

**Title of Intervention:** The Life Skills Training Smoking Prevention Program

**Website:** [www.lifeskillstraining.com](http://www.lifeskillstraining.com)

**Intervention Strategies:** Group Education, Individual Education

**Purpose of the Intervention:** To increase students' ability to cope with direct pressures to smoke

**Population:** Middle class 8th, 9th and 10th grade students

**Setting:** Suburban New York City schools; school-based

**Partners:** School districts

**Intervention Description:**

- Group Education: The Life Skills Training program consisted of 15 class sessions. Sessions discussed self-image, decision making, advertising techniques, coping with anxiety, communication skills, social skills and assertiveness. Skills were taught using a combination of teaching techniques including demonstration and feedback. Information relevant to adolescents and to prevention was taught, including the immediate negative consequences, the decreasing social acceptability and actual prevalence rates among adults and adolescents.
- Individual Education: The curriculum included self-directed behavior change and homework assignments.

**Theory:** Social Learning Theory, Problem Behavior Theory

**Resources Required:**

- Staff/Volunteers: Teachers
- Training: Teacher workshop and training videotape
- Technology: Audiovisual equipment
- Space: Rooms for sessions
- Budget: Not mentioned
- Intervention: Teacher's manual, student guide, relaxation audiotape, homework assignments
- Evaluation: Surveys, bogus pipeline, observation forms

**Evaluation:**

- Design: Randomized controlled trial
- Methods and Measures:
  - Questionnaires measured smoking status, drug use, smoking knowledge, psychosocial knowledge, locus of control, self-image, social anxiety, ability to be influenced and the need for group acceptance.
  - Bogus pipeline was used to collect breath samples.
  - Observation forms assessed the completeness of program implementation

**Outcomes:**

- Short Term Impact: The intervention groups had significantly greater increase in knowledge than the control group. The intervention groups also had lower normative expectations and higher interpersonal skills. Males in the intervention group showed the greatest decrease in social anxiety.
- Long Term Impact: There was a significantly fewer number of new smokers in the intervention group compared to the control group. The program was completely effective in preventing the onset of smoking among the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The prevalence of cigarette smoking was significantly lower in the intervention groups than in the control group.

**Maintenance:** Maintenance or booster interventions were designed to review and reinforce the material covered during the first year of the intervention.

**Lessons Learned:** The optimal time for a smoking prevention program such as this one is during junior high school. It is also important to consider students' attitudes toward the program since a program that students like is easier to implement and is more likely to succeed. It is recommended that the program be started in the 7th grade because the pressures to use tobacco and alcohol intensify and most experimentation begins at this time. Results suggest that to be effective, drug abuse prevention approaches may need to include an emphasis on increasing general personal competence as well as teaching social resistance skills.

**Citation(s):**

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