

*Effective Substance Abuse and
Mental Health Programs
for Every Community*

Project Northland

Project Northland is a multilevel, multiyear program proven to delay the age at which young people begin drinking, to reduce alcohol use among those who have already tried drinking, and to limit the number of alcohol-related problems of young drinkers. Designed for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students (10 to 14 years old), Project Northland addresses both individual behavioral change and environmental change. Project Northland also strives to change how parents communicate with their children, how peers influence each other, and how communities respond to young adolescent alcohol use. Components include:

- Parent involvement
- Behavioral curricula
- Peer-led small group activities
- Community mobilization
- Strategies to reduce access to alcohol

Each intervention year has an overall theme and is tailored to the developmental level of the young adolescent. Alcohol is the focus of the Project Northland program because it is American teenagers' drug of choice and inflicts the greatest harm among youth.

INTENDED POPULATION

Project Northland is designed to provide state-of-the-art alcohol use prevention materials for students in grades six through eight. The original evaluation involved approximately 2,400 students from 24 school districts in northeastern Minnesota. This largely rural area is one of the U.S. communities rated highest for alcohol-related problems. A replication of the Project Northland study is currently under way in a major city.

Proven Results*

- Weekly alcohol use was 46% lower in the intervention group
- Marijuana use was 50% less and cigarette use was 37% less at the end of eighth grade
- The intervention group felt less peer pressure to use alcohol
- Better parent-child communication about the consequences of alcohol use

**Baseline non-users relative to the control group.*

INTERVENTION

Universal

Selective

Indicated



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
www.samhsa.gov

OUTCOMES

Project Northland sustained widespread participation in the program, including 3 years of curricula implementation in all intervention schools, parent participation in alcohol education activities, and participation by nearly half of the students in peer-planned alcohol-free activities outside of school. Relative to controls, Northland participants:

- Drank significantly less at the end of eighth grade
- Were significantly less likely to be users of both alcohol and cigarettes at the end of the eighth grade

Project Northland was effective in changing peer influence to use alcohol, normative expectations about how many young people drink, and parent-child communication about the consequences of alcohol use and the reasons for not using alcohol.

BENEFITS

- Teaches youth decisionmaking and interpersonal skills
- Enhances parenting skills
- Strengthens peer, parent, and community no-use norms
- Has a positive effect on other substance use
- Reduces youth access to alcohol

HOW IT WORKS

Project Northland consists of four components:

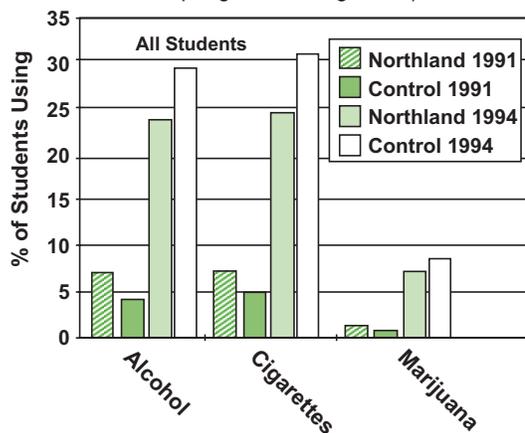
- **Slick Tracy Home Team Program** has sixth grade students and their parents complete fun and educational activities at home. This “home team” approach provides a forum for the students and their families to discuss alcohol-related issues using the Slick Tracy comic book series during the eight 45-minute classroom sessions. Students create posters and exhibits about alcohol and explain them to the parents attending Slick Tracy Poster Fair.
- **Amazing Alternatives!** provides curriculum for eight 45-minute teacher- and peer-led classroom sessions. It is designed to teach seventh graders the skills to identify and resist influences to use alcohol and to encourage alcohol-free alternatives.
- **PowerLines** features eight 45-minute sessions that are part of a 4-week program for eighth grade students. It teaches students how communities influence behavior and how they can create changes in communities.
- **Supercharged!** includes strategies that worked in Project Northland communities and provides schools with materials and a framework that can help them get parents and communities involved to reduce youth access to alcohol. Youth are placed in a leadership role to support healthy activities and initiatives.

