

Selected Evidence-Based Prevention Strategies from the 2015 Marijuana Prevention Initiative Best Practices Literature Review

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2015 Best Practices Marijuana Prevention Literature Review

Review of existing research as of October 2015 related to evidence-based practices for reducing youth access to and use of marijuana.

Intended Uses:

- Inform local Initiative & Regional Prevention approaches
- Identify risk and protective factors affecting youth marijuana use
- Identify the most effective evidence-based strategies for deterring/reducing youth marijuana use
- Identify strengths and limitations of recommended strategies

Key Components of Successful Youth-Focused Prevention Approaches

Best Practices cluster around 3 primary approaches:

- Community-based
- Media-based
- School-based

Overall, the Best Practices are comprehensive and provide strategies for:

- Increasing access to prevention programming and reducing youth access to marijuana
- Implementation of evidence-based prevention programming in schools that target youth, parents, and families at the same time
- Community coalition development involving multi-sector partnerships and cross-training to enhance and sustain involvement
- State and local alignment with the national strategic prevention framework
- Mentoring programs that promote healthy role models
- Changing social norms

Community-Based Approaches: Reshaping Community Norms

Study: Researchers reviewed archival (2004) county-level electoral outcomes and survey data (2010) to examine hypothesized correlations between marijuana use among youth ages 13-19 (N=17,500) and:

- Perceived ease of access
- Number of county-issued medical marijuana cards
- Percent of voters approving legalization of medical marijuana

Key Indicators:

- Self-reported lifetime and past 30-day use (2010 Prevention Needs Assessment Community Student Survey among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders

Key Findings:

- Living in counties with more marijuana cards was not related to higher use rates among youth but higher use rates were positively correlated with voter approval of medical marijuana
- **And**, perceived ease of access among youth was positively associated with higher numbers of medical marijuana cards *and* voter approval.

Implications for Prevention:

- Youth marijuana use may increase when they live in an environment that normalizes/tolerates marijuana use **and** access to marijuana is perceived as easy
- Prevention efforts should focus on reshaping adult norms regarding youth access to and use of marijuana

Source: Friese, B. and Grube, J.W. (2013). Legalization of medical marijuana and marijuana use among youths. *Drugs: Education, Prevention & Policy*, 20(1):33-39.

Media-Based Prevention Approaches: Media Campaigns

Study: The goal of this study is to examine the value of ad evaluation as a general predictor of use intentions and use among youth ages 12-18 (N=3,000).

Methods: Assessed relationship between adolescent's appraisals of anti-marijuana TV ads used in the *National Youth Antidrug Media Campaign* and future marijuana use by user status.

- **Users:** Had used marijuana at least once in their life
- **Resolute Non-Users:** Had stated their intention to never use marijuana
- **Vulnerable Non-Users:** Had stated their ambivalence about future use

Key Indicators:

- Past year marijuana use; past 30-day marijuana use; attitudes toward marijuana use

Key Findings:

- **Across all 3 groups**, the number of ads viewed (from 1 to 12) was not significantly related to intentions to use, **but** youth who expressed *favorable opinions* about the anti-drug ads at T-1 were *less likely to use marijuana* at T-2 (one year later)

Implications for Prevention:

- The identification of specific favorable ad components in terms of content and structure would allow for more effective and informed development of prevention messages

Source: Alvaro, E.M., et al. (2013). Adolescents' attitudes toward anti-marijuana ads, usage intentions, and actual marijuana usage. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 27: 1027–1035.

Media-Based Prevention Approaches: Anti-Drug Media Campaigns vs. Anti-Drug News Stories

Study: Examined the impact of anti-drug media campaigns and anti-drug news stories on marijuana use among young adults ages 18-24 (N=750). Participants were exposed to an average of 4 anti-drug campaign messages and 7 anti-drug news stories over a 6-month period.

Key Indicators:

- Attitudes about marijuana
- Intention to use

Key Findings:

- Media campaign exposure impacted youth perception of **both** personal and societal risk
- Anti-drug news stories impacted **only** perception of societal risk
- Youth who associated marijuana use with **personal risk** reported lower levels of past-year marijuana use than youth who primarily associated marijuana use with **societal risk**
- Youth who associated marijuana use with **both** personal and societal risks reported lower levels of **past-year marijuana use and intention to use** than youth who did not

Implications for Prevention:

- In terms of practice, the findings provide evidence for the notion that marijuana prevention efforts can achieve success by emphasizing both societal risk and, especially, personal risk when designing preventive media campaigns

Source: Beaudoin, C.E., & Hong, T. (2012). Media use and perceived risk as predictors of marijuana use. *Am. J. of Health Behavior*, 36(1): 134-143.

