

Turn It Around Group Evaluation Results

Prepared by CCHI Evaluation Team



TURN IT
AROUND

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The purpose of this report is to present results from youth reported survey data and focus groups with participants from the Turn It Around youth group in Charlestown. Results were analyzed for themes and trends, and are presented in their entirety in the following pages. In addition, a very brief review of literature on protective factors has been included to provide context and understanding of the themes and results.

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Literature Background on Protective Factors

Protective factors are defined as "conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that, when present, promote well-being and reduce the risk for negative outcomes" (Development Services Inc., 2013). The presence of protective factors may be influential in reducing risky behaviors among youth, while risk factors may increase the risk of engaging in such behaviors; thus, the more protective factors in a young person's life, the less vulnerable the young person will be in developing adverse health conditions and social conditions (Development Services Inc., 2015). In the youth development field, the presence of protective factors is essential for optimal growth and advancement of young people; the out of school time space provides a wealth of opportunities to incorporate these factors to enrich the lives and experiences of youth through skill building, career exploration, community service, and more.

Existing literature presents protective factors in five different levels: individual, community, family, school, and peers/relationships (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2011; Applied Survey Research, 2014; Development Services, Inc., 2013, 2015). A few of the most influential factors for each of these levels can be found on the next two pages of this report.

Notable protective factors for reducing adolescent risky behaviors that particularly pertain to out of school time programs include having a positive connection with adults, where youth are supported and cared for by adults outside of their family, as well as having a range of opportunities in the community for youth to engage in, which includes volunteering and helping members of the community (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2011). These particular protective factors are associated with the reduction of risk behaviors such as substance use, delinquency, school suspensions, and school dropout (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2011; Development Services Inc., 2013). In addition, overall engagement in meaningful activities and positive self-concept, in which youth feel they are of worth and feel loved and/or wanted, have been found to drastically reduce risky behaviors such as those listed above (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2011; Development Services Inc., 2013).

The data and feedback from youth members of the Turn It Around group show that some of these pertinent protective factors are evident within the program and have been important to these young people.



Literature Background on Protective Factors

Individual

- Positive self concept (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2011)
- Positive personal qualities such as internal motivation and easy-going temperament (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2011)
- Sense of purpose & positive future (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2011; Applied Survey Research, 2014; Development Services, Inc., 2013;)
- Sense of optimism (Development Services, Inc., 2013)

Family

- Family attachment/bonding; connectedness (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2011).
- High parental expectations regarding school (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2011).
- Parental involvement (Applied Survey Research, 2014)
- Family meal time (Applied Survey Research, 2014)

Community

- Positive connection to other adults (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2011)
- Safe, supportive, & connected neighborhood (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2011)
- Range of opportunities in the community to promote meaningful youth engagement (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2011)
- Services for those in need (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2011)
- Local & state policies and practices that support positive health outcomes (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2011)

Peers/Relationships

- Positive relationships with peers (Development Services, Inc., 2015)
- Involvement with positive peer group activities (Development Services, Inc., 2013)
- Positive peer role models (Development Services, Inc., 2013)
- Caring adult(s) present in life (Development Services, Inc., 2013)

School

- Youth feel connected to school (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2011).
- Youth participate in after-school activities (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2011)
- Caring school environment (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2011)
- School attendance (Applied Survey Research, 2014)
- High teacher expectations (Applied Survey Research, 2014)



Survey Results

Demographics

Of the 26 Survey Respondents...



50% Female
46% Male
4% Transgender



73% are between the ages of 15-17



67% are Black or Hispanic; 17% are Multi-Racial



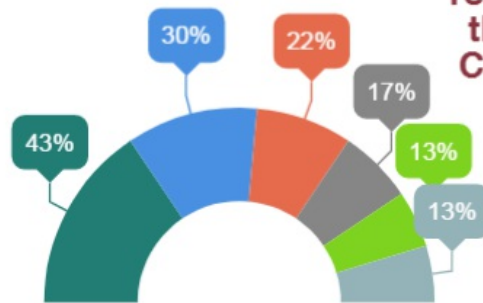
69% are Charlestown residents; 15% used to Charlestown residents



56% of survey respondents live in BHA, while 12% live in Mishuam and 28% reported living in neighborhoods/cities such as Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, West Roxbury, Revere, Medford, and East Boston

Involvement in Other Activities/Organizations

The majority of respondents reported being involved with the YMCA and Community Center in addition to Turn It Around



