

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING ROAD MAP

COMMUNITIES THAT HEAL PHASE 5



In Phase 5, coalitions will work with partners to develop implementation plans and implement selected ORCCA strategies. During this implementation phase, coalition members and partners will monitor progress, share lessons learned, and obtain technical assistance as needed. Coalitions will also work to expand and monitor communication campaign activities.

This set of Road Maps is designed for individuals working to address the opioid crisis, including community coalition members, treatment providers, recovery support specialists, policymakers, and those with lived and living experience. It aims to support the creation of new coalitions or the reimagining of existing ones to enhance prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and recovery efforts in their communities.

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Key Terms and Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
The Communities That HEAL (CTH) Intervention	An intervention that collaborated with community coalitions to develop data-driven plans and implement evidence-based strategies—such as overdose education and naloxone distribution, medications for opioid use disorder, and safer prescribing—to reduce opioid overdose deaths.
Evidence-based strategies	Interventions that have been shown, through research and evaluation, to be effective in changing people’s knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors to improve social and health outcomes.
Intervention	In a research study, an intervention is when researchers introduce or apply a change—such as a treatment, program, or method—to observe how it affects the participants or outcomes.
Medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD)	Medications that are U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved for the treatment of opioid use disorder. They are often used in combination with counseling and other behavioral therapies and include buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone in different formulations.
Naloxone	A medication that can reverse an opioid-related overdose. It can be given as a nasal spray (Narcan®) or injected into the muscle, under the skin, or into the veins.
Opioid-Overdose Reduction Continuum of Care Approach (ORCCA)	A set of evidence-based strategies aimed at reducing overdose deaths. It is organized into three categories: opioid overdose education and naloxone distribution, medications for opioid use disorder, and safer prescribing practices.
Overdose education and naloxone distribution (OEND)	Overdose education programs train and empower people to recognize and administer naloxone to someone who they suspect may be overdosing. Overdose education programs can be coupled with naloxone distribution with the goal of making naloxone more accessible and available in communities.
Safe Disposal	In the ORCCA, safer disposal refers to strategies that encourage proper discarding of unused, expired, or unwanted opioid medications to prevent accidental poisoning. Safer disposal practices include drug take-back events, permanent drug drop kiosks, and take-home disposal mechanisms.
Safer Prescribing	In the ORCCA, safer prescribing refers to strategies that promote responsible and effective opioid prescribing practices. These include training prescribers and pharmacists to manage patients with chronic pain safely and providing education on opioid safety to healthcare professionals and patients.



Overview

Phase 5 Activities

- Develop implementation plans for selected evidence-based strategies.
- Implement ORCCA evidence-based strategies.
- Share lessons and resources.
- Monitor communication campaign activities in partnership with your coalition.

Activity 5.1: Develop Initial Implementation Plans for Selected Evidence-Based Strategies

Timeline: 2 to 3 months*



This activity involves building on the action plans developed under Phase 4 to detail how partner organizations will execute the specific evidence-based strategies they agree to implement, with support from coalitions. Implementation plans should be developed for each community's selected/prioritized ORCCA strategy and can be developed at the intervention site or organizational level.

Depending on the pace of the staggered development for the action plans in Phase 4, some action planning may continue alongside Phase 5 implementation planning.

Examples of partner organizations may include the following:

- Residential reentry centers and community-based correctional facilities
- Harm reduction programs
- Clinics that provide services to individuals regardless of their ability to pay
- Pharmacies
- Substance use treatment and recovery facilities
- Community-based social service agencies

* Timelines are estimates based on the HEALing Communities Study; please note that activities may take longer depending on the level of community support, local policies, and availability of resources.

Approach

Implementation plans should be developed for your coalition's selected ORCCA strategies. Coalitions may develop a single implementation plan that covers all selected strategies or separate implementation plans for each strategy.

