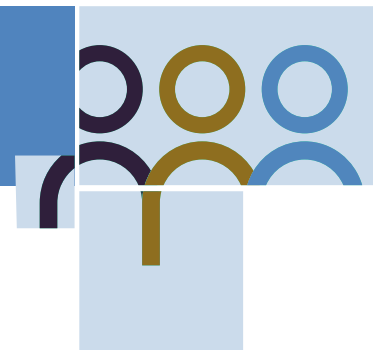


PREVENTION: THE BASICS

A Cross-cutting Principle (*SPF)



Primary prevention activities work to educate and support individuals and communities to prevent disease or injury before it ever occurs.

In the world of behavioral health, prevention activities focus on the use and misuse of drugs and the risks factors associated with mental health problems and suicide. Prevention is a proactive response to one of the nation's leading health threats.

Substance use and mental disorders can make daily activities difficult and impair a person's ability to work, interact with family, and fulfill other major life functions. Mental and substance use disorders are among the top conditions that cause disability in the United States. Preventing mental and/or substance use disorders or co-occurring disorders and

related problems is critical to behavioral and physical health.¹

Behavioral health promotion and prevention are closely aligned, with the term promotion typically used for services that operate on a population level which aim to raise awareness of behavioral health issues, improve behavioral health literacy, reduce stigma and discrimination, and maximize the population's health and well-being. Promotion activities involve efforts to strengthen the policies that affect health and involve broad-based stakeholder engagement and strategic communication for network building.

Prevention is a proactive process. It empowers individuals and systems to meet the challenges of events and transitions by creating and reinforcing conditions that promote healthy behaviors and lifestyles.

William Lofquist (adopted by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP))

Prevention vs. Treatment in the Behavioral Health Continuum of Care?

Substance abuse prevention is actively working prior to the onset of a disorder to prevent substance use and misuse. Each component presents opportunities for addressing behavioral health problems and for collaborating across sectors. The graphic below is based on the Mental Health Intervention Spectrum, first introduced in a 1994 Institute of Medicine report. It remains in wide use today. The model includes the following components:

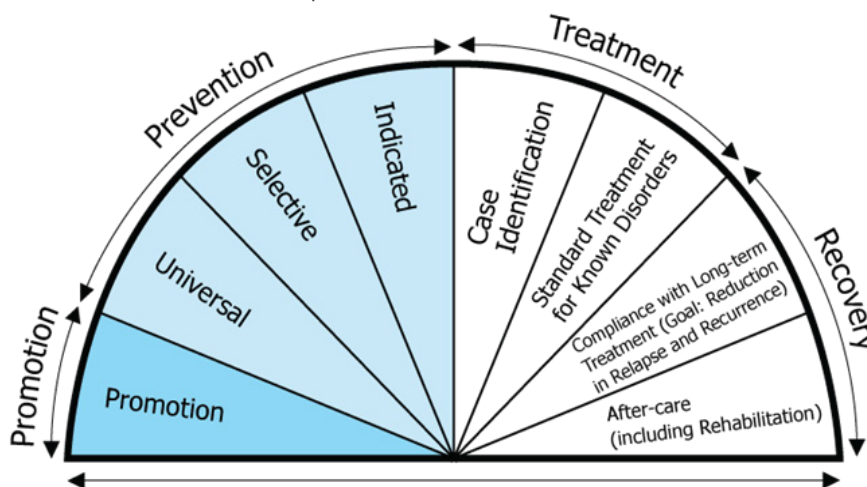
- **Promotion**—Strategies designed to create environments and conditions that support behavioral health and the ability for individuals to withstand challenges. Promotion strategies also reinforce the entire continuum of behavioral health services.
- **Prevention**—Delivered prior to the onset of a disorder, these interventions are intended to prevent or reduce the

risk of developing a behavioral health problem, such as underage alcohol use.

- **Treatment**—These services are for people diagnosed with a substance use or other behavioral health disorder.
- **Recovery**—These services support individuals' abilities to live productive

lives in the community and can often help with abstinence.

Kentucky's Behavioral Health Prevention and Promotion Branch, and the Regional Prevention Centers, work in both the Promotion and Prevention realms.



¹<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/prevention>

*The Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is a community-based approach to prevention. (www.samhsa.gov) The SPF consists of 5 steps: 1) Needs Assessment, 2) Capacity Building, 3) Planning, 4) Implementation, and 5) Evaluation. Through all the steps, there is an expectation of Cultural Competence and Sustainability.

The Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) identifies six prevention strategies that states and communities may employ in the use of federal dollars.

- 1) **Information Dissemination** builds knowledge and increases awareness of the nature and extent of alcohol and other drug use and the risks associated with behavioral health problems, including suicide. The focus includes their effects on individuals, families, and communities.
- 2) **Education** builds skills through structured learning processes, often in a school setting. Critical life and social skills include decision making,

peer resistance, coping with stress, problem solving, interpersonal communication, and systematic and judgmental capabilities.

- 3) **Alternatives** provide opportunities for target populations to participate in activities that exclude alcohol and other drugs and provide alternative, healthy activities.
- 4) **Problem Identification and Referral** aims to identify individuals who have indulged in illegal or age-inappropriate use of tobacco or alcohol and individuals who have indulged in the first use of illicit drugs. It includes the identification of individuals at significant risk of developing mental health problems.

5) **Community-based Processes** provide ongoing networking activities and technical assistance to community groups or agencies. This strategy encompasses neighborhood-based, grassroots empowerment models using action planning and collaborative systems planning.

6) **Environmental Strategies** establish or change written and unwritten community standards, codes, and attitudes. The intent is to influence the general population's use of alcohol and other drugs and promote positive mental health.

Effective prevention programming involves a variety of strategies and addresses individuals with different levels of risk.



Kentucky's Regional Prevention Centers (RPCs) assist communities in developing and implementing comprehensive plans to prevent alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) use and misuse. Fourteen centers are available to serve all counties in the state. Prevention specialists at each center provide education and training programs, information, and consultation services. For assistance with prevention efforts in your community, contact the Prevention Center in your region.

Email Addresses for Kentucky Regional Prevention Centers

Four Rivers (cturner@4rbh.org); Pennyroyal (csparks@pTeennyroyalcenter.org); River Valley (McFarling-Dianne@rvbh.com); LifeSkills (ahutchinso@lifeskills.com); Communicare (tcsmith@communicare.org);

Seven Counties (pgregory@sevencounties.org); Northkey (Autumn.smith@northkey.org); Comprehend (sarrasmith@comprehendinc.org); Pathways (Amy.Jeffers@pathways-ky.org); Mountain (Mashawna.Jacobs@mtcomp.org); Kentucky River (jamie.smith@krccnet.com); Cumberland River (jill.owens@crccc.org); Adanta (sestes1@adanta.org); New Vista (shawn.freeman@newvista.org)