



## BALANCE AND CONNECTION IN THE NORTHEAST



THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING  
OF OUR YOUTH



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# BALANCE & CONNECTION IN THE NORTHEAST:

## THE HEALTH & WELL-BEING OF OUR YOUTH

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We are also indebted to the school personnel, youth, parents, community agencies, health care professionals, and other experts in adolescent health who helped guide the development of the survey, and to the hundreds of youth who took part in pilot testing the survey instrument.

The BC AHS was administered in the Northeast by Public Health Resource Nurses and Licenced Practical Nurses. Their role in the survey was fundamental to its success. Not only did they reassure students that they could answer honestly because their answers would remain confidential, but they were also available to answer any questions that students had about their health.

Quotes from Northeast youth who completed the 2018 BC AHS are included throughout the report.

## **Thank you to the 2018 BC AHS Northeast coordinators and administrators:**

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# KEY FINDINGS

■ Northeast youth are becoming increasingly diverse. The percentage who identified as European decreased (from 59% in 2013 to 52% in 2018), while those who identified as Southeast Asian increased (from 2% to 6%).

■ Northeast students were more likely than those across BC to have worked at a paid job in the past school year, and to have worked in excess of 20 hours a week (13% vs. 8% provincially). Locally, males were twice as likely as females to work 21 or more hours a week (18% vs. 9% among students who were employed).

■ Around half (48%) of Northeast students slept eight or more hours on the night before completing the survey. Students reported doing various activities after the time they were expected to be asleep; including chatting or texting; homework; gaming; and other online activities such as watching videos and checking social media.

■ The percentage of local youth who had eaten food grown or caught by them or their family increased from 18% in 2013 to 25%. Despite this, less than a third (31%) ate three meals a day on school days, compared to 37% across BC. Males were the most likely to always eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

■ As in 2013, 16% of females vomited on purpose after eating in the past year. The percentage of local males who had done so rose from 5% to 12%.

■ The Canadian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines state that youth under 18 years of age should complete at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise every day. Similar to the provincial rate and to the local percentage five years earlier, 21% of Northeast youth aged 12–17 met these recommendations in the week before taking the survey.

■ The provincial decrease in concussions was not seen locally. Northeast youth were more likely than their peers across BC to have sustained a concussion (19% vs. 13%). Local youth were less likely than their peers to always wear a helmet when cycling; skiing; snowboarding; riding an ATV, dirtbike, or snowmobile; mountain biking; and BMXing.

■ Across BC there was a decline in the percentage of male and female students who reported positive mental health. Locally, this decline was only seen for females, where the percentage reporting good or excellent mental health dropped from 74% in 2013 to 60%. In contrast, 81% of local males reported good or excellent mental health.

■ In the past year, 20% of local youth had seriously considered suicide and 6% had attempted suicide. This represented an increase in suicidal ideation for females from 20% in 2013 to 27%. Also, females were three times more likely than males to have made a suicide attempt (9% vs. 3%).

■ In the past year, 22% of students had needed mental health services but did not receive them. This rate was higher than across BC (18%), and represented a local increase from 14% in 2013.

■ The most common reasons for not accessing needed mental health services included thinking or hoping the problem would go away and not wanting their parents to know. Also, local youth were twice as likely as those across BC to have been placed on a waiting list (10% vs. 5% provincially; among those who did not receive needed mental health services).

■ Northeast youth were more likely to have smoked tobacco (e.g., cigarettes, cigars, or cigarillos) than youth across BC (29% vs. 18%), but were less likely to have vaped with nicotine (17% vs. 21%).

■ Among students who drank on the Saturday before taking the survey, 65% engaged in binge drinking, which was a decrease from 76% in 2013.

■ About a quarter (26%) of Northeast youth had tried marijuana (with no gender differences), which was a local decrease from 31% in 2013. Also, more youth waited until they were at least 15 years old to first try marijuana.

■ Similar to five years earlier, 16% (21% of females vs. 10% of males) of Northeast students had been physically abused or mistreated and 14% (23% of females vs. 4% of males) had been sexually abused. While the rate of sexual abuse for local males was comparable to males across the province, the rate for females was higher (23% vs. 17% provincially).

■ Most Northeast youth (71%) felt there was an adult in their neighbourhood or community (outside their family or school) who really cared about them. This was similar to the rate in 2013, and above the provincial rate of 65%. Also, 31% had an adult outside their family they could talk to if they were having a serious problem (vs. 27% provincially).

■ Students who felt they had the right amount of unstructured time to spend on their own were more likely to report positive mental health and well-being. For example, they were more likely to feel happy in the past month (71% vs. 40% who felt they had insufficient time on their own) and to feel their life was going well (80% vs. 54%), and were less likely to experience extreme stress (8% vs. 30%).

■ Most Northeast youth could identify something they were really good at, felt good about themselves, reported satisfaction with their life, and were hopeful for their future.

■ The most common topic Northeast youth identified as wanting to learn more about was mental health.





# INTRODUCTION

## 2018 BC ADOLESCENT HEALTH SURVEY

The BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS) is the most reliable, comprehensive survey of youth aged 12–19 in British Columbia. The survey has been completed every five years since 1992. In 2018, over 38,000 students in 58 of BC's 60 school districts participated.

The 2018 BC AHS was developed in consultation with young people, parents, and other experts in youth health. It was extensively pilot tested before being administered in the Northeast by Public Health Resource Nurses and Licenced Practical Nurses to students in mainstream public schools between February and June 2018.

A report of the provincial findings was released in March 2019 (*Balance and connection in BC*) and can be accessed at [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca).

## REGIONAL REPORTS

This report is one of 16 regional reports of the BC AHS results. It shares data provided by students in Grades 7–12 in the Northeast Health Service Delivery Area (HSDA).

Northeast HSDA is comprised of three school districts: Peace River South (SD 59), Peace River North (SD 60), and Fort Nelson (SD 81). All three school districts in this region participated in the survey in 2013 and 2018.

One school district changed from *signed parental consent and student consent to parental notification and student consent* for the 2018 survey. This meant that all school districts in the region had the same consent procedure in 2018. Parental notification and student consent is the recommended consent procedure for the BC AHS and has been used by the majority of school districts since 2003. The change in this region ensured a greater percentage of students were able to participate in the survey, and ensured greater representation from more vulnerable students (such as those with chaotic home lives or no parent available to sign a consent form). Additional analyses were conducted to ascertain if the change in consent procedures may have affected regional trends, and this did not appear to be the case.

This regional report focuses on the 2018 Northeast results with relevant comparisons to the 2018 provincial results, as well as to local results in 2013.

## A GUIDE TO THIS REPORT

This report is intended for a community audience, and therefore does not detail all aspects of the methodology, including analyses conducted and statistical testing applied. This information is available at [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca) or by email from [mccreary@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:mccreary@mcs.bc.ca).

The report is divided into five main sections. The first provides background information about the young people who completed the survey, the second focuses on their health profile, the next section considers some potentially adverse experiences or challenges to growing up healthy, and precedes a section which looks at factors that can support young people to thrive. The final section offers Northeast students' suggestions for health topics they would like to learn more about.

The 2018 BC AHS included many questions which have been asked on the BC AHS in previous years. This allowed us to report trends over time. The survey also included some new items which reflected the changing challenges and opportunities experienced by the province's young people. These items were deemed important to include by stakeholders who participated in consultations during the development of the survey.

Based on the feedback we received about the 2013 BC AHS and through consultations during the development of the 2018 survey, one of the areas which was updated was gender identity. Following recommendations from Statistics Canada, the 2018 survey included two new

questions: one about sex/gender assigned at birth (what is listed on a student's original birth certificate, with an option of male or female); and one about current gender identity (which included the response options of male, female, neither male nor female, and not yet sure).

Previous versions of the BC AHS only included male and female options for gender. Therefore, in this report, trends are reported only for males and females (based on the question about sex/gender assigned at birth). For analyses conducted exclusively with the 2018 data, results are reported using the question about current gender identity (male, female, and non-binary). Non-binary youth include those who identified as neither male nor female, as well as those who were not yet sure of their gender identity.

All reported comparisons and associations within the Northeast and to 2013 which are included in this report are statistically significant at  $p < .05$ . This means there is up to a 5% likelihood these results occurred by chance. Comparisons between Northeast and the province are statistically significant at  $p < .01$ , which means there is up to a 1% likelihood that the results occurred by chance. Differences in tables or charts that are not statistically significant are noted.

Any percentage that is marked with an asterisk (\*) should be interpreted with caution, as it has a higher than expected standard error, but is still within the acceptable range.



## LIMITATIONS

When reading this report, it is important to remember that although it is considered representative of youth aged 12–19 who were attending mainstream schools in the Northeast, it does not capture the health picture of all young people in this age range. For example, those who were in alternative schools, independent schools, were home-schooled, were dealing with challenges which kept them out of school, or were absent on the day the survey was administered were not included.

Also, the survey was only administered on paper and in English, which excluded some youth with certain disabilities, and literacy or comprehension challenges.

Finally, the percentage of students in the Northeast who identified as non-binary was small (2%). Therefore, although non-binary youth were considered in all gendered analyses, it was generally not possible to report the findings due to the risk of deductive disclosure or the possibility that the percentage estimate was unreliable.

## GLOSSARY

For readability, the following terms are used in this report:

- **Binge drinking** refers to males who consume four or more alcoholic drinks within a couple of hours and females who consume three or more.
- **Extreme sports** include activities such as back-country skiing and BMX.
- **Ideas listened to** refers to youth who reported that their ideas were listened to 'quite a bit' or 'a lot' in the activities that they were involved in.
- **Informal sports** are sports without a coach such as skateboarding and hiking.
- **Meaningful activities** are activities which youth indicated were 'quite a bit' or 'very meaningful' to them.
- **Non-binary** reflects youth who did not identify as either male or female, and those who were not sure of their gender identity.
- **Organized sports** are sports with a coach such as school teams and swimming lessons.
- **Phone** refers to a cell phone, smartphone, or other portable electronic communication device.
- **Sexting** refers to sending sexually explicit photographs or messages via a cell phone. It was also referred to on the survey as 'sending nudes.'
- **Students** or **youth** are used interchangeably to refer to survey participants aged 12–19.

# YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE NORTHEAST

## BACKGROUND

In 2018, local students most commonly reported that they were of European heritage. However, the percentage who identified as European decreased (from 59% in 2013 to 52%), while those who identified as Southeast Asian increased (from 2% to 6%).

The percentages of youth who identified as European and Indigenous were higher in the Northeast than across the province as a whole.

Family background		
	Northeast	BC
European	52%	46%
Indigenous	24%	10%
Southeast Asian	6%	8%
East Asian	3%	18%
Latin/South/Central American	3%	5%
African	2%	3%
South Asian	1%	11%
Australian/Pacific Islander	1%	2%
West Asian	NR	3%
Don't know	22%	10%
Other	4%	4%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

Note: The majority of students who chose 'other' indicated they were Canadian.

Note: The differences between Northeast and BC were not statistically significant for Southeast Asian or African.

NR: Not releasable due to the risk of deductive disclosure.

## BIRTHPLACE & LANGUAGE

The percentage of Northeast students born in Canada decreased (from 94% in 2013 to 90%), but remained above the provincial rate (79%).

In total, 3% of Northeast students were international students (vs. 6% provincially). The percentage who had arrived in Canada as refugees was too small to report.

Among students born abroad, 29% had been in Canada between two and five years, and 36% had been here less than two years.

Thirty percent of local students spoke a language other than English at home, including 7% who did so most of the time.

## INDIGENOUS YOUTH

Around a quarter (24%) of Northeast youth identified as Indigenous. Among these youth, 52% were First Nations, 43% Métis, 4% Inuit, and the remainder specified another Indigenous background, with percentages similar to those in 2013.

Sixteen percent of Indigenous youth had ever lived on a First Nations reserve, including 9% who currently lived on reserve at least some of the time.

Around 1 in 5 (21%) Indigenous students could speak at least a few words of an Indigenous language, although none were fluent.

More than a third (35%) of Indigenous students reported that at least one member of their family had been in residential school, including 20% whose grandparents had attended. This is likely an underestimation, as 43% of local Indigenous youth did not know their family's history of residential school attendance.

Four percent of Indigenous youth identified as Two Spirit.

## GENDER IDENTITY & SEXUAL ORIENTATION

For the first time, the BC AHS asked youth about the sex on their birth certificate and also about their current gender identity. Half of Northeast youth had been assigned male on their birth certificate and half had been assigned female. For nearly all youth (97%), their current gender identity corresponded with their sex assigned at birth, while 1% were transgender and 2% were non-binary (including 1% who were not yet sure of how they identified).

Males were more likely than females to identify as straight (90% vs. 78%); while females were more likely than males to identify as mostly straight (7% vs. 4%), bisexual (8% vs. 3%), and to indicate they were not yet sure of their sexual orientation (4% vs. 2%). Non-binary youth were the most likely to identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (43%\* of non-binary youth vs. 10% of females and 3% of males).

## GOVERNMENT CARE

Students were asked if they had experienced different types of government care (through the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development or a delegated agency) or alternatives to care. Three percent had been in foster care, 2% had been on a Kith and Kin agreement, 1% had stayed in a group home, and 1% had been in a custody centre. The percentage who had been on a Youth Agreement was too small to report.

Sexual orientation of Northeast youth	
Straight	83%
Mostly straight	5%
Bisexual	6%
Gay or lesbian	1%
Not sure yet	3%
Something other than those listed above	2%

Note: Among students who identified a sexual orientation other than the options listed on the survey, the most common were pansexual, asexual, and demisexual.



