



## 2026 NPN Conference

September 29 – 30, 2026

### Program

Day 1, Tuesday, September 29, 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. ET

11:00am – 11:10am ET

**Welcome**

11:10am – 12:00pm ET

**Keynote: Prevention Priorities and the Dynamic Substance Use Landscape**

*RDML Christopher Jones, PharmD, DrPH, Director, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention; Acting Director, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*

This presentation will provide key updates on prevention priorities at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, new prevention resources, and the latest data on national substance use and addiction trends.

12:00pm – 12:30pm ET

**Transition/Exhibit Hall Break**

12:30pm – 1:30pm ET

**Workshop Session I**

**1A: Science and Services – Advancing Bidirectional Relationships**

*RDML Christopher Jones, PharmD, DrPH, MPH, Director, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention; Acting Director, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Wilson Compton, MD, MPE, Deputy Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse  
National Institutes of Health*

The epidemiology of substance use in the United States is rapidly evolving with the continued proliferation of highly potent and toxic synthetic drugs in the illicit drug supply as well as the expansion of increasingly diverse licit cannabis, alcohol, and nicotine products readily available in communities, creating new and novel challenges for prevention practitioners at the federal, state, and local levels. In addition, there is often a lag between new prevention science research and uptake into practice in communities. Translating the latest science into policy, program and practice as well as using real-world experiences to inform future research is a priority collaboration between the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This session will provide an overview of current prevention priorities at the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention at SAMHSA and the National Institute on Drug Abuse at NIH, discuss the importance of the bidirectional relationship between prevention science research and prevention services implementation in communities, and provide an opportunity for participants to engage with CSAP and NIDA leadership on emerging challenges and innovations in the research to practice space.

**1B: Emerging Drug Trends: Identifying and Addressing the Latest Novel Substances**

*Josh Esrick, MPP, Chief of Training and Technical Assistance, Carnevale Associates, LLC*

*Olivia Stuart, Associate, Carnevale Associates, LLC*

The substance use landscape is ever changing due to shifts in demand and supply, risk and protective factors, and non-medical determinants of health. Prevention professionals need to understand these changes and know how to respond to them. This presentation will provide an overview of emerging drug trends nationwide, explain what is known about the causes behind these trends, and discuss their potential impact on the prevention field.

**1C: Engaging College Students in Delivering Evidence-Based Brief Motivational Interventions: Innovative Training Models, Benefits, and Challenges**

*M. Dolores Cimini, PhD, Senior Research Scientist, University at Albany, SUNY*

Research indicates that college students, when well-trained and supervised, can deliver evidence-based brief motivational interventions just as well, if not better, than trained professionals. This workshop will explore a number of innovative peer-to-peer training models derived from evidence-based brief motivational interventions, including peer navigation and peer-delivered Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) addressing alcohol and other drug misuse, gambling, and related risk behaviors. Challenges and potential risks associated with engaging peers in delivering evidence-based brief interventions, such as compromises to intervention fidelity, will be identified and explored. Benefits of engaging in evidence-based brief intervention-focused best practices within higher education settings, both to students receiving services and to peers delivering services, will be identified.

**1D: From Fragmentation to Integration: Insights from Four States on How to Embed Substance Use Prevention in School Behavioral Health**

*Elvira Elek, PhD, Senior Research Public Health Analyst, RTI International*

This session will describe the findings of case studies developed to understand and document the activities of 4 states to create integrated, school-based behavioral health frameworks that include (1) substance use prevention, (2) suicide prevention, and (3) mental health promotion in K–12 educational settings. The goal was to develop a robust understanding of these interconnected issues and their integration within school-based frameworks, particularly through MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) and a related framework, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

### **1E: Youth Online Gambling and Substance Use: Connections and Implications for Prevention**

*Carol Oliver, BA, MAT, Director of Training and Technical Assistance, SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Technical Assistance Center (SPTAC), Education Development Center, Inc.*

*Chuck Klevgaard, Senior Training and Technical Assistance Provider, SPTAC, Education Development Center, Inc.*

With the rapid expansion of online sports betting, communities are seeing increased online gambling among adolescents. Many of the same risk factors that contribute to youth substance use—such as access through friends and family and a low perception of harm—also apply to youth gambling. Research consistently shows a strong correlation between adolescent gambling and substance use. Understanding the intersection of these behaviors can strengthen prevention efforts. This session will examine the relationship between youth gambling (with a focus on youth online gambling) and substance use and explore how integrated prevention approaches can more effectively address both.

