

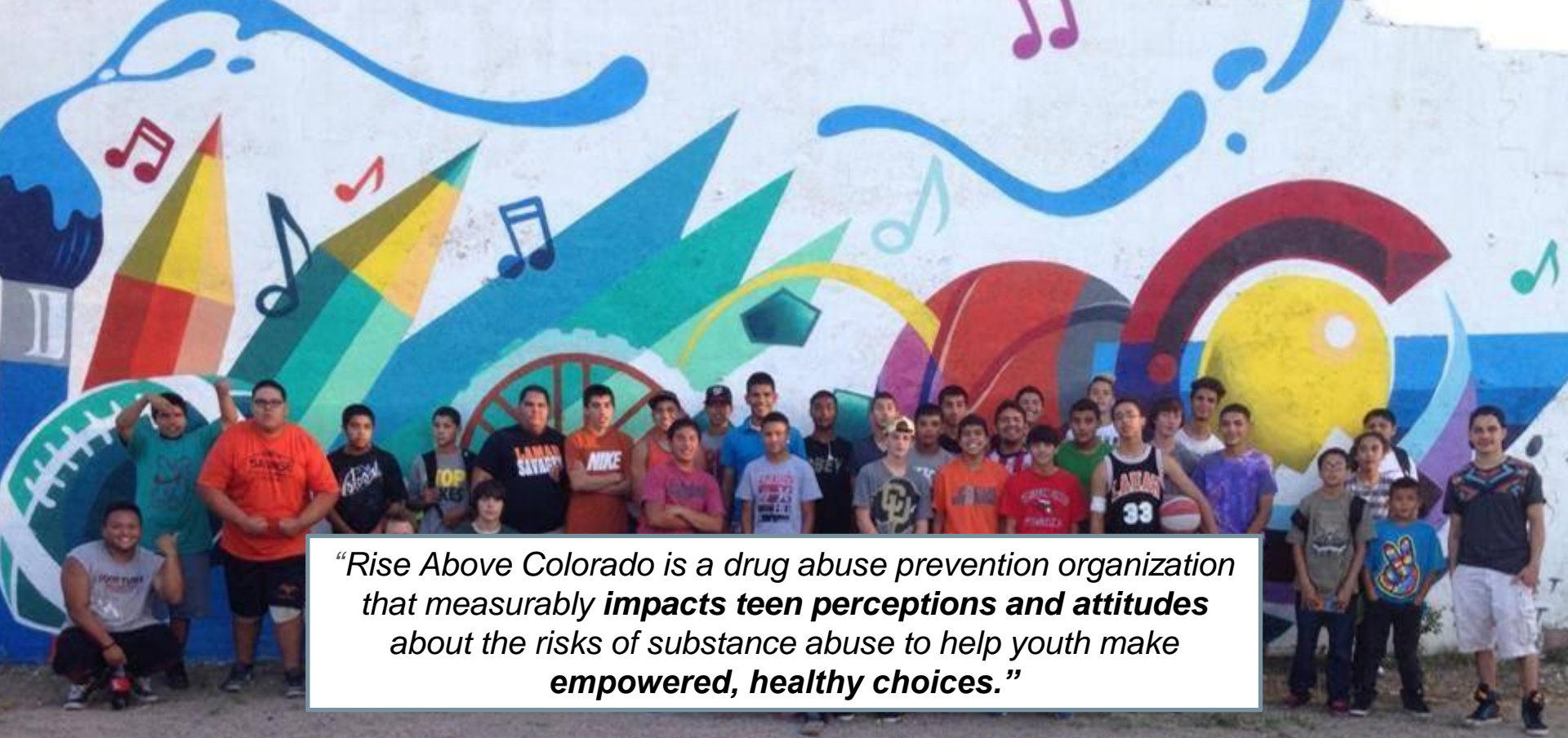
# CLOSING THE



# GAP

ALIGNING PERCEPTION WITH REALITY





*“Rise Above Colorado is a drug abuse prevention organization that measurably **impacts teen perceptions and attitudes** about the risks of substance abuse to help youth make **empowered, healthy choices.**”*