## LIVING SITUATION

*"I think kids going through their parents divorcing needs a lot more attention."*

Grade 10 student

Students most commonly reported living with at least one parent (96%) and with siblings. Compared to five years previous, they were more likely to be living with parents, siblings, and other children or youth.

Youth were asked if they had caretaking responsibilities on a typical school day. One in five (20%) looked after another relative (e.g., a relative with a disability or younger sibling), and 70% took care of a pet. Females were more likely than males to be caring for a relative (24% vs. 16%) or a pet (74% vs. 66%).

Almost a quarter (23%) of Northeast youth had moved from one home to another in the past year, including 6% who moved three or more times. Also, 7% ran away from home, and 6% had been kicked out in the past year.

Most (93%) local students often or always felt safe inside their home, while 3% never or rarely did (similar to the rate in 2013).

Who Northeast youth lived with most of the time			
	2013	2018	Change
Mother/Stepmother	82%	86%	↑
Father/Stepfather	72%	80%	↑
Sibling(s)/Stepsibling(s)	52%	67%	↑
Live with both parents at different times	10%	10%	
Grandparent(s)	5%	7%	–
Other related adult(s)	3%	3%	–
Other unrelated adult(s)	3%	2%	–
Other children or youth	NR	2%	↑
Two mothers or two fathers	NR	1%	–
Live alone	NR	1%	–
Own child or own children	NR	NR	–
Foster parent(s)	NR	NR	–

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

↑ Indicates there was a statistically significant increase from 2013 to 2018.

NR: Not releasable due to the risk of deductive disclosure.

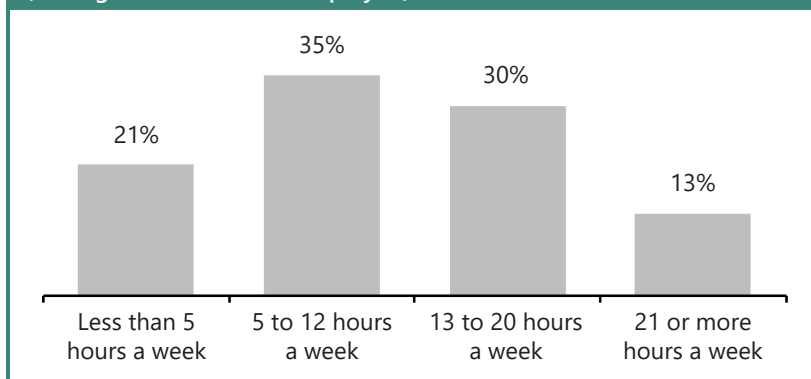


## EMPLOYMENT

Reflecting the local picture in 2013, Northeast students were more likely than those across BC to have worked at a paid job in the past school year (43% vs. 33%).

Among those employed in the past year, local students were more likely to have worked in excess of 20 hours a week (13% vs. 8% provincially). Locally, males were twice as likely as females to work this frequently (18% vs. 9%; among students who were employed).

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



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

Northeast students' phone use on their last school day  
(among those with a phone)

Listening to music	88%
Communicating with friends they know in person	85%
Using social media	82%
Communicating with parent(s)/guardian(s)	82%
Watching shows, movies, YouTube, etc.	75%
Finding information (other than health information)	62%
Playing games	61%
Doing homework	52%
Communicating with friends they only know online	23%
Finding health information	20%
Watching porn	12%
Sexting	8%
Gambling	2%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

## PHONE USE

Most (96%) local students had a cell phone, smartphone or other portable device, and nearly all of these youth used their device on the day before taking the survey.

# HEALTH PROFILE OF NORTHEAST YOUTH

Results of the 2018 BC AHS showed that youth who reported eating healthily, getting plenty of exercise, and getting enough sleep (including going offline at bedtime) not only reported better physical health, but also reported better mental health than their peers.

## PHYSICAL HEALTH

Consistent with youth across the province, most Northeast students (79%) rated their health as good or excellent (as opposed to fair or poor). Locally, the percentage who rated their health as good or excellent was similar to 2013, whereas it decreased provincially.

Similar to five years ago, males were more likely than females to rate their health as excellent (34% vs. 22%), and females were more likely to rate their health as poor (6% vs. 2% of males).

## HEALTH CONDITIONS & DISABILITIES

Similar to youth across BC and to local youth in 2013, 32% of Northeast students indicated having at least one health condition or disability.

Health conditions and disabilities reported by Northeast youth	
Mental health condition	17%
Long-term/chronic medical condition	10%
Sensory disability	5%
Learning disability	5%
Severe allergy requiring EpiPen	2%
Physical disability	1%
Other	2%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

There was a decrease in the percentage of local students who reported having a long-term/chronic medical condition (from 15% in 2013 to 10%), and a slight increase in the percentage reporting a physical disability.

Around half (49%) of students with a health condition or disability reported that it prevented them from doing things their peers could do.

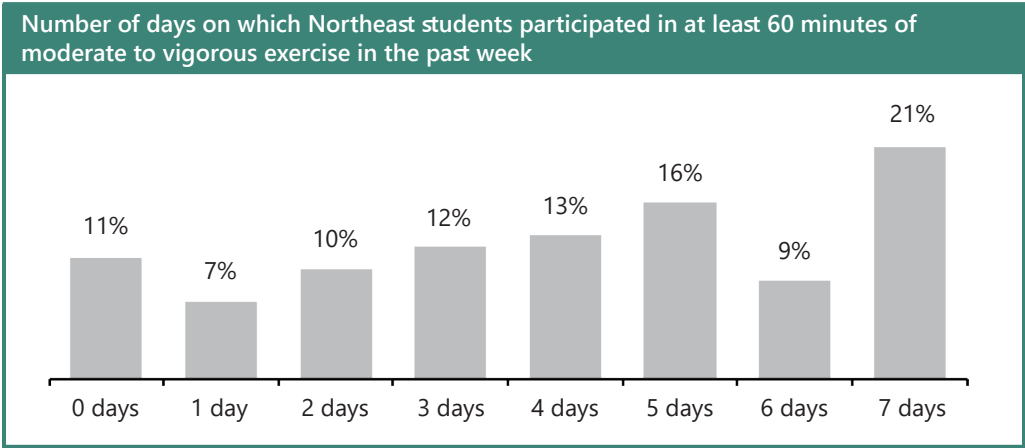


PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The Canadian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines state that children under 18 years of age should complete at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise every day. Similar to the provincial results and to the local rate five years earlier, 21% of Northeast youth aged 12–17 met these recommendations in the week before taking the survey.

As in 2013, local males aged 12–17 were more likely than females to have exercised for 60 minutes every day in the past week (27% vs. 16%).

The Guidelines recommend that individuals aged 18 or older take part in 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each week. Similar to the province and to results five years ago, 67% of students aged 18 or older met this recommendation by participating in 60 minutes of exercise on at least three days in the past week.



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

## SLEEP

Around half (48%) of Northeast students slept eight or more hours on the night before completing the survey (including 21% who slept nine or more hours), and 6% slept four hours or less. The percentage of students who slept for eight or more hours was consistent with the provincial picture and the local rate five years ago.

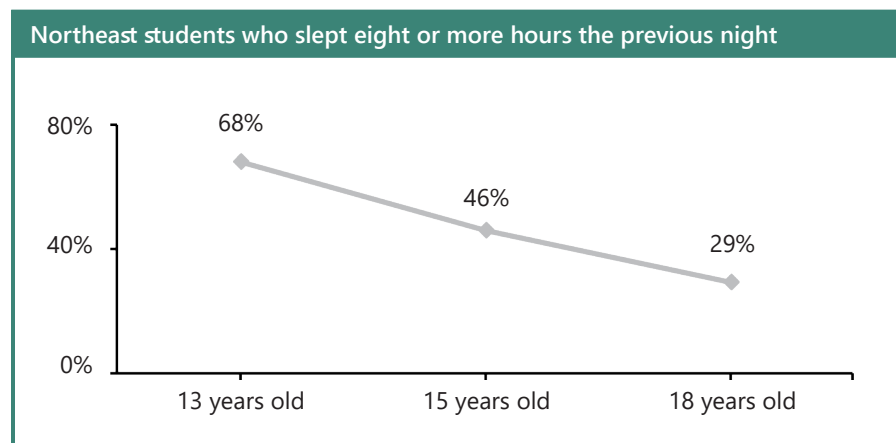
Older students were less likely than younger ones to have slept eight or more hours.

Students reported doing various activities after the time they were normally expected to go to sleep. These included chatting or texting (60%), homework (43%), gaming (31%), and online activities other than gaming (e.g., watching videos or checking social media; 71%).

Males were more likely than females to be gaming (43% vs. 18%), and females were more likely to be doing homework (50% vs. 35% males) after they were expected to be asleep.

There were no gender differences in students reporting going offline after their expected bedtime, as 38% turned off their phone, put it in silent mode, or put it in another room.

On the day they completed the survey, 52% of local students woke up feeling like they got enough rest. Students who reported going offline at night were more likely to wake up feeling rested (60% vs. 47% of those who did not go offline).



ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Around 1 in 4 Northeast youth (26%) reported not needing health care in the past year, which was above the provincial rate of 22%. However, the percentage of youth who had needed health care but had not been able to access it (4%) was comparable to the rest of the province.

Local youth most commonly got their health care from a family doctor. They were less likely than their peers across BC to get their health care from a family doctor (56% vs. 61% provincially) and a youth clinic (1% vs. 4%). They were more likely to have visited a nurse (12% vs. 9% provincially) and an emergency room (21% vs. 16%).

When asked specifically about accessing medical care when they were physically sick or hurt in the past year, 58% reported they did not need this type of medical help, 32% got the help they needed, and 10% did not get the help they needed (similar to the local rate in 2013 and to the provincial rate).

Northeast females were more likely than local males (14% vs. 6%) and females across BC (10% provincially) to have missed out on accessing needed medical help in the past year.

Where Northeast youth got health care in the past year	
Family doctor	56%
Walk-in clinic	36%
Emergency room (ER)	21%
Nurse	12%
Counsellor/psychologist	11%
Youth clinic	1%
School wellness centre	1%
Traditional healer	1%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

DENTAL VISITS

Similar to 2013, most youth (77%) had been to the dentist in the past 12 months, while 12% had visited between a year and two years ago, 7% had last been more than two years ago, and 3% had never been to the dentist.

More than 1 in 10 students (12%) who had been to the dentist reported that their last visit had been for pain.



## NUTRITION

Across the province, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of youth who ate fruit and vegetables on the day before completing the 2018 BC AHS, and an increase in those who ate fast food. In the Northeast, percentages remained comparable to 2013, as 90% ate fruit and vegetables and 50% ate fast food. The percentage who ate sweets (76%), drank water (97%), pop (45%), and energy drinks (11%) were also comparable to 2013.

There was a local increase in youth who ate traditional foods from their background (20% in 2013 vs. 24%). However, local youth were less likely than their peers across BC to have eaten traditional foods (41% provincially).

There was also a local increase in the percentage of youth who had eaten food grown or caught by them or their family (from 18% in 2013 to 25% in 2018). As was the case five years previously, Northeast youth were more likely than their peers across the province to have eaten food they or their family had grown or caught (16% provincially).

Northeast youth were more likely than youth across BC to have drunk pop (45% vs. 37%) and energy drinks (11% vs. 7%), and were less likely to have eaten fruit and/or vegetables (90% vs. 93%) the day before completing the survey.

What Northeast students ate or drank yesterday		
	Once or twice	Three or more times
Water	25%	72%
Fruit	57%	21%
Sweets (cookies, cake, candy, chocolate, etc.)	63%	13%
Vegetables or green salad	56%	17%
Fast food (pizza, hot dogs, burgers, chips, fries, etc.)	43%	6%
Pop	41%	4%
Food grown/caught by them or their family	17%	8%
Traditional food from their background	17%	8%
Energy drinks	9%	2%



## MEALS

*"I'm hungry right now because school starts too early to eat!"*

**Grade 11 student**

Similar to 2013 results, 43% of local students always ate breakfast on school days (vs. 50% across BC). The percentage who never ate breakfast increased locally from 15% to 20%.

When asked about all the places where they ate breakfast on school days, the majority ate at home, 12% got their breakfast on the way to school, and 10% ate at school. Local youth were more likely than their peers across the province to get their breakfast on the way to school (12% vs. 8%).

Compared to students across the province, Northeast students were less likely to always eat lunch (56% vs. 64%) and dinner (84% vs. 87%). Also, 6% never ate lunch, and 1% never ate dinner.

Less than a third (31%) of Northeast students ate three meals a day on school days, which was below the provincial rate of 37%. Males were the most likely to always eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

## EATING BEHAVIOURS

In the past year, 14% of youth (16% of females vs. 12% of males) had vomited on purpose after eating, including 2% who did so two or three times a month, and 1% who vomited at least once a week.

There was an overall increase in the percentage of local youth who had vomited on purpose after eating in the past year (from 9% in 2013 to 14%). However, there was no increase for females, while the rate for males more than doubled (from 5% in 2013 to 12% in 2018).



