



Promoting Well-Being for Idaho's Young People

Our Time Together

I. Intro to Communities for Youth

II. Upstream Prevention 101

III. What does data say about how we can help young people in Idaho?

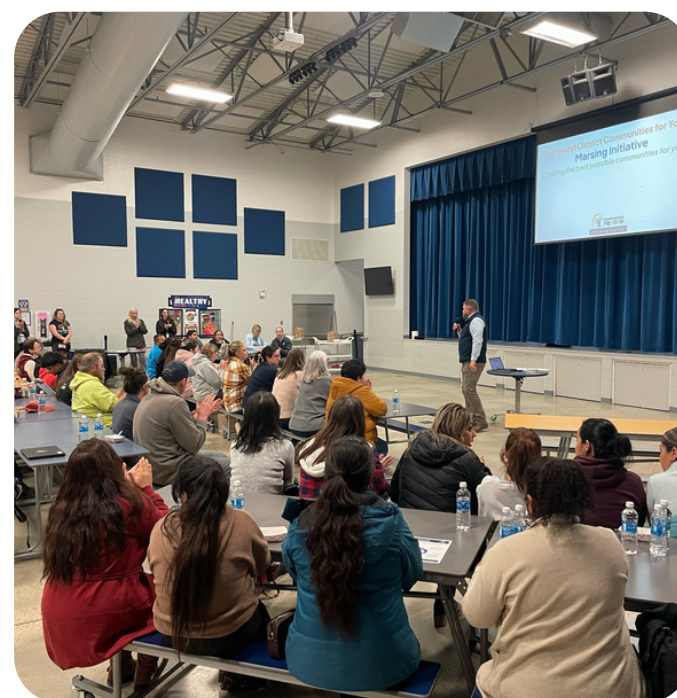
a) Building Social Connection

IV. Strategies



Who We Are

An Idaho-based initiative
focused on improving
youth mental health and
well-being



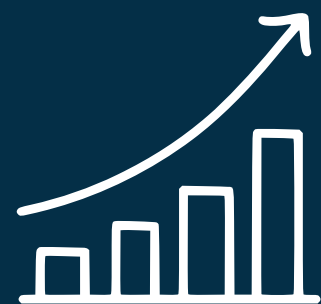
What We Do

We empower Idaho communities by connecting parents, schools, and kids with the capacity to recognize and address youth mental health so that all may thrive.



Youth Mental Health

Nationwide, high numbers of youth and adults are struggling with their mental health



Teen mental health struggles can get minimized or disregarded



Failing to address youth mental health is incompatible with reality that we all want happy, healthy kids!



Upstream Prevention



Our Approach

- Focuses on preventing negative outcomes before they happen
- Affects whole communities or populations



Our Process

BUILD A COMMUNITY COALITION

The first step is just gathering folks from across your community, including educators, parents, policy makers, grandparents and small business leaders in a group dedicated to keeping the attention on youth health in your community.

KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

The final step is to keep the conversation going about what the key issues facing youth are and what your community plans to do about them. Encourage more people to join the conversation and keep it going!



