

Campus Mental Health and Suicide: The Big Picture



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“Nothing great has been & nothing great can be accomplished without passion” *G.W.F. Hegel*

“You must be the change you want to see in the world”
Mahatma Gandhi

“Much of the work of suicide prevention must occur at the community level, where human relationships breathe life into public policy” *David Satcher, M.D., Ph.D. Former Surgeon General of the United States*

❖ Depression

- ◆ Adolescence age of onset for many mental health and AOD problems
- ◆ Healthy Minds study reports 13.8% of undergraduates were depressed

❖ Anxiety

- ◆ NCHA Spring 2008 reported anxiety disorder ranked 6th on list of self reported health problems in past year

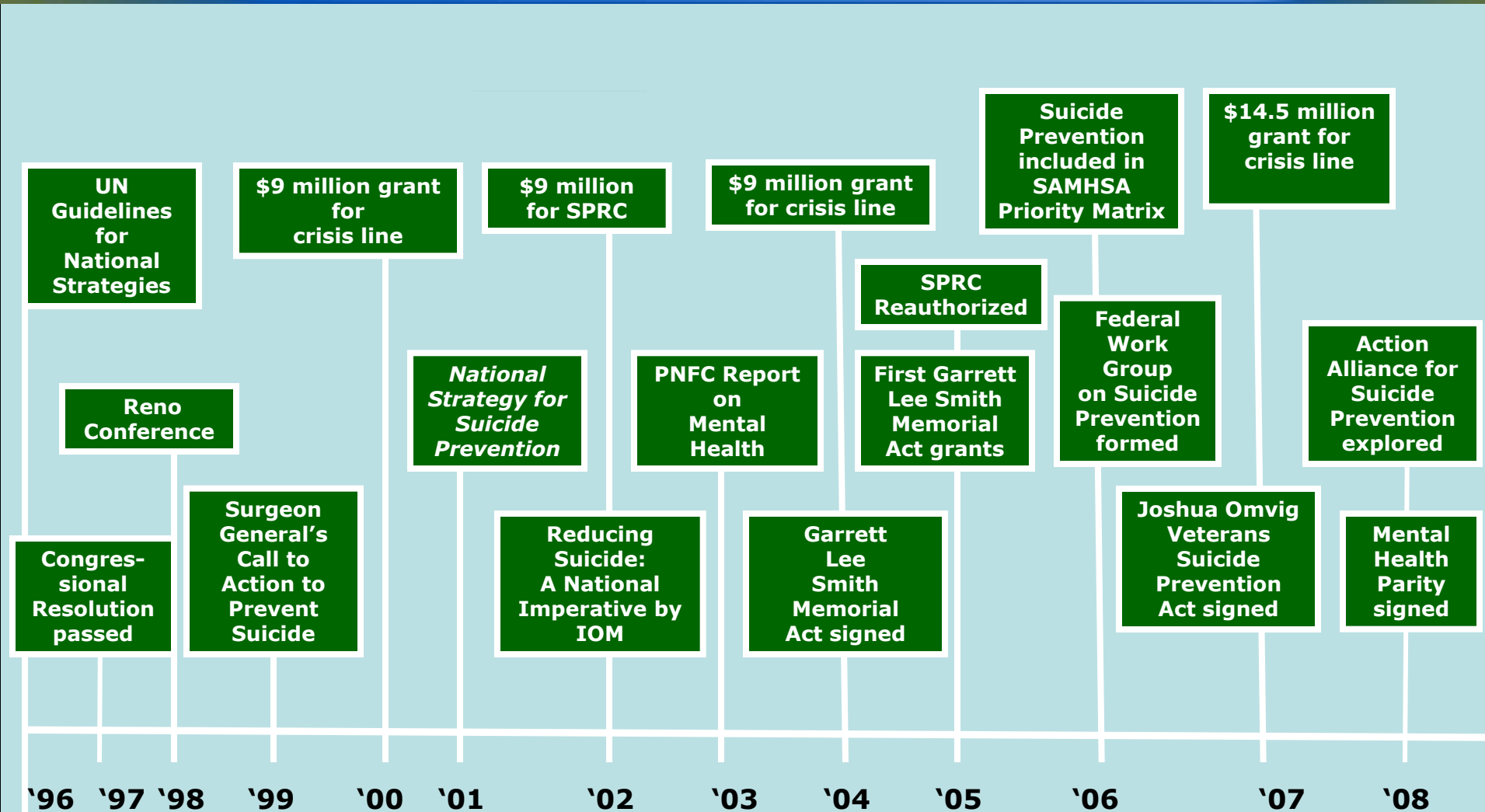
❖ Alcohol use

- ◆ 55% of students reported having 5 or more drinks in one sitting

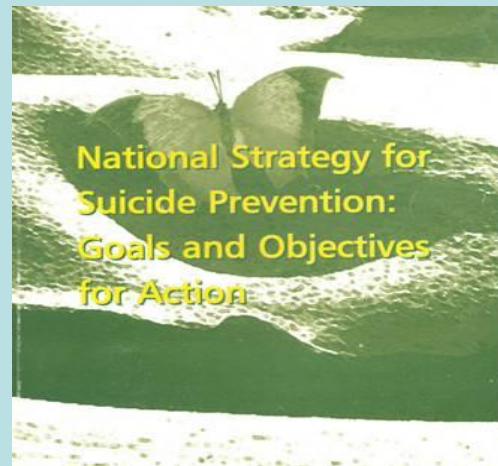
- ❖ **Attempts**
 - ◆ 1.3-1.9% report attempting suicide in 12 months prior to survey (ACHA/NCHA)
- ❖ **Plan**
 - ◆ Healthy Minds found 0.4% of all students had made a plan
- ❖ **Seriously considered attempting**
 - ◆ Drum et al found that nearly 18% of undergraduates had seriously considered attempting suicide in their lifetime
- ❖ **Suicide**
 - ◆ Big 10 university study found rate of suicide among college students to be 7.5/100,000 – ½ that of same-age peers who are not in college

- ◆ Untreated mental health problems
- ◆ Lack of health promotion
- ◆ AOD problems
- ◆ Isolation/loneliness
- ◆ Interpersonal violence
- ◆ Barriers to help-seeking
- ◆ Prior attempts
- ◆ Stigma
- ◆ Life skills deficits
- ◆ Access to potentially lethal means
- ◆ Fragmentation/lack of coordination

