

Beyond the Classroom: Building Safer School Climates

Prevention Education Annual Report

2024-2025

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A New Approach

This year, our program took a transformative step forward. We worked diligently to understand the barriers students often face and worked directly with school communities to strengthen the responses, relationships and everyday practices that shape their sense of safety and belonging.

We expanded our efforts beyond the classroom into district-wide efforts to advocate for change, starting with the voices and expressed needs of young people themselves.

From using anonymous student feedback to identify needs, to supporting school teams in implementing practices that bridge gaps, our goal was clear: we wanted to help build environments where students feel safe, heard and supported, and where staff feel prepared and empowered to meet their evolving needs.

Over the past year, we moved from raising awareness to driving meaningful action – creating new connections, improving school climates, and supporting the very adults who want to make a difference. This report highlights the powerful role that school staff play in shaping change, telling the story of a movement led by youth, in partnership with the people who show up for them every day.

Introduction

The Reality Youth Face Every Day

For many teens, it can be challenging to distinguish the difference between unhealthy and abusive relationships – especially when these behaviors are often normalized through peer influence, environment, or even media portrayals. Sexual violence, which affects teens at alarmingly high rates, is also a pervasive issue. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 1 in 6 high school students have experienced some form of sexual dating violence. Yet, many teens may not recognize what they've experienced as sexual assault or harassment and may not be aware that support and resources are available to them. For 28 years, our Prevention Education program has been dedicated to equipping young people and school staff with tools, resources, and support needed to recognize and respond to harmful dynamics. The goal is to help schools to build safer, more supportive environments where students and staff can thrive.

1.5 Million

High school students report physical abuse from a dating partner each year in the US.

1 in 3

1 in 3 teens will experience physical, sexual, emotional, digital or economic abuse within a relationship before adulthood.

Every 9 Minutes

Someone under the age of 18 (minor) experiences some form of sexual violence.

Our Prevention Educators

Doing the Work



Miranda Mizla

Education & Policy Advocate

I do this work because young people are our future, yet they are often left out of these crucial conversations. Each school year, we have the ability to reach thousands of youths, who then pass the tools they've learned along to their peers. This movement is expanding, and I am profoundly grateful to continue to be a part of it every day.



