



South Southwest (HHS Region 6)

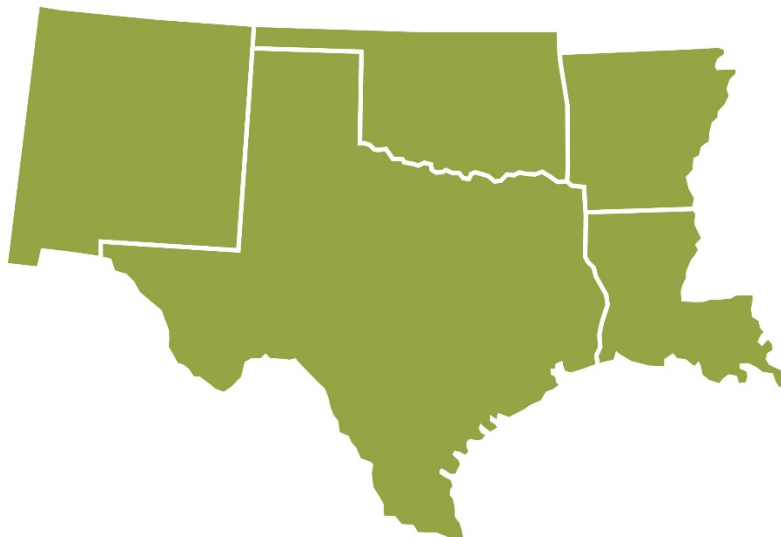
PTTC

Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Survey Report: Changes in Prevention Practice during the COVID-19 Pandemic

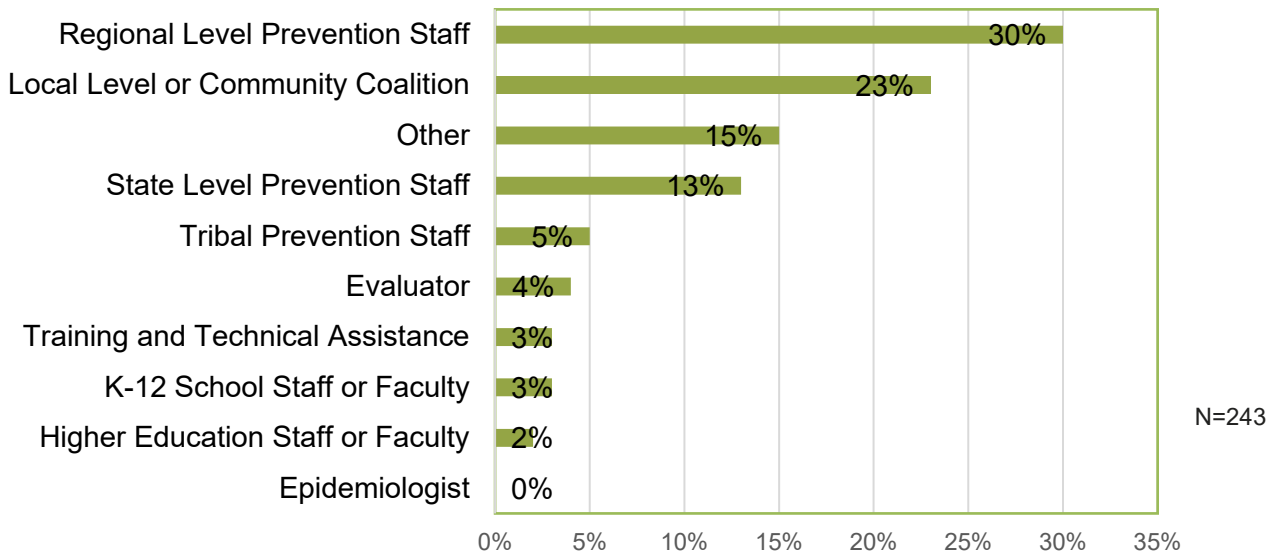
June 30, 2020

The South Southwest Prevention Technology Transfer Center disseminated the survey, *Changes in Prevention Practice during the COVID-19 Pandemic*, from May 4, 2020, through June 15, 2020. The purpose was to assess the training and technical assistance (T/TA) needs of prevention professionals in the region during the COVID-19 pandemic. Two hundred forty-three (243) participants working in the South Southwest PTTC Region (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas) completed the survey. Questions related to how prevention professionals and organizations are adapting strategies, engaging partners, and reaching marginalized populations during the pandemic. The report also assesses further training, technical assistance, or other support needed to continue prevention work during COVID-19.



