

Pre-Tree  
Activity

Section II

# A Pre-Tree Activity

A look at what's  
causing our young people  
to use or stay away from

*Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drugs ...*

and what's enabling them to be

*-Peace-  
Builders, Makers or Breakers.*

## IMPORTANT NOTE:

Please complete the following items  
with your entire peer leadership group  
**BEFORE**  
coming to the conference ...

**And be sure to bring**

1. The Pre-Tree Activity &
2. The 2 Questionnaires

**with you to the WTTI conference.**

Your students will be working further on these items while at WTTI.

*(We don't want you to feel lost at camp, so please be sure to follow this step.)*

**Thank You!**

# A Pre-Tree Activity

Dear Advisors:

Again, welcome to The Willow Tree Teen Institute or WTTI!

WTTI wants you and your students to be successful as you plan & implement positive prevention projects for your school and community. Remember, the **goal** is to:

1. *Decrease the factors that place your youth at risk for Violence or for Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drug (ATOD) use, and to ...*
2. *Enhance the factors that protect and bolster the resilience of vulnerable youth.*

In order to do this, you must first IDENTIFY what those factors are.

So ...

Before you come to WTTI,  
we suggest you convene your entire peer leadership  
group to begin the Action Planning process.

Why?

**For the Buy-In Factor:**

Involve your **whole team** right from the start to  
assure that your entire peer leadership group,  
including those who don't get to go to Camp,  
will buy into your prevention project.

**Begin by having everyone do the following  
Pre-Tree Activity.**

JOIN  
US!



So again, please be sure to complete this Pre-Tree Activity (and do it cook book style) to insure your success and to avoid being lost at camp. If you need any clarification or assistance, please call 973-682-8733.

We look forward to seeing you at WTTI on November 10th, 2005!

Sincerely,

Sue Nobleman, MA, CADC, CPS  
Executive Director

# PRE-TREE ACTIVITY

## THE ROOT ISSUE

*We will identify the factors that exist that ...*

1. **Place our young people at risk** for violence and for alcohol, tobacco and/or other drug use, and
2. **Protect our young people** from getting involved with violence and/or alcohol, tobacco & other drug use.

**MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED:** This form, a pencil or pen ... and a snack would be nice.

## The Seed of An Idea

- Beginning Your Action Plan -

Welcome to the  
WTTI Action Planning Process  
to prevent  
Violence, plus Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use by Teens.

The purpose of the Action Planning Process is to develop a **prevention program** to make a positive difference in your school or community.

*Ask for a student volunteer to read the following out loud:*

Willow Tree suggests we use the following

### GROUP RULES

to help us get along and to get things done:

1. Everyone gets a chance to talk.
2. Only one person will talk at a time.
3. No one has to talk -- we have the right to pass -- but we do encourage everyone to participate.
4. Everyone agrees to listen.
5. There will be NO "put downs" of self or others. The penalty for every put down given is to give two sincere and honest put-ups. When we give "put-ups", we say something really nice to the person we put down. *Remember, the nicest put-up of all is not to put anyone down in the first place!*

(Ask the group, "Do we want to add any more items to this list?" If yes, list them here.)

6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

Have another student read the following on the next page.

What's one positive or helpful quality that each of us can bring to our action group or team?

"It's important to recognize that we all have personal strengths and skills which help us to accomplish our goals. We are all capable people. Let's think of some of our personal strengths (or positive qualities) and think of how they can be put into action (or used as skills) to make our group perform better."

PRE-TREE ACTIVITY

Instructions:

- 1. Have someone record the following responses in the space provided below.
2. Have group members take a moment to think about their positive qualities. Give examples.
3. The advisor will be first to share a positive quality, followed by group members. Write responses on the chart below. Chart continues on next page.
4. Refer back to this list later when it comes time to assign jobs in your Action Plan.

We are Great ...

Because we have the following Helpful Qualities or Skills:



NAME:

POSITIVE QUALITY DESCRIBED:

Susie Smith (For Example:)

Artistic ... Good at making posters.

Multiple horizontal lines for writing responses.



