



# Approaches to the Prevention of Substance Abuse

Psychology 470

Introduction to Chemical Addictions

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## Wide Variety of Approaches

- Hawkins and Catalano
- Identified a variety of risk and protective variables that were associated with substance abuse
- Were broken out into several categories

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## Categories

- Risk Factors
  - Community Factors
  - Family Factors
  - School Factors
  - Individual/Peer Factors
- Protective Factors
  - Individual Factors
  - Bonding Factors
  - Healthy Beliefs and Clear Standards

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## Community Risk Factors

- Availability of drugs
- Community laws and norms are favorable toward drug use, firearms, and crime
- Transitions and mobility
- Low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization
- Extreme economic deprivation

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## Family Risk Factors

- Family history of problem behavior
- Family management problems
- Family conflict
- Parental attitudes and involvement in drug use, crime and violence

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## School Risk Factors

- Early and persistent antisocial behavior
- Academic failure beginning in elementary school
- Lack of commitment to school

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### Individual/Peer Risk Factors

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- Alienation /Rebelliousness
- Friends who engage in problem behavior
- Favorable attitudes toward problem behavior
- Early initiation of problem behavior
- Constitutional Factors

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### Overall Aspects about Risk

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- Usually have risk in multiple areas
- The more risk factors that are present, the greater the risk
- Common risk factors predict problem behaviors
- Risk factors show effects across races and cultures
- Protective factors may buffer risk

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### Protective Factors

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- Individual Characteristics
  - Bonding with positive persons
    - Can prevent youth from getting into trouble
  - Must have three aspects
    - Opportunity to contribute to their community, family, peers, and school
    - Must teach skills necessary to take advantage of the opportunities
    - Must be recognized and rewarded for their efforts.
    - INTELLIGENCE does not protect against substance abuse

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### Others

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- Healthy beliefs
  - Parents and community must have clear positive standards for behavior
- Clear Standards
  - Parents, teachers, and the community must set clear standards for a child's behavior
  - Must be consistent and widely supported.

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### Overall

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- When have all three protective factors, there is a significant decrease in substance abuse by youth

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### Developmental Assets Model

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- Search Institute
- Has been examining variables that help youth succeed
- Has examined several areas
- Relationships
  - Opportunities
  - Competencies
  - Values
  - Self-Perceptions

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### Result

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- Identified a variety of areas for youth do become healthy, caring, principled, and productive
- Developmental Assets
  - Are strategies to build assets for youth
  - Focus on
    - Community
    - Relationships with adults
    - Programs
  - Two major areas
    - External Assets
    - Internal assets

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### Types

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- External
  - Are assets that are provided to youth
- Internal
  - Are values and skills youth develop to guide themselves
- Four groups for each
  - Support
  - Empowerment
  - Boundaries and Expectations
  - Constructive Use of Time

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### External

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- Support
  - Family
  - Positive Family Communication
  - Support from other adults
  - Caring neighborhood
  - Caring school climate
  - Parental Involvement in schooling

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### Empowerment

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- Communities that value youth
- Youth as resources
  - Youth are seen useful
- Service to others
- Safety

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### Boundaries and Expectations

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- Come from a variety of areas
  - Family
  - School
  - Neighborhood
  - Adult role models
  - Positive peer influence
  - High expectation

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### Constructive use of Time

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- Creative Activities
- Youth Programs
- Religion
- Time at home

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### Internal Assets

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- Commitment to learning
  - Motivation in school
  - School engagement
  - Homework
  - Bonding to school
  - Reading for pleasure

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### Positive Values

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- Caring for others
- Equality and social justice
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Responsibility
- Restraint

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### Social Competencies

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- Planning and Decision Making
- Interpersonal Competence
- Cultural Competence
- Resistance skills
- Peaceful conflict resolution

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### Positive Identity

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- Personal power
- Self-esteem
- Sense of Purpose
- Positive view of their personal future

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### Overall

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- Model emphasizes strengths
- Schools and communities view youth as resources not problems
- Focus is prevention
  
- Designed to block the need for youth to use drugs

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### Evaluation of the Model

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- Is not a best practice but is a promising approach
- Research is correlational
  - More assets less substance abuse
  - Problem – is not causal
    - Research has not conclusively shown that increasing assets reduces or delays substance abuse

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### Resiliency Model

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- Werner
- Identified several environmental factors that increase resilience in youth

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### Factors

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- Age of the parent of the opposite sex
- Number of children in a family
- Spacing between children
- Number and type of people available to help the mother raise the children
- Steady employment for the mother, especially if a single mom
- Availability of a sibling as a caretaker in childhood
- Presence of multigenerational network of friends, teachers and relatives during adolescence
- Church attendance

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### Other Conclusions

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- Kids who overcome adversity better than others DO NOT seek out professional or institutional help
- Work with others whom they trust
  - Teachers, ministers, school counselors, grandparents, friends.

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### Other Characteristics in Resilient Youth

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- Conclude parents problems have nothing to do with them
  - Kids see through the lies and mistreatment
  - Develop a cherished belief in truth and honesty
- Spend more time in school, libraries, or at the neighbors house
  - Develop more meaningful relationships than with parents or guardians

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### Overall

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- Is considering promising
- Problem, is all correlational
- Has not shown conclusively that increasing resiliency prevents substance abuse.

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### Conclusions

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- Lots of different models
- Each has some good information
- Does not mean a particular model will prevent substance abuse
- All are correlated with lowering substance abuse

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### For You

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- Consistency is important
- Standards is important
- Try to reduce the risk factors
  - Bad apple spoils the bunch
- Academics is important at an early age
  
- Reinforce good behavior, extinguish or punish bad behavior, good behavior will increase
  
- You are the one that makes a difference
- You are the one that has the most impact
- Be there for your kid.

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