Jillian Smith

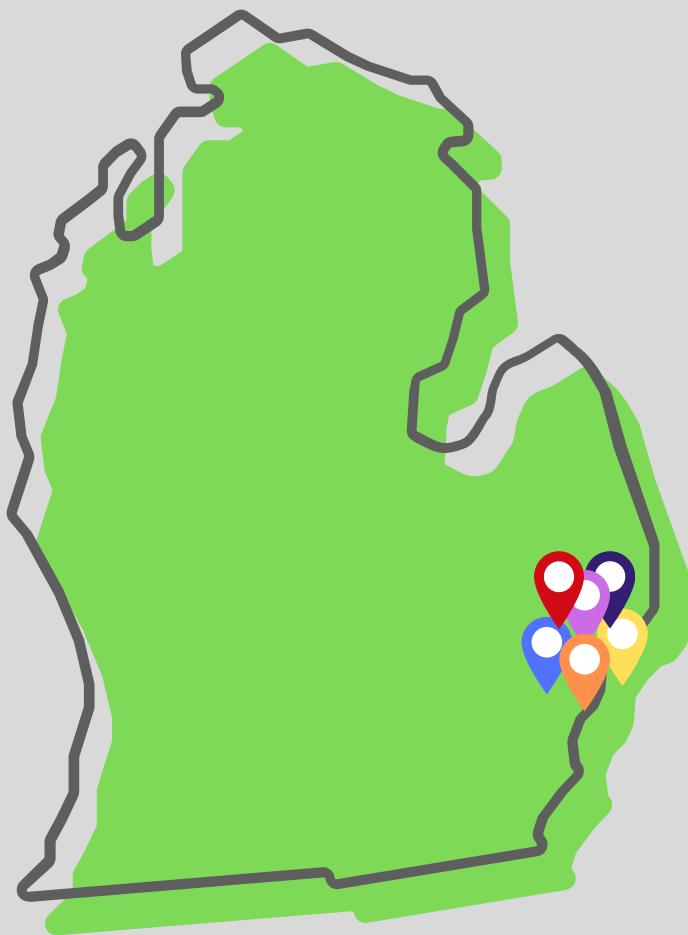
Education & Outreach Advocate

I do this work because I believe young people are often left out of conversations that directly impact them. When young people are informed, they are more likely to seek help, support others, and challenge harmful behaviors. I'm grateful to be a part of this movement, and for the opportunity to empower young people to be advocates for themselves and others.

Partnerships

Deepening the Work, Together.

Since October of 2024, Turning Point's Prevention Education program has delivered over 165 presentations to nearly 4,000 youth. Over the last several months, the program has been present in 11 school districts and 19 schools. This year, we focused on strengthening and deepening relationships with teachers, counselors and school administrators across Metro-Detroit who expressed commitment to building safer school environments. These connections led to deeper engagement, stronger follow-up and ongoing collaboration. We are building on the strengths of schools in our community by equipping staff with trauma-informed tools, fostering environments where students feel safe to seek support. We are grateful to our partners and look forward to deepening these ties and creating new ones in the year ahead.



School Districts

1. Armada
2. Center Line
3. Chippewa Valley
4. Clintondale
5. Fraser
6. Hillel Day School
7. Lakeview
8. South Lake
9. Utica
10. Warren Consolidated
11. Warren Woods

Climate Surveys and Anonymous Questions

A Different Approach

In 2023, the Prevention Education team implemented a digital approach to collect and respond to student questions. During the 2024-2025 school year, the team expanded this effort by integrating anonymous student questions into climate surveys, helping schools better understand student experiences and strengthen their response to student needs.

These anonymous surveys serve a dual purpose: they capture students' questions about the topics covered and gather feedback on school climate as it relates to the issues addressed in our programming. More than 2,600 students participated in the climate survey. The information gathered is now being used to help strengthen how schools and communities respond to students who have experienced abuse, exploitation, or violence.

The following pages include just a small sample of the many anonymous questions submitted by students throughout the 2024-2025 school year. These questions reflect a strong desire to engage in real, honest conversations about complex and difficult topics - showing that students are not only ready, but eager to have these conversations.

Dating Secrets

What They're Really Asking

Students learn about relationships and participate in an activity to learn more about elements of healthy versus unhealthy relationships and tactics abusers use to control their partners. The presentation includes facts about teen dating violence, survivors, abusive tactics and tools to support others.

How could I help if my friend is in an abusive relationship?

How can schools improve education and support for affected students?

Why is it not talked about enough?

What are some ways schools can work to reduce teen violence?

Why do so many people abuse others?

What's the big reason domestic violence is still going on?

Do you think one day this will stop?

Why is it that the law does not always do the right thing when it comes to abuse?

Could violence affect education?

Breaking the Silence

What They're Really Asking

This presentation helps students gain a deeper understanding of sexual violence. Students learn about consent, facts about sexual violence and coercive tactics used by perpetrators. Students leave the presentation with tools to provide support and offer resources to survivors.

How to approach an adult and tell them you've been sexually abused?

How to create a safer environment and prevent sexual violence in our community?

What about victims of online grooming or coercion? What options do they have?

What are ways to convince people to care about this topic?

How does sexual assault impact a survivor's mental and emotional health?

How do societal attitudes contribute to sexual violence?

What are the common misconceptions about sexual assault?

Is purity culture a part of rape culture?

What if my own parents don't believe me?

What is Exploitation?

What They're Really Asking

Students learn the definition of human trafficking and how to identify different coercive tactics used by traffickers. Students will learn about vulnerability, accessibility, and credibility as it relates to who traffickers may target and how they exploit certain individuals.