■ YMCA (31.16%)
 ■ Community Center (21.74%)
■ MissionSAFE (15.94%)
 ■ No Other Activities (12.32%)
■ Boston Bantu Girls SAT Prep (9.42%)
 ■ BGCB (9.42%)



Survey Results

Have a Caring Adult to Talk To

Inside of School



88% of respondents said they can talk to at least one teacher or adult in school if they have a problem

Outside of School



96% of youth said they can talk an adult, both family members and non-family members, about things that are important to them

Stressors/Worries



- Classes and grades: 69%
- Sexual harassment: 12%
- Dating & friendship problems:12%

Most youth identified school and the desire to have good grades as stressors they face; this is consistent with responses heard in the focus groups. Family issues were also mentioned as a stressor. When asked how they relieve stress, one young person said, "I come to Turn It Around"



Created by Strong Chosen by Youth Health Project

About 1 in 3 youth reported being sometimes or often treated badly or unfairly because of their race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability

96% of youth reported never or rarely feeling unsafe because of their race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability



Survey Results

Counseling Services



Created by Gest from the Noun Project

54% of youth respondents have received counseling services; of those who have received counseling, 35% found these services helpful, while 23% did not

Youth who received counseling services stated finding them helpful to have the opportunity to talk out problems and stress, and being able to vent. Those who did not find services helpful stated they were forced to go, counseling did not work, and it didn't change the way they felt.

Court Involvement History



23% reported having a court-involvement history

Peer Relationships



100% of youth reported that Turn It Around members are friendly with each other

96% reported that youth treat each other with respect

Youth Engagement in Turn it Around



Created by Yasou Kwon from Noun Project

100% of youth reported enjoying coming to Turn It Around, having fun, and being able to find things they like doing as a member of the group

92% reported they did not feel bored with Turn It Around

Most youth reported the events and activities are their favorite part of Turn It Around



Survey Results

Impact of Turn It Around



Created by Lashia Bivins
from Noun Project

Common words used to describe Turn It Around included: fun, opportunity, experience, helpful, exciting, and amazing

Youth reported Turn It Around is beneficial because it looks good on a resume and there are opportunities to network with people. In addition, one respondent said he/she was able to "help out my community more than I would have if I wasn't a part of Turn It Around"



Created by Anouque Akhavan
from Noun Project

85% feel they have made a difference in their community because of Turn It Around, while 15% reported feeling neutral about this statement

100% reported feeling motivated to help others (69% agreed with this statement, while 31% strongly agreed)

100% of youth reported working with people they never would have worked with before because of Turn It Around (62% agreed while 38% strongly agreed)

73% reported making new friends because of Turn It Around, while 15% were neutral and 12% disagreed with the statement

81% feel they have connected with people who are different from them in terms of race/ethnicity, background, etc., while 15% were neutral and 4% disagreed



Created by Gregor Cresnar
from Noun Project

77% feel they have made different choices in their lives as a result of Turn It Around, while 15% were neutral, 4% disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed

59% feel their voice is heard, while 24% were neutral, and 8% disagreed



Most youth reported learning time management skills, social skills, communication skills (including speaking in front of large groups), and skills to interact with people as a member of Turn It Around; this is consistent with focus group responses

Staff Relationships



100% feel there is an adult from Turn It Around/Charlestown Coalition staff who is interested in what they think about things, who helps them when they have a problem, and who they listen to and respect

89% feel there is an adult from coalition staff they can talk to when they're upset



Survey Results

Future Planning



100% have talked to an adult about what they would like to do when they get older

92% have talked to an adult about whether they should go to college, and what they can be doing to reach their life goals

96% have talked to an adult about their special interests and talents

Discussion About College with Adults



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85% have talked to a parent or guardian about college plans

81% have talked to a staff member from Turn It Around/The Charlestown Coalition about college plans

80% have talked to a teacher or guidance counselor at school about college plans



Created by Gan Khoo Lay from Noun Project

92% feel they will probably or definitely be as successful in high school as they had hoped [31% said probably, 62% said definitely]

96% reported they will probably or definitely graduate from high school [8% said probably, 88% said definitely]

96% reported they will probably or definitely go to college [24% said probably, 72% said definitely]



Survey Results

Future Planning



Created by Gregor Cresnar from Noun Project

81% said they have talked to an adult about the high school courses they should be taking to help prepare for college

85% have talked to an adult about the activities they can do outside of school to help prepare for college, and how they can increase their chances of getting into a good college

77% have talked to an adult about financial aid that may be available to help pay for college



Created by Roy Verhaag from Noun Project

8% do not plan to pursue additional education or training in the future

8% plan to pursue job training through military service

12% plan to attend a 2-year community or junior college

69% plan to attend a 4-year college or university

4% are undecided or unsure about their future plans



84% agree or strongly agree that they can identify at least one school subject or topic they are truly passionate about; 8% were neutral

80% believe they have resources and support to successfully complete high school, and reported beginning to think about their future and planning for college; 16% were neutral

66% reported that the thought of college does not scare them; 13% were neutral and 21% disagreed

83% believe they know how to motivate themselves to be successful in college; 13% were neutral

Focus Group Themes

Overall, youth who participated in the focus group sessions had very positive comments about being a member of the Turn It Around group and discussed the positive impacts the group has had on their lives.



