



Provincial results of the 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey

From Hastings Street to Haida Gwaii



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PROVINCIAL RESULTS OF THE 2013 BC ADOLESCENT HEALTH SURVEY

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Founded in 1977, McCreary Centre Society is a non-governmental not-for-profit organization committed to improving the health of BC youth through research, evaluation, and youth engagement projects.



Youth health • Youth research • Youth engagement



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Table of contents

The 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey	4
Executive summary	6
Youth in British Columbia	7
Physical health	12
Sleep	14
Mental health	16
Injuries & injury prevention	22
Nutrition	24
Body weight & body image	28
Sexual behaviour	30
Tobacco use	32
Alcohol use	34
Marijuana use	36
Substances other than alcohol & marijuana	38
Consequences of substance use & reported reasons for using	39
School	42
Bullying	46
Harassment & discrimination	50
Physical & sexual abuse	52
Employment	54
Physical activity, sports, & leisure	56
Transportation	60
Technology use	62
Youth engagement	66
Family relationships	68
Supportive & caring adults outside the family	70
Help seeking	72
Peer relationships	74
Neighbourhood safety	78
Community connectedness	80
Summary list of protective factors	82
Using the data	85
Acknowledgements	86
Index	88

The 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey

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, and the regional coverage was the highest yet. Fifty-six of the 59 BC school districts participated in the survey.

This is the first of a series of reports that will be published using the 2013 survey results. It includes some comparisons between students in the five different regions of the province. These are the Fraser, Northern, Interior, Vancouver Coastal, and Vancouver Island Health Authorities.

Sixteen reports at the Health Service Delivery Area level will be published over the coming year. These will be followed by specific reports focused on the health of various youth populations such as Aboriginal youth and youth in government care. A report on youth sexual health is already underway, and will also be published soon.

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, literacy challenges, 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 $p < .01$. This means there is up to a 1% likelihood that these results occurred by chance. Comparisons to previous years' BC AHS results are considered statistically significant at $p < .05$. This means there is up to a 5% likelihood that these results occurred by chance. Differences in tables or charts that are not statistically significant are noted.

The results presented in this report provide the most comprehensive and representative picture of youth health in the province. The trend results may have been affected by the inclusion of eight new school districts, the withdrawal of two school districts that participated in 2008, and a change in consent procedures in 30% of the participating school districts. However, additional testing indicated that the reported trends appear to have been unaffected by these changes.



ONLINE

A fact sheet explaining the methodology of the survey can be found at www.mcs.bc.ca.

November 2011–May 2012

Community consultations across BC ensure the 2013 survey captures new issues in youth health.

June–August 2012

Survey is pilot-tested with diverse youth aged 12–19.

August 2012

Survey is finalized.

September 2012

School districts are approached to participate in the survey.

November 2012

School district participation is finalized & enrolment figures are received.

December 2012

Sample of 1,645 classrooms is randomly drawn. McCreary's Youth Advisory & Action Council makes a film explaining the survey to students.

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



QUOTES

Quotes from students who completed the survey are included throughout the report.

January–February 2013

Survey administrators are trained.

June 2013

Data entry begins.

October 2013

Data is weighted & data analysis begins.

February–June 2013

Surveys are administered.

September 2013

Data entry is completed & data is cleaned, leaving a sample of 29,832 surveys for analysis.

February 2014

Results are released.

Executive summary

The 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey was administered to almost 30,000 public school students across the province. It provides a comprehensive look at the health of youth aged 12–19. The results from the survey show us that British Columbia youth come from increasingly diverse backgrounds. For example, between 2008 and 2013 the percentage of students speaking a language other than English at home increased, while the percentage of students who lived with their parents and those who identified as completely heterosexual decreased.

The survey also showed that youth are generally making better choices about risk behaviours than they have in previous years. For example, a lower percentage of students reported having tried tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, or any other substance than their peers five and ten years ago. They were also more likely to engage in injury prevention behaviours, such as always wearing a seat belt and not driving after drinking. These choices may also be reflected in better health outcomes: Students were less likely to have had a sexually transmitted infection or to have been pregnant or caused a pregnancy, and a smaller percentage reported serious injuries than in previous years.

There was a decrease in the percentage of students who had been physically or sexually abused. For example, 13% indicated having been physically abused or mistreated at some point in their life, a decrease from 17% in 2008 and 15% in 2003.

Despite these improvements, there are still a number of areas of concern. For example, only 24% of students slept at least nine hours on the night before they took the survey, and most used their phone or the Internet after they were supposed to be asleep (85% of females vs. 79% of males). This is concerning because lack of sleep was linked to poorer mental health.

Youth's responses to questions about their mental health were particularly worrying, especially among females, who were more likely than males to report extreme stress, extreme despair, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, and suicide attempts. Improvements seen between 2003 and 2008 in the percentage of students reporting suicide attempts continued for males but not for females.

Students in 2013 were less likely to be cyberbullied than in 2008, but were more likely to be teased or socially excluded than reported previously. Twenty-four percent of students admitted that they had bullied someone either in person or online. Females were more likely than males to be the victim of most forms of bullying, with 14-year-olds being particularly vulnerable.

While injuries overall have declined, 16% of youth had experienced a concussion in the past year. Yet adults may not be taking these injuries seriously. Among youth who had not accessed needed medical help, those who had a head injury were more likely to report that their parents would not take them (19% vs. 14%), and that they had previous negative experiences seeking medical help (15% vs. 10%).

Obesity is a major health concern in Canada. A larger percentage of youth were obese than in previous survey years, and only 17% of students aged 12 to 17 met the Canadian guidelines of an hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day.

The survey was able to identify a number of protective factors for BC youth that contribute to general health and well-being. These included physical activity; good nutrition; getting at least nine hours of sleep; feeling safe at home, school, and in their neighborhood; participating in cultural activities; having supportive adults and peers; having a sense of competence; and feeling listened to and valued.

Youth in British Columbia

Ethnic & cultural background

British Columbia is the most ethnically diverse province in Canada. In the 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS), students most commonly reported that they were of European heritage (53%). This was consistent with 2008, but reflected a decrease from 2003 when 61% of youth identified their background as European. Between 2008 and 2013 there was a rise in the percentage of youth who identified as Southeast Asian, South Asian, West Asian, African, and Latin/South/Central American.

Among students who knew their background, 17% indicated coming from two or more ethnic or cultural backgrounds. This was an increase from 16% in 2008 and from 9% in 2003.

As in 2008, 10% of students identified as Aboriginal. Among students who identified as Aboriginal, 64% were First Nations, 32% Métis (an increase from 23% in 2008), 2% Inuit, and 6% specified an Aboriginal group such as Blackfoot or Cherokee. (Youth could select more than one Aboriginal identity if it was applicable.)

About 1 in 4 Aboriginal youth had ever lived on reserve (26%), and 17% were living there currently (13% all the time and 4% some of the time). Fourteen percent reported that they spoke an Aboriginal language (such as Chilcotin, Cree, Shuswap, Gitksan, etc.).

New Canadians

The percentage of students born outside of Canada has not changed over the past decade (19%). However, there was an increase in the percentage of recent immigrants (22% of those born outside Canada had lived here for less than two years in 2013 vs. 17% in 2008 and 15% in 2003). Twenty-nine percent of youth born abroad had lived in Canada between 2 and 5 years, and the rest had lived in the country for 6 or more years (48%).

Seventy-three percent of youth born abroad indicated being a permanent resident or a Canadian citizen, while 22% were international students and 4% were refugees.

Family background	
European	53%
East Asian	18%
Aboriginal	10%
South Asian	10%
Southeast Asian	7%
Latin/South/Central American	4%
African	3%
Australian/Pacific Islander	2%
West Asian	2%
Other	2%
Don't know	8%

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.

Immigrant status and language spoken at home

	Northern	Interior	Vancouver Island	Fraser	Vancouver Coastal
Born outside Canada	5%	8%	12%	24%	29%
Lived in Canada less than 6 years	4%	4%	8%	12%	17%
Spoke language other than English at home most of the time	5%	6%	7%	28%	32%

Note: The difference between the Interior and Vancouver Island regions on speaking a language other than English at home was not statistically significant.

Language

A little over half (51%) of BC students spoke only English at home (a decrease from 53% in 2008 and 57% in 2003). Twenty-nine per cent of youth reported sometimes speaking a language other than English at home, and 21% reported speaking another language at home most of the time.

Sexual orientation

	Males	Females
Completely straight	85%	77%
Mostly straight	4%	9%
Bisexual	1%	4%
Gay or lesbian	1%	1%
Questioning	1%	2%
Don't have attractions	8%	7%

Note: The difference between males and females who reported not having attractions was not statistically significant.

Sexual orientation & gender identity

Both male and female students were less likely to identify as completely straight in 2013 (81%) than in previous years (86% in 2008 and 85% in 2003). There was a rise in the percentage of male and female students who identified as bisexual, and an increase in the percentage of female students who identified as lesbian.

Fewer than 1% of youth identified as transgender, and 5% of Aboriginal students identified as Two Spirit. (See *New questions* below.)

New questions

In response to requests from health professionals, schools, and youth, the 2013 BC AHS included two new questions about identity. The first asked youth if they identified as transgender, and the second asked Aboriginal youth if they identified as Two Spirit.

For both questions, students could answer 'yes', 'no', or 'I don't know what [transgender/Two Spirit] means'. Many students did not know what these terms meant. For example, 59% of Aboriginal students reported that they did not know what Two Spirit meant.

Aboriginal students who lived on reserve or spoke an Aboriginal language were more likely to understand the term and to identify as Two Spirit. Further analyses of young people's responses to these two questions will be conducted by McCreary and academic partners.

1% of students lived alone.

Home life

A smaller percentage of youth reported living with at least one parent (including a step-parent) compared to a decade earlier (94% in 2013 vs. 96% in 2003 and 2008). Among students who did not live with their parent(s), 19% lived with their grandparent(s) and 26% lived with other adult relative(s).

Who youth lived with most of the time	
Mother/stepmother	85%
Father/stepfather	71%
Sibling(s)/stepsibling(s)	58%
Grandparent(s)	9%
Both parents at different times	8%
Other adult(s) related to me	4%
Other adult(s) not related to me	2%
Other children or youth	2%
Foster parent(s)	1%
Two mothers/two fathers	1%
I live alone	1%
My own child or children	<1%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

Government care & Youth Agreements

The 2008 BC AHS asked students a combined question about their experiences in foster care, group homes, and on a Youth Agreement. Three percent of students in 2008 reported having had at least one of these experiences.

In 2013 the question changed to look separately at experiences of foster care, group homes, and Youth Agreements. Three percent of students reported living in a foster home or group home at some point in their lives, with a little over 2% having lived in foster care, and a little under 2% having stayed in a group home. One percent of students reported currently living in foster care or a group home.

One percent of male and female students aged 15 or older indicated they had been on a Youth Agreement at some point in their lives.

Def.

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

A **YOUTH AGREEMENT** supports 16- to 18-year-olds (and occasionally 15-year-olds) to live independently. It is for young people who are homeless, cannot live with their family, and for whom government care is not a viable option.



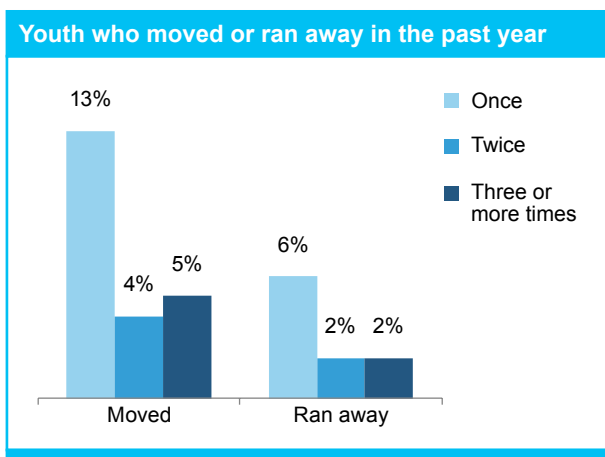
Moved or ran away from home

More than 1 in 5 youth had moved from one home to another in the past year. A little over 9% had run away, with females more likely than males to have done so (11% vs. 8%).

Moving can have a negative impact on young people and can be particularly difficult for youth in government care, as it can separate them from their community, school, and friends. Almost 1 in 5 students who had been in a foster home or group home had moved three or more times in the past year (19% vs. 4% of youth who had not lived in a foster or group home).

Youth who had been in a foster home or group home were also more likely than their peers to have no close friends at their school or in their neighbourhood (6% vs. 3% of youth who had not lived in government care). They were less likely to have three or more close friends (75% vs. 83%), and were more likely to feel that teachers and other school staff did not care about them.

Similarly, 21% of youth aged 15 or older who reported ever being on a Youth Agreement had moved three or more times in the past year, and 9% had no close friends at their school or in their neighbourhood.



Among students currently living in a foster home or group home, those who had not moved in the past year were more likely than those who had moved to report good or excellent mental health (84% vs. 67% who moved at least once) and good or excellent health overall (86% vs. 71%).

Students whose parents were not working were also more likely to have moved from one home to another during the past year (37% vs. 22% of students with employed parents), and to have moved three or more times (11% vs. 5%).



I have run away from home about three times.”

20% of students cared for a relative on an average school day.

Parental presence

Most students (88%) reported that their parent(s) or guardian(s) worked locally. However, 6% had at least one parent who worked outside of Canada. Four percent reported that their parents did not work.

There were some regional differences, with students in Vancouver Coastal the most likely to report that their parents worked outside of Canada (11%).

Students who were recent immigrants (had lived in Canada five years or less) were more likely to have parents who worked outside of Canada (27% vs. 4% of those who had lived in Canada longer).

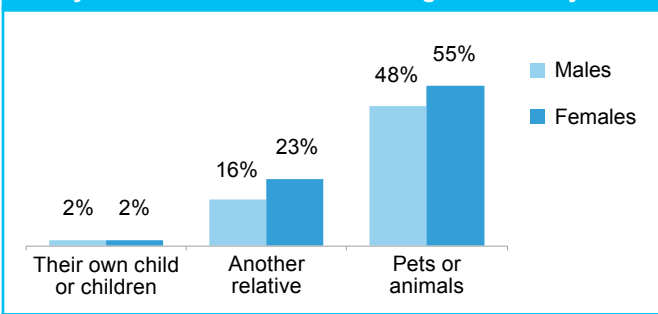
Caretaking responsibilities

On an average school day, 61% of students (56% of males vs. 66% of females) had some caretaking responsibilities. These included caring for pets or other animals (52%), caring for a relative (such as a disabled relative or younger sibling; 20%), and/or caring for their own child or children (2%).

Students who took care of a relative or their own child were more likely than other students to be dealing with associated challenges such as poverty. For example, they were more likely than their peers without caretaking responsibilities to often or always go to bed hungry because there was not enough money for food at home (2% vs. 1%). Caregivers were also more likely to miss out on extracurricular activities because they could not afford them (20% vs. 13% without caretaking responsibilities) or because they were too busy (51% vs. 45%).

When asked where they saw themselves in five years, young carers (those who took care of relatives or their own children) were less likely than their peers to see a generally positive future for themselves and more likely to see a negative one, such as thinking they would be dead or homeless.

Who youth took care of on an average school day

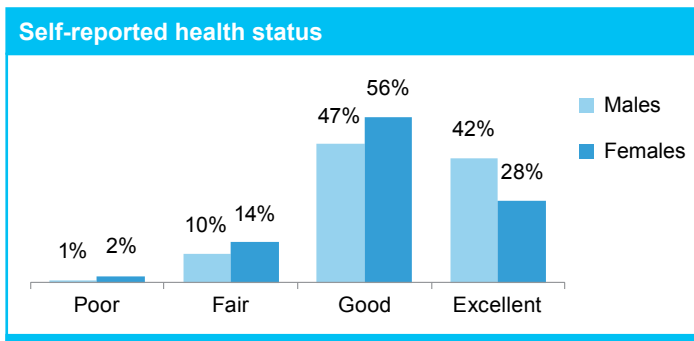


In this report

PARENTS refers to students' parent(s) or guardian(s). ➔

Physical health

Eighty-seven percent of youth reported that their health was good or excellent. This was a return to 2003 levels, following a drop to 84% in 2008. Consistent with BC AHS results from previous years, males were more likely than females to rate their health as excellent.



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

Health conditions & disabilities

Over a quarter of students (26%) had at least one health condition or disability. The most common were a mental or emotional health condition (10%) and a long-term or chronic condition, such as diabetes or asthma (10%). Youth also reported having learning disabilities (4%), sensory disabilities (3%), behavioural conditions (3%), or allergies severe enough to require an epinephrine injection (2%).

Females were more likely than males to report having a health condition or disability (30% vs. 22%). Most notably, they were three times more likely to report a mental or emotional health condition (15% vs. 5% of males).

For around half of females (49%) and a third of males (31%) with a health condition or disability, their condition sometimes prevented them from doing things their peers could do, and 4% of males and females had a condition that always stopped them from doing these activities.

“

I am unable to do certain daily activities because of my physical set-back. Even though it's not noticeable to everyone, it's a struggle.”

8% of youth did not get medical help when they thought they needed it in the past year.

Foregoing needed medical care

In the past year, 10% of females and 6% of males did not get medical help when they thought they needed it, which was a decrease from 13% in 2008.

For both males and females, the most common reason for not accessing medical help was thinking or hoping the problem would go away. However, the next most common reason for males was being too busy to go, whereas for females it was not wanting their parents to know.

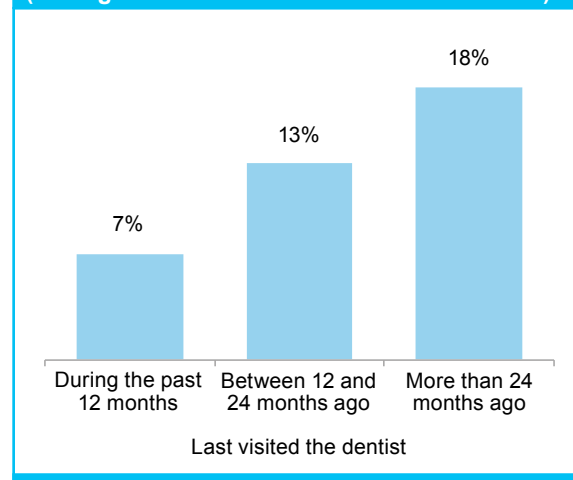
Among males and females who did not access medical help, there was an increase from 2008 in the percentage who did not access care because they did not want their parents to know (37% in 2013 vs. 19% in 2008).

Dental visits

Most youth (84%) had visited the dentist in the past 12 months, although 5% had last visited more than 24 months ago and 2% had never been to the dentist (2% of males vs. 1% of females).

Among youth who had ever been to the dentist, 8% reported that their last visit had been to address pain (9% of females vs. 8% of males). The longer it had been since youth had gone to the dentist, the more likely it was that their last visit was for pain.

**Last visit to dentist was for pain
(among students who had been to the dentist)**



Sleep

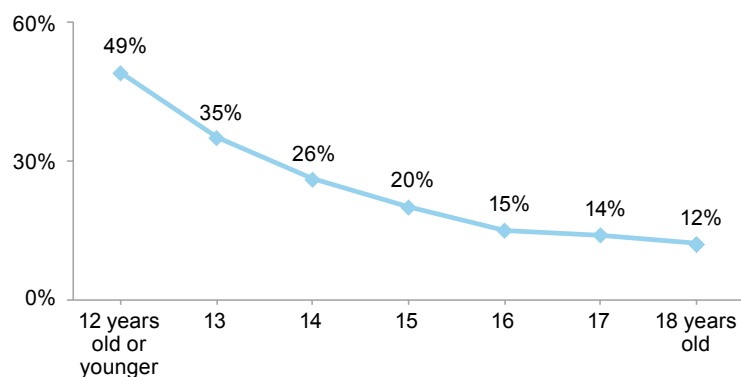
For the first time, the BC AHS included a question which asked how many hours of sleep students got on the night before they took the survey. Only 27% of males and 21% of females slept for nine hours or more. Another 29% of youth slept eight hours (31% of males vs. 28% of females).

