

**YOUTH
PEER
MENTOR
PROGRAM**



Annual Report
2021

Executive Summary



Greetings!

It has been an honor and pleasure to work with the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) this past year to increase the impact and reach of the Youth Peer Mentor Program. YPMP began as a pilot project with 13 young men at the California Division of Juvenile Justice, but has since grown significantly, expanding across the state.

Our North Star has been the goal set by DHCS of “reducing unmet treatment need and... opioid overdose related deaths through the provision of prevention, treatment, and recovery activities with a special focus on populations with limited MAT access, including youth, rural areas, and American Indian and Alaska Native tribal communities.” Our team strives to create scalable and sustainable strategies, programs, and services that are evidence-based, meet the needs of the community, and align with the goal of DHCS to serve youth and rural areas of the state. We have had the opportunity to expand our program and partnerships into rural counties, including Yolo, Glenn, Butte, Placer, Nevada, and Stanislaus, serving both justice-involved and transition age youth populations.

During 2021, with the continued presence of COVID, we transformed our on-site delivery model into a four-tiered model that can be delivered in-person, online via Zoom, and through our hosted online community. We continued to scale by training, certifying, and mobilizing additional facilitators for our Tier 1 program, *Mindfully Exploring Substance Use* (Mindfulness-Based Substance Abuse Treatment).

In addition, we piloted a new program, Natural High Retreats, which combines substance use education, mindfulness practices, and nature-based peak experiences.

YPMP programming is informed by the recognition that trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) are prevalent in the populations we serve. As we continued to refine YPMP for greater impact, we are encouraged by our alignment with the California Surgeon General’s Report, *Roadmap for Resilience: The California Surgeon General’s Report on Adverse Childhood Experiences, Toxic Stress, and Health* (December 2020), specifically, the report’s support for youth programming based on what the report refers to as “Evidence-based Buffering Interventions,” including mindfulness practices, exposure to nature, supportive relationships, and physical activity.

Looking to 2022, we are excited to continue rolling out programs across California that support justice-involved and transition age youth populations. We are grateful for the opportunity to provide youth access to programming that provides increased self-awareness, positive relationships, practices to mindfully address substance use, and experiences that expand their view of the world, while facilitating personal healing and growth.

Serving in peace, love, and gratitude,

Keith Aldrich
President, Continuity Consulting, Inc.

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Transitioned from an 8-week, in-person program for incarcerated youth at the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to a four-tiered flexible, hybrid approach that can be delivered completely online, in-person, or in a hybrid format.



Developed and piloted a program of Natural High Retreats for at-risk and underserved populations, incorporating mindfulness practices, substance use education, group process, and nature-based experiences.



Launched online communities for youth participants and program facilitators to connect, continue learning, host private groups, and participate in training.



Recruited and trained 26 additional Mindfulness-Based Substance Abuse Treatment (MBSAT) program facilitators from community partners throughout California.

2021 Major Accomplishments



Expanded YPMP to include at-risk youth, TAY populations, foster youth programs, and justice-impacted youth outside the Division of Juvenile Justice.



Provided technical assistance, trainings, and workshops to a variety of community partners on substance use, the brain science of addiction, trauma, ACEs, toxic stress, risk reduction, and mindfulness-based practices.

Despite the challenges of the last 18+ months, the Youth Peer Mentor Program continues to expand across the state as we build our network of relationships.

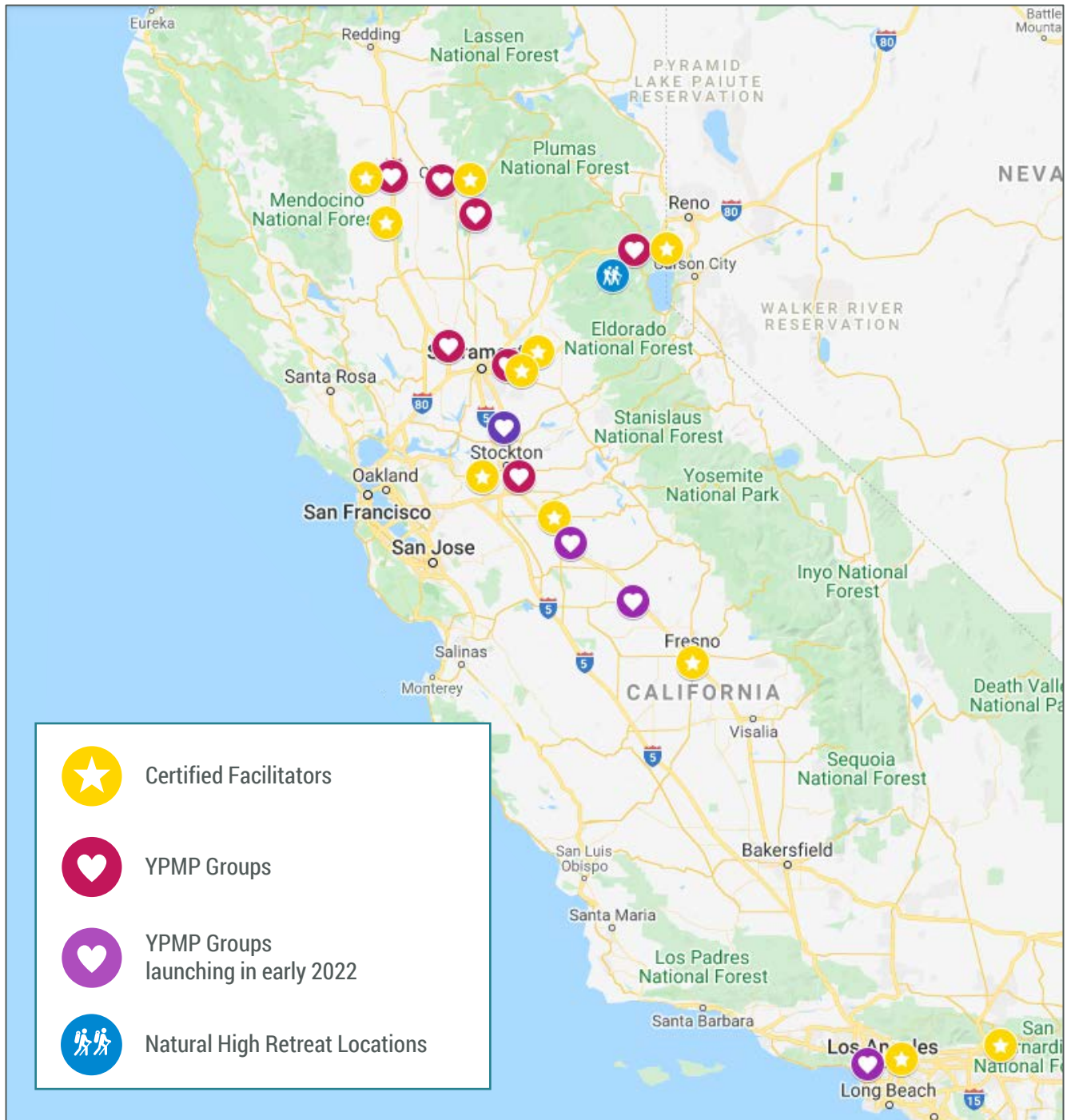
We are presently serving:

- Butte County
- Glenn County
- Nevada County
- Placer County
- Sacramento County
- San Joaquin
- Yolo County

Early 2022 Expansion:

- Los Angeles County
- Stanislaus County
- Valley State Prison, Youthful Offender Program

Areas Served



Our Passion for Transforming Lives

Amid constraints and obstacles, our team's passion and commitment to the youth we serve was a constant throughout 2021. Building authentic, caring relationships is at the heart of our work. Even though this work is often messy and fraught with challenges and setbacks, we see remarkable potential in each and every person. We go to great lengths to offer care, compassion, and support to individuals who don't yet have the capacity to hold space for their own potential.



Our Entrepreneurial Spirit, Business Acumen, and Program Management Expertise

Our twenty years of management consulting experience has been invaluable. Our team members' entrepreneurial spirit and business acumen has provided the structures, strategic processes, ways of thinking, attitudes, and problem-solving skills needed for an often chaotic, undefined, immature landscape of service provision to these youth populations.

Our program management experience has allowed us to bring a high-level of rigor and planning to our delivery. This has not only served our team well but has also been valuable to several of our partners as we develop programs together.

Adaptability and Perseverance

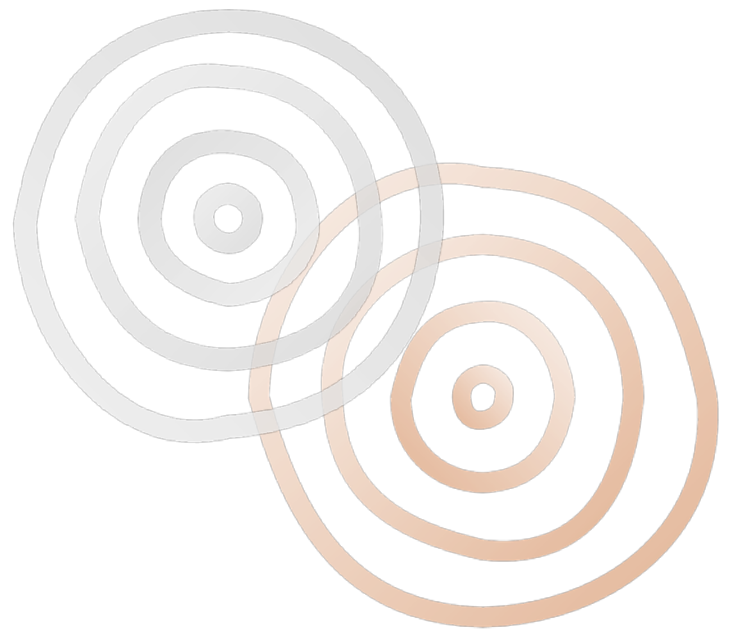
As you can imagine, 2021 has been an ongoing process of adapting to a changing and fluid environment. We develop plans, pilot, test, and evaluate the receptivity and effectiveness. We are not married to any plan. When we see new opportunities, we pivot to address them. When something isn't working, we either modify to improve it or scrap it and try something new.

Our team's perseverance in the face of obstacles has allowed us to break through barriers and continue in the face of adversity. Our perseverance is tightly coupled to our passion for transforming lives -- it is the faces of individuals we see, not impersonal numbers in a spreadsheet.

Empowered by DHCS

The California Department of Health Care Services has entrusted us with designing and delivering programs to serve youth populations under the State Opioid Response Grant, and we are grateful. By providing high-level goals and a broad scope of work, DHCS has allowed us the flexibility to gather information, identify needs, pilot initiatives, evaluate, and modify or pivot in a new direction, if needed. This has allowed us to be creative and focus on outcomes rather than being restricted to a prescribed solution from DHCS.

Success Factors



Collaboration and Partnership

We could not have done this without the support and trust of our partners. Partners such as the California Division of Juvenile Justice, Butte County Probation, Glenn County Office of Education, and Yolo County Foster Youth are examples of partners who have trusted us to deliver programs to the youth they serve.

Additionally, our community-based partnerships and program facilitators have been a joy to work with as we develop plans to give more youth access to the programming they need.



Challenges Faced

Finding the Right Partners

It has been very labor-intensive to identify both individual youth candidates and community partners that have programs that are aligned with the YPMP goals. It requires a significant amount of networking, outreach, presentations, and vetting partners to discover alignment.

Many potential partners whom we contact have all their programming locked-in. They often sense the need for SUD programming, but do not have the capacity to add any new programs. Others express interest but they do not believe that their youth population can commit to a 12-week program like “Mindfully Exploring Substance Use”.

