

Strategy 6: Environmental Prevention

Definition: This strategy establishes or changes written and unwritten community standards, codes, and attitudes, thereby influencing the incidence and prevalence of ATOD problems.

Environmental Prevention is when we strive to reduce the negative influences that directly and indirectly affect young people in their everyday lives. In other words, changing those things in the environment that promote or normalize the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Here are some examples of how you can include Environmental Prevention Strategies in your Red Ribbon Campaign:

- Encourage store owners/managers to remove (or at least significantly reduce) the alcohol and tobacco advertisements from their businesses, especially in businesses that children go.
- Encourage store owners/managers to check I.D. and commit to not selling alcohol or tobacco to minors.
- Work to change a community policy in neighborhoods where there are alcohol or tobacco billboards.
- Encourage hosts of community sponsored events to not accept alcohol or tobacco sponsorship, especially at activities that are for families.
- Educate parents, teachers and students to look at advertisement and think about the images that are presented to them via print media, television, radio, etc.

Policy Change

It might be well worth the time to focus on local government policies or ordinances designed to reduce youth access to alcohol, tobacco or other drugs in the community. Earlier we addressed the importance of forming community coalitions. These groups are often very active in this area and would love to have your support.

Resources

In the prevention world, Environmental Prevention Strategies continue to be of great interest. That means that there are many excellent resources available. Below are just two Environmental Prevention Strategies that you may incorporate in to your Red Ribbon activities.

Advertising Reduction Campaign (a.k.a. Hands Off Halloween)

Students and advisors work together to visit merchants and ask them to reduce their alcohol and tobacco advertising, especially those targeting youth.

Social Norms Marketing

Students work with adults to develop media campaigns (posters, public service announcements and other materials) that promote the fact that everyone is not engaged in alcohol, tobacco and other drug use or violence.