

Vision
Wisconsin youth are healthy, thriving & engaged citizens.



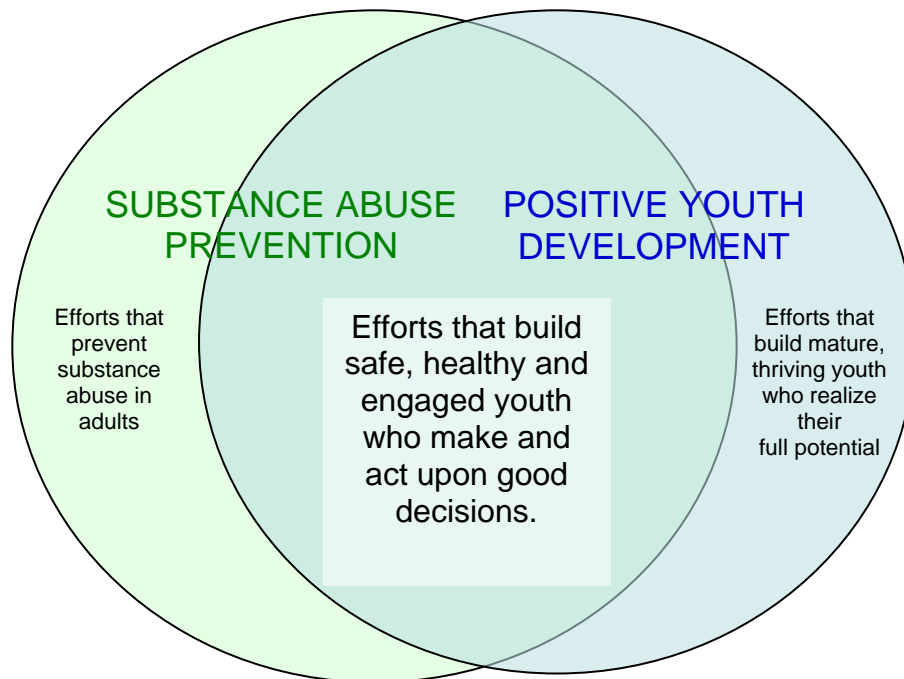
Mission
Supporting and enhancing the capacity of coalitions in their prevention & positive youth development efforts.

ALLIANCE FOR WISCONSIN YOUTH

Prevention and Positive Youth Development

The Alliance for Wisconsin Youth (AWY) supports local coalitions in their prevention and positive youth development efforts. We provide this description of the relationship between prevention and positive youth development to clarify the scope of AWY's membership and services. 'Prevention' and 'positive youth development' refer to two highly interdependent, interrelated and complementary frameworks: 1) youth risk behavior prevention (with an emphasis on substance abuse prevention)¹, and; 2) positive youth development.

These frameworks are viewed along a continuum in which 'prevention' and 'positive youth development' often occur simultaneously, as is illustrated below by the overlapping area. Some aspects of prevention do not overlap with youth development, such as prevention activities aimed at adults. Similarly, some aspects of positive youth development do not overlap with prevention, such as supports and opportunities that go beyond preventing an undesirable behavior and build maturity, thriving and full potential. However, in the vast arena that prevention and youth development share, many activities and strategies are similar or highly interrelated.



For example, conducting alcohol compliance checks is clearly a substance abuse prevention strategy that helps to keep alcohol out of the hands of young people. This action also serves to improve appropriate community boundaries and heighten positive expectations for youth – both key elements of positive youth development or asset building. Furthermore, when coalitions involve youth as ‘buyers’ in alcohol compliance checks, they are also engaging youth in community service, leadership, time with adult role models, and providing a sense that the community values them.

Both frameworks assert that community-based efforts are best advanced by the work of local, multi-sector coalitions. Both are applied in multiple domains – within individuals, among peers, in families, neighborhoods, schools, youth-serving programs and systems, communities, and society in general. “Ultimately, a comprehensive community strategy should include aspects of both frameworks.”²

However, one troublesome issue is that the terminology of each framework is not sufficiently integrated in the research and literature or by funders, often resulting in confusion or competition in practice, especially around methods and outcomes. In addition, communities vary greatly due to community history, values, resources, and political climate, and funding sources often dictate language, methods and outcomes. Ultimately, local decisions about local actions that benefit youth are best made by local people.

In deciding a course of action that benefits youth, local coalitions are encouraged to consider both prevention and positive youth development language, methods and outcomes. *AWY will provide free or low cost consultation, technical assistance, or training to member coalitions that request help in planning and implementing a course of action.*

¹AWY is funded with state dollars that requires substance abuse prevention outcomes, especially in competitive grants or scholarships awarded by AWY. AWY also encourages local efforts related to substance abuse prevention, including the prevention of child abuse and neglect, juvenile crime, school failure, suicide/depression, adolescent pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and other health-compromising behaviors.

²Small, S. and Memmo, M., Contemporary models of youth development and problem prevention: toward an integration of terms, concepts, and models. *Family Relations*, 2004, 53, 3-11.

Essential Elements of Substance Abuse Prevention

- **Focus:** Reduce Risk Factors and increase Protective Factors
- **Target:** Individuals, Peers, Families, Schools, Neighborhoods, Communities and Society
- **Goal:** Eliminate or reduce problem behavior
- **Strategies:** Public awareness, information, education and training, alternative activities, and policy and systems change (environmental strategies that change 'norms').
- **Structure:** Community-based coalitions, programs, policies and practices that represent a wide variety of stakeholders, including youth as leaders.

Substance Abuse Prevention Measurable Outcomes (National Outcome Measures)

- Past 30-day use or reduction of use
- Perception of risk and harm from use
- Age of first use
- Perception of disapproval (of parents, peers)
- Family communication around drug use
- Alcohol and drug related car crashes, crimes, suspensions and expulsions (school or work)
- Number of persons served by programs and strategies
- Number of evidence-based programs and strategies

Essential Elements of Youth Development

- **Focus:** Promote and provide the four concepts of youth development, or the 40 Developmental Assets™, or the eight features of positive developmental settings.
- **Target:** Individuals, Peers, Family, Schools, Neighborhoods, Community and Society
- **Goal:** Develop potential; build decent, capable, healthy, increasingly mature young people
- **Strategies:** Family and community development, engaging youth as actors and leaders, creating opportunities, developing skills, promoting healthy beliefs and standards, developing supports, and policy and systems change.
- **Structure:** Community-based coalitions, programs, policies and practices, including youth as leaders.

Examples of Youth Development Measurable Outcomes

- Succeeds in school
- Helps friends or neighbors one or more hours per week
- Values diversity
- Maintains good health
- Exhibits leadership
- Avoids doing things that are dangerous
- Delays gratification
- Overcomes adversity

Source: Search Institute Attitudes and Behaviors Survey