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“It Takes a Village:” Innovative multi-sector collaboration to improve Public Health through Positive Youth Development program implementation, evaluation and data analysis

Patty Flanagan
YWCA Central Massachusetts

Et al.

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**It Takes a Village: Innovative multi-sector collaboration to
improve Public Health through
Positive Youth Development program implementation,
evaluation and data analysis**



Moderator: Patty Flanagan, YWCA Central Massachusetts





It Takes a Village:

**Innovative multi-sector collaboration to
improve Public Health through Positive Youth Development program
implementation, evaluation and data analysis**

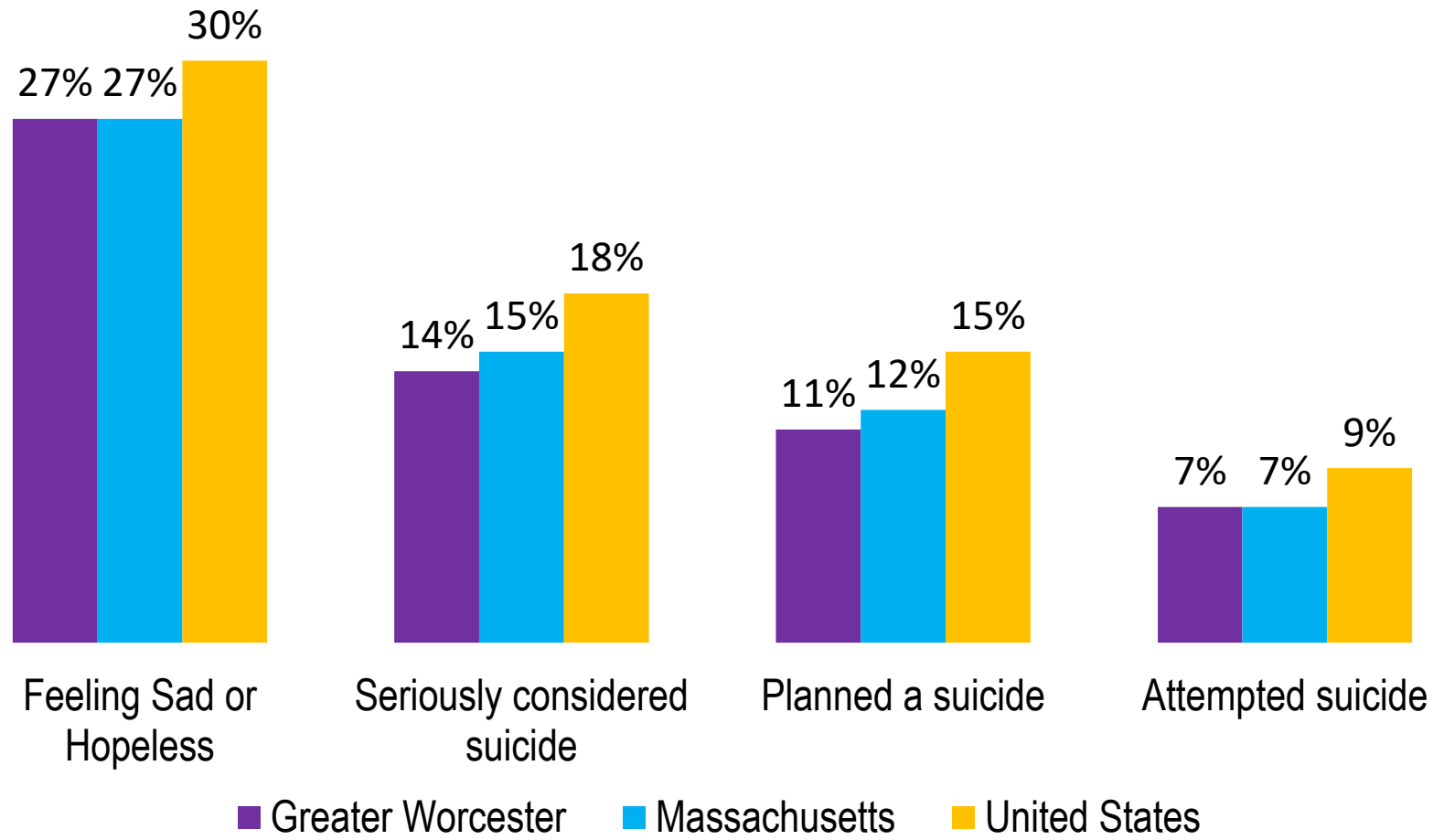
- Data: Nikki Nixon, Worcester Division of Public Health
- Program Presentations:
 - Grace Sliwoski, YouthGROW
 - Laurie Ross, HOPE Coalition
 - Judi Kirk, YouthConnect
- Funder Perspective: Heather Mangione, United Way of Central Mass.