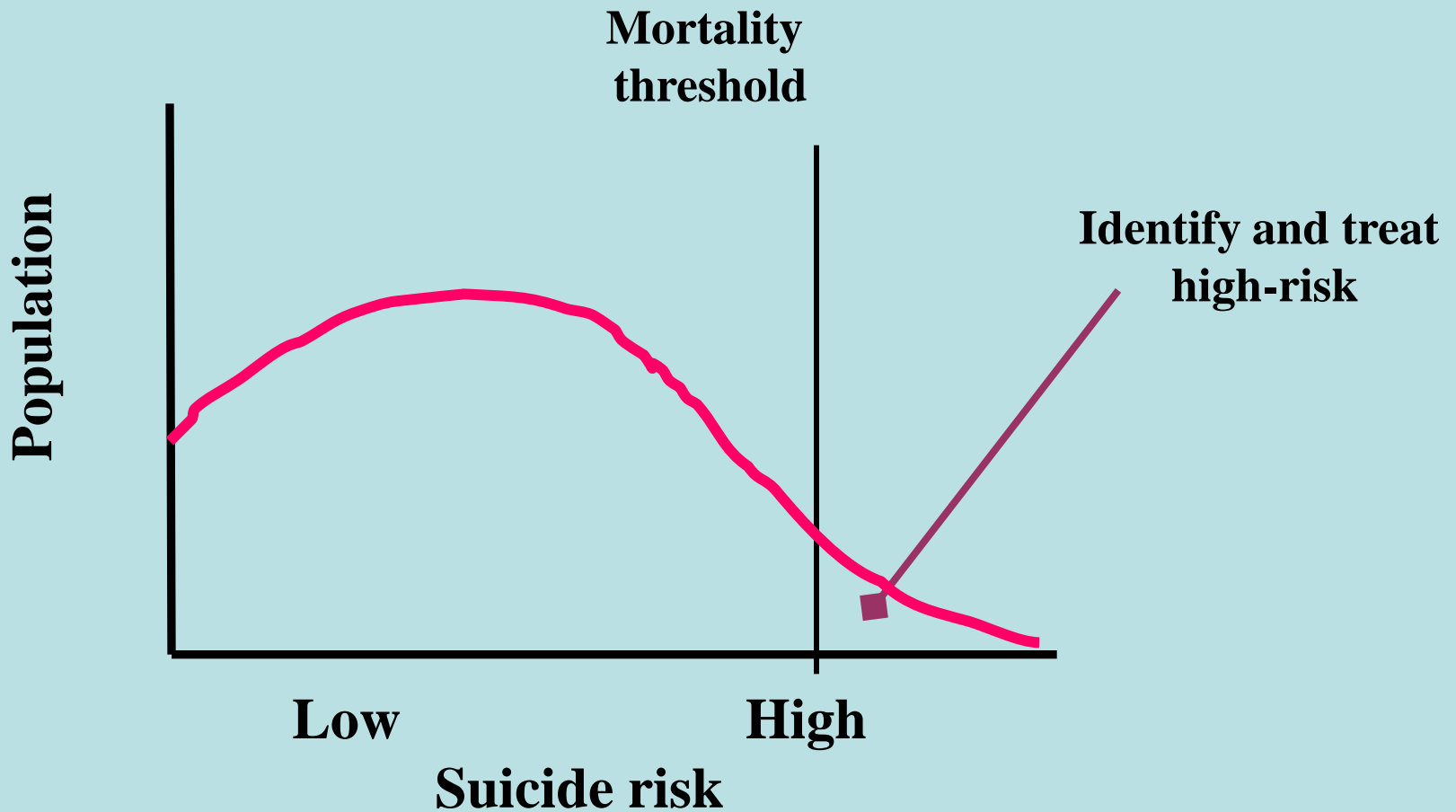
The National Response

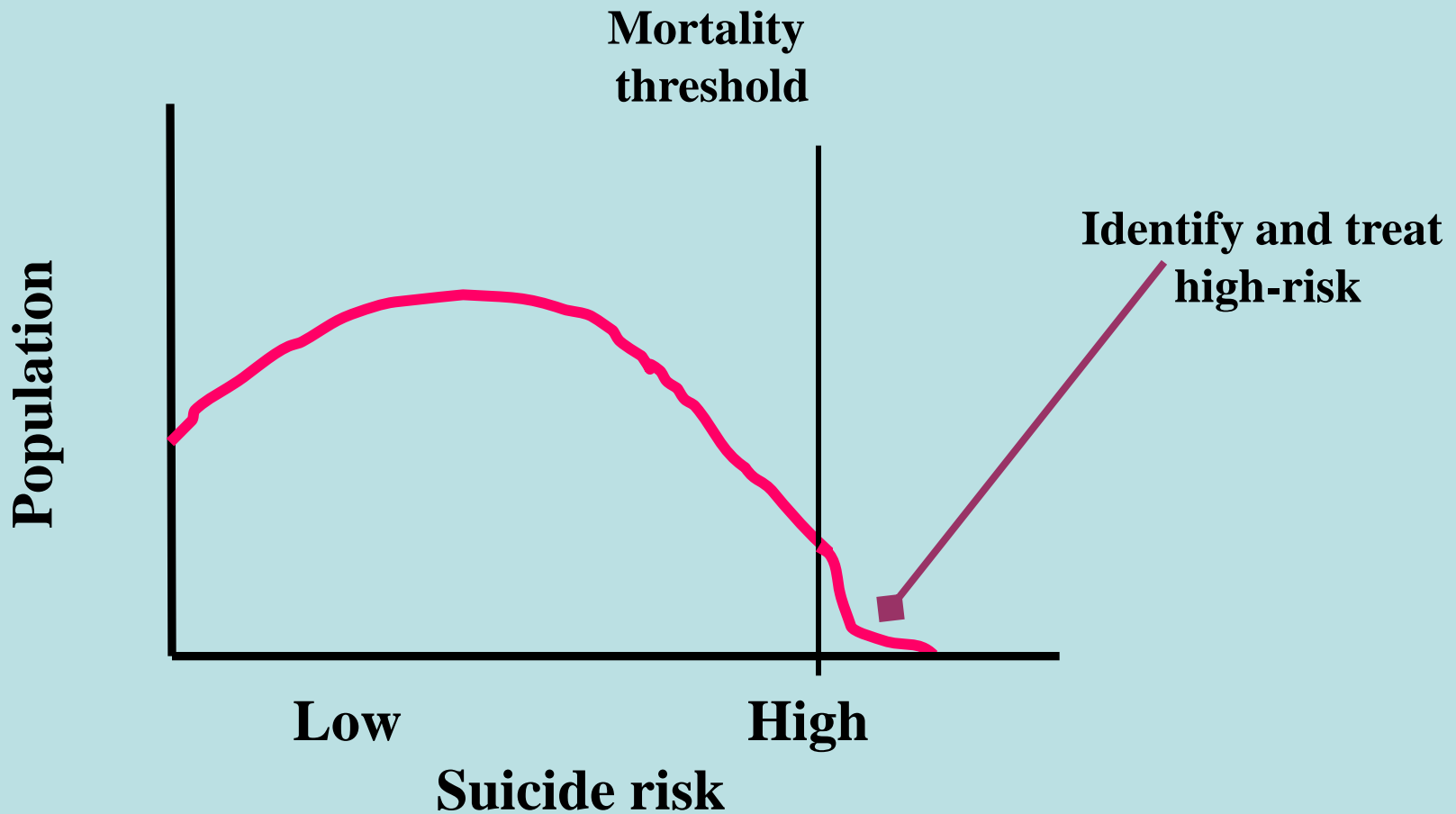


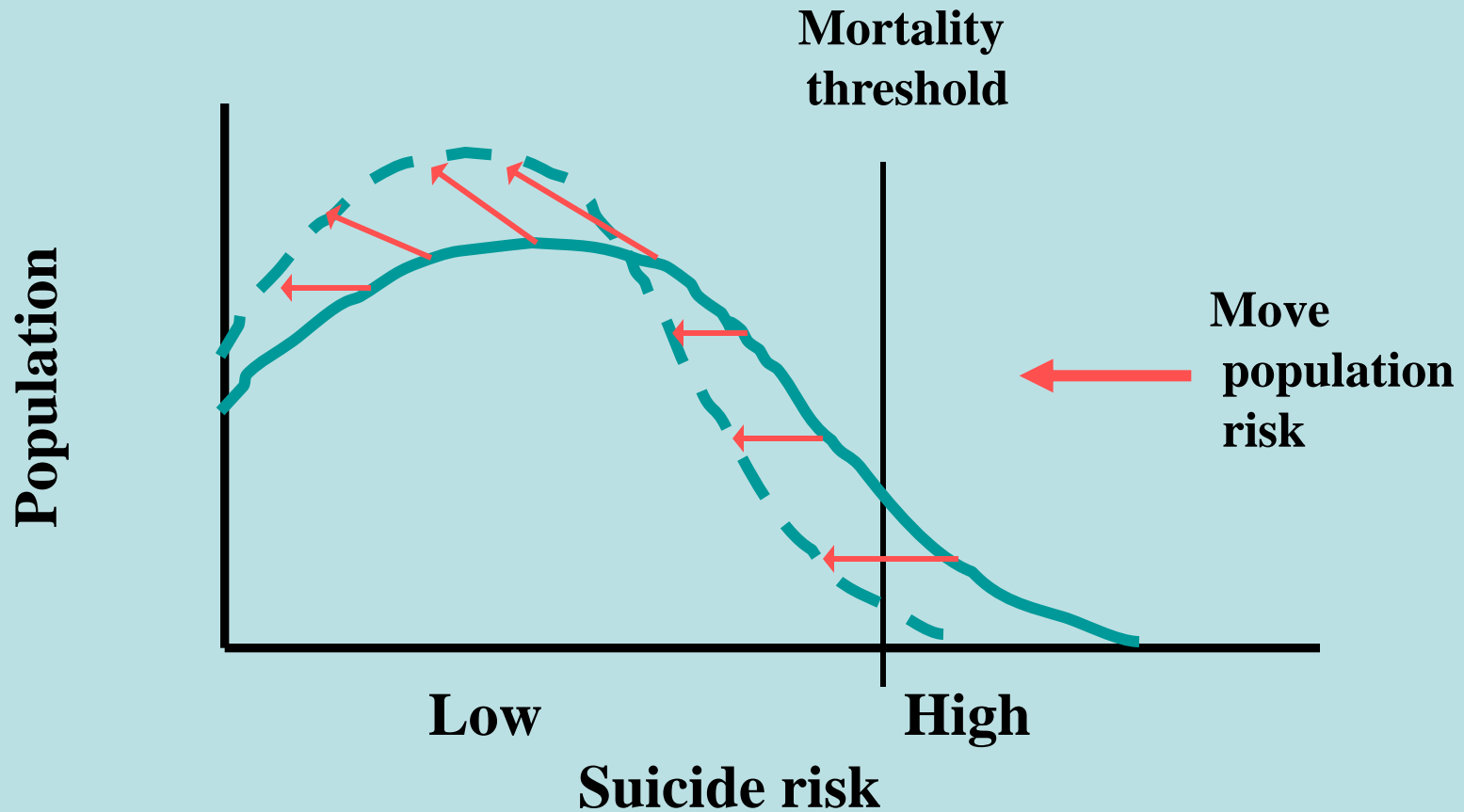
- ❖ **Objective 4.3 of the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Increase the proportion of colleges and universities with evidence-based programs designed to address serious young adult distress and prevent suicide.**



