

Communities That Care Whistler

YOUNG ADULT SURVEY 2016



MAKE WHISTLER A BETTER AND SAFER PLACE
FOR YOUNG ADULTS TO LIVE, WORK & PLAY.

HAVE YOUR SAY

PEACE

FILL OUT THIS SURVEY: [HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/53PR2WW](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/53pr2ww)



A community survey of young adults aged 18-30 years old in Whistler

Acknowledgements

Vision: “Promote a safe community where residents and guests of all ages are comfortable and secure.”

Mission: “To promote positive development for Whistler's children and young adults.”
Over time, the philosophy of our shared work has continued to be refined and includes delivery of programs that address the risk and supportive factors that have been identified through community surveys. We research programming that is compassionate, supportive, based on evidence, and informed by community wisdom given our community's culture.

Communities That Care would like to thank the Resort Municipality of Whistler for funding the 2016 Whistler Young Adult Survey with a Community Enrichment Grant and the Whistler business community for providing participation prizes. Our work would not have been possible without this support.

Communities That Care would also like to thank the Youth Workers involved with LUNA and WCSS as well as the 863 Young Adults who took part in this survey.

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Our Host Agency: Sea to Sky Community Services Society

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For more information about Communities That Care – Sea to Sky, please visit the website at: <http://www.ctcseatosky.com/> . For past surveys please click on “Whistler CTC”. For more information or to get involved, please e-mail cjewett@shaw.ca

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY6

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND 6

METHODOLOGY6

DEMOGRAPHICS FINDINGS7

AGE AND GENDER7

NATIONALITY AND COMMUNITY OF ORIGIN7

COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT7

COMMUNITY PROGRAM AWARENESS9

SUBSTANCE USE10

CONCLUSIONS10

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.....12

METHODOLOGY13

SURVEY LIMITATIONS14

DATA ANALYSIS14

DEMOGRAPHICS FINDINGS.....14

AGE AND GENDER14

NATIONALITY AND COMMUNITY OF ORIGIN16

EDUCATION.....17

COMMUNITY ATTACHMENTS17

SUPPORT NETWORK ON ARRIVAL IN WHISTLER17

EMPLOYMENT20

HOUSING25

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING AWARENESS29

HEALTH AND WELLNESS31

SUBSTANCE USE33

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS39

CONCLUSIONS39

APPENDIX42

APPENDIX 1- YOUNG ADULT SURVEY43

APPENDIX 2- CANADA'S LOW RISK ALCOHOL DRINKING GUIDELINES.....44

Executive Summary

Introduction and Background

Young adults come from all over the world to work and play in Whistler. We are their hosts and they are our neighbors, employees, and mentors to our youth. Their well-being and lifestyle choices impact our communities, to this end Communities That Care Whistler feels it is important that we gain an understanding of this community demographic and ensure their stay in Whistler is a positive one for all.

Communities That Care (CTC) Whistler is a community board that is comprised of stakeholders and concerned citizens from education, policing, health and social services, and local government. The goal of the CTC board is to strengthen environments that affect children and youth: home, school, peer group and the larger community.

The Young Adult Survey was designed to assess the demographics of the young adult population and to ascertain their needs, concerns, and level of satisfaction related to employment and housing in Whistler. In addition, the survey inquired about substance use, and health and mental health, including sources of stress. Survey questions were also designed to assess young adults' use and awareness of programs and services in Whistler, such as LUNA alcohol free events and the Whistler Opt Clinic. Finally, the 2016 *Communities That Care: Young Adult Survey* asked respondents about their interactions with minors under age 18 in the community.

Methodology

The primary data source for this report was an online survey that included both qualitative and quantitative questions. The survey design was based on similar surveys conducted in 2006 and 2009. Survey respondents were offered entry into a daily prize draw as an incentive for participating.

A total of **868** young adults submitted surveys and of these a sample size of **829** complete surveys were analyzed for this report.

Demographics Findings

Age and Gender

All ages within the target age group (18-30 years old) were represented in the survey sample. Some age groups were slightly over-represented and others were slightly under-represented when compared to the available 2011 Census data for Whistler compiled by Statistics Canada.

Among respondents aged 18-23, more males than females submitted surveys. This trend is reversed among 27 to 29-year-old respondents where more females than males submitted surveys.

Nationality and Community of Origin

Respondents originated from **37** different countries including Canada.

- Australia was the most frequently identified country of origin outside of Canada amongst survey respondents. This was followed by the United Kingdom countries of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales (**n=108**). Forty-nine respondents did not specify their country of origin but indicated it was a country other than Canada
- Almost **38%** of respondents described themselves as born in Canada.
- **21** respondents were born in the Sea to Sky Corridor. Of the Canadian born respondents, a larger number were from provinces outside of BC.

Education

- The survey respondents were a well-educated group overall.
 - **79%** had attended some form of post-secondary education at the college or university level as their highest level of education.
 - **20%** held a high school diploma or equivalent and less than
 - **1%** had not completed high school.
 - A small portion of the respondents described themselves as students.

Community Attachment

- Over half of the survey respondents arrived in Whistler on their own. The majority of those who did not come to Whistler on their own arrived with a partner, friend or family members.
- **46%** of the respondents had lived in Whistler for less than one year. The rest of the respondents were evenly distributed and had lived in the community from 1-4+ years.
- Almost half of the respondents had not determined how long they were planning to live in Whistler.
- When asked about their satisfaction with Whistler as a place to live, a sizable majority, over **70%** of respondents, rated Whistler as either an “excellent” or a “very good” place to live.

- Affordable housing, higher wages and lower costs were the most frequent areas that respondents thought would make living in Whistler better.
- Approximately half of the respondents reported moderate to extreme stress levels with more than half indicating some or a lot of stress related to their financial situation. The theme of low wages and high costs recurred throughout the survey findings.

Employment

- Most respondents, over **64%**, reported that they have one job, followed by **22%** who indicated they have more than one job.
- Respondents were employed in over **21** different sectors; the food and beverage industry, hospitality, and sports activity instruction were the most frequently cited employment categories provided by respondents.
- **58%** of respondents made less than a living wage (an income equivalent to a wage of **\$15.40** an hour) for a single resident living in Whistler in the winter time. The current living wage data for Whistler was compiled by the Whistler Centre for Sustainability as part of Whistler's monitoring of the 2020 sustainability plan.
- The majority of respondents were employed the equivalent of full time (over 30 hours per week) with a significant portion (**36%**) working 40+ hours per week.
- Respondents made several comments that indicated they found the cost of living in Whistler was high for them and that they felt a policy intervention designed to increase wages and lower costs for food and/or housing would make Whistler a better place to live.
- Respondents indicated that there was a good connection between young adult employees and their employers. With **85%** feeling their employer took 'a lot' or 'some' interest in them personally.

Housing

- Staff housing is a benefit many of the large and mid-sized employers in Whistler offer their staff.
 - **40%** of the survey respondents had the employee benefit of staff housing and
 - **34%** of respondents were living in staff housing
- A statistical significance test was conducted to determine if respondents' satisfaction with housing differed by type of housing. The results found that respondents who do not live in staff housing were significantly more satisfied with their housing situation than were respondents who do live in staff housing.
- Qualitative housing themes derived from the question on housing satisfaction included overcrowding, affordability, and either displeasure or approval of landlords.
- Respondent comments varied from being pleased with the housing they had secured while in Whistler, to being frustrated by the cost or condition of the housing they were renting. Some respondents indicated they felt anxious about losing their housing and being able to secure other suitable housing

- **6** individuals indicated that they live in accommodations such as vehicles, tents and campers and would be classified as 'unsheltered or absolute homeless' according to the Homeless Hub's Canadian definition of homelessness.
- **71%** of respondents lived with 1-4 other individuals and **22%** lived with 5-13+ individuals.
- **51%** of respondents shared a bedroom and **2%** or **13** respondents did not have a designated bedroom (i.e. Slept in a closet, couch or common area of a residence)
- **33%** were very or somewhat concerned about the maintenance and repair of their dwelling.
- In spite of the above noted concerns, the majority of respondents were satisfied with their housing.
- **26%** of respondents indicated experiencing some or a lot of stress due to housing.

Community Program Awareness

- The majority of respondents are somewhat or quite comfortable accessing the health and community services offered in Whistler if they are facing a crisis or personal health concern.
- There is not strong familiarity with the local services available to young adults based on their responses; almost half or **47%** of the **n= 761** respondents who provided a response to this question indicated they were not familiar with local health and community services available to them.
- A significant portion of young adults were not aware of the availability of alcohol free LUNA events.
 - Almost half (**47%**) had not attended these events and were unaware that they existed in Whistler.
 - **30%** of respondents were aware that LUNA events were available but chose not to attend them.
 - Just over **22%** of respondents had attended 1-10+ LUNA events during their time in Whistler.
- Respondents provided a number of suggestions for night time activities they would like to see in Whistler as an alternative to the bar scene, top of the list was skiing, movies sports and outdoor activities.

Health and Wellness

- The majority of respondents had made a connection to local health care providers either due to accident, emergency or regular medical appointments; **34%** of respondents had not visited a doctor during their stay in Whistler.
- **8%** of respondents had accessed mental health support and or treatment while in Whistler.
- While a significant majority (87%) rated their mental health as excellent to good, Whistler Community Services Society reported that, out of 531 one-on-one sessions provided to 18-30 year olds from April 2015 to April 2016, mental health was the primary presenting issue for 191 sessions. Only **33%** of the young adults in Whistler

were familiar with the Opt Clinic, a safe sexual health service for residents of Whistler to access.

Substance Use

- Alcohol is the substance most often consumed by respondents with approximately **42%** consuming enough alcohol to be at or above the limit for what is considered safe weekly consumption according to Canada's Safe Drinking Guidelines
- Respondents reported that their drug and alcohol use had changed during their stay in Whistler. Initially, as this respondent notes, their use increased and then decreased or leveled out the longer they stayed in the community.
- Respondents identified that alcohol had more impact on their incomes with **71%** of respondents indicating that sometimes or more of the time alcohol has an impact on their incomes as opposed to **23%** of respondents who reported the same impact on their finances for drug use.
- Substance use is a factor that is known to be under estimated in self-report surveys and so the amount of substance use reported by respondents is likely to be somewhat low.

Conclusions

Overall, the survey results indicate that young adults in Whistler have diverse backgrounds but share many common interests and concerns.

- They have a fairly high level of education, which is a protective factor that can decrease risky behavior.
- The results suggest that many young adults in Whistler are likely under employed relative to their education as jobs involving tourism predominate. Low wages also mean long hours for some respondents, a fact evidenced by the fact that over one-third of respondents indicated that they work more than full time.
- The implication of the survey results is that many respondents feel that aspects of life in Whistler are worth working for, even if one has to work for lower pay and at a job for which they are over qualified. Indeed, the majority of respondents indicated that they find Whistler to be a good place to live.

Of most concern, is that well over half of respondents reported working at jobs that paid less than a living wage for Whistler in the winter. Since the living wage is calculated using the cost of living in a given area, it is clear that either increasing wages or finding ways to lower costs for local workers would improve the affordability of life in Whistler for many young adults.

When it comes to affordability, housing seems to be of major concern to Whistler's young adults. It is interesting that respondents reported being more satisfied with their dwelling situation than would be expected. For example, only **28** respondents indicated they were somewhat or very dissatisfied with their dwelling despite the fact that **264** indicated that

they were somewhat or very concerned with the level of maintenance and repairs on their dwelling.

The survey results clearly indicate that more outreach is needed to inform Whistler's young adults of the health and community services available to them. Almost half of respondents were not really familiar with health and community services in Whistler, including LUNA alcohol free events.

Approximately half of the respondents reported moderate to extreme stress levels with more than half indicating some or a lot of stress related to their financial situation. The theme of low wages and high costs recurred throughout the survey findings.

Recommendations

1. Although not a large majority, there were enough young adults who engaged in binge drinking behavior to be a cause for concern. Possible ways to counter binge drinking behavior include providing alternatives to the bar scene, such as the RMOW's LUNA Program, and incorporating some of the suggestions made by respondents for alternative night time activities into the programming. In addition, individuals should be educated about Canada's safe drinking guidelines and awareness should be raised about the health and safety risks of binge drinking.
2. Future surveys of young adults should focus on the issues of employment, housing, and quality of life, so improvement in their ability to afford living in Whistler and the stress associated with financial issues can be monitored.
3. It is also important that future surveys focus on healthy substance use patterns, for example the current survey did not have a question that was specific to binge drinking. In addition, incorporating substance use questions that ensure validity of responses is essential for future surveys given the known concern around respondent underreporting substance use in the literature.
4. Low awareness of local sexual health services was concerning. An information campaign to raise awareness about local services such as the OPT Sexual Health Clinic would be beneficial. As this age demographic is at risk for unwanted pregnancies and STDs, ensuring access to a hassle free clinic is an important community public health service.
5. Although providing housing costs are beyond the scope of this report, the survey results indicate that a more careful examination of the housing needs and demands for this demographic would be beneficial.

