

An Introduction to A Public-Health Approach to Violence Prevention

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The Public Health Approach

Formal definition

Define the problem

Identify risk and protective factors

Develop and test prevention strategies

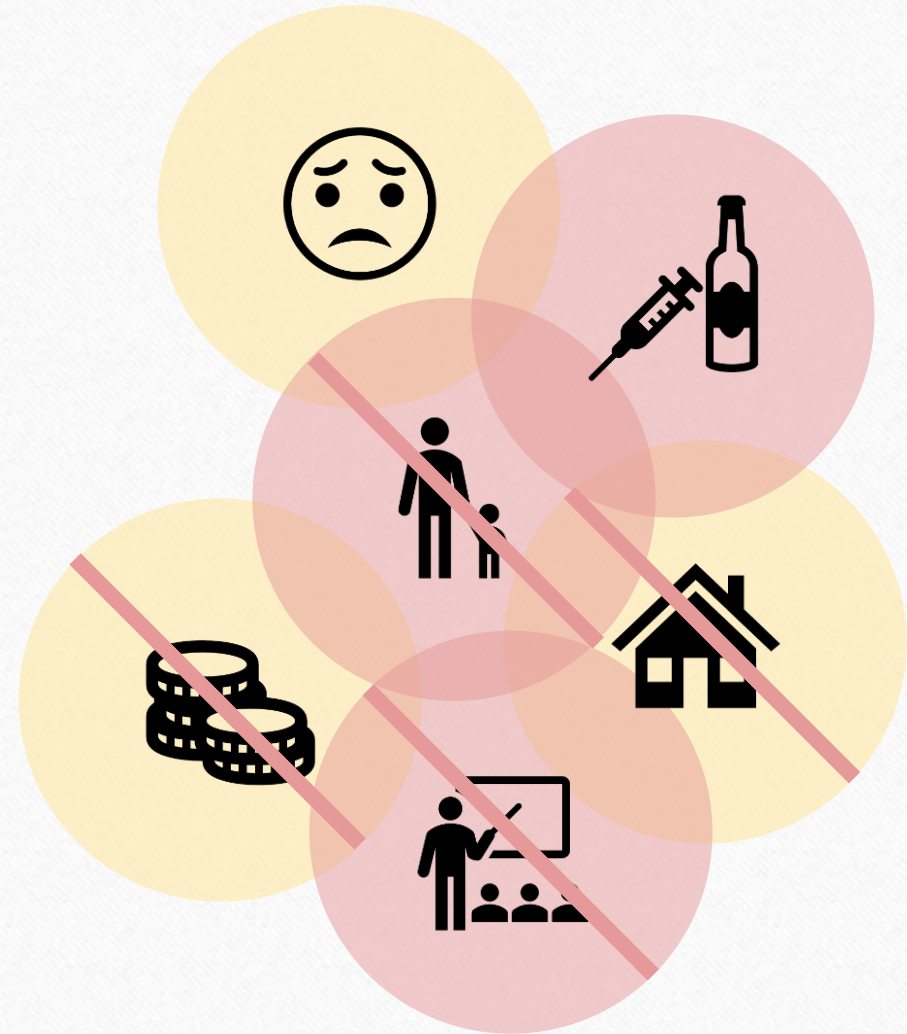
Assure widespread adoption



Risk factors

Individual-Level

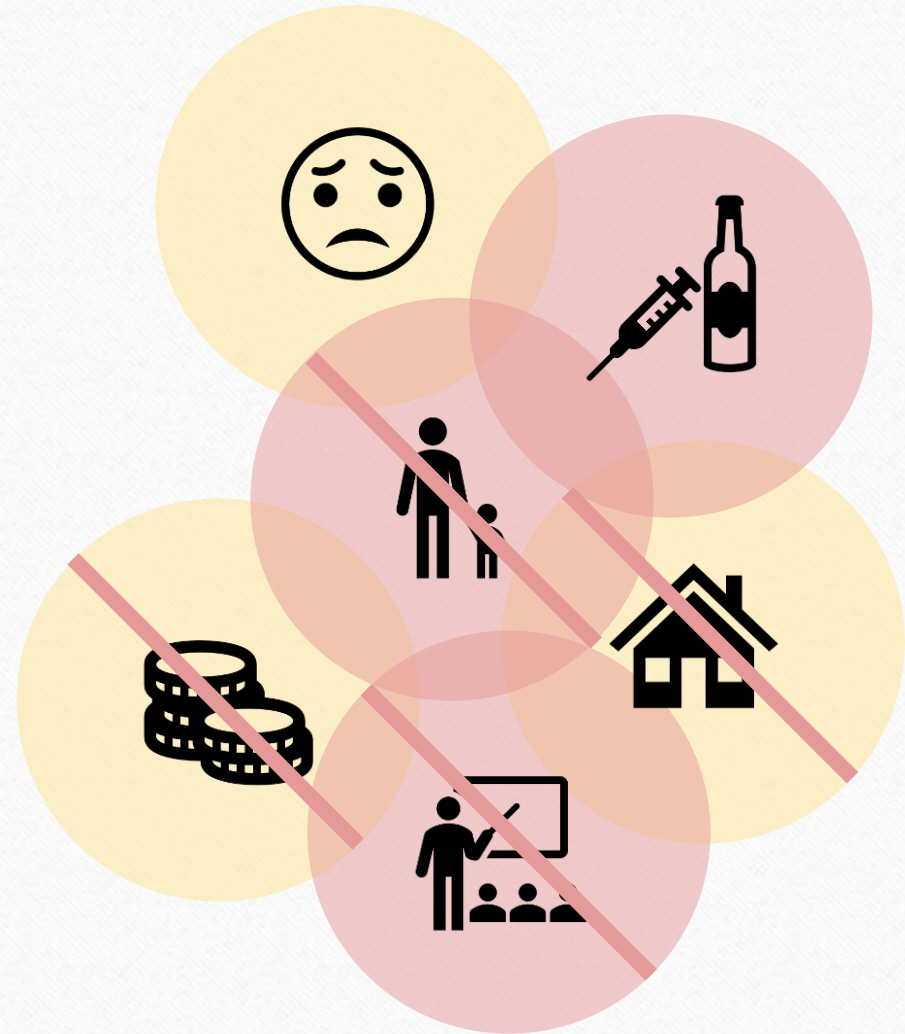
- History of violent or aggressive behavior
