

# Ohio Registry of Effective Practices

## Wood County Educational Service Center (WCESC) School and Community-Based Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug (ATOD) Prevention Program

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**School Districts:** The population served by the WCESC School and Community-Based Prevention Program includes students in 1st through 12th grades in nine public school districts, one career center, and four parochial schools in Wood County:

- Bowling Green City School District
- Eastwood Local School District
- Elmwood Local School District
- Lake Local School District
- North Baltimore Local School District
- Northwood Local School District
- Otsego Local School District
- Perrysburg Exempted School District
- Rossford Exempted School District
- Penta Career Center
- Wood County Parochial Schools

**Partnering Agencies:** Wood County Public and Parochial Schools; Wood County Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board; Wood County Juvenile Detention Center; Wood County Social Service Agencies; and Wood County Law Enforcement Agencies.

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**Available for Program Consultation:** Yes

**Available for Presentations/Workshops:** Yes

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## General Program Overview:

The Wood County Educational Service Center (WCESC) School and Community-Based Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug (ATOD) Prevention Program provides evidence-based prevention services for 9 school districts, 1 career center, 4 parochial schools, and 18,000 students in Northwest Ohio. The **vision** of the ATOD Prevention Program is to provide and enhance student-centered educational services and programs to promote healthy lifestyles by empowering youth and adults to create safe and drug-free schools and communities. The **mission** is to build and sustain a multi-systemic

approach to prevention that ensures all Wood County youth will be given the opportunity to develop to their full potential through a culture of substance-free living.

Prevention programming is comprehensive, addressing multiple levels of prevention initiatives including (1) information dissemination to the community, (2) education programming for classrooms, parents and the community, (3) activity programming for youth such as afterschool programs and Teen Institute groups that enhance developmental assets, (4) community-focused initiatives such as youth surveys that contribute to community needs assessments, youth “speak outs” on targeted topics, town hall meetings, community coalition development and collaborations with the Wood County Sheriff’s department to reduce underage drinking, such as compliance checks and seller-server trainings (5) environmental initiatives such as assessing and modifying local attitudes and beliefs related to substances, and implementation of the Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol program, and (6) identification and referral initiatives that include staffing each school district with a prevention specialist to assist with screening and referrals of at-risk youth to more intensive services and reversing early-on problem behavior with education. Within each level of programming, the WSESC provides a range of evidence-based programs. All efforts occur in partnership with multiple Wood County agencies and with the Wood County community residents.

Level of Programming	Examples of Programs Implemented
Information dissemination	Prom Promise Red Ribbon Week
Education	Parents Who Host Lose The Most BABES (Beginning Alcohol Education Series) Challenge Days LifeSkills Training Program Class Action Parent Project Classroom/Juvenile Detention Center educational programs Success in Stages Protecting You Protecting ME Guiding Good Choices ALL Stars
Community-based process	Teen Institute Development of community-based coalitions Teacher in-service presentations Teen dances and retreats Community Learning Center After School Programs
Alternatives	Increase public awareness regarding targeted marketing of alcohol and tobacco to youth Collaboration with local law enforcement agencies to reduce access to alcohol Working with local sheriff to increase penalties for drug trafficking Drug Testing in the schools and assisting schools district boards in developing local policies regarding drug testing
Environmental	Screenings for youth who demonstrate at-risk behavior Insight Program Individual Education to reverse problem behavior
Program identification and referral	

Among their many preventions efforts, one of the priorities of the WCESC ATOD Prevention Program has been their offering the LifeSkills Training curriculum since 2003. Thus, their program efforts related to LifeSkills will be highlighted below. Those who are interested in other prevention programs offered may contact [Lorrie Lewandowski](#).

LifeSkills has been recognized as a Model Program by SAMHSA and identified as an exemplary research-based program by organizations such as the American Psychological Association, the American Medical Association, and the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. LifeSkills provides knowledge to increase self-esteem, and increase students’ ability to make decisions and solve problems, communicate effectively, avoid misunderstandings, make new friends, and resist pressure to use drugs. Since 2003, over 10,000 students in Wood County have received LifeSkills

Training. A record number of 2,500 students received the program during the 2007-2008 school-year alone.

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## Evidence of Effectiveness:

The WCESC values the collection of data to identify needs, guide programming decisions, monitor program fidelity, communicate with community members, and to evaluate programming initiatives. Two data collection efforts are highlighted below.

### *LifeSkills Program – Fidelity Monitoring*

The WCESC staff makes every effort to implement the LifeSkills program with the highest level of fidelity. To assist in this goal, grade-appropriate fidelity checklists that were created by the Ohio Tobacco Research and Evaluation Center at Case Western Reserve University are presently being used by all facilitators. After completion of each session, facilitators supply the date they completed that session and the length of the session, and they check “yes” or “no” to whether they covered each of the essential course objectives for that lesson. Additionally, facilitators rate, on a 4-point Likert scale, how closely they kept the curriculum as written for the current lesson. Research evaluators at the Northwest Ohio Tobacco Control Strategic Alliance regularly monitor fidelity checklists in order to ensure that the WCESC is implementing the program with fidelity.

