



# Rise Above Colorado Youth Survey

Behavioral Health & Substance Use

October 2024



**COLORADO**  
Department of Public  
Health & Environment



# THOUGHTS FOR CONSIDERATION

## **Looking Back to the COVID-19 Pandemic:**

As we emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic two years ago, we speculated on what the 2022 Rise Above Colorado Youth Survey (RACYS) data might reveal. It was difficult not to imagine that we would see significant deviations from the past, and these expectations were indeed confirmed. The 2022 survey results revealed that Colorado's youth were viewing substance use as less risky, were more likely to have tried certain substances, and of those who had not tried them, were increasingly curious to do so in the future. Few would argue that youth have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and we could clearly see a facet of that in the 2022 data.

As we approached the 2024 survey, our expectations of what this year's data would bring forth were less certain. We wondered if the more relaxed attitudes toward substance use observed in 2022 would hold or even escalate? Or if they would instead return to the levels we saw pre-pandemic? And we also wondered, even with the pandemic now largely in our collective rearview mirrors, if new challenges might fill COVID's void—growing concerns about climate change, political unrest and increasing incidents of school violence, much of which is being exacerbated by the pervasive and strengthening influence of social media?

## **Emerging Substance Use Concerns:**

As we thought about changes to make to the 2024 survey, one thing we knew for certain: we needed to address awareness, knowledge and usage of fentanyl, particularly its unintended use through fentanyl-laced substances. In addition, vaping, despite the removal of JUUL products from the U.S. retail environment in 2022, persists, prompting a fresh series of questions focused on vaping attitudes and behaviors.

## **Findings from the 2024 Survey:**

What we learned from the 2024 survey was that the shifts we saw in 2022 were holding if not continuing, with 2024 results resembling those from 2022 much more than those from 2020.

But to suggest that the 2024 results are merely a continuation of 2022 with a small multiplier effect would overlook an important nuance: many of the increases observed in this year's aggregate scores, even if small, are often attributable to a specific demographic group—the youngest of those surveyed, Colorado youth who are 12-13 years of age. The responses of these youngest survey participants are increasingly mirroring those of their older peers, and not just 14-15-year-olds but even 16-17-year-olds.

# THOUGHTS FOR CONSIDERATION

## **Impact of Social Media:**

While this study is not designed to draw causal conclusions, one underlying variable which correlates with this flattening of scores across age groups is that of social media. In prior years, social media usage tended to increase with teens' age, whereas today usage is becoming much more uniform across all age groups.

## **Impact of Geography:**

Additionally, geography appears to be playing a role: teens who live in urban areas of the state (i.e., the Front Range and especially Denver/Boulder) seem to be facing more stressful life circumstances, reflected in poorer self-reported mental health, poorer sleep habits, and weaker social connections than teens who live in more rural parts of the state. This higher degree of stress in turn appears to relate to more relaxed attitudes and behaviors surrounding substance use, where substance use may sometimes be viewed as a solution rather than a problem.

## **Underlying Hypotheses:**

Beneath these findings lies a hypothesis: the data suggest Colorado youth may be becoming more self-reliant and less dependent on others, demonstrating a growing comfort in navigating their newfound challenges independently. This hypothesis is based on teens feeling less supported by their friends and adults (including parents) and yet feeling surprisingly comfortable with this. The ease of accessing information online, not just through traditional search engines like Google but also through AI, may partially explain this trend. If this hypothesis holds true, it could indicate the need to consider how we approach youth engagement in the future.

## **Conclusion:**

Effectively communicating the risks of substance use, especially given the pervasiveness of fentanyl in so many substances, will require messaging that resonates with how Colorado youth perceive and interact with their world. We hope that these research insights stimulate further inquiry and inspire new strategies for Rise Above Colorado and its partner agencies to serve as trusted sources of information during these times.

# STUDY BACKGROUND

This represents the ninth statewide assessment, with previous surveys being conducted in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016, 2018, 2020 and 2022.



Rise Above Colorado commissioned this 2024 assessment among Colorado's teenagers by HealthCare Research, Inc. with funding support from the following entities:

- The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Prevention Services Division (PSD), improves the health, well-being, and equity of all Coloradans through health promotion, prevention, and ensuring access to health care.
  - Community Prevention and Early Intervention (CPEI) unit helps Colorado communities develop and use tools they need to prevent substance use. CPEI administers a portion of the federal grant from the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services (SUPTRS) Block Grant for primary prevention.
  - The Tobacco Education, Prevention, and Cessation Grant Program provides funding for community-based and statewide tobacco education programs designed to reduce the initiation of tobacco use by children and youth, promote cessation of tobacco use among youth and adults, and reduce exposure to secondhand smoke.
- The Office of the Attorney General in the Colorado Department of Law. The Colorado Department of Law is making significant progress in tackling the opioid crisis through legal efforts and the state is on track to receive more than \$787 million in opioid settlement funds. Under the department's leadership, a nationally recognized joint framework has been established to ensure these funds are distributed effectively statewide, with 90% allocated directly to local regions and governments, where they can have the greatest impact.

# SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The survey instrument for the Rise Above Colorado Youth Survey continues to evolve in accordance with the substances of interest each year. In the 2022 survey, an increased focus was made on understanding attitudes and use of prescription drugs, asking specifically about stimulants, pain relievers and anti-anxiety medications (rather than “prescription drugs” in general as has been done in previous years). For the 2024 survey, additional questions were added regarding fentanyl as well as vaping. To make room for these new questions, some less-relevant content was removed, most of which surrounded the following substances: cocaine, heroin and methamphetamines.

Data were gathered between March 4th and May 31, 2024. Data collection employed online research panels and social media outreach. To qualify, teenagers had to meet the following criteria :

- ✓ Must reside in the state of Colorado
- ✓ Must be between 12 and 17 years of age
- ✓ Must be enrolled in grades seven through twelve, or have dropped out of school

The questionnaire consists of 120 questions. The survey instrument utilized skip logic to present respondents with questions that are relevant to them, based upon their previous answers in the survey. The questionnaire was available in both English and Spanish and took an average of 10 minutes to complete.

Respondents were allowed to indicate when they do not know the answer to a particular question or to not respond if they were uncomfortable providing an answer. For the purposes of this report, those individuals who did not respond, or said “Don’t know” were excluded on a question-by-question basis. Due to both skip logic and these missing-value exclusions, the sample sizes vary for each question, which is noted on each slide of the report.

The maximum margin of sampling error on a sample size of 885 interviews is +/- 3.6 percentage points.

# STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE & INFERENCE

This analysis makes use of statistical procedures, notation and terminology which are important to understand.

## Statistical Inference

As a statewide survey, the statistics presented in this report regarding Colorado youth are intended to be inferential in nature, meaning they are meant to be projectable to the larger population of Colorado's teens. However, we must recognize that survey results are not always representative, as those who chose to participate may be substantively different from those who did not. Furthermore, the subject matter of this study, asking teens about their awareness, use and curiosity to try illicit substances also lends to potentially under- or over-stated responses. However, as a tracking study, the biases in the data are likely similar year to year, allowing us to focus on trends more than absolutes.

While participants are often referred to as "teens" in this report, it is important to keep in mind that these results do not necessarily represent all Colorado teens.

## Statistical Significance Testing

Differences between groups such as by age or gender or region are evaluated to see if the difference is meaningful from a statistical perspective. Statistical tests (typically t-tests of proportions and means) are used throughout the analysis to indicate which results are most likely to represent real differences in the data (as opposed to differences which fall within the margin of sampling error).

Significance testing is performed only when sample sizes are greater than or equal to 30. The level of confidence used for all statistical significance testing in this document is 95%.

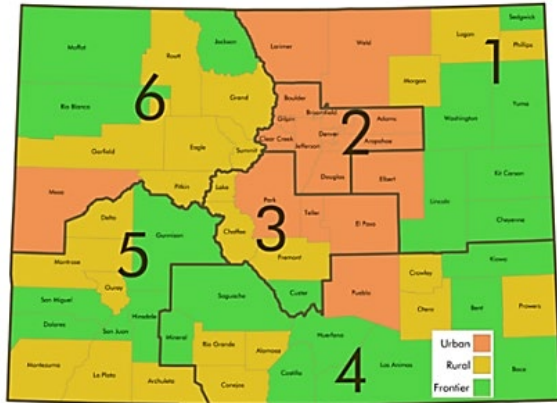
When a difference from 2022 to 2024 is found to be statistically significant, it is notated by an arrow (↑)

When a difference from 2020 to 2024 is found to be statistically significant, it is notated by an arrow within a circle (⬆)

When a difference in a table is statistically significant, this is indicated by either a shaded cell or an arrow

# OBH REGION MAP

This report looks at survey results by six geographic regions across the State of Colorado:



- 1 Northeast
- 2 Denver/Boulder MSA
- 3 Central
- 4 Southeast
- 5 Southwest
- 6 Northwest

In addition, data collection was supplemented to have at least 30 completed surveys for each of the 11 areas listed below. Those marked as “PCN Cohort” are part of the Positive Community Norm counties, representing areas of the state when extra efforts were made by Rise Above Colorado and partner organizations to reach out to Colorado youth about substance use:

Oversampled Counties	PCN Cohort?	Sample Size
1 Broomfield	Yes	40
2 Clear Creek	Yes	31
3 Denver	Yes	191
4 El Paso	No	116
5 Jefferson	Yes	62
6 La Plata	Yes	35
7 Larimer	No	38
8 Rural Northeast	No	40
9 Moffat/Routt	Yes	35
10 Prowers	Yes	30
11 Western Colorado	No	30

# PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Participant demographics aligned closely with prior years, with the only statistically significant change being among 13-year-olds, at 13% this year versus 17% in the past. Younger participants are increasingly difficult to survey, especially through social media efforts. However, this year's sample size is the largest to date at 885 interviews, giving us 115 13-year-old participants in this year's survey data, which compares similarly to 122 surveys in 2022 and 111 in 2020. Data are weighted by age, gender, race/ethnicity and region to hold the representation of each of these characteristics stable from year-to-year.

	2024	2022	2020	2018	2016
Base	885	718	653	604	607
Age 12	5%	4%	7%	8%	8%
Age 13	13%↓	17%	17%	17%	17%
Age 14	19%	18%	16%	15%	15%
Age 15	22%	19%	17%	17%	17%
Age 16	21%	24%	22%	22%	22%
Age 17	21%	19%	21%	21%	21%
Female	47%	50%	48%	51%	48%
Male	51%	47%	52%	49%	52%
Nonbinary/Gender Fluid	1%	3%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Heterosexual	86%	82%	78%	82%	85%
LGBQ	13%	17%	15%	14%	8%
Prefer not to answer	1%	1%	7%	4%	7%

	2024	2022	2020	2018	2016
White	67%	71%	67%	68%	73%
Hispanic/Latinx	18%	20%	22%	24%	20%
Black/African American	10%	8%	5%	4%	4%
Asian/Asian American	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%
Native American	5%	3%	2%	2%	1%
Other/Refused	2%	3%	6%	1%	1%
Denver/Boulder MSA	52%	52%	55%	55%	55%
Central	14%	15%	16%	16%	16%
Northeast	14%	17%	14%	13%	13%
Northwest	7%	6%	7%	7%	7%
Southeast	8%	6%	5%	6%	6%
Southwest	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%



# MENTAL & PHYSICAL WELLBEING

- 
- ▶ MENTAL HEALTH
  - ▶ PERSONAL SAFETY
  - ▶ FEELING CONNECTED

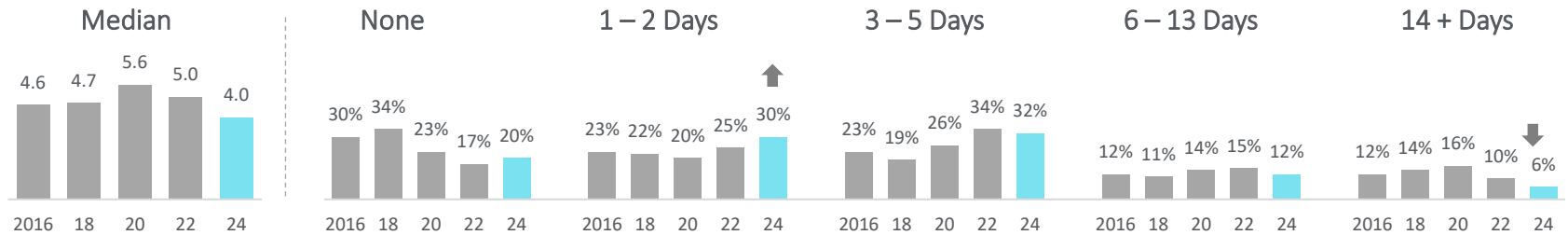


# MENTAL HEALTH

Substance use is often found to be associated with mental health. For Colorado’s youth, self-reported mental health improved in 2024, with fewer teens saying they have experienced as many poor mental health days this year than any other time since this question was introduced to the survey in 2016.

- 2020 recorded the highest number of poor mental health days at a median of 5.6 days/month. Data collection for the 2020 survey occurred largely during the month of March when COVID-19 was declared a federal emergency, a time of significant concern and uncertainty about the future.
- In 2022, fears of the pandemic were beginning to subside, and the median number of poor mental health days also saw a slight decline, from 5.6 to 5.0 days, although still the second-highest number since 2016.
- The fewest poor mental health days was recorded this year, which declined to a median of 4.0 days/month, the lowest on record.

“During the past 30 days, how many days would you say your mental health was not good? Poor mental health includes anxiety, stress, depression, and problems with emotions.”



Percentage Base: All Respondents, excluding “Don’t Know” responses

# MENTAL HEALTH

Few statistically significant changes are seen demographically between 2022 and 2024 in terms of the number of poor mental health days teens experienced. One of the largest shifts is among females who are reporting fewer poor mental health days, from 35% saying they had six or more days of poor mental health per month in 2020, which declined to 31% in 2022 and 20% in 2024. However, in every one of the last three survey periods, males have been more likely than females to experience zero poor mental health days per month and those who identify as heterosexual have fewer poor mental health days than those who identify as LGBQ in every one of the last three survey periods. The fewest poor mental health days tend to come from teens living in rural areas of the state.

	Age 12-13			Age 14-15			Age 16-17			D/B			Central			Northeast			Northwest			Southeast			Southwest			PCN Cohort				
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022
<i>sample size</i>	135	108	151	238	412	350	280	197	349	344	284	443	100	110	119	112	63	119	38	74	58	35	108	68	24	78	43	n/a	236	418		
<b>Number of Poor Mental Health Days</b>																																
0 days	35%	16%	20%	22%	22%	18%	18%	13%	21%	22%	13%	16%	25%	22%	16%	31%	11%	21%	12%	26%	21%	27%	39%	27%	28%	35%	60%	n/a	15%	22%		
1-2 days	22%	26%	37%	23%	27%	28%	17%	23%	29%	21%	30%	30%	24%	18%	29%	20%	21%	28%	15%	19%	41%	9%	12%	28%	18%	21%	27%	n/a	32%	28%		
3-5 days	26%	40%	31%	26%	34%	36%	27%	32%	29%	24%	32%	33%	26%	36%	37%	28%	39%	33%	37%	35%	31%	36%	31%	28%	23%	31%	8%	n/a	32%	32%		
6-13 days	5%	12%	8%	14%	14%	12%	20%	17%	14%	16%	13%	14%	11%	13%	9%	11%	23%	13%	18%	18%	2%	7%	17%	14%	10%	8%	0%	n/a	9%	12%		
14 or more days	12%	7%	4%	15%	4%	7%	18%	16%	7%	17%	12%	6%	14%	12%	10%	10%	6%	5%	18%	3%	5%	21%	2%	3%	21%	5%	4%	n/a	12%	5%		
Median	4.0	4.4	3.3	5.4	3.8	4.3	6.5	6.1	4.2	5.9	5.1	4.2	5.0	5.1	4.6	4.3	5.1	3.9	6.7	3.9	2.9	6.0	3.4	3.4	5.9	3.2	1.4		4.8	3.7		
	Female			Male			Heterosexual			LGBQ			Caucasian			Hispanic			<\$50k			\$50-74k			\$75-99k			\$100k+				
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022
<i>sample size</i>	350	361	397	294	332	438	494	586	746	134	119	95	445	507	575	135	141	148	122	112	124	275	254	368	138	182	260	108	139	98		
<b>Number of Poor Mental Health Days</b>																																
0 days	17%	12%	13%	31%	22%	28%	27%	19%	21%	11%	2%	6%	21%	18%	21%	29%	9%	20%	30%	18%	19%	21%	17%	23%	29%	16%	19%	18%	13%	10%		
1-2 days	23%	19%	32%	16%	32%	29%	22%	26%	32%	10%	17%	18%	20%	24%	30%	18%	28%	31%	14%	23%	28%	21%	25%	28%	18%	24%	31%	28%	29%	39%		
3-5 days	26%	38%	35%	27%	33%	30%	28%	37%	32%	23%	21%	36%	29%	29%	31%	22%	39%	27%	22%	37%	34%	28%	35%	35%	27%	39%	28%	29%	22%	30%		
6-13 days	16%	19%	13%	12%	8%	10%	12%	12%	11%	26%	30%	20%	16%	17%	12%	11%	18%	14%	15%	19%	11%	16%	13%	11%	12%	14%	13%	11%	19%	13%		
14 or more days	19%	12%	7%	12%	5%	4%	12%	6%	4%	31%	31%	20%	15%	12%	7%	19%	7%	8%	20%	4%	7%	15%	10%	4%	15%	7%	9%	14%	17%	8%		
Median	6.3	5.8	4.4	4.6	3.5	3.3	4.8	4.1	3.5	9.1	9.5	7.2	5.7	5.3	4.1	5.6	5.0	4.3	6.1	4.4	4.1	5.7	4.8	3.6	5.2	4.5	4.4	5.1	6.2	4.5		

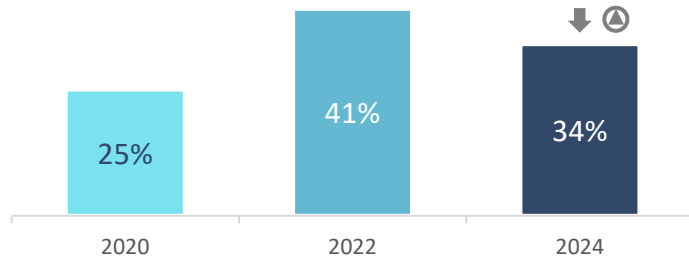
Shading indicates significantly higher/lower ratings from the prior survey period at the 95% level of confidence.

# PERSONAL SAFETY

Teens are asked about their sense of personal safety from the perspective of living with someone who has either a substance use disorder/addiction or a mental health problem such as depression.

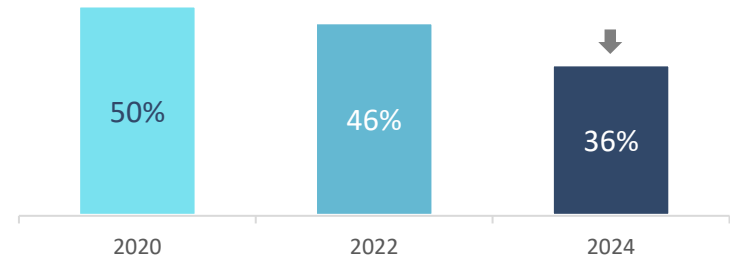
The percentage of teens saying they have lived with someone who has a substance use disorder increased dramatically between 2020 and 2022, from 25% to 41%. This year shows a significant decline to 34%, although still significantly higher than when first asked in 2020.

“Have you lived with someone with a substance use disorder or addiction (alcohol or other drugs)?”



The percentage of youth who say they live with a household member who is depressed or suffering from other mental health problems has declined to its lowest point since we began asking this question, currently at 36% versus 50% in 2020.

“Do you have a member of your household who has been depressed or has other mental health problems?”



# PERSONAL SAFETY

Few statistically significant changes are seen among teens who say they live with someone who has a substance use disorder. Statistically significant declines are seen among females (-10 points), those who identify as heterosexual (-6 points), Hispanic (-14 points) and those with incomes between \$50-74k (-11 points). While all of these groups posted significant declines since 2022, current scores are still above what was reported in 2020.

Significantly fewer older teens (16-17 years of age) report living with someone who is depressed or has mental health problems (-14), as well as those living in Northwest Colorado (-29), females (-12), those who identify as heterosexual (-8), those who identify as LGBQ (-16), Caucasian (-13) and those with household incomes between \$50-74k (-18).

	Age 12-13			Age 14-15			Age 16-17			D/B			Central			Northeast			Northwest			Southeast			Southwest			PCN Cohort		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	135	108	148	238	412	344	280	197	345	344	284	441	100	110	118	112	63	119	38	74	61	35	108	70	24	78	43	236	420	
<b>Personal Safety (% Yes)</b>																														
Lived with someone with a substance use disorder or addiction	20%	40%	30%	26%	40%	35%	28%	43%	36%	21%	39%	33%	28%	42%	30%	29%	51%	36%	24%	47%	39%	62%	36%	43%	20%	30%	39%	n/a	42%	37%
Household member depressed or mental health problems	40%	41%	35%	53%	42%	36%	53%	51%	37%	51%	43%	35%	51%	47%	40%	38%	45%	34%	53%	61%	32%	61%	56%	43%	52%	38%	41%	n/a	44%	35%

	Female			Male			Heterosexual			LGBQ			Caucasian			Hispanic			<\$50k			\$50-74k			\$75-99k			\$100k+		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	350	361	394	294	332	429	494	586	720	134	119	97	445	507	559	135	141	149	122	112	127	275	254	370	138	182	254	108	139	98
<b>Personal Safety (% Yes)</b>																														
Lived with someone with a substance use disorder or addiction	22%	47%	36%	29%	34%	32%	23%	38%	32%	36%	57%	49%	24%	36%	34%	33%	50%	36%	35%	45%	45%	24%	45%	34%	25%	41%	35%	16%	26%	25%
Household member depressed or mental health problems	55%	53%	41%	44%	34%	29%	42%	38%	30%	49%	87%	71%	51%	48%	35%	49%	36%	45%	56%	47%	40%	49%	50%	32%	52%	37%	37%	42%	48%	44%

Shading indicates significantly higher/lower ratings from the prior survey period at the 95% level of confidence.

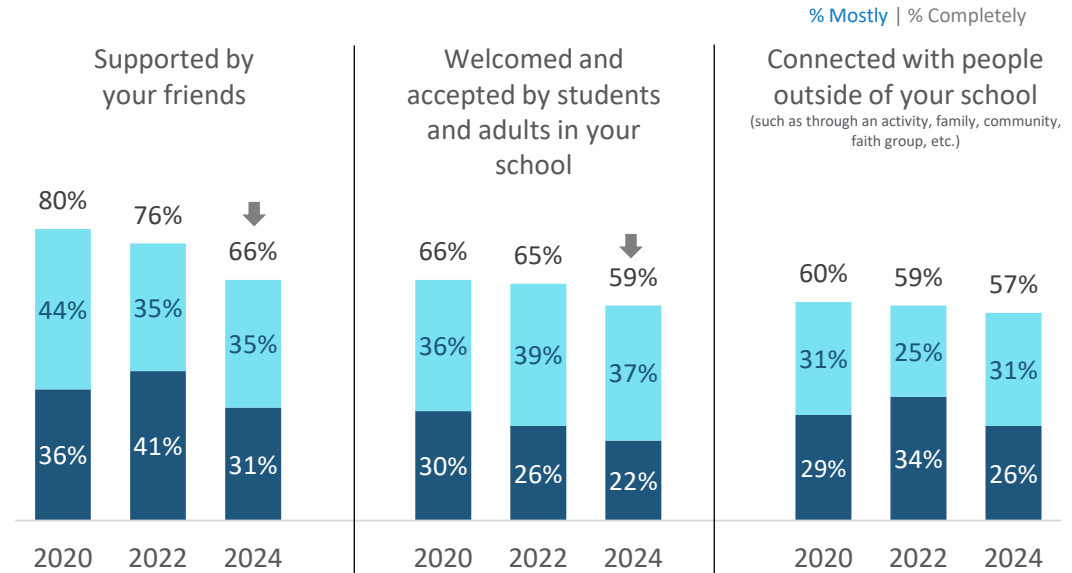
# SENSE OF BELONGING

A strong indicator of how youth are feeling is through their sense of belonging and connection with others: feeling supported by their friends, feeling connected to others at their school, and feeling connected to people outside of their school.

The percentage of teens who feel they are supported by their friends has declined significantly since 2022, which has been on the decline since 2020. The percentage of teens who feel welcomed and accepted by students and adults at their school has declined significantly since 2022 as well.

Feeling connected to people outside of school is the only one to remain statistically stable.

“To what extent do you feel that you are...?”



“Just everything that’s going on in the world, there is so much pressure to look and act a certain way and if you don’t, bullying can happen.” -- 13-year-old female Denver/Boulder

# SENSE OF BELONGING

Compared to 2022, feeling supported by friends declined significantly among youth of all age groups, males and females, and across all income groups (except \$100k+). When looking back to 2020, some of the strongest declines in feeling supported by friends are among older teens (16-17), Caucasians, and those whose parents are married.