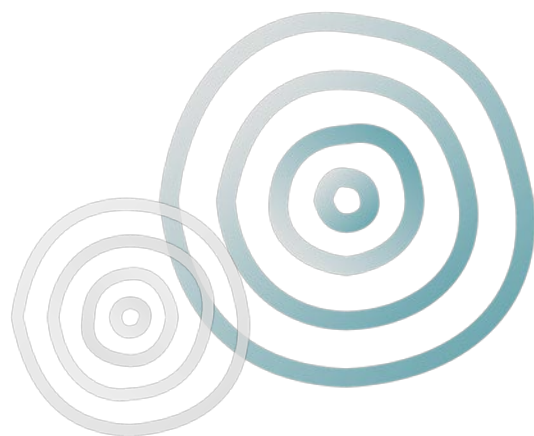


SB 803 and the Uncertainty of Peer Support Certifications

Our four-tiered Youth Peer Mentor Program is set up as a progression from personal to professional development – a progression that prepares participants to take the Certified Peer Recovery Specialist exam offered by both CADTP and CCAPP.

SB 803, which will be in effect by July 2022, introduces the Peer Support Specialist role. CalMHSA has been selected to work with California counties and to oversee certification requirements and process.

Currently, we have concerns about the long-term continuation and viability of the CADTP and CCAPP Peer Recovery Specialist certification and the value it may or may not provide to participants and prospective employers. Since CalMHSA is still in the development stages of the certification process for the Peer Support Specialist, it appears we will be unable to do an impact analysis on our programming until sometime in 2022 once CalMHSA has formally rolled out the program.



COVID Constraints

COVID has been both an obstacle and an opportunity. It has prevented in-person access to DJJ, county youth detention centers, and many other community youth programs.

On the other hand, it has enabled us to shift to live groups via Zoom and hybrid types of program delivery and to develop an online community. This has allowed us to test these alternative methodologies and to reach some youth communities who would not have been possible to reach in-person.

Shining Star In the Spotlight

JUNIOR



Junior was in our very first YPMP cohort at the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) in 2019. He stuck out as an enthusiastically engaged participant. With nothing to return to back home, he told us that he was interested in continuing his studies and working with us after his release.

Following his graduation from YPMP at DJJ, Junior continued to show interest and interact with our team when we were onsite, asking about what he needed to do to be prepared for future opportunities.

In November 2020, Continuity's Joaquin Jordan attended his discharge hearing in Tulare County. He brought Junior back to Chico with him where housing, employment, and case management had all been arranged, along with ongoing mentoring from the Continuity team. In January 2021, Junior enrolled in an addiction studies program at the local community college and joined a new YPMP cohort that was kicking off.

Junior has completed Tiers 1-3 of YPMP, attended a Natural High Retreat, and is preparing to take the Peer Recovery Support Specialist exam in 2022. He also participated with Continuity facilitators in delivering YPMP virtually via Zoom to another cohort at DJJ. The experience was both motivational for him and powerful for the participants to see what life could be like on the outside. Junior is looking forward to co-facilitating groups in 2022 and to helping others on their journey.

We believe he is just getting started!

"It has been a life changing experience. I am becoming more aware of who I am and not letting labels of the past define me. It's all about who I am today and who I am becoming that is most important. The whole experience has been totally awesome! I am so grateful for everything. It feels amazing to live a normal life. When I look back at the past, I am proud of myself, what I am doing and who I am becoming. I never thought I would ever be able to say that."

Shining Star In the Spotlight



Brittney left home at sixteen due to a toxic home environment and her mother's struggle with addiction. Once on her own, she worked to provide for herself and finish high school. After graduation, she got a job at a homeless shelter where she discovered that she had a love for helping people.

Brittney enrolled in a YPMP cohort in 2021: "I wanted to start on career path in a field that was about helping people. YPMP felt like a great opportunity to grow and provided the motivation to go back to school."

In the YPMP group, Brittney's eagerness and vulnerability was contagious. The group became an important community for her -- she even asked if the group could meet multiple times per week. She enrolled in an addiction studies program through a community college and has continued to engage with Continuity mentors on a regular basis.

"YPMP has provided me with tremendous support, encouragement, and growth. It has been a spiritual awakening for me, I have never been this connected to myself. I am learning to help myself, and continue to grow in mindfulness, and in deeper connection with others. I am no longer triggered to smoke when around others. I am okay letting them do their thing while I do mine. Plus, it was nice to have a clean drug test for my current job without the hassle of sneaking in someone else's pee."

Then, after completing the first two tiers of YPMP, Brittney attended a Natural High Retreat at Donner Summit. It was a pivotal experience for her. Even though she was initially reticent about attending, after discussing it with her mentors, she decided to go. During the trip, she conquered her fear of rock climbing and gained some insight on her life during a "solo sit" on an outcropping overlooking Donner Lake.



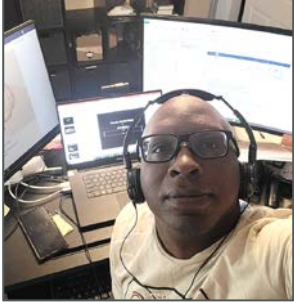
Afterwards, she asked about coming back as a Peer Mentor for future groups, which she did a couple weeks later with a group of youth from Glenn County. She led meditations, co-facilitated groups, shared her personal journey, and coached others through their fear of rock climbing.

Brittney has continued to co-facilitate a weekly YPMP program at Glenn County where she has shown vulnerability and demonstrated amazing leadership in her role. When asked about her motivation, she says, "I see myself in them and I want them to have the tools to escape their life, their patterns, and habits, to grow and see that they don't need to turn to substances as the solution to their problems."

So, what's in store for Brittney in 2022? "I want to facilitate more groups and help more people, to continue as a Peer Mentor at the Natural High Retreats, and to bring more of my ideas to YPMP and see them come to life."

Well, Brittney, we can't wait to see it.

Continuity Team Member: Joaquin Jordan



Joaquin Jordan (SUDCC III-CS, CADC-II-CS CA, ICADC, SAP) lives and breathes the Youth Peer Mentor Program. His commitment to the youth we serve is unparalleled.

On any given day, he may facilitate a small group of youth for Butte County probation in Chico, followed by a one-on-one session with a youth in Paradise, an afternoon session at a Butte County detention center in Oroville, and capped off with an evening session with Glenn County youth in Orland. In addition, he has crisscrossed the state to engage with partners in Stockton, Modesto, and Los Angeles.



He has delivered training and provided technical assistance to several of our collaborative partners -- including Impact Justice, AmeriCorps, True North Housing Alliance, Child Abuse Prevention Center, and Youth 4 Change -- on the topics of trauma, the brain and the biology of addiction.

