

# ENGAGING YOUTH IN SHAPING STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS TO PREVENT SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

## WEB CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Young people are driving prevention practice in innovative ways. We have moved from an era of youth leadership defined by token decisions (what color should those t-shirts be?) to efforts where youth are defining the problem, their vision for the future, and policy and practice solutions to prevent sexual and domestic violence. This topic hones in on how practitioners are engaging young people and creating infrastructure to support youth decision-making.

### PRACTITIONERS & ADVOCATES FEATURED

- **Eleanor Davis**, Program Assistant Public Education Campaigns & Programs, Futures Without Violence
- **Claudia Plesa**, Project Coordinator at Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

### KEY FINDINGS

- A. As programs and organizations shift from a “youth as consultants” model to a “youth as partners” model, young people can play an increasing role in defining the problems and crafting the solutions for sexual and domestic violence prevention.** The That’s Not Cool campaign, a teen dating violence prevention initiative, is an example of how youth are increasingly playing influential roles in the work. A youth advisory council help guide the campaign and



### EXPANDING PARTNERSHIPS & LINKAGES

are involved in the creation of materials and train-the-trainer models every step of the way. That's Not Cool hosted a summit for youth leaders and adults provide technical advice and other resources to support ongoing engagement efforts.

Another example of youth-engaged violence prevention is an initiative in Alaska titled Lead On! Lead On! hosts an annual youth leadership conference to empower youth to make change, with a focus on building skills and confidence. The project then provides mini-grants and technical assistance to young people and supports them in creating plans to change their own communities and ultimately promote peace, respect, and equality. Instead of being given project topics, youth select what they are passionate about, and often decide on projects that link addressing violence to other issues in their community. Lead On! links youth with adult mentors in their communities that can support these youth-led projects.

- B. Supporting youth leadership facilitates more intentional connections to intersecting social justice movements and culture change.** Too often “youth” are clumped into a very broad category that doesn't adequately acknowledge the intersectionality of young people's lives. Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

has found connecting young people to their elders and culture builds pride and encourages community engagement. Many young people are interested in activism and want to work on sexual and domestic violence as it relates to intersecting movements

*“The movement has to be more intentional in not silo-ing the work from other social justice movements.”*

**Eleanor Davis**

Futures Without Violence

for racial justice, environmental justice, and immigration reform, often using social media and other technology to organize national networks for social change. Supporting youth leadership builds a stronger, multigenerational community of practice. Youth as a whole demonstrate care for where they live and the people around them, and seek and need healthy relationships across generations, including siblings, parents, elders, and other community members. To build a stronger community of practice, there is a true need for adults and communities to make space for and value the voices and leadership of young people. This can include

## ENGAGING YOUTH IN SHAPING STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS TO PREVENT SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

training adults on how to be allies, compensating young people for their work, and supporting work that crosses issues and movements.

- C. Supporting youth leadership builds a stronger, multigenerational community of practice.** Youth as a whole demonstrate care for where they live and the people around them, and seek and need healthy relationships across generations, including siblings, parents, elders, and other community members. To build a stronger community of practice, there is a true need for adults and communities to make space for and value the voices and leadership of young people. This can include training adults on how to be allies, compensating young people for their work, and supporting work that crosses issues and movements.

*“When I am an elder I want to know the cycle of salmon, not the cycle of violence.”*

**Tia Kanuk**  
Bethel, Alaska

## RESOURCES

- [Web Conference Link](#)
- [Web Conference Slides](#)
- [That's Not Cool](#)
- [Stand Up Speak Up Alaska](#)
- [Talk Now Talk Often Alaska](#)
- [Alaska Network on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault](#)