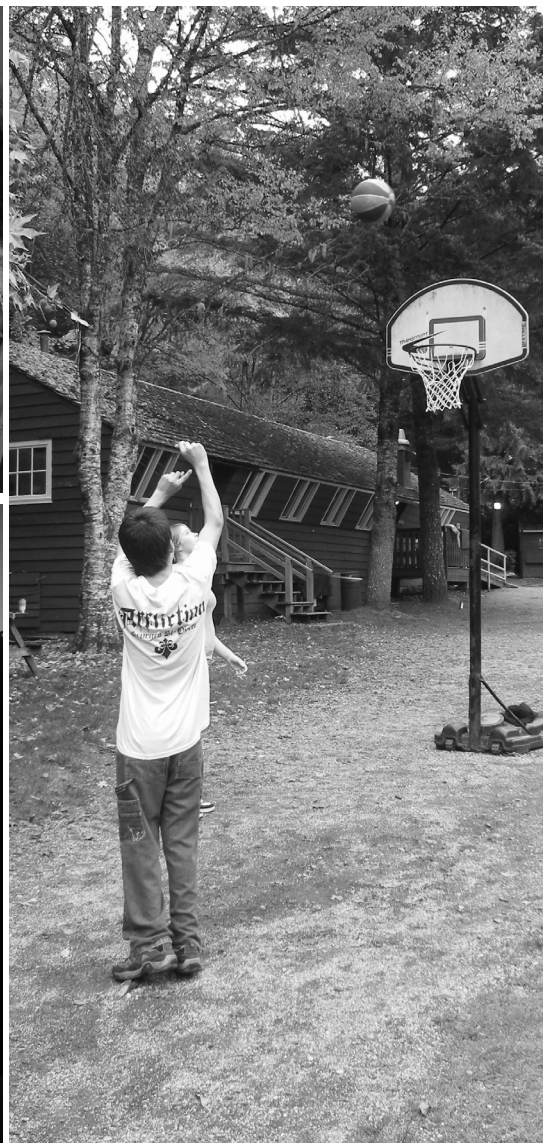


A Picture of Health



Northwest
Results of the 2008 British Columbia Adolescent Health Survey

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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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ISBN: 978-1-895438-90-1

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Funding for the Adolescent Health Survey was provided by the Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Children and Family Development; Child Health BC; Northern Health Authority; and Centre for Addictions Research BC, University of Victoria.

The McCreary Centre Society thanks the Inter-Ministerial Advisory Committee, participants in the AHS Institute advisory meetings, Public Health Nurses who administered the survey and participating school districts, principals and teachers.

Special thanks are also due to the youth who completed the survey, and whose participation, honesty and thoughtful insights are greatly appreciated.

Suggested citation:

Smith, A., Stewart, D., Peled, M., Poon, C., Saewyc, E. and the McCreary Centre Society (2009). *A Picture of Health: Northwest. Results of the 2008 British Columbia Adolescent Health Survey*. Vancouver, BC: McCreary Centre Society.

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Introduction

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.

Northwest 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.

The Northwest area is located in the Northern Health Authority region.

Of these, two school districts, Haida Gwaii-Queen Charlotte and Silkitine, chose not to participate in the survey, and reported results may not be representative of these non-participating districts.

School Districts included in the Northwest area are:

Haida Gwaii – Queen Charlotte (SD 50), Prince Rupert (SD 52), Buckley Valley (SD 54), Coast Mountains (SD 82), Silkitine (SD 87) and Nisga'a (SD 92)

Northwest Health Service Delivery Area



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.

Northwest 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

- Similar to youth across the province and to youth in the Northwest in 2003, 84% of youth reported that their health was good or excellent.
- There was no change in injury rates in this area between 2003 and 2008 with 38% of students injured seriously enough to need medical attention. This is above the 2008 provincial rate of 29%.
- The percentage of youth in this area who indicated that they were overweight or obese was similar to the percentage for this area in 2003 and remains above the provincial rate. Students in this area were more likely than students in the province as a whole to report dieting in the past year (35% vs. 31%).
- Seventy-eight percent of students rode a bicycle in the past year, above the provincial rate of 71%. However, only 19% of cyclists always wore a bike helmet, which was below the provincial rate of 24%.
- Some injury prevention behaviour did improve, as there was a rise in the percentage of youth who always wore a seatbelt when riding in a motor vehicle (from 47% in 2003 to 64% in 2008).
- Although an improvement in suicidal ideation and attempts was seen across the province, this was not the case in this area where the percentage of students who seriously considered suicide (15%) or who attempted suicide (7%) remained the same as 2003.
- Thirty-one percent of students in this area had ever tried smoking. This was an improvement from 41% in 2003. There was also a local decrease in the percentage of youth who had tried marijuana from 47% in 2003 to 40% in 2008. However this was above the provincial rate (30%).
- In this area, 30% of male and female students reported ever having sexual intercourse and the same percentage reported having oral sex. Both these percentages were higher than those seen across the province as a whole (22% and 26% respectively).
- The percentage of students who reported physical or sexual abuse was similar to the local rates in 2003, but higher than provincial rates. In total, 25% of local students had experienced either form of

abuse and 7% had experienced both types of abuse.

- Having friends with healthy attitudes to risk behaviours is a protective factor for youth. Compared to 2003, Northwest youth in 2008 were more likely to say their friends would be upset with them if they got arrested (60% vs. 49%), were involved in a pregnancy (76% vs. 70%), dropped out (88% vs. 81%) or used marijuana (53% vs. 42%) but less likely to think friends would be upset if they carried a weapon (48% vs. 55%).

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.

“*I have good health. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to take this wonderful test I enjoyed it a lot and it let me put down honest answers without people knowing who I am.*”

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.

The addition of one new school district and the change in consent procedures from 2003 within another of the participating school districts may have affected the results. For example, in school districts across the province where youth required 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 and by the small percentage of students affected by the change. 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 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.

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.

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

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@mcs.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

Northwest Youth: Their Home & Family

Background

Students in this area (the Northwest HSDA) identified with a broad range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The majority of students were of European heritage (66%), which was above the provincial rate of 54% but a local decrease from 72% in 2003. There was an increase in the percentage of students who identified as Aboriginal/First Nations (from 20% in 2003 to 29% in 2008).

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

Three percent of students in this area were born outside of Canada, below the provincial rate of 18%. Two percent of students had lived in Canada 5 years or less (below the provincial rate of 9%).

Language

There was an increase in the percentage of youth who spoke a language other than English at home, from 30% in 2003 to 38% in 2008.

Ethnic or cultural background

European	66%
Aboriginal/First Nations	29%
East Asian	3%
Latin/South/Central American	3%
South Asian	3%
Southeast Asian	3%
African	2%
Australian/Pacific Islander	1%
Other (excluding Canadian)	1%
Don't know	9%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

Spoke a language other than English at home

Never	62%
Sometimes	32%
Most of the time	5%

First Nations

Twenty nine percent of students in this area reported Aboriginal heritage. Among these students, 63% had First Nations status, 19% were Aboriginal but did not have First Nations status, and 12% were Métis.

“ *Having religious confliotions,
not sure where I fit in, Christian,
pagan, atheist?* ”

Seventeen percent of Aboriginal students currently lived on a reserve, and 33% had lived on a reserve at some point in their life (6% for less than a year, 12% for a few years, and 16% for most of their life).

Sexual Orientation

Eighty-six percent of students identified as heterosexual, 7% as mostly heterosexual, 3% as bisexual, 1% as gay/lesbian and 4% were unsure.

Spirituality

Fifty-four percent of students reported that they were not at all religious or spiritual. The remainder were either somewhat (36%) or very much (10%) 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 (65%) most of the time; 15% 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

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

Mother	87%
Father	65%
Stepfather	8%
Other adults related to me	6%
Stepmother	3%
Other adults not related to me	3%
Do not live with any adults	1%

school days when they woke up in the morning (76%) and went to bed at night (80%). 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 5% 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. This rate was higher than the provincial percentage of 3%. Similar to 2003, 2% of youth in this area were in care in the last year.

Twelve percent of students (15% of females, 8% of males) ran away from home in the past year, which was higher than the provincial rate (9%). These students were more likely than those who had not run away to have experienced extreme stress (40% vs. 12%) and despair (25% vs. 4%) and to have attempted suicide in the last 12 months (27% vs. 5%).

