



Promotion and Prevention: What do these new buzz words mean to me?

Promotion means doing what we can to improve one's mental health, just as we do certain things to improve our physical health.

Prevention means doing what we can to prevent certain mental disorders from developing, while keeping others from getting worse.

Western science as well as other ways of knowing show that:

- *Mental health is part of overall health.*
- *Mental health, like physical health, exists on a continuum.*
- *Good mental health can be promoted.*
- *Some mental health problems can be prevented.*
- *Some mental, emotional, or behavioral problems can be prevented from becoming worse.*

Resilience is an outcome that requires a set of circumstances supporting a child to bounce back from adversity. Some of the circumstances that support resilience and mental health promotion for children and youth include:

- *At least one supportive adult outside a child's family*
- *Places to live, learn and play that are safe, supportive, and have clear and appropriate rules and consequences*
- *Service providers that know how to identify and build on unique strengths, skills, and abilities of children and youth*
- *Neighborhoods that value their children and expect them to succeed*
- *Communities and schools that have appropriate and purposeful roles for their youth*
- *Communities with affordable housing*
- *Communities that respect and support the role of parenting*
- *Employers who offer living wages, health insurance, and positive relationships*
- *Adults who expect children and youth to do well*

Half of adults with mental illness experienced onset of that illness prior to age 14.ⁱ

Childhood IS the time to take action and build resilience

ⁱ National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. (2009). *Preventing Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders Among Young People: Progress and Possibilities*. Committee on Prevention of Mental Disorders and

Substance Abuse Among Children, Youth and Young Adults: Research Advances and Promising Interventions. Mary Ellen O'Connell, Thomas Boat, and Kenneth E. Warner, Editors. Board on Children, Youth, and Families., Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.