Introduction and Background

The 2016 Communities That Care: Young Adult Survey was developed and administered by the Whistler Communities that Care board (CTC), a community group that conducts research and sponsors programming with the goals of reducing risk and strengthening protective factors throughout the course of a young person's development. The goal of the CTC board is to strengthen environments that affect children and youth: home, school, peer group and the larger community.

The Communities That Care system is a way for members of a community to work together to prevent youth health and behavior problems including substance use, delinquency, teen pregnancy, dropping out of school, violence, depression and anxiety. This system was developed by Dr. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard Catalano. It is based on their research, which has identified risk factors that predict youth problem behaviors and protective factors that buffer children from risk and help them succeed over life.

Young adults, defined as individuals between the ages of 18 and 30 years, comprise approximately one-third of the Whistler population and one-half of the local workforce. In addition, it is recognized that the young adults in Whistler, many who have traveled from afar to live and work in the resort municipality, contribute to the community culture that influences our youth. As these young adults constitute a significant percentage of the population and of the workforce, the 2016 *Communities That Care: Young Adult Survey* was conducted to obtain a collective understanding of their community experience, satisfaction and lifestyle choices.

Specifically, the 2016 survey was designed to assess the demographics of the young adult population and to ascertain their needs, concerns, and level of satisfaction related to employment and housing in Whistler. In addition, the survey inquired about substance use, and health and mental health, including sources of stress. Survey questions were also designed to assess young adults' use and awareness of programs and services in Whistler, such as LUNA alcohol free events and the Whistler Opt Clinic. Finally, the 2016 *Communities That Care: Young Adult Survey* asked respondents about their interactions with minors under age 18 in the community.

Results from the 2016 *Communities that Care: Young Adult Survey* are intended to complement findings gleaned from the 2013 *Communities That Care Youth Survey* administered to Whistler students in grades 6-12. Young adults were not surveyed in 2013 as they were in previous years, when Communities that Care administered surveys to youth in grades 6-12 and to the young adult population aged 18-26 years.

Methodology

The primary data source for this report was an online survey that included both qualitative and quantitative questions. The survey design was based on similar surveys conducted in 2006 and 2009. Modifications were made to questions and content to ensure the survey was current. A copy of the online survey can be found in Appendix 1.

- An introduction to the survey informed the respondent of the survey rationale, stakeholders participating in the survey, survey confidentiality and sought participants consent;
- Screening questions determined whether an individual met the criteria (live or work in Whistler; between the ages of 18-30 years) to participate in the survey; and,
- Questions were designed to obtain data in the following areas: demographics, employment, housing, recreation, community attachment, and lifestyle choices, such as recreation and leisure, alcohol and drug use, and sexual health (See Appendix A for the Survey).
- The survey was pilot tested using approximately ten individuals of the target age group to ascertain if they understood the questions and to verify that the length of the survey did not create a time burden for respondents.
- Surveys were disseminated via steering committee networks, young adult programs such as LUNA, a local newspaper article, and listservs, such as Facebook groups and Twitter feeds known to be followed by young adults in Whistler. The YA survey ran from mid-January 2016 for one month.
- A total of **868** young adults submitted surveys. The data was cleaned and surveys from **39** respondents were omitted from analysis because they were deemed too incomplete to provide any useable data.
- Data from the remaining **829** surveys were analyzed using Microsoft Excel 2010 and NVivo software.
- As an incentive to participate in the survey, each respondent was provided with a link where they could enter their contact information to enter a drawing and win a variety of prizes. A drawing was held daily and some of the prizes had significant monetary value such as: a Heli-ski touring trip, a mountain snowmobile tour. Prizes were purchased through a small grant from the RMOW and obtained through donation

from local Whistler businesses.

Survey Limitations

Although all steps were taken to ensure that the survey was disseminated widely, it is assumed that some sample bias occurred and the data as a result is interpreted with caution, as is true with surveys of this nature. Whistler is a multicultural community; this survey was only available in English and therefore may have missed the opportunity to hear from individuals who do not read or write English or were not confident in their English reading and writing skills to complete the survey.

Data analysis

The online survey data was exported into Microsoft Excel for analysis. The data was then also imported into NVivo, software used for qualitative data analysis. The survey data consisted of answers to forced choice questions (i.e., multiple choice and Likert type scales) and open-ended responses, typically where respondents expanded on their answers to forced-choice questions. The data obtained from forced choice questions was summarized and all qualitative data responses were coded inductively and subjected to a thematic analysis to uncover key themes.

The survey was designed to achieve the goal of describing the Whistler young adult population rather than to answer specific hypotheses. Although the survey was not designed to obtain data for inferential statistics, data from several questions were recoded and subjected to post hoc analyses. These analyses were exploratory in nature and may be used to inform the design of future surveys of the Whistler young adult population.

Findings are synthesized and presented in the Findings section of this report.

Demographics Findings

The following section provides a snapshot of the survey respondents' demographic information. Comments from survey respondents are interspersed throughout this document and are highlighted in blue to distinguish them within the report content.

Age and Gender

As can be observed in the graph in Figure 1, all ages within the target age group (18-30 years old) were represented in the survey sample. Some age groups were slightly over-represented and others were slightly under-represented when compared to the available 2011 Census data for Whistler comprised by Statistics Canada. For example, it was observed

that there was a larger proportion of 30-year old respondents than would be expected given the age distribution from the census.

Figure 1 Response rate compared to 2011 Census data

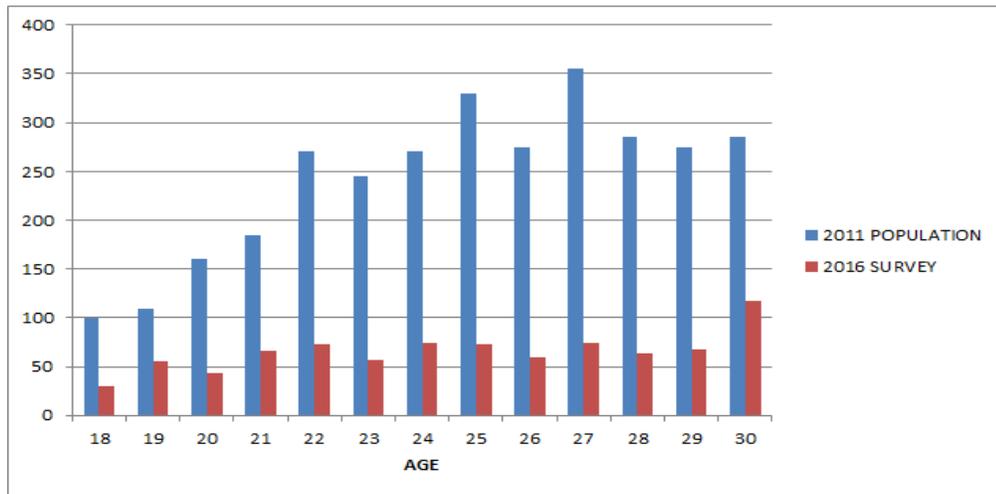
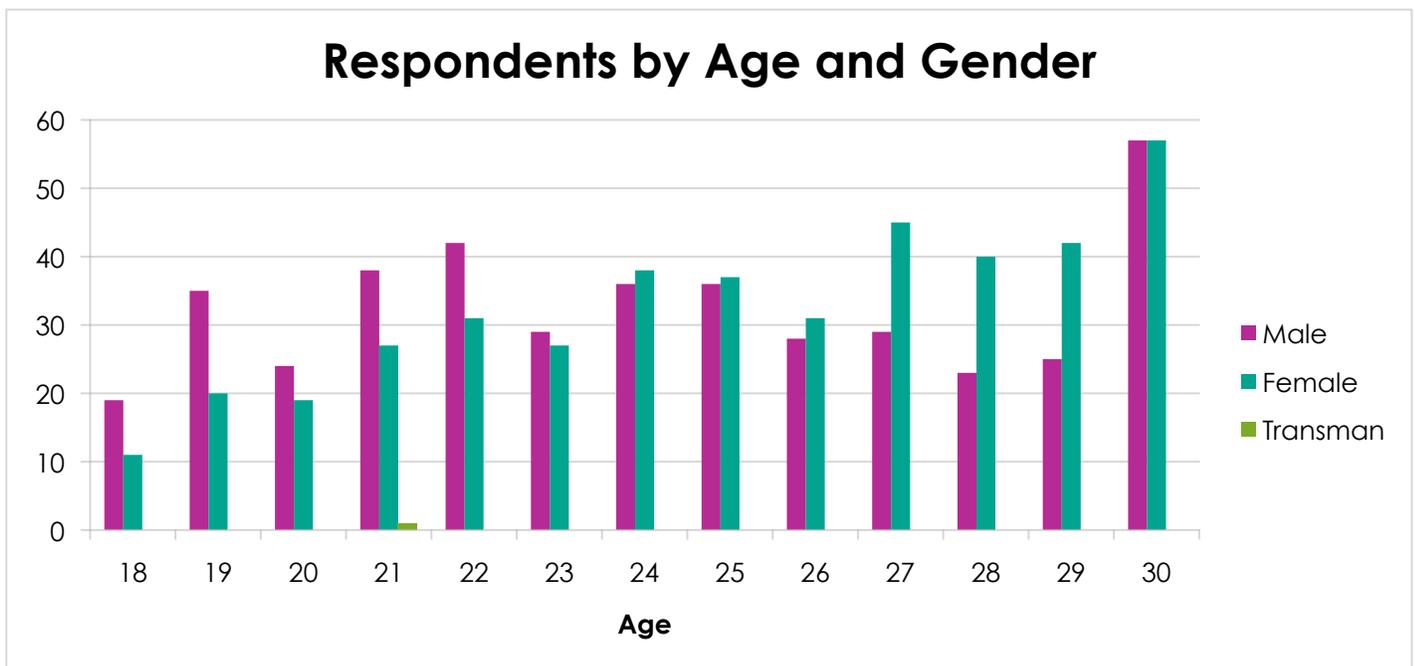


Figure 2 provides a graph comparing age and gender of respondents. Among respondents aged 18-23, more males than females submitted surveys. This trend is reversed among 27 to 29-year-old respondents where more females than males submitted surveys.

Figure 2 Response rate comparison by age and gender



Nationality and Community of Origin

As is noted by word size in the accompanying word cloud image in Figure 3, individuals travelled to Whistler to live and work from around the globe.

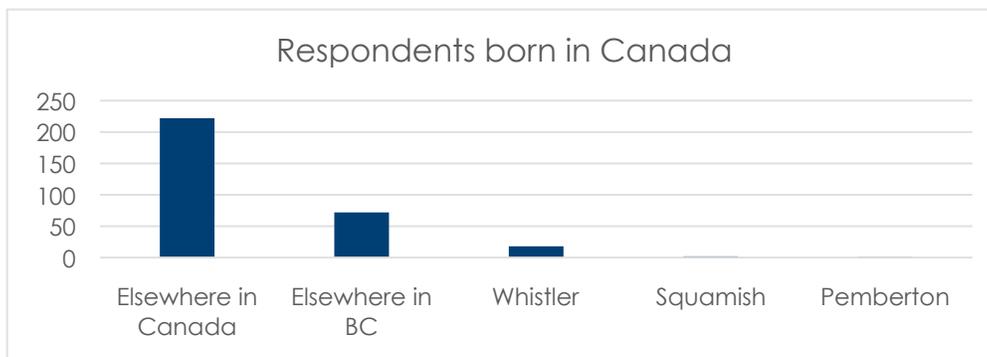
- Respondents originated from **37** different countries including Canada.
- With a frequency count of **172** or just over **20%** of all respondents, Australia was the most frequently identified country of origin outside of Canada amongst survey respondents. This was followed by the United Kingdom countries of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales (**n=108**). Forty-nine respondents did not specify their country of origin but indicated it was a country other than Canada.

Figure 3 Word cloud depicting responses to country of origin question



Almost **38%** of respondents described themselves as born in Canada. The graph in Figure 4 provides a breakdown of where in Canada the respondents originated from. Twenty-one respondents were born in the Sea to Sky Corridor. Respondents most frequently were born in other provinces outside of BC.