Data: The Status of Health and Well-Being among Youth in Greater Worcester

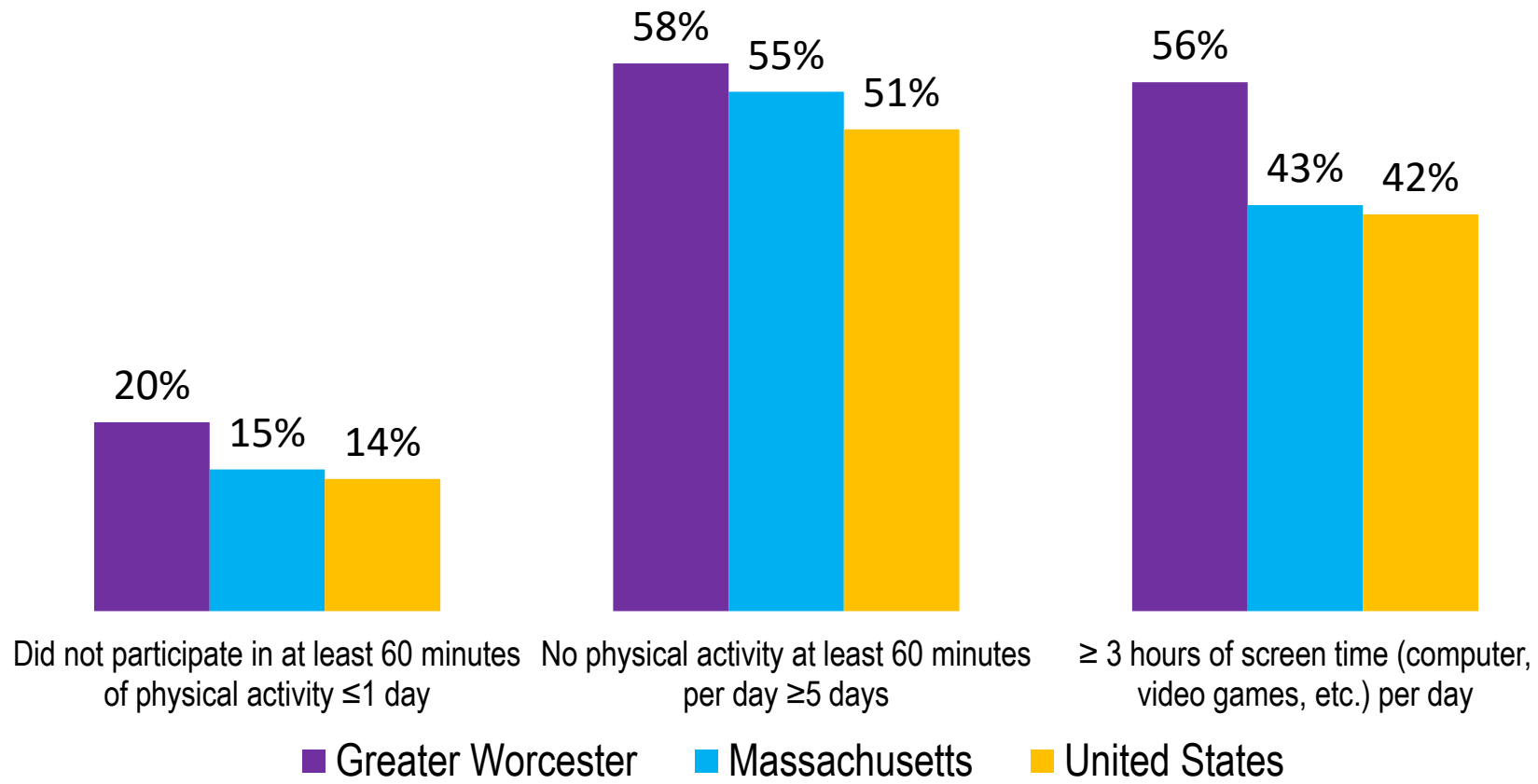
Nikki Nixon, M. S.

