Current social conditions present a mixture of progress in some areas, together with destruction and violence in others. These circumstances represent predisposing conditions for the occurrence of mental disorders. Tertiary and secondary prevention have proved insufficient to deal with such risk factors, whereas primary prevention appears to be a powerful tool. This article presents a community program for the prevention of mental disorders, based on the following premises: (a) certain environmental factors place one at risk for mental illness; (b) those factors reflect the joint action of physical and social environments; (c) they are historical; (d) mental disorder results from the interaction of two factors: personal vulnerability conditions and environmental risk factors; (e) communities are a means by which social groups can adapt to the demands posed by life; and (f) the action produced by community health programs' agents, reflects service delivery policies. Guidelines are provided for four stages of program development: Program Preparation, Indirect Interventions, Direct Interventions, and Program Assessment.