## Introduction to Risk & Protective Factors - Background for Advisors Only

- Research in the substance use prevention field has determined that **the more risk factors** a youth experiences, **the more likely s/he will experience substance abuse and related problems** in adolescence or young adulthood.
- Researchers have also found that **the more risk factors in a child's life can be reduced, the less vulnerability** that child will have to subsequent health and social problems (Hawkins, Catalano & Miller, 1992).
- However, research has also demonstrated that exposure to even a significant number of risk factors in a child's life does not necessarily mean that substance use or other problem behaviors will inevitably follow. Many children and youth growing up in presumably high-risk families and environments emerge relatively free of problems.
- The reason for this, according to many researchers, is the presence of protective factors in these young people's lives. **Protective Factors balance and buffer Risk Factors** (Hawkins et al., 1992). Taken together, this information enhances our understanding of how and why youth initiate substance use as well as **provides direction for preventing, decreasing or eliminating use.**



### Risk & Protective Factors A Summary

*Healthy = Protective Factors. Unhealthy = Risk Factors.*

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| • Individual | Biological & psychological temperaments, attitudes, values, knowledge, skills, & behaviors.<br><br><i>Are the above healthy or unhealthy? If healthy, they're protective factors.<br/>If unhealthy, they're to be seen as risk factors.</i><br><br>Basic human needs including the need to belong, be included, feel valued & cared for.<br><br><i>If the above needs are fulfilled in a healthy manner, they contribute as protective factors.<br/>If they are not, they must be seen as risk factors.</i> |
| • Peers      | What <b>norms/beliefs</b> does the peer group hold? What <b>activities</b> are they involved in? <i>Healthy or High Risk? If healthy = Protective Factors. If not = Risk Factors.</i>   |
| • Family     | Function, management and bonding issues. <i>Are these healthy or unhealthy?</i>   |
| • School     | Bonding, climate, policy, performance. <i>Are these healthy or unhealthy?</i>   |
| • Community  | Bonding, norms, resources, policies & sanctions. <i>Are these healthy or unhealthy?</i>   |

For more in-depth information about Risk & Protective Factors, see pages 19 - 22.

Willow Tree  
Pre - Tree  
Questionnaires

**What are our Risk & Protective Factors?**

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**Instructions:**

Your first task or job is to identify the  
**RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS**  
that exist in the following:

1. Individuals
  2. School
  3. Family
  4. Community
- **Risk Factors** are the things that can increase the likelihood of young people using alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.
  - **NOTE:** Not everyone exposed to risk factors develop problems. That can be attributed to having a number of protective factors in place.
  - **Protective Factors** essentially detoxify or cancel out existing risk factors.

*To begin, turn to next page ...*



# Pre - Tree Questionnaire 1

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## What Protective Factors need to be strengthened?

Be sure to work as a group.

According to researchers Hawkins et al, **Protective Factors** are the characteristics that decrease the likelihood of youngsters getting involved in high risk behaviors such as drinking, smoking, drugging, early sexual behavior & bullying. Moreover, youth possessing a large number of protective factors tend to do very well in life.

**INDIVIDUALS** Please highlight the following **Individual Protective Factors** that need strengthening.

- Ability to set goals
- Good sense of humor
- Ability to develop healthy friendships
- Strong sense of future opportunities
- Strong social skills such as getting along with others (adults & peers)
- Belief in one's self
- Good health, including being alcohol & drug free.
- A willingness and desire to learn
- Easy going and flexible
- Autonomy: Personal independence & capacity to make moral decisions & act on them

**COMMUNITY** Please highlight the following **Community Protective Factors** that need strengthening.

Healthy communities possess the following characteristics.

- Clear expectations for youth & adults regarding appropriate behaviors.
- Clear rules and regulations.
- People of all ages feel part of the community (Intergenerational ties).
- Positive and healthy role models.
- Resources are available to assist individuals families and schools

**FAMILY** Please highlight the following **Family Protective Factors** that need strengthening.

Healthy families possess the following characteristics.

- Consistent rituals, routines and traditions (For example, eating dinner as a family on a regular basis)
- Clear expectations for appropriate behavior within the family
- Clear rules and regulations
- Significant relationship and positive communication with parent(s) or

**SCHOOL** Please highlight the following **School Protective Factors** that need strengthening.

Healthy schools possess the following characteristics.

- Clear rules and regulations.
- Positive and healthy role models.
- Personnel that believe all students are capable of performing well.
- Staff that guides students in becoming socially skilled.
- Personnel that encourages positive communication with students.
- A climate that promotes positive attitudes, beliefs & behaviors.

# Pre - Tree Questionnaire 2

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## What Risk Factors need to be resolved?

Be sure to work as a group.

According to research, **Risk Factors** are the issues that increase the likelihood of youngsters getting involved in high risk behaviors such as drinking, smoking, drugging, early sexual behavior & bullying. These risk factors are “housed” within the individual, the school, the community & the family. What follows are a list of the identified risk factors. Please decide which ones are true for you.

