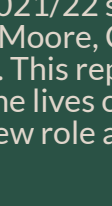


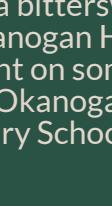
Okanogan Healthy Youth Program



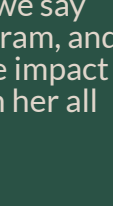
Program Highlights



Classroom Sexual Health



ILC Partnership



Leadership Groups

Dear Partners and Supporters,

All of the programming Room One does with youth and young adults in Okanogan County is meant to prevent and minimize violence, support their healthy development, and ensure they are empowered to make choices that will help them thrive. This work is successful because it keeps the experiences of young people at the center, honoring their unique identities and believing in their dreams and aspirations. We could not do this work without the support from all of our partners. We have felt honored to be invited in as experts and advocates, as well as allies and collaborators through times of challenge, change, and growth.

The end of the 2021/22 school year marks a bittersweet transition as we say goodbye to Keri Moore, Co-Lead of the Okanogan Healthy Youth Program, and Health Educator. This report will shine a light on some of the incredible impact Keri has had in the lives of young people in Okanogan County. We wish her all the best in her new role as MVSD Elementary School Counselor.

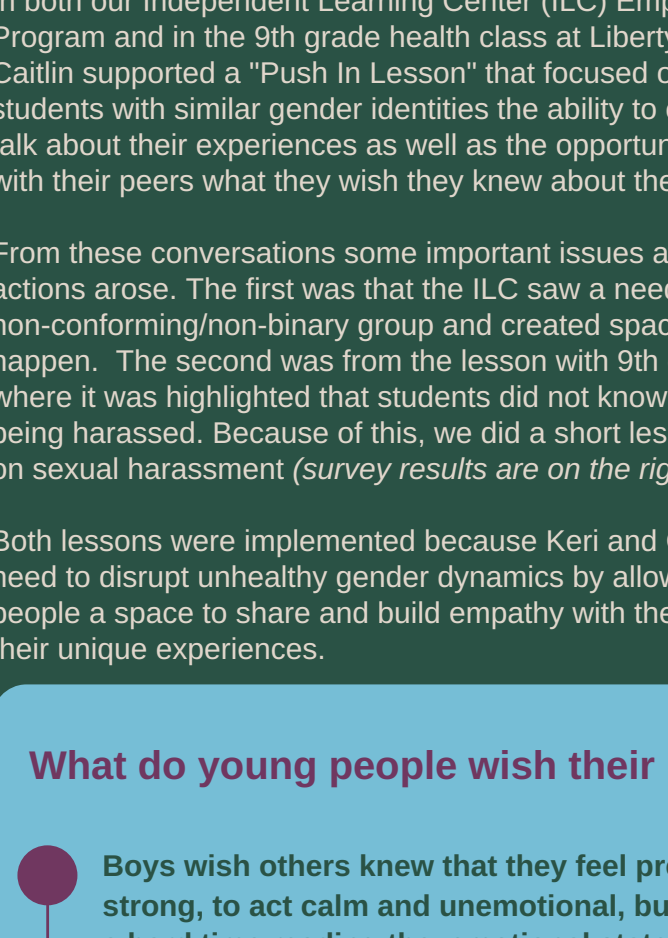
-Caitlin Cordell

MVSD Classroom Sexual Health

Room One and the Methow Valley School District (MVSD) continued a strong partnership of teaching comprehensive sexual health in the classroom. This year marked a milestone where Room One and MVSD signed a formal Partnership Agreement which outlines each agency's commitments and responsibilities.

It also outlines our shared values which include:

- Youth-centered, inclusive and responsive sexual health education programming.
- Respecting the self-determination, goals, and mission of each entity.
- Positively engaging our community in thoughtful dialogue around sensitive topics.
- Addressing misinformation that can arise around the subjects of sexual health, violence prevention, and adolescent identity development.



Classroom Lessons

- When school teachers attended trainings and shared in co-teaching, teacher confidence and skills grew.
- 9th graders had more common language and stronger ability to talk in depth around the subject matter after having sexual health consistently for three years (since 6th grade within MVSD).

