

Comprehensive Integrated Primary Prevention of Harmful Behaviors – It’s a Brave New World

We have seen the ebb and flow of violent crimes against each other for generations. There seems to be no end to the endless epidemic of crimes against women, children, and men. We have seen significant improvement in our response to victims and limited success in holding offenders accountable but have a significant way to go. We have built amazing response systems who care for and defend victims of violent crime – but this is simply not enough. We must stem the tide and look to prevent this violence from happening in the first place. Is this truly possible you may ask? The answer is a resounding YES!

In this presentation, we will delve into the concept of integrated primary prevention of harmful behaviors, with a specific focus on interpersonal violence, sexual assault, and self-harm. We will explore the theoretical foundations and practical applications of this approach within the context of the criminal justice system. We will begin by introducing the Social-Ecological Model (SEM) developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We will examine how the SEM provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the factors that contribute to harmful behaviors, emphasizing the importance of addressing multiple levels of influence, including individual, relationship, community, and societal factors. Next, we will explore the Broken Windows Theory, which proposes that visible signs of disorder and neglect in a community can contribute to an environment that fosters crime and harmful behaviors. We will discuss the implications of this theory for prevention strategies within the criminal justice system and examine how addressing minor infractions and maintaining community order can have a significant impact on reducing more serious crimes.

Finally, we will delve into behavioral change theory and its relevance to the criminal justice system. We will explore various models of behavior change, such as the Transtheoretical Model and Social Cognitive Theory, and discuss how these theories can inform prevention efforts and interventions aimed at reducing harmful behaviors. We will examine the role of motivation, self-efficacy, and environmental factors in facilitating behavior change and explore practical strategies for implementing effective prevention programs.

We can no longer afford to play “whack a mole” wherein we focus on various harmful behaviors and even fight among ourselves for scarce resources which often pit helping professionals and organizations against each other and tear down the barriers to create prevention systems that actually work. Join us for this informative and engaging presentation as we delve into the theories and strategies behind integrated primary prevention and its potential to create safer and healthier communities.

We can make the world a better place, but we must integrate our efforts with new approaches and ideas if we are to truly change for the better.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the concept of integrated primary prevention and its relevance to addressing harmful behaviors, such as interpersonal violence, sexual assault, and self-harm.
 - Gain knowledge of the Social-Ecological Model (SEM) developed by the CDC and its application in understanding the multilevel factors that contribute to harmful behaviors.
- Explore the theoretical foundations of the Broken Windows Theory and its implications for prevention strategies within the criminal justice system. Additionally, examine behavioral change theories and their practical applications for promoting behavior change and reducing harmful behaviors.