Worcester Division of Public Health

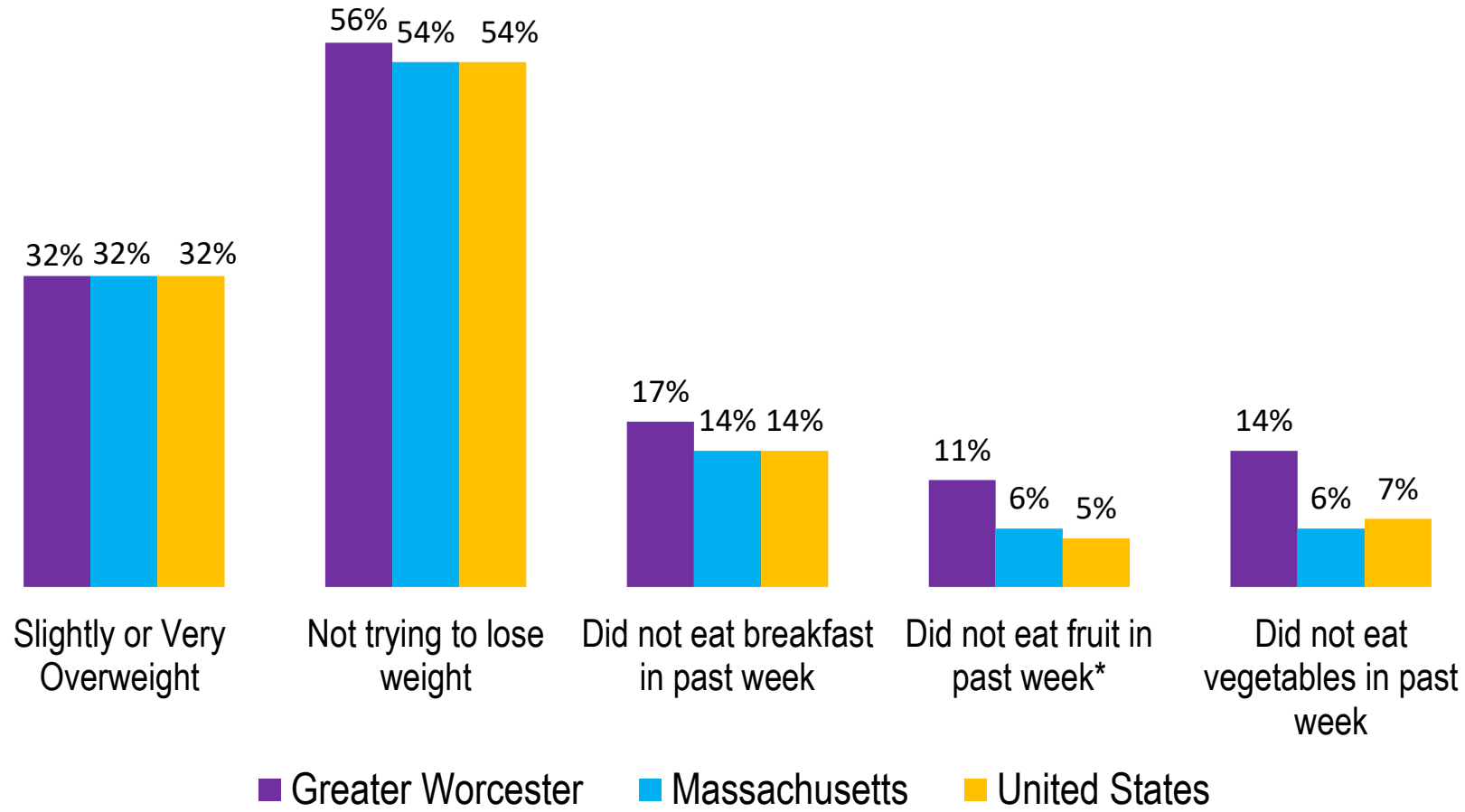
Youth Mental & Emotional Health



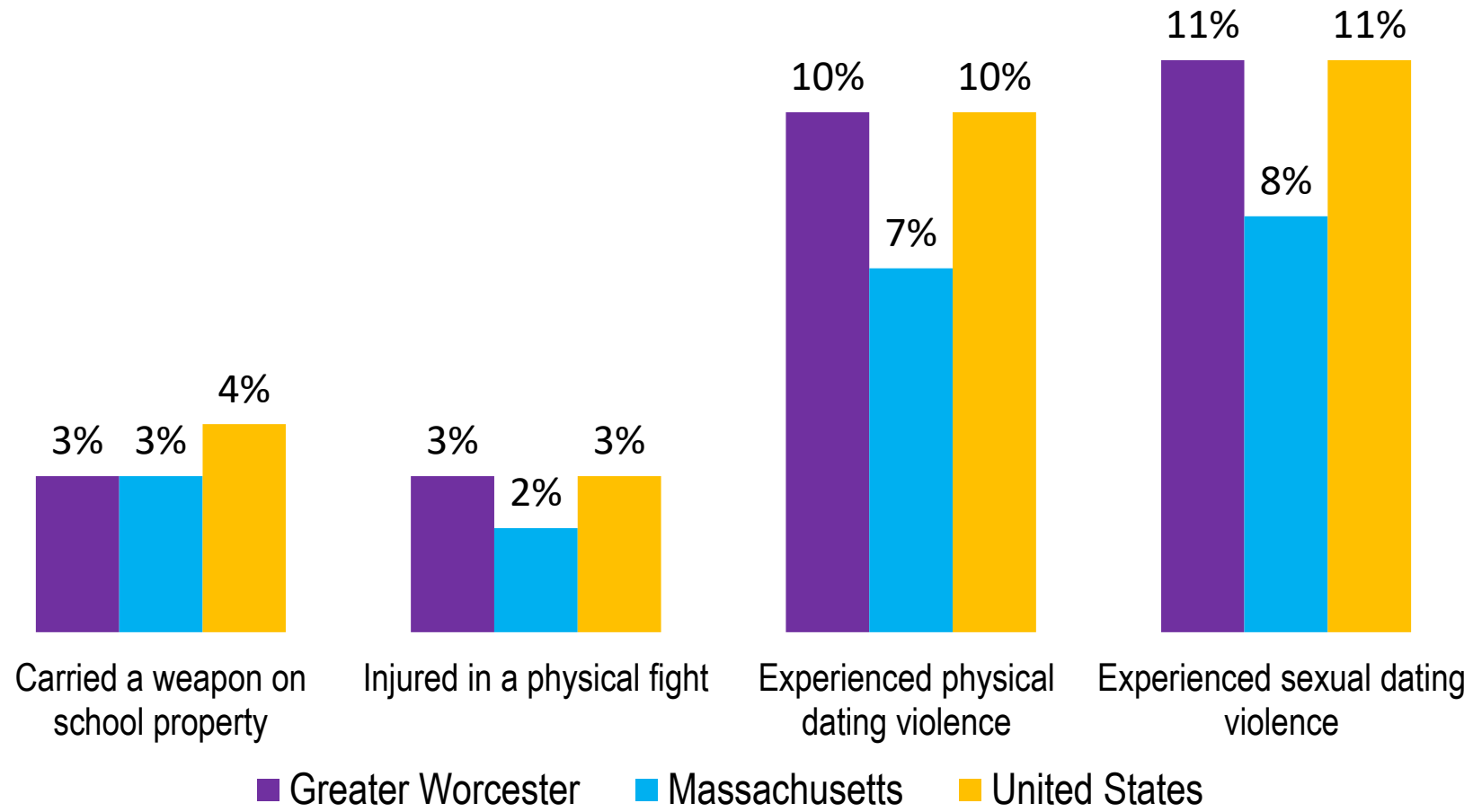
Youth Physical Activity & Screen Time



Perception of Weight & Dietary Habits

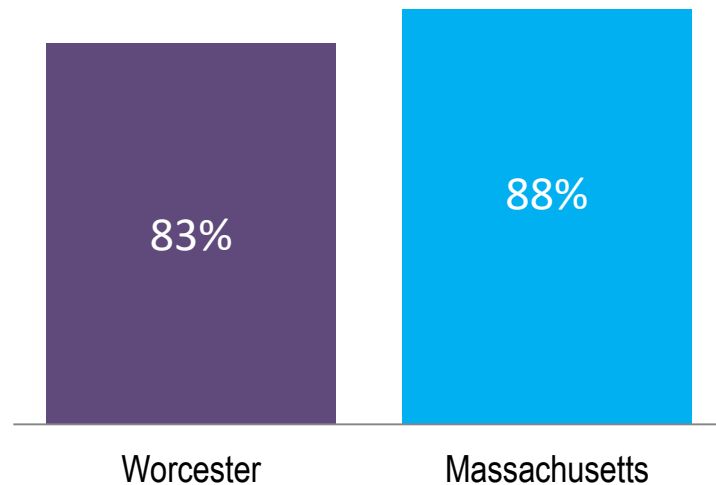


Violence and Dating Violence

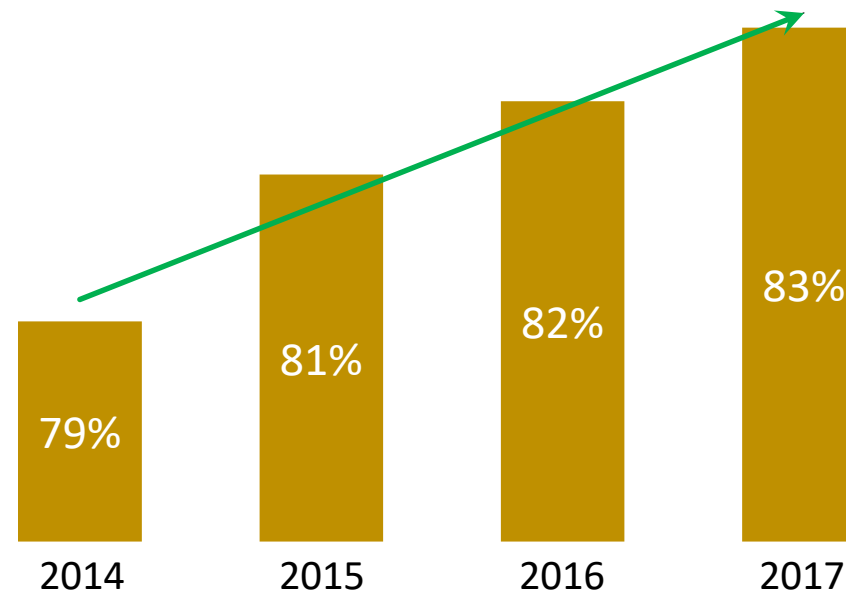


Public High School 4-Year Graduation Rate

