



Join Together Northern Nevada

**Analysis of Youth Key
Informant Interviews in
Support of CCPP**

February 2025

Prepared in collaboration with:



Impact Evaluation & Assessment Services

(775) 397-0785

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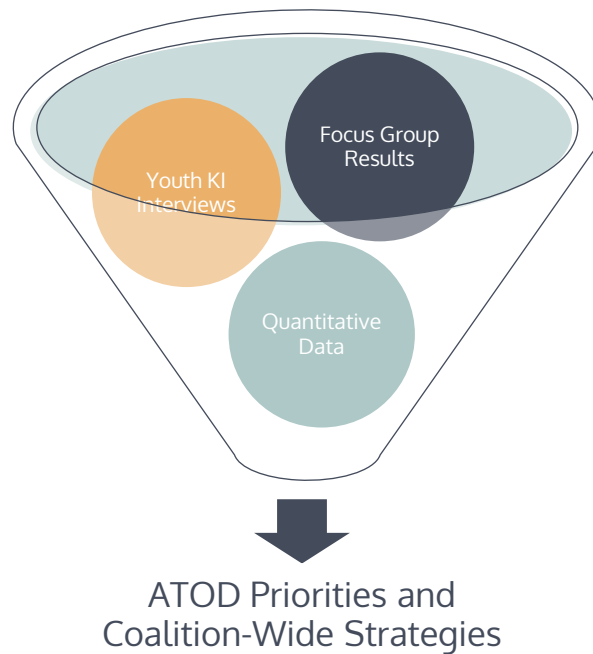
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Background

Join Together Northern Nevada (JTNN) engaged the services of Impact Evaluation & Assessment Services to facilitate focus groups and key informant interviews in support of their Comprehensive Community Prevention Plan (CCPP). This report summarizes the key findings from youth key informant interviews.

The results are organized around the four domains of the risk and protective factors: community, school, individual/peer, and family (Source: National Center for Biotechnology Information/National Institutes of Health).

The youth key informant interviews are one of three data gathering activities JTNN will utilize to select ATOD priorities for their CCPP, as follows:



The results detailed below are not exhaustive. The results of focus groups were analyzed separately and reported previously. Quantitative data will be analyzed separately. JTNN's interactions in the community and knowledge of emerging local trends may uncover topics not addressed by these participants.

Methodology for Youth Key Informant Interviews

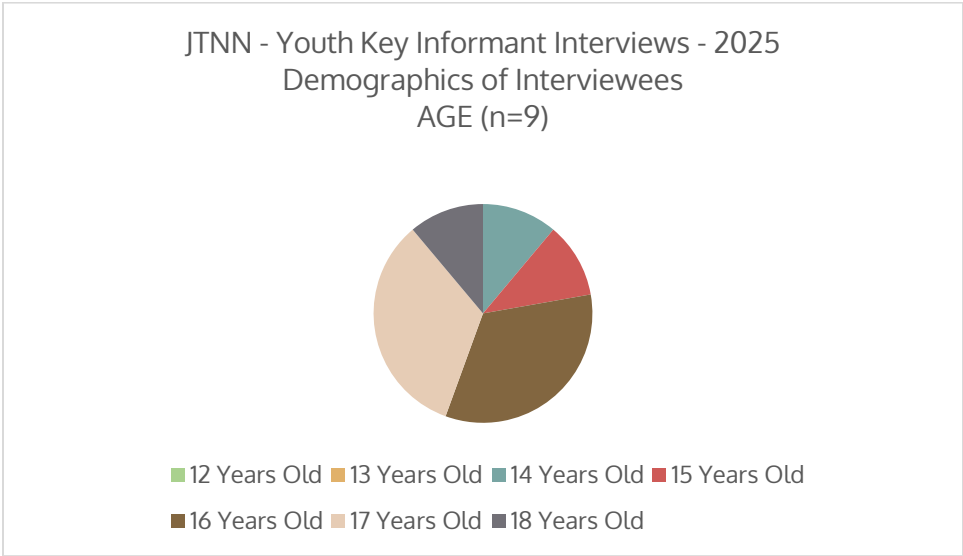
Impact and JTNN staff worked together to create a mixed methodology for youth key informant interviews.