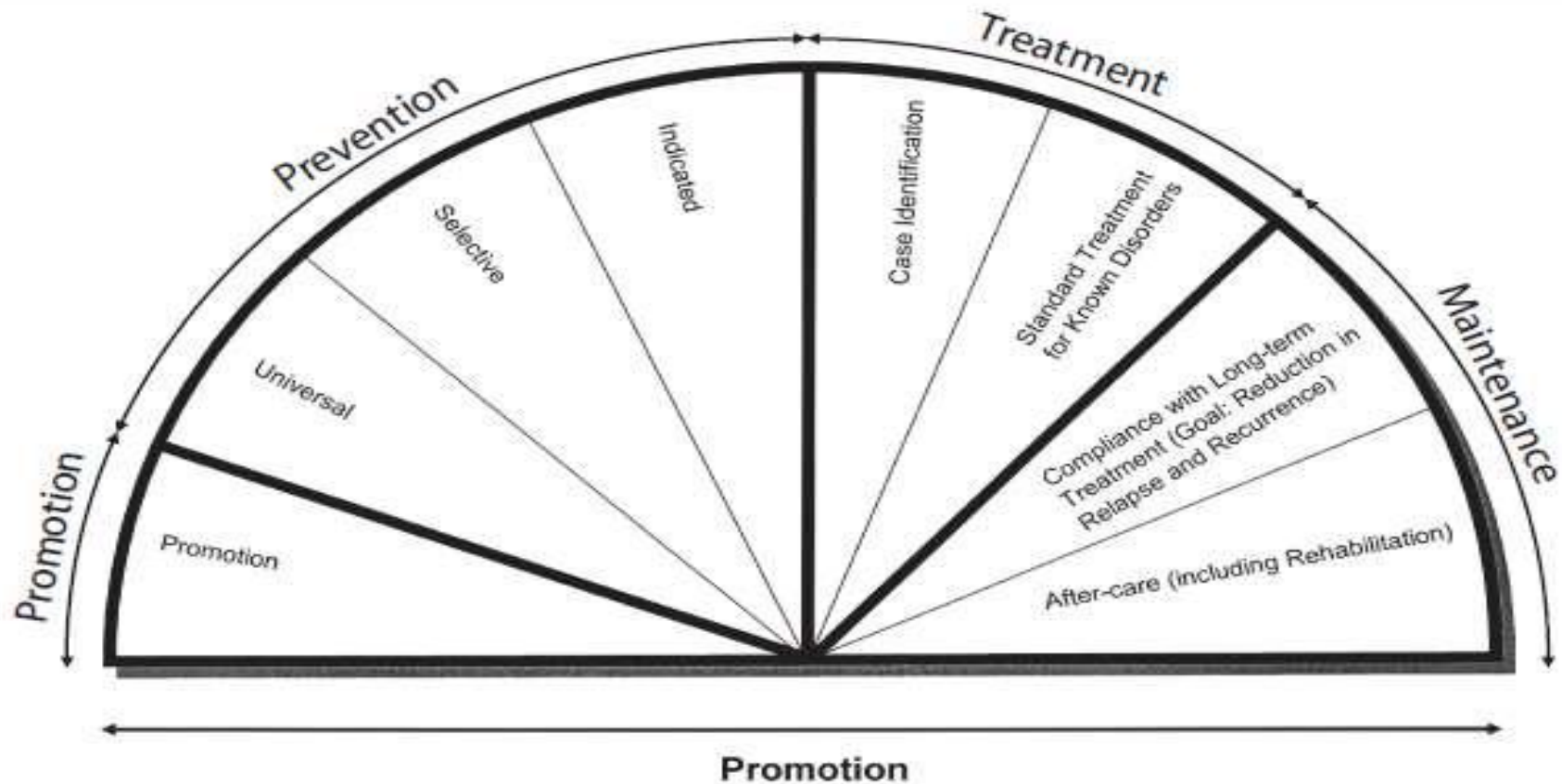
Focus Only on High-Risk?