	Age 12-13			Age 14-15			Age 16-17			Female			Male			<\$50k			\$50-74k			\$75-99k			\$100k+		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
sample size	135	108	154	238	413	360	280	197	360	350	361	408	294	332	447	122	163	130	275	263	380	138	156	262	108	107	101
(% Completely + Mostly)																											
Supported by your friends	79%	84%	<b>71%</b>	79%	76%	<b>65%</b>	81%	73%	<b>65%</b>	82%	<b>76%</b>	<b>67%</b>	77%	76%	<b>64%</b>	74%	<b>86%</b>	<b>66%</b>	80%	73%	<b>64%</b>	80%	76%	<b>65%</b>	84%	77%	<b>75%</b>
Welcomed by students and adults at school	72%	76%	<b>59%</b>	66%	66%	<b>57%</b>	64%	60%	<b>60%</b>	65%	63%	<b>60%</b>	68%	68%	<b>59%</b>	71%	74%	<b>56%</b>	61%	60%	<b>58%</b>	67%	64%	<b>57%</b>	72%	69%	<b>69%</b>
Connected with people outside of school	65%	65%	<b>58%</b>	58%	65%	<b>57%</b>	60%	52%	<b>56%</b>	60%	57%	<b>56%</b>	61%	64%	<b>58%</b>	50%	<b>70%</b>	<b>51%</b>	60%	56%	<b>61%</b>	63%	59%	<b>50%</b>	67%	56%	<b>67%</b>

	Heterosexual			LGBQ			Caucasian			Hispanic			Parents Married			Parents Divorced			Parents Other		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
sample size	494	586	747	134	119	104	445	507	585	135	141	154	444	507	644	146	147	144	50	53	62
(% Completely + Mostly)																					
Supported by your friends	81%	79%	<b>65%</b>	76%	<b>64%</b>	<b>75%</b>	82%	79%	<b>64%</b>	74%	<b>86%</b>	<b>69%</b>	83%	<b>78%</b>	<b>66%</b>	70%	74%	<b>68%</b>	69%	70%	<b>65%</b>
Welcomed by students and adults at school	71%	70%	<b>62%</b>	47%	40%	<b>46%</b>	66%	65%	<b>56%</b>	65%	74%	<b>63%</b>	72%	69%	<b>60%</b>	52%	56%	<b>55%</b>	61%	52%	<b>56%</b>
Connected with people outside of school	66%	65%	<b>58%</b>	37%	34%	<b>53%</b>	62%	59%	<b>57%</b>	54%	<b>68%</b>	<b>55%</b>	65%	63%	<b>60%</b>	49%	46%	<b>46%</b>	55%	56%	<b>50%</b>

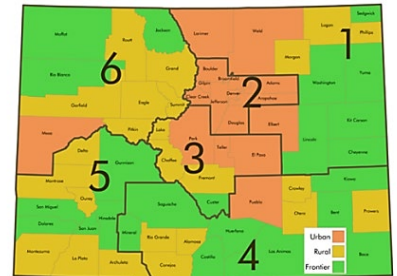
➤ “I’m a white male in a society that hates me because I’m a white male” – 17-year-old male, Denver/Boulder

# SENSE OF BELONGING

Geographically, feeling supported by friends declined the most among teens in the Denver/Boulder, Central Colorado (which includes Colorado Springs) and Northeast areas of the state (which includes Larimer and Weld counties), largely representing Colorado’s Front Range.

Teens who live in the southern part of the state (Southeast and Southwest regions) report similar feelings of connection across all three metrics as they did in 2022, with some scores even increasing (although not significantly).

	D/B			Central			Northeast			Northwest			Southeast			Southwest		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	344	284	456	100	110	123	112	63	120	38	74	62	35	109	69	24	78	44
<b>Belongingness (% Completely + Mostly)</b>																		
Supported by your friends	79%	72%	65%	78%	83%	69%	82%	82%	62%	89%	79%	64%	67%	72%	70%	86%	78%	83%
Welcomed by students and adults at school	66%	64%	59%	69%	70%	55%	67%	62%	60%	66%	66%	47%	63%	64%	66%	64%	72%	79%
Connected with people outside of school	61%	58%	54%	52%	60%	59%	61%	61%	58%	78%	60%	60%	49%	60%	67%	67%	68%	66%

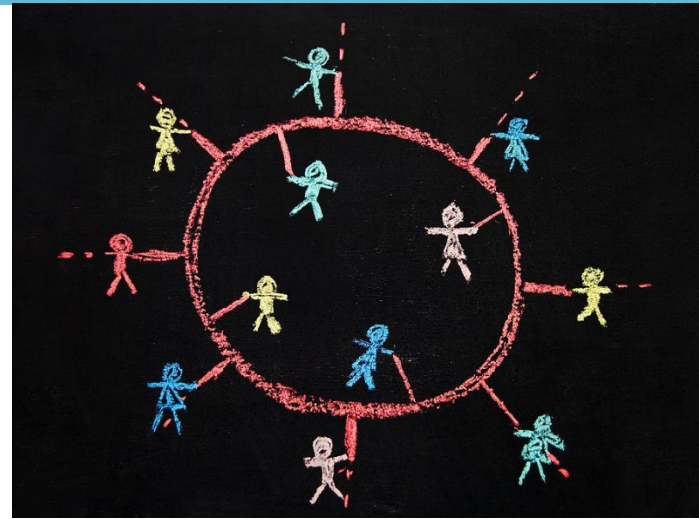


Shading indicates significantly higher/lower ratings from the prior survey period at the 95% level of confidence.



# PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- 
- ▶ PROTECTIVE FACTORS
  - ▶ EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
  - ▶ SOCIAL MEDIA USE
  - ▶ SLEEP HABITS



# PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Participants are asked the degree to which they are able to get help from a parent or trusted adult and the extent to which they find meaning in their schoolwork or through personal goals which they have set for themselves.

These kinds of “protective factors” are characteristics that have been found to be associated with a lower likelihood of problem outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

## PROTECTIVE FACTORS

If I have a serious problem, I know an adult other than my parents who I could talk to or go to for help

If I have a personal problem, I can go to one of my parents for help

The schoolwork I am assigned is meaningful and important to me

I have goals that I have set for myself which are important to me

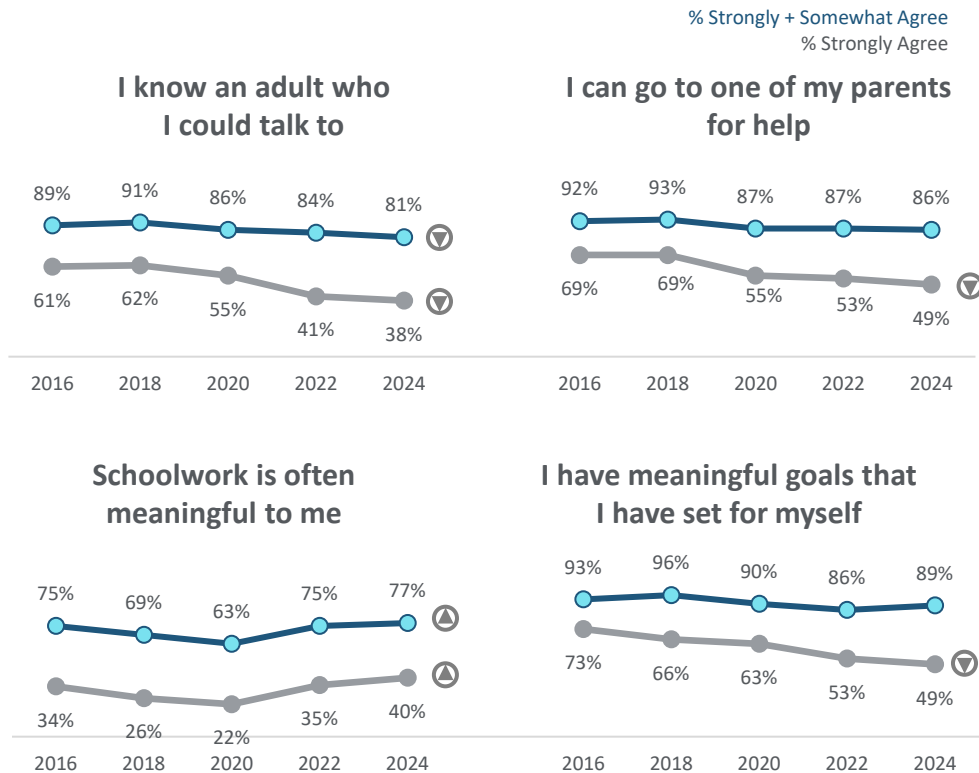
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<sup>1</sup> O'Connell, Boat, & Warner, 2009, “Preventing Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders Among Young People,” p. xxvii

# PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Agreement on all four protective factors held statistically stable with the results seen in 2022 when looking at total agreement (“Strongly” + “Somewhat”). However, over a longer period of time we see signs of weakening in most of these factors:

- Teens’ confidence that they have either a trusted adult or parent they can talk to when in need of help are both rated significantly lower today than they were 2020.
- Having meaningful goals for themselves has been steadily declining every year in terms of “strong” agreement.
- The only area where we see an improvement is in finding schoolwork to be meaningful, which has increased compared to 2020 (although statistically stable with 2022).



# PROTECTIVE FACTORS: COMMENTS

- “(My biggest challenge is) school and how much work there is and how teachers keep loading work (on) you, even if you have like a job. Work and school for hours and hours. School is just hell” – 17-year-old female  
Denver/Boulder
- “Navigating the ever-changing landscape of societal and global issues, like climate change or political unrest”  
– 17-year-old male, Central Colorado
- “My dad has high expectations and makes me feel like I can't do things right. My grades in history and English are bad too. I lose my phone if my grades aren't good enough” – 15-year-old male, Central Colorado
- “Staying focused on my training and maintaining my physical condition while also managing school responsibilities is a huge challenge for me” – 15-year-old male, Denver/Boulder
- “Psychological pressure, need to deal with anxiety, depression and loneliness in adolescence”  
– 16-year-old male, Central Colorado
- “I don't have much to do with people, and I don't have many friends” – 16-year-old male, Denver/Boulder
- “Coping with feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt while trying to meet everyone's expectations”  
– 15-year-old male Denver/Boulder
- “Feeling like I don't have anyone to talk to or seek help from when struggling with substance use”  
– 15-year-old female, Northeast Colorado

# PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Given that there were no statistically significant changes at the top-two box level between 2022 and 2024, it is not surprising to see few significant changes in these four protective factors at the demographic group level. Youth who live in the southern part of Colorado report some of the highest level of agreement on these protective factors.

	Female			Male			Heterosexual			LGBQ			Caucasian			Hispanic			<\$50k			\$50-74k			\$75-99k			\$100k+					
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	350	361	409	294	332	445	494	586	746	134	119	103	445	507	586	135	141	153	122	112	130	275	254	377	138	182	264	108	139	101			
<b>Protective Factors</b> (% Strongly + Somewhat Agree)																																	
I know an adult who I could talk to	88%	83%	<b>81%</b>	83%	86%	<b>81%</b>	86%	85%	<b>81%</b>	84%	78%	<b>82%</b>	86%	82%	<b>80%</b>	85%	89%	<b>81%</b>	79%	<b>93%</b>	<b>85%</b>	88%	<b>81%</b>	<b>80%</b>	88%	84%	<b>79%</b>	85%	83%	<b>86%</b>			
School work is meaningful to me	66%	<b>74%</b>	<b>78%</b>	59%	<b>80%</b>	<b>78%</b>	65%	<b>81%</b>	<b>81%</b>	52%	46%	<b>56%</b>	61%	<b>71%</b>	<b>75%</b>	64%	<b>84%</b>	<b>79%</b>	61%	<b>80%</b>	<b>84%</b>	63%	<b>75%</b>	<b>79%</b>	65%	<b>76%</b>	<b>75%</b>	58%	67%	<b>71%</b>			
I have goals that I set for myself	93%	<b>85%</b>	<b>88%</b>	87%	88%	<b>90%</b>	90%	<b>86%</b>	<b>89%</b>	88%	86%	<b>92%</b>	88%	85%	<b>90%</b>	93%	87%	<b>87%</b>	88%	89%	<b>87%</b>	90%	87%	<b>91%</b>	92%	<b>82%</b>	<b>87%</b>	90%	91%	<b>88%</b>			
I can go to a parent for help	87%	85%	<b>84%</b>	88%	92%	<b>88%</b>	89%	90%	<b>87%</b>	78%	75%	<b>75%</b>	87%	86%	<b>88%</b>	88%	90%	<b>86%</b>	86%	91%	<b>87%</b>	88%	85%	<b>86%</b>	87%	89%	<b>87%</b>	86%	89%	<b>81%</b>			

	Age 12-13			Age 14-15			Age 16-17			D/B			Central			Northeast			Northwest			Southeast			Southwest			PCN Cohort		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	135	108	151	238	412	361	280	197	359	344	284	453	100	110	122	112	63	120	38	74	61	35	108	70	24	78	44	236	424	
<b>Protective Factors</b> (% Strongly + Somewhat Agree)																														
I know an adult who I could talk to	85%	87%	<b>84%</b>	84%	85%	<b>81%</b>	87%	<b>80%</b>	<b>81%</b>	85%	82%	<b>79%</b>	90%	82%	<b>83%</b>	86%	88%	<b>83%</b>	89%	86%	<b>76%</b>	80%	85%	<b>92%</b>	77%	92%	<b>92%</b>	n/a	85%	<b>82%</b>
School work is meaningful to me	73%	80%	<b>76%</b>	59%	<b>79%</b>	<b>78%</b>	60%	<b>71%</b>	<b>77%</b>	61%	<b>71%</b>	<b>79%</b>	64%	75%	<b>71%</b>	65%	<b>88%</b>	<b>66%</b>	88%	<b>67%</b>	<b>84%</b>	48%	<b>80%</b>	<b>91%</b>	44%	<b>88%</b>	<b>93%</b>	n/a	80%	<b>74%</b>
I have goals that I set for myself	85%	87%	<b>87%</b>	89%	86%	<b>90%</b>	94%	<b>87%</b>	<b>89%</b>	89%	86%	<b>87%</b>	93%	92%	<b>90%</b>	95%	<b>84%</b>	<b>91%</b>	89%	81%	<b>87%</b>	88%	84%	<b>92%</b>	79%	90%	<b>98%</b>	n/a	88%	<b>89%</b>
I can go to a parent for help	91%	93%	<b>88%</b>	84%	87%	<b>87%</b>	87%	85%	<b>84%</b>	85%	86%	<b>86%</b>	90%	89%	<b>84%</b>	94%	93%	<b>85%</b>	91%	82%	<b>81%</b>	90%	88%	<b>88%</b>	77%	88%	<b>98%</b>	n/a	83%	<b>84%</b>



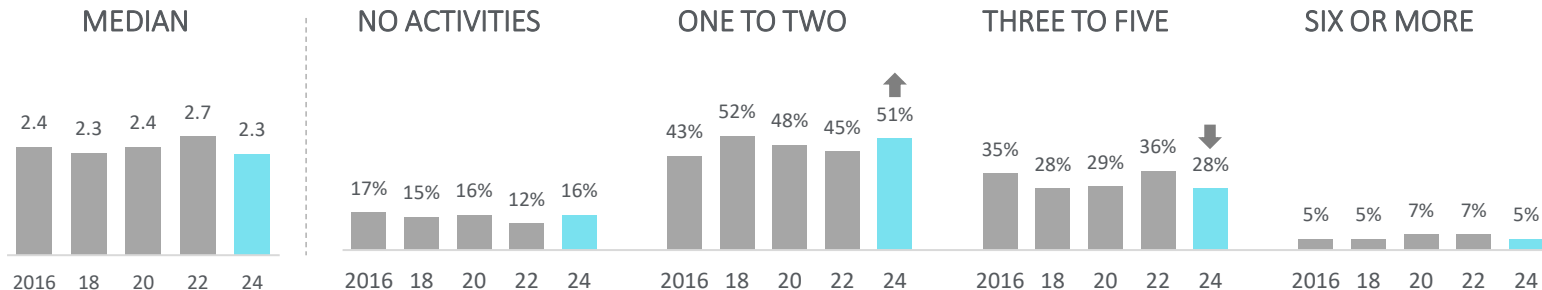
“My dad has high expectations and makes me feel like I can't do things right. My grades in history and English are bad too. I lose my phone if my grades aren't good enough” – 15-year-old male, Central Colorado

# EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Teens are asked about their participation in extracurricular activities such as arts, sports, band, drama, clubs, youth groups, and student government which provide opportunities to experience different types of shared connections.

The number of activities today's youth report participating in is largely similar to the past, although we do find a significant increase in the percentage who are participating only in one or two activities, and with corresponding declines in the three to five and six plus categories. While slightly fewer extracurricular activities are being reported than in 2022, today's results are more in line with years prior to 2022.

“How many extracurricular activities do you participate in, either at or outside of school, such as arts, sports, band, drama, clubs, youth group, or student government?”



“The biggest challenge I face is balancing my academic schedule with extracurriculars and still maintaining some flexibility and time for myself.” – 16-year-old female, Denver/Boulder

# EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The number of extracurricular activities teens are engaging in shows few changes since 2022. The significant increase in one-to-two activities seen in aggregate is coming largely from females (+11) those who identify as heterosexual (+8) and White (+8), all of which saw declines in participating in three or more activities.

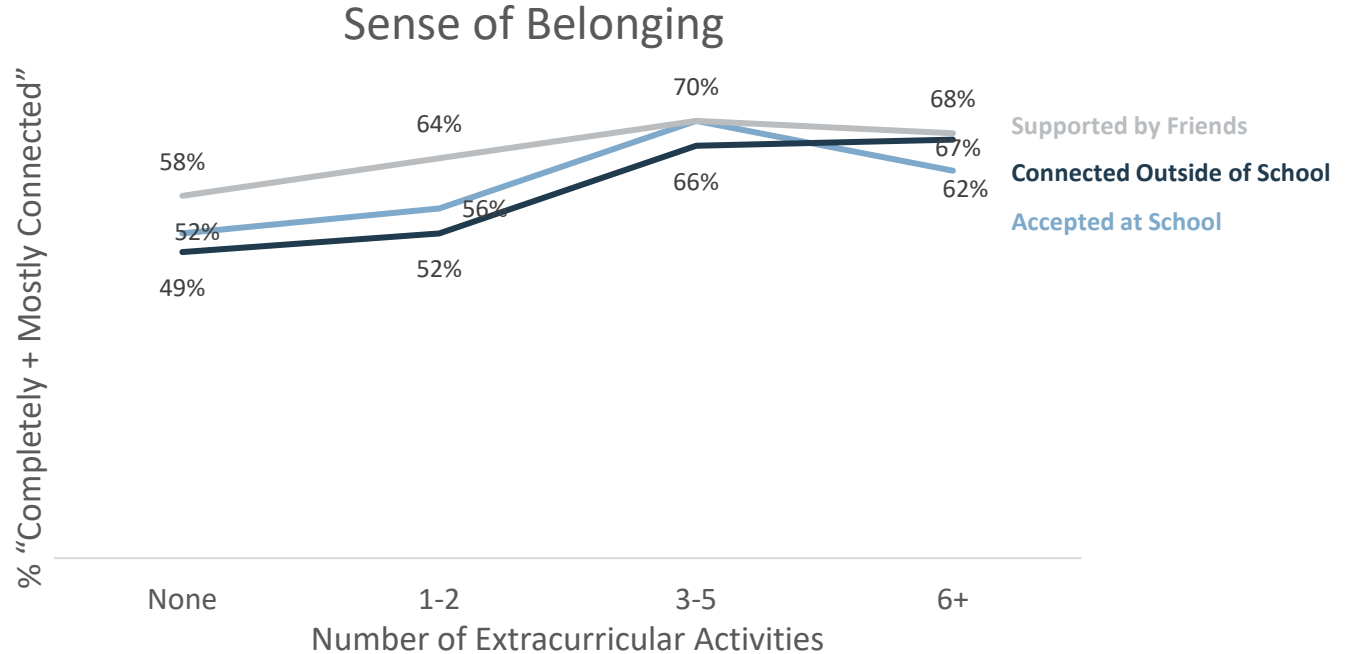
	Age 12-13			Age 14-15			Age 16-17			D/B			Central			Northeast			Northwest			Southeast			Southwest			PCN Cohort		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	135	108	151	238	412	351	280	197	356	344	284	451	100	110	119	112	63	119	38	74	58	35	108	68	24	78	43	236	424	
<b>Extracurricular Activities</b>																														
None	13%	12%	17%	19%	10%	14%	15%	14%	16%	18%	13%	15%	12%	7%	16%	12%	14%	11%	14%	15%	21%	10%	13%	20%	27%	5%	34%	n/a	5%	14%
One to Two	48%	45%	48%	51%	47%	52%	46%	43%	52%	46%	40%	51%	60%	60%	53%	45%	46%	57%	38%	34%	41%	55%	54%	42%	57%	48%	48%	n/a	41%	49%
Three to Five	29%	40%	30%	26%	37%	28%	30%	34%	28%	30%	40%	29%	27%	25%	29%	31%	31%	25%	33%	47%	33%	20%	30%	34%	14%	41%	16%	n/a	46%	31%
Six or More	10%	3%	5%	4%	6%	6%	8%	10%	4%	6%	7%	6%	1%	8%	2%	12%	9%	6%	16%	5%	5%	15%	4%	5%	2%	6%	2%	n/a	8%	6%
Median	2.7	2.5	2.3	2.1	2.7	2.4	2.5	2.8	2.2	2.4	2.8	2.4	2.1	2.5	2.1	2.9	2.7	2.3	3.2	2.8	2.3	2.8	2.3	2.4	1.6	2.8	1.5	2.6	2.1	
	Female			Male			Heterosexual			LGBQ			Caucasian			Hispanic			<\$50k			\$50-74k			\$75-99k			\$100k+		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	350	361	401	294	332	442	494	586	750	134	119	100	445	507	581	135	141	148	122	112	124	275	254	373	138	182	261	108	139	100
<b>Extracurricular Activities</b>																														
None	15%	11%	15%	17%	12%	15%	14%	9%	14%	19%	26%	27%	14%	13%	16%	21%	5%	25%	19%	12%	14%	16%	12%	17%	17%	11%	16%	13%	12%	12%
One to Two	50%	39%	50%	47%	51%	54%	47%	45%	53%	52%	43%	38%	47%	43%	51%	53%	50%	46%	51%	47%	51%	47%	45%	51%	43%	40%	48%	53%	51%	59%
Three to Five	27%	41%	30%	30%	32%	26%	31%	38%	29%	21%	26%	29%	33%	35%	27%	18%	39%	26%	24%	37%	29%	29%	36%	28%	34%	42%	30%	26%	27%	24%
Six or More	8%	9%	5%	6%	5%	5%	7%	8%	5%	8%	5%	6%	6%	9%	6%	8%	7%	3%	6%	5%	6%	8%	7%	4%	7%	7%	6%	9%	10%	5%
Median	2.5	2.9	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.8	2.4	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.5	2.8	2.3	2.2	2.9	2.0	2.2	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.2	2.6	2.8	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.2

Shading indicates significantly higher/lower ratings from the prior survey period at the 95% level of confidence.

# ACTIVITIES & BELONGING

The reason for including questions on extracurricular activities is because of their relationship to having a sense of connection with others, which has been identified in other research as a protective factor to substance use.

Looking at the number of extracurricular activities teens participate in and their sense of feeling supported/connected/accepted by others shows some relationship, but it is not as strong as one may have hypothesized.



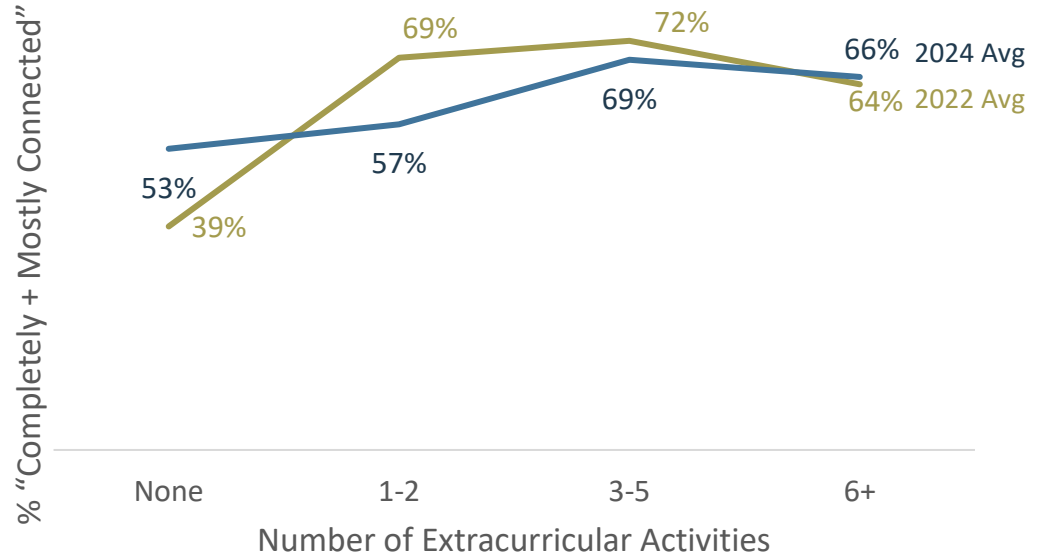


In 2022, the relationship between the number of extracurricular activities and sense of belong was much stronger, especially comparing those who did no extracurricular activities to those who did at least one.

➤ “I think my biggest challenge I face is deciding on if I am still allowed to be a kid or if it is time to grow up. Like I want to have fun and be silly with my friends but there is so much pressure on us that we are going to have to deal with”

– 12-year-old genderqueer, Northeast Colorado

## Sense of Belonging

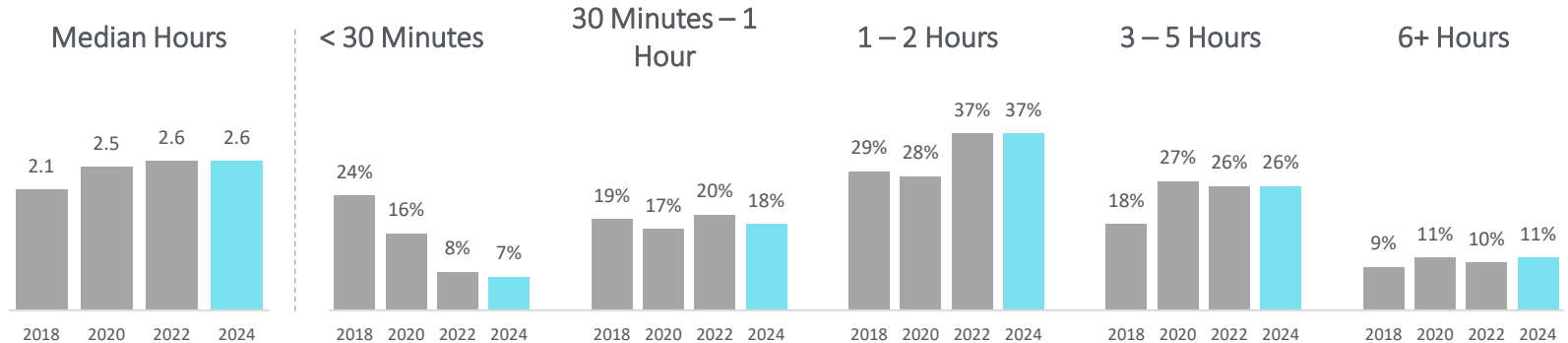


# SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Social media, such as TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter/X and Facebook provide other ways in which teens can have a sense of connection, be it with others who they know or those they aspire to, such as social media influencers and celebrities. The relationship between social media, mental health and attitudes toward substance use are far beyond the scope of this work, however, exploring how the amount of time Colorado youth spend on social media relates to other variables in this survey can provide insights worth exploring more deeply through other sources.