### **1F: Community Impact NC: Supporting Coalitions Through Workforce Development and Strategic Advising**

*Erin Jamieson Day, MPH, CPS, CEO, Community Impact NC*

With more than forty years of experience, Community Impact NC (CINC) supports community prevention coalitions to build their capacity to create change and determine their own futures. Currently working with over fifty of North Carolina's one hundred counties, CINC structures itself with the communities they serve in mind, valuing the unique strengths and qualities of each community. During this session, CINC will explain the staffing and financial structure that provides them the opportunity to support North Carolina community prevention coalitions at no cost to them.

### **1G: From Message to Movement: A Community-Driven Digital Prevention Model Promoting Alcohol-Free Youth Lifestyles**

*Israel Roman Martinez, Director, Coalicion Preventiva Lajena*

*Mayra Santiago, Coordinator, Coalicion Preventiva Lajena*

This presentation highlights an evidence-informed, community-driven prevention model implemented by a local coalition integrating the campaign “Disfruta sin Alcohol” with a digital communication strategy through the podcast “Surcando Voces.” The initiative focuses on promoting alcohol-free lifestyles among youth by combining prevention

education, relevant messaging, and technology-based outreach. This session will examine how community coalitions can effectively integrate technology into prevention strategies, particularly in reaching youth populations in a rapidly evolving digital landscape. Participants will gain practical tools to design, implement, and evaluate media-based prevention initiatives, as well as strategies to align digital engagement with broader prevention goals.

**1:30pm – 2:00pm ET**

**Transition/Exhibit Hall Break**

**2:00pm – 3:00pm ET**

**Workshop Session II**

**2A: Strengthening Prevention Practice: Digital Tools and Integrated Approaches to Address Underage Drinking**

*Gisela Rots, MSc, CPS, Director, SPTAC, Education Development Center, Inc.*

*Maria Valenti, Epidemiology Technical Assistance Lead, SPTAC, Education Development Center, Inc.*

Several recent evidence-based programs and intervention models have emerged or evolved in the past few years, reflecting advances in behavioral science, digital health, and family-centered prevention. Rather than entirely new “standalone” programs, many of the most promising approaches are enhanced, hybrid models that build on proven frameworks while incorporating technology, real-time engagement, and focused delivery. This session will focus on how recent evidence-based programs in underage drinking prevention have been adapted to share a few defining features: they are digitally supported, targeted rather than purely universal, integrated across settings (family, school, healthcare), and designed for ongoing engagement rather than one-time delivery. These innovations reflect a broader shift toward more adaptive, personalized, and scalable prevention systems.

**2B: Substance Use First Aid: The First Community-Based, Adult-Focused Secondary Substance Use Prevention Program**

*JK Costello, MD, MPH, Founder, Substance Use First Aid*

Substance Use First Aid (SUFA) is a community-based, adult-focused secondary substance use prevention program designed to equip non-clinical community members with the knowledge, language, and practical skills to recognize and respond to unhealthy substance use before it escalates into a substance use disorder. Presented by JK Costello, MD, MPH, this session addresses a critical gap in the traditional addiction services landscape: the absence of accessible tools for early action by everyday people.

**2C: Saving Lives Through Policy and Science: Puerto Rico’s Integrated Model for Opioid Overdose Prevention and Surveillance**

*Victor M. Serrano-Roman, EdD, Project Director, Administración de Servicios de Salud Mental y Contra la Adicción*

Puerto Rico has faced a complex and evolving opioid crisis shaped by social determinants of health, shifting illicit drug supply dynamics, and public health system challenges. This session will highlight a comprehensive, data-driven prevention framework that bridges science and practice.

**2D: From Data to Systems Change: Integrating Positive Community Norms into Policy, Schools, and Community Prevention**

*Jason McCoy, MPH, Positive Community Norms Coordinator, Clay County, Minnesota Public Health*

This session demonstrates how Positive Community Norms (PCN) can be operationalized beyond messaging campaigns to drive measurable change across prevention systems. Drawing on implementation across rural Minnesota communities, participants will explore how PCN was integrated into school environments, coalition strategies, and local policy efforts to reduce youth substance use. Participants will leave with a practical framework for integrating PCN into broader prevention systems, aligning data, communication, and policy strategies to support long-term community change.

**2E: Drug Endangered Children: Often the Forgotten Ones**

*Nikki Romer, LMSW, Director of Training and Alliance Development, National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children*  
*Carrie Jensen, Director of Operations, National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children*

This session will help participants understand who drug endangered children are, along with the risks and long-term impacts associated with parental and caregiver substance misuse and drug-related activity. Presenters will share the importance of early identification and intervention, as well as opportunities to recognize and respond to these children across a variety of disciplines and settings.

**2F: Building the Data Story: Addressing Emerging Issues Through Strategic Data Collection & Communication**

*Paige Carter, Senior Research Technician, Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Drug Misuse Prevention & Recovery, The Ohio State University*

*James Lange, PhD, Executive Director, Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Drug Misuse Prevention & Recovery, The Ohio State University*

Effective data communication starts long before a slide deck is built. It begins with understanding the problem, identifying what data already exist, and thoughtfully filling gaps to tell a compelling story. This session provides a practical, step by step framework for gathering, interpreting, and communicating data to support prevention, advocacy, and decision-making on campus, using traffic safety as a central case study.

