

# Prevention with a capital P

## Definition of Prevention

“Interventions that occur prior to the onset of a disorder and are intended to prevent or reduce risk for the disorder.”

Institute of Medicine

Prevention:

- Improves quality of life, academic performance, workplace productivity, and military preparedness
- Reduces crime and criminal justice expenses, motor vehicle crashes and fatalities, suicide, and drownings
- Lowers health care costs for acute and chronic conditions

## Targets for Prevention:

### Universal

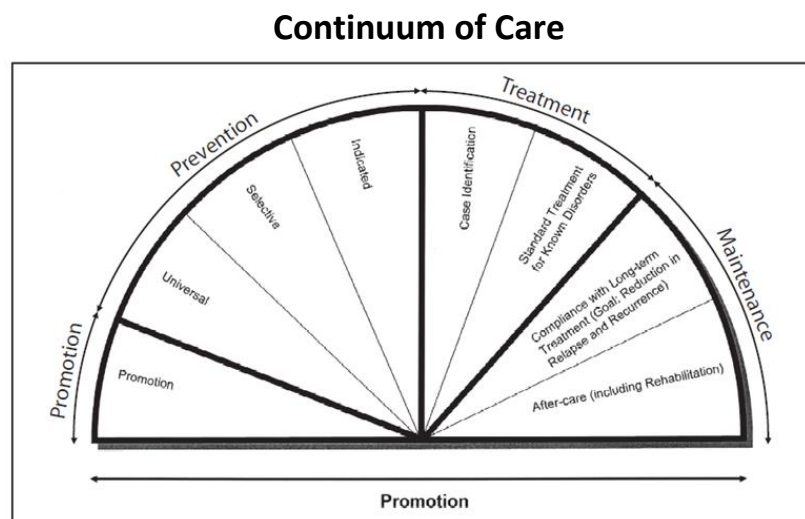
- Everyone regardless of level of risk
- Before there is an indication of an AOD problem

### Selective

- Persons or groups identified as “at risk”

### Indicated

- Individuals identified as experiencing problem behavior related to AOD use
- Does NOT include assessment or treatment



Source: Committee on Prevention of Mental Disorders and Substance Abuse Among Children, Youth, and Young Adults, 2009



## Guiding Principles for Effective Prevention Efforts

1. Substance use is a Public Health issue that requires a Public Health response
  - ▶ The public health approach creates a prevention system which addresses both acute and chronic threats to health.
  - ▶ Communities need a prevention workforce and infrastructure with the capacity to deal with any emerging new trend while still addressing underlying causes of all substance use problems.
2. Like any other Public Health issue, prevention efforts must be part of a planned approach -- data-driven, science driven and part of a community's comprehensive plan.
  - ▶ Ensures consumers receive the most effective services available.
  - ▶ Facilitates accountability --- do no harm!
  - ▶ Saves time and money.
3. Prevention is a MOVEMENT and a DISCIPLINE.
  - ▶ We need everyone to champion, advocate and work to prevent problems.
  - ▶ We need all that movement to be based in Prevention science.
  - ▶ We have the ability and responsibility to invest our time, energy, and dollars in approaches that show evidence of effectiveness.
4. Effective prevention efforts are focused across the lifespan, and not just on youth.
5. Effective prevention efforts focus on the environment as well as on individuals.
6. Effective ATOD prevention services focus on risk reduction, enhancement of protective factors &/or building assets, while noting:
  - Communities must target multiple risk/protection factors.
  - Risk/protection factors must be prioritized for relative importance.
7. Effective prevention services are most likely to result from collaborative community planning, implementation and evaluation.
  - Incorporates multiple strategies across multiple sectors.
  - Involves the community in BOTH the planning and implementation process.
8. Prevention is cost-effective!
  - ▶ If an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, imagine what a pound of prevention could do.

## SPECTRUM OF PREVENTION

The Spectrum of Prevention is a systematic tool that promotes a multifaceted range of activities for effective prevention. Originally developed by Larry Cohen while working as Director of Prevention Programs at the Contra Costa County Health Department, the Spectrum is based on the work of Marshall Swift in treating developmental disabilities. It has been used nationally in prevention initiatives targeting traffic safety, violence prevention, injury prevention, nutrition, and fitness.

The Spectrum identifies multiple levels of intervention and helps people move beyond the perception that prevention is merely education. The Spectrum is a framework for a more comprehensive understanding of prevention that includes six levels for strategy development. These levels, delineated in the table below, are complementary and when used together produce a synergy that results in greater effectiveness than would be possible by implementing any single activity or linear initiative. At each level, the most important activities related to prevention objectives should be identified. As these activities are identified they will lead to interrelated actions at other levels of the Spectrum.

LEVEL OF SPECTRUM	DEFINITION OF LEVEL
<b>6. Influencing Policy and Legislation</b>	Developing strategies to change laws and policies to influence outcomes
<b>5. Changing Organizational Practices</b>	Adopting regulations and shaping norms to improve health and safety
<b>4. Fostering Coalitions and Networks</b>	Convening groups and individuals for broader goals and greater impact
<b>3. Educating Providers</b>	Informing providers who will transmit skills and knowledge to others
<b>2. Promoting Community Education</b>	Reaching groups of people with information and resources to promote health and safety
<b>1. Strengthening Individual Knowledge and Skills</b>	Enhancing an individual's capability of preventing injury or illness and promoting safety

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# Social Development Strategy

