

# Reconnecting Youth (RY) Fact Sheet

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**Program Development** RY was developed supported by grants from NIDA, NIMH & DOE (1985-1995) at the University of Washington School of Nursing, RY Prevention Research Project.

**Program Goals**

1. Increased (↑) school achievement
2. Decreased (↓) drug involvement
3. Decreased (↓) suicide risk

**Brief Description of the Program** RY is a school-based indicated prevention program for young people in middle and high school who are at risk for school dropout, drug involvement, anger/aggression, depression and/or suicidal behavior. Key features of the program include:

- **Skills training**, with a focus on building self-esteem, setting/monitoring goals, decision making, personal control, and interpersonal communication.
- A small-group context of **adult and peer support**, to enhance the personal and social protective factors of high risk youth.
- A **school system crisis response plan** that includes both school and community-based strategies and resources.
- **Parent involvement**, including active parental consent, support of RY goals, and awareness of school/community support resources for teens & families.
- **Social activities and school bonding** to foster healthy choices in friends and an increased repertoire of fun, safe, drug-free activities.

**RY Outcomes** Youth participating in RY evidenced the following:

↑ **Mood Management**

- Reductions in depression & hopelessness
- Declines in anger-control problems
- Reductions in hard drug use

↑ **Drug Use Control**

- Reductions in drug-use control problems & adverse drug-use consequences

↑ **School Achievement**

- Increases in GPA in all classes
- Decreases in dropout rates
- Increases in credits earned per semester

↑ **Protective Factors**

- Increases in positive connections with teachers, friends & family
- Increases in personal control

**Critical Elements to Successful Implementation and Program Fidelity**

RY is a **school-based, semester-long class**

- offered for *credit and a grade*;
- delivered as part of the students' regular school schedule;
- essential is the *small group format* with a 1:10-12 teacher-to-student ratio;
- students *are invited* to participate; they must choose to participate; and
- random assignment leads to diverse representation: different grade levels, ages, genders, risk factors, and levels of school connectedness.

**RY Leaders are chosen** from those who excel in building positive interpersonal relationships with high-risk youth and express a **strong desire** to work with these youth.

A 4-day **training** is highly recommended for all RY Leaders.

A 1-day follow-up **advanced training** is recommended for RY Coordinators.

An **online tutorial** provides an overview for Administrators where RY is implemented.

**RY Program Honors and Awards**

- "First Annual Report on School Safety" by the White House as top-tier
- A+ on "Safe Schools, Safe Students: A Guide to Violence Prevention Strategies"
- Selected as a Model Program by SAMSHA and a Promising Program by SPRC
- Acclaimed by NIDA, the US Department of Education, and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention as an evidence-based indicated prevention program.

**For program information and training/curriculum ordering arrangements contact:**

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