



# 2017 Prevention Needs Assessment Survey

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# Executive Summary

This report describes the results of the 2017 *Communities that Care* (CTC) Youth Survey administered to public school students in grades 6-12 in the fall of 2017. The 2017 survey follows previous survey administrations in the spring of 2003, 2006 and the fall of 2013. Young adults 18-26 years old were surveyed in 2006 and in a separate survey for ages 19 – 30 in 2016.

Survey questions were designed to assess alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, and participation in antisocial behaviors. The survey also addressed risk factors and protective factors that influence delinquency, substance use and other antisocial behavior. Risk factors and protective factors are characteristics of communities, families, and schools which increase or decrease, respectively, the likelihood that youth will engage in substance use and antisocial behavior. Where possible, results from the 2017 CTC Youth Survey are compared with those from the 2013 Youth Survey. In addition, when applicable, results from the Whistler survey are compared with a large normative sample group.

## Recommendations

The results of the 2013 Youth Survey indicated that *recognition and opportunities for pro-social involvement* at home and at school were strengths for Whistler youth. *Belief in the Moral Order* was also found to be a protective factor among Whistler students. Results of the 2017 survey indicate that the percentage of Whistler students considered High Protection Youth, defined as those with three to four protective factors operating in their lives, is much greater than the percentage of High Protection Youth in the normative group. The number of Whistler students exhibiting protection is largely influenced by the availability of positive ways to spend their free time and the amount of time they spend doing enjoyable activities with their parents. The survey results indicate that helping students find positive ways in which to channel their time at home and at school will ensure that our youth continue to exhibit strengths on the protective factors measured in the CTC Youth Survey.

Results of the previous CTC Youth Survey, administered in 2013, indicated that priorities for substance use prevention were *alcohol and marijuana use* and *binge drinking*. Results of the most recent (2017) Youth Survey indicate that priorities for substance use are:

1. **alcohol use**, which should remain a priority for intervention efforts as recent (past 30-day) alcohol use decreased for Whistler students in the upper grades but increased among students in grades 8 and 9 and the rate of alcohol use among Whistler youth is approximately twice that of students in the normative group; and
2. **binge drinking**, a behavior that the results of the 2017 Youth Survey indicate has become less prevalent for all grades, except grades 9 and 12, but for which the rate among Whistler Youth Survey respondents is much greater than that of the normative group.

Among surveyed antisocial behaviors, the results of the 2013 Youth Survey had indicated that *being drunk or high at school* should be a priority because of its prevalence among upper grade students. *Attacking someone with intent to harm* was also determined to be a focus of prevention efforts - not because of prevalence but because of the serious nature of the behavior. Results of the 2017 survey indicate that:

1. **Being drunk or high at school** should remain a priority for prevention efforts as it continues to be a problem for upper grade students, especially those in grade 12.
2. **Depressive Symptoms reported by Grade 10s** are an area of concern. Parents and staff should be alert to symptoms in this cohort (now in Grade 11) and know where and how to get help. Currently MCFD is doing Intake Clinics for counseling services at Whistler Health Care Centre on Thursdays.
3. **Vape-ing** is an emerging issue with a lack of understanding amongst students on the long-term effects.

The 2013 Youth Survey data indicated that priorities for risk factors were *Parental Attitudes Favorable toward Alcohol*,



*Tobacco, and other Drug (ATOD) Use, Parental Attitudes Favorable towards Antisocial Behavior, and Peer Rewards for Antisocial Behavior.* Among Whistler students who completed the 2017 Youth Survey, improvement was noted on risk factors pertaining to parental attitudes that favour substance use and on parental attitudes that favour antisocial behavior. Results of the 2017 Youth Survey indicate that:

- 1. Peer Rewards for Antisocial Behavior** should remain a focus; and
- 2. Low Perceived Risk of Drug Use** should also be a priority for prevention efforts.

The latest Whistler Youth Survey results show how important family, school and community connection is to supporting the Protective Factors. While the Risk Factors have seen improvement in some cohorts, there has been growth in others. Alcohol use is still well above the normative group. CTCW will be looking into Drug and Alcohol resources surrounding the issues of Binge Drinking and Low Perceived Risk of Drug Use. With the legalization of cannabis in Canada, cannabis use will be an area that requires focus.



This report presents a brief summary of the Whistler Community Profile Report compiled from the 2017 administration of the Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA). Readers are strongly encouraged to examine the full Profile Report for more information and a better understanding of the data.

## Participants

The Whistler PNA included a survey of students in the Grades 6 - 12. A total of 461 surveys were found to be valid and honest. The male students totaled 54.1% of those surveyed and 45.9% were female. The Grade 6 students contributed 15.2% of the utilized surveys, the Grade 7 added 12.8%, the Grade 8 students contributed 20.2%, Grade 9 were responsible for 16.3%, Grade 10 contributed 12.1%, Grade 11 contributed 14.8%, and Grade 12 contributed 8.7%. These percentages are similarly proportioned to the 2013 Whistler study used for comparison in this report. (Although the 2017 results skew towards the younger grades in comparison to the 2013 results.)

Students who identified themselves as White contributed 72.6% of the surveys, Asian had 15.5%, Hispanic students contributed 2.2%, both African American or Black and Pacific Islander were represented by 0.9% of responses, and Multiracial students comprised 7.9% of those surveyed. No students identified as Native American or First Nation.

The survey overall had strong participation rates, with 461 completed forms out of 500 for a rate of 92.2%. Rates of 80.0% or higher result in confidence that the data reflect, with reasonable accuracy, the experiences of the population being assessed.

Please note that, due to the relatively small sample size when results are looked at by grade level, results that reflect the responses of five or fewer students are not included in this report. Excluding data that reflects the responses of fewer than five people is standard research protocol. Therefore, “reportable” results are those that reflect the responses of more than five students. Also, the terms “lifetime use” and “regular use” describe respondents’ experiences with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATODs). Throughout this report, the terms “experimental or lifetime use” refer to a respondent indicating that they have tried alcohol or other substances and “regular use” indicates a survey respondent has used alcohol or other substances in the past thirty days.

# Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use

## Alcohol - Lifetime and 30-day Use:

Experimentation with alcohol increases steadily in each grade, although the percentage of grades 6 and 7 youth experimenting with alcohol is too small to obtain a meaningful measure. Experimentation with alcohol becomes more prevalent in grade 8, with 36.9% of students reporting lifetime use of alcohol. The percentage of youth who report ever having used alcohol increases with grade level with 52.8% of grade 9, 73.2% of grade 10, 83.1% of grade 11, and 89.7% of grade 12 reporting that they have tried alcohol at least once in their lives. In general, compared to 2013 survey data, most scores for lifetime alcohol use declined.

One more thing to note when examining lifetime use is that even in grades where lifetime use decreased, the scores for Whistler are still higher than the Monitoring the Future (MTF) scores – a national survey of youth in the United States. Although Whistler’s overall lifetime use dropped from 59.5% in 2013 to 47.9%, it remains 6.0 points above MTF.

