


Promoting Access to Mental Health and Substance Abuse Prevention Services in a Culturally Diverse Society

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Organizational Mission

Health and Human Development Programs (HHD) is a division of Education Development Center, Inc. The mission of HHD is to foster healthy lifestyles and create healthy and safe environments where people live, learn, and work.

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) Northeast Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT): CSAP's Northeast CAPT's mission is to support the application of science-based substance abuse prevention programs and strategies at the regional, state and local levels; and enhance collaboration between and within each level.


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Workshop Objectives

- Describe a workforce development initiative developed by HHD that is being implemented by the CSAP's Northeast CAPT.
- Discuss the rationale/impetus for this initiative.


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Workshop Objectives

- Describe the initial findings from an assessment process that includes focus group and key informant interviews with state-level policy makers, practitioners, and researchers currently addressing substance abuse and mental health problems in the northeast region.
- Discuss future directions of this initiative including a proposed regional Summit that will bring together researchers, state and local policy-makers and practitioners from systems such as mental health, substance abuse, social services, and education.

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Impetus for Project


Funding Driven-

- SAMHSA focus on co-occurring disorders

Field Driven-

- September 11 - SSA focus on mental health & AOD
- Growing immigrant/ethnic minority population in northeast

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Impetus for Project


Why the focus on immigrants/racial minorities?

Increasing diversity in the U.S. and Northeast region is disproportionately impacted.

By 2050, minority populations will make up approximately half of the total US population.

Racial and ethnic minorities represent a major sub-population in edge communities, i.e., those suburban and small-city communities on the outer rim of major metropolitan areas.

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Impetus for Project

Why the focus on immigrant/racial minorities?

Services for minorities living traditionally in urban centers have limited reach for emergent communities on the edge of older metropolitan centers.

A major challenge for states in the northeast region - to adequately serve traditionally underserved minority populations.

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Impetus for Project


Challenges from the Field

“With growth in these diverse populations comes challenges of how to meet the needs these groups have and how to build relationships with the enclave of diversity in our town.”

“Our task [as a prevention coalition] is made more challenging by the diverse cultural nature of the population and the documented lack of resources for the challenge.”

-A New England School District Applying for Prevention Funds

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Project Outcomes

Increase awareness among prevention practitioners about the need for culturally appropriate prevention practices for ethnic minority youth with substance abuse and mental health problems.

Increase the capacity of the prevention workforce in the northeast region to apply prevention practices for both substance use and mental health needs of ethnic minority youth and their families.


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Project Outcomes

Facilitate the coordination of substance abuse and mental health systems in the northeast region through state-level collaboration (interagency and intra-agency) - i.e. regional summit and follow-on activities.

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Key Challenges

Language/Definitional Problems

Prevention research and research on mental health promotion/prevention are emerging fields.

Contrasting Systems - Theories of Change, Service Delivery Systems, etc.

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Definitions and Concepts

Mental illness and substance use disorders can be viewed along a continuum

<p>Mental Health</p> <p>LESS SEVERE</p> <p>Problems in handling stress, relationships, etc.</p> <p>Behavioral disorders of psychological disorders</p> <p>Clinical disorders</p>	<p>↓</p> <p>MORE SEVERE</p>	<p>Substance Use</p> <p>Experimentation</p> <p>Social Use</p> <p>Substance Use/Abuse</p> <p>Dependency</p>
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Definitions and Concepts

MENTAL HEALTH and MENTAL ILLNESS

Mental health and mental illness are not polar opposites but may be thought of as points on a continuum.

Mental health is a state of successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and the ability to adapt to change and to cope with adversity.

Mental illness is the term that refers collectively to all diagnosable mental disorders.

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Definitions and Concepts

SUBSTANCE USE

Experimentation-- The use of alcohol or illicit drugs at any time for experimentation.

Social Use-- Use of any drug or combination of drugs in social situations, or for social reasons.

Substance Abuse-- Any use of drugs that causes physical, psychological, legal, or social harm to the individual user or to others affected by the drug user's behavior.

