

Elements of an Effective Prevention Program

For help in choosing or developing an effective program, use this checklist as a guide.

A. How is an effective community prevention program identified?

1. There is evidence that the program model is effective
2. The program avoids use of more expensive interventions in the future.
3. Satisfaction with the program and results are expressed by:
 - a. participants
 - b. staff
 - c. agency
 - d. community
4. The program is maintained over time, surviving agency cutbacks and/or the withdrawal of the initial staff.
5. The program becomes an accepted part of the community continuum of service.
6. The program can be delivered without requiring unusual resources or unique circumstances.

B. What are the characteristics and elements that result in an effective community prevention program?

The Community

1. There is ownership of the program by the community.
 - a. An ongoing structure exists for interagency collaborative planning and implementation.
 - b. There is an organized group that facilitates development and advocacy.
 - c. Interagency arrangements are formalized in agreements.
 - d. The philosophy of all concerned is that the agency works for the community.
 - e. The community has identified the issue as important.
 - f. Program staff receive support from community organizations.
 - g. Program staff receive support from professional colleagues.
2. There are close connections to other service systems for:
 - a. Recruitment
 - b. Services

(continued)

Elements of an Effective Prevention Program (continued)

The Agency

3. The program is supported within the agency.
 - a. Prevention is recognized as an integral component of the agency's overall program.
 - b. Program and staff have the support of the immediate supervisor.
 - c. Program and staff have the support of the director.
 - d. Program and staff have the support of the board.
 - e. Program and staff have the acceptance of agency staff.
 - f. The staff reports routinely on the program to the director.
 - g. The staff reports periodically on the program to the board.
4. The program enhances the agency's position in the community; represents good PR.

The Program/Intervention

5. The program changes systems/environments as well as individuals.
6. The service model is soundly based on research, theory and experience.
7. The program can be replicated easily.
 - a. The mission, the expected outcomes and the intervention steps are clear.
 - b. There is a manual or audio/visual materials available for training.

The Service Delivery

8. The intervention is reality-based.
 - a. The intervention recognizes that physical/survival needs must be met before skills can be learned or behavior changed.
 - b. The child is served in the context of his/her family and surroundings.
 - c. The program is flexible in responding to population's needs and is not limited by tradition practices or structures.
9. The recruitment is accomplished with reasonable effort.
10. The program is acceptable to the population served.
 - a. The program is culturally relevant to the population served.
 - b. Intervention is based on an empowerment model that emphasizes strengths and respects the participants needs and desires.
 - c. The level of attrition is reasonable.
11. Staff are provided sufficient time in terms of caseload size to form trusting relationships with program participants.
12. The program is consistently available.

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Elements of an Effective Prevention Program (continued)

Program Management

13. The program is efficiently managed.
 - a. Cost per unit of service is reasonable.
 - b. Program uses feedback evaluation, including feedback from participants, to improve the service delivery process and outcome.
 - c. Staff receive training appropriate to the level of skill required.
 - d. Staff receive ongoing administrative supervision.
 - e. Staff receive ongoing clinical supervision appropriate to the level of complexity of the intervention.
14. The program is provided with sufficient resources.
15. The program and staff are supported by state-level activities.
 - a. Policy, guidelines and procedures are available.
 - b. Technical assistance is provided.

***Editor's note:** For a prevention program to be effective, it must include participation from all sectors of the community. It must be based on sound research, theory and experience, and its must result in the desired outcomes. In addition, the program must be delivered consistently and managed efficiently.*

