



The Center for
Communities That Care

**INTRODUCTION TO PREVENTION SCIENCE:
RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTOR THEORY**

March 5, 2026

WELCOME

As you enter, please:

- Think of one thing that made you smile in the past week :)
- Type it in the chat box



INTRODUCTIONS

Let's get to know a little bit about each other, please:

- List your name, location and role in prevention
- Type it in the chat box



YOUR TRAINING TEAM

Jen Hogge
Jaclynn Sagers
Gery Shelafoe

*We are all Community
Prevention Strategists
at the Center for
Communities That Care*

Community Prevention and
Wellness Initiative (CPWI)
Division of Behavioral Health
& Recovery



OBJECTIVES

1. Define risk and protective factors
2. Explain the relationship between risk and protective factors and population-level outcomes, including substance use and related behaviors
3. Identify risk and protective factors at the individual, family, school, and community levels
4. Identify how a risk and protective factor framework informs identifying the community needs
5. Explain how a risk and protective factors guide prevention planning, including selecting evidence-based strategies

MEETING AGREEMENTS

- Stay present (camera on, participate in discussion)
- Everyone gets a chance to speak
- Everyone listens
- One person talks at a time without interruption
- Respect all perspectives and ideas
- Assume positive intent
- Start and end on time
- Manage personal space (cell phones, emails, other distractions)

A LEARNING COMMUNITY



LOOKING DOWN THE ROAD



To **prevent** a problem before it happens, the factors that **predict** the problem must be changed.

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS?



Introduction to Prevention Science: Risk and Protective Factor Theory
Based on Communities That Care developed for Washington State Health Care Authority's (HCA) Division of Behavioral Health & Recovery (DBHR)
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RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- **Risk Factors** predictors of problem behavior in adolescence
- **Protective Factors** buffer against risk factors



40+ YEARS OF RESEARCH ADVANCES

We know

1. what **predicts** many negative developmental outcomes, and what **predicts** healthy developmental outcomes
2. what **works to change those predictors** to both prevent behavioral problems and create positive outcomes for our youth
3. experimental trials have identified **over 100 effective interventions** for promoting behavioral health and preventing negative developmental outcomes



THE SCIENCE OF RISK FACTORS

- In every domain of child's life
- Present across development
- Predict multiple problems
- Operate similarly across racial groups and regions
- Vary across communities
- Are buffered by protective factors
- Can be measured

Risk Factors for Health & Behavior Problems	Substance Abuse	Delinquency	Teen Pregnancy	School Dropout	Violence	Depression & Anxiety
Community						
Availability of Drugs	•				•	
Availability of Firearms		•			•	
Community Laws and Norms Favorable Toward Drug Use, Firearms, and Crime	•	•			•	
Media Portrayals of the Behavior	•				•	
Transitions and Mobility	•	•		•		•
Low Neighborhood Attachment and Community Disorganization	•	•			•	
Extreme Economic Deprivation	•	•	•	•	•	
Family						
Family History of the Problem Behavior	•	•	•	•	•	•
Family Management Problems	•	•	•	•	•	•
Family Conflict	•	•	•	•	•	•
Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behavior	•	•			•	
School						
Academic Failure Beginning in Late Elementary School	•	•	•	•	•	•
Lack of Commitment to School	•	•	•	•	•	
Individual/Peer						
Early and Persistent Antisocial Behavior	•	•	•	•	•	•
Rebelliousness	•	•		•	•	
Gang Involvement	•	•			•	
Friends Who Engage in the Problem Behavior	•	•	•	•	•	
Favorable Attitudes Toward the Problem Behavior	•	•	•	•	•	
Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior	•	•	•	•	•	
Constitutional Factors	•	•			•	•

HEALTH & BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS PREDICTED BY RISK FACTORS

Risk Factors for Health & Behavior Problems	Substance Abuse	Delinquency	Teen Pregnancy	School Dropout	Violence	Depression & Anxiety
Community						
Availability of Drugs	•				•	
Availability of Firearms		•			•	
Community Laws and Norms Favorable Toward Drug Use, Firearms, and Crime	•	•			•	
Media Portrayals of the Behavior	•				•	
Transitions and Mobility	•	•		•		•
Low Neighborhood Attachment and Community Disorganization	•	•			•	
Extreme Economic Deprivation	•	•	•	•	•	
Family						
Family History of the Problem Behavior	•	•	•	•	•	•
Family Management Problems	•	•	•	•	•	•
Family Conflict	•	•	•	•	•	•
Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behavior	•	•			•	
School						
Academic Failure Beginning in Late Elementary School	•	•	•	•	•	•
Lack of Commitment to School	•	•	•	•	•	
Individual/Peer						
Early and Persistent Antisocial Behavior	•	•	•	•	•	•
Rebelliousness	•	•		•	•	
Gang Involvement	•	•			•	
Friends Who Engage in the Problem Behavior	•	•	•	•	•	
Favorable Attitudes Toward the Problem Behavior	•	•	•	•	•	
Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior	•	•	•	•	•	
Constitutional Factors	•	•			•	•

- Substance use
- Delinquency
- Teen pregnancy
- School dropout
- Violence
- Depression & anxiety

ACTIVITY

In breakouts discuss (15 mins):

- Which risk factors address multiple behavioral outcomes?
- How can focus prevention efforts at the level of risk factors increase partnerships and outcomes in the community?
- What interests you about risk factors so far? What questions do you have so far?

Handouts – risk factor chart in your handouts page 2

COMMUNITY RISK FACTORS

Video



SUMMARY: COMMUNITY RISK FACTORS



- Availability of drugs
- Availability of firearms
- Law & norms favorable towards problem behavior
- Violence & drug use in media
- High mobility
- Low Neighborhood Attachment and Community disorganization
- Extreme Economic Deprivation

LET'S DISCUSS



What are examples of community laws and norms?



What are examples of availability?



What questions do you have about community risk factors?

FAMILY & SCHOOL RISK FACTORS

Video

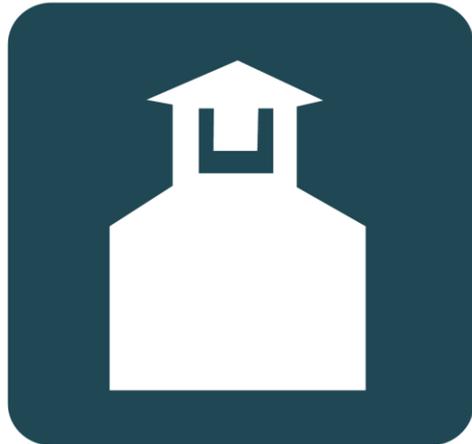


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SUMMARY: FAMILY & SCHOOL RISK FACTORS



- Family history of problem behaviors
- Family management problems
- Family conflict
- Favorable parental attitudes & involvement in problem behavior



- Academic failure
- Lack of commitment to school

LET'S DISCUSS



What risk factor in the family domain includes excessive and inconsistent discipline?



What does lack of commitment to school mean?



What questions do you have about school & family risk factors?

PEER & INDIVIDUAL RISK FACTORS

Video



SUMMARY: PEER & INDIVIDUAL RISK FACTORS



- Early & persistent anti-social behavior
- Rebelliousness
- Gang involvement
- Friends engaged in the problem behavior
- Favorable attitudes towards the behavior
- Early initiation
- Constitutional factors

LET'S DISCUSS



Is learning the skill of self-control important and valuable?



What is the risk factor of early initiation of problem behavior about?



What questions do you have?

SUMMARY: RISK FACTORS

- Multiple areas of influence
- Each factor predicts several outcomes
- Research-based
- Similar effects across race & region
- Measurable



BREAKOUT ROOMS

In triads or quads, you will have 15 minutes to:

Practice explaining risk factors in general

Practice explaining one risk factor from each domain
(total of 4 risk factors)

Important

Try not to use jargon

Ensure your explanation includes that risk factors are
predictive NOT prescriptive

Questions to bring to the group?

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

ALSO RELATE TO MULTIPLE OUTCOMES!

