



Results of the 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey

# Northeast





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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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# Key findings

This is the first time McCreary has produced a report at the Health Service Delivery Area level for the Northeast. Local findings from the 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey showed that most youth report 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 also highlights some differences between this region and the province as a whole, as well as identifying some groups of students who may need additional support. The results also identified some protective factors that appear to be linked to better outcomes for these and other youth.

- More than a third of students had at least one health condition or disability. Yet most students rated their overall health and their mental health as good or excellent. The majority also felt good about themselves, could name things they were good at, and felt they were as competent as their peers.
- Males in the Northeast generally reported more positive mental health than females. For example, 27% of females (and 9% of males) reported cutting or injuring themselves on purpose in the past year. Females were also twice as likely as males to have seriously thought about killing themselves and to have attempted suicide in the past year.
- More than half of local students slept for less than eight hours on the night before taking the survey. Comparable to the provincial picture, 80% of students were online or on their phone after they were supposed to be asleep.
- In the past year, 33% of male and female students were injured seriously enough to require medical attention. This was above the provincial rate of 27%. During the same time frame, 25% of local males and 14% of females reported they had suffered a concussion.
- When compared to the province, local youth reported poorer nutritional intake. For example, fewer youth in the Northeast ate fruit the day before taking the survey and more drank pop or soda.

- Among youth whose BMI indicated they were a healthy weight, over half of females were trying to lose weight (vs. 16% of healthy weight males).
- Seventy percent of youth who had sex reported using a condom the last time they were sexually active. Condom use among those who had oral sex was higher than seen provincially. Rates of STI's and pregnancy were comparable with the province as a whole.
- Sixteen percent of Northeast students had experienced physical abuse and 11% had been sexually abused. Females were more than three times as likely to be sexually abused as males (18% vs. 5%).
- Students reported a range of bullying experiences with females more likely to be the victim and males more likely to be the perpetrator. Students who had been a victim of bullying in the past year were more likely to have also bullied others.
- A third of students had ever smoked. Among these students, 36% had successfully quit in the past year.
- Sixty-eight percent of students who had tried alcohol had their first drink before turning 15 years old. A similar result was found for marijuana.
- In the Northeast, 27% of males and 12% of females aged 12 to 17 met the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommendation that they get an hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day.
- Sixty-seven percent of students reported having an adult in their neighbourhood or community (beyond their school or family) who cared about them. This was higher than the provincial rate of 61%.
- Protective factors which appeared to improve outcomes for even the most vulnerable youth included physical activity, nutrition, sleep, and school, family, community, and cultural connectedness. Local results also highlight the importance of supportive relationships with peers and adults including family, teachers, and other professionals.



# Introduction

Between February and June 2013, almost 30,000 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 will be published over the coming year. This report focuses on students in the Northeast Health Service Delivery Area.

The Northeast Health Service Delivery Area includes Peace River South (SD 59), Peace River North (SD 60), and Fort Nelson (SD 81). The participation of all three school districts means that we have been able to produce a report focused on the Northeast for the first time. The results presented in this report provide the most comprehensive and representative picture of youth health in the Northeast.

When reading this report there are a few important points to keep in mind:

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 Northeast 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 Northeast 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

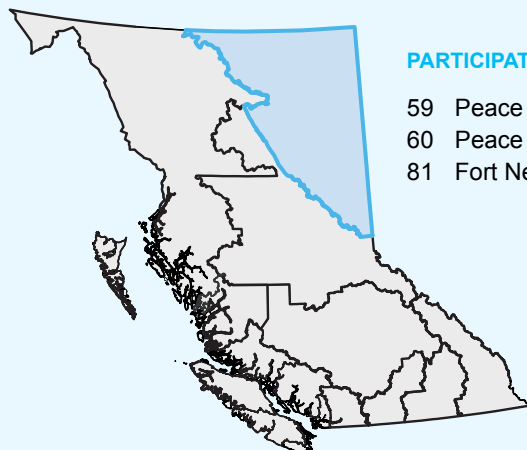
### Vancouver Island Health Authority

- 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

## NORTHEAST HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY AREA



### PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS

- 59 Peace River South
- 60 Peace River North
- 81 Fort Nelson



### 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 the Northeast

## Ethnic & cultural background

In the 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey, students in the Northeast most commonly reported that they were of European heritage (59%). This was above the provincial rate of 53%.

One in five local students did not know their background, which was more than double the rate for students in BC overall (8%).

Family background	
European	59%
Aboriginal	24%
African	4%
Australian/Pacific Islander	2%
East Asian	2%
Latin/South/Central American	2%
Southeast Asian	2%
South Asian	2%
West Asian	NR
Other	4%
Don't know	20%

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.

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

## ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

Provincially, 10% of students identified as Aboriginal, compared to almost a quarter of local students (24%). Among Northeast students who identified as Aboriginal, 59% were First Nations, 35% were Métis, and 8% specified another Aboriginal group (such as Cherokee; youth could select more than one Aboriginal identity if it was applicable).

Nineteen percent of Aboriginal youth had ever lived on reserve, and 11% spoke an Aboriginal language.

## NEW CANADIANS

Six percent of students were born outside of Canada, which was below the provincial rate of 19%. Among local students born outside Canada, almost half (49%\*) had lived here less than 2 years, and 52%\* were here as international students.

## LANGUAGE

The majority of students (71%) spoke only English at home, above the provincial rate of 51%. A quarter of youth (25%) reported sometimes speaking a language other than English at home, and 4% spoke another language at home most of the time (compared to 21% provincially).



I want to learn to speak my [Aboriginal] language.”

## Sexual orientation & gender identity

The percentages of students with various sexual orientations were similar to the provincial results. Also consistent with the province, males were more likely to identify as completely straight (84% vs. 74% of females), whereas females were more likely to identify as mostly straight as well as bisexual.

Students were asked if they identified as transgender. The percentage who identified this way was too small to release. Similarly, the percentage of Aboriginal students who identified as Two Spirit could not be released due to risk of deductive disclosure.

Sexual orientation	
Completely straight	79%
Mostly straight	5%
Bisexual	5%
Gay or lesbian	NR
Questioning	NR
Don't have attractions	8%

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

## Home life

Similar to the rest of the province, 94% of students lived with at least one parent (including a step-parent), although local youth were less likely to be living with their grandparents (5% vs. 9% of youth across BC). Nearly all youth lived in a household with an adult, as less than 1% lived alone or with other children or youth.

The vast majority of youth (93%) reported that at least one of their parents or guardians worked locally. This was above the provincial rate of 88%. Eleven percent reported that at least one parent worked somewhere else in BC or Canada, and virtually none worked abroad. Three percent of youth reported that their parents did not work, which was consistent with the rest of BC.

Most common people youth lived with	
Mother/stepmother	82%
Father/stepfather	72%
Sibling(s)/stepsibling(s)	52%
Both parents at different times	10%
Grandparent(s)	5%
Other adult(s) related to me	3%
Other adult(s) not related to me	3%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

## In this report

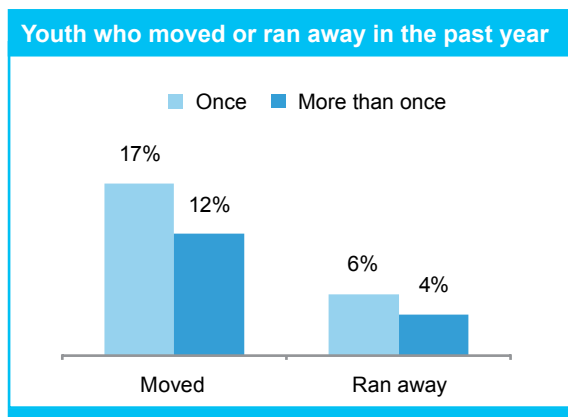
For the rest of this report, **PARENT** refers to students' parent(s) or guardian(s).

## Stable home

Ten percent of students had run away in the past year. Unlike the provincial findings, where females were more likely to run away, there were no gender differences for running away among local students.

Having a stable home has been shown to be a protective factor in the lives of youth. Students in the Northeast were more likely to have moved from one home to another in the past year than their peers across the province (29% vs. 23%). Six percent of local students had moved three or more times, which was similar to the provincial rate.

When compared to youth who had moved house, youth who had stayed in the same home for the past year were more likely to feel that there was an adult in their neighbourhood or community who cared about them (71% vs. 57% who had moved one or more times).



Among youth with a mental health condition (depression, eating disorder, etc.) those who stayed in the same home for the past year were less likely to report missing out on accessing needed medical care (24%\* vs. 52%\* of youth who had moved).

## Government care

Similar to the picture across the province, 6% of Northeast youth had ever lived in some type of government care, with 5% having lived in a foster home.

More than half of local students with care experience had moved in the past year. Local students with care experience were more likely to have moved in the past year compared to those who had not been in care (54%\* vs. 27%).

Among youth who had been in government care, those who had not changed address in the past year reported more positive mental health. For example, they were more likely to feel good about themselves than those who had moved.

A young person who is on a Youth Agreement is not considered to be in the care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development. A Youth Agreement supports independent living for 16 to 18-year-olds (and occasionally 15-year-olds) who are homeless and cannot live with their family. The percentage of local students who had lived on a Youth Agreement was too small to report.

## Def.

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

## Caretaking responsibilities

On an average school day, 72% of local male and female students had some caretaking responsibilities. These included caring for pets or other animals (67%), and/or caring for a relative (such as a relative with a disability or a younger sibling; 19%).

The rate of caring for a relative was similar to the province, but local students were more likely to be taking care of pets or other animals (67% vs. 52% provincially).

There was no gender difference in caretaking responsibilities, unlike the provincial picture where females were more likely to be caring for pets or relatives on a daily basis.

## Transportation

Students were asked about what method of transport they usually used to get to school. Thirty-nine percent of local students used active means, including walking, biking, or skateboarding. Sixty-two percent got to school by car, and 34% took a bus or other public transit. These were all similar to the provincial rates.

Males were more likely to have walked, biked, or skateboarded to school (45% vs. 34% of females), while females more commonly got to school in a car (70% vs. 54% of males).

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 (28% vs. 15% of youth who did not use a bus to get to school).

When asked about transportation in general, 50% of Northeast youth used public transit, which was below the provincial rate of 73%. Similar to the provincial rate, 3% had hitchhiked somewhere in the past month (more males than females).

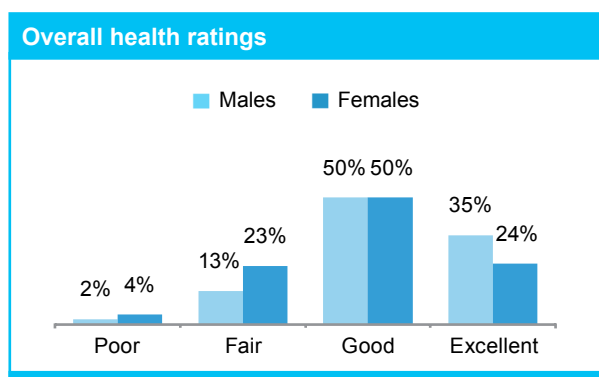
Thirty percent of Northeast youth held some sort of driver's licence. Specifically, 19% had a learner's licence and 10% had a novice licence.



# Physical health

Consistent with provincial findings, most students rated their health as good or excellent. Local males were as likely as males across the province to report good or excellent health.

In contrast, local females were less likely than females across BC to indicate good or excellent health and more likely to rate it as poor or fair. For example, 27% of local females rated their health as poor or fair compared to 16% across BC.



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

Note: The difference between males and females for poor health was not statistically significant.

## Health conditions & disabilities

Thirty-five percent of male and female students had at least one health condition or disability. This was higher than the provincial rate for both genders, as provincially 22% of males and 30% of females reported at least one condition.

There were no gender differences in the various types of health conditions and disabilities which youth reported, except females were almost twice as likely to report having a mental health condition (20% vs. 11% of males).

Among youth with a health condition or disability, 60% of females and 36%\* of males had a condition that prevented them from doing things their peers could do at least some of the time.

Youth with a health condition or disability	
Mental or emotional health condition	16%
Long term or chronic condition (e.g., diabetes or asthma)	15%
Behavioural condition	7%
Sensory disability	4%
Learning disability	4%
Allergies severe enough to require an epinephrine injection	3%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.



I have a condition that makes it hard to run and I can't do activities where getting bumped or falling can occur."

**85%** of males in the Northeast rated their health as good or excellent compared to 74% of females.

## Foregone medical care

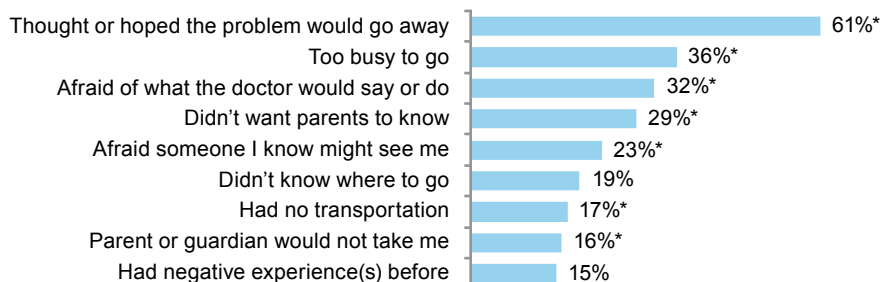
In the past year, 11% of students (8% of males vs. 14% of females) did not get medical help when they thought they needed it. This was similar to the provincial results.

Among students who did not access needed medical care, the most common reason for not doing so was thinking or hoping the problem would go away. The next most common reason for females was that they were afraid of what the doctor would say or do (47%), which no males reported as a reason for missing out on needed medical help. Other common reasons for both males and females included being too busy to go and not wanting their parents to know.

## Dental visits

Similar to the picture across the province, 82% of local students had visited the dentist in the past 12 months, 6% had last visited more than 24 months ago, and 2% had never been to the dentist. However, when compared to the province, Northeast students were more likely to report that their last visit to the dentist had been for pain (12% vs. 8% throughout BC).

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



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



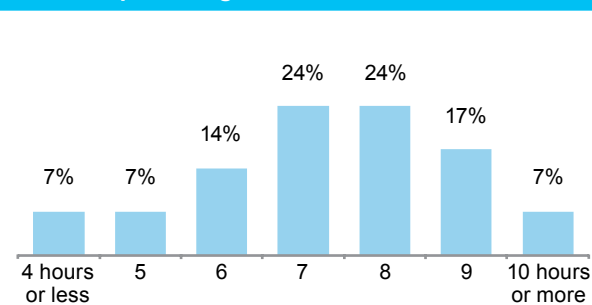
I eventually ended up going [to the doctor], but I put it off to the last minute.”

# Sleep

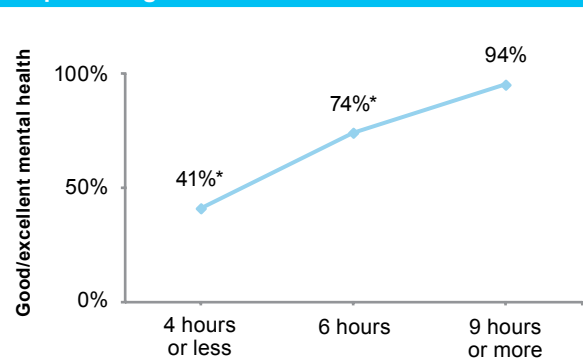
## Sleep

The National Sleep Foundation recommends that adolescents get between 8.5 and 9.25 hours of sleep each night. In the Northeast, 48% of students slept for eight hours or more, while 7% (6% of males vs. 9% of females) slept for four hours or less.

Hours slept last night



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



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

Older students slept less than younger ones. For example, 47%\* of students who were 17 years old slept for eight or more hours on the night before taking the survey, compared to 65% of students age 12 and younger.

Comparable to the provincial picture, 87% of females and 79% of males were doing something such as homework or using their cellphone after the time they were expected to be asleep. For example, 41% of local students (31% of males vs. 50% of females) were doing homework after the time they were normally expected to go to sleep.

Some students were at particular risk for not getting enough sleep. For example, 35% of students who had been physically or sexually abused slept eight or more hours the night before taking the survey, compared to 52% of students who had not experienced abuse.

The more hours of sleep students got, the more likely they were to rate their mental health as good or excellent. This was true for all youth, including the most vulnerable. For example, youth who had been abused who slept for at least eight hours were less likely to have self-harmed in the past year (33%\* vs. 50%\* who slept for less time), and were less likely to have foregone necessary mental or emotional health services.

Similarly, Northeast students with a mental or emotional health condition who slept for eight or more hours were less likely than those who slept fewer hours to have attempted suicide in the past year.



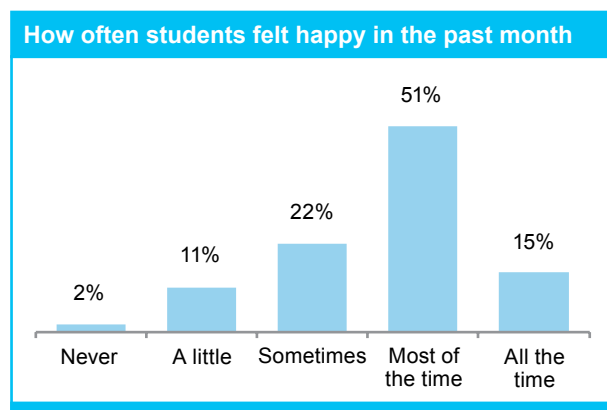
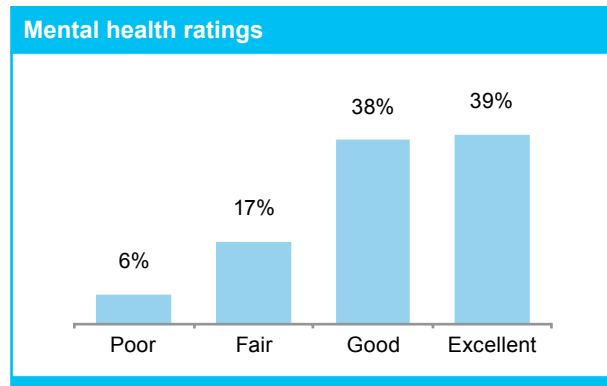
# Mental health

Most youth (77%) rated their mental health as good or excellent, which was comparable to the percentage across the province. As was the case in the province as a whole, males were more likely than females to rate their mental health as good or excellent (81% vs. 74%), whereas females were more likely to rate it as fair or poor (26% vs. 19% of males).

The majority of students felt good about themselves (88% of males vs. 68% of females) and felt they were as competent as most of their peers (90% of males vs. 76% 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 (85% vs. 74%).

Males were also more likely than females to feel calm and at peace most or all of the time in the past month (55% vs. 42%). However, females were as likely as males to feel happy in the past month, unlike the provincial picture where the percentage was lower for females.



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



I've had anxiety since I was a kid. It was very severe, but I've overcome it. I feel good and confident every day now."

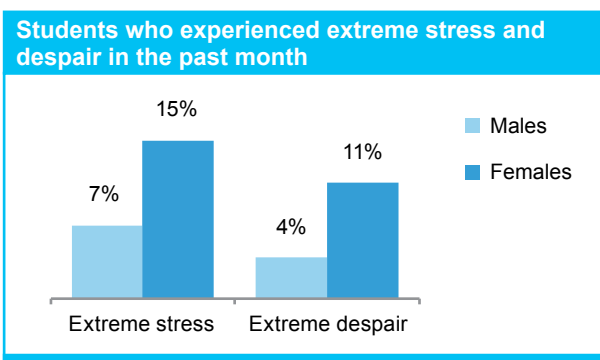
## Mental health conditions

Students were asked about specific mental health conditions. As was the case provincially, females were more likely than males to have at least one condition (28% vs. 21%).

Youth most commonly reported having Depression (13%), Anxiety Disorder (11%), Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD; 7%), and/or an addiction to alcohol or other drugs (3%). Females were more likely to have Anxiety Disorder and Depression, whereas males were more likely to report ADHD.

Most commonly reported conditions		
	Males	Females
Depression	9%	16%
Anxiety Disorder/Panic Attacks	6%	16%
ADHD	9%	4%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.



The percentage of males who had at least one condition was higher than that of males across the province (21% vs. 15%), while the local and provincial percentages for females were comparable. In terms of specific conditions, local students were more likely than those across the province to report an Anxiety Disorder (11% vs. 8%).

## Stress and despair

Most students (82%) reported feeling at least some stress in the past month. Females were more likely than males to experience extreme stress that prevented them from functioning properly. Percentages of extreme stress were comparable to those in the province as a whole for both males and females.

Students were also asked the extent to which they felt so sad, discouraged, or hopeless that they wondered if anything was worthwhile. Fifty-four percent reported feeling some level of despair in the past month.

As was the case with extreme stress, percentages of students reporting extreme despair were comparable to those in the province as a whole.



I feel sad a lot, but it's not depression I think."

## Self-harm

Reflecting the provincial picture, 9% of males and 27% of females reported cutting or injuring themselves on purpose without trying to kill themselves in the past year.

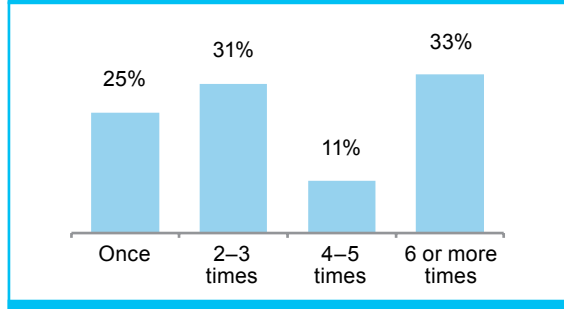
## Suicide

Females were twice as likely as males to have seriously thought about killing themselves and to have attempted suicide in the past year. Percentages were comparable to those across BC.

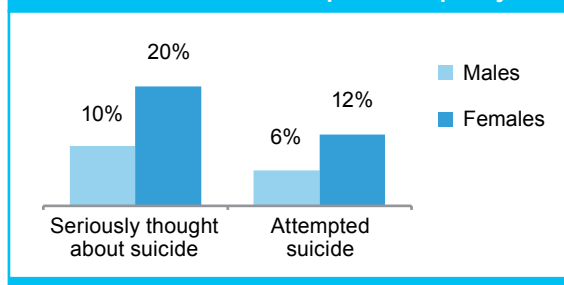
A known risk factor for attempting suicide is having a family member or close friend attempt or die by suicide. Eighteen percent of students reported that a family member had tried to kill themselves at some point (7% in the past year), and 31% reported that a close friend had attempted suicide (19% in the past year).

Students who indicated that a friend or a family member had attempted suicide were more likely to have attempted suicide themselves in the past year than students who had neither experience.

