



THE SOURCE FOR KNOWLEDGE ON GENDER & ORIENTATION®



Impact & Outcomes

Mid-Year Report

2023

The mission of YES Institute is to prevent suicide and ensure the healthy development of all youth through powerful communication and education on gender and orientation. Our dialogues and education focus on parents, professionals, and communities who care for and nurture youth. Cali McKenzie, returning intern and Youth Advisory Leadership Council member, shares about the beneficial impact of our work.



Dear friends, the first time I walked into the YES Institute I was greeted with kind and warm faces; ones that I knew would welcome me in and give me the opportunity to learn about this world and myself. I was still nervous about walking into a room even though I knew they would help me. I was nervous because I didn't know what support looked like. I didn't quite understand myself, who I was, or who I could be.

At the time, I was in high school—tremendously lost with no community that I fit into. I hid myself in the rooms I walked into, trying to fade into the background with all my might and push down the sparkling life inside of me. I didn't know then that YES Institute's tools would allow me to flourish and blossom like the flowers in spring, pulled out of the cold and dark encompassing winter.

I will forever be grateful for the environment that YES Institute creates. It is one of growth, peace, overcoming personal challenges, and learning. To me, it has always been a place that I know I can come home to. For me, they are like a beacon in a lighthouse. YES Institutes courses and training are knowledge that I will forever carry with me in life – helping me interpersonally, professionally, and individually.

Five years ago, I never would have imagined that I would be graduating from college. I never would have pictured my world filled with such joy and love—or with such peace. Quite frankly, I never really did much imagining then. The YES Institute didn't just teach me, or help me, they gave me a way to imagine my future—a way to look forward to the rest of the days to come.

I keep returning to YES Institute because of the community; it's the way that they lovingly encourage me to be me. Whoever, whatever, and however I am, I will always have a space there. There is an unconditionality to the space that YES creates. If you need them, they will be there; they will hear you. **In the world that we live in today, filled with isolation and individuals, YES Institute extends community and communication.**

— Cali McKenzie

Professionals in the healthcare community including medical and nursing school faculty are scheduling YES Institute education sessions to ensure comprehensive support for the well-being of all individuals who receive clinical care services.

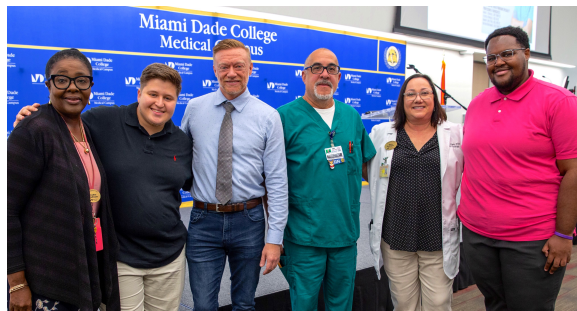
“YES Institute did an excellent job of making a potentially uncomfortable conversation feel relaxed. The knowledge I learned better prepares me when interacting with gay and transgender patients.”

–Medical student



Miami Dade College Medical Students

Medical personnel and students were thoroughly engaged in our continuing education sessions, and grasped the vital importance of understanding diverse gender and orientation experiences when hearing from our guest speakers.



Miami Dade College Medical Campus presentation

“I learned ways we can accommodate ALL patients, no matter their orientation or gender.” –Medical Student



YES Institute at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill Transgender HIV Prevention Research Workshop

Recent healthcare clients:

- Baptist Health South Florida–
 - Boca Raton Hospital
 - Bioethics CME
 - Bethesda Hospital East & West Nursing Grand Rounds
- Care Resource–Broward County
- Community Health South Behavioral Health specialists
- Cleveland Clinic Florida–Broward & Martin County
- MDC Medical Campus–
 - Nursing program students
 - Physician Assistant & Dental program students
- University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine students

Hotlines:

9-8-8 National self-harm prevention hotline

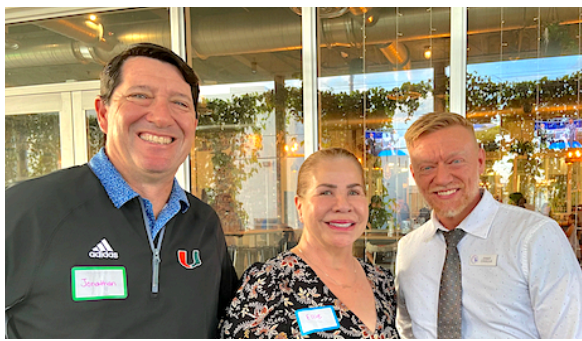
Trevor Project: **866-488-7386**

Black Lifeline: **800-604-5841**

Trans Lifeline: **877-565-8860**

YES Institute is receiving a growing number of inquiries from school communities and families looking for ways to support their youth. Our team has noticed a 61% increase in intake calls and requests, as compared to the first half of 2022.

