Epi Influence Indicators - Summary

(7.15. discussions: recommendations & decisions)

Protective Factors & Indicators

Family Support and Connection *(Reviewers: Cristy Willer, June Sobocinski, Sarah Sledge & Becky Judd)*

Sub committee Recommendation: Use the NSCH 4 question composite as the primary indicator. Secondary indicator from YRBS. Because the NSCH is conducted every 4 years, until we can have a more frequent measuring tool, of these questions (ie. add questions to BRFSS) its recommended we have a consistent secondary measure, so we recommend using YRBS measure as well.

Discussion: The NSCH 4 question composite was the first choice. Given NSCH is conducted every 4 years, experts recommended a) adding questions to BRFSS b) include YRBS question related to "talking to parents at least weekly about school." The experts felt the parent's and child's view should be represented by two separate indicators, and be richer as a result.

Decision

- **Primary Indicator: Percentage of parents who are connected and involved in their children's lives** (ages 6-17) in the following ways;
  Composite of 4 questions (*needs a summarized indicator statement*) NSCH Alaska 2007-08 sample:
  1) They can share ideas or talk with them about things that matter
  2) Usually or always attend their events or activities
  3) Who have met all or most of their friends
  4) Eat a meal with all family members every day (*variable could be refined*)
- **Secondary Indicator: Percentage of students talk with their parents, at least weekly about school** YRBS 2009

Connection to School *(Reviewers: June, Sarah Sledge Cristy, Becky)*

Sub committee Recommendation: Use the SCCS composite of 6 questions on the Fairness Scale as the primary indicator for connection (see discussion below.) A secondary indicator should get at the concept of relationship connection. This could be achieved by using the YRBS question related to teachers care; it will be useful to have two data sources.

Discussion: The strongest indicator is a scale or composite of questions, rather than a single question. The SCCS analysts looked for the scale that had the strongest association to social emotional skills, school achievement, connectedness to school, etc. The scale of being respectful and fair has questions about relationships with the participant's teacher. If the interest is having a secondary indicator related to relationships/ connectedness, SCCS has a 6 question *Caring Adults* scale that explores relationships with other school staff in addition to teachers. The value of having two data sources is relevant to the selection process, so the group decided to use the single YRBS question as a secondary indicator.

Decision:

- **Primary Indicator: Percentage of students who attend a school they feel is respectful and fair.** SCCS 2009
- **Secondary Indicator: Percentage of students who believe their teachers really care about them and give them a lot of encouragement**. YRBS 2009

Positive Connection to *Other* Adults *(Reviewers: June, Sarah Sledge, Becky)*

Sub committee Recommendation: Keep the focus on two or more adults, outside of home; this allows youth to tap into adults in school, or in the community.

Discussion: Since the definition for the factor is plural, it was decided that the indicator should reflect 2 or more adults outside of the home (this includes school or community). Use YRBS question "how many adults would you feel comfortable seeking help from if you had an important question affecting your life?

Decision: P**rimary Indicator: Percentage of youth who have a positive connection with two or more adults outside of their home.** YRBS 2009

Engagement in Meaningful Activities *(Reviewers: Cristy June, Sarah, Becky)*

Sub committee Recommendation: Modify existing indicator, create a composite of two YRBS questions (95 & 96); a secondary indicator will relate to sports. If only one indicator is allowed, combine all three YRBS questions.

Discussion: Using the question on YRBS: students participating in one or more sports teams within the last year. Sports provide incentives to stay away from drugs and alcohol. If the experts were to only use one indicator, it was important to combine the four YRBS questions. When you combine questions, however, it may have too much data. It also may be difficult to combine, as timelines are different for each question: one of the questions asks about activities within the last year and then another question to include activities within the last few weeks.

Decision

- **Primary Indicator: Percentage of students that participate in one or more organized activities outside of school. Includes: clubs, lessons, volunteering, or helping activities one or more times per week.** [YRBS Questions,95, 96]
- **Secondary Indicator: Percentage of students who play on one or more sports teams in the past year.** [YRBS]

Social, Emotional and Employability Skills (*Reviewers: Cristy & Becky*)

Sub committee Recommendation: Use the current indicator, a composite of 15 questions from the SCCS survey.

Discussion: There are questions on the NCHS that explores parent's perception of children's socio-emotional skills. In the future we might want to explore that data set. Additionally there was some discussion regarding a secondary indicator related to feeling like they matter to people. Overall, it's better to go with an indicator that is a composite of questions. We can explore this more after the Advisory Council determines its priority areas. A question was raised about employability skills. Becky referenced the Department of Labor's frameworks & skills that employers say are needed; these are remarkably similar to the ones listed under SEL. Furthermore at the HS level, most teachers refer to the skills as employment skills almost exclusively. The recommended indicator relates more to skills and not as much to interpersonal matters. This is a composite of 15 questions from the survey. Some group members felt this indicator is too "narrow".