- Substance use/misuse
- Exposure to violence (victim or witness)
- Poor impulse control or anger management challenges
- Mental health issues (especially untreated)
- Association with peers engaged in violence



Risk factors

Family-Level

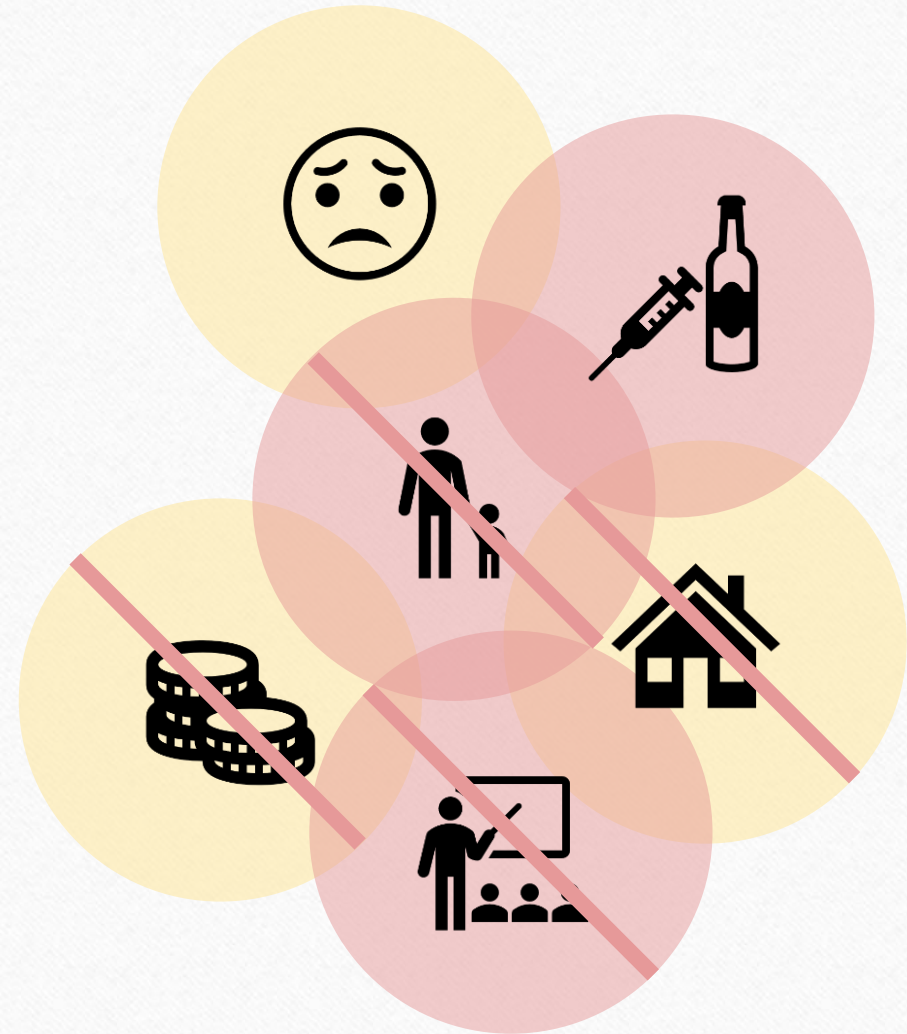
- Childhood abuse, neglect, or trauma
- Harsh, inconsistent, or absent parenting
- Family conflict and domestic violence
- Lack of stable housing or economic stress



