



Results of the 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey

# Central Vancouver Island





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## RESULTS OF THE 2013 BC ADOLESCENT HEALTH SURVEY

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Copies of this report are available at [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca)

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McCreary Centre Society is a non-government not-for-profit committed to improving the health of BC youth through research and community-based projects. Founded in 1977, the Society sponsors and promotes a wide range of activities and research to identify and address the health needs of young people in the province.



Youth health • Youth research • Youth engagement



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Quotes from Central Vancouver Island students who participated in the survey are included throughout this report.

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# Key findings

Findings from the 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey showed that most youth in Central Vancouver Island reported good physical and mental health; felt connected to their family, school, and community; had positive plans for the future; and were engaging in health promoting behaviours which will assist them to transition successfully to adulthood.

However, the survey findings also highlighted some differences between this region and the province as a whole, as well as identified some groups of students who may need additional support. Youth in this area reported higher rates of some health risk behaviours than seen provincially, but there were local improvements from previous years. Protective factors were also found that appear to be linked to better outcomes.

- Students in Central Vancouver Island most commonly identified as being of European heritage, which was above the provincial rate (70% vs. 53%). Fourteen percent of students identified as Aboriginal, which was also above the provincial rate of 10%.
- Most youth (80%) rated their mental health as good or excellent, but students were less likely to rate their mental health this way than their overall health.
- Males reported better mental health than females, including higher levels of self-confidence and lower rates of extreme stress, self-harm, and suicide attempts in the past year.
- Compared to five years previous, there was a decrease in the percentage of students who missed out on accessing needed medical care (15% in 2008 vs. 9% in 2013) and mental health services (14% in 2008 vs. 11% in 2013) in the past year. The most common reasons for students missing out on these services included thinking or hoping the problem would go away and not wanting their parents to know.
- Similar to the provincial picture, 18% of local students (24% of males vs. 12% of females) met the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines which recommend that youth aged 12 to 17 do an hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. Seven percent of students in this age group did not exercise at all during the past week.
- In the past year, 29% of youth (33% of males vs. 26% of females) were injured seriously enough to require medical attention, which was a decrease from 35% in 2008.
- Nineteen percent of students (23% of males vs. 15% of females) experienced a concussion in the past year. Mirroring what was seen provincially, almost 1 in 6 youth who had a concussion had not accessed needed medical help.
- Most students (75% of males vs. 81% of females) were online or on their phone after their expected bedtime. Also, 34% of males and 41% of females were doing homework after the time they were supposed to be asleep.

- Twenty-four percent of Central Vancouver Island youth had ever tried smoking tobacco, which reflected a local decrease from 2008 (30%) and 2003 (35%). However, almost half (49%) of youth who had ever smoked reported smoking in the past month, which was similar to the provincial rate.
- Youth in Central Vancouver Island were more likely than their peers across BC to have tried alcohol (53% vs. 45% provincially) and marijuana (30% vs. 26% provincially). However, the percentage of local students who had tried these substances was lower than in previous survey years. Youth were also waiting longer to first try these substances than in previous years.
- Five percent of students who had tried alcohol had ever driven a car after drinking, which was a decrease from 12% in 2008. There was also a decline in the percentage who drove after using marijuana (from 23% in 2008 to 16% in 2013).
- Central Vancouver Island youth felt safer in every area of their school in 2013 than in previous survey years. Males and females were equally likely to feel safe in these areas.
- Females were more likely than males to have experienced verbal sexual harassment (52% vs. 31%) and physical sexual harassment (31% vs. 11%). The percentages of youth who had experienced these forms of sexual harassment were lower than in past survey years.
- Protective factors which appeared to improve outcomes for even the most vulnerable youth included physical activity, meaningful engagement in activities, good nutrition, and getting eight or more hours of sleep. Local results also highlighted the importance of supportive relationships with peers and adults, including family, teachers, and other professionals.



# Introduction

Between February and June 2013, 29,832 students in Grades 7–12 completed the BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS) in schools across British Columbia. These students answered 130 questions about their health, and about the risk and protective factors in their lives.

This is the fifth time students have been asked to complete the survey since 1992. Fifty-six of the 59 BC school districts participated in the survey. This is seven more than when the survey was last conducted in 2008.

In addition to a provincial report (*From Hastings Street to Haida Gwaii* available at [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca)), 16 reports at the Health Service Delivery Area level have been published. This report focuses on students in the Central Vancouver Island Health Service Delivery Area.

This Health Service Delivery Area is comprised of Nanaimo-Ladysmith (SD 68), Qualicum (SD 69), Alberni (SD 70), and Cowichan Valley (SD 79). All school districts in this region participated in the survey in 2013. They also participated in 2008 and 2003, which allowed for the inclusion of trends over the past decade. The results presented in this report provide the most comprehensive and representative picture of youth health in Central Vancouver Island.

When reading this report it is important to keep in mind that the survey was administered in English to youth in public schools. This means that youth who were absent that day, had limited English language comprehension, or were not attending a mainstream class are not included in these results.

All comparisons and associations included in this report are statistically significant at  $p < .05$ . This means there is up to a 5% likelihood that these results occurred by chance. Comparisons between Central Vancouver Island and the province are statistically significant at  $p < .01$ . Where relevant, differences in tables or charts that are not statistically significant are noted.



## SYMBOLS USED IN THIS REPORT

- \* The percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was relatively high but still within a releasable range.

**NR** The percentage could not be released due to the risk of deductive disclosure.



## QUOTES

Quotes from Central Vancouver Island students who participated in the survey are included throughout this report.



## PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS

### Northern Health Authority

- 28 Quesnel
- 50 Haida Gwaii
- 52 Prince Rupert
- 57 Prince George
- 59 Peace River South
- 60 Peace River North
- 81 Fort Nelson
- 82 Coast Mountains
- 91 Nechako Lakes
- 92 Nisga'a

### Fraser Health Authority

- 33 Chilliwack
- 34 Abbotsford
- 35 Langley
- 36 Surrey
- 37 Delta
- 40 New Westminster
- 41 Burnaby
- 42 Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows
- 43 Coquitlam
- 78 Fraser-Cascade

### Vancouver Coastal Health Authority

- 38 Richmond
- 39 Vancouver
- 44 North Vancouver
- 45 West Vancouver
- 46 Sunshine Coast
- 47 Powell River
- 48 Sea To Sky
- 49 Central Coast

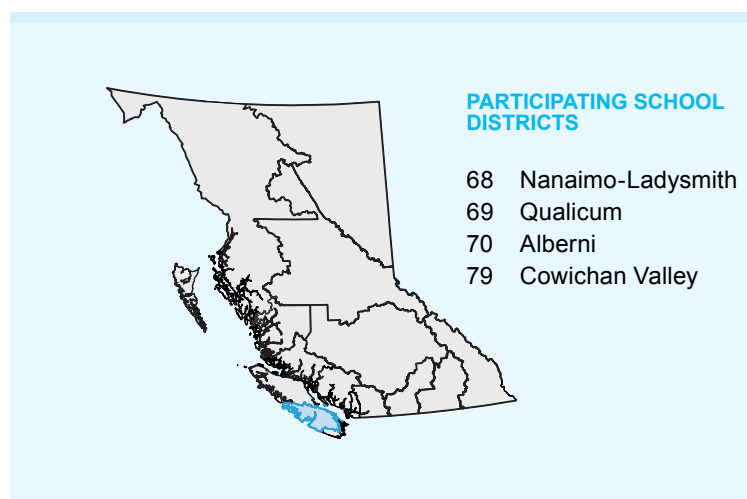
### Vancouver Island Health Authority

- 61 Greater Victoria
- 62 Sooke
- 63 Saanich
- 64 Gulf Islands
- 68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith
- 69 Qualicum
- 70 Alberni
- 71 Comox Valley
- 72 Campbell River
- 79 Cowichan Valley
- 84 Vancouver Island West
- 85 Vancouver Island North

### Interior Health Authority

- 05 Southeast Kootenay
- 06 Rocky Mountain
- 08 Kootenay Lake
- 10 Arrow Lakes
- 19 Revelstoke
- 20 Kootenay-Columbia
- 22 Vernon
- 23 Central Okanagan
- 27 Cariboo-Chilcotin
- 51 Boundary
- 53 Okanagan Similkameen
- 58 Nicola-Similkameen
- 67 Okanagan Skaha
- 73 Kamloops/Thompson
- 74 Gold Trail
- 83 North Okanagan-Shuswap

## CENTRAL VANCOUVER ISLAND HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY AREA



### ONLINE

A fact sheet explaining the methodology of the survey can be found at [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca).

# Youth in Central Vancouver Island

## Ethnic & cultural background

In the 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey, students in Central Vancouver Island most commonly reported that they were of European heritage (70%) which was above the provincial rate of 53%, and a local increase from 67% in 2008.

There was also an increase in the percentage of youth identifying as having an East Asian background (from 4% in 2003 to 6% in 2013), as well as those with an African background (from 1% in 2003 to 2% in 2008 and 2013).

Fourteen percent of local students did not know their background, which was above the provincial rate of 8%.

Family background	
European	70%
Aboriginal	14%
East Asian	6%
South Asian	3%
Latin/South/Central American	3%
Australian/Pacific Islander	3%
African	2%
Southeast Asian	2%
West Asian	1%
Other	3%
Don't know	14%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

Note: If youth did not feel any of the listed options represented their background, they could choose to write in their own identity. Most of these students wrote Canadian.

## ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

As in 2008, 14% of students identified as Aboriginal, which was above the provincial rate of 10% and reflected a local increase from 9% in 2003.

Among students who identified as Aboriginal, 67% were First Nations and 31% were Métis.

Similar to the provincial picture, 30% of Aboriginal youth had ever lived on reserve, with 15% currently living there all of the time, and 5% living there some of the time.

Ten percent of Aboriginal youth reported speaking an Aboriginal language, which was consistent with the provincial rate.

## NEW CANADIANS

Nine percent of students were born outside of Canada, which was unchanged from 2008 and below the provincial rate of 19%. Among local students born outside Canada, 43% had lived in the country less than two years, and 15% had lived here between two and five years.

**44%** of youth born outside Canada were here as international students.

## LANGUAGE

The majority of students (70%) spoke only English at home, which was above the provincial rate of 51%. Around a quarter of youth (24%) reported sometimes speaking a language other than English at home and 5% spoke another language at home most of the time.

## Sexual orientation & gender identity

Local students identified with a range of sexual orientations, and percentages were similar to those across the province.

There was a decrease in the percentage of Central Vancouver Island students who identified as completely straight, from 86% in 2003 and 2008 to 81% in 2013.

Males were more likely than females to identify as completely straight (85% vs. 77% of females), whereas females were more likely to identify as mostly straight (10% vs. 4% of males), bisexual (6% vs. 2%), and questioning.

Sexual orientation	
Completely straight	81%
Mostly straight	7%
Bisexual	4%
Gay or lesbian	1%
Questioning	1%
Don't have attractions	6%

Students were asked if they identified as transgender. Consistent with the province, 1% of students identified this way.

Aboriginal students were also asked if they identified as Two Spirit. However, the percentage who identified this way was too small to report due to the risk of deductive disclosure.

## Home life

Similar to the rest of the province, 94% of students in Central Vancouver Island reported living with at least one parent (including a step-parent), which was a decrease from 96% in 2008 and 97% in 2003.

Who youth lived with most of the time	
Mother/stepmother	82%
Father/stepfather	68%
Sibling(s)/stepsibling(s)	48%
Both parents at different times	11%
Grandparent(s)	5%
Other adult(s) not related to me	3%
Other adult(s) related to me	2%
Other children or youth	2%
Two mothers/two fathers	1%
I live alone	1%
Foster parent(s)	1%
My own child or children	NR

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

NR: Percentage could not be released due to the risk of deductive disclosure.

## In this report

**PARENT** refers to students' parent or guardian. ➔

**12%** of females and 9% of males had run away in the past year.

Students who did not live with their parents most commonly lived with adults not related to them (25%), grandparents (21%), and other adult relatives (21%).

Local youth were less likely than those across BC to be living in households with siblings or stepsiblings (48% vs. 58% provincially), grandparents (5% vs. 9%), or other adult relatives (2% vs. 4%). They were more likely to be living with both parents at different times (11% vs. 8% provincially).

Eighty-nine percent of youth reported that their parent(s) or guardian(s) worked locally, 12% had a parent who worked somewhere else in BC or Canada, and 3% had a parent that worked abroad. Five percent reported that their parents did not work, which was similar to the provincial rate.

### STABLE HOME

Twenty-three percent of Central Vancouver Island students had moved from one house to another in the past year, and 5% had moved three or more times. These rates were comparable to those across the province.

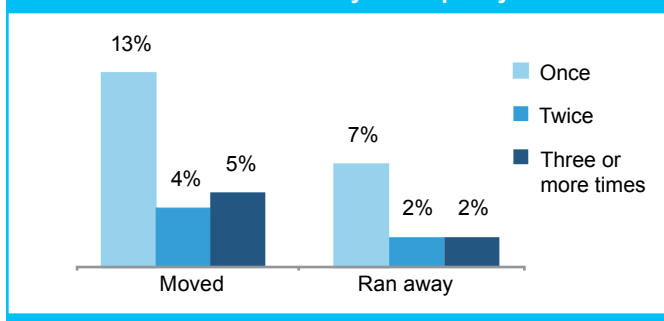
Having a stable home has been shown to be a protective factor in the lives of youth. When compared to youth who had moved house, those who had stayed in the same

home for the past year were less likely to have been involved in risky behaviours. For example, they were less likely than those who had moved to have used alcohol the previous Saturday (38% vs. 50%) and to have had five or more drinks within a couple of hours in the past month (38% vs. 47%; among youth who had tried alcohol).

Youth who had not moved were also more likely to be taking part in community life such as participating in weekly organized sports (such as school teams, swimming lessons, etc.; 57% vs. 50%) and to feel that there was an adult in their neighbourhood or community who cared about them (69% vs. 57% of youth who had moved).

