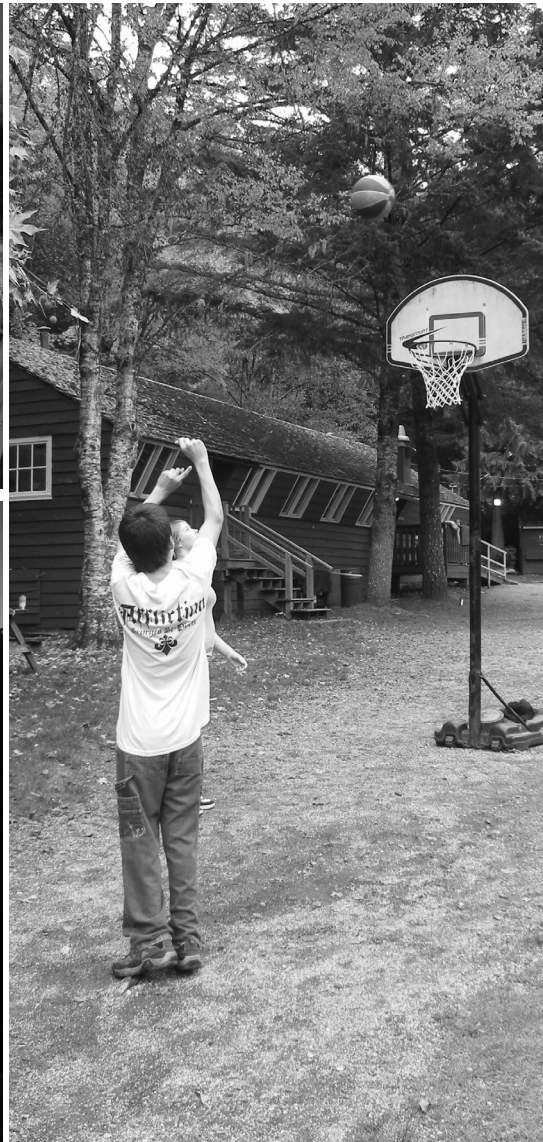


# A Picture of Health



**Kootenay Boundary**  
**Results of the 2008 British Columbia Adolescent Health Survey**



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## Kootenay Boundary

### Results of the 2008 British Columbia Adolescent Health Survey

The McCreary Centre Society is a non-government not-for-profit committed to improving the health of BC youth through research, education and community based projects. Founded in 1977, the Society sponsors and promotes a wide range of activities and research to identify and address the health needs of young people in the province.

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McCreary Centre Society  
3552 Hastings Street East  
Vancouver, BC V5K 2A7  
[www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca)

For enquiries or to order copies of the report, please email:  
[mccreary@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:mccreary@mcs.bc.ca)

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## **Project Team**

### **Annie Smith**

Executive Director

### **Elizabeth Saewyc**

Research Director

### **Duncan Stewart**

Research Associate

### **Maya Peled**

Research Associate

### **Colleen Poon**

Research Associate

### **Stephanie Martin**

Youth Participation Coordinator

### **Sherry Simon**

Aboriginal Next Steps Coordinator

### **Alison Murray**

Administrative Assistant

### **Carly Hoogeveen**

Research Assistant

### **Tamar Peled**

Graphic Designer

Additional assistance for the project was provided by Kathy Powelson, Minda Chittenden, Laura MacKay, Sally Podmore, Alison Liebel, Rita Green (Statistics Canada) and Langara Nursing Students – Vicky Bingham, Mike Dowler, Kristine Fera, Nichole McMillan, Dana Marquis and Kim Robertson.

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# Introduction

“*I would love to mention that Nelson B.C. is one of the safest places for a growing teen. I’m happy to have my childhood in such an extraordinary location.*”

This report is part of a series of reports from the 2008 Adolescent Health Survey (AHS IV), conducted by the McCreary Centre Society. The Adolescent Health Survey is the largest survey of its kind in Canada and provides the most comprehensive picture of the physical and emotional health of BC youth, including risk and protective factors. The results are used by government, schools, health professionals and community organizations to assist in the planning and evaluation of services, policies and programs for youth.

Kootenay Boundary is one of 16 regional administrative areas, called Health Service Delivery Areas (HSDAs), to participate in the survey. Data collection was sufficient across the province to allow 14 AHS IV area reports to be published. A provincial report (*A Picture of Health: Highlights from the 2008 BC Adolescent Health Survey*) is also available at [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca).

The Kootenay Boundary area is located in the Interior Health Authority region.

## School Districts included in the Kootenay Boundary area are:

Kootenay Lakes (SD 08), Arrow Lakes (SD 10), Kootenay-Columbia (SD 20) and Boundary (SD 51). All school districts in this area participated in the survey.

## Kootenay Boundary Health Service Delivery Area



■ Kootenay Boundary

# Provincial Key Findings

The provincial report of the fourth Adolescent Health Survey (AHS) conducted since 1992 offers us key information about the current health picture of BC youth. It also offers a provincial picture of youth health trends and the effect of programs and policies implemented over the past 15 years.

The 2008 AHS has again shown us that the majority of BC youth are in good health, feeling connected to their family, school and community; and are engaging in health promoting behaviours, which will assist them to transition into a healthy adulthood.

However, the results also show that there are some youth in our province who are more vulnerable than others. These youth are engaging in risky behaviours which are not only negatively affecting their lives now but are likely to do so for years to come unless we develop interventions to assist them.

## Key Findings

- The majority of students (84%) reported that their health was good or excellent, and the number who reported a debilitating health condition or disability continued to decline, from 13% in 1998 to 11% in 2003 to 9% in 2008.
- The percentage of students who were injured to the point of requiring medical attention declined from 39% to 29% in a decade. The majority of those who were seriously injured were injured playing or training for sports or recreational activities (55%).
- There was an increase in the number of students who always wore a seatbelt when they were riding in a vehicle (66% in 2008 vs. 54% in 2003).
- 18% of female students and 7% of male students across the province reported that they had not accessed mental health services when they felt they needed them; and 15% of females and 11% of males did not get medical help when they needed it.
- Half of BC youth fell short of the recommended daily portions of fruit and vegetables. However, more youth reported eating fruit in 2008 compared to a decade earlier (81% vs. 72% in 1998).
- As in 2003, only 25% of males and 11% of females exercised daily, while 7% of males and 10% of females did not exercise at all.
- For the first time since 1992, the percentage of youth who seriously considered suicide dropped, from 16% to 12% in 2008. The percentage who actually attempted suicide also decreased from 7% to 5%.



- More than one in five females and one in ten males reported that they had deliberately self harmed (cut or injured themselves) without the intention of committing suicide.
- Fewer youth in BC smoked cigarettes than in 2003, and those who did waited longer to start smoking. Three quarters of students (76%) had never tried even a puff of a cigarette, compared to 66% in 2003. However, those who had tried smoking were smoking more regularly than their peers in 2003.
- Alcohol and marijuana use declined over the past decade, as did the use of some drugs such as cocaine, amphetamines and mushrooms. However, the use of other drugs, including hallucinogens, rose.
- Relationship violence has not decreased since 2003. The survey also found that some youth were particularly vulnerable to being physically assaulted by their boyfriend or girlfriend, including youth who had been sexually abused, students with a disability or chronic illness, and gay, lesbian and bisexual students.
- Pregnancy rates have remained stable with fewer than 2% of students reporting pregnancy involvement. However, 6% of sexually active youth reported using withdrawal as their only method to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex, a slight rise from 5% in 2003.
- In 2008, there was an increase in youth who had experienced physical abuse (from 15% in 2003 to 17%). The percentage of youth reporting sexual abuse (8%) and both physical and sexual abuse (5%) did not improve between 2003 and 2008.
- The AHS showed that building protective factors such as family, school and cultural connectedness can assist even the most vulnerable youth to overcome negative experiences, can assist young people to make healthier choices and can contribute to more positive health outcomes for all youth in BC.



# Kootenay Boundary

## Key Findings

The purpose of the 14 HSDA reports is to assist those who work with youth to have information specific to their local area. It is intended that the information will be used to recognize health promotion and prevention efforts that are working well and to identify issues which may need further attention. The reports are not intended to be compared with each other.

### Key Findings

- Most youth in this area are healthy; 86% reported that their health was good or excellent, which was consistent with both provincial results and results for this area in 2003.
- In the past year, 34% of local students were injured seriously enough to need medical attention. Although this is above the provincial rate of 29%, it represents a local decrease from 42% in 2003.
- Sixty-six percent of students in this area always wore a seatbelt when riding in a motor vehicle, which was an increase from 55% in 2003.
- Eighty-one percent of students rode a bicycle in the past year, above the provincial rate of 71%. However, bike helmet use was lower among local cyclists than across the province (19% vs 24%).
- A greater percentage of students exercised every day compared to the province as a whole (21% vs. 18%). Exercise rates for this area were comparable between 2003 and 2008.
- Eleven percent of students reported seriously considering suicide in the past year, which was comparable to the 2008 provincial rate and lower than the rate in this area in 2003 (18%).
- Unlike the decline seen across the province, this area did not experience a decrease in the percentage of youth who had tried smoking and more youth smoked than smoked in the province as a whole (37% vs. 26%). Students who did smoke waited longer to start than in 2003.
- Similar to the rate in 2003, 71% of youth had tried more than just a few sips of alcohol. This was higher than the provincial rate of 54%. As in 2003, over half (53%) of local students who had tried alcohol binge drank in the past month (compared to 44% across the province).
- Youth in this area were more likely than youth across the province to have had sexual intercourse (31% vs. 22%) and oral sex (35% vs. 26%).
- Forty-eight percent of students reported always feeling safe at school, which was comparable to the rate in this area in 2003 and higher than the 2008 provincial rate of 41%.

- The percentage of youth who watched TV for three or more hours dropped from 37% in 2003 to 22% in 2008. Youth in this area were also less likely than those in the province as a whole to be on the Internet for three or more hours a day (22% vs. 27%).
- Protective factors can reduce the likelihood of experiencing negative outcomes even for vulnerable youth. For example, a substantial number of youth in the Kootenay Boundary area reported being victimized or bullied at school and 15% of these youth had seriously considered suicide in the past year. However, being connected to their family, school or cultural group, being engaged in their extracurricular activities, and having peers with healthy attitudes about risk behaviour were each associated with a lower risk of suicidal ideation.

# About the Survey

This is the fourth BC Adolescent Health Survey conducted by the McCreary Centre Society. Over 29,000 BC public school students in grades 7-12 completed the survey between February and June 2008. Previous surveys were conducted in 1992, 1998 and 2003. With each survey, there has been increased participation from school districts and this year 50 of the 59 participated, up from 45 in 2003.

## Survey Design

The survey is designed to consider emerging youth health issues, and to track trends over time. The majority of questions have been asked since 1992. The 2008 AHS included 147 questions asking youth about their perceptions of their current physical and emotional health, risky behaviours and health promoting practices. Healthy development for youth includes many contributing factors and the survey also asks about broader issues such as family connectedness, school safety and peer relationships.

To ensure the 2008 survey captured current and emerging youth health issues, new questions were added following consultation with a BC government inter-ministerial committee and an advisory institute made up of community agencies, public health personnel

and other leading figures in youth health.

The new questions reflected concerns about health-impacting behaviours such as internet safety, caffeine consumption and oral sex.

The survey includes questions used in similar surveys across Canada to allow for comparisons between provinces, and questions which have been used successfully with youth in grades 7-12 internationally. The pencil and paper survey was pilot tested with a diverse range of youth in grades 7-12 to ensure it was easily understood and could be completed within a single class period.

## Survey Administration

Public school classes were randomly chosen from participating school districts to provide a representative sample of youth across the province. Participation was voluntary and parental consent procedures were determined at the school district level. Public Health Nurses, nursing students and other trained personnel administered the confidential and anonymous survey to 29,440 students in 1,760 classrooms.

## Survey Analysis

Statistics Canada weighted the data to ensure it was representative of all BC youth in grades 7-12.

Surveys which contained contradictory, incomplete or joking answers were identified and eliminated before analysis began. (These surveys comprised less than 1% of all students surveyed).