Figure 4 A graph breaking down where in Canada respondents were born

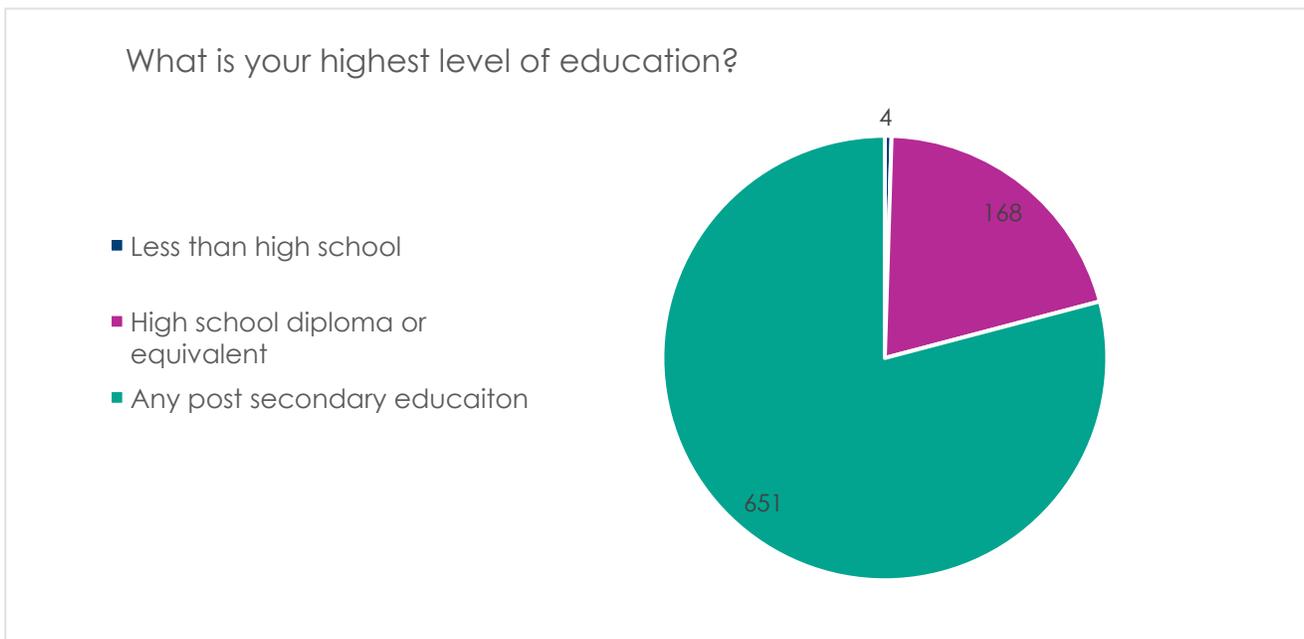


Education

Survey responses indicate that young adults in Whistler are highly educated (see chart below): **79%** of respondents had attended some form of postsecondary education including, college, university, graduate studies and apprenticeship programs. While just under **0.05%** had less than a high school diploma as noted in the chart in Figure 5, seventy respondents indicated that they are still students.

“Better pay or better access to jobs that would utilize my education.” Survey Respondent

Figure 5 Respondent Level of Education

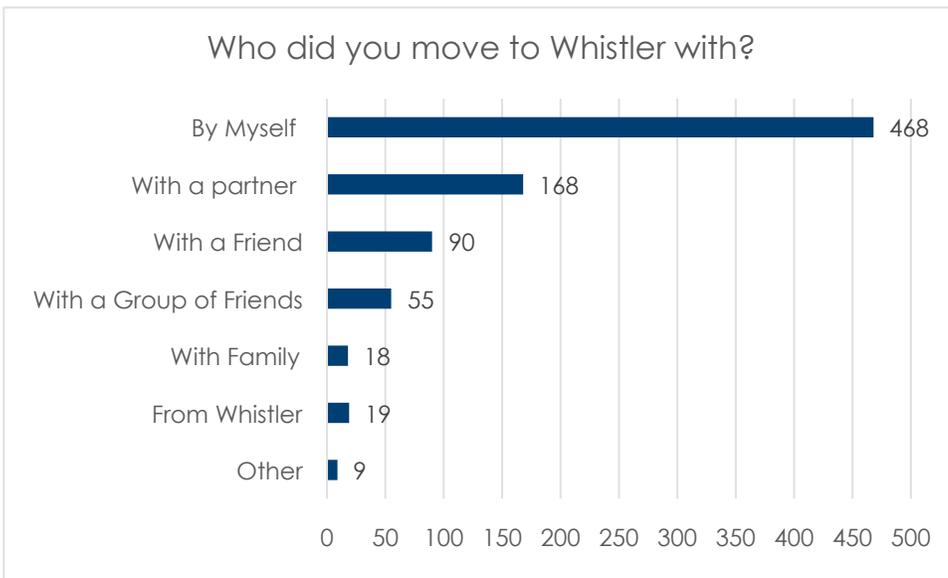


Community Attachments

Support Network on Arrival in Whistler

The majority of survey respondents arrived in Whistler on their own; the next largest group came to Whistler with a partner or spouse. A small percentage came to Whistler with a friend or with family members. Most respondents who answered 'other' category came to Whistler with an employer or met a friend or partner already living in the community.

Figure 6 Respondents support network on moving to Whistler



Just under half (**46%**) of the respondents are new to Whistler, having lived in Whistler less than a year. As indicated in Figure 7 below, at the time of the survey, the majority of respondents were undecided about how long they intended to stay in Whistler.

Figure 7 Length of time in Whistler

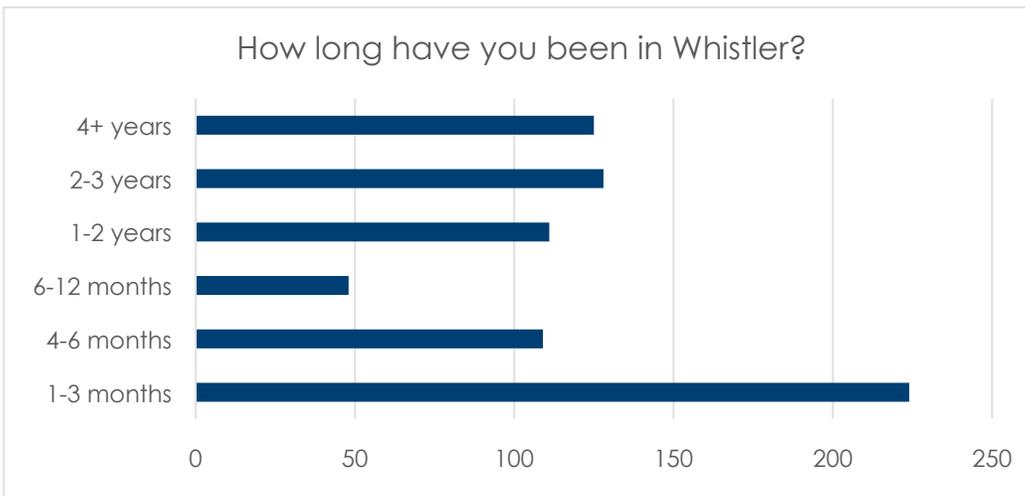
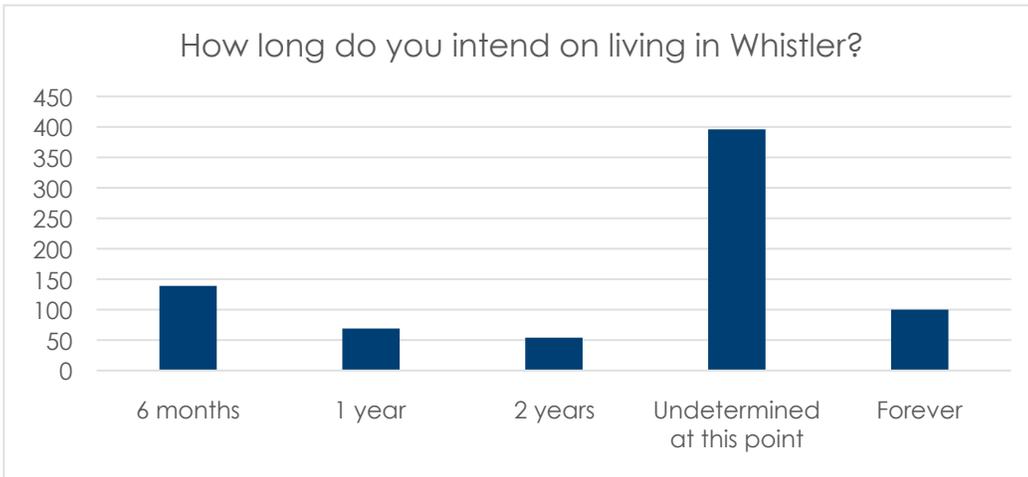


Figure 8 Length of time respondents intend to stay in Whistler.



When asked about their satisfaction with Whistler as a place to live, a sizable majority of respondents rated Whistler as either an “excellent” or “very good” place to live. A correlational analysis found that there was not a significant correlation between the length of time respondents lived in Whistler and their rating of their satisfaction with Whistler as a place to live ($R=0.078$).

Figure 9 Respondent level of satisfaction with Whistler.



Affordable housing, higher wages and lower costs were the most frequent areas that respondents thought would make living in Whistler better.

“Stability of rental (knowing that's *(sic)* we may need to move out). It won't be easy to find another place that 3 people can afford to live in without sharing rooms!” Whistler Young Adult Survey Respondent

Figure 11 Employment Status of Respondents

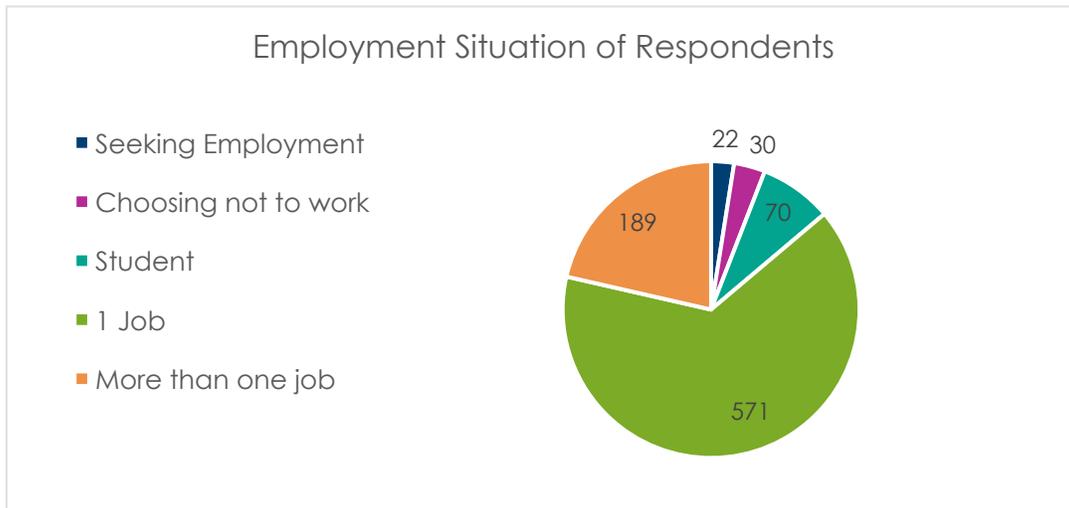
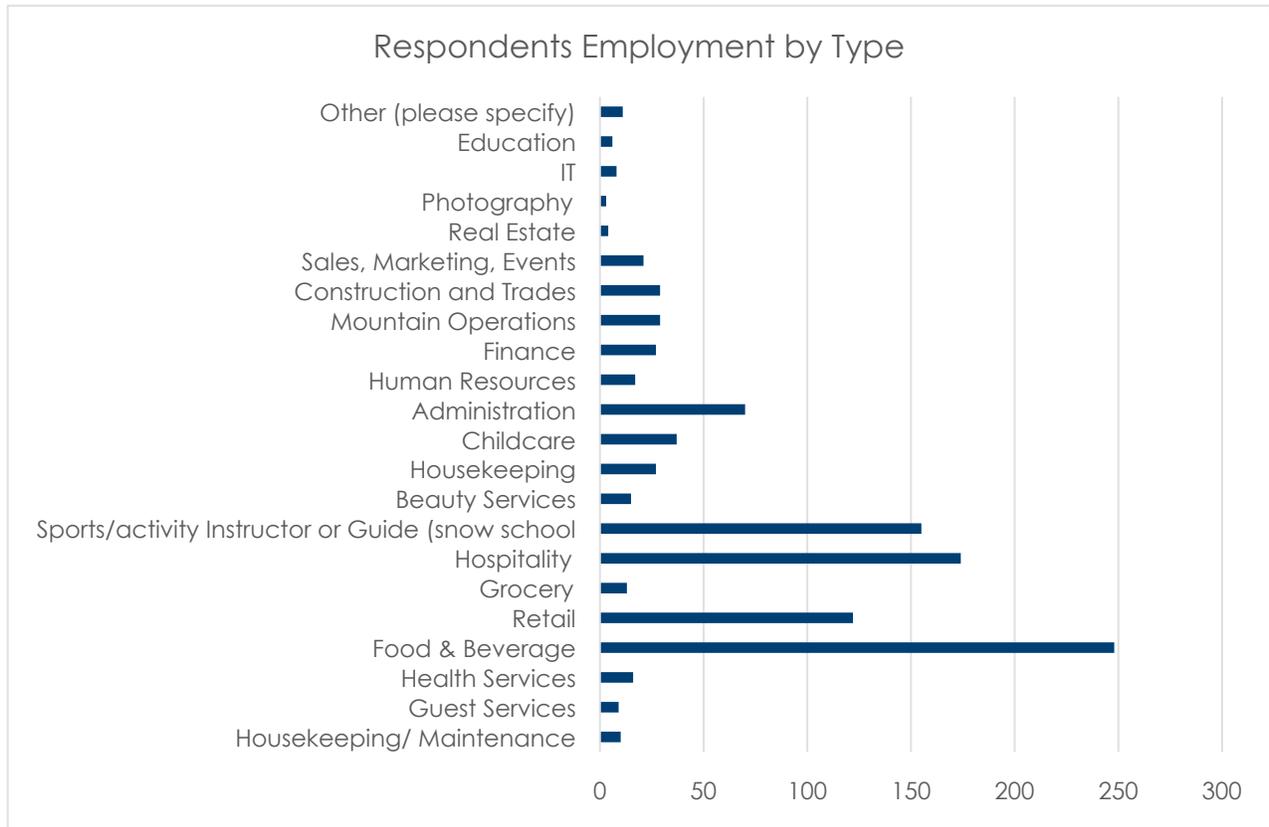


Figure 12 below provides a breakdown of the type of jobs respondents were employed in by category. Food and beverage industry, hospitality and sports activity instructor were the most frequently cited employment categories by respondents.

