

Running for a Reason

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Today's Objectives



1. Understand definitions associated with unaccompanied youth
2. Identify the reasons behind youth runaway incidents and recognize some of the warning signs
3. Describe the services and philosophy of the National Runaway Switchboard (NRS)
4. List at least three resources webinar participants can offer youth who have or are contemplating running away

Definitions:

- **Runaway**

- A youth under the age of 18 who leaves home without permission
- A child who leaves home without permission and stays away overnight

- **Throwaway**

- A youth who is asked or told to leave home or prevented from returning by a parent or other household adult and no adequate alternative care is arranged for the child by a household adult, and the child is out of the household overnight

- **Homeless**

- A youth who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
- A youth who has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings

Definitions:

Recent research showed that when shelter and street youth were asked if they would describe or define their situation “runaway” or “throwaway” (*Why They Run*):

- 30% of the youth explicitly described what happened as “running away”.
- Nearly half (48%) said they were “thrown out” of their homes.
- 22% described the situation as both, some combination of “running away” and being “thrown out”.



Runaway Youth



NRS 2009 Crisis Caller statistics depict youth as:

- 57% were away from home
- 10% were contemplating leaving home
- 25% have run before
- 52% have been out of the home for 1 week or less
- 36% of youth callers have been on the street 1-3 days before they call NRS

In recent research when shelter and street youth were asked about their departure (*Why They Run*):

- More than 70% of youth interviewed described their leaving home as spontaneous.
- 36% percent who ran said they planned it in advance, while 23% who were thrown out said they were planning on running anyway.
- 56% of runaways said that someone else knew they were planning to run away.

Runaway Youth



NRS 2009 Crisis Caller statistics show:

- Females call more often, 72% Female, 28% Males
- 46% of youth callers are 15-17 years old, 27% 18-19yrs, 13% are 14 and under
- 52% identified friends and relatives as their means for survival

In recent research when shelter youth were asked about staying Connected (*Why They Run*):

- More than half report that friends know where they are, while 26% have reported that parents and 25% have siblings who know their whereabouts. Only 13% said that nobody knew where they were.
- Nearly 45% of youth attended school, with 70% attending regularly.
- Nearly two-thirds of shelter youth attended school, while 28% of street youth continued attending school.

Top 10 Issues Identified By 2009 Crisis Callers

Warning Signs

- Youth wearing the same clothes everyday
- Youth who seem to have a lot of belongings with them; or seem to be accumulating money and possessions
- Youth threatening to run away
- Changes in behavior or patterns
- Family or peer issues (abuse, bullying, poverty, divorce)



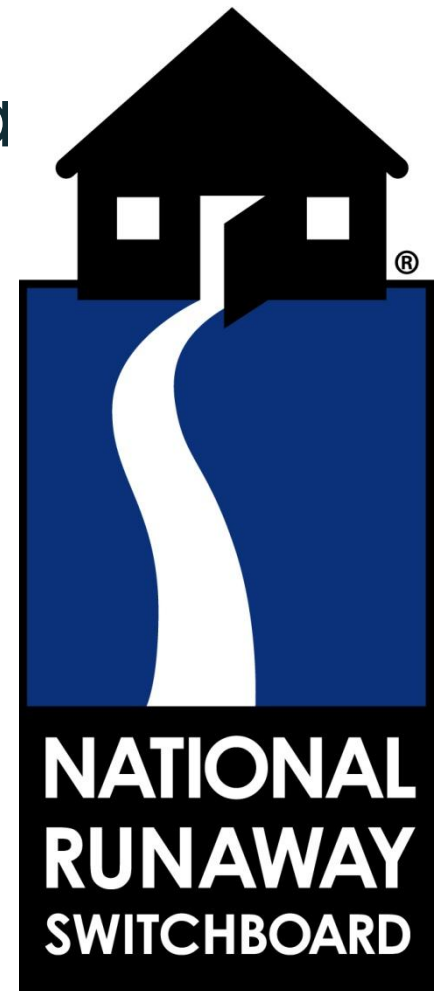
National Runaway Switchboard

How many are familiar with NRS?

How many have used our services before, or worked with a youth or family that has?



- Started in 1971 as *Metro-Help*, a crisis line in Chicago, IL and in 1974 became the federally designated communication system for runaway and homeless youth
- **Mission:** To keep America's runaway and at-risk youth safe and off the streets



National Runaway Switchboard

- **NRS VALUES:**

- Providing solution-focused interventions
- Offering non-judgmental support
- Respecting confidentiality
- Collaborating with volunteers
- Responding 24 hours a days



1-800-RUNAWAY

- **Between 1.6 and 2.8 million youth run away from home annually**
- 117,602 calls handled in 2009
- **Confidential** crisisline for runaway and at-risk youth and their families
- **24-hour** crisisline is **toll-free** and **accessible** from anywhere in the United States and its territories
- All calls to the crisisline are **anonymous**
- All calls are handled by our frontline team of staff and volunteers using a five-step model of solution focused crisis intervention



Information and Referral

NRS maintains a national database of over 13,000 agencies and services including:

- Housing
- Alternative schools
- Counseling
- Residential treatment
- Substance abuse treatment
- Medical assistance
- Legal information
- Law enforcement
- Child protection

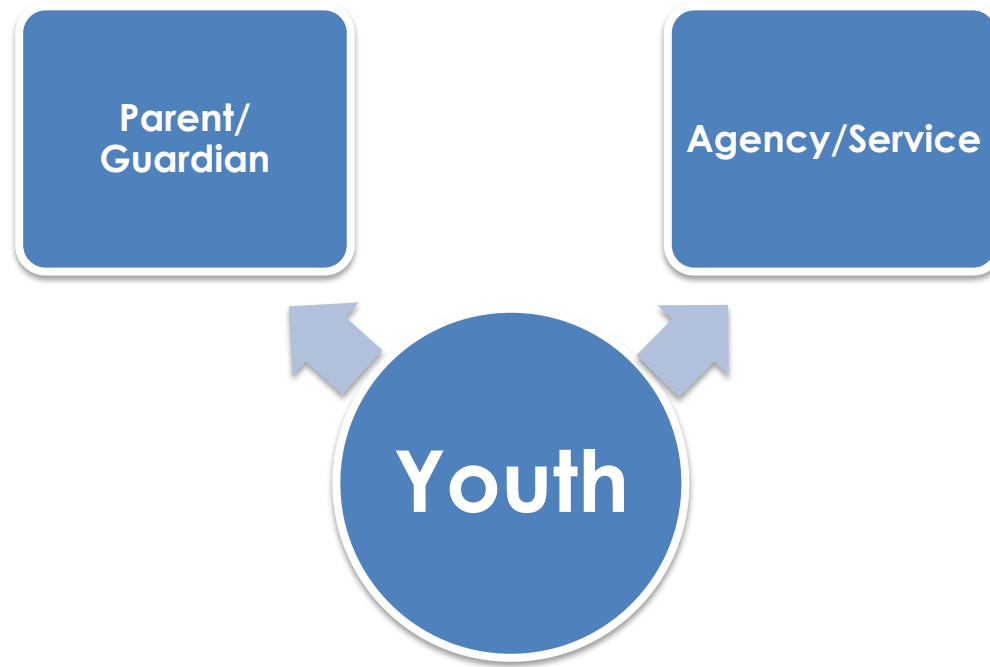


Message Relay



- Confidential
- Indirect method of communication
- Goal....move toward a conference call

Three-Way Conference Calls



- Confidential and safe
- We advocate, mediate, and articulate
- Explore agency/shelter rules and expectations



HomeFree Program



- In partnership with Greyhound Lines, Inc., NRS helps reunite runaway youth, 12-17, with their families and assists runaway and homeless youth 18-20 in stabilizing themselves with supportive family members and/or preparing for self-sufficient independent living.
- In addition to a bus ticket, NRS provides youth and families with resources in their communities to help start the process toward long-term positive outcomes.





- Anonymous message board for teens
- Helpful tips for teen and parents (can be downloaded)
- Caller data 2000-2009
- Areas of information for youth, parents, and educators
- Download and customize with agency information: brochures, newsletters, education and prevention materials
- Free Prevention and Education materials
- Videos can be downloaded for easy viewing –including a webinar and webcast about *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum*

Prevention and Awareness Tools

Community Action Toolkit

A well designed toolkit developed to assist local community member in planning, conducting, and promoting community projects and activities to be held during National Runaway Prevention Month.

Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum

An interactive, 14-module curriculum intended to build life skills, increase knowledge about runaway resources and prevention, educate youth about alternatives to running away, and encourage youth to access and seek help from trusted community members.

Kids Call

Created as a forum where youth and adults can get answers to questions about runaway and homeless youth and discuss NRS services. You must schedule in advance with NRS' prevention specialist by calling 773-289-1723.

National Runaway Prevention Month

- In 2002, the National Runaway Switchboard (NRS) expanded a week long prevention and awareness campaign to National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM).
- NRS and NRPM co-partner, the National Network for Youth (NN4Y), developed two major goals to spearhead the national campaign:
 1. Increase the awareness of the issues facing runaways, and
 2. Educate the public about the solutions and the role they can play in preventing youth from running away.



Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum



- *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum* (RPC) is a **14 module skill based curriculum**. It is available to download at www.1800RUNAWAY.org or to order in CD-ROM format.
- **Target Audience:** Grades 5 -12 but can be modified for other age groups.
- The overall **goal** of the Runaway Prevention Curriculum is threefold:
 - Educate youth about alternatives to running away; to build life skills so that youth can resolve problems without resorting to running away.
 - Educate youth about seeking help from trusted adults.
 - Increase knowledge about runaway resources and prevention through the involvement of community members as trained instructors.

What You Can do to Support Youth



- Offer the youth support! They might simply need someone to listen to them.
- Call NRS yourself or have the youth call us
- *Contact your school district's homeless liaison*
- *Refer the youth to your school's counselor*
- *Refer youth to an emergency shelter or transitional living program*
- *Offer youth other local resources*

Opportunities to promote awareness

- Kids Call
- Join Street Team
- Facilitate a service learning project
- Utilize the NRPM Tool Kit during National Runaway Prevention Month (**November**)
- Order free materials from NRS to have available for youth and adults
- Facilitate activities from the *Let's Talk Module 6: Runaway Reality*

Other Resources



- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
1.800.843.5678 www.missingkids.com
- National Association for Education of Homeless Children and Youth
www.naehcy.org
- National Safe Place
www.nationalsafeplace.org
- National Youth Advocacy Coalition
1.800.541.6922 www.nyacyouth.org

Thank you for joining us!



Any Questions?

Comments?



You can reach us at:

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For more information on the National Runaway
Switchboard, visit:

<http://www.1800RUNAWAY.org>

