



Developing A Better Understanding



RECOVERY IS BEAUTIFUL: PREVENTION WITHIN A RECOVERY-ORIENTED SYSTEM OF CARE

As Ohio's local communities undergo comprehensive and integrated system transformations to become Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC), there will need to be a continued strong focus on prevention and wellness services and supports across the continuum. These services and supports play a key role within a ROSC framework due to the long-term benefits they present for individuals, families, and communities. Prevention services provide the community with education and resources to help identify, understand, and respond to mental illness and addiction. These services also support an individual's journey towards wellness and recovery, helping to prevent or delay the onset of symptoms, and build resilience to make informed, healthy choices that support a person's overall physical and emotional well-being.

Prevention: Universal, Selective, and Indicated

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) model classifies prevention interventions according to their target population. The IOM identifies the following three categories based on level of risk: Universal, Selective, and Indicated.

Universal preventive interventions take the broadest approach, targeting "the general public or a whole population that has not been identified on the basis of individual risk" (O'Connell, 2009). Universal prevention interventions might target schools, whole communities, or workplaces.

Examples: community policies that promote access to early childhood education; implementation or enforcement of anti-bullying policies in schools; education for physicians on prescription drug misuse and preventive prescribing practices; and social and decision-making skills training for all sixth graders in a particular school system.

Selective preventive interventions target "individuals or a population sub-group whose risk of developing mental disorders and/or substance abuse disorders is significantly higher than average", prior to the diagnosis of a disorder (O'Connell, 2009). Selective interventions target biological, psychological, or social risk factors that are more prominent among high-risk groups than among the wider population.

Examples: prevention education for new immigrant families living in poverty with young children; and peer support groups for adults with a history of family mental illness and/or substance abuse

Indicated preventive interventions target "high-risk individuals who are identified as having minimal but detectable signs or symptoms foreshadowing mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder" prior to the diagnosis of a disorder (O'Connell, 2009). Interventions focus on the immediate risk and protective factors present in the environments surrounding individuals.

Examples: information and referral for young adults who violate campus or community policies on alcohol and drugs; and screening, consultation, and referral for families of older adults admitted to emergency rooms with potential alcohol-related injuries.

Promoting Prevention Strategies throughout Ohio

Communities throughout the state have been and continue to develop and implement evidence-based and promising prevention programs and strategies that are designed to increase the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Boards, as the mental health and addiction leaders in their communities, serve as the hub in facilitating many of these activities. Some examples of prevention programs that are conducted throughout Ohio include:

- ◇ **PAX Good Behavior Game (PAX GBG)** – PAX GBG is an environmental intervention used in the classroom with young children to create an environment that is conducive to learning. The intervention is designed to reduce off-task behavior; increase attentiveness; and decrease aggressive and disruptive behavior and shy and withdrawn behavior. The intervention also aims to improve academic success, as well as reduce mental health and addiction outcomes later in life.
- ◇ **Youth-Led Prevention Programs** – Prevention programs designed by and for youth to encourage their peers to abstain from alcohol and other drugs and maintain healthy lifestyles.
- ◇ **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)** – Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour course that introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health concerns, builds understanding of their impact, and provides an overview of common treatments. The course uses role-playing and simulations to demonstrate how to assess a mental health crisis; select interventions and provide initial help; and connect persons to professional, peer and social supports as well as self-help resources.
- ◇ **Suicide Prevention Coalitions** – Community groups developed with the goal of providing education about suicide, reducing stigma, and promoting suicide prevention activities.
- ◇ **Life Skills Training (LST) Program** – LST is a universal program for middle school students designed to address a wide range of risk and protective factors by teaching general personal and social skills, along with drug resistance skills and education. An elementary school version was recently developed and the LST booster program for high school students helps to retain the gains of the middle school program.
- ◇ **Start Talking!** – An effort underway across Ohio to prevent drug abuse among children and youth. Start Talking! gives parents, guardians, educators, and community leaders tools to start the conversation with Ohio’s youth about the importance of living healthy, drug-free lives.
- ◇ **Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Gatekeeper Training** – This is a brief educational program designed to teach participants to recognize and refer someone at risk of suicide. The training covers the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to respond by following three steps: question the individual’s desire or intent regarding suicide; persuade the person to seek and accept help; and refer the person to the appropriate resources.
- ◇ **Opiate and Other Drug Task Forces** – Community partnerships working across systems to develop integrated solutions attempting to reduce drug abuse and addiction.

“Creating communities where individuals, families, schools, faith-based organizations, and workplaces take action to promote emotional health and reduce the likelihood of mental illness and substance abuse.”
(Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

Implementing promising prevention programs and strategies provide opportunities for communities to go “up-stream” and address the risk factors and signs of addiction and mental illness before individuals and families enter into a point of crisis. As Ohio’s communities continue to develop and implement local Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care, planning for, coordinating, funding, and implementing prevention programs and strategies will be a key component of promoting healthy, safe, and drug-free communities.