

NATIONAL RUNAWAY PREVENTION MONTH 2017

Toolkit and Messaging Guide

Presented by the National Runaway Safeline



They Support. They Listen. They Care.

NATIONAL RUNAWAY PREVENTION MONTH

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Introduction

About National Runaway Prevention Month

National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM) is spearheaded each year by the National Runaway Safeline (NRS), the federally designated communication system for runaway and homeless youth, the National Network for Youth (NN4Y) with the support of the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB). The goals of NRPM are two-fold:

1. To raise awareness of the runaway and homeless youth crisis and the issues that these young people face.
2. To educate the public about solutions and the role they can play in ending youth homelessness.

NRPM began in October of 2002. President Bush hosted the landmark White House Conference on Exploited and Runaway Children, where leaders from across the country convened to discuss issues and challenges related to the runaway and homeless youth crisis. What was once known as National Runaway Prevention Week was thus expanded into a month-long prevention and awareness campaign.

Over the years, members of Congress have taken steps to commemorate National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM); supporting and recognizing its goals and ideals by introducing both House and Senate Resolutions. Proud sponsors of NRPM resolutions have included Rep. Judy Biggert (R-IL), Rep. Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), Rep. Jon Porter (R-NV), Rep. Steve Israel (D-NY), Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA), Sen. Susan Collins (R- ME), Sen. Orrin Hatch (R- UT), Sen. Richard Shelby (R-AL) and Sen. Blanche Lincoln (D-AK).

The theme of NRPM 2017 is “Friends Helping Friends.” A friend is there to support, listen and care. They can come in the form of teachers, mentors, peers, service providers, or even family members. The National Runaway Safeline is here 24/7 to be a friend and support for youth in crisis. This theme is designed to recognize the role key people play in the lives of at-risk youth. Our goal is to unite all communities together to help support youth as they navigate their world. How can you be a friend or how you can be a caring adult, or how communities can build safety nets to support vulnerable youth?

About This Guide

According to the Office of Juvenile Justice for Delinquency Prevention (2002)¹ and the Research Triangle Institute (1995)², between 1.6 and 2.8 million youth run away in a year. If all of these young people lived in one city, it would be the fifth largest city in the United States. These numbers are unacceptable, particularly when we consider the fact that many of these young people will end up on the streets. These are not bad kids; they are good kids in bad situations. By supporting National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM), you are showing America's runaway and homeless youth that they are not invisible and they are not alone.

This toolkit, designed and distributed by the National Runaway Safeline (NRS) with the support of the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), is intended to serve as a resource for organizations, agencies, businesses, schools, individuals, etc. who wish to participate in NRPM. Community participation is the key to NRPM's success. For each community, organization, school, and person involved in NRPM, we become that much closer to ending youth homelessness. This guide is broken into four sections: 9 easy ways to make a difference during NRPM, events and activities, fundraising, and getting the word out.



Staff at NRS wearing green in honor of 'wear green day' 2014.

¹ Hammer, H., Finkelhor, D., & Sedlak, A. J. (2002). Runaway/Throwaway Children: National Estimates and Characteristics (NCJ 196469). National Incident Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Throwaway Children.

² Greene, J. (1995). Youth with Runaway, Throwaway, and Homeless Experiences: Prevalence, Drug Use, and Other At-Risk Behaviors. Research Triangle Institute. HHS. ACF - ACYF.

9 Easy Ways to Make a Difference during NRPM

Planning a successful campaign doesn't have to involve a huge campaign budget or a major national organization. Here are 10 easy activities to raise awareness in your community.



Agencies around the country getting involved with NRPM

- 1.) **Participate in one of the nationwide NRPM events:** Check out our list of national events on page 9.
 - a. Host a candlelight vigil,
 - b. Participate in a social media campaign, or
 - c. Organize a 'wear green' day.
- 2.) **Participate in a local event:** Contact a local youth services agency to see what they have planned for NRPM. If there are no service providers in your community, work with a local library or community center to plan your own event. If you need assistance planning your event, please email Lindsey Kahney at Lkahney@1800RUNAWAY.org
- 3.) **Host a book club or movie night:** Through collaboration with the NRPM task force and NRS' Youth Activist League, we have compiled a list of media relevant to NRPM. Click [here](#) for suggestions for movies, books, songs, and other pieces of media salient to NRPM.