Figure 12 Respondents type of work by category



Survey respondents described a wide range of wages from under \$11 an hour to \$150 an hour for custom videography work. **58%** of respondents made less than a living wage for a single resident living in Whistler in the winter time, according to living wage data for Whistler compiled by the Whistler Centre for Sustainability as part of the Whistler monitoring program

for the 2020 Sustainability Plan. A living wage in Whistler for a single individual during the winter season requires the income equivalent of a **\$15.40** an hour wage. A breakdown of the costs calculated into a living wage in Whistler is shown in Figure 13 below.

Figure 13 Respondents hourly wages

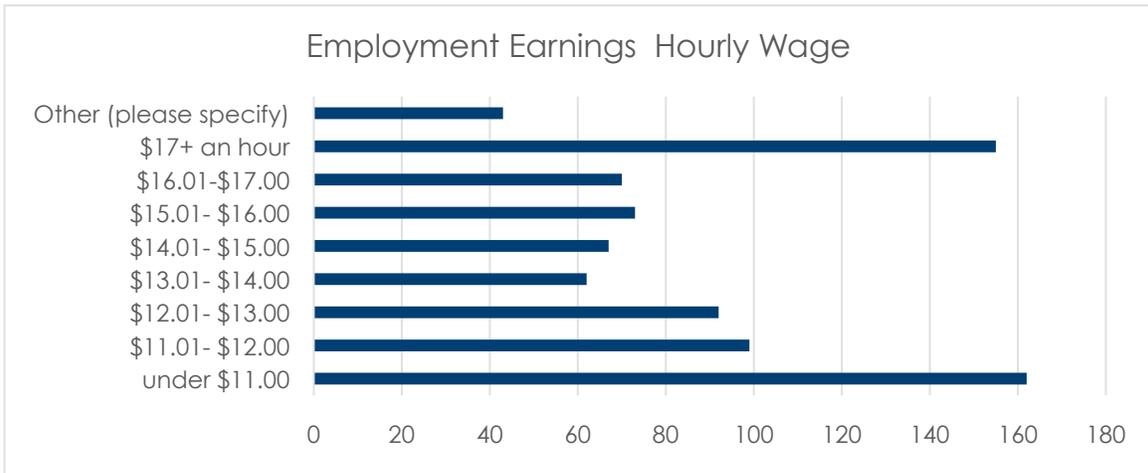
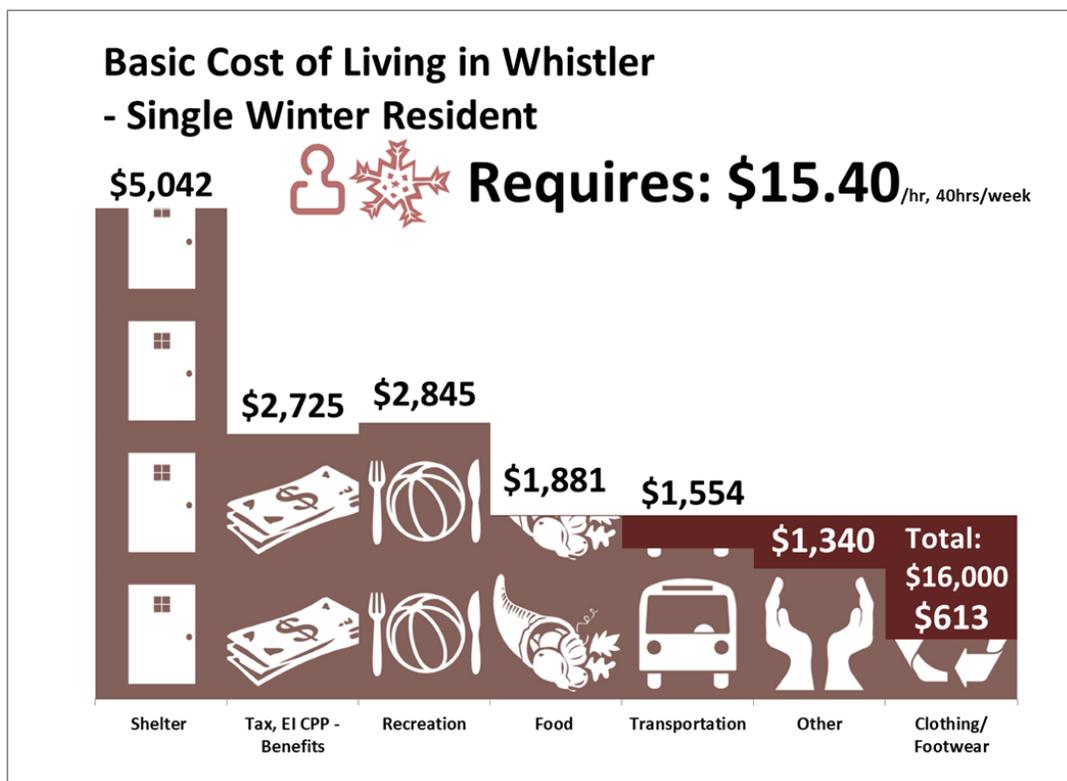


Figure 14 Whistler Centre for Sustainability Cost of Living Calculation of Single Winter Residents living in Whistler



“More housing and maybe help with grocery budgeting/cooking could help a lot of my friends from eating noodles every day.” Survey Respondent

Figure 15 indicates that the majority of respondents worked from 31-40+ hours per week. Respondents made several comments that indicated they found the cost of living in Whistler was high for them and that they felt a policy intervention designed to increase wages and

lower costs for food and/or housing would make Whistler a better place to live. The top 200 words used by respondents when asked what would make their Whistler experience better can be found in the word cloud in Figure 16.

Figure 15 Respondents hours worked per week

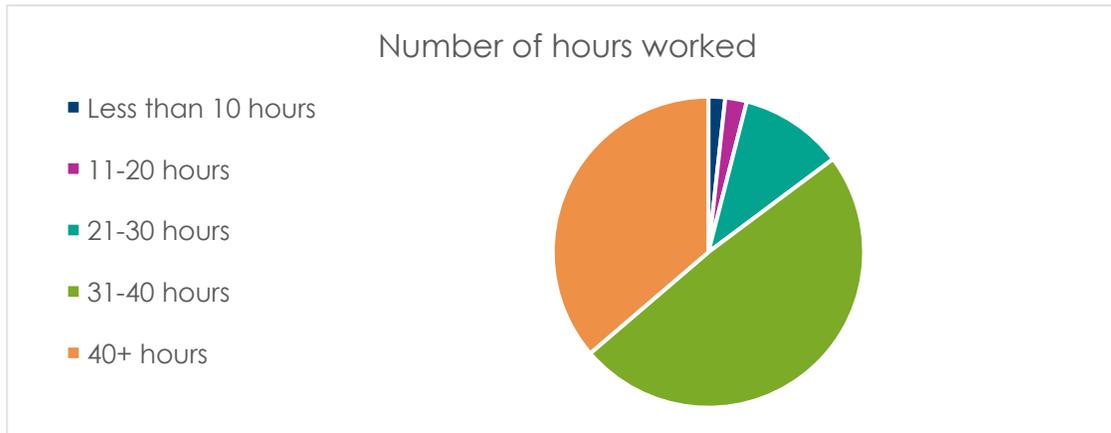
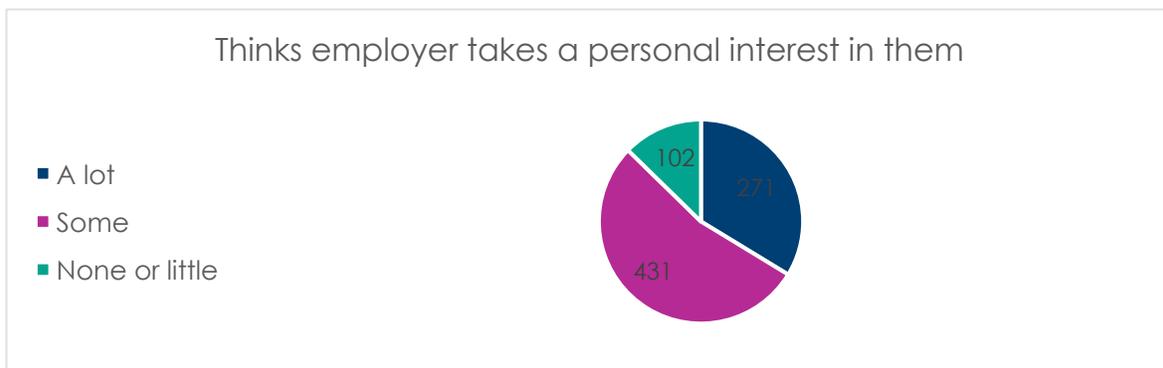


Figure 16 Top 200 words from respondents when asked what would make Whistler better.



The majority of respondents felt that their employer takes a personal interest in them, indicating that there is a good connection between young adult employees and their employers.

Figure 17 Respondents perceived support from employer



As noted in the introduction section, Communities That Care Whistler recognized the important influence young adults living and working in Whistler could have on youth in the community, where young adults are often their co-workers.

Survey respondents were asked about their awareness of and influence over minors in their workplace. For respondents who replied that they are aware of minors in their workplace, a majority (54%) indicated they have at least some influence over them.

Housing

The following section describes the housing experience of survey respondents. As noted in the quotes below, comments varied from being pleased with the housing they had secured while in Whistler, to being frustrated by the cost or condition of the housing they were renting. Some respondents indicated they felt anxious about losing their housing and being able to secure other suitable housing.

"I was very lucky and landed and (sic) awesome place with great people for a reasonable price. But this is not the norm in whistler." Young Adult Survey Respondent

"I love where i(sic) live, my main concern is if our landlord decides to no longer rent, sell or even raise the rent. If this happens we would probably leave whistler. I am not prepared to pay a higher price for here or anywhere else. The prospect of having to search for somewhere new to live scares me as there are so few options, particularly for a couple that wants their own place." Young Adult Survey Respondent

Many of the larger employers in Whistler offer staff housing benefits to their employees, which allows employees to secure shared accommodations through their employers rather than seeking market housing. Market rental housing is limited in Whistler and can be expensive to rent.

Staff Housing Benefits

The following is a breakdown of the respondents who received staff housing benefits based on related survey questions.

- **40%** of respondents had access to housing as a benefit of their work and, of this group,
- **84%** or **282** were residing in housing connected to their employment

Survey respondents' satisfaction with their housing is pictorially represented by the following word cloud. As the quotes below indicate, qualitative housing themes derived from the question on housing satisfaction included overcrowding, affordability, and either displeasure or approval of landlords.