JTNN co-sponsored an “Upward Bound” summer program on the UNR campus in July 2024. Upward Bound is designed to “prepare first-generation, income-qualified Nevada high school students for higher education access and success.” Seven (7) participants in the Upward Bound summer program were randomly selected to take part in the individual interviews (a convenience sample). Parental consent and youth assent were obtained. Participants met Margo Teague of Impact Evaluation & Assessment on UNR’s campus for the 45-minute interviews. Upward Bound’s policies required that a staff member was also present during the interviews to ensure youth safety.

An additional two interviewees were identified through a snowball methodology wherein Impact Evaluation reached out to the parents of young people within their own sphere of influence or agencies that work with young people ages 12-17. The same questions and consent forms were utilized.

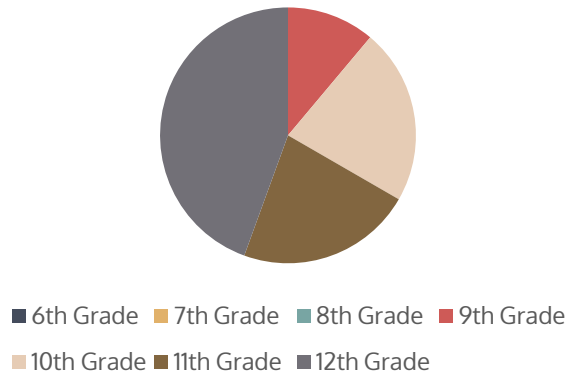
This methodology resulted in a total of 9 youth key informant interviews.

Characteristics of Interviewees



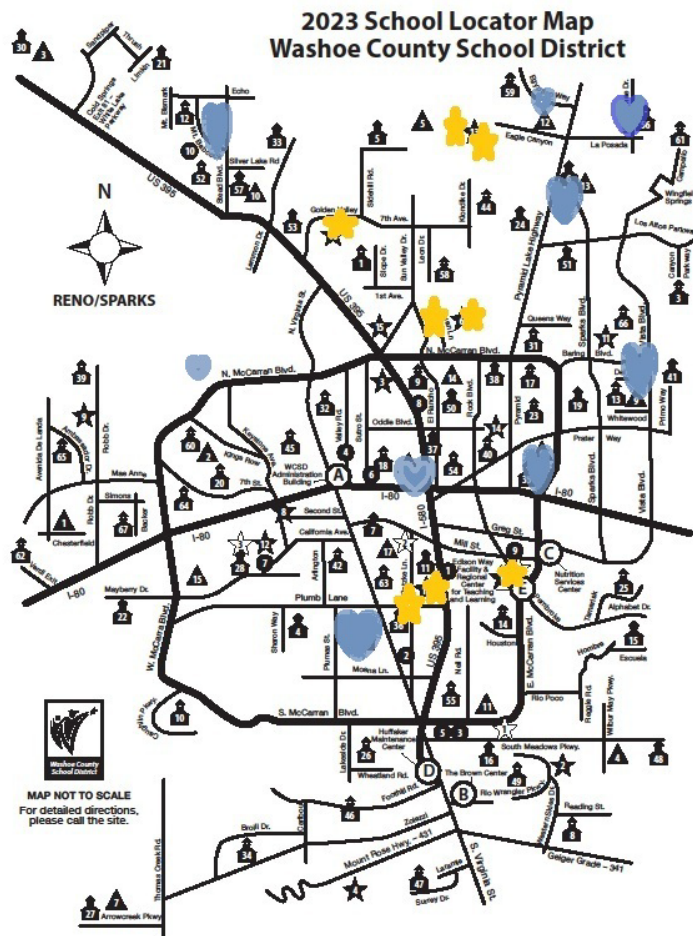
Younger students (12 and 13 year olds) are under-represented in this sample. Sixteen (16) and 17 year olds are slightly over-represented.

JTNN Youth Key Informant Interviews - 2022
Demographics of Interviewees
GRADE LEVEL (n=9)



Sixth (6th), 7th, and 8th-grade students are under-represented in this sample.

The sample population was divided nearly 50/50 in terms of gender (male=5, female=4).



★ School Attended

♥ General Area of Residence

One student is home-schooled. Students from South Reno are under-represented in this population.

