



# LifeSkills Training Program Middle School Fact Sheet



## Description

**LifeSkills Training (LST)** is an evidence-based substance abuse and violence prevention program designed to be implemented in Middle/Junior High School classrooms. In addition to helping youth resist drug, alcohol, and tobacco use, LST effectively helps to reduce violence and other high-risk behaviors. LST incorporates age-appropriate and culturally relevant information, facilitated discussion, and structured activities in 30 class sessions across 3 years. LST was developed by Dr. Gilbert J. Botvin, Professor of Public Health and Psychiatry and Director of Cornell University's Institute for Prevention Research.

## Objectives

- **Personal Self-Management Skills:** Provides students with skills to enhance self-esteem, learn creative problem solving, reduce stress and anxiety, and manage anger.
- **General Social Skills:** Empowers students to meet challenges such as overcoming shyness, communicating clearly, building relationships, and avoiding violence.
- **Drug Resistance Skills:** Helps students resist pressures to use tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.

## Features

- Designed for Middle/Junior High School students in Grades 6-9
- 40-45 minute sessions taught 1-5 times per week by classroom teachers as an intensive mini-series, or on an extended schedule
- **Level 1 (Grade 6/7):** Core Level - 15 class sessions (plus 3 optional violence lessons)  
**Level 2 (Grade 7/8):** Booster Level - 10 sessions (plus 2 optional violence lessons)  
**Level 3 (Grade 8/9):** Booster Level - 5 sessions (plus 2 optional violence lessons)

## Designations and Recognition

- **Exemplary Program** - U.S. Department of Education
- **Model Program**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Registry  
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention  
Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development)  
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention  
White House Office of National Drug Control Policy
- **Programs That Work** - National Institute on Drug Abuse

## Materials

- **Teacher's Manual** for each level
- **Stress Management CD and Smoking/Biofeedback DVD**
- **Consumable Student Guide** for each level
- **Companion Website** for each level  
[www.lifeskillstraining.com/msweb/](http://www.lifeskillstraining.com/msweb/)
- **Digital Support Slides** for each level
- **Fidelity checklists and pre/post assessment** available



## Cost

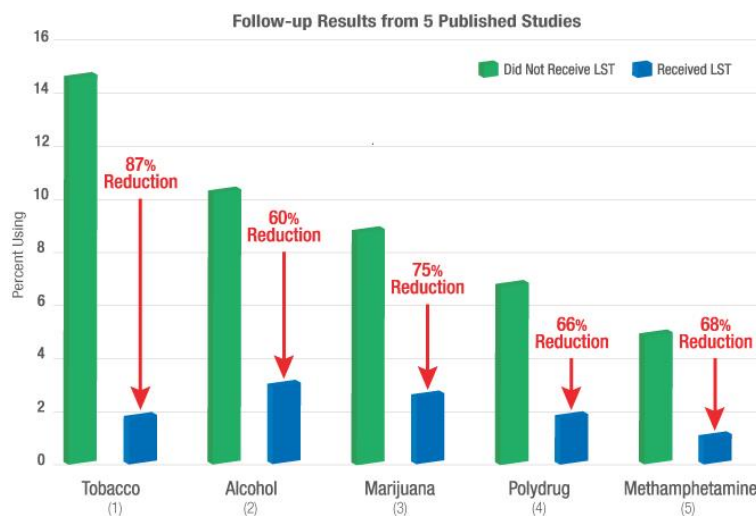
- **Online Cost Calculator:** <https://cspv.colorado.edu/what-we-do/initiatives/lst-grant/calculator/>
- **Ordering Information:** <https://www.lifeskillstraining.com/order/>

## Importance of Choosing an Evidence-Based Program (EBP)

- EBPs produce sizeable effects in well-designed and implemented randomized or matched control group studies. Two common features of EBPs are a high degree of structure or manualization, and monitoring to ensure the program is implemented with fidelity.
- Because some programs are ineffective, or even harmful, we are obligated to do what we *know* is effective. EBPs have a high likelihood of improving the health and well-being of participants.
- EBPs offer well-packaged program materials, staff training, and technical assistance.
- EBPs provide meaningful accountability of scarce community resources. Information increasingly is available that the financial benefits of EBPs outweigh their costs.
- The demonstrated effectiveness of EBPs can help in securing support from funding agencies, policy makers, and community leaders.

## Research Results

- Results consistently show that **LST can cut adolescent tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana use**. It also can **reduce more serious forms of drug involvement**. And, results can be **long-term**.
- The program is **effective with a broad range of students**, including white middle-class youth, ethnic minority and economically disadvantaged inner-city youth, and rural and suburban youth.
- Among adolescents, substance use and violence tend to co-occur. Research has shown that LST can be effective in **reducing violence and delinquency, in addition to reducing substance use**.
- LST can have a **direct, positive effect on cognitive, attitudinal, and personality factors** that are thought to play a part in substance use among adolescents.
- Research suggests a link between LST participation and **reduction in later HIV risk behavior**.
- Students receiving LST were found less likely to have indicators of **risky driving** on DMV records.
- **LST is cost effective**. Washington State Institute for Public Policy (December 2019) reports \$13.49 in measured benefits per \$1 spent in implementing LST.
- The CDC cites research demonstrating: a) **a strong relationship between school connectedness and educational outcomes** including school attendance, staying in school longer, and higher grades and classroom test scores; and b) students who do well academically are less likely to engage in risky behavior (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2009). **LST objectives align with several steps identified by the CDC to promote school connectedness**, including teaching refusal and resistance skills, and providing students opportunities to improve skill in decision making, conflict resolution, problem-solving, communication, stress management, and self-control.



**For Further Information About the LST Program:**

<http://lifesskillstraining.com>

<https://www.blueprintsprograms.org>

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