From this survey, we find that social media use has been holding stable since 2020 at a median of 2.6 hours per day, with no statistically significant changes in any of the categories of time spent on these platforms:

“Thinking about an average day, how much time do you spend on social media such as TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter/X, etc.?”



Percentage Base: All Respondents, excluding “Don’t Know” responses

# SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Given the stability in the aggregate social media usage statistics, it is not surprising to find little movement demographically in terms of the amount of time spent on social media between 2022 and 2024. Where significant differences are seen between 2022 and 2024 results, they are often a return to results which align more closely with 2020.

	Age 12-13			Age 14-15			Age 16-17			D/B			Central			Northeast			Northwest			Southeast			Southwest			PCN Cohort		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	135	108	152	238	412	355	280	197	349	344	284	448	100	110	120	112	63	118	38	74	59	35	108	68	24	78	43	n/a	236	422
<b>Social Media Use Per Day</b>																														
Less than 30 minutes	24%	14%	16%	18%	6%	5%	10%	7%	5%	14%	7%	6%	15%	11%	9%	25%	10%	6%	20%	10%	11%	16%	6%	8%	15%	5%	18%	n/a	3%	6%
30 minutes to 1 hour	23%	21%	18%	16%	24%	18%	15%	15%	18%	18%	20%	21%	22%	20%	16%	11%	19%	13%	19%	11%	8%	11%	26%	18%	8%	27%	27%	n/a	20%	22%
1-2 hours	27%	42%	34%	28%	36%	42%	29%	35%	34%	31%	35%	36%	29%	38%	46%	28%	44%	33%	22%	27%	38%	12%	34%	37%	19%	36%	38%	n/a	36%	37%
3-5 hours	22%	17%	22%	28%	27%	26%	30%	29%	29%	24%	29%	28%	24%	19%	20%	26%	19%	32%	34%	39%	31%	47%	22%	20%	58%	22%	10%	n/a	31%	26%
6+ hours	3%	6%	10%	10%	6%	8%	17%	15%	14%	13%	10%	10%	10%	12%	8%	10%	8%	15%	5%	13%	13%	14%	12%	18%	0%	10%	8%	n/a	11%	9%
Median hours	1.8	2.0	2.4	2.6	2.3	2.5	3.2	3.0	3.0	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.3	3.1	2.3	3.1	3.0	3.3	2.6	3.0	2.7	2.4	1.9	n/a	2.8	2.4
	Female			Male			Heterosexual			LGBQ			Caucasian			Hispanic			<\$50k			\$50-74k			\$75-99k			\$100k+		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	350	361	400	294	332	441	494	586	747	134	119	100	445	507	578	135	141	146	122	112	125	275	254	371	138	182	260	108	139	100
<b>Social Media Use Per Day</b>																														
Less than 30 minutes	14%	7%	7%	19%	9%	7%	16%	8%	7%	16%	10%	7%	17%	10%	8%	13%	4%	3%	16%	11%	8%	15%	6%	7%	17%	10%	6%	20%	8%	9%
30 minutes to 1 hour	13%	19%	13%	21%	21%	24%	18%	21%	19%	18%	9%	9%	15%	19%	20%	24%	22%	12%	25%	27%	21%	17%	16%	15%	13%	20%	20%	16%	21%	21%
1-2 hours	30%	29%	37%	27%	46%	39%	30%	39%	40%	30%	28%	19%	33%	37%	34%	16%	40%	47%	19%	29%	30%	29%	40%	42%	26%	41%	33%	35%	32%	38%
3-5 hours	30%	30%	30%	24%	20%	22%	26%	25%	24%	26%	33%	45%	26%	25%	25%	31%	25%	26%	26%	25%	27%	27%	26%	26%	34%	23%	28%	22%	28%	23%
6+ hours	13%	15%	13%	9%	4%	8%	10%	8%	10%	10%	20%	20%	8%	9%	11%	16%	11%	12%	15%	8%	13%	11%	12%	10%	10%	6%	12%	7%	12%	9%
Median hours	2.9	3.0	3.0	2.3	2.0	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	3.5	3.8	2.4	2.5	2.6	3.0	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.3	2.8	2.6	2.8	2.6	2.7	2.2	2.8	2.2	2.8	2.4

While aggregate scores held statistically stable, there is an interesting trend occurring by respondents' age. Since 2020, there has been a steady increase in the median number of hours spent on social media among 12–13-year-olds, while 14–15-year-olds show stability in their median social media hours and 16–17-year-olds show a bit of a decline since 2020.

This has created an overall “leveling out” of social media usage, with all age groups now looking much more similar to one another than in the past. In other words, younger teens are looking much more like their older counterparts when it comes to social media consumption.



“Coping with the pressure of social media and online image” – 15-year-old female, Denver/Boulder



“The biggest challenge we face today is social media overexposure and lack of funding for sports and after-school programs”  
– 14-year-old female, Northeastern Colorado



“Mental stress, feeling anxious and uneasy because of social and media influencers”  
– 17-year-old male, Northwest Colorado

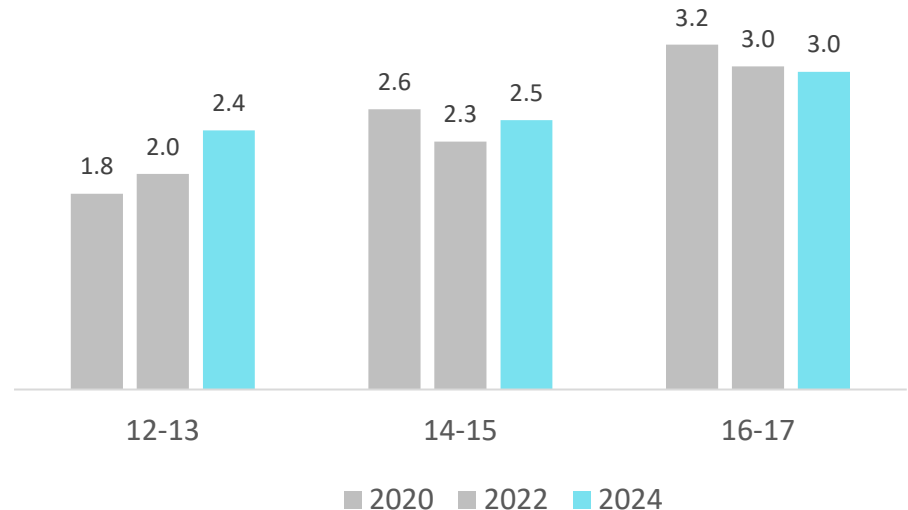


“Navigating social media and its impact on self-esteem”  
– 13-year-old male, Denver/Boulder



“Dealing with social media and comparing myself to others” – 16-year-old male, Denver/Boulder

## Median Hours/Day on Social Media



# MENTAL HEALTH & SOCIAL MEDIA

Other research has shown how social media use and teen mental health are strongly interrelated. Those findings are also supported in this survey among Colorado youth.

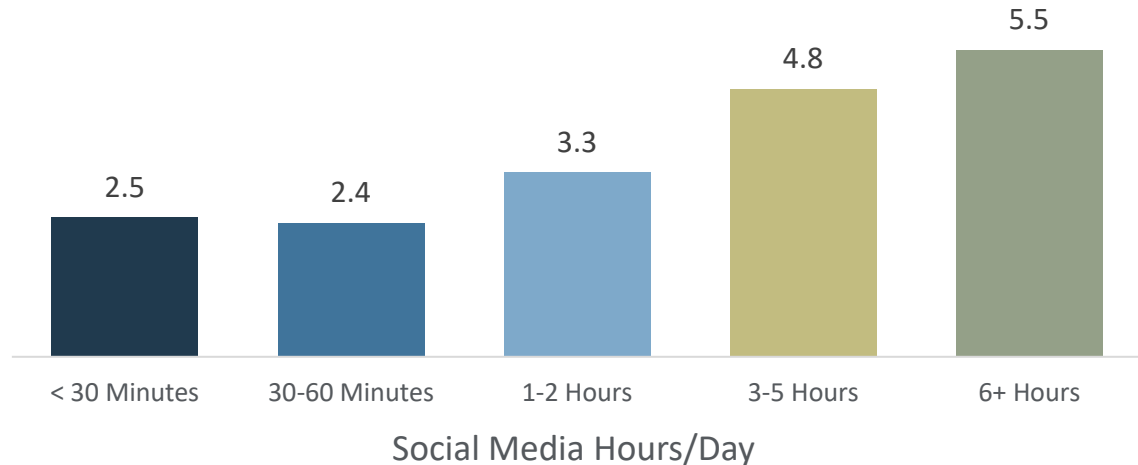
- Teens who spend less than an hour a day report the fewest number of poor mental health days per month (about 2.5 days per month), while those who spend the most time on social media report the highest number of poor mental health days/month (5.5 days per month).

We cannot assume that increased social media use is *causing* an increase in the number of poor mental health days, as it is also possible that poor mental health may lead teens to spend more time online. However, we can conclude from these data that mental health and social media use are strongly related to one another.

➤ “I think the biggest challenge we face now is trying to live our lives while simultaneously being surrounded by social media and all of its influences. It feels like we're being controlled by the media, and that brings out the worst.”

– 16-year-old female, Denver/Boulder

Median Poor Mental Health Days/Month



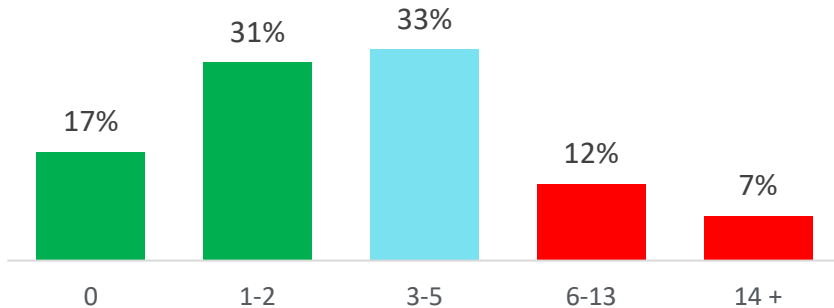
# SLEEP HABITS

A new question asked in the 2024 survey is how often in the past month they did not get a good night's sleep.

The correlation between having a good night sleep and mental health is very strong at 0.61.

- Social media usage has significant correlations to both the number of poor mental health days (0.31) and the number of poor night's sleep (0.26).

“In the past 30 days, how many days would you say you did not get a good night's sleep?”



Correlations

	Hours per Day on Social Media	Days of Poor Mental Health	Nights of Poor Sleep
Number of Extracurricular Activities	0.11	0.11	0.15
Hours per Day on Social Media		0.31	0.26
Poor Mental Health Days			<b>0.61</b>

➤ “I've been sleeping badly lately and I'm always listless during the day”  
– 14-year-old female, Northeastern Colorado

# SLEEP HABITS

Teens who report the highest number of days with poor night's sleep are those who identify as LGBQ, at a median of 7.4 poor night's sleep/month versus 3.7 days for those who identify as heterosexual – a two-fold difference.

Females tend to report having more nights of poor sleep than males (median of 4.5 days per month versus 3.6, respectively).

Those living in Southwest Colorado are the most likely to say they have not had a single poor night's sleep in the past 30 days, and while the sample size for Southwest Colorado is only 43 participants, the fact that 27 of them said they had zero nights of poor sleep still seems meaningful.

Poor Night's Sleep	Median	0 Days	1-2 Days	3-5 Days	6-13 Days	14+ Days
<b>Total (n=857)</b>	4.2	17%	32%	33%	12%	7%
Female (n=399)	4.5	12%	35%	32%	13%	8%
Male (n=442)	3.6	23%	29%	33%	10%	5%
Heterosexual (n=750)	3.7	18%	33%	33%	10%	5%
LGBQ (n=99)	7.4	7%	20%	29%	26%	19%
Caucasian (n=580)	4.4	18%	30%	32%	11%	9%
Hispanic (n=149)	4.1	18%	29%	37%	8%	8%
<\$50k (n=126)	4.5	20%	25%	30%	17%	7%
\$50-74k (n=371)	4.2	18%	31%	33%	12%	7%
\$75-99k (n=262)	3.9	17%	34%	32%	11%	6%
\$100k+ (n=98)	4.4	9%	36%	38%	8%	9%
12-13 (n=153)	4.1	18%	34%	32%	9%	8%
14-15 (n=349)	4.1	14%	34%	34%	12%	6%
16-17 (n=355)	4.0	19%	29%	32%	13%	6%
D/B (n=450)	4.0	14%	35%	32%	12%	6%
Central (n=119)	4.8	11%	31%	41%	6%	12%
Northeast (n=120)	4.6	16%	26%	36%	14%	8%
Northwest (n=58)	3.7	18%	38%	23%	18%	3%
Southeast (n=67)	3.7	30%	19%	31%	17%	3%
Southwest (n=43)	0.9	62%	25%	13%	0%	0%
PCN Cohort (n=423)	4.0	20%	33%	32%	12%	4%

Shading indicates significantly higher/lower ratings from the average at the 95% level of confidence.

# ATTITUDES TOWARD SUBSTANCE USE

- 
- ▶ SUBSTANCE AWARENESS
  - ▶ RISK FACTORS
  - ▶ PERCEIVED RISK OF USE





# RISK FACTORS

Colorado youth are asked how much risk they perceive there is in substance use and use of specific substances, as well as whether discussions with their parents are taking place about substance use.

## ATTITUDES: PERCEIVED RISK

Experimenting with drugs is just part of being a teenager – it's not that big of a deal.

Drugs can help teens manage the stress and pressure we have to deal with.

Using someone else's prescription drugs is safer than using illegal drugs.

Using prescription drugs like Adderall or Ritalin to help you stay awake and focused when studying is safe, even if the prescription wasn't written for you.

Prescription pain relievers like Vicodin or Oxy (OxyContin) are not addictive.

## RISK OF USE

How much risk do you think there is in using each of the following:

- Meth
- Fentanyl
- Rx Pain Relievers
- Rx Stimulants
- Rx Anti-Anxiety Medications
- Marijuana
- Alcohol
- Vaping

## FAMILY DISCUSSIONS

Have you ever talked to your parents about ...

- Marijuana
- Prescription drugs that were not prescribed for you
- Counterfeit or laced pills
- Alcohol
- Vaping

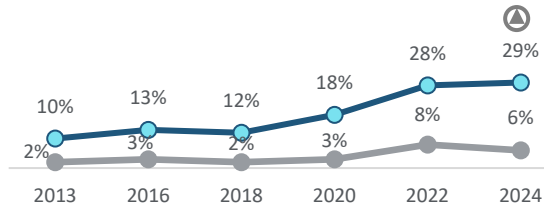
# RISK FACTORS

% Strongly + Somewhat Agree  
% Strongly Agree

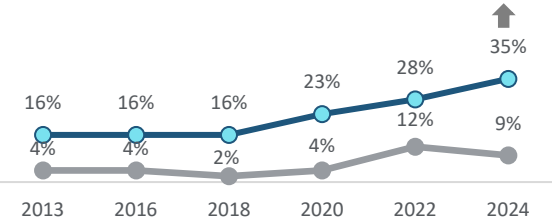
Attitudes toward substance use either held at 2022 levels or became even more relaxed.

Significantly more teens this year agreed that “drugs can help teens manage stress,” that “prescription drugs are safer than illegal drugs,” and “prescription pain relievers are not addictive.”

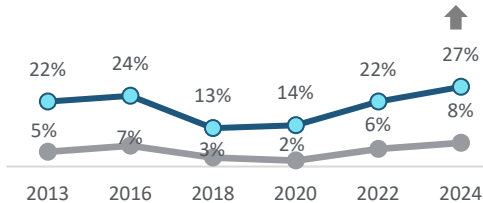
### Experimenting with drugs is not that big of a deal



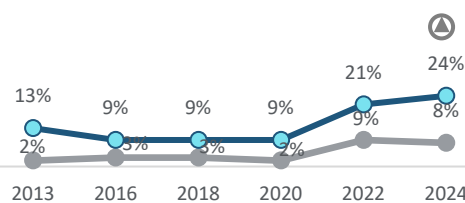
### Drugs can help teens manage stress



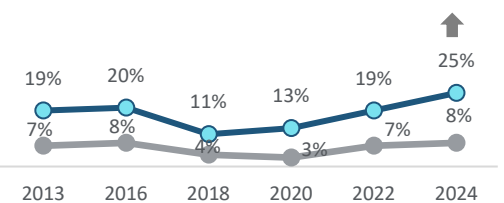
### Prescription drugs are safer than illegal drugs



### Stimulants are safe even if the script wasn't for you



### Prescription pain relievers are not addictive



# RISK FACTORS

The types of challenges teens describe cover a wide range of issues. As we think about the changes we see in attitudes toward substance use, it is important to keep in mind all the different factors that may be influencing this.

*“If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail.”*

-- Abraham Maslow

- “The biggest problem is having someone to trust and to feel safe at school. I’m scared every day to even go inside because of so many school shootings and how many of the kids have weapons” – 13-year-old male Northwest
- “The biggest challenge is battling against depression, and just being social in general is hard” – 14-year-old female Denver/Boulder
- “Facing challenges related to identity, such as sexuality or gender identity” – 14-year-old female, Denver/Boulder
- “The judgement by everyone is probably the biggest. I can’t talk about one thing without having at least one person put me down for it” – 15-year-old Central Colorado (did not disclose gender)
- “To know how to be around other kids. I get scared to say something wrong and they will hurt me or all the school kids” – 13-year-old male Denver/Boulder
- “Getting slack because I’m still a virgin and I’m a male” – 17-year-old male Northwest Colorado
- “Being accepted by other people. They find problems with me all the time” – 12-year-old male Central Colorado
- “Figuring out what I want to do with my life, high school feels like its going to be over so quickly” – 15-year-old female Central Colorado

# RISK ATTITUDES

During the prior survey period (2022), the majority of the reduced concern about drug/substance use came from younger teens, 12-13 years of age. For 2024, the majority of reduced concern came from oldest teens, 16-17 years of age. And while older teens still tend to view substance use as being less risky than younger teens, all age groups are beginning to look more similar.

Geographically, teens in the Denver Boulder area reported significant increases (less concern) across all of these risk factors, often doubling from 2020 results. On the other hand, teens in Southwest Colorado showed significant declines (expressing greater levels of concern about substance use) on most of these attitudinal statements.

	Age 12-13			Age 14-15			Age 16-17			D/B			Central			Northeast			Northwest			Southeast			Southwest			PCN Cohort		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	135	108	149	238	412	351	280	197	354	344	284	446	100	110	120	112	63	120	38	74	62	35	108	69	24	78	43	236	420	
<b>Risk Factors</b> (% Strongly + Somewhat Agree)																														
Experimenting w/drugs is part of being a teen	10%	31%	23%	18%	24%	29%	23%	29%	33%	19%	27%	35%	21%	27%	27%	13%	31%	18%	21%	29%	28%	24%	21%	34%	12%	26%	7%	n/a	28%	35%
Drugs can help teens manage stress	15%	33%	30%	20%	25%	36%	30%	27%	36%	25%	27%	40%	21%	24%	34%	15%	30%	25%	20%	31%	36%	35%	23%	37%	20%	26%	7%	n/a	30%	40%
Prescription drugs are safer than illegal drugs	12%	26%	24%	17%	24%	29%	13%	19%	28%	16%	22%	35%	9%	18%	24%	15%	24%	14%	8%	28%	24%	17%	18%	25%	6%	29%	7%	n/a	26%	34%
Using prescription drugs (stimulants) is safe	11%	29%	19%	7%	21%	26%	10%	17%	25%	10%	23%	32%	11%	17%	15%	6%	17%	14%	2%	24%	18%	14%	20%	26%	0%	25%	4%	n/a	25%	33%
Prescription pain relievers are not addictive	24%	23%	19%	10%	19%	25%	8%	17%	27%	10%	19%	29%	19%	19%	18%	6%	16%	23%	16%	25%	25%	19%	18%	21%	28%	23%	11%	n/a	18%	30%
	Female			Male			Heterosexual			LGBQ			Caucasian			Hispanic			<\$50k			\$50-74k			\$75-99k			\$100k+		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	350	361	402	294	332	439	494	586	737	134	119	102	445	507	574	135	141	152	122	112	130	275	254	372	138	182	262	108	139	99
<b>Risk Factors</b> (% Strongly + Somewhat Agree)																														
Experimenting w/drugs is part of being a teen	19%	32%	31%	17%	24%	27%	17%	27%	28%	21%	31%	34%	19%	24%	32%	22%	31%	27%	16%	30%	27%	17%	27%	24%	18%	30%	40%	23%	23%	25%
Drugs can help teens manage stress	23%	32%	33%	23%	22%	36%	20%	26%	35%	37%	37%	34%	21%	26%	36%	28%	29%	29%	24%	28%	34%	24%	26%	30%	18%	36%	43%	25%	18%	33%
Prescription drugs are safer than illegal drugs	14%	22%	26%	14%	23%	27%	14%	24%	28%	15%	15%	26%	13%	21%	30%	15%	22%	19%	13%	23%	26%	14%	22%	20%	16%	23%	37%	12%	16%	30%
Using prescription drugs (stimulants) is safe	7%	22%	23%	11%	21%	26%	8%	23%	25%	12%	8%	18%	7%	19%	26%	11%	25%	14%	8%	21%	25%	7%	16%	19%	10%	26%	33%	13%	18%	20%
Prescription pain relievers are not addictive	9%	18%	23%	17%	21%	27%	13%	20%	26%	14%	13%	16%	10%	18%	26%	18%	13%	16%	21%	18%	26%	10%	15%	20%	10%	25%	30%	14%	16%	23%

Shading indicates significantly higher/lower ratings from the prior survey period at the 95% level of confidence.

# RISK ATTITUDE CORRELATIONS

Of interest was whether these five statements represent different conceptual concepts of risk regarding substance use or if they all tend to represent a single, common construct.

Using factor analysis to explore the dimensionality of these attributes, all five statements were found to represent only a single, unidimensional construct, meaning that the way someone responds to one of these questions will be a strong indicator of how they respond to all of them.

Through correlations we can look to see if more nuanced bivariate relationships may exist between some of the statements.

- From this, we do find, not too surprising, that attitudes toward prescription drugs tend to be strongly intercorrelated.
- Perhaps less expected is the strong correlation (0.57) between believing experimenting with drugs is just part of being a teen and the belief that drugs help teens manage stress, which may indicate that “part of being a teen” is dealing with stress. This may be helpful in thinking about messaging strategies which provide teens with different ways to think about managing stress than substance use.

	Drugs Help Manage Stress	Rx Drugs are Safer	Stimulants Help you Study	Rx Drugs are Not Addictive
Experimenting with drugs is part of being a teen	0.57	0.46	0.48	0.38
Drugs Help Manage Stress		0.55	0.56	0.49
Rx Drugs are Safer			0.62	0.55
Stimulants Help you Study				0.56

➤ “The biggest challenge is navigating life and dealing with all of the added stresses we all experience today in this messed up world.” – 13-year-old male, Denver/Boulder

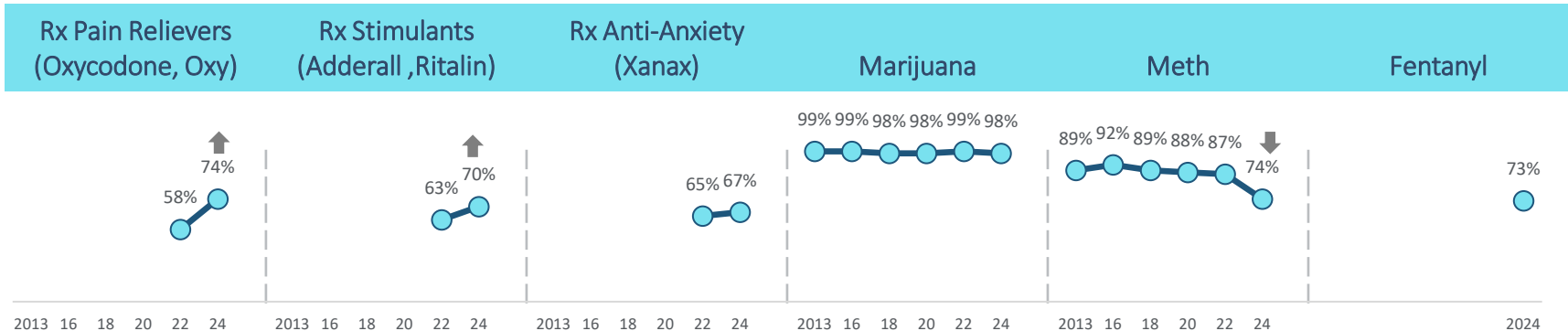
# SUBSTANCE AWARENESS

When teens were asked if they have heard of the six substances shown below, awareness of all types of prescription drugs increased since 2022, with statistically significant gains for pain relievers like Oxycodone and stimulants like Adderall and Ritalin.

Interestingly, awareness of meth declined rather dramatically since 2022, although three out of four teens still report being aware of it, higher than every substance besides marijuana.

Awareness of fentanyl, the first time asked about in this survey, is at 73%, similar to meth and Oxycodone.

“Which, if any, of the following have you heard of?” (% Yes)



# SUBSTANCE AWARENESS

The only clear trends in terms of these demographic breakouts are that the decline in meth awareness cuts across nearly all demographic groups, while the increase in awareness of prescription pain relievers occurred largely across the board.

