

access



Quarterly Newsletter

April 2020 Edition

The Regional Behavioral Health Action Organization servicing the 43 towns that comprise northwestern Connecticut. Our mission is to promote the behavioral health continuum of care and to enhance the quality of life at every stage.

EVERFI Lessons in action



Naugatuck Youth Services

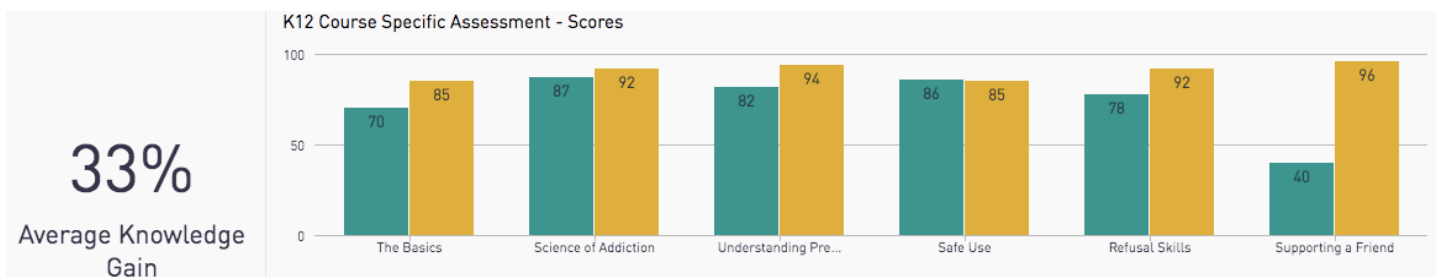
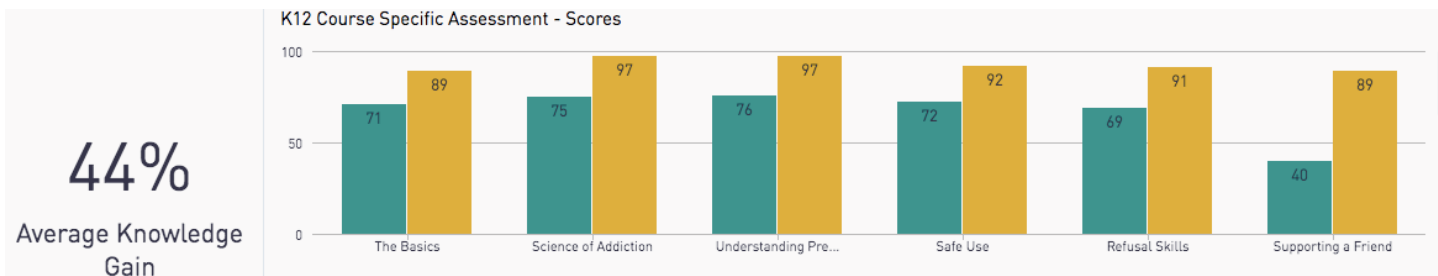


Danbury Grassroots Academy

EVERFI Prescription Drug Education Program

EVERFI, a digital learning platform, has a mission of “empowering organizations everywhere to instill knowledge around critical topics in the classroom, in the office and in the community”. They offer their resources at no-cost. Western CT Coalition (WCTC), and the Connecticut Prevention Network (CPN) have partnered with EVERFI to deliver their **Prescription Drug Safety** curriculum; an evidence-based program with a public health approach. EVERFI describes the course as follows: “Through interactive scenarios and self-guided activities, students learn about a range of topics, including the science of addiction, how to properly use and dispose of prescription drugs, and how to intervene when faced with a situation involving drug misuse”.

Through a CT Prevention Network initiative, WCTC has worked with schools and community groups across our service area to facilitate this program with many different groups of students. In addition to regular classroom settings, we have engaged Youth Service Agencies, after-school programs, Teen Centers, and Youth Prevention Partners. Participant knowledge is assessed with both a pre-test and a post-test. Among 6 of the groups who participated, knowledge gain was on average 30.6%. **Here are 2 group’s examples of the assessment data collected (pre and post):**



If you would like to learn more about this free curriculum, please visit <https://everfi.com/courses/prescription-drug-safety/>

With the coronavirus pandemic, online learning has never been more important. EVERFI is now providing access to **free digital learning platforms to parents**. Free online classes for students k-12 including " Prescription Drug Safety, Character, STEM, Wellness and Safety, Career and College Readiness". EVERFI has built a network of partners and sponsors who help fund these resources for student access. Though EVERFI's resources are typically leveraged in the classroom, our team and partners want to ensure that all students have access to these resources at home during this time. Please use this link to learn more: <https://everfi.com/k-12/parent-remote-learning/>



This edition of access **WESTERN CT COALITION** *focuses on Asset Building in the middle of a crisis*

The Western CT Coalition knows that a highly effective approach to prevention focuses on identifying, enhancing, and capitalizing on the strengths/assets of individual young people and the communities within which they live. Research from Search Institute identifies **40 Developmental Assets** that have a powerful, positive impact on young people. These concrete, common sense assets positively influence the choices young people make and thus reduce risky behaviors.

