

**Stilly Valley Health Connections
Arlington Coalition for Healthy and Resilient Youth
Meeting Notes for 10-03-24**

Attendees

Mike Gilbert (Arlington Police Department), Mandy Kruger (City of Arlington), Monica Jackson (Arlington Library), Mary Levesque (Parent), Kerri Helgeson (Arlington Public Schools), Chrys Sweeting (Arlington Public Schools), Parker Coffey (Arlington Boys and Girls Club), DJ Lockwood (Arlington Boys and Girls Club), Ardis Schmiede (Stilly Valley Health Connections), Erika Coghill (Stilly Valley Health Connections), Sarah Higginbotham (Stilly Valley Health Connections), Kristina Wigren (Stilly Valley Health Connections), and Barbara Davis (Facilitator, Your Best Thinking).

Purpose, Desired Outcomes, Methodology

Ardis Schmiede welcomed attendees and thanked them for their attendance. She shared that the purpose and desired outcomes for the meeting were to discuss the creation of a Coalition focused on youth substance misuse with hopes that those in attendance would be willing to make a commitment to the Coalition's future work.

The methodology for the meeting was to review the key features of the Coalition, to participate in subject matter data review, as well as a series of facilitated conversations to surface potential focus areas and strategies/activities for the Coalition.

Ground Rules for the Meeting

Barbara led the group in articulating the ground rules for the session leading to the following rules:

- Have courtesy.
- Be authentic.
- Have curiosity.
- Be open-minded.
- Be inclusive.
- Actively listen.
- Have fun.
- Stay on time.

Key Features of this Coalition

Ardis shared the key feature information as prepared by the Stilly Valley Health Connections staff which included proposed Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles, and Organizational Structure.

Our **vision** is a community where our youth are healthy and resilient and are not misusing or abusing substances.

Our **mission** is to work collaboratively on youth substance misuse prevention and intervention by:

- Enhancing the current work of member organizations.
- Identifying and filling the gaps.
- Expanding our reach to all community members.

Our **guiding principles** are that we will be data informed, mutually beneficial, inclusive of youth, goal oriented, efficient, and capitalize on expertise in our organizations and community.

Organizational Structure

A. Backbone Agency: Stilly Valley Health Connections is the backbone agency.

**Stilly Valley Health Connections
Arlington Coalition for Healthy and Resilient Youth
Meeting Notes for 10-03-24**

B. Staffing: Sarah Higginbotham, an employee of Stilly Valley Health Connections, is the Coalition Coordinator. The role of the Coalition Coordinator is to:

- Provide staff support.
- Coordinate meeting preparation and follow up.
- Coordinate training and technical assistance.
- Coordinate implementation of strategies.
- Document coalition efforts.
- Prepare reports as needed.
- Serve as a resource for the Coalition.

C. Leadership: The Leadership Team/Steering Committee will:

- Establish the Coalition.
- Recruit Coalition members.
- Schedule and lead Coalition meetings.
- Engage community leaders.
- Volunteer for workgroups or appoint a representative.
- Hold Coalition members accountable.
- Commit to building health equity.
- Determine and monitor the strategic plan and activities for the Coalition.
- Define the responsibilities for the workgroups and other Coalition members.

Data Presentation/ Reflection/ Discussion

The group participated in a data walk exercise in small groups to review data from the most recent Healthy Youth Survey. Please see data reviewed and comments by clicking on the file below.



Data Walk with
Notices and Wonderi

The group also viewed a video from the Snohomish County Youth Substance Use Active Listening Sessions Project. More information about this resource is in the link below.



[Listening session presentation recording \(1\).mp4](#)

The group reflected on the data reviewed and offered the following comments:

- **Summary data from Healthy Youth Survey**
 - Scary data, but it's good that we have it.
 - Since this is all self-reported data, is it accurate?
 - Arlington is leading in many categories; that's concerning and not something we want.
 - The data represents a snapshot in time; it would be good to compare with previous data or have a cohort.
 - We need to understand the underlying issues that are causing this to happen.
 - This information drives home the need for the Coalition we are seeking to establish.
 - The issues are bigger than what school districts can handle on their own.

**Stilly Valley Health Connections
Arlington Coalition for Healthy and Resilient Youth
Meeting Notes for 10-03-24**

- **Youth Substance Use Listening Sessions**

- This was valuable information.
- It's so important to have/hear the voices of youth.
- If we don't control the narrative, then social media will.
- Kids want the adults in their lives to be more educated about drugs/substances.
- Kids want to know more about dangers/effects of drugs/substances.
- The question is, how do we get the information to parents?
- Another question is, how to understand and take into consideration .issues/things/conditions that surround kids that lead them to making choices around substance use/misuse?
- We need to support others in the community to help kids.
- We need to have a wholistic approach; these are complex issues.
- Communication pieces about these issues could/should come from youth vs. adults.
- Parents need to be educated on the best responses, approaches, and resources available.
- We need to explore which topics and resources are working.
- We need to use consistent messaging.
- We need to increase our knowledge and awareness about what's currently being done.