	Age 12-13			Age 14-15			Age 16-17			D/B			Central			Northeast			Northwest			Southeast			Southwest			PCN Cohort		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	135	108	148	238	412	347	280	197	357	344	284	447	100	110	120	112	63	119	38	74	60	35	108	69	24	78	41	236	419	
<b>Substance Awareness (% Aware)</b>																														
Meth	69%	81%	74%	93%	83%	71%	95%	93%	77%	88%	88%	75%	85%	85%	80%	88%	85%	75%	100%	88%	69%	96%	88%	74%	78%	83%	55%	n/a	92%	72%
Marijuana	95%	97%	98%	98%	100%	97%	100%	100%	99%	97%	100%	96%	99%	100%	100%	99%	97%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	99%	96%	100%	100%	n/a	100%	97%
Rx Pain Relievers	n/a	48%	72%	n/a	50%	70%	n/a	69%	79%	n/a	60%	72%	n/a	62%	78%	n/a	55%	75%	n/a	52%	79%	n/a	54%	80%	n/a	49%	66%	n/a	59%	71%
Rx Stimulants	n/a	59%	67%	n/a	52%	70%	n/a	75%	72%	n/a	62%	68%	n/a	66%	76%	n/a	68%	74%	n/a	61%	73%	n/a	56%	71%	n/a	58%	56%	n/a	64%	68%
Rx Anti-Anxiety	n/a	53%	63%	n/a	57%	65%	n/a	77%	71%	n/a	67%	69%	n/a	66%	69%	n/a	59%	66%	n/a	66%	60%	n/a	66%	68%	n/a	53%	61%	n/a	64%	68%
Fentanyl	n/a	n/a	70%	n/a	n/a	73%	n/a	n/a	75%	n/a	n/a	75%	n/a	n/a	74%	n/a	n/a	70%	n/a	n/a	64%	n/a	n/a	72%	n/a	n/a	77%	n/a	n/a	75%

	Female			Male			Heterosexual			LGBQ			Caucasian			Hispanic			<\$50k			\$50-74k			\$75-99k			\$100k+		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	350	361	397	294	332	430	494	586	726	134	119	104	445	507	572	135	141	153	122	112	126	275	254	371	138	182	260	108	139	97
<b>Substance Awareness (% Aware)</b>																														
Meth	90%	92%	76%	86%	81%	72%	87%	85%	74%	93%	95%	74%	89%	88%	77%	87%	88%	82%	86%	89%	69%	85%	89%	71%	95%	81%	77%	91%	92%	85%
Marijuana	99%	100%	99%	98%	99%	98%	98%	99%	98%	100%	100%	100%	97%	99%	98%	99%	100%	97%	98%	100%	99%	98%	100%	99%	99%	98%	96%	99%	100%	97%
Rx Pain Relievers	n/a	62%	74%	n/a	52%	74%	n/a	55%	74%	n/a	76%	70%	n/a	59%	75%	n/a	58%	78%	n/a	50%	76%	n/a	63%	73%	n/a	56%	74%	n/a	61%	74%
Rx Stimulants	n/a	72%	72%	n/a	52%	67%	n/a	59%	69%	n/a	86%	73%	n/a	64%	73%	n/a	60%	63%	n/a	67%	69%	n/a	67%	66%	n/a	57%	75%	n/a	68%	72%
Rx Anti-Anxiety	n/a	69%	68%	n/a	58%	66%	n/a	60%	66%	n/a	91%	73%	n/a	64%	70%	n/a	65%	66%	n/a	62%	64%	n/a	71%	65%	n/a	59%	70%	n/a	68%	74%
Fentanyl	n/a	n/a	75%	n/a	n/a	71%	n/a	n/a	73%	n/a	n/a	73%	n/a	n/a	80%	n/a	n/a	71%	n/a	n/a	71%	n/a	n/a	73%	n/a	n/a	75%	n/a	n/a	73%

Shading indicates significantly higher/lower ratings from the prior survey period at the 95% level of confidence.

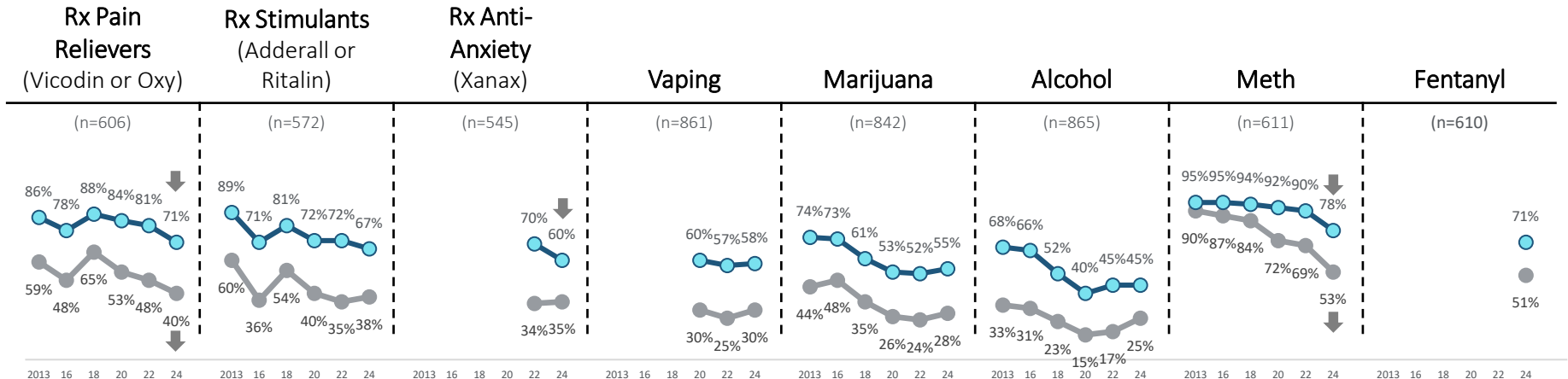
# PERCEIVED RISK OF LIMITED USE

Participants were asked how risky they believe it is to try, just once or twice, each of the eight substances shown below. Consistent with the more relaxed attitudes toward substance use is the perceived lessened risk of trying some of these once or twice, representing the continuation of a trend which has been occurring since 2018.

- The perceived risk of trying meth once or twice declined by 12 points since 2022 and 17 points since 2016.
- The perceived risk of trying pain relievers like Vicodin or Oxycontin once or twice decreased by 10 points since 2020, as did the perceived risk of using anti-anxiety medications like Xanax just once or twice (-10 points).
- The perceived risk of trying any of the other substances (stimulants, vaping, marijuana and alcohol) remained statistically stable with 2022.
- Perhaps most surprising (and concerning) is the perceived risk of trying fentanyl once or twice is at only 71% “Moderate” + “Great Risk” and only half (51%) consider this to be a “Great Risk,” slightly below meth.

“How much risk, if any, do you think there is in trying [substance] once or twice?”

% Great + Moderate Risk  
% Great Risk





# RISK OF LIMITED USE

The demographic breakouts below show many statistically significant declines in perceived risk of limited use in the 2024 columns. Significant declines are often seen among older teens (16-17), those living in Denver/Boulder and Central Colorado (which includes Colorado Springs), males, those identifying as LGBQ and Hispanic teens.

	Age 12-13			Age 14-15			Age 16-17			D/B			Central			Northeast			Northwest			Southeast			Southwest			PCN Cohort		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
sample size	97	88	107	221	328	256	261	176	267	299	327	305	87	93	95	100	52	85	38	57	42	34	92	51	21	61	24	206	418	
<b>Perceived Risk of Substance Use</b> (% Great + Moderate Risk)																														
Trying Meth	92%	93%	83%	92%	88%	81%	92%	91%	73%	90%	89%	74%	89%	93%	78%	95%	95%	85%	96%	86%	88%	100%	83%	72%	100%	89%	81%	n/a	87%	73%
Trying Marijuana	68%	58%	59%	55%	57%	53%	43%	46%	54%	51%	55%	54%	49%	57%	51%	63%	46%	51%	54%	44%	66%	46%	44%	54%	65%	45%	75%	n/a	56%	55%
Trying Rx Pain Relievers	86%	84%	67%	84%	75%	73%	83%	83%	70%	82%	77%	68%	81%	84%	70%	87%	90%	80%	91%	74%	66%	81%	86%	68%	100%	79%	82%	n/a	75%	68%
Trying Rx Stimulants	81%	75%	67%	70%	67%	60%	70%	75%	69%	69%	75%	64%	65%	76%	69%	77%	71%	73%	88%	58%	72%	66%	64%	62%	90%	55%	76%	n/a	63%	62%
Trying Rx Anti-Anxiety	n/a	72%	64%	n/a	70%	60%	n/a	70%	59%	n/a	71%	59%	n/a	74%	57%	n/a	69%	60%	n/a	62%	68%	n/a	69%	67%	n/a	62%	70%	n/a	67%	60%
Trying Alcohol	84%	62%	50%	38%	48%	45%	33%	36%	43%	35%	43%	44%	37%	54%	42%	49%	48%	46%	48%	40%	58%	43%	43%	43%	76%	45%	62%	n/a	45%	44%
Trying Vaping	90%	69%	64%	57%	57%	56%	55%	50%	56%	58%	61%	56%	56%	62%	58%	70%	52%	57%	61%	33%	64%	53%	44%	59%	84%	49%	73%	n/a	60%	57%
Trying Fentanyl	n/a	n/a	77%	n/a	n/a	70%	n/a	n/a	70%	n/a	n/a	67%	n/a	n/a	74%	n/a	n/a	77%	n/a	n/a	73%	n/a	n/a	74%	n/a	n/a	85%	n/a	n/a	64%

	Female			Male			Heterosexual			LGBQ			Caucasian			Hispanic			<\$50k			\$50-74k			\$75-99k			\$100k+		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
sample size	311	295	283	260	280	305	437	509	523	123	79	75	395	398	419	121	109	118	109	140	95	236	220	267	127	116	188	98	94	80
<b>Perceived Risk of Substance Use</b> (% Great + Moderate Risk)																														
Trying Meth	92%	89%	80%	93%	92%	74%	93%	90%	77%	87%	95%	82%	82%	91%	80%	89%	94%	77%	92%	90%	71%	91%	91%	79%	92%	91%	77%	95%	90%	81%
Trying Marijuana	50%	46%	56%	54%	61%	55%	54%	58%	56%	37%	26%	47%	52%	51%	55%	57%	57%	44%	55%	45%	55%	53%	53%	58%	49%	51%	52%	58%	57%	45%
Trying Rx Pain Relievers	84%	78%	73%	84%	82%	70%	85%	78%	71%	77%	87%	68%	85%	80%	75%	79%	89%	69%	87%	84%	70%	85%	86%	74%	84%	77%	68%	86%	75%	66%
Trying Rx Stimulants	69%	68%	69%	75%	76%	67%	76%	70%	68%	54%	80%	62%	73%	78%	70%	67%	60%	63%	53%	67%	61%	76%	74%	74%	69%	77%	63%	70%	74%	64%
Trying Rx Anti-Anxiety	n/a	71%	63%	n/a	70%	60%	n/a	70%	62%	n/a	71%	53%	n/a	71%	63%	n/a	80%	55%	n/a	68%	60%	n/a	74%	65%	n/a	67%	58%	n/a	73%	53%
Trying Alcohol	39%	41%	47%	41%	51%	45%	41%	49%	47%	35%	28%	38%	40%	44%	47%	40%	50%	42%	41%	45%	47%	39%	47%	50%	44%	44%	43%	34%	45%	33%
Trying Vaping	60%	50%	58%	61%	65%	60%	62%	59%	59%	53%	44%	48%	60%	57%	60%	60%	62%	52%	58%	55%	56%	57%	55%	59%	67%	60%	56%	65%	57%	57%
Trying Fentanyl	n/a	n/a	73%	n/a	n/a	69%	n/a	n/a	70%	n/a	n/a	84%	n/a	n/a	76%	n/a	n/a	75%	n/a	n/a	74%	n/a	n/a	72%	n/a	n/a	69%	n/a	n/a	74%

Shading indicates significantly higher/lower ratings from the prior survey period at the 95% level of confidence.

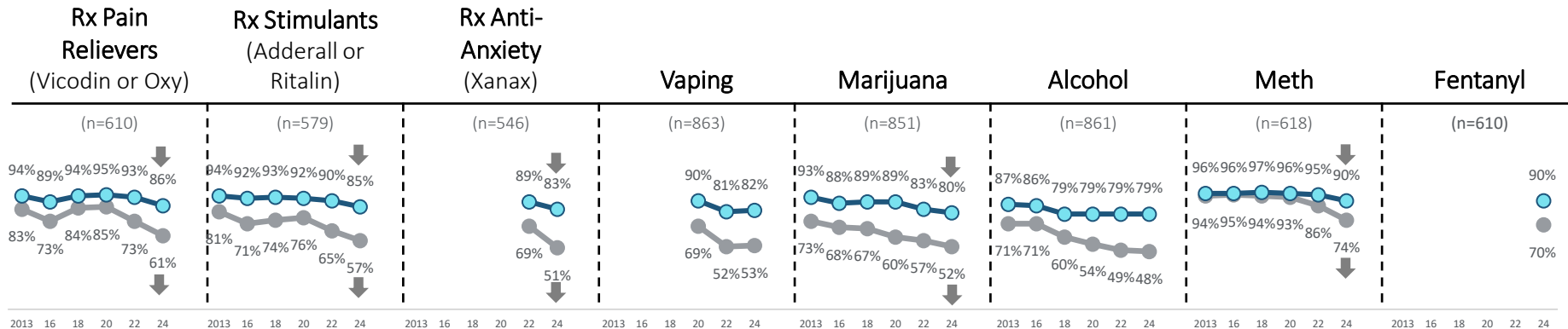
# PERCEIVED RISK OF REGULAR USE

When asked how risky teens believe it is to use these same substances on a regular basis, patterns are similar to those of limited use. Fewer teens today than in 2022 view significant risk in the regular use of meth, prescription pain relievers, stimulants and anti-anxiety medications as well as marijuana.

- Regular use of fentanyl is considered a “Great Risk” to 70% of respondents and at least a “Moderate Risk” to 90%, aligning closely with the risk associated with regular use of meth.
- The risk of vaping on a regular basis or drinking alcohol regularly remained constant with 2022. No substance was seen as having an increased risk of regular use today compared to 2022.

“How much risk, if any, do you think there is in using [substance] on a regular basis?”

● Great + Moderate Risk  
● Great Risk



# RISK OF REGULAR USE

The table below once again shows a substantial number of significant declines in the 2024 columns, which follow the same patterns as we saw with limited use of these same substances.

	Age 12-13			Age 14-15			Age 16-17			D/B			Central			Northeast			Northwest			Southeast			Southwest			PCN Cohort		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	97	85	107	221	319	234	261	174	252	299	233	305	87	89	95	100	50	85	38	57	42	34	91	51	21	58	24	201	418	
<b>Perceived Risk of Substance Use (% Great + Moderate Risk)</b>																														
Using <b>Meth</b> regularly	97%	92%	92%	97%	96%	89%	95%	96%	89%	95%	94%	88%	95%	96%	90%	96%	97%	90%	97%	99%	90%	99%	94%	95%	100%	92%	90%	n/a	97%	87%
Using <b>Marijuana</b> regularly	89%	77%	78%	80%	82%	83%	73%	76%	79%	79%	79%	78%	71%	77%	78%	88%	80%	82%	81%	70%	78%	80%	75%	86%	89%	85%	93%	n/a	85%	81%
Using <b>Rx Pain Relievers</b> regularly	95%	94%	86%	94%	92%	87%	95%	94%	86%	94%	94%	84%	95%	95%	84%	95%	86%	92%	98%	96%	81%	99%	95%	91%	100%	97%	100%	n/a	93%	85%
Using <b>Rx Stimulants</b> regularly	95%	84%	85%	90%	89%	84%	91%	92%	86%	90%	90%	82%	94%	92%	92%	90%	88%	86%	97%	88%	78%	90%	92%	93%	100%	80%	94%	n/a	91%	81%
Using <b>Rx Anti-Anxiety</b> regularly	n/a	82%	87%	n/a	90%	81%	n/a	90%	84%	n/a	88%	81%	n/a	91%	83%	n/a	86%	86%	n/a	92%	77%	n/a	96%	90%	n/a	85%	95%	n/a	92%	84%
Drinking <b>Alcohol</b> regularly	90%	83%	84%	90%	84%	82%	88%	81%	74%	89%	83%	76%	93%	84%	80%	86%	80%	79%	88%	73%	81%	84%	89%	81%	95%	81%	96%	n/a	89%	77%
<b>Vaping</b> regularly	92%	68%	82%	91%	81%	82%	87%	87%	82%	90%	82%	81%	88%	81%	81%	91%	80%	83%	94%	75%	81%	83%	81%	86%	100%	71%	93%	n/a	83%	83%
Using <b>Fentanyl</b> regularly	n/a	n/a	88%	n/a	n/a	91%	n/a	n/a	88%	n/a	n/a	88%	n/a	n/a	88%	n/a	n/a	92%	n/a	n/a	83%	n/a	n/a	100%	n/a	n/a	97%	n/a	n/a	88%

	Female			Male			Heterosexual			LGBQ			Caucasian			Hispanic			<\$50k			\$50-74k			\$75-99k			\$100k+		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	311	292	283	260	269	305	437	495	523	123	79	75	395	390	419	121	107	118	109	137	95	236	214	267	127	116	188	98	90	80
<b>Perceived Risk of Substance Use (% Great + Moderate Risk)</b>																														
Using <b>Meth</b> regularly	96%	95%	90%	96%	94%	89%	97%	95%	90%	92%	96%	89%	97%	95%	90%	94%	94%	91%	95%	95%	95%	95%	97%	88%	96%	93%	89%	98%	94%	91%
Using <b>Marijuana</b> regularly	78%	77%	82%	81%	82%	79%	83%	83%	81%	68%	59%	75%	80%	75%	79%	75%	79%	79%	79%	78%	83%	81%	81%	81%	77%	78%	77%	81%	75%	82%
Using <b>Rx Pain Relievers</b> regularly	95%	94%	85%	95%	92%	86%	96%	91%	85%	88%	99%	92%	95%	93%	86%	92%	95%	89%	96%	92%	88%	94%	93%	88%	96%	91%	82%	96%	98%	91%
Using <b>Rx Stimulants</b> regularly	93%	90%	85%	90%	90%	85%	94%	88%	85%	84%	95%	87%	93%	89%	85%	88%	89%	88%	89%	88%	83%	93%	90%	90%	91%	89%	79%	92%	92%	89%
Using <b>Rx Anti-Anxiety</b> regularly	n/a	86%	84%	n/a	92%	82%	n/a	87%	84%	n/a	93%	78%	n/a	88%	82%	n/a	85%	86%	n/a	82%	80%	n/a	91%	85%	n/a	89%	82%	n/a	87%	81%
Drinking <b>Alcohol</b> regularly	90%	85%	82%	87%	80%	75%	90%	80%	79%	87%	94%	76%	88%	79%	79%	89%	84%	82%	88%	85%	82%	90%	85%	83%	88%	79%	74%	92%	82%	73%
<b>Vaping</b> regularly	92%	80%	81%	87%	81%	83%	90%	80%	83%	87%	87%	78%	90%	79%	81%	88%	83%	83%	86%	85%	83%	91%	82%	84%	92%	74%	80%	90%	85%	81%
Using <b>Fentanyl</b> regularly	n/a	n/a	88%	n/a	n/a	90%	n/a	n/a	89%	n/a	n/a	88%	n/a	n/a	89%	n/a	n/a	94%	n/a	n/a	95%	n/a	n/a	93%	n/a	n/a	85%	n/a	n/a	83%

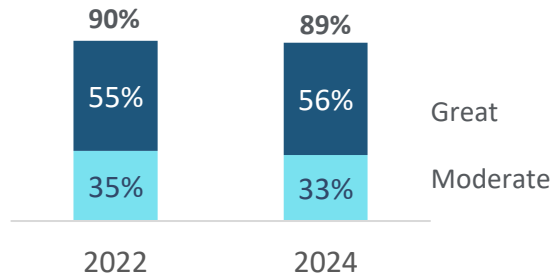
Shading indicates significantly higher/lower ratings from the prior survey period at the 95% level of confidence.

# PERCEIVED RISK OF COUNTERFEIT PILLS

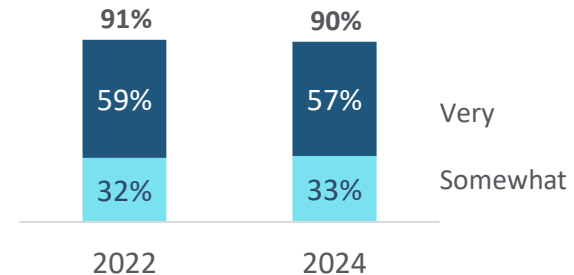
The perceived risk of taking a pill that someone got online or off the street held stable with 2022, with 89% considering this to be either a “Great” or “Moderate Risk.”

Concern that a pill being offered to them may be counterfeit or laced with substances like fentanyl also remained stable with 2022, with 90% saying they would be “Very” or “Somewhat Concerned” about this.

“How risky do you think it is to take pills that someone got online or on the street?”



“If someone offered you a pill that was not prescribed to you, how concerned would you be that it might be fake or “counterfeit,” and could contain other substances like fentanyl that could cause an overdose?”



“The blue pills that are fentanyl are all over my school. I know of 2 kids my age that have overdosed on them. Some of my friends actually have tried them before even”  
– 16-year-old female, Central Colorado

# PREVENTING OVERDOSES

Demographically we find a decline in concern about pills acquired online or on the street since 2022 among older teens (16-17), those in the Denver/Boulder region, those who identify as LGBQ and those with household incomes over \$100k. On the other hand, greater concern about fentanyl-laced pills is seen among teens living in more rural parts of the state: Northeast, Northwest and Southeast regions of Colorado.

	Age 12-13		Age 14-15		Age 16-17		D/B		Central		Northeast		Northwest		Southeast		Southwest		PCN Cohort		
	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	
<i>sample size</i>	108	155	413	357	195	358	283	451	110	123	62	121	74	62	109	69	78	44	236	422	
<b>Top-Box Rating</b> (Great Risk/Very Concerned)																					
Risk of taking a pill that was acquired online or on the street	49%	60%	46%	52%	67%	56%	62%	51%	54%	51%	47%	67%	45%	66%	41%	66%	43%	55%	59%	49%	
Concern that a pill may be counterfeit or laced with other substances	49%	63%	57%	50%	66%	60%	64%	60%	51%	56%	55%	62%	48%	53%	65%	69%	51%	60%	64%	51%	

	Female		Male		Heterosexual		LGBQ		Caucasian		Hispanic		<\$50k		\$50-74k		\$75-99k		\$100k+		
	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	2022	2024	
<i>sample size</i>	345	408	353	444	622	745	86	105	485	583	133	153	163	131	262	374	155	263	107	102	
<b>Top-Box Rating</b> (Great Risk/Very Concerned)																					
Risk of taking a pill that was acquired online or on the street	58%	61%	50%	49%	50%	53%	85%	70%	57%	56%	53%	63%	45%	53%	57%	58%	49%	52%	72%	58%	
Concern that a pill may be counterfeit or laced with other substances	61%	60%	55%	52%	57%	55%	71%	66%	58%	57%	55%	61%	65%	56%	60%	57%	53%	56%	67%	60%	

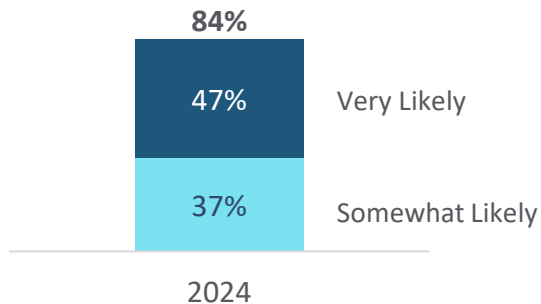
Shading indicates significantly higher/lower ratings from the prior survey period at the 95% level of confidence.

# PREVENTING OVERDOSES

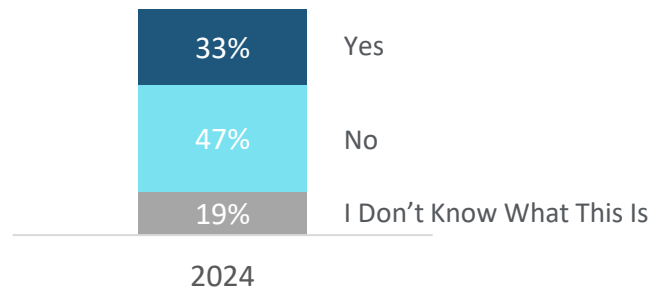
New to the survey this year were two questions specific to fentanyl: (1) Whether they would try to stop someone from taking a drug or pill because they thought it might be laced with fentanyl, and (2) Whether they have thought about carrying naloxone or Narcan in case someone around them overdoses from fentanyl.

- Half of teens surveyed (47%) said they would be “very likely” to try to stop someone from taking a pill because it might be laced with fentanyl and 84% say they would be at least “somewhat likely” to do so.
- One-third of teens (33%) said they have thought about carrying naloxone in case someone around them overdoses. Two out of ten (19%) said they did not know what naloxone or Narcan is, and half (47%) said they have not thought about doing this.

“How likely would you be to try to stop a friend from taking a drug or pill because it might be laced with fentanyl?”



“Have you thought about carrying naloxone or Narcan with you in case someone around you overdoses?”



- “Finding constructive ways to have fun and socialize without relying on substances is a significant challenge. It often feels like drugs and alcohol are the only options for having a good time” –16-year-old female, Denver/Boulder
- “Overcoming the fear of missing out on social events or activities where drugs and alcohol are present can be challenging. It's important to remember that there are plenty of other enjoyable experiences to be had” – 16-year-old female, Denver/Boulder
- “One of the biggest challenges I face as a 17-year-old today is having to say no and hold my boundaries firm when other teens around me are doing things I’m not comfortable with trying to force me to do them as well” –17-year-old female, Denver/Boulder

# PREVENTING OVERDOSES

Very few significant differences are found between teens of different demographic characteristics and their responses to these two new questions:

- Teens who identify as LGBQ are significantly more likely than average to say they would stop a friend from taking a pill if they thought it might be laced with fentanyl.
- Youngest teens (12-13) and Hispanic teens are significantly less likely to have thought about carrying naloxone, while oldest teens (16-17) are significantly more likely to have thought about doing this.

