

Healthy Lamoille Valley: 2023 Toolkit

An Introduction Presentation

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Who We Are

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

What is Prevention?



Community Health



Education Support



Youth and
Parent /Caregiver
Engagement



Planning & Policy
Support

Community Prevention:

We must acknowledge and notice what our 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 heighten our awareness of where youth see substances and the marketing of substances, and simply notice.

About the 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
- ◆ 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 the individuals, family, organizations, businesses, and systems level policies that impact substance prevention. This Toolkit highlights stakeholders from across the community demonstrating the role we each have to play.

The Toolkit is available online with up to date resources: healthylamoillevalley.org/prevention-toolkit

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.

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

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

WHERE

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

Lamoille Valley Towns & Villages:

- ◆ 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 they are 25. This puts them most at risk for substance misuse, especially if they start using at an early age. Therefore, 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.

2023 Toolkit: Whats New?

Introduction to the 2023 Edition

A lot has changed since the first edition of this community planning toolkit. The impact of the COVID pandemic continues to have a profound effect on our communities and youth. Mental health issues across the country and in our local region are increasing the need for healthy communities that value and support our youth.

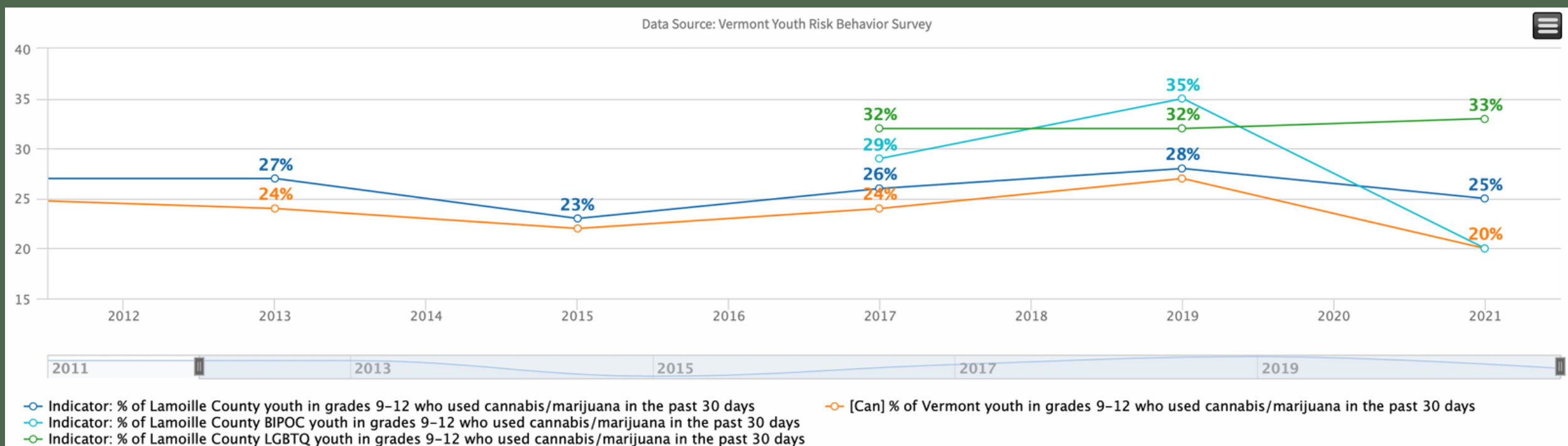
Awareness of health disparities and equity issues demand our attention. New local initiatives and opportunities reinforce that equity work is prevention work.

This emphasizes the importance of prevention work and the role we can all play within it.

As of 2022, retail cannabis is legal in Vermont. Cannabis now has a stronger presence in our communities, raising youth exposure through increased ease of access, visibility of advertising, and social norming. In this document the term “cannabis” is used in place of terms such as THC, marijuana, pot, and weed unless citing a source that used the term marijuana.

Note on Substance Use Trends and Data:

During the COVID pandemic, there may have been a temporary reduction in youth substance use (Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2021 Data Summary and Trends Report). Youth spent more time at home and less time with peers. As a result they had less access and fewer opportunities to use substances. We made the decision to show 2019 data in this 2023 edition to avoid giving a false impression of the trends based on the impact of COVID. As more data becomes available we will share it on our website at healthylamoillevalley.org.



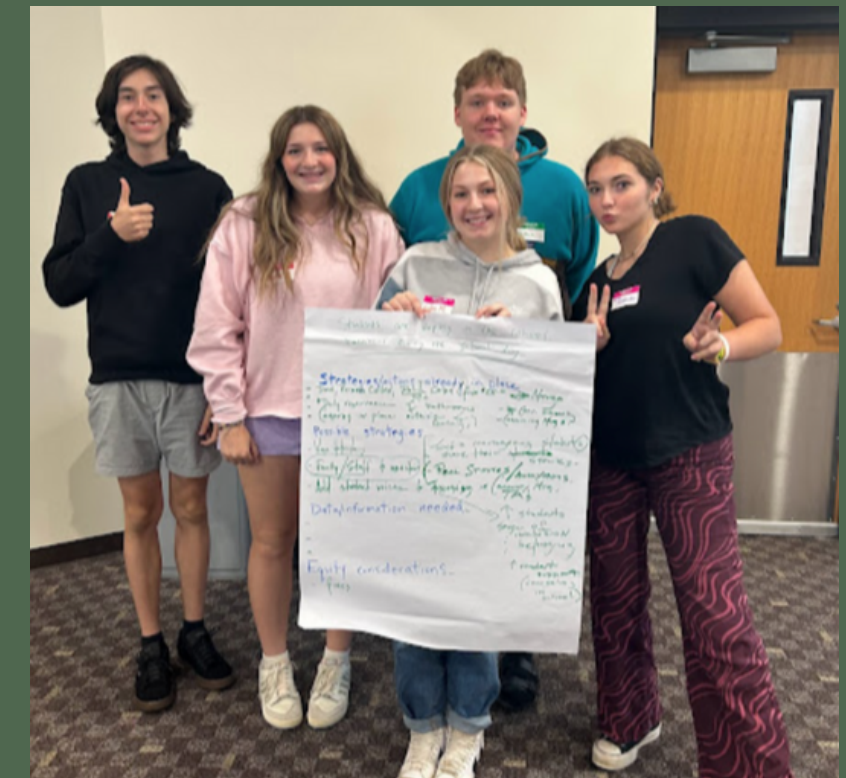
Utilizing Your Toolkit:

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 Example:
Erin from Hyde Park Elementary used the toolkit in a successful grant application.
The possibilities within this toolkit are limitless!



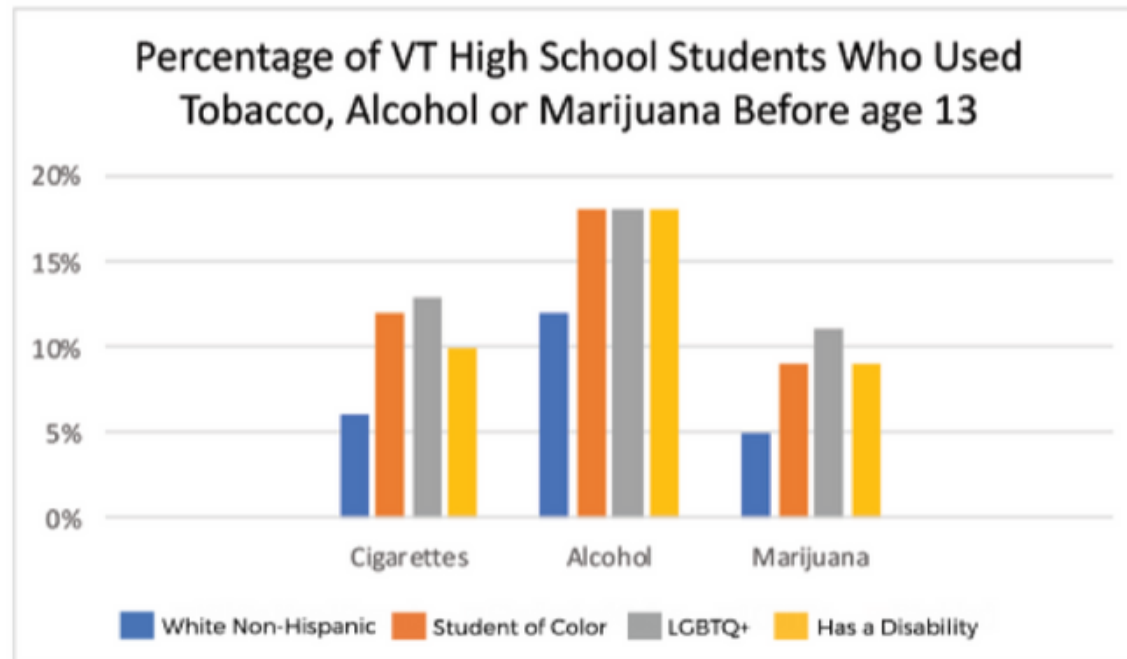
Group Action Planning with Allied Health Students!

