

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

Arizona Youth Survey 2006 Risk and Protective Factors

Our mission is to sustain and enhance the coordination, cohesiveness, productivity and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Arizona

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Background

The Risk and Protective Factor Model was first developed by Dr. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard Catalano in 1989 and is now employed by many state and local agencies to guide their

prevention efforts. The model is based on the simple premise that to prevent a problem from happening, we need to identify the factors that increase the risk of that problem developing and then find ways to mitigate these risks. It emphasizes the need for community-wide efforts to ameliorate the factors that may cause delinquent involvement and dysfunctional behavior. This fact sheet provides a brief overview of the risk and protective factors that are addressed in the 2006 Arizona Youth Survey and their influence on drug use and antisocial behavior.

The Arizona Youth Survey (AYS)

The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC), in collaboration with the Governor's Office, the Department of Education, the Department of Health Services, and the Office of Problem Gambling, conducted the 2006 Arizona Youth Survey to assess the frequency of risky behavior among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders in Arizona. The 2006 survey consists of data from 362 schools and 60,401 students representing all 15 counties. The data collected allows for state and local delinquency prevention efforts to better understand those factors that put Arizona youth at risk for delinquency, drug use, and antisocial behavior.

Risk Factors

Hawkins and Catalano identified risk factors in four important areas of life that are known to predict increased likelihood of drug use, delinquency, school dropout, teen pregnancy, and violent behavior among youth: 1) the community, 2) the family, 3) the school, and 4) within individuals themselves and their peer interactions. Table 1 provides a list of the 25 risk factors that were included in the 2006 AYS. The factors that were found to be most prevalent amongst Arizona youth were: community disorganization, transitions and mobility, parent attitudes favorable to antisocial behavior, academic failure and interaction with antisocial peers.

Table 2: Protective Factors

Community
Opportunity for Prosocial Involvement
Rewards for Prosocial Involvement
Family
Family Attachment
Opportunity for Prosocial Involvement
Rewards for Prosocial Involvement
School
Opportunity for Prosocial Involvement
Rewards for Prosocial Involvement
Peer/Individual
Religiosity
Social Skills
Belief in the Moral Order
Interaction with Prosocial Peers
Prosocial Involvement
Rewards for Prosocial Involvement

Children who reside in neighborhoods where drug use and drug sales are common, who are raised in a family with a history of addiction to alcohol and other drugs, who do not have healthy relationships with their teachers and whose friends engage in unfavorable behavior are considered to be more 'at risk' and more likely to engage in drug use and antisocial behavior than those who are not exposed to these factors.

Protective Factors

Protective factors exert a positive influence or buffer against the negative influence of risk, thus reducing the likelihood that adolescents will engage in problem behaviors. Table 2 provides a complete list of the 13 protective factors that were included in the 2006 AYS. The factors that were found to be most prevalent amongst Arizona youth were: rewards for prosocial involvement within the family, opportunities for prosocial involvement at school, and social skills.

Children who are attached to positive families, friends, schools and their community, and who are committed to achieving the goals valued by these groups, are less likely to develop problems in adolescence. Positive bonding makes up for many disadvantages caused by risk factors or environmental characteristics.

Table 1: Risk Factors

Community
Low Neighborhood Attachment
Community Disorganization
Transitions & Mobility
Laws & Norms Favor Drug Use
Perceived Availability of Drugs
Perceived Availability of Handguns
Family
Poor Family Management
Family Conflict
Family History of Antisocial Behavior
Parent Attitudes Favorable to ASB
Parent Attitudes Favor Drug Use
School
Academic Failure
Low Commitment to School
Peer/Individual
Rebelliousness
Early Initiation of ASB
Early Initiation of Drug Use
Attitudes Favorable to ASB
Attitudes Favorable to Drug Use
Perceived Risk of Drug Use
Interaction with Antisocial Peers
Friend's Use of Drugs
Rewards for ASB
Depressive Symptoms
Intention to Use Drugs
Gang Involvement

Any Drug Use

To illustrate the potential effect of risk and protective factors on youth behavior, AYS 2006 drug data, specifically any drug use by youth, was analyzed in conjunction with risk and protective factor data. The 'any drug' category is a combination of data from nine different illicit drugs, excluding alcohol, steroids, and prescription drugs. As shown in Chart 1, there is a strong positive relationship between drug use among youth and number of risk factors. The more risk factors present in a youth's life, the more likely he or she is to use illegal drugs. According to the 2006 AYS, 0.9 percent of students who reported no exposure to any risk factors used drugs in the 30 days prior to taking the survey whereas 88.4 percent of students with all 25 risk factors present in their lives used drugs in the 30 days prior to taking the survey.

Conversely, Chart 2 shows the strong negative relationship that exists between protective factors and drug use among youth. The more protective factors present, the less likely the student is to be involved in illegal drug use. Data from the 2006 AYS reveals that 56.0 percent of students with zero protective factors present in their lives used drugs in the 30 days prior to taking the survey and 2.3 percent of students with all 13 protective factors present used drugs in the 30 days prior to taking the survey.