Frequently moving house can negatively impact young people's health. Fifteen percent of youth moved once in the past year, 6% moved twice, and 7% moved three or more times. Students who moved in the past year were more likely than students who did not move to attempt suicide in the past 12 months (14% vs. 5%).

Family

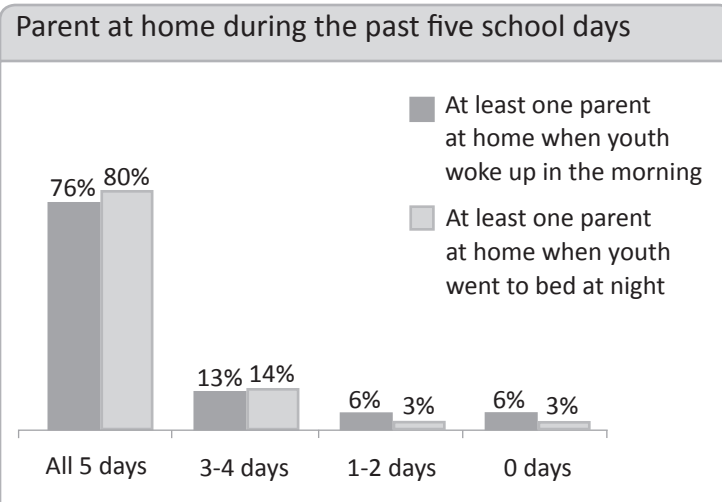
Family Connectedness

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.

Connectedness to mother and father figures was generally unrelated to age, unlike in the province as a whole where connectedness 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 and males showed comparable levels of connectedness. 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 the past five school days reported



higher connectedness with their mother and father figures compared to students whose caregiver was absent on these 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 majority of students in this area reported that they never went to bed hungry (89%), did not share a bedroom (93%), and had

travelled on holiday with their family in the past year (84%). Most youth also reported that their family currently owned a computer (97%) although this percentage was lower than the rate in the province as a whole (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).

Similar to youth across the province, 9% of Northwest students 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 (35% vs. 14%), to have considered suicide in the past year (39% vs. 12%) and to have attempted suicide in the past 12 months (26% vs. 5%).

Family poverty affected youths' ability to participate in extra-curricular activities. For example, youth who experienced hunger or did not go on vacation with their family 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

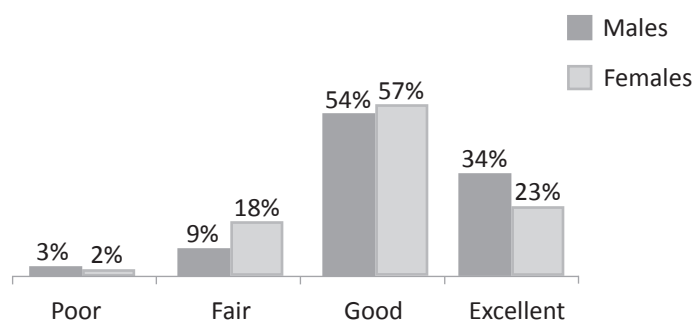
Eighty-four percent of youth in this area reported that their health was good or excellent, which was consistent with both provincial results and results for this area in 2003. More males than females rated their health as excellent (34% vs. 23%). Males were also less likely than females to report that they had physical complaints 'a lot' such as headaches (15% vs. 27%), stomach-aches (7% vs. 18%) or dizziness (9% vs. 14%) in the past six months.

Twelve percent of students in this area reported a debilitating health condition or disability. The most common condition was a long-term illness (such as diabetes or asthma) experienced by 6% of youth. Among youth with a health condition or disability, 29% took daily medication and 7% missed a lot of school due to their condition.

Accessing Medical Care

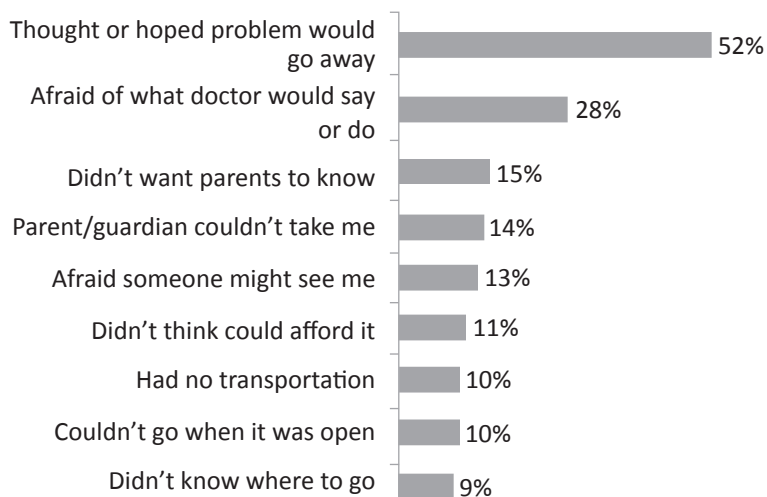
In the past year, 16% of students did not get medical help when they felt they needed it; this was higher than the provincial rate of 13%. Among those youth who did not access needed medical care, the most common reason was because they thought or hoped the problem would go away (52%). There were no gender differences in reasons for not seeking care except that females were more likely than males to say they were afraid of what the doctor would say or do (36% vs. 15%).

Self-reported health status



Note: The gender differences for poor and good health were not statistically significant.

Some reasons for not accessing medical care in the past year (among youth who felt they needed it)



Injuries

Injuries are one of the most common health hazards facing BC youth. In the past year, 38% of students were injured seriously enough to need medical attention. This is above the provincial rate of 29% and has not changed since 2003. There was no gender difference in injury rates.

The most common location for getting hurt was at a sports facility or field (37%). Sixteen percent of injuries occurred at school and 14% were at home.

Most injuries occurred while students were playing or training for sports or doing other recreational activities (47% of injuries), but this was below the provincial rate (55%). Eight percent occurred when students were snowboarding or skiing, 7% occurred when students were riding a bike, and 7% took place during relatively low-risk behaviours

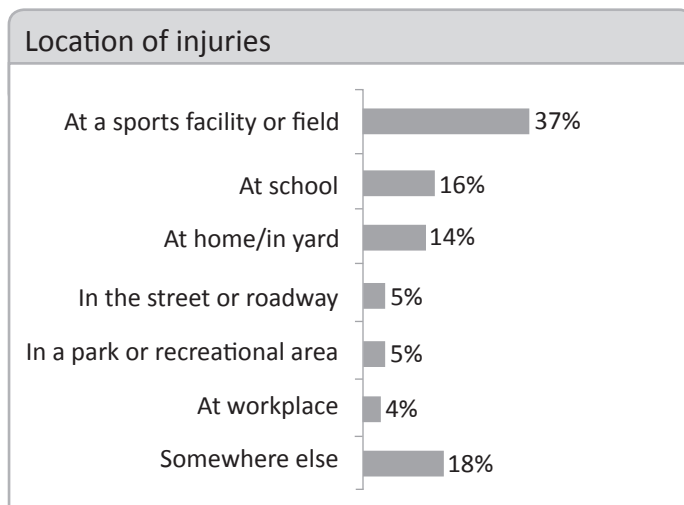
(such as walking or cooking). Similar to the provincial rate, 5% of students were injured in a motor vehicle. The rate of students who were injured roller blading or skateboarding decreased from 6% in 2003 to 2% in 2008.

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. There were no gender differences in seatbelt use or helmet use.

Similar to youth across the province, 64% of students always wore a seatbelt when riding in a motor vehicle. This was a local increase from 47% in 2003.

Seventy-eight percent of students rode a bicycle in the past year, above the provincial rate of 71%. However among these students,



only 19% always wore a bike helmet (which was below the provincial rate of 24%) and 43% never wore one (which was above the 35% provincial rate). As students got older, they were less likely to wear a helmet.

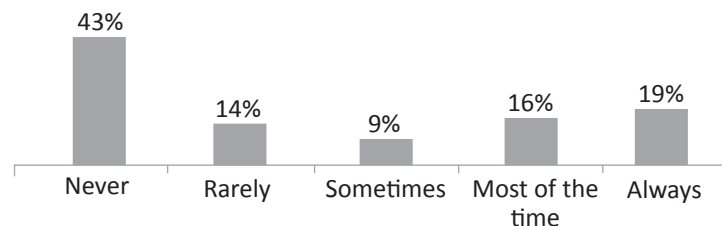
Driving and Substance Use

Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death among BC youth. In this area, 13% of youth had driven after using alcohol or marijuana.