Protective Factors	Substance Use	Delinquency	Risky Sexual Behavior	School Dropout	Violence	Depression & Anxiety
Individual						
Cognitive Competence	•	•	•	•	•	•
Emotional Competence		•				
Social/Behavioral Competence	•	•	•		•	•
Self-Efficacy			•			
Belief in the Future	•	•	•		•	•
Self-Determination			•			
Pro-Social Norms	•	•	•		•	•
Spirituality	•	•	•			
Family, School & Community						
Opportunities for Positive Social Involvement	•	•				
Recognition for Positive Behavior	•	•			•	•
Bonding to Pro-social Others	•	•	•	•	•	•

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

5 Elements of Protection



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SUMMARY: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



- Works in families, schools & communities
- Provides opportunities for involvement
- Teaches skills
- Offers recognition
- Builds bonding
- Motivates kids to follow healthy standards

DYLAN & EDEN BREAKOUT ROOMS

In your group you will have 15 minutes to:

- Read the story of Dylan and Eden – handouts page 9
- Map out the SDS components – handouts page 10

Questions or Aha's
to bring to the group?



THE SDS COMPONENTS

SDS Component	Where in the Story
<p>Opportunities <i>What is the opportunity Dylan and Eden are given?</i></p>	<p>To work at the YMCA Little League games.</p>
<p>Skills <i>What skills does Quinn teach Dylan and Eden? How does he monitor his effort and performance?</i></p>	<p>Tasks associated with operating games (e.g., scoreboard, seating set up). Monitors effort by observing and reviewing the process/tasks with the boys.</p>
<p>Recognition <i>How does Quinn recognize Dylan and Eden's effort and achievement?</i></p>	<p>He provides continued paid employment, more opportunities, and verbal praise throughout the neighborhood.</p>

THE SDS COMPONENTS

<p>Bonding <i>How does bonding come into play?</i></p>	<p>They felt connected to Quinn and other YMCA staff. Dylan and Eden listened differently to these adults and were willing step up when offered new opportunities. And when there were conversations about expectations and standards for behavior they paid attention.</p>
<p>Heathy Behaviors <i>What healthy behaviors is Quinn ultimately trying to promote?</i></p>	<p>To be law-abiding, respectful of others and to contribute to the betterment of the community, rather than getting in trouble.</p>
<p>Healthy & Clear Standards <i>How does he communicate and reinforce the standards for those behaviors?</i></p>	<p>Through continued conversations and modeling positive behaviors.</p>
<p>Individual Characteristics <i>How does Quinn take Dylan and Eden's personalities and existing skills into account?</i></p>	<p>Assigning tasks that aligned with youth interest, such as sports.</p>

Check Your Understanding

In your breakout answer the questions in your handouts page 18-21 (your breakout name is what questions to answer)

Group Name: Px Science/Science of Risk Factors

- Prevention Science
- Science of Risk Factors

Group Name: Community Family School

- Community Risk Factors
- Family & School Risk Factors

Group Name: Peer Ind SDS

- Peer & Individual Risk Factors
- The Social Development Strategy

Prevention Science

1. Finish this sentence: "To prevent a problem before it happens you must change..."
 - a) the problem.
 - b) the predictors of the problem.
 - c) the laws that affect the problem.
2. Prevention science has proven effective in preventing which of these adolescent health and behavior problems? (check all that apply)
 - a) Depression & anxiety
 - b) Teen pregnancy
 - c) Violence
 - d) Illegal music downloading
 - e) Substance use
 - f) Delinquency

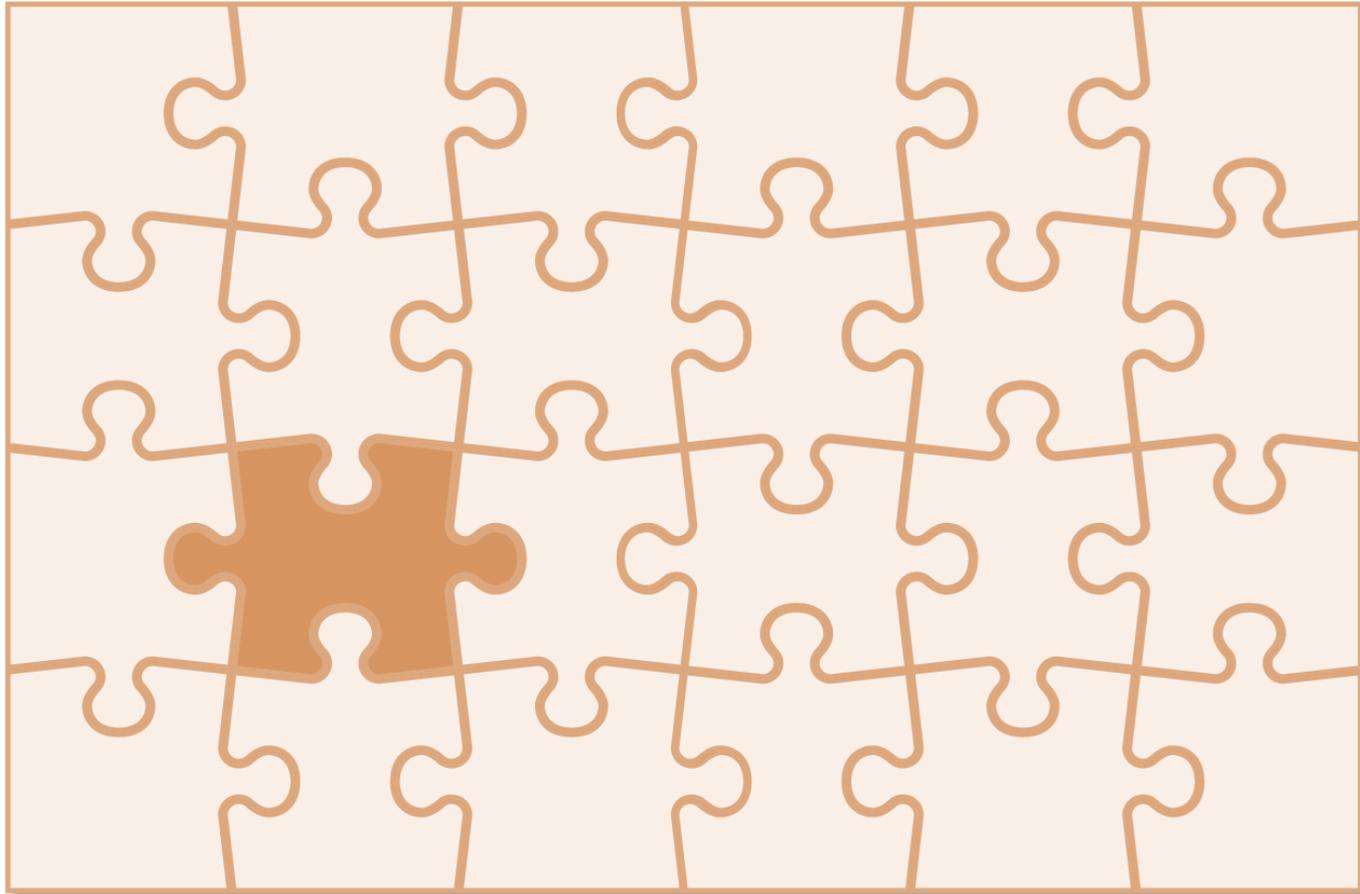
CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING ACTIVITY

Work with your Breakout Room group to:

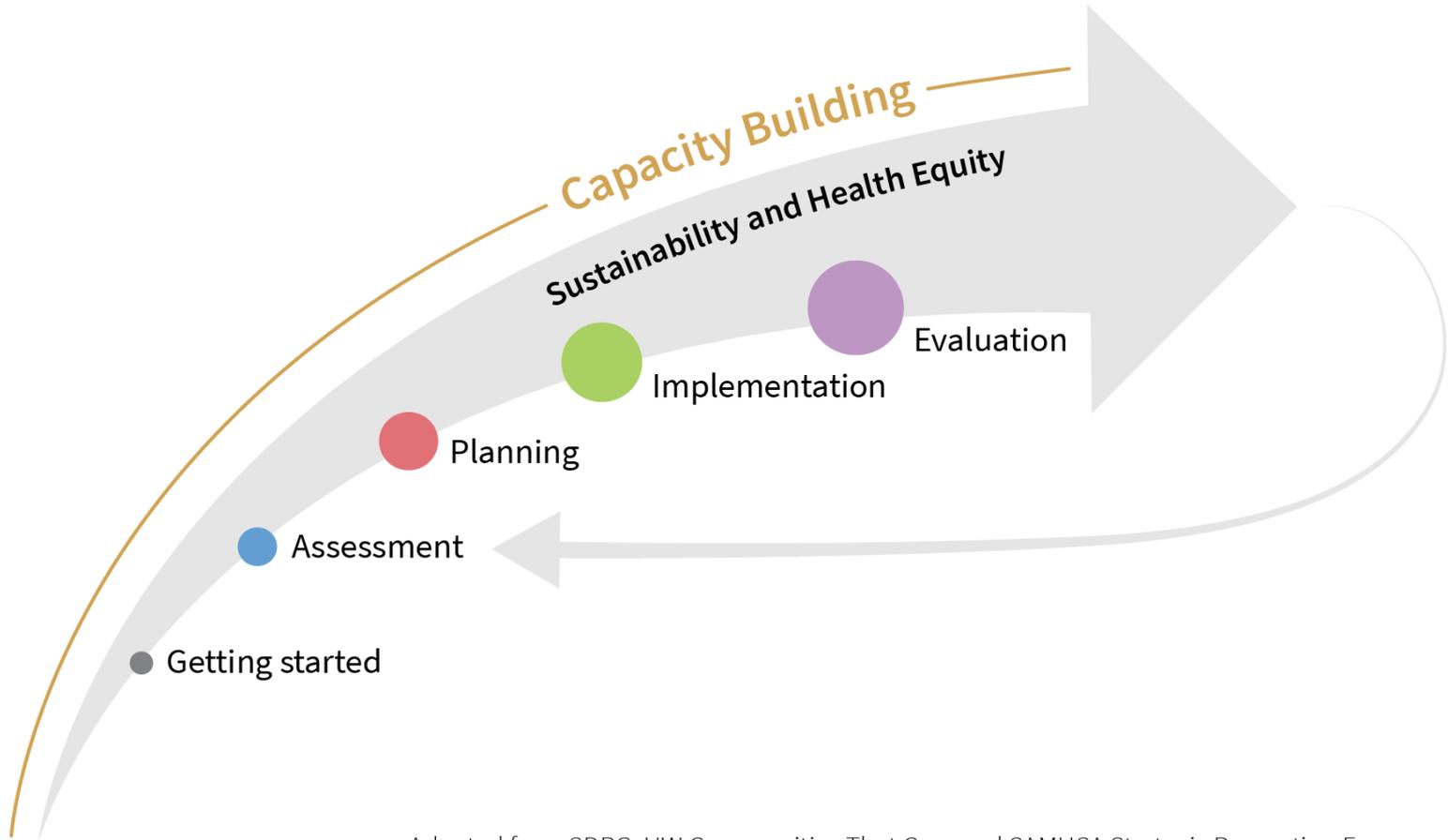
- Review your assigned questions (on the handout)
- Decide on the correct answer for each question
- Elect a spokesperson who will record answers and report out to the larger group

We'll review answers topic by topic as a large group

RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS INFORM PREVENTION: ASSESSMENT



WA State Prevention Planning Framework

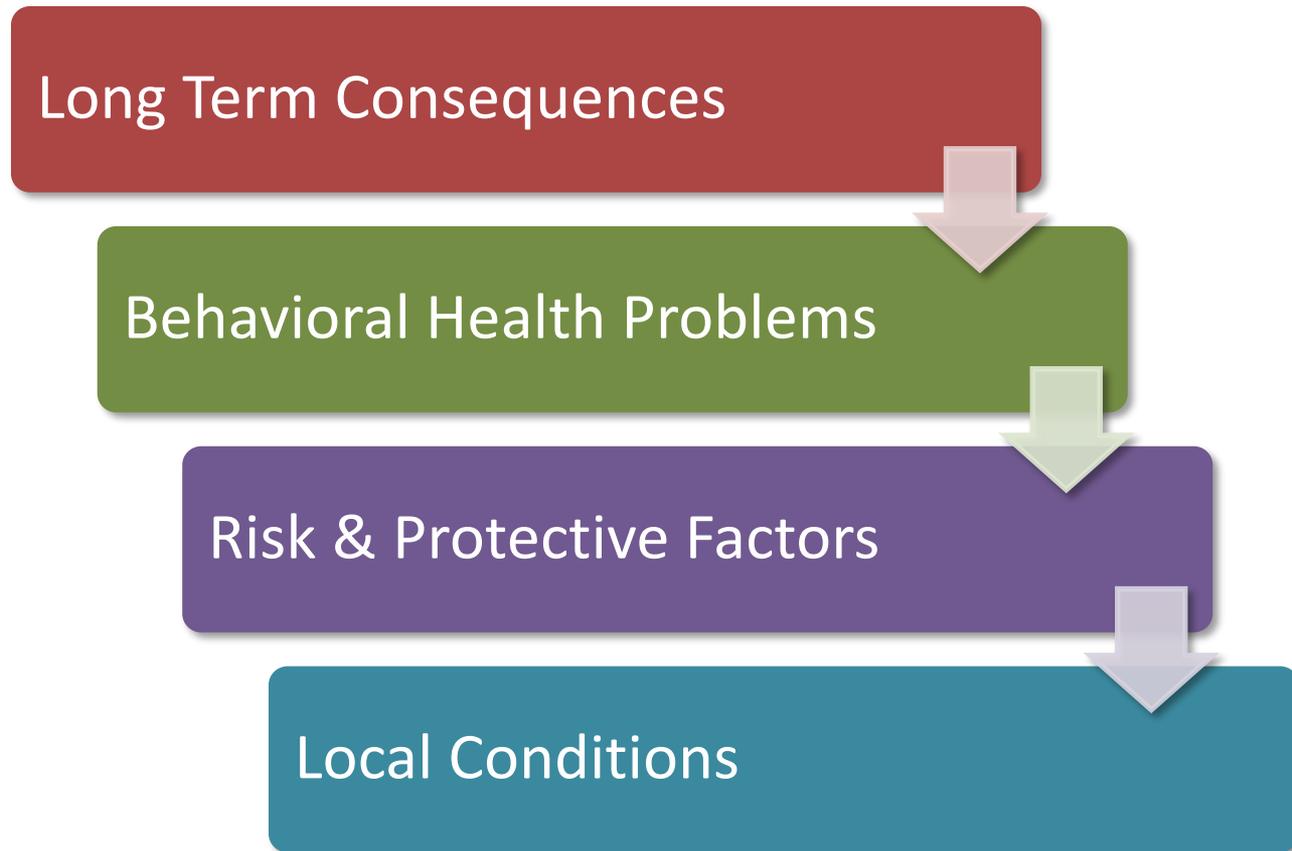


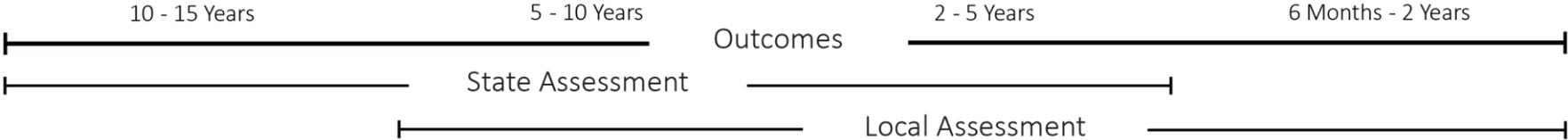
Adapted from SDRG, UW Communities That Care and SAMHSA Strategic Prevention Framework

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WHAT DO WE ASSESS

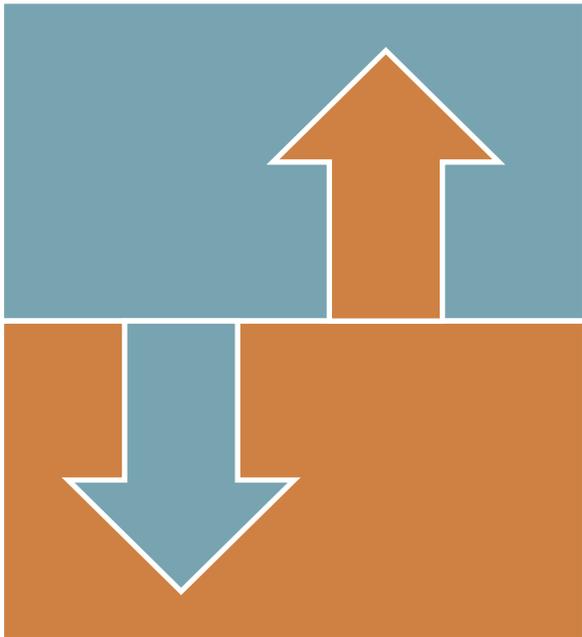




What is the problem?	Why?	Why here?	But why here?
These problems . . .	These types of problems with these common factors specifically in our community . . .
School performance Youth delinquency Mental health Add yours here	Any underage drinking Underage problem and heavy drinking Opioid /Rx drug use Marijuana/cannabis use Vape/e-cigarette use Add yours here	Low neighborhood attachment/community disorganization	Add yours here
		Availability: Retail or social access AND/OR Norms: Policies, enforcement, regulations Add yours here	Add yours here
		Favorable attitudes toward problem behavior: Add yours here	Add yours here
		Risk & protective factors Add yours here	Add yours here