COLLECT YOUTH VOICE

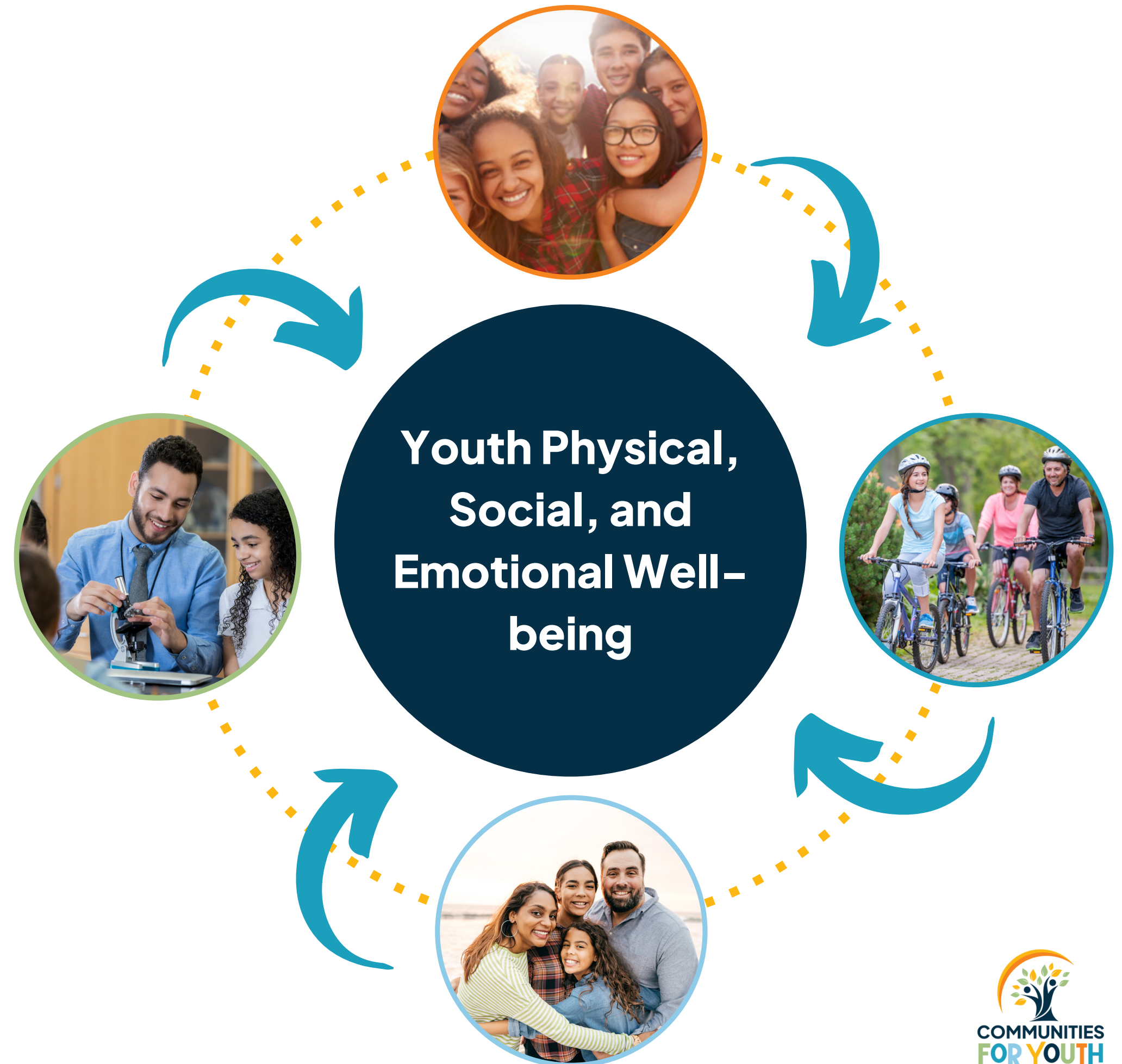
The second step is collecting information from teens in your community to more closely understand the things hurting or helping their health.

SET GOALS

The third step is coming together as a community to look at the ways in which you want to reduce challenges and promote strengths to improve youth health in your community.

Risk & Protective Factors

- Make it more likely or less likely a health outcome will occur
- Example: Not having access to bike/walking trails is risk factor for obesity