Ten percent of students had ever driven after using alcohol (compared to 7% provincially). In the past month, 6% of students had driven after consuming alcohol (above the provincial rate of 4%) and 20% of students had been a passenger in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking. Males were more likely to have driven after drinking alcohol in the past month (8% vs. 4%).



Helmet use among youth who cycled in the past year



Nutrition

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.) and fast food (pizza, hot dogs, chips and fries). Males were more likely than females to have had dairy (60% vs. 52%), fast food (18% vs. 8%), pop (19% vs. 6%) and energy drinks (7% vs. 2%) 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, 10% of youth in this area

reported eating no fruits or vegetables on the day before they completed the survey and 21% had had only one serving. At least 51% of youth fell short of the recommended daily portions of fruits and vegetables, comparable to the provincial rate.

“*I can't lose the extra weight on my body, even though I eat healthy (breakfast, lunch, snack, dinner) why?*”

What youth ate and drank yesterday			
	No	Yes (once)	Yes (twice or more)
Water	8%	23%	68%
Milk, cheese, yogurt	10%	35%	56%
Fruit	19%	39%	42%
Green salad or vegetables	26%	47%	28%
Cookies, cake, donuts, chocolate bars	40%	44%	16%
Pizza, hot dogs, potato chips, French fries	49%	38%	13%
Pop/soda	53%	35%	12%
Hot or cold coffee or coffee-based drinks	72%	19%	9%
Energy drinks	86%	10%	4%
Note: Percentages do not always total 100% due to rounding.			

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

Similar to youth in the entire province, 51% of students in this area always ate breakfast on school days, while 14% 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. They were also less likely to have had water, fruit, vegetables or dairy yesterday, but more likely to have consumed pop, energy drinks and coffee.



“ *I have very poor eating habits, but am never hungry, thirsty, etc.* ”

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, 72% of students were considered to be a healthy weight for their age and gender, while 3% were underweight, 18% overweight and 7% obese.

Youth in this area were less likely to be underweight and more likely to be overweight or obese compared to youth in the province as a whole.

Males were more likely than females to be overweight. The percentage of students falling into each of the BMI weight categories was similar in 2003 and 2008.

Obesity is linked to health challenges at all ages. Compared to youth who were a healthy weight, obese youth were less likely to rate their health as excellent (15% vs. 31%).

Body Image

Similar to 2003 local rates and 2008 provincial rates, 17% of males in this area rated themselves as very satisfied with their body

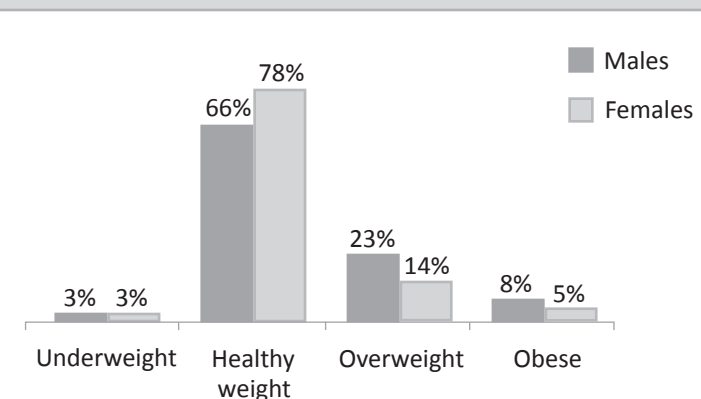
BMI weight categories

	Northwest 2008	BC 2008
Underweight	3%	5% [†]
Healthy Weight	72%	78% [†]
Overweight	18%	13% [†]
Obese	7%	4% [†]

[†] Difference between 2008 Northwest and provincial estimates was statistically significant.

“My health is fine - I am at the perfect weight.”

Students in each weight category



Note: The gender differences for underweight and obese were not statistically significant

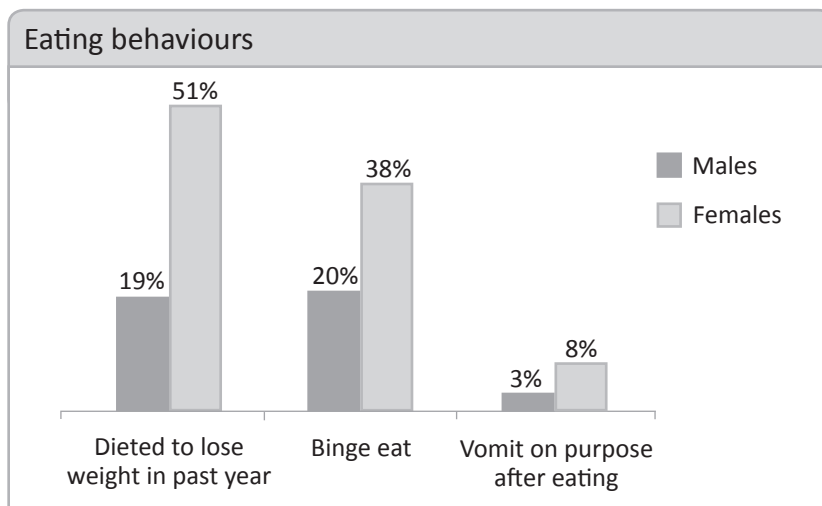
image, compared to only 10% of females. The majority of youth (68%) felt they were about the right weight.

Looking at youth whose BMI indicated they were a healthy weight, 29% stated they were not trying to do anything about their weight and 23% were trying to stay the same weight. However, 52% of healthy weight females were trying to lose weight and 26% 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. Students in this area were more likely than students in the province as a whole to report dieting in the past year (35% vs. 31%).

“When I got into dance and going to the gym and quit smoking, I learned to see my body as my friend.”

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 3.7 and females 3.3.



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 (84%) and their abilities (90%), they had much to be proud of (76%) and felt that their life was useful (85%). Fifty-five percent agreed or mostly agreed with all seven of the self-esteem questions on the survey, which was comparable to the provincial rate.

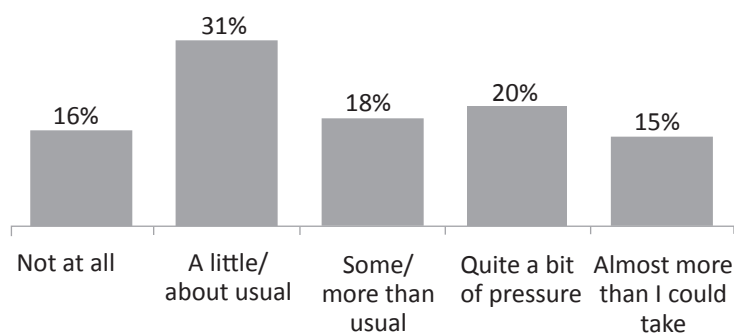
Stress

Eighty-four percent of youth reported feeling some stress or pressure in the past 30 days, and 15% 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 (21% vs. 9%). There

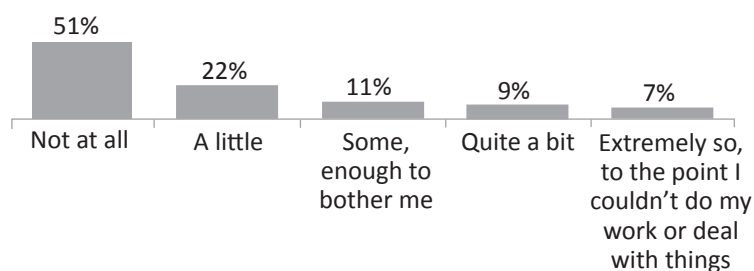
“Homework stresses me out.”

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



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.

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



“*Sometimes I feel depressed...
like no one understands what I
am going through.*”

Despair

Seven percent of students indicated feeling so much despair (feeling sad, discouraged or hopeless) that they wondered if anything was worthwhile and had difficulty functioning properly. Females and males reported comparable rates of extreme despair, unlike in the province as a whole where females were more likely than males to report this level of despair.

