

BRIEF PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Project ALERT is a drug prevention curriculum for middle school students 11 to 14 years old, which dramatically reduces both the onset of substance use and regular substance use. The two-year, 14- lesson program focuses on the substances that adolescents are most likely to use: alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and inhalants. Guided classroom discussions and small group activities stimulate peer interaction and challenge student beliefs and perceptions, while intensive roleplaying activities help students learn and master resistance skills. Homework assignments that also involve parents extend the learning process by facilitating parent child discussions of drugs and how to resist using them. These lessons are reinforced through videos that model appropriate behavior.

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES

- Project ALERT kept students from starting to smoke or curbed smoking by students who had already started at the beginning of the evaluation.
- The proportion of new smokers in the Project ALERT group was 19 percent lower than that of the control group.
- Reduced past-month cigarette use by 20 percent to 25 percent.
- Decreased regular and heavy smoking by 33 percent to 55 percent.
- Substantially reduced students' pro-drug attitudes and beliefs.

Specific Tobacco Control Lessons and Outcomes

- Specific Lessons
 - **Core Lesson 2:** Consequences of Smoking Cigarettes and Marijuana
 - **Core Lesson 4:** Introduction to Pressures
 - **Core Lesson 5:** Social Pressures to Use Drugs
 - **Core Lesson 6:** Resisting Internal and External Pressures to Use Drugs
 - **Core Lesson 7:** Practicing Resistance Skills
 - **Core Lesson 9:** Review and Practice Resistance Techniques
 - **Core Lesson 10:** Smoking Cessation
 - **Core Lesson 11:** Benefits of Not Using Drugs
 - **Booster Lesson 1:** Motivating Resistance to Drugs
 - **Booster Lesson 2:** Practice Resisting External and Internal Pressures
 - **Booster Lesson 3:** Benefits of Resisting Drugs



• Tobacco Control Outcomes

- **Use:** Controlled studies have showed that Project ALERT helps to reduce both initiation and recent use of cigarettes. Program effects have indicated reduced past month cigarette use, decreasing on average by 20 percent to 25 percent. Decreased regular and heavy smoking by 33 percent to 55 percent has also been observed.
- **Beliefs:** Results from multiple validation studies have shown that implementing Project ALERT with fidelity can mitigate a broad range of beliefs associated with the propensity to use tobacco. The program has been successful in reducing the students' estimates of peer use of tobacco, and in modifying student beliefs that refusing cigarettes can bring greater respect from one's friend. Perceptions about peer tolerance of cigarette use were significantly reduced for cigarettes.
- Among the drug-use consequence measures, the ALERT curriculum changed beliefs about the non-health consequences of using cigarettes. Beliefs about the perceived risk of becoming dependent on cigarettes, compared to study control groups, were also highly significant and beliefs about the harm of occasional cigarette use were statistically significant.

AUDIENCE CHARACTERISTICS

Age Range: 11 - 14

Grades: 6 - 7

Gender: Male and Female

PROGRAM DETAILS

Type of Program: Prevention

Audience Size: Minimum 12/Maximum 35

Number of Lessons: 11 lessons in Year One (sixth or seventh grade)/Three lessons in Year Two (seventh or eighth grade)

Minimum Lessons Required to Achieve Fidelity: 14

Length of Each Lesson: 45 minutes

Frequency of Implementation: Once a week

Duration of Implementation: 11 weeks for Year One and three weeks for Year Two

Recommended Intervention Site(s): School and community

HOW IT WORKS

Trained teachers typically deliver Project ALERT in a classroom setting, but some districts have adapted it for use in afterschool settings where trained personnel are available. Project ALERT uses participatory activities and videos to help motivate adolescents against drug use, teach adolescents the skills and strategies needed to resist pro-drug pressures and establish non-drug-using norms. Guided classroom discussions and small group activities stimulate peer interaction and challenge student beliefs and perceptions, while intensive role-playing activities help students learn and master resistance skills. These lessons are reinforced through videos that model appropriate behavior. Homework assignments that also involve parents extend the learning process by facilitating parent-child discussions about drugs and how to resist using them.

IMPLEMENTATION ESSENTIALS

To Replicate with Fidelity:

- Lessons should be taught one week apart over the course of 11 weeks for Year One and one week apart over the course of three weeks for Year Two.
- Teachers are urged to participate in an online training program or workshop where they learn the rationale and theory underlying Project ALERT, the skills needed to deliver the lessons and implementation guidelines for achieving program fidelity.
- The classroom should be equipped with Internet access or a TV and DVD player for viewing videos (also downloadable via iTunes), chalkboard, chart paper, felt-tip markers and masking tape. Capacity to photocopy student handouts is necessary.

Program Evaluation Tools Available? Yes

MATERIALS AND TRAINING

Required Materials:

- Teacher Curriculum Kit: No cost – available to download at projectalert.com

Training (Required)

- Full training/certification is available online at no cost at projectalert.com. Information regarding in-person training/certification workshops is available by contacting the technical coordinator and administrative manager, Michael Woodward, at projectalert@rand.org
- In-person training rate is negotiable based on school/organization needs. Schools have been trained in the past for between \$1,200 and \$1,800 base rate for in-person training workshop conducted by a senior trainer, plus travel expenses. If training sites plan to print and bind lessons and posters for participants, a budget of \$35 per attendee is suggested.
- Training Duration: Approximately eight hours
- Min/Max Number of Training Participants: No minimum. Maximum of 35-40 participants

Availability in Spanish: Implementation materials (14-lesson manual, student handouts) are available in Spanish. In-person training workshops are available in Spanish. Online training is English-only.

PROGRAM REPLICATIONS CONTACT INFORMATION

Jeff Coomber

Office of the Kern County Superintendent of Schools

1300 17th Street - CITY CENTRE

Bakersfield, CA 93301-4533

(661) 852-5674

jecoomber@kern.org

Kelly Lara

Ventura County Office of Education

5189 Verdugo Way

Camarillo, CA 93012

(805) 437-1378

klara@vcoe.org

Ryan Crowdis

Orange County Dept of Ed

200 Kalmus Dr

Costa Mesa, CA 92626

(714) 966-4000

rcrowdis@ocde.us



PROGRAM CONTACT

For training and program information, contact:

Eric Pedersen, Ph.D.
Director of Project ALERT
RAND
1776 Main St. / P.O. Box 2138,
Santa Monica, CA 90407
Phone: (310) 393-0411 ext. 6078
Fax: (310) 260-8173
ericp@rand.org

For materials information, contact:

Michael Woodward
Technical Coordinator and Administrative Manager
RAND
1776 Main St. / P.O. Box 2138,
Santa Monica, CA 90407
Phone: (310) 393-0411 ext. 6595
Fax: (310) 260-8173
michaelw@rand.org

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Website: projectalert.com