

White Paper

Value of the SHARP Survey to Utah's Children, Families, Communities and Schools

The purpose of this document is to highlight and explain the importance of the SHARP data to community support planning and to reinforce how many positive things have come about because of having insight into youth experiences.

The SHARP debate is a delicate one. Parental consent is important and valued and parents absolutely have the right to opt their children out. Students also have the important right to opt out or skip any questions they are not comfortable with or do not want to answer. Their choice to share their personal experience and information is honored and appreciated and treated with respect to their privacy. The decision not to participate in the survey and disclose personal information is also respected. Each Survey is completed anonymously, and the data collected is not individually identifiable; rather, it is used to show concerns and trends in communities.

We are concerned with potential negative consequences which could happen if prevention funding is separated from the SHARP Survey. We are also concerned about the potential for more bans on the Survey in the future. If schools can keep prevention funding but not need to administer the SHARP Survey, it becomes easier to choose policies and programs that are based on opinion and not data, reducing their effectiveness and the ability to recognize vital and real community problems. It is also unknown what the many public health agencies and schools will do if this data source is removed. Schools can implement their own surveys with parental consent, but they will not go through the rigorous scientific validity and reliability checks that Bach Harrison implements in the SHARP Survey, and it will not be data that is comparable to historical data to identify trends that need intervention. The SHARP data set is representative of the population in a way that various new surveys cannot be, which is related to the amount of funding received. Grant issuers want to see valid data and it would be tragic to see funding reduced because agencies do not have the same rigorous and valid data to utilize in their grant applications. Ultimately, the goal of the SHARP data is to make grounded decisions regarding community improvements, which is something that seems to get lost in the debate.

Following are some specific ways SHARP data has been used for programs, training, and support services in Davis County, as an example. Around the State of Utah where the SHARP Survey is administered, programs are tailored by local communities to the data received in their area.

2023 SHARP Data has been used, for the following critical supports and resources for children and families:

- Educate parents about the **harms of social media** on youth
- Expand **access to mental health services and resources**
- Create the **Parents Empowered campaign** which encourages parents to talk to their children about the dangers of underage drinking

- Create the **Know Your Script Campaign** which empowers Utahns to make smart decisions and ask the right questions regarding prescription drug use
- Develop the **SafeUT mobile app** and **Live On** suicide prevention campaign
- Create a program that pairs kids struggling in school with the **Foster Grandparents Program** in a local community to build connections and resilience
- Pass legislation that restricts the places where **flavored vaping products** that appeal to children can be sold
- In the last two years, SHARP data has helped in bringing in approximately \$2.5 million to support prevention and wrap around services for students in Davis County.

Programs/trainings/support provided through grant funding:

- Trauma Informed professional development and Restorative Practices
- Attendance training and coaching support
- Youth Mental Health Screenings
- **Hope Squads**
- **Suicide Prevention** mini-grants
- Educator Wellness/Adult SEL professional development
- SEL Programming (**Learning to Breathe, Move This World, Second Step**)
- **Mindfulness spaces** for students and staff
- Training about bullying, suicide prevention, attendance, etc.
- Data enables comparison of local data with state and national trends
- Data is used in the **Families Talking Together Program** which helps give parents tools to communicate with their children about reducing risky sexual behaviors
- **Communities That Care (CTCs)**, evidence-based coalitions use SHARP data to prioritize what issues are most in need of attention leading to a community process to prevent health and behavior problems in young people before they develop

E-cigarette Example

E-cigarette data was added to the SHARP survey in 2011. The data demonstrated there was a bigger problem of E-cigarettes than expected in Davis County. SHARP data on e-cig use led to the policies to regulate manufacturing and retailing of products to limit youth initiation.

Youth Mental Health Grant Example

In 2015 and 2018, Davis4Health partners participated in a joint application to address youth mental health. USU Extension was awarded the AWARE—Mental Health Education Grant for two cycles from 2015-2021 which resulted in 1,898 youth serving adults being trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid and over 660 youth and families participating in mental health screening nights for youth.