

Tips For Parents

Have you ever wondered why some students experiment with drugs, others students never even try them, and another group of students become consistent users? The Risk & Protective Factor Model (Catalano & Hawkins) is an effective model to consider when asking these questions. There are five problem behaviors parents do not want their children to be involved with, they are:

1. Substance Abuse
2. Teen Pregnancy
3. Violence
4. School Dropout
5. Delinquency

These are the Protective Factors which decrease the likelihood students will get involved in these problem behaviors.

Family Domain Protective Factors

These factors help foster a positive environment for children.

Family Attachment- Young People who feel that they are valued part of their family are less likely to engage in substance use and other behavioral problems.

Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement- Young people are exposed to more opportunities to participate meaningfully in the responsibilities and activities of the family are less likely to engage in drug use and other problem behaviors.

Rewards for Prosocial Involvement- When parents, siblings, and other family members praise, encourage, and attend to things done well by their child, children are less likely to engage in substance use and problem behaviors.

Family Risk Factors

These are the factors that contribute to drug use within children.

Poor Family Management- Parents use of inconsistent and/or unusually harsh or severe punishment with their children places them at higher risk for substance use and other problem behaviors. Also, parents' failure to provide clear expectations and to monitor their children's behavior makes it more likely that they will engage in drug use whether or not there are family drug problems.

Family Conflict- Children raised in families high in conflict, whether the child is directly involved in the conflict, appear at risk for both delinquency and drug use.

Family History of Antisocial Behavior- When children are raised in a family with a history of problem behaviors (e.g. violence or ATOD use), the children are more likely to engage in this behavior.

Parental Attitudes Favorable toward Antisocial Behavior & Drugs- In families where parents use illegal drugs, are heavy users of alcohol, or are tolerant of children's use, children are more likely to become drug abusers in their adolescence. The risk is further increased if parents involve children in their own drug (or alcohol) using behavior, for example, asking the child to light the parent's cigarette or get the parents a beer from the refrigerator.