Grades Taught

6-9th & 11-12th

Number of Students

217

Number of Opt-outs

10

91% on average of 6-9th graders

Said they were confident in abstaining or postponing sex if they were not ready

97% on average of 6-9th graders

Felt confident in saying "No" to someone pressuring them to have sex

Student Post-Survey Answers

We asked 6th graders: "Why is it important to talk with a trusted adult about sexuality?" Students overwhelmingly responded with being able to get accurate information, having a safe person to share with. Some of those responses included:

- "Because if you're wondering about something then it is better to know the right answer then to just guess."
- "So you can learn what your family's values are and so you can get help with it/when you need it."

We asked 7th/8th graders: "Why is postponing sex (choosing to be abstinent) the healthiest option for middle school students?" The vast majority of students named wanting to avoid any risk of unintended pregnancies and STIs. Some of their responses included:

- "Then there is 0% chance that you will have a STI or unintended pregnancy and it won't affect me mentally."
- "Because it's too much stress and pressure on students while studying to worry about it."

In the post-survey, 9th graders were asked "What if you were worried about a friend in a relationship? If you tried to talk to them about it, what would you say or do?" Some of their responses included:

- "I would talk to them in person to show I care. I'd show my concern and make it clear that I'm not trying to sabotage them & I'm only doing it for them. I'd explain what it is that seems unhealthy & provide solutions."
- "Hey, I've noticed some things happening between you and [partner], is that something you're concerned about? Then talk through what's going on. Tell trusted adult if I have to."

Program Spotlight: What We Wish You Knew About Us

In both our Independent Learning Center (ILC) Empowerment Program and in the 9th grade health class at Liberty Bell, Keri and Caitlin supported a "Push In Lesson" that focused on allowing students with similar gender identities the ability to connect and talk about their experiences as well as the opportunity to share with their peers what they wish they knew about them.

From these conversations some important issues and subsequent actions arose. The first was that the ILC saw a need for a gender non-conforming/non-binary group and created space for that to happen. The second was from the lesson with 9th graders at LBH, where it was highlighted that students did not know they were being harassed. Because of this, we did a short lesson and survey on sexual harassment (survey results are on the right).

Both lessons were implemented because Keri and Caitlin saw a need to disrupt unhealthy gender dynamics by allowing young people a space to share and build empathy with their peers about their unique experiences.

Teen Sexual Harassment

In the 9th grade Health Class it became clear that students did not know they were being sexually harassed by other students. Keri and Cam Alford, the 9th grade teacher, gave a short definition of sexual harassment as defined under Title XI, and also surveyed students anonymously on whether they had experienced sexual harassment. Here's what was uncovered:

83% had gender-based or sexuality-based slurs said to them.

70% received unwanted emails, texts, messages, videos, or photos of a sexual nature

65% had someone stare, leer, or make gestures of a sexual nature to them

35% experienced inappropriate touching, massaging, kissing, or hugging

35% had vulgar pictures or pornography shown to them against their will

32% experienced unwanted repeated requests for sexual favors or dates from a peer

What do young people wish their peers knew?

Boys wish others knew that they feel pressured to be strong, to act calm and unemotional, but that they also have a hard time reading the emotional states of their peers. They don't like being lumped into the category of bad men. Some boys don't think "mansplaining" is a real thing.

Gender non-conforming students wish their peers knew that they aren't experiencing a phase, that gender dysphoria is real, and they are hurt when people completely disregard their gender.

Girls wish their peers knew that they dislike being seen only for their looks, that they don't always want to be complimented for their looks, and they wish their boundaries were respected.

Where to go from here...

- More training for young people and educators on the definitions, consequences, and prevention of sexual harassment.
- Continued conversations that help build empathy between students (some students felt like the conversation was important and valuable and some thought it created more division because there wasn't enough time.)
- More learning about toxic gender stereotypes and how gender discrimination disproportionately harms girls and LGBTQ+ youth. Some girls and LGBTQ+ students felt like their male peers still didn't get how their actions were hurtful.

Independent Learning Center Partnership

This year saw more programming than ever at the MVSD Independent Learning Center. We were able to have weekly boys and girls programming for almost the entirety of the school year as well as a student led gender non-conforming group. We also had, for the first time, some mixed programming with all students. We are grateful to our ILC partners who continue to include us as a vital support to students.

