



COMMUNITY ANTI-DRUG COALITIONS OF AMERICA (CADCA)

The Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) is a national, nonprofit organization, whose mission is to build and strengthen the capacity of community anti-drug coalitions to create healthy, safe and drug-free communities. Community coalitions are defined as working alliances that include multiple sectors from the community. The community response to alcohol and other drug prevention is carried out by assessing the underlying causes of the problem and implementing a plan that addresses multi-level and multi-dimensional solutions through collaboration among stakeholders. Community-based problem solving seeks to affect changes in practices, programs, services and policies resulting in the improvement of community health and wellness outcomes. The foundation of research proven strategies informs coalitions of action they choose to adopt in addressing prevention for their unique community characteristics.

CADCA reaches its vast network of community coalitions and grassroots prevention leaders through a number of communication venues and training structures. Information is disbursed through the web site, e-newsletter, and publications. In 2007, the annual National Leadership Forum was attended by over 3,100 individuals and the Mid-Year Training Institute in July is expected to exceed last year's attendance of 600. As a training and technical assistance service provider, the National Coalition Institute (the Institute) at CADCA offers coalitions on-site training in varying intensities. Last year over 120 trainings were given across the country. Technical assistance is readily accessible by phone and email.

CADCA's position on prevention of substance abuse among children, youth and young adults:

Prevention of alcohol and other drug use among our nation's youth must be a major priority. Investments in prevention can yield huge savings in reducing the costs and consequences of alcohol and other drug abuse and addiction in our society. The research confirms that early alcohol and other drug use can have long-lasting and expensive consequences. The cost-benefit estimates of prevention presented by Swisher, Scherer and Yin, (The Journal of Primary Prevention, Oct, 2004) are compelling. Each dollar can yield \$2.00 to \$20.00 in savings. Every new cohort of youth needs the benefit of effective drug prevention strategies in their community. Substance abuse prevention has been under utilized, regarding both funding and emphasis, relative to its importance and effectiveness in reducing alcohol and other drug use and their related human and societal costs.

CADCA's targeted audience is the community coalition working to prevent and reduce substance abuse and manifested by population level changes. Population level indicators are significantly different in scale than changing the behavior of targeted individuals. It requires comprehensive and multi-faceted community strategies to change programs, policies and practices to increase protective factors and reduce risk of substance-use and the related problems among children, youth and young adults. Prevention of substance abuse requires multi-level/multi-dimensional solutions.

Role of evidence-based practices and other relevant research:

Prevention is a relatively young field and research findings from multiple sources continue to evolve and expand our understanding of what is effective and evidence-based. Theories of the prevention of substance abuse and the relationship to other problem behaviors are tested in the research arena, but it is imperative that current research on prevention of substance abuse and the strategies derived from that research are disseminated to the field. Alcohol and other drug prevention research that informs practice encompass the individual, the family, the peer group, and environmental conditions. The coalition practitioner has tremendous responsibility to be informed evidence-based practices. The dissemination of prevention research and the translation of findings into actual community program implementation or environmental strategies is critical.

Coalitions operate within the context of the unique conditions of their community. It is important that new information from research and evidence-based practices reach the field and in a format and language that they can understand and adopt. There has been an expectation that research based programs are adopted with fidelity to achieve similar results as controlled setting. Community conditions naturally lend to modifications in research practice. Research strategies are not being implemented with scientific rigor, but rather within complex environments of human interaction. While the research field adheres to scientific principles, the findings have to be applied in real world situations.

CADCA emphasizes the building and strengthening of state and local infrastructure and capacity for data-driven decision making. This includes identifying, implementing and evaluating effective substance abuse prevention strategies, programs, policies and practices. In this time of accountability for dollars invested we must inform coalitions of research proven strategies that will increase their capacity to affect rates of substance abuse.

How evidence-based practices are best translated to community coalitions:

CADCA and the Institute strengthen and support community anti-drug coalitions to become effective problem solvers of their local substance abuse issues. CADCA strives to be a source of information for coalitions and a proponent of research and dissemination of best practices.

Practitioners in the field rely on CADCA as an intermediary to communicate information on the strategies, interventions, policies and programs which have been shown to affect the consequences of substance abuse, and can be leveraged at the community level. CADCA produces a Research into Action bi-monthly document.

CADCA disseminates information efficiently and broadly by the e-newsletter and several publications. Printed materials are published and distributed widely through mail and at numerous conferences. Of relevance to research proven strategies, CADCA produces a bi-monthly brief titled, **Research into Action**. These reports present relevant findings of research that impact the work of coalitions and suggest how practitioners can incorporate the research findings into their local situation. Another successful approach has been the a “toolkit” a format that provides a clear and explicit materials that are more likely to be implemented and result in less deviation.

Technical assistance for coalitions is offered real time by phone and email.

What are the biggest barriers to the adoption of evidence-based practices?

CADCA is concerned with research can be promoted to further the adoption of research-based policies, programs and practices and be effectively implemented in large scale. CADCA has a role in disseminating findings from funded research on prevention of substance abuse to the practitioner. The practitioner typically doesn't attend to technical language such as: experimental, double-blind, randomized controlled trials, or have accessibility to journals of published studies. Rather the practitioner relies on dependable sources to disseminate information that aids them to be the consumer and benefactor of research. However, the practitioner is a consumer and has tremendous leverage to positively affect change with individuals and at the community level. They yield political influence to change practices and influence policy. All of which should be informed by research.

CADCA continuously trains and is raising the expectation that practitioners become more sophisticated in their understanding of research proven strategies. Participation in a high-quality training make it more likely they will choose a research-based program that has been shown to be effective. They rely on intermediary agents, such as CADCA and government agencies to provide information and training to them. Additionally, the practitioner rightly advocates that they know their community and have contributions to make in how research proven programs are implemented. We support a community-based participatory research agenda.