

SPF African American Substance Abuse Prevention Workgroup Recommendations

<u>Workgroup Members</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Area of Expertise</u>
Marqus Butler	ODMHSAS	Administrator
Deborah Smith	ODMHSAS	Administrator
Hiawatha Bouldin	Eagle Ridge Institute	Community Development
Marquetta Finley	Metropolitan Tulsa Urban League	Administrator/CEO
Christi Sweat	Oklahoma County Juvenile Bureau	Administrator
Marcia Keesee	CREOKS Behavioral Health Services	Administrator/Direct Service Provider (Rural)
Anthony Kibble	Oklahoma Comm. On Children & Youth	Administrator
Lynn Hall	Youth Care of Oklahoma	Direct Service Provider (Urban)
Sandra Parker	Youth Care of Oklahoma	Administrator (Urban)

Despite a short, optimistic downward trend in drug prevalence, the problems associated with its use remain a pressing national health and social crisis. The cost that substance abuse exacts from America, however, is not distributed equally across the population. Although some researchers (Nobles, Goddard, Cavi, & George, 1987) have blamed the high prevalence of drug use and abuse in the African American community, at least in part, on an erosion of Black cultural orientation and values, one cannot ignore the lack of prevention efforts specifically aimed at African Americans and that Black children, youth, and families have a greater exposure and vulnerability to a myriad of social problems, one of the most compelling of which is substance abuse. Compared to their White counterparts, Black Americans are more likely to be poor, in families headed by a single parent, unemployed, lacking health care, and living in a crowded urban environment (Turner, 2000).

To improve substance abuse prevention service access in Oklahoma for the African American community; requires a structured and coordinated over-haul of service infrastructure and collaboration. The current and existing environmental prevention strategies are the first point of entry in the prevention continuum. The African American communities currently are in need of expansion of the existing substance abuse prevention continuum. To start; Oklahoma needs to develop a strong policy and program infrastructure that will be essential to improving substance abuse prevention outcomes for African American's. Infrastructure enables a program to increase capacity, enhance support, and build sustainability. The improved infrastructure development should allow for greater awareness, improved targeted environmental prevention strategies and better coordination of services.

Recommendation	Requirement to Move the Recommendation Through
Substance abuse prevention services for the focus population should be fully-integrated into existing programs and services in a culturally competent manner.	Infrastructure (Billing and Collaborative Partnerships)
Provide incentives for substance abuse prevention service providers to do more prevention work on the treatment side.	Infrastructure (Billing and Service Expansion)
Provide infrastructure and funding to increase partnerships with various agencies that are ready to approach African American prevention activities (Example funding to other agencies such as local juvenile bureaus and social service organizations).	Infrastructure (Billing and Service Expansion)
Consistently review existing service utilization rates among target population to guide environmental strategies implementation.	Infrastructure
After an initial review of service utilization, the development of an infrastructure to improve service data and outcomes tracking.	Infrastructure

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Create and implement a special population’s work group to address substance abuse prevention.	Infrastructure
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Collaboration is based upon a process-oriented egalitarian approach of relationship building that comes from the concept of “soft power” which promotes the sharing of power to collectively generate more constructive and growth producing energy that benefits those involved (TA Partnership 2006). You can learn about a school's readiness for collaboration by talking with school administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and support staff; parents and parent-teacher organization leaders; and teacher union leaders. Before you can determine how to develop comprehensive strategies in the African American, you will want to know what local conditions will support or inhibit a collaborative effort. For example, during our discussion as a workgroup the African American service experience is extremely different from the Urban vs. Rural community. Improving collaborative efforts with the African American community will require expanding partnerships at the state and local level. Successful collaborations require a great deal of effort to begin and continuous attention to sustain. Before embarking on a new collaborative effort with the African American community substance abuse prevention should consider how the following six elements might be developed: 1. Environment 2. Membership 3. Process/Structure 4. Communication 5. Vision 6. Resources .

Recommendation	Requirement to Move the Recommendation Through
Special population representation at state level advisory/governance over-site meetings	Collaboration and partnerships at the state; actively recruit and support community representation on the State level SPF, Epidemiology and prevention services advisory groups
Improved collaboration with existing community agencies and organizations such as faith based, juvenile justice, communities and etc	Collaboration and Partnerships at the State level
Determine the role of faith-based organizations in connecting with youth and families; and collaborating with existing services and organizations	Collaboration and Partnerships; at the state and local level
Collaboration between substance abuse treatment and prevention providers (local)/administrators (state).	Collaboration and Partnerships at the state
Improved data sharing and access to information on substance abuse prevention strategies and techniques.	Collaboration and Partnerships; at the state and local level

Additional recommendations include identifying existing collaborations. After identifying the various collaborative efforts, strive to integrate common language and complementary goals with local substance abuse providers. Whether working across sectors (such as health, education and labor) or across levels of government (such as county and state), sharing a set of language and goals to describe African American substance abuse prevention efforts can help the different groups unite; to improve substance abuse prevention strategies.