

# Unleashing the Power of Prevention: Train and Enable a Workforce for Effective Prevention Practice



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## Background

Behavioral health problems in youth have significant impacts on rates of economic independence, morbidity, and mortality.

The U.S. behavioral health workforce has focused on treating these problems only after they have been identified -- at a high cost to young people, families, communities, and the nation.

**Evidence suggests that many behavioral health problems can be prevented.**

(Jenson & Bender, 2014)

## Aims

The Grand Challenge to *Unleash the Power of Prevention* (Hawkins et al., 2015) has the

**goal to reduce the prevalence of behavioral health problems among young people by 20% over the next decade.**

Achieving this goal is predicated on training and enabling a workforce to coordinate and deliver effective prevention programs.

## Methods

The *Coalition for the Promotion of Behavioral Health* was created to develop and carryout an action plan to implement effective preventive interventions for a range of behavioral health problems.



**We welcome your participation!**  
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A subgroup of the coalition has focused on training and enabling a workforce for effective prevention practice.

3. Identify existing prevention training programs (e.g., University of Oklahoma, Harvard, University of Oregon)
4. Collate a repository of prevention course syllabi (e.g., "School, Family, & Community Prevention" at the University of Denver)
5. Align efforts with state credentialing boards for certified prevention specialists.

(Hawkins et al., 2010)

**Creating a prevention workforce will require interdisciplinary collaboration, infrastructure development, & changing policies that shape training, licensure, and funding across service sectors.**

## Resulting Activities

Actions of the subgroup include:

1. Coordinate with accreditation bodies of professional degree programs (e.g., Council for Social Work Education)
2. Create standardized learning objectives for prevention practice (e.g., "Advanced Social Work Practice Standards for the Prevention of Substance Use Disorders")

## References

Hawkins, J.D. et al. (2015). Unleashing the power of prevention (Discussion Paper). Washington, DC: Institute of Medicine and National Research Council.

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Jenson, J. M., & Bender, K. A. (2014). Preventing child and adolescent problem behavior. Evidence-based strategies in schools, families, and communities. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.