

# November is Rural Health Month

## Supporting Prevention in Rural Communities



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WA State Rural Prevention Network Steering Committee Member

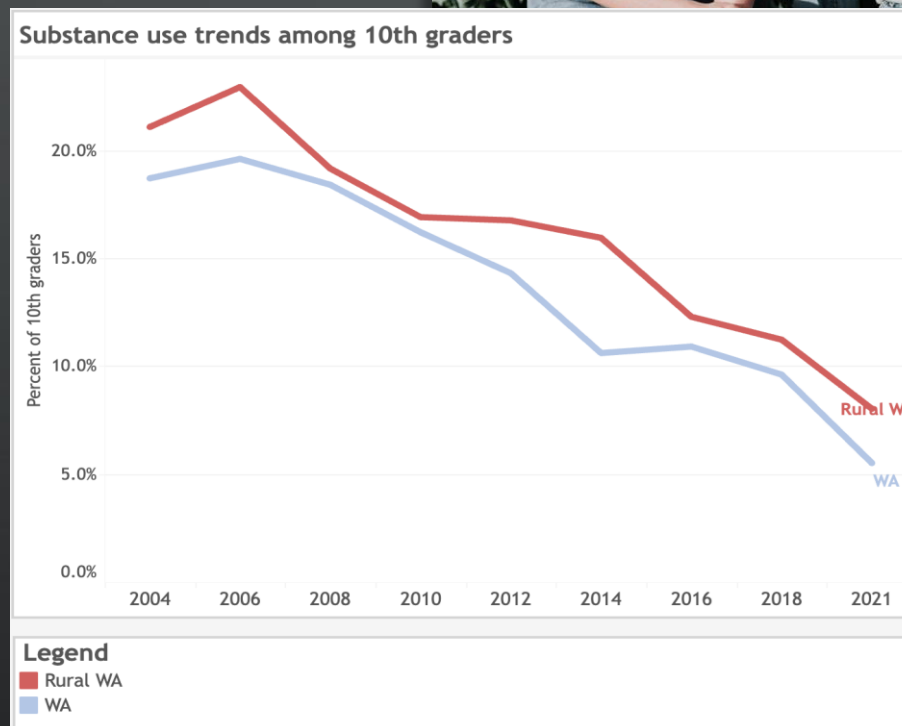
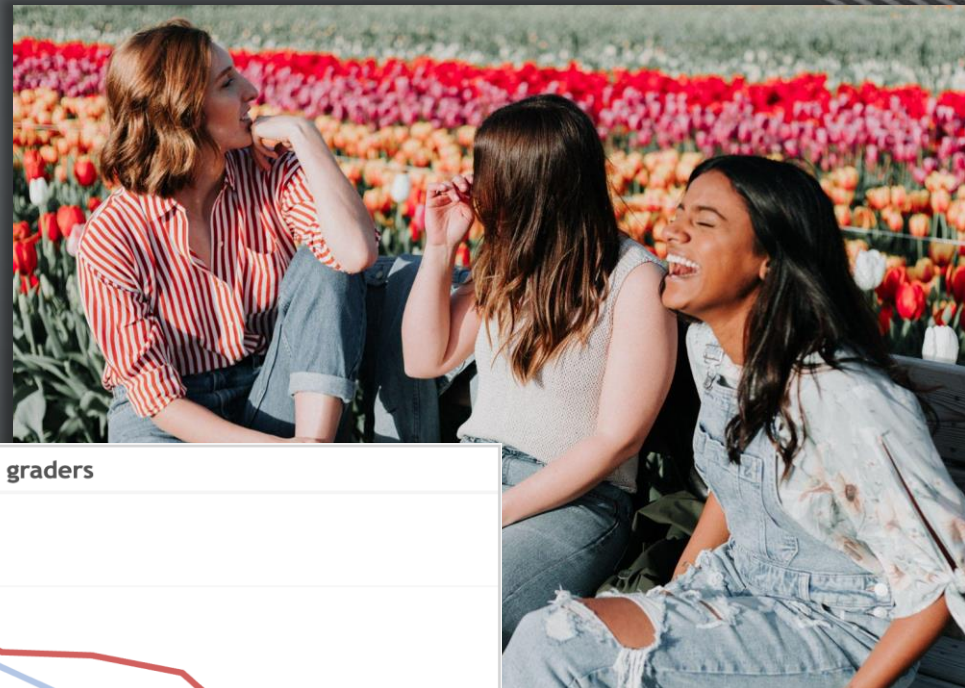


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# Define Rural

What does it mean?

