

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES: Campaign Implementation Guide

## Purpose

This guide is a starting point for communities looking to implement the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) [“Talk. They Hear You.”® parent-focused national media campaign](#). The guide highlights resources and best practices for sharing the campaign in your community, including a brief history of the campaign, step-by-step process for implementation, and additional resources to aid your underage drinking prevention and substance use prevention efforts.

## About the Campaign

The goal of SAMHSA’s “Talk. They Hear You.” campaign is to provide parents and caregivers with the resources they need to address the issues of alcohol and other drugs with children under the age of 21. Specifically, the campaign seeks to:

1. Increase parents’ **awareness of the prevalence and risk** of underage drinking and substance use;
2. Equip parents with the **knowledge, skills, and confidence** to prevent underage drinking and substance use; and
3. Increase parents’ **actions to prevent underage drinking and substance use**.

Launched in 2013, the campaign’s original goal was to provide parents and caregivers with the resources they need to address the issue of alcohol with their children. However, in 2017—amid the nation’s opioid crisis and changes in laws regarding marijuana in a growing number of states across the country—the trademarked campaign received separate funding to expand content to include information on alcohol and other substances. Recognizing the dynamic national context, SAMHSA expanded “Talk. They Hear You.” to prepare parents and caregivers to talk with their children about alcohol and other drugs, including prescription pain medications and marijuana.

Historically, “Talk. They Hear You.” has focused on reaching parents and caregivers of children ages 9 to 15 for early intervention. In 2018, the campaign expanded this age range, and now includes resources for parents and caregivers of children under the age of 21.



Underage drinking and substance use remain national public health issues with serious implications, especially among adolescents. SAMHSA is responsible for leading public health efforts to reduce the impact of substance misuse and mental health disorders on American communities. “Talk. They Hear You.” responds to directives set forth in Section 2(d) of the Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act (STOP Act), requiring the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to fund and oversee a national adult-oriented media public service campaign and to report annually on the production, broadcasting, and evaluation of this campaign.

“Talk. They Hear You.” is recognized by the National Parent Teacher Association School of Excellence program.

## Campaign Products

“Talk. They Hear You.” offers products for coalitions, school staff members, public health departments, and other community groups to aid local, regional, and national alcohol and substance use prevention efforts. All materials share the common goal of empowering parents and caregivers to talk with their children early, and often, about alcohol and other drugs.

Below is an inventory of popular campaign products that may be used as-is or customized for use in your community, as outlined in the campaign’s Brand Guide.

- [:15-, :30-, and :60-second TV public service announcements \(PSAs\) \(YouTube and Web Files\)](#)
- [:30- and :60-second TV PSAs \(Broadcast Quality\)](#)
- [:15-, :30-, and :60-second Radio PSAs and Scripts](#)
- [Print PSAs \(available in the below sizes\)](#)
  - 3.5 x 2 inches (Wallet Card)
  - 4.75 x 4.75 inches (Square – Social Media)
  - 7 x 4.875 inches (Post Card)
  - 8.5 x 11 inches (Flyer)
- [Customizable Parent Resources \(i.e., brochures, fact sheets, etc.\)](#)
- [5 Conversation Goals Handout](#)
- [Campaign Backgrounder, Talking Points, and Infographics](#)

## Using the Campaign

### Step 1: Request a License Number

As a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), use of the “Talk. They Hear You.” name and logo is licensed to organizations wishing to adapt and implement the campaign locally.



To obtain a license for use of the campaign, submit a formal request to [underage.drinking@samhsa.gov](mailto:underage.drinking@samhsa.gov). Your request should include the name of the organization, contact information for one to two representatives, website URL, location (city/town and state), and a brief explanation for how you plan to implement the campaign.

Upon approval, you will receive an email verifying your license number. There is no cost to license the campaign. To aid in “Talk. They Hear You.” evaluation efforts, your organization may be asked questions pertaining to use of the campaign and its resources locally (e.g., How many times PSAs aired in your community, type and quantity of print products shared in your community, how many underage drinking events you held and what products you shared, etc.)

## Step 2: Develop a Plan to Use the Campaign

### *Define Your Audience*

The first step in developing a successful implementation plan is to define your target audience. In other words, who are you trying to reach with this campaign? Specificity is key. For example, if you’re planning to mostly share this campaign with parents of preteens or younger teenagers, you may decide that your target audience is parents of children ages 11–13.

### *Create Goals and Objectives*

Now that you know who your audience is, you will want to create goals and objectives to reference throughout your implementation process. Your goals and objectives will help measure the impact of the work you will do to share the campaign in your community.

