

Worcester Department of Public Health



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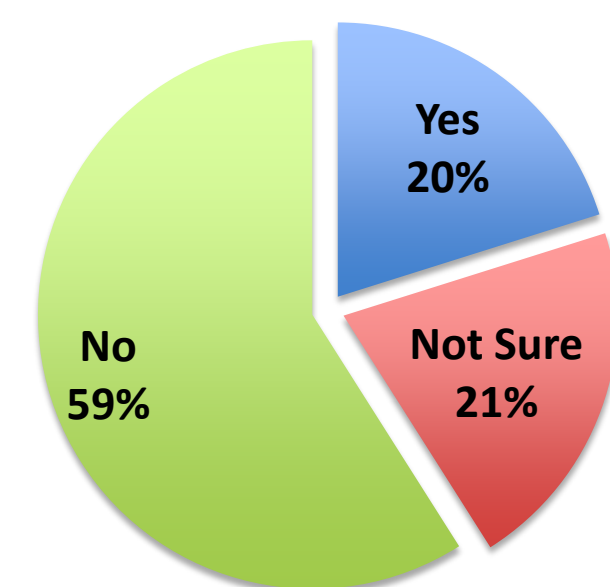
The Program: Youth Connect is a free, drop-in based summer program for 11-15 year old youth in Worcester. The program runs in the evening 5 nights a week and provides transportation to and from, activities, and a meal. In addition to things like dance class and basketball, YouthConnect embeds relationship education, substance use prevention, mental health counseling, nutrition, and more. Support for YouthConnect comes from many great organizations, including the Department of Public Health.

Goals: As an intern at the DPH, my job was to assist in coordinating the efforts of various groups, design and purchase YouthConnect materials, and create evaluation tools for the program.

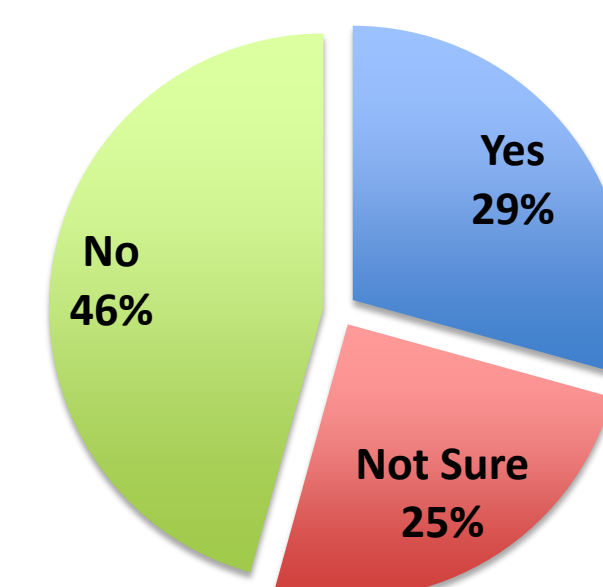
Power Source: Power Source is a curriculum that focuses on eliminating barriers to a successful and happy life. Topics include taking responsibility, anger management, who to trust, and avoiding risky behavior. My first project was to make weekly evaluations for a small group that will complete one Power Source lesson a week this summer.

Healthy Relationships: YouthConnect works hard to provide relationship education to its participants. Every Wednesday boys and girls are separated for the night and special programming is provided. With the goal of quality improvement, I designed and implemented a survey at the start of the program to quantify baseline attitudes. The questionnaire consisted of 10 hypothetical situations and asked participants to decide whether the situation was acceptable or not.

Is it ok if a boyfriend/girlfriend says you don't need other friends if you love them?



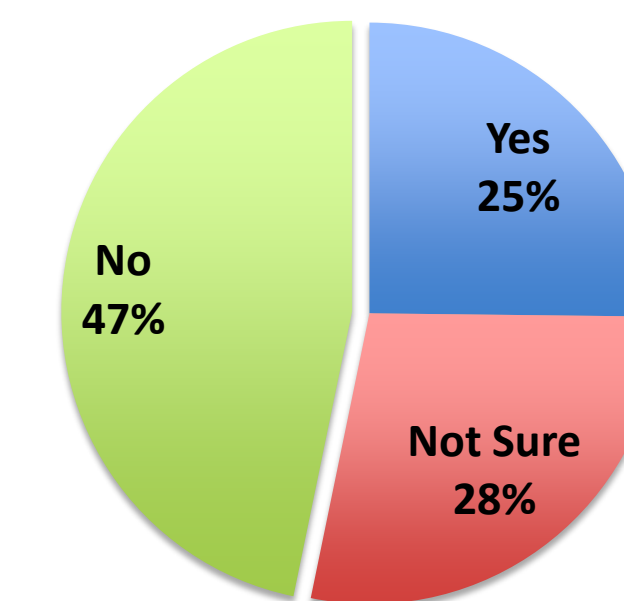
Is it ok if a boyfriend/girlfriend makes you ask permission to do what you want?



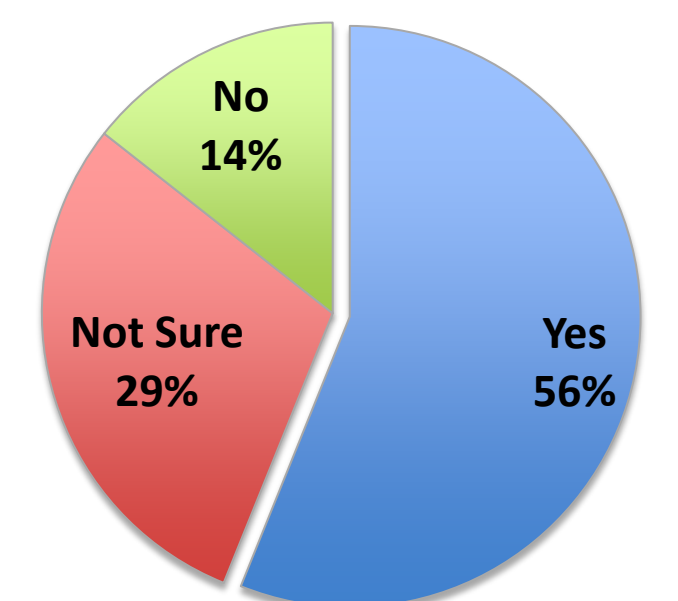
Results: Compiled answers from 140 surveys definitely support the need for the current relationship education done at YouthConnect. Below are a few of the responses (see pie charts).

Next Year: In the future, it is the hope that this will help YouthConnect with quality improvement, both as a indicator of how much special programming is needed and what attitudes to target.

Is it ok if a boyfriend/girlfriend says you couldn't make it without them?



Is it ok if a boyfriend/girlfriend chooses to spend a lot of time with their family?



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