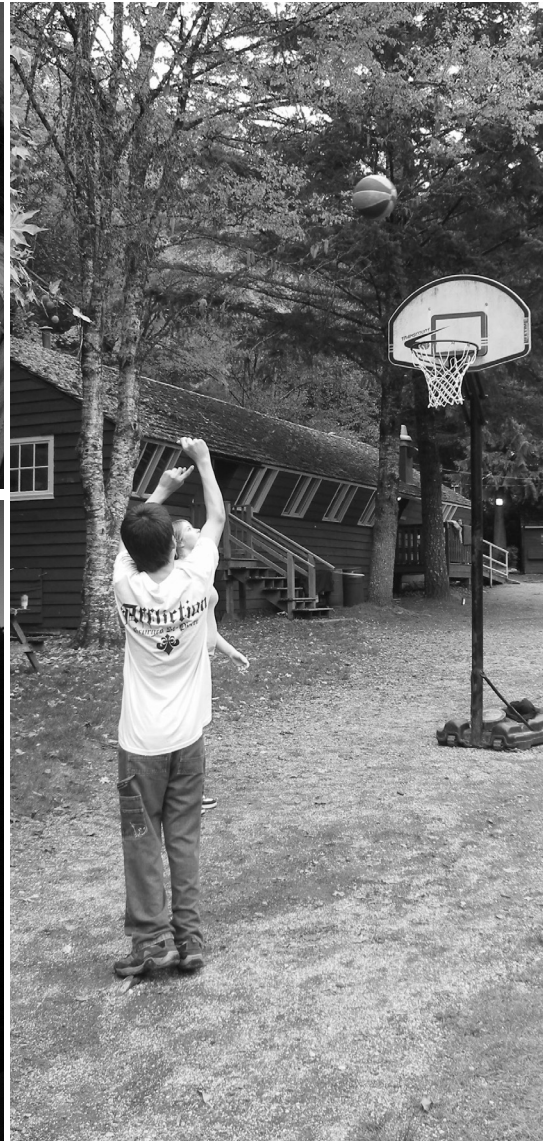


# A Picture of Health



**South Vancouver Island**  
**Results of the 2008 British Columbia Adolescent Health Survey**



# A Picture of Health

## South Vancouver Island

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

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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.

South Vancouver Island 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 South Vancouver Island area is located in the Vancouver Island Health Authority region.

School Districts included in the South Vancouver Island area are:

Greater Victoria (SD 61), Sooke (SD 62), Saanich (SD 63) and Gulf Islands (SD 64). All school districts in this area participated in the survey.

## South Vancouver Island Health Service Delivery Area



■ South Vancouver Island

# 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.



# South Vancouver Island

## 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 consistent with results from this area in 2003, 85% of South Vancouver Island students reported that their health was good or excellent. Additionally, more youth in this area rated themselves to be in excellent health compared to the province as a whole (34% vs. 31%).
- In the past year, 32% of students were injured seriously enough to need medical attention. This was above the provincial rate of 29%, but represented a local decrease from 37% in 2003.
- Seventy-six percent of students rode a bicycle in the past year, which was above the provincial rate of 71%. Among these students, 38% always wore a bike helmet (above the provincial rate of 24%).
- Sixty-eight percent of students in this area always wore a seatbelt when riding in a motor vehicle, which was an increase from 56% in 2003.
- Comparable with youth across the province, 25% of students had ever tried smoking. This was a local decrease from 34% in 2003. Among South Vancouver Island students who did smoke, they tended to start doing so at a later age than in 2003.
- Sixty percent of youth had tried more than just a few sips of alcohol. This was similar to the local rate in 2003 but higher than the 2008 provincial rate of 54%.
- Less students tried marijuana than in 2003 (35% vs 45%).
- The percentage of youth in this area who had used crystal meth (1%), steroids (1%) and heroin (1%) were all lower than in the province as a whole. The percentage who had injected an illegal drug (1%) was also below the provincial rate.
- The percentage of youth who experienced verbal (49%) sexual harassment was similar to the provincial rates. However, this was a local increase from 2003 (44%).
- The rate of school-based relational aggression was higher than the provincial percentage (35% vs. 31%) and reflected an increase in this area from 2003 (29%).

- Despite this rise in relational aggression, 46% 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%. Levels of school connectedness scores in this area were also higher than the province as a whole.
- There was no change in reported exercise rates in this area from 2003 to 2008. However, female students were more likely than those in the entire province to exercise every day (14% vs. 11%).
- The number of youth who spent three or more hours watching TV decreased from 35% in 2003 to 21% in 2008. Compared to the province as a whole, youth in this area were generally less likely to report several hours of screen time (eg local males spent less time playing videogames, watching TV and on the internet compared to males across the province).
- Healthy peer relationships are a known protective factor for youth. Compared to 2003, youth were more likely to think that their friends would be upset with them if they got arrested (66% vs. 54%) or used marijuana (50% vs. 39%). When compared to the province as whole, local youth were more likely to think their friends would get upset if they beat someone up and less likely to indicate that their friends would be upset if they got drunk or used marijuana.

# 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.

The change in consent procedures from 2003 within one 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. Additional analyses of key findings for this area were conducted to assess if the change in consent procedures had affected the results. All trend patterns were found to hold despite the consent procedure changes. However, it is recommended that all trend data be interpreted with caution.

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.

### 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.

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.

### 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*

### 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

*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](mailto:mccreary@mcs.bc.ca)

# South Vancouver Island Youth: Their Home & Family

## Background

Students in this area (the South Vancouver Island HSDA) identified with a broad range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The majority of students were of European heritage (69%), which was above the provincial rate of 54%.

If students did not feel the categories above represented their background they could choose to write in their own identity, and 16% wrote “Canadian.”

## New Canadians

Twelve percent of students in this area were born outside of Canada, below the provincial rate of 18%. Three percent of students had lived in Canada between 2 and 5 years (below the provincial rate of 6%) and another 4% had lived here for less than two years, the same as the provincial rate.

## First Nations

Similar to the province as a whole, 9% of students reported Aboriginal heritage. Among these students, 28% had First Nations status, 32% were Aboriginal but did not have First Nations status, and 19% were Metis.

Seven percent of Aboriginal students currently lived on a reserve, and 12% had lived

Ethnic or cultural background	
European	69%
East Asian	10%
Aboriginal/First Nations	9%
Latin/South/Central American	4%
South Asian	4%
African	3%
Southeast Asian	2%
Australian/Pacific Islander	2%
West Asian	1%
Other (excluding Canadian)	1%
Don't know	8%
Note: Youth could choose more than one response.	

Spoke a language other than English at home	
Never	67%
Sometimes	25%
Most of the time	8%

on a reserve at some point in their life (4% for less than a year, 3% for a few years, and 5% for most of their life).

## Sexual Orientation

Eighty-four percent of students identified as heterosexual, 9% as mostly heterosexual, 3% as bisexual, 1% as gay/lesbian and 4% were unsure.



## Spirituality

Fifty-nine percent of students reported that they were not at all religious or spiritual. The remainder were either somewhat (33%) or very much (8%) 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 (91%) and/or father (70%) most of the time; 17% 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 (77%) and went to bed at night (85%). However, 7% 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

Similar to the provincial rate, 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. Similar to 2003, 1% of youth were in care in the last year. Nine percent of students (12% of females, 6% of males) ran away from home in the past year. These students were more likely than those who had not run away to have experienced extreme stress (36% vs. 12%) and despair

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

Mother	91%
Father	70%
Stepfather	8%
Other adults related to me	6%
Stepmother	4%
Other adults not related to me	2%
Do not live with any adults	1%

“ *I lead a generally healthy life, I am happy,  
my parents do care...* ”

(20% vs. 4%) and to have attempted suicide in the last 12 months (25% vs. 3%).

Frequently moving house can negatively impact young people's health. Sixteen percent of youth moved once in the past year, 5% 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 (8% vs. 5%), to attempt suicide in the past 12 months (10% vs. 4%), and to feel less connected to school.

## 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 and father figures was generally higher among 12-year-olds. 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 both their mother

and father 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 mother and father 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

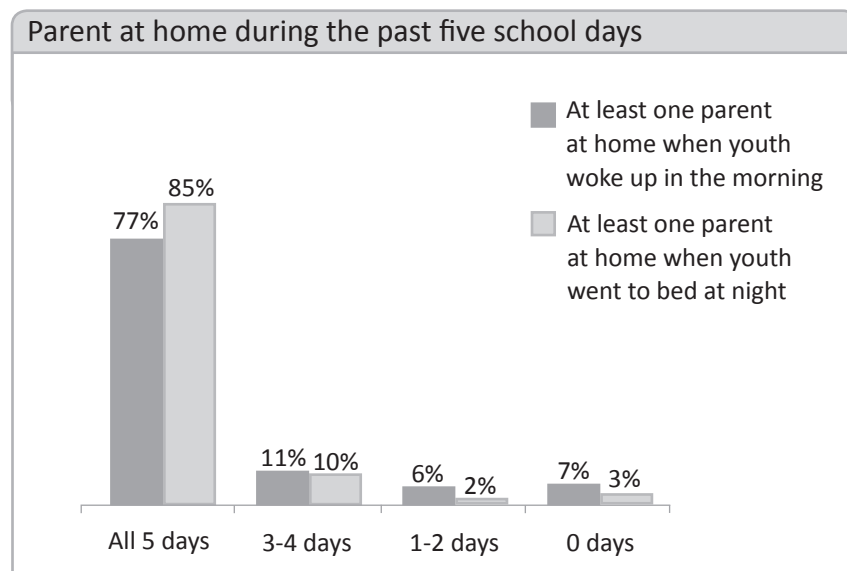
family resources: whether youth went to bed hungry because there was not enough food at home, the number of computers their family owned, whether they shared a bedroom, and if they took family holidays.

