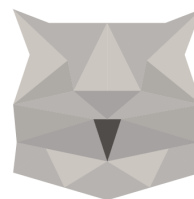


VAPING AMONG BC YOUTH WITH GOVERNMENT CARE EXPERIENCE:

A Youth Research Academy report



McCreary Centre Society's
**Research
Academy**

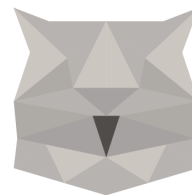


McCreary
Centre Society

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A Youth Research Academy report

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McCreary Centre Society's
**Research
Academy**

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

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Thank you:

To all the youth with care experience who participated in the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey.

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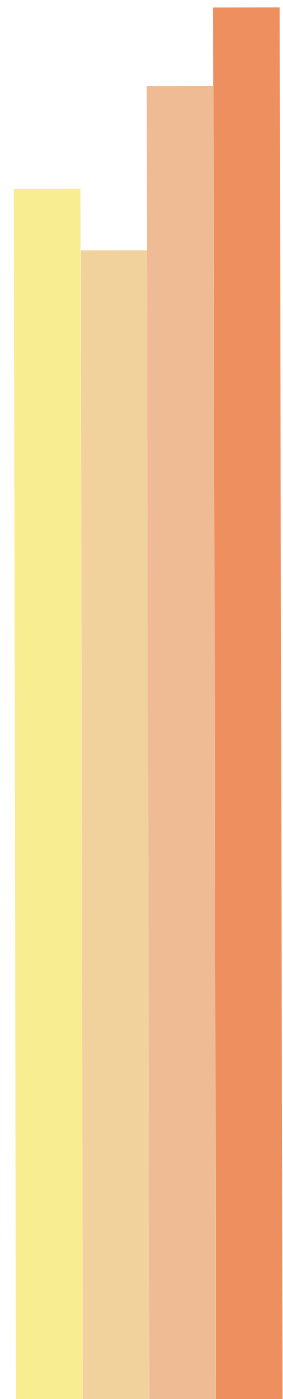


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INTRODUCTION

Background

The Youth Research Academy (YRA) is a group of young people aged 16 to 24 with experience in the government care system. We are trained to carry out research projects that can help benefit youth in and from care throughout BC. Our cohort has been meeting online twice a week since June 2021, and includes two peer mentors who took part in previous YRA cohorts.

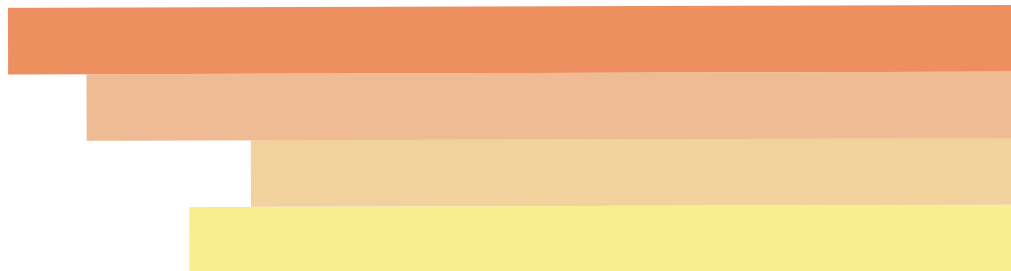
For this report, our group planned what analyses to carry out on the topic of vaping among youth in and from care. The analyses were based on questions from the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS). We looked at who was more likely to vape; protective factors linked to lower rates of vaping; and supports that can be helpful to youth who vape.

We analyzed the findings for statistical significance and documented the results, which included writing up the findings and creating graphs. We then reflected on the results and we identified key findings. Our reflections are included throughout this report.

About the BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS)

Over 38,000 students in Grades 7–12 completed the 2018 BC AHS in public schools across British Columbia, including more than 1,600 students who had ever been in government care or an alternative to care. Students answered 139 questions about their health and about the risk and protective factors in their lives. The survey has been carried out every five years since 1992. More information about the BC AHS can be found at www.mcs.bc.ca.

Data from the BC AHS is considered representative of students in Grades 7–12 attending mainstream schools in BC. It does not include youth who were in most alternative schools, independent schools, were home-schooled, or were not in school on the day the survey was administered. Some youth may also have been excluded because the survey was only available in paper form and in English.



Analyses

All analyses were carried out using SPSS Complex Samples. Associations included in this report are statistically significant at least at $p < .05$. This means there is up to a 5% likelihood the results occurred by chance. Statistically significant associations indicate a relationship between two variables. This does not prove causation or show the direction of the relationship.

Any percentage that is marked with an asterisk (*) should be interpreted with caution because its standard error is higher than others but is still within a releasable range.

All analyses were carried out among youth in and from government care, unless otherwise noted.

Glossary

Youth with care experience (or youth in and from care) refers to youth who had experienced any type of government care or alternative to care, including a foster home, group home, custody centre, Kith and Kin Agreement, and/or Youth Agreement. Youth may have received services from the BC government or through a delegated agency.

Vaping refers to vaping with and/or without nicotine in the past month.

KEY FINDINGS

All findings are among youth with government care experience, unless otherwise noted.

- In 2018, around 4 in 10 youth with care experience (42%) had vaped in the past month, which was higher than the provincial rate among all BC youth (27%).
- Females with care experience were the most likely to have vaped (e.g., 48% of females vs. 36% of males), unlike among youth not in care where there was no such gender difference.
- Youth might vape as a way to cope with mental health challenges and stress in their lives. Youth with care experience were more likely to vape if they felt extreme stress (56% vaped vs. 38% who did not experience this level of stress) and despair (54% vs. 39%) in the past month, and if they seriously thought about suicide (54% vs. 34%) or attempted suicide (64% vs. 38%) in the past year.
- Experiencing potentially traumatic and stressful situations was linked to vaping. For example, youth who had been abused, bullied, kicked out of home, or had run away from home were more likely to vape. Youth who had experienced bereavement were also more likely to vape, and the more ways in which youth had been bereaved, the more likely they were to vape.
- Youth who took risks were more likely to vape, including those who drove under the influence of substances, and did not wear a helmet when participating in activities with a high risk of head injury. For example, 61% of youth who never wore a helmet while skateboarding/longboarding had vaped, compared to 27% who always wore a helmet when taking part in this activity.
- Youth were less likely to vape when they felt connected to family, school, the community, and nature, and when they felt supported and heard by the adults in their lives. For example, youth who approached their teacher for help and found it helpful were less likely to vape than those who did not find it helpful (35% vs. 55%). Also, youth who had adults in their lives who helped them with various tasks, such as making appointments, were less likely to vape than those who did not have this type of adult support.
- Youth who had friends who would be upset with them for taking part in potentially harmful behaviours (e.g., getting drunk, using cannabis) were less likely to vape than youth with friends who would not be upset for these reasons.
- Self-care was linked to lower rates of vaping. This included getting enough sleep, having good stress-management skills, and spending enough time on their own. For example, around a third of youth (34%) who slept eight or more hours the night before taking the survey had vaped recently, compared to over half (58%) of those who slept four hours or less.
- Many of the same factors that reduced the likelihood of youth vaping were also linked to better health and well-being among youth who had vaped. For example, youth who felt their ideas were listened to and valued in their activities were more likely than those who did not feel this way to feel their life was going well (55% vs. 31%) and to report feeling hopeful for their future (60% vs. 34%).

PROFILE OF YOUTH WITH CARE EXPERIENCE WHO VAPE

All findings are among youth with government care experience, unless otherwise noted.

Across the province, 27% of youth who completed the 2018 BC AHS had vaped in the month before completing the survey. The rate was 42% among youth with care experience.

There were few differences in vaping rates based on the type of care or alternative to care youth had experienced. One exception was that youth who had been on a Kith and Kin agreement were more likely than those who had been in a foster home or group home to have vaped (50% vs. 39%).

Vaping went up with age, and youth with care experience who were 15 or older were generally the most likely to have vaped. For example, 15% of students aged 12 or younger had vaped recently, compared to 35% of 13-year-olds, and 53% of 15-year-olds.

Among youth never in care, there were few differences in vaping based on gender or sexual orientation. Among youth with care experience, there were also no differences in vaping based on sexual orientation, but females were more likely to vape than males and non-binary youth (e.g., 48% of females vs. 36% of males).

Youth with care experience who were born in Canada were more likely to vape than those born outside the country (45% vs. 27%). Among youth born outside Canada, there were no differences in vaping rates based on how many years they had lived in Canada. Also, vaping rates were not different based on whether youth were currently living in rural or urban areas.

Youth in care with a health condition or disability were more likely to vape than those without a health condition or disability (50% vs. 35%). For example, around half of youth with a long-term medical condition had vaped (49%), and around 6 in 10 with a physical disability (64%*) or a severe allergy (60%*) had vaped.

Also, youth with a health condition or disability who felt that it stopped them from doing things their peers could do were more likely to vape than those who felt their condition was not restricting in this way (55% vs. 42%).