"I want to express my sincere gratitude to Continuity Consulting for providing a high-quality training to our CA Foster Youth Initiative AmeriCorps Members. The training was thought-provoking and provided valuable insight into the Biology of Addiction. The presentation was very engaging as evidenced by the high level of participation from the members throughout the workshop. I was quite impressed with the energy and devotion of the trainer -- his passion and wisdom are captivating!!!"

(Feedback from one of the trainings led by Joaquin in 2021)

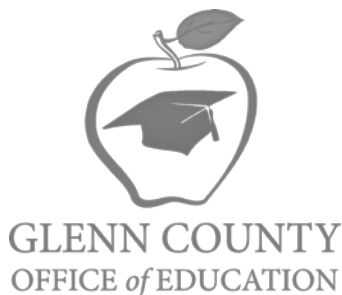


In all he does – whether it be facilitating YPMP groups in Yolo County, Glenn County, Butte County, and at DJJ, meeting one-on-one with youth on probation, attending their court dates, delivering workshops, collaborating on program design, consulting with partners, or mentoring youth in crisis -- Joaquin's unwavering commitment to the youth we serve is an inspiration to the other Continuity team members and all our partners who work with Joaquin on a regular basis.

Hey, Joaquin, keep up the good work!

Partners in Change

Our public-sector and non-profit partners makes us better and expand the impact of our efforts. We wanted to highlight two of partners who we began collaborating with in 2021.



Glenn County Office of Education

We were referred to the Glenn County Office of Education Foster Youth Services (GCOE-FYS) by Yolo County Foster and Kinship Care Education where we held a YPMP Tier 1 cohort.

GCOE-FYS have been a model partner – enthusiastic and committed from the initial planning sessions through execution. We kicked off their Tier 1 program with a Natural High Retreat at Donner Summit with 15 youth and four staff members. Following the retreat, we met in Glenn County for an integration meeting to process the retreat and kick off a 12-week Tier 1 program: *Mindfully Exploring Substance Use*. During this meeting, one youth told us, “I really miss being up there with you guys. I know I complained a lot about getting up early and going outside, but now that I am home and sitting in my room on social media, I realize how much I miss being in nature and how it made me feel and sitting in groups with everyone.” A similar sentiment was expressed by many of the retreat participants.

In the weeks following the retreat, we have heard that youth have been sharing their YPMP experiences at their drug court appearances, as a result, the judge has expressed interest in learning more about the program. To scale and ensure the sustainability of the program in Glenn County, Continuity has certified two County staff members as Tier 1 facilitators. They are participating in the current program and learning from the Continuity facilitators in order to lead programs in the future.

Gateway Mountain Center

Gateway Mountain Center, based in Truckee, California, transforms youth through adventures in nature and wellness. Since 2006, they have been innovators in the nature-as-medicine movement and have served over 25,000 youth of all backgrounds.

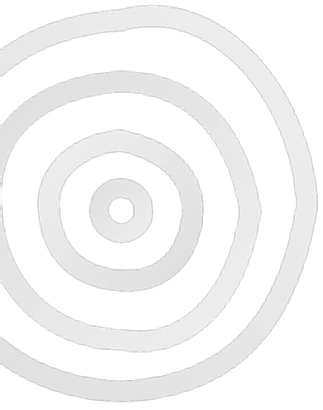
Gateway’s mission is to positively transform the lives of youth. By connecting to self, nature, and community, youth of all backgrounds Learn, Heal & Thrive! They do this through high-impact nature-based learning, wellness adventures, and innovative, non-traditional therapeutic approaches to mental health and wellness.

Continuity’s partnership with Gateway launched with two initiatives. First, during the summer of 2021, the Continuity and Gateway team came together to design the Natural High Retreat program, incorporating substance use education, mindfulness, group process, nature connection, and embodied peak experiences. After two successful pilots in the fall of 2021, we are planning for more in 2022.

Second, we trained and certified five Tier 1 facilitators to support the delivery of MBSAT-based programming at schools in the Tahoe-Truckee Unified School District and at the Gateway Wellness Center.

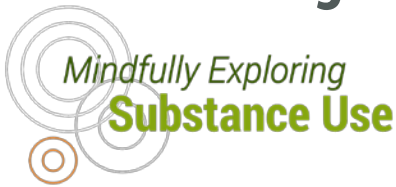
sierraexperience.org

Youth Peer Mentor Program



The Youth Peer Mentor Program (YPMP) is a four-tier model designed to help address California’s substance use crisis by • providing substance use education to young adults ages 16-25 across California (with a focus on transition age and justice system-impacted youth) and • helping more individuals with lived experience enter the substance use disorder treatment field.

Program Overview



TIER 1

“Mindfully Exploring Substance Use” is a small group exploration to help young adults grow more “mindful” about their substance use and recovery through (1) adopting intentional meditation and mindfulness practices and (2) an increased awareness and perspective-taking of various areas of their lives.

Personal Development

TIER 2

“Mindful Peer Mentor Training” is a small group exploration designed to equip participants to become Peer Recovery Support Specialists.

Topics include Understanding Peer Support in Recovery, Relationship and Communication Skills, Motivational Interviewing, Cultural Competence, Ethics, Professionalism, Wellness, Behavioral Change Process, Trauma-Informed Care, Resourcing, and Facilitating Support Groups.

Professional Development

RADT Registered Alcohol and Drug Technician

TIER 3

Preparation assistance for the exam to become a **RADT**. Although individuals are still obtaining the necessary education and experience to advance in the profession, becoming a **RADT** will give them instant recognition with employers and colleagues.

Once a **RADT**, they can take advantage of internships and employment through our network of CA SUD treatment providers. Mentoring continues as well.

