Maria Normann, Heidi Odell, Mari Tapio and Elsi Vuohelainen:

# YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION

## – let's do this together!

HUMAK
HUMANISTINEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

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Humak University of Applied Sciences


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# INTRODUCTION

Substance use prevention requires competent actors who are willing to develop their expertise and remain up-to-date on the current situation. This is a field that develops according to the changes taking place in the society and attitudes. New perspectives and modes of operation make substance education more interesting and effective, as well. During the 21st century, the significance of preventive work has increased as we have grown to understand the significance of promoting well-being and preventive work, instead of just investing in the corrective work. In order to live up to the expectations set for the preventive work, it is important to provide the actors of the field with a shared understanding of the true meaning of the preventive work. This publication supports this goal for the part of youth substance use prevention.

In this publication, youth substance use prevention is examined by describing it with a bicycle metaphor. Why do we do this? Cycling, similarly to substance use prevention, promotes health and well-being, and it is economical as well. A bicycle consists of components that require regular maintenance and that all have their own important role in ensuring a smooth and easy ride. Although, according to the familiar expression, there is no need to reinvent the wheel, in this publication, this has been done on purpose in youth substance use prevention. This will give you, readers, the possibility to concentrate on riding the bicycle and maintaining it, instead of always starting from the beginning.

In this publication, we provide an overall picture of youth substance use prevention: the actors in the field, goals, means, and quality matters. This publication does not tell how you can change attitudes towards substances or ensure everyone's well-being, since this is not so simple. An effective and influencing youth substance use prevention is a combination of several components and what works with one person, may not work with another. By considering certain issues, however, we can ensure the high quality of the work, which will also make achieving success easier. This publication determines these central issues and it also aims at ensuring that you will have a smooth ride.

Expertise in youth substance use prevention is needed in all work carried out among young people or for the benefit of young people. This publication provides a comprehensive review of youth substance use prevention and, thus, acts as a good basic material for actors, who are not yet very familiar with the theme. On the other hand, this publication also provides new perspectives for those with a longer experience in working in substance use prevention and, thus, it also offers a chance to update one's information.

**Come and join the ride!**

**CONTENTS:**



# 1. BICYCLE: YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION

**On the bicycle:** The bicycle of youth substance use prevention is ridden in the terrain of the promotion of well-being. A smooth journey requires a skilful rider and properly functioning components in the bicycle.

Substance use prevention concentrates on supporting well-being and promoting healthy ways of life among the whole population. It is a part of the substance work along with corrective work. The purpose of corrective work is to treat the harmful effects of substances, whereas preventive work aims at promoting well-being and preventing the occurrence of harmful effects at an early stage. Preventive work aims at creating and maintaining a culture where the sense of community and well-being can be created without the use of substances. The goal is to reduce the demand for substances, their availability, and the harmful effects of substances. The work is carried out in practice by telling people about the health effects of substance use, by encouraging discussion about substances, by offering perspectives for approaching substance issues and by providing alternatives to substance use, but, on the other hand, by building a healthy and safe set of values and by supporting the personal ability of people to make good choices. Actors in the field of substance use prevention are national, regional, local and individual citizen actors.

People come across substance issues on several occasions during various parts of their life and it is clear that substance use prevention is needed in all age groups. Youth, however, is an especially favourable phase of life for substance use prevention and this is why substance use prevention carried out among the youth has taken its own place and it must be defined by considering its own starting points. This publication concentrates, in particular, on youth substance use prevention and on defining it.

Providing a clear definition for youth substance use prevention is, in part, challenging, since it involves a great deal more besides talking about substances or intervening in people's experiments with substances. Many contents, methods, or models of substance use prevention concentrate on supporting the overall well-being of the youth. Due to their strong emphasis on social strengthening, they do not only support substance-free ways of life, but other themes as well, such as mental well-being, sexuality and equality education and the prevention of criminal and violent behaviour; issues that are all presently emphasised separately in

### HOW DOES YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION DIFFER FROM GENERAL SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION?

- Educational perspective is emphasised
- Young people are encountered in large numbers and on several forums
- The role of social strengthening is significant
- Attitudes towards substances can be influenced at an early stage
- Legislation restricts the use of substances by young people

work performed among the youth. At the basic level, all subject matters relevant for the youth can be influenced by using the same means, by strengthening the self-image and life management of the youth, through communication and by being present. It is justified to ponder whether preventive work should be discussed more clearly as its own entity, along with other separate areas.

## Modes of operation of youth substance use prevention

The implementation of youth substance use prevention can be divided into three modes of operations: social strengthening, universal prevention, and risk prevention that have been presented in Figure 1. These divisions are not unambiguous, but the themes of social strengthening and universal prevention are highly cross-sectional and are often also present in risk prevention and corrective work. Social strengthening and universal prevention are matters that concern all young people and, thus, they play an important role in substance use prevention carried out among the youth. In an ideal situation, the need for risk prevention should be only a small part of youth substance use prevention.

*Social strengthening* is emphasised particularly strongly in youth substance use prevention, but not to such an extent in work performed among the adults. In this publication, social strengthening refers to supporting the building of the young person's social skills, self-respect, and set of values. This means that substance use prevention is carried out at a general level that concerns all young people. At this stage, it is not necessary to talk directly about substances, but a substance-free way of life is supported by strengthening in young people the skills they need to make the right decisions. There is, however, a readiness to talk about substances, as well.

*Universal prevention* clearly concentrates in preventing substance-related harms, in making substance-free choices, and in providing information. Similarly to social strengthening, universal prevention is targeted at the whole age group and it aims at ensuring that all young people have the readiness to form a safe attitude towards substance use. As examples of universal prevention, we can mention various campaigns, providing information on substances, and substance-themed lessons.

*Risk prevention* is a more targeted mode of operation. It concentrates on providing additional support for those young people who have a higher risk for substance use or who have already been identified to have a substance-related problem. Risk prevention often consists of working either with an individual young person or a small group.

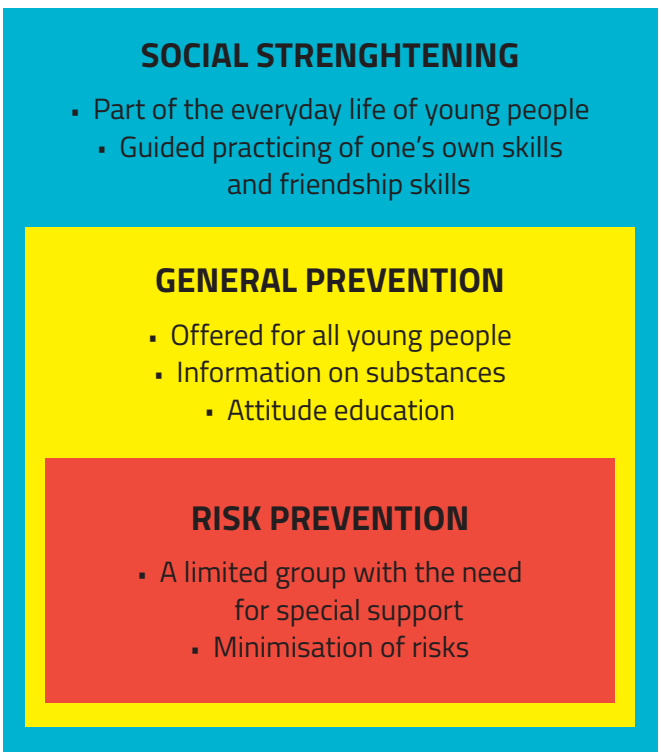



*Figure 1. Modes of operation of youth substance use prevention*

## Jungle of concepts of substance use prevention

Substance use prevention is carried out in several areas and by using several methods. This creates a situation in which the concepts in use do not always carry the same meaning for everyone. Ambiguities may lead to misunderstandings and also have harmful effects on the implementation of substance education. In multidisciplinary co-operation, it is recommended to define already at the start how each party defines the most central concepts and to determine the common meanings and the ways of using these concepts. This ensures that the co-operation is founded on a common understanding. We present a few concepts below, the use of which is quite diversified depending on the field.