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

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.

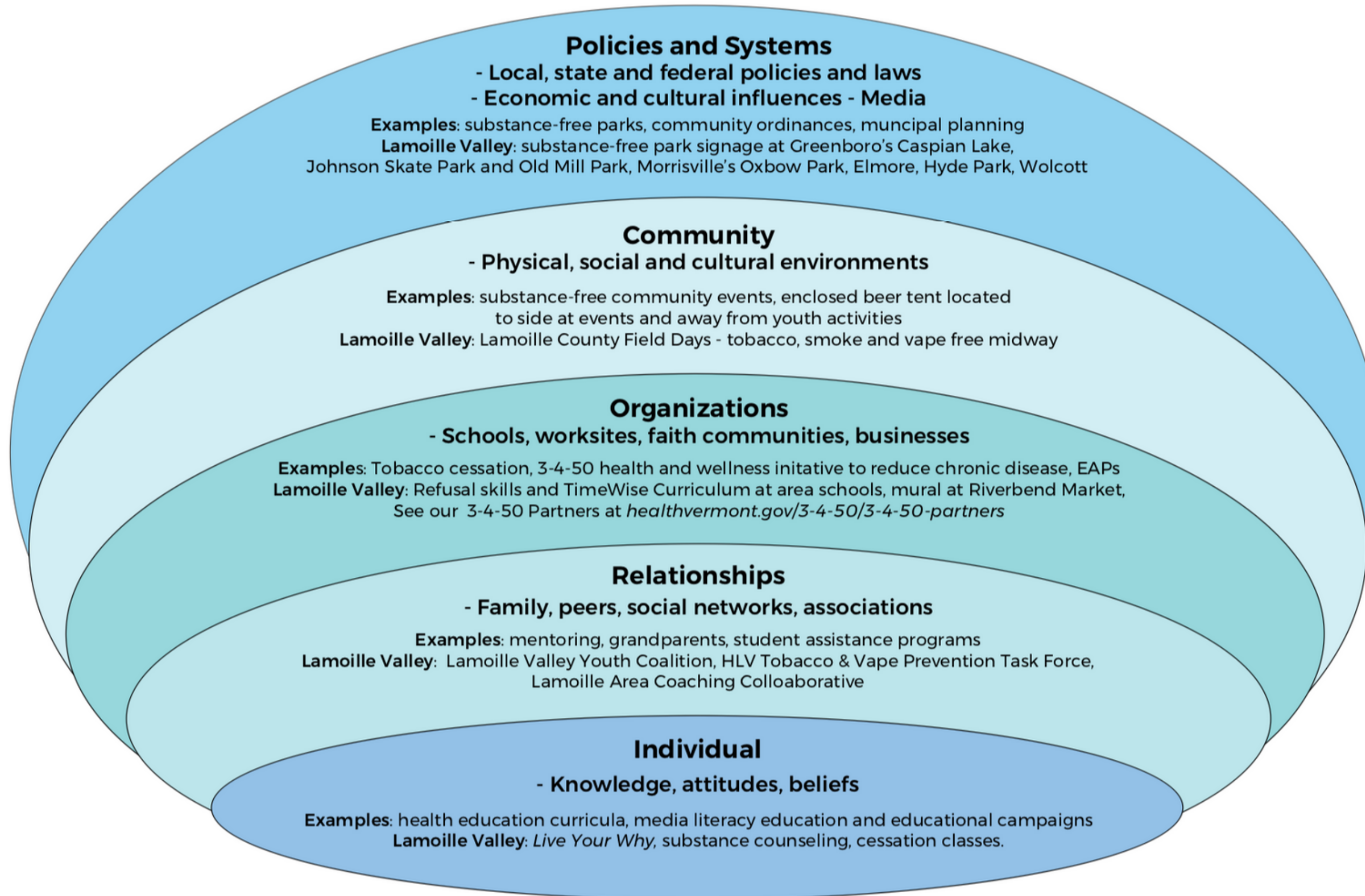
*healthylamoillevalley.org/resilient_lamoille/

