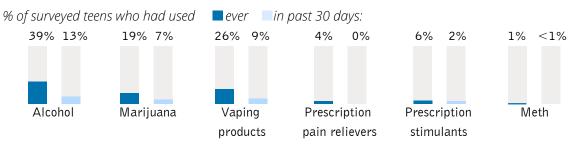
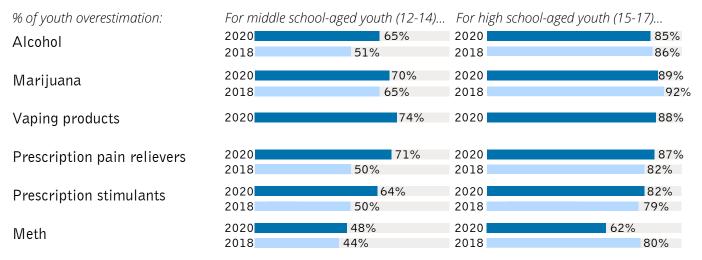
RISE ABOVE COLORADO YOUTH SURVEY

Substance use among Colorado youth remained steady in the last 2 years, although many risk factors are beginning to show cause for concern and attention. Youth report increased acceptability of using substances as a means to cope with stress. Even though most youth perceive that their peers are using substances, the hopeful reality is that the vast majority are not.



Overestimations of peer use of substances is increasing.



Youth are also reporting that most substances are becoming easier to access, and their curiosity to try various substances has either stayed the same or increased.



One in 3 youth who have not used marijuana are at least "somewhat curious" to try it, an increase of more than 50% since 2018.

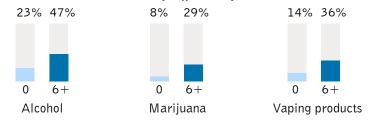
One in three youth report having 6 or more difficult mental health days in a month.

These youth are also significantly



more likely to have used alcohol, marijuana, and vaping products.

% who used based on mentally difficult days last month:





Youth Identifying as LGBQ are Faring Worse

The environments in which young people grow up can shape their paths as well as their health outcomes. Young people of color, those whose sexual orientation is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning (LGBQ), and those who belong to multiple marginalized groups, are experiencing worse outcomes related to substance use. These outcomes occur because of inequitable access to resources, opportunities, a safe school environment, and trusted relationships, all of which protect our health and opportunities to thrive. The following data illustrate some examples of these inequities.

One in 3 (31%) youth identifying as LGBQ experience 14+ mentally challenging days per month

compared to 12% of youth identifying as heterosexual

8 out of 10 (79%) youth identifying as LGBQ live with someone who has been depressed or had mental health problems compared to 4 out of 10 youth identifying as heterosexual

Fewer than half (47%) of youth identifying as LGBQ feel they belong at their school compared to 71% of youth identifying as heterosexual

Over 6 out of 10 (65% and 61%, respectively) youth identifying as LGBQ have been offered alcohol and marijuana

compared to 5 out of 10 (51% and 49%) youth identifying as heterosexual

Weighing Hope and Concern about Vaping



More than 7 out of 10 youth have never used a vaping product (73%).

In fact, 9 out of 10 (91%) youth have not vaped in the last month.

6 in 10 youth see vaping even once or twice as risky and more than 8 in 10 think it is at least somewhat wrong for someone their age.

Nearly 9 out of 10 youth report getting information about the risks of vaping in their school or community. Two out of three youth have had a conversation with a parent about vaping.

Youth who have vaped perceive the risks of substance use to be much lower.

More than 7 out of 10 (74%) have used vape pods or packs like JUUL and almost 4 out of 10 (38%) have used marijuana or THC oil in their device.

Youth who have vaped use all other substances at significantly higher rates.

They report easier access to substances than those who have never vaped. Youth who have vaped have also used alcohol at nearly 4 times the average rate (86% vs 23%) and marijuana at 15 times the average rate (62% vs 4%).



The Rise Above Colorado Youth Survey (RACYS) is a data source for behavioral health and substance use attitudes and behaviors among Colorado youth ages 12–17. With funding support from the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention and the Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health, the 2020 data of more than 600 youth is based on a representative sample of the entire state. For more information and complete survey data, visit www.riseaboveco.org.