*Social strengthening* is defined in the Youth Act (27.1.2006/72) as measures targeted at the youth in order to improve their life skills and to prevent exclusion. A closer interpretation has been left to each field. Aaltonen et. al. (2015) state that, for example, in social work, the concept of social strengthening is interpreted largely as a result achieved in the process of customer work; as a good interaction relationship and as a plan in which the functioning everyday life of the customer is supported. However, a person working in the Employment and Economic Development Office describes social strengthening as discussion support and as functions that support employment. In various interpretations, social strengthening can also refer to social rehabilitation or to rehabilitating employment activities. According to Pylkkänen et al. (2009), in youth substance use prevention, the concept of social strengthening describes the supporting of a young person´s social skills and self-respect and supporting the building of a young person´s own set of values through the use of various means. In this definition, the concept of social strengthening is not limited only to a problem-oriented, rehabilitative perspective or stage of work, but, instead, it extends to the area of early educational work. The main idea is that all young people are entitled to the support of their everyday life already before any problems have emerged.

In addition, the concept of *preventive work* is also used in several different ways. In several areas of operations, preventive work is referred to with the concept of *early intervention*. On the other hand, early intervention can be considered to be risk prevention: a professional has already become concerned about a young person and there is already a risk in the young person's life that must be dealt with. In this publication, preventive work is considered more as promotion of well-being, in which the protective factors in the young person's life are strengthened, instead of simply solving the problem that has already emerged.

And what do we mean when we talk about *substances*? Do we refer to only alcohol and drugs or do we refer to tobacco, medicines, steroids, and other products that also result in a dependence? The act that entered into force on December 1, 2015 on organising substance use prevention considers the harmful effects of gambling to belong within the sphere of substance use prevention. In this publication, substances refer to all products causing a dependence. The definition of *youth* may also be ambiguous. Youth can be considered to end at the age of 18, 25, or 29. The Youth Act provides a clear basic definition for youth, but youth is still understood in various ways and the availability of several services is also limited, according to various age limits. In this publication, the term "youth" refers to those under 29 years of age.

### THINK:

- How significant a part does substance use prevention play in your work?
- Which mode of operation of substance use prevention is highlighted in your work?
- What are the central concepts that should be defined with the various actors?

## 2. FRONT LIGHT: TARGETING

**On the bicycle:** Light up your way! Targeting functions in youth substance use prevention as the front light of the bicycle that helps us to see precisely the things we want to influence with our work.

By targeting, we mean tailoring the work in a way that it meets the needs of the target group and suits the situation. Carefully planned targeting supports achieving the goals of substance use prevention.

One of the starting points of targeting is to define who do you want to influence. Figure 2 shows that substance use prevention can be arranged at various implementation levels (Soikkeli and Warsell 2013, 23-24): at the level of:

1) an individual
2) the close relations
3) the local community
4) the society

Often, operations affect several levels of implementation; for example, well implemented work on the level of close relations can indirectly influence the attitudes towards substances in the whole local community and in the whole society. However, when planning the work, it is recommended to select only one level that is the primary target of influence. For example, when selecting the methods, you should define whether the purpose is to mainly influence individuals or the local community as a whole. Substance use prevention is carried out at these two levels of implementation by using different scales and methods.

In addition to the level of implementation, you should define the influence targets shown on Figure 2. Are you trying to influence the target group's

1) information, attitudes, and rights
2) protective factors and risk factors or
3) substance use and ways of using substances


*Figure 2. Targets of influence and the levels of implementation of substance use prevention (Soikkeli ja Warsell 2013)*

Similarly to the levels of implementation, the selection of the primary influence target affects how the operations are planned and what kinds of methods are selected. For example, traditional substance awareness education tries to influence, in particular, information about substances and it does not enable the protective factors in a young person's life to be strengthened.

It is also essential to decide whether substance use prevention is conducted from the perspective of social strengthening, universal prevention or risk prevention, since their contents of work can differ, as was already stated in section 1. It should be remembered that the experiences young people have of substances vary greatly. One 13-year-old may have a lot of personal experience of substances, whereas some other 13-year-old may have no personal experience or experiences in his or her family at all of substances. The purpose of targeting in youth substance use prevention is, on the one hand, to ensure that the work conducted is effective and, on the other hand, to make sure that young people receive substance education that is suitable for their own age and stage of development.

Targeting is supported by the knowledge base that is discussed in greater detail in section 3. By familiarising oneself with the needs of the target group and the currently influencing phenomena, the work can be targeted to influence exactly the right matters. This means that it must already be clearly defined in the planning stage to whom, how and with which perspective the work is to be conducted.

## Protective factors and risk factors

Protective factors and risk factors influencing a young person's life are an important part of youth substance use prevention and these factors are listed through the use of examples in Figure 3. The protective factors support a young person's healthy and safe develop-

### AN EXAMPLE OF TARGETING: INCREASING INFORMATION ON CANNABIS

**Need at the start**: An increasing number of young people in an upper comprehensive school have being caught using cannabis and the parents working in the area among the young people are especially worried, because the young people see cannabis as being completely harmless and have very light and positive attitudes towards it. A survey carried out among the young people confirms that this is the case. The survey provides the grounds for addressing the issue.

**Target of influence**: The target set is increasing information on cannabis among the young people and influencing their attitudes towards cannabis by providing alternative perspectives to the subject.

**Level of implementation and limiting the target group**: It is stated in the municipality of the school that the problem is at its worst during the last three years of the comprehensive school, which makes it justified to concentrate on the pupils at grade 7, 8 and 9.

**Selecting the mode of operation of the prevention work**: The operation is implemented as general prevention that covers all pupils at the upper comprehensive school. Some of the pupils also need risk prevention, due to their increased use of cannabis, but it is decided that they will be targeted additional measures, as necessary.

**The result**: The methods selected are interactive and participating methods that have been found to be applicable with this type of target group and subject. It is estimated afterwards, whether young people received additional information on cannabis, whether a hoped for discussion took place among the young people, and whether it seems like the young people have started, at least to some extent, to question the safety of cannabis more strongly than before.

ment, whereas the risk factors are the things present in a young person's life that increase the probability of substance-related problems. For all these factors, the matters related to friendships, family, psychological factors, and social themes are important. There is no direct connection between protective factors and risk factors and a young person's substance use, but experiments with substances and the use of substances may also be extensive when the adequate protective factors are present in a young person's life. The protective factors and risk factors, however, function as a good guideline when you are specifying the ways in which way the substance-free way of life of a young person could be supported. By examining these, it is easier to outline one's own work and to discern the risk factors and protective factors that can be influenced in one's own work. Many factors are probably connected to all human-oriented work. By working in co-operation with the network and with other actors, you can also influence factors that seem to belong to everyone and to no one at the same time.

