



# Assessing Intervening Variables (i.e., R&P Factors and Underlying conditions)

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Presented by.....

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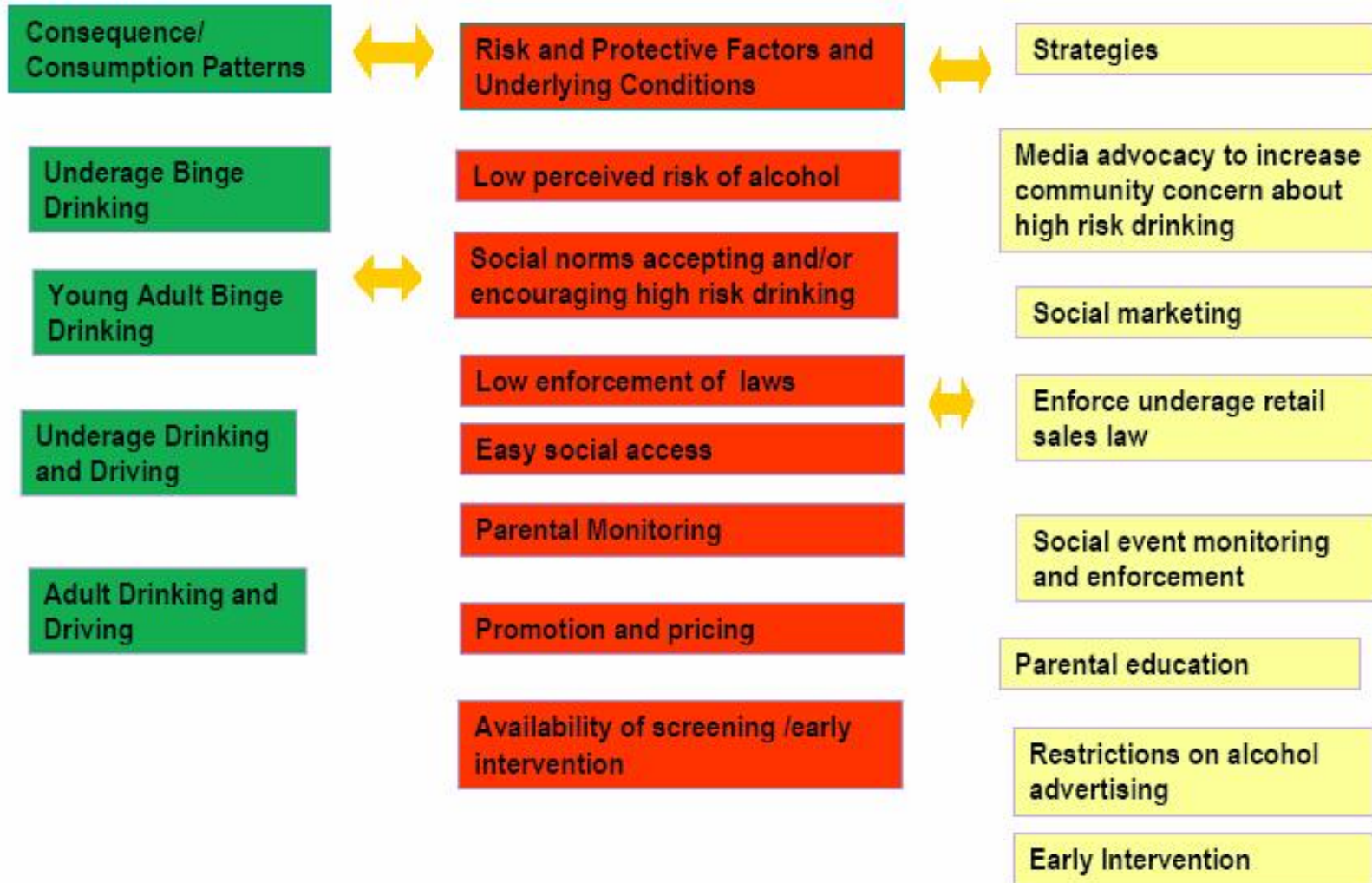
# Session Objectives

- Provide implementation grantees with a preview of upcoming guidance on topic
- Revisit Vermont SPF-SIG Logic Models and consider role of “contributing factors”
- Identify some relevant content areas for focus groups and town meetings

