



# Pathways

To a Safer Sitka

Est. 2008

equity

respect

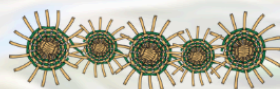
strengths-based

innovation

collaboration

## Community Primary Prevention Plan 2026-2032

The Pathways Coalition brings together diverse agencies and organizations and is dedicated to building equitable, accessible, and culturally responsive services and systems to ensure individuals are connected, cared for, and contributing back to their community.



Gunalchéesh to the Lingít people for their stewardship of this land.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the development of this prevention plan and who continue to carry out the work of the Pathways Coalition. These efforts would not be possible without the dedication and collaboration of coalition partners, funders, local businesses, community members, youth leaders, families, male allies, as well as Sitkans Against Family Violence (SAFV) leadership and backbone support.



Pathways Steering Committee Meeting 2026

Thank you to Pathways Coalition partners: Center for Community/Early Learning Program, City of Sitka Parks and Recreation, Sitka Conservation Society, Sitka Counseling, Sitka School District, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, and Youth Advocates of Sitka, Inc.



Photo credit: Berett Wilber

Additionally, we acknowledge that our work takes place on the traditional and ancestral land of the Lingít people. We honor their enduring relationship and stewardship of this land past, present, and future.

**Gunalchéesh!**

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# Introduction

Since 2008, Sitkans Against Family Violence (SAFV) has been the backbone organization for the Pathways to a Safer Sitka Coalition (Pathways), a group of local partners working collaboratively toward the vision: *Sitka is an equitable community where we hold each other up to reach our individual and collective full potential.* To ensure our efforts are comprehensive and creating environments that inhibit first-time occurrences of violence, Pathways partners use a community-based approach to address the shared risk and protective factors cutting across multiple issues impacting Sitka (e.g., violence, substance misuse, mental health, suicide, cultural dislocation). By working to build healthy social-emotional environments in the schools and community, as well as supporting family connectedness, youth leadership, and male allyship, Pathways partners create systems and programs that build individual and community protective factors and support resilience so individuals are less likely to experience violence, as well as other adverse conditions in their lifetime.



Since inception, Pathways members have routinely assessed the needs and gaps in the community in order to develop a comprehensive and responsive community prevention plan. The first community needs assessment (CNA), conducted in 2008, revealed several key areas of need within the community including opportunities for youth leadership, integrating diverse cultures into the schools, engaging men and boys, and coordinating community services to be more comprehensive and inclusive. The recent CNA, finalized in 2026, confirmed these needs are still relevant, but specifically highlighted the need for increased coordination across schools, community partners, and families to more effectively address gaps in systems and services. The CNA, which pulled from several data sources, illuminated what we have known for many years - like many Alaskan communities, [Sitka struggles](#) with intimate partner violence (IPV), sexual violence (SV), teen dating violence (TDV), bullying, suicide,

### KEY FINDINGS

- Violence is a widespread issue across Alaska, with Alaska Native populations particularly at risk
- Alaska ranks in the top five states for high rates of child victimization
- Economic instability & lack of childcare are putting undue stress on families and the community
- Mental health decline is a concern across all age groups
- Substance use is having negative community-wide impacts
- Sexual violence & teen dating violence are prevalent among teens
- Negative youth interactions within and outside of schools are concerning (e.g., bullying)
- Youth involvement in extracurricular activities is low
- Chronic absenteeism is high across schools
- There is a lack of community awareness of rigid masculinity norms & their effects
- Coordinated systems to respond to disclosures and other crises are lacking
- There is a lack of available resources to effectively address issues impacting Sitkans

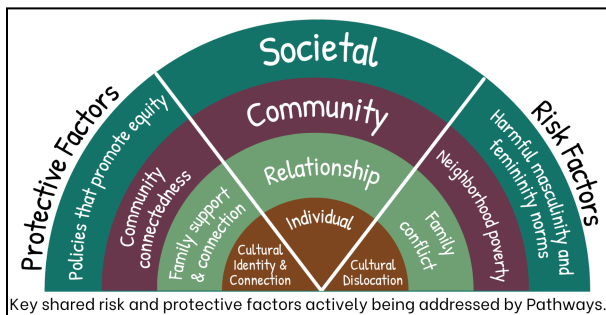
and addiction. The data compiled into this CNA, as well as information solicited from focus groups conducted over the years with youth, parents, men, schools, and community members, have been used to inform the work of the coalition, shaping our goals, strategies, programs, activities, and overall approach.

