

NORTHWEST + CENTRAL VT PREVENTION NETWORK

MEETING NOTES

August 14, 2025

10:00 – 11:30am

Meeting Goal

Providing an opportunity for people and organizations across Northwest and Central Vermont to come together to share information, make connections, and explore opportunities related to prevention of substance misuse and promoting wellbeing in our communities.

Partner Updates

Paul M, NE-HIDTA: Registration is now open for the 2025 Youth Prevention Institute, hosted by New England HIDTA in partnership with ADAPT, the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative, and the New England Prevention Technology Transfer Center. **September 15th & 16th in Manchester, NH** <https://www.hidta.org/event/new-england-hidta-youth-prevention-institute/>

Mary P, Prevention Consultant: 33rd Annual New England School of Best Practices in Addiction Services, **August 25-29** <https://web.cvent.com/event/57607a36-6a31-4b88-adfe-794e8df7aa5f/websitePage:e71aa38d-1315-42f1-bf9a-25fd3d111877>

Amy Brewer, Franklin Grand Isle Tobacco Coalition: Final count for cigarette butt clean up this year: **29,222 cigarette butts**, which is on par with last year

Adrienne, UWNWVT: Second Annual Vermont Nonprofit Summit on **November 4th** in South Burlington. <https://commongoodvt.org/vermont-nonprofit-summit/>.

Christie H: Raving for Recovery benefiting Turning Point Center on **August 23rd 4-8pm City Hall Park**. Seeing a lot of community support <https://turningpointcentervt.org/raving-for-recovery/>. Also, recently started a Fathers in Recovery led-group at Turning Point.

Mark Hughes: 1st African Landing Day is **August 23rd at Roosevelt Park and Richard Kemp Center**. Still have tabling available and highly recommend reading about [First African Landing Day](#) if you have not already done so (volunteer link on the site to sign up for tabling) <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/vermont-commemoration-of-first-african-landing-day-tickets-1512200294789?aff=oddtcreator>

Marcus A: Will be tabling outside of Crunch Fitness next week, focus on the fitness community and prevention, want to connect with others on this.

Kelly Hayes, Building Bright Futures. **October 16th** Summit. Focus is substance use disorder and how it affects children/families. In Montpelier 10am – 2:30. <https://www.buildingbrightfutures.org/event/regional-council-statewide-summit/>



NORTHWEST + CENTRAL VT PREVENTION NETWORK

Backbone Update

This year's Prevention Summit is on **Wednesday, October 8**, 9am – 3:30pm at IDX Drive in South Burlington. We will have a registration form and info ready by next week.

Camille wrapped up her service on Monday! We are happy to share that she will be staying in the area. We are thankful for her work over the past year.

Partner Highlight: Abdirisak (ISAK) Maalin from [United Immigrant and Refugee Communities of VT](#) (UIRC)

Sometimes you have to know the culture in order to understand the problems within the community.

About the Project: Resilient Futures is a culture trailer prevent program funded by United Way of Northwest VT.

Our goals of this project:

- Prevent Substance misuse among immigrant and refugee youth.
- Increase protective factors through community connection.
- We promote health and coping skills and family engagement:
 - Most of Women we engage in this program are through my colleague Maryann. Most of the cultures we engage the mothers are more involved in the lives of the kids than the fathers.
- Reduce stigma around mental health and wellness

2024 Substance Misuse Prevention Highlights:

- Reached 50+ Youth, Parents, and other Community
- Held 6 youth sessions and 3 caregiver sessions:
 - We have these sessions with youth with the approach of telling to be safe with substances. Even though it is frowned upon in for example the Somali community.
- Partnered with local providers and community leaders
 - Engaging organizations that have better capacity than we do and have the experience necessary to support our community members

One thing that we learned is that language access is very critical and for people to trust and especially those communities that are not from here. For example, you can't communicate with them effectively if you don't have someone from that community going with you.



NORTHWEST + CENTRAL VT PREVENTION NETWORK

Families want to be involved, they like events to be held on weekends, or later in the day. Another thing we learned is there is still a big stigma around mental health which is a major barrier. Let's say someone who needs an interpreter and has an appointment and one of the topics is to do with mental health, they don't want to deal with anybody from the community. They don't want anyone from their community to know that they are dealing with any mental health issues. That's still something we are building trust around the community so that we can provide the language service.

Looking ahead:

We want to strengthen our partnerships by expanding outreach like this network and sharing about the work we are doing and connecting with you all.

Launch quarterly wellness events, train community mentors in culturally responsive engagement so they know when to press harder or go lighter

Thank your continued support. I am happy to take questions and recommendations.