The vast majority of students in this area reported that they never went to bed hungry (89%), did not share a bedroom (93%), had travelled on holiday with their family in the past year (80%), and that their family currently owned a computer (99%).

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 rates across the province, 9% 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 (31% vs. 13%), to have considered suicide in the past year (25% vs. 10%) and to have attempted suicide in the past 12 months (11% 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).



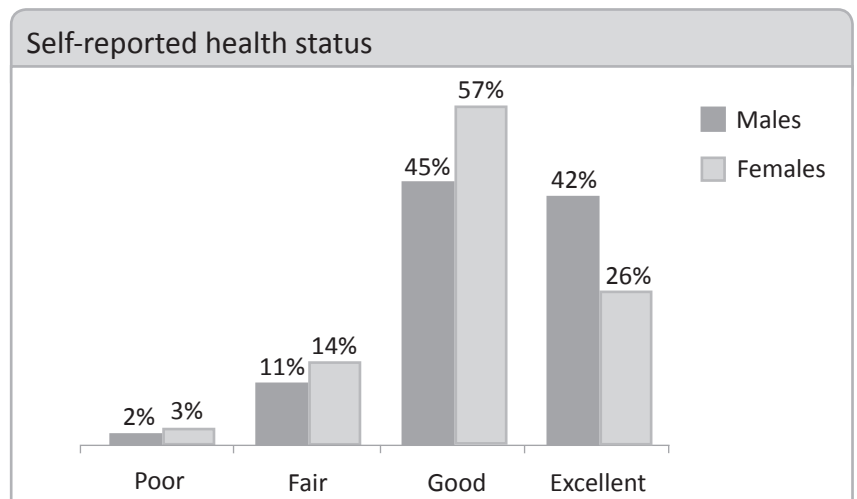
# Physical Health

Eighty-five percent of youth in this area reported that their health was good or excellent, consistent with results from 2003. More males than females rated their health as excellent (42% vs. 26%). Furthermore, youth in this area were more likely than youth in the province as a whole to rate themselves as being in excellent health (34% vs. 31%).

Males were less likely than females to report having 'a lot' of physical complaints, such as headaches (10% vs. 22%), stomach aches (6% vs. 16%), backaches (12% vs. 20%) or dizziness (6% vs. 12%) in the past six months.

Ten percent of students (7% of males and 12% of females) in this area reported a debilitating health condition or disability. The most common conditions were a long-term illness (such as diabetes or asthma) experienced by 5% of youth and a mental or emotional condition (such as depression or eating disorder) reported by 4% of youth. Among youth with a health condition or disability, 28% took daily medication for their condition.

“ *I think I am really active and healthy!!* ”



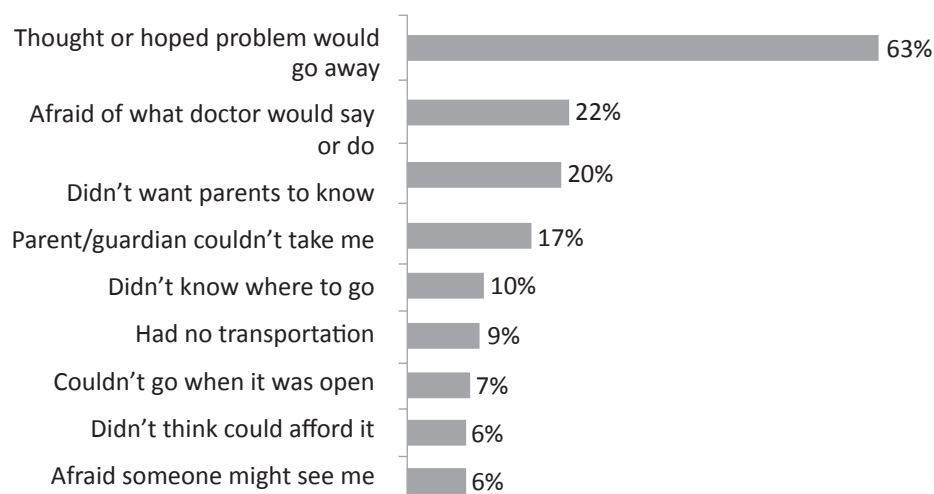
“ *I think I might have an STD, but I’m too afraid to go to the Doctor.* ”

## Accessing Medical Care

In the past year, 14% of youth did not get medical help when they felt they needed it, which was comparable to the provincial rate. 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, cited by 63% of students in this area (compared to 56% provincially). Female youth were more likely than their male peers to say they did not get care because they were afraid of what the doctor would say or do (29% vs. 14%).



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



# Injuries

“ *I work out in order to relieve stress, but I take my workout too far* ”

Injuries are one of the most common health hazards facing BC youth. In the past year, 32% of students were injured seriously enough to need medical attention. This is above the provincial rate of 29%, but a local decrease from 37% in 2003. Males were more likely than females to have been seriously injured (36% vs. 29%).

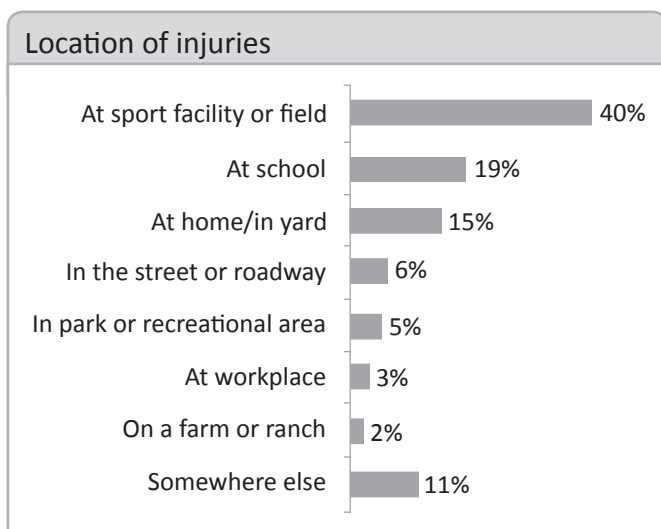
Males were more likely than females to have been seriously injured at a sports facility or field (46% vs. 32%), which was the most common location for getting hurt (40%). Nineteen percent of injuries were at school and 15% were at home.

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

recreational activities (57%). Three percent occurred when students were snowboarding or skiing (below the provincial rate of 6%), 6% occurred when students were riding a bike (a decrease from 10% in 2003), and 8% took place during relatively low-risk behaviours (such as walking or cooking). Similar to the provincial rate, 3% of students were injured in a motor vehicle.

## 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.



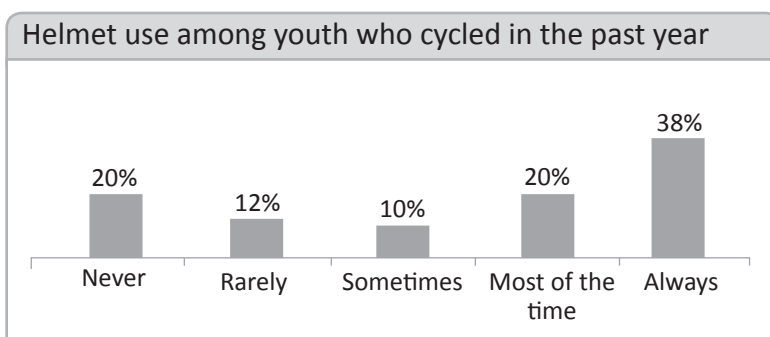
Similar to youth across the province, 68% of students always wore a seatbelt when riding in a motor vehicle. This was a local increase from 56% in 2003.

Seventy-six percent of students rode a bicycle in the past year, above the provincial rate of 71%. Among these students, 38% always wore a bike helmet (above the provincial rate of 24%) and 20% never wore one (below 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, 8% of youth had driven after using alcohol or marijuana.

Five percent of students had ever driven after using alcohol (compared to 7% provincially). In the past month, 2% of students had driven after consuming alcohol (down from 4% in 2003) and 17% of students had been a passenger in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking.





# Nutrition

“*My eating habits are horrible...I don't know how to cook a lot, I won't eat unless someone makes food for me.*”

The majority of youth reported consuming water, dairy, and fruits and vegetables on the day before they took the survey, but also sweets (such as cookies or cake). Males were more likely than females to have had pop (15% vs. 5%), dairy (61% vs. 50%), energy drinks (4% vs. 1%), and fast food such as pizza, hot dogs or chips (12% vs. 5%) twice or more yesterday, but less likely to have had vegetables twice or more yesterday (29% vs. 38%).

Despite increased awareness about the importance of consuming fruits and vegetables daily and the increased availability of healthier foods in schools, 8% of students reported eating no fruits or vegetables on the day before they completed the survey and 18% had consumed them once that day. At least 47% of youth fell short of the recommended daily portions of fruits and vegetables, comparable to the provincial rate.

