

High Risk *

What does it mean to be “high risk”? What are the indicators that identify “high risk”?
What are the leading causes of “high risk”?

High risk factors endanger life's balance and harmony, and decreases an individual's potential for living fully his/her life expectancy. They threaten the individual's well-being as they decrease the individual's human potential from birth to death. When an individual is at risk, it affects not only the individual but the general welfare of the whole community.

High risk factors shorten life expectancy, threatens the safety and security of the individual as well as that of the individual's community, and the whole world. High risk factors diminish the individual's potential for giving positive, productive contributions towards making the world a better place for all humankind. High risk factors increase the need for health/medical care as well as for increasing the need for correctional facilities. They limit the individual's, as well as the community's growth, development and pursuit of attaining the greatest degree of life, freedom, and happiness for body, mind and spirit.

Indicators for Identifying a “High Risk” Person

- **Lacks motivation and interest – No purpose, No direction**
- **Consistently lacks a positive attitude**
- **Lacks appetite, continues to have poor diet and nutritional habits**
- **Demonstrates physical mutilations and self neglect**
- **Is self medicating through alcohol and drugs**
- **Lacks positive social and educational involvement, and/or achievement**
- **Lacks social or moral commitment**
- **Lacks moral/ethical development –and demonstrates immoral behaviors**
- **Lacks true values or fails to respect true values**
- **Preoccupation with sexual behaviors and/or engaged in multiple sexual relationships (heterosexual, homosexual, asexual)**
- **Lacks discipline and is easily influenced by peer pressure**
- **Consistently uses poor judgment – continuously repeats same mistakes**
- **Socially and Emotionally Underdeveloped – does not show maturity**
- **Lacks appropriate expression, language deficits, demonstrates poor communication skills**
- **Has a poor self concept**
- **Lacks self confidence and has poor self esteem**
- **Lacks respect for authority, law and order**
- **Has poor peer relationships – alienation**
- **Continually earning low or failing grades (unemployment, loss of job)**
- **Has constant mood swings that swings from high to low**
- **Increasing stages of depression**
- **Continually demonstrates poor body language and image**
- **Has poor physical appearance and personal hygiene**
- **Increasing secretive, suspicious, manipulative, and/or intimidating behaviors**
- **Has frequent and continual emotional outbursts – temper tantrums, crying bouts, pouting, fits or rage, threats, vandalism**
- **Lacks acknowledgement or recognition of an acceptable code of conduct (behavior)**
- **Lacks focus and concentration**
- **Continuous history of abnormal/unacceptable behaviors throughout educational and social development**
- **Increasing incidents with breaking local, state and federal laws (has a police record)**
- **Increasing self medicating behaviors through drugs and alcohol**
- **Refuses to take responsibility for self and loved ones**
- **No self identity or self awareness**
- **Continual dramatic events (accidents, failures, violence)**
- **Compulsive/Impulsive personality traits**
- **Demonstrates Narcisstic Personality Traits**
- **Demonstrates Addictive Personality Traits**
- **Demonstrates Persecution and Victimized Personality Traits**
- **Demonstrates Inferiority Complexes**
- **Lacks spiritual development or spiritual connectedness (to “higher power”)**
- **Lacks coping skills for dealing with stress and conflict**

Contributing Factors for Being A “High Risk” Person

- **Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse(s) – violation of trust**
- **Abandonment and loss through death by (parent(s), sibling(s), friend(s))**
- **No significant bonding (infant/mother/care-giver/friends/spouse)**
- **Personal neglect by a parent(s) or significant caregiver(s)**
- **Fluctuating foster care (care givers)**
- **Adoption**
- **Dysfunctional environments during development (no stability, consistency or continuity during the formative years of life)**
- **Discouraged or defeated learners – No acknowledgement or understanding (Be it through general, special or alternative education, or gifted and talented programs)**
- **Genetic Dysfunction (inheriting defective genetic coding from parents, ancestors)**
- **Pre-natal Dysfunction during gestation period (biological or environmental)**
- **Having physical, intellectual, emotional, mental, and/or social disabilities**
- **Cultural, racial, and/or sexual discrimination**
- **Social and economical disadvantages**
- **Multiple geographical changes during child and adolescent development (sporadic/unpredictable relocations)**
- **Divorce in immediate family and/or extended family relationships**
- **Parent(s), or significant others involved in multiple sexual relationships during a child’s formative years**
- **A void in quality adult interaction and supervision**
- **A void in appropriate role model interactions (parents, caregivers, teachers)**
- **A void in consistent and positive discipline**
- **Having a lack of personal or social boundaries**
- **A void in one’s personal and social safety, security, and stability**
- **No personal or social accountability (Never held accountable/responsible for behavior)**
- **Does not have a standard of measurement – principles (morals), beliefs, and values**
- **Lacks educational and vocational skills**
- **Has had catastrophic or tragic experience(s)**
- **Has no community involvement, no community acceptance, and/or can not take ownership of a community (No sense of belonging)**



Southwest Support Programs

The above information on “High Risk” is based upon the study: “What is the *Success of Learning* for American students?” It was a 30 year study by Holly Asher, MA SpEd during her experience as a teacher working with “high risk” students attending K-12 public/private/alternative schools in urban as well as rural settings in the west and southwestern United States of America.

The study on the *Success of Learning* focused on students who were either struggling with or failing the educational systems of American public/private and/or alternative schools during 1970 to 2007 who may have been living in the various geographical areas around Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Alaska, and California. She wanted to know why some students failed, dropped out, or could not succeed within the system of American education. How does a student’s success/failure within the educational system correlate with his/her future for living, long, healthy, happy and productive lives – The American Dream? A major outcome of this study found that the majority of students who succeeded in school and in work force were those who would overall score low on the “high risk” factors listed above.

Ms. Asher pursued this study in hopes of finding learning/teaching practices, techniques, and strategies which would diminish the influences of the “high risk” factors on students’ learning performances in American education systems; and which would increase their learning potential that would increase their possibilities for living a full life expectancy as healthy, productive, and happy individuals (The American Dream) while being positive resources for developing healthy and productive communities* for world peace and harmony.

During the manifestation of sjbes’ Ms. Asher had the opportunity to work with older clients (adults to seniors) who were living in retirement and/or in supported living communities. She was amazed to find that many of these elderly clients also exhibited those same indicators that identified students of “High Risk” in her study on the *Success of Learning*. High Risk factors are not limited to a person’s age or at certain stages of human development, they can occur at any time or place during a human’s life span.

The scope of her study may be narrow as it concentrated upon the human condition of “learning” as influenced by biological and environmental factors, but the ramifications of her findings reveal a much more universal message not only for the secular and temporal worlds, but for the spiritual as well. The effects of high risk on an individual’s well being, applies directly to the whole - the family, community, town/city, county, state, tribe/nation, world. What affects the well being of an individual, affects the well being of the whole world.