

MAKING PREVENTION A PRIORITY IN REGION ONE COMMUNITIES

NORTHWEST
C O R N E R
P R E V E N T I O N
N E T W O R K



HISTORY

NCPN was established in February 2010 as a grassroots collective of passionate residents and organizations organizations, and passionate citizens of the six towns that form the Region One school district: Canaan/Falls Village, Cornwall, Kent, Salisbury, and Sharon.

The coalition was established with the purpose of enhancing Northwestern Connecticut youth and families' abilities to make informed, healthy decisions about substance use prevention and risky behaviors.



MISSION

Northwest Corner Prevention Network carries out the mission of making prevention a priority to **reduce youth substance use and misuse, and to enhance the emotional well-being and decision-making skills of youth and families** in the Region One community.



VISION

Northwest Corner Prevention Network aims to be the go-to organization in the Region One school district for the community to **become more informed and take action** toward prevention strategies.

Through its work, the coalition builds healthier communities in the Region One school district. The work will encompass strengthening protective factors and reducing risk factors, for youth to feel supported and empowered to make healthy decisions and build emotional resilience.



LOCAL SOLUTIONS FOR LOCAL NEEDS

Northwest Corner Prevention Network uses data from the national level, the state level, and from locally-administered surveys, specifically in the Region One school district, in order to get the most up-to-date picture of what's going on and what the current needs are.

The coalition sponsors a student survey, implemented every other year at the public middle and high school grades within the Region One School District. These surveys, which are voluntary, anonymous, and confidential, give insight as to the current snapshot of trends amongst youth regarding mental health, emotional wellbeing, and substance use. The data gathered from this survey is used to plan activities and create informative campaigns for public awareness.

The most recent survey, the Youth Voices Count survey, was administered in May - June 2023 to students in grades 7-8 and 9-12 were administered the Youth Voices Count survey. The full survey data report is available on the coalition's website, ncpncoalition.org.

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WHAT IS PREVENTION?

Substance use prevention strategies take an **upstream approach**, in which the goal is to **prevent substance use before it starts** by educating and supporting individuals and families by promoting efforts that contribute to widespread positive community change. (Source: [SAMHSA](#))

The adolescent brain is particularly vulnerable to the negative and long-lasting impacts of substance use. It is crucial to work to delay the onset of use as much as possible, which is a vital goal of the upstream approach. Prevention efforts play a crucial role in **promoting healthy choices** and **minimizing the risks** associated with substance use.

Substance use prevention coalitions use strategies that focus on **enhancing** decision-making skills and **strengthening** emotional well-being and resiliency. They also prioritize **informing** youth and families about the risk factors that contribute to early substance use, as well as the protective factors that reduce the risks.

Moving Prevention Upstream

Why do we believe in the importance of upstream prevention? To understand, imagine standing along the bank of a rushing river...

There are people struggling in the water. It's clear that without help, they could drown. Person after person are pulled to shore. They're weak and cold, and some are clearly ill. Before long, more people float by. It's a struggle to rescue as many people as possible. The question is: What else could be done to help them?

The rush of people isn't stopping. Upstream, there are people clinging to tree branches and rocks in the water. They haven't been swept away by the current yet, but they still need help. Life preservers are thrown to those in the water. The question is: Where are they all coming from?

Life jackets are being handed out when there is a distant scream. Upstream, someone falls through a hole in an old bridge and splashes into the river below. That's it! If someone doesn't post warning signs or repair the bridge, more people will fall in. Heading upstream with a toolbox, it's clear: Fixing this bridge will help keep people safe today and for years to come.



Why intervene here?

It's important to help people in urgent need. When individuals face a crisis, **tertiary prevention** services offer vital treatment options that help individuals cope and recover. These interventions are essential for dealing with the consequences of trauma. The next step? Helping people avoid them.

Why intervene here?

Giving people tools and support for improving their own health is key. **Secondary prevention** programs provide a critical early response to behavioral health challenges. Such midstream interventions can help individuals avoid further harm. The next step? Addressing trauma's root causes.

Why intervene here?

Helping people build resilience can prevent harm before it occurs. That's why **primary prevention** takes place upstream. By addressing the root causes of public health challenges, these interventions have the power to strengthen and protect communities as well as individuals.

HOW DOES THE COALITION OPERATE?

SECTOR REPRESENTATION



The coalition engages the different sectors of the community in order to get an array of perspectives from folks at the table, crafting the most practical, multi-lensed, and community-focused approach to Region One's specific needs. Coalition work is done with the collective voice of its members, community stakeholders, and residents in the region.

These sectors include:

- youth
- parents
- business
- media
- schools
- youth-serving organizations
- law enforcement
- faith-based organizations
- civic or volunteer groups
- healthcare professionals or organizations
- state, local, and tribal government agencies
- and other local organizations involved in reducing substance use

HOW IS NCPN FUNDED?

The work of Northwest Corner Prevention Network is funded through state and federal grants, including the DMHAS-funded Local Prevention Council (LPC) and State Opioid Response (SOR) grants, which are awarded through Western Connecticut Coalition, the area's Regional Behavioral Health Action Organization (RBHAO).

In 2021, the coalition was awarded the 5-year Drug Free Communities grant, a federal program through the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. This opportunity provides the coalition to increase the potential for its programming and work done throughout the community.



Prevention efforts are guided by the [Strategic Prevention Framework](#), which informs the work through a data-driven process. Cultural competence and sustainability are at the core of each surrounding step.



COMMUNITY COLLABORATION: WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?



Local Businesses: Community keystones

Through involvement with the coalition, businesses can increase their connection with the local community and feel good about being role models for their community partners!

How can businesses get involved?

- Sharing awareness messages with the community
- Hosting or sponsoring coalition events
- Designating a staff to join NCPN's monthly meetings (the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 10:30am)
- Allowing staff to volunteer time and efforts for coalition events in the community



Media's Leadership in Sharing Information

The media serves as a powerful force for sharing information throughout the community. Involvement with the coalition shows the community that there is value placed on local concerns, which builds trust between the media and its consumers.

How can the media get involved?

- Share coalition-designed PSA's about substance use prevention
- Publish articles about coalition-involved initiatives, such as events, programming, and resources



The Impact of Faith-Based Organizations

The 2023 Youth Voices Count survey found that Region One youth who were involved in a faith-based community were less likely to use substances. By being involved with NCPN, faith-based organizations can further their work within the community and use the coalition's community partnership to reach a new audience.

How can the faith community get involved?

- Encouraging members to volunteer in the coalition's activities
- Hosting or sponsoring coalition events
- Including coalition initiatives and updates in announcements



Youth: Be the Change

Youth who volunteer get the benefits of developing skills, like public speaking, community building, and interpersonal skills. Involvement with NCPN is also a **great resume booster**, and an easy way for youth to practice using their voice to make a positive impact in your hometown!

How can youth get involved?

- Joining the coalition's monthly youth coalition meeting
- Volunteer to table at coalition-affiliated events
- Share coalition and prevention-related information with peers