

Substance Abuse Prevention Programs: A Life Skills Approach

*Inter-American Drug Abuse
Control Commission*
Organization of American States
Washington, DC

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Outline

- n Background
- n Description of Life Skills Training
- n Evidence of Effectiveness
- n Who Can Teach It
- n Challenges of Teaching Prevention
- n Next Steps

Background

Advances in Prevention Science

- n What are the Causes
- n What Prevention Approaches Work
- n How Long Do Effects Last
- n What Substances Can Be Prevented
- n Who Does it Work for
- n Why Do Effective Programs Work
- n What are the Obstacles to Effective Prevention

Evidence-Based Approaches

- n Extensively Tested
- n Using Rigorous Research Methods
- n Proven Effective
- n Published in Peer-Reviewed Journal

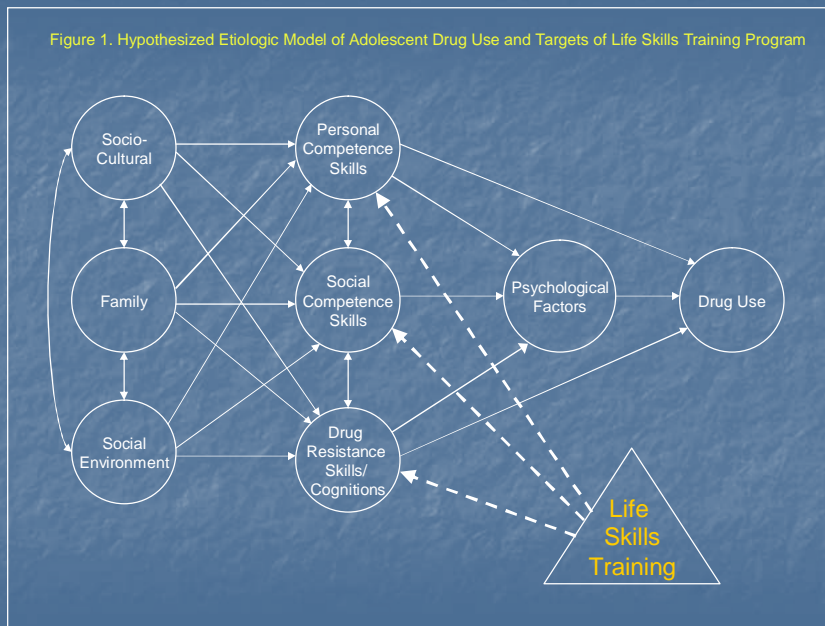
Why Conduct Tobacco Prevention in Schools?

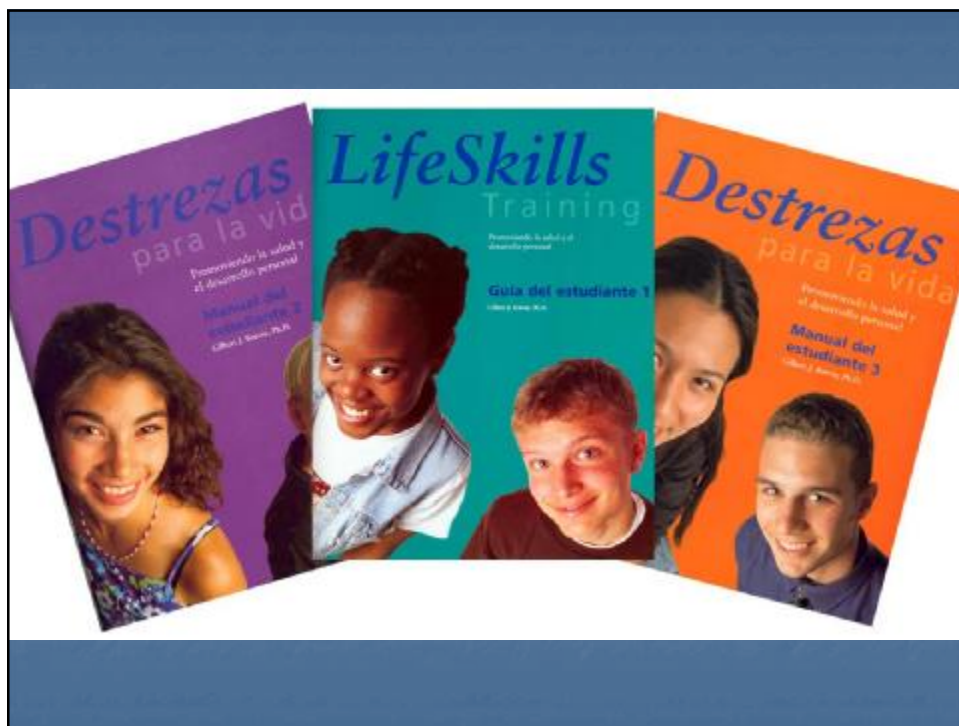
- n Easy Access
- n Large Numbers
- n Structured Setting
- n Mandated Health Education
- n Related to Educational Objectives

