

2009 Contemporary Social Issues Seminar Series
Sponsored by the Universities at Shady Grove and the Rockville Institute

Are Schools Using Effective Drug and Crime Prevention Programs?

April 16, 2009

General Overview

How do we identify effective youth substance abuse and school crime prevention programs? How prevalent are these programs in America's public schools?

What We Know

The vast majority of public elementary and secondary schools provide substance abuse and/or school crime prevention programs to students. Funding sources are increasingly requiring schools to implement only evidence- or research-based programs—programs supported by evidence of effectiveness. Partly in response to those requirements, over a dozen organizations have produced lists of research-based prevention programs, using different criteria for including programs and yielding different results.

Research conducted over the past decade has examined the use of research-based programs in schools. That research often indicates that relatively few of the programs provided in schools are research-based, despite the prescriptions of funding sources. Research also has begun to identify the factors that are associated with the adoption of research-based programs.

Goals for the Presentation

This presentation will highlight research findings and the gaps in knowledge pertaining to the identification of effective school-based prevention programs and the adoption of those programs. It will cover the following:

- The development of lists of effective prevention programs and criticisms of those lists,
- The prevalence of research-based programs in schools, and
- Factors that are associated with the adoption of research-based programs and how those factors may point to ways to boost adoption.

The presentation also will describe efforts to develop a list of research-based programs that is intended to overcome some of the concerns about previous lists, and to examine the prevalence of those programs in schools. It will conclude with a discussion of the challenges to improving prevention programming in America's schools.

Presenters

Scott Crosse, PhD, is a senior researcher at Westat with experience conducting applied research on social programs and policy issues at both the community and national levels. Much of his work has focused on the prevention of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) problems. Dr. Crosse has led research on the prevalence and implementation of school-based ATOD and crime prevention programs; the effectiveness of prevention programs intended to curb high-risk alcohol use among university students; and the effectiveness of community-based prevention programs.

Rita Rumbaugh coordinates the Title IV, Part A, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program for the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), Maryland, as the county's substance abuse

prevention specialist. She is responsible for the management of the prevention and intervention programs in the county's public and non-public schools.

Ms. Rumbaugh has served on the Board of Directors for the National Board for Student Assistance Professional Association, the Maryland Governor's Executive Advisory Council for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse, and nationally, as a presenter for *The Road to Recovery*, a Recovery Month video series. Ms Rumbaugh recently presented gang prevention workshops for the national USDOE Safe and Drug-Free Schools Conference.

As a representative of the MCPS, Ms. Rumbaugh currently serves on the county's Alcohol and Other Drug Advisory Council, the Coalition for Drawing the Line on Underage Alcohol Use, the Maryland Highway Safety Coalition, and the Conflict Resolution Center of Maryland. Ms. Rumbaugh and the Safe and Drug-Free Schools office is also a partner with the Community Supervision And Focused Enforcement (CSAFE) in designated areas of Montgomery County and the county's local management board, the Collaboration Council.

As the executive director of the nonprofit Montgomery County Community Partnership, Ms. Rumbaugh seeks and coordinates partnerships with other nonprofit violence-prevention and drug-prevention groups to advocate for the well-being of youth throughout the county.