How Substance Misuse Impacts Our Communities:

- Education
- Physical and Mental Health
- Public Safety
- Economic
- Employment

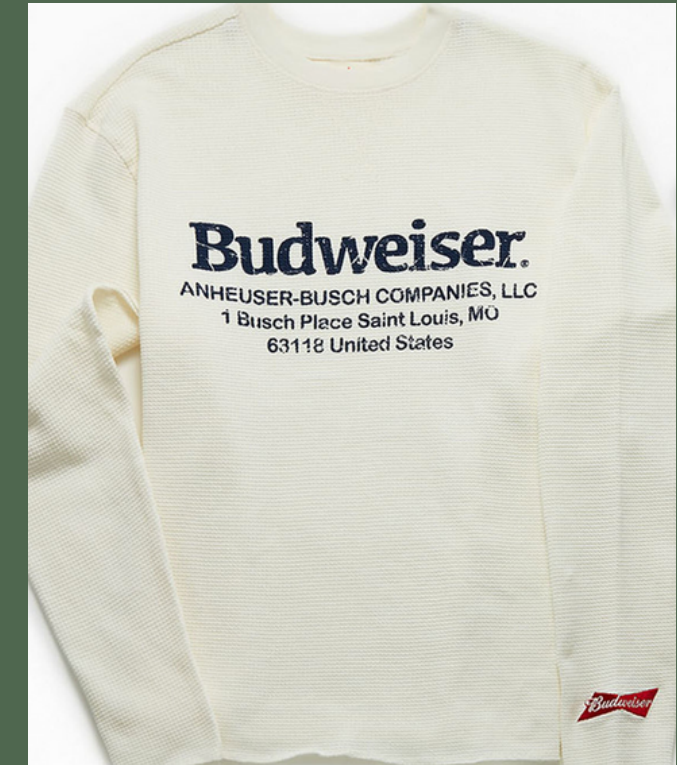
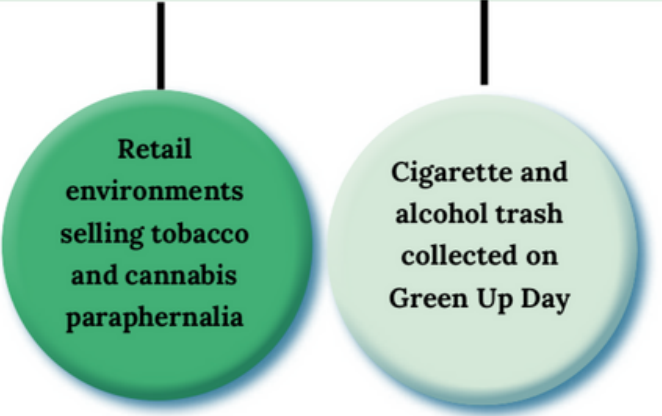
See pg. 8 of toolkit for more info

The Vermont Prevention Model:



Where Youth See Substances In our Communities

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



Policies and Systems: Information for Municipal leaders, boards, commissions, policy makers and legislators

Consider Decreasing These Risk Factors:

- ◆ Systems, policies, laws, and community norms are unclear or 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.



Actions You Can Take

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize equity in your planning. | <input type="checkbox"/> 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. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engage diverse community members in the planning process. | <input type="checkbox"/> Create restrictions for alcohol, tobacco, and vape use in public places and parks. According to VT law, cannabis use is illegal in public spaces. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Join coalitions and collaborate with others working on similar issues. | <input type="checkbox"/> Support efforts to post event signs and permanent town policy signs related to public consumption restrictions. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engage your town in a strategic planning process related to substance misuse prevention, treatment, and recovery. | <input type="checkbox"/> Revise zoning bylaws to require a buffer around community facilities such as schools, child care centers, recovery centers, and parks. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Include a health and wellness chapter in your town plan. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 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. | |

Use your toolkit like a workbook, consider actions you can take, see toolkit for more!

