High school students are vulnerable from using legal and illegal drugs. Functional coping strategies have been shown to be protective against alcohol and other drug use in young people exposed to stressful life events. The objective of this paper was to identify the relationship between coping strategies (functional and not functional) and substance abuse in high school students. Self-report cross-sectional data were obtained from non-probabilistic sample of 116 high school (users and non-users) students from México City, exposed to stressful life events. A battery of instruments were used: AUDIT; Fagerström; ASSIST and a life stress questionnaire for adolescents. Regression analysis results indicated that seeking parents’ social support OR(20.71; 95% IC[2.20, 195.04]); solving problem (11.51; 95% IC[1.31, 100.98]); offering help to others OR(30.91; 95% IC[1.32, 721.64]) and thinking about possible solutions to solving the problem OR(24.78; 95% IC[2.52, 243.52]) increased the probability of non-using drugs. The results highlight the importance of including these coping strategies school-based intervention programs for adolescents in risk of substance use and stressful life events.

Keywords
Adolescents, substance abuse, predictors, coping, and stress.