## What youth ate and drank yesterday

	No	Yes (once)	Yes (twice or more)
Water	7%	23%	70%
Milk, cheese, yogurt	9%	36%	55%
Fruit	17%	39%	44%
Green salad or vegetables	20%	47%	34%
Cookies, cake, donuts, chocolate bars	32%	51%	17%
Pizza, hot dogs, potato chips, french fries	54%	38%	8%
Pop/soda	58%	32%	10%
Hot or cold coffee or coffee-based drinks	74%	19%	7%
Energy drinks	90%	7%	2%

Note: Percentages do not always total 100% due to rounding.

Fifty-five percent of students reported always eating breakfast on school days and 13% never ate breakfast. Males were more likely than females to always eat breakfast (62% vs. 49%), and males in this area were more likely than those in the province as a whole to always eat breakfast on school days (62% vs. 57%)

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

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



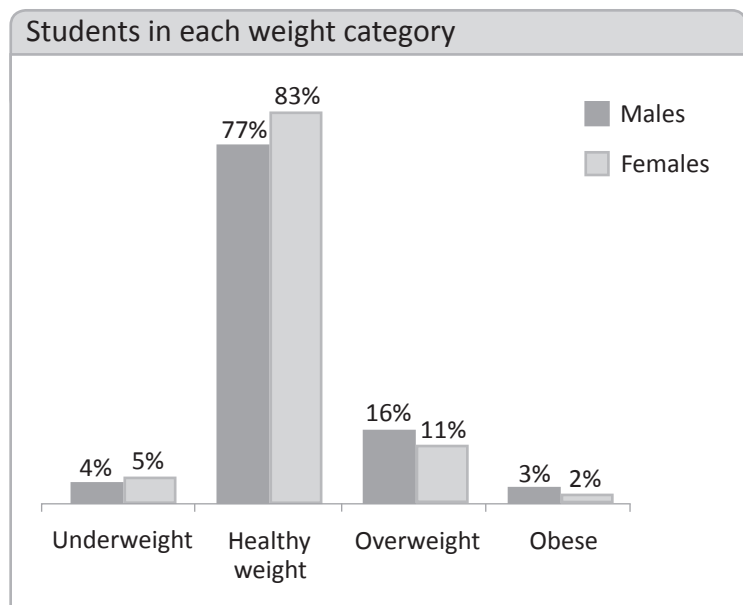
# Weight & Body Image

## 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, 80% of students were considered to be a healthy weight for their age and gender, while 4% were underweight, 13% overweight and 3% obese. These rates were comparable to those reported for the entire province.

Males were more likely than females to be overweight. The percentage of males who were obese decreased in this area from 6% in 2003 to 3% in 2008.

Obesity is linked to health challenges at all ages. Students whose BMI indicated they were overweight or obese were less likely than healthy weight youth to rate their health as excellent. Obese youth were more likely than healthy weight youth to have spent three or more hours on an average school day playing video games (24%\* vs. 10%).



## Body Image

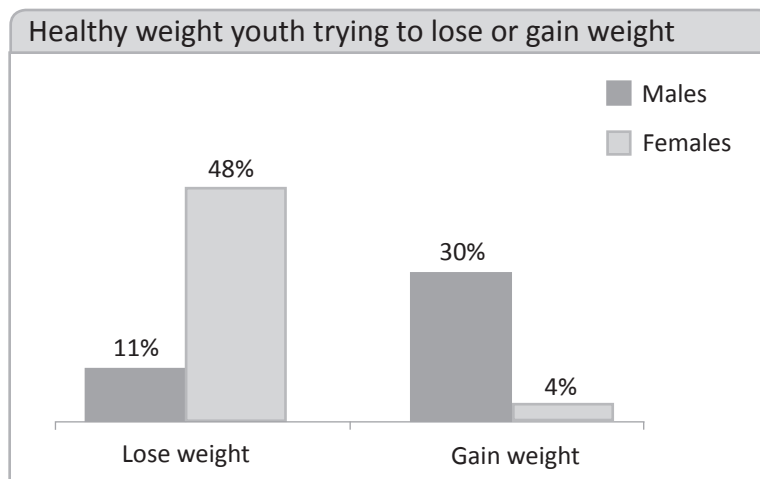
Similar to 2003, 18% of males rated themselves as very satisfied with their body image, compared to only 11% of females. The majority of males (72%) and females (66%) felt they were about the right weight.

“ *I am physically fine, I love my look.* ”

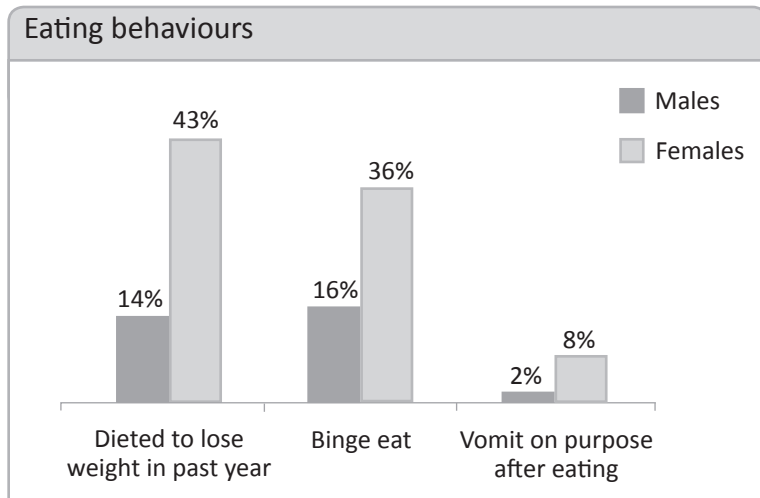
“ *I have been struggling with an eating disorder and I've been underwhelmed at the availability of support by the public health care system* ”

Looking at youth whose BMI indicated they were a healthy weight, 34% stated they were not trying to do anything about their weight and 20% were trying to stay the same weight. However, 48% of healthy weight females were trying to lose weight and 30% of healthy weight males were trying to gain weight.

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, males scored an average of 3.8 and females 3.4.



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. Rates of dieting, binge eating and vomiting on purpose after eating did not change from 2003 to 2008 for either males or females. Compared to the entire province in 2008, youth in this area were less likely to diet (29% vs. 31% provincially) and males in this area were less likely to vomit on purpose after eating (2% vs. 3% provincially).



# Mental & Emotional Health

“*Stress is a huge issue for me and most other youth I know.*”

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 (86%) and their abilities (92%), they had much to be proud of (79%) and felt that their life was useful (87%). Around 61% agreed or mostly agreed with all seven of the self-esteem questions on the survey, which was higher than the provincial rate (58%).

## Stress

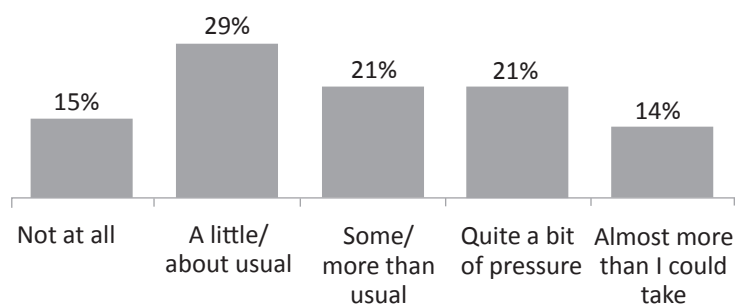
More than 85% of youth reported feeling some stress or pressure in the past 30 days, and 14% of students indicated that the stress in their lives was almost more than they could take.

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 (19% vs. 9%). Also, older students generally were more likely than younger students to report extreme stress, which was consistent with the provincial findings.

## Despair

Five percent of students indicated feeling so much despair (feeling sad, discouraged or

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



“ *They should have people at the schools talk about self injury. It's a huge issue at schools.* ”

hopeless) that they wondered if anything was worthwhile and had difficulty functioning properly. Females were more likely than males to report this level of extreme despair in the past month (7% vs. 3%). These results were all consistent with the provincial findings.

## Self Harm

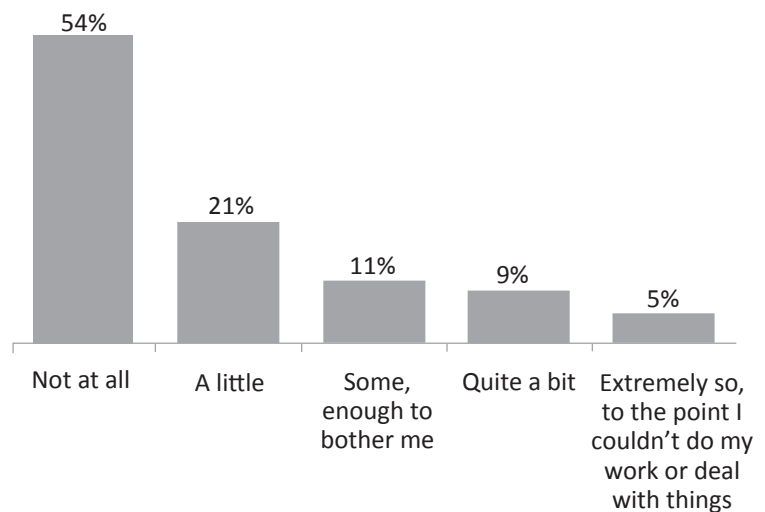
Sometimes youth will hurt themselves as a way of coping with stress and pain in their lives. Similar to rates in the province as a whole, 25% of female students and 13% of males indicated cutting or injuring themselves on purpose without trying to kill themselves at some point in their lifetime, with 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 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, 12% of students reported seriously considering suicide in the past year, which was the same as the provincial rate, and not

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



significantly different from the rate in this area in 2003.

