

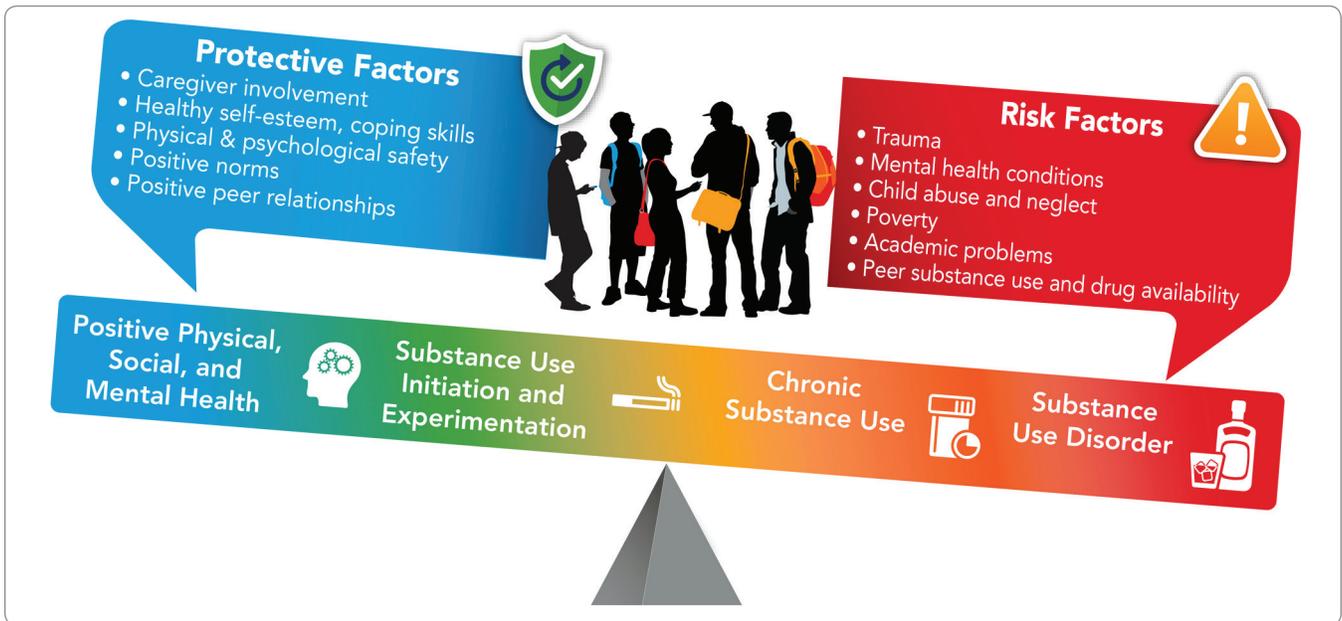
MOVING UPSTREAM:

Addressing Youth Substance Use

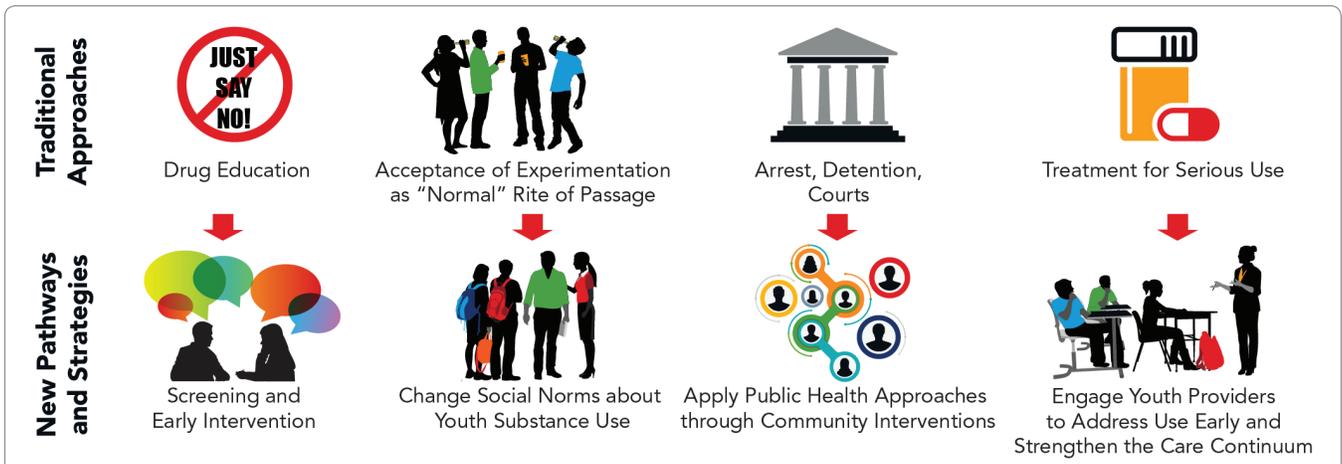
Decades of research demonstrates youth substance use can be prevented by addressing risk factors and enhancing protective factors.¹ **Risk factors** for substance use such as trauma, mental health concerns, adverse childhood experiences, and environmental factors can increase a young person’s likelihood of using alcohol, illicit drugs, or prescription medications for non-medical reasons. Repeated or chronic substance use can in turn change the structure and function systems in the adolescent brain, which is at a particularly sensitive period of development. This increases vulnerability to addiction and other negative outcomes.

