

# Preventing Youth Risk Behaviours

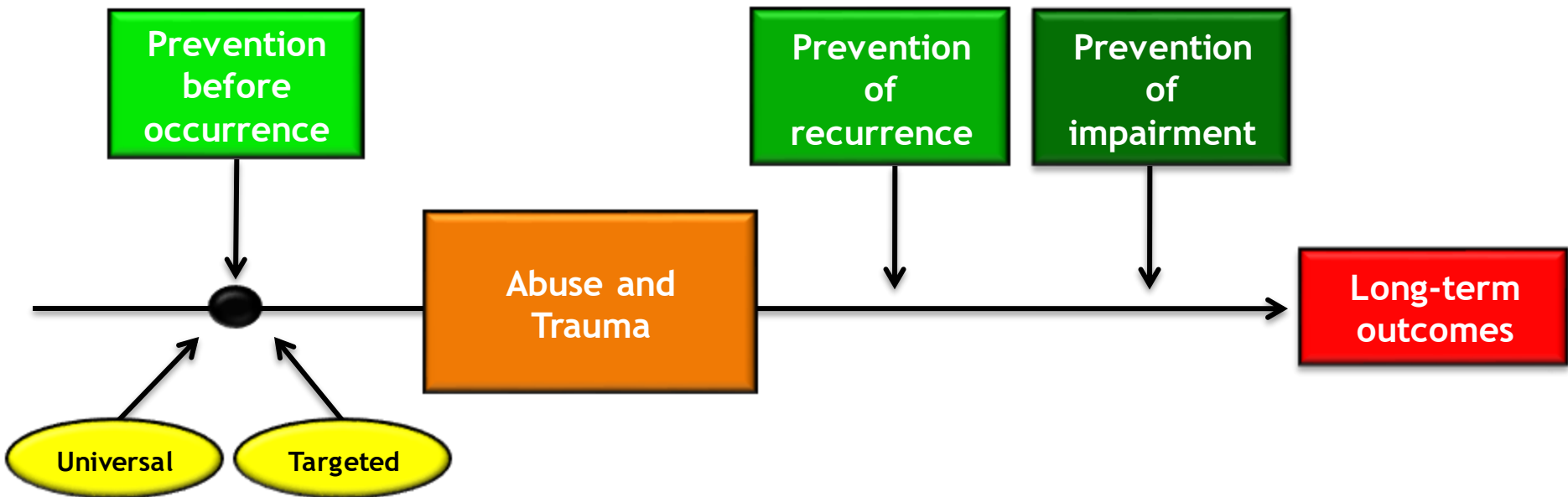
## The Synergy of University/Community Partnerships (featuring the Fourth R)

David Wolfe, Ph.D.

Susan Dale, B.Ed.

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# Prevention opportunities



MacMillan HL, Wathen CN, Barlow J, Fergusson DM, Leventhal JM, Taussig HN. (2009). Interventions to prevent child maltreatment and associated impairment. *The Lancet*. 2009;373:(9659):250-266.

