



TIPS  
for

PREVENTION

PROGRAMMING :

Barry M<sup>c</sup>Caffrey, Director

Edition No.2 • May 1997

## EFFECTIVE DRUG PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Measuring and evaluating the impact and effectiveness of prevention programs poses particularly complex problems. However, evaluations of drug prevention efforts have found certain programs to be effective in the following outcome areas: (1) reducing risk factors, increasing protective factors, or both; (2) improving knowledge and attitudes about drug or alcohol use; and (3) reducing drug or alcohol problem behaviors.

Prevention research has made it clear that, at a minimum, the Nation's young people need the following:

- ◆ Community settings that protect and promote drug-free living;
- ◆ Educational, workplace, and social settings that impart and reinforce accurate drug information and "no use" attitudes; and
- ◆ Social sanctions and rewards that discourage drug use and other serious risk behaviors.

To link specific prevention efforts to specific outcomes, analysts must ask not simply "What works?" but also "What specific programs are effective, what approaches do they use, and with which populations will they be effective?"

### *Prevention research has found:*

- ◆ For younger children and adolescents, prevention approaches that emphasize personal skills development and task-oriented skills training—"psychosocial" approaches—were shown to be the most consistently effective in reducing alcohol and drug use.
- ◆ For adolescents at significant risk for problem behaviors, professionally administered individual and family counseling demonstrated effectiveness in influencing long-term risk and protective factors related to drug use and alcohol abuse.
- ◆ For adults, prevention approaches that change the community environment, often in concert with interventions targeted to specific individuals, were shown to be effective in reducing drug and alcohol problem behaviors.
- ◆ Programs that are sensitive to and reflect the cultural values of the targeted group are more effective.

These findings are consistent with those of the broader prevention research that underpins the social development strategy now being used in numerous communities

across the country. Many communities are using approaches to interrupt the processes that produce problem behaviors, such as crime, violence, and substance abuse.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

#### ***For information on substance abuse prevention contact:***

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information  
PO Box 2345  
Rockville, MD 20847-2345  
800-729-6686  
800-487-4889 TDD  
[www.health.org](http://www.health.org)

#### ***For information on drug policy contact:***

White House Office of National Drug Control Policy  
Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse  
PO Box 6000  
Rockville, MD 20849-6000  
800-666-3332  
[www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov)

**Source:** Executive Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy, *National Drug Control Strategy: Strengthening Communities' Response to Drugs and Crime*, February 1995.