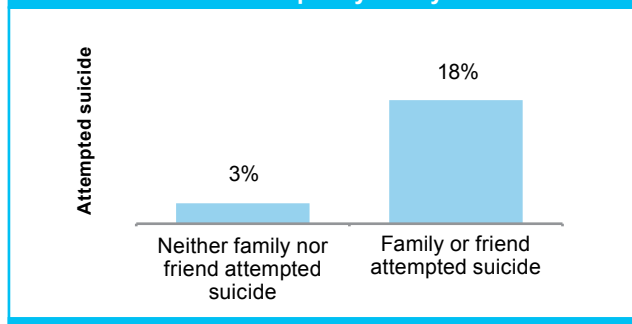
Number of times students self-harmed  
(among those who self-harmed in the past year)



Suicide ideation and attempts in the past year

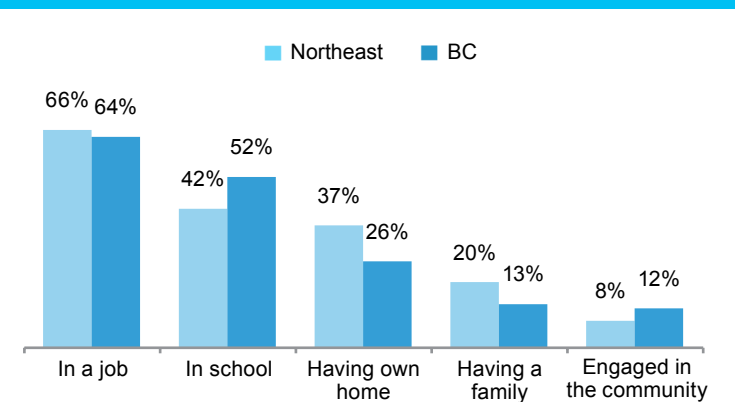


Youth who attempted suicide in the past year in relation to suicide attempts by family or close friends



My brother tried to commit suicide.  
I don't know what to do."

### Where students saw themselves in five years



Note: The difference between Northeast and BC for being in a job was not statistically significant.

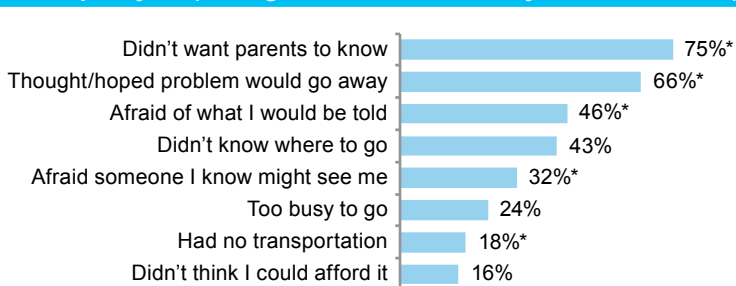
## Hope for the future

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 students saw negative circumstances in their future, including being in prison, homeless, or dead. Fifteen percent indicated not knowing what the future held for them.

Students were less likely than those across the province to see themselves in school and engaged in their community in five years. They were more likely to envision having a home of their own and having a family.

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



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

## Foregoing mental health services

In the past year, 14% of Northeast students (8% of males vs. 19% 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.

As was the case provincially, the most common reasons for local male and female students not accessing needed mental health services included not wanting their parents to know, thinking or hoping the problem would go away, feeling fearful of what they would be told, and not knowing where to go.

“

I want help with my mental health but don't know what to say or who to turn to.”

# Injuries & injury prevention

In the past year, 33% of male and female students were injured seriously enough to require medical attention. This percentage was above the provincial rate of 27%.

Northeast youth were most commonly injured playing or training for sports or other recreational activities (38%\*).

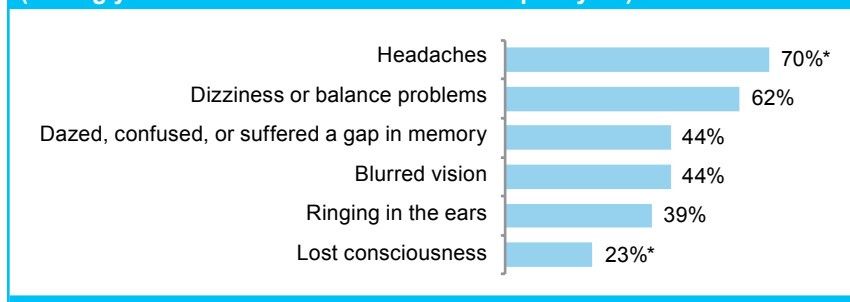
Eleven percent of injuries happened when snowboarding or skiing, 9% when cycling, 6% when youth were working, 6% when walking or running outside, and 6% when driving or riding in a car or other motor vehicle. There were no gender differences except that males were more likely to have been injured while cycling.

## Concussions

Twenty percent of students (25% of males vs. 14% of females) had a concussion in the past year. Thirteen percent had one concussion, 4% had two, and 3% had three or more. The most common symptoms experienced were headaches; dizziness or balance problems; blurred vision; being dazed, confused, or suffering a gap in memory; and ringing in the ears.

Mirroring what was seen provincially, 19% of students who experienced a concussion did not seek medical help.

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



Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

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

## 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.

## Wearing a helmet reduced the likelihood that youth had suffered a concussion.

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### Injury prevention

Similar to youth across the province, 69% of male and female youth always wore their seat belt when riding in a motor vehicle.

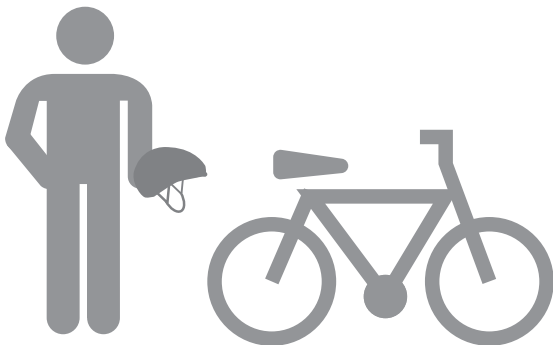
Northeast youth took injury prevention more seriously in some activities over others. For example, 55% always wore a helmet when snowboarding or skiing, while 29% always wore one when riding a bike, and 26% always wore one when on ice skates.

Wearing a helmet was linked to a lower risk of having a concussion or other serious injury. For example, 13% of youth who always wore a helmet when riding a bike had a concussion in the past year, which was below the rate of those who sometimes wore a helmet (24%).

Among youth who had tried drinking, 6% had ever driven a car after drinking alcohol, which was similar to the provincial rate.

It was more common for local youth to have driven after using marijuana than after alcohol. Thirteen percent of marijuana users had done this in their lifetime, and 5% had done so in the past month (below the provincial rate of 9%).

Thirty percent of all Northeast students had been a passenger in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking or using marijuana, and 10% had done so in the past month.



# Nutrition

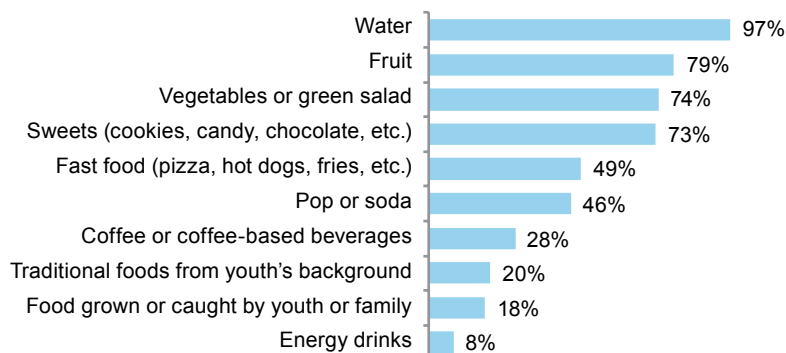
Canada's Food Guide recommends that males aged 14–18 should eat eight servings of fruit and vegetables daily and females should eat seven servings. Youth aged 13 and younger need six servings. Students in the Northeast were more likely than their peers across the province to have eaten fruit or vegetables only once or twice yesterday (44% vs. 34%).

There were some gender differences in what youth consumed yesterday. Males were more likely than females to have consumed traditional foods from their background (23% vs. 17%), foods grown or caught by them or their family (23% vs. 13%), and pop or soda (56% vs. 36%).

When compared to their peers across the province, local students consumed sweets, water, energy drinks, and coffee or coffee-based beverages at similar rates. However, youth in the Northeast were less likely to have eaten fruit (79% ate fruit at least once vs. 86% of youth across BC) or traditional foods from their background (20% vs. 38%), and were more likely to have had pop or soda (46% vs. 35%).

Similar percentages of females ate vegetables as seen across BC, but fewer local males ate vegetables (71% vs. 81% of males provincially). Males were more likely to consume food grown or caught by them or their family (23% vs. 15% of males in BC). Females were more likely to report eating fast food (47% vs. 36% of females across BC).

What youth ate and drank yesterday



## Eating breakfast was associated with positive mental health.

---

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 (84% vs. 71% who ate them less often).

There were also benefits to good nutrition among Northeast students with health conditions. For example, youth with a debilitating health condition who had fruit or vegetables three or more times were more likely to have slept for eight or more hours the night before completing the survey (49%\* vs. 15% who ate fruit and vegetables less frequently).

Among Northeast students with a mental or emotional health condition, those who had eaten fruits or vegetables three or more times on the day before taking the survey were more likely to report good or excellent general health (65%\* vs. 37% who ate them less often).

Students who are obese are at risk for low self-esteem and mental health conditions such as depression. Eating a healthy diet may be a protective factor. For example, among youth who were obese, those who ate fruit or vegetables three or more times were twice as likely as those who ate fewer servings to feel good about themselves.

### Breakfast

Consistent with the provincial rate, 15% of Northeast students reported never eating breakfast on school days. The percentage of local students who always ate breakfast was lower than that seen across the province as a whole (41% vs. 54% provincially).

Female students were more likely than males to never eat breakfast (20% vs. 11%), and male students were more likely to always eat breakfast (48% vs. 35% of females).



I skip breakfast because our food is unhealthy.”





Among youth who did not eat breakfast at home, the reasons were generally similar to those seen provincially. The only difference was that 17% of male and female students in Northeast reported getting their breakfast at school, compared to 6% across BC. Females were more likely than males to report not eating breakfast because they did not have time, they felt sick when they ate breakfast, or were trying to control their weight.

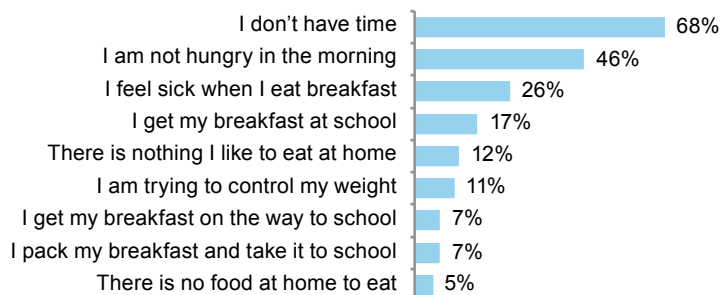
Youth who always ate breakfast on school days were more likely than those who ate breakfast less often or not at all to report good or excellent mental health, better nutrition (such as eating fruit or vegetables three or more times yesterday), and sleeping for eight or more hours the previous night.

## Going to bed hungry

Consistent with the province, around 9 out of 10 youth in the Northeast never went to bed hungry because there was insufficient money for food at home. No youth reported always going to bed hungry, but 9% had this experience sometimes and 2% went to bed hungry often.

Youth who indicated going to bed hungry at least sometimes were more likely to also report not having any food at home to eat for breakfast.

