



What is the LifeSkills Training for Middle School Prescription Drug Abuse Project?

The LifeSkills Training for Middle School Prescription Drug Abuse Project (MS-PDA) aims to prevent prescription drug abuse and alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use in middle school students by developing a prevention program that will teach adolescents personal self-management skills, social competency skills, and drug refusal skills. These skills are considered essential to successfully navigate various developmental tasks, increase resilience, and facilitate healthy psychosocial development.

What is the purpose of this project?

The primary purpose of this project is to develop and test a primary prevention program for prescription drug abuse among middle school students, based on an extensively researched evidence-based substance abuse and violence prevention approach, *LifeSkills Training* (LST). The program will address prescription drug abuse as well as alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. Ultimately, the new version of the LST program is designed to: (1) positively change social norms and challenge positive expectancies regarding prescription drug abuse, alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use; (2) discourage diversion of prescription medications; and (3) enhance protective factors by building social and self-regulation skills through interactive learning and behavioral rehearsal scenarios.

Who is conducting this project?

The current project is being conducted by National Health Promotion Associates (NHPA) with funding from the National Institutes of Health. NHPA has a 25-year history of developing, testing, and disseminating prevention approaches to behavioral health problems. The lead investigators on this project are all current or past members of the faculty at Cornell University's Weill Medical College. A particular emphasis of NHPA's current work is to facilitate the transition from science to practice by developing high quality, engaging, and effective prevention materials in order to promote the widespread implementation and sustained use of evidence-based prevention approaches. Prevention researchers and staff at NHPA will work with a representative sample of approximately 100 students from 36 middle schools throughout the United States.

What specific activities will be part of this project?

Over the course of the project, MS-PDA will involve several activities aimed at testing the effectiveness of the newly adapted LST prevention program. The specific activities are as follows:

- First, parents, students, teachers, and school administrators will be invited to a virtual open house, introducing them to the project and its key goals.
- Second, NHPA will review the purpose and content of consent forms with participants recruited into the study as well as obtain parent, teacher, and administrator consent, and student assent forms.
- Third, NHPA will randomize each middle school into one of the following conditions:
 - (1) an intervention condition where students will receive the MS-PDA program or
 - (2) a comparison (control) condition where students will continue to receive the current prescription drug abuse/alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use educational content normally provided by their school.
- Fourth, NHPA will assess key study variables including behaviors, norms, attitudes, and knowledge regarding prescription drugs, alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse as well as other risk and protective factors with students through pretest, posttest, 6-month, and 12-month follow-up assessments.

Each school assigned to the intervention group will receive FREE curriculum materials (teacher manuals and student guides) for the classrooms participating in the intervention condition. Schools assigned to the comparison condition will receive the same FREE curriculum materials as the intervention condition after the 12-month follow-up assessment.

- Students will be asked to complete an online assessment at four-time points (pretest, posttest, 6-month follow-up, and 12-month follow-up). Students will receive an incentive for each assessment they complete.
- Teachers will be asked to complete an online school/community events report and fidelity checklists (for intervention teachers only) at four-time points (pretest, posttest, 6-month follow-up, 12-month follow-up). Teachers will receive an incentive for each set of online school/community events report and fidelity checklists they complete.

How can I get involved?

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this exciting project further, please feel free to contact: Elisa Ungaro at (800)-293-4969 ext.217 or eungaro@nhpamail.com.