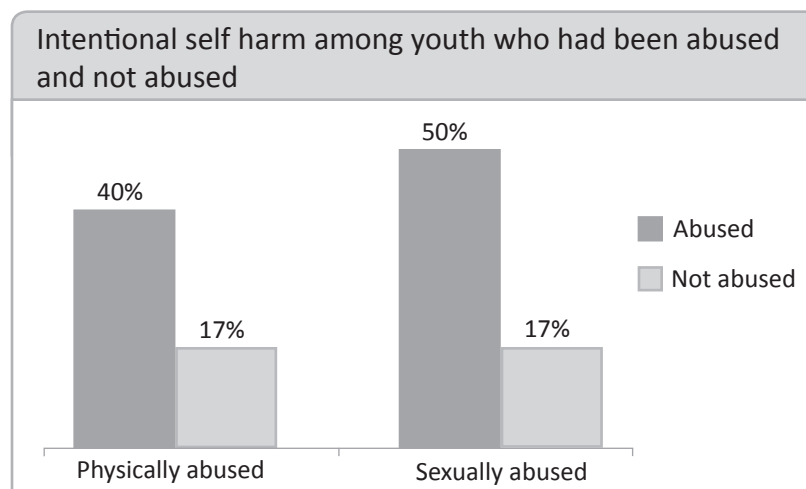
themselves at some point in their lifetime, with 14% doing so once or twice, and 7% doing so three or more times.

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.

Self Harm

Sometimes youth will hurt themselves as a way of coping with stress and pain in their lives. In this area, 28% of female students and 14% of males indicated cutting or injuring themselves on purpose without trying to kill

“*I use to cut myself on the hip so
no one would notice, although
there are no visible scars.*”



Suicide

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth aged 12-18 in British Columbia. In this area, 15% of students reported seriously considering suicide in the past year, which was higher than the provincial rate (12%) and comparable to the rate in this area in 2003.

Seven percent of students attempted suicide in the past year, which was higher than the provincial percentage (5%) and the same as the 2003 rate in this area. Males and females reported comparable rates, unlike in the province as a whole where females were more likely than males to attempt suicide.

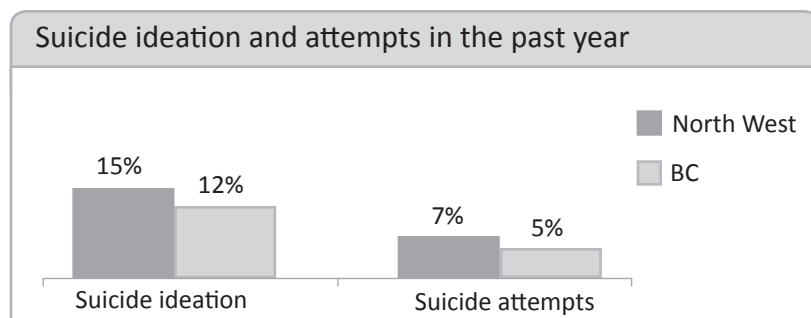
Similar to rates across the province, among youth who attempted suicide in the past year, 29% reported that their attempt was serious enough to require treatment by a doctor or nurse.

Risk factors for suicide

One of the known risk factors for attempting suicide is having a family history of suicidal behaviour. In this area, 22% of youth reported that a family member had tried to commit suicide (higher than the provincial rate of 15%), with 7% doing so in the past year (higher than the provincial rate of 4%). Also, 29% of youth had a close friend who attempted suicide (18% in the past year), which was higher than the provincial percentage (22%).

Students with a family member or close friend who had attempted or committed suicide in the past year were almost five times more likely to attempt suicide themselves, compared to students without these risk factors (19% vs. 4%).

Suicide attempts in the past year were also more likely among students who had ever been physically abused (22% vs. 4%) or sexu-



“*I have been stressed out lately and don't have anyone to talk to.*”

ally abused (30% vs. 4%) compared to students who had never been abused.

Aboriginal youth were over twice as likely as non-Aboriginal youth to have attempted suicide in the past year (14% vs. 5%). Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth*, and youth with a health condition or disability (22% vs. 5%), were also at greater risk for attempting suicide.

Also, youth who had ever used alcohol or marijuana were more likely to have attempted suicide compared to students who had never used these substances.

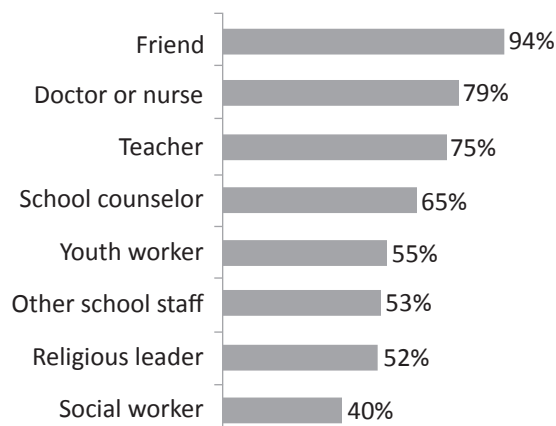
Help Seeking

The majority of students felt they could seek support from adults in their family (76%) or from adults outside their family (61%) if they were faced with a serious problem.

Students reported approaching a variety of professionals for help in the past year, including teachers (40%), doctors or nurses (32%), school counselors (28%), other school staff (20%), youth workers (17%), religious leaders (15%), and social workers (13%).

In addition to turning to adults for help, most students (81%) asked their friends for

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



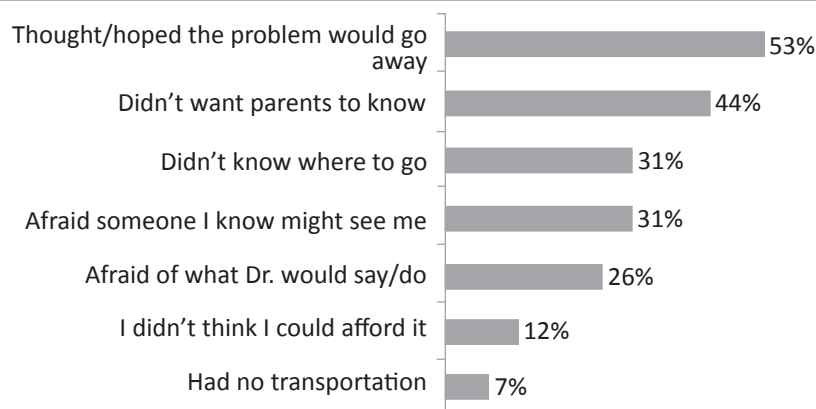
assistance. Students who sought support in the past year generally reported finding the assistance of both friends and professionals helpful.

Accessing Mental Health Services

When asked specifically about accessing mental health services in the past year, 19% of females and 8% 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 (53%) and students not wanting their parents to know (44%).

“ I think that having after school hours for councilors would make teens feel more comfortable since I wanted to go to the councilors but felt judged if I went at lunch or middle of a class. ”

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



Smoking

“ I use chewing tobacco a lot. ”

Thirty-one percent of students in this area had ever tried smoking, which was above the provincial rate (26%), but below the 2003 rate for this area (41%). Males and females were equally likely to have tried smoking.

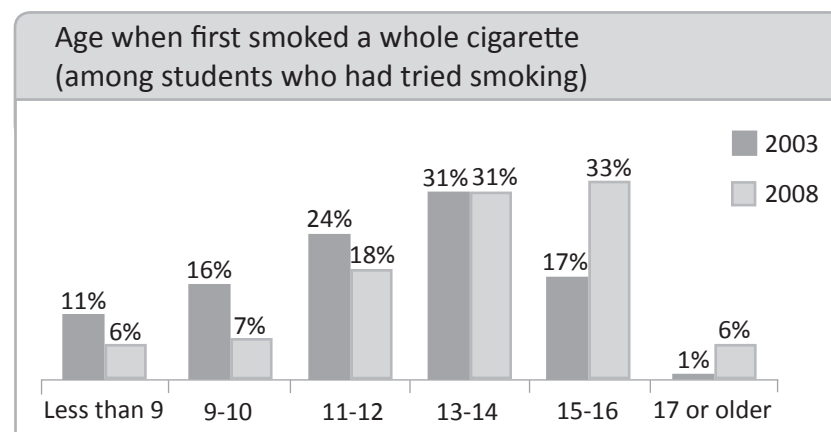
Students who had tried smoking waited longer to first try cigarettes than students in 2003. Among students who smoked, 12% had their first cigarette when they were 10 years old or younger, compared to 27% in 2003. In contrast, 33% waited until they were 15 or 16 years old (compared to 17% in 2003).

Less than half (45%) of students who had tried smoking had smoked in the past month. Those who did smoke most commonly smoked 1 or 2 days in the past month (18% of all students who had tried smoking).

Similar to the provincial rate, 4% of young people had used chewing tobacco in the past month.