The mixed methodology (the convenience sample + snowball methodology) has likely impacted the representativeness of the sample population in the following ways:

1. **Race/Ethnicity.** The interviewees were not asked to provide their race or ethnicity. From this evaluator’s observation, however, interviewees were more likely to be Hispanic than the overall population. Native American students may be underrepresented. One student identified herself as an immigrant.
2. **College Aspirations.** Because many of the interviewees were taking part in Upward Bound (a voluntary program designed to “prepare first-generation, income-qualified Nevada high school students for higher education access and

success”) this population may be more future/career-oriented than peers who chose not to participate.

3. **Income.** Similarly, because Upward Bound is income-based, the sample population likely over-represents lower-income students.

For the reasons listed above, the young people interviewed may have a more positive future orientation than their peers.

While this may not be an ideally representative sample of young people living in Washoe County, it is this evaluator’s opinion that the results are nonetheless worthy of analysis and action.

Results of Youth Key Informant Interviews

Results appearing in regular font represent **patterns of responses** from youth key informant interviewees. These results are included because they express sentiments expressed by multiple participants.

Information in “*italics and quotation marks*” are **direct quotes from individual interviewees**. These results do not represent common patterns of responses but are included because they offer interesting or important observations/suggestions.

Notes from interviews were coded by relevance to the risk and protective factors (i.e., Individual/Peer, Family, School, and Community).

Peer/Individual



Source: <https://www.communitiesthatcare.org.au/how-it-works/risk-and-protective-factors>

Risk Factor	Related Patterns of Responses
<p>Rebelliousness</p>	<p>[In response to prompt about rebellious behavior at school] We don't see a lot of that. It creates an unhealthy environment for everyone.</p>
	<p>Some teachers are not very respectful to students. That's when students aren't respectful to them.</p>
	<p>In my school, at least with my friends, we set ourselves to a high standard. We want to succeed in the future. Why cause trouble for ourselves?</p>
	<p>I think some kids are rebellious. I hear about street racing for example, but I don't see it in my school.</p>
	<p><i>"Sometimes I struggle with how to act between my culture and modern ways of doing things."</i></p>
<p>Early Initiation of Problem Behavior</p>	<p>I saw and heard about more substance use in MS than in HS.</p>
	<p><i>"I had counseling for a while. It didn't help."</i></p>

<p>Impulsiveness</p>	<p><i>"Life turns out how you set your priorities. I try to balance my future achievements with what I'm doing right now."</i></p>
	<p><i>"When I'm making a decision I think: 1) what is positive about this? 2) how will this impact my school time? And 3) Will it impact my time with friends and family?"</i></p>
	<p><i>"I like to clear my mind and then move my body, like take a walk. And then I think about whether or not the decision is healthy."</i></p>
	<p><i>"I think most of the time people do whatever is most convenient."</i></p>
	<p><i>"I see anger build up in kids. They don't know how to express it and use drugs as a coping mechanism."</i></p>
	<p><i>"When I'm making decisions I am training myself to slow down my thinking. I try to do things step-by-step. I look on social media or websites for information. I talk with people who might know something about the questions I have. And then I think, 'Am I accommodating someone else with this decision? Or are they accommodating me?' I don't usually don't do the thing if I'm accommodating someone else."</i></p>
	<p><i>"I really don't know how to solve a problem. My parents are very strict. Now that I'm older sometimes I don't know where to start. With your question about the cookies? If my parents aren't around I'm either going to eat the whole package or I won't eat any because I know I won't be able to stop."</i></p>

Antisocial Behavior	I'm sure there are bad kids, but I don't see a lot of it.
	I see things online that are pretty bad, like mean or disrespectful.
	<i>"I have seen some kids joining gangs and being violent. I wish they would ask for more help from teachers or counselors."</i>
	<i>"I would tell my middle school self to just keep to myself. There aren't a lot of people you can count on. Your friend groups will change. I don't see the point of talking to other kids now."</i>
Favorable Attitudes Toward Problem Behavior	I think a lot of kids vape. And some kids drink alcohol.
Interaction with Friends Involved in Problem Behavior	My friends don't do that stuff.
Sensation Seeking	<i>"I like to ski...like really, really fast. My friends and I compete."</i> <i>Interviewer: Aren't you afraid to get hurt?</i> <i>"No. That might happen to some people, but I don't get hurt."</i>
Rewards for Antisocial Involvement	NA
Protective Factor	Related Patterns of Responses
Social Skills	My advice to younger kids would be to make a lot of friends. Meet new people as often as you can.
	<i>"I wish I would have spent less time focusing on what other people want me to do and focused on myself. Pay more attention to my mental and physical health and find what I like to do."</i>
	<i>"I am a little more introverted. My dad is a major extrovert. He tells me all the time that I need to talk with people, get to know them, because this is how you meet the best people in the world. I try to do that."</i>

