

## Urban Lotus Project

Location: Nevada

Date Submitted: 6/2017

Category: **Cutting Edge Practice**

<b>TITLE V/MCH BLOCK GRANT MEASURES ADDRESSED</b>
---

<b>#08: Percent of children ages 6 through 11 years and adolescents ages 12 through 17 years who are physically active at least 60 minutes per day</b>
--

### BACKGROUND

Urban Lotus Project provides Trauma-Informed Yoga for youth and adolescents who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in Reno, Nevada, and surrounding areas to promote physical activity and provide stress reduction tools to high-risk youth.

Trauma-Informed Yoga makes physical activity available in a safe environment to high-risk youth without specialized equipment, dedicated space, or unsafe outdoor environment. It provides access to physical activity for 60 minutes often only available at a significant financial cost, to youth of all socioeconomic statuses and in restrictive contexts for other physical activity alternatives.

### PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

This program supports the Title V Maternal Child Health (MCH) Block Grant National Performance Measure number 8 to increase the number of adolescents aged 12-17 years who are physically active at least 60 minutes each day. It provides a unique opportunity to reach high-risk youth and those with special health care needs using a trauma-informed approach.

Trauma-Informed Yoga provides a unique opportunity for adolescents, especially those with special health care needs, to participate in physical activity within a trauma-informed approach. Due to the shortage of specialized physical activity programs for high-risk and youth with special needs, Trauma-Informed Yoga allows for the promotion of physical activity and resilience supporting mindfulness to combat obesity, chronic disease, enhance wellness, and help mitigate ACEs.

### TARGET POPULATION SERVED

Specialized yoga instruction and mindful awareness is brought to agencies serving adolescents, inclusive of youth in foster care and homeless adolescents, such as drop-in centers, juvenile justice centers, transitional living, in-patient mental health, and substance use facilities.

### PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Activities focus on increasing physical activity outside of school settings and promotion of adolescent health. Research demonstrates consistent youth physical activity (60 minutes a day) provides physical and mental health benefits such as weight management, building of healthy muscles and bones, increased endurance, reduction in anxiety and stress, and improvement in self-esteem.

### PROGRAM OUTCOMES/EVALUATION DATA

A small sample of pre-and post-tests were conducted prior to the initiation of the Title V MCH funded pilot. Responses demonstrated positive results in their ability to cope with stress, and being more open minded to trying a different technique, such as yoga to manage their lives.

Process improvement will be conducted through key informant interviews with staff at agencies where courses are conducted. Participants will be asked to answer written questions about the instructor as ongoing quality improvement during the pilot year. Pre-and post-test results will help identify process and outcome efficacy of the program and opportunities for quality improvement. The number of youth served and sites offering Trauma-Informed Yoga will also be assessed as part of the quality improvement plan.

## PROGRAM COST

The Title V MCH Program awarded \$25,000. Fiscal supports requested were: 65% of one full-time salary; operating costs for internet, instructor background checks, and printing/postage for informational, program and fundraising materials; yoga mats; as well as travel and training for the paid staff to attend an advanced Trauma-Informed Yoga course. Subgrant funds do not contribute toward rent, phone, or utilities.

## ASSETS & CHALLENGES

### Assets

Low operational costs are a benefit to initiating a Trauma-Informed Yoga program. The ease of transporting yoga mats, in a crate, and available floor space are the essentials keeping expenses down. Since individuals are served where they show up (e.g., drop-in centers and schools), or are housed (e.g., in-patient treatment, transitional housing) there is no need to rent facilities. Most yoga teachers volunteer their time one-hour a week as a community service.

The project promotes physical activity in adolescents, supports mental health in decreasing stress, increases resilience, and serves youth with special health care needs. The portability, low overhead, replicability, and youth-friendly nature of Trauma-Informed Yoga provides health benefits, meeting adolescents where they are with current fitness levels. Supporting obesity and chronic disease treatment, mindfulness, resilience, stress reduction, positive body images, and autoregulation, Trauma-Informed Yoga for youth has many benefits beyond meeting the physical activity priority for the Title V MCH Block Grant.

### Challenges

The ability to conduct a pre-and post-test survey is limited to an organization's willingness and ability to document the date the pre-test was given and commitment to follow-up six-weeks later to administer the post-test, as well as facilities where youth will remain at least six-weeks (e.g., schools, transitional living, and in-patient residence).

Urban Lotus Project is implementing an updated version of the pre-and post-test which is better suited to evaluate participants' ability to cope with stress and increase resilience.

Irrespective of low operating costs, Urban Lotus continues to take steps towards creating a sustainable program. Many facilities are unable to reimburse for yoga instruction; thus, a sustainability plan is being developed.

### Overcoming Challenges

Solutions are being sought to collect pre-and post-test survey data from more adolescents ages 12-17 years.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Despite frequent conversations between Urban Lotus Project and Title V MCH Program staff lead overseeing the pilot, communication barriers resulted. It was not learned until after quarter one mandated reporting, Urban Lotus Project had not conducted any pre-and post-tests, as well as the limited number of sites willing to administer the surveys.

## FUTURE STEPS

Year-one results will be evaluated, strategies to include plan-do-study-act methods of testing and implementing continuous quality improvements will be incorporated based on the outcomes identified in the initial evaluation.

## COLLABORATIONS

Urban Lotus Project will reach out to the Division of Child and Family Services, Nevada Department of Education, and agencies serving youth to seek partnerships in leveraging funding for yoga instruction, and cooperation in disseminating pre-and post-tests.

## PEER REVIEW & REPLICATION

Key informants will include yoga instructors implementing the program, as well as provider stakeholders serving participating youth. They will be asked about benefits of the program and areas of possible improvement.

## RESOURCES PROVIDED

[Ryther Children's Center Trauma-Informed Yoga for Youth Pilot Study](#)

[Application of Yoga in Residential Treatment of Traumatized Youth](#)

[Empirical Support for Somatic Regulation in the Treatment of Traumatized Adolescents](#)

**Key words: adolescent physical activity, trauma-informed yoga, adverse childhood experiences (ACES)**

**\*\*For more information about this program please contact: Eileen Hough [ehough@health.nv.gov](mailto:ehough@health.nv.gov) 775-684-4035**