All comparisons and associations reported in this study have been tested and are statistically significant (at  $p < .05$ ). This means that there is a 5% likelihood that the area results presented occurred by chance.

Graphs and charts show frequencies that are not necessarily statistically significant at every point. For example, a graph showing differences by age may not necessarily be significantly different at every age point.

## Limitations

All surveys have limitations and this is no exception. The survey can only provide information on youth who are in school. For administrative reasons, alternative and independent schools were not included in the 2008 survey. McCreary has recently conducted surveys with youth whose health picture is not captured in this report: youth in alternative education programs, as well as youth who are street involved and marginalized, and youth in custody.

The survey was administered in English. This may have affected those youth who were new

immigrants and/or those who did not have the language or literacy skills to complete the questionnaire.

One of the participating school districts in this area changed consent procedures from 2003. This may have affected the results. For example, in school districts across the province where youth required signed parental consent to participate, students were less likely to report ever having had sex (19% vs. 25%). However, the impact on the results in this area is minimized by the fact that there is a mixture of consent procedures in place. Additional analyses of key findings for this area were conducted to assess if the change in consent procedures had affected the results. All trends were found to hold despite the consent procedure changes.

A methodology fact sheet for the survey is available at [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca) as is a detailed fact sheet discussing the sources and rationale for the questions used in the survey.

References for research cited in this report are also available on the website.

Statistics presented in this report are for students in the local HSDA unless otherwise stated.

Quotes from youth in this area who participated in the survey appear throughout the report.

### Symbols used in the report

\* Indicates that the percentage shown should be interpreted with caution as it may represent only an approximation due to the sample size.

† Indicates that the difference between 2003 and 2008 HSDA estimates was statistically significant.

‡ Indicates that the difference between 2008 HSDA and provincial estimates was statistically significant.

## Aboriginal Youth

Due to historic and current discrimination, Aboriginal youth face additional and unique challenges to achieving healthy development. Following the AHS in 1998 and 2003, additional analysis of the data provided by Aboriginal students was conducted by an Aboriginal research team. The results were published in *Raven's Children* (2000) and *Raven's Children II* (2004). McCreary is committed to producing an Aboriginal specific report, with the 2008 survey results, when funding has been secured.

## Next Steps Workshops

As with previous McCreary Adolescent Health Surveys, the results of the 2008 survey will be used by government agencies, schools and communities to plan and assess youth programs and services.

Through its 'Next Steps' workshop series, McCreary will also ensure that youth who participated in the survey get the opportunity to learn about the results, comment on them and use them to develop community projects to improve young people's health in their local area.

To discuss youth and adult workshops in your community contact [mccreary@mcsc.bc.ca](mailto:mccreary@mcsc.bc.ca)

### Participating School Districts

05 Southeast Kootenay	53 Okanagan-Similkameen
06 Rocky Mountain	54 Bulkley Valley
08 Kootenay Lake	57 Prince George
10 Arrow Lakes	58 Nicola-Similkameen
19 Revelstoke	61 Greater Victoria
20 Kootenay-Columbia	62 Sooke
22 Vernon	63 Saanich
23 Central Okanagan	64 Gulf Islands
27 Cariboo-Chilcotin	67 Okanagan Skaha
35 Langley	68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith
36 Surrey	69 Qualicum
37 Delta	70 Alberni
38 Richmond	71 Comox Valley
39 Vancouver	72 Campbell River
40 New Westminster	73 Kamloops/Thompson
41 Burnaby	74 Gold Trail
42 Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	75 Mission
43 Coquitlam	78 Fraser Cascades
44 North Vancouver	79 Cowichan Valley
45 West Vancouver	82 Coast Mountains
46 Sunshine Coast	83 North Okanagan-Shuswap
47 Powell River	84 Vancouver Island West
48 Howe Sound	85 Vancouver Island North
51 Boundary	91 Nechako Lakes
52 Prince Rupert	92 Nisga'a

# Kootenay Boundary Youth: Their Home & Family

## Background

Students in this area (the Kootenay Boundary HSDA) identified with a broad range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Students most commonly indicated being of European heritage (74%). This was above the provincial rate of 54%, but was a local decrease from 80% in 2003.

If students did not feel the categories above represented their background they could choose to write in their own identity, and 2% wrote “Canadian.”

## New Canadians

Four percent of students in this area were born outside of Canada, below the provincial rate of 18%. One percent of students had lived in Canada between 2 and 5 years and another 1% had lived here for less than two years.

## First Nations

Thirteen percent of students reported being of Aboriginal heritage. Among these students, 16% had First Nations status, 40% were Aboriginal but did not have First Nations status, and 30% were Metis.

Six percent of Aboriginal students had lived on a reserve at some point in their lives.

### Ethnic or cultural background

European	74%
Aboriginal/First Nations	13%
Latin/South/Central American	3%
East Asian	3%
Australian/Pacific Islander	2%
African	1%
South Asian	1%
Other (excluding Canadian)	2%
Don't know	17%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

### Spoke a language other than English at home

Never	68%
Sometimes	30%
Most of the time	3%

## Sexual Orientation

Eighty-six percent of students identified as heterosexual, 7% as mostly heterosexual, 3% as bisexual or gay/lesbian and 4% were unsure.

## Spirituality

Fifty-seven percent of students reported that they were not at all religious or spiritual. The remainder were either somewhat (34%) or very much (9%) religious or spiritual.

## Home

### Living Situation

Students in this area reported a number of different living situations. However, the majority of youth lived with their mother (87%) and/or father (67%) most of the time; 16% lived with both parents but at different times.

For most students, at least one parent was at home with them every day during the past five school days when they woke up in the morning (76%) and went to bed at night (83%). However, 6% did not have a parent at home when they woke up in the morning and 3% did not have a parent at home when they went to sleep at night on any of the past five school days.

### Unstable Home Life

A total of 3% of students had lived in government care at some point in their lives, meaning they had lived in a foster home or group home, or had been on a youth agreement. As in 2003, 1% of youth were in care in the last year.

Twelve percent of students ran away from home in the past year, which was higher than the provincial rate of 9%. These students were more likely than those who had not run away

#### Who youth lived with most of the time (Youth could mark all that apply)

Mother	87%
Father	67%
Stepfather	8%
Other adults related to me	5%
Stepmother	3%
Other adults not related to me	2%
Do not live with any adults	2%

“My parents are divorced and  
I hate going back and forth!!”

to have experienced extreme stress (29% vs. 12%) and despair (17% vs. 3%) and to have attempted suicide in the last 12 months (25% vs. 3%).

Frequently moving house can negatively impact young people's health. Fifteen percent of youth moved once in the past year, 4% moved twice, and 5% moved three or more times. Students who moved in the past year were more likely than students who did not move to experience extreme despair (9% vs. 4%) and to attempt suicide in the past 12 months (10% vs. 4%).



“ *When you have a parent going through a bunch of health problems it can be hard on your family and I think it's frustrating...* ”

## Family

### Family Connectedness

Family relationships can have an important effect on youth health and development. The survey asked questions about students' relationships with their caregivers, including feelings of closeness, how much they felt their caregivers were warm and loving toward them, and their satisfaction with these relationships.

Levels of connectedness to mother figures was higher for 12-year-olds than for 14- to 17-year-olds. Connectedness to father figures was unrelated to age, unlike in the province as a whole where connectedness to both mother and father figures was higher for 12- and 13-year-olds than for students aged 14 to 18.

Youth who ran away from home in the past year or who had lived in government care reported lower connectedness than youth who did not have these experiences. Females were less connected than males to their father figures but equally connected as males to their mother figures. Both males and females felt more connected to their mothers than to their fathers.

Students who had one caregiver at home when they woke up in the morning, when they ate their evening meal, or when they went to bed at night on most of the past five school days

reported higher connectedness with their parental figures compared to students whose caregiver was absent on all five school days.

Also, students who felt their family members understood them and paid attention to them and felt they and their family had fun together reported higher connectedness with their mother and father figures compared to students who did not have these positive feelings about their family.

### Family Poverty

BC has the highest child poverty rate in Canada yet asking youth about their family's economic status can be challenging. Young people often do not know about their family's income, parent's occupation or other conventional measures that can indicate poverty. In an attempt to address this, the AHS asked youth four questions that have been used in international studies to learn about family resources: whether youth went to bed hungry because there was not enough food at home, the number of computers their family owned, whether they shared a bedroom, and if they took family holidays.

The vast majority of students in this area reported that they never went to bed hungry (91%), did not share a bedroom (94%), had

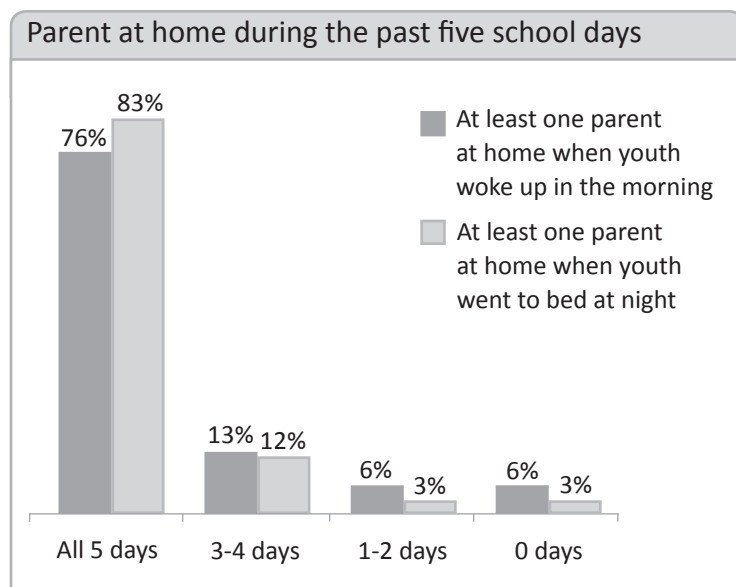
travelled on holiday with their family in the past year (81%), and that their family currently owned a computer (99%).

Virtually no youth in this area reported all four indicators of poverty (i.e., always going to bed hungry, sharing a bedroom, their family not owning a computer, and not having a family holiday in the past year).

Seven percent of youth experienced hunger some of the time and 2% went to bed hungry often or always. Hunger can affect health in many ways. For example, youth who indicated going to bed hungry were more likely than their peers who did not go to bed

hungry to report poor/fair health (40%\* vs. 12%), to have considered suicide in the past year (25%\* vs. 10%) and to have attempted suicide in the past 12 months (19% vs. 4%).

Family poverty affected youths' ability to participate in extra-curricular activities. For example, youth who did not go on a family vacation in the past year were less likely than their peers to engage in sports with a coach other than gym class (such as playing on school teams or taking swimming lessons).



# Physical Health

“ I have scoliosis ... but it doesn't disable me physically in any way. ”

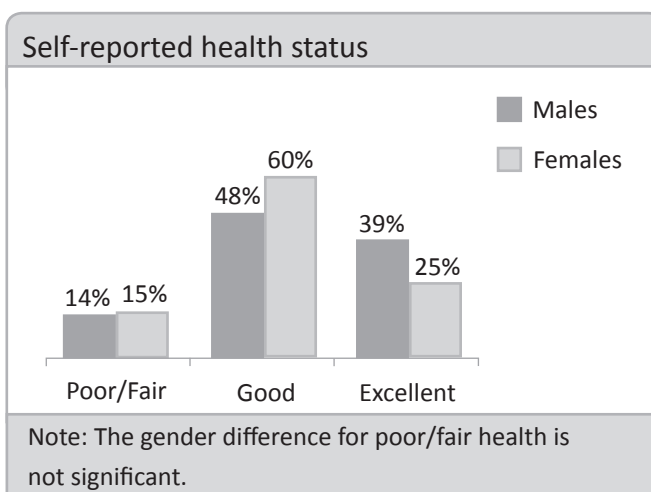
Eighty-six percent of youth in this area reported that their health was good or excellent, which was consistent with both provincial results and results for this area in 2003. More males than females rated their health as excellent (39% vs. 25%). Males were less likely than females to report that they had physical complaints 'a lot' such as headaches (13% vs. 26%) or stomach-aches (7% vs. 15%) in the past six months.