# Objectives

- Review the data and facts describing teen substance misuse
- Explain how perceptions shape our behaviors
- Build critical thinking skills for interpreting the world around us with an open mind
- Discuss hopes and concerns around Colorado teen substance misuse
- Plan ways to correct misperceptions and rise above substance misuse

## REPRESENTATION OF ACTUAL USE

Colorado's total population of high school aged youth (15–17) is the equivalent of **11 Pepsi Centers** filled to capacity:



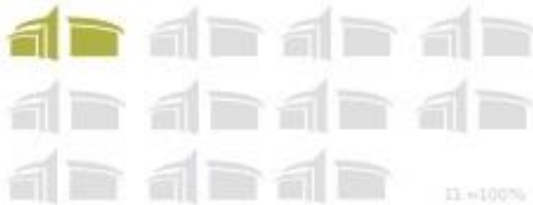
### RECENT ALCOHOL USE

 **14% ≈ 28,000**



### RECENT MARIJUANA USE

 **9% ≈ 18,000**



### RECENT PRESCRIPTION DRUG USE

 **1% ≈ 2,000**



**safe2tell<sup>TM</sup>**  
**Colorado**

Anonymously Report Safety Concerns:

WEB: [safe2tellco.org](http://safe2tellco.org)

APP:  

CALL: 1-877-542-7233

## GET HELP 24/7:



**TrevorText**

Text START to 678678



**TrevorChat**

[TrevorChat.org](http://TrevorChat.org)



**TrevorLifeline**

866.488.7386

THE **TREVOR** PROJECT  
Saving Young LGBTQ Lives

# EVERYTHING IS EASIER when I'm numb

Sometimes dependence lies just below the surface.

You're not alone.

Text **TALK** to **38255**

A personal, confidential text support line



1-800-COLORADO  
Department of Human Services

[BelowtheSurfaceCD.com](http://BelowtheSurfaceCD.com)



