



COACHING BEYOND WINNING

A resource for sports coaches and third-space leaders on
positive youth development in the third space

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Overview

The “third space” is anytime children and youth spend outside of the home or school (i.e., when they are at afterschool programs, summer camps, rec programs, youth centers, extracurricular activities, service learning projects, etc.). Young people spend a lot of time outside of their homes and outside of school. The third space is an important place for them to receive what they need as they grow up. As we go about our lives, we can welcome youth as part of our communities and provide opportunities for them to learn new skills and to have opportunities to play, learn, relax, explore, and be young.

Social and Emotional Learning

What is SEL?

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to:

Develop Healthy Identity

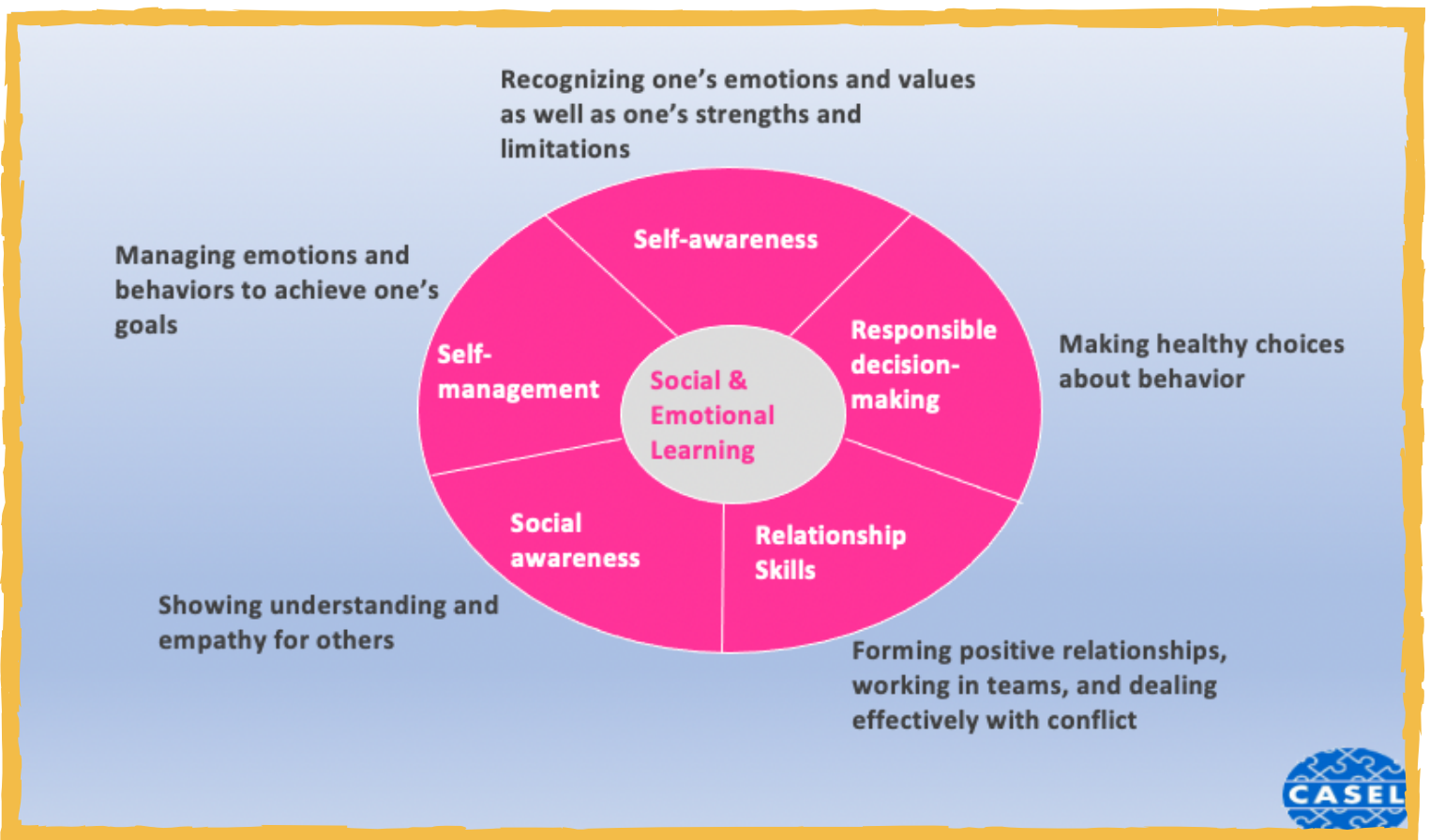
Manage Emotions and Achieve Personal and Collective Goals

Establish and Maintain Supportive Relationships

Feel and Show Empathy for Others

Make Responsible Decisions

Core Competencies



SAFE: Strategy to Promote SEL Competencies

S Support them in any way possible.

