

Western Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Core Knowledge and Skills Framework

This framework sets out the minimum level of skills and knowledge required of staff responsible for the development, implementation and evaluation of evidence-based, effective alcohol and other drug prevention activity.

What is alcohol and other drug prevention?

As a general guide, alcohol and other drug (AOD) prevention involves:

1. Stopping the onset of AOD use.
2. Delaying the onset of AOD use.
3. Reducing the likelihood of harm caused by those who choose to use AODs.
4. Reducing the extent or severity of actual harm caused by AOD use¹.

Prevention strategies can involve supply reduction, harm reduction and demand reduction initiatives which together can stop onset of AOD use, delay onset of AOD use, reduce the likelihood of harm and/or reduce the severity of harm from AOD use across communities and population groups.

Who undertakes AOD prevention work?

A range of service providers and community groups provide AOD prevention programs in Western Australia (WA). These include Population Health Professionals, Community Drug Service staff, Local Government Community Development Officers, and Community Health and Well-being Coordinators and Aboriginal Health Organisation staff.

AOD prevention activity may constitute the core business of some professionals, whereas others may spend only a proportion of their work time in prevention related activity. Professionals in these positions have been consulted as part of the development of this framework as they form the primary target group for the framework.

What are core skills and knowledge?

Core knowledge and skills specify a minimum standard of expertise a worker needs in order to carry out their role effectively. AOD prevention workers are expected to undertake relevant study and training in order to acquire the knowledge and skills specified in this *AOD Prevention Skills and Knowledge Framework*. The acquisition and development of knowledge and skills can commence pre-service and continue in service.

¹ Beatty & Allsop, 2009

Specific information is required by those working in specialist prevention areas including social marketing, research and evaluation, liquor licensing and sponsorship. This information is beyond the scope of this document.

Why develop a core knowledge and skills framework?

This framework has been developed to support the implementation of the *Drug and Alcohol Interagency Strategic Framework for Western Australia 2011-2015* as well as for the following purposes:

- To specify the required knowledge and skills of staff who are responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating effective, evidence based AOD prevention activity.
- To assist organisations, employers and employees to develop relevant job descriptions.
- To assist in developing a common understanding within and between organisations of what is involved in undertaking AOD prevention activity.
- To develop a common language between staff undertaking AOD prevention activity.
- To provide a tool for supporting supervision, coaching, mentoring, performance appraisals, career and professional development plans.
- To provide a basis for the planning and development of AOD prevention training and workforce development initiatives.
- To provide a tool to validate and evaluate the role of AOD prevention staff.

This set of knowledge and skills was adapted from the Health Promotion Core Competency Framework, but is specific to undertaking AOD prevention activity. A comprehensive set of Core Competencies for Health Promotion Practitioners is available at: <http://www.healthpromotion.org.au/issues/91-news-item-headline-2>. The *AOD Prevention Core Knowledge and Skills Framework* does not seek to duplicate but rather complement the Australian Health Promotion Association Core Competencies document.

Where does this initiative fit?

The Drug and Alcohol Office (DAO) is leading the development and implementation of a Western Australian *AOD Prevention Workforce Development Plan*². The goal of the *Plan* is as follows:

To have a confident, competent and skilled WA workforce which understands the importance of prevention of AOD related harm and can effectively develop, implement, evaluate and sustain AOD prevention programs and strategies within their local communities and where relevant state-wide.

The core knowledge and skills specified within this framework 'set the scene' for the design and implementation of relevant workforce development

² DAO, unpublished

strategies, which over time will support the achievement of the above-mentioned goal.

Core Knowledge and Skills

1 Knowledge

A staff member carrying out AOD prevention activity is able to demonstrate knowledge of:

- 1.1 Trends relating to AOD use and harm in Western Australia.
- 1.2 Relevant AOD and prevention models, theories and concepts including (but not limited to) population health, health promotion, harm minimisation, social determinants of health, risk and protective factors, prevention paradox, the public health systems approach, social marketing, behaviour change models, liquor licensing, community action, advocacy and community development.
- 1.3 Effective evidence based AOD prevention strategies that can be implemented at a local, state or national level to prevent and reduce AOD use and related harm on a population level.
- 1.4 Local, state and national strategic frameworks, policies and legislation as well as local, state and national approaches to AOD prevention, which can all be used to prevent and reduce AOD related harm.
- 1.5 The meaning of cultural security³ as it applies to working with Aboriginal people and communities.

