



Preventing Youth Drug Addiction with Social and Emotional Learning



A Program of Lions Clubs International Foundation

Risk of drug abuse increases greatly during times of transition. For an adult, a divorce or loss of a job may lead to drug abuse; for a teenager, risky times include moving or changing schools. In early adolescence, when children advance from elementary through middle school, they face new and challenging social and academic situations. Often during this period, children are exposed to substances such as cigarettes and alcohol for the first time. When they enter high school, teens may encounter greater availability of drugs, drug use by older teens and social activities where drugs are used. (National Institute on Drug Abuse)

Social and emotional learning (SEL) programs, which previously have shown immediate improvements in mental health, social skills, and academic achievement, continue to benefit students for months and even years to come, according to a 2017 meta-analysis from CASEL, the University of Illinois at Chicago, Loyola University, and the University of British Columbia.



HIGHER...	Percentile Points	LOWER...	Percentile Points
Academic performance	13 (based on 8 studies)	Conduct problems	6 (34 studies)
SEL skills	9 (29 studies)	Emotional distress	6 (35 studies)
Attitudes	5 (26 studies)	Drug use	6 (28 studies)
Positive social behaviors	5 (28 studies)		

Source: casel.org

"Teens' still-developing judgment and decision-making skills may limit their ability to accurately assess the risks of all of these forms of drug use. Preventing early use of drugs or alcohol may go a long way in reducing these risks. If we can prevent young people from experimenting with drugs, we can prevent drug addiction."

~National Institute of Drug Abuse

Lions Clubs International Foundation continues to support the research and development of quality social and emotional learning tools and resources as part of its global humanitarian effort to promote a safe, healthy approach to life, free from the harm of tobacco, alcohol and other drug use. Lions Quest Skills for Adolescence is recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration as an effective approach to reducing youth drug use. Used by more than 550,000 educators, youth workers and mental health providers, Lions Clubs are reaching as many as 16 million children and families across the globe.

What is SEL?

“Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions” ~*Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)*



“During the Lions Quest lessons to build social emotional skills, young people are wrestling with all kinds of topics that they otherwise would have to navigate on their own with little guidance.

For instance, as the choice of whether or not to use alcohol and tobacco products is addressed in the Lions Quest program, I saw 7th graders discuss why the media targets them with advertising about these substances.

Additionally, I have witnessed teachers discuss sensitive topics with their students, using the teacher resources that the Lions Quest provides that are likely bolstering their ability to broach such subjects that they may not have had the words or activities to tackle previously.”

*~Jennifer Oliphant, Research Associate,
University of Minnesota*

Self-Awareness

The ability to accurately recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one’s strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.”

- ✦ Identifying emotions
- ✦ Self-confidence
- ✦ Accurate self-perception
- ✦ Self-efficacy
- ✦ Recognizing strengths

Self-Management

The ability to successfully regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

- ✦ Impulse control
- ✦ Self-motivation
- ✦ Stress management
- ✦ Goal-setting
- ✦ Self-discipline
- ✦ Organizational skills

Social Awareness

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

- ✦ Perspective-taking
- ✦ Appreciating diversity
- ✦ Empathy
- ✦ Respect for others

Relationship Skills

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

- ✦ Communication
- ✦ Relationship-building
- ✦ Social engagement
- ✦ Teamwork

Responsible Decision Making

The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.

- ✦ Identifying problems
- ✦ Evaluating
- ✦ Analyzing situations
- ✦ Reflecting
- ✦ Solving problems
- ✦ Ethical responsibility