

Excellence in Prevention – descriptions of the prevention programs and strategies with the greatest evidence of success

Name of Program/Strategy: Project Venture

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1. Overview and description

Project Venture is an outdoor experiential youth development program designed primarily for 5th- to 8th-grade American Indian youth. It aims to develop the social and emotional competence that facilitates youths' resistance to alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. Based on traditional American Indian values such as family, learning from the natural world, spiritual awareness, service to others, and respect, Project Venture's approach is positive and strengths based. The program is designed to foster the development of positive self-concept, effective social interaction skills, a community service ethic, an internal locus of control, and improved decision-making and problem-solving skills. The central components of the program include a minimum of 20 1-hour classroom-based activities, such as problem-solving games and initiatives, conducted across the school year; weekly after-school, weekend, and summer skill-building experiential and challenge activities, such as hiking and camping; 3- to 10-day immersion summer adventure camps and wilderness treks; and community-oriented service learning and service leadership projects throughout the year.

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Excellence in Prevention is a project of Oregon Addiction and Mental Health Services and Washington Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery. Information is drawn from many sources, including the National Registry for Effective Prevention Programs (NREPP), sponsored by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

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2. Implementation considerations (if available)

3. Descriptive information

Areas of Interest	Substance abuse prevention
Outcomes	1: Use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other illicit drugs 2: Substance abuse risk and protective factors
Outcome Categories	Alcohol Drugs Mental health Tobacco
Ages	6-12 (Childhood) 13-17 (Adolescent)
Gender	Male Female
Races/Ethnicities	American Indian or Alaska Native Hispanic or Latino Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander White Race/ethnicity unspecified
Settings	School
Geographic Locations	Rural and/or frontier Tribal
Implementation History	Since 1990, Project Venture has reached thousands of American Indian and other youth. The program has been implemented in more than 70 sites in more than 23 States, Canada, and Hungary.
NIH Funding/CER Studies	Partially/fully funded by National Institutes of Health: No Evaluated in comparative effectiveness research studies: No
Adaptations	Project Venture has been adapted for Native Hawaiian, Alaska Native, Hispanic, and non-Hispanic youth, as well as for youth of mixed ethnicity. The program also has been adapted specifically for female youth.
Adverse Effects	No adverse effects, concerns, or unintended consequences were identified by the applicant.

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IOM Prevention Categories	Universal Selective
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4. Outcomes

Outcome 1: Use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other illicit drugs

Description of Measures	Respondents indicated the number of days (0, 1-2, 3-5, 6-9, 10-19, 20-31) in the past month they used alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other illicit drugs.
Key Findings	<p>In one study, alcohol use increased for both intervention and control students from baseline to the 6-month follow-up, then leveled off among intervention students and continued to increase among control students from the 6- to 18-month follow-up ($p < .05$). In a second study, alcohol use from pre- to posttest remained the same among students in the intervention group and increased among students in the control group ($p < .01$). This difference represents a large effect size (partial eta-squared = 0.189).</p> <p>From pre- to post-test, use of marijuana ($p < .01$) and other illicit drugs (cocaine, other stimulants, heroin, tranquilizers, hallucinogens, inhalants, steroids, and club drugs; $p < .05$) remained the same among students in the intervention group and increased among students in the control group. The effect sizes were large for marijuana (partial eta-squared = 0.162) and medium for other illicit drugs (partial eta-squared = 0.097).</p> <p>Tobacco use remained the same over time among students in the intervention and control groups.</p>
Studies Measuring Outcome	Study 1, Study 2
Study Designs	Experimental, Quasi-experimental
Quality of Research Rating	2.2 (0.0-4.0 scale)

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Outcome 2: Substance abuse risk and protective factors

Description of Measures	Four subscales from the Strategies for Success Survey were used to measure perceptions of alcohol and other drug use by peers, the availability of alcohol and other drugs, the intent to abstain from substance use, and perceptions of adult alcohol and other drug use.
Key Findings	From pre- to post-test, intervention students showed no change in their risk and protective factors. During the same time period, students in the control group showed decreases in their intent to abstain from substance use ($p < .05$) and increases in perceptions of alcohol and other drug use by peers ($p < .01$), availability of alcohol and other drugs ($p < .05$), and perceptions of adult alcohol and other drug use ($p < .001$). Effect sizes ranged from medium (partial eta-squared = 0.116 for availability of alcohol and other drugs; partial eta-squared = 0.101 for intention to abstain from substance use) to large (partial eta-squared = 0.256 for perceptions of adult alcohol and other drug use; partial eta-squared = 0.226 for perceptions of alcohol and other drug use by peers).
Studies Measuring Outcome	Study 1
Study Designs	Quasi-experimental
Quality of Research Rating	2.1 (0.0-4.0 scale)

5. **Cost effectiveness report (Washington State Institute of Public Policy – if available)**
6. **Washington State results (from Performance Based Prevention System (PBPS) – if available)**
7. **Who is using this program/strategy**

Washington Counties	Oregon Counties

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8. Study populations

The studies reviewed for this intervention included the following populations, as reported by the study authors.

