

Looking Upstream Parable



One day a woman
was sitting by a river.
All of a sudden, she
saw someone
drowning as he
floated downstream.





She jumped into the river to pull the child ashore.

Just as soon as she reached shore, she spotted another person *really* in trouble floating downstream, so she rescued him as well.



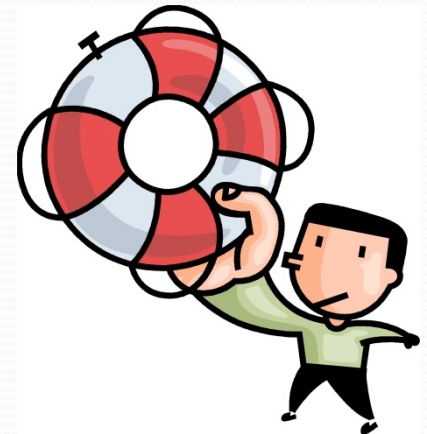
Every time she had
saved one person,
she saw another,
and another.



When she noticed
some people watching
from shore the woman
called for help.



Now several people began
collaborating and jumping in
to try to save everyone who
was tumbling down the river.





The woman decided that if people knew how to swim, it would reduce risk of drowning, so she began to teach a few to swim as others continued to drag drowning bodies out of the river.

Many people were
being saved, but
many were slipping
by and the life-savers
were exhausted.



The woman finally decided to go upstream to find out what was causing these people to end up in the river. When she got a mile upstream, she saw someone falling off the bridge.



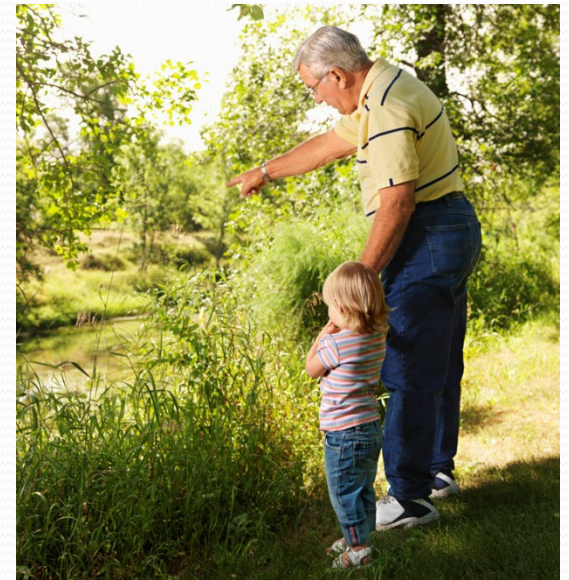
Upon careful inspection, she found that there was a well-concealed, yet sizeable hole in this bridge that was causing people to fall in.



She understood that if some resources were devoted to repairing the bridge and teaching people the skills to navigate safely, many people would not be drowning.




***Awareness
of risk
factors***



***Building skills for
safety and success***



***Improving
structural problems
that may lead to
harm***



If you always do what
you've always done,
you'll always get what
you've always got.

emotional
disorders

dropout

crime

lost jobs

violence

bullying

sexual assault

domestic abuse

addiction

suicide



Not taking the time,
money and
resources to address
the root causes will
continue to result in

emotional
disorders

dropout

crime

lost jobs

violence

bullying

sexual assault

domestic abuse

addiction

suicide

PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Universal

Directed at *everyone* equally regardless of risk



Selected

Directed at those who are at *heightened risk* for negative conditions or behaviors



