

DRUG TAKE BACK TOOLKIT

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WHAT IS A DRUG TAKE BACK DAY?

A Drug Take Back Day is an organized, safe and secure collection and return of prescription drugs to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Individuals can return prescription drugs to specified collection sites for safe disposal.

Drug Take Backs focus on collection prescription drugs that are no longer needed, were prescribed with extra doses, etc., to make sure that they are not misused, sold or otherwise used improperly.

There is a DEA Drug Take Back Day held twice a year in April and October, and there are also permanent collection sites open year round that will accept prescription drugs.

WHY PROMOTE THIS EVENT?

PREVENT

First and foremost, these events help prevent the misuse of prescription drugs by taking away accessibility to them. By collecting these prescription drugs and hosting this kind of event, you can get the entire community involved in prevention programming.

EDUCATE

Promoting a Drug Take Back Day is also a great opportunity to educate your youth, school and community on prevention and prescription drug misuse. Through marketing, information campaigns and at the event, you can disseminate information on the proper disposal of drugs to authorities and what to do at home as well to promote prevention.

UNDERSTAND

Through education and prevention, Drug Take Back Days also provide critical information about understanding individuals who have previously and are currently experiencing a substance use disorder or challenge. Drug Take Back Days can help promote person-first language and eliminate stigmas surrounding substance misuse.

EFFECTIVE PREVENTION STRATEGIES

As you look through this toolkit, we want to encourage all of our teams and individuals to think about effective prevention strategies and best practices!

Plans for Drug Take Back promotion should be structured around evidence-based programs and practices. What does this mean? You should be looking to do and share things that are credible, reliable and effective based on data! What will statistically and beneficially engage the community? What statistics can you provide that can be sourced back to trusted organizations? What will support the cultural diversity of your community and display the cultural competency of your event?

In recent years, we have seen that many of the practices that used to be followed, like scare tactics, are not effective for our youth. It's best to remain informative, engaging and evidence-based to create an impact instead of relying on fear to start conversation and participation.

We always suggest that teams and individuals refer to the [Strategic Prevention Framework](#) as a resource for best practices. The SPF is a reliable foundation for assessing and planning prevention activities, events and more that are most effective and impactful for the communities they support!

PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE

Hand in hand with effective prevention strategies comes person-first language. It's essential, especially in prevention programming that we use language that is respectful and kind.

Person-first language means referring to a person by who they are and not by their disorders or the challenges they are experiencing. For example, instead of referring to someone as "a depressed person" you would say they are "experiencing a mental health challenge."

Furthermore, when speaking about drug prevention, it's important to eliminate the "abuse" terminology. Instead of referring to someone as a "drug abuser" or someone experiencing "drug abuse," you should use "substance use disorder" or "substance use challenge" in a person-first format. When we use abuse terminology we insinuate that individuals experiencing those substance use disorders and challenges are committing serious crimes of hurt to others, which is not the case.

By using the correct, appropriate and respectful terminology, we eliminate the stigma surrounding substance use and the individuals experiencing these challenges.

PLANNING A DRUG TAKE BACK

To be clear - individuals and teams, minors especially, are not legally allowed to collect prescriptions for disposals. Drug Take Back Days are purely focused on marketing a specific day or time period for safe drug disposal to specified collector sites. Teams and individuals looking to host this event should plan on focusing on promoting the site, the time frame and prevention education whether they pick the day or focus on the DEA-chosen date.

It is also important to note that teams and individuals cannot host events at collector sites - these sites are purposefully anonymous to make disposal safe and free of stigma, judgement, etc. The best way to host an event is to spread the knowledge and information as far and wide as possible!

MARKETING

Because the basis of a Drug Take Back Day is marketing, it is important to connect to supporters and members of your organization, your school(s), community and beyond.

There are a number of ways to market, and we suggest using a mixed-approach strategy to do so. The event should be promoted with a copious amount of time for attendees to prepare, understand guidelines, ask questions, etc. Content should have the appropriate resources linked - websites, local first responders, etc.

Marketing should take place on multiple social media platforms, in emails, and on tangible flyers that can be used in local businesses, school, and more, if possible. Using a range of content - videos, pictures, quotes and words, especially on apps that cater to your specific audience, will help spread the word.

It's important to remember that statistically, someone needs to see something eight times before they act on it - whether that be clicking a link, reading an article or otherwise. Promote your event and get others engaged in the process! The more interactions you have, the more visible your content will be.

GET THE COMMUNITY INVOLVED

Getting the community members far and wide involved in your event is a great way to educate the masses and spread the word. This isn't a typical event, so sponsorships and donations aren't necessary, unless supporters are interested in donating to prevention-related foundations or to your Action Team to support your continued programming.

When thinking about the makeup of your community, think about who benefits from this event. What businesses and individuals in your community are also supporting the same cause(s) as you? Are there first responders, local educators, prevention workers and others who would be interested in taking part? Are there youth parents who need to know more information about prescription misuse and disposal? How can you get school administration involved?

There is always benefit in reaching out and discussing common goals! You can create long-term partnerships and support by initiating these connections!

IMPORTANT SAFETY REMINDERS

Drug Take Back Days are very serious and require critical attention to detail - the instructions should be clear, the statistics should be credible and the strategy should be earnest. Again, there should be no scare tactics involved.

That being said, it's possible that participants may try to bring prescriptions to your organization or school instead of the collector site. It's important to remember that if at any time should someone misunderstand the steps, local law enforcement should be called to handle the prescriptions. At no time should youth be handling the prescriptions, and a trusted adult should always be called to connect with law enforcement and hold prescriptions until they can arrive.

Action Teams are not medical professionals nor are they trained law enforcement and should not give medical or any other advice on mental and physical health or particularly dealing with prescriptions. All participants who have medical questions should be advised to call a medical professional.

SOURCES AND CREDITS

This toolkit was made based on material and resources from the [Drug Enforcement Administration \(DEA\)](#) and the [Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#). We are proud to join in supporting drug-free healthy life styles for all our communities through Drug Take Backs.

All materials here were based in part on the DEA and FDA website and resources. Operation Snowball, Inc. and the Cebrin Goodman Teen Institute made additions where fitting and do not look to profit or gain from these materials. If you are interested in further learning about safe drug disposal you can visit the links above to learn about at-home emergency disposal, drop off locations and more.

This toolkit should be used by and shared with Operation Snowball chapters and Cebrin Goodman Teen Institute actions teams only and was made with that specific use and implementation in mind.