**Lesson 4: Influences on Substance Use – Risk and Protective Factors**

**Overview:** Students will learn about influences that shape decision making to prevent substance use. Students will identify protective factors that promote health and well-being and act as a force field to prevent substance use and promote health.

National Health Education Standards:

**Standard 1:** Students comprehend functional health knowledge to enhance health.

**Standard 2:** Students analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, social media, technology, and other determinants on health behaviors.

Healthy Behavior Outcome (HBO):

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| Students will recognize their personal protective factors to avoid substance use disorder (SUD). |

Lesson Objective — Students will be able to:

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| **Objective** | **Assessments** |
| 1. Define influence and how it can have a positive or negative impact on health behaviors. | Attachment 4.1 – Risk and Protective Factor Notes |
| 1. Describe protective factors and risk factors that influence substance use. | Attachment 4.1 – Risk and Protective Factor Notes |
| 1. Identify personal protective factors that would prevent substance use. | Attachment 4.2 – Protective Factor Force Field |

Introduction:

* Health behaviors shape health and well-being in individuals and populations. Many factors influence everyday decisions that impact our health behaviors. This lesson will focus on these influences for substance use, specifically risk factors (influence us toward making an unhealthy decision) and protective factors (influence us in making a healthy decision).

Teaching Steps:

* Distribute Attachment 4.1 - Risk & Protective Factors Defined, (Attachment 4.1). Students will answer the question – What is an influence?

Activity 1 – What is an influence? How do influences impact health behavior?

* Possible answers: Influence is the power to affect the character, development, or behavior of someone; it can also be the effect itself.
* It can be positive or negative. Influences can motivate a person toward a healthy behavior or an unhealthy behavior. When we connect with an influence, it directs our actions in either positive or negative ways. For example, if I have a friend who exercises every day, I am more likely to join them in healthy exercise behavior.
* Let’s practice identifying positive or negative influences (Attachment 4.1). Positive influences increase the likelihood of a healthy behavior, while a negative influence would decrease the likelihood of a healthy behavior or increase the likelihood of an unhealthy behavior. Identify whether each influence below is a positive or negative influence on substance use.
  + Your school is a tobacco-free campus. (positive)
  + A classmate has a vape in their backpack. (negative)
  + The local store has lots of advertising for alcohol and tobacco. (negative)
  + Your friend wants to stay home and play video games with you instead of going to a party where people are likely to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. (positive)

Activity 2 – Risk & Protective Factors

* Influence can be categorized as risk factors or protective factors. We will first define risk factors and protective factors and how these factors influence health behaviors.
  + Risk factors are characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community, or cultural level that precede and are associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes.
  + Protective factors are characteristics associated with a lower likelihood of negative outcomes or that reduce a risk factor’s impact. Protective factors may be seen as positive countering events.
  + Some risk and protective factors are fixed: they don’t change over time. Other risk and protective factors are considered variable and can change over time. Variable risk factors include income level, peer group, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and employment status.
* Risk and protective factors occur at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels.
  + Individual-level risk factors may include a person’s genetic predisposition to substance use disorder, addiction, or exposure to alcohol prenatally.
  + Individual-level protective factors might include positive self-image, self-control, or social competence.
  + Risk and protective factors also occur at the peer, family, and community levels.
* Research shows that the risk for substance use disorder (SUD) and other adverse behaviors increases with the number of risk factors and that protective factors may reduce the risk of youth engaging in substance use that can lead to substance use disorder ([youth.gov](https://youth.gov/youth-topics/risk-and-protective-factors)).
* Even though a person may have several risk factors, it does not necessarily mean that they will develop SUD; also, if a person has several protective factors, it does not mean that they are immune to SUD.
* Risk and protective factors are influences, not destiny. These factors only influence your decisions; ultimately, you will make the decision. In Lessons 4, 5, and 6, we’ll practice making healthy choices.
  + Examples of risk and protective factors (See Attachment 4.1)

Activity 3 – Force Field

* Now we will take a closer look at our own protective factors and make a force field that you can have with you when we prevent substance use and practice healthy decision making.
* How would you define a force field?
  + The formal definition is an area of energy that surrounds an object or place. For purposes of this activity, the protective factors you identify will be the area of energy that surrounds you to keep you safe in unhealthy situations.
  + Distribute Attachment 4.2 - Protective Factor Force Field and review the directions with the students.
* As the teacher, create your own Protective Factor Force Field to model to students. An idea could be for you to arrange your protective factor pieces into the shape of a shield (teacher example – Attachment 4.2). On the inside, you could arrange your individual factors; the next ring of your shield could be relationship factors, followed by community and societal factors. This force field blocks the risk factors that increase our likelihood of negative outcomes.
* Allow time for students to complete their force fields. They can be creative with the shape as long as it is appropriate for school. You can provide colored pencils, markers, and scissors. These can be displayed in the classroom, or students can put them in a personalized location to refer to, like their locker or an area in their home. In the closing portion of the lesson, students can share about their force field but give students the option to pass if they do not want to share.

