Knowing is not enough; we must apply.  
Willing is not enough; we must do. – Goethe

The goal of this class is to provide you with a hands-on workshop in effective doing as it relates to preventive interventions. To facilitate class discussion, every week two students will submit questions, ideas, problems and so on for discussion by mailing them to the group by noon of the day preceding class. Each of us should think about these submissions and be prepared for discussion.

The final product will focus on some part of prevention research – identifying a problem or disorder, and the extent to which it occurs in the population; a targeted review of relevant risk and protective factors with an eye toward crossing disciplinary boundaries to search for relevant empirical and theoretical perspectives; a description of a plausible process model of the course of an intervention – targeting any part of the prevention cycle (universal, targeted, selected). You could choose to outline in detail a proposed process model for a preventive intervention, including how implementation fidelity would be monitored and change assessed. You could choose to develop a flow chart detailing the process by which a problem evolves and the natural intervention points in the process. You can choose to write a draft proposal to pilot a preventive intervention or to develop an evaluation of a pre-existing one. You can choose to work alone or in small groups. To make the process a useful one for your own development, pick something that you are actually interested in possibly carrying out and follow NIMH guidelines as if you are writing a proposal. NIMH website is located at: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms.htm. Forms themselves are at: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html. Alternatively, you can choose one part of the process – detailing the theorized change process for example. To make sure that you get useful feedback on your efforts, please raise issues relevant to your project as we discuss each week’s topic.

My own research has focused on children and adolescents, mental health and well-being, including school success. The Coursetools site (listed above) for this course lists a large number of resources to get students started in their projects. I also have a quantity of collected relevant articles that I will be happy to share.
However, prevention research might just as well be considered from other perspectives. For example, your work in this class could be tied to the issues raised by the U-M Nonprofit & Public Management Center; Professor Vinokur has kindly sent us an update of talks which are typically not social scientists:

Topics include:

Monday January 14: Steve Mariotti National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (youth focus) 12:10 p.m., Rm. 1636 School of Social Work Bldg.

Wednesday January 30: Jeffrey B. Swartz, President and CEO of the Timberland Co., National Founder of City Year (an urban youth service corps now in ten cities throughout the country). 4:30 p.m., Hale Auditorium, Business School.

Monday, February 11, William Strickland, founder of the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, an after-school program that uses pottery and other types of arts education to teach life skills to at-risk youth and runs in four cities. 1:00 p.m., Educational Conference Center (Rm. 1840), School of Social Work Bldg.

Thursday April 4: The Alliance for Justice Nonprofit Advocacy Program, Washington, DC, 5:00 -- 8:00 p.m. (Location to be announced). Workshop for students covering lobbying rules for Nonprofits.

In addition, it is important to integrate your social science discipline with your prevention interests. Students are encouraged to go to departmental symposia and brown bags and bring topics of interest into the discussion. For example on March 13, from 12-1:30 Peter Gollwitzer will give the psychology departmental colloquium entitled “Goals and goal attainment.”

Classroom time will involve informal lecture and discussion, some weeks we will have guest speakers who are currently engaged in preventive interventions. Speakers will provide a personalized sense of the process of translating problems and social science theory into effective doing. Your grade will be based on class participation and your final project (each weighed equally).

I have chosen readings with the assumption that students have all taken a basic methods class and an evaluation class. In the first session, we will discuss student background and interests and I will tailor subsequent sessions to the extent possible to suit student interests and previous coursework.

Topics attempt to balance general perspectives with topic-specific examples to provide an optimal mix.

**January 11 Ideas, theories and a point of view**

In this session, I will provide a general frame for prevention research, situating this form of social program and this process of evaluation within the larger framework of field-based research.
A number of you may already have received the message announcing the Quantitative Methods seminar; this might be an interesting way of hearing how others on campus are thinking about their analysis issues. The first seminar is Jan 15, it meets every other week on the sixth floor of ISR, faculty instructors are Susan Murphy, Rich Gonzalez, Yu Xie, and Steve Raudenbush.