Ten percent of students reported a debilitating health condition or disability. The most common condition was a long-term illness

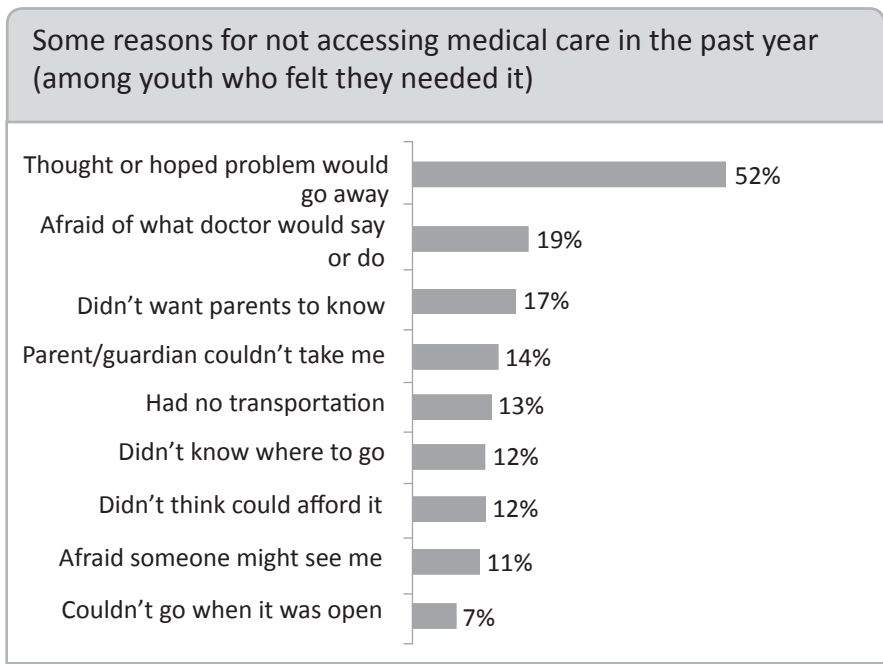
(such as diabetes or asthma) experienced by 5% of youth. Among youth with a health condition or disability, 25% took daily medication and 3% missed a lot of school due to their condition.

## Accessing Medical Care

In the past year, 12% of males and 18% of females did not get medical help when they felt they needed it; these were comparable to provincial rates. Among those youth who did not access needed medical care, the most common reason was because they thought or hoped the problem would go away (52%).



There were no differences between males and females in their endorsement of the reasons for not seeking care. However, males in this area were more likely than those in the entire province to cite having no transportation as a reason for not seeking medical care (22% locally vs. 10% provincially).



# Injuries

“*I fell off my quad somehow and got a really bad concussion with a helmet on and I was in the hospital.*”

Injuries are one of the most common health hazards facing BC youth. In the past year, 34% of students were injured seriously enough to need medical attention. This is above the provincial rate of 29%, but a decrease from 42% in 2003. Males and females were equally likely to have been seriously injured.

Similar to the experience of youth across the province and of youth in this area in 2003, the most common location for getting injured was at a sports facility or field (39%). Seventeen percent of injuries were at home and 14% were at school. There were no gender differences in injury locations.

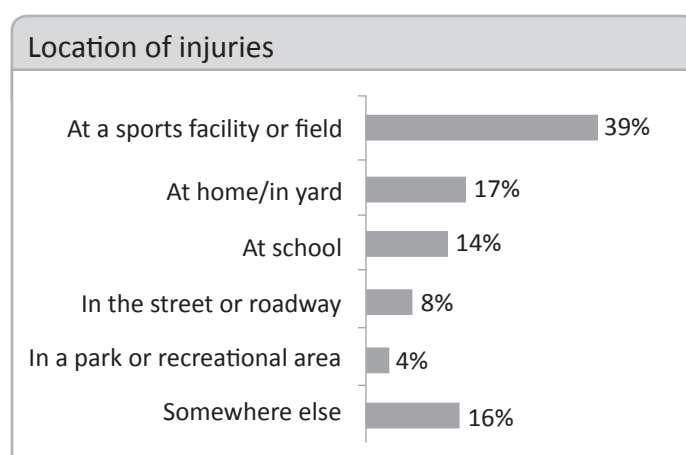
Most injuries occurred while students were playing or training for sports or doing other

recreational activities (52%). Eight percent occurred when students were snowboarding or skiing, 7% occurred when students were riding a bike, and 9% took place during relatively low-risk behaviours (such as walking or cooking). Similar to the provincial rate, 6% of students were injured in a motor vehicle.

Whilst provincially there were no gender differences, females in this area were more likely than males to have been injured playing or training for sports (60% vs. 44%).

## Injury Prevention

Many injuries are preventable. The use of motor vehicle seat belts and bicycle helmets are two key ways in which youth injuries can



be prevented. Male and female students were equally likely to wear seatbelts or bike helmets.

Sixty-six percent of students in this area always wore a seatbelt when riding in a motor vehicle, similar to the provincial rate, but a local increase from 55% in 2003.

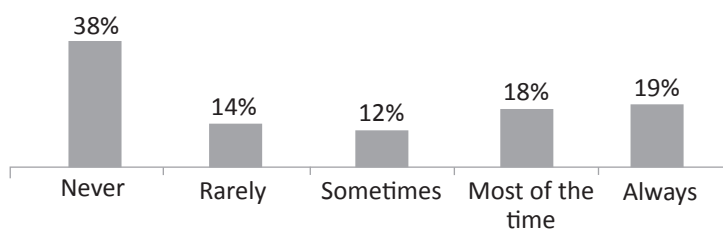
Eighty-one percent of students rode a bicycle in the past year, above the provincial rate of 71%. Among these students, 19% always wore a bike helmet (which was below the provincial rate of 24%) and 38% never wore one (which was similar to the provincial rate). As students got older, they were less likely to wear a helmet.

## Driving and Substance Use

Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death among BC youth. In this area, 16% of youth had driven after using alcohol or marijuana, which was above the provincial rate (10%). Males were more likely to have ever driven a vehicle after using alcohol or marijuana (19% vs. 12%).

Eleven percent of students had ever driven after using alcohol (compared to 7% in the province as a whole). In the past month, 5% of students had driven after consuming alcohol and 28% of students had been a passenger in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking (compared to 19% across the province).

Helmet use among youth who cycled in the past year



# Nutrition

“ I am a vegetarian. I am very healthy.  
I plan on staying that way. ”

The majority of youth reported consuming water, dairy, and fruits and vegetables on the day before they took the survey, but also sweets (cookies, cake, etc.). Males were more likely than females to have had dairy (61% vs. 52%), fast food such as pizza, hot dogs, chips and fries (12% vs. 5%), pop (15% vs. 4%) and energy drinks twice or more yesterday.

Despite increased awareness about the importance of consuming fruits and vegetables daily and the increased availability of healthier foods in schools, 7% of youth in this area reported eating no fruits or vegetables on the day before

Canada's Food Guide recommends female youth ages 14-18 have 7 servings of fruit and vegetables daily and male youth have 8.

What youth ate and drank yesterday			
	No	Yes (once)	Yes (twice or more)
Water	5%	19%	76%
Milk, cheese, yogurt	9%	34%	56%
Fruit	17%	38%	45%
Green salad or vegetables	19%	48%	34%
Cookies, cake, donuts, chocolate bars	36%	48%	16%
Pizza, hot dogs, potato chips, French fries	58%	34%	8%
Pop/soda	62%	29%	9%
Hot or cold coffee or coffee-based drinks	74%	19%	8%
Energy drinks	86%	10%	4%
Note: Percentages do not always total 100% due to rounding.			



“  
*I think that the cafeteria should  
have a better variety of foods  
and more healthy items.*”

they completed the survey and 17% had had only one serving. At least 47% of both male and female youth fell short of the recommended daily portions of fruits and vegetables; this rate was the same for females provincially but lower than the provincial rate of 53% found for males.

As was the case in the entire province, 53% of youth in this area always ate breakfast on school days, while 16% never ate breakfast. The percentage of youth who reported eating breakfast was comparable to that seen in 2003.

Youth who reported that they went to bed hungry because there was not enough food at home were more likely than their peers who did not report hunger to miss breakfast every day and less likely to have had water, fruit, vegetables or dairy yesterday, but more likely to have consumed pop.



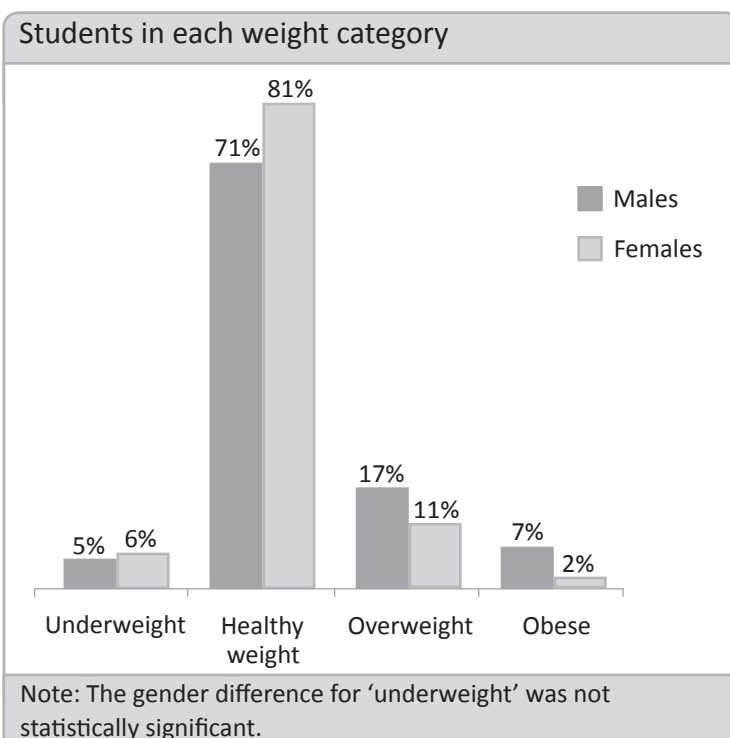
# Weight & Body Image

## Weight

Although it has been criticized for not measuring body fat or fitness levels, and is not the ideal measure for all ethnic groups, youths' body mass index (BMI) still helps track rates of obesity. The BMI was calculated from the height and weight measurements youth provided on the survey. Based on this measure, 77% of students were considered to be a healthy weight for their age and gender, while 6% were underweight, 14% overweight and 4% obese. This distribution was comparable to that seen in the province as a whole.

Males were more likely than females to be overweight or obese. In addition, the percentage of youth in this area who were classified as underweight increased from 3% in 2003 to 6% in 2008.

Obesity is linked to health challenges at all ages. Compared to youth who were a healthy weight, overweight and obese youth were less likely to rate their health as excellent (22% vs. 35%). In addition, obese youth were more likely than healthy weight youth to have spent three or more hours of an average school day on the Internet (38%\* vs. 21%) or playing video games (37%\* vs. 11%).



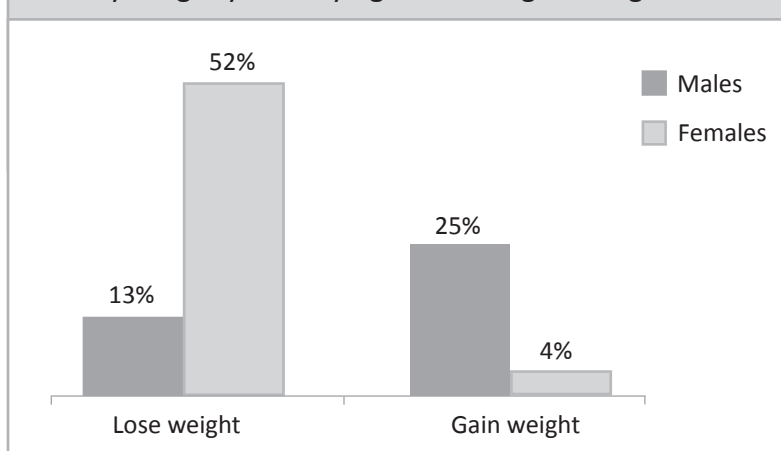
## Body Image

Similar to provincial rates, 15% of youth rated themselves as very satisfied with their body image. The majority of youth (70%) felt they were about the right weight.

