

**PREVALENCE AND PREVENTION
OF YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN SOUTHEAST MISSOURI**

What Can You Do?



PREVENTING SUBSTANCE ABUSE TOGETHER

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INTRODUCTION

The Southeast Missouri Youth Substance Abuse Coalition was awarded a grant from the Missouri Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse and United Way of Southeast Missouri to publish a manual that would raise community awareness about the prevalence of drug and alcohol use and abuse among our local youth, and would also serve as a practical guide for adults that are interested in promoting healthy choices. This publication represents the results of interviews with various youth, including those that do and do not use alcohol and/or other drugs, as well as athletic coaches, youth group leaders, school counselors, parents, educators, law enforcement officials, and agency personnel in Cape Girardeau County and Scott City.

“When learning about the life cycle of plants, a kindergarten student shared with her classmates that dead leaves can be rolled into cigarettes and smoked. That is what her mom and mom’s boyfriend do!” (Stated with pride.)

This is but one example of the stories that were shared during the interview process. It illustrates how the behavior of adults can so easily impact the children they come in contact with—both positively, or in this example, in a negative manner. The Coalition hopes that this manual will serve the community by helping adults interact with the youth they encounter in a positive manner. In turn that will ultimately reduce the incidence of unhealthy decision-making by these youth.

Research has identified specific risk and protective factors that are associated with a person’s decisions in regards to alcohol and other drugs. The Coalition hopes to assist the community in identifying and reducing the *risk factors*, while strengthening the *protective factors*. (See appendix pages 28-29 for more information on these factors.)

The following chapters include research-based recommendations for adults that are in a position to serve as positive role models and promote healthy decision-making skills. Please refer to the appendix (page 24) for more information on the Coalition’s activities and accomplishments, as well as references for helpful resources.¹

¹Additional information and assistance in implementing these recommendations may be obtained by contacting Jim Maginel, Project Consultant, at 573-651-5153 or at jmaginel@semo.edu.

PREVALENCE OF YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN CAPE GIRARDEAU COUNTY AND SCOTT CITY, MO

Minor in Possession charges were filed at the rate of over one per week during the calendar year 2004 in Cape Girardeau County. Interviews were conducted during the spring of 2005 with local youth that have abused alcohol and/or other drugs, and the results suggest that the average age of first use is 13, which is consistent with the state average (12.7) but considerably younger than the national average (15.9). *Young people who start drinking alcohol at age 13 are four times more likely to develop an alcohol abuse disorder later on in life than someone who waits until age 21.* Marijuana is also widely abused in our county, as 75% of local youth in treatment this past year identified it as being their drug of choice.

Of the 10,000 young people in Cape Girardeau County and Scott City, MO

- 1,061 have a serious alcohol problem
- 84.5% do not get treatment
- 894 out of 1,061 kids need alcohol treatment/don't get it

Problems for our Community

Everyone is affected when young people with serious alcohol problems in our community don't get treatment. Within our population of 1,061 young people with serious alcohol problems, we are likely to find the following:

- 303 additional young people who have serious problems with other drugs
- 466 additional young people who drink and drive
- 185 additional young people who are arrested
- 67 additional young people who have a C+ average or lower in school
- 9,319 additional missed school days, and 1,554 additional missed work days
- 387 additional young people who smoke
- 197 additional visits by young people to hospital emergency rooms

The estimated direct cost of underage drinking incurred through medical care, loss of work and legal expenses in our community is **9 million dollars per year!**²

Youth substance abuse is clearly a community challenge that requires a comprehensive, community-wide response, and the chapters in this manual are designed to help concerned adults become active participants in this endeavor.

² Estimates generated by the **Alcohol Cost Calculator for Kids** (<http://www.alcoholcostcalculator.org/kids>) are based on the federal government's national surveys. Use of survey data has limitations. This estimate has been extrapolated from a fact sheet prepared by the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation: http://websolutions.learfield.com/prevention/downloads/Missouri_Underage050504.pdf

WHY YOUTH CHOOSE NOT TO USE

Fortunately, there are many youth in our local community that have chosen **not** to use drugs and alcohol. Some of these youth were interviewed and gave various reasons for why they are not using:



- They have a close friend or family member that has been adversely affected by drug and/or alcohol use. They have seen first-hand what it is like and know that there can be negative consequences.
- Their parents have taught them the health and social problems that can occur because of drug or alcohol use and do not want to use because they know the facts about use.
- Their parents have stressed the importance they place on not using drugs and alcohol and they do not want to disappoint their parents by using.
- They are part of a sports team and do not want to hurt their bodies with alcohol and drugs.
- They are part of a sports team and do not want to be suspended, kicked off of the team, or lose their coach's respect by using.
- They are part of a church youth group that has stressed the importance of not using and want to be consistent with their religious beliefs.
- They have friends who do not use and do not want to disappoint their friends by using.
- They simply feel there are more engaging activities that are less harmful to their bodies than using drugs or alcohol. These activities include:
 - o Watching movies
 - o Playing and listening to music
 - o Attending school events, such as dances and sports games
 - o Joining school-sponsored groups such as band, 4-H, Future Business Leaders of America, Family Career and Community Leaders of America, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes
 - o Hanging out with friends that do not use drugs or alcohol
 - o Spending time with family

The following chapters are designed to help adults support and promote these and other *protective factors* that will help youth make healthy decisions in regard to alcohol and other drugs.

1. PARENTS

"Mom, can I have \$20 for the park tonight?"

"Sure, honey."

Anna took the money and kissed her mother goodbye as she went out the door of their house.

"Bye, Mom."

"I'll see you in the morning when Kayla's mom brings you home," says Anna's mother. "Love you."

"Love you, too, Mom."

Anna then gets into the car with Kayla and Kayla's mother, who drives the 12-year old girls to an all-night skate park. Kayla and Anna stand on the sidewalk and wave as Kayla's mother drives away. When the car is out of sight, the girls begin their walk to the home of an older friend, whose parents are gone and who is having a party in their absence.

Anna gives the money from her mother to a friend of her friend who is old enough to buy alcohol. He buys her some beer and wine coolers. Anna drinks until about 2 in the morning; then she gets ill, vomits and eventually falls asleep on the bathroom floor.

Kayla shakes Anna awake in the morning and tells her they have to hurry to the skate park—her mother will be there soon to pick them up. They walk quickly back to the park where Kayla's mother picks them up a few minutes after they arrive. Kayla's mother drops Anna off at her house. Anna goes upstairs to the bathroom, since she feels ill again. Her mother knocks on the door and asks if she is okay.

"I'm okay. Just a little bit sick to my stomach. The flu is going around at school."

"Alright, Anna. Let me know if you need anything."

"Thanks, Mom."