Readings for this session are located on our Coursetools site:


Optional additional source:

**January 18 What to study – some ideas on having ideas**

Unfortunately, there are no foolproof recipes for good ideas, although some advice is available. McGuire's chapter discusses creative hypothesis generating in psychological research, complete with some advice on how to have an idea, whereas the anticreativity letters edited by Nisbett offer tongue-in-cheek recommendations on how to ensure that graduate students do not have any useful ideas.

After reading these articles, think about the framework suggested as it intersects with your own interests. We will use this session to think broadly about ideas each student will brainstorm as part of the group on general issues of interest and creative hypotheses that could be generated from them.

Readings for this session are located on our Coursetools site:
January 25 Evaluation as prevention research

This class will focus on prevention research within the framework of program evaluation, highlighting process and outcome evaluation - providing an overview of evaluation. I will attach my lecture notes from the full semester evaluation course for those wanting a review. The Lipsey & Cordray article summarizes evaluation as it relates to social interventions, that is, programs of various sorts. The Foster-Fishman et al. piece articulates evidence for empowerment theory, which can be used as scaffolding for a program evaluation or preventive intervention. The other readings (Durlak, Durlak & Wells, Tobler & Stratton) should be skinned to give a sense of what can be learned from these sorts of evaluations, leaving us to consider the gaps to be filled by a prevention research perspective.

Readings for this session are located on our Coursertools site:


Pennie G Foster-Fishman; Deborah A Salem; Susan Chibnall; Ray Legler; Courtney Yapchai; (1998). Empirical support for the critical assumptions of empowerment theory American Journal of Community Psychology; 26 (4), 507-536.


February 1 Thinking like a prevention researcher

This class will focus on your own ideas for prevention research. Each student should come prepared with a draft flow chart, showing the process model that he or she is currently interested in. This could be at the level of process of change or the etiological process leading up to the risk to be targeted.
February 8 Use of innovative technologies - Can a single targeted intervention session make a difference?

Before proceeding, we will hear from a number of guest speakers who are at different phases in the process of developing, implementing, and evaluating a preventive intervention. By interacting with these very different individuals and having a chance to pick their brains about the process, joys, trials and tribulations of getting up and running, you will have a chance to develop a better feel for doing prevention. Unto Pallonen (Cancer Institute) is our first guest speaker. He will present an innovative use of interactive computer software that he has used to reduce smoking and that he plans to use to improve oral health outcomes of low income African American women and their young children through a federally funded Center Grant.

Reading:
Unto's grant proposal (on our coursetools cite)

Other readings for those interested in use of technologies in prevention:

Henderson, Joseph; Noell, John; Reeves, Thomas; Robinson, Thomas; Strecher, Victor (1999) Developers and evaluation of interactive health communication applications. American Journal of Preventive Medicine; Vol 16(1) 30-34


February 15 Does it ever work really well?

The second guest speaker, Amiram Vinokur (ISR), will present a successfully implemented, evaluated and disseminated preventive intervention – the JOBS program. This NIMH-funded intervention was first developed to work with individuals who lost their jobs to help them get back into the job market while reducing risk of common negative sequela of job loss – primarily depression. The intervention proved successful in both the short and long term evaluations. The model was expanded to include a COUPLES focus, to work with live-together partners and spouses in households where a partner lost a job. The model has been successfully implemented in locations throughout the globe. Current development focuses on creating a JOBS program for women who must develop job skills to enter the job market after welfare reform.

The reading is available on our Coursetools web site:

February 22 How does one transfer an intervention with one population to another population?

Larry Gant (SSW) is our last guest speaker. He will present an overview of his plans for a preventive intervention to reduce risky behavior among drug using African American men. This NIDA funded intervention will translate an intervention successfully used with African American teens to African American drug using men. Dr. Gant will share the process by which he found what appeared to be a translatable intervention and his efforts to date in making the translation.

