

BRIEF PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Project ALERT is a drug prevention curriculum for middle school students 11 to 14 years old, which dramatically reduces both the onset of substance abuse and regular use. The 2-year, 14-lesson program focuses on the substances that adolescents are most likely to use: alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and inhalants. Guided classroom discussions and small group activities stimulate peer interaction and challenge student beliefs and perceptions, while intensive role-playing activities help students learn and master resistance skills. Homework assignments that also involve parents extend the learning process by facilitating parent/child discussions of drugs and how to resist using them. These lessons are reinforced through videos that model appropriate behavior.

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES

- Project ALERT kept students from starting to smoke or curbed smoking by students who had already started at the beginning of the evaluation.
- The proportion of new smokers in the Project ALERT group was 19 percent lower than that of the control group.
- Reduced past-month cigarette use by 20% to 25%.
- Decreased regular and heavy smoking by 33% to 55%.
- Substantially reduced students' pro-drug attitudes and beliefs.

AUDIENCE CHARACTERISTICS

Age Range: Youth ages 11 – 14

Grade: Grades 6 – 8

Gender: Both Male and Female

PROGRAM DETAILS

Type of Program: Prevention (program impacts cigarette use of participants who smoke)

Audience Size: Minimum 12/Maximum 35

of Lessons: 11 lessons in year one (6th or 7th grade)/ 3 lessons in year two (7th or 8th grade)

Length of Sessions: 45 minutes

Frequency of Implementation Once a week

Duration of Implementation: 11 weeks for Year 1 and 3 weeks for Year 2

Training: Preferred

HOW IT WORKS

Trained teachers typically deliver Project ALERT in a classroom setting, but some districts have adapted it for use in after-school



settings where trained personnel are available. Project ALERT uses participatory activities and videos to help motivate adolescents against drug use, teach adolescents the skills and strategies needed to resist pro-drug pressures and establish non-drug-using norms. Guided classroom discussions and small group activities stimulate peer interaction and challenge student beliefs and perceptions, while intensive role-playing activities help students learn and master resistance skills. These lessons are reinforced through videos that model appropriate behavior. Homework assignments that also involve parents extend the learning process by facilitating parent–child discussions about drugs and how to resist using them.

IMPLEMENTATION ESSENTIALS

To replicate with fidelity:

- Lessons should be taught one-week apart over the course of 11 weeks for Year 1 and one week apart over the course of 3 weeks for Year 2.
- Teachers are urged to participate in an online training program or workshop where they learn the rationale and theory underlying Project ALERT, the skills needed to deliver the lessons, and implementation guidelines for achieving program fidelity.

- The classroom should be equipped with a TV and VCR, chalkboard, chart paper, felt-tip markers and masking tape. An overhead projector and screen are optional. Capacity to photocopy student handouts is necessary.

MATERIALS AND TRAINING

Required Materials

Teacher curriculum kit - \$150 per kit (Curriculum kit includes access to online teacher training, as well as 14 lesson plans, 8 interactive student videos and 12 full-color posters that support learning goals.)

Training (Preferred)

Online training is available free of charge with each kit purchased. Traditional training is available free of charge to sites purchasing 25 or more kits. Online training averages 3-6 hours and traditional training is 7 hours.

PROGRAM CONTACT

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Website: www.projectalert.com

Program Information Worksheet

SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Program & Practices (NREPP) Review Documents