A Series of Information Resources on

Youth Subcultures:
Understanding Subgroups to Better
Address Barriers to Learning
& Improve Schools

As calls for addressing barriers to student learning and improving schools increase, better understanding of youth subculture is essential. This series is intended to stimulate thinking about the implications for policy and practice of the complex, multifaceted subgroups with which youth come to be identified and/or assigned by peers.

Public health and education policy makers, practitioners, researchers, and educators need to know as much as they can about the factors that lead youth to manifest behaviors stemming from group defined values, beliefs, attitudes, and interests. Such understanding is basic to promoting healthy development, preventing problems, intervening as soon as problems arise, and enhancing intervention impact on severe and chronic problems.

To these ends, the Center is producing a series of resources, such as this one, as aids for policy and practice analyses, research, education, and school and community improvement planning.

About Surfing and Skateboarding Youth Subcultures

Our focus here is on briefly highlighting:

(1) how youth are identified as surfers and skateboarders

(2) the impact of these "subgroups"

(3) prevalent policy and practice efforts to address negative impact

(4) data on intervention efforts

(5) proposed new directions

(6) resources for more information.

About Surfing and Skateboarding Youth Subcultures

Some youth subcultures are built around an activity. Some of the activities require engagement with others; some involve parallel play; some can be pursued solo. All can bring an individual into contact with people who are attracted by the activity and/or by the image of those who participate in it. Surfing and skateboarding are widespread examples of activities that attract many youth and that can be pursued alone and along with others. They also are illustrative of a range of extreme sports that have taken on subcultural trappings and created a variety of involved subgroups.

Surfing – Historical references indicate surfing has been around for thousands of years (e.g., Young, 2008). The modern day subculture grew out of the increasing popularity of surfing as a sport which was accelerated in the 1950's and 1960's with the development of cheaper, lighter boards made of fiberglass and foam. Today's surfers may be seen standing up (using a short or long boards, fiberglass or wood) and bodyboarding. The term also is used to encompass body surfing, kite surfing, wind surfing, and kneeboarding.

In the 1960s, surfing in Southern California was popularized in movies and music; boardshorts, baggies, bikinis, and woodies to transport boards to the beach became symbols of a growing subculture. In recent years, discussion of the symbolic facets of surfing has broadened and deepened. An example is seen in those who argue that surfing embodies the spiritualities of belonging and connectedness with nature (Taylor, 2007).

Today, while many enthusiastically pursue surfing as a recreational sport, a wide variety of people have adopted the surfing subculture as a way of life, especially in areas such as Hawai`i, California, Florida, and Australia. And as a professional competitive sport, it also has developed a fan base and corporate sponsorship. As a result, surfing lingo and fashions are widely popular and selling the lifestyle can be profitable. Indeed, surfer fashion is everywhere and is big business from head to foot (search *Surfer Look* on the internet). The overall look is meant to convey carefree casualness. Hair usually is long, layered, sun-bleached, windswept scraggly, uncombed; facial stubble is in; headwear includes beanies, caps, trucker caps, fedoras, sun hats (beanies for warmth, caps for cool); sunglasses are de rigeur. Besides wetsuits, surfers wear board shorts (boardies), a range of tops (e.g., t-shirts and other lightweight shirts, hoodies, a range of warm jackets); denim/jean, cargo, cords, track pants; lightweight footwear (sandals, flip flops, thongs); skate shoes. Females go light on the make-up.

Skateboarding – General consensus is that skateboarding grew out of and from surfing and was even initially called "Sidewalk Surfing." As a subculture, it has been described as a fusion of surfing, punk, street, hip hop, and hard rock (Cave, nd; Ingram, nd). So, it is not surprising that skateboarders use many surfing slang terms but have adopted the rebel and hard edge image and clothing style from its other influences.