A Take Action, but make sure your action is based on hope.

F Have Faith in students' ability to initiate change.
Have Faith in students to do better.

E Express your feelings. Connect with them and let them know that you are there for them.

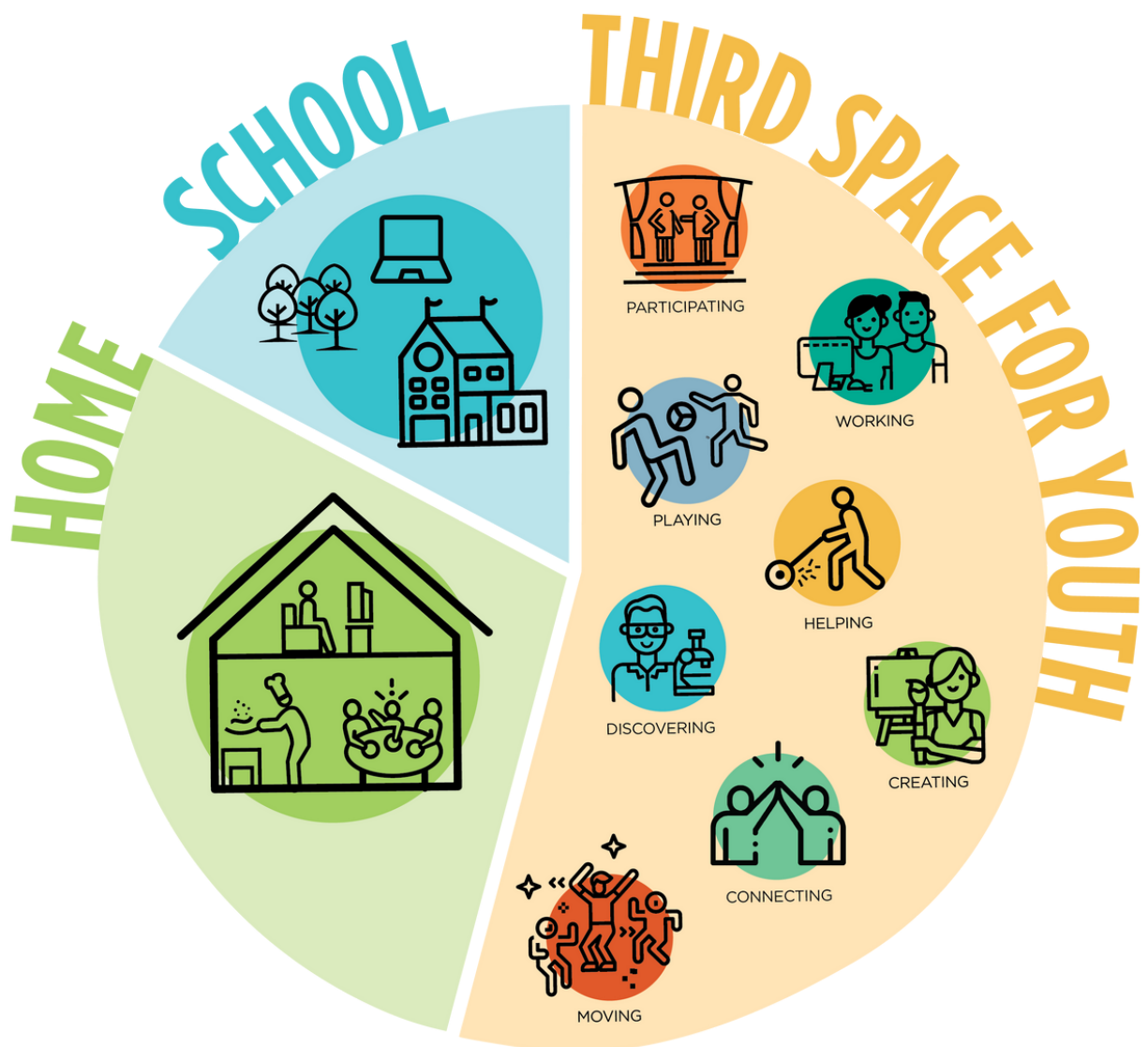


How can you promote the social and emotional competence of youth participating in your program? What resources do you have? What support do you need?

