



Multilevel Leadership

Finding and Supporting Individuals to Champion Suicide, Overdose, and ACEs Prevention Efforts

Roadmap Timeline Process

- 1 Determine the role of your champions
- 2 Find your champions
- 3 Prepare and support your champions
- 4 Honor your champions

A **champion** is someone who works within a community and dedicates him/herself to promoting change and whose actions can serve to “maintain, grow, and/or evolve the community”. The work of a champion may include new interventions or available services but often includes **promoting a shift in perspective about a community issue**.

Anyone can be a champion within a community, and champions are most successful when they have passion for the topic, combined with knowledge and tools to spread information to the community.

Community leaders and influential community members often champion topics that are important to them without anyone asking them to.

LHDs can heighten awareness and strengthen community support by strategically identifying, training, and supporting community members who are enthusiastic about the topic and who can share knowledge, increase awareness, and advocate for new efforts. This resource is intended as a roadmap towards finding and developing champions at the intersection of suicide, overdose, and ACEs prevention.



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1 Determine the role of your champions

- Think about the role you would like your champion to play in expanding the community's prevention efforts
- These may include things like:
 - » Increasing awareness
 - » Garnering interest and gaining buy-in for programming
 - » Advocating for funding for programming
 - » Lobbying for changes to policy and practice

2 Find your champions

- Decide the ideal profile(s) of a champion:
 - » What are the educational requirements (if any)?
 - » Who would you like your champions to engage the most with in your community?
 - » Will you plan to engage those with lived experience?
 - » How will your process of choosing champions be equitable?
- Look for those individuals within the LHD who have expressed a passion for expanding the community's prevention efforts.
- Consider emergent leaders in your community who may be interested in championing these efforts.
- Recruit a diverse group of potential champions through local chapters and groups, and community education events (e.g., trainings open to the public, town halls).

3 Prepare and Support your Champions

- Work with your champions to decide what type of information your champions need. Some examples of questions you may think about include:
 - » What basic knowledge about the intersection of suicide, overdose, and ACEs is needed?
 - » What information should they know about the community itself?
 - » What is the community's current narrative and understanding of those impacted by suicide, overdose, and ACEs?
 - » Where are the biggest barriers to increasing awareness and buy-in?
- Determine the best ways to provide champions with the necessary information and/or skills.
 - » Consider topic-specific workshops, panels with experts, and train-the-trainer workshops
 - » Monthly or quarterly Q&A sessions
 - » Existing mentors who could be mentors for newer champions
 - » Materials (e.g., PowerPoint slides and other materials for delivering community training or information sessions; resource guides)
- Develop a means of evaluating skills and expertise of champions.
- Assist champions in developing their platform for championing by
 - » Offering to host and promote trainings
 - » Sharing opportunities and information on social media
 - » Including their name widely as a champion for suicide, overdose, and ACEs



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Honor your Champions

- Develop a means to show gratitude to your champions.
- Consider and stay within your resources.
- Utilize social media, local press releases, blogs or newspaper article, podcast, television interviews to promote and recognize your champion's work.
- Prioritize recognizing the work your champions are doing:
 - » At regularly scheduled intervals (e.g., monthly, quarterly, annually)
 - » When a goal related to the champion's work is achieved (e.g., funding is received for a new initiative)
 - » Special dates related to the work the champion is doing (e.g., September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and National Recovery Month; April is Child Abuse Prevention Month)