



IVPA Connection

Spring 2005

This online publication is the sixth in a series of newsletters about programs administered by the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority. [Previous newsletters are archived on this site.](#)

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Interview: Technical Assistance Providers

Shannon Hartnett of the Mental Health Association in Illinois is Technical Assistance Coordinator for the Safe to Live Grant Program. Regina Shaefer, a CDC Prevention Specialist with the Illinois Public Health Futures Institute, provides technical assistance for the Center for Prevention of Abuse, a Peoria-based grantee for the program. We asked them to share their thoughts about technical assistance efforts for this program.

IVPA: What distinguishes the Safe to Live program?

Shannon Hartnett: IVPA is funding community-wide collaboratives with this program. In the first year, each of the sites conducted a comprehensive needs assessment that culminated in a strategic plan. Typically, grants in general are not given to conduct needs assessments and strategic planning; as a result, many communities do not have experience doing needs assessments at the community-wide level. Safe to Live emphasizes a data-driven process, therefore we provided

Featured Program

Overview: Safe to Live Implementation Grants

The Illinois Violence Prevention Authority launched Safe to Live in 2003 as a four-year planning and implementation program designed to support the development or enhancement of a community-wide, collaborative approach to violence prevention.

The program was developed through a strategic planning process conducted by the IVPA Board and staff. One of the central goals of this process was to promote a more comprehensive, needs assessment-based approach to violence prevention. Research has shown that communities are more effective in preventing and reducing violence if they build multi-disciplinary partnerships and implement a coordinated, community response based on a comprehensive needs assessment and strategic planning process.

Communities with at least two current IVPA grants initially applied for a planning grant through the program and conducted research-based assessments that helped them better define needs, priorities and goals.

Three sites are currently designated as Safe to Live grantees. Grantees are pursuing a collaborative, community-wide public health and/or safety approach to violence prevention. One grantee is also serving as a pilot site for a substance abuse and violence prevention integration project that focuses on common risk and protective factors, best practices and stages of integration.

Each grantee is required to maintain a community coalition comprised of a Leadership Team and a larger Community Council. Grantees have worked to increase coordination among community organizations, schools and government agencies as they address interpersonal violence that affects their communities.

To support this process, IVPA has convened a Safe to Live Advisory Committee. The committee includes members of IVPA, representatives from Safe to Live sites, and members of the Technical Assistance Collaborative, which provides trainings and assistance to grantees. In this newsletter, we will highlight the activities of Safe to Live grantees and focus on two key efforts that play a vital role in the program: technical assistance and evaluation activities that help IVPA support and assess the work of grantees.

Resources

Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships

mapp.naccho.org

This Web site outlines the MAPP public health model for community planning and includes tools and case examples.

SAMSHA Model Programs

modelprograms.samhsa.gov

A listing of tested and effective substance abuse prevention programs that have been used in communities, schools, social service organizations, and workplaces across America.

Community Tool Box

ctb.ku.edu

The Tool Box provides over 6,000 pages of practical skill-building information on over 250 different topics. Topic sections include examples, check-lists, and related resources.

OJJDP Model Program Guide

www.dsgonline.com

A listing of evidence-based violence and delinquency prevention and intervention programs for youth.

technical assistance on how to collect data, what to do with it, how to create goal statements and outcome statements.

Regina Shaefer: In Peoria, for example, no one had done the kind of social marketing campaign the community is now engaged in. We've been able to offer special assistance on that campaign because of IVPA. We've helped them narrow down their target audience, among other things. In the future, we'll help them develop messages and a way to evaluate the campaign.

IVPA: How has collaborative leadership training benefited this program?

Shannon Hartnett: It's really a way for site coordinators to come together and learn key skills for leading a community-wide collaborative effort. Leading a collaborative requires a unique set of skills and the modules included in the training helped coordinators enhance their leadership skills.

Regina Shaefer: The training offers a range of modules-- including assessing the environment for collaboration, creating clarity, building trust, sharing power and influence, developing people and a self-reflection module.

IVPA: What kind of challenges do coalitions face?

