

LifeSkills™ Training

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Program developers or their agents provided the Model Program information below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

LifeSkills™ Training is an in-school substance abuse prevention and violence prevention program for upper elementary and middle or junior high school students 11 to 14 years old. It provides students with the necessary skills to resist social pressure to smoke, drink, and use drugs; helps them develop greater self-esteem, self-mastery, and self-confidence; enables children to effectively cope with social anxiety; increases their knowledge of the immediate consequences of substance abuse; and enhances cognitive and behavioral competency to reduce and prevent a variety of health risk behaviors.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Beginning in the 1980s, a series of evaluation studies were conducted to test the effectiveness of substance abuse prevention approaches based on the *LifeSkills* model. These studies helped facilitate the development of a prevention approach that is effective with different problem behaviors when implemented by different types of providers and populations.

The early research focused on cigarette smoking and involved predominantly White, middle-class populations. More recent research extended this work to other problem behaviors including substance use. This research has increasingly focused on the utility of this approach when used with inner-city, minority populations. Finally, this research assessed the long-term durability of the *LifeSkills* Training prevention model, its impact on hypothesized mediating variables, and the importance of high-fidelity implementation.



RECOGNITION

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Model Program

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Programs That Work

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice: Model Program

White House Office of National Drug Control Policy: Model Program

U.S. Department of Education: Exemplary Program

National Institute on Drug Abuse, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Programs That Work

Drug Strategies, Inc.: Grade "A"

INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE CLASSIFICATION (IOM)

UNIVERSAL

Developed for a universal audience.

INTERVENTION TYPE

SCHOOL-BASED

CONTENT FOCUS

ALCOHOL, ILLEGAL DRUGS, TOBACCO

This program addresses general substance abuse prevention.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY, PEER, SCHOOL

INDIVIDUAL

- Social development, self-esteem, self-discipline
- Communication skills
- Decisionmaking skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Social skills
- Assertiveness and refusal skills
- Stress and anxiety management
- Goal setting, self-monitoring, self-reinforcement

FAMILY

- Effective communication with parents and other family members

PEER

- Resistance to peer pressure
- Social skills

SCHOOL

- Academic success
 - Goal setting
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RISK FACTORS

INDIVIDUAL, PEER

INDIVIDUAL

- First confrontation with illegal substances, tobacco, and alcohol
- Lack of self-control and assertiveness

PEER

- Pro-drug influences
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INTERVENTIONS BY DOMAIN

INDIVIDUAL, PEER, SCHOOL, SOCIETY

INDIVIDUAL

- After-school alcohol, tobacco, and drug education/peer-led curricula
- Life skills/social skills training (e.g., classroom training, training outside of school, role-play)

PEER

- Peer-resistance education

SCHOOL

- Classroom drug education
- Classroom-based skills development

SOCIETY

- Media education to counter alcohol and tobacco advertising

KEY PROGRAM APPROACHES

AFTER-SCHOOL CURRICULA/ACTIVITIES, IN-SCHOOL CURRICULA, SKILL DEVELOPMENT

AFTER-SCHOOL CURRICULA/ACTIVITIES

The *LifeSkills* Training curriculum can be taught in after-school programs or other community settings.

IN-SCHOOL CURRICULA

This program is delivered during standard 45-minute class periods. The structured curriculum includes booster sessions that are delivered during the 2 years subsequent to the initial intervention.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Develops drug resistance skills that enable youth to recognize and challenge common misconceptions about substance use, as well as deal with peer and media pressure to engage in substance use.

Develops self-management skills that help students examine their self-image and its effects on behavior. Develops goal setting, personal progress, and decisionmaking skills.

Develops social skills that enable students to overcome shyness, communicate effectively, and avoid misunderstandings; use both verbal and nonverbal assertiveness skills to make or refuse requests; and recognize that they have choices other than aggression or passivity when faced with tough situations.

Typical problems that users experience in implementing these program strategies and potential solutions:

This program is complex and must be implemented precisely. Therefore, training for teachers is strongly recommended.

HOW IT WORKS

The *LifeSkills* Training curriculum for middle (or junior high) schools is intended to run for 15 class periods of 45 minutes each. A booster intervention has been developed that is taught over 10 class periods in the second year and five in the third year. This means the initial program should be implemented with sixth or seventh grade students, followed by booster sessions during the next 2 years. Optional violence prevention units can be implemented for each year of the program, extending the overall number of class sessions.