## INJURIES & INJURY PREVENTION

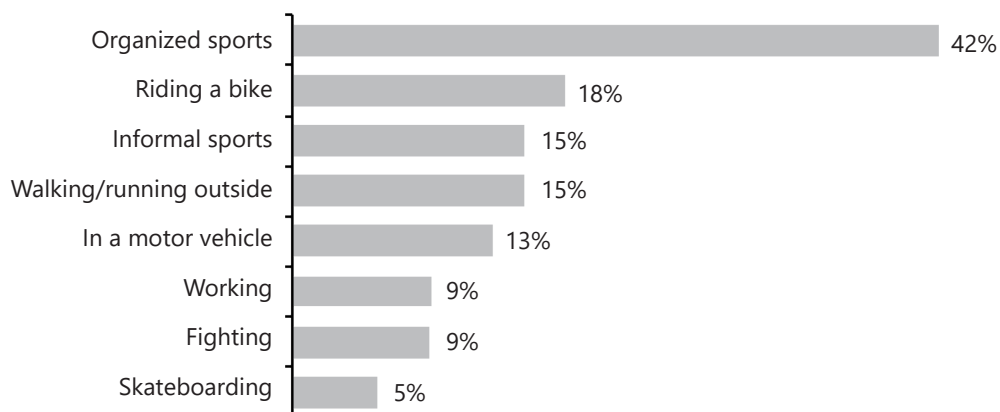
### INJURIES

In the past year, 28% of Northeast youth were injured seriously enough to require medical attention, including 6% who experienced two serious injuries and 4% who had three or more. The percentage who were seriously injured was lower than five years earlier (28% vs. 33%) and was no longer above the provincial rate.

In 2013, local males and females were equally likely to be seriously injured, but in 2018 males were more likely to have been injured (31% vs. 25% of females).

Reflecting results across the province, Northeast youth were most likely to have been seriously injured when playing or training for organized sports. However, they were around twice as likely as youth across the province to have been injured in a motor vehicle (13% vs. 6%).

Most common causes of serious injuries sustained by Northeast youth that required medical attention (among those who got injured in the past year)



Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

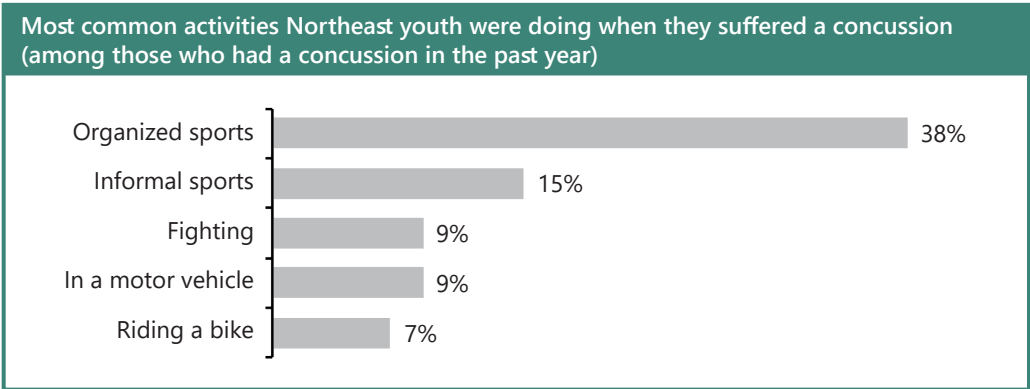
CONCUSSIONS

Locally, 19% of students had experienced a concussion in the past year (with no gender differences), including 6% who had two or more concussions. The provincial decrease in concussions was not seen locally, and Northeast youth were more likely than their peers across BC to have sustained a concussion (19% vs. 13%).

Youth who experienced a concussion typically reported multiple symptoms including headaches (80%); dizziness or balance problems (65%); blurred vision (45%); feeling dazed, confused, or experiencing memory loss (45%); ringing in their ears (41%); and loss of consciousness (28%).

Less than half (46%) of Northeast youth who experienced a concussion in the past year received medical treatment for their injury.

As was the case with serious injuries and consistent with provincial results, the most common activity local youth were doing when they suffered a concussion was playing or training for organized sports.



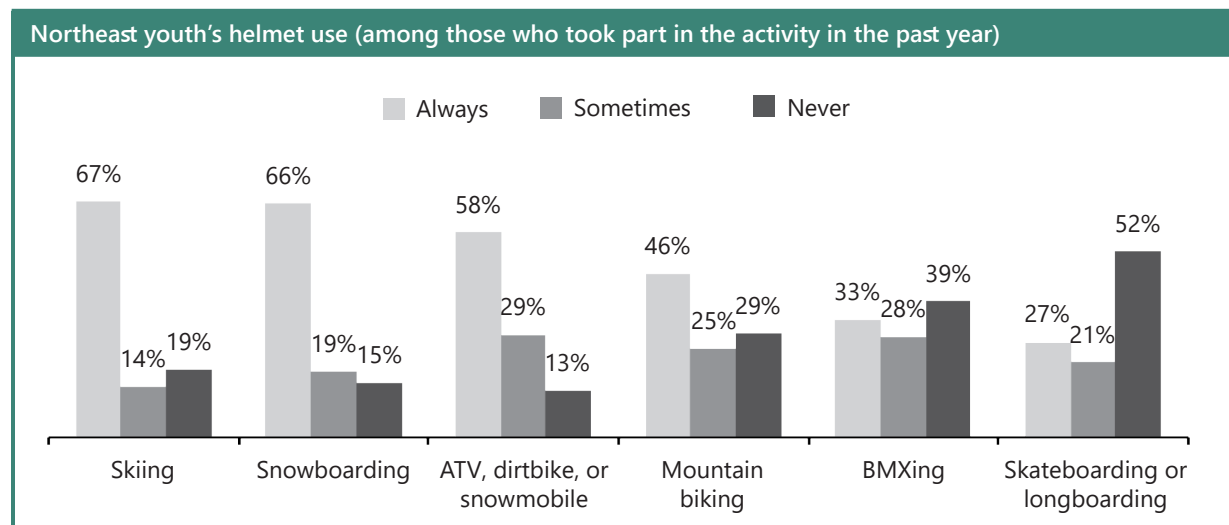
Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

## INJURY PREVENTION

As in 2013, two thirds (66%) of Northeast youth always wore a seatbelt when riding in a car, truck, or van, compared to 73% provincially. There were no gender differences in seatbelt use.

In the past year, local youth were less likely than their peers across BC to always wear a helmet

when cycling (34% vs. 45%); skiing (67% vs. 82%); snowboarding (66% vs. 78%); riding an ATV, dirtbike, or snowmobile (58% vs. 66%); mountain biking (46% vs. 69%); and BMXing (33% vs. 42%). Just over a quarter (27%) always wore a helmet when skateboarding or longboarding, which was similar to the provincial rate.



Note: For skiing, snowboarding, and mountain biking, the differences between 'sometimes' and 'never' were not statistically significant.

Note: For BMXing, the differences between 'always' and 'sometimes' and between 'always' and 'never' were not statistically significant.

Note: For skateboarding or longboarding, the difference between 'always' and 'sometimes' was not statistically significant.



## MENTAL HEALTH

Across BC there was a decline in the percentages of male and female students who reported good or excellent mental health. There was an overall decrease locally (from 77% in 2013 to 70%), but the decline was only seen among females (from 74% to 60%), whereas the percentage for males remained stable (81%). Males were more likely than females and non-binary students to rate their mental health positively.

### HAPPINESS

Overall, 63% of Northeast students felt happy most or all of the time in the past month, and 11% rarely or never felt happy. Local males were the most likely to feel happy (e.g., 72% felt happy most or all of the time vs. 55% of females).

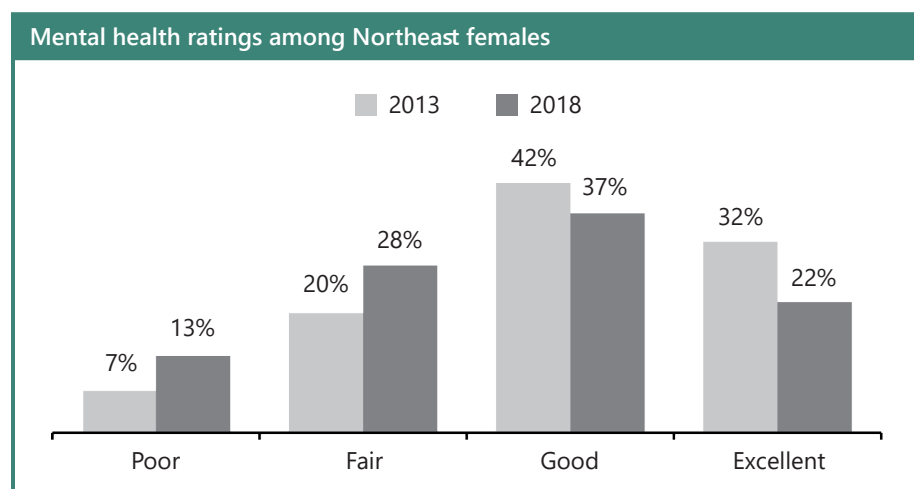
Males in 2018 were as likely as males five years earlier to feel happy, but there was a decrease in females reporting feeling happy most or all of the time (from 62% in 2013 to 55%).

### STRESS & DESPAIR

Reflecting local results in 2013, 84% of Northeast youth experienced some level of stress in the month prior to taking the survey, including 13% who felt so stressed that they could not function properly. Local females remained more likely than males to experience this level of extreme stress (20% vs. 6%).

Among those who experienced stress, 34% felt they managed it well and 18% managed it very well. However, 28% managed their stress only fairly well and 20% managed it poorly.

Similar to five years ago, over half (55%) of local students felt some level of despair in the past month, including 8% who felt so sad, hopeless, or discouraged that they were unable to function properly. Females were more likely than males to experience this level of extreme despair (12% vs. 4%).



Note: The difference between 2013 and 2018 was not statistically significant for 'Good'.

Note: Percentages for 2013 do not equal 100% due to rounding.

## MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

*"Large groups and being in public make me very anxious. I have had three panic attacks in the past week but felt I had no person who could help me."*

Grade 8 student

There was an increase in local youth who reported having Anxiety Disorder/panic attacks (22% vs. 11% in 2013) and Depression (19% vs. 13%). Also, 6% had Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), 2% had Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and 1% had Asperger's or Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Local females were more likely than males to report having Anxiety Disorder/panic attacks (35% vs. 9%), Depression (23% vs. 13%), and PTSD. Non-binary students were the most likely to report having Depression (54%\*).

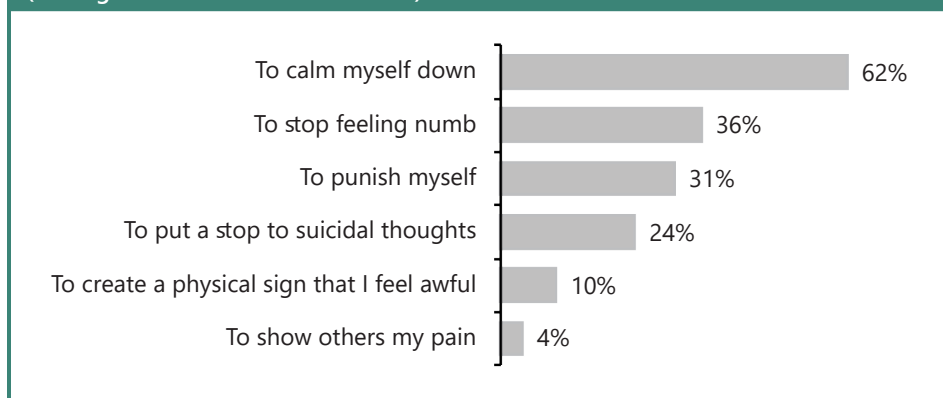
## SELF-HARM & SUICIDALITY

In the past year, 17% of local students had cut or injured themselves on purpose without the intention of killing themselves (10% of males vs. 24% of females vs. 49%\* of non-binary youth). The most common reason youth gave for self-harming the last time was to calm themselves down.

One in five (20%) local youth had seriously considered suicide in the past year. This reflected an increase for females (from 20% in 2013 to 27%), while the percentage for males was similar to five years earlier (12%).

Also, 6% of Northeast youth (3% of males vs. 9% of females) had attempted suicide in the past year, which was similar to local rates five years ago and to results across BC.

Northeast youth's most commonly reported reasons for self-harming the last time (among those who had self-harmed)



Note: Youth could choose more than one response.



## MISSED OUT ON NEEDED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

*"I would like to see someone who could help me, and my parents have offered but I don't want them to think I'm badly broken."*

Grade 8 student

*"I'm not in a good place. I want help but I'm scared to ask."*

Grade 7 student

In the past year, 22% of students had needed mental health services but did not receive them. This rate was higher than across BC (18%), and represented a local increase from 14% in 2013.

Among students who did not access needed mental health services, the most common reasons included thinking or hoping the problem would go away and not wanting their parents to know. These were also the most common reasons in 2013.

Compared to five years ago, local youth were more likely to miss out on needed services because they were too busy to go (37% vs. 24%), but were less likely to report not wanting their parents to know as a reason (56% vs. 75%).

Local youth were more likely than those across BC to report being on a waiting list (10% vs. 5%).

### Reasons Northeast youth did not access mental health services (among those who felt they needed services in the past year)

Thought or hoped the problem would go away	59%
Didn't want parents to know	56%
Afraid of what I would be told	43%
Didn't know where to go	42%
Too busy to go	37%
Afraid someone I know might see me	36%
Didn't think I could afford it	19%
Had prior negative experience	16%
Parent/guardian would not take me	10%
Had no transportation	10%
On a waiting list	10%
Couldn't go when it was open	5%
The service was unavailable in my community	5%

# SEXUAL HEALTH

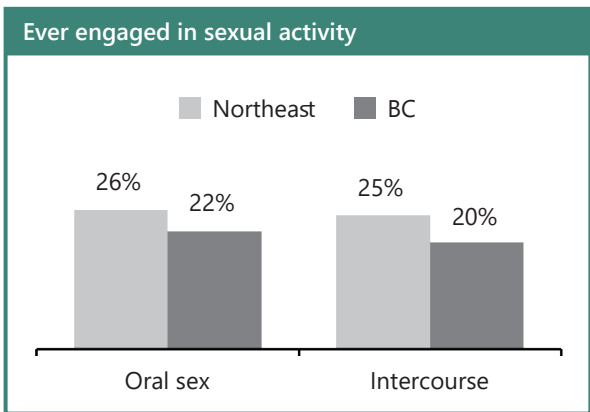
*"I feel like I've had sex at an early age. I do not necessarily regret it but it's uncomfortable."*

Grade 8 student

As in 2013, local students were more likely than their peers across BC to have oral sex and sexual intercourse. Local rates of engaging in these sexual behaviours were similar to five years ago, as was the use of protection during oral sex and sexual intercourse.

