

# SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION

## WHAT IS PREVENTION?

Evidence-based actions taken to delay the initial use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, and to prevent substance misuse in order to promote healthy behaviors.

## PREVENTION STRATEGIES

- 1 Universal Prevention** intervenes before substance use occurs. Universal interventions target the general population and aim to deter substance use by providing information and developing skills to make healthy, informed decisions. *Examples: School curriculum for all students; policies to modify advertising practices; workshop series for parents and caregivers*
- 2 Selective Prevention** interventions target specific populations who are at greater risk for substance misuse. *Examples: Support groups for children with parents/caregivers with substance use problems; mass media campaign for high-risk groups*
- 3 Indicated Prevention** targets individuals already using substances or engaging in high-risk behaviors but do not yet meet diagnostic criteria. *Examples: Mentoring programs for disengaged youth; parent/caregiver training for youth using substances*

## SAMHSA's STRATEGIC PREVENTION FRAMEWORK (SPF)

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) SPF offers a comprehensive approach to understanding and addressing the substance misuse and related behavioral health problems facing communities:

- 1. Assessment:** Identify local prevention needs based on data
- 2. Capacity:** Build local resources and readiness to address prevention needs
- 3. Planning:** Find out what works to address prevention needs and how to do it well
- 4. Implementation:** Deliver evidence-based programs and practices as intended
- 5. Evaluation:** Examine the process and outcomes of programs and practices, and make adjustments if needed

The SPF process is guided by two cross-cutting principles:

**Cultural Competence:** The ability to understand and interact effectively with people who have different values, lifestyles, and traditions based on their distinctive heritage and social relationships.

**Sustainability:** The process of building an adaptive and effective system that achieves and maintains long-term results.



## PREVENTION WORKS BY ...



Strengthening individual knowledge and skills



Promoting community education



Educating healthcare providers and other professionals



Fostering coalitions and networks



Mobilizing neighborhoods and communities



Changing internal practices and policies of agencies and institutions



Influencing policy and legislation

### For more information:

Evidence-Based Practices Resource Center  
<https://www.samhsa.gov/ebp-resource-center>

Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant  
<https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/blockgrants/sabg>

A Guide to SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework,  
<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/20190620-samhsa-strategic-preventionframework-guide.pdf>

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## PRIMARY PREVENTION STRATEGIES

SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention identified six prevention strategies. A comprehensive prevention approach using as many strategies as possible has the greatest potential to reduce substance use.



**Information Dissemination:** One-way communication to provide information about drug use, misuse, and addiction and the effects on individuals, families, and communities on available prevention programs and services. *Examples: Media campaigns, brochures, health fairs*



**Prevention Education:** Two-way communication between educator and participants that provides information and activities aimed to improve critical life and social skills, including decision-making, refusal skills, and critical analysis. *Examples: Classroom sessions, parenting classes*



**Alternative Activities:** Activities that exclude alcohol and drug use through constructive and healthy activities. *Examples: Community drop-in centers, mentoring programs*



**Problem Identification & Referral:** Aims to identify those who have used drugs and to assess if their behavior can be reversed through education. *Examples: DUI programs, student assistance programs*



**Community-Based Processes:** Enhances the ability and capacity of the community to more effectively provide substance use prevention services. *Examples: Neighborhood action training, multi-agency coordination*



**Environmental:** Establishes or changes community standards, codes, and attitudes, with the goal of reducing drug use in the general population. *Examples: Advertisement restrictions, product pricing strategies, enforcement*