PREVENTION PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES

3RD BIENNIAL MEETING OF CARIBBEAN NATIONAL OBSERVATORIES ON DRUGS
ROSEAU, DOMINICA

Organization of American States

August, 2009
POLICY FRAMEWORK – LEGAL ASPECTS

- Improve and promote legal framework in each country for the development of a national prevention strategy.
- Recommend that the prevention strategies include, in the framework of the national plan, programs at all levels in a gradual, continuous and systematic process.
- Encourage adoption of a Confiscation Law that allocates a portion of confiscated and seized assets to National Anti-Drug Committees, to fund Demand Reduction Programs.
POLICY FRAMEWORK – LEGAL ASPECTS

- Each local community, region, province and country should move forward with the development of a prevention policy as part of the national plans that are consistent with the strategy and ensures its sustainable implementation

- Cooperation agencies can be instrumental in the implementation of programs of exchange, research, coordination and technical assistance among countries and other organizations to enhance sustainability of the programs
POLICY FRAMEWORK – INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

- Secure resources to enable all facilities to implement programs for the targeted populations at large.
- Encourage corporate alliances between schools and local businesses, in order to sponsor local prevention programs.
- Prevention strategies should be carried out in coordination with the NDC and the different Ministries in each country (depending on the population), which should be involved at every stage of the process, from program design and implementation, to follow up, monitoring and evaluation.**
POLICY FRAMEWORK – INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

- Encourage partnerships between government, NGOs and civil society organizations in general, in order to broaden coverage of prevention activities for direct beneficiaries.
- Cooperation agencies can be instrumental in the implementation of programs of exchange, research, coordination and technical assistance among countries and other organizations to enhance sustainability of the programs*
POLICY FRAMEWORK – ADVOCACY

- Governments must recognize the importance of value and give priority to the implementation of national prevention strategies
POLICY FRAMEWORK – PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Adopt at every facility a policy that includes programs and measures that encourage the development of attitudes, values and skills committed to healthy, drug free lifestyle.

- *Prevention strategies should be carried out in coordination with the NDC and the different Ministries in each country (depending on the population), which should be involved at every stage of the process, from program design and implementation, to follow up, monitoring and evaluation.*

- Promote participation of other sectors apart from staff of the institutions (inter alia, church organizations, public health offices, and community based prevention agencies)
PRINCIPLES OF PREVENTION PROGRAMS

- Designed to reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors.
- Address legal substances such as tobacco and alcohol as well as illegal ones.
- Include components to build socio-affective skills and positive social competencies to reinforce rejection of drug use.
- Interactive participatory methods to enhance trust between preventer agents and population
PRINCIPLES OF PREVENTION PROGRAMS

- Should target the whole community: school (students and teachers), families and community members.
- Geared to the particular conditions of the community so activities are accurately planned.
- Include selective and indicated strategies to deal with experimental users and potential abusers.
- Appropriate to age group, gender and education level – ongoing training for prevention agents
PRINCIPLES OF PREVENTION PROGRAMS

- Should be permanent and consistent: school based, family, community, workplace and other specific populations.
- Should consider condition such as gender, immigration status, living conditions (ie. street kids, foster homes)
- Should have repeated interventions to reinforce original prevention goals.
PRINCIPLES OF PREVENTION PROGRAMS

- The greater the risk of the target group, the greater the intensity and urgency of prevention effort.
- Campaigns and policy reforms are more effective when coupled with other implementing strategies.
- *Organizational capacity of institutions by the government, schools or local agencies, is the key for the successful implementation of comprehensive and coordinated programs.*
- Develop mechanisms, strengthen networks and enhance available care resources for referral of early cases of drug use to specialized agencies.
The aim is to have a drug abuse prevention policy as part of the system: create a team of persons responsible, have trained teachers and/or prevention agents, adopt standards and procedures for dealing with drug use instances as well as support ad referral mechanisms. Determine selective and indicated programs.
COMPONENTS OF PREVENTION PROGRAMS

- RESEARCH
  - Quantitative
  - Qualitative

- MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT
  - Preparation
  - Design
  - Validation
COMPONENTS OF PREVENTION PROGRAMS