**2G: From Science to Systems: Advancing Youth Gambling Prevention in Schools**

*Natalie Alexander, Community Prevention Manager, Problem Gambling Network of Ohio*  
*Kelly Haddow, Community Impact Coordinator, Problem Gambling Network of Ohio*

Youth gambling is an emerging and often underrecognized issue within school communities, shaped by evolving digital environments and shifting social norms. As exposure through gaming, media, and online platforms increases, prevention professionals must expand traditional substance use prevention efforts to address this growing risk. This

session is grounded in prevention science and reflects core elements of the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF), including the use of data to understand need, attention to shared risk and protective factors, and integration into existing prevention systems.

**3:00pm – 3:30pm ET**

**Transition/Exhibit Hall Break**

**3:30pm – 4:30pm ET**

**Workshop Session III**

**3A: Bridging Vision and Practice: A Collaborative Approach to Prevention Workforce Development in Washington State**

*Margaret Kuklinski, PhD, Director and Endowed Professor of Prevention, Social Development Research Group, School of Social Work, University of Washington*

*Brittany Cooper, PhD, Professor, Department of Human Development, Washington State University*

Effective substance use prevention depends on a skilled, well supported workforce and strong alignment across state systems, community based providers, and university partners with expertise in prevention and implementation science. As prevention approaches evolve to address complex and emerging substance use trends, workforce development efforts must also become more coordinated, strategic, and data informed. This session highlights a statewide collaboration between the University of Washington (UW), Washington State University (WSU), and the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) to design and implement a comprehensive Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Center focused on strengthening Washington's substance use prevention workforce.

**3B: CalHOPE Student Support: A multi-sector, multi-level partnered engagement strategy to build capacity for effective preventive interventions in the education sector**

*Valerie Shapiro, PhD, Associate Professor, Social Welfare and Public Health; Co-Director, Center for Prevention Research, University of California, Berkeley*

*Mai Xi Lee, Sacramento County Office of Education*

CalHOPE Student Support is an approach to building infrastructure for prevention in California, initiated in 2021. This presentation will review common challenges of implementing effective prevention practices at scale and engage the audience in sharing the challenges participants have faced. This presentation will discuss the findings from a scoping SEL literature review to identify potential levers of transformation and describe the strategies actually used in California over five years to build a robust prevention infrastructure. Finally, the presentation will share findings from the study of CalHOPE, illustrating the power of prevention that comes from multi-sector, multi-level engagement to adequately support and build capacity for effective preventive interventions.

**3C: From Data to Dialogue: Leveraging Conversational AI to Transform Community Needs Assessment in Substance Use Prevention**

*Nicole Augustine, CEO, RIZE Consultants*

*Sarah Harlow, Co-Director, New England PTTC*

Across the prevention field, communities are asked to design and implement needs assessments that inform strategy, funding, and impact. Yet many prevention professionals face persistent barriers. This session introduces an innovative, AI-supported needs assessment tool that leverages conversational technology to guide prevention professionals through the full lifecycle of assessment development. Participants will experience a live demonstration of the tool and explore how conversational AI can function as a practical “thinking partner” in prevention work. The session will also address critical considerations, including ethical use, limitations of AI, and the importance of maintaining human-centered evaluation practices.

### **3D: Building Stronger Systems: Assessing and Improving State Problem Gambling Infrastructure**

*Eden Griffin, PhD, Director, Omni Institute*

*T Schweimler, MA, Research Manager, Omni Institute*

As legalized gambling expands across the U.S., state leaders must build public and behavioral health responses to reduce harms from problem gambling. Delivering effective prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery services in a rapidly evolving landscape requires strong infrastructure, workforce capacity, partnerships, evidence-based programming, data collection, evaluation, and sustainability planning. To support this work, experts at Omni and EDC have developed an assessment tool introducing the Essential Elements of an Effective Problem Gambling Framework. Designed for state leaders overseeing publicly funded services, the presentation will outline the tool’s development, its application, and the key dimensions that define an effective problem gambling system.

### **3E: Respecting Our Elders in Prevention: Preventing Older Adults Prescription Drug Misuse Through Medication Safety Education and Social Connections**

*Ben Spooner, Project Director, Education Development Center, Inc.*

*Maria Valenti, Epidemiology Technical Assistance Lead, SPTAC, Education Development Center, Inc.*

Older adults are often overlooked in primary substance misuse prevention, despite elevated risk for prescription drug misuse due to inconsistent dosing, limited medication literacy, and misuse of medications to cope with life transitions. This session shares findings from the Massachusetts Strategic Prevention Framework for Prescription Drugs (SPF Rx) needs assessment, including how older adults were prioritized and the key risk and protective factors identified.

