

Anchorage Collaborative Coalitions

"Together creating communities where youth and young adults thrive and are resilient"



ANCHORAGE
COLLABORATIVE
COALITIONS

Bullying is a Public Health Issue

Across several datasets and sources, bullying has been found to be significantly tied to poor mental health outcomes among youth and young adults in Anchorage. Analysis of data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey shows that Anchorage high school students who were bullied, either in school or electronically, were more likely to report that they seriously considered suicide, planned a suicide attempt, felt sad or hopeless, currently drink, and binge drink. Analysis of data from a survey given to young adults living in Anchorage, shows that bullying is a significant predictor of mental health status for 18-24 year olds in Anchorage. Focus groups with youth aged 12-24 reflected the extent to which bullying influences the mental health of youth in those age groups.

Preventing Bullying

Bullying poses serious consequences for young people, but bullying and its consequences are preventable. The Anchorage Collaborative Coalitions adopted a set of strategies to prevent bullying and its consequences in Anchorage. The coalition receives state funding through the Department of Health and Social Services to:

- Work with youth-serving organizations to improve their ability to provide youth with a safe space, supportive environment, quality youth/adult and peer interactions, and meaningful youth engagement;
- Provide youth the opportunity to improve community safety, develop friendly, supportive, and positive relationships with adults, and make a difference in their community;
- Recommend evidence based bullying policies to Anchorage schools and other institutions serving middle school and high-school youth;
- Coordinate awareness campaigns to increase knowledge of bullying, awareness of its prevalence and negative consequences among youth and young adults, and increase awareness of associated proactive practices to prevent bullying;
- Provide young adults and community members with the skills they need to empower and equip bystanders to safely intervene and stop power-based personal violence incidents, such as bullying, domestic violence, and sexual assault, from occurring through Green Dot bystander intervention training.

Building Strong Youth and Community

The Anchorage Collaborative Coalitions' bullying prevention programming is comprised of many programs. Our efforts are focused on increasing protective factors that have been found to shield youth from the negative effects of bullying. The data point to several factors such as optimism, self-esteem, and self-awareness that are protective for bullying and sadness/hopelessness. Additional protective factors that have been the focus of this work include youth feeling like they matter to their community and youth having trusted relationships, both peer and adult.

Reaching Youth

The Anchorage Collaborative Coalitions offer mini-grants to youth groups to provide them with the resources to make a difference in their community, as well as to develop and distribute messages to bring awareness to bullying in Anchorage.

Environmental Approach

Anchorage Collaborative Coalitions is reaching out to and working with community members, families, youth-serving organizations, and local businesses to address the many factors that put youth and young adults at risk, or protect them, from the harmful effects of bullying.

Making a Difference in Our Community

We evaluate our efforts so that we can measure our successes and ensure that our work is making a difference. Through our evaluation so far, we have seen real change amongst the groups we work with. Our findings show that youth participating in the Youth Matter projects experience growth in their beliefs about their role in civic engagement in their community. Our evaluation of Green Dot training attendees show that the program increases participant's belief that they can safely intervene as a bystander in the presence of power-based personal violence. Youth developing bullying awareness campaign materials have shown sustained changes in their knowledge about bullying and its consequences.

62% ↑

After participating in Green Dot training, there was a 62% increase in participants' confidence that they can prevent violence as a bystander.

127% ↑

Youth participating in our mini-grant program showed a 127% increase in their belief that people their age have chances to help decide what goes on in Anchorage.

"On a walk with my 9-year-old daughter, I chose a few of the Anchorage Collaborative Coalitions' family conversation cards and we used them to ask each other questions as we walked and talked. It was such a good experience and we had so much fun together. While we talked about really serious things like bullying and making good choices, we also shared fun stories and did a ton of laughing."
—Elizabeth Shea, Parent

What You Can Do

- **Attend a Training.** Participate in a Green Dot bystander intervention training or learn more about the initiative at greendotalaska.com.
- **Hear from Youth.** Youth with Story Works Alaska and Alaska Teen Media Institute produced a series of podcasts to discuss bullying, why it happens, how it happens and what can be done to stop it. Each podcast features stories from a different perspective of bullying and its effects, both physical and psychological. Each story is true and told by an Alaska high school student at one of the many shows put on by Story Works Alaska. You can listen to the podcasts here: <https://www.spiritofyouth.org/youth-discuss-bullying-podcast-series/>
- **Support Evidence-Based Bullying Policies.** The Anchorage Collaborative Coalitions have created a set of policy recommendations that can be found at anchoragecollaborative.org. The recommendations include a sample of a bullying prevention policy.

About Anchorage Collaborative Coalitions

Anchorage Collaborative Coalitions are a group of organizations (Volunteers of America Alaska, Healthy Voices Healthy Choices, Spirit of Youth, Anchorage Youth Development Coalition, and Alaska Injury Prevention Center) working together to prevent bullying behavior by promoting respect and inclusion for youth and young adults ages 12-24. You can learn more about the coalitions and access additional bullying prevention resources at anchoragecollaborative.org.