

Kootenai Alliance for Children and Families Community Assessment Report

May 2005

Report prepared by:
Jan Sprow, M.Ed., Project Consultant
Channing Bete Company, Inc.

Executive Summary

This report describes the results of the risk and protective factor assessment completed as part of Kootenai Alliance for Children and Families' *Communities That Care*® effort. The *Communities That Care*® system is a way for members of a community to work together to prevent youth problem behaviors, including substance use, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school dropout and violence. This system was developed by Dr. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard Catalano. It is based on their research, which has identified risk factors that predict youth problem behaviors and protective factors that buffer children from risk and help them succeed in life.

A key goal of the *Communities That Care*® effort is to identify which risk factors, protective factors and problem behaviors are prevalent in our community, and implement evidence-based programs that address our community's unique profile. To that end, the Risk and Protective Factor Assessment Work Group collected and analyzed data on the community's youth. Then, they identified our community's priority risk factors, which will guide the Community Board's decision about which evidence-based program(s) to choose that best suits the needs of Kootenai Alliance for Children and Families youth.

The assessment was completed using the Kootenai Alliance for Children and Families *Communities That Care*® Youth Survey Report and archival data. The Kootenai Alliance for Children and Families *Communities That Care*® Youth Survey was administered to students in grades 9th and 12th grades. To get a more complete picture of our community, the Risk and Protective Factor Assessment Work Group also collected archival data from public records to measure risk factors and problem behaviors not covered by the student survey.

Based on the analysis of the data and input from the Community Board, the following risk factors were identified within the community, family, school, and peer-individual domains as priorities for community attention. Domains are described as a social institution that influences behavior. The *Communities That Care*® research base identifies risk factors in four domains (community, family, school, and peer-individual), of which three are represented here:

- Family Management
- Family History of the Problem Behavior
- Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior
- Transitions and Mobility

While some of the risk factors were reported at below the national comparison data, it is still essential that the county continue to address the reduction of risk to assist the youth of Kootenai Alliance for Children and Families to become successful. These risk factors were selected as priorities for prevention action primarily due to their elevated status on the *Communities That Care*® Youth Survey but also taking into consideration other community initiatives.

Students reported high levels of protection with *Community Opportunities for pro-social involvement*, *Belief in the moral order*, and *social skills*. Students also reported suppressed levels of the protective factors *Community rewards for pro-social involvement* and *school rewards for pro-social involvement*.

This report recommends that the community give particular attention to the risk factors noted above when developing the community's action plan to prevent youth problem behaviors and promote positive youth development.

Introduction

The Kootenai Alliance for Children and Families *Communities That Care*® Effort

Vision Statement:

“All residents of our *Community of Care* and promise are responsible, healthy, secure, principled and empowered to reach their full potential.”

In January 2003, Kootenai Alliance for Children and Families began implementing Channing Bete Company’s *Communities That Care*® prevention-planning system. Developed by Dr. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard Catalano of the Social Development Research Group in Seattle, Washington, the *Communities That Care*® system is a way for members of a community to work together to efficiently and effectively promote positive youth development and prevent youth problem behaviors such as substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school drop-out and violence.

Key Accomplishments to Date

- During the calendar year 2002, Kootenai Alliance for Children and Families was awarded the opportunity to implement the *Communities That Care*® operating system.
- In January 2003 a Community Board Orientation was held and five work groups were formed. The Risk and Protective Factor Workgroup, the resource and Evaluation Workgroup, the Outreach Workgroup, the Youth Involvement workgroup and the Board Maintenance and Funding work group.
- In December 2004 the *Communities That Care*® Youth Survey was implemented to 580 in 9th and 12th grades.
- On May 10, 2005 a Community Assessment Training was held with forty-five in attendance. The *Communities That Care*® Youth Survey was reviewed and four risk factors were prioritized: *Family Management, Family History of the Problem Behavior, Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior, and Transitions and Mobility.*

The community assessment

Dr. Hawkins and Dr. Catalano have identified twenty risk factors that predict problem behaviors in youth, and protective factors that help protect young people from those risks. By addressing risk and protective factors, communities can help prevent adolescent problem behaviors in their community, and develop a plan for addressing the risk factors that are most elevated while enhancing protective factors.

This report represents the first step in that process. The Risk and Protective Factor Assessment Work Group has collected data on risk factors, protective factors and

problem behaviors in Kootenai Alliance for Children and Families. The work group has identified our community's strengths and the priority risk factors to address in the prevention plan.