Organizations & Community Partners: Information for Schools, Worksites, Youth Sports & Organizations, Faith Groups, Social Services

Consider Decreasing These Risk Factors:

- ◆ Community attitudes 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.
- ◆ Residents feel low sense of connection to community.
- ◆ High unemployment levels.
- ◆ Many residents at or below the poverty level.
- ◆ Lack of strong social institutions.
- ◆ Low academic achievement, low commitment, and bullying in schools.

Consider Increasing These Protective Factors:

- ◆ 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 their positive involvement 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.

Actions You Can Take

- ☐ Get connected with Healthy Lamoille Valley, your local substance prevention coalition.
- ☐ Join the Healthy Lamoille Valley Tobacco and Vape Prevention and Cessation Taskforce.
- ☐ 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.
- ☐ Become and build protective factors in the community by coaching youth sports and join Healthy Lamoille Valley's Lamoille Area Coaching Collaborative.
- ☐ 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 the youth and young adults in your life about alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, and other substance use.
- ☐ 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.
- ☐ Publicize and share information about substance prevention, including Vermont's social hosting laws.
- ☐ Organize groups to change community attitudes away from substance use, especially related to youth.
- ☐ Engage other community members in community planning processes.

- ☐ Collaborate with retailers to decrease substance promotions such as outdoor advertising and signage for alcohol, tobacco, vape and cannabis products.
- ☐ Engage in worksite wellness initiatives.
- ☐ Become a Recovery Friendly Workplace.
- ☐ Become a 3-4-50 partner with the Vermont Department of Health and work towards reducing chronic disease through reducing tobacco use and increasing healthy nutrition and physical activity.
- ☐ Create programs and opportunities, including volunteer work, where young people can grow, explore their options, succeed, and feel confident without using substances.



Consider becoming a 3-4-50 Partner!

Substance Industry Retailers and Licensees: Information for Retailers Selling Alcohol, Cannabis, Tobacco/Nicotine Products, and Paraphernalia

Consider Decreasing These Risk Factors:

- ◆ Lack of consistent carding.
- ◆ Untrained or unevenly trained staff.
- ◆ Product placement near youth friendly items or at youth sight lines.
- ◆ Substance marketing that appeals to youth.
- ◆ Substance-related products with flavors that appeal to youth.
- ◆ Lack of messaging to adult customers about safe storage.
- ◆ Price promotions that lead to an individual purchasing more than planned.
- ◆ Substance product placement near youth friendly items or in easily accessible locations for youth.



Consider Increasing These Protective Factors:

- ◆ Well trained staff.
- ◆ Carding commitments and incentives for staff that pass compliance checks.
- ◆ Well-monitored store.
- ◆ Product placement that keeps substances separate from other products and puts them out of youth sight lines.
- ◆ 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 swapping it out for healthy youth messaging.

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.
- ☐ Participate in the Department of Liquor and Lottery's Just Ask Campaign. Have staff sign the pledge and display the poster in your store, visit liquor.control.vermont.gov/education.
- ☐ Use Healthy Lamoille Valley's "We Card Because We Care" cards and messaging.
- ☐ Keep easy to steal items behind the register in locked cases.
- ☐ Protect youth from unintentional marketing by limiting advertising and limiting window space taken up by substance-related items.
- ☐ Keep at least 12 inches of space 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 messaging with healthy community and prevention messaging
- ☐ Choose to not sell substance related items that are attractive to youth, ie. flavored vapes.



Relationships: Information for 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, and lack of medical care.
- ◆ Family history of substance misuse, mental illness, interacting with the justice system.
- ◆ 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.

Consider Increasing These Protective Factors:

- ◆ Youth engagement in out-of-school time 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 misuse.
- ◆ Clear expectations 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 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 connection.

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.
- ☐ Separate tables if cannabis edibles are present around youth.
- ☐ 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.

- ☐ 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 the community 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 or handling stress without adult-use substances.
- ☐ Make sure that your child has quality mentors and role models that they can talk to.
- ☐ Create opportunities and spaces for youth to have mentors and adults who listen to youth voices.



See the toolkit for more!



Resources and 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.

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.



Question and Answer Time!

Link to Toolkit PDF:

Add a <https://www.healthylamoillevalley.org/wp-content/uploads/HLVToolkit-2023-FINAL-low-quality-for-web.pdf>

Interested in substance-free signage? click here:

<https://www.healthylamoillevalley.org/substance-free-signs/>

Volunteer Opportunities:

<https://www.healthylamoillevalley.org/get-involved/#volunteer>

