

**The Partners in Prevention Gilbert Evaluation**  
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**INTRODUCTION**

The Beit T'Shuvah Partners in Prevention program uses Jewish wisdom and values to strengthen Positive Development for Jewish Youth.

The Gilbert Foundation has generously supported an evaluation of the effectiveness of our ongoing work and our new curriculum in order to assure that our curriculum is an optimum developmental match for the youth we serve, and can be disseminated with adaptability and fidelity in other settings. This report summarizes the BTS Partners in Prevention Gilbert Evaluation. The focus of The Gilbert Evaluation is a developmental understanding of what 132 youth ages 12-16 gained from participating in 6-9 hours of the Partners in Prevention program.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of our curriculum we surveyed participants on the particular ecological and developmental factors that academic research has identified as protective: associated with well-being and resilience on the one hand; and with risk and vulnerability on the other. Ecological factors include family support, community, peers, religious engagement, and mentors; and developmental factors include self-efficacy, school performance, character strength and resistance to temptation, meaning-making, moral maturity, a sense of coherence, and a sense of belonging. The current PIP Gilbert Evaluation describes the baseline profile of PIP youth, and how they changed and grew over the time of the PIP course.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Partners in Prevention Curriculum produced measurable growth in many different target areas for young people of different ages. Growth in three important Domains of Life that are associated with Positive Youth Development stand out across grades 6 - 10.

**A. Talking with Trusted Adults:** 54% of the youngest students, 78% of ninth graders and 38% of tenth graders reported growth in their ability to Talk with Trusted Adults about things that were troubling them, and 59% of the youngest students reported improved communication with their families.

**B. Peer relations:** 74% of the younger students and 35% of the older students reported improvement in the Quality of Peer Relationships.

**C. Meaning and Purpose:** 66% of the youngest, 31% of the ninth grade and 63% of the tenth grade students reported growth in Meaning and Purpose, and 66% of the youngest, 39% of the ninth graders and 50% of the tenth graders reported growth in self understanding.

**Knowing Better about Alcohol and Drugs.** Among the high schoolers,<sup>1</sup> 70% of the ninth graders and 50% of the tenth graders reported that after the PIP course they had a better understanding of alcohol and drugs, even though 80% reported that they knew all they needed to know about cigarettes, alcohol and drugs before the course began.

These outcomes are significant, wide spread and important because a major goal of positive youth development and of PIP is to help adolescents develop and integrate a sense of belonging with a sense of autonomy. Belonging refers to adults, peers, and membership in community. Autonomy refers to independent decision-making consistent with values that integrate one's own needs with others' needs.

- A. **Belonging.** Being able to discuss personal problems with family members and feeling connected to G-d and the Jewish Community were among the most significant Protective factors at Time 1; and not trusting in those connections put youth at risk. Growth in trust and connection at Time 2 increases the protective factors, especially for the more vulnerable youth. (cf. Selman, Bandura, Antonovsky, Damon, Blakeney & Blakeney, Hirschi, Ebstyne-King.)
- B. **Belonging.** Having friends who smoke weed (reported by 40% at Time 1) is a significant Risk Factor (Huesler & Blakeney). At Time 2 most participants reported being able to resist peer pressure and be true to themselves and their values within peer relations. Resisting the pressure to conform is a source of resilience and a sign of growing integrity and character strength (Werner, Seligman, Berkowitz, Blakeney & Blakeney, Lerner).
- C. **Autonomy.** A sense of uselessness at Time 1 was the single most significant Risk Factor, and a challenge to self-efficacy. Growth in a sense of meaning and purpose increases self-efficacy and moral identity development. decreases risk and increases protection (Antonovsky, Bandura, Kegan, Blakeney & Blakeney; Saunders & Robinson).

The Partners in Prevention Program seeks to maximize developmental match between the students and the curriculum, therefore in the body of the Gilbert

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<sup>1</sup> At the request of the school director, we didn't survey the 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders on drug use.

Evaluation we first report the outcome of the PIP courses separately for each age group. Then we present more detailed outcomes on (a) contexts for belonging (family, peers, Jewish Community); and (b) developmental growth and change (self efficacy, self confidence, moral development, ego development, resistance to peer pressure, trust in adults, and the development of a sense of meaning and purpose. Finally, we summarize the Outcomes of the new PIP curriculum, note limitations of the this Gilbert Evaluation, and make recommendations for further research and practice.

## PART I: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS BY AGE GROUP

Overall most students in grades 6 – 10 reported positive changes in many Life Domains. The youngest group (6-8th grade) reported the most positive changes, followed by 9<sup>th</sup> graders and then 10<sup>th</sup> graders.