The protective factors and risk factors also define, for their own part, the implementation and targeting of substance use prevention. The need for strengthening the protective factors is greater when substance use prevention is carried out on the level of social strengthening or universal prevention. In this case, it is assumed that there are not many risk factors present in the young person's life at the moment and that the most important thing is to maintain and increase the protective factors. The closer we come to risk prevention, the more important it is to minimise the risk factors and concentrate on them.

## THINK:

- Think about targeting in your own work. On which levels of implementation do you work and on which influence targets do you usually concentrate?
- Which risk factors and protective factors can you influence in your own work? Do you influence them all or could you target your work more accurately?

### RISK FACTORS INCLUDE:

- feeling like an outsider
- insecurity
- changes in the life situation
- positive attitudes towards substances
- failures and a bad atmosphere at school
- difficulties at school or at work
- insufficiencies in care and upbringing
- substance-related and mental health problems in the family
- poor social and emotional skills
- easy availability of substances

### PROTECTIVE FACTORS INCLUDE:

- sense of belonging, participation and community
- experiences of success
- good self-respect
- good relationships with the family and friends
- enjoying being at school
- good social skills
- restricted availability of substances
- critical attitudes towards substances in the family
- information about risks connected to substance use
- possibilities to influence the path of one's own life

*Figure 3. Protective factors and risk factors (adapting Klaari Helsinki 2007, 9)*

# 3. FRAME: KNOWLEDGE BASE

**On the bicycle**: Knowledge base of substance use prevention forms the frame of the bicycle to which the other parts of the bicycle are connected. The knowledge base ensures, for its own part, that the substance use prevention work being implemented is reliable and sustainable.

The knowledge base refers to all information that is used for making decisions in substance use prevention. In order to ensure high quality and ethical sustainability of the work, it should be possible to state grounds for all decisions made by using the information on the background of the decisions. It is precisely the ability to justify the decisions made that separates professional knowledge from everyday knowledge. The background information of the work enables the professional to discard his or her prejudices and assumptions that could influence the implementation of the work. The knowledge base also offers reasons for selecting the particular target group, methods, and perspective. According to Section 3 of the act on organising substance use prevention (523/2015) "Substance use prevention must be based on the careful monitoring of substance use and the substance-related harms, on the available scientific evidence and on good practices" (unofficial translation). This, for its part, emphasises the importance of knowledge as the support of the implementation of substance use prevention. When the work is based on researched information, it is also more effective and credible.

The knowledge base of substance use prevention is based on substance use information, legislation, the central research of the field, on knowing the methods, strategies and actors and on knowing the culture and living conditions of the target group (Soikkeli and Warsell 2013, 17). In youth substance use prevention, quantitative studies are utilised, such as school health surveys or health and lifestyle surveys, and qualitative studies that concentrate, for example, on substance-related phenomena in the lives of young people or on the reasons behind the substance use.

The utilisation of theoretical information widens the perspective of the work and helps to proportion the target group of the work in relation to others. The expression "to see the wood for the trees" clearly indicates the need for a solid knowledge base. Understanding the growth of one particular tree is not possible if you have not examined the wood as a whole in order to understand how trees normally grow and what is needed for their growth. Similarly, we cannot find answers to the questions of substance use prevention via one young person and his or her attitudes towards substances, but we must have a profound understanding of substance-related phenomena and youth. Theoretical information helps the actors in the field of substance use prevention to see substance use and the related questions as an entity, not just via the young person and groups close to himself or herself. This is also essential when you are working on an individual level and you encounter the young person from his or her own starting points. This information helps young person to think about himself or herself in relation to other young people and to get a perspective for his or her own life.

When working in the field of youth substance use prevention, you must not underestimate the significance of everyday knowledge that refers to the understanding and knowledge that has been formed along the way, but that may have not been recorded at all. Important information includes good practices and modes of operation, knowing the target group, the gained insights and observations made and also observations of things that do not work, for some reason or other. This information should be passed on to new employees in the organisation as well, but, on the other hand, new employees must

be given the opportunity to question the existing modes of operation and to introduce their own. Sharing one's own expertise with other organisations should be encouraged, since the increased expertise always benefits the young people.

The knowledge base is a resource that must be updated, as new phenomena and perspectives come up all the time. This becomes concrete, for example, by assessing how much substance use prevention and its emphasis have changed over the past 20 years or how the number of substances used by young people has increased over a relatively short period of time. It is not necessary or even possible to acquire all information, but it is hoped that the professionals working in the field of youth substance use prevention have time to update their own knowledge base. Every now and again, the actors of the field should familiarise themselves with the operational environment and the target group, to examine the relevant studies, to participate in the events and seminars of the field, to network and to train themselves. This requires resourcing from the employer, as well for the training of the employees, for familiarising themselves with the current information and for attending the important seminars of the field.

## The role of legislation in determining youth substance use prevention

Legislation is connected to the knowledge base of substance use prevention and it defines, for its own part, who should carry out substance use prevention and to whom and with which methods the work should be conducted. The acts connected to youth substance use prevention include, for example, the following:

- laki ehkäisevän päihdetyön järjestämisestä (the Act on Organising Substance Use Prevention, free translation) 523/2015 (until December 1, 2015 the Temperance Work Act 19.11.1982/828)
- the Alcohol Act 8.12.1994/1143
- the Act on Measures to Reduce Tobacco Smoking 13.8.1976/693
- the Narcotics Act 17.12.1993/1289
- the Act on Welfare for Substance Abusers 17.1.1986/41

The acts especially affecting the living conditions and services of the youth:

- the Youth Act 27.1.2006/72
- the Child Protection Act 417/13.4.2007
- the Public Order Act 612/2003

All up-to-date legal texts, with their amendments, are available at www.finlex.fi.

The legislation sets in substance use prevention the limits as to what kind of substance policies are followed in our society; how different kinds of substances are seen and with what means can the use of substances be controlled. The acts are not, however, complete and they do not determine people's behaviour. The fact that alcohol and tobacco products are forbidden for those under 18 years of age does not alone prevent underage young people from using them. The act does, however, provide a foundation for the work of the professionals and provides them with permission and an obligation to address the issue and step in. The acts can function as a social pronouncement, as well. For example, the limitation of the advertising of alcohol in the Alcohol Act is a clear message from the society that the well-being of children and young people is important and that children and young people should be protected from this kind of advertising.

### THINK:

- What kind of topical research information could you utilise in your own work?
- From which actors in the network could you receive up-to-date information on the substance use of young people at a local level?
- Which acts are most visible in your own work?
- How could these acts be utilised in discussions with young people?

# 4. BRAKES: ETHICALITY

**On the bicycle**: Considering the ethical aspects of youth substance use prevention sometimes requires one to slow down, in order to assess whether the work is conducted from the right starting points by considering the target group.


While carrying out substance use prevention, the ethics of the work must be ensured. Substance education that is based on 'one way or another' thinking is not ethically sustainable, but, instead, manipulating. An undefined educational encounter weakens the trust and interaction between the participants, although these factors should be the mainstays of substance education.

An important concept in the ethics of substance use prevention is the "No Harm principle", according to which the work must not cause any harm or damage to the target group (Soikkeli and Warsell 2013, 19). All substance education must be arranged by respecting young people. Matters must be addressed truthfully, but in a way that the provided information does not cause any fear or anxiety. The sensitivity of young people must be remembered when selecting, for example, the content and materials for substance education. Young people may find the offered information to be unpleasant or oppressive for various reasons, due to some acute situation in the family or due to their own fears. For example, methods based on experiences, such as binging, may also bring about strong feelings in young people. It is essential to ensure that the information is provided in a suitable format and that the young person is not left alone with the new information, but he or she is offered a possibility to discuss his or her thoughts with an adult and to process the acquired information.