	Would Stop a Friend	Have Thought About Carrying Naloxone
<b>Total (n=884)</b>	47%	33%
Female (n=415)	51%	34%
Male (n=451)	42%	34%
Heterosexual (n=759)	44%	34%
LGBQ (n=105)	63%	33%
Caucasian (n=593)	49%	35%
Hispanic (n=155)	47%	25%
<\$50k (n=131)	41%	32%
\$50-74k (n=382)	51%	32%
\$75-99k (n=268)	43%	38%
\$100k+ (n=103)	49%	28%
12-13 (n=157)	53%	25%
14-15 (n=363)	46%	30%
16-17 (n=364)	45%	40%
D/B (n=464)	44%	35%
Central (n=124)	48%	35%
Northeast (n=121)	47%	32%
Northwest (n=62)	57%	27%
Southeast (n=69)	57%	30%
Southwest (n=44)	55%	30%
PCN Cohort (n=431)	44%	35%



# DISCOURAGING FRIENDS

Participants were asked if they would encourage their friends to quit if they knew they were using any of the four substances to the right.

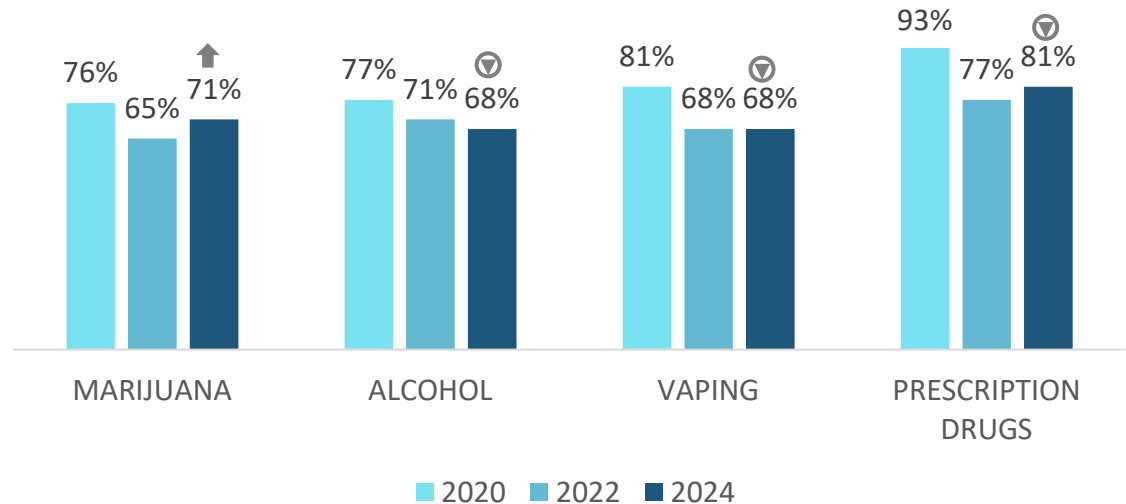
Slightly more Colorado youth said they would encourage their friends to stop using marijuana this year than in 2022, up six points to 71%, although still five points below 2020.

No significant changes are found since 2022 for encouraging friends to stop using alcohol, vaping, or prescription drugs, all significantly lower than what was seen in 2020.

The substance teens are most likely to say they would encourage their friends to stop using is prescription drugs at 81%, statistically unchanged from 2022 although also lower than 2020.

“Would you encourage a friend to stop if you knew they were using [substance]?”

% YES



# SUBSTANCE **CURIOSITY & USE**

- 
- ▶ CURIOSITY TO TRY
  - ▶ SUBSTANCE OFFERS
  - ▶ EASE OF ACCESS
  - ▶ SUBSTANCE USE

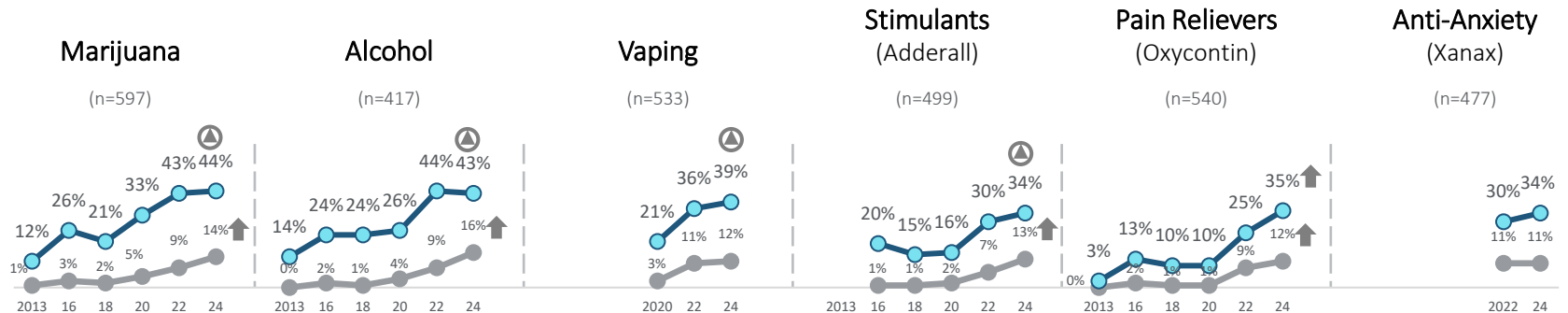
# CURIOSITY TO TRY SUBSTANCES

Approximately four out of ten teens who never tried any of the substances shown below said they would be either “Very” or “Somewhat Curious” to try marijuana, alcohol and vaping. One-third said they would be curious to try stimulants, pain relievers and anti-anxiety medications.

- Compared to 2022, the only substance with a significantly higher level of curiosity is prescription pain relievers like Oxycontin, where curiosity has grown from 10% in both 2018 and 2020 to more than double that amount in 2022 (25%) and then topped with an additional 10 points in 2024, reaching 35%.
- Also concerning is that the highest level of curiosity (“Very Curious”) is significantly higher than 2022 for marijuana (+5), alcohol (+7), prescription stimulants (+6) and pain relievers (+3).

“How curious would you be to try [substance] if someone were to give it to you?”  
*(Asked of those who have heard of, but never used, each of the following substances)*

% Very + Somewhat Curious  
 % Very Curious



# DIRECT OFFERS

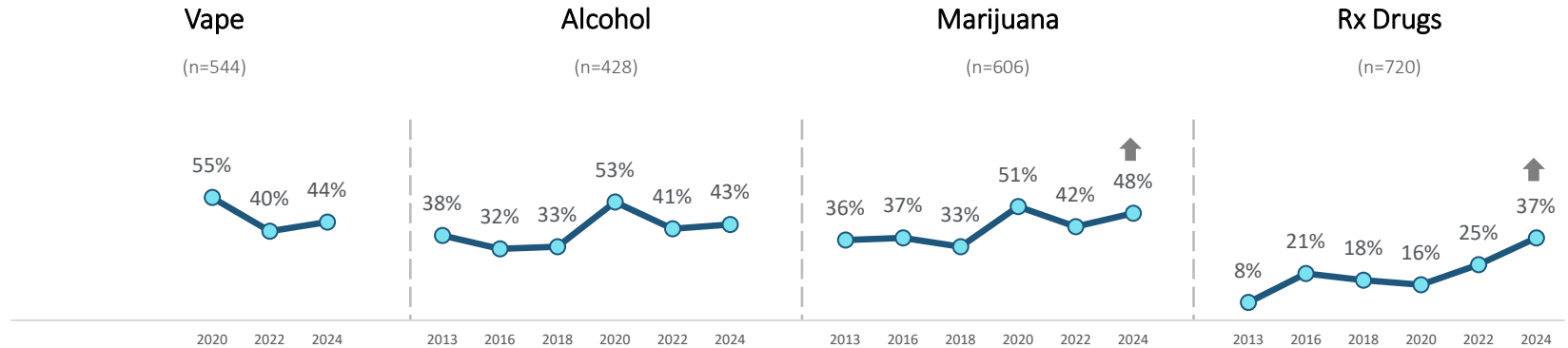
Teens who said they have never used these substances were also asked if anyone has ever tried to get them to use them in the past.

- Nearly half of those who never used marijuana (48%) said they had been offered it in the past, and nearly as many (around four out of ten) have been offered alcohol (43%), vape (44%), and/or prescription drugs (37%).

The greatest increase in direct offers over time is for prescription drugs, which are up 12 percentage points since 2022 and 21 points since 2020.

“Has anyone ever offered you or tried to get you to use [substance]?”

% Yes



# DIRECT OFFERS

Increases in direct offers compared to 2022 were most likely to be seen among males and older teens (16-17 years of age), although for both of these demographic segments, direct offers today for marijuana, alcohol and vapes are lower than what was reported in 2020. The substance that has steadily increased in terms of direct offers is prescription drugs.

- Offers of prescription drugs among those who have never tried them are at near equal levels for all age groups, both males and females, Caucasians and Hispanics and all income categories.

	Age 12-13			Age 14-15			Age 16-17			D/B			Central			Northeast			Northwest			Southeast			Southwest			PCN Cohort		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	97	88	122	221	348	223	261	176	210	299	235	293	87	98	83	100	56	70	38	55	44	34	100	43	21	68	34	193	304	
<b>Have Been Offered (% Yes)</b>																														
Marijuana	31%	49%	38%	46%	38%	46%	67%	41%	57%	53%	39%	50%	55%	42%	39%	40%	49%	48%	40%	39%	62%	66%	45%	42%	59%	41%	57%	n/a	44%	54%
Rx drugs not prescribed to you	13%	29%	34%	13%	26%	38%	19%	23%	38%	17%	29%	38%	18%	24%	36%	8%	14%	36%	8%	23%	45%	30%	25%	44%	11%	18%	21%	n/a	26%	41%
Alcohol	28%	40%	33%	51%	43%	38%	68%	40%	55%	54%	34%	43%	54%	53%	43%	39%	49%	40%	53%	50%	53%	66%	35%	31%	70%	46%	51%	n/a	44%	51%
Vape	34%	35%	36%	49%	38%	42%	71%	45%	50%	55%	40%	48%	65%	38%	33%	42%	43%	38%	41%	39%	46%	65%	42%	36%	60%	43%	48%	n/a	43%	48%
	Female			Male			Heterosexual			LGBQ			Caucasian			Hispanic			<\$50k			\$50-74k			\$75-99k			\$100k+		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	311	299	279	260	295	314	437	525	523	123	81	71	395	402	416	121	123	104	109	149	101	236	218	238	127	128	157	98	92	80
<b>Have Been Offered (% Yes)</b>																														
Marijuana	50%	43%	50%	53%	39%	48%	49%	39%	49%	61%	58%	45%	48%	42%	47%	61%	38%	49%	63%	55%	55%	51%	45%	48%	45%	38%	50%	46%	34%	42%
Rx drugs not prescribed to you	15%	28%	36%	17%	22%	38%	13%	26%	38%	25%	21%	34%	16%	23%	33%	16%	30%	41%	26%	24%	45%	11%	28%	38%	15%	25%	34%	17%	18%	35%
Alcohol	54%	43%	42%	51%	40%	44%	51%	41%	44%	65%	47%	39%	52%	40%	41%	59%	48%	47%	56%	53%	30%	54%	41%	44%	49%	36%	48%	51%	40%	39%
Vape	52%	44%	42%	57%	36%	45%	55%	38%	44%	57%	46%	45%	53%	40%	41%	61%	32%	57%	62%	36%	49%	52%	45%	42%	49%	39%	45%	57%	38%	40%

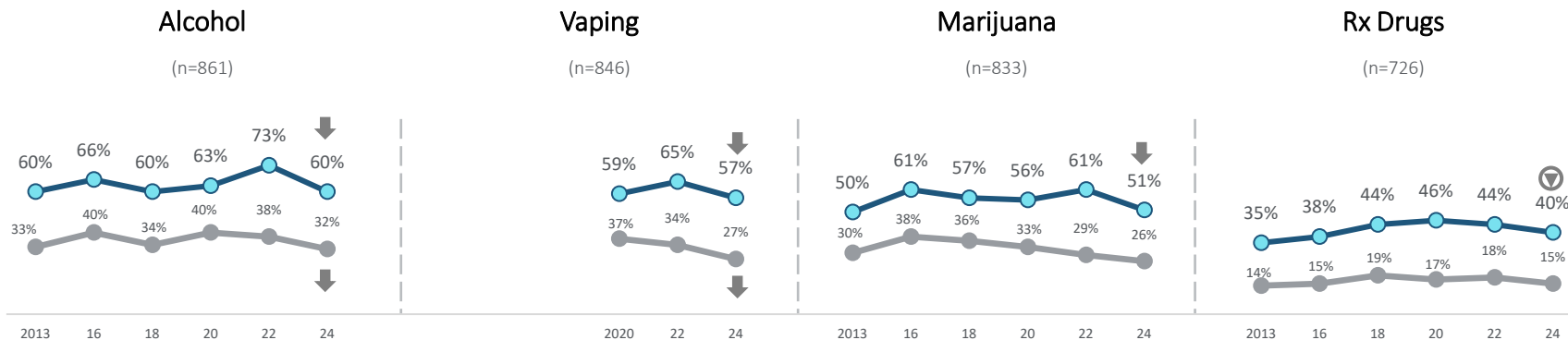
Shading indicates significantly higher/lower ratings from the prior survey period at the 95% level of confidence.

# EASE OF ACCESS

These data paint a concerning trifecta of (1) reduced concern about the risk of using most substances, (2) increase in curiosity in trying many substances and (3) increased direct offers. Fortunately, a barrier to use is the fact that teens are finding it more difficult to get most substances today than was reported in 2022, aligning more closely with 2020 and earlier.

“How difficult, or easy, do you think it would be for YOU to get [substance]?”

% Very + Somewhat Easy  
% Very Easy



# EASE OF ACCESS

Ease of access declined across several demographic groups but especially among females, those who identify as heterosexual, Caucasians, those living in the Denver/Boulder area and those with household incomes of \$50-74k.

Noteworthy in these data is again the “leveling off” of results across most demographic groups, with all finding each of the substances equally easy (or difficult) to acquire.

	Age 12-13			Age 14-15			Age 16-17			D/B			Central			Northeast			Northwest			Southeast			Southwest			PCN Cohort		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
sample size	97	90	143	221	338	343	261	180	346	299	244	426	87	94	117	100	52	116	38	60	60	34	96	67	21	62	44	209	415	
<b>Ease of Access (% Very + Somewhat)</b>																														
Marijuana	32%	58%	46%	53%	56%	47%	71%	68%	56%	58%	62%	46%	49%	65%	52%	55%	59%	62%	57%	60%	60%	67%	62%	40%	50%	41%	66%	n/a	58%	47%
Rx drugs not prescribed to you	35%	44%	39%	46%	39%	41%	50%	48%	40%	46%	43%	38%	38%	45%	39%	55%	47%	41%	41%	49%	48%	51%	46%	39%	60%	33%	50%	n/a	35%	41%
Alcohol	43%	63%	52%	66%	68%	57%	72%	82%	67%	66%	75%	57%	53%	65%	60%	61%	82%	71%	71%	72%	70%	66%	64%	48%	53%	49%	61%	n/a	71%	59%
Vape	39%	53%	45%	58%	61%	54%	71%	74%	66%	61%	70%	55%	52%	63%	58%	55%	60%	63%	63%	57%	68%	66%	57%	51%	48%	45%	52%	n/a	64%	56%

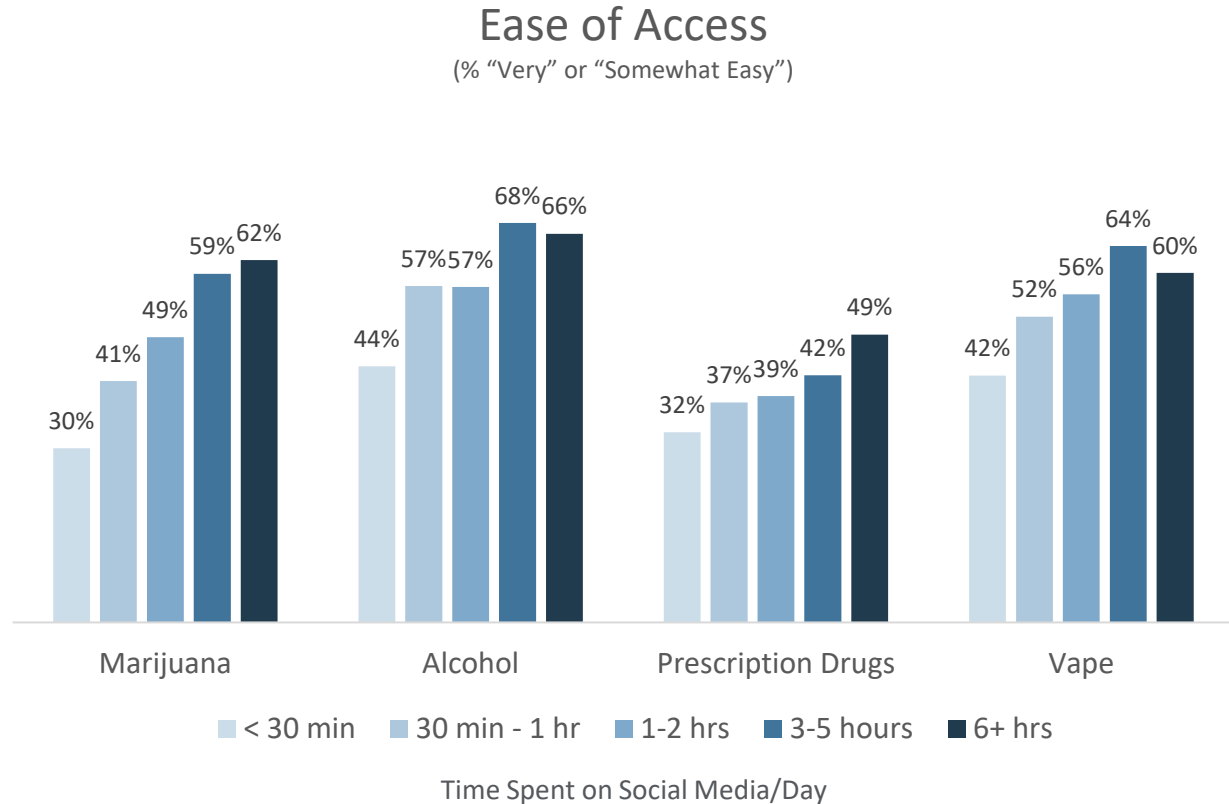
	Female			Male			Heterosexual			LGBQ			Caucasian			Hispanic			<\$50k			\$50-74k			\$75-99k			\$100k+		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
sample size	311	308	394	260	282	431	437	521	714	123	82	102	395	412	558	121	112	150	109	144	126	236	223	366	127	121	229	98	98	100
<b>Ease of Access (% Very + Somewhat)</b>																														
Marijuana	58%	65%	51%	54%	56%	49%	54%	58%	49%	64%	74%	67%	57%	61%	52%	55%	61%	55%	56%	64%	50%	60%	63%	52%	50%	61%	49%	54%	61%	54%
Rx drugs not prescribed to you	50%	48%	40%	42%	38%	39%	42%	37%	39%	61%	71%	50%	46%	47%	40%	44%	48%	41%	42%	50%	47%	42%	41%	38%	49%	49%	39%	54%	45%	43%
Alcohol	66%	78%	59%	60%	69%	60%	62%	71%	59%	70%	79%	72%	64%	72%	61%	58%	82%	59%	44%	67%	62%	42%	73%	59%	42%	71%	59%	49%	79%	69%
Vape	60%	66%	58%	58%	65%	56%	58%	64%	56%	60%	70%	71%	59%	67%	58%	55%	76%	60%	56%	61%	62%	56%	66%	58%	56%	64%	54%	72%	72%	59%

Shading indicates significantly higher/lower ratings from the prior survey period at the 95% level of confidence.

# EASE OF ACCESS

Also of interest was whether ease of access is related to the time spent on social media. To test this hypothesis, we looked at whether these two measures move in a similar pattern.

As hypothesized, ease of access to these substances tends to increase with the amount of time spent on social media, especially with regard to marijuana, from 30% finding it easy to obtain among those who spend less than 30 minutes per day on social media per day to 62% for those who spend 6+ hours.





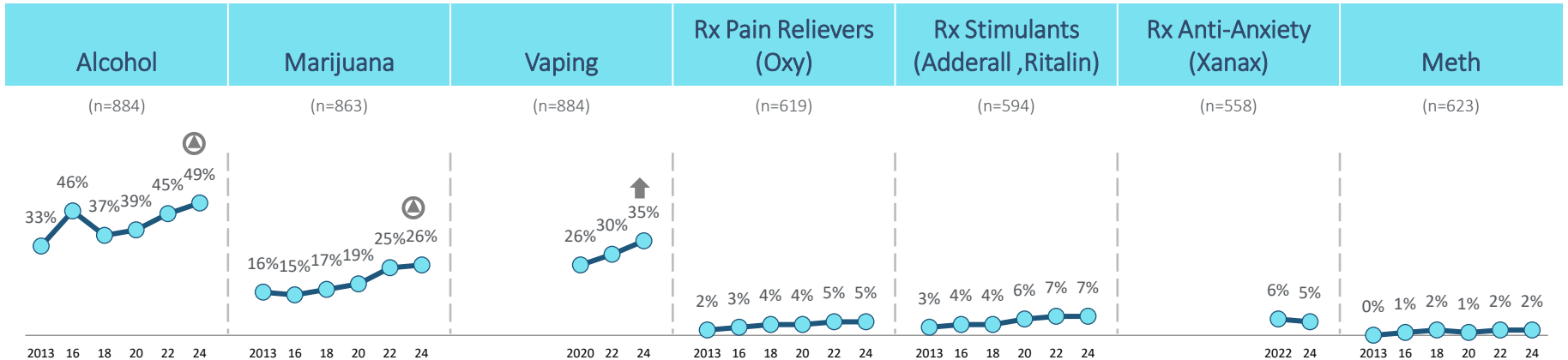
# SUBSTANCE USE (Ever)

When it comes to self-reported substance use, the percentage of Colorado teens who say they have used alcohol and marijuana at some point in their lives both remained statistically unchanged since 2022, although significantly higher when compared to 2020.

Self-reported use of prescription pain relievers and stimulants have experienced slow but steady gains over the years, although current levels are not significantly different from either 2022 or 2020.

The only statistically significant change in substance usage compared to 2022 is in vaping, which 35% of teens now report that they have done at some point in their lives (versus 30% in 2022).

“Have you EVER tried [substance]?” (% Yes)



Correlating use of different substances to one another allows us to see if certain substances tend to go together.

From this analysis, two groupings are found:

1. All three prescription medications tend to be intercorrelated with one another and less strongly correlated to other substances, implying use of one prescription medication is often associated with the use of others, while having less of a relationship to other substances.
2. Marijuana, alcohol and vaping tend to be fairly strongly intercorrelated with one another.
3. In addition, we see use of meth (among the 2% who reported using meth) is most strongly correlated to prescription pain relievers like Oxycontin and stimulants like Adderall.

## Correlation Coefficients

	Marijuana	Rx Pain Relievers (Oxy)	Rx Stimulants (Adderall)	Rx Anti-Anxiety (Xanax)	Alcohol	Vape
Meth	0.25	<b>0.40</b>	0.38	0.31	0.16	0.24
Marijuana	1	0.26	0.31	0.31	<b>0.44</b>	<b>0.47</b>
Rx Pain Relievers (Oxy)		1	0.36	<b>0.45</b>	0.24	0.29
Rx Stimulants (Adderall)			1	<b>0.39</b>	0.29	0.33
Rx Anti-Anxiety (Xanax)				1	0.23	0.30
Alcohol					1	<b>0.55</b>
Vape						1

All correlations shown are statistically significant at the 95% level of confidence.

# SUBSTANCE USE

Substance use tends to increase with age, although not as dramatically as we have seen in past years. Significant increases are seen among males, whose use now mirrors females. Once again, while there are quite a few significant increases, most tend to bring different segments closer to the overall average.