Worcester Public High Schools' 4-year Graduation Rate was slightly below the state's average for 2017



Worcester's Public High Schools' 4-Year Graduation Rate has been improving annually



YouthGROW

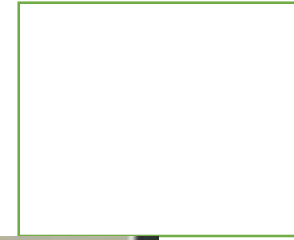
Worcester Regional Environmental Council

Grace Sliwoski

Director of Programs, Worcester REC



REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL OF CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS



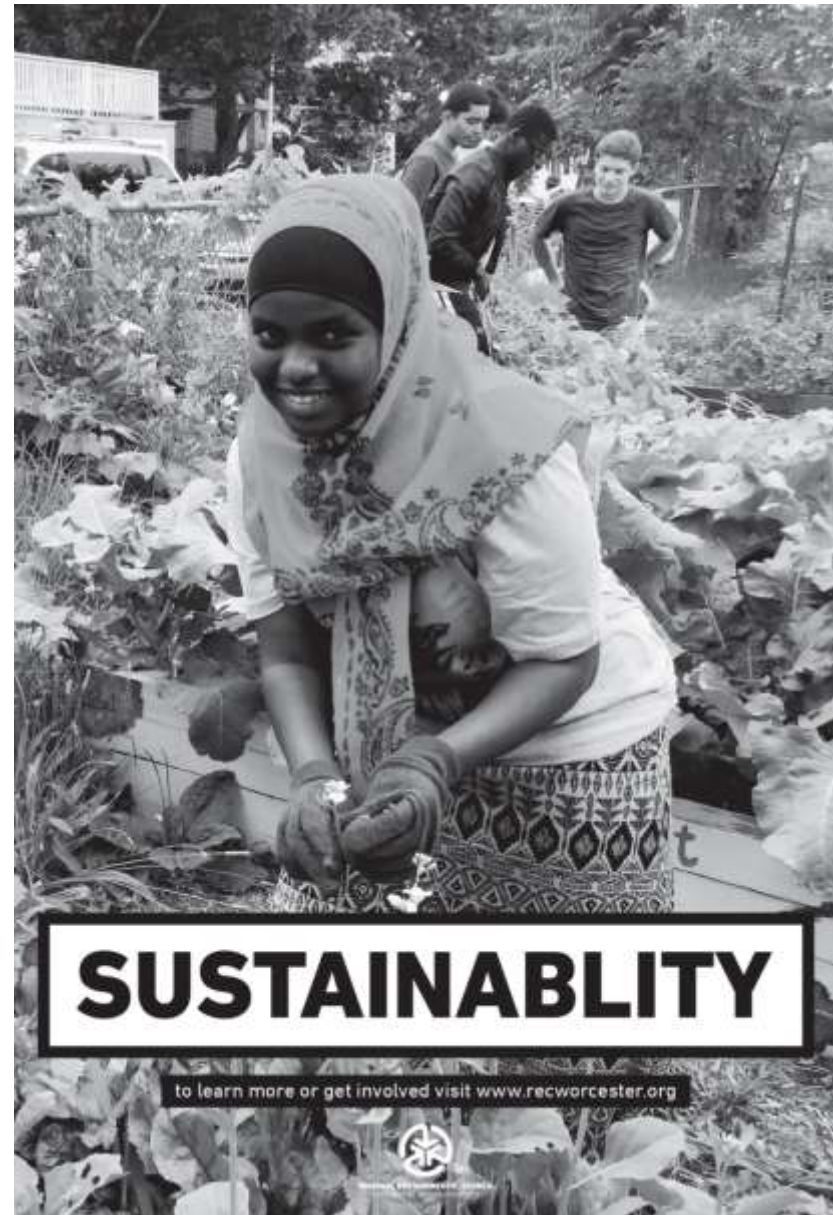
YouthGROW Program Model

- Urban agriculture youth employment program (all youth are paid hourly during summer months with limited year round employment opportunities)
- Two farm campuses in low income neighborhoods
- Year Round Programming
- 34 teenagers
- PLUS Curriculum



