

4. Initial Implementation

Purpose:

Put selected actions, initiatives, and programs into practice.

Activities:

- Review initial research and environmental scan of target groups.
- Identify local stakeholders for each community goal, i.e., people who can make the goal happen.
- Hold meetings with local stakeholders to obtain input and buy-in.
- Identify action steps, responsibilities, target dates, and resources (e.g., people, money, training materials).
- Execute the action plan for each goal.
- Track and report progress.
- Remove roadblocks.
- Develop and implement data collection and reporting processes to monitor implementation effectiveness

Resources/Input:

- Mobilized community stakeholders
- Logic Model
- Community suicide prevention goals
- Community action plan

Results/Output:

- Initial operation of selected activities, initiatives and programs
- Completed goals
- Data collection and reporting processes

Description:

In step 4, you identify the details of your action plan, implement the plan, and measure if and how well the implementation was done.

a) Identify the Details

For each goal in your action plan, identify the steps needed to reach the goal, the people who are responsible and involved in making it happen, target start and completion dates,

and needed resources such as people, money, and training materials. Identify potential roadblocks and barriers to achieving the goal. Gather ideas for how you will overcome these roadblocks and challenges. Talk to other coalitions to see if you can learn from their experiences. Through social marketing, advocacy, and creative communication, coalitions have achieved successes in spite of overwhelming obstacles.

b) Implement the Plan

Each of your coalition members is very likely busy so it may be difficult to find volunteers to take responsibility for implementation. One strategy is to ask for a volunteer sub-committee so the work is spread over multiple people. Another strategy is to identify major stakeholders who would benefit (as determined during the environmental scan) by completion of the goal or action and ask them to assume responsibility.

Encourage the people responsible for implementation to become thoroughly familiar with your community's suicide-related statistics. Coalitions have found that "talking the numbers" is a useful technique for overcoming resistance, encouraging involvement, and facilitating implementation. In conversations with stakeholders and the media, incorporate the statistics that support your implementation efforts.

No matter how your coalition chooses to track and report status, ensure that your process includes the following:

- Each person responsible for a goal, objective, or action knows when and how they are to report status. For example, you may ask members to send their status in an email prior to your monthly meeting.
- All the members of your coalition receive information about the status of each goal, objective and action on a well-communicated timetable.
- What people outside your coalition need to know and when and how they should be told. For example, you may decide to send monthly emails to an interested member of the county commission or keep in quarterly contact with a reporter for your local newspaper.
- Celebrations and publicizing of successes, thank you letters, and other simple forms of recognition of achievement keep people motivated.
- By frequently reminding members about their achievements, you may keep the momentum and encourage continued engagement. Consider visual reminders of progress, such as posting a large sign showing the number of completed gatekeeper training sessions.

c) Measure the Implementation

For each objective met by your coalition, you will want to determine the answers to three questions:

1. Was it done?
2. How well was it done?
3. How effective it is?

In this step, you will seek to answer the first two questions. Once the implementation is in full operation and enough time has elapsed for the implementation to impact results, you can seek to answer the third question.

By measuring the implementation, you may learn:

- How to make implementation better and easier in the future.
 - After meeting an objective in your plan, debrief the participants to discover what lessons were learned. For example, participants may report that they faced resistance from parents when attempting to implement gatekeeper training for students. They may have discovered a technique for overcoming this resistance. You may want to include that technique in action plans when taking the training to other schools.
- The extent of the implementation.
 - For example, how many school personnel actually received gatekeeper training? How well was training material organized and presented?

Decide what data you need to collect to measure each goal in your action plan and how you will collect that data. For example, you may ask people who complete gatekeeper training to complete training evaluation forms at the end of the training to tell you how well the training was organized and presented.

Now that your coalition has completed the initial implementation, you will want to ensure that what you implemented may be sustained and effective over time.