



EVIDENCE-BASED PREVENTION

A practical guide to evidence-based strategies that reduce opioid and stimulant misuse, for coalitions and prevention professionals in Connecticut.

5

EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES IN
THIS GUIDE

SPF

THE 5-STEP STRATEGIC
PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

4

LEVELS ADDRESSED, INDIVIDUAL
TO SOCIETY

Fidelity

IMPLEMENT WITH FIDELITY FOR
REAL RESULTS

WHAT ARE EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES

Evidence-based prevention strategies are interventions that have been rigorously evaluated and shown to reduce substance use, delay initiation, or lessen its consequences. They are grounded in theory, supported by data, and deliver results when implemented with fidelity.¹

Effective prevention takes a comprehensive, multi-level approach across the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels, and coalitions adapt these strategies to local needs (the [National Institute on Drug Abuse, NIDA](#)).²

THE STRATEGIC PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

The [Strategic Prevention Framework](#) (SPF) guides practitioners through a data-driven, culturally responsive planning cycle, with cultural competence and sustainability woven throughout. The [Prevention Training and Technical Assistance Service Center \(TTASC\)](#) offers an [SPF 101 course](#) and a printable [SPF checklist](#).³



THE FIVE STEPS

- **Assess** local needs, resources, and readiness.
- **Build capacity** by mobilizing partners and funding.
- **Plan** with strategies matched to your data.
- **Implement** with fidelity to what works.
- **Evaluate** outcomes and refine.

Woven through every step: cultural competence and sustainability, shown at the center of the wheel.

FIVE EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES

No single strategy solves the crisis. These five work best layered together, and each can be piloted locally.

1. Youth engagement

Youth as partners, not problems.

- Involve young people in program design, delivery, and evaluation, not just as an audience.
- Use peer advocates, youth-adult partnerships, and youth councils with real decision-making power.
- Peer-led education and overdose-prevention messaging reach other youth and reduce stigma.
- TTASC tool: [Youth Engagement Strategy Guide](#).

3. Environmental & enforcement strategies

Change the conditions around use.

- Prescription [take-back events](#) and drop boxes remove unused medications from homes.
- Access-focused enforcement reduces availability: retail compliance checks (alcohol, tobacco, and vape), social host law education, shoulder-tap operations against third-party sales, driving-under-the-influence (DUI) checkpoints, and preventing fake identification (fake IDs).
- [Good Samaritan laws](#) protect people who call 911 during an overdose.
- TTASC tool: [Enforcement Strategy Guide](#).

2. Social norms marketing

Correct misperceptions with data.

- Teens who overestimate peer substance use are more likely to use themselves.
- Social norms campaigns share accurate local data showing most youth do not use.
- Correcting misperceptions can measurably reduce risky patterns.
- TTASC tools: [Social Norms Marketing Guide](#) and [Prevention Storytelling for Impact](#).

4. Prescriber education & PDMPs

Safer prescribing, fewer leftover pills.

- The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) 2022 prescribing guideline](#) recommends the lowest effective dose and short supplies for acute pain.
- Avoid co-prescribing opioids with benzodiazepines when possible.
- Connecticut's [Prescription Monitoring Program](#), the state Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP), helps clinicians spot risky patterns.

5. Family & parent education

Equip the adults closest to youth.

- Parents are the leading influence on youth choices; skills-based programs work ("[Talk. They Hear You.](#)").
- See the companion TTASC guide, [A Parent's Guide to Opioid Use Prevention](#).
- Pair education with safe storage, disposal, and naloxone access at home.

KEY MESSAGES FOR PREVENTION PROFESSIONALS

COMPREHENSIVE AND ADAPTABLE

Layer multiple evidence-based strategies for overlapping protection, and adapt them to local culture using the SPF.

YOUTH ARE PARTNERS

Move beyond tokenism and give young people real decision-making authority.

DATA DRIVES DECISIONS

Assess needs, monitor fidelity, evaluate outcomes, and refine.

OVERDOSE PREVENTION IS EVERYONE'S JOB

[Naloxone](#), [fentanyl test strips](#), and syringe services save lives, and success depends on cross-sector partnerships.

PREVENTION RESOURCES & SUPPORTS

CT DMHAS & RBHAOs

CONNECTICUT

Prevention support, naloxone, and training from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) and [Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations \(RBHAOs\)](#).
portal.ct.gov/dmhas

Drug Free CT

CONNECTICUT

Prevention resources, naloxone, and fentanyl test strips.
drugfreect.org

CT Prescription Monitoring Program

CONNECTICUT

State PDMP for safer controlled-substance prescribing.
portal.ct.gov/dcp

TTASC Strategy Guides & Tools

CONNECTICUT

SPF 101 plus the full library of evidence-based strategy guides (youth engagement, social marketing, enforcement, and more).
preventiontrainingcenter.org/tools

SAMHSA Prevention & SPF

NATIONAL

Strategic Prevention Framework and resources from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
samhsa.gov/prevention

CADCA & Blueprints

NATIONAL

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) training, plus the [Blueprints](#) program registry and [NIDA principles](#).
cadca.org

SOURCES & FURTHER READING

¹ [NIDA](#), Preventing Drug Use: research-based principles. ² CDC, socio-ecological model of risk and protective factors. ³ [SAMHSA](#), Strategic Prevention Framework; [TTASC SPF 101 training](#) and [strategy tools](#). ⁴ [CADCA](#); TTASC strategy guides: [youth engagement](#), [social marketing](#), [enforcement](#). ⁵ Perkins & Berkowitz, social norms approach; TTASC [Prevention Storytelling for Impact](#). ⁶ U.S. [CDC](#), 2022 Clinical Practice Guideline for Prescribing Opioids; CT [PMP](#). ⁷ [SAMHSA](#), "Talk. They Hear You."; [CT Good Samaritan Law](#).



Developed by TTASC in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services. For education only, and not a substitute for professional medical advice.