### **3F: Exploring Prevention Through a Social-Ecological Lens: Evidence-Based Strategies to Strengthen Protection**

*Clara McCurdy-Kirlis, MA, Associate Program Director & Training and TA Coordinator, Education Development Center, Inc.*

*Clare Neary, Project Coordinator, Rutgers University, Northeast and Caribbean Prevention Technology Transfer Center*

Preventing and reducing substance use requires more than a focus on individual behavior change; it demands a comprehensive understanding of how risk and protection are shaped across the environments in which people live, work, and connect. This interactive session presents an evidence-based and evidence-informed approach to prevention using the Social-Ecological Model (SEM), offering a practical framework for strengthening protective factors across individual, interpersonal, community, and societal domains.

**4:30pm – 4:45pm ET**

**Transition/Exhibit Hall Break**

**4:45pm – 5:45pm ET**

**Workshop Session IV**

**4A: From Burnout to Breakthrough: Building a Coalition Operating System That Actually Works**

*Dave Closson, CEO, DJC Solutions, LLC*

Coalitions are filled with passionate, committed people. But many still struggle with inconsistent engagement, unclear roles, and difficulty turning plans into action. The challenge isn't a lack of effort. It's a lack of systems. This session introduces the Coalition Operating System (COS), a practical framework designed to help prevention coalitions move from fragmented efforts to aligned, high-functioning systems. Participants will explore how to strengthen the core components that drive coalition effectiveness, including structure, leadership, meetings, data use, and accountability.

**4B: Youth Advocacy & Policy Change**

*Dana Mitchell, MPA, Prevention Specialist, Dover to Dover Youth*

*Dannielynn Somers, Youth (participant) Advocate, Dover to Dover Youth*

The focus of this workshop is to assist a community in preparing youth advocates to participate in policy change and community advocacy. This largely youth-taught workshop utilizes live and video demonstrations and audience participation to illustrate the Knowledge > Skills > Action model of how youth can be organized and empowered in a community to become leaders of environmental change; and explain the core best practices in successfully facilitating youth participation in policy change.

**4C: Innovating for Impact: Adapting evidence-based interventions for delivery in novel settings to reach families impacted by caregiver substance use disorder**

*Alison Sutter, LMSW, MPH, Senior Program Officer, Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts*

The Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts supported three innovative efforts to adapt, pilot, and evaluate EBIs for families impacted by OUD. The unifying goal of these projects is to deliver EBIs in settings where caregivers already receive SUD treatment and services and integrate new family-centered prevention supports into treatment and recovery care. Initiatives include: 1) Adapting an EBI for low-barrier delivery in opioid treatment programs (OTPs), 2) Collaborating with specialty courts and treatment programs to offer EBIs to justice-involved families, and 3) Providing

training and technical assistance to equip community-based organizations that serve OUD-impacted families to incorporate EBIs into their programming.

#### **4D: Community Voice and Connection: Advancing Protective Factors in Prevention**

*Scott Gagnon, Prevention Science Advisor, New Mexico Office of Substance Abuse & Prevention*

*Juan Suazo, MPH, MBA, Manager, New Mexico Office of Substance Abuse Prevention*

At the heart of any prevention strategic plan, is a focus on addressing the risk and protective factors that influence youth and young adult substance use. However, often we can see an imbalance where most of the focus is put on reducing risk factors, and not as much capacity put towards building protective factors. This presentation will showcase the New Mexico Office of Substance Abuse Prevention's statewide prevention program, which includes innovative approaches to build and elevate protective factors.

#### **4E: The Intersection of Substance Use Prevention and Other Health and Social Issues: Applications of the Communities That Care Framework**

*Jaclynn Sagers, Senior Community Prevention Strategist, Center for Communities That Care, Social Development Research Group, University of Washington*

Substance use prevention does not occur in isolation. Communities that succeed in reducing youth drug and alcohol use often experience corresponding improvements in mental health, violence prevention, school engagement, and family well-being. This session explores how the Communities That Care (CTC) framework provides an evidence-based structure for addressing the shared risk and protective factors underlying substance use and related health and social issues. Drawing on real-world community data and outcomes, the presentation illustrates how CTC helps cross-sector coalitions identify common causes, align resources, and implement tested interventions for lasting community impact.