The readings are available on our coursetools web site. The first reading provides a general theoretical framework for Larry’s thinking, the second provides specific information he used in developing his grant application, the third gives and example of research like that which he is undertaking.


Pequegnat and Stover (1995) How to write a successful research grant application: A guide for social and behavioral scientists. Chapters 9 and 10 (developing a theoretical framework and rationale for a research proposal, and how do you formulate a testable exciting hypothesis?)


Another related reading:


March 8 Translating developmental theory into preventive intervention

In this class we will explore the interface between the action focus of social work and the theory focus of prevention as a field. The readings make the case that theory-based work is necessary but remind us of the pitfalls of simplistic approaches to evaluation.

Readings are on our coursetools website:


March 15 and 22 General Process Theories – motivation and persuasion

In these sessions we will discuss some of the current theories of motivation and persuasion that can be useful in thinking about developing an intervention. Theories of motivation and persuasion are typically implicit in interventions. As a prevention researcher, a key question to ask in developing an intervention is ‘What is the overarching goal of the intervention?’ Typically overarching goals focus on changing beliefs and attitudes, altering behavior, or providing information (or some combination of these). Simply put, our behavior is likely to be influenced by what happens to be contextually salient, what easily comes to mind in the moment, unless we are highly motivated to do an exhaustive information search or have been cued in to the fact that what easily comes to mind may not be relevant. So the question we must ask as prevention researchers is ‘What is likely to come to mind without the intervention versus as a result of the intervention?’ The readings for today discuss how this process occurs.

The first set of readings reviews what we know about attitudes and attitude change:


The next set of readings focus on motivation and attempt to lay out a variety of possible motivational forms:


Higgins, T. E. Beyond Pleasure and Pain, American Psychologist, 52, 1280-1300.
March 30 Specific Process Theories – influence of social capital, poverty, race

A primary goal of prevention research is to prevent mental illness (for example by reducing risks of social isolation, social stress and strain, unemployment, school failure, drug and alcohol use, problematic parenting, neglect, abuse) and promote well-being (for example through employment, education, social connectedness). We cannot cover all of these literatures in a single session and not everything is of interest to everyone. In this class we will focus on Putnam’s thesis of social glue and its promotive effects. However, I have included on the coursetools site, a number of general summaries focused more specifically on health and mental health and the interplay between culture and mental health.


Optional readings focused on Mental Illness specifically


NIMH strategic plan to reduce and ultimately eliminate health disparities (2001).

Steven Regeser Lopez; Peter J. J. Guarnaccia (2000). Cultural psychopathology: uncovering the social world of mental illness. Annual Review of Psychology, p571

Robert E Roberts; Catherine R Roberts; Y Richard Chen (1997). Ethnocultural differences in prevalence of adolescent depression American Journal of Community Psychology; 25(1), 95-110


April 7 Asking questions and assessing fidelity

Previous weeks focused on prevention research as a framework, gave examples of prevention research, and connected prevention research to theories of behavior change. This session seeks to consider the nuts and bolts of assessing whether the intervention actually occurs as planned and whether behaviors actually change as planned.


April 14 Final Class – student presentations

This is our final class; students should come prepared to present their work in progress toward the final project. The goal of this class is to obtain group feedback, to revise, refine, or shift course as needed. On the next page I list some additional bibliographic resources.

List of Available Bibliographies on Preventive Trials:


Websites:
Other websites linked to our course tools site include:
Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice
Health and Behavior
How to read and summarize a research article
International Registry of Preventive Interventions
John Hopkins Prevention Research Center
NIMH strategic plan
Putnam's Social Capital By State and Region
Putnam - The social capital community benchmark survey
Reducing risk of mental disorders
Social Science Information Gateway - Social Welfare
The Better Together Website
The Future of Children Web Newsletter
The Internat'l Social & Public Policy Research Info Gateway
The Roper Center - Social Capital Benchmark Survey -
U.S. Census Bureau