

COMMUNITIES TALK ACTIVITIES COME IN ALL SIZES

Find Your Perfect Fit

Virtual *Communities Talk* activities take place in varying sizes and use a range of tools and platforms. Here are some thoughts on how to host an activity that's just right for your community. And remember, while there are many popular calendar observances that align well with prevention activities, there is no one magic day: You can strengthen underage drinking and other substance misuse prevention efforts in your community throughout the year.

To decrease your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19, CDC recommends that you do not gather with people who do not live with you at this time. Attending events and gatherings increases your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. For current information from the CDC on event planning and preparedness, [click here](#).

No matter when or how you choose to host a virtual *Communities Talk* activity, be sure to share the highlights with SAMHSA through the [Communities Talk website](#) and post updates, photos, and videos on social media using the hashtag #CommunitiesTalk. Doing this helps others learn from you!

Small-Group Activities Tips (Up to 25 people)

- When hosting **youth/young adult group activities**, use the meeting platform that your community is most familiar with (such as Zoom, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams) to make sure it goes off without a hitch. These platforms allow for more intimate interactions where all participants can share their screens, communicate in the chat, and mute/unmute themselves as they need to.
- A perk of meetings or activities this size is that you can tailor the session for your attendees; small gatherings often allows the option for participants to decide how they want to spend the time and what to focus on. This works particularly well if you are hosting an intimate conversation with someone in your organization or a prevention leader in your community.
 - Alternatively, small groups are also the best size to review the content in one of [SAMHSA's Tips for Teens](#) or [SAMHSA's The Sound of Your Voice: Talking With Your College-Bound Young Adult About Alcohol](#) and then invite dialogue among participants. For the Tips for Teens, you could host an open and honest discussion with young adults about alcohol use among their peers.
- When hosting meetings of this size, start off with a little bit of fun. Encourage attendees to apply screen backgrounds or filters that say something about their personality or interests. Doing this is a good conversation starter and can help break the ice.
- Other activities that would work well for smaller groups include:
 - Providing guidance in wellness activities that could take root as an alternative to alcohol or other substance use. These might include group yoga, meditation, or a paint class, which can help reduce stress (a common reason youth turn to substances);

- Partnering with local schools to host prevention curriculum programs during health class or directly “after” school; and
- Convening a state-/county-/city-wide group of other preventionists and meet virtually every week to share ideas.

Medium-Sized Group Activities Tips (26 – 150 people)

- When hosting a **virtual town hall or open forum**, Zoom Meetings or Webex are your best bets. These platforms allow you to share your screen and engage with the audience, while also giving them the opportunity to unmute and interact with your team as the activity requires.
 - Zoom Meetings allow you to utilize breakout rooms so you can better replicate what an in-person meeting/event might look like and achieve.
 - Planning stipends can be used to purchase subscriptions to large meeting platforms that will help you share your prevention messages.
- Invite parents to join you for a “Hidden in Plain Sight” session where you visually walk them through potential places their child may be hiding alcohol and/or drug paraphernalia.
- Other activities that would work well for medium-sized groups include:
 - Host a virtual cooking session, where families tune in and cook along with a guest chef;
 - Host trivia nights with prevention themes and giveaways (Note: Planning stipends cannot be used to purchase giveaways and prizes); and
 - Work with local schools to distribute grab-and-go kits that include lessons or information on underage drinking prevention with school meals or at other community locations.

Large-Group Activities Tips (150+ people)

- When hosting online activities such as **panels or moderated Q&A’s** for more than 100 people, invest in Zoom Webinar or stream the discussion on Facebook Live. These platforms give you the ability to mute everyone so that they cannot interrupt your activity. However, the audience will be able to see, listen, and ask questions on both platforms, so the environment is still well-suited for audience engagement.
- **Recording** these activities and posting them to your organization’s Facebook or YouTube pages also can increase the number of total views, as people can watch the recording on their own time.
- If you want to host a quick **one-on-one conversation** with a prevention expert in your community, Instagram Live will help you reach the most people in real time. Alternatively, you could use Facebook Live depending on your intended audience.
- Other activities that have the potential to reach large groups include:
 - Hosting an online movie screening followed by a Q&A;
 - Creating a “Take a Break” prevention activity book for teenagers that includes adult coloring pages, mindfulness tips, self-care wordsearch or crossword, and mad libs.

- Include prevention tips and/or underage drinking facts throughout, as well as references at the end with the solutions and/or resources;
- Designing lawn signs with a positive message about community health and have people place orders on your website;
 - Developing and sharing community prevention bingo and encourage members of your community to fill them out on social media; and
 - Organizing activities that could take root as an alternative to drinking or using other substances. This could mean creating a door-hanger card that young adults can put their names and phone numbers on, and place on their neighbors' doors to introduce themselves and offer help with raking leaves, shoveling snow, etc.—anything that might encourage youth to participate in healthy activities.

Not seeing the right virtual activity for your community? Get inspired by reading (or watching) additional [Communities Talk Success Stories](#) available online.