

Torrington

Youth Voices Count
Survey Report, 2023

Grades 6-12



Survey Conducted by:

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C O N S U L T I N G

PROGRAM EVALUATION • GRANT PREPARATION • CAPACITY BUILDING

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Torrington Youth Voices Count Survey Report

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Introduction

The following report is a summary of data that was gathered during April of 2023 at Torrington Middle School (grades 6-8) and Torrington High School (grades 9-12). Data collected from this student survey will be used in the planning and development of strategies, policies, and practices for the sponsoring organization, Torrington Awareness & Prevention Partnership, as well as other educational and social service organizations.

This survey was administered to youth enrolled in Torrington Public Schools to ensure a representative sample and reliable data. Please note that the findings presented in this report are not reflective of the school but are intended to reflect the greater community of Torrington.

It is important to note that COVID-19 greatly disrupted lives beginning in March 2020, which may have ongoing impacts on youth substance use rates and mental health concerns.

The Youth Voices Count Survey fulfills the following objectives:

1. Describes youth's perceptions and experiences regarding substance use, mental health, school environment, social media and online gaming, and other related behaviors among students in grades 6-12 in the year 2023.
2. Utilizes information provided by youth, allowing leaders to systematically **“hear” from youth**, in order to enhance and **plan initiatives and activities for youth** in the community.

Youth Voices Count Survey Background:

The Youth Voices Count Survey (YVCS) is adapted from the “ERASE Student Survey” which originated out of the Governor’s Prevention Initiative for Youth (GPIY) Student Survey, a school survey that was distributed throughout the State of Connecticut in 2000. Other survey influences include: The Connecticut School Health Survey, The Center for Prevention Evaluation and Statistics (CPES) Young Adults Statewide Survey and most importantly, emerging issues for youth today—including vaping, online gaming, and social media-related behaviors.

Youth Voices Count Survey is a product of B. Weyland Smith Consulting, LLC. Located in Wethersfield, Connecticut, B. Weyland Smith Consulting researchers have over 48 years combined experience of survey and statistical research regarding youth behaviors, perspectives, and experiences, specific to substance use, mental health and related risk and protective factors.

Youth Voices Count Survey was established with the support of many youth and professionals in the field of survey development, program evaluation, internet safety and school mental health staff. They provided feedback through document review and focus groups. The core elements of the YVCS are designed to understand youth’s current substance use and mental health behaviors and perceptions. These data are aligned with Federal National Outcome Measures for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. This allows for competitive grant applications and ongoing evaluation requirements to be met.

Topics assessed in the YVCS include: substance use, anxiety, depression, e-sports/online gaming, social media perspectives, gambling and accessing resources and supports in the community. Optional add-on topics include bullying/school climate, sexual behavioral and electronic communications, extracurricular activities and toxic stress.



Survey Methodology:

Survey Consent:

The Youth Voices Count Survey was administered in April of 2023 to students in Torrington. Students' guardians received e-mail letters notifying them of the purpose and content of the survey and were able to return a signed "passive consent" form to the school if they did not want their children to participate in the school survey. Guardians were provided with an opportunity to review the survey document.

Survey Administration:

All surveys were administered using SurveyMonkey.com website and software. Students were directed to access a link to the survey and an instructional video including an overview of the survey, ensuring anonymity, resources if the survey brought up uncomfortable feelings and informing of their option to decline participation. Any question could be skipped if a student was not comfortable answering a question. Students who chose to not participate in the survey were asked to sit quietly until all classmates finished the survey.

Data Analysis:

Data Processing:

The student survey data was exported from the SurveyMonkey.com website and imported into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for data analysis. A total of 24 surveys (1.7% of original sample of 1,428 surveys) were omitted from the sample pool due to lack of any responses other than demographics and survey responses that were implausible. The final sample size after surveys were omitted was 1,404 surveys for grades 6-12.

Sample Response Rates:

Response rates by grade level and school are listed in the table below. Note that there were 4 individuals who did not specify a grade. These cases were retained but will not be included in any grade level reporting. Response rates are calculated as a proportion of the number of surveys included in the sample to the number of total students enrolled in the 2022-2023 school year. Note that total sample counts only contain surveys that were used in the survey report; surveys that were omitted from the sample pool are not included in the following counts.

Sample Response Rates	Sample Count	Population Count	Response Rate (%)
Grade 6	259	325	79.69%
Grade 7	262	315	83.17%
Grade 8	282	335	84.18%
Grade 9	192	306	62.75%
Grade 10	152	273	55.68%
Grade 11	150	235	63.83%
Grade 12	103	196	52.55%
Grades 6-8	803	975	82.36%
Grades 9-12	597	1010	59.11%
Grades 6-12	1400	1985	70.53%

The next table below shows the confidence intervals calculated for grades 6-8, 9-12, and 6-12, using a 95% confidence level. A confidence interval means the percentage range you can expect the accurate rates to fall within. Smaller confidence

intervals give you more accurate estimates of the actual use rates in the school population (and larger confidence intervals give you less accurate estimates of the actual use rates in the school population).

For example, if 25% of your sample reported using alcohol in the past month, a confidence interval of 2.0 means that if you randomly re-sampled your population 100 times, 95 of those times you would find past month alcohol use rates to fall somewhere between 23% (25-2) and 27% (25+2). In contrast, if your confidence interval is 5 (and 25% of your sample reported using alcohol in the past month), you would typically find past month use rates ranging between 20% (25-5) and 30% (25+5) if you repeatedly re-sampled students in this population.

	Confidence Level	Confidence Interval
Grades 6-8	95.00%	1.45
Grades 9-12	95.00%	2.57
Grades 6-12	95.00%	1.42

Data Reporting:

The survey tool utilized several skip patterns to reduce the time spent on the survey for students, in addition, no question was required to be answered by respondents. Unless otherwise stated, data presented represent the percent of students responding to each question. However, survey response and completion rates are high enough for those questions to make strong estimates of the total population’s behavior and perceptions.

Survey Sample Demographics:

The student survey sample consisted of a total of 1,404 youth (695 females, 702 males; 7 students did not specify their biological sex). Additionally, 3 that provided their biological sex did not specify their grade, thus are not shown below. Refer to the Table below for more descriptions of the sample by grade level.

	6 th grade	7 th grade	8 th grade	9 th grade	10 th grade	11 th grade	12 th grade
Total	259	262	282	192	152	150	103
Female	121	133	128	101	76	77	58
Male	135	128	154	89	76	73	45
Did not Identify	3	1		2			

Statistical Analyses:

Statistical comparisons by biological sex (male/female) were conducted separately for grades 6-8 and grades 9-12 using the Chi-Square (χ^2) technique for key substance use measures (core GPRA measures for alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, marijuana, prescription drug use, and gambling).

No statistical analyses for grade level differences in substance use will be included in this report, but substance use percentages by grade level will be included for core GPRA measures for alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, marijuana, prescription drugs, and gambling.

Statistical Comparisons by Race:

We must be careful not to unfairly identify or stereotype a handful of students as using or misusing drugs, given the smaller sample size within specific minority groups in these schools. As also done in the CDC’s YRBSS (Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System) National Survey, we classified students exclusively as Hispanic or Latino even if they also selected being one or more of the races, such as African American, White, and/or another category. American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Multiracial (2 or more races) were combined into an aggregate category titled “All Other Races”, to simplify analyses and ensure that no individuals are inadvertently identified due to small sample sizes of specific racial groups. Thus, the core race/ethnicity groups

included in the statistical analyses for race differences were: White, Black, Asian, Hispanic or Latino, or All Other Races (organized in table below by color).

Race/Ethnicity Category	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12	Grades 6-12
White	48.19%	36.68%	43.29%
Black or African American	4.86%	6.53%	5.57%
Hispanic or Latino	38.98%	43.38%	40.86%
Asian	2.99%	6.53%	4.50%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.25%	1.17%	0.64%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.37%	0.17%	0.29%
Other (2 or more races selected or race not Hispanic)	3.74%	5.19%	4.36%
Not Specified	0.62%	0.34%	0.50%

For information regarding race and ethnicity differences in substance use, refer to the national survey reports, such as the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (<http://oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh.htm>) or the Monitoring the Future Survey (<http://monitoringthefuture.org>).

Statistical Comparisons by Gender Identity:

In the interest of assessing how gender identity may impact youth behavioral health, analysis was done to determine statistically significant differences among students identifying as the same gender as their biological sex (cisgender), and those that reported their gender as “non-binary,” “transgender,” or “I am not sure right now.” Because of the smaller sample size for these categories, they were grouped together for analyses. Statistically significant differences reported are significant at $p < 0.05$. It should be noted that gender identity is different than sexual orientation. Gender identity reflects who you are, while sexual orientation is about who you’re attracted to. 87 students (6.2%) identified as non-binary, transgender, or “I am not sure right now.”

Gender Identity	
Male	690
Female	623
Non-binary	34
Transgender	20
I am not sure right now	33
Did not Identify	1

Sexual Identity	
Heterosexual (straight)	1027
Gay or Lesbian	46
Bisexual or Pansexual	172
I describe myself some other way	37
I am not sure right now	76
I do not know what this question is asking	40
Did not Identify	6

Statistical Comparisons by Sexual Identity:

In the interest of assessing how sexual identity may impact youth behavioral health, analysis can be done to determine statistically significant differences among students describing themselves as heterosexual, and those that described themselves as gay or lesbian, bisexual or pansexual, “I describe myself some other way,” and “I am not sure right now.” 331 (23.6%) students described themselves as gay or lesbian, bisexual or pansexual, “I describe myself some other way,” or “I am not sure right now.”

Equity, Disparities and Social Determinants of Health:

When evaluating statistically significant differences between population groups it is essential to consider historical, political and cultural context with the intent of preventing the reinforcement of stereotypes. In the United States, minority groups have experienced discrimination leading to unequal access to resources (i.e. quality education, employment and housing). Stigma is another driver of inequity, “because of its pervasiveness, its disruption of multiple life domains (e.g., resources, social relationships, and coping behaviors), and its corrosive impact on the health of populations, stigma should be considered alongside the other major organizing concepts for research on social determinants of population health.” (Hatzenbuehler ML et al. *Stigma as a fundamental cause of population health inequalities*. Am J Public Health. 2013 May)

Executive Summary:

Student Mental Wellbeing:

Anxiety: For grades 6-12, 29.5% of youth reported feelings of anxiety in the past year as occurring almost always (16.3%) and always (13.2%). 30.9% of youth report their feelings of anxiety make things difficult for them in their lives always or almost always.

Sources of Anxiety: For grades 6-8, the most reported sources of stress or worry in their lives are academics, post-high school plans, and peers. For grades 9-12, it was academics, post-high school plans, and schedule. For all grades, social media and financial security ranked as the lowest source of anxiety among the provided choices.

Self-Harm: 18.0% of youth in grades 6-8 reported having thoughts of self-harm and 11.2% report having harmed themselves in the past year. For grades 9-12, 17.3% reported having thoughts of self-harm and 11.2% report having harmed themselves in the past year.

Depression: 22.9% of youth in grades 6-8 and 24.6% of youth in grades 9-12 reported having “felt sad or hopeless for two or more weeks in a row so much it stopped me from doing my usual activities” in the past year.

Suicidal Ideation in the Past Year: 9.7% of youth in grades 6-8 and 10.9% of youth in grades 9-12 reported having considered attempting suicide within the past year.

Comfort Seeking Help: For grades 6-12, the sources youth felt most comfortable seeking help from were parents (61.5%) and friends (54.7%).

Having a Trusted Adult: 89.7% of youth in grades 6-12 agreed with the statement, “I have at least one adult in my life that I can share my thoughts and feelings with.”

Community and School Safety: For grades 6-12, 79.5% of youth agreed with the statement, “I feel safe in my community” and 65.6% agree with the statement, “I feel safe at school.”

Bullying:

Bullying Frequency: 55.1% of youth in grades 6-12 report having been bullied in their lifetime. 7.6% experienced this 1 to 5 days in the past month, 3.0% 6 to 20 days in the past month and 2.9% for 21 days or more in the past month.

Bullying Types: The types of bullying most frequently reported among youth grades 6-12 were mean names or comments, exclusion, and rumors.

Bullying Locations: Bullying most frequently occurs in the hallways, classroom, and at lunch.

Gaming and Social Media:

Gaming Assets and Consequences: For grades 6-12, 55.7% of youth indicated that as a result of gaming they “felt more connected with others.” The most common negative consequence of gaming was “I did not complete my homework or study” (30.2%), and I did not get enough sleep (28.9%).

Social Media Assets and Consequences: For grades 6-12, 60.6% of youth indicated that as a result of social media they “felt more connected with others.” 30.6% of youth reported they heard or saw something their parents/guardians would think was inappropriate, and 29.3% report having a hard time stopping their social media use.

Substance Use and Gambling Rates:

Youth in Grades 6-8: Alcohol was the most used in youths' lifetimes (6.2%), followed by vape products with nicotine (5.0%), and vape products with flavored liquids (4.6%). For past month use, marijuana was the most used (1.9%), followed by vape products with nicotine (1.6%), and vape products with flavored liquids (1.5%). 1.9% of youth in grades 6-8 reported gambling in the past month.

Youth in Grades 9-12: Alcohol was the most used substance in youths' lifetimes (15.1%), followed by marijuana (11.6%), and vape products with nicotine (10.7%). For past month use, marijuana was most used (5.5%), followed by alcohol (4.7%), and vape products with flavored liquids (4.5%). 2.4% of youth in grades 9-12 reported gambling in the past month.

Substance Use Perceptions and Behaviors:

Perceived Risk: For grades 6-8 and 9-12, non-medical use of prescription drugs had the highest perceived risk (78.3% and 83.7% respectively). For grades 6-12, marijuana had the lowest perceived risk among substances (61.2%).

Parental Disapproval: For grades 6-8, perceived parental disapproval was highest for non-medical use of prescription drugs (94.7%), followed by smoking cigarettes (94.0%), and vaping nicotine (93.2%). For grades 9-12 parental disapproval was highest for non-medical use of prescription drugs (94.6%), followed by smoking cigarettes (93.8%), and vaping nicotine (92.1%).

Peer Disapproval: For grades 6-8 perceived peer disapproval was highest for non-medical use of prescription drugs (87.6%), followed by smoking cigarettes (83.8%) and marijuana use (83.3%). For grades 9-12, perceived peer disapproval was highest for non-medical use of prescription drugs (84.2%), followed by smoking cigarettes (78.6%), and drinking alcohol (73.0%).

Accessibility of Alcohol and Other Drugs-Perception of Ease of Access: For grades 6-8 alcohol was perceived as the easiest to obtain, followed by vape products with nicotine, while prescription drugs were perceived as the hardest to obtain. For youth in grades 9-12, vape products were perceived as the easiest to obtain, followed by alcohol.

Accessibility of Alcohol and Other Drugs-Sources: Overall, youth in grades 6-12 most frequently access vape products, marijuana, and prescription drugs from friends/peers. Tobacco products are most accessed from home without parents' permission, and alcohol is most accessed from home with parents' permission.

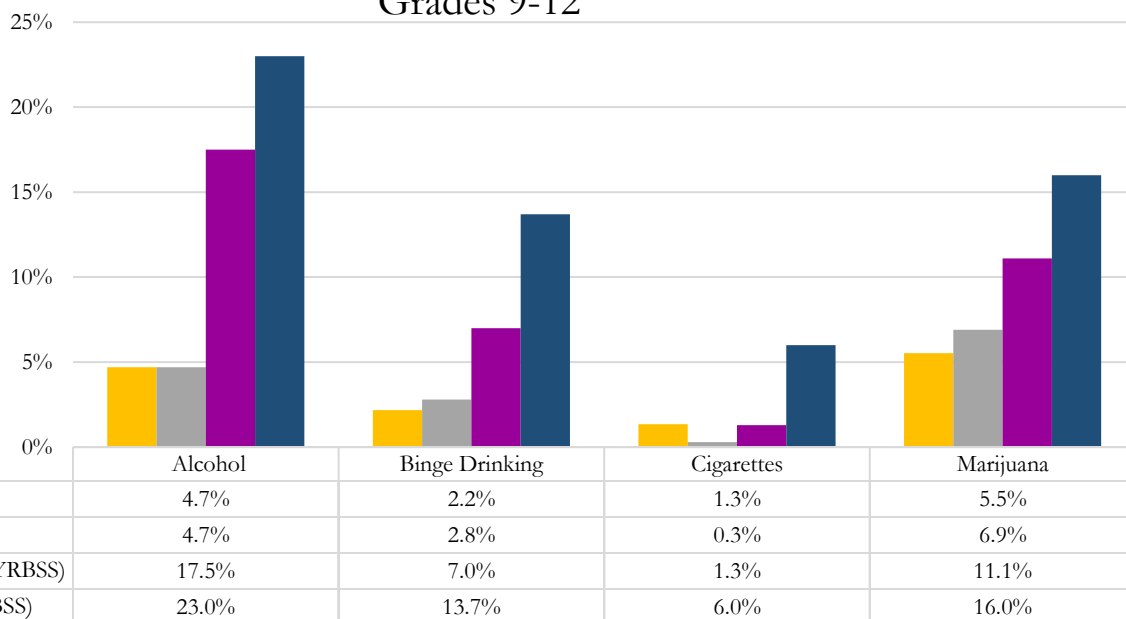
Locations of Substance Use: Vape products and marijuana are most used "with friends at my home or my friends' home," while alcohol is most used at home with parents' guardians present. Prescription drugs are most used at home alone, tied with "with friends at my home or my friends' home."

Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol or Marijuana/THC: Among youth in grades 11-12, more drove under the influence of marijuana/THC (1.6% past month/1.6% lifetime) than alcohol (0.4% past month/ 1.6% lifetime).

Other Substance Use: Of substances less commonly used, the highest lifetime use rates for grades 6-12 were CBD products (4.2%), followed by inhalants (2.4%). Heroin/fentanyl was 0.3%, noted here due to community concerns regarding the opioid epidemic in our state and nation.

Toxic Stress: In the past year, 22.8% of youth grades 6-12 reported experiencing discrimination and 14.4% reported experiencing community violence. 4.0% of youth reported housing problems and 7.2% reported food insecurity in the past year.

Past Month Rate Comparisons to DRG and State Grades 9-12



-YRBSS 2021* It should be noted that YRBSS data presented here is from 2021, the most recent year available.

-DRG reflects aggregated data from Youth Voices Count Surveys administered in communities within the same District Reference Group as Torrington. District Reference Groups come from the Connecticut State Department of Education and are a classification system grouping school districts with similar socioeconomic status and need in order to make comparisons. For more information, see the following: https://sdeportal.ct.gov/cedar/files/pdf/reports/db_drg_06_2006.pdf

Torrington Youth Voices Count Survey Report

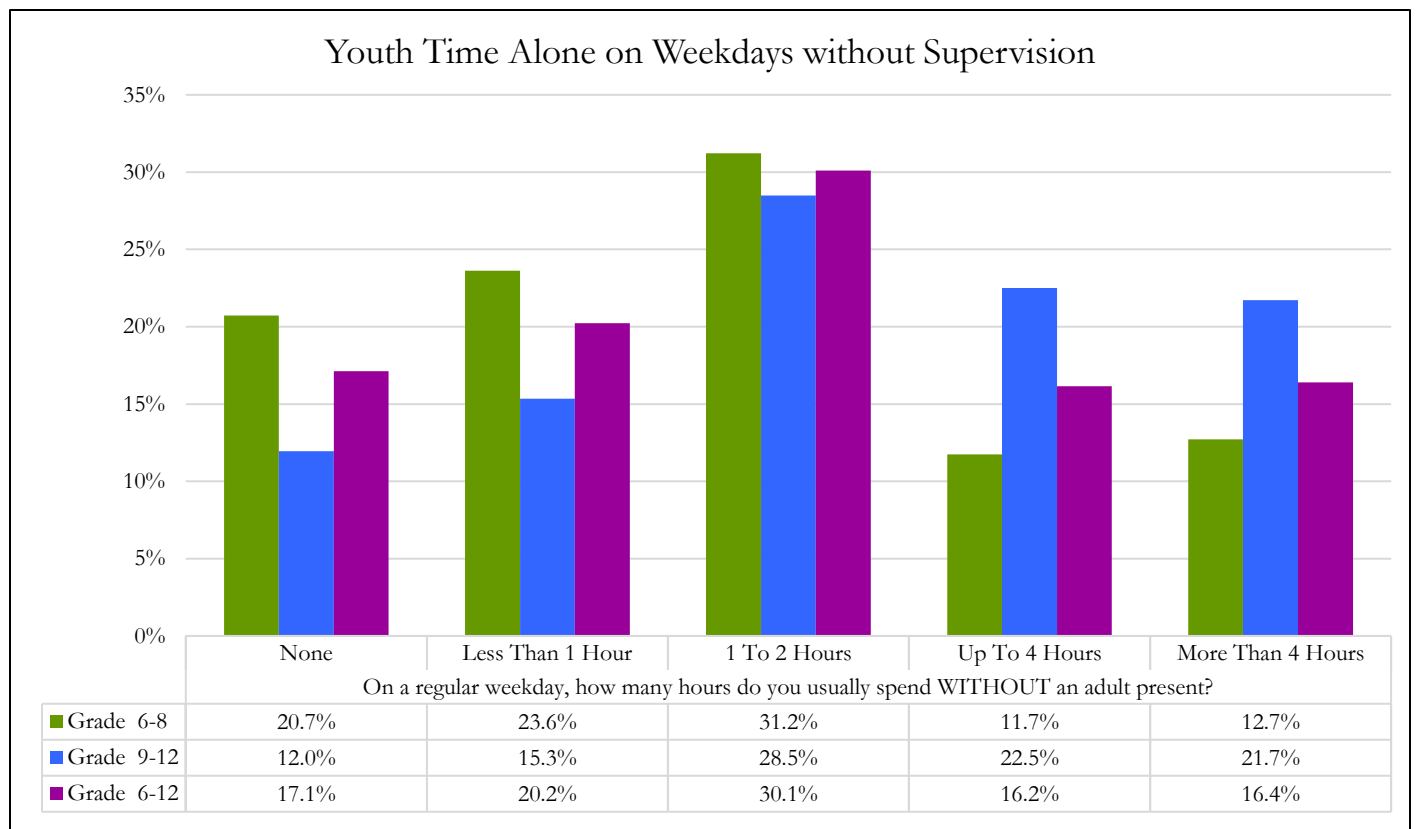
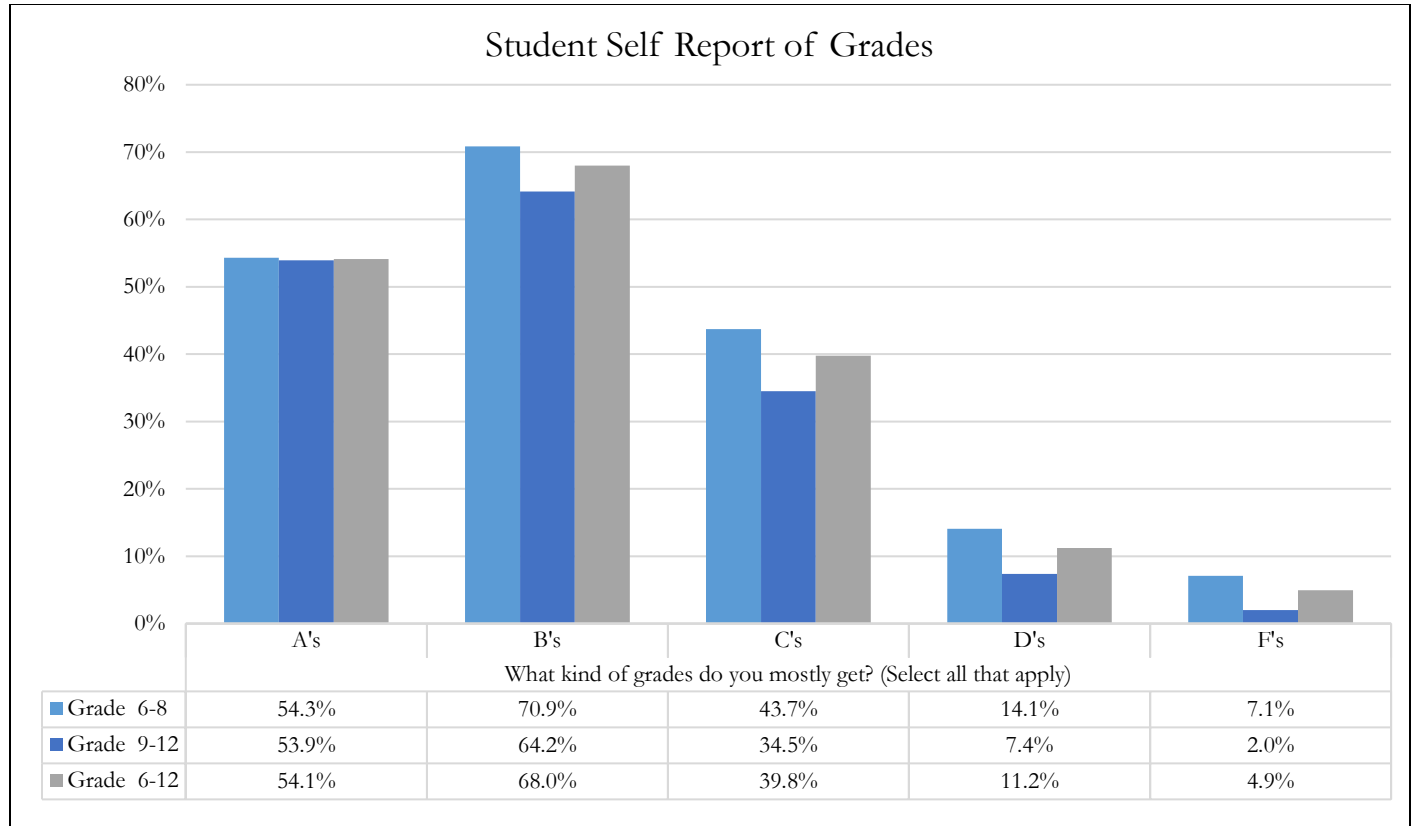
For the following sections, tests for statistically significance difference were performed by biological sex, race and ethnicity, and gender identity for grades 6-8 and 9-12. Race was grouped into categories to allow for accurate statistical analysis and to ensure that students in race categories that represent a small number of students are not inadvertently identified. The categories are white, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and All Other Races.

