

Prevention Academy Frequently Asked Questions:

What are the requirements or qualifications for becoming a Prevention Specialist? Is prior experience needed?

While a specific professional degree is not required to become a Prevention Specialist, a strong interest in substance use prevention and recovery is highly recommended. To qualify, candidates must complete comprehensive Prevention Specialist Basic and Advanced Training programs, which are offered by Prevention Academy at Saint Joseph's University School of Education and Human Development. Additionally, all required background checks and clearances must be successfully completed prior to working within school communities.

Who do Prevention Specialists work with in schools?

Prevention Specialists work in schools in a variety of capacities. Their primary role is to provide prevention education, which includes working directly with students in classrooms, facilitating grade-level prevention education assemblies, student seminars, workshops, and retreats. Prevention Specialists typically engage with students from 7th through 12th grade, following guidelines established by the CDC and Human Development Benchmarks. Additionally, they collaborate with school faculty and staff, as well as parents and guardians, to create a comprehensive prevention program. In some cases, school districts may request prevention education for students in the later elementary years. As a client-focused organization, Prevention Academy is flexible and able to adapt to the unique scheduling and educational needs of each school district.

What's the schedule like?

The schedule for Prevention Specialists varies based on the unique needs and capacities of each school. As a school-based program, our scheduling is tailored to meet the specific requests and requirements of the school. Depending on the needs, the schedule may consist of either a full-day or half-day model. Typically, staff from Prevention Academy collaborate with school leadership and personnel to coordinate prevention programming that seamlessly fits into the students' regularly scheduled school day.

What schools are involved?

Since our inception in Delaware County for the 2024-2025 school year, we have facilitated prevention education across 8 districts and 26 schools throughout Delaware County, Pennsylvania. Public, charter, independent, and archdiocesan schools within the county are eligible to request programming.

What grades do Prevention Specialists expect to work with during the programming?

Prevention Academy primarily serves students in grades 7 through 12. However, as a client-focused organization, we are committed to meeting the needs of each school community. If a school requests programming for younger grades or post-12th grade classes, Prevention Academy is fully equipped to accommodate those requests.

What does the actual school program entail?

Each school has its own unique needs and schedules, which is why we offer a wide variety of programming tailored to fit. This may include grade-level assemblies, intensive student education workshops in classrooms (either period or block schedule), faculty meetings, morning or evening parent meetings, student-parent roundtables, workshops for athletic coaches, and peer-to-peer leadership seminars. The programming is designed to be flexible and adaptable to the specific requirements of each school.