YRA reflections

- *I guess I am a little surprised but not too shocked about the amount of vaping going on. I would be lying if I said that this many youth vaping doesn't make me sad, it's a little heartbreaking.*
- *Youth in care go through a lot and I think that as they get older this affects them more as they start to understand more, and due to this they may be more inclined to vape.*
- *Females usually experience more stress than males, so it makes sense to me that they would be more likely to vape than males. I think some youth use vaping to try to relieve stress.*

EXPERIENCES ASSOCIATED WITH VAPING

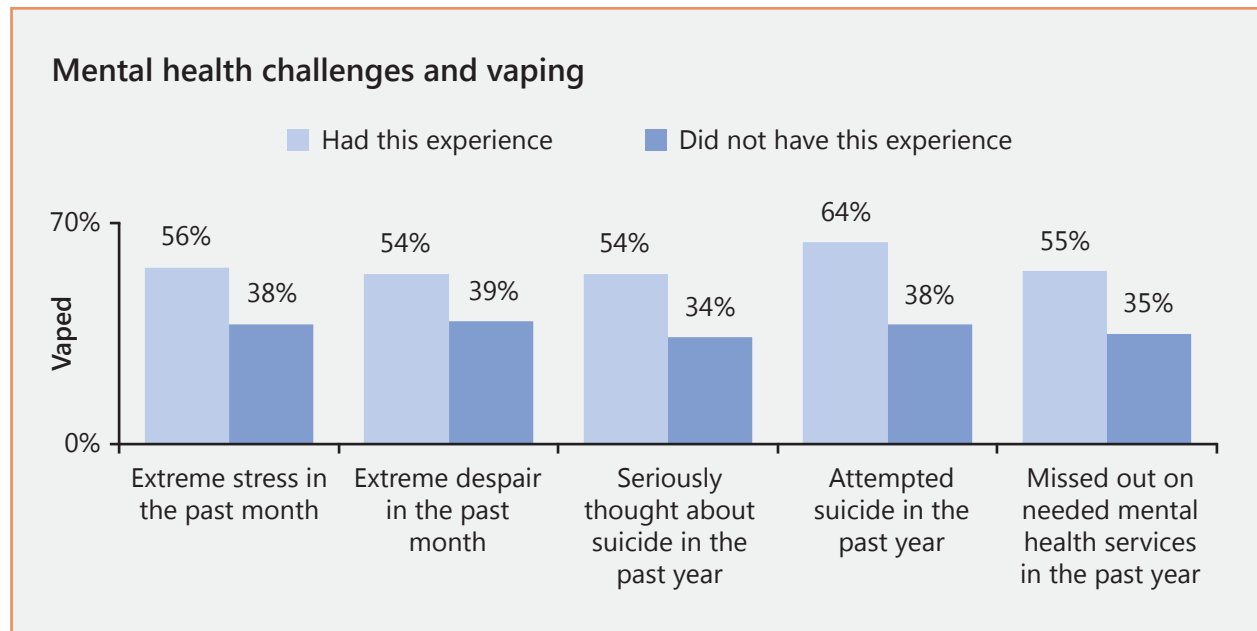
All findings are among youth with government care experience, unless otherwise noted.

This section identifies experiences associated with a greater likelihood of vaping, among youth in and from care.

Mental health challenges

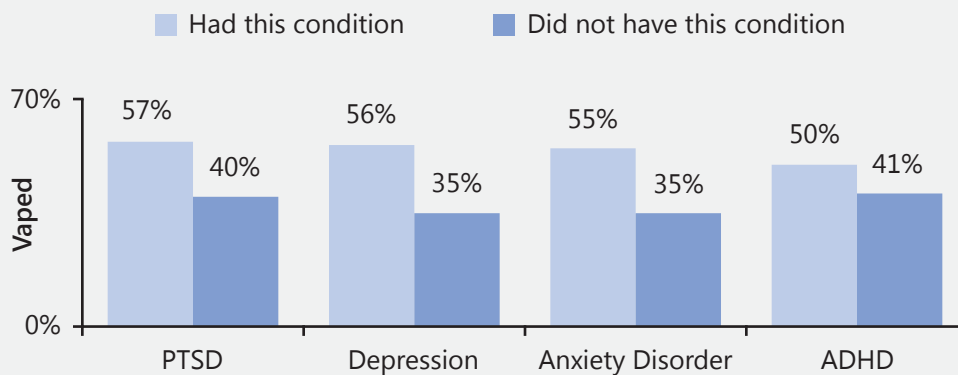
Youth with mental health challenges were more likely to vape. For example, youth who rated their mental health as poor or fair were more likely to vape than those who rated it as good or excellent (51% vs. 34%). Experiencing extreme stress or despair in the past month, and seriously thinking about suicide or having attempted suicide in the past year were also linked to vaping. Also, youth who missed out on accessing needed mental health services in the past year were more likely to vape.

Youth who reported having a specific mental health condition were more likely to vape (54% vs. 36% of youth without a mental health condition). For example, youth who reported having Anxiety, Depression, ADHD, and/or PTSD were more likely to vape than youth without these conditions.



Note: Among youth with care experience.

Mental health conditions and vaping



Note: Among youth with care experience.

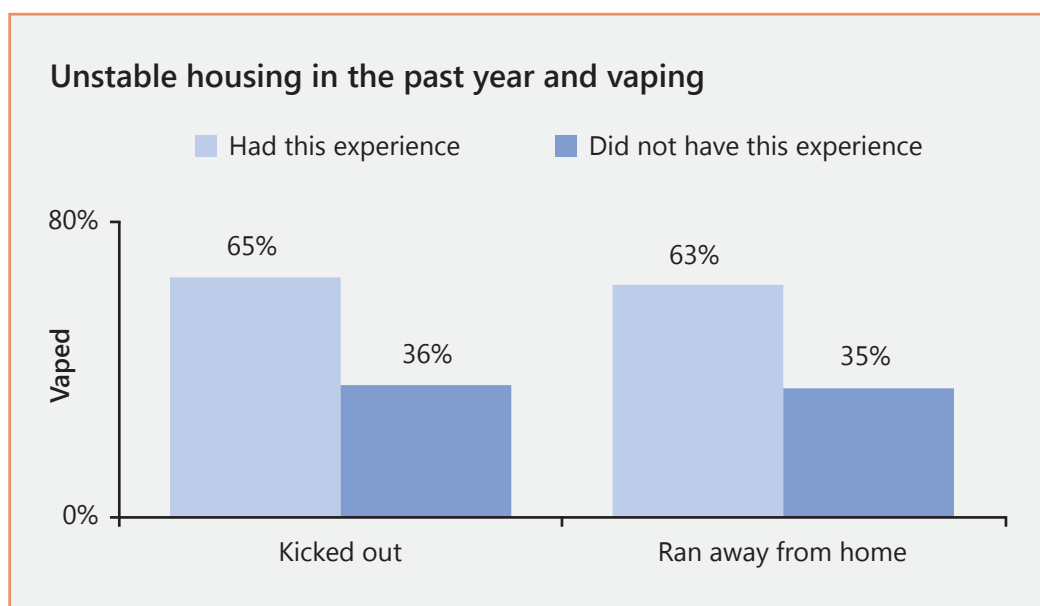
YRA reflections

- *It makes sense that those who have mental health challenges would be more likely to vape since it can be a way for them to cope with their feelings.*
- *I think youth use vaping as a coping mechanism for stress and for helping them to take deep breaths, which can be relaxing for the body. These youth might not think of taking deep breaths by themselves.*
- *When you take into consideration that youth might do almost anything to manage their mental health challenges ... it makes sense that youth with mental health challenges vape more, especially considering all that they must have to deal with. I'm not saying it's good, but vaping may be far better than what a lot of youth end up getting into.*
- *With mental health treatment not always accessible due to financial or situational challenges, those suffering might seek out relief through substances like vaping.*

Unstable housing

Youth who had been kicked out or had run away from home in the past year were more likely to vape than those who had not had these experiences. Also, females who had moved three or more times in the past year were more likely than females who had not moved to have vaped recently (58% vs. 44%).

There was no difference in vaping rates between youth who lived alone and those who lived with other people. There was also no difference in vaping among youth who lived with adults and those who lived with no adults.



Note: Among youth with care experience.

YRA reflections

- *Being kicked out or being put in a position to run away is extremely stressful on youth and explains the higher percentage of vaping in my opinion.*
- *I think that when youth experience instability at home, they experience more stress which can cause them to turn to vaping in order to cope and to possibly have something they have control over.*
- *I was a little surprised to see no difference in vaping between youth who lived with an adult and those who did not. I would have thought that those who live with an adult would for the most part be less likely to vape because there would be someone in the house that would stop them from vaping.*
- *Who the youth lives with might make no difference when it comes to vaping, perhaps because what might be more important is how much stability and stress they experience in their living situation.*

Victimization

Youth who had experienced victimization were more likely to vape. For example, those who had been bullied—including teased, excluded, and/or assaulted by another youth at school or on the way to or from school in the past year—were more likely to vape than those who had not been bullied (47% vs. 33%).

Also, youth who had been sexually abused were more likely to vape (60% vaped vs. 35% of youth who had never been sexually abused), as were those who had been physically abused (53% vs. 34%).