Among youth with a mental or emotional health condition (depression, eating disorder, etc.), those who stayed in the same home for the past year were more likely to be planning to continue their education beyond high school (84% vs. 71%\* who had moved). They were also less likely to have missed out on needed medical care (18% vs. 40%\* who had moved), to have seriously considered suicide (47% vs. 65%\*), or to have attempted suicide (21% vs. 46%\*) in the past year.

Youth who moved or ran away in the past year



## Government care

Similar to the provincial picture, 4% of students had ever lived in foster care and 1% had lived in a group home. Two percent were currently in government care.

As was the case provincially, local students with care experience were more likely to have moved in the past year than those who had not been in care (51%\* vs. 21%). They were also more likely to have moved three or more times (17% vs. 5% of youth who had not been in care).

Among youth who had been in government care, those who had not changed address in the past year were more likely than those who had moved to report good or excellent overall health, to have only positive aspirations for the future, such as having a job or a home of their own, and to feel like a part of their community.

## Caretaking responsibilities

On an average school day, 70% of students (65% of males vs. 76% of females) had some caretaking responsibilities. These included caring for pets or other animals (60% of males vs. 69% of females) and caring for a relative (e.g., a relative with a disability or a younger sibling; 14% of males vs. 21% of females). Local students were more likely to be caring for pets or other animals than their peers across the province (64% vs. 52%).

### Def.

In this report, when the term **GOVERNMENT CARE** is used, it refers to youth living in a foster home or group home.

## Transportation

Students were asked what method of transport they usually used to get to school. Thirty-two percent of local students (36% of males vs. 28% of females) used active means, including walking, biking, or skateboarding. Sixty percent (55% of males vs. 65% of females) got to school by car, while 33% used the bus or public transit, and 1% usually hitchhiked to school.

Youth who were dependent on transit to get to school were more likely to have missed out on extracurricular activities because they could not get there or home (23% vs. 15% of youth who did not get to school by bus).

When asked about transportation in general, 63% of youth used public transit, which was lower than the provincial rate of 73%. Three percent of students (5% of males vs. 2% of females) had hitchhiked somewhere in the past month, which was similar to the rate across BC.

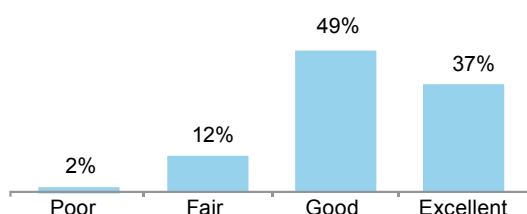
Thirty-one percent of Central Vancouver Island youth held some sort of driver's licence. Specifically, 19% had a learner's licence and 11% had a novice licence.



# Physical health

Most students (86%) rated their health as good or excellent, which was consistent with provincial findings and with local percentages in previous survey years. Males were less likely than females to rate their health as good (43% vs. 56%) and were more likely to rate it as excellent (44% vs. 30%).

Overall health ratings



## Health conditions & disabilities

Similar to the provincial picture, 28% of students (22% of males vs. 34% of females) had at least one health condition or disability. Females were more likely than males to report having a long term or chronic condition (12% vs. 9%) or a mental or emotional health condition (19% vs. 5%).

The percentage of students reporting a mental or emotional health condition was higher when students were asked about specific conditions such as Depression or Anxiety Disorder (see page 17).

Among youth with a health condition or disability, 39% of males and 50% of females had a condition that sometimes prevented them from doing things their peers could do, while 4% had a condition that always prevented them from participating in these activities.

### Youth with a health condition or disability

Mental or emotional health condition	12%
Long term or chronic condition (e.g., diabetes or asthma)	10%
Learning disability	5%
Behavioural condition	4%
Sensory disability	4%
Allergies severe enough to require an epinephrine injection	2%
Physical disability	1%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.



I am concerned with risk of Diabetes due to family background.”

## Foregone medical care

In the past year, 9% of students (6% of males vs. 11% of females) did not get medical help when they thought they needed it. This was similar to the provincial picture but reflected a local decrease from five years previous (15% in 2008).

Among students who did not access needed medical care, the most common reason for this was thinking or hoping the problem would go away. Other common reasons included not wanting their parents to know, being too busy to go, and being afraid of what the doctor would say or do.

Females were twice as likely as males to miss out on needed medical care because they did not want their parents to know.

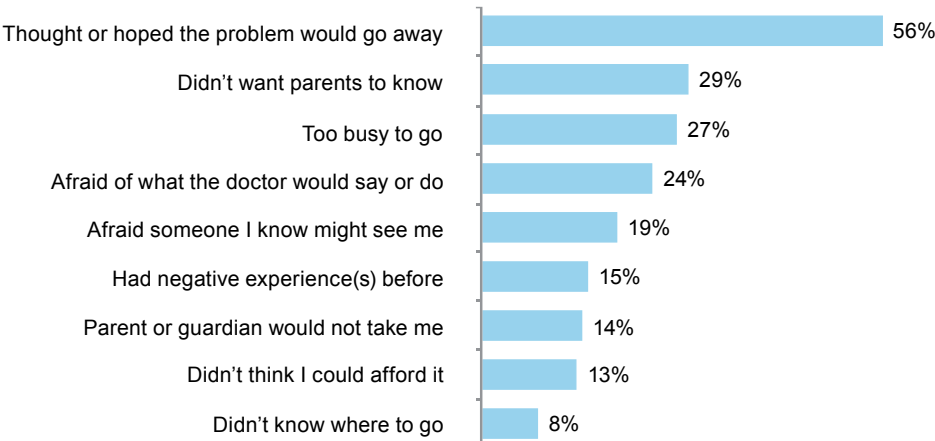
Compared to five years previous, students were more likely to miss out on needed medical help because they were afraid of being seen (19% in 2013 vs. 12% in 2008) and because they did not want their parents to know (29% vs. 14%).

## Dental visits

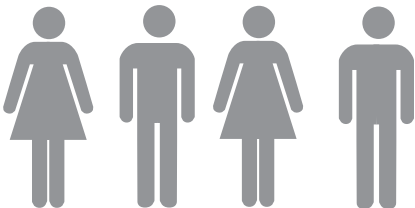
Similar to the provincial picture, 84% of local students had visited the dentist in the past 12 months, while 6% had last visited more than 24 months ago, and 1% had never been to the dentist.

For 9% of students, their last visit to the dentist had been for pain.

Most common reasons students missed out on needed medical help in the past year (among those who felt they needed help)



Note: Youth could choose more than one response.



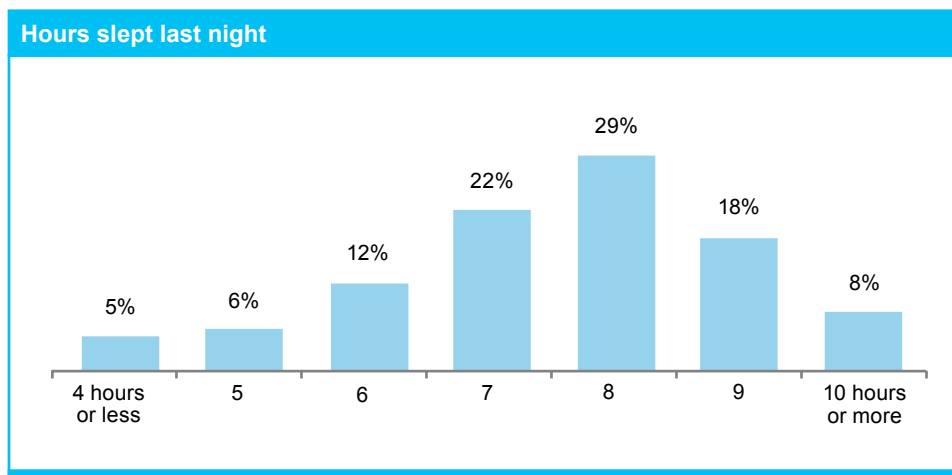
# Sleep

It is recommended that adolescents get between 8.5 and 9.25 hours of sleep each night. Comparable to youth across the province, 55% of students (59% of males vs. 52% of females) slept for eight or more hours on the night before taking the survey, while 5% slept for four hours or less.

Older students slept less than younger ones. For example, 39%\* of students who were 18 years old slept for eight or more hours on the night before taking the survey, compared to 82% of students age 12 and younger.

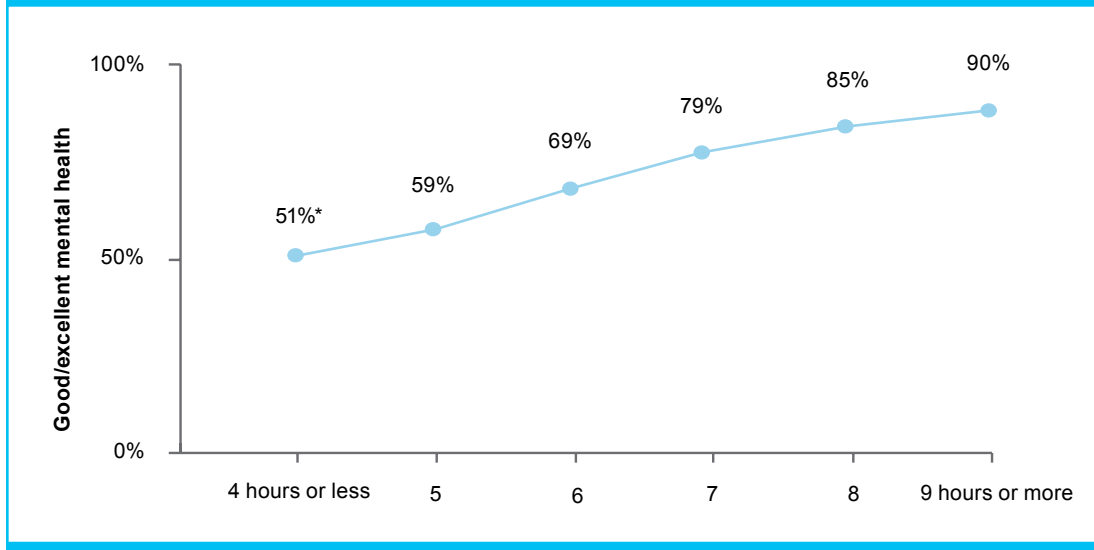
Reflecting the provincial picture, 78% of local students (75% of males vs. 81% of females) were online or on their phone after the time they were supposed to be asleep. Also, 38% of students (34% of males vs. 41% of females) were doing homework after their expected bedtime.

The more hours of sleep students got, the more likely they were to rate their mental health as good or excellent.





### Good/excellent mental health in relation to hours slept last night



Note: Not all differences were statistically significant.

\* The percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was relatively high but still within a releasable range.

Some students were at particular risk for not getting enough sleep. For example, 40% of students who had been physically or sexually abused slept eight or more hours the previous night, compared to 58% of students who had not experienced abuse. However, youth who had been abused who slept for at least eight hours were less likely to have self-harmed in the past year than those who slept fewer hours (32% vs. 47%).

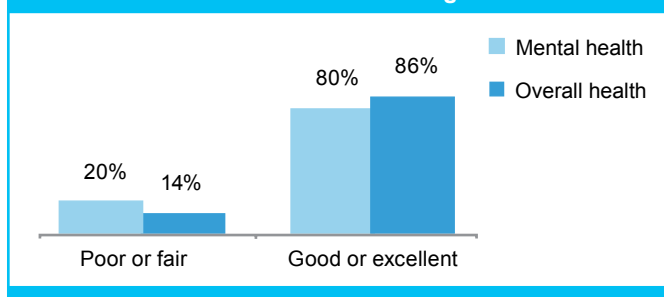


I don't have a bed time."

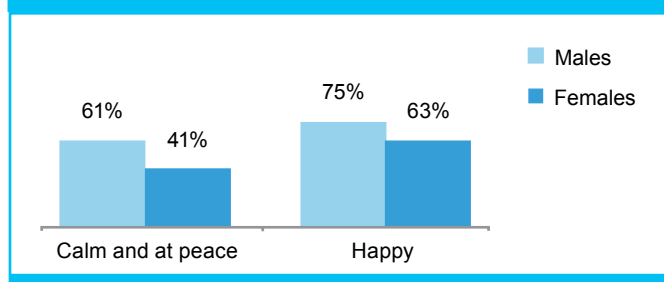
# Mental health

Most youth (80%) rated their mental health as good or excellent. Males were more likely than females to rate their mental health this way (85% vs. 75%), whereas females were more likely to rate it as fair or poor (25% vs. 15% of males). These findings were similar to those across the province.

**Mental health and overall health ratings**



**Students who felt calm and happy 'most of the time' or 'all the time' in the past month**



Also consistent with the provincial picture, students were less likely to rate their mental health as good or excellent than their overall health.

The majority of students felt good about themselves (89% of males vs. 72% of females) and felt they were as competent as most of their peers (91% of males vs. 82% of females).

Most students reported excelling in at least one area, such as sports, school, the arts, or relationships. As with self-confidence, males were more likely than females to indicate they were really good at something (83% vs. 73%).

Males were also more likely than females to feel happy and to feel calm and at peace most or all of the time in the past month.



I go through so much stress even without a stress disorder.”

## Mental health conditions

Students were asked about specific mental health conditions. Local students were more likely than those across BC to report having at least one condition (22% vs. 19%). As was the case provincially, females were more likely than males to have at least one condition (26% vs. 18%). They were also more likely to have multiple conditions (10% vs. 4% of males).

Youth most commonly reported having Depression (10%), Anxiety Disorder (9%), Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD; 6%), and/or an addiction to alcohol or other drugs (3%). Females were more likely than males to have Depression (14% vs. 6%) and Anxiety Disorder (16% vs. 3%). Males and females reported comparable rates of ADHD and substance use addictions, unlike across the province where these conditions were more common among males.