Belief in the Moral Order	Most kids I know respect each other and themselves.
	People know what's moral and good. Most of us don't want to cause trouble for other people or make them feel unsafe.
Emotional Control	<i>"When I'm up against something I tend to talk less and get angry. When I notice that happening I spend a lot of time journaling and with my family."</i>
Interaction with Prosocial Peers	My friends all want to go to college or trade school and have careers.
	<i>I had one mentor who really opened my eyes to a possible future and how I can get there.</i>

Family



Source: <https://www.communitiesthatcare.org.au/how-it-works/risk-and-protective-factors>

Risk Factor	Related Patterns of Responses
Poor Family Management and Discipline	NA
Family Conflict	<p><i>"I have some problems with my mom, but I have a step-mom who helps me a lot."</i></p> <p><i>"I have a lot of responsibilities at home caring for [redacted for privacy]."</i></p> <p><i>Interviewer: Is that ok with you? Is that a choice you are making?</i></p> <p><i>"Not really, but I'm the one who is available to do it. Someone has to be around and I guess it's me."</i></p>
Family History of Antisocial Behavior	NA
Favorable Parental Attitudes to Problem Behavior	There was no mention of parental substance use or parents condoning youth substance use.
Protective Factor	Related Patterns of Responses
Attachment and Bonding to Family	I'm close with my siblings and cousins.
Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement in the Family	NA
Recognition of Prosocial Involvement	NA

School



Source: <https://www.communitiesthatcare.org.au/how-it-works/risk-and-protective-factors>

Risk Factor	Related Patterns of Responses
Academic Failure (low academic achievement)	Sometimes the order of classes gets messed up. That interferes with someone trying to take certain classes to be able to go to college.
	Some teachers seem more interested in discipline and imposing order than they do on teaching.
Low Commitment to School	<i>"Some of the classrooms in my school are overcrowded. Sometimes I don't feel safe."</i>
	Most of the time the environment in my school is mellow and welcoming. It feels safe and calm.
	<i>"My school is small. All the teachers and staff know everyone's name. The front office staff knows our names and knows things going on in our lives."</i>
	I would tell younger people to talk more to teachers. They really do know more than you do and most of them really do care.
Bullying	Bullying can be really bad. In school and online.
	<i>My middle school taught us about cliques and how to navigate that whole situation.</i>
	<i>There are too many cliques in my school. There are rumors, things get chaotic.</i>

Protective Factor	Related Patterns of Responses
Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement in School	Some schools are proactive in telling us what is available, like "sign up!" But in other schools it is more up to the students to say, "Hey, can I do this thing?"
	I'd like to see more programs and activities at my school. More of the things that might be less popular.
	I would tell younger students to get involved in more things. Don't give in to your doubts, just go for it.
Recognition of Prosocial Involvement	Students shared many examples of pro-social involvement, including: band, Skills USA, FBLA, theater, FFA, sports teams, academic clubs, and, talent shows.