- 4.) **Host a fundraiser:** Organize a fundraiser at your office, place of worship, school, or social club. A list of fundraising ideas can be found on page 10 of this toolkit. The funds collected can be donated to a local RHY program or a local youth serving organization in your community.
- 5.) **Develop a "runaway" display:** Get permission from your local library, public building, bank, or other businesses to display free promotional materials in their lobby. Materials could include brochures about NRS and the runaway issue, bookmarks, pencils, and wallet cards. [Order free materials](#) online to distribute in your display.
- 6.) **Create an e-Campaign:** Tell your online contacts about NRPM by adding the following message to your e-mail signature or social media network:
"November is National Runaway Prevention Month! Get involved today by visiting 1800RUNAWAY.org."
- 7.) **Write an op-ed:** Submit an op-ed to your local newspaper, highlighting the importance of NRPM. Tips on [writing an op-ed](#).
- 8.) **Adopt National Runaway Prevention Month:** Ask your local school student council, sports team, or other extracurricular group to "adopt" National Runaway Prevention Month this year. Distribute posters, wallet cards, and other materials in your school, mall, or community center.
- 9.) **Facilitate an activity from the *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum*:** You can download this free resource off of 1800RUNAWAY.org. Take a look at the Weekly Guide (pages 15-22) to see the recommended *Let's Talk* activity for the week. The *Let's Talk Curriculum* is available in English and Spanish.

Events and Activities

Planning a local event or activity or participating in a national activity are great ways to show your support for NRPM and to spread awareness amongst your friends, family, and community.

Suggested Events and Activities

- 1.) **Green Light Project:** The Green Light Project is a cornerstone of National Runaway Prevention Month, and getting involved is as easy as flipping a switch! Secure a landmark or building to be lit green in November. Also participate in 'Wear Green' Day.
- 2.) **Community Presentation:** Deliver a presentation to a community group (schools, civic groups, faith based organizations, etc.) on the problem of youth running away and the resources available. [Order free NRS promotional materials](#) to hand out at presentations.
- 3.) **Develop a "runaway display":** Develop a display of [statistics](#) and [promotional materials](#) that viewers can "take-away" (i.e. bookmarks, brochures), and get permission to set up your information in a busy public area. You might try a public building, a business establishment, or a state / county fair. Contact the National Runaway Safeline to [order free promotional materials](#) to distribute at your runaway display. Make sure to include information about our *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum*.
- 4.) **Invite the public to hear local experts:** Host a general forum for youth, parents, service providers and other stakeholders in runaway prevention. Invite expert guest speakers to present information at the forum – your experts could be representatives from service providers, city agencies, and/or youth.
- 5.) **Involve your local politicians:** Invite a local politician (mayor, city councilperson, congressman, etc.) to attend your event. Having a respected local dignitary in attendance can increase the credibility of your event, and bring you additional press coverage.
- 6.) **Partner with a [local program serving runaway and homeless youth \(RHY\)](#)** as featured on the FYSB website.

Green Light Project

The Green Light Project is the symbol for National Runaway Prevention Month, and getting involved is as easy as flipping a switch, securing a landmark or building to be lit with green light in November, and/or participating in 'Wear Green' Day.

- 1.) Plan a green light event/ceremony and purchase and distribute green light bulbs in your community. Green light bulbs are available at most local hardware stores.
- 2.) Participate in a Green Light Project event by securing a landmark or building in your community to be lit green in November.
- 3.) Create green awareness ribbons and distribute them to local government officials and/or local businesses.
- 4.) Join groups across the country to wear green on Wednesday, November 8th or choose your own day to wear as an office, school, sports team, social club, Greek organization, service organization, etc. Take a group picture* and put it on your social media platform with the hashtags **#NRPM2017** and **#endyouthhomelessness**

****Tell NRS about your Project - We want to hear about your Green Light Project! Connect to us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram with #NRPM2017 and #endyouthhomelessness to share your green light goals, successes, set-backs, and results.***



Past NRPM partners who organized a walk

NRPM National Events

Check out our list (below) to see the calendar and descriptions for NRPM's national events. Weekly events (two online events, two "in real life" events) will take place on each Wednesday in November:

1). November 1st: Facebook Profile Picture. Lately, the trend on Facebook is to add a filter to your profile picture to show that you support a certain cause and spread awareness. This year, we are creating a filter that we will share closer to the date in order for you, your organization and followers to be able to participate.