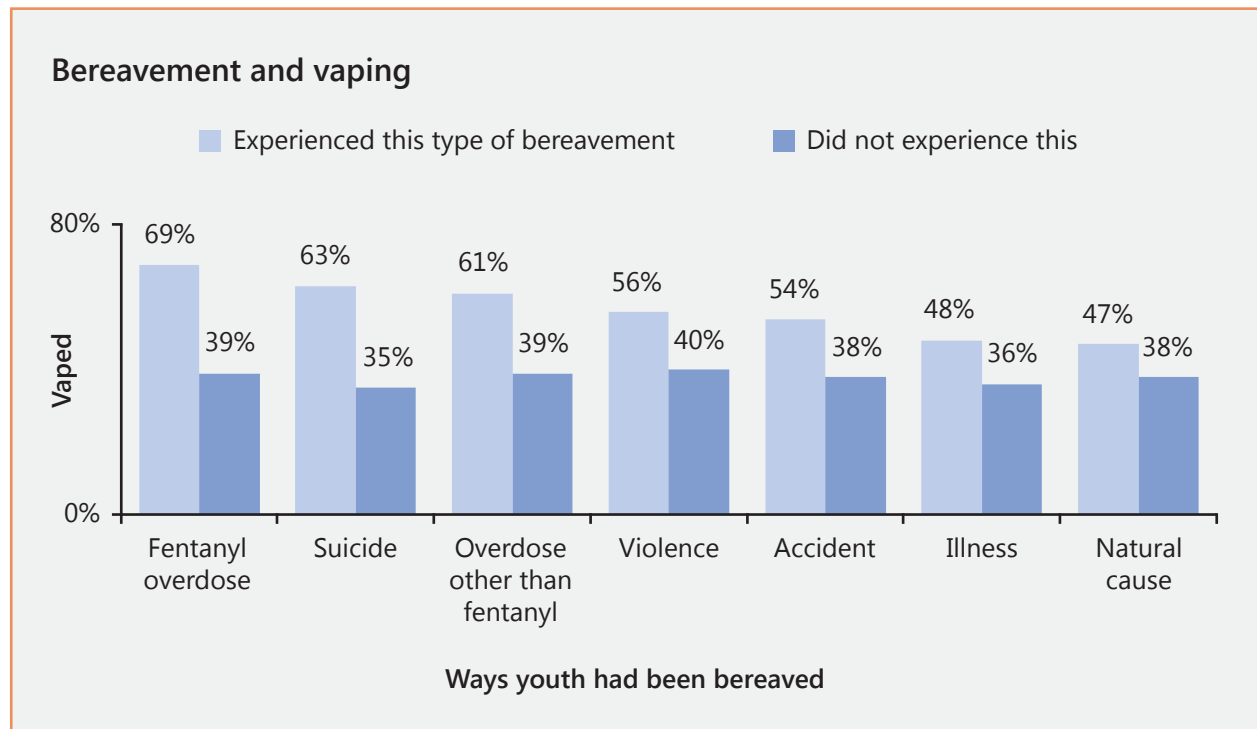
YRA reflections

- *Youth might use vaping as a distraction from past traumas they have faced. It also gives them something to do in their free time, so they're not stuck with their thoughts and feelings. Also, in relation to bullying, they might take up vaping to seem more cool or tough.*
- *Vaping is a coping mechanism and if you're dealing with trauma or excess stress you're going to seek some alternative way to hide the pain.*

Bereavement

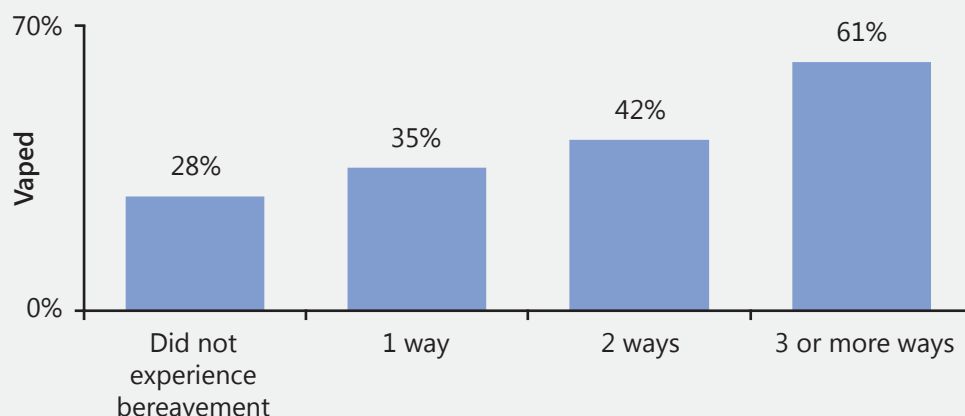
Youth who had someone close to them who had died (i.e., experienced bereavement) were more likely to vape than youth who had not experienced bereavement (46% vs. 28%). The pattern was the same for different types of bereavement, including someone close to them dying of a fentanyl overdose, another type of overdose, suicide, violence, an accident, illness, or natural causes.

The more ways in which youth had been bereaved, generally the more likely they were to vape. For example, youth who had been bereaved in three or more different ways (such as due to illness, suicide, and a fentanyl overdose) were over twice as likely as those who had never been bereaved to have vaped in the past month (61% vs. 28%).



Note: Among youth with care experience.

Number of different ways youth had been bereaved in relation to vaping



Note: The difference between 1 way and 2 ways was not statistically significant.

Note: Among youth with care experience.

YRA reflections

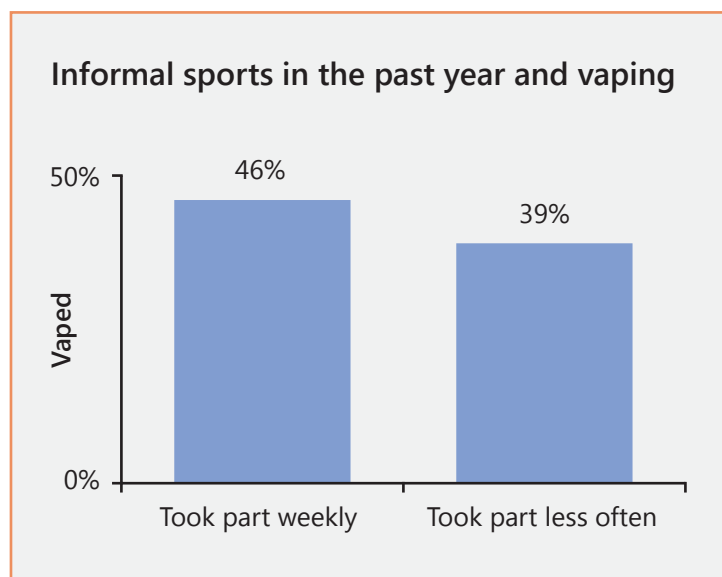
- *It's never easy to deal with bereavement, so when youth must go through that while they're still in school it can be very difficult. Some youth turn to vaping to help cope with the stress and their emotions. It also seems like the more sudden the person's death was, the more likely the youth are to vape.*
- *Bereavement can be a traumatic experience, causing extreme stress and depression. Unfortunately, youth might not be prepared to handle the emotional toll, which could be why they may turn to vaping, smoking, or other substance use to cope.*
- *It makes sense that the more loss a youth has experienced, the more likely they are to have vaped, since I think youth use vaping as a coping mechanism for stress.*

Physical activity

Previous studies have found a link between sports participation and vaping. Youth with care experience who took part in sports without a coach (informal sports) on a weekly basis—such as skateboarding, biking, or hiking—were more likely to vape than youth who took part less often or not at all. Also, youth who exercised on three or more days in the past week were more likely to vape than those who exercised on fewer days (46% vs. 37%).

YRA reflections

- *The findings are surprising because being active and playing sports is usually associated with a healthy lifestyle.*
- *If youth were smokers beforehand, they would probably switch to vaping with the more exercise they do, since they might think it's better for their lungs.*
- *A lot of youth who tried vaping might have come to realize that it affected their performance when it came to sports.*



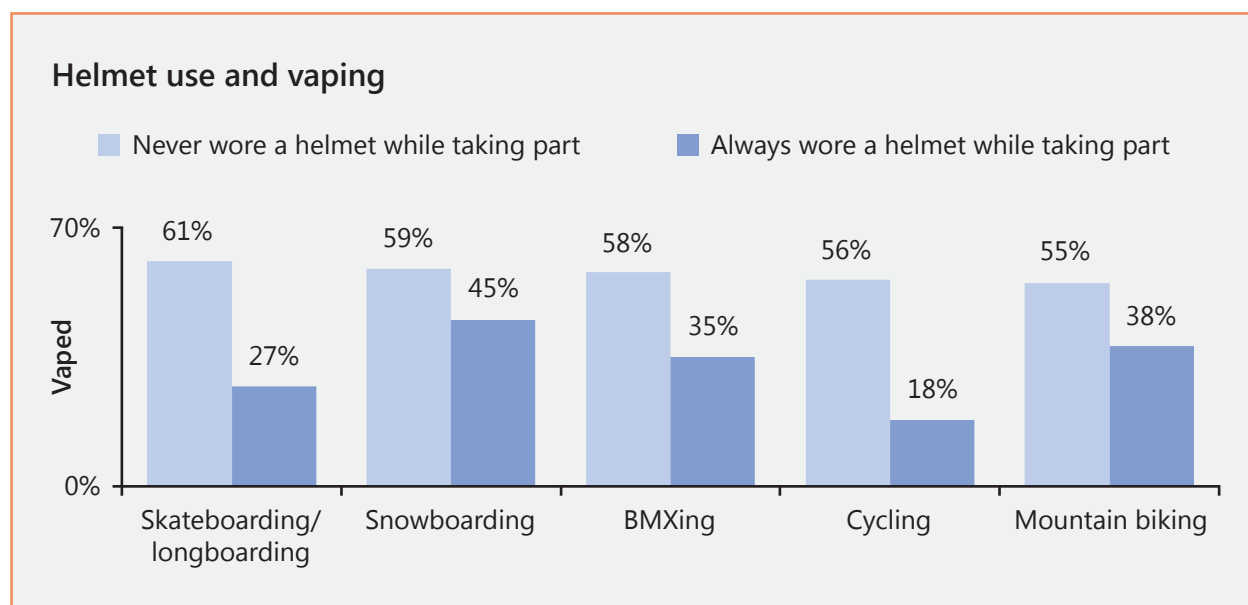
Note: Among youth with care experience.

Risk taking

Youth who took risks were more likely to vape, including those who did not wear a helmet when participating in activities with a high risk of head injury, and youth who drove under the influence of substances.

Never wearing a helmet

Youth were more likely to vape if they never wore a helmet while snowboarding, BMXing, mountain biking, skiing, skateboarding/longboarding, and cycling.



Note: Among youth with care experience.