Looking at youth whose BMI indicated they were a healthy weight, 34% stated they were not trying to do anything about their weight and 18% were trying to stay the same weight. However, 52% of healthy weight females were trying to lose weight and 25% of healthy weight males were trying to gain weight.

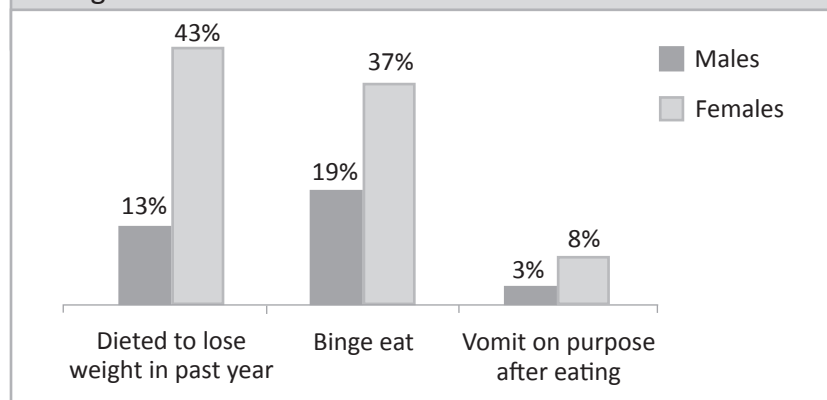
Females were more likely than males to report dieting to lose weight in the past year as well as binge eating and vomiting on purpose after eating. The rates of dieting, binge eating and purging did not differ between 2003 and 2008, and also did not differ between this area and the province as a whole.

Healthy weight youth trying to lose or gain weight



“*I suffer from anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa, I do not think there are enough resources or help in this community for people suffering from an eating disorder.*”

Eating behaviours



When asked to rate how satisfied they were with their body, on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being not at all satisfied and 5 being very satisfied, male youth scored an average of 3.8 and females 3.4.

# Mental & Emotional Health

Adolescence is an important time for mental and emotional development. As they mature, youth have increased abilities to think about abstract ideas and are more aware of their emotions. However, it can also be a time when mental health problems first emerge.

## Self Esteem

Measuring self-esteem can tell us about how youth view themselves. The majority of youth in this area reported high self-esteem; they agreed or mostly agreed that they felt good about themselves (88%) and their abilities (92%), they had much to be proud of (81%) and felt that their life was useful (87%). Sixty-two percent of students agreed or mostly agreed with all seven of the self-esteem questions on the survey, which was comparable to the provincial rate.

## Stress

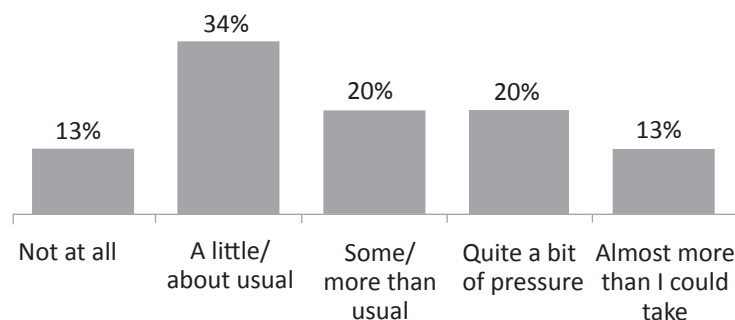
Most youth (87%) reported feeling some stress or pressure in the past 30 days, and 13% of students indicated that the stress in their lives was almost more than they could take.

Females were more likely than males to report extreme levels of stress in the past month to the point that they could not work or function effectively (17% vs. 9%). There was no relation between extreme stress and age, unlike in the province as a whole where older students were more likely than younger students to report extreme stress.

## Despair

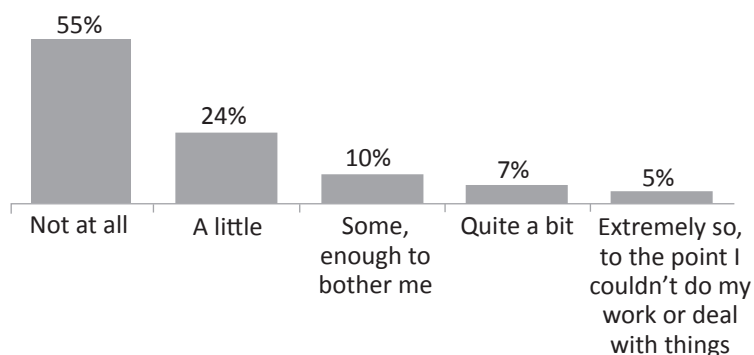
Five percent of students indicated feeling so much despair (feeling sad, discouraged or hopeless) that they wondered if anything was

During the past 30 days, have you felt you were under any strain, stress or pressure?



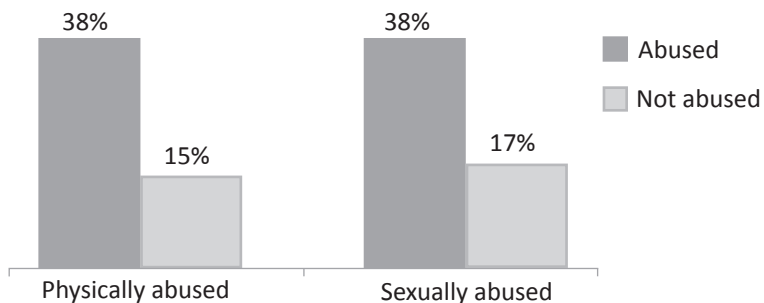
“*There is too much pressure on students to decide they're career in grades eleven and twelve. Nobody can truly know at that point, and it adds unnecessary stress to one's life.*”

During the past 30 days, have you felt so sad, discouraged, hopeless or had so many problems that you wondered if anything was worthwhile?



“*I feel trapped in my own life.*”

Intentional self harm among youth who had been abused and not abused



worthwhile and had difficulty functioning properly. Females and males were equally likely to report this level of extreme despair in the past month, unlike in the province as a whole where females were more likely than males to report extreme despair.

## Self Harm

Sometimes youth will hurt themselves as a way of coping with stress and pain in their lives. In this area, 25% of female students and 13% of males indicated cutting or injuring themselves on purpose without trying to kill themselves at some point in their lifetime, with 13% doing so once or twice, and 7% doing so three or more times.

Students who had been physically abused or sexually abused were more likely to self-harm than students with no abuse history. Also, youth who had ever used alcohol or marijuana were more likely to self-harm compared to youth who never used these substances.

## Suicide

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth aged 12-18 in British Columbia. In this area, 11% of students reported seriously considering suicide in the past year,

“  
*I have cut my wrists and thought about committing suicide but I just think about my friends and how they will always need my help.*  
”

which was comparable to the provincial rate and lower than the rate for this area in 2003 (18%).

Five percent of students attempted suicide in the past year, which was the same as the provincial rate and not significantly different from the 2003 rate in this area. Females were more likely than males to have attempted suicide (7% vs. 3%), although males generally have higher rates of suicide completion.

Among youth who attempted suicide in the past year, 26% reported that their attempt was serious enough to require treatment by a doctor or nurse.

### Risk factors for suicide

One of the known risk factors for attempting suicide is having a family history of suicidal behaviour. In this area, 14% of youth reported that a family member had tried to commit suicide, with 5% doing so in the past year. Also, 28% of youth had a close friend who attempted suicide (15% in the past year), which was higher than the provincial rate (22% in lifetime and 12% in past year).

Students with a family member or close friend who had attempted or committed suicide in the past year were over six times more likely to attempt suicide themselves, compared to students without these risk factors (19% vs. 3%).

Suicide attempts in the past year were also more likely among students who had ever been physically abused (15% vs. 3%) or sexually abused (20% vs. 4%) compared to students who had never been abused.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth\*, and youth with a health condition or disability, were also at greater risk for attempting suicide. Also, youth who had ever used substances such as marijuana, hallucinogens, mushrooms, ecstasy or cocaine were more likely to have attempted suicide compared to students who had never used these substances.

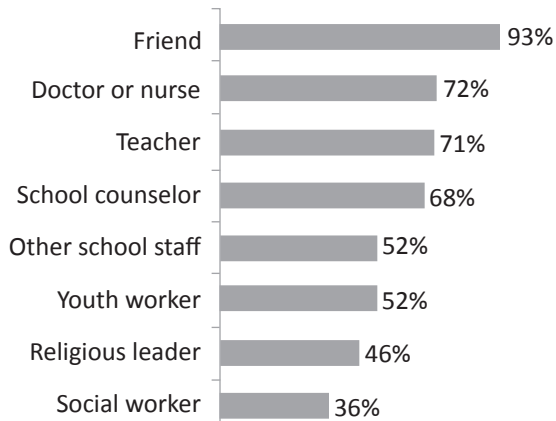
### Help Seeking

The majority of students felt they could seek support from adults in their family (80%) or from adults outside their family (63%) if they were faced with a serious problem.

Students reported approaching a variety of professionals for help in the past year, including teachers (43%), doctors or nurses (31%), school counselors (28%), other school staff (21%), youth workers (19%), religious leaders (18%), and social workers (15%). In addition to turning to adults for help, most students (80%) asked their friends for assistance. Students who sought support in the past year generally reported finding the assistance of both friends and professionals helpful.

“ I have an amazing boyfriend. He listens. ”

#### Students who found others' assistance to be helpful (among youth who sought help in the past year)

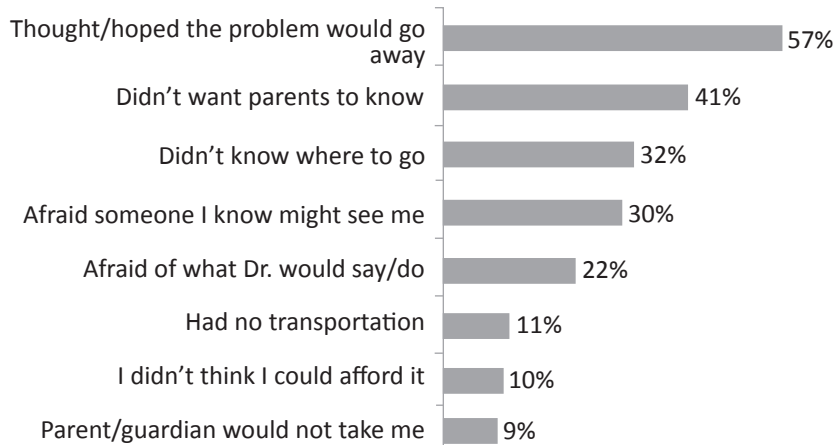


#### Accessing Mental Health Services

When asked specifically about accessing mental health services in the past year, 19% of females and 7% of males reported that they had not accessed services when they felt they needed them. The most common reasons for not accessing mental health services included hoping the problem would go away (57%) and students not wanting their parents to know (41%).

“ I feel I need someone to talk to and any options given are ones I am not comfortable with. ”

#### Most common reasons for not accessing mental health services (among youth who felt they needed them)





# Smoking

“You only asked about smoking cigarettes. you should also ask about cigars. They are very different to most youth.”

Unlike the situation across the province, this area did not see a decrease in the percentage of youth who had ever tried smoking. As in 2003, 37% of students in this area had ever smoked, which was above the provincial rate of 26%. Males and females were equally likely to have tried smoking.

Although there was no change in the rate of students who tried smoking, those who did smoke waited longer. Among students who smoked, 4% had their first cigarette when they were younger than 9 years old, which was lower than the 9% seen in 2003. In contrast, 26% of students waited until they were 15 or 16 to try smoking, compared to 16% in 2003.