The Third Space

What is the Third Space?

The space outside the home and school where young people spend their time is known as the Third Space. These spaces include afterschool programs, summer camps, recreation programs, youth centers, extracurricular activities, and service-learning projects. Third-space programs provide opportunities for youth to play, relax, explore, learn new skills, and just be youth. All of these activities support positive youth development and a youth's sense of belonging and connectivity.





Sports, Third-Space Programs, and SEL

When school vacation and summer break are taken into account—in addition to all the other times when youth aren't at home or school—youth spend a significant amount of time in the third space. What happens in third space really matters in a youth's life because participation in consistent, high-quality third-space programs serves as a protective factor against substance use and risky behaviors. Sports and third-space programs provide an ideal context for cultivating SEL skills in youth because they provide youth with a positive-sustained relationship with caring adults as well as opportunities to develop, practice, and use life skills to assume leadership roles in their community. For these reasons, third-space programs are often highlighted as an effective primary prevention strategy.



Make a list of third-space programs available for youth in your communities.



Are those activities easily accessible to youth? What are the possible barriers?

Neurodevelopment

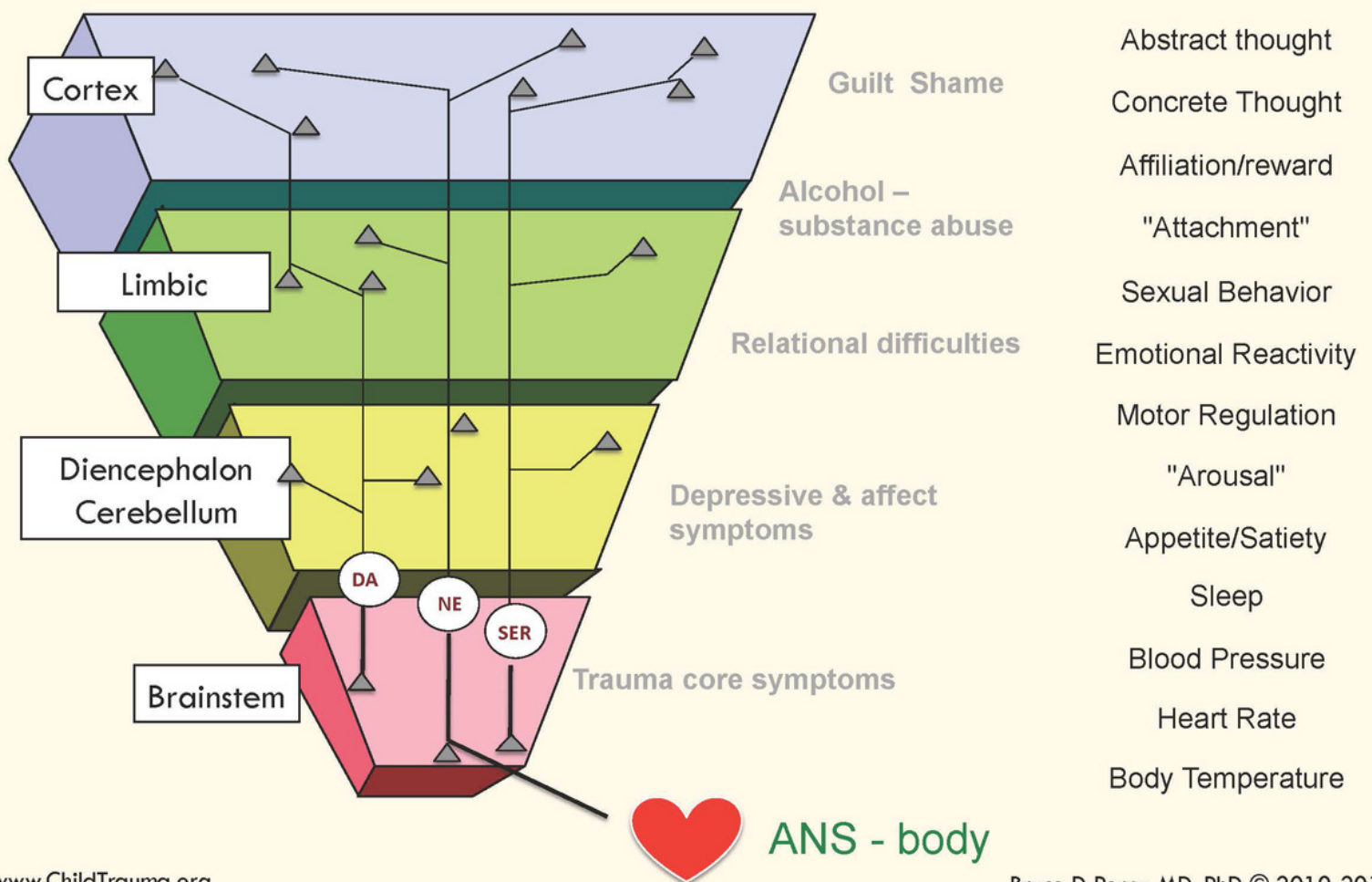
Hierarchical and Use-Dependent Brain Development