When looking at 30-day alcohol use among youth in the Whistler region, there was no reportable use of alcohol among grade 6 and 7 students. Comparing the 2013 and 2017 surveys, there was, however, an increase in alcohol use in the past 30 days among grade 8 and 9 students such that 30-day use for grade 8 rose from 11.1% to 16.7%, and use for grade 9 students rose from 19.4% to 37.5%. For the older grades, strong drop-offs in regular alcohol use were the rule with the 10th grade decreasing 14.4 points to 47.3%, Grade 11 decreasing by 15.2 points to 60.3%, and the 12th grade score of 61.5% falling 9.5 points below 2013. Overall, 30-day alcohol use was down by 7.2 points thanks to the significant decreases among the older Whistler students.

As mentioned above, referential norms for the results of the survey administered to Whistler youth are provided by the Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey that is administered to approximately 50,000 U.S. students in grades 8, 10, and 12. When comparing 30-day alcohol use for Whistler students in grades 8, 10, and 12 with those of students who took the MTF survey, the past-month drinking rate for Whistler students is roughly double the norms depicted in the MTF survey.

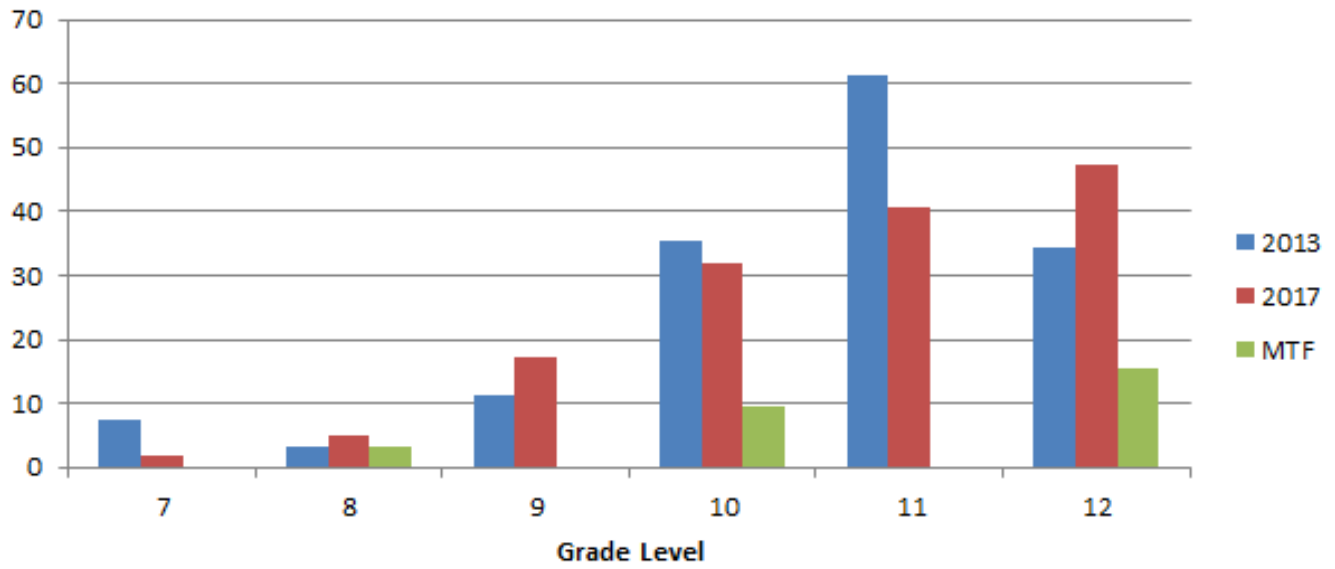
## Alcohol - Binge Drinking:

Among grades that had a reportable percentage of binge drinking, the rate of binge drinking decreased between the 2013 and 2017 survey administrations for all grades except grades 9 and 12. An interesting result was that past-month alcohol use by 12th graders decreased between the 2013 and 2017 surveys, but binge drinking went up by 12.8 percentage points. Overall, however, binge drinking dropped by 5.7 points from 23.8% in 2013 to 18.1% in the latest survey. This still leaves Whistler at nearly double the average rate, as set by the MTF survey, for having five or more alcoholic drinks at a time.

Binge drinking is frequently associated with parties, where kids feel extra social pressure to drink more than they might usually to impress their friends. When asked “If you drank alcohol in the past year, how did you get it?” 85.0% of 12th graders said they got it at a party. Working with parents to monitor parties and ask their kids whether alcohol will be present could help to lessen some of this more dangerous drinking activity.



# Binge Drinking



## Cigarettes and chewing tobacco:

While some students in Whistler have tried cigarettes, very few have picked up the habit. In fact, no students in grades 6 through 8 reported using cigarettes in the month prior to the survey, overall use was down 1.8 points to 15.8% (2.4 points below MTF), and only one grade – 11 – saw a rise in the number of students who reported using cigarettes in the past 30 days. Older high school students are more likely to have experimented with cigarettes with 32.7% of grade 10 students, 35.5% of grade 11, and 44.7% of grade 12 having tried cigarettes in their lifetime. Among grades 9 and 10, cigarette use in the past 30 days slightly decreased and regular cigarette use by grade 12 students fell to just 7.9%, placing it solidly below the MTF's 10.5% for other students the same age.

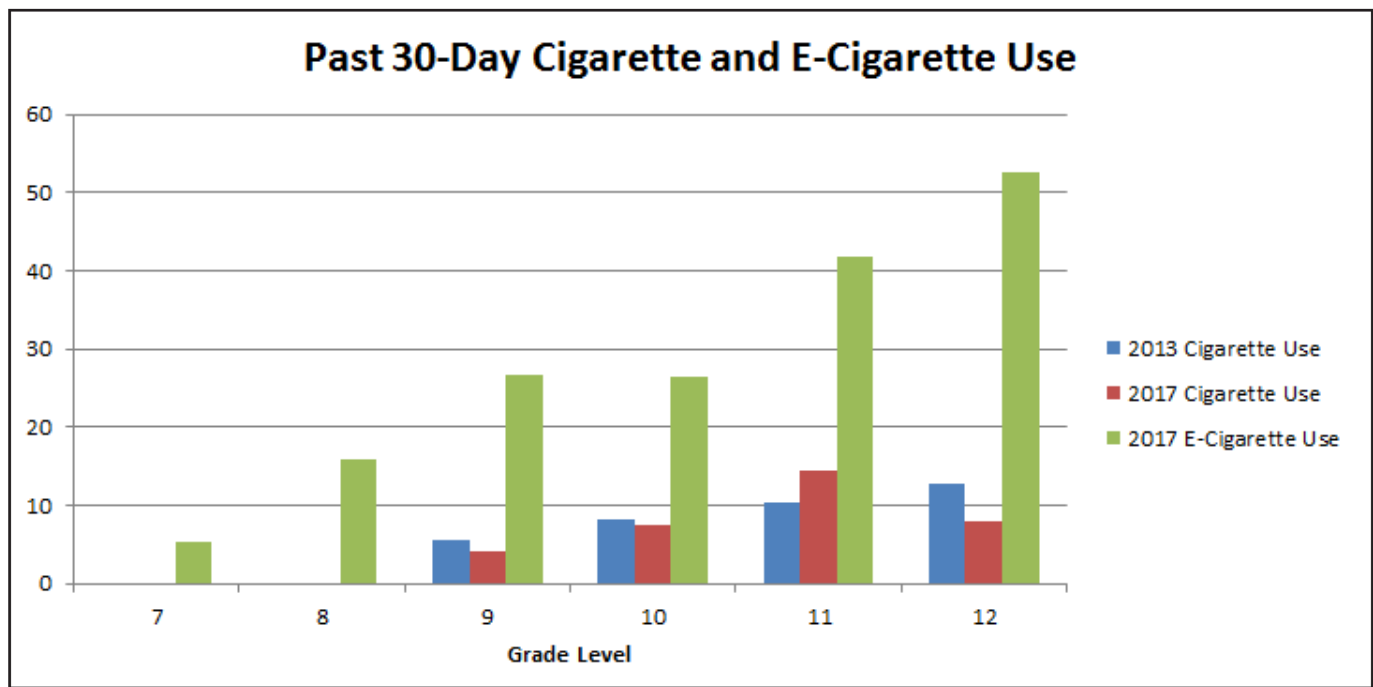
Only 2.3% of Whistler survey respondents indicated that they had used chewing tobacco in the past 30 days. In comparison, 4.1% of MTF survey respondents reported recent use of chewing tobacco.

