

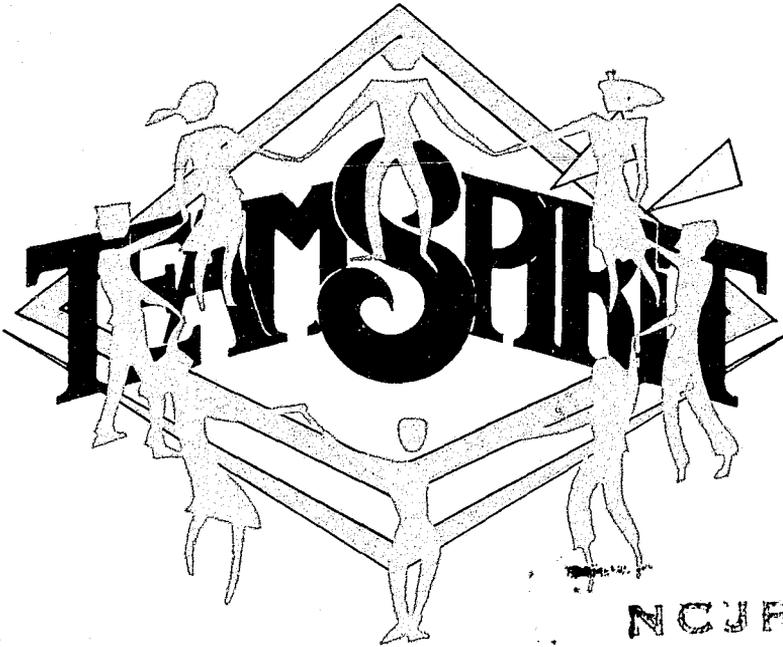
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A
COMMUNITY-BASED
YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
EVENT THE ABUSE OF ALCOHOL
AND OTHER DRUGS



U.S. Department of Transportation
**National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration**

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YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
TO PREVENT THE ABUSE OF ALCOHOL
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**U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice**

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INTRODUCTION

Since TeamSpirit was developed and pilot tested under co-sponsorship of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (U.S. Dept. of Transportation) and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (U.S. Dept. of Justice), many people have expressed an interest in learning more about it and possibly starting a program in their own community. This interest is not surprising, for the need for this type of substance abuse prevention program for adolescents is critical at the present time.

A publication does exist that provides detailed information about all aspects of the program. This is the **TeamSpirit Program Manual**, a detailed "how to" manual, which contains time and task charts, forms, workshop guides and evaluation questionnaires. It is an invaluable resource for anyone who is engaged in planning or implementing the program.

This pamphlet has been prepared for another audience -- those who still have basic questions about TeamSpirit. It is designed to answer the questions that might be asked by a prevention specialist or a planning committee trying to decide if TeamSpirit will meet their needs and if they have the resources to implement it. This publication describes what kind of a program TeamSpirit is, why communities need it, how it works, who it is for, and how it can be started locally.

If your community decides to start its own TeamSpirit Program, it will be joining several other communities which already have TeamSpirit Programs underway. Please seek them out by contacting one of the agencies listed on page 12, and share ideas. This can lead to sharing events and even participants. After all, that's what the program is all about -- **Team Spirit**.

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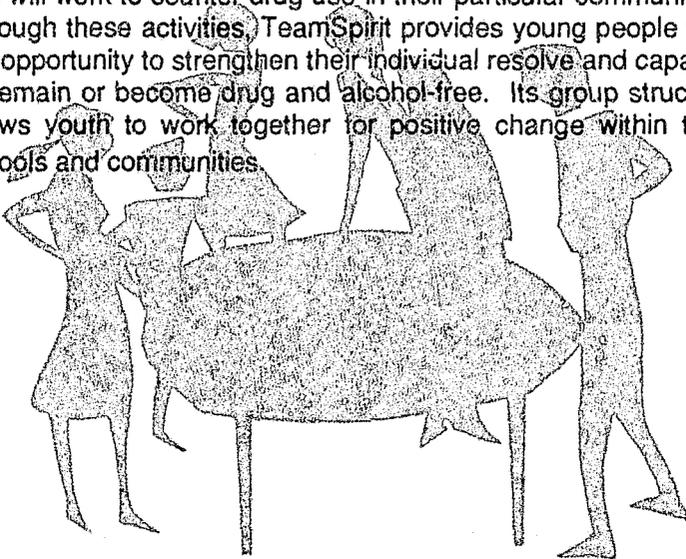
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WHAT IS TEAMSPIRIT?