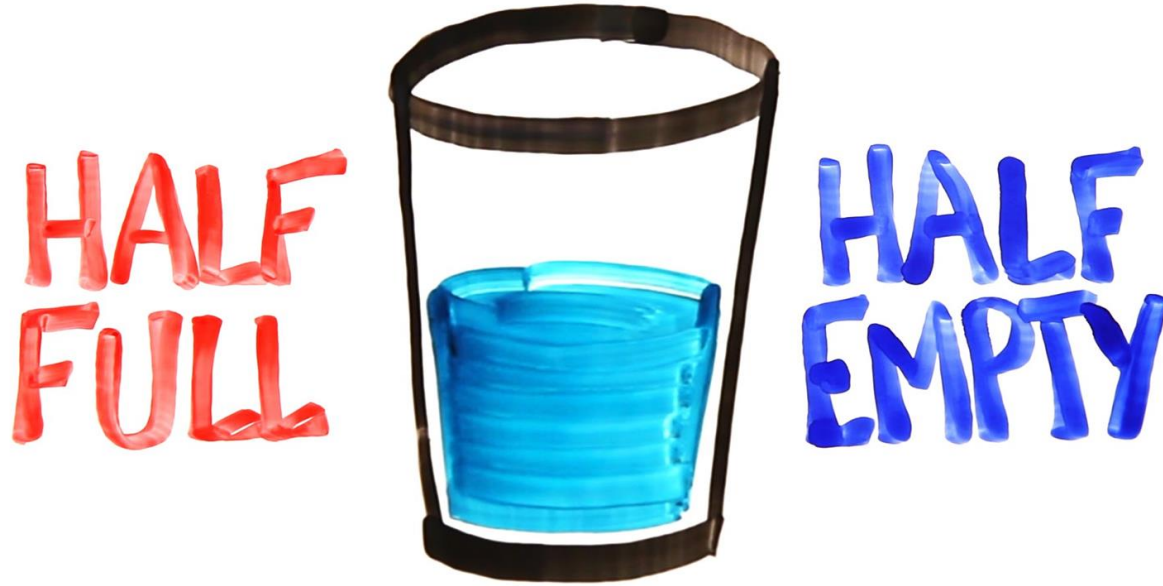




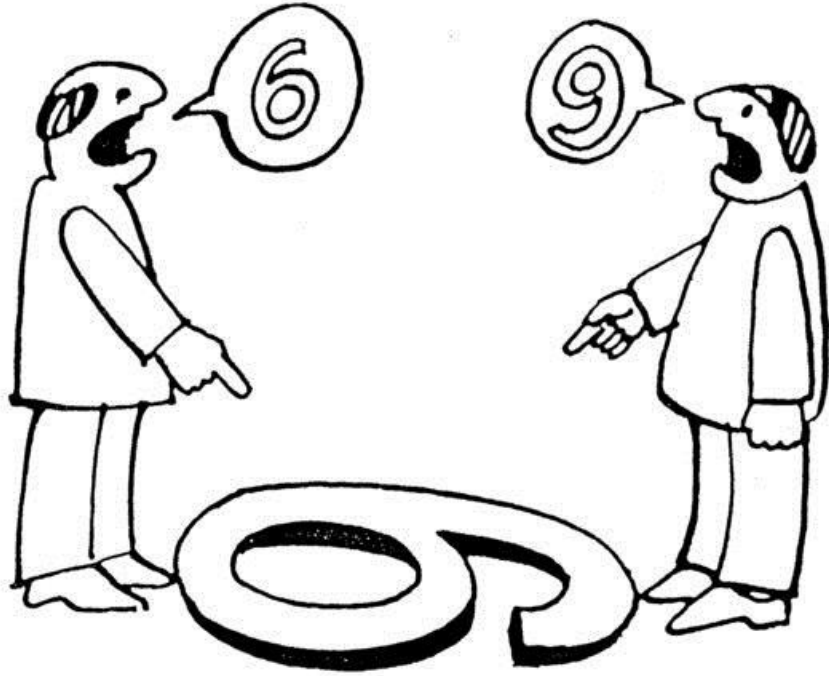


*How do you define  
**PERCEPTION?***

*Where do our perceptions come from?*



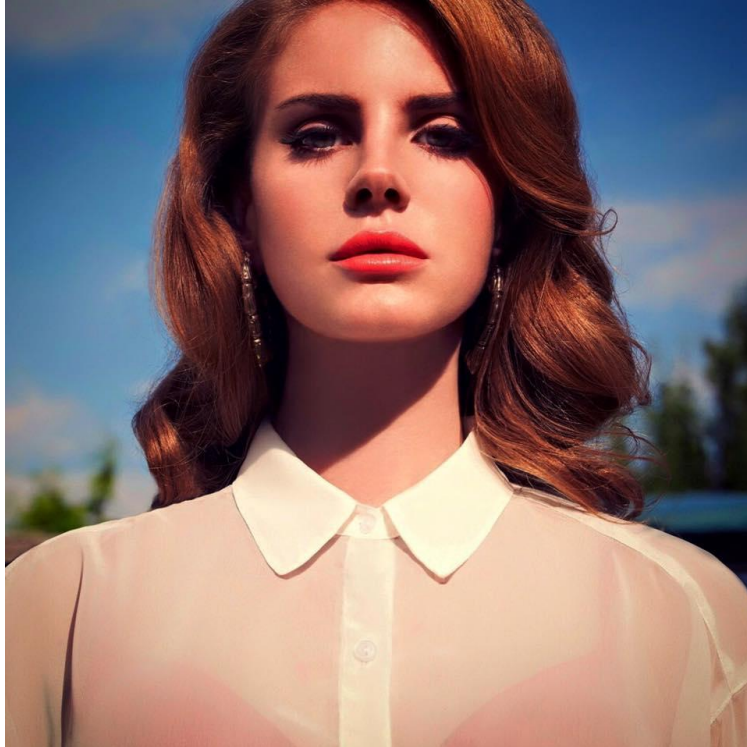




*Does this mean  
that the **FACTS**  
are different for  
each of us?*



# Perception is *NOT* always reality.





Social Media is *NOT* always reality

**MAY YOUR LIFE  
BE AS AWESOME AS  
YOU PRETEND IT IS  
ON INSTAGRAM**

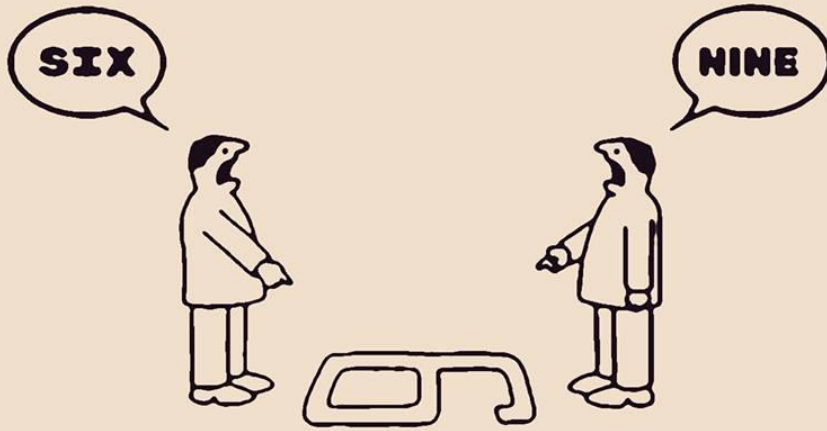
# Social Media is *NOT* always reality





Why is it important to have an accurate perception  
of the world around us?





~~Just because you are right,  
does not mean, I am wrong.~~

But one of those people is wrong, someone painted a six or a nine, they need to back up and orient themselves, see if there are any other numbers to align with. Maybe there's a driveway or a building to face, or they can ask someone who actually knows.

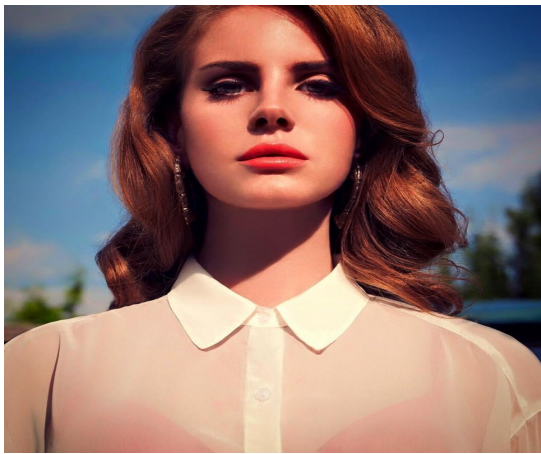
Use DATA and FACTS  
to understand reality.



*Observation* First.

*Question* Next.

*Interpretation* Last.