## ORAL SEX

Around a quarter (26%) of Northeast youth had engaged in oral sex (with no gender differences). Among these youth, 22% used a condom or other barrier/protection the last time they had oral sex.



## INTERCOURSE

A quarter (25%) of youth had ever had sex other than oral sex or masturbation. Among these youth, the percentage who waited until they were at least 15 years old to first have sex was higher than in 2013 (66% vs. 56%).

Half of students (50%) who ever had intercourse had one sexual partner in the past year, 22% had two partners, 18% had three or more partners, and 11% did not have intercourse in the past year.

Among youth who ever had intercourse, 61% used a condom or other barrier/protection the last time they had sex.

When asked specifically about what efforts they had made to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex, condoms remained the most commonly used method, but 8% used withdrawal as their only contraceptive method.

One percent of youth had ever been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant.

### Most common methods Northeast youth used to prevent pregnancy the last time they had intercourse (among those who ever had intercourse)

Condoms	60%
Birth control pills, birth control patch, Nuva Ring, or other method prescribed by doctor or nurse	51%
Withdrawal	48%
Emergency contraception	7%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

Note: Percentage estimates for Depo Provera, IUD, not sure, and no method were not releasable due to the risk of deductive disclosure.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIs) & THE HPV VACCINE

Reflecting the provincial picture, 1% of youth had been told by a doctor or nurse that they had an STI.

The HPV vaccines protect against infection from certain types of cancers, and have been available to girls in Grade 6 since 2008 and to boys in Grade 6 since September 2017. Yet, only about a quarter (24%) of youth in this region reported they had been vaccinated (vs. 28% across BC), and 60% did not know whether they had been vaccinated.

Similar to the provincial results, females were more likely than males to have been vaccinated (32% of youth who had been assigned female on their birth certificate vs. 15% of males).

REFUSAL SKILLS

Most youth felt they were able to say ‘no’ if they were asked to engage in a sexual activity which they did not want to do.

USED PHONE TO SEXT OR WATCH PORNOGRAPHY

On their most recent school day, 8% of Northeast students with a phone used it to engage in sexting (a decrease from 14% in 2013), and 12% used their device to watch pornography (asked for the first time on the 2018 survey).

Older youth were more likely than younger ones to use their phone to sext or watch pornography. For example, 15% of youth aged 16 to 18 watched pornography on their last school day compared to 6% of youth aged 13 or younger.

Northeast youth who felt they could say no if asked to ...			
	Could say no	Couldn't say no	Not sure
Have sex with a new partner when they didn't want to	92%	2%	6%
Have sex with a long-term partner when they didn't want to	87%	4%	9%
Send nudes/sext	92%	3%	5%



# SUBSTANCE USE

## SMOKING, VAPING, & TOBACCO USE

Northeast youth were more likely to have smoked tobacco (e.g., cigarettes, cigars, or cigarillos) than youth across BC (29% vs. 18%). Provincially there was a decline in smoking tobacco, but this was not seen locally.

The most common ages for local youth to first try smoking were between 13 and 16 years old. As in 2013, there was no gender difference among those who had smoked tobacco.

Similar to five years earlier, 42% of those who had tried smoking had smoked in the past month, including 6% who smoked daily.

Reflecting the provincial pattern, the most common smoking products used by local students in the past month were a vape pen or stick with or without nicotine.

Among students who had smoked tobacco, 41% vaped with nicotine and 39% vaped without nicotine in the past month. Youth who had never smoked tobacco were also vaping, as 7% vaped with nicotine and 10% vaped without nicotine in the past month.

Products Northeast students used in the past month (among all youth)	
Vape without nicotine	19%
Vape with nicotine	17%
Cigarettes	11%
Chewing tobacco	7%
Cigars/cigarillos	3%
Product to help stop smoking	3%
A hookah	NR

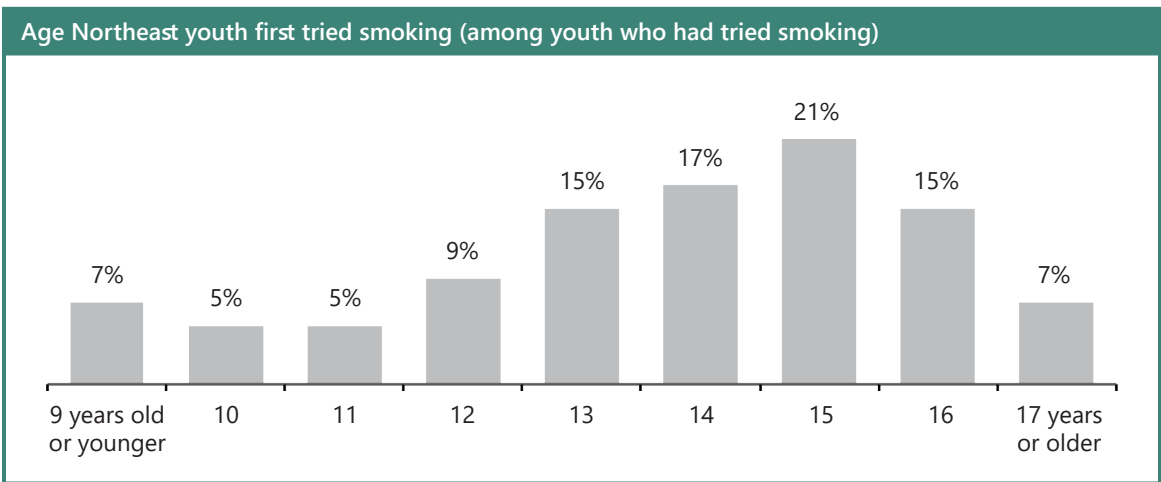
Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

Note: The difference between vaping with and without nicotine was not statistically significant.

NR: Not releasable due to the risk of deductive disclosure.

Local youth were less likely than those across BC to have vaped with nicotine (17% vs. 21%; among all youth), and to have used a hookah. Northeast students were more likely to have smoked cigarettes (11% vs. 7% across BC) and used chewing tobacco (7% vs. 2%).

Males were more likely than females to have used chewing tobacco (11% vs. 2%), cigars/cigarillos, and a product to help them stop smoking.



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

ALCOHOL

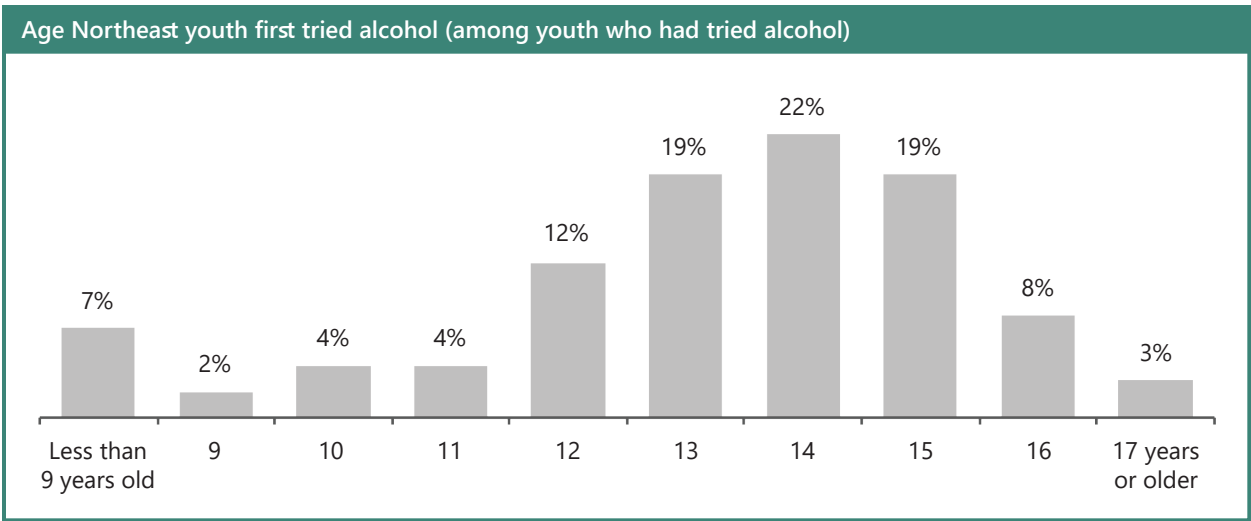
Similar to five years earlier, 56% of local youth had tried alcohol (with no gender differences). As in 2013, local youth were more likely to have tried alcohol than their peers across BC (56% vs. 44%).

The most common ages for youth to have their first drink of alcohol were 13 to 15. Among those who had tried alcohol, 30% waited until they were 15 or older to first drink. This was similar to local results in 2013 but lower than across BC (37%).

Among youth who had tried alcohol, 64% had at least one drink in the past month, including 4% who drank on at least 10 days that month.

Similar to youth across the province, 35% of local students who had tried alcohol drank on the Saturday prior to completing the survey. They most commonly drank coolers (26%; among those who had tried alcohol), liquor (22%), and beer (18%), and fewer consumed wine (5%). Males were more likely than females to drink beer, while females were more likely to drink coolers.

Among youth who drank last Saturday, 53% mixed at least two different types of alcohol (e.g., drank liquor and coolers), including 16% who mixed three or four types. While females were less likely to mix three or four types of liquor compared to 2013 (11% vs. 31%\*), males' rates were comparable to five years earlier (21%).



Canadian Low Risk Drinking Guidelines suggest not exceeding two drinks on any one occasion. However, among those who had tried alcohol, 30% of local students had more than two drinks at least once in the week before taking the survey, and 6% did so on at least three days that week.

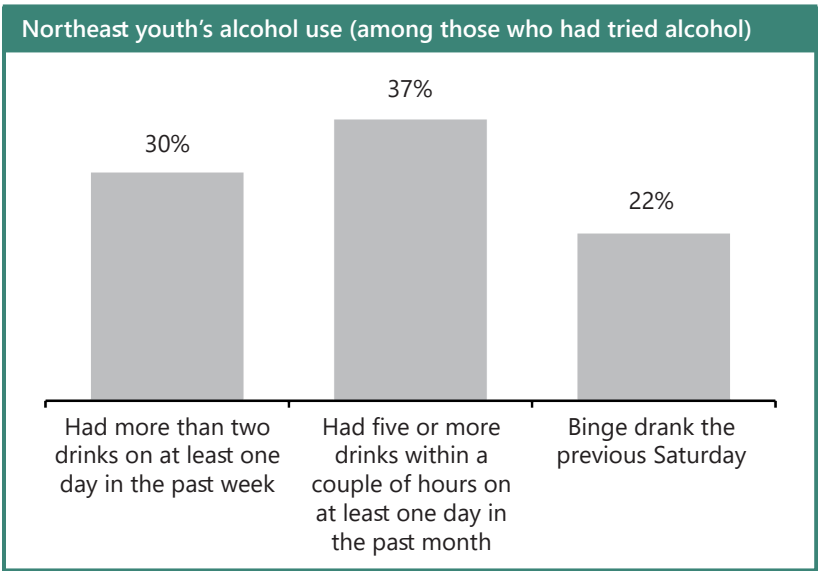
Unchanged from five years earlier, 37% consumed five or more drinks within a couple of hours at least once in the past month (among those who had tried alcohol).

Binge drinking refers to males who consume four or more alcoholic drinks within a couple of hours and to females who consume three or more. Among students who drank on the Saturday before taking the survey, 65% engaged in binge drinking. This percentage was similar to the provincial rate and represented a local decrease from 76% in 2013.

For the first time, the BC AHS asked youth where they got their alcohol from the last time they drank. Youth in the Northeast most commonly got their alcohol from an adult.

Where Northeast youth got alcohol the last time (among those who had tried alcohol)	
Adult gave it to me	50%
At a party	30%
Gave someone money to buy it for me	23%
Bought it	11%
Took it without permission	9%
Youth gave it to me	9%
Exchanged something for it	NR
Made it	NR

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.  
NR: Not releasable due to the risk of deductive disclosure.



Note: Binge drinking refers to males who consume four or more alcoholic drinks within a couple of hours and to females who consume three or more.



## MARIJUANA

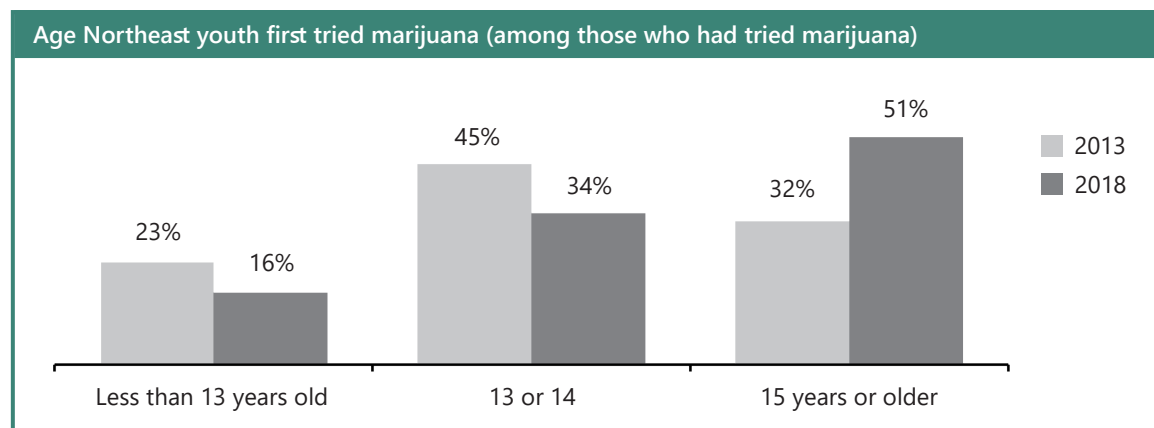
The 2018 BC AHS was completed a month before marijuana was legalized for adults in Canada. About a quarter (26%) of Northeast youth had tried marijuana (with no gender differences). This was similar to the provincial rate and represented a local decrease from 31% in 2013.

