

# LIFESKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM

---

The LifeSkills Training Program (LST) is designed to prevent young adolescents from initiating or continuing cigarette, alcohol, marijuana, and other drug use. The program addresses social, psychological, cognitive, and attitudinal factors associated with the initiation of early substance use. The primary purpose of the program is to help young adolescents to develop the ability to resist peer pressure and reduce their personal motivation to smoke, drink alcohol, and use drugs.

## **Program Content:**

The LifeSkills Training Program seeks to influence the social and psychological factors that promote the initiation of early substance use. The LifeSkills Training Program is delivered in a series of classroom sessions over three years. Age appropriate versions of the curriculum are delivered to elementary (8 to 11 years of age) and middle school (11 to 14 years of age) students, beginning in third and seventh grade, respectively.

The curriculum focuses on three components:

- 2) Drug Resistance Skills – recognizing substance use misconceptions, dealing with peer pressure, and responding to media pressure
- 3) Personal Self-Management Skills – examining the effects of self-image on behavior, developing goal setting skills, identifying the influence of others on decisions, and problem solving and decision making skills
- 4) General Social Skills – the ability to overcome shyness, effectively communicate, and to be verbally and non-verbally assertive

Program participants practice how to respond to situations in which they may be pressured to use substances. General and social skills are taught using a variety of techniques including rehearsals, demonstrations, feedback, and reinforcement. The following skills are targeted:

- Decision-making ability
- Insight into media influences
- Self-esteem
- Communication skills
- Personal relationships
- Anxiety management
- Assertiveness

## **National Recognition:**

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Association (SAMHSA) Model Program
- National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) Research-Based Prevention Program
- Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) Blueprints for Violence Prevention Model Program
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Title V Exemplary Program
- U.S. Surgeon General Model Program
- Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools Exemplary Program

## **Program Effectiveness:**

The following effects have been observed up to six years after the LifeSkills Training Program intervention:

- Alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use reduced by 50% to 75%
- Multiple drug use decreased up to 66%
- Pack-a-day smoking reduced by 25%

### **Protective Factors**

*Targeted for an Increase*

- Effective communication
- Promotion of healthy beliefs and clear standards
- Family bonding
- Opportunities and life skills

### **Risk Factors**

*Targeted for a Decrease*

- Community laws and norms favorable toward drug use, firearms, and crime
- Favorable attitudes toward problem behaviors and substance use
- Friends who engage in problem behaviors
- Early initiation of problem behaviors