Five percent of youth slept four hours or less the night before. This was the case for 6% of youth in Grade 12, compared to 2% of those in Grade 7.

Forty-five percent of students (49% of females vs. 40% of males) reported that they were doing homework after the time they were supposed to go to sleep. Students in Vancouver Coastal were more likely than youth elsewhere in the province to do this.

Additionally, the majority of youth (85% of females vs. 79% of males) were online and/or on their phone after they were supposed to be asleep. Among these youth, only 19% slept for at least nine hours on the night before taking the survey, compared to 44% of those who had no such distractions.

Students who slept nine or more hours last night



Students in every grade who slept nine or more hours the night before completing the survey were more likely than students who got less sleep to report that their mental health was good or excellent. Further, rates of good or excellent mental health increased with each hour of sleep that students got, with consistent findings for students in every grade.

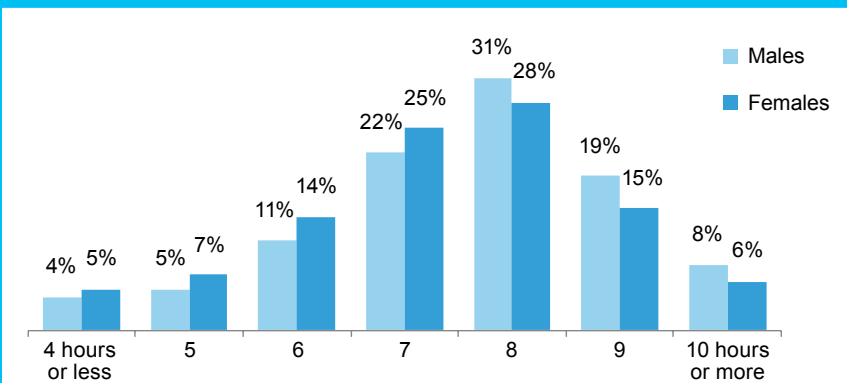
Fact

RECOMMENDED SLEEP The National Sleep Foundation recommends that adolescents have 8.5 to 9.25 hours of sleep each night.

<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/>

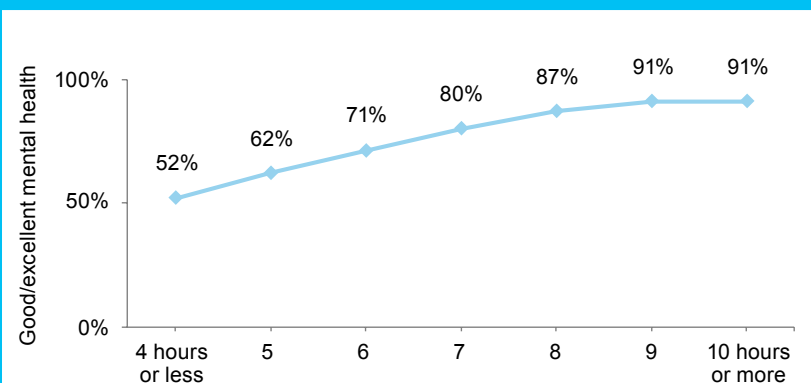
82% of youth were online or on their phone after they were supposed to be asleep.

Hours slept last night



Note: The difference between males and females who slept four hours or less was not statistically significant.

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



I take medication to sleep.”

Mental health

A new question in the 2013 BC AHS asked students to rate their overall mental health. Most reported that their mental health was good or excellent. However, the percentage of males and females who reported good or excellent mental health was lower than the percentage who reported good or excellent overall health (81% vs. 87%).

The majority of students felt good about themselves and felt they were as competent as most of their peers. However, males were more likely than females to feel this way.

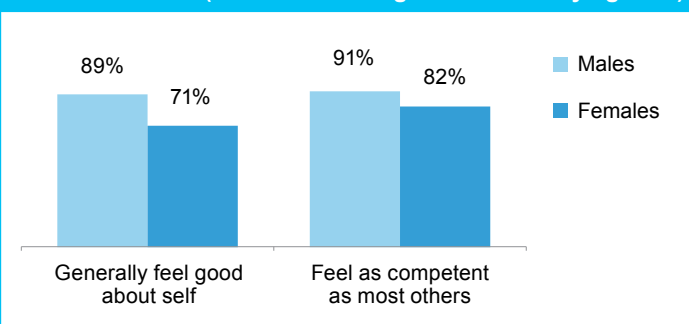
Most students reported excelling in at least one area, such as sports, school, the arts, or relationships. As with self-confidence, males were more likely than females to indicate they were really good at something (81% vs. 72%). Sense of competence went down with age, with 82% of students aged 12 or younger thinking they were really good at something, compared to 74% of 18-year-olds.

Self-reported mental health status



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

Self-confidence (students who 'agreed' or 'mostly agreed')



New questions

The 2013 BC AHS asked new questions based on feedback from youth and community stakeholders. These included questions about positive mental health and mental health conditions.

87% of males and 76% of females reported good or excellent mental health.

For the first time, the BC AHS included two questions about feeling calm and at peace, and feeling happy in the past month. Students most commonly felt calm and at peace most of the time (41%). Males were more likely than females to feel calm all or most of the time. A similar pattern was seen for feeling happy.

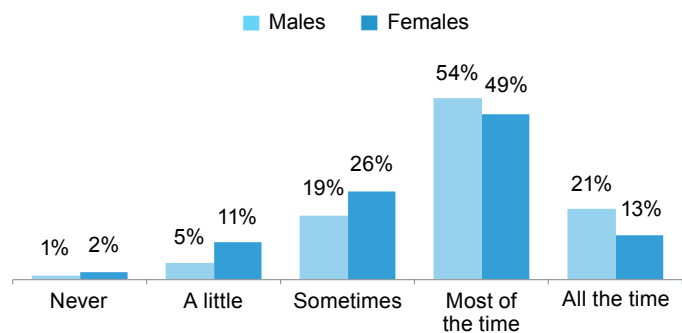
Mental health conditions

Students were asked about specific mental health conditions. They most commonly reported having Depression, Anxiety Disorder or panic attacks, and/or Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

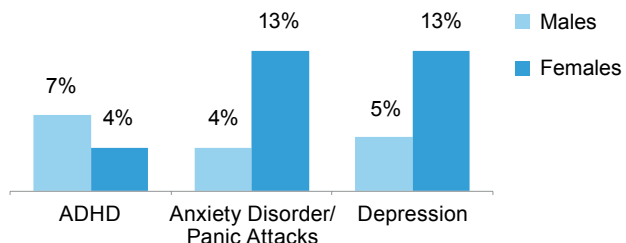
Females were more likely than males to report having at least one condition (22% vs. 15%), and were specifically more likely to report having Depression (13% vs. 5%), Anxiety Disorder or panic attacks (13% vs. 4%), and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD; 1% vs. < 1%). Males were more likely than females to report having Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD; 7% vs. 4%), Autism or Asperger's (1% vs. < 1%), and an alcohol or other drug addiction.

Fewer than one percent of students indicated having Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), with equal rates for males and females.

How often students felt happy in the past month



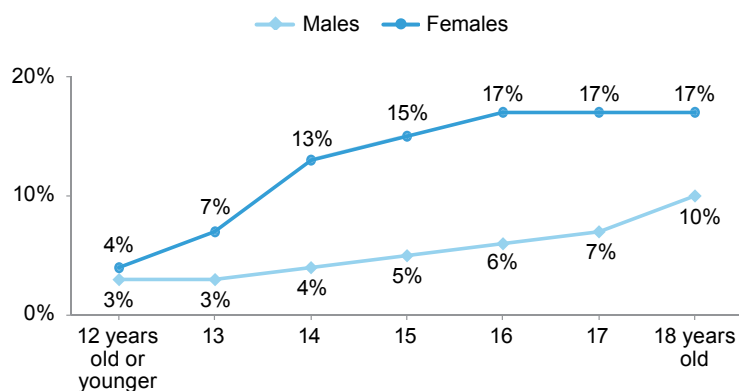
Most commonly reported mental health conditions



I'm getting help with Depression."

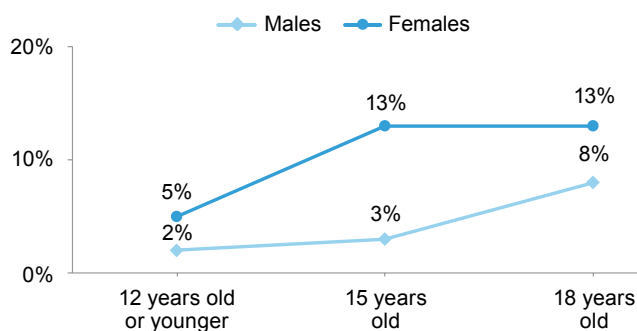
10% of females and 4% of males reported feeling extreme despair in the past month.

Students who experienced extreme stress in the past month



Note: The difference between males and females aged 12 years or younger was not statistically significant.

Students who experienced extreme despair in the past month



Stress & despair

As was the case in 2008, most youth (83%) 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 (13% vs. 5%). Consistent with findings from 2008, this gender difference was found at every age after age 12.

Students were also asked the extent to which they felt so sad, discouraged, or hopeless that they wondered if anything was worthwhile. Just over half (52%) reported feeling this type of despair at least sometimes in the past month, which was an increase from 2008 (48%) but similar to the rate in 2003.

Students aged 14 and older were more likely in 2013 than in 2008 to report extreme levels of despair to the point where they could not function.



“

We're really too young to be as stressed as we are.”

Self-harm

Fifteen percent of students (8% of males vs. 22% of females) reported cutting or injuring themselves on purpose without trying to kill themselves in the past year. Among students who self-harmed, females did so more often.

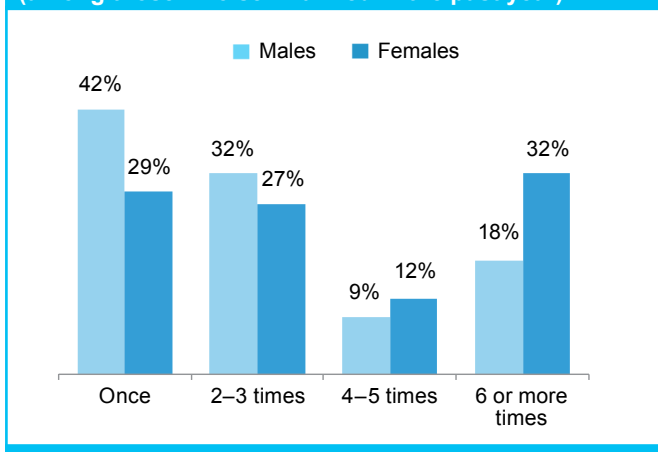
Suicide

Eight percent of males reported suicidal ideation in the past year, which was a decrease from 9% in 2008 and 11% in 2003. However, the decline for females seen between 2003 (21%) and 2008 (14%) did not continue, but instead rose to 17%.

Similarly, the rate of female students who reported suicide attempts in the past year increased between 2008 and 2013, but remained lower than the rate in 2003, while rates for males remained constant.

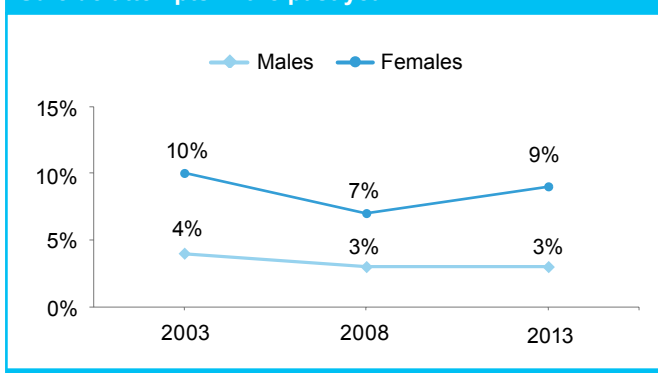
A known risk factor for attempting suicide is having had a family member or close friend attempt or die by suicide. Thirteen percent of students reported that a family member had tried to kill themselves at some point (4% in the past year), and 23% reported that a close friend had attempted suicide (16% in the past year).

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



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

Suicide attempts in the past year



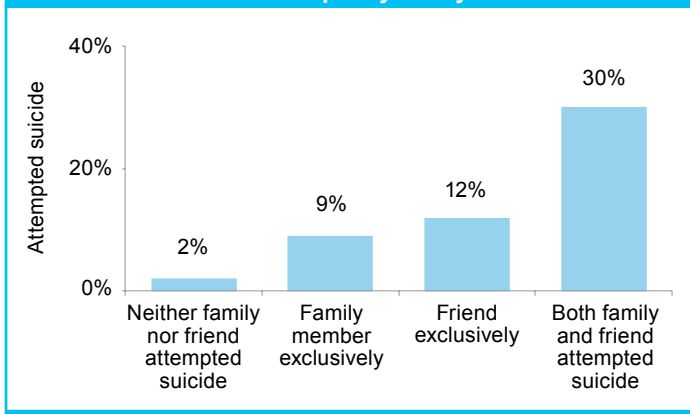
Note: The differences among males were not statistically significant.

30% of youth who had both a family member and a friend attempt suicide had attempted suicide themselves in the past year.

Students in rural areas were more likely than those in urban areas to have ever had a family member (17% vs. 12%) or a close friend (27% vs. 23%) attempt suicide.

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

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



Hope for the future

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

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

Youth who experienced better mental health were more likely to feel positive about the future. For example, 91% of those who reported good or excellent mental health envisioned only positive circumstances in five years, compared to 76% of youth who reported fair or poor mental health.

Similarly, the more often youth felt happy in the past month, the more likely they were to have only positive future expectations.

Youth who reported high levels of despair were more likely to expect negative outcomes or to not know what the future held for them (compared to their peers who reported low levels of despair).



I've improved a lot in the past year, and I've been a lot happier in general."

Foregoing mental health services

Eleven percent of students (17% of females vs. 5% of males) reported not accessing mental health services in the past year when they thought they needed to. Male students were less likely to forego needed mental health services in 2013 than in 2008 (5% vs. 7%), but there was no difference for females between survey years.

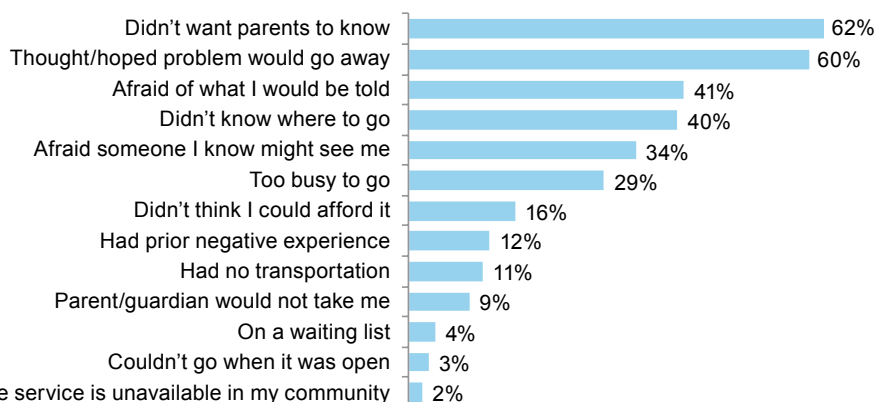
Among students who did not access needed mental health services, the most common reasons included not wanting their parents to know (64% of females vs. 57% of males), thinking or hoping the problem would go away (62% of females vs. 54% of males), feeling fearful of what the mental health professional would tell them (43% of females vs. 33% of males), and not knowing where to go (40% of males and females).

Both male and female students who did not access these needed services were more likely in 2013 than in 2008 to list certain

reasons for not doing so. Specifically, a larger percentage reported they did not want their parents to know (62% in 2013 vs. 43% in 2008), hoped the problem would go away (60% vs. 56%), did not know where to go (40% vs. 30%), feared someone they knew might see them (34% vs. 23%), thought they could not afford it (16% vs. 11%), or had no transportation to get there (11% vs. 8%).

The percentage of students who did not access needed mental health services was comparable across Health Authorities. However, there were some regional differences in reasons for not accessing these services. For example, students in the North and Interior were more likely to report they had no transportation to get there, compared to students in Vancouver Coastal. The only urban-rural difference was that students in rural areas were more likely to indicate that the service was not available in their community (5% vs. 1% in urban areas).

Reasons for not accessing needed mental health services in the past year
(among students who felt they needed services)



Note: Youth could choose more than one response.



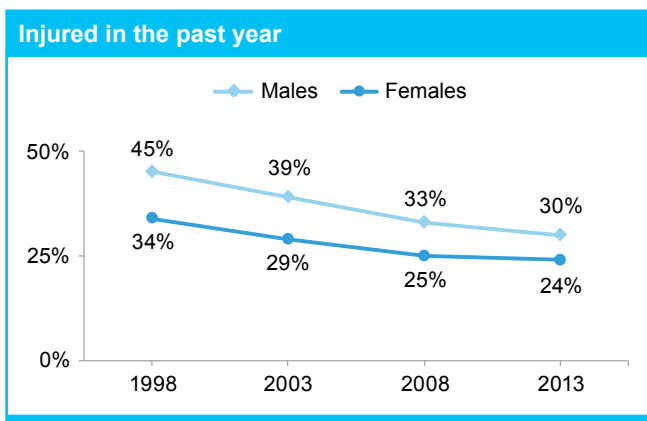
I want to see
a counsellor.”

Injuries & injury prevention

Injuries

The percentage of youth who were injured seriously enough to require medical attention continued to decline from previous survey years. Males remained more likely than females to be seriously injured. For example, 5% of males were injured rollerblading or skateboarding, compared to 1% of females.

The majority of injuries (57%) occurred while students were playing or training for sports or other recreational activities. Other serious injuries were the result of walking or running outside (8%), snowboarding or skiing (6%), bicycle riding (6%), a car or other motor vehicle accident (4%), fighting with another person (2%), and working (2%). Five percent of youth who were injured reported that they were using an iPod, cellphone, or other portable device at the time of their injury.



Note: The difference for females between 2008 and 2013 was not statistically significant.



I've had three concussions in two years, and I don't tell anyone because I don't want to stop playing rugby or football."



Def.

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

Concussions

In the past year, 16% of youth (19% of males vs. 14% of females) suffered a concussion. Most reported one concussion, while 3% had two, 1% had three, and 1% had four or more.

The most common symptoms students experienced were headaches, dizziness or balance problems, being dazed or having a memory gap, and/or blurred vision. Among youth who had a concussion, 55% reported three or more symptoms (60% of females vs. 51% of males).

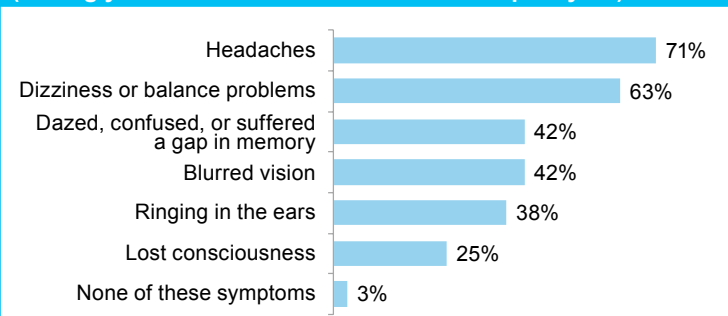
Eighteen percent of youth who experienced a concussion in the past year did not access medical care when they thought they needed it. Among students who had not accessed needed medical help, youth who had been concussed were more likely to report that it was because their parents would not take them (19% vs. 14% of youth who had not had a concussion) or because of negative experiences accessing medical help previously (15% vs. 10%).

Injury prevention

Youth who wore a helmet when active (e.g., snowboarding, skateboarding, or cycling) were less likely to have had a concussion in the past year than those who did not wear a helmet. For example, among youth who cycled, 15% of those who always wore a helmet had experienced a concussion, compared to 22% of those who never wore one. Those who never wore a helmet were also more likely to report multiple head injuries (e.g., 7% had two or more concussions vs. 3% who always wore a helmet).

Seventy-four percent of youth always wore a seat belt when they were riding in a motor vehicle, which was an increase from 66% in 2008. Youth in Grades 9 and 10 were the least likely to always wear a seat belt, while students in Grades 7 and 12 were the most likely.

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



Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

Nutrition

The Canadian Food Guide recommends that youth eat several servings of fruit and vegetables every day. For example, males aged 14–18 should eat eight servings of fruit and vegetables and females should eat seven servings.

Overall, more youth reported eating fruit or vegetables at least once on the day before taking the survey in 2013 than in 2008 (94% vs. 92%). However, around a third of students had fruit or vegetables only once or twice that day (34%).

In 2013, the majority of youth reported consuming water (96%), fruit (86%), vegetables or green salad (82%), and sweets (77%) at least once the day before. They also consumed fast food, such as pizza, hot dogs, chips, and fries (41%); pop or soda (35%); energy drinks (6%); and coffee or coffee-based beverages (27%). Also, 12% had eaten food grown or caught by them or their family, and 38% had eaten traditional foods from their background.

There was a decrease in the percentage of youth who consumed fast food (from 48% in 2008), pop (from 42%), and energy drinks (from 11%). However, there was a rise in the percentage of youth who ate sweets (from 64% in 2008).

Although there were no gender differences in eating fruit on the day before taking the survey, females were more likely than males to have consumed vegetables, sweets, and coffee or coffee-based beverages. Males, on the other hand, were more likely than females to have had fast food, traditional foods from their background, food grown or caught by them or their family, water, pop or soda, and energy drinks. Males were at least twice as likely as females to have consumed fast food, pop, and energy drinks three or more times on the day before taking the survey.

Youth who ate their evening meals with their parents most or all of the time were more likely to report eating fruit or vegetables three or more times yesterday (64% vs. 47% who ate with their parents less often). They were also more likely to have sweets, traditional foods from their background, food grown or caught by them or their family, and water. They were less likely to report consuming fast food, pop or soda, energy drinks, and coffee or coffee-based beverages.



It is hard to eat healthy because fruit etc. is not cheap at all. It's cheaper to buy junk food.”



54% of students always ate breakfast on school days.

There were some regional differences in what youth ate on the day before they took the survey. Youth in the Fraser and Vancouver Coastal regions were twice as likely as youth elsewhere to consume traditional foods from their background (46%–55% vs. 21%–23% elsewhere). Youth in the North were the least likely to eat fruit (82%) and vegetables (77%), and the most likely to drink pop or soda (43%) and energy drinks (10%).

There were other factors that appeared to be linked with what youth ate and drank. For example, youth who lived alone were less likely than their peers to have had fruit, vegetables, and water; and were more likely to consume energy drinks and coffee or coffee-based beverages. Also, youth who had a mental health condition such as Depression or an eating disorder were more likely than their peers without such a condition to have consumed energy drinks (9% vs. 5%) and coffee or coffee-based beverages (39% vs. 26%) at least once yesterday.

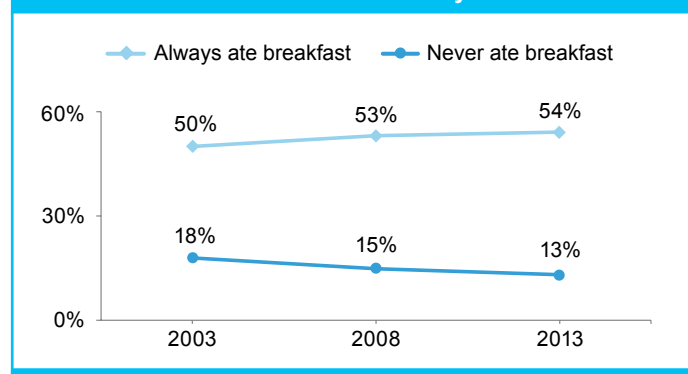
Youth who reported eating fruit and vegetables three or more times on the day before taking the survey were more likely to participate in at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity (20% vs. 11% who had them less often). They also reported better mental health. For example, they were less likely than youth who ate fruit and vegetables less often to report extreme stress and were more likely to have felt happy.

Breakfast

The improving trend seen between 2003 and 2008 for youth eating breakfast continued. As in previous years, males were more likely than females to always have breakfast on school days (61% vs. 48%), while females were more likely to never eat breakfast (15% vs. 10%).

Vancouver Coastal had the highest percentage of students who reported always eating breakfast on school days, while the North had the lowest rate. However, among students who did not eat breakfast at home, those in the North were the most likely to have their breakfast at school (11% vs. 5%–7% elsewhere).

Youth who ate breakfast on school days



73% of students who did not eat breakfast at home reported it was because they did not have time.

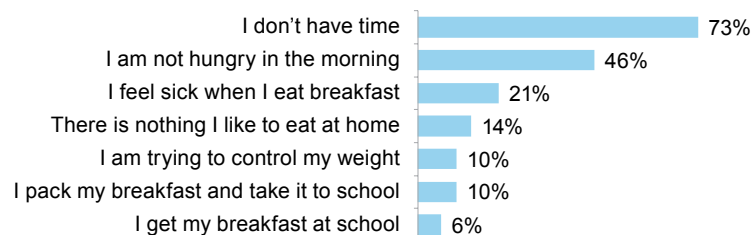
Among students who reported not eating breakfast at home, the top three reasons for both males and females were that they did not have time (75% of females vs. 70% of males), they were not hungry (50% of females vs. 40% of males), and they felt sick when they ate breakfast (28% of females vs. 11% of males). Females were more likely

than males to report they were trying to control their weight (14% vs. 3%), and that they took their breakfast to school (12% vs. 7%). Having no food at home to eat was a reality for 2% of students who did not eat breakfast at home.

Youth who relied on public transit, a school bus, or hitchhiking to get to school were less likely to eat breakfast at home than those who got to school by other methods.

Youth who ate breakfast at least sometimes on school days were more likely than those who missed breakfast to report engaging in physical activity in the past week and to report better mental health.

**Most common reasons for not eating breakfast at home
(among youth who did not eat breakfast at home)**



Note: Youth could choose more than one response.



I think healthy eating should be encouraged more than it is.”



Def.

Throughout this report, there are mentions of youth who **WENT TO BED HUNGRY**. This refers to youth who went to bed hungry because there was not enough money for food at home. —

Going to bed hungry

BC continues to have the highest child poverty rate in Canada. The survey was not able to fully capture poverty but did ask a variety of questions looking at outcomes of poverty, such as missing out on extra-curricular opportunities (see p. 58). The survey also asked students about extreme measures of poverty such as going to bed hungry.

The vast majority of BC students reported that they never went to bed hungry because there was not enough money for food at home (93%). Six percent went to bed hungry sometimes, and 1% went to bed hungry often or always. This marks a decrease from 2008, when 9% of students experienced hunger some of the time and 2% went to bed hungry often or always.

Some youth were at greater risk of going to bed hungry. These included youth whose parent(s) or guardian(s) were unemployed

(20% vs. 7% of youth whose parents worked) and youth in rural communities (9% vs. 7% of urban-based youth).

Among Aboriginal youth, 3% reported going to bed hungry often or always, which was a decrease from 2008 (5%). However, the rate remained above that for non-Aboriginal youth (1%).

About 1 in 6 youth who indicated going to bed hungry at least sometimes also reported not having any food at home to eat for breakfast (17% vs. 1% of those who did not go to bed hungry).

Some youth may have been using coffee, energy drinks, or pop or soda in an attempt to reduce hunger, as those who drank these beverages three or more times yesterday were more likely to report going to bed hungry at least some of the time (17% vs. 7%).



With only one parent working,
it's hard for us to buy good food.”

Body weight & body image

Being overweight and obese in adolescence has been linked to a number of poor health outcomes including diabetes, adult obesity, and mental and emotional health problems. BC has lower rates of obesity than many other parts of Canada, but the survey results showed an increase in the percentage of overweight and obese youth.

Trends in BMI weight categories			
	2003	2008	2013
Males			
Underweight	2%	2%	4%
Healthy weight	72%	73%	70%
Overweight	19%	18%	18%
Obese	7%	7%	8%
Females			
Underweight	2%	2%	3%
Healthy weight	84%	84%	81%
Overweight	11%	11%	12%
Obese	3%	3%	4%

Note: The difference between 2003 and 2008 for healthy weight males was not statistically significant; differences for overweight males were not statistically significant.

Note: The difference between 2008 and 2013 for underweight females was not statistically significant.

According to their BMI, 76% of youth were a healthy weight for their age and gender, while 3% were underweight, 15% overweight, and 6% were obese.

Males were more likely than females to be underweight, overweight, or obese. Younger students were more likely to be obese compared to older students (8% in Grade 7 vs. 6% in Grade 12). Regionally, youth living in the North were the most likely to be overweight (20%) or obese (11%).

The percentage of youth who were a healthy weight decreased from 2008 and 2003. In 2013 the percentage of females who were overweight or obese increased slightly, as did the percentage of underweight and obese males.

Students were asked how they saw themselves. Over two thirds felt they were about the right weight (68%), whereas 10% thought they were underweight, and the remaining 22% felt they were overweight. Older students were less likely to feel they were about the right weight compared to younger students.

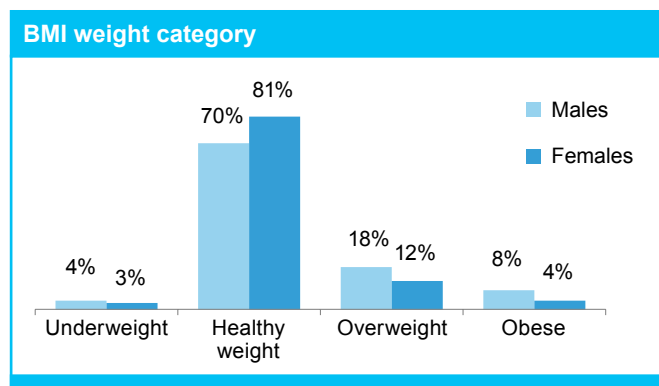
Def.

BODY MASS INDEX (BMI) was calculated from students' self-reported height and weight measurements.

16% of females were overweight or obese according to their BMI, but 30% thought they were overweight.

The majority of youth who were a healthy weight according to their BMI felt they were about the right weight (79% of males and 72% of females). However, over a fifth (22%) of healthy weight females thought they were overweight, compared to 4% of males.

A third of healthy weight males were trying to gain weight (vs. 4% of healthy weight females), while 52% of healthy weight females were trying to lose weight (vs. 13% of healthy weight males).

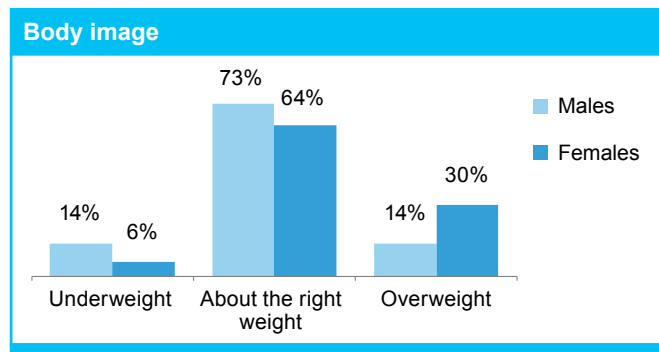


Eating behaviours

Twenty-seven percent of youth had binge eaten in the past year (35% of females vs. 19% of males), and 6% had done so weekly.

Binge eating was more common among older students. For example, 41% of 18-year-old females had binged in the past year compared to 27% of 13-year-olds. Obese youth were the most likely to have binge eaten on a weekly basis (10% vs. 6% of healthy weight youth).

In the past year, 5% of males and twice as many females vomited on purpose after eating (purged). Among females, those who were overweight or obese were more likely to have purged at least once in the past year (13% vs. 10% of healthy weight females).



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



A lot of males, including myself, are using nutritional supplements to aid in weight lifting... I would like to know the long term effects it has on teens.”

Sexual behaviour

Oral sex

A total of 23% of students reported ever having oral sex, which was a decrease from 26% in 2008 for both males and females. Although equal percentages of males and females indicated having oral sex, males were more likely to have received oral sex (21% vs. 18% females), whereas females were more likely to have given it (21% vs. 13% of males). Rates of both giving and receiving oral sex increased with age.

Sexual intercourse

Nineteen percent of students indicated ever having sex, other than oral sex or masturbation, with similar rates for males and females. This percentage reflected a decrease from a decade earlier for both genders (24% in 2003).

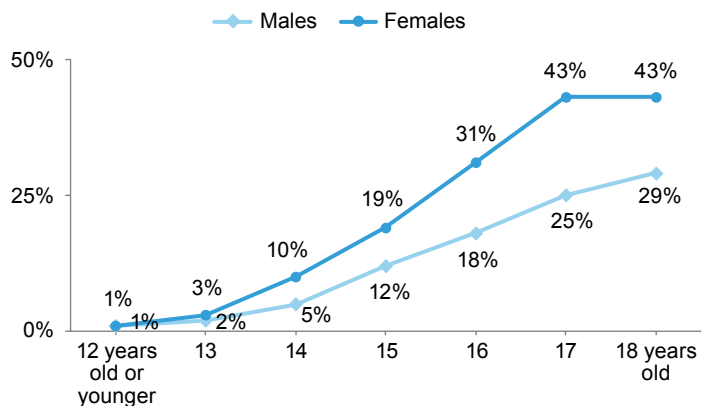
Consistent with previous BC AHS findings and with the pattern for oral sex, older students were more likely than younger ones to have had sexual intercourse. For example, 2% of Grade 7 students reported having had intercourse, compared to 44% of Grade 12 students.

Sexually transmitted infections

Overall, 1% of students had been told by a doctor or nurse at some point that they had a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Three percent of students who had ever had sexual intercourse reported an STI, which was lower than in 2008 and 2003 (4%).

There were comparable rates of STIs between students who had oral sex exclusively (i.e., never had sexual intercourse) and those who had sexual intercourse exclusively (i.e., never had oral sex).

Students who gave oral sex



Note: The difference between males and females who were 13 years old was not statistically significant.

81% of students had never had sexual intercourse.

Condom use

Sixty-nine percent of students who ever had sexual intercourse reported that they or their partner had used a condom or other latex barrier the last time they had sex (72% of males vs. 66% of females). The percentage of males who had used a condom was similar to 2003 and 2008, but returned to 2003 rates for females after dropping to 61% in 2008.

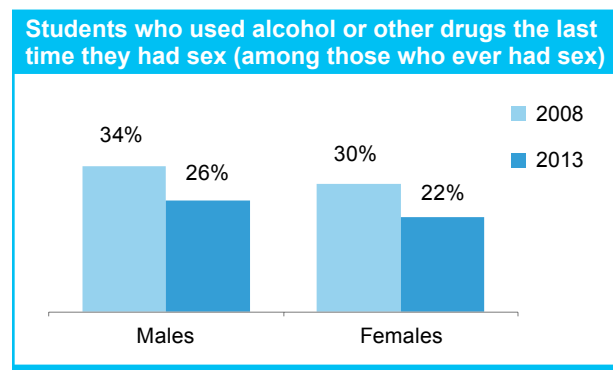
Seventeen percent of students who had oral sex reported that they or their partner had used a condom or other barrier the last time they had oral sex, with similar rates for males and females. However, this rate was lower among students who had oral sex exclusively (i.e., never had sexual intercourse; 12%).

Pregnancy

Overall, 1% of youth reported ever being pregnant or causing a pregnancy. The rate was 5% among male and female students who had ever had sexual intercourse, which was a decrease from 2008 (7%) and 2003 (6%).

Sex & substance use

Twenty-four percent of students who had ever had sexual intercourse reported using alcohol or other substances before they had sex the last time. The rate reflected a decline from 32% five years earlier.



Is there any harm in asking?

McCreary and other research have found no evidence that youth will be influenced to try a risky behaviour if they are asked a question about it. For more information, please refer to *Is There Any Harm in Asking?*, available at www.mcs.bc.ca.

Tobacco use

Smoking is one of the leading causes of premature death in Canada. Many adult smokers begin to experiment with smoking during their adolescence. It is therefore encouraging to see that the percentage of students who ever tried smoking has decreased since 2003 (see graph on p. 36).

Twenty-one percent of youth had ever tried smoking (not including ceremonial tobacco). Among youth who had tried smoking, the most common ages for first doing so were 14 or 15 years (21% for each of these ages).

Youth in the North and Interior were the most likely to have tried smoking. Those in the North were more likely than youth elsewhere in the province to have started smoking at age 12 or younger.

In 2003 and 2008, females were more likely than males to have tried smoking, while in 2013 males were more likely to have smoked (22% of males vs. 19% of females).

Youth used a variety of different tobacco products in the month before taking the survey. Among youth who had ever tried smoking, 47% smoked cigarettes, 35% smoked cigars or cigarillos, 19% used a hookah, 16% used electronic cigarettes, and 13% used chewing tobacco. There was no gender difference in the use of a hookah, but females were more likely to smoke cigarettes and males were more likely to use the other products.

Although the percentage of students who had ever smoked decreased from previous years, a greater percentage of those who had smoked were recent smokers (48% smoked in the past month in 2013 vs. 45% in 2008 and 38% in 2003). More males than females had smoked in the past 30 days (51% vs. 45%). Seven percent of youth who had tried smoking had become daily smokers.

Def.

TOBACCO use includes cigarettes, cigars or cigarillos, chewing tobacco, electronic cigarettes, or using a hookah.

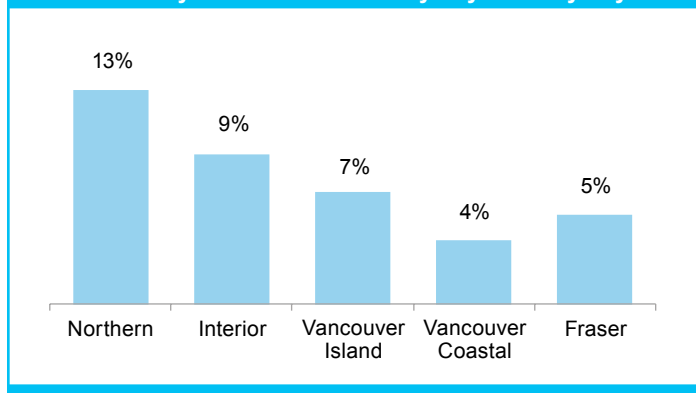
21% of youth had ever tried smoking tobacco.

Among youth who had tried smoking, 23% had successfully quit in the past year, and 13% had quit but started smoking again.

Six percent of youth who ever tried smoking had used a product to help them stop smoking in the past month, and 28% of these youth had successfully not smoked during that time. Youth in the North were the most likely to have tried quitting, and also the most likely to have successfully quit (31% in the North vs. 21%–25% through the rest of BC, among those who had tried smoking).

Youth were less likely to be exposed to tobacco smoke inside their home or family vehicle than in previous survey years. However, 21% were exposed to tobacco at least some of the time, with 6% exposed to second-hand smoke almost every day or every day.

Students who were exposed to tobacco smoke inside their home or family vehicle almost every day or every day



“

“I have smoked before but quit for basketball and my baby sister.”

“I just switched from cigarettes to e-smoke.”

“Anti-smoking ads don’t stop kids from smoking... It just makes it cool.”

“I was [exposed to tobacco smoke] until I was 12. It was every day, but my dad quit.”

“I smoke socially once in a while, not a lot.”

“Help me to quit smoking.”

“I don’t smoke. I tried it once and it was gross.”

”

Alcohol use

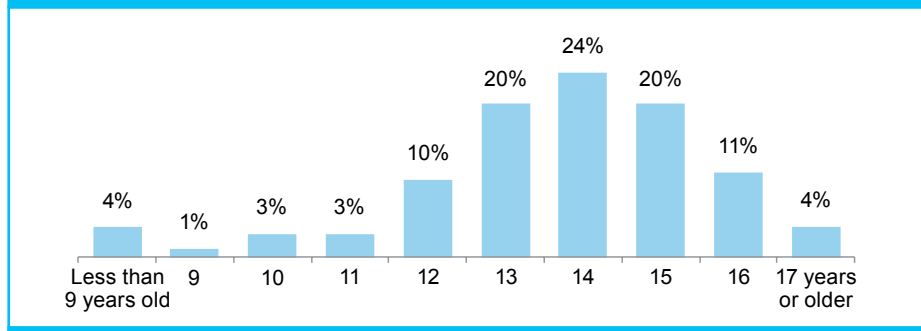
In British Columbia, the legal drinking age is 19. Youth under this age are allowed to drink under the supervision of their parents.

The decline from 2003 to 2008 in the percentage of youth who had ever tried alcohol continued in 2013, as 45% of male and female youth had tried drinking alcohol (see graph on p. 36).

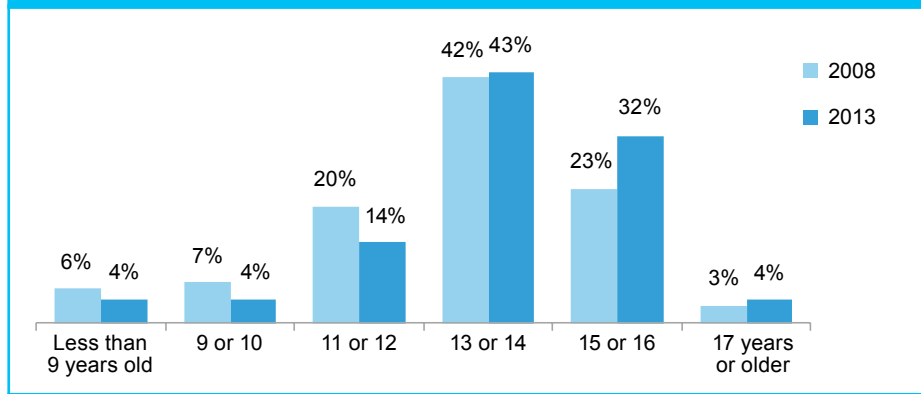
The most common age for first trying alcohol was 14 years old (24%). Four percent first drank alcohol before turning 9 years old (5% of males vs. 3% of females).

Compared to five and ten years previously, youth in 2013 were more likely to wait until later in their adolescence before having their first drink. The percentage of students who reported trying alcohol before age 15 decreased over the past decade, from 80% in 2003 to 75% in 2008 and 65% in 2013.

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



Changes in the age that youth first tried alcohol (among those who ever drank)



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



I'm trying to quit drinking."

45% of youth had ever tried alcohol, compared to 58% a decade earlier.

Last Saturday use

Among youth who had tried alcohol, 93% drank in the past year and 62% drank in the past month (a decrease from 67% in 2003 and 2008). One percent of males reported drinking every day in the past month and fewer than 1% of females had done so.

Binge drinking for females is usually defined as having four or more drinks within a couple of hours. However, to be consistent with previous surveys, the 2013 BC AHS asked youth about having five or more drinks in this time frame.

Among youth who ever drank, rates of past month binge drinking remained constant between 2003 and 2008 at around 44%, but in 2013 dropped to 39%, with similar rates for males and females. Six percent of those who had ever tried alcohol reported binge drinking on six or more days in the past month (3% of all youth), with 1% having done so on 20 or more days.

Although males and females were equally likely to report binge drinking in the past month, females were more likely to binge drink at younger ages. For example, 25% of females aged 14 or younger who had tried alcohol indicated binge drinking in the past month, compared to 17% of similar aged males.

Nineteen percent of all male and female students drank alcohol on the Saturday before taking the survey, including liquor (14%), beer (10%), coolers (9%), and wine (3%). Males were more likely to have had beer, whereas females were more likely to have had coolers.

Among those who drank last Saturday, 64% mixed different types of alcohol, with 24% mixing at least three types (27% of females vs. 21% of males), and 14% mixing their alcohol with an energy drink (16% of males vs. 13% of females).

Youth in urban and rural areas were equally likely to mix three or more types of alcohol. However, the highest rate of mixing different types of alcohol was in the North, where 33% of youth who drank last Saturday mixed three or four types.

Additionally, 63% of youth who drank on the Saturday before taking the survey had at least five drinks (67% of males and 59% of females). Youth in rural areas were more likely than those in urban ones to have had five or more drinks that night (68% vs. 62%).

As four drinks is considered binge drinking for females, it is notable that over two thirds (68%) of females who drank last Saturday had four or more drinks.

Def.



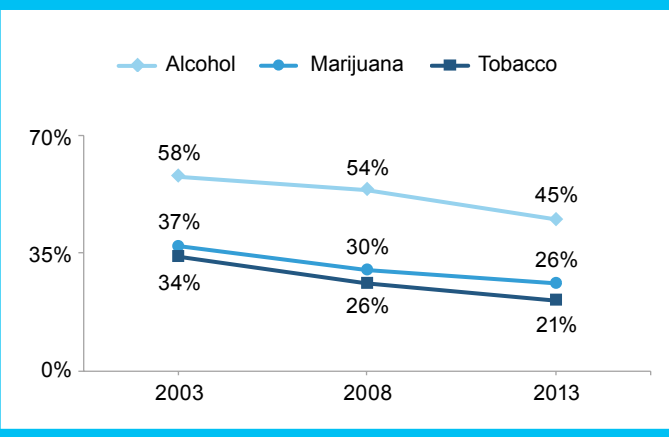
A **STANDARD DRINK** of alcohol is equal to a regular bottle of beer (12 oz), a medium glass of wine (5 oz), or a shot of liquor (1.5 oz).

Marijuana use

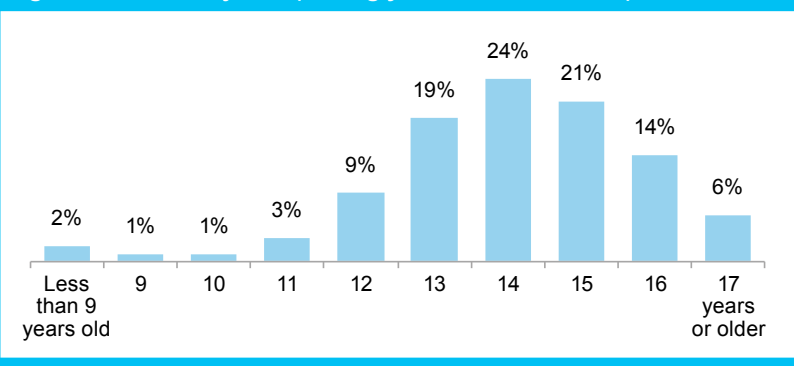
Continuing the trend of decreasing marijuana use seen between 2003 and 2008, 26% of youth in 2013 had ever used marijuana, with males slightly more likely to do so than females. Among those who had tried marijuana, the most common age for first doing so was 14 years (24%).

As with alcohol, youth started using marijuana at a later age in 2013 than in previous survey years. For example, 2% of youth who had tried marijuana first did so before turning nine years old, compared to 3% in 2008. Additionally, youth were more likely to wait until they were at least 15 years old to first try marijuana (41% in 2013 vs. 33% in 2008 and 28% in 2003).

Youth who had ever tried different substances



Age first tried marijuana (among youth who ever used)



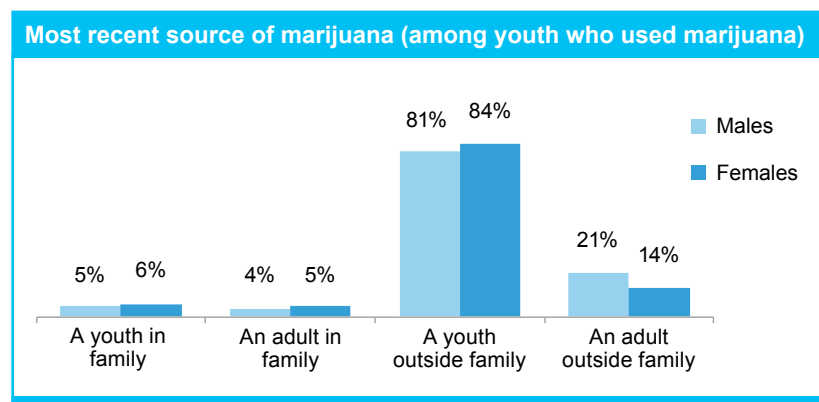
I smoke marijuana every day,
and I am dependent on it.”

16% of males and 14% of females had used marijuana in the past month.

Overall, 15% of youth had used marijuana in the past month. This was a decrease from 2008 (17%) and 2003 (21%). However, among students who had tried marijuana, use in the past month remained stable since 2008 (58%), and 24% used on six or more days.

Eight percent of BC students had used marijuana on the Saturday before taking the survey (down from 12% in 2008). Six percent had used both alcohol and marijuana last Saturday, which was a decrease from 9% in 2008. Among youth who had tried both alcohol and marijuana, almost one in four (24%) had used both substances last Saturday.

For the first time, the BC AHS asked youth where they got their marijuana. Students who used marijuana most commonly got it from a youth outside their family (82%). Males were more likely than females to get their marijuana from an adult outside their family, whereas females were more likely to get it from a youth or adult family member or from a youth outside their family. Youth in the North were more likely than those in other regions to get their marijuana exclusively from an adult.



Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

Substances other than alcohol & marijuana

In addition to being asked about their alcohol and marijuana use, youth were asked about their lifetime use of a range of other substances. There was a decrease from 2008 to 2013 in the percentage of students who used each substance. For example, the percentage who had ever tried crystal meth dropped from 2% to 1%, and the percentage who had used ecstasy decreased from 7% to 4%.

Females were more likely than males to misuse prescription pills (12% vs. 10%), whereas males were more likely to have tried hallucinogens (5% vs. 3%), mushrooms (6% vs. 4%), amphetamines (2% vs. 1%), crystal meth (1% vs. <1%), heroin (1% vs. <1%), and steroids without a doctor's consent (2% vs. <1%). For the first time, the BC AHS asked about ketamine and GHB, which 2% of males and 1% of females had tried.

Students who had ever used substances other than alcohol or marijuana			
	2003	2008	2013
Prescription pills without a doctor's consent	9%	15%	11%
Cocaine	5%	4%	3%
Hallucinogens [§]	7%	9%	6%
Mushrooms	13%	8%	5%
Amphetamines [§]	4%	3%	2%
Inhalants	4%	4%	2%
Heroin	1%	1%	1%
Steroids without a doctor's consent	1%	2%	1%

[§] The 2003 BC AHS did not include a separate item for ecstasy or crystal meth. These drugs are included in the hallucinogens and amphetamines categories, respectively, for all survey years.

[§] Ketamine and GHB were not included specifically as hallucinogens in 2013. The percentage would not change if they were included.

Overall, 17% of male and female youth had tried at least one substance other than alcohol or marijuana. Additionally, 1% of youth had ever injected an illegal drug, with males more likely than females to have done so. This was a slight decrease from 2008, but was slightly above the rate in 2003.



I was addicted to [a painkiller] that was prescribed, and was not using it for the right reasons.”

Consequences of substance use & reported reasons for using

Consequences

Over half (52%) of youth who used alcohol or other substances reported negative consequences in the past year. The most common were being told they had done something they could not remember (37%), passing out (28%), or getting injured (14%).

A total of 5% of students felt they needed help for their substance use or were told they needed help. This included their use of alcohol (2%), marijuana (3%), and/or other drugs (1%). Males were more likely than females to have needed help for marijuana use, while females were more likely than males to have needed help for alcohol use.

Consequences of substance use in the past year (among youth who used alcohol or other substances during that time)		
	Males	Females
Was told I did something I couldn't remember	31%	42%
Passed out	26%	29%
Got injured	12%	17%
Argued with family members	10%	15%
Damaged property	10%	5%
Got in trouble with police	9%	5%
Schoolwork or grades changed	8%	10%
Got into a physical fight	8%	5%
Lost friends or broke up with a girlfriend or boyfriend	5%	10%
Had sex when I didn't want to	4%	7%
Overdosed	2%	2%
Had to get treatment for alcohol or drug abuse	1%	1%
Used alcohol or drugs but none of these things happened	52%	46%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

21% of students who used alcohol or other substances reported doing so to manage stress.

Reported reasons for using

For the first time, the BC AHS asked youth who had ever used alcohol or other drugs about their reasons for using substances. The most common reasons were that they wanted to have fun (65%), their friends were doing it (33%), and/or they wanted to experiment (28%). Females were more likely to report a number of reasons for substance use, while over half of males (55%) chose only one reason.

Youth in the Vancouver Coastal and Fraser regions were more likely than those in the rest of the province to have used substances because they wanted to experiment.

Youth who reported a variety of mental health concerns, including having self-harmed or attempted suicide in the past year, were more likely than their peers to have last used substances to manage stress or because they were sad. For example, those who had self-harmed in the past year were more likely than those who had not to have used alcohol or other substances because of stress (43% vs. 14%, among those who had ever tried these substances). Similarly, youth who had foregone necessary mental or emotional health care were more likely to have used substances because they felt sad than those who had not missed out on that care.

Reasons for using substances the last time (among youth who ever used alcohol or other drugs)		
	Males	Females
I wanted to have fun	60%	69%
My friends were doing it	29%	37%
I wanted to try it/experiment	27%	29%
Because of stress	16%	25%
I felt down or sad	11%	21%
I felt like there was nothing else to do	9%	10%
To manage physical pain	5%	7%
I was pressured into doing it	3%	4%
I thought it would help me focus	3%	3%
Because of an addiction	2%	2%
I didn't mean to do it	1%	1%
To change the effects of some other drug(s)	1%	1%
Other	21%	16%

Note: The difference between males and females for having nothing else to do was not statistically significant.

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

Among youth who had tried alcohol or other substances, those who last used substances to manage stress were more likely than those who did not use for this reason to have ever tried a variety of other substances, including prescription pills without a doctor's consent (32% vs. 13% who did not attribute their substance use to stress), cocaine (11% vs. 4%), ecstasy or MDMA (17% vs. 8%), or marijuana (79% vs. 51%).

Students may have been using substances to manage a variety of symptoms. Eighteen percent of students with a physical disability

who had used substances had last used to manage physical pain (compared to 6% of youth without a physical disability). Ten percent of those with a long-term chronic condition used substances for the same reason. Also, youth with ADHD were four times as likely to have used substances to help them focus (8% vs. 2% of those without ADHD, among youth who ever used substances).

Finally, youth with almost any type of health condition or disability were more likely to report having used substances recently to change the effects of other drugs.



"I wanted to see what it was like."

"I didn't want to be made fun of."

"There was nothing else in the community that was more fun."

"When I smoke, I feel like I can focus on what I want, and don't feel overwhelmed."

"To have fun and to get away from the responsibilities of school."

"To keep my mind off of eating."

"Marijuana helps my anxiety."

"To forget about problems in my life."

"To help me sleep."

"It's all there is to do these days."



School

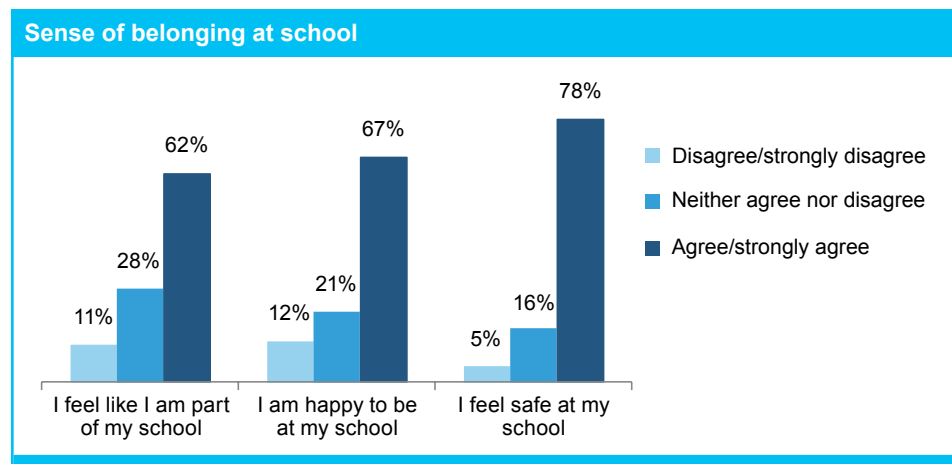
School connectedness

Previous McCreary studies as well as other research have shown that school connectedness is associated with positive academic and health-related outcomes.

Youth were asked a series of questions about their connections to school and school staff. The majority of students felt like they were a part of their school, were happy to be at school, and felt safe there. They also reported that they got along with teachers (72%), their teachers cared about them (63%), and they were treated fairly by

school staff (74%). However, fewer than half of students felt that school staff other than teachers cared about them (48%).

Males were more likely to be happy at their school (69% vs. 65% of females). In contrast, females were more likely to get along with their teachers, feel cared about by their teachers (64% vs. 63% of males) and other school staff (49% vs. 47%), and feel that school staff treated them fairly (76% vs. 73%).



Note: Percentages for feeling like part of school do not equal 100% due to rounding.

Def.

A **SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS** scale was created from items which asked youth how much they felt part of their school, how well they got along with people at their school, and how much they felt cared about at school. —

94% of youth who felt highly connected to school reported good or excellent mental health, compared to 58% who felt less connected.

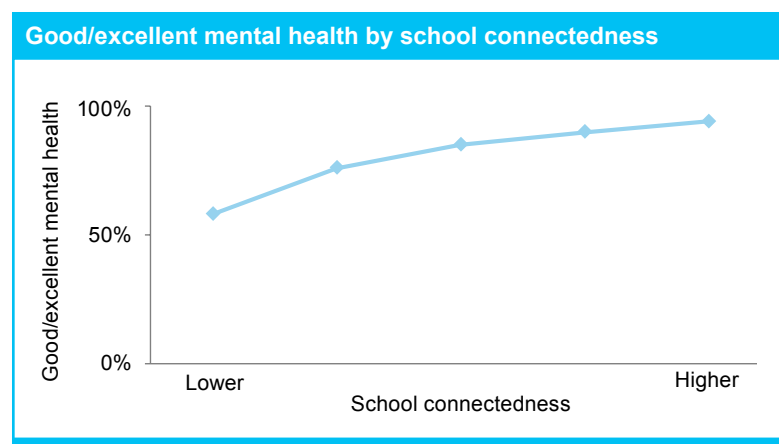
Students in urban communities were more likely to be happy at their school and get along with teachers than students in rural areas.

Connectedness to school was highest among students in Grade 7 and lowest among students in Grades 9 to 11. For example, 40% of Grade 7 students reported the highest levels of school connectedness compared to 16% in Grade 10 and 21% in Grade 12.

Students who had been neither a victim nor a perpetrator of teasing, social exclusion, or physical assaults in the past year reported

higher school connectedness than those who had been involved in bullying. Students who were both a victim and a perpetrator of bullying were the least connected to school.

Feeling connected to school had many positive associations. For example, those who reported higher school connectedness were more likely to describe their mental health as good or excellent, and they were also more likely to expect to continue their education beyond high school.



I feel extremely isolated in school.”

School safety

One important element of school connectedness is feeling safe at school. BC students felt safer in all areas of their school than they did in 2003 and 2008. In 2013, males and females were equally likely to report feeling safe at school. However, when asked about specific school locations, males were more likely to feel safe in every location except the washrooms, where they were as likely as females to feel safe.

Students in the North were less likely than their peers in the rest of BC to feel safe at school (72% vs. 77%–80% in the other four regions).

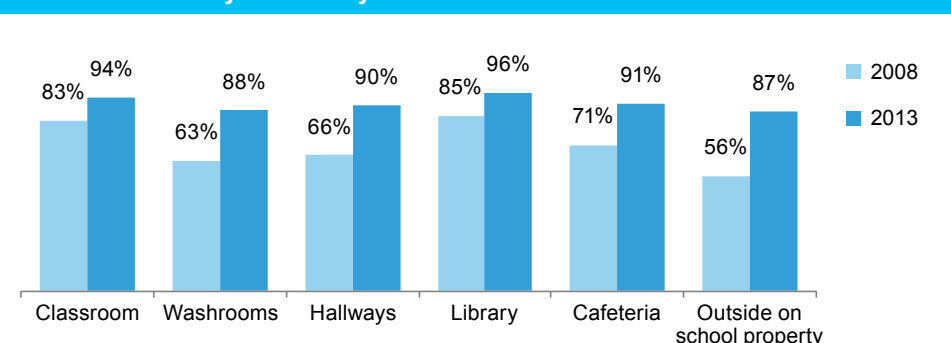
There was a link between neighbourhood and school safety. Students who felt very safe in their neighbourhood were more likely to also feel very safe at school (76%

vs. 10% of students who did not feel safe in their neighbourhood).