SUMMARY OF RISK/PROTECTIVE FACTORS

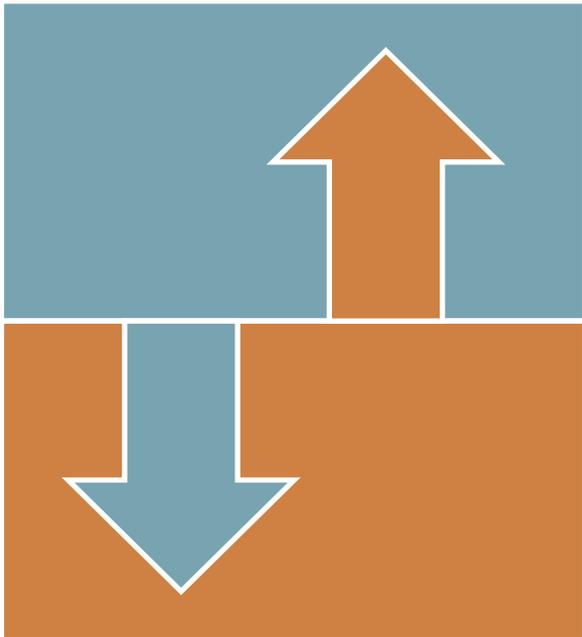
INFORMING ASSESSMENT



- Identify which risk and protective factors to prioritize
- Most prevalent
- High or low in comparison to others
- Trending up or down

SUMMARY OF RISK/PROTECTIVE FACTORS

INFORMING ASSESSMENT



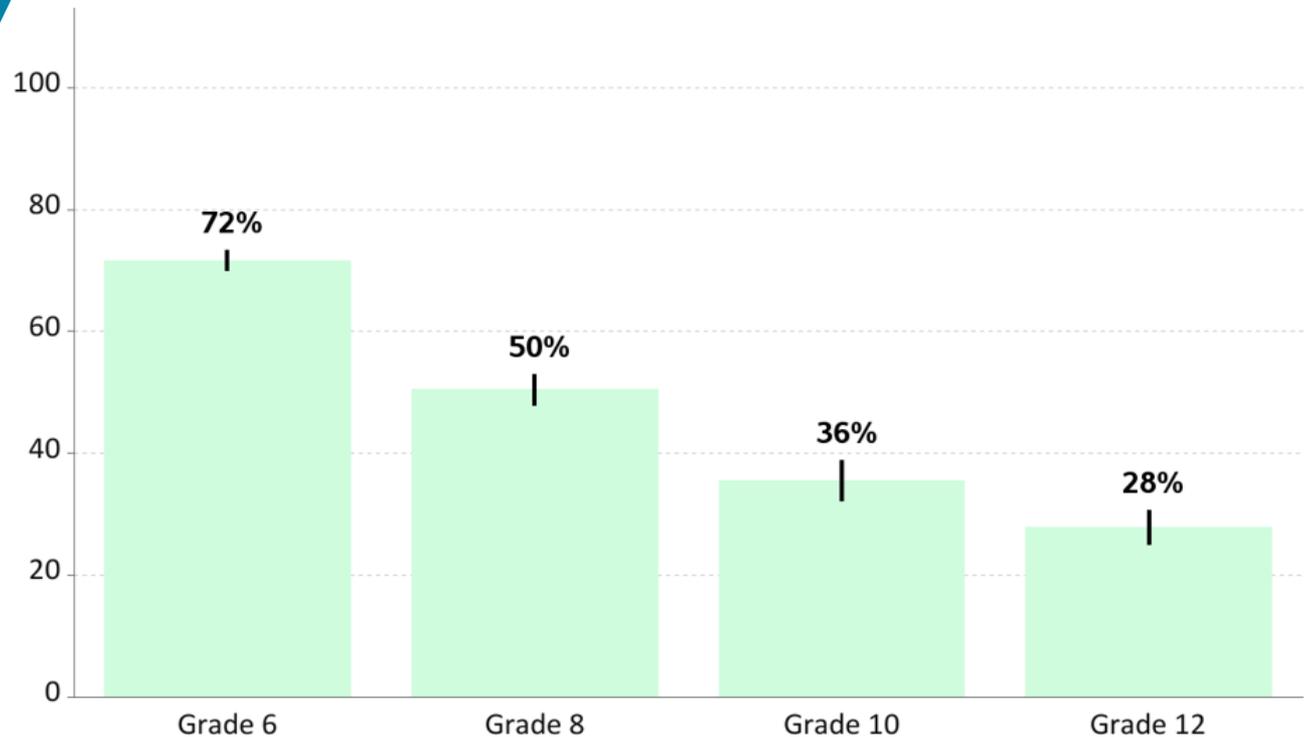
Contributing Factors

- Answer the question of but why here?
- Why is this risk factor high here?
- Why is this protective factor low here?

WHERE TO FIND DATA ON RISK/PROTECTIVE FACTORS



Perceived Availability of Alcohol
Percent of students who report alcohol
would be "very hard" to get

