

County Improvement Using Survey Data

How do I decide which intervention(s) to employ?

- ❑ Strategies should be selected based on the risk factors that are high in your community and the protective factors which are low.
- ❑ Strategies should be age appropriate and employed prior to the onset of the problem behavior.
- ❑ Strategies chosen should address more than a single risk and protective factor.
- ❑ No single strategy offers the solution.

**No
isolated
strategy
offers the
solution to
reducing
youth
problem
behaviors.**

How do I know whether or not the intervention was effective?

- ❑ Participation in the bi-annual administration of the survey provides trend data necessary for determining the effectiveness of the implemented intervention(s) and also provides data for determining any new efforts that are needed.

HOW TO READ THE CHARTS BRIEF OVERVIEW

1. Student responses for risk and protective factors, substance use, antisocial behavior and school safety questions are displayed by grade on the following pages.
2. The bars represent the percent of students in your community who reported elevated risk or protection, substance use or antisocial behaviors, or school safety concerns.
3. Scanning across these charts, you can easily determine which factors are more (or less) prevalent, thus identifying which of the factors are most important for your community to address.
4. Bars will be complemented by a small dot. This dot shows the comparison to all Arizona students sampled, and provides additional information for your community in determining the relative importance of each risk and protective factor. Additional explanations of cut-points, dots, and the 7-state norm line are located on the following page.
5. Actual percentages are provided in the data tables following the charts.
6. Brief definitions of the risk and protective factors can be found following the graphs.

HOW TO READ THE CHARTS

CUT-POINTS, DOTS, DASHED LINES

In order to read the Risk and Protective Factor Charts, there are three features to keep in mind while scanning the chart: 1) **cut-points** help with distinguishing between students at risk and those not-at-risk, 2) **dots** indicating county rates compared to state rates, and 3) **dashed lines** showing comparisons to other state levels.

- **Cut-Points**

Before the percentage of youth at risk on a given scale could be calculated, a scale value or cut-point needed to be determined that would separate the at-risk group from the not-at-risk group. The Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA) survey was designed to assess adolescent substance use, anti-social behavior and the risk and protective factors that predict these adolescent problem behaviors. The Arizona Youth Survey, and other surveys designed for other states and areas, follow the PNA format and have the same goal of gathering information on the prevention needs of students, schools, communities, and states. Since PNA surveys have been given to over 200,000 youth nationwide, it was possible to select two groups of youth, one that was more at risk for problem behaviors and another group that was less at risk. A cut-point score was then determined for each risk and protective factor scale that best divided the youth from the two groups into their appropriate group, more at-risk or less at-risk. The criteria for selecting the more at-risk and the less at-risk groups included academic grades (the more at-risk group received “D” and “F” grades, the less at-risk group received “A” and “B” grades), ATOD use (the more at-risk group had more regular use, the less at-risk group had no drug use and use of alcohol or tobacco on only a few occasions), and antisocial behavior (the more at-risk group had two or more serious delinquent acts in the past year, the less at-risk group had no serious delinquent acts).

The cut-points that were determined by analyzing the results of the more at-risk and less at-risk groups will remain constant and will be used to produce the profiles for future surveys. Since the cut-points for each scale will remain fixed, the percentage of youth above the cut-point on a scale (at-risk) will provide a method for evaluating the progress of prevention programs over time. For example, if the percentage of youth at risk for family conflict in a community prior to implementing a community-wide family/parenting program was 60% and then decreased to 40% one year after the program was implemented, the program would be viewed as helping to reduce family conflict.

- **Dots**

The Dots on the charts represent the percentage of all of the youth surveyed from Arizona who reported ‘elevated risk’ or ‘elevated protection’. The comparison to the state-wide sample provides additional information for your community in determining the relative importance of each risk or protective factor level. Scanning across the charts, you can easily determine which factors are most (or least) prevalent for your community. This is the first step in identifying the levels of risk and protection that are operating in your community and which factors your community may choose to address.

- **Dashed Line**

Levels of risk and protection in your community also can be compared to a more national sample. The dashed line on each risk and protective factor chart represents the percentage of youth at risk or with protection for the seven state sample upon which the cut-points were developed. The seven states included in the norm group were Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. All the states have a mix of urban and rural students. Again, brief definitions of the risk and protective factors are provided in Table 2. For more information about risk and protective factors, please refer to the resources listed on the last page of this report under Contacts for Prevention.