

PROJECT

AMP

AMPLIFYING  
OUR  
FUTURES

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## Project Amp Update:

### What are we learning from the qualitative data?

This summer, the Project Amp team completed implementation at the final pilot site for Project Amp and has been conducting focus groups and interviews to learn more about the experiences of the participants, mentors, and staff across all six study sites. Based on our initial qualitative analyses, here's what we've learned.

#### Overall Impressions of Project Amp

## RESOURCES

### [SBIRT: From Best Practice to Law?](#)

In West Virginia, advocates for SBIRT in school settings are urging state lawmakers to equip school counselors and others to help students avoid problematic opioid use as early as possible.

### [ENCARE Network](#)

Visit the European Network for Children Affected by Risky Environments within the Family (ENCARE) website for resources related to risk, protective, and resilience factors for children.

### [Illicit Drug Use Across Geographic Context](#)

Read about a comparative analysis of illicit drug use, illicit drug use disorders, and overall drug overdose deaths in urban and rural areas from 2003-2014.

- Participants found meeting with a mentor rewarding; the young adult mentors made it a fun and fulfilling experience for the adolescents.
- Mentors generally felt that it was a helpful program for the adolescents, while acknowledging the benefit for their own recoveries, as well as personal and professional development.
- Site staff considered Project Amp an exciting and innovative resource for youth, encouraging genuine conversations around substance use, wellness, and positive role modeling.

*"I liked the opportunity for the youth to be matched with mentors and...to talk about feelings or emotions...regarding their choices on substances [with] someone that they could connect to because they were younger and less judgmental than they assume most adults are."* - Site staff focus group participant

### The Impact of Project Amp on At-Risk Adolescents

- Youth reported a myriad of benefits including improved confidence and self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills, relationships with family members, a change in attitude regarding substance use and decreased substance use in some cases, skills for coping with stress and peer pressure, goal-setting, and greater hope about the future.
- These positive outcomes indicate that Project Amp likely enhanced resilience factors among some adolescents.

*"I think it's just really helped with making things easier, coping-wise. I feel like I don't need to smoke anymore to feel better. I honestly think it's helped me find ways to distract myself. I've found it's [had] a very positive impact."*

- Youth focus group participant

### The Young Adult Mentor Model

- Adolescent participants liked meeting with someone older but relatively close in age with whom they could relate, and sharing openly about their feelings and goals or simply feeling heard.
- Mentors and adolescents shared that they quickly established rapport and that it was beneficial to build a relationship and discuss substance use in a "judgment-free zone."
- The extent to which mentors shared their lived experiences of substance use and recovery varied, depending on comfort level and perceived relevance.
- Staff generally recognized the value of the near-peer mentor model, although they noted barriers including creating buy-in and confidence among referring providers.

*"I feel like being someone close in age to the mentees and sharing some of my own experiences with them helped gain trust. Talking about my experiences and how I perceived things at their age... helped a lot of them feel a genuine connection with me."*

- Mentor focus group participant

## Share and Connect!

### The First Eight Years

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) published a summary of research on the importance of early childhood interventions to prevent substance use disorders later in life.

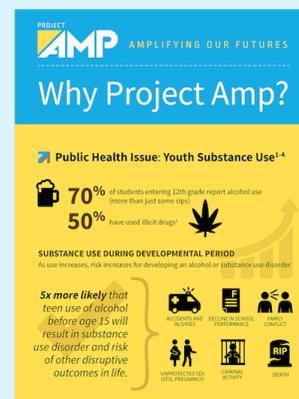


### Archived Updates

Check out archived email updates from Project Amp.

### Why Project Amp?

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