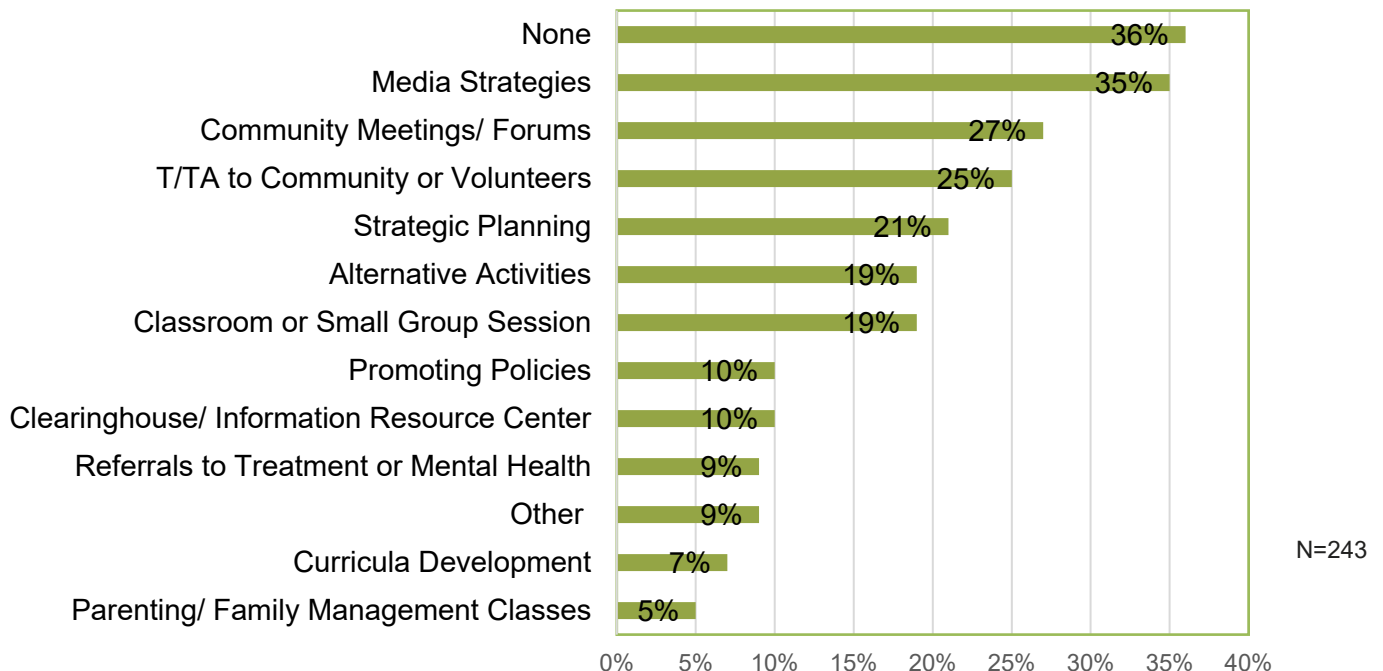
## Participant Job Roles\*

Fifty-three percent (53%) of participants selected their prevention role as either regional or local level prevention staff. Of the 15% who selected “Other” as their role, most identified as a tribal partner, volunteer, or health educator.



## Activities Conducted Virtually Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic\*

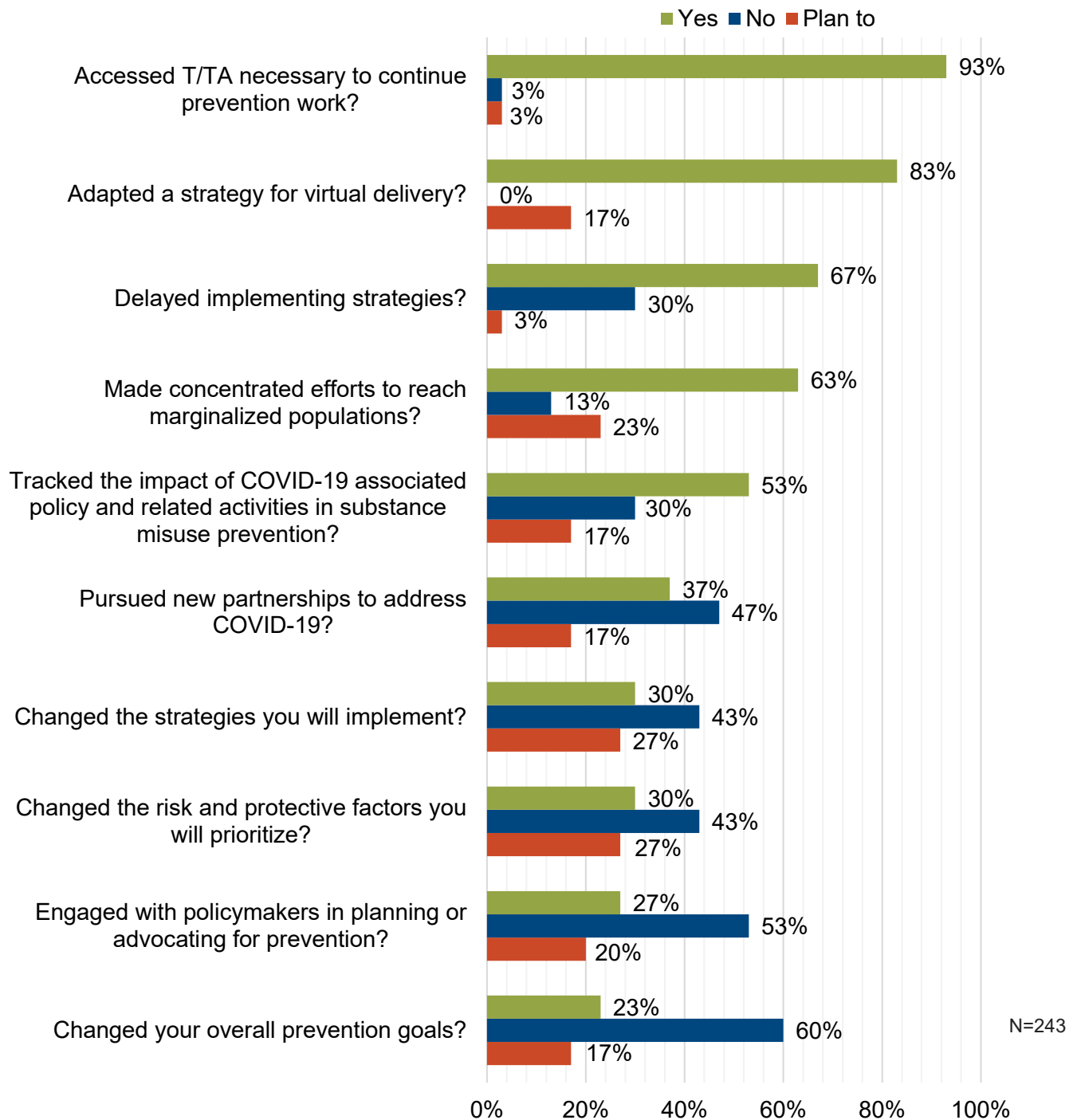
Over one-third of participants indicated they had not conducted any service virtually prior to COVID-19. Media strategies were the most frequent activity conducted virtually prior to COVID-19; only 5% indicated they had conducted parenting or family management classes virtually prior to the pandemic.