This narrative, based upon actual occurrences of teenagers in our community, illustrates how the action, or inaction, of parents can greatly impact their children's lives regarding drug and alcohol use. On surveys concerning drug and alcohol use, teenagers frequently cite their parents as their top source for receiving information on drug and alcohol use as well as citing them as the greatest influence on their decisions about using drugs and alcohol. Although research supports this, parents rarely realize the impact that they have on their children's behavior.

PARENTS, YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Using the story about Anna as an example, here is what Anna's mother could have done to ensure her safety in activity choices:

- Asked Kayla's mother to check up on the girls during the night.
- Checked up on the girls herself during the night.
- Asked Anna to call her at least once at some point during the night to make sure she was doing okay.
- Asked Anna how she spent her money.
- Asked Anna for a receipt of her attendance at the park.
- Called Anna's friends to ask for corroboration of her attendance at the park.
- Looked at Anna's appearance when she arrived home in the morning.
- Investigated Anna's sickness to determine if there was a possibility the cause could have been related to drugs or alcohol.

There are some general practices parents can use to encourage their children to make healthy choices—the following protective factors are designed to prevent alcohol and other drug use:

Communicate!

- Start early. Parents have the most influence on their children during early adolescence. The earlier you begin to talk to them about drugs, the more impact you can have on their future.
- Discuss drugs and alcohol with your children. Teaching them what drugs and alcohol are is the first step in learning to avoid using the harmful substances.
- Discuss with your children the opportunities that are likely to arise when drugs and alcohol will be offered to them.
- Stress your attitude toward drugs and alcohol and your values concerning substance abuse—be sure your attitude does not advocate the use of drugs or alcohol in any way.
- For instance, if your attitude is lenient towards alcohol, such as, “All kids go through that phase. I did when I was in high school, and I turned out fine,” your children will hear this as giving them permission to drink.
- Make your rules concerning the activities of your children, from curfew to chores, clear to them as well as communicating how the rules will be enforced.
- Spending quality time with your children engaging in fun activities will help keep communication lines between you and your children open—as well as benefiting your relationship!
- Encourage decision-making skills in your children.
- Remember to communicate frequently and clearly.
- Be consistent in the information you give your children and with your attitudes toward alcohol and substance use.

Model!

One of the best ways you can deter the involvement of your child or children with alcohol and drugs is to model this abstinence yourself. Although children usually listen to what their parents say, they pay much closer attention to what their parents do. Actions of parents always play a much bigger role in the influence of their children’s behavior than the parents’ words alone. For instance, if parents tell their children that smoking is harmful and they should never smoke, but the parents often smoke around the child, the child will hear the words but will see the parents smoking and will take that action as a sign that smoking is acceptable. The same is true of drinking alcohol or using other drugs. When you back up your words about not using drugs or alcohol with behavior consistent with that vocal message, your children are much more likely to take your advice and stay away from tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.

Monitor!

- Know where your children are and whom they are with at all times.
- If he or she is to arrive home late in the evening, wait up for them to ensure they arrive on time.
- If they know you are aware of when they get home, they will be more likely to come home on time.
- Keep track of your children’s grades at school—a drop in grades is a warning sign of risky behavior.
- Take notice of your children’s appearance—a neglected appearance can also be a warning sign of risky behavior.
- Keep track of your children’s friends—learn about them and meet them if at all possible.
- Note your children’s moods—be aware of any sudden changes in mood—and especially be aware of depression.

Take Action!

- Enforce the family rules you have set for your children.
- Confront children if you notice or suspect:
 - o Reckless behavior
 - o Glassy or red eyes
 - o Verbally abusive language
 - o Unexplained weight changes
 - o Lack of motivation
 - o Disinterest in family or other usual activities
 - o Hostile behavior towards others
 - o Possession of drug paraphernalia
 - o Sudden change in friends, and reluctance to introducing the new friends
 - o Furtive or secretive behavior
 - o Money or valuables are missing from around the house or from your purse or wallet
 - o Seems to have a lot of money or always asks for money
 - o Unusual sleeping habits
 - o Forgetfulness
 - o Lack of hygiene activities or grooming
 - o Difficulty remembering things
 - o Skips school
 - o Sleeps in class
- Seek professional help if needed—from school counselors, counselors in the community, and other service providers.
- Familiarize yourself with your community's resources concerning drug and alcohol abuse prevention and treatment.



Siblings Matter Too!

Interviews with members of our community found that not only parents, but also siblings, were an important factor in many teens' choices concerning use of drugs and alcohol. Research has established a connection between the substance abuse of older siblings and the likelihood of substance abuse in the younger brothers and sisters of those individuals.

- Younger siblings look up to their older siblings—if older siblings do not promote drugs and alcohol, younger siblings are less likely to use.
- Older siblings try to be role models for younger children—they may monitor their younger siblings' behaviors to ensure healthy decision-making.
- Older siblings and the friends of these siblings are often the chief way underage teenagers gain access to alcohol and illegal drugs.

IS IT WISE TO PROVIDE ALCOHOL FOR YOUTH?

According to a study from Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center, parents strongly influence their children's drinking behavior. Researchers at Wake Forest analyzed survey data from the National Evaluation of the Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws Program and found that adults' approval of alcohol use is highly correlated with youth drinking behavior. Teens were twice as likely to binge drink and use alcohol within a 30-day period if their parents or friends' parents provided alcohol at their homes for a party. The study also showed that parents who enforce strict consequences for breaking the house rules regarding drinking can help prevent underage drinking. The study's findings were published in the October 2004 issue of the Journal of Adolescent Health.

Between holiday parties, special school celebrations, and weekend gatherings, your teen's calendar is likely to be full of festive events. You and your teen might be planning a party of your own. You may have mulled over many of the party-planning details, but have you thought about what might happen if you allow alcohol and drugs at your event? Even if you don't buy alcohol for your teen's party, youth may still get it from your home or from a sibling or friend who is over the age of 21.

Some parents believe that it's safer for their teens to drink at home than to drink anywhere else. Other adults, including some parents, mistakenly think that underage drinking is part of growing up. They may view it as a rite of passage—one that often follows a teen's high school graduation instead of his 21st birthday.

In the state of Missouri, it is currently illegal to

- Make alcohol available to minors.
- Host or allow underage drinking parties in your home.
- Possess or consume alcohol if under age 21.
- Drive under the influence of alcohol (.02 Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) for minors, .08 BAC for adults).



Those hosting can be prosecuted and sued, and property owners of the site can also be held liable. Missouri's statutes regarding these issues were recently strengthened when Governor Matt Blunt signed into law Senate Bill 402.

Parents may be held responsible even if they're not home when underage drinking occurs. They also may be held responsible if underage drinking takes place anywhere on their property. Social host liability laws often extend to parents who fail to take sufficient measures to prevent underage drinking in their homes. You should think twice about leaving your teen home alone for a weekend or even overnight.

