



YPRC

YOUTH
PREVENTION
RESOURCE CENTER



Youth Prevention Resource Center

ANNUAL REPORT

2022

PREVENTION FIRST 

Funding in part or whole by the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Substance Use, Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery through a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.



Our Critical Work.

We believe our work with youth is some of the most critical work we do at Prevention First. We work directly with youth, teachers, advisors, parents, SROs, local law enforcement, driver ed facilitators, coalitions, and other community members who have an important role in our youth's lives.

At Prevention First's Youth Prevention Resource Center, we apply a holistic approach in all that we do, ensuring that youth voices are represented and respected. We invest significant resources to be responsive to the needs of our youth and support healthy decision-making, supporting both those who work with youth and youth themselves.

YEAR IN REVIEW

The YPRC along with the Student Advisory Board (SAB), strive to develop relevant resources using evidence-based prevention strategies. We have two target audiences, and we produce resources to meet separate but similar needs. We use our monthly calls and meetings to advise the SAB on best practices surrounding these strategies. Their voices are amplified in the resources we produce and through our newsletter and social media reach. We provide education and training, helping adults develop the necessary tools to empower self-advocacy skills in young people. Additionally, the YPRC delivers webinars and virtual and in-person trainings covering a variety of topics related to the needs identified by the SAB. Notably, mental health issues are considered the most concerning among the SAB. We met in person this past June with our new and expanded SAB to discuss the issues outlined below.

YPRC CORNERSTONES OF PREVENTION



Substance Misuse: Although alcohol is the most commonly used drug by young people, we provide resources on other drug trends as well. At the YPRC and Prevention First, we prioritize our resources to focus on alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and prescription drug misuse prevention. Instilling in young people that every decision matters.



Teen Traffic Safety: Automobile crashes remain a leading cause of death for young people. The YPRC offers a variety of resources for driving instructors and parents of new drivers to help youth address the issues related to teen safe driving.



Mental Health and Wellness: The importance of physical health has been well documented, but youth (and adults) must pay attention to their emotional wellbeing. Depression, suicide, anxiety, and feeling of isolation are on the rise among young people. The YPRC and Prevention First are steadfast in continuing to address these ever-changing and complex issues.



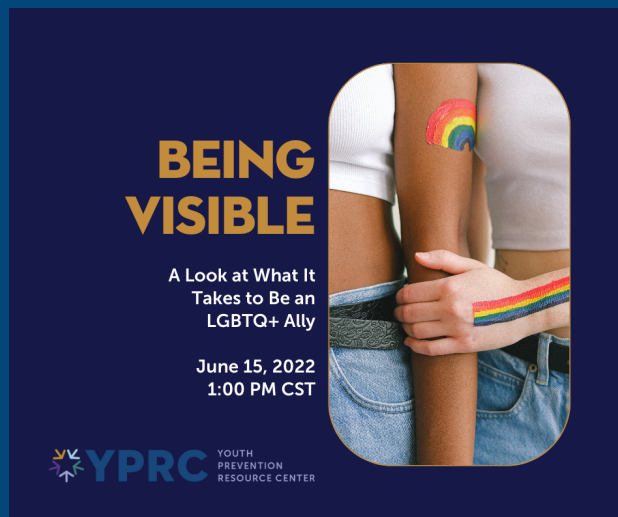
Youth Leadership Development: Practicing leadership skills is shown to have profound effects throughout life. The YPRC maintains, facilitates, and supports a diverse Student Advisory Board. The Student Advisory Board has a strong voice and is a guiding force for all programming efforts, including resource development and advocacy.

WEBINARS

Authentic Youth Engagement, Part One

Authentic Youth Engagement, Part Two

Being Visible, A Look at What It Takes to Be an LGBTQ+ Ally



BEING VISIBLE

A Look at What It Takes to Be an LGBTQ+ Ally

June 15, 2022
1:00 PM CST

YPRC YOUTH PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER



PART TWO

AUTHENTIC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

NIGEL WRANGHAM
SPEAKER

TUESDAY, MARCH 29
10:00 AM

YPRC YOUTH PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER



"I think it was great. It covered lots of information without being overwhelming. I left feeling empowered and with resources to go learn even more."

Being Visible
Participant



"It was very informative. I felt the speaker was passionate about his topic. Great job!"

