

Risk & Protective Factors for Substance Use Disorder

Check off each factor that is present for your child. Revisit this mix for each child, over time.

Protective Factors

Conditions that buffer youth from exposure to risk by either reducing the impact of the risks, or changing the way that young people respond to risks



Risk Factors

Conditions that predict substance use

Protective Factors

Family

- Strong family bonds, defined as warmth, attachment and commitment
- Healthy beliefs about substance use
- Parental monitoring and supervision
- Clear parental expectations and consequences for youth substance use

Community & School

- Healthy norms about substance use
- Strong bonds with institutions that promote positive social involvement (school, community, church)
- Opportunities for positive social involvement, skill development, and reinforcement/recognition for involvement

Individual

- Individual traits such as resiliency, positive attitudes about social involvement
- Skills to interact positively in social situations and to refuse peer social pressure
- Academic success

Risk Factors

Family

- Family history of substance use problems
- Persistent, serious family conflict
- Family management problems (such as ineffective parenting, lack of supervision, unclear expectations, lack of consequences)
- Favorable parental attitudes toward substance use
- Adverse childhood experiences (including history of parental mental illness; emotional, physical or sexual abuse or neglect; parental separation or divorce; family history of high-risk behavior; social isolation of the family; incarcerated household member)

Community & School

- Availability of substances
- Community laws and norms favorable toward substance use
- Low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization
- Extreme poverty
- Inadequate youth services or opportunities for positive social involvement
- Poor academic performance
- Lack of commitment to school

Individual & Peers

- Early and persistent antisocial behavior (lying, stealing, aggression)
- Friends who use substances
- Rebelliousness
- Criminal justice involvement or gang involvement
- Youth have favorable attitudes about substance use (low perception of risk; high perception of peer use; low disapproval of peer use)
- Early initiation of substance use
- Co-occurring disorders, or Individual traits such as risk-taking or sensation-seeking behaviors; lack of self-control; poor social coping skills; susceptibility to negative peer pressure



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