Using What Works to Prevent Violence

Beverly Kingston

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SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Mountain Plains (HHS Region 8)
MHTTC Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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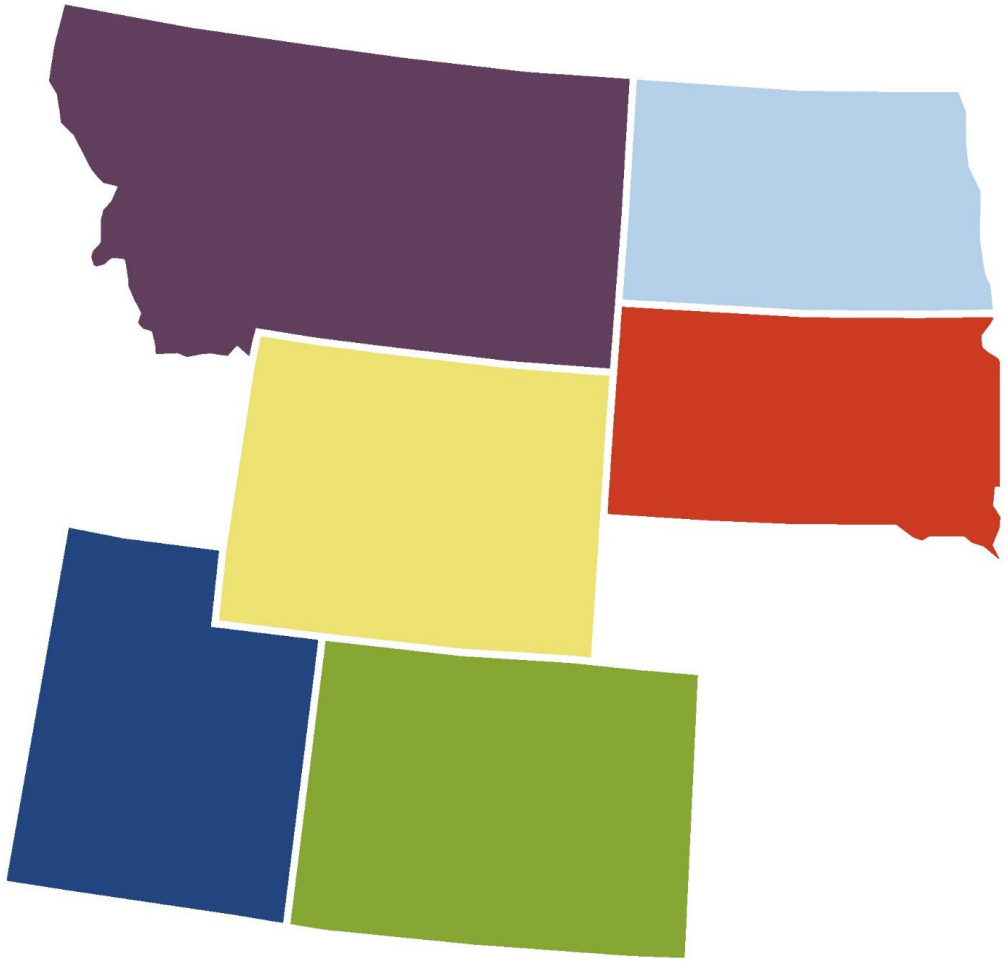
The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center

The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (Mountain Plains MHTTC) provides training and technical assistance to individuals who serve persons with mental health concerns throughout Region 8 (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming).

We belong to the Technology Transfer Center (TTC) Network, a national network of training and technical assistance centers serving the needs of mental health, substance use and prevention providers. The work of the TTC Network is under a cooperative agreement by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA).



Land Acknowledgement Statement

Today, the University of North Dakota rests on the ancestral lands of the Pembina and Red Lake Bands of Ojibwe and the Dakota Oyate - presently existing as composite parts of the Red Lake, Turtle Mountain, White Earth Bands, and the Dakota Tribes of Minnesota and North Dakota. We acknowledge the people who resided here for generations and recognize that the spirit of the Ojibwe and Oyate people permeates this land. As a university community, we will continue to build upon our relations with the First Nations of the State of North Dakota - the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Nation, Spirit Lake Nation, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians.

