Youth Experiences Survey
The Right Questions, Asked the Right Way, for Results

The Youth Experiences Survey (YES) allows you to hear directly from the youth in your community about their experiences in their school, neighborhood, and home.

Benefits of Administering YES

• Provides a picture of youth well-being, needs, and strengths across your community
• Identifies both the risk factors and the protective factors affecting youth outcomes
• Helps communities prioritize and allocate resources where they are most needed
• Generates data for inclusion in state and federal grant applications
• Assists in matching local priorities with proven prevention and early intervention programs
• Gives potential funders confidence that the proposed solutions are evidence-based
• Shows what’s working and what’s not working by revealing changes in risk, protection, and outcomes, when re-administered

“It really helps to have evidence to support your movement.”
—Non Profit Executive
Results Across the Country

INCREASED FUNDING
In Rhode Island, four administrations of the YES proved to funders that the need was real, the drivers of that need were understood, and the proposed programs would directly address the root causes. This led to new and leveraged funding of approximately $2.5M annually for prevention programming. Funders include federal, state, local, philanthropic and Medicaid.

RESHAPED POLICY
In one Alabama county, public systems had prioritized substance use. When they learned that substance use in their county was actually much lower than national averages they were able to re-prioritize their efforts.

PROGRAMMED EFFECTIVELY
In Memphis, TN, the YES data led local leaders to fund and implement evidence based programs that are both culturally relevant and proven to improve outcomes for children and youth.

PROVED SUCCESS
In Providence, RI the YES showed tobacco use among youth at about half the national average. This validated several years of policy, investment and community organizing around this issue.

What Differentiates YES
- Easy to administer, relatively low cost, and available on a variety of platforms
- Youth voice their own perceptions of what is happening in their community
- Includes questions addressing behavioral health
- Youth outcomes are linked to risk AND protective factors, allowing communities to adopt a prevention approach using evidence
- Results highlight areas in which public agencies and communities might focus their investments
- Reports of survey data are easy to read and include national norms for comparison
- Links to a database of results-based programs (blueprintsprograms.com) designed to address the needs identified by the data
- Resulting data is open-source so it stays with the community and can be easily shared

How Does it Work?
- Usually administered in middle and high schools during a single class period either on-line or in a paper-based format
- Participation is always voluntary and students can skip any question
- Youth responses are anonymous to protect confidentiality
- The survey asks about youth’s experiences in a variety of settings including school, neighborhood, and home
- It focuses on five key areas of wellbeing: education and skills attainment, emotional well-being, physical health, positive behavior, and positive relationships
- Both rural and urban communities can use it
- Has been tested with African-American, white, and Latino youth

“This contained data that I didn’t know was available about our kids”
—County Official