Similar to 2003 and to the 2008 provincial rate, 5% of students attempted suicide in the past year. Females were over twice as likely as 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, 24% 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, 16% of youth reported that a family member had tried to commit suicide, with 4% doing so in the past year. Also, 26% of youth had a close friend who attempted suicide (15% in the past year). Students with a family member or close friend who had attempted or committed suicide in the past year were over five times more likely to attempt suicide themselves, compared to students without these risk factors (16% 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 (22% vs. 4%) compared to students who had never been abused.

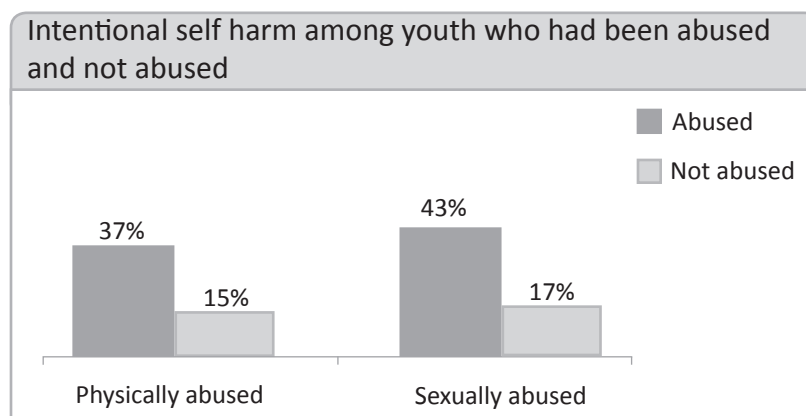
Aboriginal youth were over twice as likely as non-Aboriginal youth to have attempted suicide in the past year (12% vs. 5%). Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth and youth with a health condition or disability were also at greater risk for attempting suicide.

Also, youth who had ever used alcohol, marijuana or other drugs 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 (77%) or from adults outside their family (59%) if they were faced with a serious problem.

Students reported approaching a variety of professionals for help in the past year, includ-

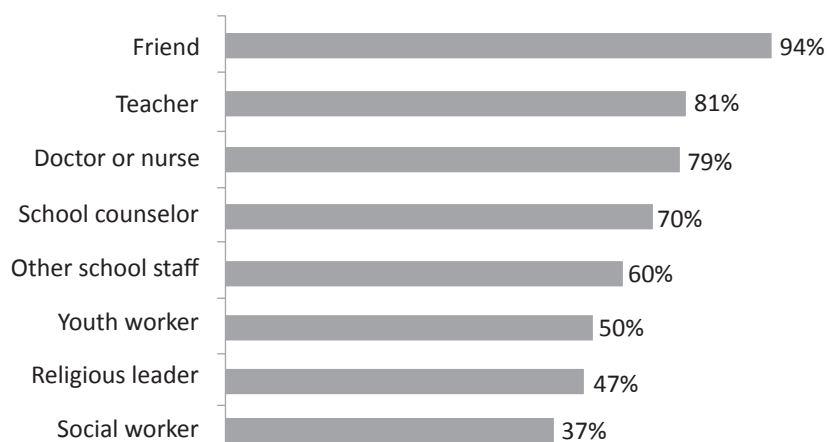


ing teachers (46%), doctors or nurses (30%), school counselors (27%), other school staff (20%), youth workers (13%), religious leaders (12%), and social workers (10%). In addition to turning to adults for help, most students (80%) asked their friends for assistance. Students who sought support in the past year generally reported finding the assistance of both friends and professionals helpful.

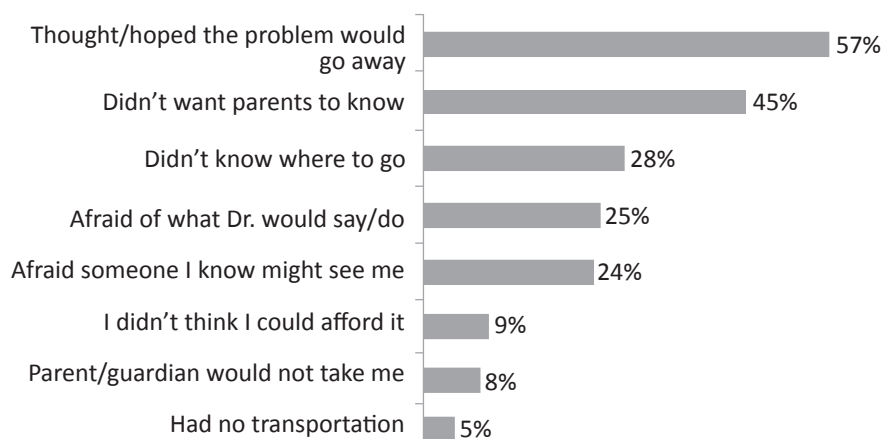
## Accessing Mental Health Services

When asked specifically about accessing mental health services in the past year, 21% of females and 8% of males reported that they had not accessed services when they felt they needed them. These were similar to the rates for the province as a whole. 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 (45%).

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



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



# Smoking

“ I smoke cigars daily, but have never tried a cigarette. ”

Twenty-five percent of students in this area had ever tried smoking, similar to the provincial rate, but a decrease from 2003 (34%). Males and females were equally likely to have tried smoking.

Among students who smoked, they tended to start smoking at a later age than in 2003. In 2008, 15% had their first cigarette when they were 11 or 12 years old, compared to 24% in 2003. Thirty-seven percent of students waited until they were 15 or 16 years old, compared to 17% in 2003.

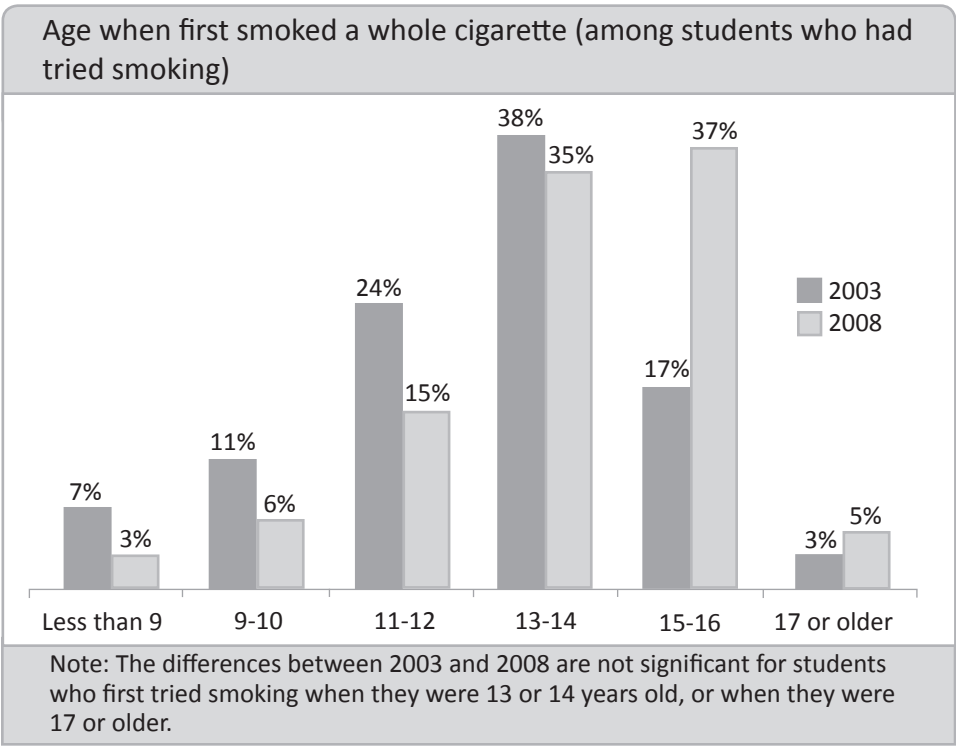
Less than half (44%) of students who had tried smoking had smoked in the past month.

Those who did smoke most commonly smoked 2 to 5 cigarettes a day (14% of students who had ever tried smoking).

Similar to youth across the province, 3% of South Vancouver Island young people had used chewing tobacco in the past month (5% of males vs. 1% of females).

## Second-hand Smoke

Twenty-five percent of students in this area had been exposed to smoke inside their home or vehicle, similar to the provincial rate. Eight percent of youth were exposed to smoke in their home or car almost every day.



# Substance Use

## Alcohol

Sixty percent of youth had tried more than just a few sips of alcohol. This was higher than the 2008 provincial rate of 54%, but similar to the local rate in 2003. Males and females were equally likely to have tried alcohol.

The age at which students first drank was similar to the provincial rate except that among students who had tried alcohol, the percentage of local students who drank before they were 9 years old was lower (5% vs. 6%).

Among students who drank in the past year, 13% had only had a sip, 38% drank once a month or less, and 26% drank two or three times a month. Students in this area who had tried alcohol were equally as likely as those in the province as a whole to have been drinking in the past month (68%).