### *LifeSkills Program – Program Evaluation*

Evaluations of the effectiveness of LifeSkills have occurred in partnership with the University of Toledo (Dr. Timothy Jordan and Dr. James Price). All students completing LifeSkills completed a pre-test and post-test assessing current and past tobacco use, perceptions and beliefs about tobacco use, exposure to tobacco, and smoking cessation.

- Program results indicate that 7th - 9th grade students completing the LifeSkills program (N=458) were significantly less likely to believe that people who smoke tobacco have more friends and that people who use chewing tobacco have more friends after completion of the program than they were before participating in the LifeSkills program.
- Additionally, there is convincing evidence that the LifeSkills program contributes to significantly more realistic beliefs about alcohol and cigarette use among 4th - 6th graders (N=507). After completing LifeSkills Training, they were less likely to report that smoking would probably make them look older and that smoking would make them more popular. Students were more likely to report that not smoking would lead to a better future, their parents being pleased with them, and better health in adulthood.
- Evidence also indicates that 4th - 6th grade students report being less susceptible to peer pressure about smoking after the LifeSkills program. Students were less likely to report that their decision to smoke or not to smoke will be based on what their friends say or do and were less likely to report that they would smoke if their friends really wanted them to. They were also significantly more likely to report that they practiced different ways to say “no” to peer pressure to smoke.

- Data collected biannually from all Wood County schools from 2004 to 2008 compared ATOD prevalence rates among youth who received LifeSkills Training to the prevalence rates among youth who did not. Results suggest that youth in grades 7 through 12 who did not receive the program report higher rates of ATOD use than students who completed the program. For example, 2008 prevalence rates for cigarette, alcohol, and marijuana use for youth who received LifeSkills Training and youth who did not are compared by grade level in the following chart.

**Substance Use reported by Youth Who Did or Did Not Receive Life Skills Training**

Grade 7	Cigarettes	Alcohol	Marijuana
No Training	1.7%	24.1%	4.5%
Life Skills Training	3.2%	15.4%	2.6%
Grade 8	Cigarettes	Alcohol	Marijuana
No Training	6.7%	34.5%	8%
Life Skills Training	5.3%	31.7%	8%
Grade 9	Cigarettes	Alcohol	Marijuana
No Training	11.1%	45.2%	18.8%
Life Skills Training	8%	42.9%	13.3%
Grade 10	Cigarettes	Alcohol	Marijuana
No Training	15.4%	56.1%	20%
Life Skills Training	12.5%	56.8%	15.8%
Grade 11	Cigarettes	Alcohol	Marijuana
No Training	14.2%	63.1%	15.3%
Life Skills Training	10.5%	44.1%	10.5%
Grade 12	Cigarettes	Alcohol	Marijuana
No Training	19.4%	67.4%	16.9%
Life Skills Training	13.4%	62.8%	15.1%

*County-Wide Youth Survey*

Since 2004, the WCESC, in collaboration with the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Wood County, has sponsored a biennial survey of adolescent alcohol and other drug use by students in grades 5 through 12 (N~ 9000). Wood County has used this data for program planning, program evaluation, grant writing efforts, and community communication efforts.

**Selected results are summarized below.**

- Tobacco Use.* Rates of nicotine use by 12th graders declined from 27% use in 2004 to 18% use in 2008.
- Cough Medicine Use.* Rates of cough medicine use by 11th graders declined from 16.2% use in 2004 to 11.7% use in 2008.
- Narcotic Painkiller Use.* Rates of narcotic painkiller use by 11th graders declined from 22.2% use in 2004 to 15.3% use in 2008. Additionally, rates of narcotic painkiller use by 12th graders declined from 22.6% use in 2004 to 17.4% use in 2008.
- Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD).* Rates of LSD use by 11th graders declined from 5.6% use in 2004 to 3.9% use in 2008. Additionally, rates of LSD use by 12th graders declined from 5.6% use in 2004 to 3.8% use in 2008.

- *Methylphenidate Use.* Rates of methylphenidate use by 12th graders declined from 10.4% use in 2004 to 8% use in 2008. Additionally, rates of methylphenidate use by 11th graders declined from 9.7% use in 2004 to 8% use in 2008.
- *Alcohol Use.* Alcohol consumption rates indicate that both annual and monthly use has declined since 2004 and has either declined or held steady since 2006. Binge drinking declined in all grades except grade 11.
- *Marijuana Use.* Since 2004, both annual and monthly marijuana use trends dropped in all grades. In Wood County, 27.7 percent of seniors smoke marijuana, compared to 31.7 percent nationally.
- *Mental Health.* Data from the Problem Severity subscale of the Ohio Scales indicate that 10.6% of Wood County youth report significant mental health problems and 20% of Wood County youth report “moderate” mental health problems. Survey results also suggest that Youth who report more mental health problems are more likely to engage in substance use across a broad variety of substances, and are much more likely to think about suicide or make a suicide attempt.