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



Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

## 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.

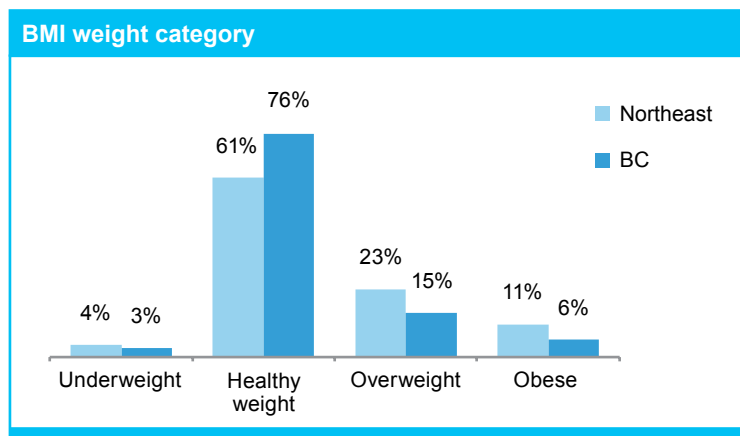
# Body weight & body image

## Body weight

Students' body mass index (BMI) was calculated from their self-reported height and weight measurements. According to their BMI, 61% of Northeast youth were a healthy weight for their age and gender, while 4% were underweight, 23% overweight, and 11% were obese. There were no gender differences.

Youth in the Northeast were more likely to be overweight and obese compared to their peers across the province.

Youth who were underweight were less likely to exercise in the past week compared to their healthy weight peers. On the other hand, youth who were overweight and obese exercised, on average, a similar number of days as their healthy weight peers.



Note: The differences between Northeast and BC for underweight was not statistically significant.

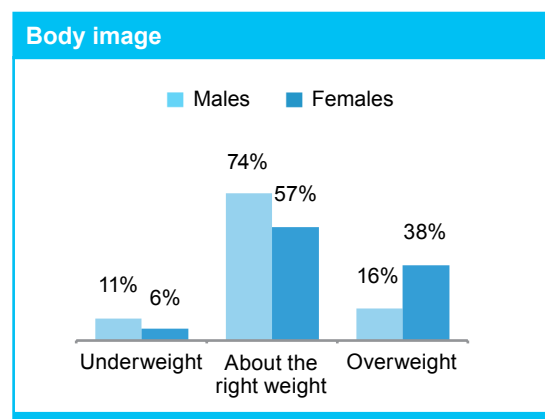


## Body image

Students were also asked how they saw themselves. Sixty-five percent of youth felt they were about the right weight, whereas 8% thought they were underweight, and the remaining 27% felt they were overweight.

Healthy weight females were more than three times as likely as healthy weight males to think they were overweight.

While 28% of healthy weight males were trying to gain weight (vs. 5% of healthy weight females), over half (51%\*) of healthy weight females were trying to lose weight (vs. 16% of healthy weight males).



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

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

## Eating behaviours

Twenty-nine percent of youth (21% of males vs. 37% of females) had binge eaten in the past year, and 7% (3% of males vs. 10% of females) had done so weekly. Nine percent of youth (5% of males vs. 12% of females) had vomited on purpose after eating (purged) in the past year. The percentages of youth who engaged in bingeing and purging were similar between this region and the province.

Youth who reported poorer mental health were more likely to binge eat in the past year. For example, 16% of youth who rated their mental health as poor or fair had binge eaten on a weekly basis in the past year, compared to 4% of youth with good or excellent mental health. Furthermore, 19%\* of students who did not feel happy during the past month binge ate on a weekly basis compared to 5% of students who felt happy most or all of the time. Similar relationships were found between mental health and engaging in purging behaviour.



**I hate my body.”**

# Sexual behaviour

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

## Oral sex

Thirty-one percent of students reported ever having oral sex, which was higher than the rate seen in the province as a whole (23%). Twenty-six percent of youth indicated they had received oral sex, with similar percentages for males and females. However, females were more likely to have given oral sex (31% vs. 17% of males).

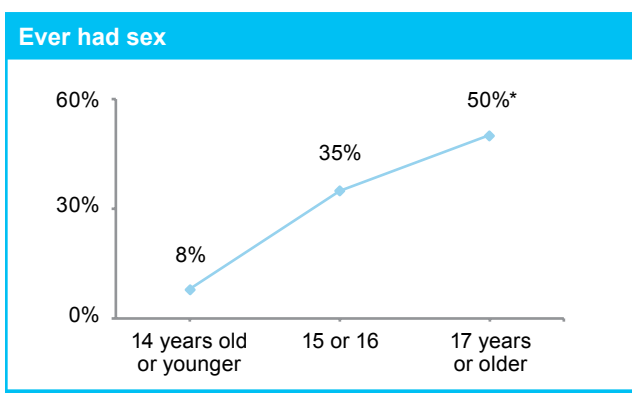
The rate of ever having oral sex generally increased with age. For example, no 12-year-olds had ever had oral sex compared to 38% of 15-year-olds and 55%\* of 17-year-olds.

## CONDOM USE

Twenty-eight percent of 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, which was higher than that seen in the province (17%). Males and females in this region were equally likely to use a condom the last time they had oral sex.

## Sex (excluding oral sex)

Twenty-seven percent of local male and female students indicated ever having sex, other than oral sex or masturbation, which was higher than the provincial rate of 19%. Consistent with the pattern for oral sex, older students were more likely than younger ones to have had sex.



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

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

## AGE FIRST HAD SEX

Youth who had ever had sex most commonly reported first doing so at age 14 or 15. This was similar to the provincial picture, as was the finding that local males were more likely than females to have first had sex at age 12 or younger.

## PARTNERS

Among students who had ever had sex, the majority (52%) had one sexual partner during the past year. Seventeen percent had sex with two partners during this time, while one fifth (21%) had sex with three or more partners. Eleven percent of students who had ever had sex had not done so during the past year. These rates were comparable to those found provincially.

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

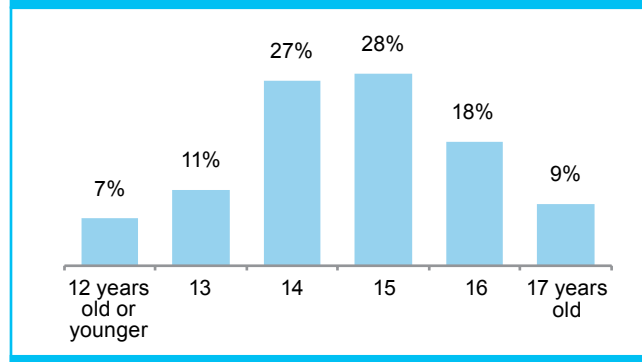
## SUBSTANCE USE

Comparable to the province as a whole, 22% of Northeast students who had ever had sex reported using alcohol or other substances before they had sex the last time. Males and females were equally likely to have engaged in this behaviour.

## CONDOM USE

Similar to students across the province, 70% of students who ever had sex reported that they or their partner had used a condom or other latex barrier the last time they had sex, with similar rates for males and females.

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



Note: No students reported first having sex at age 18 or older.

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

## CONTRACEPTION

When students were asked about what efforts they or their partner made to prevent pregnancy during the last time they had sex, those who had ever had sex most commonly reported using condoms (63%), birth control pills (54%), and/or withdrawal (which is not a reliable method of birth control; 47%).

For 9% of students, the last time they had sex was with a same sex partner.

## Pregnancy

Provincially, 1% of youth reported ever being pregnant or causing a pregnancy, which was similar to the rate in this region.

## Sexually transmitted infections

Overall, 2% of students had been told by a doctor or nurse at some point that they had a sexually transmitted infection (STI).

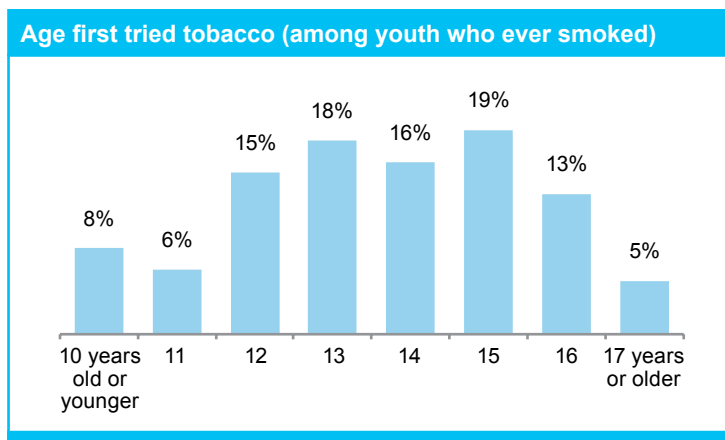
# Tobacco use

A third of male and female youth had smoked, compared to 21% across the province.

Youth in the Northeast started smoking at a similar age to youth across the province. For example, among those who had ever tried smoking, 29% first did so at 12 years old or younger, while 37% waited until they were at least 15 years old. There were no gender differences in the age that youth first started smoking.

Similar to the provincial picture, 42%\* of youth who had tried smoking smoked in the past month, and 8% did so every day.

Among those who had ever smoked, youth used a variety of different tobacco products in the past month. Forty-three percent had smoked cigarettes, 32% had smoked cigars or cigarillos (44% of males vs. 20% of females), 12% used chewing tobacco, 9% had used a hookah, and 16% used electronic cigarettes with nicotine.



“

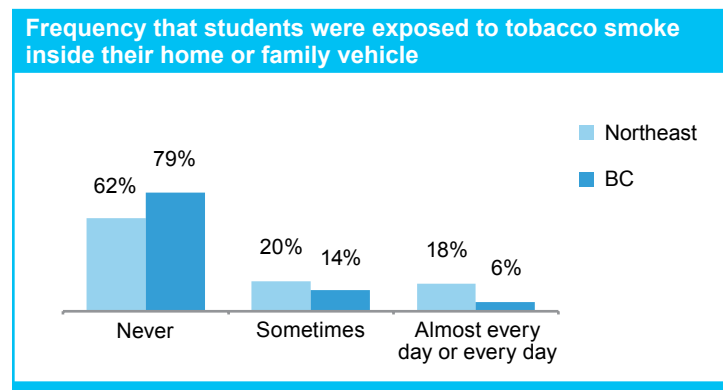
I haven't smoked, never will.”

**38%** of youth were exposed to second hand smoke at home or in their family vehicle.

The use of a hookah was less popular among local youth than was seen provincially where 19% of youth who had ever smoked had used one.

Among youth who had ever smoked, 36% had successfully quit smoking in the past year, and 15% had tried to quit but had started again. Youth in the Northeast were more likely to have tried to quit smoking in the past year than youth across the province (50% vs. 37%, among youth who had tried smoking).

Being exposed to smoking is considered to be a risk factor for starting to smoke. Students in the Northeast were more likely than their peers across the province to be exposed to tobacco smoke inside their home or family vehicle. Furthermore, Northeast students were more likely to be exposed to second hand smoke on a daily or almost daily basis (18% vs. 6% provincially).



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



I tried smoking once and that was it.”

# Alcohol, marijuana, & other drug use

## Alcohol

Male and female students in the Northeast were more likely to have tried alcohol than their peers across the province (60% vs. 45%).