In comparison to 2013, more youth waited until they were at least 15 years old to first try marijuana. In 2018, the most common ages for local youth to first try marijuana were 13 to 16 years old.

Among youth who had tried marijuana, 54% used it in the month before completing the survey, including 17% who used it on 6 or more days and 10% who used it on 20 or more days. These percentages were comparable to 2013.

About a quarter (27%) of Northeast youth who had tried marijuana used it on the Saturday before completing the survey, and 5% used both alcohol and marijuana that day.

For the first time, the BC AHS asked students how they had consumed marijuana the last time they used it. Most students who had used marijuana smoked it, while 14% ate it in a cooked recipe, and 6% took it another way, such as through a bong or vaping.



Note: Percentages for 2018 do not equal 100% due to rounding.

## USE OF SUBSTANCES OTHER THAN ALCOHOL & MARIJUANA

Similar to their peers across BC, 18% of local youth had tried at least one substance other than alcohol or marijuana. As was the case five years ago, youth most commonly misused prescription medications without a doctor's consent.

In comparison to 2013, local youth were half as likely to have tried ecstasy/MDMA (4% in 2013 vs. 2%).

The percentage of Northeast youth who had injected an illegal drug was too small to report.

Northeast youth who had used substances other than alcohol and marijuana	
Prescription pills without a doctor's consent	9%
More of my own prescription than prescribed	6%
Mushrooms	5%
Inhalants	3%
Cocaine	2%
Hallucinogens (excluding ecstasy/MDMA and ketamine)	2%
Ecstasy/MDMA	2%
Amphetamines (excluding ecstasy/MDMA and crystal meth)	NR
Ketamine, GHB	NR
Crystal meth	NR
Heroin	NR
Other substances	NR

NR: Not releasable due to the risk of deductive disclosure.



CONSEQUENCES OF USE

Similar to 2013, 51% of youth who had used alcohol or other substances reported negative consequences of their use in the past year. The most common was being told they did something they could not remember.

Similar to 2013, 17% of youth who had sex used alcohol or other substances before they had sex the last time.

In the past year, 4% of students felt they needed help or were told they needed help for their alcohol, marijuana, or other substance use. Specifically, 3% needed help for their alcohol use and 2% for their marijuana use. Also, when asked about health conditions, 3% of youth indicated having an alcohol or drug addiction (which was similar to the provincial rate).

Consequences of substance use experienced by Northeast youth in the past year (among those who had used alcohol or other substances during that time)	
Was told I did something I couldn't remember	36%
Passed out	26%
Got injured	13%
Argued with family members	12%
Got into a physical fight	9%
Lost friends or broke up with a girlfriend, boyfriend, or significant other	8%
Damaged property	7%
School work or grades changed	6%
Had sex when I didn't want to	6%
Got into trouble with the police	3%
Overdosed	NR
Had to get medical treatment	NR
Used alcohol or other substances but none of these happened	49%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

NR: Not releasable due to the risk of deductive disclosure.



## DRIVING AFTER SUBSTANCE USE

Rates of driving after using alcohol or marijuana and being a passenger of a driver who had been using were similar to those seen across BC and to local results in 2013, unless noted.

Among youth who had ever tried alcohol, 8% reported they had driven a car or other vehicle after they had been drinking, and 3% did so in the past month.

Youth were more likely to drive after using marijuana than after using alcohol, as 15% of local youth who had tried marijuana drove after using it, including 6% who did so in the past month.

However, they were more likely to be a passenger of a driver who had been using alcohol than marijuana. Around a quarter (24%) had ridden in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking alcohol, including 8% who had done so in the past month (an increase from 5% in 2013). In contrast, 16% had been a passenger with a driver who had been using marijuana, including 7% who had done so in the past month.

## REPORTED REASONS FOR USING

As in 2013, the most common reason youth gave for using substances the last time they did so was to have fun. There was a decrease from 2013 in the percentage of students who reported using substances because there was nothing else to do (from 10% to 6%).

### Reasons Northeast youth used substances the last time (among those who had used alcohol or other substances)

I wanted to have fun	64%
My friends were doing it	27%
I wanted to try it/experiment	26%
Because of stress	20%
I felt down or sad	16%
To manage physical pain	7%
I felt like there was nothing else to do	6%
I thought it would help me focus	2%
I was pressured into doing it	2%
Because of an addiction	2%
I didn't mean to do it	NR
To change the effects of some other drug	NR
Other	13%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

Note: Among youth who wrote 'Other,' they most commonly cited a special occasion or being with family/adults as the reason they had used substances.

NR: Not releasable due to the risk of deductive disclosure.



# EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

BC AHS results show that participation in extracurricular activities can have many benefits, including an increased likelihood that youth will have access to a supportive adult outside their family and will feel connected to their community. Engaging in regular physical activity (such as weekly organized or informal sports) is also linked to better mental health and better sleep patterns.

In the past year, 89% of Northeast students participated in at least one extracurricular activity (such as sports, dance, clubs, art, or volunteering), including 80% who did so on at least a weekly basis.

Among youth who engaged in weekly activities, 67% took part in two or more different types of activities (e.g., volunteering and informal sports), including 12% who participated in four or more weekly activities.

Rates of engaging in various weekly extracurricular activities were similar to five years earlier except there was a decrease in youth who participated in art, drama, singing, or music (17% vs. 25%); extreme sports (17% vs. 23%); and dance, yoga, or exercise classes (13% vs. 17%).

Over the past year, the most common weekly activities Northeast youth engaged in were informal sports (sports without a coach, such as biking, skateboarding, or hiking).

In comparison to males across BC, males in the Northeast were less likely to have played weekly organized sports (46% vs. 55%), and were more likely to have taken part in extreme sports (27% vs. 14%). Local females' engagement in various extracurricular activities was similar to females across the province.

Locally, males were more likely than females to have played weekly informal sports (63% vs. 48%); whereas females were more likely have participated weekly in volunteer activities (19% vs. 10%); and dance, yoga, or exercise classes (21% vs. 5%).

Northeast youth's participation in extracurricular activities in the past year				
	Never	Less than once a week	1 to 3 times a week	4 or more times a week
Informal sports	27%	18%	35%	20%
Organized sports	46%	9%	26%	20%
Volunteered without pay	67%	19%	12%	2%
Extreme sports	71%	12%	9%	8%
Art/drama/singing/music (group or lessons)	75%	8%	11%	6%
Dance/yoga/exercise classes	78%	9%	7%	5%
Cultural/traditional activities	81%	15%	3%	1%
Clubs/groups	86%	5%	9%	1%

Note: Percentages for each activity may not equal 100% due to rounding.

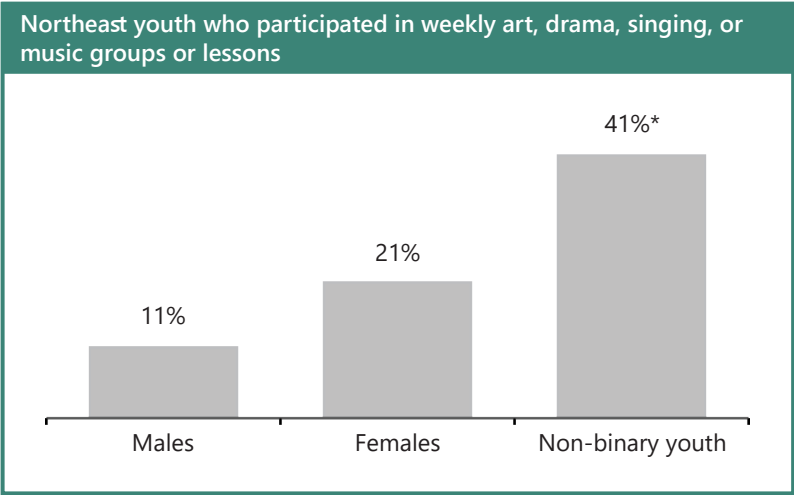
Non-binary youth were more likely to take part in art, drama, singing or music than in any other extracurricular activity, and were also more likely to have engaged in these activities than males and females.

Students were asked about any barriers they had experienced to taking part in extracurricular activities in the past year. Northeast youth’s most commonly reported barrier was being too busy, which was consistent with the rest of the province and with previous local findings.

Compared to five years earlier, Northeast youth were less likely to report missing out on activities because they were not available in their community (18% vs. 25% in 2013) and because they could not get there or home (14% vs. 19%).

Reasons Northeast youth did not participate in extracurricular activities in the past year	
Too busy	46%
Activity wasn't available in community	18%
Could not get there or get home	14%
Couldn't afford it	14%
Too anxious or depressed	14%
Worried about being bullied	7%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.



\* Percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than expected but is still within the releasable range.



# GAMBLING

In BC, it is against the law for young people under the age of 19 to enter a gambling facility or participate in online or in-person gambling for money.

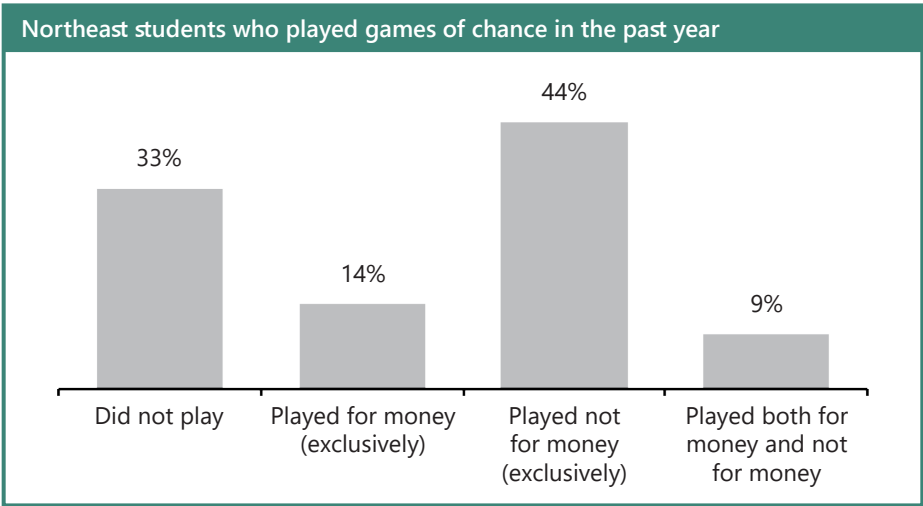
The BC AHS asked students if they had played a number of games of chance in the past year (e.g., online gaming, cards/dice, sports betting, lottery tickets/scratch cards); and, if so, whether they had played these games for money. In the past year, 68% of Northeast students had played at least one of these games, with males more likely to have done so than females (80% vs. 56%).

Just under a quarter (23%) had gambled for money in the past year. Among these students, the most common ways they gambled were through lottery tickets/scratch cards (44%) and playing cards/dice in person (42%). They also engaged in online gaming (33%), sports betting in person (30%) and online (9%), and cards/dice online (9%).

Among those who gambled for money, local males were more likely than females to have participated in online gaming (43% vs. 13%), in-person sports betting (34% vs. 20%) and in-person cards/dice (48% vs. 32%); and they were less likely to have used lottery tickets/scratch cards (31% vs. 65% of females).

Reflecting the provincial pattern, 17% of local youth who had gambled for money did so on at least a weekly basis over the past year, with online gaming the most popular weekly activity. For example, 13% of Northeast youth who gambled for money participated in online gaming weekly, compared to 4% who played cards/dice in person.

Among local students who gambled for money and had access to a phone, 4% had used their device to gamble on the day before completing the survey.



# RISKS TO HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

This section considers some of the adverse experiences which can have lasting negative effects on health and well-being.

## POVERTY & DEPRIVATION

### GOING TO BED HUNGRY

Reflecting the provincial picture and local results five years ago, 11% of Northeast youth went to bed hungry at least sometimes because there was not enough money for food at home, including 1% who often or always went to bed hungry.

### DEPRIVATION

Going to bed hungry because there is not enough money for food is a measure of extreme poverty, and the BC AHS has previously struggled to get a reliable measure of other experiences of poverty and deprivation.

With the help of over 800 young people across BC, a Youth Deprivation Index was developed for the 2018 survey. The Index highlights the 10 items BC youth felt were most important for them to have to feel like they belonged, and which if they did not have, could make them feel like they were missing out on things their peers had. The 2018 BC AHS asked youth if they had the 10 items, and whether they wished they had them if they did not.

Northeast youth who felt deprived of ...	
Money to spend on themselves	11%
Smartphone	7%
Lunch for school/money to buy lunch	5%
Space of their own to hang out in	5%
Money for school supplies, trips, and extracurricular activities	5%
Access to transportation	3%
Equipment/clothes for extracurricular activities	3%
A quiet place to sleep	3%
Access to the Internet	3%
Clothes to fit in	2%





Most youth had all the items on the list. For example, 93% of local youth had a space of their own to hang out in, while 5% did not have this but wished they had it, and 2% did not have it and did not want it or did not know if they wanted it.

Reflecting the provincial pattern, the most common item youth reported wanting but not having was money to spend on themselves.