	Age 12-13			Age 14-15			Age 16-17			D/B			Central			Northeast			Northwest			Southeast			Southwest			PCN Cohort		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	135	108	120	238	412	209	280	197	270	344	284	443	100	110	118	112	63	90	38	74	45	35	108	49	24	78	25	236	422	
<b>Substance Use (% Ever Used)</b>																														
Meth	1%	2%	<b>2%</b>	1%	2%	<b>2%</b>	0%	1%	<b>3%</b>	1%	1%	<b>2%</b>	2%	3%	<b>2%</b>	1%	1%	<b>3%</b>	0%	3%	<b>5%</b>	0%	1%	<b>8%</b>	0%	3%	<b>6%</b>	n/a	2%	<b>2%</b>
Marijuana	8%	13%	<b>20%</b>	15%	<b>25%</b>	<b>28%</b>	28%	31%	<b>31%</b>	18%	<b>30%</b>	<b>23%</b>	20%	19%	<b>28%</b>	14%	15%	<b>40%</b>	8%	<b>27%</b>	<b>28%</b>	37%	28%	<b>34%</b>	33%	17%	<b>22%</b>	n/a	25%	<b>23%</b>
Rx Pain Relievers	3%	7%	<b>5%</b>	3%	6%	<b>6%</b>	6%	3%	<b>8%</b>	4%	6%	<b>6%</b>	6%	2%	<b>5%</b>	5%	7%	<b>8%</b>	0%	<b>8%</b>	<b>13%</b>	5%	4%	<b>14%</b>	0%	4%	<b>5%</b>	n/a	8%	<b>6%</b>
Rx Stimulants	4%	5%	<b>7%</b>	4%	<b>10%</b>	<b>13%</b>	9%	7%	<b>11%</b>	6%	8%	<b>10%</b>	9%	8%	<b>6%</b>	4%	6%	<b>10%</b>	1%	<b>12%</b>	<b>17%</b>	12%	2%	<b>25%</b>	0%	<b>11%</b>	<b>14%</b>	n/a	9%	<b>9%</b>
Rx Anti-Anxiety	n/a	7%	<b>6%</b>	n/a	6%	<b>10%</b>	n/a	6%	<b>8%</b>	n/a	7%	<b>8%</b>	n/a	4%	<b>6%</b>	n/a	5%	<b>9%</b>	n/a	7%	<b>14%</b>	n/a	7%	<b>17%</b>	n/a	5%	<b>6%</b>	n/a	6%	<b>7%</b>
Alcohol	24%	<b>37%</b>	<b>42%</b>	37%	43%	<b>48%</b>	50%	51%	<b>56%</b>	40%	<b>51%</b>	<b>46%</b>	36%	38%	<b>53%</b>	37%	40%	<b>64%</b>	38%	41%	<b>68%</b>	48%	42%	<b>46%</b>	38%	32%	<b>24%</b>	n/a	50%	<b>47%</b>
Vape	14%	20%	<b>29%</b>	25%	29%	<b>36%</b>	34%	35%	<b>40%</b>	28%	33%	<b>33%</b>	28%	26%	<b>36%</b>	17%	25%	<b>49%</b>	20%	30%	<b>49%</b>	33%	27%	<b>33%</b>	27%	22%	<b>10%</b>	n/a	29%	<b>34%</b>

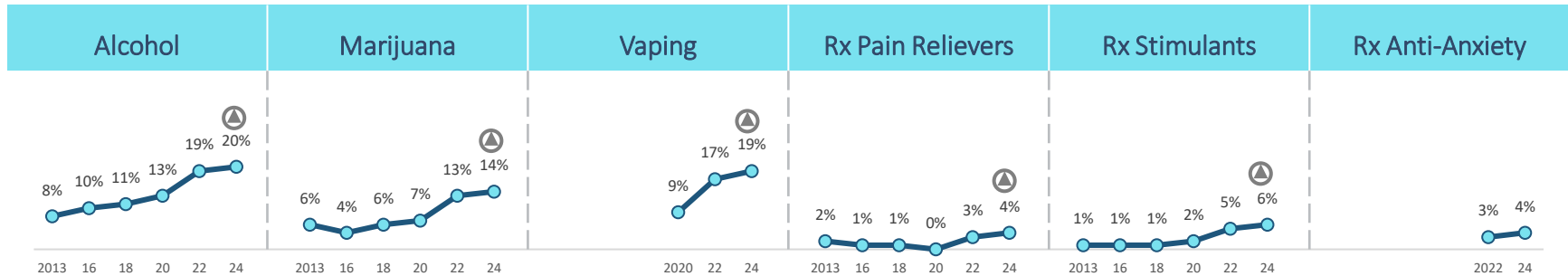
	Female			Male			Heterosexual			LGBQ			Caucasian			Hispanic			<\$50k			\$50-74k			\$75-99k			\$100k+		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	350	361	400	294	332	434	494	586	728	134	119	102	445	507	567	135	141	123	122	112	124	275	254	262	138	182	189	108	139	100
<b>Substance Use (% Ever Used)</b>																														
Meth	1%	1%	<b>2%</b>	1%	2%	<b>4%</b>	1%	2%	<b>3%</b>	1%	1%	<b>1%</b>	1%	1%	<b>2%</b>	1%	0%	<b>1%</b>	2%	2%	<b>5%</b>	1%	3%	<b>3%</b>	1%	1%	<b>2%</b>	0%	0%	<b>0%</b>
Marijuana	20%	<b>30%</b>	<b>29%</b>	18%	19%	<b>27%</b>	17%	<b>23%</b>	<b>27%</b>	29%	34%	<b>29%</b>	18%	23%	<b>25%</b>	26%	29%	<b>31%</b>	29%	24%	<b>36%</b>	17%	<b>30%</b>	<b>30%</b>	14%	20%	<b>23%</b>	18%	22%	<b>21%</b>
Rx Pain Relievers	6%	7%	<b>6%</b>	3%	4%	<b>9%</b>	4%	6%	<b>7%</b>	5%	3%	<b>6%</b>	4%	5%	<b>7%</b>	6%	4%	<b>8%</b>	4%	7%	<b>14%</b>	3%	5%	<b>4%</b>	6%	5%	<b>8%</b>	5%	4%	<b>6%</b>
Rx Stimulants	6%	<b>10%</b>	<b>11%</b>	6%	6%	<b>11%</b>	5%	<b>9%</b>	<b>11%</b>	9%	<b>3%</b>	<b>13%</b>	6%	5%	<b>9%</b>	6%	10%	<b>10%</b>	5%	9%	<b>22%</b>	3%	<b>7%</b>	<b>8%</b>	9%	9%	<b>11%</b>	9%	7%	<b>5%</b>
Rx Anti-Anxiety	n/a	7%	<b>7%</b>	n/a	6%	<b>11%</b>	n/a	6%	<b>9%</b>	n/a	7%	<b>9%</b>	n/a	5%	<b>8%</b>	n/a	8%	<b>5%</b>	n/a	4%	<b>11%</b>	n/a	8%	<b>6%</b>	n/a	7%	<b>10%</b>	n/a	5%	<b>9%</b>
Alcohol	41%	<b>52%</b>	<b>51%</b>	38%	39%	<b>49%</b>	37%	<b>45%</b>	<b>50%</b>	49%	48%	<b>58%</b>	41%	42%	<b>49%</b>	41%	51%	<b>51%</b>	43%	38%	<b>55%</b>	41%	48%	<b>51%</b>	35%	45%	<b>50%</b>	35%	45%	<b>46%</b>
Vape	28%	<b>35%</b>	<b>37%</b>	25%	25%	<b>36%</b>	26%	28%	<b>36%</b>	30%	39%	<b>34%</b>	25%	28%	<b>34%</b>	34%	36%	<b>40%</b>	29%	33%	<b>36%</b>	24%	30%	<b>38%</b>	24%	28%	<b>38%</b>	30%	27%	<b>27%</b>

Shading indicates significantly higher/lower ratings from the prior survey period at the 95% level of confidence.

# RECENT SUBSTANCE USE

When it comes to **recent** substance use (within the past 30 days), use of all six substances below remain statistically unchanged from 2022, although significantly higher than 2020 as well as prior years (except for anti-anxiety medications, which were not asked about until 2022).

“In the past 30 days, have you used ...”



# RECENT SUBSTANCE USE

Few statistically significant changes are seen demographically in terms of recent substance use aside from males, whose usage figures now mirror that of females.

	Age 12-13			Age 14-15			Age 16-17			D/B			Central			Northeast			Northwest			Southeast			Southwest			PCN Cohort		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	135	108	157	238	412	364	280	197	364	344	284	464	100	110	124	112	63	121	38	74	62	35	108	70	24	78	44		236	432
<b>Substance Recent Use (% Used in past 30 days)</b>																														
Marijuana	7%	5%	<b>12%</b>	5%	<b>13%</b>	<b>14%</b>	11%	17%	<b>15%</b>	7%	<b>18%</b>	<b>13%</b>	10%	8%	<b>14%</b>	4%	5%	<b>17%</b>	0%	<b>9%</b>	<b>13%</b>	12%	19%	<b>17%</b>	0%	<b>8%</b>	<b>18%</b>	n/a	16%	<b>16%</b>
Rx Pain Relievers	0%	<b>4%</b>	<b>3%</b>	1%	4%	<b>3%</b>	0%	1%	<b>5%</b>	1%	3%	<b>4%</b>	0%	2%	<b>2%</b>	0%	4%	<b>2%</b>	0%	3%	<b>9%</b>	0%	3%	<b>7%</b>	0%	4%	<b>3%</b>	n/a	4%	<b>5%</b>
Rx Stimulants	2%	5%	<b>4%</b>	0%	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>	3%	5%	<b>6%</b>	2%	<b>6%</b>	<b>5%</b>	2%	5%	<b>3%</b>	2%	4%	<b>5%</b>	0%	<b>7%</b>	<b>10%</b>	0%	2%	<b>13%</b>	0%	<b>8%</b>	<b>5%</b>	n/a	7%	<b>8%</b>
Rx Anti-Anxiety	n/a	2%	<b>3%</b>	n/a	2%	<b>6%</b>	n/a	3%	<b>4%</b>	n/a	2%	<b>4%</b>	n/a	2%	<b>3%</b>	n/a	3%	<b>5%</b>	n/a	4%	<b>6%</b>	n/a	3%	<b>7%</b>	n/a	1%	<b>0%</b>	n/a	2%	<b>6%</b>
Alcohol	11%	9%	<b>16%</b>	11%	<b>19%</b>	<b>20%</b>	15%	<b>24%</b>	<b>22%</b>	15%	<b>25%</b>	<b>22%</b>	7%	14%	<b>16%</b>	9%	10%	<b>19%</b>	13%	8%	<b>25%</b>	18%	18%	<b>18%</b>	6%	13%	<b>5%</b>	n/a	30%	<b>25%</b>
Vape	7%	9%	<b>17%</b>	8%	<b>18%</b>	<b>17%</b>	12%	<b>20%</b>	<b>21%</b>	9%	<b>21%</b>	<b>16%</b>	12%	11%	<b>17%</b>	6%	14%	<b>27%</b>	6%	8%	<b>24%</b>	21%	13%	<b>23%</b>	0%	<b>12%</b>	<b>5%</b>	n/a	19%	<b>20%</b>
	Female			Male			Heterosexual			LGBQ			Caucasian			Hispanic			<\$50k			\$50-74k			\$75-99k			\$100k+		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	350	361	415	294	332	452	494	586	759	134	119	105	445	507	594	135	141	155	122	112	132	275	254	382	138	182	268	108	139	103
<b>Substance Recent Use (% Used in past 30 days)</b>																														
Marijuana	7%	<b>17%</b>	<b>14%</b>	6%	10%	<b>15%</b>	6%	<b>12%</b>	<b>14%</b>	10%	<b>21%</b>	<b>18%</b>	7%	10%	<b>13%</b>	5%	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>	8%	13%	<b>18%</b>	6%	<b>17%</b>	<b>15%</b>	6%	9%	<b>13%</b>	7%	13%	<b>12%</b>
Rx Pain Relievers	0%	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	0%	<b>2%</b>	<b>4%</b>	0%	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>	0%	1%	<b>3%</b>	0%	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>	1%	1%	<b>5%</b>	1%	5%	<b>7%</b>	0%	2%	<b>2%</b>	0%	<b>3%</b>	<b>5%</b>	0%	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>
Rx Stimulants	2%	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>	2%	3%	<b>6%</b>	2%	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>	1%	1%	<b>6%</b>	2%	3%	<b>5%</b>	1%	<b>9%</b>	<b>5%</b>	1%	<b>6%</b>	<b>10%</b>	1%	5%	<b>4%</b>	5%	6%	<b>6%</b>	1%	4%	<b>3%</b>
Rx Anti-Anxiety	n/a	4%	<b>4%</b>	n/a	1%	<b>5%</b>	n/a	3%	<b>4%</b>	n/a	1%	<b>5%</b>	n/a	2%	<b>5%</b>	n/a	2%	<b>2%</b>	n/a	1%	<b>4%</b>	n/a	4%	<b>3%</b>	n/a	3%	<b>6%</b>	n/a	1%	<b>5%</b>
Alcohol	14%	<b>23%</b>	<b>20%</b>	11%	15%	<b>21%</b>	12%	<b>20%</b>	<b>21%</b>	15%	16%	<b>19%</b>	14%	16%	<b>19%</b>	12%	18%	<b>17%</b>	10%	18%	<b>24%</b>	14%	19%	<b>16%</b>	12%	<b>20%</b>	<b>24%</b>	13%	17%	<b>18%</b>
Vape	9%	<b>19%</b>	<b>21%</b>	10%	<b>16%</b>	<b>19%</b>	9%	<b>17%</b>	<b>20%</b>	10%	17%	<b>15%</b>	10%	14%	<b>18%</b>	10%	18%	<b>17%</b>	12%	17%	<b>23%</b>	8%	<b>19%</b>	<b>19%</b>	6%	<b>17%</b>	<b>20%</b>	12%	13%	<b>11%</b>

Shading indicates significantly higher/lower ratings from the prior survey period at the 95% level of confidence.

# MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE

Substance use and teens' self-reported mental health continue to be strongly interrelated.

- Those who said they have not experienced any poor mental health days in the past month are also significantly less likely to say they have ever used any of these substances.
- Those who had the highest number of poor mental health days (6+ per month) are more likely to use all substances, significantly so when it comes to marijuana, alcohol, vaping and prescription pain relievers.

Number of Poor Mental Health Days

% Have Used (Ever)	None	One to Two	Three to Five	Six or more
	<b>Meth</b>	2%	1% ↓	5%
<b>Marijuana</b>	11% ↓	26%	33%	39% ↑
<b>Pain Reliever</b>	3% ↓	6%	9%	12% ↑
<b>Stimulant</b>	3% ↓	7%	15%	16%
<b>Anti-Anxiety</b>	2% ↓	6%	13%	13%
<b>Alcohol</b>	26% ↓	49%	61% ↑	59% ↑
<b>Vaping</b>	11% ↓	30%	52% ↑	44% ↑

# BELONGING & SUBSTANCES

Having a strong sense of belonging to a social group (which could be friends, people at school, or people outside of school) is also found to be related to significantly lower use of substances.

Comparing those who feel “Completely” connected to at least one social group to those who do not have any such strong social connection reveals statistically significant differences in terms of having used marijuana (11-points higher among those without any strong social connections), vaping (22-point difference) and alcohol (14-point difference).

In addition, those who don’t feel “Completely” connected to at least one social group are significantly more likely to be curious to want to try marijuana (15-point difference), pain relievers (16-points) and anti-anxiety medications (11-points).

BELONG “COMPLETELY” TO AT  
LEAST ONE GROUP

n=223

DON'T BELONG TO ANY GROUP  
“COMPLETELY”

n=649

<b>19%</b>	Used marijuana	<b>30%</b>
<b>39%</b>	Consumed Alcohol	<b>53%</b>
<b>19%</b>	Vaped	<b>41%</b>
<b>4%</b>	Taken pain relievers	<b>8%</b>
<b>6%</b>	Taken stimulants	<b>12%</b>
<b>2%</b>	Taken anti-anxiety drugs	<b>10%</b>
<b>23%</b>	Curious to try pain relievers	<b>39%</b>
<b>25%</b>	Curious to try anti-anxiety drugs	<b>36%</b>
<b>32%</b>	Curious to try marijuana	<b>47%</b>

SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER

SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER

# ATTITUDES & SUBSTANCE USE

While this research is not intended to assess the efficacy of protective and risk factors in terms of substance misuse, recognizing that the breadth and depth of attitudes, behaviors and situations which comprise those factors is far greater than accounted for in this survey, we can look at the correlations between different questions in this survey and substance use to get a sense for which tend to have a statistically significant relationship.

- Agreement on the five risk factors tends to be most strongly associated with use of prescription stimulants like Adderall, and to a lesser degree, prescription pain relievers and anti-anxiety medications.
- Agreement that experimenting with drugs is part of being a teenager correlates most strongly with marijuana use and vaping.

Correlation Coefficients\* to Substance Use

	METH	MARIJUANA	Rx PAIN RELIEVERS	Rx STIMULANTS	Rx Anti-Anxiety	ALCOHOL	VAPING
Protective Factors	Schoolwork is meaningful	--	-.15	--	--	-.14	-.18
	I have goals that I have set for myself	--	--	--	-.14	-.18	-.15
	I can go to one of my parents for help	--	-.13	--	-.17	<b>-.20</b>	-.13
	I can go to a trusted adult for help	--	--	--	-.11	--	-.13
Belonging	Feel welcome and accepted at my school	--	.15	--	<b>.21</b>	.12	.09
	I feel connected with people outside of my school	--	.11	.11	.14	--	.10
	I feel supported by my friends	--	--	--	--	--	.10
Risk Factors	Experimenting with drugs is part of being a teenager	.14	<b>.27</b>	<b>.20</b>	<b>.23</b>	<b>.21</b>	.12
	Drugs can help teens manage stress	.19	<b>.23</b>	.17	<b>.25</b>	<b>.27</b>	.11
	Prescription drugs is safer than using illegal drugs	.12	.10	.14	<b>.27</b>	.18	--
	Using stimulants is safe	<b>.21</b>	.13	<b>.23</b>	<b>.25</b>	<b>.22</b>	--
	Prescription pain relievers are not addictive	.11	--	.15	<b>.27</b>	<b>.20</b>	--

All correlations shown are statistically significant at the 95% level of confidence.

\* Correlation coefficient indicate the degree to which two variables are related, ranging from -1.0 (a perfect negative relationship) to +1.0 (a perfect positive relationship). Correlations of 0 indicate no relationship between them.

"--" = not statistically significant

Correlations of 0.20 and higher are emphasized



# SOCIAL NORMS



Social norms are defined as “*rules and standards that are understood by members of a group, and that guide or constrain social behaviors without the force of law.*”<sup>1</sup> Perceived peer behavior (i.e., prevalence of the behavior) is referred to as *descriptive norms*, while approval/disapproval of those behaviors is referred to as *injunctive norms*.

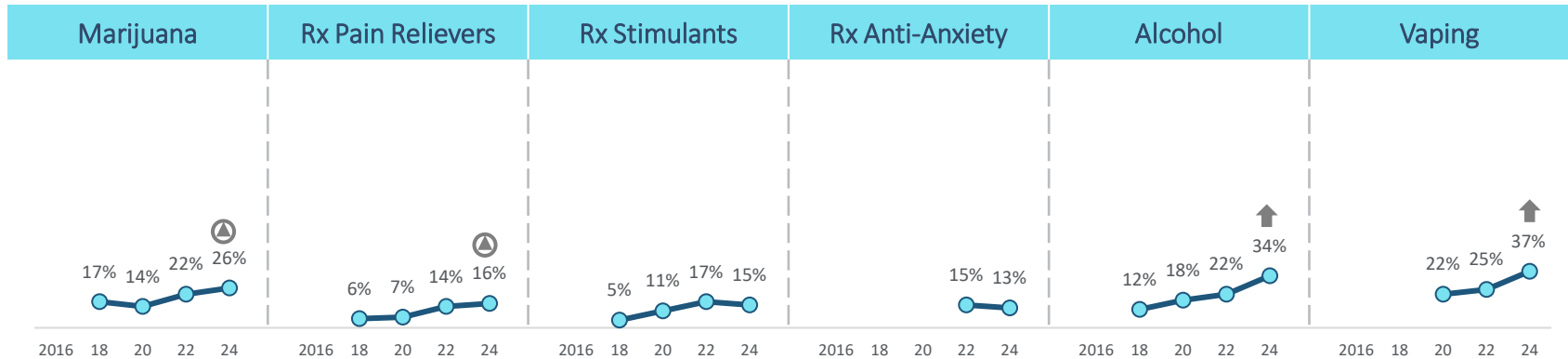
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S074959789190020T>

# AGE 12 – 14: PERCEIVED SUBSTANCE USE

Descriptive norms represent the prevalence to which teens perceive these substances are used by their peers. Participants were asked to estimate the percentage of students in their grade that use each of the six substances shown below. Since substance usage often varies by age, we will first look at survey participants who are 12-14 years of age.

- The greatest increase in these estimations over 2022 are for alcohol, where teens believe that 34% of students in their grade are drinking alcohol today, compared to 12% in 2018.
- Increases in the perception of 12–14-year-olds vaping is also seen, from believing 25% of students in their grade vaped in 2022 to 37% today.
- However, perceived use of marijuana, pain relievers, stimulants and anti-anxiety medications all held stable with 2022.

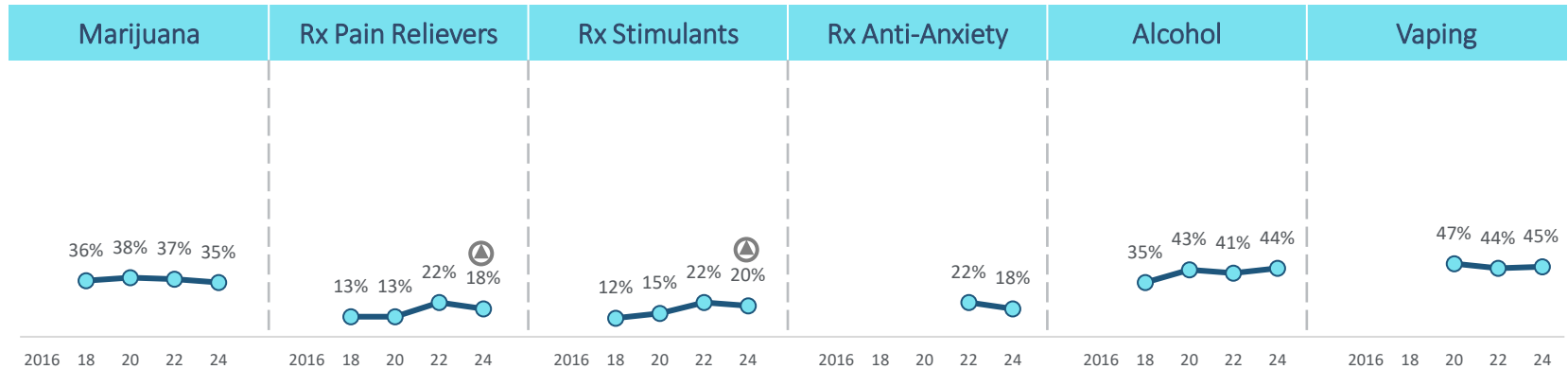
Perceived Peer Use In **Grade**



# AGE 15 – 17: PERCEIVED SUBSTANCE USE

Older teens, 15-17 years of age, estimated the prevalence of all substance use statistically the same as in 2022.

Perceived Peer Use in **Grade**

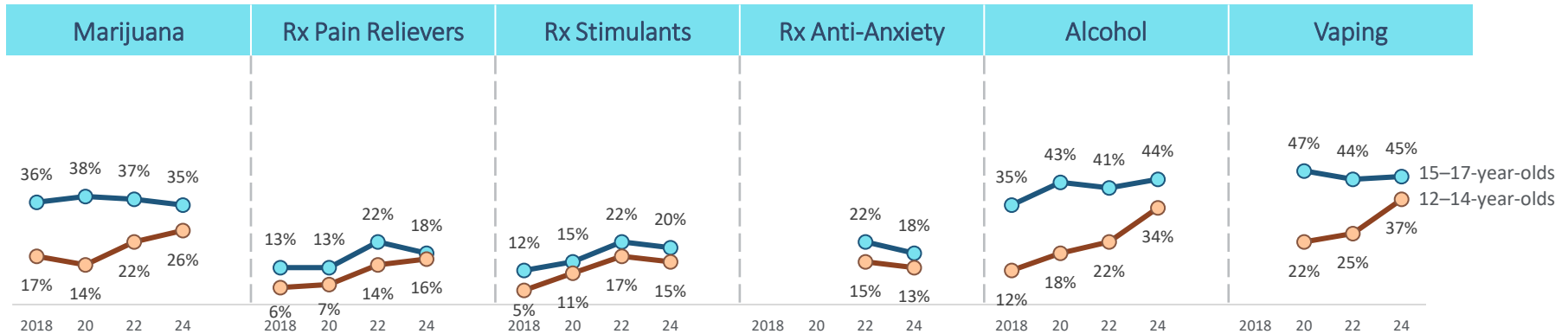


Percentage Base: Those aware of each substance; "Don't know" responses are excluded

# COMPARISONS IN PERCEIVED SUBSTANCE USE

Comparing estimations between younger and older teens over time reveals more similar perspectives between these two age groups.

Perceived Peer Use in **Grade**



Percentage Base: Those aware of each substance; "Don't know" responses are excluded

# AGE 12 – 14: DESCRIPTIVE NORMS

Comparing perceived to self-reported usage from this survey allows us to estimate the extent to which teens over- or under-estimate the prevalence of peer use for each substance. Substances which are highly over-estimated create the effect of “everyone is doing it” and hence makes those substances seem more okay.

Among 12-14-year-olds, the two substances most likely to be over-estimated in terms of usage are alcohol and vaping, both estimated about 20 points higher than actual. The remaining substances are over-estimated by about 10 points each.

Compared to the perceived-actual use gap from 2022, over-estimating alcohol and vaping increased the most, at +5 and +6 points, respectively while prescription stimulants, anti-anxiety medications and marijuana usage are over-estimated less than in 2022.

	MARIJUANA	Rx PAIN RELIEVERS	Rx STIMULANTS	Rx ANTI-ANXIETY	ALCOHOL	VAPING
<b>Perceived Peer Use in Grade</b>	26%	16%	15%	13%	34%	37%
<b>Self-Reported 30-Day Use</b>	11%	2%	3%	4%	15%	15%
<b>Over/(Under) Estimation</b> <small>(Perceived Use – Reported Use)</small>	+14	+14	+12	+9	+19	+22
<b>Gap Measured in 2022</b>	+17	+12	+16	+13	+13	+17
<b>Gap Change from 2022</b>	-3	+2	-4	-4	+6	+5

# AGE 15 – 17: DESCRIPTIVE NORMS

Older teens believe that approximately four out of ten students at their school vape (45%), drink (44%) and use marijuana (35%), all being overestimated by approximately 20 percentage points compared to their self-reported usage, similar to 2022. Several large declines in over-estimation are found when compared to 2022: prescription pain relievers (-6) and anti-anxiety medications (-7).