Comparable with youth across the province, less than half (46%) of students who had ever

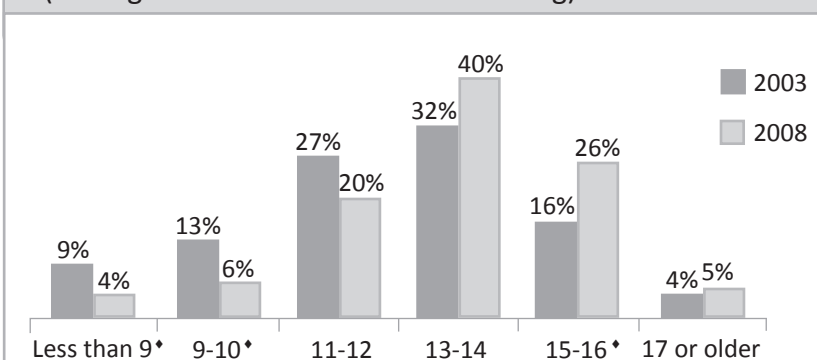
tried smoking had smoked in the past month. Students who did smoke in the past month were most likely to have smoked between 2 and 5 cigarettes per day (18% of students who have ever tried cigarettes).

Above the provincial rate of 4%, 7% of young people had used chewing tobacco in the past month (13% of males and 3% of females).

## Second-hand Smoke

Thirty-three percent of students had been exposed to second-hand smoke inside their home or vehicle. This was unchanged from 2003 and higher than the provincial rate of 28%. Sixteen percent of youth were exposed to smoke in their home or car almost every day.

**Age when first smoked a whole cigarette  
(among students who had tried smoking)**



\* Indicates that the difference between 2003 and 2008 Kootenay Boundary estimates was statistically significant

# Substance Use

“ I know my dad was an alcoholic but that doesn't mean I will be. ”

## Alcohol

Similar to the rate in 2003, 71% of youth had tried more than just a few sips of alcohol. This was higher than the provincial rate of 54%. Males and females were equally likely to have tried alcohol.

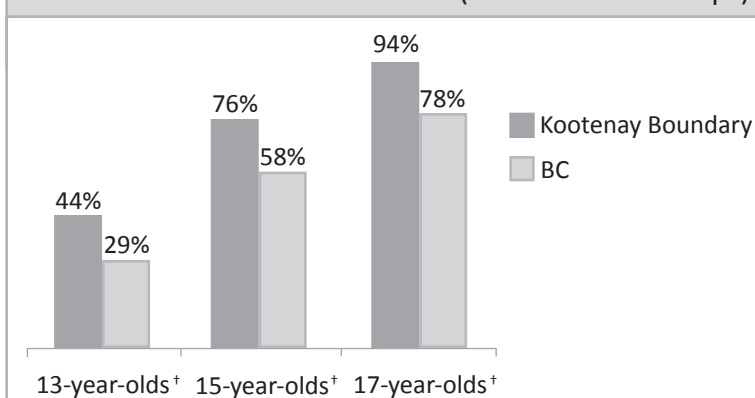
Compared to the provincial rate, students in this area started drinking earlier; 24% of students who had tried alcohol had their first drink when they were 11 or 12 years old (compared to 20% across the province), and 17% waited until they were 15 or 16 years old (compared to 23% provincially).

Among students who drank in the past year, 9% had only a sip, 34% drank once a month or less, 9% drank two or three times a month and 2% drank every day of the week.

## Binge Drinking

Binge drinking is defined in the AHS as having five or more drinks within a couple of hours. As in 2003, over half (53%) of local students who had tried alcohol binge drank in the past month (above the 44% provincially) and 5% binge drank ten or more times in the previous month. Males and females were equally likely to binge drink.

Students who ever drank alcohol (other than a few sips)



<sup>†</sup> Indicates that the difference between 2008 HSDA and provincial estimates was statistically significant.

## Last Saturday Use

The AHS IV included new questions asking about substance use “last Saturday.” Students were instructed to specifically think of the Saturday that had just passed, even if it was not a typical Saturday for them.

Forty percent of students drank alcohol last Saturday, which was higher than the provincial rate of 26%. There were no gender differences among those who consumed wine and liquor but females were more likely to have drunk coolers last Saturday (24% vs. 13%) and males were more likely to have drunk beer (31% vs. 21%).

“ *I like to smoke weed everyday at school and after school.* ”

## Marijuana

Similar to the rate in 2003, 44% of students in this area had tried marijuana, which was higher than the 2008 provincial rate (30%). Males and females were equally likely to have tried marijuana.

Among students who had tried marijuana, 9% had first used it when they were 10 years old or younger, although the most common age for first trying it was 13 or 14 years old (45%).

Fifty-eight percent of those who had tried marijuana used it in the past month and 14% used it 20 or more days in the past month. Among those who had used marijuana, males

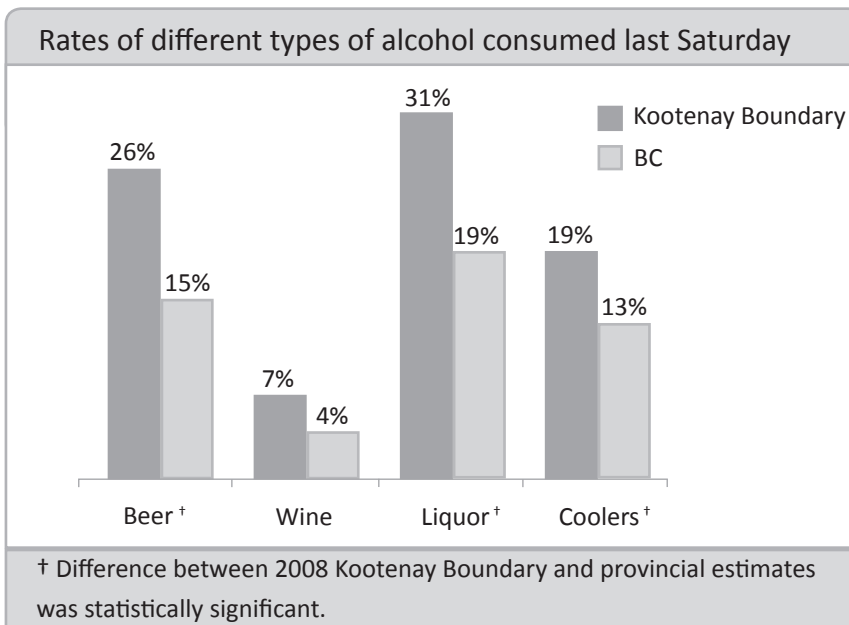
were more likely than females to report this extreme use (21% vs. 8%).

## Last Saturday use

Above the provincial rate of 12%, 18% of male and female students in this area used marijuana last Saturday.

## Other Drugs

The percentage of youth who had used most substances other than alcohol or marijuana was similar to the province as a whole, and there were no gender differences. However, students in this area were more likely to have tried mushrooms (18% vs. 8%) and hallucinogens (including ecstasy; 12% vs. 5%).



“*People don’t take you seriously when you are not an adult. Sometimes, using drugs is the only way you can break down those barriers. It is easy to become addicted.*”

When compared to youth in this area in 2003, there was an increase in the percentage of students who had used prescription pills without a doctor’s consent.

For the first time, students were specifically asked about the use of ecstasy and crystal meth. Nine percent of students in this area had used ecstasy, and 2% had used crystal meth. Both percentages were comparable to the provincial rate.

## Consequences of Substance Use

In the past year, 2% of male and female students felt they needed help for their alcohol use, and 2% felt they needed help for their drug use.

Sixty-four percent of students reported using alcohol or drugs in the previous year. Among these students, over half (57%) experienced a variety of negative consequences as a result. The most common included being told they had done something they could not remember, passing out and arguing with family members.

Males were more likely to report getting into a physical fight, while females were more likely to have argued with family members. Females in this area were more likely than males to report having sex when they did not want to, as a consequence of substance use (10% vs. 4%).

Ever used other drugs	2003	2008
Prescription pills	9%	17% <sup>†</sup>
Any Hallucinogens	11%	12% <sup>†</sup>
Mushrooms	23%	18% <sup>†</sup>
Cocaine	4%	5%
Inhalants	5%	5%
Any Amphetamines	5%	4%
Steroids	1%	2%
Heroin	1%	2%
Injected an illegal drug	1%	2%
<sup>†</sup> Difference between 2008 Kootenay Boundary and provincial estimates was statistically significant. <sup>♦</sup> Kootenay Boundary difference between 2003 and 2008 estimates was statistically significant.		

“*[I have a] psychosis related to marijuana & other drugs.*”

“ *Most Friends of mine drink,  
and they want me too, I refuse  
always because I know it will  
lead to something unwanted, my  
biggest fear is sex then getting  
someone pregnant.* ”

#### Consequences of substance use among those who used alcohol or drugs in the past year

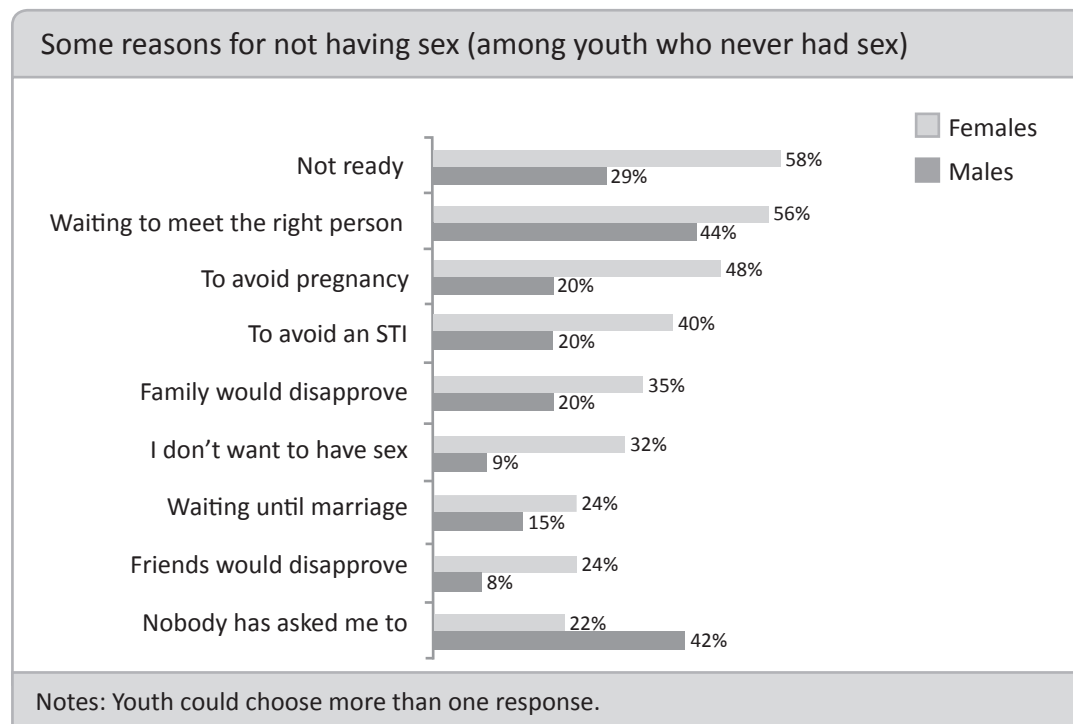
Was told that I did something that I couldn't remember	43%
I used alcohol or drugs but none of these things happened	43%
Passed out	36%
Argued with family members	18%
Got injured	15%
Damaged property	13%
Got in trouble with the police	12%
Got into a physical fight	11%
School work, marks, or behaviour at school changed	10%
Lost friends or broke up with a girlfriend or boyfriend	9%
Had sex when I didn't want to	7%
I overdosed	3%
Had to get treatment for alcohol or drug abuse	2%
Got into a car accident	1%

# Sexual Behaviour

The majority of youth reported never having had sexual intercourse (69%), which was comparable to the rate in this area in 2003. However this rate was lower than the provincial percentage of 78%, meaning that youth in this area were more likely to have had sex (31% vs. 22%).

Students who never had sexual intercourse provided a number of reasons for not having sex (they could choose more than one reason). The most common were wanting to wait until

they met the right person (50%), not being ready to have sex (44%) and not wanting to get pregnant or cause a pregnancy (34%). When there were gender differences in rates of responding, females were more likely than males to endorse the reason, with the exception that males were more likely to indicate that they had not had sex because nobody had asked them to (42% vs. 22%).



The percentage of youth that reported ever having sexual intercourse was comparable for males and females and increased with age. Among sexually active youth, the most common age for first having sex was 15 years, and 21% reported first having sex before age 14.