The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

- Strengths-based and hopeful
- Inclusive and accepting of diverse cultures, genders, perspectives, and experiences
- Healing-centered and trauma-responsive
- Inviting to individuals participating in their own journeys
- Person-first and free of labels
- Non-judgmental and avoiding assumptions
- Respectful, clear and understandable
- Consistent with our actions, policies, and products

Adapted from: https://mhcc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Recovery-Oriented-Language-Guide_2019ed_v1_20190809-Web.pdf

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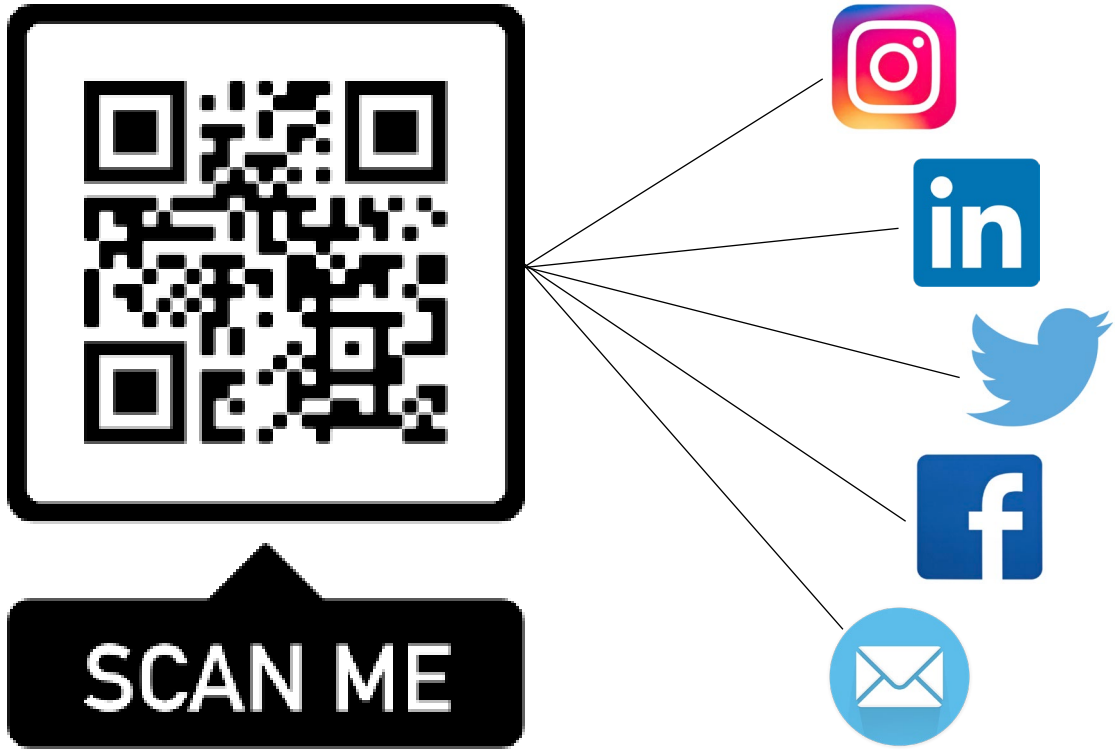


USING WHAT WORKS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE

Beverly Kingston, Ph.D.

Director and Senior Research Associate
Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence
University of Colorado Boulder

CENTER FOR THE
STUDY AND PREVENTION
OF VIOLENCE

University of Colorado **Boulder**

My Motivating Questions

What are the **best things** we can do to **support the optimal development** of kids and communities?