Prevention Approaches

- n Health Information
- n Scare Tactics
- n Social Influences
- n Competence Enhancement
(Personal and Social Skills)

Description of the Program





Life Skills Training

Major Components

- Normative Education
- Refusal/Resistance Skills
- Self-Management Skills
- Social Skills

Drug Resistance Skills

- n Awareness of Pro-Drug Social Influences
- n Anti-Drug Use Norms
- n Prevention-Related Health Knowledge
- n Resistance/Refusal Skills

Self-Management Skills

- n Problem-Solving and Decision-Making
- n Personal Behavior Change Skills (Goalsetting, Self-Monitoring, Self-Reinforcement)
- n Stress and Anxiety Management



General Social Skills

- n Effective Communication Skills
- n Greetings and Brief Social Exchanges
- n Meeting New People
- n Conversational Skills
- n Complimenting Skills
- n Assertive Skills



Number of Classes Per Year

- n 15 Class Periods (6th or 7th Grade)
- n 10 Class Periods (7th or 8th Grade)
- n 5 Class Periods (8th or 9th Grade)

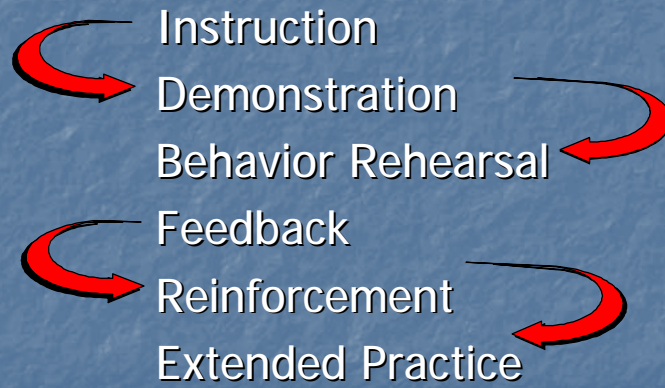
Who Can Teach LST

- n Health Professionals
- n Graduate Students
- n Peer Leaders
- n Classroom Teachers

Teaching Methods

- n Facilitate Group Discussion
- n Teach Skills
- n Provide Reinforcement
- n Provide Opportunities for Practice

