



Preventing

*A Community Planning Toolkit*

**Youth Substance Misuse  
and Building Protective Factors**





## Who We Are

Healthy Lamoille Valley is a coalition of community organizations and individuals working collaboratively to reduce youth substance misuse and encourage youth to make substance free healthy choices.

## What We Do



**Community Health**



**Education**



**Youth Engagement**



**Town Planning**

**Join Us and Work to Reduce Youth Substance Misuse in Our Community!**

**We want your involvement and voice!**

[www.healthylamoillevalley.org](http://www.healthylamoillevalley.org) | Facebook: Healthy Lamoille Valley | Twitter: @HealthyLamoille

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You can download this Toolkit as a PDF  
and access up to date resources at:  
[www.healthylamoillevalley.org/community-policy-toolkit](http://www.healthylamoillevalley.org/community-policy-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 adults who care for and about them
- ◆ Local decision makers
- ◆ Selectboard members
- ◆ Village Trustees
- ◆ Municipal Administrators and Managers
- ◆ You

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

## WHAT

This Toolkit is a community planning guide focusing on reducing youth misuse of alcohol, tobacco, cannabis and prescription drugs, while supporting efforts to help youth make healthy substance-free choices. There are many factors, including on family and individual levels, that impact youth substance misuse. The purpose of this Toolkit, however, is to focus on the community, policy and systems levels.

The Toolkit is also available online with up to date resources at:  
[www.healthylamoillevalley.org/  
community-policy-toolkit](http://www.healthylamoillevalley.org/community-policy-toolkit)

## WHEN

This Toolkit can be used as part of town or organizational planning processes or as a stand alone resource to support healthy community and policy development.

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



## Your Own Toolkit Notes...

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





## WHERE

This Toolkit highlights local data, examples and resources from Vermont's Lamoille Valley.

Lamoille Valley Towns & Villages:

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

## WHY

The brains of young people are still developing until they are 25. 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 environment around our youth is inundated with substance industry tactics that drive youth misuse. Additional pressures and consistent stressors on families that build up, for some more than others, can lead to higher rates of misuse.

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.

## 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. The focus is on a systems and policy level intervention.

Planning resources are provided to create policies that use a substance prevention lens to help build healthy communities and reduce youth substance misuse.



# Community Prevention Lens

## Noticing what your community teaches youth about substances

*Each of us can make a difference in our community toward reducing youth substance misuse, 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 start to heighten our awareness and simply notice.*



### Use This Toolkit To...

**Focus your attention** by taking steps to see through a youth substance misuse 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 vision** for what it means to live in a healthy community that includes maximizing the potential that youth will make healthy decisions - that healthy decisions become the norm.