Media-Based Prevention Approaches: Media Campaigns Combined with Community-Based Approaches

Study: Assessed the simultaneous impact of the national-level *Above the Influence* media campaign (which highlights the positive consequences of not using drugs) with the community-based *Be Under Your Own Influence* campaign (which employs media advocacy, and coalition activities to increase community readiness) among **middle school youth**.

Research Design: 20 communities were randomly assigned to 1 of 4 groups (N=3,200)

- Community intervention **plus** in-school dissemination of media materials and posters
- Community intervention **without** in-school dissemination of media materials
- In-school dissemination of media materials **without** community intervention
- **No** intervention (control groups)

Key Findings:

- *Be Under your Own Influence* was more effective than *Above the Influence* at reducing lifetime marijuana use and in increasing perceptions that marijuana use was inconsistent with personal goals and aspirations
- The intervention that incorporated only in-school media materials had no significant effect on use

Implications for Prevention:

- Community-based anti-marijuana messaging materials may do well to emphasize the impact of use on adolescent autonomy, competence, and achievement, which research identifies as in alignment with developmentally appropriate goals for adolescents

Source: Slater, M., *et al.* (2011). Assessing media campaigns linking marijuana non-use with autonomy and aspirations: “Be Under Your Own Influence” and ONDCP’s “Above the Influence.” *Preventative Science*, (12): 12-22.

School-Based Approaches: Social Competence Enhancement

Study: Assessed anti-drug education program that teaches public high school students (N=452) social competence enhancement (SCE) skills for resisting pro-substance influences. Intervention group outcomes were compared to non-intervention group outcomes.

Key Indicators:

- Frequency of marijuana, alcohol, and tobacco use

Key Findings:

- Daily substance use among youth in the intervention cohort was significantly reduced by 50% compared to controls
- SCE can be an effective approach for preventing/reducing daily substance use among high school students when it addresses key risk and protective factors
- SCE prevention approaches can be effective for both middle school and high school students, if adapted to be developmentally appropriate
- A universal prevention approach, such as SCE, can be delivered by classroom teachers with minimal specialized training, offering the potential for widespread and cost-effective program dissemination
- Follow-up research needed to determine long-term effectiveness of the program

Source: Botvin, G.J., *et al.* (2015). Preventing daily substance use among high school students using a cognitive-behavioral competence enhancement approach. *World Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 3 (3): 48-53.

Literature Review of Best School-Based Practices for Preventing Marijuana Use among 10-15 Year Olds

Summary of Literature Reviews:

- Comprehensive approaches are more effective than “knowledge only” programs
 - **Ex.** Anti-drug information combined with social competence training (e.g., refusal skills, self-management skills, and social skills) are likely to be more effective in reducing marijuana use than programs that impart information alone
- Interactive interventions are more effective than non-interactive interventions
- Interactive approaches combined with social competency enhancement reported the highest rates of reduced marijuana use
- Effective outcomes are strongly linked to program size and type
 - Small-scale interventions are more effective than large-scale
 - Small-scale was more effective regardless of whether the intervention was interactive or non-interactive
- For 10–13 year olds, the most effective prevention approaches were universal multi-modal programs that combined the following components:
 - Utilized non-teacher or multiple facilitators (e.g., peer leaders or mental health counselors)
 - Were short in duration (10 sessions or less)
 - Implemented boosters or reinforcements sessions

Sources:

Norberg, M.M., *et al.* (2013). Primary prevention of cannabis use: A systematic review of randomized controlled trials. *PLOS ONE*, 8(1).
Lemstra, M., *et al.* (2010). A systematic review of school-based marijuana and alcohol prevention programs targeting adolescents aged 10–15. *Addiction Research and Theory*, 18(1): 84-96.
Tobler, N. S., *et al.* (1999). Effectiveness of school-based drug prevention programs for marijuana use. *School Psych. Intl*, 20(1): 105-137.

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