Community



Source: <https://www.communitiesthatcare.org.au/how-it-works/risk-and-protective-factors>

Risk Factor	Related Patterns of Responses
<p>Low Community Attachment</p>	<p><i>"I am a minority in a white school. I look [redacted for privacy}, but I do not have the same culture and back story as other [redacted]. There aren't other people like me in my school."</i></p>
	<p>I know my neighbors' faces but not their names.</p>
	<p>I have been to a couple of BBQs with neighbors. I take care of their dogs when they go out of town.</p>
	<p><i>"I live in a very communal neighborhood, but I don't participate."</i></p> <p><i>Interviewer: Hmmm...I keep hearing that young people want more opportunities to connect with their neighbors. You don't agree?</i></p> <p><i>"No! They already know too much of my business."</i></p>
	<p><i>"My family experienced race-based vandalism on our home. None of our neighbors reached out to help clean it up or sympathize. We moved."</i></p>

Community Disorganization	See discussion of online communities in CAPP, Appendix A.
	I am worried about picking a career that won't be taken over by robots or AI. We need more certainty about future jobs.
	We keep hearing about all these crises...the environment, the economy, housing shortages, etc. But it seems like nobody is willing to put the resources out to fix it. Is my future not worth it? So I'm supposed to go into debt to go to college, when a robot might take over my job anyway, and live with my parents for the rest of my life. Cool. So much for the American Dream.
	I wish the adults making decisions for us understood the giant brick wall in front of young people. I can't see over or around it. I just have to climb it and hope for the best. All the people making decisions are so old and disconnected. This is a different world than it was.
Community Transitions & Mobility	About half of the students interviewed discussed moving frequently in and out of town. The other half have lived in Reno their whole lives, many still live in the same house from infancy.
	A few of the students interviewed discussed moving back and forth between separated mothers and fathers.
Protective Factor	Related Patterns of Responses
Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement in the Community	Several of the students work part-time.
	A few students mentioned volunteering.
	Upward Bound has been supportive and encouraging. I've made a lot of friends through Upward Bound.
	I talk with my friends' parents sometimes. That's helpful.
Recognition of Prosocial Involvement	NA

Perceptions of Peer Use

- Students ranked substance use in general at their schools at 3.48 on a scale of 0-5.
- Most students mentioned vaping during this conversation. They see vaping use in their school bathrooms and hear about peers using vapes.
- Students did not mention any other substances specifically.

Thoughts About Prevention

- A 50 year old telling young people in a large assembly, "back in my day," just doesn't mean anything. The experiences before cell phones and technology and the economic and environmental classes just aren't relevant. I think education should be in small groups and be led by younger people.
- We know the dangers of drug use. Sometimes people don't make the one-to-one connection.
- I think we would have healthier communities if we had more social events to bring people together. It's been harder after COVID for people to get to know each other. Maybe they could host community bike rides or something fun.
- I wish people understood inter-generational connections better. I think mental and physical health problems would be identified more quickly and advocated for if we were around each other more often. There is a big divide between family members.
- I wish parents would take the time to learn what's going on with their kids. I don't think they understand the isolation we are facing and what we are dealing with online.
- I think what's missing is hope. And inspiration. We don't have a lot of role models that we can look at and say, "That person looks happy and successful. I want to be like them."

- I don't see a lot of passion in the adults around me. A lot of adults, parents and teachers, are obviously going through the motions. It isn't very inspiring.
- I think we need more suicide prevention at school. Live every two weeks or once a month. There is still a stigma. We don't know how to react if someone is depressed.
- I wish adults understood that they are expecting a lot from young people who are still growing. They should be more considerate of what we are thinking and our mental and physical health. They should be more open-minded when we try to talk to them and be willing to listen.

