



Wisconsin Prevention Network Meeting Summary

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prepared by

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I. Purpose and Scope of the Meeting

Prevention in Wisconsin is at an interesting juncture with several key prevention efforts happening simultaneously – SIG, Wisconsin Counties Association Visions Plan, Kids First. So that WPN can be an integral part of those discussions, the network meeting on July 21, 2004, was used to develop an organizational position that identifies how WPN will help move prevention forward in Wisconsin and the steps needed to make that happen. For this meeting WPN focused on three specific initiatives – Kids First, Wisconsin Counties Association Vision Plan, and the State Incentive Grants. (Appendices I-III explain these initiatives in more detail.)

II. Methods

Prior to attending this meeting, WPN members and other invited guests were asked to complete a set of *appreciative questions*. *Appreciative questions* try to discover things that are working – the successes – so that we can build and do more of it. The purpose of these questions was to provide a framework for the discussion in the topic work groups.

Following is a Meeting Agenda that explains in detail the activities and procedures that were used to gather information and move the discussion forward.

Meeting Agenda:

- I. Introductions
 - a. Meeting participants introductions
 - b. Brief description of Appreciative Inquire Process
The following concepts are key to the AI process:
 - *Systems create or determine their own reality.*
 - *AI focuses on what gives “life” to a system when it is at its best.*
 - *AI seeks to bring the best of “what is” forward into the future*
 - *AI focuses on possibilities.*
 - *Human systems move in the direction of what they focus on.*
- II. Appreciative Discussion (Based on Appreciative Questions Appendix IV)
 - a. Identify Common Values -- Participants listed the reasons that prompted them to be part of the prevention movement. This activity focused on participants identifying their “core values”. (Appreciative Question 1)
 - b. Root Causes of Success – Participants were asked to tell one story about a time when they were involved in a successful prevention activity. From each story, reasons for success of the event were compiled, and mutual themes were identified. (Appreciative Question 2)
 - c. Visions of Prevention –Participants were asked to think about prevention 10 years into the future. From the discussion, a set of principles and priorities were identified that guided prevention along that path. (Appreciative Question 3)
- III. Work Groups – Kids First, WCA-Vision Plan, SIG
Using what was learned from the appreciative discussion and personal experience, participants divided into three work groups. The work group discussions focused on the following: (1) Identification of the basic elements of this prevention effort; (2) Identification of the role(s) that WPN can play in this effort; and (3) Development of a statement about WPNs position in relation to this initiative.

III. Results

Identify Common Values

Appreciative Question 1 allowed participants to hear from each other the individual reasons for being involved in prevention. Looking at these common values collectively, the “positive core” or the “core values” begin to emerge. These core values reflect the strengths, resources, skills, assets, and capabilities that cause people to gravitate toward prevention efforts that work. The common themes that emerged from this WPN discussion were:

- A passion to do prevention work, to make a difference in the lives of others.
- Collaboration and relationships with others (working WITH, not FOR)
- Broad base of participants (Essential for youth, families, and communities to be involved.)

Appreciative Question 1

Think about your membership in WPN or other prevention group (i.e. county coalition, task force, work group, etc.). This can be a group in which you are a current member or a group that you belonged to in the past. Describe one of your most positive experiences within this group and how that reinforced your initial sense that this was a great organization to belong to.

When did you join? How long have you or your agency/organization been a member? What most attracted you to join this prevention effort? What had you heard about this group that prompted you to join in the first place? What has made you most proud of being part of this group?

Table 1 summarizes the common themes that transpired from the discussion and exemplify the core values of this group.

Table 1: Common Values That Caused Individuals to Gravitate Towards Prevention	
Personal Reasons	<p>These common themes can be expressed as the following core values of prevention organizations (as identified by meeting participants):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • positive emotions • visions of possibility • diversity • grounded • social capital • teamwork • resourcefulness <p><i>As prevention continues to grow and evolve so will the positive core.</i></p>
Vision	
Mutual Respect	
Creativity	
Openness	
Share Resources / not competitive	
Relationships /Partnerships / Collaboration	
Crossing Boundaries / Develop Common Language	
Involvement by youth, families, community “Prevention is for all ages”	
Broad Focus / Comprehensive Approach	
Community Education	
Community Buy-In / “Ground Up”	
\$ Availability	
Energy generated a natural high / passion	
Outcomes – make a change / make a difference	
Diversity in planning and participation	
Doing something concrete and substantial	
ENERGIZING – very positive emotional experience	

Prevention Activities – Causes of Success

This part of the discussion allowed participants to share their stories of “best practices” – the elements that influenced the success of their prevention efforts. The sharing of stories increased the awareness about other prevention efforts and revealed the knowledge and wisdom of those involved in the process. As is evident from the stories listed below, these causes of success build on the core values that were first identified. There were many “common themes” that were woven through the “success stories”. (A complete list of the success stories and root causes of success for each story are listed in Table 2.)