Roles that your coalition can play:

- Introduce partner organizations to your overall approach and selected evidence-based strategies for reducing opioid overdoses.
- Share updates on action planning activities to date.
- Collaborate on the development of implementation plans.

Implementation plans should:

- Define clear milestones and checkpoints throughout the implementation timeline to assess progress and make necessary adjustments.
- Define the implementation roles of the partner organizations and staff supporting implementation, and coalition; example role descriptions that can be adapted for implementation plans are provided below.
- Specify resource commitments to support implementation of evidence-based strategies.
- Include a discussion of potential sustainability strategies (see Phase 6 for more detail on sustainability planning).
- Include planned approaches to reach and promote equitable outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and other people of color and other groups experiencing fatal opioid overdose-related inequities.



Possible Roles and Responsibilities of Partner Agencies

- Hire staff to support implementation of evidence-based strategies.
- Work to coordinate and promote relevant training for providers and staff.
- Address stigma and cultural sensitivity with providers and staff to help promote a welcoming, service-oriented culture that will facilitate implementation of evidence-based strategies.
- Work with other organizations to expand access to services and enhance reach.
- Establish and adopt protocols to minimize risks, ensure safety, and respond to emergencies.
- Identify and support efforts to address secondary goals, including prevention, recovery, and rehabilitation of people affected by opioid use disorder and the psychosocial needs of affected individuals, families, and communities.
- Share or coordinate with specific outreach efforts to distribute campaign materials and assets to specific priority groups.
- Participate in communication campaigns by posting on social media platforms; securing free media coverage; distributing print materials; or sponsoring or authoring op-ed pieces, letters to the editor, and articles in local media and small media outlets (for example, bulletins, newsletters, email lists).
- Facilitate and participate in community educational forums and events to raise awareness and reduce stigma regarding opioid use and available treatments among providers, local political and civic leaders, and the public.
- Plan for sustainability and expansion.

Identify Partner Organization Champions

As you finalize your partner organizations for each evidence-based strategy, consider identifying “champions” within these organizations. Champions help lead the implementation of the selected evidence-based strategies. Because of their important role, champions should be people with influence or authority in their organizations. They could be providers, clinical leaders, or senior administrators. This role can also be shared by two or more staff members or across connected partner organizations if necessary. Partner organization leads may also be the same individuals at the organization who serve as champions for OEND, MOUD, or safer opioid prescribing.



Activity 5.2: Implement ORCCA Evidence-Based Strategies

Timeline: 9 to 11 months*



Using implementation plans as a guide, coalitions and partner organizations will implement selected evidence-based strategies. Implementation resources for each evidence-based strategy are available in the [Opioid-Overdose Reduction Continuum of Care Approach Practice Guide](#). As partner organizations monitor and learn from implementation efforts, they may identify opportunities to improve the implementation of evidence-based strategies and can work to modify implementation plans as needed.

Approach

During the intervention, your partner organizations will cycle through implementing, monitoring, and refining evidence-based strategies.

Roles that your coalition can play:

- Facilitate opportunities for partner organization leaders to present implementation updates to the coalition.
- Monitor implementation efforts and offer constructive feedback.
- Review and share available data on outcomes.

Review the action plan:

As your coalition continues to engage and collaborate with partner organizations and their teams, it may be necessary to document any adjustments or changes in the action plan. Coalitions and partner organizations should work together to identify necessary refinements and keep key partners informed of updates to the action plan. You should review and revise the action plan at least yearly.

Examples of changes to the action plan:

- **New partners:** Add new organizations that are responsible for, or play a key role in, implementing strategies.
- **Adapting specific activities:** Refine activities for your strategies to better match the capabilities and practices of partner organizations.
- **Updating Timelines:** Extend timelines to allow for training new partner organizations or their champions.

* Timelines are estimates based on the HEALing Communities Study; please note that activities may take longer depending on the level of community support, local policies, and availability of resources.