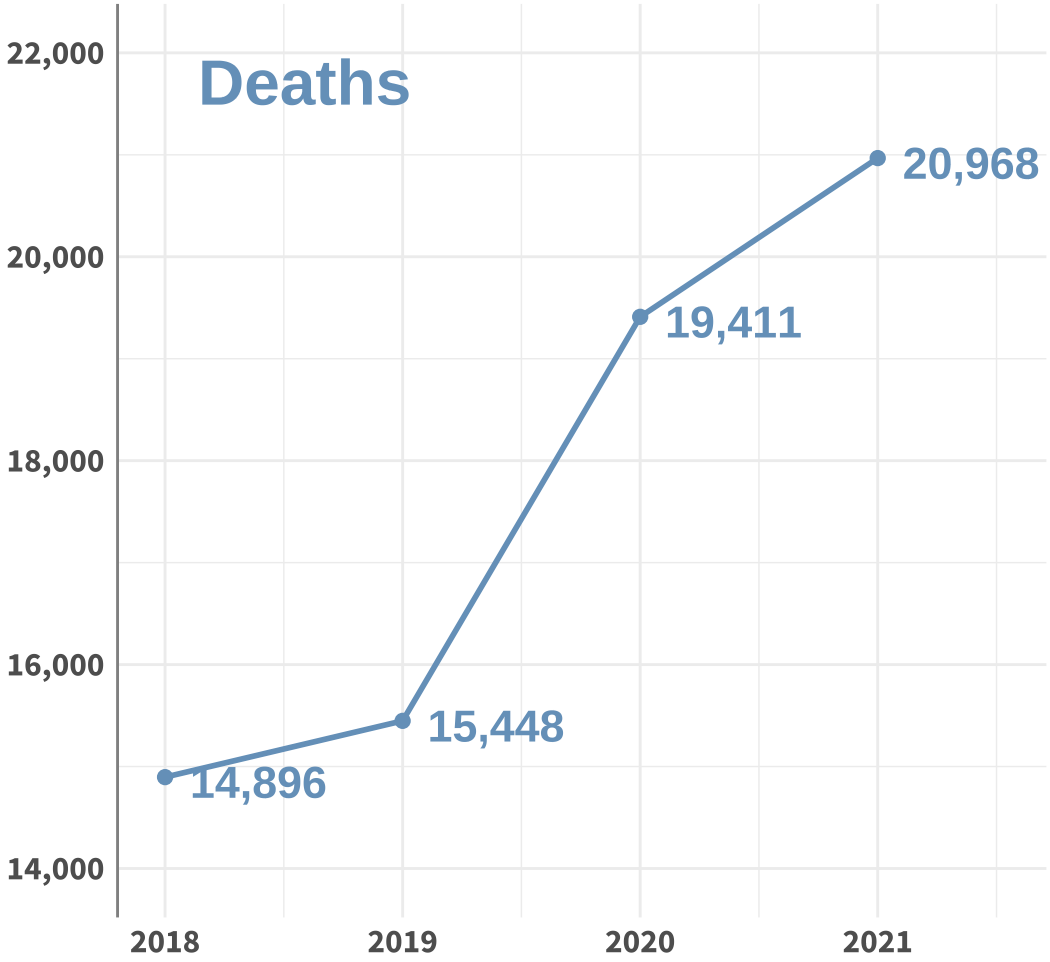
And **how can we put them into practice**?

