



Central East (HHS Region 3)

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

# Step One: Needs Assessment

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***SAMHSA***  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

 **THE DANYA INSTITUTE**

# Strategic Prevention Framework (SAMHSA)

- **Step 1: Needs Assessment**
  - Step 2: Build Capacity
  - Step 3: Planning
  - Step 4: Implementation
  - Step 5: Evaluation
- 
- Be mindful throughout of:
    - Sustainability
    - Cultural Competence
    - Ethical Behavior



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# Learning Objectives

- Review the **IMPORTANCE** of a needs assessment
- Describe how to **CONDUCT** a needs assessment
- Discuss **CHALLENGES** and **SOLUTIONS** when working with data
- Examine the **DATA PRIORITIZATION** process
- **LEARN** data prioritization techniques



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# Summary of a Needs Assessment



**DATA**



**KNOWLEDGE**



**ACTION**



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# The Importance of a Needs Assessment

- Using data underpins the concept of delivering evidence-based prevention, and a needs assessment is how we can obtain comprehensive data about our communities (SAMHSA)
  - Prevalence data
  - Risk and protective factor data (NIH)
  - Capacity data
- Prioritizing data then guides our efforts through the rest of the SPF process

# How to Conduct a Needs Assessment

- **Step One:** Understand research on needs assessment topics
- **Step Two:** Review existing, available data
  - Public data sets, previous assessments
- Identify and seek access to other existing data
  - Other agencies and stakeholders
- Collect and analyze new primary data
  - Interviews, focus groups, surveys
- **Step Three:** Prioritize data



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# Understanding Your Data



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# Common Challenges with Data

- Lack of resources to conduct own data collection
- Existing data not correctly collected
- Gatekeepers not willing/allowed to share data
- Data is available, but difficult to access
- Data not in readily usable forms
- Available data not directly relevant to current needs
- Outdated data or accompanied by misleading/incorrect analysis
- Lack of data other than prevalence data
- Lack of expertise at reviewing academic research



# Potential Strategies to Overcome Challenges

- Identify which data sources may be available to you, and whether there are overlapping sources if any turn out to be unavailable
- Have a clear data request
- Request data as part of a broader collaboration effort
- Understand relevant regulations and statutes
- Value qualitative data
- Contact local experts and researchers
- Consider more feasible data collection efforts
- Re-focus primary data collection efforts

# Using Your Data Effectively

- Once you understand your data and have identified and corrected any issues, you can now begin to use your data
- There is no universal, best strategy for allocating prevention resources
- Each community needs to decide for themselves what course of action is most appropriate
- This requires the use of data prioritization techniques

# Planning for Data Prioritization



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# Types of Assessments (NACCHO)

- Before you start prioritizing your data, your organization should engage in a series of assessments and processes to be sure everyone is on the same page
  - **Community assessment:** This will help determine the current status of what is occurring in the community as well as detect any gaps so that you can focus on as many potential priority areas as possible
  - **Agency self-assessment:** This type of assessment is useful to evaluate your agency/ organization's performance against recognized standards in the field

