



LifeSkills Training

Program Description

LifeSkills Training (LST) is a well researched, school-based substance abuse and violence prevention program, geared to upper elementary (beginning in grade 3) and junior high/middle school students. The program helps children understand the consequences of substance abuse while building their self-esteem and confidence, helping them overcome social anxiety, and giving them the skills to resist peer pressure, and avoid high risk behavior.

Target Audience

LST was originally designed for middle/junior high school students, beginning in the sixth or seventh grade. A two-year booster program to reinforce material learned in the first year is recommended. An age-appropriate version has also been created for upper elementary school students, beginning with either the third or fourth grade and continuing for three years.

Special Audiences/Program Adaptations

LST has demonstrated positive outcomes for White, African-American, and Latino populations in inner-city urban, suburban, and rural settings. LST has been successfully taught in a variety of settings, including school classrooms, after school programs, summer camps, and community-based organizations.

Program Components

LST consists of three major components that cover the critical domains involved with the decision to use substances. Research has shown that students who develop skills in these three domains are far less likely to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviors. The three components are:

- **Drug Resistance Skills:** Enable young people to recognize and challenge common misconceptions about tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use; teach practical ATOD (Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug use) resistance skills for dealing with peers and media pressure to engage in ATOD use through coaching and practice.
- **Personal Self-Management Skills:** Teach students how to examine their self-image and its effects on behavior; set goals and keep track of personal progress; identify everyday decisions and how they may be influenced by others; analyze problem situations, and consider the consequences of each alternative solution before making decisions; reduce stress and anxiety, and look at personal challenges in a positive light.
- **General Social Skills:** Teach students the necessary skills to overcome shyness, communicate effectively and avoid misunderstandings, initiate and carry out conversations, handle social requests, utilize both verbal and nonverbal assertiveness skills to make or refuse requests, and recognize that they have choices other than aggression or passivity when faced with tough situations.

Designed to be taught in sequence over three years, Year 1 of LST consists of 15 class periods; Year 2 consists of 10 class periods; and Year 3 consists of 5 class periods.

The LifeSkills middle school curriculum consists of 30 classroom sessions (approximately 45 minutes each) to be conducted over three years. The LifeSkills elementary school curriculum consists of 24 classroom sessions (approximately 30–45 minutes each) to be conducted over three years. The LifeSkills program must be taught in sequence to its completion. The time it takes to complete the program depends on the individual school or class. It can be taught either as an intensive mini-series (consecutively every day, or two to three times a week) or an extended schedule series (once a week). Both schedules have been effective.

Program Costs

A kit containing the entire three-year curriculum for middle/junior high students, including a teacher's guide, 30 student guides, and a relaxation tape, costs \$625. The three-year kit for upper elementary students costs \$655. Additional student guides and materials are available at additional cost. The pricelist is available online at www.lifeskillstraining.com.

Training & Technical Assistance

Training is provided through National Health Promotion Associates (NHPA), a training/consulting firm established by the curriculum developer, Gilbert Botvin. The middle school curriculum requires a two-day training course for the year-long program and one-day trainings for each of the one-year boosters. The upper elementary school program involves two days of training. The training is geared toward teachers, school counselors, prevention specialists, and other program providers. Older peer educators are also qualified to deliver the curriculum. In addition, NHPA offers on-site training for 20 or more participants.

Schools participating in the training workshops are eligible for technical assistance services, also offered through NHPA. Services to assist in the planning and implementation of LST include on-site visits, telephone, and email responses.

“Train the Trainer” workshops are also available to states and regions currently disseminating LST so that they can conduct LST provider workshops. Only those who have completed facilitator training are eligible.

Training Costs

Onsite training is available for a minimum of 20 participants at the rate of \$100 per participant per day of training

Evaluation Results

Over a dozen studies in scientific journals have demonstrated that when LifeSkills is delivered to middle/junior high students over a three-year period (15 sessions in Year 1, 10 sessions in Year 2, and 5 sessions in Year 3), it produces the following results:

- Cuts tobacco, alcohol and marijuana use 50%–75%
- Cuts polydrug use up to 66%
- Reduces pack-a-day smoking by 25%
- Decreases use of inhalants, narcotics and hallucinogens

Evaluation Components

There are three types of evaluation tools available through the National Health Promotion Association, Inc.: pre- and post-tests, which measure program outcomes; fidelity check lists, which evaluate program implementation by classroom teachers; and classroom assessments, which are quizzes that teachers can give students for each lesson. NHPA is currently developing an evaluation service to assist sites in gathering and assessing data.

Agency/Institution Recognition

- Blueprints Model 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) Exemplary Program
- National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) Effective program
- Sherman et al. (1997) Effective Program
- Surgeon General's Report (2001) Model 2
- Title V (OJJDP) Exemplary Program

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