Dependency-- Has the following characteristics: Presence of tolerance; avoidance of withdrawal symptoms; consumption in larger amounts than intended; and persistent use despite negative consequences.

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Contrasting Delivery Systems

The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP): CSAP is the sole Federal organization with responsibility for improving accessibility and quality of substance abuse prevention services. The Center provides national leadership in the development of policies, programs, and services to prevent the onset of illegal drug use, underage alcohol and tobacco use, and to reduce the negative consequences of using substances.

The Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS): CMHS is charged with leading the national system that delivers mental health services. The goal of this system is to provide the treatment and support services needed by adults with mental disorders and children with *serious* emotional problems.

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Contrasting Systems

Table 1: Service Delivery Domains

	Substance Abuse Prevention	Mental Health	
		Prevention Promotion	Service Delivery
Individual	XXXX		XXXX
Family	XXXX	X	XX
School	XXXX	XX	
Peer	XXXX		
Community	XX		
Society	XX		

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Contrasting Systems

Table 2: Intervention Targets

	Substance Abuse Prevention	Mental Health
Universal	XX	
Selective	XXXX	XX
Indicated	XXXX	XXXX

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Contrasting Systems

Table 3: Theories of Behavioral Change

	Substance Abuse Prevention	Mental Health
Individual	XXXX	XXXX
Organizational	XX	X
Community	XX	

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Common Ground

Risk & Protective Factors

- Common vocabulary is emerging around risk and protective factors.
- Growing recognition and acceptance of risk and protective factors in both fields.

Comprehensive Approaches

- Growing evidence for use of multiple strategies in multiple settings
- General acceptance that culturally and developmentally appropriate approaches are necessary

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Key Components

Create a Common Understanding - crosswalk between mental health and substance abuse prevention

- Examine current research & practice
- Examine demographic trends

Transfer existing knowledge and common understanding to frontline practitioners.

Convene state level policy makers from both fields to address these challenges.

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Creating Common Understanding

Gathered information through electronic literature searches about current state of knowledge in the field.

Conducted key informant interviews with 20+ state-level preventionists and state-level policy makers

Convened focus group of community- and state- level prevention practitioners.

Examined demographic data on the migration of immigrant/ethnic minorities from country-of-origin and urban centers to suburbs on the edge of older metropolitan centers

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Selected Findings

The purpose of the focus group was to develop a better understanding of the challenges faced by prevention practitioners in implementing best practices that promote mental health and prevent substance abuse. Also to examine these issues in the context of cultural diversity

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Selected Findings

What information do you want or seek to apply about the connection between mental health and substance abuse?

- A synthesis of the research and effect that you could use for both parents groups and for fellow professionals in prevention
- A matrix mapping out different substance abuse prevention and mental health programs/practices accompanied by research examining how they can be integrated.

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Selected Findings

What information do you want or seek to apply about evidence-based culturally appropriate practices?

- More options around culturally appropriate practices are needed.
- Information about programs, specifically science-based model programs evaluated for cultural fit, is needed as well as curricula or tools that help preventionists examine some of their own filters in determining culturally-appropriate materials.

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Selected Findings

Have you seen, in your own work, effective ways to overcome these obstacles What other tools do you want or seek to apply?

- Example from Massachusetts illustrating the difficulty of bringing together Mental Health and Substance Abuse Prevention Systems.
- Stronger recognition of programs that attempt to address both substance abuse and mental health problems in youth.
- Common language needs to be developed.


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State-Level Collaboration

CSAP's Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT) two-day planning and networking event focused on systems change to improve prevention. The Single State Agency for substance abuse prevention in each state in the Northeast region assembled an inter- or intra-agency team of colleagues. The Summit offered an opportunity for state leaders to reflect on common prevention goals and engage in structured planning to achieve multi-system collaborations.

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Moving Forward

- Continue dialogue with the field
- Create common understanding
- Monitor demographic trends
- Convene advisory group
- Plan summit

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