

How Prevention Works

Prevention Stops Drug Use Before It Starts



Drug misuse comes with serious health problems, including an increased risk of addiction. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, [long-term drug use can lead to heart or lung disease, cancer, mental health issues, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, and other diseases.](#) Short-term drug use can cause heart attack, stroke, psychosis, overdose, and death.

The good news is that drug use is preventable.

How Prevention Works

Prevention is perhaps best explained using a parable in which a community continuously rescues people from drowning in a river. Constantly fishing people out of the river and applying CPR to them drains the community of its resources and exhausts its rescuers. Worse, many of the people who fall in cannot be saved despite the community's best efforts.

Eventually, the community concludes that it should send people upstream to see why so many people are falling into the river in the first place. There, it learns that people are falling off of a slippery cliff. The community builds a protective barrier so fewer people fall off the cliff. Over time, fewer people fall off the cliff and have to be rescued from the river. The community ends up saving lives and money.

Prevention is the act of going "upstream" to learn why a problem is occurring in the first place. It addresses the root causes of an issue, providing systemic solutions to systemic problems.

[Everyone has a role to play in prevention. We invite you to find yours.](#)

Do Your Part—Join Prevention Action Alliance

At Prevention Action Alliance, we are dedicated to leading healthy communities in the prevention of substance misuse and the promotion of mental health wellness. We're building a world where every community has access to high-quality prevention resources and where all know their role in prevention.

To build that world, we need your help. Everyone has a role in prevention. It takes a community to create safe and healthy environments for our children, and we'd like to invite you to join the Prevention Action Alliance. Learn more at preventionactionalliance.org/join

About Us

Prevention Action Alliance is a 501(c)3 nonprofit in Columbus, Ohio that is dedicated to leading healthy communities in the prevention of substance misuse and the promotion of mental health wellness. Learn more about Prevention Action Alliance at preventionactionalliance.org.