

Frequently asked Questions about the Life of a Student Program (LOS)

What can LOS do for our school and community?

Have high school athletes and co-curricular participants changed?

The “just do it” generation has been marketed to and it has indeed worked. Today’s student has assumed the adventurer/risk takers stance on how far to push their luck. Co-curricular participants and athletes have always portrayed the assumption of risk as behavior as usual. The recent onset of increases in pack mentality has certainly increased the problems and behaviors of concern we presently see. Even non-risk takers boldly portray themselves as risk takers to fulfill a “wan-a-be” identity. Social drug use is now normative. It is “Just what they do...” This puts today’s students at incredible risk for many negative behaviors of concern.

How many students use social drugs?

What is the big deal? Kids party?

It begins at onset in 7th grade with 14.1% reporting alcohol consumption during the school year. This use progresses to 58.5% by 12th grade. It is understandably of concern that the use is associated with increasing amounts throughout high school, although the number of occasions per month remains relatively constant at five drinking episodes per month, which leads us to believe that it is for most once per week on the weekend. Nonetheless, this activity is against the law and dangerous, as alcohol has been linked to nearly all high-risk behaviors and health crises. When we combine this alcohol use with high-risk behaviors normally experienced by youth, we greatly magnify the propensity for disaster and watch our young adolescents enter the ten most dangerous years of life, ages 14-24.

Who does it target?

High School Administrators, Athletes and Co-Curricular Activity Participants,
Parents/Guardians, Coaches and Community Stakeholders.
Why “Involved” Students?

Prevention and intervention efforts focus on priority populations. Often they look for populations with something in common. Athletes and co-curricular activity participants are the largest priority population that exists in any community or any school. 40-90% of students in most U.S. schools are involved in at least one sport or co-curricular activity. More than any other group of adolescents, we have compelling reasons for involved students not to drink, health and performance. Alcohol, a metabolic poison has only negative effects on all physiological parameters. This can be our initial rationale for non-use.

High school sports and activities do matter! High school co-curricular activities are an integral part of many communities throughout the United States. The local sports teams and activity groups are the focal point of community life: it’s a source of pride, a spot for social gathering, and where initial perception of a community begins; because of this performance matters; the performance of the students as well as their behavior. The choice by involved students to use drugs greatly affects both of these domains. Involved students are usually the leaders in the school and the way they go the school goes.

What is the prevention basis to LOS?

The Prevention Basis to Student Programs and Team Effectiveness

- Programs to prevent athlete substance use inherently rests on certain assumptions about why athletes would use alcohol and other drugs. Strategies for prevention, in turn, are based on these assumptions.

- To date, most prevention efforts have focused on changing the traits and behaviors of individuals, with heavy emphasis on their personalities, their backgrounds, or their ability to respond to their environment. Thus, some educational programs teach individuals about the dangers of substance use in order to promote fear of those dangers.
- Others teach them skills for dealing with inter- and intra-personal social influences (such as stress and peer pressure).
- Still others emphasize the improvement of personal qualities, such as self-esteem, that help people function in a complex world. These education efforts are based on theories that locate the causes of substance abuse primarily within the individual.
- Even in cases where the role of the social environment is given prominence, the responsibility for action is placed on the individual.

Clearly, many causes of substance abuse lie within the individual, and these should not be ignored. Additionally, Hansen's social ecology theory seeks causes primarily in the social environment. Consequently, efforts to modify use must focus on changing the person's environment in addition to the person. For the central tenet of social ecology is that individual behaviors are mainly the result of socialization; to change the behavior, we must change the social institutions that shape it and provide opportunities and resources to change individual behavior within the social context. When applied to alcohol and drug abuse, social ecology theory gives attention to an additional set of variables from those that most program developers typically deal with. Of particular interest from this perspective are variables like team/group culture, traditions, rituals, inter-team/group relationships (including power relationships), team/group value systems, and team/group social norms. With the Life of a Student Program, these variables are emphasized in addition to factors such as personal belief, perception of risk, and intra-personal skills.

