



## ISSUE BRIEF:

# Best Practices

*From the National Initiative to Improve Adolescent and Young Adult Health by the Year 2010*

**A** growing body of research exists about practices and strategies that have been proven to promote adolescent health. However, there is often a disconnect between research and practice as some of this information can be difficult to locate. A variety of research articles, web sites, organizations and publications disseminate information about what works in adolescent health. However, adolescent health practitioners often work on a variety of issues at once, including unintentional injury, reproductive health, substance use, violence, mental health, nutrition and physical activity, and youth development. It can be a major task to locate information about Best Practices in every outcome area. This issue brief provides an overview of Best Practices and a comprehensive listing of resources for Best Practices in each of the areas listed above.

### What are Best Practices?

Those strategies, activities, and/or approaches that experimental research has shown to be effective at significantly impacting targeted outcomes are called **Best Practices**. The term “evidence-based” is also used to describe Best Practices as there is literature documenting the rigorous evaluation that proves their success. Programs and strategies that have some quantitative data from non-experimental studies showing positive outcomes in behavior, but do not have enough research or replication to support generalizable outcomes are called **Promising Practices**. Promising Practices are also based on wisdom from professionals in the field and are recommended for consideration by program designers and policy makers. However, they cannot be recommended as **Best Practices**. Recommendations on how to create prevention programs are called **Guiding Principles**.

Different organizations and documents often use slightly different definitions for these terms. For the purposes of this brief, the above definitions will be used. In the Resource Section of this document, it is noted when terms are used differently by organizations and web sites listed as

resources. What is important is to recognize that there are different levels of evidence for program effectiveness. Public health professionals must decide on the best match for their interventions by weighing level of effectiveness against community needs, characteristics and resources.

When designing an intervention, it is important to research whether there are programs and/or practices that have demonstrated success in the past. Lessons learned from what has and has not previously worked can provide a valuable foundation for future work and help to avoid reinventing the wheel.

### Why use Best Practices?

Reviewing Best Practices and model programs before designing an initiative gives immediate direction to program planning and saves communities from wasting time and resources on ineffective strategies. For this reason, funders often place priority on programs using strategies that have evidence of effectiveness. Existing research can provide a foundation for creating new interventions, or indicate successful programs that can be replicated. It can also be used to provide a roadmap for implementation of an intervention by outlining specifics such as persons to involve, sequence of events, possible curricula or program components, and levels of intervention.

When a community already has a prevention program or strategy in place, Guiding Principles can be used to gauge the program’s potential effectiveness. They can also be used to design an innovative program when none or few of the Best Practices are appropriate to the community’s needs. Using Best Practices and model programs in combination with program evaluation contributes to further testing of effective strategies. For example, evaluating a program implemented with a different population, under different conditions, or with culturally appropriate modifications can add important knowledge to the field.

Many professional associations have published clinical guidelines and recommendations for providers.

Additionally, Federal agencies such as the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, and non-governmental agencies such as Child Trends and the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy publish information about Best Practices for addressing different adolescent health issues (See Table 1).

### How to Select Best Practices

Not all Best Practices are appropriate for all communities. It is important to balance what research says about what works, with knowledge about what is feasible in specific communities. It is important to consider the following questions when designing an intervention:

- What risk and protective factors need to be addressed in our community (as determined by a needs-and-assets assessment)?
- Programs are more successful when they operate at multiple levels of intervention. What effective strategies have been identified for each of the four levels which are important to incorporate: individual/family, school, community and policy?
- What strategies have been shown to be effective with the socio-demographic profile of our community?
- What critical components from evaluated programs need to be incorporated (e.g., if a model curricula is 14 hours, can we commit ourselves to implementing the same)?
- What financial resources are available right now? Do we need to focus on fundraising efforts at this stage of development?
- What resources can be redeployed to support implementing Best Practices and strategies within existing programs? For example, what staff training and agency capacity building may be necessary to incorporate a well-tested curricula in existing school education programs?

