



What is Prevention of Substance Misuse?

Substance misuse prevention isn't a term that's familiar to many Vermonters—but it should be. Prevention activities keep people and communities healthy. People with substance use disorders often struggle with work, school, and relationships. Substance misuse is one of the leading causes of disability in the United States.

Vermont is among the top five states in the US with the highest rates of substance use disorder. In 2019, Vermont provided \$33,342,700 to treatment services and invested only \$6,991,417 in prevention. Substance misuse prevention is part of public health and addresses components of Social Determinants of Health that address culture, physical environments, healthy child development, and social support networks.

Prevention includes:

- Decreasing *risk factors* that make people more likely to use substances
- Boosting *protective factors* that lessen the chance of people using substances
- Giving young people information to prevent early substance use
- Partnering with communities to create environments that encourage healthy choices

Prevention has 3 parts:

- **Primary prevention** reduces substance misuse before it begins
- **Secondary prevention** reduces harm once substance use has begun
- **Tertiary prevention** helps prevent relapse or further harm

Who Works in Substance Misuse Prevention?

Prevention workers can be project coordinators, community outreach specialists, social workers, recovery coaches, and program managers. People in the prevention field work alongside community partners, such as schools, law enforcement, community coalitions, health care providers, the media, as well as parents and youth.

Who Benefits from Prevention?

We all do! Prevention keeps our community informed and safe.

When communities invest in prevention, they don't just save money: Most importantly, they save and improve countless lives.

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