Though testing is available for most charts in the report, it was only selected for the following charts:

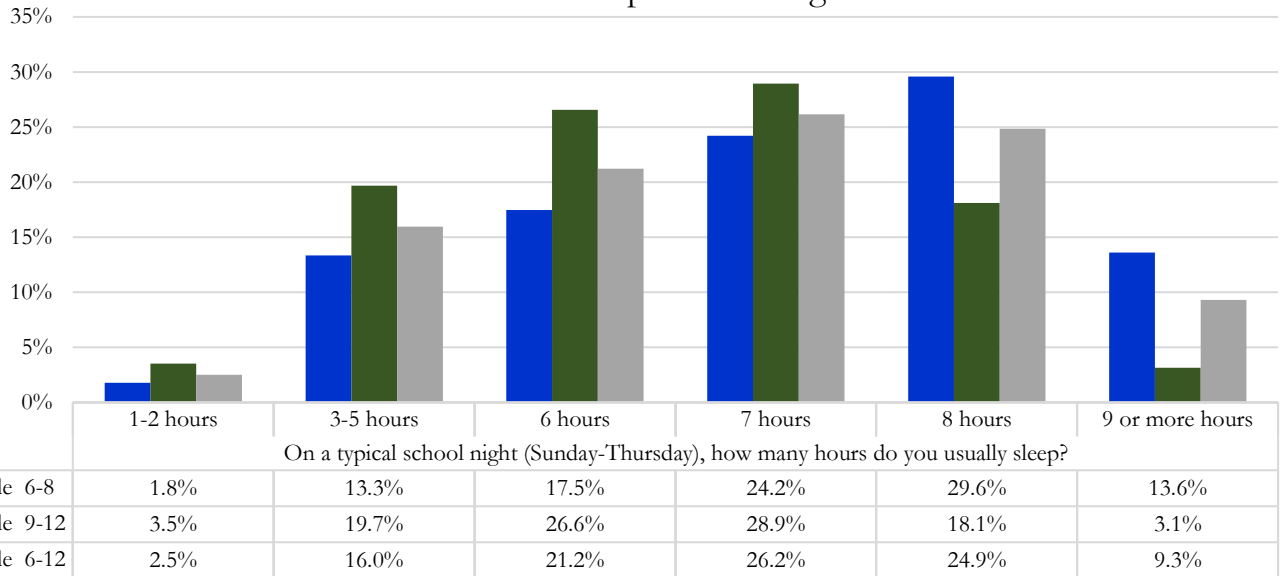
Perception of Having a Trusted Adult and Feelings of Safety (p. 11), Bullying Frequency (p. 14), Frequency of Anxiety (p. 16), Anxiety Level by Source (p. 17), Other Emotional Health Indicators (p. 18), Perception of Parental Disapproval (p. 21), Perception of Peer Disapproval (p. 22), Perception of Risk/Harm (p. 23), Past Month Substance Use and Lifetime Substance Use (p. 30 and 31), and Toxic Stress (p. 40).

Any statistically significant difference in these groups is noted under the chart it applies to and on pages 28-29 where a list of associations with substance use are provided. There are instances where significance testing indicates differences among categories, however they are less statistically reliable due to small numbers and thus are not reported here.

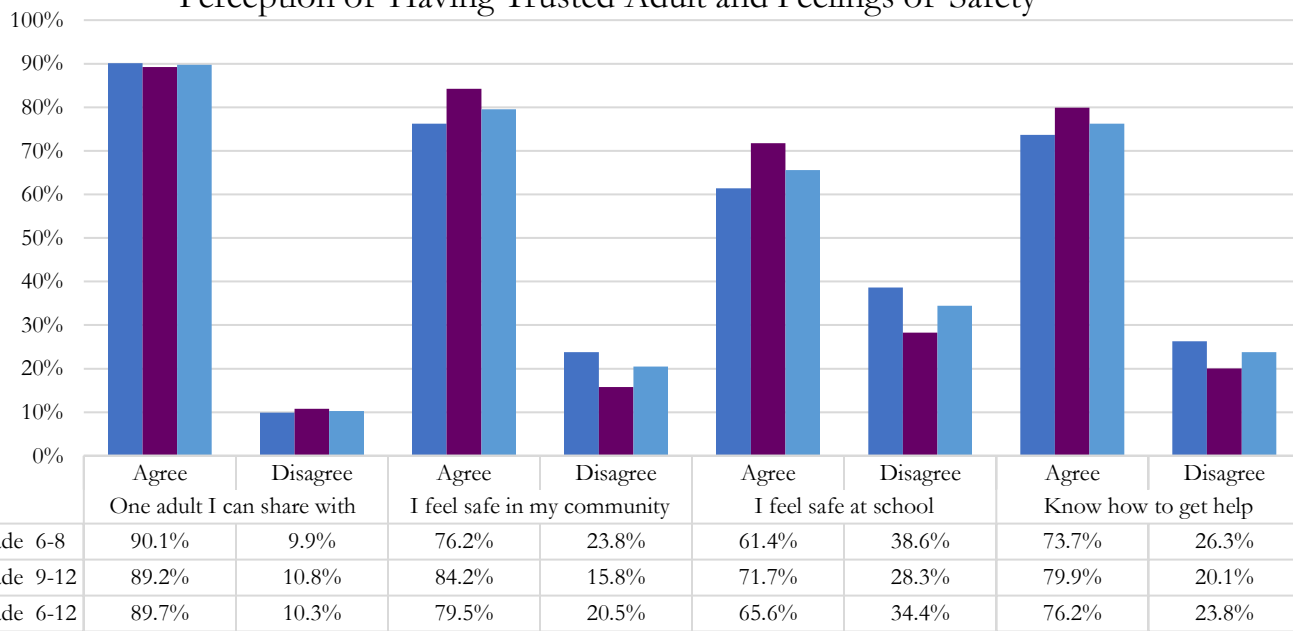
Youth Lifestyles:



Youth Hours of Sleep on Weeknights

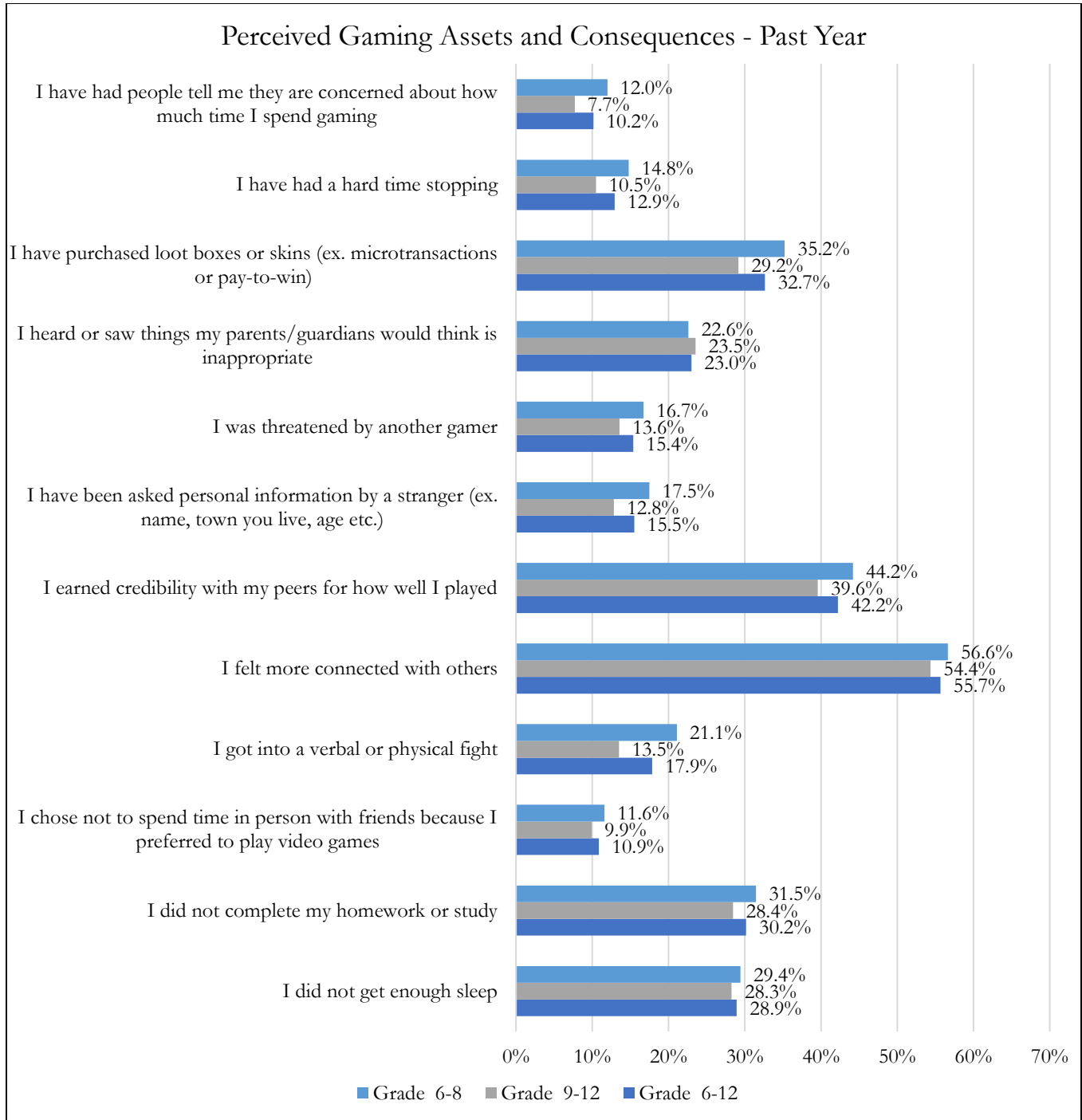


Perception of Having Trusted Adult and Feelings of Safety

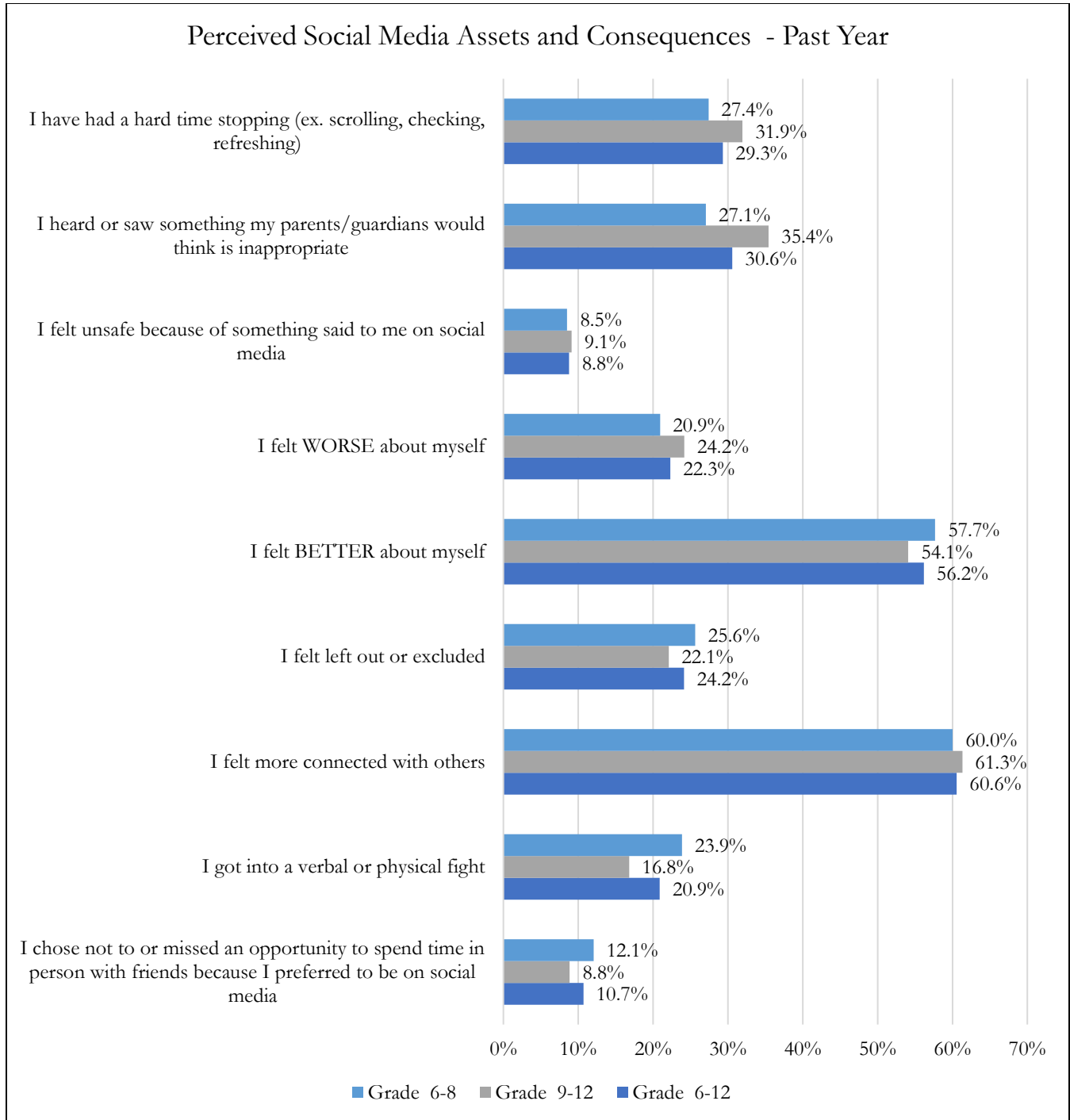


- *Middle and high school males were more likely than females to report feeling safe in their community and safe at school.
- *High school white youth were more likely to have at least one adult they can share thoughts and feelings with compared to youth in the “All Other Races” group.
- *High school white and Hispanic youth were more likely to feel safe in their community than youth in the “All Other Races” group.
- *Middle school youth who described themselves as transgender, non-binary, or unsure were less likely to have an adult they can share thoughts and feelings with compared to their cisgender peers, and less likely to feel safe in their community.
- *High school youth who described themselves as transgender, non-binary, or unsure were less likely to report feeling safe at school compared to their cisgender peers.
- *Middle and high school youth who described themselves as LGBS were less likely to feel safe in their community or safe at school compared to their heterosexual peers.
- *High school youth who described themselves as LGBS were less likely to know how to get help for themselves or peers for mental health or substance use problems at school.

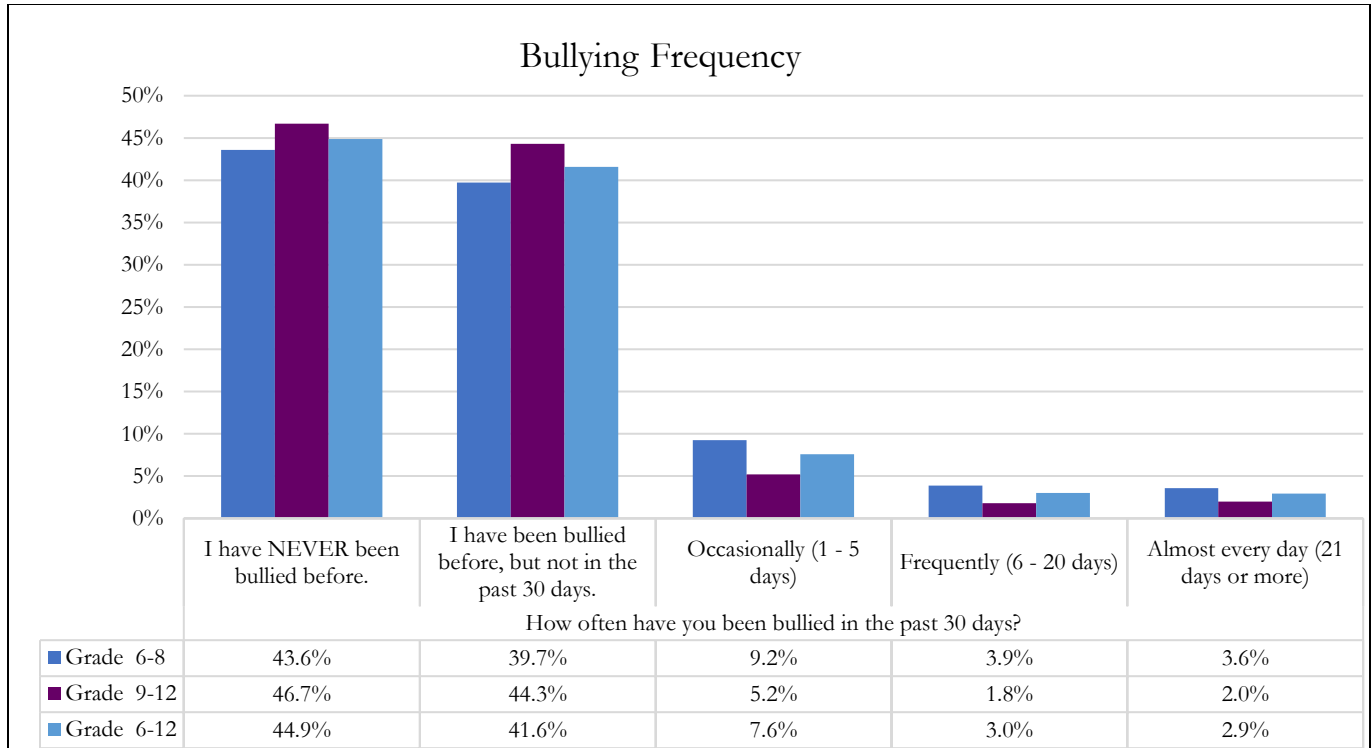
Gaming:



Social Media:



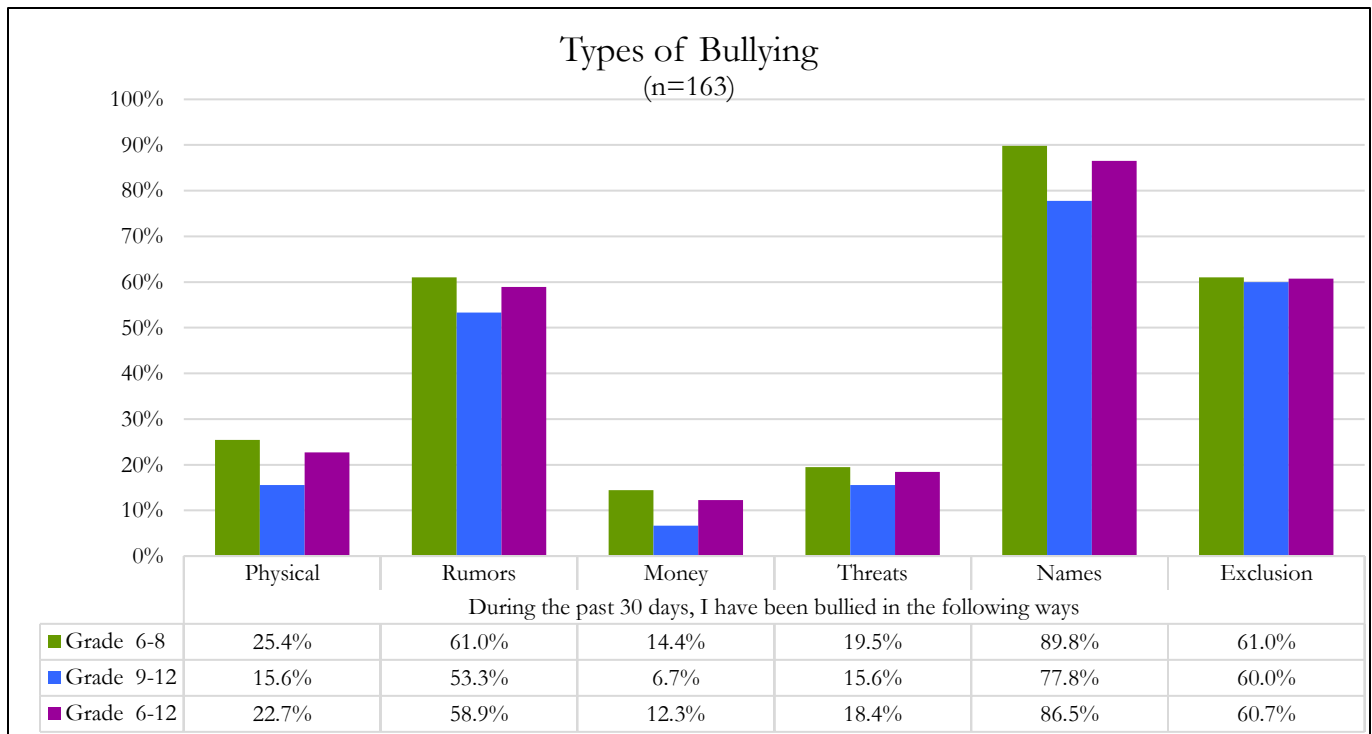
Bullying:



*Middle and high school females were more likely to report ever having been bullied than males.

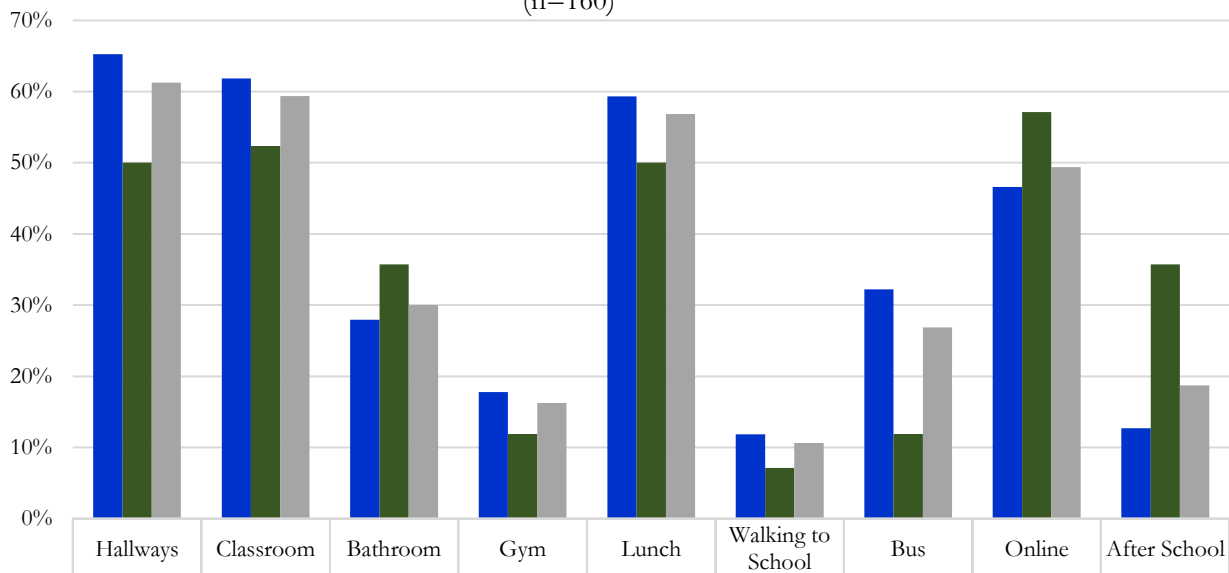
*High school youth who described themselves as transgender, non-binary, or unsure were more likely to report ever having been bullied compared to their cisgender peers.

*Middle school youth who described themselves as LGBS were more likely to have been bullied occasionally or frequently compared to their heterosexual peers. High school youth who described themselves as LGBS were more likely to have ever been bullied, or have been bullied almost every day, compared to their heterosexual peers.



Locations of Bullying

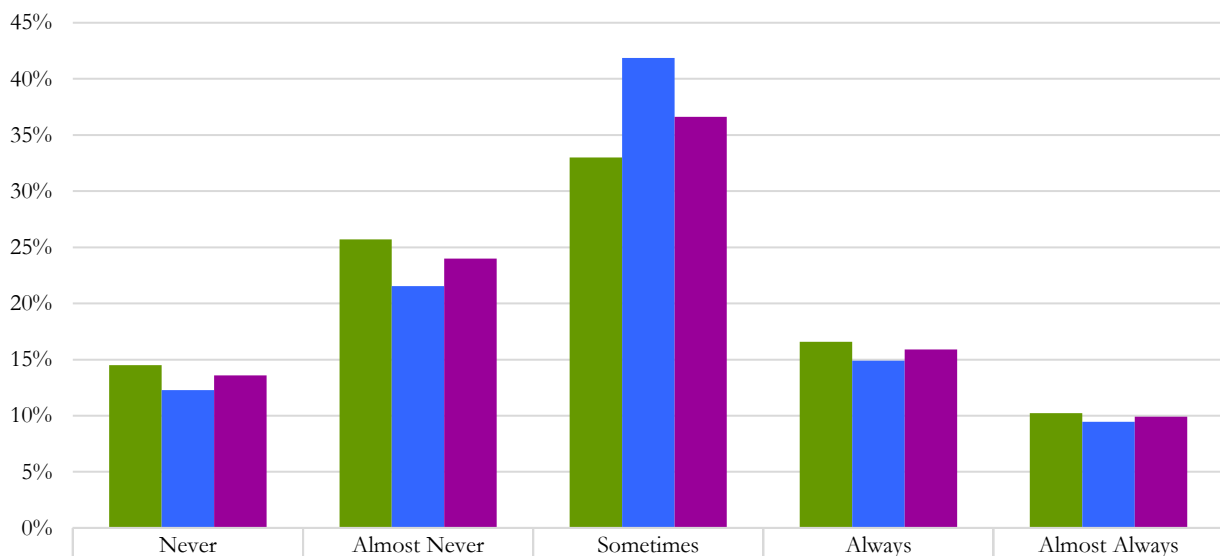
(n=160)



In the past 30 days, I have been bullied in the following places (Select all that apply):

■ Grade 6-8	65.3%	61.9%	28.0%	17.8%	59.3%	11.9%	32.2%	46.6%	12.7%
■ Grade 9-12	50.0%	52.4%	35.7%	11.9%	50.0%	7.1%	11.9%	57.1%	35.7%
■ Grade 6-12	61.3%	59.4%	30.0%	16.3%	56.9%	10.6%	26.9%	49.4%	18.8%

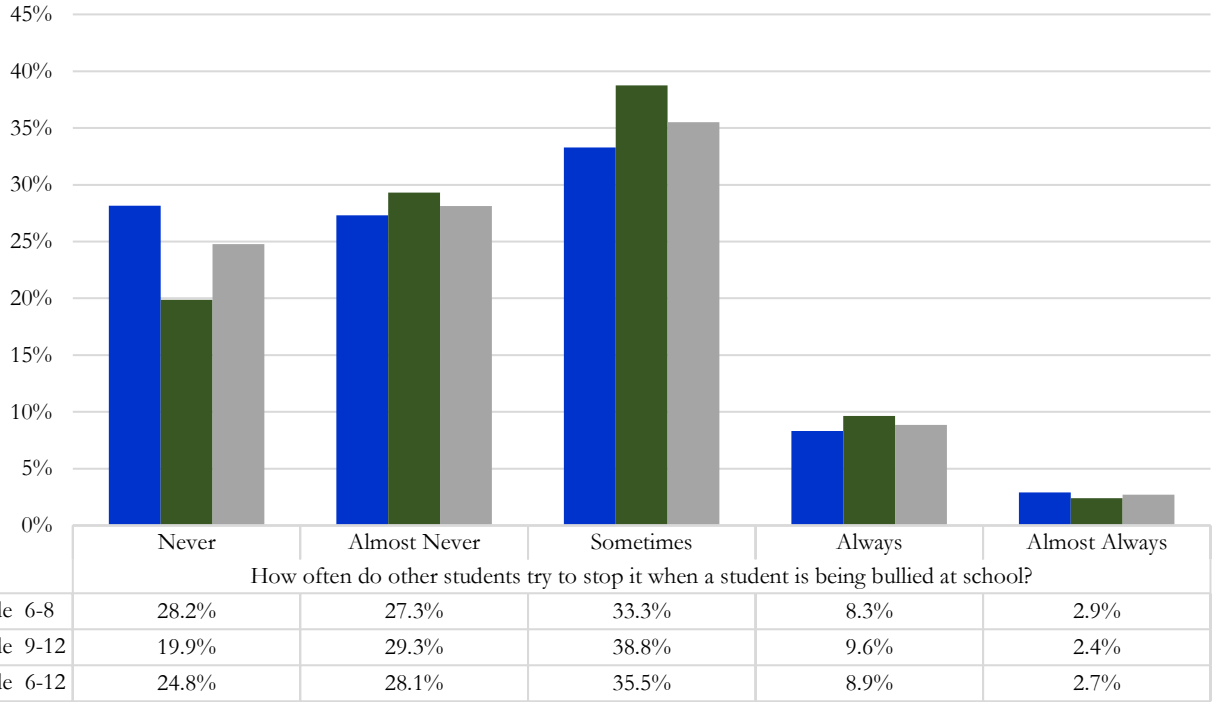
Frequency of Teachers/Adults Intervening When Bullying Occurs



How often do the teachers or other adults at school try to stop it when a student is being bullied at school?