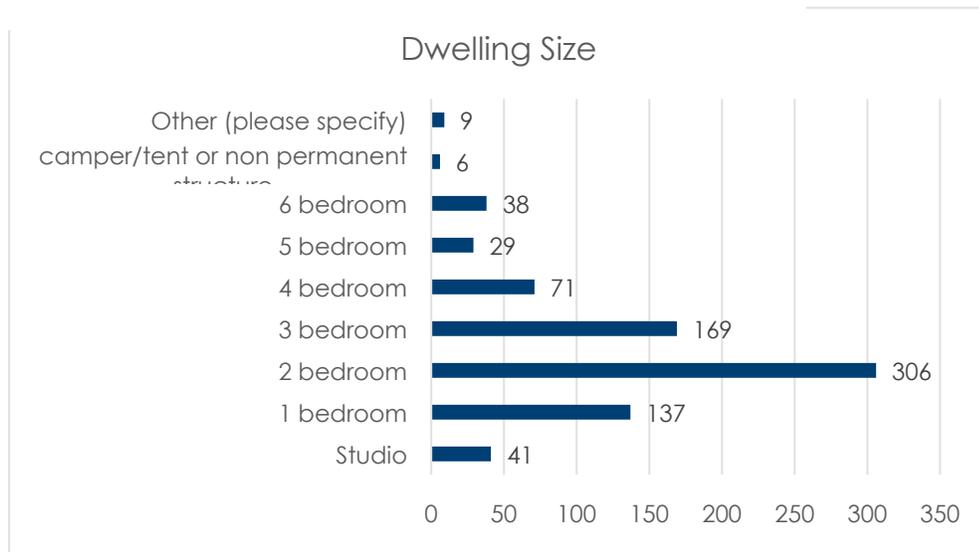
"I live in a storage room" Survey Respondent

"3 people in two bedrooms, shared part time (2 out of 3 months)" Survey Respondent

"I share a bedroom with my two young children" Survey Respondent

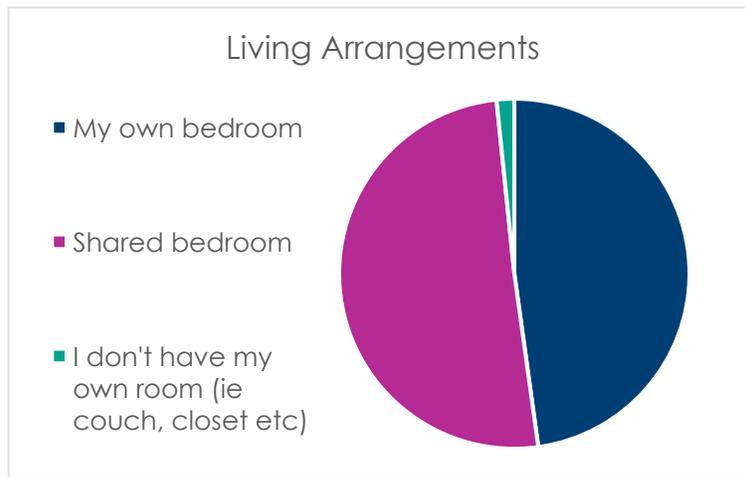
A significant portion of the respondents reported that they live in dwellings with two or more bedrooms. Six individuals indicated that they live in accommodations such as vehicles, tents and campers and would be classified as 'unsheltered or absolute homeless' according to the Homeless Hub's Canadian definition of homelessness.¹

Figure 19 Size of respondents dwelling



¹ The Homeless Hub's Canadian definition of homelessness can be found at the following link: <http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHhomelessdefinition.pdf>

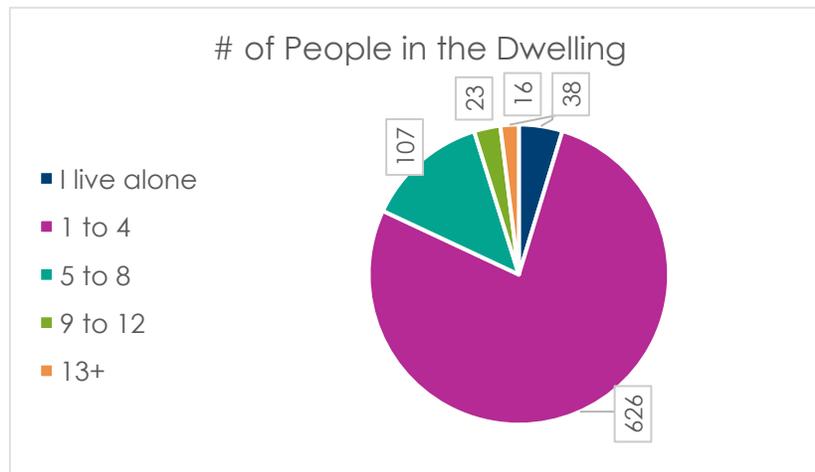
Figure 20 Respondents living arrangements



As Figure 20 indicates, just over half (**51%**) of respondents share a bedroom. It is possible that some respondents who reported that they share bedrooms live with a spouse or significant other. However, when responses of those who came to Whistler with a partner are considered separately, it does not appear that the majority of respondents who reported sharing a bedroom are sharing it with an intimate partner.

- **82 (20%)** of the respondents in shared bedrooms came to Whistler with a partner.
- Of those in shared bedrooms (**n=404**), just under **5%** provided comments that indicate that they live with a partner.

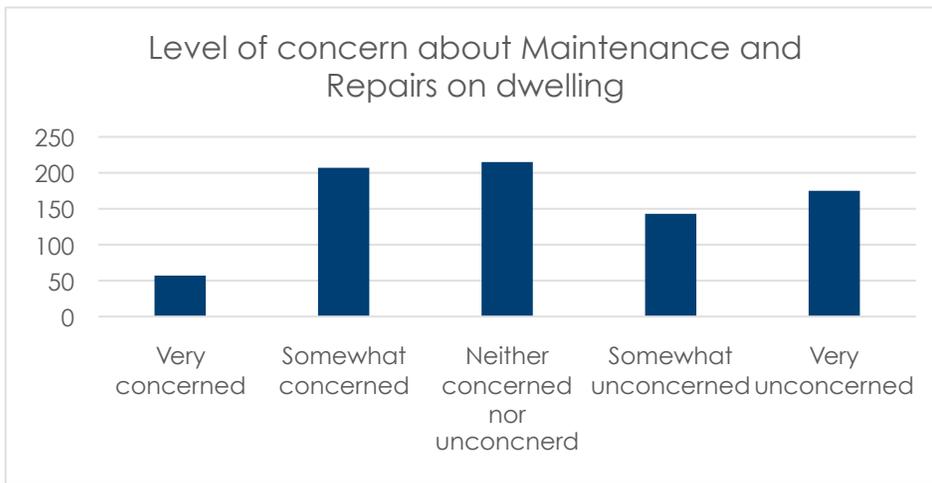
Figure 21 Number of individuals living in a dwelling with respondents



Just over **4%** of respondents (**n=810**) indicated they live alone in their dwelling. The majority (**77%**) reported that they live with 1-4 other people in their home.

The chart below indicates that, of the **n=797** respondents who described their level of concern around the maintenance of their dwelling, slightly over **33%** were very or somewhat concerned about their dwelling.

Figure 22 Respondents' concern with physical condition of the dwelling.

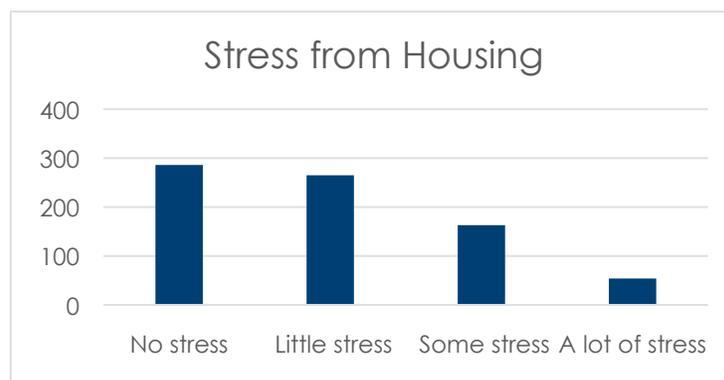


Satisfaction with Housing

A statistical significance test was conducted to determine if respondents' satisfaction with housing differed by type of housing. Specifically, a t-test comparing satisfaction with housing by type of housing (Staff housing/Not staff housing) was conducted and the results found that respondents who do not live in staff housing were significantly more satisfied ($M=4.14$; $S.D.=0.87$) with their housing situation than were respondents who do live in staff housing ($M=3.81$, $S.D.=1.16$); ($p<.001$).

Of the respondents who shared their level of stress related to housing ($n=750$) in Figure 23, almost **29%** of respondents had some or a lot of stress with housing. While the majority or **71%** had little or no stress with housing.

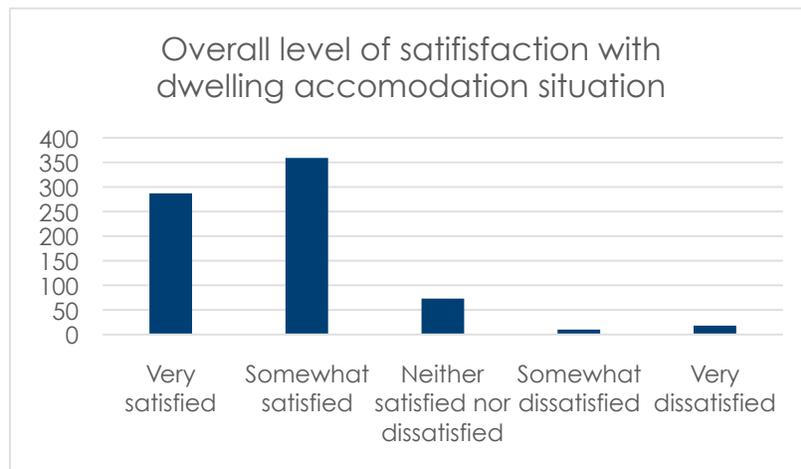
Figure 23 Respondents level of stress related to their housing.



Other residential concerns focused on, as noted previously, the high price of rents and housing availability. Other areas that warranted resident comments were the concern that employers were profiting from rents and laundry in their staff housing. Garbage and snow removal concerns, theft, lack of buses in neighbourhoods, lack of privacy, cleanliness/hygiene standards, people in two bedrooms, shared part time (2 out of 3 months), and overcrowding were other areas of concern respondents cited.

Overall, respondents had a high level of satisfaction with their housing as is indicated in the chart in Figure 24 below.

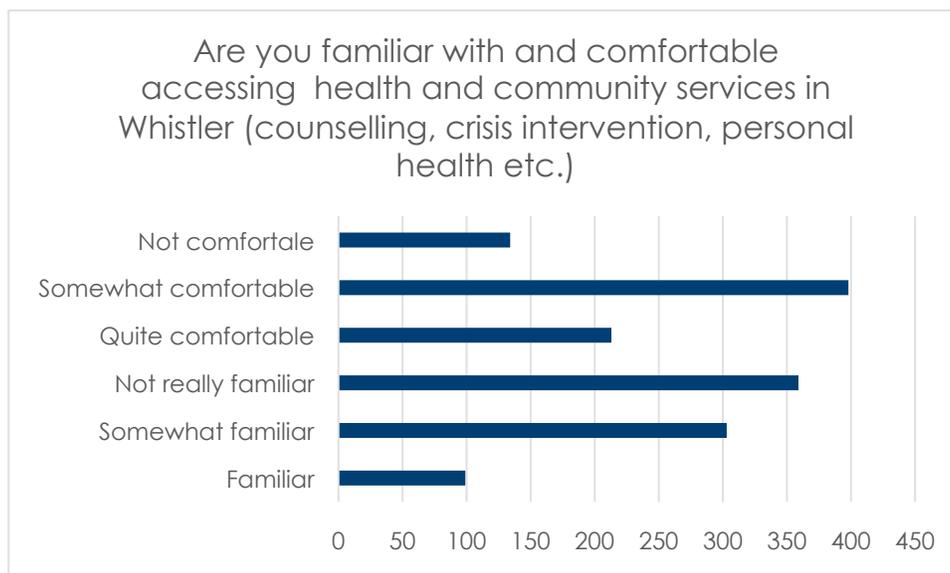
Figure 24 Respondents' level of satisfaction with their housing in Whistler.



Community Programming Awareness

The proceeding section provides an overview of the respondent's knowledge and use of local services and activities provided to assist young adults in Whistler. Their responses to these two survey question topics indicate that the majority of respondents are somewhat or quite comfortable accessing the health and community service offered in Whistler if they are facing a crisis or personal health concern. However, there is not strong familiarity with the local services available to young adults based on their responses; almost half or **47%** of the **n= 761** respondents who provided a response to this question indicated they were not familiar with local health and community services available to them.

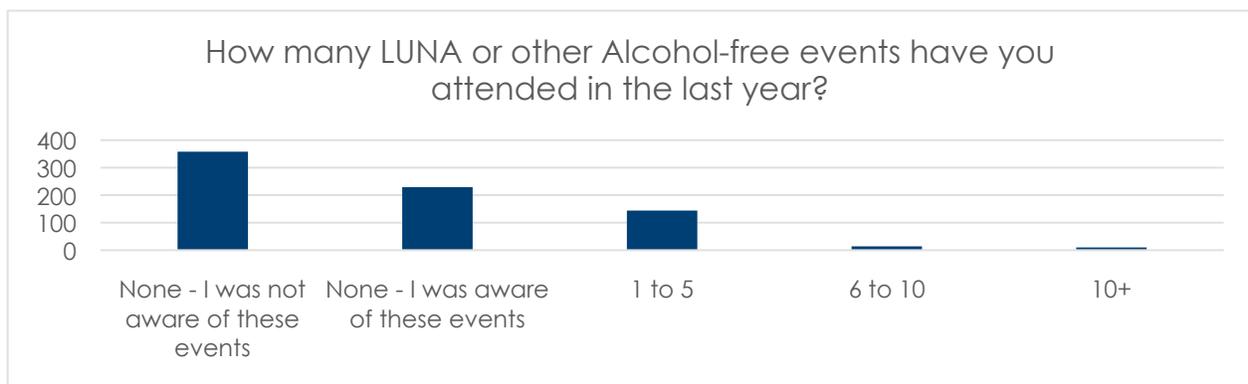
Figure 25 Respondents' level of familiarity and comfort with local health and community services.