When the items were considered individually, there was a link between feeling deprived and potentially negative outcomes. For example, 79%\* of youth who did not have but wished for a quiet place to sleep had slept for less than 8 hours on the night before completing the survey, compared to 51% of those who had somewhere quiet to sleep.

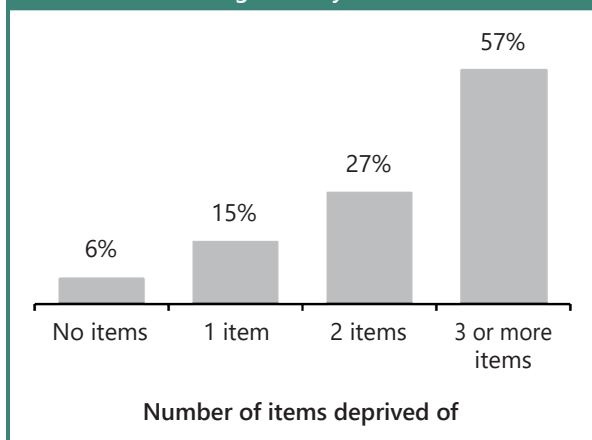
Just over a quarter (27%) of Northeast youth felt deprived of at least one of the items in the Index, including 6% who lacked two items, 2% who lacked three items, 1% who lacked four items, and 1% who lacked five or more.

The more items youth reported not having but wishing they had, the more likely they were to go to bed hungry because there was not enough money for food at home.

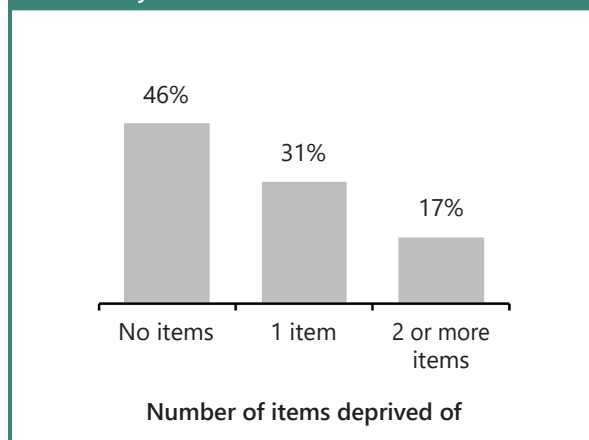
The more items youth were deprived of, the worse their health outcomes. For example, among youth with all the items in the Index, 83% rated their overall health as good or excellent and 75% rated their mental health this way. In comparison, 58% of those who lacked two or more items rated their overall health as good or excellent and 53% rated their mental health this positively.

Also, the more items youth were deprived of, the less likely they were to feel connected to their school or community. For example, 35% of those who lacked but wished they had two or more of the items felt like a part of their school, compared to 60% of those who did not lack any of the items.

Northeast youth who went to bed hungry because there was not enough money for food at home



Northeast youth who felt connected to their community



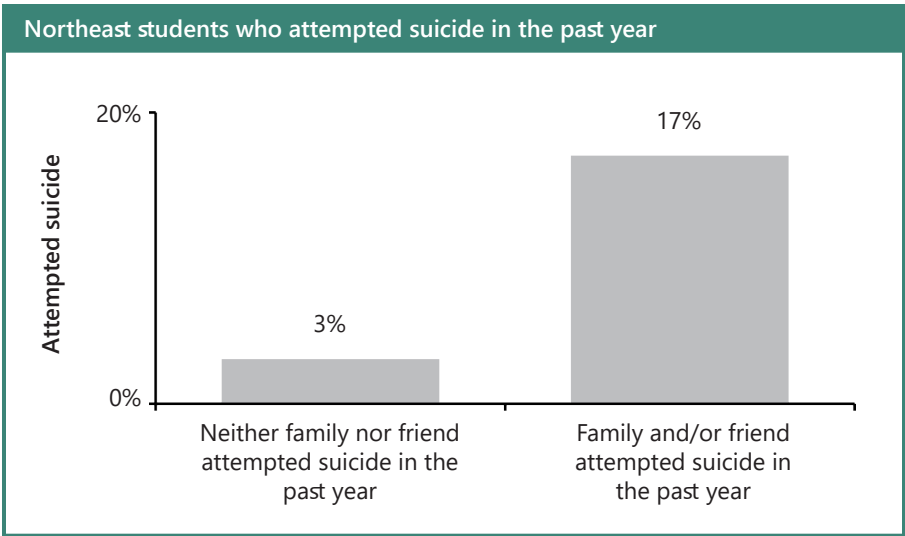
# LOSS & BEREAVEMENT

Most (78%) Northeast students had experienced bereavement. They had most commonly lost someone close to them due to old age (50%) and illness (49%). Other reasons included accident (21%), suicide (12%), violence (4%), a fentanyl overdose (2%), and an overdose from a substance other than fentanyl (4%).

Local students were more likely to have been bereaved than students across the province, including as a result of an accident (21% vs. 13%).

The BC AHS also asked participants if they had a family member or close friend who had attempted or died by suicide, and if this experience had happened within the past year. In total, 22% of local youth had a family member who had attempted or died by suicide (including 8% in the past year), and 33% had a close friend who had done so (18% in the past year).

Youth who had experienced a family member and/or close friend attempt or die by suicide were more likely to have attempted suicide themselves.



## VIOLENCE & DISCRIMINATION

Findings in this section were generally similar to local results in 2013 unless noted.

### DATING VIOLENCE

Half (50%) of Northeast youth had been in a romantic relationship in the past year (compared to 43% provincially). Among these students, 8% had been the victim of physical violence within their dating relationship (with no gender differences).

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

In the past year, 43% of local students had been verbally sexually harassed, and 27% had been physically sexually harassed. Females remained more likely than males to have been verbally (56% vs. 30%) and physically (39% vs. 15%) harassed.

There was a decrease in verbal sexual harassment among males (from 39% in 2013 to 30%), but not females.

Northeast females were more likely than females across BC to have been verbally (56% vs. 50%) and physically sexually harassed (39% vs. 31%). Local males experienced sexual harassment at a similar rate to males across the province.

### PHYSICAL & SEXUAL ABUSE

Reflecting results across BC, 16% of Northeast students had been physically abused or mistreated. Females were around twice as likely as males to have had this experience (21% vs. 10%).

Students were asked if they had ever been sexually abused and about other forms of sexual abuse that they may not have recognized as abuse, including being forced into sexual activity against their will and being the younger of an illegal age pairing the first time they had sex.

When all forms of sexual abuse were considered, 14% of Northeast youth had been sexually abused (4% of males vs. 23% of females). While the rate of sexual abuse for local males was comparable to males across the province, the rate for females was higher (23% vs. 17% provincially).

### DISCRIMINATION

Locally, 40% of youth reported experiencing some form of discrimination in the past year. Students in this region were less likely than their peers across the province to have experienced discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity or skin colour (9% vs. 14%).

Northeast youth's perceived reasons for being discriminated against in the past year	
Physical appearance	24%
Weight	18%
Income or family income	9%
Race, ethnicity, or skin colour	9%
Gender/sex	8%
Sexual orientation (e.g., being or thought to be gay or lesbian)	6%
A disability	3%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

## BULLYING

Similar to the picture across BC, 54% of Northeast youth had been bullied at school or on the way to or from school in the past year. Specifically, 41% had been teased to the point where they felt extremely uncomfortable, 38% had been purposefully excluded, and 9% had been physically attacked or assaulted.

Also reflective of the provincial picture, 10% of students reported they had bullied someone else.

## WEAPON CARRYING

In 2018, 8% of local students carried a weapon to school in the past 30 days, including 2% who always carried a weapon. Students who had been the victim of bullying were more likely to carry a weapon. For example, 18% of Northeast youth who had been physically attacked in the past year carried a weapon, compared to 7% who had not been attacked.

## INTERNET SAFETY

*"I don't talk to people I don't know online."*

Grade 12 student

In total, 18% of students had met someone online who made them feel unsafe. Females were more likely than males to have met such a person (26% vs. 10%).

There was a decrease in the percentage of local students who reported being cyberbullied in the past year (14% vs. 18% in 2013). Females remained more likely than males to have been cyberbullied (19% vs. 9%).

Also, 5% of local males and females admitted they had cyberbullied someone else in the past year.



# SUPPORTING HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

## FAMILY

BC AHS results show that family relationships are one of the most important protective factors in the lives of youth. For example, youth who report feeling connected to family, have supportive adults they can turn to within their family, and have parents or caregivers who know what they are doing in their free time and online report better overall health and better mental health than their peers without such positive family relationships.

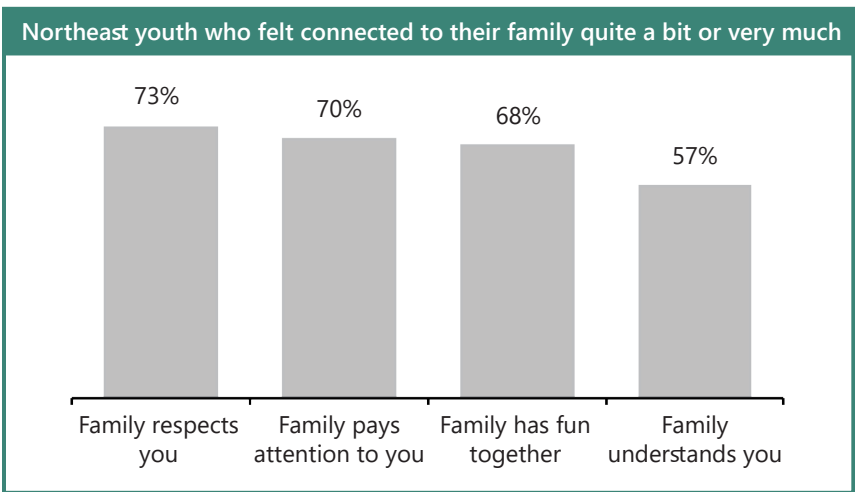
Youth with positive family relationships are also less likely to engage in health risk behaviours (such as risky substance use or risky sexual behaviours), and are more likely to have the skills to refuse negative peer pressure or unwanted sexual activity.

Most Northeast youth felt connected to their families. Males were generally more likely than females and non-binary youth to feel this way. For example, 78% of males felt their family respected them, compared to 69% of females and 38%\* of non-binary youth.

## SUPPORTIVE FAMILY

More than two thirds (69%) of Northeast students felt they had an adult inside their family they could talk to if they had a serious problem, with males the most likely to feel this way and non-binary youth the least likely (75% of males vs. 65% of females vs. 38%\* of non-binary youth).

Most students (73%) turned to a family member for help in the past year, and the majority of these students (93%) found the support helpful. There was an increase in local males who turned to a family member for help (73% vs. 65% in 2013), while the percentage among local females remained consistent (73%).

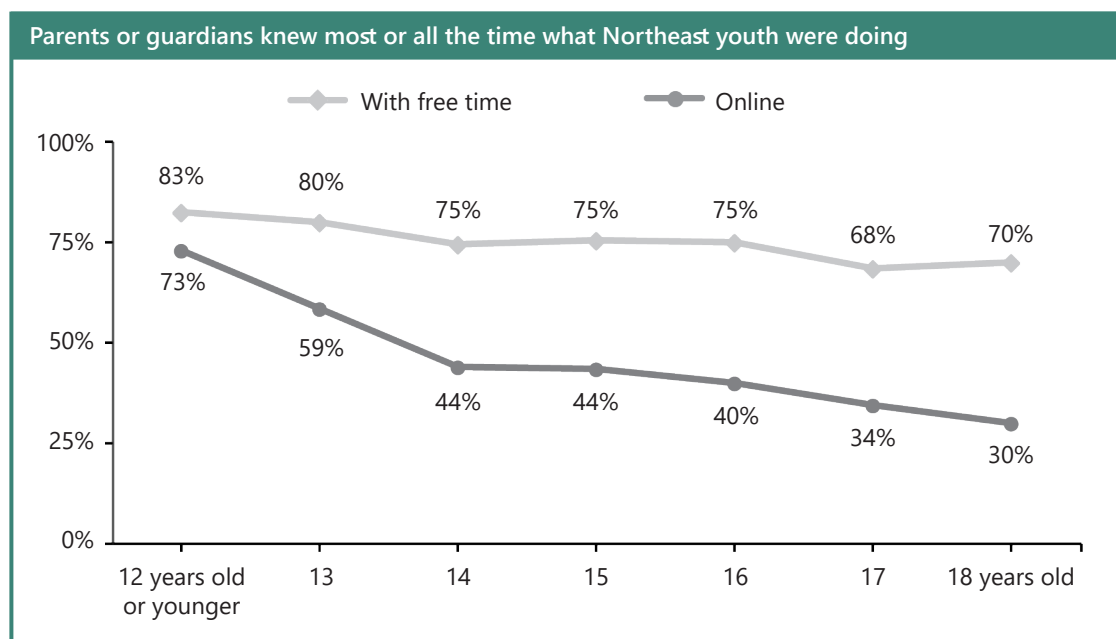


## MONITORING

Most students (75%) had parents who usually monitored their free time, while 11% had parents who rarely or never knew what they were doing in their free time. Just under half (46%) of local students reported that their parents usually or always knew what they were doing online, while 35% reported that their parents rarely or never did.

Youth aged 13 or younger were more likely than those aged 17 and 18 to report that their parents monitored their free time. They were also more likely than youth aged 14 or older to report their parents monitored their time online.

When asked how much time they had to do the things they wanted with their family, most local students (75%) felt they had the right amount of time, and 19% felt they did not have enough time.



Note: Differences between ages were not statistically significant at every point.



# SCHOOL

School connectedness is consistently one of the strongest protective factors for BC youth. It is associated with positive academic and health-related outcomes, including positive mental health and reduced likelihood of risky substance use and risky sexual behaviour.