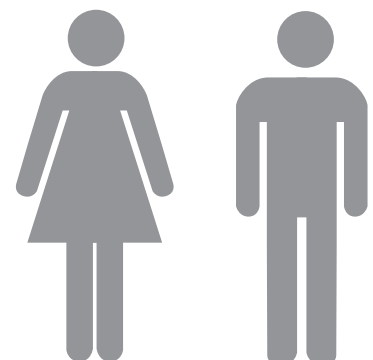
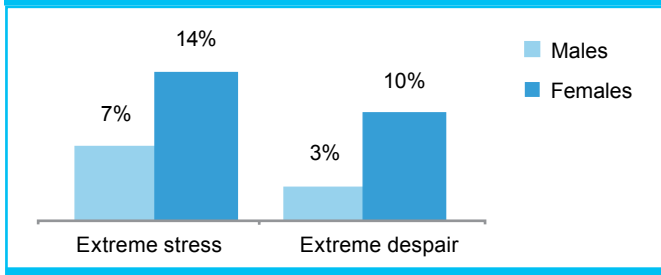
## Stress & despair

Most students (83%) reported feeling at least some stress in the past month. Reflecting the provincial picture, females were more likely than males to experience extreme stress that prevented them from functioning properly.

Students were also asked the extent to which they felt so sad, discouraged, or hopeless that they wondered if anything was worthwhile. Forty-seven percent reported feeling some level of despair in the past month, and 6% reported extreme levels. As was the case with extreme stress, females were more likely than males to report extreme despair.

Rates of extreme despair were similar to those across the province and to local rates over the past decade.

Students who experienced extreme stress and despair in the past month





Sometimes I stay up talking people out of suicide on the Internet. So far it's always worked, but I'm worried about what will happen (to me) if it doesn't, I don't think I could handle that."

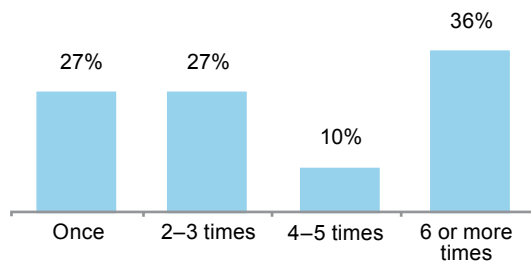
## Self-harm

Similar to the provincial picture, 7% of males and 22% of females reported cutting or injuring themselves on purpose without trying to kill themselves in the past year. Among students who self-harmed, more than a third (36%) did so six or more times in the past year.

## Suicide

Reflecting the provincial picture, females were more likely than males to have seriously thought about killing themselves in the past year, and to have attempted suicide.

Number of times students self-harmed  
(among those who self-harmed in the past year)



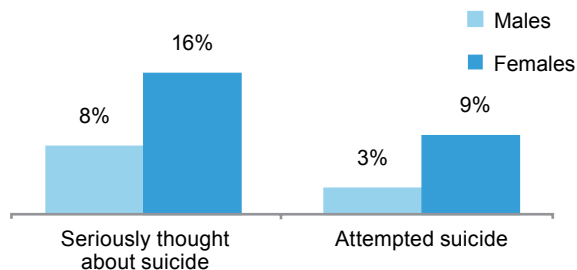
Fewer local males seriously considered suicide in 2013 than five and ten years previously (e.g., 8% in 2013 vs. 12% in 2008). The rate among females was comparable to that in 2008, but lower than a decade ago (16% seriously considered suicide in 2013 vs. 20% in 2003).

For both males and females, the percentage who actually attempted suicide in 2013 was comparable to 2008 and 2003.

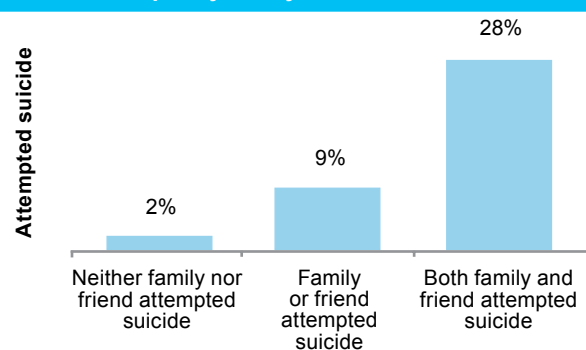
A known risk factor for attempting suicide is having a family member or close friend attempt or die by suicide. Fifteen percent of students reported that a family member had tried to kill themselves at some point (6% in the past year), and 27% reported that a close friend had attempted suicide (18% in the past year).

Students who indicated that both a friend and a family member had attempted suicide were more likely to have attempted suicide themselves in the past year, compared to students who had either a friend or family member attempt suicide or to students who had neither experience.

Suicide ideation and attempts in the past year



Youth who attempted suicide in the past year in relation to suicide attempts by family or close friends



## Hope for the future

Students were asked where they saw themselves in five years. Most envisioned positive circumstances, including having a job or career, being in school, having a home of their own, having a family, and/or being engaged in their community.

A small minority of youth saw negative circumstances in their future, including being dead (2%), in prison (1%), or homeless (1%). Thirteen percent indicated not knowing what the future held for them.

Local students were more likely than their peers across the province to see themselves having a home of their own in five years (30% vs. 26%).

## Foregoing mental health services

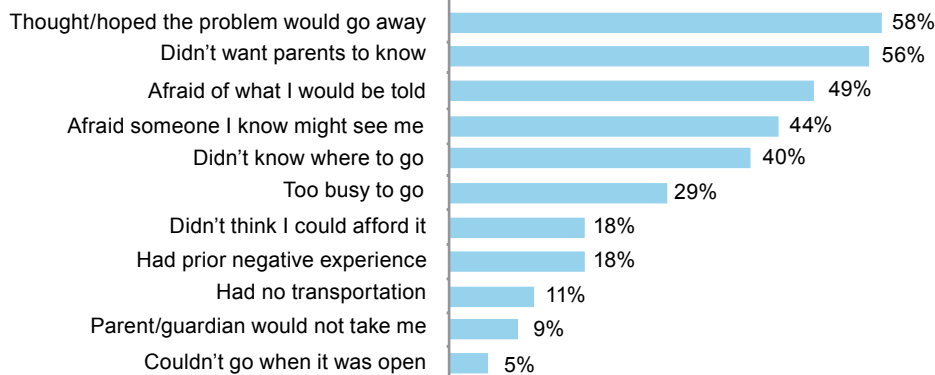
In the past year, 11% of students (6% of males vs. 16% of females) reported not accessing mental health services when they

thought they needed to. These rates were similar to those in the province as a whole and reflected a local decrease from five years previous (14% in 2008).

As was the case throughout BC, the most common reasons for local students not accessing needed mental health services included thinking or hoping the problem would go away, and not wanting their parents to know. Youth in this region were more likely than their peers across BC to report not accessing needed services due to fear that someone they know might see them (44% vs. 34%) and because they had a previous negative experience (18% vs. 12%).

Reflecting the provincial picture, local students in 2013 were more likely than five years earlier to report certain reasons for not accessing mental health services they felt they needed. These included not wanting their parents to know (56% in 2013 vs. 45% in 2008), feeling fearful that someone they know might see them (44% vs. 24%), and not knowing where to go (40% vs. 29%).

**Most common reasons for not accessing mental health services in the past year  
(among students who felt they needed services)**



# Injuries & injury prevention

In the past year, 33% of male and 26% of female students were injured seriously enough to require medical attention, which was similar to the provincial picture. The overall local rate of 29% reflected a decrease from 35% in 2008.

Over half of youth who were injured were hurt playing or training for sports or other recreational activities (53%). Also, 8% of injuries happened when youth were walking or running outside, 6% when riding a bicycle, and 6% when snowboarding or skiing. Seven percent of students who were injured were using a cellphone or portable electronic device at the time.

## Concussions

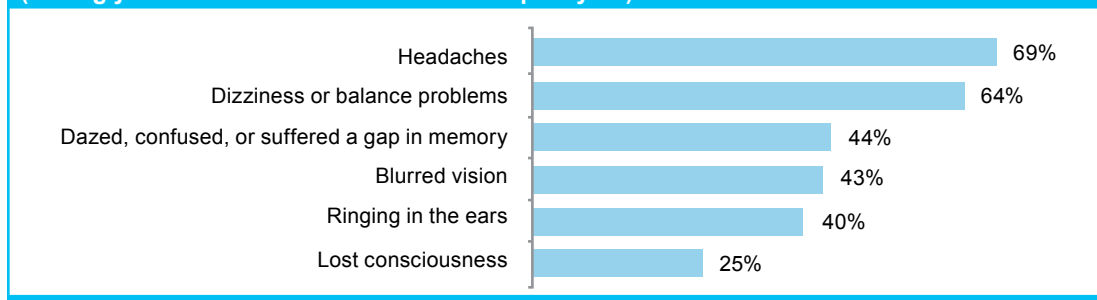
Nineteen percent of students had a concussion in the past year (23% of males vs. 15% of females). Fourteen percent had one concussion, while 3% had two, 1% had three, and 1% had four or more. The most common symptoms experienced were headaches and/or dizziness or balance problems.

Mirroring what was seen provincially, 17% of youth who had experienced a concussion in the past year had not accessed needed medical help.

## Def.

A **CONCUSSION** was defined in the survey as a head injury where youth lost consciousness, were dazed, confused, or suffered from a gap in their memory.

Concussion symptoms experienced  
(among youth who had a concussion in the past year)



Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

“

I broke my collarbone playing rugby.”

15%

of females and 11% of males had been in a vehicle with an impaired driver in the past month.

## Injury prevention

Seventy-eight percent of local youth reported always wearing a seat belt when riding in a motor vehicle. This percentage was higher than the provincial rate (74%) and reflected a local increase from previous survey years.

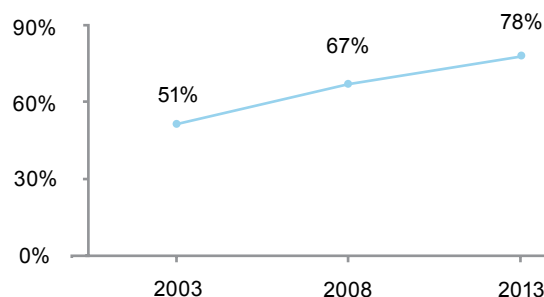
Youth were more likely to take injury prevention seriously in some activities than others. For example, 75% always wore a helmet when snowboarding or skiing, while 40% always wore one when riding a bike, and 30% always did so when using ice skates.

Wearing a helmet was linked to a lower risk of having a concussion or other serious injury. For example, 24% of youth who always wore a helmet when bicycling had been injured in the past year, compared to 34% of youth who never wore a helmet when cycling.

Five percent of students who had tried alcohol had ever driven a car after drinking, which was similar to the provincial rate and a decline from 12% in 2008.

It was more common for local youth to have driven after using marijuana, which 16% of marijuana users had ever done (and which 10% had done in the past month). However, this percentage reflected a decrease from 2008 when 23% of marijuana users had ever driven after using this substance.

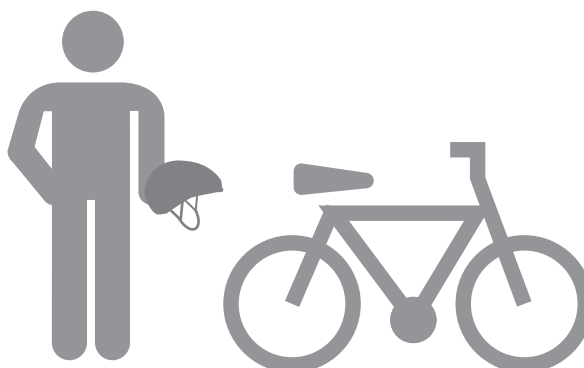
Always wore a seat belt



There was no local gender difference in ever having driven after using alcohol but males were more likely than females to have ever driven after using marijuana (23% vs. 8%; among those who had ever used marijuana).

Around a quarter of youth (26%\*) who had driven after using alcohol or marijuana in the past month did not have a driver's licence.

Twenty-eight percent of students had been a passenger in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking or using marijuana, and 13% had done so in the past month. Females were more likely than males to have ever been in a car with an impaired driver (32% vs. 24%),



# Nutrition

Ninety-five percent of youth reported eating fruit or vegetables at least once on the day before taking the survey, which was consistent with the provincial rate and an increase from 92% in 2008.

Canada's Food Guide recommends that males aged 14–18 should eat eight servings of fruit and vegetables daily and females should eat seven servings. Youth aged 13 and younger need six servings. However, 35% of students had fruit or vegetables only once or twice the previous day, which was similar to the provincial picture.

Males were more likely than females to have consumed fast food (43% vs. 33%), traditional foods from their background (27% vs. 16%), food grown or caught by them or their family (19% vs. 12%), pop or soda (45% vs. 28%), and energy drinks (9% vs. 4%).

When compared to their peers across the province, local students were less likely to have had traditional foods from their background (21% vs. 38% provincially) the previous day.

Youth who reported eating fruit or vegetables three or more times on the day before taking the survey were more likely to report good or excellent mental health (85% vs. 73% who ate them less often). They were also less likely to report feeling extreme despair in the past month (4% vs. 9%).

**What students ate and drank yesterday (one or more times)**

	2008	2013	Change from 2008
Fruit	81%	88%	↑
Vegetables or green salad	76%	82%	↑
Sweets (cookies, candy, chocolate, etc.)	63%	77%	↑
Fast food (pizza, hot dogs, fries, etc.)	47%	38%	↓
Traditional foods from youth's background	NA	21%	
Food grown or caught by youth or family	NA	16%	
Water	93%	96%	↑
Pop or soda	43%	36%	↓
Energy drinks	13%	6%	↓
Coffee or coffee-based beverages	30%	29%	--

Note: NA means that the question was not asked.

-- means that the percentage in 2008 was comparable to the rate in 2013.



There was a link between diet and exercise, as youth who had eaten three or more servings of fruit or vegetables the previous day were more likely to be engaging in physical activity. For example, they were more likely than their peers who had fewer servings to have taken part in weekly informal sports (e.g., hiking, cycling, skateboarding; 68% vs. 48%) and organized sports (e.g., team sports, swimming lessons; 65% vs. 43%).