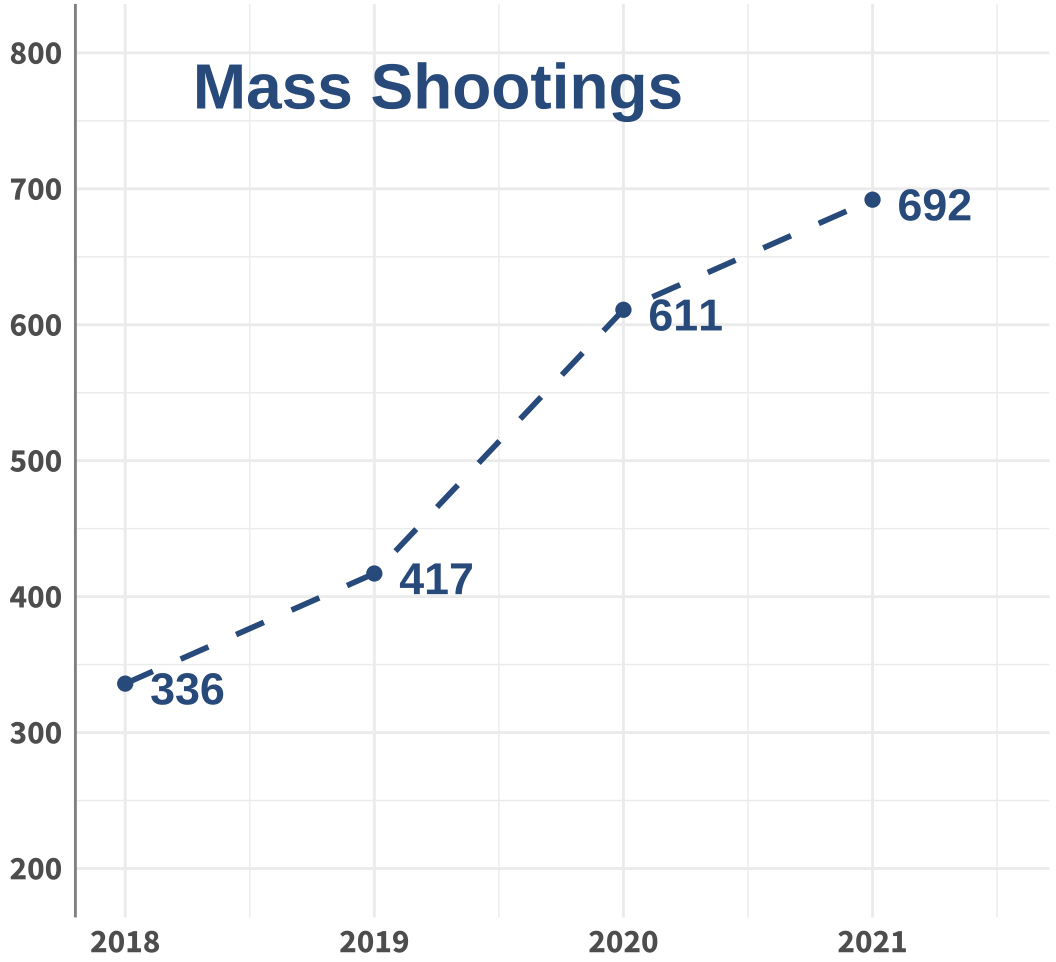
Presentation Overview

- The problem of violence
- A comprehensive public health approach to prevent violence
- Best practices for violence prevention
- Implementation considerations and resources

The Problem of Violence

Increasing Firearm Violence – U.S. (2018-2021)





Source: Gun Violence Archive, 2022

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

- Over **1 in 3** (61 million women) and **1 in 4** (53 million men) have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime.
- About **16 million women** and **11 million men** reported experiencing intimate partner violence before the age of 18.
- In more than **two-thirds (68%) of mass shootings** analyzed, the perpetrator either killed family or intimate partners or the shooter had a history of intimate partner violence.

Our Kids are Hurting

Bullying & Fights

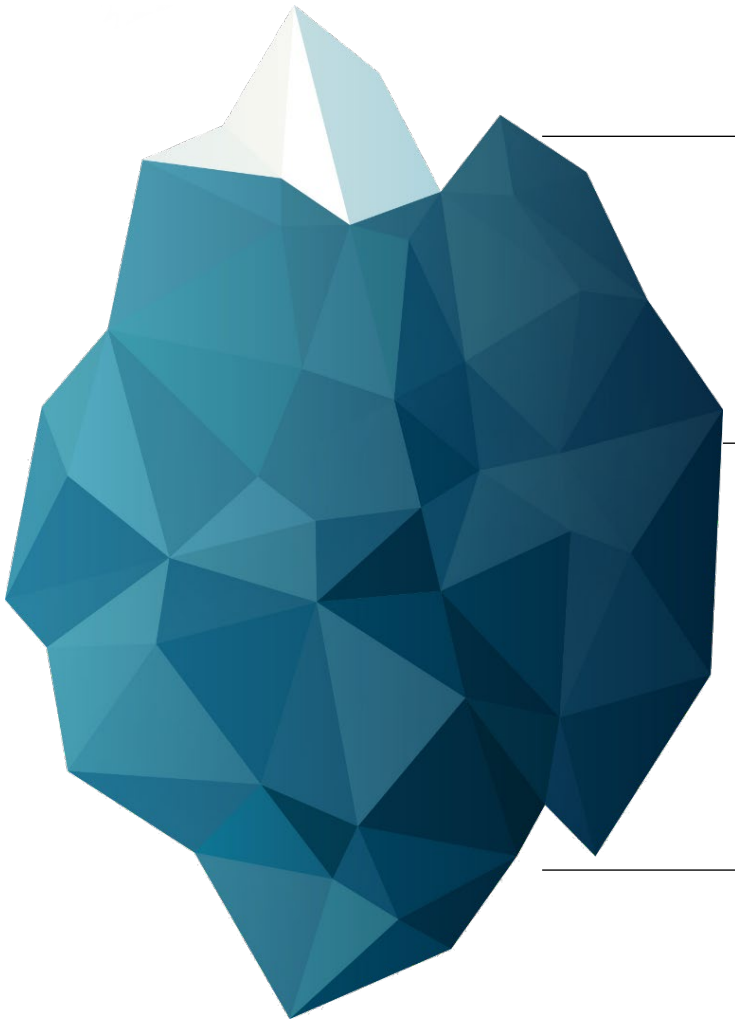
- **28%** of middle schoolers report being **bullied** at school
- **24%** of high schoolers were in a **physical fight** in the last year

