From Nothing Works to Unleashing the Power of Prevention

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thanks to:
National Institute on Drug Abuse
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
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Human Development
And to Our
State Collaborators

Colorado DHS Alcohol & Drug Abuse Division

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Oregon DHS Addictions & Mental Health Division

Utah Division of Substance Use & Mental Health

Washington Division of Behavioral Health & Recovery
“In the Beginning” (Before NPN)

Substance Abuse Prevention in the 1970’s

• Information about drugs and their effects.
• “Affective education” and building self-esteem.
• Just say “NO”.
Results from Early Drug Abuse Prevention Efforts

• All ineffective (Elmquist, 1995; Hanson, 1992; Moskowitz, 1989).

• Drug information programs increased drug use in some studies (Tobler, 1986).

Lesson: Untested good ideas can sometimes make things worse.
Progress: Public Health Approach - Risk focused prevention

- Identification of predictors of substance abuse as targets for preventive intervention ...

- ACEs and more.
## Risk Factors for Adolescent Problems

### Community
- Availability of Drugs
- Availability of Firearms
- Community Laws and Norms Favorable Toward Drug Use, Firearms, and Crime
- Media Portrayals
- Transitions and Mobility
- Low Neighborhood Attachment and Community Disorganization
- Extreme Economic Deprivation

### Family
- Family History of the Problem Behavior
- Family Management Problems
- Family Conflict
- Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behavior

### School
- Academic Failure Beginning in Late Elementary School
- Lack of Commitment to School

### Individual/Peer
- Early and Persistent Antisocial Behavior
- Alienation and Rebelliousness
- Friends Who Engage in the Problem Behavior
- Favorable Attitudes Toward the Problem Behavior
- Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior
- Constitutional Factors
Progress: Health Promotion & Positive Youth Development

Build Protective/nurturing environments and individual strengths

- Protective factors predict less substance abuse, even in the presence of risk.
Five Important Elements for Protection

SOCIAl DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Opportunities
Skills
Recognition

HEALTHY BEHAVIORS

Clear Standards
Bonding

Individual Characteristics
Progress: 35 Years of Prevention Testing

Controlled trials have identified over 60 effective policies and programs for preventing adolescent behavioral health problems including substance abuse, depression, anxiety, violence and delinquency.

Effective programs: www.blueprintsprograms.com


Effective policies and programs can save money: www.wsipp.wa.gov/
Effective Prevention Programs

Examples:

Good Behavior Game, Life Skills Training,
Positive Action, Project Northland,
Raising Healthy Children,
Achievement Mentoring- Middle school, ATLAS,
BASICS, Coping Power, Keep Safe,
Familias Unidas, Strengthening Families 10-14,
Strong African-American Families,
Guiding Good Choices,
MST, Functional Family Therapy
Effective Prevention Policies

Examples:

- Graduated Driver Licensing
- Night Driving Restrictions
- Social Host Liability
- Increased Taxes - Alcohol & Tobacco
- Minimum Legal Drinking Age – Age of Tobacco Possession
- Tobacco Clean Air Restrictions - Smoking Bans
- Alcohol & Tobacco Sales Restrictions (outlet density regulations, single cigarette & vending machine prohibitions)… Marijuana?
Beyond “Environmental” Versus “Individual” versus “Developmental” Prevention

- Policies AND programs
- Community norms AND life skills training
- Graduated drivers licensing AND parent education

Different interventions address different risks – which ones are most needed depends on levels of specific risk and protective factors in a community*
The Challenge:
Different Communities, Different Needs
Communities differ in:

- Levels of youth behavioral health problems
- Levels of risk and protective factors
- Resources and capacity
- Norms and values
Progress: Statewide data systems based on student surveys and public data

- Create opportunity for data driven prevention planning at state AND community levels.