As a way of supporting young adults who have relocated to Whistler, the RMOW offers alcohol free recreation events to young adults on a regular basis in a program called LUNA. The following questions relate to the respondent's knowledge, familiarity and ideas for possible future events. A significant portion of young adults were not aware of the availability of these events. Of the **n=755** respondents who shared their awareness and participation in LUNA events:

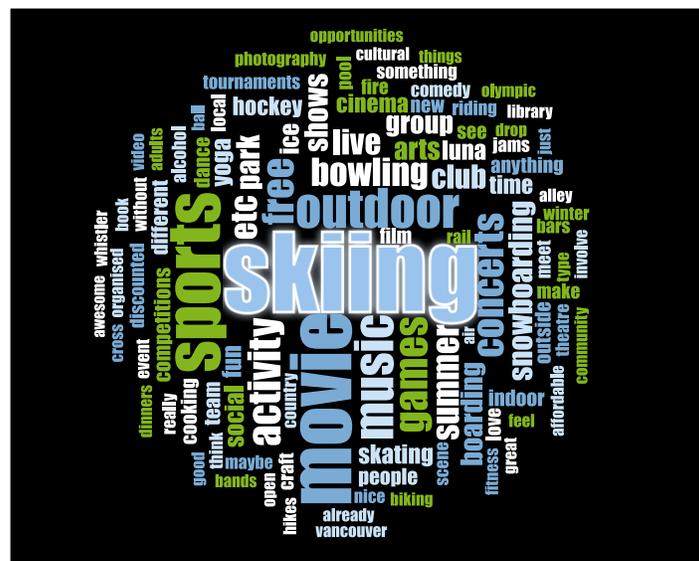
- Almost half **47%** had not attended these events and were unaware that they existed in Whistler.
- **30%** of respondents were aware that LUNA events were available but chose not to attend them.
- Just over **22%** of respondents had attended 1-10+ LUNA events during their time in Whistler.

Figure 26 Number of Luna events respondents have attended



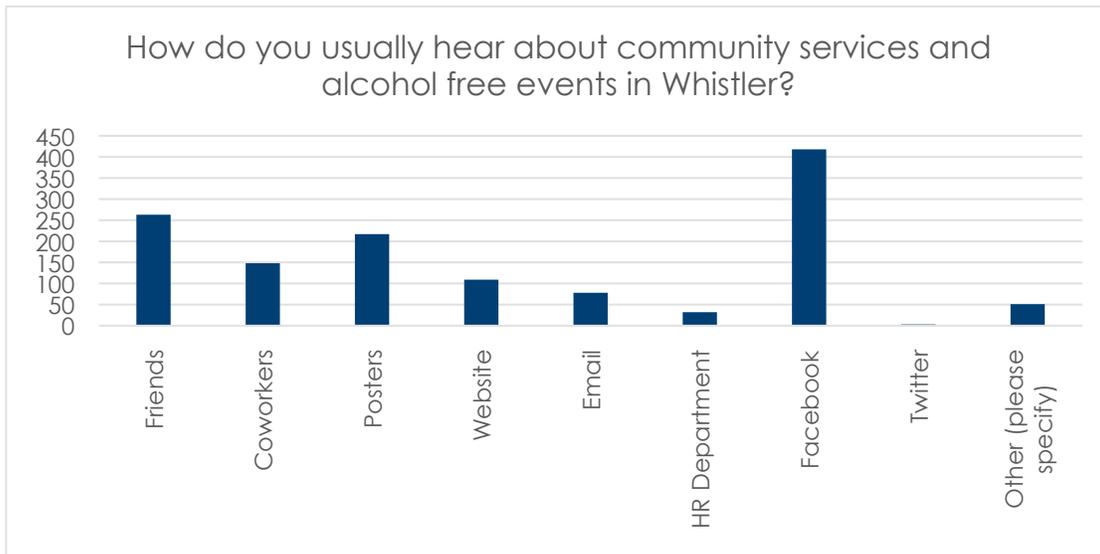
Respondents provided a number of suggestions for night time activities that they would like to see as alternatives to the bar scene in Whistler. The following word cloud in Figure 27 provides an overview of the most frequently used words from their responses. As in previous word clouds, the size of the word indicates the number of times the word was used in respondents' answers. Skiing, movies, outdoor and sports activities were the most popular choices.

Figure 27 Night time activities respondents would you like to see besides the bar scene



Respondents were asked how they heard about LUNA activities and community services in Whistler. Facebook and word of mouth were the most frequent means of learning about activities and services and Twitter and employment HR departments were the least frequently cited means of learning about events and services as noted in the chart in Figure 28. **The local newspaper the Pique was the most frequently cited other option for learning about services and events in Whistler.**

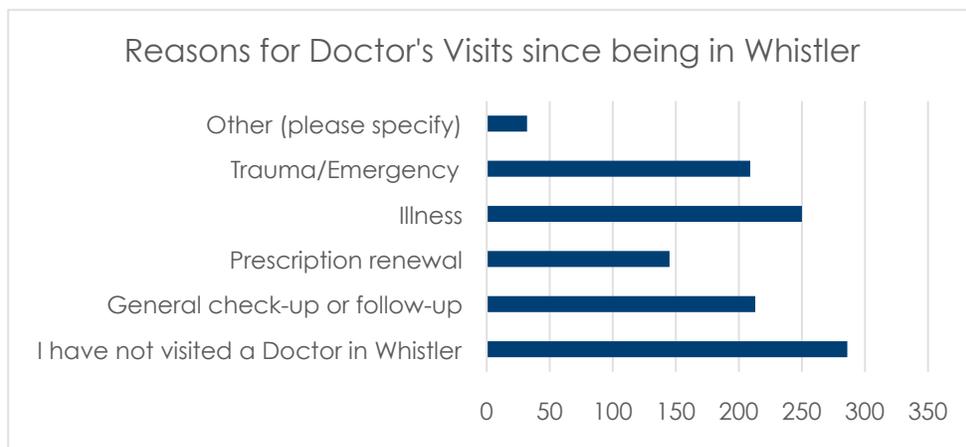
Figure 28 Respondent sources for learning about activities and services in Whistler



Health and Wellness

The following section of the report focuses on mental and physical health and wellness and stress levels of young adults in Whistler based on their self-report in the survey.

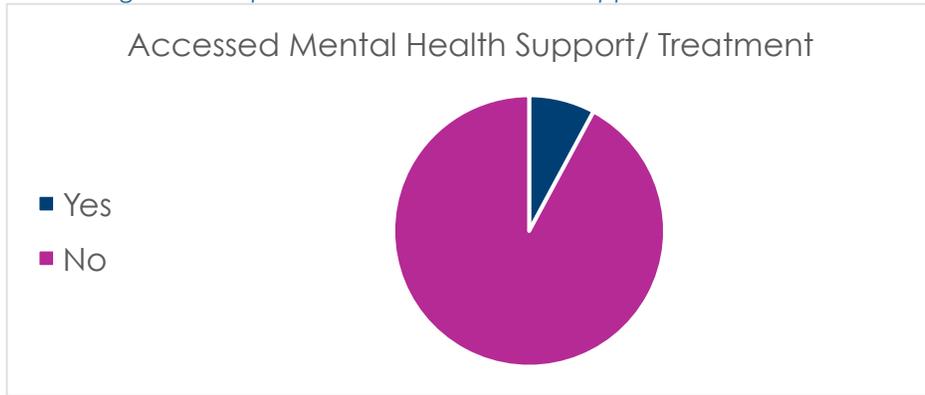
Figure 29 Respondents visits to doctor's in Whistler by reason for visit



Respondents were asked to identify all their reasons for visiting a doctor in Whistler. Just over **34%** of respondents had not visited a doctor during their stay in Whistler. The chart in Figure 29 provides a breakdown of the reasons individuals visited doctors in Whistler. The 'Other' category cited injuries that were mostly work or sports related.

Just a small portion of respondents (**8%**) indicated that they had accessed mental health support and or treatment while in Whistler.

Figure 30 Respondents access to mental support and treatment



The majority of respondents (**87%**) rated their mental health as excellent to good.

Figure 31 Respondent's mental health self-rating

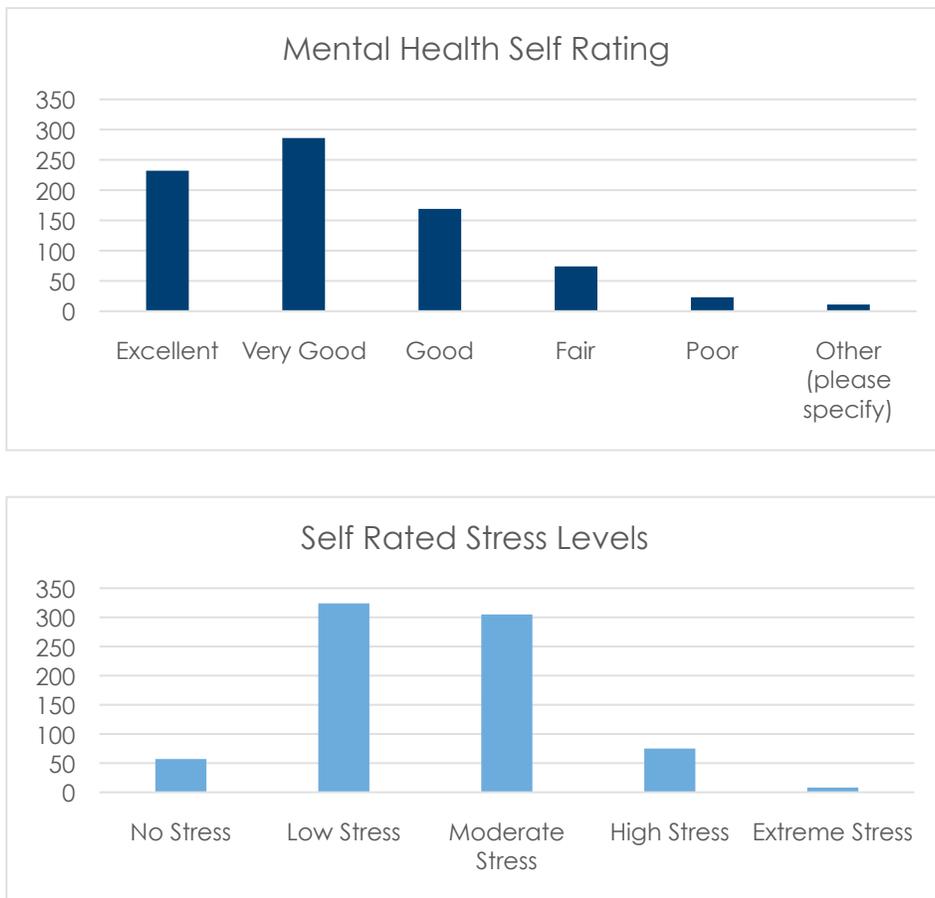


Figure 32 Overall stress level rating of respondents

The Opt Clinic provides a safe sexual health service for residents of Whistler to access. Only **33%** of the young adults in Whistler were familiar with this service according to the chart in Figure 32.

Figure 33 Respondents awareness of the OPT Clinic in Whistler

Awareness of Whistler Opt Clinic/ Former SAFE Clinic



Substance Use

Survey respondents were asked about their alcohol use during the time they have lived in Whistler. To ascertain the amount of alcohol consumed by young adults, respondents were asked to estimate how often they consume alcoholic beverages given options that ranged from “never” to “daily or almost daily” and to estimate the number of alcoholic beverages they consume in an average week. To answer the latter question, respondents were given response categories that varied from “I don’t drink” to “22 + drinks.”

When respondents were asked how often they consume alcoholic beverages, the most common response was “more than once a week but not daily,” which was selected by **44%** of survey respondents. As depicted in Chart 34, the majority of respondents indicated that they consumed either 3-7 drinks (**32.3%**) or 8-14 drinks (**23.4%**) in an average week. A little over **17%** of respondents indicated that their typical weekly alcohol consumption exceeded 15 drinks.

According to the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, Canada’s low –risk alcohol drinking guidelines limit men to three standard drinks per day and a maximum of fifteen per week and women to two standard drinks per day and a maximum of ten drinks per week. While the survey results indicate that at least **17%** of respondents are exceeding these drinking guidelines, under reporting of alcohol consumption is a well-known occurrence in health-related research. By using methods such as comparing self-reported alcohol consumption to alcohol sales or to biological indications of alcohol-related health problems, many public health researchers have estimated that alcohol consumption is under-reported by **40-50%**.