Mental Health & Suicide

- **Mental health concerns** are up for **girls** from **36%** in 2011 to **57%** in 2021
- Almost **25%** of high schoolers reported **seriously considering suicide** in the last year
- **Suicide death rates** for **black teenage girls** increased by **182%** from 2001 to 2017

Violence is Destructive & Costly

Violence Iceberg



<u>TIP</u>: Mass shootings, homicide, suicide

<u>UNDERNEATH</u>: Concerning behaviors - physical fights, bullying, suicidal ideation

<u>DEEP UNDERWATER</u>: Underlying conditions – structural racism, poverty, collective trauma

A Comprehensive Public Health Approach

Research consistently finds that a comprehensive public health approach offers the greatest potential for:

- *Preventing* violence
- *Promoting* mental/behavioral health

Building Schools' Readiness to Implement a Comprehensive Approach to School Safety (Kingston, 2018)

Shared Risk Factors: Multiple Forms of Violence

	Child Maltreatment	Teen Dating Violence	Intimate Partner Violence	Sexual Violence	Youth Violence	Bullying	Suicide	Elder Abuse
Social Isolation	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Poor Parent-Child Relationships	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Family Conflict	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Economic Stress	X		X		X		X	X
Association w/Delinquent Peers		X	X	X	X	X		
Gang Involvement		X	X	X	X			

Source: Wilkins, N., Tsao, B., Hertz, M., Davis, R., Klevens, J. (2014). Connecting the Dots: An Overview of the Links Among Multiple Forms of Violence. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Oakland, CA: Prevention Institute. https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/connecting-the-dots/

Key Protective Factors

- Supportive pro-social relationships
- Pro-social involvement (school and community)
- Socio-emotional competencies

Using a Comprehensive Approach

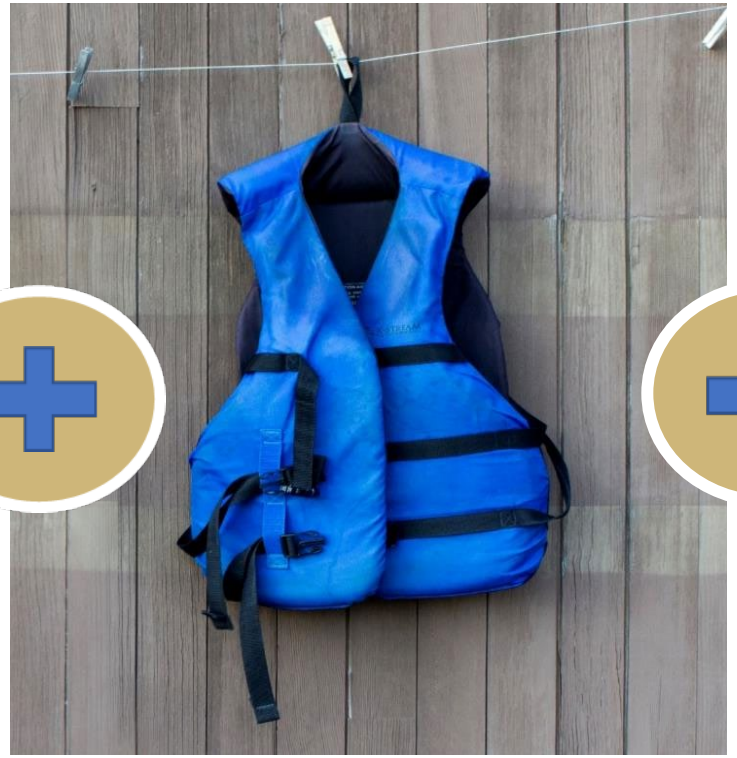
A comprehensive approach addresses what matters most for preventing violence, including:

- Upstream prevention and intervention
- Identifying and addressing warning signs