Driving under the influence

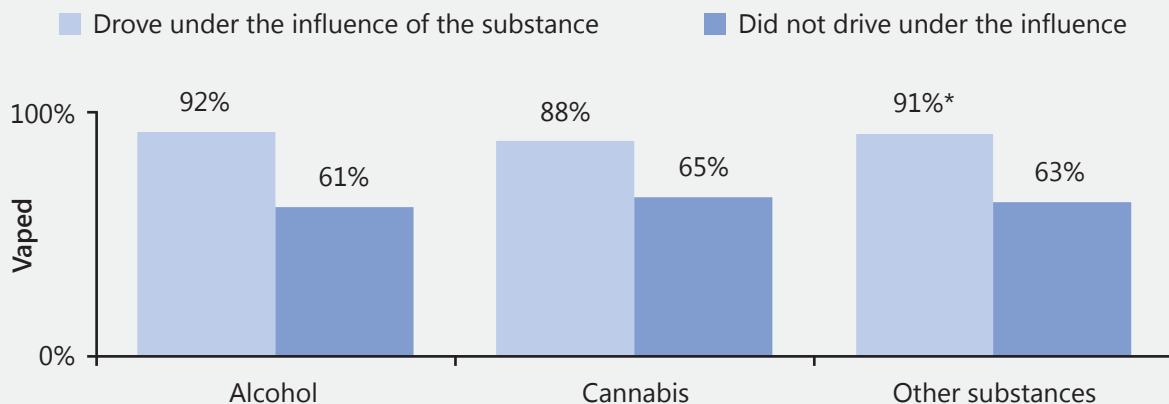
Among youth who had used substances, those who had driven while under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or another substance in the past month were more likely to have vaped than those who had not driven after using substances.



YRA reflections

- *These findings refer to youth's risk-taking behaviours and it makes sense that if a youth is going to be driving recklessly that they would be more likely to start vaping, since vaping in and of itself is a risk-taking activity.*
- *Youth with care experience seem to participate in risky behaviour more than people without care experience. People who thrive on excitement or highly stimulating situations as adults may have been children who were constantly walking on eggshells or always in situations where they had to stay alert, so as they grow up they subconsciously might go after such experiences.*

Driving under the influence of substances in the past month and vaping (among youth who had ever used the substance)

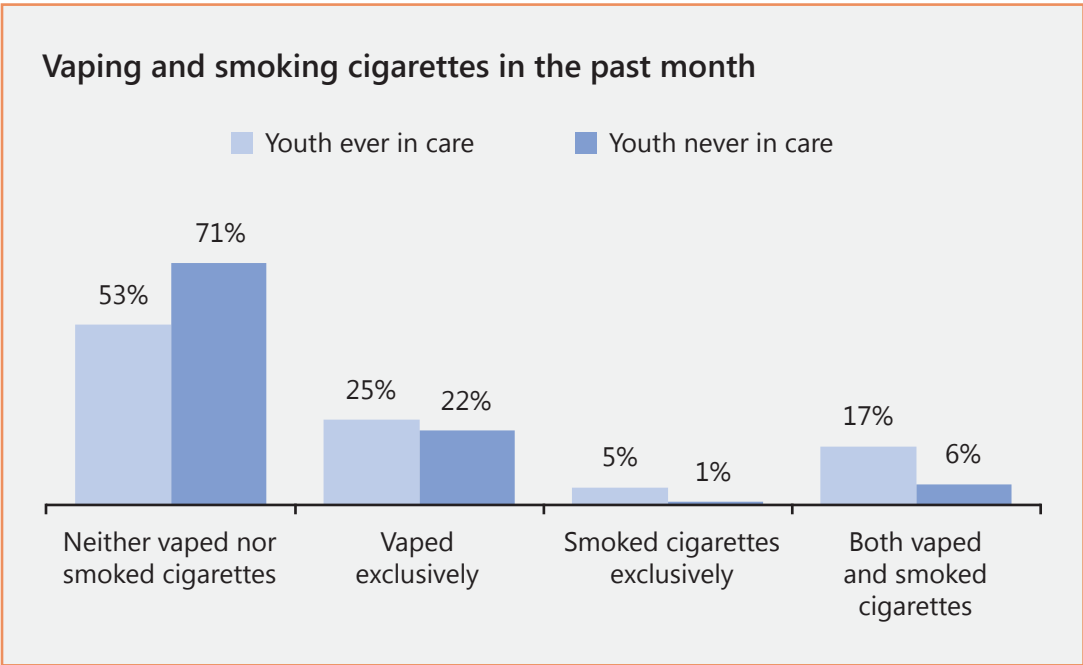


*The percentage should be interpreted with caution because the standard error is higher than others but is still within a releasable range.
Note: Among youth with care experience.

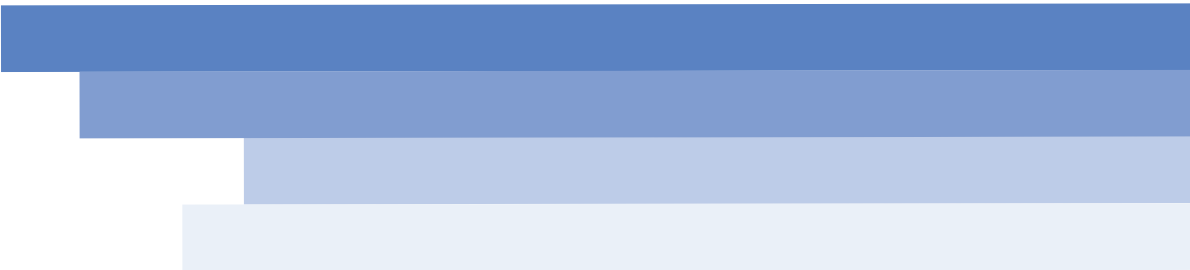
Substance use

In the past month, 17% of youth had both vaped and smoked cigarettes, while 25% vaped exclusively, and 5% smoked cigarettes exclusively. Youth with care experience were more likely than those never in care to have both vaped and smoked, and to have exclusively smoked cigarettes recently.

Vaping is sometimes used as an aide to stop smoking. Among youth who had vaped in the past month, 83% also reported they had recently used a product to help them stop smoking cigarettes.



Note: The difference for 'vaped exclusively' was not statistically significant.

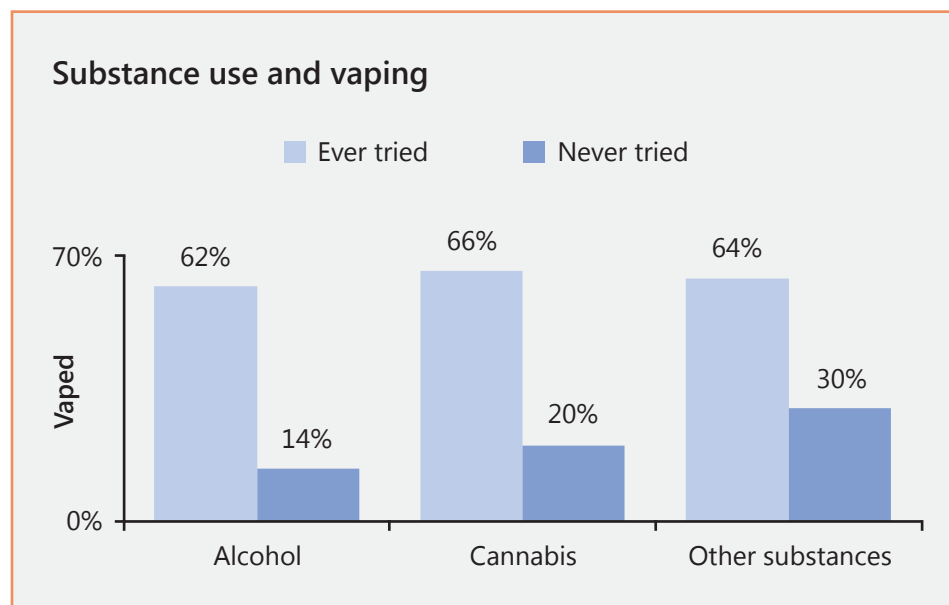


Youth who had tried alcohol or cannabis were more likely to have vaped than those who had never tried these substances. Also, youth who had used these substances in the past month were more likely to have also vaped during that month. For example, among youth who had tried cannabis, 77% who had used it in the past month had vaped during that time, compared to 46% who had not used cannabis recently. Use of substances other than alcohol and cannabis (cocaine, hallucinogens, prescription pills without a doctor's consent, etc.) was also linked to vaping.

Also, youth who reported having an addiction to alcohol or other substances were more likely to have vaped in the past month than youth who did not have an addiction to substances (78% vs. 38%).

YRA reflections

- *I was not surprised that youth in care were more likely to vape or smoke cigarettes than youth not in care. Those who have had to overcome challenges, such as familial trauma during childhood or bereavement, are more likely to vape so this makes sense.*
- *I think vaping is used as a coping mechanism, in the same way other substances are too.*
- *Nicotine is a substance that gives people a sense of relief when it is taken into the body, and usually smokers who don't get their fix in time will experience anxiety.*



Note: Among youth with care experience.

Working

Youth who worked five or more hours each week were more likely to vape than those who worked fewer hours or not at all (61% vs. 35%).

YRA reflections

- *Youth who do not have a job have less money or no money to spend on vape products.*
- *More work means more stress, which leads to youth needing coping mechanisms, such as vaping.*
- *Working in places such as the restaurant industry can increase vaping. When co-workers take smoke breaks together it becomes a social thing.*

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH A LOWER LIKELIHOOD OF VAPING

All findings are among youth with government care experience, unless otherwise noted.

