

# Principles of Effective Substance Abuse Prevention

This page provides a brief listing of the scientifically defensible principles that can help service providers design and implement programs that work. The more detailed descriptions of each principle can be found at [http://modelprograms.samhsa.gov/pdfs/pubs\\_Principles.pdf](http://modelprograms.samhsa.gov/pdfs/pubs_Principles.pdf). The principles are divided into six domains: Individual, Family, Peer, School, Community, and Society/Environmental.

## Individual Domain

- I-1 Build social and personal skills.
- I-2 Design culturally sensitive interventions.
- I-3 Cite immediate consequences.
- I-4 Combine information dissemination and media campaigns with other interventions.
- I-5 Provide positive alternatives to help youth in high-risk environments develop personal and social skills
- I-6 Recognize that relationships exist between substance use and a variety of other adolescent health problems.
- I-7 Incorporate problem identification and referral into prevention programs.
- I-8 Provide transportation to prevention programs.

## Family Domain

- F-1 Target the entire family.
- F-2 Help develop bonds among parents in programs; provide meals, transportation, and small gifts; sponsor family outings; and ensure cultural sensitivity.
- F-3 Help minority families respond to cultural and racial issues.
- F-4 Develop parenting skills.
- F-5 Emphasize family bonding.
- F-6 Offer sessions where parents and youth learn and practice skills.
- F-7 Train parents to both listen and interact.
- F-8 Train parents to use positive and consistent discipline techniques.
- F-9 Promote new skills in family communication through interactive techniques.
- F-10 Employ strategies to overcome parental resistance to family-based programs.
- F-11 Improve parenting skills and child behavior with intensive support.
- F-12 Improve family functioning through family therapy when indicated.
- F-13 Explore alternative community sponsors and sites for schools.
- F-14 Videotape training and education.

## Peer Domain

- P-1 Structure alternative activities and supervise alternative events.
- P-2 Incorporate social and personal skills-building opportunities.
- P-3 Design intensive alternative programs that include a variety of approaches and time commitment.
- P-4 Communicate peer norms against use of alcohol and illicit drugs.
- P-5 Involve youth in the development of alternative programs.
- P-6 Involve youth in peer-led interventions or interventions with peer-led components.
- P-7 Counter the effects of deviant norms and behaviors by creating an environment for youth with behavior problems to interact with other nonproblematic youth.

## School Domain

- S-1 Avoid relying solely on knowledge-oriented interventions designed to supply information about negative consequences.
- S-2 Correct misconceptions about the prevalence of use in conjunction with other education approaches.
- S-3 Involve youth in peer-led interventions or interventions with peer-led components.
- S-4 Give students opportunities to practice newly acquired skills through interactive approaches.
- S-5 Help youth retain skills through booster sessions.
- S-6 Involve parents in school-based approaches.
- S-7 Communicate a commitment to substance abuse prevention in school policies.

## Community Domain

- C-1 Develop integrated, comprehensive prevention strategies rather than one-time community-based events.
- C-2 Control the environment around schools and other areas where youth gather.
- C-3 Provide structured time with adults through mentoring.
- C-4 Increase positive attitudes through community service.
- C-5 Achieve greater results with highly involved mentors.
- C-6 Emphasize the costs to employers of workers' substance use and abuse.
- C-7 Communicate a clear school policy on substance abuse.
- C-8 Include representatives from every organization that plays a role in fulfilling coalition objectives.
- C-9 Retain active coalition members by providing meaningful rewards.
- C-10 Define specific goals and assign specific responsibility for their achievement to subcommittee and task forces.
- C-11 Ensure planning and clear understanding for coalition effectiveness.
- C-12 Set outcome-based objectives.
- C-13 Support a large number of prevention activities.
- C-14 Organize at the neighborhood level.
- C-15 Assess progress from an outcome-based perspective and make adjustments to the plan to meet goals.
- C-16 Involve paid coalition staff as resource providers and facilitators rather than as direct community organizers.

## Society/Environmental Domain

- S/E-1 Develop community awareness and media efforts.
- S/E-2 Use mass media appropriately.
- S/E-3 Provide structured time with adults through mentoring.
- S/E-4 Avoid the use of authority figures.
- S/E-5 Broadcast messages frequently over an extended period of time.
- S/E-6 Broadcast messages through multiple channels when the target audience is likely to be viewing or listening.
- S/E-7 Disseminate information about the hazards of a product or industry that promotes it.
- S/E-8 Promote restrictions on alcohol advertising in public places
- S/E-9 Promote restrictions on tobacco use in public places and private workplaces.
- S/E-10 Promote alcohol retailer compliance checks
- S/E-11 Combine beverage server training with law enforcement.
- S/E-12 Promote keg registration ordinances.
- S/E-13 Increase the price of alcohol and tobacco through excise taxes.
- S/E-14 Increase minimum purchase age for alcohol to 21.
- S/E-15 Limit the location and density of retail alcohol outlets.
- S/E-16 Employ neighborhood antidrug strategies.
- S/E-17 Enforce minimum purchase age laws using undercover buying operations.
- S/E-18 Use community groups to provide positive and negative feedback to merchants.
- S/E-19 Employ more frequent enforcement operations.
- S/E-20 Implement "use and lose" laws.
- S/E-21 Enact deterrence laws and policies for impaired driving.
- S/E-22 Enforce impaired-driving laws.
- S/E-23 Combine sobriety checkpoints with positive passive breath sensors.
- S/E-24 Revoke licenses for impaired driving.
- S/E-25 Immobilize or impound the vehicles of those convicted of impaired driving.
- S/E-26 Target underage drivers.

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*(Excerpt from "Principles of Substance Abuse Prevention" by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, 2001, p. 1-4.)*

**To order a free copy** of "[Principles of Substance Abuse Prevention](#)" by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (2001), contact the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI), (800) 729-6686, and request publication order no. "**PHD 865.**"