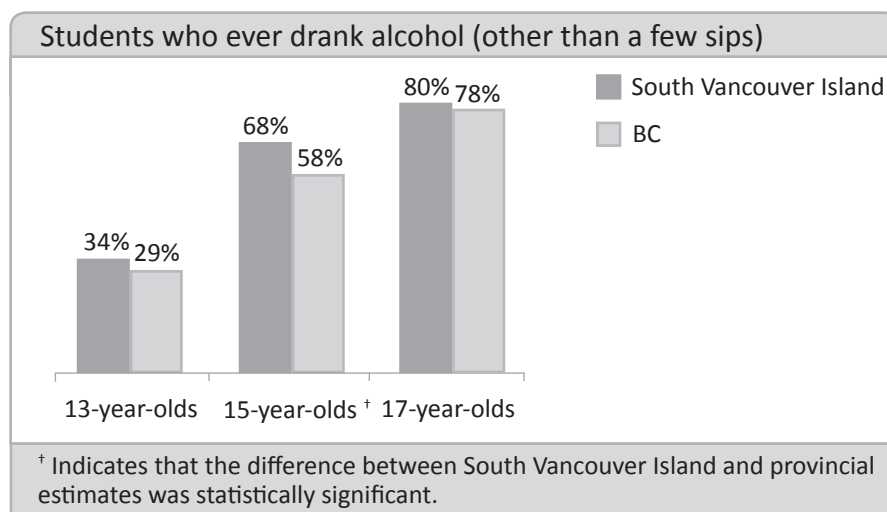
## Binge Drinking

Binge drinking is defined in the AHS as having five or more drinks within a couple of hours. Forty-two percent of local students who had tried alcohol binge drank in the past month, similar to both the 2008 provincial rate and the local 2003 rate.

Males and females were equally likely to binge drink in the past month. Two 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.



Twenty-seven percent of students in this area drank alcohol last Saturday, which was similar to the provincial rate. There were no gender differences among those who consumed wine or liquor, but females were more likely to have drunk coolers last Saturday (17% vs. 9%), and males were more likely to have drunk beer (20% vs. 12%).

## Marijuana

Thirty-five percent of male and female students had tried marijuana, which was above the rate for youth in the entire province (30%), but lower than the 2003 local rate (45%).

Among students who had tried marijuana, 4% had first used it when they were 10 years old or younger, compared to 6% across the province.

The most common age for first trying marijuana was 13 or 14 years old (51%).

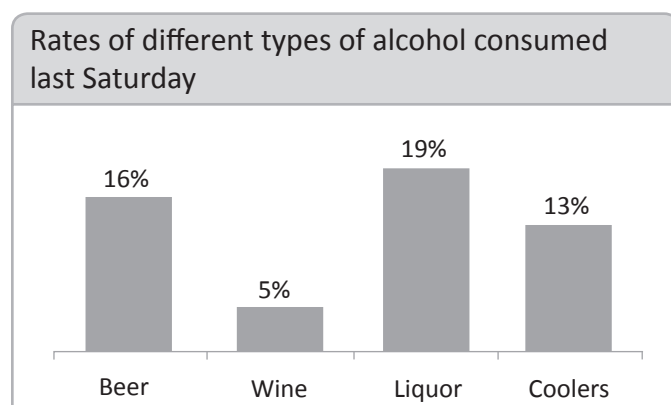
Sixty percent of those who had tried marijuana used it in the past month and 10% used it on 20 or more days in the past month (3% of all students).

## Last Saturday use

Fifteen percent of students in this area used marijuana last Saturday, which was above the provincial rate of 12%.

## Other Drugs

In this area, the rates of lifetime use of steroids (1%) and heroin (1%), and of injecting an illegal drug (1%) were lower than the provincial rates.



Since 2003, there have been increases in the use of prescription pills without a doctor's consent, but decreases in ever using mushrooms or any amphetamines (including crystal meth).

For the first time, students were specifically asked about their use of ecstasy and crystal meth. Six percent of students in this area had used ecstasy, and 1% had used crystal meth, which was below the provincial rate (2%).

There were no gender differences in the use of other drugs except females were more likely to use prescription pills (19% vs. 11%).

## Consequences of Substance Use

In the past year, 3% of students who had ever used alcohol felt they needed help for their alcohol use and 5% of those students who had ever used drugs felt they needed help for their drug use.

Fifty-four percent of students reported using alcohol or drugs in the previous year, above the provincial rate of 48%. Among these students, over half 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.

“ I would just like to share that I have smoked marijuana before but don't anymore! ”

“ I have a drug problem and need help! ”

### Ever used other drugs

Prescription pills	15%
Mushrooms	9%
Any Hallucinogens	8%
Inhalants	5%
Cocaine	3%
Any Amphetamines	2%
Steroids	1% <sup>+</sup>
Heroin	1% <sup>+</sup>
Injected an illegal drug	1% <sup>+</sup>

<sup>+</sup> Indicates that the rates in South Vancouver Island were statistically lower than provincial estimates.

Males were more likely to report having been in a physical fight or damaged property in the past year as a result of their substance use. They were also more likely to report using drugs but not experiencing any of the consequences. Females were more likely to have passed out, argued with family members, and done something that they could not remember.

#### 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	45%
Was told that I did something that I couldn't remember	41%
Passed out	30%
Argued with family members	19%
School work, marks, or behaviour at school changed	15%
Got injured	13%
Damaged property	11%
Got in trouble with the police	11%
Got into a physical fight	8%
Lost friends or broke up with a girlfriend or boyfriend	8%
Had sex when I didn't want to	6%
I overdosed	2%
Got into a car accident	1%



# Sexual Behaviour

The majority of youth reported never having had sexual intercourse (77%), and the rate was comparable to the 2003 figure in this area and the 2008 provincial rate.

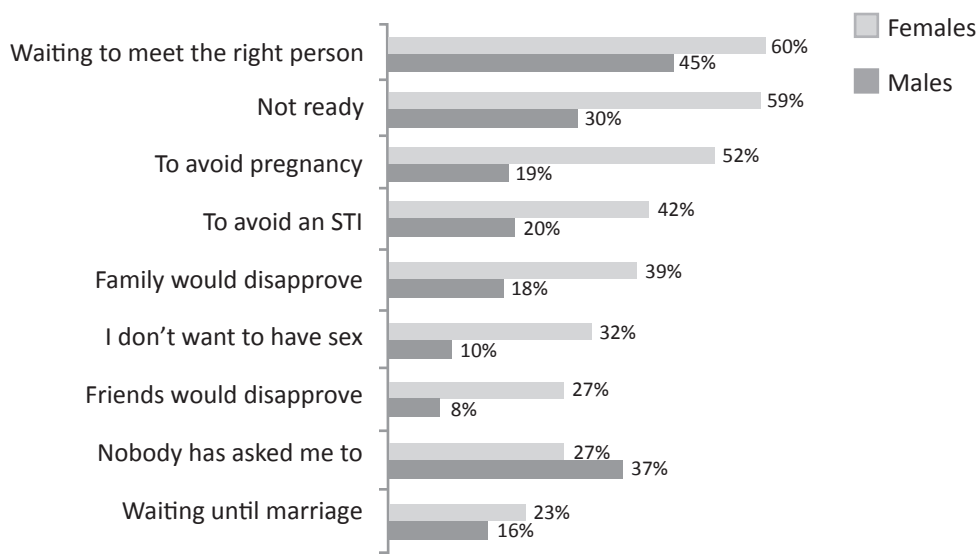
Students who never had sexual intercourse provided a number of reasons for not having sex (they could choose more than one reason). The most common were wanting to wait until they met the right person (53%), not being ready to have sex (45%) and not wanting to get pregnant or cause a pregnancy (36%). 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 (37% vs. 27%).

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 17% reported first having sex before age 14.

Among sexually active students, 53% had sexual intercourse with one person in the past year, and 8% had sex with six or more people.

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



Note: Youth could choose more than one response

“*Usually my boyfriend and I do not use condoms, instead we use the ‘withdrawal’ method*”

## Oral Sex

In this area, 28% of students reported ever having oral sex, which was higher than the provincial rate of 26%.

Among youth who ever had sexual intercourse, 7% of males and 10% of females reported having had sex with a same-sex partner.

## Sexually Transmitted Infections

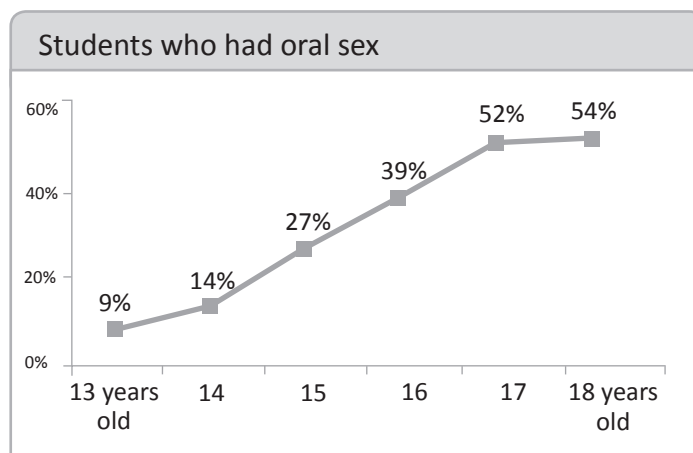
Similar to rates across the province, 1% of students had been told by a doctor or nurse that they had a sexually transmitted infection (STI). The rate was 4% among sexually active students.