Finding our Focus (The "What") - Discussion and Decision

The group engaged in a brainstorm exercise to capture ideas on what the Coalition could focus on to have impact on the data reviewed. Once all ideas were offered, the information was grouped into common themes which then were given a topic title. Further discussion about the ideas offered surfaced the following three areas for the Coalition to focus on: **Youth Empowerment, Support Systems, and Education for All**. These notes reflect the common themes as offered during the brainstorm and are listed under each of the focus areas.

- **Focus Area: Youth Empowerment**

- Determine/understand underlying issues.
- Mental health.
- Mental health awareness.
- Youth empowerment.
- Youth voice.
- Involve youth.
- Engage youth and provide opportunities.
- Listen to youth.
- Increase youth voice.
- Opportunity for conversation.

- **Focus Area: Support Systems**

- Mental health.
- Mental health awareness.
- Collaborate (2).

**Stilly Valley Health Connections
Arlington Coalition for Healthy and Resilient Youth
Meeting Notes for 10-03-24**

- Determine underlying issues.
- Creating safe spaces for youth (2).
- Third spaces.
- Youth outlets.
- Create social connections.
- Recovery resources.
- Support recovery.
- Supporting parents.
- Resources.
- Community involvement.
- Community awareness of issues/problems (4).
- Create a multilevel support system for youth, surrounding them with peers, family, and community; support would come from schools, churches, sports, clubs, government, medical community, etc.
- Advocate healthy choices.

- **Focus Area: Education for All**

- Mental health awareness (2).
- Understand underlying issues.
- Social stigma (2).
- Reduce stigma (2).
- Education (3).
- Inform.
- Educate parents.
- Support for parents and guardians.
- Education for the entire community – all stakeholders.
- Program based drug education awareness program.

Finding our Strategies (The “How”) - Discussion and Decision

The group engaged in a brainstorm exercise to capture potential strategies for the Coalition to employ to impact Focus Areas. The following ideas surfaced. They represent both strategies and activities. Coalition members will discuss these at a follow-up meeting to define which are strategies and which are activities or refine language as needed. The goal would be to decide on three to five broad-based strategies to guide future activities.

- **Focus Area: Youth Empowerment**

- Invite youth to steering committee.
- Engage youth regularly (surveys, listening sessions, etc.).
- Peer 2 Peer Mentoring.
- Mentoring.
- Peer led conversations around misuse.
- Videos created by students for: students, parents, community.
- Highlight youth voices through our media and messaging to the community.

**Stilly Valley Health Connections
Arlington Coalition for Healthy and Resilient Youth
Meeting Notes for 10-03-24**

- Recognizing what youth already know about substances and mental health.
- Create communication pieces with youth.
- Youth led activities.
- Discussion forums.
- Look forward to hearing from all youth (not just the shiny stars).
- Create participation opportunities for students: coalition membership, sharing perceptions in person and/or surveys.
- Provide platforms.

- **Focus Area: Support Systems**

- Create many safe spaces so youth can find their space.
- Create welcoming spaces.
- Free, fun community events for youth with easy access for all.
- Create flyers of local things students can be involved with.
- Have a resources page/portal.
- Develop resource toolbox.
- Involve resources (providers of).
- Communicate where families can go for help or find resources.
- Communicate the need to value their/our youth.
- Consistent messaging across agencies.
- Ensuring positive role models for youth.
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters type mentorship.
- Mental health counselors.
- Provide drug/alcohol counselors at middle/high school.
- Identify stakeholders.

- **Focus Area: Education for All**

- Supporting authentic conversations.
- Complete an inventory of education efforts in place already and look for gaps.
- Prevention.
- Positive social norms campaign.
- Eliminating abstinence-only education.
- Teach younger (elementary) students about the dangers and health risks of substances.
- Educate youth on how to seek help for mental health.
- Provide training for youth for peer support.
- Coalition youth Tik Tok.
- Make Tik Tok with youth voices to educate other youth.
- Create an education program on substances for elementary and middle school students based on input from students.
- Create convenient messaging to share with our community.
- Community events that empower learning.
- Recovery options.
- Partner/collaborate.

**Stilly Valley Health Connections
Arlington Coalition for Healthy and Resilient Youth
Meeting Notes for 10-03-24**

- Create or enhance programs.
- Whole community informational events/classes.
- Create informational events in various locations and offer them at various times.
- Educate families on resources for support of addictions.
- Educate families on how to handle identifying and addressing substance use/abuse.
- Parental support.
- Educate teachers, coaches, businesses, etc. about substance risks.
- Look at what the education curriculum entails.
- Sharing data.

