

VERMONT STRATEGIC PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

ENFORCEMENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Some of the contents in this guide were adapted from Shattuck and Associates, Inc., Program Planning & Evaluation, Mt Airy, MD, September, 2007.

OVERVIEW

Personnel from law enforcement agencies are likely to have some very useful information and insights regarding patterns and certain causal factors in your community with respect to underage drinking, high risk drinking, and marijuana use. This interview guide is provided for community grantees to use in discussing these issues with local law enforcement personnel.

Community grantees are asked to conduct two interviews with law enforcement personnel for their community, one with the Department of Liquor Control Investigator (or DLC Educator if the Investigator is not available) in their region (discuss questions pertaining only to alcohol) and one with a local police officer (discuss questions pertaining to alcohol, and to marijuana use, if the community selected it as its second priority). Additional law enforcement personnel you might consider interviewing are Border Patrol Officers (may substitute for the local police officer interview if this makes sense in the community context) and School Resource Officers (this would be a third interviewee).

The interviews can serve multiple purposes. Depending on how active law enforcement personnel already are with your coalition or organization, they provide an opportunity for the grantee organization director (and staff) to get to know local law enforcement agents (or know them better). They provide an opportunity to inform and update local law enforcement on the purpose and activities of the grantee organization, and the SPF-SIG in particular. And they can provide information on the factors that cause or contribute to and facilitate the problems you are trying to address, and thereby help inform the selection and implementation of your prevention activities.

Community grantee may wish to expand the interview content beyond what is provided here, depending on their individual needs. The particular forum you use for the interview is also very much up to each grantee. The coalition coordinator or evaluator may choose to interview the law enforcement agents in private, with other staff present, or even in the context of a coalition meeting.

The remainder of this document pertains to conducting enforcement interviews for the Vermont SPF SIG and is divided into two sections: 1) Interview Guidance, which is a brief outline of some key issues to consider in planning and conducting the interviews, and 2) the Enforcement Interview questions, which relate to underage drinking, high risk drinking, and marijuana use.

INTERVIEW GUIDANCE

Contacting participants

Contact the Vermont Department of Liquor Control Investigator who covers your community, provide an overview of the project and the goal of the enforcement interviews, and ask for the opportunity to meet. If you do not have success scheduling an interview with the DLC Investigator for your region, it is fine to instead interview your regional DLC Educator. We have asked DLC officials to inform the regional Investigators and Educators of the SPF and that they will be contacted for an interview. Finally, please look up the service area of your regional DLC Investigator and check whether there are any other SPF grantees that would be contacting the same DLC representatives. If so, please coordinate your efforts with the other SPF coalition(s) and schedule only one interview per DLC representative.

Contact the chief of the local police department that covers your community, provide an overview of the project and the goal of the enforcement interviews, and ask for the opportunity to meet with him/her or an appropriate officer from the department.

Inform participants in advance how long the interview is estimated to be.

If you will be interviewing more than two law enforcement personnel, consider setting up a group interview or forum where interviewees would answer each question and have a chance to respond to one another.

Identifying a place, date, and time

Agree on the place, date, and time for the interview.

Conducting the interview

- *Allot time for introductions, including yourself, the goal of the interview, and how the information will be used*
- *Remain objective / withhold judgment (consider both verbal and nonverbal body language)*
- *Listen carefully and occasionally reflect what you are hearing by paraphrasing responses*
- *Arrange for someone else from your coalition or organization to serve as the note taker so that you can focus your attention on the interview*

Wrapping up

- *Ask for any remaining comments*
- *Ask if there are any questions*
- *Thank the participant*
- *After completing all law enforcement personnel interviews, prepare a summary of what you have learned using the template provided at the end of this guide*
- *Send the completed summary form to*

Katy Cahill

VDH/ADAP

108 Cherry St.

Burlington, VT 05401

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Directions:

The questions are organized into three sections: underage drinking, high risk drinking, and marijuana use. At a minimum, the focus group should address the questions that pertain to the community's priorities (if they have already been identified). It is estimated that the interview will take around one hour, with approximately 30 minutes being devoted to each of the community's two priorities. If desired, the interview can address all three sections, in which case extra time should be allotted.

The questions contain probes that may be used, if necessary, to stimulate discussion or to ask for additional information. Begin by asking only the question and then use probes as necessary.

Introduction:

(The interviewer will begin the discussion by briefly explaining to the participant the purpose of the interview.)

Hello, my name is _____. I would like to thank you for taking time to talk with me today. I work with/for _____, and we are conducting this research in an effort to get a better understanding of your views related to alcohol use (and marijuana use, if applicable) in this community.

(If the interviewee might not be familiar with your SPF-SIG grant, take a moment now to tell him or her about the project and your coalition's or organization's role in the project).

Before we get started, there are a few things that I want to tell you. (**NOTE: practice and put into your own words, adapting as necessary to fit the situation**):

- I am going to ask you some questions about alcohol use (and marijuana use, if applicable). You will not be asked questions about your own behavior, but rather your views about issues in your community.
- I will be sharing your comments with members of our coalition (or organization) and possibly other members of the community. But if there is anything that you say that you would prefer not to go beyond this room, please let me know and I will honor your request.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

SECTION 1: UNDERAGE DRINKING

Introduction: I would like to begin by asking some questions about underage drinking.

1. **Based on your view of this community, how acceptable is it for persons under the age of 21 to drink alcohol? How acceptable is it to youth and young adults? To parents and other adults? To the community in general?**

Probe:

What are some reasons it is seen as OK for people under the age of 21 in your community to drink alcohol?