Among local youth with government care experience, those who had three or more servings of fruit or vegetables the previous day were more likely than those who had fewer servings to rate their overall health as good or excellent.

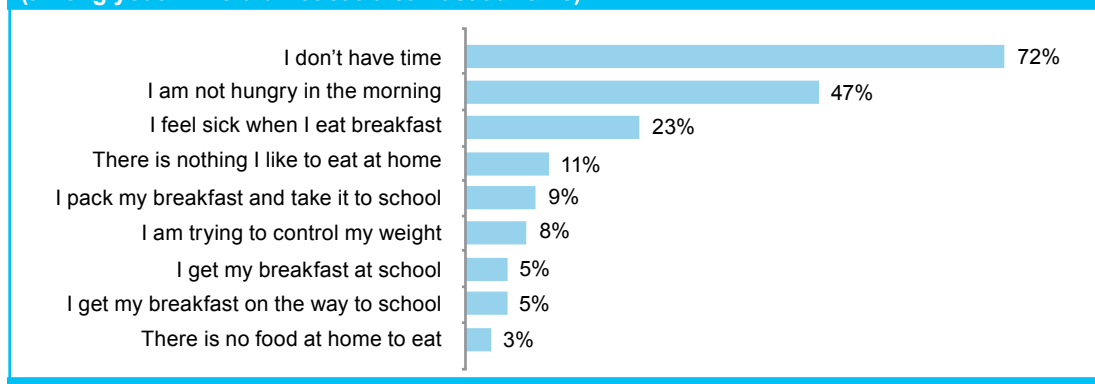
## Breakfast

Fifty-one percent of students (59% of males vs. 43% of females) reported always eating breakfast on school days. Local females were less likely than their provincial peers to report always eating breakfast on school days (48% of females across BC).

In 2013, males were more likely than five years previous to report always eating breakfast at home (59% in 2013 vs. 54% in 2008), but there was no change among females.

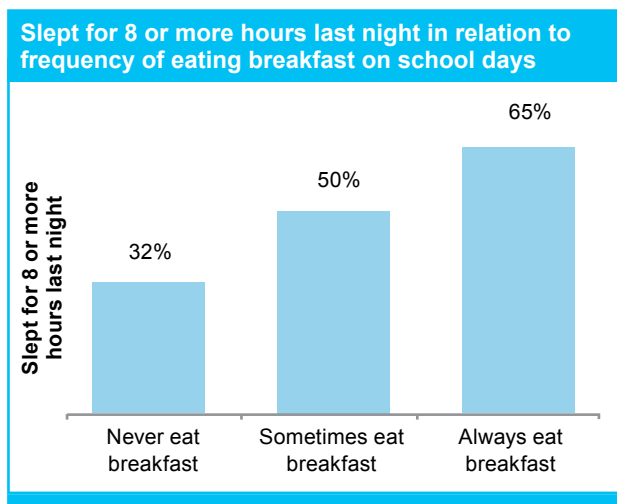
Among youth who did not eat breakfast at home, females were more likely than males to report not doing so because they were not hungry in the morning (51% vs. 41%), they felt sick when they ate breakfast (30% vs. 14%), they packed their breakfast and took it to school (11% vs. 6%), or they were trying to control their weight.

**Reasons for not eating breakfast at home  
(among youth who did not eat breakfast at home)**



Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

Youth who always ate breakfast on school days were more likely than those who ate breakfast less often to report good or excellent mental health (89% vs. 70%), better nutrition (such as eating fruit or vegetables three or more times yesterday; 69% vs. 50%), and sleeping for eight or more hours last night (65% vs. 45%).



## Going to bed hungry

Consistent with the provincial rates, 91% of youth never went to bed hungry because there was insufficient money for food at home. Eight percent went to bed hungry sometimes, and 2% went to bed hungry often or always.

Compared to five years previously, there was a decrease in the percentage of males who reported going to bed hungry often or always, from 4% in 2008 to 1% in 2013. There was no change over time for females.

Youth who indicated going to bed hungry at least sometimes were more likely than those who never went to bed hungry to also report not having any food at home to eat for breakfast.



## Def.

Youth who **WENT TO BED HUNGRY** refers to youth who went to bed hungry because there was not enough money for food at home.

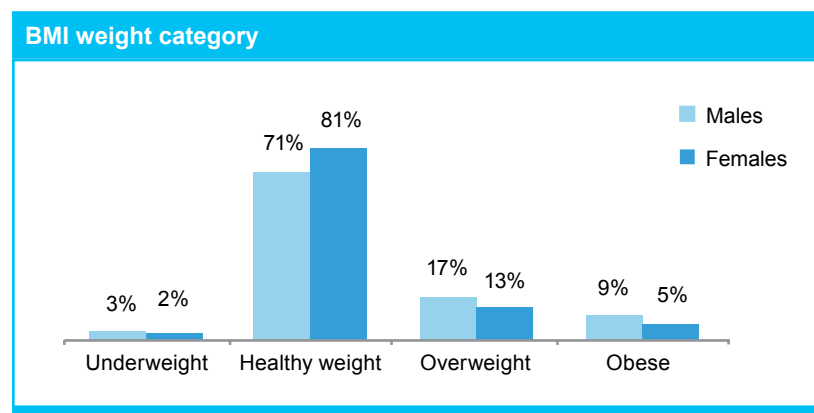
# Body weight & body image

## Body weight

Students' body mass index (BMI) was calculated from their self-reported height and weight measurements. According to their BMI, 76% of youth were a healthy weight for their age and gender, while 2% were underweight, 15% were overweight, and 7% were obese.

Percentages of youth in the various weight categories were similar to 2008 results and to the province as a whole, except that local students were less likely to be underweight (2% vs. 3% of students across BC).

Youth who ate three or more servings of fruit the day before taking the survey were less likely to be obese than youth who did not eat any fruit the previous day (5% vs. 11%). Similar relationships were found between eating three or more servings of vegetables and students' BMI.



Note: The difference between males and females who were underweight was not statistically significant.



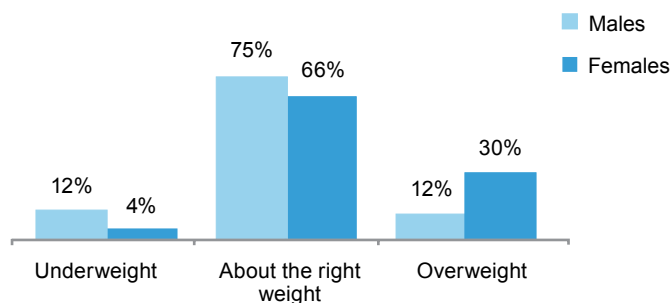
**21%** of healthy weight females thought they were overweight (vs. 3% of healthy weight males).

## Body image

Students were also asked how they saw themselves. Seventy-one percent felt they were about the right weight, whereas 8% thought they were underweight and the remaining 21% felt they were overweight.

While 36% of healthy weight males were trying to gain weight (vs. 3% of healthy weight females), 50% of healthy weight females were trying to lose weight (vs. 10% of healthy weight males).

### Body image



## Eating behaviours

Twenty-six percent of youth (19% of males vs. 34% of females) had binge eaten in the past year, and 8% (6% of males vs. 10% of females) had done so on at least a weekly basis. Nine percent of youth (5% of males vs. 12% of females) had vomited on purpose after eating (purged) in the past year, and 2% had done so weekly. These rates were consistent with those across the province.

Youth who reported binge eating in the past year had poorer mental health than their peers who did not binge eat. For example, students who binge ate on a weekly basis were less likely than their peers who binge ate less frequently or not at all to feel happy (52% vs. 76%) or calm (33% vs. 58%) most or all of the time in the past month, and were less likely to report good or excellent mental health (62% vs. 82%). Similar relationships were found between mental health and purging behaviour.



**I just don't feel comfortable with my body or anything."**

# Sexual behaviour

Students were asked if they had ever had oral sex or sex other than oral sex or masturbation. If they answered 'yes' to either of these questions, they answered some additional questions.

## Oral sex

Twenty-eight percent of students reported ever having oral sex, which was higher than the 2013 provincial rate (23%) but lower than the 2008 local rate (33%). Twenty-one percent of students had given oral sex (16% of males vs. 25% of females), while 24% of students had received it. The rate of ever having oral sex increased with age.

## CONDOM USE

Similar to youth across the province, 19% of male and female students who had oral sex reported that they or their partner had used a condom or other barrier the last time they had oral sex.

## Sex (excluding oral sex)

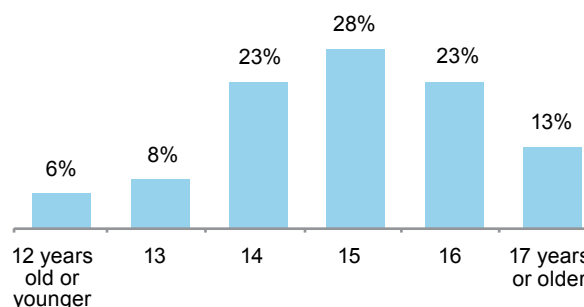
Twenty-six percent of local male and female students indicated ever having sex, other than oral sex or masturbation, which was higher than the 19% provincially. The local percentage was similar to that in previous survey years.

Consistent with the pattern for oral sex, older students were more likely than younger ones to have had other types of sex.

## AGE YOUTH FIRST HAD SEX

Youth who had ever had sex most commonly reported first doing so at age 15, which was similar to the provincial picture. Locally, 37% of students who ever had sex first did so before age 15, which was comparable to previous survey years.

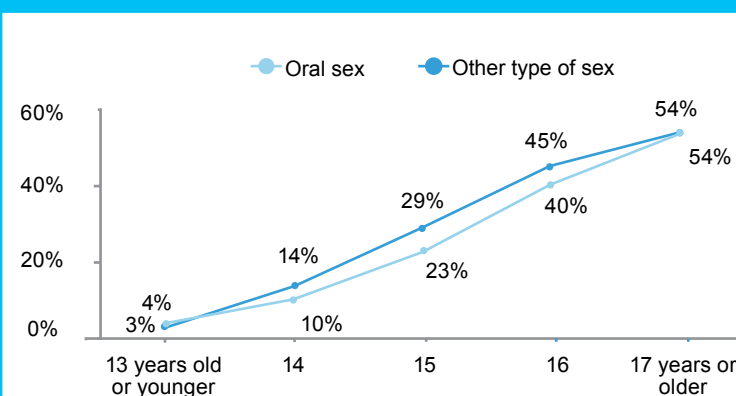
Age first had sex  
(among youth who had ever had sex)



Note: Sex refers to sex other than oral sex or masturbation.

Note: Percentages do not equal 100% due to rounding.

Ever had sex



Note: Sex refers to sex other than oral sex or masturbation.

Note: Not all differences were statistically significant.

## PARTNERS

Among students who had ever had sex, 9% had not had sex in the past year, 52% had one sexual partner during this time, 17% had two partners, and 22% had three or more partners. These rates were comparable to those found provincially.

Eighty-five percent of youth who had ever had sex reported having opposite gender partners exclusively in the past year.

## SUBSTANCE USE

Comparable to the province as a whole, 21% of students who ever had sex reported using alcohol or other substances before they had sex the last time. The percentage of males who engaged in this behaviour returned to 2003 levels, after increasing in 2008. The percentage of females reporting substance use before sex was lower in 2013 than a decade earlier.

## CONDOM USE

Similar to students across the province and to local results in 2003 and 2008, 69% of youth who ever had sex reported that they or their partner had used a condom or other latex barrier the last time they had sex.

### Efforts made to prevent pregnancy during last time students had sex (among students who indicated ever having sex)

Condoms	63%
Birth control pills	51%
Withdrawal	29%
Emergency contraception	4%
Depo Provera	3%
Other method prescribed by doctor or nurse (e.g., IUD, patch, ring)	NR
Not sure	3%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

NR: The percentage could not be released due to the risk of deductive disclosure.

Note: Sex refers to sex other than oral sex or masturbation.

## CONTRACEPTION

When students were asked what efforts they or their partner made to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex, they most commonly reported using condoms, birth control pills, and withdrawal (which is not a reliable method of birth control). Four percent of students indicated they did not try to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex. These rates were similar to those found provincially.

The percentage of students who used Depo Provera in 2013 was lower than in 2003 (6%) but was comparable to the rate in 2008.

For 5% of students who ever had sex, the last time they had sex was with a same sex partner.

## Pregnancy

Overall, 1% of youth reported ever being pregnant or causing a pregnancy. The rate was 5% among male and female students who had ever had sex. For females, this rate was similar to those in previous survey years. For males, the rate represented a decrease from 13% in 2008, and a return to the 2003 rate.

The percentage of local youth who reported a pregnancy history was comparable to that seen in the province as a whole.

## Sexually transmitted infections

Consistent with results over the past decade, 1% of all youth in the region indicated that they had been told by a doctor or nurse that they had a sexually transmitted infection (STI). The rate was 3% among youth who ever had sex (including oral sex), which was similar to the provincial rate.

# Tobacco use

Twenty-four percent of Central Vancouver Island youth had ever tried smoking tobacco, which was above the provincial rate of 21%. However, this percentage reflected a local reduction from 2008 (30%) and 2003 (35%).

Males were more likely than females to have ever smoked (27% vs. 22%), which was the reverse of the 2003 results when females were more likely to have smoked.

Local youth started smoking at a similar age to youth in the province overall. Among those who had ever tried smoking, 22% first did so at age 12 or younger, while 42% waited until they were 15 or older. More local youth waited until they were at least 15 years old before trying smoking than in 2008 (32%) or 2003 (18%).

