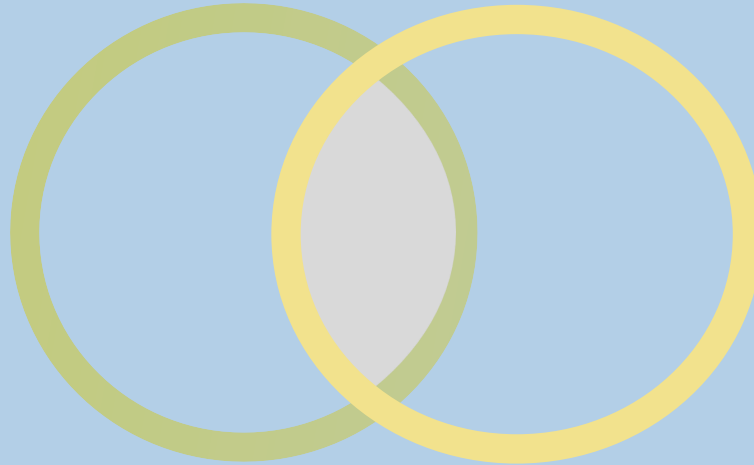


# Nexus of Substance Misuse Prevention and Mental Health Promotion



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July 28, 2022



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## **Nexus of Substance Misuse Prevention and Suicide Prevention**

Substance use -- especially alcohol use -- is a significant factor linked to a substantial number of suicides and suicide attempts



## **Nexus of Substance Misuse Prevention and Problem Gambling Prevention**

Gambling disorders are highly comorbid with other mental health and substance use disorders



## **Nexus of Substance Misuse Prevention and Mental Health Promotion**

Anxiety disorders, depression, and other psychiatric disorders frequently coincide with an individual's substance abuse



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# Objectives

- Discuss the complex relationship between mental health disorders and substance misuse
- List shared risk and protective factors between mental health and substance use disorders
- List shared strategies for promoting mental health and preventing substance misuse
- Describe opportunities for the substance misuse prevention and mental health promotion fields to collaborate



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# The Importance of Understanding Co-Occurrence



Mental health and substance misuse impact each through risk and protection



Co-occurrence increases the severity and worsens prognosis for both disorders



Prevention and promotion focus on addressing risk and protective factors



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# Definition of Mental Health Promotion

Mental health promotion attempts to ***encourage and increase protective factors*** and healthy behaviors that can ***help prevent the onset*** of a diagnosable mental disorder and ***reduce risk factors*** that can lead to the development of a mental disorder.



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# Definition of Prevention

A ***proactive*** process of ***creating conditions*** and fostering attitudes that ***promote the well-being*** of people.

Interventions that occur ***prior to the onset*** of a disorder and are intended to ***prevent or reduce the risk of substance misuse***.