Created by Gregor Cresnar
from Noun Project

Youth were motivated to join the group because their peers/family members joined and being a member gives them something to do



Created by Gan Khoo Lay
from Noun Project

Youth consistently discussed how much they appreciate the help staff provide them, stating, "They help you with everything"; youth also discussed the abundance of support they receive from staff-"They believe in you more than you believe in yourself"; "You can ask any of the staff if you need it [support]"



Created by Gregor Cresnar
from Noun Project

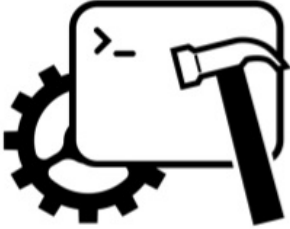
Participants enjoy interacting with/giving back to the community and stated, "If people need help, I help them". Youth felt they can give back to younger youth and "give them things we didn't have or couldn't do when we were their age".



Created by Gregor Cresnar
from Noun Project

Youth discussed the positive impact Turn It Around has had on their lives, particularly around empowerment and life choices; some participants stated, "People look at me differently"; "I feel like I have the power to change things"; " I can voice my opinion", "My participation in Turn It Around helped me get out of something potentially serious". Although a few youth mentioned appreciating the monetary benefit of being in Turn It Around, more youth expressed their appreciation of the intrinsic benefits of Turn It Around that they may not get from a paid job. One young person said, "If I worked at Stop & Shop they wouldn't teach me how to be a good person; I would just get money".

Focus Group Themes



Created by Kevin Augustine LO
from Noun Project

Youth discussed learning a variety of skills such as communication skills, public speaking, working in a group, talking to people about their problems, and learning not to judge other people, especially drug addicts.



Created by Luis Prado
from Noun Project

Turn It Around members felt they had more options as a participant in this group; youth mentioned feeling like they had more educational choices and were considering different colleges and trade/vocational schools; youth also felt they could be connected to resources through Turn It Around staff



Created by Fiona OM
from Noun Project

Youth had minimal suggestions for improving Turn It Around; youth did not immediately answer this question when asked and took a little time to think but once they did answer, the improvements were mostly around little things like the meeting location, as youth expressed liking the old location better, and wanting better food. Youth also later mentioned their future aspirations for the group; participants expressed ideas that included expanding Turn It Around nationally and to other Boys and Girls Clubs in Boston. Youth would like to host more social events such as a party to help make people aware of the group and mentioned filming a commercial to advertise the group. In addition, youth expressed a desire to interact with the community more. Lastly, participants mentioned having more fun events to engage in and wanting to have a mix of both fun and educational events; two participants said they used to raise money to go on fun trips once a year and they would like to go on trips like this again.



Conclusions

Overall, it is evident that the Turn It Around group has been an invaluable resource and source of support for youth involved. Staff support is a very strong presence that multiple youth identify with, as a high percentage of youth reported being able to talk to coalition staff and feeling supported in many ways; it is clear that youth deeply appreciate this type of support as they continue to participate in the group. Staff support is critical, as having caring adults in one's life is a strong protective factor for youth.

It is also evident that youth have learned a great deal about working with others through events and opportunities to build skills, creating positive relationships with peers from diverse backgrounds, and respecting others, particularly community members. In addition to providing opportunities for positive relationship building with the community and peers, the group also helps youth look towards the future positively, especially as it pertains to post-secondary education, as a large percentage of youth reported having a desire to go to college or pursue additional education/training. Youth responses show that Turn It Around has not only given youth something to do after school; it has also provided youth with the opportunity to engage in a positive outlet where they feel they can learn and grow in a supportive environment, as well as construct their futures based on their experiences in this group.

Based on survey data and reflections from the youth, it is clear that Turn It Around is a strong example of a positive youth development program that provides youth with the space to find and use their voices, engage in personal development, and feel empowered to make changes in their communities and overall.



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