



# **Health professionals, conflicts and peace**

Forum «Medicine & Human Rights»  
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MEDICAL PEACE WORK



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# Framework and definitions

- What is Medical Peace Work?

# What Medical Peace Work is NOT:



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# What is peace?



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# A holistic concept of peace

- Absence of war
- Absence of terror
- Absence of human rights violations
- Absence of interpersonal violence and suicide
- Individual and social harmony
  - Development and justice
  - Fulfilment of basic needs
    - Human security

**Negative  
peace**

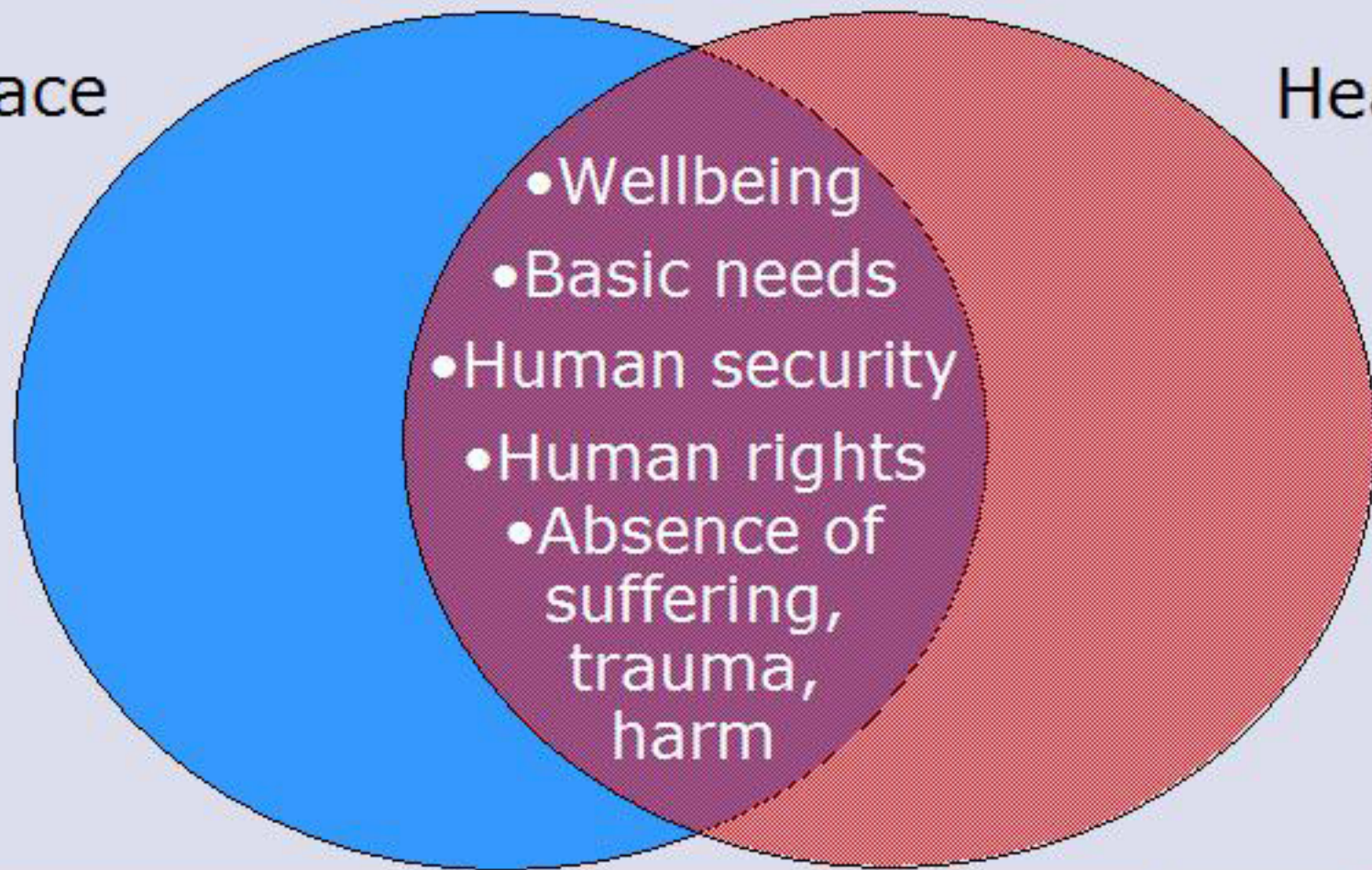
**Positive  
peace**



# Holistic concepts of peace and health overlap

Peace

Health



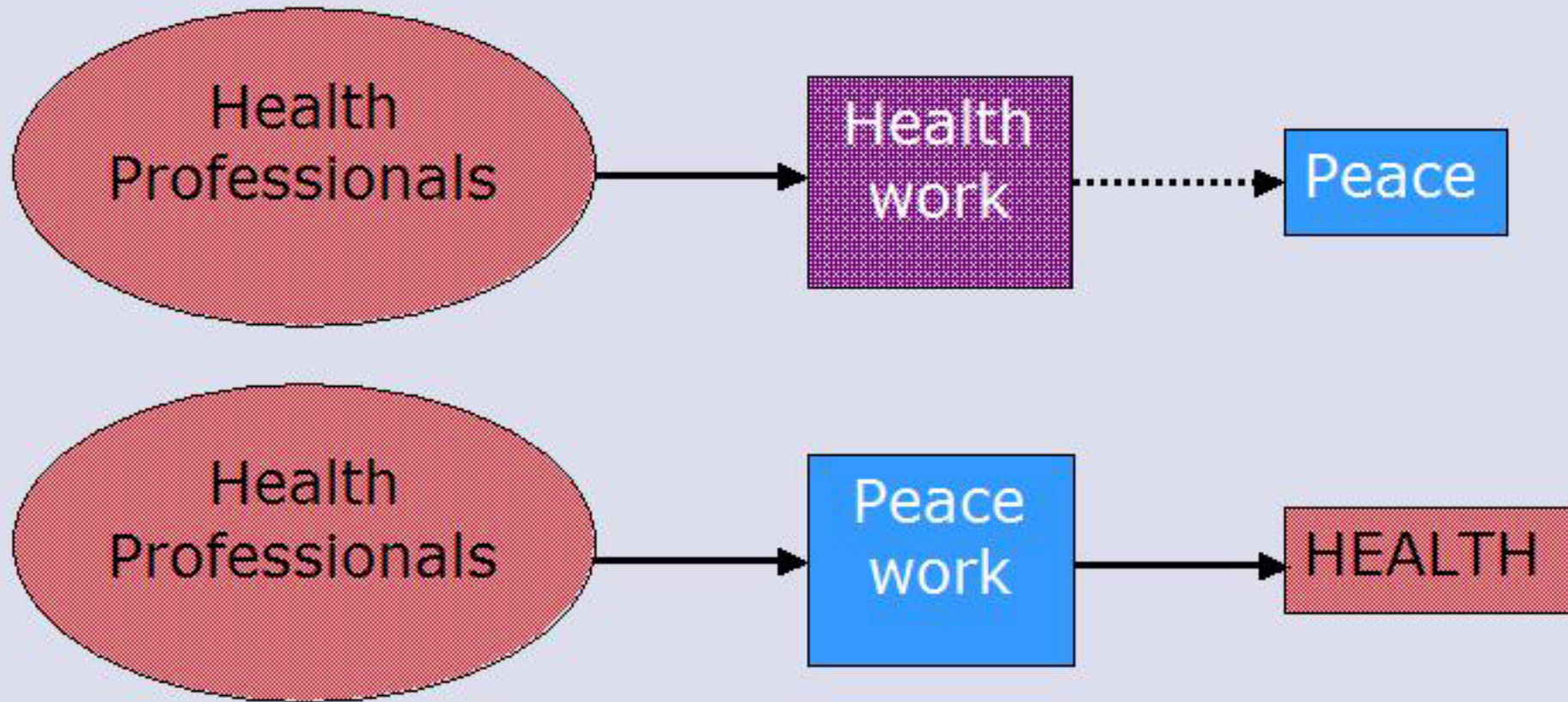
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# Implicit & explicit medical peace work



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# Why do health professionals deal with peace issues?

1. Violence as a public health problem
2. Health professionals at risk of committing violence
3. Health work can worsen a conflict situation

Homicide	520 000
Suicide	815 000
War-related	310 000
Total	1 659 000

(WHO 2002:10)



