

The keys to prevention in mental health

▶

Unlocking psychologists' potential

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Joining forces to prevent mental health conditions

Presentation overview

- ▶ Mental health and mental illness
- ▶ The action continuum
- ▶ Types of prevention
- ▶ Risk and protective factors
- ▶ Prevention interventions

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Mental health and mental illness

Mental health and mental illness

- ▶ From a public perspective, and sometimes even from a practitioner perspective, mental health and mental illness are often used interchangeably
- ▶ But that's confusing and does not provide space to talk about 'good' mental health



The mental health continuum

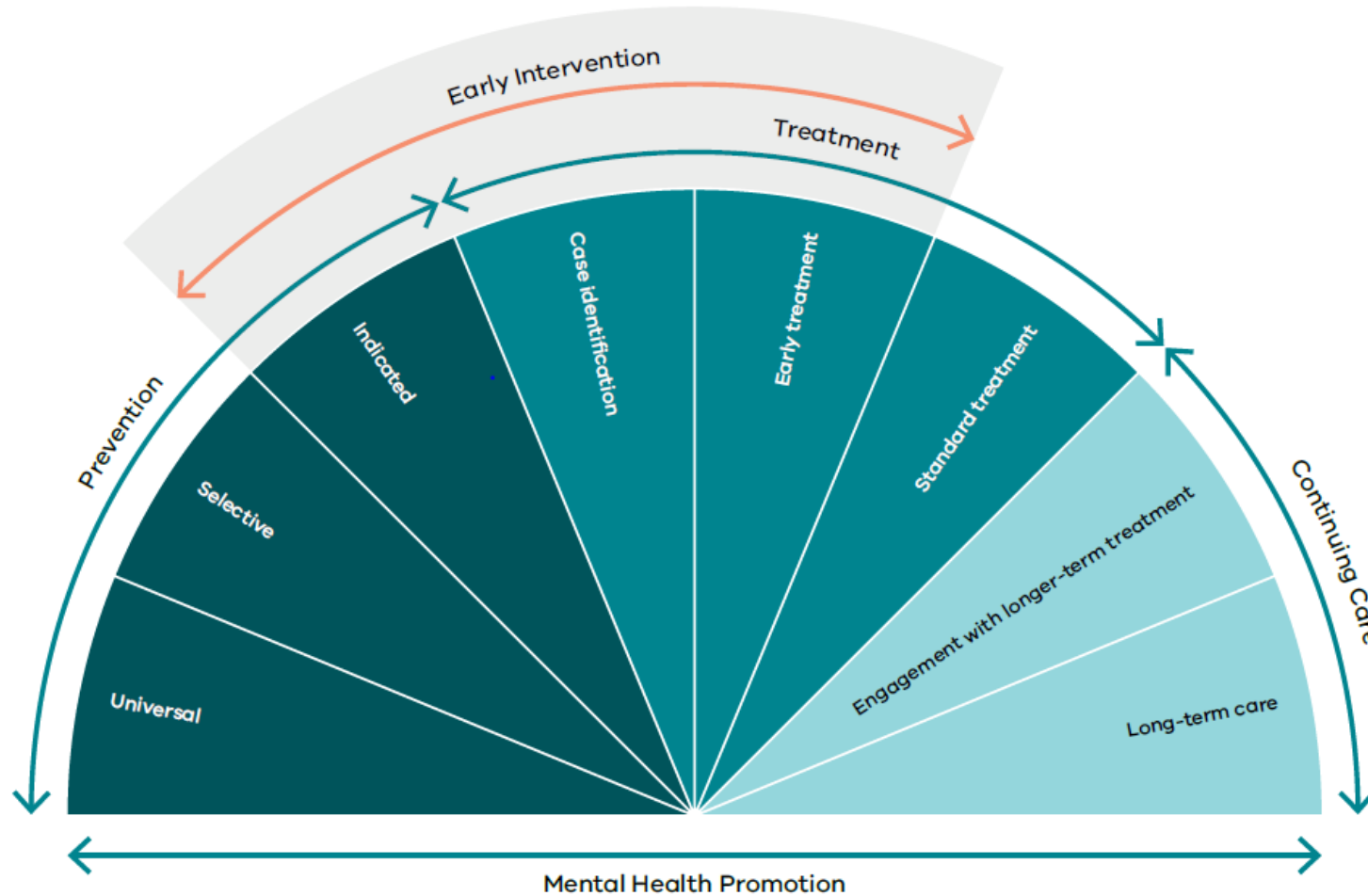
The action continuum

The action continuum

- ▶ Interventions also lie on a continuum from:
 - ▶ Promoting mental wellbeing, preventing mental health conditions, early intervention for first episode, low → high intensity recovery support, and suicide prevention