- Self-identification
- Intersectionality
- Values and beliefs
- Unique data
- Grassroots



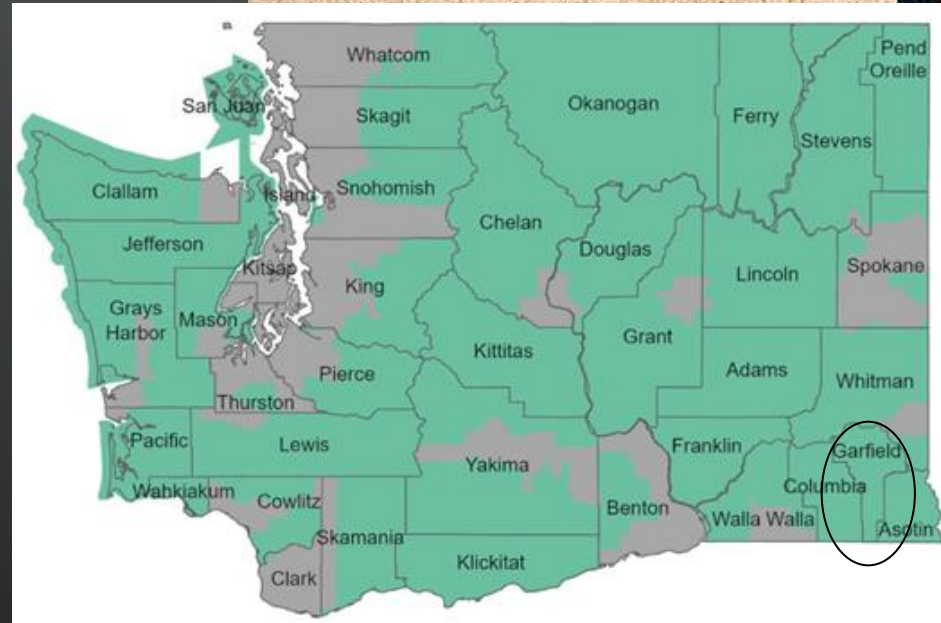
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# What Does Pomeroy Look Like?

Garfield County  
Population: 2,400

- Only 1 zip code
- Isolated, no services in a 30 mile radius
- Mostly white, lower middle class farming community



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# The Paradox of Rural



- Poverty and wealth
- Hardship and privilege
- Strengths sometimes are *also* Weaknesses



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# Rural Challenges

- Distance and technology challenges
- Recruitment of all 12 sectors
- Limited volunteer pool
- Identification and use of local data
- Gatekeepers and power players
  - Formal and informal power holders



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# Rural Challenges, cont.

- Fiscal Agencies
  - Business capacity
  - Regional service - not local
  - Culture clash
- Technical Challenges
  - Internet speeds
  - Data gathering and analysis
  - Reporting - low numbers, privacy concerns



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# Differences in Rural and Urban Communities

- Slow trust building
- Values
  - Solidarity
  - Interdependence
  - Civic pride
- Integrating rural innovation
- In-person relationships
- Acknowledgement of betrayals:  
Economy, access, and culture





# What about the positives?

- Rural communities can thrive with little funding
- Funding prevention in rural communities provides needed infrastructure for other projects
- Innovative practices that can drive improvement
- Strong, tight knit communities





# Washington State Rural Network



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# Structure

- Network of Prevention Professionals
- Supported by 1 full time staff at ESD112
- Drug Free Communities Coalitions
- Community Prevention & Wellness Initiative Coalitions (CPWI)
- WA State Department of Health
- WA State Healthcare Authority
- Collaborate on rural needs
- Unique rural data
- Provide professional development
- Expert presentations



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# Network Goals

1. Connect rural communities
2. Reduce youth substance misuse in rural areas



*A gathering of rural people who support youth on their journey to whole health.*



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How to Have Fearlessly Curious  
Conversations in Dangerously Divided Times

**I NEVER  
THOUGHT  
OF IT  
THAT WAY**

"The book's greatest offering, I think, is permission to reclaim  
people we might have dumped for ideological reasons; such  
connections won't sully us but may in fact enrich us."

—NEW YORK TIMES

MÓNICA GUZMÁN

# Rural Network Book Club



How do talk about cultural  
competence in a rural community?

"Anyone who sincerely wants to bridge the gaps in  
understanding will appreciate this book."

—*Manhattan Book Review*

In "*I Never Thought of it That Way*", Washington State  
author Mónica Guzmán explores how to have  
curious conversations in dangerously divided times.



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# Rural vs. Non-rural Data Findings

- Higher use of cannabis, vapor, binge drinking
- Native, Hispanic/Latino, LGBTQ+
  - Fact: No difference in number of youth identifying as LGBTQ+
- When discussing disparities, focus on risk/protective factors
- Positive Adult Relationships
- Positive Childhood Experiences

Risk Factors		
Measure	Rural WA	Non-rural WA
Have best friends who use marijuana	32.8%	31.5%
Easy access to marijuana	32.6%	31.5%
Perceive no/low risk of harm from regular marijuana use (once or twice a week)	31.1%	28.2%
Friends perceive youth marijuana use as not wrong	14.3%	12.9%
Perceive no/low risk of harm from regular vaping (almost daily)	16.1%	12.7%
Perceive no/low risk of harm from heavy cigarette use (pack or more a day)	9.0%	7.8%
Perceive no/low risk of harm from regular alcohol use (daily)	22.5%*	15.9%
Perceive no/low risk of harm from binge drinking (five or more alcoholic drinks on one occasion, once or twice a week)	12.5%	10.9%
Perceive no/low risk of harm from misusing prescription drugs	7.8%	6.5%