To further investigate the data obtained from the Whistler Young Adult Survey questions regarding alcohol use, the frequency of consumption and the number of drinks per week were cross-analyzed. It appears that some of the respondents who indicated that they are not exceeding the weekly maximum are, on some days, exceeding the daily recommended limit or binge drinking, defined as the consumption of five or more standard drinks on one occasion. For example, Chart 34a demonstrates that, among respondents who indicated that they drink once per week, **21%** consume more than eight drinks and **83%** consume over

three drinks. Similarly, Chart 34b demonstrates that, among those who drink more than once per week but not daily, **21%** consume over the weekly limit for the low-risk drinking guidelines.

Figure 34 Respondents number of drinks per week

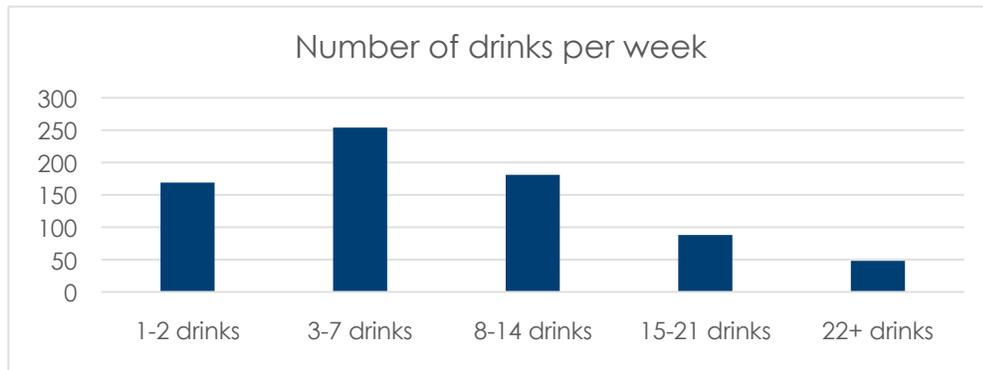
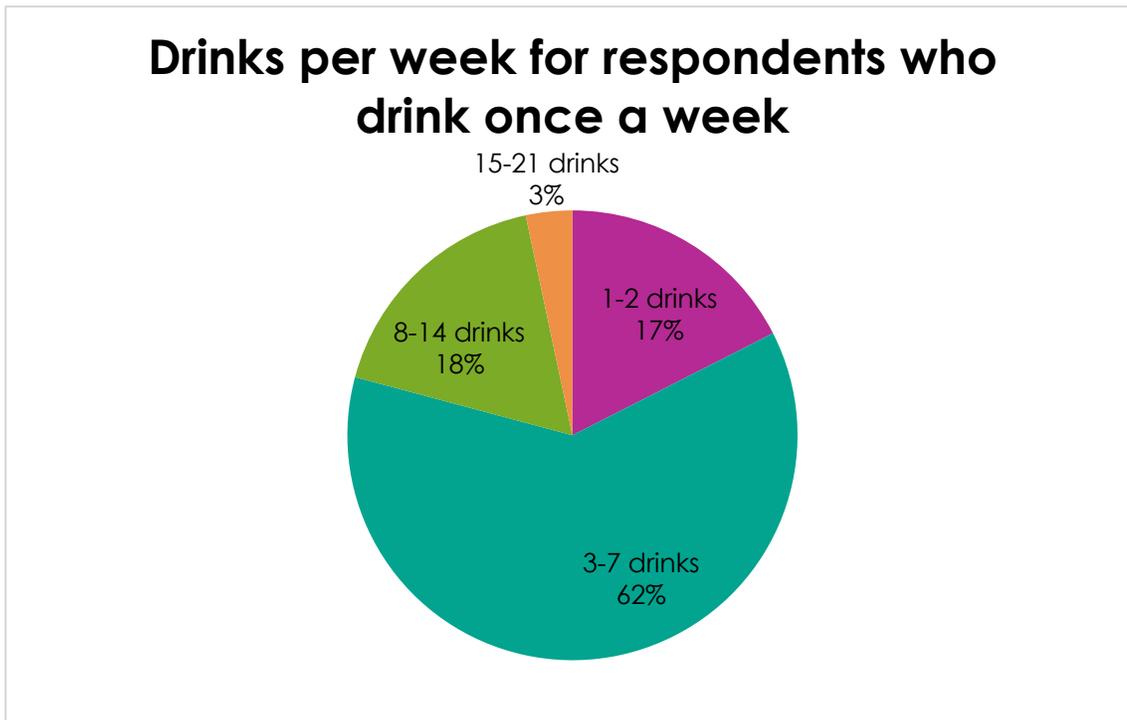
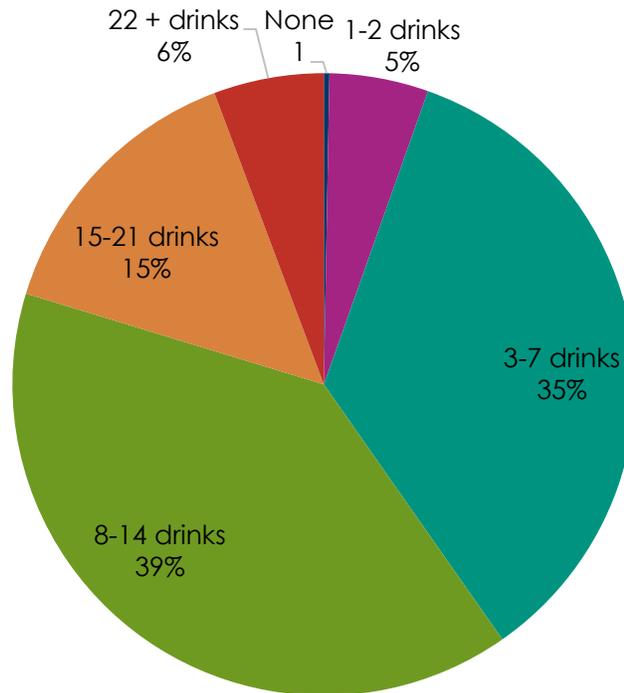


Figure 34a & 34b Drinks per week by consumption frequency



Drinks per week for respondents who drink more than once/wk but not daily



Survey respondents were also asked about the effects of their alcohol consumption on various aspects of their life, including their physical health. While **48%** of respondents did not indicate that alcohol impacted their health, the majority or **51%** identified that alcohol impacted their health at least sometimes (see Chart 35).

“Well of course to some degree alcohol and drugs negatively effect [sic] health but not to a noticeable degree” Survey Respondent

As indicated in Chart 35a, the responses for effects of alcohol on physical health track respondents' self-report of the amount of alcohol consumed per week, such that those who report drinking more per week are more likely to report that alcohol negatively affects their physical health. At an average weekly consumption of 8-14 drinks or more, respondents report that alcohol is *more likely than not* to negatively affect their physical health at least some of the time. The fact that almost half of respondents who reported an average weekly consumption of 3-7 drinks also reported that alcohol negatively affects their physical health at least some of the time suggest that there is either significant under-reporting on alcohol use or binge drinking occurring even at this moderate level of weekly alcohol consumption.

Figure 35 Impacts from alcohol to respondents' health.

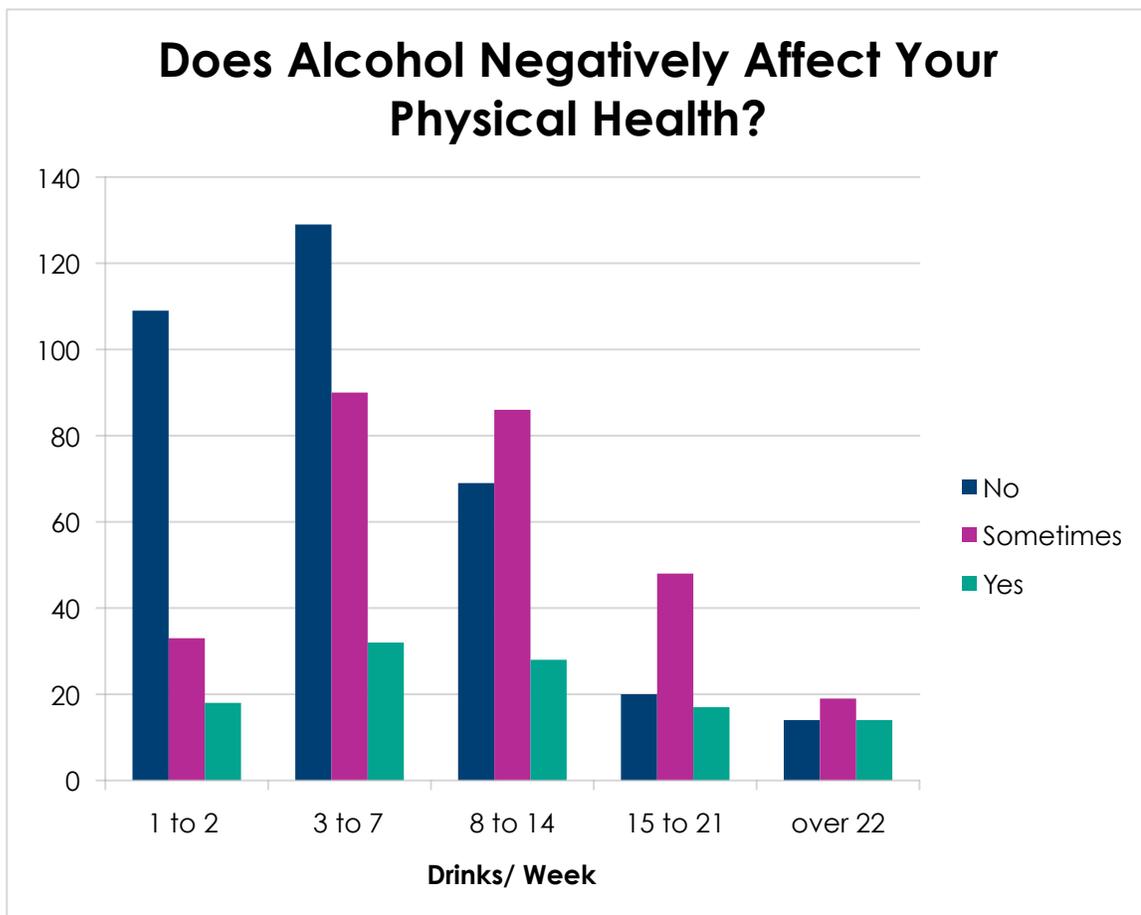
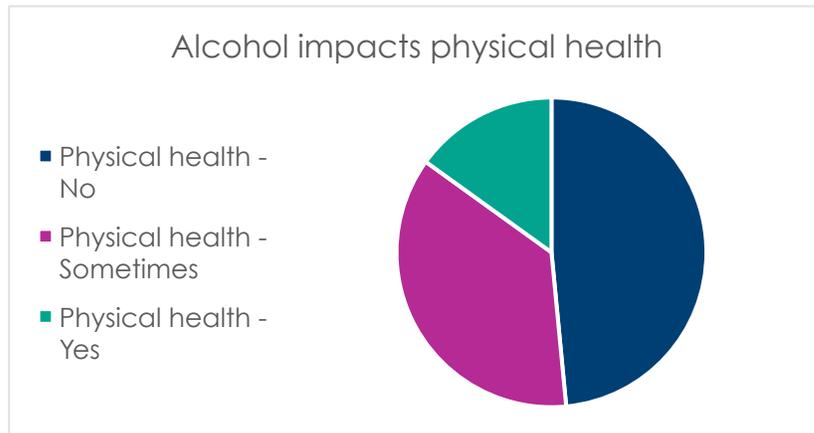
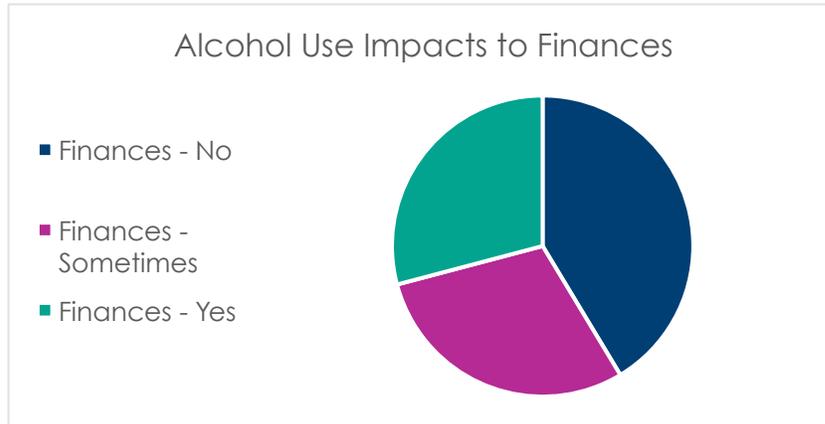


Figure 35a Effects of alcohol on physical health by drinks per week

“Apart from costing money and being hungover at work I suffer no side effects in my life.” Survey Respondents

Respondents identified that alcohol had more impact on their incomes with **71%** of respondents indicating that sometimes or more of the time alcohol has an impact on their incomes as shown in the chart in Figure 36.