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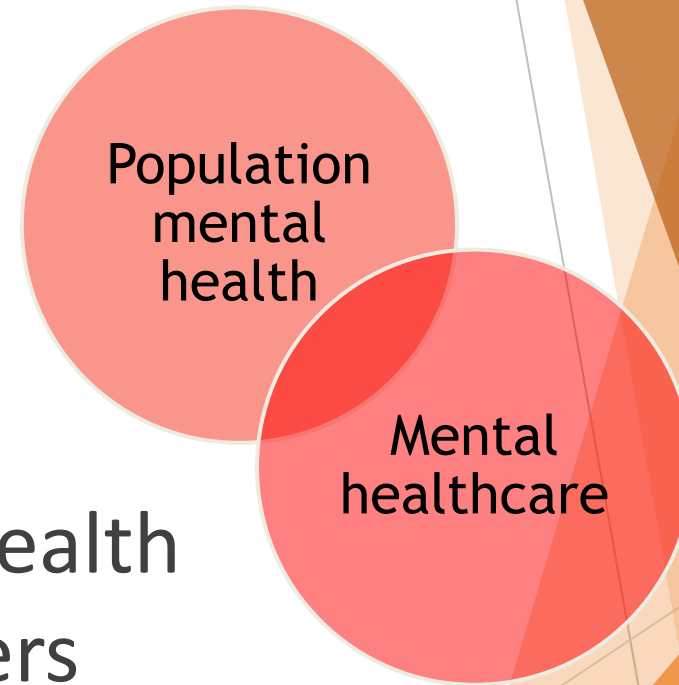
The action continuum



Source: Emerging Minds. Prevention and Early Intervention <<https://emergingminds.com.au/our-work/prevention-and-early-intervention/>> [accessed 1 November 2019]; Adapted from Patricia J. Mrazek and Robert J. Haggerty, *Reducing Risks for Mental Disorders: Frontiers for Preventive Intervention Research* (Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 1994).

The action continuum

- ▶ The activities in this action continuum can be grouped into two broad categories:
 - ▶ Population-wide initiatives
 - ▶ Mental healthcare initiatives for individuals living with a mental health condition, and their families/carers



Population-wide initiatives

- ▶ Promoting 'complete' mental wellbeing (flourishing)
- ▶ Preventing mental health conditions
- ▶ Increasing mental health literacy, decreasing stigma, & promoting help-seeking
- ▶ Screening & early recognition of mental health conditions and referral to supports and services
- ▶ Elements of suicide prevention
 - ▶ reducing access to means, media reporting

Mental healthcare initiatives

- ▶ Low intensity treatment
 - ▶ Online treatment programs, peer-to-peer support, non-clinical coaches
- ▶ High intensity treatment & recovery support
 - ▶ GPs, psychologists, psychiatrists and others
 - ▶ Psychosocial service providers
- ▶ Crisis support and suicide prevention
 - ▶ Telephone helplines, emergency services, EDs, aftercare services

Types of prevention

Types of prevention

- ▶ Conditions progress through clinical stages
 - ▶ Wellness > subthreshold > first episode
 - ▶ Remission > relapse or persistence

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Types of prevention

- ▶ Prevention can target any point to prevent progression to next
 - ▶ Primary prevention – prevent onset
 - ▶ Secondary prevention – detect and treat early stage illness (overlaps with early intervention)
 - ▶ Tertiary prevention – treat to modify trajectory (maximise QoL and longevity)

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Types of prevention

- ▶ Can sub-classify primary prevention by target population
 - ▶ Universal prevention – whole population
 - ▶ Selective prevention – people at increased risk
 - ▶ Indicated prevention – people with subthreshold symptoms (some overlap with early intervention)

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Target risk and protective factors

Key protective factors

- ▶ Genes, temperament and personality
- ▶ Secure attachment
- ▶ Authoritative parenting
- ▶ Psychological skills (social and emotional, self-care)
- ▶ Social supports and social connectedness
- ▶ Positive school and work climate
- ▶ Social cohesion, trust and social capital
- ▶ High access to social determinants education, employment, housing