2). Wednesday, November 8th: 'Wear Green' Day. Most people have something green in their closet; whether it be a t-shirt, tie, pair of socks, etc. Coordinate a 'wear green' day with your friends, coworkers, students, and/or classmates on November 8th. This is a fun and easy way to get people to learn more about NRPM. For added impact, take a photo of your group wearing green and post it to social media with the hashtag **#NRPM2017**. Tag NRS and we will share your photo!

3). Wednesday, November 15th: National Candlelight Vigil. Youth service agencies, community groups, and individuals will be hosting candlelight vigils to show solidarity with youth in crisis. Host your own candlelight vigil in your neighborhood. We are encouraging people to pick a spot that may be unique or special to your city. Perhaps there is a mural, community center, or town sign that you can meet at. This event is low cost and high impact.

4). Wednesday, November 22nd: Selfie Sign Day. On this day, our website, 1800RUNAWAY.org will have a 'Selfie Sign' available for agencies to download. The sign will show you are supporting NRPM 2017, but we are also encouraging everyone to use the caption "This is how I have helped a friend..." and have everyone share a story of how they have helped a friend.



Our partners at Greyhound Lines, Inc. participating in 'Wear Green' Day

NRPM Fundraising*

*Want to support NRPM by organizing a fundraiser? Not sure how to get started?
Check out our tips and ideas.*

Tips on organizing a fundraiser

- 1.) **Know your audience:** Do your friends love to be outdoors, or do they prefer a night at the pub? Think of an activity that your friends/ family/ coworkers already enjoy and use it as a way to raise funds. For example, someone whose friends love throwing dinner parties could host an NRPM dinner party, with a suggested donation and green decorations.
- 2.) **Make it tangible:** Asking people to do something specific is more motivating than just asking for “donations.” For example, asking your coworkers to all pack lunch on a certain day and give what they would have spent on lunch at a restaurant.
- 3.) **Never underestimate the power of social media:** While in-person events are a lot of fun, online ‘events’ may be more convenient for supporters. For example, announce to your friends and followers that if they are able to collectively raise \$100 in donations, you will post embarrassing photos of yourself from middle school. Fun activities like this are more actionable and memorable.
- 4.) **Tie the event to the issue:** Organizing a fun event or challenge will draw people in, but relating it back to the cause will provide extra motivation for people to participate. In your invitations, you can cite statistics about runaway and homeless youth or include quotes from one of the books or movies in our media guide. Reminding people where their money will go is important.
- 5.) **Show gratitude:** Thank everyone who participates, at least once. Handwritten thank you notes are a way to go the extra mile.

**SIDENOTE: If you choose to conduct an NRPM fundraiser, donations can be made to the National Runaway Safeline or a [local program providing services for runaway and homeless youth \(RHY\)](#) for general operations support.*

Getting the Word Out

An important part of NRPM is making sure we all get the word out about NRPM and its goals, as well as the projects, events, and activities that are planned during November. In this section we have put together various tips and resources to help with effectively communicating to the public about NRPM.

Talking Points

Want to get the word out about NRPM and runaway and homeless youth but not sure where to start? We have compiled some easily referenced talking points.

