

- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration
- Center for Substance Abuse Prevention

The Power of Prevention

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Substance Abuse and Mental Health Problems

Serious psychological distress (SPD) among adults aged 18 and older is linked with:

- Past year illicit drug use—22 percent had SPD
- Dependence on or abuse of alcohol or illicit drugs—21.3 percent of adults with SPD
- Binge drinking—28.9 percent of adults with SPD
- Young adults, females, those without a college degree, and those who are unemployed.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Problems

Major depressive episodes (MDE) are linked with:

- Illicit drug use
 - 26.8 percent among adults with MDE
 - 38 percent among youths with MDE
- Females

A Dangerous Combination: MDE, Substance Abuse, and Suicidality

MDE and thoughts of suicide among adults:

- Better off dead—56.3 percent
- Considered suicide—40.3 percent
- Suicide plan—14.5 percent
- Suicide attempt—10.4 percent

MDE and binge drinking or illicit drug use:

- More likely to report suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts

Tragic Results: MDE, Substance Abuse and Suicide

- 1 in 3 suicide victims tested positive for alcohol
- 1 in 6 suicide victims tested positive for opiates
- 2 in 5 suicide victims have a documented mental health diagnosis

Evidence-Based Prevention: A Basis for Making Prevention Work

Evidence-based programs:

- Have a guiding theory
- Are backed by evidence of effectiveness
- Apply to specific conditions
- Must be implemented fully
- Call for careful evaluation

Resources for Evidence-Based Prevention Programs

National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP):

- Model
- Effective
- Promising

Evidence-Based Practices Program (EBPP):

- Online registry of evidence-based suicide prevention programs
- Developed by the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)
- Future reviews of suicide prevention programs to be conducted as part of NREPP

Lessons From the Field

Training and Technical Assistance

Most effective delivery:

- Ongoing
- Hands-on
- On-site
- Responsive

Training and Technical Assistance

Key elements:

- Evidence-based implementation
- Training for evaluators
- Providing tools for assessment, monitoring, and evaluation.

Communication

- Between local entities
- Input from the field

Evidence-based Programming

Important steps:

- Justify local use
- Ensure match with local resources
- Justify adaptations
- Assess fidelity

Evaluation: The Gold Standard

Standards for prevention programs:

- Common and complementary measures
- Reflect evidence-based approach
- Maximize use of existing data
- Use data effectively
- Measure broad and long-term impacts
- Train evaluators

State-Level Processes

Shared processes:

- Common goals and objectives among relevant State agencies
- Common tools for needs assessment
- Providing local breakdowns of Statewide survey data
- State plans for program areas such as suicide prevention

Cultural Competency

Local focus:

- Emphasize community values
- Seek community input
- Employ staff who know and reflect local culture
- Adapt programs to cultures—with care

Sustainability

Keys to the future:

- Early start
- Maximum publicity
- Data-supported approach
- Creativity in seeking new funds

Conclusion

In summary:

- Connect
- Learn
- Innovate
- Evaluate