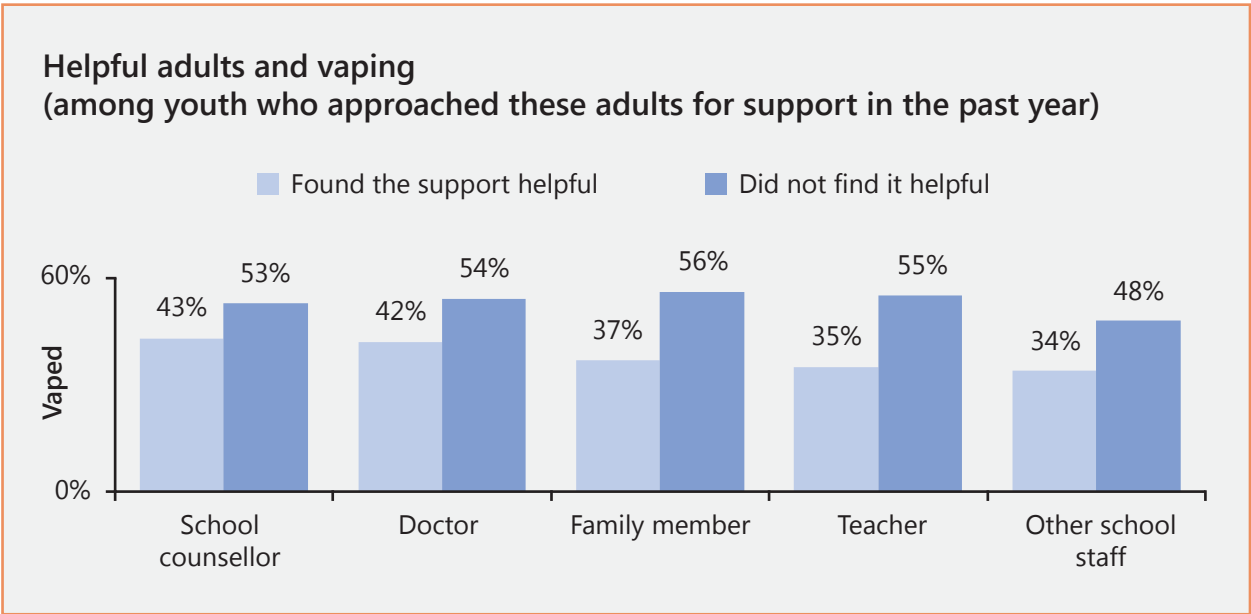
This section describes protective factors that were linked to lower rates of vaping, among youth with care experience.

Supportive adults

If youth approached various adults for help in the past year and found them helpful, they were less likely to vape than if they did not find the support helpful. This included adults in their family and at school, as well as a doctor. Also, youth who found a telephone helpline helpful were less likely to vape than those who did not find it helpful (38% vs. 57%; among those who had accessed a telephone helpline in the past year).

YRA reflections

- *Helplines are places youth would call when they don't know where else to turn, so it's good that they also seem to have a positive impact on youth's vaping habits.*



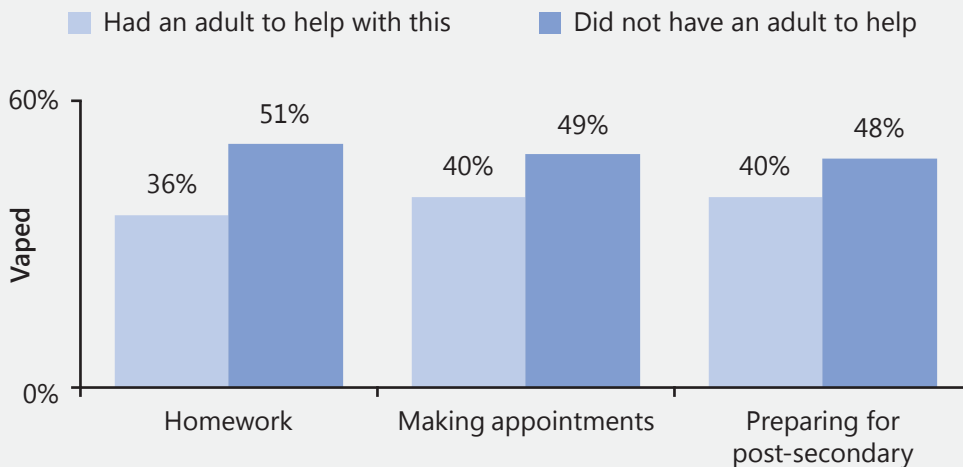
Note: Among youth with care experience.

Youth who had an adult in their life who helped them with their homework, preparing for post-secondary, and making appointments were less likely to vape than those who did not have this type of support.

YRA reflections

- *I hypothesize that receiving help making appointments is associated with reduced vaping because a lot of youth have anxiety making phone calls, so setting up the appointments is the hardest part of the process.*
- *If youth got the adult support they needed, they would be less stressed out and therefore less likely to vape.*

Adult support and vaping



Note: Among youth with care experience.

Family

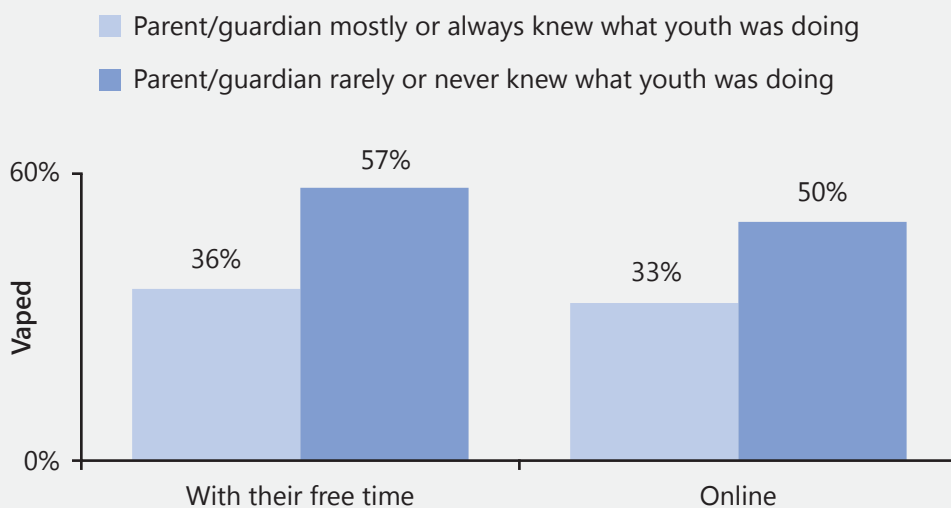
The more connected youth felt to their family, the less likely they were to vape. For example, 31% who felt their family understood them quite a bit or very much had vaped, compared to 41% who felt their family somewhat understood them, and 53% of youth who felt their family did not understand them.

Youth who felt they spent the right amount of time with their family were less likely to vape than those who did not spend enough time with their family (39% vs. 48%). Also, having parents or guardians who monitored youth's spare time and their time online was linked to a lower likelihood of vaping.

YRA reflections

- *Youth who do not get their family-time needs met may be vaping more because they may spend more time with friends or people who vape. They may also have more free time to vape as they're not spending as much time with their families.*
- *If youth are being monitored more often, they don't want to get in trouble and would be less likely to take risks, and they may not want to disappoint their parent/guardian by vaping.*

Parental monitoring and vaping



Note: Among youth with care experience.

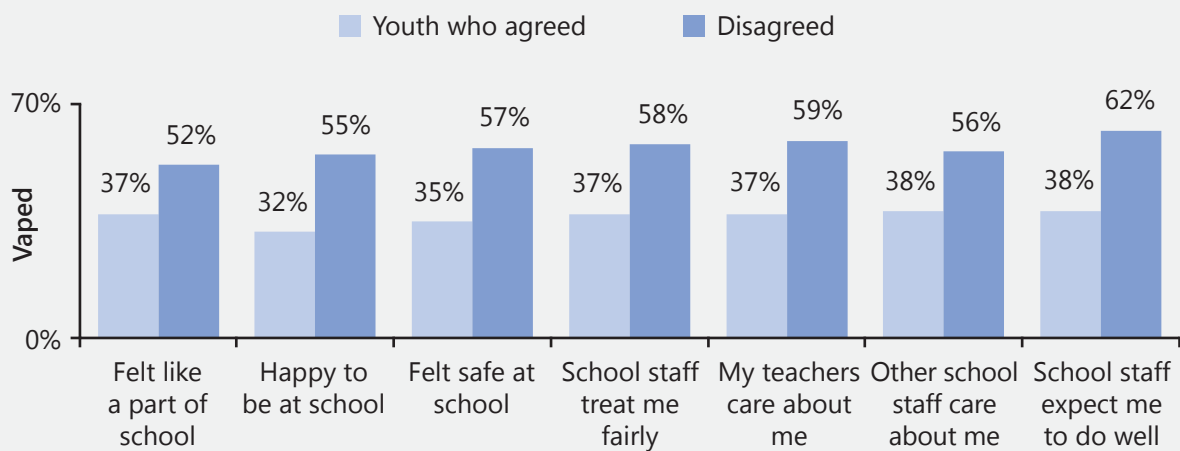
School

Youth were less likely to vape if they felt like a part of their school, felt safe there, happy to be there, and if they felt school staff treated them fairly, cared about them, and expected them to do well.

YRA reflections

- *Youth spend a lot of their time at school, so it is important for them to feel safe and connected there, otherwise they'll be more likely to act out, such as by vaping and using other substances.*

School connectedness and vaping



Note: Among youth with care experience.

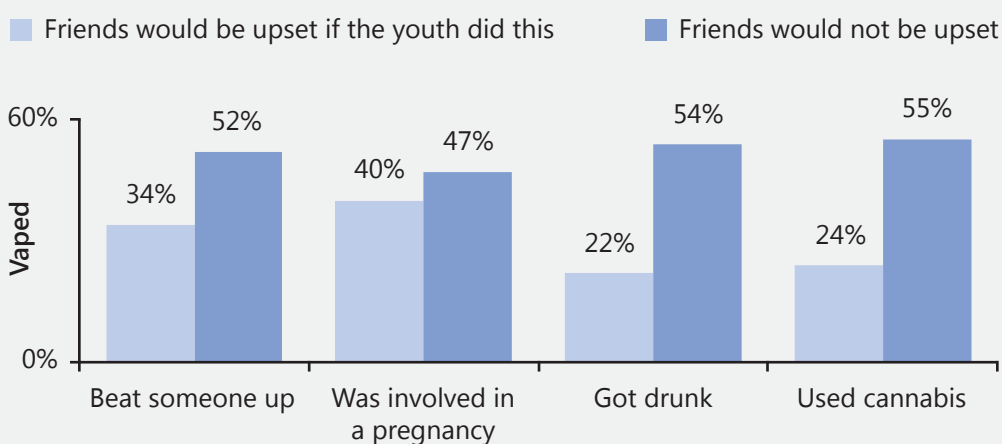
Friends

Youth who had friends who would be upset with them for taking part in potentially risky behaviours (getting drunk, using cannabis, beating someone up, and being involved in a pregnancy) were less likely to vape than youth with friends who would not be upset for these reasons.

