

Core Four Youth Coalition Survey

As part of the Texas Youth Action Network (TYAN) Collaborative, the Core Four Partnership Regional Pod created and distributed two needs assessment surveys to better understand the gaps in resources for our Greater San Marcos Area youth and young adults aged 11-24. The intention of gathering this information is to assist local agencies and organizations understand what services youth are most interested in.

The *Youth Coalition Working Group (YCWG)* consisted of the following groups: Students Opportunities for Applied Research (SOAR), Student Support Services Association, Greater San Marcos Youth Council, Star Teens at the San Marcos Public Library, San Marcos Housing Authority Teen Program, and the Core Four Partnership Youth Task Force. This group worked collectively to meet the goals set by Texas Youth Action Network.



Project Goals & Benchmarks

The project began in June 2023 and concluded in May 2024. Three phases were established to help meet the benchmarks set by Texas Youth Action Network. **Phase I** was the creation of the Youth Coalition Working Group. **Phase II** focused on the creation, distribution, and analysis of the survey to inform our Youth Fest. **Phase III** focuses on recruiting new members to expand the YCWP with the goal to review and prioritize activities based on the feedback from the needs assessment.

1. Establish a working group consisting of 5 Youth Adult Partnerships

2. Complete a Community Needs Assessment

3. Create goals and activities that would meet the goals set by the coalition working group

Survey Creation & Distribution

The SOAR Program created two surveys with the focus on gathering information on how existing services impact youth and young adult's mental health, sense of community, and career readiness. One survey focused on youth/young adults (11-24) and Texas State University students (18-24) while the other focused on surveying parents of Greater San Marcos Area youth and stakeholders such as local policy makers and organizations that serve youth. The survey was distributed through the YCWG as well as the Core Four Partnership entities.

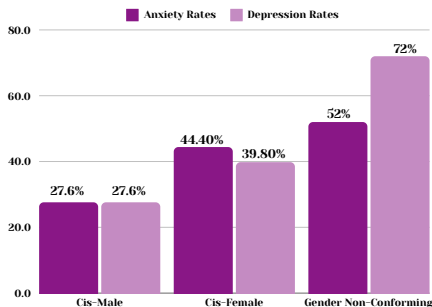
After an excellent response rate, a follow up group discussion was hosted to discuss the results of the survey. The data represented in the charts shows participant responses. Participants were not required to answer all questions, could choose more than one answer on some questions, and were free to respond to those they felt comfortable with.

619 Youth/Young Adult & TXST Student Responses

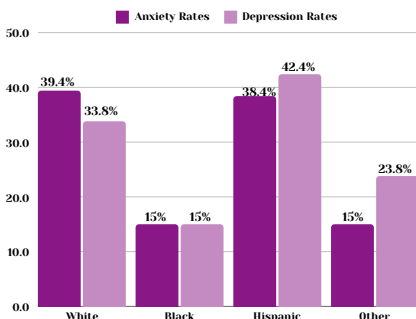
135 Parent & Stakeholder Responses

Finding: Anxiety & Depression

Anxiety/Depression Rates in Y/YA Across Gender Identity



Anxiety/Depression Rates in Y/YA Across Race

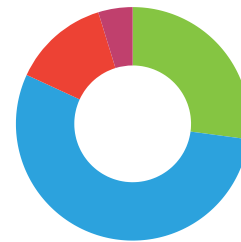


Youth were asked to respond to national questions used to score depression (PHQ9) and anxiety (GAD7). While we were unable to survey everyone, and therefore cannot say that this data represents all youth within the surrounding area, the data suggest that a considerable amount of respondents experience clinical levels of depression and/or anxiety.

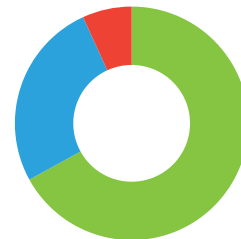
2.95 is the average rating across all groups when asked to rate youth mental health on a scale from 1, being poor, to 5, being excellent.

The anxiety and depression rates reported from the survey are similar to the national averages. It is especially important to note that Hispanic youth and gender non-confirming youth experience higher rates for screening positive for depression and/or anxiety.