Activity 5.3: Share Lessons and Resources

Timeline: 9 to 11 months*



Coalition members will troubleshoot implementation problems with partner organizations and provide technical assistance (TA) as needed to facilitate optimal implementation of evidence-based strategies. It is important to also recognize that not all community coalitions are equipped to provide TA because of varying capacities and expertise. However, partner organizations within these networks can play a vital role by sharing lessons learned and exchanging TA resources, fostering collaboration and mutual growth. This collective approach strengthens the coalition's overall impact and reach.

Approach

Coalition members involved in supporting the implementation of evidence-based strategies play a crucial role in ensuring smooth, effective adoption. They work closely with partner organizations to identify and address any obstacles that may arise during implementation.

Roles that your coalition can play:

- Conduct regular check-ins with partner organizations to proactively identify challenges and areas needing improvement.
- Offer tailored TA or facilitate joint knowledge-sharing sessions as feasible, such as hands-on training sessions, resources, and guidance, to enhance partner organizations' ability to implement evidence-based strategies effectively.
- Identify members with ORCCA-related expertise who can address partner organizations' training and TA needs.
- Facilitate peer-to-peer learning opportunities within the coalition, allowing members to share best practices, lessons learned, and strategies to overcome common implementation barriers.

* Timelines are estimates based on the HEALing Communities Study; please note that activities may take longer depending on the level of community support, local policies, and availability of resources.

- Provide ongoing feedback and encouragement to foster a collaborative and adaptive environment focused on continuous improvement.
- Assist in evaluating the effectiveness of TA provided and adjusting support strategies as necessary to meet the evolving needs of partner organizations.

By serving as troubleshooters and TA providers, coalition members can significantly contribute to sustaining the successful implementation of evidence-based strategies, supporting partners in meeting their goals and achieving positive outcomes.

Revisiting and Revising Evidence-Based Strategies

Partner organizations may experience implementation challenges that indicate a particular strategy is not as feasible as anticipated, or data dashboards may indicate the evidence-based strategy is less impactful than initially expected. In these cases, partner organizations and coalitions may work together to repeat evidence-based strategy selection steps from Phase 4 to identify alternative strategies—this involves updating action and implementation plans as needed.





Activity 5.4: Monitor Communication Campaign Activities in Partnership with Your Coalition

Timeline: 11 months*



The CTH intervention also included a series of health communication campaigns developed within the communities themselves, aimed at promoting implementation of evidence-based strategies, increasing demand for OEND and MOUD, and reducing stigma toward people with OUD.

This activity provides guidance on implementing this in your community.

Review the [HEALing Communities Study communication campaign materials](#) for your community. The communication campaign objects are to:

- **Reduce stigma.** Make your community a judgment-free zone that supports people with opioid use disorder throughout their recovery.
- **Encourage treatment.** Remove treatment barriers and improve access to care so people can get the help they need.
- **Provide naloxone to reverse opioid overdoses.** Save lives by stocking naloxone at your organization and training staff to use it in the event of an opioid overdose.

During Phase 5, coalitions can actively monitor and evaluate the communication campaign building on strategies outlined in Activity 3.5. This includes regularly assessing campaign effectiveness, ensuring the message reaches and resonates with the target audience, and adjusting tactics as needed to stay aligned with community needs and goals. Tracking progress, evaluating audience engagement, and making evidence-based adjustments allows the coalition to maximize impact, measure behavioral changes, and adapt the campaign for sustained relevance and success.

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However, as a coalition, there may be limited resources or staff capacity to conduct a comprehensive evaluation. In these cases, focusing on high-priority aspects, such as audience awareness and key behavior shifts, can provide valuable insights while balancing workload constraints. Regular adjustments based on this feedback can still strengthen the campaign's effectiveness and relevance.

Approach

Assessing Progress of Communication Campaign

Coalition campaign planners should meet at least once a month to ensure that campaign activities are on track, including meeting timelines and making progress on key milestones.