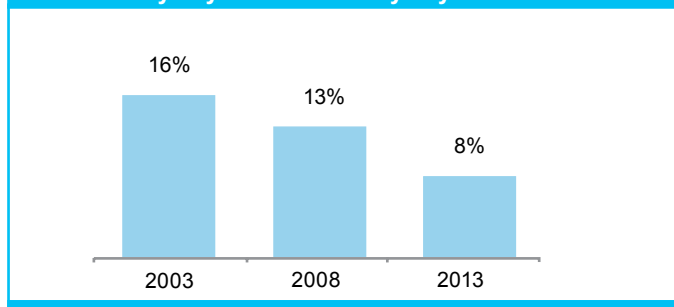
Youth used a variety of different tobacco products in the past month. Among those who had ever smoked, 46% had smoked cigarettes, 36% had smoked cigars or cigarillos (45% of males vs. 25% of females), 14% used chewing tobacco (24% of males vs. very few females), 11% had used a hoo-kah, and 9% used electronic cigarettes with nicotine.

Forty-nine percent of youth who had ever smoked reported smoking in the past month. This was similar to the provincial rate and the local rate in 2008, but above the local rate in 2003 (35%). Eight percent of youth who had ever smoked had smoked every day in the past month.

Among youth who had ever smoked, 22% had successfully quit in the past year, and 15% had tried to quit but had started again. These were both comparable to the provincial rates. In the past month, 4% of smokers had used a product to help them stop smoking.

Being exposed to smoking is considered a risk factor for starting to smoke. Twenty-four percent of youth were exposed to tobacco smoke inside their home or family vehicle at least sometimes (compared to 21% provincially). Eight percent experienced second-hand smoke almost every day or daily, which was lower than the rates in 2003 and 2008.

Exposed to second-hand smoke in home or family vehicle every day or almost every day



Youth most commonly first tried smoking at 15 years old.

# Alcohol, marijuana, & other drug use

## Alcohol

After remaining stable between 2003 and 2008, the percentage of local students who had tried alcohol decreased from 64% in 2008 to 53% in 2013. Youth in Central Vancouver Island were more likely to have tried alcohol than those across BC (45% provincially).

Delaying the onset of alcohol and marijuana use has been shown to reduce the risk of future substance dependence and other associated challenges. As a result, in 2010 the BC Ministry of Health Services and Ministry of Children and Family Development aimed to see a 10% reduction in the percentage of BC students who first use alcohol or marijuana before the age of 15. Among local youth who had tried alcohol, 67% had their first drink before turning 15 years old, which was a decrease from 75% in 2008.

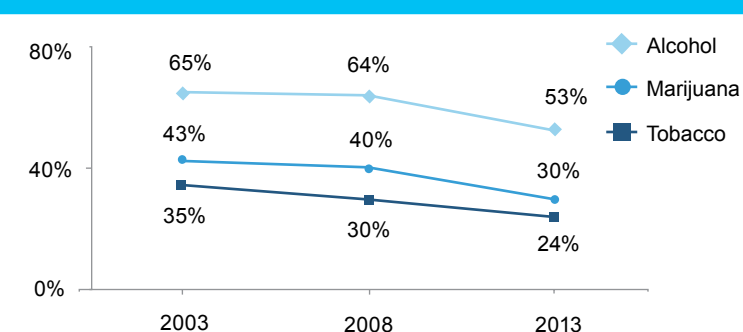
Local students who had tried alcohol were first drinking at a similar age to youth across the province.

Among youth who had tried alcohol, 40% of males and females reported having five or more drinks within a couple of hours on at least one occasion in the past month. This was similar to the provincial rate and reflected a local decrease from 48% in 2008.

Overall, 22% of youth in this region drank on the Saturday before completing the survey. Specifically, 16% had liquor, 13% drank beer (16% of males vs. 10% of females), 11% drank coolers (8% of males vs. 15% of females) and 3% had wine. Among youth who drank last Saturday, 65% mixed different types of alcohol (72% of males vs. 59% of females), with 27% having mixed three or four different types. Fifteen percent of youth who drank last Saturday mixed alcohol with energy drinks.

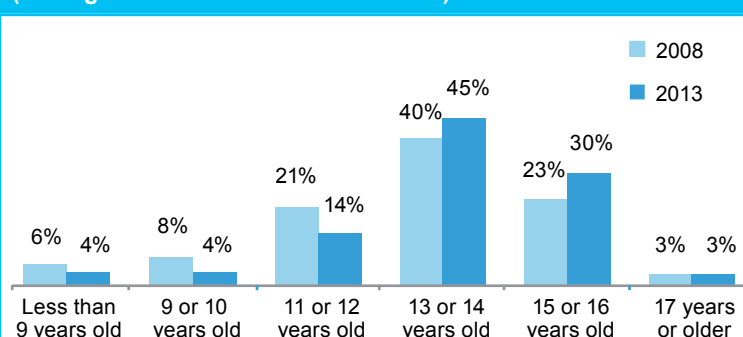
Among youth who drank last Saturday, 62% of females had four or more drinks and 74% of males had five or more drinks, which is defined as binge drinking.

Youth who had ever tried different substances



Note: The differences between 2003 and 2008 among youth who had tried alcohol and who had tried marijuana were not statistically significant.

Age first tried alcohol (among those who ever drank alcohol)





**10%** of youth used marijuana the previous Saturday.

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## Marijuana

Although local youth were more likely to have tried marijuana than was seen provincially (26% across BC), the percentage of local students who had tried marijuana decreased from 40% in 2008 to 30% in 2013.

Among those who had tried marijuana, 65% of students had first used it at age 14 or younger, which was higher than the provincial rate (59%).

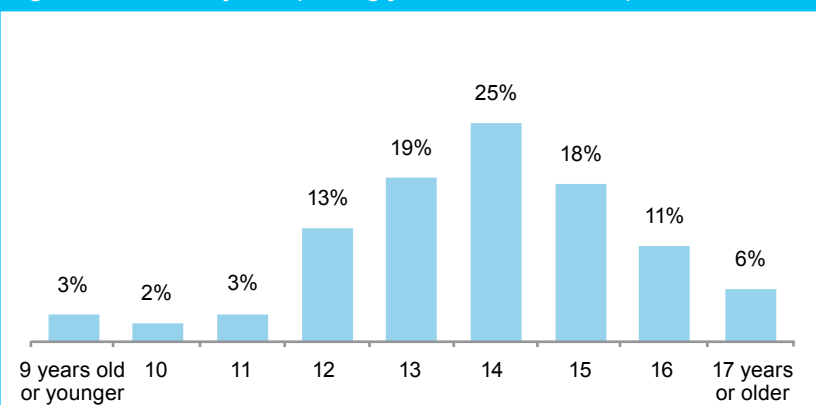
There was no difference between 2008 and 2013 in the age of first using marijuana, but youth were waiting longer to use marijuana than their peers a decade ago. In 2013, 35% of those who used marijuana first used it when they were 15 or older, compared to 25% in 2003.

Fifty-eight percent of youth who had tried marijuana reported using it in the past month, which was unchanged from 2008 but above the local rate a decade ago (52% in 2003). Over a quarter of students (27%) who had tried marijuana used it on six or more days in the past month (34% of males vs. 21% of females).

There was a decrease in the percentage of students who had used both alcohol and marijuana on the Saturday before taking the survey, from 13% in 2008 to 7% in 2013.

Reflecting the provincial pattern, local students who used marijuana most commonly got it from a youth outside their family (80%). Eighteen percent got it from an adult outside their family (21% of males vs. 14% of females), 7% from an adult inside their family, and 6% from another youth in their family.

Age first tried marijuana (among youth who ever used)



## Substances other than alcohol & marijuana

Youth had tried a variety of substances other than alcohol and marijuana. Males and females most commonly tried prescription pills without a doctor's consent (11%), although the use of these decreased from 2008 (16%). There was also a decrease in the use of mushrooms (7% in 2013 vs. 10% in 2008), hallucinogens (5% vs. 7%), ecstasy (5% vs. 7%), cocaine (3% vs. 5%), inhalants (2% vs. 5%), amphetamines (2% vs. 4%), and heroin (1% vs. 2%). There was no change locally between 2008 and 2013 in the use of crystal meth (1%) or steroids without a doctor's prescription (1%).

For the first time, the survey included questions about ketamine or GHB, which 1% of students had tried. There were no gender differences in ever using any of these substances, with the exception of heroin and steroids, which more males had tried than females.

The percentages of local students who had tried substances other than alcohol or marijuana were similar to those in the province overall.

## Consequences of substance use

Over half of youth (53%) who had used alcohol or other substances reported negative consequences in the past year.

Females were more likely than males to have done something they could not remember (43% vs. 36% of males), to have argued with family members (15% vs. 7%), to have had their school work or grades change because of their substance use (11% vs. 5%), or to have lost friends or broken up with a romantic partner (11% vs. 5%). Males were more likely than females to have damaged property (12% vs. 7%) or gotten in trouble with the police (10% vs. 5%).

In the past year, a total of 5% of youth were either told or felt that they needed help for their substance use. Specifically, 3% needed help for their alcohol use, 3% for their marijuana use, and 2% for their other drug use.

### Most common consequences of substance use in the past year (among youth who had used alcohol or other substances during that time)

Was told I did something I couldn't remember	40%
Passed out	27%
Got injured	15%
Argued with family members	11%
Damaged property	9%
Lost friends or broke up with a girlfriend or boyfriend	8%
School work or grades changed	8%
Had sex when I didn't want to	8%
Got in trouble with police	8%
Got into a physical fight	6%
Overdosed	2%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

## Reported reasons for using

For the first time, the survey asked students who had used alcohol or other drugs what their reasons for doing so were the last time they used. The most common reasons were wanting to have fun, because their friends were doing it, and wanting to experiment.

Females were more likely than males to have used substances because they wanted to have fun (71% vs. 61%), their friends were doing it (37% vs. 25%), to experiment (29% vs. 23%), because of stress (28% vs. 18%), or because they felt down or sad (24% vs. 13%).

### Most common reasons for using substances the last time (among youth who ever used alcohol or other drugs)

I wanted to have fun	66%
My friends were doing it	31%
I wanted to try it/experiment	26%
Because of stress	23%
I felt down or sad	18%
I felt like there was nothing else to do	10%
To manage physical pain	7%
I was pressured into doing it	4%
Because of an addiction	3%
I thought it would help me focus	3%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

# School

## School connectedness

School connectedness was measured using a scale which included students' feelings about school and their school community. Local students reported similar levels of school connectedness to students across the province.

Most students felt that they were treated fairly by school staff (74%), they got along with their teachers (71%), and their teachers cared about them (63%). In addition, 48% of students felt that school staff other than teachers cared about them.

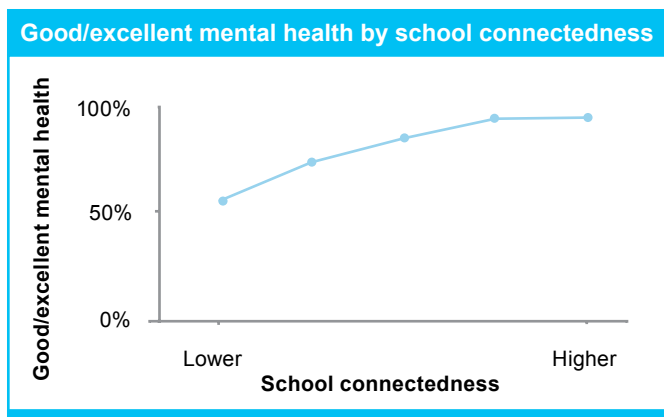
Sixty-one percent of students felt like they were a part of their school, which was similar to the rate in previous survey years. The percentage of students who felt happy at school increased over time, from 60% in 2003 to 67% in 2013.

School connectedness was associated with health benefits. For example, the more connected students felt to their school, the better their mental health ratings. Also, youth who had been teased, excluded, and/or assaulted in the past year were more likely to have only positive aspirations for the future if they felt more connected to their school. In addition, youth with a mental or emotional health condition were more likely to feel good about themselves if they felt more connected to their school.

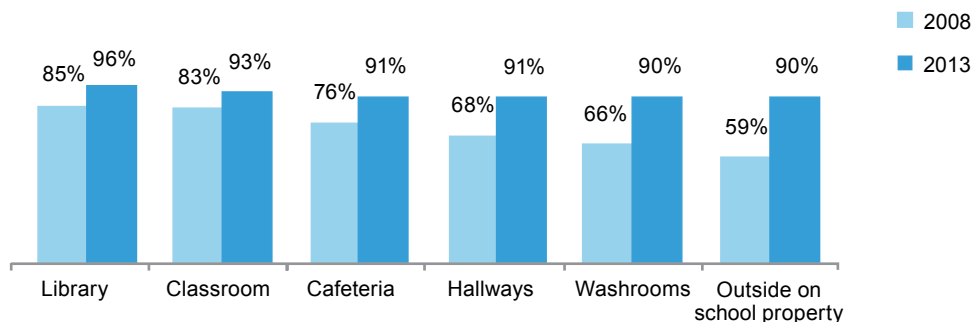
## School safety

Central Vancouver Island youth felt safer in every area of their school in 2013 than in previous survey years. Males and females were equally likely to feel safe in these areas.

In terms of overall feelings of safety at school, 78% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe at school, which was higher than the rate over the past decade (73% in 2003 and 2008). Youth who felt safe were less likely than those who did not feel safe to have missed school in the past month (64% vs. 82%) and were more likely to have post-secondary plans (86% vs. 69%). Youth who felt safe at school were also more likely to rate their overall health as good or excellent (90% vs. 65%\*) as well as their mental health (86% vs. 54%\*).



Locations where students always or usually felt safe at school



## Weapon carrying

Similar to the provincial picture, 6% of students carried a weapon, such as a knife or bat, to school in the past month. Males were more likely than females to have done so (9% vs. 2%).

Females were more likely than males to have missed school because of bullying (6% vs. 2%), whereas males and females were equally likely to have missed school because of skipping (27%), family responsibilities (17%), and work (4%).