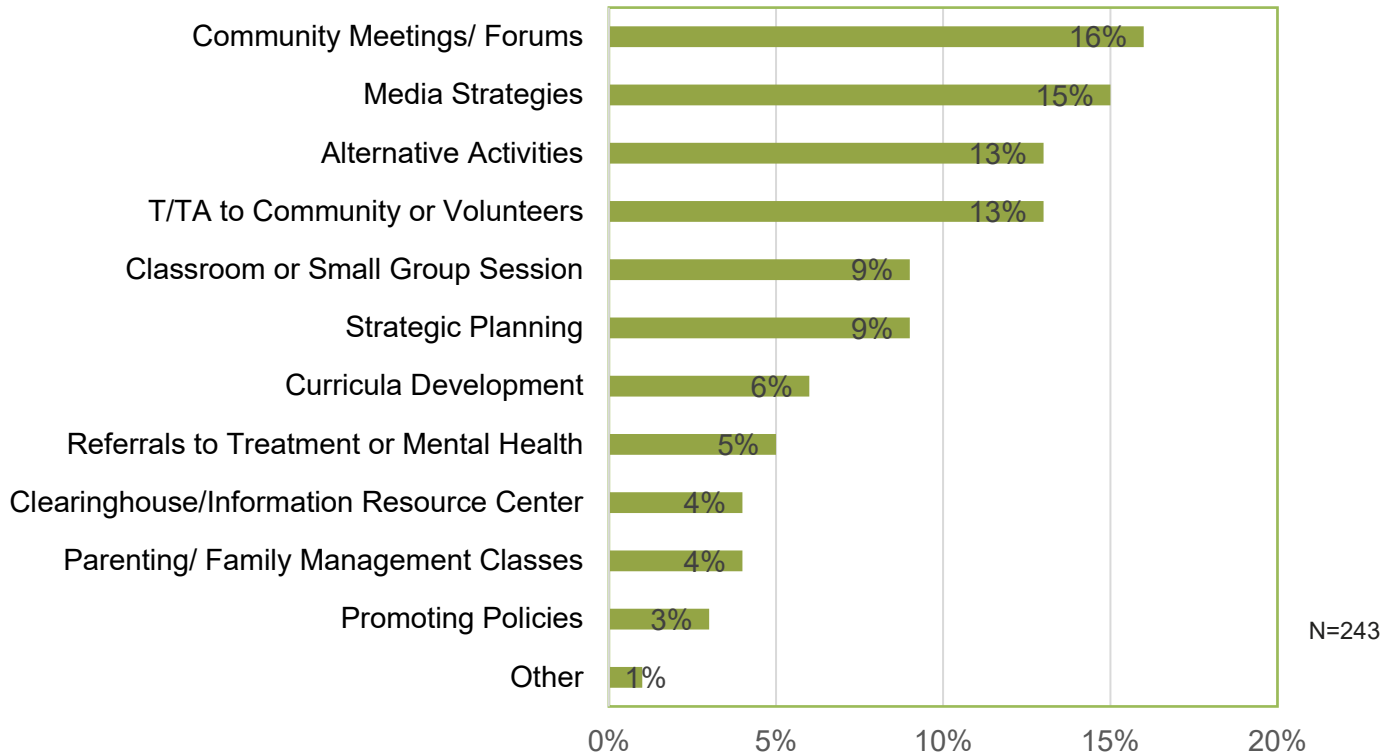
\*Total percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. For activities conducted virtually prior to COVID-19, participants could select more than one option.

