

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Funded by Maine Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, the Student Intervention and Reintegration Program (SIRP) is a substance use intervention program that targets an *indicated population* of youth ages 13 through 18 with either verified or suspected use of alcohol or drugs, as identified through a violation of school substance abuse policy, violation of probation, or physical impairment as reported by self or others. These are youth who *do not* diagnostically qualify for substance abuse treatment services. Youth may be referred to the program from anywhere in the community: via schools, healthcare providers, the criminal justice system, a parent/guardian, or self-referral.

With the goal of reducing their alcohol and/or other drug use and other high-risk behaviors, youth participate in a 12-hour educational program. The program content and process work toward increasing awareness of the risks involved in using alcohol and other drugs, identifying personal values around use, and reducing attitudes favorable to use. Youth learn and practice decision-making and coping skills, exploring alternative options to high-risk behaviors.

This report examines evaluation data received during a three-year implementation of the program at five sites across the state from September 2009 through June 2012. The purpose of the evaluation was to collect and analyze data to determine progress made toward achieving participant outcomes. Data was collected using questionnaires completed by participants at four junctures throughout their involvement in the program and included before- and after-program questionnaires, as well as 90-day and 180-day follow-up questionnaires. Participants also completed program satisfaction questionnaires to gather feedback about the quality of the program and areas needing improvement. A review of participants' referral data was also included.

A total of 258 participant before- and after-surveys and 256 satisfaction surveys were analyzed. Participant demographic information (gender, race, age, school attended, town of residence) and a profile of substance use is presented, including type of substance(s) used (including tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, other illicit drugs, non-prescribed prescription drugs, and inhalants), and the number, quantity, and frequency of use of each substance. Demographic information indicated:

- 70% were male
- 85% were ages 15–18
- 91% indicated their race as Caucasian
- 34% indicated they were referred to the program to reduce legal sanctions, and 30% were referred to avoid school sanctions
- 40% completed the program because the information was interesting and helpful

The most commonly used substances were marijuana (64%), tobacco (62%), and alcohol (49%), and 28% of participants used at least two substances. Additional analysis showed no significant differences in the types and amounts of substances used by gender or age.

Findings indicate that participants showed statistically significant changes in the desired direction in the following outcome measures:

- Increased understanding of the damaging effects alcohol and other drugs have on the body
- Increased awareness of personal risk related to alcohol and drug use
- Increased awareness of how personal values are negatively affected by use
- Increased motivation and intention to reduce use

Follow-up questionnaire data, while limited to 52 participants for the 90-day survey and 37 participants for the 180-day survey, indicated a reduction in use of all substances over each timeframe. A majority of participants who returned their follow-up information either did not use or decreased their use of tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, or other illicit drugs within the past 30 days.

Although many participants were reluctant to participate in the program at the beginning, by program end most were glad they did—and expressed moderate to high satisfaction with the content of the program and instructor.

The SIRP shows that participants are learning valuable information and skills to help them be informed of the choices that constitute high risk and to compare that risk in relationship to the things they value most. Participants were able to use the knowledge and skill to make choices that were both lower in risk and more in alignment with personal values. Follow-up data indicates promising outcomes with respect to participants reducing substance use over time.