



Community Educational Forum

How to organize an educational forum featuring the DVD *Drugs: True Stories* and *Words Can Work: When Talking About Drugs* booklets.

DVDS and booklets available from Blake Works are an ideal catalyst for community dialogue about the challenges facing young people.

Blake Works co-hosted a successful two-hour educational forum featuring *Drugs: True Stories* and *Words Can Work: When Talking About Drugs* at the Massachusetts State House.

You can have a well-attended educational forum in your community by following this step-by-step plan.

Four months before the event

- Invite organizations to co-host the event. (May include representatives of your Department of Health, your state Senators or Representatives, local youth organizations, PTA and PTO and schools.)

Three months

- Hold first meeting of the co-hosts.
- Pick a time and place for the forum.
- Decide who to invite. (Blake Works and our co-hosts invited public health officials, educators, policymakers, youth advocates, and peer leaders.)
- Pick moderator/facilitator for the event.
- Develop a budget. (Costs include the DVD, *Words Can Work* booklets, refreshments, and may include audio/visual equipment.)
- List potential sponsors. (insurance companies, businesses, community foundations, hospitals, HMOs, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, sports teams, Departments of Health)
- Identify volunteers to set up, welcome attendees, and clean up at forum.
- List potential speakers and panel members. Include a health care professional; a parent who has dealt with a child addicted to drugs; and representatives of local substance abuse or youth serving organizations.
- Assign tasks (finding the event space; contacting speakers/panel members; identifying funding.)

- Schedule next planning meeting.

Six weeks

- Finalize speakers and panel members.
- Create e-invite (Email info@wordscanwork.com to request template)
- Co-hosts email e-invite to their membership and contacts. (Determine who receives and logs the RSVPs.)
- Write press release (Email info@wordscanwork.com to request template)
- Reserve audio/visual equipment (large screen TV or projector, microphones for speakers and panel members)
- Order DVD and *Words Can Work* booklets. (A sponsor can provide each attendee with a page including the DVD and booklets.)
- Plan refreshments.

One week

- Confirm speakers, refreshments, audio/visual equipment, and set-up/clean-up volunteers.
- Send press release and follow up with calls to local media.

Day of event

- Ensure sufficient seating for everyone.
- Copy any handouts, including a program. (Email info@wordscanwork.com to request template) We suggest having extra copies. People who didn't pre-register may show up for the forum.
- Review agenda, videos, and handouts.
- Set up a registration table with sign-in sheets. Give representative of each organization a package including the DVD and Words Can Work booklets.
- Check all AV equipment.
- Queue video *Drugs: True Stories*.

Follow up

- E-mail evaluation form to attendees. (Email info@wordscanwork.com to request template)