Joint Approaches and Working Together

The group articulated ways to employ new or existing joint approaches to further the work of the Coalition:

- **Focus Area: Youth Empowerment**

- Create clubs in middle and high schools for students interested in helping educate their peers.
- Have Stilly Valley Health Connections/Arlington Public Schools/Arlington Police Department discussion groups.
- Connect ASB Leadership + Student Advisory Committee + City Youth Council.
- Collaborate with youth already in our spaces: school clubs, youth council, Boys and Girls Club, library, etc.
- Include/ bring students to other community meetings.
- Have city sponsored events with Arlington Public Schools and community partners?
- Find multiple avenues for spectrum of student voices.
- Current collaborations need to be shared with the group.
- Have youth led Friday Fun Days.

- **Focus Area: Support Systems**

- Continuing outreach partnerships, i.e., Library Summer Reading Program at the Boys and Girls Club.
- Sharing resources across agencies.
- Have meeting places.
- Do a resource gap analysis.
- Health Department, Stilly Valley Health Connections, and Skagit Regional Health share health information with students.
- Open gyms at middle schools or Boys and Girls Club on a Friday night as a place for kids to be supervised.
- Supervised space open to kids and families in the evening, i.e., school gym, library, Boys and Girls Club.
- Support groups in the schools for recovery, mental health, etc.
- Teen Nights at Boys and Girls Club.
- Using Peachjar to advertise programs/activities for youth.

**Stilly Valley Health Connections
Arlington Coalition for Healthy and Resilient Youth
Meeting Notes for 10-03-24**

- School Resource Officers, Arlington Police Department, and driving schools educate drivers on substances and driving under the influence.
- Mentorship programs with Boys and Girls Club and the Arlington Police Department.
- High school sports mentoring middle and elementary school youth (Jr. Eagles).
- Build a city community center/pool and recreation center.

- **Focus Area: Education for All**

- Partnering with library to offer educational workshops.
- Youth interviews or educational information on our organization's social medias, newsletters, etc.
- Information sharing.
- Stilly Valley Health Connections, Arlington Police Department, Arlington Public Schools, Boys and Girls Clubs partner with each other for education on substance abuse.
- Jointly develop communication.
- Identify and implement programs.
- Stilly Valley Health Connections, Arlington School District, and Boys and Girls Club offer parenting classes at the Boys and Girls Club.
- Educate students and parents/guardians on substances with the school district.
- Conduct youth Q&A with Arlington Public Schools and Boys and Girls Club.

Additional Sectors to be Included

Recognizing that there are sectors not represented or in attendance today, the group listed potential invitees to the Leadership Team or future workgroups as follows:

- Students
- Youth who use substances
- Youth voices
- Need youth on leadership team and workgroups.
- Parents of elementary, middle, and high schoolers
- Youth Dynamics
- Recovery support individuals
- State assistance programs
- Surrounding school districts (Stanwood, Marysville, Granite Falls)
- PTAs and other parent groups
- State and local agencies that deal with youth.
- Community Transit
- Snohomish County Health Department
- Medical service providers
- Family doctors and pediatricians
- Counselors and therapists
- Chamber of Commerce
- Mayor and City Council
- Sports coaches
- Retired folks

**Stilly Valley Health Connections
Arlington Coalition for Healthy and Resilient Youth
Meeting Notes for 10-03-24**

- Faith community and churches (3)
- Immigrant/refugee service providers
- County leaders
- Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians (either on leadership team or workgroup) (3)
- Civic groups, i.e., Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions (2)
- Social service agencies
- Businesses/ business community (4)
- Local business owners who support our youth
- Local Arlington business (DABA) (anti-middle school backpacks)
- Smoke shops/dispensary/other related business owners or staff (5)
- North County Fire/EMS (3)
- Private schools
- Home school families
- Amazon
- Boeing
- Navy

Next Steps

- Confirm commitment
 - Attendees confirmed their commitment to establishing and participating in this Coalition.
- Immediate next steps
 - Barbara types and submits meeting notes.
 - Convene a second meeting with today's attendees to finish discussions, set meeting calendar, process for selecting youth to participate, defining how to start Coalition work, etc. A doodle poll will be sent to attendees.
 - Share information from this meeting with the APS Youth Council at their meeting on Wednesday, October 9th.

Reflections on Today's Session

- This Worked
 - We already collaborate with one another.
 - There is high commitment to launching this Coalition.
 - Good brainstorming
 - Good availability of data to look at and listen to
 - We stayed on task.
 - There was movement throughout the session; we weren't sitting all the time.
 - The use of the "sticky wall" as a visual planning tool
 - Good to have the Vision and Mission done ahead of time; it gave us focus and was more efficient.
- This Could Have Been Better
 - Reviewing the full Healthy Youth Survey prior to the meeting
 - Having a better understanding of how the Healthy Youth Survey is conducted.

Final comments and Thank You

Ardis thanked everyone for their attendance today and their commitment to the future work of the Coalition.