

# TOGETHER **TO** LIVE .ca

## Worksheet: Sustainability planning



Ontario Centre of Excellence  
for Child and Youth  
Mental Health



Waterloo Region  
Suicide Prevention Council  
[www.wrspc.ca](http://www.wrspc.ca)

This tool was created for youth suicide prevention however it can easily be adapted to suit other sectors of mental health. The Centre would like to acknowledge the support of the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council in the development of this tool.

## Sustainability planning worksheet

Once your community coalition feels that your youth suicide prevention/youth life promotion initiative can and should be in place for a substantial amount of time, you can follow these steps to create a plan for long-term sustainability.

*Any time your coalition considers a new activity, it is important to think about sustainability.*

### What's in a name?

While this worksheet uses the term **coalition**, you may refer to your group of community members as a network, working group, task force, alliance, partnership or any other term for a collaborative effort. Try not to get caught up in the terms - what's important is knowing how you'll work together so that everyone's on the same page.

### Have you checked out these tools?

We suggest having a look at the tools listed below before creating your sustainability plan.

- The building a coalition worksheet will walk you through the essential steps of building a coalition.
- The strategic planning worksheet walks you through the steps of strategic planning to identify the activities/interventions your coalition will put into place.
- The evaluation planning worksheet guides you through the steps of evaluating your coalition and its activities.

## STEP 1: Clarify the goals and context for sustaining your coalition's youth suicide prevention/youth life promotion initiative.

Planning for sustainability should be done from the beginning of the community mobilization process and should be connected to your strategic action plan. Even if you're further along in the community mobilization process, it's never too late to start thinking about sustainability. To start a sustainability plan, consider the following questions.

**Tip:** *It may feel overwhelming to look at all of your coalition's goals at once. Start by picking one goal and create a plan to sustain your work to achieve that particular goal.*

1. What **aspects of your coalition's initiative** need to be sustained to achieve its goals? Think about the structure of your coalition (i.e., how you're working together, roles and responsibilities), the activities (e.g., gatekeeper training, postvention protocol) and results (i.e. evaluation).

*Note: This tool has been adapted from The Community Toolbox section on sustaining the work or initiative. This can be downloaded from <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/sustaining-work-or-initiative>. The Centre would like to acknowledge the support of the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council in the development of this tool.*

2. How are you currently **funding and gathering resources** for your coalition's initiative?

3. What **resources** are needed to support the current structure and organization of your coalition (e.g., funding sources, fundraising activities, community support, member involvement/engagement/collaboration, skills) and its activities? Think about those resources that **push**, such as funding, and those that **pull** (i.e. what doesn't go away when the funding goes away), such as pre-existing strengths in a community (e.g., culture of inclusion, expertise, knowledge) and in-kind support from participating organizations.

See **Appendix A** for a list of factors that influence sustainability these can help you think through push and pull factors specific to your coalition.

4. What are **potential obstacles** to sustaining your community's initiative?

## STEP 2: Create a plan to anticipate what resources will be necessary to sustain your coalition's youth suicide prevention/youth life promotion initiative.

So you've thought about the context surrounding your coalition's initiative in step 1, and through the strategic action planning worksheet, you've prioritized activities/interventions to put into action. Now it's time to think about the anticipated resources that will be necessary to sustaining the work.

### 1. Budget

- What are the projected expenses for your coalition and its activities (e.g., salaries, office expenses, rent, utilities, phone and computer expenses, evaluation, equipment, travel, volunteer recruitment and recognition, etc.)?
- How are you generating income and what amount are you projected to receive?
- Based on your anticipated budget, what resources are needed to sustain your coalition and its activities?
- If there are limited resources, how will you prioritize which activities to maintain (e.g., those most important and/or cost effective)? For priority setting strategies, check out [setting priorities](#).

### 2. Goals for financial resources

- What specific goals does your coalition have for financial resource generation? Think about immediate and long-term goals.

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### 3. Other resources

- What are the projected resources needed for your coalition and its initiative besides funding (e.g., time, materials, motivation and commitment among community members, volunteers, community support, leadership buy-in and support, etc.)?
- Are you able to leverage any of these from pre-existing strengths within your community? If so, how?
- What ways can you generate these resources?

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### STEP 3: Identify specific strategies your coalition will use to sustain your youth suicide prevention initiative.

What strategies will you use to sustain your coalition’s structure and activities (including evaluation)? You will use the identified strategies to create your coalition’s sustainability plan using a table in step 5.

**Some ideas include:**

- use a train-the-trainer model for gatekeeper training
- use a mentorship model to allow newer members to learn from more experienced members
- think about shared leadership to help sustain the work when a person gets busy or leaves
- share positions and resources among organizations
- share responsibility and work between organizations involved in your coalition
- incorporate your initiative directly into a public or organizational budget for the long term
- incorporate the initiative’s activities or services into another organization with a similar mission
- access volunteers for specific services/duties
- apply for grants to foundations (e.g., Trillium), provincial organizations, businesses (e.g., Bell), service clubs
  - o **Tip: Grants for service clubs are easier to write and take less reporting, leaving you with more time to do the work you want to do. Be sure to look at their websites for guidelines.**
- apply for a Google Grant, which is available for all non-for-profit organizations in Canada
- tap into available personnel resources in other organizations that can be shared at low or no cost
- solicit in-kind support (e.g. access to office space or supplies and equipment)
- develop and host a fundraiser
- Ask an organization to pay for a brochure. Promote their business by placing their logo on the brochure. The same can work for t-shirts, stickers, pens and any promotional material.
- garner buy-in and support from Band & Council/local government/leadership
- partner with local businesses and corporations
- consider third party (i.e., those not actually involved or directly benefiting from your initiative) funding/fundraising
  - o **Tip: Third party fundraising takes work on the part of the community. Make sure you have an understanding of the event and that it aligns with your mission and values, and provide guidelines if needed.**
- develop a fee-for-service structure
- apply for government funding – municipal, provincial, federal (e.g., local public health units, ministries or departments of health or public health)
- secure endowments or planned giving arrangements
- establish a donor or membership base
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