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Key risk factors

- ▶ Genes, temperament and personality
- ▶ Insecure or disorganised attachment
- ▶ Authoritarian or permissive parenting style
- ▶ Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- ▶ Intimate partner violence
- ▶ Bullying
- ▶ Poor school climate & workplace psychosocial risk factors
- ▶ Discrimination (minority stress)
- ▶ Low access to social determinants

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Prevention interventions

Prevention interventions

- ▶ Interventions seek to influence risk and protective factors
 - ▶ Among a defined population (particularly children and adolescents)
 - ▶ Through key settings (home, school, work, online)
 - ▶ At scale (small changes across large populations)

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Prevention interventions

- ▶ Currently able to prevent some conditions more than others
 - ▶ Depression
 - ▶ Anxiety conditions
 - ▶ Some behavioural disorders (CD & ODD)
 - ▶ Substance use conditions
 - ▶ ?First episode psychosis

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Prevention interventions

- ▶ Public health approach to individual behaviour change and systems change
 - ▶ Public education campaigns
 - ▶ Developing personal skills
 - ▶ Creating supportive environments
 - ▶ Strengthening community action
 - ▶ Mentally healthy public policy
 - ▶ Re-orienting health care services toward promotion and prevention

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Prevention interventions

- ▶ Public education campaigns
 - ▶ Explain mental health and mental illness
 - ▶ Promote use of psychological skills
 - ▶ Health, clinical and positive psychology
 - ▶ e.g. Act Belong Commit, 5 Ways to Wellbeing
- ▶ Limited evidence, needs more research

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Prevention interventions

- ▶ Skills building: Parenting skills and supports
 - ▶ Assist parents with perinatal mental health conditions
 - ▶ Practical, emotional, material supports for parents
 - ▶ Home nurse visiting, Triple P, Tuning into Kids/Teens, Partners in Parenting, etc
 - ▶ Target attachment, warmth, communication, emotion coaching, limit setting, conflict resolution
- ▶ Very good evidence for many parenting programs

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Prevention interventions

- ▶ Skills building: Individual 'resilience'
 - ▶ Social and emotional skills – school based packages
 - ▶ Self-care skills
 - ▶ Health psychology – lifestyle behaviours
 - ▶ Clinical – CBT, ACT, IPT informed strategies
 - ▶ Positive psychology – mindfulness, compassion, gratitude, signature strengths
 - ▶ Resilience programs – school and workplace
- ▶ Very good evidence for many programs and individual strategies

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Prevention interventions

- ▶ Supportive communities
 - ▶ Mental health promoting schools
 - ▶ Workplace mental wellbeing
 - ▶ ?University mental health
- ▶ Promote positive ethos/climate/culture as well as review internal practices and policies
- ▶ Good evidence for schools, emerging for workplaces

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Strengthen community action

- ▶ Place-based initiatives (local councils)
 - ▶ Communities that Care
 - ▶ Positive impacts on reducing alcohol and offending behaviour among young people
 - ▶ Limited evidence for impact on mental health conditions, needs more research

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Mentally healthy public policies

- ▶ Target macro-system factors
 - ▶ Social norms (attitudes & beliefs)
 - ▶ Gender inequality, racism, homophobia, transphobia, other discrimination
 - ▶ Social determinants
 - ▶ Education, employment, housing, equality and equity
- ▶ Limited research evidence on effective public policies but likely to make BIG difference.

Implementation

Implementation

- ▶ Requires a multi-modal & multi-sector approach
 - ▶ No single strategy enough to prevent any condition
 - ▶ No single sector can do it all
 - ▶ mental health & non-mental health sectors need to collaborate

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Implementation

- ▶ Requires a 'conductor' to lead and coordinate action across multiple sectors
- ▶ Requires a prevention system infrastructure (building blocks)

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Implementation

- ▶ Key system building blocks
 - ▶ Leadership
 - ▶ Coordinating body
 - ▶ **Mental health promotion workforce**

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Putting it together

- ▶ Key system building blocks
 - ▶ Interventions
 - ▶ Delivery systems especially digital
 - ▶ Data & monitoring systems
 - ▶ Finance
 - ▶ Research & evaluation

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Summary

Summary

- ▶ Mental health conditions are not inevitable
- ▶ Able to prevent many common conditions
- ▶ Target underlying risk and protective factors
- ▶ Requires multi-modal, multi-sector approach
- ▶ Variety of evidence based approaches exist but are poorly implemented and/or not to scale
- ▶ Need to better deliver existing evidence-based interventions, enhance the systems architecture, including the mental promotion workforce

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