- 1.) The theme of NRPM 2017 is “Friends Helping Friends.” A friend is there is support, listen and care. They can come in the form of teachers, mentors, peers, or even family members. The National Runaway Safeline is here 24/7 to be a friend and support for youth in crisis. This theme is designed to recognize the role key people play in the lives of at-risk youth. Our goal is to unite all communities together to help support youth as they navigate their world. How can you be a friend? How you can be a caring adult?
- 2.) Runaway and homeless youth are not ‘bad kids,’ they are typically good kids caught in bad situations.
- 3.) Runaway and homeless youth are not limited to urban environments. There are runaway and homeless youth in every community: urban, suburban, and rural.
- 4.) Runaway and homeless youth often do not look like the stereotype of an adult homeless person. They often try to hide their situation and therefore the issue remains invisible.
- 5.) Young people on the street are often perceived as ‘bad kids’ if/ when they engage in risky behaviors. The reality is that many of these young people do not engage in these behaviors until they are already on the streets, and only do so for survival or to cope.
- 6.) The runaway and homeless youth crisis is a solvable problem.
- 7.) The public can help runaway and homeless youth by connecting them with evidence-based services, such as NRS.
- 8.) There is a positive return on investment (ROI) for those willing to invest in ending youth homelessness. Helping a young person before they turn to a lifetime on the streets saves society money in social programs, medical expenses, law enforcement, and other costs.

Social Media

Being a part of NRPM can be as easy as a click, a 'like,' a 'share' or a retweet. NRS' social media pages are a great resource to stay informed about youth issues. Throughout November, we will be disseminating data, stories, and other useful information about the runaway and homeless youth crisis. We will also be coordinating two social media 'events,' (see our list of NRPM national events for more information) on Wednesday, November 1st and Wednesday, November 22nd. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) to stay in the loop!

Remember that throughout the month of November if you share any pictures or information about NRPM events on social media please use the hashtags **#NRPM2017** and **#endyouthhomelessness**

Media and Art

While data is crucial to understanding different issue areas, peoples' stories are what move us. To get people to understand the issues faced by youth in crisis on an emotional level, we have put together a list of books, movies, TV shows, and various media that effectively convey the stories of these young people. Want to get your friends and family involved in NRPM? Why not host a book club or movie night with one of the books or movies from our list? You can download the list at 1800runaway.org/runaway-prevention-month.

NRPM Messaging Guide

About this Guide

This messaging guide is not intended to give parameters or limits to National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM) partner agencies' and task force members' content during the month of November. Instead, it is intended to serve as a resource that allows participating agencies to easily access content during each week day in November. The National Runaway Safeline (NRS) will be following this editorial calendar in terms of themes and content, but may have additional content throughout the month. This guide contains key pieces of messaging for NRPM and also day-to-day suggestions for content.

Structure of the Weekly Guide

This weekly guide is arranged by week, then by day. The guide covers days Monday through Friday. The themes are as follows (in order):

Introduction / abuse, trafficking, system involved youth, and LGBTQ youth.

The idea behind the guide is to have the messaging flow and build on itself, rather than being piecemeal. The overall setup of the guide is as follows:

Monday

Mondays are devoted to introducing audiences to that week's focus. We will introduce the audience through statistics and trends. Mondays will tend to be data-heavy.

We will also highlight a module activity from the *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum* during this time, giving agencies and community partners another resource to utilize during the week.

Tuesday

Tuesdays are meant to connect the issue addressed to other issues affecting youth. For example, 'youth living on the street who have been abused in the past are more likely to be victimized on the street.' Tuesdays are about framing the issues within a greater context, exploring consequences, and making people understand *why* they should care about the issue at hand.

Wednesday

On Wednesdays, the content is designed to let people know how they can get involved in the short-term, by highlighting upcoming events and ongoing NRPM social media campaigns.

Thursday

Thursdays are designed to put faces and stories to the 'issues.' Through telling stories from each agency, promoting pieces of media that address the issue being discussed, and asking people to share their own stories, we are humanizing complex issues, further making the public understand *why* they should care.

Friday

Fridays are focused on long-term involvement. National and local agencies will use the momentum built during the week to get people involved as donors, volunteers, and advocates.