Brain development is a lifelong process and is hierarchical—the brain regions responsible for basic functioning develop earlier than those responsible for higher-order functioning. The brainstem, responsible for heartbeat, blood pressure, breathing, safety, etc., develops first followed by the limbic system (our emotion center), which is responsible for the Fight, Flight, or Freeze Reaction. The prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for abstract thoughts, thinking about the future, connecting dots, etc., may not mature until our mid-20s. Thus, when youth are with us, we must address the safety concerns and make them feel connected before they can learn anything, including athletic skills.





Furthermore, brain development is use-dependent—the more we use the circuit, the stronger it gets. In this process, less-used circuits become weaker and are eventually pruned away. For this reason, environments with supportive, empathetic adults (like coaches, third-space leaders, volunteers, etc.), where youth can practice new skills, learn from mistakes, and contribute to greater wellbeing, play a significant role in promoting positive youth development.



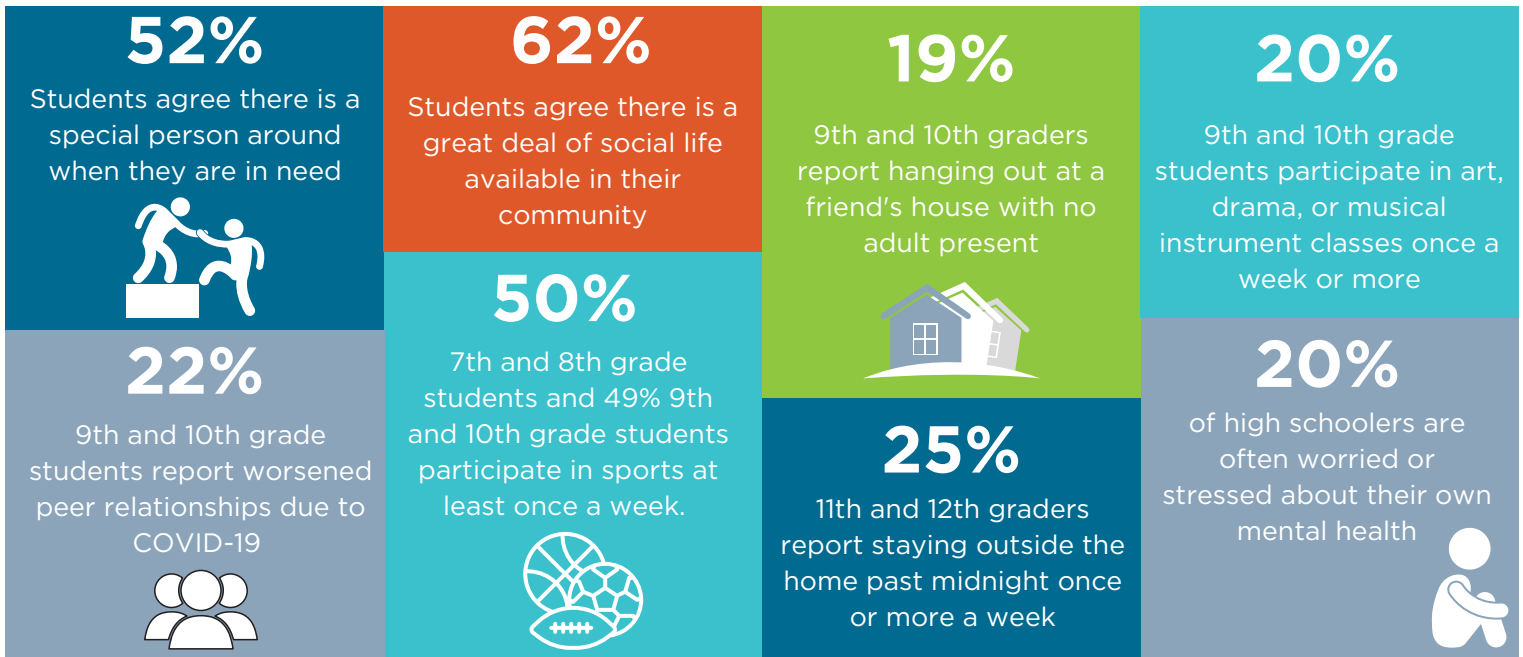
How can you promote safety, connection, and learning in your program?
What do you anticipate being challenging in creating a fun, safe, and judgment-free environment? Make a list of valuable resources and activities.