# Creating Consensus (NACCHO)

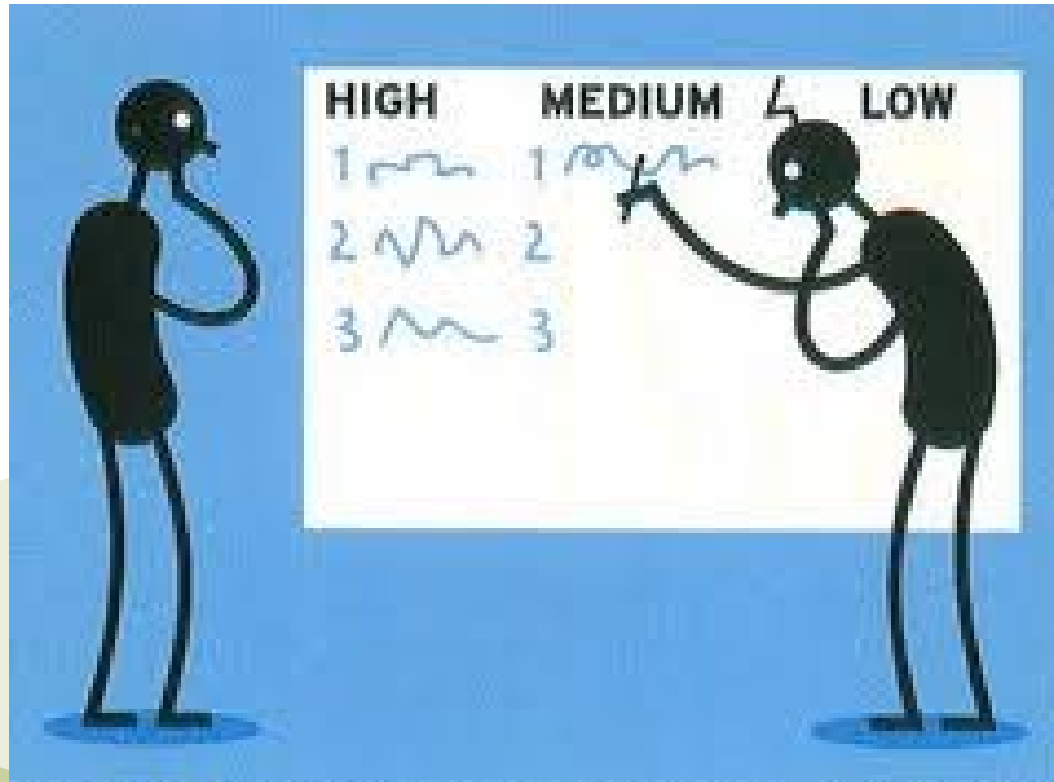
- **Clarifying objectives and processes:** All team members should have a clear understanding of the goals and objectives of why you are undergoing this process
- **Establishing criteria:** The selection of appropriate prioritization criteria on which to judge the importance and relevance of potential areas of focus
  - Think about what should be established for the identification of the priority problem, e.g. cost, resources, urgency, scope
  - Consider the criteria for identifying the intervention you want to use, e.g. return on investment, effectiveness, implementation and maintenance



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# Prioritizing Your Data



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# Data Prioritization Techniques (NACCHO)

1. Multi-voting Techniques
2. Strategy Grids
3. Nominal Group Techniques (NGT)
4. The Hanlon Method
5. Prioritization Matrix



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# Multi-Voting Technique

- Helps to narrow scope
- Allows a problem which may not be a top priority of any individual but is favored by all to rise to the top



Grant Fund Ideas	Round 1 Vote	Round 2 Vote	Round 3 Vote
Printing Materials and Other Resources	XX	XX	
Community Trainings	X		
Furniture for Support Center	X		
School-based Outreach			
Purchasing Naloxone	XX	XXX	XXX
Identify and Use Evidence-based Best Practices Programming	XX	XXX	XXXXX



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# Nominal Group Technique

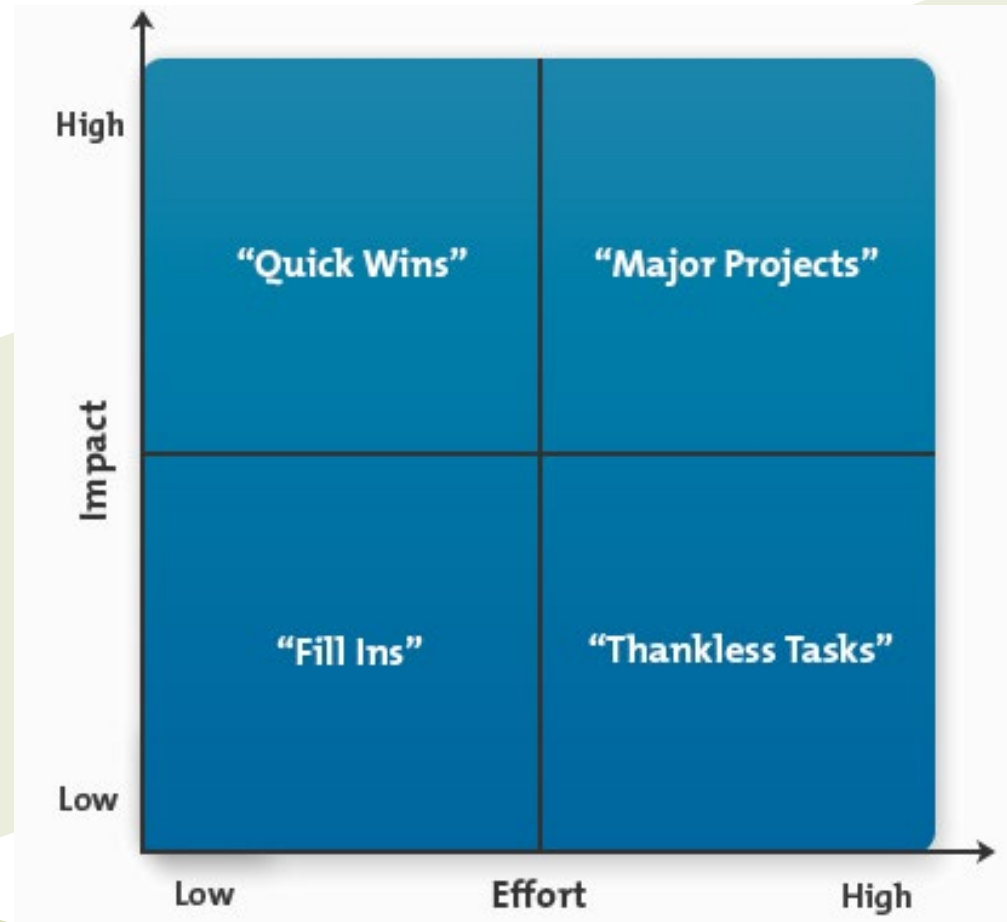
- Useful in early stages of prioritization
- Generate lots of ideas quickly
- Can be used with the Multi-Voting Technique
- Democratic process with input from all levels of the agency