Some of the strongest predictors of alcohol and drug abuse among high school or college involved students are social. Among high school and college students, for example, the social group dominates as the best predictor of substance use...
(other than previous drug use).

Student athletes and co-curricular participants who take drugs usually do so in a social context of one kind or another. From such data, we may conclude that students use drugs primarily as a function of the social group with whom they interact. This principle applies directly to casual and experimental use and indirectly to addictive use of substances. Obviously, at some point in an addict's history, physiological and psychological effects drive use.
(HANSEN) Adapted UNDERWOOD

If we hope to change a particular behavior (e.g., excessive use of alcohol), we must change the social context-the institution or group-that shapes the behavior. In other words, we must address the effects of social influence, within the group on the members of that group. (HANSEN) Adapted UNDERWOOD

What is the emphasis of the program?

-Phase #1 Pre-Season Meetings for Entry Level Participants and Parents

Phase one employs a strategy for school districts to establish mandatory seasonal meetings to discuss conditions for involvement, expectations, philosophy and also to address the issues of substance use by athletes and co-curricular activities participants. A clear perspective of the privilege and personal and collective responsibility required to be afforded the opportunity to be a participant in co-curricular activities. This program allows you to impact the majority of your entire student body and most importantly the parents. Athletics and Co-Curricular Activities are the largest target populations that exist in any school. Current drug data and research is shared with all stakeholders

-Phase #2 Co-Curricular Activity Codes of Conduct Conditions for Involvement and Introduction of The Santa Cruz City School Co-Curricular Policy

The #1 issue reported by high school Co-Curricular Activity Directors is the problem of enforcing Codes of Conduct. This program helps schools to understand what a code is for, what it can impact and how to rewrite them for today's co-curricular activities participants and the dilemmas they face. This program also introduces The Santa Cruz City Schools Co-Curricular Policy. This policy is designed to strengthen the

Life of a Student Program by assisting in the reduction of use of alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs among students. The policy contains an educational component, The Seven Challenges. The Seven Challenges is part of our school substance use prevention/intervention procedure. It is a strength-based curriculum that may allow students an early return to the classroom and maintain their involvement in athletics and co-curricular activities. The re-writing of the Codes of Conduct along with the implementation of the Santa Cruz City Schools Co-Curricular Policy updates existing codes to reflect the integration of the successful evidence based strategy, The Seven Challenges. Codes are re-written as proactive character based documents, taking us to a valuable paradigm shift, supporting our young athletes and co-curricular activity participants by telling them what we want them to do and our rationale for why, rather than telling them what we don't want and what we will do to them, if they fail to follow the rules.

-Phase #3 Coaching Effectiveness Training for Substance Use Issues

Phase 3 focuses on training of all coaches and co-curricular activities directors at all levels to understand and confront substance use issues for today's student co-curricular activity participant. Training includes Drug Abuse Recognition Training that helps a coach/director impact his/her team or group with valuable lessons against drug use and affords any coach/director a perspective of the present day problem and how they can impact it. Additionally, training helps co-curricular activity directors to understand the reasoning behind The Santa Cruz City Schools Co-Curricular Activities Policy and how to implement the principles and adhere to the guidelines of the policy.

-Phase #4 Developing Peer Led Student Assistance Groups to Confront Behaviors of Concern

This workshop is designed to identify, evaluate and develop peer led student assistance groups. Once formed, these groups have a primary focus on teaching the individual what it means to be a leader and how to handle the responsibility that comes with a position of authority, influence, and importance. The groups also serve as a peer-based community where students can feel safe. We teach the leaders how to confront their peers with behaviors of concern and to take matters that merit immediate action or continual issues to an adult authority. This workshop gives the coaches, directors and administrators a conduit to behaviors in the group. Individual and team success depends on good leadership. The first school to use this program had 27 athletes turned in for substance use issues in the first year, for failure to follow the code of conduct.