Those who outline the history of skateboarding suggest that it first appeared in the 1950s when surfers in California brought surfing to the streets. A brief synthesis from various sources follows:

> At first, the equipment was primitive (e.g., wooden boxes or boards with roller skate wheels). As the activity became popular, companies began producing decks of pressed layers of wood, and by the early 1960s skateboarding competitions were being organized . Early competition was called freestyle and the technique is described as akin to ice skating or ballet dancing with a skateboard. Popularity waned around 1965, skateboard companies closed, and skaters once again responded by making their own boards.
>   In 1972, introduction of urethane skateboard wheels increased the attractiveness of skateboarding, and in 1975 "skateboarding took an evolutionary boost toward the sport that we see today. In Del Mar, California a slalom and freestyle contest was held at the Ocean Festival. That day, the Zephyr team showed the world what skateboarding could

be. They rode their boards like no one had in the public eye, low and smooth, and skateboarding was taken from being a hobby to something serious and exciting. ... The Zephyr team, and all the skaters who wanted to be like them, also made skateboarding even more edgy in the public eye, and added a strong anti-establishment sentiment that still remains in skateboarding today." And, in 1978, "a skater named Alan Gelfand (nicknamed 'Ollie') invented a maneuver that gave skateboarding another revolutionary jump. He would slam his back foot down on the tail of his board and jump, thereby popping himself and the board into the air. The ollie was born, a trick that completely revolutionized skateboarding – most tricks today are based in performing an ollie."

In the 1980s, media, especially film and video, helped spread skateboarding and established the image of skateboarders as a subculture of "reckless rebels" who disrespect authority and rules in general. Later films have tried to soften the image depicting the subculture as having a group spirit that embodies "a positive outlook on life, prone to poking harmless fun at each other, and engaging in healthy sportsman's competition." The widespread media coverage and merchandise marketing have popularized skateboarding clothing styles, music, videogames, and magazines.(Quoted information is from http://skateboard.about.com/cs/boardscience/a/brief_history_3.htm)

While the variety of skateboards on the market has expanded, a skateboard essentially consists of three main parts: *deck*, *wheels*, and *truck*. Decks come in a variety of shapes and sizes but essentially are short (traditional – 33 inches) or long (over 35 inches – mainly used for cruising). Longboards have both a longer wheelbase and larger, softer wheels. Typical decks are made of specially designed plywood board and use a quad wheeled, dual "truck" eight bearing system designed for both movement and stunts. Graphic designs have become a major deck feature. Most experienced skateboarders prefer wood because of its responsiveness, but it also is easily damaged Less expensive skateboards are made of plastic, fiberglass or aluminum. The board's shape depends mainly on its intended function and the height and foot size of the skateboarder. A concave board is designed for mastering tricks and ramps. A deeper curve allows for more precision, but deep concave decks are more expensive, harder to master, and more easily damaged. Skateboard wheels are made from polyurethane and vary in composition, color, diameter, and hardness. Larger wheels roll faster (e.g., when riding ramps); smaller wheels are preferred for flip tricks. (http://www.wisegeek.com/what-are-different-types-of-skateboards.htm)

Today, as with surfing, skateboarding attracts those who simply enjoy the challenge of riding a board (and even using it for transportation) and those who want to pursue a skateboard subculture. Also as with surfing, professional competition and corporate backing have added a fan base and fashion appeal. Skateboard fashion is a fusion of punk, metal, and urban styles (includes, sneakers, baggy pants that show the heads of their boxer shorts, loose t-shirts, hoodies, and funky hats).

Still, as Chiu (2009) emphasizes:

"Skateboarding is commonly characterized as an activity that challenges the social norms. ... By performing skateboarding tricks in public space, skaters display male bodies and a specific fashion style. ... The key marketable image that appeals to teens and young adults is an edgy and rebellious style."

Clearly, the diverse interests in surfing and skateboarding have created an image competition within each subculture. In particular, some subgroups involved with each want to move toward a more positive portrayal; others do not. The different agenda can be seen in the various surfing and skateboarding magazines. For example, some skateboard magazines are devoted to continuing to portray skaters as dirty, rebellious, punkers, while other strive to show skateboarding as a sport that attracts a wide range of people.

Defining Surfer and Skateboarder Subcultures and Identifying Subgroup Members

Surfers – Over the years, male surfers have been stereotyped as slackers or beach bums, and females have been referred to as beach bunnies. However, surfers and others interested in subgroups associated with surfing go well beyond these stereotypes.

Market researchers are especially interested in clarifying the diversity within groups such as surfers. In one study, Moutinho and Leal (2007) concluded that surfing exhibits cult-like characteristics and that there are three distinct types of adherents whose behavior can characterized by affiliation, social recognition, socialization, and symbolism. They label the three subgroups as regular and occasional surfers and non-surfers.