*“School is good. I have a lot of friends.”*  
Grade 12 student

Most local students felt they were treated fairly by school staff (69%), their teachers cared about them (64%), they were part of their school (55%), and that school staff other than teachers cared about them (54%). Around half (51%) were happy to be at school.

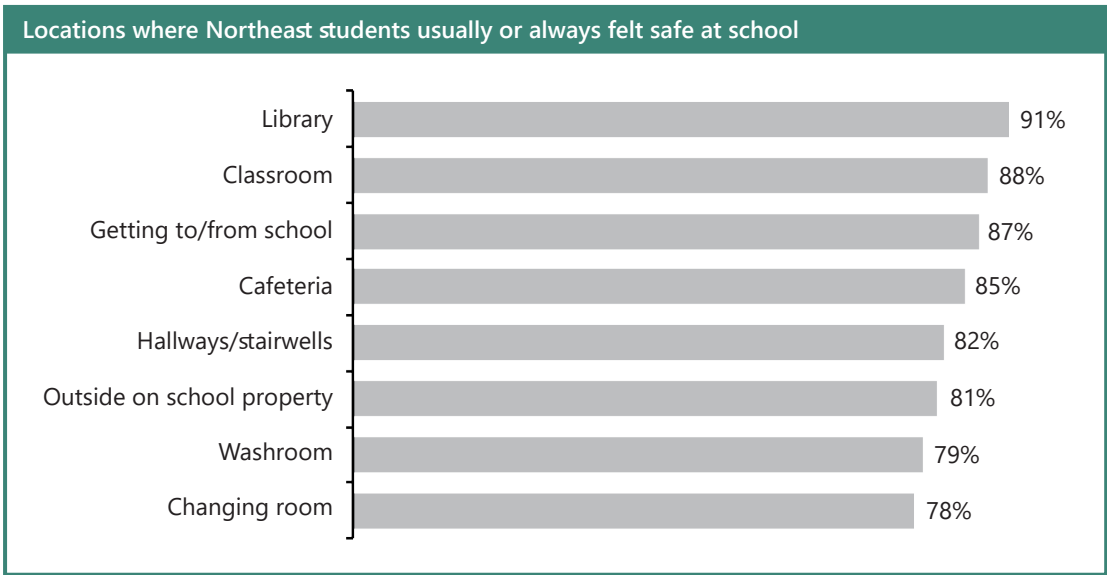
## SAFETY

Overall, 63% of Northeast students felt safe at school. This was similar to the local rate in 2013 but lower than the provincial rate (73%). Males were the most likely to feel safe at school and non-binary youth were the least likely to feel safe (70% of males vs. 58% of females vs. 40%\* of non-binary students).

When asked about specific areas of their school, Northeast students felt safest in the library and classroom. However, students were less likely to feel safe in these parts of the school compared to five years earlier. For example, 88% felt safe in their classroom (vs. 92% in 2013), and 78% felt safe in the changing rooms (vs. 84%).

Northeast students were less likely than those across BC to feel safe in all areas of their school.

Males were more likely than females to feel safe in their classroom (91% vs. 86%), the cafeteria (89% vs. 82%), changing rooms (82% vs. 75%), hallways (87% vs. 79%), outside on school grounds (86% vs. 77%), and getting to/from school (89% vs. 85%).



EDUCATION PLANS

Reflecting the pattern in 2013, Northeast students were less likely than their peers across the province to plan to finish Grade 12 (83% vs. 87%) and pursue post-secondary education (77% vs. 83%). However, most youth who did not report planning to finish high school had not yet thought about it or were unsure if they would complete high school, and only 1% specifically did not plan to complete high school.

Reflecting the provincial picture, local females were more likely than males to anticipate continuing their education beyond high school (80% vs. 75%).

SCHOOL ABSENCES

*"I do get anxiety at times to the point where I have to leave class."*  
Grade 12 student

In the past month, students most commonly missed school because of illness or to attend appointments. Also, 30% skipped class, with 9% doing so on three or more days.

Local youth were more likely than their peers across BC to have missed school in the past month because of family responsibilities (21% vs. 14%), lack of transportation (7% vs. 5%), and work (7% vs. 4%).

There was a decrease in the percentage of local students who missed school due to illness (from 48% in 2013 to 41%) and an increase in the percentage who missed school because they were working (from 4% to 7%). Females were more likely than males to miss school due to illness, appointments, skipping classes, school responsibilities, mental health, and bullying.

Reasons Northeast students missed classes in the past month	
Illness	41%
Appointments	37%
Skipping class	30%
Slept in	21%
Family responsibilities	21%
Other school responsibilities	18%
Mental health (e.g., anxiety, depression)	17%
No transportation	7%
Work	7%
Bullying	4%

Note. Youth could choose more than one response.

COMMUTE TO SCHOOL

Northeast students most commonly got to school by car (54%), followed by taking the school bus/public transit (31%).

Local youth were more likely than their peers across the province to commute to school by car (54% vs. 47%) and school bus or public transit (31% vs. 23%), and were less likely to use active transportation (walk/bike/skateboard; 15% vs. 29%).

Most Northeast students (80%) had a commute to school that was less than 30 minutes; whereas 7% commuted for an hour or more, including 1% who commuted more than 2 hours.



## COMMUNITY

Youth who feel connected to their community are more likely to feel safe in their neighbourhood, to have post-secondary aspirations, and to feel hopeful for the future; and they are less likely to engage in binge drinking and other health risk behaviours. They are also less likely to miss out on mental health services when they need them.

Having an adult in their community to turn to for support can be particularly helpful for youth without such an adult in their family.

Similar to youth across the province, 41% of students in Northeast felt quite a bit or very much connected to their community, whereas, 22% felt only a little or not at all connected.

Local males were more likely than females to feel connected to their community (44% vs. 38%), unlike in 2013 when there was no gender difference. The percentage of Northeast males who felt connected to their community was higher than five years ago (33% in 2013), whereas the percentage among females remained stable.

Most Northeast youth (71%) felt there was an adult in their neighbourhood or community (outside their family or school) who really cared about them. This was similar to the rate in 2013, and above the provincial rate of 65%.

## SAFETY

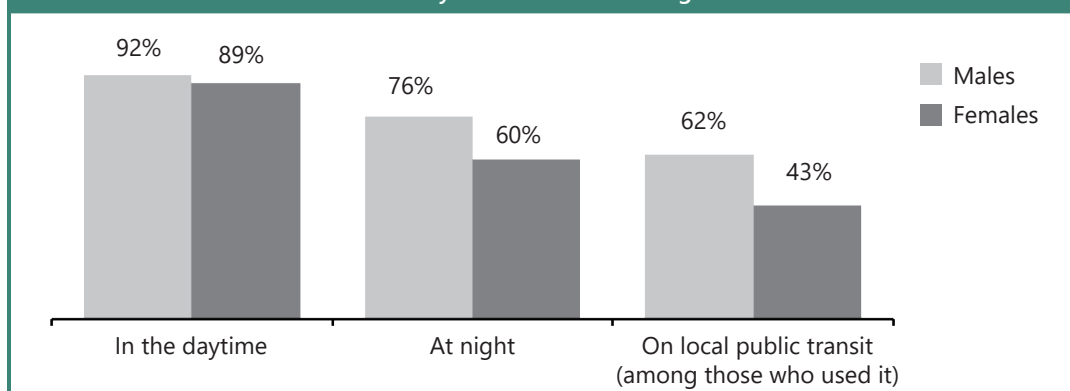
As in 2013, the majority of Northeast youth often or always felt safe in their neighbourhood in the daytime (90%) and at night (68%). Non-binary youth were less likely than males and females to feel safe during the day (71%\* vs. around 90% of males and females), and males were the most likely to feel safe at night.

Among local youth who used public transit, 52% often or always felt safe when doing so (including 24% who always felt safe) and 11% never did. Males were more likely than females and non-binary youth to feel safe on transit.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE LAND/NATURE

For the first time, the BC AHS asked about feeling connected to the land or nature. A little under half (48%) of Northeast students reported often or always feeling connected, whereas 36% sometimes felt this way, and 17% hardly ever or never felt connected.

Northeast students who often or always felt safe in their neighbourhood



Note: The difference between males and females was not statistically significant for 'In the daytime'.

# SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

## SUPPORTIVE ADULTS

Youth who have a supportive adult in their life are more likely to feel comfortable refusing to do something they do not want to do, such as engaging in unwanted sexual activity or sexting, and are less likely to miss out on needed mental health care. They are also more likely to feel happy if they have an adult who cares about them.

Youth who have an adult who helps them with tasks report better outcomes. For example, if they have an adult to help them with post-secondary applications, they are more likely to plan to go to college, university, or trade school.

Around a third (31%) of Northeast youth indicated they had an adult outside their family they could talk to if they were having a serious problem, which was above the provincial rate of 27%.

In 2013, local females were more likely than males to have a supportive adult outside their family, but there was no gender difference in 2018. This was because the percentage of females who had such an adult in their life dropped, whilst the percentage among males remained stable.

Most Northeast youth had an adult who helped them to make and get to appointments, prepare for post-secondary, get a job, and with homework. Local students were more likely than youth across BC to report having an adult who helped them with their homework (69% vs. 63%) and with finding employment (76% vs. 69%).

Northeast students who had an adult who helped them with ...			
	Yes	No	Didn't need this
Making appointments	89%	6%	5%
Getting to appointments	89%	5%	6%
Getting a job	76%	13%	11%
Preparing for post-secondary	75%	16%	10%
Homework	69%	17%	15%

Note: Percentages for each task may not total 100% due to rounding.

## ASKING ADULTS FOR HELP

Outside of family members and friends, Northeast students most commonly approached a teacher for help.

In comparison to the rest of the province, local youth were less likely to ask for help from a school counsellor (23% vs. 31%) or a youth worker (7% vs. 9%), but were more likely to ask for help from an Aboriginal Education Worker (9% vs. 6%) or a friend's parent (26% vs. 21%).

Adults outside their family whom Northeast students approached for help and found helpful in the past year		
	Asked for help	Found helpful (among those who asked for help)
Teacher	55%	94%
Doctor	31%	86%
Sports coach	26%	92%
Friend's parent	26%	90%
School staff (other than teacher, counsellor, or Aboriginal Education Worker)	26%	87%
School counsellor	23%	82%
Nurse	19%	88%
Mental health counsellor	11%	72%
Aboriginal Education Worker <sup>‡</sup>	9%	75%
Youth worker	7%	76%
Spiritual leader	6%	75%
Online community/online support group	6%	66%
Social worker	6%	62%
Indigenous Elder <sup>‡</sup>	5%	72%
Telephone helpline	5%	58%

<sup>‡</sup> Among Indigenous students, 26% had approached an Aboriginal Education Worker for help and 88% found this experience helpful, while 12% had approached an Elder and 87% found this experience helpful.

## FRIENDS

The BC AHS results show that having three or more in-person friends is associated with a number of positive experiences, including positive mental health and a reduced likelihood of being bullied.

The survey results also show that if students have friends who disapprove of them engaging in certain health risk behaviours, they are less likely to engage in those behaviours.

*"My friends care about me and each other."*

Grade 7 student

Most local students (95%) had at least one close friend in their school or neighbourhood, and 80% had three or more close friends. Males were more likely than females to have three or more close friends (83% vs. 77%), which was consistent with provincial results and 2013 local findings. In 2018, 68%\* of non-binary youth had three or more close friends.

Just over a third of students (35%) had at least one close friend online whom they had never met in person, and 17% had three or more such friends. Males were more likely than females to have three or more online friends whom they had never met in person (21% vs. 13%).

In the past year, 8% of youth had dated someone they had met online and had never met in person, including 2% who had two or more online partners.

### Connecting with friends

When asked how much time they had to do the things they wanted with friends, 70% felt they had the right amount of time, while 25% did not have enough time, and 5% had too much time. Females were more likely than males to feel they had insufficient time with their friends (31% vs. 19%), as were older youth in comparison to younger ones (e.g., 30% of 17-year-olds did not have enough time with their friends vs. 14% of 13-year-olds).

### Asking for help

In the past year, 73% of students had asked a friend they knew in person for help, with females more likely than males to have done so (76% vs. 69%). Among these students, 94% found their friends helpful, with males the most likely to feel this way.

Also, 18% of youth had asked a friend they only knew online for help, and 78% of these youth found the support helpful (84% of males vs. 71% of females).

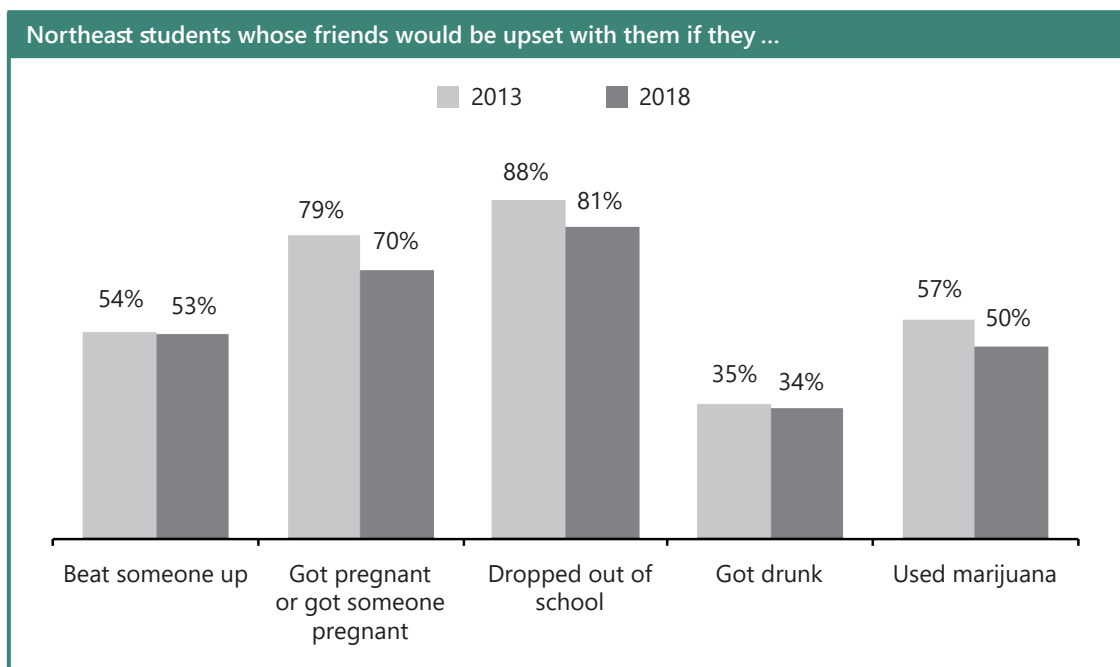
In the past year, 79% of students had a friend who had asked them for help, and most of these youth (97%) had felt able to help (with no gender differences).