Among sexually active youth, 55% 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 6% used only withdrawal. Four percent of students used no method to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex and 3% used emergency contraception (“morning after pill”).

## Birth Control and Pregnancy

Sixty-two percent of sexually active youth (71% of males and 54% of females) reported using a condom the last time they had sex, and 62% indicated that they had done so to prevent pregnancy.

Six 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, almost a third (30%) reported that they drank alcohol or used drugs before having sex the last time.

# Abuse & Violence

“*As a kid my life was rough... But my life is okay now, I am happy...Not all abused kids turn to drugs and alcohol for healing.*”

## Physical and Sexual Abuse

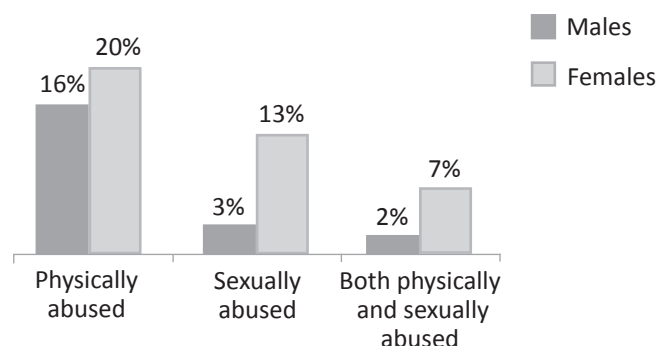
The percentage of students who reported physical or sexual abuse was similar to the 2008 provincial rate and to the local rates in 2003. Eighteen percent reported that they had been physically abused, and 8% had been sexually abused. In total, 21% of students had experienced either form of abuse and 5% had experienced both types of abuse.

Comparable with the province as a whole in 2008 and with the local 2003 rates, 4% of students had been forced to have sex when they did not want to; 1% by an adult and 3% by another youth. Females were more likely than males to have been forced to have sex (5% vs. 2%).

## Sexual Harassment

The percentage of youth who experienced verbal or physical sexual harassment was similar to the provincial rates. However, the rate of verbal sexual harassment increased locally from 44% in 2003 to 49% in 2008. Female students were more likely to experience either form of harassment. In the past year, 60% of females and 38% of males had been verbally sexually harassed, while 41% of females and 14% of males had been physically sexually harassed.

Males and females who were ever abused



Note: The gender difference was not statistically significant for physical abuse.

## Internet Safety

Comparable to both the 2003 local rate and the 2008 provincial rate, 14% of students (21% of females and 7% of males) had been in contact with someone on the Internet who made them feel unsafe. In the past year, 10% of youth gave personal information to someone that they met on the internet.

Eighteen percent of students were cyber-bullied in the previous year, similar to the provincial rate. Females were more likely than males to have been cyber-bullied (25% vs. 12%).

## Physical Fights

Consistent with youth across the province and with local youth in 2003, 25% of students were involved in a physical fight in the past year.

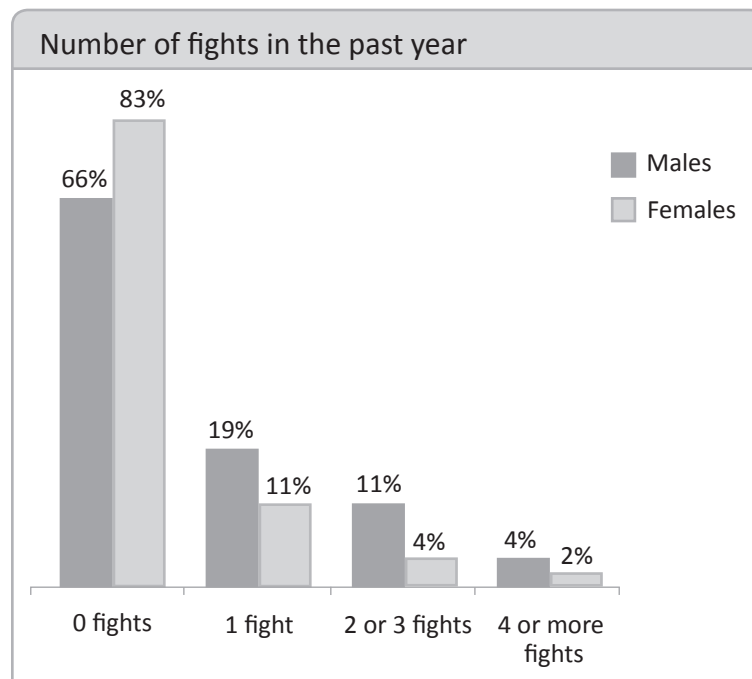
Males were more likely than females to have been in a fight (34% vs. 17%). Two percent of students were injured in a fight to the point where they required medical attention.

### Relationship Violence

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

### Discrimination

Consistent with the experience of youth across the province in 2008 and with local youth in 2003, 20% of students had been discriminated against because of their physical appearance in the past year, and 9% of students experienced racial discrimination. Five percent of students reported they had experienced discrimination because of their sexual orientation.



# School & Work

“ I feel verbally abused a lot – some boys in my class gossip about me a lot ”

## 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 (27% vs. 17%).

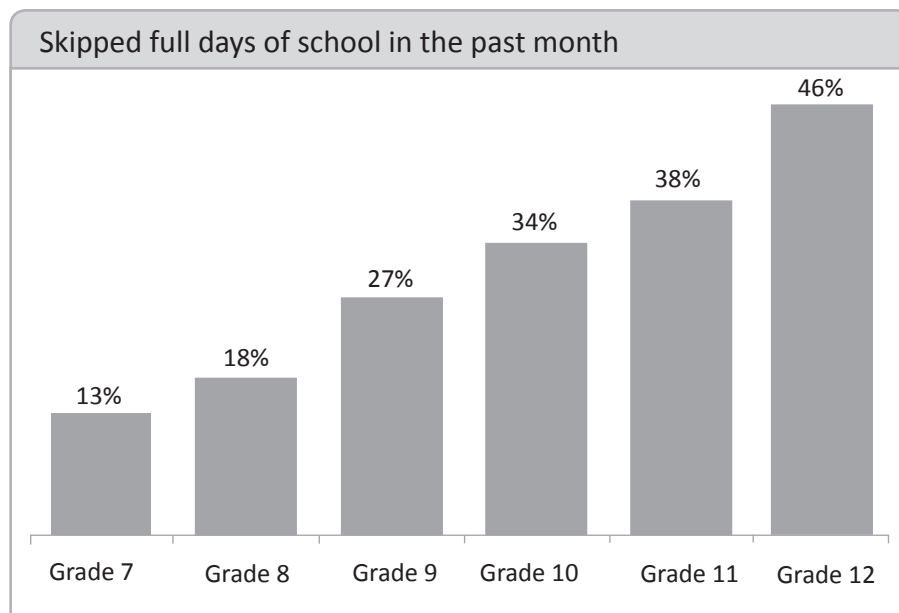
Feelings of connectedness to school were unrelated to grade level, unlike in the province as a whole where connectedness was highest among Grade 7 students.

Thirty 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 compared to students who did not skip school.

## Feeling Safe at School

Forty-six 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 (35%-46%) than for those in Grade 12 (64%).

Students most commonly reported “always or usually” feeling safe in the library (88%) or classroom (86%). They were least likely to report “always or usually” feeling safe outside on school property during school hours (63%).

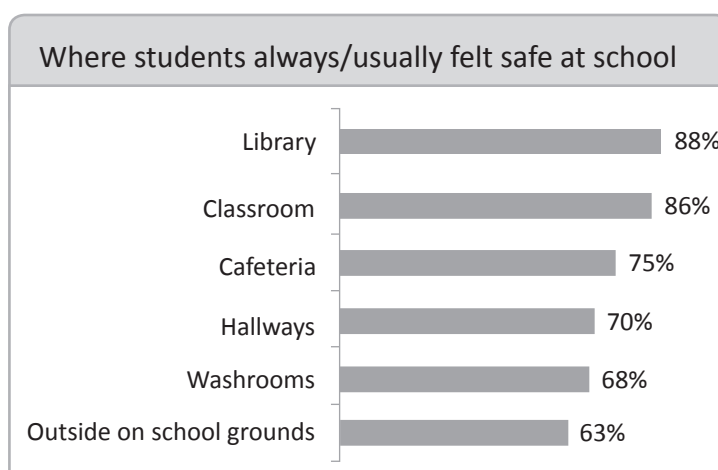
Ten percent of students had been physically attacked or assaulted while at school or traveling to or from school in the past year. Males were more likely than females to be physically attacked (14% vs. 5%), but females were more

likely to be victims of relational aggression (i.e., excluded from social groups or ignored; 44% vs. 27%) or to be verbally harassed at school (e.g., teased; 40% vs. 30%).

The rate of school-based relational aggression in this area was higher than the provincial percentage (35% vs. 31%) and reflected an increase in this area from 2003 (29%).

