



A Program of the Lamoille Family Center

A Community Planning Toolkit

Creating Healthy Communities *through a Focus on* Substance Prevention





Who We Are.

Healthy Lamoille Valley is a coalition of individuals and community organizations working collaboratively to prevent and reduce youth substance misuse and support youth to make substance free healthy choices. We are a program of the Lamoille Family Center.

Proud partners of...



What is Prevention?

Prevention focuses on the risks which contribute to the use of alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, and other substances among youth and within the community - while promoting protective factors which support healthy lifestyles and healthy communities.

Who Engages in this Work?



Youth



Parents/Caregivers



Schools



Youth Serving Organizations



Businesses/
Non-Profits



Media



Law Enforcement



Religious/Fraternal
Organizations



Civic/Volunteers
Organizations



Healthcare
Providers



State/Local/Tribal
Governments



Treatment &
Recovery Providers

We all play a role in creating healthy communities. Join us!

We want your involvement and your voice!



www.healthy.lamoillevalley.org



@healthylamoillevalley



@healthylamoillevalley



www.lamoillefamilycenter.org

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You can download this Toolkit as a PDF
and access up-to-date resources at:

healthylamoillevalley.org/prevention-toolkit



About This Toolkit

WHO

Ever wonder what you and others can be doing in our community to reduce substance misuse?

This Toolkit is designed for all:

- ◆ Community members and leaders
- ◆ Youth and caring adults
- ◆ Local decision makers
- ◆ Treatment and recovery partners
- ◆ Leaders of local business, organizations, law enforcement, schools, faith-based institutions
- ◆ Physical and mental health providers
- ◆ Community members like you!

We encourage those with all identities, affiliations and experiences to join us in this effort.

Your Own Toolkit Notes...

Record your thoughts, brainstorm and questions in this interactive Toolkit.

WHAT

This toolkit is a community planning guide focused on preventing the misuse of alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, and other drugs among youth and people across the lifespan. It emphasizes the importance of creating supportive relationships and environments that reduce risk factors and promote healthy, substance-free behaviors.

The Toolkit is available online:



WHEN

Our hope is that youth, parents, educators, business, organizational, and municipal leaders will all use this Toolkit in different settings to build protective factors and reduce risk factors in our community.

As examples: a group of parents might want to look at how to make their community safer. A town might want to use it when updating a municipal plan. Retailers might use it when rearranging their store.

Healthy Lamoille Valley is available to facilitate group discussions and help create substance prevention plans with your community.

WHERE

This Toolkit was created for the following Lamoille Valley Towns, but can be used anywhere.

- ◆ Belvidere
- ◆ Cambridge/Jeffersonville
- ◆ Craftsbury
- ◆ Eden
- ◆ Elmore
- ◆ Greensboro
- ◆ Hardwick
- ◆ Hyde Park
- ◆ Johnson
- ◆ Morrisville / Morristown
- ◆ Stannard
- ◆ Stowe
- ◆ Waterville
- ◆ Wolcott
- ◆ Woodbury

WHY

The brains of young people are still developing until around 25 years old. This puts them most at risk for substance misuse, especially if they start using at an early age. Increasing their likelihood of becoming dependent and experiencing negative health outcomes.

The Lamoille Valley, and Northeast Kingdom, have higher rates of substance use for youth and young adults than much of VT. VT has higher rates of use than the country. This is driven by many factors that we will explore in this Toolkit.

Our job and responsibility is to reduce the risks in our communities that lead to substance misuse and to increase the factors that protect our youth through facilitated conversations and intentional planning. It is our responsibility to the generations to come.

HOW

This Toolkit is designed to help support those working to create healthy communities and to take some of the guesswork out of the process. There is a focus on systems and policies, organizations and businesses, relationships and family interventions.

Resources are provided to support actions that each of us can take through using a substance prevention lens across the spectrum of care (prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery).



Community Prevention Lens

Notice what our community teaches youth about substances

Each of us can make a difference in our community toward reducing youth substance use, whether through actions in our personal lives or by changing community norms and policies. It is our responsibility to the generations to come. As a first step, we can heighten our awareness of where youth see substances and the marketing of substances.

Use This Toolkit To...

Understand how addressing both risk and protective factors foster resiliency in youth.

Ensure that all populations are welcome, invited and considered in the planning process.

Focus your attention by taking steps to see through a “youth substance use” prevention lens.

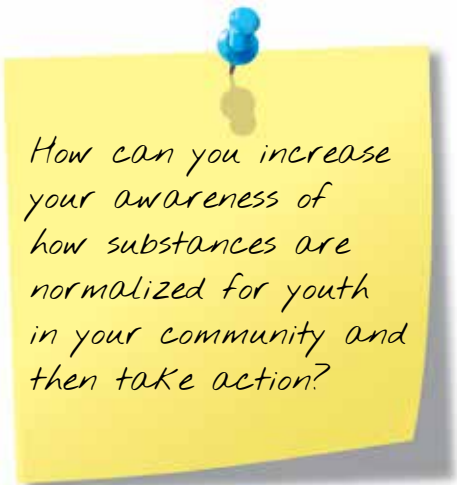
Understand community norms, messaging, and both risk and protective factors to foster resiliency in youth and create a healthy environment that prevents substance misuse.

Identify a personal vision for what it means to live in a healthy community that includes maximizing the potential so that healthy decisions become the norm.

Become a change agent for bringing about lasting change to reduce substance use in your community.

Promote awareness towards creation, or change of health and substance related policies.

Be strategic in your prevention efforts. Find allies and build coalition in your efforts.



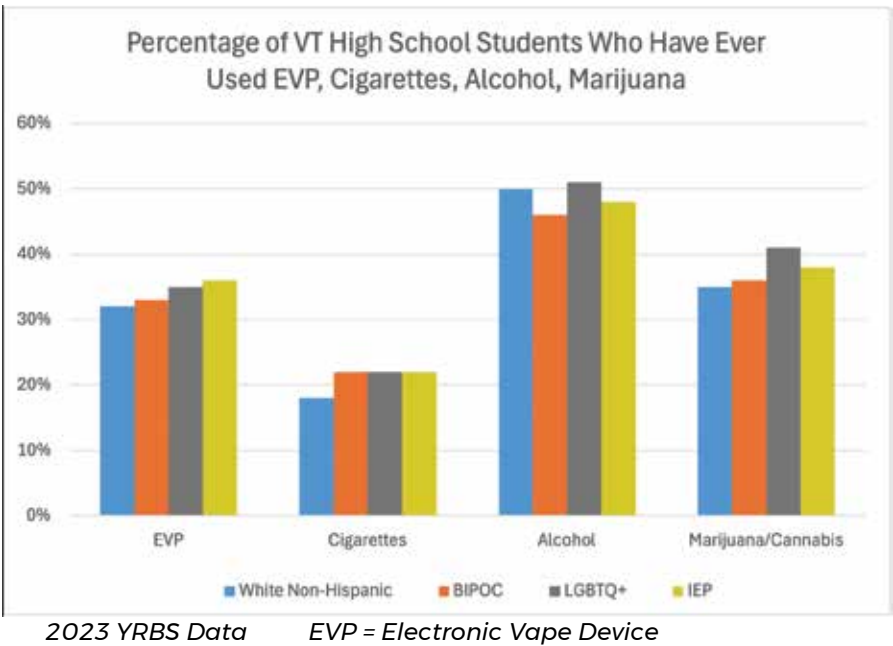
Prevention Through An Equity Lens

Substance misuse is often an equity and justice issue.



An Example: Age of First Use

As we look at Age of First Use data, we see that health inequities exist in Vermont from a very young age.



“Health equity exists when all people have a fair and just opportunity to be healthy, especially those who have experienced socioeconomic disadvantage, historical injustice, and other avoidable systemic inequalities that are often associated with social categories of race, gender, ethnicity, social position, sexual orientation and disability.”

Vermont Department of Health, Health Equity

It is crucial that we consider equity when creating policies and actions that support prevention.

What leads to inequity?

- ◆ Systemic discrimination, racism and inadequate funding for marginalized communities limit resources, worsening health disparities and substance misuse risks.
- ◆ Individuals and communities with fewer resources experience more stress and have less access to medical and mental health services, increasing vulnerability to substance misuse.
- ◆ Chronic stress from unstable and/or unsafe housing, food insecurity, income inequality, financial instability, and violence, along with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), raises the risk of substance misuse.
- ◆ Underfunded schools and limited opportunities hinder youth from developing healthy coping skills, increasing substance misuse risks.
- ◆ Increased exposure to substances in under-resourced communities raises the risk of misuse.
- ◆ Lack of parks and community spaces increases isolation and stress, contributing to substance misuse.
- ◆ Limited transportation and cultural stigma around seeking help create barriers to accessing care in rural areas.

This section was adapted from ChangeLab Solutions, originally adapted from Frameworks; parts of the language above are quoted directly.

Substance Misuse Impacts Our Communities



Education

Youth who use substances tend to perform poorly in school, develop self-esteem issues, and engage in even riskier behaviors. Substance use is also associated with an incomplete high school or college experience.



Physical & Mental Health

Addiction and substance misuse cause or contribute to more than 70 other conditions requiring medical care. Substance use disorders have high rates of overlapping mental illness and vice versa.

National Institute on Drug Abuse.



Public Safety

Substance misuse contributes to an increase in motor vehicle crash fatalities, opioid deaths, suicides, domestic violence situations, and unintentional injuries, increasing the need for law enforcement, mental health and emergency service costs.



Employment

Substance misuse can lead to an increase in missed days at work, increased workplace accidents, decreased productivity at work, turnover, and higher health insurance costs for the employer. It can impact an individual employee directly, or through a co-worker, family member or friend's misuse.



Economic Impacts of Substance Misuse

The misuse of substances drive up costs in healthcare, emergency services, and the criminal justice system, in addition to the increases to the loss of productivity.

Substance misuse costs our nation over \$600 billion annually.

National Institute of Health

Community impact language in this spread adapted from North West Regional Planning Commission and Franklin County Caring Communities Primer: Planning for Prevention: A Guide to Community Health Initiatives



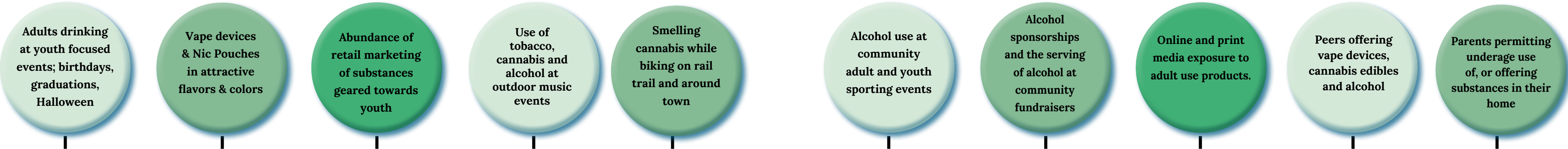
VERMONT PREVENTION MODEL

Lamoille Valley Examples

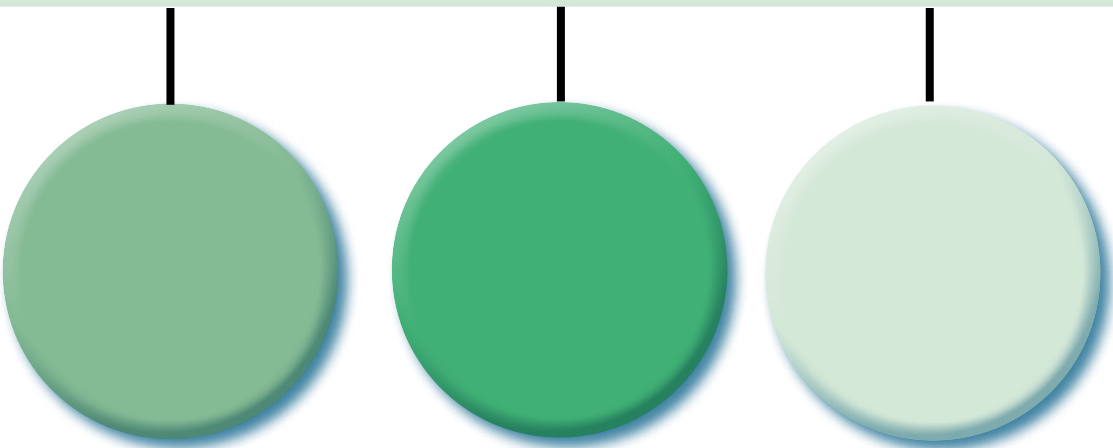
Live Your Why	OVX Student Engagement	Refusal skills and TimeWise at area schools	Lamoille Equity Team	Substance-free signage at parks in:
Substance counseling	Lamoille Area Coaching Collaborative	Mural at Riverbend Market	Cigarette Butt Litter Clean Up Events & Survey	Greensboro, Johnson, Morrisville, Elmore, Hyde Park, Wolcott.
Cessation classes	Conversation Guide	3-4-50 Partners	Lamoille County Field Days - tobacco, smoke and vape free midway	Health & Wellness Chapters in Town Plan
		Employee Wellness		

Where Do Youth See Substances in our Community?

We spoke to area youth and here's what they told us:



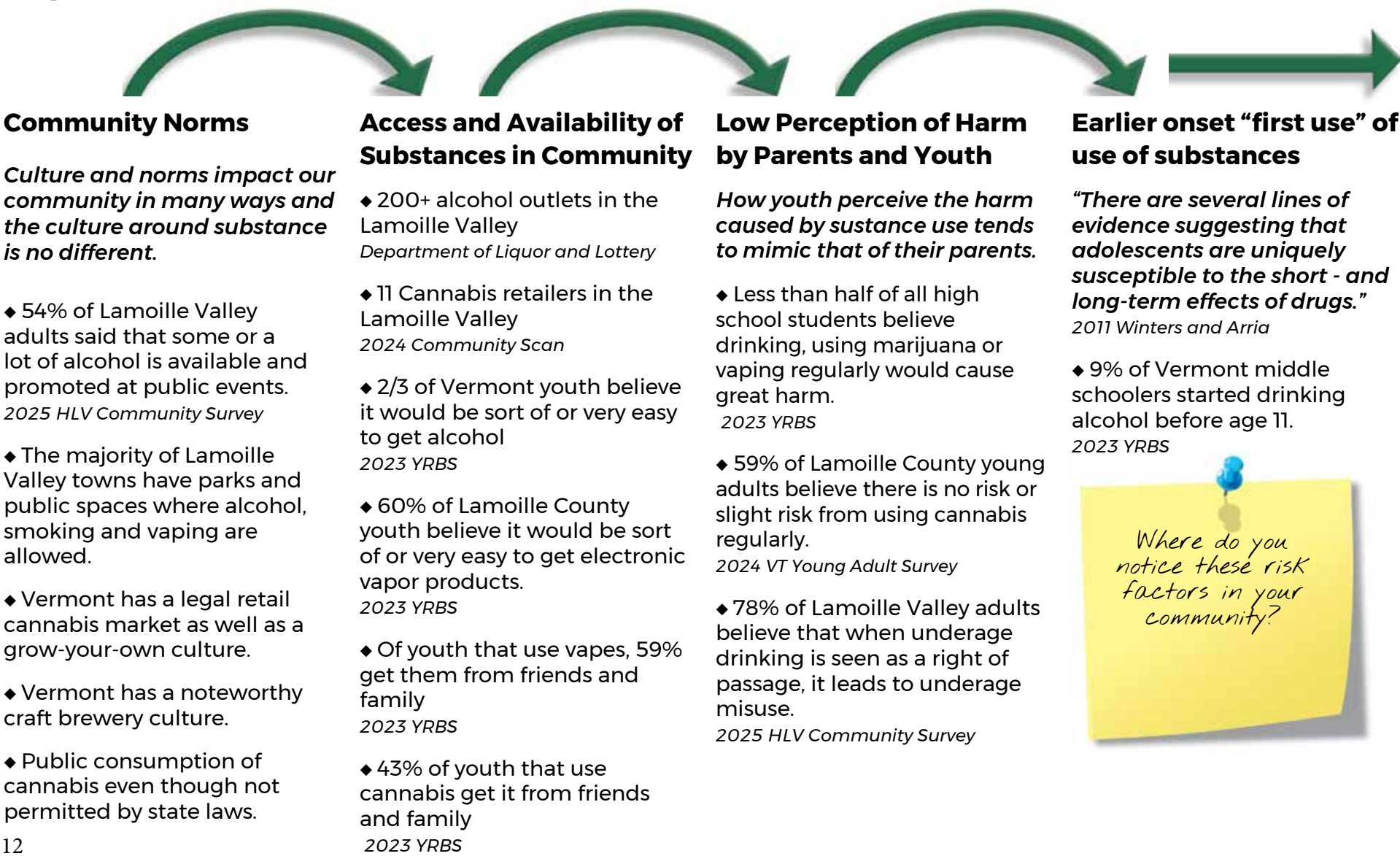
Take a fresh look at your community through a prevention lens.



Add your own observations.

Risk Factors that Lead to Youth Use

Risk factors are characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community, or cultural level that are associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes.



What Does the Data Tell Us?

Early In Life

Vermont Youth Substance Use Before the Age of 13

- ◆ Alcohol 14%
- ◆ Marijuana 6%
- ◆ Cigarettes 7%
- ◆ Electronic Vape Product 7%

Data on this page from 2023 YRBS (Youth Risk Behavior Survey).



Too Often

In the Past 30 Days

- ◆ 5% of middle school students reported drinking alcohol
- ◆ 27% of high school students reported drinking alcohol
- ◆ 22% of high school students reported using marijuana
- ◆ 16% of high school students reported vaping (down from 26% in 2019)
- ◆ 5% of high school students reported using prescription drugs not prescribed to them

Too Much

Of High School Students Who Vape

- ◆ 50% use 20 or more days/month
- ◆ 63% use 10 or more days/month
- ◆ 72% use 6 or more days/month

Alcohol Binge Drinking

- ◆ 13% of high school students binge drink at least once per month (21% of seniors).
- ◆ Out of middle schoolers who drink, about one in five have five or more drinks in a row.

Of Students Using Cannabis in Last 30 Days

- ◆ 31% use it one or two times
- ◆ 25% use it three to nine times
- ◆ 22% use it 40 or more times

Your Local Data

healthylamoillevalley.org/prevention-toolkit




Find out **how your community compares** to state and national data and review trend data for your area.

Look for the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) in the Data section of our online Toolkit.

What is most concerning to you about Vermont youth substance use?


Protecting Our Youth

**PROTECTIVE FACTORS**

Protective factors are conditions that buffer young people from the negative consequences of exposure to risks.

*Public Health Dept,
Lane County Oregon*



**RISK FACTORS**

Risk factors are characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community, or cultural level that precede, and are associated with, a higher likelihood of negative outcomes.

Some risk and protective factors are fixed: they don't change over time. Other risk and protective factors are considered variable and can change over time. Variable risk factors include income level, peer group, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and employment status.

Individual-level risk factors may include a person's genetic predisposition to addiction or exposure to alcohol prenatally. Individual-level protective factors might include positive self-image, self-control, or social competence.

source: samhsa.gov



The Risk and Protective Factor Model is based on the work of J. David Hawkins, Ph.D., Richard F. Catalano, Ph.D., and a team of researchers at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Address Prevention Through Risk & Protective Factors Related to Health Equity *(see page 7)*

Health Equity is achieved when everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health.

Health Equity Planning Toolkit & Resources Guide

Created by Vermont Regional Planning Commissions in collaboration with health partners through a VDH grant. These documents introduce the concept of health equity and how to incorporate it into municipal planning documents and bylaws.



See www.lcpcvt.org for Health Equity Toolkit

Think more about protective strategies...

Take a few minutes to think about the following questions, either alone or with your community group:

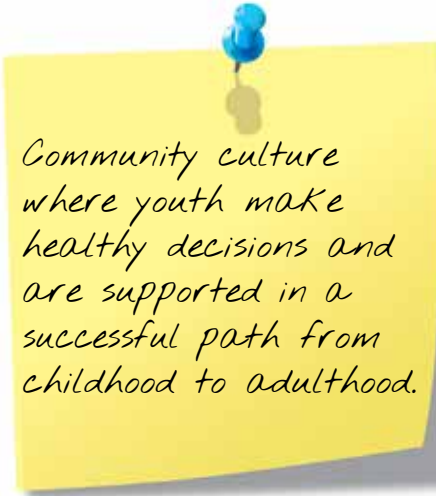


- How does our community support a healthy environment for all ages, and what strengths can we build on?
- What messages do our community norms and culture send about health and well being, especially to youth? How can we ensure these messges are positive for everyone?
- How can we prevent, or delay substance use while also supporting harm reduction and recovery across all ages in our community?
- What actions can we take to strengthen protective factors and reduce risks for all community members?
- How can we prioritize equity in our efforts to improve outcomes for everyone?
- How can policies we create (or advocate for) improve the future of youth and the overall community? What areas of policy can we start with?

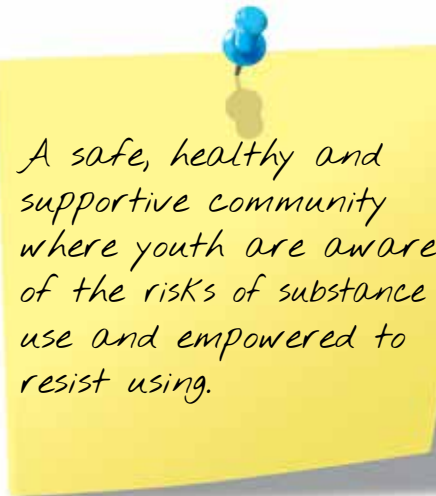
What Is Your Vision For Youth In Our Community?

What’s the dream and why does it matter?


A few examples of personal visions for their communities from Healthy Lamoille Valley Steering Team and Lamoille Area Youth Coalition members...



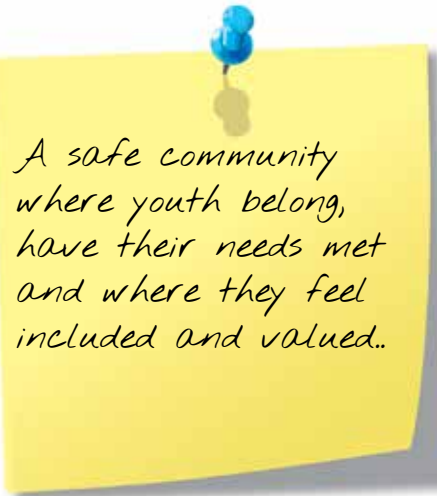
Community culture where youth make healthy decisions and are supported in a successful path from childhood to adulthood.



A safe, healthy and supportive community where youth are aware of the risks of substance use and empowered to resist using.



Community is free of alcohol and other drug addiction, misuse and related outcomes.



A safe community where youth belong, have their needs met and where they feel included and valued..

What is your personal vision for your community related to the topic of youth substance misuse?

What values do you want to pass on to youth in your community?

What accomplishments do you hope your community will reach with respect to youth substance prevention?









Community Visioning: Where Are We Going?

What kind of community do we want?

A world where all people live free of the burden of drug use.

Youth are healthy and substance-free.

An inclusive, safe, supportive and healthy community.

Substance use is not the norm.

Childcare and housing are available to all.

A community that addresses norms, messaging and community level factors in order to foster an environment resistant to substance misuse.

Treatment and recovery available to all without stigma.

To create long lasting sustainable change

Everyone can equitably access needed services, including transportation.

Healthy decisions become the default.

A safe and vibrant community where youth choose to live substance free, and are collectively supported by their peers, parents and community members in making healthy decisions.

Write your ideas for a vision statement for your community...



Examples from local town plans and policy

Create and sustain a healthy community for all residents and visitors.

Healthy Community Policy, Hyde Park

Building a town culture that promotes healthy behaviors and also significantly reduces risk behaviors such as substance misuse.

Elmore Town Plan

Achieve a healthier environment and community for its residents.

Wolcott Town Plan

Policies and Systems

Policies and laws; economic and cultural influences

Who: Town leaders, boards, commissions, policy decision makers, legislators.

Consider Decreasing These RISK Factors:

- ◆ Systems, policies, laws, and community norms that are unclear or are favorable towards substance use.
- ◆ Marketing or distribution of substances in areas where youth are present.
- ◆ High density of substance related businesses.
- ◆ Presence of substances in spaces such as parks, trails, and playgrounds when youth are present.