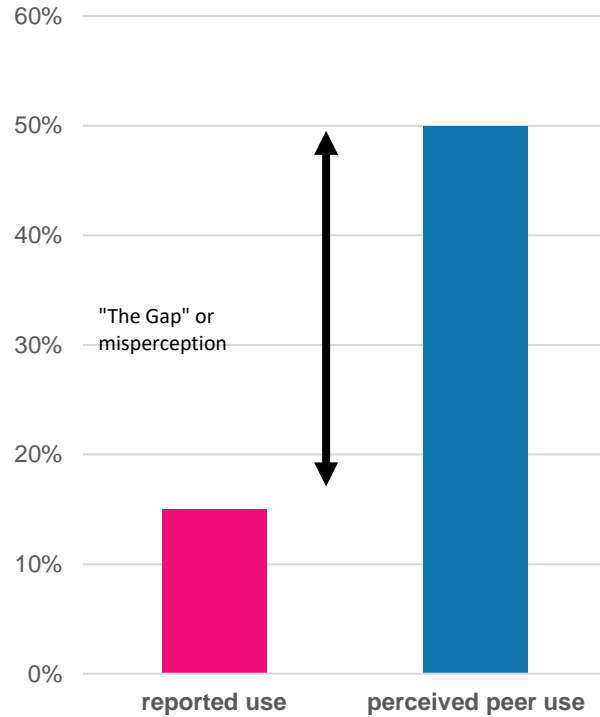


# What is RACYS?

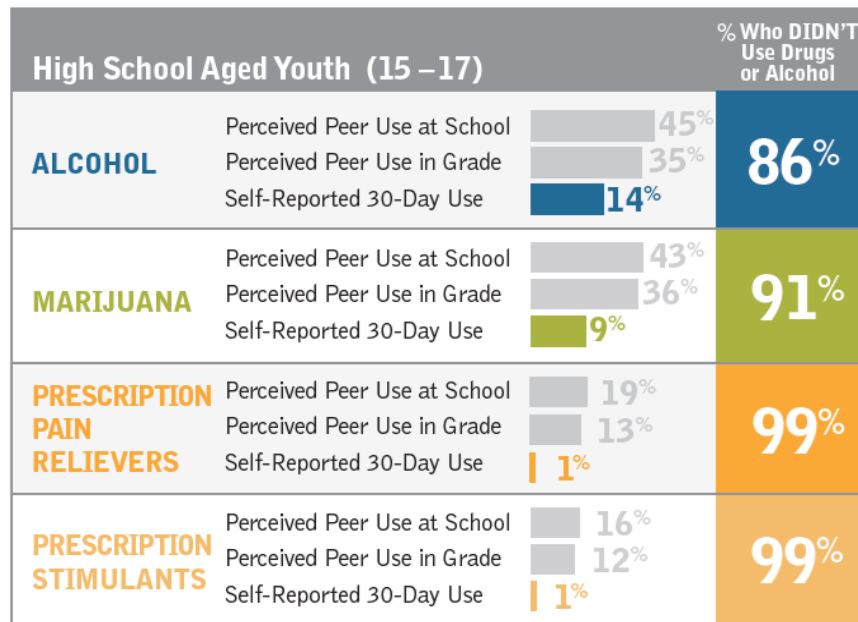
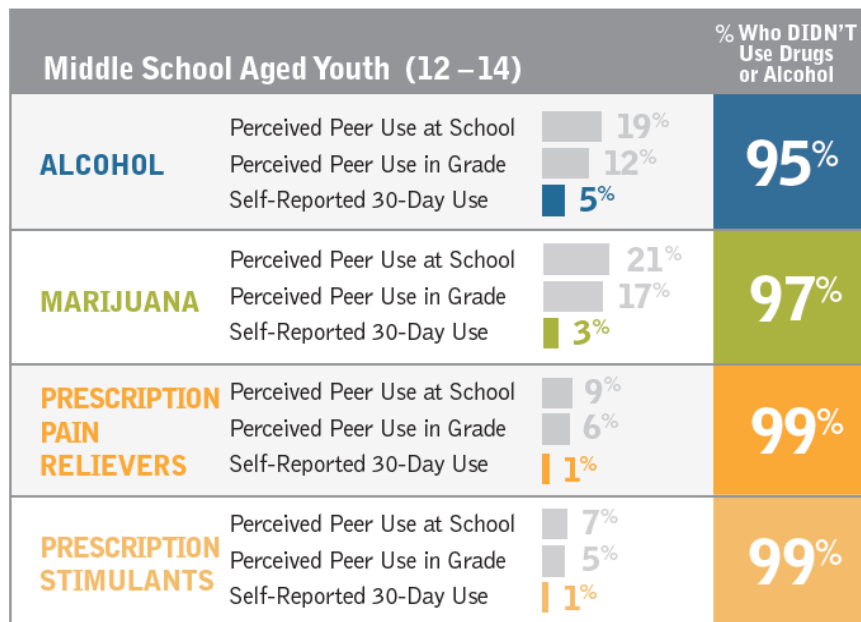




