Middle school is a time of enormous transition—physically, emotionally, socially, and academically. Many of Manchester’s youth face additional hardships, like poverty, violence, and other traumas, that greatly affect their overall well-being.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further impacted their social interaction and access to routine, leading to higher levels of anxiety, depression, loneliness, and suicidality. Behavior health supports and trauma-informed approaches are more critical than ever. Unfortunately, accessibility and stigma are barriers to getting help.

The Youth Enrichment Partnership (YEP) breaks down these barriers by bringing mental and behavioral health supports to the places middle school students already go and feel comfortable, like their schools, after-school, and summer programs. It also provides trauma-informed training to school and agency staff which adds stability and safety in a time of great uncertainty.

Kenny, a participant at one of the YEP programs, was in crisis and reached out to Amoskeag Health requesting weekly onsite behavioral health services. "I would never talk to a therapist about this, but it’s different because I know them," he said.

Having a regular, familiar face on-site at the Hubs helps mental health clinicians build rapport and reduce stigma around seeking behavioral and mental health services.