Substance education must be voluntary: it must be possible to refuse to share one's thoughts and experiences and various exercises that a young person may for some reason or another find unpleasant. The purpose of substance use prevention is not to corner young people and to make them tell about their own substance use. Instead, it is more useful to address the subject at a general level and to ask young people about their own thoughts. Young people must be entitled to disagree with the discussed matters and they should have a possibility to influence the type of substance education offered to them, when possible in the situation. Considering young people and listening to them in the implementation of substance use prevention is not only ethical, but often also improves the effectiveness.

Equality is also connected to the ethics of substance use prevention. Work based on discriminatory thinking or promoting it cannot promote health and well-being. A courageous substance educator also evaluates to what kind of situation does substance education set the young people: does it inadvertently produce values that, in part, function as values causing exclusion? When discussing the adverse effects of substance use, the related images

are created or reinforced at the same time. For example, if skin problems possibly caused by smoking are emphasised, having skin problems is defined as something that defines value or validity. Many adverse effects related to substance use, such as problems at school, mental health problems or matters related to appearance, are everyday life for young people or those close to them, even if they did not use substances at all. This does not mean, however, that these matters could not be addressed in discussions with young people, but it means that the other side of things should also be considered.

Professionals working in the field of substance use prevention are often, maybe inadvertently, in a position of authority to the young person and this is why the professionals must try to create an equal discussion connection and to remove possible obstacles to the discussion. Substance education and substance discussions can, at their best, be seen as human encounters discussing an interesting theme. These discussions do not have to be lessons in which an authority tells how things are, even though there is a professional stating facts, or his or her own point of view, to the young people. In addition, the professional must be able to recognise how his or her own possible prejudices and attitudes and work history affect the substance use prevention work that he or she can implement with each group. A good substance educator accepts that the measure of a good life for a young person and the methods for achieving it can differ from those of the educator. In spite of this, a common understanding of the contents of substance education should be found without forcing them on young people. (Pylkkänen and Vuohelainen 2012.)

## Knowledge-based education

The purpose of having social influence can be considered to be a part of the ethics of substance use prevention. The idea of knowledge-based education is that changing a phenomenon requires a change in the culture as well. If for example a substance-free way of life is not a valued alternative, it is not easy for an individual to select this alternative. Substance-free way of life must first be made an acceptable and preferred alternative in order to make selecting it more inviting and thus likely. Large numbers of individuals in a group can only change their behaviour after the common attitudes and social norms have changed. (Salasuo 2011.) Substance educators must also highlight and discuss the matter.

Substance use prevention, thus, also includes influencing. After a professional who has gained a wide knowledge base and understanding that can be utilised in promoting well-being and, for example, in forming attitudes towards substances, it is recommended for him or her to share this expertise to the widest extent possible. It is important to launch discussions or influence ongoing private and public discussions. A professional of the field can by himself/herself, or with the network and young people, produce new inputs in topical discussions. Social media, everyday use of communication technology and promoting participation of the young as a work method provide completely new methods for substance use prevention. Influencing also provides a good opportunity to present matters that are important to young people in the society.

### THINK:

- How are substance users presented in the material or in the method? How does the substance user or those close to him/her see the message?
- How can you influence possible abusive talk and promote empathy and solidarity among young people?
- When you discuss phenomena related to health and appearance, how can you ensure that you do not increase appearance-related pressure among young people?
- How has the diversity of young people and, for example, language groups been taken into consideration in the materials? Is the communication easily understandable?

# 5. TYRES: METHODS

**On the bicycle**: The methods function as tyres that take youth substance use prevention forwards. The methods must be carefully considered and purposeful in order to reach the set goals.

In youth substance use prevention, many different kinds of methods are used: games, experiences, campaigns, competitions, drama, theme weeks, peer awareness education... The list could be a great deal longer, as well. There are almost as many ways of implementing substance use prevention as there are actors in the field. The use of various methods can bring new perspectives and energy to substance education and these can be utilised in making the young people interested in the subject. Substance education can also, however, be conducted successfully without any specific methods. From a professional's perspective, it is good to know that even via short encounters that are based on genuine caring and openness, the young people can receive support for developing their own attitudes towards substances and their knowledge about substances. The method itself is not as important as what is tried to be achieved with it and accomplished. It is only a tool that is used for launching dialogue and to increase knowledge and introduce new perspectives. Strengthening skills related to acting in a group, problem solving and emotional skills through the support of an adult provides a young person with ways of acting responsibly and consciously, also in situations connected to substance use.

When selecting the methods of substance use prevention, it is important to remember the stages and choices that should be discussed before selecting the mode of operation (see sections 1 and 2). Only after the level of work, goals and the special needs of the target group have been taken into consideration, will it be possible to identify and select the most suitable methods and, even at this stage, the familiarity of the professional to the use of the methods to be selected must be assessed. Thus, all of these stages must be carefully considered when selecting the method.

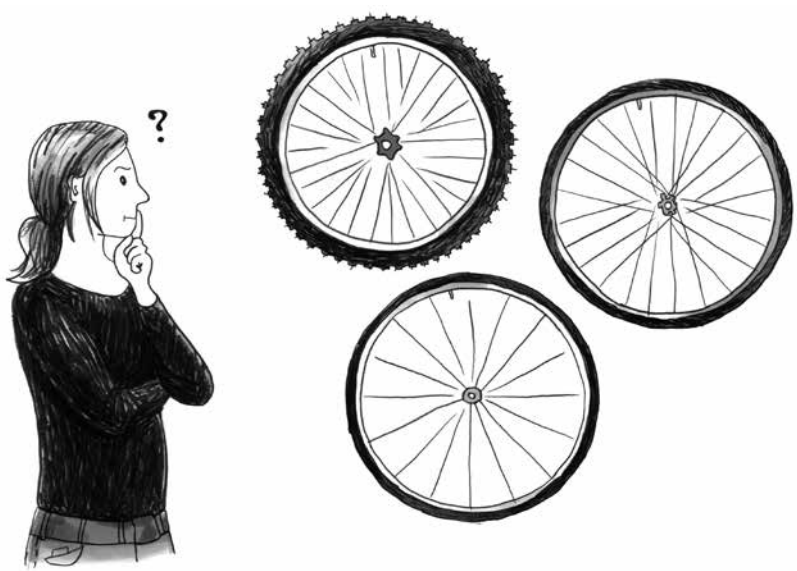
One concrete perspective to the methods that is worth examining is the extent to which young people become interested in them and see them as "their own". Kiilakoski (2013) uses an American term *edutainment* to describe how educational contents (*edu*cation) when aimed at young people must be to some extent entertaining (enter*tainment*) as well, in order to reach "the target" as intended. Entertaining does not, (even) in substance use prevention, only mean funny activities with a lighter content, but it means that substance education does not have to be too serious in order to be relevant and efficient. The big question is are we willing to discuss substances in a positive, even humorous, manner or via pleasant activities. Every now and then an oppressive and unpleasant tone is present in substance education and it is accompanied by glum materials, provocative arguments, and very strict role expectations set for the professionals. Naturally, it is true that a substance use prevention educator sets an example for young people with his or her own behaviour. In addition, the educator has an important role in conveying information about the harmful effects of substances, but this task does not need to make the tone of substance use prevention too glum.