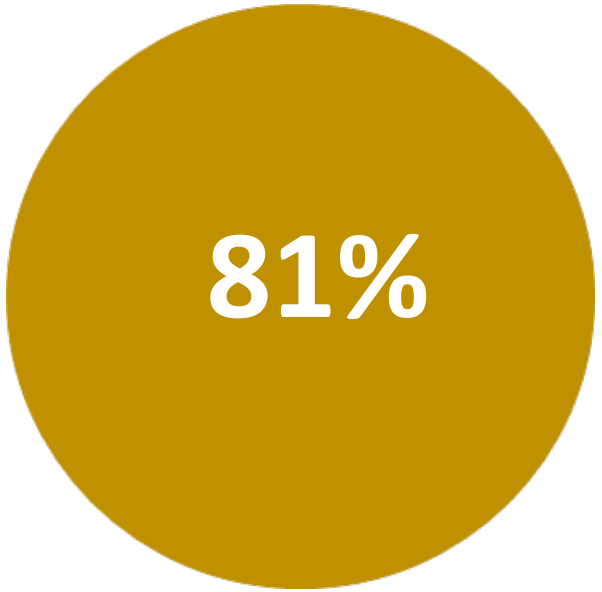
and

Intervention

Prevention



Addressing the Warning Signs for Violence



communicated their plan to attack

exhibited behavior that caused others concern

(Fein et al. 2004)

Warning Signs for Violence

Concerning Behaviors and Risk Factors

- intense or escalating anger
- threats and/or intent to attack
- interest in weapons
- interest in or history of violence
- unmanaged depression or isolation
- grade or attendance issues
- changes in behavior or appearance
- talk of being bullied
- relationship difficulties
- harassment of others
- suicide and/or self-harm

Best Practices to Prevent Violence

Best Practices to Prevent Violence

- Creating cultures of safety
  - Assessing School Climate
- Building a Multi-Tiered System of Supports
  - Bullying Prevention
  - Positive Youth Development
  - Evidence-Based Programs
- Strategies to Address Warning Signs

"The principal objective of any…violence reduction strategies should be to ***create cultures and climates of safety, respect, and emotional support...****"*

(U.S. Secret Service & Department of Education, 2004, p. 11)

Cultures and Climates of Safety

Assessing School Climate – Conducting Surveys

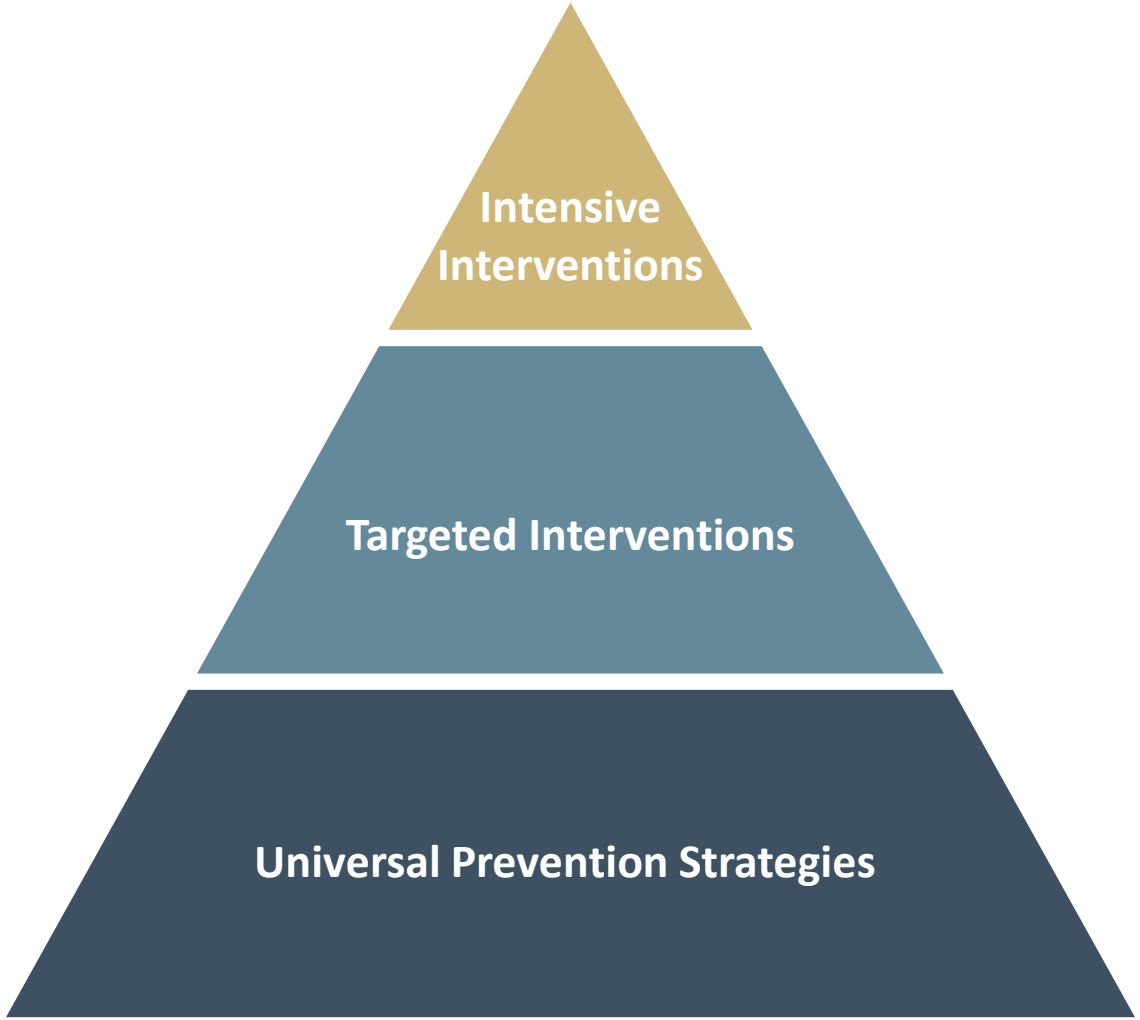
- Administer climate surveys to students and all staff
- Identify strengths and challenges related to school climate and student behavior
- Conduct surveys annually to monitor impact of programs & policies over time