#### **4F: What Does Innovation in Prevention Look Like in 2026?**

*LaShonda Williamson, PhD, Co-Director, South Southwest Prevention Technology Transfer Center*

*Rodney Wambeam, PhD, Director, Mountain Plains Prevention Technology Transfer Center*

Innovation in prevention in 2026 looks less like "new programs" and more like a fundamental shift in how prevention is designed, delivered, and measured. Prevention is increasingly shaped by new technology, co-designed with communities, and aligned with mental health and wellness to address root causes of substance misuse and related behavioral health challenges. This session highlights how prevention systems are leveraging technology and community-centered design to improve reach, relevance, and impact. Examples include the use of data dashboards that monitor fatal and nonfatal overdose trends for targeted community responses, wastewater testing, and community-level indicators to guide timely, targeted interventions.

5:45pm ET

Day 1 Closing

Day 2, Wednesday, September 30, 11:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. ET

11:00am – 11:10am ET

Welcome to Day 2

11:10am – 12:00pm ET

**Workshop Session V**

**5A: 360 Proof in Practice: Leveraging the Personalized Feedback Inventory to Implement Evidence-Informed High Risk Drinking Prevention**

*Whitney O'Regan, EdD, Senior Director, Prevention and Safety Initiatives, NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education*

High risk alcohol use prevention efforts often operate in silos, limiting their effectiveness across the full continuum of care. This workshop introduces 360 Proof, a comprehensive, evidence-informed prevention framework designed to support institutions in implementing coordinated, data-driven strategies that address high-risk alcohol use across populations and settings. Grounded in public health principles, 360 Proof integrates environmental strategies, social norms approaches, policy alignment, and individual-level interventions to reduce risk and strengthen protective factors.

**5B: Getting Them, Keeping Them: Recruitment and Retention Strategies That Work**

*Sandra Del Sesto, MEd, ACPS, Consultant*

One of the prevention field's greatest challenges is recruiting good staff and then retaining them in a competitive public health environment. In this workshop, participants will consider how to assess the strengths, skills and relevance of their current staff; develop an effective recruitment and onboarding strategy; and maintain competent and responsive staff. They will also share successful strategies they have used and add to their current repertoire of ways to enhance their work teams and provide more effective services to the communities they serve.

**5C: Can We Trust Our Data? What Youth Told Us About Survey Validity in Prevention**

*Sarah McCarty, Program Director, Thriving Youth Darien*

This session presents an evidence-informed, practice-based approach to examining youth perceptions of survey anonymity and their implications for prevention data quality. Drawing from a community-based survey of 6th–12th grade students measuring substance use behaviors and perceptions (including alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs), this session highlights how bringing data back to youth through real-time polling and structured peer discussion revealed critical gaps in trust. The session will explore how youth validation can be incorporated into

prevention systems to strengthen data credibility, improve interpretation, and support more effective decision-making.

**5D: Prevention Specialist Certification: An Important Piece of Mastering the Craft of Prevention**

*Marissa Carlson, MS, CPS, Board Member, IC&RC*

As an advancing field of professional service, substance misuse prevention is expanding through certification and concurrent initiatives with behavioral health. Despite the importance of certification, we know that real & perceived barriers can get in the way of prevention professionals pursuing their certification with confidence. This workshop will illuminate various aspects of the certification process and be a responsive environment in which participants can ask questions to further their understanding of the specific body of knowledge and skills needed to meet the requirements of this professional certification.

**5E: From Effort to Impact: Aligning Prevention Strategies with Data, Local Conditions, and Systems Change to Achieve Measurable Outcomes**

*Angela Da Re, President/CEO, Delta Prevention*

This session explore how prevention efforts can be strengthened to achieve impact across a range of community settings. Whether working within a formal coalition, a cross-sector workgroup, or a smaller prevention initiative, participants will examine how to move from fragmented efforts to coordinated, outcome-driven strategies. By the end of the session, participants will leave with a clear framework and practical tools to strengthen the connection between effort and impact, ensuring that prevention strategies lead to meaningful and sustained change at the population level.

**5F: Prevention with Purpose: Engaging Adults 45+ in Community Alcohol Safety through the PFS-PAM Initiative**

*Penny Seidenkranz, MAEd, Grant Coordinator, Employee and Family Resources*

Alcohol misuse doesn't stop at age 21—and for many adults over 45, it quietly increases with social routines, stress, and life transitions. Through the Partnerships for Success – Preventing Alcohol Misuse (PFS-PAM) grant, we set out to change that narrative in Iowa communities by focusing prevention where it's often overlooked—among adults in midlife and beyond. This session will share how our team built practical, community-level strategies that resonate with adults 45 and older. From partnering with local events and hospitality venues to creating conversations around moderation, our approach emphasized inclusion, awareness, and personal responsibility rather than restriction. We learned that prevention messaging works best when it connects to real life—health, family, and community pride.