Second-hand Smoke

Thirty-seven percent of students in this area had been exposed to smoke inside their home or vehicle. This was a higher percentage than across the province as a whole (28%). Sixteen percent of youth were exposed to smoke in their home or car almost every day.



Substance Use

“*I have done drugs and alcohol before but I don’t anymore.*”

Alcohol

Similar to the local rate in 2003, 65% of youth had tried more than just a few sips of alcohol. This was above the provincial figure of 54%. Males and females were equally likely to have tried alcohol.

The most common age to first try alcohol was 13 or 14 years old, when 42% of those who drank alcohol had their first drink. Among students who had tried alcohol, the percentage of students who drank when they were 10 years old or younger (12%) was similar to the provincial rate, and has not changed since 2003.

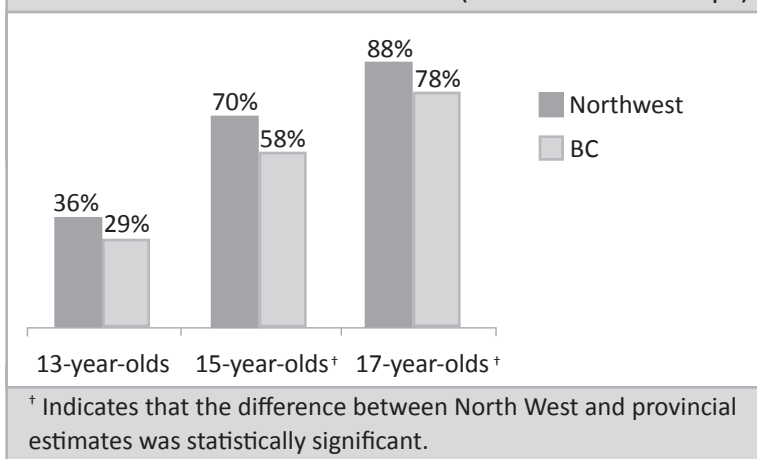
Among students who drank in the past year, 10% had only had a sip, 37% drank once a month or less, and 29% drank two or three times a month.

Among students who had tried alcohol, the percentage of students who drank in the past month was unchanged from 2003 (72%) and was higher than the 2008 provincial rate (67%).

Binge Drinking

Binge drinking is defined in the AHS as having five or more drinks within a couple of

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



hours. Fifty-three percent of local students who had tried alcohol binge drank in the past month, above the provincial rate of 44% and consistent with the rate in 2003. Males and females were equally likely to binge drink in the past month. Four percent of students who had tried alcohol binge drank on ten or more days in the previous month.

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.

Thirty-four percent of students drank alcohol last Saturday, which was higher than the provincial rate of 26%. There were some gender differences in the type of alcohol youth consumed; females were more likely to have drunk coolers (22% vs. 14%) and males were more likely to have drunk beer (27% vs. 18%).

“*I am never doing pot again. I can't remember stuff and I can't concentrate.*”

Marijuana

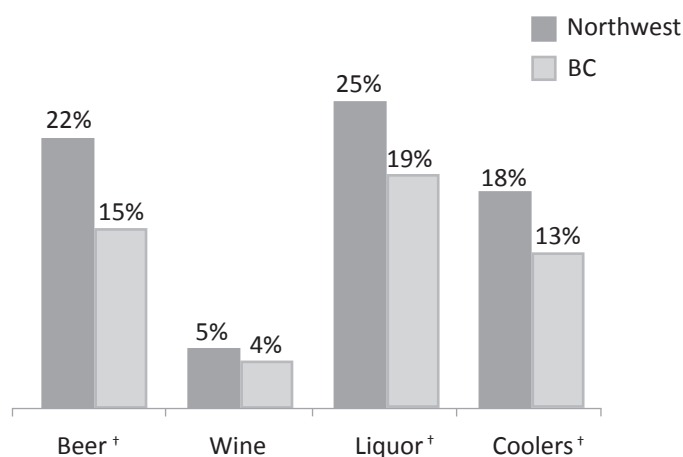
Forty percent of students had tried marijuana, which was above the rate for youth in the entire province (30%), but below the local 2003 rate (47%). However among students who had tried marijuana, the percentage who had tried it when they were 10 years old or younger (9%) was similar to the provincial rate. The most common age for first trying marijuana was 13 or 14 years old (47%).

Fifty-nine percent of those who had tried marijuana used it in the past month and 14% used it on 20 or more days in the past month (6% of all students).

Last Saturday Use

Seventeen percent of students in this area used marijuana last Saturday (20% of males and 13% of females), which was higher than the rate among youth across the province as a whole (12%).

Rates of different types of alcohol consumed last Saturday



† Indicates that the difference between Northwest and provincial estimates was statistically significant.

Other Drugs

The percentage of youth in this area who had used substances other than alcohol and marijuana was similar to the province as a whole. However, eleven percent of students in this area had tried mushrooms, which was above the provincial rate of 8%.

Since 2003 there has been an increase in the percentage of students who have used prescription pills without a doctor's consent (14% vs. 9%), and hallucinogens (11% vs. 6%).

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

Consequences of Substance Use

In the past year, 3% of male and female students have felt that they need help for their alcohol use, and 3% have felt that they need help for their drug use.

Ever used other drugs	2003	2008
Prescription pills	9%	14% [♦]
Hallucinogens (including ecstasy)	6%	11% [♦]
Mushrooms	13%	11% [†]
Cocaine	4%	5%
Inhalants	4%	5%
Amphetamines (including crystal meth)	4%	3%
Steroids	1%	2%
Heroin	<1%	2%
Injected an illegal drug	<1%	2%
[†] Difference between 2008 Northwest and provincial estimates was statistically significant. [♦] Difference between 2003 and 2008 Northwest estimates was statistically significant.		

Sixty-one 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.

In this area, females were more likely to report arguing with their family. Males were more likely to have been in a physical fight or to have been in trouble with the police as a result of their substance use.

“A lot of students I know take drugs and can’t stop. It’s way too easy to get drugs.”

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

I used alcohol or drugs but none of these things happened	43%
Was told that I did something that I couldn’t remember	43%
Passed out	33%
Argued with family members	19%
School work, marks, or behaviour at school changed	12%
Got injured	12%
Got into a physical fight	11%
Damaged property	11%
Got in trouble with the police	9%
Lost friends or broke up with a girlfriend or boyfriend	9%
Had sex when I didn’t want to	9%
I overdosed	3%
Got into a car accident	3%
Had to get treatment for alcohol or drug abuse	2%

Sexual Behaviour

“*The only reason I have had sex [is] because I felt safe and comfortable with who I was with. I know him well and trust him.*”

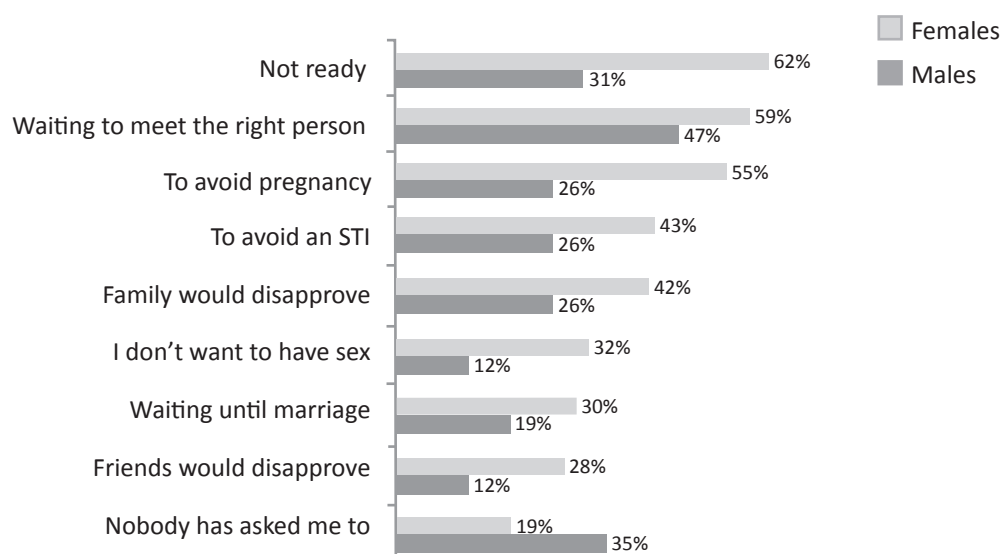
The majority of youth reported never having had sexual intercourse (70%), which was comparable to the 2003 rate in this area but lower than the 2008 provincial rate (78%), meaning that youth in this area were more likely to have had sex compared to youth in the province as a whole.