Shannon Hartnett: When groups are starting out, a big challenge is getting people involved and keeping the momentum. Coalition members have their own full-time jobs and families and are not paid to participate in the coalition. They are also struggling to figure out how much structure they want. Some coalitions are comfortable with a more informal structure, while others benefit from a more rigid structure. It's our job to help them find the right balance.

Regina Shaefer: I think the concept of seeing tangible products is really important for

Grantees Focus on Community, Collaboration

Southwestern Illinois

Melissa Case, violence prevention coordinator for the Adolescent Health Center in Carbondale and coordinator for the Safe to Live grant in this area, says that two issues stood out for coalition members as they completed a needs assessment for the grant: positive youth development and race relations. In particular, she says race relations between police and young people of color was identified as an especially important issue. Case points to the opening of a Boys and Girls Club in the community as an important step forward, noting that the coalition provided funding for a life skills and prevention program at the organization that emphasizes decision-making, controlling anger and other skills. Meanwhile, the coalition is also holding focus groups with youth and adults in the community to better identify resources for youth in the community, what motivates youth and what they would define as "priority" issues. Case also indicates that community members and police are holding a series of small group discussions that emphasize problem-solving on key social issues (community policing was identified by the coalition as being tied to the race relations issue). These discussions, which feature curriculum designed by a national organization called Study Circles Resource Center, provide an organized, step-by-step forum that values everyone's opinion. "This particular process works well for us," Case says. "It really helps people break down stereotypes and get to the point where they can say, 'OK, so what can we do about this problem?'" In addition, the coalition is working to build neighborhood associations in the community that promote participation and educate people about different cultures and races. "Through all of these efforts, we're getting a better picture of what's working and what's not," she says. "We're learning more and more about how we can impact perceptions and beliefs in our community - and getting more people to join us in this effort."

Western Central Illinois

The Safe to Live coalition in Peoria County is engaged in an innovative effort to address the co-occurrence of substance abuse and violence through this grant program. "What we learned through our strategic planning process is that we have a plethora of programs in this county that do excellent violence prevention and substance abuse prevention work," says Kris Mills, who coordinates the Safe to Live Program for the Center for Prevention of Abuse in Peoria, the lead agency for the program in the county. "We found that we needed to do some broader marketing and media work to integrate these two efforts together." The coalition's main effort, Mills says, is its Healthy Families Social Marketing Campaign, which will officially kick off in April. Through this campaign, coalition members are reaching out to parents of high school students at eight high schools in Peoria. "Our goal is address the way parents communicate with their teens and enhance parent understanding of these issues," she says. "We want parents to know that violence and substance abuse are

some people in these coalitions. It's also important that technical assistance providers celebrate small successes along the way--like how far people have come toward the development of specific goals, completing needs assessments, and so much more. It helps to frame each phase, so people understand that they've completed specific things at different points of a strategic planning process.

IVPA: Can you share other examples of how technical assistance benefited coalitions?

Shannon Hartnett: For our Carbondale site, issues related to the relationship between youth and police became a bigger issue than people originally thought it would be. We helped the coalition initiate contact with the police department and set up a meeting with the Carbondale police chief. We also helped set up a training for the coalition on community policing with the Regional Institute on Community Policing.

These coalitions typically have many local resources. We can also help connect them to statewide resources, especially through the Safe to Live Advisory Committee. For example, we linked sites with people at the Evaluation Resource Institute and the Center for Prevention Research and Development, which shared information with grantees about logic models--and helped them strengthen their strategic plan with the identification of more specific, measurable project outcomes.

Regina Shaefer: We also found a way to help the coalition define the issues it wanted to address. The coalition wanted to do some sort of awareness campaign on the co-occurrence of violence prevention and substance abuse; one of the things we did was hook the coalition up with three sources to further their knowledge of how to do social marketing.

problems and they need to be communicating with their teens and addressing some basic, common factors." The coalition has focused thus far on reaching out to parents through focus groups and phone calls and laying the groundwork for the campaign by creating and crafting relevant messages.

In addition, Mills says the coalition is providing training on the co-occurrence of violence and substance abuse to professionals and community groups in Peoria County. "Our message is not that violence causes substance abuse, or the other way around," Mills says. "It's that the more risk factors there are, the more likely there will be a problem. We need to reduce these risk factors and increase protective factors. What the Safe to Live Initiative allows us to do as a community is look at the global picture on these issues."

