

PFS Protocol: Coalition Member Conversations

Purpose

The main purposes of the Coalition Member Conversations are to:

- 1) Gather information about community readiness and prevention infrastructure.
- 2) Build relationships with coalition members.
- 3) Shape buy-in for future assessment efforts.

Timing

These conversations are required during the first phase of the Partnerships for Success (PFS) grant. The initial conversations with early coalition members should take place prior to August 15th, 2015, so Wilder Research can help synthesize the results for your strategic plan. However, additional conversations can take place at any time during the grant as new members join the coalition.

Process

- ***All conversations will be conducted using the Conversation Guide.*** You are welcome to add questions to the tool. If you would like the additional questions to be synthesized by Wilder Research, please contact them to assist with tailoring the tool. If your additional questions are only for your internal planning purposes, then you can add them as you see fit.
- ***Plan an individual meeting with each coalition member*** to gather this information. Answering the required questions will likely take between 15 and 30 minutes, but you may want to schedule a longer meeting to allow more time for informal conversation and answering questions about the coalition and its goals.
- ***Schedule the conversation in a neutral, convenient location.*** When scheduling the appointment, you should select a location that is convenient and neutral enough for the coalition member you are speaking with to get there easily and feel comfortable talking openly. In some cases, this may be a private location, such as an office or a conference room, and in other cases, it may be a public location, such as a café or a park. To help make the interview more comfortable, you can purchase a non-alcoholic beverage for yourself and the person you are interviewing and the coalition will reimburse you.

- **Fill out introductory information prior to conversation.** Before arriving at the your scheduled appointment, fill out the coalition member’s name and title and the date of the conversation. This will allow you to start the interview more quickly and it will ensure that you are prepared with accurate information.
- **Follow general interviewing tips.** Please refer to the **Conducting Interviews** tip sheet for general tips on interviewing. It is important that you allow your coalition members to share their perspectives openly, even if their opinions do not align with yours or with the overarching goals of the coalition. You can use opportunities during future coalition meetings to build understanding of and buy-in for the coalition’s goals.
 - Remember, this interview is voluntary and participants can skip questions if they do not know the answer or they would prefer not to respond. However, please remember that respondents sometimes skip questions because they didn’t understand the question, didn’t hear the entire question, or are not sure how to answer. If someone says that they “don’t know” an answer, try reading the question again or answering any questions they may have about what you are asking.
 - Remember for this grant, “young adults” are defined as individuals between the ages of 18 and 25. “Underage drinking” involves students ages 18 through 20.
- **Provide your reflections.** After the conversation is complete, take a few moments on your own to respond to the reflection questions at the end of the guide. It is important to reflect on your conversation as quickly as possible after the conversation is complete so the information is fresh in your mind. These reflections will be very helpful when it comes time for you to synthesize the results.
- **Send copies of completed tools to Wilder Research and ADAD.** You will also need to send copies of all of your completed Conversation Guides to Wilder Research to allow for synthesis across all conversations conducted in your community. You can submit your completed forms either electronically by emailing them to kristin.dillon@wilder.org or through the mail by sending them to Kristin Dillon at Wilder Research, 451 Lexington Parkway North, St. Paul, MN 55104. You will also need to send your completed Conversation Guides to Annemarie Goldhorn at the Department of Human Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division (ADAD) at Annemarie.Goldhorn@state.mn.us.

Privacy

You are collecting this information from members of the coalition who are expected to work together and work with you, which may make some people concerned about sharing information. The information being asked is not likely to be sensitive, but it is important to build trust among members and make participants feel comfortable sharing. Be respectful of participant opinions and try to share overall themes, rather than individual responses, when possible.