### Middle School Student Outcomes

The youngest group consists of 42 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. When we surveyed them after the course they reported the following changes:

How have the following changed for you	Gotten worse	No Change	Gotten Better
<b>1. Relationships with friends.</b>	2.6	23.1	<b>74.4</b>
<b>2. Communication in my family</b>	7.7	33.3	59.0
<b>3. Ability to concentrate on school work</b>	10.3	23.7	<b>65.8</b>
<b>4. Confidence that I can handle situations that come up.</b>	15.8	28.9	53.3
<b>5. Sense of meaning and purpose</b>	0	34.2	<b>65.8</b>
<b>6. Understanding of Jewish Values</b>	18.4	28.9	52.6
<b>7. Talking to people I can Trust when I have problems.</b>	12.8	33.3	53.8
<b>8. Understanding myself.</b>	5.1	28.2	<b>66.7</b>

**Table 1. Middle Schoolers grew in belonging and autonomy**

## Summary

Two out of three students reported

- ☒ Improved relationships with friends,
- ☒ Better understanding of themselves,
- ☒ Increased ability to concentrate on schoolwork, and
- ☒ Growth in a sense of meaning and purpose.

Additionally, more than half reported growth in

- \*Communication in the family,
- \*Confidence in their ability to handle stressful situations,
- \*Talking to people they trust when they have problems,
- \*Better understanding of Jewish values.

## Discussion

BTS's Positive Youth Development curriculum is designed to improve core skills associated with navigating adolescence with healthy and successful developmental outcomes. Good relationships with a healthy peer group; good family communication; academic self-efficacy; self-confidence, self-understanding, a support network, and a sense of belonging to a community with shared values are all correlated with resilience and with positive youth development outcomes. Conversely, the absence of these ecological and developmental factors is predictive of adolescent risk (misbehavior, alcohol & drug use, delinquency, mental and physical health risks including anxiety, depression, suicidal behavior, unsafe driving, unsafe sex, anorexia, etc.). **Participants in the BTS Program report an increase in all the protective factors we want for our youth in the critical middle school years.** Middle school is a particularly critical period for developing positive skills and a positive sense of self because it is the period of developmental transition from childhood to adolescence, with observable and predictable changes in cognitive developmental, emotional development, identity development and moral development, as well as in physical maturation. **Periods of developmental transition create both opportunity for growth and risk of straying from the path. One of the key developmental challenges is moving away from what Piaget calls a morality of constraint, defined strictly by adults, to a normative morality of cooperation, co-defined by peers and adults. The PIP curriculum helped middle schoolers to navigate this task particularly well in the classroom environment.**

## Ninth Grade Student Outcomes

Twenty-two 9<sup>th</sup> graders at Temple Ahavat Shalom completed the time 1 (pretest) and 13 completed the Time 2 post-test after approximately 6 weeks. In 7 out of 10 Domains of Life 30% - 76.9 % of students reported significant improvement. About half the 9<sup>th</sup> graders reported no change in most Domains of Life (DL). Of those who reported change, only one or two said things had gotten worse.

**Reported change over time**

How Domains of Life have changed since the course began	GOTTEN WORSE	STAYED THE SAME	GOTTEN BETTER
Relationships with friends.	7.7%	53.8%	38.5%
Communication in my family	7.7	84	7.7
Ability to concentrate on school work	15.4	46.2	38.5
Confidence that I can handle situations that come	0	76.9	23.1
Sense of meaning and purpose	7.7	61.5	30.8
Ability to say no to drugs and alcohol	0	69.2	30.8
Understanding of Jewish Values	0	69.2	30.8
Talking to people I can Trust when I have problem	0	23.1	<b>76.9</b>
Understanding drug and alcohol use	0	30.8	<b>69.2</b>
Understanding myself.	7.7	53.8	38.5

**Table 2. Ninth graders grew in trust, and in understanding drugs and alcohol.**

*Nearly all students reported significant growth in two particular protective Life Domains that directly reflect specific curricular goals:*

Talking to people I can trust when I have problems      76.9%  
 Understanding drug and alcohol use                              69.2%

Importantly, 38.5% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders reported improved peer relations. This is significant because peer relations (trying to fit in; being influenced by powerful negative peers, being bullied, and hanging with the “wrong crowd”) are related

to alcohol, drugs, delinquency, school problems, eating disorders, anxiety and depression. **The PIP 9<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum helped youth learn to cope better with peers, as well as to trust adults.**

*Two thirds of 9<sup>th</sup> graders reported no change in four protective Life Domains related to Positive Youth Development:*

Communication in my family	84%
Confidence that I can handle situations that come up	76.9%
Ability to say no to drugs and alcohol	69.2%
Understanding Jewish Values	69.2%

The confidence of these young students in their ability to handle situations, to resist temptation, to communicate within their families and to understand Jewish values may be both an indication of character strength and evidence of a naiveté or simplicity that is typical among similarly situated youth. On the one hand, this particular group could have been at lower risk to begin with. Alternately, these *areas of No Change among the ninth graders also demand that we examine whether the curriculum either (a) could be better matched developmentally to the ninth grade participants (Vygotsky's zone of proximal development; and/or (b) there is a dose response effect, in that the younger students may need more hours, more weeks, more frequency, etc. in order to get the same benefit as 10<sup>th</sup> graders.* This need for developmental fine-tuning in curriculum is a common finding in large-scale evaluations of socio-moral education interventions, e.g. Facing History and Ourselves (Selman; Bardage; Sussman;) and developmentally guided adaptation is one goal of the Gilbert Evaluation.