When we trust young people's own assessments and their willingness to learn more about things, we can discuss and ponder things together with young people in an atmosphere of humour and conviviality. A positive atmosphere that encourages discussion supports young people's learning about the issue under discussion.

## Listening, discussing and participating substance use prevention

When working in substance use prevention among young people, it is good to actively search for possibilities for young people to actively participate. Young people may become inspired to influence each other's attitudes towards substances or to launch discussions about current themes related to substances that they find particularly interesting. On the other hand, the participation of young people can be encouraged by linking the used adult-controlled methods directly to the life situation and experiences of the young people. By providing young people with possibilities to plan and arrange activities, they can independently help to produce other contents they find interesting. Active participation in substance education and in selecting methods for its implementation often influences young people as much as if they would participate in substance education in the role of a recipient. It should be noted, however, for which purpose the contents are produced with the young people. Young people may have strong normative assumptions, according to which they should be warned about substances and that what is influencing substance education. If young people tend to produce material based on a shock reaction, the professional must work together with the young people, since although producing material based on intimidation may be meaningful and even educational for the young people in question, its suitability for substance education must be assessed on a case-specific basis.

One of the goals of substance use prevention is to offer young people factual information about substances and substance use that they can utilise in making



their own decisions. Information can be conveyed by various ways, and the traditional method of offering factual information from up to down is not the only or even the most efficient method. The main purpose of the methods is often to encourage critical thinking in young people and this can be achieved by using, for example, various ways of encouraging discussion. Current substance-related newspaper articles, videos and video blogs in the internet, photos, figures and charts, hit music and TV series are only a few examples of the types of materials that can be used for encouraging discussions. Also, young people themselves are probably able to introduce materials that they find especially interesting.

Information and discussion in the media are not, necessarily, based on facts and this is why it is the professional's task to direct the discussion in a way that substance-critical perspectives also come up and to ensure that young people understand the importance of source criticism. It is possible to launch a good discussion with young people about the conflicting flow of information and this is why false statements presented in the media should not be brushed aside at once, but, instead, young people should be encouraged to evaluate the validity of the information and the reasons for sometimes presenting incorrect information.

When acting at the level of risk prevention, we should think about what kinds of risks should be discussed and how; what would young people find interesting. A substance educator should closely observe the living environment of young people; what is their everyday life like. Interaction with young people often results in hearing a story, the events of which can also be examined from the perspective of substance use prevention. If the story tells about messing about drunk and feeling bad afterwards, a worsening or breaking up of social relationships, loosing things, money problems, and about near accidents, when selecting the methods, the emphasis should be on contents that highlight the immediate consequences of risk behaviour close to the young person in question. Unnecessary intimidation should be avoided, since material with a high shock value does not necessarily reach a young person and cannot, thus, yield successful results. In addition, the young person may already be filled with anxiety or worried about his or her own situation, in which case strengthening these feelings is unethical. When working with underage young people, it should be remembered that the guardians should be encouraged to become involved in the co-operation as well and the suitable modes of operation should be searched for together.

Via dialogic encounters, it is possible to reach a common, and sometimes completely new, understanding, for example, about various substance-related phenomena and examine these from various perspectives. In methods based on dialogue, it is essential that they encourage everyone to tell their own opinion and that they give possibilities to all participators to become actively involved in an impartial atmosphere. Several types of methods utilising dialogue can be applied in substance use prevention. Also, many creative and artistic methods include dialogical elements or, at least, they promote participation and co-operation and, thus, they are very suitable for addressing substance-related themes.

## THINK:

- What is tried to be achieved with the selected method? What is tried to be influenced?
- Has the effectiveness of the method been researched? Why do you think this method is worth trying? Why is it suitable for the group/individual in question?
- What does the successful use of the method require?

## 6. SADDLE: PEDAGOGY

**On the bicycle**: Making educational choices functions as the saddle of the bicycle and its purpose is to make the ride more comfortable and, thus, support the professional in his or her work and make the work fluent.

In substance use prevention, the resources of children and young people are taken into consideration and the development of skills and readiness that strengthen well-being are supported. Youth substance use prevention is often referred to as substance *education* and the work is seen as comprehensive education, not just education that is connected to the harmful effects of substances. This is why we should focus on *how* the education is arranged and *why* we have selected the specific educational approach. There are several pedagogical (educational) approaches and most of these can be used, in addition to educational institutions, as the basis of other educational activities, such as in youth work. A substance educator always selects, consciously or unconsciously, some kind of educational approach that he or she uses when working with young people or addressing the relevant themes. In substance education, as in other education as well, it is essential for the professional to know what kind of educator he or she is, what kind of relationship he or she has with the young people and why he or she is going to implement the education by using the selected methods.

Education is not performed in a vacuum, but as a part of the environment, culture and society we currently live in. This is why values are always present in education and education is always used for promoting something that is seen as important and worth reaching for. The methods used in substance education are always based on an educational approach, even if the developers or users of the method had not knowingly considered the educational grounds of the actual work. When stating the reasons for selecting the methods for discussing substance-related themes with young people, it is necessary to define what the relationship is between the substance edu-

### IN SELECTING THE EDUCATIONAL APPROACH, THE FOLLOWING FACTORS ARE CONSIDERED:

- the professional identity of the substance educator: background, strengths, information, and skills
- the role and tasks of the substance educator in a practical substance education situation
- the role of the young people and the level of operation and participation in a practical substance education situation
- the relationship between the substance educator and the young person
- the operational environment where the substance education takes place
- the possible social aspect of substance education and its effects on social discussion

cator and the young person when using the method and how is the position of the young person seen in the communities important for him or her and to the whole society. For example, a health promotion professional working with young people may, in addition to providing health information and treating symptoms, provide educational guidance to the young person to value his or her own life and to build a safe everyday life in a comprehensive manner. In substance related questions, these kinds of themes could be, for example, friendships, getting along with the parents and matters connected to attending school. Similarly, a teacher or a person working in the Employment and Economic Development Office is an adult with an educational duty, in addition to his or her main duty. Identifying one's own educational role does not mean transferring educational responsibility away from the guardians, but, instead, it supports the educational work conducted at home.

A substance educator works as a mediator of substance information and culture, society and communities and the young person. This mediation work can be seen as education, because the educator tries, with his or her actions and guidance, to knowingly influence the young person, his or her growth, learning and operations. Through education, young people obtain the information and skills they need for coping in the society and in their own life, for taking care of themselves and for participating in various communities. Through substance education, young people obtain substance-related information and support towards making their own decisions concerning substances. In addition, they obtain tools for participating and taking part in discussions concerning substances. The selection of an educational view has a direct influence on how the young people and the desired information and skills are approached.

## Educational point of view in substance education: positive pedagogy and social pedagogy as examples

*Positive pedagogy* has in recent years been studied in Finland as one of the practices promoting the well-being of children (and young people), both in nurseries and in schools. Positive pedagogy examines learning via the views of children and young people and the meanings given by themselves. It emphasises the experiences, feelings, and strengths of the young people. (Kumpulainen et al. 2014.) Also, in substance education, they can be discussed and, thus, the young people can be given the power to describe their own life and their views on substances or well-being in their own way. This makes young people feel that they are taken seriously in the community. On the other hand, the substance-related themes and situations brought up and documented by the young people can be examined from several perspectives and the educator can direct the discussion and target it as he or she sees best. Positive pedagogy emphasises positive feelings and experiences, resources and strengths which makes it particularly suitable for substance education carried out at the level of social strengthening.

