

A Review of Alternative Activities and Alternative Programs in Youth-Oriented Prevention

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Abstract

Alternatives include activities, programs, and events that are free of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs and for which participation is voluntary. These activities are likely to include one or more of five elements such as the use of free time that might otherwise be idle or unstructured and the involvement in community service or prosocial activities. Most alternatives programs are developed and implemented because they sound like a good idea, not because sound research support exists for a particular approach or even for alternatives in general. Any specific alternatives program, by itself, is unlikely to produce a measurable change in outcomes. Therefore, alternatives should sometimes be regarded as part of the network of resources that any caring community provides, regardless of the possibility of documenting reductions in participants' alcohol or drug use. However, the available data indicate that more intensive programs seem to be the most effective, programs should include skill-building components, and alternatives should be one part of a comprehensive prevention plan. Additional recommendations, appended program

descriptions and addresses of programs cited, list of other publications, and 74 references

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