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

Presented by Laura Stanley, CCR
To MPI Youth Access Workgroup (YAW)
January 20, 2016

Funded by the County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency, Behavioral Health Services

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

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

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

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

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

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:
Please use the following citation when citing this document:


Please contact CCR if you have any questions:

Laura Stanley: (760) 291-7663
lstanley@ccrconsulting.org

Erica Pachmann: (619) 528-2235
epachmann@ccrconsulting.org