The view of education presented in *social pedagogy* emphasises the relationship between an individual and the community. Growing into a unique personality takes place in communities and in the operation of communities, attention is paid especially to how and when they support the participation, well-being, functional capacity and life management of people. An educator with orientation in social pedagogy is willing to influence defects in the society, to inspire people to create change and to support communal action culture. The educator encourages the recipients of education to acknowledge their own actual situa-

tion and the situation of the community and to participate in the operations of their own community from their own starting points. (Kurki 2000.)

Substance education oriented in social pedagogy aims at, to some extent similar, dialogic and participating encounters of young people and the educator as in positive pedagogy. The social pedagogy perspective, however, creates its own (community) critical tone in substance education. The targets of critical examination can be, for example, young people's attitudes towards substances and the Finnish substance culture. The task of substance use prevention can free young people to make decisions concerning alcohol use that differ from the decisions made by the previous generations. In order to support reaching this goal, young people can be offered possibilities to question the prevailing substance culture in practice and to form well-founded views on making different kinds of decisions. (Tapio 2014.) A suitable method could be, for example, an educator-led argument on an agreed upon topical substance-related news or discussion or a controlled compiling of a photo collage with substance-related themes that young people find especially interesting at the moment. In substance education oriented in social pedagogy, it is also essential to examine together the topics discussed and activities arranged.

Also, small-group operations arranged at the level of risk prevention can be organised by applying the social pedagogy approach. In this case, the main goal could be, for example, a creative reflecting of the young people's own experiences on substances and, via that, charting new alternative life stories for the future of the young people. In social pedagogy, the emphasis is on the perspective of hope and, through that, it is natural in substance education to concentrate on searching for possibilities and alternative views on the future together. For a young person who has encountered problems in his or her life and possibly been labelled as a problem youth, it may be particularly liberating to let go of his or her own past and grow out of the roles given to him or her partially from outside.

## THINK:

- How is education shown in your work? Do you see yourself as an educator?
- How could considering pedagogical approaches support your work?

# 7. HANDLEBARS: QUALITY AND EVALUATION

**On the bicycle**: Everyone who has ever ridden a bicycle knows the significance of the handlebars in riding and steering. In youth substance use prevention, ensuring the quality makes sure that the ride is smooth and steady and the evaluation saves us from turns that are too sharp.

As in all work, it is important in youth substance use prevention to pay attention to the high quality of the work throughout the implementation. It serves the needs of decision-makers, sponsors, actors, and the target group. Investing in quality makes work more efficient and pleasant and it also makes it more likely to achieve the changes that are desired. However, it may be difficult to justify and point out precisely why one's own operations are of high quality and how quality is shown.

Ehkäisevän päihdetyön laatutähti (Quality Star of Substance Use Prevention, a free translation) (Soikkeli & Warsell 2013) published by the National Institute for Health and Welfare is a practical tool that supports the planning and implementation of substance use prevention. The quality star (Figure 4) has eight points, which, when in balance, support the implementation of high quality work. Questions have been added to each point that make planning and implementing the work easier and they also make the points of the star understandable via actual work. The star encourages reasons to be stated for the choices made concerning targeting and to ponder the setting of the goals for the work. It encourages the participation of all actors, young people themselves included, to be considered in the planning and implementation of activities and to consider how the flow of information between the participants and the instilling of the operations can be ensured. When the entity of work has been planned carefully, all participants will have a strong idea of what they are trying to achieve and why. The quality star helps the professionals working in the field of substance use prevention to implement a balanced circle of planning, implementation and evaluation.

## The significance of evaluation in quality assurance

Through evaluation, it is possible to ensure that the set targets can be achieved with as high quality and efficiency as possible and, on the other hand, to define whether the operations were purposeful or not. The evaluation must be performed in substance use prevention from the planning stage until the end. If the evaluation is only performed at the end of the process, it only enables an evaluation of whether the process was successful or not and to determine the reasons for it. When the evaluation is performed right from the start and the evaluation targets and points of evaluation are carefully planned, it is possible to implement corrective measures in good time, if they are considered to be necessary.

In the *planning stage*, it is essential to determine which aspects should be evaluated. It is always possible to evaluate several aspects in operations, such as results and effects, participation, process, and methods. These can be evaluated in several different ways and via

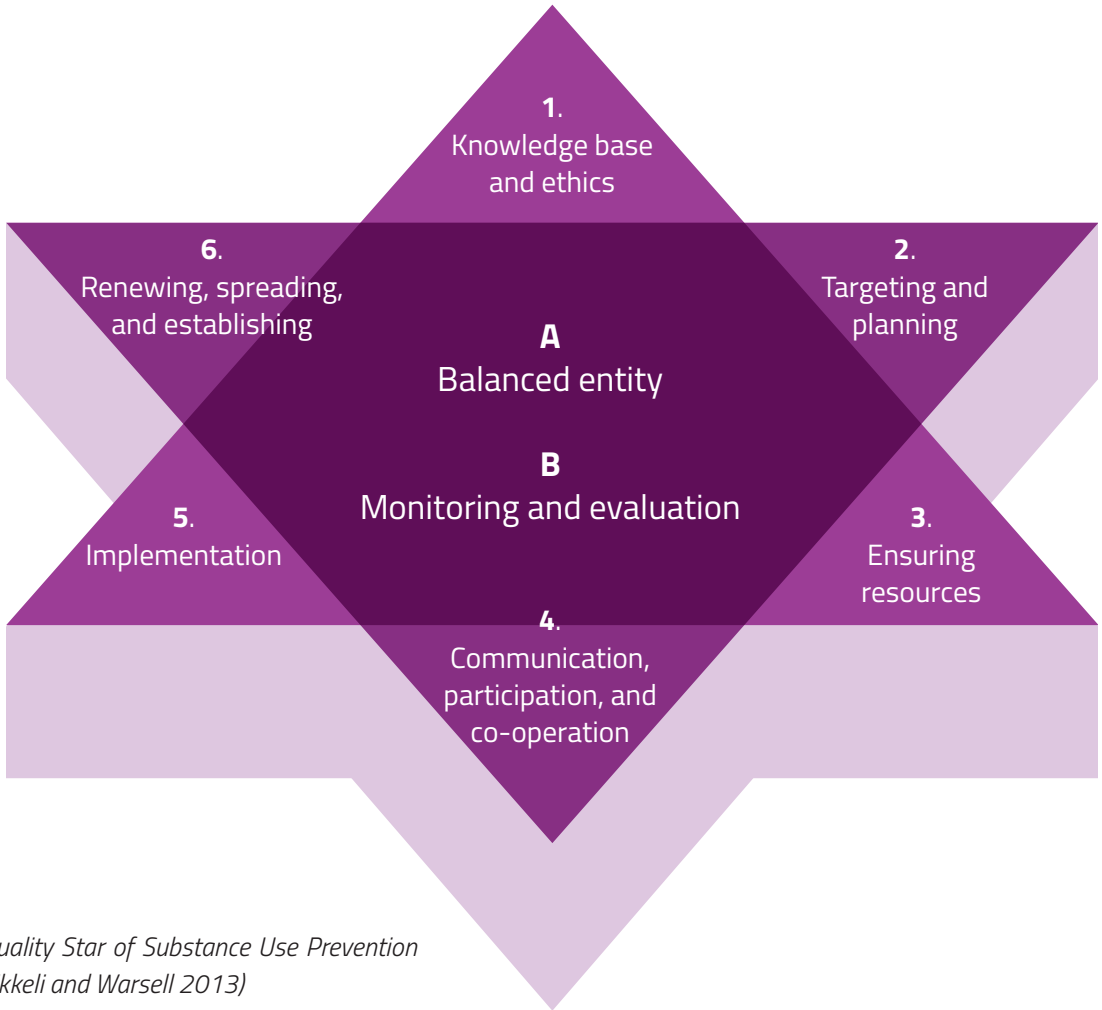



*Figure 4. Quality Star of Substance Use Prevention (Source: Soikkeli and Warsell 2013)*

different kinds of questions and it is not always necessary to evaluate everything. It is necessary to define the evaluation targets and create clear questions that must be answered along the way. It is good to assess already in the planning stage when the operations should be evaluated and this plan must also be followed.