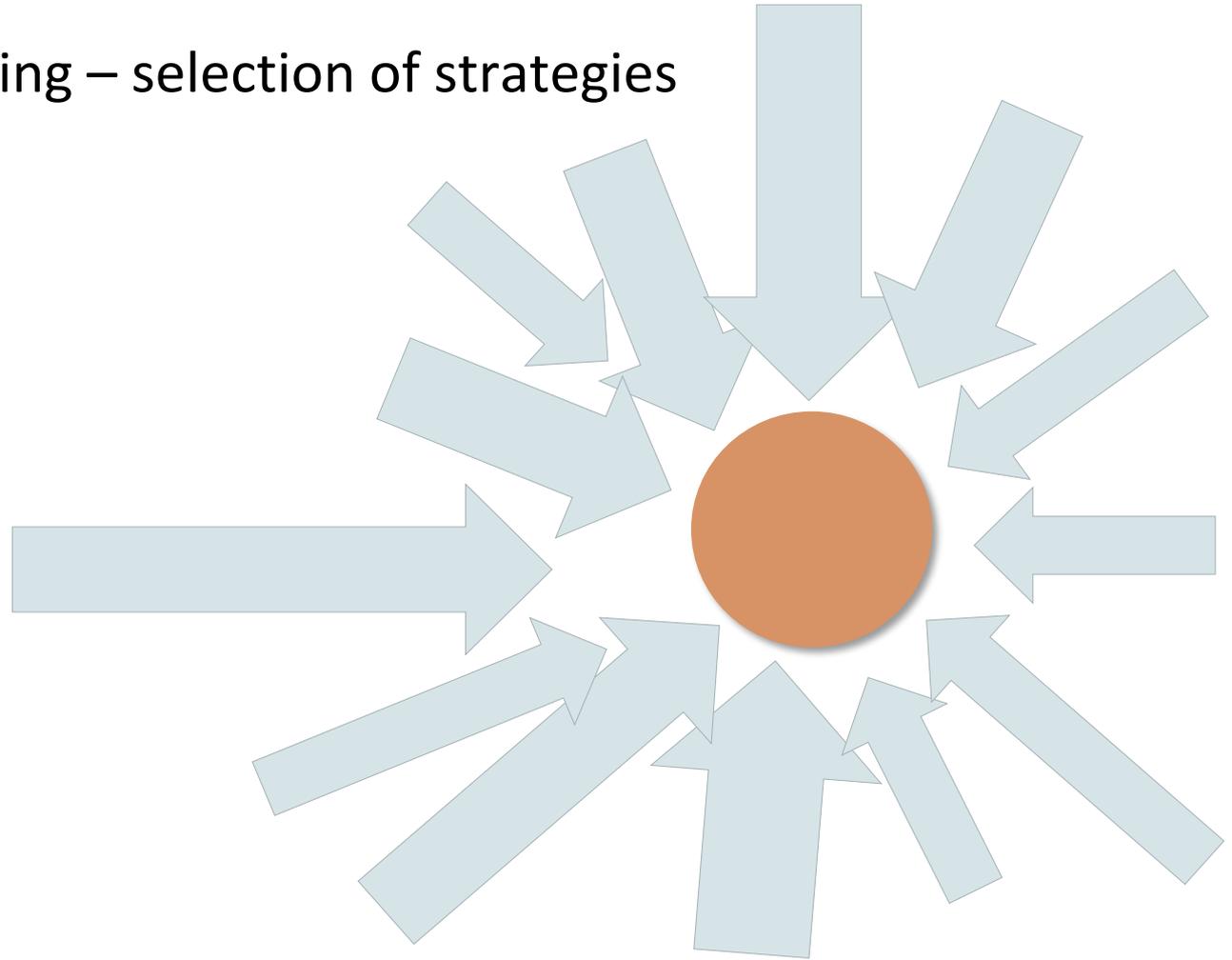


Statewide

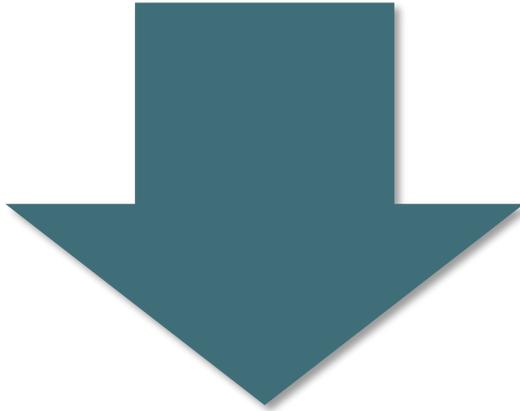
- Source: 2023 Healthy Youth Survey

RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS INFORM PREVENTION EFFORTS

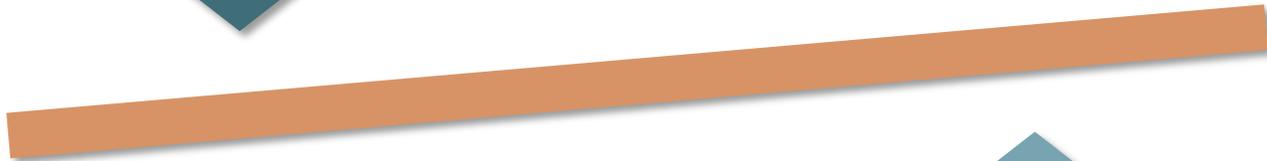
Let's look at planning – selection of strategies



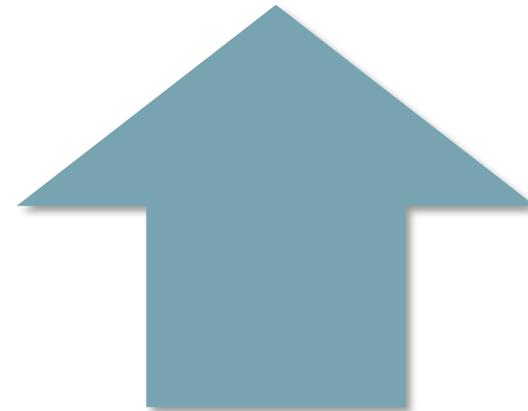
MATCHING IS KEY!



For a risk factor to go **down**, then we need **strategies** that has been **shown to reduce that risk factor**



For a protective factor to go **up**, then we need **strategies** that has been **shown to increase that protective factor**

