

GETTING TO 'Y'



Youth Bring Meaning to their Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data, 2017-18

During the 2017-2018 school year, 15 leadership teams of students and teachers from schools across Vermont participated in **Getting to 'Y': Youth Bring Meaning to Their Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)**. This student leadership initiative is a collaborative effort of UP for Learning and the Vermont Department of Health. Over the course of the year, these school teams attended training in data analysis and facilitation, analyzed their YRBS data*, led community dialogues, and made action plans to strengthen their school and community. Veteran GTY teams who had analyzed their 2015 YRBS data during the prior year used the year to move forward on their action plans and strengthen their youth-adult teams.

This newsletter highlights the work of these change-makers.
Congratulations to all of the school teams for a productive year!

*Unless otherwise noted, school teams used their respective 2015 supervisory union data, which was the most current YRBS data available during this school year.

Barre Schools & Spaulding High School

Barre, Vermont

On February 9, 2018, a diverse group of 12 seventh, eighth and ninth grade students from Barre City, Barre Town and Spaulding High School gathered to examine their high school's 2015 YRBS data for assets already present in the community, areas of concern, and to start the process of thinking about action steps to address their concerns. They then hosted a Community Dialogue event on March 27 at the school, which was attended by families, community members and health experts. The students presented information and facilitated deeper discussions of ways to help improve their areas of concern.



The Barre Schools team, above, and Spaulding team, left, at the GTY training days.



STRENGTHS



90%

of students think their parents think it is wrong

for them to smoke cigarettes.



45%

of current smokers tried to quit smoking

during the past 12 months.



37%

drank 4 or more glasses of water

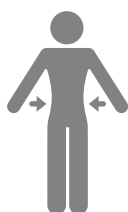
yesterday (statistically higher than the state average).

CONCERNS



9%

of students used marijuana before age 13.



44%

of students are trying to lose weight.



16%

of students never eat

breakfast (and only **30%** of students eat breakfast daily)

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS

and Accomplishments

- Get information out about marijuana in different ways.
- Provide shared experiences so younger kids can think for themselves.
- Discussion, hands on and information stations about marijuana for older students.

- Provide information on healthy body and weight during assemblies.
- Analyze morning bus and start times to address breakfast access.
- Survey students about breakfast habits.
- Talk to the school boards about schedules and breakfast access.

Canaan Middle & High School

Canaan, Vermont

As a “Year 2” school, Canaan’s combined middle/high school team built on the action plan developed during their earlier data analysis retreats and community dialogue event, where they got input from peers and over 50 members of their community on their 2015 YRBS strengths, concerns, root causes and action ideas. They focused this year on building assets and improving school climate, and worked with their school administration, staff and school board to achieve significant changes to address their concerns and build on existing strengths.



The Canaan team at the fall training.

STRENGTHS



100% of middle school students think it would be wrong for someone their age to smoke cigarettes, and **93%** think their parents would think it is wrong for them to drink alcohol.



93% of middle school and **71%** of high school students think it would be wrong for someone their age to smoke marijuana.



63% of high school students participated in 60 minutes of physical activity at least 3-6 days per week.

CONCERNS



14% of middle school students never participated in 60 minutes of physical activity in the past seven days.



35% of middle school students were bullied in the past 30 days, and **68%** were ever bullied.



37% of high school students have smoked a whole cigarette, **33%** have used electronic vapor products and **20%** have used smokeless tobacco products. **14%** of middle school students have tried cigarettes.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS and Accomplishments

- Study hall has been moved to the end of the day so all MS students can connect with their subject teachers.
- All Middle School students now get daily physical activity.
- Tobacco education K-8 has been implemented.
- A monthly “Canaan Can” award has been implemented to recognize middle and high school students who embody the school’s transferable skills.
- Participated in the Umatter suicide prevention training.
- Hosted a full-day Wellness Fair for all students.
- Promoted wellness with exam prep tips, goody bags, and personalized positive messages throughout the year.
- Working with administrators to host a weekly school-wide meeting.

Craftsbury Academy Middle School

Craftsbury, Vermont

A group of 6 Craftsbury seventh graders meet weekly to plan the Data Analysis Retreat, the Community Dialogue Event, and to process the information. Our Data Analysis Retreat was a hit with 16 students who participated in helping to identify the top 3 strengths and concerns. We then presented these findings to the community through our Community Dialogue Event, with the help of some of the students who joined us from the data analysis retreat. We are in the process of digesting some great ideas from the community night, and plan to continue to meet next year to identify and implement a couple of feasible solutions to our concerns.



