

# Intervention: Role Play/Drama



“The treatment of one becomes the prevention of many.”

- Drug Story Theater

## Goals of a Drama:

- Help adolescents develop communication and resistance skills.
- Help adolescents develop the *confidence to utilize* refusal skills.

## Benefits of Using Role Play or Drama:

1. Can role play situations familiar to adolescents of all socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds.
2. Drama both engages and entertains the audience.
3. Role-playing activities enable adolescents to learn and practice social and decision-making skills.
4. Inexpensive and easy to employ.
5. The brief format of role play makes it possible to present subjects with numerous situations.
6. Relevant skills may be directly assessed.
7. Drama has been shown to be both educational and motivational.
8. Opens communication in a non-threatening way.
9. Impact goes beyond the audience and participants by stimulating discussion, therefore serving as a means of distributing information to the community.
10. Shown to motivate community members to get involved in prevention.

## Issues that can be addressed:

- Sensitive health care issues
- Relationships with peers
- Intimate partner relationships
- Family relationships and dysfunctional family structures
- Legal consequences of substance use
- Teenage pregnancy
- Gang involvement
- Where to go to get help

## Evidence-Based Programs:

### Under Pressure

**Goal:** Youth understand the pressures they face and learn to make responsible choices.

**Format:** A 30-minute live musical play using singing, dancing, and contemporary music focusing on the difficult choices made by the characters, who are challenged by school stresses, peer pressure, and failed family relationships. The play is followed by a 90-minute discussion and role playing allowing the students to engage in active participation rather than the traditional “teach and preach” format.

**Results:** Surveys show an increase in adolescent knowledge, in understanding of the choices they face, and in problem solving and social skills needed for making appropriate decisions regarding drug and alcohol abuse.

### Drug Story Theater

**Goal:** Youth help other youth understand the dangers of drugs and alcohol, as well as educate them on adolescent brain development.

**Format:** Adolescents in the early stages of recovery from drugs and alcohol are taught improvisation theater and psychodrama with which they then create their own show about the section of, addiction to and recovery from drugs and alcohol, weaving in educational pieces on the development of the adolescent brain and the effects substances can have on it.

**Results:** Pre-and post-show surveys showed that the show resulted in changes in student perceptions about the effects of drugs and alcohol on relationships and school performance. Additionally, a 30-day follow up survey showed a reduction in drug use.

### TUNNELS

**Goal:** Stimulate awareness, communication, and community activism in prevention.

**Format:** Neuroscience and drug abuse faculty, drug abuse counselors, recovering drug abusers, a minister, and other advocates from the community create a play about drug abuse.

**Results:** Pre-and post-show surveys showed people intended to become more involved in family and community prevention activities, indicating that the combination of emotion and information promote activism. In a 3-month follow up, all respondents reported that some part of the play was still memorable and that they had discussed all or part of the play with family and friends.

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