Not everything can be foreseen and this is why it is important to periodically check in the *implementation stage* that the chosen direction is correct. At this stage, it is checked whether the ongoing operations seem to be headed towards the goals set or whether changes should be made while it is still possible. When the stages and results of the evaluation are properly documented and the documentation is started already in the implementation stage, you will have plenty of useful material for later use. In fact, documentation is one of the keys for successful evaluation. *After the process has ended,* the final evaluation must be performed in which the operations are evaluated as a whole in relation to the targets set.

The evaluation can be conducted in several ways. People performing the implementation are always in

**Questions for the evaluation conducted during the implementation stage:**

- Does the operational model seem to be working as expected?
- Have some modes of operation, contents, or materials been discovered in the work that do not seem to be suitable for the target group?
- Have some unexpected challenges come up? If so, how have they been dealt with?
- Is the work progressing on schedule and are there sufficient resources available?

**Questions for the evaluation conducted after the operations have been finished:**

- How did the project succeed and what kinds of effects were observed?
- How did the various stages of implementation go?
- Were the targets reached?
- Did the operations have some unexpected effects?
- What did not succeed and what should be done differently in the future?

a central position in the evaluation, even if the evaluation had been arranged by a third party. People performing the implementation are the best experts of the targets and the process and, thus, they cannot be excluded from the evaluation process. *Self-evaluation* is important and it can often be implemented effortlessly along the way by assessing how the operations are progressing and what is the current situation. In *internal evaluation*, operations can be examined by another actor in the same organisation who does not, however, participate in the implementation of the process in question. This way, it is possible to receive valuable feedback on how the operations look from the outside. It is also possible to order an *external evaluator,* who, as an outsider, examines the operations from a pre-defined perspective.

The methods of evaluation can include, for example, various feedback surveys, discussions, or observation. In all of these, it is essential to obtain information from various perspectives and, on the other hand, to select the evaluation method, according to the research questions. If the purpose is, for example, to evaluate the experiences of employees of a youth centre on the use of a certain method or a model of substance education as a tool, it is probably unnecessary to arrange a survey for young people for charting their thoughts, since the young people cannot answer questions about the adult's experiences. Instead, young people can answer questions well about how they felt about being involved in operations in which the methods or model in question was used.

It is also important to define how the evaluation is utilised. The evaluation should not just be performed for the sake of it, but it can be used for targeting operations, for evaluating the necessity of the operations, and for developing something completely new. Thus, the evaluation offers necessary information to other actors as well, so that they do not have to reinvent the wheel or repeat mistakes that have been done once before. This means that reporting should be done carefully and purposefully.

**THINK:**

- Do I identify components of quality in the substance use prevention work that I plan or implement by myself or in co-operation with others?
- Do I identify various evaluation methods or is there something essential that I have not tried in my work?
- Is the evaluation an established working method and do all people involved understand its importance?

# 8. RIDER: ACTORS AND CO-OPERATION

**On the bicycle**: A bicycle cannot go anywhere without a rider. In substance use prevention, there are many actors and influencing parties, some of which are peddling and some in the service team and some cheering and spurring.

In substance use prevention, municipalities have an important role in practical work and they have the legal obligation to conduct substance use prevention. The act 523/2015 on organising substance use prevention requires that each municipality has its own body responsible for the tasks of substance use prevention that ensures that substance use prevention is implemented in the services offered by the municipality, especially in social and health care, in education, physical exercise, youth and economic development services. The operations of the municipalities are supported by regional, local and national organisations operating in various areas of substance use prevention.

Substance use prevention is guided by various strategies and programmes that aim at creating a framework for enabling and conducting the work. As examples of these, we could mention the National Institute for Health and Welfare´s "Ehkäisevän päihdetyön toimintaohjelma" (the National Action Programme on Substance Use Prevention) (previously the National Alcohol Programme), the primary purpose of which is to ensure the quality and basic structures of substance use prevention in all municipalities in Finland (the National Institute for Health and Welfare 2015a; 2015b). The national plan for mental health and substance use work defines mental health and substance use work at a national level. Work (preventive work as well) carried out among young people is guided by the child and youth political development programme that, in accordance with the government programme, defines the areas of emphasis of the work.

Each ministry has its own important role as well and the ministries are, with their own operation, involved in defining substance use prevention. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health plays an especially important role and for the part of the work carried out among children and young people, the Ministry of Education and Culture has a significant role. Various monopoly companies, such as Alko and Finland's Slot Machine Association (RAY), bring their own input to substance use prevention, as well.

From the perspective of substance use prevention, monitoring is conducted by the authorities, such as alcohol inspectors. The PAKKA model is an efficient tool in local substance use prevention. In PAKKA activities, attention is paid especially to the availability

of alcohol, tobacco and gambling by working in close and extensive co-operation with local actors.

Above, we have described some of the field of actors of substance use prevention and, thus, it is obvious that there are a large number of actors who are implementing substance use prevention from different starting points.

## Who should carry out substance use prevention among young people?

Substance use prevention is a topic that adults working among young people cannot disregard by saying "this is none of my business". Substance use prevention, in all its forms, belongs to all adults who encounter young people in their daily life, from a teacher to a librarian, from a volunteer to a coach and from a clerk to a cashier. We should not forget the daily education work carried out by parents either and the basis it provides for all work performed by the professionals of the field. In these other encounters, the adult promotes, with his or her actions, the same goals than a professional, but often with a more narrow theoretical background or practical experience. In the field of substance use prevention, it is important to identify and support these various roles and strengthen them. This can be done by encouraging the participation of various actors and by informing about substance use prevention and its goals openly by using various channels.

It is presented in Figure 5 how youth substance use prevention can require a different kind of expertise at various levels. The promotion of well-being and a substance-free way of life are the starting points of all substance use prevention carried out among young people and they are a part of all levels of operation. *Level 1* concerns all professionals who encounter young people (and to some extent volunteers, as well). At this level, the emphasis of substance use prevention is on the skills related to social strengthening. This means being present as an adult and requires various skills, such as the skill to encounter young people. The pro-


*Figure 5. Levels of expertise needed in youth substance prevention*

fessional must be able to support young people during their various stages of development and refer them to obtain help and guidance elsewhere, if necessary. Encountering young people at this level is not always easy and uncomplicated, but it does not require any special expertise or knowledge in substance use prevention. The reacting to substance-related phenomena and supporting young people in their everyday life is sufficient. The activities at *level 2* are clearly substance education or young people are encountered frequently. Substance-related questions come up repeatedly and this is why it is good that the professional is familiar with the targets, central factual contents and modes of operation of substance use prevention. The professional must be able to actively discuss substances and the related attitudes with young people and to utilise the various everyday phenomena and purposeful working methods as the support of substance education. In order to be credible, the work and operations must be based on facts and the work of the professional must be based on relevant factual information. At *level 3,* the actors are experts of substance use prevention, who are required to have, in addition to mastering the preceding levels, a wide perspective on the whole field of substance use prevention and youth work and their points of contact to social decision-making and current situation. At this level, substance use prevention is developed and information is produced for the use of all of those who encounter young people in their work.

