

Prevention Planning for Transition Aged Youth

What is Prevention Planning?

A prevention plan is a collaboratively determined set of responses to an impending or potential high-risk situation.

Why do Prevention Planning?

- To identify specific behaviors and clarify consequences.
- To interrupt patterns of on-going high-risk activity.
- To help people identify desired support and interventions.
- To enhance self-empowerment and coping skills.
- To provide documentation of decisions and agreements.
- To strengthen individual and team accountability.
- To increase the effectiveness and coordination of a team's response.
- To increase the likelihood that a situation will be handled in a manner most satisfactory to all.

Who should be involved?

- The youth
- Transition facilitator or service coordinator
- Desired and/or identifiable support persons
- Members of the transition planning team

When to do prevention planning?

- When there seems to be an anxiety or concern on the part of the young person or other key players
- When individual is choosing to engage in high-risk activities
- When there is an impending high-risk situation.
- When there is an ongoing pattern of high-risk behaviors.
- When a plan will enhance individual self-monitoring and self-management.

What does a prevention plan look like?

- Many different approaches – formal and informal
- Plans include the following basic information:
 - ✓ State the purpose of the prevention plan
 - ✓ Describe the situation, including critical or target behaviors, typical precursor, and/or personal triggers
 - ✓ Self-management coping strategies
 - ✓ External supports and clear specification of roles
 - ✓ Interventions/action plan, including teaching of skills
 - ✓ Conditions for hospitalization/incarceration/crisis placement
 - ✓ Agreement among young person and all key players

Prevention Planning Process

1. Identify situation: problem behavior, setting events, risk factors, risk behavior patterns, situation anxiety, and possible secondary gains for the young person.
2. Explore the young person's feelings and personal triggers related to the high-risk situation.
3. Identify purpose and possible benefits of a prevention plan to the young person.
4. Identify others who should be involved in developing the plan. Secure their perspectives regarding Steps 1, 2 and 3.
5. Convene meeting with identified transition planning team. Orient team to 1, 2, 3 and 4 above. Solicit additional input from young people and other team members.
6. Identify what skills the young person needs to cope with triggers and stressors prior to the high-risk situation. Specify coping strategies.
7. Explore what the young person needs to feel safe in a high-risk situation.
8. Clarify key support persons for individual to contact when needed.
9. Develop a prevention action plan:
 - Include as many proactive and preventive strategies as possible.
 - Build on the young person's strengths and natural support network to the extent possible.
 - Examine strategies to minimize possible secondary gains for the young person.
 - Teach skills to the young person to provide replacement behaviors that enable the young person to access more appropriate social and non-social reinforcers.
 - Teach coping skills:
 - ✓ Recognition of one's trigger stimuli (internal or external)
 - ✓ Teach alternative responses
 - ✓ Stress management
 - ✓ Avoidance of high-risk situations
 - ✓ Self-imposed respite or escape responses
 - Remove means of doing self-harm.
 - Increase support and/or teach increased utilization of necessary supports.
 - Identify conditions (legal, individualized needs) under which the following types of interventions would be utilized: emergency medical unit, police, hospitalization, medication review, detox, or crisis unit, and/or involuntary commitment.
 - Specify any interventions that should not occur: removal from school/work/home, forced medication, involuntary commitment if alternatives available.
 - Build plans that triage responses to differing level of crisis intensity and severity.

Prevention Planning Process (continued)

10. Clarify any conditions which would void the plan (e.g., legal)
11. Sign and date the plan. Make sure all participants, including young person, have a copy of the plan and are clear about their roles.
12. Review and update the plan on a regular basis or as needed.
13. Resume your strength and future focus with the young person.