Professional Development

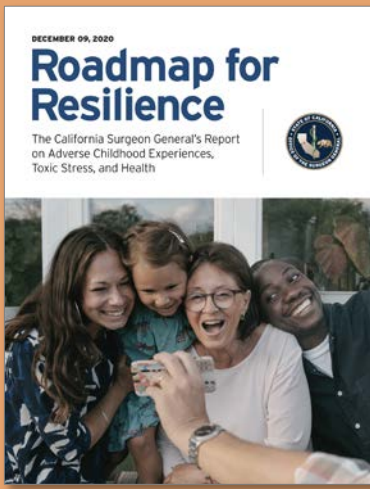
PRS Certified Peer Recovery Specialist

TIER 4

Preparation assistance for the exam to become a **Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (PRS)**. The professional **PRS** is recognized as the direct support specialist, with formal recovery support services responsibilities available to individuals.

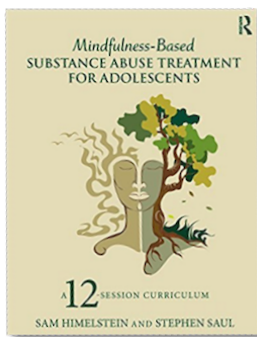
Once working professionally as a **PRS**, participants can continue to work towards full AOD Counselor Certification.

Professional Development



Roadmap for Resilience, State of California (Dec 2020)

The California Surgeon General's Report: Roadmap for Resilience includes mindfulness practices as one of seven "evidence-based buffering interventions" effective in interrupting the toxic stress response, breaking the intergenerational cycle of ACEs and toxic stress, and promoting an intergenerational cycle of health.



Mindfulness-Based Substance Abuse Treatment (MBSAT)

Continuity Consulting has incorporated the Mindfulness-Based Substance Abuse Treatment (MBSAT) program as Tier 1 of the

Youth Peer Mentor Program (YPMP) for justice-involved and transition age youth. MBSAT is a 12-Session, 90-minutes per session program.

Through a randomized control trial with incarcerated youth, researchers found that MBSAT resulted in:

- Decreased stress
- Decreased impulsiveness
- Improved attitude toward drugs
- Improved self-regulation
- Significant increase in self-esteem
- Significant increase in decision making skills
- Significant decrease in behavioral outburst



MBSAT training is provided by one of the book's authors, Sam Himelstein, PhD from the Center for Adolescent Studies. Find more information here: <https://bit.ly/3ewUq4y>

The Evidence Behind the Program

Other Programs Successfully Using Mindfulness-Based Interventions to Address Substance Use Disorders

- Mindfulness-based relapse prevention (MBRP)
- Mindfulness-oriented recovery enhancement (MORE)
- Mindful awareness in body-oriented therapy (MABT)

Using randomized controlled trials, these programs reported the following findings:

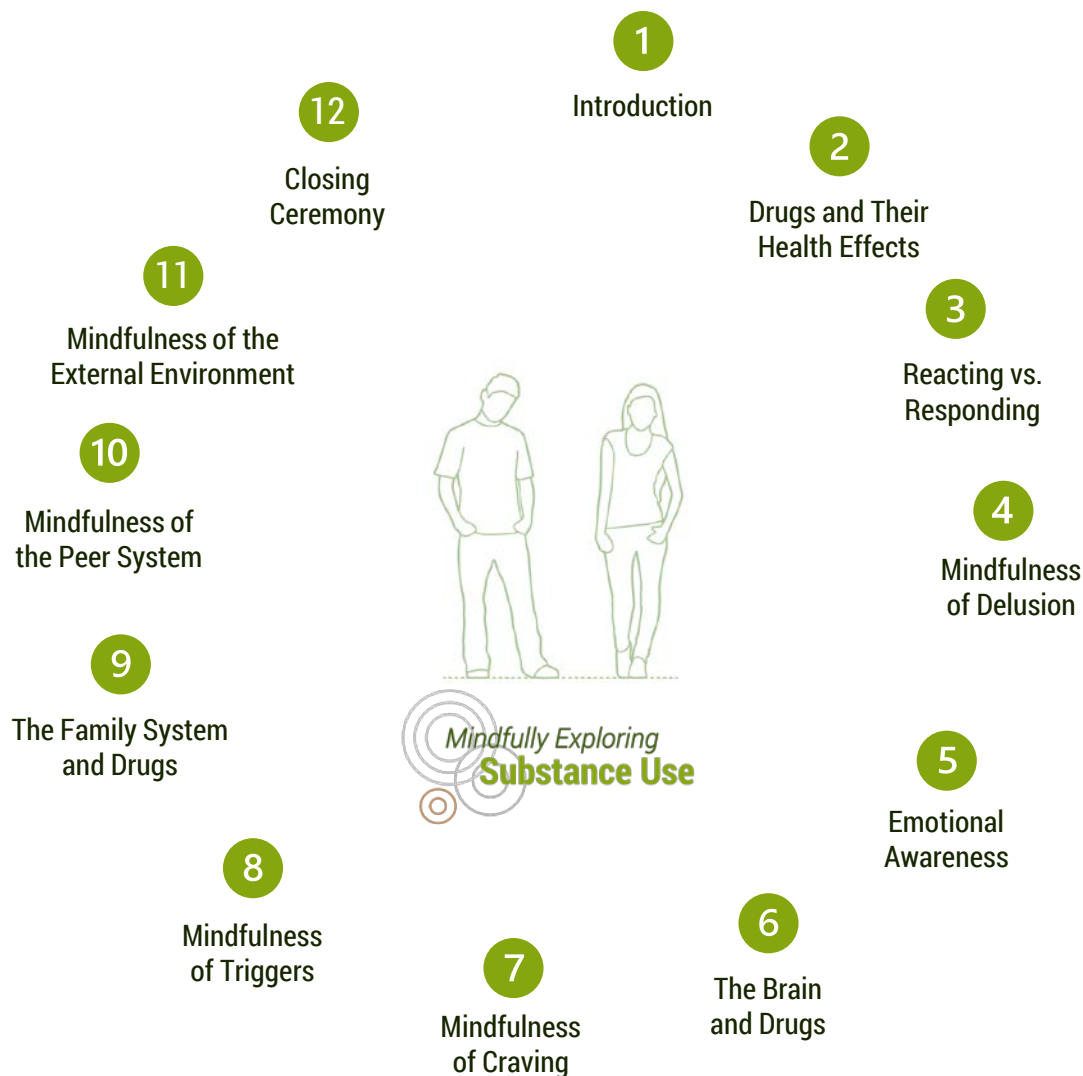
Improved symptomatic distress and emotional regulation, significantly lower substance use rate, greater self-control over cravings, increases in acceptance and acting with awareness. Additionally, they saw significantly improved physiological recovery from stress and drinking-related triggers, greater decreases in post-traumatic stress symptoms, decreases in opioid-wanting and urge, as well as increases in positive affect, meaning in life, savoring, and self-transcendence.