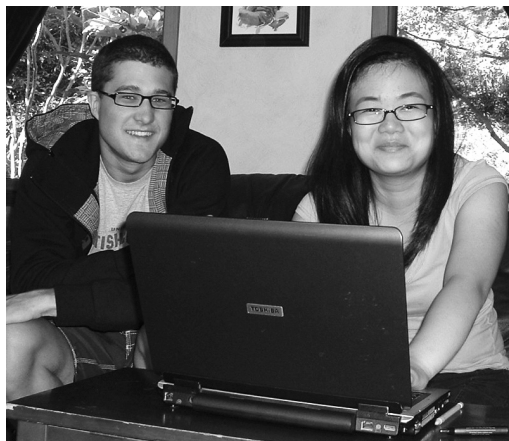
## Weapon Carrying

A total of 8% of students carried a weapon to school in the past month (13% of males and 3% of females). Among those who carried a weapon, the majority (81%) carried a knife or razor.



## Academic Aspirations

The vast majority of students expected to finish high school; only 1% anticipated finishing their education before graduating from high school. A total of 57% expected to complete their education when they graduate from university, medical school, or law school; 19% when they graduate from community college or a technical institute; 7% once they complete high school; and 16% were not sure when they would complete their education.



## Work

A total of 48% 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, 26% worked less than 5 hours a week, 57% worked 5-19 hours, and 17% worked 20 or more hours a week.

# Sport & 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 26% of males and 14% of females exercised every day, while 8% of youth did not exercise at all. Female students in this area were more likely than those in the entire province to exercise every day (14% vs. 11%).

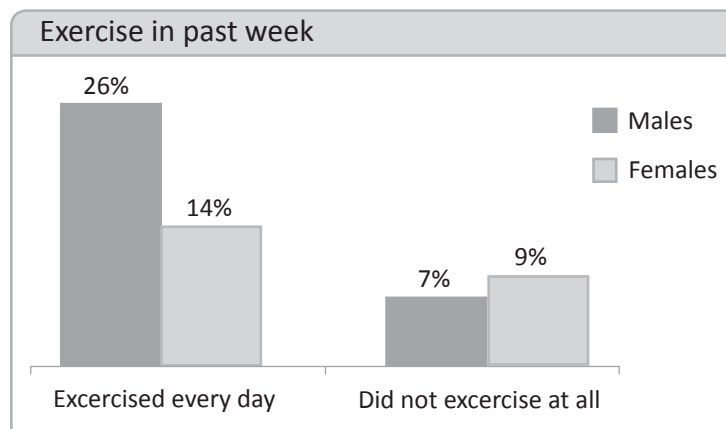
On average, youth in Grades 7 and 8 exercised more often than those in Grades 11 and 12. There was no change in reported exercise in this area from 2003 to 2008.

## Extracurricular activities

The majority of youth participated in extracurricular sports activities on a weekly basis:

62% of youth took part in sports activities with a coach (e.g., school teams, swimming lessons), and 72% participated in physical activities without a coach (e.g., biking, road hockey). Students in this area were more likely than those in the entire province to report weekly participation in non-coached sports activities (72% vs. 69%). Furthermore, while male and female youth in this area were equally likely to participate weekly in sports activities with a coach, males were more likely to participate in sports without a coach 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, 61% of youth did some form of volunteer work such as babysitting or helping a charity and 24% did this once a

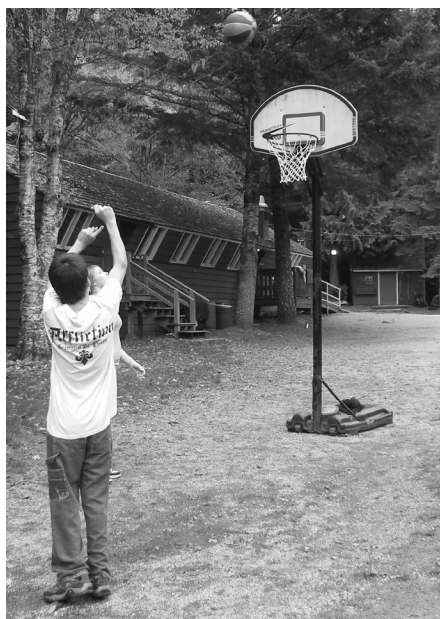




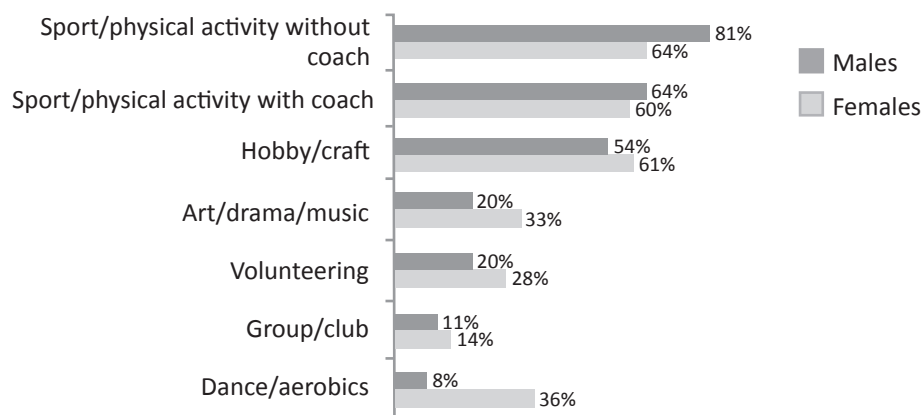
“ *I usually do sports activities every day.* ”

week or more. Other leisure activities youth participated in on a weekly basis included hobbies (57%), art/drama/music (26%) and clubs (12%). Females were more likely than males to take part weekly in arts, hobbies and volunteer activities.

Compared to youth in the entire province, students in this area were less likely to participate weekly in clubs (12% vs. 16%) or volunteer activities (24% vs. 27%). Furthermore, males in this area were less likely (8% vs. 11% provincially) while females in this area were more likely (36% vs. 31% provincially) to participate in weekly dance or aerobic classes.



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



For most extracurricular activities, participation rates from 2003 to 2008 did not differ. There were, however, a few exceptions. Fewer youth in 2008 had participated weekly in clubs (12% in 2008 vs. 16% in 2003), but more youth reported weekly participation in hobbies (57% in 2008 vs. 45% in 2003).

## Screen time

On an average school day, 89% of youth watched television. The number of youth who spent three or more hours watching TV decreased from 35% in 2003 to 21% in 2008.

Nearly 9 in 10 youth spent time on the Internet (excluding doing homework), three-

quarters spent time talking or texting on the phone, and 6 in 10 played video games. On a typical school day, 24% of youth played on the Internet, 17% phoned or texted, and 12% played video games, for three or more hours. Males were more likely than females to play video games for three or more hours a day (21% vs. 4%), but were less likely to spend three or more hours on the Internet (19% vs. 29%) or texting or talking on the phone (11% vs. 22% females).

Compared to the province as a whole, youth in this area were generally less likely to report several hours of screen time. Specifically, males in this area were less likely than

Weekly participation in extracurricular activities			
	South Vancouver Island 2003	South Vancouver Island 2008	BC 2008
Sports without coach	73%	72%	69% <sup>†</sup>
Sports with coach	59%	62%	59%
Hobby/craft	45%	57% <sup>♦</sup>	54%
Art/drama/music	27%	26%	27%
Volunteering	NA	24%	27% <sup>†</sup>
Group/club	16%	12% <sup>♦</sup>	16% <sup>†</sup>
Dance/aerobics	25%	22%	22%
♦ Difference between 2003 and 2008 HSDA estimates was statistically significant.			
† Difference between 2008 HSDA and provincial estimates was statistically significant.			
NA Not available due to change in wording of survey item.			

“ I have an unhealthy addiction to video games on the PC. I spend more time playing online shooters than I do sleeping. ”

those in the entire province to spend three or more hours watching television (20% vs. 25%), playing video games (21% vs. 25%) or on the Internet (19% vs. 24%); while females in this area were less likely than those in the entire province to spend three or more hours texting or talking on the phone (22% vs. 27%).

## 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.

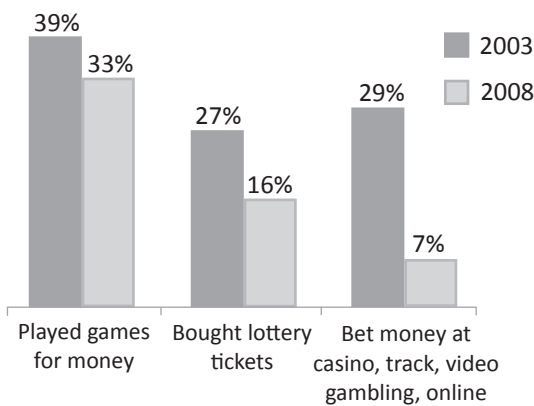
The percentage of local students who reported gambling in the past year decreased from 63% in 2003 to 51% in 2008 for males and from 46% to 28% for females. Decreases were seen in all forms of gambling.

There was no gender difference in buying lottery tickets, but males were more likely than females to have played games for money (46% vs. 20%) and to have bet money at a casino, racetrack, on video games or on-line (9% vs. 4%).

### 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, 48% said it had not affected them, 7% said they had become more physically active, 5% reported they had more sports opportunities and 3% felt they had more job prospects.

### Gambling in the past year



# Protective Factors

“My mom is the person who I would go to if I needed help.”

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.