# Changes in Prevention Work Since COVID-19

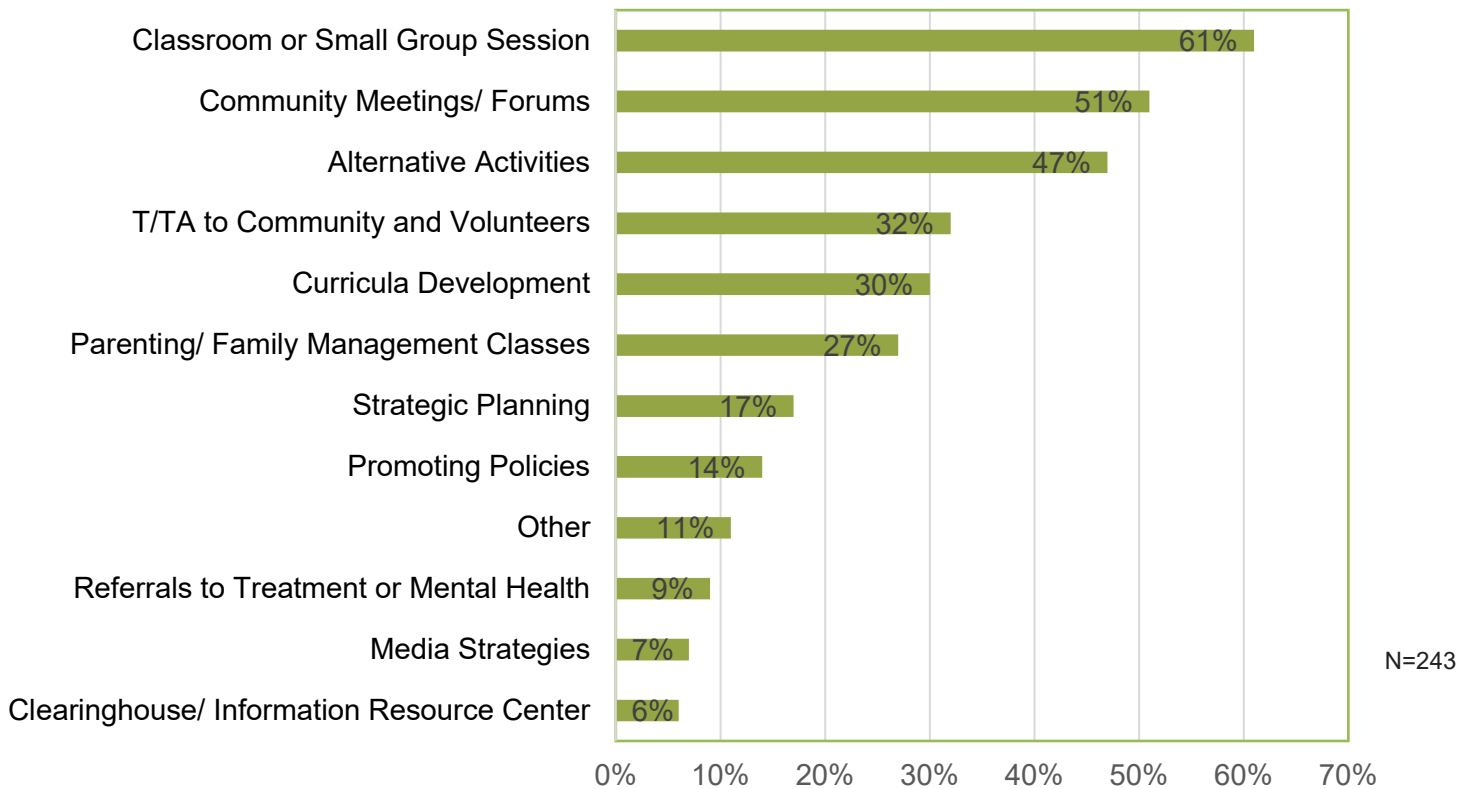
## 1. Since the inception of COVID-19, have you or your organization . . .



## 2. What strategies have you adapted since COVID-19?\*



## 3. What strategies have you delayed since COVID-19?\*



\*Total percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Participants could select more than one option.

#### 4. If you have plans to change your prioritized risk and protective factors, what changes are you going to make and how?

**Theme: Assessing Situation- Unsure How to Proceed**

- We are researching the consequences now to provide appropriate services to respond to this change in risk and protective factors.
- At this time, we are working with the prevention providers, leadership and the prevention team to determine if and what changes need to be made. We do not have anything confirmed at this time.
- Unsure, Pending, or Undecided (5)

**Theme: Reviewing Alternative Service Delivery Methods**

- We will meet with other tribal professionals and preventionists on how to best serve our population with these new measures of safety.
- COVID-19 has caused life altering change resulting in change in prevention delivery. Virtual meetings have become the new norm. Distancing, with no gatherings with more than 10 people has caused a strain for accomplishing often creating delay. Anxiety is prevalent almost everywhere.

**Theme: Other**

- Target those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Reduce [risk and protective factors] to 1-2 instead of 4.

#### 5. If you have plans to change your overall prevention goals, what changes will you make and how?

**Theme: Assessing Situation-Awaiting Further Direction**

- These options are currently being discussed at the level of leadership to see how we can enhance goals to reach target populations and serve communities better.
- It depends on our funders.
- Not sure (3)

**Theme: Employing Virtual Delivery Methods**

- Virtual presentations and videos.
- Being able to provide presentations virtually has been the conversation with many schools. The schools appreciate being able to offer sessions and help with this transition. The schools are looking to see how they can support community organizations virtually implementing information.
- Make things more virtual.

**Theme: Assessing Readiness and Building Capacity**

- Reassess community readiness to address the substances they will work on together.
- Involve more partnerships.

#### 6. If you have plans to change the strategies you will implement, what changes are you going to make and how?

**Theme: Transitioning to Virtual Delivery Methods, Including Social Media**

- Providing virtual yoga and prevention information sessions and increasing our social media and email presence.
- We are having to refocus our delivery of services from face to face to connecting through social media by inviting our participating families.
- We have to wait on direction from the state to make concrete changes and or plans. For now, we have increased our social media presence and have offered our help and assistance to our school partners. Our assistance has not been requested at this time, but we are confident requests will be made in late August.
- Providing strategies that are virtually available (4)

- Utilizing virtual curricula resources and modifying plans with school and community contacts to allow for virtual access to target population.

**Theme: Assessing and Planning for Change**

- Currently in process of working on various strategies.
- We will re-evaluate when the time is right.
- We are currently reviewing information.
- We are still assessing our community to see what change needs to be implemented.
- Those plans are on-going and are developing as re-opening continues.

