

new
directions in
prevention
among american indian
and alaska native
communities

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American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research
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NATIONAL CENTER FOR AMERICAN INDIAN
AND ALASKA NATIVE MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH

This proceedings document is the fourth issuance within the Primary Prevention Publication Series. The purpose of this series is to disseminate and exchange information on primary prevention activities in the mental health field; stimulate the development of primary prevention projects in mental health, public health, and other human service facilities; encourage the training of mental health workers in aspects of primary prevention; and promote research on primary prevention issues. This series includes scientific monographs, conference proceedings, commissioned papers, and other materials, thereby meeting a need for information about primary prevention. Publications in this series will be issued as materials and manuscripts are developed. The views expressed in these publications are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the National Institute of Mental Health or the Department of Health and Human Services.

Previous issuances within the National Institute of Mental Health Primary Prevention Publication Series:

- (1) Primary Prevention: An Idea Whose Time Has Come
- (2) Mutual Help Groups: A Guide for Mental Health Workers
- (3) Preventive Intervention in Schizophrenia: Are We Ready?

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To my parents,

Barbara and Spero, Sr.

FOREWORD

The past five years have witnessed a growing concern with addressing the mental health needs of underserved and unserved populations, particularly minorities, women, and children. Efforts have proceeded to make mental health services more accessible and available for such special populations. The workshop proceedings reported in this monograph document the initial effort by the Office of Prevention, organized at NIMH in the Fall of 1979, to focus on prevention concerns related to special populations, in this instance American Indians and Alaska Natives.

This workshop emerged from an initial consultation between staff of the NIMH Office of Prevention and members of the National Center for American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research during the final day of calendar year 1980. Several options were discussed about developing prevention activities which were consistent with the missions of the organizational components involved and of sufficient priority from a prevention perspective among persons most knowledgeable about mental health issues in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. From the outset, the proposed workshop was a joint venture between two NIMH administrative components—the Center for Studies of Minority Group Mental Health within the Division of Special Mental Health Programs, and the Office of Prevention. Collaborative efforts included joint funding and program consultation.

The contents of this monograph are the product of the second research planning workshop collaboratively organized and sponsored by the NIMH Office of Prevention. A research planning workshop is a key initial step in the process of program planning and program development. Operationally, the research planning workshop mechanism calls for convening a group of about a dozen research scientists and related professionals for a two to two-and-one-half day period to discuss in depth a specific research problem or set of research issues. The agenda of each research planning workshop includes consideration of the following areas:

- (a) a review of the state-of-the-art of research knowledge with respect to the problem area on which the workshop is focusing,
- (b) identification of the gaps in research knowledge and promising areas for further research,

- (c) indication as to the readiness of the field to pursue preventive intervention research on that specific subject,
- (d) delineation of a prioritized research agenda for the support of both basic and preventive intervention research, and
- (e) preparation of a set of recommendations to NIMH and to other groups or organizations about research concerns related to the specific theme of the workshop.

This monograph represents one tangible outcome from the research planning workshop. The intent of the Office of Prevention is to produce a monograph from each research planning workshop in order to make the information generated at the workshop readily available to the field, and thereby promote knowledge transfer and information dissemination.

Finally, the workshop mechanism may be perceived as a “pipeline” for program development in the sense that where the experts indicate the readiness of the field for preventive interventions, budget planning may proceed to set aside funds and to invite applications in that specific area relevant to preventive intervention research.

The papers in this monograph and the accompanying discussion sections, as well as the recommendations, offer a comprehensive agenda for prevention research directed to American Indian and Alaska Native populations, as well as new, thoughtful approaches for research efforts directed to other special populations. The rapidly accumulating prevention research knowledge base is significantly enriched by the material contained in this monograph.

Stephen E. Goldston, Ed.D., M.S.P.H.
Director, Office of Prevention
National Institute of Mental Health
August 1982

Donais, Printing Department, Oregon Health Sciences University, were very gracious in dealing with a novice editor and took welcome interest in the quality of this document.

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Spero M. Manson

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