**12:00pm – 12:15pm ET**

**Transition/Exhibit Hall Break**

12:15pm – 1:15pm ET

## **Workshop Session VI**

### **6A: Substance Use Prevention in the Workplace**

*CAPT Jennifer Fan, PharmD, JD, Public Health Advisor, CSAP, SAMHSA*  
*Brijet Burton, PMP, MS, MPP, PA-C, Social Science Analyst, CSAP, SAMHSA*  
*Sarah Potter, MPH, Public Health Advisor, CSAP, SAMHSA*

This session will provide an overview of substance use in the workplace along, an overview of the Federal Drug-Free Workplace Program and its use of drug testing, and resources that employers and employees can use to prevent substance use.

### **6B: Environmental Scans: Building Skills for Strategic Planning**

*Olivia Stuart, Associate, Carnevale Associates, LLC*  
*Josh Esrick, MPP, Chief of Training and Technical Assistance, Carnevale Associates, LLC*

Effective strategic planning is vital to ensuring the delivery of appropriate substance use prevention services. Processes and models, such as SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF), can guide strategic planning efforts. But the foundation of every effective strategic planning effort is relevant, reliable data. Environmental scans are data collection, analysis, and knowledge translation processes focused on better understanding the context in which prevention services operate. This presentation will provide an overview of environmental scans and their importance to prevention. It will identify and discuss the common types of environmental scans and the steps to completing them. Lastly, the presentation will explore how to incorporate environmental scan data into all five steps of the SPF and improve strategic planning.

### **6C: Beyond Compliance: Advancing Tobacco Prevention and Enforcement through Innovation, Capacity Building, and Community Engagement**

*Bryan Champagne, MS, Supervising Special Investigator / State Synar Program Coordinator, Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services*  
*Steve Cambron, State Synar Program Coordinator, Kentucky Department of Behavioral Health, Intellectual and Development Disabilities*

The State Synar Coordinators from Connecticut and Kentucky will share proven strategies for overcoming key challenges in tobacco prevention and effectively engaging retailers and local prevention coalitions. Both states will highlight initiatives to educate retailers and to empower communities to play a greater role in reducing retail access of tobacco and vape products to persons under the age of 21. Presenters will also demonstrate how technology can be leveraged to bridge gaps in tobacco prevention efforts.

### **6D: Supervising Prevention Specialists: Enhancing Professional and Administrative Skills**

*Julie Stevens, MPS, ACPS, ICPS, Consultant, Prevention Training Services*

As an advancing field of professional service, substance use prevention is expanding through levels of certification and through concurrent initiatives with behavioral health. As the certification process advances in states, jurisdictions and tribes, there is little to no training specifically for supervising prevention staff. The basic goals of supervision of the prevention specialist are to ensure the delivery of high quality interventions, create a positive work environment, and develop staff professional and administrative skills. This session will discuss characteristics of effective supervisors, the prevention supervisor job description, supervision tools and ethical issues for supervisors.

**6E: Delivering Evidence-informed Prevention for Families in Carceral Settings**

*Barbara Bennet, Director of Prevention Research, Evaluation, and Data, New York State Office of Addiction Services and Support*

*Ellen Tryon, Director, Division of Criminal Justice, New York State Office of Addiction Services and Support*

This session will present the effectiveness of state and local collaborations to in maximizing the impact of substance use/misuse prevention for parents for at-risk families and youth. Parenting Inside Out (PIO) is a multi-session face to face evidence-based substance use and misuse prevention program supporting justice involved parents in building positive family relationships despite the unique challenges of the criminal legal system. This sessions will describe the steps taking to deliver the PIO intervention is diverse carcel settings. NYS OASAS and state-funded prevention providers will present accomplishments and barriers from three years of planning, implementation, and evaluation of PIO in our most vulnerable communities.

**6F: Better Together: Rethinking State Resource Development Through Provider Collaboration**

*Anne Rogers, ME., ABD, CHES, Problem Gambling Prevention Coordinator, Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services*

*T Schweimler, MA, Research Manager, Omni Institute*

State-level problem gambling initiatives often fall short when the materials, campaigns, or tools developed at the state level do not fully resonate with the prevention programs expected to implement them. Since integrating problem gambling into Virginia's statewide prevention framework, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) has developed processes that meaningfully center local prevention voices in the design, development, and rollout of statewide strategies. This presentation will share lessons from three major Virginia initiatives where prevention staff from community services boards (CSBs) across the Commonwealth supported, facilitated, and piloted state-level resources.

**1:15pm – 1:45pm ET**

**Transition/Exhibit Hall Break**

1:45pm – 2:45pm ET

## **Workshop Session VII**

### **7A: Prevention Pitfalls: Recognizing and Avoiding Ineffective Substance Misuse Strategies**

*Kris Reed, MPH, CPS, Co-Director, Great Lakes PTTC*

In the world of substance misuse prevention, we often hear about what does work—research-backed strategies that make a real impact. But what about the methods that don't work? Surprisingly, many communities continue to use outdated, ineffective, prevention practices despite decades of research showing they fail to deliver. This presentation will explore the common approaches still in use, shedding light on why they don't work and the unintended consequences they can create. We'll also dive into practical strategies for prevention professionals to overcome the resistance they often face when challenging long-held beliefs and entrenched practices.