YRA reflections

- *At some point during the teenage years, friends become a really important part of youth's lives. Their way of thinking can rub off on each other, so when youth have friends who have prosocial attitudes, they will be more likely to hold those same standards, while if a youth has friends who want to take risks and party, the youth will be more likely to want to do those things too.*
- *Interestingly, one of the few circumstances in which stress may be a protective factor is when the stress is coming from positive peer pressure. Youth may be more hesitant to vape if their friends disapprove of it, due to their need to be accepted and belong.*

Pro-social peers and vaping



Note: Among youth with care experience.

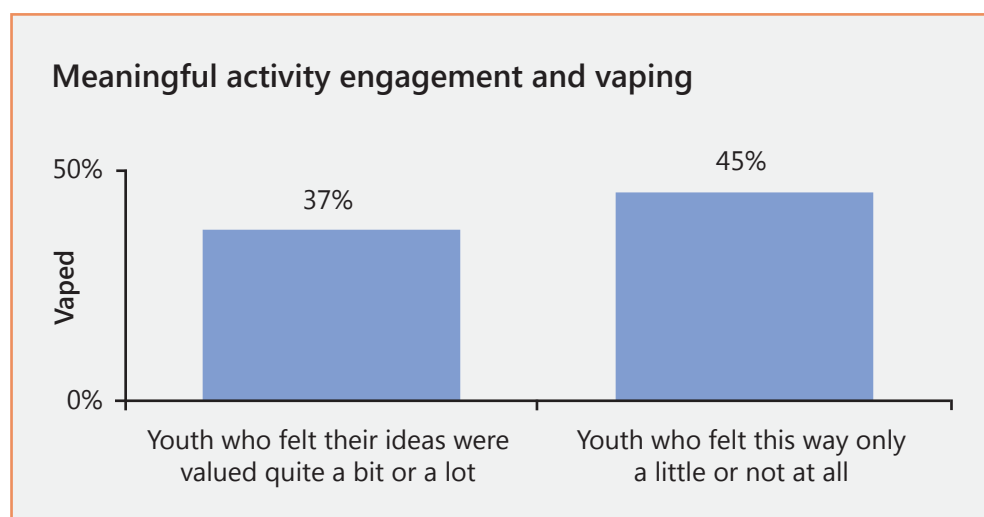
Involvement in activities

Youth who took part in weekly art, drama, singing or music groups/lessons were less likely to vape than those who took part less often or not at all (32% vs. 45%). Volunteering in the community on a weekly basis was also linked to lower rates of vaping (35% vaped vs. 44% of youth who volunteered less often).

Youth who felt meaningfully engaged in their activities—specifically that their ideas were listened to and acted upon—were less likely to vape than youth who did not feel this way about their activities.

YRA reflections

- *When a youth has less free time on their hands, they will be less likely to try risky things, such as vaping, and more likely to do something they enjoy (and that's healthier) instead. If a youth has more free time on their hands, they will be searching for something to do in that time, and I've heard somewhere before that smoking is a way for people with nothing to do to have something to do, and I think the same could go for vaping.*
- *In terms of having their ideas listened to and acted upon, it can give the youth a sense of purpose and responsibility, which would lead to them wanting to make healthy choices for themselves. I think youth who don't feel important or who feel neglected would be less likely to care about being healthy and would be more likely to vape.*



Note: Among youth with care experience.

Connection to community, culture, and the land

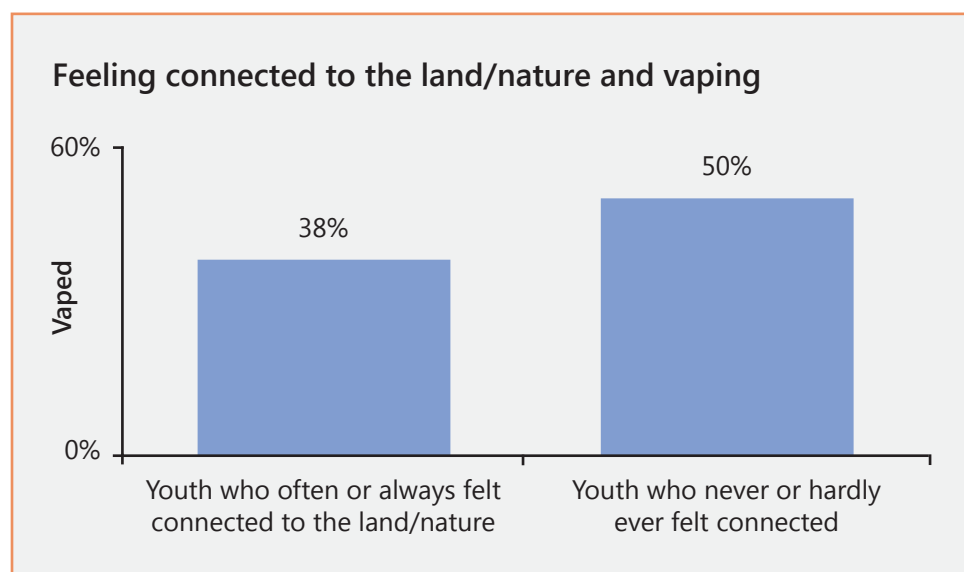
Youth who felt like a part of their community (at least somewhat) were less likely to vape than those who felt less connected to their community (39% vs. 49%).

Feeling connected to culture can also be protective. For example, youth who ate traditional foods from their culture the day before completing the survey were less likely to vape than those who did not eat traditional foods (37% vs. 44%).

Youth who felt they had the right amount of time to spend in nature were less likely to vape than those who felt they did not spend enough time in nature (38% vs. 46%). Similarly, youth who felt connected to the land or nature were less likely to vape than those who did not feel this way.

YRA reflections

- *It is quite interesting to see that youth being connected to nature is a protective factor. The idea of nature could be anything from getting some fresh air to going on hikes or going for a swim. It is so intuitive that if I feel like I need a mental boost, I'll go out for a walk. But I suppose that isn't the case for everybody.*
- *Not having a connection to the land can make youth feel like they're trapped inside. Also the fresh air can help to make youth feel better if they've been inside somewhere without proper ventilation. Also, when you're stressed out, Mother Earth will share her energy with you and take on any negativity you may have and replace it with positivity.*

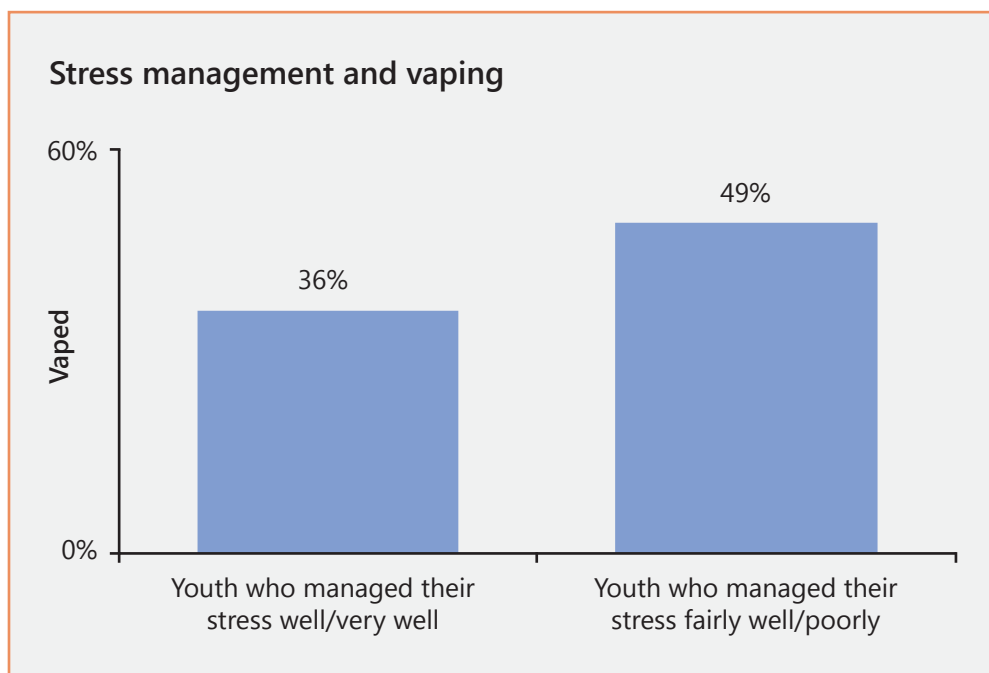


Note: Among youth with care experience.

Self-care and related skills

Stress management

Youth who managed their stress well or very well were less likely to vape than those who managed their stress only fairly well or poorly.