2 Program planning, implementation and evaluation competencies

2.1 Needs assessments

A staff member carrying out AOD prevention activity is able to:

- 2.1.1 Identify relevant AOD research, information and data sources.
- 2.1.2 Use critical evaluation skills to analyse relevant AOD research, information and data to establish key themes and research findings.
- 2.1.3 Conduct research using appropriate research methodologies in order to explore AOD issues.
- 2.1.4 Consult and involve key stakeholders, including the general public, service users and consumers, carers and experts in relevant areas.
- 2.1.5 Review, analyse and summarise relevant international, national, state and local data, projects and policies.

³ The term culturally secure is a guiding principle that ensures we respect the legitimate cultural rights, values, beliefs and expectations of Aboriginal people and that this approach is central in the development of programs, services, policies and strategies (WADOH n.d.).

- 2.1.6 Develop service development and/or strategic recommendations and prioritise these according to relevant criteria (including budget, time constraints, feasibility and so on).

2.2 Program planning

A staff member carrying out AOD prevention activity is able to:

- 2.2.1 Develop specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound AOD prevention program/project aims and objectives.
- 2.2.2 Select appropriate evidence-based strategies and interventions to achieve program aims and objectives.
- 2.2.3 Conduct or coordinate appropriate pre-testing with target groups to ensure suggested strategies are appropriate and accepted.
- 2.2.4 Where appropriate facilitate community and/or target group ownership of relevant strategies to secure sustainability.
- 2.2.5 Identify and secure required resources, including funding, to implement strategies.
- 2.2.6 Develop a detailed action plan and timeline to guide the implementation of agreed program/project plan.
- 2.2.7 Prepare ethics approvals if carrying out research.
- 2.2.8 Use negotiation, communication and persuasion skills to gain support from local key stakeholders for the implementation of effective evidence based AOD activity.

2.3 Program implementation and evaluation

A staff member carrying out AOD prevention activity is able to:

- 2.3.1 Lead and manage the implementation and monitoring of evidence-based AOD prevention strategies.
- 2.3.2 Develop and where relevant implement a comprehensive AOD prevention program/project risk management plan as part of prevention planning process.
- 2.3.3 Develop an appropriate approach to evaluation as part of the prevention program/project planning process.
- 2.3.4 Conduct formative evaluation during program implementation to ensure continual adaption and program improvements.

- 2.3.5 Implement appropriate evaluation mechanisms to assess program effectiveness.
- 2.3.6 Analyse program/project evaluation findings and communicate findings to appropriate stakeholders as well as use evaluation findings to inform future prevention activity.
- 2.3.7 Engage local stakeholders in implementing prevention activity at a local level.

3 Coalition building

A staff member carrying out AOD prevention activity is able to:

- 3.1 Identify and bring together relevant key stakeholders within and outside their organisation who are relevant to the success of the AOD prevention project or program (e.g. health, social work, Police, housing, business, sporting groups, local government, academia etc)
- 3.2 Recognise the skills, strengths and perspectives of each stakeholder group and facilitate their active participation in the AOD prevention program/project.
- 3.3 Establish an agreed purpose across key stakeholders and where appropriate form a group with appropriate terms of reference.
- 3.4 Maintain group motivation, commitment and active participation.
- 3.5 Effectively network and strengthen partnerships with relevant stakeholder groups through application of appropriate skills (negotiation, problem solving skills, motivating skills, decision making, team work, and delegation).
- 3.6 Facilitate and chair meetings.
- 3.7 Use appropriate written and verbal skills to communicate with relevant audiences (e.g. the general public, professionals, management, media).
- 3.8 In partnership with relevant stakeholders, develop a project/program plan which sets out agreed program/project aims and objectives (see program planning section).
- 3.9 Work with the local coalition to assess community readiness to address identified AOD issues.
- 3.10 Apply cultural competency and political sensitivity when undertaking all AOD prevention work to ensure support, and where appropriate, active engagement is facilitated from relevant local groups.

4 Advocacy

A staff member carrying out AOD prevention activity is able to:

- 4.1 Support/promote relevant AOD prevention key messages in their community.
- 4.2 Develop, or support the development of, a comprehensive advocacy plan identifying key advocacy strategies.
- 4.3 Facilitate and, where appropriate, conduct advocacy to support the implementation of relevant AOD prevention strategies.
- 4.4 Appropriately utilise the media and relevant media outlets (e.g. digital, print, radio) to convey key messages and gain support for AOD prevention strategies.

5 Values and ethics

A staff member carrying out prevention activity is able to:

- 5.1 Understand the complexities and contexts of AOD use, apply cultural and political sensitivity, and uphold a high level of professionalism and ethics when carrying out AOD prevention activity.
- 5.2 Understand and demonstrate culturally secure ways of working with Aboriginal people and communities.

The core knowledge and skills outlined in this framework have been endorsed by the Drug and Alcohol Office Corporate Executive.