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

**Be strategic** in your substance prevention efforts.

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

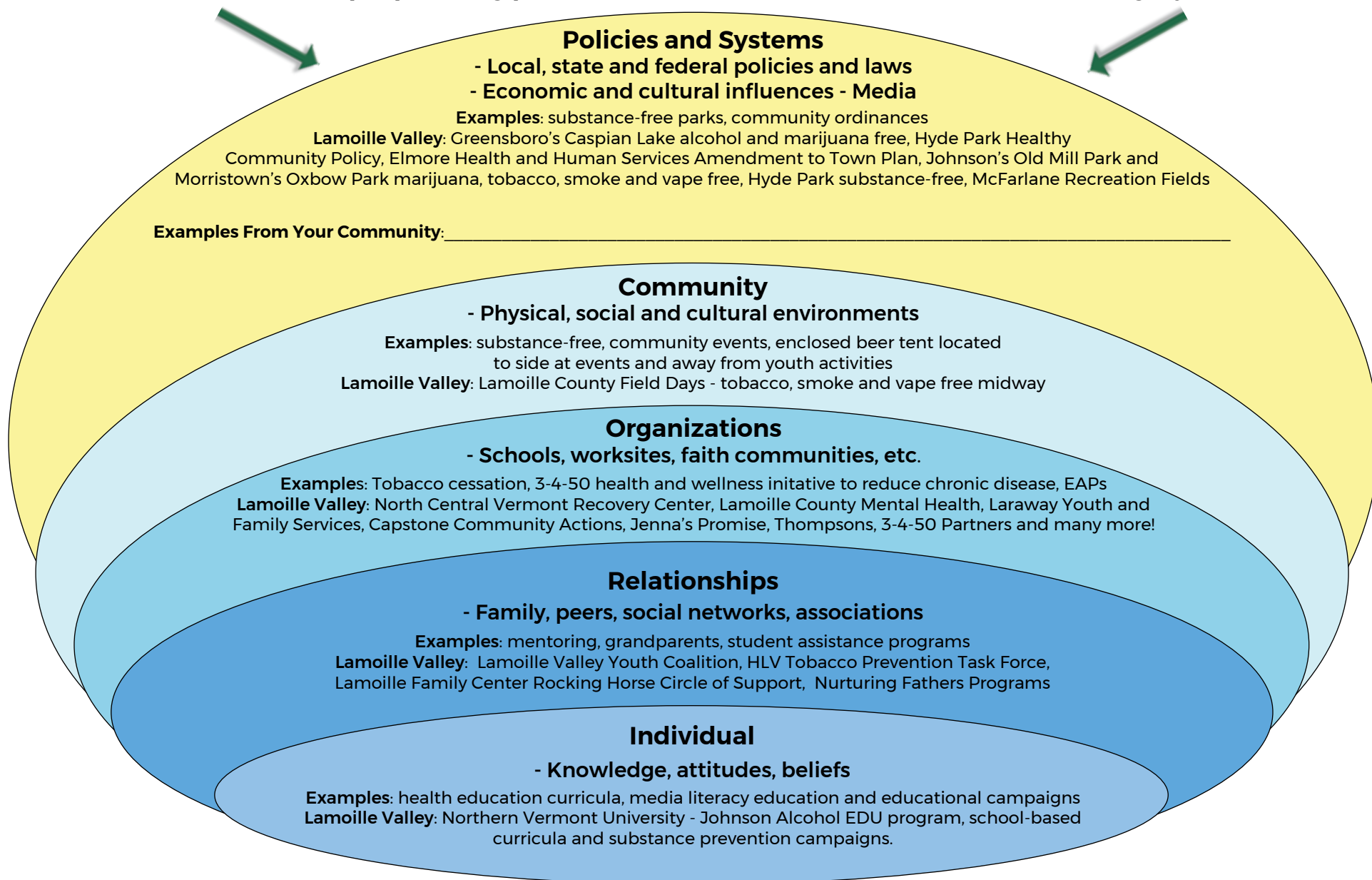
**Promote awareness** towards creation of, or change of, health and substance related policies.



*How can you increase your awareness of how substances are normalized for youth in your community and then take action?*

# The Vermont Prevention Model

This Toolkit is focused on the “Policies and Systems” level of intervention.  
Most municipal planning prevention activities will fall under this same category.



# Where Do Youth See Substances in our Community?

We spoke to area youth and here's what they say they've noticed...



Adults drinking at youth birthday parties and offering youth mocktails

Smoking and vaping in public spaces

Abundance of retail marketing of substances geared towards youth

Use of tobacco, cannabis and alcohol at outdoor music events

Smelling cannabis while biking on the Rail Trail, and in public



Retail environments selling tobacco and cannabis paraphernalia

Cigarette and alcohol trash collected on Green Up Day





Alcohol use at  
community  
adult and youth  
sporting events

Alcohol  
sponsorships  
and the serving  
of alcohol at  
community  
fundraising  
events

Alcohol promotions  
at community  
events that promote  
healthy lifestyles  
(ski areas and  
5Ks)

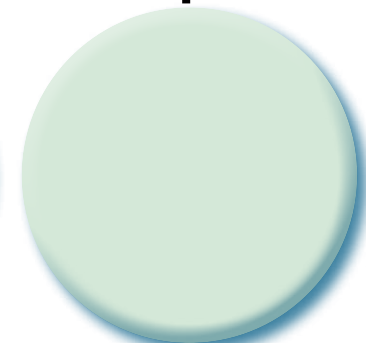
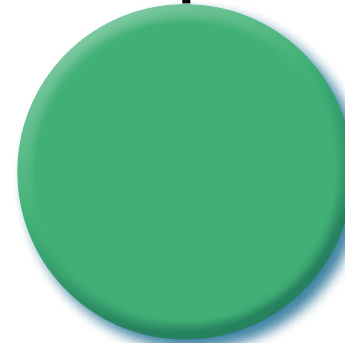
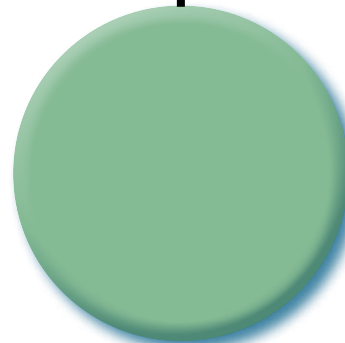
Peers offering  
vape devices,  
cannabis edibles  
and alcohol

Parents  
permitting  
underage use  
of substances  
in their home



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

*What would youth  
notice in your  
community?*



# 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.



## Community Norms

*Culture and norms impact our community in many ways and the culture around substance is no different.*

- ◆ 62% of Lamoille Valley adults said that some or a lot of alcohol is available and promoted at public events. *HLV Community Survey*
- ◆ The majority of Lamoille Valley towns have parks and public spaces where alcohol, smoking and vaping are allowed.
- ◆ Vermont has a grow-your-own cannabis movement and is preparing for commercialization.
- ◆ Vermont has a prominent craft brewery culture.

## Access and Availability of Substances in Community

- ◆ The Lamoille Valley has 200+ alcohol outlets.

*Department of Liquor and Lottery*

- ◆ 33% of Lamoille County parents feel that it is very likely or somewhat likely that their child would be able to access alcohol in their home without their knowledge.

*VDH Vermont Parents Survey, 2019*

- ◆ 75% of Vermont youth believe it is easy to get a vape device (68% for alcohol and 62% for marijuana). *YRBS, 2019*

- ◆ Flavored tobacco is attractive to youth and 86% of retailers sold at least one kind of flavored tobacco product in 2018.

*VDH, Flavors Drive Tobacco Use in Vermont, January 2020*

## Low Perception of Harm by Parents and Youth

*Youth perceptions of harm of substance use tends to mimic those of their parents. If parents have low perception of harm, youth will likely have low perception of harm, as well. This leads to higher rates of youth use.*

- ◆ Less than half of all high school students believe drinking, using marijuana or vaping regularly would cause great harm. *YRBS, 2019*
- ◆ 63% of Lamoille County young adults believe that there is no risk or slight risk from smoking marijuana every day or almost every day. *VT Young Adult Survey, 2019*
- ◆ 56% of Lamoille Valley adults believe that marijuana is a rite of passage. *HLV Community Survey, 2019.*

## Earlier onset "first use" of use of substances

*"There are several lines of evidence suggesting that adolescents are uniquely susceptible to the short- and long-term effects of drugs."*

*Winters and Arria, 2011*

- ◆ 20% of Lamoille youth drink before the age of 13 compared to 14% of Vermont youth statewide. *YRBS, 2017*
- ◆ 9% of Vermont middle schoolers started drinking alcohol before age 11. *YRBS, 2019*



# Throughout Vermont Youth Are Using Substances

## Early In Life

### Vermont Youth Substance Use Before the Age of 13

- ◆ Flavored Tobacco 15%
- ◆ Alcohol 13%
- ◆ Marijuana 6%
- ◆ Cigarettes 7%



## Too Often

### In the Past 30 Days

- ◆ 7% of middle school students reported drinking alcohol
- ◆ 31% of high school students reported drinking alcohol
- ◆ 27% of high school students reported using marijuana
- ◆ 26% of high school students reported vaping (up from 12% in 2017)

## Your Local Data

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.

[www.healthylamoillevalley.org/  
community-policy-toolkit](http://www.healthylamoillevalley.org/community-policy-toolkit)

## Too Much

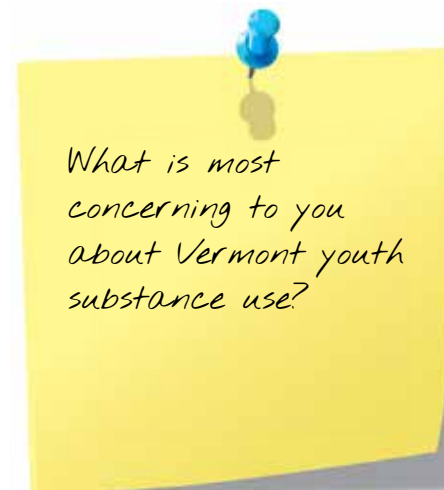
### Of High School Students Who Vape

- ◆ 43% use 20 or more days/month
- ◆ 57% use 10 or more days/month
- ◆ 88% use 6 or more days/month

### Alcohol Binge Drinking

- ◆ 15% of high school students binge drink at least once per month (25% of seniors).
- ◆ Out of middle schoolers who drink, one in five have five or more drinks in a row.

*Data on this page from YRBS, 2019. Adapted format from CADCA midyear presentation by Angela De Re, CADCA trainer, 2019*



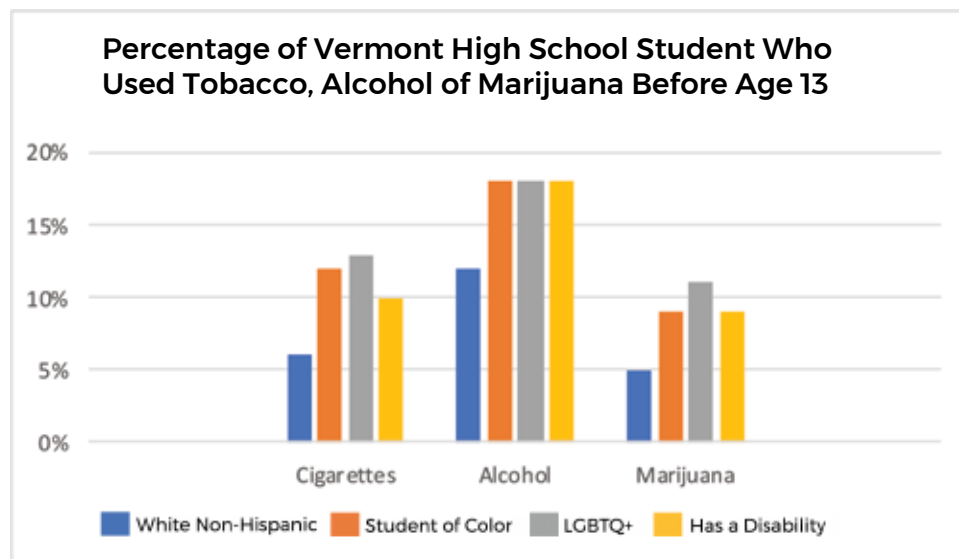
# Prevention Through An Equity Lens

## 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.



For more data see 2019 YRBS Populations In Focus, in our Online Toolkit.

***“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?

- ◆ Substance industry tactics often target more vulnerable populations.
- ◆ Individuals and communities with fewer resources are likely to endure more stress and less access to medical and mental health services. The pressures that exist in an environment affect substance use. As pressures accumulate, they can increase health problems and related risks.
- ◆ Some additional stressors that lead to inequity include food insecurity, income inequality, structural discrimination and racism, intergenerational trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)\*, housing instability, lack of access to quality education, and higher rates of substance exposure.

\*[https://www.healthylamoillevalley.org/resilient\\_lamoille/](https://www.healthylamoillevalley.org/resilient_lamoille/)

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

**A child who gets through age 21 without smoking, misusing alcohol or using illegal drugs is almost certain never to do so.**

CASA National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University



# Substance Misuse Impacts Our Communities



## Education

The human brain isn't fully developed until around age 25. 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 failure to complete high school or college.



## Health & Mental Health

Addiction and misuse cause or contribute to more than 70 other conditions requiring medical care. Substance use disorders have high rates of co-occurring mental illness and vice versa (NIDA).



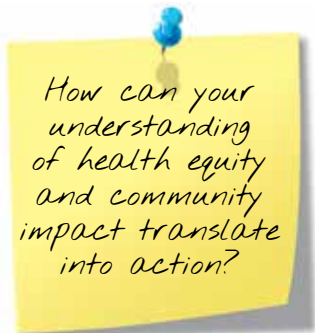
## Public Safety

Substance misuse contributes to an increase in motor vehicle crash fatalities, suicides, domestic violence situations, and unintentional injuries, increasing law enforcement and emergency service costs.



## Employment

Substance misuse can lead to an increase in missed days at work, increased workplace accidents, decreased productivity at work, 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 loss of productivity.

- ◆ Substance misuse costs our nation over \$600 billion annually. *NIH, National Institute of Drug Abuse*
- ◆ Evidence-based school prevention programs can save Vermont \$18 for every \$1 invested. *VDH 2017 How Prevention Works*

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

# Protecting Our Youth



## PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- ~ Policies and norms encourage non-use.
- ~ Opportunities exist for community involvement.
- ~ Laws and ordinances are consistently enforced.
- ~ Community service opportunities are available for youth.
- ~ Resources (housing, healthcare, childcare, jobs, recreation, etc.) are available

*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.*



Increasing Community Protective Factors  
and



Decreasing Community Risk Factors

Lead to healthier youth & communities

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

**Protective factors** reduce the impact of risk or change the way a person responds to risk.

*Public Health Dept, Lane County Oregon*

**See our resources online**

**[www.healthylamoillevalley.org/community-policy-toolkit](http://www.healthylamoillevalley.org/community-policy-toolkit)  
for a more complete list of risk and protective factors.**



## RISK FACTORS

- ~ Community norms and laws that lead toward substance use.
- ~ Access and availability of substances in the community.
- ~ Low perception of harm among parents and youth.
- ~ Early onset of "first-use" of substances.

*What can you do to increase protective factors in your community?*

## Think more about protective strategies...

To address the issues of youth substance misuse and early age of onset, we need to address both protective and risk factors related to local conditions.



What is our community doing to provide a healthy environment for ALL of our youth?

How does our town culture invite people to be healthy?

What do our community norms say to our youth?

What can we do to prevent or delay the onset (first use) of substances of youth in our community?

Which risk and protective factors can we address first?

What can our community do to take more action?

How can we prioritize what is best for our youth?


How can we use an equity lens to approach substance prevention?

How can the policies we set (and advocate for) improve the future outcomes of our youth?

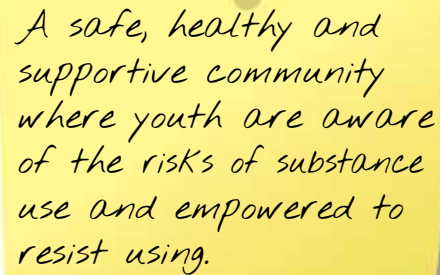
# What Is Your Vision For Youth In Our Community?

What's the dream and why does it matter?