Week One: Introduction and Focus on Abuse (10/30 – 11/03)

Monday 10/30

- Between 1.6 and 2.8 million youth run away in a year.
- 47% of runaway / homeless youth indicated that conflict between them and their parent or guardian was a major problem. (Westat, Inc. 1997. National Evaluation of Runaway and Homeless Youth. Washington, DC: US Dep't of HHS, Admin on Children, Youth and Families).
- Over 50% of youth in shelters and on the streets reported that their parents either told them to leave or knew they were leaving but did not care (Greene, J. (1995). Youth with Runaway, Throwaway, and Homeless Experiences: Prevalence, Drug Use, and Other At-Risk Behaviors Research Triangle Institute. HHS. ACF - ACYF).
- Within the dysfunctional family environments cited by runaway and homeless youth, abuse is often a factor. Verbal abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse before the age of 18 are all correlated with higher run away rates. ([NRS Longitudinal study](#))
- 80% of runaway and homeless girls reported having ever been sexually or physically abused. 34% of runaway youth (girls and boys) reported sexual abuse before leaving home and forty-three percent of runaway youth (girls and boys) reported physical abuse before leaving home. [Additional research](#).
- **Let's Talk Activity for the Week: Module 4: Peers and Healthy Relationships – “Healthy Relationships” Activity**

Tuesday 10/31

- If all of America's runaways in the United States lived in one city, it would be the fifth largest city in the U.S. (after New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston). Putting this number in context shows the real scale of this problem. These numbers are truly unacceptable and it is up to everyone, from outreach workers to government officials to members of the general public, to tackle it.
- A common misconception is that youth sleeping on the street are there by choice. In fact, there is a huge gap between services available and services needed. In NRS' database, we have 727 shelters across the country. Compare this number to the between 1.6 and 2.8 million runaways in a year and the gap in services becomes evident.
- Childhood abuse increases youths' risk for later victimization on the street. Physical abuse is associated with elevated risk of assaults for runaway and homeless youth, while sexual abuse is associated with higher risk of rape for runaway and homeless youth. [Additional research](#).
- Over 70% of runaway and throwaway youth in 2002 were estimated to be endangered, based on 17 indicators of harm or potential risk. The most common endangerment component was physical or sexual abuse at home or fear of abuse upon return. The second most common endangerment component was the youth's substance dependency. [Additional research](#).
- In conclusion, the majority of young people on the street are not there because they want to be. They are there because they have nowhere else to go. Runaway and homeless youth are often endangered, with the risk of victimization on the street increasing for youth who have been victims of abuse in the past.

Wednesday 11/01

- **Facebook Profile Picture.** Lately, the trend on Facebook is to add a filter to your profile picture to show that you support a certain cause and spread awareness. This year, we are creating a filter that we will share closer to the date in order for you and your organization and followers to participate.
- Agencies promote their upcoming events.
- NRS to promote upcoming task force member events (local agency events) if information has been given.

Thursday 11/02

- Suggested movies: *Freedom Writers*, *Gimme Shelter*, *Precious*, *Short Term 12*, *Inocente*
- Suggested books: *Almost Home*, *Girlbomb: A Halfway Homeless Memoir*, *Homeless at Age 13 to a College Graduate: An Autobiography*, *My Orange Duffel Bag*, *The Glass Castle*
- Prompt followers/ volunteers/ staff/ local agencies to share their stories
- Prompt followers/ volunteers/ staff/ local agencies to suggest additional pieces of media on social media

Friday 11/03

- These problems are solvable, with increased resources and advocacy.
- National NRPM partners to highlight: Break the Cycle, Futures Without Violence, National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, National Safe Place, Prevent Child Abuse America, RAINN.
- Call to action nationally: learn more about runaway and homeless youth across the country at 1800RUNAWAY.org and learn about agencies working with runaway and homeless youth in your area.
- Call to action nationally: check out our [9 easy ways to make a difference during NRPM](#).
- Call to action locally: Get involved through volunteering, donating, and/or advocating. Local agencies to highlight upcoming fundraisers, volunteer opportunities, etc.

Week Two: Trafficking (11/06 -11/10)

