

## Life Skills

A proposal for the protection of our children and teenagers.

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# BLOG



## #LifeSkills

A proposal for the protection of our children and adolescents.



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We are in a generational transition when it comes to parenting. Many of our parents and grandparents used expressions like: "study, what you have in your head is the only thing that nobody can take away from you", highlighting the importance of studying and advancing as much as possible, because the success of a person was associated with the level of their knowledge. Research on lifestyle, health (in its broadest sense), the development of skills and abilities, among others, have concluded that childhood and adolescence are an important period in human development since it's here that we learn essential life skills, that will go on to protect us against addictions, diseases, violence, among other things.

This time we want to share with you a proposal developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) called "life skills", which has been incorporated in proposals for the promotion of health and citizenship skills, and also mainly in the prevention of the consumption of psychoactive substances, risky sexual behavior and violent behavior. This proposal allows addressing phenomena of social relevance that has been hard work in different scenarios, with the education sector being the one that has implemented the most activities based on this methodological proposal. However, it is very important that from home, parents, guardians and / or people responsible for the care of children and adolescents, can work on

developing these skills, so that there is coherence and unity in learning home-school, so that, as a society, parenting practices progressively become respectful, caring and loving, we abandon violent behaviors, and together as a family be able to develop life skills.

After all this, then what do we mean by life skills? The WHO defines them as "a set of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills (...) that are oriented toward personal and interpersonal actions and are necessary to transform the environment so that it is conducive to health "(WHO, 2003, p. 3)<sup>[1]</sup> In other words, the skills that allow people to meet the needs and demands of their environment in everyday life and generating well-being

## What are life skills?

While it is true that there are many skills that promote protective environments, The WHO defined only ten as major and, from them, are described in the literature scientific a series of proposals for children and adolescents to develop them in school environments or their community. These skills are<sup>[1]</sup><sup>[2]</sup>:

1. **Self-awareness:** The ability of each person to recognize their capabilities, qualities, defects and limitations. It is the perception of the self, identifying, recognizing and accepting reality itself in different contexts.
2. **Creative thinking:** Is understood as the ability to develop new ideas, innovate passionately and with originality.
3. **Critical thinking:** Refers to the ability to reason, analyze, evaluate information, knowledge or specific experience in order to provide concepts or generate solutions in situations that require it.
4. **Decision Making:** Refers to the analysis of a concrete situation and the choice of an option that would lead to expected results.
5. **Managing emotions and feelings:** Refers to the ability recognize, accept and express emotions and feelings and to understand the emotions of the rest.
6. **Managing stress:** This is identify the source of tensions, worries and stress, to face them and assume them in the best way possible.
7. **Empathy:** In its conception best known, is to take the place of the other, which translates into understanding the needs, emotions and feelings of another person.
8. **Interpersonal Relations:** Is to establish and maintain social relationship built on mutual respect, cordiality and tolerance for differences. It includes having the ability to end or end a relationship that is detrimental to the people involved.
9. **Troubleshooting and conflicts:** Is understood as the ability to understand and take adverse situations. This is not to avoid them but to manage them creatively and constructively.

**10. Assertive Communication:** Is the ability to express ideas, opinions, emotions, feelings in a respectful way that suits the context and the people around you.

These definitions are a brief reference to the complexity of each of these skills. However, it is essential to note that not all children and adolescents develop these skills to the same level; there is a factor of individual variability that cannot be forgotten, so it is not convenient to compare the performance of one of these skills between two or more people, for example, between pair of siblings. Likewise, keep in mind that the age and stage of growth of each child are fundamental for the development of these skills; please parents and carers, you must adjust your expectations on the behavior of a child or adolescent to the reality of their development, for example: a teenager will have the ability to decide whether or not they evade handing in a school assignment, but a child can decide whether to wear red or white pajamas.

However, in the later posts we will tell you more about this.

Now, many will wonder what is the relationship between life skills and child sexual abuse? This answer would lead us to the development of another blog, but now, we will share with you that there is a great relationship from prevention to coping and the psychological impact that the aggression generates in the victim. In this case, to prevent child sexual abuse, studies have been carried out in different parts of the world, with the aim of knowing the possible risk factors both in the victim as in their family environment; From there, it has been possible to conclude that children and adolescents most vulnerable are those who are introverted, isolated, with few friends, with few emotional ties at the family level, in addition to inadequate supervision by their parents, to mention a few aspects. Therefore, it is essential to work on the development of life skills as a mechanism to generate protective factors at the individual level which in turn, will have a favorable impact on the family and social environment.

On the other hand, the process of disclosure or making known what happened implies the use of many emotional and psychological resources, so the older the victim, the more they'll plan how they will tell about the abuse and to whom, as well as the consequences that this story can have, so talking about it is very difficult. So the children or adolescents who have more developed skills such as communication, decision-making decisions, managing emotions, will be more likely to seek help sooner. In the same sense, minors who are in families that fulfill their protective role will have a better adherence to the necessary comprehensive treatment.

Therefore, we reiterate the call to action: work from the family, the community and society to develop in our children and adolescents the necessary skills to protect them of the risks we encounter in our society, our work begins at home, recognize areas for improvement and work on them.

Learn about our Strategic Lines here

[1] Correa, R. M. Mental health and life skills. Life skills, [La salud mental y las habilidades para la vida. Habilidades para la vida],30 Sourced From: [https://www.funlam.edu.co/uploads/fondoeditorial/702\\_Habilidades\\_para\\_la\\_vida\\_Aproximaciones\\_conceptuales.pdf#page=31](https://www.funlam.edu.co/uploads/fondoeditorial/702_Habilidades_para_la_vida_Aproximaciones_conceptuales.pdf#page=31)

[2] Herklotz, D. J. R., & Quintal, M. J. D. L. (2019). Life skills: a proposal for youths. Journal of Clinical Studies and Psychological Research [Habilidades para la vida: una propuesta para jóvenes. Revista de Estudios Clínicos e Investigación Psicológica], 9(18), 59. Sourced from: <http://www.investigacionyposgrado.uadec.mx/site/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/el-envejecimiento-en-la-esfera-social.pdf#page=59>

[1] Cited Ruíz, V. M. (2014). Life Skills: a proposal for human formation. Educational Itinerary [Habilidades para la vida: una propuesta de formación humana.Itinerario educativo], 28(63), 61-89. Sourced on December 22, 2021 from: <https://doi.org/10.21500/01212753.1488>

[2] Source of information for the elaboration of this blog: <https://redcontraelabusosexual.org/habilidadespara-la-vida/>

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