### **Tenth Grade Student Outcomes**

Twenty-five 10<sup>th</sup> graders at Temple Ahavat Shalom completed the Time 1, and 16 completed the Time 2 surveys. Of those students who completed both Time 1 and Time 2 interviews 50% reported no change in most domains and about 30% reported positive change in most Life Domains.

How Domains of Life have changed since the course began	GOTTEN WORSE	STAYED THE SAME	GOTTEN BETTER
Relationships with friends.	12.5%	50%	37.5%
Communication in my family	6.3	81.3	12.5
Ability to concentrate on school work	12.5	81.3	6.3
Confidence that I can handle situations that come	6.3	43.8	50
Sense of meaning and purpose	18.8	18.8	62.5
Ability to say no to drugs and alcohol	12.5	56.3	31.3
Understanding of Jewish Values	6.3	93.8	0
Talking to people I can Trust when I have problem	12.5	56.3	31.3
Understanding drug and alcohol use	0	50	50
Understanding myself.	6.3	43.8	50

**Table 3. Tenth graders grew most in feeling like a meaningful part of a whole, integrating autonomy and belonging.**

Most 10<sup>th</sup> graders grew in meaning and purpose, self understanding, self efficacy and drug knowledge. Understanding oneself and finding a place and a meaningful role are the particular developmental tasks of 16-18 year olds. Thus, the PIP curriculum offered an appropriate developmental match for 10<sup>th</sup> graders.

Specifically,

\* 62.5% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported that their sense of meaning and purpose had improved. *This is important because a sense of meaninglessness and uselessness are significant risks not only in adolescence but also in adulthood. Conversely a sense of meaning and purpose in life is related not only to well-being and resilience, but also to recovery from addictions, depression and despair (Blakeney, Reich & Blakeney; Roos, Kiruac, Pearson, et.al.; Pargamont). Finding a meaningful place, building a moral identity, is a major developmental task at this phase of development (Damon, Erikson).*

\* 50% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported increased confidence in their ability to handle situations (self efficacy), and

- \* 50% said they had a better understanding of drugs and alcohol,
- \* 50% reported growth in self-understanding. and
- \* 37.5% reported improved peer relations.

**These are Outcomes that the PIP curriculum is designed to address, and thus, we can report with some confidence on the effectiveness of the curriculum to improve resilience and well-being. One out of three 10<sup>th</sup> graders also reported greater confidence in their ability to resist drugs and alcohol.**

## **PART II: DETAILED FINDINGS**

In Part II we report more detailed findings from both Time 1 and Time 2 Surveys. In addition to the groups described above, we include students who participated in an intensive Day Long intervention with whom we administered only one survey, thus the total number of students surveyed includes 42 middle schoolers and 99 high school students. Total n = 141.

### **ECOLOGICAL CORRELATES OF VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE AMONG PIP YOUTH: CONTEXTS FOR BELONGING**

#### **How PIP youth use their free time**

When we look at the group as a whole, we see a reasonably healthy bunch of kids, on the right developmental path. After school, on average they spend more time doing homework than any one other activity (on average 2-3 hours a day). They also spend an hour or two on the phone, listening to music, and playing sports each day after school. Some of the kids use their time more socially (social media, phone, sports); others are more likely to read, listen to music and work on hobbies; a third group spend most of their after school time doing after school classes, homework, and organized activities. Most PIP youth report that they participate 5 – 9 hours each month in team sports, exercise classes, and playing music with a group. These activities are correlated in the research literature with higher resistance to drugs.

#### **Quality of Family Life: Context for Belonging and Autonomy**

PIP students are mostly growing up in two parent families with whom they have good, open relationships. Mostly they have one or two siblings and, on average, 9 years of Jewish education. The families vary in parenting style and family climate (cf. Baumrind; Oser, Blakeney & Bascio; Feinberg) from Authoritarian (strict rules and consequences) to Laissez-faire (we can do whatever).

Family life is among the strong predictors of adolescent risk and resilience. We assessed how youth characterized their own families and indeed found the four prototypic patterns that differentiate among the quality of family life:

Factor 1: **Authoritative Families (contained type)** are characterized by holding tempers, not quarreling, getting along, not criticizing, and never hitting.

Factor 2: **Authoritative families (engaged type)** are characterized by expressing opinions, family discussions, parents knowing the whereabouts of the children, and eating together.

Factor 3: **Laissez-Faire Families** are characterized by getting away with anything, everyone doing what s/he wants, keeping personal problems to oneself, not discussing family problems, and the absence of punishment.