Northwestern Illinois

As it explored ways to better meet needs of people in LaSalle, Bureau and Grundy counties, members of this coalition decided to focus on three issues: crimes against children, youth dating violence and, finally, the related issues of suicide, depression and self-mutilation. In all cases, the decision to focus on these issues was based on data gathered in a community assessment (In 2004, coalition members found there has been an increase in suicides in the community). For its work on crimes against children, the coalition will hold a four-day training this spring offered through the American Humane Association's Front Porch Project. The program is designed to help people recognize the signs of child abuse — and take steps to prevent it. The coalition's site will be the first in the Midwest to offer the program. "We will continue to provide this type of education to people in the community," says Susan Bursztynsky, director of the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Family Violence Prevention Council in Ottawa, IL and coordinator of the Safe to Live Program for this area. "As is true for drunk driving, we have the belief that until the whole community gets involved, you can't prevent child abuse."

Meanwhile, the coalition is also offering peer-to-peer education on teen dating violence that encourages teens from several schools to develop 3-5 minute skits on youth violence prevention. Through this process, youth are trained to become leaders and go on to perform the skits at area schools. In addition, youth leaders working with YouthPeace will be developing an assessment, pamphlet and website related to issues impacting youth, including teen dating violence. "The Safe to Live Program allows us to look at interpersonal violence on a broader scale and take a more prevention-focused view of our work," Bursztynsky says.

Evaluation: Safe to Live Program

The Center for Prevention, Research and Development, a program of the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois, is conducting an evaluation of the Safe to Live Program.

Strategic Plan Evaluation Report

As part of its assessment, the Center produced a "Strategic Plan Evaluation Report" that reviewed common themes reflecting the quality of these plans in the 13th Judicial Circuit, Carbondale and Peoria. In addition to violence issues, the Peoria site addressed all forms of substance abuse and focused on how prevention efforts "can be integrated across both disciplines at the local and state level."

According to the report, key elements of success included:

- The plans showed that they were data driven;
- Prioritization of issues was a critical piece of plan development;
- Documentation of coalition activities, needs assessment findings and depth of planning was more than adequate;
- The higher level of technical assistance seemed to have a positive impact on the quality of the plans.

Overall, strategic plans were very well-defined and comprehensive in scope and function.

Coalition Member Survey Site Reports (2004)

Last fall, the Center also conducted a Coalition Member Survey that focused on a range of issues being addressed by grantees. Survey questions covered issues related to focus, participation, interaction between coalition members, impact and level of satisfaction about progress, among other topics.

Highlights:

Community sector representation

The degree of membership diversity on all community coalitions remained high, with some variances as one would expect to see over time:

13th Judicial Circuit: Community sector representation remained relatively stable over the year. Sectors with the greatest representation in 2004 were social service agencies, education (K-12) and law enforcement.

Carbondale: Sectors with the greatest representation in 2004 were social service agencies, youth agencies, healthcare and youth.

Peoria: The sector with the most representation in 2004 was social service agencies. The next two sectors with the most participation were education (K-12) and healthcare.

Coalition member satisfaction

In all cases, coalition members gave high ratings to their leadership. All coalitions also confirmed the importance of having a fully funded, full-time local site coordinator.

13th Judicial Circuit: The coalition's satisfaction and perception of the coalition leadership stayed relatively stable, but the range of perception decreased. In other words, members overall were more satisfied with the coalition leadership.

Carbondale: More than half of all coalition members said leadership is knowledgeable about issues the coalition is seeking to address and problems and issues across the community.

Peoria: Coalition members noted an improvement in the planning process used by the coalition, the degree of

coalition member involvement and programs the coalition proposed to meet objectives.

Effect coalition has had on violence-related problems in community

13th Judicial Circuit: Among other findings, more members felt that the coalition has had an effect on helping violence prevention organizations increase their share of community resources and on helping raise violence prevention as a priority in the community.

Carbondale: Coalition members were especially positive about the impact the coalition has had on raising violence prevention as a priority in the community.

Peoria: Coalition members said the coalition made a strong impact on a range of issues affecting the community, including raising violence prevention as a priority and strengthening and enhancing violence prevention-related policies and practices in the community.