Data collection methods

As noted above, the *Communities That Care*® Youth Survey was administered in November of 2004. The Youth Survey data was reviewed and utilized to determine priority risk factors for Kootenai Alliance for Children and Families. The complete survey results are provided in the Kootenai Alliance for Children and Families *Communities That Care*® Youth Survey Report. Students in grades 9th and 12th were asked to participate in the survey. 580 youth, approximately participated in the survey. In addition, Dr. Hawkins and Dr. Catalano have identified archival data indicators that have been shown to be valid and reliable measures of certain risk factors and problem behaviors that are not measured by the survey, namely the risk factor Extreme Economic Deprivation and the problem behaviors Teen Pregnancy and School Drop-Out. The Risk and Protective Factor Assessment Work Group collected recommended archival data from local, state, and national agencies to supplement the youth survey. (Please see Appendix A for data collection results.) Furthermore, the risk factors *Media Portrayals of Violence* and *Early and Persistent Anti-social Behavior* cannot be measured by the survey or by archival data, thus those risk factors were not considered.

How the priorities were identified

The Risk and Protective Factor Assessment Work Group analyzed the data to identify which risk factors are most elevated and to assess area youths' involvement in problem behaviors. The archival data assisted the community in identifying areas of concern the student survey did not measure, although members determined the greatest tool of measurement for risk and protection was determined from the student survey results. The prioritized risk factors will be presented to the Community Board for approval on June 10, 2005.

Please see a full copy of the *Communities That Care*® Youth Survey report available from:

Callie Ketner
Executive Director
Kootenai Alliance for Children & Families
610 W. Hubbard, Ste. 123
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
(208) 661-9817
ce.Ketner@verizon.net

Conclusion and Recommendations

Protective Factors

Protective factors are conditions that buffer children and youth from exposure to risk by either reducing the impact of the risks or changing the way that young people respond to risks. Young people in Kootenai Alliance for Children and Families reported high levels of the protective factors of *Community Opportunities for pro-social involvement, Belief in the moral order, and social skills*. These areas represent strengths in our community and are areas we can build on. However, students reported lowest overall scores for the following protective factor scales: *Community rewards for pro-social involvement* and *school rewards for pro-social involvement*. While policies that target any protective factors could potentially be an important resource for students, focusing prevention planning in these areas could be especially beneficial. It is thus recommended that while special attention be placed on areas of low protective factor scale scores, that working to enhance or develop programming in any of the protective factor areas is recommended.

Risk Factors

Risk factors are conditions that increase the likelihood of a young person becoming involved in drug use, delinquency, school dropout, teen pregnancy, and/or violence. In Kootenai Alliance for Children and Families, the highest risk factors are:

- *Family management problems* - Poor family management practices are defined as having a lack of clear expectations for behavior, failure of parents to supervise and monitor their children (knowing where they are and whom they're with), and excessively severe, harsh or inconsistent punishment. Children exposed to these poor family management practices are at higher risk of developing all of the health and behavior problems listed above.
- *Transitions and mobility* - Even normal school transitions can predict increases in problem behaviors. When children move from elementary school to middle school or from middle school to high school, significant increases in the rate of drug use, school drop-out, and anti-social behavior may occur.

Communities that are characterized by high rates of mobility appear to be linked to an increased risk of drug and crime problems. The more people in a community move, the greater is the risk of both criminal behavior and drug-related problems in families. While some people find buffers against the negative effects of mobility by making connections in new communities, others are less likely to have the resources to deal with the effects of frequent moves and are more likely to have problems.

- *A family history of high risk behavior* - If children are raised in a family with a history of addiction to alcohol or other drugs, the risk of their having alcohol or other drug problems themselves increases. If children are born or raised in a family with a history of criminal activity or behavior, their risk for delinquency increases. Similarly, children who are born to a teenage mother are more likely to

be teen parents, and children of dropouts are more likely to drop out of school themselves.

- *Early initiation of the problem behavior* - The earlier young people drop out of school, begin using drugs, committing crimes and becoming sexually active, the greater the likelihood that they will have chronic problems with these behaviors later.

For example, research shows that young people who initiate drug use before the age of 15 are at twice the risk of having drug problems than those who wait until after the age of 19.

It is recommended that Kootenai Alliance for Children and Families adopt these risk factors as the prioritized risk factors for the county.

Next Steps

The next step in the Kootenai Alliance for Children and Families *Communities That Care*® process is to identify evidence-based programs that address our community's risk factors. This report, combined with a report from the Resource Assessment and Evaluation Work Group, will serve as the Community Board's guide to choose evidence based programs to fill identified gaps.