TRAINING
- Prevention agents
- Teachers
- Social Workers

EVALUATION
- Process
- Results
- Impact

DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION
### RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS – INDIVIDUAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RISK</th>
<th>PROTECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Antisocial behavior and alienation/delinquent beliefs/general</td>
<td>*Positive/resilient temperament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delinquency involvement/drug dealing</td>
<td>*Religiosity/valuing involvement in organized religious activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Gun possession/illegal gun ownership/carrying</td>
<td>*Social competencies and problem-solving skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Teen parenthood</td>
<td>*Perception of social support from adults and peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Favorable attitudes toward drug use/early onset of AOD use/alcohol</td>
<td>*Healthy sense of self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Early onset of aggression/violence</td>
<td>*Positive expectations/optimism for the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Intellectual and/or development disabilities</td>
<td>*High expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Victimization and exposure to violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Poor refusal skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Life stressors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Early sexual involvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Mental disorder/mental health problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Risk and Protective Factors – School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Protective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Low academic achievement</td>
<td>*School motivation/positive attitude toward school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Negative attitude toward school/low bonding/low school attachment/commitment to school</td>
<td>*Student bonding and connectedness (attachment to teachers, belief, commitment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Truancy/frequent absences</td>
<td>*Academic achievement/reading ability and mathematics skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Suspension</td>
<td>*Opportunities and rewards for pro social school involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Dropping out of school</td>
<td>*High-quality schools/clear standards and rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Inadequate school climate/poorly organized and functioning schools/negative labeling by teachers</td>
<td>*High expectations of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Vertical relationships between teachers and students</td>
<td>*Presence and involvement of caring, supportive adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Identified as learning disabled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Frequent school transitions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS – PEER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RISK</th>
<th>PROTECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Gang involvement/gang membership</td>
<td>*Involvement with positive peer group activities and norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Peer alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Association with delinquent/aggressive peers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Peer rejection</td>
<td>*Good relationship with peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Parental approval of friends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS – FAMILY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RISK</th>
<th>PROTECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Family history of problem behavior/parent criminality</td>
<td>*Good relationships with parents/bonding or attachment to family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Family management problems/poor parental supervision and/or monitoring</td>
<td>*Opportunities and reward for pro social family involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Poor family attachment/bonding</td>
<td>*Having a stable family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Child victimization and maltreatment</td>
<td>*High family expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Family violence/high conflict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Having a young mother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Sibling antisocial behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Family transitions/broken home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Parental use of physical punishment/harsh and/or erratic discipline practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Low parent education level/illiteracy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS – COMMUNITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RISK</th>
<th>PROTECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Availability/use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs in neighborhood</td>
<td>*Economically sustainable/stable communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Availability of firearms</td>
<td>*Safe and health-promoting environment/supportive law enforcement presence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*High-crime neighborhood</td>
<td>*Positive social norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Community instability</td>
<td>*Opportunities and rewards for pro social community involvement/availability of neighborhood resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Low community attachment</td>
<td>*High community expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Economic deprivation/poverty/residence in a disadvantaged neighborhood</td>
<td>*Neighborhood/social cohesion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIFE SKILLS APPROACH

There is no definitive set of skills, they interact with each other depending on the situation.

For example:
Decision-making:
  critical thinking ("what are my options?")
  +
  values clarification ("what is important to me?")
  +
  Media, policies and health services

Behavioral Outcome
LIFE SKILLS APPROACH

- Successful as long as family, school and community work together
  - Family: Parents and/or guardians
  - School: Teachers, admin staff, directive staff
  - Community: Local business, church, local institutions
COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- **Interpersonal communication skills**
  - Verbal/Nonverbal communication
  - Active listening
  - Expressing feelings; giving feedback (without blaming) and receiving feedback

- **Negotiation/refusal skills**
  - Negotiation and conflict management
  - Assertiveness skills
  - Refusal skills

