

Youth Risk Factors

Youth are at risk for numerous problem behaviors that are often interconnected. Many of these risk factors are developed at a young age and are hard to break. In addition, youth live and develop in many different contexts such as family setting, school, and community setting.

These interactions and influences with other negative and unhealthy behaviors make breaking the cycle an especially complex task. Breaking the Cycle focuses mainly on the School and Individual level, but these levels tend to spill into their community and family spheres.

Adolescent Problem Behaviors and Risk Factors	Substance Abuse	Delinquency	Teen Pregnancy	School Drop-Out	Violence
Community					
Availability of drugs	✓			✓	✓
Availability of firearms		✓		✓	✓
Community laws and norms favorable toward drug use, fire arms, and crime	✓	✓		✓	✓
Media portrayals of violence				✓	✓
Transitions and mobility	✓	✓		✓	
Low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization	✓	✓		✓	✓
Extreme economic deprivation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family					
Family history of the problem behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family management problems	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family conflict	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Favorable parental attitudes and involvement in the problem behavior	✓	✓		✓	✓
School					
Early and persistent antisocial behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Academic failure beginning in late elementary school	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of commitment to school	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individual/Peer					
Alienation and rebelliousness	✓	✓		✓	
Friends who engage in the problem behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Favorable attitudes toward the problem behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Early initiation of the problem behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Constitutional factors	✓	✓		✓	✓

