

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION & EDUCATION



Needham Coalition for Youth Substance Abuse Prevention, NCYSAP

Vision Needham is a cohesive community that supports all of our youth to grow and develop to be substance free and healthy in mind, body and spirit.

Mission The Coalition incorporates a collaborative, community based and data driven prevention approach to reduce alcohol, marijuana and other drug use among Needham youth. Through community education, partnership and strategic action we will decrease the risk factors associated with substance use and increase the protective factors that will enhance the health and safety of our youth.

The cornerstone of an effective community substance abuse prevention effort is a coalition comprised of leaders and stake holders from key sectors of a community including: parents, youth, business leaders, law enforcement, school and public service officials, health care professionals, faith-based organizations, media, youth serving representatives, state and local government agencies, social service providers and other community representatives. The Coalition meets the first Tuesday morning of each month at the Needham Public Library from 7:15am-8:30am sharing an open and honest dialogue on the high risk behaviors and substance use and abuse issues confronting Needham youth. Our monthly meetings are regularly attended by approximately 15-20 Needham community leaders, community stakeholders, parents and youth.

NCYSAP members discuss the biological, psychological, social/emotional and legal consequences of underage substance use and how prevention strategies can positively impact Needham youth, as well as families. Research shows that multi-sector, multi strategy approaches to substance abuse prevention, implemented by community coalitions, reduce alcohol and other drug use significantly. Our members are committed to implementing *Environmental Prevention Strategies* that impact access and availability, policy and enforcement, media advocacy and community norms.

Coalition successes during the past year include three Medication Take-Back events; Needham residents were asked to check their homes for unwanted, expired and unused medications and drop them off for environmentally proper disposal. Over 40,000 prescription medications and 15,000 over-the counter medications were dropped off to the Needham Police Department (NPD) and NCYSAP members for safe disposal. The DFC program purchased a permanent disposal safe for medication disposal 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, located in the NPD lobby.

Our Youth Connections Action team has succeeded in initiating 5th *Quarter*, a program that consists of post game substance free social gatherings. The first 5th *Quarter* was held after an October football game featuring free pizza, drinks, Ping Pong and a DJ, over 200 Needham High students attended! Our coalition is committed to supporting monthly 5th *Quarter* events, our community fundraising efforts have resulted in over \$6500 from community businesses, fraternal organizations, parent groups and residents. All donations are welcome, checks can be sent to the 501-(c) 3- *Friends of Needham Health Department*, 1471 Highland Avenue, Needham MA 02492.

Youth participation in the NCYSAP has increased through the dedication of students from the Needham High School group, Rockets Against Destructive Decisions (R.A.D.D.) Carol Read, NCYSAP Director, serves as the DFC program advisor to the group. Will Grannan, Needham High School Guidance Counselor, serves as the in-school advisor, supporting youth efforts to sponsor substance- free activities and programs.

The R.A.D.D club goal is to create a cultural shift in their peer's beliefs around the normalization of underage substance use in social settings through the establishment of fun, substance- free activities. The group successfully coordinated a Wii Game night, a Coffee House and a "Friday Fiesta" that featured local bands and an open mic segment. These innovative events were attended by over 100 Needham youth. R.A.D.D students developed a school wide survey to gain insights into NHS student awareness of the R.A.D.D club and the events their peers would attend.

The NCYSAP is supported by the federal Drug Free Communities (DFC) Grant program sponsored by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) in partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association (SAMHSA). This five year grant program supports over 700 community coalitions across the United States in their mission to prevent and reduce underage substance use.

NCYSAP STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Build coalition capacity
2. To prevent and reduce youth access to alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs
3. To change attitudes and social norms towards youth alcohol and substance abuse
4. To increase protective factors that prevent youth alcohol and other substance abuse and decrease risk factors that predispose youth to use.

DRUG FREE COMMUNITIES GRANT (DFC) GOALS

GOAL 1: Establish and strengthen collaboration among communities, private nonprofit agencies, and Federal, State, local, and tribal governments to support the efforts of community coalitions to prevent and reduce substance use among youth.

GOAL 2: Reduce substance abuse among youth and, over time, among adults by addressing the factors in a community that increase the risk of substance abuse and promoting the factors that minimize the risk of substance abuse.

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