Craftsbury team at the fall training.

STRENGTHS



93%
of 7th graders
think it would
be wrong for

someone their age to drink
alcohol.



60%
of middle school
students strongly
agree that they matter to people
in their community.



52%
of middle
school students
participated in
physical activity breaks outside
of P.E. courses every day in a
school week.

CONCERNS



26%
of middle school
students ever rode in
a car with someone who's been
drinking.



17%
of 8th grade
students have ever tried smoking,
even one or two puffs.



15%
of middle school
students have
made a suicide
plan.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS and Accomplishments

- Held successful Data Analysis Retreat.
- Hosted successful Community Dialogue Event and collaborated with Healthy Lamoille Valley who followed the discussion with a presentation on youth vaping and marijuana prevention.

- Compare our data to the new 2017 data when released to see which are still concerns.
- Develop concrete action steps during the 2018-2019 school year, using the input and offers of help from the community dialogue event.

Harwood Middle School

Moretown, Vermont

This spring, a group of 20 Harwood Middle School students analyzed the 2015 Washington West Supervisory Union Middle School YRBS data. Our trained student leaders facilitated the day with poise and a sense of humor. Many of them came away with a great appreciation for what teachers do and how difficult it can be to wrangle peers! Our group explored challenges and strengths in our community and school in an effort to better understand where we need to put our efforts.



Harwood Middle School team at the fall training.

STRENGTHS



64%

of students spent 1 hour or less watching TV on an average day.



54%

spent 1 hour or less per day playing video games or going online for something not related to school on an average school day.



81%

of students talk to parents about school at least once a day.

CONCERNS



12%

of 7th grade and **18%** of 8th grade students have ever seriously thought about suicide.



6%

of middle school students have had sexual intercourse and **7%** have had oral sex.



40%

of students agree that students help decide what's going on in school.



19%

of students ever drank alcohol other than a few sips.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS and Accomplishments

- Helped plan and execute a prevention activity during our Wellness Day.
- Hosted two parent/student education nights about substance use and prevention.
- Students participated in a survey about Getting to 'Y'.

- The team would like to explore creating a suicide hotline and providing more education for parents and students around this topic.
- The team would also like to focus their attention next year on sexual health and decreasing alcohol consumption.

Harwood High School

Moretown, Vermont

The high school team held their YRBS retreat in the spring with about 20 participants and 4 wonderful student leaders. They analyzed their 2015 WWSU high school data, because the 2017 data was not yet available, and decided to focus the year on alcohol and other drug prevention and emotional well being. The student leaders were hugely responsible for planning and executing an all-day Wellness Day for the middle and high school students on March 30, which addressed many of the concerns the students highlighted in our Getting to Y retreat.



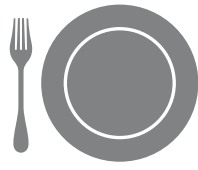
Harwood high school team at the fall training

STRENGTHS



28%

of students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times per day during the past 7 days, compared to 24% statewide.



48%

of students ate breakfast during the past 7 days, compared to 40% statewide.



8%

of students are obese (>95th BMI percentile), compared to 12% statewide.

CONCERNS



63% of high school students ever drank alcohol, **39%** have ever used electronic vapor products, and **30%** were offered, sold or given an illegal drug on school property during the past 12 months.



12%

of students made a suicide plan during the past 12 months.



Only **46%** of students feel like they matter to people in their community, compared to 50% statewide.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS and Accomplishments

→ Planned and hosted a full-day, all school Wellness Day, focused on ATOD issues and emotional well being.

→ Hosted two parent/student education nights about substance use and prevention.

→ Plan to work with 2017 data when it is available.

Lamoille Union Middle School

Hyde Park, Vermont

After attending the training in Montpelier, four students met weekly throughout the year. They hosted a data analysis retreat at the GMTCC in Hyde Park with twenty-five of their 7th and 8th grade peers to celebrate community assets and to determine what were the greatest strengths and concerns of the 2015 data. On May 15th, the core team hosted a Community Dialogue Night and presented to a room full of parents, teachers, administrators, school board members, students, and community agencies. Jordan, Emma, Sasha, and Caleb shared the process of their retreat and facilitated discussion of the work they had started, and generated more ideas and resources to further their action plan.



Lamoille team at their Community Dialogue Event.

STRENGTHS



0%

of students used a vapor product in the last 30 days.



