



Engaging the Faith Community in Substance Use Prevention: The Rationale for Partnering and Resources to Support Your Efforts



Why should substance use prevention coalitions partner with faith leaders and faith-based organizations?

Prominence of Faith and Spirituality in the United States

- Over 75% of adults have some religious affiliation, and nearly 75% say religion is very or fairly important in their life.¹ One in three 12th graders say religion is very or pretty important in their lives and nearly half of 8th and 10th graders say the same.²
- Over half of American adults pray daily³ and nearly 9 in 10 believe in God.⁴ Over 33% of adults attend religious services at least once a week.⁵ Nearly one in five 12th graders attend religious services at least once a week, and over 33% of 8th and 10th graders attend at least once a week.⁶

Faith Leader Roles Across the Lifespan/Community

- “Religious groups and the government are the only two institutions that follow people from the cradle to the grave. As a result, the religious community has the potential to be the most significant force in the whole field of chemical health.” —Reverend Phil Hansen⁷
- Congregations, faith-based organizations, and religious healthcare systems are pervasive in the social-structural landscape of many communities.
- Faith-based organizations have the potential to touch a broader range of the community than other sectors because they reach people of all ages, economic levels, and

¹ Pew Religious Landscape Study 2014, based on telephone interviews with more than 35,000 Americans from all 50 states

² <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/37182/datasets/0005/variables/V4170?archive=icpsr>

³ <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/frequency-of-prayer/>

⁴ Source: Gallup <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1690/religion.aspx>

⁵ <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/attendance-at-religious-services/>

⁶ <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/37183/datasets/0001/variables/V7219?archive=icpsr>

⁷ https://envrc.org/content/faith_community/brochures/people-of-faith-manual.pdf



ethnicities. They have access to populations in communities that the public health sector has difficulty reaching and audiences that otherwise would have been excluded. ⁸

Readiness

- 94% of clergy surveyed consider substance use to be an important issue, and 38% find alcohol use involved in half or more of the family problems. Over 33% reported preaching a sermon on substance abuse more than once a year.⁹
- In a 2012 survey, more than one and three (35.7%) congregation members reported having a family member with an alcohol or drug problem, and more than 22.4% reported that they also have a family member in recovery. Roughly 5% (4.9%) of members reported they are in recovery from alcohol or drugs themselves. And nearly 75% said it was very important for their congregation to help those who have substance use disorder. ¹⁰

Faith and Spirituality as a Protective Factor

- In a review of 134 studies that examined the relationships between religious involvement and substance abuse, 90% found less substance abuse among the more religious.¹¹
- Spiritual well-being has been associated with better adherence to treatment regimens.¹²
- Adults who attend religious services more frequently and hold more salient religious beliefs tend to exhibit lower rates of medical and recreational marijuana use.¹³
- Among youth who have never used alcohol, 56.6% (57%) classify religion as “pretty important” or “very important” to their lives. Among youth who have used alcohol in their lifetime, 47.3% classify religion as “pretty important” or “very important.” Among youth who have never used marijuana, 56.5% classify religion as “pretty important” or “very important” to their lives. Among youth who have used marijuana many times (40+), 34.5% classify religion as “pretty important” or “very important.” ¹⁴
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⁸ https://envrc.org/content/faith_community/brochures/people-of-faith-manual.pdf

⁹ The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA), 2001

¹⁰ Dnika J. Travis, Joy A. Learman, Drew Brooks, Trish Merrill & Richard T. Spence (2012): The Faith Community, Substance Abuse, and Readiness for Change: A National Study, *Journal of Social Service Research*, DOI:10.1080/01488376.2011.647988

¹¹ Koenig HG, McCullough ME, Larson DB. *Handbook of Religion and Health*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2001:514-554

¹² Burkhart L., Schmidt, L., & Hogan, N. (2011). Development and psychometric testing of the Spiritual Care Inventory instrument. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 67, 2463Y2472

¹³ Burdette, A. M., Webb, N. S., Hill, T. D., Haynes, S. H., & Ford, J. A. (2018). Religious Involvement and Marijuana Use for Medical and Recreational Purposes. *Journal of drug issues*, 48(3), 421–434. doi:10.1177/0022042618770393

¹⁴ Citation: *Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth (12th Grade Survey) 2017 Core Data. Analysis ran on 2019-10-10 using SDA3.5: Tables*



Resources

[People of Faith - Partners in Prevention: Engaging the Faith Community in Substance Abuse Prevention](#)

This manual was designed to assist substance abuse prevention specialists to engage the faith community in substance abuse prevention.