Authentic Youth Engagement
Participant



RESOURCES

Our SAB determines the topics, creates or assists in creating, and provides feedback on all resources produced through the YPRC.

- Vaping 101 for Parents
- Kickstart Your Year
- Event Planning Guide
- Tips for Engaging Youth
- Tip for Engaging Youth - SAB Edition
- Social Media Etiquette
- How to Talk to a Friend About Suicide
- Unhappy Holidays
- Traffic Safety Hero Series, Volume One: Occupant Safety
- Traffic Safety Hero Series, Volume Two: Impaired Driving
- Summer Teen Driving Tip Sheet

TIPS FOR ENGAGING YOUTH
YPRC SAB EDITION
Straight from the source - our Student Advisory Board

Be Present

- Acknowledge the child in any way or form. Many teens don't get any attention from their parents or teachers, so they don't have anyone to talk to or role models. Adults such as parents or teachers should be present in a kid's life to make sure they know they have a support system.
- Be available and ready to help, listen, assist and provide for others whenever needed.
- For an adult to be present, they must demonstrate their reliability every day.
- Give youth your full attention and listen and engage in conversation.
- Listen to what teens are saying and believe them. Also, do not ignore anyone's questions or go on their phone.
- Continuously and willingly support youth ideas.

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UNHAPPY HOLIDAYS: IT'S NOT THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR FOR EVERYONE

Holidays not so happy? A lot of people are feeling not-so-merry-and-bright right now. Be gentle with yourself. It's okay to be human this holiday season.

The Winter Blues, or Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) - SAD is a form of depression that occurs during the winter months. Many people experience a mood shift during the winter months. But if your winter blues start to interfere with your ability to enjoy your life, it might be time to connect with a mental health professional. Your regular doctor or local health department are good places to start.

- Grief and Loss** - For some, the holidays are a reminder of lost loved ones, or a loss of traditions once held dear. It can be helpful to make space to honor lost loved ones or find new ways to enjoy holiday traditions that you miss. However, some prefer to avoid painful reminders and may choose to celebrate differently or not at all.
- Expectations** - There can be a lot of pressure to be joyful this time of year, which can lead to feelings of guilt for those already living with depression. Social obligations and family gatherings can be hard for those with anxiety disorders. Candles, lights, and music can create uncomfortable feelings of sensory overload for some people. It's okay to decline an invitation, it's okay to be sad or overwhelmed. It's okay to not be okay, even during the holidays.

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TIPS FOR ENGAGING YOUTH

- Be Present**
Pay close attention to the young adult and everything they have to say. Don't multitask while talking with youth.
- Offer Meaningful Engagement**
Youth-friendly activities should be geared toward their interests and needs. Meet youth at their current level of knowledge and development. Let them experience and discover their passions.
- Provide Leadership Opportunities**
Provide youth the opportunity to play active, independent roles. Involve them in ALL aspects of programming and support their opinions and ideas.
- Motivate**
Encourage positivity. Challenge youth to exceed their expectations.
- Seek and Value Youth Input and Perspective**
The youth perspective is crucial. Past experiences, family life, and other factors and/or barriers have influenced their thinking. Be open to learning from youth.

HOW TO TALK TO A FRIEND ABOUT SUICIDE

It's a difficult conversation, but one that can save lives.

If you or someone you know is considering suicide...

- Look for Warning Signs - Often, but not always, people considering suicide will exhibit warning signs. These can include talking about killing themselves, expressing feelings of hopelessness, feeling like a burden to others, isolating from family and friends, withdrawing from activities, and giving away prized possessions. Learn more about suicide warning signs here.
- Ask Directly - Be direct. Don't avoid using the word suicide. It can be an uncomfortable question. It might help to tell your friend why you're asking. Say something like, "I've noticed you've been talking a lot about wishing you were dead. Are you thinking about killing yourself?" or "I saw that you gave away your skateboard, and you've seemed depressed lately. Have you been thinking about suicide?" Be prepared for their answer. Stay calm and listen without judgment.
- Tell a Trusted Adult - Now is not the time to keep a secret for a friend. Tell an adult you trust as soon as possible. You can also turn to the resources listed to the left for 24/7 help.

