

Risk and Protective Factors



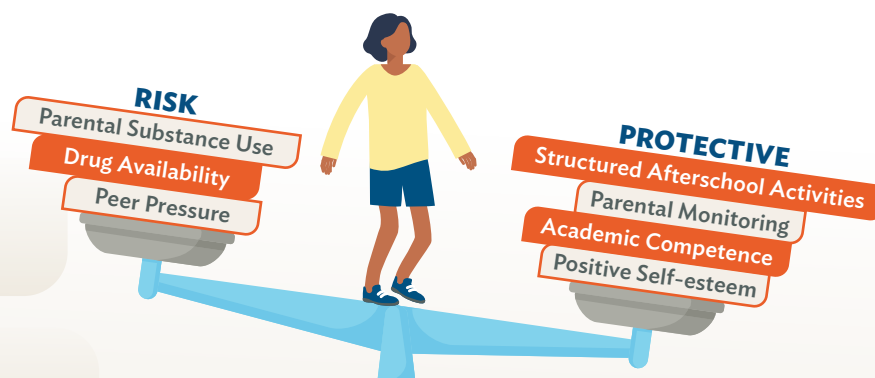
WHAT ARE RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS?

Risk factors are conditions or characteristics of individuals, families, communities or society that increase a young person's likelihood of initiating substance use and experiencing other harms or challenges associated with use.

Protective factors are conditions or characteristics that increase resilience, help a young person deal more effectively with stressful events and reduce the impact of a risk factor.

Risk and protective factors may be biological, psychological, environmental, cultural or genetic.

Effective prevention efforts focus on reducing risk factors and strengthening protective factors. For example, exercising regularly may serve as a protective factor by decreasing the likelihood or severity of anxiety. Tobacco use may be a risk factor as it may lead to the use of other substances, such as marijuana, alcohol and opioids. Supportive social networks may reduce the impact of depression and enhance mental health; while loneliness and social isolation increase risk.



The following worksheet can be completed independently or in collaboration with a provider serving youth or other trusted adult.

MY PROTECTIVE FACTORS WORKSHEET

Which protective factors are most important to you? Use the following spaces to personalize your list with examples of factors that are currently in your life or factors that you plan to incorporate in the future.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS	MY PROTECTIVE FACTORS
Positive physical development Positive physical development includes attitudes or actions you can take to optimize the rapid changes occurring in your brain and body.  <i>I stop checking my phone an hour before bed.</i>	
Calming techniques and brain breaks Being aware of the impact your emotions and actions have on yourself and others, and the ability to manage them.  <i>When I'm really angry or upset, I remove myself from the situation.</i>	
Self-esteem, self-efficacy Self-esteem is your overall sense of value and worth. Self-efficacy is a belief and confidence in your ability to take action.  <i>I'm willing to walk away from a fight and be true to who I am.</i>	
Interpersonal and problem-solving skills Skills that help you take into account feelings, thoughts and actions for working with others and resolving problems.  <i>I have a friend I can run things by before sending a text when I'm angry.</i>	
Social connections Interest and involvement in activities or events such as at school, with friends, in athletics, employment, religion, community.  <i>I joined the school drama club.</i>	
Supportive relationships with family or other trusted adults Strong personal connections increase belonging. These relationships also support development of skills and interests.  <i>My grandma and I like cooking together.</i>	
Safety Safety can refer to physical or mental security and protection.  <i>I'm able to talk with my mom without worrying about being shamed or embarrassed.</i>	

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