

RISK /PROTECTIVE FACTORS & SDS

INFORMATION SHEET

The following graph supports a public health model using a theoretical framework of risk reduction and protection enhancement. Developments in prevention and intervention science have shown that characteristics of individuals, their families, and their environment (i.e., community neighborhoods, schools) affect the likelihood that individuals will engage in substance abuse, delinquency, violence, and school dropout. Other characteristics serve to protect or provide a buffer to moderate the influence of the negative characteristics. These characteristics are identified as risk factors and protective factors (Arthur, Hawkins, et al., 1994; Hawkins, Catalano, Miller, 1992).

Domains	Risk Factors	Adolescent Problem Behaviors						Protective Factors	Social Development Strategy (SDS)
	<i>Risk factors are characteristics of individuals, their families, schools, and community environments that are associated with increases in alcohol and other drug use, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school dropout, and violence. The following factors increase the likelihood that children and young people may develop such problem behaviors.</i>	Substance abuse	Depression/anxiety	Delinquency	Teen pregnancy	School dropout	Violence	<i>Factors associated with reduced potential for drug use are called protective factors. They encompass family, social, psychological, and behavioral characteristics that can provide a buffer for young people. These factors mitigate the effects of risk factors.</i>	<i>SDS is a synthesis of three existing theories of criminology (control, social learning, and differential association). It incorporates the results of research on risk and protective factors for problem behaviors and a developmental perspective of age, specific problem, and prosocial behavior. It is based on the assumption that children learn behaviors.</i>
Community	Availability of alcohol/other drugs	✓					✓	Opportunities for prosocial involvement in community	
	Availability of firearms			✓			✓	Recognition for prosocial involvement	
	Community laws and norms favorable to drug use, firearms, and crime	✓		✓			✓		
	Transitions and mobility	✓	✓	✓		✓			
	Low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization	✓		✓			✓		
	Media portrayals of violence						✓		
	Extreme economic deprivation	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Family	Family history of the problem behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Bonding to family with healthy beliefs and clear standards	
	Family management problems	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Attachment to family with healthy beliefs and clear standards	
	Family conflict	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Opportunities for prosocial involvement	
	Favorable parental attitudes and involvement in problem behaviors	✓		✓			✓	Recognition for prosocial involvement	
School	Academic failure beginning in late elementary school	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	Bonding and attachment to school	
	Lack of commitment to school	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	Opportunities for prosocial involvement Recognition for prosocial involvement	
Individual / Peer	Early and persistent antisocial behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Bonding to peers with healthy beliefs and clear standards	
	Rebelliousness	✓		✓		✓		Attachment to peers with healthy beliefs and clear standards	
	Friends who engage in the problem behavior	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	Opportunities for prosocial involvement	
	Favorable attitudes toward the problem behavior (including low perceived-risk of harm)	✓		✓	✓	✓		Increase in social skills	
	Early initiation of the problem behavior	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Gang involvement	✓		✓			✓		
	Constitutional factors	✓	✓	✓			✓		