Study	Age	Gender	Race/Ethnicity
Study 1	6-12 (Childhood) 13-17 (Adolescent)	51.6% Male 48.4% Female	61% American Indian or Alaska Native 27% Hispanic or Latino 12% White
Study 2	6-12 (Childhood) 13-17 (Adolescent)	50.3% Female 49.7% Male	75.5% American Indian or Alaska Native 15.6% Hispanic or Latino 5.3% White 3.3% Race/ethnicity unspecified 0.3% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

9. Quality of studies

The documents below were reviewed for Quality of Research. Other materials may be available. For more information, contact the developer(s).

Study 1

Carter, S. (with Letts, D., Tom, G., Tallant, A., Soce, B., Cleveland, R., et al.). (2005). FY 2005 final evaluation progress narrative report on Project Venture Middle School. Submitted to the New Mexico Department of Health Behavioral Health Services Division. Gallup, NM: National Indian Youth Leadership Project.

Study 2

Carter, S., Straits, K. J. E., & Hall, M. (2006). Project Venture: Evaluation of a positive, culture-based approach to substance abuse prevention with American Indian youth. Manuscript in preparation.

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Carter, S., Straits, K. J. E., & Hall, M. (2007). Project Venture: Evaluation of an experiential, culturally-based approach to substance abuse prevention with American Indian youth. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 29(3), 397-400.

Quality of Research Ratings by Criteria (0.0-4.0 scale)

External reviewers independently evaluate the Quality of Research for an intervention's reported results using six criteria:

1. Reliability of measures
2. Validity of measures
3. Intervention fidelity
4. Missing data and attrition
5. Potential confounding variables
6. Appropriateness of analysis

For more information about these criteria and the meaning of the ratings, see [Quality of Research](#).

Outcome	Reliability of Measures	Validity of Measures	Fidelity	Missing Data/Attrition	Confounding Variables	Data Analysis	Overall Rating
1: Use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other illicit drugs	2.5	2.5	2.5	1.5	1.5	2.5	2.2
2: Substance abuse risk and protective factors	2.3	2.5	2.5	1.5	1.5	2.5	2.1

Study Strengths

The evaluation studies used measures with acceptable psychometric properties, and the data were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. Program implementation was assessed qualitatively by observing the implementation sessions, documenting meeting attendance, and interviewing both participants and staff members. In addition, a fidelity checklist was developed and used.

Study Weaknesses

The lack of random assignment to groups weakened the impact of the intervention and created the potential for confounding variables. It appears that participant attrition was present and increased over

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time. Because attrition was not addressed in the evaluation, however, it is difficult to evaluate its potential impact on the findings. In addition, the impact of the after-school activities on the findings is not clear.

10. Readiness for Dissemination

The documents below were reviewed for Readiness for Dissemination. Other materials may be available. For more information, contact the developer(s).

Dissemination Materials

Hall, M., Carter, S., Flesher, J., & Pilz, A. (2005). Project Venture replication guide. Gallup, NM: National Indian Youth Leadership Project. National Indian Youth Leadership Project. (2006). Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Field Initiated Research and

Evaluation Program grant proposal [Excerpt]. Gallup, NM: Author.

National Indian Youth Leadership Project Replication Site Survey, 2007

Positive Youth Development Approaches for American Indian Youth [pamphlet] Program Web site, <http://www.niylp.org>

Project Venture Replication/Adaptation Assessment Scale

Training materials:

- National Indian Youth Leadership Project Decision Workshop [PowerPoint slides]
- Project Venture sample training agenda
- Project Venture sample training workshop evaluation results

Readiness for Dissemination Ratings by Criteria (0.0-4.0 scale)

External reviewers independently evaluate the intervention's Readiness for Dissemination using three criteria:

1. Availability of implementation materials
2. Availability of training and support resources
3. Availability of quality assurance procedures

For more information about these criteria and the meaning of the ratings, see Readiness for Dissemination.

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Implementation Materials	Training and Support Resources	Quality Assurance Procedures	Overall Rating
2.3	3.5	2.5	2.8

Dissemination Strengths

A well-written replication guide with a valuable organizational readiness component is provided. The developer requires a consultation and customized initial training before allowing the purchase of implementation materials. The assessment scale serves as a fidelity tool to support quality assurance.

Dissemination Weaknesses

While the lack of step-by-step instructions offers flexibility for the delivery of this complex program, it may be a significant barrier for some implementers. Further implementation guidance is needed for the school-based and youth recruitment components. Guidance on outcome and process evaluation is limited to the need to hire an outside evaluator.

11. Costs (if available)

The information below was provided by the developer and may have changed since the time of review. For detailed information on implementation costs (e.g., staffing, space, equipment, materials shipping and handling), contact the developer.

Item Description	Cost	Required by Program Developer
Curriculum guide	\$250 each	Yes
2.5- to 3-day, on-site training (recommended for sites with six or more trainees)	\$3,000 per site plus travel expenses	Yes, one training option is required
Off-site training at National Indian Youth Leadership Project workshop	\$500 per person	Yes, one training option is required
Advanced Project Venture Programming workshop	\$500 per person	No
Phone consultation	Free	Yes
Consultation for assessment of	\$1,000 per day plus travel	No

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resources for readiness, programming, sustainability, and evaluation	expenses	
10 hours of follow-up consultation via phone or Web	\$2,000 per year	Yes
On-site follow-up consultation, coaching, and support	\$1,000 per day plus travel expenses	Yes
Fidelity self-study instrument	Free	No

12. Contacts for more information

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