Program Objectives

- Youth take on leadership roles in our community
- Youth are prepared with the tools they need to be successful in life
- Community members are aware of environmental injustices in Worcester and understand the importance of local food
- Youth become advocates for urban food access and environmental justice issues in Worcester and beyond



Public Health Impact

- Diet and Physical Activity- Increased access to healthy foods and knowledge of food resources, basic nutrition and food preparation skills, physical exercise through gardening, stress reduction
- Violence Prevention- Community Gardens and Employment as interventions
- Studies show reduction in vandalism, gun assaults in areas surrounding community gardens
- Farm Campuses intentionally located in high gang activity neighborhoods



HOPE Coalition,
reducing youth violence and substance abuse
and promoting positive mental health and youth
voice in Worcester.

Laurie Ross

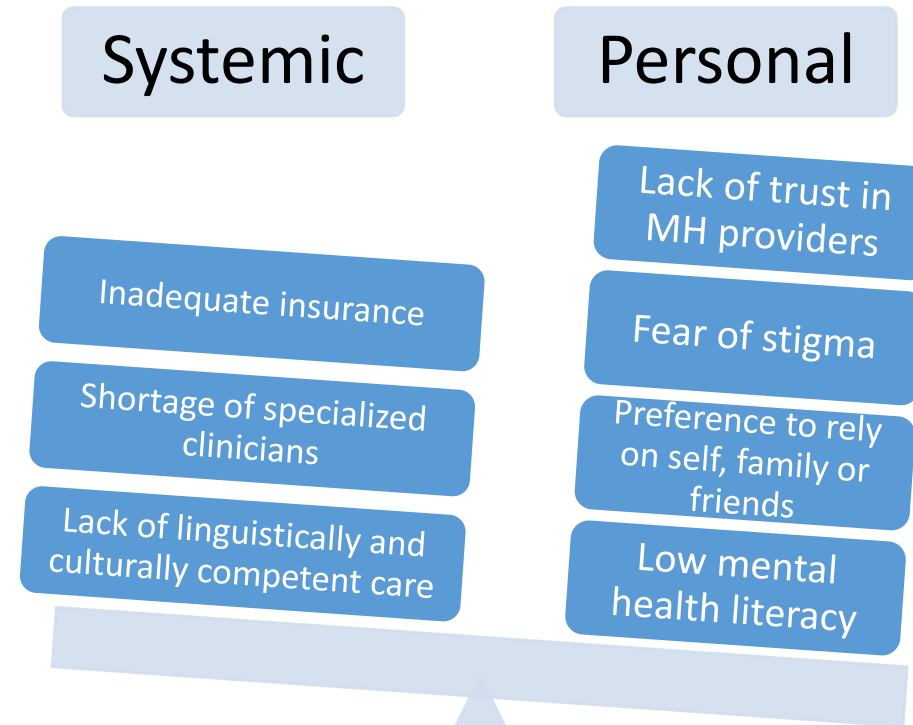
Associate Professor of Community Development, Clark University



HOPE Coalition: Youth-Adult Partnership for Policy and Systems Change



Interacting & Reinforcing Service Barriers for Youth Mental Health (Barker et al 2005)



Worcester Youth's Perceptions of Mental Health

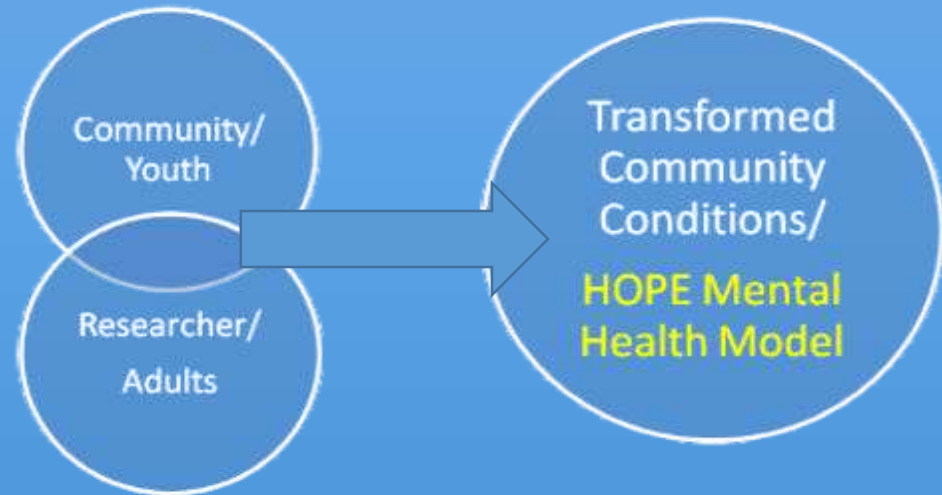
- "It means you are insane, psychotic."
- "If you have a messed up home, and a messed up teacher, you'll have a messed up head"
- "You go to an office with bad music, old magazines and have to wait in the room with an old, white unfriendly lady knowing someone is going to get into your business"

