



OKANOGAN HEALTHY YOUTH 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

THE BIG PICTURE

Room One’s Okanogan Healthy Youth (OHY) team were hard at work in 2025. The driving force behind this programming has been, and will continue to be, about violence prevention. OHY operates with the understanding that *prevention* starts when youth are able to build confidence, community and healthy relationship skills. Prevention also looks like taking ownership of one’s sexual and reproductive health, learning how and where to ask for help, and celebrating the incredible work that young people are doing to achieve their goals every day. Keep reading to learn more about how OHY is bringing this work into the Methow Valley community!

Empowerment Group

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Another year, another chance to learn healthy relationship skills and foster community.

Empowerment Groups, part of the Independent Learning Center’s (ILC) weekly schedule for more than 5 years, allow students to explore relationships, boundaries, self-esteem, and friendships in a safe space with trusted adults.



22
CLASSES

Students who opted into the female/gender nonconforming group led by Shannon, Room One’s Youth Prevention Program Lead, met **22** times in 2025! That means that students had **22** conversations about topics such as gender based violence, what a healthy breakup looks like, how to regulate yourself when emotions are high, and ways to support a friend you’re worried about. **22** lessons to support sexual health education by learning about *consent* and *boundaries*. There were **22** chances for students to take care of each other, practice vulnerability, embrace group hugs, and laugh with each other. Students had **22** days of intentional identity exploration and building confidence in asking for help.



HOW YOUTH DESCRIBE EMPOWERMENT GROUP:

“I love the support from peers– it’s such an open and supportive space!”

“I learned to speak up when I’m uncomfortable and am now a lot more comfortable with some of my friends.”

“I’ve used some of the check-in skills with my partner.”



WARM HANDOFFS

Room One’s connection to the ILC has created tangible pathways for students to access the support they need. **Asking for help is a learned skill**, and through partnership with the Methow Valley School District, Room One has worked to reduce barriers, lessen anxiety, and build students’ confidence in seeking resources. As a result, **more youth than ever** are engaging with Room One Advocates for support, guidance, and connection to critical services.



OHY Is made possible by funding from the Burning Foundation and the Paul Allen Foundation via Room One’s partnership with FYRE.

Youth Leadership Council

Room One’s longstanding relationship with the Foundation for Youth Resiliency and Engagement (FYRE) in Omak has allowed for the Youth Leadership Council’s (YLC) impact to reach youth across Okanogan County from 2020–2025.

The YLC’s focus is on uplifting youth voices, fostering leadership skill building, and educating youth on healthy relationships and unintended pregnancy prevention. In alignment with this mission, the YLC’s facilitation for the 2026 school year was handed off in November to two former longtime YLC members, Sadie and Diana. As they complete their final year of college, these incredible young people will continue to build out this authentically youth-run program.

In Community

Folks who attended Omak’s annual Pride in the Park event or the Mental Health Walk enjoyed stopping by the YLC booth to snag temp tattoos, condom packs, snacks and smiles!



“I’LL TAKE SEXUAL HEALTH FOR 100, ALEX”

Trivia Night, an annual event thrown by the YLC team, was another success in 2025! Under the big top, **more than 50 youth** from around the county had a Circus-themed good time while participating in two rounds of trivia covering topics such as STI facts, harm-reduction, and Okanogan County health resources.



UNINTENDED PREGNANCY PREVENTION

A cornerstone of Room One’s work since the beginning has been reducing barriers and providing access to sexual health resources (condoms, Plan B, and pregnancy tests). This year, Room One saw an **increase in requests for Plan B**, which can be accessed without an appointment. This has provided **over 20** opportunities for a Room One team member to discuss long-term pregnancy prevention options with community members. This low-barrier access allows us to create connections while in a confidential safe space for young people to ask the questions they need answered.

IN THE CLASSROOM

2025 saw two significant changes to the Okanogan Healthy Youth role!

First: Shannon began facilitating the Liberty Bell Junior and Senior High School GSA (Gender, Sexuality Alliance, formerly known as the Gay Straight Alliance). This group, which meets weekly on Wednesdays during student’s respective lunch breaks, has been well attended and ***lively!*** Junior High students’ focus is on community building and creating a safe space for students to be their most authentic self with peers and trusted adults. High School students are learning about Queer History and what community activism looks like in rural towns.

Room One recognizes the impact of marginalizing groups of young people, like those in the LGBTQ+ community. The GSA supports the mental wellbeing of all students and strives to ensure that *all* identities are explored and celebrated!



SEX ED FT. SHANNON

In a throwback move to OHY’s past, Shannon was asked to facilitate the comprehensive sexual health curriculum at the ILC for 9th and 11th graders in the 2025–2026 school year! The strength of the relationship between MVSD and Room One means that having (what are typically uncomfortable) conversations about sex and relationships is easier with someone students already know and trust.

BIG CHANGES IN 2026!

Room One and OHY are excited to be building out a **teen drop-in center space** complete with weekly programming focused on community and skill building as well as violence prevention.

STAY TUNED!

Thank you to our incredible Methow Valley community for the ongoing support, trust and love you offer to Room One and the young people in our towns.