

**ARCH Community Meeting**  
**Focus Group and Survey facilitated by The Coad Group**  
**June 11, 2004**

The meeting was held at 9:00 AM, at the ESC Building. Nine people attended, including Terry Kenworthy of The Coad Group, who made the presentation.

The Coad Group, on behalf of Chester County Drug & Alcohol Services, conducted a 1-hour focus group and survey to explore what members of this community perceive to be the risk factors that contribute to substance abuse. The presentation was a Power Point presentation that was accompanied by a handout. This focus group is part of the County's "Prevention Risk Assessment" and will be utilized to develop their future drug and alcohol prevention plan.

This is a summary of the Risk Factors that were presented. Risk Factors are grouped in four domains: community, school, individual and peer, family. (Risk factors are “those conditions that increase the likelihood that an individual will engage in at-risk behaviors.”)

**Community Domain**

- Economic and social deprivation
- Transition and mobility
- Low neighborhood attachment
- Community laws and norms favorable to use
- Availability of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs
- Media portrayals of violence
- Availability of firearms

**School Domain**

- Lack of clear enforced policy on the use of ATOD (alcohol, tobacco & other drugs)
- Availability of ATOD
- Early and persistent antisocial behavior
- Academic failure beginning in late elementary school
- Lack of commitment to school

**Individual/Peer Domain**

- Early initiation of problem behavior
- Alienation and rebelliousness
- Favorable attitude toward ATOD
- Problem behaviors – constitutional factors
- Friends who engage in the problem behavior

**Family Domain**

- Family history of the problem behavior
- Family management problems
- Favorable parental attitudes and involvement in the problem behavior
- Family conflict

Risk and protective factor-focused prevention is based on the simple premise: to prevent a problem from happening, you need to first identify the factors that increase the risk of that problem developing and then find ways to reduce those risks.

Risk factors exist in multiple domains.

Risk factors are predictive of certain behaviors.

Risk factors are inclusive (among different racial, cultural, or socioeconomic groups).

(These are all excerpts or summaries taken from the Power Point presentation)

Following the presentation, the group was asked to take the survey. It was a written survey, taken anonymously. Those taking the survey were asked to rate their own perception about their community.

Following the survey, a discussion of protective factors was conducted. Protective factors are those conditions that protect individuals from the negative consequences of exposure to risks by 1) reducing the impact of the risk, and 2) changing the way a person responds to the risk.

The following **Protective Factors** were discussed.

Individual characteristics

Bonding

Healthy Beliefs and Clear Standards

### **Protective Processes**

Opportunities for involvement

Development of social and cognitive skills

Recognition for skillful performance

The group in attendance discussed the risk factors and protective factors, primarily focusing on the family domain. **The protective factor of healthy beliefs and clear standards may be effective in *this* community. This community has demonstrated that when parents set clear academic expectations, the students achieve. This may also be true when parents set clear behavior standards related to ATOD use.**

Other issues discussed:

- Coad is facilitating a networking meeting of county post prom chairs to get together, reflect, and share strategies together.
- B. Lyon and E. Moeller will meet next week and finalize the letter to be mailed to potential community board of advisors. They will be invited to attend the opening ARCH meeting in the fall, Friday, September 10, 2004, 9:00 AM, at the ESC Building, Berwyn.
- The topic of soliciting donations for ARCH was briefly discussed. It is advised that this discussion be linked clearly with ARCH goals to be effective.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Moeller, ARCH Secretary