Decision

Primary Indicator: Percentage of students who feel they have "social, emotional & employability skills" [SCCS 2009]

Cultural Identity (*Reviewers: James Gallanos, Jody (UAA), Sarah Dewane, Jim Allen (UAF), and Christy Willer*)

Sub committee Recommendation: There is no recommendation at this time; this indicator continues to be in the developmental stages.

Discussion: There was no discussion regarding this indicator.

Decision: There was no decision or recommendation made.

Risk Factors & their Indicators

Experienced Family Violence or Child Abuse (neglect, physical, sexual abuse) *(Reviewers: Becky/Rhonda/Linda Chamberlin)*

Recommendation: Use the CUBS measure for mothers who report children have seen violence, etc. Use the OCS child abuse rate as it becomes available.

Discussion: What does an event (abuse or violence) on a 3 year old have on adolescents? Research has shown a significant link between children experiencing either abuse or violence and its effect on adolescents. A more inclusive indicator could be one from BRFSS that asks parents of children of all ages the same question, rather than children who are 3 years old: Have you ever experienced or seen violence or physical abuse, in person, in the home? Explored adding the CUBS question to BRFSS. Becky will meet with Linda again to discuss the possibility of incorporating more indicators suggested by Charles.

Decision

- **Primary Indicator: Percentage of mothers who report their child has (ever experienced), seen violence or physical abuse, in person.** CUBS 2008
- **Secondary Indicator: Substantiated rate of Alaska children (ages 0-17) abused or neglected per 1,000 children** OCS

Death by Suicide of a Family Member *(Reviewers: James Gallanos, Jody (UAA), Andrew Jessen & Deborah Hull-Jilly)*

Sub committee Recommendation: There is no recommendation at this time; this risk factor for adolescent substance use is being re-examined.

Discussion: Given the risk factor itself is being re-examined there was no discussion about an indicator.

Decision: *No recommendation made*

Availability of Alcohol and Other Drugs *(Reviewers: Marny, Natasha)*

Recommendation

Create an indicator based on the most common responses to the alcohol access question on YRBS. Use NAHSD indicator related to ease of obtaining marijuana. Consider other drugs as well.

Discussion

Looked as YRBS and NSDUH data. One of the items looked at previously was one of the students who looked at or were given drugs on school grounds. However, the experts felt it was more beneficial to evaluate how easy it was to access drugs. The experts also felt it was important to cover several drugs, not just one, such as alcohol, tobacco and marijuana. Becky and the group would like to see what the SPF SIG Priority areas are before narrowing down these indicators. After the August 2nd and 3rd meeting, the Influences group will revisit and refine these indicators.

Decision

Primary Indicator: Percentage of youth who got their alcohol from social sources (gave someone money to buy it or someone gave it to them). YRBS

Secondary Indicator: Percentage of youth reporting it is easy (very or fairly) to get marijuana. NSDUH

Community Norms and Laws Related to Alcohol and Drug Use *(Reviewers: Marny, would like others to assist)*

Recommendation: None at this time

Discussion: The challenge is that factor includes multiple components:

1) Policies and laws (including school policies and community laws)
2) Personal beliefs about harmfulness of substances
3) Norms or personal beliefs about use of substances by peers, acceptability among peers and perception of parent disapproval.

Becky and Marny identified some questions which related to the school district. The list of indicators doesn't include laws, but rather alcohol and drug use norms and perceptions. The indicator asks participants what parents and friends think of drug and alcohol use. It is challenging to prioritize one indicator over the other, as the collective list of indicators are all relevant. If Marny had to choose specifics it would be one indicator each for youth perception of alcohol and drugs.

Decision:
This indicator will remain in the developmental stage until more information is known regarding the priority areas selected by SPF/SIG Advisory Council. Additional subject matter experts are needed to help identify an appropriate indicator for this comprehensive risk factor.

Early Initiation of Substances *(Reviewers: Natasha & Becky)*

Sub Committee Recommendation
Combine the responses to YRBS questions addressing early initiation if there is a yes to one or more.

Discussion: Older indicator used alcohol only. However, youth use different substances depending on availability, social norms and other factors. Tobacco remains the "gateway drug" for many. Rather than only reviewing alcohol, the experts reviewed marijuana, alcohol and tobacco. The indicators will review the age of onset use.

Decision
Primary Indicator: Percentage of students that have used either tobacco, alcohol or marijuana before the age of 13. [YRBS]

Loss of Cultural Identity (*Reviewers: James Gallanos, Jody (UAA), Sarah Dewane, Jim Allen (UAF), and Christy Willer*)

Sub committee Recommendation: There is no recommendation at this time; this indicator continues to be in the developmental stages.