### Challenges: When Models are not Available

Research indicates that interventions targeting more than one level (individual/family, school, community and policy) are more likely to be effective. However, there are gaps in our knowledge about what is effective at every level. Communities may find that there is much more evidence about what works at the individual level, because of the greater challenge inherent in measuring the impact of environmental change and policy level

interventions. Despite this lack of research on interventions at the school, community and policy levels, communities should pursue multiple level approaches that reinforce a consistent message even though sufficient research to support their efforts has yet to be conducted.

Some health issues, such as teenage pregnancy, have more research on Best Practices and effective programs available than others, such as mental health. In such cases, communities need to examine Best Practices and evidence-based research in other health issues to review whether parallel findings in other content areas have implications for their own efforts. No matter what health issue is being addressed, adolescents need specific knowledge regarding the issue; a specific set of skills that enable them to adapt and apply that knowledge to their own behavior; motivation to use those skills; a family, school and community environment that supports use of the requisite knowledge and skills; and a policy environment that provides sufficient resources and political commitment for improving adolescent health and changing social norms.

Communities may also encounter that existing program evaluations and research have been documented with certain ethnic groups, but not conducted with groups that reflect the ethnic profile of adolescents in their own communities. For example, much of the existing research has been conducted on non-Latino white and African American youth. Less research has involved Latinos, Asian/Pacific Islanders or adolescents representing multi-ethnic groups. In such cases, it is important to consider what cultural adaptations, if any, are necessary to make the intervention more culturally appropriate. A coalition might, for example, aim to reduce teen pregnancy among Latino youth and decide to tailor an existing program for that population. It may help to research the types of interventions that have been effective in reaching Latino communities in general, and Latino youth in particular. It is also advisable for a sub-committee to work with parents, youth and teachers to consider what, if any, cultural adaptations are needed. When tailoring interventions that have been shown to be effective, it is important to maintain a critical core from the original program by staying as true as possible to the evaluated model with respect to factors such as the number of classroom hours, learning objectives and types of activities.

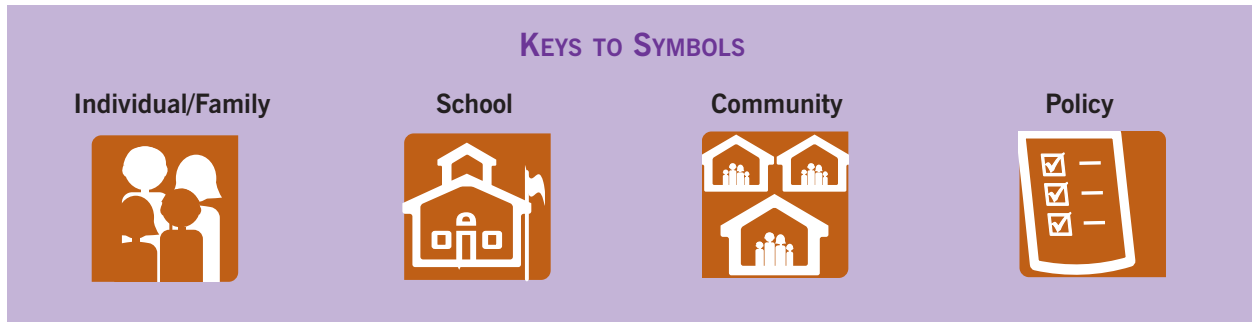
Table 1:

## BEST PRACTICE RESOURCES ADDRESSING THE 21 CRITICAL HEALTH OBJECTIVES FOR ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS

Resource	Best Practices	Promising Practices	Guiding Principles/Guidelines	General Adolescent Health	Youth Development	Violence	Reproductive Health	Substance Use	Mental Health and Suicide	Nutrition and Physical Activity	Unintentional Injury
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, <a href="http://www.saferoads.org/">http://www.saferoads.org/</a>	X										X
Advocates for Youth, <a href="http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/">www.advocatesforyouth.org/</a>	X	X					X				
American Academy of Pediatrics, <a href="http://www.aap.org/">http://www.aap.org/</a>			X	X							
American Medical Association Program on Child and Adolescent Health, <a href="http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/1947.html">http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/1947.html</a>			X	X							
Bright Futures, <a href="http://www.brightfutures.org/">http://www.brightfutures.org/</a>			X	X					X	X	
Center for Mental Health Services, <a href="http://www.mentalhealth.org/">http://www.mentalhealth.org/</a>	X	X	X			X			X		
Center for School Mental Health Assistance, <a href="http://csmha.umaryland.edu/">http://csmha.umaryland.edu/</a>	X	X	X						X		
Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, <a href="http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/">http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/</a>	X	X				X		X			
Center for Substance Use Prevention, Western Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies, <a href="http://casat.unr.edu/westcapt/">http://casat.unr.edu/westcapt/</a>	X	X	X					X			
Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, <a href="http://www.aed.org/youth/">http://www.aed.org/youth/</a>			X		X						
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Division of Adolescent and School Health, <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/">http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/</a>	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
CDC, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/index.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/index.htm</a>	X	X	X							X	
CDC, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/">http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/</a>	X	X	X			X					X
CDC, Tobacco Intervention and Prevention Source, <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/">http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/</a>	X							X			

**Table 1 (cont'd): BEST PRACTICE RESOURCES ADDRESSING THE 21 CRITICAL HEALTH OBJECTIVES FOR ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS**

Resource	Best Practices	Promising Practices	Guiding Principles/Guidelines	General Adolescent Health	Youth Development	Violence	Reproductive Health	Substance Use	Mental Health and Suicide	Nutrition and Physical Activity	Unintentional Injury
Child Trends, <a href="http://www.childtrends.org/">http://www.childtrends.org/</a>	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
ETR Associates, Resource Center for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (ReCAPP), <a href="http://www.etr.org/recapp/">http://www.etr.org/recapp/</a>	X	X	X		X		X				
Guide to Community Preventive Services, <a href="http://www.thecommunityguide.org/">http://www.thecommunityguide.org/</a>	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X
Konopka Institute for Best Practices in Adolescent Health, <a href="http://www.allaboutkids.umn.edu/cfahad/index_konopka.htm">http://www.allaboutkids.umn.edu/cfahad/index_konopka.htm</a>	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, <a href="http://www.teenpregnancy.org/">http://www.teenpregnancy.org/</a>	X	X	X				X				
National Center for Suicide Prevention and Training, <a href="http://www.ncspt.org/">http://www.ncspt.org/</a>		X	X						X		
National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices, <a href="http://www.nga.org/center/">http://www.nga.org/center/</a>	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	
National Institute of Mental Health, <a href="http://www.nimh.nih.gov/">http://www.nimh.nih.gov/</a>	X	X							X		
National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, <a href="http://www.safeyouth.org/">http://www.safeyouth.org/</a>	X	X				X					
PAVNET (Partnerships Against Violence Network) Online, <a href="http://www.pavnet.org/">http://www.pavnet.org/</a>	X	X				X					
Promising and Effective Practices Network, <a href="http://www.nyec.org/pepnet/">http://www.nyec.org/pepnet/</a>		X		X							
Promising Practices Network, <a href="http://www.promisingpractices.net/">http://www.promisingpractices.net/</a>	X	X				X	X	X			
Sociometrics, <a href="http://www.socio.com/">http://www.socio.com/</a>	X	X					X				
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, <a href="http://www.samhsa.gov/">http://www.samhsa.gov/</a>	X	X						X	X		
Surgeon General's Home Page, <a href="http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/">http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/</a>	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	
UCLA School Mental Health Project: Center for Mental Health in Schools, <a href="http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/">http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/</a>	X	X				X			X		

**BEST PRACTICE RESOURCES****ADVOCATES FOR HIGHWAY AND AUTO SAFETY,** 

<http://www.saferoads.org/>

This organization is an alliance of consumer health and safety groups and insurance companies that advocates for state and federal laws, policies and programs that reduce traffic related injuries and fatalities. The web site includes a section on teen drivers that includes motor vehicle injury information, statistics and policy recommendations. The site also contains a state-by-state listing of policies aimed at reducing motor vehicle related injuries and deaths and public opinion poll results. In 2004, this organization released a report describing effective policy interventions (some directly targeting teens) for preventing motor vehicle injuries, <http://www.saferoads.org/Roadmap2004.pdf>. Strategies recommended in the report are research-based strategies that have been proven effective.