How do you move forward as a victim of human trafficking?

Why is grooming and human trafficking so common?

Can human trafficking come from a parent or tutor?

Why do traffickers do this?

How can you identify a trafficker?

What is the punishment for trafficking?

Reflections from Our Community

2024-2025

We are truly grateful for the invaluable feedback from our partners and the students we serve. Educators' reflections guide program improvements, while student voices ensure our content connects to their lived experiences. Together, this community input fuels ongoing growth, making our programming more relevant, impactful and responsive to the needs of those we serve.

"Breaking the Silence was a fabulous presentation for my 9th grade health class. The videos, activities, statistics, slides and anonymous question opportunities were extremely helpful and eye opening for our students."

- Davis Junior High
Educator

"Thank you so much for coming and giving us more insight on how we can support sexual assault victims, and also for addressing rape culture. I think it's so normalized in our world, so acknowledging it is really important."

- Warren Mott High School
Student

"After listening to this presentation, I feel much safer knowing there is somewhere, people can talk about when people are in need of help within their relationship!"

- Center Line High School
Student

"Thank you! I find it very important for everyone to be educated on these topics. I am glad this topic is getting the attention and education it deserves."

- Hillel Day School
Student

"Turning Point was very accommodating and helpful in making sure we were both comfortable and prepared for their conversation. The content was age appropriate and safe. Thank you for coming and educating our kids."

- Anonymous Educator

"I just want to thank you for talking about this topic to people of our age group, you have no idea the amount of appreciation we feel for hearing someone spread awareness about the violence we and others have gone through."

- Henry Ford II High School Student

"I thought this was a very fascinating and well-informed presentation. Thank you!"

- International Academy of Macomb Student

"Such a good presentation, probably the best presentation I've ever witnessed."

- Lakeview High School Student

"Miranda and Jillian were great. They are both very knowledgeable of the topics and engaging with my classes."

- Anonymous Educator

"As always, presented in a strong and firm way so that students learned but were also engaged in a dynamic lesson."

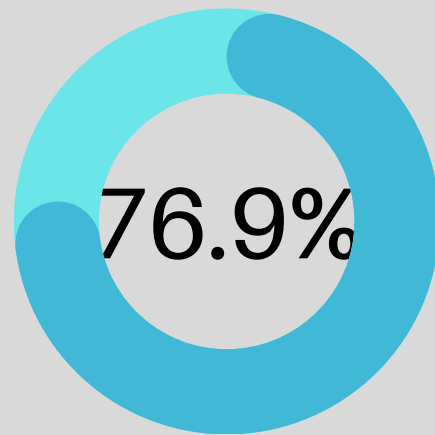
- Anonymous Educator

Data and Statistics

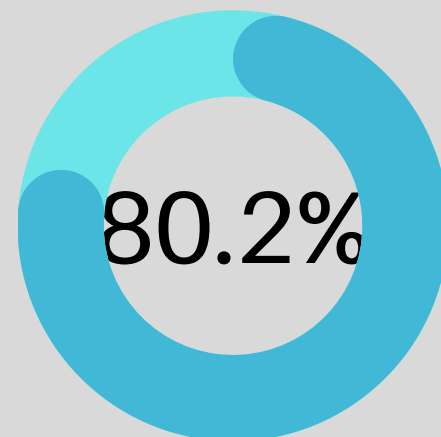
Tracking the Impact of Our Work

The Prevention Team utilizes pre and post-questionnaires to assess student understanding before and after presentations, ensuring the program effectively enhances student knowledge of teen specific resources, Turning Point services and facts about violence through curriculum materials.

Before prevention, **76.9%** of students stated that they were unfamiliar with Turning Point services.



Following prevention, **80.2%** of students reported being familiar with Turning Point services—a strong indication of improved visibility and outreach effectiveness.



