

CONNECTIONS IN PREVENTION CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 29-30, 2026
PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN SPRINGFIELD HOTEL
701 E. ADAMS STREET | SPRINGFIELD, IL 62701



CONNECTIONS IN PREVENTION 
KNOWLEDGE, ACTION, IMPACT



CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Hosted By:
PREVENTION FIRST 

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

Overview

The Connections in Prevention Conference convenes the frontlines of prevention—where evidence, practice, policy, and lived experience meet. Drawing participants from across Illinois and the country, the conference features 40+ dynamic workshops highlighting prevention best practices, innovative service delivery, and real-world strategies responsive to today's social and behavioral health challenges.

With an audience of approximately 300, this CEU-credited event brings together prevention professionals, social workers, counselors, educators, community leaders, thought leaders, and young people. The conference is intentionally anchored in a racial and health equity lens, ensuring prevention work is examined through culturally responsive, inclusive, and systems-aware approaches.



Dates & Times

October 29 (8:00 – 5:00 pm) and October 30 (8:00 am – Noon)

Focus Areas

- **Prevention Across the Full Continuum of Care:** Explore how prevention integrates with early intervention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery—helping professionals better align their work within a coordinated, system-wide approach.
- **Collaboration That Leads to Action:** Engage in intentional networking designed to foster partnerships, cross-sector learning, and collaborative problem-solving that extend well beyond the conference.
- **Innovative Strategies for a Changing Prevention Landscape:** Stay ahead of emerging trends, technologies, and dynamics shaping prevention work, and discover innovative approaches that help professionals adapt, respond, and lead in evolving environments.
- **Outcome-Driven, CEU-Accredited Learning:** Gain practical, CEU-eligible training grounded in real-world prevention challenges, equipping participants with immediately applicable tools and strategies that strengthen daily practice and long-term impact.

ABOUT THE HOST

Founded in 1980, Prevention First has a mission to equip communities with resources and support to build pathways that prevent substance misuse and promote safety and lasting well-being for all through training, education, and partnerships. Serving the entire state of Illinois, Prevention First is headquartered in Springfield with a training and resource center in Chicago.

PRIOR YEAR WORKSHOPS

Our conference workshops for 2026 will cover topics and information comparable to those in prior years, as summarized below:

Empowering Adolescent Perspectives: Safer Substance Use Strategies

This workshop will explore the rationale and impact of safer substance use strategies with adolescents. Attendees will learn how to engage teens who are experimenting with or regularly using substances to decrease high risk substance use behaviors. Attendees will walk away with knowledge and skills to apply safer use strategies with consideration of developmental, cultural, and ethical contexts.

Weaving it All Together: Integrating Prevention Across the Continuum

Discover how one agency is strengthening the substance use continuum of care by embedding prevention from early intervention through long-term recovery. This interactive workshop highlights grant-funded initiatives spanning school-based prevention, Drug-Free Communities efforts, opioid settlement-supported harm reduction, and DOPP projects. Learn how Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care and the Strategic Prevention Framework drive coordinated, system-level change.

Relevant, Relatable, Responsible: How You Can Be a Trusted Adult in Action

This workshop is for those who work with youth directly. Backed by data, it is no surprise that youth do not feel like they have adults they can turn to. You may be familiar with the terminology or concept of a “trusted adult”, however, this workshop will challenge you to go beyond the blogs and webinars. No matter your age or your job history, the world our youth live in is ever changing. We will also examine key youth engagement strategies

From Scan to Action: Insights and Strategies from a Suburban Community Assessment

This workshop is designed for professionals who work directly with youth. Data show many young people do not feel they have adults they can turn to. Moving beyond familiar “trusted adult” concepts, this session challenges surface-level guidance and explores practical strategies for staying relevant amid changing youth culture, including current topics, trends, memes, and social media shaping connection.

Jellybeans and Chocolate Chip Cookies: Engaging Youth on Substance Misuse Dangers

What do jellybeans and chocolate chip cookies have in common with opioids, fentanyl, and stimulants? This interactive session refreshes and deepens understanding of opioids, fentanyl, and stimulants—including caffeine, sugar, supplements, and illicit drugs—and their impact on youth. Participants review data, trends, and practice activities to address misuse and reduce harm.

Breaking the Silence: Unveiling the Suicide Crisis in Chicago’s Black Community

In this workshop, attendees examine current suicide statistics in the Chicagoland area, explore trends affecting youth and gender, and confront community stigma. Film segments from *We Cry Your Tears: The Jamal Clay Story* and *While the Children Fade* anchor discussion. Participants engage in dialogue on lessons learned, mental health complexities, and culturally responsive strategies to address suicide and stigma in Black communities.

Adapting Substance Use Prevention for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students Using Universal Design

Mainstream education often excludes students with disabilities, including those who are Deaf or hard of hearing, and substance use prevention curricula are no exception. This session highlights Chicago’s state-funded SUPPD program, which addresses inequities by adapting evidence-based prevention curricula using Universal Design principles and Deaf community input, reducing risk and ensuring Deaf and hard of hearing youth equitably.

