



# What is Prevention?

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Transforming Children's Behavioral Health Meeting  
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# Overview

Purpose: Establish a shared understanding of key concepts and strategies.

Objectives:

- Clarify definitions and characteristics
- Introduce frameworks and evidence-based strategies
- Call to Action
- Resources



# Background on Prevention

## Prevention Science:

A multidisciplinary field devoted to the scientific study of the theory, research, and practice related to the prevention of social, physical, and mental health problems, including etiology, epidemiology, and intervention.\*



\*IOM "Preventing Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders Among Young People: Progress and Possibilities" pg xxvii



# What is Prevention?

 Strategies to stop or reduce the likelihood of a condition or behavior occurring

 Public Health Lens: population-level health, equity, and social determinants

 SAMHSA - “*like physical illnesses, mental and substance use disorders **cost money and lives** if they are not **prevented**, are left **untreated**, or are poorly managed.*”

## Data-Driven and Evidence-Based



Use local/state data to guide planning



Implement programs with proven outcomes



Evaluate continuously for improvement

# What Prevention is NOT



# Why Prevention Matters



IMPROVES HEALTH,  
SAFETY, AND WELL-  
BEING



- REDUCES RISK  
FACTORS BEFORE  
PROBLEMS OCCUR



- SAVES LIVES AND  
LONG-TERM  
HEALTHCARE COSTS



- STRENGTHENS  
COMMUNITIES AND  
SYSTEMS

# Prevention in Behavioral Health

Targets mental health, substance misuse, suicide, problem gambling, etc.

Addresses risk and protective factors at various levels

Increases assets and positive childhood experiences

# Risk and Protective Factors



## Risk Factors

Factors or variables that increase the likelihood for development of a substance use disorder.



## Protective Factors

Factors or variables that decrease the likelihood for development of a substance use disorder.



## ***RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS***


<b><i>Risk Factors</i></b>	<b><i>Domain</i></b>	<b><i>Protective Factors</i></b>
Sensation-seeker	<b>Individual</b>	Successful student
Child of drug user		Bonds with family
No supervision	<b>Family</b>	Consistent discipline
Parent/sibling drug use		Anti-drug family rules
Pro-drug use norm	<b>School</b>	Anti-drug use norm
Availability of drugs		High academics
Crime/poverty	<b>Community</b>	Consistent anti-drug message
No afterschool programs		Strong law enforcement



# Adverse Childhood Experiences = # 1 Risk Factor

- Abuse: Emotional, Physical, Sexual
- Neglect: Emotional, Physical
- Household Challenges: Substance misuse, mental health, divorce, incarceration, suicidal thoughts / behavior, IPV/DV, food insecurities, financial insecurity, physical health conditions
- <https://acestoohigh.com/>





# Positive Childhood Experiences = Protective Factors

As a child, how often did you.....

- Feel able to talk to your family about feelings
- Feel your family stood by you during difficult times
- Enjoy participating in community traditions
- Feel a sense of belonging in high school
- Feel supported by friends
- Have at least 2 non- parent adults who took genuine interest in you
- Feel safe and protected by an adult in your home

**Positive childhood experiences buffer against the negative lifelong health effects caused by exposure to ACEs**

(JAMA Pedi. 2019 Sept.; e193007)

# Prevention includes all the Dimensions of Well-Being



# Prevention work is often behind the scenes...

The results can be hard to see because they are integrated.

Prevention approaches problems from many different angles in multi-tiered approaches.

Prevention depends on the involvement of multiple community partners.