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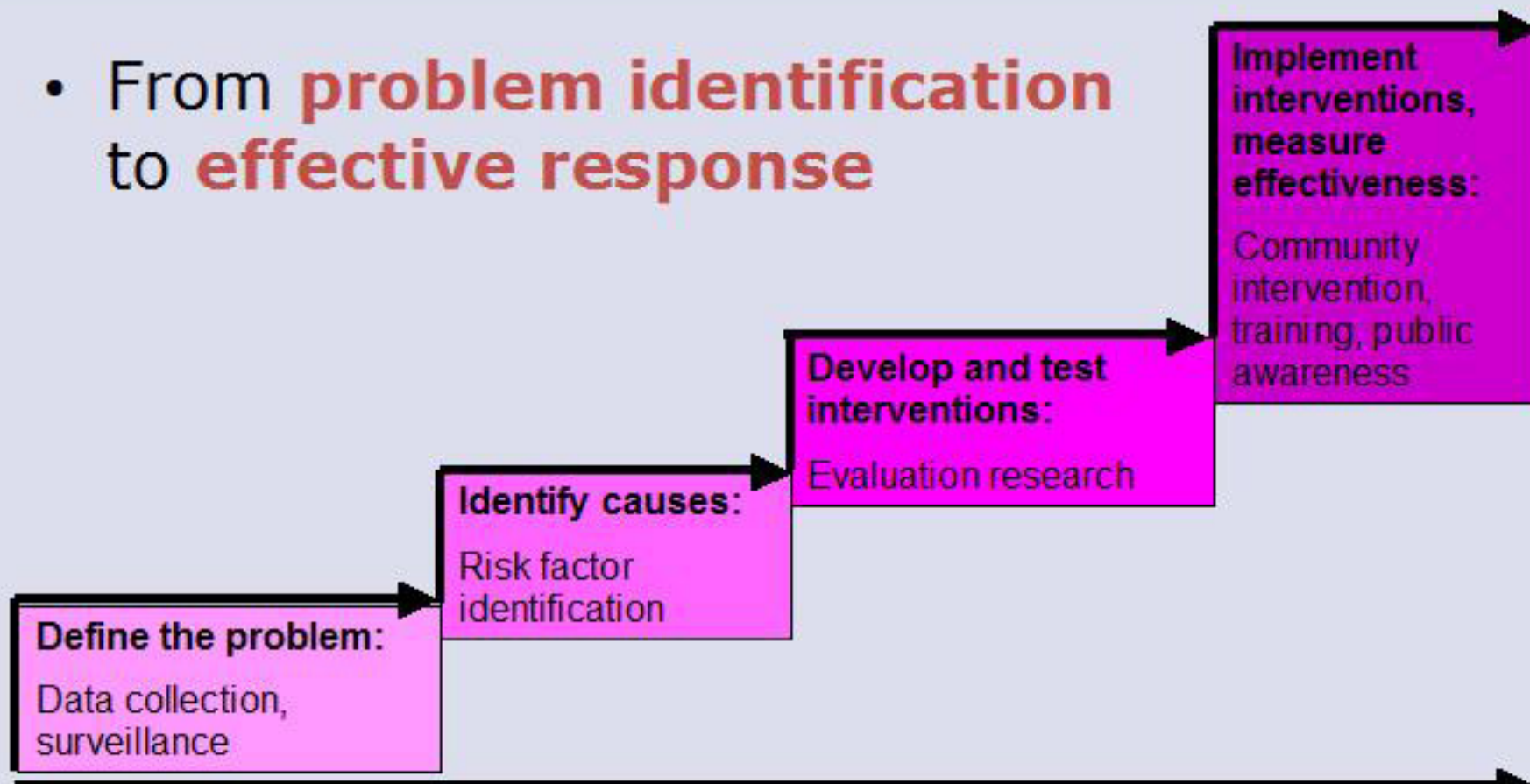


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# A public health approach to violence

- From **problem identification** to **effective response**



(Adapted from: Mercy et al. 1993)



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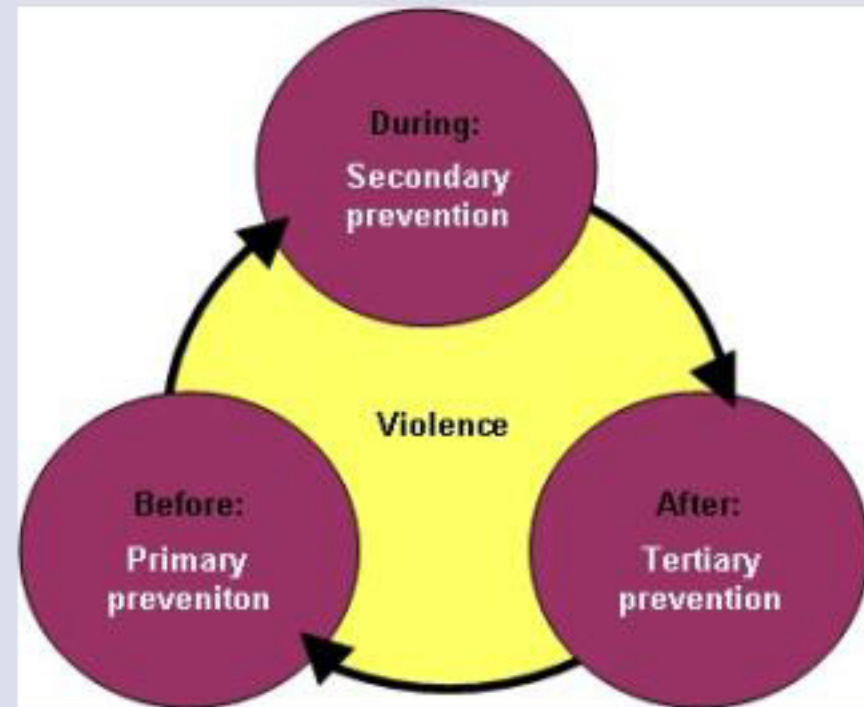


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# Timing of peace work

- Primary prevention
  - Risk factors ↓
  - Protective factors ↑
- Secondary prevention
  - Early warning
  - De-escalation
  - Conflict handling
- Tertiary prevention
  - Reconstruction
  - Resolution
  - Reconciliation





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# The role of health professionals in human rights advocacy & monitoring

- As witnesses & reporters of abuse
- As standard setters & information providers
- As advocates & campaigners
- As educators

*"Dr Farooq Ahmed Ashir, chief orthopaedic surgeon at the Srinagar Bone and Joint Hospital, recorded numerous cases of torture and assault on civilians. He was shot dead at an Indian army checkpoint in 1993."*

*...not without risk:*

(British Medical Association 2001)

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