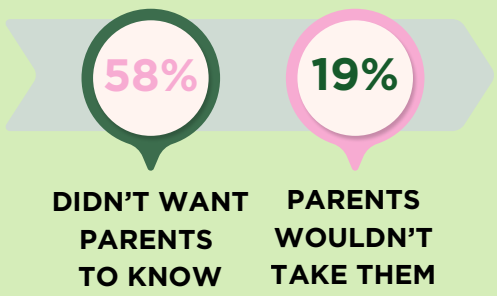
YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH:

WHAT YOUTH THINK **PARENTS** NEED TO KNOW

During McCreary's 2025 Mental Health Summit, 9 young people came together to analyze data on youth mental health from the 2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS), which was completed by over 38,400 youth. These are the findings we thought all parents and guardians should know.

In the past year, **18%** of youth felt they did not get the mental health services they needed.



Among these youth:

- **58%** reported that they didn't want their parents/guardians to know.
- **19%** reported their parent/guardian would not take them.

Youth who felt they spent the right amount of time with their family were less likely to feel lonely and extreme despair.

For example:

19% of youth who spent sufficient time with their family **often/always** felt lonely

VS.

41% who spent insufficient time with their family.

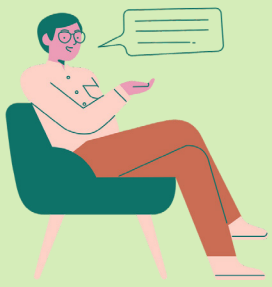
When youth felt that their family understood them, they were more likely to feel good about themselves.

72% of youth who felt their family understood them **very much or quite a bit,** felt good about themselves

VS.

17% who felt their family understood them **only a little or not at all**

Youth who had an adult to help them with learning life skills (eg. cooking, budgeting) felt more positive about their life. For example:

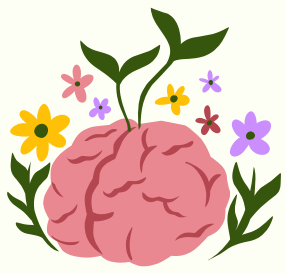


75% of youth who had a helpful adult in their life reported feeling good about themselves vs. **59%** of youth who did not have such adults.

62% of youth who had a helpful adult in their life reported feeling hopeful for their future vs. **37%** who did not have such adults who felt this way.

Based on findings and discussions, we suggest that parents and guardians:

- **Normalize help-seeking and vulnerability** about their own mental health. This can encourage youth to be more open about their own challenges.
- Try not to be **judgmental**. Keeping emotions in check and staying neutral can help youth to **feel safe** opening up.
- Let youth guide the conversation and **try to give choice** about how much they want to discuss.
- Be **open to apologizing** if needed, don't be afraid to admit when a conversation doesn't go well.
- Help youth understand that their **physical and mental safety is important** to their loved ones. This can encourage youth to reach out if they need help.



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