- Supported through SPF SIGs
For best chance of positive local effects

Choose tested and effective policies and programs to address the most prevalent risks and build protection in the community as measured through student surveys and public records.
Progress: Prevention Operating Systems

Development and testing of operating systems for choosing and implementing effective preventive interventions community wide.
Effective Community Prevention Operating Systems

- PROSPER
- Communities That Care

• have shown significant effects in reducing adolescent drug use and promoting behavioral health community wide in randomized trials.
Progress Summary

• Prevention science has identified risk and protective factors for substance abuse and other problems.

• Preventive interventions that address these factors have been found to be effective in reducing behavioral health problems in controlled trials.

• Community prevention efforts should include a combination of locally chosen tested/effective preventive interventions to address elevated risks and low protection in the community.

• Effective prevention systems can achieve community wide reductions in adolescent substance use and improvements in behavioral health.
Despite this Progress...

Prevention approaches that do not work or have not been evaluated are more widely used than those shown to be effective.

(Ringwalt, Vincus et al., 2009)
Our Grand Challenge: Ensure the Healthy Development of All Children
What Gets In the Way?

All have been prevented in controlled trials

Anxiety
Depression
Autism
Alcohol, tobacco, other drug use

Risky driving
Aggressive behavior and conduct problems
Delinquent behavior
Violence

Self-inflicted injury
Risky sexual behavior
School dropout

Disproportionately experienced by poor and minority youth
Solution: Unleash the Power of Prevention!

Evidence, Goals, Action
Unleashing the Power of Prevention

- Summary of evidence on prevention of behavioral health problems
- An action plan to achieve widespread reductions in behavioral health problems.
- Developed by the Coalition for the Promotion of Behavioral Health
Unleashing the Power of Prevention:
10 Year Goals

• Reduce the incidence and prevalence of behavioral health problems in the population of young people from birth through age 24 by 20%
• Reduce racial and socioeconomic disparities in behavioral health problems by 20%
How do we achieve these goals?
Action Steps

1. Increase public awareness of the advances and cost savings of effective preventive interventions that promote healthy behaviors for all
   - Goal: In a decade, a majority of the U.S. adult population will report that it is possible and cost-effective to prevent behavioral health problems among children and adolescents

2. Increase the percentage of all public funds spent on young people to support effective prevention
   - Goal: In a decade, at least 10% of all state and federal expenditures on the education, health, protection, and welfare of children will be allocated to effective interventions for preventing behavioral health problems
Action Steps

4. Establish criteria for preventive interventions that are effective, sustainable, equity-enhancing, and cost-beneficial
   - Goal: In a decade, all 50 states will use data from controlled studies and cost-benefit analyses to inform policy decisions regarding investments in prevention, treatment, and control of behavioral health problems

5. Increase infrastructure to support the high-quality implementation of preventive interventions
   - Goal: In a decade, 25 states will have cross-agency “backbone” organizations that provide technical assistance and monitoring services to local community organizations that provide behavioral health services for youth and their families
6. Monitor and increase access of children, youth, and young adults to effective preventive interventions

- **Goal:** In a decade, child welfare, education, health, justice, and other agencies in 20 states will use integrated data structures that enable cross-agency monitoring of behavioral health and preventive interventions.

7. Prepare practitioners in health and human service professions for new roles in promotion and preventive interventions

- **Goal:** In a decade, 20 universities will include cross-disciplinary, prevention-focused training programs in behavioral health that will include primary care medicine, nursing, psychiatry, psychology, and social work.
The Prevention Pay-Off!

• Tested and effective prevention programs prevent problems and save lives.
• Many tested preventive interventions are cost-effective. They have the potential to save millions of dollars annually.

We can prevent behavioral health problems in young people before they begin!
• Unleashing the Power of Prevention is published as a Discussion Paper by the National Academy of Medicine. It is available at:

  • http://nam.edu/perspectives-2015-unleashing-the-power-of-prevention/

• Unleashing the Power of Prevention is available at the Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare website:

  • http://aaswsw.org/grand-challenges-initiative/
Join Us!

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