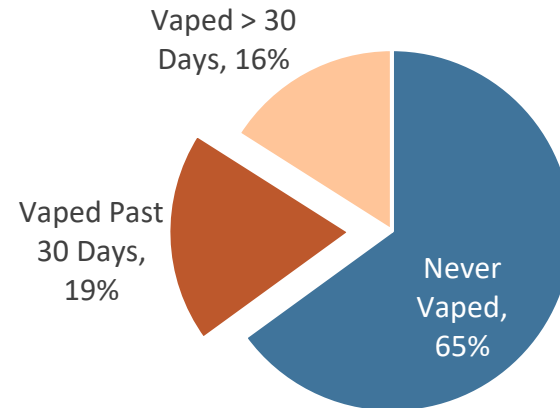
	MARIJUANA	Rx PAIN RELIEVERS	Rx STIMULANTS	Rx ANTI-ANXIETY	ALCOHOL	VAPING
<b>Perceived Peer Use in Grade</b>	35%	18%	20%	18%	44%	45%
<b>Self-Reported 30-Day Use</b>	16%	4%	7%	5%	23%	21%
<b>Over/(Under) Estimation</b> <small>(Perceived Use – Reported Use)</small>	+19	+14	+13	+13	+21	+24
<b>Gap Measured in 2022</b>	+20	+20	+16	+20	+17	+23
<b>Gap Change from 2022</b>	-1	-6	-3	-7	+4	+1

# VAPING

“On June 23, 2022, the FDA ordered Juul to remove all of its products from the United States market.” (Wikipedia)

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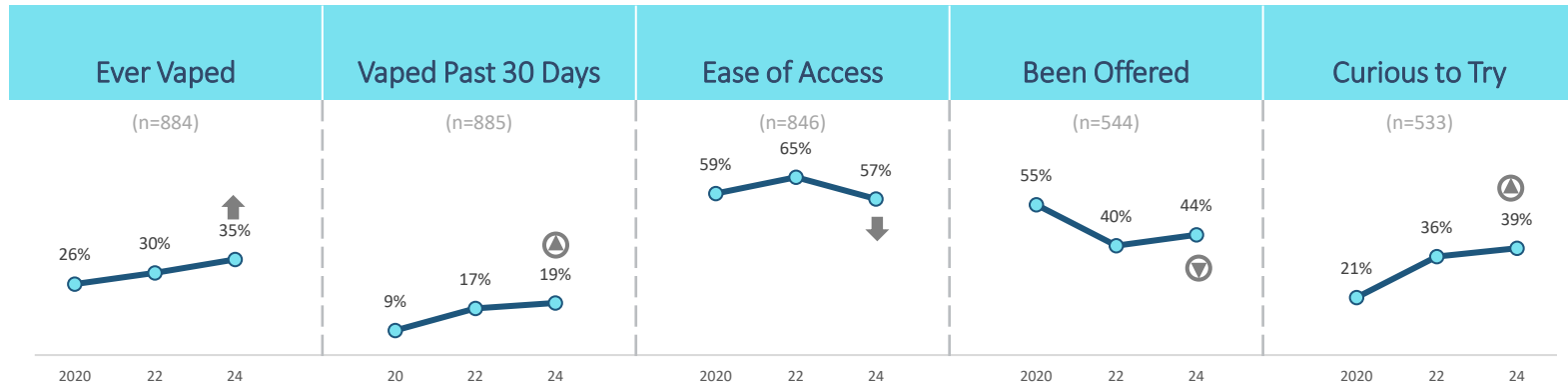
## ATTITUDES TOWARD VAPING



# VAPING REFRESHER

A review of vaping behavior below shows that vaping has increased since 2020, with one-third of teens today saying they have vaped at some point in their lives (35%) and two out of ten (19%) saying they have vaped in the past 30 days – statistically stable with 2022 but higher than 2020.

Among those who have never vaped, curiosity to try is stable with 2022 (but both years are higher than 2020). However, ease of accessing vaping products has declined significantly since 2022, likely related to Juul being removed from all retail environments that year, and direct offers have held statistically stable with 2022.

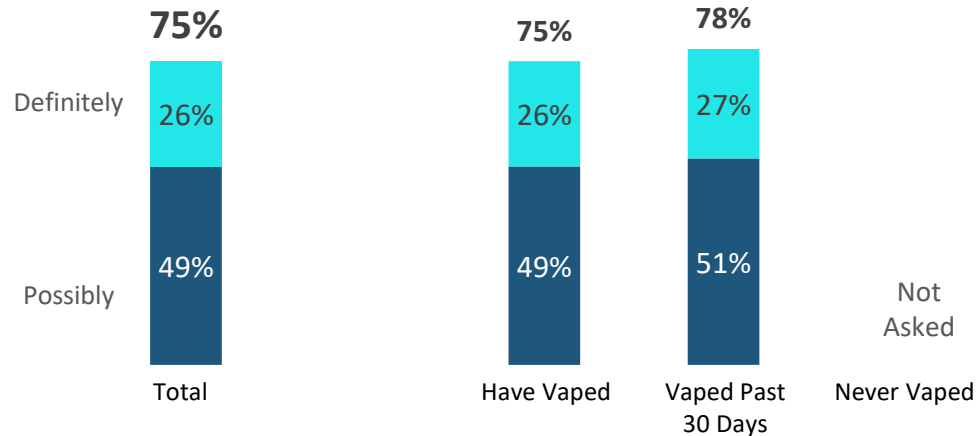




# VAPING SOCIAL PRESSURE

Vaping clearly has a social component to the behavior, with half of those who have vaped (ever or within the past 30 days) saying they “possibly” would think about stopping if their friends stopped, and an additional one-fourth saying they “definitely” would stop if their friends did.

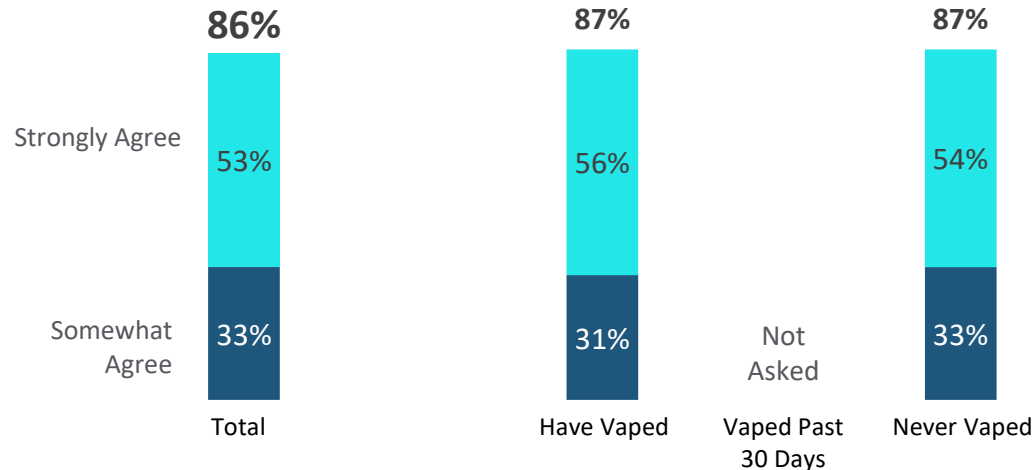
“If your friends stopped vaping, do you think you would stop as well?”



# VAPING SOCIAL PRESSURE

Teens who have never vaped or have not done so within the past 30 days are asked if they would “not give in” to vaping, even if their friends kept pressuring them. Nearly 9 in 10 agreed with this statement, with nearly identical results between those who have never vaped and those who have not vaped in the past 30 days.

“I would not give in if I didn’t want to vape, even if my friends kept pressuring me”

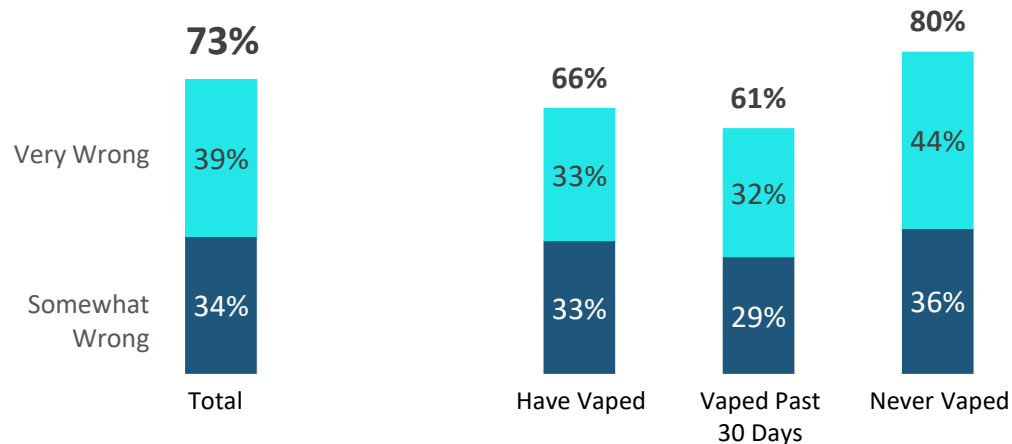


# VAPING SOCIAL PRESSURE

When asked if they believed adults in their neighborhood (or community or school) consider vaping by young people to be wrong, most agree that this would be true (39% saying most adults would consider this to be “very wrong” and an additional 34% “somewhat wrong.”)

Among those who have never vaped, agreement that adults find youth vaping to be “wrong” is even higher at 80%.

“How wrong do adults in your neighborhood think it is for young people to vape?”

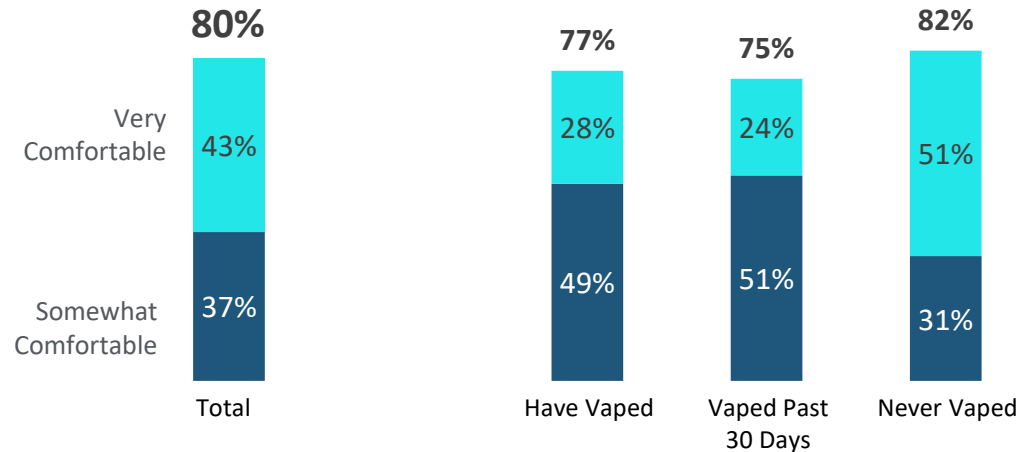


# VAPING SOCIAL PRESSURE

Of teens who have never vaped, half (51%) say they would be very comfortable telling a close friend “no” if offered a vape, and an additional 31% said they would be “somewhat comfortable” saying no (82% total).

Of those who *have* vaped in the past, about one out of four (28%) said they would be “very comfortable” telling a close friend no if offered a vape – half the level of non-vapers.

“If a close friend offered you a vape, how comfortable would you be telling them ‘no’?”



# VAPING SOCIAL PRESSURE

Few statistically significant differences are found between teens of different demographic characteristics on the vaping attributes below.

- Respondents who identify as LGBQ are less likely to say they would stop vaping if their friends were to stop (57% versus 74% on average), and teens from the lowest income households (<\$50k/year) were more likely to say adults view youth vaping as wrong while those with incomes in the \$75-99k range were less likely to agree with that perspective.
- Those in the northwest and southwest regions of Colorado were more likely to view adult perspectives of youth vaping as wrong and to say they would not give in to social pressure to vape.

	Total	Age			Gender		Sexual Orientation		Income			
		12-13	14-15	16-17	Female	Male	Heterosexual	LGBQ	<\$50k	\$50-74k	\$75-99k	\$100k+
<i>sample size</i>	875	155	359	362	411	447	759	105	128	378	266	103
<b>Vaping Social Pressure (% Top-Two Box)</b>												
Would stop if friends stopped	74%	70%	80%	71%	76%	72%	76%	57%	73%	74%	72%	84%
Comfortable telling close friend no if offered vape	80%	84%	79%	80%	81%	80%	81%	73%	84%	84%	82%	86%
Neighborhood adult views of vaping	74%	73%	76%	72%	75%	73%	74%	72%	86%	80%	72%	77%
Would not vape despite pressure	86%	87%	86%	85%	86%	87%	86%	82%	85%	92%	85%	88%

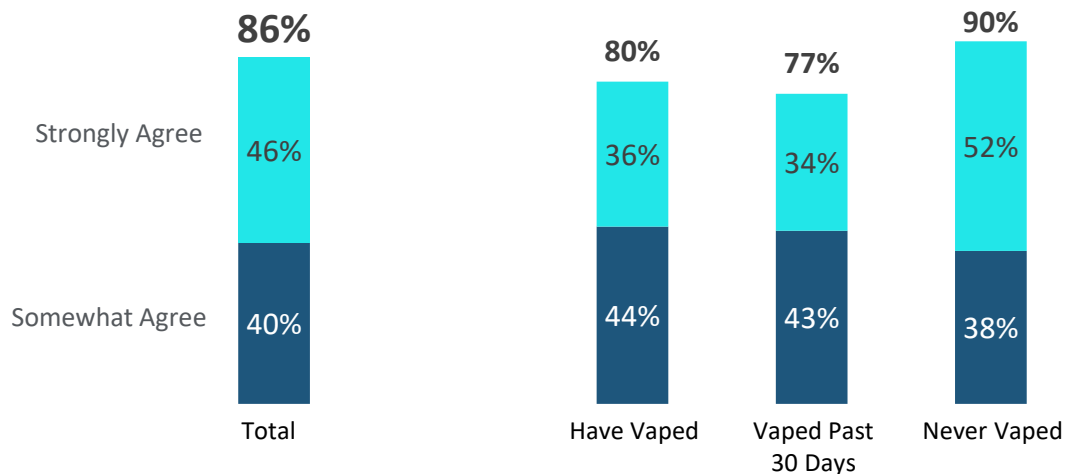
	Race/Ethnicity				Region				
	Caucasian	Hispanic	D/B	Central	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest	PCN Cohort
<i>sample size</i>	591	148	460	123	120	60	69	43	428
<b>Vaping Social Pressure (% Top-Two Box)</b>									
Would stop if friends stopped	77%	69%	76%	87%	68%	66%	66%	59%	72%
Comfortable telling close friend no if offered vape	81%	79%	81%	82%	85%	92%	73%	98%	77%
Neighborhood adult views of vaping	73%	76%	69%	68%	80%	90%	87%	95%	74%
Would not vape despite pressure	86%	86%	80%	90%	93%	90%	91%	97%	85%

# VAPING ATTITUDES

Willingness to talk with their friends about vaping if they thought it was hurting their mental or physical health is something which nine out of ten said they would do, but it is somewhat surprising that only 46% “strongly agree” with this statement.

Those who vape are less likely to agree they would talk with their friends if they thought vaping was hurting their health than those who have never vaped.

“I would talk to my friends if I thought vaping was hurting their physical or mental health”

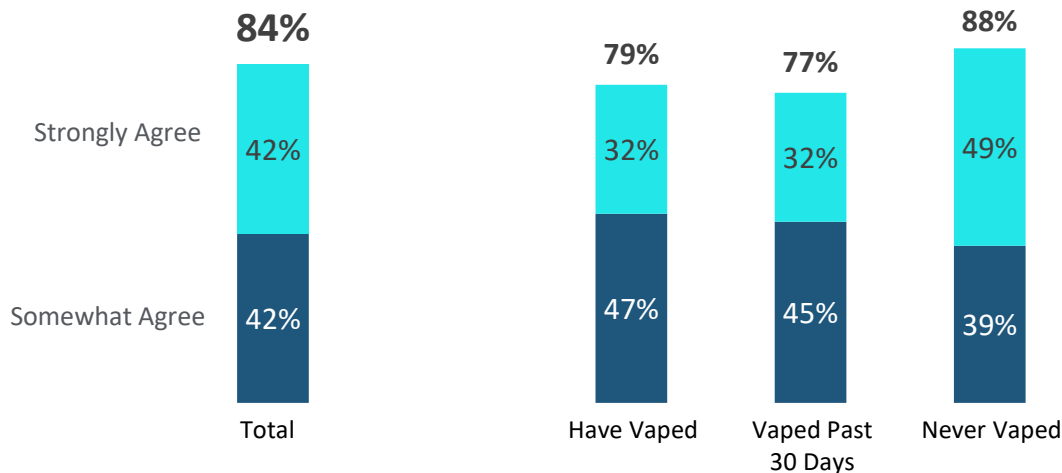


# VAPING ATTITUDES

A similar question was posed to teens, asking if they would get help from an adult if they saw a friend's health was being impacted by vaping.

Agreement to this question was similar to the one asking whether or not they would talk with their friends with 84% total agreement and 42% "strongly agreeing."

"I would get help from an adult if I saw my friend's vape use really hurting their physical or mental health"

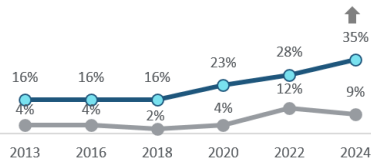


# VAPING ATTITUDES

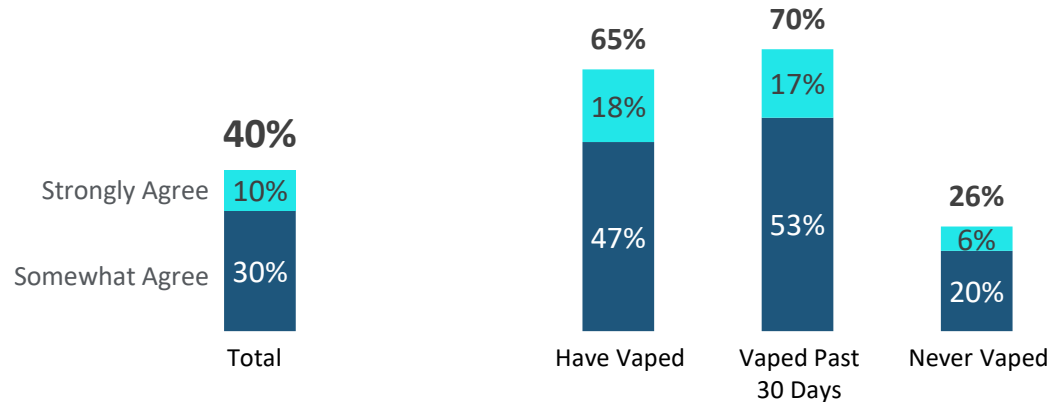
Among teens who vape, agreement that vaping helps teens manage the stress and pressure which teens have to deal with is quite strong, with 65% agreeing with this statement. However, among those who have never vaped, only 26% share this level of agreement.

In aggregate among those who do and do not vape, agreement that vaping helps teens manage stress is similar to the results seen regarding drugs helping teens manage stress (40% for vaping and 35% for drug use).

Drugs can help teens manage stress



“Vaping helps teens manage the stress and pressure they have to deal with”





# VAPING ATTITUDES

Few differences are seen demographically on the attributes below regarding attitudes toward vaping. Youngest respondents (12-13) are the least likely to agree that vaping helps teens manage stress while those living in households with incomes of \$75-99k are the most likely to agree with this statement.

Teens living in the Southwest and Southeast areas of Colorado are the most likely to say they would talk to their friends if they thought vaping was harming their health and those in the Southwest are also the least likely to agree that vaping helps teens manage stress.

	Total	Age			Gender		Sexual Orientation		Income			
		12-13	14-15	16-17	Female	Male	Heterosexual	LGBQ	<\$50k	\$50-74k	\$75-99k	\$100k+
<i>sample size</i>	853	176	321	356	420	405	732	110	115	376	260	101
<b>Vaping Attitudes (% Strongly + Somewhat Agree)</b>												
Talk to friend if vape use hurt them	88%	87%	86%	89%	87%	88%	88%	82%	88%	90%	86%	85%
Would seek adult help if friend's vape use hurt them	86%	85%	85%	87%	86%	86%	87%	80%	84%	88%	86%	82%
Vaping helps manage teen stress	42%	29%	46%	44%	43%	41%	42%	40%	40%	39%	49%	36%

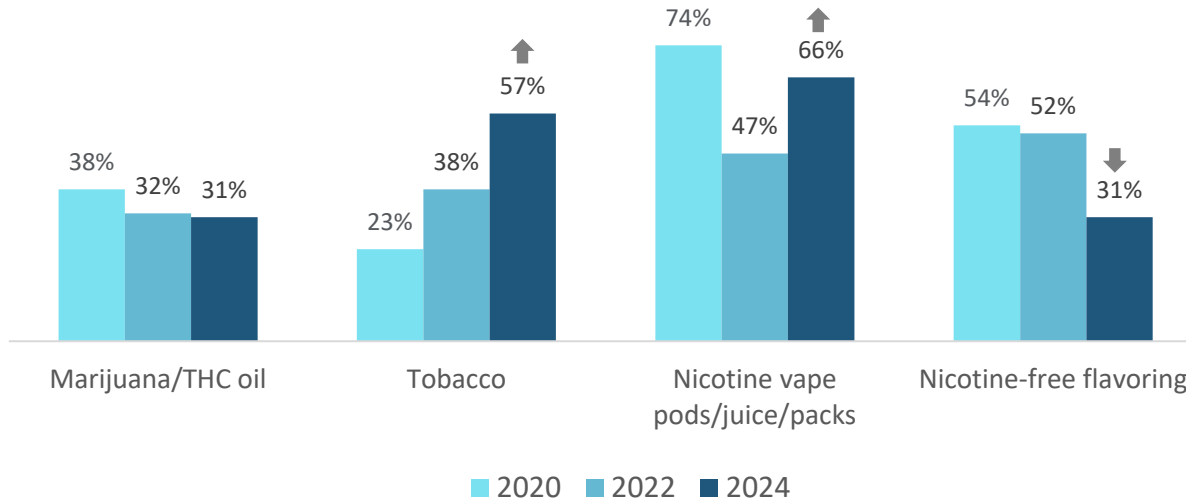
	Race/Ethnicity			Region					
	Caucasian	Hispanic	D/B	Central	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest	PCN Cohort
<i>sample size</i>	591	148	440	130	145	52	52	34	427
<b>Vaping Attitudes (% Strongly + Somewhat Agree)</b>									
Talk to friend if vape use hurt them	86%	84%	86%	89%	89%	82%	96%	100%	86%
Would seek adult help if friend's vape use hurt them	84%	81%	85%	87%	88%	85%	87%	97%	85%
Vaping helps manage teen stress	39%	40%	46%	41%	37%	48%	40%	11%	44%

# VAPING SUBSTANCES

Those who vape are asked about the substances they use in their vapes.

- When asked which of the following substances they use in their vape, a sharp decline is seen for nicotine-free flavoring (from 52% in 2022 to 31%) and a sharp increase in tobacco (from 38% to 57%). Nicotine vape pods/juice/packs returned to levels more similar to 2020 at 66% this year.

“Which of the following have you ever used in your vape?”



Base: Those who have recently used vaping products (n=259)  
Sum of percentages exceed 100% due to multi-responses.

# VAPING SUBSTANCES

Compared to 2022, use of tobacco in their vape increased significantly for 14-15 as well as 16-17-year-olds who vape. Use of tobacco also increased significantly among females, those who identify as heterosexual and Caucasian and Hispanic participants, most of which saw corresponding declines in the use of nicotine-free vape juice/flavoring. Nicotine vape pods/packs are up significantly among 14-15-year-olds, males and females, although these are most likely to be used among females, those who identify as heterosexual and Caucasian participants.

