

CATHOLIC CHARITIES PREVENTION NEWSLETTER

Spring 2021

Happy Spring! In this issue of the Prevention Newsletter we will discuss what risk and protective factors are and how we can understand them better to provide a positive environment for children at home and in our community.



A risk factor is something that makes drug use more likely. In contrast, a protective factor is something that reduces the potential for drug use. Our work in substance abuse prevention focuses on identifying risk factors for children in the community and choosing a variety of different protective factors to implement. In short, we work to decrease risk factors and increase protective factors. The main intervention we use in the school setting is the program Too Good For Drugs by the Mendez Foundation. Some of the specific protective factors this program works to instill include; social and emotional competency, self-control, developing healthy peer groups and implementing practices to reduce bullying,

Who we are?

Our names are Kelly West and Mary Minahan. We are the Substance Abuse Prevention Educators in Columbia County. Our job is to go to different area schools and teach children about the importance of staying drug free.

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Risk and protective factors are not limited to the school environment. Choices made surrounding the child at home and in the community impact these factors as well. By being aware of risk factors at home, we as caregivers can also work to strengthen the protective factors to help shape our children's future.

Below are two tables detailing specific risk and protective factors. Having certain risk factors does not mean a child will develop a problem with drugs and alcohol. A risk factor is just something to be aware of and work to instill a protective factor to counterbalance. For example; A child with aggressiveness would benefit from developing emotional regulation. You can teach the child to identify when they are starting to feel upset or angry. Next you could talk about how to handle the emotion once it has been identified.



Risk Factor:

- Parental modeling of drug and alcohol use
- Anxiety
- Aggressiveness
- Permissive parenting
- Inadequate supervision/ monitoring
- Low parental warmth
- Lack of discipline
- Harsh discipline
- Child abuse
- Substance use among siblings or friends
- Failure in school
- Accessibility to drugs and alcohol
- Rebelliousness
- Early onset of use
- Antisocial behavior
- Poor attachment with parents
- Undiagnosed mental health problems

Protective factors:

- Strong and positive family bonds
- Parental monitoring of child's activities and friends
- Clear rules at home and school that are consistently reinforced
- Success in school
- Ability to make friends and get along with others
- Responsiveness from family members
- Support for early learning
- Language based rather than physical discipline
- Healthy peer groups
- Positive partnership between school and family
- Emotional self regulation
- Good problem solving and coping skills
- Connections in school, athletics, employment, religion and culture.