TeamSpirit is a substance abuse prevention program for high school youth. It is designed to empower teenagers to take an active role in preventing drug and alcohol use and the resulting impaired driving by their peers. It is based on the belief that **youth themselves can become a potent force in combating substance abuse among other youth.**

The kick-off event for TeamSpirit is a summer Leadership Training Conference. Participants are teen leaders and their adult sponsors, who attend the conference in teams representing their schools or youth groups. After four days of intense interaction and learning, each team will have developed an action plan for organizing at least two prevention activities during the coming school year. A community TeamSpirit Coordinator provides support to the teams as they carry out their plans. The Coordinator also promotes joint activities for the teams, so they can maintain a common sense of purpose and identity.

In TeamSpirit, young people create and institute projects that they feel will work to counter drug use in their particular communities. Through these activities, TeamSpirit provides young people with the opportunity to strengthen their individual resolve and capacity to remain or become drug and alcohol-free. Its group structure allows youth to work together for positive change within their schools and communities.



WHY DO COMMUNITIES NEED A PROGRAM LIKE TEAMSPIRIT?

The problem of drug and alcohol abuse is enormous in scope. It is played out not only on the streets, but in businesses, courts, hospitals, schools, and homes throughout America. No community is immune to its destructive effects.

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the effects of drugs and alcohol. The period of adolescence is a transition from childhood to adulthood, characterized by dramatic psychological, biological and mental growth. If young people become heavily involved with alcohol or other drugs during this period, their growth can stop. Inevitably they will experience difficulties in several areas of life: school, family and friends. By using drugs and alcohol and driving while impaired, they are jeopardizing their future.

Unfortunately, the use of alcohol and other drugs and driving under their influence, have become widespread among young people. It is often the norm rather than the exception for adolescents to experiment with these dangerous substances. All of our young people are "at risk" of substance abuse.

The good news is that the tide is turning. Recent surveys show that the number of young people in school who use drugs and alcohol has decreased each year for the last several years. Drinking and driving by adolescents, as reflected in accident rates, has decreased significantly more than for any other age group.

For this change to be taking place, something must be working. What is happening is that many things are working -- that is, **working together.**

The causes of the alcohol and drug abuse and impaired driving are extremely complex. A number of factors involving different domains of life -- the individual, family, peer group, school and community -- increase the risk for an adolescent to use illegal substances. Known "risk factors" include characteristics such as having parents or friends who use drugs and lacking positive ties to one's school or community. Other factors which might help to protect young people from abusing alcohol or other drugs involve the same domains. Examples of protective factors are warm and nurturing families and schools which provide ample opportunity for student involvement and leadership.

Any policy or program targeting a single aspect of an adolescent's life cannot be expected by itself to prevent substance abuse. It can, however, be an effective part of a broader prevention strategy. Every community needs many different policies and programs designed to reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors in all areas of a young person's life. The only way to solve the drug problem is to take a comprehensive approach.

TeamSpirit alone will not solve the drug problem. Yet it can be one part of the solution for almost any community when used in a comprehensive prevention strategy. TeamSpirit's design is based on the current knowledge of both program professionals and researchers in the field of substance abuse. It targets these risk factors for youth substance abuse - friends who use, favorable attitudes toward use, poor social skills, and a lack of bonding to school and to society - and strengthens their corresponding protective factors. The program is flexible and can be adapted for use in communities of any size and ethnic composition. Finally, it is a **positive, productive and fun** approach to a deadly serious problem.

HOW DOES TEAMSPIRIT WORK?

TeamSpirit has two distinct phase: the Leadership Training Conference and the Program Activities phase. Together they build a program which involves young people in healthy, constructive activities throughout the year.

The Leadership Training Conference

The first phase of the program is a four day residential conference for between 100 and 200 youth and adult participants. During the conference, participants are busy from early morning until late evening. The schedule for each day is filled with general sessions, workshops (see Appendix I for a list of workshops), School/Community Team meetings, Color Team meetings, outdoor activities and entertainment. The purpose of the conference is to:

- Strengthen natural leadership skills and other important life skills;
- Bond participants together into cohesive teams;
- Provide pertinent, up-to-date information about substance abuse issues;
- Promote positive and fun alternative activities;
- Help each TeamSpirit team to develop its own customized prevention plan.



To understand more about the conference, here is a brief description of some of its key elements:

School/Community Teams. Conference participants attend in teams from local high schools and community youth groups. Each team should have between four and ten teenage members and one or two adult advisors.

Team Leaders. Ten to 15 outstanding youth serve as Team Leaders, performing special staff functions during the conference. They attend a day-long training seminar just before the conference.

Color Teams. Each participant belongs to a Color Team, in addition to belonging to a School or Community Team. Color Teams provide a small group setting where participants can feel comfortable to develop new friendships, share experiences, discuss topics of importance, and process the information presented in workshops and general sessions. Team Leaders facilitate these meetings.

Action Plans. Each School/Community Team develops an Action Plan for at least two activities for the coming school year. The Action Plan is a detailed blue-print, which includes problem statements, goals and objectives, and a time and task chart.

Coordinator. The Coordinator manages the community-wide TeamSpirit Program. This person can be either a current employee of one of the sponsoring agencies or someone hired specifically for this position. The coordinator might be a substance abuse specialist with local government or the school district, or a teacher, counselor or community leader. Whoever it is should have these qualifications: experience working with young people; the ability to motivate youth and develop a positive, trusting rapport with them; a background in the area of substance abuse and impaired driving, and good organizational skills.

The Coordinator's responsibilities include: planning the Leadership Training Conference, managing the program budget, providing support to the TeamSpirit chapters, monitoring their progress, and organizing joint activities.

Program Activities

When school resumes, TeamSpirit team members carry out their Action Plans. Other young people join in this process, expanding the program beyond the initial cadre of trained members.

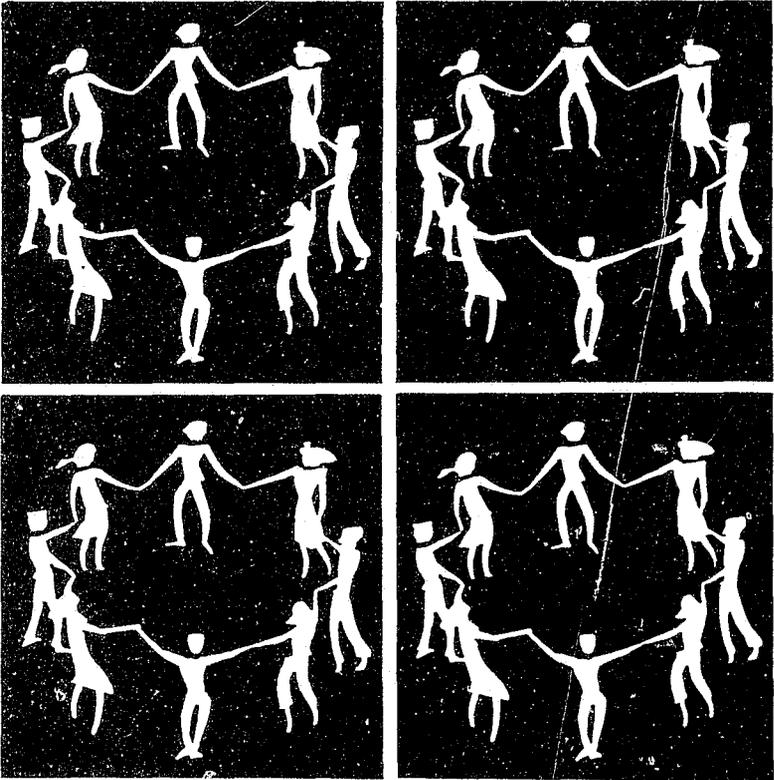
Each local TeamSpirit chapter receives technical assistance from the Coordinator. The Coordinator contacts each team just before the school year begins, offering to help the group develop its membership and structure, and organize its first activity. During the year, the Coordinator continues to provide support as needed. In addition, he or she monitors the progress of each group in carrying out their Action Plan and collects information about their activities and other accomplishments.

