



# **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  
National Institute of Mental Health

National Cancer Institute  
National Institute on Child Health and  
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National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

# And to Our State Collaborators



**Colorado** DHS Alcohol & Drug Abuse Division

**Illinois** DHS Bureau of Substance Abuse Prevention

**Kansas** Dept. of Social & Rehabilitation Services

**Maine** DHHS Office of Substance Abuse

**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 (Elmqvist, 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

## Family

## School

## Individual/Peer

Risk Factors							
	Substance Abuse	Teen Delinquency	School Drop-Out	Depression & Anxiety	Violence		
<b>Community</b>							
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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
<b>Family</b>							
Family History of the Problem Behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family Management Problems	✓	✓	→	✓	✓		
Family Conflict	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behavior	✓	✓			✓		
<b>School</b>							
Academic Failure Beginning in Late Elementary School	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of Commitment to School	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
<b>Individual/Peer</b>							
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







# 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](http://www.blueprintsprograms.com)

Effective policies: Anderson et al. 2009, Catalano et al. 2012, Hingson & White 2013, Vuolo et al., 2015

Effective policies and programs can save money : [www.wsipp.wa.gov/](http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/)  
Lee, S., Aos, S., & Pennucci, A. (2015). *What works and what does not? Benefit-cost findings from WSIPP.*

# **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



Grand Challenges  
for Social Work



## **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*



## Action Steps

### 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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