Tier 1: Mindfully Exploring Substance Use

Tier 1 of the Youth Peer Mentor Program focuses on an important area of personal development -- learning to be mindful about substance use.

“**Mindfully Exploring Substance Use**” is an experiential, small group exploration to help adolescents grow more “mindful” about their substance use and recovery in two ways: (1) through adopting intentional meditation and mindfulness practices and (2) through an increased awareness and perspective-taking of various areas of their lives.

It is based on the book, *Mindfulness-Based Substance Abuse Treatment for Adolescents: A 12-Session Curriculum* (Routledge, 2015) and the corresponding MBSAT facilitator certification program which is listed on the National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP).



Tier 2: Mindful Peer Mentor Training



Mindful Peer Mentor Training is an experiential, small group exploration curriculum designed to equip participants to become Peer Recovery Support Specialists (PRS) and is based on *Rhode Island Peer Recovery Specialist Certification: Study Guide for the Certification Exam* (2016). The professional PRS is recognized as the direct support specialist, able to provide formal recovery support services to individuals.

1 Understanding Recovery
Defining Recovery and Comparing Recovery to Treatment

2 Peer Support in Recovery
Defining Peer Recovery Support and the Role of a Specialist

3 Relationship Building
Peer-Peer Connection built on Trust and Empathy

4 Communication Skills
Using Empowering Language and Effective Listening

5 Talking About Change
Motivational Interviewing and Sharing Your Recovery Story

6 Cultural Competence
The Connection between Culture and Recovery and Increasing Your Cultural Competence

7 Boundaries and Ethical Issues
Relational Boundaries, Ethics, and Confidentiality

8 Workplace Expectations
Professionalism in the Workplace and Self-Care for You

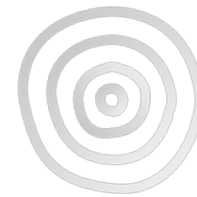
9 Supporting Recovery & Wellness
Recovery Includes Wellness and the Dimensions of Wellness

10 The Process of Behavior Change
Stages of Change and Recovery and Wellness Planning

11 Trauma-Informed Care
Understanding TIC and Connecting Peers to Resources

12 Facilitating Support Groups
Benefits and Phases of Groups and Group Facilitation

➔ After completion of Tier 1–2, participants are offered a Personal Planning Session with program mentors. Interested candidates may apply for YPMP’s Counselor Apprenticeship Program (Tier 3-4) and, together, they will assess any support or assistance needed to complete the program.



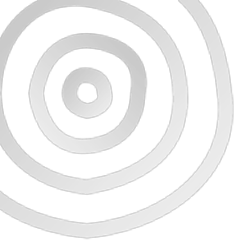
Tier 3: Become a Registered Alcohol and Drug Technician (RADT)

The goal of Tier 3: For interested and motivated graduates of Tier 1 and 2, this is the first step in the Counselor Apprenticeship Program that will lead to the development of an individualized preparation plan to facilitate employment, education and counselor certification. Completion of this law and ethics course and the accompanying exam is a California DHCS requirement for participants to intern or be employed at a treatment center.

- Interested candidates, who have completed Tier 1 and 2, are eligible to apply for the **Counselor Apprenticeship Program** (Tier 3 and 4).

- Registration as an Alcohol and Drug Technician (RADT) is achieved by **completing a 9.5-hour law and ethics course and passing the accompanying exam.**
- After Tier 3 participants pass the exam and receive their registration, Continuity can assist with **employment and/or internship opportunities** through our **network of SUD treatment providers.** This will enable graduates to **apply for Tier 4** and continue to work towards full counselor certification.





Tier 4: Become a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (PRS)

The goal of Tier 4* is both personal development, through mentoring, and professional development, training to be a paraprofessional, and culminating in State of California certification. Once working professionally as a PRS, participants can continue to work towards full **AOD Counselor Certification**.

**Tier 4 requires (1) completion of Tier 1 and 2, (2) RADT registration, and (3) an invitation to enter the program after a selection process that includes an application and interviews.*

- A **network of SUD treatment providers** is being developed to **provide employment and/or paid internships**, enabling participants to (1) become a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist and (2) continue to work towards full counselor certification.
- A **group of mentors**, who support the graduates, continues to grow, including a diverse team of instructors, and successful, credible messengers with lived experience.

Continuing educational programming • Personal and professional mentoring • Assistance with career planning



Natural High Retreats

Youth Adventure Intensives for Substance Use Prevention and Recovery

Natural High Retreats are condensed programming opportunities which provide justice-impacted and transition aged youth with substance use education in an environment that promotes engagement, deep learning, and improved retention. We weave together evidence-based practices and novel outdoor adventure to create an experience with lasting value for participants and partners.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Natural High Retreats are a unique opportunity for personal development, integrated with novel, outdoor-adventure experiences in a psychologically safe, therapeutic learning environment facilitated by skilled, experienced, and caring professionals.



We partner with Gateway Mountain Center, based in Truckee, California to provide these retreats.

Benefits of Natural High Retreats Include:

- Undistracted, concentrated program delivery. Mindfully Exploring Substance Use is typically delivered in twelve 90-minute sessions over three months. During the retreat, we cover highlights of the program which encourages youth to stay involved upon their return.
- Earned attachment with mentors and supervising adults. Shared experiences with caring adults creates trust and healthy relationships.
- Expert facilitation of all aspects of the program. Led by knowledgeable, experienced, caring and certified professionals.
- Outdoor activities and mindfulness practice shown as an alternative to substance use – in the wild discussions about flow states, breathing and self-regulation, and “natural high” dopamine release – all learned during an unforgettable experience and accessibly continued when they return home.