Four percent of youth (6% of males vs. 2% of females) reported that they had carried a weapon, such as a knife or bat, at least sometimes while at school in the past month. This was a decrease from 6% in 2008 and 7% in 2003. One percent reported that they always carried a weapon.

Students who carried a weapon to school were more likely to have teased, excluded, or physically assaulted another student in the past year (49% vs. 21% who did not carry a weapon). They were also more likely to have been the victims of these bullying behaviours (67% vs. 49% who did not carry a weapon).

Students who always or usually felt safe at school



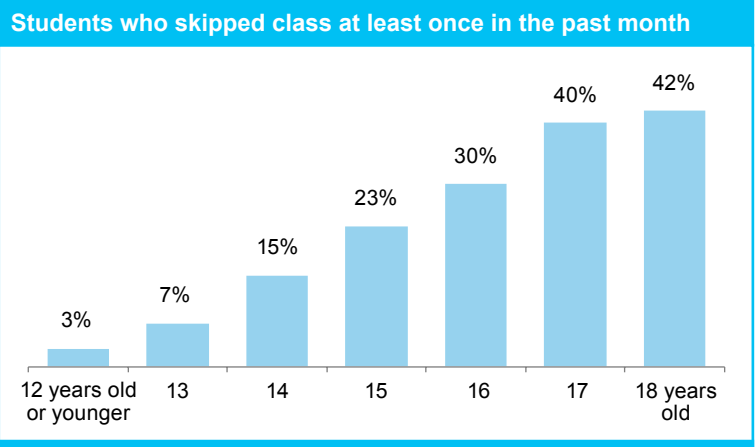
I feel unsafe at school most of the time because of all the verbal harassment.”

3% of youth who had been in government care did not expect to finish high school. This was a decrease from 7% in 2008.

School absences

Overall, 57% of students (54% of males vs. 61% of females) missed class on at least one day in the past month.

Forty-two percent missed school due to illness (38% males vs. 45% females). Other reasons for missing included family responsibilities (12% of males vs. 14% of females), bullying (2% of males vs. 4% of females) and work (3% of males vs. 2% of females). Also, 23% skipped classes on at least one day in the past month (21% males vs. 25% females).



Note: The difference between 17- and 18-year-olds is not statistically significant.

Educational aspirations

Most students (89%) expected to graduate from high school, and 86% planned to continue their education beyond high school (e.g., through university, college, or trade school). One percent indicated they did not plan to finish high school, and 11% did not know their plans or had not thought about it.

Males were less likely to anticipate continuing their education beyond high school (83% vs. 89% of females), and were more likely to have not thought about their school plans (8% vs. 5% of females).

Youth in the Vancouver Coastal (88%) and Fraser regions (89%) were the most likely to indicate they planned to continue their education beyond high school. Some groups of

students were less likely to plan to continue with their education, including youth who had ever been in a foster home or group home (70% vs. 87% who had not been in these types of government care), and youth who worked 21 or more hours (77% vs. 88% of those who worked fewer hours and 85% of those who did not have a job).

Youth who saw themselves in school in five years were less likely to have skipped school three or more times in the past month (5% vs. 9% of those who did not expect to be in school). They were also more likely to have friends who would disapprove if they dropped out of school (90% vs. 85%), to feel engaged in their community, and to have done weekly volunteer work (22% vs. 18%).

Bullying

The term bullying is used to describe behaviours as diverse as name-calling, social exclusion, and physical assault. Although adults often respond differently to these diverse behaviours, they are all associated with unhealthy outcomes for the victim and perpetrator.

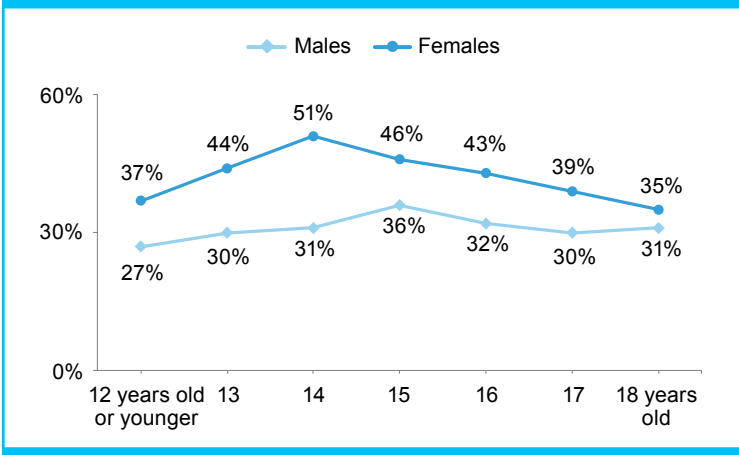
The BC AHS asked youth about a range of bullying experiences they may have had in the past year, either as the perpetrator or victim. Youth were asked specifically about their bullying experiences with other youth at school or on the way to or from school.

Teased

In the past year, 37% of students (43% of females vs. 31% of males) had been teased at least once to the point where they felt bad or extremely uncomfortable. This was an increase from 33% in 2008 (37% of females vs. 28% of males) and 34% in 2003 (39% of females vs. 30% of males). Twelve percent of students experienced teasing on three or more occasions in the past year.

Rates of being teased peaked at age 14 for females and at age 15 for males.

Students who were teased in the past year



Note: Differences between data points were not statistically significant across every age.

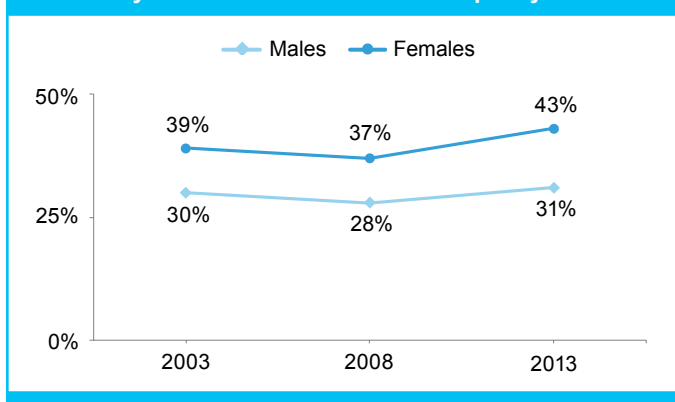
Def.

BULLYING experiences asked about in the BC AHS included teasing, exclusion, and physical assault. →



12% of students were teased on three or more occasions in the past year.

Trends in youth who were teased in the past year



Excluded

The percentage of students who reported being socially excluded by their peers in the past year remained stable between 2003 and 2008. The percentage increased from 24% in 2008 to 26% in 2013 for males, and from 37% to 43% for females. Thirteen percent of females and 7% of males experienced this type of exclusion on three or more occasions.

Among females, rates of being excluded increased up to age 14 and then decreased. There was no age difference for males.

Physically attacked or assaulted

The decline between 2003 and 2008 in the percentage of students who reported being physically assaulted continued for males, from 12% in 2008 to 10% in 2013. Rates for females remained stable at 5% between 2008 and 2013. Two percent of males and 1% of females were attacked or assaulted three or more times in the past year.



I was bullied via texting, Facebook, and in real life by people at my school.”

24% of youth bullied someone in person or online in the past year.

Perpetrators of bullying

In the past year, 12% of youth (14% of males vs. 10% of females) reported they had teased someone at school or on the way to or from school. Fifteen percent of females and 13% of males had socially excluded another youth. Five percent of males and 2% of females had physically attacked or assaulted another youth.

Students who had been teased themselves were more likely to tease others (23% vs. 6% who had not been teased). Similarly, those who had been excluded were more likely to exclude others (25% vs. 8% who had not been excluded), and those who had been physically assaulted were more likely to assault others (23% vs. 2%).

Patterns of bullying changed with age. Being exclusively a victim of bullying was more common among younger students, whereas being exclusively a perpetrator was more common among older students.

Among youth with experience of bullying, females were more likely than males to be exclusively the victims, whereas males were more likely to be exclusively the perpetrators.

In the past year, 26% of males and 23% of females reported bullying someone either at school (or on the way to or from school) or through the Internet or other technology (see p. 64 for a more detailed look at cyberbullying).

“

“I think most people [bully others] even if they don't mean to. I didn't.”

“Bullying is a big part of my life and it doesn't go away.”

“I really want help from someone, but I'm afraid.”

“I am bullied almost everyday, but I force myself to go to school.”

“My friends would call me gay as a joke, knowing I am not gay. It still bothered me and made me a much quieter person because of it. It was to the point that I felt I didn't have a voice.”

“I'm very afraid of school, I don't feel safe, I get bullied.”

“I stay off the Internet to avoid being bullied.”

“I have ADHD and I am bullied a lot and have been called mean things.”

”

Impact of bullying

Youth who were victims of any type of bullying (teasing, exclusion, or assault) in the past year were more likely than those who were not bullied to report skipping class in the past month (27% vs. 19%). The more types of bullying students experienced, the more likely they were to miss school.

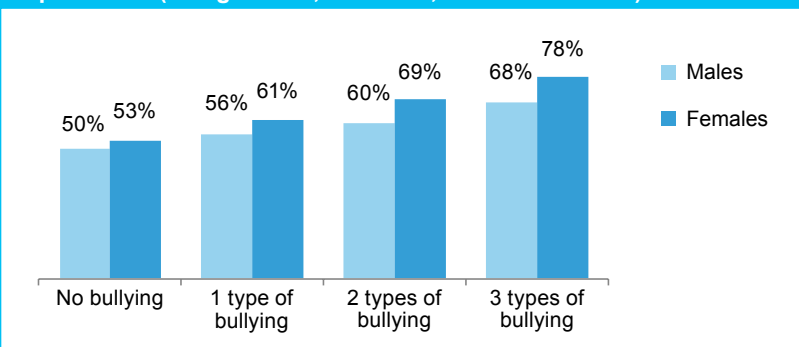
All forms of bullying were associated with students' mental health. For example, youth who were teased at least once in the past year were less likely to report their mental health was good or excellent (70% vs. 88% of those who were not teased). As well, youth who experienced social exclusion were more likely to have seriously

considered suicide in the past year (22% vs. 7% of those who were not excluded).

Being bullied was also linked to health risk behaviours. For example, youth who were assaulted in the past year were more likely than those who were not to binge drink (26% vs. 17%), and to use marijuana on six or more days in the past month.

The fear of being bullied restricted some students' activities. Six percent of youth (7% of females vs. 4% of males) reported that they had not participated in extracurricular activities (e.g., sports, dance, art) because they were worried about being bullied.

Students who missed school by number of different types of bullying experienced (being teased, excluded, and/or assaulted)



Note: The difference between being a victim of one type and two types of bullying was not statistically significant for males.



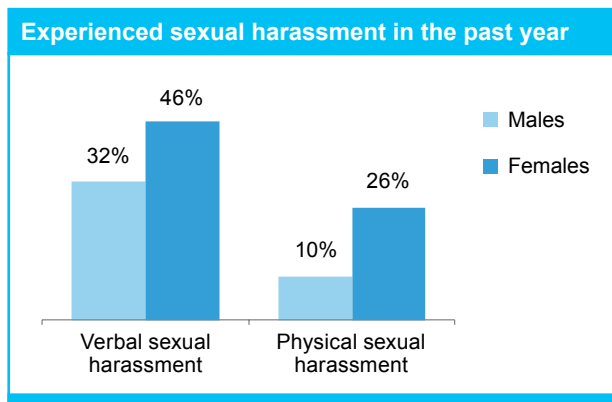
I went through a time where I felt bad about myself and had low self-esteem because I was bullied so badly when I was young.”

Harassment & discrimination

Sexual harassment

In 2013, the percentage of youth who experienced verbal sexual harassment in the past year dropped to 39%. This was below the 2003 (44%) and 2008 (47%) rates for both males and females.

There was also a decrease in the percentage of students who experienced physical sexual harassment. Rates for females decreased from around 38% in 2003 and 2008, to 26% in 2013. In 2013, 10% of males experienced physical sexual harassment compared to 18% in 2003 and 15% in 2008.



I know of a lot of sexual harassment happens to me and others, by youth and some adults in the neighborhood.”

19% of students reported being discriminated against because of how they looked.

Discrimination

Thirty-five percent of youth reported they had experienced at least one type of discrimination in the past year (such as racist or homophobic discrimination), with 17% experiencing one type, 9% experiencing two types, and 9% experiencing three or more types of discrimination.

There were no gender differences in discrimination on the grounds of race or sexual orientation, but females were more likely to report being discriminated against for all the other listed reasons. For example, 9% of females felt they had been discriminated against because of their sex or gender compared to 2% of males. Females were also more likely than males to experience multiple types of discrimination.

Relatively high percentages of youth who identified as transgender or did not identify as straight experienced discrimination. For example, 64% of lesbian students had been discriminated against because of their sexual orientation, as had 47% of gay males, and 37% of bisexual students.

Perceived reasons for being discriminated against in the past year

Physical appearance	19%
Being seen as different	13%
Race, ethnicity, or skin colour	11%
Age	9%
Gender/sex	6%
Income or family income	5%
Sexual orientation (being or thought to be gay or lesbian)	4%
A disability	3%

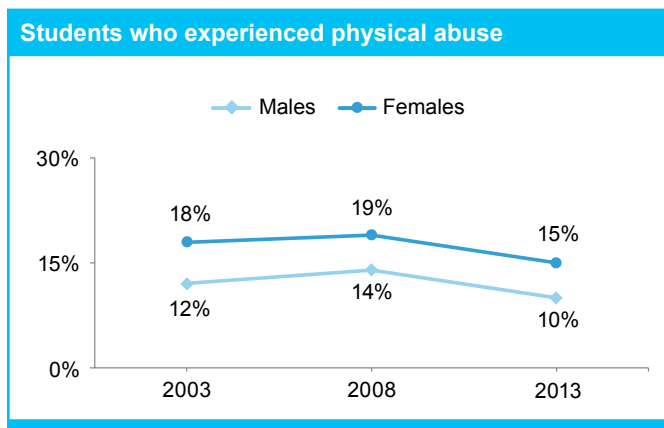


I have a hearing disability and I've had several people mock me and call me names."

Physical & sexual abuse

Physical abuse

Thirteen percent of students (15% of females vs. 10% of males) indicated having been physically abused or mistreated at some point in their life. This rate represented a decrease from 17% in 2008 and 15% in 2003.



Sexual abuse

When youth were asked specifically if they had ever been sexually abused, 10% of females and 2% of males recognized they had experienced this type of abuse.

Youth were also asked about other forms of sexual abuse they might not have recognized as abuse. For example, 5% were forced into sexual activity against their will by another youth (7% of females vs. 2% of males), and 1% were forced into sexual activity by an adult (2% of females vs. 1% of males).

Def.

SEXUAL ABUSE includes experiences that students might not have recognized as abuse, including 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.

4% of youth had experienced both physical and sexual abuse.

Bill C-22 (2007) of Canadian law states that sex between a youth under age 16 and someone who is not close in age is also sexual abuse. One percent of male and female students were the younger of an illegal age pairing the first time they had sex.

When all three forms of sexual abuse were considered, a total of 13% of female students were sexually abused. This reflected a decrease from 2003 and 2008 (15%–16%). For males, sexual abuse (any of the three forms) increased from 5% in 2003 to 6% in 2008, but decreased to 4% in 2013.

Youth in 2013 were less likely to have experienced both physical and sexual abuse than in 2003 and 2008. Six percent of females reported being both physically and sexually abused (down from 8% in 2008 and 2003), while 1% of males did so (down from 2% in 2008 and equivalent to the percentage seen in 2003).



I met an adult online who convinced me to send inappropriate pictures to him.”

Employment

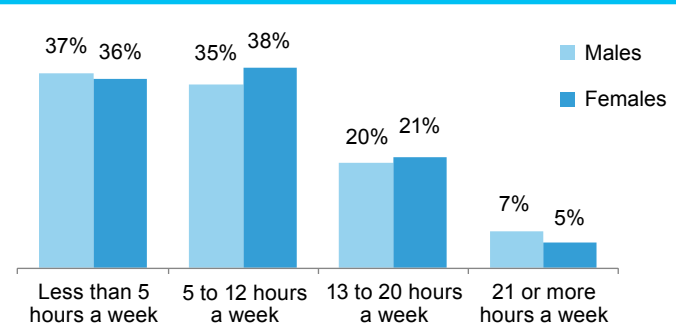
A total of 29% of male and female students worked at a paid job during the school year, which was down from 41% in 2008 and 37% in 2003. Further, students who did work were more likely to have worked fewer hours each week than in previous years (37% worked less than five hours a week in 2013 vs. 28% in 2008).

Among students who worked in 2013, the majority did so for 12 hours or less each week.

Students in the North and Interior were the most likely to work during the school year (38% in each region). Students in the North were also the most likely to work 21 or more hours a week (5%).

As youth got older they were more likely to be employed and to work more hours.

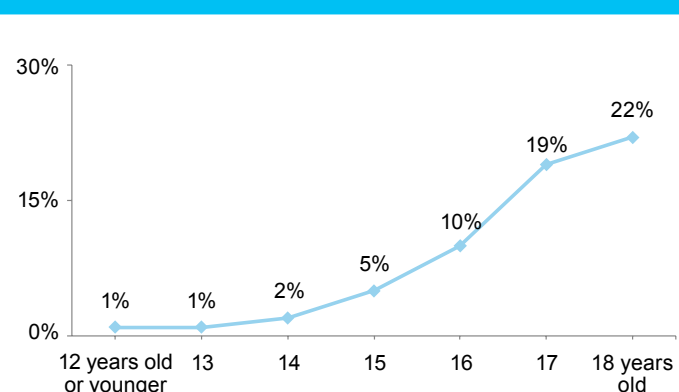
**Hours spent working at a paid job
(among youth who were employed)**



Note: The differences between males and females who worked less than 5 hours or 13 to 20 hours were not statistically significant.

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

Students who worked 13 or more hours a week



6% of employed students worked 21 or more hours a week.

Male and female students who worked were more likely than their non-employed peers to have had a serious injury that required medical attention during the past year (34% vs. 24%). The more hours that students worked, the more likely they were to get injured at work. For example, 1% of students who worked 5–12 hours a week were seriously injured at work, compared to 6% of students who worked 21 or more hours a week.

It is likely that some students were working out of necessity rather than for luxuries or experience, including students who lived in households without any adults or those who lived alone. For example, 58% of

students who lived alone worked at a paid job, compared to 29% of their peers who did not live alone. One in four of these students worked 21 or more hours a week (vs. 2% of their peers). Additionally, employed students whose parents were not working were more likely to have worked 21 or more hours a week, compared to students whose parents were employed (18% vs. 6%).

Students who worked at a paid job were more likely than their non-employed peers to go to bed hungry because there was not enough money for food, and to have missed out on extracurricular activities because they could not afford to participate or were too busy.

“

“I tutor kids after school.”

“I have a job because my parents are unable to pay for clothing, etc. for me.”

“I work on my parents’ farm.”

“I have my own business.”

“I lost my job.”

“I took a year off high school and became a hair stylist, and then came back for my grade 12.”

“I have two jobs currently.”

“I babysit sometimes.”

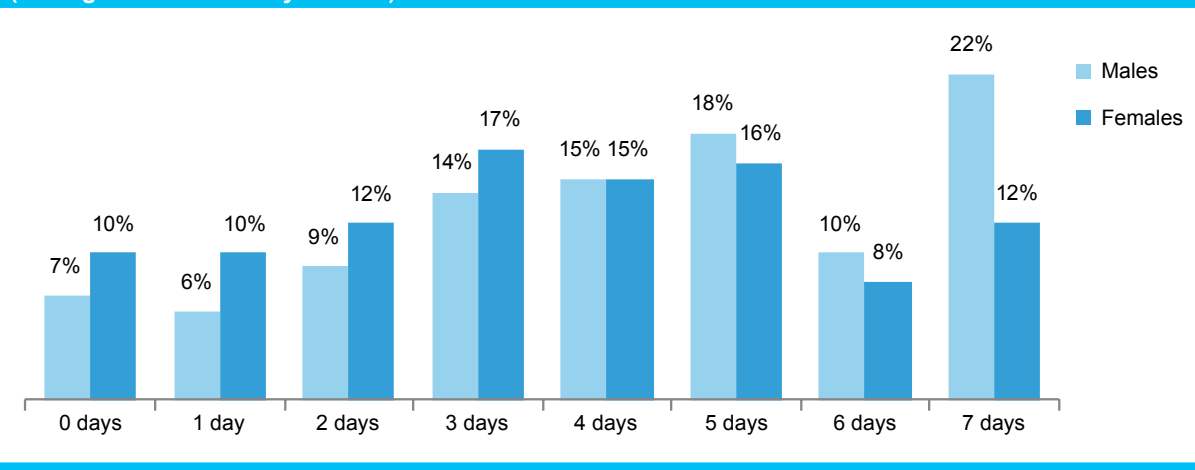
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Physical activity, sports, & leisure

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that youth aged 12 to 17 do an hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. The BC AHS indicated that only 17% of students in this age bracket met these recommendations during the past week.