4%

of students smoked a cigarette in the last 30 days.



47%

of students agree or strongly agree that students help decide what goes on in school.

CONCERNS



75%

of students had not participated in 60 minutes of

physical activity daily in the past week.



30%

of students have been electronically bullied.



23%

of students have seriously thought about suicide.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS and Accomplishments

- Present information to students and parents about online behavior and cyberbullying.
- Co-hosted an informational evening on Vaping with Healthy Lamoille Valley.
- Provide education about warning signs of suicidal ideation and where to get help.
- Increase club options — a place for everyone to belong and to connect to an adult.
- Build school competition into the curriculum with incentives for being active.
- Take the GTY show on the road to share information with elementary schools.
- Attended CADCA Youth Leadership Forum in Washington, D.C.

Lowell Graded School

Lowell, Vermont

On December 5, 2017, a group of twenty 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Lowell students gathered at the North Country Career Center Conference room to analyze North Country middle school data from the 2015 YRBS. This was almost 100% of the middle school participating! The event was organized by the eight core GTY team members and the school counselor. At the retreat, they voted on the top strengths and concerns, incorporating information from a prior year analysis of the data. The group walked away from the day with action plans which will help support youth in the Lowell community. The Getting to Y team has worked to prepare a Health and Wellness Fair at the school and plans to develop and deliver this to the Lowell Community in the fall of 2018.



Lowell team at the Vermont State House.

STRENGTHS



3%

of North Country middle school students have ever attempted suicide.



2%

of students smoked a whole cigarette by age 11.



85%

think it's wrong or very wrong for someone their age to drink alcohol.

CONCERNS

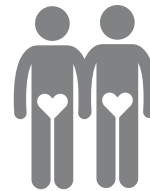


10%

of students have used electronic vapor products such as e-cigarettes.



Of those who smoke, **too few students to record** have attempted to quit smoking in the past 12 months.



9%

of middle school students have had sexual intercourse.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS and Accomplishments

- Practice and repetition on avoiding tobacco use.
- Make quit resources more available.
- Meet with the community about reducing middle school sexual activity, and ways to create safe/fun

place to get more education and talk about topics like this.

- Experts will provide information to students and the Lowell community during a Health and Wellness Fair in fall of 2018 on health topics and specifically on tobacco education, resisting peer pressure, quit resources, and sex education.

Northfield Middle & High School

Northfield, Vermont



Northfield school brought both a middle school and a high school team to the fall GTY training. Because both groups of students wanted to wait to do a comprehensive analysis using their 2017 data, which was not available during this school year, they instead laid the groundwork for the following year. The high school group worked to expand their leadership team and has gotten support from their school to do extensive student voice and leadership activities in the coming year, which will include working with their 2017 YRBS data as well as other initiatives. The 7th grade team helped their peers review the data from the 2015 YRBS survey during guidance classes. They highlighted strengths and concerns and did presentations to other 7th grade students during classes. They also presented the recently released 2017 state-level data at a Community dinner and to Hunger Free Vermont and DCF representatives. The students plan to regroup in the fall to analyze the 2017 data with their peers.



Northfield Middle School and high school teams at the fall trainings.

Peoples Academy Middle School

Morrisville, Vermont

People's Academy Middle Level team attended the GTY training in the fall. As a veteran team, they focused on implementing action steps identified during their prior analysis of the 2015 People's Academy Middle Level YRBS data and the input from their community. Because of their focus on concerns related to mental health issues, the team participated in the U Matter for Youth and Young Adult (YYA) training and brought that work to bear in their school community.

People's Academy Team at the GTY training.



STRENGTHS



97%
of students
think that it is
wrong to smoke
cigarettes.



96%
of students think
that parents think
it is wrong for
them to smoke marijuana.



79%
of students talk
to their parents
weekly about school.

CONCERNS



7%
of students
made a suicide
plan in the past
12 months.



51%
of students have
ever been bullied at
school.



14%
of students did
not go to school
because they felt unsafe in the
past 30 days.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS and Accomplishments

- Attended the Youth Mental Health Summit on Jan. 31 to learn how to help with mental health issues.
- Create a school brochure about bullying. Deliver to students in Teacher Advisories (TA).
- Present to TA teachers about youth mental health.
- Fifteen students completed the YYA all day training, completed a eight week participant workbook, and a community project.
- On April 13, 2018, the YRBS students sponsored a Health and Wellness fair that had fifteen volunteer presenters on different topics of health. The presentations were made to over two hundred middle school students grade 5 to 8.
- It is hoped to become a annual event at the school.
- All students receive Certificates of recognition at Last chapel for their efforts to improve the school and community cultures.

