
TIP SHEET

TOO GOOD FOR DRUGS MIDDLE SCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Too Good for Drugs (TGFD) is a science-based prevention program designed to reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors related to alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) use. TGFD is an effective school-based prevention program for kindergarten through 12th-grade students, which focuses on five interwoven components that appear throughout the curriculum. These five components include goal setting, decision making, bonding with pro-social others, identifying and managing emotions, and communicating effectively.

Too Good for Drugs empowers teens to meet the challenges of middle school life fostering confidence and building resistance to substance abuse. Students set and reach more complex goals and, in the process, develop and practice stronger decision-making skills and effective-communication skills.

Students also learn to identify and manage their emotions and the emotions of others so they can better relate to others and seek to associate with positive peer groups. Too Good for Drugs addresses environmental and developmental risk factors related to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs through the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes teens need to make healthy decisions consistent with their healthy goals.

Substance use topics are discussed in the context of expectations, peer pressure and influence, and the role of the media. In particular, more complex social challenges and influences that present a greater risk for escapism and risky behavior are explored and met with strategies for managing those situations in a positive and healthy way.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

The Too Good for Drugs program approaches prevention with a combination of normative education, information about the consequences of drug use, and the development of pro-social skills. Interactive activities allow youth an opportunity to internalize the skills they learn in the program. The following tips will help maximize the success and interaction of the TGFD sessions.

MAKE ACTIVITIES FUN

TGFD is filled with interactive activities designed to engage students in active learning. The curriculum relies heavily on role-play scenarios. These activities are popular with youth upon completion of the program. Taking some extra time to prepare for these role-plays will make them more effective and enjoyable. Use simple props to illustrate characters in the skit. For example, a store security guard might have sunglasses and a badge. The school nurse might have a vest and a toy stethoscope. You might be able to find these props around your house, in your agency, or for a small cost at your local dollar store. Putting a little extra effort into these activities will encourage youth to fully participate and enjoy the lesson. You will also find yourself smiling, laughing, and enjoying the students' role-plays, too!

ESTABLISH CLEAR, CONSISTENT RULES FOR PEER-REFUSAL ROLE PLAYING

Again, the TGFD curriculum relies heavily on role-play scenarios. It is important to provide rules at the beginning of each role-play so students know your expectations and what will happen if they break the rules. If a student does break a rule while role-playing, stop the role-play and select another volunteer. TGFD suggests these simple role-playing rules:

- ▶ **Keep it short.** The sooner you can get yourself out of the situation, the better off you will be. Don't argue. Say no and start moving in another direction.
- ▶ **Keep it clean.** No profanity allowed.
- ▶ **Keep your hands to yourself.** No physical contact allowed. In real life, kids don't twist their friends' arm to get them to do things. Words should be used, and verbal persuasion encouraged.

BUILD A COLLECTION OF ADVERTISING ARTICLES

Examples of tobacco and alcohol advertising are needed for some of the lessons in TGFD. Use a folder to house your ads and continuously add to your collection. You may want to laminate your ads or put them in a plastic sleeve, so they hold up over several years. The more examples of advertising you have to analyze with students, the more effective the lesson will be. While you may have access to magazines with advertisements in them, an affordable way to add to your collection is to print tobacco and alcohol ads from the internet. You can also check with the local school and/or public library as they give away old magazines.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR NORMATIVE EDUCATION

Many students overestimate the percentage of people who engage in problem behavior such as violence and drug use. Normative education teaches that most people are not involved in these behaviors, and that most people do not think drug use and violence are appropriate or cool. It is very important to be aware of the negative norms promoted by our culture, so you will not inadvertently reinforce them. For example, many young people have the misperception that everyone does drugs or that it's normal for teens to experiment with tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs. Paying too much attention to students who express these negative norms during discussions, for example, can reinforce the negative norm. Lastly, during discussions, be sure to correct students who express a negative norm and reframe the discussion to include a positive message based on a positive norm. So, for the student who expresses the opinion that it is normal for teens to experiment with alcohol, you would reframe the negative norm and focus on a positive norm by pointing out that through the lessons the young person will learn many ways to get what they want and need without using alcohol or other drugs.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information about the Youth Prevention Education model programs approved by IDHS SUPR and the implementation conditions and parameters for each curricula, please refer to the [Youth Prevention Education Evidenced-Based Model Program Overview](#) on the [Prevention Strategy Resources](#) page on the Prevention First Website.

For more information about technical assistance or the services we offer, please contact providerservices@prevention.org or call 312-909-9768.

Too Good for Drugs Support: <https://toogoodprograms.org/>

Too Good for Drugs Materials or Program Inquiries: <https://toogoodprograms.org/collections/program-kits>

Too Good for Drugs blog: <https://toogoodprograms.org/blogs/blog>