Consider Increasing These PROTECTIVE Factors:

- ◆ Systems, policies, laws, and community norms that encourage non-use and prioritize healthy individuals, families, and communities.
- ◆ Policies limiting youth access and availability of substances.
- ◆ Consistently enforced laws and ordinances.
- ◆ Equal access to resources such as housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, employment, recreation, etc..
- ◆ Youth voices considered and included when setting policy or planning events.



Why It Matters:

“Town policies are an important mechanism for creating a healthy culture because citizens, especially youth, get “messages” from what they see in their communities, thereby influencing their choices. The environment around our youth is inundated with substance industry tactics that drive youth misuse.” - Elmore Town Plan

Health promotion and substance prevention policies are important because they help change our environment in positive ways. They help make a healthy choice the default or easy choice for youth and adults. They also have an impact on social norms that lead to healthy behavior and greater health equity.

Actions You Can Take

- ◆ Prioritize equity in your planning.
- ◆ Engage diverse community members in the planning process including those with lived experience.
- ◆ Join coalitions and collaborate with others working on similar issues.
- ◆ Engage your town in a strategic planning process related to substance misuse prevention, treatment, and recovery.
- ◆ Include a health and wellness chapter in your town plan.
- ◆ Know your data and get a true picture of what is happening. Help town leaders and citizens learn about and implement local laws and policies based on the latest research and data.
- ◆ Develop policies for youth sporting events and clearly share them. For instance, parents and spectators may not have alcohol, cannabis, or tobacco products at the recreational facility.
- ◆ Create restrictions for alcohol, tobacco, and vape use in public places and parks. According to VT law, cannabis use is illegal in public spaces.
- ◆ Support efforts to post event signs and permanent town policy signs related to public consumption restrictions.
- ◆ Revise zoning bylaws to require a buffer around community facilities such as schools, child care centers, recovery centers, and parks.



- ◆ Restrict the number and placement of substance outlets within the community as well as limit youth exposure through advertising.
- ◆ Help bolster community enforcement by ensuring policies, ordinances, and laws are widely shared and consistently enforced in ways that do not penalize youth. Substance industries and media outlets can be held responsible for advertising to youth.
- ◆ Your own idea.....

Promote the “Find Help Tool” in your community,
<https://lamoille.findhelp.com>



Organizations & Community Partners

Those Serving Others

Who: Schools, Worksites, Youth Sports & Organizations, Faith Groups, Social Services

Consider Decreasing These RISK Factors:

- ◆ Community attitudes that are unclear about or encourage substance use.
- ◆ Alcohol, THC cannabis, vape devices, and other drugs are easy to get.
- ◆ Low adult and parental perception of harm from underage substance use.
- ◆ Early first use of substances increases risks.
- ◆ Citizens feel low sense of connection to community.
- ◆ High unemployment levels.
- ◆ High poverty levels.
- ◆ Lack of strong social institutions.
- ◆ Low academic achievement, low commitment, and bullying in schools.



Consider Increasing These PROTECTIVE Factors:

- ◆ Highlight equally attractive, or more appealing, substance-free alternatives
- ◆ Safe, supportive, and encouraging community.
- ◆ Opportunities for community involvement.
- ◆ Community service and other extracurricular opportunities for youth.
- ◆ Early intervention student services.
- ◆ Youth are recognized for being positively involved in community and school.
- ◆ Exposure to evidence based programs and strategies for prevention
- ◆ Community resources (housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, employment, recreation) are available and accessible to all.
- ◆ Participate in wellness initiatives: 3-4-50, Great American Smokeout, fitness challenges.



Why It Matters:

When substances are normalized in our families, schools, and communities, it is more likely that youth will use substances earlier in life, too often and too much.

Actions You Can Take

- ◆ Get connected with Healthy Lamoille Valley, your local substance prevention coalition.
- ◆ Healthy Lamoille Valley has information on comprehensive substance prevention education for school partners, visit www.healthylamoillevalley.org/schools.
- ◆ Know and share Healthy Lamoille Valley's Youth Resources webpage and promotional materials with youth, visit www.healthylamoillevalley.org/youthresources.
- ◆ Know the risk and protective factors that impact substance use.
- ◆ Support belonging and attachment for youth and young adults on a community level.
- ◆ Talk with youth and young adults about alcohol, tobacco, vaping, nicotine pouches, cannabis, and other substance use.

Substance use, treatment, and recovery have a cost. *"By stopping substance use before it starts, or before it becomes substance misuse, prevention works to save Vermont tax dollars."*
(Vermont Department of Health)

- ◆ Create opportunities and spaces for youth to have mentors and adults who listen to youth voices.
- ◆ Host and advocate for substance-free family friendly events in your community.
- ◆ Know and recognize "adult use products" that are packaged similarly to "youth friendly products".
- ◆ Publicize and share information about substance prevention, including Vermont's social hosting laws.
- ◆ Organize groups of people who want to help change community attitudes about substance use, especially that of our youth population.
- ◆ Engage in worksite wellness initiatives.
- ◆ Become a Recovery Friendly Workplace.
- ◆ Engage community members with lived experience in community planning processes.