- Family acceptance / Parents allow
- Right of passage
- Youth perceive it as cool, something to do

What forms or levels of underage drinking are more acceptable than others?

2. **Where do you think people under the age of 21 in this community get alcohol and which are the most common sources?**

Probe:

- Retail Access
 - liquor store?
 - grocery store?
 - bar?
 - restaurant?
- Social Access
 - friends?
 - parents?
 - older siblings
 - strangers?
 - parties
 - other social events?

3. How easy is it for people under the age of 21 in this community to get alcohol from those sources?

Probe:

What are some reasons it is easy for people under the age of 21 in this community to get alcohol?

- Retail Access
 - Bars, stores, and restaurants don't check id's
- Social Access
 - Adults are unaware of penalties for providing alcohol to minors
 - Lack of monitoring at social events
 - Lack of parental monitoring
 - It only takes a few persons willing to provide the alcohol for it to be widely available

4. Where do you think people under the age of 21 in this community drink alcohol?

5. What specific measures are being taken in this community to enforce laws against underage drinking, including:

- enforcing laws regarding sales of alcohol to minors?
- enforcing laws regarding adults supplying alcohol to minors?
- conducting party patrols
- other measures (?)

6. How effective do you think those measures are at enforcing laws against underage drinking? What would help make them more effective?

SECTION 2: HIGH RISK DRINKING

Note: This section may be skipped if this community did not identify high risk drinking as a priority.

Explain: Now, I would like to ask some questions about different patterns of alcohol use.

- 1. How acceptable is it in this community for people to have 5 drinks or more within an hour or two? This is also referred to as “binge drinking.” How acceptable is it to youth and young adults? To parents and other adults? To the community in general?**

Probe:

What are some reasons it is seen as OK for people in this community to drink until they are drunk?

- Lack of knowledge of health and safety consequences
- Perception that negative consequences won't happen to them (perceived invulnerability)
- Perceived as cool, something to do
- It is tolerated or even encouraged

- 2. How acceptable is it in this community for people to drink and drive? How acceptable is it to youth and young adults? To parents and other adults? To the community in general?**

Probe:

What are some reasons it is seen as acceptable for people in this community to drink and drive?

- Lack of knowledge of health and safety consequences
- Perception that negative consequences won't happen to them (perceived invulnerability)
- They think it is unlikely they will get caught
- It just seems to be part of the local culture

3. **Where do you think young adults ages 21 through 25 in this community drink alcohol?**

4. **In what areas, and at what times, do you see the most drinking and driving take place?**

5. **What measures are being taken in this community to enforce laws against sales to intoxicated persons?**

6. **How effective do you think those measures are at enforcing laws against sales to intoxicated persons? What would help make them more effective?**

7. **What measures are being taken in this community to enforce laws against drinking and driving?**

8. **How effective do you think those measures are at enforcing laws against drinking and driving? What would help make them more effective?**

9. **In what ways does the community provide support in enforcing laws related to alcohol use?**

10. **What additional support, resources, information, or activities would help support the enforcement of laws related to alcohol use in this community?**

SECTION 3: MARIJUANA USE

Note: This section should also be skipped if the interviewee is from the Liquor Control Board. It may also be skipped if your community did not identify marijuana use as a priority.

Explain: Now, I would like to ask some questions about marijuana use.

1. **How acceptable is it in this community for people to use marijuana? How acceptable is it to youth and young adults? To parents and other adults? To the community in general?**

Probe:

What are some reasons it is seen as OK for people in this community to use marijuana?

- Perceived as OK / Parents allow
- Perceived as cool, something to do
- Perceived as not harmful

2. **How easy is it for people in this community to get marijuana?**
3. **What specific measures are being taken in this community to enforce laws against marijuana use?**
4. **How effective do you think those measures are at enforcing laws against marijuana use? What would help make them more effective?**
5. **In what ways does the community provide support in enforcing laws against marijuana use?**
6. **What additional support, resources, information, or activities would help support the enforcement of laws against marijuana use in this community?**

Vermont SPF-SIG Law Enforcement Interviews Summary	Community Grantee: Dates of interviews: Who was interviewed:
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1. What are the three most significant things you learned (or confirmed) from this activity?

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2. Did you learn anything that was a surprise to you?

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3. What useful information did you obtain about causal factors for underage drinking?

a	Low perceived risk	
b	Social norms that accept or encourage	
c	Low enforcement of laws	
d	Easy access to alcohol	
e	Lack of parental monitoring	
f	Promotion and pricing	
g	Other causal factors not listed above	

4. What useful information did you obtain about causal factors for high risk alcohol use by persons under age 26 (if this priority was addressed)?

a	Low perceived risk	
b	Social norms that accept or encourage	
c	Low enforcement of laws	
d	Easy access to alcohol	
e	Lack of parental	

	monitoring	
f	Promotion and pricing	
g	Other causal factors not listed above	
5. What useful information did you obtain about causal factors for marijuana use by persons under age 26 (if this priority was addressed)?		
a	Low perceived risk	
b	Social norms that accept or encourage	
c	Low enforcement of laws	
d	Easy access to marijuana	
e	Lack of parental monitoring	
f	Other causal factors not listed above	
6. Were any insights gained on promising strategies or ideas on how best to address important causal factors?		
7. Do you have any other summary observations or comments on what was learned and/or the usefulness of the interviews to your planning and capacity building efforts?		
8. What follow-up activities related to this effort (if any) were identified?		