Appreciative Question 2

By thinking about prevention successes, we can identify a valuable collection of ideas and practices to enhance the future of prevention. Remember a time when you, your agency or an organization that you work with were a part of a successful prevention activity. Explain the activity.

What made it successful? Who was involved (i.e. local relationships, state-county partners)? Describe what this success was like? How were resources utilized? What contributed to the success?

The principal themes that consistently emerged throughout these prevention success stories were:

- collaboration (of both efforts and resources) (cross-system);
- diversity (in planning and participation);
- meet community need (community commitment and readiness critical elements);
- effort was “doable”, concrete, and allowed participants to feel successful;
- driven by a “passion” to make a difference

Table 2: Stories Illustrate Root Basic Elements of Success	
Story (each participant recounted a prevention success)	Root Causes of Success (fundamental reasons for event success)
One Day Learning Event (Chris – Outagamie County)	Diverse Participation Good response to invitation Partners got word out Quality speaker for Free
Walk for Awareness (Sue O.)	Personal Passion Emotionally reflective Doing something that was “Do able”
WRTI Mentoring (Stephanie)	Personal Relationship Empowering Skill Building
WPN Prevention Conference (Ron B.)	Diversity in Planning and Participation Organized and Focused Doing Something Concrete & Substantial Revival “Big Tent Experience”
Festival / “wristbands”	Creativity – flexible – ability to adapt Persistence Right thing to do Change in climate Dedicated volunteers
Coalition Capacity Building	Persistence / Patience / Listening Champions Money Breaking down barriers

HOPE Walk	Meets community need Shared experience Support – information, personal
Alcohol Free Business	Faith – personal value Trendsetter Meet Community Need Role Model
F.A.C.T. (Jeff)	Dedicated School Nurse Resources From Tobacco Coalition Youth Involvement
Suicide Prevention (Shel)	Cross System (MHA, DPI, FED) (Resources) Complementary skills, knowledge Synergy
After School Programs (Pam)	Researched effective programs (used data Site visits (Boys / girls clubs) Business/Foundations/Schools/Health Started small & built 5 years now 600 kids Determination Youth survey --wanted arts drama music
Conference for 8 th graders (Carol)	9 th year – good feedback from kids Keynotes, Break outs Life skills focus (HIV?AID, Bullying, etc) (Based on surveying kids Collaborative: schools, Forest Co. Partnership, County Board BFI \$ Peer leaders in breakouts
Suicide Prevention (Faden)	Groups coming together – kids did it Collaboration / relationships built Wave of suicides stopped No exterior funding
Environmental Strategies (Lyle)	Youth as partners w/ Police Communication / listening Other segments came together Resolved turf issues / shared resources
Program Expansion – Menominee Tribe (Wendy)	Timing was big issue – ready to respond Short-term project TA from Clearing House - Resources Ready for help Open to new approach Action oriented Key leaders w/ youth
Community Service Project related to 9/11 (Rick)	Time was right – readiness Kids did it Short-term Key leaders Youth driven /involvement Concrete Goal
Prevention Conf. – Educational Opportunity (Kathy)	Collaboration Pride Diversity

Supporting Today's Parents (Suzy – Milwaukee County)	Community Involvement Systems Working Together Embedded / Community Culture
PALS Mentoring (Pat – Waushara County)	Agency Collaboration Community Support / Fundraising Family Commitment
County Prevention Network (Ken – Marquette County)	Total Community Commitment Information /Issues Sharing Consistency
Project Self-Sufficiency (Colorado) (Kathi – Wisconsin Clearinghouse)	Cross-System Collaboration Participant Empowerment End result = productive tax paying individuals

Vision of Prevention – Guiding Principles/Priorities

Meeting participants were asked to think about a prevention system(s) in the future – specifically what it might look like and what happened over the course of time to allow that vision/dream to evolve. Considering each persons dream, small groups developed a set of guiding principles and/or priorities that would characterize a prevention system in 2014 (ten years into the future). (Table 3 lists the prevention system characteristics identified by each small group.)