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## STEP 4: Develop a communication plan to secure resources for your coalition's initiative

Developing a communication plan helps you reach your target audience for sustainability (i.e. who do you want to influence and how will you sway them?) Use the questions below as a guide to develop your communication plan. For more detailed information on developing a communication plan, check out the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health's [knowledge mobilization toolkit](#).

<p><b>WHY:</b> Why are you doing what you do?</p>	
<p><b>WHAT:</b> What does your coalition offer? What are the costs and benefits (or value added) of your coalition's initiative? What message do you want to deliver about your coalition's initiative?</p>	
<p><b>WHO:</b> Who are you targeting with your message? Who will be delivering the message?</p>	
<p><b>HOW:</b> How will you deliver your message (e.g., funding proposal, press release, community forum, social media, etc.)? How will you make it easier for people to contribute, learn about, or be involved in your coalition's initiative?</p>	
<p><b>WHEN:</b> When do you plan to deliver your message?</p>	

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## Tips for promoting your community coalition's initiative:

- ✓ Key messages can be sent out to all key partners, stakeholders, politicians and policy makers to promote your coalition's activities or accomplishments (e.g., a new program brought to the community, number of people trained). Think about whom else can benefit from this knowledge, take the information and promote it to their networks and/or take action and make changes.
- ✓ Keep your message to one page and be sure to include all contact information (including the key person to connect with if press wants to talk to you). Including quotes from some key people is always helpful.
- ✓ Develop a list of all cost-free ways you can promote your coalition and its activities (e.g. local cable station, radio, community events section in your local newsletter). Each time you promote your coalition add the name of the contact to your list. You could even have a volunteer develop the contact list and use it when promoting new activities.
- ✓ Social media can be a powerful way of promoting your coalition's initiative but be sure to have appropriate policies in place (for reputational risk, suicide and self-harm, inappropriate use of hashtag, etc.) and a person dedicated to monitoring your network's social media account.
- ✓ Develop a three minute elevator speech for each of the members of your coalition to use. Be succinct and clear. You never know who you might run into and where!
- ✓ Learn and share with other community coalitions provincially, nationally and internationally. Getting outside perspectives can be really helpful to promote your work, instill new ideas and keep you current and knowledgeable. A good place to start is our [communities in action page](#).
- ✓ Stay connected to the evidence and the information/resources available. Some suggestions on where to access information and resources:
  - Togethertolive.ca/vivonsensemble.ca
  - Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention
  - Ontario Association for Suicide Prevention (or other provincial organizations)
  - CSPCNetwork
  - Centre for Suicide Prevention
  - social media: Follow national and international players on Twitter
  - Google alerts: Sign up for google alerts using suicide prevention as a key word. Google will email you each day the top news stories of the day that include suicide prevention in the title.

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**STEP 5: Outline your coalition’s plan for sustainability.**

For each strategy identified in step 3, prioritize and develop a specific plan of action using the table below.

<b>STRATEGIES</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>  What activities will be carried out? List chronologically.	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>  Who will do it?	<b>TIMELINE</b>  When will you start and complete each?	<b>RESOURCES</b>  What are the specific resources needed to complete it? (e.g. volunteers, staff, facility, dollars, etc.)	<b>FEEDBACK LOOPS</b>  Who needs to know about it? Think big!

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Appendix A: Factors influencing sustainability

<p><b><u>Context (internal and external)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> climate</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> culture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> leadership buy-in and support</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> role clarity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> readiness among community partners</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> motivation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> lack of opposition</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> setting characteristics (structure, policy)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> system/policy change/support</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> alignment/integration (i.e., program need and priority alignment)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> awareness/visibility among community stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Characteristics of your strategy</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> fit with context</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> flexibility</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> complexity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> assessing the evidence (i.e. is it effective in producing the desired outcome?)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> ability to maintain fidelity (i.e. sticking to the prescribed intervention)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> added value/cost effectiveness</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> ability to be modified</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Resources/capacity</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> champions (internal or external)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> sufficient and diversified funding</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> workforce (staffing, skills, expertise)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> resources</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> community/stakeholder support and involvement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> information technology systems and support</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> allocated time</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Processes and interactions</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> engagement/relationship-building among community partners, especially with those stakeholders who have the power to drive change (i.e. those who have the money, authority and desire for the change you seek)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> shared decision-making among stakeholders</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> adaptation/alignment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> integration of rules/policies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> evaluation and feedback and using this data to inform activities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> ongoing training and education</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> collaboration/partnership and the history of those collaborations/partnerships             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- interagency and multi-sectoral involvement is important</li> <li>- grassroots and professional organization involvement are both important</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> navigating competing demands</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> ongoing support</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> planning based on a clear vision with well-defined guidelines and role clarity, along with a commitment to the goals and vision of the initiative</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> knowledge dissemination and mobilization (e.g., publicizing results) inside and outside network</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> developing local expertise</li> </ul>

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