

Recognizing Protective and Risk Factors in Youth

Protective Factors

Individual

- Healthy / Conventional beliefs and clear standards
- High expectations
- Perception of social support from adults and peers
- Positive / Resilient temperament
- Positive expectations / Optimism for the future
- Religiosity / Involvement in organized religious activities
- Self-efficacy
- Social competencies and problem-solving skills

Family

- Effective parenting
- Good relationships with parents / Bonding or attachment to family
- Having a stable family
- High expectations
- Opportunities for prosocial family involvement
- Rewards for prosocial family involvement

School

- Above average academic achievement / Reading and math skills
- High expectations of students
- High quality schools / Clear standards and rules

- Opportunities for prosocial school involvement
- Presence and involvement of caring, supportive adults
- Rewards for prosocial school involvement
- Strong school motivation / Positive attitude toward school
- Student bonding (attachment to teachers, belief, commitment)

Community

- Clear social norms / Policies with sanctions for violations and rewards for compliance
- High expectations
- Non-disadvantaged neighborhood
- Presence and involvement of caring, supportive adults
- Prosocial opportunities for participation / Availability of neighborhood resources
- Rewards for prosocial community involvement
- Safe environment / Low neighborhood crime

Peers

- Good relationships with peers
- Involvement with positive peer group activities
- Parental approval of friends

Risk Factors

Individual

- Anti-social behavior and alienation/Delinquent beliefs/General delinquency involvement/Drug dealing
- Chronic medical and/or physical condition
- Cognitive and neurological deficits/Low intelligence quotient/Hyperactivity
- Early onset of aggression and/or violence
- Early sexual involvement
- Favorable attitudes toward drug use/Early onset of AOD use/Alcohol and/or drug use
- Gun possession/Illegal gun ownership and/or carrying
- Lack of guilt and empathy
- Life stressors
- Mental disorder/Mental health problem/Conduct disorder
- Poor refusal skills
- Teen parenthood
- Victimization and exposure to violence

Family

- Broken home
- Child victimization and maltreatment
- Family history of the problem behavior/Parent criminality
- Family management problems/Poor parental supervision and/or monitoring
- Family transitions
- Family violence
- Having a young mother
- Low parent education level/Illiteracy
- Maternal depression
- Parental use of physical punishment/Harsh and/or erratic discipline practices
- Pattern of high family conflict
- Poor family attachment/Bonding
- Sibling antisocial behavior

School

- Dropping out of school
- Frequent school transitions
- Identified as learning disabled
- Inadequate school climate/Poorly organized and functioning schools/Negative labeling by teachers
- Low academic achievement
- Low academic aspirations
- Low parent college expectations for child
- Negative attitude toward school/Low bonding/Low school attachment/Commitment to school
- School suspensions
- Truancy/Frequent absences

Community

- Availability of alcohol and other drugs
- Availability of firearms
- Community crime/High crime neighborhood
- Community instability
- Economic deprivation/Poverty/Residence in a disadvantaged neighborhood
- Feeling unsafe in the neighborhood
- Low community attachment
- Neighborhood youth in trouble
- Social and physical disorder/Disorganized neighborhood

Peer

- Association with delinquent and/or aggressive peers
- Gang involvement/Gang membership
- Peer alcohol, tobacco, and/or other drug use
- Peer rejection