

# Involving Parents in Prevention Programs

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# What we will cover today

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- Family Risk Factors
- Barriers to Parent Involvement in Prevention Programs
- Overcoming Barriers for Parent Participation
- Keeping Parents Involved

# Getting to know you...

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- How many of you target children under the age of 5?
- How many of you target school age children?
- How many of you target adolescents?
- How many of you have goals of affecting family risk factors in the prevention programs that you offer?

# Prevention Science

- Prevention Science is defined as: The study of the prevention negative outcomes and the promotion of positive development through the identification and manipulation of risk and protective factors.
  - Involves research identifying relationships between risk and protective factors and developmental outcomes
  - Involves research on the development, evaluation and implementation of prevention programs

# Family Risk Factors

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- Family Management Problems
- Family Conflict
- Favorable Parental Attitudes
  - Including involvement in the problem behavior

(Hawkins, Catalano & Arthur, 2002)

# Family Management Problems

- Examples of Family Management Problems:
  - Do parents ask children if their homework is done?
  - Do parents know where children are when they are not at home?
  - If youth skipped school would they get caught by their parents?
  - Would parents know if youth did not get home on time?
- Poor family management is related to increased risk for: Substance Abuse, Delinquency, Teen Pregnancy, School Drop-out, & Violence

(Washington Healthy Youth Survey)

(Hawkins, Catalano & Arthur, 2002)

# Family Conflict

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- Family conflict is related to increased risk for:  
Substance Abuse, Delinquency, Teen Pregnancy,  
School Drop-out, & Violence

(Hawkins, Catalano & Arthur, 2002)

# Favorable Parental Attitudes

- Examples of Favorable Parental Attitudes:
  - How wrong would parents feel it would be for youth to: Drink beer, wine, or hard liquor regularly?
  - How wrong would parents feel if youth smoked cigarettes or marijuana regularly? (Washington Healthy Youth Survey)
- Favorable parental attitudes are related to increased risk for: Substance Abuse, Delinquency, & Violence (Hawkins, Catalano & Arthur, 2002)



# Why Involve Parents in Prevention?

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- Family-Based programs have been shown to have significant effects on reducing youth risk, and increasing protection.
- Programs that are evidence-based have been shown through many research and evaluation studies to work lower risk .
- Prevention Science research and policy are calling for programs such as these that address multiple risk factors across multiple domains.

# Selecting a Program

- Evidence-Based Programs
- Conceptual Fit
  - Is the program relevant?
  - Select programs that target multiple risk and protective factors relevant for your population
- Practical Fit
  - Is the program appropriate?
  - Make sure that the program fits the community's needs
  - Is the community ready? Does it fit the local circumstances and context?



How many of you have experienced difficulties  
in recruiting or keeping parents in prevention  
programs?

# Barriers to Involving Parents in Prevention Programs

# Barriers to Parent Participation

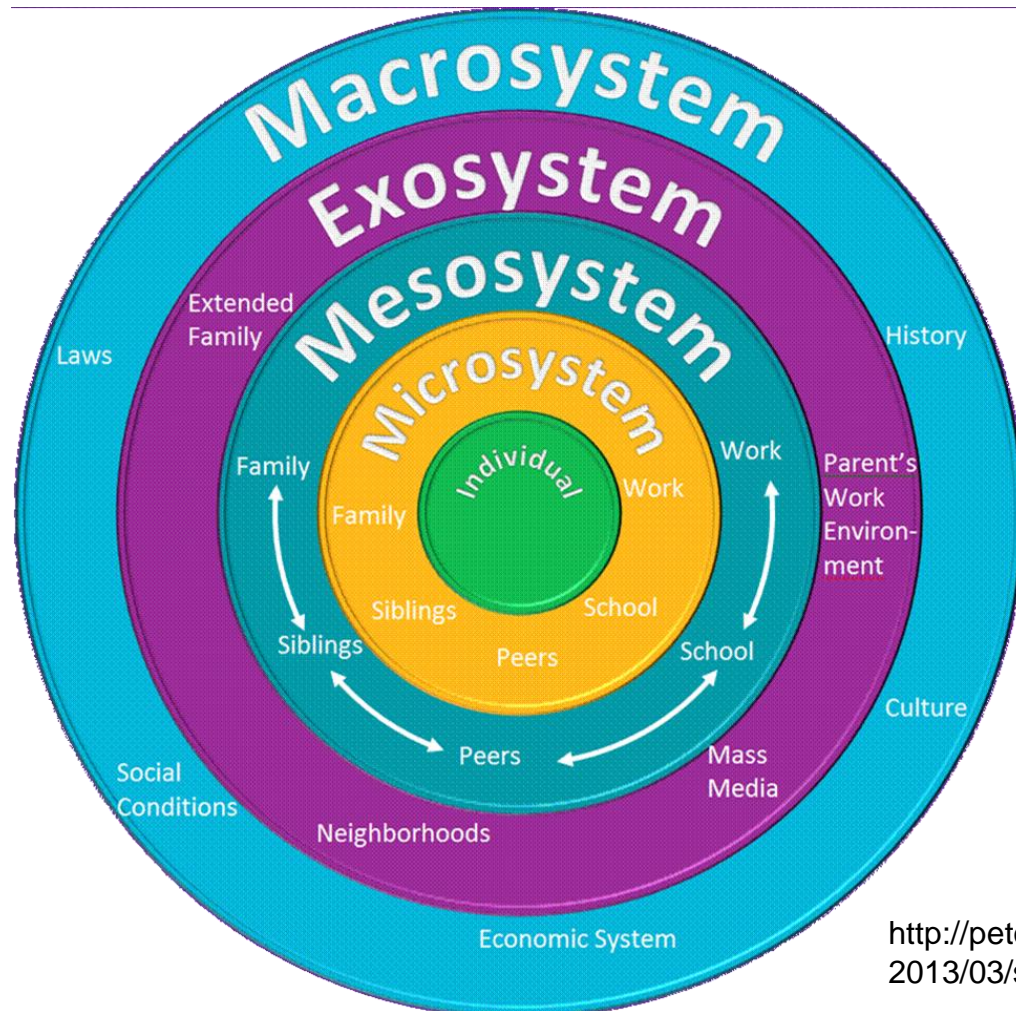
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- Competing demands for time
  - Parent or youth work schedules, inflexible hours
  - Extracurricular activities
  - Family schedules and needs
- Differences in cultural backgrounds between participants and program staff
  - History of discrimination
  - Concerns of residency status