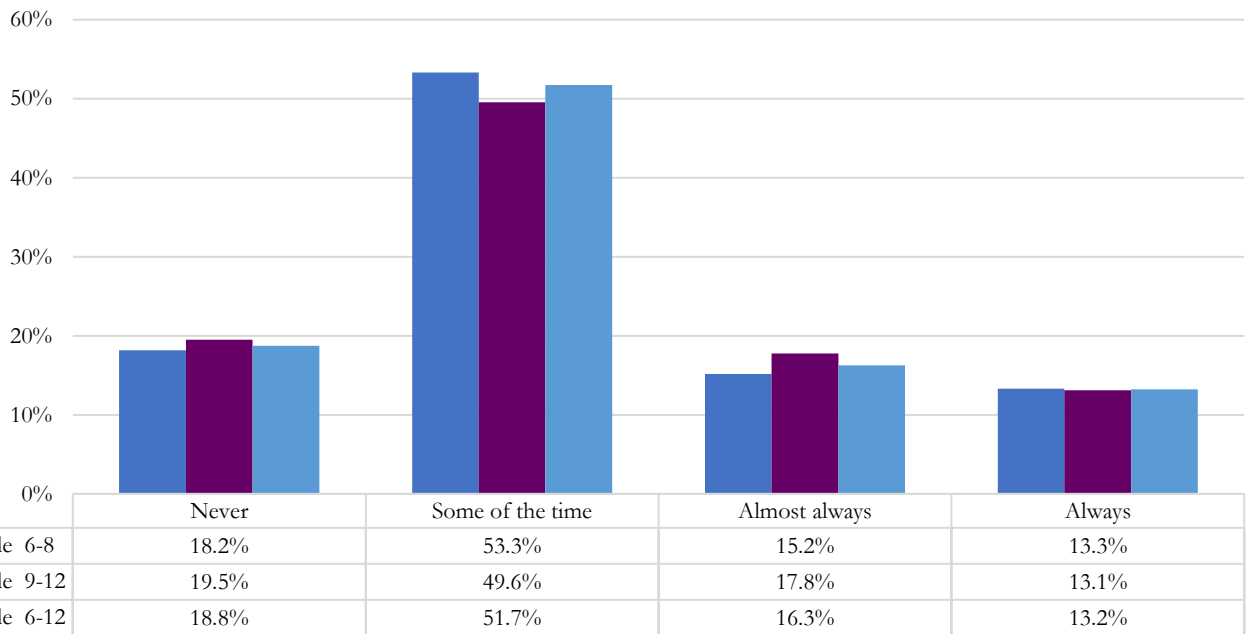
■ Grade 6-8	14.5%	25.7%	33.0%	16.6%	10.2%
■ Grade 9-12	12.3%	21.5%	41.9%	14.9%	9.5%
■ Grade 6-12	13.6%	24.0%	36.6%	15.9%	9.9%

Frequency of Students Intervening When Bullying Occurs

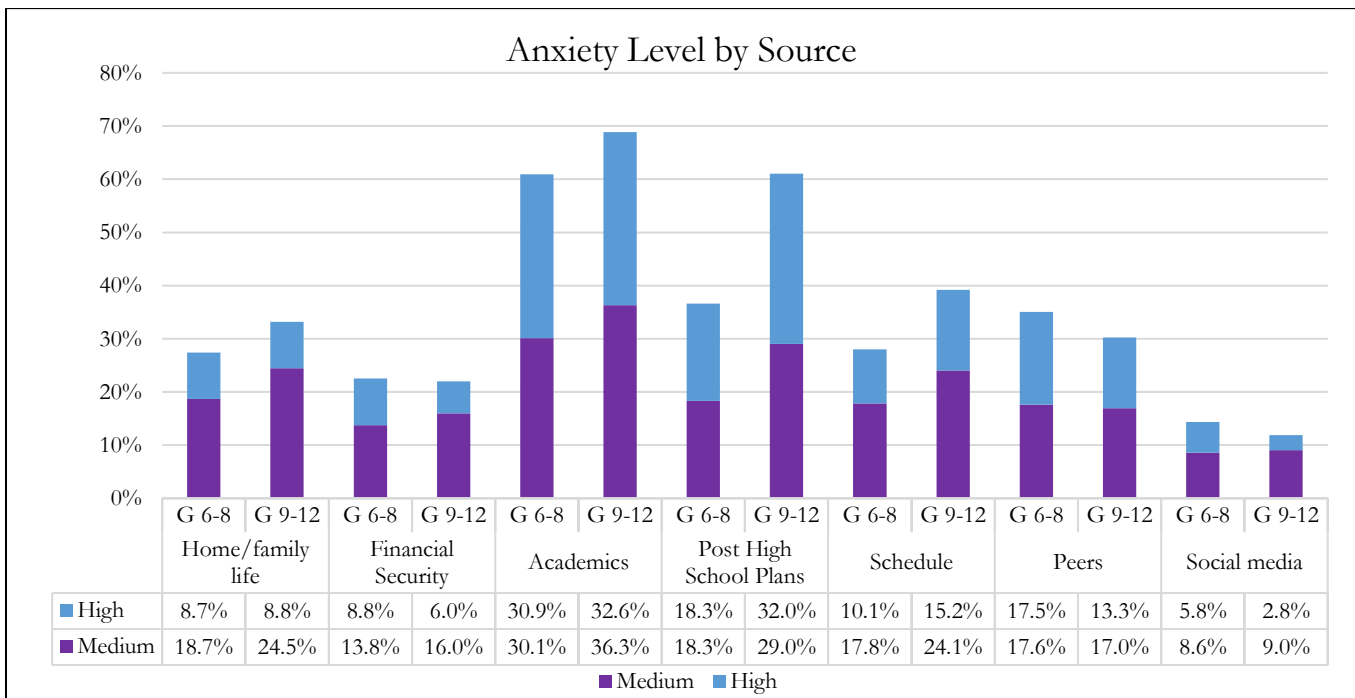
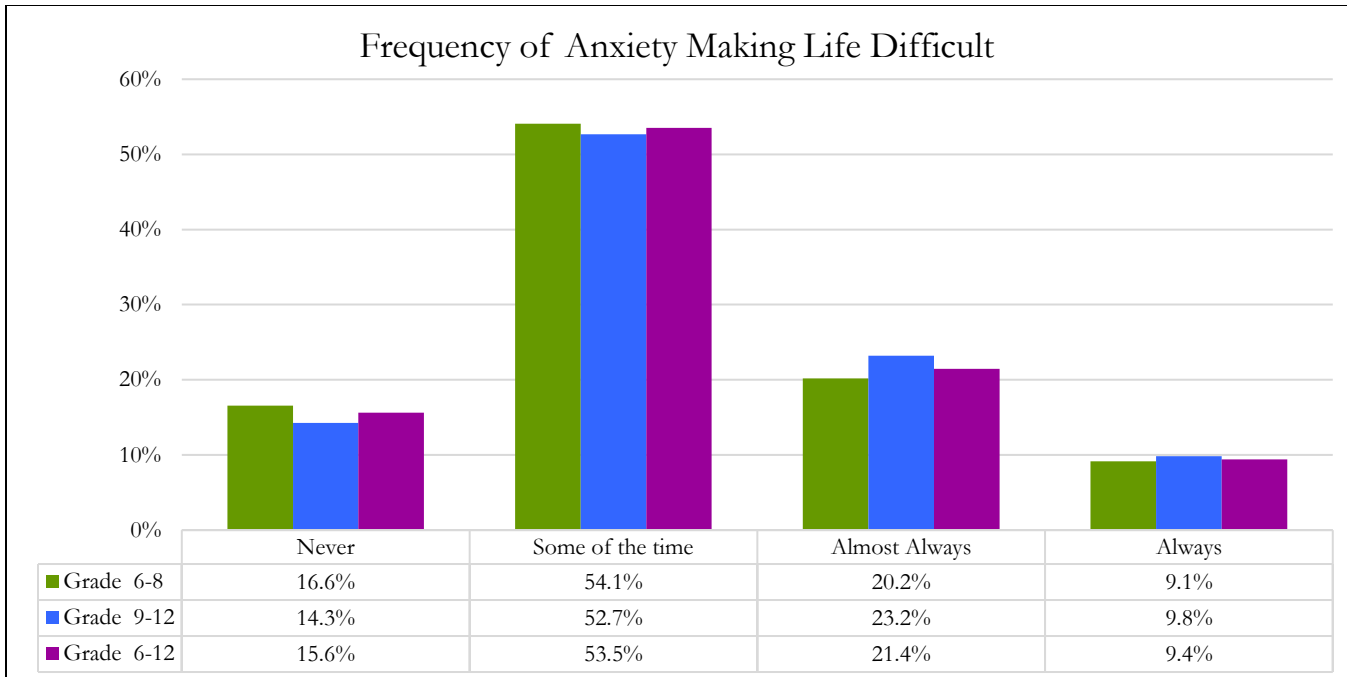


Emotional Health:

Frequency of Anxiety-Past Year



*Middle and high school females were more likely to report feeling anxious always or almost always compared to males.
 *Middle and high school youth who described themselves as transgender, non-binary, or unsure were more likely than their cisgender peers to report feeling more frequent anxiety.
 *Middle and high school youth who described themselves as LGBS were more likely to report anxiety always or almost always.



*Middle and high school females reported higher levels of stress compared to males for the following sources: home/family life, academics, schedule, peers, and social media.

*Middle school females reported higher levels of stress compared to males for financial security. High school females reported higher levels of stress compared to males for post-high school planning.

*Middle school youth who described themselves as transgender, non-binary, or unsure were more likely to identify home/family life and academics as a source of anxiety or stress.

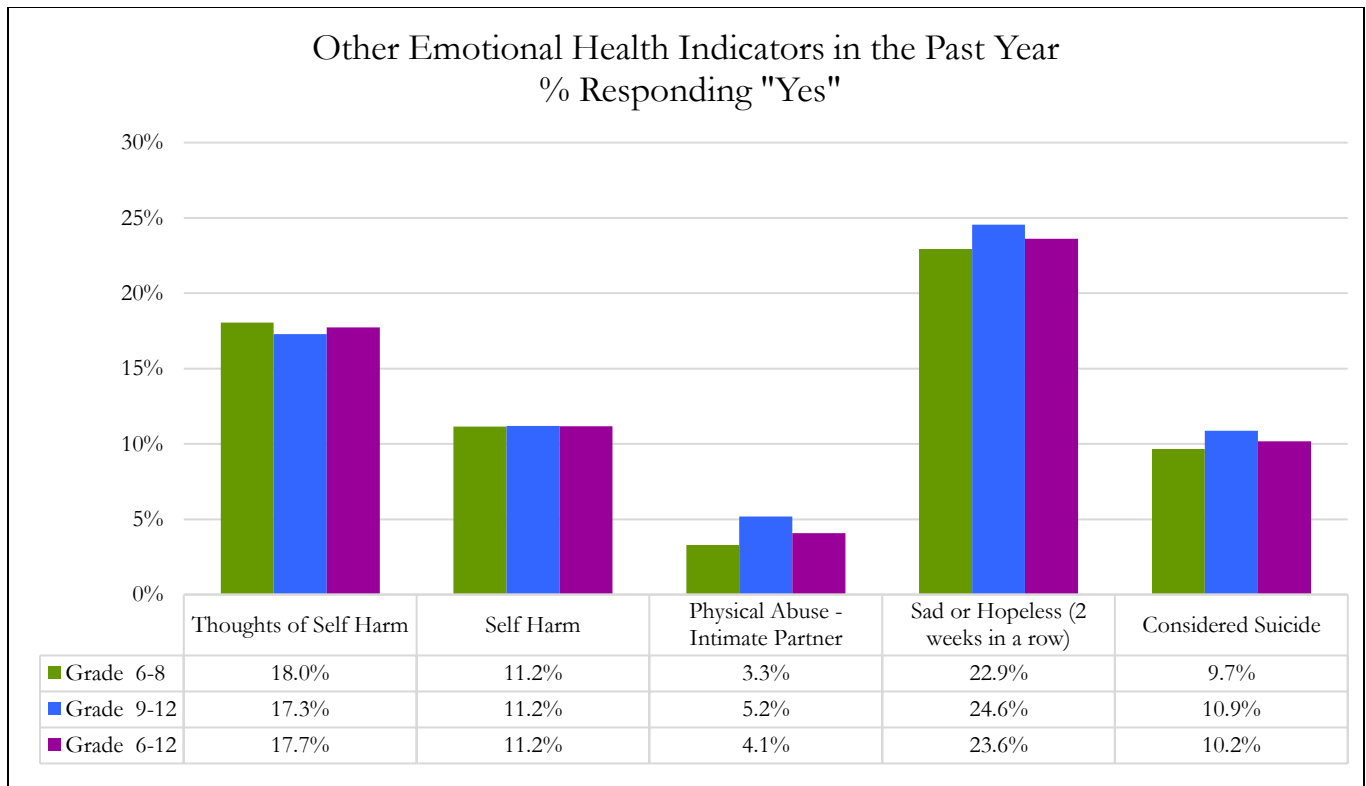
*High school youth who described themselves as transgender, non-binary, or unsure were more likely to identify financial security as a source of stress or anxiety.

*Middle and high school youth who described themselves as transgender, non-binary, or unsure were more likely to identify peers as a source of stress or anxiety.

*Middle and high school youth who described themselves as LGBS were more likely to identify home/family life and peers as a source of stress or anxiety.

*Middle school youth who described themselves as LGBS were more likely to report post-high school planning as a source of stress.

*High school youth who described themselves as LGBS were more likely to report financial security and social media as a source of stress.



Note: State data for grades 9-12 (YRBSS 2021) indicate that 35.6% of students felt sad or hopeless for 2 or more weeks in a row, 14.1% considered suicide, and 18.0% harmed themselves in the past year.

*Middle and high school females were more likely than males to report thoughts of self-harm, self-harm behaviors, feeling sad two weeks or more in a row, and having considered suicide.

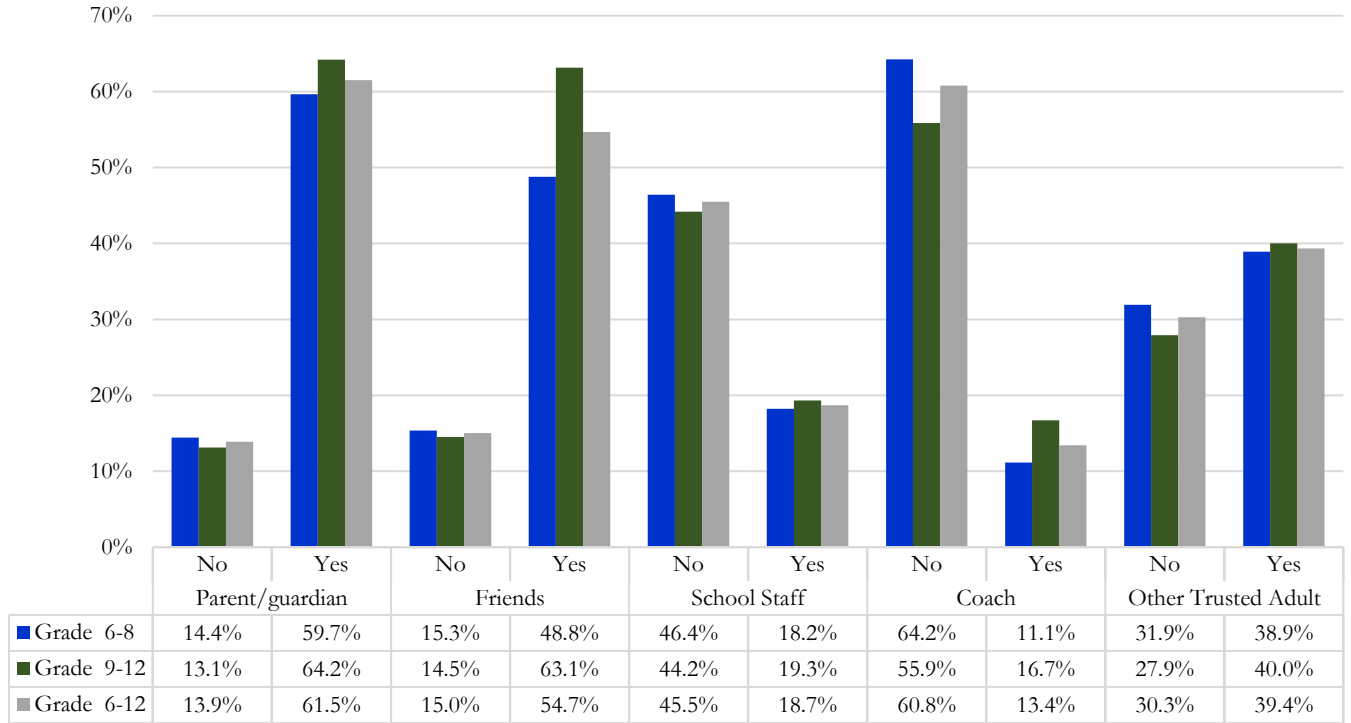
*High school white, Hispanic, and Black youth, and youth in the “All Other Races” group were more likely to report feeling sad or hopeless two or more weeks in a row compared to Asian youth.

*High school Black youth were more likely than Hispanic youth to have considered suicide in the past year.

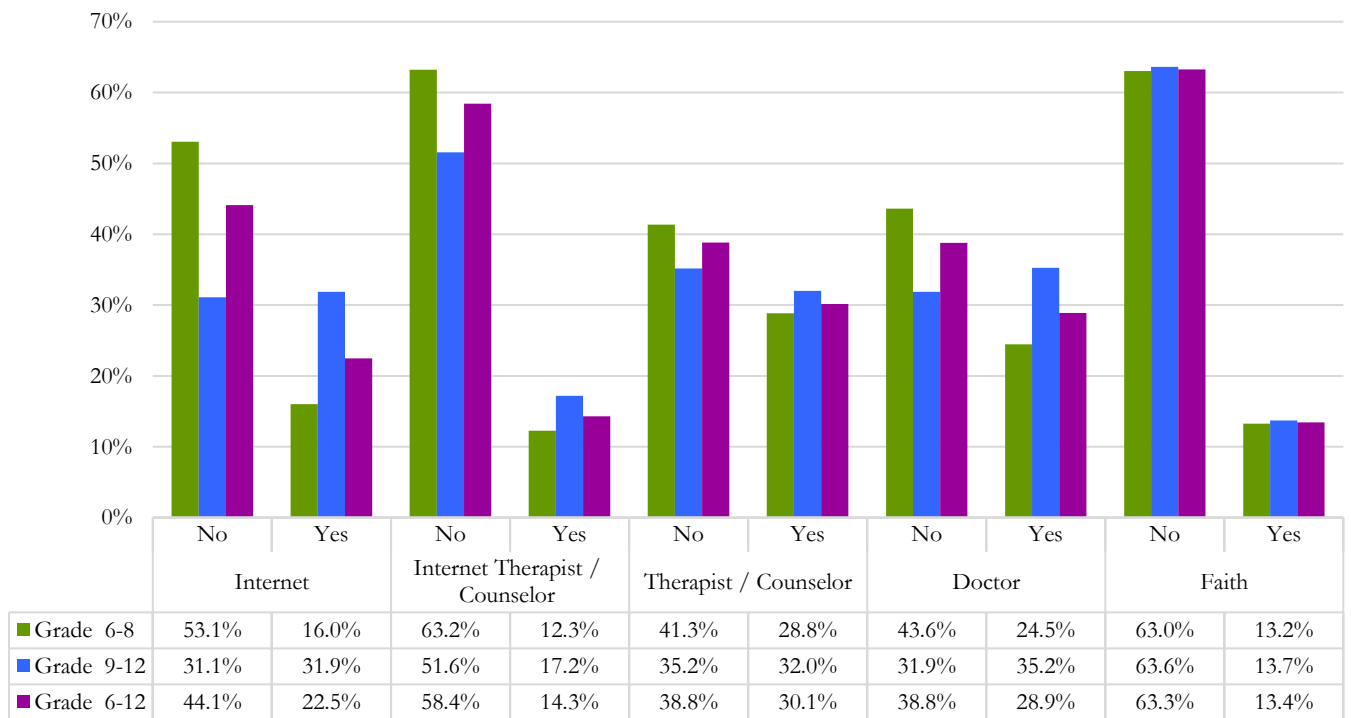
*Middle and high school youth who described themselves as transgender, non-binary, or unsure were more likely to report thoughts of self-harm, self-harm behaviors, feeling sad or hopeless two or more weeks in a row, and considering suicide compared to their cisgender peers.

*Middle and high school youth who described themselves as LGBS were more likely to have thoughts about self-harm, self-harm behaviors, feel sad or hopeless two or more weeks in a row, and have considered suicide.

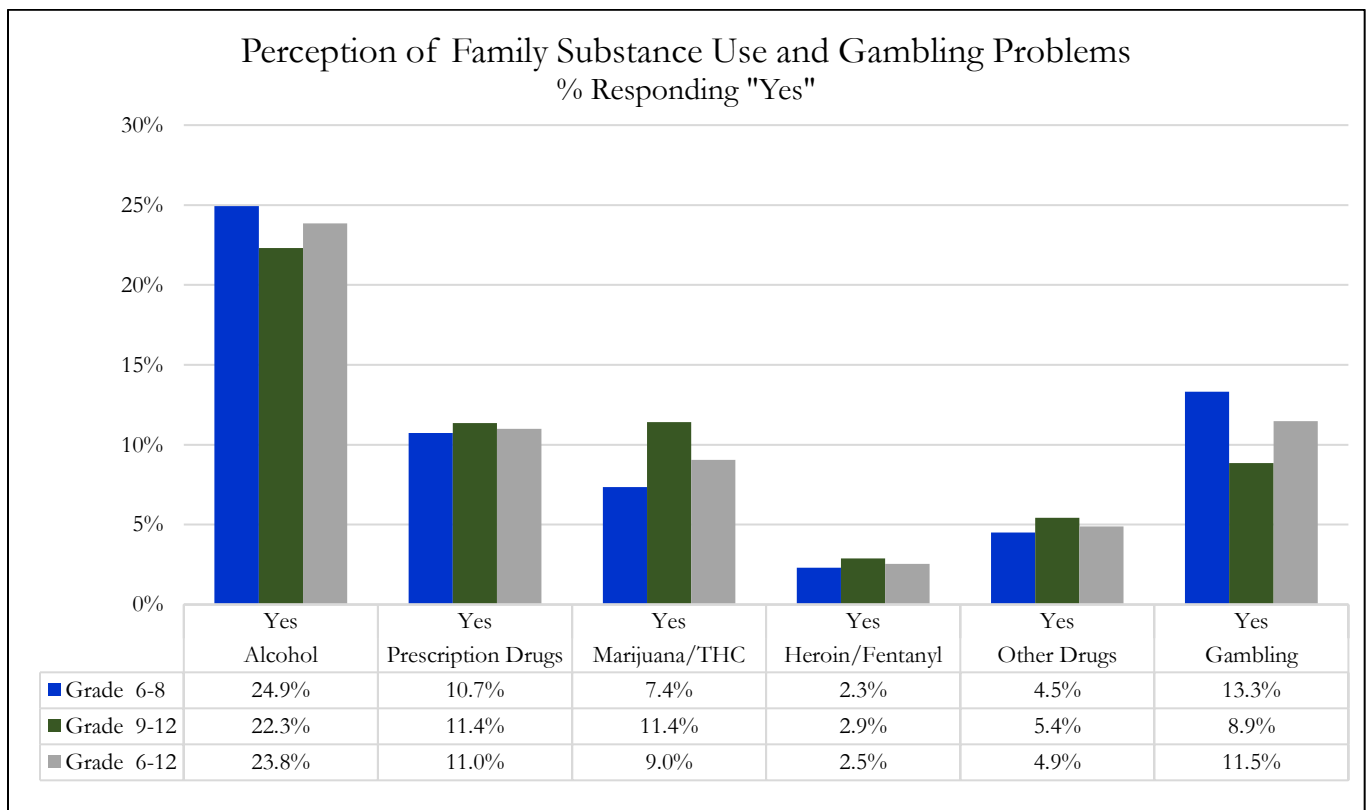
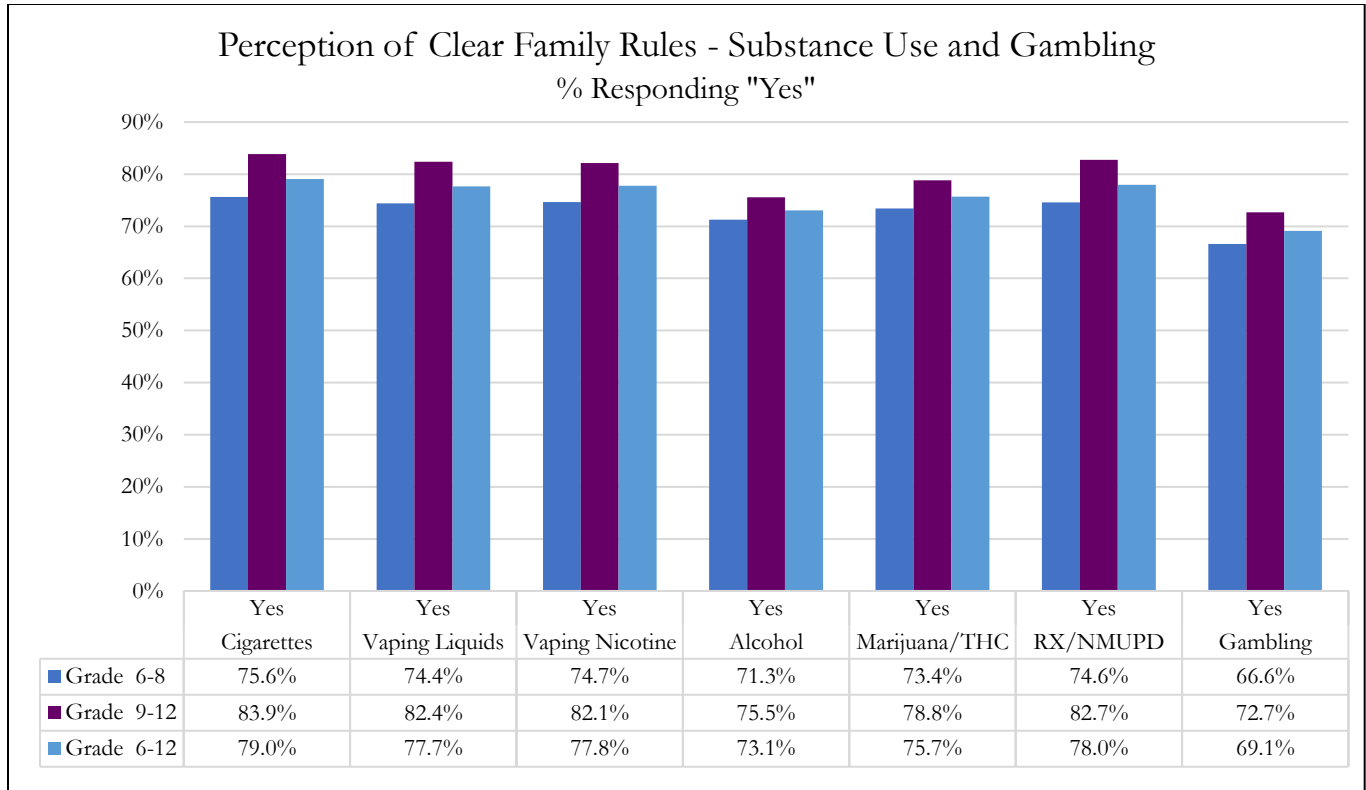
Comfort Seeking Help by Source-Family and School



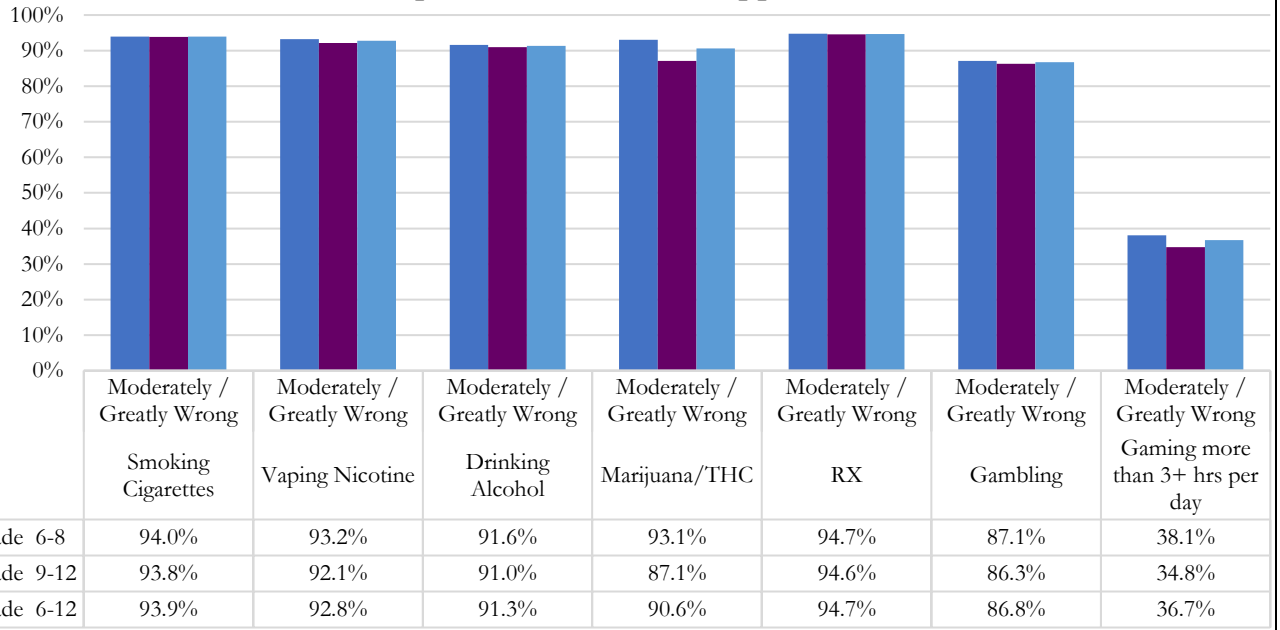
Comfort Seeking Help by Source-Community and Internet



Perceptions of Substance Use, Family Rules and Experiences:



Perception of Parental Disapproval



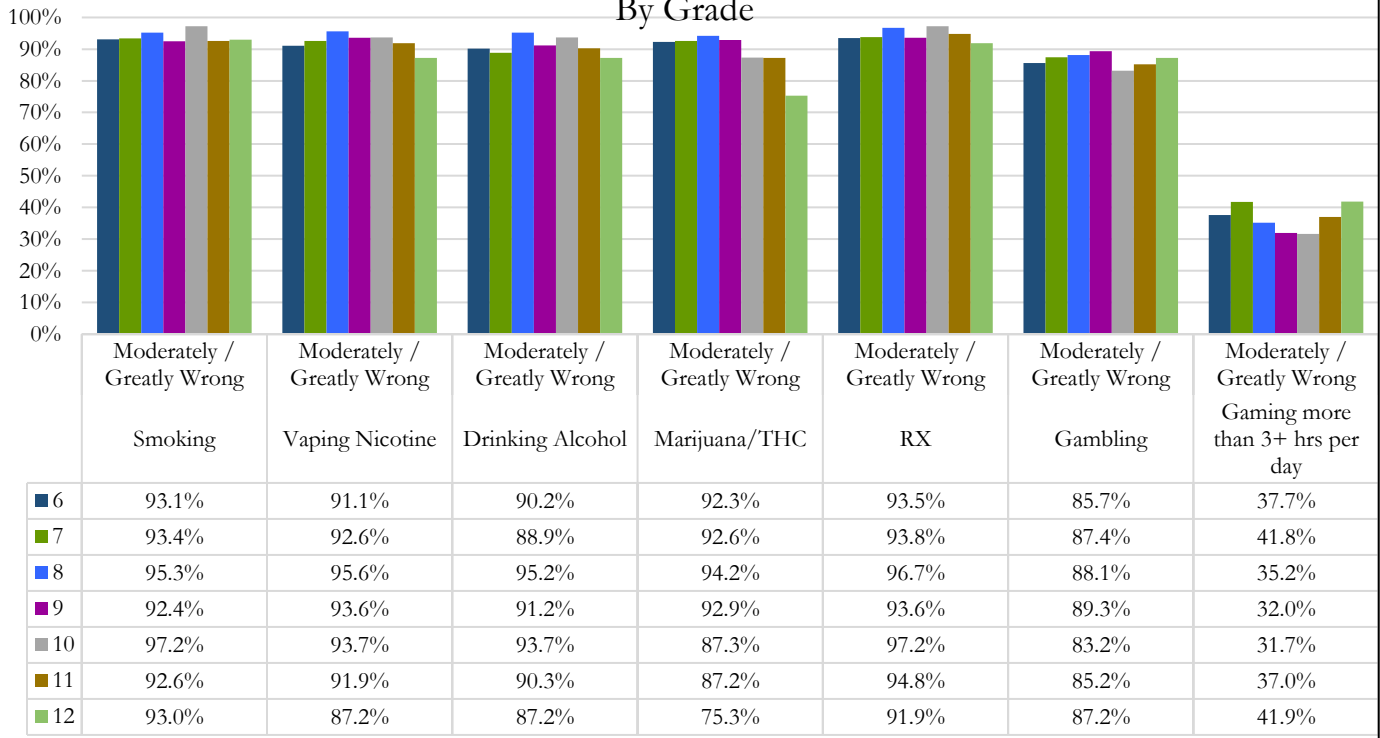
*Middle school females reported greater parental disapproval for cigarettes, gambling, and gaming 3+ hours per day.

*High school white youth reported greater parental disapproval than youth in the “All Other Races” group for cigarettes, vaping nicotine, alcohol, marijuana, and non-medical use of prescription drugs.

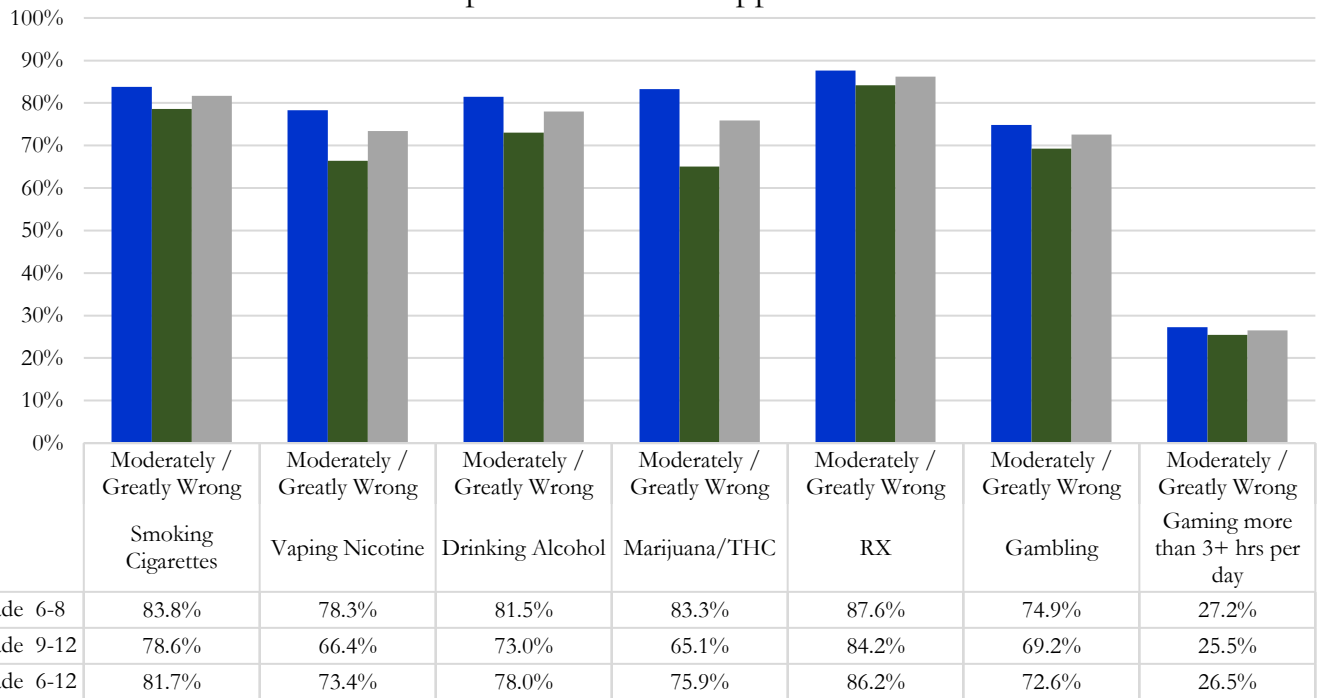
*High school Hispanic youth reported greater parental disapproval than youth in the “All Other Races” group for vaping nicotine and marijuana. High school Hispanic youth reported less parental disapproval for alcohol and prescription drugs compared to white youth.

*High school youth who described themselves as LGBS reported less parental disapproval than their heterosexual peers for cigarettes, marijuana, non-medical use of prescription drugs, and gaming 3+ hours per day.

Perception of Parental Disapproval By Grade



Perception of Peer Disapproval



*High school males reported greater peer disapproval for cigarettes, vaping, and marijuana.

*Middle school females reported greater peer disapproval for non-medical use of prescription drugs.

*Middle school white and Hispanic youth reported greater peer disapproval for marijuana than youth in the “All Other Races” group.

*High school Asian youth reported greater peer disapproval for vaping than Black youth, and greater disapproval for marijuana than Black and white youth.

*High school white youth reported greater peer disapproval for prescription drugs than Black youth and youth in the “All Other Races” group.

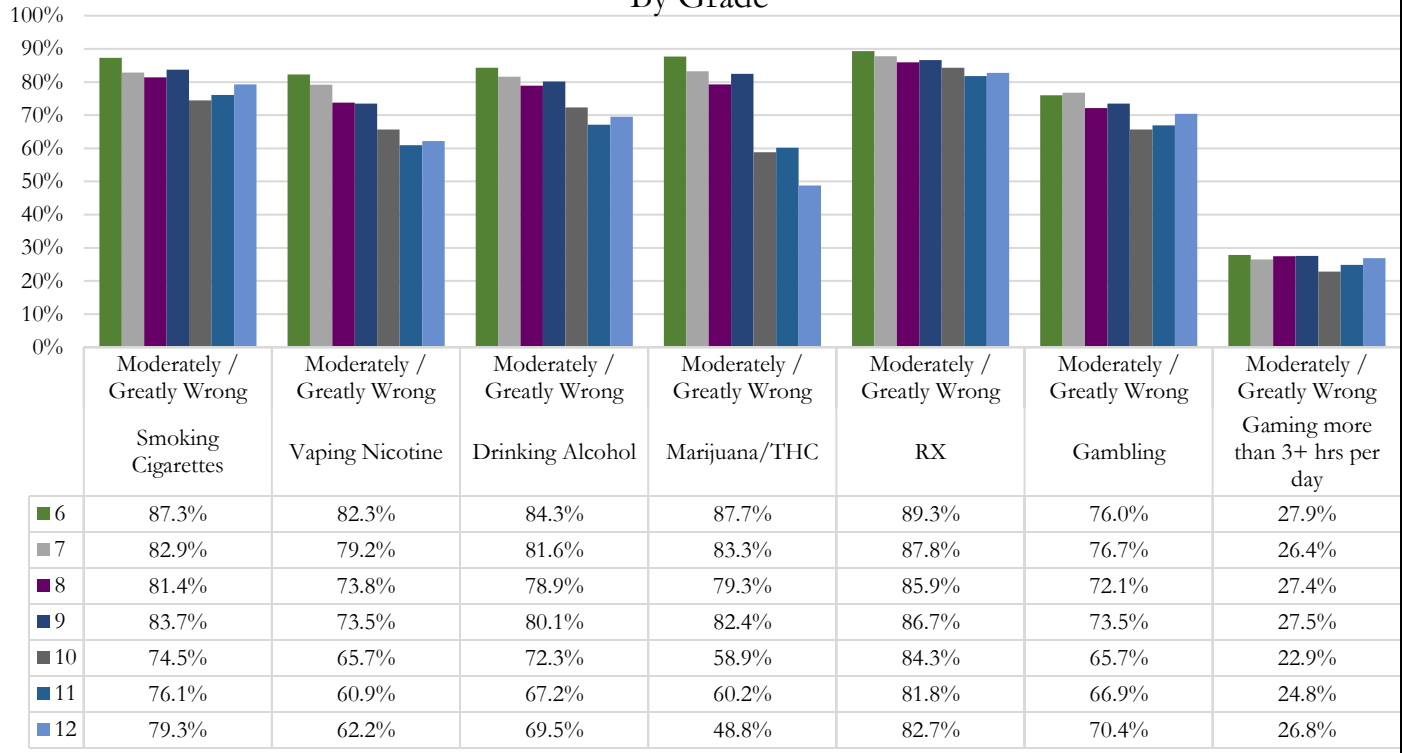
*Middle school youth who described themselves as transgender, non-binary, or unsure reported less peer disapproval than their cisgender peers for cigarettes, vaping, alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs.

*Middle school youth who described themselves as LGBS reported less peer disapproval than their heterosexual peers for cigarettes and alcohol.

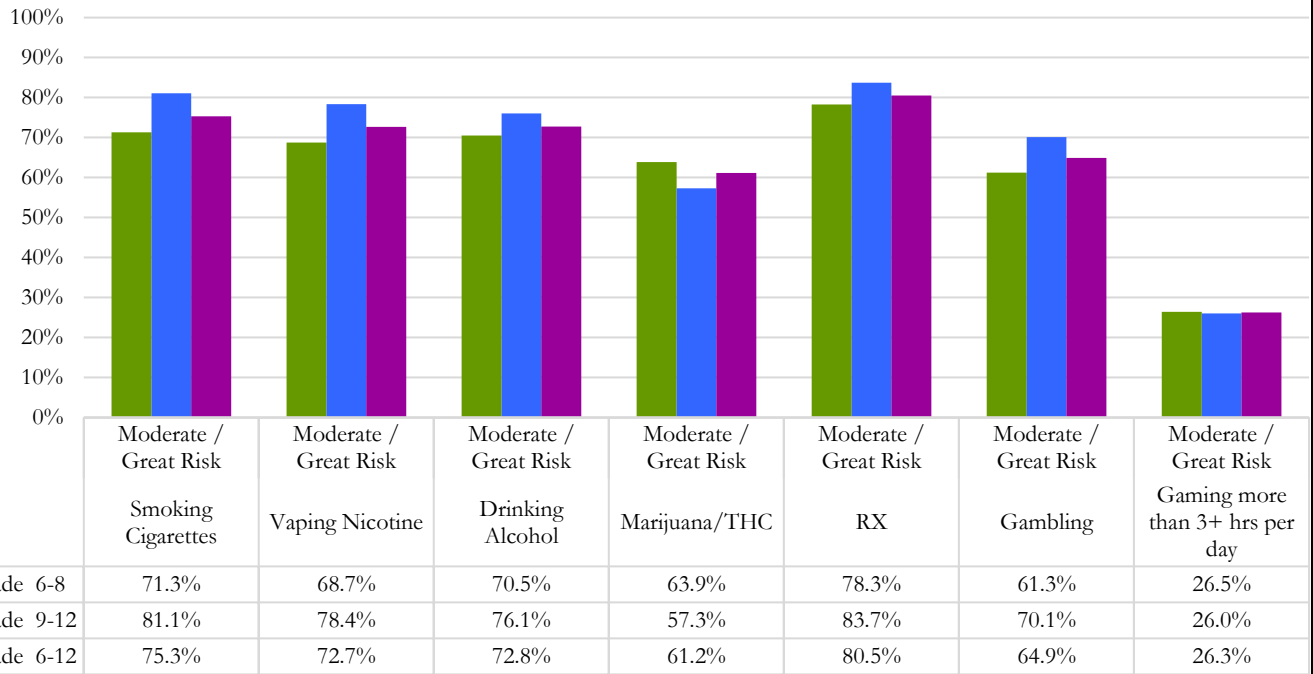
*Middle and high school youth who described themselves as LGBS reported less peer disapproval for marijuana.

*High school youth who described themselves as LGBS reported less peer disapproval for vaping and gaming 3+ hours per day.

Perception of Peer Disapproval By Grade

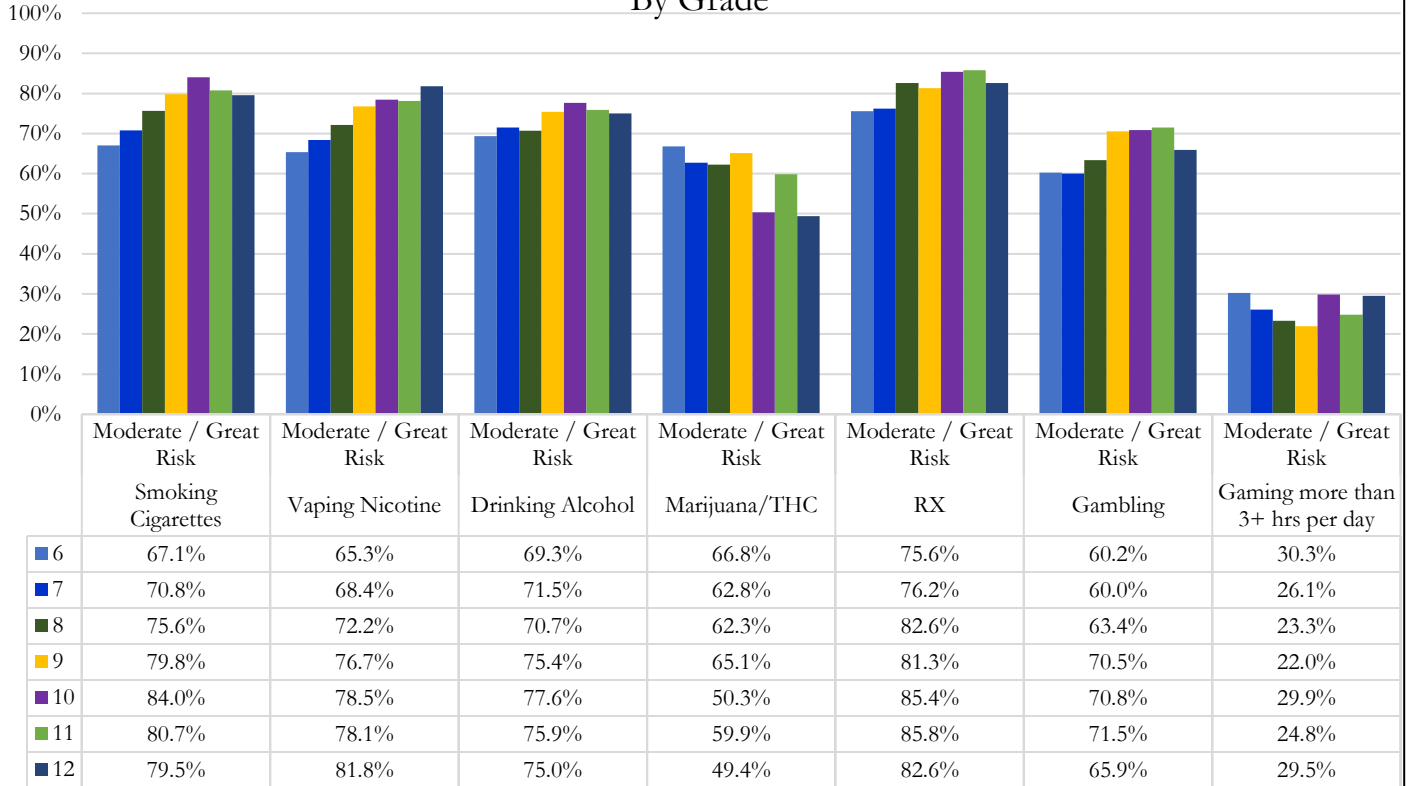


Perception of Risk/Harm



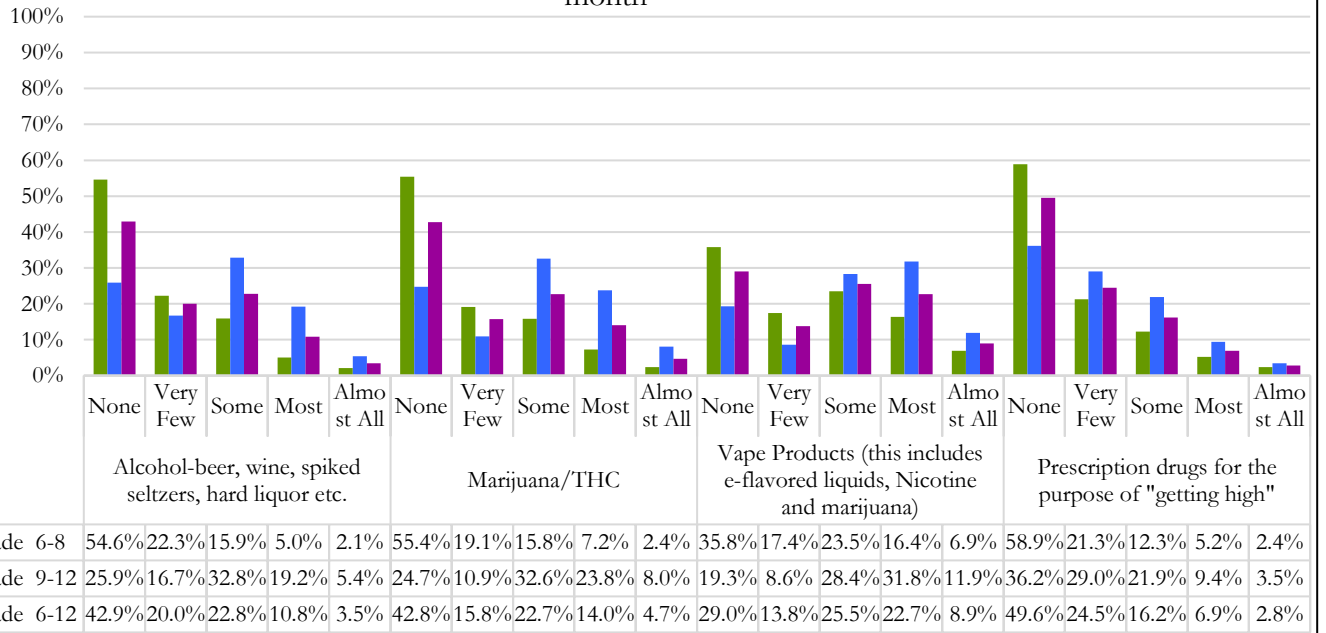
*Middle school females reported greater perception of risk than males for vaping, prescription drugs, and gaming 3+ hours.
 *High school Asian youth reported greater perception of risk than white youth and youth in the “All Other Races” group.

