

Activity: Determining the Training Needs of New Partners

What's exciting about collaborating is that it allows us to work with partners who are different than we are—partners whose differences help us understand and address prevention problems in new and creative ways.

Yet in order to work together successfully, collaborative teams can't just be different. They also need to possess—both individually and collectively—the knowledge and skills needed to move the team's prevention efforts forward. For example, if a team is tasked with addressing a specific prevention problem, it's important that everyone on the team share a basic understanding of the problem—including related consequences and contributing factors. Similarly, if a team is tasked with following a specific planning model, all members should be familiar with the model.

The activity described below is designed to help teams identify and prioritize their knowledge needs. Engaging in a collaborative assessment process will help to ensure that the needs of all members are heard. It also gives teams a chance to practice some of decision-making skills they will use to explore and solve problems as they continue working together.

Materials Needed: Package of large sticky notes, package of adhesive dots

Prior to Activity: Designate a team member to facilitate the activity.

Directions:

- **Distribute** 10–20 large sticky notes to each team member.
- **Ask** the group, “If we were going to build our knowledge over the next year, what topics would you like to learn about?” (Consider giving participants a “cheat sheet” that outlines some items they may want to consider.)
- **Give** the group at least 15 minutes to write down their responses—one per sticky note—and then **collect** everyone's responses.
- Using the wall as a canvas, **group** similar responses together.

- **Assign** a heading to each category or topic (e.g., the Strategic Prevention Framework, evaluation basics, prescription drug prevention strategies). These headings are your list of identified knowledge needs.
- As a group, **prioritize** the list. To do this, distribute small dots or stickers to the team, then have team members “vote” on which topics to address first by placing their stickers on the two to five needs that they feel are most important.
- **Count** the dots to see which knowledge needs the group prioritized (i.e., the more stickers or dots, the greater the priority).
- **Discuss** ideas for addressing prioritized needs. As a next step, you may want to invite a few member volunteers to explore training options for some of the needs the group identified.