

# Strengthening Families Program: For Parents and Youth 10-14 (ISFP or SFP 10-14)

Program Developed & Researched through Project Family of the Social & Behavioral Research Center for Rural Health at Iowa State University  
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Fact Sheet Created by the Evidence-based Prevention & Intervention Support Center (EPISCenter) at Penn State University.

## **PROGRAM COMPONENTS & GOALS:**

SFP 10-14 consists of seven highly interactive, video-based sessions conducted over seven consecutive weeks. During the first half of each session, parents and youth meet separately, but work on similar skills. During the second hour, the youth and parents participate together as families to practice skills, play games, and do family projects. The program focuses on setting appropriate limits, using consequences, protecting against substance abuse, handling peer pressure, reaching out for help, understanding family values, and building family communication. The youth sessions also include topics such as identifying positive goals for the future, appreciating parents, managing stress, following rules, and resisting peer pressure.

The primary goals of the program are to:

- Build life skills in youth, including stress management, conflict resolution, and communication skills
- Enhance parenting skills and promote effective parenting styles
- Strengthen family bonds, promote positive communication, and enhance the ability to solve problems together

## **PROVEN PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS:**

**Proximal Outcomes** are the modifiable attitudes, knowledge, beliefs and behaviors that the program is designed to impact *immediately following* program completion.

Research demonstrates that immediately following the program, **parents** who attend are significantly more likely to:

- Set and clearly communicate expectations and consequences for substance use
- Manage anger & strong emotions in parent-child relationships
- Involve child in family activities & decision making
- Improve communication with their child
- Improve child management
- Improve parent-child affective quality

Immediately following the program, **youth** who attend demonstrate:

- Lower levels of substance-related risk, including substance use initiation, favorable attitudes toward alcohol, and poor peer pressure resistance skills

**SFP 10-14's impact on long-term youth substance use and delinquency outcomes are mediated through its more immediate or proximal influence on targeted risk and protective factors. Immediate gains in skills, attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs serve to strengthen the family unit and promote positive family dynamics that buffer youth against initiation and lifetime use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco and delinquent behaviors, such as aggression. Unlike many prevention programs that show a decline in achieved outcomes shortly after the intervention, SFP 10-14 demonstrates positive and significant impacts years following program participation.**

## **Protective Factors**

*Targeted for an Increase*

- Youth and family management practices, including monitoring, age-appropriate parental expectations, and consistent discipline
- Effective and empathetic parent-child communication
- Promotion of healthy beliefs and clear standards
- Family bonding and supportive family involvement
- Goal setting and positive future orientation
- Positive parent-child affect
- Emotional management
- Pro-social family values
- Peer pressure refusal skills

## **Risk Factors**

*Targeted for a Decrease*

- Child and family management practices, including harsh, inappropriate, or inconsistent discipline, indulgence, poor parental monitoring, demanding/rejecting behavior, and poor communication of rules
- Youth aggressive or withdrawn behavior
- Favorable attitudes toward problem behaviors and substance use
- Friends who engage in problem behaviors – Negative peer influences
- Poor social and stress management skills
- Family conflict
- Early initiation of problem behaviors
- Early and persistent antisocial behavior
- Poor school performance

**Distal Outcomes** are the modifiable attitudes, knowledge, beliefs and behaviors that the program is designed to impact *several months or years following* program completion.

Research demonstrates that **youth** who attended the program in the past are significantly *less likely to have...*

- Ever used alcohol as measured both one year and two years after program completion
- Initiated use of alcohol, cigarettes or marijuana two and four years after program completion
- Reported aggressive and destructive behavior four years after program completion
- Reported past year methamphetamine use six years after program completion
- Reported past year narcotic (prescription drug) misuse six years after program completion
- Reported lifetime narcotic (prescription drug) misuse at 21 years of age
- Reported growth in internalizing symptoms
- Reported poly-substance use from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade
- Reported drunkenness or illicit drug use at 21 years of age

Research demonstrates that **youth** who attended the program in the past are significantly *more likely to have...*

- Delayed onset of problematic behaviors
- Increased resistance to peer pressure
- Improved school engagement two years after program completion
- Improved academic success six years after program completion

#### **Cost Benefits:**

**SFP 10-14 pays for itself as it has demonstrated a positive, significant return on investment!**

- Analyses by researchers from the Institute for Social and Behavioral Research found economic returns of up to \$9.60 for every dollar spent implementing SFP 10-14 and a cost benefit of up to \$5,923 for each youth participating in SFP 10-14.
- The Penn State Prevention Research Center released a 2008 report demonstrating a statewide return on investment for sites implementing SFP 10-14 in Pennsylvania of over \$13 million, which reflected a savings in future crime and substance use costs and an estimated average economic benefit of \$872,133 per community.

#### **National Recognitions:**

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) Model Program
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Research-Based Drug Abuse Prevention Universal Program
- Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) Blueprints for Violence Prevention Promising Program
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency (OJJDP) Exemplary Program
- National 4 H Headquarters & Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service Program of Distinction
- Center for Substance Abuse Prevention Model Program
- U.S. Department of Education Exemplary Program

In 2002, the Cochrane Collaboration Systematic Review, which was sponsored by the World Health Organization, reviewed 6000 reports of studies of psychosocial or educational interventions intended to prevent alcohol use or misuse by young people. SFP 10-14 was recognized as the most promising “effective intervention over the longer-term for the primary prevention of alcohol misuse.”

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

##### **ABOUT THE SFP 10-14 CURRICULUM, CONTACT:**

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#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

##### **ABOUT SFP 10-14 TRAINING AND IMPLEMENTATION IN PENNSYLVANIA, CONTACT:**

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