A distinction made by surfers is whether or not one is a "local." Regular surfers who live around a surf break are referred to as locals. The tendency for locals to protect their territory has led to the warning "locals only." Where locals form loose gangs to keep others out, they are often referred to as "surf punks" or "surf nazis" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surf_culture#Localism).

Skaters – Kelly, Pomerantz, and Currie (2005) note that because of the noncomforming image of skateboarders, they are stereotyped by others as (a) "potheads"(defying prevailing mores against drug use), (b) "punks" and "hooligans"(defying prevailing mores supporting respect for private property), (c) "slackers" (defying the dominant work ethic), and (d) "laid back" and "underground" (defying the consumer culture). In contrast, these researchers report that participants define three subgroups:

> "The 'hardcore' or 'serious skaters,' referred to themselves as skaters, frequented skate parks, had mastered a number of tricks, and knew how to assemble their own board. The 'skater', liked the 'lifestyle' but skated more infrequently, and they had usually mastered only the basics, although they knew a few tricks. The 'skater affiliates,' identified as skaters mainly because of their friendships with other skaters, and affinity for skater culture, or both."

With respect to the girls in their study, Kelly and colleagues (2005) report: "Girls who hung around boy skateboarders became known among their peers as skaters or 'skate betties' (slang for girl skaters, a term often used derisively by boy skaters)." The girls they interviewed stated that "skateboarding symbolizes fun (acting 'loud and crazy'), adventure (a willingness to try new things or take a risk), confidence and nonconformity. ... Every skater girl participant said she valued being 'different'".

Compared to the respondents in the above study, it should be noted that the Wikipedia entry on *Skaters* presents that subgroup as more anti-authoritarian. The entry states:

> "Skaters often are similar to punks, and skater punks are common. Skater Punk [or Skate Punk] is a subculture combining skater and punk. It is usually someone who dresses like a skater, rides a skateboard, and has some punk and some skater ideas. Skater is the subculture of many skateboarders. ... Skaters are opposed to police and police action. ... They can be very creative in opposing police oppression, and unneeded skateboard bans. ... Skaters skate in streets, or concrete skateparks, as opposed to ramps. Due to the assimilation and co-opting attempts by big business and Hip-Hop, [this subgroup] is in danger, and many people try to deny it's existence"
> (http://subculture.wikia.com/wiki/Skater).

Finally, it is important to recognize that within both surfing and skateboarding there are many wannabes and fans. These also differ with respect to the subgroups with whom they identify.

What is the impact of these subgroups on society and on subgroup members?

As with other youth subcultures, both surfing and skateboarding have made contributions to fashion, recreation, the arts, and the economy, as well as to the personal development of many. And, it is interesting to note that in the 1990s even the U.S. military explored whether skateboards might be useful during urban combat "for maneuvering inside buildings in order to detect tripwires and sniper fire" (U.S. Department of Defense, 1999).

An inspiring example of society embracing and using the positive aspects of a youth-oriented subculture is described in a March 17, 2010 New York Times article by Karen Jones entitled *Connecting to a Culture Using 4 Wheels.* Below are excerpts:

> "RYAN WASHINGTON, 21, ... a member of the Lakota Sioux tribe, started skateboarding at age 14.... ... Mr. Washington is the attendant and instructor at the indoor skate park on the Big Cypress Seminole reservation in Florida. He is 'living his dream,' said Fred Mullins, prevention specialist in the family services department of the Seminole tribe. 'We needed a mature, sensitive Native American leader to groom our kids and that's Ryan.' Mr. Mullins said the skate park, which opened in 2008, had become 'the most consistent activity offering positive interaction, contact-oriented, positive relationship-building environment for young people we have on the reservation.'
>
> Skateboarding has been a street sport for decades with a popularity that encompasses all demographics. 'Ramp It Up: Skateboard Culture in Native America,' an exhibition at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian at One Bowling Green in Manhattan, celebrates the sport from a Native American perspective, said the project manager, Betsy Gordon. 'Native skateboarding is a thriving, extremely creative, strongly passionate movement and only getting bigger and better,' she said. She added that tribal leaders were investing in skate parks to provide their youth with a place for healthy physical activity.
>
> The exhibition, which runs through June 27, features a chronology of the sport, photographs, videos of skaters doing their tricks and personally decorated boards from Native American skaters and skateboard companies like Wounded Knee Skateboards, Native Skates and 4wheelwarpony, owned by the filmmaker Dustinn Craig, a White Mountain Apache. A film, also called '4wheelwarpony,' by Mr. Craig about White Mountain Apache skateboarders helped inspire 'Ramp It Up,' said Ms. Gordon. 'I was struck by the metaphor that the skateboard has replaced the pony on reservation life.'
>
> ...Jim Murphy [who is part Lenni Lenape] ... runs Wounded Knee Skateboards and is a co-founder of Nibwaakaawin, a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering Indian youths through skateboarding. Goals include helping build skate parks on reservations, particularly those that are economically depressed. 'A lot of kids on these reservations need something to do and this is it,' said Mr. Murphy. 'Skating keeps you motivated, keeps the weight down and keeps you healthy.'
>
> Todd Harder, who created the annual All Nations Skate Jam competition in Albuquerque and who runs Native Skates, which designs skateboards with 'culturally significant native symbols,' said that diversity and traditions of Native American cultures can resonant with young people through skating. 'Some kids don't want to learn the old ways, but they might explore their heritage by painting a deck with their own native designs,' said Mr. Harder, who is part Creek. ...
> http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/18/arts/artsspecial/18SKATE.html

Moving from societal to positive personal impact, Chiu (2009) cogently notes: "Street skating ensures skaters of performance, competence, agency, and social opportunities." And Rinehart (2005) stresses: "They are kids practicing something they love. Somewhat surprisingly, they devote,

without adults pushing them, countless hours perfecting tricks–just for the satisfaction of accomplishment....”

At the same time, it is recognized that participation in any extreme sport is risky, and the risks have societal as well as personal concerns attached to them. In activities such as surfing and skating, adult supervision is largely absent. Rinehart (2005) stresses that many young extremists and action sport aficionados are unprepared for this freedom. He observes that “the adult influence in skating is not coming from parents, coaches, or other responsible adults, but rather in the guise of identification with an outlaw culture, from multinational corporations and large conglomerate media firms.”

With respect to negative impact, geography makes a difference. While surfer locales are rather circumscribed, skateboard activity may appear almost anywhere there is a skate-able surface. Public perception also makes a difference. Surfers tend to be less threatening than skaters in the eyes of adult observers, public health and education professionals, and societal policy makers.

Thus, society spends much more time worrying about the impact of those using skateboards. However, in locales where regular surfers still have a reputation for overindulging in sex, drugs, and rock ‘n roll and where locals have adopted gang-like behaviors, parents, schools, health professionals, and police tend to retain a high level of concern about surfer subculture.

In general, both subcultures have been accused of romanticizing a counterculture outlaw image, reifying the sports as masculine and white endeavors, and objectifying and sexualizing females. And, as will be obvious from the following discussion, some of the societal concerns raised about skaters also have application to the surfing subculture.

With respect to street skaters, citizens and authorities view them as engaging in a range of antisocial and criminal behavior involving physical threats to pedestrians, harm to public and private property, and ecological abuse (e.g., being confrontational with those they encounter, making excessive and disruptive noise, being a source of graffiti). In this respect, Vivoni (2009) suggests that skateboarding and other alternative sports hinge on the dynamics of contestation and cooptation. He writes that:

> “At the center of these dynamics lies an incommensurable divide between grassroots practices engaged in trespassing, loitering, and defacement of property and global corporate media images, merchandise, and spectacular mega events. ... Sidewalks, stairs, handrails, planters, benches, curbs, and ledges are the preferred found spaces of street skateboarders. Much like empty backyard pools, drainage ditches, and pipes, modern street furniture and landscaped public plazas become sources of thrill-induced pleasure as well as sites for political and spatial contestation.”

