

Communities That Care (CTC)

CTC is a coalition-based community prevention operating system that uses a public health approach to prevent youth problem behaviors including underage drinking, tobacco use, violence, delinquency, school dropout and substance abuse.

Program Targets:

Ultimately, the beneficiaries of CTC are children of any age in the community. CTC helps decision-makers in the community select & implement tested, effective prevention policies and programs to address the most pressing risks facing their youth. CTC guides the community coalition through an assessment and prioritization process that identifies the risk and protective factors most in need of attention, and links those priorities to prevention programs that are proven to work in addressing them.

Program Content:

CTC activities are planned and carried out by the CTC Community Board, a prevention coalition of community stakeholders who work together to promote positive youth outcomes. Board members participate in a series of six CTC training workshops in which they build their coalition and learn the skills needed to install the CTC system.

Communities That Care is installed in a community through a five-phase process implemented over a 1-2 year period:

- 1) **Get Started**—assessing community readiness to undertake collaborative prevention efforts;
- 2) **Get Organized**—getting a commitment to the CTC process from community leaders and forming a diverse and representative prevention coalition;
- 3) **Develop a Profile**—using epidemiologic data to assess prevention needs;
- 4) **Create a Plan**—choosing tested and effective prevention policies, practices, and programs based on assessment data; and
- 5) **Implement and Evaluate**—implementing the new strategies with fidelity, in a manner congruent with the programs' theory, content, and methods of delivery, and evaluating progress over time.

Core components include:

- Community coalition of key stakeholders concerned with the health and well-being of the community's youth
- Community coordinator, preferably full-time devoted to CTC but at minimum half time
- Series of 6 CTC trainings (all materials are available on the CSAP webpage free of charge)
- Certified CTC trainers to conduct the trainings
- CTC Youth Survey, administered at least every two years for students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12, to learn directly from the youth themselves about risk factors, protective factors, and youth behaviors

Program Outcomes:

Results from a 7-state experimental trial involving 24 communities show that within 4 years of adopting the CTC system, community coalitions can reduce the incidence of delinquent behaviors and of alcohol, tobacco, and smokeless tobacco use as well as the prevalence of alcohol use, binge drinking, smokeless tobacco use, and delinquent behavior among young people community wide by the spring of grade 8.

Among youths consented into a longitudinal panel in 5th and 6th grades, these significant effects of CTC were found by spring of grade 8:

- Exposure to targeted risk factors increased less rapidly in CTC than in control communities.
- Initiation of substance use and delinquency: By the end of 8th grade, compared to students in the control communities, students from CTC communities were:
 - 24% less likely to initiate delinquent behavior
 - 32% less likely to initiate the use of alcohol
 - 33% less likely to initiate cigarette use
 - 33% less likely to initiate the use of smokeless tobacco
- Substance use: By 8th grade, compared to students in the control communities, students from CTC communities were:
 - 23% less likely to use alcohol in the past 30 days
 - 49% less likely to use smokeless tobacco in the past 30 days
 - 37% less likely to have engaged in binge drinking in the past two weeks
- Delinquent behaviors: In 8th grade, students from CTC communities committed 31% fewer different delinquent behaviors than students in the control communities.

Program Costs:

All CTC training materials are available for download free of charge from CSAP's Prevention Platform at <http://communitiesthatcare.net/>. Installing the CTC system requires an on-site community coordinator to manage the CTC coalition; administration, analysis and reporting of the CTC Youth Survey; and trainer costs for the six CTC trainings. Additionally, communities need to cover the costs of the prevention programs selected for implementation through the CTC process.

The information for this fact sheet was excerpted from:

Hawkins, J.D., Brown, E.C., Oesterle, S., Arthur, M.W., Abbott, R.D., & Catalano, R.F. (2008). Early effects of Communities That Care on targeted risks and initiation of delinquent behavior and substance use. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 53*, 15-22.

Hawkins, JD, Oesterle, S, Brown, EC, Arthur, MW, Abbott, RD, Fagan, AA, & RF Catalano. (2009). Results of a type 2 translational research trial to prevent adolescent drug use and delinquency: A test of Communities That Care. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*.

For more information and materials: <http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/features/ctc/resources.aspx>

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