Understanding and Addressing the Rise of Bullying: Insights, Findings, and Applications

School bullying has returned to pre-pandemic levels, with increases reflected in national and Lake County trends. This workshop examines definitions, key types, and demographic patterns of bullying, and analyzes local data linking bullying with rising substance use among affected students. Participants gain practical strategies to integrate bullying prevention, coping skills, and substance use prevention into broader student wellness efforts.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Our Conference keynote speakers are national thought leaders who bring lived experience, systems expertise, and culturally grounded prevention practice.



Mark Sanders, LCSW, CADC is an international speaker and consultant in behavioral health whose presentations have reached thousands throughout the United States, Europe, Canada, West Indies, and Guam. He is the recipient of four lifetime achievement awards including the prestigious NAADAC Enlightenment Award. He was one of three finalists for the National Association for Addiction Professionals 50th Anniversary Legends Award. Mark is also the recipient of the Illinois Certification Board's Professional of the Year Award, The Illinois Certification Board, Jessica Hayes Lifetime Achievement Award and The Barbara Bacon Award for outstanding contributions to the social work profession as a Loyola University of Chicago alumni.



Kateri Coyhis, Mohican Nation, is the Executive Director of White Bison in Colorado Springs, CO. White Bison, Inc., is an American Indian non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to creating and sustaining a grassroots Wellbriety Movement that provides culturally based healing to the next seven generations of Indigenous People. Kateri serves the Wellbriety Movement by providing community presentations to bring awareness to the programs White Bison offers for individual, family, and community healing. She has been providing training, delivering a variety of presentations, and offering technical assistance for over 19 years. She is also a Board Member for Faces and Voices of Recovery. Kateri is co-author for a chapter in *Radical Psychology: Multicultural and Social Justice Decolonization Initiatives* (2018). Kateri has a Masters Degree in Public Administration from the University of Colorado



Dr. Lisa Martin is the Associate Vice President of the Sanctuary Institute and a licensed clinical psychologist with deep expertise in trauma-responsive, equity-centered systems of care. A seasoned strategist, trainer, and change leader, she guides organizations across sectors in building cultures of safety, accountability, and healing. Throughout her career, Dr. Martin has helped countless teams navigate complex trauma, foster resilient leadership, and translate equity principles into practice. At the Sanctuary Institute, she leads business operations, oversees model development and innovation, and drives initiatives that expand the Institute's reach and impact globally. Recognized for her engaging facilitation style and visionary approach, Dr. Martin is committed to transforming the way individuals and organizations respond to adversity, turning insight into sustainable, systemic change.



Stephen Hill—founder of Speak Sobriety, young person in recovery, bestselling author, recovery coach, and a defense attorney—is a renowned national speaker on substance use prevention & mental health with a truly inspiring comeback story that everyone must hear. But before Stephen had these accolades attached to his name, his reputation was filled with stigma—junky, dropout, felon, failure. A once promising student-athlete barely graduated high school, dropped out of numerous colleges, was arrested several times, struggled with substance use disorder for a decade, in and out of countless treatment programs, lost friends, and cost his family severe emotional and financial hardship. Today, Stephen lives a meaningful, healthy, sober life with his family and friends. Some of the personal experiences that Stephen shares are difficult for him to talk about, but he knows it's worth it if his story helps just one person every time he speaks.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Why Sponsor? Sponsoring Connections in Prevention invites your organization into a community shaping the future of prevention. Engage alongside professionals from across Illinois and the nation committed to evidence-based practice, meaningful collaboration, and real-world impact that continues beyond the conference.

PLATINUM | \$7,500

(Limited Opportunities Available)

- Promotion across all conference marketing channels.
- Business logo on attendee badges/lanyard.
- Business logo on conference app.
- Business logo on main ballroom table tents.
- Verbal recognition during conference.
- Exhibit table.
- Include materials in welcome bags.
- Opportunity to introduce keynote speakers.
- Four (4) complimentary conference registrations.
- Conference attendee information (after event).

GOLD | \$5,000

(Limited Opportunities Available)

- Promotion across all conference marketing channels.
- Business logo (digital) in the ballroom.
- Business logo on conference app.
- Business logo on main ballroom table tents.
- Verbal recognition during conference.
- Exhibit table.
- Include materials in welcome bags.
- Two (2) complimentary conference registrations.
- Conference attendee information (after event).

SILVER | \$3,000

(Limited Opportunities Available)

- Promotion across all event marketing channels.
- Sponsor recognition on signage.
- Include materials in welcome bags.
- One (1) complimentary conference registration.
- Conference attendee information (after event).

BRONZE | \$2,000

(Limited Opportunities Available)

- Promotion across all event marketing channels.
- Sponsor recognition on signage at registration.
- Include materials in welcome bags.

PARTNER | \$1,000

(Limited Opportunities Available)

- Listing of your business in the sponsorship program (with logo).

SCHOLARSHIP | \$ 400

(Unlimited Opportunities Available)

- Sponsor 1 or more attendees: Listing of your business in the sponsorship program (no logo).

Secure Your Sponsorship: To begin the sponsorship process, contact Chief Development Officer James Miletello at james.miletello@prevention.org. You can also visit https://prevention.org/2026_cip_conference.