From the perspective of personal harm, the focus mainly has been on physical dangers but a range of psychosocial concerns warrant attention. With respect to physical harm, cautions abound that skateboarding injuries range from minor cuts and bruises to catastrophic brain injury. Data from the National Trauma Databank for a 5 year period indicate “2,270 admissions due to skateboard related injuries ... [were] associated with a high incidence of traumatic brain injury and long bone fractures” (Lustenberger, et al, 2010). The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (2007) stresses that “each year in the US, skateboarding injuries cause about 50,000 visits to emergency departments and 1500 children and adolescents to be hospitalized. ... 60% of skateboard injuries involve children under age 15."

From the perspective of social determinants of risky behavior, a recent study done with skateboarders is intriguing. The researchers report that physical risk taking by young men increases in the presence of an attractive female. They found that the

"increased risk taking leads to more successes but also more crash landings in front of a female observer. Mediational analyses suggest that this increase in risk taking is caused in part by elevated testosterone levels of men who performed in front of the attractive female. In addition, skateboarders' risk taking was predicted by their performance on a reversal-learning task, reversal-learning performance was disrupted by the presence of the attractive female, and the female's presence moderated the observed relationship between risk taking and reversal learning. These results suggest that men use physical risk taking as a sexual display strategy, and they provide suggestive evidence regarding possible hormonal and neural mechanisms" (Ronay & von Hippe, 2010).

In terms of general influence on psychosocial development, the concern is that attraction to these subcultures as a lifestyle is associated with poor performance at school, narrow social and emotional development, and significant limitations on adult opportunities for well-being.

What are the prevalent policy and practice efforts to address negative impact?

Public policy has gone back and forth about restricting surfing and skateboarding. With respect to surfing, it is commonplace to confine it to certain areas and to bar nonsurfers from using areas designated for surfing. Outright bans on surfing are rare. Decades ago, after three girls died in an accident involving an inflatable raft, Chicago did ban all flotation devices from their beaches, which halted all surfing. However, in June 2009, the Chicago Parks District rescinded the ban, opening two city public beaches for surfers.

Examples of policies indirectly aimed at combating behavior associated with surfing subculture include beach bans on alcohol and smoking (Marks, 2004; Ybarra, 2008).

With respect to skateboarding, *No Skateboarding* signs, environmental damage countermeasures, and increased surveillance have become ubiquitous. As Vivoni (2009) notes:

"No Skateboarding" signs are just one component of an intricate system of public space regulation that includes police-issued fines for trespassing, loitering, and defacement of public and private property. ... Metal brackets are fastened to concrete ledges, knobs are welded into handrails, and ornamental features are strategically placed in hopes of deterring scuff."

Similarly, Chui (2009) notes:

"The legal control of street skating in NYC originated from the prohibition of reckless operations of skates and skateboards on sidewalks enacted in 1996. ... A ticket can be issued to a violating skater, requiring the skater to pay a fine. Under certain circumstances, police will issue summons requiring skaters to go to court on designated dates. In privately owned but publicly accessible plazas, the control primarily comes from private security agencies. This private monitoring is often accompanied by a defensive system that combines the installation of surveillance cameras and skate proof designs."

From 1978-1989, Norway actually banned skateboarding, forcing skateboarders to go underground and find places where they could avoid the authorities. Nowadays, skateboarders in Norway apparently are treated much like bikers.

And, policy makers have gone back and forth about skate parks. When New York City enacted a law restricting skateboarding on sidewalks and public plazas in 1996, the Department of Parks and Recreation provided 16 skate parks citywide as an alternative. In contrast, despite data suggesting

that protective gear and designated areas for skateboarding can reduce the number of serious injuries (Lustenberger, et al., 2010; Yesupalan, 2008), many cities oppose skate parks because they believe they are a source of crime and drugs (Chiu, 2009; Vivoni, 2009).

Another problem that concerns some segments of the society is the protective stance by subgroups who are determined to maintain surfing and skateboarding as male and white dominated. Concern about such matters, however, has never reached more than a discussion stage (see, for example, "Opinion: Race and Surfing. We Need More of It" in *Surfer Magazine*, http://blogs.surfermag.com/office-blog/opinion-race-and-surfing-we-need-more-of-it/).

Finally, laws to protect surfers and skater's from personal harm remain controversial and difficult to enact. Surfers consistently repel efforts to pass helmet laws aimed at them. Skaters have found it more difficult to do so because of findings suggesting that helmets significantly reduce the incidence of serious injury to those on wheels (Lustenberger, et al., 2010; Yesupalan, 2008). For example, in 2003 California's bicycle helmet law was expanded to require anyone under 18 to wear helmets when using skateboards, inline skates, roller skates, or scooters. Violators are fined $25; funds go to the promotion of helmet safety education and subsidize helmets for low income families.

