



All You Need to Know About SADD as a Prevention Program

For the past two decades, researchers have been studying the most effective ways to prevent youth from engaging in harmful activities such as alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, violent behavior, eating disorders, and aggressive and reckless driving. As a result, a science-based approach to prevention has emerged that offers guidelines for designing effective programming. SADD embraces these guidelines in a highly unique, two-pronged approach.

First, SADD itself is a prevention program. It promotes youth development and empowers students to get involved in leading their peers toward good decision-making. SADD provides a supportive environment for many young people to follow a healthy lifestyle. It also provides an opportunity for students to develop leadership skills, engage in service-learning, and serve as agents for change in their schools and communities. Integrated in schools and communities across the country, SADD chapters themselves foster a culture among participating students that promotes youth resiliency and positive decision-making.

Second, SADD's mission is "to provide students with the best prevention and intervention tools possible to deal with the issues of underage drinking, impaired driving, drug abuse, and other destructive decisions." SADD chapters are charged with implementing programming that raises awareness and informs the community about pertinent issues, engages local youth in alternative activities that build resilience and reduce risk factors, and strengthens norms against destructive decisions within families, schools, and communities. SADD National offers local SADD chapters successful and effective prevention strategies that help them fulfill this goal.

What is a science-based prevention program?

According to research done in the field, prevention programs must be designed to enhance protective factors and move toward reducing known risk factors. The research also reveals that in order to prevent substance abuse and violence among youth, programming must involve a coordinated, collaborative approach that addresses change not only at the individual level but also at the peer, school, family, community, and larger society levels.

What does this mean for SADD?

For SADD activities to be effective, SADD programming must capitalize on protective factors, reduce risk factors, and target the six identified domains: individual, peer, family, school, community, and society/environment.

What are risk factors?

Risk factors make a young person vulnerable to health and social problems. Researchers have found that the more risk factors a young person experiences, the more likely it is that she or he will experience substance use and related problems in adolescence and young adulthood.¹ Risk factors include biological, psychological/behavioral, and social/environmental characteristics, such as family history of substance use, depression or diagnosed mental health disorder, or living in an area where substance abuse and violence are tolerated and/or pervasive.

What are protective factors?

Protective factors (also known as resilience factors) help safeguard youth from substance abuse and related problems. Essentially, many attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, situations, and/or actions can build resilience. Researchers have found that the presence of protective factors reduces the likelihood that a young person will struggle with substance abuse and violence even if that young person is exposed to a substantial number of risk factors. Protective factors appear to balance and buffer the negative impact of existing risk factors.

What are domains?

Risk and protective factors exist at every level at which a person interacts with others and the surrounding world. Based on the research, human interactions have been organized into six different life or activity domains. Within each one of these domains, risk and protective factors can be identified.

This table lists the six domains and identifies a few examples of possible risk and protective factors for each.

Domain	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
Individual	Lack of impulse control; depression; low self-esteem; rebelliousness, anti-social behavior	Strong social skills; enthusiastic attitude; self-discipline; resilient temperament; ability to establish positive relationships/ close bonds
Peer	Very few friends; friends who use drugs; friends who are much older	Friends are in SADD chapter; friends are involved with school activities (sports, music, art, theater, etc.); friends do not use drugs

¹ Science-Based Substance Abuse Prevention: A Guide. Department of Health and Human Services, SAMHSA, CSAP. p.2, 2001. www.modelprograms.samhsa.gov/pdfs/pubs_Principles.pdf (Sept. 9, 2005).

Domain	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
Family	Family history of substance abuse or violence; parents tolerate teen substance use; parents lack clear expectations; family conflict; neglect	Parents provide consistent structure; open communication in family; positive bonding between family members
School	No clear behavior policy in school; low expectations of students; no opportunities for parent networking	Firm “No Use” policy enforced; strong, active SADD chapter; student assistance and referral systems in place
Community	Lack of youth recreation activities; lack of adult involvement or interest in youth; tolerance of teen substance use	Strong collaboration among parents, law enforcement, public health services, and schools; enforcement of purchasing ages for alcohol and tobacco; opportunities for youth participation in community activities
Society/ Environment	Alcohol use seen on TV commercials and shows and in movies aimed at teens; strong media influences to smoke cigarettes and use alcohol; alcohol-sponsored community events	No alcohol billboards within 500 yards of school facilities; strong impaired driving laws enforced; graduated licensing laws in place

How SADD Reduces Risk Factors

Through the design and implementation of programming, SADD chapters are able to respond to risk factors. Several examples are outlined in the following table.