# Collective Impact Strengthens Prevention



Collaboration is key



# Levels of Prevention

1

## **1. Primary Prevention**

Stops the problem before it starts

(e.g., education, policy, skill-building, positive reinforcement for not using )

2

## **2. Secondary Prevention**

Early intervention to reduce impact (e.g., screenings, referrals)

3

## **3. Tertiary Prevention**

Reduces long-term impact and prevents relapse

(e.g., treatment and recovery support, Harm Reduction )

# Frameworks & Models



**1. Public Health Model**



**2. SAMHSA's Strategic  
Prevention Framework  
(SPF)**

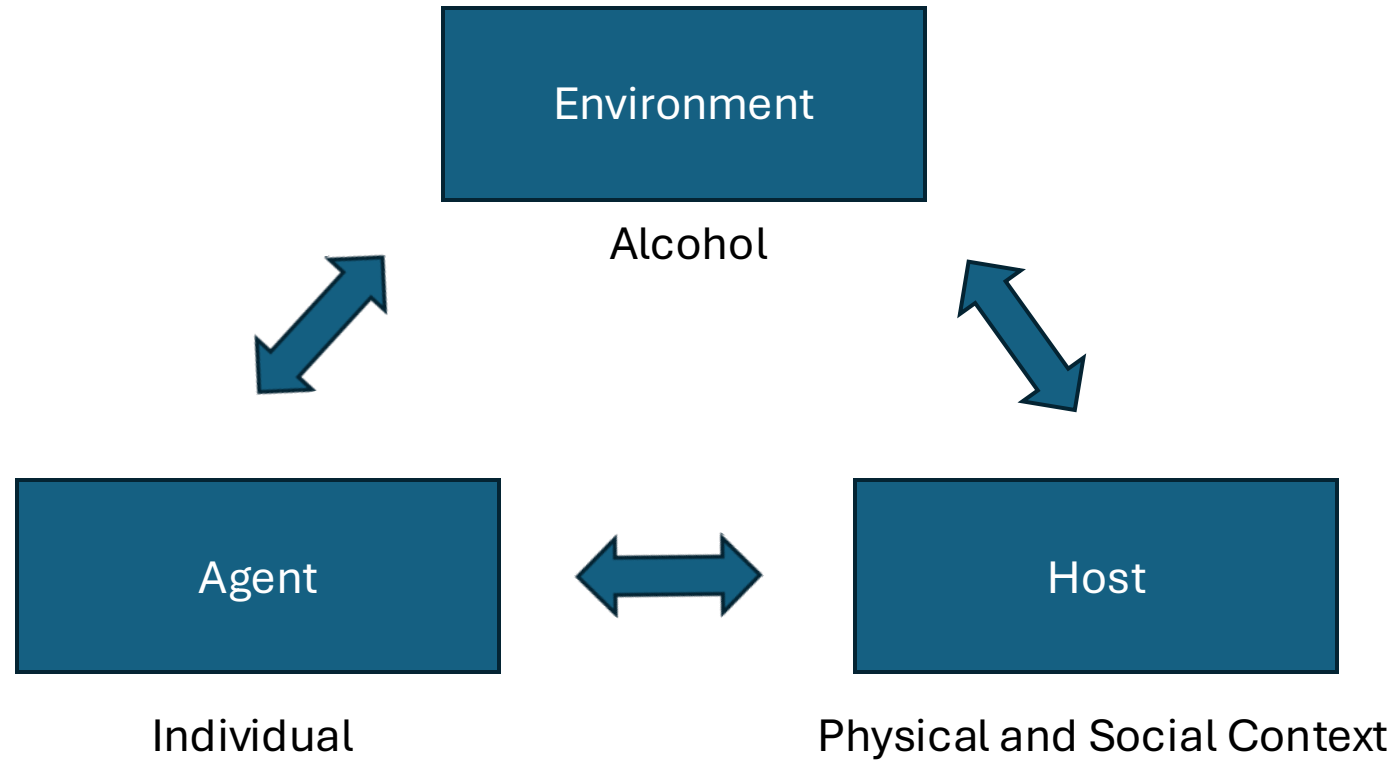


**3. Continuum of Care:  
Promotion → Prevention →  
Treatment → Recovery**



**4. Social Ecological  
Model**

# 1. Public Health Model



## 2. Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF)

### A Community Problem Solving Process

**Assess** prevention needs - data collection

Build prevention **Capacity**

Develop a **Strategic Plan**