## E-Cigarettes:

A decrease in cigarette use may be cause to celebrate, but data show it's extremely likely that much of this behavior has been replaced by vaping instead. The 2017 PNA is the first iteration of the survey to measure e-cigarette use, so there is no earlier data to compare with the current numbers. However, the survey data indicates that e-cigarettes and vaping are more popular than cigarettes among young people in Whistler, BC. Use of e-cigarettes increases with grade level as more than a third (35.6%) of grade 9 students and nearly three quarters (74.4%) of grade 12 students reported having used some kind of electronic cigarette or vaping device.

No grade 6 students reported vaping regularly, but 15.9% of grade 8 students, who did not use cigarettes regularly at all, reporting using vaping products in the past month. For the older teens, some of whom who do smoke regularly, vaping is a preferred choice with more than six times as many grade 9 (26.8%) vaping than smoking cigarettes, three-and-a-half times as many grade 10 (26.4%), close to three times as many grade 11s (41.9%), and almost seven times as many grade 12s (52.6%) who would rather use e-cigarettes than their paper predecessors.

The finding that both alcohol and e-cigarettes have a greater than 50.0% 30-day use rate by Whistler grade 12s makes use of these two substances more common than not among this age group in the Whistler community.



## Marijuana:

In many previous surveys in other parts of the United States and Canada, marijuana has been the second-most used drug among young people. With the advent of measuring e-cigarette use, the survey results indicate that marijuana use is less prevalent than vaping among Whistler youth.

Among grades 6 and 7 there was no lifetime or 30-day use of marijuana. Lifetime use for grade 10s fell from 44.7% in 2013 to 25.5% in 2017. Grade 11 also experienced a drop of 5.8 points in the rate of students trying marijuana. While 6.0% of grade 8s reported having ever tried marijuana, the rate at which grade 8s in Whistler experiment with marijuana is less than half that of the grade 8 youth who completed the Monitoring the Future survey (12.8%). The only grade for which there was a significant increase in lifetime use of marijuana was grade 12, where the rate of lifetime use of marijuana jumped from 51.6% in 2013 to 74.4% in the most recent survey.

Two grades, 9 and 12, had increases in 30-day use. When examining reasons for this increased marijuana use, it may be helpful to focus on student attitudes and the influence of peer pressure. Only 1.4% of grade 6s felt there was at least “some chance” they would be seen as cool if they started using marijuana, and that likely played a role in the absence of marijuana use among those students. Older students held a different view with 37.6% of grade 8s, 53.6% of grade 9s, 54.5% of grade 10s, 47.0% of grade 11s, and 70.7% of grade 12s thinking they stood at least “some chance” of impressing their friends by choosing to use marijuana. Combating the perception that marijuana facilitates social acceptance is one way to decrease the attractiveness of this behavior and in turn lessen its use.

## Hallucinogens:

Mind-altering substances like mushrooms and LSD usually only enjoy slight popularity among younger teens often due to limited availability and the fact that they are more likely to be experimented with after first using other drugs. Lifetime hallucinogen use was up from none in the grade 9 in 2013 to 6.8% in the most recent survey. Grade 11 saw a small increase in the number of students trying hallucinogens. In the 2013 survey, only one Whistler grade 12 student reported ever trying a hallucinogen but, among grade 12 respondents of the 2017 survey, one in five reported experimenting with a hallucinogenic drug. The most notable survey results for recent use of a hallucinogen was for grade 11s, of whom 9.7% reported using a hallucinogen in the past 30 days. It may be worth a closer look into which of these hallucinogenic substances are being used by Whistler youth and where young people are obtaining them. When asked how difficult it would be to get a drug like cocaine, LSD, or amphetamines 13.0% of grade 9s, 13.4% of grade 10s, 25.5% of grade 11s, and 44.4% of grade 12 said it would be “sort of easy” or “very easy” for them to get some.

## Other Drugs:

There was no reportable lifetime use of other drugs, including cocaine, heroin, amphetamines, methamphetamine, sedatives, tranquilizers, and ecstasy among Whistler students in grades 6 through 10. Grade 11, however, experienced a hike in lifetime use of several substances with increases in cocaine, amphetamines, tranquilizers, ecstasy, and “other narcotics”. Among grade 11 respondents, lifetime use rates were 9.4% for cocaine, 14.1% for amphetamines, 7.8% for sedatives, 9.4% for tranquilizers, 10.9% for ecstasy, and 14.1% for “other narcotics”. Grade 12 survey respondents indicated increased lifetime use of cocaine and ecstasy. Among grade 12 students, the use of cocaine (15.4%) and ecstasy (28.2%) by respondents to the 2017 Whistler survey was much greater than the use of these substances reported by MTF survey respondents, among whom 3.7% reported lifetime use of cocaine and 4.9% reported lifetime use of ecstasy.

