



# TOOLS AND TIPS FOR ACTION PLANNING

Once key stakeholders and partners are identified, engage them in the next step of any policy or practice-change process: action planning.

## CONVENE A WORKGROUP

Convening a workgroup with representatives from a state health department, mental health and substance use state agency, mental health and substance use organizations and community-based organizations is an important first step in action planning. It is essential to include a variety of cross-sector stakeholders with diverse experience and perspectives to ensure the approach is comprehensive, reflects best and promising practices, and adequately addresses the challenge. Complex issues require complex solutions. Whenever possible, include people with lived experience (individuals with MH/SUDs) to confirm specific strategies will resonate with and prove effective for the intended audience. Consider engaging stakeholders and partners from the following:

STATE GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS	COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medicaid</li> <li>• Public health department staff</li> <li>• Mental health department staff (e.g., substance use staff, mental health staff)</li> <li>• Human services department staff (if applicable and separate from the public health department)</li> <li>• Title V staff (programs that address critical women’s MH/SUD programming)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health state associations</li> <li>• Mental health and substance use organizations</li> <li>• Pharmacies</li> <li>• Primary care providers</li> <li>• Hospitals</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Persons with lived experience (adult and youth)</li> <li>• Faith-based organizations</li> <li>• MH/SUD advocacy organizations</li> <li>• Other community-based organizations (e.g., community centers)</li> <li>• Peers/peer-led organizations</li> </ul>

During an initial conversation, an existing workgroup may be identified as a natural place to join, instead of creating yet another workgroup with many of the same faces sitting around the table. If so, there may be a need for some additional strategizing to learn how agendas align and how best to “make the case” for shared goals.





## Create a Vision Statement

Before developing an action plan, the workgroup should agree upon a strategic vision for the initiative. The vision statement should be clear, data-informed, future-oriented and aspirational.

### Sample Vision Statement (adapt the topic and vision statement with your one behavioral health specific or organizational change specific topic as needed)

In 12 months, the XYZ Treatment Facility will be a 100% tobacco-free campus with overwhelming support from administration, staff and clients and will also secure dedicated funding of \$15,000 to improve access to tobacco cessation treatment within the facility.

## DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

The workgroup will need to reach consensus on the following questions in the early stages of action planning:

- What is the long-term goal?
  - » Reduce the prevalence of tobacco use in individuals with MH/SUDs?
  - » Increase access to evidence-based tobacco cessation treatment?
  - » Become a 100% comprehensive tobacco-free campus?
- How will progress toward this goal be measured and evaluated? Is this possible with existing resources?
- What are the intermediate and short-term goals?
  - » Increase provider buy-in for integrating tobacco cessation treatment with current services?
  - » Build momentum for tobacco-free treatment settings across the state?
- How will progress toward intermediate and short-term goals be measured and evaluated? Is this possible with existing resources?
- Are roles and expectations for each member of the workgroup clearly defined?
- What expertise or skill is missing from the workgroup that is needed?

The data gathered to understand the state or organization's particular landscape will also inform identification of strategic priorities. Effective action plans are challenging, especially when working across diverse sectors. They are also achievable and should contain the following elements:

- **SMART objectives:** Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.
- **Action steps:** Tangible activities that must be completed to reach objectives. Each action step should detail what needs to take place, who is responsible for doing it, the resources they will need and the performance indicator that will let the rest of the group know if they are taking the right path toward the long-term goal – a compass.
- **System for continuous monitoring:** Progress on all activities and objectives should be continually monitored and evaluated to ensure goals are achieved and that the group remains aligned. This system should also facilitate accountability for all partners.

Remember to be flexible. It is important to have a plan in place but just as critical to respond to emerging needs. Maintain a continual loop of gathering data, assessing progress, checking in with stakeholders and partners and using information to make data-informed decisions and adjustments as needed. Sometimes data (including process data) reveal unanticipated results so be prepared to respond accordingly. For example, recent quitline data suggest fewer individuals with MH/SUDs are calling than originally believed. Is there now a need to develop tailored quitline promotional materials that better resonate with mental health and substance use organizations and individuals with MH/SUDs?

For an action plan template, **see next page**.



**National Behavioral  
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*for Tobacco & Cancer Control*

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR  
MENTAL WELLBEING



# Action Plan Template

**Instructions:** Develop 3-4 SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Attainable/Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) focused on tobacco control and systems-level change. Write them into the appropriate boxes.

SMART OBJECTIVE 1:					
Action Step	Action Step Lead	Targeted Completion Date	Resources Needed	Measure & Performance Indicator	Status Update
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

<b>On a scale from 1-10, how confident are you about achieving this objective?</b> 1 = no confidence, 10 = extremely confident	<b>Confidence score:</b>
<b>On a scale from 1-10, how committed are you to achieving this objective?</b> 1 = no commitment, 10 = extremely committed	<b>Commitment score:</b>



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### SMART OBJECTIVE 2:

Action Step	Action Step Lead	Targeted Completion Date	Resources Needed	Measure & Performance Indicator	Status Update
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

On a scale from 1-10, how confident are you about achieving this objective? 1 = no confidence, 10 = extremely confident

**Confidence score:**

On a scale from 1-10, how committed are you to achieving this objective? 1 = no commitment, 10 = extremely committed

**Commitment score:**

### SMART OBJECTIVE 3:

Action Step	Action Step Lead	Targeted Completion Date	Resources Needed	Measure & Performance Indicator	Status Update
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

On a scale from 1-10, how confident are you about achieving this objective? 1 = no confidence, 10 = extremely confident

**Confidence score:**

On a scale from 1-10, how committed are you to achieving this objective? 1 = no commitment, 10 = extremely committed

**Commitment score:**