Factor 4: **Authoritarian families** are characterized mainly by the expectation of punishment for rule violation, and the expectation that work takes priority over play.

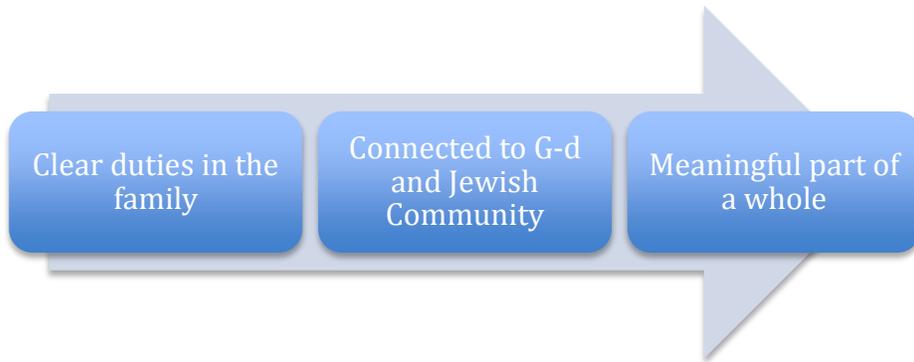
Youth are more at risk when they come from families at the extremes of Authoritarian strict punishment and Laissez faire neglect, according to most research (cf. Huesler & Blakeney). Youth are most protected by families where the expectations are clear, *and* discussable; where parents take an authoritative (knowing better) stance, and yet listen to their kids.

All four family types were well represented in the 138 young people we surveyed. Among PIP participants, however, there was no significant correlation between family type and other risk factors. That is, the young people who participated in the BTS Partners in Prevention Program came from “good enough” families (Bettleheim), regardless of their parenting practices, that Quality of Family Life alone neither put youth at risk, nor protected them from other risk factors. Overall, most youth reported being able to discuss problems with their families sometimes (65.3%) or often (11.6%), and that their parents almost knew where they were (93%). Two family characteristics were associated with protective factors among PIP students: Having clear duties in the family (65%) and being able to discuss problems (77%).

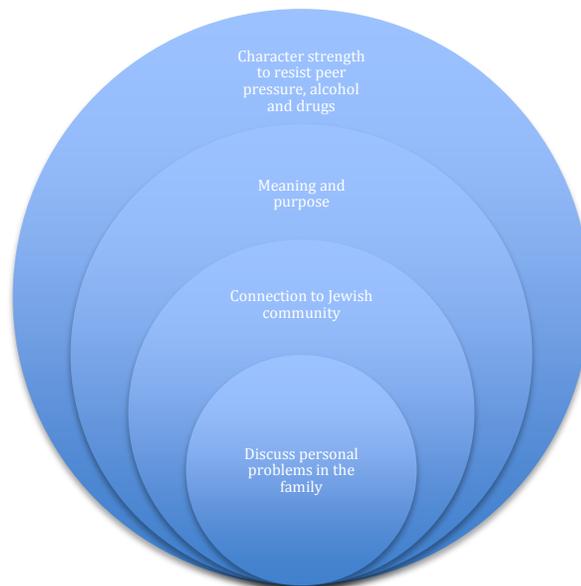
**Clear duties in the family and connection to G-d and the Jewish community give young people a sense of meaning and belonging.**

The assignment of chores, and the clear expectation of specific duties in the family is a significant protective factor. Having clear duties is significantly correlated with feeling connected to G-d ( $r = .267$ ; sig.  $< .045$ ) and to feeling

connected to the Jewish community ( $r = .283$ ; sig.  $< .033$ ) and negatively related to feeling useless ( $r = -.373$ ; sig.  $< .004$ ). Thus one of the most important gifts we give our youth is clear duties that provide them with a sense of contributing to a greater whole, and a sense of meaning and purpose (cf Lerner). *Partners in Prevention helped participants to see themselves as a meaningful, contributing part of a larger whole. Over 50% of the students grew in a sense of meaning and purpose.*



**Youth who feel able to discuss problems within the family are better able to resist drugs.** A reported inability to discuss things in the family was correlated with an inability to say no to drugs. The easier young people felt they could communicate in the family, the more capable they felt to withstand pressure to use drugs. Further, the quality of family discussion was related to feeling connected to G-d and to the Jewish community. Lastly, being able to discuss personal problems in the family was statistically significantly correlated with not feeling useless. The direction of causation is not implied.



Rather, there are a cluster of protective factors related to having clear duties and being able to discuss personal problems at home. These include feeling connected to G-d and to the Jewish community; the character strength to withstand pressure and temptation to use drugs, and a sense of meaning and purpose as a part of a larger whole.

