



Activity Guide (MS)

Date:	Materials: Presentation, activity sheet
Subject: Illicit fentanyl and opioid-use prevention	Notes:
Lesson: Risk factors and protective factors	

Objectives

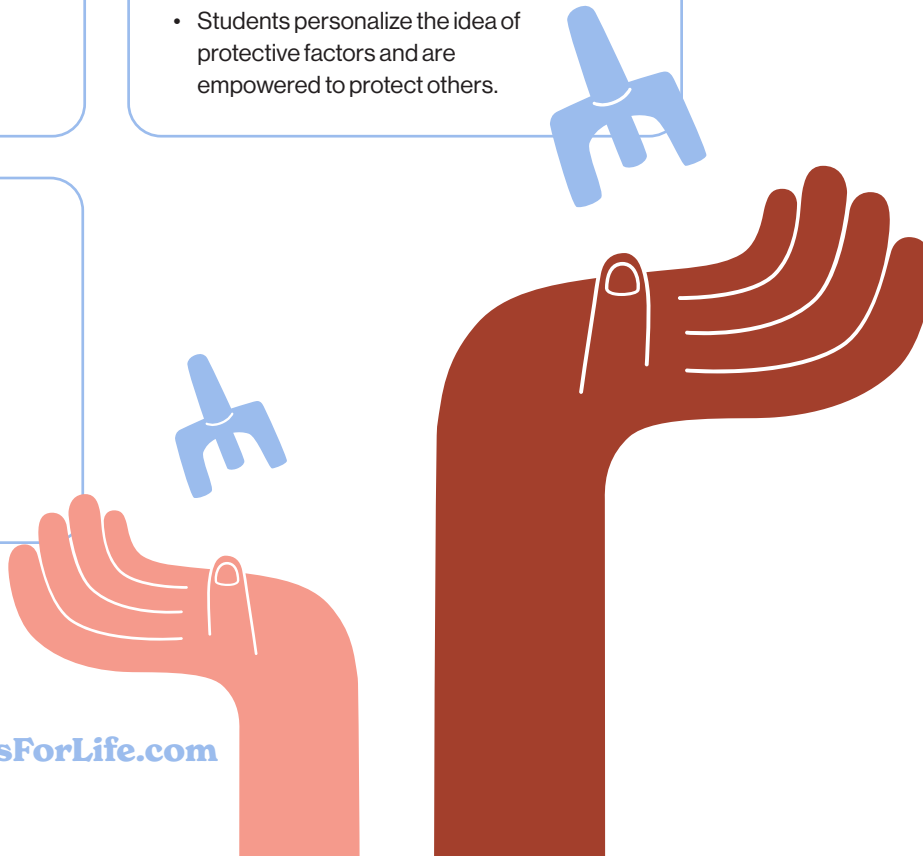
- Students work in small groups to generate lists of risk factors and corresponding protective factors to prevent opioid use, including the misuse of prescription pills.
- Students reflect on what protective factors exist in their lives and what they can do to help protect friends.

Goals

- Students recognize common risk factors of drug use, including the misuse of prescription pills.
- Students recognize protective factors to prevent drug use, including the misuse of prescription pills.
- Students personalize the idea of protective factors and are empowered to protect others.

Key vocabulary:

- fentanyl
- illicit
- opioid
- prevention
- protective factor
- risk factor



Warm-up — Context (5 min)

- Agree on a whole-class definition of “risk factor” using student input.
- Display the official definition: **A behavior or condition, such as smoking or high blood pressure, that increases the possibility of sickness or injury.**
- Students use the warm-up section on the activity sheet to brainstorm common risk factors for other outcomes:

Ask: What might put someone at risk of getting into a car accident?

Outcome – car accident // **Risk factors** – speeding, texting while driving, drunk driving, etc.

Ask: What might put someone at risk of getting a low score on a test?

Outcome – low score on a test // **Risk factors** – not studying, skipping class, test anxiety, etc.

Lesson — Part 1 — Risk Factors (10 min)

- In small groups of 3–4, students use the activity sheet to brainstorm the top three most common risk factors for why teenagers might experiment with drugs like prescription pills.
- As a whole class, hear from students about what they brainstormed in groups.
- Display the top three most common risk factors for teens to experiment with drugs like prescription pills:
 1. **mental health challenges**
 2. **physical pain**
 3. **social/peer pressure**

Lesson — Part 2 — Protective Factors (10 min)

- Say: “For every risk factor, there are also protective factors.”
- Display the official definition: **Skills, strengths, resources, supports, or coping strategies that help people deal with stressful events or lower the risk of sickness or injury.**
- In small groups of 3–4, students use the activity sheet to brainstorm all the protective factors they can think of to counteract the risk factors of **mental health challenges, physical pain, and social pressure.**
- Protective factors include **mental health resources, strong friendships, counseling, taking prescribed medication, going to see a doctor or school nurse, joining an activity, learning refusal skills, avoiding situations where drugs may be present, etc.**

Reflection (5 min)

- Students work on their own to respond to two questions (if time is short, ask students to pick one question to write down and one to think about later):
 1. What protective factors exist in my life to help keep me safe when it comes to experimenting with drugs like prescription pills? (Responses might fall into these categories: **family support, strong friendships, social norms, extracurricular activities, culture, faith practices, academic goals, future goals, etc.**)
 2. What can you do to help protect a friend who might be at risk of experimenting with drugs like prescription pills? (Responses might fall into these categories: **talk to them, listen to them, encourage them to get help, give them information, include them in activities, etc.**)

Sources: <https://drugfree.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Playbook-for-Parents-of-Teens-062821.pdf>

Find out more at [WaFriendsForLife.com](https://www.wafriendsforlife.com)



Activity (MS)

Warm-up

What do you think the phrase “risk factor” means?

Outcome: Car accident	Outcome: Low score on a test
Risk factors	Risk factors
1. Driving too fast/speeding	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Risk Factors

Fake prescription pills laced with fentanyl are the most common reason teenagers overdose on opioids.

There are three common risk factors to explain why young people might seek out pills in the first place. What do you think those risk factors might be?

Outcome: Experimenting with pills
Risk factors
1.
2.
3.

Protective Factors

What do you think the phrase “protective factor” means?

Risk factor:	Risk factor:	Risk factor:
Protective factors	Protective factors	Protective factors
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

Reflection

1. What protective factors exist in your life to help keep you safe from experimenting with drugs like prescription pills?

2. What can you do to help protect a friend who might be at risk of experimenting with prescription pills?

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