# Why Assess Intervening Variables?

- Identify those that are most problematic or relevant in your community (or at least confirm that candidate variables are operative in your community)
- Also, gain a better understanding of these variables and how they work (this may help inform intervention strategies)
- Finally, to be able to monitor progress in changing these variables over time

# High Risk Drinking Logic Model



# “Intervening Variable” Definition\*

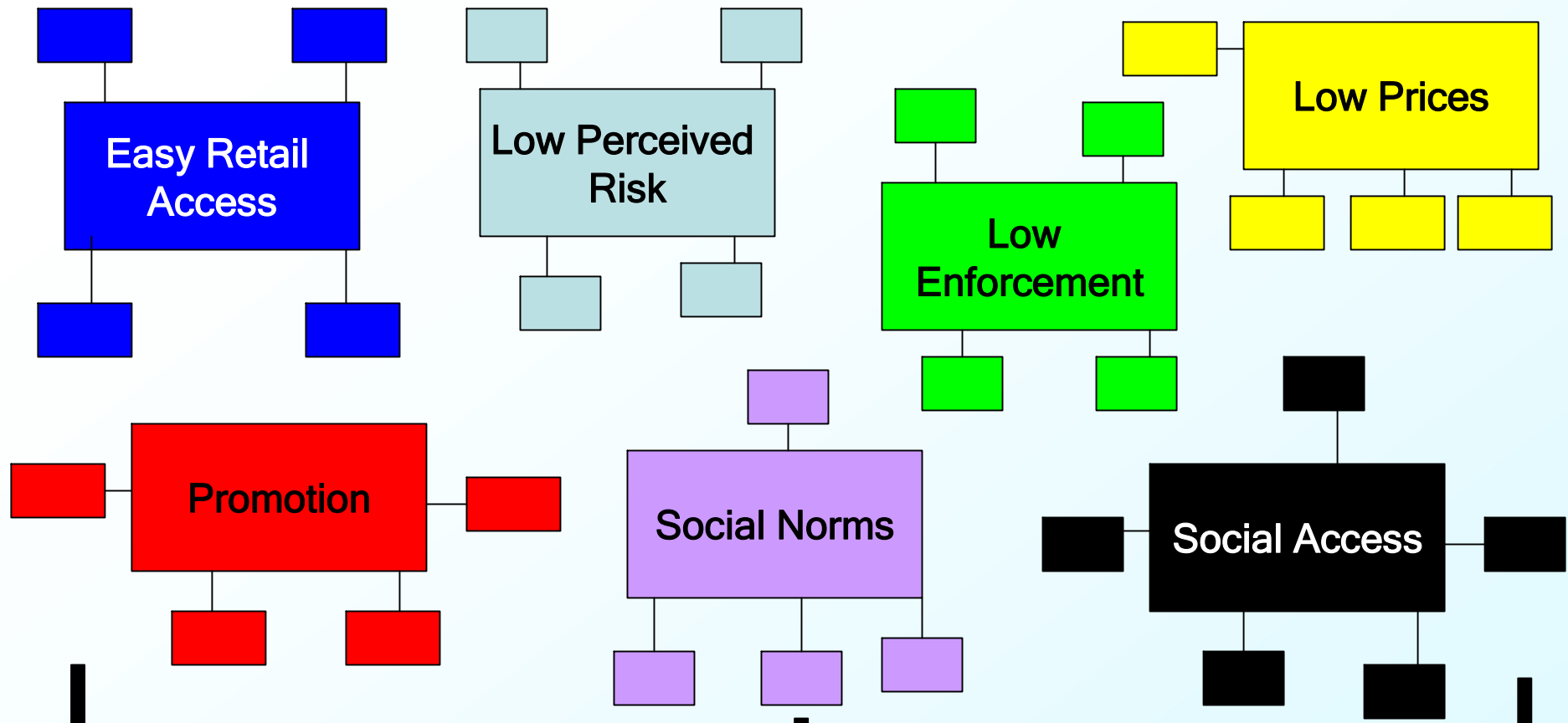
Intervening variable (aka causal factor; risk factor) – research-based constructs that have been identified as being strongly related to and influencing the occurrence and magnitude of substance use and related risk behaviors and their subsequent consequences. These variables are the proximal focus of prevention strategies, changes in which are then expected to effect consumption and consequences.