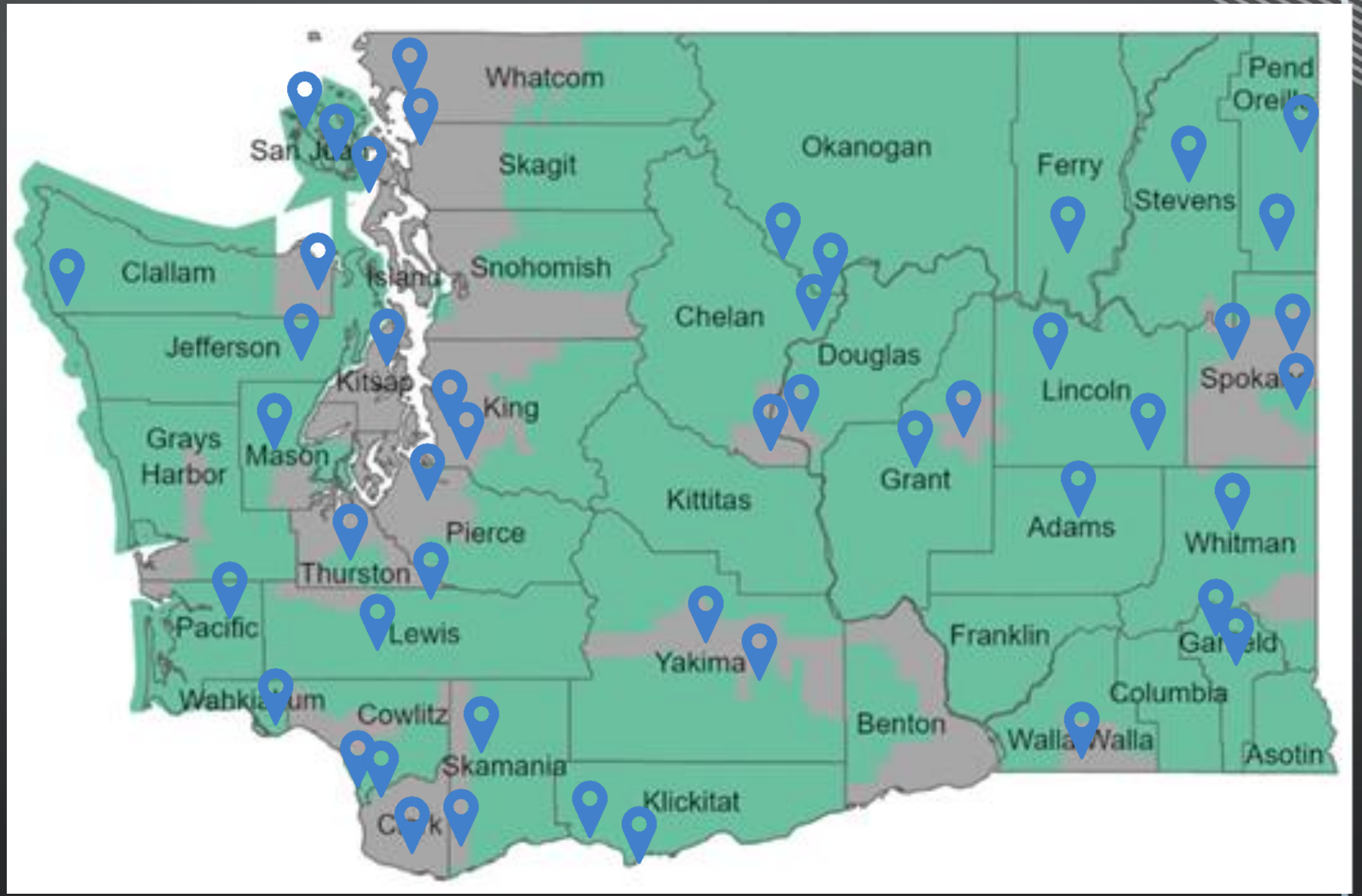
Protective Factors		
Measure	Rural WA	Non-rural WA
Parents perceive youth marijuana use as very wrong	75.1%	75.7%
Parental discussion about reasons to not use marijuana	58.1%	58.3%



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# Who Do We Serve?

- Isolated, rural communities
- Those who self-identify as rural
- People who serve rural but may not identify as rural





We have had  
TWO Rural  
Prevention  
Conferences!



# Current Priorities



## Toolkit

- Stock photos
- Success stories
- Other TBD



## Conference

- Training
- Networking
- Skill building



## Policy

- Advocacy
- Connect to Legislators
- Public testimony



## Data

- Needs assessment
- Healthy Youth Survey





[www.preventcoalition.org/rural](http://www.preventcoalition.org/rural)



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