Evidence-based strategies to decrease these risks and enhance **protective factors** such as positive relationships with peers and caregivers improve an individual’s health and wellbeing. The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation is investing in an initiative focused on prevention and early intervention for youth that aims to train health and youth service providers to talk with young people about substance use to prevent and reduce risky behavior. Without these interventions, the short- and long-term effects of use can negatively impact a young person’s health, social life, emotions and behavior, as well as their education, employment, and life trajectory.

Risk and Protective Factors²



By taking risk factors into consideration, innovative new initiatives are able to move “upstream” and seize on the opportunity to intervene at a critical point before serious problems develop. The graphic below illustrates the evolution of strategies for addressing youth substance use.



Moving Upstream: Addressing Youth Substance Use

What We know — Research Findings

Intervening early before substance use progresses is the most effective way to prevent individual and societal level substance use problems and costs. Screening to identify risk is the first step, followed by brief intervention(s) to increase a young person's insight about risks and to motivate change, and referral to treatment or services if indicated.³

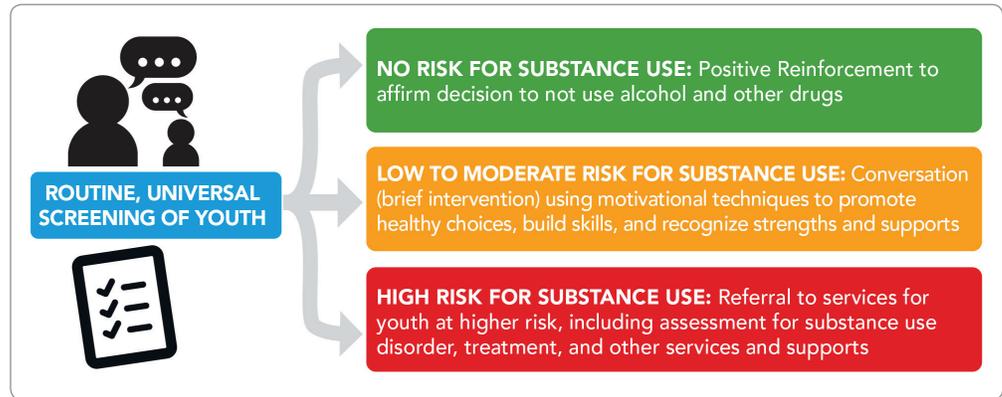


Organizing cross-sector coalitions to establish effective evidence-based policies and interventions can play an important role in prevention and early intervention in communities. Interventions should address the full spectrum of use and mitigate community-level risk factors and enhance protective factors.

Training health and community service providers on the delivery of prevention and early intervention messages and practices builds the capacity of providers and systems to more effectively identify and address substance use.

Engaging peers and parents/caregivers in prevention and intervention efforts can positively impact youth decisions around substance use by delaying initiation and decreasing misuse.

The Hilton Foundation's Youth Substance Use Prevention and Early Intervention Strategic Initiative is advancing innovative approaches to prevent and reduce youth substance use and promote health and wellbeing.



Examples of how the Hilton Foundation's partnerships are advancing screening and early intervention



American Academy of Pediatrics is leading a quality improvement project for pediatricians on the use of validated mental health and substance use screening tools and brief intervention techniques.



The Center for Social Innovation's Project Amp is pairing low-to-moderate risk youth with young adult mentors in recovery who partner with the mentees to enhance their strengths, interests, and personal goals and connect them to community resources.



Community Catalyst is developing consumer-led advocacy campaigns to enact state policy changes that improve financing and increase access to screening and early intervention for adolescents.



NORC at the University of Chicago is collaborating with schools of nursing and social work across the country to integrate screening and early intervention curriculum in baccalaureate and graduate level programs.



Reclaiming Futures is piloting a coordinated services approach for youth who report mild to moderate levels of substance use and are at the front door of the juvenile justice system.



School-Based Health Alliance is facilitating a learning collaborative on screening and early intervention for substance use and depression in school-based health centers and contributing to schools' efforts to employ alternatives to suspension and expulsion.

¹ *Unleashing the Power of Prevention*, National Academy of Sciences, 2015, page 3

² <http://youth.gov/youth-topics/substance-abuse/risk-and-protective-factors-substance-use-abuse-and-dependence>

³ *Facing Addiction: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health, 2016*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, page 3-3