Perception of Risk / Harm By Grade

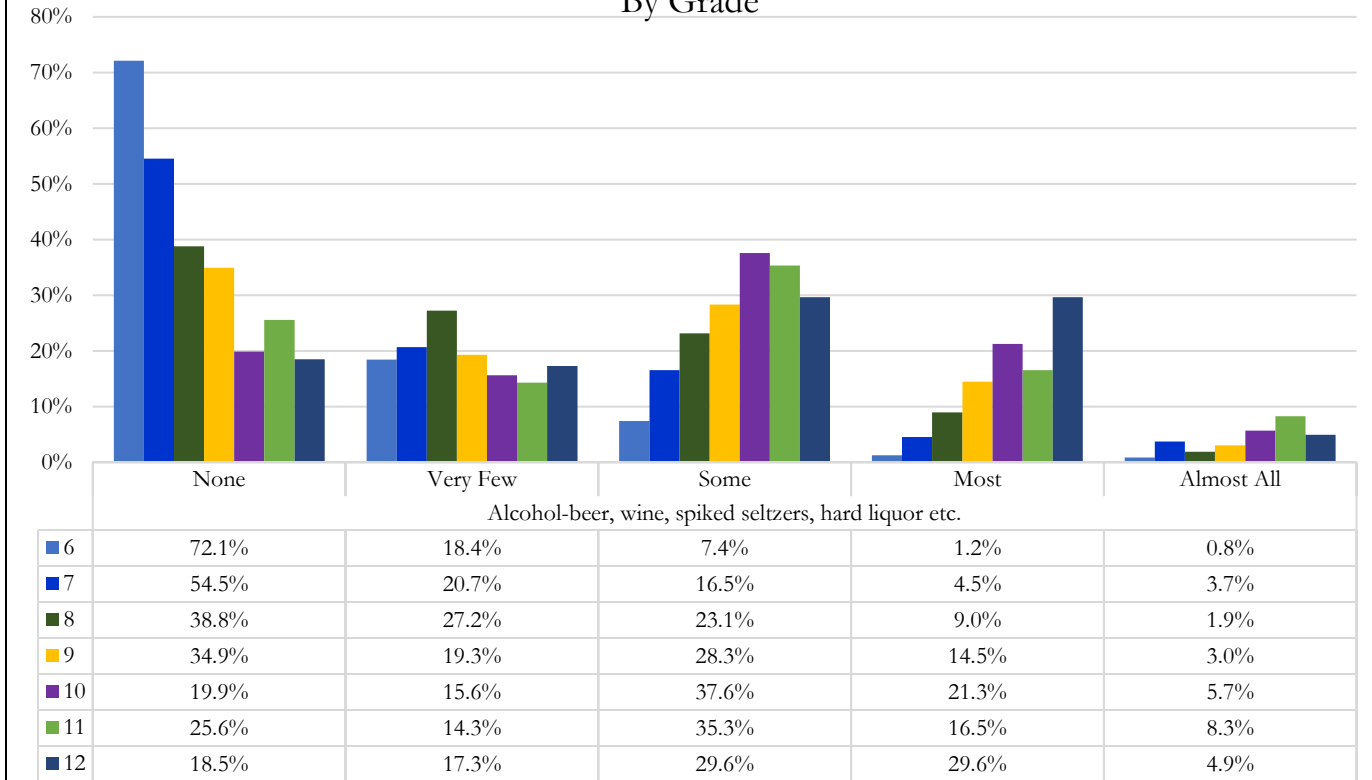


Perception of Peer Use in Past Month

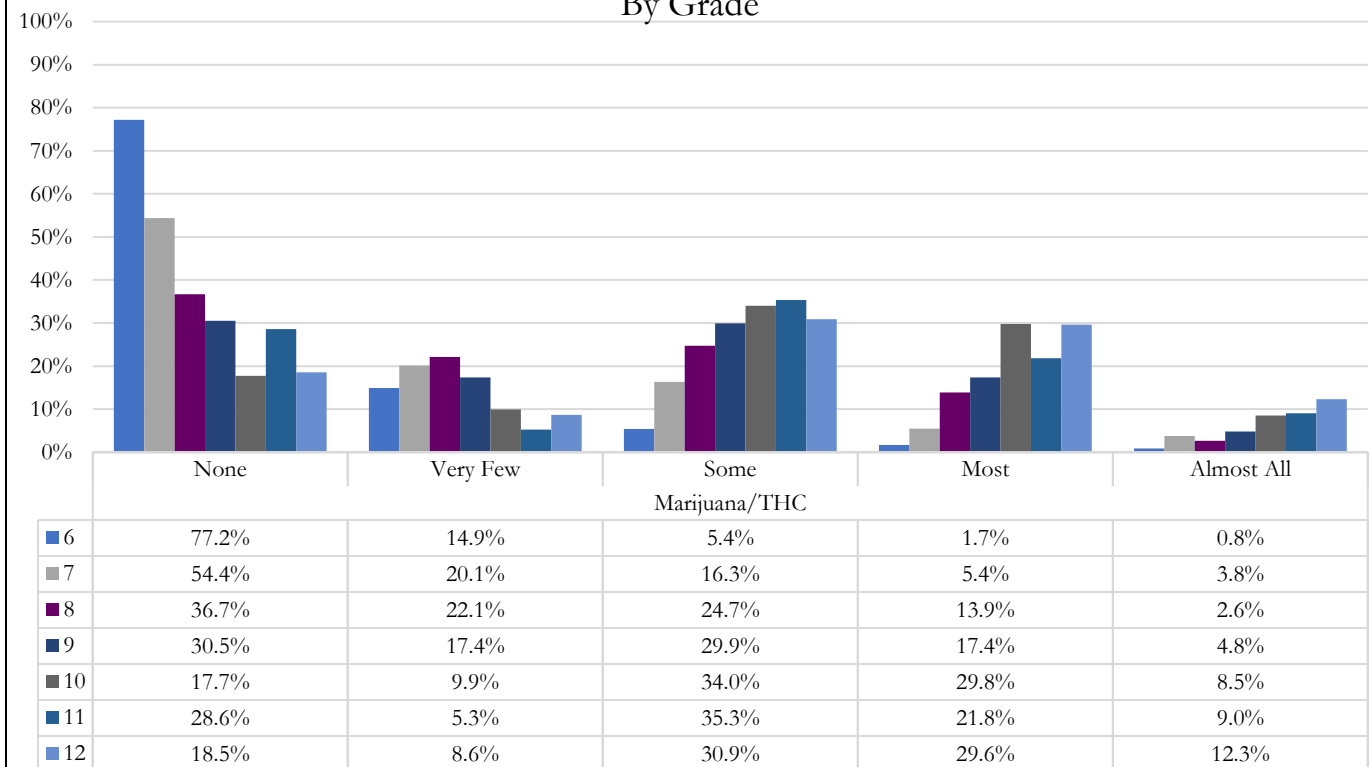
"Estimate the percentage of peers that have used the following substances in the past month"



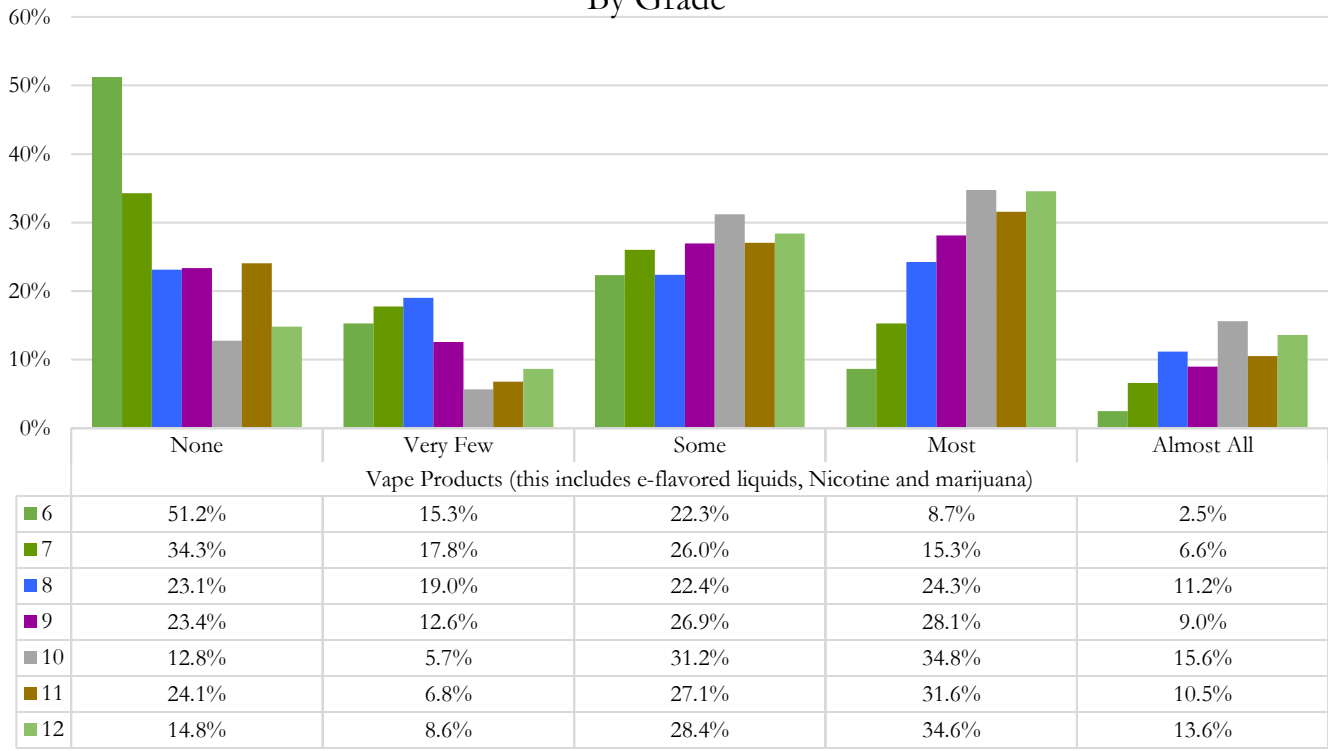
Perception of Peer Alcohol Use in Past Month By Grade



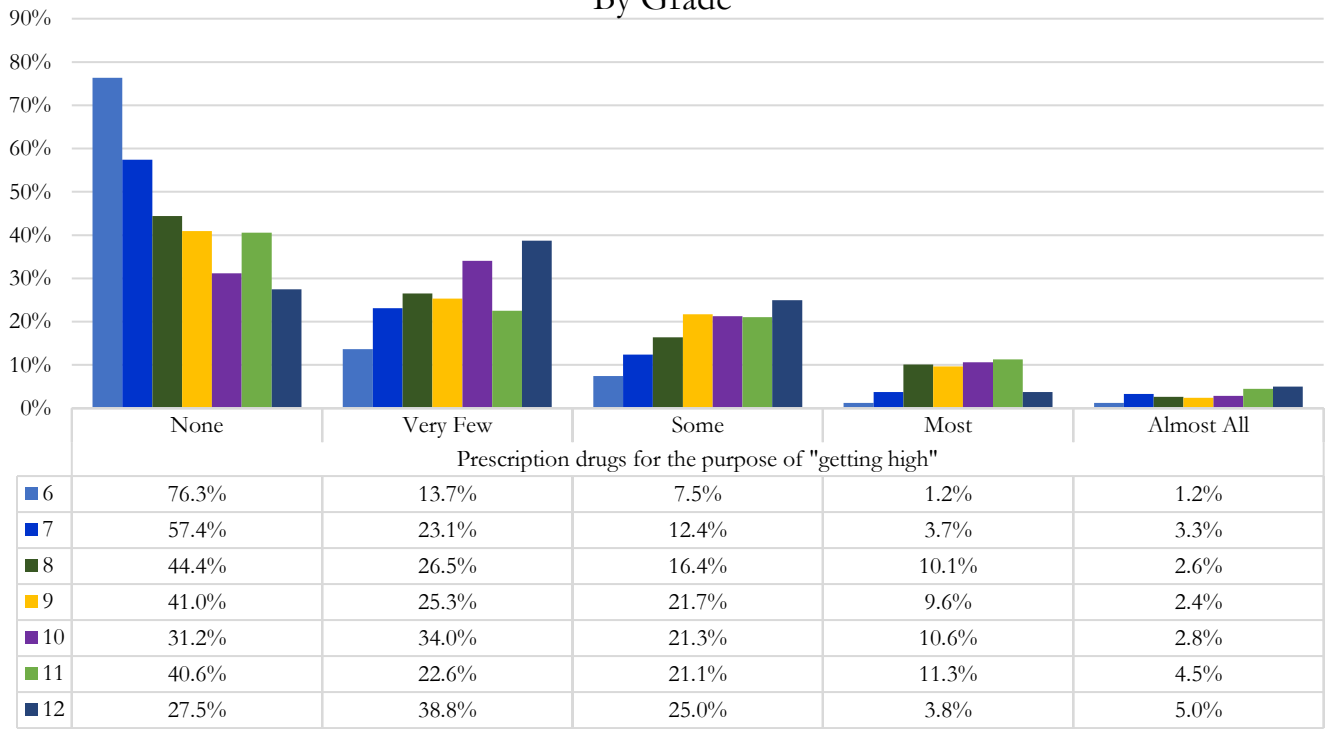
Perception of Peer Marijuana Use in Past Month By Grade



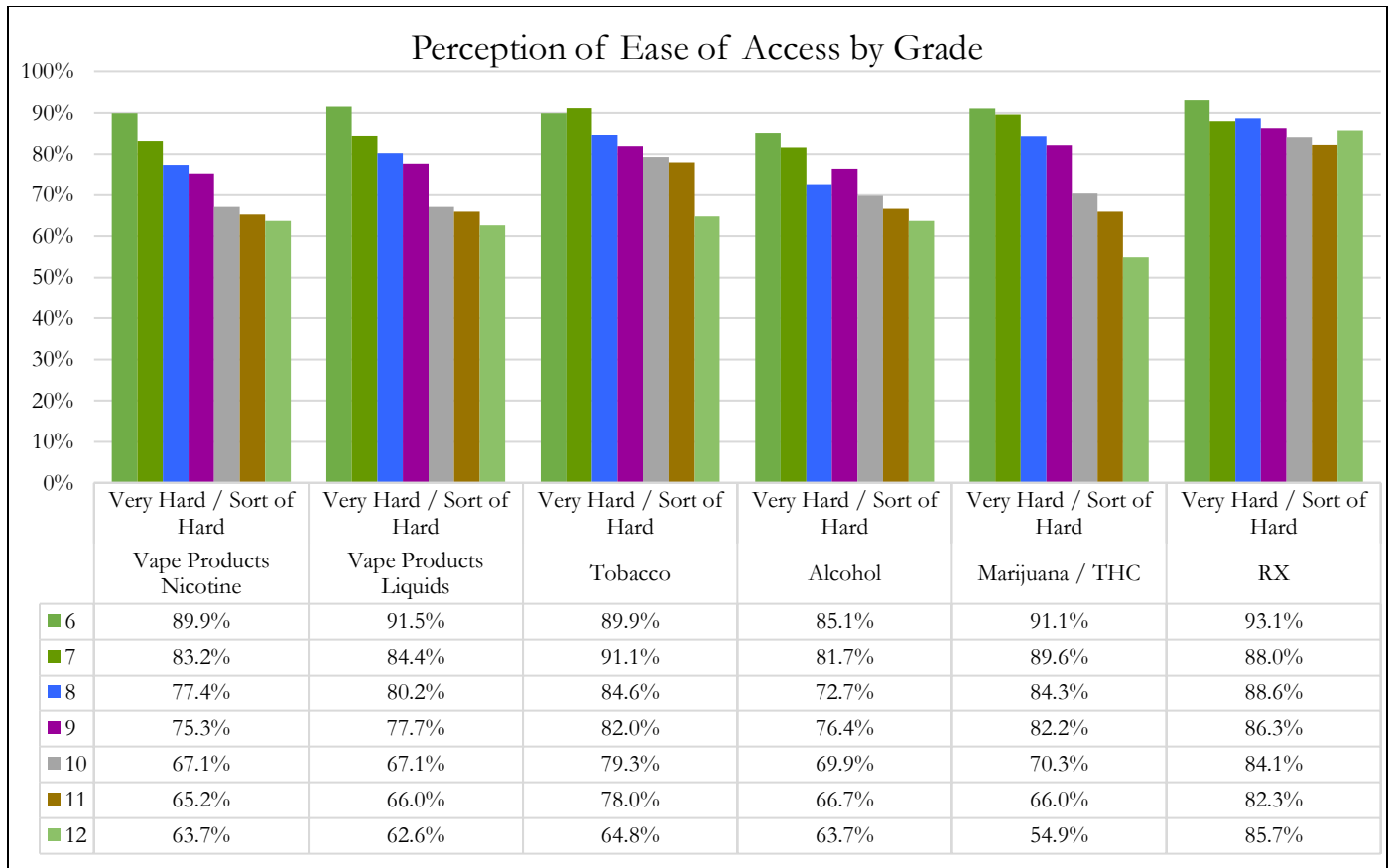
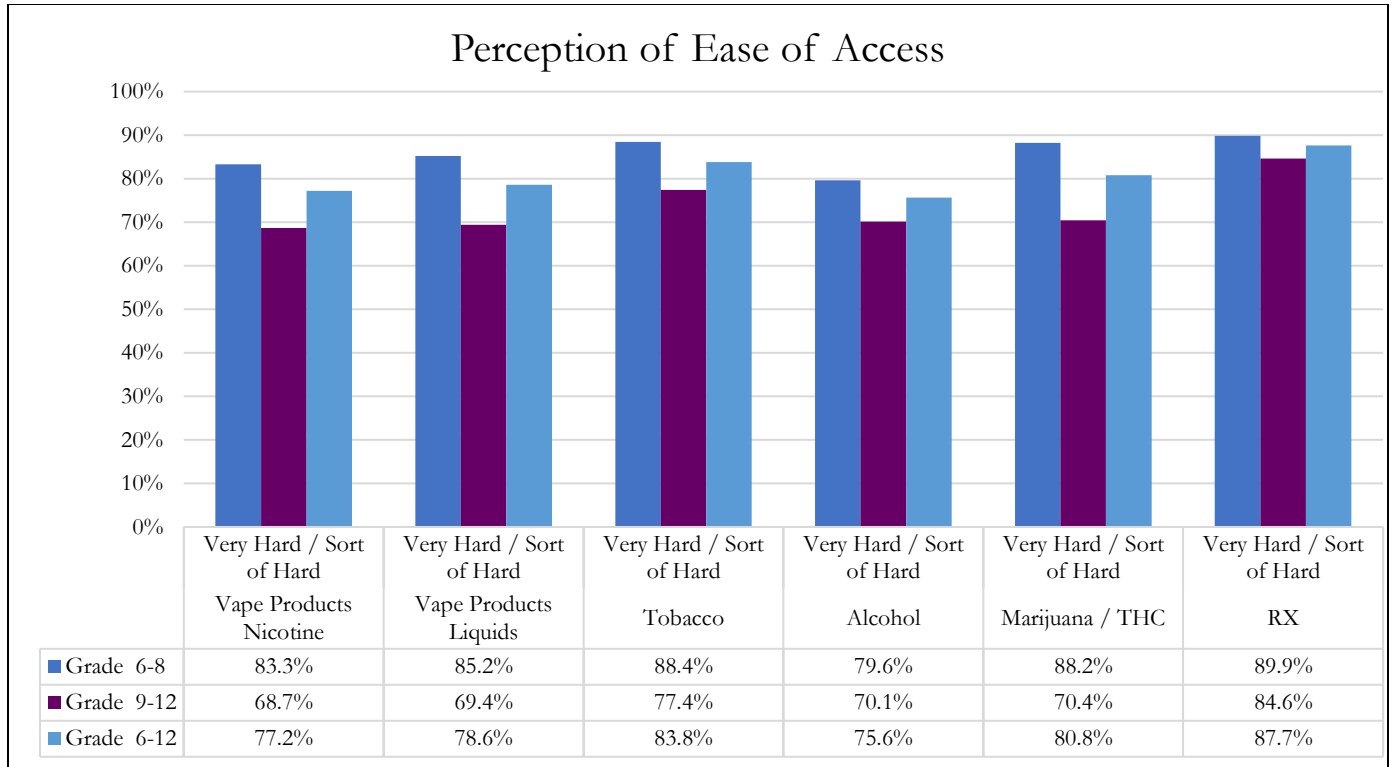
Perception of Peer Vaping Use in Past Month By Grade



Perception of Peer RX Use in Past Month By Grade



Ease of Access:



Substance Use and Gambling:

Risk Factors for Any Substance Use in Youth's Lifetime, Grades 6-12:

The following list includes youth-reported experiences and perceptions that are statistically associated with lifetime use of any substance. It is important to note association should not be considered causation.

Torrington Middle & High School youth who have used **any substance in their lifetime** are more likely to:

- Report not getting enough sleep
- Not have a trusted adult they can share thoughts and feelings with
- Not feel safe in their community or at school
- Not know how to get help for themselves or peers for mental health or substance use problems
- Have the following experiences related to gaming: being asked personal information by a stranger, being threatened by another gamer, hearing or seeing inappropriate things
- Have the following experiences related to social media: have gotten into a fight, feel left out or excluded, feel worse about themselves, feel unsafe because of something said on social media, have heard or seen something inappropriate, and having a hard time stopping their social media use
- Have been bullied
- Have experienced anxiety always/almost always in the past year
- Report home/family life, peers, and social media as sources of anxiety
- Have thoughts of self-harm, and have self-harm behaviors
- Have had a partner physically hurt them on purpose
- Have felt sad or hopeless two or more weeks in a row
- Have considered suicide in the past year
- Feel less comfortable seeking help from a parent/guardian or doctor/nurse
- Report having family problems around alcohol, prescription drugs, marijuana, other drugs, and gambling
- Report less parental disapproval for vaping, marijuana use, gambling, and gaming 3+ hours per day
- Report less peer disapproval for cigarettes, vaping, alcohol, marijuana, non-medical use of prescription drugs, gambling, and gaming 3+ hours per day
- Perceive less risk of harm from using marijuana
- Perceive more peer use of alcohol, marijuana, and vaping
- Perceive greater ease of access to vape products, tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs
- Have experienced community violence, discrimination, and housing problems in the past year
- Work at a paying job
- Perceive less coach/advisor and teammate disapproval for using substances

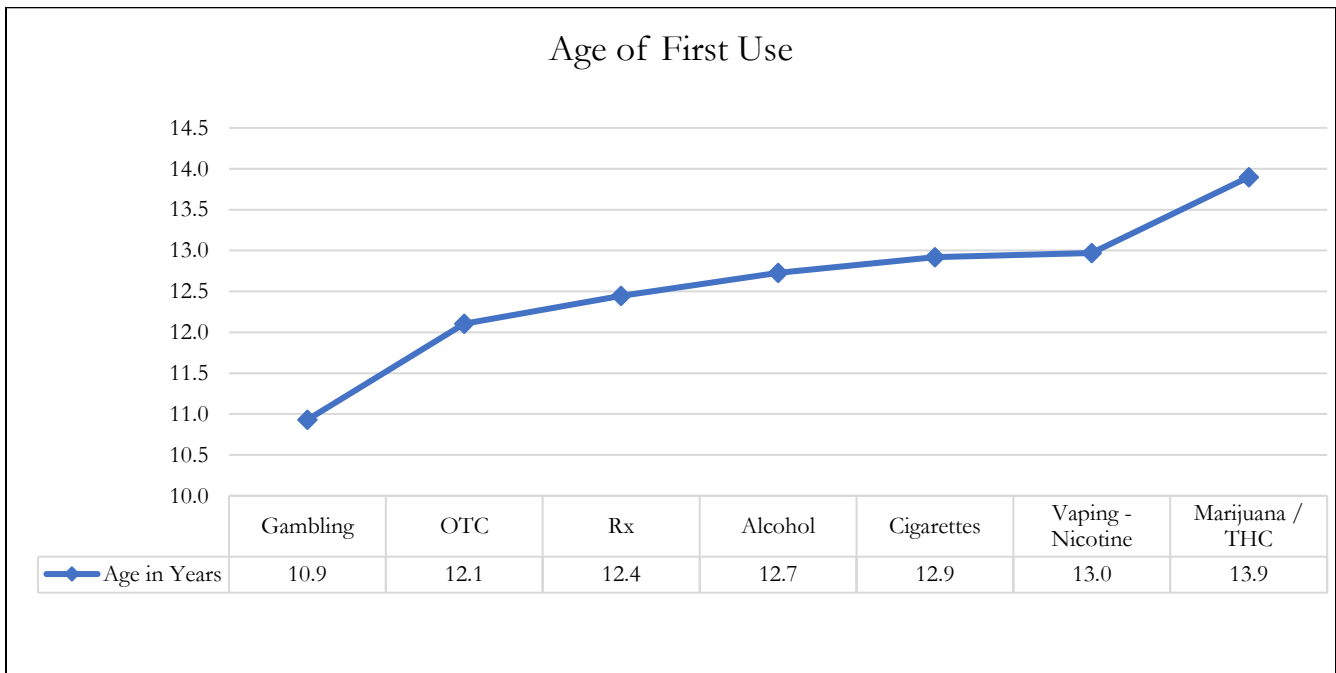
Torrington High School youth who have used **any substance in their lifetime** are more likely to:

- Not get enough sleep due to gaming
- Feel unsure about family rules around gambling
- Report less parental disapproval for cigarettes and alcohol

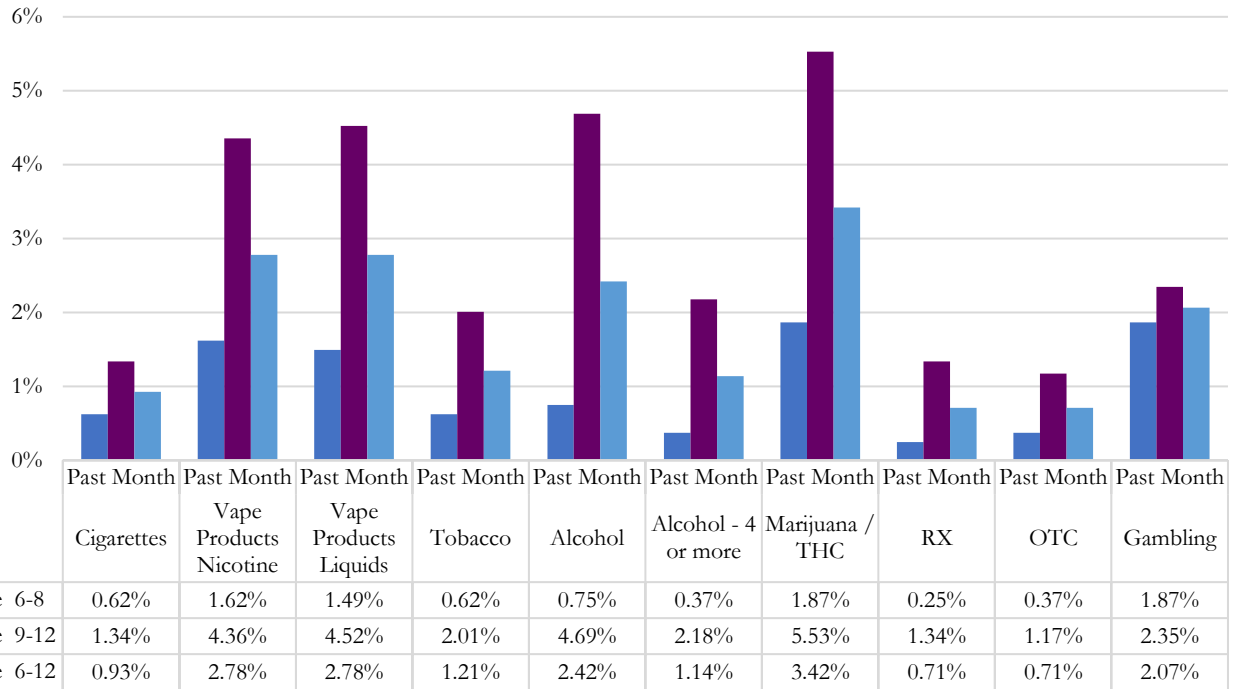
Torrington Middle School youth who have used **any substance in their lifetime** are more likely to:

- Spend more time home alone
- Have the following experiences due to gaming: not completing homework/studying, have gotten into a verbal or physical fight, have purchased loot boxes or skins, and have a hard time stopping
- Choose not to spend time with friends in person because they preferred to be on social media
- Report teachers or adults at school almost never intervene when bullying occurs

- Report financial security, academics, and schedule as sources of anxiety
- Feel less comfortable seeking help from school staff
- Feel unsure about family rules around alcohol and marijuana use.
- Report having family problems with heroin/fentanyl
- Perceive less risk from vaping or gambling
- Perceive more peer use of prescription drugs
- Have experienced food insecurity in the past year



Past Month Use of CORE Substances and Gambling



*High school males were more likely to report past month use of tobacco and gambling than females.

*Middle school youth in the “All Other Races” group were more likely than white and Hispanic youth to report past month use of cigarettes, vape products, tobacco, marijuana and gambling. Middle school youth in the “All Other Races” group were more likely than white youth to report past month use of prescription drugs.

*High school Black youth were more likely than white or Hispanic youth to report past month use of vape products with nicotine and tobacco.

*High school white youth less likely than Black youth or youth in the “All Other Races” group to report past month use of vape products with flavored liquids. High school Hispanic youth were less likely to report past month use of vape products with flavored liquids than youth in the “All Other Races” group.

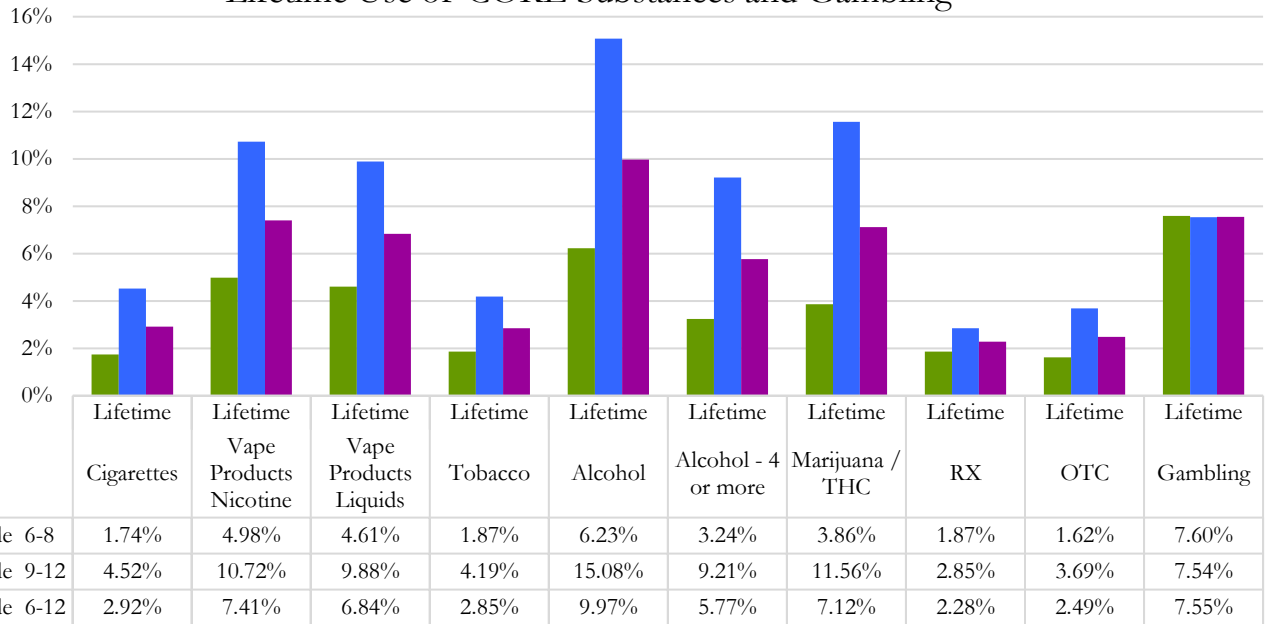
*High school youth in the “All Other Races” group were more likely than white youth to report past month use of prescription drugs and over the counter medicines.