# Perception, Reality, & Behavior



## SUBSTANCE USE: PERCEPTION VS. REALITY 2018



## High School Aged Youth (15 – 17)

% Who DIDN'T  
Use Drugs  
or Alcohol

### MARIJUANA

Perceived Peer Use at School




Perceived Peer Use in Grade



Self-Reported 30-Day Use



91%



What factors  
contribute to teens  
misusing substances?



Family history of addiction

Environment

Media

Poor mental health



Trusted adults

Positive peers

Future goals

Hobbies and passions

Community connections

Stress management skills



## MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCES

Youth reporting **6 or more difficult mental health days in a month** are significantly **more likely to have tried alcohol, marijuana and prescription pain relievers** than those who have no difficult mental health days:



**1** in **4** Youth

said they had **6 or more difficult mental health days** in the last month.

↑ Denotes Statistically Significant Difference

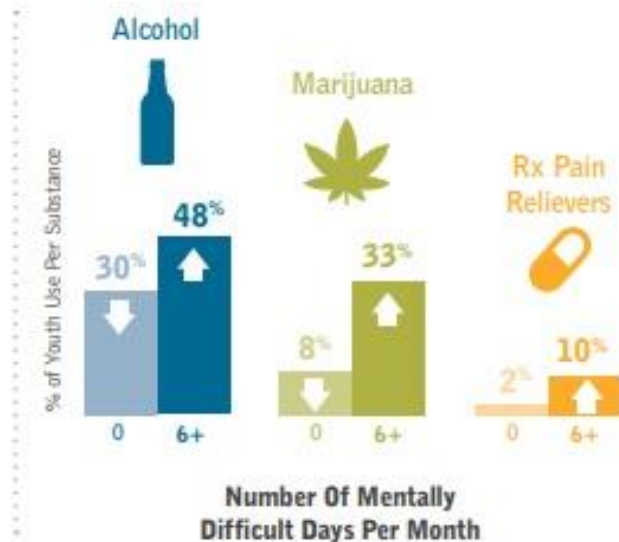
\*QUESTION WORDING CHANGED SLIGHTLY IN 2018 TO DEFINE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AS "AT LEAST ONE DRINK RATHER THAN JUST A FEW SIPS."



Youth who reported experiencing

**6 or more**

**difficult mental health days in a month** are significantly more likely to have tried **alcohol, marijuana and prescription pain relievers**.



SURVEY DATA FROM 2018 RACYS RESULTS

What concerns do you have after reviewing this data? What makes you hopeful?

Why do you think misperceptions around teen substance misuse tend to grow with age?

What information do teens typically use to form their perceptions and opinions? How can we use “*Observe, Question, Interpret*” to avoid forming misperceptions?

Looking at the factors that protect young people from substance misuse, which do you believe have the most potential for making positive change in your community?

***What are actions YOU can take  
to change the misperceptions  
among your friends,  
schoolmates, family and  
community?***

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BELOW THE SURFACE

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Check out youth resources & campaign updates: [www.IRiseAboveCO.org](http://www.IRiseAboveCO.org)

Share your story and/or highlight positivity from your community:  
[www.iriseaboveco.org/submit-your-story](http://www.iriseaboveco.org/submit-your-story)

Connect with Rise Above Colorado on social media: **#IRiseAbove**