### Outcome: Improved Family Communication

Family communication significantly improved, especially among the younger students (59%). Sixty eight percent of the older students reported at Time 1 that they could deal with family demands and expectations fairly well. Among the 29 students completing Time 2 surveys, 80% report being able to handle family demands and expectations. *Teaching students how to deal with family expectations, listening without being overwhelmed, or shamed; integrating parental demands with personal calling is an important and effective focus of the PIP curriculum.*

### Substance Knowledge and Substance Use

When High schoolers began the PIP course they reported knowing all they need to know about nicotine, alcohol and drugs.

78.9 % reported that they knew all they needed to know about nicotine

88.4 % reported that they knew all they needed to know about alcohol

80 % reported that they knew all they needed to know about drugs.

After the PIP course, 70% of the 9<sup>th</sup> graders and 50% of the tenth graders reported a better understanding of drugs and alcohol. Thus, despite thinking they knew all they needed to know, after the PIP course they had an enhanced understanding of alcohol and drugs.

	Personal use in past year	Known friends use
Beer	20.7% (n= 19)	37.9% (n = 36)
Wine	12.2% (n = 11)	31.2% (n = 30)
Hard Liquor	13% (n = 12)	24.5% (n = 23)
Drunk	12% (n = 11)	37.2% (n = 35)
Marijuana	7.5% (n = 7)	40.4% (n = 38)
Cigarettes	4.3% (n = 4)	24.5% (n = 23)

<b>Heroin</b>	0	7.4% (n = 7)
<b>Drunk driving</b>	0	19.4% (18)

**Table 4. Personal and friends reported substance use at Time 1, pre-test**

Self-reported personal alcohol and drug use among the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders who responded to our Intake Survey (n = 99) is thankfully, somewhat lower than nationwide averages. Nationwide 23% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders report drinking alcohol and 16% report smoking marijuana. Among the PIP 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders, twelve to twenty percent reported personal use during the past year, and about the same during the past month. Given the protective factors among these youth, and that they are only 14-16 years old, suggests that attention be paid.

(The younger students are excluded from this report because the school requested that we didn't survey them about alcohol, drugs, sex, and other potentially controversial topics.)

We asked the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders at TAS about their alcohol and drug use on the first day of the course (T1), and again 4-6 weeks later, at the end of the course (T2). None of the ninth graders reported smoking marijuana or drinking alcohol in the previous 30 days. Two 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported smoking marijuana in the prior month and 5 reported drinking alcohol. That is 25% of tenth graders reported using alcohol or weed in the month before the program started. On the Time 2 surveys, one 9<sup>th</sup> grader and four 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported marijuana use in the past 30 days, and seven 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported alcohol use. One might conclude that marijuana and alcohol use increased during the time of the course. It is more likely, however, that *as a result of the PIP course, students, particularly the older students, felt safe enough with these trusted adults to be honest about their alcohol and drug use. This, too, is a desired outcome of the PIP curriculum.*

### **Peer Relations: Context for autonomy and belonging**

When they began the course, PIP high school participants report that they deal pretty well with issues that come up with their peers (86%, n = 83), and 21% (n = 25) report that they can usually deal with peer pressure, while 79% (n = 75) are unsure that they can resist peer pressure, even when they want to. Among the middle schoolers 66.7% (n = 26) reported feeling confident they can deal with issues that come up with their peers; 15.4% (n = 6) report they can rarely deal with peer pressure and 41% (n = 16) sometimes find peer pressure difficult. **Peer relations improved for 74% of the younger students, and 38% of the older students after participating in the PIP course.**

**Peers, conformity and the pressure to drink and smoke.**

Having friends who drink alcohol and use drugs is one of the most significant risks for alcohol and drug use, and young people are about three times as likely to report friends use of alcohol and drugs as they are to self-report.

Out of 99 high school age respondents, less than 20% reported that they themselves drank alcohol or smoked cigarettes or marijuana. On average they reported that one out of three friends used *that they knew of*. Likewise, they reported knowing that about one out of three did not drink or smoke. The PIP high schoolers report having friends who use alcohol about three times as often as they report personal use, and 5 times as many weed smoking friends as self reported marijuana use. The high rate of knowing friends who use alcohol and drugs is profound. Seven percent report knowing friends who use heroin, 40% report having friends whom they know smoke marijuana, and 37% report knowing friends who get drunk (see Table 4). The significant discrepancy between self report and friends report may reflect (a) underreporting (minimizing) their own drug use; (b) exaggerating friends use; and/or (c) particular resistance to drug use despite having so many friends who use.

### **Vulnerability and resistance to peer pressure to drink and use drugs**

Overall, about 40% of the 99 teens in our sample (9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> graders) reported having friends who smoke weed. Which of these youth are vulnerable to drug use themselves? What helps them resist drugs in the face of the reported peer norms? Three variables were significantly correlated with reporting having friends who smoke weed:

1. Youth who felt disconnected from G-d reported more friends who used marijuana (G-d:  $r = -.268$ ;  $\text{sig} < .005$ )
2. Youth who reported that their parents didn't usually know where they are were more vulnerable ( $r = -.236$ ,  $\text{sig} < .012$ )
3. Youth with lower stages of Moral and Emotional Development reported more friends who smoked marijuana ( $r = -.203$ ,  $\text{sig} < .041$ ).