California Surgeon General's *Roadmap to Resilience* points out that (pg. 151):

- Nature is associated with calming the stress response system and increasing healthy behaviors such as physical activity, mindfulness, and relational health.
- Providers may consider park prescriptions, ecotherapy, wilderness therapy, or adventure-based treatment programs.

Natural High Retreats

Sample Program

DAY 1

- 11 am – Arrival
- 12 pm – Lunch
- 1:30 pm – Hike, introduction to being present and mindful
- 6:00 pm – Dinner
- 7:30 pm – Group games
- 8:30 pm – Night hike, star gazing
- 10 pm – Lights out

DAY 2

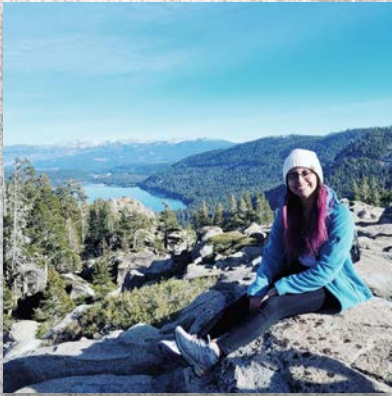
- 7:30 am – Breakfast
- 8:30-10:00 am – Highlights from “Mindfully Exploring Substance Use” (MBSAT) The Brain and Drugs
- 10:45 am-3:30 pm – Introduction to rock climbing, orienteering, and a destination hike, emphasizing themes throughout the day such as: being present, embodied mindfulness, flow, peak experience, facing fear, breathing for emotional regulation, the value of sitting/doing nothing, and discovering our deep connection with nature. Lunch.
- 4:30-6:00 pm -- Highlights from “Mindfully Exploring Substance Use” (MBSAT) Family Systems
- 6:30 pm – Dinner
- 7:45 pm – Gathering around the campfire, making smores
- 10 pm – Lights out

DAY 3

- 7:30 am – Breakfast
- 8:30-10 am -- Highlights from “Mindfully Exploring Substance Use” (MBSAT) Peer Systems
- 10:30 am-12:30 pm – Hike, lunch, and solo sit
- 1-2 pm – Closing Group Circle: integration and preparation for the return home, emphasizing connection with others, peak experiences, and intentionality
- 3 pm – Head home

Natural High Retreats

Expanding Our Experience



The YPMP Online Community

The Development of the YPMP Online Community

Continuity Consulting began developing a private online community for youth participants and program facilitators. The online community provides those involved in the program access to a private, by-invitation-only platform, which includes:

- Additional resources on addiction, mindfulness, community partners, and other relevant topics.
- A private group with facilitator resources and the ability to share best practices and collaborate.
- Private groups for youth cohorts with eLearning functionality and the ability to communicate and share within their community.

YPMP Community

Search YPMP Community

+ Share your thoughts...

Secret

Keith Aldrich
Host

Session 4 - Mindfulness of Delusion

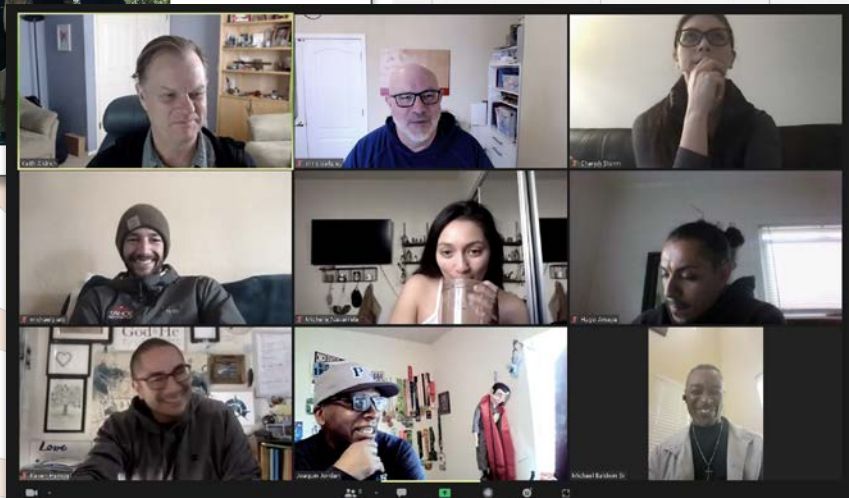
Here are the slides we developed for session 4 to assist facilitators in delivering the session. This session includes the reading of the poem "The Perfect High" by Shel Silverstein. The poem can be...**CONTINUE**

The Pros and Cons of Substance Use

Pros	Cons

Congratulations to our latest graduates

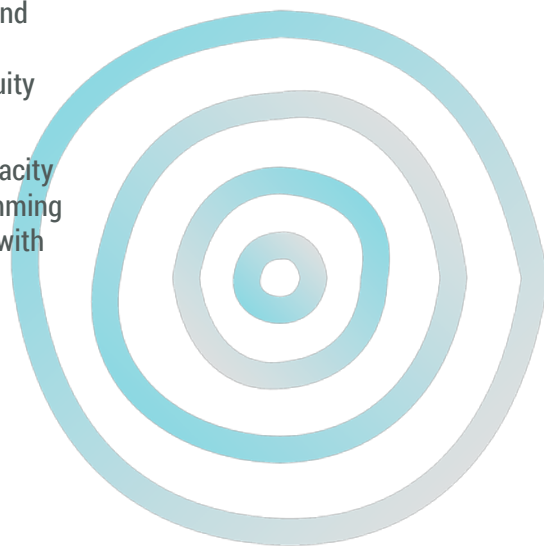
You guys are awesome. We are so proud of all of you. I can't believe 12 weeks went so fast. Looking forward to kicking off our next group.



With the goal of expansion, increased access to programming, and long-term sustainability, our team has continued to grow our cadre of certified Tier 1 facilitators.

In collaboration with Dr. Sam Himmelstein from the Center for Adolescent Studies we have trained and certified additional facilitators to deliver Tier 1 programming, both in collaboration with Continuity Consulting and within their organizations.

This partnership (1) meets our objectives of capacity building and long-term sustainability of programming and (2) equips people who are already engaged with youth in the community in which they serve.