# Why Prevention of Youth Risk Behaviours Should Be Universal

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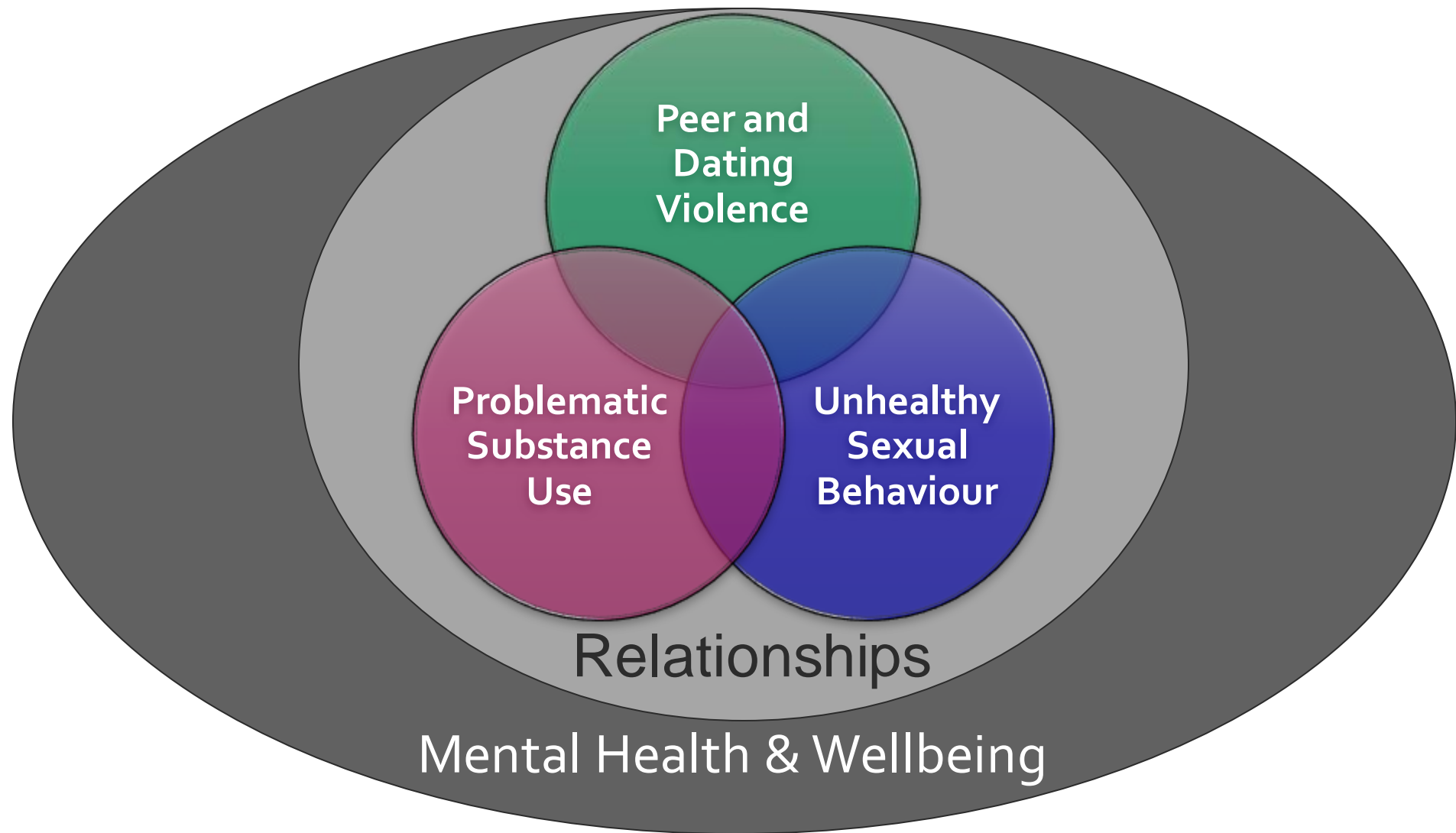
- Learning to relate starts early, is gender-based, and requires positive influences
- Relationships are dynamic and can be “adjusted” at many points along the life span
- Healthy relationships are one of the best protective factors known in preventing violence and abuse

# Early- to mid-adolescence: A key window of opportunity

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- Autonomy / transition / experimentation
- Pressure to conform
- Gender-role rigidity returns (with a vengeance)
- Patrolling the borders: Gay-baiting, homophobia, and peer violence
- Signaling intimacy: Confusing abuse as signs of love and caring

# The Adolescent Risk Triad: The Relationship Connection



# Principles of universal prevention

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- Proper dosage, timing, delivery, content, and setting
- All youths need:
  - education about *healthy, non-violent* relationships
  - Accurate information without a scare message
  - Personal values clarification, and limit/boundary setting to reduce risk behaviours

# What is the Fourth R?

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# What is the Fourth R?

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The Fourth R is a skills-focused, relationship-based program for Grades 7, 8 and 9 Health Education.



An evidence based approach promoting healthy youth relationships and preventing violence



# Ministry Alignment

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- Updated in 2015 to reflect the newest curriculum changes
- Meets the Ontario Ministry of Education expectations for HPE **Healthy Living** and **Living Skills**.
- Mental health and wellbeing are also integrated throughout all units of study.
- The Fourth R is able to provide curriculum resources relevant to all school boards in Ontario including:
  - \* English Public
  - \* English Catholic
  - \* French Public
  - \* French Catholic

# Fourth R Health Curricula

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- Consist of comprehensive teacher-friendly lesson plans
- Include learning strategies, activities, assessment tools and innovative methods for teaching healthy living concepts
- Integrate technology including the use of apps, websites and other media to engage students in the learning process

# Fourth R Health

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- Unit 1: Personal Safety & Injury Prevention
- Unit 2: Substance Use, Addictions & Related Behaviours
- Unit 3: Human Development & Sexual Health
- Unit 4: Healthy Eating

# Fourth R Skills

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- Active listening
- Reflective listening
- Assertive communication
- Delay, refusal, negotiation
- Support skills and help seeking
- Apologizing
- Ending a friendship/relationship