Appreciative Question 3

Prevention is at an interesting crossroads and the future is filled with endless possibilities.

A: What trends and changes are you seeing today that excites you and make you feel confident about possibilities for prevention in Wisconsin?

How are current initiatives providing opportunities to bring prevention to the forefront?

B: Given these trends, imagine that it is ten years from today and an “intentional and effective” prevention system is in place. What do you see? Be as creative as you can...

How is prevention work done? What does the prevention system look like? Who is involved?

How has prevention work been integrated? What role is WPN playing in the prevention system?

C: Now, imagine this same prevention system ten years from today. Looking back, describe how this “intentional and effective prevention system” got to where it is.

What decisions were made ten years ago that allowed this system to develop? How were funding issues addressed? How was WPN involved in the development of this system?

Table 3: Priorities / Principals of a Future Prevention System identified by Small Work Groups

Work Group #1: “Dream Wisconsin”

- Prevention is on the state agenda. The guiding theme in all decisions = “Is this good for the health of our people?”
- Team integrated approach within state government agencies to problems, holistic approach
- Sense of community is elevated
- How we get there:
 - Change alcohol norm
 - Decision are not driven by \$s of special interest groups
 - Woman governor – non-political appointments in government
 - Childcare educators... financially supported vs. professional athletes
 - Empower Families

Work Group #2: Priorities and Principles

- Respect for all human beings
- Global Shift – change in attitude
- Strength-based
- Prevention from prenatal to death
- Family support
- One-stop shops with many points of entry (holistic)
- No need for the word prevention (because it is the norm)
- Removal of stigma
- Business commitment
- Socialized health care
- Light Rail / subway / universal transportation
- One month vacation for everyone

Work Group #3: State and Local

- State Level Activities
 - Bi-partisan political support for prevention
 - Cross-system Prevention Plan (Funding, Communication Gaps)
 - Broad-based (e.g. turning point)
 - State-level staff support (State or contracted)
 - Prevention policy institute
 - Prevention Conference
 - Support Prevention Education (i.e. classes in schools, parenting classes, curriculum in technical schools, universities)
 - Identification of core programs (evidence-based, data consistency)
- Local Level Activities
 - Community recognizes need and benefits
 - Local, cross-system partnerships leads to local plan
 - Local point of responsibility, prevention specialist
 - Dedicated funds to support local efforts
 - Local resource centers for information and education
 - Data collection / reporting

Work Group #4: Vision

- Communication and Collaboration at multi-levels
 - Federal, state and local
 - Local and Community
 - Private and Public
- Build on “Best Practices”
- Pool funding for universal access to effective strategies

Work Group #5: Priorities

- Safe decent housing, schools, health care
- To insure thriving families
- Funded mandate for Prevention (Possible SIN tax)
- Promote change in our nations values
- “Moral strength not strength thru force”

Work Groups – SIG, Kids First, Wisconsin Counties Association Vision Plan

The meeting attendees divided into work groups to use the information that generated from the three appreciative questions to have a focused discussion about three prevention initiatives within the state. (Detailed information about these three initiatives is attached to this report – Appendices I-III.) The task for each work group was to: Identify the basic elements of the specific prevention effort, identify role(s) that WPN can play in this prevention effort, identify how funding issues can be addressed, develop a statement about WPN's position in relation to this initiative, develop a work plan related to WPN's position. *In lieu of the time that was available, most work groups did not complete all of the tasks.*

(1) SIG

- a. Basic elements:
 - i. Science-based, model, effective programs
 - ii. Collaboration (key groups)
 - iii. Needs/gaps based
 - iv. Analysis of current prevention system
 - v. Community driven
- b. Role(s) for WPN:
 - i. Advocate to use lessons learned
 - ii. Use data that is collected
 - iii. Decision process – Turning Point?