**7. What steps are you taking to engage policymakers in planning or advocating for prevention during COVID-19?**

**Theme: Staying Informed Through Virtual Board, Council, or Other Meetings**

- Meeting and discussing with the Board to implement alternative strategies.
- Through emails, zoom meetings, and media outlets.
- Participating in virtual meetings with advocacy groups.
- Participating in weekly ASAP calls. Supporting legislative letters. Reaching out to local policy makers.
- Participating in weekly Zoom advocacy groups.
- Phone calls and internet video conferencing.
- Meeting with agencies that advocate for prevention to make sure they know that primary prevention is an important part and we are first responders.
- Attending virtual monthly meetings with Chambers of Commerce.
- Keeping informed as to what other prevention agency are doing and how we can work together for new changes with COVID-19.
- Attending virtual meetings with city council members and community leaders.

**Theme: Collaborating with State, School and Local Leaders**

- Working on social hosting ordinance with local city council.
- Working with {state} to provide on-line proctored testing.
- We are currently and have been speaking to [state] to collaborate a way to continue giving the services we have in the past from a virtual format so that our partnerships can continue.
- I am working with the [college]faculty to try and implement a mandatory online alcohol education training to new incoming students.
- Seeing if there are ways we can meet virtually with students in the fall.  
We are hoping to start with meeting with our local stakeholders and documenting the impact we are making in the community. We will then share this information with the District representatives to promote support.
- I have an advantage; I am on the Executive Team that meets with leadership to offer my recommendations.
- We reviewed and updated a long-overdue Alcohol and Drug policy at our college, creating new avenues for restorative justice and educational methods and limiting punitive measures.

**Theme: Writing and Reaching Out to Legislators or Tribal Council**

- Worked with [Executive Director] to modify a letter that was emailed to Tribal Leaders to gain buy in.
- Contact [policymakers] via email.
- Through emails, zoom meetings, and media outlets.
- Memos to Tribal Council.
- Participating in weekly ASAP calls. Supporting legislative letters. Reaching out to local policy makers.

***Theme: Advocating for Prevention via Partnerships***

- Myself and other Regional Prevention Directors meet regularly to discuss advocating for Prevention, we did it before and we are doing it now. We are giving them suggestions about how we move forward from this point and the importance of Prevention, now, more than ever! We have a few of our members who take our suggestions directly to our State contacts.
- Meeting with agencies that advocate for prevention to make sure they know that primary prevention is an important part and we are first responders.
- Keeping informed as to what other prevention agency are doing and how we can work together for new changes with COVID-19.
- Keep reaching out to them to make sure that they are aware of the efforts we are putting into our work during this time.

***Theme: Advocating via Social Media***

- During COVID-19, prevention advocacy has continued to take place via social media platforms. Prevention assistance and various trainings have been conducted and posted to the platforms. Additionally, they are shared and information for further assistance is given with each video.
- Using social media and messaging
- Reaching out, speaking to as many people as possible-anyone who will listen. Of course, all is being done through phone calls, texts, emails, social media. Also preparing to distribute activity packets and care packages to rural communities.

***Theme: Other***

- Reminding that relaxed policies should return to normal after crisis.
- Follow company guidelines and leadership instructions.
- We haven't engaged but planning to engage with policymakers.

**8. How are you engaging new partners around COVID-19? Please describe any new partnerships you are establishing.**

***Theme: Collaborating with New Organizations***

- Yes, new partners that we ordinarily would not meet or have a need for because of the COVID.
- Partnering with other agencies to get out needed COVID-19 emergency supplies to community.
- Through our United Way partnerships.
- Planning a summer program we can deliver through social media together.
- Working with adult probation depts to deliver adult classes.
- Our team is engaging new partnerships around COVID-19 through outreach via phone and going to a site, practicing safety precautions and guidelines. For example, we have utilized this time to emphasize medication safety and in doing so we have reached out to various funeral homes around our county and provided them with information they have agree to add to their own informational packets for their clients.
- Building new partnerships since COVID-19 to engage them in community coalition efforts. We kept our same partnerships and are gaining more partners in the same sectors that were previously engaged. Some of other partners have not been as engaged as their offices are closed, such as some boy and girls' clubs, and other schools that have not allowed virtual delivery of services to their student and parent populations.
- Partnerships with others using the sam[educational] platforms.
- Reaching out to local nonprofit organizations to see how the prevention staff can assist during these times.  
Reaching out to boys and girls club to determine the services that we will be providing and how will those services be implemented.
- We are partnering with local entities who are delivering food to distribute prevention material and activities. Such as pizza delivery, Salvation Army, meals on wheels, drive thru or pick up restaurants, etc.

- Working with a new entity, who has always been a virtual-based company, to learn from their experience in maintaining successful services and a healthy culture via remote functioning.
- We are pursuing a relationship with another Houston university to assess needs for freshmen attending urban and rural HBCUs.
- Engaging with new agencies online virtually in different parts of the country not just our local area.

***Theme: Networking Virtually***

- Using this opportunity to let others know about the effect that substance use and misuse may have on a large number of community members who are not in a structured school environment and to highlight the risk of increased substance misuse and related effects on the older population.
- [The state] has been working with funded providers to provide several resources and updates on bimonthly web-based calls and Friday SharePoint link updates. This list of resources is inclusive for all program types from prevention, mental health and substance use disorder. I am not privy to the exact details of what else is being discussed. I attend these web-based calls and look at the updates.
- Virtual meetings. Email.
- Working with new schools to offer virtual workshops.
- Meeting new people around state and national level though zoom meetings and social media.
- Virtual meetings.
- Attending different virtual trainings and networking with new organizations to help each other during this time. Letting our community know about the resources that different organizations, hospitals, and treatment centers are offering.
- Attending other agencies' webinars and making connections.
- Participating in various virtual meetings with partners around the state. At this time, we have not established any new partnerships, however we are gathering data to assist us in continuing to deliver our prevention message.