### **7B: Engaging Key Partners for Substance Use Evaluation: Enhancing Capacity for Effective, Responsive, and Sustainable Substance Use Prevention Work**

*Heather Terral, PhD, Research Associate, Washington State University, NW Prevention Technology Transfer Center*  
*Gitanjali Shrestha, Research Assistant Professor, Washington State University, NW Prevention Technology Transfer Center*

This interactive workshop will provide participants with the opportunity to design a key partner engagement plan to support evaluation brainstorming and planning. Over the course of three engaged learning activities, participants will move from concept to application. Attendees will be able to identify and map key partners to engage in the evaluation process, and explore and practice techniques for collaborative evaluation design, analysis, and interpretation.

### **7C: Youth Leading the Way: From Research to Prevention**

*Evelyn Balderas, MPH, Prevention Education Manager, Koreatown Youth and Community Center*  
*Lisbette Armenta, Prevention Education Coordinator, Koreatown Youth and Community Center*

Koreatown Youth and Community Center's MacArthur Park Community Initiative (MPCI) cultivates youth leadership and activism to promote a safer, cleaner, and more vibrant MacArthur Park community. This session highlights the accomplishments of youth leaders from MPCI's youth leadership program, MacArthur Park Protecting and Reviving Community, MYPARC, in addressing environmental concerns such as secondhand smoke and hazardous tobacco and cannabis waste in public spaces.

### **7D: Unleashing the Uncle Influence: The Protective Role of Extended Family**

*Logan Reid, LPS, MHW, Prevention Specialist, Reid Prevention & Education Services*

In the field of prevention we often focus on parents and the immediate family, for good reason: we know that parents are the first line of defense against risk factors that adolescents face. But parents are not the ONLY influence. Aunts and uncles may be an untapped resource communities can target. This presentation will do a deep dive into the

research around the influence that extended family can have on problem behaviors (like substance use), and positive behaviors (like resilience, academic success, and emotional well-being). Examples will be shared to show how aunts and uncles are creating opportunities to influence young people, and planning materials will be proposed for how communities can develop projects using this research.

**7E: Measuring and Monitoring Fidelity and Adaptation of Evidence-Based Community Prevention Programs: A Report by 2025 SAMHSA Prevention Fellows**

*Shavanne Lambert, MPH, Prevention Fellow, Prevention Technology Transfer Center - Pacific Southwest*

*Trevor McCane, Prevention Fellow, Prevention Technology Transfer Center - Pacific Southwest*

In 2025, a SAMHSA Prevention Fellows cohort conducted research on 19 widely used curricula and programs to gather information and insight into the following key areas: fidelity tools, guidance on adaptations, community-specific evaluations, and curriculum updates. In this presentation, the presenters will describe the current landscape of fidelity and adaptation of prevention curricula, summarize key insights from curriculum developers, and review practices for monitoring and measuring implementation fidelity and adaptation, as outlined in a guidance document.

**7F: The Intersection of Black Youth Suicide and Substance Use in Kentucky**

*John Broadus, PhD, Program Administrator-Strategic Prevention Framework, Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services*

*Brittany Watkins, PhD, Epidemiologist and Independent Contractor*

Black Youth Suicide rates have steadily increased in recent years, despite a decline in overall youth suicide rates. The Kentucky Black Youth Suicide Initiative workgroup has met to address this issue and prevent or reduce black youth suicide since 2024. The state has identified many risks and groups at increased risk of suicide and self-harm. One risk that has been identified is substance use. During this presentation, we will discuss the intersection of substance use and suicidality and what that looks like in Kentucky's youth.

**2:45pm – 3:15pm ET**

**Transition/Exhibit Hall Break**

**3:15pm – 4:15pm ET**

**Workshop Session VIII**

**8A: The Power in Us and the Ask for Help Tour: Building Resilience, Hope, and Connection Across Alaska's North Slope**

*Olivia Kim, Leal Health Educator, North Slope Borough Department of Health and Social Services - Prevention Unit*

*Rachel Aumavae, Prevention Program Manager, North Slope Borough Department of Health and Social Services - Prevention Unit*

In 2025, the North Slope Borough Health Department's Prevention Unit launched two interconnected initiatives: The Power in Us: Rooted in Cultural Resilience and Community Action Conference and the Ask for Help Tour. Together,

they created a culturally grounded continuum of prevention designed to strengthen community connection, reduce stigma around mental health, and build hope and healing across Alaska’s Arctic region. Launched in September 2025, the Ask for Help Tour carried forward the message, “It’s okay to ask for help” through school assemblies, workshops, and Community Resource Carnivals held across eight North Slope communities.

