

Healthy Start Grantee Perspectives

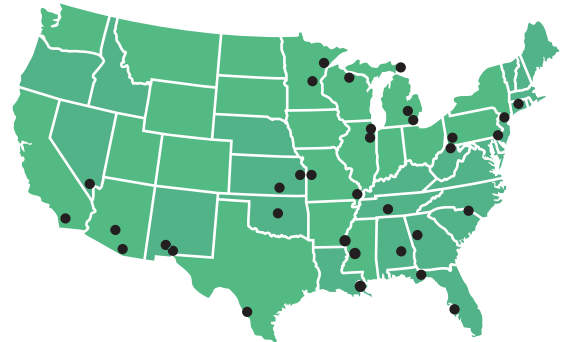
Alcohol and Substance Exposed Pregnancies

The Alcohol and Substance Exposed Pregnancy Prevention (AStEPP) Initiative works to increase Healthy Start grantees' understanding of the impacts of fetal exposure to alcohol and other drugs, strengthen their capacity to engage in effective prevention and early identification, and help them to build behavioral health referral and treatment networks. AStEPP seeks to build upon successful program activities and address identified gaps by providing training and technical assistance on behavioral health topics.

9 DISCUSSION GROUPS held between March and November of 2017

65 REPRESENTATIVES from 35 Native American, Border, Community Health Center, Rural, and Urban Healthy Start grantees

Grantees pooled their collective knowledge of and experience with participant substance use and behavioral health factors. Among the substances of concern were **alcohol, opioids, tobacco, marijuana, crack, methamphetamines ("meth"), and MDMA ("Molly").**



Key Themes From All Discussions



MENTAL HEALTH

People with mental health disorders, such as depression and anxiety, are more likely than those without to experience an alcohol or substance use disorder.

We have always screened for depression, and have developed a network of providers to provide services once someone is identified as at risk.

—RURAL GRANTEE

SUBSTANCE USE DISCLOSURE

Participants are reluctant to report substance use due to stigma, fear of legal consequences, and lack of trust.

We use motivational interviewing and focus on building a relationship with clients. Clients must feel comfortable and trusting or they won't be as forthcoming with information. Over time, we find that clients are more likely and willing to open up.

—URBAN GRANTEE



ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES

Factors in a participant's surroundings contribute to substance use, such as relationships that enable use, intimate partner violence, physical and social isolation, and poverty.

When entire families have substance use problems, quitting can be much more difficult. Asking her to leave her support system is not realistic, but we let her know that being around people who are using will make it more of a challenge to be successful.

—NATIVE AMERICAN GRANTEE



KNOWLEDGE OF SUBSTANCE USE

There is limited understanding around the signs of and risks associated with substance use. This is leading to the acceptance of substance use as normal behavior and participants not being diagnosed.

We are sometimes not aware of all of the side effects of certain substances. It will be nice to receive that extra education, so that we are doing our best with our moms.

—COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER GRANTEE



INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

Cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over one's lifespan and across generations, stem from massive group trauma experiences. This trauma can put affected participants at-risk for substance use if it is not understood and addressed.*

We are working to address the root causes of substance abuse on the reservation, and recognize that we must include trauma in every policy consideration and decision that we make.

—NATIVE AMERICAN GRANTEE



LACK OF ACCESS TO CARE

Participants have insufficient access to comprehensive, high quality care services, due to lack of adequate insurance, available services, culturally or linguistically appropriate care, and limited awareness of available resources.

This means that all of our Healthy Start participants are provided a care coordinator to help provide that link between primary care and making sure they adhere to medical appointments, etc.

—COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER GRANTEE



What is the AStEPP Initiative Doing?



Conducts Webinars



Offers Technical Assistance



Provides Mental Health First Aid



Disseminates Resources



Provides Skills Building



Facilitates Discussion Groups

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