## School absences

Overall, 67% of students (61% of males vs. 72% of females) had missed classes on at least one day in the past month. Illness was the most common reason for missing school, both locally (41% of males vs. 54% of females) and throughout the province, although local students were more likely than those across BC to have missed school for this reason (48% vs. 42%).

Local students were more likely than students across BC to have missed school due to family responsibilities (17% vs. 13%).

Older students were generally more likely than younger ones to have missed school due to work or skipping. For example, 19% of 14-year-olds skipped school in the past month, compared to 45%\* of 18-year-olds.

## Educational aspirations

Comparable to the provincial picture, a minority (1%) of students did not expect to graduate from high school. Four percent planned to finish high school but not pursue post-secondary education (compared to 8% in 2003 and 10% in 2008), 7% (8% of males vs. 6% of females) had not thought about their school plans, and 5% (6% of males vs. 4% of females) did not know what their school plans were, which was lower than in previous survey years (18% in 2003).

The majority of youth (83%) anticipated continuing their education beyond high school, such as through university, college, or trade school (compared to 86% across BC). As was found across the province, males were less likely than females to have post-secondary plans (80% vs. 87%).

Students who had been physically assaulted by another youth in the past year were more likely than those who had not been assaulted to have plans that did not extend beyond high school (15% vs. 4%).

Students who were doing weekly volunteer work in their community were more likely to anticipate continuing their education beyond high school (91% vs. 80% of students who did not volunteer).



# Bullying & discrimination

## In-person bullying

In this section, findings were similar to the provincial results unless noted.

Students were asked about a range of bullying experiences they may have had in the past year, either as the perpetrator or victim. Youth were asked specifically about their bullying experiences with other youth at school or on the way to or from school. (Cyberbullying is discussed on page 46 in the section about technology use.)

### TEASING

Thirty-eight percent of students (32% of males vs. 44% of females) had been teased at least once in the past year to the point where they felt bad or extremely uncomfortable. The percentage of local females who had been teased was higher than in previous survey years (36% in 2008 and 38% in 2003), whereas the rate for males was unchanged over time.

Thirteen percent of local students (10% of males vs. 15% of females) experienced teasing on three or more occasions in the past year.

### SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Twenty-eight percent of males and 43% of females (36% overall) reported being socially excluded at least once in the past year, and 8% of males and 14% of females were excluded three or more times. The percentage of local youth who experienced social exclusion was higher than in previous survey years (31% in 2003).

## ASSAULT

In the past year, 7% of students (9% of males vs. 6% of females) reported being physically attacked or assaulted at least once, and 1% had this experience three or more times. The percentage of local males who had been assaulted decreased from 14% in 2003 and 2008, whereas there was no change over time among females.

## Impacts of bullying

Students who had been the victim of a particular type of bullying were more likely to perpetrate that same type of bullying. For example, 22% of students who had been teased in the past year reported teasing others during this same time frame, compared to 5% who had not been teased. Similarly, students who had been excluded themselves were more likely to exclude others (25% vs. 7% who had not been excluded), and students who had been physically attacked or assaulted were more likely to assault others (24% vs. 1% of those who had not been assaulted).

The more types of bullying youth experienced, the more likely they were to also bully others. For example, 48%\* of youth who had been teased, excluded, and assaulted had bullied others, compared to 25% of youth who had experienced one of these forms of victimization, and 9% of youth who had not been bullied.



**Bullying needs to stop, and people should not judge. Respect others.”**

Seven percent of youth (5% of males vs. 9% of females) reported that they had not participated in extracurricular activities (e.g., sports, dance, art, or clubs) because they were worried about being bullied.

Further, youth who had been bullied were more likely than their peers without this experience to report not participating in extracurricular activities. For example, 23% of youth who had been assaulted in the past year reported not participating in extracurricular activities, compared to 5% of youth who had not been assaulted. Similar patterns were seen for youth who had been cyberbullied (19% missed out on activities vs. 4% who had not been cyberbullied), socially excluded (14% vs. 2%), and teased (14% vs. 2%).

## Perpetrators

In the past year, 12% of local students (14% of males vs. 9% of females) reported that they had teased another youth, while 13% had socially excluded a peer, and 3% had physically attacked or assaulted another youth (4% of males vs. 2% of females).

## Discrimination

Youth identified a number of different discrimination experiences. Females were more likely than males to report being discriminated against because of their physical appearance (26% vs. 16%), being seen as different (18% vs. 12%), their age (11% vs. 7%), and their gender (10% vs. 3%).

Compared to students across BC, youth in Central Vancouver Island were less likely to report experiencing discrimination because of their race, ethnicity, or skin colour (8% vs. 11% provincially) but were more likely to experience discrimination because of their income or their family's income (7% vs. 5% provincially).

### Perceived reasons for being discriminated against in the past year

Physical appearance	21%
Being seen as different	15%
Age	9%
Race, ethnicity, or skin colour	8%
Income or family income	7%
Gender/sex	6%
Sexual orientation (being or thought to be gay or lesbian)	5%
A disability	3%



# Physical abuse, sexual abuse, & sexual harassment

## Physical abuse

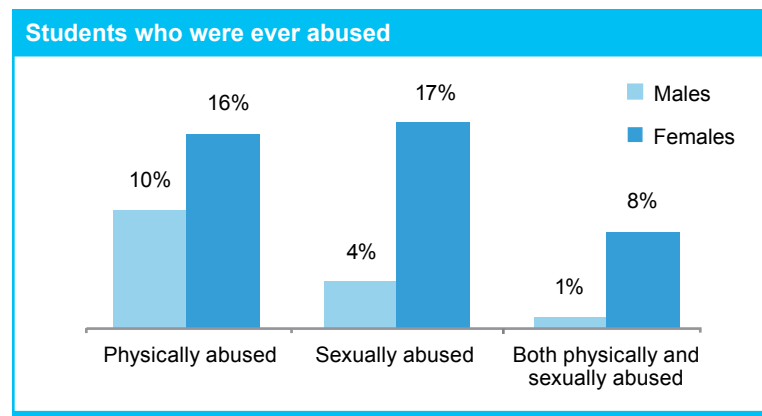
Consistent with the province, 13% of students in Central Vancouver Island indicated having been physically abused at some point in their life. This reflected a decrease for males, from 17% in 2008 to 10% in 2013 but was unchanged for females at 16%.

## Sexual abuse

When youth were asked specifically if they had ever been sexually abused, 7% of students (2% of males vs. 13% of females) recognized they had experienced this type of abuse. Youth were also asked about other forms of sexual abuse they might not have recognized as abuse. For example, 5% (2% of males vs. 9% of females) were forced into sexual activity against their will by another youth, and 1% by an adult (more females than males). Also, 2% were the younger of an illegal age pairing the first time they had sex.

When all these forms of sexual abuse were considered, a total of 10% of students had been sexually abused. Local females were more likely than females across BC to have been sexually abused (17% vs. 13% provincially), whereas there was no difference among males (4% locally).

The percentage of males who had been sexually abused was lower in 2013 than five years previous (7% in 2008) and similar to the percentage in 2003. The percentage among females was unchanged over survey years.



Note: Sexual abuse included being forced into sexual activity by another youth or adult, or being the younger of an illegal age pairing the first time they had sex.

## Females were more likely than males to have experienced verbal or physical sexual harassment in the past year.

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### Sexual harassment

In this section, findings were similar to the provincial results unless noted.

Thirty-one percent of males experienced verbal sexual harassment in the past year (including 11% who had this experience three or more times). This percentage was a local decrease from previous years (36% in 2003). Fifty-two percent of females had experienced verbal sexual harassment (including 19% who had been harassed three or more times). This percentage was above the provincial rate (46%) but a local decrease from 59% in 2008 and a return to the 2003 level.

The percentage of males who were physically sexually harassed in the past year decreased to 11% from 18% in 2003. The percentage of females who were physically sexually harassed also declined from 39% in 2003 to 31% in 2013, but remained above the provincial rate of 26%.

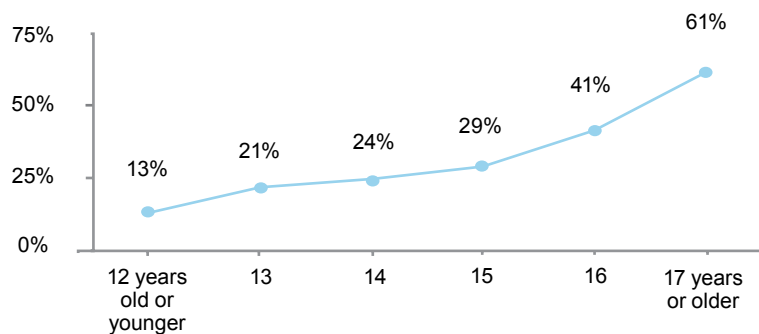


# Employment

A total of 35% of students worked at a paid job during the school year, which was higher than the provincial rate (29%). The percentage of local students who worked was lower than in 2003 (41%) and 2008 (49%).

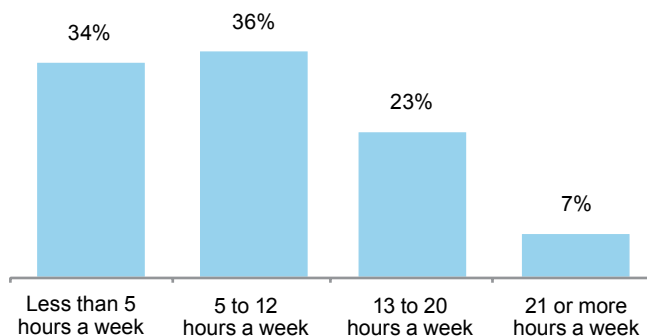
Seven percent of employed students worked 21 or more hours each week, which reflected the provincial picture.

Students who worked at a paid job during the school year



Note: Not all age differences were statistically significant.

Hours spent working at a paid job (among youth who were employed)



“I don’t work at any restaurant, store, etc. but I babysit.”

# Physical activity, sports, & leisure

## Physical activity

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that youth aged 12 to 17 do an hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. Similar to the provincial picture, 18% of students in this region (24% of males vs. 12% of females) met these guidelines, while 7% of students did not exercise at all during the past week.

Younger students were generally more likely than older ones to have met the physical activity guidelines. For example, 29% of students aged 12 or younger had exercised for an hour daily in the past week, compared to 12% of students aged 17.

Canadian Guidelines recommend that individuals aged 18 and older take part in 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each week. Most Central Vancouver Island students aged 18 and older (59%\*) met these recommendations by participating in 60 minutes of exercise on at least three days in the past week. This percentage was similar to the provincial rate.

Physical activity was associated with better health. For example, those who exercised daily during the past week were more likely to have slept for eight or more hours the night before taking the survey (63% vs. 53% of youth who exercised on fewer days) and to rate their overall health as good or excellent (94% vs. 86%).



86%

of students who played weekly organized sports reported good or excellent mental health, compared to 72% who never participated.

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## Sports

In the past year, 60% of local students (67% of males vs. 52% of females), took part in informal sports on a weekly basis (such as road hockey, hiking, or skateboarding). This percentage was lower than in previous survey years (73% in 2003).

Eighteen percent of students (7% of males vs. 28% of females) took part in yoga, dance, or exercise classes on a weekly basis, which was also lower than the percentage a decade ago (22% in 2003).

Comparable to previous survey years, 56% of youth participated weekly in organized sports. Older students were less likely than younger ones to play organized sports on a weekly basis.

Among youth aged 16 and younger, males and females were equally likely to take part in weekly organized sports. However, among youth aged 17 and older, males were more likely than females to take part on a weekly basis (48% vs. 37%).

There were health benefits to being involved in sports and exercise classes. For example, youth who took part in organized sports on a weekly basis were more likely than those who did not take part to have slept for eight or more hours the previous night (61% vs. 45%). This pattern was also found for informal sports (60% vs. 48% of youth who did not take part in informal sports).

Among youth who had been physically or sexually abused, those who took part in informal sports on a weekly basis were more likely to report good or excellent overall health (83% vs. 57%\* of those who did not participate in informal sports).



I love life and sports.”

## Barriers to participation

Students were asked about the reasons they might not have participated in sports and other activities in the past year. The most common reason was being too busy, although not being able to afford to participate was a reality for more than 1 in 10 males and for 2 in 10 females.

## 2010 Winter Olympics

Three years after the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, 11% of students (14% of males vs. 8% of females) reported that they were more physically active as a result of the Games, which was similar to the rate across the province. However, Central Vancouver Island students were less likely than their peers throughout BC to feel that they had more sports opportunities because of the Games (5% vs. 6% provincially).



## Gambling

While the legal gambling age in BC is 19, 12% of students (18% of males vs. 6% of females) had gambled in the past 12 months and the majority of these youth were aged 18 and under. This percentage was similar to the provincial rate but represented a local decrease from 52% in 2003 and 40% in 2008.

Four percent of students (6% of males vs. 1% of females) gambled more than once a month in the past year. This percentage was similar to that seen in 2008 but lower than the rate a decade ago (6% in 2003).

### Barriers to participation in activities

	Males	Females
Too busy	35%	50%
Couldn't afford to	14%	20%
Couldn't get there or home	17%	18%
Activity wasn't available in community	15%	15%
Worried about being bullied	5%	9%

Note: The difference between males and females who could not participate in activities because they couldn't get there or home was not statistically significant.



**I feel like there is not enough support for families without a lot of money. I have to quit my sport because we don't have enough money."**

# Technology use

Similar to the provincial rate, 90% of youth (86% of males vs. 93% of females) owned a cellphone or other portable electronic communication device. The majority (98%) had used their device on the previous school day.

Youth who had a phone most commonly used it for communicating with friends, communicating with parents, playing games/entertainment/music, chatting online or social networking, and for finding information.

Females were more likely than males to use their cellphone to communicate with friends and with parents, and to chat online or social network, whereas males were more likely than females to use their phone to engage in sexting (17% vs. 7%).

Seventy-eight percent of students (75% of males vs. 81% of females) were online or on their phone after they were supposed to be asleep. The most common activities included using a phone to talk or text (59%), surfing the Internet (56%), and chatting online or social networking (54%).