# Barriers to Parent Participation

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- Accessibility
  - ▣ Rural and urban issues of transportation
  - ▣ Families changing residences often
  - ▣ Location of program
  
- Lack of Interest in the Program
  - ▣ Program does not fit community
  - ▣ Participants don't see need for program



<http://petonekindergarten.blogspot.com/2013/03/special-friends-day.html>

# Overcoming Barriers to Parental Involvement in Prevention Programs



# Addressing Barriers to Participation

- Involve members of the target population in program planning (including: selection, recruitment, and implementation)
  - Programs involving participants are more appealing
  - Local knowledge can assist in important decision making
  - Helps to establish and maintain trust
  - Works especially well when community leaders are involved in planning
  - How to involve parents in planning?
    - Ask!
      - Identify parents from target population
      - Past participants

# Addressing Barriers to Participation

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- Link the program to a trusted institution known to participants
  - Partnering with other trusted sources (schools, childcare, community centers, churches) can help with recruitment
  - These partnerships can help to recruit families and keep families involved in the program

# Addressing Barriers to Participation

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- Strategically choose location of program
  - Locations should be convenient for participants, safe, and familiar to participants
- Involve other family members
  - Involving multiple family members can increase participant engagement and retention

# Addressing Barriers to Participation

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- Hire and train culturally sensitive individuals to recruit and implement
  - Need to be able to establish rapport
  - Strong Interpersonal skills are most important
  - Matching participants and staff on cultural or ethnic similarities can be helpful

# Addressing Barriers to Participation

- Provide for basic needs of participants
  - Transportation
  - Child care
  - Meals
  
- Give incentives
  - Consult with community experts to determine incentives
  - Provide incentive for evaluation

# Addressing Barriers to Participation

- Make frequent contact
  - Stay in touch by email, phone, social networks
  - For long term projects send holiday and birthday cards
  
- Make every effort to maintain staff members
  - Retention is higher when staff members continue with the program.
  - If there are changes make sure to ease the transition

# Addressing Barriers to Participation

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- Keep promises
  - Always keep appointments
  - Follow-through with incentives and other compensation
  - Follow-up with families
  - This helps to build trust
- Help potential participants to see the program as worthwhile

# Addressing Barriers to Participation

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- Be flexible!
  - ▣ As much as possible be flexible in scheduling
  - ▣ Some families prefer weekends or evenings



# Addressing Barriers to Participation

- These barriers are examples and may not be relevant in every community.
- Find out what the barriers are affecting your community. Evaluate!
  - Go beyond required evaluation
    - Potential Evaluation Topics:
      - Ask Participants who stopped coming, what would make it easier for them to participate
      - Ask participants what they thought of the program (facilitators, incentives, relevancy of the program, etc.)
  - Evaluation can be a tool to help build and sustain the life of a program!

# Evaluation Strategies

- Qualitative Information
- Focus Groups
  - Participants
    - Focus groups should be small (6-8) participants
    - Recruit similar groups of people
  - Environment
    - Comfortable
    - Circle Seating
    - Use a recorder

(Krueger & Casey, 2002)

# Evaluation Strategies

## □ Focus Groups cont.

### □ Moderator

- Pre-determine questions
  - Questions should be open ended
- Sets the tone for conversation
- Should be skillful in group discussions
- Take notes
- Non-judgmental responses, acknowledge responses

### □ Analysis

- Read through notes, transcribe recordings
- Construct Themes (think about frequency and intensity of certain topics)

# Evaluation Strategies

## □ Focus Groups cont.

### ■ Sample Questions

- Tell us how the program has helped your family?
- What did you like best about the program?
- What did you like least about the program?
- What should be changed about the program?
- What would make it easier for you to participate in the program?

(Krueger & Casey, 2002)

# Addressing Barriers to Participation

## □ Examples:

- Some programs have found the following strategies to help increase participation:
  - Provide childcare for non-participating children
  - Provide a meal for families
  - Provide incentives such as grocery cards, gift cards, & other gifts
  - Schedule program on days and times convenient for participants
  - Provide additional resources requested by parents
  - Provide a positive and supporting atmosphere

# Keeping Parents Engaged and Involved in Prevention Programs

# Keeping Parents Engaged

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- Build trust and relationships with participants
- Follow through
- Make Frequent contact
- Help participants see the benefits of participating

# Additional Resources

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- University Extension
  - Washington State University Extension
  - Other Land-grant University Extension Programs
- SAMHSA Resources
  - <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA09-4205/SMA09-4205.pdf>
- Each other!



Thank you for your time!

Questions?

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