Using Climate Surveys to Give Students a Voice

"The adults are listening to us, and they are going to make the school safer"

- Reichen Posey

Building Multi-Tiered Systems of Support



Bullying Prevention Programs and Practices

"Student environments characterized by bullying and meanness can lead to student isolation and fear [and] school environments that turn a blind eye to bullying and teasing inhibit the work of school learning and growth."

(Fein et al., 2004, p. 12)

Groups at Higher Risk for Being Bullied

- Common Student Reported Reasons for Bullying, Harassment, Cruelty
  - Appearance and/or body size
  - Actual or perceived sexual orientation (LGBTQI+)
  - How masculine or feminine they are
  - Ability at school
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Socioeconomic status
  - Religion

Positive Youth Development based on:

…the practice of **nurturing core internal strengths** and abilities in children and teens.

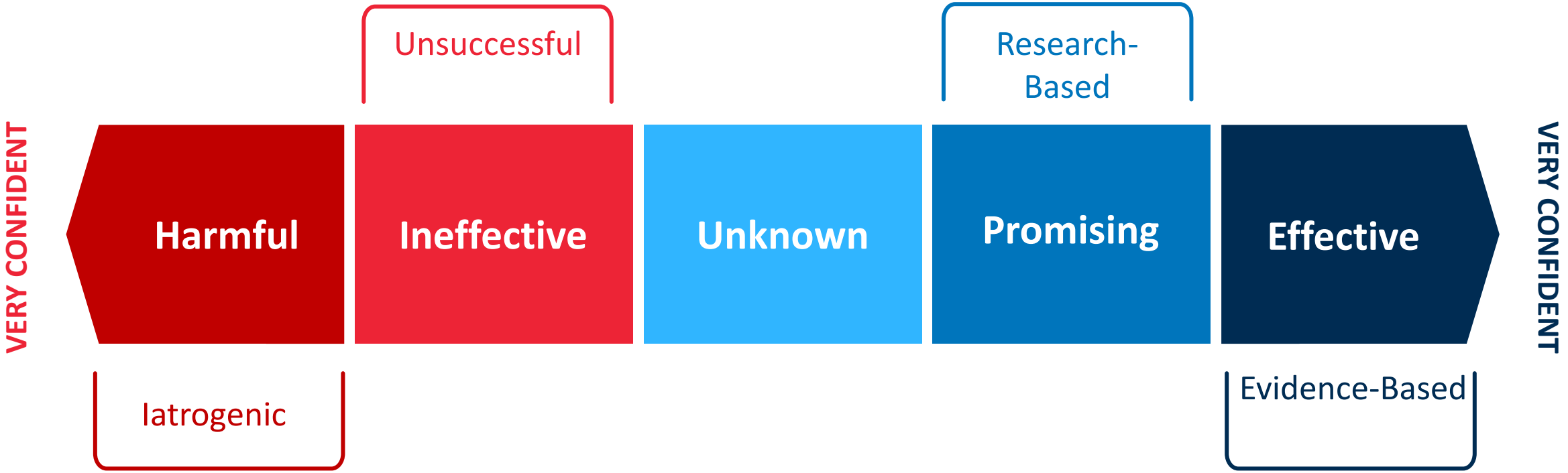
It is about providing **opportunities for youth to believe in themselves** and their abilities to influence their lives and the world around them.