As developed during Phase 2, distribution plans will include performance measures for monitoring, such as metrics for the use of paid and unpaid social media, other media placements, print distribution of materials, op-eds, feature news stories (print or digital), outdoor media, and other channels. Metrics typically include the number of placements or copies distributed for each type of material. Building sustainable communication campaigns is essential for ensuring long-term impact, adaptability, and relevance in addressing complex issues like opioid overdose prevention. Evaluating these campaigns plays a crucial role in this process by providing insights into their effectiveness, identifying areas for improvement, and ensuring that messaging evolves based on evidence and community needs. [Playbook 7: Building Sustainable Opioid Overdose Communications Beyond HCS](#) offers some tools to help communities maintain and enhance the communications infrastructure related to opioid messaging and how to sustain the communication campaign efforts.

Communication champions, subgroups, and other coalition members can come together periodically to review and track distribution activities and metrics.

Performance Measures to Monitor¹

1. **Campaign Implementation:** Track progress on planned activities, timelines, and delivery quality.
2. **Audience Awareness and Exposure:** Assess the level of campaign awareness, message retention, and audience reach.
3. **Behavioral Changes:** Monitor targeted behavior shifts within the audience over time.
4. **Population-Level Outcomes:** Evaluate long-term changes at the population level related to the campaign's goals.
5. **Impact of Campaign Components:** Analyze how specific campaign elements contribute to behavior and outcome improvements.

¹ Adapted from Community Tool Box. (n.d.). *Implementing social marketing*. University of Kansas. <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/implement-social-marketing-effort>.

Guided Discussion Prompts for Assessing Communication Campaign

What worked well during the campaign?

Consider both process and outcomes.

Process: What strategies or activities reached the intended audience?

Outcomes: What strategies or activities were more successful?

What could have been improved?

Consider both process and outcomes.

Process: What strategies or activities did not reach the intended audience?

Outcomes: What strategies or activities were less successful?

What other materials and resources would have helped?

Where could you have used more support or advice?

What materials and resources were most helpful? Examples include campaign toolbox, social media toolkits, and ad customization tools.

Lessons learned: What would you want other communities to know before launching a similar campaign?

Metrics and outcomes: What were the results of this campaign?

Celebrate Successes and Ongoing Adjustments to the Communication Campaign¹

Recognizing achievements, big or small, fosters a culture of encouragement and motivation. After putting in hard work, take time to celebrate and reflect on the dedication and progress made. Acknowledging these efforts is not just about achieving major goals; it reinforces a shared commitment to positive change. Celebrations help reinforce teamwork, boost morale, and remind everyone of the value in striving to improve their community. This ongoing recognition builds resilience, inspiring continued contributions and energizing future initiatives. Embrace each step as part of a meaningful journey worth celebrating.

Refining the Communication Campaign

Communication campaigns succeed by remaining responsive to environmental shifts and leveraging the flexibility to adapt effectively.

Your coalition should consider several factors:

- **Demographics:** Changing neighborhood dynamics require targeted messaging.
- **Consumer preferences:** Issues once critical may lose prominence, so campaigns should stay relevant. For instance, focus on particular substances—like opioids or other drugs—may change with evolving patterns and trends.
- **Social memory:** Younger generations may lack historical context for certain issues.
- **Communication channels:** Adapt to preferred media channels, such as digital platforms, to connect with target audiences.

Monitoring a communication campaign’s progress involves evaluating the quality and reach of the message to its intended audience. As the campaign evolves, it may be necessary to adjust the message or delivery method to maintain audience engagement. Additionally, revisiting the approach and adapting based on audience needs can help promote the desired behavior change more effectively.

What’s Next:

In Phase 6, you will be creating a sustainability plan led by your coalition.



¹ Adapted from Community Tool Box. (n.d.). *Implementing social marketing*. University of Kansas. <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/implement-social-marketing-effort>.