The Risk and Protective Model

Alcohol and other drug abuse is the root cause of many of the serious problems facing Utahans: escalating health care costs, violence, crime, teen pregnancy, child and spouse abuse, mental retardation, low productivity, HIV/AIDS, and school dropout.

In 1992, the Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health began to focus on a strong theoretical foundation: the Risk and Protective Factor Model. Risk-focused prevention is based on the work of J. David Hawkins, Ph.D., Richard F. Catalano, Ph.D., and a team of researchers at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Research has shown that there are a number of risk factors that increase the chances of adolescents developing health and behavior problems. Equally important is the evidence that certain protective factors can help shield youngsters from such problems. If we can reduce risk which increase protection throughout the course of young people’s development, we can prevent these problems and promote healthy, pro-social growth.

Not surprisingly, there is an interrelationship between adolescent drug abuse, delinquency, school dropout, teen pregnancy, violence and the identified risk factors for these problems. Young people who are seriously involved in any one of these behaviors are more likely to engage in one or more of the other problem behaviors. Furthermore, all of these teen problems share many common risk factors.

Community Risk Factors:

Availability of Drugs *(Substance Abuse and Violence)*

Availability of Firearms *(Delinquency and Violence)*

Community Laws and Norms Favorable Toward Drug Use, Firearms, and Crime *(Substance Abuse, Delinquency, and Violence)*

Media Portrayal of Violence *(Violence)*

Transitions and Mobility *(Substance Abuse, Delinquency, School Dropout, and Depression)*
Low Neighborhood Attachment and Community Disorganization (*Substance Abuse, Delinquency, and Violence*)

Extreme Economic Deprivation (*Substance Abuse, Delinquency, Violence, Teen Pregnancy, and School Dropout*)

**Family Risk Factors:**

Family History of the Problem Behavior (*Substance Abuse, Delinquency, Teen Pregnancy, School Dropout, Violence, and Depression*)

Family Management Problems (*Substance Abuse, Delinquency, Violence, Teen Pregnancy, School Dropout, and Depression*)

Family Conflict (*Substance Abuse, Delinquency, Violence, Teen Pregnancy, School Dropout, and Depression*)

Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behavior (*Substance Abuse, Delinquency, and Violence*)

**School Risk Factors:**

Academic Failure Beginning in Late Elementary School (*Substance Abuse, Delinquency, Violence, Teen Pregnancy, School Dropout, and Depression*)

Lack of Commitment to School (*Substance Abuse, Delinquency, Teen Pregnancy, School Dropout, and Violence*)

**Individual/Pear Risk Factors:**

Early and Persistent Antisocial Behavior (*Substance Abuse, Delinquency, Teen Pregnancy, School Dropout, Violence, and Depression*)

Alienation and Rebelliousness (*Substance Abuse, Delinquency, and School Dropout*)


Gang Involvement (*Substance Abuse, Delinquency, and Violence*)

Favorable Attitudes Toward the Problem Behavior (*Substance Abuse, Delinquency, Teen Pregnancy, and School Dropout*)
Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior (*Substance Abuse, Delinquency, Violence, Teen Pregnancy, and School Dropout*)

Constitutional Factors (*Substance Abuse, Delinquency, Violence, and Depression*)

**Protective Factors:**

Individual Characteristics

Bonding

Healthy Beliefs and Clear Standards