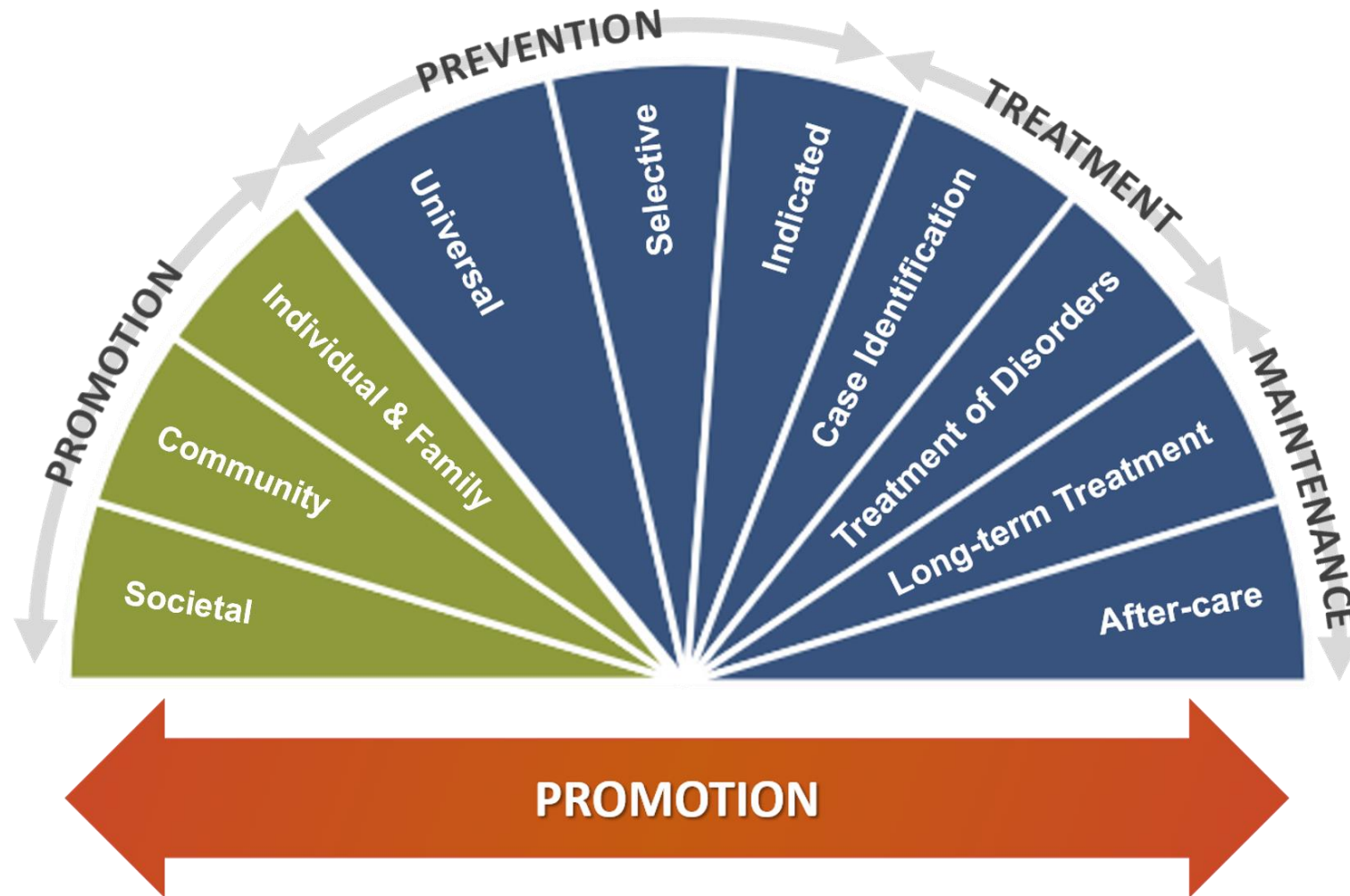


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# The Spectrum of MEB Interventions (2019)



National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2019). Fostering Healthy Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Development in Children and Youth: A National Agenda.

