

COMMUNITY WELLNESS TOOL

HOW DOES MY COMMUNITY SUPPORT HEALTHY DECISIONS ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE?

Substance abuse or misuse has been an issue in many Vermont communities. One thing that helps to reduce early use among kids is how they perceive adult use and the norms in their community. Things like lots of advertising for alcohol at stores or smoking at public events, can give kids the misperception that use of alcohol or cigarettes is safe and everyone does it. If we are aware of the messages our community is sending to youth it can help us think about changes that could improve outcomes for everyone!

This tool can be used to help identify things in your community that may have an impact on substance use and misuse problems, such as underage drinking, binge drinking, tobacco use, marijuana use, prescription drug misuse, etc.

 Completing it with a child can be a great way to start a discussion with youth about substance use and abuse. The more they are aware of the community norms and influences around them, the better they will get at making their own healthy choices in spite of outside influences.

This is not meant to be done at home! Don't try to answer the questions from memory. Walk, bike, drive, whatever works for you - but get out and really look closely at the community as you fill in the answers. You may be surprised by the things you never noticed before.

If you have a big community and can't get to all of it, try to just go to at least 3 types of different areas in the community (e.g: a residential area, a commercial area, and around a school(s)).

This is just a starting place. There are MANY additional community factors that influence substance use and abuse rates. We encourage you to think more about what they are and add in additional things you noticed on your own at the end!

COMMUNITY SCAN TOOL

DOES MY COMMUNITY SUPPORT HEALTHY DECISIONS ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE?

Answer the questions below about the community you live in.

Community: _____ Date: _____ Scan completed by: _____

	Bars	Restaurants	Liquor Stores	Convenience Stores	Grocery Stores	Pharmacy	Other
Check the places in your community where alcohol is sold							
Check the places in your community where tobacco is sold							

- Does the community have tobacco or vape shops? (A tobacco or vape shop specializes in selling tobacco products/paraphernalia). Yes No
 - If yes, how many?
- Does the community have stores that carry a large number of products that can be used for alcohol or drug use (e.g. glass pipes) or have products with drug related references or images (e.g. clothing with marijuana leaves or pill bottles on them, large shot glass display, etc.)
- Do the alcohol outlets sell alco-pops? (An "alco-pop" is a flavored malt-beverage, usually with high sugar content, often with a similar design to soda/juice.) Yes Most of them No Unsure
- Are the alco-pops displayed near other similar non-alcoholic beverages, candy, or gum? Yes No
- Are the tobacco products (including e-cigarettes/vaping devices) within 3 feet of candy or gum? Yes No Unsure
- Are there locations where there are 3 or more places that sell alcohol or tobacco in a 1 block area? Yes No Unsure
- Are there community events where alcohol or other drug use is largely promoted (e.g. festivals, parades, sporting events) or the event is sponsored by an alcohol distributor? Yes No Unsure
 - If yes, what are they?
- Are there open community events where alcohol or other drug use is prohibited? Yes No Unsure
 - If yes, what are they?
- Are there open community events where tobacco use is prohibited? Yes No Unsure
 - If yes, what are they?

10. Is there town/city owned property, such as a public park or beach, where alcohol is sold?
11. Is there town/city owned property, such as a public park or beach, where tobacco is sold?
12. Is there town/city owned property, such as a public park or beach, where alcohol use is prohibited? If yes, does it have clear signage?
13. Is there town/city owned property, such as a public park or beach, where tobacco use is prohibited? If yes, does it have clear signage?
14. Are there alcohol or tobacco outlets located within 1000 feet of a school or youth center? If yes, do they have advertising outside? Does it light up?

**If yes, go inside. Does it also have a lot of alcohol or tobacco promotion inside? Is any of it 3 feet or less from the floor? Also check out the height of ads on the front door.*
15. Are discarded alcohol cans and bottles often seen in public places (e.g., parks, trails, parking lots)?
16. Does the community have a Prescription Drug Disposal site? (A place you can disposal of unused or expired prescription medications for free. Usually located at police departments, pharmacies, or health care centers.)
17. Do you see alcohol, tobacco, cannabis or other substance related advertisements often in the community (e.g. on kiosks, in the local paper, on public transportation)?
18. Additional notes - Is there anything else you noticed while out in the community that you think is important to include?

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Did you learn anything that was a surprise for you?

Is there anything you would like to see change about your community to help support healthy choices related to substance use?