*Middle and high school youth who described themselves as transgender, non-binary, or unsure were more likely to report past month use of cigarettes than their cisgender peers.

*Middle school youth who described themselves as transgender, non-binary, or unsure were more likely to report past month use of vape products with nicotine or flavored liquids, tobacco, marijuana, and prescription drugs.

*High school youth who described themselves as LGBS were more likely than their heterosexual peers to report past month use of vape products with flavored liquids, and alcohol.

Lifetime Use of CORE Substances and Gambling



*Middle school females were more likely than males to report lifetime use of alcohol.

*High school females were more likely to report never gambling in their lifetime.

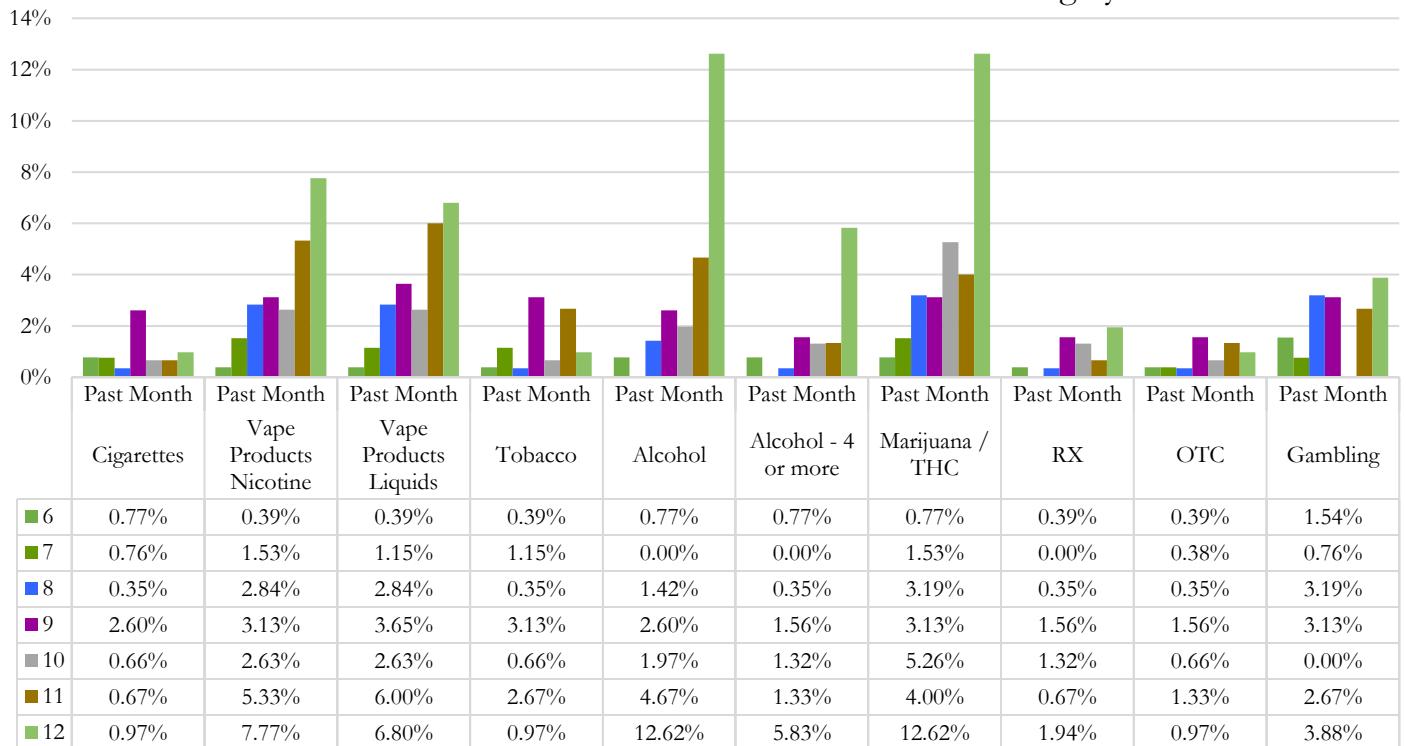
*Middle school Black youth were more likely to report ever binge drinking than white youth.

*High school Black youth were more likely to report ever using prescription drugs non-medically compared to Hispanic youth.

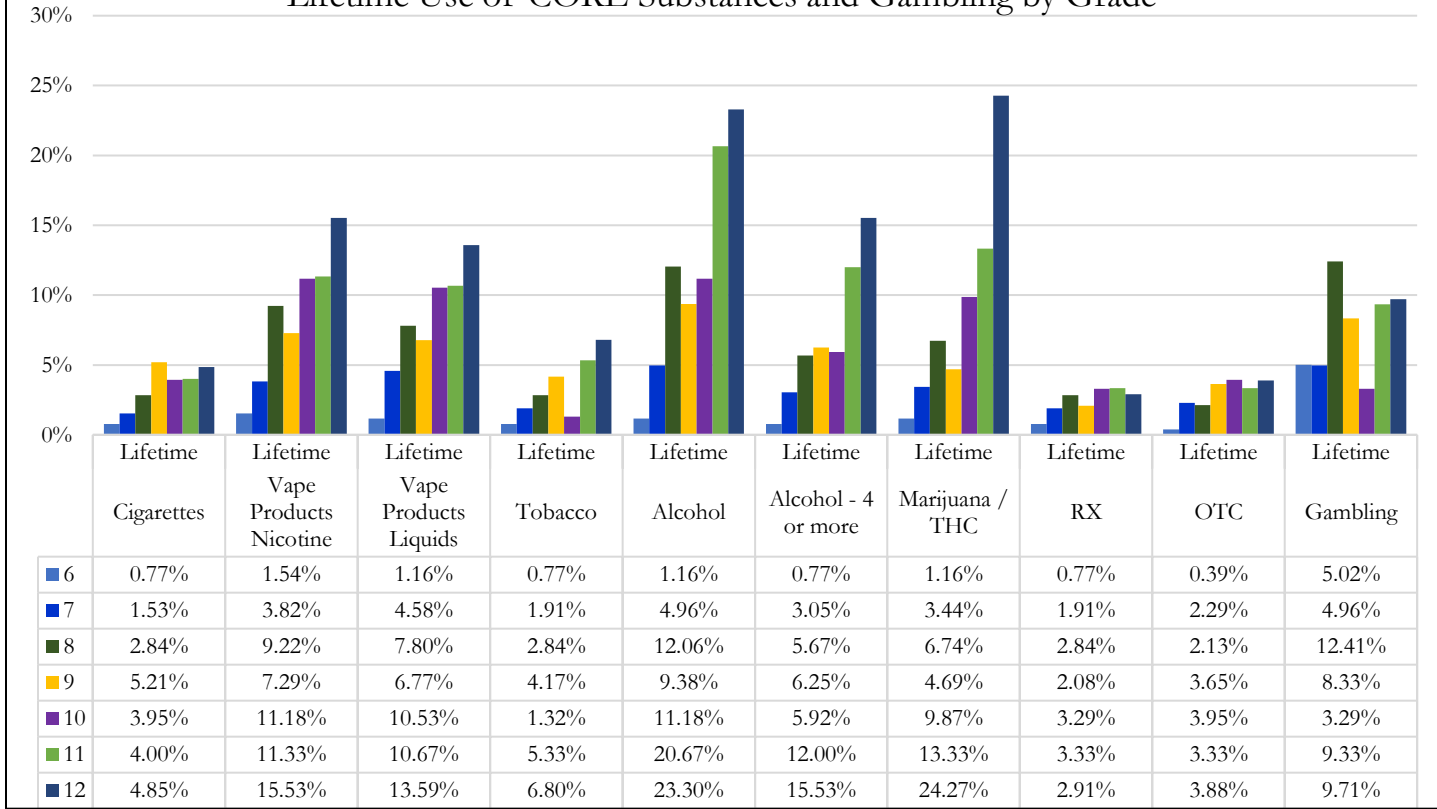
*Middle school youth who described themselves as transgender, non-binary, or unsure were more likely to report ever using alcohol, binge drinking, using prescription drugs, and over the counter medicine than their cisgender peers.

*Middle school youth who described themselves as LGBS were more likely than their heterosexual peers to report ever using alcohol or over the counter medicines non-medically.

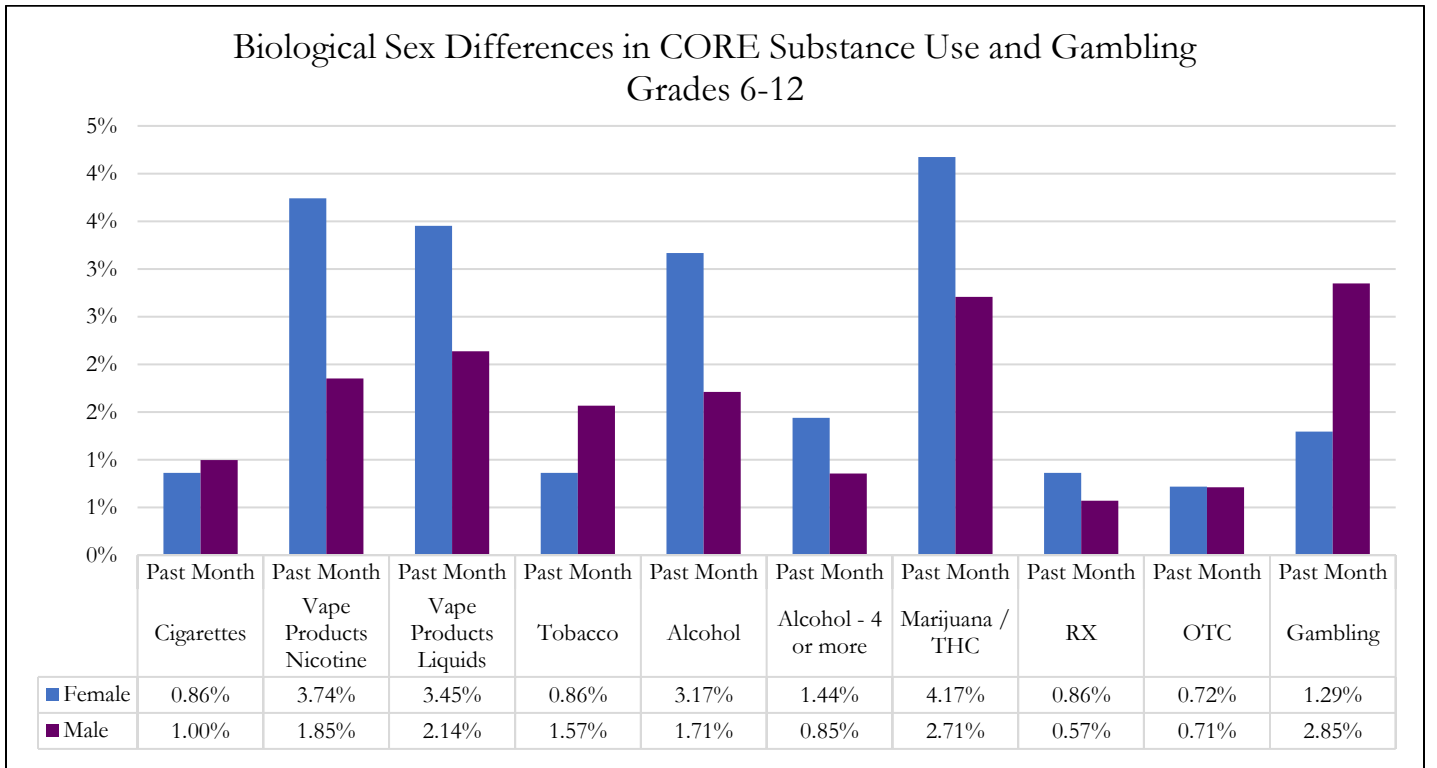
Past Month Use of CORE Substances and Gambling by Grade



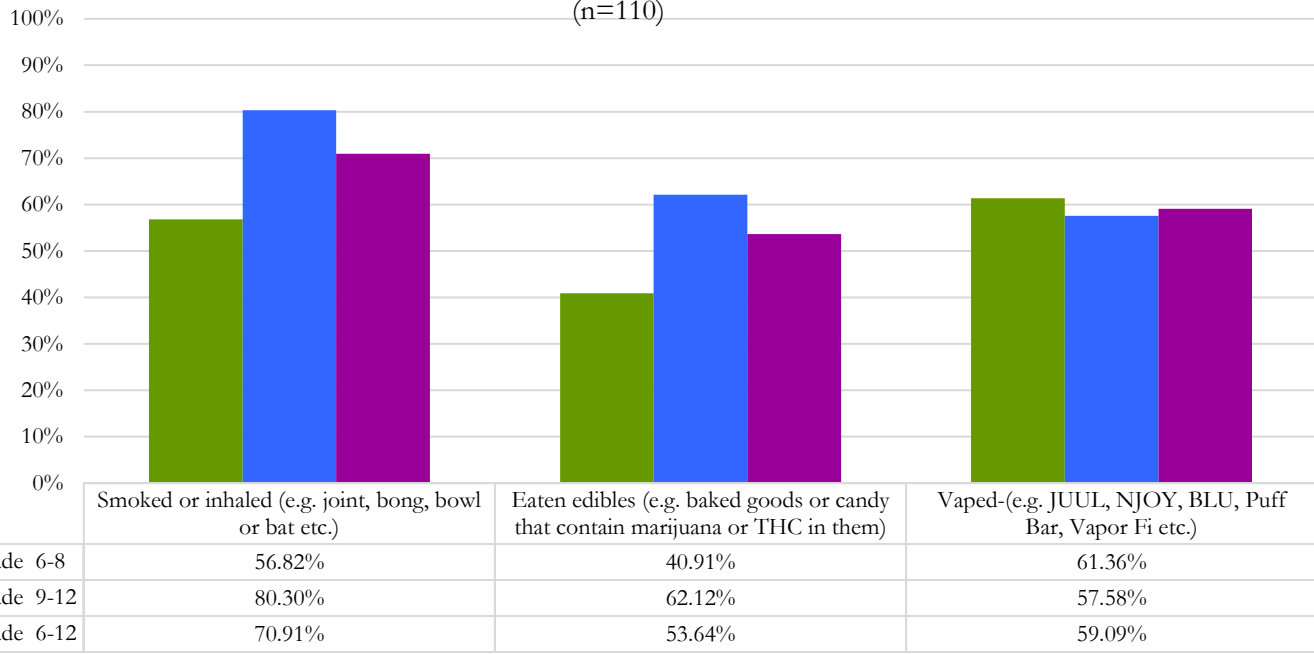
Lifetime Use of CORE Substances and Gambling by Grade



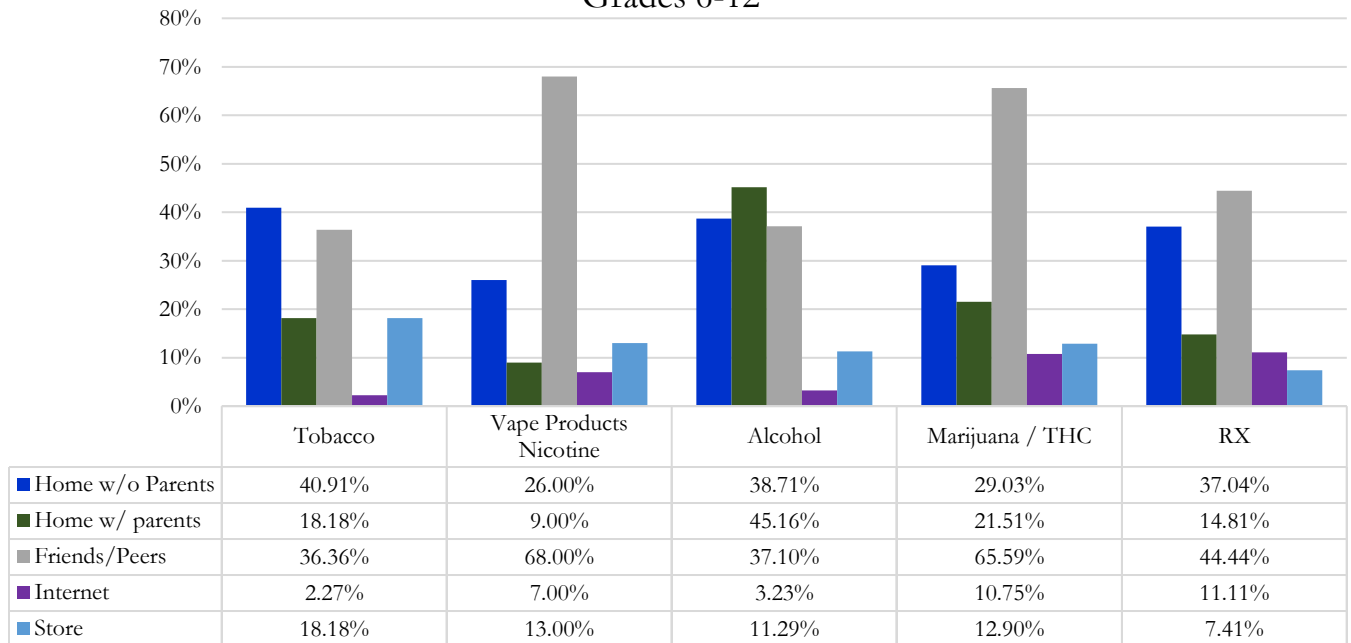
Biological Sex Differences in CORE Substance Use and Gambling Grades 6-12



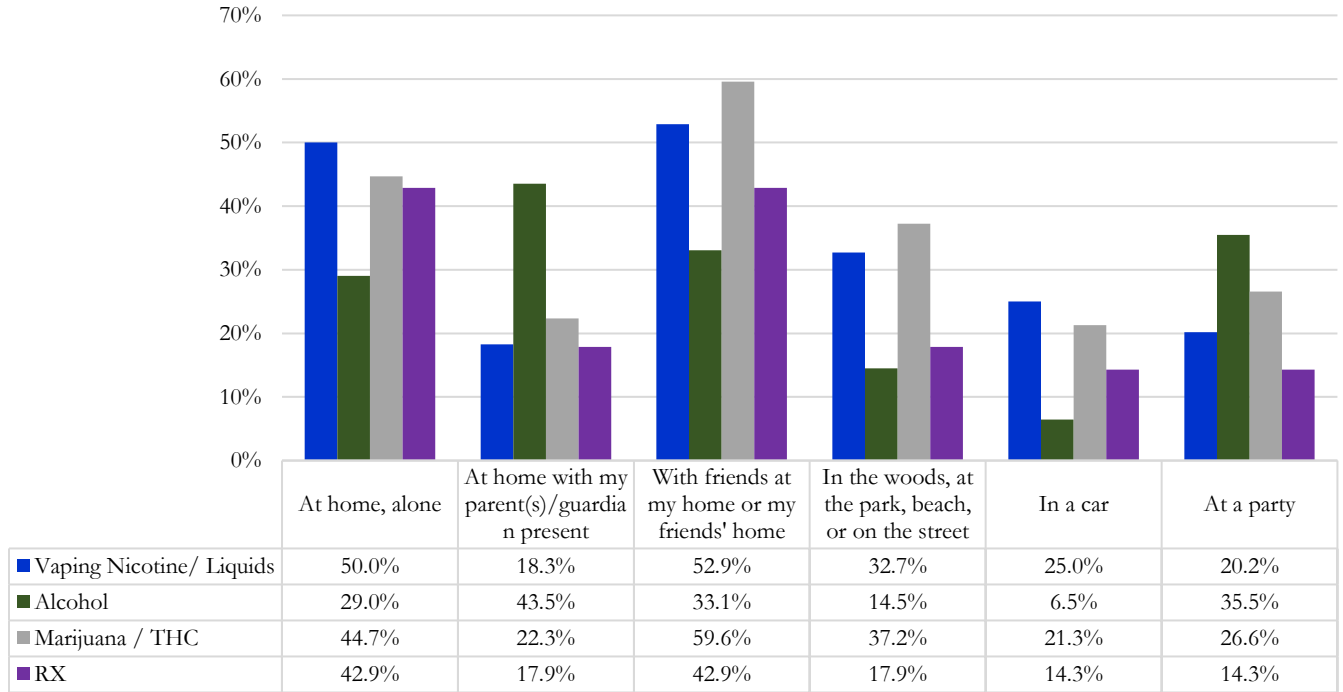
Methods of Marijuana Use Youth Who Have Used in the Past 12 Months (n=110)



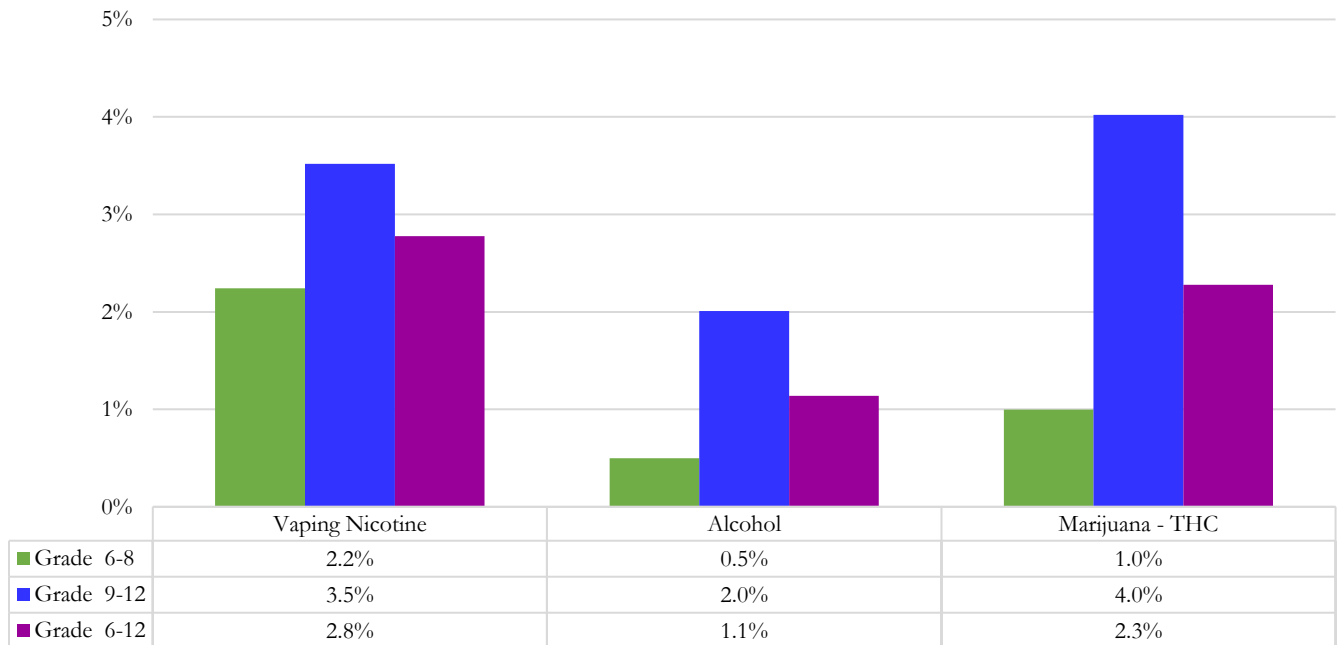
Where Substances Are Acquired Most Often Amongst Lifetime Users Grades 6-12