Previous Knowledge of JTNN

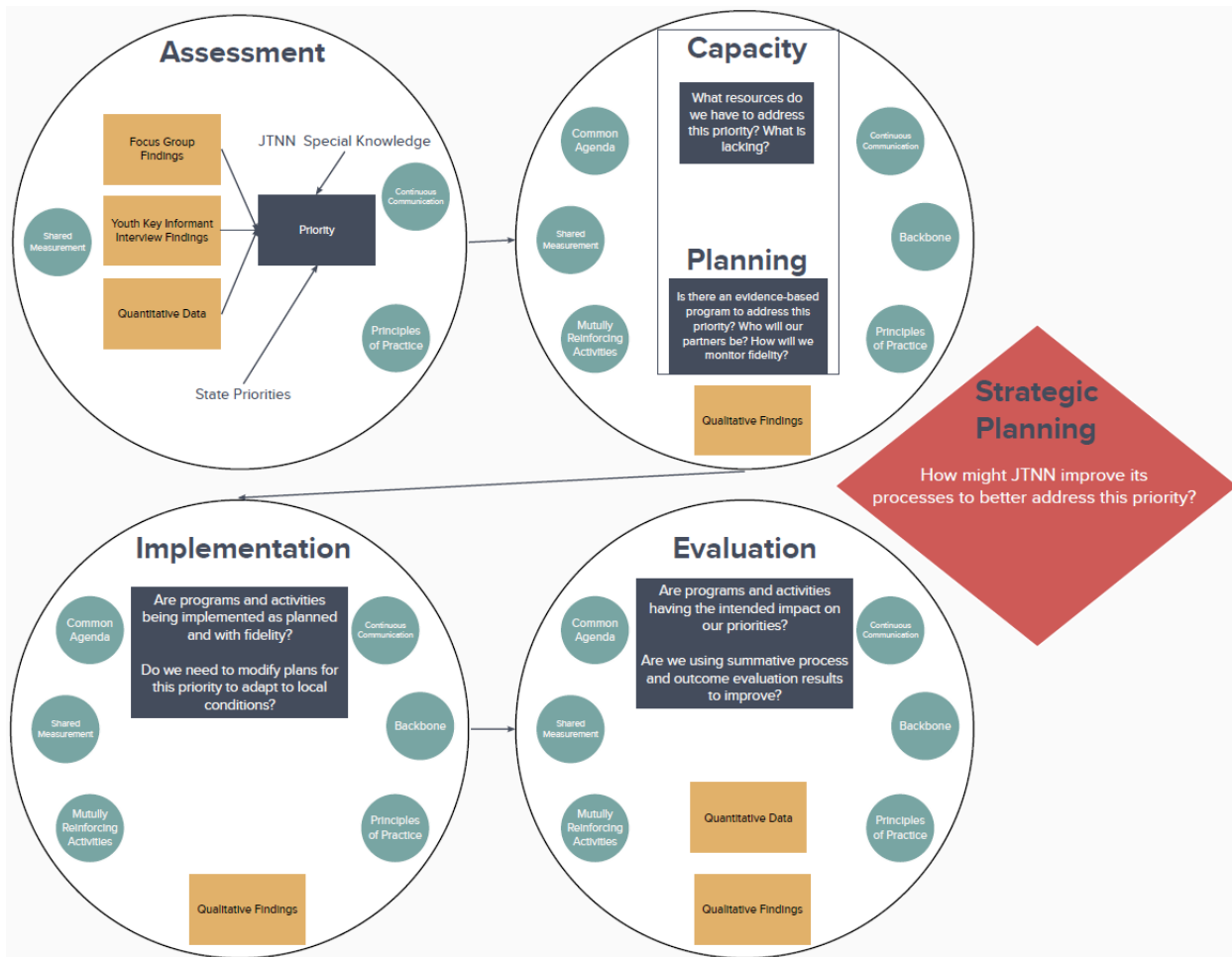
Most students had not heard of JTNN in the past. Of those that did, their knowledge was relatively vague. One student thought they saw JTNN advertised as a cannabis dispensary.

Some youth offered interpretations of JTNN's mission statement:

- *"OK, that's a lot of words. I think they should just get rid of the drugs."*

Conclusion/Next Steps

Impact and JTNN will work together to compare these results with the Focus Group Results provided in a previous report and quantitative data in order to triangulate findings and decide upon ATOD priorities, see Appendix B.



= Data Sources
 = Elements of Collective Impact

Appendix A – Questions for Youth Key Informant Interviews

JTNN – CCPP 2025 Proposed Youth Interview Questions

First Name/Agreed Upon Moniker:

Age:

Intro: I am working on a project for JTNN. They are interested in learning more about what it is like growing up in Washoe County. I'm going to ask you a few questions. I am not recording this conversation, but I am taking notes. I'm not telling anybody other than the people in this room which young people I'm talking to in your community. If I use something you say in my report, I'm going to refer to you as "young person." Your parents have consented to your participation in this interview, but if I ask a question you don't want to answer please just say, "pass." I will not ask you anything about your personal substance use or anything else personal. I am also not interested in hearing names of people who might be using drugs. Feel free to talk about whatever you want, but I will interrupt you if you say something that I don't think I should be hearing. Also, if you tell me something about physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, I will have to report that to the authorities. Does this all sound ok to you?

