



LifeSkills Training Protects Teens from Prescription Opioid Abuse

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y., Feb. 4, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- Recent research reveals an effective new strategy for combating the growing epidemic of prescription opioid misuse among youth. Researchers funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) reported that a school-based prevention program, called [Botvin LifeSkills Training \(LST\)](#), delivered in 7th grade classrooms can help students avoid misusing prescription opioids and other drugs throughout their teen years.

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Through the LST program, students learn not only how to resist pressures to smoke, drink, and use drugs, they also learn important life skills such as how to make informed decisions and solve problems, how to manage stress and anxiety, and how to communicate clearly. The combination of drug resistance skills and life skills has proven to be a powerful formula for preventing drug use and even violence.

The new study also showed that LST's impact on prescription opioid misuse made it a good financial investment for communities. The evaluation showed that communities that implemented LST more than recouped its cost in reduced health, social, and other expenditures related to teen prescription opioid misuse.

"We know that effective prevention programs can produce a powerful public health benefit by helping teens avoid the damaging effects of drug abuse and violence. This study proves that it can also cut prescription opioid misuse and can save money," said Dr. Gilbert J. Botvin, professor emeritus at Cornell University's Weill Medical College and developer of

the LST program. "A relatively small upfront investment in a proven prevention program such as LST can yield tremendous health and economic benefits."

Dr. D. Max Crowley from Duke University, with colleagues from Penn State University, evaluated the impacts of LST and two other school-based interventions. However, LST was the only intervention that was effective by itself. The researchers drew the data for the evaluation from a recent trial of the PROMoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience (PROSPER) prevention program. PROSPER is led jointly by Richard Spoth at Iowa State University and Mark Greenberg at Penn State University, with research funding from NIDA.

Over 35 federally-funded studies show that LST protects teens against tobacco, alcohol, substance use, and other problem behaviors such as delinquency and violence. These benefits presumably would further increase communities' economic advantage in implementing effective prevention programs.

About Botvin *LifeSkills Training*

Botvin *LifeSkills Training* (LST) is a highly acclaimed, evidence-based substance abuse and violence prevention program used in schools and communities. LST has been extensively tested and proven to reduce tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drug use by as much as 80%. Long-term follow-up studies also show that it produces prevention effects that are durable and long-lasting. For more information visit www.lifeskillstraining.com

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