Ensure Healthy Development for all Youth

The Issue

Behavioral health problems in childhood and adolescence take a heavy toll over a lifetime, with significant impacts on rates of economic independence, morbidity, and mortality. A large body of scientific evidence over 30 years shows that behavioral health problems can be prevented.

Societal Goal

Within a decade, we can reduce the incidence and prevalence of behavioral health problems in the population of young people from birth to age 24 by 20% from current levels and reduce racial and socioeconomic disparities in behavioral health problems by 20 percent through the widespread implementation of tested and effective preventive interventions.

A Decade of Work

Over the next ten years, researchers, practitioners and policymakers can engage in a variety of activities that will advance this Grand Challenge and ignite social work achievements. Ensure Healthy Youth Development for All Youth is guided by scientific advances and strategies described in *Unleashing the Power of Prevention* a discussion paper published by the National Academy of Medicine. Its goals are to:

- Develop and increase public awareness of the advances and cost savings of effective preventive interventions that promote healthy behaviors for all.
- Ensure that 10% of all public funds spent on young people support effective prevention programs and policies.
- Implement community-assessment and capacity-building tools that guide communities to systematically assess and prioritize risk and protective factors, and select and implement evidence-based preventive interventions that target prioritized factors.
- Establish and implement criteria for preventive interventions that are effective, sustainable, equity-enhancing, and cost-beneficial.
- Increase infrastructure to support the high-quality implementation of preventive interventions.
- Monitor and increase access of children, youth, and young adults to effective preventive interventions.
- Create workforce development strategies to prepare practitioners in health and human service professions for new roles in behavioral health promotion and preventive interventions.
Ensure Healthy Development for all Youth

Resources


Network Leadership

Jeffrey M. Jenson, PhD
Philip D. and Eleanor G. Winn Endowed Professor for Children and Youth
University of Denver, Graduate School of Social Work
jeffrey.jenson@du.edu

J. David Hawkins, PhD
Endowed Professor of Prevention
Founding Director, Social Development Research Group
University of Washington, School of Social Work
jdh@uw.edu

Get involved!


To learn more about opportunities to become involved in this Grand Challenge contact Jeff Jenson at the University of Denver (Jeffrey.Jenson@du.edu).