The Guidelines recommend that individuals aged 18 or older take part in 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each week. Most students (69% of males vs. 54% of females) aged 18 and 19 achieved these recommendations by participating in 60 minutes of exercise on at least three days.

Participation in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity in the past week (among students 12–17 years old)



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

Def.

ORGANIZED SPORTS refer to sports with a coach, such as school teams and swimming lessons.

INFORMAL SPORTS are sports without a coach, such as skateboarding and hiking.

EXTREME SPORTS include activities such as backcountry skiing and BMX.

62% of 13-year-olds played weekly organized sports compared to 45% of 17-year-olds.

Over the past year, 55% of students participated in organized sports at least once a week. This was a drop back to 2003 levels of participation, after an increase to 59% in 2008.

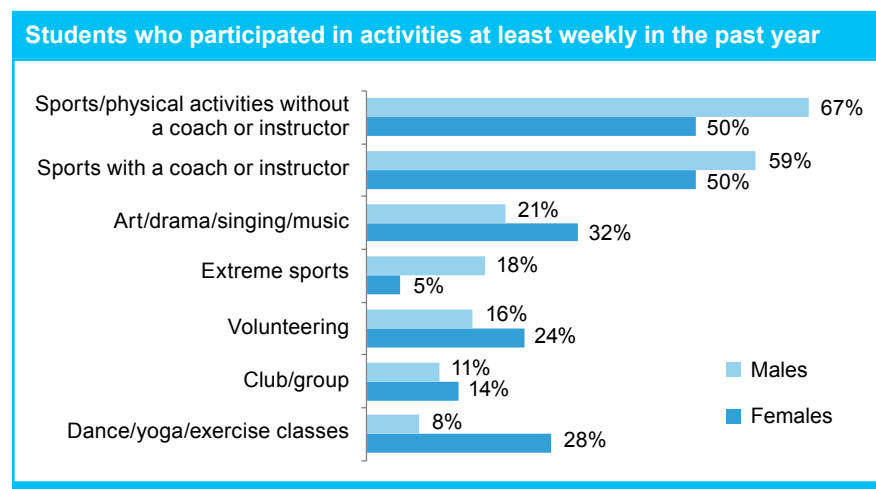
The decrease in participation in informal sports seen between 2003 and 2008 continued, with a drop in participation from 69% in 2008 to 58% in 2013. The percentage of students who took part in weekly dance, yoga, or exercise classes also declined (from 22% in 2008 to 18% in 2013).

Younger students were more likely than older ones to play organized sports. Similarly, students aged 16 or younger were more

likely than older students to take part in extreme sports or yoga/dance on a weekly basis. However, there was no age difference in weekly participation in informal sports.

Males were more likely than females to be involved in organized sports, informal sports, or extreme sports four or more times a week; while females were more likely to be participating in dance or yoga this often.

Participation in exercise and physical activity differed between rural and urban youth. For example, students in rural areas were more likely than students in urban areas to participate weekly in informal sports (64% vs. 57%) and extreme sports (20% vs. 10%).



I am very active in sports: soccer, basketball, volleyball, and rugby.”

4% of students did volunteer activities such as charity work four or more times a week.

Overall, three quarters of students (81% of males vs. 69% of females) took part in either organized or informal sports on a weekly basis. These students were more likely than their less active peers to rate their mental health as good or excellent (84% vs. 72%) and to report always feeling happy, calm, and at peace in the past month. These students were also more likely to have slept nine or more hours the night before taking the survey (26% vs. 17% who were less active).

In addition to participating in sports and other physical activities, BC students engaged in a variety of leisure activities outside of school hours. Similar to 2003 and 2008, 27% of students took part in art, drama, singing, or music groups or lessons at least once a week over the past year.

Thirteen percent of students attended clubs or groups such as Guides or Scouts, 4-H, or community or religious groups at least once a week, which was down from 16% in 2008. Students were also less likely to take part in some form of volunteer work each week, such as helping a charity or fundraising (20% in 2013 vs. 27% in 2008). Participation in clubs or groups and volunteer work was higher among urban-based students than rural ones.

Barriers to participation

Students were asked if anything had prevented them from participating in sports and leisure activities. The most common reasons for both males and females were that they were too busy (40% of males vs. 52% of females) and that they could not get there or home (13% of males vs. 19% of females). Females were also more likely than males to report that they could not afford to participate (18% vs. 11%), that the activity was not available in their community (15% vs. 12%), and that they were worried about being bullied (7% vs. 4%).

Students in rural areas were more likely than their peers in urban centres to have missed out on activities because the activities were not available in their community (25% vs. 12%), whereas urban students were more likely to have been too busy to participate (47% vs. 42%). Females in rural areas were also more likely to not participate because of fears about being bullied (10% vs. 7% of urban females).



I could get [to activities], but it would cost a lot and be a 45 minute commute.”

2010 Olympic Games

Over three years after the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver, the event was still having an effect on some youth. For example, 13% reported that they were more physically active as a result of the Games, 6% had more sports opportunities, and 2% had more job prospects. Males were more likely than females to report they were more physically active (15% vs. 10%) and had more sports opportunities (8% vs. 5%) as a result of the Games.

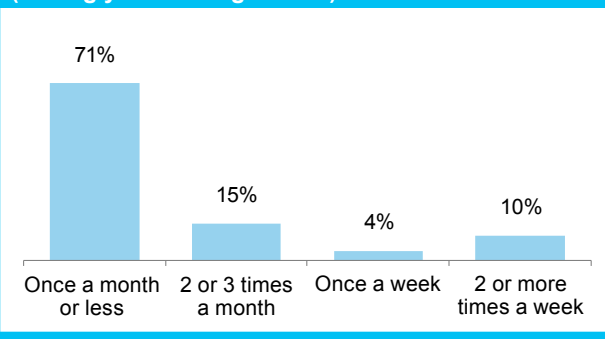
Youth from the Fraser and Vancouver Coastal regions were more likely than youth in the rest of the province to report having more sports opportunities as a result of the Games.

Two years before the Games took place, 6% of youth who completed the 2008 BC AHS reported that they had more job prospects because of the Games, compared to 2% who felt that way three years after the event happened.

Gambling

The legal gambling age in BC is 19. The overall rate of students who gambled in the past 12 months dropped from 51% in 2003, to 39% in 2008, to 10% in 2013. This included playing games for money; buying lottery tickets; or betting at a casino, race track, or online. As in previous years, males were around three times more likely than females to have gambled.

Gambling in the past year
(among youth who gambled)



The 2013 survey

GAMBLING On previous BC AHS surveys, students were asked separate questions about different types of gambling. In 2013, these items were combined and compared against students who indicated any type of gambling in previous years.

Transportation

Modes of transport

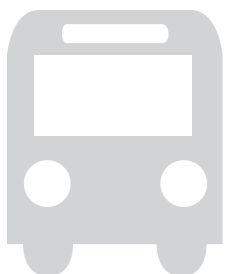
Students were asked about the various methods of transportation they usually used to get to school. More than half (58%) arrived by car. Forty-two percent walked, cycled, or skateboarded; 28% took a bus or used public transit; and 1% hitchhiked.

There were some regional differences in how students generally got to school. Half of students in Vancouver Coastal walked, cycled, or skateboarded to school (50%); while most of those in the Fraser region drove or were driven (63%). Youth in the Interior were more likely than youth in other areas to take the bus or other public transit (42%).

When students used only one method to get to school, females were more likely to go by car (36% vs. 32% of males); while males were more likely to have walked, cycled, or skateboarded (27% vs. 20% of females) or hitchhiked (1% vs. < 1%).

Overall, 3% of youth across the province had hitchhiked in the past month, with twice as many males as females having done so. Youth who went to bed hungry often or always were more likely to have hitchhiked in the past month, and to specifically hitchhike to school (17% vs. 1% who were not living in this level of poverty). Youth who felt unsafe on public transit were more likely to have hitchhiked in the past month than their peers.

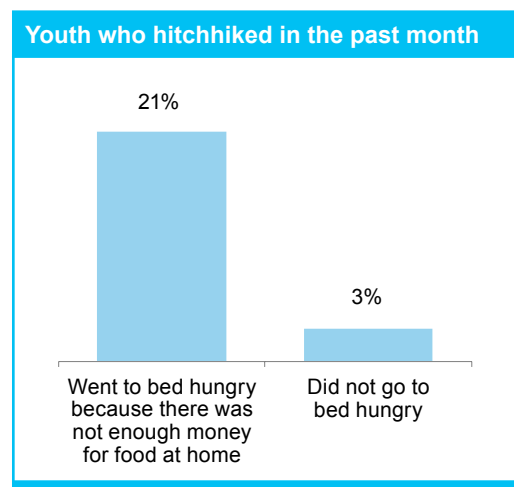
Twenty-seven percent of students reported that they did not use public transit. The safer that transit users felt, the more likely they were to take a bus or other transit options to school.



3% of students had driven after using alcohol or marijuana, and 10% had been in a car with an impaired driver in the past month.

Youth who relied on public transit or hitchhiking were more likely than their peers to have missed out on extracurricular activities and health care services. For example, 34% of youth who hitchhiked to school and 21% who took the bus or other public transit had missed out on extracurricular activities because they could not get there, compared to 15% who got to school by car. Youth reliant on the bus or hitchhiking were also more likely than those travelling by car to have missed out on necessary medical care because they had no transportation.

Nineteen percent of youth had a learner's driver's licence, 10% had a novice licence, and almost none had a full licence. Youth in the Interior were the most likely to have any sort of driver's licence.



Impaired driving

Driving while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs is associated with a greater chance of being involved in a motor vehicle accident. BC has a requirement that those with a learner's or novice licence have a zero blood alcohol content when driving.

Over a quarter of youth who had ever driven after using substances (27%) did not have a driver's licence.

Five percent of youth who had tried alcohol had driven after drinking. Two percent had done so in the past month, which was a decline from 6% in 2008 and 8% in 2003. There was also a decrease in the percentage of youth who had ever driven after using marijuana (from 20% in 2008 to 15% in 2013; among youth who had ever used marijuana). Nine percent of youth who had ever used marijuana had driven while impaired by this substance in the past month.

Consistent with previous BC AHS results, males were more likely than females to have driven after using alcohol or marijuana.

Eighteen percent of youth (21% of females vs. 15% of males) had ever been a passenger in a car with a driver who had been drinking, and 14% had been in a vehicle with a driver who had been using marijuana (15% of females vs. 13% of males).

Technology use

Nine out of ten students reported that they had a cellphone or other portable electronic communication device. The majority of these students (96%) had used their device on the previous school day.

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

Females were more likely than males to use their phone to communicate (with friends, parents, or for social networking). Males were more likely than females to use their phone to bully others or engage in sexting.

Youth continued to be online after the time they were expected to go to sleep. Common activities included surfing the Internet (59%), talking or texting (57%), chatting online or using social networks (56%), and playing online games (29%).

Def.

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

Used cellphone to...	Did this on last school day	When activity took place		
		Before school	During school	After school
Communicate with friends	89%	45%	62%	71%
Play games/entertainment/music	83%	33%	45%	68%
Communicate with parent(s)/guardian(s)	80%	19%	38%	63%
Chat online or social networking	74%	31%	39%	63%
Find information	72%	19%	53%	46%
Engage in sexting	10%	2%	3%	9%
Communicate with teachers	9%	2%	4%	5%
Bully others	2%	<1%	1%	1%

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

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

35%

of males and 43% of females were using Facebook, Twitter, or other social media during school.

Females were more likely than males to have been texting or talking on the phone (65% vs. 50%) or chatting online or social networking (61% vs. 51%) after they were supposed to be sleeping. Males were more likely to have been gaming (38% vs. 19% of females).

Ten percent of students reported that they did not have a cellphone or other such device (13% of males vs. 8% of females). There were some differences between these students and those who had a phone. For example, students without a cellphone were less likely to have close friends in their

school or neighbourhood, or to feel they had an adult in their neighbourhood or community who cared about them. However, they were more likely to feel connected to school.

There may be a link between poverty and students not having a cellphone. For example, students who did not have a cellphone were less likely to participate in at least one weekly extracurricular activity, were less likely to have been to the dentist recently, and were more likely to have gone to bed hungry because there was not enough money for food at home.

“

“Eight hours of computer use a day... I think asking about computer usage is important.”

“I am one of the few kids with no Facebook account, no cellphone.”

“I have a video game addiction.”

“Do I have control over my belongings that I use frequently (e.g., cellphone, computer)?: No.”

“I am expected to leave my phone in the living room when I go to bed.”

“I 'game' a lot and would like to see more questions related to that because of how big the community is.”

“The only time I feel happy is when I play online games.”

”

Link between technology use & health outcomes

Youth who had used a cellphone to communicate with their parents were more likely to feel they had an adult in their family who they could talk to if they had a problem (74% vs. 70% of youth who had not used their cellphone to contact their parents), and to report that their parents knew what they were doing in their free time.

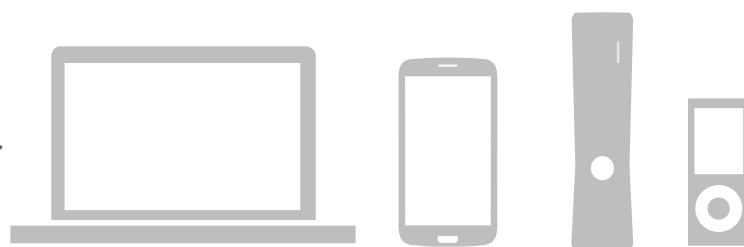
Youth who had used their phone for sexting on the previous school day were more likely to report that they had met someone on the Internet who made them feel unsafe (22%

vs. 13% of those who had not sexted), and to have been cyberbullied in the past year (26% vs. 13%).

Fourteen percent of youth reported that they had been cyberbullied in the past year (19% of females vs. 10% of males). This reflected a decrease from 2008 when the rates were 21% for females and 12% for males. Additionally, 19% of females and 9% of males had met someone through the Internet who made them feel unsafe.



My eldest sister has a gaming addiction... This has been going on for a while now and I'm quite worried."



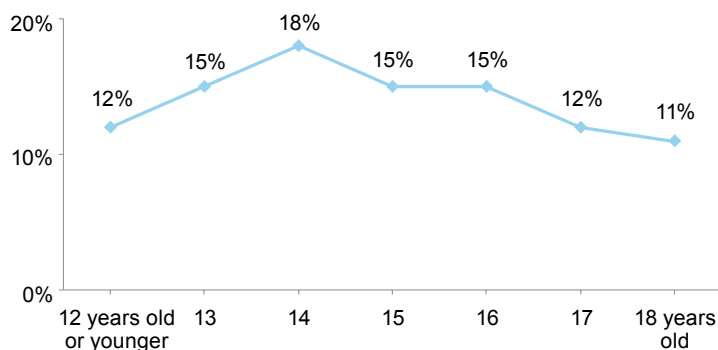
14% of students had met someone on the Internet who made them feel unsafe.

Seven percent of males and 6% of females reported that they had cyberbullied someone else in the past year. Fourteen-year-olds were the most vulnerable to being cyberbullied, with lower rates for younger and older youth. Perpetrators of cyberbullying were most commonly aged 14 and older.

As with other forms of bullying, females were more likely than males to be exclusively the victims of cyberbullying, whereas males were more likely to be exclusively perpetrators.

Youth who were cyberbullied in the past year were less likely to rate their mental health as good or excellent (61% vs. 85% of those who were not cyberbullied). They were also more likely to have seriously considered suicide in the past year (33% vs. 9%) and to report binge drinking in the past month (26% vs. 16%).

Youth who were cyberbullied in the past year



Note: The differences between 12 and 18 years old and between 17 and 18 years old were not statistically significant.



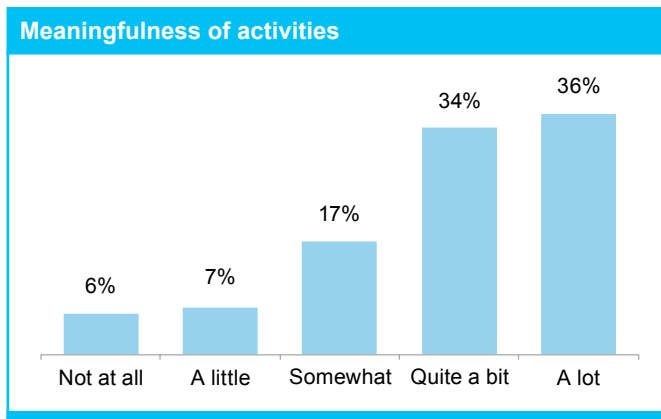
I have been sexually harassed on the Internet."

Youth engagement

The BC AHS asked students about their level of engagement in the activities they participated 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.

Meaningfulness of activities

Seventy percent of male and female students reported that the activities they were involved in were at least quite a bit meaningful to them. Females were slightly more likely to feel this way in 2013 than in 2008, but there was no difference for males.



Ideas listened to & acted upon

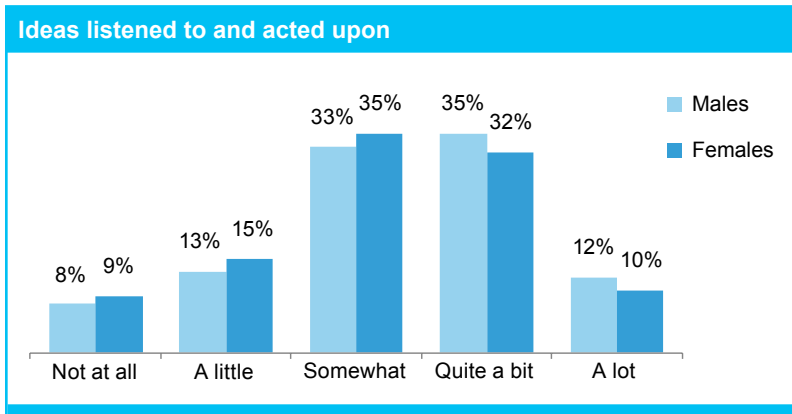
Students were less likely in 2013 (44%) than in 2008 (50%) to feel that their ideas were listened to and acted upon at least quite a bit in the activities they took part in.

Older females were less likely than younger ones to feel that their ideas were listened to, but there was no such difference among males. Similarly, students in urban areas were more likely than those in rural areas to feel that their ideas were valued.



I want to volunteer,
I just don't know how."

46% of males and 42% of females felt listened to and valued in the activities they took part in.



Note: The difference between males and females whose ideas were not at all listened to was not statistically significant.

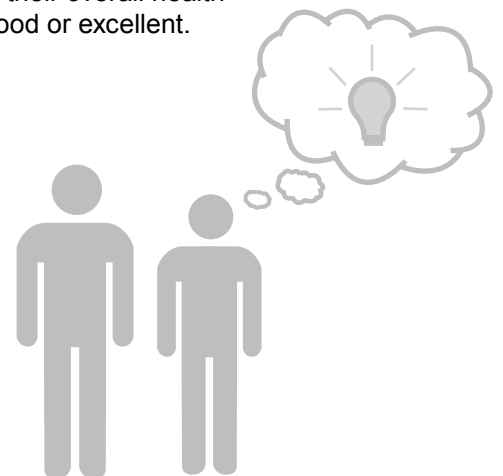
Note: Percentages do not equal 100% due to rounding.