Discussion and Questions

Marcus: Thank you for the presentation and that was very informative. I want to engage with some of these programs both for my organizations and my personal time and maybe make recommendations for migrant mentors that I know in the community that I've worked with in the past that I think would be really strong for the program and I am just curious who should I connect people with. I know some folks that would be interested.

-Abdirizak: you can connect them with me I will provide my email in the chat and we can go from there. We started in started in 2023 and we are very new and are always learning.

-Marcus and Abdirizak want to connect and share information:

Question from Stefani: What do you use for your resource connection, referral pathways or word of mouth.

-Abdirizak: we do word of mouth referrals as its one of the best things out there we do have our own website and a referral form that someone can fill out information and send it to us and we go from there. There is also a contact form on the website that folks can use to connect with us.

Amy: Are you seeing any trends with the young people what trends you are seeing? Is there a specific reason or just broad that young people are using.

-Abdirizak: Most of them start as an experimentally, peer pressure, some of them use it but not just for themselves but also to make a business out of it which is why we wanted to involve law enforcement.



NORTHWEST + CENTRAL VT PREVENTION NETWORK

What substances are you seeing most?
Alcohol is what we are seeing most.

Mark: Thank you, I appreciate the presentation. The website looks really good so I don't think you are giving yourself enough credit over there. The services you are providing and everything on there makes sense. It makes sense in terms of just all the things that black folks will need in other marginalized communities underserved communities want to try to pull together all the way down to mental health and it just makes sense all the way across the board. and I love the way you delineated from Migrant from Refugee resettlement communities folks and that I got that from Ali Dieng one day when he was hanging out over here with me. The other bridge that we are working on is bridging the indigenous African American community too so I am looking forward to connecting and partnering with you. Especially from the Racial Justice Alliance perspective on a policy level and so there's more and I am sure that the Richard Kemp Center probably will want to link up with you too on a few things. At the end of the day there's a lot to be said when black people come together. I'm pretty impressed with what it is you got going on and I just want to publicly compliment you and also just let you know I am really looking forward to working with you and the folks you have over there. Thank you for all of the work that you do.

Christine Hughes, Richard Kemp Center

Christine: Unfortunately I can't share my screen for some reason but I'd be happy to share for 5-10 minutes and then come back another month. *Christine will present next month*

Highlights from the Richard Kemp Center

Some of the things that are coming up, Mark already mentioned, First African Landing Day (8/23). The Richard Kemp Center will be open that day as wellness zone. I should back up a bit, I am the Director of the Richard Kemp Center and I've been there for a couple of years. I've been in this community for most of my life and came here from New York with my family, I've done a lot of human service work and employment work for different communities like people with disabilities and folks that are returning to community from prison. I worked for Howard and Spectrum, that's a kind of my background. So the Richard Kemp Center will be open on the First African landing day on the 23rd is kind of like a wellness zone and so I would encourage folks to visit us there and will share the link in the chat. We are at 372 North Winooski Avenue across from the Community Health Center.

We are a cultural empowerment center that came out of the work of the Vermont Racial Justice Alliance's wellness working group. That's a bit about who we are. We have an annual event coming up in October that is our Back in School Block Party. While everybody is doing a back to school thing, we decided that we would wait and do a back in school, so like maybe a



NORTHWEST + CENTRAL VT PREVENTION NETWORK

month at the beginning of the school year, we shut down the street on the side of the Richard Kemp Center and have a bounce castle, music, food and all that kind of stuff. This year we have been working with Juniper Creative, and we are hoping to kick off a community mural project that is going to cover the wall that's all been tagged up. If you are familiar with Juniper Creative. They are an amazing Mural Husband and Wife team. We did get part of the funds raised through an arts council grant recently and we are excited about that. I will say the Richard Kemp Center was named after my father Richard Kemp who was a Major Social Justice Advocate in Burlington.

Another thing that's been exciting is that over the last three years we have taken a group of families and youth to the National Museum African American History and Culture in DC. We have been able to do that with incredible support in the community. It is a fund-raising effort that has a lot of exciting around it every year. We were a little nervous about everything going on this past year with the current administration and DC, so we were thrilled to make it happen again.

We just finished up a summer activities program and free lunch program that starts at lunch time and for a lot of families it didn't meet their needs of fulltime care for the day. That is something we have been doing over the summers, and we hope to continue that. We got things like passes from the Echo center, which is a great place to take kids, spent some time at CCTV and learned about TV Production.

I'd love to present this slide deck and if I could follow with you Mahat about setting this up on teams and getting this presented at another meeting that would be great. That's it for now. Thank you!

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Next month's meeting: September 11th, 2025, 10-11:30am

Training on the CADCA's 7 Strategies for Community Change with Jess Bickford