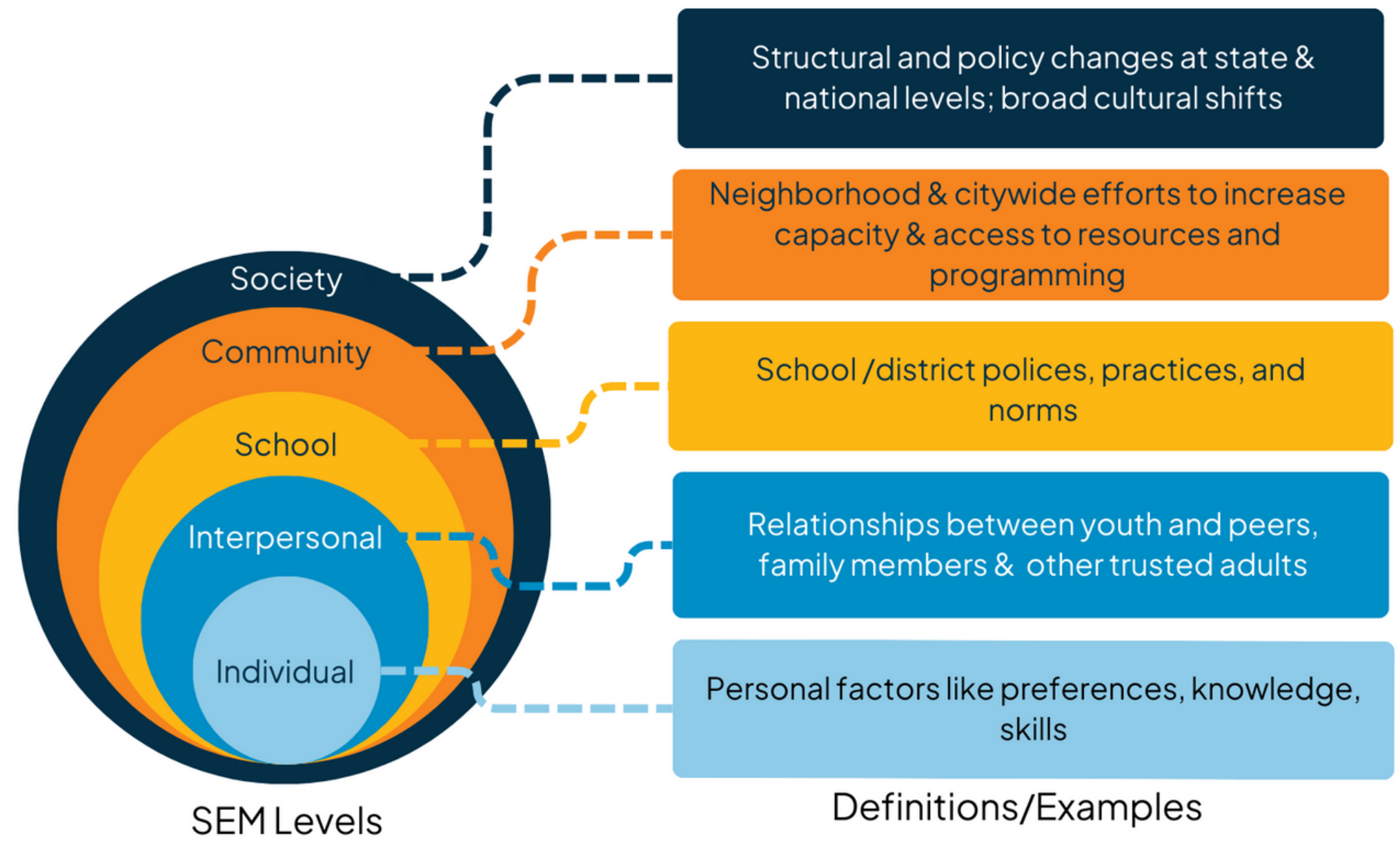


Risk & Protective Factors

- Exist at multiple levels of experience
- Focusing on just one level is unlikely to create real, sustainable change



Factors That Can Impact Youth Well-being



Examples of Youth Risk & Protective Factors for Mental Health

- Feeling close to parents/family
- Having authentic relationships with peers
- Meaningful and supportive connections to non-parent, trusted adults
- High levels of stress
- Lack of sleep or physical activity



*How We Can
Support
Young People
in Idaho?*



**Increasing
Youth Social
Connection!**



How Can We Increase Youth Social Connection?