Domain	Risk Factors	SADD Reduces Risk
Individual-Based Risk Factors	<p>First use of any substance occurs during early teen years.</p> <p>Greater vulnerability to negative peer pressure</p> <p>Low self-esteem, lack of bonding with peers, school, or community</p> <p>Victim of violence in the home or community</p> <p>Youth has a history of depression or suicide attempts or emotional, psychological, physical, or sexual abuse.</p>	<p>SADD chapters educate youth about risks of substance use.</p> <p>SADD chapters allow students to develop positive relationships with peers who have healthy beliefs and can set clear boundaries.</p> <p>SADD chapters welcome all types of people and can provide opportunities for youth to develop strong leadership and social skills.</p>
Peer-Based Risk Factors	<p>Friends use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.</p> <p>Friends are much older.</p> <p>Dating relationships involve alcohol, others drugs, or violence.</p>	<p>SADD activities provide safe, healthy, structured alternatives for youth.</p> <p>SADD chapters offer youth the opportunity to meet and to build relationships with peers who choose not to use and who make healthy decisions.</p> <p>SADD students model positive behavior and decision-making and often act as mentors for younger peers.</p>

Domain	Risk Factors	SADD Reduces Risk
<p>Family-Based Risk Factors</p>	<p>Family history of alcoholism or violence</p> <p>Parents involve youth in the parents' use or misuse of alcohol, tobacco and/or other drugs (e.g., "light my cigarette"; "get me a beer")</p> <p>Unclear expectations of behavior, lack of monitoring and supervision, inconsistent or harsh discipline, lack of bonding and caring, and conflict between parents/caregivers</p> <p>Encouraging or ignoring teen use of alcohol and other drugs</p>	<p>SADD chapters educate youth about family alcoholism, negligent parent attitudes about substance use, and violence prevention.</p> <p>SADD chapters promote awareness of parenting skills and the need for consistent, supportive structure in the home.</p> <p>SADD chapters organize parent workshops to educate adults in the community.</p> <p>SADD chapters encourage open communication between parents and youth.</p>
<p>School-Based Risk Factors</p>	<p>School policies, rules, and regulations are not defined or enforced uniformly.</p> <p>Low school spirit and unification</p> <p>Unsupportive transitions between schools (e.g., from elementary school to middle school or from middle school to high school)</p>	<p>SADD chapters mobilize school community to put clear policies and enforcement in place.</p> <p>SADD chapter activities promote school bonding, understanding differences, and unity among the student body.</p> <p>SADD chapters visit younger schools, organize new school year orientations, offer opportunity for new students to get involved, and provide a safe group for students to join.</p>

Domain	Risk Factors	SADD Reduces Risk
Community-Based Risk Factors	<p>Availability of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs (liquor stores do not ID customers, etc.)</p> <p>Lack of recreational space and activities</p> <p>Community attitudes, practices, policies, or laws favor substance use and misuse</p> <p>Witnessing violence in the community</p>	<p>SADD chapters can launch a liquor-control campaign in their communities.</p> <p>SADD chapters can create alternative programs and activities for youth to participate in and encourage collaboration between youth and community members.</p> <p>SADD chapters can mobilize to create a strong “No Use” stance in the community and collaborate with police to strengthen enforcement practices.</p>
Societal/ Environmental -Based Risk Factors	<p>Portrayal in the media of teens using substances</p> <p>Lack of progressive state legislation and enforcement (graduated driver’s licensing, primary safety belt laws, liquor server training)</p> <p>Pervasiveness of violence in media, popular culture, and entertainment</p>	<p>SADD chapters provide media literacy education to youth in their communities.</p> <p>SADD chapters influence policy by informing legislators about youth issues.</p>

How SADD Enhances Protective Factors

SADD can customize prevention efforts to increase youth protective factors. SADD advisors, working through their SADD chapters, can take the following actions.

⇒ **Target all forms of drug use.**

When targeting drug-related issues, focus SADD programming and activities on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use.

⇒ **Promote skills to resist drug offers.**

Enlist SADD students in developing ways to resist invitations to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, and then set up programs that enable SADD students to teach younger students how to resist drug offers.

⇒ **Build social competency skills.**

Empower SADD students to take on projects and tasks that will help them develop communication, leadership, and interpersonal skills. As students learn to negotiate all the details to fulfill their assignments and responsibilities, they will develop competencies in a variety of areas.

⇒ **Promote education designed to correct students' misperceptions about drug use.**

Invite outside professionals to inform students about the facts and realities of drug use. Design programming that allows trained SADD students to educate other youth about the issue.

⇒ **Include a strong parent component.**

Work with parent/teacher organizations to develop programming that educates, trains, and informs parents about teen issues, behaviors, and attitudes. Design programming that will bring parents and youth together to engage in a dialogue, participate in activities, and share a common experience.

⇒ **Reach out to diverse populations, including youth with behavior problems or learning disabilities.**

Focus recruiting efforts on youth groups that are not yet represented in your chapter. Identify and demystify stereotypes and prejudices. Implement outreach programs that target all the diverse populations located in your school and/or community.

⇒ **Provide interactive methods, such as peer discussion groups.**

Lead SADD chapter activities that are engaging and allow students to interact. Provide opportunities for role-plays, dialogue, educational games, performances, and demonstrations.