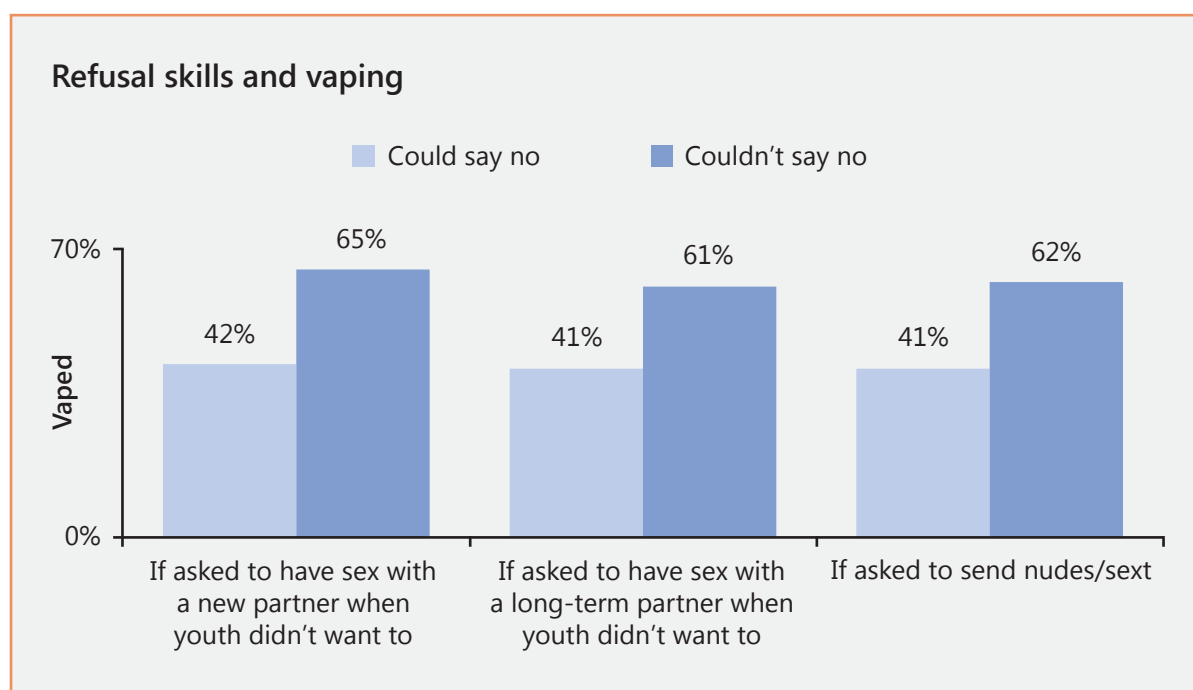
Note: Among youth with care experience.

Refusal skills

Youth who reported having good refusal skills, in terms of feeling they could say no to sexual activity they did not want to engage in, were less likely to vape.

YRA reflections

- *These findings may suggest that having refusal skills for sexual activity might generalize to being able to say no across other situations, such as when peers invite youth to vape.*



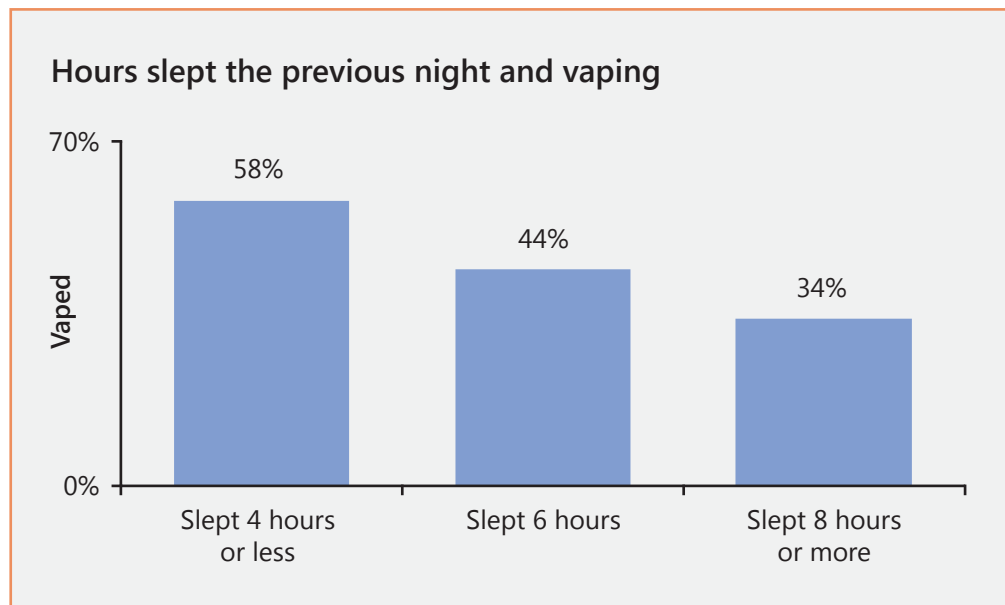
Note: Among youth with care experience.

Time alone

Youth who felt they had the right amount of time to spend on their own were less likely to vape than those who felt they had insufficient time for themselves (40% vs. 48%).

Sleep

Getting enough sleep was also linked to a lower likelihood of vaping. For example, 34% of youth who had slept eight or more hours the night before completing the survey had vaped, compared to 49% who had slept fewer hours.



Note: Among youth with care experience.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS AMONG YOUTH WHO VAPED

All findings in this section are among youth with care experience who had vaped in the past month.

Youth who are vaping may not be ready to quit or reduce their vaping. In this section, we looked at protective factors that were associated with positive health and well-being among youth with care experience who vaped. Many of the same factors that reduced the likelihood of youth vaping were also linked to better health and well-being among youth who had vaped recently.

For example, youth who vaped were more likely to report better health and well-being if they ...

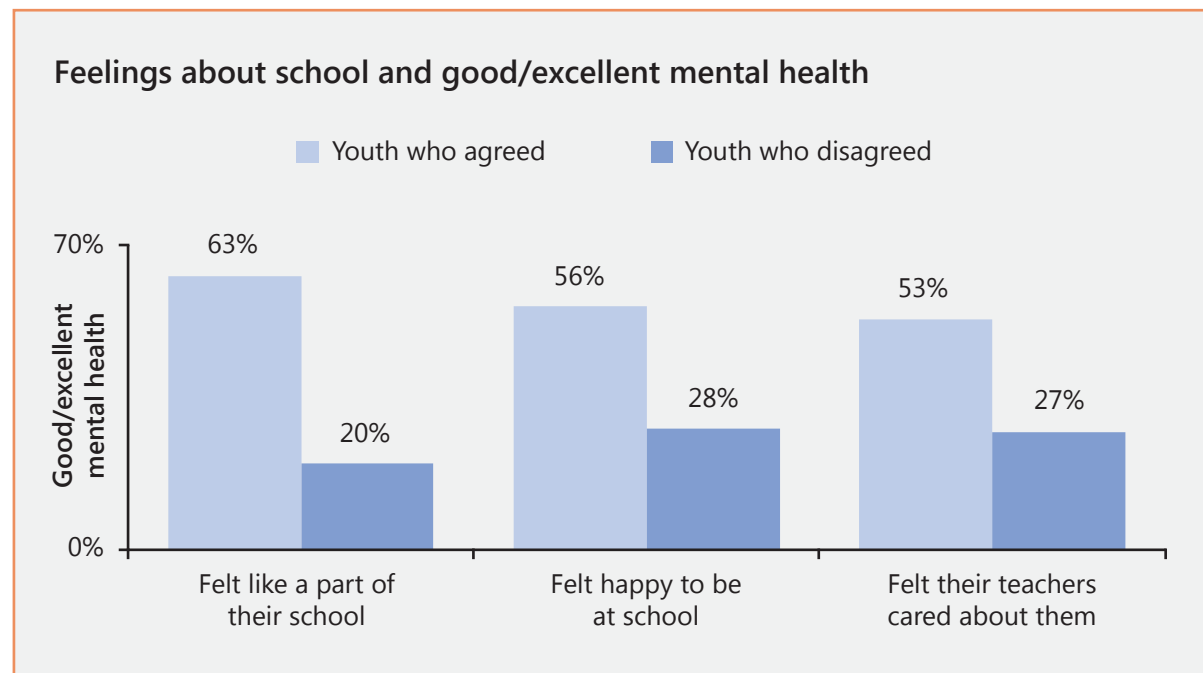
- Had friends who would be upset with them for using substances. Specifically, if their friends would be upset with them for getting drunk, they were less likely to have had alcohol in the past month than if their friends would not be upset for this reason (60%* vs. 81%; among youth who had tried alcohol). Similarly, if their friends would be upset with them for using cannabis, they were less likely to have used it in the past month (51%* vs. 81%), and on six or more days in the past month (17% vs. 41%; among youth who had tried cannabis).



■ Felt close with their family. Youth were more likely to report satisfaction with their life if they felt their family understood them (78% vs. 25%) and paid attention to them (70% vs. 19%), and if their caregivers knew what they were doing in their free time (64% vs. 41% of youth whose caregivers did not monitor their free time).

■ Felt connected to their school and that their teachers cared about them.

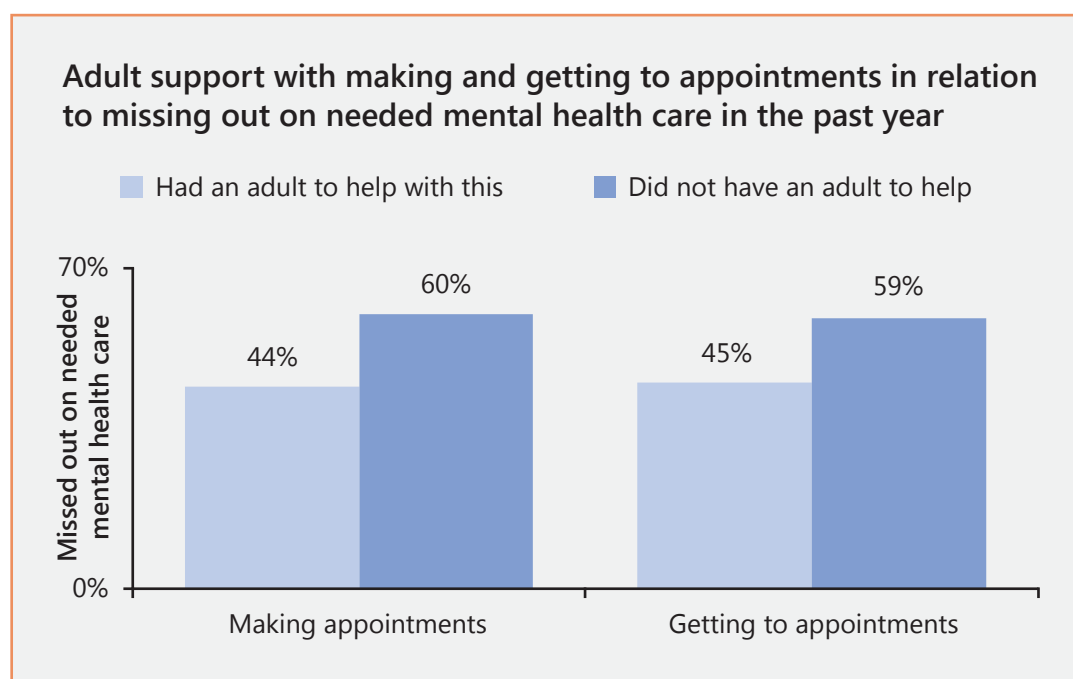
■ Found the supports they accessed to be helpful. Youth were more likely to report hopefulness for their future if they found helpful the support they received from a teacher (61% felt hopeful vs. 32%* of youth who did not find a teacher helpful) and doctor (49% vs. 27%*), as well as a youth worker and online community/support group.



Note: Among youth with care experience who vaped.

Had adult support in various areas. Youth who had an adult who helped them with making and getting to appointments were less likely to have missed out on accessing needed mental health care in the past year, compared to youth who did not have this type of adult support.

Felt meaningfully engaged in their activities. Youth who felt their ideas were listened to and acted upon in their activities were more likely than those who did not feel this way to feel their life was going well (55% vs. 31%), and to report hopefulness for their future (60% vs. 34%).

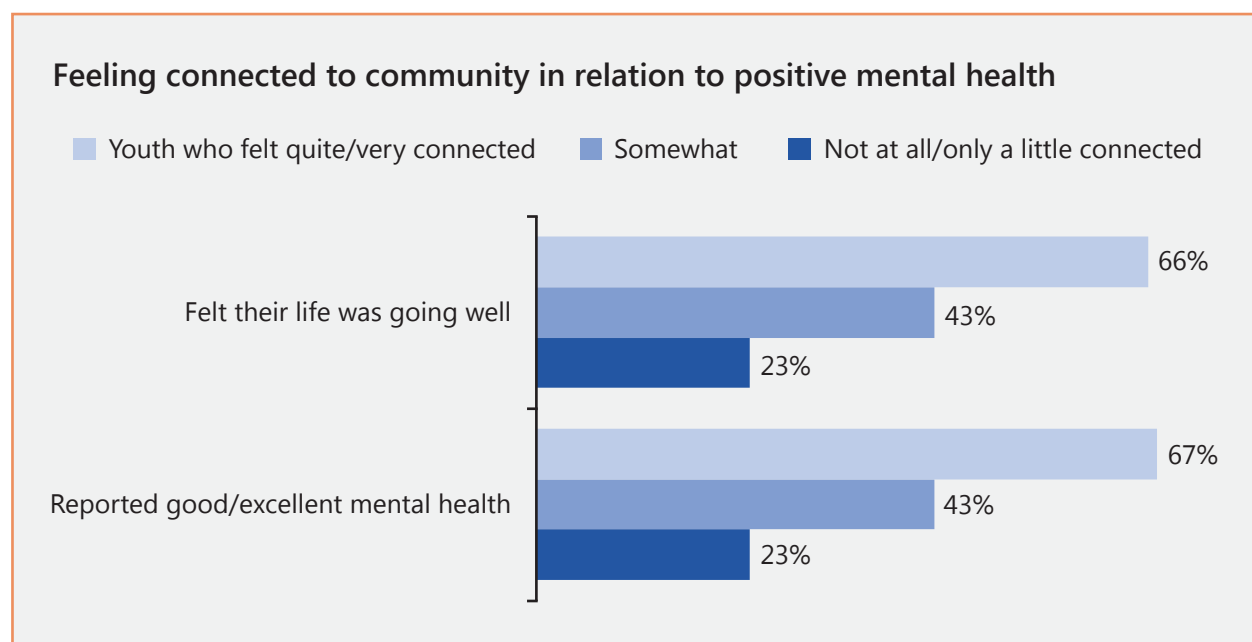


Note: Among youth with care experience who vaped.

■ Felt connected to the land or nature, and that they spent the right amount of time in nature (e.g., 43% of youth who felt connected to the land/nature reported feeling happy vs. 29% who did not feel connected).

■ Felt connected to their community.

■ Got eight or more hours of sleep the night before taking the survey. These youth were more likely to describe their mental health as good or excellent compared to youth who slept fewer hours (61% vs. 32%).



Note: Among youth with care experience who vaped.



CONCLUSION

Overall, the results showed that youth with care experience have a greater tendency to vape than youth without care experience. This can be for several reasons, such as youth in and from care experiencing trauma and stressful situations at higher rates than youth who have never been in care, which can take a toll on their mental health. Youth might vape and use other substances as a way to cope with the stress in their lives.

The results also showed that feeling supported and having healthy connections at home, school, and in the community can reduce the chances of youth vaping. These supports and connections can also help youth who have vaped to experience positive mental health and well-being.

YRA's recommendations based on the findings:

- *Adults who support youth in and from care should be informed about vaping, including the reasons youth might vape, and about how to talk with youth about vaping. Rather than lecturing to youth about the reasons they should not vape, and/or confiscating their vapes, adults should engage in non-judgmental conversations with youth. Adults should meet youth where they are at, and should support them to stop or reduce their vaping if they are ready to do so.*
- *Youth might vape or use other substances to manage their mental health challenges. More mental health supports should be available to youth with care experience, which might help to reduce rates of vaping and other substance use.*
- *Schools should be a place where youth with care experience feel accepted and connected. If schools focus on promoting protective factors—including fostering a sense of connection—as opposed to taking a punitive approach to vaping—youth are more likely to feel valued and a sense of belonging, which could lower their likelihood of vaping.*
- *Youth with care experience should have improved access to extracurricular activities and should be supported to take part in outdoor activities such as hiking (e.g., a hiking group). These activities are healthy alternatives to vaping, and give youth something to do in their free time. Taking part can help youth to feel connected, valued, and good about themselves.*

McCREARY RESOURCES

This report and other McCreary resources are available online (mcs.bc.ca) and in paper copy (mccreary@mcs.bc.ca)

Youth Research Academy reports

Clearing the Air: A youth-led research project about vaping was produced by YRA members and other young people during the Vaping Research Slam (a fast-paced weekend project), where they investigated vaping among BC youth. Download the full report at mcs.bc.ca/pdf/yrs_clearing_the_air.pdf or check out the infographic at mcs.bc.ca/pdf/yrs_clearing_the_air_poster.pdf.



Youth transitioning out of care in BC: A preliminary report shares the preliminary findings from the YRA's longitudinal study of youth aging out of care in BC. Download the report at mcs.bc.ca/pdf/youth_transitioning_out_of_care_preliminary_report.pdf.

Supports in the Spotlight was produced by the YRA using data from the 2013 and 2018 BC Adolescent Health Surveys (BC AHS) to identify protective factors that can support youth in and from government care to achieve positive health and well-being. Download the report at mcs.bc.ca/pdf/supports_in_the_spotlight.pdf.

BC AHS

Balance and Connection in BC: The health and well-being of our youth shares provincial findings of the 2018 BC AHS, which was completed by 38,015 Grade 7–12 students in schools across British Columbia. The report is available for download at mcs.bc.ca/pdf/balance_and_connection.pdf.

Balance and Connection in BC Next Steps Workshop Toolkit provides a workshop template to share findings from the 2018 BC AHS with youth. It includes an introduction to the results, activities to learn about risk and protective factors, and discussion questions to explore youth health in youth's school or community. An accompanying PowerPoint is also available. The toolkit and PowerPoint is available at mcs.bc.ca/next_steps. McCreary staff are also available to deliver the curriculum through interactive online or in-person workshops.

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.

YOUTH RESOURCES

Reliable information on vaping

QuitNow is a BC-based service for those looking to reduce or quit tobacco and e-cigarette use. It is funded by the government of British Columbia and delivered by the BC Lung Association. The service is available free-of-charge to all BC residents at quitnow.ca. Specific pages on vaping are available at quitnow.ca/quitting/thinking-about-quitting/learn-about-vaping and quitnow.ca/quitting/preparing-quit/tips-quit-vaping.

HealthLink BC has a number of resources for people wanting to quit nicotine-related products at healthlinkbc.ca. For information about vaping, visit healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/vaping.

BC Lung Association provides information on vaping, visit bc.lung.ca/how-we-can-help/vaping.

Get involved

Youth Research Academy

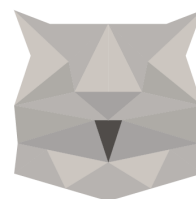
Youth aged 16–24 with care experience are welcome to apply to join the YRA. No previous experience in research is necessary. Youth must live in BC and be able to work in Canada to be eligible for this position. For more details, visit mcs.bc.ca/youth_research_academy.

Youth transitioning out of care study

The Youth Research Academy is surveying BC youth aged 18 to 20 who are either currently in government care (or an alternatives to government care such as on a Youth Agreement) or have aged out within the past year.

The survey takes about 20 minutes to complete, and youth receive a \$20 e-gift card for completing the survey. Youth who complete the survey have the option to complete further surveys about every six months after that and receive a \$20 e-gift card for each time point completed. Participation in the study is anonymous and confidential.

For more information of to fill out a survey, visit mcs.bc.ca/youth_transitioning_out_of_care_study.



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