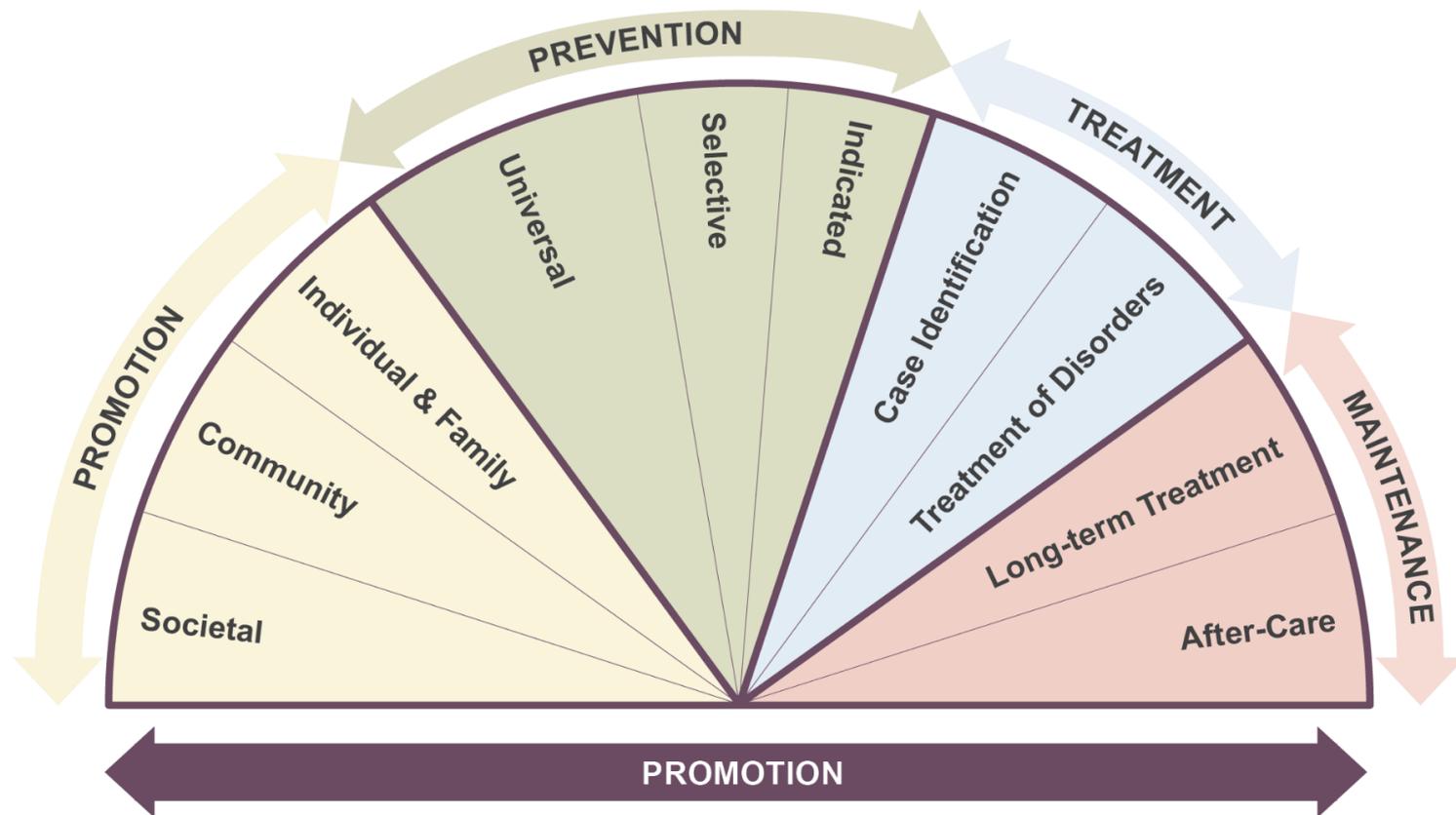


STRATEGIES & 3 TYPES OF PREVENTION

3

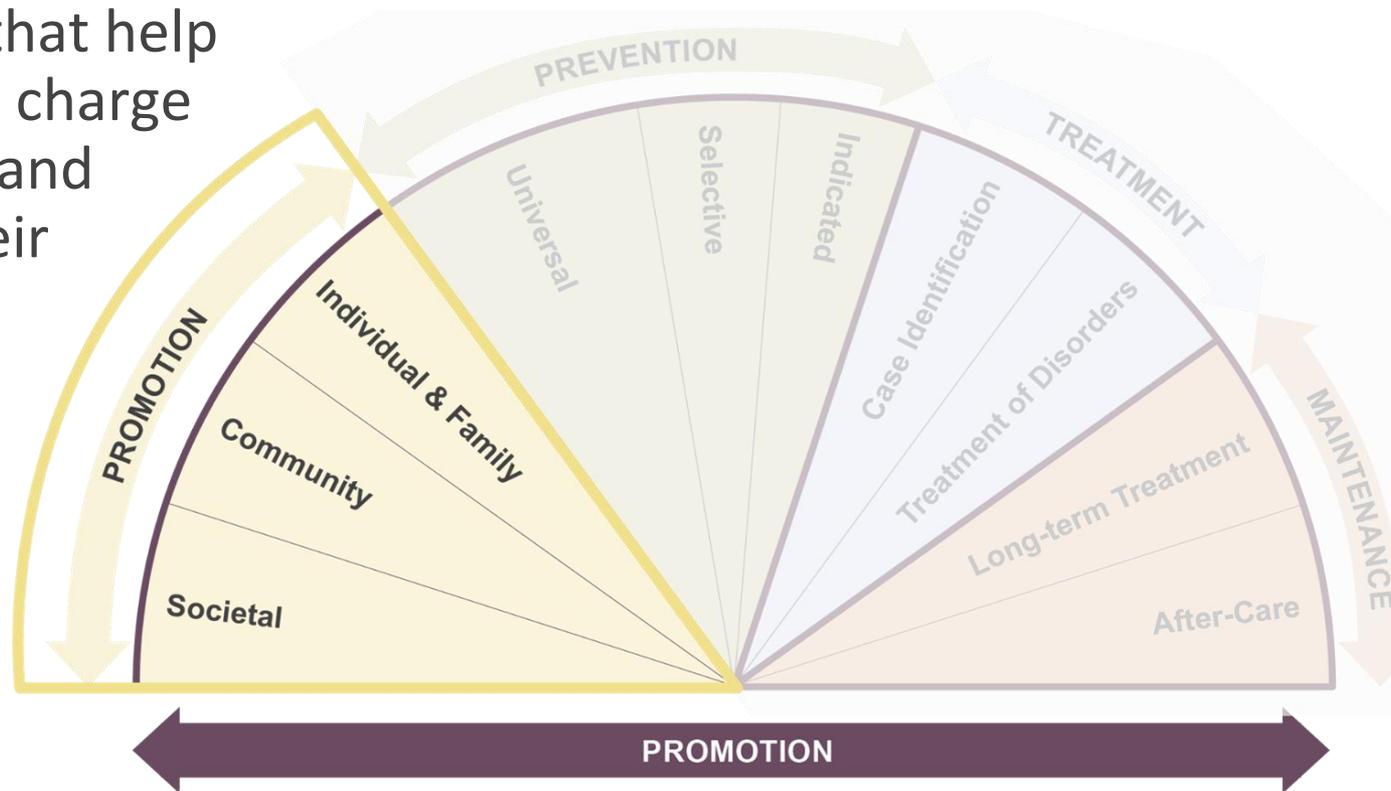
SPECTRUM OF ...

... MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, & BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS



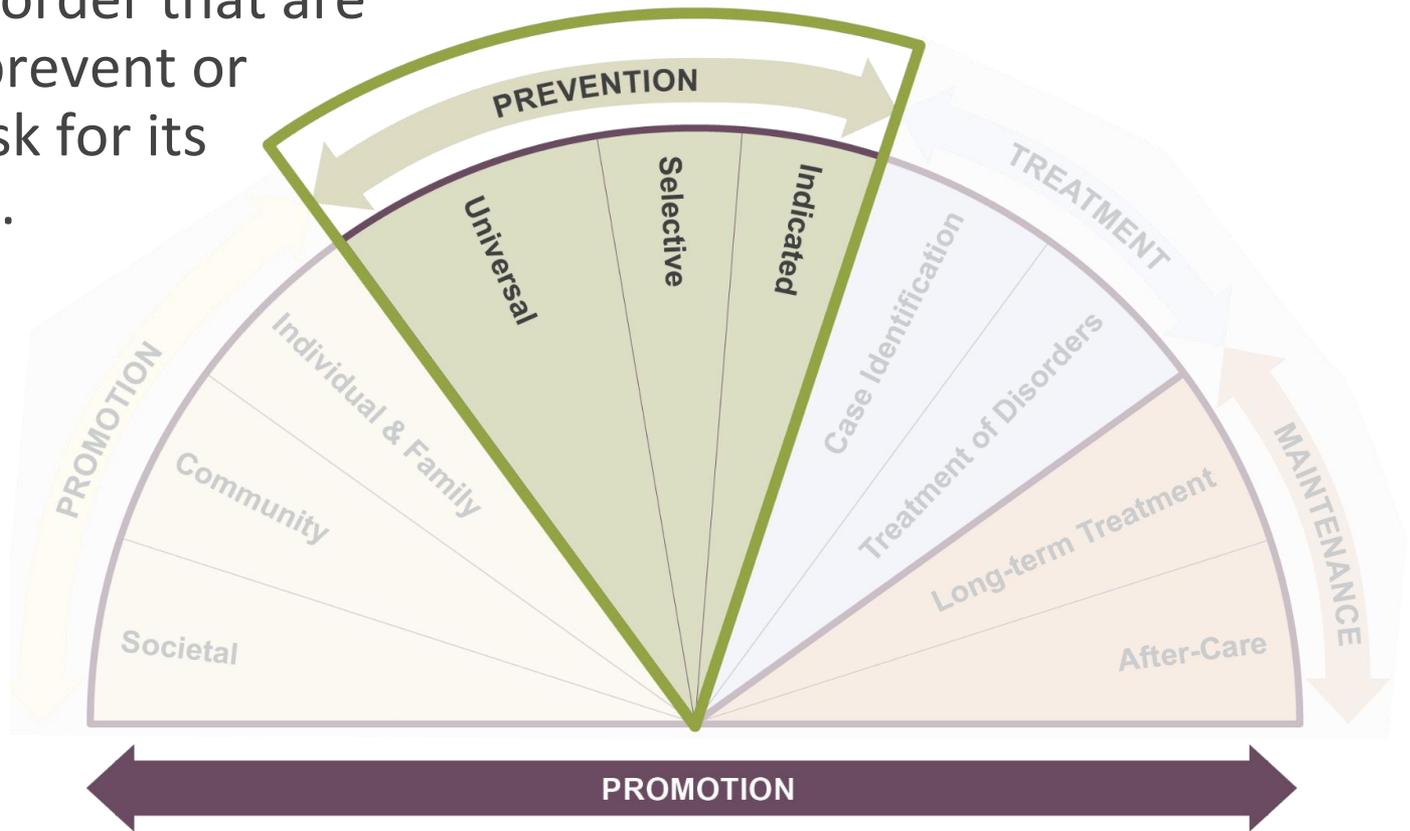
PROMOTION

Promotion involves interventions (e.g., programs, practices, or environmental strategies) that help people take charge of their life and improve their well-being



PREVENTION

Prevention refers to the strategies offered prior to the onset of a disorder that are intended to prevent or reduce the risk for its development.