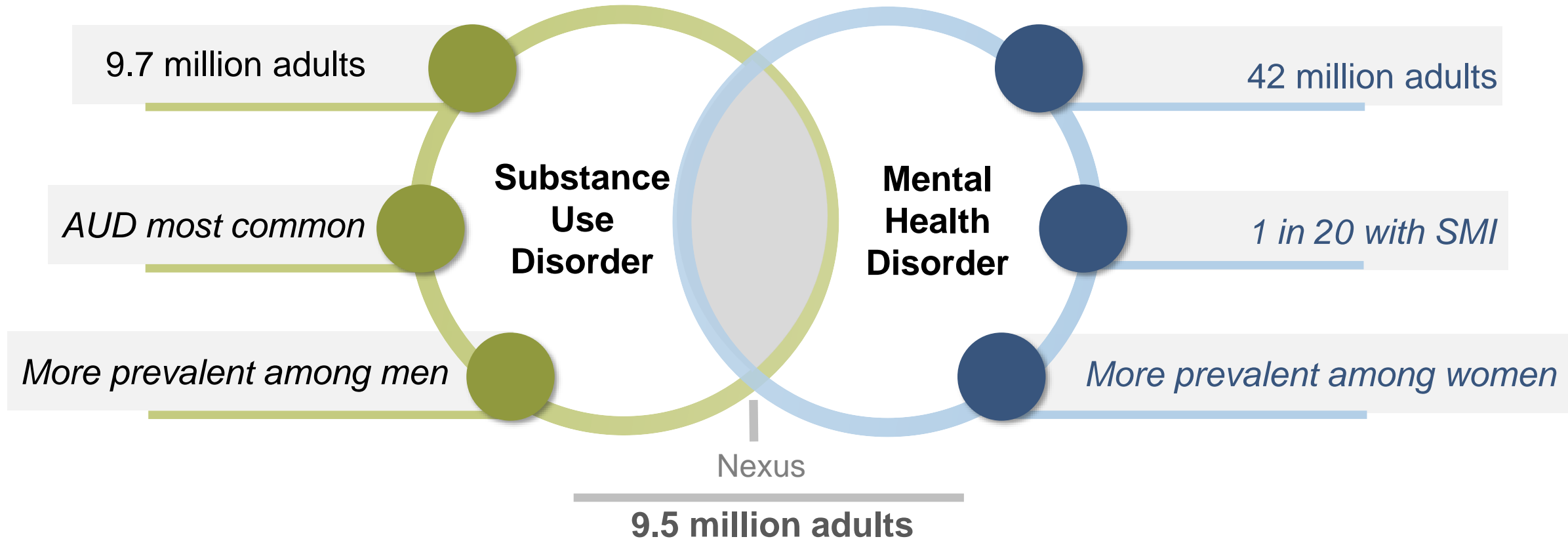


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# Nexus of the Substance Use and Mental Health Disorders



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# Which Comes First?



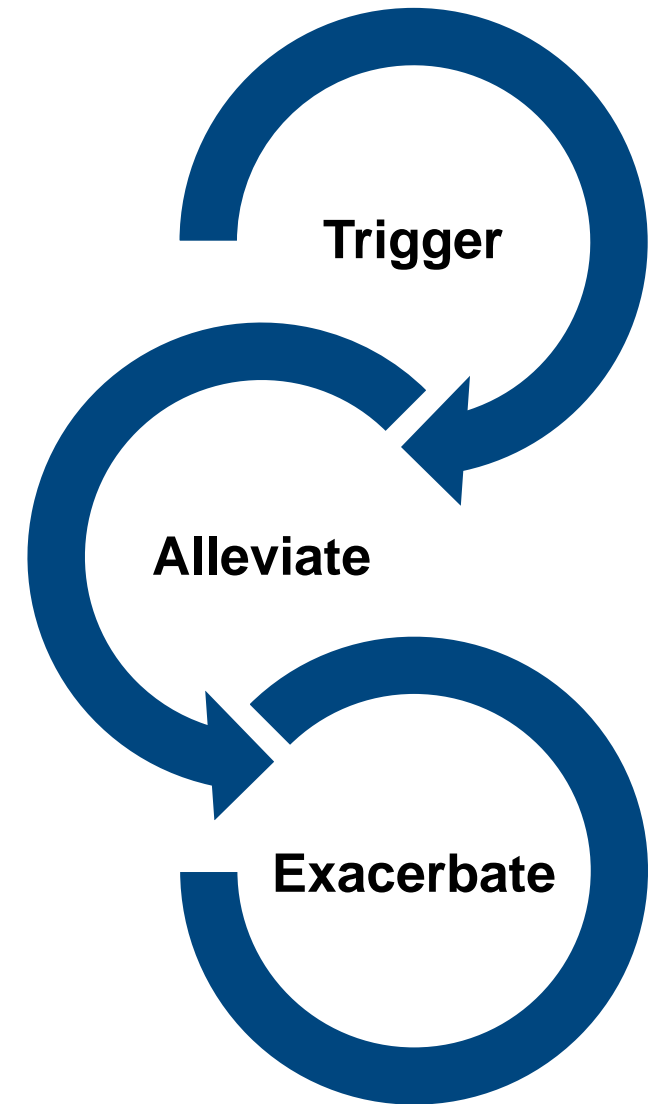
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# Complex Interactions

- Substance misuse has been shown to impact the symptoms of mental health conditions
- Mental health conditions have been shown to impact substance misuse behaviors