Shelburne Community School

Shelburne, Vermont

After attending the GTY training day in Montpelier, the leadership team invited a diverse list of students to help analyze their YRBS data. At their initial meeting, the group decided that it was important to work with the most current 2017 data, which was not released until the end of the school year. In preparation, the 8th grade leadership team explained the process for analysing the data and developed an outline for the 2018-2019 year, creating the structure and sharing their learning of the GTY process with the students who will lead the initiative in the fall. The group did review the CCSU 2015 YRBS middle school data and found many strengths. Overall, they noted that they were “doing better” than the state of Vermont as a whole. They also noted a general concern about bullying and want to focus time next year on improving that.



Shelburne team at the fall training.

STRENGTHS



74%

of students agree or strongly agree that their teachers really care about them and give them a lot of encouragement.



70%

of students agree or strongly agree that they matter to people in their community.



Screen time, including computers, was **significantly lower** than the state average.

CONCERNS



Only **58%**

of students think that people their age are greatly at risk of harming themselves if they have five or more drinks of alcohol once or twice each weekend, and **36%** think it would be easy or very easy to get alcohol.



18%

of students have been electronically bullied and **38%** have been bullied in school.



Only **72%**

of students think that people their age greatly risk harming themselves if they smoke marijuana regularly.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS and Accomplishments

- There is a fall meeting scheduled with the GTY team of 2018-2019 middle schoolers.
- We have obtained the support of our administration and the venue within our Skills for Life block to promote education about YRBS concern areas and build on strengths.
- We will schedule 2 parent nights for the next academic year
- We will continue to promote our work school-wide through the school newsletter.

Springfield High School

Springfield, Vermont

This was the first year that Springfield High School participated in the Getting to 'Y' analysis training. Four students attended the training and put on a retreat with ten additional students to analyze their YRBS data. The group identified three strengths and concerns, root causes and actions that they felt would help to support our students to improve the concerns. This information was shared at a dialogue night which took place during the Springfield Community Wellness Week. Approximately forty community members attended and suggested additional action steps. Students also presented a workshop on their GTY process at the P2 Youth Engagement Summit. We are looking forward to working with community partners to implement action steps next school year.



Springfield team at their Community Dialogue Event.

STRENGTHS



Among students who currently use **marijuana**, **24%** used it one to two times in the last month; **31%** used it 3 to 9 times, and **45%** used it over 10 times.



92% of female students and **89%** of male students think their parents think it is wrong for them to smoke cigarettes.



56% of sexually active students used condoms the last time they had sex.

CONCERNS



34% of female students harmed themselves without wanting to die in the past year (compared to 26% statewide).



19% of female students have been forced to have sexual intercourse, compared to 10% statewide.



26% of female students feel they matter to people in their community, compared to 47% statewide. **41%** of males feel they matter, compared to 54% statewide.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS and Accomplishments

→ We plan to collaborate with community members on the development of a Teen Center in Springfield. There was a recent grant obtained by the town of Springfield in order to build a Teen Center. Student voice will be the driving force behind the

location, activities offered, and many other details.

- Plan a Wellness Week at school in order to provide education and support for students dealing with stress.
- Host a parent and community night to provide education to parents regarding stress and anxiety amongst students.

Stowe Middle & High School

Stowe, Vermont

The middle school "Making A Difference Stowe" group (M.A.D.S.) attended the fall training as a Year 2 school. Since the 2017 data was not available, both the new M.A.D.S. students and the experienced high school B.O.S.S. ("Bettering Our School Environment") group continued work on action steps to build strengths, improve school climate and inclusion, and to address specific concern areas identified through their prior analysis of Stowe's 2015 YRBS data and input received during community dialogue events.



M.A.D.S. at the fall training, above, B.O.S.S. at end of year celebration, left.

STRENGTHS



91%

of middle school students talk to their parents about school on a weekly basis.



97%

of middle school students think their parents would think it is wrong for them to smoke cigarettes (**94%** for marijuana).



91%

of sexually active high school students used either a condom or prescription birth control the last time they had sex.

CONCERNS



13%

of middle school students and **19%** of high school students felt sad or hopeless for 2 weeks in a row. **9%** of middle school students have made a suicide plan.



Only **51%**

of middle school students think that people their age are doing physical harm when consuming 5 or more drinks in a weekend.



