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.*

*Childhood IS the time to take action and build resilience.*

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