Although they are not included in the 'any drug' category, similar trends are seen for alcohol, steroids, and prescription drugs when analyzing the effects of risk and protective factors. It is evident that the presence of risk and/or protective factors can be very influential as to whether or not an adolescent is involved in drug use.

Chart 1: Any Drug Use by Risk Factors

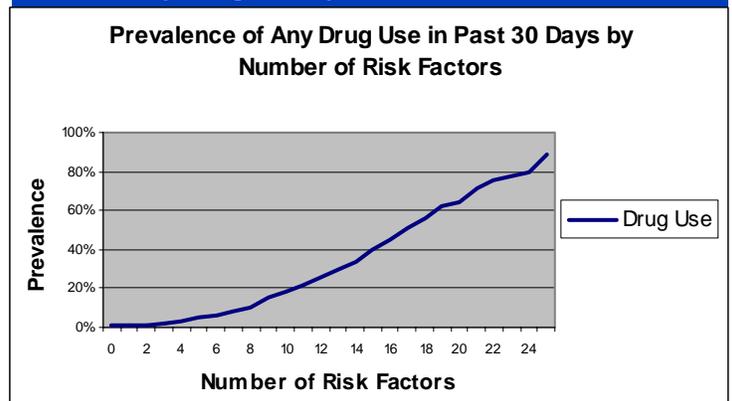


Chart 2: Any Drug Use by Protective Factors

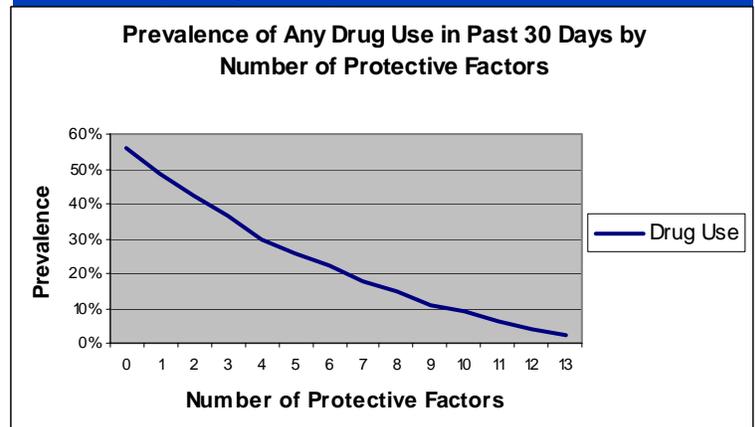


Table 3: Percentage of Youth Reporting Antisocial Behavior in the Past 12 Months by the Presence of Risk Factors

	No Risk Factors Present	All Risk Factors Present
<i>Attacked to Harm</i>	0.7	86.0
<i>Carried a Handgun to School</i>	0.0	27.3
<i>Drunk or High at School</i>	0.2	84.1
<i>Stolen a Vehicle</i>	0.2	37.2
<i>Sold Drugs</i>	0.0	58.1
<i>Suspended from School</i>	0.5	63.6

in the past 12 months", with 0.7 percent of students who do not have any risk factors reporting that behavior versus 86.0 percent of students who have all the risk factors present.

Table 4 exhibits the relationship between antisocial behavior and protective factors. Students who had no exposure to any protective factors were more likely to participate in a variety of antisocial behaviors than their counterparts who had all 13 factors present in their lives. The survey question "Have you been drunk or high at school in the past 12 months" revealed the largest decrease due to the presence of protective factors in students' lives, from 45.4 percent to 1.6 percent. Although the decrease in the percentage of students who reported carrying a handgun to school in the past 12 months as protective factors increased was relatively small, it is in part a function of the relatively few students who reported carrying a handgun to school.

Table 4: Percentage of Youth Reporting Antisocial Behavior in the Past 12 Months by the Presence of Protective Factors

	No Protective Factors Present	All Protective Factors Present
<i>Attacked to Harm</i>	38.5	0.2
<i>Carried a Handgun to School</i>	7.1	0.2
<i>Drunk or High at School</i>	45.4	1.6
<i>Stolen a Vehicle</i>	15.5	0.1
<i>Sold Drugs</i>	22.3	0.3
<i>Suspended from School</i>	36.1	1.9

Antisocial Behavior

Consistent with the findings above on drug use, Table 3 demonstrates the positive relationship between risk factors and antisocial behavior. Youth who had zero risk factors present were considerably less likely to attack someone in order to harm them, carry a handgun to school, go to school drunk or high, steal a vehicle, sell drugs, or get suspended from school than youth who reported to having all 25 risk factors present in their lives. The largest difference in the percentage of youth reporting antisocial behavior is seen in the question "Have you attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting them

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