Indicated

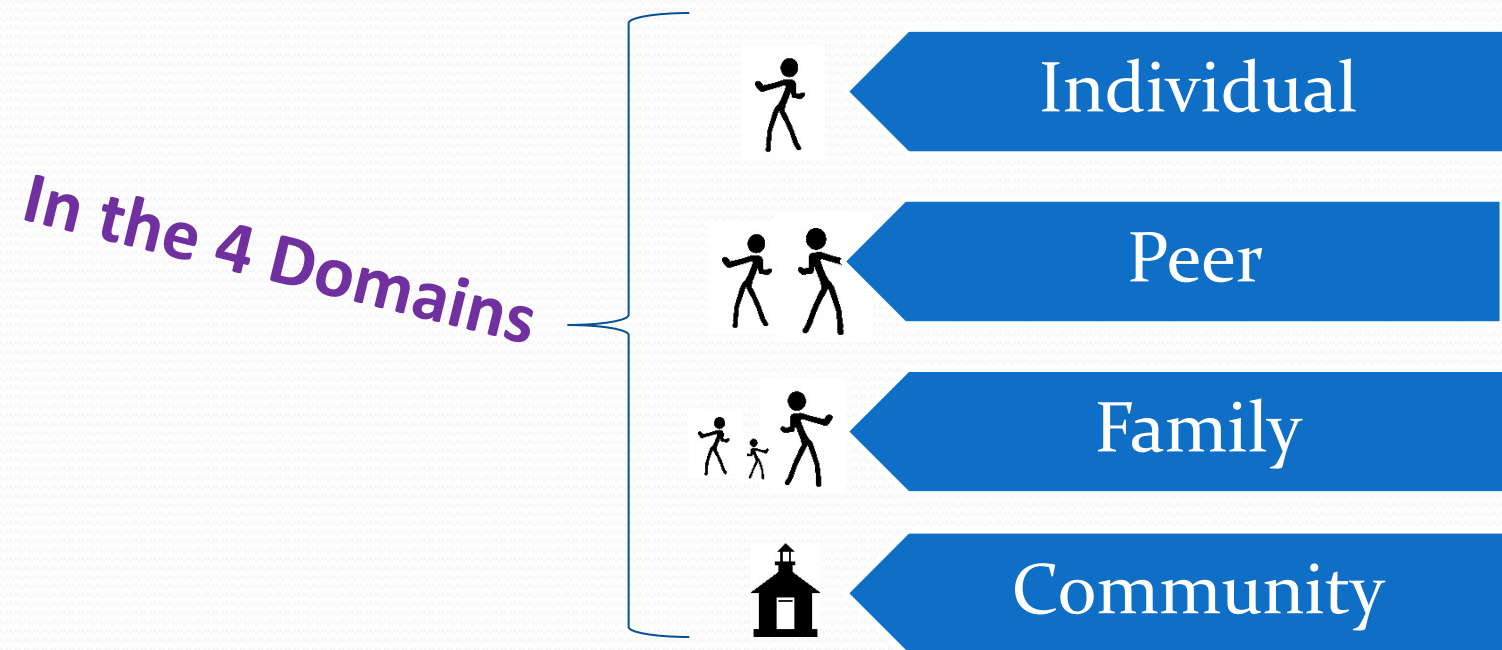
After conditions occur but still early enough to avoid most long-lasting negative consequences



Prevent Problems by...

↓ Decreasing **risk** factors

↑ Increasing **protective** factors





Risk Factor

... a behavior or condition that, on the basis of scientific evidence, is thought to increase vulnerability to a specific condition or other behaviors.


Protective Factor

... a behavior, social influence or policy that, on the basis of scientific evidence, is thought to **reduce vulnerability** to a specific condition or other behaviors.

Prevention Programming
Decreasing Risk Factors and Increasing
Protective Factors -- not only makes *sense*
in terms of avoiding problems...



It makes *CENTS* in terms of
saving money that is spent
on incarceration, treatment
and health costs .



“The USA prefers to spend more money on responding to social ills, rather than preventing them.”

(U.S. Surgeon General Murthy 2017)

Each dollar spent on
Social Emotional
Learning results in a
savings of up to \$11
in intervention costs.

--Belfield et al 2015





*Improving
Communities
from the
inside out*