The good news is that more teens are enjoying alcohol- and drug-free parties. School systems, parents, community groups, and faith-based organizations often host events without alcohol that provide parent supervision, food, games, and prizes. Teens turn out in high numbers to these parties, keeping themselves and their parents safe.

SAFE RIDING, SAFE DRIVING

Motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of youth ages 15 - 20!

If you're the parent of a teen, it's likely that drunk and drugged driving is at the top of your list of concerns for your child. Many teens know someone who has been involved in or affected by a car crash with an impaired driver—a driver who has been drinking alcohol or using another drug that lowers the ability to drive safely. Sadly, some of those drivers are young people.



Sobering Statistics

- Per mile driven, 16-year-old drivers have the highest rate of fatal crash involvement.
- 2,339 youth died in alcohol-related crashes in the year 2000—accounting for more than one-third of all youth traffic deaths. Think of it this way—that's enough kids to fill more than 58 school buses.
- More than 60% of youth alcohol-related crash deaths occurred in rural areas—on roads where traffic isn't heavy.
- 1 of 3 teenagers admit to driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

The Good News

During the past 20 years, educational efforts, policy changes, and new laws have helped reduce the number of youth alcohol-related deaths. The number of young people who died in a crash involving a young driver with blood alcohol content at or above .10 has declined by more than 60% since 1982—from 2,763 to 1,076 deaths. However, this news doesn't mean that the work is done—just ask a parent who has lost his teen to a car crash.

Reducing alcohol-related traffic deaths is one of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's top concerns. The national goal is to lower the death toll for all ages to no more than 11,000 annually by the year 2005. This number may seem high, but not when you compare it to the 16,000 people who were killed in 2000 as a result of alcohol-related crashes.

What To Do

December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month (<http://www.3dmonth.org>)—a time when communities across the country join with the National 3D Prevention Month Coalition to conduct campaigns to prevent driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

The tips below can help you stop impaired driving in your neighborhood and keep your child safe.

- Tell your child that you do not want her getting into a car with someone who has had even one drink or who has been using illegal drugs. Marijuana and other illegal drugs can impair driving ability. (Keep in mind that even some over-the-counter drugs and other medications can impair driving ability as well.)
- Help young people plan substance-free events. Visit <http://family.samhsa.gov/get/soberholiday.aspx> for details.
- If you host parties for young people, do not allow them to drink alcohol or use drugs. Do not serve alcohol, even to college students. Check on your young guests often to make sure that no one is

sneaking alcohol or other illegal substances into your home. The legal consequences of allowing underage drinking and drug use in your home can be harsh, especially if a minor is injured or killed during the party or after leaving your house. Visit <http://family.samhsa.gov/set/prosecuting.aspx> for more information.

- Join the Southeast Missouri Youth Substance Abuse Coalition (573-334-9634) or the local MADD chapter (573-335-7908). Write to your local paper and legislators to gain support.
- **Be a good role model.** If you have been drinking, don't drive. We all know that young people learn by example—don't send mixed messages.
- Above all, tell your child that you want him to call you if he can't get a safe ride home from a party or other event. Stress to him that you want him to call even if he has been drinking or using drugs. Assure him that, while you do not support this behavior, his safety is your first concern. Wait a day or so, and then talk with him about what happened and what you expect from him in the future.

Setting rules about safe riding and driving, especially when alcohol and drugs are involved, will help you make the roads safer for everyone.³

³ A Family Guide to Keeping Youth Mentally Healthy and Drug Free. <http://family.samhsa.gov/set/>

SETTING GUIDELINES FOR TEEN DATING

As your children grow up, it's normal for them to think about having a boyfriend or girlfriend. They've probably been hanging out with friends of both sexes and doing things as a group, but they may be thinking about one-on-one dating. It's time to talk about the different types of relationships and prepare to set rules for dating.

Talking about relationships in regular, everyday conversation lets you and your child talk about your family values when it comes to friendship, dating, and love. Dating helps young people learn to get along with others, communicate, negotiate, make decisions, and learn to be assertive. It's an important part of growing up, and talking about it together will help your teen mature.

So, how will you handle the teen-dating scene? Parents approach teen dating in different ways. Some set strict rules while others let teens make their own decisions. However, a more "middle-of-the-road" approach may be best. This includes setting ground rules while giving young people options from which they can choose. It also means being available and open to ongoing conversations.

Setting Ground Rules

Even though they can make many decisions on their own, teens still need boundaries from you. Exactly what those boundaries are is something that you and your teen should discuss. Here are a few suggestions that may work for your family:

- Meet all of your teen's friends, and insist that his/her date come into the house so that you can say hello.
- Know the details about each group outing or date, including what adults and teens will be present, where it will take place, who is driving, what they're doing, and when they'll be home.
- Make sure your teen knows that alcohol or drug use is not allowed by anyone on any date or group outing.
- Explain that if your teen wants to come home from a date, you are willing and available to pick them up at any time.
- Make yourself available if your teen wants to talk after a group outing or date.

There are many areas to discuss when it comes to teen dating. You will need to set rules that are appropriate for your child's age and maturity level. These rules will change as your child grows up and as he handles different dating situations. For example, you may extend his curfew as he gets older. His curfew might change based on whether he is driving, his date is driving, or if a parent is driving. The curfew also might change based on the day of the week (weekend versus school-night dates) and time of year (summer versus school year).



Dating is a big deal to teens. They need you to stay involved and attentive to what is going on. By setting rules with your teen about dating, you will help her learn to make good choices and to build healthy relationships while she navigates the teen-dating scene.⁴

⁴ Families Are Talking: Friendship, Dating, and Love: Young People Experience Many Types of Relationships, Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States in 2004 http://www.siecus.org/pubs/families/FAT_Newsletter_V3N1.pdf

2. CHILDCARE/PRESCHOOL EMPLOYEES

BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR AN ALCOHOL- AND DRUG-FREE FUTURE

What you can do as a caregiver of young children

1. Encourage responsibility by developing their skills. Give them a task they can perform (such as zipping a zipper, buttoning a button, or feeding themselves). Show them how to perform the task, give them opportunities to practice it, and praise them for their efforts.
2. Teach them that they can trust adults—such as yourself and other familiar figures such as firefighters, mail carriers, and parents.
3. Assign tasks for them (i.e. feeding a fish or putting away toys), and hold them accountable for finishing the task. When they finish the task, let them know how much help they are to you.
4. Develop problem-solving skills by encouraging them to apply their knowledge to new situations.
5. Notice something special about each child and comment on it often.
6. Encourage good cleanliness habits such as washing hands, brushing hair, and cleaning teeth.
7. Encourage healthy eating habits.
8. Set limits of what they can and cannot do—make sure these limits are both understood and enforced.
9. Share these ideas with the child's parents.