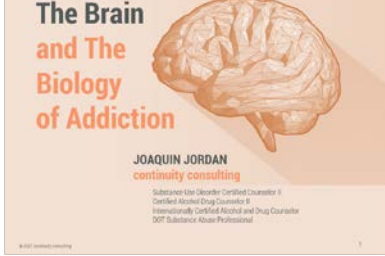


Creating a Community of Tier 1 Facilitators

MBSAT “Mindfully Exploring Substance Use” Certified Trainers:

- **Continuity Consulting** (4) – Folsom, Chico, and Los Angeles
- **Gateway Mountain Center** (5) - Truckee
- **Impact Justice** (2) – Fresno and Los Angeles
- **Echo Chamber** (2) – Stockton
- **True North Housing Alliance** (1) – Chico
- **Glenn County Office of Education** (2) – Orland and Willows
- **Timelist Group** (1) – Los Angeles
- **Marriage and Family Therapist** (1) – Chico
- **Legacy Outreach Alliance** (4) – Modesto
- **Inner Circle** (2) – Rancho Cordova
- **Young People in Recovery** (1) – Chico
- **Youth 4 Change** (1) – Chico
- **Butte County Probation** (2) - Oroville





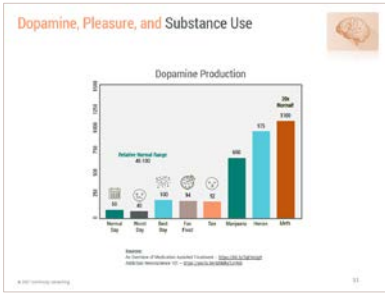
Technical Assistance, Training, and Workshops

Featured examples of trainings and workshops provided in 2021:

Impact Justice: California Justice Leaders

Provided prevention training for 37 AmeriCorps members who serve justice-involved youth across the state with re-entry support and resources. Our training better equipped them to help clients with their SUD-related needs. It also catalyzed collaboration with their placement agencies.

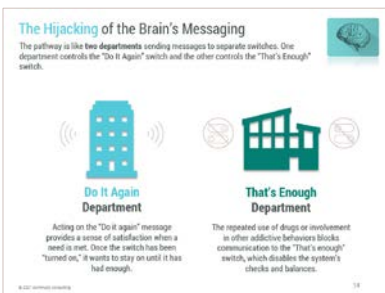
"We have received great feedback from many members and staff people already. Not only did they find the content relevant and interesting, but they also truly enjoyed the facilitation and presentations. I am incredibly excited for them to use this information in both their own lives and their work with beneficiaries." -- CJL Regional Manager



True North Housing Alliance

Provided prevention training for 28 staff members and volunteers from True North who offer a spectrum of services that move people forward and out of homelessness in Butte County.

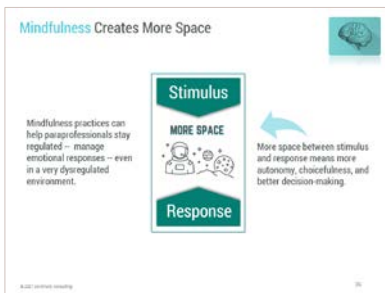
"I can't think of a single staff training that has been this intriguing, and I've been working here for almost two years. It felt like we were all family in the room. Most of us grew up in families dealing with abuse, drugs, neglect, and homelessness. When one person answers honestly about themselves the rest will too. The best thing Joaquin explained is that this training is not 'Hey, listen to this training, learn this tool, and you will know how to deal with any client'. Instead, he said, 'learn this knowledge about trauma and ask yourself why is this behavior happening?' In my opinion, that got everyone to really think, and it caused them to listen." -- True North Staff Member



Child Abuse Prevention Center: Foster Youth Initiative

Provided prevention training for 50 AmeriCorps members who provide foster youth with the skills, experience, and attachments to adult role models to thrive. Our training better equipped them to help clients with their SUD-related needs. It catalyzed collaboration with their placement agencies as well.

"Joaquin Jordan of Continuity Consulting brings a wealth of personal and empirical knowledge to build engagement for Understanding the Biology of Addiction. Clearly, we need to rethink addiction, and this powerful workshop drives forward how alcohol and drugs hijack our biology and rewire our brain – reconfiguring our mind, body and soul. With mindfulness practice we can strive to overcome the manifestations of early trauma and addiction to help live our best lives with empowerment and self-control. A must training for all Transitional Age Youth!" – CAPC Staff Member



Looking Ahead to 2022

The past year and half there has been a lot of heavy lifting, trial and error, and the need to continuously pivot to adapt to both COVID and shifting partner needs. We are energized and excited for 2022. We believe that we can build on our successes -- the YPMP cohorts, Natural High Retreats, the development of a critical mass of partners and facilitators, the creation of the YPMP online community, and our training workshops. Here are a few of the initiatives on the horizon for early 2022:

- **Valley State Prison** – Our team will be launching YPMP into Valley State Prison’s Youthful Offender Program in January 2022 with two initial cohorts of 15-25 participants. The goal is to provide this opportunity to more than 200 Youthful Offenders who are eligible for participation.
- **Natural High Retreats** – Our team is working with county and non-profit partners to deliver several more Natural High Retreats during 2022.
- **Chico Unified School District** – Our team is in discussion with Chico Unified School District to bring our Tier 1 program, *Mindfully Exploring Substance Use* to high schools in the district.
- **Drug Courts** – Based on the feedback from Glenn County Office of Education, we will continue to explore potential relationships with Drug Courts in the state, providing YPMP programming as alternative sentencing to youth participants.
- **Foster Youth Conference** – We have been encouraged to attend the annual California Foster Youth Education Summit in April 2022 to network with providers to transition aged youth, potentially presenting a workshop on our program.
- **YPMP Facilitator Learning Community** – In December 2021, we kicked-off a learning community with our group of 28 Tier 1 facilitators to learn, grow, share, and support one another as we each work within our organizations and communities.



Continuity Consulting Social Impact

Youth Peer Mentor Program is a program developed by Continuity Consulting.

The aim of Continuity's social impact work is to drive transformative, evidence-based solutions that produce measurable outcomes. We partner with a range of leading social innovators in the nonprofit, public, and private sectors that are seeking to create significant, positive changes that address pressing social challenges in our communities.

continuityconsulting.com



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