Project Focus for FY2020	1st Choice Score =3	2nd Choice Score =2	3rd Choice Score =1	Total Score
Improve interagency communication and collaboration	3	3	2	17
Engage stakeholders and community groups	1	2	1	8
Review internal practices to see how we can streamline the project and refocus spending	1	2	4	11
Research and implement evidence-based best practices programming	3	1	2	13
Hire additional staff to better meet the needs of clients and increase capacity	2	1	2	10
Develop new materials that can reach wider audience	2	3	1	13



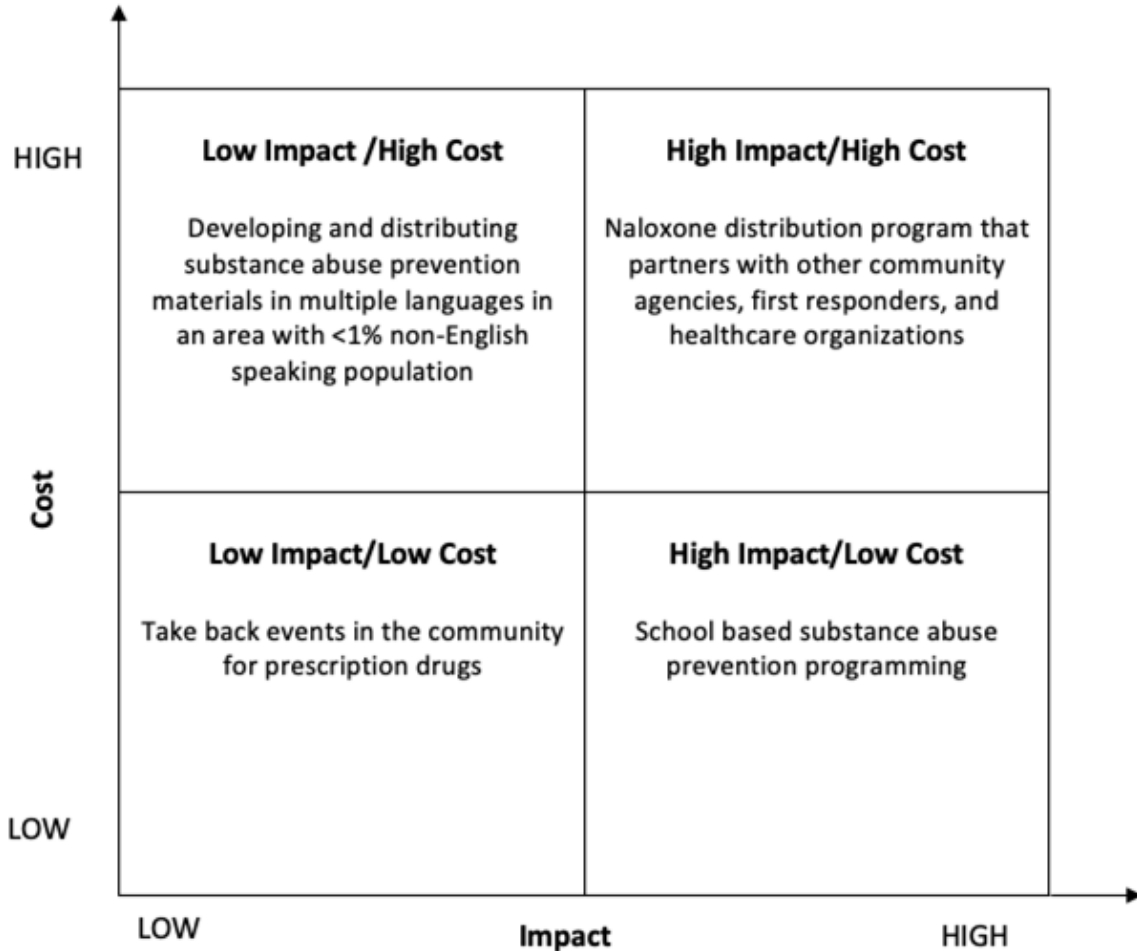
# Strategy Grids

- Shifts an agency's focus to addressing issues that can yield the greatest results
- Achieve maximum results with limited resources
- Focuses the plan of action



# Strategy Grid Example

An urban county received a small grant to enhance their substance use prevention efforts. The county conducted a needs assessment to see where they should invest their money and efforts based on substance use rates and prevalence.



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# The Hanlon Method

- Creates an objective list of priorities based on baseline data and numerical values
- Uses a rating scale (1-10) based on the
  1. Size of the problem
  2. Magnitude of the problem
  3. Effectiveness of potential interventions



## P.E.A.R.L Test

- Calculates using priority scores to determine the top priority(ies)



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# Hanlon Method Example

- A large county was looking to implement community prevention programming using a newly awarded grant from the state. They conducted a needs assessment to determine areas of focus within the community. They produced 6 target areas and rated them using the established criterion.
- The county then applied the PEARL test to each target area and 5 passed. They excluded the one that did not.
- They then calculated the priority scores. Using those scores, they ranked their top three target areas

