



PREVENTION Network

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For Professionals

January 2008

• Plan

• Build Partnerships

• Evaluate

Prevention – It’s More than Education!

School-based drug education is possibly the most widely used prevention strategy for attempting to discourage young people from using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. Though education is a key component of prevention programming, it must be combined with other prevention strategies and extend beyond the classroom and into the community.

In order to optimize their prevention efforts, schools need the collective support of families and communities. A comprehensive approach, using multiple strategies in several domains, is necessary in affecting a shift in social norms and behaviors related to drug use. These strategies must work toward a set of clearly defined and measurable goals with a consistent message. For example: a student who learns about the harms of marijuana in a classroom and then goes home to hear a family member tell him that “marijuana is not that bad, it’s natural” and then reads something in the local newspapers about the possible decriminalization of marijuana, is left with a very confusing message or no message at all.

Substance abuse prevention has evolved considerably over the years and we now have scientific evidence of what constitutes an effective prevention program. Using a comprehensive approach offers the best chance to prevent young people from using alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) has specified seven effective prevention approaches: Policy, Enforcement, Collaboration, Communications, Education, Early Intervention, and Alternatives.

Program planners in the area of substance abuse prevention must build into their programs a combination of the above strategies both at the school and community level. Programs that are built on strong partnerships between schools and communities and have applied the principles identified by prevention research have seen real success.

To learn more about education as a prevention strategy and how to integrate education into other prevention strategies, go to: captus.samhsa.gov/northeast/PDF/Education_Paper.pdf

PREVENTION TIPS

Prevention principles for community-based programs:

Be comprehensive: Does the program have components for the individual, the family, the school, the media, community organizations and health providers? Are the program components well integrated in theme and content so that they reinforce each other?

Use media and community education strategies to increase public awareness, attract community support, reinforce the school-based curriculum for students and parents, and keep the public informed of the program’s progress.

Be coordinated with other community efforts to reinforce prevention messages.

Have interventions carefully designed to reach different populations at risk, and be of sufficient duration to make a difference.

Follow a structured organizational plan that progresses from needs assessment through planning, implementation and review to refinement, with feedback to and from the community at all stages.

Source: Community How To Guide on Prevention and Education, The National Association of Governors’ Highway Safety Representatives

Available Resources & Workshops

Making Decisions Series

A leading education initiative to combat drug and alcohol abuse and encourage social responsibility.

Grades 4, 6, 7, 8 & 9 <more info

Parents as Preventors™

Workshops designed for parents, emphasizing the central role parents play in influencing their children to make healthy choices regarding alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. <more info

Professionals as Preventors™

A customized drug prevention workshop for professionals at Pro-D days or community based events. <more info

drugfacts.ca

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“If teaching were only telling, my children would be incredibly brilliant; I’ve told them everything they need to know.”

Howard G. Hendricks

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ASK AN EXPERT

What type of support could community based health and prevention professionals provide for teachers in the area of drug education?

Students in British Columbia are provided with the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to be informed decision makers in key life skill areas through a series of courses and programs beginning in kindergarten and continuing through grade 12. As part of the health education component of these courses students are supported to learn the decision-making skills required to take increasing responsibility for developing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

A reoccurring conversation throughout the grades relates to the impact of substance abuse on a healthy lifestyle as well as education, career and financial goals. Teachers must develop and deliver age appropriate, engaging lessons effective at guiding students to make healthy choices in all areas including drug use. They must access and share current and accurate information that represents 'best practice' in the area of comprehensive health education and drug education. Teachers are very aware of how

important it is that they guide students well in relation to these important life skill areas. However, teachers often do not have any formal training in drug education. It would be very reassuring for teachers to know with conviction that they have the most recent and accurate drug education information available to share with their students.

This is an area of need for teachers delivering drug education and an area of expertise for public health and prevention professionals. Public health and prevention professionals can provide support to teachers by:

- identifying recommended and developmentally appropriate drug education materials that meet learning outcomes across the grades.
- providing training on how to deliver effective drug education programs consistent with research findings and instructional strategies most effective at impacting student outcomes.
- providing drug prevention expertise in response to:

- ◇ teacher questions related to lessons, materials, resources and effective drug education instruction strategies. This might take the form of a call line.
- ◇ class questions related to drugs and substance abuse for projects and assignments. This might take the form of an online Q & A forum.
- providing a list of speakers to participate in school and district wide initiatives such as conferences and workshops for students, parents and teachers.

By combining the knowledge and expertise of prevention professionals with the knowledge and expertise of teachers, our students will be supported to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to make life-enhancing decisions related to drug use.

Pat Rosen
District Coordinator
Langley School District

ACTIVITY CORNER

This activity would be a good follow up exercise for lessons about alcohol absorption and breakdown in the body, and the physical effects of alcohol at various blood alcohol levels.

Alcohol Impairment Simulation Game

Grade Level: Grades 8-12

1. Ask students to break into six groups. Ensure groups are seated in a circle facing each other.
2. Provide each group with one nut and bolt, one pair of glasses and one pair of gloves.
3. Go over **instructions** and play game.
4. Debrief by asking:
 - How did each impairment affect your ability to perform the task?
 - How was it different when there was no impairment?
 - How did you feel when people were laughing at you?
 - What types of things do you need to consider when making a decision about drinking alcohol?
 - How would you assess if a friend has had too much to drink? Has a drinking problem?
 - What supports are there at school and in the community to help people with alcohol or other drug problems?

Source: *Healthy Choices – Under the Influence*

RESOURCES

1. Centre for Substance Abuse Prevention, 2002, **Achieving Outcomes: A Practitioners Guide to Effective Prevention**

[Click here](#) for PDF 

2. National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2007, **Drugs, Brains, and Behavior – The Science of Addiction**

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