



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)