8 Asset Categories:



Support: Young people need to be surrounded by people who love, care for, appreciate, and accept them.



Empowerment: Young people need to feel valued and valuable. This happens when youth feel safe and respected.



Boundaries and Expectations: Young people need clear rules, consistent consequences for breaking rules, and encouragement to do their best.



Constructive Use of Time: Young people need opportunities—outside of school—to learn and develop new skills and interests with other youth and adults.



Commitment to Learning: Young people need a sense of the lasting importance of learning and a belief in their own abilities.



Positive Values: Young people need to develop strong guiding values to help them make healthy life choices.



Social Competencies: Young people need the skills to interact effectively with others, to make difficult decisions, and to cope with new situations.



Positive Identity: Young people need to believe in their own self-worth and to feel they have control over the things that happen to them.

The Coronavirus and the disease of COVID-19 has quickly and dramatically changed our lives. Schools are closed, and sports and other extra-curricular activities have come to an abrupt halt. As we stay home and social distance, we are cut off from important social connections- a tough time for our youth.

Search Institute has developed some guidelines- use this link: [Building Developmental Relationships During the COVID-19 Crisis -- A Checklist](#)

Here is a sampling of ways we can connect with young people and help them get through this difficult and uncertain time:

Show that you care and provide support

- Check in to see how they are doing by sending a text, email, or video.
- Ask them how they are spending their time.
- Ask young people how they are feeling about the world, themselves, and the future during the crisis. Indicate that you really hear them when they respond and that you care about their feelings

Treat them with respect and give them a say

- Give them voice and choice in shaping your new ways of working and being together
- Invite young people to tell you how they think you can support them during their time away from your school or program.

Challenge them and help them expand their horizons

- Let young people know that you expect them to keep up with their schoolwork or program even though times are difficult; hold them accountable if they don't put in the effort
- Ask young people to set one personal goal for something they want to achieve during their time at home and then periodically check in on their progress.



In the
Spotlight

In this segment, The Western CT Coalition shines the spotlight on individuals who are doing good work in their community.

Naugatuck Youth Services

Naugatuck Youth Services is comprised of hardworking, kind-hearted individuals who provide a welcoming space for young people and adults to participate in their work. The staff are always learning and acquiring new skills including naloxone administration training, A-SBIRT training, and CADCA's Annual National Leadership Forum. Step Up Naugy, Naugatuck's Local Prevention Council, is a strong coalition that uses comprehensive sector representation, evidence-based practice and group enthusiasm to



facilitate effective and meaningful prevention work in the community of Naugatuck. The coalition has been reviewing the survey data from their Attitudes & Behaviors Survey administered in September and held a Youth-Led Survey Analysis where the group discussed their primary concerns and how they plan to empower young people and parents to have conversations about these topics. Abby Wood, Behavioral Health Director, commented that "A strength of Step Up Naugy, as well as Naugatuck Youth Services overall, is the value that is placed on youth and their thoughts and opinions. Young people are always present at the table and when they speak up, the adults in the room really listen."



Naugatuck Youth Services is always ready to help with projects or take on something new. Staff members Gina and Nicole helped coordinate time for a group of peer leaders to participate in the EVERFI Prescription Drug Safety curriculum this past February. The group took their time working through the different interactive activities and learned important skills that they will take out into their school and the larger community.

Most recently, a group of young people and staff produced an original Youth Gambling Awareness PSA in recognition of Problem Gambling Awareness Month in March. The group worked together to create an outline for the PSA, write the script, record the video and edit the final product. The PSA features important themes young people are experiencing around gambling, sports betting and the risks associated with these behaviors. The PSA highlights important resources for those who are struggling with problem gambling. To check out the PSA for yourself, go to gamblingawarenessct.org/new-youth-gambling-awareness-psy/. Since its completion, the PSA has been shared widely on social media, on multiple prevention websites and with state representatives and senators. After watching the new PSA, Greg Simpson, Regional Network Manager at Beacon Health Options, shared "I tell everyone what great creativity and projects come from Naugatuck Youth Services!! You are role models for the whole state!!"

Western CT Coalition would like to thank Naugatuck Youth Services and Step Up Naugy for their partnership and collaboration. You can follow them both on Facebook- @stepupnaugy and @naugatuckyouthservices



Staff and youth from Naugatuck Youth Services attended the Youth Gambling Awareness Training last October in New Haven representing Region 5. We thank them for their participation, enthusiasm and hard work.



access WESTERN CT COALITION is brought to you by The Western CT Coalition

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This newsletter is partially funded by CT DMHAS and SAMHSA's DFC Support Program