These findings may be common sense: Adolescents typically divorce their own every day lives from their faith tradition (Oser & Gmuender). Young people are notoriously vague and mysterious, private, about where they go and when and with whom; and moral development should have something to do with making the right choices in the face of peer pressure. These developmental characteristics are part of the healthy adolescent move toward autonomy: making independent judgments, however, *too often youngsters get side tracked trying to fit in with the peer group. Young people in the BTS Partners in Prevention program learned how to make independent, autonomous decisions and still have a sense of belonging (Blakeney & Blakeney: "Delinquency: a quest for moral and spiritual integrity?")*.

Feeling disconnected from G-d, parents not knowing one’s whereabouts, and immature moral development put youth at risk of having friends who use drugs. Feeling connected to G-d, parents knowing whereabouts, and moral maturity immunize youth against being vulnerable to friends who smoke weed. PIP youth grew in these skills and connections.

**Connections to G-d and to the Jewish community: Context for belonging**

Two of the strongest predictors of resilience in the face of adolescent challenges are a sense of belonging, (B & B; Selman, etc.) and a connection to a religious institution or spiritual tradition and practice (Blakeney & Blakeney; Miller; Ebstyn-King, Pargamont, et.al). The PIP students feel overwhelmingly connected to their Jewish roots. They feel connected to G-d (52%), the Jewish community (84%) and Am Yisrael, the Jewish People (87%). Nine out of ten feel good about being a Jew, and 77% feel a sense of belonging when they’re with other Jews. This sense of positive identity and belonging offer protective factors, and are positively related to character development and upholding community norms (Berkowitz; Althof; Allen).

	Connected	Mixed feelings	Disconnected
G-d	52%	33%	14%
Jewish community	84	15	1
Jewish people	87	10	3
Israel	60	25	15
Feel good about being a Jew	90	7	3
Belonging among Jews	77	22	1

**Table 5: Jewish identity and belonging**

**Current Jewish practices**

In terms of past month Jewish practices more than 50% of the students endorsed a wide range of common practices, and more than 75% reported reciting the shema, praying, observing holidays, honoring father and mother, practicing compassion for the needy, making peace where there is strife, avoiding loshon

HaRa and treating others as they want to be treated sometimes, often or very often in the past month. Less than 50%, but still a significant subset keep kosher, keep Shabbos, and go to services often or very often.

<b>Regular Jewish Practice past month</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>1. Recited the Shema</b>	84
<b>2. Prayed</b>	93
<b>3. Lit Shabbos candles (or watched them being lit.)</b>	75
<b>4. Attended Shabbos services (Friday night or Saturday morning)</b>	63
<b>5. Worn a Kippah</b>	52
<b>6. Observed a Jewish Holiday</b>	86
<b>7. Observed Kashrut</b>	46
<b>8. Kept Shabbos</b>	63
<b>9. Read or studied Torah</b>	72
<b>10. Given tzedakah</b>	84
<b>11. Honored your father and mother</b>	93
<b>12. Practiced compassion for the needy</b>	89
<b>13. Made peace where there was strife or anger</b>	93
<b>14. Visited the sick</b>	77
<b>15. Avoided gossip (Loshon hara)</b>	88
<b>16. Treated others as you want to be treated</b>	98

**Table 6. PIP youth practice Jewish values.**

*It is important to note that nearly all the PIP youth practice Jewish values (treating others as you want to be treated, making peace, honoring parents, giving tzedakah, helping the needy, etc. whether or not they considered themselves to be religious. That is, Jewish values are an important underpinning in the life of PIP participants.*

## **DEVELOPMENTAL CORRELATES OF VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE**

How do youth develop the internal wherewithal to negotiate adolescence? Parents and teachers of Jewish youth in America ask: “what can we do to protect our kids from substance abuse and other risky behavior? How can we help them to resist negative peer pressure, and to be resilient as they make their way through adolescence and into adulthood?” We have thus far described the contexts of family, peers and Jewish Community that nurture a sense of belonging. In this section we describe the internal (autonomous) developmental factors that contribute to Positive Youth Development among PIP youth, and how the PIP experience strengthened them.

**Self-efficacy.** Self-efficacy is related to resilience and resistance to alcohol and drugs in adolescence. Self-efficacy is the degree to which you have confidence in yourself in various domains (e.g. education, social, etc); the capacity to take ownership of challenges and plan and take effective steps toward achieving your goals. (Bandura; Psadzki & Glass; et.al.) We measured a cluster of self-efficacy variables among the Beit T'Shuvah PIP participants.

PIP high school youth were strong on most self-efficacy items even before the course. From 85 - 95% felt they could handle most situations (93%) including academic challenges (91%) resisting alcohol and drugs (88%) do most things as well as others (88%) think their way out of trouble (86%).

