



PREVENTION TALK

RISK FACTORS - WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

WRITTEN BY DIANE HIPPI

EDITED BY KRIS GABRIELSEN AND JACK WILSON

CSAP'S WESTERN CENTER FOR THE
APPLICATION OF PREVENTION TECHNOLOGIES
JULIE HOGAN, PH.D. DIRECTOR

Issue Number 12

In America's homes, communities, and schools, positive adult role models are working to reduce risk factors in the lives of young people in order to decrease the chances they will develop behavior problems. Risk factors are conditions that increase the likelihood that a young person will develop one or more behavior problems in adolescence.¹ This month's Prevention TALK is the second in a two-part series on the risk and protective factors for substance abuse prevention.

The science behind the prevention work being done in communities and schools across the country is based on this simple premise: to prevent a problem, we must find out what factors increase the chance of that problem occurring, then find ways to reduce the presence of these risk factors.² Parents need to know what these risk factors are so that they can begin to address them at home.

REMEMBER:

The more risk factors present in a young person's life, the greater the risk of exhibiting these problem behaviors.²

TO THINK ABOUT:

- Which risk factors are present in my teen's life?
- Which risk factor(s) can I address in my home?
- Which risk factor(s) are prevalent in my community?

ACTION STEPS:

- Learn about the risk factors for adolescent behavior problems.
- Take steps to reduce those risk factors at home. Below are two examples:
 1. **Availability of drugs...**the more available alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs are, the greater the risk the teen will use them. Parents can control the availability in the home to help reduce this risk factor.
 2. **Family management problems...**a lack of or unclear expectations for behavior, failure to monitor behavior, and a lack of appropriate and consistent consequences. Parents can set guidelines, monitor these guidelines, and apply consequences for behavior.³

The attached chart graphically shows the risk factors identified by Dr.'s Hawkins and Catalano for drug abuse and other behavior problems.

For more information call:

SOURCES:

- 1 Hogan, J. A., Gabrielsen, K., Luna, N., & Grothaus, D. (2003). *Substance abuse prevention: The intersection of science and practice*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- 2 Hawkins, J.D., Catalano, R.J. (1992). *Communities that care: Action for drug abuse prevention*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- 3 Hawkins, J.D., Catalano, R.J. (2002). Getting started – how to prevent drug use in your family. In Channing Bete (Ed.), *Guiding good choices program: Family guide*. South Deerfield, MA: Channing Bete Company, Inc.