What are the Youth Saying?

Vermont Youth Project

The Vermont Youth Project (VYP) is a statewide initiative supporting communities with building an environment that embraces positive youth development. Visit the [VYP website](https://vermontafterschool.org/vyp/) (vermontafterschool.org/vyp/) to learn more. Local youth in VYP communities take a survey in the fall, and communities receive key data findings within eight weeks so they know what's going on with their youth in real time. Youth need us now more than ever to feel safe, have some sense of control, build connections, and learn essential life skills.

Youth need to be heard more than ever to build connections, life skills, and play!



Data from the Vermont Youth Project 2022 Survey
vermontafterschool.org/vypdata



**What stood out to you? Are you surprised by youth's perception of anything?
What can you and your community do to address any issues highlighted in the data?**

Know the Signs

Youth go through a lot of changes and typical development between the ages of 12-18. If you work with young people, you know them well and if there is a drastic change in behavior, it may be time to check in.

Common Signs of Alcohol and Drug Use

Changes in Behavior or Mood:

Restlessness, nervousness, paranoia, irritability, defensiveness, and/or a lack of interest in appearance or activities

Changes in Friends:

Switching friends and being reluctant to introduce new friends

Problems at Home or School:

Poor attendance, drop in grades, and rebelling against rules

Physical or Mental Challenges:

Slurred speech, lack of coordination, disorientation, memory lapses, trouble concentrating, or symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, bloody noses, teeth clenching, or sweating

Common Signs of Adolescent Development

Emotional Changes:

Shifts mood quickly, feels more intensely, and increasing risk-taking and impulsive behavior

Physical Changes:

Changes in hormones and increase in weight and height

Mental Changes:

Developing more abstract thinking skills, forming own beliefs, and questioning authority

Social Changes:

Increase in peer influence, learning to manage relationships, and experimenting with social and cultural identity

Need Confidential Mental Health Support?

➤ Call or text 988 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

➤ Text VT to 741741 (Crisis Text Line)

➤ Call LGBTQ Crisis Hotline at 1-866-488-7386

➤ Call 211 for local mental health agencies and referrals

Tobacco Use

NYTS

National Youth
TOBACCO

— Survey —

2022

More than **3 million**

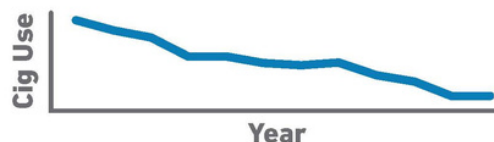
middle and high school students currently used any tobacco product

16.5% | **4.5%**

of high school students | of middle school students
currently used any tobacco product



We have made great progress in reducing the number of youth who use combustible cigarettes.



However, youth e-cigarette use remains a serious public health concern. E-cigarettes have been the most commonly used tobacco product among youth since 2014.

More than **2.5 million** students currently used e-cigarettes

Among current youth e-cigarette users:

More than **1 in 4**



used e-cigarettes daily



The most commonly
used device type was

disposables

Approximately **85%**



used flavored e-cigarettes

Findings suggest ongoing disparities in tobacco product use across different population groups.