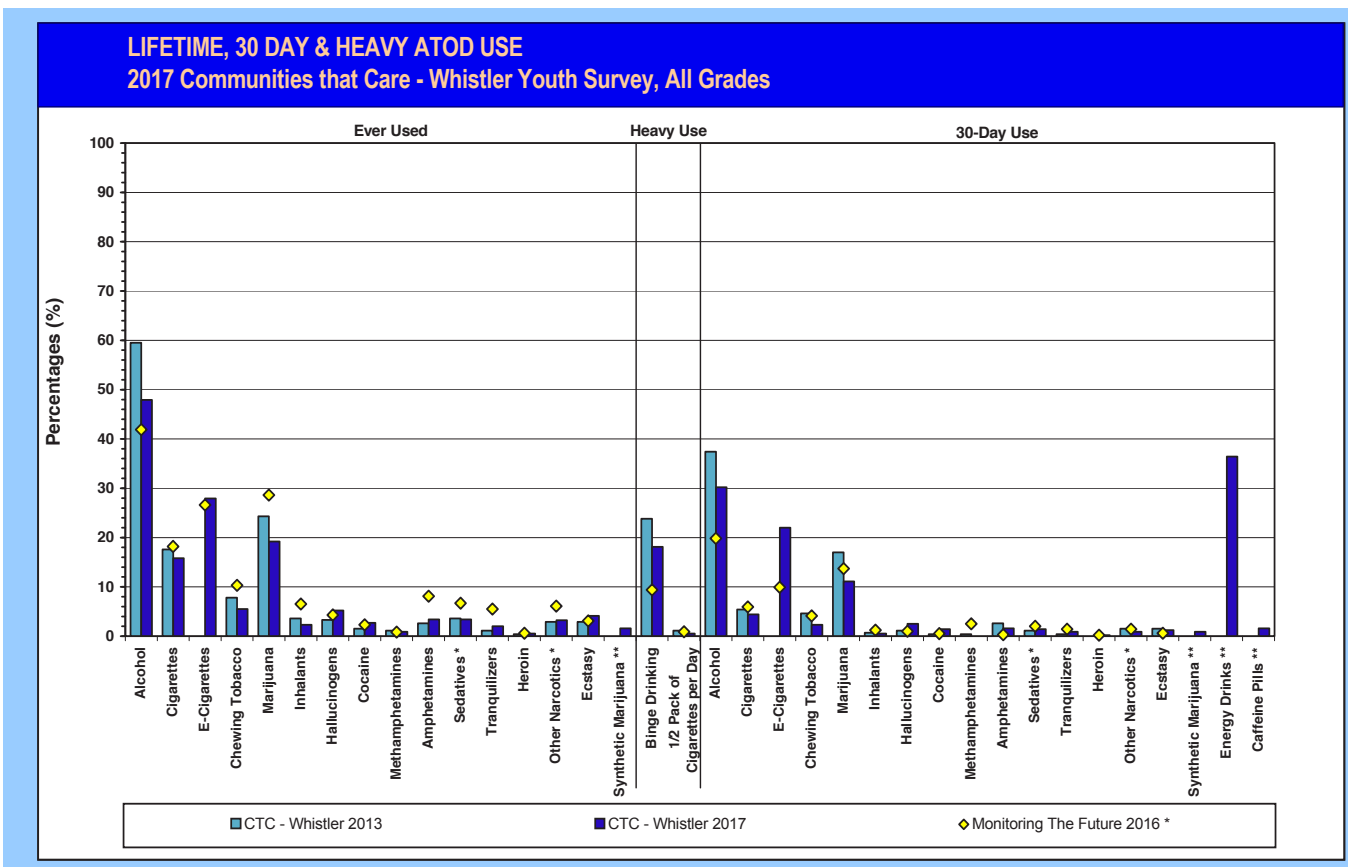
Only in grade 11 did these upward trends in experimenting with other drugs translate into a pattern of more regular use with 7.9% of grade 11s reporting use of cocaine within the past 30 days. In the 12th grade, where students reported a great deal of experimental use, there was no reportable use of these drugs in the past 30 days.





## Energy Drinks:

Energy drinks reach their peak popularity in the 8th grade in Whistler, where 48.8% of students say they consume them regularly (lifetime use for energy drinks is not measured.) They are only slightly less popular among older students from 34.0% in the 10th grade to 45.2% in the 9th grade. Younger students were less likely to drink energy drinks with only 20.3% of 7th graders and 18.8% of 6th graders using them in the past month. These beverages are mostly unregulated and contain high amounts of caffeine and other stimulants. It is worthwhile to examine their use among youth, who according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, should not consume energy drinks because they are linked to harmful effects in children’s developing neurological and cardiovascular systems. Warnings on the labels for these beverages themselves describe them as “not for children.” However, it is important to note that survey respondents might have confused sports drinks and energy drinks and so these numbers might not reflect the exposure of Whistler youth to caffeinated beverages.



\* MTF only surveys grades 8, 10, and 12. Sedatives and Other Narcotics are 2014 values.  
 \*\* MTF does not collect data on those substances.

## Antisocial Behaviour

In all but a few cases, antisocial behaviours in Whistler BC are reported at rates significantly below the Bach-Harrison Norm (BH Norm), which is derived from the aforementioned MTF survey, an aggregate of eight statewide surveys and five large regional surveys representing youth across the United States.

There were no reportable antisocial behaviors among Whistler survey respondents in grades 6 through 9. The statistic that stands out among antisocial behaviours measured by the Whistler survey is the percentage of students in grades 10, 11 and 12 who reported being high or drunk at school. The percentage of students in grade 10 (14.5%) and grade 11 (19.4%) who indicated they have been high or drunk at school are close to the BH norms for these grades (14.7 and 19.7, respectively). However, the percentage of students in grade 12 (40%) who reported being high or drunk at school significantly exceeds the BH norm on this question for grade 12 students (17.3%).

### Suspended from School

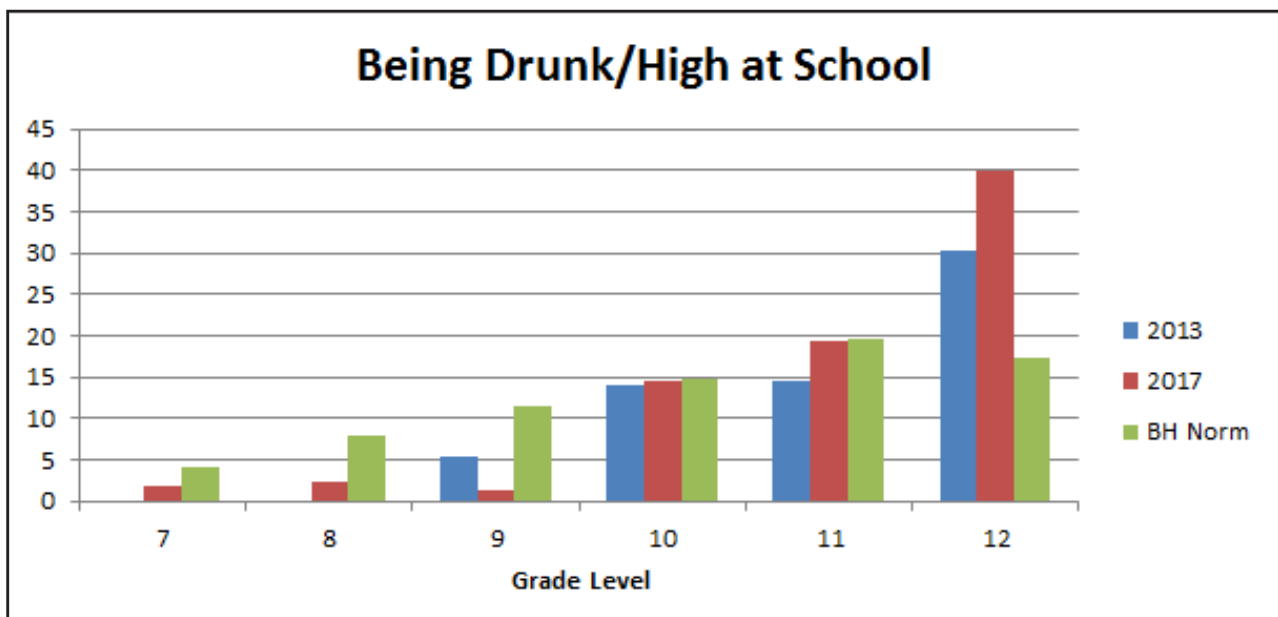
The overall rate of school suspension for Whistler was 3.8% (7.3 points below the BH Norm), with the highest rate belonging to grade 11 at 7.4% (5.4 points higher than 2013, 6.8 points below the BH Norm.)