Many of these character-building skills are taught in the Al's Pals model program. These skills enhance a child's *protective factors*. (See appendix page 29.)

Local childcare providers that currently offer the Al's Pals curriculum

- ABC 123 Learning Center (573-335-1142)
- Big Stuff Preschool & Child Care (573-243-2900)
- Christian School for the Young Years (573-334-1999)
- Just Kids - Rosamund (573-204-0002)



3. EDUCATORS

“As a sixth-grade teacher at a local elementary school, one of my female students invited me to a party she was having the next weekend. She then proceeded to ask me if I could bring some ‘booze’ if I did come. I informed the student that I would not come to the party nor bring any ‘booze’ because it was illegal, that I did not drink myself or agree with underage drinking, and that what she was asking crossed the teacher/student relationship. I explained that I was required to report her request to the school principal, counselor, and her parents, which I did”.



This experience of an educator in Cape Girardeau County is particularly interesting, since it not only documents that pre-teens are involved in alcohol, but that there exists an expectation that adults are willing to provide the beverages.

How did this conversation affect the relationship between the teacher and student? In this case, it turns out that the appropriate teacher/student relationship was reinforced, as was the value of abstaining from alcohol. Of course, not every opportunity to intervene in the school setting is this obvious, but we can facilitate such “teachable moments” through our unique relationships with students. Recognizing these opportunities requires a blend of comfortable engagement with students and vigilance for indicators that are associated with unhealthy choices.

Indicators of possible substance use

- Drop in school attendance or academic performance
- Hostility or lack of cooperation
- Deterioration of personal appearance
- Physical changes (red eyes, bruises, sudden loss of weight)
- Sleepiness, lethargy
- Loss of interest in curricular or extracurricular activities
- Change of friendships
- Smell of alcohol on breath or perspiration, frequent use of mints
- Isolation or withdrawal from peers

As an educator, ask yourself these questions

- Has your school or community assessed student drinking to determine the extent of the problem?
- Do you know what factors may be contributing to underage drinking in your school or community (e.g., easy access to alcohol, peer pressure, adults’ failure to address the issue)?
- Do you know what prevention steps, if any, are being taken within your school system to help kids resist the pressure to drink?
- Is your school currently working to educate parents about underage alcohol use?
- Does your school have an active partnership with the families of its students?

Sample School Alcohol Policy

The strategies below appear in the Leadership Prevention Guide available at <http://www.alcoholfreechildren.org/en/pubs/html/prev.htm>

A good school alcohol policy

- States that alcohol and alcohol use are not allowed on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities, or while students are representing the school.
- Describes the consequences for violating the policy.
- Explains how to assess and refer students who use alcohol, and guarantees that self-referral will be treated confidentially and will not be punished.
- Pays attention to due process issues in dealing with violators.
- Is cautious about imposing suspension and expulsion for violators because students who are away from school, especially if unsupervised, have even more opportunity to drink alcohol.
- Offers students accurate information about the addiction and other detrimental effects of alcohol use.

Governor Matt Blunt recently signed the following statute into law: SECTION 160.069 - SCHOOL POLICY ON ALCOHOL - This act provides that every school district shall develop a policy by June 30, 2006, detailing the consequences that will result for a student at school if the student is found to be in possession or drinking alcohol on school property or while representing the school at extracurricular activities.

IN THE SCHOOL

Whatever your role in the school—teacher, principal, coach, nurse, or guidance counselor—you can play an important role in preventing underage drinking. In the school setting, children draw conclusions about alcohol use from what they see and hear about alcohol from their friends, classmates, and teachers. When schools establish alcohol policies that clearly state expectations and penalties regarding alcohol use by students, they help reinforce the fact that underage drinking is not an acceptable form of behavior.



School staff should take these steps

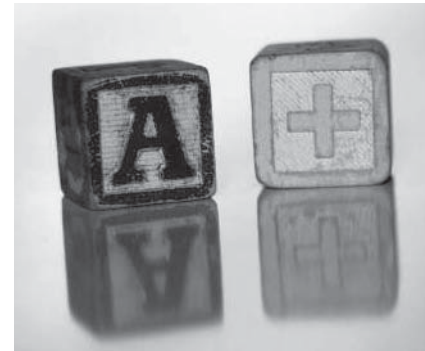
- Assess student drinking to determine the extent of the problem.
- Find out what factors may be contributing to student drinking in your school or community (e.g., easy access to alcohol, peer pressure, adults' failure to address the issue).
- Determine what steps, if any, are being taken within your school system to help young people resist the pressure to drink.
- Educate parents about underage alcohol use.
- Develop an active partnership with the families of your students.
- Implement school policies prohibiting alcohol use on school grounds.

School nurses, disciplinarians and guidance counselors are often early points of contact for students with serious alcohol problems and should be supported in their efforts to identify and help these young people. Some school systems have formalized these efforts by establishing Student Assistance Programs (SAPs), which can be found in more than 1,500 school systems.

SAPs are modeled after Employee Assistance Programs, which many employers provide to help employees with problems that negatively affect their work performance. Like those programs, SAPs use their proximity to and familiarity with specific groups to help identify people with alcohol problems and refer them to appropriate treatment. While more research is needed concerning the effectiveness of SAPs, one large study in Rhode Island indicated that 86% of those who participated in a SAP reduced or stopped use of alcohol and other drugs.⁵

A Reminder

Children do not need to make straight A's or be involved in every extracurricular activity at their school in order to have a lesser chance of drug use later in life. Finding even one activity that a child especially loves and is talented at can make a big difference. If a child is good at soccer or really wants to play the trumpet, then encourage that child as much as possible in that endeavor. This will help them feel connected to the school environment and his or her schoolmates. Volunteering in the community or taking part in community activities from an early age can also help the child feel more connected to his or her environment.



Prevention programs for elementary school children should target improving academic and social-emotional learning to address *risk factors* for drug abuse, such as early aggression, academic failure, and school dropout. Education should focus on the following skills:

- Self-control
- Social problem-solving
- Academic support, especially in reading
- Communication
- Emotional awareness

⁵ For more information about SAPs, contact Student Assistance Services at <http://www.sascorp.org> and the National Student Assistance Association at <http://www.nasap.org>.