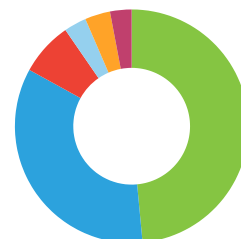
Respondent Demographics



- Groups Surveyed**
- 205 TXST
 - 414 Youth/Young Adult
 - 101 Parents
 - 36 Stakeholders



- Gender**
- 343 Cisgender Female
 - 134 Cisgender Male
 - 35 Gender Non-Conforming*
- *includes transgender, non-binary, etc.



- Race/Ethnicity**
- 374 Hispanic
 - 266 White
 - 57 Black
 - 24 American Indian/Alaska Native
 - 27 Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander
 - 23 Other

Finding: Community Belonging

Youth/Young Adult Respondents (n=414)			
	Matter In	Belong In	Feel Safe In
City	28.8%	33.5%	43.7%
School	28.8%	19.9%	18.9%
Extracurriculars	29.4%	29.7%	24.8%
Online Communities	13.0%	16.8%	12.6%
None of the Above	22.2%	23.9%	23.4%

Texas State Students (n=205)			
	Matter In	Belong In	Feel Safe In
City	20.6%	25.8%	30.3%
School	34.9%	34.9%	35.1%
Extracurriculars	36.5%	32.3%	29.3%
Online Communities	7.9%	7.0%	5.3%
None of the Above	7.8%	9.3%	8.3%

Across all youth surveyed, there is a higher sense of mattering, belonging, and safety within the city, school, and extracurricular (spaces such as clubs, sports, and organizations) compared to online communities. However, the None of the Above category also presented high percentages which can indicate that our youth are feeling socially distant. Social distance is a strong predictor to poor mental health. Additionally, people who screen for depression and anxiety are more likely to perceive spaces as unsafe. This provides an opportunity for communities to create events that foster a Hays county resident identity as a way to combat social distancing and overall help youth improve their mental health.

"I like playing sports so I use the Rec Center... We also branch out and make a bunch of friends... I made my friends that I hang out with sometimes like on the weekends to go out with them."

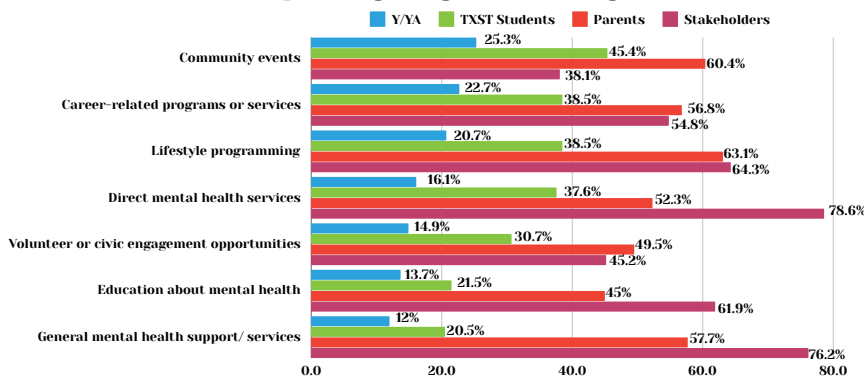
Finding: Social Media Usage

The survey found that social media is a large component of youth's lives, reporting that at least 89% of youth and young adults and 68% of Texas State students use social media at least once day. Community partners can use these platforms to exposing students to different resources and programs aimed to build a sense of community.



Finding: Event & Programming Interest

Expanding Program Offerings



There are clear differences in what youth and young adults are interested in and what parents and stakeholders believe should be expanded. The data gathered in regard to expanding programs and events offered to the local youth show us the need for their voices to be heard in these decisions.

Finding: Coping Strategies

When creating programming centered around youth/ young adults and TXST students consider incorporating activities that encourage movement, outdoor exploration and welcome family engagement.

Among activities such as counseling, healthy eating, spiritual or religious practices/activities, medication, meditation/mindfulness, and yoga, the survey found that our youth were able to cope by talking to family/friends, exercise and spending time in nature.



Recommendations

About 1 in 3 Youth and Young Adults feel socially distant, which may lead to depression and anxiety.



Community focused activities are important to help combat feeling socially distant.

Basic needs, such as safety and access to healthy food, are not being met across the age groups. This impacts depression and anxiety rates amongst the youth.



These should be priority areas for the Youth Coalition Working Group and other organizations that work with youth.

Youth and Young Adults are interested in community events, lifestyle programs, career planning, and academic support services.



New events and programming should focus on these areas in create ways that build community, foster safety, and provide access to safe foods.

For more information head over to <https://www.communityaction.com/youthservices>