Current tobacco product use was higher among:

- **Non-Hispanic American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN)** students
- Those identifying as **lesbian, gay or bisexual**
- Those identifying as **transgender**
- Those reporting **severe symptoms of psychological distress**
- Those with **low family affluence**
- Those with **low academic achievement**

About **1 million youth** used any combustible tobacco product. **Non-Hispanic black students** reported the highest percentage of **combustible tobacco product use, including cigar product use.**



Tobacco Cessation Resources

Youth can text “START” to 36072 to start confidential chat with a coach.

Free tools and support for ages 12-17. [My Life My Quit \(vt.mylifemyquit.org\)](https://vt.mylifemyquit.org)

Free tools and resources. [Truth Initiative \(truthinitiative.org\)](https://truthinitiative.org): To join, text “DITCHVAPE” to 88709

Free tools and resources. [Smokefree Teen \(teen.smokefree.gov\)](https://teen.smokefree.gov): To enroll, text Quit to 47848

More Resources [Vermont Department of Health \(healthvermont.gov/wellness/tobacco/vaping-e-cigs\)](https://healthvermont.gov/wellness/tobacco/vaping-e-cigs)

How Parents and Mentors Influence Youth Cannabis Use [Vermont Department of Health \(bit.ly/VTDOHCannabisInfo\)](https://bit.ly/VTDOHCannabisInfo)



Make a list of local resources and/or organizations available in your community that are dedicated toward promoting positive youth development and/or addressing tobacco and other substance use among youth.

Vaping Illness

➤ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and state and local health departments, including the Vermont Department of Health, are investigating a multistate outbreak of e-cigarette or vaping product use-associated lung injury (EVALI).

➤ The investigation is ongoing and a cause has not been identified, but all reported cases have a history of using e-cigarette products. Many patients report using e-cigarette products with liquids that contain cannabinoid products, such as tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

Source: Department of Health. Lung Injury Associated with E-Cigarette Use in 2019.

How to Stay Updated



EVALI is new and evolving. To stay updated, please visit the following CDC page: cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html

Know the Symptoms

Cough, Shortness of Breath, or Chest Pain

Nausea, Abdominal Pain, or Vomiting

Fever, Chills, or Weight Loss

Additional Information and Resources

Youth can text “START” to 36072 to chat with a coach.

USA Today (December 2019): usatoday.com/story/sponsor-story/beasley-allen/2019/12/02/vaping-negatively-impacts-student-athletes-health/4298607002/

CDC: cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html

Tip Sheet: tobaccofreeco.org/know-the-facts/talking-to-youth

Adolescent Brain and Reward System

Adolescent Brain and Its Vulnerability

Adolescence development is characterized by rapid brain changes, increased novelty-seeking and social interactions with peers, and desires for independence. Increased peer pressure, paired with a youth's need for belonging during adolescence, places our youth in a vulnerable position and susceptible to risky behaviors. NYTS data survey shows that more than 3 million youth used tobacco products in 2022. All tobacco products deliver various amounts of nicotine. When a youth smokes cigarettes or vapes, nicotine is carried into the lungs, observed into the blood, and reaches the brain. Dopamine is released when the reward system senses the presence of nicotine in the brain. Dopamine gives you a sense of pleasure and youth quickly find themselves addicted to nicotine.