4. YOUTH GROUP LEADERS

Cory is 16 years old and he goes to church with his parents almost every Sunday. He has many friends at school and spends his time with different groups of teenagers. On Fridays, he usually goes to the movies with his friends from his church's youth group. On Saturday night, he sometimes goes to "field parties" other kids in his class have. At these parties, he does not drink, although alcohol is readily available. When others at the parties offer him drinks, he says, "No, thanks." If they ask why he does not drink, he tells them that he would rather stay sober to enjoy his friends more or he tells them he does not feel like being drunk. He does not voice that he has friends at church and older members that think of him as a good role model for other church members. He does not say that he helps teach a Sunday School class for pre-school children and wants to be a good role model for them. All he may say out loud is, "No, thanks," but his faith is the underlying basis for his healthy decisions.

The interviews done in our local community illustrated that teenagers in this area are not immune to alcohol and drug use. Underage drinking and use of other illicit drugs is widespread in the youth population in this community. Church-going youth are no different than the whole population of youth in this area. Most have been exposed to alcohol or other drugs through family, friends, or acquaintances, many have experimented with the substances, and some even use on a regular basis.

Some adults interviewed, especially those in the school system, have noticed that students with some sort of spiritual focus did seem to have an easier time resisting substance abuse. Because it seems that having a faithful attitude seems to deter alcohol and drug use, it is important that those of you in the religious community, especially youth group leaders, realize what a powerful position you are in to promote drug prevention in your activities with the youth you serve.

As well as in self-reports, scientific research has also shown that teenagers who view religion positively and/or attend church services use alcohol and drugs less frequently than those who have a negative attitude toward religion. This research also found religion to be a deterrent across denominations.

FAITH-BASED ROLE MODELS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE Strategies for the promotion of healthy decisions

- Do not assume the youth that attend your church or participate in youth activities will not try or do not use substances.
 - o It is likely that even if they do not use, they will be in a situation in which they have a choice whether or not to use.
 - o Make the negative health and social consequences of drug use clear to them and teach them many ways to refuse drugs or alcohol that are offered to them.
 - o Stress the activities available besides those that involve alcohol and drugs.
 - o Provide alternate activities for youth to attend after school, in the evenings, and on weekends.



-
- Teach alternative means of managing stress such as:
 - o Meditation
 - o Prayer
 - o Physical activity
 - o Time management skills
 - Use opportunities such as Vacation Bible School to reach those youth that do not regularly come to your church to invite them to come to youth activities, if not church services.
 - o Use that opportunity to stress the importance of healthy life decisions—so that youth who may not get a strong message elsewhere can find it from the adults or other young adults who lead the Vacation Bible School programs.
 - Make drug prevention a long-standing part of the youth group’s focus and activities.
 - o Incorporate teachings about drug use into fun activities that will keep the youth’s interest, yet help them to learn how to make healthy choices.
 - o Engage in role-playing activities about situations of drug and alcohol abuse by peers or family members. i.e. “You see your sister, who is in 7th grade, smoking a cigarette at school. What would you do?”
 - Make yourselves available to the youth, so that they can come to you with any problems they have or questions they may want to ask you about drugs.
 - o Make them feel that they can come to you in confidence without the fear of judgment and with the goal of advice.
 - Begin a mentoring program at your church where older children take younger children under their wings and teach them about drug abuse.
 - o If the older children see themselves as role models, they will be more likely to make life choices that they would want those children to make. As a mentor, they will feel more responsibility to make healthy decisions concerning themselves.
 - Introduce “Personal Codes of Conduct” to the youth in your youth groups.
 - o These are “contracts” that can outline unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, drinking alcohol, or use of other drugs that the youth will agree to avoid. It may also contain healthy behaviors the youth agrees to engage in. Activities such as these are described in Pathways to Prevention.⁶

Faith-based programs are not alone in their efforts to promote drug and alcohol prevention in youth. As one can see by the number of other chapters in this manual, many groups and citizens of our community have an interest in prevention and the opportunity to promote prevention in youth. Working with other groups in the area associated with youth, such as community coalitions, parents, and law enforcement is an excellent method to bring about change in a community, since often more goals can be met when groups collaborate on a project. Take advantage of the connections your youth groups can form with other groups in the community with similar prevention goals.

⁶ Pathways to Prevention, A Prevention Guide for Youth Leaders in Faith Communities available from Jim Maginel, Project Consultant, at 573-651-5153 or at jmaginel@semo.edu.

5. COACHES

His heart was pumping hard, his mind was racing, and his body was sweating and shaking. He could barely see the court as he ran—everything was blurry.

“Coach, I think I need to come off,” he said as he gazed to the sideline.

“Come on Jimmy, only a couple more minutes. We need you,” the coach responded.

Each step became more and more difficult to take. His teammates were yelling, “Come on, Jimmy! Defense! What are you doing?”

Before Jimmy could take another step, he collapsed. The whistle blew, and everyone swarmed around the unconscious 16 year-old boy.

“He’s not breathing. Call 911!,” yelled the referee. The paramedics came and rushed him to the hospital, where his stomach had to be pumped. Unbeknownst to the coach or his teammates, Jimmy had been abusing drugs. He had taken Xanax, Darvocet, and smoked marijuana before the game.

“He was one of our best athletes. I never would have thought he would use drugs,” said the coach.



Stories such as Jimmy’s are not uncommon. His story is actually based on true stories of the youth in our area. Too many times heads are turned from the reality of substance abuse, especially when it is among adolescents who are involved in athletics. Although youth involvement in athletics has proven to be a powerful force in preventing substance use, it does not counter the fact that many who are involved in sports do abuse drugs and/or alcohol.

Although not widely recognized, the role of coach can be one of the most vital in preventing substance abuse. The job of coach should not stop at teaching athletic skills; it should also extend to teaching life lessons. As a coach, one has the chance to be more than a coach—you can be a teacher, leader, friend, and mentor. A coach is a role model and can greatly influence the players to make healthy decisions.

Today, 14 million boys and girls in the United States are involved in sports during middle school, junior high, and high school (National Household Survey on Drug Abuse). Sports have been found to be a leading factor in helping youth make healthy decisions regarding drugs and alcohol.

Some of the benefits of being involved in sports are:

- A chance to make friends
- Gain self-esteem
- Maintain good physical and mental health
- Learn how to respect others
- Experience success and pride
- Reduce stress
- Develop commitment

Disadvantages have also been found to create a greater risk, though, as there are studies suggesting that participants in sports are more likely to binge drink and use other forms of drugs. As a role model, a coach can use his or her influence to convey a positive drug-free message that can have a lasting effect on youth.

As a coach, you should be informed of the many ways in which substance abuse can present itself so that you know when action is warranted.