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 (53%), not being ready to have sex (47%) and not wanting to get pregnant or cause a pregnancy (41%).

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 never having had sex because nobody had asked them to (35% vs. 19%).

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 (similar to the rate across the province).

Some reasons for not having sex (among youth who never had sex)



Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

Among youth who ever had sexual intercourse, 7% of males and 9% of females reported having had sex with a same-sex partner.

“ I think birth control for young teens should be much more accessible. ”

Among sexually active students, 5% did not have sexual intercourse in the past year, 51% had sex with one person, 20% had sex with 2 people, 15% with 3-5 people and 9% had sex with six or more people.

Oral Sex

In this area, 30% of male and female students reported ever having oral sex, which was higher than the provincial rate of 26%. Rates of oral sex generally went up with age.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

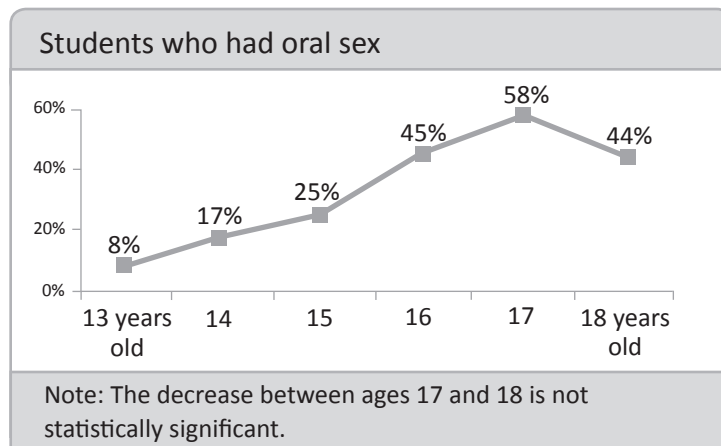
Overall, 1% of students had been told by a doctor or nurse that they had a sexually transmitted infection (STI). The rate was 4% among sexually active students, which was the same as the provincial rate.

Birth Control and Pregnancy

Similar to rates in 2003, 66% of sexually active youth reported using a condom the last time they had sex, and 64% indicated that they had done so to prevent pregnancy.

Among sexually active youth, 43% used birth control pills to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex. Twenty-one percent used withdrawal which is an unreliable method of contraception, and 5% used only withdrawal. Five percent of students used no method to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex and 6% used emergency contraception (“morning after pill”).

Seven percent of sexually active students reported that they have been pregnant or caused a pregnancy, which was the same as the provincial rate.



Among students who have had sexual intercourse, over a third (35%) reported that they drank alcohol or used drugs before having sex the last time. This was unchanged from 2003.

Abuse & Violence

“*Is it still rape if you didn't actually have intercourse?*”

Physical and Sexual Abuse

The percentage of students who reported physical or sexual abuse was similar to the local rates in 2003, but higher than provincial rates. Twenty percent reported that they had been physically abused (compared to 17% provincially), and 12% had been sexually abused (compared to 8% provincially). In total, 25% of students had experienced either form of abuse and 7% had experienced both types of abuse.

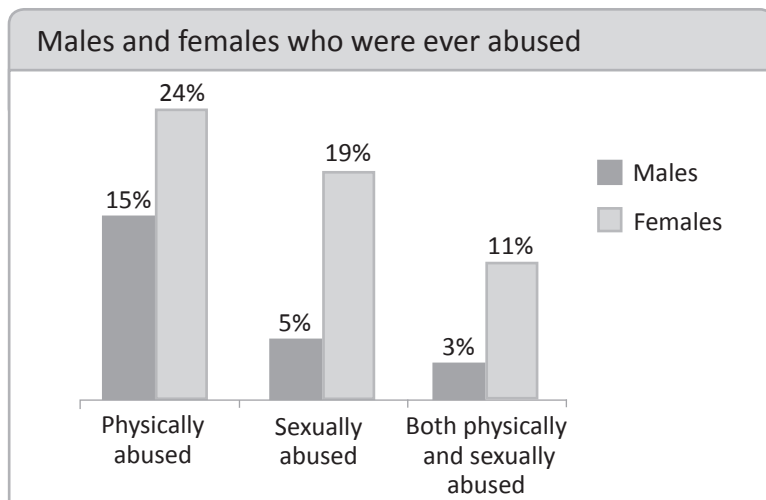
Comparable with the local 2003 rates and above the 2008 provincial rate of 5%, 7% of students had been forced to have sex when they did not want to; 2% by an adult and 5% by another youth. Females were more likely than males to have been forced to have sex (10% vs. 3%).

Sexual Harassment

The percentage of youth who experienced verbal or physical sexual harassment was similar to the 2003 rates. However, the rate of verbal sexual harassment was higher than the 2008 provincial rate (52% vs. 47%). The rate of physical sexual harassment was similar to the provincial rate at 29%.

Female students were more likely to experience either form of harassment. In the past year, 58% of females and 46% of males had been verbally sexually harassed while 40% of females and 18% of males had been physically sexually harassed.

“*Guys have touched me in places that I don't want them to but I sometimes feel that I can't do anything about it.*”



“*I fight a lot but eh that’s life, haven’t lost yet, fighting is not bad it releases anger stress and usually solves conflict.*”

Internet Safety

Comparable to both the 2003 local rate and the 2008 provincial rate, 14% of students (22% of females and 5% of males) had been in contact with someone on the Internet who made them feel unsafe. In the past year, 12% of youth gave personal information to someone that they met on the internet.

Similar to youth across the province, 17% of students were cyber-bullied in the previous year. Females were more likely than males to have been cyber-bullied (21% vs. 13%).

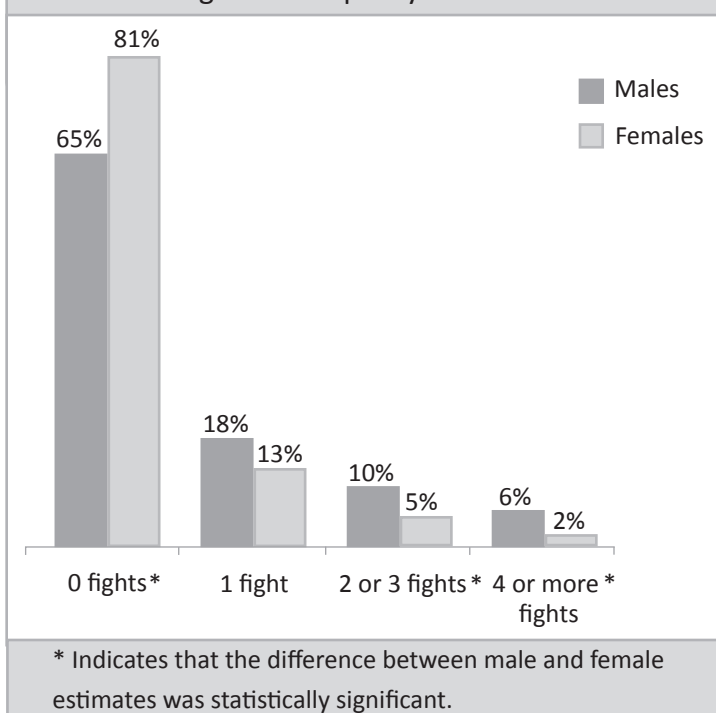
Physical Fights

Consistent with youth across the province in 2008 and with local youth in 2003, 27% of students were involved in a physical fight in the past year. Males were more likely than females to have been in a fight (35% vs. 19%). Four percent of students were injured in a fight seriously enough to need medical attention.

Relationship Violence

Nine percent of students (12% of males and 6% of females) who were in a relationship reported that their boyfriend or girlfriend hit, slapped or hurt them in the past month.

Number of fights in the past year



Discrimination

Consistent with the experience of youth across the province in 2008 and with local youth in 2003, 19% of students had been discriminated against because of their physical appearance in the past year, and 14% of students experienced racial discrimination. Six percent of students reported they had experienced discrimination because of their sexual orientation.

School & Work

“*I would like to share that 2-3 hours of homework a night is very hard. And when you are working after school 4-10, that gives you very little time.*”

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 (66%). Females were more likely than males to like school very much (22% vs. 13%) and to report a greater sense of connectedness to school.