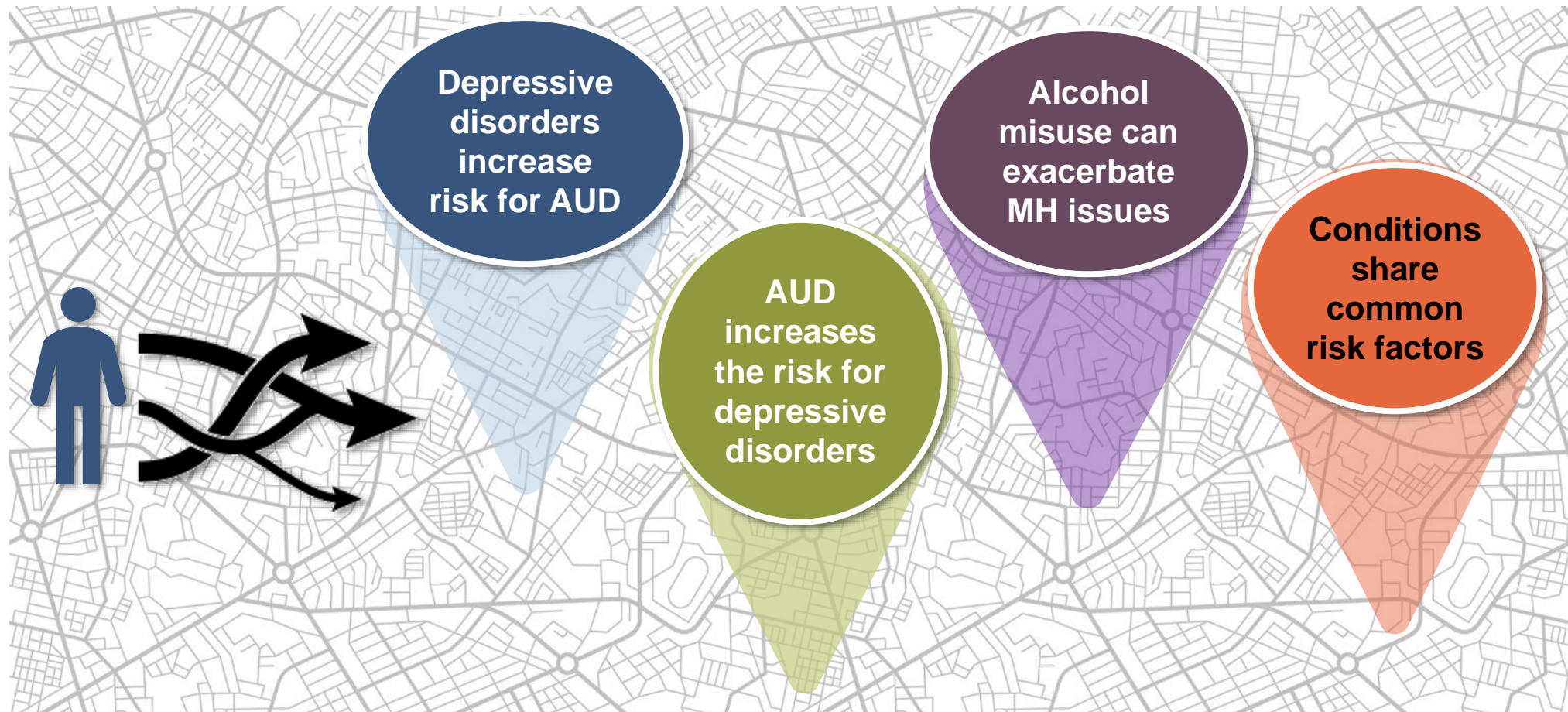
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# An Example: Alcohol Misuse and Depressive Disorders



