

Alcohol Learning from Tobacco

Sharing Advocacy's Path:
More Alike than Different

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On March 21 & 22, 2012
many people
passionate about the health of Nova Scotians
and
passionate about healthy alcohol policy
gathered in Truro.

They were invited to learn and to share at a
Knowledge Exchange Event.

Over two days
people who have been advocating
with tobacco control
through the years shared their experiences
of what worked, and of what did not.

This shared learning became a key element
in focusing the work underway
by people advocating
for a change in the culture of alcohol.

It was a great event



Even the Weather Cooperated!



The Planning

- Hosted by IFNS, organized by individuals involved with health alcohol policy work from across the province.
- focused on engaging like-minded individuals; consensus that alcohol is an issue, ...no need to convince
- “By invitation only” –
 - To healthy alcohol policy leaders in each district health authority
 - All those working in tobacco control and healthy alcohol policy were invited to attend.
- focused for participation/active learning with many group discussions, both big and small, activities to engage all participants

The Event

- Sold out – More than 90 participants registered.
- As space was limited, “first come first served” meant not all interested were able to attend.
- Key Events
 - Learning the history of tobacco control in N.S.
 - Bridging into alcohol through “high school dance” discussion, “world café sessions, “surprise guest”
 - Reviewing current work on alcohol and discussing how to build on the successes

Spread the Message: Tweeting

by Dan Steeves and Holly Gillis...and others

- This is like a reunion.
- Addressing alcohol industry has to play a part.
- You have to be crazy to do this work. Passionate people.
- Social Marketing takes – energy, evidence and consistent leadership
- Injury Free Nova Scotia leading the province. Alcohol leads to injury.

- Meaningful work takes place at district and NGO.
- Expect the unexpected. Have a team.
- Be humble. Ask for help. Always be looking for new partners.
- We need to change the adult world children live in.
- It is o.k. to do this work. Tobacco control and healthy alcohol policy.

- Change is a dance; sometimes you're a wallflower, sometimes you dance. Networking influences policy.
- We have evidence that educating people is not the best route; yet we go to it first. Need policy for action.
- If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go further go together.
- Advocacy is opportunistic – be ready, have the evidence and jump when the doors open.

- Build on stories and share local data. People respond when its not a judgment but an experience that is shared.
- It is important to be a bit ahead of the crowd but not too far that you leave people behind.
- If you are not hearing from someone, you're not doing the right thing. Change your action. Risk makes change happen.
- We used to smoke in elevators at St. Martha's.

What We Learned

While Alcohol is a different issue from tobacco in some respects, there are many commonalities and a reason for similarities in our approach to advocacy.

We do not have the luxury of waiting for perfect information, for perfect timing, or for a formal invitation to act.

The time is now. Do not wait to get involved. Start locally.

Get clear on your key messages. Share them far and wide. Be agile in changing your messages as the work progresses.

Explore hosting a future learning event. Focus on success stories and learning from what works.

Understanding the industry and the role they play is critical to this work.

Evaluation is essential to learn from the event and each other.

Some reflections from the session:

- Be prepared for the long haul
- The only way to do this is together
- Invest in relationships and in partnership
- Don't let missteps or perceived failure define you
- Show your passion and model accountability
- Be realistically ambitious

- Not everyone is going to proceed with this work at the same pace – that is o.k.
- Know you sometimes need to be patient and you sometimes need to be impulsive
- What you are pursuing will sometimes be unpopular. It helps if you can wear your “thick skin” outfit.
- Being respected trumps being liked every time. We are pursuing the right work for the right reasons.

Some Key Points from Dr. Robert Strang

(Chief Medical Officer of Health in N.S.)

- The key learning from tobacco is that real progress comes when the focus is on creating supportive policies rather than a focus on education and treatment
- The first step in moving alcohol policy work forward, and where we are today in N.S. is building awareness, understanding and a willingness to act at a community level (mobilizing the voice of the general community)
- Not only is policy-based advocacy work o.k. to do, it is necessary to truly make a difference at a population level.
- “Let’s get going and I will support you wherever I can.”

Session Participants make Action Plans in many areas

- Advocacy
- Changing Culture
- Community Engagement
- Knowledge Mobilization
- Leadership
- Making Partnerships
- Municipal Alcohol Policy
- School/University policy

Two-Phase Evaluation

Phase one:

at the event, measuring goals of event being met
(through paper and online)

Phase two:

follow-up after 6 months to determine the impact of
the event long-term

- progress made on participant goals
- barriers experienced
- Supports required to move work forward?

Everyone has a role to play

IFNS committed to moving some policy pieces forward and has articulated the following

(radio, print, social media, community sessions)

ACCESS: Moratorium on further alcohol outlets until a Municipal Alcohol Policy is undertaken in HRM.

ADVERTISING: No alcohol advertising where children play. (through regulations in place through a Municipal Alcohol Policy)

PRICING: We want higher percentage alcohol to cost more per drink to buy than lower percentage alcohol. (..some form of volumetric pricing)

Kimberly Sleeman-Banks was a surprise visitor, and very persuasive in her promotion of the alcohol industry.



Alcohol is a big issue.
Tobacco is a big issue.

The potential for meaningful change
and a healthier and safer Nova Scotia
lies with us.

We are in this together.



Are there any questions?



Thank you