

Gender Specific Strategies to Prevent Substance Abuse among Girls and Young Women

Presentation by Center for Collaborative Planning for the 2017 National Prevention Network Conference



- To explore the role of gender-specific practices in preventing underage drinking
- To gain knowledge about effective strategies and tools to engage female mentors in youth substance abuse prevention
- To understand the risk and protective factors of alcohol use and abuse for girls and young women
- To expand culturally relevant practices when working with girls and women in diverse community settings

Session Objectives

- Overview of the My Future Initiative (MyFI) Coalition
 - Why? What? How?
- Girls and Alcohol: Huge Risks with No Rewards
 - Risk factors and disparate impacts
- Gender-Specific Practices Unique to MyFI's Success
- Transforming From Mom to Mentor and Advocate

Session Agenda

Vision:

MyFI is a coalition of girls ages 12-17 and adult allies who seek to prevent alcohol abuse among teenage girls through partnership with local organizations, outreach, education, advocacy, and the provision of safe and positive environments.

Overview of MyFI

- The gender gap in underage drinking has closed. Girls are drinking as much or more than boys.

California Healthy Kids Survey, 2011-2013, alcohol use in past month:

Sacramento County	Percent											
	Female						Male					
Grade Level	0 days	1 day	2 days	3-9 days	10-19 days	20-30 days	0 days	1 day	2 days	3-9 days	10-19 days	20-30 days
7th Grade	91.5%	4.3%	1.3%	1.6%	0.4%	0.9%	91.2%	4.9%	1.2%	1.0%	0.5%	1.2%
9th Grade	82.3%	6.5%	3.3%	4.1%	1.4%	2.3%	83.4%	6.2%	3.4%	3.0%	1.7%	2.4%
11th Grade	73.2%	8.8%	6.3%	7.8%	2.1%	1.8%	73.0%	7.7%	5.4%	7.9%	2.8%	3.3%

California	Percent											
	Female						Male					
Grade Level	0 days	1 day	2 days	3-9 days	10-19 days	20-30 days	0 days	1 day	2 days	3-9 days	10-19 days	20-30 days
7th Grade	89.1%	5.5%	2.2%	1.5%	0.7%	1.0%	88.8%	5.9%	1.7%	1.5%	0.7%	1.4%
9th Grade	77.8%	8.6%	4.5%	4.8%	2.1%	2.1%	82.1%	6.2%	3.7%	3.7%	1.4%	2.9%
11th Grade	69.3%	10.9%	6.6%	8.7%	2.4%	2.1%	67.9%	9.2%	6.5%	10.0%	3.1%	3.4%

Girls and Alcohol

- **Girls turn to alcohol and drugs for more serious reasons**
 - Girls are more likely to link drugs and alcohol to avoidance of problems and stress relief.
 - Rather than reaching out for help, girls use alcohol or drugs to escape.
 - Boys tend to use drugs and alcohol to make socializing easier, or to experience a rush.
- **Alcohol and drugs place girls at higher risk for health problems**
 - Women metabolize alcohol differently than men. When women and men of the same body weight drink the same amount of alcohol, women reach higher peak blood alcohol levels.
 - Women drinkers are at higher risk for certain medical problems, including liver, brain, and heart damage, than are men who drink comparable amounts.
 - Adolescent girls who use drugs or alcohol are at higher risk of depression, addictions and stunted growth.
 - Frequent alcohol use by teen girls may increase their chances of breast cancer.

Impact on Girls and Young Women

- Youth Development Principles and Practices
- Community Building
- “Glass Half-Full” – Asset-Based, What Works?
- Equity
- Culturally Relevant and Responsive
- Collaborative Leadership

What is MyFI?
Overall Approach

- Prevention education and leadership training of core group of coalition members including girls/young women age 12-18 and their adult allies/champions
- Design of a youth grants program which has resulted in re-granting of approximately \$15,000 to support 14 prevention projects implemented by girls /young women ranging from youth educating parents on impact of abuse of alcohol and other drugs to engagement of girls in school climate digital storytelling
- Production of youth video as an education tool
- Youth presentations on substance abuse prevention
- Engaged coalition members in community volunteer efforts

MyFI Coalition Outcomes

Promising prevention practices emerged from program evaluations and gathering of stories from interviews with MyFI youth. Key discoveries include:

- Healthy relationships with adults with special emphasis on female parent/caregivers
- Girls only with a focus on girls' strengths and assets in a non-competitive, safe space
- Bridging across differences (age, place, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status)
- Girls' leadership and voice; taking a position and acting on it throughout program
 - Teachers, mentors and researchers
- Community grantmaking and stewardship
 - Building social capital