### Selling Illegal Drugs

A rise in the selling of illegal drugs typically accompanies a rise in drug use, and Whistler is no exception. Most of these gains occurred in grades 11 and 12, with grade 11 more than doubling its 2013 rate to 8.8%, and grade 12 rising from 3.1% to 10.3%. Students seem to be noticing the prevalence of this activity among their friends; when asked, “In the past year, how many of your four best friends have sold illegal drugs?”, 16.6% of grade 11 said at least one of their friends did, and 21.1% of grade 12s said the same. Curbing drug use in Whistler will also hinge on making these substances less accessible and making the students who are selling drugs aware of the potential harm they are causing their friends and classmates and the legal consequences of their actions.

### Gambling

Instances of gambling in Whistler were relatively low with no scores for any grade approaching the BH Norm, and most were much lower. Overall, about a quarter of students said they had participated in gambling activities in the past year, the most popular being: betting on sports (10.3%), playing the lottery (9.3%), and betting on cards (7.8%). Grade 12 had the highest scores with 37.8% of students gambling in some form in the 12 months prior to the survey.



## Risk Factors

Across all grades that took the PNA survey, this administration of the survey saw eleven factors for which Whistler students indicated less risk than was indicated by 2013 respondents and nine factors for which the level of indicated risk either increased or remained the same. Whistler exhibited more risk than the BH norm in three areas: “Parent Attitudes Favor Drug Use,” “Perceived Risk of Drug Use,” and “Rewards for Antisocial Behavior.” Grade 12 had the most students score as “high risk,” meaning they have seven or more of the risk factors from the report operating in their lives. Students in grade 12 also scored as the most at risk in all scales but three: “Interaction with Antisocial Peers” in which grade 11 had the highest score with 30.3%, “Depressive Symptoms” where grade 10 had 46.2%, and “Gang Involvement” in which grade 11 scored 9.1%.

### Community Domain:

Both scales in this domain deal with attitudes toward drug use. Across grades 6 through 9, Whistler survey respondents indicated less risk than did respondents who comprise the BH norm. For the risk factor “laws and norms favor drug use” grade 11 Whistler respondents scored 8 points more than the BH norm while Whistler grade 12 respondents indicated more risk on this factor - by 18.6 points - when compared to the BH norm. Whistler respondents in grade 12 also were more likely to indicate a perceived availability of drugs (7.6% more than BH norm).

The reason for these higher scores can be seen by examining students’ perception of the permissiveness of adults in their neighborhood towards substance abuse – especially toward alcohol. When asked how wrong they thought other adults felt it would be for them to drink alcohol, 71.2% of grade 11s said they would only think it was “A little bit wrong” or “Not wrong at all.” A total of 72.9% of grade 12s said the same with 35.1% of them siding with “Not wrong at all.” Curbing underage drinking will have to involve more than just teens’ parents, but the entire community, making young people aware that drinking and other drug use are not something to be permitted or simply dismissed.

### Family Domain:

Conflict in the home, a lack of clear rules governing substance abuse and antisocial behaviour, and older siblings setting less-than-positive examples can all contribute to a teen’s participating in negative behaviors. In this domain, all of the grade 12’s scores exceeded the BH Norm; in addition, all scores represented a majority – in some cases a strong majority – of these students being at risk in this particular area.

Compared to students who comprise the BH norm, grade 6 Whistler survey respondents indicated less risk on all factors. For grade 6 students, “poor family management” was the area with the highest percentage of at-risk students at 43.3%. Whistler grade 7 students also indicated less risk than students in the BH norm cohort on 5 of 6 risk factors. “Exposure to adult antisocial behaviour” is the risk factor which the largest percentage (46.2%) of Whistler grade 7s indicated risk. Whistler grade 8 students indicated significantly more risk than students who comprise the BH norm group by 6 percentage points on the risk factor “sibling drug use” and by 17.6 percentage points on the risk factor “parent attitudes favor drug use.” From grades 9 through 12 Whistler survey respondents indicated more risk on the “parent attitudes favor drug use” factor than those who comprise the BH norm with the difference in percentage points ranging from 12.3% for grade 11s to 38.1% for grade 12s. While the discrepancy between the “parent attitudes favor drug use” risk factor scores for Whistler students and those for students who took the BH norm are large, the questions that comprise the factor pertain to alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana. It is important to note that the legal drinking age in British Columbia is 19 while the age in U.S. states is 21 so many of the Whistler grade 12 students are approaching legal drinking age.

When the 2013 and 2017 PNA surveys of Whistler students are compared, the percentage of students indicating risk decreased for “exposure to adult antisocial behavior” in grades 6, 8, 10, and 11; for “parent attitudes favor antisocial behavior” in grades 6, 9, 10, 11, and even 12; and for “parent attitudes favor drug use” in grades 7, 9, 10, and 11.



## School Domain:

Data in the 2017 Whistler study paint a picture where “academic failure” is low overall and on the decline in most grades, but the 12th grade has seen a steep rise in the number of youth scoring as at-risk on this scale. The 12th grade score of 37.5% in 2013 – which fell below the BH Norm – has increased to 61.1% putting it 23.6 points higher than the average. The 12th grade also had the highest score for “low commitment to school,” though at 42.5% this scale was consistent with the BH Norm. Despite the increased risk measured in the 12th grade, overall this domain remained below the BH Norm by at least 5.0 points in both scales.

## Peer-Individual Domain:

The Peer-Individual domain uses ten separate scales to construct a picture of how student introduction to delinquency and association with friends who use drugs and engage in problem behaviours puts them at risk of engaging in those same types of actions in the future. When looking at this picture, it is hard to miss one scale where all but one grade scored higher (more at risk) than the BH Norm: “Perceived Risk of Drug Use.” This scale was the highest or second-highest in all but grade 11, with scores of 54.5% in grade 6, 67.3% in grade 7, 56.3% in grade 8, 58.0% in grade 9, 67.9% in grade 10, and 75.0% of grade 12s. Risk in this scale was also on the rise overall from 52.5% in 2013 to 58.8% in 2017 (13.2 points higher than the BH Norm of 45.6.) When students don’t believe they will suffer any physical harm or consequences if they take ATODs, then they are much more likely to do so.

Not all substances are viewed as equally dangerous by Whistler youth. According to the crosstab results, only 11.5% of students said there was “No risk” or only a “Slight risk” from smoking one or more packs of cigarettes a day, but 68.3% said trying marijuana once or twice put them at a similarly low level of risk, although that number diminishes to 26.5% of students believing that regular marijuana use poses the same lack of adverse effects. Similarly, 25.0% of kids surveyed believed regular, daily alcohol use was likely to do them minimal harm, and this actually increased to 30.7% when asked to assess the dangers of binge drinking. Altering students’ perception that ATODs, particularly alcohol and marijuana, are safe and consequence-free will be necessary in any attempt to persuade young people in Whistler to avoid their use.

