

OVERVIEW OF SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER (SUDs)

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KEY TAKE-AWAYS:

Prevention can be effective, but needs to be a concerted, ongoing effort, with an evidence base supporting the approach.

Levels of Prevention

- Primary/Universal: provided to all of a population (school, grade level)
- Secondary/Targeted: directed to individuals at higher risk (those with a family history of mental health issues or substance use issues)
- Tertiary/Indicated: given to those already showing signs of an issue. Can also be thought of as early intervention or treatment

Risk Factors for Substance Use

- Family history, particularly genetic, but environmental as well
- Trauma/Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)
- Perception of community approval of substance use
- Negative peer support/influence
- Poor family oversight/supervision/boundaries
- Low academic aspiration
- Poverty

Protective Factors

- Positive family support/engagement
- Anti-drug use policies
- High academic/achievement aspiration
- Community disapproval of substance use
- Positive peer support/influence

Effective Prevention Strategies are...

- Ongoing, organized, processing, discussion
- Provided by credible providers
- Providing accurate information non-judgmentally
- Examples: social norms approaches

Ineffective Prevention Strategies are...

- Scare tactics
- The “one-shot deal”: wrecked car before prom, dramatic one-time speakers

Actions to consider:

- Model responsible, legal use (or abstinence, of course)
- Don't glorify or normalize use (“everyone gets drunk at college”)

- Dispose of unused medications
- Get trained in naloxone administration
- Advocate for resources
- Reduce stigma
- Celebrate and support recovery

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Words have power. How can you change the way you refer to substance use and addiction to avoid further stigmatization of SUDs?
- What environmental factors exist in your school community that contribute to unhealthy substance use?
- What information shared in the webinar was surprising or eye-opening for you?
- What protective factors can you contribute to or increase access to for students?
- How can you build your awareness and the awareness of others around community resources available in your community?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Virginia DBHDS REVIVE](#)
- [Chris Atwood Foundation](#)
- [Lock and Talk Virginia: Access to Free Lock Boxes for Medicine](#)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#)
- [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)
- [Virginia Department of Education Resource Document on Substance Abuse Prevention \(2021\)](#)
- [American School Counselor Association: A School Counselor's Role in Substance Abuse Prevention](#)
- [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#)
- [Addiction Technology Transfer Network](#)
- [Prevention Technology Transfer Network](#)
- [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.). American Psychological Association (2013)

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