

Partners in Prevention Coalition Toolkit

Step 1 Coffee Talk: Conversation Topics to Help with Coalition Building

One of the best ways to build confidence in your coalition is to build relationships with your potential (or existing) coalition members through individual interactions. Ask colleagues to grab a cup of coffee or take a walk on campus and chat about their interests, the coalition, etc. Here are some suggested topics for the conversation:

Ask your colleague about their previous work and what brought them to the campus.

- **If your colleague has worked at another campus**, ask them to share with you about how they collaborated with the AOD/mental health colleagues at their previous campus.
- **If your colleague is new to higher education**, ask what drew them. Offer to answer any questions about the institution or working in higher ed in general.

Ask them about how they believe alcohol, drugs, mental health, violence, etc. affect their work. Listen attentively and even if you disagree, make note of their perspective.

Get to know them on a personal level; ask about interests, their friends/family, etc. and share a bit about yourself.

Ask your colleague about their career aspirations. The person may have interest in positions on campus or in higher education for which participation in the coalition may be helpful to their work.

Share your favorite accomplishment related to health and well-being and ask your colleague to do the same!

Tell your colleague about your work and introduce the coalition. Share its goals/focus and any other important details; ask them for their thoughts and feedback.

Listen attentively for win-win situations. Are there ways their membership would benefit the coalition? Are there things coalition membership would provide to them (connections on campus, training and professional development, etc.)?

Feel free to brainstorm other topics, but remember to let the conversation flow freely.

Overall it's important to make that connection and open the door for further conversations and collaboration.