

# Family skills training

Family skills trainings are programs that can shape youth behavior and **create stronger family relationships, reducing the risk of youth substance use**, including opioids. These types of programs can help parents develop healthy problem-solving and monitoring skills, increase children's sense of emotional support, and promote open family communication – all skills that play an important role in preventing youth opioid use.

## Overview of the model

**The Strengthening Families Program 10-14** is an evidence-based family skills training program for parents and guardians and their children ages 10 to 14. The program can be used for families with or without risk for substance use problems and aims to improve family protective factors while reducing risks related to adolescent substance use and other problem behaviors. Through the program, parents and guardians learn about the norms of adolescent substance use and behavior and learn skills around setting clear expectations, using appropriate discipline, managing children's emotions, and communicating effectively.

In the program:

- Cohorts of participants typically include eight to ten families, and sessions are conducted once a week for seven weeks, usually in the evenings over mealtimes
- Sessions are two hours long, which includes a one-hour parent and child skills-building session followed by a one-hour family session where parents and children practice the skills they learned separately
- All sessions are led by trained facilitators and at least two rooms are required for each session for parents and children to practice their skills independently.
- SFP 10-14 may be used for families in schools, faith institutions, and other community settings, and may be used for families at higher risk for substance use concerns, such as families involved in the child welfare system.

### About us

Healthy Minds Policy Initiative is a nonprofit LLC contracted by the Oklahoma Office of the Attorney General to support the Oklahoma opioid abatement grant program.

## Family skills training as an opioid abatement strategy

As a stand-alone program, sixth grade students that participated in the program showed significantly lower rates of youth prescription opioid misuse and overall prescription drug misuse at age 25.<sup>1</sup> In another study, seventh grade students that participated in SFP 10-14 in combination with a school-based prevention program, Botvin LifeSkills Training, showed reduced risk of opioid misuse at age 25.<sup>2</sup> Communities and schools can consider implementing these programs together to strengthen efforts around youth opioid abatement.

Parents and guardians also benefit from the program: SFP 10-14 benefits parents by improving family communication, parenting skills, and mental health, and reducing parental stress.<sup>3</sup> SFP 10-14 has also demonstrated reduced parent drug use and depression.<sup>4</sup>

## EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES FOR OPIOID ABATEMENT

### Implementation considerations

SFP 10-14 requires dedicated time and space to deliver lessons for youth and families to learn knowledge and skills, and proper training for staff, volunteers, or community partners to facilitate sessions and deliver the program to fidelity.

Communities should consult with the SFP 10-14 program coordinator ([sfp1014@iastate.edu](mailto:sfp1014@iastate.edu)) before modifying the curriculum as even well-meaning changes can be counterproductive and reduce effectiveness.

- **Training:** To be certified to facilitate the program, facilitators are required to complete a three-day, interactive training provided by Iowa State University National Trainers. Teams of three facilitators should attend trainings and must complete recertification training every three years. Organizations can either host their own training on-site or attend any open trainings offered in Iowa. Virtual trainings are not offered.
- **Implementation:** Sessions are taught in sequence over a seven-week period, and at least two rooms are required for each session: one for parents and guardians and the other for youth. Attendance incentives, such as providing a meal or transportation options, are highly encouraged.
- **Evaluation:** Evaluation tools are available for facilitators, including pre- and post-program surveys and fidelity observation forms to help measure the effectiveness of the program.

### Additional reading and resources

[Strengthening Families Program 10-14 website](#)

[Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development: SFP 10-14 program overview and cost-benefits](#)

[Penn State's Evidence-Based Prevention & Intervention Support: SFP 10-14](#)

### References

- 1 Spoth, R., Trudeau, L., Redmond, C., Shin, C., Ralston, E., Redmond, C., Greenberg, M., Feinberg, M. (2013). Longitudinal effects of universal preventative intervention on prescription drug misuse: Three randomized controlled trials with late adolescents and young adults. *American Journal of Public Health*, 103(4), 665-672.
- 2 Spoth, R., Trudeau, L., Redmond, C., Shin, C., Ralston, E., Redmond, C., Greenberg, M., Feinberg, M. (2013). Longitudinal effects of universal preventative intervention on prescription drug misuse: Three randomized controlled trials with late adolescents and young adults. *American Journal of Public Health*, 103(4), 665-672.
- 3 Pinheiro-Carozzo, N.P., Murta, S.G., Vinha, L.G.d.A. *et al.* Beyond effectiveness of the Strengthening Families Program (10-14): a scoping RE-AIM-based review. *Psicol. Refl. Crít.* **34**, 16 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41155-021-00182-z>
- 4 Kumpfer, K.L., Whiteside, H. O., Greene J. A., & Allen, K.C. (2011). Effectiveness outcomes of four age versions of the Strengthening Families Program in statewide field sites. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 14(3), 211-229.