Warning Signs

- Change in personality, such as withdrawal or mood swings
- Loss of coordination
- Loss of interest or lack of energy for the sport
- Talking about drugs and alcohol frequently
- Excessive sweating
- Red and/or glazed eyes
- Hyperactivity, shakiness or nervousness
- Missing practices and games frequently or being late to them
- Abnormal weight loss
- Increase in aggressiveness
- Dramatically increased muscular definition



Qualities that will help develop a healthy team

- Respect your team and each individual's own capabilities
- Show love and enthusiasm for the sport
- Trustworthiness-helps your players feel they can talk to you openly
- Patience
- Commitment to the health and well-being of players
- Commitment to fair play and teaching fairness
- Awareness of effective communication among players and parents

One of the best ways of dealing with substance abuse is to use preventive strategies before the problem starts. Youth are constantly going through periods of change and development, which makes them vulnerable to drugs and alcohol. All youth have risk factors that contribute to the chances of them abusing drugs, which is why it is essential to make sure *protective factors* outweigh the *risk factors*.

Begin education early by

- Talking about the positive aspects of sports
- Talking about the possibilities of being an athlete and how drugs will interfere
- Talking about what to do if they believe a family or friend has a problem
- Teaching valuable leadership skills
- Openly discussing drugs and alcohol

For your team to be drug-free, it is important to stress your commitment to an alcohol- and drug-free team. Make sure the standards for your players are clearly understood and enforced.

6. EMPLOYEE SUPERVISORS

Kelly came up to the front counter of the fast food restaurant and asked the cashier worker where Lisa was. She looked at her watch: 2:20. Lisa's break was over at 2:00. She was taking extra time—again. She walked out to the parking lot to see if Lisa's car was there. She saw the car, so she knew Lisa had returned to the restaurant.

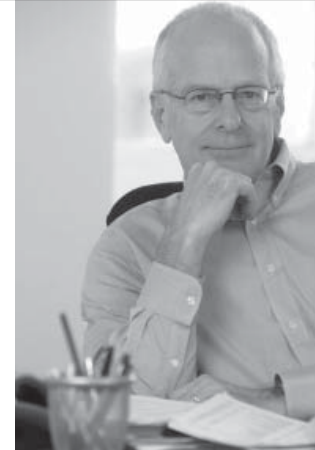
As she walked back inside, she almost collided with Lisa, who was coming out of the employee bathroom. "Oh, I thought you had left for the day," said Lisa nervously.

"No, I was getting ready to leave, though. I was trying to find you. You were supposed to be back from your break twenty minutes ago."

"I lost track of time, I guess," said Lisa, trying not to make eye contact.

Kelly was not fooled, however. Lisa's eyes were red, she seemed unable to concentrate, and unwilling to look Kelly straight in the eye. Kelly had wondered before if Lisa had a problem with alcohol or drugs—she had been coming in late to work, her appearance had been unkempt, and she lacked any motivation.

Obviously Lisa had progressed from abusing substances outside of work to abusing them at work. Kelly had been silent for too long concerning Lisa, and now she was going to take action to help her and help her business by figuring out what Lisa's problem was and what she could do to help her.



For adolescents, the workplace may be used as an opportunity to use drugs and to get drugs. This makes it a key location for employers to make an effort to prevent youth drug use. The number of adolescents entering the workforce has increased over the years. The number of workers age 16 to 19 is projected to approach 9 million individuals by 2006. With this many adolescents in the workforce, a main objective within the workplace should be identifying and helping those adolescents who struggle with substance abuse.

Interviews collected from area youth show that many youth who are using or have used substances have been employed in the area—mostly by fast food restaurants. Many of the adolescents interviewed admitted to using at work, going to work under the influence of substances, and/or selling drugs at work. In some situations, managers turned their heads to the abuse going on, and in some cases, managers even participated in the substance use. Youth that abuse substances are not only harming themselves, they are putting the business at risk as well. Drug use can affect the workplace by causing decreased productivity, increased accidents, absenteeism, turnover, and medical costs for the business. This makes it important for the manager to become aware of the issues surrounding substance abuse so that they can become effective agents in preventing substance abuse. It is not the job of the supervisor to diagnose and treat a drug or alcohol problem, but it is his or her responsibility to note changes in job performance and keep the workplace alcohol- and drug-free.

Like Kelly, you too can be aware of your employees' behavior and performance and identify a problem with alcohol or drugs in your young employees. These are warning signs with which you should be familiar.

Warning Signs

- Deterioration of job performance
- Signs of fatigue/apathy
- Erratic work pace
- Lowered concentration
- Increased mistakes and carelessness
- Poor attendance and absenteeism
- Complaints of other physical symptoms and/or illness
- Change in attitude or physical appearance
- Management being deliberately avoided
- Disregard for safety
- Sudden change in personality without another known cause
- Unexplained disappearance from the job site
- Unexplainable risk taking
- Red and glazed eyes
- Irritability
- Frequent financial problems
- Complaints about problems at home, school, or with friends

What you can do if you suspect an employee is in danger

- Talk with the employee, and keep the conversation focused on the problems as they affect work performance.
- Be clear and firm while speaking to them.
- Explain your company's policy regarding work performance and address your drug-free workplace policy.
- Explain how the employee is not meeting these standards and identify resources that can help them.
- Be supportive, but try not to get involved personally or emotionally.

Additional considerations

There are also measures you can take in an attempt to prevent drug use from becoming a problem in the workplace. Education is key for drug and alcohol prevention in the workplace.

- Keep the workplace drug-free.
- Be careful of limited work supervision and boring or isolating work.
- Implement a drug-free workplace program.

Drug-Free Workplace Programs have five categories: a drug-free workplace policy, supervisor training, employee education, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and drug testing. It is not mandatory to involve all five categories in each drug-free workplace program, but the more that are implemented, the more effective the program can be. (See appendix page 27 for resources.)

7. AGENCY PERSONNEL

Agency employees often get overlooked when it comes to youth and alcohol and/or substance abuse. Although some agency employees do work primarily with youth and may even deal with youth substance abusers, many do not work primarily with youth, or this group of youth in particular. Agency employees do have an opportunity to see many youth, though, in their day-to-day work, so it is important to realize that they serve as potential role models to youth. Not only are agency employees in a position that youth may look up to, they may even be in positions at times where they can intervene if they see youth that they believe may be abusing substances. Therefore, it is important for employees of various community agencies to know the signs of substance abuse in youth and possible actions they can take when confronted with the situation.



Signs of possible alcohol or other drug use

- Mood swings—often the first outward symptoms
- Youth seems to be out of touch with his or her environment
- Poor coordination
- Smell of alcohol on clothing or breath
- Bloodshot eyes
- Very sleepy appearance (throughout the day)
- Reduced motivation
- Agitation or anxiousness
- Depression
- Changes in appearance
- Verbally or physically abusive

Through interviews done in our community, it was often found that children or teenagers who use alcohol and/or other drugs come from families where parents or siblings are also users. As an agency employee, you may have knowledge of family history of drug or alcohol use. One way to use this knowledge, even if just casual knowledge, is to pay attention to the children in the families where substance abuse is a problem. Unfortunately, many children of users will also end up using, and if you can take actions to prevent those children from abusing substances, you can change their lives and futures profoundly. If you see a youth that is already at risk of using drugs or alcohol because their family situations present any of the symptoms of use, it is not the time to turn the other cheek. It is the time to take action!