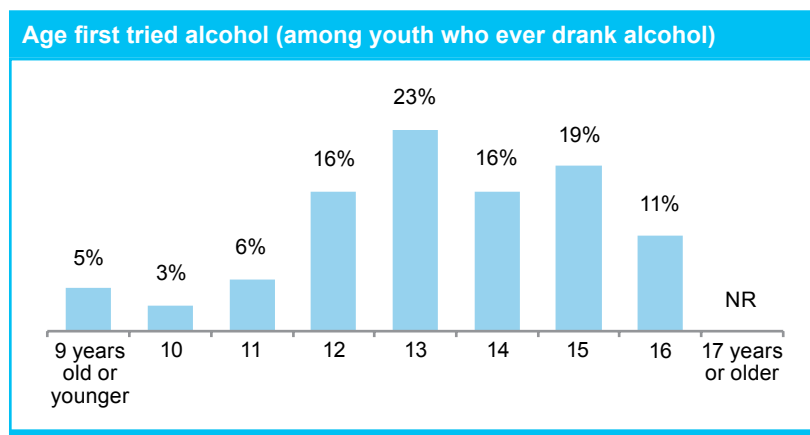
The age at which young people had their first drink of alcohol was generally consistent with provincial findings. Among Northeast youth who had tried alcohol, 68% first drank before turning 15 years old.

Similar to youth across the province, 37% of male and female youth who had tried alcohol consumed five or more drinks within a couple of hours at least once in the past month.

Overall, 22% of youth drank last Saturday. Specifically, 10% had beer, 3% had wine, 17% had liquor, and 12% (7% of males vs. 17% of females) drank coolers.

Among youth who drank last Saturday, 64% had mixed different types of alcohol, with 25% mixing three or four different types. Fifteen percent of youth who drank last Saturday mixed alcohol with energy drinks.

Among youth who drank last Saturday, 78% of females had four or more drinks and 65%\* of males had five or more drinks, which is considered binge drinking. Neither was different from the provincial rates.



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



I work many nights and when I go out with friends, I have a social drink or two.”



**20%** of local students who had tried marijuana used it six or more times in the past month.

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## Marijuana

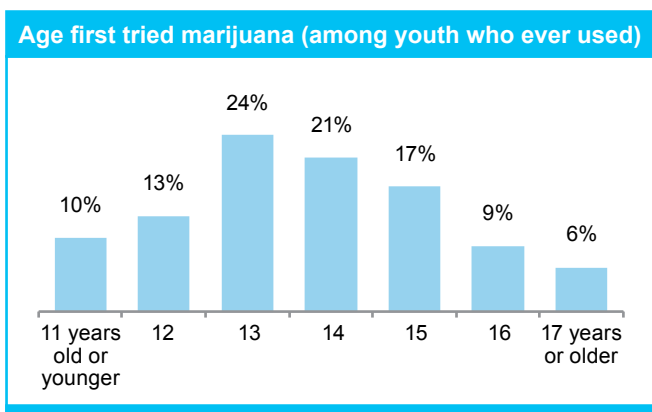
Students in the Northeast were more likely to have tried marijuana than youth across BC (31% vs. 26%). Among local youth who had tried marijuana, 68% of males and females had first used it before their 15th birthday. Youth in the Northeast started using marijuana at a comparable age to youth across the province overall.

Although local students were more likely to have tried marijuana than their peers across the province, those who used were less likely to have used it in the past month (46% vs. 58% provincially).

Nine percent of all local youth used marijuana last Saturday and 6% had used both alcohol and marijuana last Saturday.

Students were asked where they last got their marijuana (and could indicate more than one source). Similar to their peers across the province, among youth who had tried marijuana, their most common source was a youth outside their family (80%). Fifteen percent got their marijuana from an adult outside their family, 7% from a youth in their family, and 5% got it from an adult inside their family.

Females were more likely than males to get their marijuana from a youth inside their family but there were no other gender differences.



## Substances other than alcohol & marijuana

Northeast youth had tried a variety of substances other than alcohol and marijuana such as prescription pills without a doctor's consent (11%), mushrooms (5%), and ecstasy/MDMA (4%). Youth also reported having tried inhalants (3%), cocaine (3%), and hallucinogens (2%). Females were more likely than males to have used someone else's prescription pills (14% vs. 7%).

The number of local youth who had tried amphetamines, crystal meth, heroin, ketamine, or steroids without a doctor's prescription were too small to report.

The rates of trying most substances were similar to the province overall, but youth in the Northeast were less likely to have tried hallucinogens (2% vs. 4% provincially), as well as amphetamines, ketamine, heroin, or steroids.

## Consequences of substance use

Over half of youth (55%) who had used alcohol or other substances reported negative consequences in the past year.

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	36%
Passed out	30%
Argued with family members	13%
Got injured	11%
Lost friends or broke up with a girlfriend or boyfriend	11%
School work or grades changed	9%
Had sex when I didn't want to	6%
Damaged property	5%
Got in trouble with police	5%
Got into a physical fight	5%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

## Females were more likely than males to have had treatment for their alcohol or drug abuse.

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Females were more than twice as likely as males to report having argued with family members, to have lost friends or broke up with a girlfriend or boyfriend, or to have had sex when they didn't want to as a result of their substance use.

In the past year, a total of 5% of Northeast youth were either told or felt that they needed help for their substance use. When asked specifically about alcohol or marijuana, 3% needed help for their alcohol use and 3% for their marijuana use.

### Reported reasons for using

For the first time, the survey asked students who had used alcohol or other drugs what their reason for doing so was the last time they used. The most common reasons were wanting to have fun (63%), because their friends were doing it (30%), and wanting to experiment (24%). Females were more likely to have used substances because of stress (27% vs. 17% of males) or because they felt down or sad (22% vs. 12%).

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

I wanted to have fun	63%
My friends were doing it	30%
I wanted to try it/experiment	24%
Because of stress	22%
I felt down or sad	17%
I felt like there was nothing else to do	10%
To manage physical pain	7%
I was pressured into doing it	4%
Other	18%

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. Compared to the provincial results, students in the Northeast reported lower levels of school connectedness.

Most students felt like they were a part of their school (54%), were happy to be at school (58%), and felt safe there (68%). The majority also felt that they were treated fairly by school staff (69%), they got along with their teachers (62%), and their teachers cared about them (63%). In addition, 51% felt that school staff other than teachers cared about them.

School connectedness also appeared to have positive associations for certain groups of youth. For example, 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.

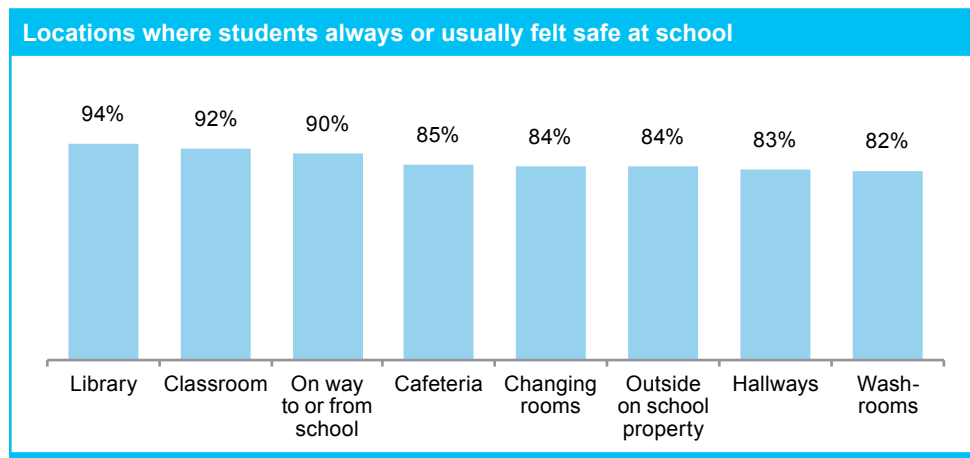
## School safety

Male and female students felt equally safe in most areas of their school except the washrooms (86% of males vs. 78% of females felt safe) and getting to and from school (94% of males vs. 86% of females).

Students in the Northeast were less likely than those throughout BC to feel safe in the washrooms (82% vs. 88%), hallways and stairwells (83% vs. 90%), and the cafeteria (85% vs. 91%).

In terms of overall feelings of safety at school, 68% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe at school (compared to 78% across the province).

Youth who felt safe at school were more likely than those who did not feel this way to report that they also felt safe in their neighborhood, felt like a part of their community, and that their mental health was good or excellent.



## Weapon carrying

Seven percent of students in the Northeast carried a weapon to school, such as a knife or bat in the past month, with males four times more likely than females to have done this. Youth who were bullied were more likely to carry a weapon than their peers who had not been bullied (10% vs. 4%). Among female students, only those who had been bullied carried a weapon to school.

## School absences

Overall, 68% of students (62% of males vs. 73% of females) in the Northeast had missed classes on at least one day in the past month. While this was higher than the provincial rate of 57%, illness was the most common reason for missing school among both local students and those throughout BC.

Northeast females were more likely than males to miss school due to illness (54% vs. 42%) or because they were being bullied. Males were more likely to miss school because they had to work. Males and females were equally likely to have missed school for other reasons including skipping (29%) and family responsibilities (20%).

Older students were generally more likely than younger ones to have missed school due to skipping class. For example, 44%\* of students aged 16 or older had skipped school on one or more days in the past month, compared to 21% of 14-year-olds and 3% of those under 13.

## Educational aspirations

Northeast students were less likely than students across the province to expect to graduate from high school (83% vs. 89%). They were also less likely to anticipate continuing their education beyond high school, such as through university, college, or trade school (79% vs. 86%); and more likely to have not thought about their school plans (11% vs. 6%). Similar to the provincial picture, 6% of Northeast students did not know what their school plans were.

School plans varied among Northeast youth. For example, students who had been physically or sexually abused were more likely than their peers who had not been abused to have plans that did not extend beyond high school.

Students who were doing weekly volunteer work in their community were more likely to anticipate continuing their education beyond high school (90% vs. 74% of students who did not volunteer).



In the past 12 months, I have missed school for tests because of my [medical] problems.”

# Bullying & discrimination

## In-person bullying

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 44 in the section about technology use.)

### TEASING

In the past year, 44% of students in the Northeast (39% of males vs. 48% of females) had been teased at least once to the point where they felt bad or extremely uncomfortable. These rates were consistent with the provincial rate for females, and above the provincial rate of 31% for males. Eighteen percent of male and female students experienced teasing on three or more occasions in the past year.

### SOCIAL EXCLUSION

In the past year, similar to students across BC, 39% of Northeast students (32% of males vs. 47% of females) reported being socially excluded at least once.

Seventeen percent of local students were excluded three or more times in the past year (10% of males vs. 23% of females). This rate was consistent with the provincial rate for males, and above the provincial rate for females (13% of females across BC had been excluded three or more times).

### ASSAULT

In the past year, 9% of students (12% of males vs. 6% of females) reported being physically attacked or assaulted at least once, and 2% had this experience three or more times. These were consistent with the provincial picture.

## Impacts of bullying

Youth who were teased, excluded, or assaulted in the past year were more likely to report skipping class in the past month (35% vs. 19% who had not experienced any of these types of bullying), and to skip class regularly (13% skipped class on three or more occasions in the past month vs. 5% of youth who had not been bullied).

Youth who were cyberbullied were the most likely to report not participating in extracurricular activities (27%\* vs. 5% who had not been cyberbullied). However, youth who experienced in-person bullying also missed out on activities for fear of being bullied, including youth who were assaulted (20% vs. 8%) as well as those who were teased or excluded.