***Theme: Delivering Virtual Services***

- Virtual meetings to develop prevention education, summer programs and informational videos to help parents and students during these difficult times.
- By creating videos and making them YOUTUBE.
- Zoom presentations.
- Virtual meetings with other prevention providers.
- Working with other entities to provide assistance with online learning and presenting tools. If they don't have those available, we are making sure to offer them.

***Theme: Engaging Health Departments and Clinics***

- Partnering with the local health department to relay information to the public on testing sites.
- We have partnered up with the Austin Public Health department to help disperse funds to families that were not eligible to receive the benefits of the CARES act. We have also partnered up with different community project to identify needs in the community to find the resources needed to maintain the family quality of life.
- Alcohol retailers now see the agency as a resource. Clinics and other organizations that need volunteers are reaching out.



**Theme: Partnering with Youth-serving Organizations**

- We are being contacted by more community providers who work with youth (day care centers, youth groups, church camps etc.)
- Local food banks, Teen Pregnancy Center
- I have reached out to new agencies that have younger children to provide services, providing materials on coping skills to families while volunteering to hand out food with local food pantry
- Reaching out to community partners who are conducting Zoom meetings with their clients and being a guest host to provide prevention presentations. Also working with local youth summer camps who are in phase 2 of reopening to provide presentations in small groups at a time while social distancing a wearing face mask.

**Theme: Working with Coalitions**

- More people are able to attend coalition meetings now that the meetings are virtual.
- Coalition members are still talking with people they know and talking about the coalition. Then giving their information for me to reach out and talk about the coalition.
- We are building relationships with new partners by exploring best practices in serving young people and families during this pandemic. The service coordinator sits in coalitions where she is building relationships with partners by asking what tools and strategies they can assist with when working with populations in need (i.e. Child Abuse, Homelessness, Substance Use/Recovery, etc.)
- We are establishing partnerships with the forestry service and agricultural services as well as working closely with community coalitions to identify ways to engage youth throughout the summer.