Monday 11/06

- Children who are victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and youth over 18 who engage in sexual acts as a result of coercion, fraud, or force are also considered to be victims of human trafficking under federal statute. This applies to children and youth engaged in pornography, sexual entertainment industries, “survival sex” (trading sex to meet youth’s basic needs for food and shelter), and prostitution. Children are considered to be victims of trafficking even when they seem to be engaging willingly in sexual acts. CSEC is the most common form of human trafficking of U.S. citizens and runaway and homeless youth are often its victims. [NCHE Issue Brief: CSEC and Youth Homelessness](#)
- Nine percent of runaway youth in a non-random sample of over 1,600 youth reported engaging in survival sex at some point in their lives. [Additional research](#).
- Approximately 10% of shelter youths and 28% of street youths report were forced to participate in survival sex. Survival sex includes the exchange of sex for shelter, food, or other basic needs. . This compares to 4% of the overall adolescent population. [NN4Y human trafficking fact sheet](#).
- Runaway and homeless children are vulnerable to sex and labor trafficking because of their circumstances. High numbers of youth who are homeless report having been forced to trade sex for basic needs, such as shelter and food. Traffickers have been known to actively target locations where homeless children and youth congregate, including on the streets, at foster care group homes, and at runaway and homeless shelter programs. Homeless youth are often its victims. [NCHE Issue Brief: Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children \(CSEC\) and Youth Homelessness](#)
- **Let’s Talk Topic for the Week: Module 6: Runaway Reality – “Runaway Risks” Activity**

Tuesday 11/07

- In a 2013 study, The Institute of Medicine found that homelessness is the largest risk factor for CSEC and sex trafficking of minors. [Institute of Medicine report](#).
- Additionally, 48% of runaway and homeless youth who engaged in a commercial sex activity said they did it because they didn’t have a safe place to stay. [NN4Y human trafficking fact sheet](#).
- Expanding access to emergency housing options can reduce the risk that runaway and homeless youth will be victims of CSEC but further progress requires minimizing the length of time young people remain homeless. This can be achieved by helping homeless children and youth quickly reunify with family and quickly connecting those who cannot be reunified to long-term transitional housing and support services. [NCHE Issue Brief: Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children \(CSEC\) and Youth Homelessness](#).

Wednesday 11/08

- **‘Wear Green’ Day:** Most people have something green in their closet; whether it is a t-shirt, tie, pair of socks, etc. Coordinate a ‘wear green’ day with your friends, coworkers, students, and/or classmates on November 20th. This is a fun and easy way to get people to learn more about NRPM. For added impact, take a photo of your group wearing green and post it to social media with the hashtag #NRPM2014. Tag NRS and we could share your photo! [Additional information](#).

- Participate in NRS' Community Contest this month. Winners are now chosen by photos of activities with the hashtag #NRPM2017. Entries will be judged on the creativity and effort expressed in the photos. Community Contest Winners will be honored on NRS' social media pages as well as our website. [More information.](#)
- Agencies promote their upcoming events.
- NRS to promote upcoming task force member events (local agency events) if information has been given.

Thursday 11/09

- Suggested movies: *Gimme Shelter*, *Where the Day Takes You*
- Suggested books: *Miles From Nowhere*, *Kicked Out*
- Prompt followers/ volunteers/ staff/ local agencies to share their stories
- Prompt followers/ volunteers/ staff/ local agencies to suggest additional pieces of media on social media

Friday 11/10

- These problems are solvable, with increased resources and advocacy.
- Call to action nationally: learn more about runaway and homeless youth across the country at 1800RUNAWAY.org and learn about agencies working with runaway and homeless youth in your area.
- Call to action nationally: check out our [9 easy ways to make a difference during NRPM.](#)
- Call to action locally: Get involved through volunteering, donating, and/or advocating. Local agencies to highlight upcoming fundraisers, volunteer opportunities, etc.

Week Three: System Involved Youth (11/13 – 11/17)

Monday 11/13

- Approximately 12 to 36 percent of youth ages 18 or 21 exiting the foster care system become homeless, which in 2010 translated to approximately 28,000 youth. (Dworsky, Dillman, Dion, Coffee-Borden, & Rosenau, [Housing for Youth Aging out of Foster Care: A Review of the Literature and Program Typology](#), March 2012)
- Over 30% of respondents who had been in foster care as an adolescent had also run away from home compared to 8.1% of individuals who had not been in foster care. [NRS Longitudinal Study](#)
- Young people who have been in foster care are 3 to 10 times more likely than their peers to experience homelessness. ("Homelessness During the Transition from Foster Care to Adulthood" (abstract). American Journal of Public Health, Vol. 103, No. S2 (December 2013)).
- **Let's Talk Topic for the Week: Module 3: Personal Influences – “Who's On Your Bus” Activity**

Tuesday 11/14

- Youths feel that caseworkers do not provide the support they need. They feel that caseworkers should visit more often and find out how the youth is doing. Caseworkers should take time to talk to the kids to understand them and try to make things better. Youths feel they are not asked their opinion and that caseworkers rely on the foster parent or a visual inspection to determine if everything is fine. Basically youths wanted caseworkers to listen to the youth, try to understand, be reasonable, and be flexible. [Why They Run](#)
- Most youth do not hate the system or blame it for having to remove them from their home; they just want it to work better. [Why They Run](#). Again, this goes to show that these are not bad kids, they are good kids in bad situations.