Go to [sitkapathtways.org](http://sitkapathtways.org) to view the most recent [CNA](#) and learn more about our collective work.

### Our Approach

The Pathways Coalition uses a modified [collective impact approach](#) and a shared risk and protective framework to guide our work. Identifying the common denominators underlying the multitude of issues impacting Sitkans has helped partners be more aligned and coordinated (and less duplicative and competitive), allowing for a more strategic and comprehensive approach to addressing community needs. Recognizing that protective factors such as connectedness (within schools, communities, families, and peer groups), teaching social-emotional skills, accessing opportunities/services, embodying a strong cultural

identity, and having positive role models help set individuals up for success, Pathways partners collectively work upstream to establish the conditions needed for a safe and thriving community. To address the five [Pathways goals](#), projects and programs span the [socio-ecological model](#) reaching children, youth, young adults, parents, families, men, and social service providers in both school and after school settings, the home, and the wider community.



### Service Areas

Pathways efforts serve the communities of Sitka, Kake, and Angoon. Sitka, traditionally known as Shee'tká, is a rural, remote Southeast Alaskan coastal community and the ancestral home of the Lingít people. Located on Shee (also known as Baranof Island), it is in the heart of the Tongass, the largest temperate rain forest in the world. Accessible only by boat or plane, food and outside resources are scarce and expensive. The city has a population of about 8,400 residents and relies on a variety of economic sectors like seafood processing, healthcare, and tourism. Sitka is an interconnected community with a long history of working together to provide resources and build infrastructure to support its diverse population, especially for youth and families.



Photo credit: Mark Kelley

Pathways efforts also extend to the rural communities of Kake and Angoon, both predominantly Alaska Native villages in SAFV’s service area. The populations are much smaller than Sitka (Kake- 537, Angoon- 335), and their remote locations make resources even more scarce. Similar to Sitka, both communities are interconnected and have a community culture of working together to take care of each other.

### Pathways Partners

The coalition is a diverse cross-sector group of individuals, agencies, and governments with representatives from schools, tribal and healthcare entities, as well as social service organizations that focus on domestic violence advocacy and prevention, substance use treatment and prevention, mental health, and serving youth and families. Our implementation partners also include individuals from environmental agencies, youth, men, and parents/guardians. Many of our coalition partners have been involved since inception and are listed below.



## Vision

Sitka is an equitable community where we hold each other up to reach our individual and collective full potential.

## Purpose

Purpose statements are more descriptive than mission statements and help do the following:

- Provide boundaries around the focus of Pathways
- Provide boundaries around what programs and activities are promoted by Pathways
- Provide clarity as to main actors and efforts in Pathways

## Purpose Statements

- Pathways works to build equitable, accessible, culturally responsive services and systems so that individuals are connected, cared for, and contributing back to their community.
- Pathways' partners use a coordinated effort to remove barriers tied to prevention of domestic violence, sexual assault, alcohol/substance abuse, suicide, child abuse/neglect, poverty, homelessness, isolation, mental health issues, low educational achievement, and harmful cultural norms.
- Pathways utilizes an “upstream” approach for creating healthy social-emotional environments by prioritizing and supporting programs and initiatives that build protective factors and support community resiliency.
- Pathways sees culture, specifically Alaska Native culture, as a central component of resiliency - “cultural resiliency” among Sitkans.

