

Edition 09 – 4

Spring 2009

Research Précis

Best Practices: Safe and Drug-free Schools and Communities

Creating a better tomorrow...

Title: Focus On Families

Overview:

Focus On Families is a selective clinical-based program that is designed to reduce parents' use of illegal drugs by teaching them skills for relapse prevention and coping, and to reduce their children's risk for future drug abuse by teaching them family management skills.

Target: Parents who receive methadone treatment for substance abuse and their children between ages 3 and 14

Extent/Duration of Program: The program intervention lasts nine months (four months of parent training groups and nine months of home-based services).

Program Costs:

- Material costs include \$100 for the *Focus On Families* curriculum and \$100 for the workbook.
- Parent training consists of a five-hour family retreat and 32 training sessions of 1.5 hours each. Children attend 12 sessions to practice developmentally appropriate skills with parents.

For further information, or to order:

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Principles/Approaches/Components: *Focus On Families* is based on the premise that reducing parents' use of illegal drugs while helping them to learn coping, drug refusal, and family management skills will not only result in healthier parents but will also reduce risk factors for their children's future drug use while enhancing protective factors. The program consists primarily of two components. The first is a parenting curriculum that is taught by a professional team. During each session of the curriculum parents learn different skills, including relapse, communication, family management, and skills for teaching their children. They are also provided with home practice activities. The second component consists of home-based case management to help parents and children maintain the skills learned in the group sessions.

Evidence-based Effectiveness: Study follow-ups in 1997-98 indicated that the program still had positive effects on parents after one year, especially in parenting skills, rule-setting, domestic conflict, drug refusal skills, and drug use. At the same one-year mark, fewer children in the experimental group reported having stolen in the past six months. Results of a follow-up at the two-year mark indicated that parents' problem-solving skills were improved and that their drug refusal skills were still evident. Perhaps more notably, their children's two-year assessment showed continued improvement, suggesting an almost delayed or "sleeper" effect on targeted risk and protective factors and substance use, making the program very promising for early reduction of family-related risk factors.

Safe and Drug-free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) connections:

A.ii - Activities that promote a sense of individual responsibility.

A.iv - Activities that teach students to recognize social and peer pressure to use drugs illegally and the skills for resisting illegal drug use.

A.vi - Activities that engage students in the learning process.

B - Activities that involve families, community sectors, and a variety of drug and violence prevention providers in setting clear expectations against violence and illegal use of drugs and appropriate consequences for violence and illegal use of drugs.

D - Professional development and training in prevention, education, early identification and intervention, mentoring, or rehabilitation referral, as related to drug and violence prevention.

National Standards connections:

Preschool through Grade 8

Health Education Standard 1 – Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.

Health Education Standard 4 – Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

Health Education Standard 7 – Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

National Health Education Standards, Second Edition: Achieving Excellence. American Cancer Society, 2007.

Counseling: Personal and Social Development Standard C: Students will understand safety and survival skills.

ASCA National Standards for Students. American School Counselor Association, 2004.

Family and Consumer Sciences Area of Study 6.0 (Family): Comprehensive Standard – Evaluate the significance of family and its effects on the well-being of individuals and society.

Family and Consumer Sciences Area of Study 15.0 (Parenting): Comprehensive Standard – Evaluate the effects of parenting roles and responsibilities on strengthening the well-being of individuals and families.

National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences Education, Second Edition. National Association of State Administrators of Family and Consumer Sciences, 2008.

Recognition and additional reports:

The following organizations/institutions have recognized *Focus On Families*. The organizations are in alphabetical order and the status of the recognition is in parentheses.

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) (Example Prevention Program)

SAMHSA (Promising Program)

GENERAL NOTES: The intent of the above synthesis and correlations is to assist teachers and school administrators dedicated to using best practices to reduce violence and substance abuse among students. To our knowledge, the information was current upon publication. However, details pertaining to status of program recognition, research and findings, costs, and contact information are subject to change.

Correlations to the Safe and Drug-free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) federally approved activities and to national education standards have been limited in depth (“standard” level only) and breadth (number of standards and subjects) due to the encompassing nature of many programs that typically qualify as model or exemplary. The correlations listed should not be viewed as exhaustive.

Designed Instruction’s effective SDFS program research review series was funded by the United States Department of Education. For information on other effective programs for promoting safe and drug-free schools and communities, visit www.designedinstruction.com/learningleads/effective-sdfs-programs.html

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