Boys and Gender Non-Conforming Empowerment Program

2021-2022 was the first year for an empowerment program focusing on boys, thanks to the initiative of ILC staff member Willy Duguay. While Willy started off in a lead facilitator role he was not able to complete the year. Fortunately Joe Query, a teacher at the ILC was able to step into the lead role. Room One purchased an educators' version of the film "The Mask You Live In" for Joe to use, which breaks the film into segments and offers learning goals and a facilitator guide to go along with the clips.

88% of participants said the group helped them connect better with their peers.

3 was the average score participants gave the group from a scale of 1-5 (1 being not valuable and 5 being very valuable).

Some boys named toxic masculinity and healthy masculinity as some of the learning that stuck with them. Here's what else they said:

- "I liked all of it"
- "In dude group [I] enjoy talking about the image we have publicly"
- "Having relatable down-to-earth talks, guy-only talks"
- "Talking about feelings"

Specific Gender Non-Conforming Group

Students in this group were self-directed with the support of ILC staff member Kelleigh McMillan. There were approximately 5 youth that participated. The group started in the winter and went through to early spring. Below are some of the supports they identified LGBTQ+ youth needing:



SCHOOL

- Use preferred names and pronouns
- Gender neutral bathrooms (all of them)
- Educate students and staff about gender, sexuality
- Change name on email to preferred name



COMMUNITY

- A Pride themed store
- Support groups for LGBTQ+ youth and their parents/family members
- Normalizing LGBTQ+ issues and making room for questions



HEALTHCARE

- Use preferred names and pronouns
- Train the support staff so they don't say or ask inappropriate things during check-in

Girls and Gender Non-Conforming Empowerment Group

We had our largest group this year with about 18 girls and gender non-conforming students. With this number of students, focused discussions and practice time for self-defense were both more difficult. The program is structured to have more team building activities in the beginning leading to more deep conversations and activities later in the year. In our quarterly evaluation, the participants named self defense and discussing issues in a non-judgmental way as their favorite parts of the group. The most impactful session of the year was on the bystander effect.

Percent of participants that said the group helped them connect better to their peers

92%

Average score the group gave on a scale of 1-5 (1 = not valuable, 5 = very valuable)

4.5

Topics covered in the Group:

- Self-Defense
- Exploring our fear responses
- Healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Understanding our boundaries
- Learning about the bystander effect
- Dealing with street harassment
- Exploring how gender affects us
- How to have conversations with people of differing views
- Critically looking at media and social media
- Stress coping skills

We asked participants what they would tell other students about the group if they were trying to decide to join, here's what they said:

- Don't skip empowerment group
- Get to be around really cool people. When I first started I wasn't really close to anyone here (maybe one), now we're besties
- Safe space to be with others of gender you identify with
- Open-minded, kind, considerate, respectful group of people – people will be here for you
- Literally a safe space
- Helps you get your mind straight
- Think of an AA that makes you really feel great. And tells you how to be healthy, nice to others, in a calm way
- Support group, not always like that but it can be if you need it. We do things, activities, share experiences. It's called empowerment group, that's important
- A group where you can vibe comfortably
- Very welcoming. We all treat each other like we're family

Program Spotlight: Independent Learning Center Internships

Chloe Sprauer, ILC senior, stepped back into the *Get Real* teaching assistant internship for a second year working with Room One Health Educator Keri Moore. Chloe started in 2020 as the 6th Grade *Get Real* teaching assistant, and this school year they wanted to level-up and take on both 7th and 8th grade.

As part of their internship Chloe gave a 30-minute presentation to Liberty Bell staff about gender identity. Utilizing hands on activities and visuals, Chloe was able to clearly articulate the differences between sex, gender, sexuality, and gender expression. After their presentation Chloe was given feedback that they should present to the entire school district.

Kelleigh McMillan, who is the Internship Coordinator at the ILC, sent a gratitude email to Keri, saying:

"I am just in awe of your mentorship. I see it up close in my time with Chloe who shows up for her time with you like no other part of her life. Your trust in her gives her the confidence and desire to do the best job she can. Recently, I have said in both personal and professional settings that you are the best mentor I have worked with in the last 6 years, and it is true."

