

Youth-centered Environmental Shift (YES!) Program

Background

Students need our help to stay safe and healthy. In 2018, 12.3% of 8th-grade students reported that they have been in a situation where someone made them engage in kissing, sexual touch, or intercourse when they did not want to; and 24.9% reported seeing a peer pressure someone else to kiss, touch, or have sex when they did not want to.¹

Youth-centered Environmental Shift (YES!) is an evidence-informed primary prevention strategy. It addresses school climate and centers youth empowerment to create protective environments and reduce rates of sexual violence (SV) within school communities.

YES! aims to create a school culture where students are emotionally and physically safe, supported, and free of abuse, specifically sexual violence.

YES! promotes positive norms and makes changes to the physical space of the school to reduce the risk of SV and other forms of violence, rather than relying on classroom instruction. For schools wanting to link YES! with their sexual health education instruction, technical assistance is available.

YES! can have several positive effects that contribute to student wellbeing and success:

Risk and Protective Factors

- Increase positive social behavior and socio-emotional skills
- Decrease bystander inaction and attitudes towards violence
- Increase youth engagement and positive attitudes towards their school
- Increase academic achievement & decrease discipline



Adolescent Violence Outcomes –Victimization/Perpetration

- Decrease in sexual violence (including sexual harassment)
- Decrease in teen dating violence
- Decrease in bullying and other youth violence

¹ Healthy Youth Survey. Healthy Youth Survey 2018: Statewide Results, Grade 8. <https://www.askhys.net/library/2018/StateGr08.pdf>. Published 2019. Accessed January 29, 2020.



Funding

OSPI is recruiting three (3) middle and junior high schools in Washington state to implement YES!. Participating schools will receive an estimated total of \$17,750 each in funding between January 2022 and September 2023, for their work on program implementation and evaluation. The University of Washington, in partnership with Harborview Medical Center, is conducting the evaluation of YES!. A successful evaluation will result in YES! becoming a model for statewide and national replication.

YES! Program Components (Schools)

1) Develop a School Support Team (SST)

- This team (~5-6 teaching/non-teaching staff) will implement YES! at the school level.
- Attend monthly/quarterly meetings.
- Each SST will collaborate with other middle/junior high schools on the remaining program components.

2) School Climate/Environmental Shift

- Run WA Department of Health's (DOH) "[It's About Respect](#)" social norms campaign.
- Engage students and hold focus groups.
- Give out assessments to score the physical, social, cultural environment of school.

3) Protocol/Plan Revision & Implementation

- Review policies and procedures (e.g., dress code, mandated reporting, sexual harassment, bullying, teen dating violence, etc.).
- Revise or develop building-level protocols and plans based on review.

Additional Program Components (OSPI)

1) Youth Oversight Board

- Young people are experts in their own environments. YES! stands out for engaging youth as active leaders in the program.
- YES! is partnered with Okanogan County's Foundation for Youth Resiliency & Engagement (FYRE) to run a Youth Oversight Board with WA middle and high school students. Youth board members are paid for their time and actively review and contribute to our work with pilot schools, including all listed program components.

2) Sexual Health Education - RCW 28A.300.475

- To make connections with new comprehensive sexual health education requirements (optional for participating schools).
- Technical assistance throughout YES! program implementation.
- Foundations training to sex education teachers at each pilot school.
- Develop cohort with sex educators across schools.

For more information

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