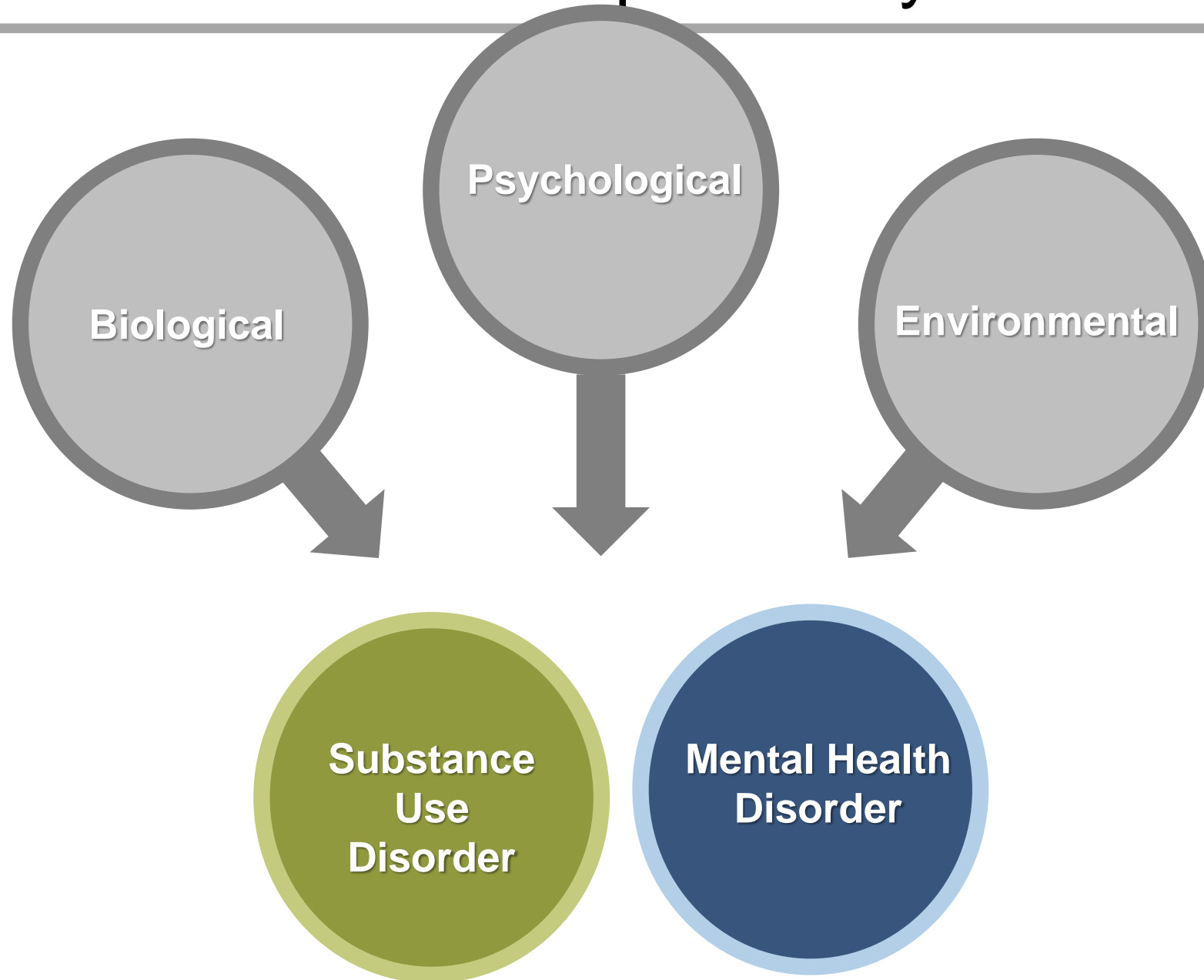
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# Both Conditions Are Impacted by Risk Factors

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# Socio-Ecological Model

**Individual:** Personal attributes, characteristics, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors

**Interpersonal:** Family, friends, co-workers, personal physicians, teachers, neighbors, close associates

**Community:** Hospitals/health systems, schools, media, community organizations, employers, faith communities

**Societal:** Social and cultural norms and governmental policies that affect health behaviors and healthcare



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# Mental Health Risk and Protective Factors

## Risk Factors

- Genetic predisposition to mental health disorders
- Substance use
- Poverty
- Violence
- Inequality
- Harsh parenting
- Bullying

## Protective Factors

- Social and emotional skills
- Quality education
- Safe neighborhoods
- Community connectedness

***Each single risk and protective factor has only limited predictive strength***



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# Examples of Substance Misuse Risk and Protective Factors

## Risk Factors

- Genetic predisposition to mental health disorders
- Exposure to alcohol prenatally
- Parents who suffer from SUD or MHD
- Community laws/norms favorable to substance use
- Lack of adult supervision
- Easy access drugs and/or alcohol

## Protective Factors

- Social and emotional skills
- Attachment and bonding to family
- Positive social norms
- Opportunities for pro-social involvement
- Recognition of pro-social involvement



