Prevention Psychiatry
What is it?

Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry Committee on Prevention, 2006-2007

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Prevention psychiatry is the reduction of mental disorders and behavioral problems by
A) Identifying risk and protective factors, and
B) Applying evidence-based interventions.
Prevention Examples

- Reduction of specific disorders
  - Substance abuse, depression, PTSD
- Reduction of risky behaviors
  - Substance use, unsafe sex
- Reduction of negative outcomes
  - Suicide, teen pregnancy, school dropout, delinquency
- Promotion of mental health and wellness
Positive Prevention Outcomes

- Decrease incidence and prevalence
- Delay onset
- Minimize adverse impact on family, peers, and society
- Demonstrate cost-effectiveness
Primary prevention: Reduction of the incidence of a disorder.

Secondary prevention: Reduction of the prevalence of a disorder.

Tertiary prevention: Reduction of the disability associated with a disorder.
Institute of Medicine Classifications

- **Universal preventive intervention**: An intervention targeted to an entire population.
- **Selective preventive intervention**: An intervention targeted to members of a population with higher than average risk factors.
- **Indicated preventive intervention**: An intervention targeted to members of a population with subsyndromal symptoms of a disorder.
## Types of Prevention – A Synthesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary</strong></td>
<td>- Universal interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Selected interventions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Indicated interventions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary</strong></td>
<td>- Screening</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Early intervention/treatment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tertiary</strong></td>
<td>- Relapse prevention</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Prevention of morbidity/disability</td>
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</table>
Risk Factors

- Risk factors predate the associated disorder.
- They are highly associated with the disorder.
- Some risk factors are malleable, or subject to change via a preventive intervention.
Examples of Risk Factors

- **Biological**
  - Expression of genetic vulnerability, adverse prenatal event (traumatic, toxic, infectious)

- **Psychological/Psychosocial**
  - Family discord, parenting skill deficits

- **Social/Environmental**
  - Availability of drugs and firearms, extreme economic and social deprivation
# Risk Factors by Domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Substance Abuse</th>
<th>Delinquency</th>
<th>Teen Pregnancy</th>
<th>Violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Drugs and Firearms</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Economic Deprivation</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Substance Abuse</th>
<th>Delinquency</th>
<th>Teen Pregnancy</th>
<th>Violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Conflict</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Attitudes and Involvement</td>
<td>✔</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual/Peer</th>
<th>Substance Abuse</th>
<th>Delinquency</th>
<th>Teen Pregnancy</th>
<th>Violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alienation and Rebelliousness</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends Who Engage in a Behavior</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Protective Factors

- Protective factors predate the associated disorder.
- They reduce the risk of developing a disorder or adverse outcome.
- Some are malleable, or subject to enhancement via a preventive intervention (i.e., promoting resiliency).
Examples of Protective Factors

- Support from caring adults
  - Parents, relatives, mentors
- Good school performance
- Conflict resolution skills
- Positive role models and positive peers
- Clear and consistent discipline in the family
What Constitutes “Evidence-Based?”

- Determination of effectiveness and/or efficacy is based on scientific studies.
- Downplays intuition and unsystematic clinical experience as sufficient grounds for decision-making.
- Interventions are tested in systematic, empirical, and rigorous ways.
Illustration: Universal Intervention

- Prevention of marital distress and divorce
- Target population: Married couples and couples planning to marry
- Intervention: Group sessions for couples to build skills to handle disagreements
Illustration: Universal Intervention

- Prevention of poor school and family bonds, violence, substance abuse, risky sexual behavior
- Target population: Elementary school-aged children
- Intervention: Modified teacher practices and parent training in child behavioral techniques
Illustration: Universal Intervention

- Prevention of behavioral and health problems in children later in life
- Target population: New mothers
- Intervention: Counseling sessions aimed at enhancing self worth of the new mother, fostering gentle interactions with the baby
Illustration: Selective Intervention

- Prevention of alcohol abuse among college students
- Target population: Students with high-risk drinking behavior
- Intervention: Motivational interviewing and skill-based training to help students “mature out” of high-risk drinking
Illustration: Selective Intervention

- Prevention of protracted bereavement, depression, and social withdrawal
- Target population: New widows
- Intervention: Widows are paired with a widow contact who provides emotional support and practical assistance
Illustration: Selective Intervention

- Prevention of behavioral and attitude problems
- Target population: Children with parents who have affective disorders
- Intervention: Parent, child, and family sessions performed with semi-structured interviews
Illustration: Indicated Intervention

- Delaying or preventing the onset of schizophrenia
- Target population: Patients with sub-threshold (prodromal) symptoms
- Intervention: Low dose atypical antipsychotic and cognitive-behavioral therapy (or other psychosocial interventions)
General Principles for Effective Prevention Programs

- Address factors that play causal roles.
- Reverse or reduce risk factors.
- Enhance protective factors to increase competency in multiple domains.
- Age-specific, developmentally appropriate, and culturally sensitive.
Prevention-minded Treatment

Intervention for a whole family in which an individual with a mental disorder receives treatment and other family members (parents, children, spouse, etc.) receive preventive interventions.

[NYS-OMH, Koilpillai (2000)]
Roles for Mental Health Professionals

- Incorporate knowledge of risk and protective factors into clinical practice.
- Promote awareness of the benefits of prevention.
- Consult with schools and community agencies.
- Collaborate with prevention groups to work together at reducing common risk factors and promoting protective factors.
References

References

References

- McGorry PD, Yung AR, Phillips LJ, et al. Randomized controlled trial of interventions designed to reduce the risk of progression to first-episode psychosis in a clinical sample with subthreshold symptoms. *Arch Gen Psychiatry* 2002;59:921-928.
The Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (GAP) was founded in 1946 by a group of physicians under the dynamic leadership of the late Dr. William C. Menninger. Their wartime experiences had brought them to realize the urgency of greater public awareness of the need for new programs in mental health for the people of the United States.

Over the ensuing years, GAP has had a tremendous influence in shaping psychiatric thinking, public programs, and clinical practice in mental health. It continues today to pioneer the exploration of issues and ideas on the frontiers of psychiatry and in applying psychiatric insights into the general medical, social, and interpersonal problems of our times.

GAP analyzes significant data in psychiatry and human relations, reevaluates old concepts, develops new ones, and applies this knowledge for the advancement of mental health.