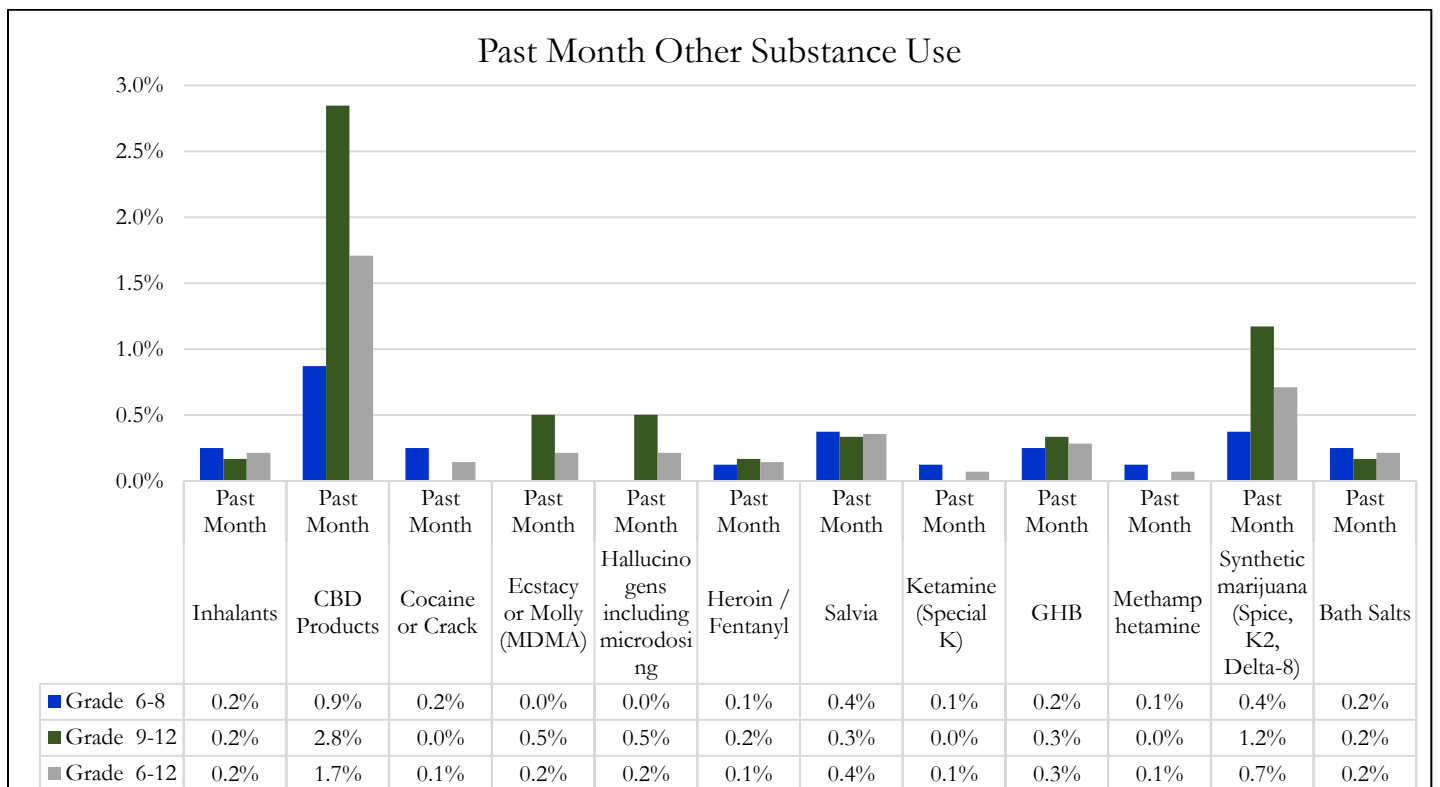
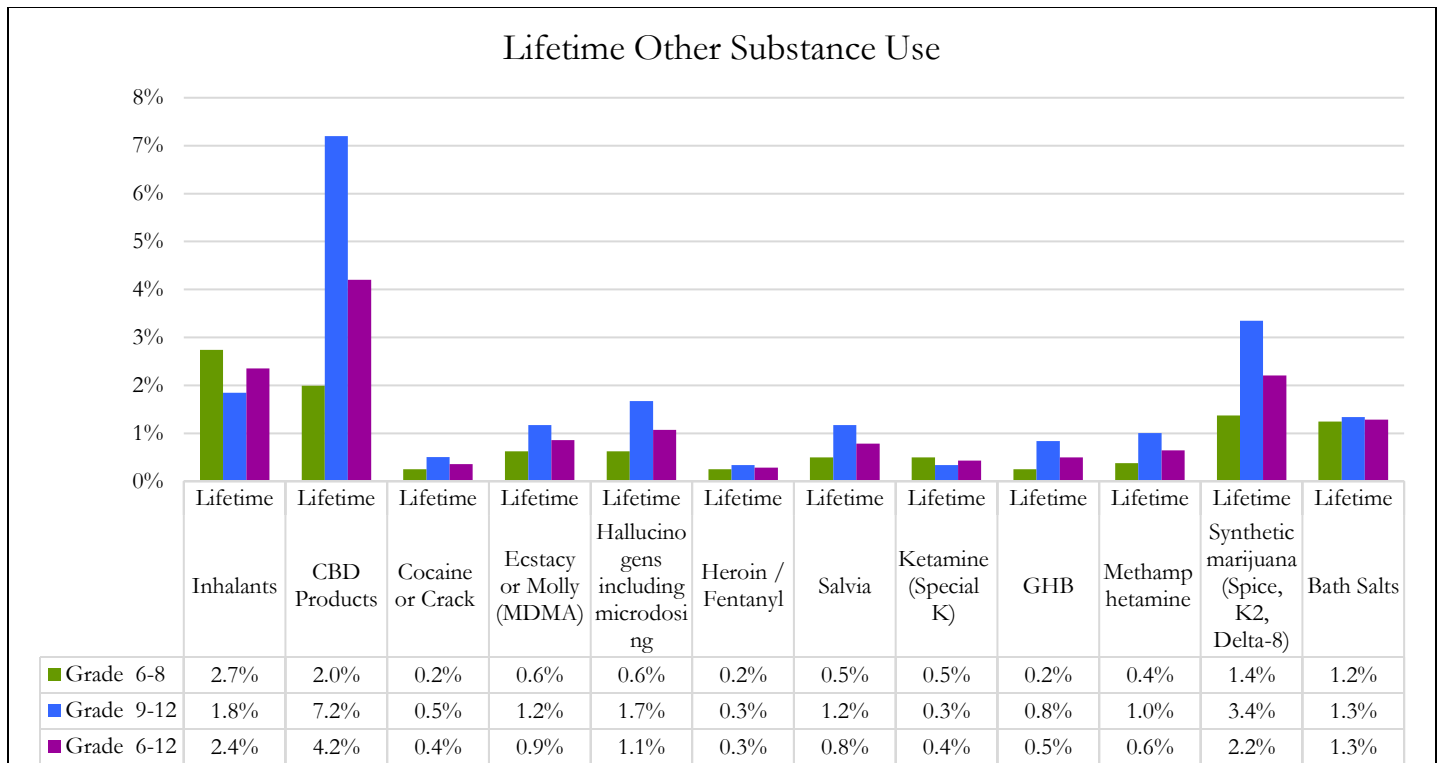
Where Substances Are Used Most Often Amongst Lifetime Users Grades 6-12



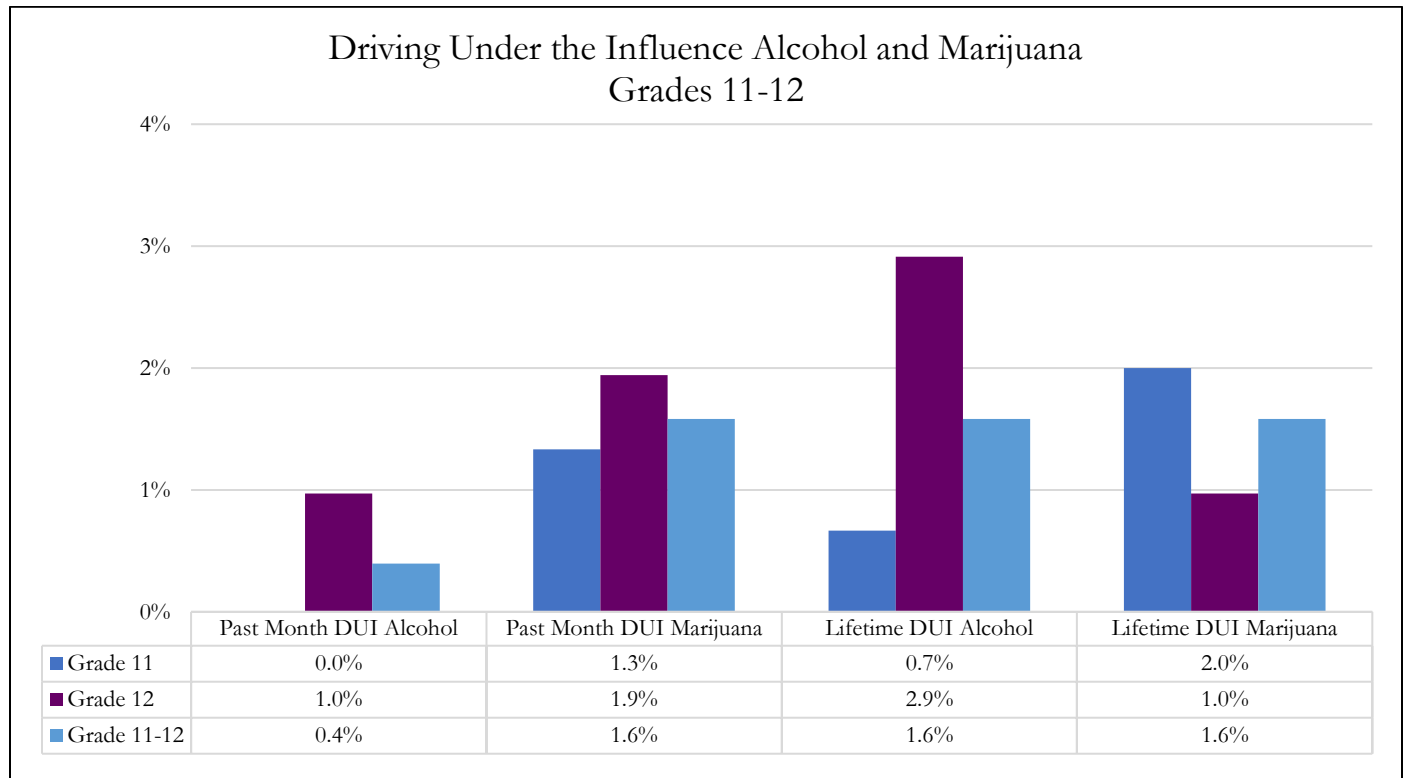
Youth Use of Substances at School- including school events



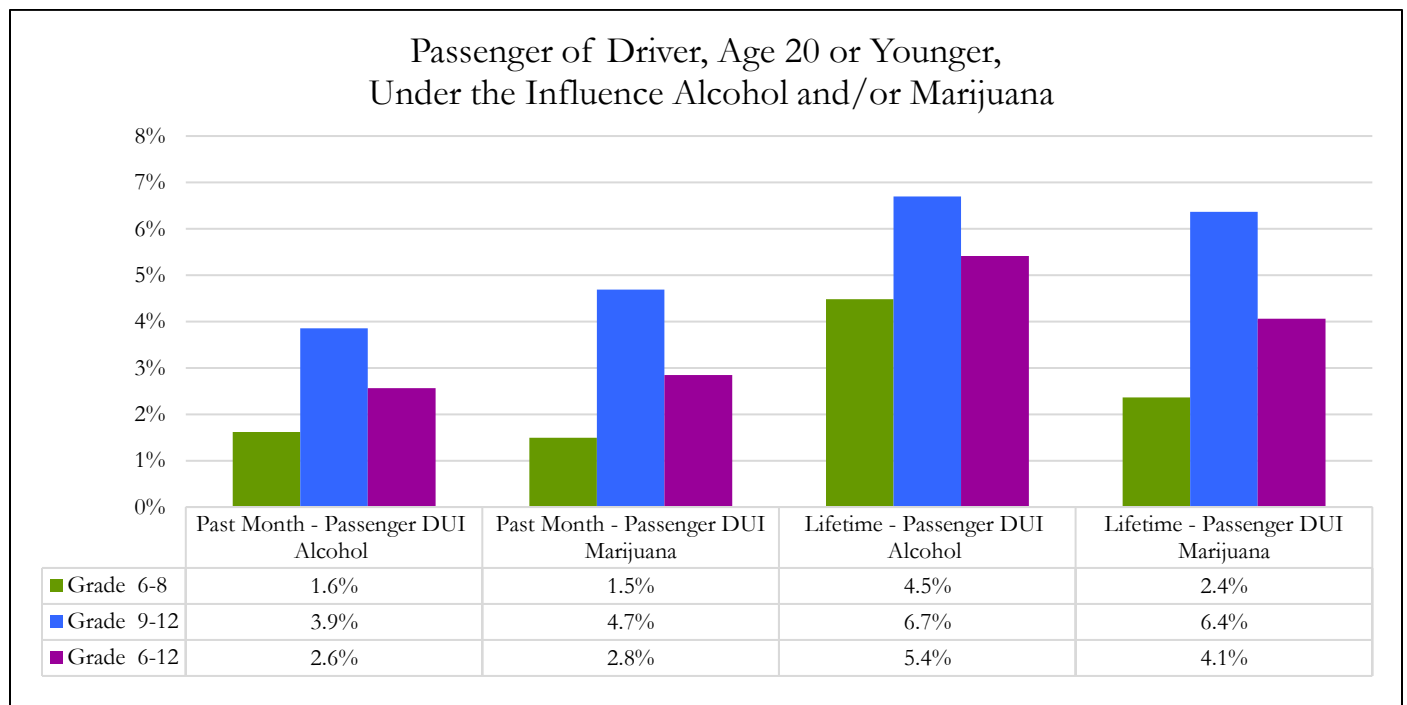
Other Substance Use:



Driving Under the Influence:



**One individual who reported past month DUI of marijuana did not report lifetime DUI of marijuana. The analysts chose to retain this case in the dataset.*



Torrington 2023 Substance Use Rates Compared to 2020:

It is important to note when comparing 2020 and 2023, that the survey tool and administration of the survey changed during that time. In 2020 the sample size was n=481.

Past Month Substance Use 2020 and 2023, Grades 9-12			
	Torrington 2020	Torrington 2023	Percent Change 2020-2023
Alcohol	7%	4.7%	-33.00%
Binge Drinking	3%	2.2%	-27.41%
Cigarettes	2%	1.3%	-33.00%
Vaping Nicotine	6%	4.4%	-27.41%
Vaping Flavored Liquids		4.5%	N/A
Marijuana	7%	5.5%	-21.03%
Prescription Drugs	2%	1.3%	-33.00%

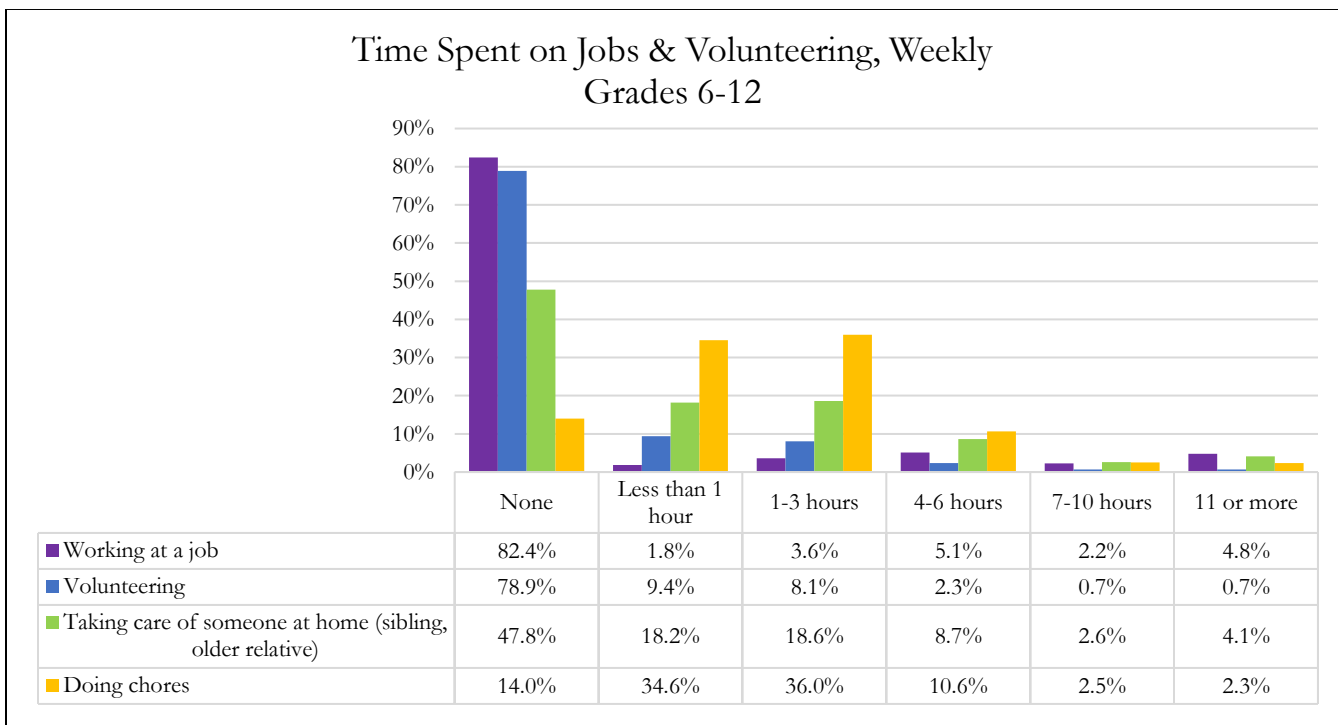
Perception of Risk/Harm (Moderate/Great Risk) 2020 and 2023, Grades 9-12			
	Torrington 2020	Torrington 2023	Percent Change 2020-2023
Alcohol	85%	76.1%	-10.51%
Cigarettes	92%	81.1%	-11.84%
Vaping	73%	78.4%	7.36%
Marijuana	58%	57.3%	-1.16%
Prescription Drugs	93%	83.7%	-9.96%

Perception of Parental Disapproval (Moderately/Greatly Wrong) 2020 and 2023, Grades 9-12			
	Torrington 2020	Torrington 2023	Percent Change 2020-2023
Alcohol	93%	91.0%	-2.16%
Cigarettes	98%	93.8%	-4.24%
Vaping	96%	92.1%	-4.01%
Marijuana	93%	87.1%	-6.30%
Prescription Drugs	98%	94.6%	-3.51%

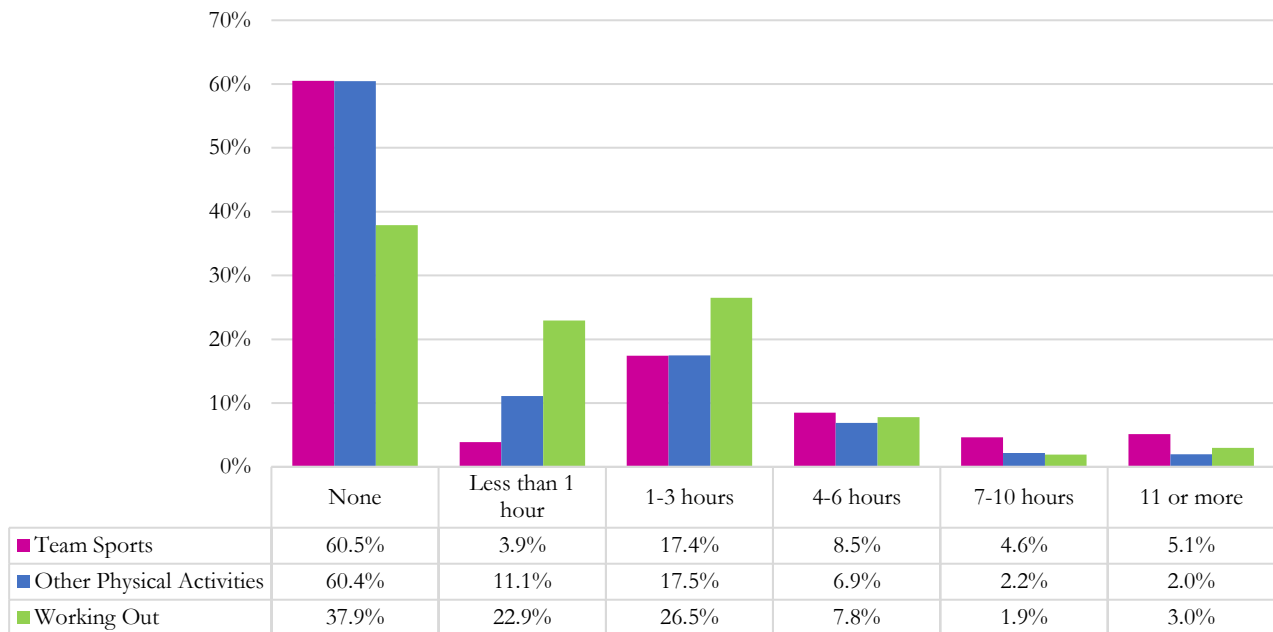
Perception of Friends/Peer Disapproval (Moderately/Greatly Wrong) 2020 and 2023, Grades 9-12			
	Torrington 2020	Torrington 2023	Percent Change 2020-2023
Alcohol	79%	73.0%	-7.54%
Cigarettes	86%	78.6%	-8.62%
Vaping	71%	66.4%	-6.46%
Marijuana	72%	65.1%	-9.63%
Prescription Drugs	91%	84.2%	-7.51%

Emotional Health Indicators, 2020 and 2023, Grades 9-12			
	Torrington 2020	Torrington 2023	Percent Change 2020-2023
Anxiety (almost always or always)		30.9%	N/A
Sad or Hopeless 2+ weeks in a row	36.2%	24.6%	-32.17%
Considered Suicide		10.9%	N/A

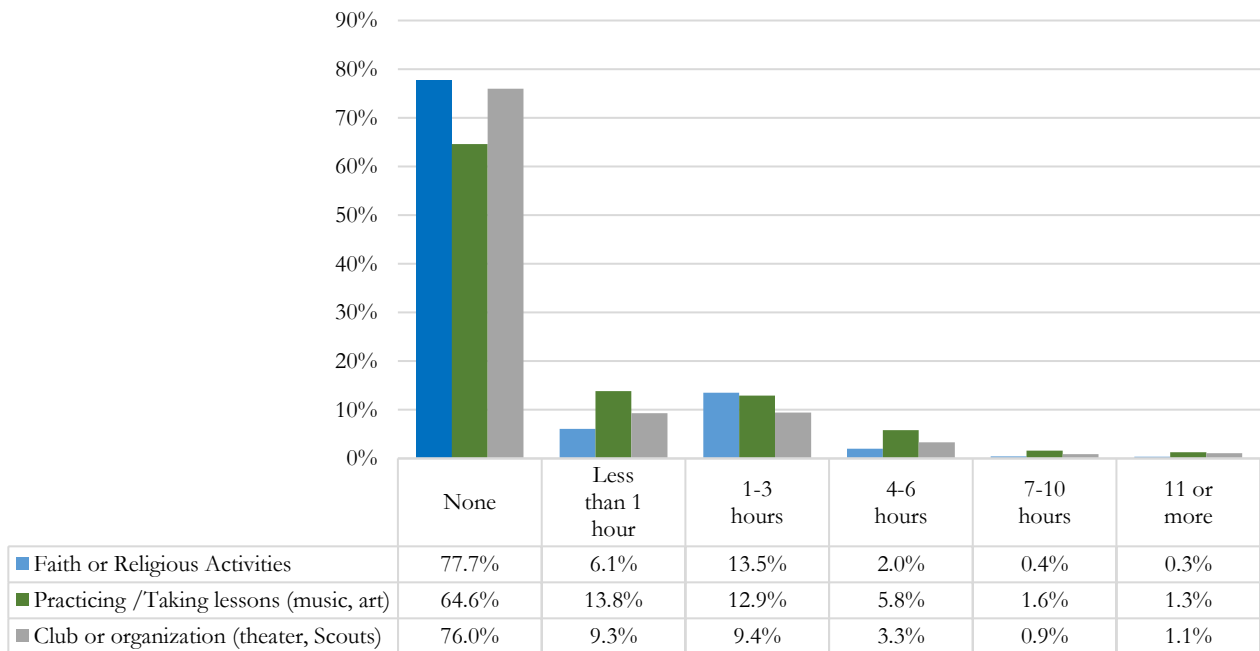
Extracurricular Activities:



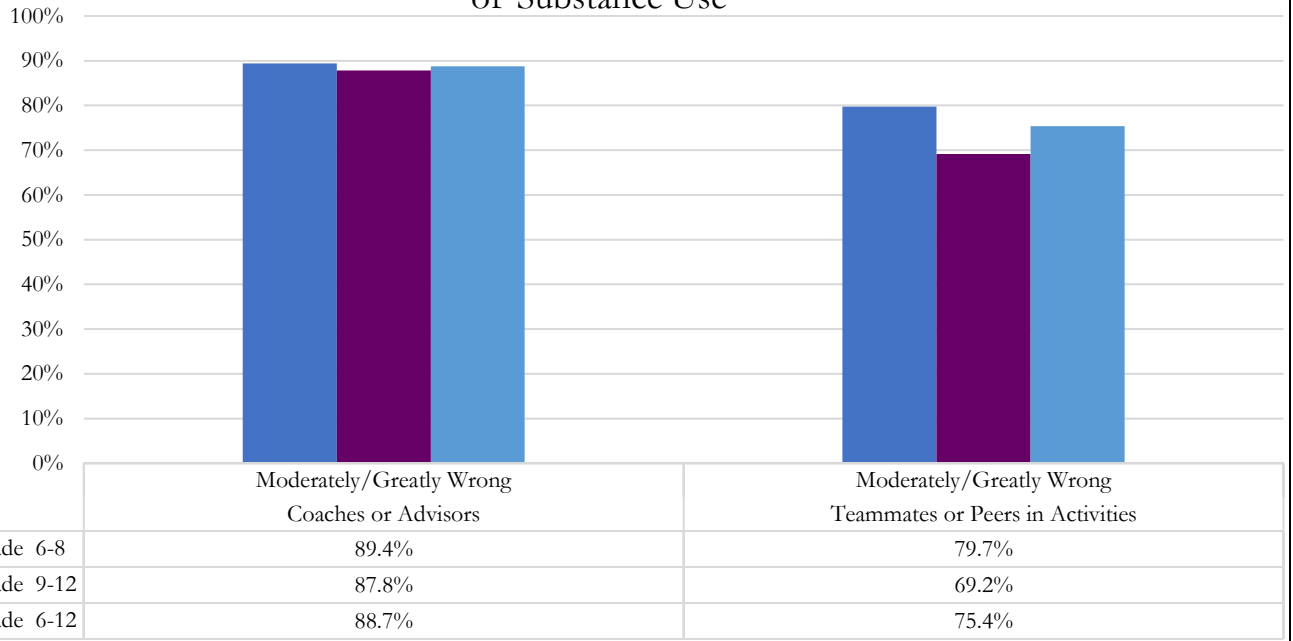
Time Spent on Physical Activities, Weekly Grades 6-12



Time Spent on Faith-based Activities, Taking Lessons, Clubs or Orgs, Weekly, Grades 6-12

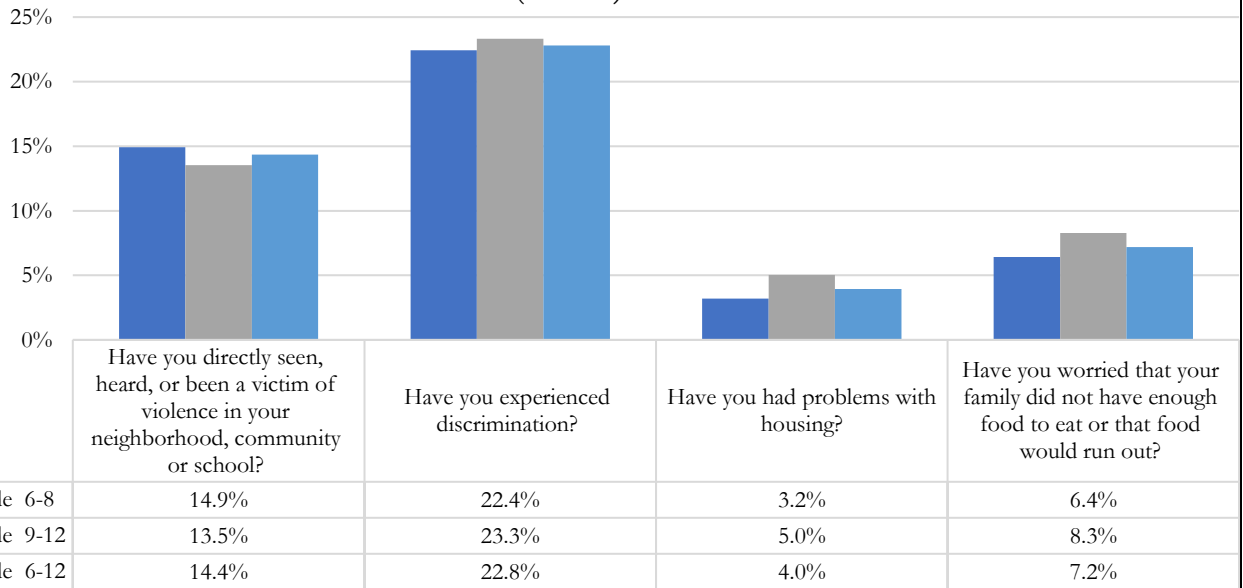


Perception of Coaches or Advisors and Teammates or Peers Disapproval of Substance Use



Toxic Stress:

Toxic Stress Indicators- Past Year (% Yes)



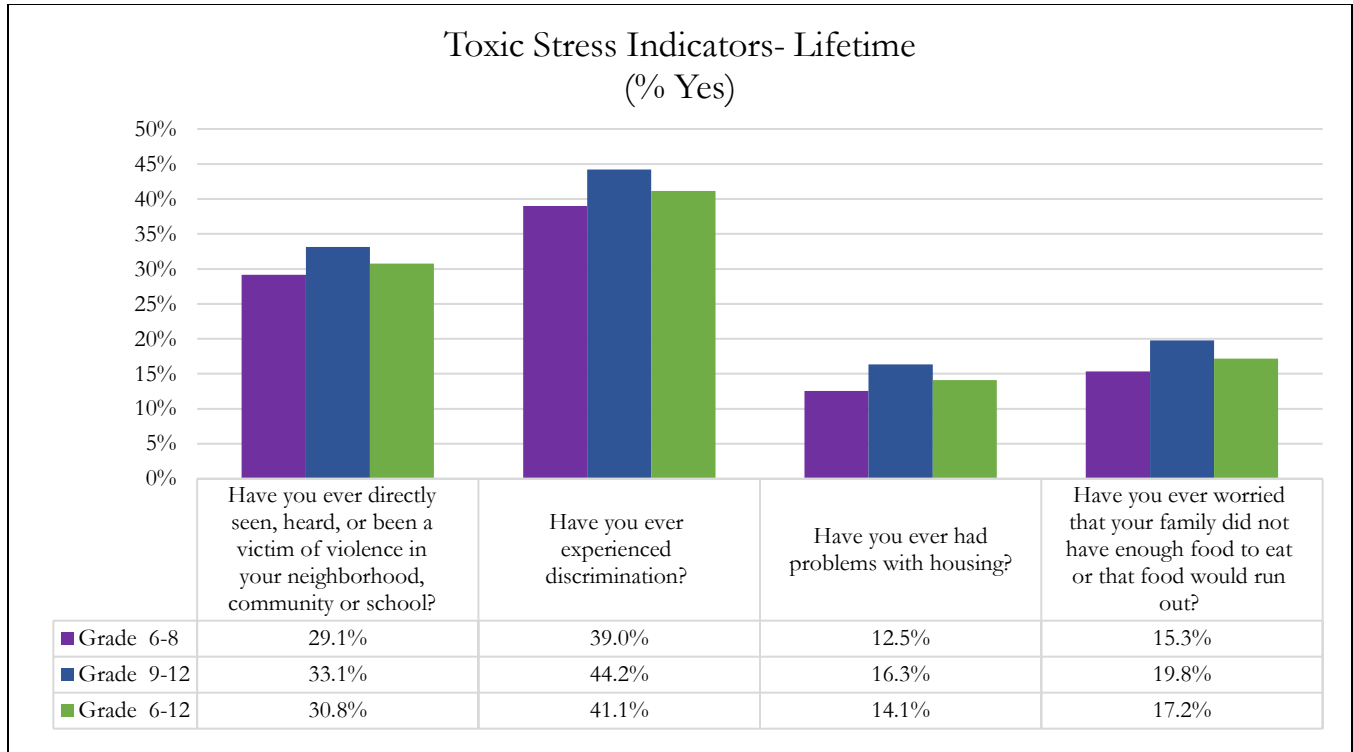
- *High school females were more likely than males to report experiencing community violence in the past 12 months.
- *Middle and high school females were more likely than males to report experiencing discrimination in the past 12 months.
- *Middle school youth in the “All Other Races” group were more likely than white youth to report experiencing discrimination.
- *High school youth who described themselves as transgender, non-binary or unsure were more likely than their cisgender peers to report experiencing community violence and problems with housing in the past 12 months.