## Perpetrators

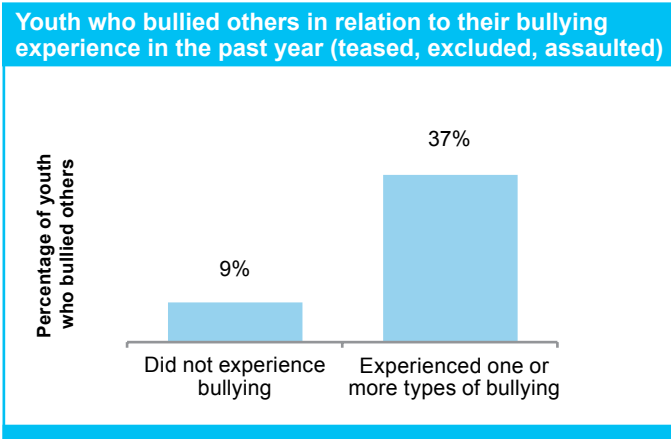
Provincially, females were more likely to exclude others and males were more likely to assault or tease others, but locally males were more likely than females to perpetrate each of the three types of bullying.

In the past year, 17% of local students (22% of males vs. 13% of females) reported they had teased another youth at school or on the way to or from school with the intention of making them feel bad or extremely uncomfortable. Additionally, 14% (18% of males vs. 10% of females) had socially excluded another youth, and 4% had physically attacked or assaulted another youth.

In comparison to the province, local male students were more likely to report teasing another youth (22% vs. 14% of male students across BC), whereas females were less likely to exclude other youth (10% vs. 15% of female students across BC).

The more types of bullying youth experienced the more likely they were to also bully others.

Students who had been the victim of a particular type of bullying were more likely to perpetrate that same type of bullying. For example, 29% of students who had been teased in the past year teased others during this same time frame, compared to 8% who had not been teased. Similarly, students who had been excluded themselves were more likely to exclude others (20% vs. 10% who had not been excluded), and students who had been physically attacked or assaulted were more likely to assault others (32%\* vs. 1% of those who had not been assaulted).



Discrimination

Youth in the Northeast identified a number of different discrimination experiences.

There were some gender differences in experiences of discrimination. Females were more likely than males to report being discriminated against because of their physical appearance (29% vs. 18%), their gender (16% vs. 4%), and their age (14% vs. 5%).

The percentage of youth in the Northeast who felt discriminated against because of their sexual orientation was higher than seen provincially (8% vs. 4%).

In comparison to the provincial picture, a greater percentage of local female students reported that they were discriminated against because of their gender (16% vs. 9%), or because they had a disability (7% vs. 3%). Males were more likely than their peers across the province to report feeling discriminated against because they were seen as different (19% vs. 11%).

Perceived reasons for being discriminated against in the past year	
Physical appearance	24%
Being seen as different	19%
Gender/sex	10%
Age	10%
Race, ethnicity, or skin colour	9%
Income or family income	9%
Sexual orientation (being or thought to be gay or lesbian)	8%
A disability	5%



# Physical abuse, sexual abuse, & sexual harassment

## Physical abuse

Consistent with the experiences of youth across the province, 16% of students in the Northeast had been physically abused at some point in their life.

## Sexual abuse

When youth were asked specifically if they had ever been sexually abused, 7% of students recognized they had experienced this type of abuse. Youth were also asked about other forms of sexual abuse they might not have recognized as such. For example, 8% were forced into sexual activity against their will by another youth or by an adult, and 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 11% of students were sexually abused. This was consistent with the provincial rate.

## Sexual harassment

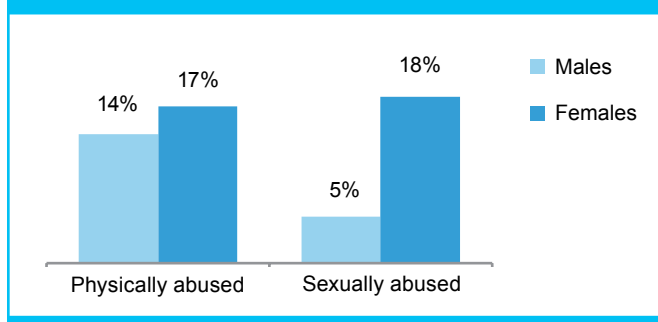
In the Northeast, 39% of males had experienced verbal sexual harassment in the past year, which was similar to the provincial rate. Twenty-five percent had been harassed once or twice and 14% had experienced it three or more times.

Consistent with the provincial picture, 12% of males were physically sexually harassed in the past year.

Fifty-seven percent of female students had experienced verbal sexual harassment, above the provincial rate of 46%. Thirty-two percent had been harassed once or twice and 25% had experienced it more often.

Thirty-three percent of female students experienced physical sexual harassment in the past year, with 9% having experienced it three or more times. This was consistent with the provincial rates.

Students who were ever abused



Note: The gender difference for physical abuse was not statistically significant.

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.**

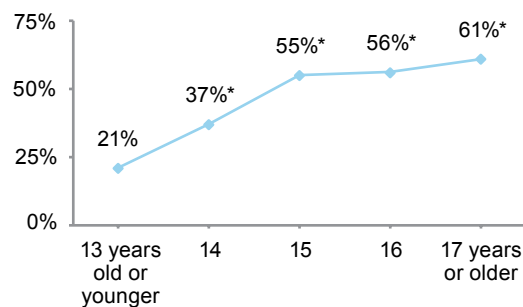


# Employment

A total of 45% of male and female students in the Northeast worked at a paid job during the school year. This was higher than the provincial rate (29%). Males aged 13 and younger were more likely to have worked than females at that age (29% vs. 13%), with no gender differences between youth at older ages.

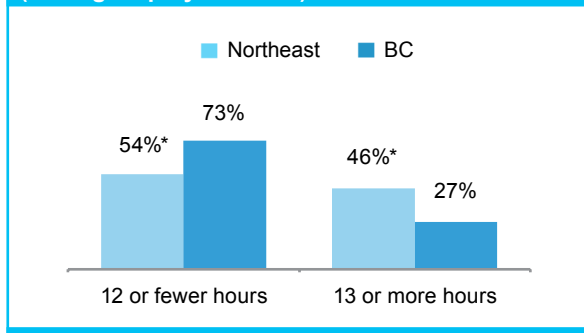
Among employed students, those in the Northeast were working more hours than their peers across the province. For example, 13% of male and female students worked 21 hours or more each week, compared to 6% of students provincially.

Students who worked at a paid job

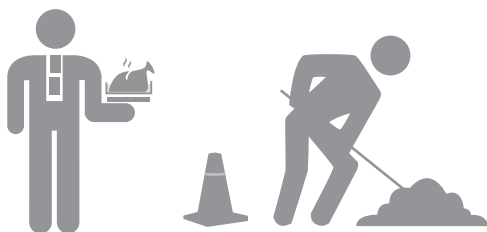


\* The percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was relatively high but still within a releasable range.

Hours spent working at a paid job (among employed males)



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



**13%** of Northeast students who were employed were working at least 21 hours a week.

# 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. Provincially, 17% of students exercised for an hour each day in the past week. The rate was similar in the Northeast, where 27% of males and 12% of females met these guidelines. Also reflecting the provincial picture, female students were more likely to have not exercised at all in the past week.

Younger male students were more likely than older males to have met the physical activity guidelines. For example, 33% of males aged 14 or younger had exercised for an hour daily in the past week compared to 23% of males aged 15 or older. This age difference did not exist among females.

Physical activity was associated with better health outcomes. For example, those who exercised daily during the past week were more likely to have slept for eight or more hours on the previous night (61% vs. 46% of students who exercised on fewer days).

Physical activity may be particularly beneficial for those with challenges in their lives. For example, local youth who had been teased, excluded, and/or assaulted who exercised on at least three days in the past week were more likely to feel good about their skills and abilities (78% vs. 65% of youth who were bullied who exercised on two or fewer days).

## Sports

During the past year, students in the Northeast were as likely as students throughout BC to have participated weekly in informal sports (such as road hockey, hiking, and skateboarding: 59%); organized sports (48%); and yoga, dance, or exercise classes (17%).

Similar to provincial results, males were more likely than females to be involved in informal sports on a weekly basis (68% vs. 51%), while females were more likely than males to be taking weekly dance, yoga, or exercise classes (23% vs. 11%).

“

I dance 7–10 hours a week.”

**12%** of females had not exercised in the past week, compared to 6% of males.

Male students throughout BC were more likely than their female peers to participate weekly in organized sports. However, this gender difference was not seen in the Northeast, where local males were less likely than those provincially to play weekly organized sports (49% vs. 59%).

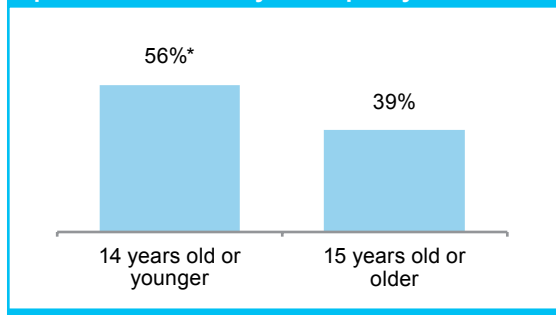
Consistent with the provincial picture, older female students were less likely than younger ones to play organized sports on a weekly basis.

Students in the Northeast were more likely than students across BC to indicate that the reason they did not participate in sports and other activities was because the activity was not available in their community (25% vs. 14%).

There were health benefits to being involved in sports and exercise classes. For example, youth who took part in informal sports on a weekly basis were more likely to rate their mental health as good or excellent (80% vs. 69% who did not take part).

Among youth who had been physically and/or sexually abused, those who took part in weekly organized sports were more likely to rate their overall health as good or excellent (77% vs. 42%\* of youth who had been abused who did not play organized sports). Similarly, 64% of youth who had been abused who played informal sports rated their health as good or excellent, compared to 42%\* who did not do informal sports.

**Female students who participated in organized sports at least weekly in the past year**



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



9%

of Northeast students reported that they were more physically active as a result of the 2010 Winter Olympics.

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## Barriers to participation

Students were asked about the reasons why they might not have participated in sports and other activities in the past year. The most common reason male and female students gave was being too busy (47%). The next most common reason was that the activity was not available in their community, with females reporting this reason more than males (29% vs. 20%).

Females were also more likely than males to miss out on activities because they were worried about being bullied (13% vs. 5%). However, males and females were as likely to report that they did not participate in activities because they could not get there or home (19%) or that they could not afford it (13%).

## 2010 Winter Olympics

Three years after the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, 12% of males and 6% of females reported that they were more physically active as a result of the Games. This was lower than the provincial rate for females (10%), but similar to the provincial rate for males. The percentage of students in the Northeast who felt they had more sports opportunities as a result of the Games was also comparable to students throughout BC (5%).

## Gambling

While the legal gambling age in BC is 19, 14% of Northeast students (19% of males vs. 8% of females) had gambled in the past 12 months. Almost all of these students were aged 18 or younger. The percentage of students who gambled was similar to the provincial rate, as was the percentage who had gambled more than once a month during the past year (4%).



# Technology use

Ninety-seven percent of females and 89% of males owned a cellphone or other portable electronic communication device. Youth in the Northeast were slightly more likely to own a cellphone than youth across the province (93% vs. 90%).

Youth who had a cellphone most commonly used it for communicating with friends, playing games/entertainment/music, communicating with parent(s), finding information, and for chatting online or social networking.

Used cellphone to...	Did this on last school day	When activity took place		
		Before school	During school	After school
Communicate with friends	91%	48%	71%	67%
Play games/entertainment/music	83%	42%	55%	66%
Communicate with parent(s)/guardian(s)	82%	22%	54%	56%
Find information	75%	25%	62%	42%
Chat online or social networking	70%	37%	46%	57%
Sexting	14%	3%	3%	13%
Communicate with teachers	10%	2%	4%	6%
Bully others	3%	NR	NR	2%

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.