Risk factors

Community/Societal-Level

- High levels of poverty and unemployment
- Easy access to firearms or weapons
- Lack of community cohesion or trust in institutions
- Normalization of violence in culture/media
- Limited access to education, health care, or social services
- Neighborhood disorder (e.g., high crime, abandoned properties, lack of safe spaces)



Protective factors

Individual-Level

- Strong social and emotional skills (self-regulation, empathy, conflict resolution)

- Academic success or engagement in school
- Positive self-esteem and future orientation
- Access to mental health or substance use support



Protective factors

Family-Level

- Stable, nurturing, and supportive relationships with caregivers
- Consistent family structure and routines
- Parental involvement and monitoring
- Economic stability



Protective factors

Community/Societal-Level

- Safe, stable, and supportive neighborhoods
- Positive peer groups and pro-social activities (sports, arts, faith communities, mentoring)
- Strong school environments with clear norms against violence
- Community cohesion and collective efficacy (neighbors looking out for each other)
- Access to employment and workforce development opportunities
- Culturally relevant supports and services
- Equitable policies that reduce systemic inequalities



An important note...

Risk factors

Do **not** automatically mean someone will...

- Behave violently or
- Experience violence

Protective factors...

Do **not** necessarily protect against...

- Experiencing violence
- Behaving violently

Violence is **P**reventable

Violence is not inevitable.

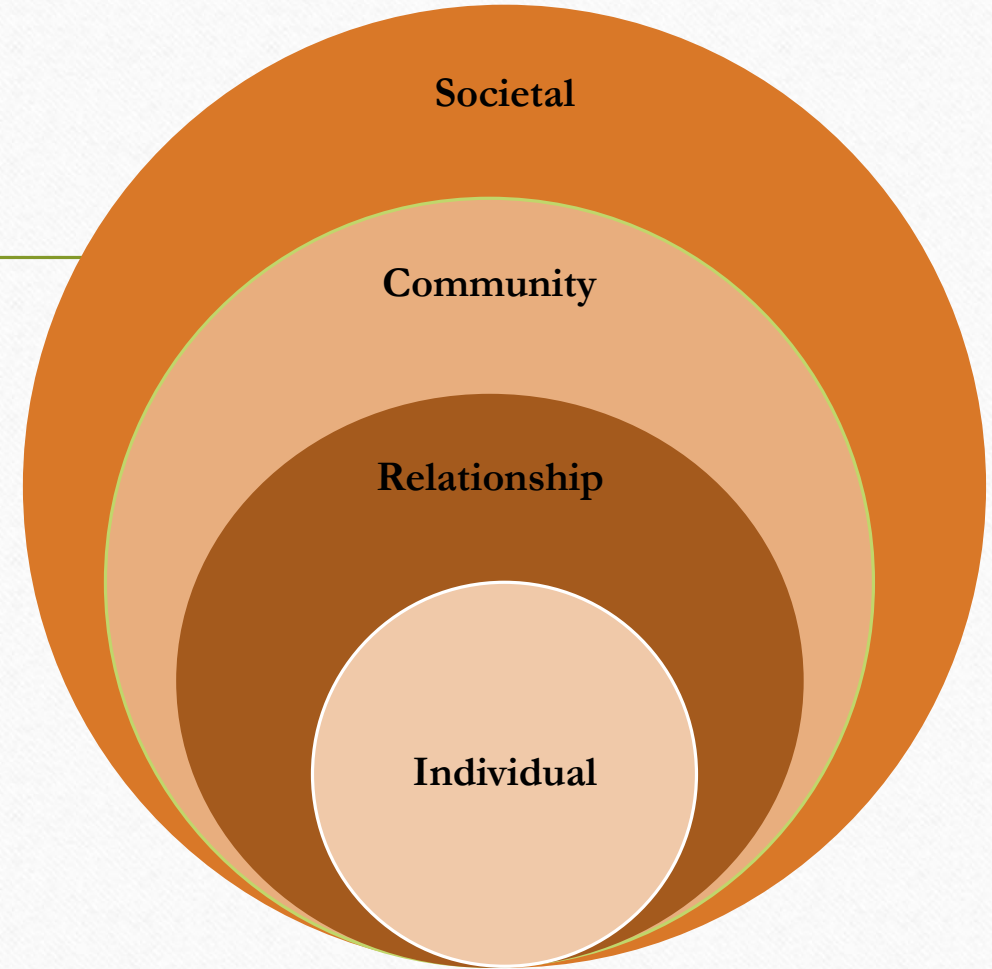
Like other communicable diseases,
we can ...