### **INDIVIDUALS** Please highlight the following Individual Risk Factors that need to be resolved.

- Health problems.
- Physical, mental & learning disabilities.
- Favorable attitudes toward alcohol and drug use.
- Early first use of alcohol &/or drugs.
- Youth more influenced by and dependent on peers than parents.
- Disruptive, inconsiderate, rebellious, mean & highly selfish adolescents.
- Isolated youth ... a.k.a. “loners.”
- Youth grieving the loss of a loved one, friend, pet or a significant peer relationship.
- Youth involved with the criminal justice

### **SCHOOL** Please highlight the following School Risk Factors that need to be resolved.

- Lack of clear school policy regarding alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
- School transitions: Our school district doesn't prepare students for changing grades or schools.
- Poor academic performance & low grades.
- Youth lack commitment to academics and

### **FAMILY** Please highlight the following Family Risk Factors that need to be resolved.

- Lack of parental supervision and/or difficulty in setting standards & limits for behavior.
- Families lack clear rules and consequences regarding alcohol and other drug use.
- Parents tolerate use of alcohol, tobacco and/or drugs by youth.
- Alcoholism and/or drug abuse in the family.

### **COMMUNITY** Please highlight the following Community Risk Factors that need to be resolved.

- Lack of economic & social resources.
- Residents feel little sense of “connection” to community.
- Community tolerates inappropriate use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
- Laws regarding inappropriate use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs are not enforced.
- Alcohol, tobacco &/or drugs are easy to get.

Review your Protective Factor Questionnaire.  
List the Protective Factors you'd like to improve here.

	Rank Order <i>From most to least important</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

Rank Order the Above Items from the ones you'd like to work on first to last (1-6).

Review your Risk Factor Questionnaire.  
List the Risk Factors you'd like to improve here.

	Rank Order <i>From most to least important</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

Rank Order the Above Items from the ones you'd like to work on first to last (1-6).

## **VERY IMPORTANT:**

Please be sure to

*Bring these forms:*

1. Your "We are Great" List
2. The 2 Questionnaires
3. Your Rank Ordered Items

*with you to WTTI  
on November 10th.*

Now ...

Give yourselves a  
pat on the back for a job well done.

**"Gooooood Job!**

**G o o d, g o o d, g o o d j o b! "**

**More information than you ever  
wanted to know about**

**Risk**  
**&**  
**Protective**  
**Factors**

**The question before us is:**  
**Which risk & protective factors**  
**do young people have the power to influence/improve?**

“- ” Means we can't change this. “+ ” Means we can influence or improve this.

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**Individuals**

- Ones' biology and psychological make up. *It's very difficult to change people's biology and their psychological make up. So we won't be focusing in this area.*
  - + We can influence the following: *We begin by ...*
    - **Attitudes** *Improving our own attitudes. We can choose to be positive or negative.*
    - **Values** *Taking a look at what we value & asking ourselves if we're making decisions that support those values*
    - **Knowledge** *Educating ourselves and others in prevention issues*
    - **Skills** *Learning, practicing, teaching & utilizing our skills (for example, following the steps outlined in the Refusal Skills process when confronted with doing something we know is hurtful and wrong);*
    - **Behavior** *Improving our behaviors by intentionally seeking to take the next right step.*
- 

**Peers (friends)**

+ **Norms & Beliefs**

Through education, we can influence the beliefs (norms) our peers hold. *Example:*

*If your friends believe that EVERYONE drinks, you can tell them that's not true. You don't drink ... and there are others just like you. This is important because most people are afraid to be different from the majority. They need to know that in actuality, most young teens don't drink. You can do a mass poster campaign to let people know that if they don't drink, they're not alone. In fact, they're part of the majority.*

+ **Activities**

We can make a positive difference with our peers (kids our own age) by:

- a. Remaining alcohol and drug free, and
- b. Reaching out to others, inviting them to hang out with us.

*Friends who hang out with people who are involved in high-risk activities almost always join in. This often leads to trouble. Kids who hang out with people who are involved in healthy activities will usually join in, too, thereby staying out of trouble.*

We can also make a difference by:

- a. Holding fun activities that are alcohol, tobacco and drug free.

*Specifically, you could hold a dance or form a coffee house that meets monthly where people perform (open mike style) and serve coffees, teas, lemonade, apple cider, and desserts. You can charge a small fee for the beverages and food so that you make a little bit of money while you're also giving people a cool place to hang out that's also drug-free.*

- b. Treating people kindly at these activities.

*Have a "no put-down" rule.*

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**The question before us continues to be:**  
**Which risk & protective factors**  
**do young people have the power to influence/improve?**

“- ” Means we can't change this. “+ ” Means we can influence or improve this.

- 
- Families
- + One way that you can help young people who are having problems with their families is to encourage them to speak with their Guidance or Student Assistance Counselor (SAC).
  - + Another way to help is to encourage young people to connect with surrogate parents and/or families if, for some reason, their own family is not available to them.
  - + To increase knowledge, you can hold parent education workshops.
  - + To increase your bonding level (*how close & safe you feel with one another*), you can hold parent-child or family events.