**99%** of students with a phone had used their device on the previous school day.

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Females were more likely than males to use their cellphone to communicate with friends and parent(s)/guardian(s), whereas males were more than twice as likely as females to use their phone to engage in sexting (20% vs. 9%).

Eighty percent of students 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 (64%), surfing the Internet (59%), and chatting online or social networking (56%).

Seven percent of students reported that they did not have a cellphone or other such 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 phones to report feeling safe at their school, to rate their mental health as good or excellent, and to usually feel good about themselves and their abilities. They were also less likely to have self-harmed in the past year.

However, students with a cellphone were more likely to report having an adult outside their family they could turn to if they needed help (38% vs. 21%\* of those without a cellphone).

## Online safety

Eighteen percent of students (12% of males vs. 24% of females) reported that they had been cyberbullied in the past year. Eight percent admitted that they had cyberbullied someone else in the past year.

Additionally, females were twice as likely as males to have reported meeting someone through the Internet who made them feel unsafe (21% vs. 10% of males).

Technology use after students were expected to go to sleep		
	Males	Females
Surfing the Internet	62%	56%
Using a phone to chat or text	53%	73%
Chatting online or social networking	48%	64%
Online gaming	43%	24%

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

# Youth engagement

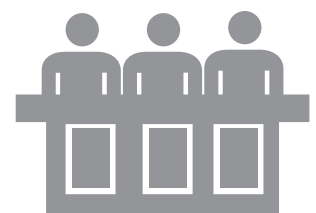
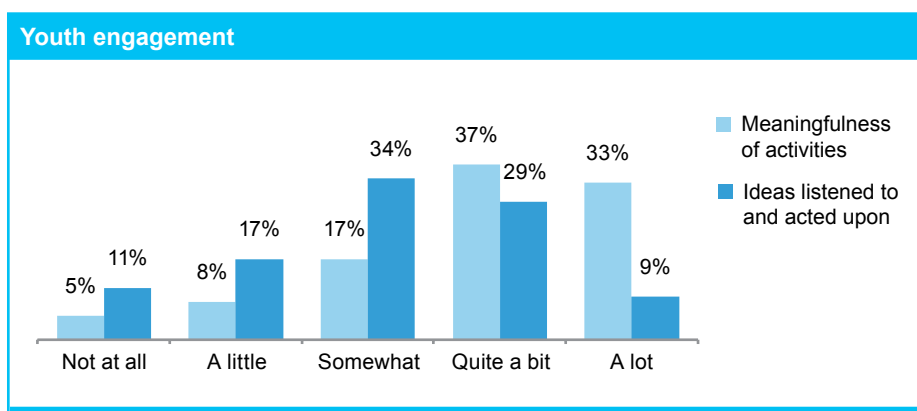
Students were asked about their level of engagement in the activities they took part in. Specifically, they were asked about how meaningful they felt their activities were and how much they felt their ideas were listened to and valued within these activities.

As with the provincial picture, 70% of Northeast students reported that the activities they were involved in were at least quite a bit meaningful to them. However, when asked if they felt that their ideas were listened to and acted upon in these activities, only 38% of local students felt that they were to a significant extent, compared to 44% provincially.

There were many positive associations for youth who felt engaged in 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 either good or excellent (90% vs. 62% of students who felt their ideas were listened to less).

Among youth who had been teased, excluded, or assaulted in the past year, those who felt their activities were more than somewhat meaningful were more likely to feel good about themselves than youth who had been bullied who felt less engaged (74% vs. 46%\*). Similarly, youth who were bullied were more likely to rate their mental health as good or excellent if they felt listened to and valued (83% vs. 50%\* of youth who had been bullied who did not feel heard).

In addition, students in the Northeast with a mental health condition were more likely to feel connected to their community if they also felt that the activities they engaged in were meaningful to them or that their ideas were listened to.



# Family relationships

The survey asked youth about their sense of connectedness to their family. Similar to the provincial results, most students in the Northeast felt their family had fun together (64%) and their family understood them (57%). However, local students were less likely than those throughout BC to feel their family paid attention to them (67% vs. 75%).

Nineteen percent of students felt that their family did not understand them, 10% felt their families did not have fun together, and 11% felt their family did not pay attention to them.

There were positive associations with having strong family relationships. For example, students who felt that their family paid attention to them were more likely than those who did not feel this way to always wear a seat belt when in a car or other vehicle (73% vs. 50%\*). Additionally, students who felt their family paid attention to them were more likely to have post-secondary plans (82% vs. 70%).

Family connectedness was also a protective factor for even the most vulnerable youth. For example, the more connected youth who had been bullied felt to their family, the more likely they were to report their mental health as good or excellent and to feel good about themselves.

Students were asked on the survey if there was an adult in their family they could turn to if faced with a serious problem. In the Northeast, 75% of males and 60% of females indicated that there was. Students who had such an adult in their lives were less likely to miss out on mental health services when they felt that they needed them (6% vs. 30% of students who did not feel they could turn to an adult relative).

Students with a mental health condition who felt they had an adult in their family to talk to were less likely than those without this support to have seriously considered suicide in the past year (62%\* vs. 40%\*).

## Def.

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



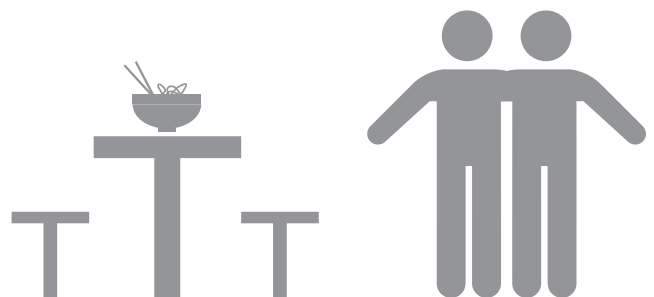
Most students approached family or friends when they needed help, and more than two thirds of youth had asked a family member for help in the past year. Youth who had been bullied were less likely than those who had not been bullied to have found their friends or family members to be helpful. However, when these youth did find their family to be helpful, they were twice as likely to feel good about themselves (78% vs. 38%\* of those who did not find their family to be helpful) and less likely to have self-harmed or seriously considered suicide in the past year.

## Parental monitoring

Consistent with students across BC, 72% of Northeast male and female youth reported that their parents always or mostly knew what they were doing in their free time. Fourteen percent reported that their parents never or rarely knew what they were doing, which was higher than the provincial rate of 10%.

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 (59% vs. 75%\* of those students 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 (55% vs. 26%).

Seventy percent of Northeast youth ate an evening meal with their parents most or all of the time in the past month, while 15% never or rarely did so. Youth who ate their evening meals with their parents were more likely to report consuming fruit or vegetables three or more times yesterday (51% vs. 34%\* who never or rarely ate with their parents). They were also more likely to feel good about themselves (86% vs. 51%) and their abilities (88% vs. 65%\*).



# Supportive & caring adults outside the family

## Adult to turn to for help

Thirty-seven percent of local youth (31% of males vs. 43% of females) felt they had an adult outside their family they could turn to if faced with a problem.

Females in the Northeast were more likely than those throughout BC to have an adult outside of their family they could confide in (43% vs. 34%).

Students who could identify a supportive adult outside of their family were more likely to feel like a part of their community (45% vs. 30% without this support). This was true for even the most vulnerable young people.

Among those who had been teased, socially excluded, or assaulted, a sense of community connectedness was more common among those who had an adult outside of their family to talk to (43% vs. 25%). Youth with this support who were bullied were also more likely to feel good about themselves (72% vs. 61% without an adult outside of their family to talk to) and their abilities (81% vs. 69%).

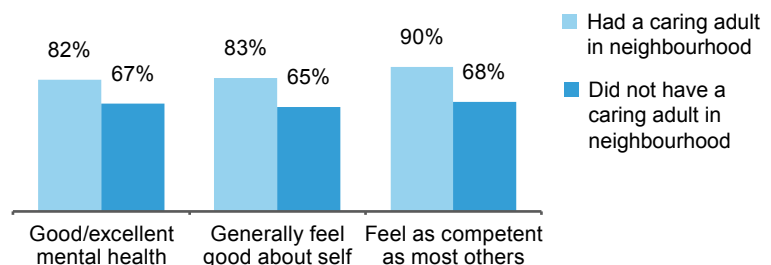
## Local adult who cares

Sixty-seven percent of students in this region reported having an adult in their neighbourhood or community (beyond their school or family) who cared about them. This was higher than the provincial rate of 61%.

Male and female youth were equally likely to report that there was an adult in their neighbourhood or community who cared about them. This differed from the provincial results, where females were more likely than males to feel this way (63% vs. 59%).

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

Caring adults in neighbourhood and mental health outcomes



# Help seeking

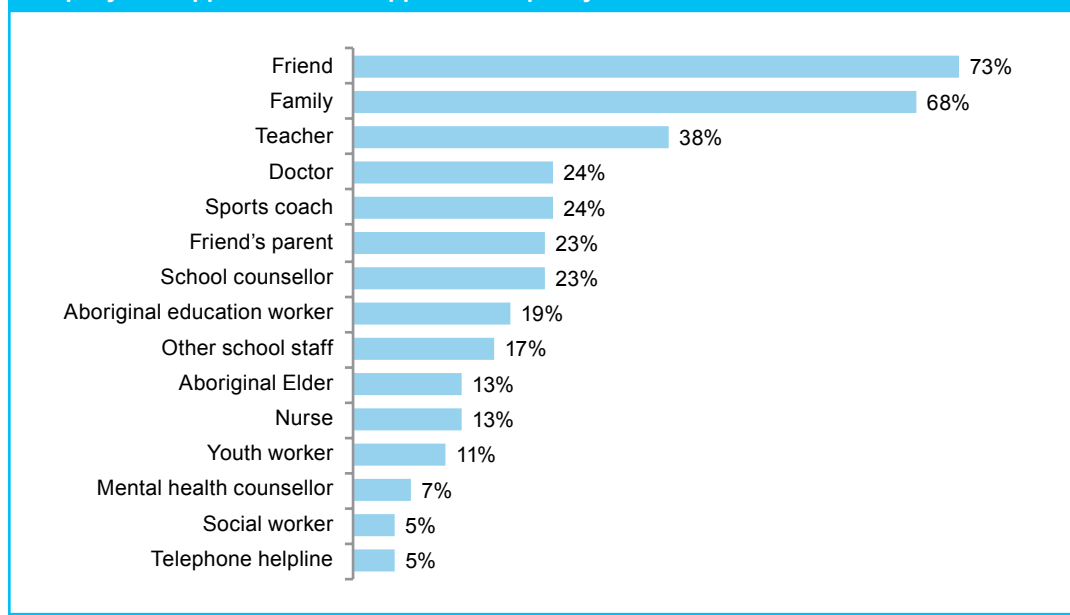
When students needed help, they most commonly approached friends and family members. They also sought support from a variety of different professionals in their lives, most commonly teachers, doctors, sports coaches, and school counsellors.

There were some gender differences. Females were more likely to have sought help from their friends (81% vs. 65% of males) and a school counsellor (27% vs. 18%), whereas males were more likely to seek help from a sports coach (29% vs. 20% of females).

The majority of male and female students found the people they approached for help to be helpful, although some vulnerable groups were less likely to feel this way. For example, youth who had been teased, socially excluded, and/or assaulted who asked a school counsellor for help were less likely than their peers who had not been bullied to have found the counsellor to be helpful (85% vs. 96%).