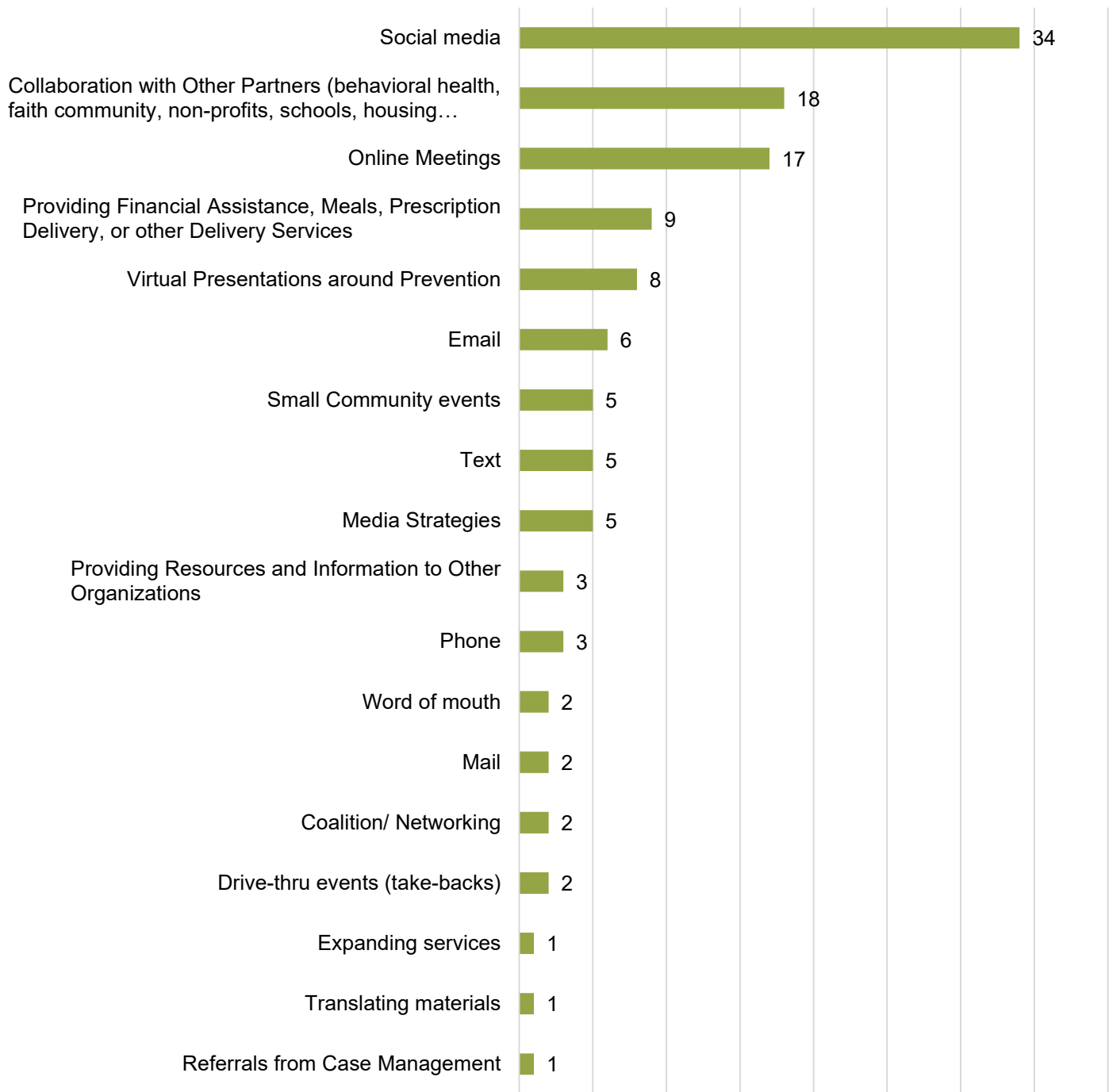
**Theme: Other Partnership Responses**

- Partnered with the Louisiana National Guard to deliver food to a marginalized community.
- Tele-health, Tele-behavioral health. Mainly tele-audio. Tele-video is preferred but in rural Oklahoma over have the time the connection is poor either on the provider or patient end. (50/50)
- Mostly medical to gain as well as provide information.
- I am engaging with new partners using technology. I have reached out to media outlets in rural areas to assist me with putting out substance use prevention messages during COVID-19.
- We have worked collaboratively with the Suicide Prevention Team to seek support for communities. We are reaching out to public speakers to provide training and technical assistance around trauma, equity, and how to support families and communities during this time.
- Not necessarily new partners, just working with current partners in different ways to disseminate materials and information sharing. Using a more cohesive whole person approach to share in educating and referring to services that are needed.
- By providing prevention education and life skills lessons to them virtually.
- Local food banks, Teen Pregnancy Center.
- We are partnering with local entities who are delivering food to distribute prevention material and activities. Such as pizza delivery, Salvation Army, meals on wheels, drive thru or pick up restaurants, etc.
- We are establishing relationships with organizations to build out additional dashboards that will allow us to track a variety of data in light of COVID-19, but that is also transferrable to prevention use.

# Reaching Marginalized Populations

Participants were asked “How are you reaching marginalized populations during COVID-19?” Due to overwhelming qualitative response, themes are captured in the graph below by frequency.

## Themes: Reaching Marginalized Populations by Frequency of Response



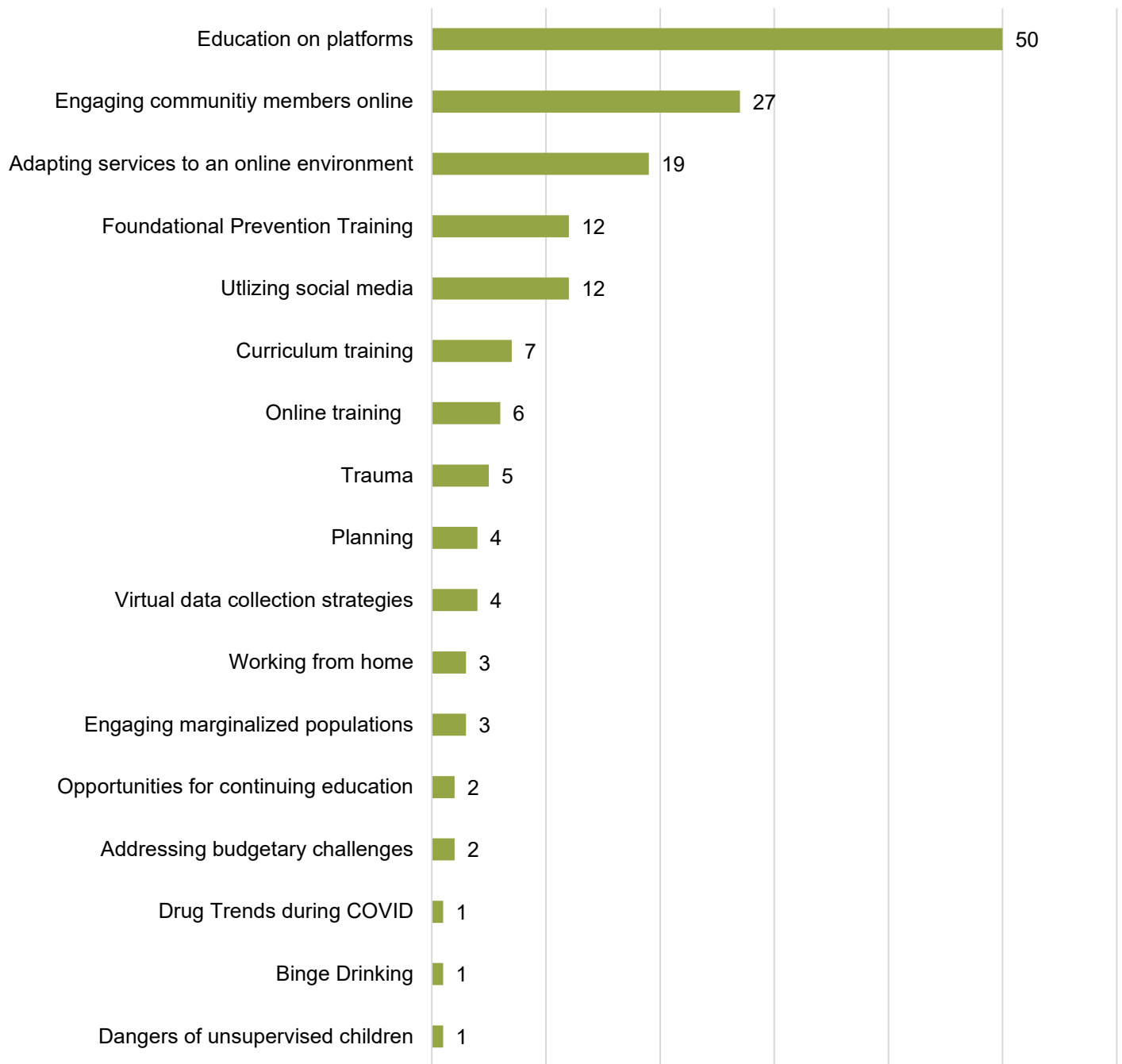
*“We are working with school personnel to ensure they are using the increased access of students to technology (via school loan programs) to address at-risk and homeless youth needs.”*

