

## RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

**It is important to identify both Risk and Protective Factors when creating a prevention program for a community.**



Principles for adhering to the *Risk and Protective Factors* model in prevention programs.

**PRINCIPLE 1** - Prevention programs should enhance protective factors and reverse or reduce risk factors.

**PRINCIPLE 2** - Prevention programs should address all forms of drug abuse, alone or in combination, including the underage use of legal drugs (e.g., tobacco or alcohol); the use of illegal drugs (e.g., marijuana or heroin); and the inappropriate use of legally obtained substances (e.g., inhalants), prescription medications, or over-the-counter drugs.

**PRINCIPLE 3** - Prevention programs should address the type of drug abuse problem in the local community, target modifiable risk factors, and strengthen identified protective factors.

**PRINCIPLE 4** - Prevention programs should be tailored to address risks specific to population or audience characteristics, such as age, gender, and ethnicity, to improve program effectiveness.



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The Indiana Prevention Resource Center is operated by the Department of Applied Health Science, School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation at Indiana University. Funded, in part, by a contract with the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Mental Health and Addiction, financially supported through Health and Human Services/Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant.

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**Risk Factors:** Characteristic of people or their family, school, and/or community environments that are associated with increases in alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

Examples of Risk Factors:

- Chaotic home environments, particularly in which parents abuse substances or suffer from mental illnesses
- Ineffective parenting, especially with children with difficult temperaments or conduct disorders
- Lack of parent-child attachments and nurturing
- Inappropriately shy or aggressive behavior in the classroom
- Failure in school performance
- Poor social coping skills
- Affiliations with peers displaying deviant behaviors
- Perceptions of approval of drug-using behaviors in family, work, school, peer, and community environments

**Protective Factors:** Factors associated with reduced drug use potential, encompassing psychological, behavioral, family, and social characteristics that can insulate individuals from effects of risk factors in the environment.

Examples of Protective Factors:

- Strong and positive family bonds
- Parental monitoring of children's activities and peers
- Clear rules of conduct that are consistently enforced within the family
- Involvement of parents in the lives of their children
- Success in school performance; strong bonds with institutions, such as school and religious organizations
- Adoption of conventional norms about drug use

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