

PLANNING VIRTUAL NATIONAL PREVENTION WEEK ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

There are many creative, engaging ways to host National Prevention Week activities and events when you don't have the space or budget to host an in-person event.

Here are ideas for how you can host an activity or event virtually and provide discussions and public education opportunities for your community using a range of tools and platforms.

However you participate in National Prevention Week, share your virtual activity and event plans with us through the Community Events and Activities Form and post updates, photos, and videos on social media using hashtag **#NationalPreventionWeek24**.

1. **Share #MyPreventionStory on social media.** #MyPreventionStory is a way for us to acknowledge our mental health and substance misuse prevention experiences.

Year-round, we encourage individuals and organizations to create and [share a prevention story](#) on social media—whether it's telling how they are helping to prevent substance use or sharing the ways they're promoting mental health. Be a part of the national conversation that celebrates prevention by using the hashtag **#MyPreventionStory!**

2. **Organize a substance misuse prevention resource fair on your website or blog.** Create a webpage or blog post that showcases prevention resources that are in your community or available through SAMHSA and other federal organizations.

As part of the online event, consider adding a virtual “creative jam,” where local artists and young people can share their prevention stories and art through webcast. Pre-selected artists can join via video to share and to showcase their art, which can also be shared on social media to promote National Prevention Week.

3. **Host an interactive virtual panel discussion or “Ask Me Anything” session.** Talk about substance misuse prevention or create an opportunity for viewers to ask questions and contribute to expert panel discussions. Get inspired by reading (or watching) some of the **Communities Talk** Success Stories and see if you can make similar things happen at your virtual event.
4. **Host a X (Twitter) chat about prevention topics.** Your topic could be suicide prevention, youth marijuana use prevention, or opioid misuse prevention. Invite local stakeholders, such as faith-based organizations, parks and recreation departments, and school boards to participate and share their insights and resources. If available, representatives from local first responder agencies, such as police or medical professionals, can be great resources.



5. **Share a “must-watch” list of films, TV shows, and documentaries about substance misuse prevention.** Create and share this list on your website, blog, or social media profiles. Host an online watch party and encourage supporters to watch a certain production on each day of National Prevention Week. Discuss the production on social media using **#NationalPreventionWeek24**.
6. **Ask local musicians and performers to livestream a performance that includes a public service announcement on substance misuse prevention.** Use Facebook Live or Instagram Live to livestream the performance. While the music will draw your audience in, the substance misuse prevention information in the public service announcement will leave them more informed and inspired to take action.
7. **Create and share memes or data visualizations on social media with substance misuse prevention data and information.** Distribute the memes and data visualizations widely and encourage people to post and share them as well. Some of these can be found on the National Prevention Week website!
8. **Develop a “Prevention Tip of the Day” or “Prevention Question of the Day” and share it on social media.** Encourage supporters to share their perspectives on the tip or question and facilitate an informal dialogue about that prevention topic. You can also use the polling features in X (Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram Stories to quiz your followers.
9. **Connect with community groups that are hosting virtual events and sign-on to co-host.** Make connections with local faith community leaders, policymakers, and school leaders and deliver a speech or presentation about substance misuse prevention during their existing virtual activities or events.
10. **Create a prevention lesson plan for local K–12 educators in your community.** They can use the lesson plan to talk about substance misuse prevention with students during National Prevention Week or throughout the year. Consider reaching out to your local board of education to engage high school teachers and counselors to see if they are open to adding underage drinking prevention activities to their new virtual curriculums. Explore the “Talk. They Hear You.” discussion starter guides and the Substance Misuse Prevention for Young Adults Guide to get ideas and find helpful resources.

Glossary of Techniques and Tools for Hosting Virtual National Prevention Week Activities and Events

Use the following techniques and tools to start discussions and increase understanding about substance misuse prevention and participate virtually in National Prevention Week

ONLINE MEETINGS AND WEBINARS

- **Definition:** Online meetings are interactive sessions with lots of audience participation and are great for smaller groups. Webinars are ideal for presentations to large audiences and events that are open to the public with no expectation of interaction between attendees. Both online meetings and webinars could use video or presentation slides as visuals.
- **Benefits:** Online meeting and webinar platforms allow attendees to gather without traveling or appearing in-person to a physical location. These online events can replicate much of the face-to-face interaction of meeting in person, anywhere and using any device. By using video feeds during meetings and webinars, participants can see each other—especially during smaller meetings—and easily contribute during discussions. Through most meeting and webinar platforms, events can be recorded and shared later with people who were unable to attend or would benefit from the content at a later date.
- **Event Idea:** Host a **Communities Talk** virtual event using a webinar platform to mobilize your community to prevent underage drinking. Invite representatives from different aspects of the community—including law enforcement, elected officials, youth, faith-based organizations, businesses, schools, parent groups, health care professionals, and local colleges and universities—to participate in a panel discussion followed by a question-and-answer session with participants. Get inspired by reading (or watching) some of the **Communities Talk** Success Stories and see if you can make similar things happen in your virtual event.