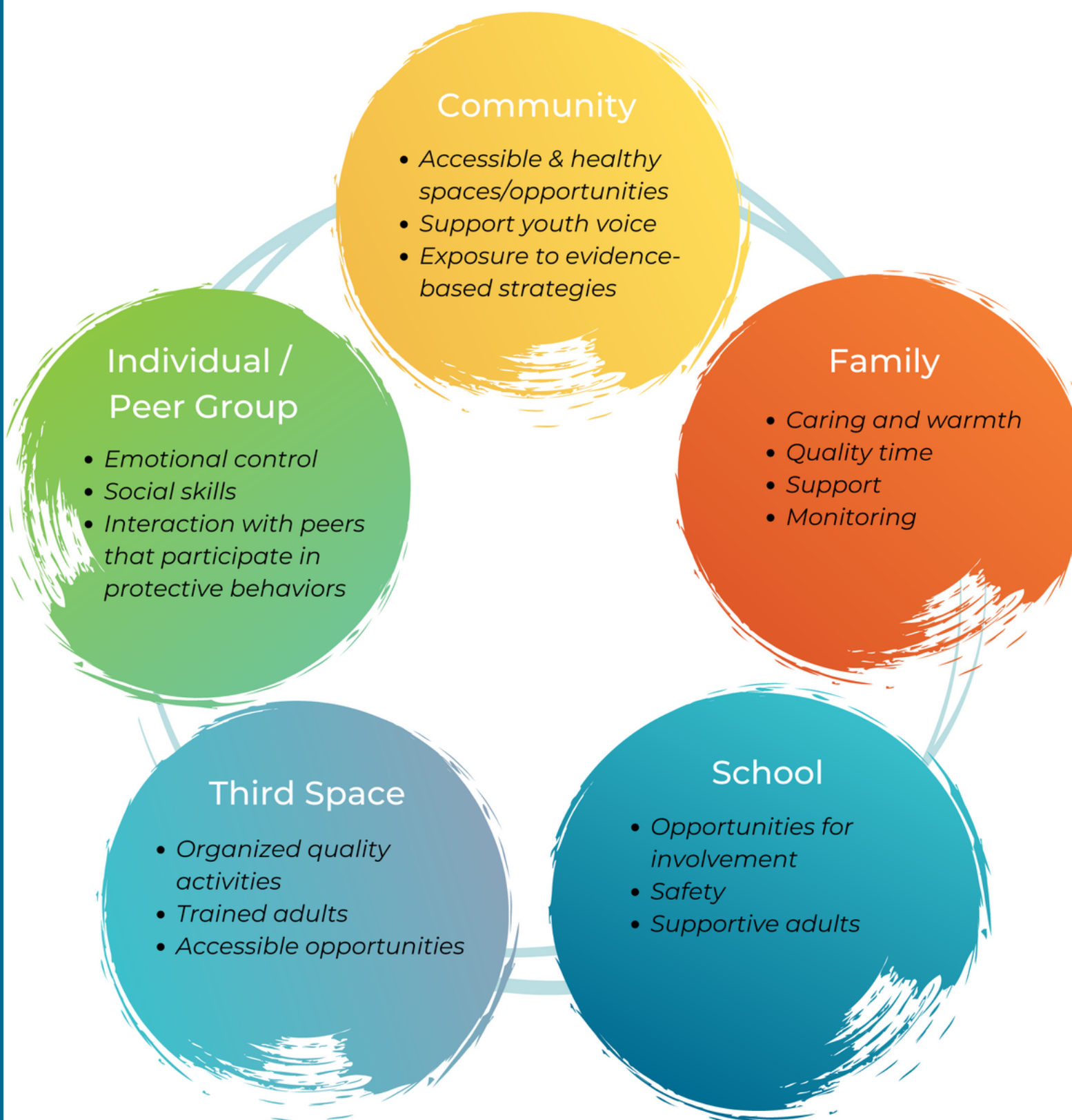
To support overall wellbeing and holistic development of youth, we can provide safe spaces to discuss their challenges and find solutions. Protective factors are an antidote to risk factors and we need to ensure protective factors are accessible to our youth.



Factors for Positive Youth Development

What Are Protective Factors?

There are many domains that youth interact with frequently and they can have protective impacts on a youth's wellbeing.





Participation in consistent, high-quality third space programs are a known protective factor against risky behaviors. Organized quality activities, trained third space leaders, and accessible opportunities are an effective primary prevention strategy that third space programs can provide. Below are factors that promote positive youth development:



Positive Social Norms



Supportive Relationships



Opportunities to Belong



Appropriate Structure



Opportunities to Make a Difference



Opportunities for Skill Development



Physical and Psychological Safety



Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts



What risk behaviors are prevalent in your community? How can afterschool and sports programs help prevent or minimize the prevalence of risk behaviors among youth?

Role of Sports Coaches and Third-Space Leaders

“You’re a coach. You want your athletes to earn trophies, medals, and win titles. You want them to reach the highest height their sport allows. But as every great coach discovers, developing a great athlete means nurturing, nurturing the even greater person within.”

— Edwin Moses

Ignite Curiosity

Help young athletes recognize failure/setback as an opportunity.

Promote Resilience

Know youths’ boundaries and fears and gently push them out of their comfort zone while providing support and encouragement.