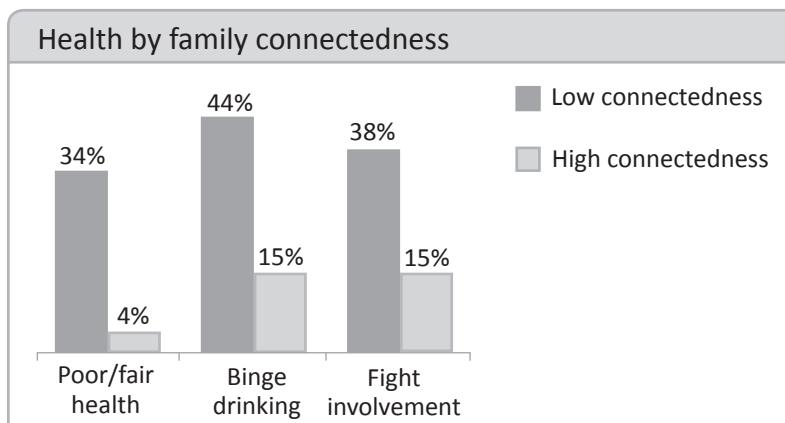
On average, students indicated relatively high connectedness to family and school. While male and female students in this area

were equally connected to school, males were more highly connected to family than females. Compared to those seen in the province as a whole, family connectedness scores in this area were similar, whereas school connectedness scores in this area were higher.

## 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 48% agreeing with the statement. Fewer



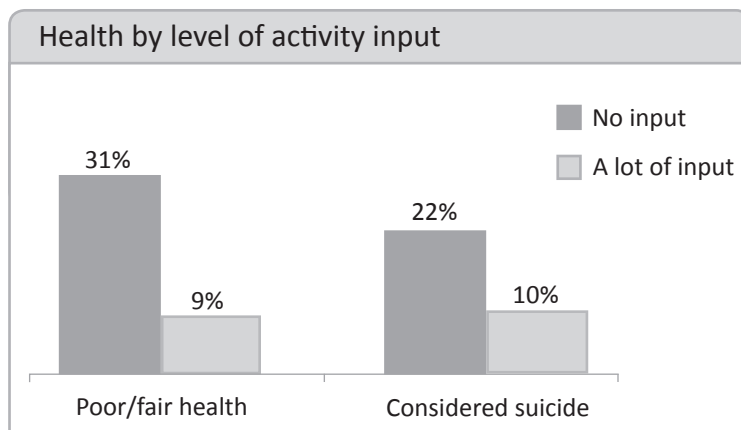
youth agreed with other statements regarding learning about their ethnic group, feeling a strong sense of belonging or attachment to the group or participating in cultural practices. There were no gender differences in level of cultural connectedness.

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 (such as special food, music or customs), 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 percent of youth reported that the activities they were involved in were not at all meaningful to them and 5% indicated that that they had no input into these activities. On the other hand, 39% were involved in activities that were very meaningful to them and 15% felt that they had a lot of input into their activities. Youth in this area rated their input in their activities similarly to those in



the province as a whole, but reported that their activities were more meaningful to them.

## 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 in each of these situations.

Compared to 2003, youth in 2008 were more likely to think that their friends would be upset with them if they got arrested (66% vs. 54%) or used marijuana (50% vs. 39%).

The overall level of prosocial peer attitudes was similar in this area compared to the province in general. However, compared to BC as a whole,

local students were more likely to think their friends would be upset if they beat someone up, and less likely to indicate that their friends would be upset if they got drunk or used marijuana.

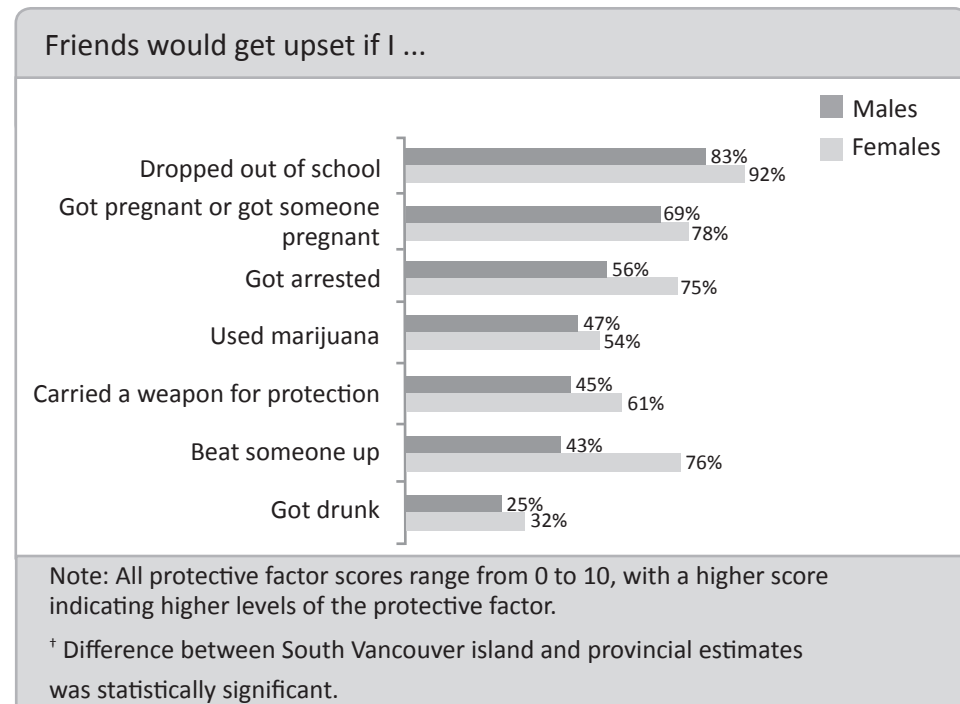
## The Value of Protective Factors

Results from provincial data depict the value of promoting protective factors. The table on the following page indicates that the presence of protective factors was generally associated with lower rates of poor/fair health, binge drinking, suicidal ideation, and fight

involvement compared to overall provincial rates. Similar associations were evident in the South Vancouver Island 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 South Vancouver Island area reported being victimized or



bullied at school and 18% of these youth had seriously considered suicide in the past year. However, being connected to family, school or culture, being engaged in their extracurricular activities, and having peers with prosocial attitudes about risky behaviours 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.

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

Protective factors	South Vancouver Island	BC
Family connectedness	7.9	7.9
School connectedness	7.0	6.8 <sup>†</sup>
Cultural connectedness	5.3	5.5 <sup>†</sup>
Youth engagement		
Meaningfulness of activities	7.4	7.2 <sup>†</sup>
Ideas listened to and acted upon	6.1	6.0
Prosocial peer attitudes	5.9	6.0
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 South Vancouver Island and provincial estimates 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% <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.				

# 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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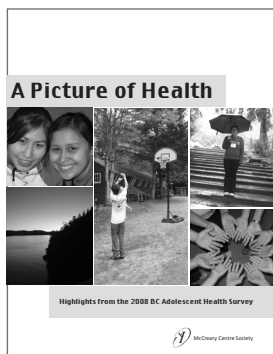


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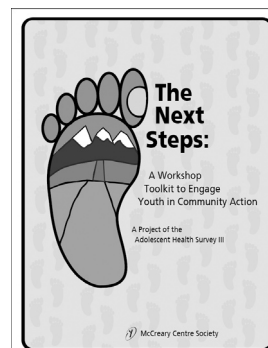
# McCreary Resources

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



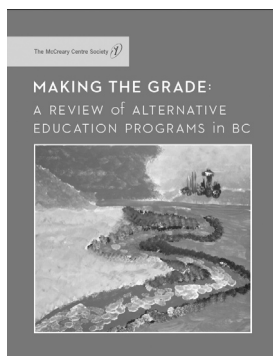
## ***A Picture of Health: Highlights from the 2008 Adolescent Health Survey (2009)***

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.



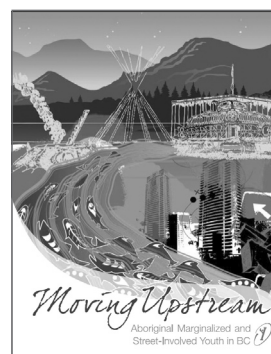
## ***The Next Steps: A workshop toolkit to engage youth in community action (2005)***

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.



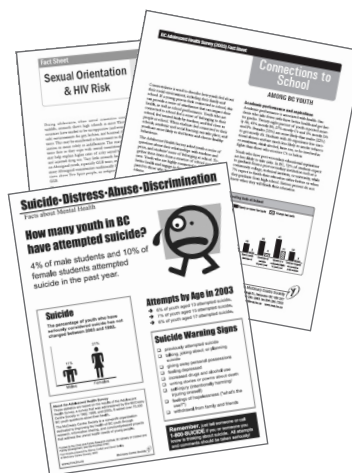
## ***Moving Upstream: Aboriginal marginalized and street-involved youth in BC (2008)***

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)***

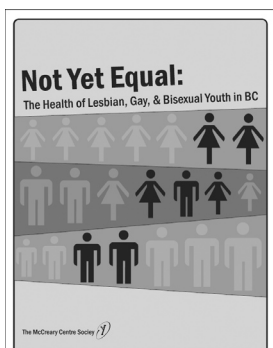
The lives of marginalized and street-involved youth are complex and filled with challenges, dangers and opportunities. This report summarizes the results of surveys with marginalized youth in the North, Interior, Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island and Vancouver.



## ***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.





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