The Coordinator is responsible for nurturing the community-wide TeamSpirit coalition as well as assisting the individual groups. This can be done by organizing joint activities for all the local chapters. For example, there might be a winter weekend workshop, a picnic/barbecue, a trip to the state capitol or a dance. Another way to strengthen the bonds between groups is to circulate information about what each group is doing. A TeamSpirit newsletter can include accounts of the various group activities and of outstanding achievements of individual members. It can also include informative articles about a range of topics.

Finally, the Coordinator must lay the plans for the next Leadership Training Conference. This is done with the help of young people and adults who have participated in previous conferences.

The Future

Over time the TeamSpirit membership will expand, and the group identity will deepen. Each conference will build on the experiences of past conferences. Graduates of previous conferences can serve as Team Leaders and even workshop presenters. They will bring with them their shared memories and a sense of the group's history, which can enrich the experience for all participants. Each succeeding year, TeamSpirit can become a stronger program.



WHO ARE THE PARTICIPANTS?

One decision to make early in the planning process is the age group to target. A community may choose to recruit only high school aged youth who will be entering the ninth, through twelfth grades. It may decide to include younger adolescents --those entering the eighth grade. This decision should be based on the number of eligible youth of various ages, the comparative needs of the different age groups, and the existence of other prevention activities in the community.

Another basic decision involves the locale for recruitment. The schools are the most obvious and, in some respects, easiest place. Many adolescents spend a good deal of their free time either engaged in extra-curricular activities or in the company of school friends. Teachers and other school personnel can serve as adult advisors. The school provides a place for TeamSpirit teams to meet, plan activities, and even hold some events. The student body provides many potential group members. If the school chooses to support the program actively, it can provide an array of resources to help make the TeamSpirit activities fun and appealing.

In some communities youth groups are strong and active organizations. These groups may be affiliated with community centers or churches, or be scout groups, boys or girls clubs, 4H groups and the like. They may function as the primary unit for social activities in a particular community or for a particular segment of the youth population. If this is the case, it makes sense to draw teams from these groups as well as from the schools.

Here are sample guidelines for participating schools and community groups and eligibility criteria for adult advisors, youth participants and Team Leaders.

Participant Schools and Community Groups Should:

- o Recruit an agreed upon number of qualified youth;
- o Recruit qualified adult advisors; and
- o Recognize, encourage and support the activities of the TeamSpirit group by:
 - Allowing them to circulate information about planned activities and special events;
 - Making a meeting room available on pre-approved days;
 - Providing recognition or credit to adult advisors.

Adult Advisors Should:

- o Be concerned about the problem of substance abuse by young people;
- o Be known and liked by the students;
- o Participate fully in the Leadership Training Conference; and
- o Make a commitment to provide active support and guidance to the TeamSpirit group during the coming year.

Youth Participants Should:

- o Have demonstrated leadership potential;
- o Have the trust and respect of peers;
- o Be earning passing school grades; and
- o Have no serious emotional, disciplinary or substance abuse problems.

Youth Team Leaders Should:

- o Meet all youth participant guidelines;
- o Have completed prior course work or training in the area of substance abuse or leadership skills;
- o Attend a training seminar before the conference;
- o Act as a role model; and
- o Be willing to carry out assigned tasks during the conference.