- Protect against
- Prevent
- Treat

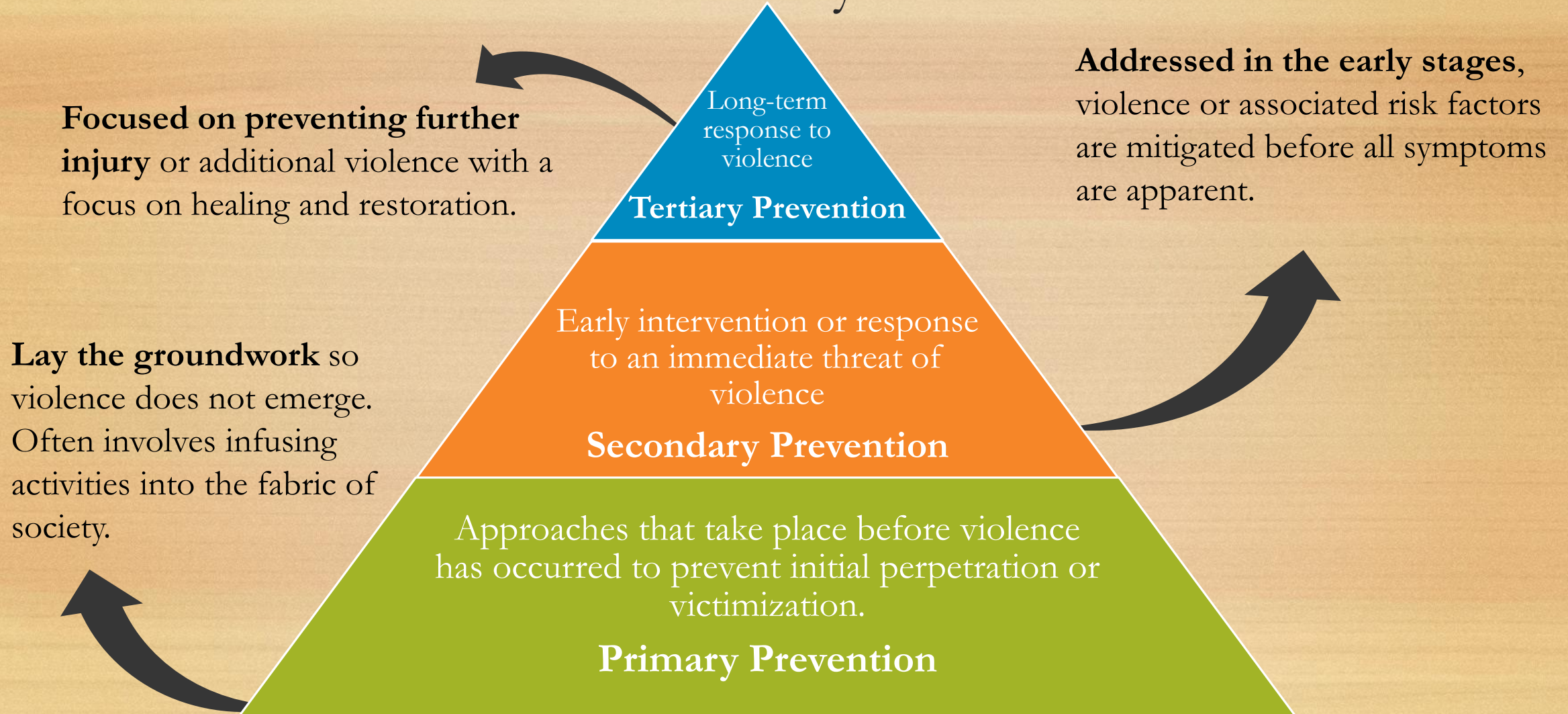


Many factors

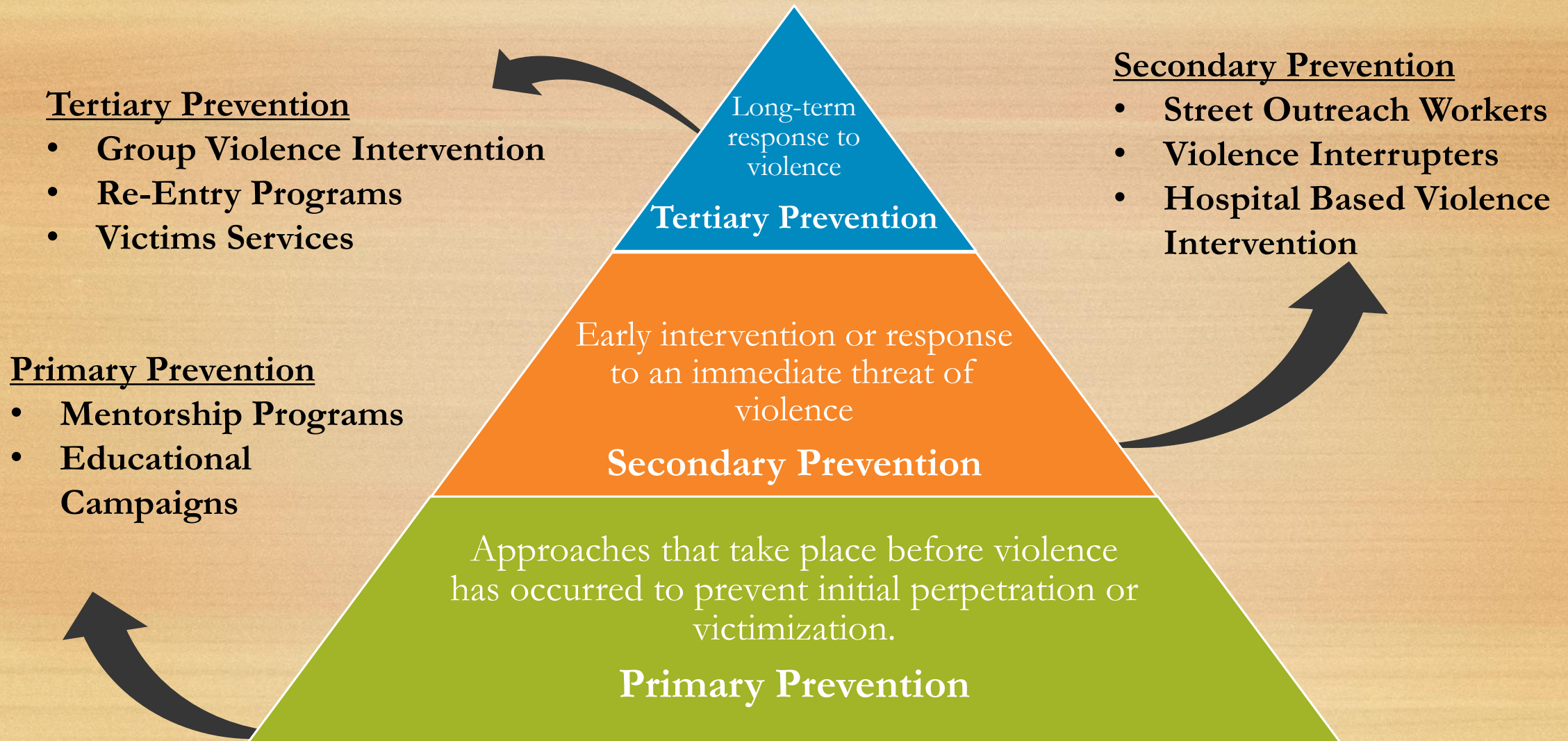
- ✓ Violence is complex
- ✓ Social conditions matter
- ✓ Violence is much more than “bad” choices being made by “bad” people
- ✓ Consider all factors that put people at risk for or protect from experiencing or perpetuating violence



Prevention Pyramid



Prevention Pyramid - Program Examples



Prevention Continuum

Up Front

In The Thick

Aftermath



Approaches that take place

BEFORE

violence has occurred to lay groundwork that can prevent violence from emerging

Early intervention, often at the first sign of risk or as a response to an immediate act or threat of violence

Responses

AFTER

violence has occurred to deal with the lasting consequences and promote healing and restoration

Questions and Thanks



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**National Network
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The Power of Partnership