Closure:

* What are influences? What are a few influences on substance use? What are positive influences that could prevent substance use and promote healthy behaviors?
* After compiling all your protective factors to create your force field, place it in a location that you can refer to; share it with a loved one; or take a picture of it and refer to it when you feel like it is a good idea to think about these factors. (Allow students to share factors in their force fields.)

Additional Resources:

*Additional materials outside of the Behavioral HELP ATOD Curriculum that provide information that supports the development or implementation of the lesson.*

* <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/substance-use-and-mental-health>
* <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/20190718-samhsa-risk-protective-factors.pdf>
* <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26213711/>
* <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/risk-and-protective-factors>
* <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/health-promotion/2/theories-and-models/ecological>

Attachment 4.1: Risk & Protective Factors Defined

1. What is an influence?
2. How do influences impact health behavior?
3. Identify whether each of the following is a positive (+) or negative(-) influence on substance use.

\_\_\_\_\_You school is a tobacco-free campus.

\_\_\_\_\_A classmate has a vape in their backpack.

\_\_\_\_\_The local store has lots of advertising for alcohol and tobacco.

\_\_\_\_\_Your friend wants to stay home and play video games with you instead of going to a party where people are likely to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

1. Provide an example of a risk factor and a protective factor for substance use for each category.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Risk factors** | **Protective factors** |
| **Individual** |  |  |
| **Family** |  |  |
| **Peers** |  |  |
| **School, community, environment** |  |  |

Examples of risk and protective factors:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Risk factors** | **Protective factors** |
| **Individual** | * Rebelliousness, poor conduct, or antisocial behavior. * Early substance use * Antisocial or negative emotionality * Low commitment to school, schoolwork, and goals * Lack of engagement in school or community activities | * Positive physical, emotional, mental, and social development * Self-regulation, coping, and problem-solving skills * Engagement in school or community activities * Social connections * Trusted adults at home, at school, and in the community |
| **Family** | * Family history of substance use * Lack of adult supervision * Family conflict * Family attitudes toward substance use | * Supportive family relationships * Clear expectations for values, behaviors, and rules * Family monitors behaviors * Values and attitudes promote healthy behaviors and discourage substance use |
| **Peers** | * Rebelliousness * Peer/friend substance use * Peers’ attitudes supporting substance use | * Friendships and engaged with friends * Friends who have attitudes that promote health and discourage substance use |
| **School, community, environment** | * Laws, norms, or policies that increase the availability and use of substances * Poverty * Physical, psychological, and environmentally unsafe spaces * Community violence * Community substance use | * Presence of mentors and community engagement * Laws, norms, or policies that reduce the availability, promotion, and use of substances * Physical, psychological, and environmentally safe spaces |
| **Societal factors** | * High levels of substance use in community * Media and advertising promoting use of substances * Lack of respect for rules, guidelines, and enforcement of policies * Norms and attitudes that indicate approval for substance use | * Drug-free environments * Health promotion resources available * Positive relationships with law enforcement * Respect for the law * Presence of law enforcement * Respect for rules, guidelines, and enforcement of policies * Norms and attitudes that discourage substance use |

Source: <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/risk-and-protective-factors#adolescents>

Attachment 4.2a – Protective Factor Shield

Choose words and phrases from the categories below to create a **Protective Factor Force Field**. Write one protective factor on each hexagon you cut out. Be creative with how you decorate and arrange hexagon patterns onto another piece of paper.

The purpose of this activity is to compile your protective factors into a *force field.* You can reference your *force field* when practicing decision making and refusal skills in future lessons.

**Rubric**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Advanced** | **Target** | **Limited** |
| **Individual factors** | Identifies at least three protective factors | Identifies at least two protective factors | Identifies fewer than two protective factors |
| **External factors** | Identifies at least three external factors from at least two categories (relationship, peers, family, community) | Identifies at least three external factors | Identifies two or fewer external factors |
| **Reasons I will make healthy choices** | Writes three specific reasons they will not use substances | Identifies at least two reasons they will not use substances | Does not provide a reason they will avoid substance use |

Brainstorming Table

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| **Individual factors** | * Drug-free knowledge and attitude * Emotional self-regulation * High self-esteem * Good coping skills and problem-solving skills * Engagement and connections at school, with peers, and in athletics, employment, religion, and culture * Self-determination * Goal-oriented * Delayed gratification * Resiliency * Stress management * Positive mindset * Service-oriented * Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| **External Factors** | |
| **Relationship factors** | * Family provides structure, limits, rules, monitoring, and predictability * Supportive relationships with family members * Clear expectations for behavior * Clear articulation of values * Healthy peer groups * Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| **Community factors** | * Connections with positive adults * Opportunities for engagement in school * Opportunities for engagement in the community * Clear expectations for conduct in the community * Feeling physically safe * Feeling psychologically safe * Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| **Societal factors** | * Drug-free environment * Health promotion resources available * Positive relationships with law enforcement * Respect for the law * Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

Attachment 4.2a: Force Field of Protective Factors

Decorate your Force Field of Protective Factors with individual and external factors.

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**List three reasons you will make healthy choices to prevent substance use.**

Attachment 4.2b: Teacher Examples

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Drug-free school

Connected with positive adults

Healthy Peers

Extra-curricular activities

Goal-oriented

**List three reasons you will make healthy choices to prevent substance use.**