## Guiding Principles/Values

The way we do our work:

- **Respect:** We recognize the power of teamwork, practice respectful listening, and ensure that there is space for all voices.
- **Equity:** We recognize that one size does not fit all and work to remove barriers to allow everyone to achieve their full potential.
- **Innovation:** We seek and encourage innovative approaches to address public health issues, reach diverse communities, and improve agency operation.
- **Integrity:** We maintain consistency in what we say and what we do, and maintain accountability to each other and the communities that we serve.
- **Collaboration:** We seek to sustain and enhance the reach and impact of our efforts through partnership and engagement with community partners.
- **Sustainability:** Shared leadership that supports institutionalization of programs within agencies and community institutions.
- **Strengths-based:** Finding the strengths within agencies and individuals and building upon them.
- **Accountability:** We maintain transparency among partners and the community through continuous quality improvement and evaluation and strive to provide evidence-based/informed strategies for the community.

## Goals and Outcomes

Pathways partners meet regularly to develop, implement, evaluate, and revise a comprehensive primary prevention plan for Sitka. This plan guides us in our work as we collaborate to develop and implement prevention efforts within our five goals that stretch across the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels.

### Goal 1: School Environments

Schools are promoting and fostering safe and supportive environments for student well-being, growth, and learning.

#### Outcomes

- School staff incorporate culturally-responsive education and social-emotional learning into the classroom and school settings.
- School staff are well-equipped to respond to student crises.
- Community agencies and schools coordinate to ensure students are connected to resources and opportunities.
- Parents/guardians are involved in their child's school and learning.

### Goal 2: Youth Leadership

Youth are empowered to be leaders in their community and are actively promoting a positive peer culture.

#### Outcomes

- Youth are positively influencing their peers to shift unhealthy norms.
- Adults are mentors and advocates for youth.
- Partner agencies work together to establish safe community spaces for youth to engage and grow.

### Goal 3: Engaging Men and Boys

Men are allies, actively practicing and promoting healthy masculinities that foster safe and inclusive environments.

#### Outcomes

- Community partners work together to coordinate opportunities and provide resources to engage men.
- Men are open to personal growth and take steps towards their own healing.

- Men are role-modeling respect and healthy behaviors for youth (e.g., mentors, fathers).
- Men actively intervene to address harm in the community.

**Goal 4: Family Environments**

Families are fostering safe and nurturing home environments to support their children’s growth and development.

**Outcomes**

- Agencies are coordinating a streamlined approach to ensure relevant resources and family engagement opportunities are accessible.
- Families have access to support systems.
- Family units are connected and cohesive.

**Goal 5: Community Environments**

Partner agencies use a coordinated approach to establish systems and structures that support a safe and inclusive community.

**Outcomes**

- Partner agencies streamline efforts to increase accessibility to community resources and services.
- Partner agencies advocate for policies and norms that support equity.
- Partner agencies cultivate workplace environments that are conducive to growth, retention, and support.

**Strategies**

Strategies, activities, programs, and prevention initiatives are typically co-implemented by Pathways partners, often with backbone support from SAFV’s prevention team. We strive for comprehensiveness to ensure efforts are reaching beyond the individual and are implemented continuously (versus one-time events). The following all work together to improve outcomes across multiple domains helping us build a safer community that upholds and promotes positive social norms, where individuals have access to resources and opportunities that set them up for success.

- **Goal 1 (School Environments)** - in partnership with the Sitka School District, Pathways supports implementation of:



- [Girls on the Run](#) (GOTR) - a 10-week empowerment program for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade girls
  - [Boys Run I toowú klatseen](#) (BRITK) - a 10-week social emotional learning (SEL) and cultural program for boys in 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade
  - [Fourth R](#) - a best-practice healthy relationship curriculum for 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students taught by teachers in health classes
  - The development and implementation of a district-wide culturally responsive embedded social emotional learning ([CRESEL](#)) plan to establish safe and supportive school environments where all students feel like they belong and are able to reach their full potential
- **Goal 2 (Youth Leadership)** - in partnership with teens from Mt. Edgecumbe High School and the Sitka School District, Pathways supports the implementation of:
    - The [Sitka Youth Leadership Committee](#) (SYLC) - a leadership program for teens where members are mentored to develop social action projects that raise awareness about issues teens are confronted with (e.g., harmful norms, gender inequities, mental health decline) and initiate positive change in their community through strategic communications and media campaigns, as well as community education and conversations
    - The [Peer Education](#) program - a peer mentoring program where members learn skills to teach their peers about healthy relationships and develop messages to increase community awareness and education around teen dating violence
- **Goal 3 (Male Engagement)** - in partnership with male allies in the community, Pathways supports:
    - Capacity building for male engagement in primary prevention by working with men across the community to develop resonate campaign messages to further reach and engage men as positive role models in prevention programs as well as offer learning opportunities for men interested in becoming better allies
- **Goal 4 (Family Environments)** - in partnership with parents/guardians and families, Pathways supports:
    - Family connectedness by working together to foster complementary messages and coordinate approaches and opportunities that foster positive parent/child dynamics and healthy parenting skills, as well as connect families to resources
- **Goal 5 (Community Environments)**
    - This goal was informed by findings from the most recent CNA and is new to the prevention plan. It focuses on the larger systems and structures contributing to violence in our community; though strategies have not been implemented,



## Shared Risk and Protective Factors

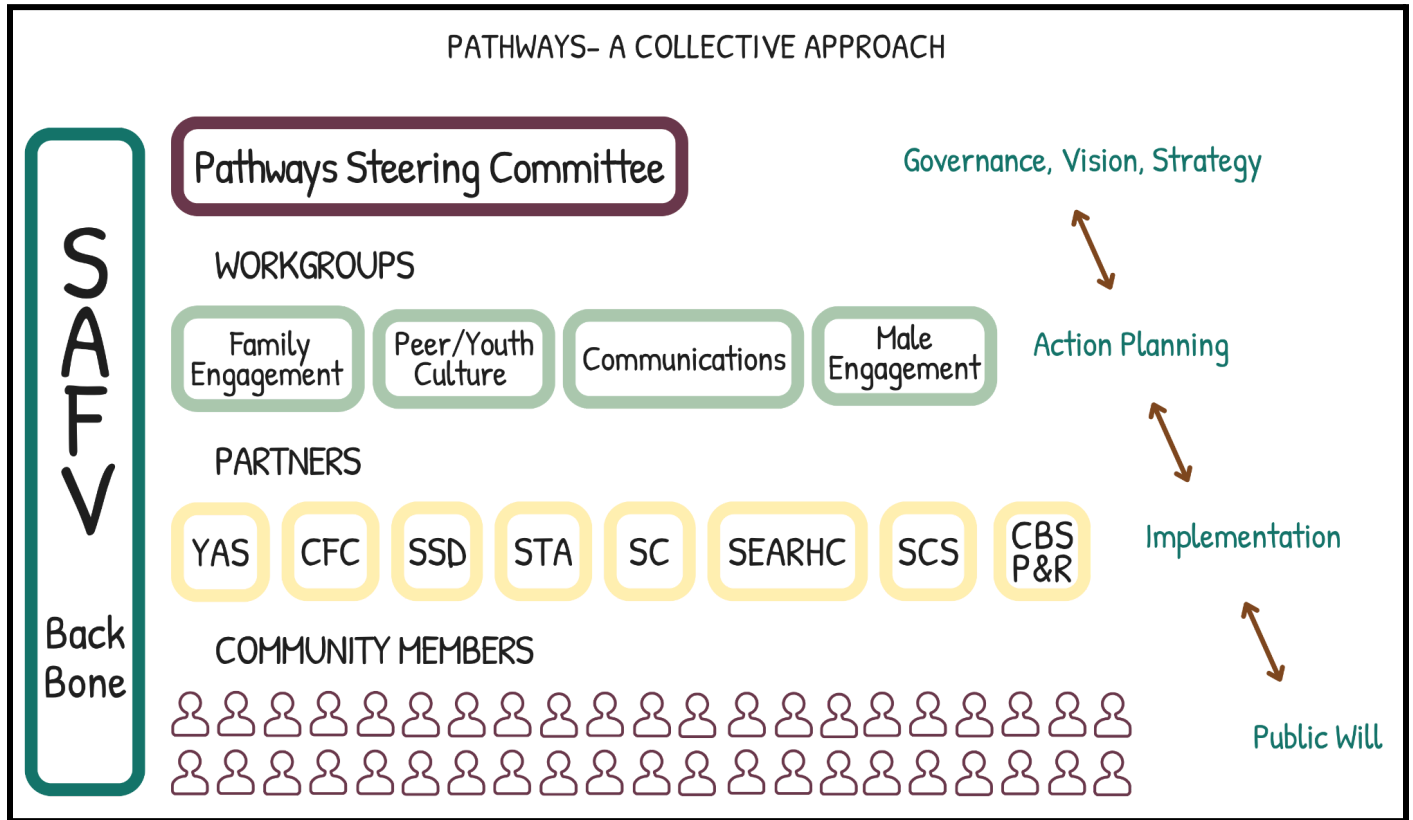
The chart below shows the shared risk and protective factors identified by Pathways partners which guide our collective impact approach. Each partner agency seeks to address relevant risk and protective factors, all of which have overlapping and intersecting impacts on each other.

