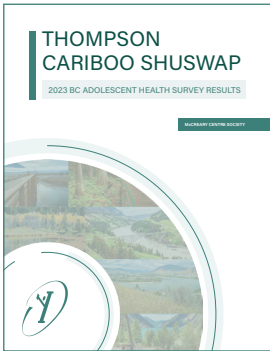


Thompson Cariboo Shuswap youth are more likely to feel supported and connected than youth across BC and are more likely to be engaged in extracurricular sports



Thompson Cariboo Shuswap regional results from the 2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS) were released today by McCreary Centre Society.

The results show that mental health is a major concern among local Grade 7 to 12 students with decreases in youth rating their mental health positively, and feeling good about themselves and their quality of life; and increases in self-harm and disordered eating. Also, the percentage who slept for at least 8 hours the night before taking the survey decreased from 51% in 2018 to 43%.

The result also showed some real positives for the region as local youth are less likely to be sexually active and use some substances than Thompson Cariboo Shuswap youth 5 and 10 years ago. For example, the percentage who had drunk alcohol decreased from 56% in 2018 to 49%.

McCreary Centre Society's Executive Director and co-author of the Thompson Cariboo Shuswap report, Dr Annie Smith noted: *"We are seeing concerning rises across British Columbia in youth reporting they are struggling with their mental health, and Thompson Cariboo Shuswap is no exception—although we do see a lot locally that is encouraging. For example, we have seen a drop off across the province in youth feeling connected to their community but we did not see that here. Also in this region, we see youth are more likely than those across BC to feel there is an adult in their community who really cares about them. They are also more likely than in previous survey years to have an adult inside and outside their family they can turn to if they are having a serious problem and to help them with tasks such as applying for college. These are all huge protective factors for young people, and we know that when young people have these connections and supports, they are less likely to engage in health risk behaviours."*

Smith also highlighted the positives of physical activity for youth in this region: *"Physical activity and getting outside can be key to positive mental health and to things like sleep. It is therefore concerning that the survey results show decreases in youth participating in extracurricular physical activity, such as organized sports. The good news for this region is that local youth are more likely to be taking part at least weekly in informal sports like hiking and biking, and in extreme sports like back country skiing than we typically see across BC."*

To read the full results for Thompson Cariboo Shuswap, please visit mcs.bc.ca/pdf/2023_bcchs_thompson_cariboo_shuswap.pdf.



McCreary Centre Society is a non-government, non-profit organization committed to improving the health of BC youth through research, evaluation, and community-based projects.

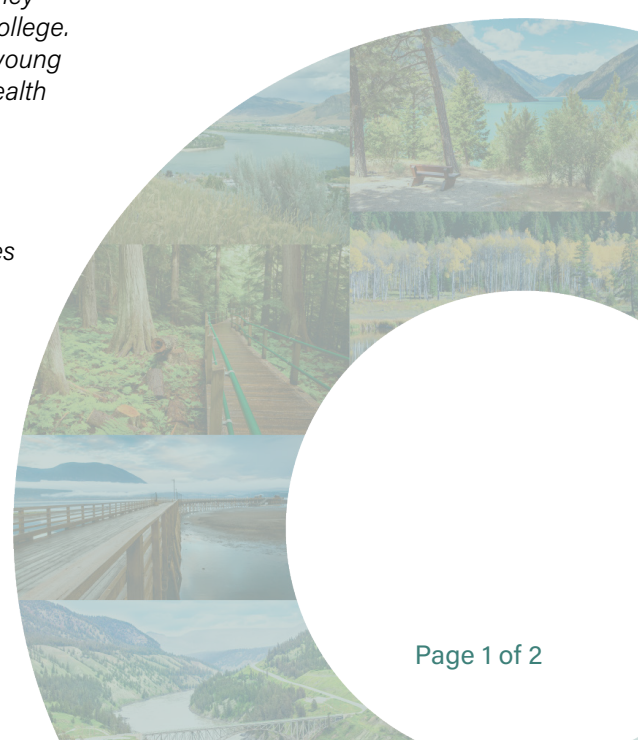
Founded in 1977, our vision is that all youth are supported to be healthy and connected.

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Backgrounder

This report is one of 16 regional reports of the 2023 BC AHS results. It shares data provided by students in Grades 7–12 in the Thompson Cariboo Shuswap Health Service Delivery Area (HSDA). Thompson Cariboo Shuswap HSDA is comprised of six school districts: Revelstoke, Cariboo-Chilcotin, Nicola-Similkameen, Kamloops Thompson, Gold Trail, and North Okanagan-Shuswap. All school districts in this region have participated in each of the seven waves of the survey. The region also includes students in Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (SD 93).

Some key findings for Thompson Cariboo Shuswap:

Results from the 2023 BC AHS show that youth (aged 12–19) in Thompson Cariboo Shuswap are becoming increasingly diverse, with a greater percentage born abroad and identifying as a gender and sexual minority than in previous survey years.

Local results also showed:

- Among Indigenous youth, 45% could speak at least a few words of an Indigenous language (vs. 32% across BC).
- Compared to 5 years earlier, local youth were less likely to have run away from home (6% vs. 9% in 2018), been kicked out (4% vs. 7%), and moved (17% vs. 25%) in the past 12 months.
- The percentage of local youth who experienced a concussion was higher than in previous survey years (e.g., 23% vs. 17% in 2018). However, the percentage of these youth who received medical treatment for their concussion decreased (40% vs. 53% in 2018).
- Reflecting trends across BC, there was a decrease in the percentage of youth who rated their mental health as good or excellent (57% vs. 70% in 2018), and an increase in those who had cut or injured themselves on purpose without trying to kill themselves (27% vs. 20% in 2018).
- Local youth remained more likely to be sexually active and to use substances than youth across BC. However, they were less likely than local youth in 2018 to have had oral sex (22% vs. 28%), had sexual intercourse (22% vs. 28%), tried tobacco (21% vs. 27%), or used alcohol (49% vs. 56%).
- Reflecting results across the province, local youth were less likely to feel connected to school and to feel safe there than in previous years (e.g., 60% felt safe at school vs. 68% in 2018). They were also less likely to plan to attend post-secondary (71% vs. 80% in 2018).
- Local youth were more likely than those across the province to have participated weekly in informal sports (57% vs. 53%) and extreme sports (22% vs. 12%); and were less likely to have participated this often in dance, yoga, or exercise classes (11% vs. 14%).
- Local youth were more likely than those across the province to have an adult in their neighbourhood or community who cared about them (78% vs. 73% provincially). Also, they were more likely than 5 years earlier to have an adult outside their family they could talk to when they were having a serious problem (40% vs. 31% in 2018); and an adult who would help them prepare for university, college, or trade school (87% vs. 84%).
- The local survey results highlight some of the factors that can negatively affect health and well-being, such as experiencing deprivation, as well as the value of exercise, sleep, and access to healthy food. The results also clearly show the importance of youth feeling connected to family, culture, school, and community.



For more information about the BC Adolescent Health Survey, please visit mcs.bc.ca/about_bcchs.