\*(from SPF Cross-Site Intervening Variable workgroup)

# “Contributing Factor” Definition\*

Contributing factor - specific dimensions or aspects of intervening/causal/risk factors

\*(from SPF Cross-Site Intervening Variable workgroup)



**Binge Drinking; Drinking and Driving**

**16-24 year olds involved in alcohol-related vehicle crashes and crash fatalities**

# Example Contributing Factors for “Low Perceived Risk”

- Lack of knowledge of health and safety consequences
- Perception that negative health and safety consequences are unlikely or won't happen to them (i.e., perceived invulnerability)
- Low perception of getting cited or arrested
- Low perception that they will be punished even if cited or arrested
- Lack of perceived parental enforcement of consequences (parents have few alcohol rules)

# Example Contributing Factors for “Low Enforcement of Laws”

- Lack of enforcement resources (shortage of officers, lack or knowledge/training for officers)
- Law enforcement practice (Inconsistent application of laws with minors/DUI's, low retail compliance checks, low number of saturation patrols, low arrest rate for DUI's)
- Judicial practice (no prosecution by DA, inconsistent application of legal consequences by courts, low mandatory sentencing, high dismissal rates by courts for DUI's)
- Lack of monitoring at social events (no enforcement at sporting events, social parties, graduations or with boaters on the lakes)

# Example Contributing Factors for “Easy (retail) Access to Alcohol”

- Id Issues (using fake id's, failure by retailers to check id's, using friends'/siblings' id)
- Non-compliance with regulations & ordinances (sales to minors, sales to intoxicated persons)
- Density (high density package sales locations, high density open container sales locations)
- Product placement (ease of shoplifting, alcohol placement in store, segregated sales)
- Product characteristics (Forty ounce containers, iced shots, alcopops, etc)

# Example Contributing Factors for “Easy (social) Access to Alcohol”

- Friends & Relatives provide alcohol to minors (parents provide alcohol to minors, older siblings or other relatives provide alcohol, of age college students provide for others, strangers buy)
- Parties provide unsupervised access to alcohol (parties on the lake, college parties)
- Community Celebrations (community festivals, graduations, weddings, acceptance of binge drinking at many social settings)
- Adults are unaware of consequences for providing alcohol to minors (unaware of laws prohibiting providing alcohol to minors, unaware of consequences & liability)

# Example Contributing Factors for “Social Norms”

- Family Acceptance (parents permit underage drinking, family inclusion of alcohol at events)
- Considered Right of Passage (Binge drinking, family & friends encourage a culture of drinking)
- Multigenerational Use (drinking is a normal pattern for parents, grandparents, uncles, etc., adults of all ages drink in public & create sense of acceptance)
- Youth Perceptions (perceived as a bonding activity, perceived as the norm, lack of alternative activities leads to drinking, excessive drunkenness is OK & even cool)

# Intervening Variable Assessment Data Sources and Tools

- Existing archival data sources (e.g., YRBS)
- Pending young adult survey
- Community forums / town meetings
- Focus groups (underage, young adults, parents, other groups as appropriate)
- Community scans (visits to alcohol outlets)
- Law enforcement interviews

# Matching Tools with IVs

	YRBS	Young adult survey	Comm forums	Focus groups	Comm scans	Law enforce interviews
Low perceived risk	√	√	√	√		
Social norms	√	√	√	√		
Low enforcement						√
Easy access	√	√	√	√	√	√
Parental monitoring			√	√		
Promotion and pricing					√	
Screening and early intervention						

# Goals for Using Tools

- Gauge presence and/or importance of candidate intervening variables
- Identify the specific contributing factors for each priority and intervening variable
- Learn as much as possible about how these contributing factors operate (e.g., where, when, how, and who?)
- Rate strength of each contributing factor



# Decision Points

- Does this approach to assessing intervening variables seem useful?
- Does this approach seem doable?

(Note: this approach very closely follows the SPF model.  
But there are alternative approaches).

# Next Steps

- Develop guides for focus groups, community forums, community scans, and law enforcement interviews
- Decide who should do this:
  - 1) Each grantee develops their own guides
  - 2) ADAP or PIRE develops the guides
  - 3) ADAP or PIRE develops drafts guides with review and input from the grantees