



## TAG in Action: *LifeSkills Training* Program

As part of its national call to action, **Adolescent Health: Think, Act, Grow**® (TAG), the Office of Adolescent Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has identified a number of successful strategies for improving adolescent health throughout the country.

**The Goal** | Botvin *LifeSkills Training* program is an evidence-based curriculum designed to teach youth healthy alternatives and skills that reduce risky behaviors, such as smoking, substance use, and violence.

**The Game Plan** | Botvin *LifeSkills Training (LST)* is an interactive and flexible curriculum that helps youth to develop skills to resist negative peer pressure, build confidence and self-mastery, and cope with social anxiety. LST also increases youth's knowledge of the immediate and long-term consequences of substance abuse. LST is designed for upper elementary, middle, and high school students, and can be taught either on an intensive schedule (two to three times a week), or on a more extended schedule (once a week) until the program is complete.

More than 35 rigorous studies, conducted over a 30-year period, have demonstrated that the LST program reduces tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drug use by as much as 80%. In addition to other outcomes, a recent evaluation by the National Institute on Drug Abuse reported that LST specifically helps youth avoid misusing prescription opioids throughout their teen years. Multiple studies have also found that LST effects on drug use can last for up to 12 years -- through high school and college and even into young adulthood. As a result, communities more than recoup the program's costs in reduced health, social, and other expenditures related to teen risky behavior.

In 2017, in response to the opioid crisis, LST released a Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Module to further help youth avoid the misuse/abuse of opioids and prescription drugs. The new module is designed for school districts, community-based organizations, and agencies serving students ages 11 – 14, and can be delivered either online or in a classroom. The module can be used in conjunction with the existing LST program or can be integrated into other prevention programming.

**The Winning Ways** | Paulina Kalaj, Director of Communications for LST, shared, "LST works because rather than merely teaching about drugs, violence, and other risky behaviors, we help youth develop the skills they need to navigate adolescence. We build their confidence and self-mastery to reject negative social pressures. LST has been shown to work with a broad range of youth, including various multi-ethnic and socioeconomic groups. This is particularly important within the current context of the opioid crisis, which is hitting every demographic. We developed the new module on prescription drug use in order to reinforce prevention of opioids in our already-effective LST program, and to reach an even broader audience of youth."

**Learn More** | Botvin *LifeSkills Training* Program  
<https://www.lifeskillstraining.com/>