**Implement** effective community prevention programs, policies, and practices

**Evaluate** efforts for outcomes – baseline, change

Build **cultural competence** and **sustainability**



## 2. SPF (continued)

### Seven Strategies for Community Change

1. Providing information
2. Enhancing skills
3. Providing support

**Strategies targeting individuals**



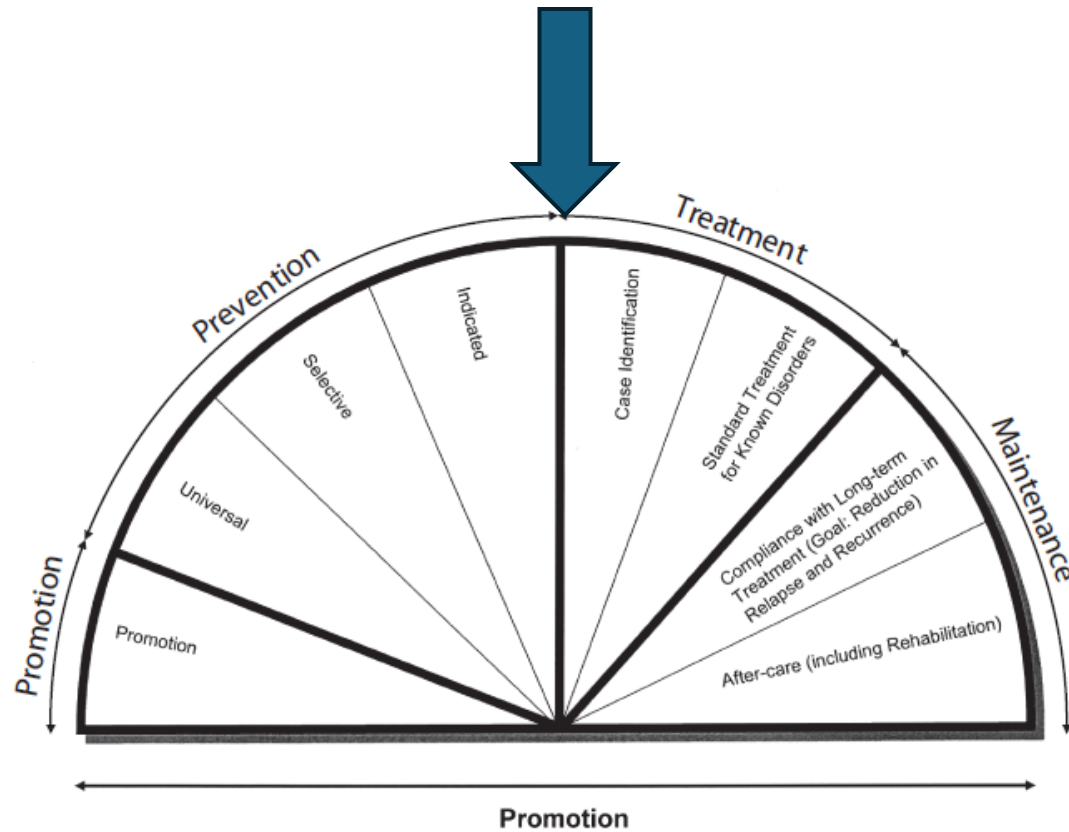
4. Enhancing access/reducing barriers
5. Changing consequences
6. Physical design
7. Modifying/changing policies

**Strategies targeting policies, systems and environments**





### 3. Continuum of Care



## 4. Social – Ecological Model



# Examples of Prevention Strategies

Youth-led  
initiatives

Social norming  
campaigns

Environmental  
strategies (policy,  
enforcement)

Parent/family  
programs

School-based  
education

# Equity in Prevention

Address	Address systemic disparities
Tailor	Tailor interventions to cultural/community context
Promote	Promote inclusive and equitable strategies



## Call to Action

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Prevention is everyone's  
responsibility

