

Alcohol and Drug Abuse among Youth



DR MUTHONI MATHAI
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY UNIVERSITY
OF NAIROBI;
HEALTH DAY:
VISA OSHWAL COMMUNITY
3RD OCT 2014

Objectives



- Pathways to drug abuse and addiction
- Risk factors and protective factors
- Adolescence as a critical stage in the life span
- Role of the family, school and community in prevention

Introduction



- The use of alcohol and different mind altering substances commonly referred to as drugs is universal
- legally available as Alcohol, tobacco (Nicotine), khat (miraa)etc
- Illegal- like cannabis, cocaine, heroine etc
- Pharmaceutical products, like sedatives, amphetamines barbiturates etc.

Human Life Stages



Critical stages in life stages



Child
0 to 11yrs

Primary
School

Teenage
12 to 18yrs

High
School

Young
Adult
19 to 25yrs

College
/trainin
g

Pathways to abuse and addiction



Individual
Biological,
personality traits,
learned behaviour

Drug Effect

**Alcohol
and drug
abuse**

Life situation
Exams, conflicts,
family stress

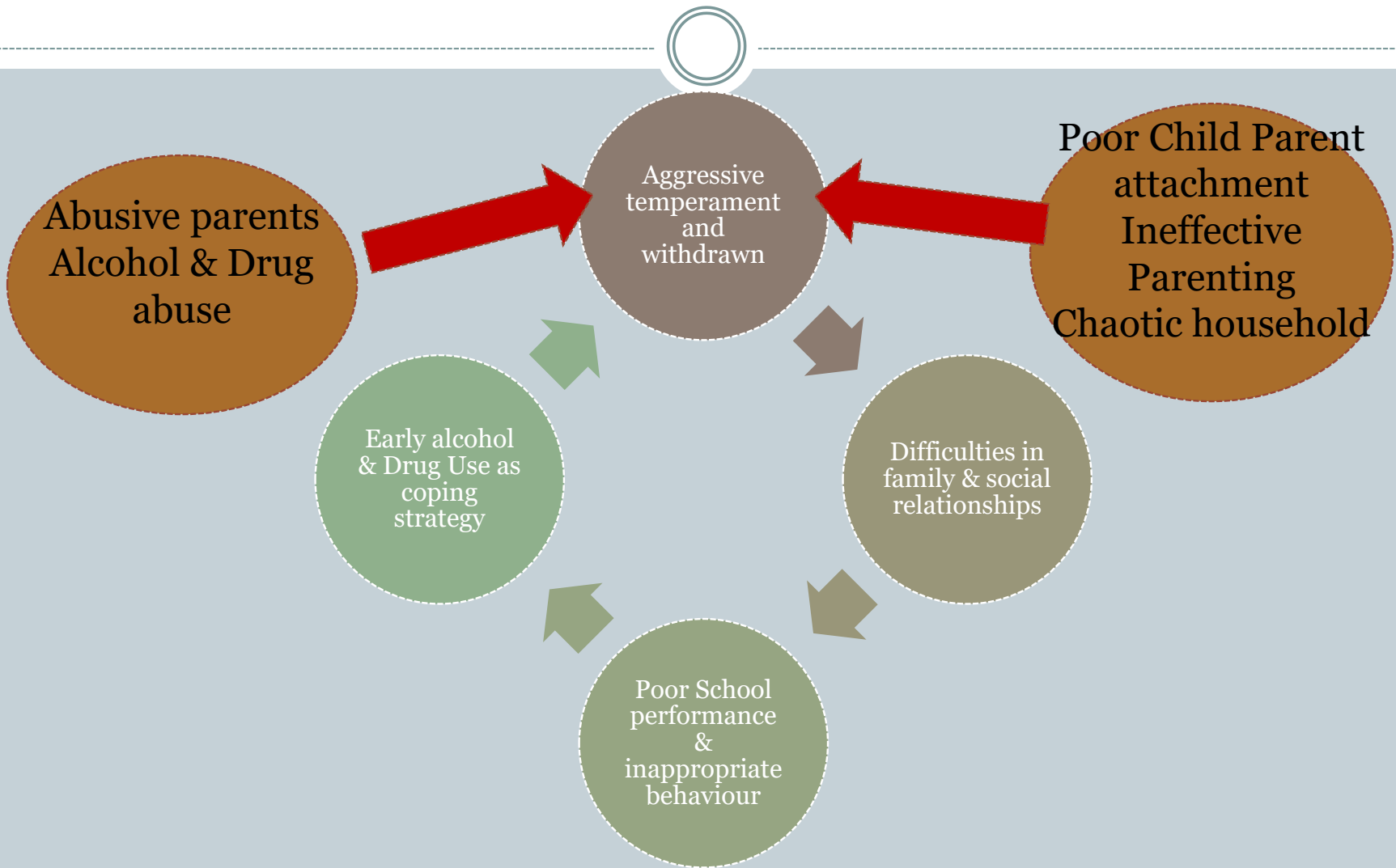
**Social
Environment**
Drug availability
Drug acceptance
Peer Pressure
Legal status