We also found that 19% feel like failures, 31% don't deal well with the expectations of their families and fully 46% sometimes or often feel useless. Thus, while most PIP youth feel competent to handle the balls as they come into their court, nearly half lack a sense of purpose and direction in their lives, don't feel like they are making a contribution to the whole. Of course this is one of the developmental tasks of adolescence, but it is extreme in this group. These youngsters have many of the factors (two parent families, middle income, good education, connection to faith-based community, summer camp, Jewish schooling) that research tells us protect young people from alcohol, drugs and delinquency. Even so, these youngsters don't see a meaningful place for themselves.

At Time 1 more than 98% of the students say that it would be easy for them to say something nice to a friend, or help someone in need (95%). Fewer (70-80%) would find it easy to ask for help, or confide in somebody about a problem, few would find it easy (48%) to show someone they like them. All in all, we have a picture of young people who see themselves as helpful and kind AND who are somewhat more private and self-contained about their own vulnerabilities.

Together, these findings suggest that while many of the young people in this sample have confidence in their abilities to accomplish what they try to accomplish, including helping others, many are much less certain about their moral identity...who and how they want to be, further, they are reluctant to admit their confusion and ask for directions. The Time 2 post tests reveal that **PIP students, already high on most measures of self efficacy, grew in their confidence that they could handle most situations, stick to goals, remain calm and use coping skills. There remain a subset of PIP students who at least sometimes or even often feel useless and like a failure.** No conclusions can be drawn about these changes over time because of the small sample size and the rate of attrition. It is possible that students who needed help most were most

likely to stay the course, or they may be going through a particularly difficult developmental transition.

1. I can usually handle whatever comes my way if I try hard enough.	93% (n=89)
2. I can usually find a way to get what I want, even if someone is against it.	69% (n=66)
3. It's often hard for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.	20% (n=20)
4. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.	70% (n=67)
6. If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.	86% (n=83)
7. I am not sure that I can resist peer pressure, even when I want to.	22% (n=21)
8. Thanks to my determination, I can resist drugs and alcohol whenever I want to.	88% (n=82)
9. I am confident that I can master most academic challenges.	91% (n=87)
10. I can deal pretty well with most problems that I have with friends.	84% (n=83)
11. I don't deal very well with the demands and expectations of my family.	31% (n=30)
12. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	78% (n=75)
13. I am able to do most things as well as others.	88% (n=84)
14. At times I feel useless.	46% (n=44)
15. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	19% (n=18)

**Table 7. Self-efficacy across domains among PIP youth**

**Self confidence: the details.** We found that most of the students were confident or very confident in their ability to accomplish what they started out to do. The sense of self efficacy was statistically significantly correlated with confidence in their ability to resist drugs and peer pressure ( $r = .180^*$ , sig. .039). This could be a false bravado. However a perceived confidence in ability to resist drugs and peer pressure is also significantly negatively correlated with reported smoking of marijuana and drinking alcohol until drunk ( $r = -.229$ , sig. .014;  $r = -.274$ , sig. .004). That is, the higher their confidence in their ability to resist, the lower the likelihood of reporting having used alcohol or drugs.

**Asking for Help.** The ability to use social support is one important coping mechanism that is utilized by resilient people (Lazarus; Ainsworth; Werner; Vaillant; Lerner; new integrity article). **Beit T'Shuvah's PIP curriculum teaches youth how and when to ask for help, and that it's OK to ask for help, that help is there.** In the pre-tests we found that the students found it easier to help others (62%) than to ask for help (35%). On the one hand, helping others is an admirable character trait, consistent with Jewish values. On the other hand, it indicates that it's difficult for these young people to make themselves vulnerable, and to ask for help. This is especially significant because **finding it easy to ask for help is significantly correlated with self-efficacy items including: I can usually handle whatever comes my way (r = -.204, sig. .023); I deal pretty well with most problems that come up with friends (r = -.272, sig. .004); and I do most things as well as others (r = -.257, sig. .006).** Asking for help is also statistically significantly correlated with an overall feeling of satisfaction (r = .296, sig. <.002); and being able to deal with friendship issues well (r = .272, sig. <.004); and negatively correlated with feeling useless (r = -.262, sig. <.005). That is the more satisfied students feel, the more confident they are overall, and the better they assess their ability to deal with friendship issues that arise, the more likely they are to ask for help; while the more useless they feel, the less likely they are to ask for help. This means that being able to ask for help is part of self-efficacy and competence, not of incompetence, neediness and uselessness. **The more useless one feels, the less likely to ask for help and vice versa: The less likely one is to ask for help, the more likely one is to feel useless, thus, learning to ask for help may, paradoxically help kids to feel more competent and less useless.**

*One of the most important outcomes of the PIP curriculum is empowering youth to trust adults and ask for help. Fifty-three percent of the 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders, 76.9% of the 9<sup>th</sup> graders and 31.8% of the 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported improvement in their ability to talk about their problems with people they trust.*