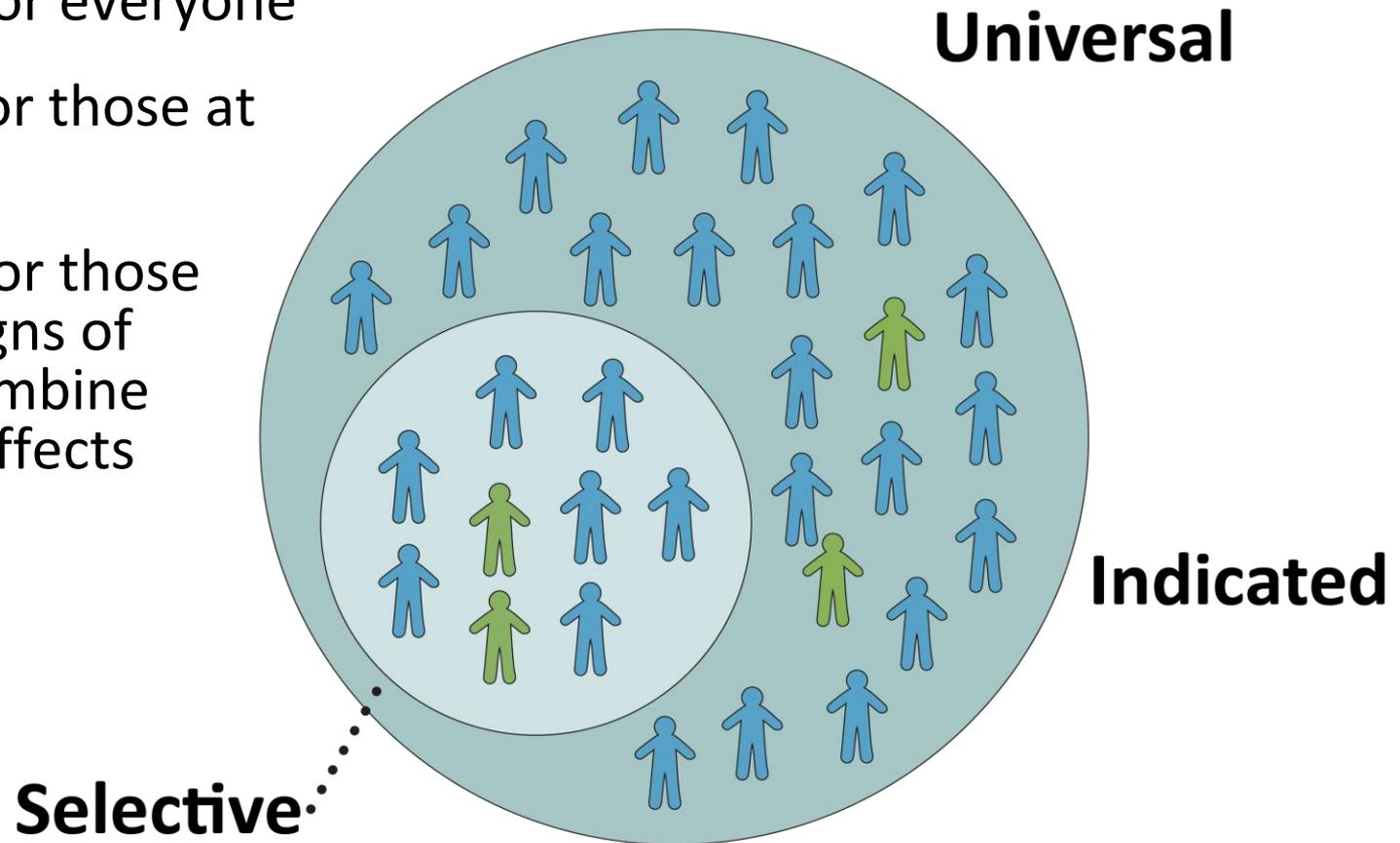


SUMMARY: THREE TYPES OF PREVENTION

Universal = for everyone

Selective = for those at elevated risk

Indicated = for those with early signs of problems combine for greater effects



HOW DOES IT RELATE ACTIVITY

1. How does this relate to risk & protective factors?
2. Questions and Aha's?



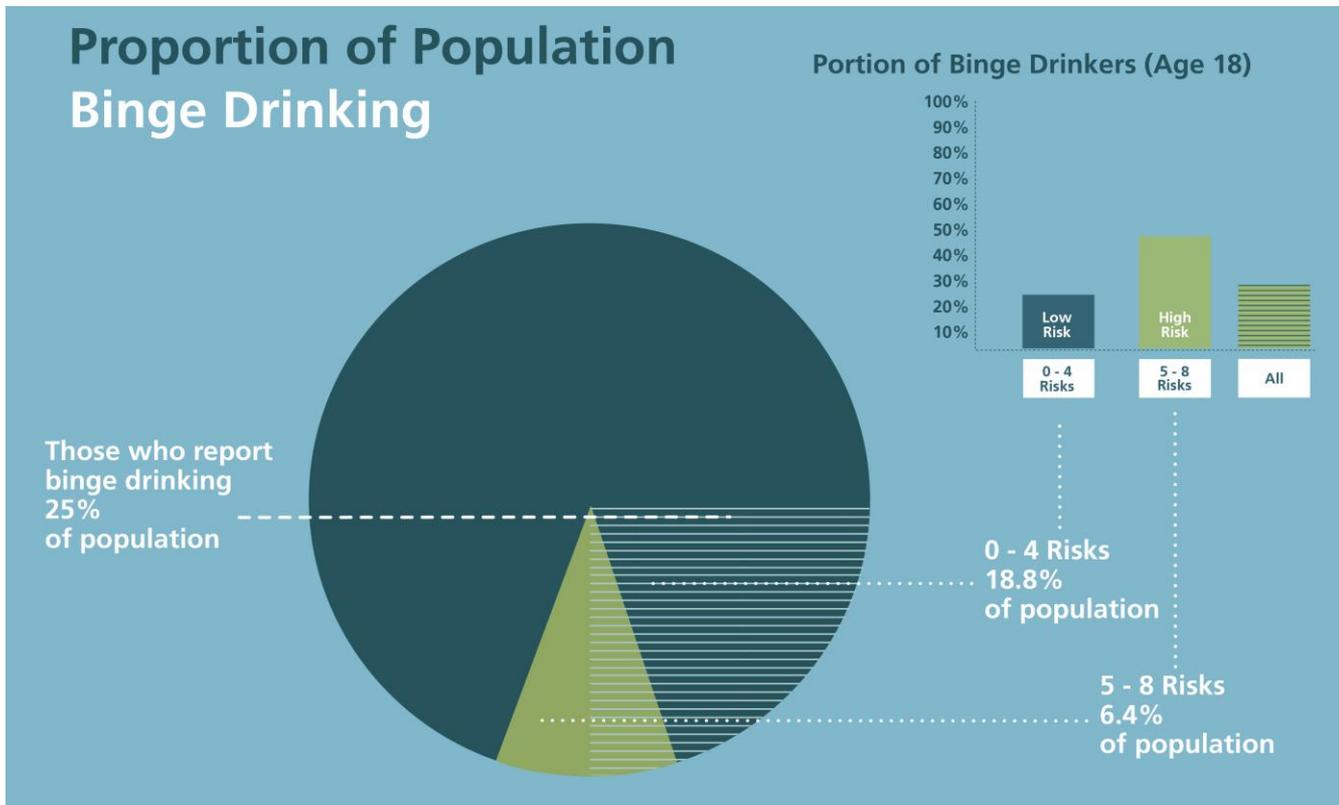
PREVENTION PARADOX

Video



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SUMMARY: PREVENTION PARADOX



Universal prevention to reduce risks is needed to achieve community-wide effects.

LET'S DISCUSS



How does the Prevention Paradox support the idea of using universal strategies?



How does a change in behavior across a large group lead to big community-level improvements?



What questions do you have?

TESTED & EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

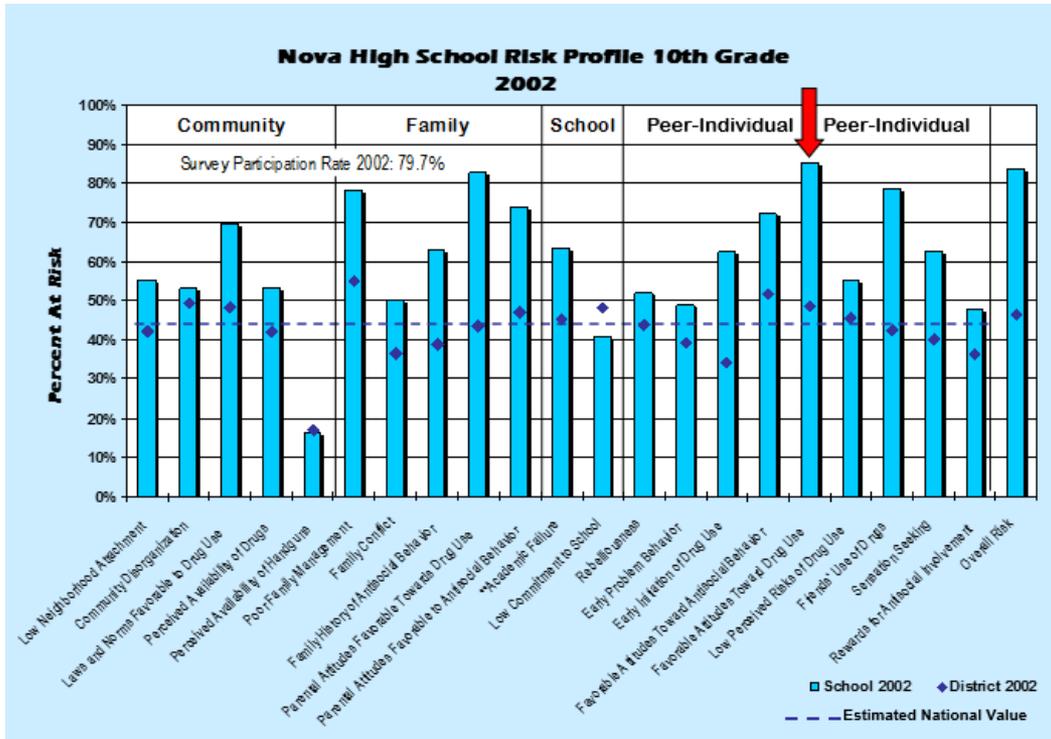
Proven in high quality evaluations

Impact health & behavior problems

Specify how programs work

Ready-to-use

EXAMPLE: PRIORITY RP FACTORS LEAD TO APPROPRIATE PROGRAM SELECTION



PROGRAM SEARCH

CHOOSE FROM 3 WAYS TO SEARCH:

20 PROGRAMS MATCHED YOUR SEARCH.

YOU SEARCHED ON THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

Risk and Protective Factors: Risk Factors: Favorable attitudes towards drug use

COMPARE

Select the checkboxes on the left below for programs you wish to compare, then click the "Compare" button.

To sort the list, click on the underlined Program or Rating column headings.

PROGRAM	RATING	BENEFITS AND COSTS	IMPACT
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>LIFESKILLS TRAINING (LST)</u> PROGRAM INFORMATION TARGET POPULATION FUNDING STRATEGIES	Model Plus	BENEFITS MINUS COSTS	Alcohol, Delinquency and Criminal Behavior, Illicit Drug Use, Sexual Risk Behaviors, STIs, Tobacco, Violence
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>FUNCTIONAL FAMILY THERAPY (FFT)</u> PROGRAM INFORMATION TARGET POPULATION FUNDING STRATEGIES	Model	BENEFITS MINUS COSTS	Delinquency and Criminal Behavior, Illicit Drug Use
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>MULTISYSTEMIC THERAPY - PROBLEM SEXUAL BEHAVIOR (MST-PSB)</u> PROGRAM INFORMATION TARGET POPULATION FUNDING STRATEGIES	Model	BENEFITS MINUS COSTS	Academic Performance, Adult Crime, Delinquency and Criminal Behavior, Illicit Drug Use, Mental Health - Other, Prosocial with Peers, Sexual Risk Behaviors, Sexual Violence
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>POSITIVE ACTION</u> PROGRAM INFORMATION TARGET POPULATION FUNDING STRATEGIES	Model	BENEFITS MINUS COSTS	Academic Performance, Alcohol, Anxiety, Bullying, Delinquency and Criminal Behavior, Depression, Emotional Regulation, Illicit Drug Use, Positive Social/Prosocial Behavior, Sexual Risk Behaviors, Tobacco, Truancy - School Attendance, Violence

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MOST HIGH-QUALITY INTERVENTIONS

ADDRESS MULTIPLE RISK FACTORS & BUILD PROTECTION

LIFESKILLS TRAINING (LST)	Model Plus	BENEFITS MINUS COSTS	Alcohol, Delinquency and Criminal Behavior, Illicit Drug Use, Sexual Risk Behaviors, STIs, Tobacco, Violence	A classroom-based, 3-year, middle school substance abuse prevention program to prevent teenage drug and alcohol abuse, adolescent tobacco use, violence and other risk behaviors. The life skills curriculum teaches students self-management skills, social skills, and drug awareness and resistance skills.
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RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Risk Factors

Individual: Early initiation of drug use, Favorable attitudes towards drug use*, Stress, Substance use

Peer: Interaction with antisocial peers, Peer rewards for antisocial behavior, Peer substance use

Neighborhood/Community: Laws and norms favorable to drug use/crime

Protective Factors

Individual: Clear standards for behavior*, Coping Skills*, Perceived risk of drug use*, Problem solving skills*, Refusal skills*, Skills for social interaction*

*Risk/Protective Factor was significantly impacted by the program.

See also: [LifeSkills Training \(LST\) Logic Model \(PDF\)](#)

How does the local condition impact the strategy?

Risk Factor

Local Condition

Availability of Drugs (Risk)

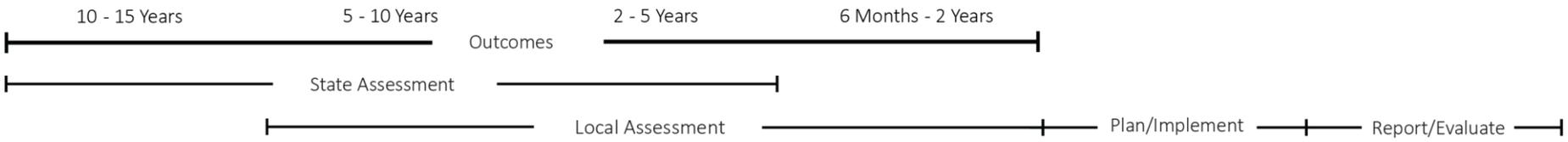
Enforcement of laws and policies

Availability of Drugs (Risk)

Perceived availability of drugs

Availability of Drugs (Risk)

Youth access to ATOD



What is the problem?	Why?	Why here?	But why here?	What are we doing about it?	So what? How will we know?
These problems . . .	These types of problems with these common factors specifically in our community can it be addressed with these strategies we will use these tools to measure impact . . .

School performance Youth delinquency Mental health Add yours here	Any underage drinking Underage problem and heavy drinking Opioid /Rx drug use Marijuana/cannabis use Vape/e-cigarette use Add yours here	Low neighborhood attachment/community disorganization	Add yours here	Community engagement coalition development - Coalition Name	Engagement/coalition development - Assess/Sustainability documentation
		Availability: Retail or social access AND/OR Norms: Policies, enforcement, regulations Add yours here	Add yours here	Public awareness/info dissemination - Add yours here	Environmental strategies - Process measures, Community survey HYS
		Favorable attitudes toward problem behavior: Add yours here	Add yours here	Environmental strategies - Add yours here	Student Assistance Program - Pre/Post Add your here
		Risk & protective factors Add yours here	Add yours here	School-based Student Assistance Program - Add yours here	Direct Services- Assigned program pre/post and process measures, HYS

MATCHING ACTIVITY

In your breakouts discuss:

- What happens if we pick a strategy that does not impact the priority risk factor?
- Why isn't it enough that a strategy is evidence-based in general?
- How does this protect our time, funding, and credibility?

Come back prepared to discuss as a full group your Aha's and highlights

MATCHING ACTIVITY DEBRIEF #1

**What happens if we pick
a strategy that doesn't
impact the priority
risk factor?**

MATCHING ACTIVITY DEBRIEF #2

**Why isn't it enough
that a strategy is
evidence-based in
general?**

MATCHING ACTIVITY DEBRIEF #3

**How does this
protect our time,
funding, and
credibility?**

SUMMARY: R&P FACTORS INFORM PLANNING



WHY RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS ARE FOUNDATIONAL TO PREVENTION?

Address problems **before they start**

Helps find the **most appropriate prevention responses** to the unique situation for the children and youth in your community

More bang for your buck: Working at level of risk and protection can **impact multiple outcomes**

*A shared risk and protective factor approach refers to prioritizing risk and protective factors linked to multiple [youth outcomes] in **prevention planning, partnership, and programmatic efforts** (vs focusing on different outcomes separately)*.*

**J Public Health Manag Pract. 2018 Jan-Feb; 24(Suppl 1 INJURY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION): S32–S41.*

CLOSING ACTIVITY: SPIRAL JOURNALING

Please fold a sheet of paper in half-and-half-again (1 min)

Place the point of your writing implement at the center of the page and start drawing a spiral as tightly-and-slowly as possible.

We'll tell you when to stop.

Write your answers to our questions for each quadrant.

Circle/underline one thing or one word you've written.



EVALUATIONS



THANK YOU

The Center for **Communities That Care**

Jen Hogge, Community Prevention Strategist

Jaclynn Sagers, Senior Community Prevention Strategist

Gery Shelafoe, Community Prevention Strategist

Connect with us!



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linkedin.com/company/center-for-communities-that-care/