Background: Tell me a little about yourself...

Prompts: How long have you lived here?
 Where do you go to school/grade?
 How do you spend your time?
 Who do you live with?
 Do you live in the town or outskirts?

Individual/Peer

1. {Resiliency}

If something isn't going well for a young person, let's say for example they just moved to your school and they are struggling to make friends. You know how when something isn't going quite right and it feels really irritating? It's just irritating until it gets resolved somehow? What are some things that a young person in this kind of situation, who lives in Washoe County, might do to start feeling better about things?

2. {Rebelliousness}

Let's imagine that 20 people [your age group] are sitting in a classroom together before the teacher walked in. Someone, we'll call him "Joe," wants to pull a mean prank on the teacher. How confident would most of the young people in your school feel about standing up to Joe and asking him not to do it?

3. *{Social, Emotional, Behavioral, Moral Competence}*

This question is a little bit personal to you. Remember, if there's ever anything you don't want to talk about just say so. Have you given any thought about what you want to do as a grown up? Where you'd like to live, whether you'd like to work outside or in an office, whether you'd like to be married or have children?

Prompts: If not, describe some kind of hypothetical future based on answers from background section.

So what kinds of things that you are doing now as a [age] year old do you think might have some kind of impact on [plan]?

School

You told me you are in [grade] at [school].

1. *{Investment in School/Positive Social Involvement}*

Can you tell me some of the things you like about your school?

If you were the principal of your school, what would you do to make it better?

When you think about the adults who work at your school, who would you be most likely to talk to if you were having problems?

And, if Older

Thinking back to your time in middle and early high school, what do you think your school did right in preparing you for your future?

Prompt: What could they have done better?
Do you think most people felt included/belonged?
Did you have an adult you trusted at your school?
Did you have opportunities to shine?

What advice would you give to someone who is in middle or entering high school now?

Community

1. {Bonding}

As people get a little older, we find ourselves making more and more decisions for ourselves, without our parents or guardians telling us what to do as often. Maybe it's something simple, like whether you're going to eat a third or fourth Oreo, and sometimes it's more complicated, like whether you should take Algebra or Geometry, whether you should stay friends with someone or stay away from them, or whether you should get an after-school job.

Most of us get help somehow to make these decisions. Sometimes people write down a list of positive or negative things or maybe they ask friends or family for their opinion. Or sometimes people look online for guidance.

From what you've seen in your community, when a young person is making decisions or choices, what kinds of things do they do to help them decide? Let's use the job decision as an example. How might someone in your school make a decision about getting a job?

Prompts: Do you think people ask parents' opinions?

Friends' opinions?

Do they look online? Where?

2. {Neighborhood Attachment}

Remember, I'm not asking you to tell me about anything wrong that you've done or anyone you know has done. I want you to think about a pretend situation. Let's pretend that a group of [age] are [age appropriate – bikes or driving – breaking a rule or law] somewhere in your town. An adult saw this happening.

What do you think would happen?

Prompts: Would the adult call the police? What would happen?

Would the adult call parents? What would happen?

3. {Community disorganization}

What do you consider to be your “neighborhood”?

Prompts: Block, street, rural area

Not counting the people you live with, how many people’s first names do you know in your neighborhood?

Thinking back to that story of the young people [breaking rule], if this happened in your neighborhood what do you think would happen?

JTNN/Substance Misuse

1. I told you before that I’m here on behalf of JTNN. Have you ever heard of them before today? Do you know what they do?

Prompt: Schools programs? B&G Clubs? Etc.

2. A big part of JTNN’s work involves reducing the use of drugs, including alcohol, cigarettes, vaping, heroin, etc. Again, I’m not asking you about your personal involvement with any of this. What I would like to know is, in your opinion, on a scale of 1-5, how big of a problem is substance use with people your age?

Tell me why you chose that number.

3. JTNN’s mission is “to create a healthy drug-free community by building successful partnerships to support prevention, education, and outreach.” When they say that they are talking about physical health and mental or emotional health. In your opinion, what would make your community healthier for young people?

4. Final question, what do you wish adults (teachers, parents, authority figures) understood better about being a young person living in Washoe County?

Appendix B – Sample ATOD Priority Plan