HOW A COMMUNITY CAN START ITS OWN TEAMSPIRIT PROGRAM

To launch TeamSpirit in a community, a sponsoring organization or organizations need to come forward. Almost any organization might wish to sponsor the program, for the prevention of youth substance abuse is in everyone's interest. Many public sector agencies at all levels of government have a mandate to address this problem. Agencies responsible for health, education, mental health, social service, transportation, law enforcement, justice, and housing could all justifiably assume sponsorship. In addition to these public agencies, a private agency such as a foundation, fraternal order or a local business might want to sponsor TeamSpirit.

One organization or agency may come forward with the interest, money and personnel required to develop TeamSpirit. It is likely, however, that more than one organization will provide the basic program resources. In this case, a Task Force should be created, composed of interested individuals from the agencies and organizations that wish to participate. The Task Force would become the decision making body, charged with identifying resources, selecting a coordinator, and providing overall direction to the program.

Staff Resources

The number of staff needed for the program varies according to the activities that are conducted. Although the Coordinator has year-round responsibilities, he or she need not work full-time all year on TeamSpirit. For several months before the conference, however, the Coordinator does need to work full-time. In the month before the Conference, it is likely that at least two additional staff members will be needed to complete last minute tasks. From September through March, 25-50% of the Coordinator's time should suffice.

Financial Resources

The Leadership Training Conference is the major program expense. Although the cost of such a conference will vary in different types of communities and parts of the country, it is likely to range between \$13,000 and \$18,000. This estimate includes participants' food and lodging, supplies, printing, snacks, t-shirts, small honorariums for a few guest speakers and a modest dance party. Since the most expensive item is food and lodging, the overall budget depends largely upon the number of participants and the charge for the facility.

During the Program Activities phase, TeamSpirit requires a limited amount of financial support. Program expenses include the Coordinator (part-time), a newsletter, and the cost of hosting several joint activities for all School/Community Group Teams.

Several sources may be tapped to provide additional funding for the program. It may be possible to use Federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities monies. These are grant-in-aid funds made available to the states either through a state educational agency or via a Governor's discretionary fund. The state highway safety agency may be willing to offer support, as may other state or local agencies involved with youth and/or substance abuse.

Many other organizations and individuals in the community may be happy to donate money, services or specific items to the conference. Through making such contributions, they can be a part of this worthwhile program.

More detailed information about costs and potential funding sources is included in the **TeamSpirit Program Manual**.

The TeamSpirit Program Manual

If you are interested in starting a TeamSpirit Program or in learning more about what it involves, send for a free copy of the **TeamSpirit Program Manual**. This detailed "how to" guide contains information crucial for planning and implementing the program. It includes time and task charts, conference forms, workshop curricula and evaluation instruments.

Training and Technical Assistance

A National TeamSpirit Coordinator is available to provide information and, possibly, technical assistance to communities interested in starting a TeamSpirit Program.

To order a **TeamSpirit Program Manual** or to learn more about available training and technical assistance, write:

Youth Coordinator
Office of Alcohol and State Programs
Room 5130, NTS-21
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

or

National TeamSpirit Coordinator
Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation
7315 Wisconsin Avenue
Suite 900 East
Bethesda, MD 20814

**APPENDIX I
CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS**

Core Curriculum

Drug and Alcohol Effects I
Drug and Alcohol Effects II
Action Planning
DUI Youth Forum
Prevention Forum
Crime and Punishment: Substance Abuse and the Law
Drug and Alcohol-Free Fun
Getting It Together

Elective "Free Round" Workshops

The Media: Whose Side is It On
How To Be The Winner That You Are
Leadership Roles
Special Problems of Children of Alcoholics
How To Be A Friend And "Natural Helper"
How To Talk To Your Parents

Adult Advisor Workshops

Stress and the Professional
Assessing Your Own Chemical Use
Recognizing Substance Abuse and Making Referrals
Sponsors Make a Difference
Negotiating Administrative Roadblocks