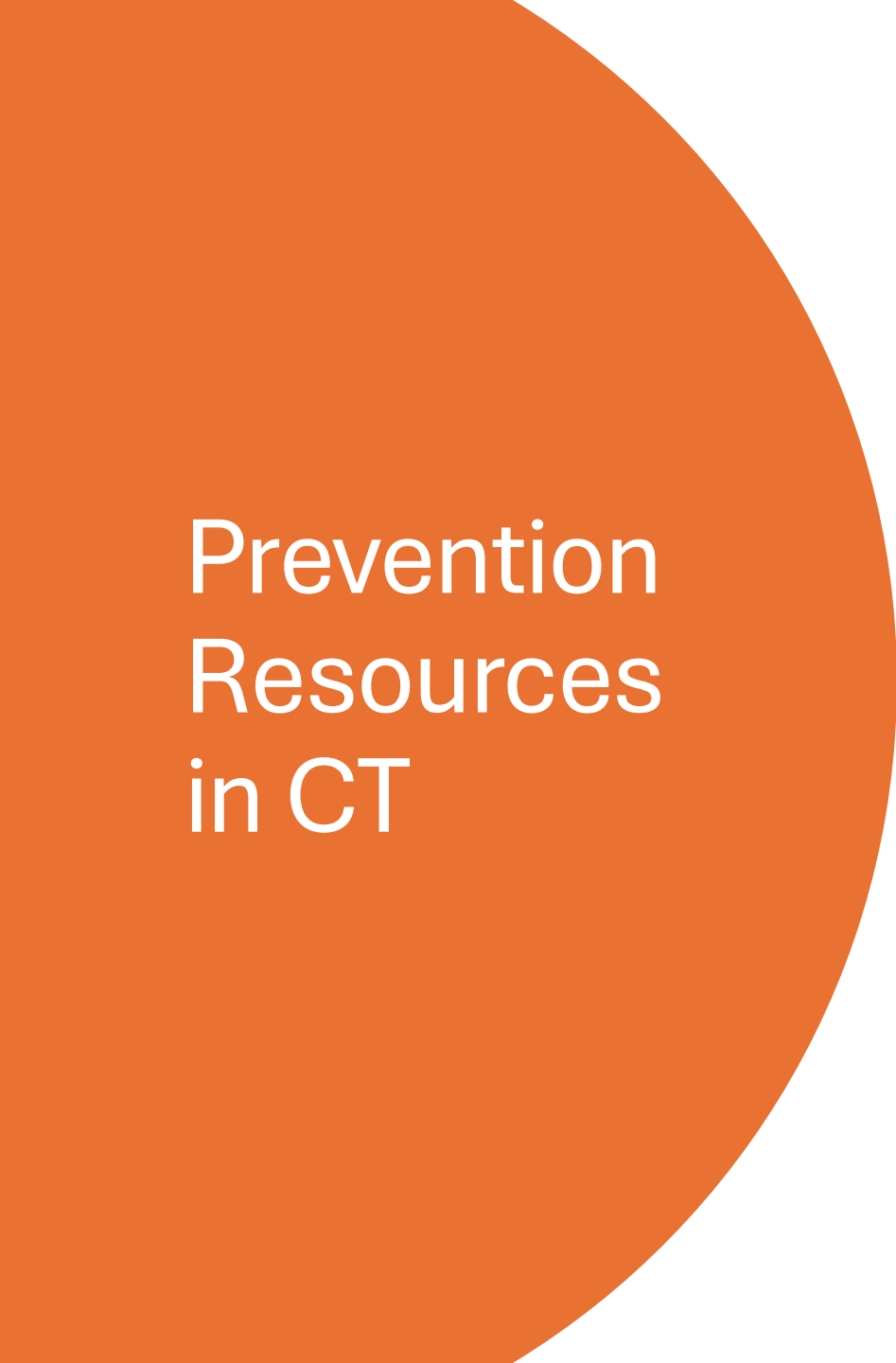
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Align around a shared  
framework

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Invest in upstream work for  
safer, healthier communities



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# Prevention Resources in CT

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[Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations \(RBHAOs\)](#)

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[Connecticut Clearinghouse](#)

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[Center for Prevention Evaluation and Statistics](#)

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[Governor's Prevention Partnership](#)

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[Prevention Training and Technical Assistance Service Center](#)

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[Connecticut SEOW Prevention Data Portal](#)

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[Local Prevention Councils](#)

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[DrugFreeCT](#)

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[Connecticut Suicide Advisory Board](#)



# Contact Information



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