What you can do to help at-risk youth

- Be perceptive. Take notice of warning signs listed above. Often the children you work with will be at-risk youth, so it is likely you will come into contact with children who are at-risk of getting involved in using drugs and alcohol or are already involved with drugs and alcohol.
- Do not ignore the warning signs. If you notice a child that is possibly in need of help, consider the behaviors that they exhibit and their appearance to determine whether a problem is likely.
- Communicate with the child and/or the child's parent, parents, or caregivers.
- Become familiar with the resources in the Cape Girardeau County and Scott City areas for youth that are at-risk or involved with drugs and alcohol as well as for parents of at-risk youth.
- As professionally and politely as possible, refer these children or their parents/caregivers to the proper resources that can help them with the problem.
- Realize that just because you decide you are going to try to help the youth that it is not up to you to give them the help they need. Do what you can to refer them to the right sources and try to persuade them to get help. Remember that you cannot help every child. Although this is true, you can certainly improve their chances by noticing they need help and referring them to where they can receive the help.

LOCAL REFERRAL RESOURCES

- First Call for Help: 573-334-4357
- Treatment Facility Locator: <http://dasis3.samhsa.gov>
- www.communityconnection.org
- Southeast Regional Support Center: 573-651-5153, <http://www5.semo.edu/community2000>

APPENDIX

DON'T GAMBLE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE'S ALCOHOL PROBLEMS

Young people with untreated alcohol problems face many increased risks when compared to their peers. This may be because of underlying mental health or behavioral problems, or because drinking adversely affects people's judgment, or both. For the 1,061 young people in our community with serious alcohol problems, they are approximately:



9.4 times more likely to drink and drive.



8.5 times more likely to have serious problems with other drugs.



5.5 times more likely to be arrested.



2.25 times more likely to smoke.



1.5 times more likely to have a C+ avg. or lower & miss twice as much school.



1.5 times more likely to require hospital emergency room care.

Young people ages 15-20 with serious alcohol problems are more likely to face a number of additional serious risks. Compared to their peers, they are about:



5 times more likely to attempt suicide.



4.5 times more likely to get into a serious fight.



3.5 times more likely to carry a weapon.



3 times more likely to be hospitalized with a mental health problem.



3 times more likely to have a conduct disorder.



1.5 times more likely to get into an accident, injure, or poison themselves.⁷

⁷ National Survey on Drug Use and Health, <http://www.alcoholcostcalculator.org/kids/problems.html>

SOUTHEAST MISSOURI YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE COALITION

Identified in a United Way assessment in 1999 and again in the recent COMPASS Community Assessment as one of the top 4 issues of concern in our community, substance abuse is a critical problem in our community. Formed in 2000, the Southeast Missouri Youth Substance Abuse Coalition is working to positively affect the youth portion of this issue.



The Coalition is facilitated by the United Way of Southeast Missouri along with Jim Maginel (Project Consultant hired through Prevention Assistance grants) with the Southeast Regional Support Center. With over 30 members, the Coalition meets every other month. Three subcommittees were formed in 2004 to work in specific areas on an ongoing basis: Resources, Public Education and Public Policy.

The mission of the Coalition is *to join together in a common effort to build a healthy and safe community, reducing the risks of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs while promoting the healthy attitudes and behaviors of youth in SE Missouri.*

The Coalition received a Division of Alcohol & Drug Abuse Prevention Grant, along with a grant from United Way in 2003, to develop and implement a survey that identified existing programs and helped identify gaps.

- The survey also was a tool to evaluate the existing programs regarding whether or not the programs included effective proven prevention principles. The project coordinator followed up with the existing programs, encouraging the incorporation of appropriate principles into the program.
- Specific gaps identified a need for:
 - o More programming for ages above and below the 9-12 age group, which is where most of the programming is targeted.
 - o More pre-school programming with only one pre-school reporting prevention programming.
 - o Incorporation of prevention programming in church programs (only 5% reported including scheduled prevention programming).
 - o Inclusion of family relationship principles (less than ½ the respondents reported including this as part of their program).
- Survey results can be reviewed by visiting the following website: www5.semo.edu/community2000/survey/directory_list.asp.

The identification of these gaps led to the award of a United Way Community grant in 2004 to the Success By 6 initiative to implement the Al's Pals program in 4 area pre-schools. Al's Pals is a research-based program with a parent component, which focuses on self-esteem and making good choices.

In 2004 the Coalition helped the Community Caring Council formalize the Community Plan to address Alcohol and Drug Abuse in the community. The group identified effective strategies to address programming gaps and will serve as the responsible party to make sure this plan is implemented as outlined. Council staff have been active and supportive Coalition members and the Council has served as fiscal and hiring agent for all grant awards received by the Coalition.

A second Prevention Grant was awarded to the Coalition in 2004, and the Resources Subcommittee developed this Prevalence and Prevention of Youth Substance Abuse publication, which is now being distributed within the community. This manual contains local statistics about alcohol and other drug use and abuse in our community and includes practical prevention, intervention and treatment referral strategies for implementation. Brief training on utilizing these strategies is being offered with distribution of the manual.

In addition, the Coalition is collaborating with Southeast Missouri State University around this issue. The University also has a community coalition, the Campus and Community Coalition for Change. These groups are working together to support each other, mesh plans, and come up with collaborative strategies to address youth substance abuse. Both groups continually work to find resources to implement their plans, fill gaps and ultimately reduce the incidence of youth substance abuse and use. A collaborative grant application is being planned.

In 2004 and early 2005 the Public Education Subcommittee, collaborating with the Youth United Way and five local schools, sent letters home to high school parents reminding them of their role in helping their children avoid risky behaviors (substance use and sexual activity). This triggered another peer-to-peer letter sent by the Youth United Way to high school students around prom time, asking them to make good choices and not participate in risky behaviors. These projects were funded through a 2004 United Way Community Grant. This subcommittee will continue to work on educating the community on local youth substance abuse issues and will be developing an awareness campaign.

The Public Policy Subcommittee researches public policies in other communities that might have a positive effect on this issue and monitors state and local legislation and policy issues, working where possible to impact these at the local level.

The Coalition recently partnered with Missouri's Youth/Adult Alliance Against Underage Drinking to offer a Media Skills Training in March 2005. Several media ideas to "get the word out" to the general public were generated among the 15 participants.

Please call 573-334-9634 to find out how to assist the Coalition as it continues to encourage positive choices among the youth in our community.



