

Prioritization Facilitated Discussion Guide

Facilitator Instructions

The purpose of this document is to assist PFS Coordinators in facilitating the coalition's prioritization process. The goal is to identify intervening variables that are most important to the coalition. You should read the script below verbatim when leading this discussion. The times noted next to the questions are for your reference. Please try to keep the conversation moving by following the time recommendations as much as possible.

Note: You will need to assign a note-taker before you begin to capture the discussion.

Prioritization Script

Today we are going to talk about what we discovered about our community by completing the Needs Assessment Workbook and going through the process of rating intervening variables. [Name of note-taker] is here to take notes.

The main purpose of today's conversation is to identify the intervening variables that we think are most important to focus on in our community. To refresh your memory, intervening variables are factors that have been identified through research as influencing substance use patterns in a community.

There are no right or wrong answers and we value everyone's opinions. Please take turns so everyone gets a chance to talk. (If recording) We would like to record the discussion today in case we miss anything in the notes. Is that okay with everyone?

All of the intervening variables in the Needs Assessment Workbook were first rated by the coalition's Epi Workgroup. They were asked to rate each variable based on magnitude, political will, capacity, and changeability. I am going to hand out definitions of these criteria and we'll take a moment to quickly review them [*Distribute criteria handout*]:

- **Magnitude** is addressed by the question “**How meaningful is the SIZE of this issue in your community?**” and it refers to how big or small the value is in your community data. It can be measured by considering the following questions: What percent of the community is impacted? Is the rate or percent high or low compared to other intervening variables in your community? Is the rate or percent high or low compared to the state average? If data are available for multiple points in time, has the rate or percent changed over time?

- **Political will** or “**How much do community leaders/members care about this issue?**” encompasses readiness, concern, and willingness to take action. For example, political will might include community willingness to raise taxes on alcohol, or readiness to take on the hospitality or alcohol industries. Readiness may include a number of dimensions, such as the community’s recognition of substance use/abuse problems, the availability of needed resources, a plan for addressing substance use/abuse concerns, and leaders positioned to take action.
- **Capacity** or “**What level of resources do you have available to address this issue?**” refers to your coalition or community’s ability to implement programs, policies, and other changes designed to reduce the likelihood of substance abuse. Elements include: staff time, skills, experience, and expertise; training and technical assistance; organizational systems; communication systems; technology; fiscal resources; etc.
- **Changeability** or “**How easy is it to change the value of the variable over the course of the grant?**” encompasses time frame, readiness, and capacity. Can your community make a change in a given intervening variable by the end of the project?

We have developed a list of the top 20 intervening variables based on the ratings. *[Provide the list of the top 20 highest-ranking variables as a handout, projected on a screen, or written on a whiteboard/large post-it.]* Now we’re going to try to get this list of 20 down to 5-7 priority variables that represent **both underage alcohol use and marijuana use**. This is to ensure that our prevention efforts are comprehensive. These final variables will be the ones that our coalition will work to address in the coming years. Please keep in mind that these variables will help us select strategies we will use moving forward, but we are not discussing strategies today, only intervening variables.

1. First, the Epi Workgroup is going to discuss the top seven variables on this list and why they were rated as they were. [10 minutes]
2. Looking at these results, are there any intervening variables in the top **5-7** that you think should **not** be on the final list of priority variables based on the criteria I just went over? [15 minutes]
 - a. Why do you think this variable is not a priority?
 - b. Does anyone feel strongly that this particular variable **should** be included in the final list?
3. Are there any intervening variables that are not currently in the top 5-7 that you think **should** be? Again, this should be based on the criteria we went over earlier.

(Remember that you are only looking at the list of top 20 variables, not all of them).[15 minutes]

- a. Why do you think this variable **should** be included in the final list?
 - b. Does the Epi Workgroup have any additional information to share about the ratings for these additional variables?
 - c. Does anyone feel strongly that this particular variable should **not** be included in the list?
4. [*Read the new list of top 5-7 variables*] Does anyone have any other thoughts to share about the intervening variables on this list? [5 minutes]

Thank you for your input on our coalition's focus moving forward. In the coming months, we will use this information to identify strategies that we can implement to address these intervening variables.