

The Strategic Prevention Framework

The Strategic Prevention Framework is grounded in the public health approach and based on six key principles:

1. Prevention is an ordered set of steps along a continuum to promote individual, family, and community health, prevent mental and behavioral disorders, support resilience and recovery, and prevent relapse. Prevention activities range from deterring diseases and behaviors that contribute to them, to delaying the onset of disease and mitigating the severity of symptoms, to reducing the related problems in communities. This concept is based on the Institute of Medicine model that recognizes the importance of a whole spectrum of interventions.
2. Prevention is prevention is prevention. That is, the common components of effective prevention for the individual, family or community within a public health model are the same--whether the focus is on preventing or reducing the effects of cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, substance abuse or mental illness.
3. Common risk and protective factors exist for many substance abuse and mental health problems. Good prevention focuses on these common risk factors that can be altered. For example, family conflict, low school readiness, and poor social skills increase the risk for conduct disorders and depression, which in turn increase the risk for adolescent substance abuse, delinquency, and violence. Protective factors such as strong family bonds, social skills, opportunities for school success, and involvement in community activities can foster resilience and mitigate the influence of risk factors. Risk and protective factors exist in the individual, the family, the community, and the broader environment.
4. Resilience is built by developing assets in individuals, families, and communities through evidenced-based health promotion and prevention strategies. For example, youth who have relationships with caring adults, good schools, and safe communities develop optimism, good problem-solving skills, and other assets that enable them to rebound from adversity and go on with life with a sense of mastery, competence, and hope.
5. Systems of prevention services work better than service silos. Working together, researchers and communities have produced a number of highly effective prevention strategies and programs. Implementing these strategies within a broader system of services increases the likelihood of successful, sustained prevention activities. Collaborative partnerships enable communities to leverage scarce resources and make prevention everybody's business. National prevention efforts are more likely to succeed if partnerships with State, Tribe, and/or community, and practitioners focus on building capacity to plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and sustain effective prevention.
6. Baseline data, common assessment tools, and outcomes shared across service systems can promote accountability and effectiveness of prevention efforts. A Strategic Prevention Framework can facilitate Federal agencies, State, Tribe, and/or community to identify common needs and risk factors, adopt assessment tools to measure and track results, and target outcomes to be achieved. A data-driven strategic approach, adopted across service systems at the Federal, Tribal, State, community, and service delivery levels, maximizes the chances for future success and achieving positive outcomes.

The Strategic Prevention Framework Process

Moving the Strategic Prevention Framework from vision to practice is a strategic process that State, Tribes, and/or community stakeholders must undertake in partnership. The process consists of five (5) steps:

1) **Profile population needs, resources, and readiness to address the problems and gaps in service delivery**

Conduct needs assessments, through collection and analysis of epidemiological data that includes the following:

- assessment of the magnitude of substance abuse and related mental health disorders in the State,
- assessment of risk and protective factors associated with substance abuse and related mental health disorders in the state,
- assessment of community assets and resources,
- identification of gaps in services and capacity,
- assessment of readiness to act,
- identification of priorities based on the epidemiological analyses, including the identification of target communities to implement the Strategic Prevention Framework, and
- specification of baseline data against which progress and outcomes of the Strategic Prevention Framework can be measured.

2) **Mobilize and/or build capacity to address needs**

Engagement of key stakeholders at the State, Tribe and community levels is critical to plan and implement successful prevention activities that will be sustained over time. Key tasks may include, but are not limited to, convening leaders and stakeholders; building coalitions; training community stakeholders, coalitions, and service providers; organizing agency networks; leveraging resources; and engaging stakeholders to help sustain the activities.

3) **Develop a Comprehensive Strategic Plan.**

Using data from the statewide needs assessment, State, Tribe, and/or community must develop a strategic plan that articulates not only a vision for prevention activities, but also strategies for organizing and implementing prevention efforts. The strategic plan must be based on documented needs, build on identified resources/strengths, set measurable objectives and include the performance measures and baseline data against which progress will be monitored. Plans must be adjusted as the result of ongoing needs assessment and monitoring activities. The issue of sustainability should be a constant throughout each step of planning and implementation and should lead to the creation of a long-term strategy to sustain policies, programs and practices.

4) Implement evidence-based prevention programs and infrastructure development activities

State, Tribe, and/or community will use their strategic plan to guide selection and implementation of policies, programs and practices proven to be effective in research settings and communities to achieve the goals of their plan. Community implementers must ensure that culturally competent adaptations are made without sacrificing the core elements of the program. SAMHSA especially encourages the selection and adaptation of programs contained in the National Registry of Effective Programs (NREP), and other evidence based programs policies and practices.

5) Monitor process, evaluate effectiveness, sustain effective programs/activities, and improve or replace those that fail

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation are essential to determine if the outcomes desired are achieved and to assess program effectiveness and service delivery quality and to make adjustments as required. State, Tribe, and/or community must utilize performance data monitor, evaluate, sustain and improve the Strategic Prevention Framework activities in the State, Tribe, and/or community and communities.

State and communities that commit to the implementation of the Strategic Prevention Framework are ultimately more likely to succeed in reducing substance abuse and substance abuse related problems in communities. The process when implemented provides a road map for successful comprehensive community plans to foster sustained long term change in communities all across America.