Among sexually active students, 53% had sexual intercourse with one person in the past year, and 10% had sex with six or more people (15% of males, 6% of females).

## Oral Sex

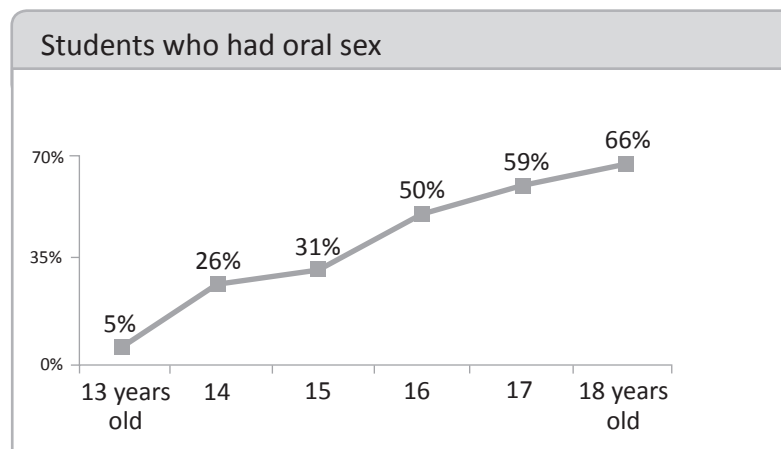
In this area, 35% of male and female students reported ever having oral sex, which was higher than the provincial rate of 26%. Rates of oral sex increased with age.

Among youth who ever had sexual intercourse, 8% of males and 10% of females reported having had sex with a same-sex partner.

## Sexually Transmitted Infections

Overall, 1% of students had been told by a doctor or nurse that they had a sexually transmitted infection (STI). The rate was 4% among sexually active students.

*I went to get tested for STD's but didn't go through with it on more than one occasion because I was uncomfortable.*





## Birth Control and Pregnancy

As in 2003, 70% of sexually active youth reported using a condom the last time they had sex, and 66% indicated that they had done so to prevent pregnancy.

Among sexually active youth, 48% used birth control pills to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex. Twenty percent used withdrawal which is an unreliable method of contraception, and 4% used only withdrawal. Seven percent of students used no method to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex and 5% used emergency contraception (“morning after pill”).

Five percent of sexually active students reported that they have been pregnant or caused a pregnancy, which was comparable to the provincial rate of 7%.



Among students who have had sexual intercourse, 38% reported that they drank alcohol or used drugs before having sex the last time.

# Abuse & Violence

“Did you know that there is abuse going on everyday in “good” households with threats of abandonment if tales get told?”

## Physical and Sexual Abuse

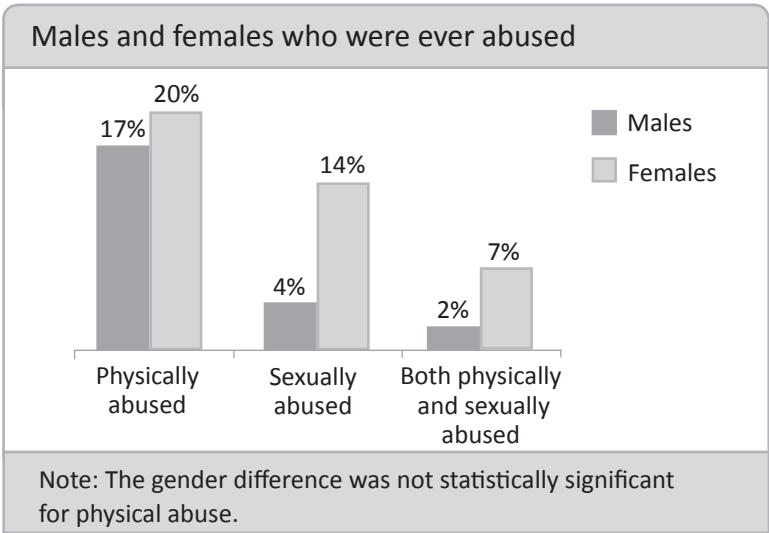
Similar to youth across the province, 19% of students reported that they had been physically abused and 9% had been sexually abused (both these rates were unchanged locally from 2003). In total, 23% of youth had experienced either form of abuse and 5% had experienced both types of abuse.

Six percent of students had been forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to. Four percent had been forced by another youth, and 1% by an adult. These rates were similar to both the provincial and 2003 rates. There were no gender differences.

## Sexual Harassment

The percentage of students who experienced verbal (53%) or physical (31%) sexual harassment was similar to the rate for this area in 2003. However, both rates were above the 2008 provincial rates of 47% and 27% respectively.

Female students were more likely to experience either form of harassment. In the past year, 61% of females and 44% of males had been verbally sexually harassed, and 41% of females and 19% of males had been physically sexually harassed.



## Internet Safety

Fifteen percent of students (21% of females and 7% of males) had been in contact with someone on the Internet who made them feel unsafe. This was similar to the 2008 provincial rate and the 2003 local rate. Twelve percent of male and female students gave personal information to someone they had met on the Internet in the past year.

Twenty percent of students were cyber-bullied in the previous year, similar to the provincial rate (17%). Females were more likely than males to have been cyber-bullied (26% vs. 14%).

## Physical fights

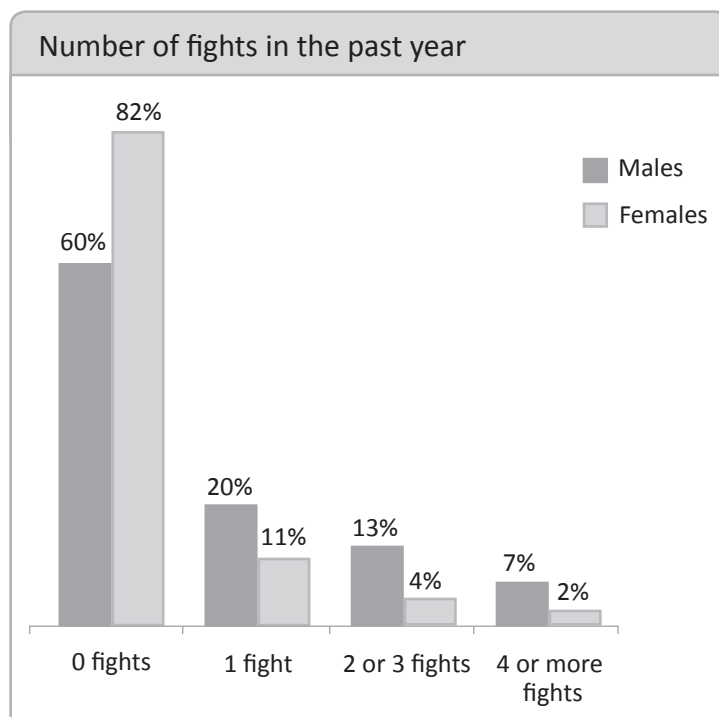
Above the provincial rate of 24% and unchanged from the 2003 local rate, 28% of students in this area were involved in a physical fight in the past year, and 3% of students were injured seriously enough in a fight to require medical attention. Males were more likely than females to have been in a fight (40% vs. 18%).

## Relationship Violence

Eight percent of male and female students who were in a relationship reported that their boyfriend or girlfriend had hit, slapped, or hurt them in the past month.

## Discrimination

Eighteen percent of students experienced discrimination as a result of their physical appearance. This was a local decrease from



23% in 2003, and was similar to the provincial rate in 2008. Six percent of students had been discriminated against because of race or skin colour in the past year, which has not changed since 2003, but is lower than the provincial rate (12%).

Similar to youth across the province, 5% of students reported they had experienced discrimination because of their sexual orientation.

“ *People mock my religion around me all the time.* ”



# School & Work

## School Connectedness

Feeling connected to school is linked to better physical and emotional health and to reduced risk taking. In this area and consistent with the AHS provincial results, the majority of students reported liking school somewhat (64%). Females were more likely than males to like school very much (22% vs. 13%) and to feel more connected to school.

Feelings of connectedness to school were unrelated to grade level, unlike in the province as a whole where connectedness was highest among Grade 7 students.

Thirty-one percent of students skipped at least one full day of school in the past month. Students in higher grades were more likely than students in younger grades to skip school.

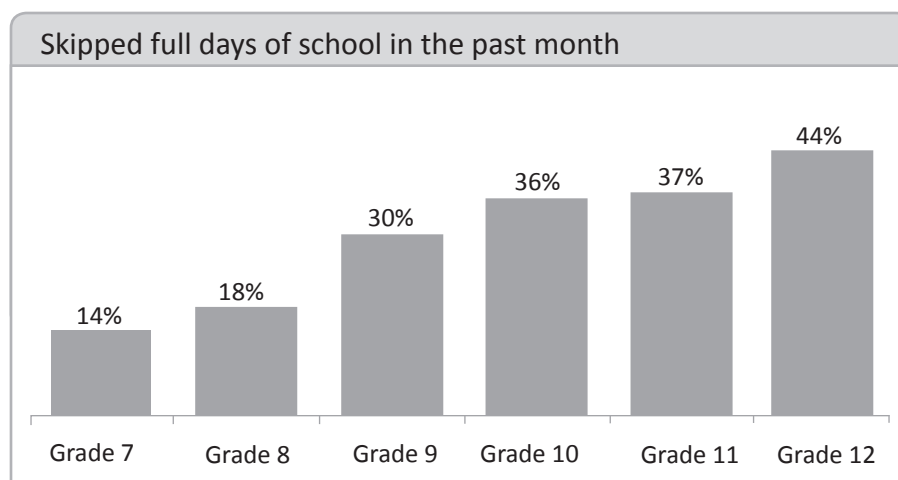
Youth who skipped school in the past month felt less connected to school and had more trouble getting along with teachers and peers compared to students who did not skip school.

## Feeling Safe at School

Forty-eight percent of students reported always feeling safe at school, which was comparable to the rate in this area in 2003 and higher than the 2008 provincial rate of 41%.

The sense of always feeling safe was lower for students in Grades 7 through 10 than for those in Grade 12.

Students most commonly reported “always or usually” feeling safe in the library (87%) or classroom (84%). They were least likely to report “always or usually” feeling safe outside on school property during school hours (67%).

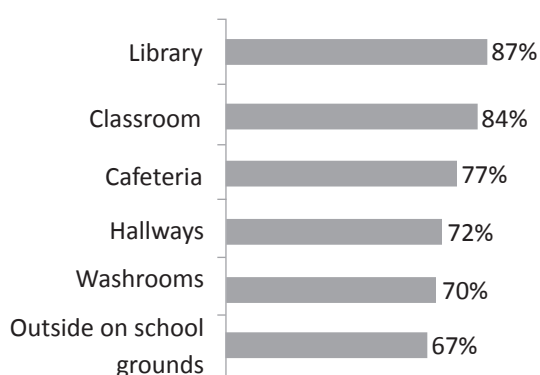


“  
*I really, really, want you guys  
 to help on the bullying and  
 cliques amongst students, I hate  
 being looked at and laughed at  
 because of my hair.*  
 ”

Ten percent of students had been physically attacked or assaulted while at school or travelling to or from school in the past year. Males were more likely than females to be physically attacked (16% vs. 5%), but females were more likely to be victims of relational aggression (i.e., excluded from social groups or ignored; 39% vs. 28%) or to be verbally harassed at school (e.g., teased; 44% vs. 29%).

The rate of verbal aggression in this area was higher than the percentage in the province as a whole (37% vs. 32%). Rates of all three forms of school-based aggression were comparable to the 2003 percentages in this area.

#### Where students always/usually felt safe at school



#### Weapon Carrying

A total of 8% of students carried a weapon to school in the past month (13% of males and

4% of females). Among those who carried a weapon, the majority (80%) carried a knife or razor.

#### Academic Aspirations

The vast majority of students expected to finish high school; only 2% anticipated finishing their education before graduating from high school. A total of 48% expected to complete their education when they graduate from university, medical school, or law school; 24% when they graduate from community college or a technical institute; 8% once they complete high school; and 18% were not sure when they would complete their education.