Age group	Youth reporting growth in meaning & purpose	Youth reporting growth in trust
6-8 <sup>th</sup> grade	65.8%	54%
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	30.8%	77%
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	62.5%	31%

**Table 8. Growth in Meaning and Purpose and being able to talk to trusted people**

**Meaningfulness and uselessness.** A surprising number of young people responding to the pretest reported feeling useless, at least some of the time (46%). This did not vary by age. Meaninglessness, a sense of lack of competence, and uselessness, not having a purpose or having something to contribute are related to adolescent risk (Blakeney & Blakeney, Antonovsky, etc.). As might be expected, the more useless young people felt, the less likely they were to feel like they could do most things as well as others; deal with friendship issues; handle whatever comes up; feel satisfied or ask for help when they need it. That is, they not only feel useless and have low self-efficacy, but they also find it difficult to enlist social support (ask for help). *Thus, the growth in meaning, finding purpose and place is a critical positive youth development outcome of the PIP curriculum.*

### **Moral Development**

We measured moral judgment development among a subset of the PIP population and found the vast majority of students were developmentally age appropriate. The younger students were mostly in the transition from ego-centric needs meeting to a conventional relationship and norms orientation. When we asked if they should sell their used bicycle to the first person they promised, or to a second person with a higher offer, about 30% said to take the higher offer, 30% said the promise was more important, and the rest said, for example, take the money and feel bad or keep the promise and feel bad. *The PIP curriculum helps youth practice more mature moral thinking about everyday problem solving. Stage of Moral Development is related to having friends who use drugs, although the relationship failed to reach significance (.06).*

### **Moral Identity and Ego Strength.**

We assessed ego strength in a subset of the population (the younger students) and found small, but not significant growth across the group as a whole. Their moral identity at Time 2 was slightly more likely to assume responsibility. Internalize, both strengths and problems. Typically, measurable growth in ego strength and moral identity is only measurable over year-long interventions, so seeing some growth after such a short intervention is a good sign, but may reflect chance or normal development alone. *A longer PIP intervention is needed to be confident that growth in moral identity and ego strength are Outcomes of the PIP course.*

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

**The Gilbert Evaluation provides evidence that at least 9 out of the 10 goals of the new PIP curriculum were in part met in this past year's courses. The course:**

1. Increased awareness of adolescent challenges
2. *Identified what's difficult about life: stress, temptation, feeling less than, identity confusion, overwhelming, unrealistic expectations*
3. Increased awareness about sources of wisdom and especially helped youth to find trusted people to talk with.
4. Identified sources of strength, resilience and courage; practiced calling on them.
5. Learned how to belong without losing themselves.
6. Helped identify core values in Jewish practice to guide decision making.
7. *Increased awareness of adolescent risks, including alcohol, drugs, eating disorders, gambling, sex and other risky behavior;*
8. Increased understanding of the process of addiction and the possibility of recovery; and
9. Learned communication skills that help maintain healthy peer relationships.

### **Fidelity and adaptability**

The new curriculum is designed for adaptability across a range of contexts and with youth across a range of developmental stages, ages and needs. In the Gilbert Evaluation we found that the curriculum worked in different ways for different age groups. For the youngest, it helped with the development of conventional moral reasoning, self-understanding, perspective taking and peer relations. For the 9<sup>th</sup> graders it helped with trusting adults and understanding drugs and alcohol. And for the 10<sup>th</sup> graders it helped with finding meaning and purpose. That is, the curriculum is adaptable in its ability to offer the optimum developmental match across a range of ages and stages. This is in line with the recommendations of Sussman (2013) that prevention programs tailored to developmental stage, and especially to support developmental transitions as we saw among the 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders and the 10<sup>th</sup> graders.

### **Implications for program dissemination**

The Gilbert Evaluation is the first step in providing an evidence-based curriculum for the BTS Partners in Prevention. It demonstrates that the curriculum is effective across a range of settings and ages, and can be implemented with fidelity by various facilitators. Once proven effective, programs can be replicated, implemented, disseminated and adopted by others. This is a first step in that direction.

### **Limitations of the current study**

The major limitations in the PIP Gilbert Evaluation relate to sample size, attrition, length of courses, and parent, teacher and school director alliances. Although PIP delivered services to several hundred participants this year, we were only able to survey 140 youth who participated in the 6 - 9 hour core curriculum. Further, because of problems with testing and with retention, we have pre and post tests on about one third of the 140 (some missing pre tests, some missing post tests, and some were only surveyed once).

### **Directions for further research and implications for practice**

In collecting further evidence of the effectiveness of the PIP curriculum it will be important to gather observations of teacher/facilitator implementation to assess fidelity. Further, increased evidence of the positive outcome of the new PIP curriculum will facilitate building alliances with parents and teachers. Obviously, longitudinal research on participant development two and four years post course would provide important evidence, and inform future curriculum development.