

## **Preventive Intervention on Drug Abuse**

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### **Abstract**

**U**nlike the treatment of some epidemic disease, prevention on drug abuse has never been a complete success in human history. In reviewing the literature on drug prevention, there hardly exists a single program or strategy, which can eliminate abuse behaviors in connection with either a single drug or more recently, a group of drugs used in rave party settings. For many years, drug educators and many others, through extensive publicity and education, have tried various approaches, to enhance awareness among people, particularly the adolescents, about the dangers inherent in drug use. Tactics have included preaching about the evils of drugs; scaring young people about the harmful effects of drugs; frightening people with the serious legal consequences of drug abuse; rationally informing people about drugs and teaching or clarifying values about drug use. For many reasons, including the great difficulty of evaluating drug prevention programs, most of these initiatives did not appear to be effective to change behavior entirely; some programs even seemed to have increased drug abuse unfortunately.

It is widely accepted that knowledge alone is insufficient to change attitudes or behaviors, and that changing attitudes is insufficient to change behaviors. Drug abuse behaviors among adolescents, to a large extent, are attributable to internal pressures, like anxiety and stress as well as external pressures, like peer influences and social environment. Recent preventive interventions have focused more on the factors or conditions leading to drug abuse. Those, which increase the potential of drug abuse are known as risk factors and those which reduce it are the protective factors. Prevention efforts are chosen to enhance the protective factors and move toward reversing or reducing the risk factors. Hence, in addition to providing information about drugs and their effects, and the risks and consequences involved in their use, preventive programs for young people must include a wide variety of skills-building components and secondly, must involve their peers, teachers, parents, health professionals and other community leaders. The skill components cover analyzing and applying drug-related information, self-awareness, assertiveness training, communication, decision-making and techniques for dealing with stress and anxiety. These capabilities to counteract drug influence cannot be sustained without the coordinated backup from the family and community at large, including partnership from government and non-government agencies. As a fundamental, comprehensive preventive intervention must not only **INFORM**, it also has to **CONVINCE** and **LEAD** to changed behaviors: from the careless to the careful, from the unthinking to the thinking, and from the unhealthy to the healthy.