Building Feelings of Support and Belonging in Our Own Families

Becoming a “Trusted Adult” for Youth Outside of Your Immediate Family

Supporting Mental–health Promoting Practices and Policies in Your Community

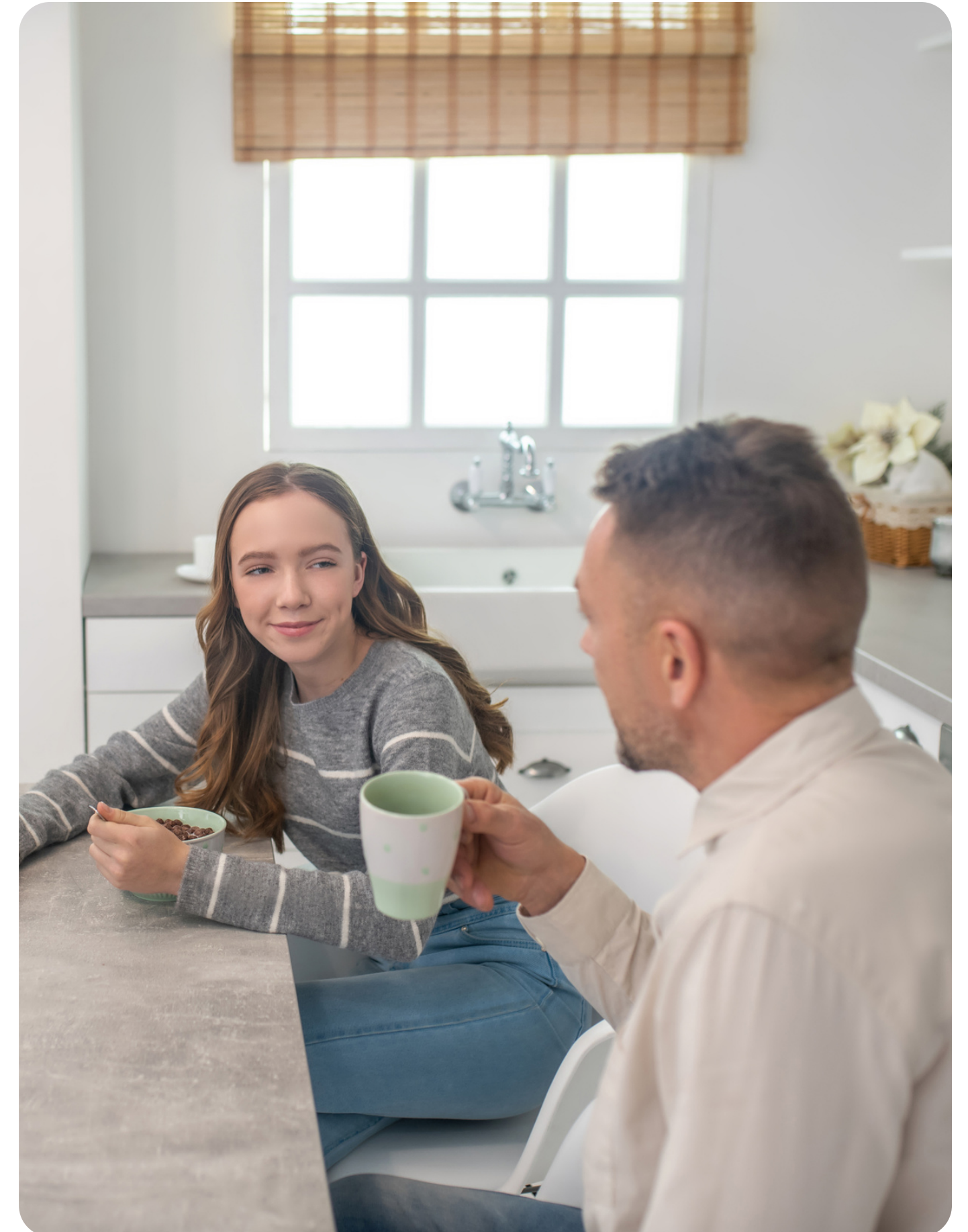
Helping All Youth Connect to Their Authentic Selves

Building Feelings of Support and Belonging in Our Own Families



What Does This Really Mean?