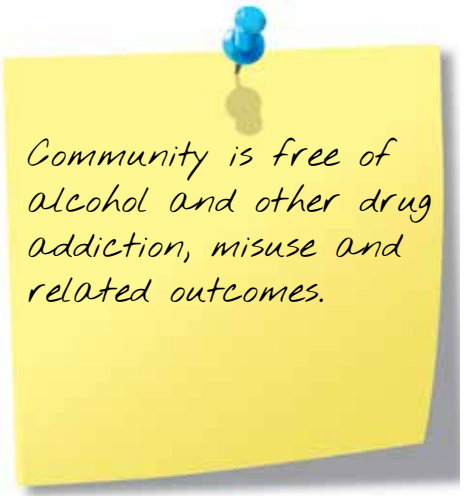
A few examples of personal visions for their community from Healthy Lamoille Valley Steering Team and Lamoille Area Youth Council members...



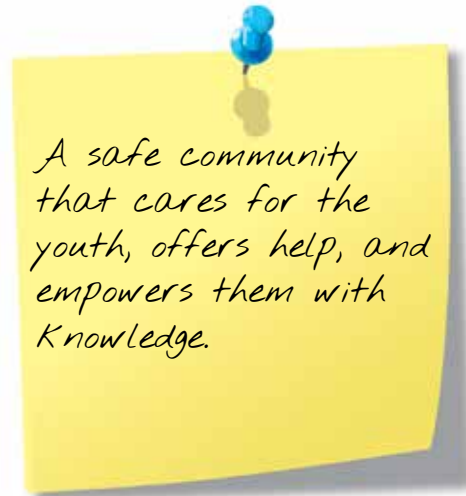
*Community culture where youth make healthy decisions and are supported in a successful path from childhood to adulthood.*



*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 that cares for the youth, offers help, and empowers them with Knowledge.*

**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 sample language resonates with you?

***A world where all people live free of the burden of drug misuse***

LIVE IN A COMMUNITY THAT ADDRESSES NORMS, MESSAGING AND COMMUNITY LEVEL FACTORS IN ORDER TO FOSTER AN ENVIRONMENT RESISTANT TO SUBSTANCE MISUSE

*To create long lasting sustainable change*

To be the community leader in eliminating the impact of substance misuse

**A safe, supportive and healthy community**

***Alcohol and drug-free community***

***Youth are healthy and substance free***

***Substance use is not the norm***

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

***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

*Thanks to Drug Free America, SAMHSA and substance prevention coalitions across the US for inspiration of this sample language*

## 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*

# Strategies - Addressing Risk and Protective Factors

## Which community level protective strategies can you influence?



- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organize groups to change community thinking and norms around substance use, especially related to youth.            | <input type="checkbox"/> Get connected to Healthy Lamoille Valley, the local substance prevention coalition.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Support efforts to post event signs and permanent town policy signs.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Know your data to get a true picture of what is happening.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Engage your town in a strategic planning process related to substance misuse and prevention.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Develop policies for youth sporting events and clearly share them (e.g. parents and spectators may not have alcohol, cannabis, or tobacco products at the recreational facility). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Host and advocate for substance-free family friendly events (and even create incentives for others to do the same!). | <input type="checkbox"/> Help town leaders and citizens learn about and implement local laws and policies based on the latest research and local data.                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Help bolster community enforcement by making sure policies, laws and ordinances are shared widely and consistently enforced.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Revise zoning bylaws to require a buffer around community facilities such as schools, child care centers, and parks. | <input type="checkbox"/> Create restrictions for alcohol, tobacco, and vape use in public places and parks.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Apply an equity lens to your planning: Ask who has been harmed? Who stands to benefit? How can future harms be prevented? ( <i>ChangeLab Solutions</i> )                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Create equitable policies and norms that encourage non-use.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicize and share information about Vermont's local social hosting laws.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Your own idea _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restrict the number and placement of substance outlets within the community.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Revise zoning bylaws and collaborate with retailers to decrease substance promotions, such as outdoor alcohol and tobacco signage and advertising. |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engage diverse community members in planning processes.  |   |  |