Wednesday 11/15

- **National Candlelight Vigil.** Youth service agencies, community groups, and individuals will be hosting candlelight vigils to show solidarity with youth in crisis. Host your own candlelight vigil in your neighborhood, at your school, your workplace, your place of worship, etc. We are encouraging people to pick a spot that may be unique or special to your city. Perhaps there is a mural, building, or community art piece that you can meet at. This event is low cost and high impact. [More information.](#)
- Participate in NRS' Community Contest this month. In 2014, the community contest transitioned to a social media contest. Winners are now chosen by photos of activities with the hashtag #NRPM2017. Entries will be judged on the creativity and effort expressed in the photos. Community Contest Winners will be honored on NRS' social media pages as well as our website. [More information.](#)
- Agencies promote their upcoming events.
- NRS to promote upcoming task force member events (local agency events) if information has been given.

Thursday 11/16

- Suggested movies: *One Heart, Short Term 12, The Blindside, The Homestretch.*
- Suggested books: *The Language of Flowers, Foster Girl; A Memoir, Three Little Words: A Memoir.*
- Prompt followers/ volunteers/ staff/ local agencies to share their stories
- Prompt followers/ volunteers/ staff/ local agencies to suggest additional pieces of media on social media

Friday 11/17

- These problems are solvable with increased resources and advocacy.
- National Partners to highlight American Association of School Administrators, CenterLink: LGBT Centers, National Center for Homeless Edu., National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, PACER, True Colors Fund, NN4Y, NAEHCY, RAINN, National Safe Place, VoiceMatters Project, A Way Home America and Youth Catalytics.
- Call to action nationally: learn more about runaway and homeless youth across the country at 1800RUNAWAY.org and learn about agencies working with runaway and homeless youth in your area.
- Call to action nationally: check out our [9 easy ways to make a difference during NRPM](#).
- Call to action locally: Get involved through volunteering, donating, and/or advocating. Local agencies to highlight upcoming fundraisers, volunteer opportunities, etc.

Week Four: Vulnerable Populations (11/20 – 11/24)

Monday 11/20

- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth ran more often than heterosexual youth. [Why They Run](#)
- For LGBTQ youth, some parents can't accept their child's sexual orientation and throw them out of the house. Other youth remain in the home, but face difficulties due to lack of acceptance within their families, which may lead them to run. [Why They Run](#)
- Family rejection on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity was the most frequently cited factor contributing to LGBT homelessness. The next most frequently cited reason for LGBT youth homelessness was youth being forced out of their family homes as a result of coming out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. [Williams Institute study](#).
- LGBTQ youth are significantly overrepresented on the streets. According to a 2012 study, 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ. [Williams Institute study](#).
- Five of the top six factors identified as barriers to improving services related to reducing LGBT homelessness related to a lack of funding. The top three barriers were a lack of state, local, and federal funding, in that order. [Williams Institute study](#).
- **Let's Talk Topic for the Week: Module 12: Sexuality & Sexual Orientation – “Becoming an LGBTQ Ally” Activity**