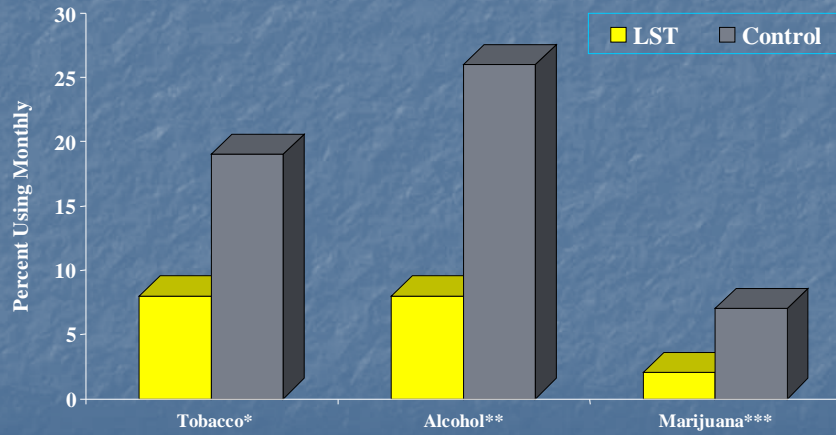
How to Teach Skills



Evidence of Effectiveness

Life Skills Training

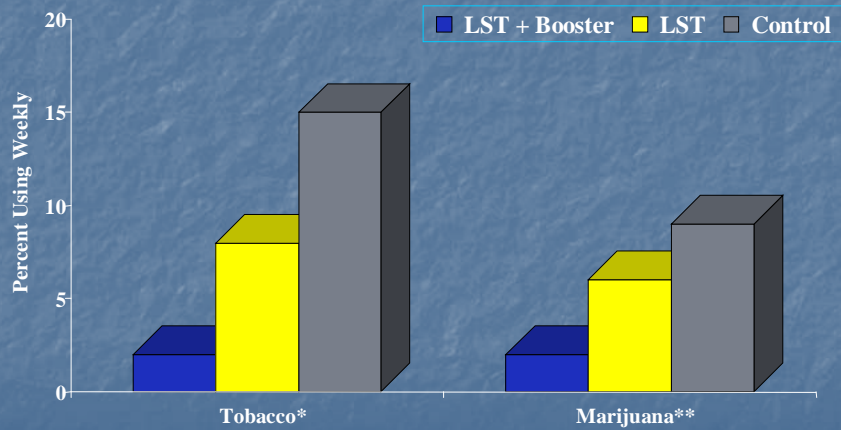
Short-Term Effects



Source: *Botvin et al. (1982), ** Botvin, Baker et al. (1984), *** Botvin, Baker, Renick et al.(1984).

Life Skills Training

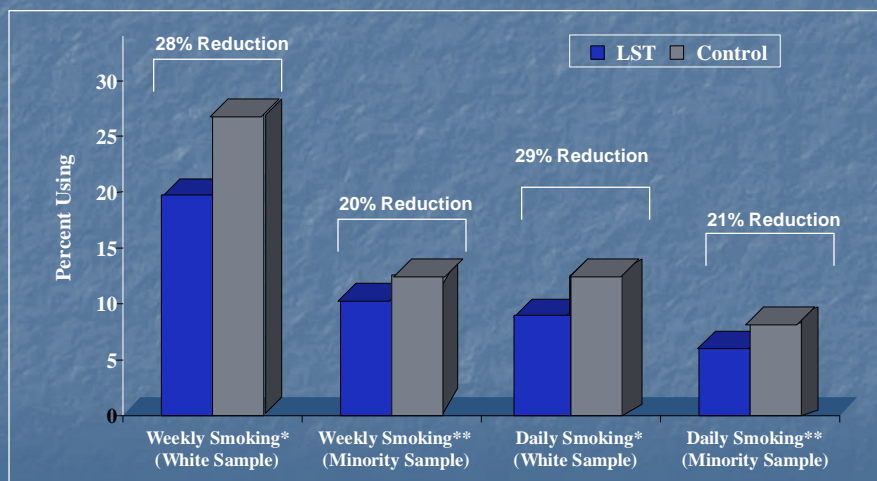
Booster Effects



Source: *Botvin et al. (1983), ** Botvin et al. (1990)

Life Skills Training

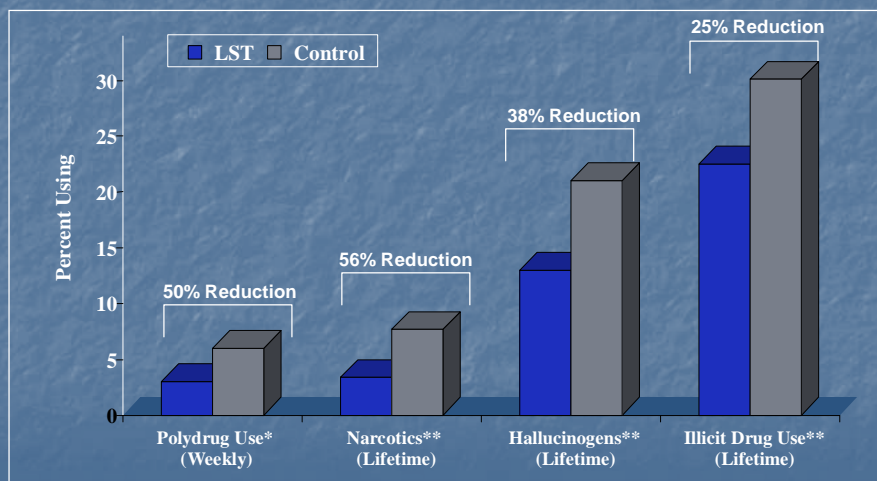
Long-Term Effects: Smoking



Source: *Botvin et al. (1995), ** Botvin et al. (2004)

