

## Youth engagement and health

The 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS) asked youth about their extracurricular activities, how meaningful these activities were to them, and how much they felt their ideas were listened to and acted upon in these activities.

### Feeling engaged in activities

Seventy percent of youth felt they were involved in activities that were quite a bit or very meaningful, while 44% were involved in activities in which they felt listened to at least quite a bit.

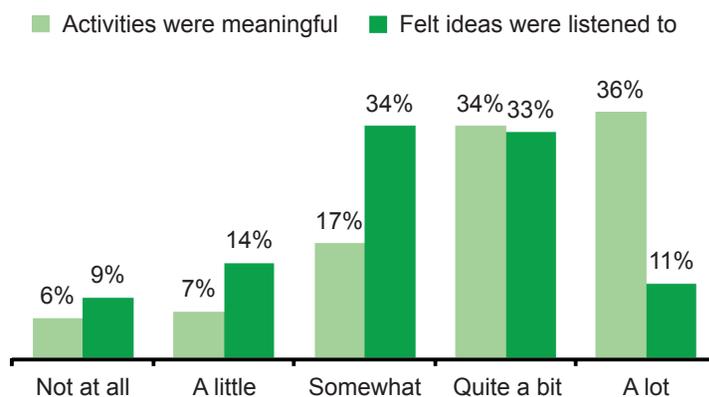
The health picture of youth who felt that their activities were quite a bit or very meaningful to them or who felt that their ideas were listened to and valued quite a bit or a lot, was compared to that of youth who did not feel this engaged in their activities.

Male and female youth who found the activities they took part in to be meaningful or who felt their ideas were listened to were more likely to report good or excellent mental health.

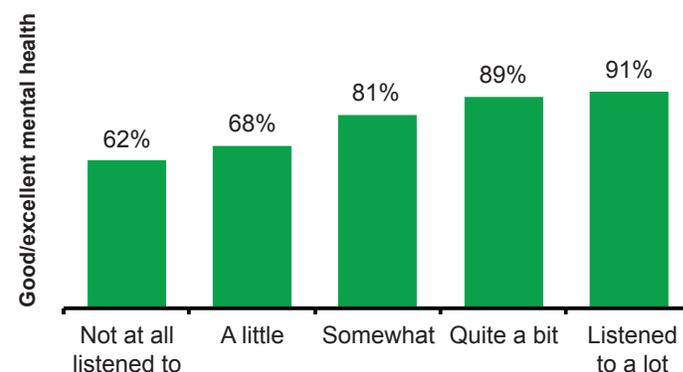
Youth who were meaningfully engaged in activities were less likely to report extreme despair in the past month and less likely to report self-harm, suicidal ideation, and suicidal attempt in the past year.



### YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN ACTIVITIES



### YOUTH WHO REPORTED GOOD/EXCELLENT MENTAL HEALTH BY LEVEL OF INPUT INTO ACTIVITIES

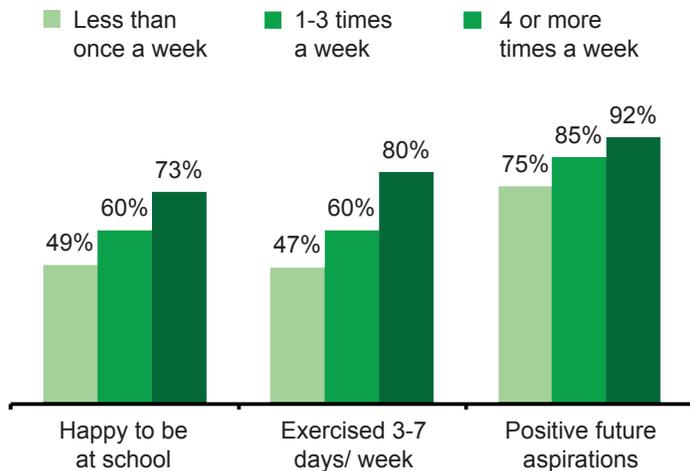


**These stats are from the 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey, which was completed by nearly 30,000 students in Grades 7 to 12 in schools across BC. For more details about the survey, visit [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca)**

**This fact sheet was created by Langara College School of Nursing students Emaly Klomp and Lynn Nguyen while on practicum placement at McCreary Centre Society.**

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### BENEFITS OF MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT IN ACTIVITIES



In addition to mental health benefits, youth who felt engaged in their activities were more likely to indicate they had an adult they could turn to when they had a serious problem, were more connected to school, and had positive aspirations for the future.

Youth who were engaged in their activities were also less likely to have tried marijuana and other drugs (such as prescription pills without a doctor's consent, cocaine, inhalants, etc.).

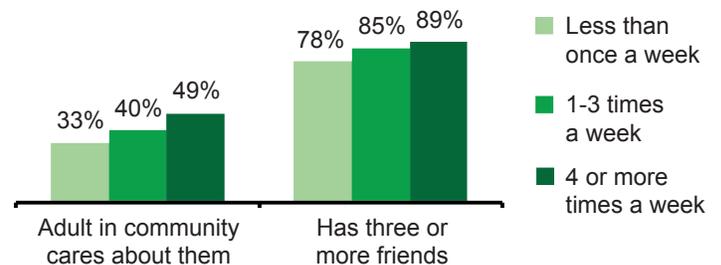
### Frequency of engaging in activities

How frequently youth engaged in activities was also related to their health. For example, the more frequently youth played organized sports or informal sports (such as biking or skateboarding) in the past year, the more likely they were to have an adult they could talk to about serious problems, to have an adult in their community who cared about them, and to have three or more close friends.

Regular participation in organized sports was related to other health behaviours such as always eating breakfast, sleeping nine or more hours, and good or excellent health. It was also associated with a lower likelihood of engaging in some risk behaviours. For example, 15% of youth who played organized sports on a weekly basis had tried substances other than alcohol or marijuana (such as cocaine), compared to 20% who had not played sports in the past year.

These results support the importance of fostering protective factors such as youth engagement in adolescents.

### SOCIAL SUPPORTS BY ENGAGEMENT IN ORGANIZED SPORTS



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