- **Platform Options:** Zoom, Cisco Webex, Skype, Amazon Chime, or GoToMeeting, among others.
- **Tips:**
 - Enable question-and-answer sessions to encourage attendees to ask questions throughout the session and designate the moderator to pose the questions to the speakers or panelists.
 - Always prepare a few questions in advance in case the audience questions are slow to arrive.
 - Use polling questions to assess how the meeting or webinar is going, what your audience is most interested in, and what their understanding is of the topic being discussed.
 - If using presentation slides, limit the amount of text on each slide and include relevant visuals to keep the presentation interesting and engaging for the audience.

X (Twitter) Chats

- **Definition:** X chats are public conversations on X (formally known as Twitter) organized around a specific topic. These moderated discussions take place at a set time and connect people by using a unique or designated hashtag.
- **Benefits:** These chats are open, public conversation that offer access to hundreds or even thousands of Twitter users to engage and discuss a desired topic, such as substance misuse prevention. Similar to holding an in-person town hall event, the conversation is guided by a facilitator and organized by questions shared in individual tweets with a designated hashtag. Participants respond by commenting on tweets or sharing their own tweet with the same hashtag.
- **Activity Idea:** Host a chat during National Prevention Week to discuss the benefits of substance misuse prevention. Or, start a chat to promote **#MyPreventionStory** to understand what prevention means to your community.
- **Tips:**
 - Select a hashtag that is unique, relevant, memorable, and not too long, i.e., **#NationalPreventionWeek24**.
 - Make sure that your hashtag is not affiliated with a different, existing conversation on Twitter to reduce confusion for your chat participants.
 - Promote the date and time in advance across all social media platforms, websites, blogs, and email newsletters. Share reminders on Twitter for when the chat will begin.
 - Send out invites to followers and influencers who you know will engage.
 - Organize questions by number (i.e., Q1, Q2, Q3, and so on) and encourage participants to respond with the same format—A1, A2, A3.
 - Moderators need to keep the conversation moving by responding to replies, posing follow-up questions, and sharing insightful comments.

Livestreaming

- **Definition:** Livestreaming is using features in an online platform, such as Facebook or Instagram, that enable someone to start a video feed that followers can watch and engage with in real time.
- **Benefits:** It allows the host to create connections with audiences who can see your organization in a candid way, helping your organization seem more personable and making your message relatable. Hosting a livestream makes social media posts interactive and allows for more natural conversations than you can achieve by using edited videos or photos. Followers receive notifications when your account goes live so they can immediately tune in to the broadcast when it starts.
- **Platform Options:** Facebook Live, Instagram Live, Twitch, YouTube, or even Zoom.
- **Activity Idea:** Use livestreaming to create panel discussions or “Ask Me Anything”-type events to talk about a specific topic, i.e., preventing illicit drugs, or facilitate questions from the audiences for panel experts to answer.



- **Tips:**
 - When hosting a livestream, it is important to plan and promote it, so users know the broadcast is coming.
 - It is always important to plan what you want to feature and how you will show it ahead of time.
 - Before you go live, shoot a practice video, and check it for sound quality and disruptions in your internet connection.
 - Engage with viewers by answering their questions and responding to their comments.
 - Always post the video immediately after broadcasting. This way, if live viewers missed something because they came in halfway through, they'll be able to get the information they need on the replay.

Social Media Videos

- **Definition:** Short videos that are designed for quick watching on a mobile device and shared on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, X, and YouTube.
- **Benefits:** Social media videos have become an increasingly popular way to share messages in an engaging, compelling format.
- **Video creation/editing tools:** Lumen 5 or iMovie, if you have Mac.
- **Activity Idea:** Convert articles on your website and blog content about substance misuse prevention to produce short videos using online video production platforms, such as iMovie or Lumen 5. Share the videos with community partners for posting on their website and social media profiles.
- **Tips:**
 - Upload video content directly to each of your social media pages, rather than posting a link to another website with the video. Each social media site shares this type of content (often referred to as “native content”) with your followers more often.
 - Be sure to enable the autoplay feature to help boost engagement.
 - For all social media videos (other than story-type videos posted in Instagram and Facebook), use subtitles so a user can understand your video without audio.
 - The end of your video should guide the user to a desired action—whether it is an email sign-up, website click, or even a behavior change, like asking for help.
 - As you create video content, make sure it is optimized for vertical viewing on mobile devices.