Any data on intervention impact?

Despite the various interventions devised by policy makers, as befits their subcultural image, surfers and skaters tend to ignore and even aggress against the rules. Surfers defy bans on where they can surf. Skaters ignore no skateboarding edicts. Chiu (2009) suggests they do so because, compared to skate parks, street skating is considered more real and cool – requiring courage and creativity. Skaters and their supporters also have been known to indicate their displeasure with signs banning them. For example, Vivoni (2009) reports: "A culture jamming tactic was devised by the Emerica skateboard shoe company, through the purchase-free distribution of 'de-sign' kits. ... The ideas was to place a "G" sticker over the letter "N" of a "No Skateboarding" sign reversing the meaning to "Go Skateboarding."

A considerable amount of resources are devoted to educating surfers and skaters about safe practices and how to provide aid if someone is hurt (e.g., use good equipment, use protective gear, learn basic skills, stay in shape, pursue new stunts with appropriate care, observe local etiquette, be prepared to respond in an emergency). Most of this is common sense, and research on the impact of educational interventions doesn't seem to have warranted attention. Observers suggest that as with other subculturals, some of the most successful interventions are those strictures that the subgroup imposes on its members. Ironically, for surfers and stakeholders this commonly takes the form of clarifying and enforcing general and local "etiquette" (see http://www.srosurf.com/rules.html ; http://www.skatingramp.com/a69179-skateboarding-etiquette-do-s-don-ts.cfm).

Proposed New Directions

As is the case with many other youth subgroups that don't fit the dominant culture's view of normal and healthy, there are widespread stereotypical prejudice against anyone who is seen as a surfer or a skateboarder. Besides immediate concerns, there are negative prognostications about the long-term impact on youth who are so-identified.

Given that relatively few fall into hardcore subgroups, it is imperative to design interventions in ways that avoid stigmatizing everyone who participates in such activities. From the perspective of our Center's work, the reason for concern related to any youngster arises when it is evident that significant factors are interfering with positive physical, cognitive, social and emotional

development. And, when those factors stem from or are maintained by association with a particular lifestyle, there is reason to address that lifestyle.

At the same time, it is essential to avoid traditional tendencies to wait for problems and then to approach such youth as if they required totally unique intervention strategies. Below and in the box that follows, we offer a perspective about policy and practice related to all students with the first emphasis on promotion of healthy development and preventing problems. Embedded are a few examples to illustrate addressing subgroups such as are found among surfers and skateboarders.

The emphasis is on developing and implementing a comprehensive intervention continuum that:

- *Promotes healthy development and prevents problems*

  For instance:
  > providing information to educate school and key community stakeholders and policy makers about the positive and negative features of youth subculture in general and specific subgroups associated with surfing and skateboarding that are in the locale and about how to counter any negative impact

  > establishing working alliances to dialogue with students designated as surfers and skateboarders, with the intent of minimizing reactance and negative encounters, personalizing engagement at school, and promoting social emotional learning

- *Intervening when problems are noted*

  For instance:
  > implementing agreed upon promising practices to respond as quickly as feasible

  > protecting all students (e.g., from being stigmatized and rejected, from inappropriately interfering with and confronting others)

  > ensuring a student's status as a surfer or skater isn't interfering with success at school (e.g., enhancing regular attendance and motivated participation in classroom learning)

  > providing medical, mental health, and learning supports
  (e.g., related to social, emotional, and learning problems)

- *Attending to chronic and severe problems*

  For instance:
  > identifying and referring for appropriate individual interventions as necessary (e.g., related to re-engaging disconnected students, reducing negative emotional and cognitive concerns)

  > establish a safety net of support (e.g., through school, family, community mental and physical health providers, social service and juvenile justice agencies)

In contrast to a waiting for problems, new directions thinking stresses a proactive approach to preventing social rejection, enhancing personal well-being, and improving academics, and using a continuum of interventions that contributes to enhancing a positive school climate.