**8B: Communities Need to Make Choices: Products of the PTTC Data Informed Decision Workgroup that Support the Prevention Workforce and Drive Local Prevention Efforts**

*Rodney Wambeam, PhD, Director, Mountain Plains Prevention Technology Transfer Center*

This workshop, led by members of the SAMHSA funded Prevention Technology Transfer Center (PTTC) Data Informed Decision Workgroup, discusses two important products created over the past year. The first is a report detailing findings from nationwide needs assessments of the prevention workforce. Workgroup members conducted a meta-analysis of assessments from all ten PTTC Regions, and results can inform training and technical assistance in states, communities, territories, and jurisdictions across the country. The second is a set of rubrics guiding faithfulness to the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) model. These rubrics provide a roadmap for implementing the SPF process with fidelity to the underlying theory that guides prevention in states, communities, territories, and jurisdictions across the country.

**8C: Implementing Strategic and Action Plans for Prevention: Challenges and a Quality Improvement Approach**

*Jerry Schultz, PhD, Senior Researcher, Center for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas*

This session examines the use of fidelity checks as part of a structured, continuous quality improvement (CQI) approach to monitoring and strengthening the implementation of strategic and action plans. Drawing on experiences providing process evaluation support and TA to nearly 20 prevention collaboratives, the presentation describes how fidelity check processes were developed and applied to assess adherence not only to planned activities, but also to planning processes, decision-making structures, and implementation timelines. Fidelity checks are framed not as compliance audits, but as learning-focused tools that support reflection, guide intentional adaptations, and enhance the effectiveness of technical assistance and collaboration.

**8D: Guiding Good Choices (GGC), a Universal Prevention Program for Caregivers of 9–14-year-Old Youth**

*Dalene Beaulieu, MS, Director of Training and Family Programs, Social Development Research Group, University of Washington*

*Meghann Wolvert, Community Prevention Specialist, Guiding Good Choices Specialist, Social Development Research Group, University of Washington*

Guiding Good Choices (GGC) is an evidence-based universal prevention program for parents and caregivers of children ages 9-14 that reduces risk factors for substance use and other behavioral health concerns and enhances protective factors by teaching strategies and skills that promote bonding and enable clear guidelines. Presenters will describe

GGC—including its theoretical underpinnings, target audience, evidence base, outcomes, and recommendations for successful implementation. Participants will have an opportunity to discuss implementation feasibility for their local context and parent engagement tips offered by the team that they may want to employ in their own prevention efforts.

**8E: What's Love Got to Do With It? From Connection to Transformation: Applying the HPR Paradigm in Real-World Prevention**

*Carlton Hall, MHS, President/CEO, Carlton Hall Consulting*

This session challenges prevention professionals to rethink their work through the lens of the Health-Promoting Relationships (HPR) Paradigm, where connection is the catalyst for transformation. Drawing from decades of real-world experience and inspired by movements for social change, this session explores how authentic relationships, belief-building, and relational leadership can drive meaningful, lasting impact in communities.

**8F: Workforce as Prevention: New Mexico's Population-Level Approach to Youth Behavioral Health**

*Carmen Irving, PhD, Vice President, PAXIS Institute*

*Scott Gagnon, Prevention Science Advisor, New Mexico Office of Substance Abuse & Prevention*

This session explores the intersection of prevention science and statewide practice through the lens of New Mexico's initiative to scale evidence-based universal prevention. Participants will examine how the New Mexico Office of Substance Abuse and Prevention (OSAP), in partnership with PAXIS Institute, has been collaborating to bridge the gap between clinical research and community application by equipping a diverse youth-facing workforce—including educators, behavioral health professionals, and tribal partners—with a set of evidence-based trauma-informed practices.

**4:15pm – 4:30pm ET**

**Transition/ Exhibit Hall Break**

**4:30pm – 5:30pm ET**

**Keynote: Becoming a Changemaker by Leading with Design**

*Maria Giudice, Founder, Executive Leadership Coach, Co-author of Rise of the DEO and Changemakers*

In this inspiring talk, veteran design leader Maria Giudice explores how leaders can become changemakers who shape organizational culture, organizations, and the future. Drawing on more than 35 years of leadership experience and insights from interviews with dozens of leaders across industries, she shares practical lessons on leading change through empathy, listening, relationship-building, collaboration, and resilience. Attendees will learn how to navigate resistance, build trust, create shared vision, and persist through failure while using the unique strengths of design to drive meaningful impact. Ultimately, this talk is a call to action for leaders at every level to embrace their power to create positive change.

**5:30pm ET**

**Conference Closing**