Used cellphone to...	Did this on last school day	When activity took place		
		Before school	During school	After school
Communicate with friends	88%	44%	66%	67%
Communicate with parent(s)	81%	20%	48%	58%
Play games/entertainment/music	80%	34%	48%	63%
Chat online or social networking	71%	32%	38%	58%
Find information	68%	17%	51%	42%
Sexting	12%	2%	3%	10%
Communicate with teachers	8%	1%	5%	4%
Bully others	2%	NR	1%	1%

Note: Sexting is the sending of explicit photographs or messages via cellphone or other similar device.

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

NR: The percentage could not be released due to the risk of deductive disclosure.

## Def.

**CELLPHONE** refers to a cellphone, smart phone, or similar portable electronic communication device.

**7%** of students had cyberbullied someone in the past year.

Ten percent of students reported that they did not have a cellphone or similar device. There were some differences between these students and those who had a phone. For example, students without a cellphone were more likely than their peers with a cellphone to have slept eight or more hours the previous night (67% vs. 54% with a phone). However, those with a cellphone were more likely than those without a phone to report having an adult outside their family they felt comfortable talking to (35% vs. 25% without a phone) and to have approached a friend for help in the past year (71% vs. 54%).

#### Technology use after students were expected to go to sleep

	Males	Females
Surfing the Internet	56%	55%
Using a phone to chat or text	51%	67%
Chatting online or social networking	49%	60%
Online gaming	40%	17%

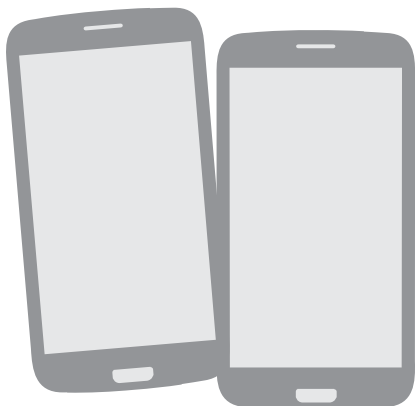
Note: The difference between males and females who surfed the Internet after they were expected to go to sleep was not statistically significant.

## Online safety

Seventeen percent of students reported that they had been cyberbullied in the past year, which was a decrease from 20% in 2008.

Females were twice as likely as males to have been cyberbullied in the past year (22% vs. 11%). They were also twice as likely to have met someone through the internet who made them feel unsafe (20% vs. 9% of males).

Students who had been cyberbullied were more likely to have missed out on extracurricular activities because they were worried about being bullied (19% vs. 4% who had not been cyberbullied).





# Youth engagement

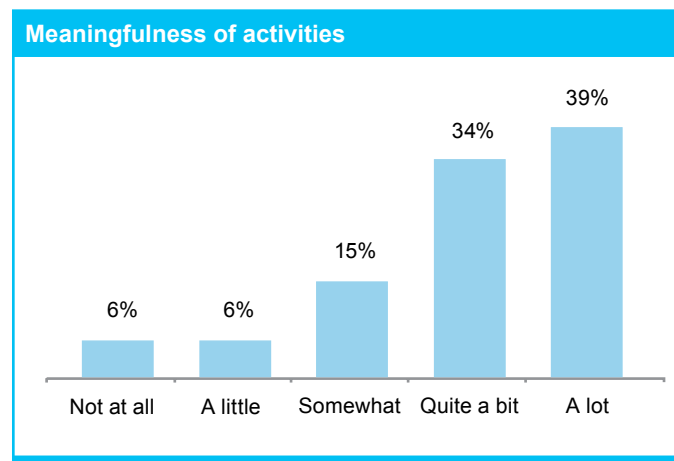
Students were asked about their level of engagement in the activities they took part in. Specifically, they were asked how meaningful they felt their activities were and how much they felt their ideas were listened to and valued within these activities.

Most students (73%) reported that the activities they were involved in were at least quite a bit meaningful to them. This percentage was similar to the provincial rate and higher than the local rate five years previous (69% in 2008).

When asked if they felt that their ideas were listened to and acted upon in these activities, 42% of students (46% of males vs. 38% of females) felt that they were to a significant extent. This percentage was also similar to the provincial rate but reflected a local decrease from 49% in 2008.

There were positive associations for youth who felt valued within their activities. For example, students who felt their ideas were listened to at least quite a bit were more likely to rate their overall health as good or excellent (93% vs. 77% of those who did not feel listened to as much).

Among youth who had been bullied in the past year, those who felt their activities were meaningful were more likely than those who did not feel this way to report feeling good about themselves (78% vs. 49%\*) and to rate their mental health as good or excellent (76% vs. 59%).



**I feel alone and like I'm not doing enough outside of school. I wish it was easy to find groups to have fun with and do activities. They should make this information available at school."**

# Family relationships

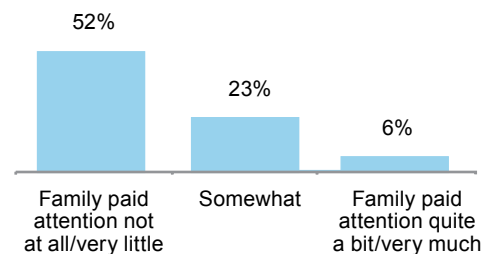
The survey asked youth about their sense of connectedness to their family. Similar to the provincial picture, most students felt their family had fun together (68%), understood them (61%), and paid attention to them (75%). Males were more likely than females to report feeling that their family understood them (66% vs. 57%) and paid attention to them (78% vs. 72%).

Sixteen percent of youth felt that their family did not understand them, while 10% felt their family did not have fun together, and 8% felt their family did not pay attention to them.

There was a positive association between family relationships and injury prevention. For example, students who felt that their family understood them were less likely than those who did not feel this way to have ever been a passenger in a vehicle with someone who had been drinking alcohol (15% vs. 35%) or using marijuana (13% vs. 34%).

Positive family relationships were associated with better mental health. For example, students who felt that their family paid attention to them were less likely than those who did not feel this way to have seriously considered suicide in the past year. They were also more likely to rate their mental health as good or excellent (88% vs. 44%) and to feel good about themselves (88% vs. 35%) and their abilities (92% vs. 63%).

**Suicide ideation in the past year in relation to how much students felt their family paid attention to them**



## Def.

**FAMILY CONNECTEDNESS** included students feeling that members of their family paid attention to them, had fun together, and understood them. ➔

Among youth with a mental or emotional health condition, those with higher levels of family connectedness were more likely than those with lower levels to report only positive future aspirations, such as having a job, attending school, or being involved in their community.

Eighty percent of males and 73% of females indicated that there was an adult in their family they could turn to if they were having a serious problem. Students in Central Vancouver Island were more likely than those across BC to feel this way (76% vs. 73%). Students who had such an adult in their lives were less likely to miss out on needed mental health services (7% vs. 25% of students who did not feel they could turn to an adult relative).

## Parental monitoring

Consistent with students across BC, 79% of local students reported that their parents always or mostly knew what they were doing in their free time. Nine percent of youth reported that their parents never or rarely knew what they were doing.

Students whose parents were aware of what they were doing in their free time were less likely to be texting or chatting on their phone after they were expected to be asleep (58% vs. 64% whose parents were not monitoring their spare time). They were also more likely to have slept for eight or more hours on the night before taking the survey (59% vs. 26%).

Similar to the provincial picture, 75% of local youth (78% of males vs. 71% of females) ate an evening meal with their parents most or all of the time in the past month. These youth were more likely to report consuming fruit or vegetables three or more times the previous day (63% vs. 41% of those who never or rarely ate with their parents). They were also less likely to have seriously considered suicide (9% vs. 33%) or to have self-harmed (10% vs. 36%) in the past year.



# Supportive & caring adults outside the family

## Adult to turn to for support

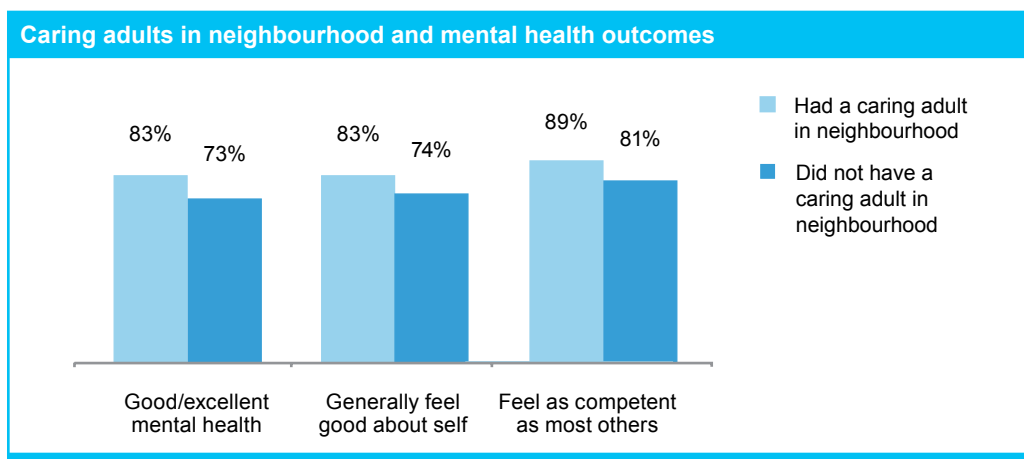
A third of local youth (30% of males vs. 37% of females) felt they had an adult outside their family they could turn to if faced with a problem. This was comparable to the picture across BC.

Students who could identify a supportive adult outside of their family were more likely to feel like a part of their community (43% vs. 34% without this support) and to have post-secondary plans (88% vs. 82%). Among youth who had been bullied, those who had an adult outside their family to talk to were more likely than those without this support to have only positive aspirations for the future (93% vs. 86%).

## Local adult who cares

Sixty-six percent of local students (61% of males vs. 71% of females) reported having an adult in their neighbourhood or community (beyond their school or family) who cared about them. Local females were more likely than females across BC to feel this way (63% provincially), whereas the percentage among local males was comparable to that throughout BC.

Students with an adult in their community who cared about them were more likely to feel that the activities they engaged in were meaningful (78% vs. 63% who could not identify a local adult who cared about them) and to feel that their ideas were listened to and acted upon (48% vs. 31%).



**Feeling cared about by an adult outside the family was associated with positive mental health.**

# Help seeking

When students needed help, they most commonly approached friends (61% of males vs. 76% of females) and family members (66% vs. 72%). This was similar to students throughout the province, although local students were less likely to seek the help of a friend (69% vs. 73% provincially). Students also sought support from a variety of professionals, most commonly teachers, school counsellors, sports coaches, and doctors.

Females were more likely than males to have sought help from a school counsellor (29% vs. 22%), mental health counsellor (9% vs. 5%), and doctor (27% vs. 20%), while males were more likely than females to have sought help from a sports coach (27% vs. 22%).

The majority of male and female students found the people they approached for support to be helpful, although some vulnerable groups were less likely to feel this way. For example, youth who had been physically or sexually abused who asked a school counsellor for help were less likely than their peers who had not been abused to have found a school counsellor helpful (77% vs. 88%).



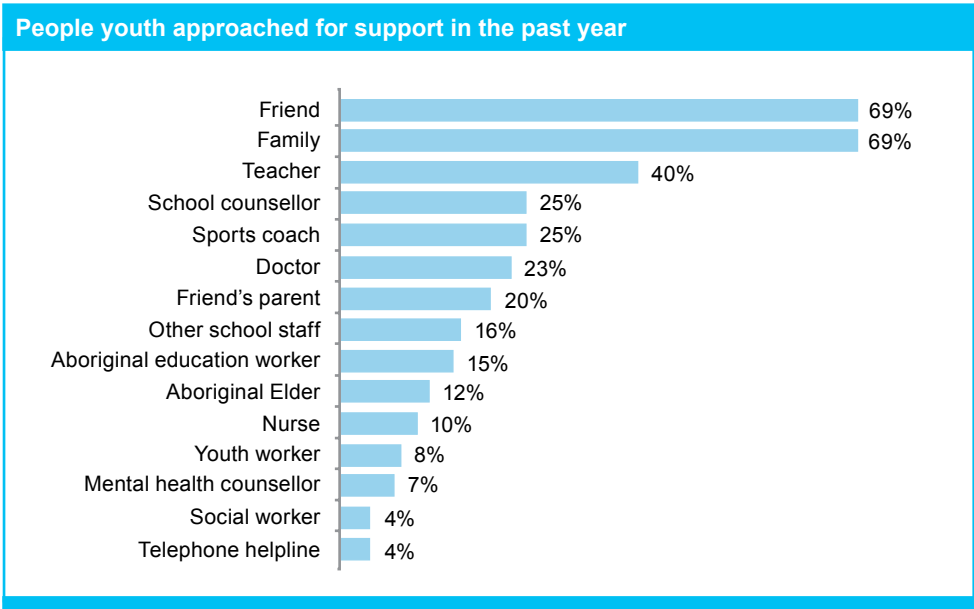
**Sometimes I don't feel good enough, and I tear myself down. But by talking to someone, I'm learning to control it."**



“I went to therapy, it helped a lot.”

When youth found the adults in their lives to be helpful, there were health benefits. For example, among youth who had been abused and who asked their school counsellor for help, those who found this experience helpful were more likely than those who did not find it helpful to rate their mental health as good or excellent (62% vs. 39%\*).

In addition, among youth who had been bullied, those who found their teacher helpful were less likely than those who did not find their teacher helpful to have seriously considered suicide in the past year (9% vs. 38%\*).



Note: The rates for accessing an Aboriginal education worker and an Elder are among Aboriginal youth.