- **Promoting health**
- **Enhancing health**
- **Primary prevention**
- **Early recognition and intervention**
- **Treatment**
- **Maintenance**
- **Postvention**



Source: Committee on Prevention of Mental Disorders and Substance Abuse Among Children, Youth, and Young Adults, 2009

Need to think on many levels



- **Problem is one of the entire campus and community**
- **Include prevention *and* treatment**
 - ◆ **Address problems at multiple levels**
 - ◆ **Think/plan strategically**
 - ◆ **Use best practices and tactics**



It takes a campus community to prevent suicide



Administration, student services, RA's, financial aid office, campus security, legal services, trustees, students, faculty, academic probation offices, campus counseling center staff, local community, student newspaper, grantees, student groups/clubs, health center staff, Greek life, athletic department

- ❖ **Know the data**
- ❖ **Know the players**
- ❖ **Have a strategy**
- ❖ **Build community capacity**
- ❖ **Think public health and not only mental health**
- ❖ **Engage the campus**
- ❖ **Engage policymakers**

- ❖ **Involve students**
- ❖ **Build partnerships**
- ❖ **Identify leaders**
- ❖ **Evaluate progress**
- ❖ **Share results**
- ❖ **Be willing to modify approach based on findings**
- ❖ **Promote living and learning**

- ❖ **Identifying leaders throughout the campus community**
- ❖ **Challenging stigma and discrimination**
- ❖ **Overcoming fear/generating interest**
- ❖ **Staying focused and on message**
- ❖ **Having adequate clinical/support capacity**
- ❖ **Having limited resources**

- ❖ **Lives tragically lost**
- ❖ **Families changed forever**
- ❖ **Communities affected in ways we haven't begun to understand**
- ❖ **Societies that will not benefit from the years of potential contributions of those who die by suicide**
- ❖ **A world where suicide accounts for 54% of violent deaths and nearly 1 million suicides occur annually – 1 person every 40 seconds**

- ❖ **Student well-being depends on our working as a community on our campuses, applying a public health approach as we do our work. If there is a community in place— join it. If there is no community – build one – and encourage others to join you.**



The Campus Mental Health Community Must Fly in Formation



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