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**For Immediate Release**

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**The Westport Prevention Coalition launches  
Community Readiness Survey on January 25th, 2020**

Westport, CT – Human Services Director Elaine Daignault announced today that the Westport Prevention Coalition has launched an [online Community Readiness Survey \(CRS\)](#) to measure public perception of substance misuse and mental health issues in Westport. The survey was created in partnership with Westport’s Local Prevention Council, the Westport Prevention Coalition and Positive Directions - The Center for Prevention and Counseling, as part of the Town’s ongoing efforts to address issues related to substance misuse and other health needs of the community.

The anonymous survey, which is now live, is meant to provide helpful information as the Coalition embarks on prevention and resource development efforts addressing substance misuse, mental health services and the overall wellness across the lifespan. The data will be used to advise local programming efforts that enhance the health and wellbeing of the entire community.

According to Daignault, “Measuring community perceptions of substance misuse and mental health issues allows us to establish a baseline of community readiness so we can effectively develop resources that bring appropriate prevention and intervention messages to the residents. Westport’s CRS is unique in its intention to gather input from a large cross section of age groups, as opposed to youth-only assessments. One only needs to review the daily news to comprehend the rise in mental health and substance misuse issues among children, adults and seniors across the country.”

The CRS will serve as a complement to the youth and parent surveys which are administered through Positive Directions bi-annually in partnership with Westport Public Schools; with plans for the next youth and parent survey cycle will occur during the 2020-2021 school year.

Jennifer Hrbek, Executive Director of Positive Directions adds, “We are proud to continue to partner with the Town of Westport in raising behavioral health as a community priority and are excited to have this process be informed by community members in identifying and addressing the issues most important to them.”

“The information we gather will help to create a stronger dialogue among residents and gauge community interest and opinion of mental health and substance abuse issues in Town. An anonymous survey allows us to take an in depth look at community perceptions while providing residents with an opportunity to voice their opinions openly.” said Daignault.

To learn more about available national, state and regional data on substance abuse and mental health topics, residents are encouraged to visit The Regional Behavioral Health Action Organization, [The Hub CT’s website](#) for local statistics.

Residents are encouraged to take the survey online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WCPCCS2020> and/or contact the Dept. of Human Services at (203) 341-1050 for more information or for assistance in accessing a paper copy.