#### Work

A total of 47% of students worked at a paid job during the school year, which was comparable to the 2003 rate and higher than the 2008 provincial rate (41%). Among students who worked, 33% worked less than 5 hours a week, 54% worked 5-19 hours, and 13% worked 20 or more hours a week.

“  
*I know someone who carries  
 a pocket knife. They have  
 been my friend since grade  
 6, and have never used it on  
 someone as far as I know.*  
 ”

# Sports & Leisure Activities

## Exercise

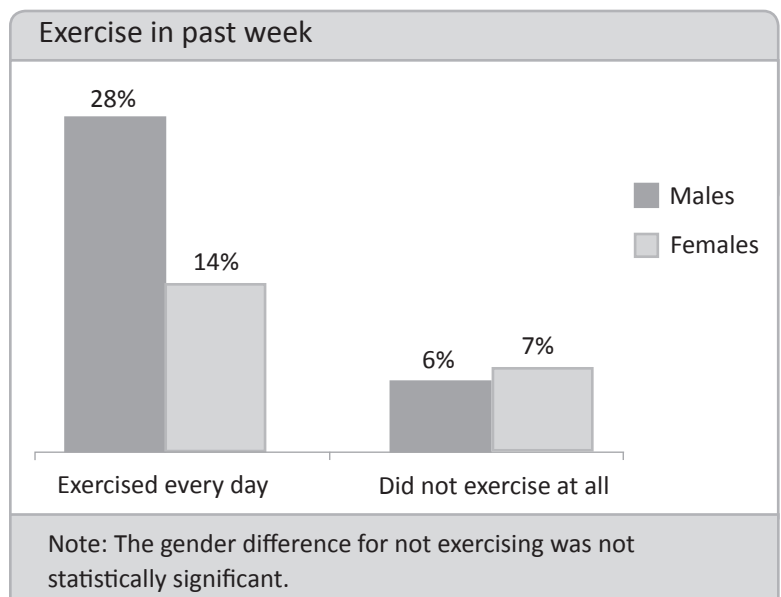
Health Canada recommends that youth participate in a minimum of 90 minutes of physical activity every day. Yet, when asked how often they exercised for at least 20 minutes a day during the past week, only 28% of males and 14% of females exercised every day, while 7% of youth did not exercise at all. A greater percentage of students in this area exercised every day compared to the province as a whole (21% vs. 18%).

On average, youth in lower grades exercised more often than those in later grades. Exercise rates for this area were comparable between 2003 and 2008.

## Extracurricular Activities

The majority of youth participated in extracurricular sports activities on a weekly basis: 61% of youth took part in sports activities with a coach (e.g., school teams, swimming lessons), and 77% participated in physical activities without a coach (e.g., biking, road hockey). While males and females were equally likely to participate in sports with a coach, males were more likely to participate in non-coached sports activities (84% vs. 72%) and females were more likely to take part in dance/aerobic classes (33% vs. 11%).

“*I exercise every day, and enjoy it.*”



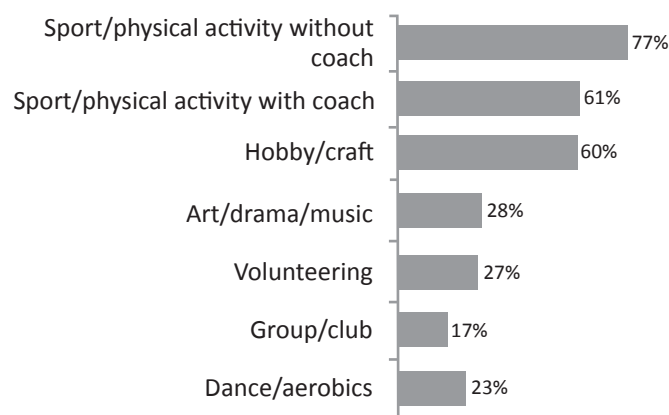
“*We need more to do in this town.*”

In addition to participating in sports activities, youth engaged in a range of other activities outside of school hours. For example, in the past 12 months, 65% did some form of volunteer work such as babysitting or helping a charity and 27% did this once a week or more. Other leisure activities youth participated in on a weekly basis included hobbies (60%), art/drama/music (28%) and clubs (17%). Females were more likely than males

to take part in art, drama and music activities (32% vs. 23%).

Compared to the province as a whole, youth in this area were more likely to participate weekly in non-coached sports activities and in hobbies. In this area, weekly participation in extracurricular activities was comparable between 2003 and 2008, with the exception of hobbies which increased from 46% to 60%.

#### Weekly participation in activities in the past year



#### Weekly participation in extracurricular sports activities

	Kootenay Boundary 2003	Kootenay Boundary 2008	BC 2008
Sports without coach	80%	77%	69% <sup>†</sup>
Sports with coach	60%	61%	59%
Hobbies	46%	60% <sup>♦</sup>	54% <sup>†</sup>

<sup>♦</sup> Difference between 2003 and 2008 Kootenay Boundary estimates was statistically significant.

<sup>†</sup> Difference between 2008 Kootenay Boundary and provincial estimates was statistically significant.



## Screen Time

Similar to the province as a whole, 88% of youth in this area watched TV on a typical school day and 22% did so for three or more hours. There was no gender difference in TV watching. The percentage of youth in this area who watched TV for three or more hours dropped from 37% in 2003 to 22% in 2008.

On a typical school day, the majority of youth spent time on the Internet (excluding doing homework), talking or texting on the phone, or playing video games. Over one-fifth of students (22%) phoned or texted for three or more hours on a typical school day. The same percentage used the Internet and 14% played video games for three or more hours a day. Youth in this area were less likely than those in the province as a whole to be on the Internet for three or more hours a day (22% vs. 27%).

Males were more likely than females to play video games for three or more hours a day (23% vs. 5%), but were less likely to spend this amount of time texting or talking on the phone (14% vs. 30%).

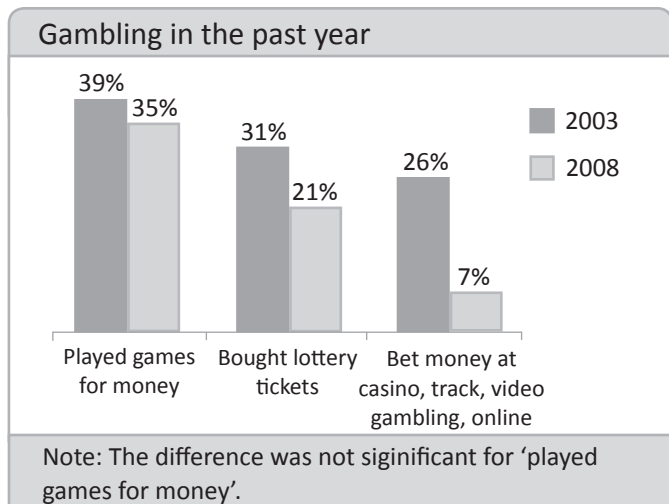
## Gambling

Although it is often seen as a fun activity, gambling in BC is illegal for youth under 19 years of age. Some young people turn to gambling as a way to escape from their problems, and it is often linked to risky behaviours such as alcohol use and smoking. Gambling at an early age also increases the risk of developing an adult gambling problem.

### 2010 Winter Olympics

When asked about the effect of the upcoming 2010 Olympics in BC, 47% of youth said they had not thought about it, 45% said it had not affected them, 8% said they had become more physically active, 7% reported they had more sports opportunities, and 3% felt they had more job prospects.

Forty-four percent of students reported gambling in the past year (compared to 39% provincially). There was no gender difference in buying lottery tickets, but males were more likely than females to have played games for money (52% vs. 20%) and to have bet money at a casino, racetrack, on video games or on-line (10% vs. 5%). Participation in all three forms of gambling decreased from 2003 to 2008, with the exception of playing games for money where the percentage of males who gambled in this way remained consistent.



# Protective Factors

“ I love my family and friends. ”

The survey included a number of questions that have been shown to reflect protective factors for youth. By looking at these protective factors we can point to areas of health promotion, education and awareness which can improve the lives of all youth, including the most vulnerable.

## Family and School Connectedness

Family connectedness includes youths' feelings of closeness, caring, warmth, satisfaction and understanding toward their parents and family. School connectedness refers to students' relationships with their teachers and their sense of belonging at school.

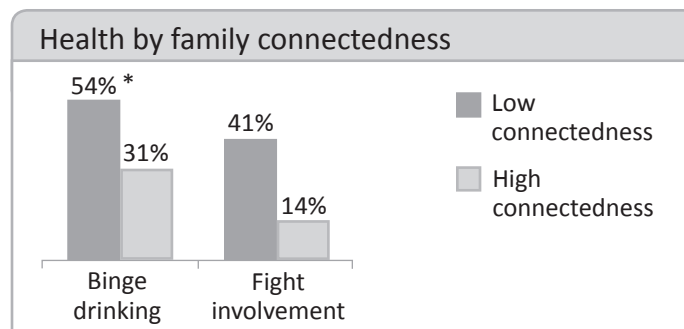
On average, students indicated relatively high connectedness to family and school. Male and female students were equally connected to family; however, males were less connected to school than females. Family

and school connectedness scores for this area were comparable to the province as a whole.

## Cultural Connectedness

The 2008 AHS included items on ethnic or cultural connectedness which measured the extent to which youth made efforts to learn about their ethnic/cultural group and how strongly they belonged to or felt attached to their group.

Of the six issues pertaining to cultural connectedness, the one that received the most endorsement from youth was “I understand what my ethnic group means to me”, with 39% agreeing with the statement. Fewer youth agreed with other statements regarding learning about their ethnic group, feeling a strong sense of belonging or attachment to the group or participating in cultural practices. There were no gender differences in level of cultural connectedness.



“ *I think children should have a part in politics even in just our own community.* ”

Compared to the entire province, youth in this area reported lower levels of cultural connectedness. For example, while 31% of youth in this area reported participating in their group’s cultural practices, 42% of youth in the entire province did so.

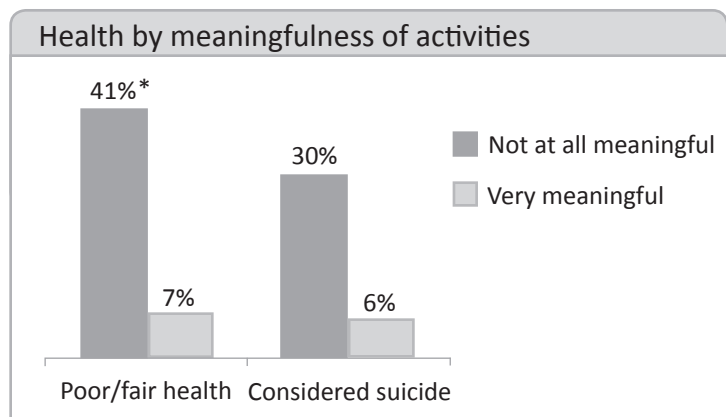
## Youth Engagement

In addition to being asked about their involvement in extracurricular activities, youth were asked to rate how meaningful their activities were to them and how much they felt their ideas were listened to and acted upon in these activities.

Five to six percent of youth reported that the activities they were involved in were not at all meaningful to them or that they had no input into these activities. On the other hand, 38% were involved in activities that were very meaningful to them and 14% felt that they had a lot of input into their activities. Levels of youth engagement in this area were comparable to those seen in the province as a whole.