### ***Honors and Awards***

- In 2006 and in 2008, the WCESC was awarded an Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services (ODADAS) Exemplary Prevention Program Award.
- In 2008, the WCESC was awarded the SAMHSA Science to Service Award.
- In 2008, the WCESC received two highly competitive, discretionary grants from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools.
- In 2009, the WCESC became the only Licensed Educational Association in the state to be certified as a prevention entity by ODADAS.

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## **Capacity and Resources:**

The WCESC ATOD Prevention Program staff includes a director, a coordinator/prevention specialist supervisor, eleven prevention specialists, a community organizer, two program evaluators, and an administrative assistant.

- All ATOD prevention programming is implemented by the school-based prevention specialists. Each of the prevention specialists is an Ohio Certified Prevention Specialist or a Registered Applicant. Select staff have also received chemical dependency counselor (CCDC) licensing through the state of Ohio. Each specialist works full-time at one of the schools served by the program and has his or her performance monitored for fidelity.

The population served by the ATOD prevention programs included students in 1st-12th grades in ten public school districts and four parochial schools in Wood County. Students live in suburban and rural communities. Prevention services are available for universal, selected, and indicated populations. Prevention efforts are also directed towards parents, families, and community members, through coalition building. Since the program began in 2003, over 10,000 students have received LifeSkills training alone.

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## Family Partnerships:

Community members perceive that the WCESC is conducting programming not just “for them” but “with them.” Parent Project of Wood County is an educational program that has been offered to families since 2003 by the Wood County Educational Service Center. A concurrent, but separate program, “Choosing Success...Choosing Life,” is offered to teens. Having the youth involved is a family-friendly way to make it easier for the parents to attend, knowing their youth are involved in a positive program at the same time. The curriculum, using a behavior-modification approach, teaches parents how to avoid arguments with their children, using effective communication strategies. Other topics covered include: strategies for improving their teen’s school attendance and performance, advocacy, drug and alcohol use, negative peer associations, teen depression/suicide, violence and bullying, gangs, the influence of music and media on today’s youth, and information about multi-system resources for families. Parents benefit from the opportunity to share with other mothers and fathers who face similar parenting challenges. Suggestions and input gathered from evaluations submitted by attending family members are incorporated into future programming. Positive reviews by participants document the success of Parent Project. Graduates say this program helps to make them better at the job of parenting. Families develop strong bonds and are reluctant to have this system of support and education end once the program is completed. For this reason, the program leaders facilitate graduates in organizing and sustaining ongoing, parent-led meetings. Parents are encouraged to call facilitators with any concerns or questions after graduation.

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## Community Partnerships:

The WCESC partners with 9 public school districts, one career center, and 4 parochial schools who receive WCESC ATOD prevention programming, as well as with the Wood County ADAMHS Board, the Wood County Juvenile Detention Center, the Wood County Social Services Agencies, Wood County Law Enforcement Agencies, and community families. ATOD prevention programming began in 1983, and was reinvigorated when it moved under the WCESC in 2003. The strength of these partnerships is attributed to several factors including the use of baseline data to identify community needs, obtaining community support, and the presence of “program champions.” More specifically, Wood County had observed that a neighboring county had successfully used baseline community data to guide programming decisions. Thus, in 2003, the acquisition of baseline community data was prioritized. However, great efforts were made to obtain community support for the collection of this data and to determine the uses of this data (e.g., agreements were made that the data would not be used to make comparisons across districts or school buildings). Partners devoted an entire year to partnership development, including bringing key community stakeholders to the table, listening to community needs, validating community concerns, and negotiating next steps in programming. It is believed that these efforts established a strong foundation upon which current programming rests.

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## Sustainability Plan:

The Wood County ATOD Prevention Program has been in existence since 1983. It has been housed in the Wood County Educational Service Center since 2003. Since 2003, with the acquisition of two additional federal grants, personnel resources and programming to the schools and community has increased.

The WCESC ATOD Program demonstrates its dedication to sustainability through its use of blended funding sources, continued seeking of external grants, and through training community members to implement the program with fidelity. Funding sources include the Wood County ADAMHS board, individual school districts, and community, state, and national grants. Recognizing that much of this funding is provided through local levy dollars, the WCESC continues to develop new ways to sustain prevention programming during a time of general financial uncertainty. For example, the WCESC offers trainings to teachers to enhance their capacity to assist with implementation of the prevention programs. In addition, community organizers assist communities and schools in locating and applying for grants to sustain programming. Furthermore, the program has received annual increases in funding from the Northwest Ohio Tobacco Control Strategic Alliance in order to expand the program's services throughout Wood County.

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