Risk Factors and protective factors

- **Risk Factors:** Factors associated with greater potential for drug abuse
- **Protective Factors:** Factors associated with reduced potential of drug use



Risk factors in early childhood



Prevention and Management



Increasing protective factors

Protective family

Strong Bonds between parents and children

Parenting skills

Parental Involvement

Supportive parents who recognize and meet the needs of child

Setting clear limits and consistent discipline

Adolescence



- Most Critical period in the development of drug Abuse
- Physical/biological changes
- Mood changes
- Change in cognitive- thinking process (more questioning)
- Identity formation- change of self-concept from child to adult- ‘Who am I’?
- ‘Adolescence crisis’, ‘generation gap’ (implying the underlying communication discord between parents and children).

Adolescence and peer groups

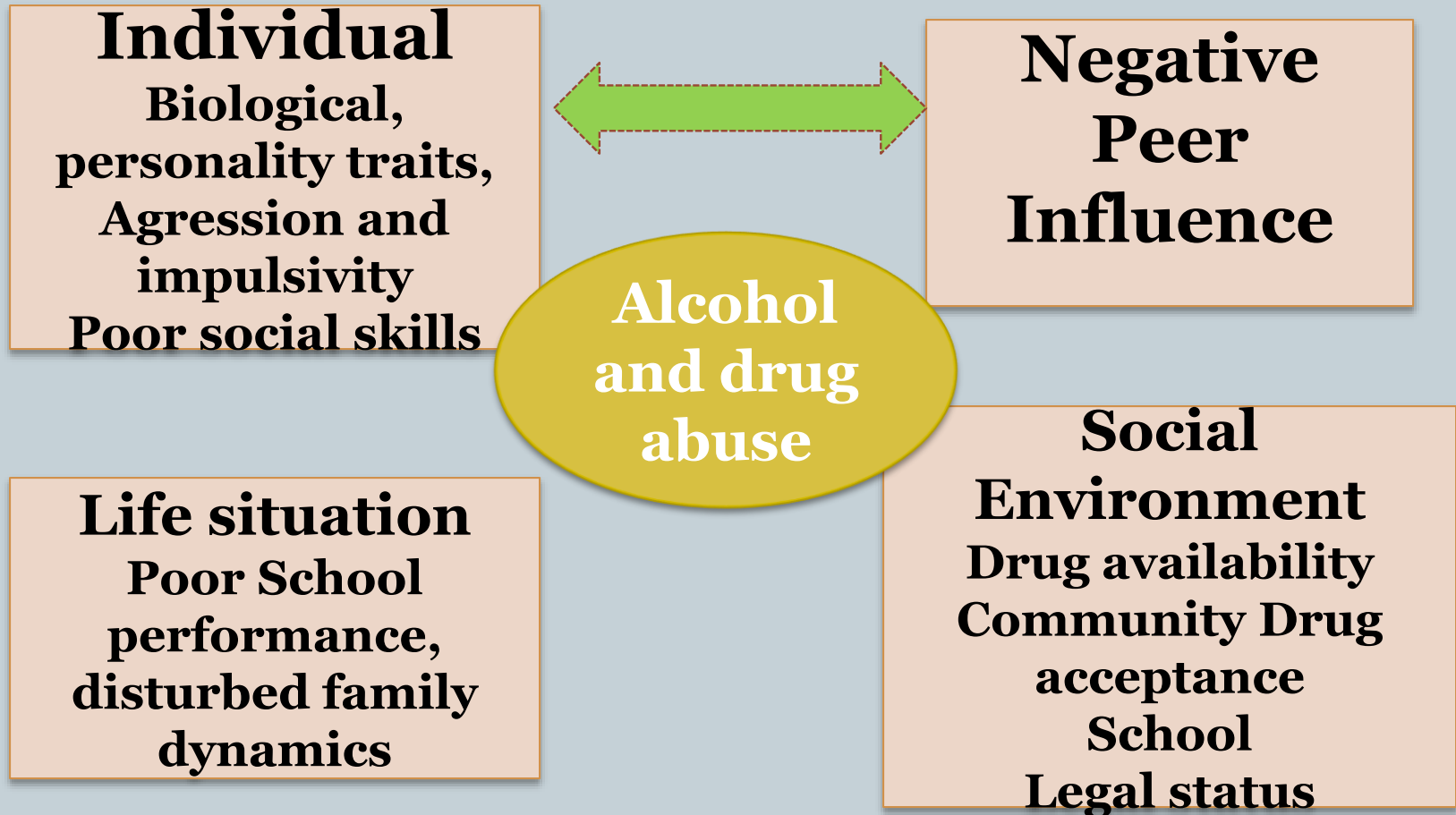


- The peer group functions as a kind of new ‘family’, a kind of half-way house.
- Identification in dress, grooming and behaviour.
- Stage for experimenting with ideas of self as adult
- Experimenting with cigarettes, alcohol and illicit drugs and sex.
- Gangs may be the gateway to substance abuse- conflicts with the law, school truancy and eventual poor performance in school



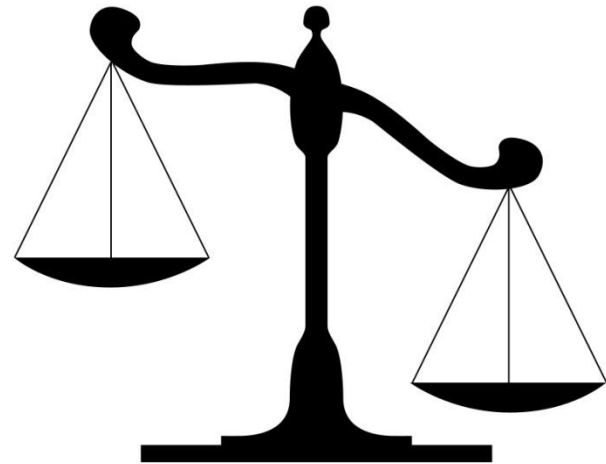
- The balance between family influence and peer influence is an important factor in the outcome of the process of adolescence.
- Decreasing parental involvement, poor family communication skills and poor parental discipline are some of the factors that increase peer influence. On the other hand parents can minimise peer influence through their positive acceptance of the process of separation. This includes praising the adolescent and talking positively of others in his group.

Risk factors in Adolescence



Preventive Programs

- The Goal of prevention- is to change the balance of Risk factors and protective factors so that protective factors outweigh Risk factors



Role of Family



Age appropriate monitoring of social behaviour:

- Establishing curfews
- Ensuring adult supervision of activities outside home
- Knowing the friends and their families
- Enforcing household rules

Role of family continued



- Giving Support to enhance school success
- Encouraging extracurricular activities and sporting activities
- Strengthening bonds with pro-social institutions like school and religious institutions
- Maintaining a clear stand on Drug abuse

Alert signals- Is my child using drugs?



- A deterioration in education performance
- Unusual behaviour change
- Mood changes
- Withdrawal from former social contacts
- Mixing with only known drug users and experimenters
- Presence of unknown substances in house

School programs



- Promoting an all round balanced education
- Academic performance as well as social skills
- Enhancing peer relationships
- Training self control
- Coping skills
- Promoting acceptable social behaviour
- Life skills training
- Alcohol and drug awareness training
- Drug refusal skills

Community programs



- Identify the specific drugs licit and illicit and other child and adolescents problems in the community
- Assess the magnitude of problem and Identify the sources of illicit drugs
- Identify the available resources- like existing programs, anti drug policies and supporting institutions
- Identify modifiable risk factors
- Develop short term and long term goals