A Perspective on What Schools Should Do Based on the Work of our Center at UCLA

Schools experience many overlapping concerns related to youth subgroups and youth subculture. Of special concern is addressing any negative impact (e.g., criminal acts, bullying, sexual harassment, interracial conflict, vandalism, mental health problems). But, also essential is a focus on promoting healthy development and fostering a positive school climate.

As always, the more we understand about subgroups and individual differences, the more effective our interventions can be. But to keep from the tendency to focus on each concern as if it is discrete, schools need to work in a new way.

Given the complexity of the negative behaviors that arise in relation to youth subgroups, those in the school, district, and community who have responsibility for gangs, safe schools, violence prevention, bullying, interracial conflict, substance abuse, vandalism, truancy, and school climate need to work collaboratively. The *immediate objectives* are to (1) educate others about motivational and behavioral factors associated with a particular subgroup, (2) counter the trend in policy and practice to establish initiatives in terms of separate categories that lead to a host of fragmented and too often ineffective programs and services, and (3) facilitate opportunities on campus for youth subgroups to engage positively in subcultural activity and connect with effective peer supports.

By working collaboratively and differentiating the causes of observed problems, school staff and community stakeholders can integrate fragmented and marginalized initiatives for promoting positive youth development, preventing problems, intervening as soon as problems are identified, and providing effective ways to respond to pervasive, chronic, and serious problems. *Longer-term*, the aim is to help develop a comprehensive system of student and learning supports that (a) addresses a wide range of barriers to learning, teaching, parenting, and development and (b) re-engages disconnected youth. Such a system encompasses a continuum of integrated school-community intervention systems that are fully integrated into the improvement agenda for schools and communities (Adelman & Taylor, 2006a, b).

Toward these ends, schools must reach out to the community and establish a collaborative mechanism where those with specialized knowledge not only bring that knowledge to the table, but also work to build the needed comprehensive system of student and learning supports that addresses a wide range of barriers to learning, teaching, parenting, and development (Adelman & Taylor, 2007). And it is essential to remember that those with specialized knowledge include youth themselves (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2009).

Moving forward requires building a comprehensive and systemic continuum of interventions and fully integrating the system into the improvement agenda for schools and communities. To guide development of a systemic approach, we have suggested using a continuum of integrated school-community intervention systems as a unifying framework. This includes school-community systems for promoting healthy development, preventing problems, intervening early to address problems as soon after onset as is feasible, and addressing chronic and severe problems.

Policy that helps schools and communities develop the full continuum of interventions is essential to moving forward in enhancing equity of opportunity. Such policy must effectively establish a *comprehensive intervention framework* that can be used to map, analyze, and set priorities. It must guide fundamental *reworking of operational infrastructure* so that there is leadership and mechanisms for building integrated systems of interventions at schools and for connecting school and community resources. And, it must provide guidance for the difficulties inherent in facilitating major *systemic changes*. By working in this way, we can counter the trend in policy and practice to establish initiatives in terms of separate categories that lead to a host of fragmented and too often ineffective programs and services.

For resource aids related to policy examples, intervention frameworks and related mapping tools, examples of ways to rework the operational infrastructure and develop key mechanisms such as a *Learning Support Resource Team*, guides for facilitating systemic change, and much more, see the Center's Toolkit at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/resourceaids.htm

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Glossary of Terms Related to Youth Culture Subgroups

Youth Subcultures: Annotated Bibliography and Related References

About Youth Gangs

About the Goth Youth Subculture

About Hip Hop Youth Subculture

About "Loners" and "Losers"

About "Jocks" as Youth Subculture

About Emo Youth Subculture

About Surfing and Skateboarding Youth Subcultures

About the Cheerleading Youth Subculture

About "Mean Girls" as a Youth Culture Subgroup

About "Nerds" and "Geeks" as an Identified Subculture

About "Preppies" as a Youth Culture Subgroup

About Sexual Minority (LGBT) Youth Subculture

Youth and Socially Interactive Technologies

About Raves as a Youth Culture Phenomenon

Others are in development

*Many of the terms used by youth in referring to subgroups often are pejorative and offensive. We do not condone such language. We do, however, recognize the need to go beyond adultcentric definitions and descriptions of youth subgroups if we are to understand youth perceptions and perspectives. So the *Information Resource* documents reflect the terms used by youth.