“I’m looking for words of gratitude. I feel part of your family. When persons like me find people like you, I feel wonderful.” –Mom



Jonathan Drucker, Board Member, Eli Cano, Donor, and Joseph Zolobczuk, Executive Director at fundraising event.

Most of our calls come from families seeking mental health practitioners specializing in gender and orientation. Families are looking for professionals who can provide inclusive care for their child as they navigate the experience of identifying as gay or transgender.



Participants during YES Institute's Communication Toolbox course.

Accepting Our Kids



Parent Volunteer and Board Member Naomi Canning was interviewed on The Mindful Podcast for her experiences as the parent of a transgender child.

YES Institute's team is invited to facilitate our Communication Toolbox course, where participants gain practical tools for relating authentically, working across lines of difference, and cultivating environments where all feel seen, heard, and included. Faculty and administrators seek out our courses for tools to bring solutions to challenging conversations with parents and students.

“Power in diversity is so important, and listening to opposing or different viewpoints is so enriching if we can drop our wrong/right biases, and communicate with common purpose.” –Faculty member

Recent school and parent communities:

- Broward County Public Schools Student Support & Academic Enrichment Conference
- Coral Gables High School
- Fusion Academy Miami
- MDCPS School for Advanced Studies
- Miami Central High and Stellar Leadership Academy Charter
- Miami Country Day School
- St. Martin's Episcopal School
- United Way Parent Academy



“Boys Don’t Cry” Unpacking Masculinity Stereotypes educational dialogue with Broward & Miami-Dade First Responders

There is a high interest in conversations on masculinity stereotypes and expectations. If masculinity gets defined or idealized only as aggression and domination, what impact on young people might this have? YES Institute leads sessions that open critical conversations for adults, parents, and youth contending with these messages in society.

Police officers and fire fighters across Broward and Miami-Dade County joined our team for an in-depth inquiry into masculinity expectations. First responders were led through a series of questions asking them to reflect on their own experiences with masculinity in the workplace and home life.

“Young men should not be shamed for wanting to cry. We all need a way to heal.”
–Police Officer

As mass shooting incidents continue to increase in the United States, YES Institute asks what can each of us do to prevent violence for our young people? We examine the role of extreme expectations and bullying behaviors. We ask participants how we can all shift the way we conceptualize masculinity and its expectations on our youth.



Our podcasts discuss current topics and interviews people who share their lived experiences. Check out our new podcast on Masculinity.

yesinstitute.org/podcast



YES Institute presenting to South Florida Law Enforcement LGBTQ Coalition

Education & Learning for Psychologists

YES Institute provides continuing education courses for mental health professionals, budding psychologists, and students.

Our education team led a training for the Council of Directors of School Psychology Programs, which comprises leaders overseeing graduate school psychology training programs across the country. Since the January conference, we have been invited by professors across the country to speak to their graduate program students.



Council of Directors of School Psychology programs dialogue

“I was reassured that we are all human beings able to self-reflect, learn, and apologize when we make a mistake.”
–Psychology Student

In Memory of Dr. Carolyn Garwood

We celebrate the life of Dr. Carolyn Garwood, Professor of Counseling Psychology with University of Miami, and the incredible difference she made in our community. Carolyn was instrumental of the early success of “Project YES”, facilitating the first gay and lesbian youth suicide awareness and prevention workshops with school districts, psychologists, and teachers since 1996.



University of Miami psychology undergraduate class presentation

Recent psychology conferences and training programs:

- Council of Directors of School Psychology Programs Annual Conference
- Nova Southeastern University–
 - Psychology Faculty
 - *Shark Chat* webinar series
- University of Miami–
 - School of Counseling
 - Students of Color Symposium

Recent school psychology graduate training programs class presentations:

- Louisiana State University
- Nova Southeastern University
- University of Connecticut
- University of Massachusetts Amherst

Youth mental health distress is garnering increased attention. The Trevor Project recently reported 45% of gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year in the United States. Nearly 1 in 5 transgender and nonbinary youth attempted suicide, with Black and Latin youth reporting higher attempt rates than their white peers. The Florida Youth Risk Behavior Survey (CDC, 2021) showed an increase in self-harm among gay and bisexual high schoolers during 2020, reversing a decades-long improvement trend for this young population.

“There is more good than bad in this world, especially in our generation. It’s just our job to find it, and express the goodness.”

–Miami-Dade high school student

Since January, we’ve served:

- **3,146 people** including students, parents, and professionals who attended ...
- **91 education sessions** delivered virtually and in-person, while responding to a ...
- **61% increase** of intake calls for mental health, peer and family support, and medical referrals, compared to the first half of 2022.

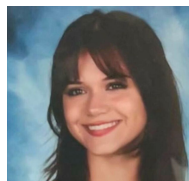


Nikolas Montolio, YES Institute Youth Empowerment Coordinator, leads after-school student presentation in Miami-Dade.

