



Healthy Teen Network

How & Where Youth
Live, Learn, & Play Matters

YOUTH
360°



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Healthy Teen Network

Healthy Teen Network promotes better outcomes for adolescents and young adults by advancing social change, cultivating innovation, and strengthening youth-supporting professionals and organizations. Located in Baltimore, since 1979, we have served as a leading national membership organization (501c3) for adolescent health professionals. We promote a unique and holistic perspective—Youth 360°—to improve the health and well-being of young people.

We are uniquely able to have an impact on a large number of young people because of our collaborative, organic approach rooted in science and enriched by our immediate links to a grassroots network of adolescent health professionals throughout our nation's communities. Our vast network consists of more than 3,000 affiliates, composed of diverse youth-supporting professionals such as health educators, social workers, program managers, teachers, clinicians, and more.

Our work is driven by our guiding principles.

- ✓ **Rights:** A more just and equitable world supports and empowers all adolescents and young adults—including teen parents—to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.
- ✓ **Individuality:** All adolescents and young adults, including pregnant and parenting teens, deserve respect, appreciation, and acceptance for their unique strengths, talents, and potential.
- ✓ **Youth 360°:** How and where youth live, learn, and play matters...and needs to be addressed to achieve better outcomes.
- ✓ **Evidence:** Evidence-based strategies and approaches are effective and efficient ways to achieve positive outcomes.
- ✓ **Innovation:** Innovation is a critical component of a comprehensive strategy to respond to the dynamic lives of adolescents and young adults.
- ✓ **Youth Centered:** Youth-centered strategies and approaches are critical to empower young people.
- ✓ **Access:** All adolescents and young adults, including teen parents, have a right to comprehensive, developmentally and culturally appropriate, confidential support and services, including contraceptive services, and if pregnant, to full options counseling and services.

We build the capacity of professionals and organizations through five interrelated strategies:

- 1) Networking and Dissemination
- 2) Capacity-Building Assistance and Evaluation
- 3) Innovation and Research
- 4) Leadership Development and Organizational Capacity Building
- 5) Public Policy and Advocacy

VISION

We envision a world where all adolescents and young adults lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

MISSION

We promote better outcomes for adolescents and young adults by advancing social change, cultivating innovation, and strengthening youth-supporting professionals and organizations.



HOW & WHERE YOUTH LIVE, LEARN, & PLAY MATTERS

How and where youth live, learn, and play matters: we know social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities and disparities.¹ We cannot expect to significantly impact health outcomes without considering the full range of factors

that make a critical difference. These factors, the **social determinants of health**—such as access to quality education and health services, socioeconomic status, or having life goals and aspirations—shape our long-term physical, mental, emotional, and social health and well-being.

We know social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities & disparities.

Certainly, knowledge, attitudes, and skills matter...however, they are *necessary but not sufficient* to achieve better outcomes for **all** young people.

Every one of us is affected by factors, or social determinants of health, at an individual level, but also, through our relationships, in our communities, and in society as a whole. Beyond knowledge, we must consider, for example, the power of parent-child communication, or access to safe housing, or institutionalized racism if we want to increase our impact, particularly in the face of increasing health disparities.



Youth 360° is the strategic communication frame we developed to make it easier to talk about and understand the importance of social determinants and health promotion. Adolescent health and well-being is a social justice issue with public health ramifications. To achieve our vision—a world where all adolescents and young adults lead healthy and fulfilling lives—we *must* practice Youth 360°.

ADOLESCENT & YOUNG ADULT HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Adolescence is an important time of developmental transition, when adolescents and young adults may be more sensitive to the environmental influences around them, in their relationships, communities, and society.² To ensure a better world and future for all of us, we must foster the positive development of all young people to be supported and empowered to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

Significant health disparities among racial and ethnic groups persist. Adolescents and young adults who are African American, American Indian, or Latino—especially those living in poverty—experience greater health disparities compared to their White peers.² Most often, the leading causes of illness and death for young people are preventable: young people's health outcomes, grounded in their environments (i.e., how and where they live, learn, and play) can be affected by an individual's behaviors.³

For example, positive parent-child communication and connectedness can protect adolescents and young adults from engaging in risk-taking behaviors.³ Or, academic success and achievement are strong predictors of overall health outcomes, and young people with proficient academic skills experience higher rates of healthy behaviors.⁴ And, adolescents and young adults who live in neighborhoods characterized by concentrated poverty are at higher risk for sexual risk-taking behaviors, lower academic achievement, and poor physical and mental health.⁵ These examples—all social determinants of health—highlight opportunities where we can come together to support and empower adolescents and young adults to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

¹ World Health Organization. (2015). Social determinants of health: Key concepts. Available from: http://www.who.int/social_determinants/thecommission/finalreport/key_concepts/en/.

² Mulye TP, Park MJ, Nelson CD, et al. Trends in adolescent and young adult health in the United States. *J Adolesc Health*. 2009;45(1):8-24. Available from: <http://download.journals.elsevierhealth.com/pdfs/journals/1054-139X/PIIS1054139X09001244.pdf>

³ Resnick MD, Bearman PS, Blum RW, et al. Protecting adolescents from harm: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health. *JAMA*. 1997;278(10):823-32. Available from: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/278/10/823>

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Healthy youth! Student health and academic achievement. Atlanta: CDC; 2010. Available from: http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/health_and_academics/index.htm#2

⁵ Leventhal T, Brooks-Gunn J. Diversity in developmental trajectories across adolescence: Neighborhood influences. Chapter 15 in *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology* (pp 451-86), 2nd ed. Lerner RM, Steinberg L, editors. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.; 2004.