It is important to create a *"healthy culture because citizens, especially youth, get "messages" from what they see in their communities, thereby influencing their choices."*
(Elmore Addendum to Town Plan).

- ◆ Monitor spaces to help ensure events remain substance free.
- ◆ Collaborate with retailers to decrease substance promotions such as outdoor advertising and signage for alcohol, tobacco, vape and cannabis products.
- ◆ Join local employee wellness initiatives (ie. 3-4-50) and improve support for your team!
- ◆ Create programs and opportunities, including volunteer work, where young people can grow, explore their options, succeed, and feel confident without using substances.
- ◆ Your own idea....

Organize a cleanup



Substance Retailers and Licensees

Establishments that sell or serve substances

Who: Retailers Selling Alcohol, Cannabis, Tobacco/Nicotine Products, and Paraphernalia

Consider Decreasing These RISK Factors:

- ◆ Lack of consistently checking IDs.
- ◆ Untrained or inconsistent training of employees.
- ◆ Product placement near “youth-friendly” items or in a youth’s line of vision.
- ◆ Substance marketing that appeals to youth.
- ◆ Substance-related products with flavors that appeal to youth.
- ◆ Absence of messaging to adult customers about safe storage.
- ◆ Price promotions that lead to an individual purchasing more than planned.



Consider Increasing These PROTECTIVE Factors:

- ◆ Consistent checking of IDs.
- ◆ Incentives for employees that pass compliance checks.
- ◆ Well-monitored store.
- ◆ Product placement that keeps substances separate from other products and out of youths’ line of vision.
- ◆ Regular store safety audits to prevent youth access and exposure to substances.
- ◆ Clear messaging to customers about safe storage and use at home.
- ◆ Well monitored and lit parking lots.
- ◆ Good relationships with local law enforcement partners.
- ◆ Limiting or removing substance-related products that appeal to youth.
- ◆ Underage staff are well supervised.
- ◆ Include public health trainers or content when training staff.
- ◆ Consider limiting advertising or exchanging it for healthy youth messaging.

Why It Matters:

Easy access, normalizing of use, inconsistent messaging, low perception of harm, and inconsistent enforcement of policies leads to youth use. The more risk factors there are, the greater the likelihood that youth will use. If we can reduce these risk factors, we can delay underage use of substances. Adults ages 26 and older who began drinking before age 15 are 3.5 times more likely to report “alcohol use disorder” in the past year than those who waited until age 21 or later to begin drinking.

National Institute of Health

Actions You Can Take

- ◆ Have a clear loss-prevention plan if adult-use substances go missing.
- ◆ Meet with Healthy Lamoille Valley about our Prevention Retailer Campaign.
- ◆ Have all staff complete required trainings.
- ◆ Use Healthy Lamoille Valley’s “We Card Because We Care” cards and messaging.
- ◆ Keep all nicotine products behind the register or in locked cases.
- ◆ Protect youth from inappropriate advertising by limiting the marketing materials for substance-related items, especially in window spaces.
- ◆ Keep 12 inches of space, or more, between substance-related products and youth-friendly products.
- ◆ Know and follow all state regulations.
- ◆ Provide education to your underage staff on the dangers of substance misuse.
- ◆ Replace substance advertising with healthy community and prevention messaging.
- ◆ Choose to not sell substances or substances-related products that are attractive to youth, ie. flavored vapes, alcohol in kid friendly lookalikes.
- ◆ Choose to not sell paraphernalia.



- ◆ Carry equally attractive alcohol-free alternatives!
- ◆ Purchase or update your Point of Sale software as able to alert cashier of the sale of an adult use product.
- ◆ Know which vapes/nicotine products are on the FDA approved list and choose to only sell those. Ensure all products are legal to sell in VT.
- ◆ Your own idea...

Retailer Resources



Social Networks

Parents, Caregivers, Teachers, Counselors, Advisors

WHO: Family, Peers, Social Networks, Youth Coaches, Associations


Consider Decreasing These RISK Factors:


- ◆ Unclear expectations around substance use, communication, and house rules.
- ◆ Easy access to substances in homes and at parties.
- ◆ Casual or permissive attitudes towards substance use by adults around children and youth.
- ◆ Modeling substance use in front of children and youth.
- ◆ Unsupervised or unscheduled time for youth.
- ◆ Childhood trauma including homelessness, food insecurity lack of medical care, and underassessed childhood trauma.
- ◆ Peer attitudes, beliefs, social norms, or involvement in unhealthy behaviors.
- ◆ Youth feeling isolated or depressed.
- ◆ Loss of cultural identity or connection.
- ◆ Media exposure to substance use and unsupervised use of tech.
- ◆ Bullying others or being a victim of bullying.