[Building Strong and Effective Partnerships Among Community and Faith Organizations](#)

This guide highlights and chronicles some of the unique experiences of the SAMHSA 2010 Summit community partnership teams. They provide general instruction and outline the steps taken by these teams in finding common ground and establishing a foundation for sustained strategic partnerships among community and interfaith leaders to support prevention, treatment, and recovery needs in their communities. These products offer strategies, benefits, and building blocks for developing a community collaboration model generally; they specifically help the organizations focus on the diverse needs associated with mental health and substance use conditions.

[The Faith Community, Substance Abuse, and Readiness for Change: A National Study](#)

There are many paths to recovery from substance use disorders, and recognition is growing for the vital role that faith communities play. This study examines a theory-driven model of congregational readiness (defined as a faith community's intention and preparedness to address and support recovery from substance use disorders) using a national cross-sectional study of 45 faith communities (composed of 3,649 members). Findings revealed that addiction and recovery attitudes and perceptions of self-efficacy (rather than one's experiences) were determinants. Directions for future research focus on developing culturally relevant means of working with faith communities and congregational leadership to bolster readiness over time.

[Opioid Epidemic Practical Toolkit: Helping Faith and Community Leaders Bring Hope and Healing to Our Communities](#)

This resource from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Partnership is segmented into seven key areas such as youth prevention, supporting those in recovery, and increasing awareness. It briefly covers practical ways faith-based communities can consider bringing hope and healing to those in need.

[Preventing and Addressing Alcohol and Drug Problems: A Handbook for Clergy](#)

In this handbook you will find: Basic information about alcohol and drug addiction, how addiction in a family impacts the children, information and strategies you need to help children of addicted parents, prevention strategies to use with the youth in your congregation, community prevention approaches, resources you can turn to for help, and materials you can reproduce easily.

[So Help Me God: Substance Abuse, Religion and Spirituality](#)

For many individuals, religion and spirituality are important components of prevention and treatment of substance abuse and of successful recovery. This report examines the link between substance use disorder and spirituality.



[Four ways to include drug prevention in your religious programs](#)

A guidebook for faith leaders on how they can incorporate substance use prevention into their faith agenda and provide prevention messages to their congregation, and particularly with youth.

[A practical tool kit for the faith community to address substance abuse in Bartholomew County](#)

Faith-based community organizations are integral partners in addressing the opioid epidemic. This tool kit from the Alliance for Substance Progress in Bartholomew County, ASAP-BC, provides ways that your community can support prevention efforts, support those in and seeking recovery to save lives, and prevent future generations from harm.

[Faith Matters: Race/Ethnicity, Religion and Substance Use](#)

Substance abuse is America's number one health problem touching the life of every family, congregation and community. While whites are the majority of drug users, black and Hispanic substance abusers suffer more of the consequences. Given the tremendous negative impact of substance abuse, this report outlines how researchers, policy makers, and practitioners can stem the tide and help people recover. Research suggests religion may be a large part of the solution, and this report explores that potential. Readers examine findings from the past and present and review the relationship between race/ethnicity, substance abuse, and spirituality. The document includes recommendations for clergy, foundations, and researchers.

[Relationship of Spirituality or Religion to Recovery From Substance Abuse](#)

Spirituality and religion are frequently acknowledged as significant contributors to individuals' recovery from substance use disorders. This review focuses on the role that spirituality or religion plays in substance abuse treatment outcomes.

[The Conspiracy of Silence: Alcohol, Other Drugs and the Faith Community](#)

Faith communities in the 21st Century can safeguard those who may be in danger from alcohol and other drugs. This book includes material for adults and youth, which can guide congregations in addressing a critical issue that has often been cloaked in silence.

[Faith-Based Partnerships for Population Health: Challenges, Initiatives, and Prospects](#)

This brief overview summarizes the scope of existing efforts among faith-based and public health institutions and organizations to work in partnership to further the health of the population. These intersections between the faith-based and public health sectors are more diverse than many public health professionals may realize, and of greater longstanding than the past two presidential administrations