(2) Kids First

- a. Basic elements:
 - i. Strengthening early child education, child care
 - ii. More \$s to welfare
 - iii. Acknowledge that there is a problem (i.e. two systems are not working, TANIFF, Child welfare does not take the recourses of TANIFF)
- b. Role(s) for WPN
 - i. WPN needs a “passion piece” to get people going (this could be it).
 - ii. WPN request copies of different county's proposals to review
 - iii. WPN submit our paper “What is Prevention” paper with cover letter about what we did today to help the counties guide what is acceptable to ensure that prevention is in their plans.
 - iv. We can lobby?
- c. Development of a position statement for WPN in relation to Kids First
Send the prevention papers to the state with our guidelines to be used when the state chooses the proposals – show our values and mission. It is a good start, good goals (i.e. Where is any addressing of alcohol abuse – but don't put that in the letter). There is a lack of excitement or “trust” that this is going to make a difference. So how can we drum up excitement? Identify what WPN is. Get the prevention concept to the core group.

(3) WCA Visions Plan

- a. Basic elements: (See attached discussion paper.)
- b. Role for WPN: Giving this input is the immediate role that WPN can play.
- c. Development of a position statement for WPN in relation to WCA Vision Plan
WPN believes that by and large prevention monies should continue to be distributed through the current funding streams. The different requirements that each funder has for their funds would make pooling funds very complicated and monitoring their use very difficult. However, WPN believes that the Vision goals of creating accountability and some level of consistency across counties could be applied to prevention activities. The Visions steering committee should consider funding incentives that would support the organization of broad-based, cross-system prevention coalitions in each county. These coalitions would work to ensure that prevention efforts are coordinated and synergistic, rather than competitive. The incentives might take the form of new funds allocated to

support such activities and serve as seed monies, such as has been done through Brighter Futures, or by communicating that any new grant funds will go only to those counties that have such coalitions. The Visions steering committee should also recognize the importance of promoting evidence-based prevention programming to address "accountability". We need to be able to sell the benefits for prevention to decision-makers, so the state and counties have an incentive to make sure that prevention programs are based on model programs and that appropriate data is collected. At the same time, there should be some room for local creativity in implementation of prevention activities. Therefore, the availability of some flexible funds for local use is desirable.

- d. Work Plan: Shel will take these comments to the Visions steering committee.

IV. Conclusions / Recommendations

The conversations surrounding the appreciative questions generated an incredible amount of energy within the meeting participants. The discussions were alive with success stories. The causes for these successes emerged from the core values (positive core) that each participant identified. Stemming from this positive core, five main "Causes for Prevention Success" surfaced:

- Collaboration (based on community needs and commitment)
- Prevention activities that are "doable", concrete, and substantial lead to success.
- Diversity (youth, all ages, families) strengthens the prevention effort
- Most successful prevention efforts included a "champion (s)"
- Successful prevention evokes emotions: passion, empowerment, energy

When participants worked on specific prevention initiatives (i.e. SIG, Kids First, Visions), the energy of the group waned slightly. However, when the groups came back to their positive core and applied the identified causes of success, the group work was most productive.

"Success moves in the direction of things that we value."

Throughout the day several concepts kept re-surfacing that need to be explored further: collaboration, cross-system prevention, diversity, positive energy, evidence-based programs, accountability, best practices, community involvement, and community norms. These seem to be key-concepts in addressing the prevention system that is aspired to in the future. What is important is that there can be more than one path that leads to a successful prevention system. Given more time, the visions / dreams surrounding these issues could be more clearly designed. For the immediate future, each work group generated ways that WPN can influence Wisconsin prevention initiatives. Comments from meeting participants indicated that this is an opportune time to move prevention to a new level within the state.

In the The Tipping Point (by Malcolm Gladwell), three types of people that play instrumental roles in community change are discussed. They are the *connector* (person who knows everyone), *maven* (when this person speaks, everyone listens), and *salesperson* (persuasive person that can sell anything). At this WPN meeting, all three types of change agents were evident in the discussion (and we all know them in our communities as well). These people have been committed to prevention and will be crucial in the design of the forthcoming system.

Bringing together "change agents" from across the state, this WPN meeting created a space for discussion about a "new" prevention system that is formulating in Wisconsin. . It will take WPN more time to further discover its positive core, identify the strategic opportunities, dream about the possibilities of prevention and concretely participate in the design of an intentional and effective prevention system for the future.