**ADVOCATES FOR YOUTH,**   

[www.advocatesforyouth.org/](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/)

Advocates for Youth is dedicated to creating programs and advocating for policies that help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health. The web site has a report on *Science and Success: Sex Education and Other Programs That Work to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, HIV & Sexually Transmitted Infections*, <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/programsthatwork/index.htm>, which outlines 19 programs that have been proven to reduce teen pregnancies and STDs.

**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS,**  

<http://www.aap.org/>

The American Academy of Pediatrics is a membership organization for pediatricians. Their web site includes state and federal policy updates, information about child health advocacy campaigns, programs and provider tools, research, information for families, practice guidelines and other resources for professionals.

**AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION PROGRAM ON CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH,**  

<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/1947.html>

This online resource provides information related to adolescent health, including the 21 *Healthy People 2010* health critical objectives related to adolescent and young adult health, the State Children's Health Insurance Program, AMA adolescent health resources, guidelines for adolescent clinical preventive services, and other related links, news items and announcements. *The Guidelines for Adolescent Preventive Services (GAPS) Recommendations Monograph*, <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/upload/mm/39/gapsmono.pdf>, provides information on the 24 recommendations which are organized into four types of services that address 14 different health topics or conditions. A document describing lessons learned from implementation of the guidelines is also available by request.

**BRIGHT FUTURES,** 

<http://www.brightfutures.org/>

Bright Futures, an initiative led by Georgetown University, lays out expert guidelines and a practical developmental approach to promote the health, education, and well being of children and adolescents from birth through age 21. The guiding philosophy of Bright Futures is that optimal health requires a partnership between the health professional, the child, the family, and the community. The web site includes information about practice guidelines, training tools and resources for families. An interactive, web-based training tool is also being developed. Bright Futures is funded by the US Maternal and Child Health Bureau. Guidelines; practice toolkits for mental health, oral health, nutrition and physical activity; and training tools can be downloaded from the web site.

**CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (CMHS),** 

<http://www.mentalhealth.org/>

CMHS is part of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Mental Health Information Center. The web site contains a variety of publications related to adolescent mental health covering topics such as cultural competence, various mental health disorders, and community action. Useful publications include *Systems of Care: Promising Practices in Children's Mental Health*, <http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cmhs/ChildrensCampaign/practices.asp>, and *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention*, <http://www.mentalhealth.org/suicideprevention/strategy.asp>. The Center also administers the CMHS Initiative, *Enhancing Resilience*, <http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/schoolviolence/initiative.asp>. The Initiative is a federal program aimed at making schools safer, fostering children's healthy development, and preventing aggressive and violent behavior among youth. The web site contains an overview of model programs that describes the method of evaluation, target population, level of intervention and provides contact information and citations for each program, <http://www.mentalhealth.org/schoolviolence/lrenelis.asp>.

**CENTER FOR SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE,** 

<http://csmha.umaryland.edu/>

This center supports schools and community collaboratives in the development of school-based mental health programs that are accessible, family-centered, culturally sensitive, and responsive to local needs. The center provides technical assistance and consultation; conducts national trainings and education; analyzes and promotes discussion on critical issues; gathers, develops, and disseminates relevant materials; and facilitates networking.

**CENTER FOR THE STUDY AND PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE (CSPV),** 

[www.colorado.edu/cspv/](http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/)

This site contains publications, information databases, and program information to assist with the development and evaluation of violence prevention programs. The site also contains fact sheets on a variety of topics including school violence, bullying, gangs, and firearms. *Blueprints for Violence Prevention*, <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/index.html>, is an initiative of CSPV that identifies programs that have been effective in reducing adolescent violent crime, aggression, delinquency, and substance abuse. The web site provides information about Best Practices and Promising Programs that were identified through an extensive and rigorous review process. The web site identifies Best Practices as Model or Exemplary Programs. Each program description contains information about program components, targeted outcomes, costs, and contact information for those who would like to obtain program materials.

**CENTER FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION, WESTERN CENTER  
FOR THE APPLICATION OF PREVENTION TECHNOLOGIES (CSAP – CAPT),**

<http://casat.unr.edu/westcapt/>

CSAP's Western Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies is one of six regional centers that assist states, jurisdictions and community-based prevention programs to apply scientifically defensible strategies in their efforts to prevent substance abuse. The web site contains an on-line guide to program planning that includes a guide for selecting and implementing Best Practices, <http://casat.unr.edu/westcapt/bestpractices/bestprac.htm> and a comprehensive listing of Best Practices, <http://casatweb.ed.unr.edu/cgi-bin/WebObjects/Step6.woa/wa/getList>. The listing includes a description of program components, targeted outcomes, target population, costs, research conclusions and contact information for those who would like to obtain program materials. There is also a link to the publication, *Achieving Outcomes: A Practitioner's Guide to Effective Prevention*, <http://modelprograms.samhsa.gov/pdfs/AchievingOutcomes.pdf>.

**CENTER FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY RESEARCH,**

<http://www.aed.org/youth/>

The Center provides information on youth development, its current youth development mobilization strategies, community youth mapping, and current outside programs and projects that emphasize youth development. The mission of the Center is to: make “what works” available for youth to be productive and involved citizens; to increase the number of people, places, and possibilities available to young people by the year 2005; to strengthen and support local systems to build a comprehensive youth development infrastructure; and to increase public will to support positive youth development for all youth. The Center published *7 Elements of a Youth Development Infrastructure*, guidelines for developing and sustaining youth development programs.

**CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC),  
DIVISION OF ADOLESCENT AND SCHOOL HEALTH (DASH),**

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/>

This web site contains information for health professionals and school personnel about school health policies and programs. Available on the site are school health education profiles, data, Best Practices, Promising Practices, guidelines, and funding sources on a variety of health topics. The site also contains data on relevant youth behaviors monitored by Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS). The following guidelines are available on the DASH web site:

*School Health Guidelines to Prevent Unintentional Injuries and Violence,*  
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5022a1.htm>

*Guidelines for School Health Programs to Promote Lifelong Healthy Eating,*  
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00042446.htm>

*Guidelines for School and Community Programs to Promote Lifelong Physical Activity Among Young People,*  
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00046823.htm>

*Guidelines for School Health Programs to Prevent Tobacco Use and Addiction,*  
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00026213.htm>

*Guidelines for Effective School Health Education To Prevent the Spread of AIDS,*  
<http://wonder.cdc.gov/wonder/prevguid/p0000217/p0000217.asp>



### CDC, NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION AND HEALTH PROMOTION,

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/>

This center takes the public health approach to addressing the role of nutrition and physical activity in improving the public's health and preventing and controlling chronic diseases. Their web site includes a "Recommendations" page that lists several useful documents and tools such as the Surgeon General's reports on physical activity and nutrition, nutritional guidelines, and a variety of other guidelines and recommendations for promoting nutrition and physical activity. *Promoting Physical Activity: A Guide for Community Action*, <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/pahand.htm>, is a step-by-step guide for promoting behavior change using individual/family, school, community and policy level interventions. *Effective Population Level Strategies to Promote Physical Activity*, <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/recommendations.htm>, and *Promoting Better Health for Young People Through Physical Activity and Sports*, [http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/physicalactivity/promoting\\_health/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/physicalactivity/promoting_health/index.htm), describe evidence-based strategies for promoting physical activity, but do not list specific programs.

### CDC, NATIONAL CENTER FOR INJURY PREVENTION AND CONTROL (NCIPC),

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/>

The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control works to reduce morbidity, disability, mortality and costs associated with injuries. The NCIPC web site includes information on unintentional injury and prevention including bike safety, home and recreation injury, and motor vehicle related injuries. The site includes data, publications and research, program information, and federal agency grant information. The Center developed *Best Practices of Youth Violence Prevention: A Sourcebook for Community Action*, <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/bestpractices.htm>. This publication provides a comprehensive overview of evidence-based practices and programs for youth violence prevention. Contact information is provided for those who would like more information on highlighted programs or to obtain implementation tools such as curricula or training guides.

### CDC, TOBACCO INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION SOURCE (TIPS),

<http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/>

The CDC developed *Best Practices for Tobacco Control Programs*, an evidence-based guide to help states establish effective tobacco control programs. The document is available on the TIPS web site at, <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/bestprac.htm>. This report is not specific to adolescents but does address prevention programs, school and community programs, and policy interventions targeting young people. The guide lists examples of strategies and activities in each program category and gives examples of some Best Practice programs being implemented by selected states. It also provides recommended state funding levels for each program category.

### CHILD TRENDS,

<http://www.childtrends.org/>

Child Trends is a non-profit, nonpartisan children's research organization that collects and analyzes data; conducts, synthesizes and disseminates research; designs and evaluates programs; and develops and tests promising approaches to research in the field. Projects related to adolescents include efforts to define measures of positive youth development, and a series of briefs of "what works" in program approaches to support adolescent health and development. A report entitled *American Teens: A Special Look at "What Works" in Adolescent Development*, can be ordered at [www.childtrends.org/store](http://www.childtrends.org/store). Also available on the web site is an online version of the *Youth Outcomes Compendium*, [http://www.childtrends.org/what\\_works/clarkwww/compendium\\_intro.asp](http://www.childtrends.org/what_works/clarkwww/compendium_intro.asp), that provides an overview of youth development outcomes, suggested measures for these outcomes, and programs that have shown evidence of success. The document addresses four domains of youth development: educational achievement and cognitive attainment, health and safety, social and emotional development, and self-sufficiency. Best Practice program descriptions include a listing of program activities and evaluation findings.



**ETR ASSOCIATES, RESOURCE CENTER FOR ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY PREVENTION (ReCAPP),** 

<http://www.etr.org/recapp/>

ETR provides leadership, educational resources, training and research on health promotion with an emphasis on sexuality and health education. Their web site contains an online catalogue of health education resources such as brochures and curricula. The Resource Center for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (ReCAPP) provides information, evaluated program materials and tools for teachers and health educators aimed at reducing sexual risk-taking behaviors among adolescents. The web site also contains professional skill-building tools for health educators, research, health behavior theory, statistics, and learning activities. The “Evidence Based Programs” section of the web site, <http://www.etr.org/recapp/programs/effectiveprograms.htm>, contains descriptions of six Best Practice Programs, their theoretical frameworks, costs and training information (including contact information), and evaluation fact sheets.

**GUIDE TO COMMUNITY PREVENTIVE SERVICES,** 

<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/>

The Community Guide is being developed by a non-Federal Task Force on Community Preventive Services appointed by the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The group provides leadership in the evaluation of community, population and health care system strategies to address a variety of public health and health promotion topics. Each topic contains a list of intervention strategies and a summary of research on their effectiveness.

**KONOPKA INSTITUTE FOR BEST PRACTICES IN ADOLESCENT HEALTH,** 

[http://www.allaboutkids.umn.edu/cfahad/index\\_konopka.htm](http://www.allaboutkids.umn.edu/cfahad/index_konopka.htm)

The Konopka Institute provides information, programs, and policy support to the youth serving community through dissemination, convenings, education and research synthesis. Their web site contains a variety of publications including monographs, policy briefs and research papers. One useful resource is *Growing Absolutely Fantastic Youth: A Guide to Best Practices in Healthy Youth Development*, <http://allaboutkids.umn.edu/kdwbfvc/Fantastic%20Youth%20Book.pdf>. The document highlights the latest research and theories behind youth development and adolescent health, risk factors, protective factors, and resiliency. It also showcases the various roles schools, families, and communities can play in promoting healthy adolescent development and numerous examples of successful youth programs within Minnesota.

**NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY,** 

<http://www.teenpregnancy.org/>

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy is a nonprofit, nonpartisan campaign to improve the well being of children, youth and families by reducing teen pregnancy. The web site offers fact sheets and data, research, polling data, information on Best Practices, public education materials, and news. The web site includes the report, *Emerging Answers: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy*, <https://www.teenpregnancy.org/product/pdf/emergingSumm.pdf>. This document provides an overview of evaluations of various teen pregnancy prevention programs and summarizes the common characteristics of effective programs.

**NATIONAL CENTER FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION AND TRAINING,** 

<http://www.ncspt.org/>

The National Center for Suicide Prevention and Training provides educational resources to help public officials, service providers, and community-based coalitions develop effective suicide prevention policies and programs. The web site includes links to research, fact sheets, publications, databases, training materials and other useful web sites. The Center also offers online trainings on the following topics: Using Data to Educate the Public and Policy Makers about Youth Suicide, Youth Suicide Prevention Program Planning and Evaluation and Youth Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training.

**NATIONAL GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION CENTER FOR BEST PRACTICES (NGA),** 

<http://www.nga.org/center/>

The NGA Center for Best Practices helps Governors and their policy staff develop and implement innovative solutions to challenges facing their states by providing technical assistance, identifying and sharing Best Practices, and exploring emerging national trends. For example, their web site includes policy briefs such as *The Obesity Epidemic—How States can Trim the Fat*, [http://www.nga.org/center/divisions/1,1188,C\\_ISSUE\\_BRIEF^D\\_3878,00.html](http://www.nga.org/center/divisions/1,1188,C_ISSUE_BRIEF^D_3878,00.html)

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH (NIMH),**  

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/>

The NIMH web site offers a wealth of information on current research in the field of mental health. Most reports available on the site are clinically oriented. However there are several resources such as research papers, conference reports and program descriptions, related to prevention.

**NATIONAL YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER (NYVPRC),**    

<http://www.safeyouth.org/>

This site is a collaboration between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Federal Working Group on Youth Violence. The site contains information about adolescent violence prevention and intervention programs, publications, research and statistics. Types of effective youth violence prevention programs such as youth development and skills training, are described on the NYVPRC web site, <http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/faq/effective.asp>. However, specific programs are not mentioned. The site also contains a *Youth Violence Prevention and Intervention Fact Sheet*, <http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/facts/intervention.asp>, which describes various program approaches, but does not list specific programs. However, the fact sheet does provide links to resources with further detail about both Best Practice programs and Promising Programs. Contact information for specific programs is not provided.

**PAVNET (PARTNERSHIPS AGAINST VIOLENCE NETWORK) ONLINE,**    

<http://www.pavnet.org/>

The Partnerships Against Violence Network is a virtual library with information about violence and youth-at-risk, representing data from seven different Federal Agencies. This site contains several databases of federally funded research, promising programs, publications, funding opportunities, and links to other resources related to violence. PAVNET has a searchable database of Promising Programs addressing issues of violence and youth-at-risk. Contact information, brief descriptions of the target audience, evaluation information and a program overview are included in each program profile. While the Promising Programs database does contain some Best Practice programs, they are not identified as such.

**PROMISING AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICES NETWORK (PEPNET),**  

<http://www.nyec.org/pepnet/>

PEPNet, created and managed by the National Youth Employment Coalition, is a network and information source, based on practice and research, for identifying and promoting what works in youth employment and development. PEPNet provides guidelines and strategies for identifying and promoting effective practices. The web site contains an index of effective practices, specific strategies and approaches, and descriptions of programs that are putting these strategies into practice. The site also contains tools for programs that want to conduct a self-assessment.

**PROMISING PRACTICES NETWORK,** 

<http://www.promisingpractices.net/>

The Promising Practices Network web site, operated by the RAND Corporation, highlights programs and practices that credible research indicates are effective in improving outcomes for children, youth and families. Their Proven and Promising Programs database includes programs aimed at improving outcomes related to adolescent use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, sexual activity and youth violence. For each topic area both Best Practices and Promising Programs are listed. A program overview, evaluation findings, implementation considerations, contact information and resources are provided for each program.