-Phase 5 Stakeholder Unity

The fifth and final phase in Life of a Student is to ensure that all members of the community take stake in eliminating drug and alcohol use among youth. Only by coordinating our efforts and taking a "many messengers with the same message" approach can we ensure that all individuals receive that message. This workshop allows a school district to take a comprehensive look at all aspects of their existing programs and determine priorities for the future. Phase five allows all stakeholders to share their views of the entire athletic and co-curricular activity program. This process gives any school district a valuable perspective of establishing priorities, strengths and limitations for the future directions of the programs. An evaluative process is utilized to garner valuable information on student substance use issues within your co-curricular activity program. The information gained is incredible.

What domains, protective factors and risk factors does LOS affect?

Protective Factors:

Individual Domain:

- Improved knowledge and understanding of athlete and co-curricular activity lifestyle, training effect and goal and social cohesion.
- Accurate knowledge of the effect of social drug use and performance.
- Improved perception of personal achievement and self-efficacy, through greater normative understanding and personal and collective responsibility.
- Holds student responsible for their actions

School Domain:

- Team Vigilance
- Individual responsibility
- Collective responsibility
- Student social and behavioral norms raised to a higher standard
- Team/group leadership
- Coaching/Directing Vigilance
- Parent Vigilance
- Stakeholder Knowledge Understanding Agreement
- Fan responsibility
- Universal Code enforcement

Community Domain:

- Debunk any perceptions that use is acceptable
- Get community involved in after contest activities
- Create community tone of healthy involved students with character
- Community wide support of Code
- Improve social and behavioral norms of student community

Risk Factors:

Individual Domain:

- Personal vulnerability to use drugs

School Domain:

- Drug use norms

Community Domain:

- Availability of drugs to students
- Enforcement of all laws pertaining to underage use

Besides better athletes, involved students, and winning teams what else can LOS do for our youth?

The following are some of the additional benefits for students who choose not to drink alcohol:

- Academic, athletic, group performance will not be hampered;
- The risk of breaking school rules or the law is greatly reduced;
- Serious and life threatening problems related to being alcohol impaired such as drunk driving and sexual decision-making, injury, arrest, death are eliminated or reduced;
- There is reduced risk of becoming addicted to alcohol; and,
- The ability to develop appropriate life skills such as stress management, problem solving, conflict resolution, interacting with others, and goal setting is enhanced.
- Young people can learn what it means to join a social order and be held to agreed upon standards for the group.

The Life of an Student Task Analysis

Specify Key Activities	Scheduled Dates	Who is responsible?	Resources Needed/ Materials to be provided	Location
Mandatory Stakeholder Meetings				
Goal Cards Commitment Forms Signed				
Codes Signed				
Code of Conduct Training KUA= knowledge understanding agreement				
Coaching Effectiveness Training All Staff				
Student Athlete Leadership Training				
Nominations for Potential Leaders				
Training Workshop for Leaders				
Graduation for Leaders/ Public Notice				
Bi-monthly Leaders Meeting				
Team Meetings with Leaders				
Team Meeting With Coach/ Public Notice				
Posters Selection				
Posters Printed /Framed				
Posters Displayed				
Code Committee Chosen				
Code Reviewed				
Code Rewritten				
Code Revisions Presented to B of E				
B of E Workshop				
Adoption as SD Policy				
Rollout to Stakeholders (fall)				
Counselor Health Professional Meeting				
Student Athlete Assistance Process Training				
Student Athlete Advisory Council SAAC Chosen				
Bi-Monthly SAAC Meetings				
Behaviors of Concern Drop Box and Process				
SRO Meeting and Expectations				
Local Law Enforcement Meeting				
Health Curriculum Meeting				
Senior Exit Interviews Conducted				
Seasonal Wrap-Up 20/20 Questions Conducted				
Pick Super Seniors				
New 7 th Graders Assembly/ Sign Up				
P.E. Staff Class Screening Meeting				
Sportsmanship Meeting				
S.D. Athletics Analysis Process				
Athletic Analysis Recommendations				
Athletic Analysis Strategic Plan				