Importance of feeling engaged

Feeling engaged in activities can be a protective factor for even the most vulnerable youth. For example, youth who had experienced bullying but felt that their ideas were valued were more likely to always feel safe in their school and community, compared to bullied youth who did not feel engaged in this way (13% vs. 6%).

Similarly, among youth who had been abused, those whose activities were meaningful to them were less likely than those who felt their activities were not meaningful to have considered suicide (32% vs. 44%), and they were more likely to rate their mental health as good or excellent (64% vs. 47%).

Students born outside of Canada were less likely than their Canadian-born peers to feel that their activities were quite a bit or very meaningful (62% vs. 72%) and to feel that their ideas were listened to and acted upon (42% vs. 45%). However, when immigrant youth were involved in meaningful activities or felt that their ideas were listened to, they were more likely to rate their overall health and mental health as good or excellent.



Family relationships

BC families are diverse and include single parents, extended families in one household, same-sex parents, and step-parents. Regardless of how families are made up, if family members are connected to each other, there is a positive association with youth health.

Most students reported that their family paid attention to them (75%), they had fun together (68%), and their family understood them (60%) quite a bit or very much.

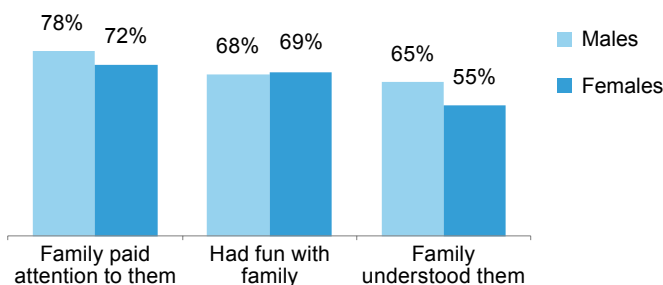
Females were more likely than males to feel that their family paid very little or no attention to them (9% vs. 6%) and that their family did not understand them.

Students aged 14 and younger were more likely than older students to report that they had fun with their family, their family paid attention to them, and their family understood them.

Youth who felt that their family paid attention to them quite a bit or very much were more likely to have made safer decisions than their peers who felt that their family paid attention to them very little or not at all. For example, they were less likely to have ever driven after drinking alcohol (2% vs. 6%), or to have been a passenger in a vehicle with someone who had been drinking (15% vs. 33%), and were more likely to always wear a seat belt (77% vs. 61%). They were also more likely to report higher self-confidence than those who felt their family did not pay attention to them.

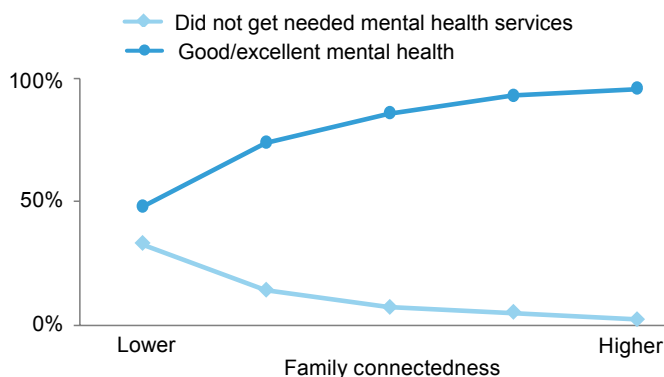
Additionally, the more students felt connected to their family (i.e., that members of their family understood them, paid attention to them, and had fun together), the less likely they were to miss out on accessing needed mental health services, and the more likely they were to report good or excellent mental health.

Family relationships
(students who marked 'quite a bit' or 'very much')



Note: The difference between males and females for having fun with family was not statistically significant.

Mental health in relation to family connectedness



73% of youth had an adult in their family they could turn to if they had a serious problem.

Students were also asked if there was an adult in their family they could turn to if faced with a serious problem, and 76% of males and 70% of females indicated that there was. Students with such an adult in their lives were less likely to forego needed mental health care (6% vs. 25% of students who did not feel they could turn to an adult relative), and were less likely to report binge drinking in the past month (37% vs. 42%; among those who had tried alcohol). They were also more likely to describe their mental health as good or excellent (89% vs. 61%) and to have post-secondary education plans (88% vs. 81%).

Parental monitoring

In addition to being asked about family relationships, students were asked how much in the past 30 days they felt their parent(s) or guardian(s) had monitored what they were doing with their free time. Over three quarters (76%) reported that their parents knew what they were doing all or most of the time. One in ten male and female students reported that their parents rarely or never knew what they were doing with their free time.

If youth felt that their parents were monitoring what they were doing in their free time, they were less likely to have used their cellphone after they were expected to be asleep, and were more likely to have slept for nine or more hours last night (27% whose parents monitored them slept for nine or more hours vs. 13% whose parents did not monitor them).

Three quarters of students reported that they ate an evening meal with their parents always or most of the time in the past month. Twelve percent (11% of males vs. 14% of females) rarely or never had this experience. Older students were less likely than younger ones to eat dinner with their parents, and were more likely to report that their parents did not know what they were doing with their free time.

Parental presence at meal times is linked to positive health. For example, youth who reported that their parents ate an evening meal with them at least sometimes were more likely to feel good about themselves (83% vs. 60% of youth who rarely or never ate with their parents) and to feel good about their abilities (88% vs. 73%).



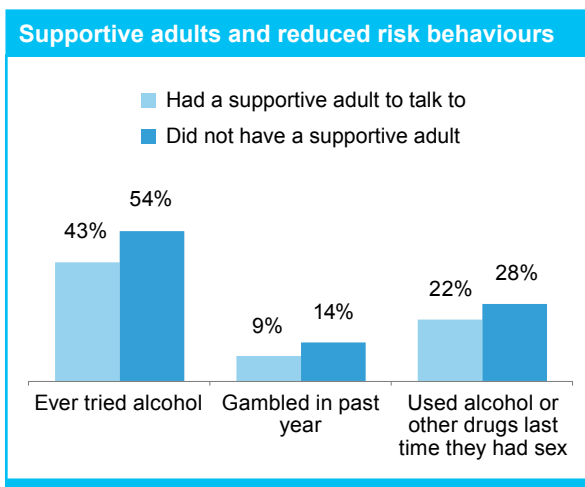
Parents do not know
I drink with friends.”

Supportive & caring adults outside the family

Almost a third (32%) of students felt they had an adult outside their family they could turn to if faced with a problem. Females were more likely than males to have a supportive adult outside the family (34% vs. 30%), whereas males were more likely than females to identify a supportive adult inside the family. Older youth were less likely than their younger peers to have a supportive adult inside their family and more likely to have one outside.

A third of youth who had no adult in their family to turn to did have one outside their family. However, 19% of youth had no adults inside or outside their family to turn to (20% of females vs. 18% of males).

Youth who had ever been physically or sexually abused were more likely to report that there was no adult in their lives they would feel comfortable talking to if faced with a serious problem (33% vs. 15% who had not been abused). However, if these youth did have an adult in their lives they could turn to, they were more likely to have plans to continue their education after high school (85% vs. 77% of those without such an adult), and were less likely to think that they would drop out of high school (1% vs. 2%).



Note: Percentages of youth who used alcohol or other substances the last time they had sex are among those who ever had sex.

Among youth with a mental health condition, those who had an adult outside their family they could turn to if faced with a problem were more likely than their peers without such an adult in their lives to feel good about themselves (40% vs. 29%), feel as competent as their peers (63% vs. 54%), feel calm and at peace more often in the past month, report only positive future aspirations (80% vs. 72%), report good or excellent mental health (28% vs. 22%), and feel like a part of their school.



My ADD has affected me greatly... I have received an extreme amount of help and support from family and staff at my school.”

61% of youth felt there was an adult in their neighbourhood or community who cared about them.

Caring adult in neighbourhood or community

More than 6 out of 10 students reported having an adult in their neighbourhood or community (beyond their school or family) that really cared about them. However, 2% could not identify an adult in their neighbourhood, community, or at school who they felt cared about them or who they could talk to if they had a problem.

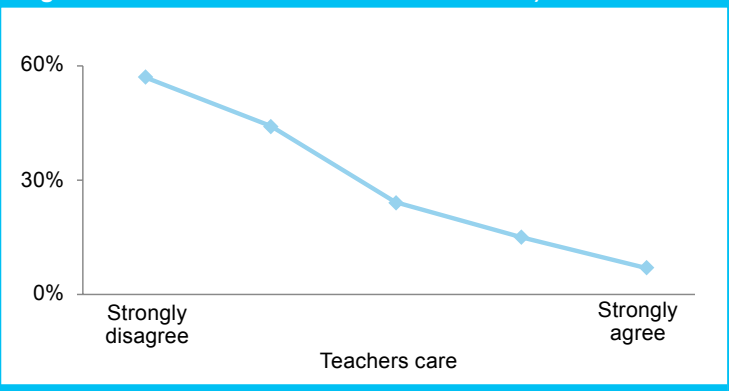
Some youth were less likely to identify an adult in their neighbourhood or community that really cared about them. These included youth who had ever been physically or sexually abused (55% vs. 62% of those who had not been abused) and youth in urban areas (70% vs. 60% in rural areas).

Feeling cared about by an adult outside the family was protective. Students who felt that an adult in their neighbourhood, community, or school cared about them were less likely to miss out on accessing needed mental health services (11% vs. 28% who did not feel cared about). They were also more likely to feel competent in at least one area (76% vs. 53%), to have only positive aspirations for the future (89% vs. 70%), feel happy most or all of the time in the past month (69% vs. 34%), and report good or excellent mental health (82% vs. 56%).

In addition, youth who felt that there was an adult in their neighbourhood who cared about them were more likely than their peers who did not feel this way to always feel safe there during the day (69% vs. 55%) and at night (32% vs. 23%).

Youth who had been in government care were less likely than their peers to have a supportive adult inside or outside their family; but when they did, it was associated with healthy outcomes. For example, they were less likely to report binge drinking in the past month if they felt that their teachers or other school staff cared about them. They were also more likely to have post-secondary plans if they felt there was an adult in their neighbourhood or community who really cared about them (74% vs. 66% of youth with government care experience who did not feel cared about by an adult in the community).

Binge drinking in past month (among youth who had lived in government care and had ever tried alcohol)



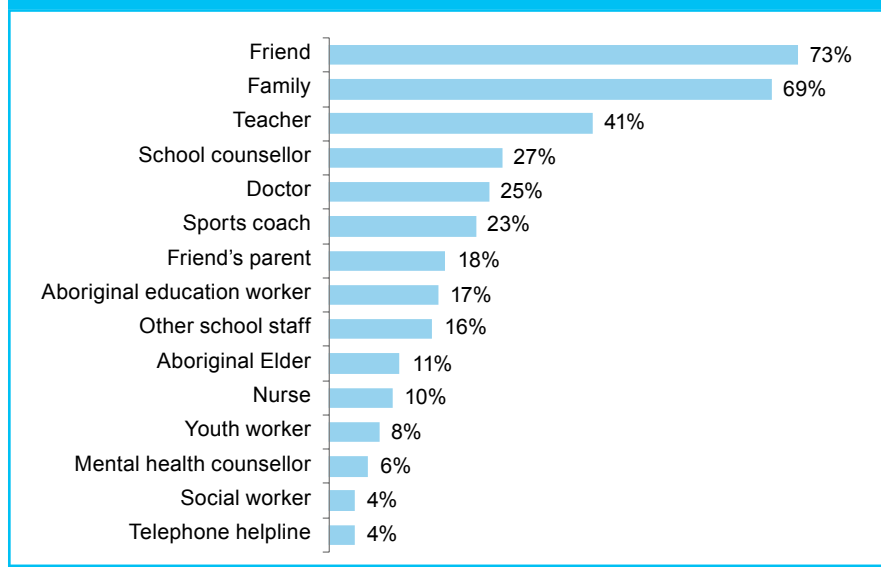
Help seeking

Students asked various professionals for help in the past year, and the most common were teachers, school counsellors, doctors, and sports coaches. In addition to seeking support from professionals, students sought assistance from friends, family members, and a friend's parent.

There were some gender differences in whom youth approached for help. Males were more likely than females to approach teachers, other school staff, sports coaches, nurses, and social workers. Females were more likely than males to ask for help from family, friends, school counsellors, or mental health workers.



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.

84% of youth who had been in government care and found a sports coach helpful reported good or excellent mental health (vs. 52% who asked for help but did not feel supported).

The majority of students who approached people for help found the assistance helpful. Males were more likely than females to find the support they received from friends helpful (95% vs. 94%), as well as the support they received from family members (95% vs. 92%), school counsellors (86% vs. 81%), doctors (93% vs. 88%), and nurses (91% vs. 87%).

Seventeen percent of Aboriginal students asked for help from an Aboriginal education worker in the past year, while 11% asked for help from an Aboriginal Elder. Among Aboriginal students who asked for help, 90% found an Aboriginal education worker helpful and 92% found helpful the support they received from an Elder.

Some youth were less likely to find the adults they approached to be helpful, including youth with a mental or emotional health condition. However, when these youth did find the adults they approached to be helpful, there were positive associations. For example, among youth with a mental or emotional health condition, those who approached a teacher and found the support helpful were less likely to have attempted suicide in the past year than those who did not find their teacher's support helpful (28% vs. 48%).



"We should all have someone to talk to."

"My best friend's mom treats me like her kid."

"Had it not been for my soccer coach and my principal, I would be dead."

"Only a select few people in my life...can get me to open up. These people range from a close friend to my fabulous school bus driver."

"Our school does not know how to deal with kids who are upset... I usually use Kids Help Phone."

"I find a nurse very helpful."

"I don't want my family to be disappointed in me or be embarrassed of me if I did go to them for help, I'm afraid to even though I love and trust them. I need this help though."

"I just need someone who understands me. Someone who actually cares."

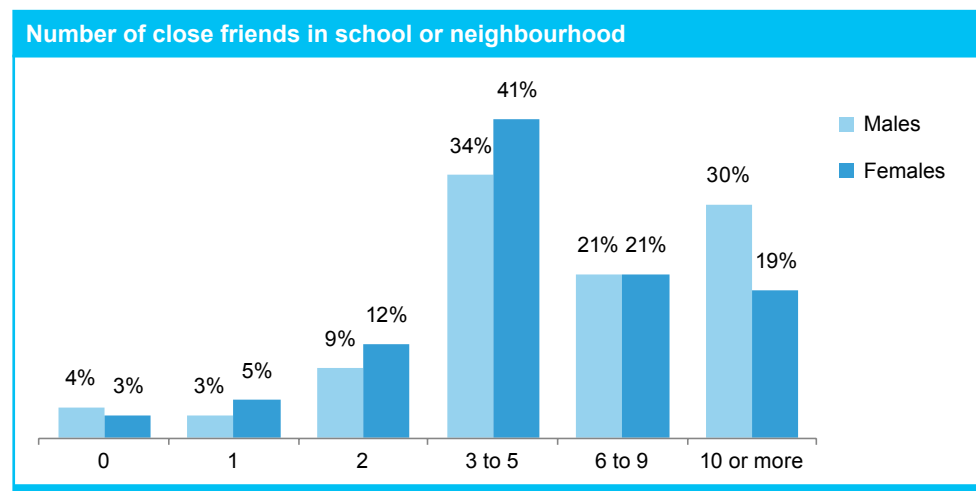


Peer relationships

As youth grow older, their relationships with peers play an increasingly important role in their lives. The majority of students in BC had at least three close friends in their school or neighbourhood. Students in Grade 7 were more likely than those in Grade 12 to report having 10 or more friends (32% vs. 20%).

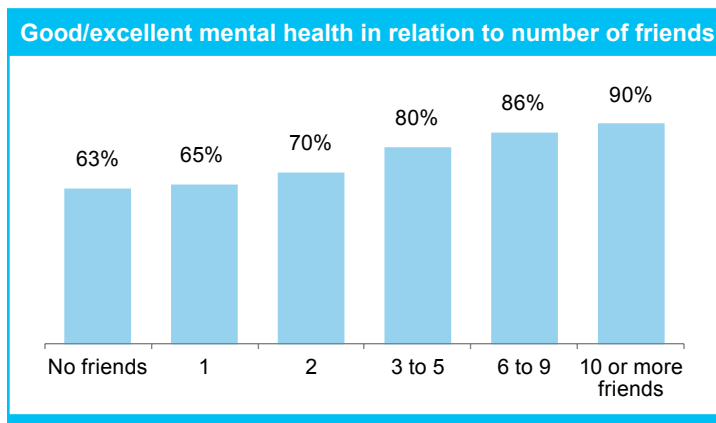
Students in urban and rural areas were equally likely to report having no friends. However, males in rural areas were more likely than males in urban areas to report having ten or more close friends (33% vs. 30%).

Having close friends in the neighbourhood or at school was linked to better health. The more close friends a student had, the more likely they were to report good or excellent mental health, and the less likely they were to be bullied. For example, 62% of youth without any close friends had been teased, excluded, or assaulted at school or on the way to or from school in the past year, compared to 48% of those with three or more friends.



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

83% of youth had at least three close friends in their school or neighbourhood.



Note: The difference between having no friends and one friend was not statistically significant.

Pro-social friends

Adolescence is a time when young people try out new behaviours and experiences with their friends and peer group. Students were asked if their friends would be upset with them if they were involved in certain risky behaviours, including getting arrested, dropping out of school, and using marijuana. The majority of students had friends who would be upset with them if they engaged in risky behaviours, and females were more likely than males to have such friends.

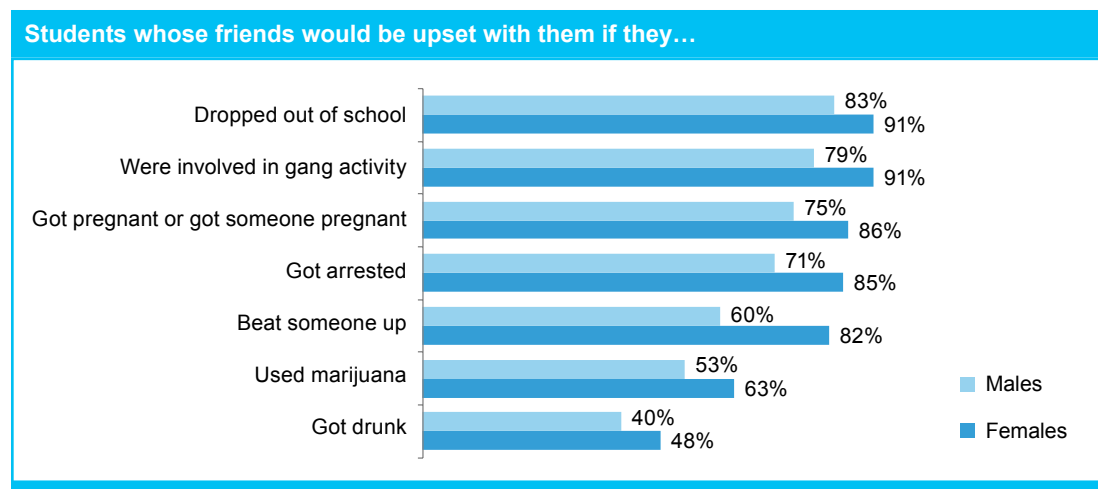
Students in urban areas were generally more likely than those in rural areas to have friends with pro-social attitudes. Two exceptions were dropping out of school and pregnancy involvement among males, where there were no differences between urban and rural youth.



I have two best friends who love me and I feel like I belong here.”

Friends' attitudes towards marijuana did not change between 2008 and 2013. However, students in 2013 were more likely than their peers five years earlier to report having friends who would be upset with them if they beat someone up (71% vs. 54%), got arrested (78% vs. 66%), got drunk (44% vs. 35%), got pregnant or got someone pregnant (81% vs. 74%), or dropped out of school (87% vs. 86%).

Students who reported that their friends would be upset with them for these reasons were more likely to indicate good or excellent mental health than students whose friends would not be upset. For example, 86% of students whose friends would be upset if they used marijuana reported good or excellent mental health compared to 75% of students whose friends would not be upset for this reason.



I believe in a healthy lifestyle (no drugs or alcohol), so I try to stay with a group of friends who don't [use]. But it's getting harder."