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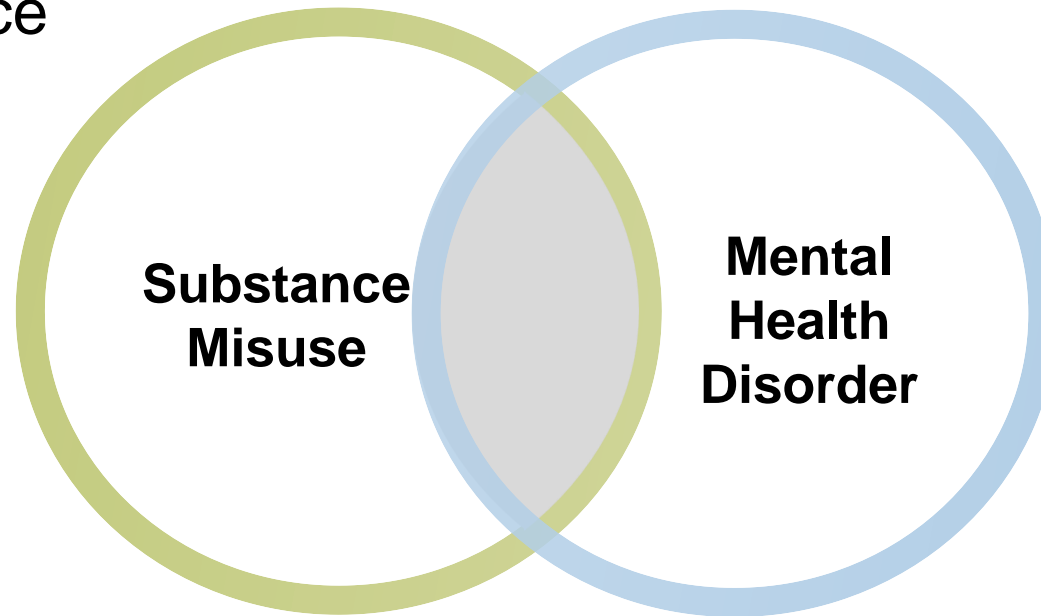
# Overlapping Risk and Protection

## Risk

- Genetic predisposition to mental health disorders
- Exposure to violence

## Protection

- Social and emotional skills
- Community connectedness



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A close-up photograph of several hands of different skin tones (dark brown, light brown, and fair) stacked together in a circular gesture. The hands are wearing various colored sleeves, including white, light blue, and grey. The background is blurred, showing more people in a group setting. The overall image has a blue tint.

# **Substance Misuse Prevention and Mental Health Promotion: Key Areas of Collaboration**



# Mental Health Promotion Strategies

- Mental health disorders are difficult to prevent due to the individual experiences with risk and protective factors throughout the socio-ecological model.
- At a population level, impacting mental health outcomes is best done at an environmental level through systemic approaches:
  - early childhood interventions
  - providing support for children
  - programs targeted at vulnerable groups
  - incorporating mental health promotional activities in schools
  - violence prevention programs
  - community development programs



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# Examples of Substance Misuse Prevention Strategies

- Parenting support and education
- School-based life skills curricula
- Educational campaigns
- Community alcohol and drug policy changes
- Enforcement changes