I learned that many people are supporting youth in our community. Despite social fears, YES institute left a positive impact on what I can expect for my future.

–Miami-Dade high school student

YES Institute spoke to several high school groups and at the Miami Youth Climate Summit, drawing over 300 youth. After our team facilitated inspiring conversations, students shared new actions they are taking in their schools, homes, and communities to be their authentic selves, and apply new communication, leadership, and self-care practices.



Big congrats to our Youth Advisory Leadership Council members Rachel and Liana who got accepted to McGill University and University of Miami.

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We thank our amazing Kiaora Society and Professionals Society of Donors for their incredible support of our mission. Contributions to YES Institute are vital to sustaining our vision and fulfilling our purpose.

YES Institute invests 88% of every dollar directly into our educational programs. Our finances are audited annually, and we hold a Gold Transparency rating by Candid/ Guidestar.

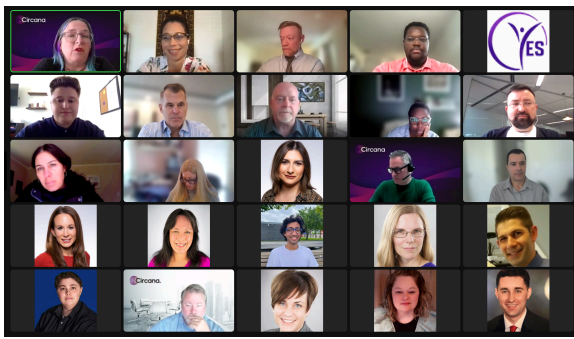


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Inspired? We invite you to share about our work and invite your friends to consider donating.
yesinstitute.org/give

**Donor contributions through
June 30, 2023.**

Workplace Inclusion & Belonging



Circana employee affinity group webinar

Workplaces today are at unique cultural and generational crossroads, with gender, orientation, and racial topics at the forefront of inclusion efforts. YES Institute receives inquiries from companies and organizations interested in creating and cultivating welcoming professional environments through interactive presentations, focusing on the importance of employee and client connections and belonging.

“I learned about historical pioneers I had never heard of before. I enjoyed hearing the personal stories from Joseph and Nikolas and the ways we can be allies and create a more inclusive environment in my work and personal life.

–HealthStream employee

“Beautiful presentation. I love how you all get so much participation and openness out of colleagues. Just a magical way to end the week.”

–Getaround Employee

Every company and organization navigates employee and client relationship conversations uniquely. Our education approach takes into consideration the values and mission of the organization, as well as the specific needs and intentions of training content and delivery. Facilitators on our team provide updated research, best practices, and ongoing leadership coaching, as well as customized support for those seeking to cultivate a sense of inclusion.

Recent organizational clients:

- Center for Children & Youth Justice in Seattle, WA
- Florida Chapter of the National Diversity Council
- Getaround
- HealthStream
- Kaufman Rossin
- University of Miami Human Resources Department



Kaufman Rossin Miami “Lunch and Learn” with employee affinity group



Hotel staff with Alquimia Hospitality Group

The Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau recently requested two hospitality and tourism trainings in the Spanish language for hotel staff with Alquimia Hospitality Group.

Participants felt open to be authentic in sharing about their experiences with gender and orientation, particularly around personal family upbringing and religious perspectives. Other staff asked multiple questions about greeting guests in gender inclusive ways, in both English and Spanish, to avoid assumptions about guest identity or relationship status. With Miami and the Beaches among the top 10 US travel destinations for gay male travelers and diverse families, hotels are partnering with YES Institute to ensure their guests feel welcome.

“Aprendí a tratar con respeto a toda persona sin importar su género. / I learned to treat everyone with respect regardless of their gender.”
–Hotel Staff

“Mil gracias por toda tu ayuda y paciencia con nosotros que somos novatos en el tema, pero con gran deseo de aprender y crecer. / Thank you very much for all your help and patience with those of us who are new to the subject, but with a great desire to learn and grow.” –Hotel Staff

Following our Communication Toolbox course for Vizcaya Museum & Gardens staff members last Fall, our education team was invited to lead four additional hospitality inclusion trainings for all volunteers and tour guides. Participants asked for guidance on how to respectfully approach a guest or colleague when gender or orientation questions arise.



Vizcaya Museum & Gardens staff.



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Sunday, August 20, 2023
11am – 1pm

Bird Bowl
9275 SW 40th St. Miami, FL 33165

*Join our commitment to the mission of
YES Institute, which serves youth and
families across the community.*

- Participate in a team building activity while supporting your local community and having fun.
- Lunch and non-alcoholic beverages included.
- Partner with YES Institute, a leading and reputable nonprofit for over 27 years.
- Invitation to our yearly donor events and inclusion in our donor acknowledgements.
- Silent auction and win raffle prizes!
- Highest scorer wins a trophy and a special prize!

[yesinstitute.org/bowling](https://www.yesinstitute.org/bowling)

Call 305-663-7195