- Building youth's sense of value and mattering to their families
- Closeness to parents and other family members
- Feelings of support and safety in various areas of their lives



Where to Start

- Dedicating specific and frequent times for youth-driven conversation
 - Car trips
 - Walks/hikes
 - Making/eating dinner
- Taking genuine interest in their friends, activities, and interests
 - Not just asking about school or grades
- Making family traditions out of shared interests



Where to Start

- Giving youth decision making and planning power
 - Weekend plans
 - Meals
 - Family activities
 - Vacation
- Building confidence in and modeling things like meeting new people, trying new skills/activities without needing to be perfect or even good at them



Where to Start

- Helping youth navigate conflict without solving issues for them/on their behalf
 - Note: for serious issues sometimes youth DO need parents/adults to act on their behalf
- Perspective taking in conflicts WITH them
 - Reminding yourself about where they are developmentally
 - Recognizing that their lives are not the same environment we grew up in



Becoming a “Trusted Adult” for Youth Outside of Your Immediate Family



What Does This Really Mean?

- Being someone young people enjoy seeing and checking in with
- Being someone a young person can depend on or go to when they need help
 - Emotional support
 - Access to resources



Where to Start

- Forming more meaningful connections with friends or acquaintances of your own kids
 - “I heard you did really well at...”
 - “We missed you at...”
 - “Hey, how have you been lately”
- Hosting neighborhood events like pizza nights, bbqs, game or movie nights
 - Ask young people what THEY want to do or eat for these
 - Inviting new friends



Where to Start

- Volunteer/work in youth spaces
 - Rec centers
 - Libraries
 - Non-profits
 - Faith spaces
- Important thing is valuing youth for who they are, letting them be their authentic self, and helping them connect to things that bring them joy and purpose
 - Hobbies/interests
 - Culture
 - New people and communities



Who Can Be a Trusted Adult?

Anyone dedicated to helping youth be their authentic selves!

Often include:

- Formal mentors
- Teachers and school staff
- Coaches and other club/activity leaders
- Members of faith community
- Other community members



Supporting Mental-health Promoting Practices and Policies in Your Community



- Remember, mental health is more than just access to mental health services
 - Supporting youth social connection also addresses youth mental health challenges
 - Communities also can have different risk and protective factors, having community-specific data is key

Supporting Mental-health Promoting Practices and Policies in Your Community

- Supporting social connection opportunities in can look like:
 - Volunteering or donating to high-quality youth programs, clubs, and spaces
 - Advocating for more community-support for schools, youth programs, and youth mental health services
 - Ensuring youth programs, clubs, and services are accessible to ALL youth regardless of their background or neighborhood

*Three things
that support
real youth
mental
health
change...*

Increasing social connection for young people; to self, peers, and safe adults.

Moving Youth Mental Health Prevention Upstream.

Collecting community-specific data to navigate and check our work.



Thank you!

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 [Facebook.com/CommunitiesForYouth](https://www.facebook.com/CommunitiesForYouth)

 [Instagram.com/communitiesforyouth/](https://www.instagram.com/communitiesforyouth/)

Learn more:
communitiesforyouth.org

Building Connection for Youth Mental Health

ADULT TIP SHEET



Why Connection?

One of the main drivers of mental health struggles among Boise's youth is a lack of connection. If a large group of adults in Boise work on increasing connection opportunities for youth, we can make a real impact on the youth mental health crisis. Consider how you can be a trusted adult and create supportive relationships with the youth in your life.

How Can I Start Building Better Connections?

Make time to check in with your kids, your kids' friends, and other young people. A quick "Hey, how have you been?" can go a long way.

Plan weekly family and multi-family meals. Pizza night, taco night, ice cream sundae night---all are great opportunities to connect.

Create hobbies and rituals. It can be as easy as going for a walk or bike ride, watching a specific show, or having a themed movie night.

Encourage young people to join activities, attend events, and extend their social circle. These can be through school or through places like the Boise library, Parks & Rec, or other organizations.

Invite youth to volunteer with you. Volunteering has many mental health benefits and can take some of awkwardness out of building a connection.

Get creative together. Arts, crafts, building projects, you name it. You do not need to be an expert.