



Project ALERT

Program Description

Project ALERT is a school-based drug prevention curriculum for the middle grades. It focuses on preventing teenage non-users from experimenting with drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Its goals are to prevent adolescents from beginning drug use, to prevent teenage experimenters from becoming regular users, and to prevent or curb the risk factors shown to predict drug use.

Focusing on norms, beliefs about drugs, and intentions, the curriculum motivates adolescents not to use drugs and teaches them skills to translate that motivation into effective resistance.

Target Audience

Middle grade youth

Special Populations/Available Adaptations

Project ALERT promotes parent involvement through home learning opportunities. Handouts designed for use in the home are available in Spanish and can be downloaded from the teacher resource section of the Project ALERT website.

Program Components

Project ALERT uses participatory activities, videos, and guided classroom discussions. It uses small group activities to stimulate peer interaction and intensive role-playing to challenge student beliefs and perceptions and to help students learn resistance skills. The curriculum consists of 14 lessons taught over a two-year period.

Implementing Project ALERT effectively involves the following activities:

- Training teaching staff on the rationale and theory underlying Project ALERT, the skills needed to deliver the lessons, and the implementation guidelines for achieving program fidelity
- Delivering 11 core lessons during the first year (6th or 7th grade) and three booster lessons to the same students the following year (7th or 8th grade)
- Promoting parent involvement through home learning opportunities

Training & Technical Assistance

Project ALERT is typically delivered by trained teachers in classroom settings, but some districts have adapted it for use in after-school settings where trained personnel are available. Strong examples of outside agencies delivering the program in school settings also exist.

Training is offered in either a one-day training workshop or online in a series of training modules that collectively take six hours to complete. Project ALERT training is intended for middle grade core teachers, health teachers, physical education instructors, and guidance counselors. It is important to train all educators who will be involved in delivering both years of the program. Consideration should be given to training administrators who have oversight responsibility, school nurses, and school resource officers.

Educators participating in training gain understanding of the content, process and goals of Project ALERT, and acquire the skills needed to deliver the lessons effectively. They learn how

to implement the program with fidelity and develop confidence in their ability to teach the curriculum successfully.

Project ALERT has a toll-free telephone number for technical assistance: **1-800-ALERT-10**.

Training Costs

The cost of training is \$150 per educator either in-person or online. A minimum of 25 people are required per in-person training workshop. All curriculum materials are received as part of the \$150 training package and are shipped upon receipt of payment for training.

Traditional in-person training workshops can be arranged at the same low price per educator for districts contracting to train 25 or more educators on site. Online training access is provided for workshop trained educators following the workshop so that they may review and refresh skills on any aspect of the training at any time.

Evaluation Results

The Project ALERT curriculum was developed and field-tested over a ten-year period by RAND, the nation's leading think tank on drug policy. The program's proven outcomes have been validated through longitudinal tests conducted by RAND. Students receiving Project ALERT:

- Reduced initiation of marijuana use by 30%
- Decreased current marijuana use by 60%
- Reduced past month cigarette use by 20% to 25%
- Decreased regular and heavy smoking by 33% to 55%
- Developed significantly enhanced anti-drug beliefs

Recommended Evaluation Components

Project ALERT provides a fidelity instrument that allows educators to see how well their classroom implementation parallels the implementation criteria proven effective in research. In addition, a student use survey that contains questions regarding students' current drug use patterns and their attitudes and beliefs about drugs is also available. Both of these tools can be downloaded from the password-protected section of Project ALERT's website.

Agency/Institution Recognition

- Blueprints Promising Program
- Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) Model Program
- Department of Education- Safe Schools Exemplary Program
- Communities That Care- Developmental Research and Programs Effective Program
- Mihalic & Aultman-Bettridge (2004) Favorable Program
- Sherman et al. (1997) Effective Program
- Title V (OJJDP) Exemplary Program

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