

Crosswalk of Suicide Prevention and Substance Abuse

The table contains common concepts and definitions used in the fields of substance abuse prevention/treatment and suicide prevention.

Concept	Suicide Prevention (SP)	Substance Abuse (SA)
Recovery	Recovery occurs after a person has experienced suicidal thoughts and/or attempts. Strengthening mental health and other protective factors can prevent future thoughts or attempts.	Recovery is more than an abstinence from alcohol and drugs; it's about building a full, meaningful, and productive life in the community. The ability to effectively manage and withstand triggering emotions is a cornerstone of SA recovery. May involve peer-support programs, professional counseling and/or medication.
Prevention	Effective prevention programs and policies stress the importance of wellness, resiliency, and protective factors; effective suicide response and intervention programs address risk factors, mental health and substance abuse services, and crisis response for those who are struggling with suicidal behaviors; and effective support programs are required for those who have been touched by suicide or suicidal behavior.	Prevention programs are two-fold in the SA field: preventing initiation of drug use and preventing relapse among former users. Universal prevention programs aim to avoid substance use at the population level, while indicated prevention programs are utilized to prevent relapse. Recovery is often an important part of prevention (e.g., regular attendance to AA promotes recovery while preventing relapse).
Risk Factors	Attributes which raise the risk of suicidal behaviors.	Most commonly refers to attributes which raise the risk of substance abuse. May also refer to the risk of substance dependence.
Protective Factors	Most commonly refers to attributes which protect an individual from a suicide attempt and mediate that person's risk.	Attributes which prevent the initiation of drug or alcohol consumption. Includes individual (e.g., cultural beliefs) and environmental (e.g., adequate employment) factors that protect against substance abuse/misuse.

SPRC Substance Abuse and Suicide Prevention Collaboration Continuum— 2013

Adapted from The Jed Foundation/SPRC's *Comprehensive Approach to Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Promotion* (2011) by Wheeler Clinic's Connecticut Center for Prevention, 2013, Wellness and Recovery's Connecticut Healthy Campus Initiative in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

Concept	Suicide Prevention (SP)	Substance Abuse (SA)
Harm Reduction	Actions taken to reduce the likelihood of death by suicide. Also referred to as means reduction (the removal of lethal means while a person is actively suicidal).	Actions/policies/programs aimed to reduce the economic and social consequences of drug use. Most often aimed at substance abuse, rather than dependence (e.g., needle-exchange programs).
Relapse	Signifies a return to a previous state-of-mind. Most commonly used to refer to mental health diagnoses (for example: a depressive episode relapse), but can also refer to renewed suicidal ideation after a period of remission.	Describes use of drugs/alcohol after a period of sobriety. May be used for both SA and SD.
Substance Abuse	A major known risk factor for suicidal behaviors.	Abuse denotes a maladaptive pattern of substance use manifested by recurrent and significant adverse consequences related to the repeated use of substances. Substance can refer to a drug of abuse, a medication, or a toxin. Typically involves psychosocial disruptions – trouble with family/friends/work/law enforcement.
Substance Dependence (i.e., Addiction)		The path to drug or alcohol addiction begins with the act of taking or using alcohol and/or other drugs. Over time, a person’s ability to choose not to take drugs is compromised. This in large part is a result of the effects of prolonged drug or alcohol use on brain functioning, and thus on behavior. Addiction, therefore, is characterized by compulsive, drug craving, seeking, and use that persists even in the face of negative consequences.”