## Positive Peer Relationships

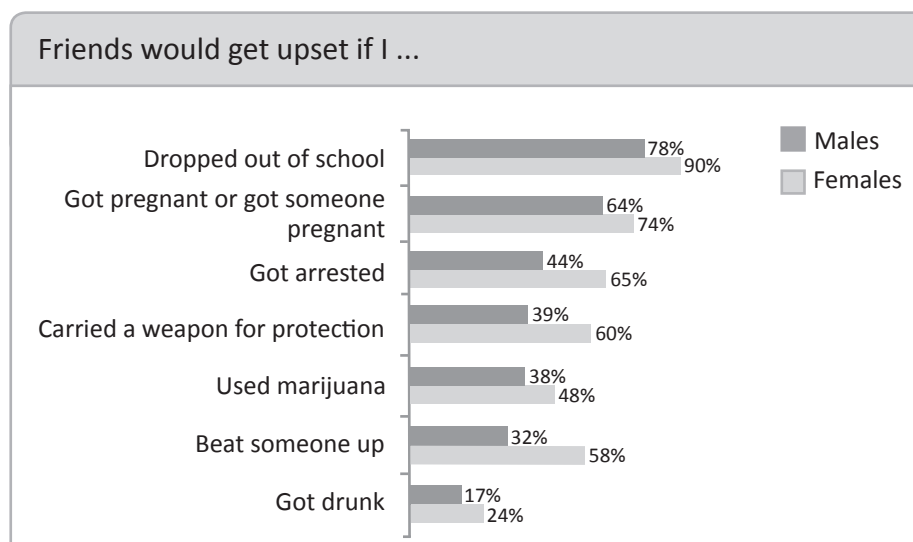
Youth were asked whether their friends would be upset if they engaged in a number of behaviours including getting arrested,



“ *Most adult institutions are infested with people who constantly disrespect youth. Mental health requires that these begin to treat youth with respect.* ”

beating someone up or dropping out of school. For each situation females were more likely than males to think their friends would be upset with them.

The overall level of prosocial peer attitudes was lower in this area compared to the province in general. For example, students in this area were less likely than those in the entire province to think that their friends would be upset with them if they got arrested (55% vs. 66%), beat someone up (46% vs. 54%), were



involved in a pregnancy (69% vs. 74%), got drunk (20% vs. 35%) or used marijuana (44% vs. 58%).

## The Value of Protective Factors

Results from provincial data depict the value of promoting protective factors. The table on the next page indicates that the presence of protective factors was generally associated with lower rates of poor/fair health, binge drinking, suicidal ideation, and fighting involvement compared to overall provincial rates. Similar associations were evident in the Kootenay Boundary area (see previous graphs on family connectedness and meaningfulness of activities).

## Building Resilience in Vulnerable Youth

Protective factors can reduce the likelihood of experiencing negative outcomes even for

vulnerable youth. For example, a substantial number of youth in the Kootenay Boundary area reported being victimized or bullied at school and 15% of these youth had seriously considered suicide in the past year. However, being connected to their family, school or cultural group, being engaged in their extracurricular activities, and having peers with healthy attitudes about risk behavior were each associated with a lower risk of suicidal ideation.

These findings show us that building protective factors can assist youth, even those who are vulnerable, to overcome negative experiences, can help young people to make healthier choices and can contribute to more positive health outcomes.

Protective factors and reduction of health risk behaviours for BC youth				
	Poor/fair health	Binge drinking	Considered suicide in past year	Involved in fight
Highly connected to family	4%	14%	4%	15%
Highly connected to school	5%	11%	5%	12%
Highly connected to cultural/ethnic group	13%	18%	10% <sup>N/S</sup>	24% <sup>N/S</sup>
Involved in very meaningful activities	9%	23% <sup>N/S</sup>	9%	24% <sup>N/S</sup>
Have peers with more prosocial attitudes	13%	2%	8%	10%
<b>Overall Provincial Rate</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>24%</b>
<sup>N/S</sup> Not significantly different from overall provincial rate.				

Even a small improvement in a protective factor, such as school or family connectedness, will improve outcomes for youth in many areas.

Protective factors	Kootenay Boundary	BC
Family connectedness	7.9	7.9
School connectedness	6.7	6.8
Cultural connectedness	4.9	5.5 <sup>†</sup>
Youth engagement		
Meaningfulness of activities	7.4	7.2
Ideas listened to and acted upon	6.0	6.0
Prosocial peer attitudes about risk behaviour	5.2	6.0 <sup>†</sup>
Note: All protective factor scores range from 0 to 10, with a higher score indicating higher levels of the protective factor.		
<sup>†</sup> Difference between Kootenay Boundary and provincial estimate was statistically significant.		

# Acknowledgements

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## AHS IV Inter-Ministerial Advisory Committee

### **Kelly Acker**

Policy Advisor, Ministry of Community Services

### **Jayne Barker**

Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)

### **Jennifer Donison**

Aboriginal Regional Support Services Team, Quality Assurance Analyst, MCFD

### **Ron Duffell**

Executive Director, Act Now BC

### **Les Foster**

University of Victoria/Contractor Ministry of Health

### **John Green**

Youth Services Consultant, MCFD

### **Jamie Lipp**

Community Justice, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

### **Alex Mann**

Policy and Research Analyst, Ministry of Education

### **Steve Morgan**

Child and Youth Mental Health Consultant, MCFD

### **Paul Mulholland**

Youth Services Consultant, MCFD

### **Wayne Mitic**

A/Manager, Chronic Disease Prevention, Ministry of Health

### **Phil Schwartz**

Director, MCFD

### **Wayne Wei**

Performance Management Analyst, MCFD

### **Michelle Wong**

Contractor, MCFD

## AHS IV Institute

### **Kelly Acker**

Senior's and Women's Partnerships, Ministry of Community Services

### **Tim Agg**

McCreary Centre Society Board/PLEA

### **Marika Albert**

McCreary Centre Society

### **Tanya Bemis**

Healthy Living/Chronic Disease Prevention, Ministry of Health

### **Dr. William Boyce**

Faculties of Education and Health Science, Queen's University

### **Jennifer Cameron**

McCreary Centre Society

### **Anne Carten**

Children and Youth Health, Vancouver Coastal Health

### **Kathy Cassels**

Directorate of Agencies for School Health BC

### **Dr. Susan Clark**

Educational Psychology, UBC

### **Dr. David Cox**

Department of Psychology, SFU

### **Sarah Day**

McCreary Centre Society

### **Jennifer Donison**

Aboriginal Regional Support Services Team, Province of BC

### **Dulcie Fernandes**

Child and Youth Officer for BC, Ministry of Attorney General

### **Annette Glover**

BC School Trustees Association

### **Dr. Rita Green**

Statistics Canada

### **Elaine Jones**

Division of STI/HIV Prevention and Control, BC Centre for Disease Control

### **Pamela Joshi**

BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit, Children's and Women's Health Centre of BC

### **Sherry Kelly**

Interior Health

### **Dr. Marvin Krank**

Graduate Studies – UBC Okanagan

### **Alison Liebel**

McCreary Centre Society

### **Jaimie Lipp**

Victim Services and Community Programs Division, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

### **Dr. Nadine Loewen**

Fraser Health

### **Dr. Laura McKay**

SFU

### **Dr. Roey Malleson**

Division of Adolescent Health, Children's and Women's Health Centre of BC

### **Sydney Massey**

BC Dairy Foundation

### **Lauranne Matheson**

Division of Childhood and Adolescence, Public Health Agency of Canada

### **Pat Mauch**

McCreary Centre Society Board

### **Megan McLarnon**

Department of Psychology, UBC

### **Bruce Mills**

Healthy Schools Network, Ministry of Education

### **Steve Morgan**

Child and Youth Mental Health Team, MCFD

### **Paul Mulholland**

Youth Services Policy Team, MCFD

### **Melissa Northcott**

McCreary Centre Society

### **Dr. Colleen Poon**

McCreary Centre Society

### **Kathy Powelson**

McCreary Centre Society

### **Maureen Rowlands**

Health Promotion, Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC and Yukon

### **David Sadler**

McCreary Centre Society

### **Dr. Elizabeth Saewyc**

McCreary Centre Society/UBC School of Nursing

### **Annie Smith**

McCreary Centre Society

### **Cathy Still**

McCreary Centre Society Board

### **Dr. Tim Stockwell**

Centre for Addictions Research of BC, UVic

### **Dr. Roger Tonkin**

McCreary Centre Society Founder

### **Wayne Wei**

Accountability and Project Management Branch, MCFD

### **Cathy Whitehead**

Vancouver Island Health Authority

### **Karen Wonders**

Northern Interior Health Unit



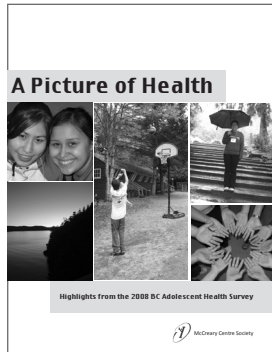
## **Kootenay Boundary Regional Coordinators and Administrators**

Heather Allen  
Sherry Kelly  
Linda Rollins



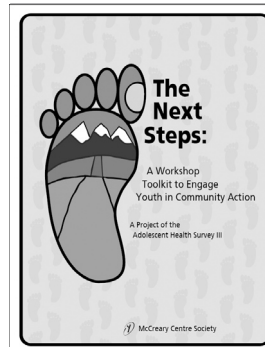
# McCreary Resources

For any of these, or other materials by the McCreary Centre Society, visit our website [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca).



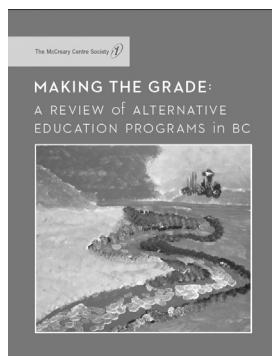
## ***A Picture of Health: Highlights from the 2008 Adolescent Health Survey (2009)***

Over 29,000 students in grades 7-12 across the province participated in the Adolescent Health Survey. It is the largest survey of its kind in Canada and provides valuable health status and risk behaviours of BC adolescents.



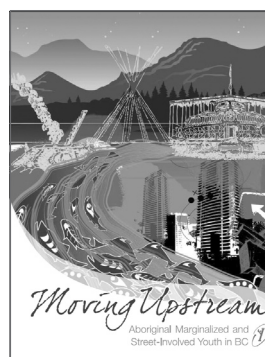
## ***The Next Steps: A workshop toolkit to engage youth in community action (2005)***

The Next Steps is a workshop series that provides youth, along with supportive adults, an opportunity to: discuss the results of the Adolescent Health Survey; identify priority issues; and plan projects for improving the health of youth in their communities.



## ***Making the Grade: A review of alternative education programs in BC (2008)***

A review of alternative education programs in BC, involving youth attending alternative education programs for “at-risk” and “high risk” youth across the province, and adult stakeholders. The review documents the positive impact of these programs for youth.



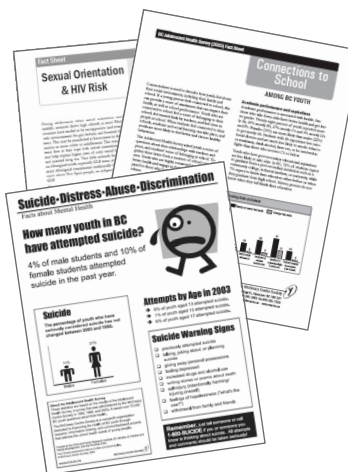
## ***Moving Upstream: Aboriginal marginalized and street-involved youth in BC (2008)***

This report analyzes the experiences in nine BC communities of homeless, inadequately housed, street-involved and marginalized Aboriginal youth. The report is a further analysis of McCreary’s Marginalized and Street-Involved Youth Survey.



## ***Against the Odds: A profile of marginalized and street-involved youth in BC (2007)***

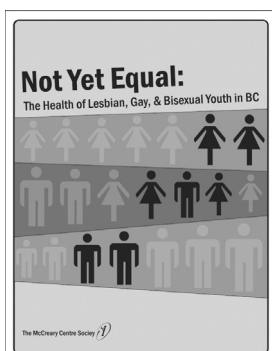
The lives of marginalized and street-involved youth are complex and filled with challenges, dangers and opportunities. This report summarizes the results of surveys with marginalized youth in the North, Interior, Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island and Vancouver.



## ***Fact Sheets***

Fact Sheets offer research results on a variety of topics using the most recent Adolescent Health Survey data. Fact Sheets include:

- Sexual behaviour & sexuality
- Connections to school
- Safety and violence
- Harassment & discrimination
- Emotional health
- Injuries



## ***Not Yet Equal: The health of lesbian, gay & bisexual youth in BC (2007)***

This report takes a closer look at the health of LGB youth, their life experiences and risk behaviours across the first three AHS surveys. It reveals both hopeful and worrying trends.







**McCreary Centre Society**

3552 East Hastings St. Vancouver, BC V5K 2A7  
[www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca)