



ARE WE SUPPORTING THE RIGHTS OF BC YOUTH WITH PHYSICAL OR SENSORY CONDITIONS?

A 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey report

We gratefully acknowledge that the McCreary Centre Society is located on the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We also acknowledge the ancestral and continuing connection to this land of the Métis Nation.

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ISBN: 978-1-926675-86-2

McCreary Centre Society
3552 East Hastings Street
Vancouver, BC V5K 2A7



**McCreary
Centre Society**

Copies of this report are available at: www.mcs.bc.ca.
For enquiries about this report, please email: mccreary@mcs.bc.ca.

Project team

Dr. Annie Smith, Executive Director
Dr. Colleen Poon, Senior Research Associate
Dr. Maya Peled, Director of Evaluation
Garrett Jones, Research and Evaluation Analyst
Sophie Reinhart, Research and Evaluation Analyst
Erin Casey, Research Assistant

Report layout by **Danielle Mahdal**

Thank you

Thank you to all the youth who shared their experiences on the survey. Quotes from youth with a physical or sensory condition are included throughout the report.

Funding for this report was provided by the BC government.



Citation: Smith, A., Poon, C., Casey, E., Reinhart, S., Jones, G., and McCreary Centre Society. (2022). *Are we supporting the rights of BC youth with physical or sensory conditions? A 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey report.*

Project Advisory Committee

Dr. Jennifer Baumbusch, Associate Professor, CIHR Sex & Gender Science Chair, The Dynamics of Caregiving in an Aging Society, School of Nursing, University of British Columbia

Kathaleen Evans, Senior Policy Analyst, Inclusion Policy, BC Ministry of Children and Family Development

Ash Fengler, McCreary Centre Society Provincial YAC member

Leah Howard, Senior Policy Analyst, Inclusion Policy, BC Ministry of Children and Family Development

Devyn Hughes, McCreary Centre Society Provincial YAC member

Dr. Janet Jamieson, Professor, Educational & Counselling Psychology, & Special Education (Concentration in Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing), Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia

Cynthia Lee, Manager of Research, Strategic Policy and Research, Policy, Legislation and Litigation Branch, BC Ministry of Children and Family Development

Dr. Jennifer E.V. Lloyd, Research Associate, UBC School of Nursing

Dr. Mandeep Mahal, MD, FRCPC, Clinical Instructor, UBC Department of Pediatrics, BC Children's Hospital

Zak Markiw, McCreary Centre Society Provincial YAC member

Paige Mierau, McCreary Centre Society Youth Health Ambassador

Dr. Eva Moore, MD, Clinical Associate Professor, University of British Columbia, Department of Pediatrics, Division of Adolescent Health and Medicine, BC Children's Hospital

Danielle Smith, Executive Director, Early Years, Indigenous Early Years and Inclusion Policy, BC Ministry of Children and Family Development

Alyssa Sundstrom, McCreary Centre Society Provincial YAC member

Dr. Andrea Wallace, MD, FRCPC, Clinical Instructor, Division of Adolescent Health and Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, BC Children's Hospital

Danjie (Jerry) Zou, M.A., PhD student, Measurement, Evaluation, & Research Methodology (MERM) Program

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KEY FINDINGS



In 2018, 12% of BC youth reported they had at least one of the three types of physical or sensory conditions asked about on the BC AHS, including 8% with a chronic medical condition, 4% with a sensory disability, and 1% with a physical disability. Youth with one of these physical or sensory conditions were more likely than those without a health condition or disability to identify as female or non-binary, have been born in Canada, identify as a sexual minority, and have experience of government care.



Youth with a physical or sensory condition experienced barriers to fully participating in their family, school, and community. For example, they were more likely than youth without a condition to report they lived in poverty, felt unsafe at school and in their home, experienced violence and abuse, and missed out on needed mental health services.



Youth with a physical or sensory condition most commonly reported having 3–5 close friends in their school or neighbourhood. They were less likely than their peers to have in-person friends, and were more likely to have online friends they had never met in person (37% vs. 32% of youth without a health condition or disability).



Youth with a physical or sensory condition experienced poorer physical and mental health than those without a health condition or disability, including being more likely to have self-harmed (26% vs. 11%), seriously considered suicide (26% vs. 9%), or attempted suicide (9% vs. 2%) in the past year. However, they reported more positive health and well-being when they experienced positive relationships with family, friends, teachers, and other adults. For example, 73% of those who had an adult in their family they could talk to about their problems reported good or excellent mental health, compared to 37% who did not have such an adult in their family.



Youth with a physical or sensory condition can experience societal barriers to independence. However, when these young people felt their family respected them, they were more likely to feel they had the right amount of time to do the things they wanted on their own and with family, friends, and in nature. For example, 67% who felt respected by their family had sufficient time on their own to do the things they wanted (vs. 35% who did not feel respected by their family).



Among youth with a physical or sensory condition, female and non-binary youth were more likely to experience discrimination and other barriers to enjoying their human rights. For example, in the past year 18% of non-binary youth had experienced discrimination because of their disability, compared to 8% of males. Also, 36% of females had been discriminated against because of the way they looked, compared to 26% of males.



Despite the barriers they faced, youth with a physical or sensory condition participated in a range of extracurricular activities over the past year, including volunteering, various sports, arts, exercise classes, clubs, and cultural or traditional activities. They were less likely than youth without a health condition or disability to participate in organized and informal sports but were more likely to volunteer and to participate in the arts, exercise classes, and clubs.



Most youth with a physical or sensory condition reported they persevered to achieve their goals when they experienced setbacks, were optimistic for their future, and planned to attend post-secondary. Also, more than three out of four (78%) could name something they were really good at including sports, school, the arts, and helping others. Youth also reported being creative, empathetic, energetic, friendly, funny, helpful, kind, independent, social, caring, resourceful, responsible, self-aware, positive, and happy.

INTRODUCTION

This is the first BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS) report to focus on the health and well-being of youth with a physical or sensory health condition or disability (referred to in the report as a physical or sensory condition). This includes young people who identified as having a chronic medical condition (such as diabetes or asthma), physical disability (such as cerebral palsy or a disability requiring the use of a wheelchair), and/or sensory disability (including deafness, hearing loss, and a vision impairment).

The needs, goals, and strengths of youth with such physical or sensory conditions are often overlooked in research, as are the barriers they face to enjoying their rights to full and meaningful participation in their family, school, and community. This report seeks to address these gaps and is framed in the context of Canada's commitment to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

The report begins with a brief profile of all youth with a physical or sensory condition, before considering those who reported their condition prevented them from participating in things other youth their age did. The report then moves on to consider the health and well-being of BC youth with a physical or sensory condition in relation to their rights and the promotion of those rights. Comparisons to youth without any type of health condition or disability (also referred to as 'youth without a condition') are also included.

The risks to healthy development and protective factors which supported better outcomes were largely similar between youth with a chronic medical condition, physical disability, and/or a sensory disability. However, it is important to recognize the unique needs of youth with each condition or disability and to ensure they are included in policy and practice planning. For example, one survey participant noted, "*Visual impairments get overlooked.*" For this reason, tables for each group are included in the Appendix of the report, and detail the specific results for each group, as well as how the results compare to youth without a health condition or disability.

Percentage estimates in this report were generated through frequency and crosstabulation analyses. Age-adjusted logistic regressions were also conducted to ensure reported differences in results were not being driven by age. All reported comparisons in this report are statistically significant at least at $p < .05$. This means there is less than a 5% likelihood these results occurred by chance.

Any percentage that is marked with an asterisk (*) had a standard error that was higher than others but was still within the releasable range.

The report provides associations, and does not imply causation or the direction of the relationship.

The 2018 BC AHS was completed by over 38,000 youth aged 12–19, and is considered representative of over 95% of BC youth in Grades 7–12 who were attending mainstream schools in the province. Over 4,300 young people with a chronic medical condition, physical disability, and/or sensory disability participated in the survey. However, results may not be representative of all youth in BC with a physical or sensory condition as they do not include youth in alternative, independent, or special school programs; who were not in school on the day the survey was administered; or who experienced barriers to completing a pencil and paper survey. Additionally, whilst the BC AHS asks about a range of health topics, it may have missed some information that may be relevant to fully understanding the experiences of youth with a physical or sensory condition.

For more details about the methodology, sample, and limitations of the BC AHS, please contact mccreary@mcs.bc.ca.



Glossary

The wording used in this report is based on the question wording of the 2018 BC AHS to accurately reflect the information which young people provided. However, language continues to evolve and terms like hearing impairment are no longer acceptable to many people. Additionally, the question wording which asks youth whether their condition prevented them from doing things their same-age peers did, unintentionally implies that it is the condition rather than the societal and institutional barriers which young people face that is preventing their inclusion.

Chronic medical condition - youth who reported on the BC AHS that they had a long-term medical condition such as diabetes or asthma.

Exercise classes - refers to participation in dance, yoga, or exercise classes in the past year.

Non-binary youth - youth who did not identify as male or female.

Physical or sensory condition - a collective term used to describe youth who identified as having a chronic medical condition, physical disability, and/or sensory disability.

Physical disability - youth who reported they had a disability which affected their mobility or dexterity, such as cerebral palsy or a condition which required the use of a wheelchair.

Protective factors - these are factors that promote the likelihood of positive outcomes, reduce the likelihood of negative ones, and can buffer the effects of adverse experiences.

Sensory disability - youth who indicated they had a hearing or vision impairment such as deafness or blindness.

Sexual minority - youth who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, mostly straight, or questioning.

Youth without a condition - for readability this term is sometimes used to refer to youth who did not identify as having any type of health condition or disability.



Quotes from youth with a physical or sensory condition are included throughout the report.

YOUTH WITH A PHYSICAL OR SENSORY CONDITION

In 2018, 12% of BC youth reported they had at least one of the three types of physical or sensory conditions asked about on the BC AHS, including 8% with a chronic medical condition, 4% with a sensory disability, and 1% with a physical disability. Males were the least likely to report having a physical or sensory condition (10% vs. 13% of females vs. 21% of non-binary youth).

Older youth were more likely to report they had a physical or sensory condition, as 13% of those aged 14 or older had a condition, compared to 10% of those under 14 years old.

The majority of youth with a physical or sensory condition were born in Canada, and 17% were born outside Canada. The percentage born abroad was lower than among those without a health condition or disability (24%).

Overall, 49% of students with a physical or sensory condition spoke a language other than English at home (vs. 55% without a condition), including 18% who did so most of the time (vs. 26%).



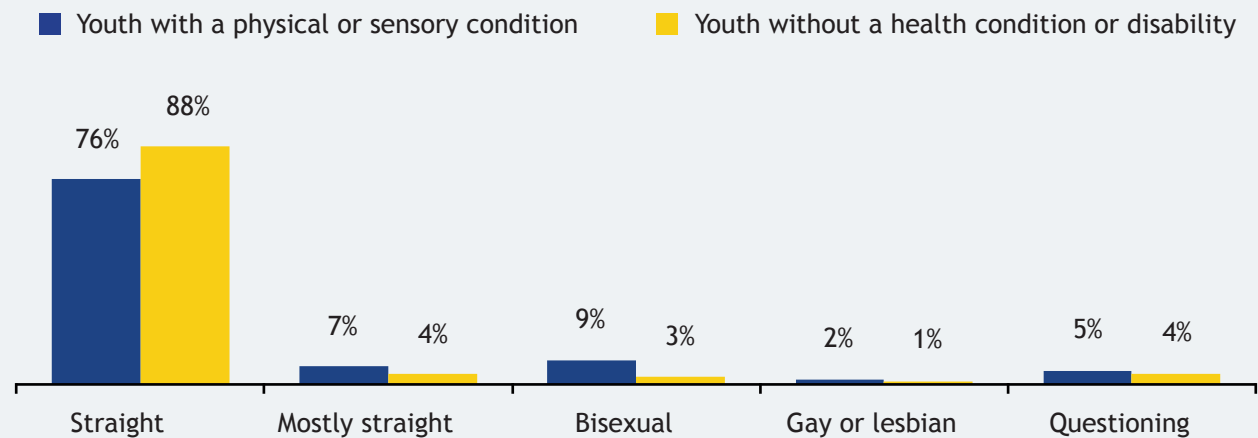
FAMILY BACKGROUND OF YOUTH WITH A PHYSICAL OR SENSORY CONDITION

African	3%
Australian/Pacific Islander	2%
East Asian	14%
European	54%
Indigenous	14%
Latin/South/Central American	6%
South Asian	10%
Southeast Asian	9%
West Asian	3%
Other	3%
Don't know	9%

Note: Youth could mark all backgrounds that applied to them. Among youth who indicated 'other', they most commonly specified they were Canadian.

Most youth identified their sexual orientation as straight. However, just under a quarter of youth with a physical or sensory condition identified as a sexual minority (i.e., as mostly straight, bisexual, gay, lesbian, or questioning) which was double the rate among youth without a condition (24% vs. 12%).

SEXUAL ORIENTATION



Note: The difference between youth with a physical or sensory condition and youth without a health condition or disability who identified as questioning was not statistically significant.

The majority of youth with a physical or sensory condition had some sort of caretaking responsibilities on an average school day, including 59% who took care of a pet or other animal and 26% who took care of another relative (e.g., younger sibling or a relative with a disability).

Among all 2018 BC AHS respondents, 5% had ever been in government care or an alternative to care (e.g., on a Youth Agreement), and 1% were currently in care. Youth with a physical or sensory condition were overrepresented in the government care system, as 7% had ever been in care and 2% were currently in care.

Most youth with a physical or sensory condition reported having a single type of disability or health condition. However, more than a third reported having at least one other type, and this was most commonly a mental health condition (27%). A mental health condition was also the most common type of health condition reported by all BC youth (15% of all BC youth had a mental health condition).



I am good at caring for the well-being of others."



I am good at helping family, being a big brother."



Youth who identified they could not participate in activities with their peers because of their health condition

Over a third (36%) of youth with a physical or sensory condition reported they had a condition that prevented them from doing things their same-age peers did. These youth tended to be older than those who did not feel they missed out because of their condition, and were more likely to identify as female or non-binary.

Youth who identified their condition prevented them from doing things their peers did were more likely than other youth to experience challenges to healthy development (including in comparison to youth who did not feel their life was impacted by their condition in this way, and those without a health condition or disability). For example, they were more likely to go to bed hungry (22% vs. 12% who did not experience restrictions because of their condition vs. 7% without a condition), and to have experienced physical abuse (36% vs. 17% vs. 10%), sexual abuse (28% vs. 13% vs. 7%), and discrimination in the past year (63% vs. 45% vs. 32%).

Despite these challenges, 74% of youth who felt their condition prevented them from doing things their peers did could name something they were really good at, 72% felt happy at least some of the time in the past month, 72% felt at least somewhat hopeful, 41% felt happy to be at school, 31% felt good about themselves, and 30% always persevered to achieve their goals when things went wrong (among those who experienced setbacks).

Also, compared to other youth with a physical or sensory condition, youth who had a condition that prevented them from doing things their peers did were more likely to have volunteered weekly and to have tried art, drama, singing, or music groups or lessons in the past year.

ACKNOWLEDGING AND PROMOTING THE RIGHTS OF YOUTH WITH A PHYSICAL OR SENSORY CONDITION

Canada ratified the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* in 2010. Doing so commits the country to promoting and ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights for persons with disabilities. In this section, we consider the level to which BC's young people with a physical or sensory condition (a chronic medical condition, physical disability, and/or sensory disability) enjoyed those rights, compared to youth without a health condition or disability. We also offer examples of some factors that appear to increase the likelihood young people with a physical or sensory condition will report positive health and well-being and are able to more fully participate in society. The final right considered in this section is the right to gender equality.



Right to education

“

I am good at reading, writing, academic studies.”

“

I am good at school, getting good grades, art.”

Young people with a physical or sensory condition were less likely than those without a condition to feel connected to school. For example, they were less likely to feel like part of their school (53% vs. 65%), happy to be at their school (53% vs. 66% of those without a condition), safe at school (66% vs. 78%), that school staff treated them fairly (67% vs. 73%), and that teachers cared about them (62% vs. 69%).

When asked about safety in specific locations around their school, youth with a physical or sensory condition were less likely to usually or always feel safe in the classrooms (90% vs. 95% of youth without a condition), washrooms (83% vs. 89%), changing rooms (81% vs. 88%), hallways and stairwells (85% vs. 92%), the cafeteria (86% vs. 93%), the library (93% vs. 96%), and outside on school grounds (81% vs. 89%).



Most youth with a physical or sensory condition expected to graduate high school, and only 1% did not anticipate completing Grade 12. Most also planned to continue on to post-secondary. However, they were slightly less likely than their peers to plan to do so (83% vs. 85% of youth without a condition).

In the month prior to taking the 2018 BC AHS, around 8 in 10 youth with a physical or sensory condition had missed classes (81% vs. 69% of youth without a condition). They most commonly missed school because of appointments (47% vs. 32% without a condition) and illness (46% vs. 36%). Also, a quarter (25%) missed class due to their mental health (vs. 7%), and 6% missed because of bullying (vs. 2%).

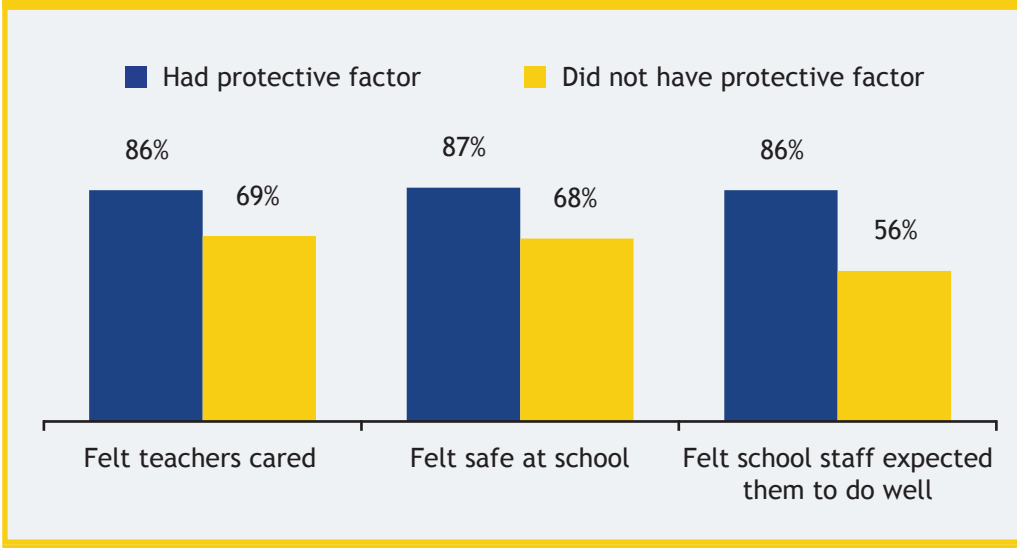
Promoting youth's rights

Experiencing a safe and supportive school environment increased the likelihood that youth with a physical or sensory condition were planning to continue their education beyond high school. They were also more likely to plan to attend post-secondary if they had an adult to help them prepare for it (89% vs. 66% who did not have such an adult), as well as if they had the money for school supplies and to participate in school trips and extracurricular activities (85% vs. 67% who felt deprived of this).

Youth were more likely to feel connected to their school when they had caring relationships. For example, youth with a physical or sensory condition were more likely to feel part of their school when they had at least one close friend in their school and/or community (55% vs. 29% who had no friends) and when they felt school staff treated them fairly (64% vs. 26% who did not feel they were treated fairly).



YOUTH WITH A PHYSICAL OR SENSORY CONDITION WHO PLANNED TO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL





Right to an adequate standard of living

Youth with a physical or sensory condition were more likely than their peers to be living in poverty and were less likely to have the material items they needed to feel like they belonged. For example, they were around twice as likely as youth without a health condition or disability to miss out on extra-curricular activities because they could not afford to participate (17% vs. 9%), and to go to bed hungry at least sometimes because they or their family did not have enough money for food (15% vs. 7%).

Youth were asked if they had 10 items which BC youth had identified as important to have in order to feel like they belonged at school and with their peers. Youth with a physical or sensory condition were equally likely to have a smartphone as youth without a condition, but were more likely than youth without a condition to feel deprived of the other nine items. They were also more likely to feel deprived of multiple items. For example, 7% lacked at least three of the items on the list (vs. 3% without a condition).

YOUTH WHO FELT DEPRIVED OF ...

	Youth with a physical or sensory condition	Youth without a health condition or disability
Money for self	13%	8%
Space of their own to hang out in	9%	5%
Smartphone	7%	6%
Money for school supplies, trips, or extracurricular activities	7%	3%
Lunch for school/money for lunch	6%	3%
Equipment/clothes for extracurricular activities	5%	2%
Access to transportation	4%	3%
Clothes to fit in	4%	1%
Quiet place to sleep	4%	1%
Access to Internet	2%	1%

Note: The difference between youth with a physical or sensory condition and youth without a condition who felt deprived of a smartphone was not statistically significant.

Promoting youth's rights

Youth with a physical or sensory condition who had access to breakfast on school days (including through school breakfast programs) were less likely to go to bed hungry because of a lack of money for food (11% vs. 30% of youth who did not get breakfast on school days).





Right to freedom from violence and abuse



People at my school get catcalled a lot... it makes me feel uncomfortable and I feel I can't wear things because they will make a comment I don't want."



I have had an experience with a teacher verbally abusing me."



Teachers and coaches need to be more aware of bullying physically and verbally."

Youth with health conditions and disabilities can be vulnerable to victimization and abuse. This appeared to be the case in BC, as youth with a physical or sensory condition were more than twice as likely to have been physically abused (23% vs. 10% without a condition).

The BC AHS asked youth directly if they had experienced sexual abuse, as well as about other types of abuse which youth might not recognize as sexual abuse, such as being forced into sexual activity and being the younger of an illegal age pairing when they first had sex. In total, 14% of students with a physical or sensory condition recognized they had been sexually abused (vs. 5% without a condition), and this rose to 18% when other types of sexual abuse were considered (vs. 7% without a condition).

In the past year, around half (51%) of youth with a physical or sensory condition had experienced discrimination. This included 10% who felt they had been discriminated against because of their disability and around a third (32%) who had been discriminated against because of the way they looked.



Youth with a physical or sensory condition were more likely to have been bullied at school or on the way to or from school, compared to their peers without a health condition. For example, they were more likely to have been deliberately socially excluded (21% vs. 10%), severely teased (19% vs. 9%), and physically attacked (3% vs. 1%) at least three times in the past year. They were also twice as likely as their peers without a condition to have been cyberbullied during this time (20% vs. 10%).

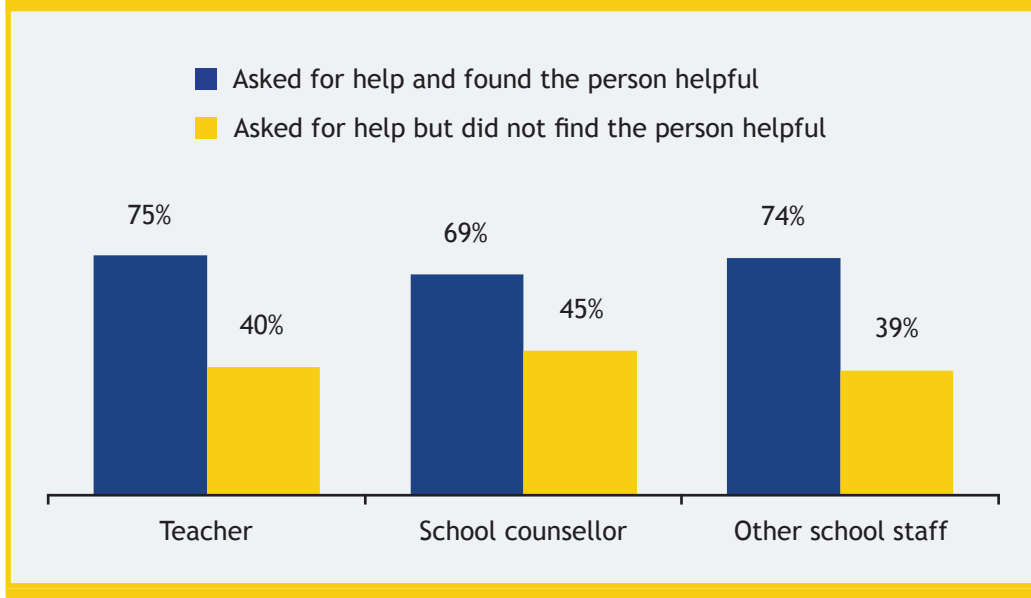
Most youth felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day and at night. However, those with a physical or sensory condition were less likely to feel safe (82% felt safe in their neighbourhood at least sometimes vs. 89% without a condition). They were also less likely to feel safe on their journey to and from school (85% usually/always felt safe vs. 92% of youth without a condition).



Promoting youth's rights

The presence of supportive adults increased youth's sense of safety at school and in their community. For example, youth with a physical or sensory condition were more likely to feel safe in their neighborhood when they had an adult in their community who cared about them (61% vs. 49% who did not have such an adult). Youth were also more likely to feel safe at school when they had access to helpful school staff.

YOUTH WITH A PHYSICAL OR SENSORY CONDITION WHO FELT SAFE AT SCHOOL





Right to liberty of movement

Youth were asked about various modes of transport they might use to get to school. As with other youth, those with a physical or sensory condition most commonly got to school by car (48%). However, they were more likely to take a school bus or public transit to school (25% vs. 22% without a condition).

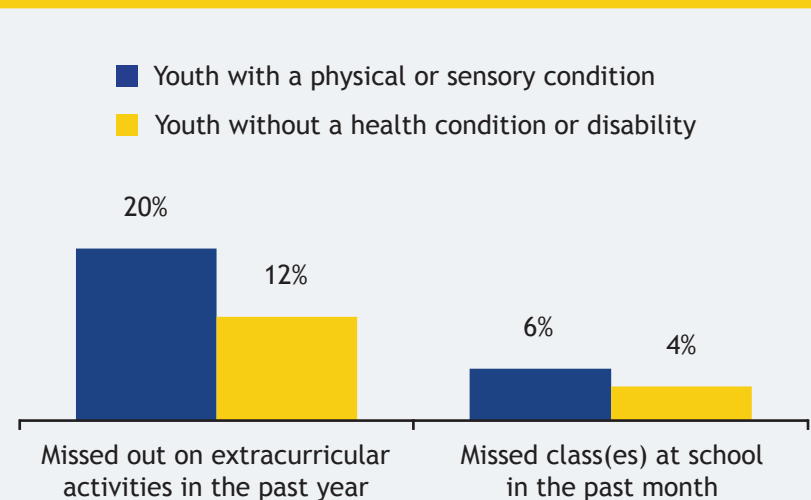


I am good at finding my way around places.”

Around a quarter of youth with a physical or sensory condition (24%) reported they did not use public transit. Among those who used transit, youth with a physical or sensory condition were less likely to feel safe doing so (54% often or always felt safe on transit vs. 63% of youth without a condition).

Compared to their peers without a condition, youth with a physical or sensory condition were more likely to cite transportation challenges as a reason they had not engaged in extracurricular activities in the past year and had missed school in the past month. Also, 4% of youth reported being deprived of access to transportation.

YOUTH WHO MISSED OUT ON ACTIVITIES OR SCHOOL DUE TO A LACK OF TRANSPORTATION



Promoting youth's rights

Youth with a physical or sensory condition who were able to access transportation reported a better quality of life. For example, they were more likely to feel like their life was going well (64% vs. 29% who felt deprived of transportation). They were also more likely to participate weekly in extracurricular activities (84% vs. 75%).





Right to participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure, and sport

“

I like to play the guitar and connect with people.”

“

I am good at challenging myself physically and being there for someone when they need it.”

“

I am a fantastic public speaker.”

“

I am good at adapting to different sports easily.”

“

There is a large stigma around disabilities in general in social situations that is rarely if at all addressed.”

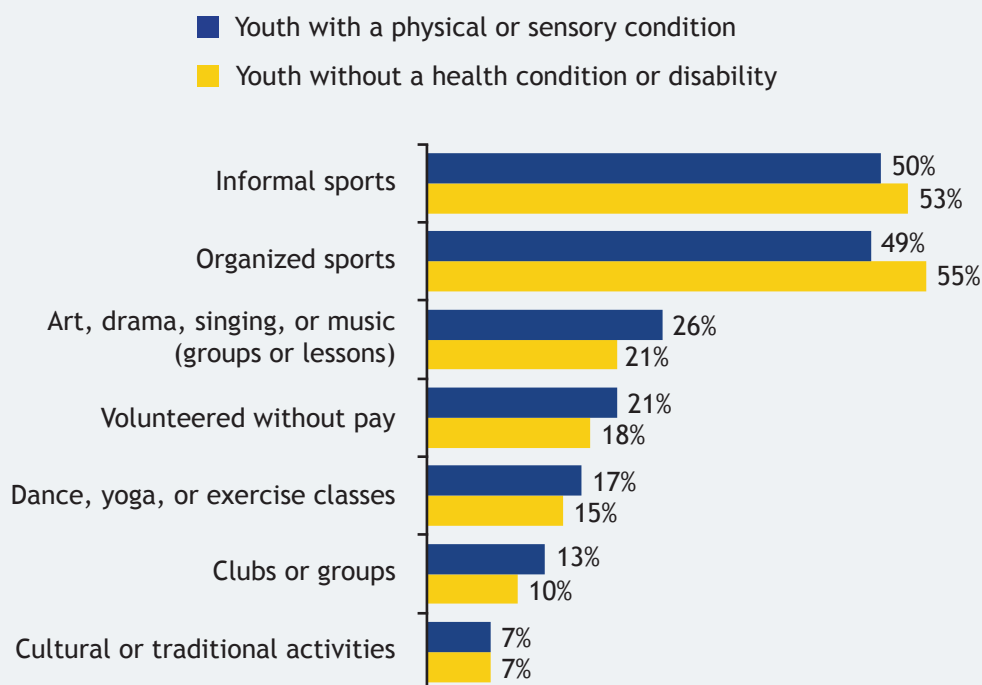
Youth with a physical or sensory condition experienced a range of barriers to participating in cultural, recreational, leisure, and sport activities. In addition to missing out because they could not afford to participate and because of transportation issues, 23% missed out because they were too anxious or depressed (vs. 6% without a condition), 18% reported activities were not available to them in their community (vs. 11%), and 11% did not participate because they were worried about being bullied (vs. 4%).



Despite the barriers they faced, youth with a physical or sensory condition participated in a range of extracurricular activities, including various sports, arts, exercise classes, clubs, cultural or traditional activities, and volunteer opportunities over the past year. They were less likely than youth without a condition to participate in organized and informal sports but were more likely to participate in the arts, exercise classes, clubs, and volunteer activities.

Youth with a physical or sensory condition who participated in community activities were less likely to find the activities meaningful (66% reported their activities were at least quite meaningful vs. 68% of youth without a condition), and to feel their ideas were listened to and valued within those activities (40% vs. 47%).

YOUTH WHO PARTICIPATED AT LEAST WEEKLY IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST YEAR



Promoting youth's rights

Youth with a physical or sensory condition were more likely to engage in extracurricular activities on a weekly basis when they had the clothes and equipment to participate (87% vs. 65% who felt deprived of this); felt their ideas were listened to and valued (93% vs. 70% who did not feel this way); and found the activities they were involved in meaningful (92% vs. 56% who did not feel this way). They were also more likely to play organized sports if they had a supportive coach. For example, 85% of youth with a physical or sensory condition who had approached a sports coach for help and found them helpful played organized sports at least weekly (85% vs. 52%* who did not find a coach helpful when approached).





Right to equal access to health

PHYSICAL HEALTH

“

I get a huge lack of sleep because I work late and wake up early to work out.”

Youth with a physical or sensory condition reported poorer physical health than their peers without a condition. For example, those with a physical or sensory condition were less likely to describe their health as good or excellent (67% vs. 88% without a condition); to get at least eight hours of sleep the previous night (41% vs. 53%); and to get 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise on three or more days in the past week (68% vs. 73%).



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

“

I have hurt myself in the past but I have received a lot of help from friends and family that have got me up and going again.”

“

I am not currently anxious or depressed but I have been in previous years and it is possible that it could come back. Using the tools around me and mental health strategies, I have been able to overcome it for the current time in my life.”

“

I feel school administrators should stop giving the overwhelming amount of school work we're given. I work 5-11pm most evenings and don't have a life because if I'm not working, I'm stressed.”

Youth with a physical or sensory condition were less likely than youth without a condition to rate their mental health as good or excellent (59% vs. 84%). They were more likely to have experienced extreme stress (21% vs. 6% without a condition) and extreme despair (12% vs. 3%) in the past month. They were also more likely to have self-harmed (26% vs. 11% without a condition), purged (deliberately vomited after eating; 16% vs. 10%), seriously considered suicide (26% vs. 9%), or attempted suicide (9% vs. 2%) in the past year.

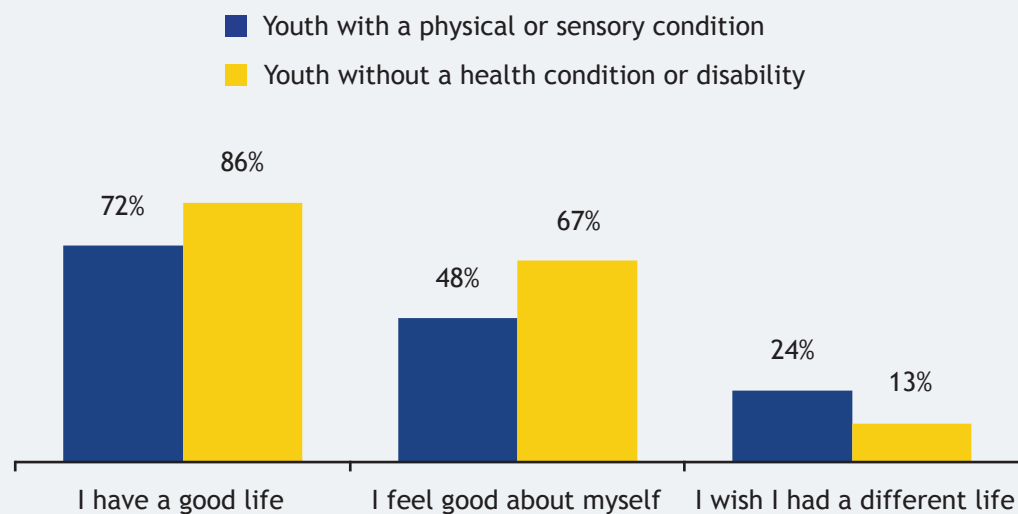
Youth with a physical or sensory condition were less likely to feel hopeful for their future (60% vs. 72% without a condition), feel good about themselves (48% vs. 67%), and rate their quality of life positively.



I am good at doing the best I can do, at least trying to."

They were more likely to have experienced things going wrong in their life (98% vs. 95% without a condition), and were less likely to always push themselves to achieve their goals when they did experience setbacks (40% vs. 48%).

YOUTH WHO AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED ...

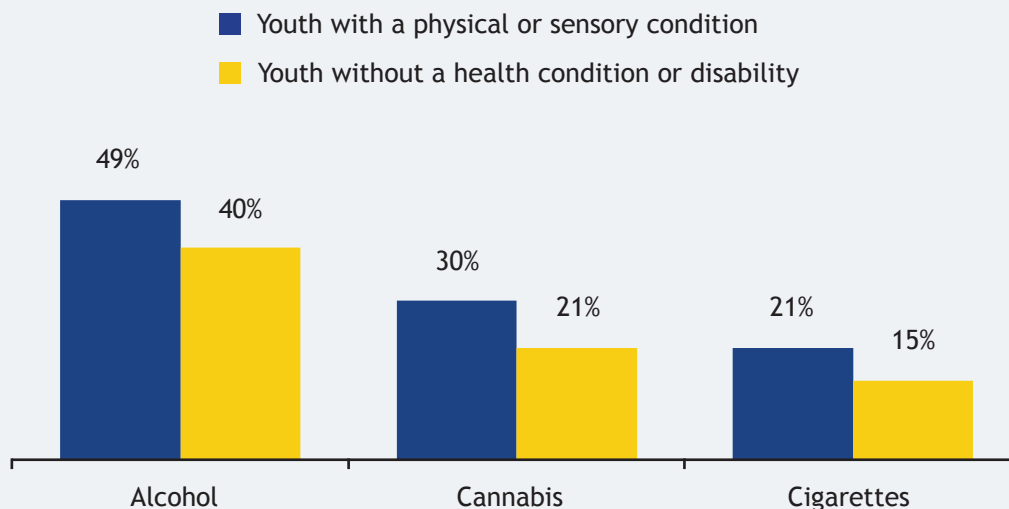


SUBSTANCE USE

Youth with a physical or sensory condition were more likely than their peers without a condition to have tried alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis; and to have used tobacco and cannabis recently and frequently. For example, they were more likely to have smoked cigarettes (3% vs. 1% without a condition) and used cannabis (4% vs. 2%) on 20 or more days in the past month. They were also more likely to have vaped in the past month (30% vs. 25%).

In addition, youth with a physical or sensory condition were more likely to have used substances other than alcohol and cannabis (23% vs. 12% without a condition), including heroin (1% vs. <0.5%), cocaine (3% vs. 2%), and ecstasy (4% vs. 2%).

YOUTH WHO HAD TRIED SUBSTANCES

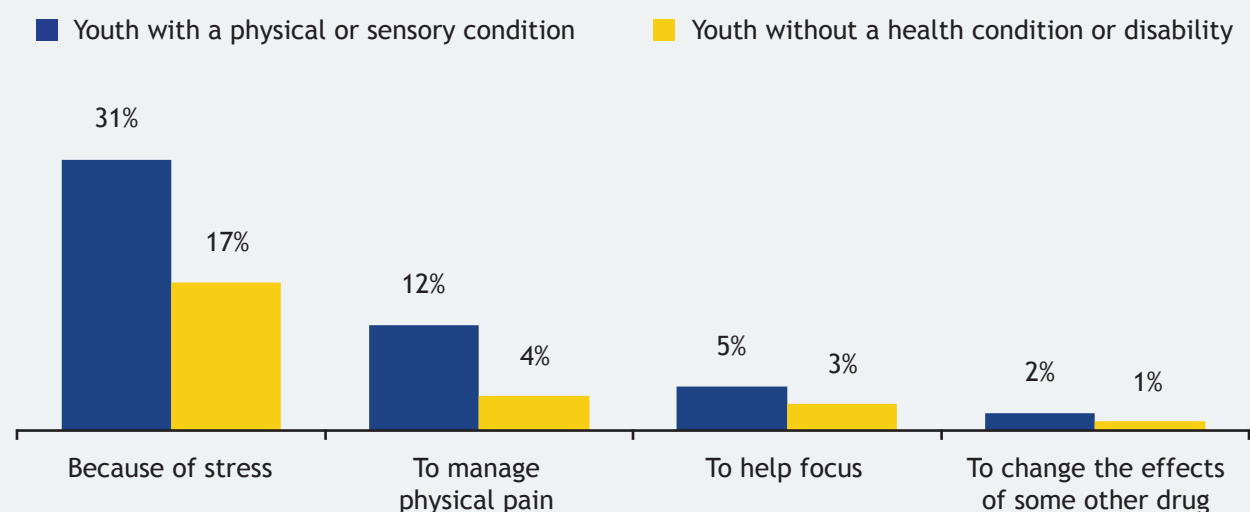


When I started abusing drugs it was because of my depression ... I can finally say after months of receiving treatment and getting help that I genuinely enjoy being alive (being around family a lot too)."



Few youth with a physical or sensory condition (1%) had been prescribed medical marijuana. However, they may have been self-medicating in other ways as they were more likely than youth without a condition to have used more of their own prescription medication than was prescribed (11% vs. 3%), and to have used prescription pills without a doctor's consent (12% vs. 6%). Youth with a physical or sensory condition who used substances were also more likely to report having done so the last time in order to manage their physical pain, because of stress, to help them focus, and to change the effects of another drug.

REASONS FOR MOST RECENT SUBSTANCE USE (among youth who had used substances)



SEXUAL HEALTH

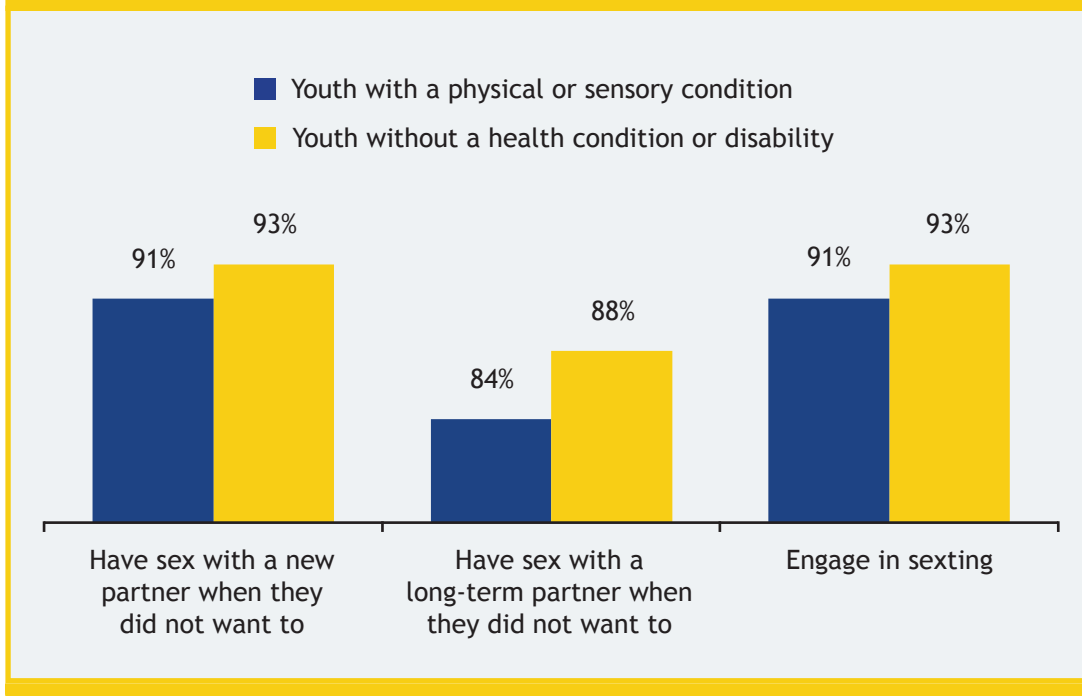


Sexual education should be improved and taught earlier.”

Youth with a physical or sensory condition were more likely to have been sexually active than their peers. For example, 25% had participated in oral sex (vs. 19% without a condition), and 23% engaged in intercourse (vs. 17%). Youth with a physical or sensory condition were as likely as those without a condition to use a condom or other protection the last time they had intercourse.

Most youth with a physical or sensory condition felt they could say no if they were asked to engage in unwanted sexual activity. However, they were less likely than youth without a condition to feel they could say no.

YOUTH WHO FELT THEY COULD SAY NO IF ASKED TO ...





Promoting youth's rights

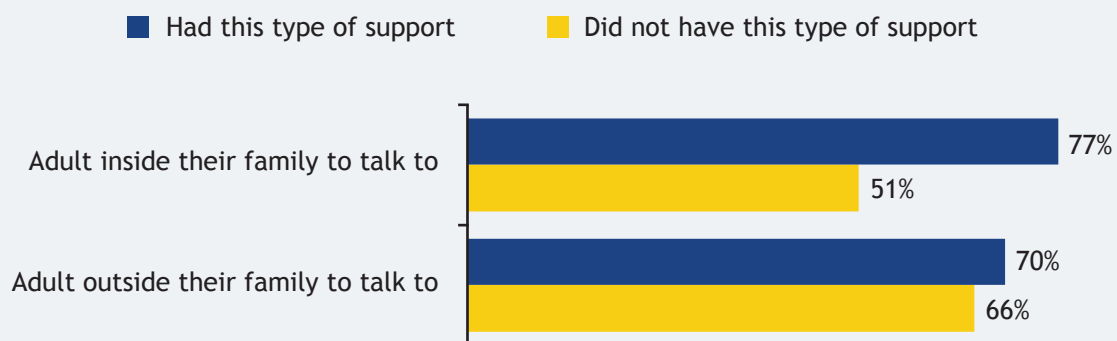
Youth with a physical or sensory condition who had supportive adults they could turn to if they were having a serious problem reported better health and well-being, and reduced substance use. For example, among youth with a physical or sensory condition who had tried alcohol, those who had teachers who cared about them were less likely to have drunk alcohol on 10 or more days in the past month (5% vs. 14% of those who did not feel their teachers cared). Those who felt school staff treated them fairly were less likely to have engaged in heavy sessional drinking (having five or more drinks of alcohol within a couple of hours) on six or more days in the past month (4% vs. 12% of those who did not feel school staff treated them fairly).

Similarly, youth who had tried smoking were less likely to be daily smokers when they had a teacher who cared about them (7% smoked daily in the past month vs. 16% of those who did not feel their teachers cared), and when they felt they were treated fairly by school staff (6% vs. 14% of those who did not feel school staff treated them fairly).

Youth were around twice as likely to rate their mental health as good or excellent if they had an adult in their family who they could turn to for support (73% vs. 37% who did not have such an adult in their family). Overall health ratings were also higher when youth had an adult inside or outside their family that they could turn to for support.

Youth with a physical or sensory condition who had a quiet place to sleep were more likely to have slept at least eight hours the previous night (42% vs. 23% who were deprived of a quiet place to sleep).

RATED HEALTH AS GOOD OR EXCELLENT IN RELATION TO HAVING SUPPORTIVE ADULTS (among youth with a physical or sensory condition)





Right to health care

“

In the past year, I have gone through a tough patch and when I needed immediate help (online and in person) I was not able to seek the help I needed.”

“

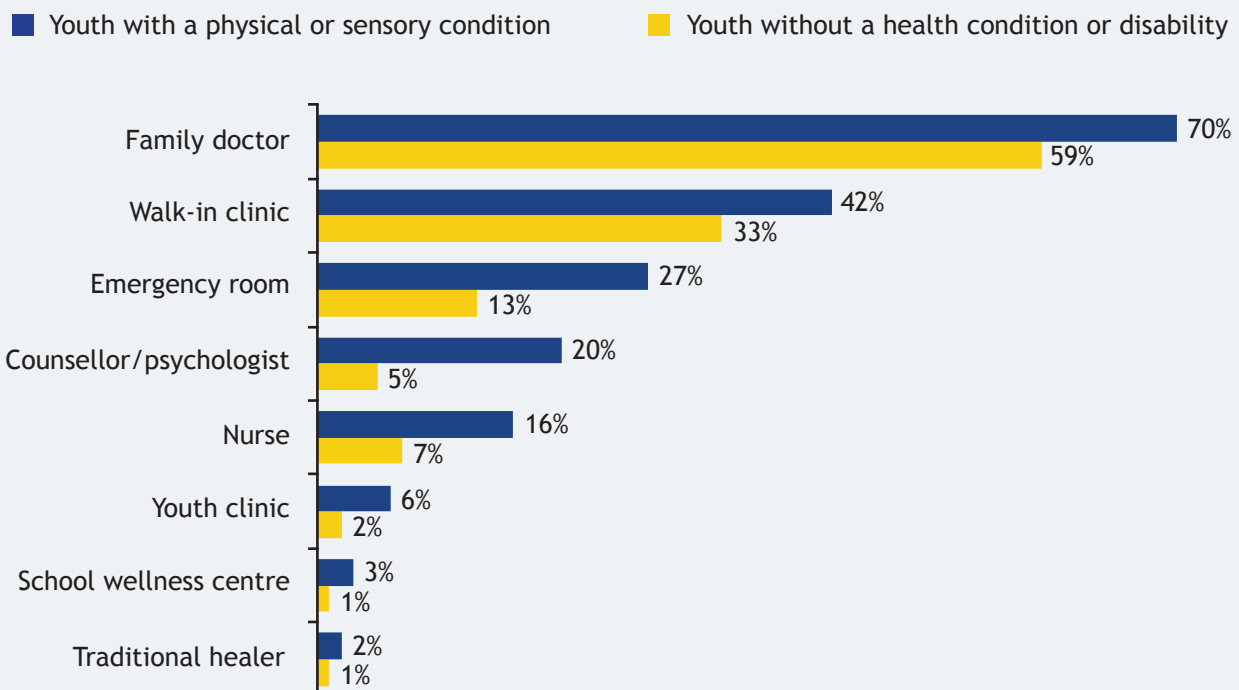
Daily activities cause a lot of pain and there are few services available in my area to help me cope with my disability.”

“

I want to see more people including myself reaching out for help. I have no idea where to go to get help for constant feelings of depression.”

In the past year, youth with a physical or sensory condition were more likely than youth without a condition to have accessed a variety of health care providers including a family doctor, walk-in clinic, emergency room (ER), counsellor or psychologist, nurse, youth clinic, school wellness centre, and traditional healer.

HEALTH CARE ACCESSED IN THE PAST YEAR



Most youth with a physical or sensory condition (83%) had seen a dentist in the past year, which was similar to the rate among those without a condition.

Youth with a physical or sensory condition were more likely than their peers to have needed medical help in the past year because they were physically sick or hurt (61% vs. 35%). They were also more likely to have missed out on the help they needed (24% vs. 14%; among those who needed help).

Youth with a physical or sensory condition also missed out on mental health care at higher rates than their peers, as 29% reported they had not received needed mental health services in the past year, compared to 10% of youth without a condition.

When asked an open-ended question about their health needs, youth with a physical or sensory condition noted having to miss school to access health care and of the need for services to be available after school and on weekends. For example, one noted, *"The youth walk-in clinic – it's only open 5 days a week and 3 of the days are appointment only and none of the days are on weekends or after school hours."*

Youth who had a physical or sensory condition who missed school because of appointments were less likely to feel connected to school, including feeling a part of their school, happy to be at school, and safe at school. These youth were also less likely to feel they got enough time with their friends and were more likely to report poorer mental health. For example, those who missed three or more days of school in the past month to attend appointments were twice as likely as those who did not miss class for appointments to feel extreme stress (37% vs. 17%) or despair (22% vs. 11%) in the past month.

Promoting youth's rights

Youth with a physical or sensory condition who had an adult in their life who helped them with making and getting to appointments were more likely to have seen a dentist and to have accessed needed medical care in the past year. For example, 79% of those who had needed medical care in the past year and who had an adult to help them get to appointments had received care (vs. 45% who did not have an adult to help them get there). Similarly, 85% of those with an adult who helped them to make appointments had seen a dentist, compared to 64% without such adult support.





Right to privacy

The BC AHS asked participants who had missed out on needed mental health services in the past year about their reasons for not accessing help. Similar to youth without a health condition, 63% of youth with a physical or sensory condition who had not accessed needed services reported they had not done so because they did not want their parents to know. Also, 38% were afraid someone they knew might see them.



My mum won't let me get tested for ADHD, but I'm having trouble focusing constantly in class and I don't know how to get help without telling her."

Promoting youth's rights



Youth with a physical or sensory condition who experienced independence through having space of their own to hang out in and sufficient time on their own were more likely than those who felt deprived of these things to have accessed needed mental health services and to have in-person friends. For example, youth who felt they had sufficient time on their own to do the things they wanted were more likely to have at least one friend in their school or neighbourhood (97% vs. 93% who did not have enough time on their own) and to have three or more close friends (83% vs. 72%).



Right to access information

Similar to youth without a condition, the majority of youth with a physical or sensory condition (96%) had a cell phone or similar portable electronic device. Youth with a physical or sensory condition were more likely to have used their device the previous day to communicate with someone they only knew online (27% vs. 23% of those without a condition), to search for health information (27% vs. 16%), and to search for non health-related information (72% vs. 62%).

Promoting youth's rights



Among youth with a physical or sensory condition who felt they needed health care, those who had access to the Internet were less likely to have missed out on care, and to report that the reason they missed out was because they did not know where to go. For example, 77% of youth who had access to the Internet had been able to access medical help when they needed it, compared to 58%* who were deprived of the Internet.



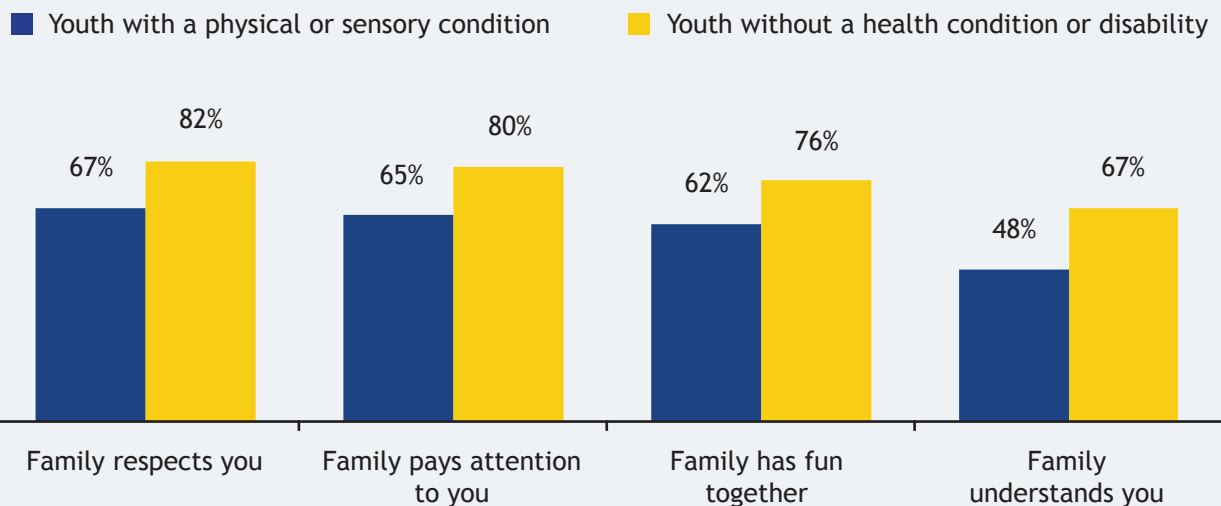
Right to respect for home and family

Most youth with a physical or sensory condition (95%) lived in a household with at least one parent. However, 1% lived alone (vs. <0.5% of youth without a condition). Youth with a physical or sensory condition were less likely than their peers without a condition to usually feel safe inside their home (90% vs. 96%).

Compared to youth without a condition, youth with a physical or sensory condition were less likely to feel their family respected them, paid attention to them, had fun together, or understood them.

Youth with a physical or sensory condition were less likely than youth without a condition to report that their parents or guardians knew how they spent their free time (71% vs. 77%) and time online (39% vs. 46%).

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTION (youth who agreed quite a bit or very much)



I have a very good home life, but it feels very hard to talk to my parents about my issues."

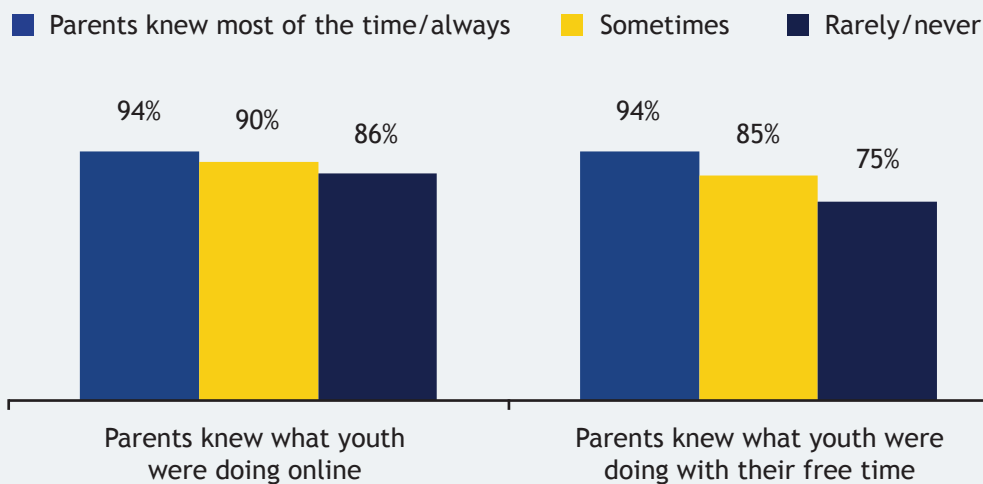


Promoting youth's rights

Youth who experienced housing stability and those who had parents who knew what the youth were doing in their free time were more likely to feel safe at home. For example, 92% of youth with a physical or sensory condition who had not moved in the past year felt safe at home, compared to 85% who had moved.

Youth who had caring adults in their school or community were less likely to report that they had experienced discrimination because of the amount of money their family had (11% vs. 25% of youth who did not have such caring adults in their life).

YOUTH WITH A PHYSICAL OR SENSORY CONDITION WHO OFTEN OR ALWAYS FELT SAFE AT HOME





Right to work

“

I am good at my job.”

“

*I am good at working with
kids/volunteering.”*

Perhaps reflective of being more likely to be living in poverty or a desire for autonomy, youth with a physical or sensory condition were more likely than youth without a condition to have worked at a paid job during the school year (38% vs. 31%).

Promoting youth's rights



Youth with a physical or sensory condition who had an adult to help them get a job were more likely to be employed (40% vs. 34% who did not have an adult to help with this). They were also more likely to be working if they had access to transportation (39% vs. 30% who felt deprived of this).





Right to autonomy

“

I am good at going up to new people to say hi and making new friends.”

“

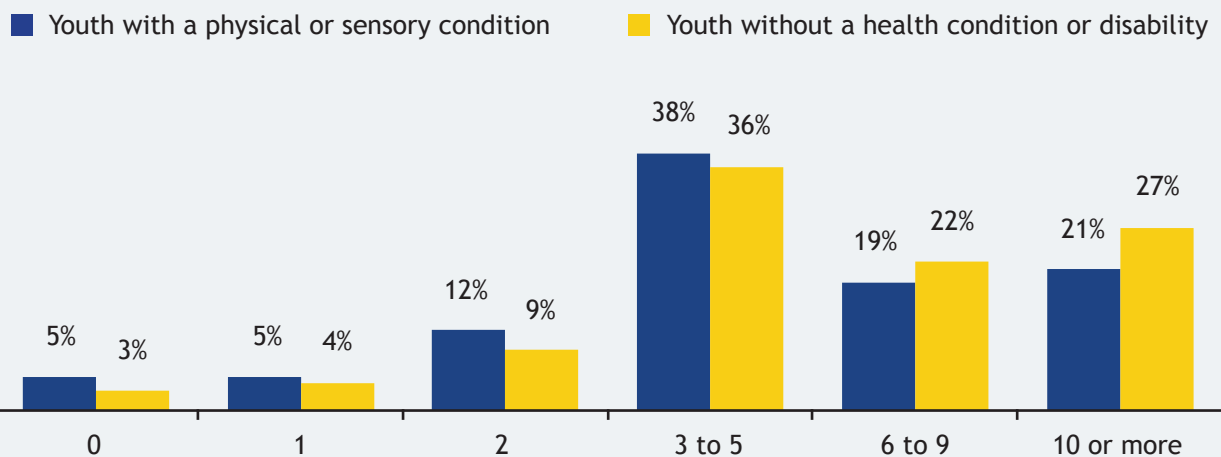
My close friends have helped me.”

Adolescence is a time when young people develop a growing desire to have control over the decisions in their life, and seek to develop relationships outside of their immediate family.

Youth with a physical or sensory condition most commonly reported having 3 to 5 close friends in their school or neighbourhood. However, they were less likely than their peers to have close in-person friends, and were more likely to have online friends whom they had never met in person (37% vs. 32% of youth without a condition).

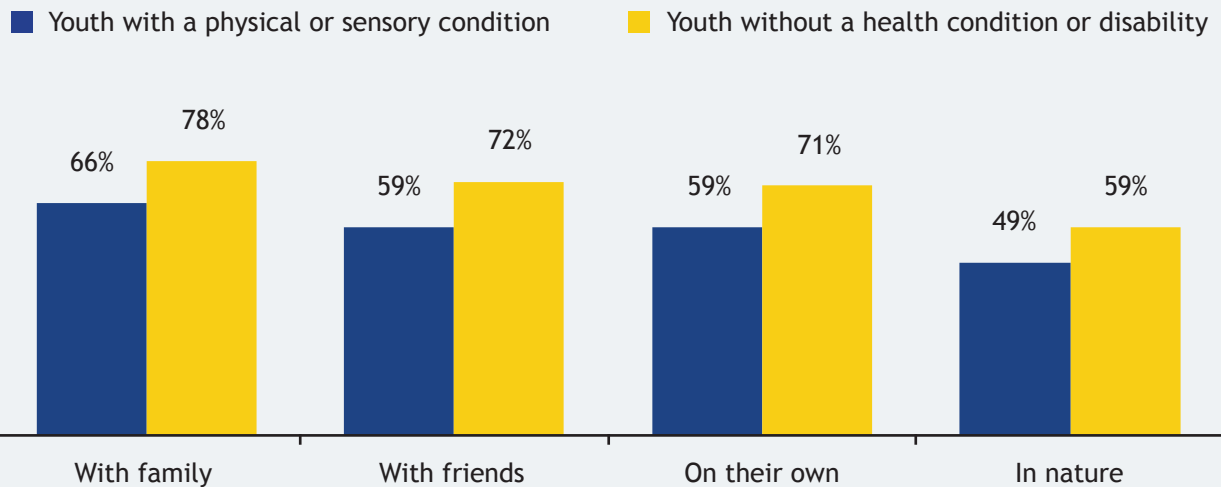
Youth with a physical or sensory condition were also more likely to have dated someone online whom they had never met in person (8% vs. 6%), and to have dated in general in the past year (44% vs. 40%).

NUMBER OF CLOSE FRIENDS YOUTH HAD IN THEIR SCHOOL OR NEIGHBOURHOOD



Youth with a physical or sensory condition were less likely than their peers without a condition to feel like they had sufficient time to themselves, with their family, with their friends, and in nature.

YOUTH WHO FELT THEY HAD THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF TIME ...



I have friends who I talk to online because they live on the other side of the world."



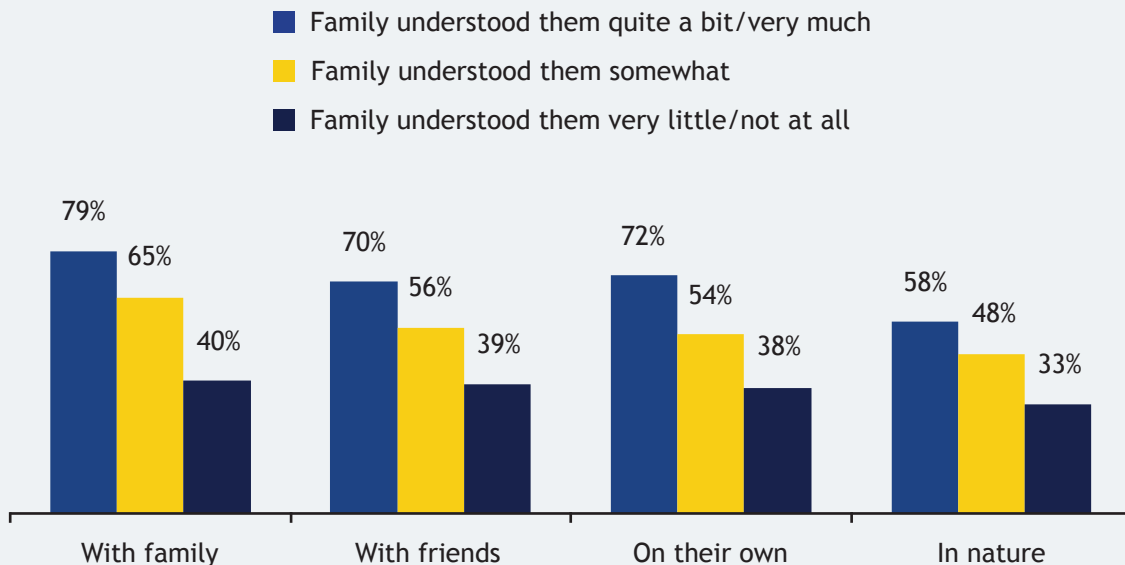


Promoting youth's rights

Youth with a physical or sensory condition were more likely to feel they had the right amount of time to do the things they wanted on their own and with family, friends, and in nature when they felt their family respected and understood them, and when they had money to spend on themselves. For example, 67% who felt respected by their family felt they had sufficient time on their own to do the things they wanted (vs. 35% who did not feel respected by their family).

“Nature usually helps when I feel very stressed or anxious.”

YOUTH WITH A PHYSICAL OR SENSORY CONDITION WHO FELT THEY HAD THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF TIME ...



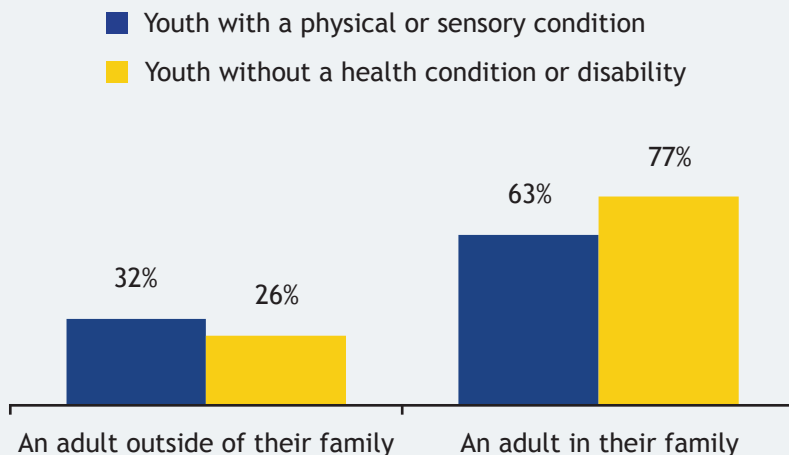


Right to appropriate support

Reflecting the pattern for youth without a condition, around two thirds (64%) of youth with a physical or sensory condition felt there was an adult in their neighbourhood who cared about them. However, there were some differences in whom youth felt they could talk to if they were having a serious problem. Youth with a physical or sensory condition were less likely than their peers to report they had an adult in their family they could talk to, but were more likely to have such an adult outside their family.

Most youth with a physical or sensory condition had an adult in their life who helped them with making and getting to appointments (89%), which was similar to the rate among youth without a condition. However, youth with a physical or sensory condition were less likely to have an adult in their life who helped them with homework (58% vs. 66%), preparing for post-secondary education (72% vs. 79%), and getting a job (66% vs. 70%).

YOUTH WHO HAD AN ADULT TO TALK TO WHEN THEY HAD A SERIOUS PROBLEM



One of the hardest things for myself when my depression was at its worst point was not having my mother understand I think giving more education to parents, adults, etc., could really improve lives."





Promoting youth's rights

Having supportive friends with healthy attitudes towards health risk behaviours decreased the likelihood that youth with a physical or sensory condition would engage in potential health risk behaviours. For example, 1% of those whose friends would be upset with them if they got drunk, had binge drank on the previous Saturday, compared to 17% who did not have such friends. Similarly, 1% of those with friends who would be upset with them if they were involved in a pregnancy had experienced a pregnancy (vs. 3% of those whose friends would not disapprove).

Youth with a physical or sensory condition who had a caring teacher were more likely to feel they had an adult they could turn to about their problems and to feel that they were good at something. Similarly, those with an adult in their community who cared about them were more likely to feel like they were part of their community (48% vs. 17% who did not have such an adult).

“I cut myself once but that was quite a while ago and I am very happy and confident now. I have good friends and no one has bullied me since then.”





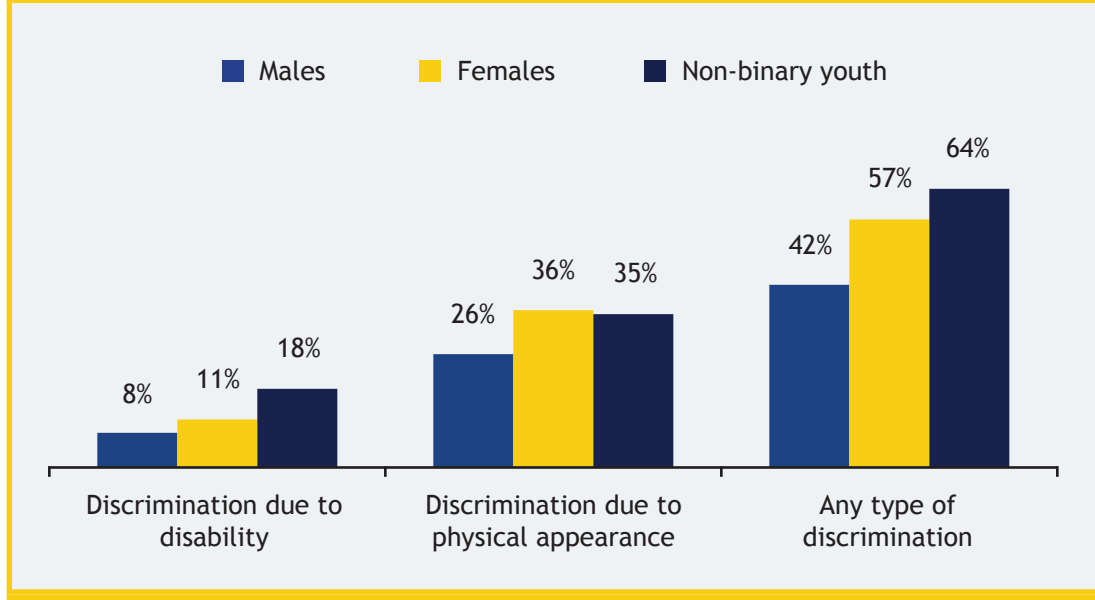
Right to equality between genders



I am good at debating/ educating people on equality (gender, race, religion)."

Having considered the difference in access to rights between youth with a physical or sensory condition and their peers without a condition, this section considers the right to equality between genders. Among youth with a physical or sensory condition, female and non-binary youth were more likely than males to experience discrimination, including because of their disability and the way they looked.

EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE PAST YEAR (among youth with a physical or sensory condition)



Note: For all three categories, the differences between female and non-binary youth were not statistically significant.



Female and non-binary youth were also more likely to experience barriers to participating in community life. For example, around a quarter of female and non-binary youth reported they could not participate in activities because they could not get to them or get home, compared to 16% of males. Also, females were more than twice as likely and non-binary youth were four times as likely to miss out on extracurricular activities because they were worried about being bullied (6% of males missed out for this reason vs. 13% of females vs. 28% of non-binary youth).

Males were the least likely to experience poverty as a barrier to community participation. For example, 12% reported that they did not take part in extracurricular activities because they could not afford to, compared to 20% of females. Females were also more likely than males to have worked at a paid job during the school year (39% vs. 36%).

Having caretaking responsibilities can negatively impact young people's ability to participate in school and community life. On a typical school day, females were more likely than males to care for a relative, such as a younger sibling or relative with a disability (28% vs. 22%); and female and non-binary youth were more likely to have responsibility for the care of a pet or other animal (63% of female and non-binary youth vs. 52% of males).

“

I would like the curriculum to implement more ways to learn about discrimination in communities (i.e., racism, homophobia, sexism).”

“

Gender dysphoria is often the source of panic attacks for me, although I try not to let it run my life. Most people are accepting but some (including family) are not.”



Promoting youth's rights



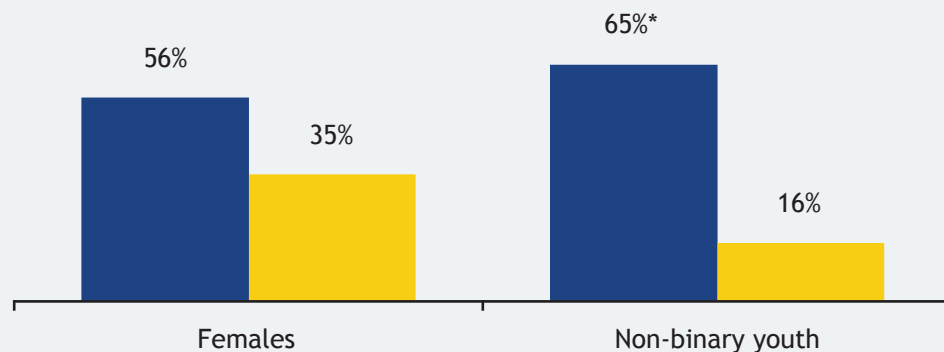
Female and non-binary youth with a physical or sensory condition reported better health and well-being when they felt their family respected them. For example, 52% of females who felt respected felt good about themselves (vs. 17% who did not feel their family respected them). They were also more likely to feel good about themselves when they did not experience gender discrimination (females: 43% vs. 28% of those who experienced discrimination; non-binary youth: 38%* vs. 16%) or barriers to participating in extracurricular activities.

Female youth who felt safe in their neighbourhood were more likely to report good or excellent health (68% who felt safe at least sometimes vs. 45% of those who rarely or never felt safe) and mental health (56% vs. 37%).

Female and non-binary youth who felt their teachers cared about them and that school staff treated them fairly were more likely to feel safe at school. For example, 78% of females who felt their teachers cared about them felt safe at school, compared to 25% who did not feel their teachers cared. Also, 62% reported good or excellent mental health (vs. 25% who did not feel teachers cared) and 90% planned to attend post-secondary (vs. 77%).

YOUTH WITH A PHYSICAL OR SENSORY CONDITION WHO FELT GOOD ABOUT THEMSELVES

- Did not experience any barriers to participation in extracurricular activities
- Experienced at least one barrier to participation in extracurricular activities



*Percentage estimate should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others, but still within the releasable range.

CELEBRATING THE STRENGTHS OF YOUTH WITH A PHYSICAL OR SENSORY CONDITION

This report has highlighted some of the many individual, systemic, and organizational barriers that youth with a physical or sensory condition can experience growing up in BC, and has highlighted some of the supports that can help young people to enjoy the rights to which they are entitled. This chapter focuses on the skills, spirit, strengths, and resiliency of these young people.

“

I am good at being there for people and having a good heart.”

More than three out of four youth with a physical or sensory condition (78%) could name something they were really good at. The most common examples youth gave included being good at various sports (e.g., basketball, hockey, soccer, and volleyball); school subjects (particularly math); the arts (e.g., dancing, drawing, music, writing, singing); video games; and helping others. Youth also reported being creative, empathetic, energetic, friendly, funny, helpful, kind, independent, social, caring, resourceful, responsible, self-aware, positive, and happy.

“

I am good at cooking, baking, creative writing, singing.”

“

I am good at being humorous and kind.”

“

I am good at being caring, a good sister.”

“

I am good at communicating and understanding myself and other people.”

“

I am good at getting good grades, being positive, optimistic.”



Youth with a physical or sensory condition also appeared to be a source of support to their friends, as 84% had been approached for help by their friends in the past year, and 96% of those who were asked felt able to help.

“

I am good at being there for my friends and helping them get through things.”

“

I am good at giving all sorts of advice – relationship, problems, etc.”

“

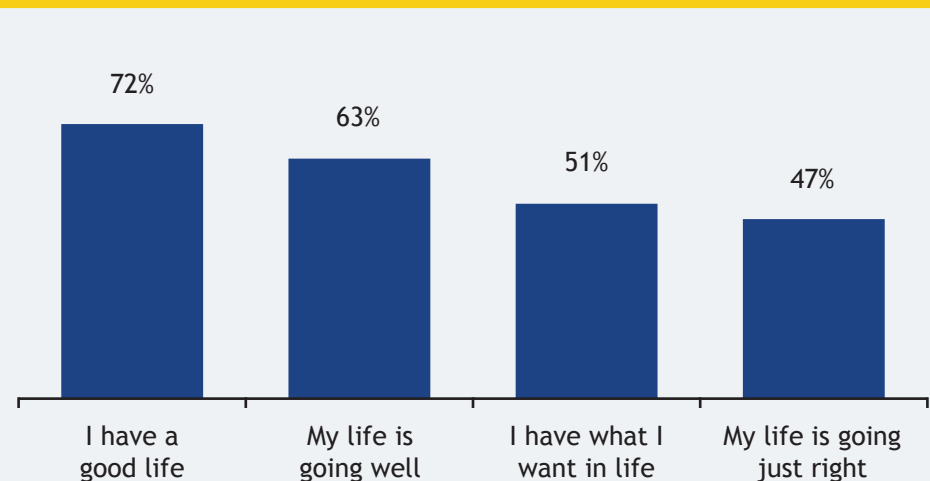
I am good at listening and empathizing.”

Despite the challenges they faced, most youth with a physical or sensory condition felt happy in the past month, including over half (54%) who felt happy most or all of the time. A similar percentage (53%) reported that they felt happy at their school.

Youth with a physical or sensory condition were less likely to rate their quality of life positively, compared to their peers without a condition. However, the majority felt they had a good life and their life was going well, and around half had what they wanted in life, and felt their life was going just right. Also, 60% were at least quite hopeful for the future, and 48% felt good about themselves.

Among youth with a physical or sensory condition who reported they had experienced setbacks to achieving their goals, 93% reported they had pushed themselves to keep going, including 40% who always persevered.

QUALITY OF LIFE (youth with a physical or sensory condition who agreed or strongly agreed)



TOPICS YOUTH WITH A PHYSICAL OR SENSORY CONDITION WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT

Youth who completed the 2018 BC AHS had the opportunity to comment about health issues they would like to learn more about. Among the 6% of youth with a physical or sensory condition who commented, mental health and sexual health were the most common topics they wanted to learn more about.

Specific areas of mental health included wanting to learn more about different conditions; where they could go to access services and supports; how to deal with emotions and adverse experiences; and techniques to relax and cope with stress. Youth also noted the need for parents or guardians to learn strategies and techniques to help youth when they are struggling.



[I would like to learn more about] Anxiety, stress, depression and allergies.”



[I would like to learn more about] How to prevent depression.”



I think mental health issues, their common symptoms, and how they can affect everyday life should be taught more in schools. Especially how to deal with stress and/or mental illness.”



I would like to see more awareness about mental health, and more communication between teachers and their students on how to deal with different feelings/ experiences.”



I'd like to learn more about depression stats, prevention, and help. I know many depressed people getting no help so I want to know who's more likely to get it, how we can prevent it, and how to pull them out of it. It's so common at grade 10-12 and it's mind-blowing how little they teach about it.”



[I would like to learn more about] What constitutes as good mental health and at what point should someone seek help.”

Youth felt there was a need for more comprehensive and inclusive education about sexual health for students in all grades of high school. The curriculum should be tailored to address the specific needs of diverse youth and should cover healthy relationship skills, how to practice safer sex, and where to go to access resources.

“

More education on mental and sexual health. They feel like too much taboos to research or ask anyone about it.”

“

Sexual education should be improved and taught earlier.”

“

[I would like to learn more about] Sex Ed for LGBTQ youth.”

“

I would like to know more about what you do if you get sexually assaulted.”

“

I would also like to see more communication about consent because it is important for students to understand!”

“

From what I have seen there is a great need for more youth-based sex education around healthy relationships. If there are already resources to support this, they are not advertised enough. Many (most) students do not feel confident with the amount of education they have around sex and relationships and would like to see an increase in efforts.”

“

It’s important to learn about sexual interaction, conversations, youth ED, abnormalities, and the ‘uncomfortable’ things we aren’t taught. If we are taught about these things, it will get rid of negative bias towards sex & talking about sex.”



In addition to mental and sexual health, youth with a physical or sensory condition reported wanting to learn more about how their health condition or disability might affect their daily life, and how to connect with other young people who have the same condition or disability as them. Several also noted they felt other youth should be educated about the challenges and discrimination experienced by youth with a health condition or disability.

“

I have scoliosis ... I feel that there is not enough information about it, and in the future I hope that more study will be put into it for teenagers who don't understand what it is.”

“

I would like to connect more with people with the same disability.”

“

[I would like to learn more about] How to help those who deal with physical and mental disabilities learn and feel included.”

“

In school people learn type 2 diabetes not type 1. I want people to know there's two types, that's all I want.”



FINAL THOUGHTS

This report has shown the many physical and societal barriers that youth with a physical or sensory condition experience, and has highlighted the large-scale systemic issues which must be addressed, such as poverty, discrimination, and access to health care. However, it has also shown the role that a supportive family, peer group, school, and community can play.

The resilience and optimism of BC youth with a physical or sensory condition shine through the report and we owe it to these young people to ensure they are able to meaningfully participate in all aspects of society to the extent that they would like.

By working in partnership with these young people, we can identify where change is needed and work to create positive family, school, and community environments for youth with any sort of chronic medical condition, physical disability, and sensory disability. For example, schools and community recreational facilities can establish policies and procedures that communicate respect, celebrate diversity, and offer equitable opportunities for all youth. They can also ensure staff and parents have access to education and training about how to support young people with physical or sensory conditions to achieve their goals.

Data from the BC AHS has shown the value of caring and supportive adults for all youth, and this was also the case for youth with a physical or sensory condition. However, fewer youth with a physical or sensory condition had such adults in their lives. This is an important finding and can provide an impetus to ensure all youth with a physical or sensory condition have access to such an adult, including within the school and healthcare communities. Doing so could also ensure their requests for more information about topics such as mental and sexual health are addressed, and that they have someone who can advocate for societal and structural change, including that their medical appointments be scheduled outside of school hours, so that these young people do not miss out on the social and educational opportunities afforded to other youth in BC.

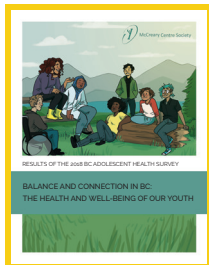
RESOURCES

McCreary resources



Youth members of the project advisory committee for this report have created an infographic poster to share what they saw as the most important messages from the report. A PowerPoint presentation is also available to download at mcs.bc.ca/download_resources.

Any requests for McCreary staff and young people to share the findings via webinar or in-person presentations or workshops can be submitted to mccreary@mcs.bc.ca.



A range of reports and fact sheets have been released about the health of BC youth using data from the BC Adolescent Health Survey. To view and download any reports, visit mcs.bc.ca/download_resources. To view and download any fact sheets, visit mcs.bc.ca/about_bcahs.

Grants

The Trevor Coburn Memorial Grants are available to BC youth (up to age 29) wanting to carry out projects to support BC youth facing barriers, including youth with experience of homelessness, substance use challenges, and government care experiences. For more information or to apply, visit mcs.bc.ca/trevor_coburn_memorial_grants.

Youth Action Grants (YAGs) were created by McCreary's Youth Advisory & Action Council (YAC) to provide BC youth (ages 12–19) the opportunity to deliver a project to improve youth health in their school or community. For more information or to apply, visit mcs.bc.ca/youth_action_grants.

Other resources for youth with physical or sensory conditions

BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society is an Indigenous not-for-profit serving the unique and diverse disability and health resource/support service needs of Indigenous people | bcands.bc.ca/

BC Association for Child Development and Intervention is a provincial association of agencies that provide child development and therapy services to children and youth with special needs and their families in British Columbia | bcacdi.org/

BC Centre for Ability designs and delivers community-based services for persons with diverse abilities | bc-cfa.org/

BC Families of Complex Kids are a grassroots group of BC families who have children with medical complexity and complex disabilities | facebook.com/BCComplexKids/

BC Government has details on programs and services available to anyone living with a disability in BC | gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/services-for-people-with-disabilities

Blind Beginnings offers programs, experiences, counselling, and peer support to youth who are blind or partially sighted and their families | blindbeginnings.ca

Canadian Deafblind Association - BC provides a range of services to support deafblind children, youth and adults | cdbabc.ca

Family Network for Deaf Children & Deaf Youth Today is a parent-run organization that offers social and recreational programming for deaf and hard of hearing youth that use sign language or would like to learn | fndc.ca

Family Support Institute of BC aims to strengthen, connect, and build communities and resources with families of people with disabilities in BC | familysupportbc.com

APPENDIX

Results for youth with a chronic medical condition, physical disability, or sensory disability

Having provided a profile of youth with a physical or sensory condition and their health and well-being in relation to their rights and promotion of those rights, the appendix details the results for those with a chronic medical condition, sensory disability, or physical disability separately, and indicates how these results compare to youth without a health condition or disability.

Percentages that are **bolded** indicate a statistically significant difference, in comparison to youth without a health condition or disability. For example, youth with a chronic medical condition and those with a sensory disability were more likely to have been born in Canada than those without a health condition or disability. However, rates of being born in Canada were similar between youth with a physical disability and those without a health condition or disability.

	Chronic medical condition (n=2,962)	Physical disability (n=403)	Sensory disability (n=1,276)	Youth without a health condition or disability (n=25,753)
PROFILE				
Male	39%	37%	49%	54%
Female	58%	58%	47%	45%
Non-binary youth	3%	5%	5%	1%
Aged 13 or younger	7%	1%	3%	NA
Aged 14 or older	9%	1%	4%	NA
Born in Canada	85%	79%	81%	76%
Born outside of Canada	15%	21%	19%	24%
Spoke a language other than English at home at least sometimes	48%	49%	52%	55%
Identified as African	3%	2%	3%	3%
Identified as Australian/Pacific Islander	2%	NR	3%	2%
Identified as East Asian	14%	17%	15%	20%
Identified as European	55%	58%	51%	42%
Identified as Indigenous	13%	18%	15%	8%
Identified as Latin/South/Central American	6%	5%	5%	5%
Identified as South Asian	9%	6%	11%	13%

	Chronic medical condition	Physical disability	Sensory disability	Youth without a health condition or disability
Identified as Southeast Asian	8%	7%	10%	9%
Identified as West Asian	2%	NR	3%	3%
Identified as 'Other' family background	3%	5%	3%	3%
Did not know family background	9%	10%	9%	10%
Identified as sexual minority	22%	28%	27%	12%
Bisexual	9%	11%	10%	3%
Mostly straight	7%	8%	8%	4%
Questioning	4%	6%	5%	4%
Gay or Lesbian	2%	2%	3%	1%
Took care of a pet or other animal on an average school day	61%	64%	54%	47%
Took care of another relative (e.g., younger sibling or relative with disability) on an average school day	25%	28%	26%	20%
Ever been in government care	7%	9%	8%	3%
Currently in government care	2%	4%	2%	1%
Had multiple health conditions or disabilities	42%	42%	46%	NA
Had a mental health condition	28%	23%	31%	NA
Condition or disability prevented them from doing things their same-age peers could do (among those with a health condition or disability)	38%	53%	30%	NA
RIGHT TO EDUCATION				
Missed class for any reason in the past month	82%	82%	76%	69%
Because of appointments	50%	51%	39%	32%
Because of illness	50%	43%	39%	36%

	Chronic medical condition	Physical disability	Sensory disability	Youth without a health condition or disability
Because of their mental health	27%	25%	24%	7%
Because of bullying	6%	7%	5%	2%
Felt like a part of their school	54%	54%	49%	65%
Felt happy to be at school	52%	52%	52%	66%
Felt safe at school	66%	62%	65%	78%
Felt school staff treated them fairly	66%	64%	66%	73%
Felt teachers cared about them	62%	62%	61%	69%
Felt safe in the classrooms	90%	83%	89%	95%
Felt safe in the washrooms	84%	76%	81%	89%
Felt safe in the changing rooms	82%	75%	78%	88%
Felt safe in the hallways and stairwells	85%	79%	84%	92%
Felt safe in the cafeteria	87%	82%	86%	93%
Felt safe in the library	93%	87%	92%	96%
Felt safe outside on school grounds	82%	77%	80%	89%
Did not expect to finish high school	1%	3%	1%	<1%
Planned to go on to post-secondary	84%	80%	79%	85%
Promoting youth's right to education				
Had an adult to help with preparing for university, college, or trade school (among youth who felt they needed help)	81%	77%	76%	88%
Had money for school supplies, school trips, and extracurricular activities	89%	84%	87%	94%
Felt school staff expected them to do well	77%	75%	78%	81%
Had at least one close friend in their school and/or neighbourhood	95%	90%	95%	97%

	Chronic medical condition	Physical disability	Sensory disability	Youth without a health condition or disability
RIGHT TO AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING				
Went to bed hungry at least sometimes because there was not enough money for food at home	15%	15%	17%	7%
Missed out on extracurricular activities in the past year because they could not afford them	17%	19%	19%	9%
Deprived of money to spend on themselves	12%	14%	14%	8%
Deprived of clothes to belong/fit in	4%	5%	4%	1%
Deprived of access to transportation	3%	5%	6%	3%
Deprived of a smartphone	6%	6%	9%	6%
Deprived of lunch for school/money to buy lunch	6%	8%	7%	3%
Deprived of access to the Internet	1%	3%	2%	<1%
Deprived of space of their own to hang out in	8%	10%	11%	5%
Deprived of equipment/clothes for extracurricular activities	5%	6%	6%	2%
Deprived of money for school supplies, school trips, and extracurricular activities	6%	8%	8%	3%
Deprived of a quiet place to sleep	4%	5%	5%	1%
Deprived of at least three items that BC youth identified as important to feel like they belonged	6%	8%	9%	3%
<i>Promoting youth's right to an adequate standard of living</i>				
Had access to breakfast on school days	78%	79%	77%	86%
RIGHT TO FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE AND ABUSE				
Experienced abuse				
Physical abuse	23%	25%	28%	10%
Sexual abuse	15%	16%	14%	5%

	Chronic medical condition	Physical disability	Sensory disability	Youth without a health condition or disability
Sexual abuse, including being forced into sexual activity and being the younger of an illegal age pairing the first time they had sex	18%	20%	18%	7%
Experienced discrimination of any type in the past year	51%	53%	54%	32%
Because of their disability	9%	25%	14%	1%
Because of their physical appearance	32%	31%	34%	17%
Deliberately socially excluded at least three times at school or on the way to/from school in the past year	21%	22%	21%	10%
Severely teased at least three times at school or on the way to/from school in the past year	18%	23%	20%	9%
Physically attacked at least three times at school or on the way to/from school in the past year	2%	3%	4%	1%
Cyberbullied in the past year	20%	20%	21%	10%
Felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day and night (at least sometimes)	82%	75%	80%	89%
Felt safe getting to and from school (usually/always)	85%	78%	82%	92%
Promoting youth's right to freedom from violence and abuse				
Felt there was an adult in their neighbourhood who cared about them	65%	63%	60%	66%
Found a teacher helpful (among youth who asked for help)	90%	90%	91%	95%
Found a school counsellor helpful (among youth who asked for help)	76%	78%	76%	84%

	Chronic medical condition	Physical disability	Sensory disability	Youth without a health condition or disability
Found other school staff helpful (among youth who asked for help)	81%	75%	80%	88%
RIGHT TO LIBERTY OF MOVEMENT				
Got to school by car	50%	42%	43%	48%
Got to school by a school bus or public transit	24%	29%	27%	22%
Deprived of access to transportation	3%	5%	6%	3%
Felt safe using public transit (among those who used it)	53%	53%	54%	63%
Did not participate in extracurricular activities in the past year because they had no transportation	19%	22%	23%	12%
Missed class at school in the past month because they had no transportation	6%	9%	6%	4%
<i>Promoting youth's right to liberty of movement</i>				
Had access to transportation	95%	91%	92%	94%
RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL LIFE, RECREATION, LEISURE, AND SPORT				
Did not participate in extracurricular activities in the past year because they were too anxious/ depressed	23%	24%	24%	6%
Did not participate in extracurricular activities in the past year because the activity was not available in their community	18%	19%	18%	11%
Did not participate in extracurricular activities in the past year because they were worried about being bullied	11%	12%	12%	4%
Participated weekly in informal sports	52%	45%	48%	53%
Participated weekly in organized sports	51%	45%	45%	55%
Participated weekly in exercise classes	18%	16%	13%	15%
Participated weekly in art, drama, singing, or music	26%	28%	28%	21%