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VAPING 101 FOR PARENTS

Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are battery-powered devices that deliver nicotine, cannabis (THC & CBD), flavorings, and other substances. Vaping or "juling" with e-cigarettes produces an aerosol that may contain harmful chemicals, not harmless "water vapor." Devices can be called e-cigs, vapes, dab pens, dab rigs, tanks, mods, pod mods, electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS). They are easily hidden and often resemble other devices.

RESPONSIBLE PARENTING **LEARN HOW TO USE DEVICES** **MINIMIZE YOUR DEVICES** **RECOGNIZING A COMMITTEE**

VAPING FACTS

- E-cigarettes contain nicotine.
- Long-term effects are unknown.
- Using e-cigarettes can lead to future smoking.
- E-cigarettes are marketed to children and teens.
- E-cigarettes themselves are dangerous.

IS YOUR KID VAPING?

- Don't assume it's a scented candle that is making their room smell sweet!
- E-cigarette users commonly experience nosebleeds.

For more information visit prevention.org/1923781
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STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD



ADVISE • AMPLIFY • ADVOCATE

2021-2022

- Salsabel Alshaikh
- Charlotte Bossler
- Aarushi Sharma
- Alisha Chowdhary
- Sanya Mahajan
- Annabelle Bowman
- Jaxon Henrichs
- Emmaly Martin
- Morgan Elliff
- Lily Karnes
- Makenna Gill

2022-2023

- Chi Chia Chen
- Po Chen Chen
- Alisha Chowdhary
- Jori Dowling
- Thomas Edat
- Kimberlee Ford
- Makenna Gill
- Caroline Hail
- Anvi Harish
- Olympia Harris
- Jaxon Henrichs
- Lily Karnes
- Cameron Kossler
- Matthew Lewis
- Madilyn Martin
- Pranav Meraga
- Cari Norton
- Hanvita Ramineni
- Adithya Sathyamurthy
- Kaitlyn Spencer
- Pravika Srivastava
- Sanatanu Sunaharan



“ YOUTH LEADERSHIP STORIES ”

"My last year in the Student Advisory Board has been amazing. I have gotten the chance to work on the Traffic Safety Hero Series, where I got to help create content, provide feedback, and make it teen oriented. The Hero Series also allowed me to attend the Lifesavers National Conference on Highway Safety to help gain more knowledge about traffic safety and share the Hero Series Volume 1. During our Student Advisory Retreat, I had the chance to meet other students face to face, learn more about the YPRC's cornerstones, and work on our social media outreach. The YPRC has given me invaluable leadership opportunities on the resources we published, and the events we have attended. I was given the opportunity to attend CADCA's Mid-Year Training Conference which will help further my prevention and leadership skills. Overall, it has been an amazing experience, and I look forward to another great year!"