Target Area	Size (A)	Seriousness (B)	Effectiveness of Intervention (C)	Priority Score (D) (A+2B)C	Rank
Young Adult (18-24) Fentanyl Use	6	9	8	192	1
Youth Vaping	9	4	7	119	3
Young Adult (>35) Alcohol Misuse	9	6	8	168	2



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# Prioritization Matrix

- A commonly used tool, the prioritization matrix is useful if there are many criteria or if only a single problem can be addressed
- Creates visual documentation of its process
- Rates each issue on how well it meets certain criteria. For example:
  - 3 = criterion well met
  - 2 = criterion partially met
  - 1 = criterion not met
- Criteria is weighted by importance. For example:
  - Criteria A = 0.75
  - Criteria B = 0.5
  - Criteria C = 0.25

# Prioritization Matrix Example

- A school board was looking to see what prevention programming they should implement across their middle and high schools. They wanted to target youths in grades 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>. Using data from their annual survey they focused on 3 prevention areas.

## Criteria

4 = High priority  
 3 = Moderate priority  
 2 = Low priority  
 1 = Not priority

## Weight of the criteria

Criteria A = .25  
 Criteria B = .5  
 Criteria C = .5

Proposed focus for a school-based prevention program	Evaluative Criteria			Total Score	Rank
	Designed for youths aged 12-15 (.25)	Teachers can be trained and can deliver the program (.5)	Effectiveness of the Program (.5)		
Alcohol	2 x (.25)	4 x (.5)	4 x (.5)	4.5	1
Smoking & Vaping	3 x (.25)	2 x (.5)	4 x (.5)	3.75	3
All Substances	3 x (.25)	3 x (.5)	4 x (.5)	4.25	2



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# Conclusion

- Conducting a needs assessment is a **CRITICAL** first step to gathering, understanding, and using data
- There are a wide variety of data **RESOURCES** available
- Be sure to **EXAMINE** your needs assessment data
- Prioritizing your data will help set your **DIRECTION** and **FOCUS**
- We are now going to **PRACTICE** two data prioritization techniques