	Chronic medical condition	Physical disability	Sensory disability	Youth without a health condition or disability
Participated weekly in clubs or groups	13%	14%	16%	10%
Participated weekly in volunteer activities	21%	23%	20%	18%
Participated weekly in cultural or traditional activities	7%	8%	7%	7%
Found activities they were involved in meaningful	67%	62%	62%	68%
Felt their ideas were listened to and valued in their activities	41%	38%	38%	47%
Promoting youth's right to participate in cultural life, recreation, leisure, and sport				
Had clothes and equipment to participate in extracurricular activities	88%	84%	84%	92%
Found a sports coach helpful (among youth who asked for help)	93%	91%	90%	96%
RIGHT TO EQUAL ACCESS TO HEALTH				
Physical health				
Rated health as good/excellent	66%	66%	66%	88%
Got eight or more hours of sleep the previous night	41%	40%	39%	53%
Got 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise on at least three of the past seven days	70%	61%	64%	73%
Mental health and well-being				
Rated mental health as good/excellent	58%	62%	57%	84%
Experienced extreme stress in the past month	22%	21%	22%	6%
Experienced extreme despair in the past month	13%	15%	14%	3%
Self-harmed in the past year	26%	27%	28%	11%
Purged in the past year	16%	18%	16%	10%
Seriously considered suicide in the past year	26%	25%	29%	9%
Attempted suicide in the past year	9%	8%	9%	2%
Felt they had a good life	72%	71%	69%	86%

	Chronic medical condition	Physical disability	Sensory disability	Youth without a health condition or disability
Felt good about themselves	48%	48%	45%	67%
Wished they had a different life	23%	26%	28%	13%
Felt hopeful for the future	60%	62%	54%	72%
Had experienced setbacks	98%	98%	97%	95%
Always pushed themselves to achieve their goals (among those who experienced setbacks)	41%	41%	36%	48%
Substance use				
Ever tried alcohol	51%	43%	47%	40%
Ever tried tobacco	21%	18%	21%	15%
Used cigarettes on 20 or more days in the past month	3%	3%	3%	1%
Ever tried cannabis	31%	24%	29%	21%
Used cannabis on 20 or more days in the past month	4%	4%	4%	2%
Prescribed medical marijuana	1%	3%	1%	<1%
Vaped in the past month	31%	29%	27%	25%
Used substances other than alcohol or cannabis (e.g., heroin, cocaine, and ecstasy)	24%	24%	24%	12%
Used more of their own prescription than was prescribed	11%	8%	11%	3%
Used prescription pills without a doctor's consent	12%	13%	11%	6%
Last used substances to manage physical pain (among those who used substances)	11%	19%	12%	4%
Last used substances because of stress (among those who used substances)	32%	27%	34%	17%
Last used substances to help them focus (among those who used substances)	4%	5%	8%	3%

	Chronic medical condition	Physical disability	Sensory disability	Youth without a health condition or disability
Last used substances to change the effects of another substance (among those who used substances)	2%	NR	2%	1%
Sexual health				
Ever had oral sex	26%	24%	23%	19%
Ever had intercourse	24%	21%	19%	17%
Used protection the last time they had intercourse (among youth who had intercourse)	61%	66%*	61%	66%
Could say no if asked to have sex with a new partner when they did not want to	91%	88%	90%	93%
Could say no if asked to have sex with a long-term partner when they did not want to	85%	83%	83%	88%
Could say no if asked to sext	91%	91%	90%	93%
Promoting youth's right to equal access to health				
Felt teachers cared about them	62%	62%	61%	69%
Felt school staff treated them fairly	66%	64%	66%	73%
Had an adult in their family they could talk to	63%	60%	59%	77%
Had an adult outside their family they could talk to	32%	34%	30%	26%
Had a quiet place to sleep	95%	93%	93%	98%
RIGHT TO HEALTH CARE				
Visited family doctor in the past year	74%	65%	62%	59%
Visited walk-in clinic in the past year	45%	38%	39%	33%
Visited emergency room in the past year	30%	30%	23%	13%
Visited nurse in the past year	18%	19%	12%	7%
Visited counsellor or psychologist in the past year	21%	24%	18%	5%

	Chronic medical condition	Physical disability	Sensory disability	Youth without a health condition or disability
Visited youth clinic in the past year	7%	6%	5%	2%
Visited school wellness centre in the past year	3%	5%	3%	1%
Visited traditional healer in the past year	2%	4%	3%	1%
Visited dentist in the past year	84%	82%	82%	84%
Needed medical help in the past year because they were physically sick or hurt	64%	66%	54%	35%
Did not get needed medical help in the past year (among youth who needed help)	22%	25%	30%	14%
Did not get needed mental health services in the past year (among youth who needed help)	29%	33%	32%	10%
Promoting youth's right to health care				
Had an adult to help with making appointments (among youth who needed help)	93%	91%	91%	95%
Had an adult to help with getting to appointments (among youth who needed help)	94%	91%	92%	95%
RIGHT TO PRIVACY				
Missed out on needed mental health services in the past year because they did not want their parents to know (among those who needed help)	63%	58%	66%	60%
Missed out on needed mental health services in the past year because they were afraid someone they knew might see them (among those who needed help)	39%	31%	39%	35%
Promoting youth's right to privacy				
Had space of their own to hang out in	90%	84%	87%	93%

	Chronic medical condition	Physical disability	Sensory disability	Youth without a health condition or disability
Had the right amount of time on their own to do the things they want	59%	60%	56%	71%
RIGHT TO ACCESS INFORMATION				
Had a smartphone	91%	89%	87%	90%
Used phone yesterday to communicate with someone they only knew online (among those with a phone)	25%	27%	31%	23%
Used phone yesterday to find health information (among those who had a phone)	28%	26%	25%	16%
Used phone yesterday to find non health-related information (among those who had a phone)	72%	66%	74%	62%
<i>Promoting youth's right to access information</i>				
Had access to the Internet	98%	95%	98%	99%
RIGHT TO RESPECT FOR HOME AND FAMILY				
Lived with at least one parent	95%	93%	93%	96%
Lived alone	1%	NR	1%	<1%
Felt respected by their family	68%	63%	63%	82%
Felt they were paid attention to by their family	66%	61%	61%	80%
Felt they had fun with their family	63%	60%	58%	76%
Felt understood by their family	49%	45%	45%	67%
Felt safe inside of their home	90%	88%	89%	96%
Parents/guardians knew what youth were doing with their free time in the past month (most or all of the time)	73%	68%	66%	77%
Parents/guardians knew what youth were doing online in the past month (most or all of the time)	40%	41%	35%	46%

	Chronic medical condition	Physical disability	Sensory disability	Youth without a health condition or disability
Promoting youth's right to respect for home and family				
Had not moved in the past year	74%	72%	73%	76%
Felt there was an adult in their neighbourhood who cared about them	65%	63%	60%	66%
RIGHT TO WORK				
Worked at a paid job during the school year	40%	35%	35%	31%
Promoting youth's right to work				
Had an adult to help them with getting a job (among youth who felt they needed help)	77%	73%	75%	70%
Had access to transportation	95%	91%	92%	94%
RIGHT TO AUTONOMY				
Felt they had the right amount of time on their own	59%	60%	56%	71%
Felt they had the right amount of time with family	65%	62%	66%	78%
Felt they had the right amount of time with friends	58%	56%	59%	72%
Felt they had the right amount of time in nature	50%	44%	49%	59%
No close in-person friends	5%	10%	5%	3%
1 close in-person friend	5%	6%	6%	4%
2 close in-person friends	12%	11%	13%	9%
3 to 5 close in-person friends	38%	37%	39%	36%
6 to 9 close in-person friends	19%	18%	18%	22%
10 or more close in-person friends	22%	19%	18%	27%
Had online friends they had never met in person	36%	34%	39%	32%
Dated someone online that they had never met in person in the past year	8%	12%	10%	6%
Dated someone in the past year	46%	44%	40%	40%

	Chronic medical condition	Physical disability	Sensory disability	Youth without a health condition or disability
<i>Promoting youth's right to autonomy</i>				
Felt respected by their family	68%	63%	63%	82%
Felt understood by their family	49%	45%	45%	67%
Had money to spend on themselves	84%	82%	82%	88%
RIGHT TO APPROPRIATE SUPPORT				
Felt there was an adult in their neighbourhood who cared about them	65%	63%	60%	66%
Had an adult in their family they could talk to about a serious problem	63%	60%	59%	77%
Had an adult outside their family they could talk to about a serious problem	32%	34%	30%	26%
Had adult to help make appointments (among those who needed help)	93%	91%	91%	95%
Had adult to help get to appointments (among those who needed help)	94%	91%	92%	95%
Had adult to help with homework (among those who needed help)	72%	71%	68%	80%
Had adult to help with preparing for post-secondary (among those who needed help)	81%	77%	76%	88%
Had adult to help get a job (among those who needed help)	77%	73%	75%	83%
<i>Promoting youth's right to appropriate support</i>				
Had friends who would be upset if they got pregnant or got someone pregnant	72%	69%	74%	73%
Had friends who would be upset if they got drunk	41%	45%	45%	48%
Felt teachers cared about them	62%	62%	61%	69%

Percentages that are **bolded** indicate a statistically significant difference in comparison to youth without a health condition or disability.

NA: Not applicable.

NR: Percentage estimate was not releasable due to risk of deductive disclosure or because the standard error was too high to produce stable estimates.

*Percentage estimate should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but was still within the releasable range.

Right to equality between genders

Percentages that are **bolded** for female and non-binary youth indicate a statistically significant difference in comparison to male youth. For example, female and non-binary youth were more likely than males to have experienced discrimination in the past year. However, females were more likely than males to have been employed during this time, whereas non-binary youth and males were employed at similar rates.

YOUTH WITH A CHRONIC CONDITION			
	Females (10%)	Non-binary youth (13%)	Males (6%)
Experienced discrimination of any type in the past year	57%	65%	41%
Because of their disability	10%	19%	6%
Because of their physical appearance	36%	37%	25%
Did not participate in extracurricular activities in the past year because ...			
They had no transportation	22%	27%	14%
They were worried about being bullied	13%	27%	6%
They could not afford it	20%	30%	11%
Worked at a paid job during the school year	42%	39%	36%
Took care of another relative (e.g., younger sibling or relative with disability) on an average school day	28%	32%	21%
Took care of a pet or other animal on an average school day	66%	65%	53%
<i>Promoting youth's right to equality between genders</i>			
Felt their family respected them	65%	40%	75%
Did not experience discrimination in the past year based on gender	79%	61%*	95%
Did not experience barriers to participating in extracurricular activities in the past year	25%	21%	42%
Felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day and night (at least sometimes)	80%	65%	87%
Felt teachers cared about them	61%	42%*	65%
Felt school staff treated them fairly	65%	56%*	68%

YOUTH WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY			
	Females (3%)	Non-binary youth (9%)	Males (4%)
Experienced discrimination of any type in the past year	58%	NR	43%
Because of their disability	25%	NR	21%
Because of their physical appearance	37%	NR	20%
Did not participate in extracurricular activities in the past year because ...			
They had no transportation	24%	NR	18%
They were worried about being bullied	13%	NR	8%
They could not afford it	19%	NR	17%
Worked at a paid job during the school year	35%	NR	38%
Took care of another relative (e.g., younger sibling or relative with disability) on an average school day	30%	NR	25%
Took care of a pet or other animal on an average school day	67%	58%*	60%
<i>Promoting youth's right to equality between genders</i>			
Felt their family respected them	60%	NR	71%
Did not experience discrimination in the past year based on gender	79%	73%*	95%
Did not experience barriers to participating in extracurricular activities in the past year	28%	NR	44%
Felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day and night (at least sometimes)	74%	NR	80%
Felt teachers cared about them	66%	NR	58%
Felt school staff treated them fairly	66%	54%*	61%
YOUTH WITH A SENSORY DISABILITY			
	Females (1%)	Non-binary youth (3%)	Males (1%)
Experienced discrimination of any type in the past year	58%	68%*	47%
Because of their disability	14%	19%*	13%
Because of their physical appearance	37%	34%*	31%
Did not participate in extracurricular activities in the past year because ...			
They had no transportation	28%	29%*	18%
They were worried about being bullied	15%	24%*	7%
They could not afford it	22%	24%*	15%

	Females	Non-binary youth	Males
Worked at a paid job during the school year	34%	38%*	36%
Took care of another relative (e.g., younger sibling or relative with disability) on an average school day	29%	17%	24%
Took care of a pet or other animal on an average school day	57%	66%*	49%
<i>Promoting youth's right to equality between genders</i>			
Felt their family respected them	60%	32%*	70%
Did not experience discrimination in the past year based on gender	78%	60%*	93%
Did not experience barriers to participating in extracurricular activities in the past year	24%	24%*	39%
Felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day and night (at least sometimes)	75%	61%*	85%
Felt teachers cared about them	59%	45%*	65%
Felt school staff treated them fairly	66%	61%*	67%

Percentages that are **bolded** for female and non-binary youth indicate a statistically significant difference in comparison to male youth.
 NR: Percentage estimate was not releasable due to risk of deductive disclosure or because the standard error was too high to produce stable estimates.

*Percentage estimate should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than others but was still within the releasable range.





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