RESOURCES

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention: Keeping Youth Drug Free (An updated print version of this publication was released in 2004.)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, 2002: Alcohol and Driving: A Dangerous Holiday Cocktail, <http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/newsroom/prognotes/20021202.aspx>.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving, <http://www.madd.org>

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, <http://www.ncadd.org>

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Injury Prevention: Impaired Driving, <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/alcohol>

National Organizations for Youth Safety, <http://www.noys.org>

Students Against Destructive Decisions, <http://www.saddonline.com>

Missouri Prevention for Healthy Bodies and Safe Communities: <http://www.missouriprevention.org/>

1. Parents

Is My Child Using Drugs or Alcohol?, http://alcoholism.about.com/od/tipsforparents/a/quiz_parents.htm

Talking to Your Child About Drugs, http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/behavior/talk_about_drugs.html

Parents. The Anti-Drug. <http://www.theantidrug.com>

Adolescent Substance Abuse Knowledge Base, <http://www.adolescent-substance-abuse.com/signs-drug-use.html>

Signs of Drug Use in Children, <http://www.family.samhsa.gov/set/signs.aspx>

Monitoring Your Teens for Drug Use Without Appearing to be Spying, <http://www.wahm.com/articles/monitoring-teens-for-drugs.html>

2. Childcare/Preschool Providers

Al's Pals, <http://www.wingspanworks.com>

Born Learning: Learning on the Go and About Early Learning, <http://www.bornlearning.org>

3. Educators

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention: Keeping Youth Drug Free (An updated print version of this publication was released in 2004.)

Media Literacy for Drug Prevention, <http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/NIE/medialiteracy>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, 2002: Alcohol and Driving: A Dangerous Holiday Cocktail, last referenced 11/24/04, <http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/newsroom/prognotes/20021202.aspx>

Mothers Against Drunk Driving, <http://www.madd.org>

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, <http://www.ncadd.org>

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Injury Prevention: Impaired Driving, <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/alcohol>

National Organizations for Youth Safety, <http://www.noys.org>

Students Against Destructive Decisions, <http://www.saddonline.com>

4. Youth Group Leaders

Pathways to Prevention, A Prevention Guide for Youth Leaders in Faith Communities available from Jim Maginel, Project Consultant, at 573-651-5153 or jmaginel@semo.edu.

Campaign Resources for Faith Leaders, <http://www.theantidrug.com/faith/index.asp>

Search Institute, <http://www.search-institute.org>

5. Coaches

The Coaches Playbook Against Drugs, <http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/coachesplaybook>

Athletes Training and Learning to Avoid Steroids, <http://www.ohsu.edu/som-hpsm/atlas.html>

6. Employee Supervisors

U.S. Department of Labor: Working Partners for an Alcohol- and Drug-Free Workplace. <http://www.dol.gov/asp/programs/drugs/workingpartners/dfworkplace/dfwp.asp>

Making Your Workplace Drug Free. A Kit for Employers, <http://www.health.org/govpubs/workit>

7. Agency Personnel

Making Your Workplace Drug Free. A Kit for Employers, <http://www.health.org/govpubs/workit>

RISK FACTORS

Certain *risk factors* increase the possibility that a child will develop problems with alcohol or drugs in the future. The earlier these risk factors are identified by someone in the child's life and are addressed, the greater the decrease in the chance that the child will develop a problem with drugs and/or alcohol in the future. Be aware, however, that not all children experiencing *risk factors* end up making unhealthy choices.

The three main domains where risk factors exist are:

1. Family

- A child that has parents or siblings that abuse alcohol and/or use drugs are more likely to develop a problem than children whose family members do not use. Genetics play a large role in the likelihood of developing a substance abuse problem.
- A family history of criminal or antisocial behavior also makes a child more likely to become a user.
- Children of parents who are inconsistent in their parenting and discipline styles are more likely to develop a problem. This inconsistency can be from one extreme of giving very little supervision and being overly permissive to using severe discipline and criticism to the other extreme of giving no praise or approval to the child.
- Children whose parents smoke, drink, or have an attitude that is casual about drug and alcohol use are likely to follow their parents' example and feel it is acceptable to use the substances.

2. Peers

- Peers are also an important factor—children with friends who use alcohol or drugs are more likely to use, and friends are one of the main ways that children become introduced to alcohol and other drugs.
- In a preschool/daycare environment, identification with other peers who behave aggressively or defiantly can be a risk factor for future drug/alcohol use.

3. Social and Developmental Factors

- Poor academic achievers are more likely to use drugs at an earlier age as well as more likely to become regular users of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
- Those who feel schoolwork is boring and are disinterested in academic achievement are more likely to become users.
- Children who act out against adult authority and do not agree with the social values of the community in which they live are more likely to become involved with alcohol and other drugs than those children who feel bonded to their families, religions, or ethnic cultures.
- Predictors of later alcohol/drug use are early antisocial behavior, lack of social responsibility, fighting, and other aggressive behavior.
- The earlier a child begins smoking and/or drinking, the more likely they will become involved in heavy drug use later in life.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

The presence of many *protective factors* can reduce the impact of risk factors—for example, strong adult support and involvement can reduce the influence of substance-abusing peers.

- Strong bond between children and family members
- Parental involvement in a child’s life
- Supportive parenting that meets financial, emotional, cognitive, and social needs
- Clear limits and consistent enforcement of discipline
- Age-appropriate parental monitoring of social behavior, including establishing curfews, ensuring adult supervision of activities outside the home, knowing the child’s friends, and enforcing household rules
- Success in academics and involvement in extracurricular activities
- Strong bonds with pro-social institutions, such as school and religious institutions
- Acceptance of conventional norms against drug abuse

Parents can use information on risk and protection to help them develop positive preventive actions (such as discussing family rules and enforcing consequences) before problems occur.

Educators can strengthen learning and bonding to school by addressing aggressive behaviors and poor concentration—risks associated with later onset of drug abuse and related problems.

Childcare/Preschool Employees, Youth Group Leaders, Coaches and Employee Supervisors can help develop healthy decision-making skills, teach positive values, and encourage positive communication and bonding.

Community Leaders can assess community risk and protective factors associated with drug problems in order to best target prevention services.

In summary, adults that recognize their potential to introduce and strengthen protective factors can help change the balance so that *protective factors* outweigh *risk factors*.⁸

This manual was completed in August 2005 through the efforts of the Resources Subcommittee of the Coalition and Project Director James Maginel, with special thanks to Southeast Missouri State University students CariAnn Bergner and Erin Slattery.

⁸ Preventing Drug Use among Children and Adolescents. A Research-Based Guide for Parents, Educators, and Community Leaders, Second Edition 2003, National Institute on Drug Abuse, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.