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

Twenty-nine percent of males and females skipped at least one full day of school in the past month. Students in higher grades generally 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

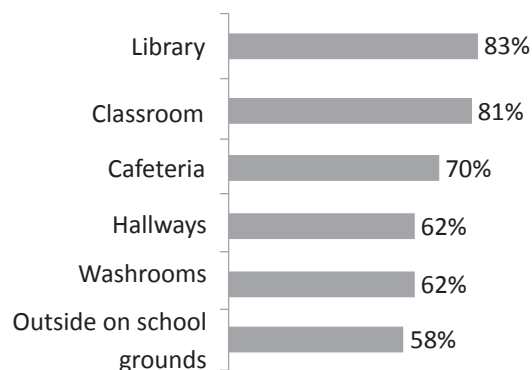
Forty percent of students reported always feeling safe at school, which was comparable to the rate in this area in 2003 and to the 2008 provincial rate.

Students most commonly reported “always or usually” feeling safe in the library (83%) or classroom (81%). They were least likely to report “always or usually” feeling safe outside on school property during school hours (58%).

Ten percent of students had been physically attacked or assaulted while at school or traveling to or from school in the past year. The rates were comparable for males and females unlike in the province as a whole where males were more likely than females to have been physically attacked.

Females were more likely than males to be victims of relational aggression (i.e., excluded from social groups or ignored; 37% vs. 29%) or to be verbally harassed at school (e.g., teased; 40% vs. 31%).

Where students always/usually felt safe at school



Rates of school-based physical, relational and verbal aggression were similar to the rates in this area in 2003 and to the 2008 provincial rates.

Weapon Carrying

A total of 6% of students carried a weapon to school in the past month (11% of males and 2% of females). Among those who carried a weapon, the majority (80%) carried a knife or razor.

Academic Aspirations

The majority of students expected to finish high school; only 1% anticipated finishing their education before graduating from high school. A total of 50% expected to complete their education when they graduate from university, medical school, or law school; 22% when they graduate from community college or a technical institute; 11% once they complete high school; and 15% were not sure when they would complete their education.

Work

A total of 50% of students worked at a paid job during the school year, which was higher than the 2003 rate in this area (42%) and the 2008 provincial rate (41%). Among students

who worked, 25% worked less than 5 hours a week, 56% worked 5-19 hours, and 19% worked 20 or more hours a week.

“*This place needs more jobs for kids (paid work, mind you)*”



Sports & Leisure Activities

“For the past year or so, I have been eating healthy and exercising everyday.”

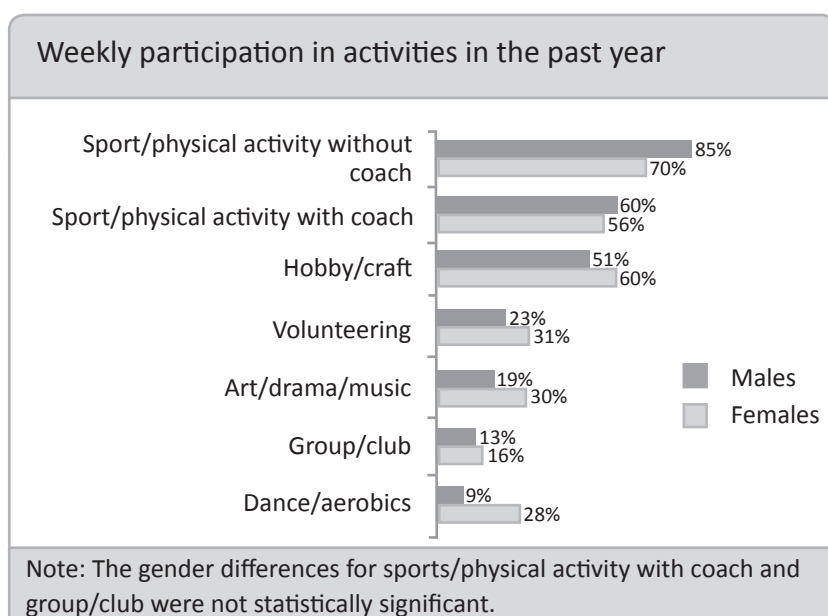
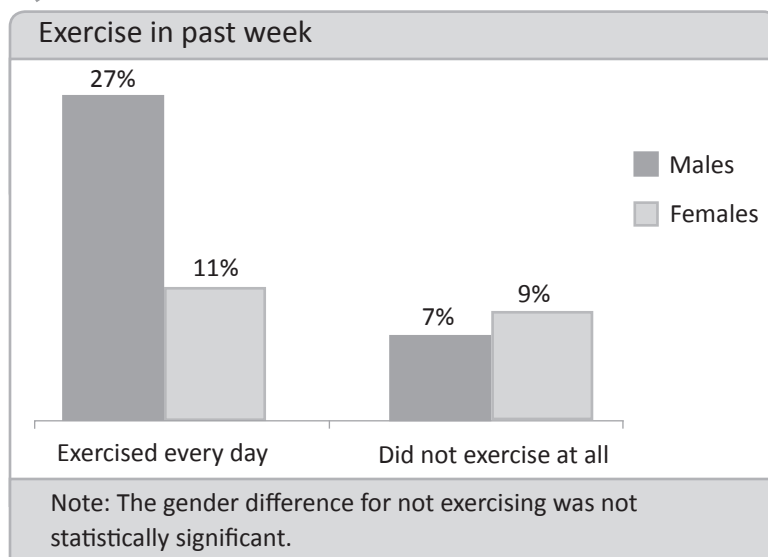
Exercise

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 27% of males and 11% of females exercised every day, while 8% of youth did not exercise at all. Exercise rates in this area were comparable between 2003 and 2008 and were comparable to those seen in the province as a whole.

Extracurricular Activities

The majority of youth participated in extracurricular sports activities on a weekly basis: 58% 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 and females were more likely to take part in dance/aerobic classes.

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, 66% did some form of volunteer work such as babysitting or helping a charity



“ *I think that extracurricular activities around here are lacking if not non-existent.* ”

and 27% did this once a week or more. Other leisure activities youth participated in on a weekly basis included hobbies (56%), art/drama/music (25%) and clubs (15%). Females were more likely than males to take part in art, drama and music activities, hobbies and volunteer activities.

Compared to the province as a whole, youth in this area were more likely to participate weekly in non-coached sports activities (77% vs. 69%). In addition, weekly participation in extracurricular activities in this area was comparable between 2003 and 2008, with the exception of hobbies which increased from 45% to 56%.

Screen Time

Similar to the province as a whole, 89% of youth in this area watched TV on a typical school day and 24% 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 39% in 2003 to 24% 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. One-fifth of students

(20%) phoned or texted for three or more hours on a typical school day. About a quarter (26%) of students used the Internet and 17% played video games for three or more hours a day.

Males were more likely than females to play video games for three or more hours a day (28% vs. 6%), but were less likely to spend this amount of time texting or talking on the phone (13% vs. 27%).

2010 Winter Olympics

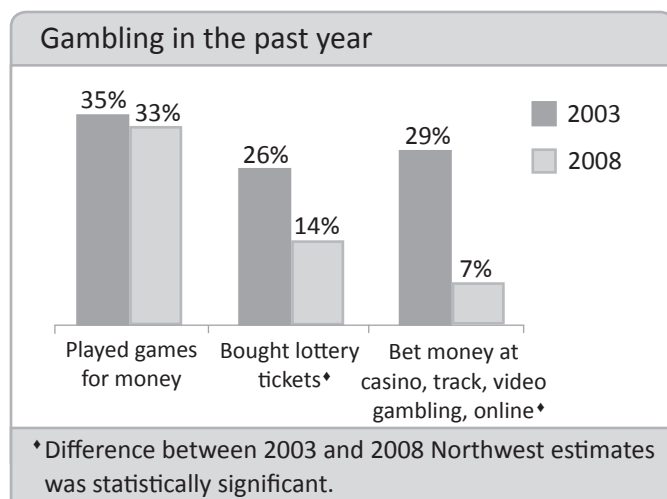
When asked about the effect of the upcoming 2010 Olympics in BC, 44% of youth said they had not thought about it, 49% said it had not affected them, 10% said they had become more physically active, 6% reported they had more sports opportunities, and 4% felt they had more job prospects.

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.

Thirty-nine percent of students reported gambling in the past year (comparable to the provincial rate). There was no gender difference in buying lottery tickets, but males were more likely than females to have played games for money (44% vs. 23%) and to have bet money at a casino, racetrack, on video games or on-line (10% vs. 4%). While the percentage of students who reported playing games for money did not change from 2003 to 2008, there was a decrease in the other two forms of gambling.



