

**Fargo Youth Initiative (FYI)**  
**Executive Summary**  
**Initial Series of Adult & Youth Meetings**

The FYI project is made possible by North Dakota State University  
President Chapman's Community Project Award  
Group Decision Center  
Extension Service

# Fargo Youth Initiative (FYI) Executive Summary Initial Series of Adult and Youth Meetings

## INTRODUCTION

35 Youth (ages 14-19) and 27 Adults discussed both Youth Issues and Youth Involvement in the electronic discussion center at NDSU.

This Executive Summary includes:

- A) FYI Project Goals
- B) Youth Issues Ranking
- C) Summary of the Youth Issue Discussion (key points addressed by both groups)
- D) Areas of Youth Involvement Discussion

The goals of this executive summary are:

- ❖ Identify issues affecting Fargo youth that are important to meeting participants.
- ❖ Assess the areas with the greatest potential for youth involvement as partners with Adults.
- ❖ Provide summary of the discussion for the second series of the Fargo Youth Initiative.

The documents from either the Adult or Youth Session can be viewed at the GDC website

<http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu/gdc/calendar/surveys/index.shtml>

## A) FYI PROJECT GOALS:

- ❖ Identify and develop Youth and Adult consensus on issues affecting Fargo youth
- ❖ Assess the current resources available to address these issues
- ❖ Develop action steps to address these issues and unmet needs
- ❖ Determine the current level and effectiveness of youth involvement in community decision making
- ❖ Develop an ongoing process for increased youth involvement in the community in partnership with Adults.

## B) FYI YOUTH ISSUES

**Issues Ranked in Order of Importance \*\***

<u>Issues</u>	<u>Youth Report Pages #</u>
1. Substance Abuse.....	45-49
2. Importance of Parental Guidance .....	65-66
3. Teen Pressure / Acceptance .....	55-57
4. Teen Depression .....	43-44
5. Teen Sexuality .....	53-55
6. Eating Disorders .....	49-51
7. Choices About College / Career .....	58-60
8. Fear of Physical / Mental Abuse .....	63-64
9. Nothing To Do On Weekends .....	51-53

**\*\* NOTE: Page numbers correlate with sections from the original FYI reports.**

<http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu/gdc/calendar/surveys/index.shtml>

## **C) SUMMARY OF THE MAIN TOPICS**

Key Points of Youth/Adults Discussions and Summary Statement are below.

### **Rank 1: Substance Abuse**

#### **Youth**

The key concerns about substance abuse were as follows:

1. Drugs and Alcohol are easily accessible to youth.
2. Peer pressure to use these substances.
3. Lack of recreation on weekends, which leads to substance usage.
4. Problem usage among certain groups of youth.

#### **Adults**

The key concerns about substance abuse were as follows:

1. Alcohol use is not any worse than when they were kids.
2. Binge drinking is a problem.
3. Not all parents are getting involved with their children and their problems.
4. Substance abuse can lead to other destructive behaviors.
5. Education of substance use and abuse is important.

#### **Summary Statement**

Availability and accessibility seem to be common themes. Although some of the concerns are similar there are differences between the two groups. These differences may need to be discussed further.

### **Rank 2: Parental Guidance**

#### **Youth**

The key concerns of the youth group were as follows:

1. There was large concern about home life and child rearing practices.
2. The importance of parents being role models.
3. The importance of support by parents.

#### **Adults**

The key concerns of the adult group were as follows:

1. Being involved with your children is very important.
2. Community involvement is key to raising children.
3. Some adults think that there are parents who expect the school to do their job.
4. Parents need to set a good example for their children.

#### **Summary Statement**

Both groups were concerned about the importance of parents setting a good example for their children. Also, both groups questioned the parenting skills of some parents and the outcomes of poor child rearing practices.

### **Rank 3: Peer Pressure And Acceptance**

#### **Youth**

The key concerns of the youth group were as follows:

1. Social Cliques.
2. Rivalries between schools.
3. Ability to get help without being ridiculed by peers. (Confidentiality)
4. Pressure to be popular.

#### **Adults**

The key concerns of the adult group were as follows:

1. The pressure to be successful.
2. The importance placed on competitive sports.
3. Pressure from peers, schools and media to look, dress and act a certain way.

#### **Summary Statement**

Both groups were concerned about peer pressure to be popular and the pressure to dress, act and look a certain way; competition, and Rivalry.

### **Rank 4: Depression**

**This concern was not addressed directly by the adult group; the issue of Health Care Service was addressed.**

#### **Youth**

The key concerns of the youth group were as follows:

1. Pressure to perform (from peers, adults and teachers).
2. Lack of easily accessible help.
3. Suicide.
4. Lack of education about causes and effects of depression.
5. Lack of recognition of symptoms of depression.

#### **Adults**

The concerns of the adult group were as follows:

1. The importance of education on issues like sex, substance use and psychological issues.
2. The importance of confidential help for young people.
3. Although some youth are responsible, some think they are immune to the possible effects of irresponsible behaviors.
4. The ability to get quality help for health, sexual and psychological problems.
5. Annual screenings for health problems, like depression.

#### **Summary Statement**

Education addressing these issues was important to both groups. The ability to get help for these types of issues was also a concern raised by both groups. Both groups also raised concerns about recognizing symptoms of depression. Although there were some similarities, the adult group did not address this topic as in-depth as the youth group.

### **Rank 5: Teen Sexuality**

**This issue was not addressed directly by the adult group; the issue of Health Care Services was addressed.**

#### **Youth**

The key concerns of the youth group were as follows:

- 1. Media message that sex is O.K. \***
2. Lack of education about sex in the home.
3. Poor values of some youth.