Pathways to a Safer Sitka Shared Risk & Protective Factors								
		Child Maltreatment	Teen Dating Violence	Intimate Partner Violence	Sexual Violence	Bullying	Suicide	Substance Use
<b>Protective Factors</b>								
<b>Community</b>	<b>Resource and service coordination</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	<b>Access to mental health and substance abuse services</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	<b>Community connectedness</b>	X	X	X	X		X	X
<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Family support and connectedness</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	<b>Connection to a caring adult</b>		X		X		X	X
	<b>Pro-social peers</b>		X			X		X
	<b>School connectedness</b>		X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Individual</b>	<b>Cultural connectedness</b>	X	X				X	X
	<b>Healthy problem solving skills</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	<b>Engagement in meaningful activities</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	<b>Cultural identity and connection</b>						X	X
<b>Risk Factors</b>								
<b>Societal</b>	<b>Cultural norms that support aggression</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Media Violence				X	X	X	
	Income Inequity	X		X	X			X
	<b>Harmful masculinity and femininity norms</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Community</b>	<b>Neighborhood Poverty</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Community Violence	X	X	X	X	X		X
	Poor neighborhood support and cohesion	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Availability of drugs and alcohol	X	X	X			X	X
<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Lack of social support</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	<b>Negative parent-child relationship</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	<b>Family Conflict</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Individual</b>	History of Victimization	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	<b>Low educational achievement</b>	X	X	X		X	X	
	<b>Lack of healthy problem-solving skills</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	<b>Impulsiveness</b>	X	X	X	X		X	X
	<b>Loss of cultural identity and connection</b>	X		X			X	X

**Bolded Risk & Protective Factors** are ones actively being addressed in Sitka by Pathways.



## Pathways Structure



A collective approach between Pathways partners serves to coordinate efforts rather than working independently with sparse resources. We aim to address the complex causes of violence through shared planning, resources, information, and interventions. Pathways partners have worked together to establish systems and structures that help increase effectiveness and sustainability of our efforts. This structure helps partners spread out the work and allows individuals and agencies to determine where they can/want to plug in. Not everyone has to do everything!