Jaxon Henrichs



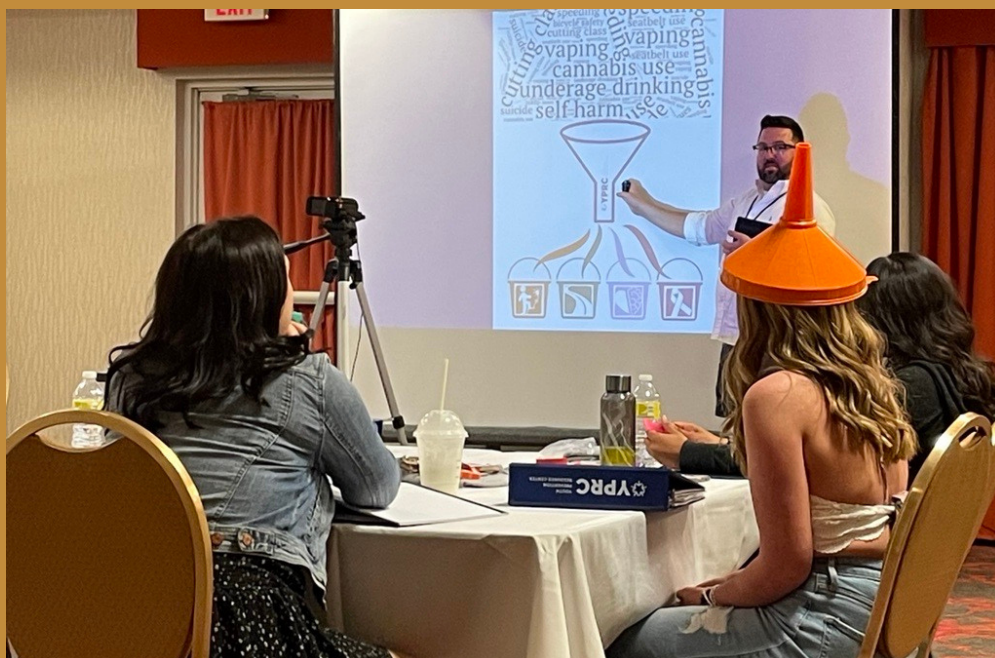
Makenna Gill

"I have a variety of knowledge and skills that were further enhanced by working on the Student Advisory Board with the Youth Prevention Resource Center. These include things such as confidence in being a leader and knowledge about prevention methods. These skills empowered me to begin working in my own community through a grassroots effort. While being on the SAB, there were workshops that improved public speaking as well as other leadership skills that helped build confidence in my leadership abilities. Not only that, but through the SAB asking for input on prevention resources, I gained both knowledge about prevention methods and confidence in the power of my own voice. This has allowed me to begin pursuits in my own community to work on prevention work for issues I see daily."

"The Student Advisory Board was a great experience to improve my leadership, communication, and teamwork skills. I was able to meet with other teens in Illinois to discuss how certain topics impact youth and what we can do to advocate and solve these problems. I was chosen to discuss the impacts of cannabis on youth at a cannabis symposium where I discussed the harmful impact it has and what youth/trusted adults can do to help solve those problems. On the panel, I met with youth as well as adults to discuss the different viewpoints on this issue. Not only was I able to advocate and actually use my voice but I was able to hear other viewpoints on an issue that many were passionate about. In addition, I was able to use my creative skills to create wallpapers that focused on mental health on youth and even adults. The wallpapers I created were reminders that it is okay to take it one step at a time to grow and develop. This activity made actually me think outside the box because I was trying to think on how I can create an artistic cover with mental health wrapped in it. I researched, spoke with peers, until I knew how to create what I was thinking. The student advisory board helped me enhance my skills in both my academic and social life. I was able to implement these skills in my school organizations, in events that I hosted, and just in life every day. I am grateful that I got to be a part of the student advisory board and will forever use what I learned from here on."



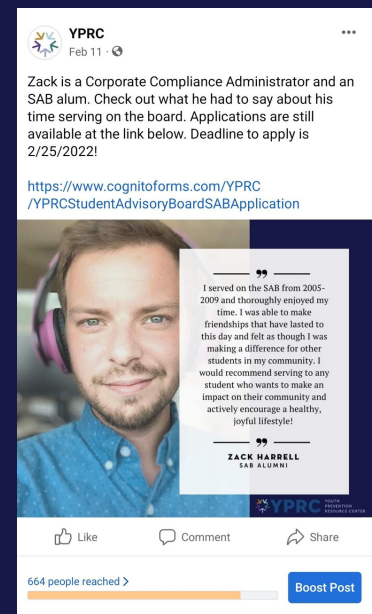
Salsabel Alshaikh



COMMUNICATIONS

Our monthly newsletter is sent to over 700 contacts through our mailing list. We also send out eLERTs to inform contacts on upcoming events, new research, and other timely information.

The YPRC team is constantly working to expand and strategically focus communication efforts to our target audience. For example, providing YPRC related information to multiple networks, like the Prevention Connection, which reaches over 5,500 contacts and through our multiple social media platforms.



Click below to join our social media!



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS



Mental Health FIRST AID

The YPRC hosted five Youth Mental Health First Aid trainings in FY22. Youth MHFA teaches adults how to help an adolescent experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge or crisis.

"MHFA has been an incredible skill to have in both my professional and personal life. Recently, I was able to put my training to use when a young family member faced a mental health crisis. I was able to have real, open, and appropriate conversations utilizing my training. I will forever be thankful for the skills and knowledge I gained through this training. It definitely helped save the life of my family member."

YPRC trained Mental Health First Aider



FY22 also saw the YPRC add Adult MHFA and QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer - a Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper training) to our training offerings. QPR will allow us to train even more adults to respond to a youth in crisis, as well as train young people to help their peers.

The SAB Mental Health & Wellness subcommittee started some ambitious projects last year that they will continue working on in FY23. These include a guide for parents to talk to their kids about their mental health and a presentation done by youth that addresses mental wellbeing among their peers.

