

Lets' Go: A Journey Toward Runaway Prevention

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The National Runaway Switchboard (NRS) is proud to present its new and improved curriculum. *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum*, like all other NRS materials, is available free of charge for providers nationwide through our toll free hotline (1-800-RUNAWAY) and website (www.1800RUNAWAY.org).

The NRS curriculum was created in collaboration with DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois. The development process involved gathering input from multiple sources over a two year period. The first stage included an extensive literature review to determine what information and curricula already existed; phone interviews with service providers nationwide to gather initial thoughts about what such a curriculum should include; a web survey to gather feedback from existing programs and a wide variety of providers nationwide; and six focus groups with youth and adult service providers in rural, suburban, and urban Illinois to check the relevance of the web survey findings. The second stage consisted of written curriculum development, fourteen modules in all, and the creation of a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC). The YAC met to review each module and provide feedback regarding their relevance and adaptability to youth from different walks of life. Fourteen focus groups were held in rural, suburban, and urban Illinois with youth ranging from 14 to 20 to pilot test each module and gather final feedback. Finally, the YAC met once more to review the curriculum in its entirety. All focus group participants and YAC members were rewarded with a stipend for their time and effort.

The final outcome? An entirely new curriculum that will bring runaway and at-risk youth issues to the forefront and to help prevent youth from running away from home. *Let's Talk* is an interactive, 14-module curriculum that allows for flexibility in setting and youth population. Its goals are: to increase knowledge about resources and prevention, educate about alternatives to running away and encourage youth to access and seek help from trusted adults. The curriculum covers the following topics:

- Communication and Listening
- Adolescent Development
- Personal Influences
- Peers
- Families: Roles and Responsibilities
- Runaway Reality
- National Safe Connections
- Community response and Responsibility
- Anger Management
- Stress Reduction Drugs and Alcohol
- Sexuality and Sexual Orientation
- Internet Safety and Fun
- Future Life Planning

The purpose of this workshop is two-fold. First, it will provide a brief overview of the NRS Runaway Prevention Curriculum development process. Second, it will take a look at this long-anticipated curriculum. The facilitator will lead participants through components of the curriculum's modules in a series of interactive and engaging activities. Participants are encouraged to learn about the curriculum's development, participate in its activities, and bring word of its release back to their communities!