Merging Perspectives

Youth: Stress, Depression as Key Issues

Existing mental health services do not meet youth's needs

Adults: Waitlists, transportation, insurance, lack of crisis intervention, issues with referrals, under-resourced prevention services





Partners:

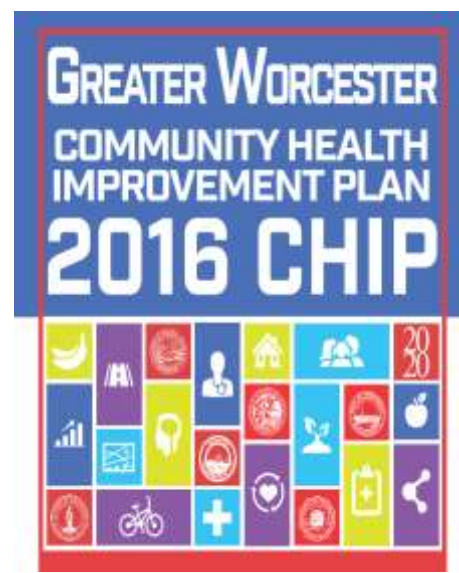
- Boys and Girls Club
- Friendly House
- Girls Inc
- Worcester Youth Center
- YouthConnect
- YOU, Inc.

Funders:

- FCHP
- Greater Worcester Community Foundation
- United Way of Central MA
- UMass Memorial Health Care



The Setting



Individual and
Organizational
Changes

Increases access.
Builds capacity.
Reduces stigma.
Prevents problems.
Saves money.
Healthier communities.



YouthConnect,

a seamless, inclusive youth-serving consortium,
modeled on best practices and built on a framework
that delivers positive outcomes for health, education,
and family stability

Judi Kirk, Director of Community Impact

YouthConnect and Boys & Girls Clubs of Worcester



www.youthconnectworcester.org

Goal: Provide high quality neighborhood-based recreational, educational and cultural activities to isolated and underserved Worcester youth aged 5-24 with focus on the middle school years. Establish a seamless, inclusive youth-serving system; a consortium modeled on best practices and built on a framework that delivers positive outcomes for health, education, and family stability.

8 YouthConnect Executive Partners

- Boys & Girls Club Girls Inc.
- Friendly House
- Worcester Youth Center
- YMCA of Central MA
- YWCA Central MA
- Y.O.U., Inc.
- United Way of Central MA

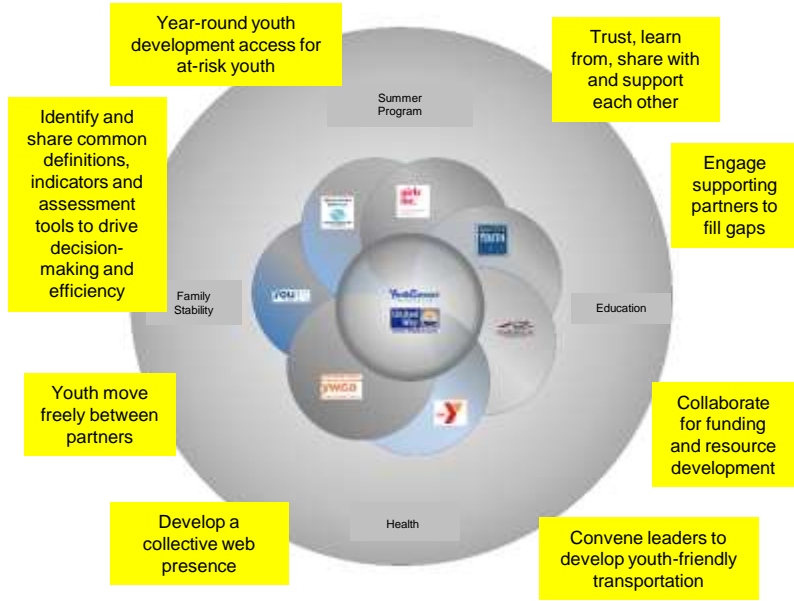
45 Supporting Partners

- Youth Development
- Workforce Investment
- Academic Supports/ College Access
- Municipality Funders
- Social Services
- Mental Health Supports
- Housing Health Care
- Violence Prevention

- Economic Opportunity**
- Better prepared workforce
 - Reduction in Summer Learning Loss
 - Financial Literacy
 - Mentors

- Substance Use**
- Social Norms Campaigns to delay first use of Substances
 - Communication Skills
 - Risk Avoidance.