## Which of the following can you do to make a positive difference?

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Be aware of factors that may increase the risk of substance use.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Create opportunities for mentors and adults who listen.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Support the youth in your life and give them space to grow, while setting appropriate limits and clear rules.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help to foster a sense of belonging and attachment with youth.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage youth to adopt healthy beliefs and offer them clear standards.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Create programs and opportunities, including volunteer work, where young people can grow, explore their options, succeed and feel good about themselves without substances. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage youth and parent involvement in school.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Work to ensure that schools and the community support and reward young people's decisions not to drink or use substances. | <input type="checkbox"/> Know where your kids are, what they are doing, and who they are with.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talk with youth in your life about alcohol, tobacco, cannabis and other drug use. ( <i>ParentUpVT.org</i> ) | <input type="checkbox"/> Be a positive peer or adult role model.   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stay involved in your children's lives.   |  |  |

# Your Town Has A Say

## Creating a healthy environment for our youth

### WHAT TOWNS CAN DO

- ◆ Create rules and policies that support prevention.
- ◆ Encourage residents to participate in prevention activities.
- ◆ Ensure all populations are included, considered, invited and welcomed to your process.
- ◆ Take actions with regional partners to reduce current risk factors and build protective factors.
- ◆ Listen to the community, know your local data and make program adjustments based on new concerns.



Lamaille County Field Days Tobacco Smoke and Vape-Free Midway

### A few local examples

- ◆ Healthy living and wellness promotion language in town plans for Wolcott, Morristown, and Jeffersonville.
- ◆ Johnson's Old Mill Park and Morristown's Oxbow Park are tobacco, smoke, vape and marijuana free.
- ◆ Elmore's addendum to its Town Plan includes prevention language:  
*"Building a positive town culture that promotes healthy behaviors also significantly reduces risky behaviors such as substance misuse. Town policies are an important mechanism for creating healthy culture because citizens, especially youth, get "messages" from what they see in their communities, thereby influencing their choices."*

Links to the specific policies can be found in our Online Toolkit.



Greensboro Caspian Lake - Alcohol and Marijuana Free



Hyde Park - Healthy Community Policy, Substance Free Parks and Trails and 3-4-50 Partner

# Getting Started

## Now what? Next steps towards my community action plan



My vision for substance prevention in my community \_\_\_\_\_

My top 3 priorities for strategic change during the next six months:

1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_ 3) \_\_\_\_\_

Where do I have power or influence to make change in my community?

Resources and data I will use and/or need:

What support do I need?

Who else can I engage in this work?

What are my next steps?

How can I ensure this work continues?



# 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

Alison Link, Policy & Community Outreach Coordinator, HLV, [alison@healthylamoillevalley.org](mailto:alison@healthylamoillevalley.org)

Michelle Salvador, Substance Misuse Prevention Consultant, VDH, [Michelle.Salvador@vermont.gov](mailto:Michelle.Salvador@vermont.gov)

[www.healthylamoillevalley.org](http://www.healthylamoillevalley.org) | Facebook: Healthy Lamoille Valley | Twitter: @HealthyLamoille

## Thank You

Many thanks to the following people for their support of this project.

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[www.healthylamoillevalley.org/community-policy-toolkit](http://www.healthylamoillevalley.org/community-policy-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 are on the topics of healthy community design, mental health, physical health and preventing chronic disease.*



2019 PA Student Getting to Y Presentation



Lamoille Area Youth at CADCA Leadership Summit

# Collaborating to reverse the trend of youth substance misuse.



The “**Community Planning Toolkit: Preventing Youth Substance Misuse and Building Protective Factors**” (2020) is an updated version of the Healthy Lamoille Valley document, “**A Primer on Planning for Prevention**” (2015).

Both documents were created thanks to grants from the Vermont Department of Health to decrease statewide substance misuse rates for youth. Initial funding was from the **Partnership for Success** and current funders for this update are the **Regional Prevention Partnership** and the **Tobacco Control Program**.