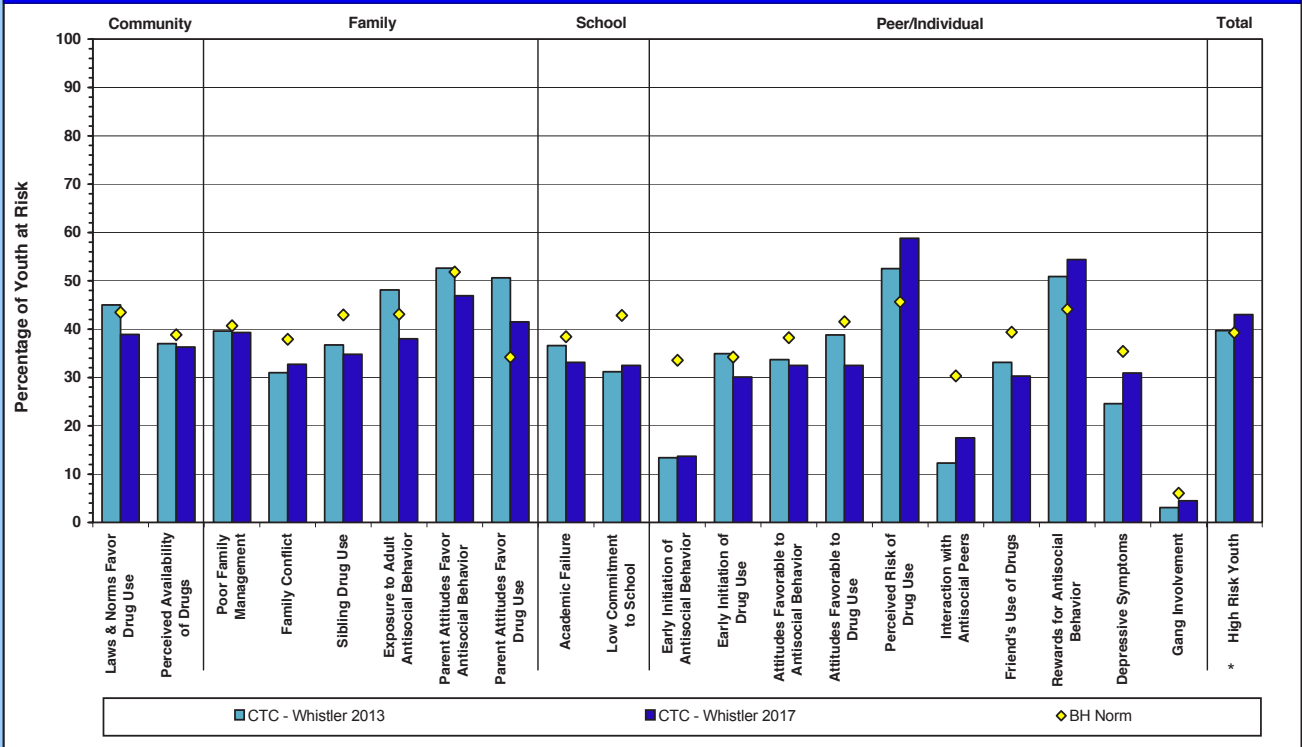
For the risk factor, “rewards for antisocial behavior” scores for Whistler respondents in grades 8 - 12 were higher than risk scores for students who comprise the BH norm with a high score of 80.0% in grade 12 (28.5 points above the BH Norm.) It was the only other scale in which Whistler’s overall marks were higher than the national average as well. This risk factor measures “looking cool” for engaging in activities such as smoking cigarettes and marijuana and drinking alcohol. It is interesting, but not surprising, that there is a jump in the percentage of students who demonstrate risk on this factor between the primary school and secondary school grades.

In the younger grades, nearly all risk scale scores had increased demonstrably over those from 2013; some of the largest jumps being “Friends’ Use of Drugs” in grade 6 from 0.0% to 15.9%, “Perceived Risk of Drug Use” in grade 7 from 29.6% to 67.3%, and “Rewards for Antisocial Behavior” in grade 8 from 34.4% in 2013 to 56.2% in the most recent survey.



## RISK PROFILE

### 2017 Communities that Care - Whistler Youth Survey, All Grades



\* High Risk Youth are defined as the percentage of students who have more than a specified number of risk factors operating in their lives. (6th grade: 5 or more risk factors, 7th-9th grades: 6 or more factors, 10th-12th grades: 7 or more factors)

## Protective Factors

The percentage of High Protection Youth (students having 3 or more protective factors operating in their lives in grades 6 and 7, and 4 or more in grades 8 - 12) in all grades exceeded that of the BH Norm, with Whistler's overall score of 74.6% being 28.5 points higher than average. Protection scores increased in 45.4% of all scales across all grades, with the Community Domain seeing the most progress at 57.1% of its scores moving in a positive direction. The Family Domain was a close second at 52.3%. Younger students in grades 6 and 7 exhibited the most protection, which is typical, but a large majority of older students' scores showed protection rates of over 50.0%.

### Community Domain:

The sole scale for this domain, "Rewards for Prosocial Involvement," measures recognition and encouragement for youth by their neighbors. From 2013 to 2017, the percentage of respondents with this protective factor increased for some grades and decreased for others. Grade 7 showed the most improvement at 49.1% - a gain of 14.6 points and grade 12 saw an increase of 12.1 points to 50%. Grade 8 also had a majority of students receiving protection from this scale at 50.6%. Grades 6 (46.2%) and 9 (39.7%) fell below 50.0% from their higher scores in the 2013 survey.

### Family Domain:

A strong point of protection for young people in Whistler is that the Family Domain continues to exhibit scores of over 50.0% in a majority of scales, many of these improving over 2013's Prevention Needs Assessment. The highest score belonged to grade 9s in the "Rewards for Prosocial Involvement" scale at 80.0%. This scale measures the degree to which the survey respondents enjoy spending time with their parents and how much positive recognition they receive from their parents. The high scores for Whistler students is not surprising given that Whistler families are generally active and engage in many outdoor and sporting activities.

Overall, Whistler scored 74.5% in "Family Attachment" (18.1 points over BH Norm), 73.9% in "Opportunity for Prosocial Involvement" (15.8 points over BH Norm), and 67.8% in "Rewards for Prosocial Involvement" (15.4 points over BH Norm). Positive family bonds and open communication at home can provide a good place for prevention efforts to begin; working to ameliorate the risk factors discussed earlier in the Family Domain should have increased effectiveness because of these relationships.

### School Domain:

Students in Whistler see school as a place with a variety of fun activities where they receive praise and positive reinforcement. When this is the case, it can provide motivation for teens to become good citizens of their school rather than engage in antisocial behaviors. The younger grades had the highest scores in both scales with over 80.0% in "Opportunity for Prosocial Involvement" for grades 6 (85.7%) and 7 (86.4%) and over 70.0% in "Rewards for Prosocial Involvement" (grade 6 - 71.2%, grade 7 - 84.7%). Older students in grades 11 and 12 experienced a drop in both protection factors for this domain. Nevertheless, these scores still outpace the BH Norm by several points.