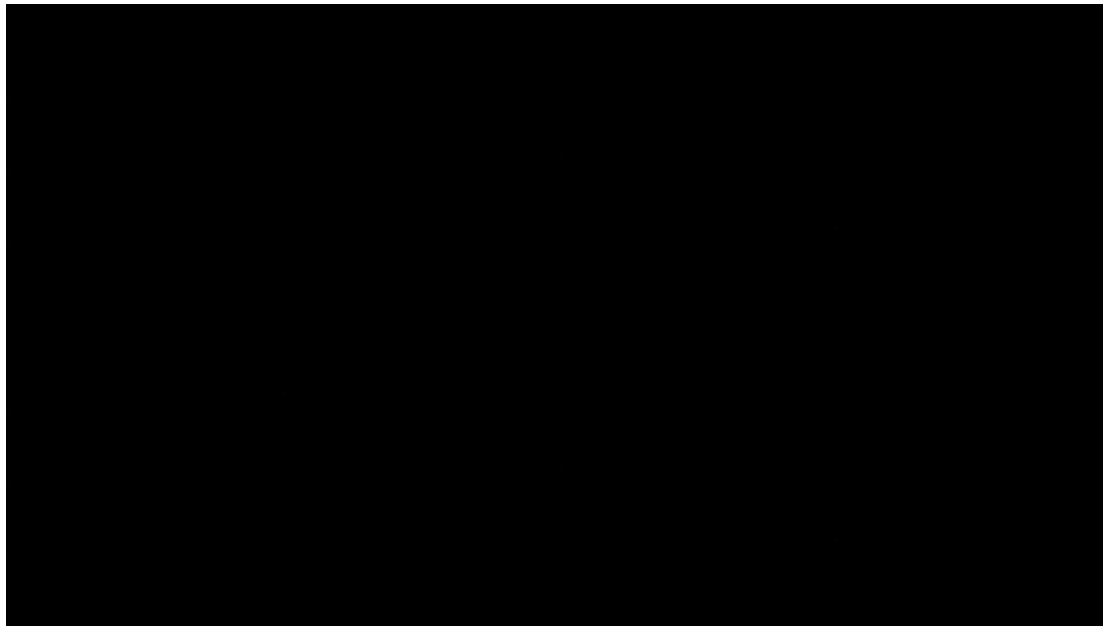


# Video Resources:

## Skills for Effective Relationships

### Part II - Delay, Refusal and Negotiation

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# Fourth R Successes and Challenges

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- **Strengths and successes:**

- Strong evidence-base – listed with numerous best practice registries
- Range of programs for ages and specific groups
- Uptake across the country

- **Challenges:**

- Maintaining implementation fidelity
- Waiting for updates to ministry guidelines

# Findings of Cost/Benefit Analysis

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- Based on reductions in dating violence and violent delinquency – cost savings of \$1778.73 per student
- Program cost differed based on geography and phase
  - NT adaptation and capacity building - \$126
  - NT implementation - \$38
  - AB implementation - \$18
  - TVDSB sustainability - \$5
- Tremendous return on investment – even most expensive case was 14:1 and 0.5% of annual education budget per student

# Summary

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- Fourth R has grown from a single grade 9 program to menu of options for different stakeholders.
  - Collaborative research and delivery has been key!
- Principles remain same, but increased attention to mental health and well-being among underserved youth (e.g., LGBT2Q+, Indigenous, Newcomers)
- Continue to grow the evidence-base (NIH RCT in Houston now underway)
- Shift from focusing on effectiveness to implementation and sustainability



# The Evolution of Safe Schools Programming

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# Integrated programming: Strengths and Challenges

Strengths	Challenges
Cost effective (delivered by teachers)	Programs need to be revised when ministry outcomes change
Programming can be linked to curriculum outcomes (and meet hours requirements!)	Individual educators vary in their interest and skill level for delivering program
Experience implementing program can create change among educators	Youth may not have same sense of transformative experience as they do with an off-site program
No added cost for involving all students	
Can be integrated into each age level to meet age needs and curriculum expectations	
Seen by educators as part of the core curriculum and not an 'add on'	

# Community partner programming: Strengths and Challenges

Strengths	Challenges
Access significant community expertise	More expensive
Creates bonds between community organizations and schools	Difficult to scale up
Increase student awareness of community supports	Lack of integration into curriculum makes sustainability an ongoing challenge
Viewed as something special and desirable to be part of	More difficult to get school/teacher approval if during instructional time
	Shifting board and ministry policies are making this increasingly difficult

# Combined approach

## Strengths

Accesses in-depth community knowledge, creates a strong school-community partnership, and is likely integrated into the core curriculum

## Challenges

Generally more expensive because it requires teacher training as well as sustainable funding for the community partners. It is also intensively collaborative, requiring significant time for planning and logistical coordination.

# Use of Youth Co-facilitators/Mentors

Strengths	Challenges
Peer models can provide powerful examples for other youth	Facilitators require significant training and supervision
Research has identified benefits	Can only accommodate a small number of youth – can lead to disappointment
Great opportunity for youth co-facilitators to develop leadership skills	Conflicts in scheduling around availability of youth
Youth find other youth more engaging	Potential for youth to be disillusioned if youth facilitator makes unhealthy choices

# Things to consider in forming Synergistic Partnerships



# The Fourth R in Canada

