The Lifestyle Risk Reduction Model

Why Does it Matter?

Alcohol and drug use and misuse costs the United States billions of dollars each year in lost work productivity, healthcare-related costs, and societal harm (e.g., crime). Problems occur across the lifespan and research shows that reducing substance use does not necessarily correspond with a reduction in problems. Despite this, models almost exclusively target adolescents and focus on reducing any use rather than high-risk use. The field needed a new model.

To address this gap, Ray Daugherty and Terry O'Bryan developed the Lifestyle Risk Reduction Model (LRR). A comprehensive, lifespan approach, the LRR describes important conditions and principles that will lead to change, as well as factors that influence individual choices. The LRR aims to increase abstinence across all age groups while simultaneously reducing problems associated with high-risk substance use (i.e., quantity and frequency of substance use statistically associated with problems) across all ages.

The LRR conditions begin with people identifying personal-risk for use-related problems and how their substance use choices can reduce or magnify these risks. Change is most likely to occur when people are able to estimate their biological risk and know what quantity and frequency choices are high-risk and low-risk. Additional factors that facilitate change include people having attitudes, risk perceptions, beliefs, values, and motivations that support making low-risk choices, perceive social support for those choices, and believe they have the necessary skills to make and maintain low-risk choices. The model also contains principles that are not articulated here; for more information click here.

It follows from these conditions that the first step in helping individuals make low-risk choices to avoid or reduce problems is to foster an accurate perception of their own risk for experiencing problems and what values they are risking by continuing to make high-risk choices. This then leads to other interventions including providing individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to make low-risk choices and avoid or reduce problems. **This complex interplay of biology, choices, and psychological and social factors, depicted in the figure below, is taught to participants:**
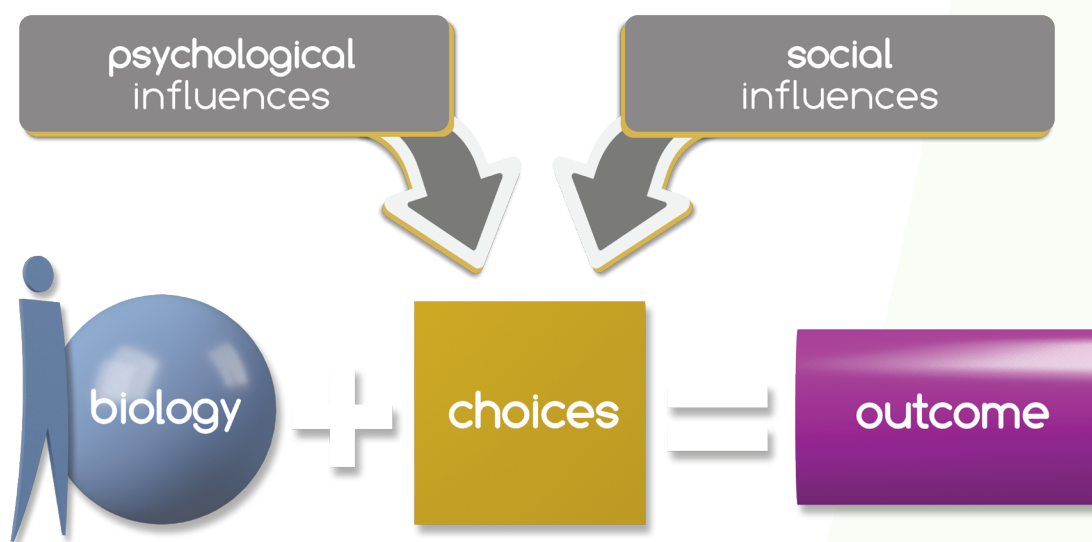
In short, the LRR model helps individuals realize that anyone making high-risk substance use choices can experience problems. By helping individuals assess their current level of risk and learn how to make the appropriate low-risk choices, problems across the lifespan are reduced or avoided. This model is the foundation for several risk reduction programs developed by Prevention Research Institute, Inc, that serve a variety of populations (e.g. DUI offenders, military personnel, students, and parents). For more information about these programs please visit: **www.primeforlife.org.**

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