



## Core Competencies for Prevention Researchers



The field of prevention science has undergone a dramatic expansion during the past decade, culminating in a proliferation of prevention science academic degree programs, specialized trainings and workshops, and new organizations and groups, both within the U.S. and throughout the world. In light of this, the 2021 Society for Prevention Research (SPR) Board of Directors commissioned the SPR Training Committee to form a Special Task Force to systematically review and update the [2011 Standards of Knowledge for the Science of Prevention](#) report and develop a dissemination plan for the updated report.

We are pleased to announce the release of this report, entitled [Core Competencies for Prevention Researchers](#). The goal of this

Society for Prevention Research  
<https://preventionresearch.org/>



Updated: 12/5/25

report is to help define prevention science; to identify the assumptions, principles, and key domains that fall within this definition; and to describe specific competencies that characterize each domain. The report highlights the fundamental roles of epidemiology and etiology of risk, promotive, and protective factors for health, behavior, and societal problems; it highlights advancements and innovations in basic and applied research, including the evaluation of preventive interventions; it addresses both the development and adaptation of these interventions; and it recognizes the growing importance of their dissemination and implementation with our focal populations. The report was informed through extensive interviews with prevention researchers, focus group discussions with prevention practitioners, interactive roundtable conversations with prevention research conference attendees in the U.S. and internationally, and reviews of prevention course syllabi and peer-reviewed literature.

Phillip W. Graham, President of the Society for Prevention Research, remarked that “we hope that this report can be used as a guide to articulate prevention science as a discipline, identify training needs for the field, and cultivate the next generation of prevention scientists. We consider this report as a fundamental part of the broader work of the SPR to ‘...advance scientific investigation into preventing social, physical, and mental health problems, translating that knowledge to promote well-being, and disseminating prevention science globally to benefit individuals, families, and communities through rigorous, equity-focused research and practice.’ The report is available [here](#) in an open-access format, and we encourage broad dissemination.”

Task force members include (in alphabetical order): Cady Berkel, Eric C. Brown (Co-chair), Qiyue Cai, Brittany Cooper (Co-chair), Erica Doering, J. Mark Eddy, Youngjo Im, Nathaniel Riggs, Zili Sloboda, and John W. Toumbourou. Support for the task force's work was provided by Tatiana Bustos, Konul Karimova, Victoria Wyant, and Aggie Rieger.

December 5, 2025