The *LifeSkills* Training elementary school curriculum runs for 24 class sessions, each 30 to 45 minutes long, to be conducted over 3 years. The first year (i.e., Level 1) is composed of eight class sessions and covers all skill areas. The remaining booster sessions are divided into eight class sessions for Level 2 and eight for Level 3. The booster sessions provide additional skill development and opportunities to practice in key areas. Level 1 is designed for either grade three or four, depending on when the transition from elementary to middle school begins.

Both the elementary and middle school programs can either be taught intensively (consecutively every day or two to three times a week) until the program is complete, or they can be taught on a more extended schedule (once a week). Both formats have proven to be equally effective.

LifeSkills is a completely self-contained prevention curriculum. To implement the program, in addition to a *LifeSkills*-trained provider (teacher, counselor, or health professional), all that is required is a curriculum set consisting of a *Teacher's Manual*, *Student Guide*, and relaxation tape.

Provider training is available for individuals interested in conducting the *LifeSkills* program. All training is conducted by qualified trainers who are certified by National Health Promotion Associates, Inc. The provider training workshop is designed to—

- Teach the background, theory, and rationale for *LifeSkills*
- Familiarize participants with the program
- Teach participants the skills needed to conduct *LifeSkills*
- Provide an opportunity to practice teaching selected portions of the program
- Discuss practical implementation issues

A preplanning instrument is being developed as an additional technical assistance service, at cost, to assist schools in assessing their capacity to implement *LifeSkills* Training.

OUTCOMES

DECREASES IN SUBSTANCE USE, OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

DECREASES IN SUBSTANCE USE

Reduced initiation of cigarette smoking by 75% and, 3 months after program completion, by 67%.

Reduced alcohol use by 54%, heavy drinking by 73%.

Reduced drinking to intoxication one or more times a week by 79%.

Reduced marijuana use by 71% and weekly or more frequent use by 83%.

Reduced multiple drug use by 66%.

Reduced both long- and short-term substance abuse.

Reduced pack-a-day smoking by 25%.

Decreased use of inhalants, narcotics, and hallucinogens by up to 50%.

OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

Develops resistance to peer and media pressure to use substances

Develops a positive self-image

Develops decisionmaking and problem-solving skills

Helps youth manage anxiety

Fosters effective communication

Builds healthy relationships

Increases youths' self-confidence in social situations

EVALUATION DESIGN

Over the past 20 years, a dozen evaluation studies of *LifeSkills* Training have been conducted. Among these are—

- A randomized study that tested the effectiveness of peer leaders as providers of *LifeSkills* Training. The number of new smokers in the group that received training with the peer leader was compared with a control group. Results were corroborated by a saliva thiocyanate (SCN) analysis, where an increase in SCN levels is indicative of increased smoking.
- A randomized study that compared alcohol use over the past month and degree of use by students who received *LifeSkills* Training with use rates reported by a control group.
- The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services funded a study of approximately 1,200 seventh grade students (from predominantly White, middle-class families) in 10 suburban New York junior high schools. The study compared the proportion of students reporting marijuana use in the peer-led *LifeSkills* group and a group of students who received *LifeSkills* booster sessions with the rates reported in the control group.
- NIDA also funded a randomized study involving nearly 6,000 students from 56 middle schools. Students received the program in the seventh through ninth grades and followup data were collected at the end of the twelfth grade.

DELIVERY SPECIFICATIONS

1–3 YEARS

Amount of time required to deliver the program to obtain documented outcomes:

Elementary school curriculum:

24 sessions, each 30 to 45 minutes long, conducted over 3 years.

First year: 8 sessions.

Second and third years: 8 booster sessions per year.

Can be conducted intensively (several times per week) or with an extended schedule (once a week).

Middle school curriculum:

30 sessions, each 45 minutes long, conducted over 3 years.

First year: 15 sessions.

Second year: 10 booster sessions.

Third year: 5 booster sessions.

INTENDED SETTING

RURAL, URBAN, SUBURBAN

This program was developed and tested in rural, urban, and suburban settings.

FIDELITY

Qualified trainers certified by National Health Promotion Associates, Inc., must train the teacher, counselor, or health professional who implements *LifeSkills* Training.

