



Jefferson County
Communities That Care

Our Vision: Jefferson County is a thriving, healthy & safe community for our youth.

Jefferson County Communities That Care is a coalition comprised of 100 stakeholders, community members, key leaders and youth. We use a structured, evidence-based community change process focused on preventing substance misuse, sexual/relationship violence & hopelessness/anxiety among youth in our community by reducing risk factors and improving protective factors.

Data Snapshot

On average, out of every 30 high school youth in Lakewood, Wheat Ridge & Edgewater, Colorado

Substance misuse

- 10 had used alcohol and 6 had 4 or more drinks at one time in the past 30 days (5 or more for boys)
- 7 had used marijuana in the past 30 days
- 1 had taken someone else's prescription medication in the past 30 days

Violence

- 2 had been raped in their lifetime
- 3 experienced physical dating violence in the past year

Hopelessness and anxiety

- 11 had experienced depressive symptoms in past year
- 2 had attempted suicide in the past year

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Key risk factors for youth in Jefferson County

- Favorable parental attitudes towards substance misuse
- Favorable youth attitudes toward substances misuse
- Substance availability
- Community laws, norms and social rules
- Need for opportunities for prosocial involvement with trusted adults

Coalition history

- Began summer 2016
- Merged with the county's collaborative management team "Prevention" subcommittee
- Supported by three full-time staff members

Focus area within Jefferson County, Colorado

- Youth who live, work or attend school in the articulation areas for Lakewood, Wheat Ridge and Jefferson Jr./Sr. High Schools
- Also includes surrounding areas with zip codes of 80033, 80214, 80215 and 80226

Funding

- \$125,000 per year from federal Drug Free Communities grant program
- \$250,000 (variable) per year from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment through the Colorado Communities That Care program

Accomplishments

- Worked with more than 40 youth interns to collect insights from peers
- Conducted a resource assessment which identified more than 500 resources improving risk and protective factors in Jefferson County
- Collected extensive data to identify problems and potential solutions
- Created an action plan in January 2019

Action plan to address local risk & protective factors

- Promote talking to teens and link caregivers to resources through the "12 Questions for Teens" campaign
- Prevent adults from providing to minors and hosting parties involving substance misuse
- Advocate for equitable approaches to enforcement of Minor in Possession ticketing and diversion programs
- Support social, emotional and behavioral health learning at the middle and high school level
- Train adults to help youth: Jefferson County Communities That Care trustable adult designation