*Middle and high school youth who described themselves as transgender, non-binary, or unsure were more likely than their cisgender peers to report experiencing discrimination in the past 12 months.

*High school youth who described themselves as LGBS were more likely than their heterosexual peers to report experiencing community violence, housing problems, and food insecurity in the past 12 months (and ever in their lifetime).

*Middle and high school youth who described themselves as LGBS were more likely than their heterosexual peers to report experiencing discrimination in the past 12 months.

*Middle school youth who described themselves as LGBS were more likely than their heterosexual peers to report experiencing food insecurity in the past 12 months.



*Middle and high school females were more likely than males to report ever experiencing discrimination.

*High school females were more likely than males to report ever experiencing problems with housing and food insecurity.

*Middle school youth who described themselves as transgender, non-binary, or unsure were more likely than their cisgender peers to report ever experiencing problems with housing.

*Middle and high school youth who described themselves as transgender, non-binary, or unsure were more likely than their cisgender peers to report ever experiencing food insecurity.

Addendum:

Perception of Parental Disapproval and Past Month Substance Use: Grades 9-12

The chart below shows the percentage of youth who reported past month substance use among those who reported moderate/great perception of parental disapproval compared to those who perceived less parental disapproval (not at all or slightly wrong). For example, among those who reported moderate/great parental disapproval for alcohol use, 4.3% reported using alcohol in the past month, compared to 14.6% of those who reported disapproval as not at all or slightly wrong. Youth who reported moderate/great parental disapproval for the four substances below were less likely to have used that substance in the past month.

	Perceived Parental Disapproval*		Total (Grades 9-12)
	Not at all wrong/ Slightly wrong	Moderately wrong / Greatly wrong	
Past Month Alcohol Use	14.6%	4.3%	4.7%
Past Month Marijuana Use	27.9%	2.8%	5.5%
Past Month Vaping (Nicotine) Use	31.0%	2.6%	4.4%
Past Month NMUPD	13.8%	0.8%	1.3%

*Perceived parental disapproval specific to each substance used

Mental Health Indicators by Substance Use Categories (Grades 7-12)

Substance Use Categories:

**Non-User: youth who had not reported any substance use in their lifetime*

**Past Month Substance User: youth who reported use of one or more core substances in the past month or 30-days.*

Youth who reported using any substance in their lifetime but NOT in the past month are not displayed in the tables below but are included in analysis of these tables, thus numbers below do not add to 100%.

Depression:

Among Torrington youth grades 6-12, 23.6% reported being sad or hopeless 2 or more weeks in a row in the past year. The table below illustrates how those who indicated depression fell in terms of substance use in the past 30 days or never having used substances. 14.7% of those reporting depression in the past year reported using substances in the past month.

	Depression (Past Year)			
	No		Yes	
	Count	Col. Valid N %	Count	Col. Valid N %
Non-User	870	84.1%	194	60.6%
Past Month User	32	3.1%	47	14.7%

Anxiety:

Among Torrington youth grades 6-12, 30.9% reported experiencing anxiety always or almost always in the past year. Among youth who reported anxiety always or almost always, 10.1% reported past month use of substances.

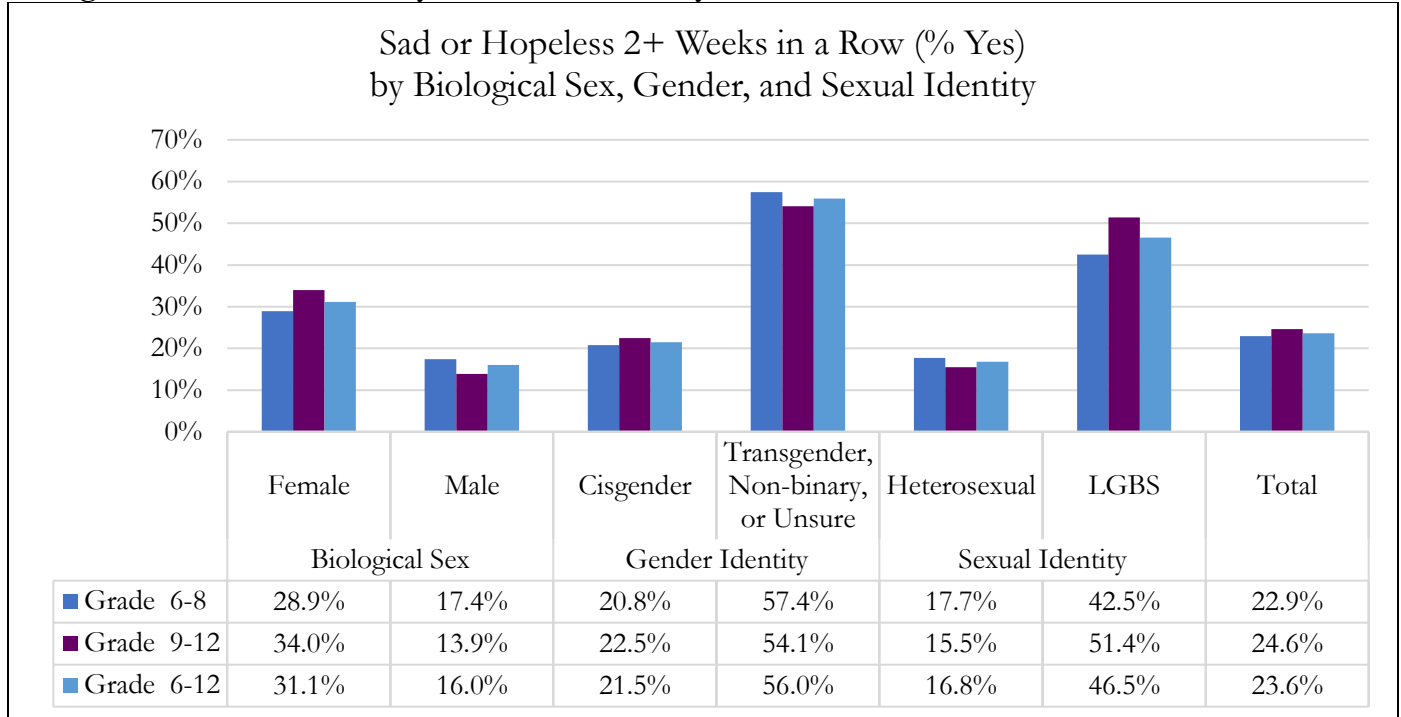
	Anxiety (Past Year)			
	Never/Some of the Time		Almost always/Always	
	Count	Col. Valid N %	Count	Col. Valid N %
Non-User	812	83.5%	276	67.8%
Past Month User	38	3.9%	41	10.1%

Thoughts of Suicide:

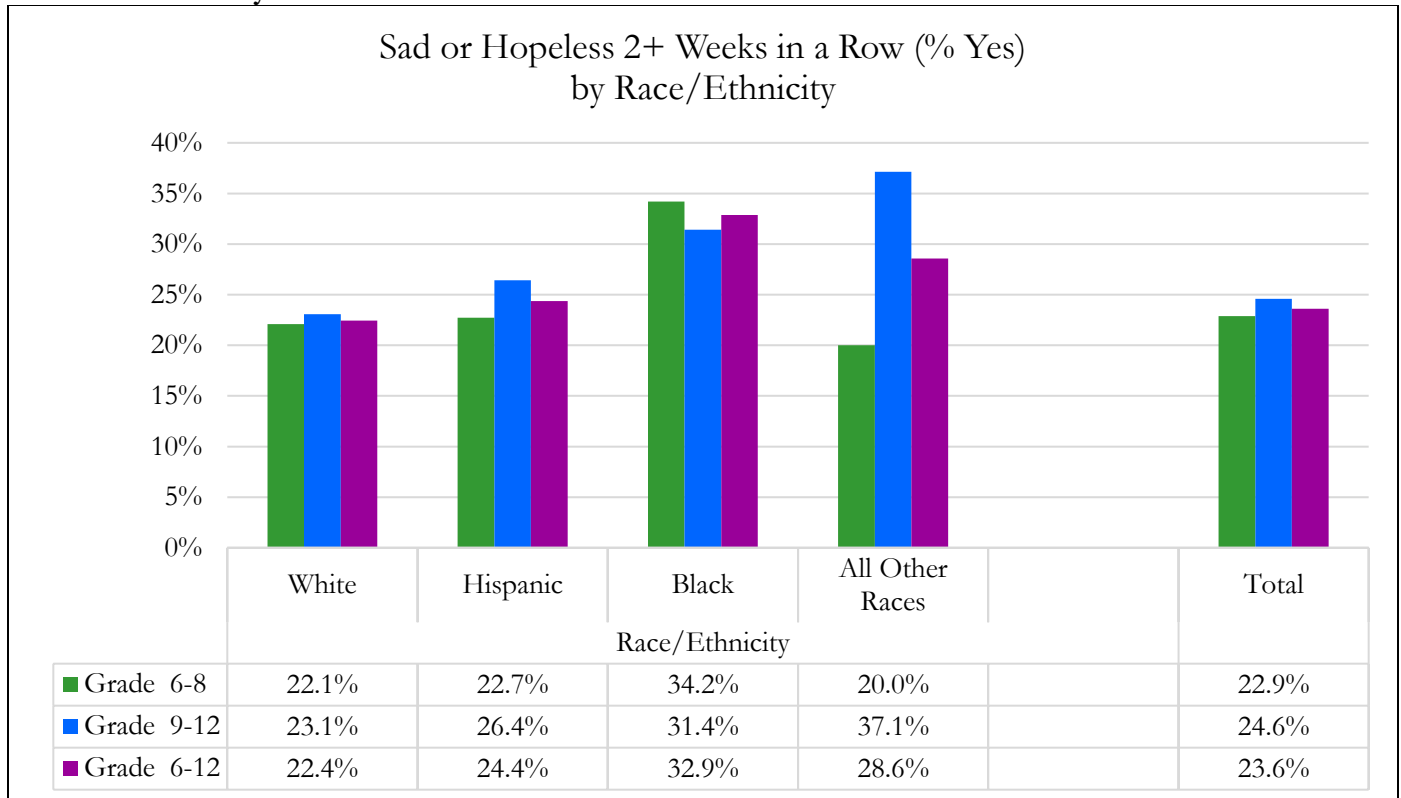
Among Torrington youth grades 6-12, 10.2% reported considering suicide in the past year. Among youth who reported having considered suicide in the past year, 24.1% reported past month substance use.

	Considered Attempting Suicide (Past Year)			
	No		Yes	
	Count	Col. Valid N %	Count	Col. Valid N %
Non-User	990	81.5%	70	51.1%
Past Month User	46	3.8%	33	24.1%

**Deeper Dive on Depression and Other Indicators:
Biological Sex, Gender Identity, and Sexual Identity**

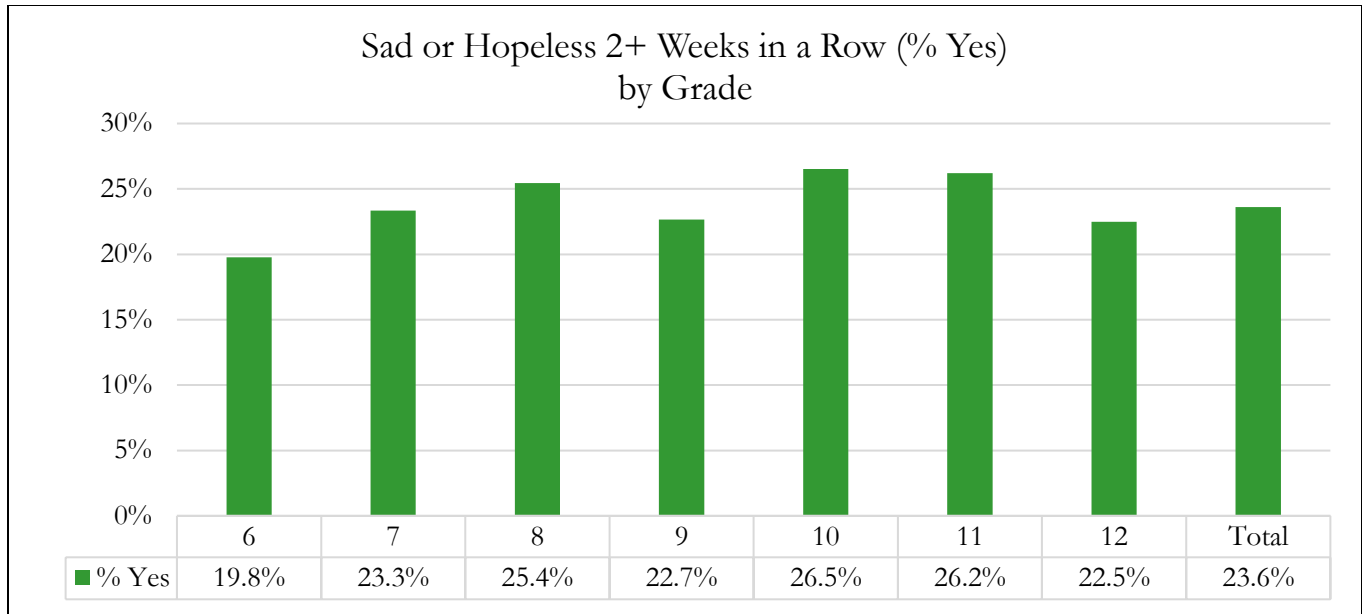


Race and Ethnicity



*Prevalence of “sad or hopeless 2+ weeks in a row” among Asian youth is not shown above due to the number of individuals represented in this group, presenting a risk of inadvertently identifying individuals.

Grade



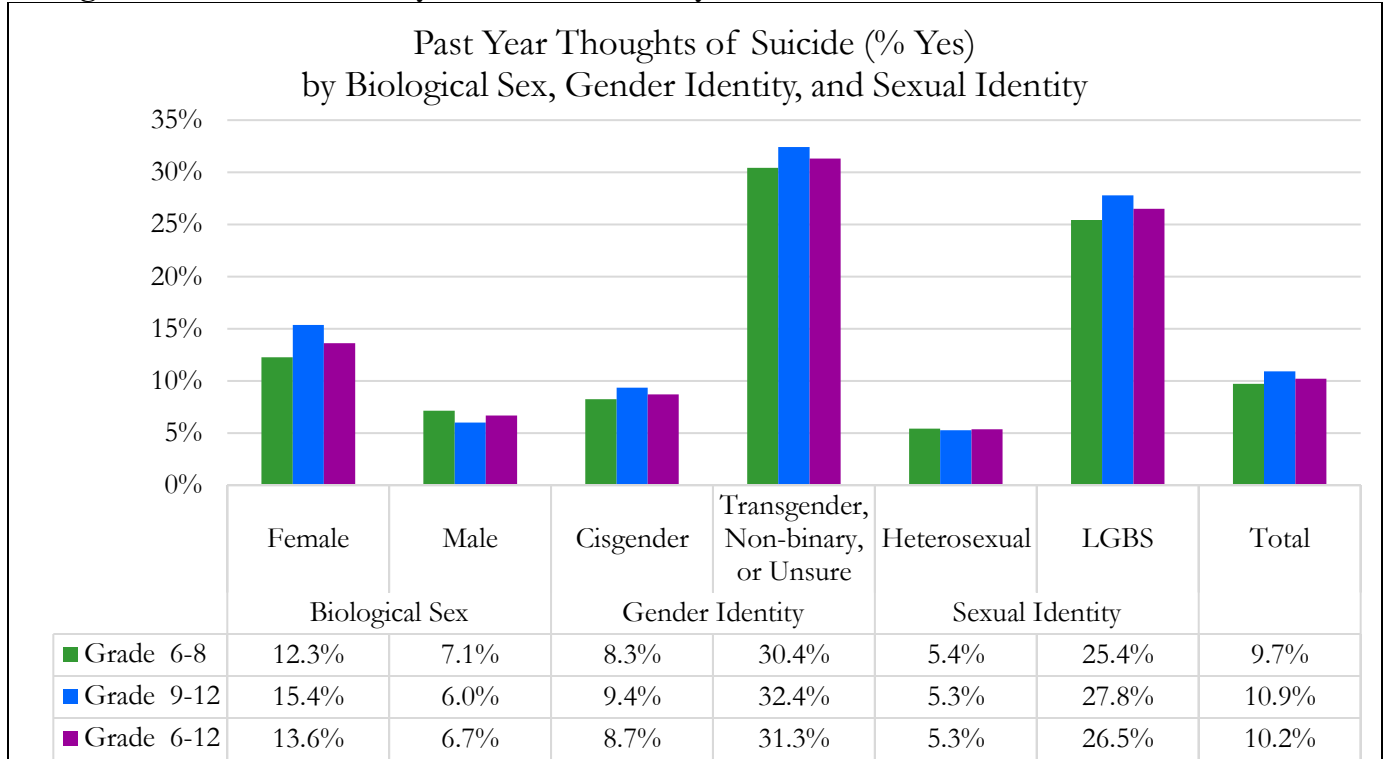
Self-Harm

		Depression (Past Year)			
		No		Yes	
		Count	Col. Valid N %	Count	Col. Valid N %
I have had thoughts about hurting myself	No	959	92.8%	152	47.8%
	Yes	74	7.2%	166	52.2%
I have hurt myself on purpose	No	988	95.6%	215	67.2%
	Yes	46	4.4%	105	32.8%

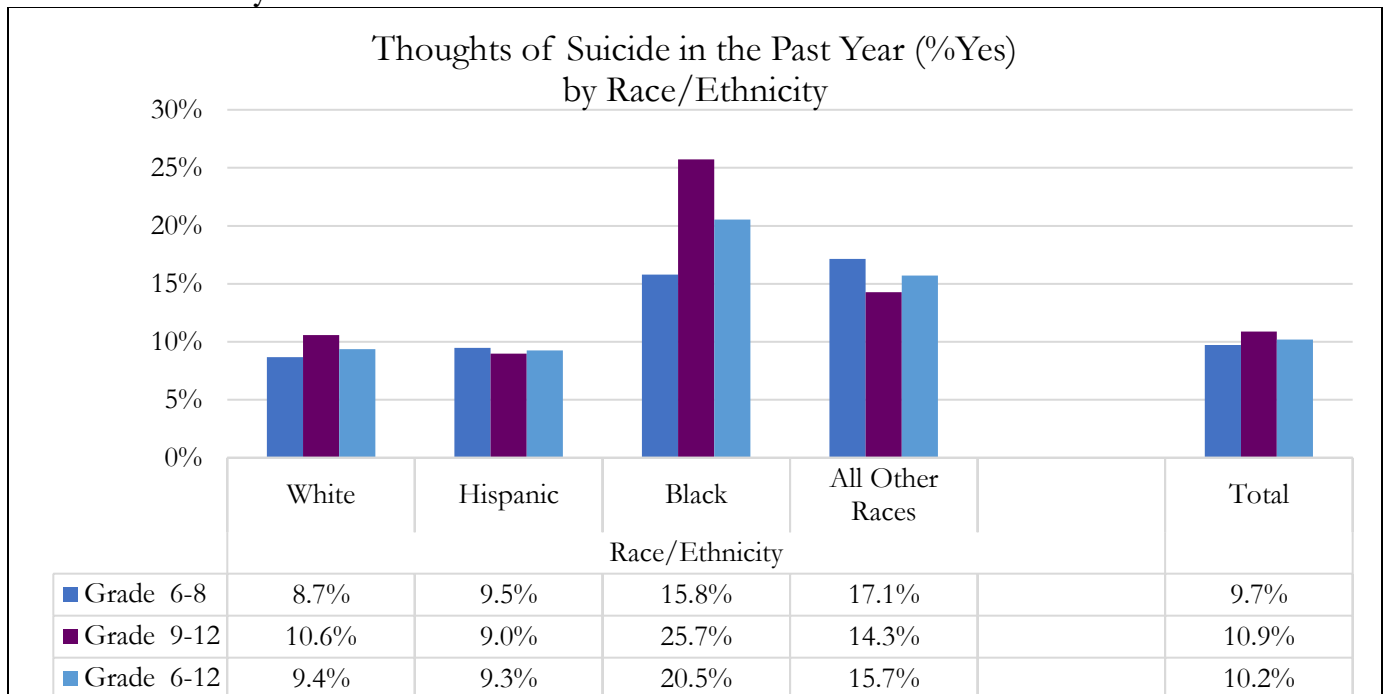
Trusted Adult, Community and School Safety, and Knowing where to get Help

		Depression (Past Year)			
		No		Yes	
		Count	Col. Valid N %	Count	Col. Valid N %
I have at least one adult in my life that I can share my thoughts and feelings with	Agree	865	92.2%	233	81.8%
	Disagree	73	7.8%	52	18.2%
I feel safe in my community	Agree	798	85.3%	176	62.0%
	Disagree	138	14.7%	108	38.0%
I feel safe at school	Agree	662	71.1%	138	49.1%
	Disagree	269	28.9%	143	50.9%
I know how to get help for myself or my peers for mental health or substance use problems at my school	Agree	748	80.6%	175	61.8%
	Disagree	180	19.4%	108	38.2%

**Deeper Dive on Thoughts of Suicide and Other Indicators:
Biological Sex, Gender Identity, and Sexual Identity**

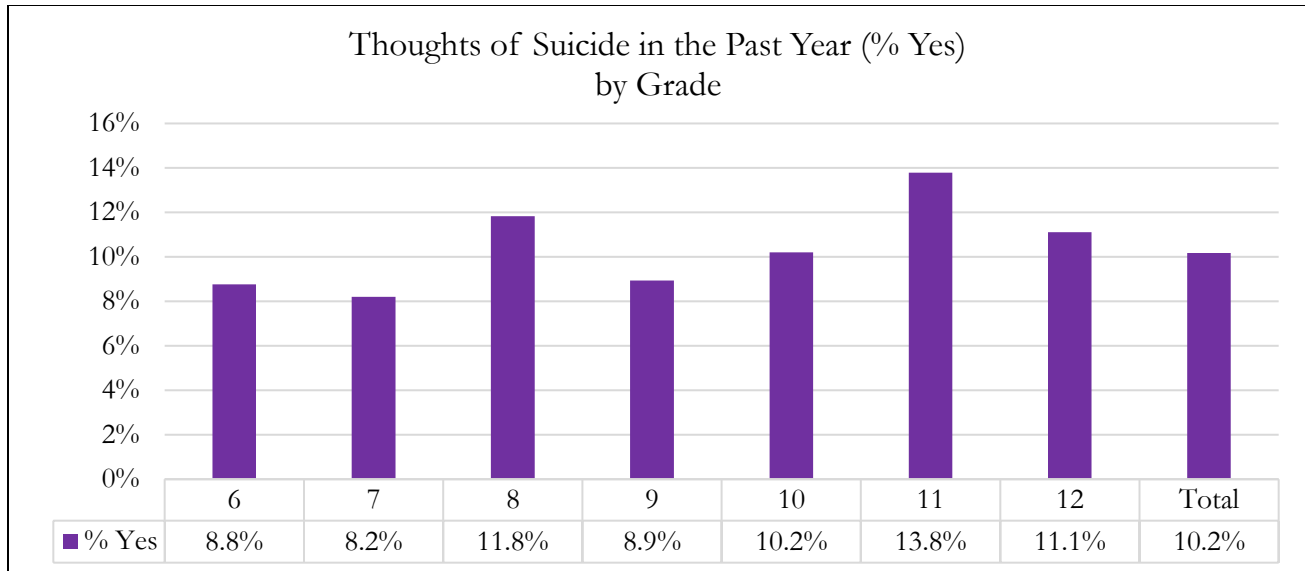


Race and Ethnicity



*Prevalence of thoughts of suicide among Asian youth is not shown above due to the number of individuals represented in this group, presenting a risk of inadvertently identifying individuals.

Grade



Self-Harm

		Thoughts of Suicide (Past Year)			
		No		Yes	
		Count	Col. Valid N %	Count	Col. Valid N %
I have had thoughts about hurting myself	No	1098	90.5%	13	9.5%
	Yes	115	9.5%	124	90.5%
I have hurt myself on purpose	No	1147	94.5%	53	39.0%
	Yes	67	5.5%	83	61.0%

Trusted Adult, Community and School Safety, and Knowing where to get Help

		Thoughts of Suicide (Past Year)			
		No		Yes	
		Count	Col. Valid N %	Count	Col. Valid N %
I have at least one adult in my life that I can share my thoughts and feelings with	Agree	998	91.2%	97	77.0%
	Disagree	96	8.8%	29	23.0%
I feel safe in my community	Agree	904	82.9%	65	52.0%
	Disagree	187	17.1%	60	48.0%
I feel safe at school	Agree	749	69.0%	48	38.7%
	Disagree	336	31.0%	76	61.3%
I know how to get help for myself or my peers for mental health or substance use problems at my school	Agree	856	79.0%	65	52.4%
	Disagree	227	21.0%	59	47.6%