- **Empathy**
  - Ability to listen and understand another's needs and circumstances and express that understanding
COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- **Cooperation and Teamwork**
  - Expressing respect for others' contributions and different styles
  - Assessing one's own abilities and contributing to the group

- **Advocacy Skills**
  - Influencing skills & persuasion
  - Networking and motivation skills
DECISION MAKING AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Decision making / problem solving skills
- Information gathering skills
- Evaluating future consequences of present actions for self and others
- Determining alternative solutions to problems
- Analysis skills regarding the influence of values and attitudes of self and others on motivation

Critical thinking skills
- Analyzing peer and media influences
- Analyzing attitudes, values, social norms and beliefs and factors affecting these
- Identifying relevant information and information sources
COPING AND SELF MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Skills for increasing internal locus of control
- Self esteem/confidence building skills
- Self awareness skills including awareness of rights, influences, values, attitudes, rights, strengths and weaknesses
- Goal setting skills
- Self evaluation / Self assessment / Self-monitoring skills

Skills for managing feelings
- Anger management
- Dealing with grief and anxiety
- Coping skills for dealing with loss, abuse, trauma

Skills for managing stress
- Time management
- Positive thinking
- Relaxation techniques
ENHANCING LIFE SKILLS

- Facilitators have the capacity to boost students’ sense of self-worth
- Prevention atmosphere is non-threatening and non-judgmental
- Learning environment reflects care, understanding and involvement
ENHANCING LIFE SKILLS

- Facilitators and preventers:
  - Must understand what a drug abuse prevention program is under this approach.
  - Learn the skills needed to deliver programs in accordance with the rationale in the environment.
  - Understanding of the life skills needed by children and adolescents to deal with the challenges of their changing life.
  - Recognize the importance of developing life skills in their drug abuse prevention programs.
  - Understand the psychosocial development phases and developmental changes of the targeted populations.
MORE IMPACT -- LOWER COST

- Life Skills Module Curriculum
  - Schools of Education
  - Nursing Schools
  - Social Work
  - Others
SCHOOL, COMMUNITY AND FAMILY INTEGRATION

SERVICE LEARNING

- Participation in socially valued tasks is the most critical protective factor in preventing social problems like substance abuse.
- Prevention interventions are most beneficial when they simultaneously enhance personal and social assets, as well as improve the quality of the environments.
SCHOOL, COMMUNITY AND FAMILY INTEGRATION

- School attendance and drop out rates:
  - Students contribute and help in the improvement and maintenance of their school environment, and feel responsible for it.
  - Environment invites them to feel comfortable and secure (safe) they will feel more attached to it and the drop out rates and absenteeism rates will reduce.
SCHOOL, COMMUNITY AND FAMILY INTEGRATION

- Academic and Civic Engagement
  - Students learn to be responsible for their community, the space and the people around them. Activities such as recycling or cleaning the school or neighborhood, will give them a sense of ecological responsibility and at the same time they will learn how to maintain a clean environment and how to collaborate with ecological causes.
SCHOOL, COMMUNITY AND FAMILY INTEGRATION

Reducing youth risk behavior

Students are involved in defining, solving and evaluating solutions to the problems, allowing them to be more self conscious, reason why they begin to identify more clearly the risk behaviors that can lead them into substance abuse.
SCHOOL, COMMUNITY AND FAMILY INTEGRATION

- Reducing discipline problems
  - Happens as long as students learn and understand through the activities that being well behaved and having a positive and pro social attitude will help them succeed on their own goals and expectations.
SCHOOL, COMMUNITY AND FAMILY INTEGRATION

Improving classroom climate

- Facilitators encourage children to bring more of themselves in the class, as well as to understand and respect others' opinions.
- Children learn to be more tolerant to others' opinions and the relationship between teachers and students becomes more horizontal rather than vertical, since there is more exchange and sharing among everyone.
- Students begin bonding a lot more with teachers and peers improving the classroom climate.
EVALUATION

• Many programs based on the Life Skills Model have been implemented but not fully evaluated.
• Evaluation also has to be adapted depending where the program is being implemented
• Process, Results, Impact
• CICAD Evaluation Toolkit for Youth Prevention Programs