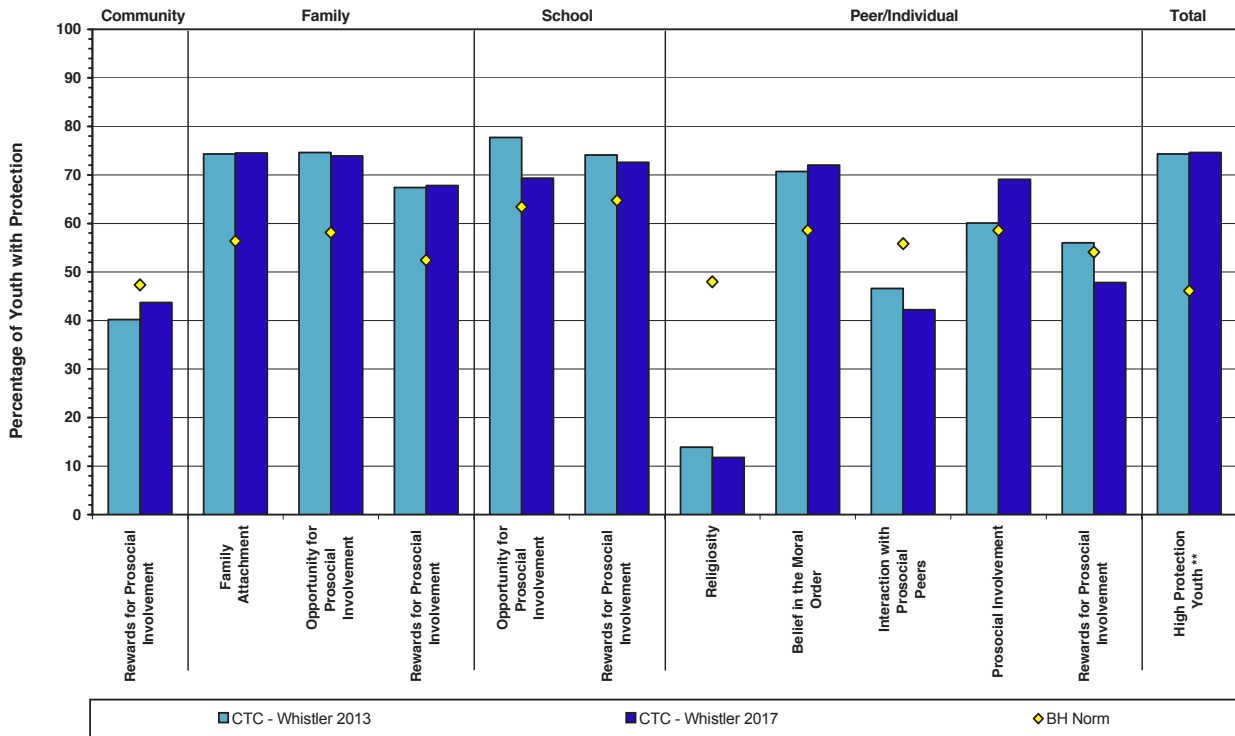


## Peer-Individual Domain:

Two encouraging areas of protection for youth in Whistler are the scores for “Belief in the Moral Order” (72.0% overall) and “Prosocial Involvement” (69.1% overall). A strong grasp of what is right and wrong, and a belief in honesty and accountability – this first scale asks questions about cheating, stealing, fighting and lying to parents – are essential building blocks for helping young people make more difficult moral choices as they grow up. As discussed in the School and Family Domains earlier, students also believe they have a great deal of options available to channel their time and efforts into positive change in their lives. The Peer-Individual “Prosocial Involvement” scale measures how many of these youth have protection due to their participation in activities - such as clubs and volunteer work. Lower overall scores for “Interaction with Prosocial Peers” (42.2%) and “Rewards for Prosocial Involvement,” (47.8%) however, indicate that students don’t necessarily believe that their friends are also participating in these activities or that they feel they will be thought of as “cool” for doing so themselves. High-school aged students were more likely, though, than Whistler teens overall to participate and see the social benefits of interacting positively with the community and each other; a majority of grades 11 (54.5%) and 12 (50.0%) receive protection from the fact that they see their friends engaging in prosocial activities, and a majority of grades 10 (53.6%), 11 (53.7%), and 12 (63.2%) scored as having protection from the belief that doing so will raise their standing in the eyes of their classmates.



**PROTECTIVE PROFILE**  
**2017 Communities that Care - Whistler Youth Survey, All Grades**



\*\* High Protection Youth are defined as the percentage of students who have more than a specified number of protective factors operating in their lives. (6th and 7th grades: 3 or more protective factors, 8th-12th grades: 4 or more factors).





# Reference

## Sources and Places of Student Alcohol Use

To prevent underage drinking, it is important to have an understanding of where kids are getting their alcohol and where they are using it. Two sources emerge from the data as the most likely places teens obtain alcohol: “At a party” topped the list at 69.2% overall and was the most popular choice for grades 9 - 12, and “I got it from home with my parents’ permission” was second at 56.2%.

When it comes to using the alcohol they find, students are drinking at their home with their parents’ permission (63.7%) or their home or someone else’s home without their parents’ permission (52.5%), or finding somewhere outside (51.5%) like a park, beach, or backroad where they are unlikely to be discovered.

## Consequences and Perceived Risk of Alcohol Use and Binge Drinking

When young people drink, it can be difficult for them to do so responsibly, as evidenced by the rate of binge drinking and the reported instances of negative consequences when doing so. High school students especially reported the most occurrences of physical problems due to their use of alcohol. The most common negative result of grade 12s’ alcohol use was feeling hungover (8.3% had this happen once, 53.0% had it happen at least twice) or feeling sick to one’s stomach or throwing up after drinking (10.8% had this happen once, 49.5% had it happen at least twice.) The same was true of grade 11, but to a lesser extent with 9.7% reporting being hung over once, but just 30.7% saying it had happened to them at least twice. Fewer became ill from their drinking with 14.5% reporting being sick once and only 22.5% having it happen two or more times. Additionally, there were social repercussions to students drinking with some notable numbers being: 13.4% of grade 10s, 14.5% of grade 11s, and 13.5% of grade 12s had trouble with their friends because of their drinking; 6.4% of students in grade 11 and 13.5% of those in grade 12 got into physical fights as a result of alcohol use, and more than 20.0% of students in those same grades found themselves at least once in sexual situations they regretted because they had been impaired by alcohol.

## Disapproval of Alcohol and Substance Use

An opportunity exists to combat the influences of peer pressure to engage in substance abuse by asking students to consider how they might appear to the rest of their friends if they start using drugs or alcohol regularly - particularly if they start experiencing the physical and social problems reported by some students when doing so as discussed earlier in this report. When asked to estimate how their friends would react to their use of alcohol regularly, nearly all or all (100.0% of 6th graders, 98.3% of 7th graders, and 91.9% of 8th graders) students in the younger grades thought their friends would feel it was “Wrong” or “Very wrong” to do so. A strong majority (more than 60.0% of students in grades 9-12) of high schoolers felt the same. Although numbers were lower, especially among older students when asked about marijuana, they were nevertheless significant. Posing the question to students, “How will you look to your friends?” could be a powerful influencer judging by their responses in this portion of the data.



## Perception of Use vs. Actual Use

While the approach of asking children to consider how they will appear to their friends is useful when they believe a majority of their peers disapprove of drug or alcohol use, it can have the opposite effect to those few students who perceive that everyone they know is taking part. What repeated surveying has shown is that many young people overestimate how much substance abuse is actually taking place among their classmates. If we look at the two most commonly abused substances, alcohol and marijuana, we see this borne out, especially among older teens. Students in grades 6 - 8 had a strong grasp on whether or not kids their age were using ATODs with most if not all assuming correctly that very few of their peers were involved in that behavior. Each progressive grade had a more difficult time discerning how many of their peers were frequently using alcohol and marijuana. For example, grade 9 alcohol use in the past month was 37.5%, but 61.0% of students in that grade thought the majority of their peers drank, and while only 1.2% had used marijuana regularly, 24.6% thought it must be more. Just shy of half of grade 10s (47.3%) had consumed alcohol in the past month, but 68.6% of students in that grade thought a majority of their peers drank.