Your goal(s) establish a general outcome you’d like to achieve by implementing the “Talk. They Hear You.” campaign. Objectives, however, should be more specific and directly tied to your planned evaluation of campaign implementation.

For example, your objectives should work toward the broader goal of reducing underage drinking and substance use in your community. With this in mind, you’ll need to establish measurable interim objectives that lead up to achieving this goal.

**Sample Goal:** Increase parents’ **awareness of the prevalence and risk** of underage drinking and substance use. [Note: This is also a goal of the national campaign.]

**Sample Objective:** To increase the percent of parents with children ages 11–13 in [Community] knowledgeable about the prevalence and risk of underage drinking and substance use by 10 percent by [Month Day, Year].

It’s important to remember to set objectives that are both specific and attainable. For example, if previous prevention efforts yielded little to no success with parents and caregivers in your community, it would be unattainable to aim for a 50 percent increase in awareness and



knowledge about the prevalence and risk of underage drinking and substance use among parents and caregivers in your community.

Additionally, objectives should be measurable when compared with baseline data. For the sample objective above, you might consider working with an evaluation specialist to do a pre- and post-implementation survey with your target audience.

### *Craft an Implementation Strategy*

Once goals and objectives are set, you can begin planning for implementation. Planning will include developing strategies to promote the campaign resources to your target audience, assigning roles for yourself or your team, and crafting a timeline for implementation. Your strategies should tie in to your specific objectives.

Following this guide’s previous example, one of your strategies might be to partner with your local middle school’s Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to host a presentation for parents and caregivers on the importance of talking with their children about avoiding alcohol and other drugs. The presentation may focus on the prevalence and risks of underage drinking and drug use, and you may consider sending parents and caregivers home with printed brochures or fact sheets from the campaign (e.g., “[5 Conversation Goals](#)” or “[Why You Should Talk With Your Child About Alcohol and Other Drugs](#)”). This –strategy is in line with the sample objective listed earlier in this guide to “increase the percent of parents with children ages 11–13 in [Community] knowledgeable about the prevalence and risk of underage drinking and substance use by 10 percent by [Month Day, Year].”

As you map out additional strategies to implement “Talk. They Hear You.” in your community, consider the time and level of effort involved for each strategy, and develop a timeline that includes specific dates for initial planning, pre-implementation preparations, day-of implementation activities, and post-implementation follow-up and evaluation efforts.

### *Evaluate Your Success*

After you have shared “Talk. They Hear You.” in your community, you will want to conduct evaluation activities and revisit your goals and objectives. You can use the baseline data you gathered and used for the goals- and objective-setting process to determine if you have achieved your desired results.

For example, below are a few questions to consider if you conducted a pre- and post-implementation evaluation to determine the percent change of parents with children ages 11–13 in [Community] knowledgeable about the prevalence and risk of underage drinking and substance use by [Month Day, Year]:



1. Did 10 percent more parents of children ages 11–13 in [Community] gain more knowledge about the prevalence and risk of underage drinking and substance use?
2. If so, did you meet this objective by the date originally proposed in your plan?

Download the TTHY Event Planning Toolkit and reference [SAMHSA’s Strategic Prevention Framework](#) for more specific planning and evaluation guidance for prevention practitioners.

### Step 3: Access and/or Customize Products

Organizations can download the “Talk. They Hear You.” products mentioned earlier in this guide from [www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov](http://www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov). Spanish-language products are also available at <https://www.samhsa.gov/hable-ellos-escuchan>.

Products may be used as-is or adapted to meet the needs of your community. Reference the campaign’s [Brand Guide](#) for more information on the campaign’s editorial style and how products can be customized.

Additionally, visit SAMHSA’s [YouTube channel](#) to explore the archive of “Talk. They Hear You.” community engagement meetings, which feature community-driven best practices for implementing the campaign across the country.

### Step 4: Share Your Success

Consider sharing campaign successes in your community with SAMHSA during and after implementation by emailing metrics and stories to [underage.drinking@samhsa.gov](mailto:underage.drinking@samhsa.gov). Quantifiable results are most useful to share, such as the number of brochures distributed, PSAs aired, etc. Your efforts might even be featured in the campaign’s newsletter, community engagement meetings, website, or annual report.

### Additional Resources

SAMHSA also produces resources on the prevalence of underage drinking and youth substance use, which may help with your community implementation planning or evaluation efforts.

- [National Survey on Drug Use and Health \(NSDUH\)](#)—NSDUH provides national and state-level data on the use of tobacco, alcohol, illicit drugs (including nonmedical use of prescription drugs), and mental health in the United States.
- [The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Data Archive \(SAMHDA\)](#)—SAMHDA provides raw data of the nation’s substance use and mental health data, including NSDUH, the National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services, and more.