Tuesday 11/21

- One study* concluded that LGBTQ homeless youth experience an average of 7.4 more acts of sexual violence toward them than their heterosexual peers **National Recommended Best Practices for Serving LGBTQ Homeless Youth' NN4Y, NAEH) Cochran, Bryan N., Stewart, Angela J., Ginzler, Joshua A., and Ana Mari Cauce. 2002. Challenges Faced by Homeless Sexual Minorities: Comparison of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Homeless Adolescents With Their Heterosexual Counterparts. American Journal of Public Health 92, no. 5: 773-777. Rew, Lynn, Taylor-Seehafer, Margaret and Maureen Fitzgerald. 2001 Sexual Abuse, Alcohol and Other Drug Use, and Suicidal Behaviors in Homeless Adolescents. Issues in Contemporary Pediatric Nursing 24: 225-240*
- One study* found that LGBTQ youth may have twice the rates of sexual victimization on the streets as non-LGBTQ homeless youth, and LGBTQ youth report double the rates of sexual abuse before age 12. **Rew, Lynn, Whittaker, Tiffany A., Taylor-Seehafer, Margaret, and Lorie R. Smith. 2005. Sexual Health Risks and Protective Resources in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Heterosexual Homeless Youth. Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing 10, no. 1: 11-20.*
- One study* found that LGBTQ homeless youth are also more likely to attempt suicide (62 percent) than their heterosexual homeless peers (29 percent). **Van Leeuwen, James M., Boyle, Susan, Salomonsen-Sautel, Stacy, Baker, D Nico, Garcia, JT, Hoffman, Allison and Christian J. Hopfer. 2006. Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Homeless Youth: An Eight City Public Health Perspective. Child Welfare 85, no. 2: 151-170. See also, Whitbeck, Les B., Chen, Xiaojin, Hoyt, Dan R., Tyler, Kimberly A. and Kurt D. Johnson. 2004. Mental Disorder, Subsistence Strategies, and Victimization among Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Homeless and Runaway Adolescents. The Journal of Sex Research 41, no. 4: 329-342.*
- LGBTQ youth suffer disproportionately when they age out of the foster system. For example while many youth who age out of the foster care system suffer economic hardship, 38 percent of LGBT youth report not being able to pay their rent in the past year compared to 25 percent of heterosexual youth. [Additional research](#).
- LGBTQ youth who age out of the foster care system report high levels of food insecurity with 34 percent of youth reporting that they had been hungry but couldn't afford food at some point during the past year compared to 14 percent of heterosexual youth. [More information](#).

- LGBTQ youth are therefore not only more likely to leave home, but to have a harder time once they are on the streets.

Wednesday 11/22

- **Selfie Sign Day.** On this day, our website, 1800RUNAWAY.org will have a 'Selfie Sign' available for agencies to download. The sign will show you are supporting NRPM 2017, but we are also encouraging everyone to use the caption "This is how I have helped a friend..." and have everyone share a story of how they have helped a friend.
- Participate in NRS' Community Contest this month. Winners are now chosen by photos of activities with the hashtag #NRPM2017. Entries will be judged on the creativity and effort expressed in the photos. Community Contest Winners will be honored on NRS' social media pages as well as our website. [More information.](#)
- Agencies promote their upcoming events.
- NRS to promote upcoming task force member events (local agency events) if information has been given.

Thursday 11/23

- Selfie Sign Day: On this day, our website, 1800RUNAWAY.org will have a 'Selfie Sign' available for agencies to download. The sign will show that you are supporting NRPM 2017, but we are also encouraging everyone to use the caption "This is how I have helped a friend..." and have everyone share a story of how they have helped a friend.
- Suggested movies/ documentaries: *Boys Don't Cry, Saved!, The Homestretch*
- Suggested books: *Kicked Out, Street Kids: Homeless Youth, Outreach, and Policing New York's Streets, With No Direction Home: Homeless Youth on the Road and In the Streets*
- Prompt followers/ volunteers/ staff/ local agencies to share their stories.
- Prompt followers/ volunteers/ staff/ local agencies to suggest additional pieces of media on social media.

Friday 11/24

- These problems are solvable with increased resources and advocacy.
- National NRPM partners to highlight: CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers, National Safe Place, True Colors Fund.
- Call to action nationally: learn more about runaway and homeless youth across the country at 1800Runaway.org and learn about agencies working with runaway and homeless youth in your area.
- Call to action nationally: check out our 9 [easy ways to make a difference during NRPM.](#)
- Call to action locally: Get involved through volunteering, donating, and/or advocating. Local agencies to highlight upcoming fundraisers, volunteer opportunities, etc.
- Thank you to everyone for participating in NRPM 2017.