**SOCIOMETRICS,** 

<http://www.socio.com/>

Sociometrics is a for-profit research and development firm specializing in social science research applications that produces research-based products and services for a variety of different audiences. Sociometrics' Program Archives on Sexuality, Health and Adolescence (PASHA) contains replication kits for programs aimed at preventing teen pregnancy and STD/HIV/AIDS, <http://www.socio.com/pasha.htm>. PASHA identifies programs that have been evaluated and demonstrated success as Promising Programs. Programs whose evaluations have not consistently shown success but meet certain criteria are identified as Best Practices. A table organized by program goal and setting with descriptions of each program allows users to select the appropriate program. Users can also define their own search criteria in the following categories: setting, population, program goal and program approach. Once selected, users can purchase an implementation kit for a single program or the complete collection of PASHA Program Packages.

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION,** 

<http://www.samhsa.gov/>

This web site features a comprehensive clearinghouse on mental health and substance abuse related data and publications, and some reports specific to adolescents. It also includes a list of funding opportunities and features updated news items and legislation. SAMHSA hosts the SAMHSA Model Programs web site, <http://www.samhsa.gov/centers/clearinghouse/clearinghouses.html>, that offers a searchable clearinghouse of promising, effective and model programs that are reviewed by the National Registry of Effective Programs. Programs are organized by content focus, alpha order and degree of evidence of effectiveness. There is a fact sheet for each program describing the program focus, evaluation design and outcomes, a training schedule, guidelines for maintaining fidelity during implementation, and ordering information. SAMHSA considers programs Evidence Based if they are well conceived and reasonably well implemented and evaluated. A program that has demonstrated some positive outcomes is labeled Promising, and a program that has consistently positive outcomes and has been well implemented and evaluated is labeled Effective. A Model Program is a program that is available for dissemination and whose program developers are available to provide technical assistance.

**SURGEON GENERAL'S HOME PAGE,** 

<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/>

The web site for the Office of the Surgeon General makes available a variety of Reports of the Surgeon General, Calls to Action, and conference precedings on topics such as mental health, violence, tobacco use prevention, physical activity, nutrition, and sexual behavior. Although only a few reports are specific to youth, they do look at issues from a life span perspective. Reports include reviews of what research tells us about effective prevention and highlights effective programs. Calls to Action lay out national guidelines and strategies for addressing health issues. All publications can be downloaded from the web site.

**UCLA SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT: CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS,**

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>

This web site hosts a clearinghouse of articles and materials designed to assist service providers in delivering mental health services in schools. By clicking on “Search and Quick Find” users can select “Model Programs Information” for a list of technical assistance packets on various types of programs. Packets address topics such as violence prevention programs and school based health centers.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Adapted From:** Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention & Health Promotion, Division of Adolescent & School Health; Health Resources & Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Office of Adolescent Health; National Adolescent Health Information Center, University of California, San Francisco. Improving the Health of Adolescents and Young Adults: A Guide for States and Communities. Atlanta, GA: 2004. To download or order this publication, visit the NAHIC web site: <http://nahic.ucsf.edu/2010guide>. Special thanks to Kristin Teipel, Project Coordinator, State Adolescent Health Resource Center/Konopka Institute for Best Practices in Adolescent Health, University of Minnesota, for her assistance in the development of this brief.

**Suggested Citation:** National Adolescent Health Information Center. (2004). Issue Brief: Best Practices. San Francisco, CA: National Adolescent Health Information Center, University of California, San Francisco.

This document was developed with generous support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Adolescent and School Health, and the Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Office of Adolescent Health (2U45MC00002-11-00).

**Published by:**  
National Adolescent Health Information Center  
University of California, San Francisco,  
Division of Adolescent Medicine  
3333 California Street, Box 0503, Suite 245  
San Francisco, California, 94143-0503  
Phone: 415-502-4856  
Fax: 415-502-4858  
Email: [nahic@itsa.ucsf.edu](mailto:nahic@itsa.ucsf.edu)  
Web site: <http://nahic.ucsf.edu/>