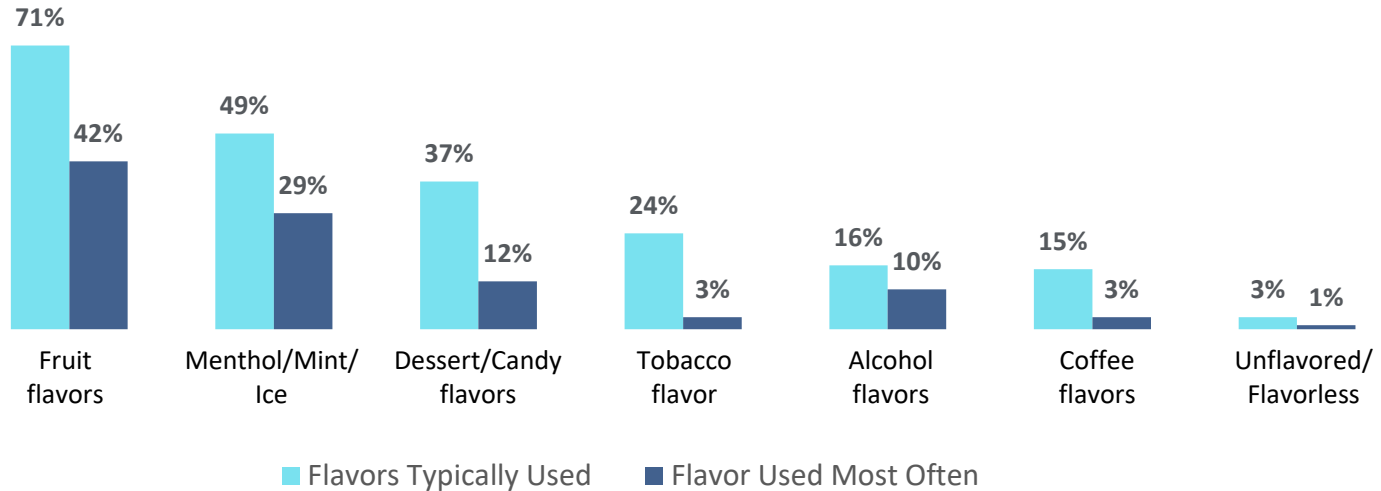
		Age 12-13			Age 14-15			Age 16-17			D/B			Central			Northeast			Northwest			Southeast			Southwest			PCN Cohort		
		2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>		19	24	37	55	117	111	91	68	111	96	94	128	25	29	35	16	17	50	8	24	24	14	34	19	6	14	3	72	136	
<b>Vaping Content</b>																															
	Tobacco	34%	26%	<b>46%</b>	24%	38%	<b>58%</b>	20%	41%	<b>61%</b>	24%	<b>38%</b>	<b>54%</b>	26%	42%	<b>73%</b>	26%	29%	<b>53%</b>	7%	<b>36%</b>	<b>49%</b>	30%	35%	<b>64%</b>	0%	<b>63%</b>	<b>70%</b>	n/a	33%	<b>57%</b>
	Marijuana/THC Oil	3%	<b>27%</b>	<b>26%</b>	44%	30%	<b>31%</b>	43%	35%	<b>34%</b>	39%	30%	<b>28%</b>	43%	31%	<b>29%</b>	46%	42%	<b>37%</b>	16%	24%	<b>44%</b>	19%	39%	<b>23%</b>	38%	44%	<b>41%</b>	n/a	34%	<b>30%</b>
	Nicotine-free Vape Juice or Flavoring	54%	34%	<b>34%</b>	54%	53%	<b>26%</b>	54%	56%	<b>34%</b>	56%	50%	<b>30%</b>	49%	51%	<b>26%</b>	48%	63%	<b>34%</b>	66%	43%	<b>42%</b>	54%	51%	<b>17%</b>	34%	50%	<b>41%</b>	n/a	45%	<b>33%</b>
	Nicotine vape pods/liquid/juice/packs	66%	55%	<b>68%</b>	71%	<b>31%</b>	<b>64%</b>	77%	<b>55%</b>	<b>67%</b>	74%	<b>43%</b>	<b>66%</b>	80%	57%	<b>62%</b>	62%	65%	<b>68%</b>	74%	<b>34%</b>	<b>73%</b>	90%	<b>24%</b>	<b>52%</b>	40%	54%	<b>59%</b>	n/a	48%	<b>63%</b>
		Female			Male			Heterosexual			LGBQ			Caucasian			Hispanic			<\$50k			\$50-74k			\$75-99k			\$100k+		
		2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>		92	118	126	71	88	133	12	173	227	39	35	28	108	134	156	46	45	50	36	50	40	65	76	115	31	45	83	32	28	21
<b>Vaping Content</b>																															
	Tobacco	19%	27%	<b>59%</b>	30%	<b>57%</b>	<b>55%</b>	26%	39%	<b>57%</b>	17%	<b>37%</b>	<b>55%</b>	25%	<b>41%</b>	<b>53%</b>	20%	27%	<b>46%</b>	28%	37%	<b>56%</b>	13%	<b>37%</b>	<b>54%</b>	37%	46%	<b>58%</b>	24%	36%	<b>73%</b>
	Marijuana/THC Oil	35%	35%	<b>31%</b>	42%	28%	<b>33%</b>	37%	28%	<b>32%</b>	41%	44%	<b>28%</b>	35%	30%	<b>33%</b>	43%	26%	<b>33%</b>	23%	39%	<b>35%</b>	43%	<b>25%</b>	<b>35%</b>	36%	31%	<b>29%</b>	46%	35%	<b>19%</b>
	Hash/Hash Oil	8%	<b>18%</b>		14%	<b>28%</b>		11%	25%		8%	9%		12%	19%		10%	19%		6%	<b>35%</b>		10%	12%		19%	23%		12%	22%	
	Nicotine-free Vape Juice or Flavoring	50%	56%	<b>29%</b>	59%	42%	<b>33%</b>	56%	48%	<b>31%</b>	48%	65%	<b>23%</b>	54%	45%	<b>36%</b>	51%	69%	<b>29%</b>	51%	51%	<b>28%</b>	66%	54%	<b>36%</b>	46%	34%	<b>26%</b>	44%	68%	<b>24%</b>
	Nicotine vape pods/liquid/juice/packs	75%	<b>54%</b>	<b>72%</b>	73%	<b>34%</b>	<b>60%</b>	74%	39%	<b>65%</b>	77%	71%	<b>70%</b>	71%	<b>49%</b>	<b>71%</b>	79%	59%	<b>63%</b>	78%	<b>56%</b>	<b>61%</b>	69%	<b>45%</b>	<b>67%</b>	72%	<b>45%</b>	<b>66%</b>	80%	<b>43%</b>	<b>67%</b>

Shading indicates significantly higher/lower ratings from the prior survey period at the 95% level of confidence.

# VAPING FLAVORS

Those who use vape pods or juice, either with or without nicotine, are asked their flavor preferences. The flavors used most often are fruit flavors followed by menthol/mint/ice and then dessert/candy flavors.

“What flavors do you typically use?”  
“Of these flavors, which do you use most often?”



# VAPING FLAVORS

Very few significant differences are found when looking at different demographics in terms of preferred flavors in their vape pods, largely due to small sample sizes for many of these groups.

	Total	Age			Gender		Sexual Orientation		Income				Race/Ethnicity	
		12-13	14-15	16-17	Female	Male	Hetero-sexual	LGBQ	<\$50k	\$50-74k	\$75-99k	\$100k+	Cau-casian	Hispanic
<i>sample size</i>	200	30	82	88	101	99	175	21	29	93	62	16	129	34
<b>Flavors Typically Used</b>														
Fruit flavors	71%	72%	78%	66%	74%	68%	69%	92%	70%	76%	69%	53%	69%	69%
Menthol/Mint/Ice	49%	30%	57%	51%	43%	56%	49%	58%	48%	50%	42%	69%	45%	53%
Dessert/Candy flavors	37%	39%	27%	44%	35%	39%	38%	29%	47%	33%	38%	38%	40%	42%
Tobacco flavor	24%	20%	27%	24%	25%	23%	24%	26%	24%	32%	13%	26%	22%	30%
Alcohol flavors	16%	23%	12%	17%	13%	19%	18%	0%	16%	10%	22%	29%	16%	11%
Coffee flavors	15%	7%	12%	20%	12%	18%	15%	9%	7%	15%	18%	14%	17%	15%
Unflavored/Flavorless	3%	3%	3%	2%	1%	5%	3%	0%	3%	4%	1%	0%	1%	7%
<b>Flavor Used Most Often</b>														
<i>sample size</i>	140	19	60	61	67	73	122	15	20	66	42	12	90	24
Fruit flavors	42%	42%	48%	38%	48%	37%	42%	53%	28%	49%	39%	37%	50%	23%
Menthol/Mint/Ice	29%	23%	30%	30%	24%	34%	29%	35%	28%	26%	30%	45%	22%	41%
Dessert/Candy flavors	12%	11%	11%	14%	14%	10%	12%	0%	26%	9%	13%	7%	12%	17%
Tobacco flavor	3%	0%	0%	6%	5%	0%	2%	6%	6%	4%	0%	0%	3%	5%
Alcohol flavors	10%	24%	8%	7%	7%	13%	11%	0%	12%	9%	11%	11%	9%	7%
Coffee flavors	3%	0%	3%	5%	2%	5%	3%	6%	0%	3%	6%	0%	4%	4%
Unflavored/Flavorless	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	4%

# VAPING FLAVORS

No statistically significant differences are found by region, but here too the sample sizes are often very small.

		Region						
		D/B	Central	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest	PCN Cohort
<i>sample size</i>		100	25	38	22	12	3	104
<b>Flavors Typically Used</b>								
	Fruit flavors	68%	74%	76%	60%	84%	100%	67%
	Menthol/Mint/Ice	48%	47%	56%	44%	57%	0%	49%
	Dessert/Candy flavors	39%	34%	31%	41%	42%	41%	42%
	Tobacco flavor	20%	27%	30%	26%	40%	0%	23%
	Alcohol flavors	16%	19%	11%	29%	14%	0%	19%
	Coffee flavors	17%	4%	16%	15%	16%	29%	18%
	Unflavored/Flavorless	2%	3%	0%	7%	0%	41%	4%
<b>Flavor Used Most Often</b>								
<i>sample size</i>		69	17	27	17	8	2	76
	Fruit flavors	39%	52%	43%	29%	65%	100%	39%
	Menthol/Mint/Ice	32%	29%	26%	26%	24%	0%	29%
	Dessert/Candy flavors	15%	7%	7%	20%	11%	0%	17%
	Tobacco flavor	0%	0%	8%	7%	0%	0%	0%
	Alcohol flavors	9%	12%	12%	11%	0%	0%	10%
	Coffee flavors	4%	0%	4%	6%	0%	0%	5%
	Unflavored/Flavorless	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%

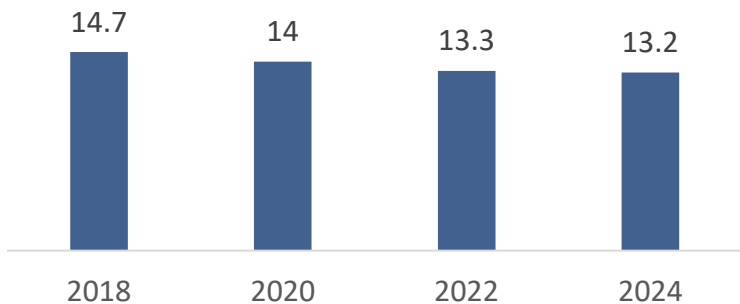
# AGE FIRST VAPE

The average age when teens first used a vape has declined from 14.7 in 2018 to 13.2 today, which is nearly identical to 2022 (13.3).

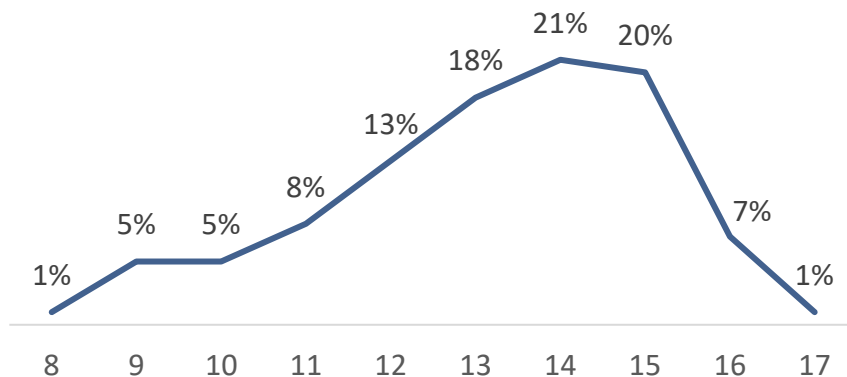
- Most youth are likely to first try a vape between 13 to 15 years of age, with 59% of teens trying during these three years.
- However, 32% first vape before the age of 13. After 15 very few teens are likely to first try a vape.

“How old were you when you first used a vape, JUUL or other e-cigarette?”

### Average Age



### 2024 Age Distribution



# COMMUNICATIONS



CAMPAIGN AWARENESS

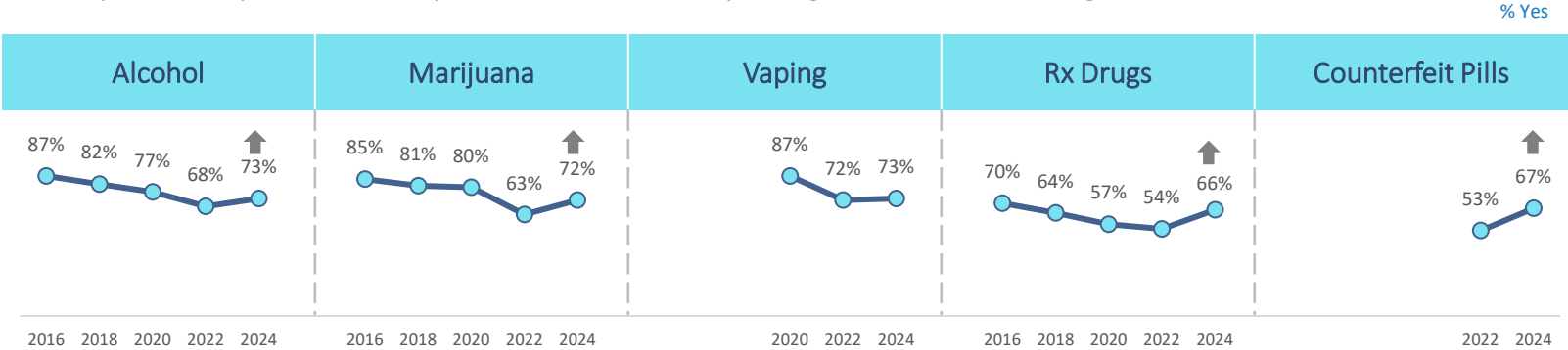


# EDUCATION AT SCHOOL & COMMUNITY

Recall of information about the risk of using alcohol, marijuana, vaping and prescription drugs at schools or in their communities has increased significantly since 2022 for alcohol, marijuana, prescription drugs and counterfeit pills.

Current levels of informational awareness are now again similar to 2020. During the 2022 survey it was hypothesized that recall of these types of communications declined as a result of teens spending less time at school due to the pandemic, as well as schools allocating more of their wall space to communicating COVID-19-related topics such as mask wearing and social distancing.

“Have you seen any information at your school or community talking about the risks of using [substance]?”



Base: Those aware of each substance

# EDUCATION AT SCHOOL & COMMUNITY

Awareness of educational information at schools and in their community increased significantly for the PCN cohort compared to 2022 when it comes to information about marijuana and prescription drugs. Teens 14+ were significantly more likely to have seen information about prescription pills and counterfeit pills, which carried over to males and females, those who identify as heterosexual and LGBQ and Caucasian participants (Hispanic teens have a significant increase on counterfeit pills but the 7-point gain on prescription drugs was not enough to qualify as statistically significant).

	Age 12-13			Age 14-15			Age 16-17			D/B			Central			Northeast			Northwest			Southeast			Southwest			PCN Cohort		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	135	108	128	238	412	336	280	197	310	344	284	433	100	110	107	112	63	103	38	74	50	35	108	62	24	78	41	236	408	
<b>School Education (% Yes)</b>																														
Marijuana	71%	59%	73%	85%	63%	74%	82%	65%	71%	80%	68%	72%	84%	58%	68%	84%	58%	80%	69%	50%	80%	83%	65%	69%	71%	55%	48%	n/a	64%	72%
Rx Drugs not prescribed to you	48%	61%	66%	62%	57%	67%	58%	50%	66%	58%	53%	67%	59%	56%	64%	65%	58%	69%	40%	50%	76%	56%	48%	64%	42%	61%	40%	n/a	56%	66%
Counterfeit, contaminated, or laced pills	n/a	56%	62%	n/a	52%	65%	n/a	52%	70%	n/a	58%	67%	n/a	42%	69%	n/a	49%	67%	n/a	49%	73%	n/a	46%	61%	n/a	65%	56%	n/a	58%	66%
Alcohol	67%	64%	73%	82%	69%	73%	79%	68%	72%	75%	68%	70%	85%	66%	70%	82%	69%	76%	68%	58%	90%	75%	70%	85%	75%	68%	60%	n/a	69%	72%
Vape	79%	62%	80%	90%	71%	75%	90%	77%	68%	88%	72%	69%	94%	75%	75%	90%	80%	80%	75%	79%	77%	90%	68%	78%	69%	67%	76%	n/a	72%	73%
	Female			Male			Heterosexual			LGBQ			Caucasian			Hispanic			<\$50k			\$50-74k			\$75-99k			\$100k+		
	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>	350	361	351	294	332	360	494	586	714	134	119	103	445	507	555	135	141	148	122	112	120	275	254	316	138	182	227	108	139	98
<b>School Education (% Yes)</b>																														
Marijuana	80%	58%	73%	80%	68%	71%	80%	61%	72%	79%	71%	69%	81%	60%	70%	79%	75%	73%	85%	62%	70%	79%	64%	75%	83%	61%	68%	83%	67%	77%
Rx Drugs not prescribed to you	53%	57%	65%	62%	54%	68%	58%	56%	67%	54%	49%	65%	60%	51%	66%	49%	54%	61%	49%	56%	62%	59%	52%	68%	63%	64%	64%	56%	41%	71%
Counterfeit, contaminated, or laced pills	n/a	54%	67%	n/a	51%	68%	n/a	53%	67%	n/a	53%	67%	n/a	52%	65%	n/a	51%	64%	n/a	52%	62%	n/a	51%	70%	n/a	55%	65%	n/a	55%	66%
Alcohol	76%	66%	75%	78%	69%	70%	78%	67%	73%	74%	69%	72%	77%	68%	72%	78%	77%	70%	74%	70%	76%	77%	69%	75%	79%	60%	69%	78%	76%	71%
Vape	87%	71%	72%	89%	73%	75%	89%	72%	73%	84%	75%	75%	87%	68%	70%	92%	84%	73%	82%	75%	68%	88%	73%	78%	87%	64%	69%	92%	77%	73%

Shading indicates significantly higher/lower ratings from the prior survey period at the 95% level of confidence.

# FAMILY DISCUSSIONS

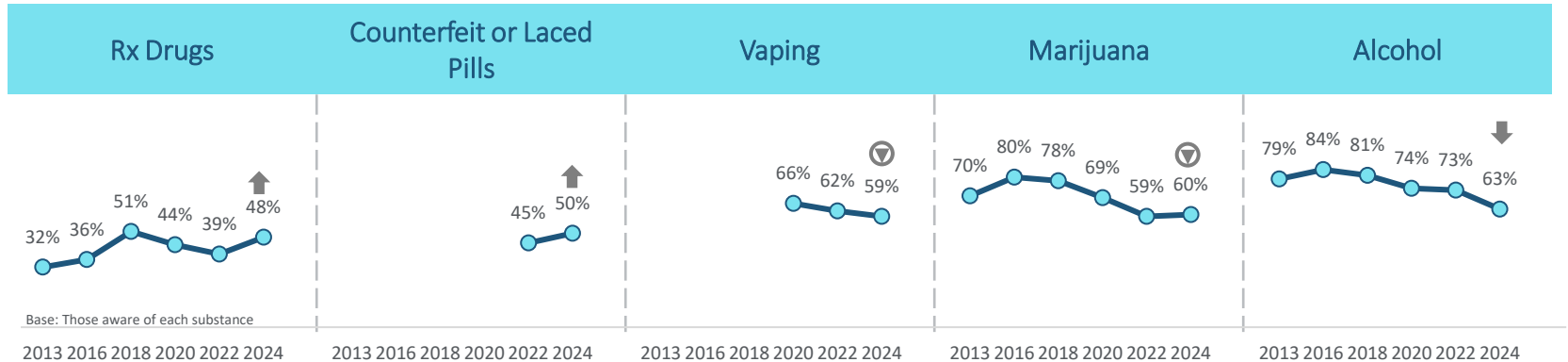
Discussions between teens and their parents surrounding the five substances below increased significantly when it came to prescription drugs and counterfeit or contaminated pills, the same two substances which received increased awareness in their school and community.

On the other hand, discussions with parents about alcohol consumption continue to decline, 10-points lower than 2022 and 21 points lower than 2016.

Discussions about marijuana and vaping both held statistically stable with last year, although conversations about both of these substances are significantly lower than in 2020.

“Have you EVER talked to your parents about [substance]?”

% Yes



# FAMILY DISCUSSIONS

The statistically significant increase in discussions regarding prescription pills was driven largely by males, Caucasians, teens 14-17 years of age, those in the Denver/Boulder area and those in the PCN cohort. Significant increases in discussions about counterfeit pills were found only among Caucasians and older teens, 16-17 years of age.

		Age 12-13			Age 14-15			Age 16-17			D/B			Central			Northeast			Northwest			Southeast			Southwest			PCN Cohort		
		2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>		135	108	146	238	412	336	280	197	353	344	284	380	100	110	106	112	63	105	38	74	49	35	108	58	24	78	34	236	410	
<b>Family Discussion (% Yes)</b>																															
	Marijuana	52%	59%	58%	72%	55%	59%	76%	62%	62%	71%	59%	62%	70%	63%	64%	64%	58%	57%	68%	50%	65%	72%	58%	62%	59%	61%	22%	n/a	61%	60%
	Rx Drugs not prescribed to you	52%	47%	41%	45%	40%	47%	41%	35%	51%	43%	36%	49%	50%	42%	53%	43%	42%	47%	42%	56%	47%	48%	38%	47%	52%	49%	9%	n/a	36%	47%
	Counterfeit, contaminated, or laced pills	n/a	53%	46%	n/a	44%	48%	n/a	42%	53%	n/a	46%	50%	n/a	42%	55%	n/a	41%	52%	n/a	52%	49%	n/a	48%	53%	n/a	54%	22%	n/a	47%	47%
	Alcohol	56%	79%	62%	77%	68%	62%	81%	75%	65%	75%	70%	66%	75%	78%	67%	71%	87%	62%	67%	63%	63%	72%	62%	66%	67%	67%	21%	n/a	71%	62%
	Vape	50%	56%	56%	69%	58%	58%	72%	68%	60%	68%	61%	60%	67%	70%	63%	58%	55%	58%	65%	60%	53%	63%	60%	65%	56%	72%	18%	n/a	61%	57%

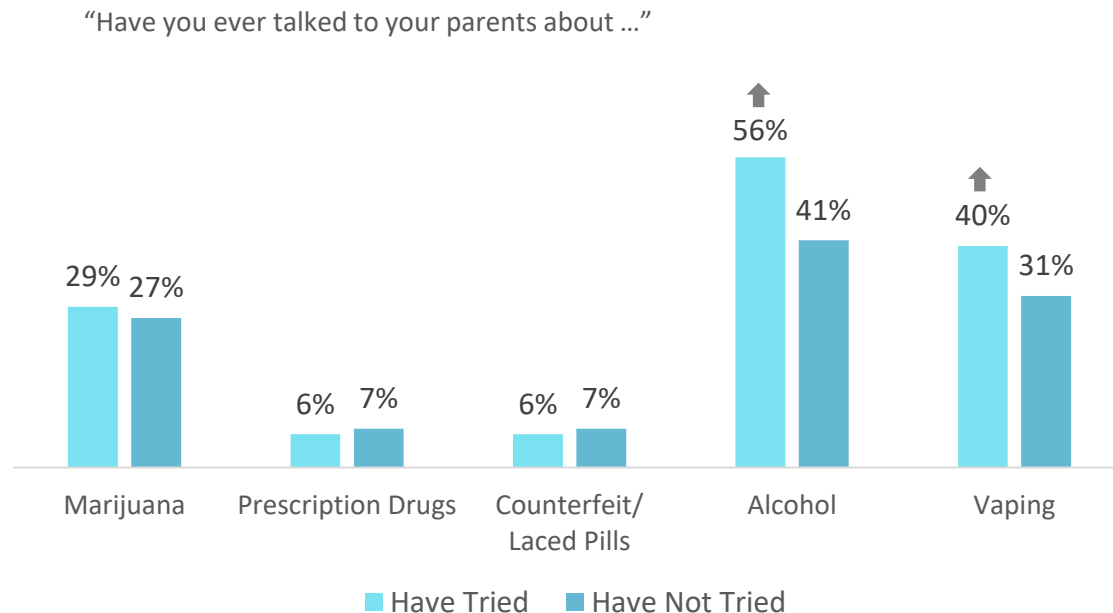
		Female			Male			Heterosexual			LGBQ			Caucasian			Hispanic			<\$50k			\$50-74k			\$75-99k			\$100k+		
		2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024	2020	2022	2024
<i>sample size</i>		350	361	349	294	332	367	494	586	717	134	119	103	445	507	557	135	141	150	122	112	123	275	254	320	138	182	225	108	139	82
<b>Family Discussion (% Yes)</b>																															
	Marijuana	70%	63%	62%	68%	53%	59%	67%	55%	59%	77%	76%	63%	71%	57%	59%	66%	66%	57%	70%	64%	63%	67%	57%	56%	75%	61%	62%	66%	55%	65%
	Rx Drugs not prescribed to you	43%	42%	47%	46%	38%	48%	42%	41%	48%	52%	34%	49%	47%	40%	48%	43%	44%	44%	48%	54%	47%	44%	36%	46%	48%	43%	50%	39%	29%	50%
	Counterfeit, contaminated, or laced pills	n/a	50%	55%	n/a	41%	44%	n/a	45%	50%	n/a	44%	49%	n/a	43%	50%	n/a	54%	48%	n/a	48%	47%	n/a	44%	51%	n/a	49%	50%	n/a	40%	52%
	Alcohol	75%	77%	64%	72%	68%	63%	73%	72%	63%	74%	79%	68%	76%	73%	64%	71%	79%	62%	72%	79%	64%	72%	74%	58%	79%	70%	69%	75%	71%	66%
	Vape	67%	64%	62%	63%	59%	55%	66%	61%	58%	63%	69%	62%	69%	60%	59%	62%	66%	55%	58%	64%	60%	64%	62%	57%	74%	57%	59%	69%	61%	62%

Shading indicates significantly higher/lower ratings from the prior survey period at the 95% level of confidence.

# FAMILY DISCUSSIONS

To better understand the impact of parental discussions, we compared usage of each substance that they talked with their parents about.

- Teens who talked with their parents about marijuana, prescription drugs and counterfeit pills were as likely to have tried each of those substances as teens who have not had these conversations with their parents.
- Teens who talked with their parents about alcohol and vaping were *more* likely to have tried those substances than teens who have not had these discussions, suggesting the impetus for having those discussions may have been more reactive than proactive, at least for these two substances.



# KEY TAKE AWAYS

## Attitudes toward substance use shifted since the pandemic.

The pandemic (2020) changed many things for youth – it is not just about COVID-19.

- ▶ It is a different world for kids than it was four years ago.



- ▶ Attitudes today look largely like 2022.
  - ▶ Shifts typically reflect lower perceived risk of substance use and/or greater curiosity to try.
  - ▶ This may reflect other aspects of life feeling more risky.

- ▶ Younger teens are responding to the survey in ways which look more similar to older teens, which appears to be linked to increased social media use.

# KEY TAKE AWAYS

However, mental health has improved, especially among females, which appears to be related to being less likely to live with someone with substance use or mental health problems (also a likely post-pandemic shift).



- ▶ But youth are feeling less supported by their friends and family, and instead focusing on controlling what they can control: finding meaning in their schoolwork.
- ▶ This feels a bit like GRIT (growth, resilience, integrity, and tenacity) which is designed to strengthen ourselves and develop resilience to bounce back from adversity.
- ▶ If the way kids are thinking about themselves is changing, our messaging will need to adapt to resonate.



Rise Above Colorado  
**Youth Survey**

**THANK YOU!**



**COLORADO**  
Department of Public  
Health & Environment