--Survey Participant

# Training and Technical Assistance Needs

Participants were asked “What new training or technical assistance (T/TA) do you need to make adaptations in your work during the COVID-19 pandemic?” Due to overwhelming qualitative response, themes are captured in the graph below by frequency.

## Themes: T/TA Needs by Frequency of Response



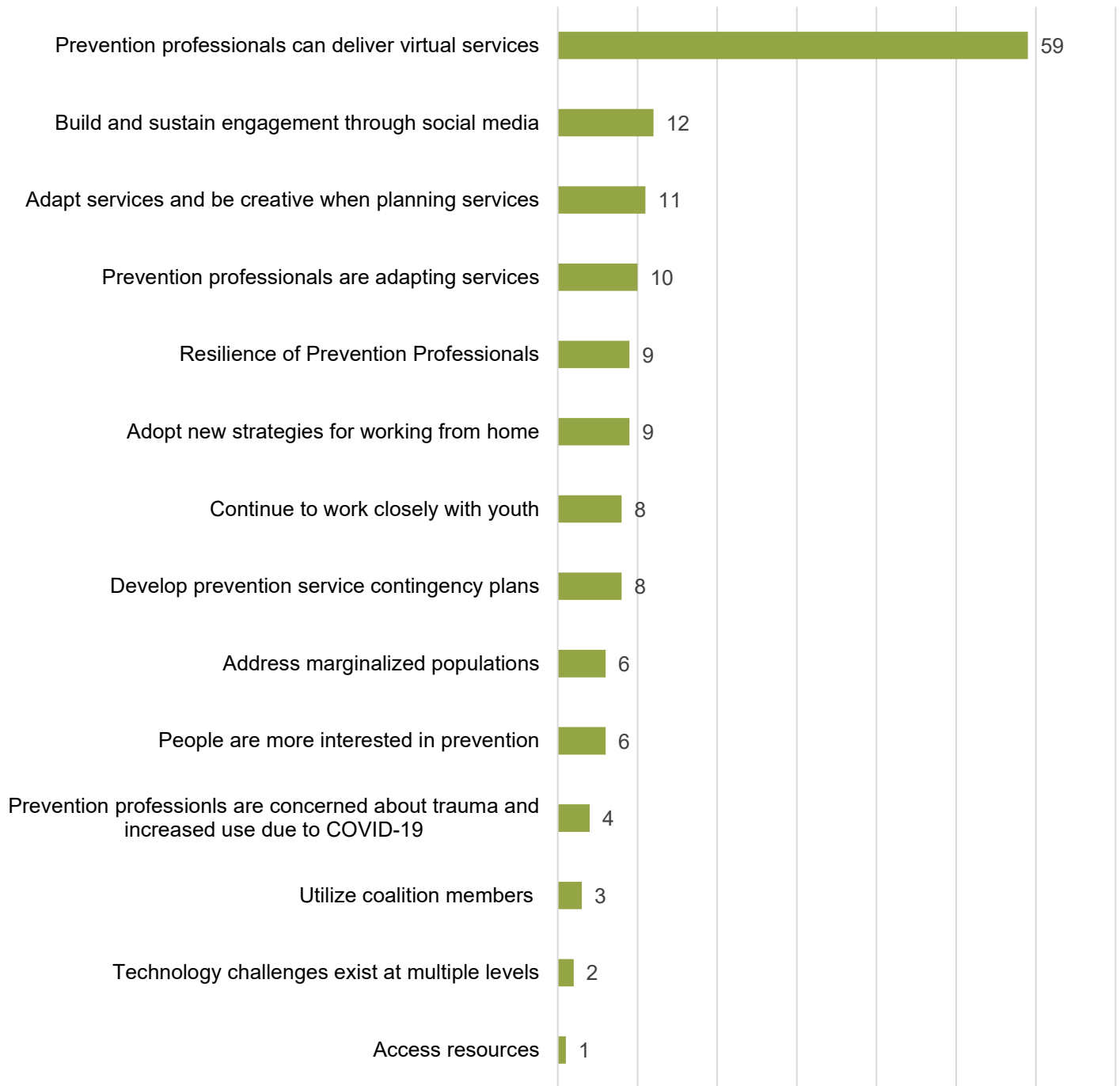
*“We need to find grants for online curriculum development. Each 2hr workshop is costing us approximately \$16,000 to convert from face-to-face to online.”*

--Survey Participant

# Successes or Lessons Learned during COVID-19

Several themes emerged on successes and lessons learned from participants during reflection on COVID-19. Qualitative responses were grouped according to themes and graphed due to overwhelming response.

## Themes: Successes or Lessons Learned by Frequency of Response



*"We can do more than we thought virtually. I think a lot of agencies are learning this, but at the same time there is a lot that has to be put on hold because of this as well."*

--Survey Participant