An Introduction to the Prevention Core Competencies
For Prevention Professionals

Professionalizing the Field
Funding statement

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At the time of this publication, Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D. is the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Administrator of SAMHSA.
About

The Introduction to the Prevention Core Competencies for Prevention Professionals, covers the foundations of substance use prevention science for early and mid-career prevention professionals.

The curriculum utilizes evidence-based strategies for adult learning; and builds upon and complements existing workforce training curricula and resources (e.g., Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist Training (SAPST), Foundations of Prevention Science and Practice Curriculum, and Universal Prevention Curriculum).

Course Goals

1. To provide an overview of prevention science and its application to practice.
2. To strengthen understanding of effective planning and implementation approaches to prevention services.
3. To raise awareness about the training and credentialing needs for the field.
4. To encourage the pursuit of more specialized training.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Describe the key elements of prevention planning and evaluation.
2. Understand the core prevention professional knowledge, skills, and competencies.
3. Acknowledge the importance of research-based theories and processes that help explain and build effective prevention interventions, and
4. Describe how evidence-based (EB) prevention strategies can be delivered across settings including the family, school, media, community, or workplace.
Learning Objectives by Individual Module

Module 1-Introduction to the Prevention Profession
1. Define prevention, prevention science, and evidence-based interventions
2. Understand how psychopharmacology informs prevention practices and the development of prevention interventions
3. Describe the impact of substance use on the brain and body
4. Describe the epidemiological data showing the impact of substance use in society

Module 2-Needs and Resources Assessment
1. Recognize the knowledge necessary to perform a needs and resource assessment
2. Identify the different quantitative and qualitative methods used to perform a needs and resource assessment
3. Understand how epidemiology helps us understand substance use and provides the key to addressing the problem
4. Recognize the developmental nature of substance use and SUDs and why it is important to begin prevention with young people

Module 3-Selection of Evidence-Based Interventions and/or Policies
1. Explain the Etiology model, the risk and protective factors as indicators of likelihood of experiencing substance use
2. Provide an overview of how socialization and life transitions are key elements in substance use and misuse and causes of risky behavior
3. Explain the importance of theory in the development of effective interventions and policies.
4. Discuss the Theory of Planned Behavior and how it can be used to guide prevention intervention development.
5. Describe the criteria used to identify EB interventions and how these prevention interventions operate within a developmental framework.

Module 4-Preparation of the Intervention and Policy
1. Describe the knowledge and skills required to prepare the implementation of EB prevention interventions
2. Summarize and apply the basic rules regarding ethics and professional behavior in prevention programming

Module 5-Monitoring and Evaluation, Dissemination, and Continuous Quality Improvement
1. Understanding how monitoring and evaluation help determine if the intervention was delivered as designed
2. Describe the knowledge and skills required to monitor, evaluate and improve the implementation of EB prevention interventions.

Module 6-Professional Development Plan
1. Describe the knowledge, skills and abilities needed for prevention professionals
2. Describe a personal professional development plan focused on in-depth training and gaining the Prevention Specialist certification.
Meet the Developers

Nicole Augustine
RIZE Consultants

Nicole M Augustine is the Founder & CEO RIZE Consultants, Inc, a strategic consulting firm founded in January 2015. Nicole is an entrepreneur, public health professional and social justice advocate. Nicole serves as a consultant to the Prevention Technology Transfer Center (PTTC) and her past experience includes serving as Project Coordinator for the Southeast PTTC, the Project Director of the NC Behavioral Health Equity Initiative, and the Prevention Director for the Addiction Professionals of NC.

Nicole is a passionate prevention thought leader with a desire to be of greater impact and drive community change through innovative strategies. In August 2022, Nicole published the Prevention Specialist Exam Study Guide to help readers understand the competencies and knowledge necessary to become a Prevention Specialist (PS) and adequately prepare prevention professionals to pass the Prevention Specialist certification exam. With this book, Nicole aims to close the gap in existing literature for the PS exam and enhance the prevention workforce so that society is better equipped to address current and future substance misuse challenges and improve long-term health outcomes for all.
Maria P. Luna M.A. is a Colombian psychologist from the University of the Andes in Colombia and holds a Master’s Degree in Public Health with emphasis in prevention from the University of Deusto in Spain. During her previous job managing the Prevention programming of the Inter American Drug Abuse Control Commission at the Organization of American States, Ms. Luna worked closely with Latin American and Caribbean governments, civil society entities, academia, and other international organizations around the world. Her 17 years of public policy in the region brought a deep understanding of the substance use problem in the Americas and helped her identify innovative political and technical approaches to address it. She has coordinated the development, publication, and implementation of prevention guidelines for the development, promotion and enhancement of policies and practices in different settings and targeted needs.

When joining APSI as Director of Professional Development in 2014, Ms. Luna led the training side of the Universal Prevention Curriculum with special efforts on preparing training of trainers programming for APSI around the world which led to the development and creation of the Applied Prevention Science International Education Center (APSI-EC). The goals of the Center include not only making prevention science and evidence-based prevention more accessible to prevention professionals, but also providing the tools to making evidence-based prevention. After coordinating the development and launching of this initiative, she is currently the Director of the APSI EC. In this position, she also sits in the European Universal Prevention Curriculum Advisory Board.

Ms. Luna is fully committed to guaranteeing that quality prevention content is delivered and disseminated with the highest quality procedures to appropriately professionalize the prevention field and allow prevention professionals to implement evidence-based interventions in favor of communities around the world.
About the PTTC Network

The purpose of the Prevention Technology Transfer Center (PTTC) Network is to improve implementation and delivery of effective substance abuse prevention interventions, and provide training and technical assistance services to the substance misuse prevention field. It does this by developing and disseminating tools and strategies needed to improve the quality of substance misuse prevention efforts; providing intensive technical assistance and learning resources to prevention professionals in order to improve their understanding of prevention science, epidemiological data, and implementation of evidence-based and promising practices; and, developing tools and resources to engage the next generation of prevention professionals.

Established in 2018 by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the PTTC Network is comprised of 10 Domestic Regional Centers, 2 National Focus Area Centers, and a Network Coordinating Office. Together the Network serves the 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Pacific Islands of Guam, American Samoa, Palau, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and the Mariana Islands.

View the National American Indian & Alaska Native PTTC Mission Statement

https://pttcnetwork.org/

About APSI

Applied Prevention Science International (APSI) was established in 2013 by Dr. Zili Sloboda to collaborate with prevention leadership in research, policy and practice to bring evidence-based prevention to communities.

The goals are to help prevention practitioners to implement and sustain evidence-based (EB) prevention interventions and policies in their communities. In addition, APSI provides consultation on the development of epidemiological surveillance systems and evaluation approaches to ensure high quality implementation.

APSI hopes to expand the availability of effective and efficient prevention services in communities in the U.S. and around the world. APSI works collaboratively with a multidisciplinary team of select national and international professionals and experts in prevention research and practice to achieve these goals

https://www.apsintl.org/origins

Acknowledgement

This course is an adaptation of Applied Prevention Science International (APSI) curriculum Foundations of Prevention Science and Practice to fit this three-day training.