- 
- School
- + Bonding (Being involved in and feeling connected to your school)
    - We can make a positive difference in this area by:
      - a. Reaching out to peers who normally don't join clubs ... and specifically inviting them to become a member.
      - b. Inviting peers to join your Willow Tree club.
      - c. Starting a Principal's Board where student issues can be heard and where administration can share their thoughts, policies and feelings. Through this dialogue, a bond can be established and strengthened.
  - + Climate (This describes both the physical and emotional feeling of the school)
    - We can make a positive difference in the physical arena by:
      - a. Painting uplifting, spirit-encouraging murals to be hung in the hallways.
      - b. Decorating our homeroom doors (inside & out)
      - c. If there are any areas filled with litter, we can hold "clean-up parties" monthly.
    - We can make a positive difference in the emotional arena by:
      - d. Instituting a school-wide "No Put-Downs Rule" that applies to students, teachers, administrators, the nurse, cafeteria workers, janitors, school bus drivers, crossing guards.
      - e. Making daily announcements over the PA system using positive, encouraging quotes.
      - f. Seeking to catch people in the act of doing something good or nice ... and praising them for doing so.

*School Issues Continued Next Page*

**The question before us continues to be:**  
**Which risk & protective factors**  
**do young people have the power to influence/improve?**

“- ” Means we can't change this. “+ ” Means we can influence or improve this.

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School (continued) + Policy re: alcohol and drug use

We can make a positive difference by:

- a. Checking to see that one is in place. Ask, “Do we have a policy regarding alcohol and drug use by students?” If you do, ask to see it.
- b. Looking to see if it includes both consequences for use and a helping hand as well. *If it does, great. If it doesn't ...*
- c. Asking if a faculty-student team can be formed to review the policy and to make changes where needed.
- d. Considering whether or not it is evenly enforced. Ask yourselves: *Are there times when it is enforced and times it isn't? If yes, ask why. Is this fair?*
- e. Publicizing what the policy says to make sure your fellow students know what the consequences are for use.

Performance (getting good grades and behaving well)

+ We can make a positive difference by:

- a. Studying and asking for academic help when we need it.
- b. Serving as academic tutors.
- c. Acting as role-models for good behavior.

- Our ability to influence others regarding school performance is limited by their level of cooperation.

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Community + Bonding (Being involved in and feeling connected to your community)

We can make a positive difference in this area by:

- a. Having Willow Tree students take turns attending meetings of your town's Municipal Alliance on Alcohol and Drug Abuse.
- b. Inviting community members to an evening meeting to tell them about your Willow Tree Club, thanking them for their past support and inviting them to partner with you on activities.

+ Norms & Beliefs

Through education, media and Public Service Announcements (PSAs), we can influence the beliefs (norms) our community holds. For example:

- a. Posters: See next page

**Community Issues Continued Next Page**

**The question before us continues to be:**  
**Which risk & protective factors**  
**do young people have the power to influence/improve?**

“- ” Means we can't change this. “+ ” Means we can influence or improve this.

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Community

+ Norms & Beliefs Continued ...

a. To change norms, place posters around town listing how important it is for:

- (1) Parents to set a clear “No Use” policy in their homes ... *This way you can always use your parents as a reason why you won't drink, smoke or drug. “They'd kill me if they found out I drank — and they always find out somehow!”*
- (2) Adults not to buy alcohol or cigarettes for kids. Write on your poster: “You're not doing us a favor ... even if we ask you to do this. Be adult enough to say, “Sorry, Kid.”
- (3) Parents to supervise their kids parties to make sure it remains an alcohol, tobacco and drug-free environment.

b. Newspapers and Newsletters: To change norms, write & submit articles for publication about the 3 issues listed above.

c. PSAs: These are 10, 30 and 60 second “sound bites” or commercials written to be aired over your local radio or TV stations. Again, to change norms, deal with the 3 issues listed above.

- **Resources:** *It's difficult for students to provide resources. However,*

+ **Resources:** Students can:

- a. Research what services are already available in the community, and
- b. Publicize these so people know they exist. For example: If you know that there is an ala-teen meeting in your town, post this information on a bulletin board in your school and in a central place in your community.

+ **Policies:**

Here's one way a Willow Tree group impacted a town ordinance

This group decided that too many of their peers were smoking cigarettes. As a result, they went to their town council asking for cigarette vending machines to be outlawed in their town. The council resisted, saying that they were not in places that teens had access. In response, the students went to each of the vending machines and purchased cigarettes. They returned to the council with the evidence that young people could, in reality, access the vending machines. As a result, the council voted to outlaw the vending machines.

Good Job! You can do this sort of thing, too.

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**NOTES:**

**WTTI**

is a program of

**The Willow Tree Center**

Member of the National Association of Teen Institutes (NATI) since 1986.

For more information, call 973-682-TREE (8733).