8% of youth who had been bullied had also been the victim of relationship violence (vs. 4% who had not been bullied).

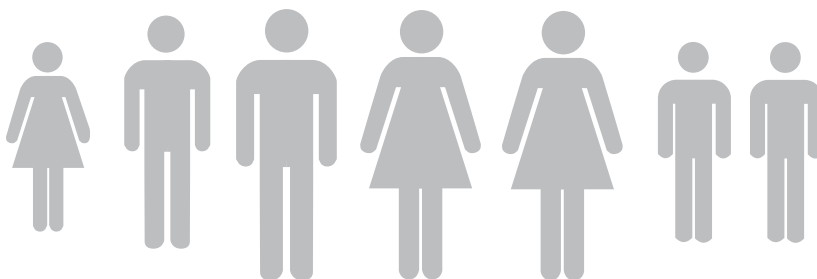
Relationship violence

In addition to friendships, the survey asked about romantic relationships. Thirty-nine percent of students had been in dating relationships in the past year, a decrease from 57% in 2008. Among youth who had been in a dating relationship, 6% had been the victim of physical violence within that relationship. This rate reflected a decrease from 8% in 2008, and was a return to the 2003 rate.

Students with less positive peer relationships were more likely to also experience relationship violence. For example, youth who had been the victim of bullying were

twice as likely as their peers who were not bullied to have been the victim of relationship violence as well. Also, youth who had no close friends were more than twice as likely as youth with one or more friends to be intentionally physically hurt by their boyfriend or girlfriend (14% vs. 6%).

Youth with friends who would not be upset if they beat someone up were more likely to have been the victim of relationship violence themselves, compared to youth whose friends would disapprove of that behaviour (8% vs. 4%).



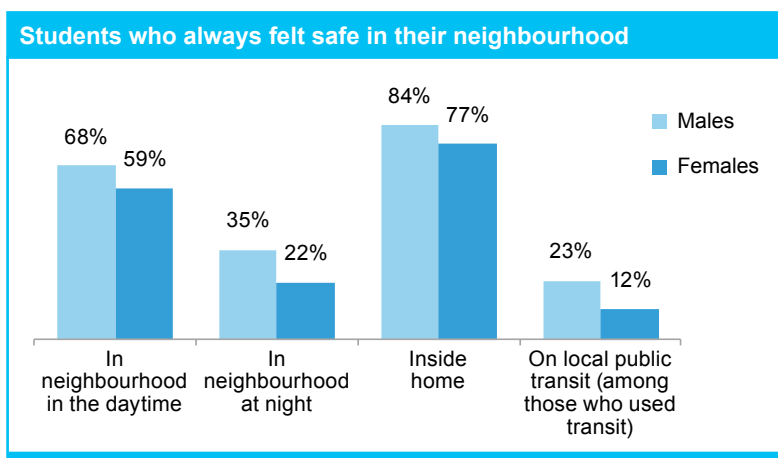
My ex-boyfriend
abused me.”

Neighbourhood safety

While 64% of youth always felt safe in their neighbourhood in the daytime, only 28% felt the same way at night. Most youth (81%) always felt safe inside their home, whereas 2% rarely or never did. Males were more likely than females to always feel safe in their neighbourhood, home, and on transit.

Only 17% of youth who used transit always felt safe while using it, and 5% never felt safe. Youth living in the Fraser region were the least likely to feel safe on transit (12% always felt safe vs. 19%–23% in other regions of the province).

Youth who had been cyberbullied or had experienced in-person bullying were less likely to feel safe in their home or neighbourhood. For example, 56% of youth who had been teased, excluded, or assaulted always felt safe in their neighbourhood in the daytime, compared to 71% of those who had not been bullied. These youth were also less likely to feel safe in their neighbourhood at night (21% vs. 36%), at home (74% vs. 88%), or on public transit (13% vs. 22%; among transit users).



Without [my dog] or somebody around, I don't feel safe."

65% of youth who always felt safe in their neighbourhood at night felt calm and at peace most or all of the time in the past month (vs. 34% who never felt safe).

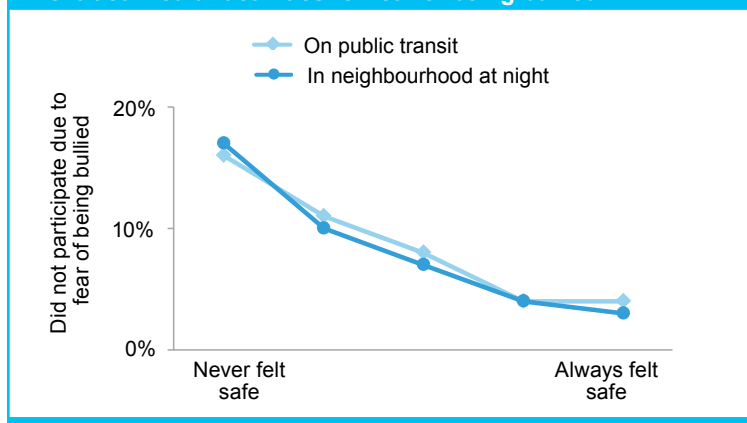
Feeling unsafe in their neighbourhood prevented some youth from engaging in community life. For example, they were more likely to report not being involved in extra-curricular activities because they were afraid of being bullied. Furthermore, only 5% of youth who never felt safe in their neighbourhood thought that they would be engaged in their community in five years, compared to 12% of youth who always felt safe in their neighbourhood.

Students who felt very safe in their neighbourhood were more likely than those who did not feel safe to report a high sense of connection to their community (48% vs. 36%).

Immigrant students were less likely than their Canadian-born peers to feel safe in their neighbourhood. However, they were more likely to report feeling like a part of their community.

Neighbourhood safety was linked to mental health. For example, youth who felt the least safe in their neighbourhood were five times more likely to have attempted suicide in the past year than those who felt the safest. Furthermore, 7% of youth who always felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day reported extreme stress in the past month, compared to 24% of those who never felt safe at this time.

Feelings of neighbourhood safety in relation to not participating in extracurricular activities for fear of being bullied

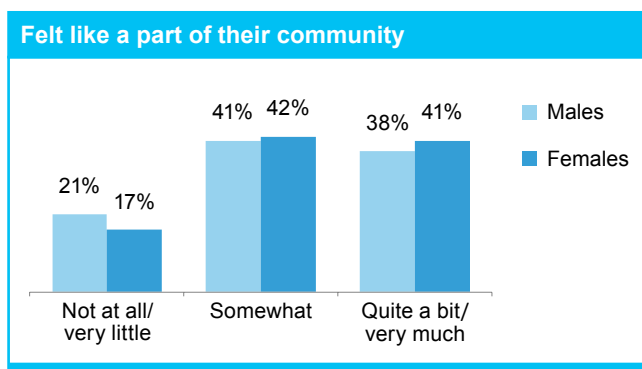


I don't use transit because I'm scared."

Community connectedness

Overall, students in rural communities were more likely to report feeling connected to their community than urban students (44% vs. 39%), although students in the Vancouver Coastal region were more connected to their community than students in the other four Health Authorities.

About 4 in 10 youth felt they were a part of their community. Older students were less likely to feel this way. For example, 55% of 12-year-olds felt connected to their community compared to 36% of 18-year-olds. Females were more likely than males to feel connected to their community.



Note: The difference between males and females for feeling somewhat connected to their community was not statistically significant.

The link between neighbourhood safety and community connectedness has already been discussed (p. 79). Also, students who participated in at least one weekly extracurricular activity, felt listened to and valued in their activities, felt their activities were meaningful, and felt safe at school, all reported greater sense of community connectedness than students who did not have these experiences.

Students who felt connected to their community were more likely to see themselves engaged in their community in five years (17% vs. 6% who did not currently feel connected). They were also more likely to see only positive future outcomes for themselves (92% vs. 80%), to think they were really good at something (83% vs. 66%), and report feeling happy all or most of the time in the past month (80% vs. 50%).

Def.

COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS The BC AHS asked youth how much they felt like a part of their community. Youth who answered 'quite a bit' or 'very much' were considered to be connected to their community, while those who answered 'not at all' or 'very little' were not considered to be connected.

26% of students participated in cultural or traditional activities in the past year.

Cultural engagement

The 2013 BC AHS asked students about their engagement in cultural activities, such as dances and holidays, as well as their access to foods from their culture. Twenty-nine percent of females and 23% of males reported participating in cultural or traditional activities in the past year. Students aged 12 and younger reported the highest participation in weekly cultural activities.

Recent immigrants to Canada were more likely to take part in cultural activities on a weekly basis than students who were Canadian-born.

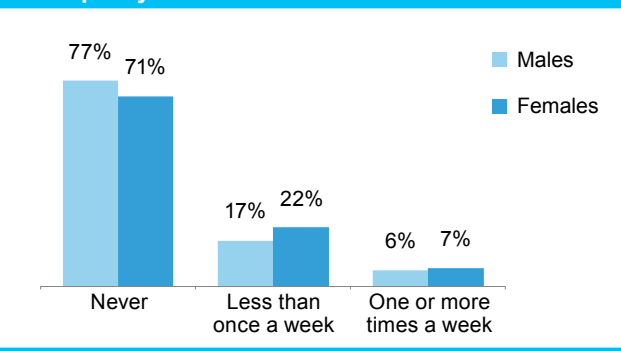
Thirty-eight percent of students (42% of males vs. 35% of females) reported consuming traditional foods from their background at least once on the day before taking the survey. Older students, students in urban communities, and immigrant students were more likely to have consumed traditional foods than their peers. For example, 70% of immigrant students had consumed traditional foods from their background at least once yesterday, compared to 31% of their Canadian-born peers.

Nine percent of Aboriginal youth participated in weekly cultural or traditional activities in the past year, and 20% consumed traditional foods from their background at least once yesterday.

Attempts to ensure youth in government care remain connected to their culture may be working well. For example, 43% of those living in foster care or a group home reported consuming traditional foods from their background at least once yesterday, and 11% participated in weekly cultural or traditional activities in the past year (compared to 6% of students not in government care).

Students who took part in weekly cultural activities were more likely to report seeing themselves engaged in their community in five years (18% vs. 10% who did not participate in such activities in the past year), to rate their mental health as good or excellent (85% vs. 81%), to feel good about themselves (85% vs. 79%), to feel that the activities they were involved in were meaningful (76% vs. 68%), and to feel that their ideas were listened to and acted upon (50% vs. 43%).

Students' participation in cultural/traditional activities in the past year



Summary list of protective factors

Throughout this report a number of protective factors in the lives of BC students have been identified. This chapter provides a list of those protective factors along with an example for each from the report.

PROTECTIVE FACTOR	EXAMPLE
Stable home	Among students currently living in a foster home or a group home, those who had not moved at all in the past year were more likely than those who had moved to report good or excellent mental health (84% vs. 67%) and good or excellent health overall (86% vs. 71%).
Nine or more hours of sleep	Students in every grade who slept nine or more hours the night before completing the survey were more likely than students who got less sleep to report that their mental health was good or excellent (91% vs. 78%). Further, rates of good or excellent mental health increased with each hour of sleep that students got, with consistent findings for students in every grade.
Good nutrition	Youth who reported eating fruit and vegetables three or more times on the day before taking the survey were less likely than those who ate these foods less often to report extreme stress, and more likely to report positive mental health.
Sports and exercise	Students who played organized or informal sports were more likely than their less active peers to rate their mental health as good or excellent; to report feeling happy, calm and at peace; and to have slept nine or more hours the night before taking the survey.
Feeling safe at home, in school, and the community or neighbourhood	Youth who always felt safe in their neighbourhood at night were nearly twice as likely to have felt calm and at peace most or all of the time in the past month (65% vs. 34% of those who never felt safe).

PROTECTIVE FACTOR

EXAMPLE

Feeling connected to school

Students who felt highly connected to school were more likely to expect to continue their education beyond high school compared to those who felt less connected.

Feeling engaged in activities

Among youth who had experienced bullying, 13% of those who felt that their ideas were listened to and acted upon always felt safe in their school and community, compared to 6% of bullied youth who did not feel engaged in this way.

Feeling like family pays attention to them

Youth who felt that their family paid attention to them were less likely to have ever driven after drinking alcohol or using marijuana, less likely to have been a passenger in a vehicle with someone who had been using substances, and more likely to always wear a seat belt.

Parental monitoring

If students felt that their parent(s) or guardian(s) were monitoring what they were doing in their free time, they were less likely to have used their cellphone after they were expected to be asleep, and were more likely to have slept for nine or more hours the night before taking the survey.

Supportive adult in family

Students who had an adult in their family who they could talk to if they had a serious problem were less likely to forego accessing mental health services when they needed them (6% vs. 25% of students who did not feel they could turn to an adult in their family).

PROTECTIVE FACTOR

EXAMPLE

Caring adult outside family

Students who felt that an adult at their school or elsewhere outside their family cared about them were more likely to report that there was something they were good at (76% vs. 53%), and to have only positive aspirations for the future (89% vs. 70%). They were also more likely to have felt happy most or all of the time in the past month (69% vs. 34%).

Helpful adults

If youth with a mental or emotional health condition found a teacher they approached for assistance to be helpful, they were less likely to attempt suicide (28%) compared to those who approached a teacher but did not find this experience helpful (48%).

Having close friends (excluding online friends)

Having close friends in the neighbourhood or at school was linked to better health. The more close friends a student had, the more likely they were to report good or excellent mental health, and the less likely they were to be bullied. For example, 62% of youth without any close friends had been teased, excluded, or assaulted at school or on the way to or from school in the past year, compared to 48% of those with three or more friends.

Having friends with pro-social attitudes

Among youth in a romantic relationship, those who had friends who disapproved of beating someone up were half as likely to be the victim of relationship violence as those with friends who condoned this behaviour.

Community connectedness

Students who currently felt connected to their community were more likely to also see themselves engaged in their community in five years (17% vs. 6% who did not feel connected).

Cultural engagement

Students who participated in weekly cultural activities were more likely to feel that the activities they were involved in were meaningful (76% vs. 68% who participated less often) and that their ideas were listened to and acted upon (50% vs. 43%).

Using the data

This report offers a comprehensive look at the health of BC students aged 12–19. The online version of the report will be updated as more in-depth analyses are completed and new data become available.

It is hoped that the information will be used to identify what is working well in BC, identify areas for improvement, and inform policy and practice.

An accompanying film to the report details the value of the data and how it will be used. It includes the perspectives of people as diverse as the BC Representative for Children and Youth, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, and Vancouver Whitecaps FC President, Bob Lenarduzzi.

In addition to this provincial report, McCreary will produce 16 reports at the Health Service Delivery Area level, as well as 56 confidential data table reports at the school district level. A number of reports are also planned which will look at specific topics in greater detail. These include reports about sexual health, the health of youth in government care, and the health of Aboriginal youth.

The data is also being used by partners such as UBC's Stigma and Resilience among Vulnerable Youth Centre (SARAVYC) to consider the health of transgender youth, and by the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth for the next *Growing up in BC* report.

The survey results are available in a number of youth-friendly formats which can be used by teachers, youth workers, and young people themselves to engage in a dialogue about youth health. McCreary staff and Youth Advisory and Action Council (YAC) members are also available to conduct workshops. The workshops aim to engage youth in the results of the survey and use these as a platform to develop projects which address youth health issues at the community or school level.

Students attending school in the school districts that participated in the BC AHS are eligible to apply for funding for projects which address youth health issues identified in the survey.

For more details on any of these initiatives, please visit www.mcs.bc.ca or contact mccreary@mcs.bc.ca. ❖

“To whoever is reading this, I hope my message gets passed on.”



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Index

- Aboriginal youth, **7**, 8, 27, 72, 73, 81
Abuse, physical & sexual, 6, **52–53**, 67, 70, 71
Acknowledgements, **86–87**
Alcohol use, 6, 31, **34–35**, 36, 37, 39–41, 49, 61, 65, 68, 69, 70, 71, 76, 83
Background, ethnic & cultural, **7**, 24–25, 51, 81
Body weight & body image, 6, 26, **28–29**
Bullying, 6, 43, 44, 45, **46–49**, 58, 62, 64, 65, 67, 74, 77, 78, 79, 83, 84
Caretaking responsibilities, **11**, 45
Concussions, 6, **23**
Connectedness, community, 20, 45, 79, **80–81**, 84
Connectedness, cultural, 6, 24–25, **81**, 84
Connectedness, school, 10, **42–43**, 63, 70, 71, 83
Dental visits, **13**, 63
Discrimination, **51**
Eating behaviours, 24, 25–26, **29**, 69
Employment, 20, 22, 45, **54–55**, 59
Executive Summary, **6**
Family relationships, 6, 11, 13, 19–20, 21, 23, 24, 37, 39, 45, 62, 64, **68–69**, 70, 72, 73, 83
Future aspirations, 11, **20**, 43, **45**, 69, 70, 71, 80, 81, 83, 84
Gambling, **59**, 70
Gender identity, **8**, 51
Government care & Youth Agreements, **9**, 10, 45, 71, 73, 81, 82
Health conditions & disabilities, **12**, **17**, 25, 40, 41, 45, 51, 70, 73, 84
Help seeking, **72–73**, 84
Hitchhiking, 26, **60–61**
Home Life & Housing, 6, **9**, 10, 11, 20, 25, 27, 33, 55, 78, 82
Immigrant youth, **7**, 8, 11, 67, 79, 81
Impaired driving, 6, **61**, 68, 83
Injuries & injury prevention, 6, **22–23**, 39, 55, 61, 68, 83
Language, 6, **7**, **8**
Marijuana use, 6, **36–37**, 39–41, 49, 61, 76, 83
Medical care, 6, **13**, 23, 61, 72, 73
Mental health, 6, 10, 14–15, **16–21**, 25, 26, 40, 43, 49, 58, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 74, 75, 76, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84
Mental health services, **21**, 39, 40, 68–69, 71, 72, 83
Nutrition, 6, **24–27**, 69, 81, 82
Obesity, 6, **28**, 29
Olympic Games, 2010, **59**
Peer relationships, 6, 10, 19–20, 37, 39, 40, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 52, 62, 63, 72, 73, **74–77**, 78, 84
Physical activity, sports & leisure, 6, 11, 22, 23, 25, 26, 45, 49, 55, **56–59**, 60, 61, 62, 63, 66–67, 72, 73, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84
Physical health, 10, **12–13**, 16, 67, 82
Poverty, 11, 13, 21, 26, **27**, 51, 55, 58, 60, 61, 63
Pregnancy, 6, **31**, 75, 76
Protective Factors, 6, **82–84**
Relationship violence, **77**, 84
Rural, urban differences, 20, 21, 27, 35, 43, 57, 58, 66, 71, 74, 75, 80, 81
Safety, neighbourhood, 6, 44, 67, 71, **78–79**, 82, 83
Safety, school, 6, 42, **44**, 67, 80, 82, 83
Safety, transit, 60, **78**, **79**
School, 14, 20, 25, 26, **42–45**, 49, 60, 61, 62, 69, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 83, 84
School districts, participating, **5**
Self-confidence, **16**, 68, 69, 70, 71, 80, 81, 84
Self-harm, 6, **19**, 40
Sexual behaviour, 6, **30–31**, 39, 62, 64, 70
Sexual harassment, **50**
Sexual orientation, 6, **8**, 51
Sleep, 6, **14–15**, 58, 62, 63, 69, 82, 83
Stress & despair, 6, **18**, 20, 25, 40, 41, 79, 82
Substance use, 6, 31, **38**, 39–41, 70
Suicide, 6, **19–20**, 40, 49, 65, 67, 73, 79, 84
Supportive adults outside family, 6, 63, **70–71**, 72, 84
Survey, administration / analysis, **4–5**, 6, 8, 16, 31
Survey, using the data, **85**
Table of contents, **3**
Technology use, 6, 14, 15, 22, 48, **62–65**, 69, 72, 78, 83
Tobacco use, 6, **32–33**, 36
Transportation, 6, 21, 22, 23, 26, 58, **60–61**, 68, 78, 79, 83
Violence, 22, 39, 43, 44, **47**, 48, 49, 74, 76, 77, 78, 84
Weapon carrying, **44**
Youth engagement, 6, 20, 45, **66–67**, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84
Youth profile, 6, **7–11**