#### **Adults**

The concerns of the adult group were as follows:

1. The importance of education on these issues.
2. The importance of accessible help for youth.

#### **Summary Statement**

Both groups mentioned the importance of education. The adult group briefly discussed this issue, while the youth group went more in-depth. The adult group did stress the importance of the ability of young people to get help.

### **Rank 6: Eating Disorders**

**This issue was not addressed directly by the adult group; the issue of Health Care Services was addressed.**

#### **Youth**

The key concerns of the youth group were as follows:

1. Peer pressure
- 2. Pressure of the media. (T.V., movies and the press) \***
3. Lack of support about their looks.
4. Societies pressure to be thin.

#### **Adults**

The concerns of the adult group were as follows:

1. The importance of education on these issues.
2. The importance of accessible help for youth on issues such as this.

#### **Summary Statement**

Both groups mentioned the importance of education. The adult group briefly discussed this issue. The adult group did stress the importance of the ability of young people to get help.

**\* NOTE: Role of Media is discussed in Youth discussion of TEEN SEXUALITY #1 / EATING DISORDERS #2 (P. 53-55) / (P. 49-51)**

### **Rank 7: College And Career Choices**

**The adult group briefly addressed college choices and focused more on areas of involvement for possible career development.**

#### **Youth**

The key concerns of the youth group were as follows:

1. Pressure of getting into college. (grades, testing and applying)
2. Not enough focus on real world preparation in school.
3. Concerns about paying for college.

#### **Adults**

The concerns of the adult group were as follows:

1. Internship programs.
2. Youth leadership programs, junior achievement clubs and youth employment.
3. The opportunity for youth involvement in city or county government.
4. Mentoring programs between youth and city officials.
5. Student leadership development academy.
6. Possibly putting too much pressure on youth to get a four-year education.

#### **Summary Statement**

The youth group focused more on the pressure to perform and get into college, while the adult group raised concerns about the amount of pressure youth receive to attend a four-year institution. The youth group also discussed the lack of real world preparation in school. The adult group focused more on the existing programs and opportunities and brainstormed some ideas about new programs, which may help involve youth in leadership and government processes.

### **Rank 8: Physical And Mental Abuse**

**This issue was not addressed directly by the adult group; the issue of Health Care Services was addressed.**

#### **Youth**

The key concerns of the youth group were:

1. Fear of being sexually harassed by peers.
2. Fear of being emotionally abused by others. (peers and teachers)
3. Fear of being ridiculed by peers.

#### **Adults**

The concerns of the adult group were as follows:

1. The importance of education on these issues.
2. The importance of accessible help for youth on issues such as this.

#### **Summary Statement**

Both groups mentioned the importance of education. The adult group briefly discussed this issue. The adult group did stress the importance of the ability of young people to get help.

**Rank 9: Nothing To Do**

**Youth**

The key concerns of the youth group were:

1. Lack of things to do lead to substance abuse.
2. The need for more recreational opportunities.
3. There are things to do but youth are not informed about opportunities in the community, or they choose not to participate.
4. A safe and clean place for young people to hang out.
5. The need for less expensive recreational opportunities.

**Adults**

The key concerns of the adult group were:

1. A youth center run by youth, but overseen by adults.
2. More dances and concerts that appeal to young people.
3. Work opportunities for young people.
4. Volunteer opportunities for young people.
5. Opportunities for at risk groups of young people.
6. There are opportunities but many youth do not participate in these activities.
7. Allowing youth to be involved in the planning process of these activities.

**Summary Statement**

Both groups did discuss the need for more recreational opportunities including a recreational center. The concern was also raised that there are opportunities available, but some are not aware of the opportunities or choose not to participate. The youth group expressed the need for a place to hang out that was free of drugs and alcohol and was also free of violence and other unwanted behaviors. The youth group also believed that more leisure opportunities would lead to lower substance abuse. The adult group stressed the need to reach youth that are at risk. The adult group believed that youth need to be involved in the planning process of future activities that are geared towards their age group.

**D) FYI ADULTS MEETING RESULTS**

**Areas With the Greatest Potential for Youth Involvement Ranked in Order of Importance**

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<u>Issues</u>	<u>Adult Report Pages #</u>
1. Leisure Opportunities .....	23-26
2. Recreation Facilities .....	34-35
3. Secondary Education .....	27-28
4. Post-Secondary Education .....	28-29
5. City Government .....	31-32
6. Courts / Law Enforcement .....	30-31
7. Health Care Services .....	33-34
8. Service Sector Businesses .....	22-23
9. County Government .....	32
10. State Government .....	33
11. Retail / Business .....	29-30

\*\* *NOTE: Page numbers correlate with sections from the original FYI reports.*

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## **SUMMARY OF POSSIBLE DISCUSSION TOPICS FOR FYI SECOND SERIES OF MEETINGS**

- Leisure and Recreation: Youth and adults agreed that having more diverse leisure and recreational options could reduce the substance abuse problem.
- Education is key in dealing with many of the issues ranging from substance abuse to eating disorders, etc. According to youth and adult discussions youth also identified a need for focus on “real world” preparation for employment and post secondary education.
- Health Care involvement surfaced as critical in numerous youth issues for both groups.
- Courts and law enforcement are possible areas for youth involvement when addressing several youth issues.
- Parental Guidance is an issue that the youth discussed in greater detail than the adult group did. Further discussion of this topic might be valuable.

*This executive summary resulted from a research team’s careful review of the Youth Report (111 pages) and Adult Report (62 pages). This summary provides a ready reference to the FYI discussion reports.*

**FYI project is made possible by NDSU**  
**1. President Chapman’s Community Project Award**  
**2. Group Decision Center**  
**3. Extension Service**

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