⇒ **Facilitate collaboration among all resources in the community.**

Reach out to local law enforcement, juvenile court officials, mental health agencies, school administration, local businesses, parents, prevention coalitions, and networks.

⇒ **Launch youth media campaigns and lobby for policy changes.**

Advocate for change in schools, in communities, in states, or on the national level. Organize focus groups to assess and develop school handbook policies. Work with state-level legislative coalitions on youth issues, such as graduated licensing, safety belt use, and underage drinking. Teach SADD students how to meet with legislators to discuss pertinent youth issues and policies.

Seven Prevention Strategies to Incorporate in SADD Programming

When determining your target issue and designing programs, it is important to consider the seven major strategies to prevention.²

1. **Policy:** The creation, promotion, and enforcement of policies, norms, rules, laws, and regulations to regulate and control behavior
2. **Enforcement:** Creating awareness of, promoting, and exercising enforcement and reinforcement of existing and new policies regarding violence and substance abuse
3. **Communications:** Education, marketing, and campaigning about an issue to influence norms, attract support from others, raise awareness, and keep the people informed
4. **Education:** Instructional approaches that teach a combination of positive social and thinking skills have been found to be much more effective at changing behavior than simply teaching youth about substances, violence, and the consequences involved. Specific skill building should be integrated into any educational strategy.
5. **Collaboration:** Community coalition building, interagency collaboration, and other collaborative efforts have been shown to be effective in raising awareness about the issues of substance abuse and violence and in coordinating prevention and intervention services.
6. **Alternatives:** Schools and communities must work together to incorporate recreational, enrichment, and leisure activities into their approach to prevention.
7. **Early Intervention:** Strategies such as student assistance programs, counseling, and referral and treatment services for youth at risk for substance abuse, violence, and other related risk factors are important to have in place. The most effective strategies are those designed to identify young people and their parents as “at risk” and refer them to appropriate educational, counseling, or support programs.

Using components of these seven various strategies when designing your SADD activities will increase the likelihood that your program will be effective in reducing substance abuse, violence, and/or other destructive behaviors harmful to young people.

² *Prevention: What's Science Got to Do With It?* Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Northeast Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies. 2001 Education Development Center, Inc. <http://captus.samhsa.gov/>.

Examples of Prevention Strategies Executed by a SADD Chapter

Drawing on multiple strategies increases the likelihood that your SADD chapter will be successful in meeting its goal of changing youth behavior. For example, if a chapter's goal is to reduce the amount of violence, specifically bullying and fighting in a school community, then participants should incorporate several different strategies of action to achieve this goal. Some of these may include the following strategies.

- ⇒ **(Policy)** Spearheading the development of a clear policy against fighting and harassment to post in the school handbook
- ⇒ **(Enforcement)** Working with school officials to support and sustain enforcement that will uphold policy
- ⇒ **(Communication)** Posting messages around the school that encourage respect and compassion
- ⇒ **(Education)** Holding interactive classes in middle and elementary schools to educate younger students about abuse and respect
- ⇒ **(Collaboration)** Working with school administrators, support staff, and community mental health services to establish a referral process and support services for identified victims and perpetrators of bullying
- ⇒ **(Alternatives)** Sponsoring an event – a dance, rally, or assembly – to promote spirit and respect among members of the student body
- ⇒ **(Early Intervention)** Working with school administrators to implement an appropriate, structured, standardized conflict resolution program that is endorsed by a nationally recognized and accredited organization, such as the Association of Conflict Resolution (www.acresolution.org) or the National Association of Peer Programs (www.peerhelping.org), P.O. Box 32272, Kansas City, Missouri 64171-5272; Tel: 913-362-0794; Toll-free: 877-314-7337; Fax: 913-362 0735; E-mail: npha@peerhelping.org).

SADD as a Proven, Effective Prevention Program

In 1995, Preusser Research Group, Inc. completed a national SADD evaluation.³ The study produced the following results.

- ⇒ Students in schools with an active SADD chapter, as compared with students attending a school without an active SADD chapter, were exposed to substantially more information advocating efforts against drinking, impaired driving, and drug use.
- ⇒ Students attending a school with an active SADD chapter, as compared with students attending a school without an active program, were more aware of and informed about underage drinking, impaired driving, and drug use.
- ⇒ Students attending a school with an active SADD chapter, as compared with students attending a school without an active SADD chapter, expressed more positive reasons not to use alcohol and/or drugs.
- ⇒ SADD chapters provide real benefits to participants in terms of personal growth, experience, and community perspective.
- ⇒ A rigorous program such as SADD should be viewed as an important component of a total community strategy to address underage drinking and impaired driving.

³ Preusser Research Group, Inc. "Evaluation of Youth Peer-to-Peer Impaired Driving Programs." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Transportation, 1995.

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For single copies, contact SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI), P.O. Box 2345, Rockville, MD 20847-2345; 1-800-729-6686 or 301-468-2600. To obtain a PDF file, visit www.modelprograms.samhsa.gov/pdfs/pubs_Principles.pdf.

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