Life Skills Training

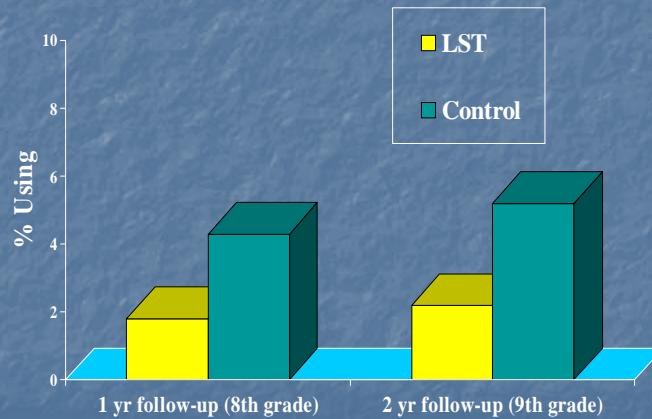
Long-Term Effects: Gateway Polydrug Use & Illicit Drug Use



Source: *Botvin et al. (1995), ** Botvin et al. (2000)

Life Skills Training

Binge Drinking (Botvin et al., 2001)



Life Skills Training

Summary of Evaluation Results

- Reduces Substance Use by 50% to 87%
- Tobacco, Alcohol, Marijuana
- Effects Last for at Least 6 Years
- Inhalants, Narcotics, Hallucinogens
- Reduces Polydrug Use
- White, African-American, Hispanic
- Urban, Suburban, Rural Youth

Challenges of Going to Scale

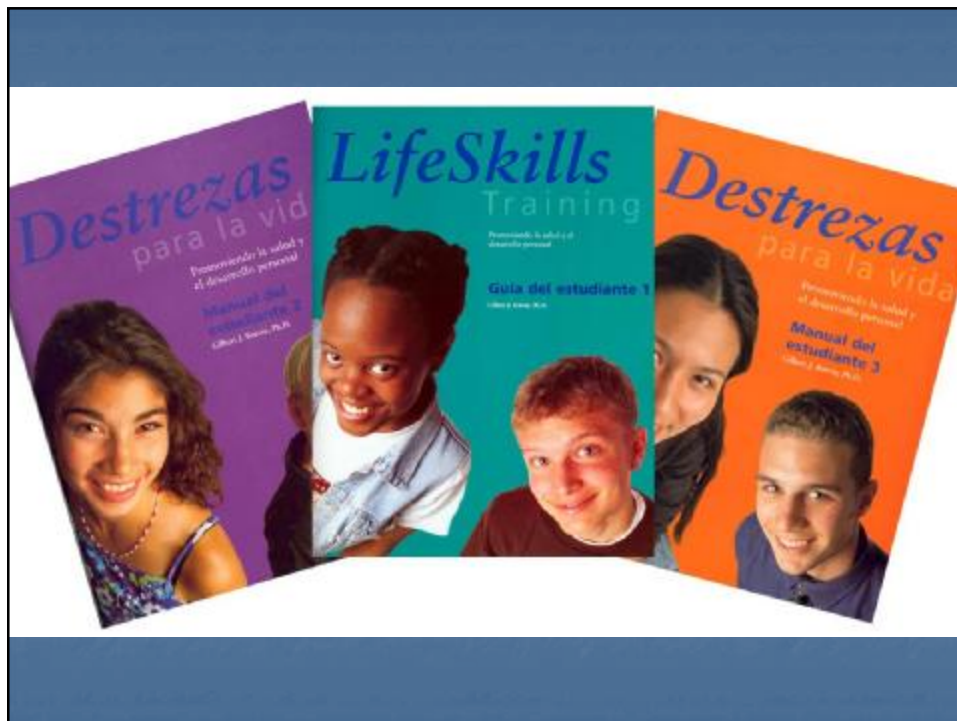
- n Develop Organizational Infrastructure
- n Increase Training Capacity
- n Refine Training Model
- n Control Quality of Training
- n Maintain Implementation Fidelity
- n Address Planning and Scheduling Issues
- n Address Technical Assistance Needs

How Can High Fidelity be Achieved

- n Emphasize Importance of Fidelity
- n Explain Underlying Theory
- n Describe Prevention Approach
- n Train Program Providers
- n Monitor Implementation
- n Provide Support and Technical Assistance

Future Research Directions

- n Refine Current Approaches
- n Identify Key Components
- n Tailor Approaches to Populations
- n More Research with Minority Youth
- n Develop Multi-Level Approaches (Schools, Family, Community)
- n Extend Findings to Related Behaviors





Thank You !

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