See our

Conservation Guide

Coaches Handbook





Consider Increasing These PROTECTIVE Factors:

- ◆ Youth engagement in extracurricular programs and other positive and meaningful activities. Help youth learn how to use free time in healthy ways.
- ◆ Youth feeling valued and that they matter to others.
- ◆ Frequent conversations about the risks of substance use.
- ◆ Clear rules around non-use, curfews, and when to communicate changes in plans.
- ◆ Monitoring and securing substances and medicines in the home.
- ◆ Parents/caregivers knowing where youth are and who they are with.
- ◆ Regular well-child and well-adolescent healthcare visits.
- ◆ Youth feeling connected to their family. Positive, warm parenting style.
- ◆ High parental expectations about school engagement.
- ◆ Positive friends and peer role models.
- ◆ Children and youth having strong self-esteem and control of their actions.
- ◆ Sense of cultural identity and community connection.
- ◆ Model substance-free ways of stress management.
- ◆ Mental health check-in's and counseling as needed.

Why It Matters:

When adults communicate the risks of substance use and set clear expectations, youth are less likely to misuse substances. Youth often follow the behaviors they see modeled by adults.



Actions You Can Take

- ◆ Become an Askable Adult, visit vtnetwork.org/askableadult.
- ◆ Show youth they matter. Help build a sense of belonging and attachment for youth.
- ◆ Help support youth mental health.
- ◆ Encourage and create spaces for youth voices to be heard.
- ◆ Secure and monitor all adult-use substances and medicines in the home.
- ◆ Use separate coolers for alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages at gatherings.
- ◆ Keep cannabis edibles securely away from youth at all times.
- ◆ Keep adult-use substances and medicines in the original packaging.
- ◆ Help youth learn the skills of how to manage their free time in healthy ways.
- ◆ Stay involved in your children's and teen's lives. Know where they are, what they are doing and who they are with.
- ◆ Talk to children and youth early and often about the risks of substance use, visit parentupvt.org and samhsa.gov/talk-they-hear-you/parent-resources.
- ◆ Encourage youth to adopt healthy behaviors.
- ◆ Help schools and community to support and reward youth who decide not to drink or use substances.
- ◆ Get to know other adults who care for, and about, youth.
- ◆ Find ways to model having fun and handling stress without adult substances.
- ◆ Make sure that your child or teen has quality role models that they can talk to.
- ◆ Create opportunities and spaces for youth to have mentors and adults who listen to youth voices.
- ◆ Know and share high quality resources for youth. Visit healthylamoillevalley.org/youthresources.
- ◆ Watch out for risk factors that may

- increase youth substance use.
- ◆ Help youth find strategies for getting out of tricky situations such as being with a friend who offers them a vape, cannabis, or alcohol product.
 - ◆ Be involved with your child's school.
 - ◆ Create programs and opportunities, including volunteer work, where youth can grow, explore their options, succeed and feel confident without using substances.
 - ◆ Serve equally or more appealing, non-alcoholic beverages at all gatherings.
 - ◆ Your own idea...

Taking charge of leisure time with TimeWise



Getting Started

My Action Plan - Next Steps



How are you currently involved in the work of prevention? _____

Which communities do you currently interact, and could you engage more, especially those most impacted? _____

- Which substances are most important to address?
- ☐ Alcohol
 - ☐ Cannabis
 - ☐ Tobacco/nicotine (vape/pouches/chew/cigarettes)
 - ☐ Opioids
 - ☐ Prescription medications
 - ☐ Emerging substances

What outcomes do you want to improve and for whom? and who will benefit from these changes? _____

Where do you have the power or influence to create change in your community? _____

What resources, data, and support will you need to move forward? _____

Who else can you engage to help with this work? _____

What are your top 3 priorities for strategic change? _____

What are your immediate next steps? _____

Resources

Healthy Lamoille Valley, working with the Vermont Department of Health, is a resource for you when you are considering actions and recommendations that will make your community healthier.

Please refer to our online version of the Toolkit, which is regularly updated, for additional information, planning documents, data, checklists and other resources.

Contact

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healthylamoillevalley.org/prevention-toolkit

Topics to view on our online Toolkit

- **Toolkit and Planning Materials for Making Change**
- **Education and Information by Substance**
- **Statewide and Local Data**
- **Community-Wide Strategies for Town Plans and Policy Development**
- **Resources For Building Healthy Communities**

Explore sample language for policies and town plans, links to local data and resources for strategic planning for the health of your community.

Additional resources available include the topics of healthy community design, mental health, physical health and preventing chronic disease.



“Prevention is Better Together” Celebration



Allied Health Student at GMTCC

Collaborating to reverse the trend of youth substance use.



Healthy Lamoille Valley's 2025 *Community Planning Toolkit: Preventing Youth Substance Use and Building Protective Factors, 4th Edition* and additional online resources are an update of the 2020 edition and an expansion of the original 2015 *Primer on Planning for Prevention*. These publications and resources were created thanks to grants from the Vermont Department of Health to decrease statewide substance use rates. Initial funding was from the Partnership for Success and current funders for this update are the Drug Free Communities Program and a grant from the Vermont Department of Health. The original foundation document for this update was created in collaboration with the Lamoille County Planning Commission.

