

Annex 2**Risk factors of adolescent drug use/abuse**

The drug abuse problem is usually a manifestation, or a result of inter-related risk factors and possible maladaptive coping mechanism adopted by the adolescent. Moreover, as the socio-economic background of the drug users/abusers is often complicated, drug use/abuse is only part of a syndrome of youth delinquent problems. Therefore, the risk factors listed below do not mean that there is a causal chain leading to adolescent drug use/abuse. However, identifying the risk factors of adolescent drug use/abuse can help social workers and related persons have a deeper understanding of the various influential factors involved. More importantly, other protective factors have to be identified to help the client in the treatment process.

(I) Risks factors to be assessed by social workers:**(1) Individual factors*****a) Behaviour pattern:***

- lack of social bonding
- alienation
- disruptive behaviour
- impulsivity
- poor social skills
- poor problem solving skills
- poor school performance
- lack of interest in school
- problem drinking, smoking
- early initiation of drug use

b) Perception:

- pessimistic
- low self-esteem
- risk-taking tendency
- positive attitude towards drug-taking behaviour

c) Environment:

- lack of role model
- drug-taking peers, anti-social peers
- availability of drugs
- residence in a disadvantaged neighbourhood
- traumatic experiences that are not appropriately handled

(2) Family factors (Note 1)

The following factors are summarized from Kumpfer(1998)

- Family history of behaviour problem, including:
 - parental or sibling role modelling of antisocial values and drug-taking behaviours
 - favourable attitudes about drug taking
 - parental criminality, psychopathology, antisocial personality disorder and substance abuse
- Poor socialization practices, including:
 - failure to promote positive moral development
 - neglect in teaching life, social and academic skills to the child or in providing opportunities to learn these competences
 - failure to transmit prosocial values and disapprove of youth's use of drugs
- Ineffective supervision of the child, including:
 - failure to monitor the child's activities
 - neglect
 - latchkey conditions
 - sibling supervision
 - too few adults to care for the number of children
- Ineffective discipline skills, including:
 - lax, inconsistent, or excessively harsh discipline
 - parental behavioural undercontrol or psychological overcontrol of the child
 - expectations that are unrealistic for the developmental level of the child creating a failure syndrome
 - excessive, unrealistic demands or harsh physical punishment
- Poor parent-child relationships, including:
 - lack of parental bonding and early insecure attachment
 - repeated loss of caregivers
 - negativity and rejection of the child by the parents (including: cold and unsupportive maternal behavior; lack of involvement and time together, resulting in rejection of the parents by the child)
 - maladaptive parent-child interactions
- Excessive family conflict and marital discord with verbal, physical, or sexual abuse
- Family disorganization, chaos, and stress
 - often because of poor family management skills, life skills, or poverty
 - teenage mothers, single parents, large family size, father absence, long-term parental unemployment, or other disadvantaged family characteristics
- Poor parental mental health, including depression and irritability

- which cause negative views of the child's behaviours, parental hostility to child, and harsh discipline
- Family isolation:
 - lack of supportive extended family networks
 - family social insularity
 - lack of community support resources
- Differential family acculturation:
 - role reversal
 - loss of parental control over adolescents by parents who are less acculturated than their children

(II) Protective factors to be identified by social workers:(Note 2)

- strong and positive family bonds
- parental monitoring of children's activities and peers
- clear rules of conduct that are consistently enforced within the family
- involvement of parents in the lives of their children
- success in school performance; strong bonds with institutions, such as school and religious organizations
- adoption of conventional norms about drug use

Note 1: Source – Kumpfer 1998, pp. 56-57

Note 2: Source – National Institute on Drug Abuse (2002). Risk and protective factors in drug abuse prevention. *NIDA Notes*, 16(6).