Model Integrity

Treat youth with respect and dignity.
Praise youth for demonstrating and living their values.

Promote Self-Awareness

Provide specific feedback about performance and support students in being aware of their self talk during practice and competition.

Foster Resourcefulness

Challenge athletes to set high expectations for themselves and support them to accomplish their goals by connecting with/providing resources required.

Encourage Creativity

Notice and help others notice youth for thinking outside the box.

Lead with Empathy

Ensure youth are seen, heard, and understood.

Antiracism and Positive Sports Environment

Creation of a positive sports environment demands our commitment to equity. We must stand up against racism, homophobia, hatred, and any forms of discrimination on and off the sports arena. Sports is what brings many of us together, and as a coach or leader of a sports team or third-space program, you have a crucial role to play in ensuring ALL youth feel safe, heard, understood, and respected.

The unique and powerful role of coaches comes with important responsibilities. It is the coach's responsibility to ensure athletes' safety and that they are having fun and are being challenged to become the best of themselves. This can only happen if coaches are willing to meet athletes where they are mentally, emotionally, and socially. Focusing on the social and emotional competence of youth and providing the space for them to feel, coaches can build a safe space for all athletes to be their true selves.



The best responses to hatred- and bias-motivated behaviors need to incorporate prevention, intervention, and long-term education. This will not be possible until everyone involved in supporting our youth, including coaches, play their part.

P.E.A.C.E. Framework

by Anti-Defamation League

Prevent and Prepare

Educate and Heal

Act Quickly and Respond

Communicate

Encourage Reporting

To learn more about incorporating these elements into your program, please visit
[adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/2022-10/
school-sports-and-bias-toolkit.pdf](https://adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/2022-10/school-sports-and-bias-toolkit.pdf)

Other Resources Related to Supporting Athletes and Creating a Positive Sports Environment

[Pregame statement](https://bit.ly/PregameStatement)
(bit.ly/PregameStatement)

[VPA Guide to Good Sportsmanship](https://bit.ly/GoodSportsmanshipGuide)
(bit.ly/GoodSportsmanshipGuide)

[VPA Athletic Policies](https://bit.ly/VPAAthleticPolicies)
(bit.ly/VPAAthleticPolicies)



What are you pledging to do to promote an anti-racist sports culture? What other resources do you need?

SEL Tips for Coaches

Use Visuals to Convey Concepts and Norms

There are many different learning styles and having visuals to convey concepts and rules assists young people with these different styles. Set rules and expectations as a group. Ask the students for input into what your group norms and rules should be as a way to establish what's most important to keep everyone's bodies and feelings safe during your time together. Engage students in creating posters and artworks for them to see and use when they are with you.

Communication

Encourage students to use a positive tone of voice when things don't go as planned, Practice giving and receiving compliments in a circle or individually, find ways to recognize kindness publicly each day, and give them language to talk about their feelings.



[Encouraging Kids to Talk About Emotions](https://psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-baby-scientist/201909/encouraging-kids-talk-about-emotions)

(psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-baby-scientist/201909/encouraging-kids-talk-about-emotions)

Cooperation

Practice fun team-building activities each day. It is important for everyone to work on getting to know each other, so you must introduce all adults. This will help students see themselves as an integral part of their team, increases the sense of belonging and helps to build trust among each other.

Warm Up and Play Time

All student athletes have their unique needs. Give athletes a few extra minutes during the warmup to meet their bodies' unique needs. Also, create an environment where athletes feel empowered to take on a challenge without the fear of failure. This can be done by practicing different team-building activities, promoting the concepts of shared responsibility, and seeing failure as a learning opportunity.

Protect Tomorrow

If a child or teen has a hard day, always repair the same day. Consequences should ALWAYS stay on the same day as a transgression or mistake. This way, you can say goodbye with easy hearts and minds and look forward to a fresh day together the following day or week. There is so much external stress right now, so this space needs to be a safe space for children and youth to process.

Transition Out and Informal Time

It is equally important to set aside a few minutes at the end where coaches remain accessible to players wanting to connect with coaches without the pressure of practice or other athletes around. Transitioning out with a good conversation with coaches helps remind athletes that they matter, that it is okay to express their feelings, and that they can always count on the coaches if they need any support.





Expanding Access. Strengthening Programs. Empowering Youth.

VERMONTAFTERSCHOOL.ORG

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