- Safety**
- Active participation in the Worcester Youth Violence Prevention Initiative
 - Bullying prevention, peer mediation and conflict resolution, relationship-building
 - Girls Promoting Safety
 - Civicism and Peer Leadership
 - Supports to low income, subsidized housing communities.
 - Youth friendly transportation supports



- Common Outcomes for Youth**
- Education
 - Health
 - Family Stability

Common Outcomes for the Consortium

CHIP Priority Areas

- Racism & Discrimination**
- All programs to meet Health Equity Compliance
 - Undoing Racism Training for Coalition Staff and Volunteers

- Mental Health**
- Staff trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid
 - Embedded Mental Health supports throughout Consortium
 - LGBTQ supports and counseling services.
 - Reduction of stigma associated with access to mental health services

- Physical Activity**
- Healthier youth through increased levels of physical activity
 - Leadership Development and Team Building
 - Advocacy and youth voice as part of policy & systems change.

- Access to Healthy Food**
- Healthier youth through healthier eating habits
 - Advocacy and youth voice as part of policy & systems change

- Access to Care through Supporting Partnerships**
- Homeless youth supports
 - Primary care and health and wellness referrals
 - Sex Education, Pregnancy Prevention, School Based Clinics

- Cultural Responsiveness**
- Staff Dev Activities to support culturally appropriate services
 - Engagement of youth identified during Summer Outreach

Common Outcomes for Youth

Education:

Increase the High School Graduation Rate for at-risk youth through on time grade progression.

Health:

Reduce the childhood obesity rate by increasing the number of children and families accessing opportunities for

- 1) year round physical activity and
- 2) increased consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Family Stability:

Reduce the child poverty rate through prevention programs and stability supports for youth in low income neighborhoods and subsidized housing resulting in a better prepared workforce.

Common Outcomes for the Consortium

- Year-Round youth development access for at risk youth.
- Identify and share common definitions, indicators and assessment tools to drive decision making and efficiency.
- Youth move freely between partners.
- Develop a collective web presence.
- Convene leaders to develop youth friendly transportation.
- Collaborate for funding and resource development.
- Engage supporting partners to fill gaps.
- Trust, learn from, share with and support each other.

Indicators:

Education: Graduation Rates

- 44% thru college visits
- 52% through informal staff contact
- 68% through leadership and service learning programs
- 79% through participation in High Yield Learning activities, homework help, study groups and STEM/STEAM programming
- 100% through formal mentor matches

Health: Obesity Rates

- 36% increased participation in physical activity weekly
- 4% increased their consumption of healthy fruits and vegetables

Family Stability: Reduce the childhood poverty rate

- 61 young adults accessed HiSET/ABE/ESOL programming with 3% of participants successfully completing programs.
- Formed partnership with Worcester Youth Work Alliance for Youth Worker Development
- Partnered with Youth Worker Training Institute to provide Certification opportunities for Youth Workers.

Youth Development Theory

Self-Expectation: An indicator of Resilience.

(Healthy Youth Development Self Expectation Survey Results)

Education:

Boys show a 14% improvement over the program year in their Self Expectation. Girls consistently reported higher self-expectation than boys on both pre and post surveys.

	Pre Test	Post Test
Girls:	81%	86%
Boys:	69%	83%

Peer Adult Relationships:

Girls report higher positive self-expectation than boys on all questions for both the pre and post surveys. Interestingly, boys reported self-expectation is lowest related to their ability to get along with people that are different and their ability to stand up for themselves under negative peer pressure.

	Pre Test	Post Test
Girls:	71%	77%
Boys:	63%	69%

Youth Development Theory

Self-Expectation: An indicator of Resilience.

(Healthy Youth Development Self Expectation Survey Results)

Interests:

Girls again report higher levels of varied interests than boys on all questions except those related to video games. Boys do once again show the most positive change from the beginning to the end of the program.

	Pre Test	Post Test
Girls:	71%	72%
Boys:	61%	72%

Self Esteem:

Consistently, girls again report higher self-expectation than boys for this series of questions both pre and post. It is worth noting however, related to “expectations to lead”, boys report higher than girls on the post test.

	Pre Test	Post Test
Girls:	68%	75%
Boys:	54%	68%

Funder Perspective: United Way of Central Massachusetts

Heather Mangione, Community Relationship Manager

United Way of Central Mass

It Takes a Village

*DISCUSSION
and
QUESTIONS*

It Takes a Village: Presenter Contacts

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