Marilyn Price-Mitchel, Ph.D.

Igniting Sparks

Searchinstitute.org

Continuum of Evidence



Selection of Programs: Blueprints Registry

www.blueprintsprograms.org

Strategies to Address Warning Signs

Bystander Response and Reporting

- Provide ***training on warning signs*** for violence and how to report safety concerns (staff, students, parents, community) including using Safe2Tell

Information Sharing and Mental Health Systems

- Develop gap-free ***systems/processes for sharing information***

Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management

- Ensure a trained multi-disciplinary team uses an ***effective threat assessment tool and process***

Strategies to Address Warning Signs

Counseling on Safe Storage & Locking Device Distribution

- Distributing free gun cabinets alone improves safe storage (Grossman et al., 2012)
- Counseling and free cable locks (Barkin et al., 2008)
- Counseling and free gun lock (Miller et al., 2020)

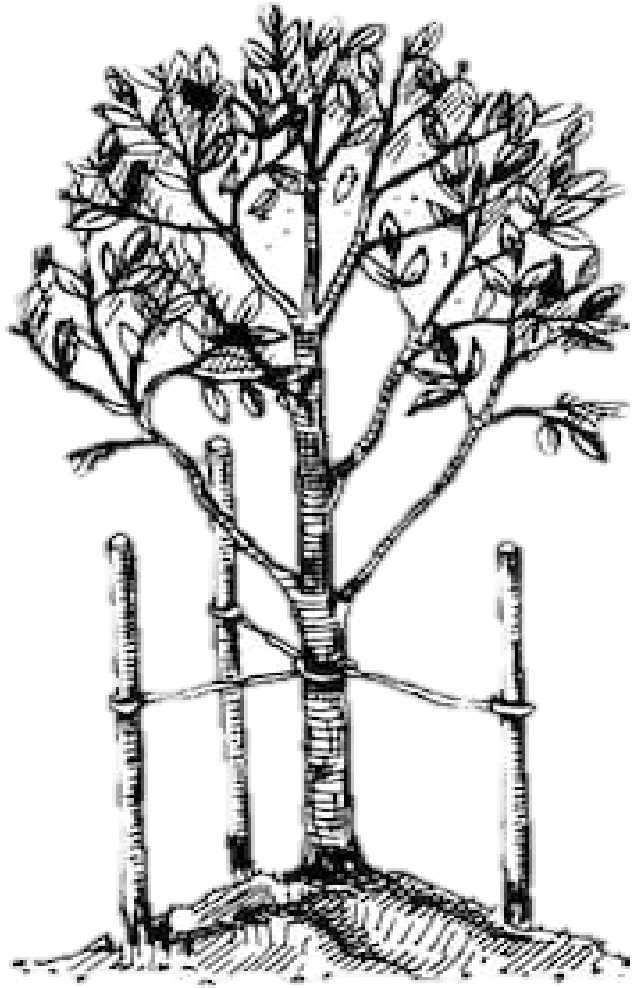
Implementation Considerations and Resources

Flooded

Implementation Supports

If we want schools and communities to implement upstream violence prevention…

We *must* provide support and resources



Prevention Infrastructure

- A network of supportive dependable relationships and focused resources to prevent violence and promote healthy development

Prevention Infrastructure Characteristics

- Addresses root causes of violence (risk and protection) using a comprehensive public health approach
- Includes intervention and prevention across 3 tiers and systems of support
- Addresses warning signs for violence
- Uses best practice for violence prevention including promoting a culture and climate of safety
- Includes implementation supports

There is great hope…

Resources

- Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence
  - cspv.colorado.edu/safeschools
- Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development
  - https://www.blueprintsprograms.org/
- National Center for School Safety: Library of Trainings
  - www.nc2s.org/trainings
- Search Institute
  - https://searchinstitute.org/
- National Threat Assessment Center
  - https://www.secretservice.gov/protection/ntac
- Gun Policy in America
  - https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy.html

THANK YOU!

Beverly Kingston, Ph.D. (she/her)
Director and Senior Research Associate
Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence
Institute of Behavioral Science – University of Colorado Boulder

Email: beverly.kingston@colorado.edu