The distributor has fidelity checklists that are available free of charge, although they must be specially requested.

Optional components or strategies and how they were determined to be optional:

The elementary and middle school programs can be taught intensively (consecutively every day or two or three times a week) until it is complete, or they can be taught on a more extended schedule (once a week). Both formats have proved to be equally effective.

There are optional violence prevention units that can be implemented for each year of the middle school program, extending the overall number of class sessions.

PERSONNEL

FULL TIME, PART TIME

Full- or part-time teachers, counselors, or health professionals.

EDUCATION

UNDERGRADUATE, SPECIAL CERTIFICATION

Certified *LifeSkills* Training trainers must train teachers or personnel teaching the course.

PERSONNEL TRAINING

Type: SEMINAR/WORKSHOP, Location: ONSITE (user)/OFFSITE (developer or trainer location), Length: BASIC/REFRESHER (if required)

Training by certified *LifeSkills* trainers is required for all teachers or school personnel who teach this course. The training workshop is designed to:

Teach the background, theory, and rationale for the program.

Familiarize participants with the program.

Teach participants the skills needed to conduct the program.

Provide an opportunity to practice teaching selected portions of the program.

Discuss practical implementation issues.

There are two types of training events, both of which are posted on the Web site:

Onsite Training (which constitutes most training): an organization can schedule onsite training for a minimum of 20 participants.

Open Training: sessions that are open to anyone interested and are usually sponsored by *LifeSkills* Training.

COST (estimated in U.S. dollars)

\$1,001–5,000

Cost considerations for implementing this program as recommended by the developer:

TRAINING

Training \$1,000 per day, includes training materials, but not the curriculum

Elementary school level requires 2 days of training.

Middle school level requires 2 days of core training and 1 day of training for each booster year.

Training participants should purchase the materials for their grade level (*Teacher’s Manual*, *Student Guide*, “Relaxation Tape”, and optional “Smoking and Biofeedback” video) prior to the training and bring the materials with them to the training.

MATERIALS

There are different ways of purchasing the materials—either individual items by grade level or a classroom set by grade level. Products include one *Teacher’s Manual*, *Student Guides* (30 in a classroom set), a “Relaxation Tape”, and a “Smoking and Biofeedback” video).

A single *Elementary Teacher’s Manual* and *Student Guide* \$95

A single *Middle School Teacher’s Manual* and *Student Guide* \$100

Optional violence unit \$15

Cost of middle school materials (includes *Teacher’s Manual*, 30 *Student Guides*, and “Relaxation Tape”):

First year (6th/7th grade) \$275

Second year \$225

Third year \$175

Full set/3 years \$625

Cost of elementary school materials (includes a *Teacher’s Manual* and 30 *Student Guides*):

First year (3rd/4th grade) \$235

Second year \$235

Third year \$235

Full set/3 years \$655

OTHER COSTS

Travel, hotel, and per diem for the trainer.

Costs of overhead projector, newsprint paper, and other training supplies.

INTENDED AGE GROUP

CHILDHOOD (5–11), EARLY ADOLESCENT (12–14)

The grade levels are somewhat flexible, depending on how the school system defines different levels of education.

This program was developed for:

Elementary

- Year 1: grades 3–4
- Year 2: grades 4–5
- Year 3: grades 5–6

Middle School

- Year 1: Grades 6–7 (core)
 - Year 2: Grades 7–8 (booster)
 - Year 3: Grades 8–9 (booster)
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INTENDED POPULATION

AFRICAN AMERICAN, ASIAN AMERICAN, HISPANIC/LATINO, WHITE

This program has been designed for a general population and has been tested with White, African-American, Hispanic/Latino and Asian American students in middle schools.

GENDER FOCUS

BOTH GENDERS

This program was developed for male and female students.

REPLICATION INFORMATION

NO INFORMATION PROVIDED

CONTACT INFORMATION

ABOUT THE DEVELOPER

LifeSkills Training was developed through the research of Gilbert J. Botvin, Ph.D., who is a professor in the Public Health and Psychiatry Departments of Weill Medical College at Cornell University and director of Cornell's Institute for Prevention Research. National Health Promotion Associates, Inc., provides training and technical assistance. Princeton Health Press provides the curriculum materials.

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