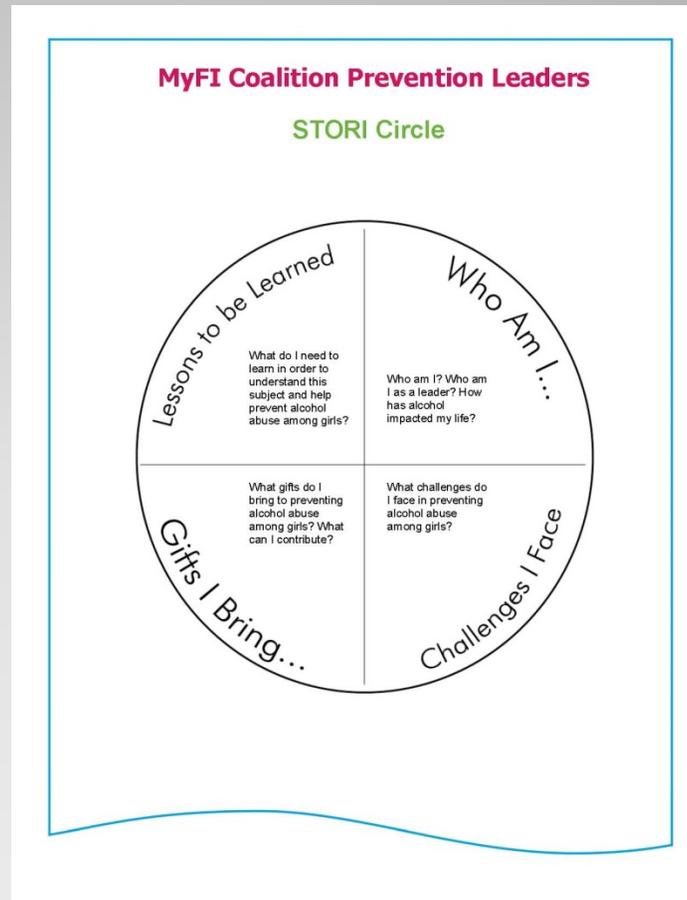
Gender-specific Practices

Girls' safety is really important. Girls are turning to alcohol and drugs without attention at home and don't have people at home to turn to for problems with bullying, dieting, body issues. (Girls) need to be able to build independence and confidence.

- MyFI Youth Coalition Member

Gender-specific Practices

STORI Circle



Toolbox

Promising practices and tools to engage women as mentors and advocates emerged from program evaluation and gathering of stories from MyFI adults. Key discoveries include:

- Transition from parent-child relationship to youth-adult partnership.
- Mutual support among moms – increased parenting skills
- Seeing my child as powerful
- Issue advocacy to encourage learning and application of skills
- Education on role of parents in preventing underage drinking and substance use
- Ongoing rather than episodic/one-time only
- High expectations of youth and adults

Transforming From Mom to Mentor and Advocate

- Joining forces to make positive change
- Creating options/alternative realities for girls faced with significant life challenges
- “Knowing that three less girls are engaging in risky behaviors and becoming a part of a caring community when it could have easily gone the other way.”

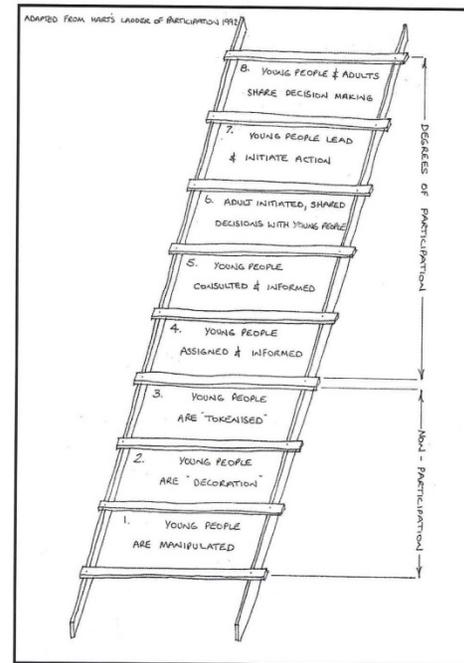
Everyone came from different backgrounds, life experiences but came together to share experiences and knowledge. I was able to see how impressive the young ladies were. They became strong and had a voice. Saw myself as helping them to be stronger in the world.

- MyFI Adult Coalition Member

Transforming From Mom to Mentor and Advocate

Hart's Ladder of Youth Engagement

Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



Using concept of the "ladder of citizen participation", developed by Sherry R. Arnstein (1969), Roger A. Hart (1992) describes eight stages of young people's participation, with lowest rung showing the least participation.

Toolbox

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Thank you!!