STUDENT WORK SHEET

Using Drugs: Who Becomes Addicted?

Anyone who uses drugs is at risk for becoming addicted. Genes, family and environment, age, and mental health all influence an individual's risk for using drugs and also for becoming addicted. Some factors make a person more vulnerable, while other factors have a protective effect. To find out more, study the factors below, and then answer the questions that follow.

RISK FACTORS

- Drug use at a young age
- Drug availability
- Genetic risk factors
- Mental illness, stress, or abuse
- Poor grades
- Certain personality traits, such as aggression or poor social skills
- Family or friends who use drugs
- Poor relationships with parents
- Peer pressure

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- Never using drugs; having a plan for saying no if offered drugs
- High self-control
- Undergoing treatment for mental and physical illnesses
- Academic achievement; goals that challenge the brain and/or body
- Close, supportive friends who don't use drugs
- High parental involvement, including good communication
- Involvement in school, religious, and/or community activities

Think It Through *(Write your answers on separate paper.)*

1. Select three risk factors and three protective factors from the list above. Then, for each factor (total of six), provide a specific, real-life example that shows how it contributes to risk or protection.
2. Which factors are teens able to control? Which factors do teens have limited or no control over?
3. What are some ways teens can work to manage the factors they have limited or no control over?
4. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the biggest risk is being around other teens who abuse drugs. Why do you think that would be particularly dangerous?