- **Backbone Agency**
  - SAFV, as the backbone agency for the coalition, maintains strategic coherence while managing and coordinating the day-to-day operations and implementation of the work.
- **Pathways Steering Committee**
  - The function of the Steering Committee is to provide guidance, vision, and oversight; develop a common agenda inclusive of goal(s) and guiding principles; use data to inform strategy development and learning; and track progress of work using agreed-upon indicators. The Steering Committee maintains

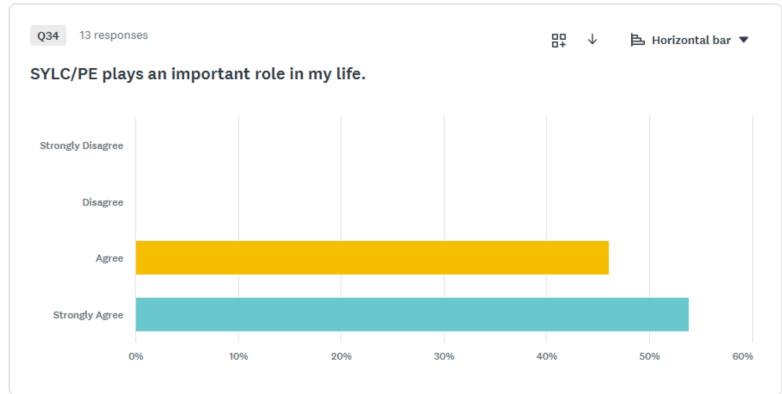
connections between working groups to ensure coordination and efficiency, and keeps the backbone entity, SAFV, updated on strategy, community engagement, and shared measurement developments. The committee meets annually.

- Chaired by Sitkans Against Family Violence
- **Workgroups:** the four workgroups help move the work forward on the ground by focusing more specifically on a goal area, meeting regularly, and implementing concrete projects
  - **Family Engagement Workgroup**
    - Formed in 2016, this workgroup aims to increase positive connections between parents/guardians and their children. The members coordinate and align efforts in order to better reach, support, and strengthen families.
    - Co-chaired by Center for Community and Sitkans Against Family Violence
  - **Peer Culture/Youth Leadership Workgroup**
    - Formed in 2019 to better align and coordinate efforts to reach youth in the after school setting. This workgroup aims to increase connectedness among peers, increase adult support to youth, as well as create opportunities for youth leadership in the community.
    - Co-chaired by Sitka Tribe of Alaska and Sitkans Against Family Violence
  - **Communications Workgroup**
    - The Communications Workgroup formed in 2020 and works to develop internal and external communications systems to help the coalition be more connected with one another as well as increase visibility in the community.
    - Chaired by Sitkans Against Family Violence
  - **Male Engagement Workgroup**
    - This workgroup was formed in 2025 and works to engage men and boys in the prevention of unhealthy outcomes related to harmful masculinity norms.
    - Chaired by Sitkans Against Family Violence

A [theory of change](#) and action plans have been developed for the workgroups as well as the steering committee; shared outcomes and measures have been identified for much of the collective work.

## Evaluation

Evaluation is a key component to creating a sustainable and effective primary prevention plan. The Pathways Coalition sought to develop outcomes that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. As this is a living document, we recognize that indicators may shift to align with work that is implemented on the ground. To ensure activities, programs, and efforts are on track and moving us closer to our collective vision and goals, we use both process and outcome measures to tell the story of how implementation is going and whether we are meeting our objectives. We recognize that change takes time and are using tools that will assess both short and intermediate/long-term impact.



Sitka Youth Leadership Committee & Peer Education Survey Monkey Data



BRITK 5K Finish Line

**"Being a strong man means to be kind and treat others with respect."**

**-Boys Run I toowú klatseen Participant**

## Get Involved

There are numerous ways in which organizations or community members can be involved in the work to build a more equitable Sitka. Individuals can participate on the steering committee or in a workgroup as a planning partner, or as an implementation partner for one of our programs. For more information, visit [sitkapathtways.org/getting-involved](https://sitkapathtways.org/getting-involved) or email [sitkapathtways@gmail.com](mailto:sitkapathtways@gmail.com).

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