# Peer relationships

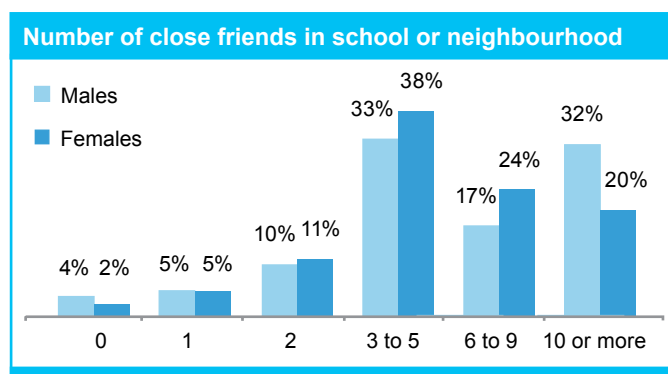
Forty-six percent of students had been in a romantic relationship in the past year, which was higher than the provincial rate of 39%. Among local students in a romantic relationship, 6% of male and female youth had been the victim of dating violence, which was similar to the percentage across BC.

Locally, the percentage of students in a romantic relationship was lower than in previous survey years (65% in 2003 and 2008) but the rate of dating violence remained unchanged.

In total, 97% of students in Central Vancouver Island reported having at least one close friend.

There were positive associations with having more than just one or two close friends. For example, students who had three or more close friends in their school or neighbourhood were more likely than those with fewer friends to rate their overall health as good or excellent (89% vs. 76%). They were also less likely to have been teased, excluded, or assaulted in the past year (49% vs. 58%).

Having more than two close friends appeared to be protective for youth who had been bullied. For example, students with three or more friends who had been socially excluded were more likely to feel good about their skills and abilities (84 % vs. 68% of those with fewer friends). This was also true for students who had been teased.



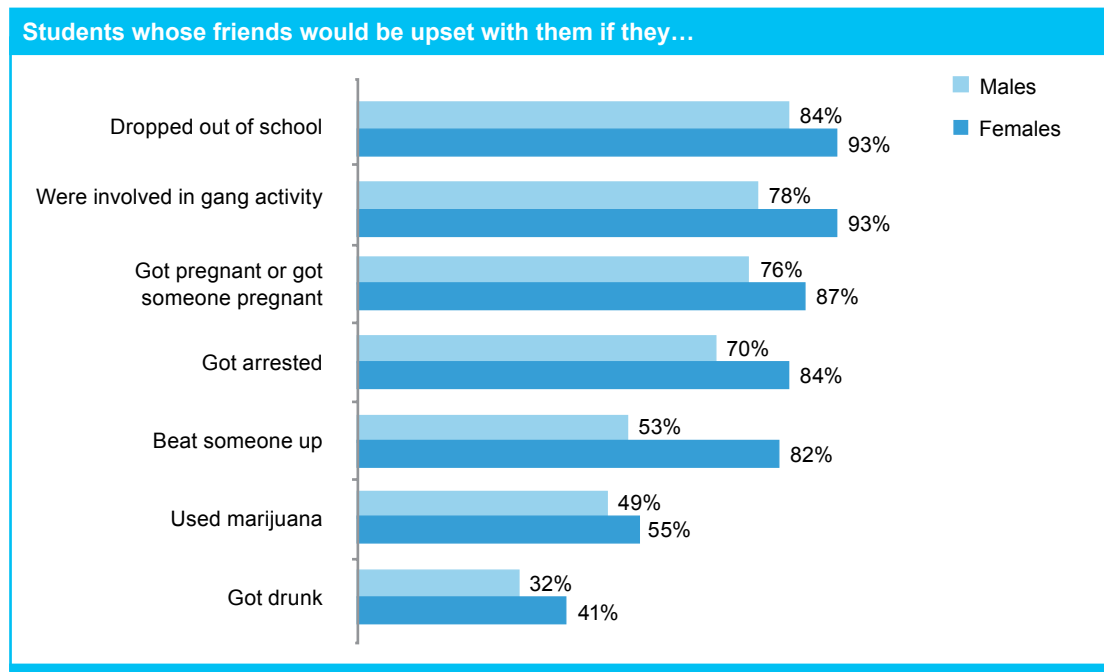
Note: Percentages for males do not equal 100% due to rounding.

Note: The difference between males and females who had 0, 1, or 2 friends was not statistically significant.

**82%** of local students had three or more close friends.

## Friends with pro-social attitudes

Students were asked if their friends would be upset with them if they were involved in certain risk behaviours, such as getting arrested, dropping out of school, or using marijuana. While they generally had friends who would be upset with them for these reasons, local students were less likely than those throughout BC to have friends who would be upset with them if they used marijuana (52% vs. 58% provincially) or got drunk (37% vs. 44%).





Having pro-social peers was a protective factor for youth. For example, students whose friends would be upset with them if they beat someone up were less likely to have assaulted someone in the past year than those whose friends would not be upset with them for this reason (1% vs. 6%). In addition, students whose friends would be upset with them for dropping out of school were more likely to have post-secondary plans (86% vs. 72% of those whose friends would not be upset with them for dropping out).

Further, students who drank in the past month were less likely to report binge drinking during this period if they had friends who would be upset with them for getting drunk (49%\* vs. 65% of those whose friends would not be upset with them for getting drunk).

Students whose friends would be upset with them if they...			
	2008	2013	Change from 2008
Dropped out of school	84%	88%	↑
Were involved in gang activity	NA	86%	
Got pregnant or got someone pregnant	71%	82%	↑
Got arrested	62%	77%	↑
Beat someone up	51%	68%	↑
Used marijuana	50%	52%	--
Got drunk	27%	37%	↑

Note: NA means that the question was not asked.

-- means that the percentages in 2008 and 2013 were comparable.



# Neighbourhood safety

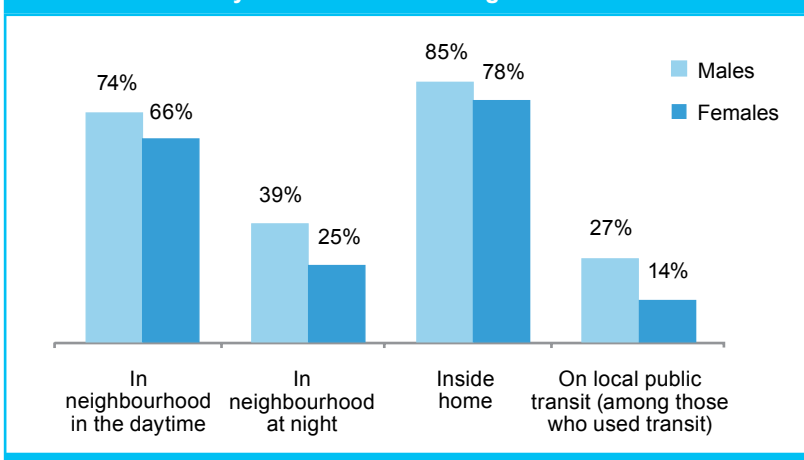
Reflecting the provincial picture, 82% of youth always felt safe inside their home. Local youth were more likely than their peers across the province to always feel safe in their neighbourhood during the day (70% vs. 64% provincially) and at night (32% vs. 28%). Among youth who used transit, 20% always felt safe doing so, while 6% never did.

Youth who always felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day were more likely to rate their mental health as good or excellent (84% vs. 63%\* of those who never or rarely felt safe), to plan to continue their education after high school (85% vs. 68%\*), and to have only positive future aspirations (91% vs. 71%\*). They were also less likely to have attempted suicide in the past year (4% vs. 26%\*), or to have missed out on accessing needed medical care or mental health services.

Feeling safe was associated with positive mental health among vulnerable youth. For example, local students who had been teased were less likely to always feel safe in their neighbourhood in the daytime (60% vs. 77% of youth who had not been teased), or at night (23% vs. 37%). However, if these students did feel safe in their neighbourhood during the day they were more likely to feel good about themselves and less likely to have attempted suicide than those who never or rarely felt safe.



Students who always felt safe in their neighbourhood



**Males were more likely than females to always feel safe in their neighbourhood, inside their home, and on transit.**

# Community connectedness & cultural engagement

## Community connectedness

Similar to the provincial picture, 38% of students reported that they felt quite a bit or very much connected to their community.

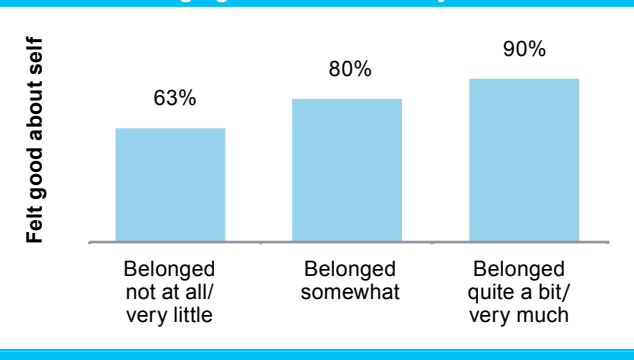
There were benefits for youth who felt like a member of their community, including a greater likelihood of feeling good about themselves and their abilities.

Youth who had a debilitating health condition were more likely to rate their mental health as good or excellent if they felt connected to their community (66%\*) than if they did not feel connected (34%). Similarly, the more connected that these youth were to their community, the more likely they were to have played weekly informal sports (67%\* vs. 32%\* of those who were not connected) and the less likely they were to have missed out on accessing needed mental health services.

## Cultural engagement

In addition to feelings about their community, students were asked about their engagement in their culture. Four percent of Central Vancouver Island youth participated in cultural or traditional activities at least weekly, which was below the provincial rate of 7%. Youth who were involved in traditional activities on a weekly basis were more likely to have positive aspirations for the future.

Youth who felt good about themselves in relation to sense of belonging in their community



# Summary list of protective factors

Throughout this report, a number of protective factors in the lives of Central Vancouver Island students have been identified. This chapter provides a list of some of those protective factors along with an example for each.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR	EXAMPLE
Stable home	Youth who had not moved in the past year were more likely than those who had moved to feel there was an adult in their neighbourhood or community who cared about them.
Eight or more hours of sleep	The more hours of sleep students got, the more likely they were to rate their mental health as good or excellent.
Good nutrition	Among students with government care experience, those who ate three or more servings of fruit or vegetables the previous day were more likely than those who had fewer servings to rate their overall health as good or excellent.
Sports and exercise	Students who exercised daily during the past week were more likely than those who exercised less often to have slept for eight or more hours on the previous night.
Feeling safe at home, in school, and the community or neighbourhood	If youth who had been teased felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day, they were less likely than those who rarely or never felt safe to have attempted suicide in the past year.
Feeling connected to school	Youth with a mental or emotional health condition were more likely to feel good about themselves if they felt more connected to their school.
Feeling engaged in activities	Students who felt their ideas were listened to at least quite a bit were more likely to rate their overall health as good or excellent than those who did not feel their ideas were listened to as much.
Feeling connected to family	Youth who felt their family understood them were less likely than those who did not feel this way to have ever been a passenger in a vehicle with someone who had been drinking.

**PROTECTIVE FACTOR****EXAMPLE****Parental monitoring**

Students whose parents were aware of what they were doing in their free time were less likely than those whose parents were not monitoring their spare time to be texting or chatting on their phone after they were expected to be asleep.

**Adult in the family students could talk to**

Students who felt they could turn to an adult relative for support were less likely to miss out on accessing needed mental health services compared to students who did not feel they could turn to an adult relative for support.

**A supportive adult outside family**

Students who had an adult outside of their family to talk to were more likely than those without such an adult to feel like a part of their community.

**Adult outside their family who cares about them**

Students with an adult in their community who cared about them were more likely than those who could not identify such an adult to feel that the activities they engaged in were meaningful.

**Helpful sources of support**

Among youth who had been physically or sexually abused and had asked their school counsellor for help, those who found this experience helpful were more likely than those who did not find their school counsellor helpful to rate their mental health as good or excellent.

**Having close friends (excluding online friends)**

Among students who had been bullied, those with three or more friends in their school neighbourhood were more likely than those with fewer friends to feel good about their skills and abilities.

**Having friends with pro-social attitudes**

Students whose friends would be upset with them if they beat someone up were less likely to have assaulted someone in the past year than those whose friends would not be upset with them for this reason.

**Community connectedness**

The more that youth who had a debilitating health condition felt connected to their community, the less likely they were to have missed out on accessing needed mental health services.

**Cultural engagement**

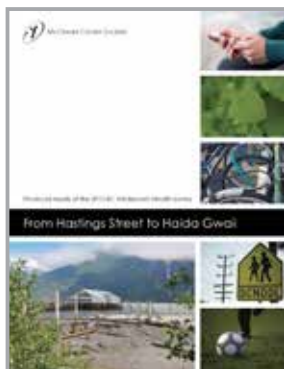
Youth who were involved in traditional activities on a weekly basis were more likely than those who were not involved to have only positive future aspirations (such as expecting to have a job or a home of their own in five years).

# How to use these results

McCreary will continue to produce reports and other resources using the results of the 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey. All of the resources can be accessed at [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca). Upcoming reports include a sexual health report and a report about protective factors in the lives of BC youth with government care experience.

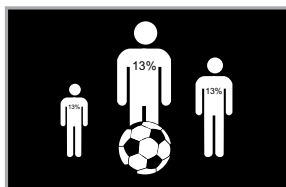
If you would like to join our community mailing list to receive updates about when new reports are released, when webinar presentations are scheduled, and other news related to the BC Adolescent Health Survey, please contact [community@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:community@mcs.bc.ca).

## A selection of BC AHS resources



### *From Hastings Street to Haida Gwaii*

This report offers a comprehensive picture of the health and health behaviours of BC youth.



This film shares responses from key BC figures to results of the BC Adolescent Health Survey.



This PowerPoint provides an overview of the provincial BC Adolescent Health Survey results. It is aimed at adult audiences. McCreary staff are also available to present local and provincial results.

## YOUTH RESOURCES



This and other posters were designed by McCreary's Youth Advisory and Action Council (YAC) for a youth audience.

Other resources for youth include interactive workshops and the Next Steps program which uses the results of the survey to engage youth in local community projects.



McCreary's YAC has a granting program open to students in school districts which participated in the survey. Grants of up to \$500 are awarded to youth who wish to conduct a project that aims to address a local youth health issue.