When youth found the adults in their lives to be helpful, there were health benefits. For example, youth who had asked their teacher for help and found this experience helpful were more likely to rate their mental health as either good or excellent (85% vs. 60%\* who asked for help but did not find it helpful).

People youth approached for support in the past year



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

# Peer relationships

Similar to youth across the province, 87% of male students in the Northeast reported having three or more close friends in their school or neighbourhood. Most local females also reported having three or more close friends (72%), although this percentage was lower than that for females throughout BC (81%).

Very few local youth had no close friends, but females were more likely than males to have one (8% vs. 4%) or two close friends (17% vs. 7%), whereas males were more likely to have ten or more close friends (32% vs. 17%).

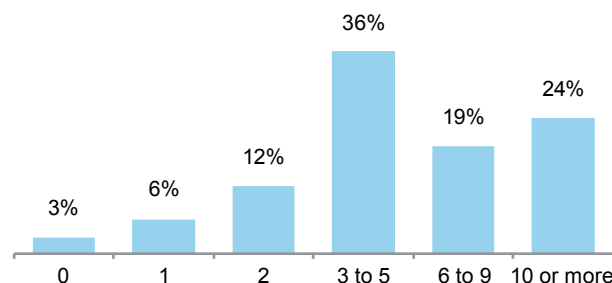
There were positive associations with having more than just one or two friends. For example, students who had three or more close friends in their school or neighbourhood were more likely than those with fewer friends to rate their overall health as good or excellent (84% vs. 61%).

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 themselves and their abilities than those with fewer friends.

Just over half (51%) of students in the Northeast had been in a romantic relationship in the past year. Among these students, 7% of male and female youth had been the victim of dating violence. While the percentage of students in a dating relationship was higher in the Northeast than in BC overall (39%), the rates of violence within relationships were comparable.



Number of close friends in school or neighbourhood



**79%** of local students had three or more close friends.

## Friends with pro-social attitudes

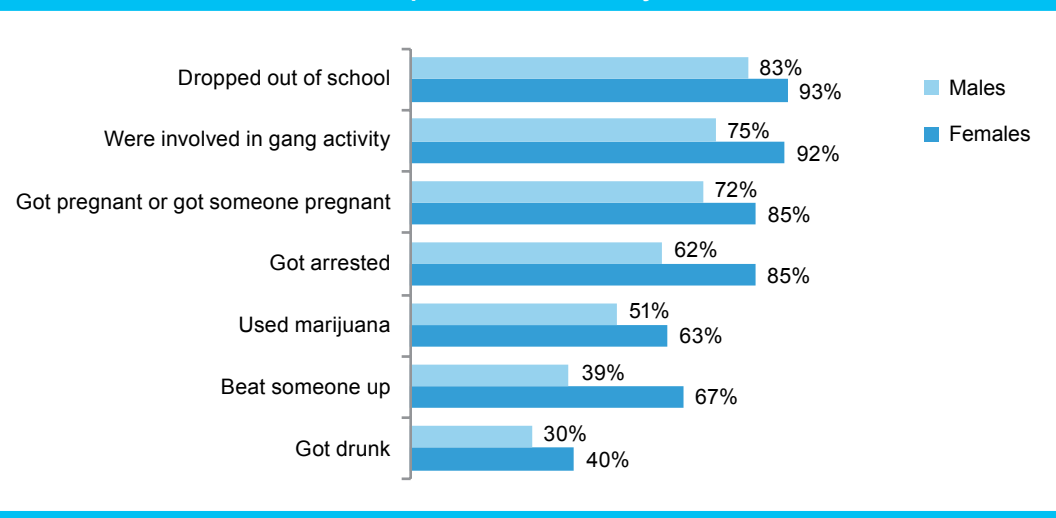
Students were asked if their friends would be upset with them if they were involved in certain risk behaviours, such as getting arrested, dropping out of school, or using marijuana. They generally had friends who would be upset with them for engaging in most of the behaviours.

However, students in the Northeast were less likely than their peers throughout BC to have friends who would be upset with them if they beat someone up (54% vs. 71%). This was particularly striking for males, with 39% of Northeast males having friends who would be upset if they beat someone up, compared to 60% provincially. Local males were also less likely to have friends who would be upset if they got arrested (62% vs. 71% provincially) or got drunk (30% vs. 40%).

Having pro-social peers was a protective factor for Northeast youth. For example, students whose friends would be upset with them if they beat someone up were less likely to have assaulted someone than those whose friends would not be upset with them for this reason.

Having friends with pro-social attitudes was linked to positive health for students who were facing challenges in their lives. For example, students who had been physically abused whose friends would be upset with them if they got drunk were less likely to have reported binge drinking in the past month.

Students whose friends would be upset with them if they...



# Neighbourhood safety

Reflective of the picture across the province, 77% of Northeast youth always felt safe inside their home, and 61% always felt this way in their neighbourhood during the daytime. However, local youth were more likely than their peers across the province to always feel safe in their neighbourhood at night (34% vs. 28% provincially).

Among youth who used transit, 17% always felt safe and 11% never did. Youth in the Northeast were more likely to never feel safe on transit than those across the province overall (11% vs. 5%).

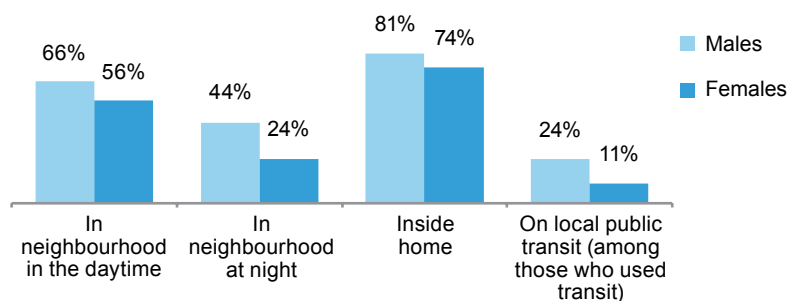
Males were more likely than females to always feel safe in their neighbourhood in the daytime or at night, and on transit.

Youth who always felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day were more likely to rate their mental health as good or excellent (87% vs. 53%\* who felt safe sometimes or less often), and were less likely to have missed out on necessary medical help than their peers who never felt safe (6% vs. 33%\*).

Feeling safe was associated with positive mental health among vulnerable youth. For example, Northeast students who had been physically abused were less likely to always feel safe in their neighbourhood in the daytime (39%\* vs. 65%) or in their home (53%\* vs. 82%). However, if these students did feel safe in their neighbourhood during the day, they were more likely to feel good about themselves.

Similarly, youth who were teased who always felt safe during the day were more likely to think that they could do things as well as most people.

Students who always felt safe in their neighbourhood



Note: The difference between males and females always feeling safe inside their home was not statistically significant.



# Community connectedness & cultural engagement

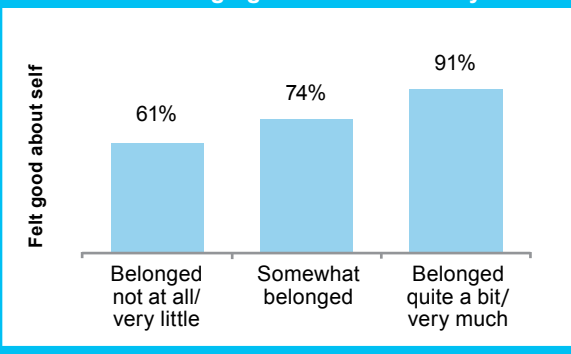
## Community connectedness

Students were asked how much they felt like a part of their community. In the Northeast, 36% of students reported that they felt quite a bit or very much connected to their community, while 24% felt very little or not at all connected. Both of these rates were similar to the province overall.

There were many benefits associated with feeling like a member of the community. For example, youth who felt like they were quite a bit or very much a part of their community were more likely to feel as competent as their peers (95% vs. 70% of those who did not feel even somewhat part of their community) and to feel good about themselves.

Victimized youth, in particular, benefitted from feeling like they were a part of their community. For example, youth who had been teased in the past year were more likely to rate their mental health as good or excellent if they felt connected to their community (88%) than if they only somewhat felt that way (62%) or did not feel connected (42%\*). Similarly, among youth who had been socially excluded, the more connected they felt to their community, the more likely they were to feel good about themselves (80%\* vs. 38% of those who were very little or not at all connected).

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



## Cultural engagement

In addition to feelings about their community, students were asked questions about their engagement in their culture. Similar to youth across the province, 6% of Northeast youth participated in cultural or traditional activities at least weekly. Youth who were involved in traditional activities on a weekly basis were also more likely to be volunteering weekly (39%\* vs. 15% who were involved less frequently).

# Summary list of protective factors

Throughout this report a number of protective factors in the lives of local 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	When compared to youth who had moved house, youth who had stayed in the same home for the past year were more likely to feel that there was an adult in their neighbourhood or community who cared about them.
Eight or more hours of sleep	Students with a mental health condition who slept for eight or more hours were less likely to have attempted suicide in the past year than those who got less sleep.
Good nutrition	Among youth who were obese, those who ate fruit or vegetables three or more times yesterday were twice as likely to feel good about themselves as those who ate fewer servings.
Sports and exercise	Among youth who had been physically and/or sexually abused, those who took part in organized sports on a weekly basis were more likely to rate their overall health as good or excellent.
Feeling safe at home, in school, and the community or neighbourhood	Youth who always felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day were more likely than their peers who never felt safe to rate their mental health as good or excellent, and were less likely to have missed out on necessary medical help.
Feeling connected to school	Among students who were bullied, the more connected they felt to their school, the more likely they were to have positive aspirations for the future.
Feeling engaged in activities	Students who felt their ideas were listened to were more likely to rate their overall health as either good or excellent compared to students who did not feel their ideas were listened to.
Feeling connected to family	Students who felt that their family paid attention to them were more likely than those who did not feel this way to engage in injury prevention behaviour such as always wearing a seat belt when in a car or other vehicle.



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

Students whose parents knew 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 than their peers whose parents were unaware of what they were doing. They were also more likely to have slept for eight or more hours on the night before taking the survey.

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

Students who had an adult in their family that they could talk to were less likely to miss out on mental health services when they felt that they needed them compared to students who did not feel they could turn to an adult relative.

**A supportive adult outside family**

Students who could identify a supportive adult outside of their family were more likely to feel like a part of their community than those who did not have such an adult in their life.

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

Students who had an adult in their neighborhood or community (outside of their school and family) who they felt cared about them reported more positive mental health.

**Helpful sources of support**

Youth who had asked their teacher for help and found this experience helpful were more likely to rate their mental health as either good or excellent compared to those who asked for help but did not find this helpful.

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

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.

**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 than those whose friends would not be upset with them for this reason.

**Community connectedness**

The more connected youth who had been socially excluded felt to their community, the more likely they were to feel good about themselves.

**Cultural engagement**

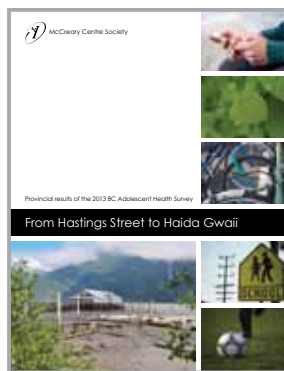
Youth who were involved in traditional cultural activities on a weekly basis were more likely than those involved less frequently to be volunteering weekly.

# 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 15 other regional reports at the Health Service Delivery Area level.

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.