Room One also hosted two other interns from the ILC. Client Advocate Maureen Collins supported a student in an internship that explored DV and social work, and Caitlin hosted an intern who explored the intersection of LGC and therapy. Being able to support young people in their exploration of careers and skill building has been rewarding and we look forward to more internship and mentorship opportunities in the future.

Supporting Student Sexual Assault Victims

Because of our strong partnership with the ILC, Room One staff are seen as trusted adults to help young people navigate crisis. This year, that partnership grew in a new direction towards creating more supports for young people who have experienced sexual assault and other sexual violence.

Caitlin's connection to young women and gender non-conforming group students through the Empowerment Groups means that students and ILC staff know she cares about violence prevention and gender justice. This last year we had three ILC students come forward and make a report of sexual assault to the police. Caitlin also heard of three other incidents of young women being assaulted but who didn't want to come forward. Caitlin and the Room One Client Advocates have helped young people and their families navigate through the tricky nature of making a report.

In the coming year, we are looking forward to figuring out how to better support these people as they come forward and we continue to work with local partners on these improvements.

Some lessons so far have been:

- Ensuring victims know their rights and important steps to take in the first 72hrs.
- Supporting victims in proper documentation of the situation prior to making a report to the police.
- Honoring and documenting the victim's desires and needs, and
- Creating a streamlined process of communication between all the adult supports involved.

Along with our 1-1 client advocacy for sexual assault victims, Caitlin began a peer educational group at the ILC that is working on creating clear information to teens who have experienced and/or want to prevent sexual assault from happening. This work is funded through a contract with the Department of Health.

Leadership Groups

In 2020 with the creation of the Foundation of Youth Resilience and Engagement (FYRE), Room One began co-facilitating the longstanding Youth Leadership Council (YLC) with Mary Sandoval, the founder of FYRE and former Room One Staff. With FYRE having an abundance of services, access to young people, and a new youth friendly space, it was a natural fit.

Programming this last year grew on traditional programming by adding two sub-committees to the YLC that youth could join: An Events Group and a Okanogan Teen Survival Guide group.

In addition to our YLC, Caitlin began an ILC specific group focused on building peer educators and tangible resources for teens and their loved ones around the issue of Sexual Assault Response and Recover. There was enthusiastic turnout for this group maxing at around 16 unduplicated students of mixed gender.

These projects were enhanced by funding from the Department of Health and the Burning Foundation aimed at teen pregnancy prevention.

Youth Leadership Council Highlights

YLC members began the development of a Survival Guide that helps teens in Okanogan County get important and relevant information about Addiction, Mental Health, and Sexual Health.

The YLC hosted a Sexual Health Trivia Night for a nearly full-capacity crowd of teens from different background. With fun games, prizes, and mocktails the event was a huge success and spread awareness and facts about sexual health and including experiences of all teens, especially LGBTQ+.

ILC Sexual Assault Response and Recovery

At the beginning of Caitlin's Empowerment Program a number of ILC girls mentioned that they had experienced an assault. The majority also said they didn't want to make a report, but this meant it was hard for them to receive support because of mandated reporting laws. This prompted Caitlin to start a student group in partnership with the ILC focused on bringing awareness to sexual assault responses and recovery resources for teens.

Students explored restorative justice, demographic specific data, and the myths of false allegations.

Student's also worked on creating content for a website page that is dedicated specifically to teen sexual assault victims.

Looking Forward 2022-2023

Caitlin will step into more facilitation support of the YLC in Keri's absence and will continue to facilitate and do design work around the Survival Guide. The goal for the Sexual Assault Response and Recovery Group is to create a number of different digital, video, and print resources that can be distributed around the County and with key partners.

Funding & Gratitude

Special thanks to the many partners and community members who help our programming thrive:

- Foundation for Youth Resiliency and Engagement
- Methow Valley School District Liberty Bell Jr. & Sr. High and the Independent Learning Center
- Family Health Centers
- Confidence Health
- TwispWorks
- Aleeta Van Petten, self-defense guest instructor
- WA State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- WA State Department of Health Teen Pregnancy Prevention Network
- The Burning Foundation