IMPLEMENTATION ESSENTIALS

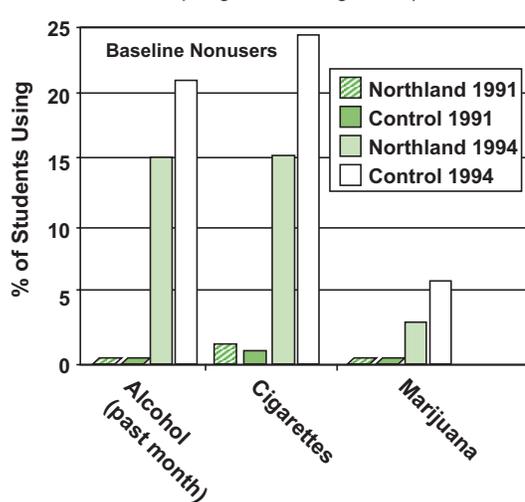
Successful replication of the Project Northland model requires:

- Student involvement from sixth through eighth grades
- Teacher and peer training (recommended to maintain implementation fidelity)
- Incorporation of student-selected peer leaders at all three grade levels
- A community member task force
- Program coordinator

**Project Northland
Alcohol and Other Drug Use Outcomes**
(Fall 1991 6th graders to followup
Spring 1994, 8th graders)



**Project Northland
Alcohol and Other Drug Use Outcomes**
(Fall 1991 6th graders to followup
Spring 1994, 8th graders)



Training and Technical Assistance

Project Northland, through Hazelden Information and Educational Services, can provide training of teachers and community coordinators based on local needs. Training can be conducted for one grade level each year or for all three grade levels at once. Hazelden also offers evaluation services.

Program Materials and Resources

The following materials are available from Hazelden:

- **Slick Tracy Home Team Program** (Sixth Grade)—includes 1 teacher's manual, 30 sets of 4 comic books, 30 envelopes, and 1 poster
- **Amazing Alternatives!** (Seventh Grade)—includes one teacher's manual, four cassette tapes, one blackboard game, and two posters
- **PowerLines** (Eighth Grade)—includes one teacher's manual and one cassette tape
- **Supercharged!**—a manual that presents successful strategies for getting parents and communities involved in youth alcohol use prevention (includes the Community Night Game Pack)
- **Project Northland Complete Set**—includes one each of the three grade-level programs, as well as the ancillary products

Timeline

One day of training is strongly suggested for each year's curriculum. This training can equip those providing direct services to youth or persons who will then train additional staff to use the program. It is suggested the program be implemented beginning with Slick Tracy in year one, Amazing Alternatives! in year two, and PowerLines in year three. The community mobilization training is designed to build coalitions and can be scheduled anytime during the 3-year implementation cycle.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Project Northland was developed at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health, Division of Epidemiology, and evaluated with a grant from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The evaluation was the largest and most rigorous alcohol use prevention trial ever funded by NIAAA, and Project Northland was shown to be effective in delaying and reducing alcohol use among young adolescents. After the initial evaluation, the program underwent extensive pilot testing in a comparable Minnesota community, and revisions were made prior to implementation.

EVALUATION DESIGN

The Project Northland evaluation involved approximately 2,400 students from 24 school districts in northeastern Minnesota during their sixth, seventh, and eighth grade years (1991 to 1994), and included children from seven area American Indian reservations. This area has the highest rate of alcohol-related problems in the State.

Twenty-four school districts were recruited systematically and four smaller school districts were combined with nearby districts to ensure an adequate sample size in each unit to be randomized. These combined districts were blocked by size and randomized to an intervention condition (n=10) or a reference condition (n=10). The population of the six participating counties was 235,000; 94 percent of the students were White, while American Indian students constituted about 5.5 percent of the study's cohort. Because of their small number, analyses of intervention effects within this subgroup were not possible. This area is predominantly rural and lower-middle class to middle class. (See *Outcomes* for details.)

PROGRAM DEVELOPER

The University of Minnesota, School of Public Health, Division of Epidemiology, in 1991, was awarded a grant from NIAAA, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to develop Project Northland. Through the research and development of this program, developers were able to successfully link and study behavioral curricula in schools, parental involvement, extracurricular peer leadership, and community-wide efforts for the prevention of adolescent alcohol use.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Ann R. Standing
National Sales Manager
Prevention and Education
Hazelden Publishing and Educational Services
RW9 15251 Pleasant Valley Road
PO Box 176
Center City, MN 55012-0176
Toll-free: (800) 328-9000, ext. 4030
Phone: (651) 213-4030
Fax: (651) 213-4793
E-mail: astanding@hazelden.org
Web site: www.hazelden.org

For information on training or to order materials, contact:

Hazelden Information and Educational Services
Box 176
Center City, MN 55012-0176
Phone: (800) 328-9000
Fax: (651) 213-4590

RECOGNITION

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

Exemplary Program—U.S. Department of Education

Rated "A"—Drug Strategies, Making the Grade

Promising Program—Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice