

The City of St. John's

Risk and Protective Factors



ST. JOHN'S

Risk and Protective Factors

Risk factors encompass negative elements in the lives of individuals or within a community. They have the potential to increase the presence of crime, victimization, or the fear of crime in a community. Additionally, these factors may elevate the likelihood of individuals engaging in criminal behaviour or becoming victims themselves.

On the other hand, **protective factors** represent positive influences that enhance the quality of life for individuals and the safety of a community. They act as a counterbalance, decreasing the likelihood of individuals engaging in criminal activities or becoming victims. Strengthening existing protective factors empowers individuals and communities, equipping them to better mitigate the impact of risk factors.

Risk and protective factors exist at the individual, family, peer, school, community, and societal levels.

Individual Level

Risk Factors	Protective Factors
• Negative attitudes, values, or beliefs • Low self-esteem • Drug, alcohol, or solvent abuse. • History of violent victimization • Mental or physical illness • Attention deficits, hyperactivity, or learning disorders • History of early aggressive behavior • Poor behavioral control • Deficits in social cognitive or information-processing abilities • High emotional distress • History of treatment for emotional problems • Antisocial beliefs and attitudes. • Illegal gun ownership • Early and repeated anti-social behaviour	• Positive attitudes, values, or beliefs • Positive self-esteem • Problem-solving skills • Conflict resolution skills • Intolerant attitude toward deviance • Good mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional health • Highly developed social skills / competencies • Highly developed skills for realistic planning • Involvement in social activities • Strong sense of responsibility

Family Level

Risk Factors	Protective Factors
• Exposure to violence, neglect, and conflict in the family • Leaving institutional / government care (hospital, foster care, correctional facility, etc.) • Low emotional attachment to parents or caregivers • Poor monitoring and supervision of children • Low parental involvement. • Harsh, lax, or inconsistent disciplinary practices • Poor family functioning / family distress • Children of parents in conflict with the law • Parental substance abuse / addictions • Family disorganization, including broken homes • Family members in a gang • Lack of adult and parental role models • Pre-teen exposure to stress • Parents with violent attitudes • Siblings with anti-social behaviours	• Parental supervision • High parental education and income • Healthy prenatal and early childhood development • Good parenting skills • Parental involvement in children's education and activities • Supportive and nurturing parenting • Consistent and appropriate discipline • Ability to discuss problems with parents • Frequent shared activities with parents • Quality childcare • Consistent presence of parent during at least one of the following: when awakening, when arriving home from school, at evening mealtime, or when going to bed • Parental / family use of constructive strategies for coping with problems (provision of models of constructive coping) • Connectedness to family

Peer Level

Risk Factors	Protective Factors
• Social rejection by peers • Association with / high commitment to delinquent peers • Lack of positive role models • Lack of involvement in conventional activities • Involvement in gangs • Street socialization • Friends who use drugs or who are gang members • Desire for group rewards such as status, identity, self-esteem, companionship, and protection • Anti-social behaviour towards peers	• Positive peer influence • Social skills / competencies • Involvement in prosocial activities • Positive adult role models, coaches, mentors • Building positive relationships and patterns of interaction with mentors and pro-social peers • Membership in peer groups that do not condone antisocial behaviour • Interpersonal / prosocial skills



School Level

Risk Factors	Protective Factors
• Poor academic performance • Low commitment / attachment to school and school failure • Low literacy • Gang members in class • Negative labelling by teachers • Few teacher role models • Educational frustration • Learning difficulties • Bullying	• High academic achievement • High educational aspirations • Access to high-quality preschool • Parental involvement in children’s education and activities • Perceived parental expectations about school performance are high • High expectations from teachers to perform well • Schools that provide a safe environment • Exposure to school climates with the following characteristics: ◦ Intensive supervision ◦ Clear behavior rules ◦ Firm disciplinary methods. ◦ Engagement of parents and teachers



Community Level

Risk Factors	Protective Factors
• Socially disorganized neighborhoods • High concentration of poverty. • Lack of services (social, recreational, cultural, etc.) • High level of transiency • Low levels of community participation • High crime area • Neighbourhood youth in trouble • Presence of gangs • Availability or perceived access to drugs • Availability of firearms and weapons • Cultural norms supporting gang behaviour • Feeling unsafe in neighbourhood	• Availability of services (social, recreational, cultural, etc.) • Participation in traditional healing and cultural activities. • Sense of community belonging and cohesion • Participation and engagement in community organizations and events • Presence of social support networks • Creating positive social environments through community, family, and service organizations • Volunteering • Connectedness to adults outside the family



Societal Level

Risk Factors	Protective Factors
• Poverty • Unemployment / underemployment • Racism • Discrimination • Stigma • Oppression • Food insecurity • Homelessness • Extreme economic deprivation • Lack of access to quality education • Negative media messages	• Availability of economic resources • Access to health and social services • Strong social supports • Safe, stable housing • Steady employment • Promoting social and economic policies that support positive youth development • Access to medical care and mental health services • Access to quality education • Positive media messages