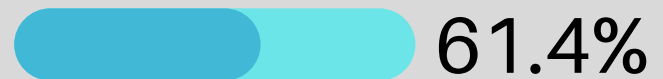
This shift represents a net gain of **1,200+** students who are now informed and more likely to engage with available support resources.

Data and Statistics

Tracking the Impact of Our Work

Pre-Questionnaire Results

In the pre-questionnaire, only **61.4%** of students correctly identified that leaving an abusive relationship is the deadliest time for survivors.



Post Questionnaire Results

Following the presentation, **88.7%** of students demonstrated an increased understanding of this safety issue, a + **27.3** percentage point improvement from the pre-questionnaire.



Additional Notable Gains Occurred in:

- Recognizing that false reporting of sexual violence is not common.
- Challenging the misconception that Human Trafficking is primarily committed by strangers.
- Understanding that a police report is not required to receive support services.

This shift suggests the program is successfully challenging harmful myths and broadening students' awareness of domestic violence, sexual violence and human trafficking.

Youth Advisory Board

A Year of Youth-Led Impact

Prevention launched its very first Youth Advisory Board last year. The board consisted of nine dedicated high school youth who brought their insights, creativity, and lived experience to the forefront of our prevention and advocacy work. Their contributions included curating youth-centered social media content, hosting drives, refining and strengthening our prevention education presentations, and helping make materials more relevant and impactful for their peers.

Members of the board crafted and sent a thoughtful, urgent statement to state legislators—advocating for sustained, adequate funding for services supporting survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking. They made it clear that as young people and advocates, they understand the weight of these issues and the importance of robust, reliable support for survivors provided by organizations like Turning Point in their communities.

Looking Ahead

Change doesn't happen in a vacuum. It takes passion, drive, and courage—the kind these young people showed up with each day. They came together across backgrounds, schools, and schedules, united by one purpose. As we bid farewell to our seniors and new voices rise, we are reminded of what's possible when youth are not only heard—but trusted to lead.

Youth Advisory Board

Celebrating Our Graduating Youth Advisory Board Seniors

As another school year comes to a close, we want to take a moment to celebrate and commemorate the incredible seniors who are retiring from our Youth Advisory Board. Their leadership, passion, and commitment to ending violence have left a lasting impact. We are so proud of their accomplishments and look forward to seeing the powerful work they will continue to do in the world.



Cooper Hodgson

*Program Evaluation and
Content Specialist*

Cooper will be attending Pratt Institute in New York to study interior design with a minor in psychology!



Taylor Romero-Dudek

Chair

Taylor is planning to go to Wayne State University to pursue a degree in social work!

Youth Advisory Board

Honoring Our Graduating Youth Advisory Board Seniors



Danya Rodzik

Community Engagement Coordinator

Danya plans to attend Wayne State University's Honors College to major in public health with a minor in chemistry on a pre-dental track!



Lauren Sergent

Secretary

Lauren will be attending Michigan State University and plans to major in criminal justice!

What's Next

The Movement Continues

This past year has shown us the true power of partnership. When youth voices and school systems come together with a shared commitment, real change happens.

We're so grateful to the educators, staff, and communities we've worked alongside — your trust, collaboration, and willingness to grow has been the heart of this work. Students have never been silent about what they need. They've been telling us — and so many of you have been listening, trying new approaches, and staying open to the possibilities.

We are committed to continuing this work hand-in-hand with educators, staff, parents, and students. This is a movement built within schools and in our communities, rooted in collaboration and taking action together.

It's not just about students feeling safe, heard, and supported, it's about making sure school staff feel equipped, confident, and connected to the support they need. As students' needs evolve, our systems have to evolve with them.

We invite you to be a part this shift, because when we come together, meaningful change is within reach.

Contact Us

To learn more about Prevention Education, program offerings, or to speak to an educator before requesting a presentation, please contact: mmizla@turningpointmacomb.org.

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Website: <https://turningpointmacomb.org/> → menu → community engagement → community education

Ways to Get Involved

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