The 30-day marijuana use rate for grade 10th was just 15.1%, but 48.2% of grade 10 students thought it was at least 50.0%. Strong majorities of grades 11 (75.5%) and 12 (61.5%) drank alcohol regularly, yet more than a quarter of 11th graders and more than 40.0% of 12th graders thought “Almost All (91%-100%)” of their classmates drank. The differences between students’ impressions and the facts was even more pronounced in these grades when it came to marijuana use. The 30-day rate for grade 11 were 24.6%, and 41.0% for grade 12 but 39.4% of grade 11 and 60.0% of grade 12 believed the majority of their peers used marijuana regularly. Making young people aware of how much lower the actual rate of use is for these substances can help to dispel the myth that “everyone is doing it,” and make declining to do so that much easier.

Reference: Whistler Prevention Needs Assessment Profile Report, 2017. Bach Harrison, LLC.



## Community Domain Risk Factors

### Community Disorganization

Research has shown that neighborhoods with high population density, lack of natural surveillance of public places, physical deterioration, and high rates of adult crime also have higher rates of juvenile crime and drug selling.

### Low Neighborhood Attachment

A low level of bonding to the neighborhood is related to higher levels of juvenile crime and drug selling.

### Laws and Norms Favorable Toward Drug Use

Research has shown that legal restrictions on alcohol and tobacco use, such as raising the legal drinking age, restricting smoking in public places, and increased taxation have been followed by decreases in consumption. Moreover, national surveys of high school seniors have shown that shifts in normative attitudes toward drug use have preceded changes in prevalence of use.

### Perceived Availability of Drugs

The availability of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, and other illegal drugs has been related to the use of these substances by adolescents.

## Community Domain Protective Factors

### Opportunities for Positive Involvement

When opportunities are available in a community for positive participation, children are less likely to engage in substance use and other problem behaviors.

### Rewards for Positive Involvement

Rewards for positive participation in activities helps children bond to the community, thus lowering their risk for substance use.



## Family Domain Risk Factors

### Exposure to Adult Antisocial Behavior

When children are raised in a family or are around adults with a history of problem behaviors (e.g., violence or ATOD use), the children are more likely to engage in these behaviors.

### Sibling Drug Use

Youth who are raised in a family where their siblings use drugs are more likely to use drugs themselves.

### Family Conflict

Children raised in families high in conflict, whether or not the child is directly involved in the conflict, appear at risk for both delinquency and drug use.

### Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward Antisocial Behavior & Drugs

In families where parents use illegal drugs, are heavy users of alcohol, or are tolerant of children's use, children are more likely to become drug abusers during adolescence. The risk is further increased if parents involve children in their own drug (or alcohol) using behavior, for example, asking the child to light the parent's cigarette or get the parent a beer from the refrigerator.

### Poor Family Management

Parents' use of inconsistent and/or unusually harsh or severe punishment with their children places them at higher risk for substance use and other problem behaviors. Also, parents' failure to provide clear expectations and to monitor their children's behavior makes it more likely that they will engage in drug abuse whether or not there are family drug problems.

## Family Domain Protective Factors

### Family Attachment

Young people who feel that they are a valued part of their family are less likely to engage in substance use and other problem behaviors.

### Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement

Young people who are exposed to more opportunities to participate meaningfully in the responsibilities and activities of the family are less likely to engage in drug use and other problem behaviors.

### Rewards for Prosocial Involvement

When parents, siblings, and other family members praise, encourage, and attend to things done well by their child, children are less likely to engage in substance use and problem behaviors.



## School Domain Risk Factors

### Academic Failure

Beginning in the late elementary grades (grades 4-6) academic failure increases the risk of both drug abuse and delinquency. It appears that the experience of failure itself, for whatever reasons, increases the risk of problem behaviors.

### Low Commitment to School

Surveys of high school seniors have shown that the use of hallucinogens, cocaine, heroin, stimulants, and sedatives or non-medically prescribed tranquilizers is significantly lower among students who expect to attend college than among those who do not. Factors such as liking school, spending time on homework, and perceiving the coursework as relevant are also negatively related to drug use.

## School Domain Protective Factors

### Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement

When young people are given more opportunities to participate meaningfully in important activities at school, they are less likely to engage in drug use and other problem behaviors.

### Rewards for Prosocial Involvement

When young people are recognized and rewarded for their contributions at school, they are less likely to be involved in substance use and other problem behaviors



## Peer-Individual Risk Factors

### Early Initiation of Antisocial Behavior and Drug Use

Early onset of drug use predicts misuse of drugs. The earlier the onset of any drug use, the greater the involvement in other drug use and the greater frequency of use. Onset of drug use prior to the age of 15 is a consistent predictor of drug abuse, and a later age of onset of drug use has been shown to predict lower drug involvement and a greater probability of discontinuation of use.

### Attitudes Favorable Toward Antisocial Behavior and Drug Use

During the elementary school years, most children express anti-drug, anti-crime, and pro-social attitudes and have difficulty imagining why people use drugs or engage in antisocial behaviors. However, in middle school, as more youth are exposed to others who use drugs and engage in antisocial behavior, their attitudes often shift toward greater acceptance of these behaviors. Youth who express positive attitudes toward drug use and antisocial behavior are more likely to engage in a variety of problem behaviors, including drug use.

### Friends' Use of Drugs

Young people who associate with peers who engage in alcohol or substance abuse are much more likely to engage in the same behavior. Peer drug use has consistently been found to be among the strongest predictors of substance use among youth. Even when young people come from well-managed families and do not experience other risk factors, spending time with friends who use drugs greatly increases the risk of that problem developing.

### Interaction with Antisocial Peers

Young people who associate with peers who engage in problem behaviors are at higher risk for engaging in antisocial behavior themselves.

### Perceived Risk of Drug Use

Young people who do not perceive drug use to be risky are far more likely to engage in drug use.

### Rewards for Antisocial Behavior

Young people who receive rewards for their antisocial behavior are at higher risk for engaging further in antisocial behavior and substance use.

### Rebelliousness

Young people who do not feel part of society, are not bound by rules, don't believe in trying to be successful or responsible, or who take an active rebellious stance toward society, are at higher risk of abusing drugs. In addition, high tolerance for deviance, a strong need for independence and normlessness have all been linked with drug use.

### Depressive Symptoms

Young people who are depressed are overrepresented in the criminal justice system and are more likely to use drugs. Survey research and other studies have shown a link between depression and other youth problem behaviors.

### Gang Involvement

Youth who belong to gangs are more at risk for antisocial behavior and drug use.

# Peer-Individual Protective Factors

## Religiosity

Young people who regularly attend religious services are less likely to engage in problem behaviors.

## Social Skills

Young people who are socially competent and engage in positive interpersonal relations with their peers are less likely to use drugs and engage in other problem behaviors.

## Belief in the Moral Order

Young people who have a belief in what is “right” or “wrong” are less likely to use drugs.

## Prosocial Involvement

Participation in positive school and community activities helps provide protection for youth.

## Rewards for Prosocial

Young people who view working hard in school and the community as rewarding are less likely to engage in problem behavior.





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