**Drugs and Alcohol in the Criminal Justice System: Project SUCCESS**

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**Introduction**

National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) determines the four components of drug abuse prevention programs as; education, alternatives, information, and intervention. The information theory argues that providing coherent information about drugs and side effects will provide a foundation from which appropriate attitude will be deducted thus, prompting lower and eventual abstinence of drug abuse. This approach forms the backbone of several available programs targeting juveniles. Researches show that the approach has successfully managed to relay necessary information about substance abuse, but it has not curbed its root purpose, which was to reduce the usage of substance and its abuse (Schaps et al., 1981, p. 2). The use of the information approach assumes that drug abuse is majorly driven by a lack of sufficient information on the effects among the youths.

Similarly, the education approach compliments information. Education provides substitutes to drug abuse, assuming that adolescents use drugs for both negative and positive gains. Coherently, the alternative paradigm is based on the assumption that providing another means away from drugs will quench the desires that substance abuse presents to the youths. Schedules such as sports, scouting, and academic engagements have proven effective in an alternative approach, while programs such as social clubbing have been detrimental (Hoadley & Sabri, 2016). This study aims to evaluate project SUCCESS which is a targeted intervention peculiarly for volatile youths. The program is offered in all public schools based in North Carolina, with highly trained professionals planted in schools to help youths overcome drug use and abuse. The 14 to 18 years old adolescent session targeted influencing the development of appropriate attitude towards drugs, general life skills, and nurturing self-awareness among youths.

**Schools Using Coordinated Community Effort to Strengthen Students (PROJECT SUCCESS)**

Project SUCCESS program was formulated after the Residential Student Assistant Program (RSAP) and Westchester Student Assistant Program (WSAP) successes to take the edge of drug use and abuse prevalent among the youths who are attending both the alternative and traditional secondary schools. The program relies on disclosures of other prior programs such as RSAP and WSAP by devising ways to maximize protective factors while successfully taming the risk factors. Project success employs the use of highly trained professionals dubbed Project SUCCESS Counselors (PSC) (Hoadley & Sabri, 2016). The counselors are obliged to deliver professional services on substance abuse prevention and early intervention to the students with the community's assistance. The program is funded through one of the state aid program grants identified as block grants. The project is integrated closely with the school and works with community organizations that have alike interests together with parents of the concerned youths who are taking part in the SUCCESS program.

The councilors are expected to employ mediation methods such as; information distribution and prevention education, problem identification and referral, community-based process, and environmental approaches. Consequently, participating students are taught how to manage stress and anger, solve problems, decision-making, communicate competence, and social skills. The prevention education consists of eight sessions; coping skills, adolescent reality, relationship with family and friends, alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; individual and group counseling; parent education program and referral program through which students who need comprehensive counseling and treatment allude to a suitable health facility within the community. While the alternative schools integrate the program into their curriculum according to the institution organization, public institutions incorporate the program in health education curricula of the 7th and 9th-grade students.

The PSC works predominately with juveniles solitarily and sometimes in mini-groups. Coherently, they also train school staff, synchronize drug abuse policies and services of the school, refer and conduct student follow up who need assistance with mental health or substance abuse treatment, and consult with teachers. PSC scans the students before and after completion of project SUCCESS to evaluate its potency.

The prevention and treatment strategy consists of three main approaches; Selective, indicated, and universal. Approach singles out substance abuse recruits who are yet to develop disorders, while the universal approach applies to everyone. Comparably, the selective approach focuses on high-risk adolescents who are exposed to drug disorders.

**The Effectiveness of the Program**

During a study conducted in Westchester 1995-1998, with a sample of 425 juveniles in alternative schools, 23% of those who were accounted to have been abusing drugs abandon its consumption, with 5% detailed to have quit with those retaining the abuse at 17-26% (Schaps et al., 1981). After two years, a second evaluation was done with the results showing that 33% of students who were substance abuse victims had quit alcohol, 22.9% no longer consuming tobacco, and 45 % quit cannabis (Schaps et al., 1981). Uniformly, the study revealed that students who were active in co-curricular activities represented alternative schools that held awareness programs. Thus, confirming project SUCCESS efficacy to students who completed the prevention Education series and participated in counseling and those who concentrated solely on general school events only.

Between 2002-2006, the United States Department of Education issued a grant to study the efficacy of project SUCCESS in public schools. Random, indiscriminate methodologies were Formulated and implemented to examine the potency of project SUCCESS using 363 students; all students were involved in general events, with half being offered education series and counseling groups (Hoadley & Sabri, 2016). A three-year tracking was done on high and middle schoolers with results showing that project SUCCESS is valuable to both sexes, among age and ethnic groups. The study conducted a post-test 21 months later after program completion, indicating that students involved in project SUCCESS are less likely to show alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis consumption than those in the control group and five times likely to report illegal drug use. Students exposed to cannabis, bhang, and alcohol gave the test were 4.1 times likely to divulge persistent consumption and 7.33 times likely to delineate the use of an illegal substance. Student participants who were part of the program reported showing family care and much confidence in the protection that the law might offer in times of distress or whenever their family care fails them (Hoadley & Sabri, 2016).

**Conclusion**

With youths spending much time in the school environment, the school provides a prime surrounding to administer Project SUCCESS, thus reducing risk and increasing protective factors against substance use and abuse. Trained experts characterize School-based Project SUCCESS, restricted number of students, vigorous interaction, and referrals at the final process while taking advantage of community partnership. Alcohol and drugs are informally associated with crime, with numerous researches discovering a significantly strong bond between alcohol, drugs, and criminal activities.

References

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Schaps, E., DiBartolo, R., Moskowitz, J., Palley, C. S., & Churgin, S. (1981). A Review of 127 Drug Abuse Prevention Program Evaluations. *Journal of Drug Issues*, *11*(1), 17-43.