







Think. Talk. Reflect. Act.

Summary of the Options

The evidence is clear: alcohol and drugs, when abused, are taking a heavy toll on our health, safety, productivity, and economy. History has proven that it's a problem with no easy solution.

During the dialogue, we considered different perspectives on what to do when alcohol and drug use becomes a problem to society. Our task now is to reflect on our conversation and weigh the advantages and drawbacks of different approaches to the issue.

OPTION ONE Keep People Safe	OPTION TWO Address Conditions that Foster Substance Abuse	OPTION THREE Uphold Individual Freedom
<p>Our top priority must be to protect people from the dangers posed by substance abuse, according to this option. To keep people safe, we must tightly regulate and control the production and use of alcohol and drugs, as well as impose penalties for people who break the rules.</p>	<p>We must recognize the critical role society plays regarding how and why people use drugs and alcohol, according to this option. It is our shared responsibility to change the social, cultural, and economic conditions that foster widespread substance use and abuse.</p>	<p>We must respect people's freedom while offering them the means to act responsibly, according to this option. We must provide the information and accessible treatment options people need to make their own choices, as well as reform laws that are unduly intrusive or unfair.</p>
<p>Potential Actions </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce substance use and abuse in the workplace. • Assume personal responsibility for at-home drinking parties. • Reserve harsh penalties for serious harm. • Treat users to reduce prison recidivism. • Develop methods for determining marijuana impairment. 	<p>Potential Actions </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce glamorization of substance use in entertainment. • Promote alcohol-free activities. • Limit advertising of prescription drugs. • Create more and better jobs in disadvantaged communities. • Offer substance-abuse treatment that is culturally sensitive. 	<p>Potential Actions </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legalize and regulate certain less-harmful substances. • Increase research of potentially hazardous substances. • Expand education and harm-reduction efforts. • Offer treatment and recovery programs to all who seek help. • Reform drug sentencing laws.
<p>Possible Drawbacks and Trade-offs </p> <p>This option takes too much of a “nanny state” approach and infringes on individual privacy and choice. Its focus on externally imposed rules discourages people and communities from coming up with their own solutions to the problems created by substance abuse. This option is also likely to result in even higher incarceration rates, leaving fewer resources for treatment and recovery programs.</p>	<p>Possible Drawbacks and Trade-offs </p> <p>This option suggests that people bear little responsibility for their choices when it comes to using substances. It also requires too much time and too many resources to turn around impoverished communities when people need help now. This option invites too much government control over private businesses and could limit our access to products, such as entertainment and prescription drugs.</p>	<p>Possible Drawbacks and Trade-offs </p> <p>This option places too much confidence in the hope that people will use substances responsibly and increases the potential risk to others, especially the children in their care. Without serious consequences, people have little incentive to change their behavior. Also, this option hinges on government and industry to provide unbiased research into substances and their effects.</p>



Reflection Questions

- What new information or insights did we gain?
- What approaches are we most willing to support, and why?
- What approaches are we least willing to support, and why?
- What tough choices do we still need to grapple with?



Moving to Action

What opportunities for action emerged from the dialogue? (See inside back cover for more questions.)

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Moving to Action

Most people who participate in community dialogues want to do more than talk about the problem; they also want to consider actions that will improve the situation. What are the opportunities for action that emerged from this forum?

? WHAT CAN WE DO?

- What can we each do personally to address alcohol and drug abuse?
- What can our communities do about the issue?
- What policies—local, state or national—should be created or changed?

? WHERE SHOULD WE START?

- What actions are most likely to have the greatest impact?
- What actions are the most doable in terms of time, resources, and public will?
- Who needs to be involved?
- What will be our next steps?

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