38%

of high school students texted or emailed while driving a car or other vehicle, past 30 days.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS and Accomplishments

- Kindness is Contagious Initiative: Random acts of kindness to inspire others in the school and community.
- Valentines Day Spreading Love: Notes of appreciation personalized for each student and faculty member in the school, and a free Valentine gram project, including a kind message and Valentine bag for every student and staff.
- Practice Gratitude Project: Raised awareness about the importance of gratitude and led gratitude activities with students and staff.
- Mindfulness Conference: Learned mindful leadership skills in partnership with community executives.
- Community Presentations: Created skits to raise community awareness about local youth risk statistics and partnered with Healthy Lamoille Valley on Growing Up Stowe education series.
- Attended the CADCA Youth Leadership Forum in Washington, D.C.

Vergennes Middle School

Vergennes, Vermont

After attending the GTY training in October, the Vergennes for Responsible Educated Decisions group (VRED) led their peers in an analysis of the 2015 ANWSU Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data. Forty students utilized Exploratory classes on December 11 and 14 to review and discuss their own YRBS data and decide what they felt was most positive and most concerning. On March 15, 2018, eleven students from our VRED group prepared and hosted a spaghetti dinner and community dialogue at the cafeteria at VUHS to discuss the strengths and concerns we had identified and to provide information on suicide prevention.



Vergennes team at the Community Dialogue Event.

STRENGTHS



Close to
0%
of students in
grades 6-8 took
prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription.



4%
of students in
grades 6-8 have
ever had sexual
intercourse.



59%
of students
in grades 6-8
wear a helmet, most or all of
the time while rollerblading or
skateboarding, compared to 45%
statewide.

CONCERNS



11%
of 7th graders
have attempted
suicide,
compared to 5% of 7th graders
statewide.



15%
of 6th-8th graders
have seriously
thought about
suicide.

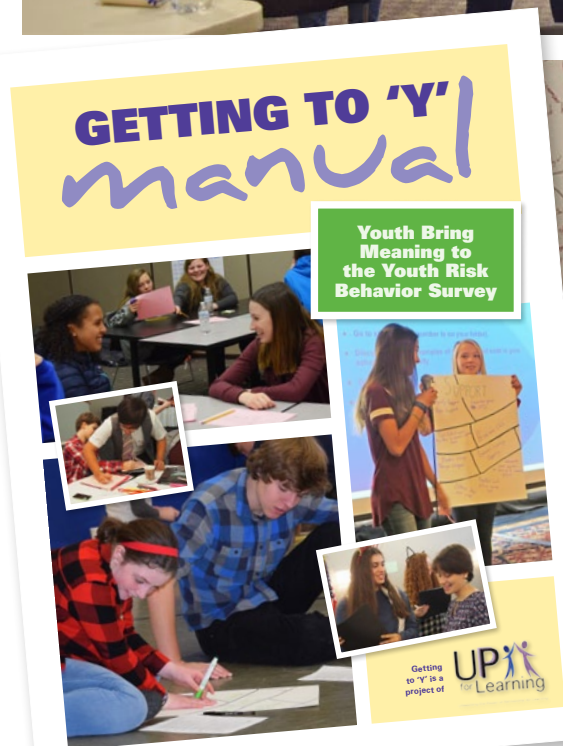


48%
of 6th-8th graders
have been bullied at
school.

PROPOSED ACTION STEPS and Accomplishments

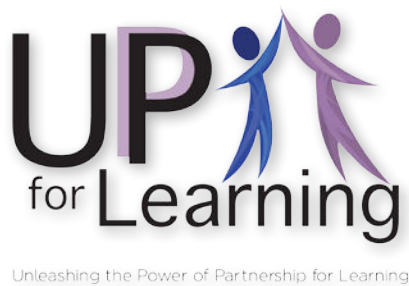
- Raise awareness of suicide prevention as an area of need by presenting the YRBS data to parents, community and administration.
- Wrote and performed a skit about suicide prevention for parents and community.

- The group also performed the skit for the entire middle school during a community meeting.
- Organized and led a Kindness Challenge that lasted a few weeks. Each morning, we read a kind act that students were challenged to do during the day.



Getting to 'Y' around the state!

Clockwise from top: Lamoille Community Dialogue Event, Craftsbury Academy Community Dialogue Event, People's Academy Wellness Promotion event, and the 2018-2019 Getting to 'Y' manual.



Learn more about Getting to 'Y' and other UP for Learning initiatives at upforlearning.org or contact:

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