The random fear...

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What is perceived risk?

-Perceived risk is how someone personally judges the chance of a bad outcome, especially when engaging in risky behavior.

According to the National Library of Medicine:

- The percentage of adolescents aged 12 to 17 who perceived risk from having five or more alcoholic drinks once or twice a week increased from 38.2 percent in 2002 to 40.7 percent in 2011; during the same period, the rate of binge alcohol use among adolescents decreased from 10.7 to 7.4 percent
- Between 2007 and 2011, the percentage of adolescents who perceived great risk from smoking marijuana once or twice a week decreased from 54.6 to 44.8 percent, and the rate of past month marijuana use among adolescents increased from 6.7 to 7.9 percent

How can we utilize the idea of perceived risk to our advantage?

Often times, perceived risk strategies are implemented in our daily lives without us even realizing it. For example:

-"smile, you're on camera" signs in stores
-airport security checkpoints
-red light/speedometer cameras

How do we use this strategy in our schools?

Our solution is to implement randomized drug testing during school hours to test for presence of drugs or alcohol.

-This involves random students quietly receiving a slip to the office, where they would be sent to get drug tested

-The drug tests would include urine testing, also known as “urinalysis”, which detects alcohol, marijuana,and other drugs within the system

-According to nih.gov, urine testing is the only testing method approved for federally mandated testing, and is the least invasive form of drug testing.

How do we deal with positive tests?

-if a student receives a positive drug test, the outcome would not be a fear based punishment such as suspension/expulsion.

-instead, the school would offer helpful prevention resources including group and individual meetings with substance abuse counselors to establish why the student is using substances

Are randomized drug tests constitutional?

“The Supreme Court held that although the tests were searches under the Fourth Amendment, they were reasonable in light of the schools' interest in preventing teenage drug use.”

Drug testing students randomly increases the perceived risk of drugs by conditioning them to the possibility of detection at anytime.

Students are likely to perceive the potential negative outcomes of failing a drug test (loss of privileges, disciplinary actions, damage to reputation) as more significant than any perceived benefits of drug use.

According to an article from the British Journal of General Practice
“Drug testing gives children a legitimate reason to say no to drugs when they are offered them. Last year that could have helped the 62% of 15-year olds who said they were offered drugs in the US”

How does this solution successfully nudge students away from substance use?

Random drug testing serves as a nudge, subtly encouraging students to make healthier choices. Knowing they could be tested creates an environment where the default behavior (not using drugs) is the easier short term solution and safer long term solution. This aligns with the idea of nudging students towards positive behaviors without coercion.

Thank you for listening and considering our solution!