Figure 36 Respondents financial impacts from alcohol use



“I don't use recreational drugs or smoke anymore I have lived in Whistler for 5 years and it is definitely part of the party scene and something i experimented and enjoyed in my first 2-3 years in Whistler.” Survey Respondent.

Regarding drug use, with the exception of marijuana, the majority of respondents reported that they never used drugs, including tobacco, as indicated in the charts below. Those respondents that did use the drugs identified in the survey questions described their use as between less than once a year to daily.

- **43%** of respondents reported never using marijuana
- **67%** of respondents reported never using tobacco
- **68%** respondents reported never using cocaine
- **71%** respondents never using MDMA

“I started smoking again once moved here due to stress levels of income. Catch 22” Survey Respondent

Figure 37 Respondent frequency tobacco use

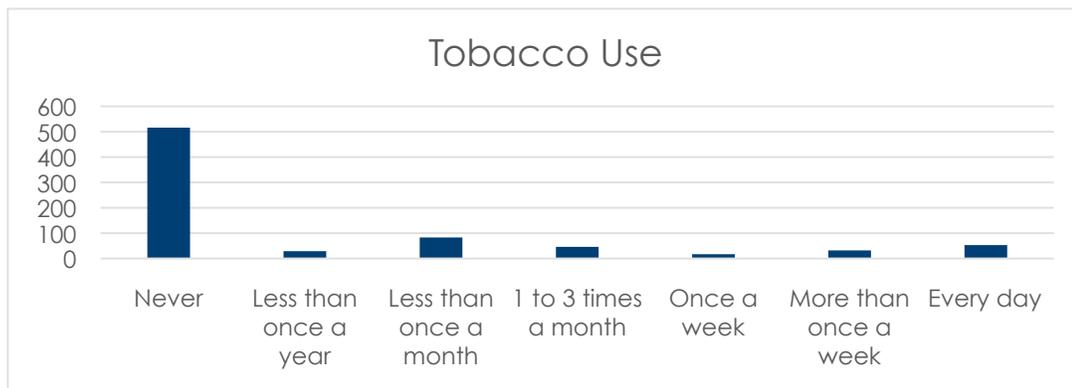


Figure 38 Respondent frequency cocaine use

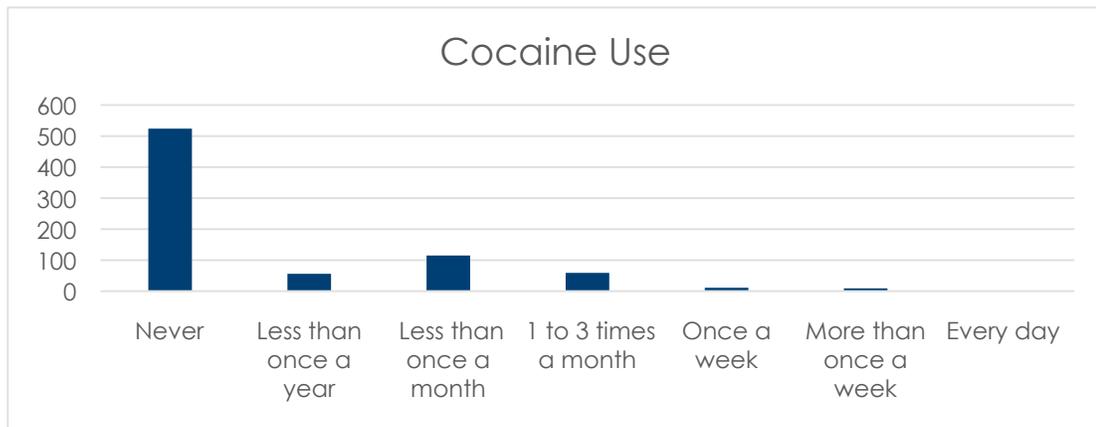


Figure 39 Respondent frequency marijuana use

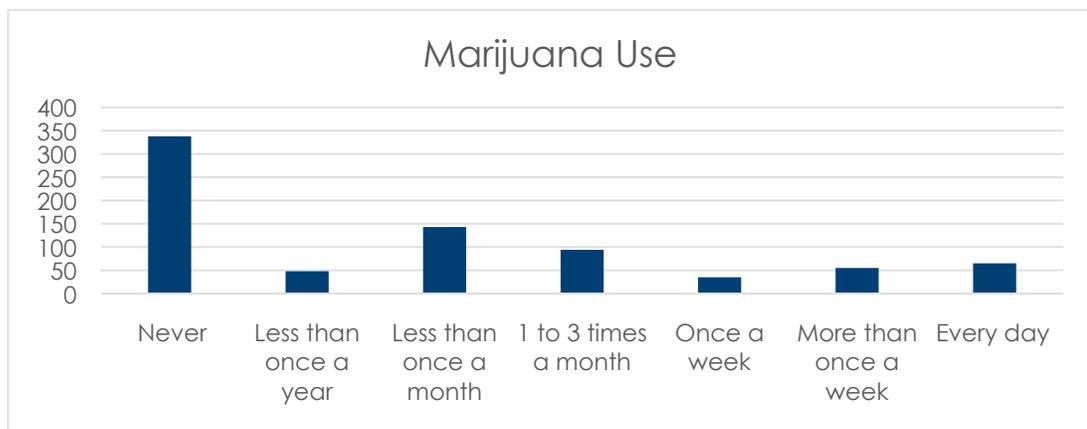


Figure 40 Frequency of respondents MDMA use

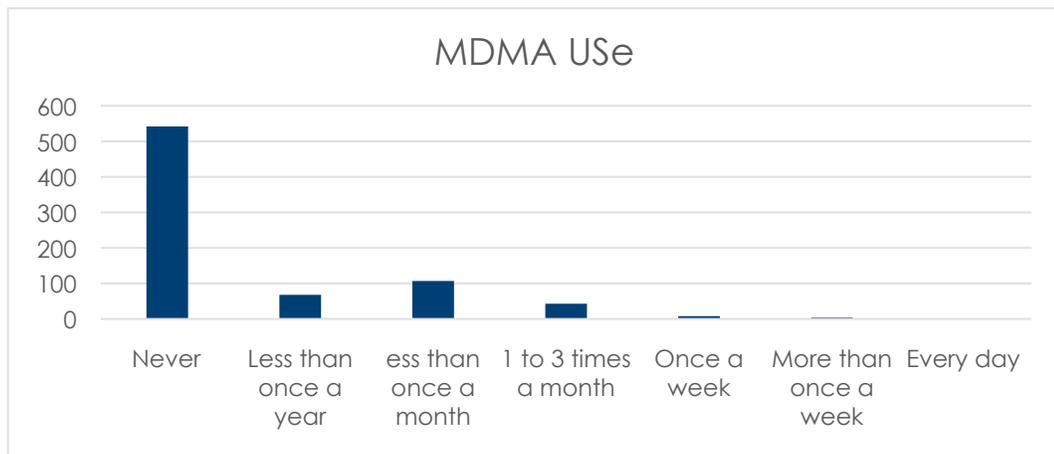


Figure 41 Impacts of drug use on respondent's health

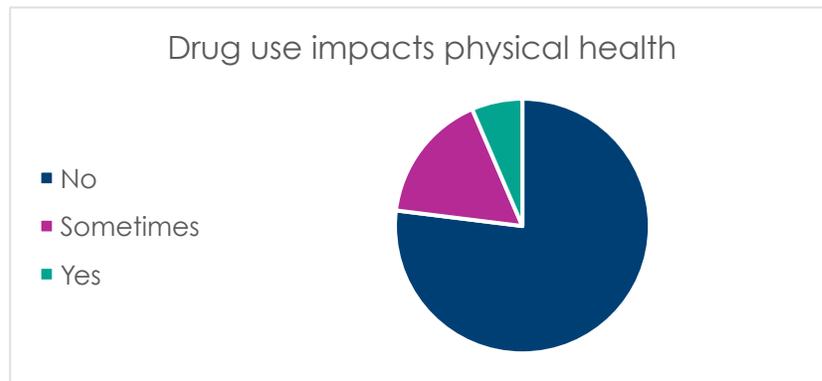
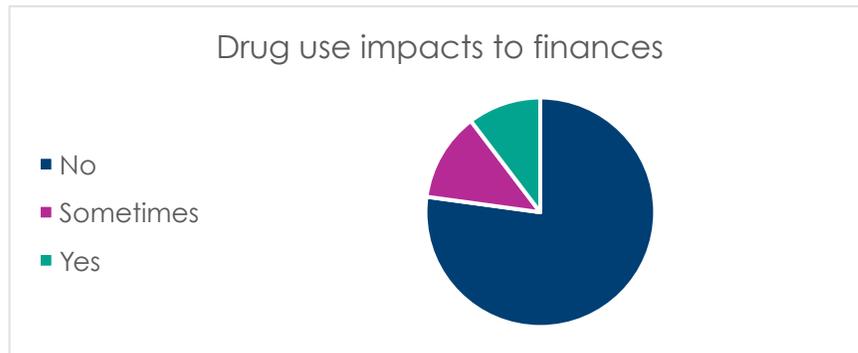


Figure 42 Impacts of drug use on respondents' finances



"It increased a lot when I first arrived, but now it has lessened to very rarely as my appreciation for this town and what it has to offer outside of partying has grown as each year." Survey Respondent

Respondents reported that their drug and alcohol use had changed during their stay in Whistler. Initially, as this respondent notes, their use increased and then decreased or leveled out the longer they stayed in the community.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Overall, the survey results indicate that young adults in Whistler have diverse backgrounds but share many common interests and concerns.

- They have a fairly high level of education, which is a protective factor that can decrease risky behavior.
- The results suggest that many young adults in Whistler are likely under employed relative to their education as jobs involving tourism predominate. Low wages

also mean long hours for some respondents, a fact evidenced by the fact that over one-third of respondents indicated that they work more than full time.

- The implication of the survey results is that many respondents feel that aspects of life in Whistler are worth working for, even if one has to work for lower pay and at a job for which they are over qualified. Indeed, the majority of respondents indicated that they find Whistler to be a good place to live.

Of most concern, is that well over half of respondents reported working at jobs that paid less than a living wage for Whistler in the winter. Since the living wage is calculated using the cost of living in a given area, it is clear that either increasing wages or finding ways to lower costs for local workers would improve the affordability of life in Whistler for many young adults.

When it comes to affordability, housing seems to be of major concern to Whistler's young adults. It is interesting that respondents reported being more satisfied with their dwelling situation than would be expected. For example, only **28** respondents indicated they were somewhat or very dissatisfied with their dwelling despite the fact that **264** indicated that they were somewhat or very concerned with the level of maintenance and repairs on their dwelling.

Substance use is a factor that is known to be under estimated in self-report surveys and so the amount of substance use reported by respondents is likely to be somewhat low. Alcohol is the substance most often consumed by respondents with approximately **42%** consuming enough alcohol to be at or above the limit for what is considered safe weekly consumption based on Canada's Low Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines (Included in Appendix 2). The survey questions did not directly address binge drinking; a behavior that should be more closely examined in future surveys.

The survey results clearly indicate that more outreach is needed to inform Whistler's young adults of the health and community services available them. Almost half of respondents were not really familiar with health and community services in Whistler, including LUNA alcohol free events.

Approximately half of the respondents reported moderate to extreme stress levels with more than half indicating some or a lot of stress related to their financial situation. The theme of low wages and high costs recurred throughout the survey findings.

Recommendations

1. Although not a large majority, there were enough young adults who appear to engage in binge drinking behavior to be a cause for concern. Ways to address binge drinking among Whistler's young adults include: providing alternatives to the bar scene, such as the RMOW's LUNA Program; incorporating some of the suggestions made by respondents for alternative night time activities into local

programming; educating individuals about Canada's safe drinking guidelines; and raising awareness about the health and safety risks of binge drinking.

2. Future surveys of young adults should focus on the issues of employment, housing and quality of life, so improvement in their ability to afford living in Whistler and the stress associated with financial issues can be monitored.
3. It is also important that future surveys focus on healthy substance use patterns, for example the current survey did not have a question that was specific to binge drinking. In addition, incorporating substance use questions that ensure validity of responses is essential for future surveys given the known concern around respondent under reporting substance use in the literature.
4. Low awareness of local sexual health services was concerning. An information campaign to raise awareness about local services such as the OPT Sexual Health Clinic would be beneficial, as this age demographic is at risk for unwanted pregnancies and STDs. Ensuring access to a hassle free clinic is an important community public health service.
5. Although providing recommendations for affordable housing is beyond the scope of this report, the survey results indicate that a more careful examination of the housing need and demand for this demographic would be beneficial based on the concerns identified by respondents.

Appendix

Appendix 1- Young Adult Survey

Appendix 2- Canada's Low Risk Alcohol Drinking Guideline