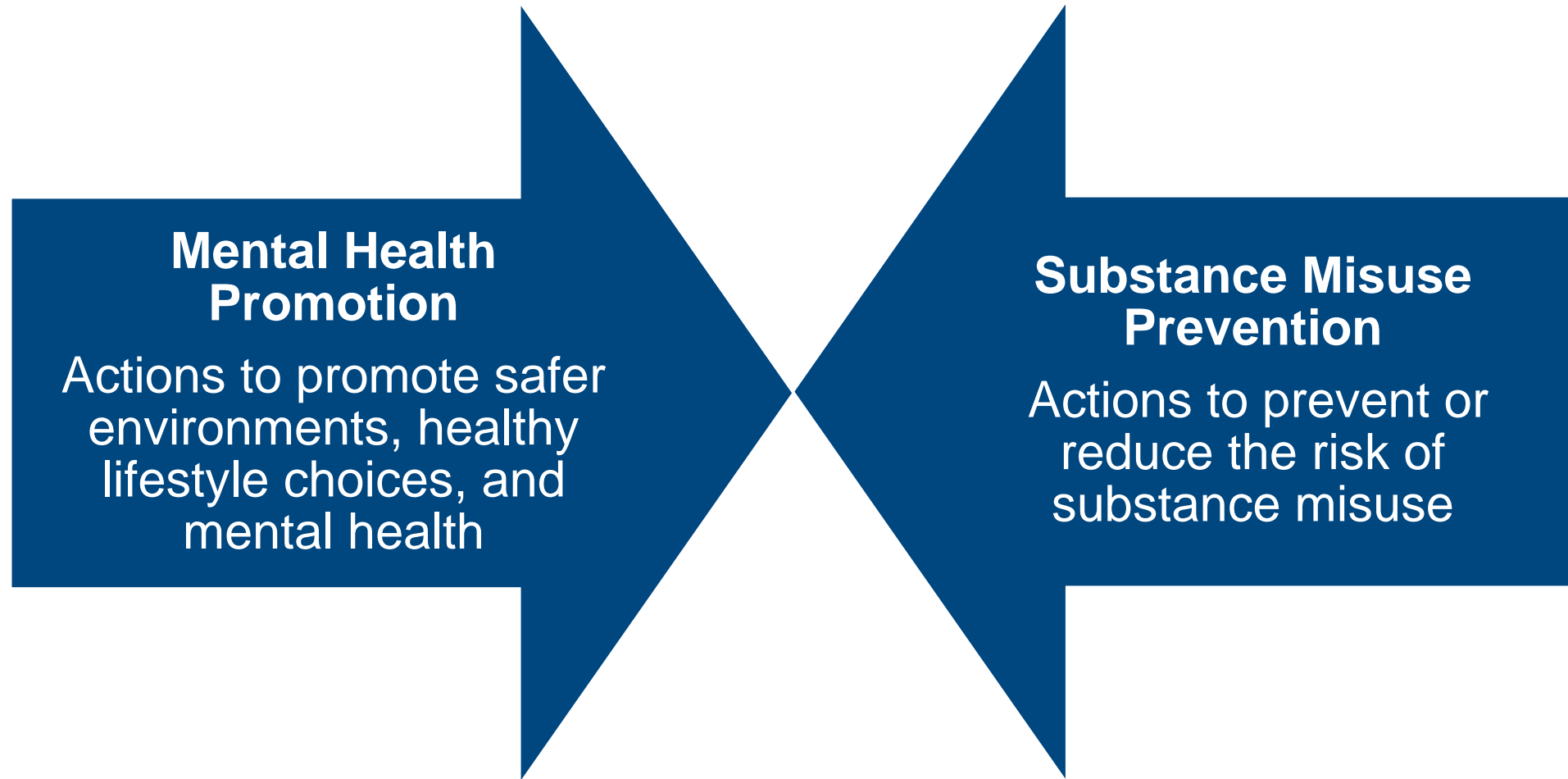


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# AOD Prevention and Mental Health Promotion



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# Overlapping and Complementary Strategies

## **Prevention Professionals**

- School-based life skills curricula
- Mentoring programs
- Building community collaboratives
- Parenting support and education

## **Mental Health/Other Community Partners**

- Early childhood interventions
- Programs encouraging help-seeking and reducing stigma
- Violence prevention programs
- Home visiting programs



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# Challenges to Collaboration

- Understanding the difference in promotion and prevention
- Complex set of risk and protective factors
- Different settings: Coalitions vs. health care agencies
- Different training: Public health vs. clinical/individual health



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# Ways to Improve Collaboration

- Explore and learn the difference in promotion and prevention
- Learn about the promotion work happening in your community
- Focus on shared goals and areas of potential collaboration
- Help mental health understand prevention through clear messaging and communication with partners



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# Key Takeaways



Address shared  
risk and protective  
factors



Focus on shared  
outcomes



Collaboration  
is key



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# Action Steps

- Learn more about mental health promotion in your community
- Include mental health professionals on your coalition
- Build awareness of the relationship between mental health and substance use
- Review ways risk and protective factors overlap and how they can be addressed through collaboration



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# Questions



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