## Friends with prosocial attitudes

Most Northeast youth had friends with prosocial attitudes towards health risk behaviours. Reflecting the provincial pattern, females were more likely than males to have friends who would be upset with them if they dropped out of school (87% vs. 75%), were involved in a pregnancy (74% vs. 65%), beat someone up (63% vs. 43%), used marijuana (54% vs. 46%), or got drunk (37% vs. 30%).

As in 2013, local youth were less likely than their peers across the province to have friends who would disapprove if they beat someone up (53% vs. 65%) or got drunk (34% vs. 45%).

Students were less likely than in 2013 to indicate that their friends would be upset with them if they used marijuana, dropped out of school, or were involved in a pregnancy.



Note: The differences between 2013 and 2018 for 'got drunk' and 'beat someone up' were not statistically significant.

# YOUNG PEOPLE'S STRENGTHS & RESILIENCY

## QUALITY OF LIFE & WELL-BEING

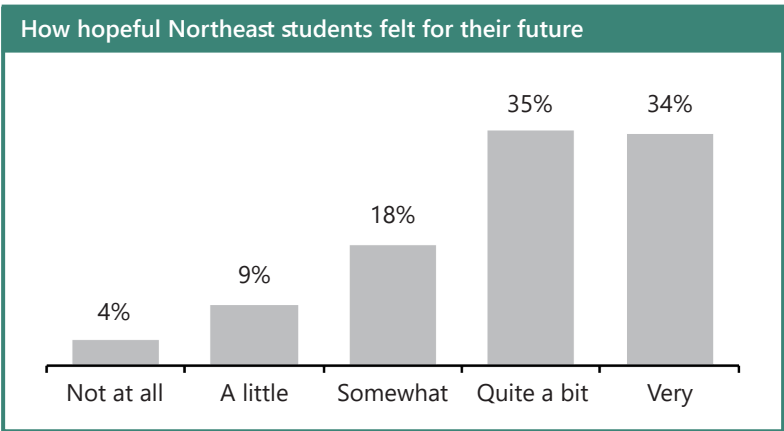
Northeast youth generally felt positively about their quality of life. For example, most indicated that they had a good life and their life was going well. Males were more likely than females to rate their quality of life positively.

## HOPEFULNESS

Most Northeast students (69%) felt quite a bit or very hopeful for their future, with males more likely to feel this way than females (74% vs. 66%).

Youth who felt hopeful were more likely than their peers to report positive mental health, including feeling happy, and were less likely to report extreme stress and despair.

Quality of life and well-being among Northeast youth			
	Agree/ strongly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree/ strongly disagree
I have a good life	81%	14%	5%
My life is going well	74%	18%	8%
I have what I want in life	61%	25%	14%
My life is going just right	60%	25%	15%
I wish I had a different life	14%	21%	65%



## PERSEVERANCE

For the first time, the BC AHS included a question about how often students pushed themselves to achieve their goals when things went wrong. Four percent of students indicated that things had never gone wrong for them. Among those who had experienced challenges or setbacks, 41% always pushed themselves to achieve their goals in these situations (with males the most likely to do so), whereas 53% sometimes pushed themselves, and 6% never pushed themselves.

The more often students persevered when faced with obstacles, the more likely they were to experience positive mental health and to have plans to pursue post-secondary education, and the less likely they were to experience extreme stress.

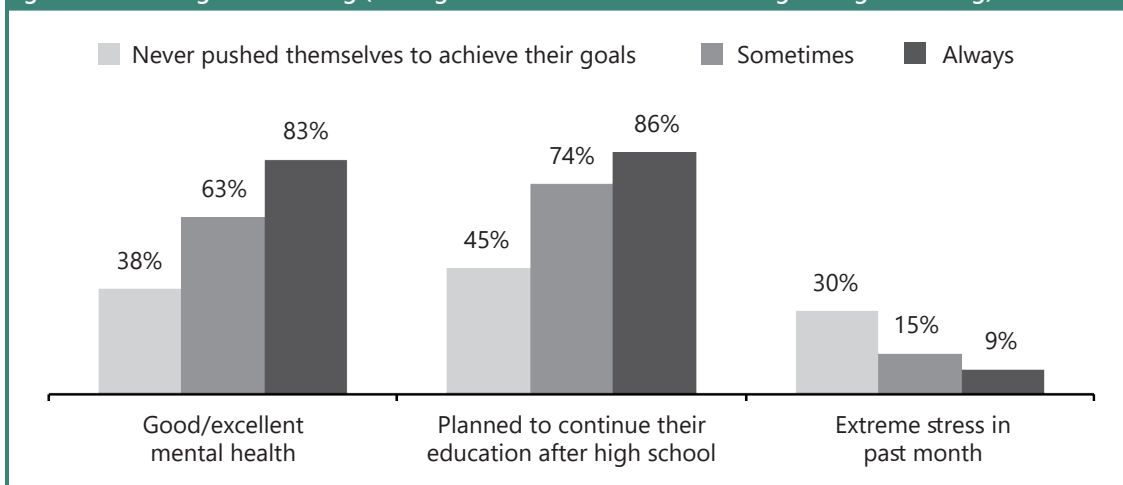
## FEELING SKILLED & CONFIDENT

As in 2013, 79% of Northeast youth were able to name something they were really good at (such as sports, school work, and art).

Also, the majority (58%) usually felt good about themselves. Students who felt good about themselves were more likely than those who did not feel this way to feel hopeful for their future (86% vs. 36%).

Males were the most likely to be able to name something they were really good at and to feel good about themselves.

Northeast students' well-being in relation to how often they pushed themselves to achieve their goals when things went wrong (among those who indicated that things had gone wrong)



## UNSTRUCTURED TIME

Around two thirds (67%) of local youth felt they had the right amount of time to do what they wanted on their own, whereas 21% did not feel they had enough time, and the remainder felt they had too much time.

Students who felt they had the right amount of time to spend on their own were more likely than those who felt they had insufficient time to report positive mental health and well-being. For example, they were more likely to feel happy in the past month (71% vs. 40% who felt they had insufficient time on their own), and to feel their life was going well (80% vs. 54%), and were less likely to experience extreme stress (8% vs. 30%).

In the Northeast, 60% of youth felt they had the right amount of time to do what they wanted in nature, while 37% felt they did not get enough time. Those who felt they had the right amount of time to spend in nature were more likely to feel connected to the land/nature (50% vs. 39% of those who felt they did not have enough time to spend in nature).

## SPIRITUALITY

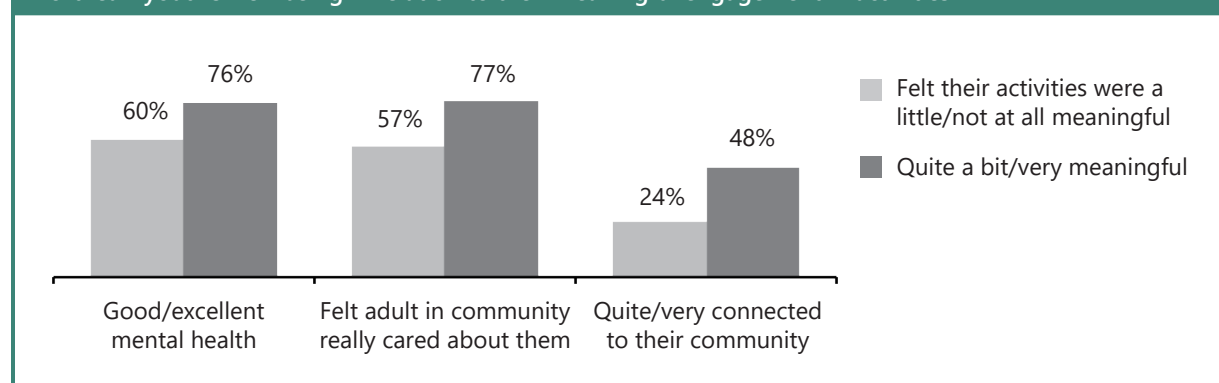
Seventeen percent of Northeast students reported that spirituality was very important in their life, while 18% felt it was somewhat important, 14% a little important, and 38% felt it was not important to them. Also 13% were unsure how important spirituality was to them.

## MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

There was a decrease in the percentage of local students who felt the activities they were involved in were meaningful to them (from 70% in 2013 to 64%). However, the percentage who felt their ideas were listened to and acted upon in their activities was similar to five years earlier (40%).

Northeast youth who experienced meaningful engagement in their activities were more likely to report positive mental health, to feel an adult in their community cared about them, and to feel connected to their community.

Northeast youth's well-being in relation to their meaningful engagement in activities





# TOPICS NORTHEAST YOUTH WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT

The final question on the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey was an open-ended question which asked youth if there were any topics which affected their health that they wanted to learn more about.

Locally, 5% of students who completed the survey provided a comment and identified at least one health related topic that they would like to receive training about or see included in their school's curriculum.

Half of all Northeast students who identified a topic that they would like to learn more about wanted more information about mental health, including information about specific conditions; how to manage symptoms of depression, stress, and anxiety; where and how to access mental health services; and how to help a friend or relative who was experiencing mental health challenges.

*"How to cope with anxiety and depression."*

Grade 10 student

*"Learning how to deal with trauma and shock."*

Grade 9 student

*"I want to know how to recognize mental disorders."*

Grade 8 student

*"Help with managing mental thoughts. I tend to over think and it causes fights with my friends and family."*

Grade 12 student

*"Depression and mental health need to be taught in school more."*

Grade 11 student

Sexual and physical health were the next most common topics youth wanted to learn more about. Sexual health topics included general sex education, as well as information about different birth control methods, and how to recognize symptoms of a sexually transmitted disease. Physical health topics included nutrition, sleep hygiene, and information about how to adopt a healthy lifestyle and become more physically active.

*"Sex ed."*

Grade 7 student

*"Health in maintaining shape and overall fitness."*

Grade 7 student

*"Sports health."*

Grade 12 student

*"How to beat insomnia."*

Grade 8 student

Other topics students wanted to learn more about included life skills, gender identity and sexual orientation, accessing services, healthy relationships, recognizing and responding to abuse, and substance use.

*"A money management class would be good."*

Grade 10 student

*"I want to learn how to recognize the difference between discipline and abuse from parents."*

Grade 11 student

*"I would like to learn more about how we could prevent or stop bullying from ex-partners."*

Grade 12 student

# McCREARY RESOURCES

## BC AHS PROVINCIAL & REGIONAL RESULTS



This report provides an overview of the BC Adolescent Health Survey results for youth in the Northeast Health Service Delivery Area.

Provincial results and results for BC's other Health Service Delivery Areas are available at [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca).

## ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS



A range of special topic reports and posters are being published using data from the 2018 BC AHS. These include an in-depth report about the health of Métis youth who completed the survey, a poster considering BC AHS results in the context of Canada's commitment to implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a youth-led investigation of substance use among BC youth, a vaping poster created by youth, and an in-depth report about marijuana use among BC youth.

## PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS



McCreary staff are available to present the Northeast BC AHS findings, and to conduct workshops which explore how local stakeholders can utilize the results. For more information contact [mccreary@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:mccreary@mcs.bc.ca).

## ENGAGING YOUTH IN THE BC AHS RESULTS



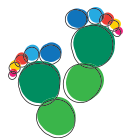
McCreary's Youth Advisory and Action Council (YAC) have created a youth-friendly poster of the key findings of the provincial report. Additional youth-friendly posters will be available on a range of topics, including substance use and mental health. The YAC have also created a workshop to share the results of the survey with their peers. To book a workshop contact [mccreary@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:mccreary@mcs.bc.ca).

## YOUTH ACTION GRANTS



The YAC distributed over \$87,000 in Youth Action Grants (YAGs) to youth (aged 12–19) in school districts that participated in the 2013 BC AHS. The granting program for the 2018 BC AHS is now accepting applications from youth aged 12 to 19 who are wanting to improve youth health in their school or community in one of the areas highlighted in the BC AHS. The YAC are also available to offer grant-writing workshops to young people who may be thinking of applying for a YAG. To book a workshop contact [mccreary@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:mccreary@mcs.bc.ca).

## BC AHS NEXT STEPS



McCreary is committed to returning the results of the 2018 BC AHS to young people in the Northeast. An interactive 'Next Steps' workshop is available to engage young people in a dialogue about the results and youth health in their community. Youth who participate in the workshops can receive funding and support to conduct youth health projects in their school or community. For more details or to book a workshop contact [mccreary@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:mccreary@mcs.bc.ca).

A Next Steps curriculum toolkit is also available on our website for anyone wanting to conduct their own Next Steps.