It cannot be clearly defined what is a sufficient amount of information in substance use prevention, and it is not even necessary to exclude some actors from a specific area of expertise. Different kinds of educational situations require a different kind of expertise and, at times, one must dare to step outside his or her own area of expertise, as well. As it is shown in Figure 5, not all adults encountering young people in their work have to be experts in substance use prevention, but they must have a certain kind of readiness to talk about substances. The professional is allowed to (and has an obligation to) identify the limits of his or her own expertise. On the other hand, the figure removes the possibility to say that "substance use prevention is not a part of my job description", because by utilising the skills that all professionals encountering young people have, it is possible to implement substance use prevention, at least, on some level. Substance use prevention needs actors who have sufficient resources for the work and who are dedicated and willing to develop the field further. On the other hand, actors are also needed who support the implementation of the goals of substance education, even though their work does not concentrate directly on substance education.

The significance of the atmosphere prevailing in the society and the set of norms in changing the behaviour of an individual is significant. This, for its part, creates possibilities for everyone working with young people with regards to substance use prevention. Recurrent and audible influencing and evoking thoughts support the forming of critical attitudes towards substances. Consistency is crucial in youth substance education and this is why it is important that the adults who encounter young people are on the same line, each actor from his or her own starting points.

## Speed from co-operation

Substance use prevention should not be based on the efforts of an individual actor. There are always co-operation partners or, at least, places where you can have discussions with other professionals. Networks bring actors from various backgrounds together and enable discussions, a wide variety of perspectives and organisation of work. There are different types of networks.

*Local networks* are concentrated on the needs and ways of implementing substance use prevention of

## PREREQUISITES FOR A FUNCTIONING CO-OPERATION

- Common understanding of the topic discussed, explaining the key terms
- Uniform targets
- The co-operation must be beneficial for all parties involved
- Progressing of matters, not just general discussion
- Good coordination, clear modes of operation

a certain municipality or area. In many municipalities, there is a multidisciplinary work group of substance work or health promotion, which, depending on the municipality, includes various actors from different services of the municipality. At their best, these groups are multidisciplinary and, in addition to actors from the social, youth and education services of the municipality, they include other actors from other areas, such as the police, organisations or business life. This kind of work group is ideal for examining local phenomena and the reality of how substance use prevention is shown and implemented in the area.

*National, wider networks,* on the other hand, offer the actors of substance use prevention professional peer support, possibilities to share good practices, to obtain up-to-date information and to discuss the questions and themes concerning substance use prevention. As an example of national networks, we can present Preventiimi that brings together actors of the youth field to discuss substance use prevention and offers them possibilities to increase and update their own expertise, to receive peer support and, on the other hand, opportunities to be involved in developing youth substance use prevention.

Networks and co-operation have no intrinsic value, but in order to succeed co-operation must benefit all parties involved. They need a common agenda, a clear basis for co-operation, a functioning structure and good coordination. Co-operation does not work by itself, but it requires the input of all participants, good coordination or, at least, clear agreements and instructions concerning ways of action. Being willing to do things together is crucial.

You can also gain support for substance use prevention from various further training groups and, especially, from electronic groups (Facebook groups, Innokylä and other similar electronic forums where professionals discuss substance use prevention). They can bring together professionals working geographically far from each other to discuss things together and to receive and offer peer support.

### THINK:

- What kind of expertise in substance use prevention do you need in your work?
- Do you know where you should send a young person who you cannot help, because you have already done everything you can in your position and all support possibilities have been used?
- Who are the parties you could co-operate with in substance use prevention?
- Is the flow of information efficient in the networks, have the most important common target groups been found and identified? Should the operations be freshened up or made more efficient?

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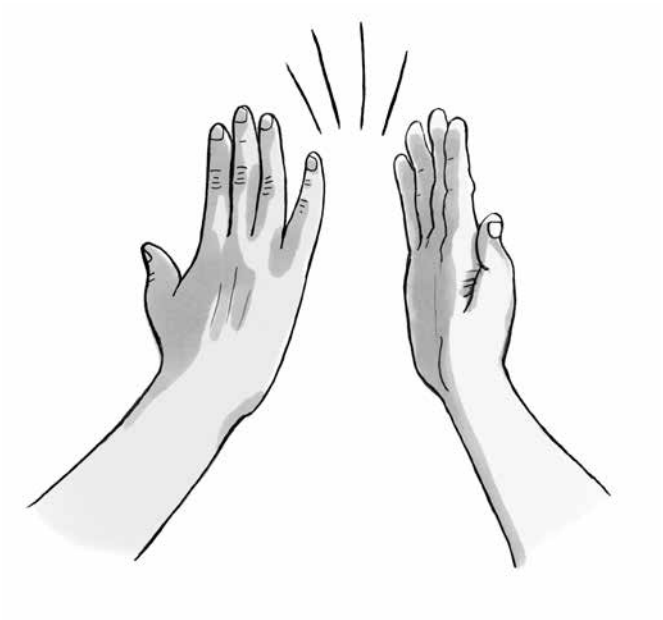

Checklist for youth substance use prevention, **CUT HERE!**

# CHECKLIST FOR YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION

1. **Consider the target group and keep it in mind during the planning and implementation phase!** Substance education is more efficient, if you plan the work according to the target group and take young people into consideration. Participation makes substance education appealing to young people and encourages them to become involved in the operations.

2. **Ensure continuity!** The message will not probably be conveyed at once, because changing one's thinking requires time and repetition.

3. **Try to be consistent!** Receiving consistent substance-critical messages from as many adults as possible supports the formation of attitudes.

4. **Influence by interaction!** Information and attitudes cannot be passed on to young people directly, but they can be conveyed by discussing things, listening, by offering new perspectives and by being open to different kinds of thoughts.

5. **Know the facts!** Offering incorrect information weakens the credibility of substance use prevention, even if the intentions were good. Be ready to provide reasons for your decisions and choices.

6. **Remember quality and ethics!** Ensuring high quality is not something that greatly increases the amount of work, but it increases the efficiency and functioning. Use as support the quality star of substance use prevention. Ensure that the work conducted is always ethically sustainable.

7. **Evaluate!** Bring up the success achieved and the reasons behind the success, but don't be afraid to tell about cases that went wrong and why. Don't be afraid of failing, it only proves that you tried.

8. **Speak out!** Utilise your expertise and influence by taking part in discussions and by bringing up new topics for discussions.

9. **Co-operate, network!** By co-operation, you can find new perspectives and combine expertise of several actors; and the ones who benefit from this are young people.

10. **Stay positive!** Substance use prevention is a positive approach for promoting the well-being of young people. Important work can be carried out with joy!

**Youth substance use prevention – let's do this together!**

As it says in an old Finnish children's song: "Let me peddle, you can steer, we'll have a smooth and jolly ride". By doing things together and by trusting our own skills and expertise and by updating them, we can advance youth substance use prevention smoothly towards the desired direction. You are the best expert of your work and you can tackle the most demanding routes as well! Hop on and join the ride: engage in discussions with young people, ask and encourage the members of your network to join you, don't be afraid to try something new, search for information and update the old familiar models. This material offers you support and information on your way. Have a nice and productive journey!

Preventiimi

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