Discussion: There was no discussion regarding this indicator

Decision
There was no decision regarding this indicator, as no recommendation was made. This indicator will continue to be developed.

Protective Factors

The definition for each factor is derived from its research, citations noted on the back page.

Family Support & Connection - Family connectedness has several components. Connectedness refers to the feelings of warmth, love and caring children get from their parents. Children who feel support and connection report a high degree of closeness, feelings of being understood, loved, and wanted. A parental presence is related to connection; it refers to a parent being present during key times: before school, after school, dinner, bedtime and doing activities together. A "*positive parenting style"* involves high expectations, clear family rules, fair and consistent discipline practices and age appropriate supervision and monitoring of behavior, friends and whereabouts. The Add-Health study found this to be one of the strongest protective factors against all risk behaviors. 1,4,6,8,7,8,11,15, 21, 25

Connection to School - Students feel "connected" (attached or bonded) to their school based on their feelings about the people at school, both staff and other students. School connectedness is closely related to a caring positive school climate. School connectedness protects adolescents against many health risks, including smoking, alcohol, drug use, and early sexual initiation. Positive school climate and connectedness have been shown to contribute positively to academic achievement. < *Add sentence about the SCCS Fairness scale relationship to connectedness & other outcomes?*> 1,6,8,9,10,15,22 26

Positive Connection to *Other* Adults - This factor refers to the student's perception that they *receive* support and caring in relationships with adults, other than family members i.e. neighbors, coaches, teachers, mentors or ministers. As children grow, they become involved in an expanded network of significant relationships. This enlarged network includes many adults who can provide regular contact, mentoring, support, and guidance. 1,3,4,5,9,10,11,13a,14, 21,25

Engagement in Meaningful Activities - This factor refers to youth involvement in positive activities in the school or community; that have *meaning to them*. Since student interests and talents are varied, activities may involve volunteering, helping others, sports, music, art, or dance lessons; drama, church, cultural or other any other organized, supervised activity. This protective factor is associated with the reduction of several risk-taking behaviors (alcohol, tobacco or drug use, delinquency, anti-social behaviors, teen pregnancy, school suspensions or school dropout. Programs increase skills and positive development when youth are involved in all phases: planning, organizing, implementation and evaluation. 2,3,4,6,7,6,8,9,11,15, 25, 28, 27,29

Social, Emotional and Employability Skills - This refers to the abilities that equip young people to make positive choices, maintain healthy relationships and succeed in life; the skills include: communication, conflict resolution, empathy, resistance, problem solving/decision making and cultural competence. 3,4,5,8,9,11

Cultural Identity (Risk Factor: Loss of Cultural Identity**)** – This factor may be further refined, current definition - *see Risk Factors*

Risk Factors -

Experienced Child Abuse (neglect, physical, sexual) or other family violence - Research suggests that children or youth who have been physically abused or neglected are more likely than others to commit violent crimes and/or become pregnant. Exposure to high levels of marital and family discord or conflict also appears to increase risk, as does antisocial or delinquent behavior by siblings and peers. 1,6,11,17,20

Early Initiation of Substances - The earlier young people begin using drugs, committing crimes, engaging in violent activity, dropping out of school and becoming sexually active, the greater the likelihood that they will have problems with these behaviors later on. For example, research shows that young people who initiate drug use before the age of 15 are at twice the risk of having drug problems as those who wait until after the age of 19. 6,8,18

Availability of Alcohol and other Drugs - The more available alcohol and other drugs are in a community, the higher the risk that young people will use and abuse these substances. The perceived availability of drugs is also associated with greater risk of use. In schools where students believe drugs are more available, a higher rate of drug use occurs. 8,12,18

Family History of Suicide or Attempts – Risk Factor being reconsidered and defined. Youth who have a suicide among any family member in the past 12 months are at greater risk for attempting suicide. 1,7,11

Community Norms and Laws related to Alcohol and Drug Use - Community norms (the attitudes and policies a community holds about alcohol/drug use) are communicated in a variety of ways: through laws and written policies, informal social practices, and through the expectations parents and community members have of young people. (e.g. alcohol taxes, local option or drunk driving laws, perceptions of disapproval) 8,11,12,18

Loss of Cultural Identity (Protective Factor: Cultural Identity) - Alaska Native and American Indian people may face additional risks associated with alcohol and other drug use. The increased vulnerability may be due to marginalization, stigmatization, and loss or devaluation of language, culture, spiritual and traditional healing practices, and subsistence living. Another problem may be lack of access to culturally appropriate health care. Alaska Native and American Indian communities also experience higher levels of stress due to historical trauma and rapid cultural change. Other ethnic persons or groups may experience similar risk factors. 14,16,19,21

Citations for Risk and Protective Factors

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