Protective Factors

“In closing, I would like to say that I am a healthy, fit person and I am happy with who I am!”

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.

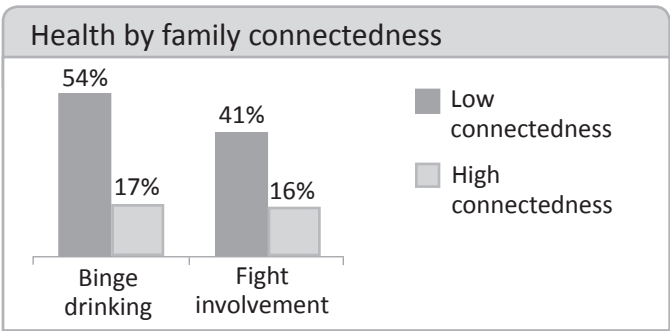
On average, students indicated moderately high connectedness to family and school. Males and females were equally connected to family but males were less connected to school than females. Family and school con-

nectedness scores for this area were lower than those seen in 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 47% 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.



Compared to the entire province, youth in this area reported lower levels of cultural connectedness. For example, while 34% 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.

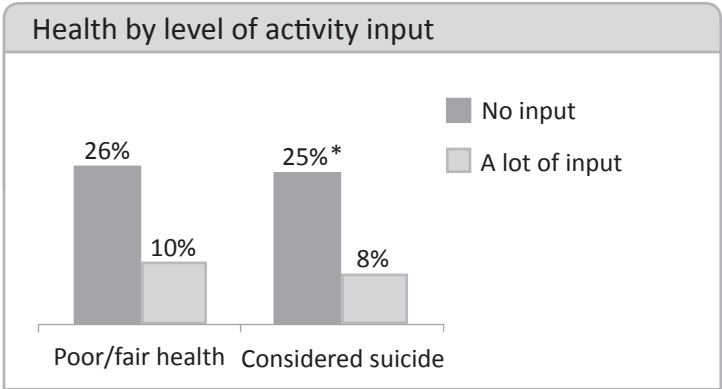
Six to eight percent of youth reported that the activities they were involved in were not at all meaningful to them or that they had no input into these activities. On the other hand, 34% were involved in activities that were very meaningful to them and 13%

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, beating someone up or dropping out of school. Females were more likely than males to think their friends would be upset with them if they got arrested (71% vs. 48%), beat someone up (61% vs. 31%), carried a weapon (55% vs. 39%), or dropped out of school (91% vs. 84%).

Compared to 2003, youth in 2008 were more likely to say their friends would be upset with them if they got arrested (60% vs. 49%), were involved in a pregnancy (76%



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

vs. 70%), dropped out (88% vs. 81%) or used marijuana (53% vs. 42%) but less likely to think friends would be upset if they carried a weapon (48% vs. 55%).

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 beat someone up (47% vs. 54%) or got drunk (28% vs. 35%).

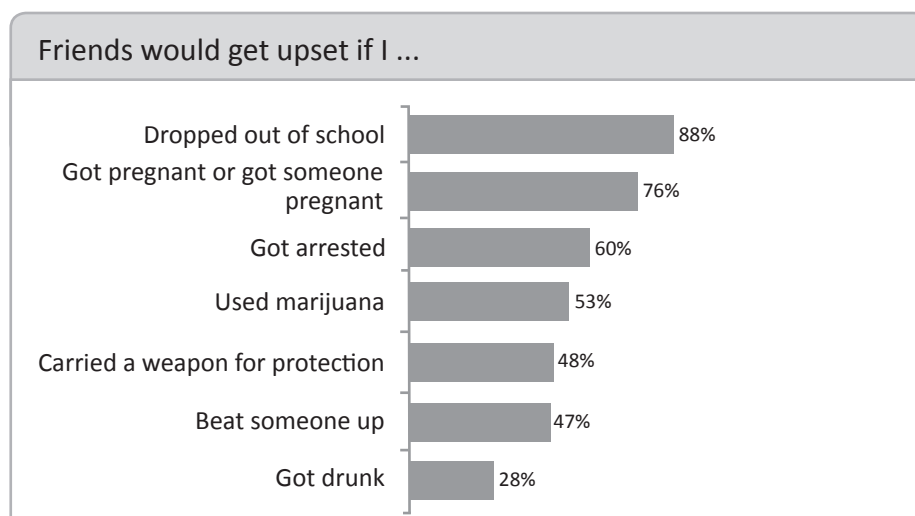
The Value of Protective Factors

Results from provincial data depict the value of promoting protective factors. The table on the bottom of 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 Northwest area (see previous graphs on family connectedness and activity input).

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 Northwest area reported being victimized or bullied at school and 22% of these youth had seriously con-



sidered suicide in the past year. However, being connected to their family or school and being engaged in their extracurricular activities 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	Northwest	BC
Family connectedness	7.7	7.9 [†]
School connectedness	6.5	6.8 [†]
Cultural connectedness	5.2	5.5 [†]
Youth engagement		
Meaningfulness of activities	7.1	7.2
Ideas listened to and acted upon	5.8	6.0
Prosocial peer attitudes about risk behaviour	5.6	6.0 [†]
Note: All protective factor scores range from 0 to 10, with a higher score indicating higher levels of the protective factor.		
[†] Difference between Northwest and provincial estimate was statistically significant.		

Protective factors and reduction of health risk behaviours for BC youth				
Protective Factor	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% ^{N/S}	24% ^{N/S}
Involved in very meaningful activities	9%	23% ^{N/S}	9%	24% ^{N/S}
Have peers with more prosocial attitudes	13%	2%	8%	10%
Overall Provincial Rate	16%	24%	12%	24%
^{N/S} Not significantly different from overall provincial rate.				

Acknowledgements

The AHS IV represents a province wide collaboration between government agencies, the health authorities, school districts and service providers. McCreary is indebted to all the school principals and teachers who made it possible for the AHS to be administered in their schools and to the following experts and practitioners in youth health:

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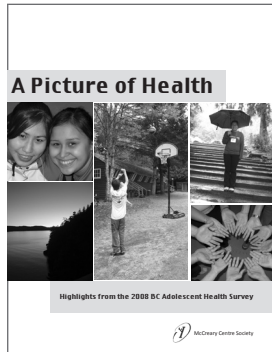


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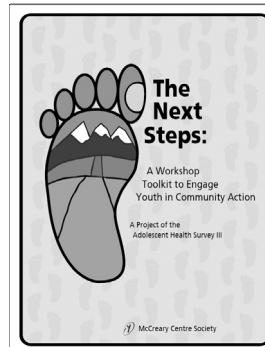
McCreary Resources

For any of these, or other materials by the McCreary Centre Society, visit our website www.mcs.bc.ca.



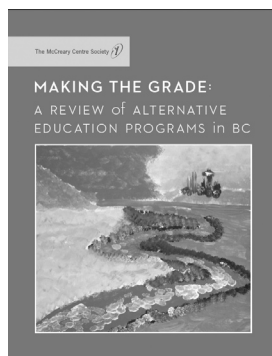
A Picture of Health: Highlights from the 2008 Adolescent Health Survey (2009)

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.



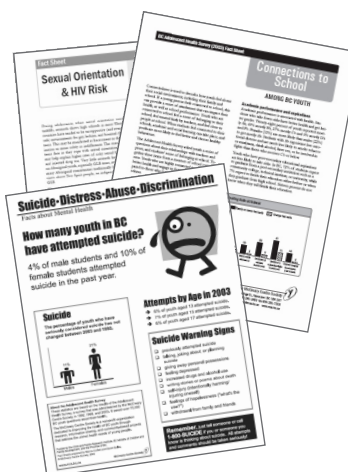
Moving Upstream: Aboriginal marginalized and street-involved youth in BC (2008)

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)

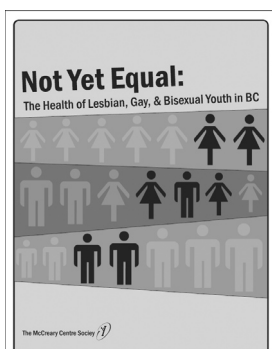
The lives of marginalized and street-involved youth are complex and filled with challenges, dangers and opportunities. This report summarizes the results of surveys with marginalized youth in the North, Interior, Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island and Vancouver.



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.



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