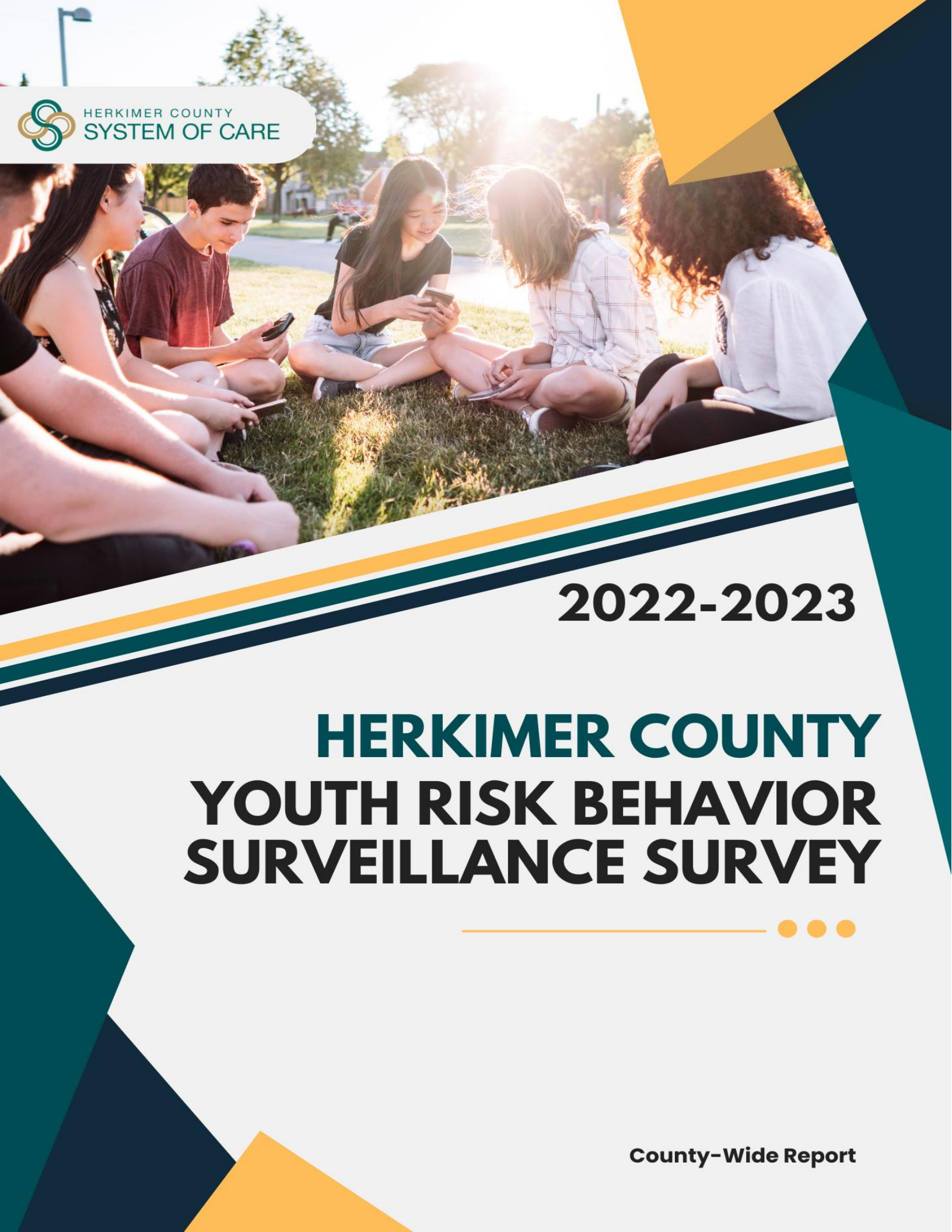




2022-2023

HERKIMER COUNTY YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEILLANCE SURVEY



County-Wide Report

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Acknowledgement

This survey's creation, administration, and analysis reflect a dedicated and collaborative effort among a wide range of organizations, agencies, and school districts. Together, we are committed to gaining deeper insights into the health and well-being of our youth, fostering a data-driven approach to address their needs. This collective effort enhances our understanding and strengthens our ability to implement meaningful change within our community. We want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the following contributors:

Herkimer County System of Care and SAMHSA

- Katherine Driscoll, Project Director
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- SOC Planning Team
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 - Sarah Corapi, NYSPHC
- **Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES**
 - DJ Shephardson, Superintendent
- **Herkimer County School Districts**

Overview and Methodology

The Herkimer County System of Care administered the 2022-2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to local high school students. A total of 1,729 students in grades 9-12 participated across 8 school districts. Participating districts included Central Valley Academy, Frankfort-Schuyler, Herkimer, Little Falls, Mount Markham, Pathways Academy, Town of Webb, and West Canada Valley.

The survey was distributed to students as an at-home school assignment via SurveyMonkey, allowing flexibility for students to respond at their convenience. To respect students' comfort and maximize participation, a "prefer not to answer" option was provided for each question, enabling students to skip any item without penalty.

In line with previous years, the survey instrument was a modified version of the CDC's YRBS, adapted by the state of Vermont. This version includes additional items on protective factors, risk perception, and other topics relevant to local needs. Although the COVID-related questions used in previous surveys were excluded, the survey still covered areas such as mental health, bullying, and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to capture a broad perspective on youth experiences and behaviors.

Every possible effort was made to achieve a representative sample of students in the districts. However, certain groups were not included, such as students in alternative education settings, homeschooled students, and private school students. The participation count of 1,729 is considered sufficient to reflect the high school population in Herkimer County. However, results should be interpreted with consideration of each school's unique context and participation rate.

Basic statistical summaries and interpretations were derived directly from SurveyMonkey data to provide a clear overview of trends and responses. To maintain confidentiality, data points representing fewer than five individuals have been suppressed.

This survey aims to describe the prevalence of various risk behaviors among Herkimer County youth rather than explain the motivations behind these behaviors. Schools are encouraged to engage with their students, especially those who feel disconnected or marginalized, to understand the underlying reasons behind observed behaviors.

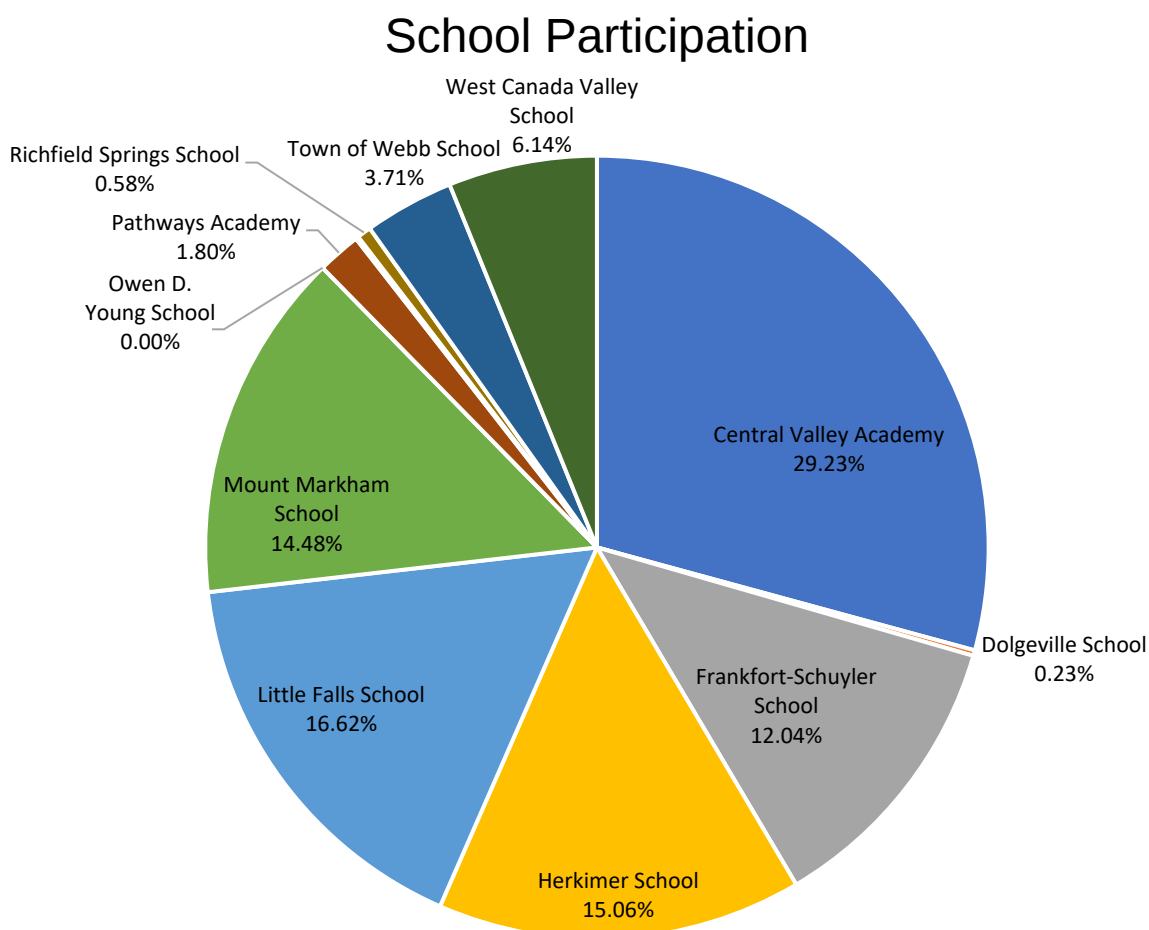
The insights gained from this survey are intended to support countywide and district-specific efforts in youth programming, health promotion, and resource allocation.

Participating Schools

All school districts in Herkimer County were invited to participate in the 2022-2023 YRBS. During this period, 8 districts participated in the survey: Central Valley Academy, Frankfort-Schuyler, Herkimer, Little Falls, Mount Markham, Pathways Academy, Town of Webb, and West Canada Valley. Overall, 1,729 students completed the survey, with varying student participation rates across school districts.

Although only these 8 districts officially participated, the accompanying graph shows small percentages of responses from Dolgeville and Richfield Springs. These additional data points likely represent students whose home districts did not formally participate in the YRBS but completed the survey through Pathways Academy. While these “outlier” responses comprise a small proportion of the overall dataset, they are included for completeness and transparency.

We extend our gratitude to district superintendents, building principals, and school staff who supported the survey process and encouraged student participation.



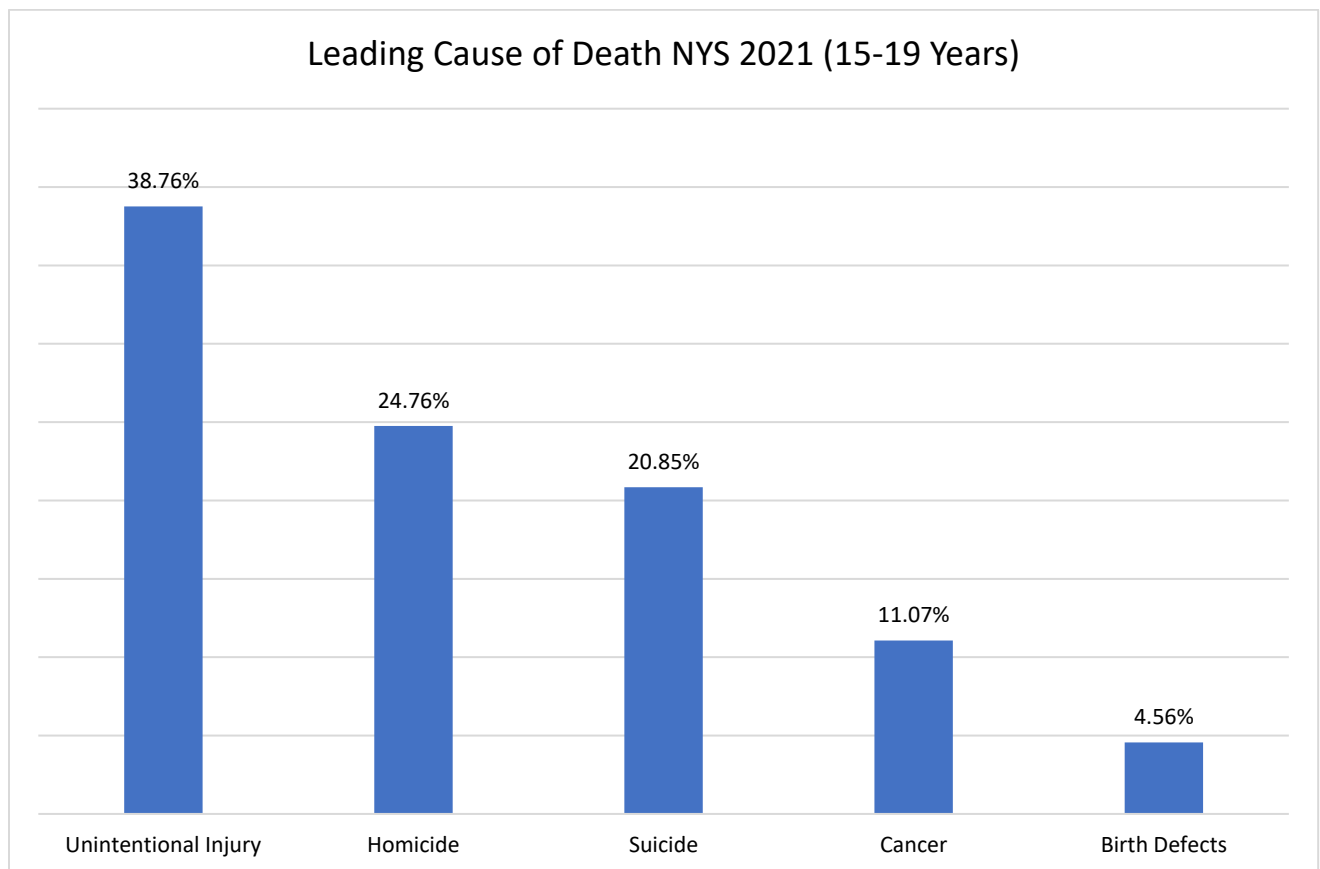
Adolescent Mortality

The chart below highlights the leading causes of death among adolescents aged 15-19 in New York State in the most recent reporting year (2021). These top causes reflect behaviors and risk factors many adolescents face in New York State and locally in Herkimer County.

The three leading causes of death for youth aged 15 to 19 in New York State are unintentional injury, homicide, and suicide. Cancer and birth defects also rank among the top five causes.

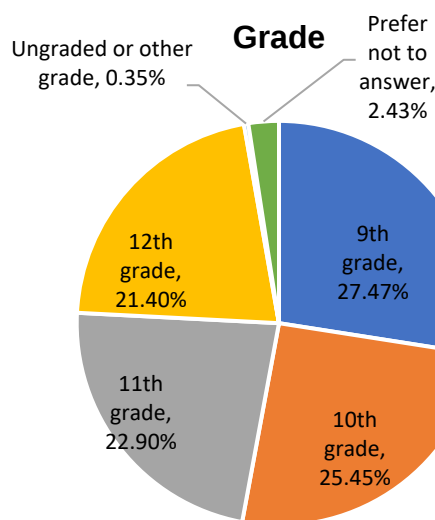
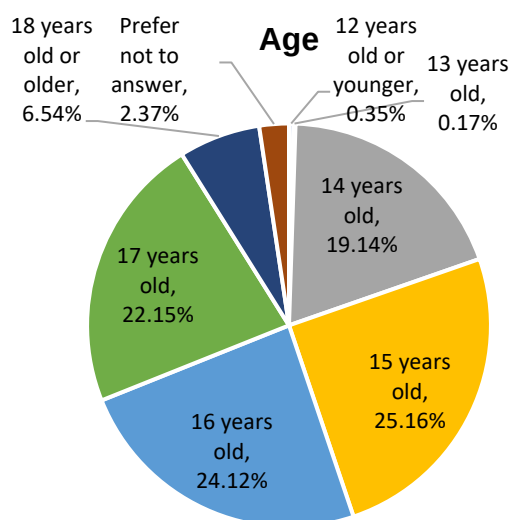
In Herkimer County, the adolescent mortality rate for those aged 10-19 is 35 deaths per 100,000, higher than the New York State objective of 20.4 per 100,000.³ Similarly, the county's suicide mortality rate for adolescents stands at 8.6 per 100,000, nearly double the state objective of 4.7 per 100,000.²

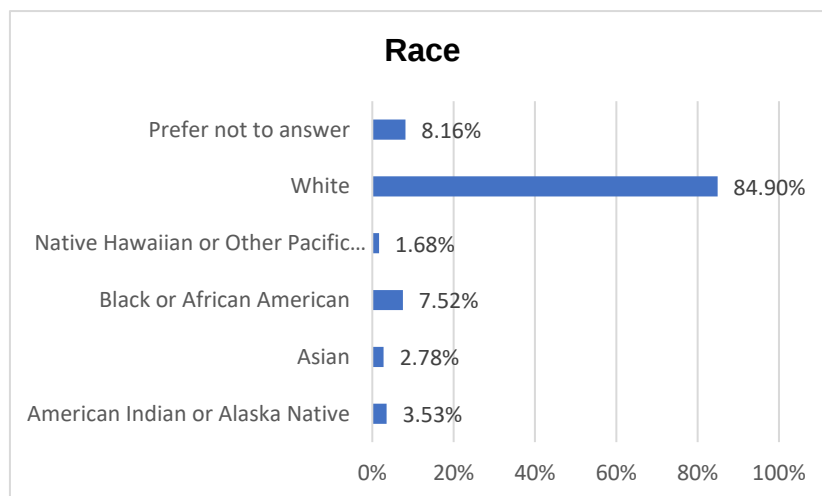
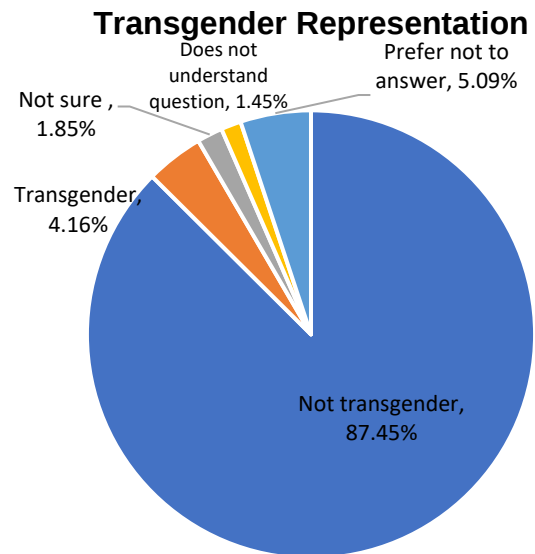
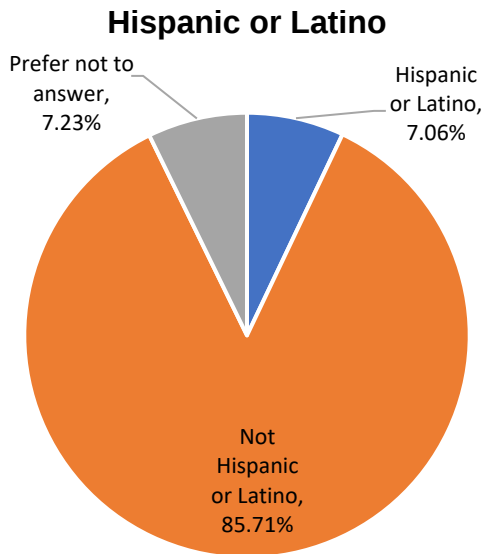
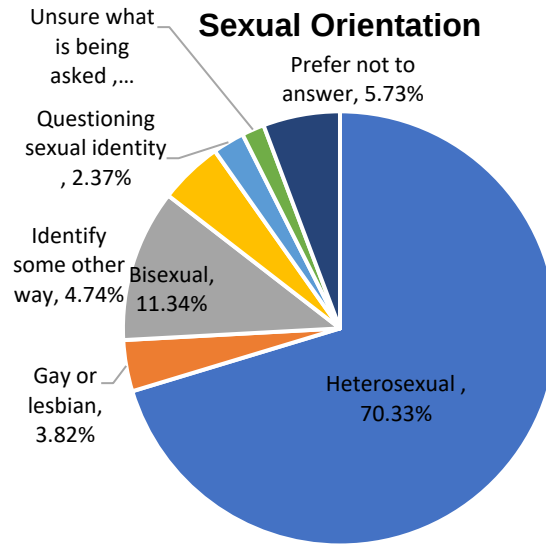
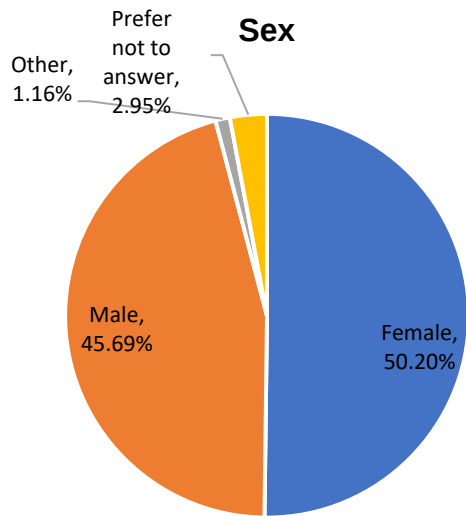
These statistics underscore the importance of addressing risky behaviors and mental health concerns among local youth, with a particular focus on preventing motor vehicle injuries and supporting mental health initiatives to reduce suicide rates.



Demographics

The following tables provide an overview of the demographic characteristics of students who participated in the 2022-2023 YRBS in Herkimer County. The demographics of the student participants show a diverse yet representative high school population. Most students were between 14 and 17 years old, with a fairly even grade distribution. The student body was nearly balanced by sex, with 45.69% male, 50.20% female, and 1.16% identifying as “Other.” Ethnic and racial backgrounds indicated a primarily non-Hispanic (85.71%) and White (84.90%) demographic, though other racial groups were represented. In terms of sexuality, the majority identified as heterosexual (70.35%), with smaller proportions identifying as bisexual, gay or lesbian, or questioning. Additionally, 4.16% identified as transgender, while most did not (87.45%). These findings provide a comprehensive snapshot of survey participant demographic characteristics.





Demographic Summary

Key Findings of Participant Demographic Characteristics

- **Age:** Most respondents were between 14 and 17 years old, with 15-year-olds forming the largest group (25.16%), followed by 16-year-olds (24.12%) and 17-year-olds (22.15%). 14-year-olds made up 19.14% of the sample, while younger students (12 or younger, 13) and older students (18 or older) were less represented. A small proportion (2.37%) preferred not to answer.
- **Grade:** The grade distribution shows a relatively even spread across high school levels, with 9th grade being the largest group (27.47%), followed by 10th (25.45%), 11th (22.90%), and 12th grade (21.40%). Only a small percentage were ungraded or in another grade (0.35%), and 2.43% preferred not to answer.
- **Sex:** The student population was almost evenly split between male (45.69%) and female (50.20%) students. A small percentage identified as "Other" (1.16%) and 2.95% preferred not to answer.
- **Hispanic or Latino Identity:** Most students (85.71%) did not identify as Hispanic or Latino, 7.06% identified as Hispanic or Latino, and 7.23% preferred not to disclose their ethnicity.
- **Race:** The majority of students identified as White (84.90%). The next largest group was Black or African American (7.52%), followed by American Indian or Alaska Native (3.53%) and Asian (2.78%). A smaller percentage identified as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (1.68%), while 8.16% preferred not to answer.
- **Sexuality:** Most students identified as heterosexual (70.35%), while 11.34% identified as bisexual, and smaller percentages as gay (3.82%), questioning (2.37%), or described their sexuality in another way (4.74%). Additionally, 5.73% preferred not to answer.
- **Transgender Representation:** The majority of students (87.45%) did not identify as transgender, while 4.16% identified as transgender. Smaller percentages were unsure (1.85%), did not understand the question (1.45%), or preferred not to answer (5.09%).

Motor Vehicle Safety

Motor vehicle crashes remain a leading cause of death among U.S. teenagers, with the CDC reporting an average of seven teen fatalities each day due to crash-related injuries.² These incidents are largely preventable, highlighting the importance of understanding teen driving and passenger behaviors to shape effective initiatives that reduce road risks.

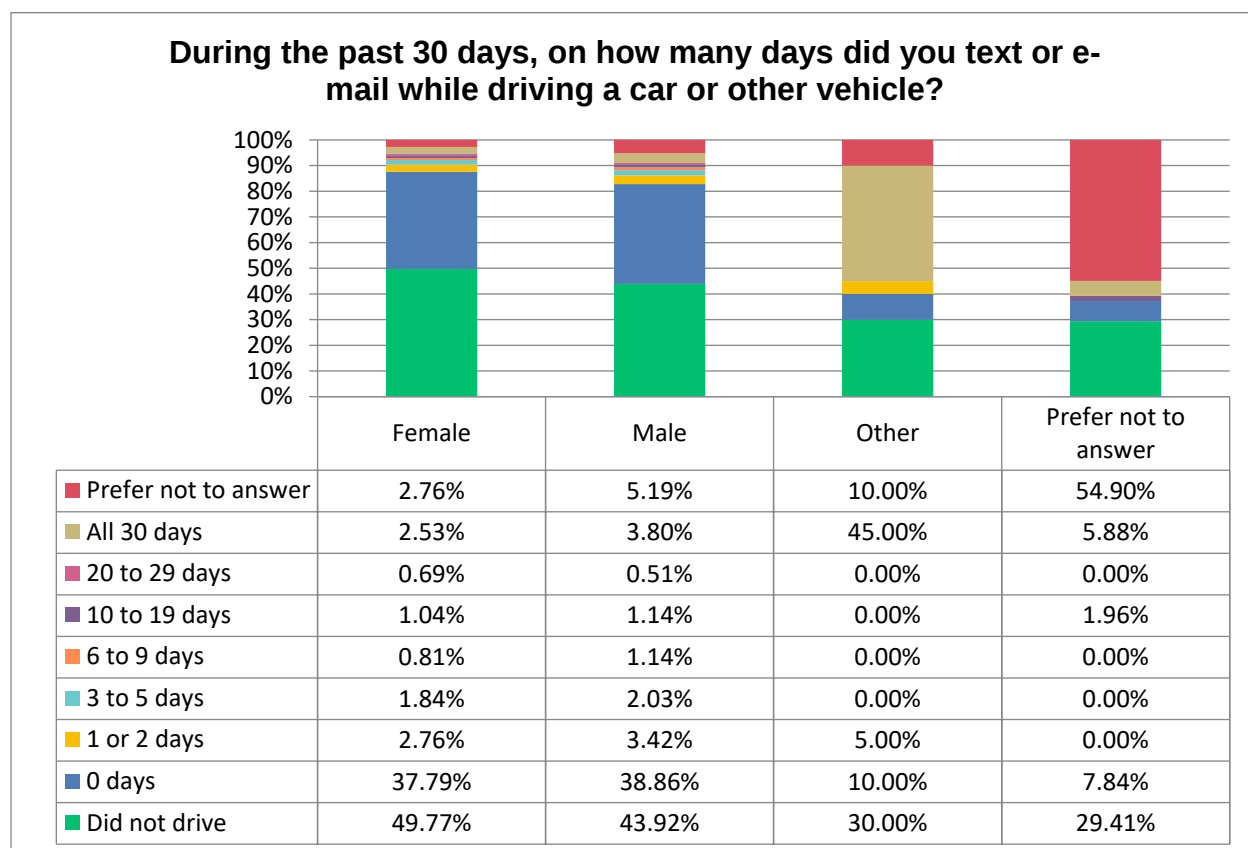
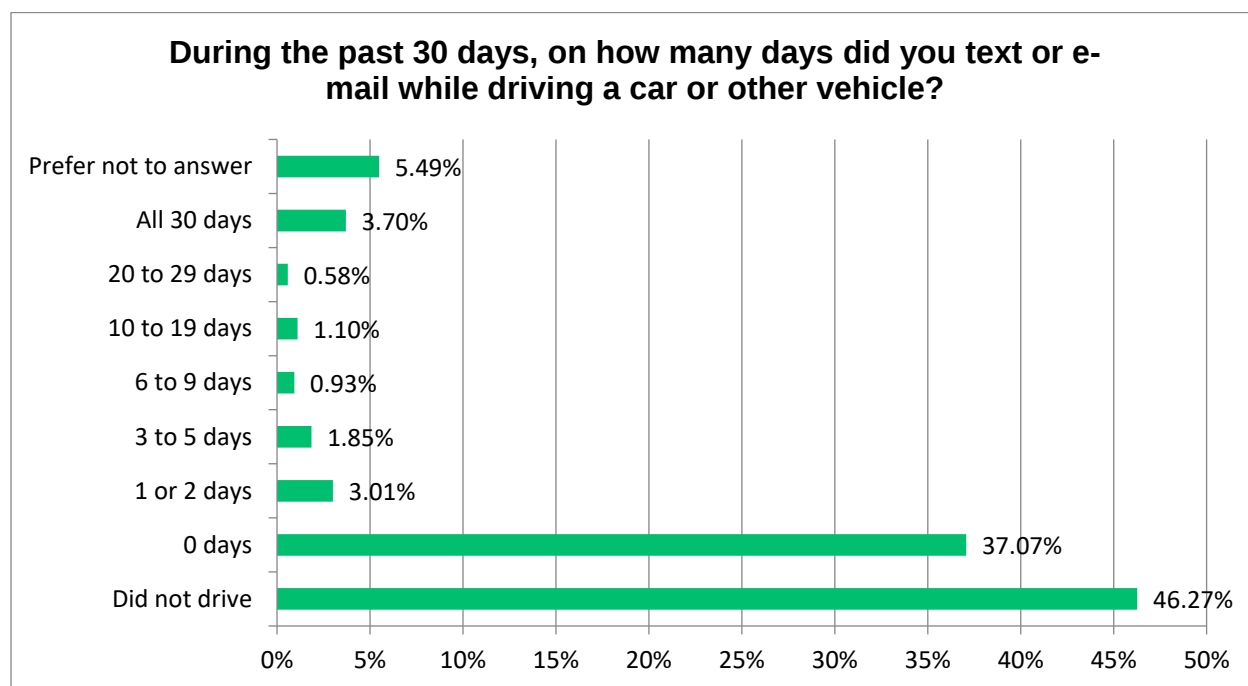
The YRBS assesses several behaviors that impact teen safety on the road, including seatbelt use, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, texting while driving, and riding with impaired drivers. This comprehensive approach allows us to identify safe habits and areas of concern, informing targeted interventions where needed.

Most students reported engaging in safe driving and passenger behaviors, with the majority refraining from texting while driving, driving under the influence of alcohol or marijuana, or riding with impaired drivers. However, a small group engaged in risky driving behaviors, with older students and those identifying as "Other" being more likely to report these activities.

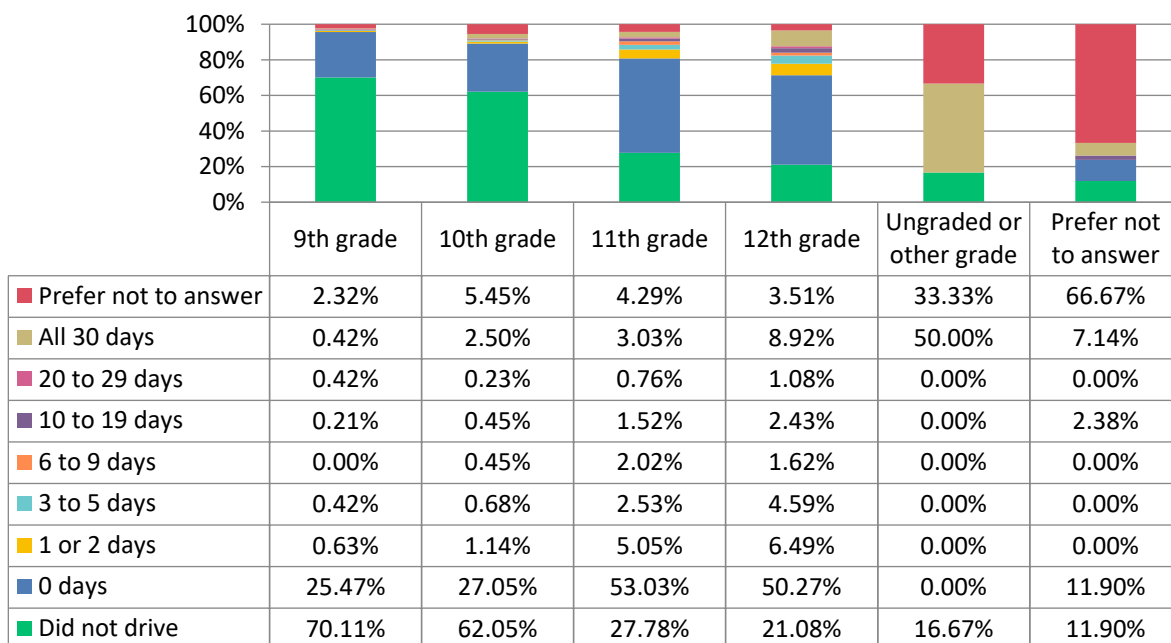
Reports of texting or emailing while driving remained relatively low, though it increased among higher grades. Similarly, while the majority of students avoided driving after drinking alcohol or using marijuana, students in higher grades and males were slightly more likely to report that they had engaged in these behaviors. Reports of riding with impaired drivers were also minimal but more frequent among those identifying as "Other."

Over the past three years, driving after drinking alcohol or using marijuana declined, while rates of riding with impaired drivers remain relatively stable. Texting while driving also shows a decreasing trend. These findings highlight continued areas for targeted interventions, particularly among high-risk groups.

General Vehicle Safety Behaviors



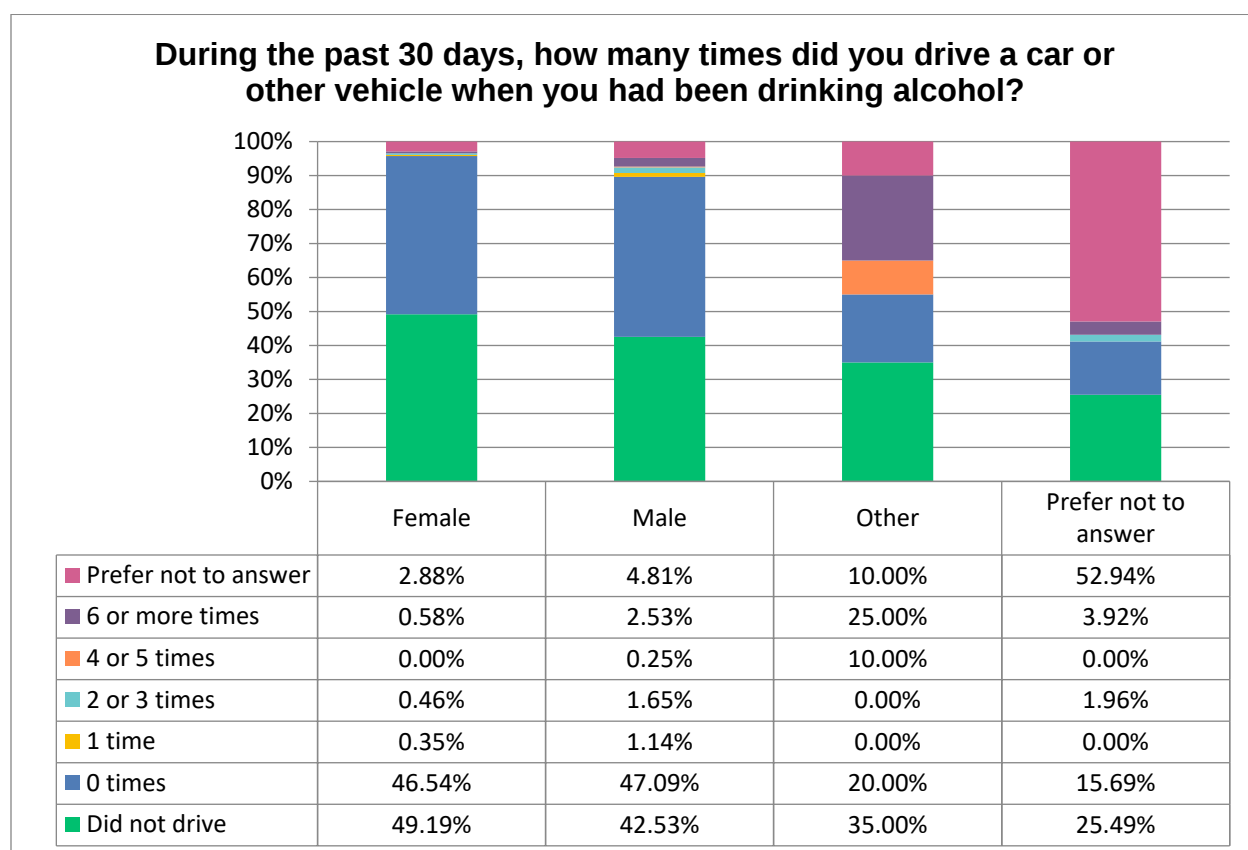
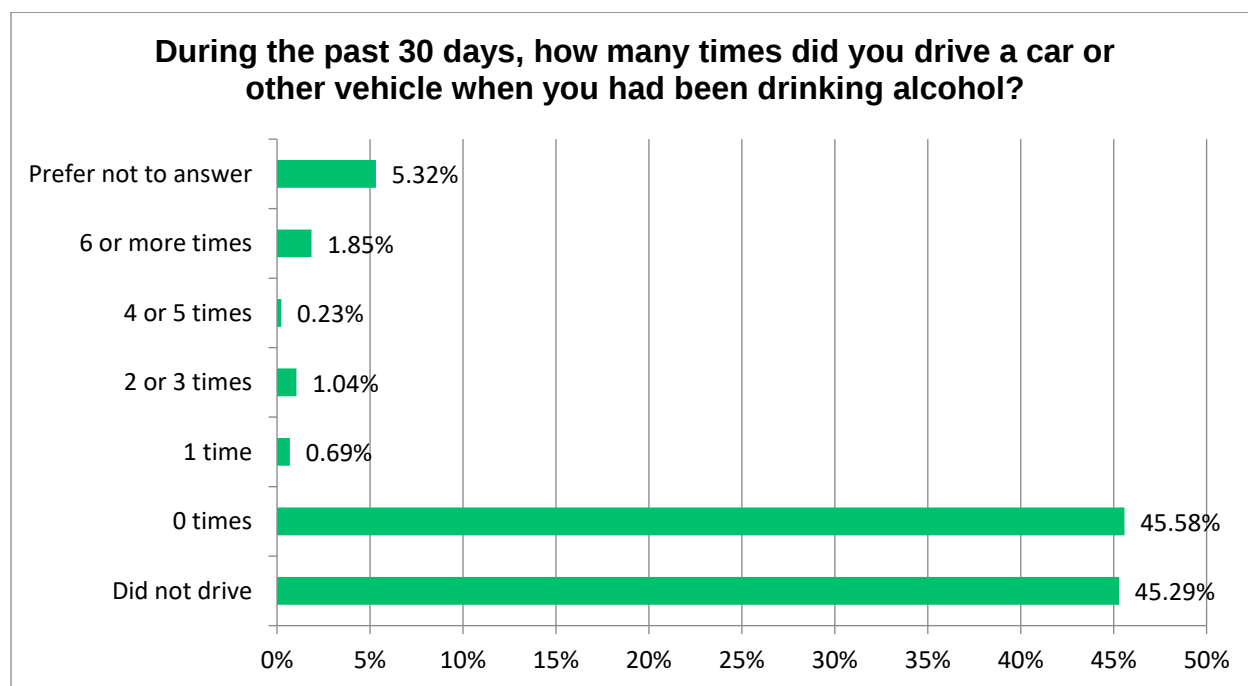
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you text or e-mail while driving a car or other vehicle?

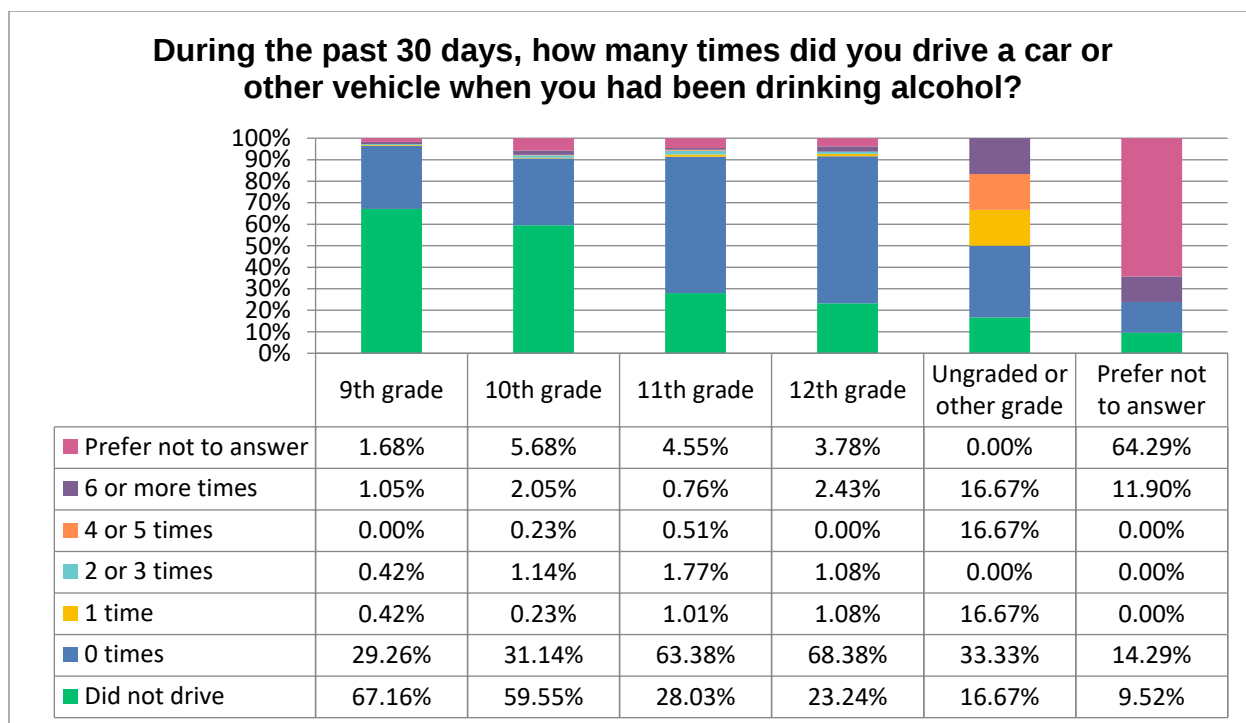


Key Findings on Texting or Email While Driving Among Students:

- County-wide Trends:** Most students did not text or email while driving. A large portion (46.27%) reported not driving, while 37.07% indicated they engaged in the behavior "0 days." However, 3.70% reported texting or emailing "All 30 days," and smaller percentages engaged in the behavior less frequently, such as "1 or 2 days" (3.01%) and "20 to 29 days" (0.58%). Additionally, 5.49% of students preferred not to answer. The data suggests that many students refrained from texting or emailing while driving.
- Gender Differences:** Most males and females reported either not driving or refraining from texting or emailing while driving. Among females, 49.77% reported "Did not drive" and 37.79% reported "0 days," compared to 43.92% and 38.86%, respectively, among males. Smaller percentages of both groups reported engaging in the behavior, such as "20 to 29 days" (0.51% for males and 0.69% for females) or "1 or 2 days" (3.42% for males and 2.76% for females). Among students identifying as "Other," 30% did not drive, but a notably higher percentage (45.00%) reported texting or emailing "All 30 days."
- Grade Differences:** The percentage of students who reported "Did not drive" decreased with grade level, from 70.11% in 9th grade to 21.08% in 12th grade. At the same time, daily texting while driving ("All 30 days") increased with grade, rising from 0.42% in 9th grade to 8.92% in 12th grade. While younger students were less likely to drive, older students, particularly in 12th grade, reported higher rates of texting while driving.

Motor Vehicles and Alcohol Use

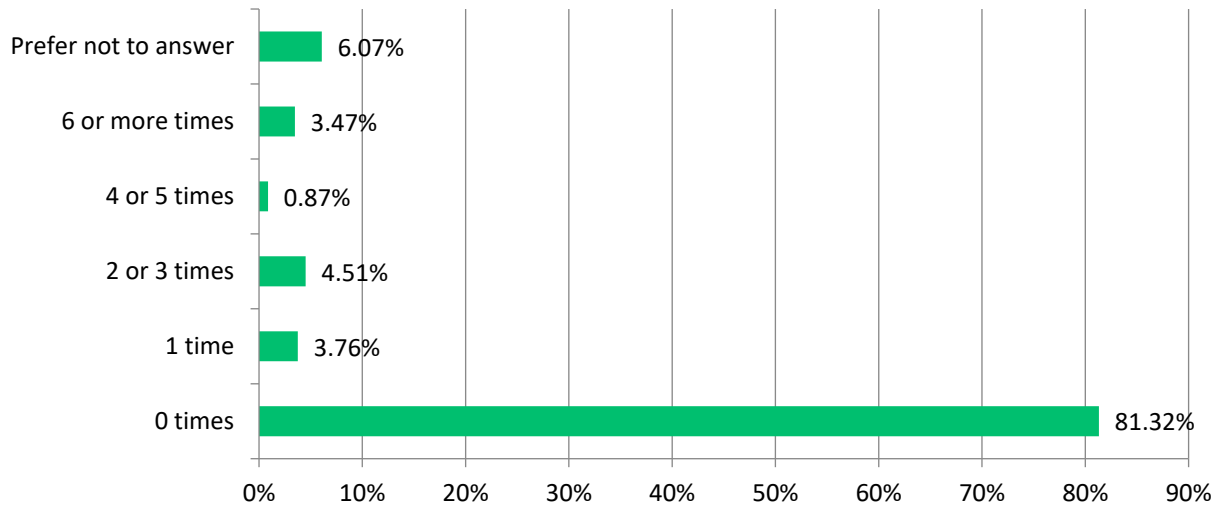




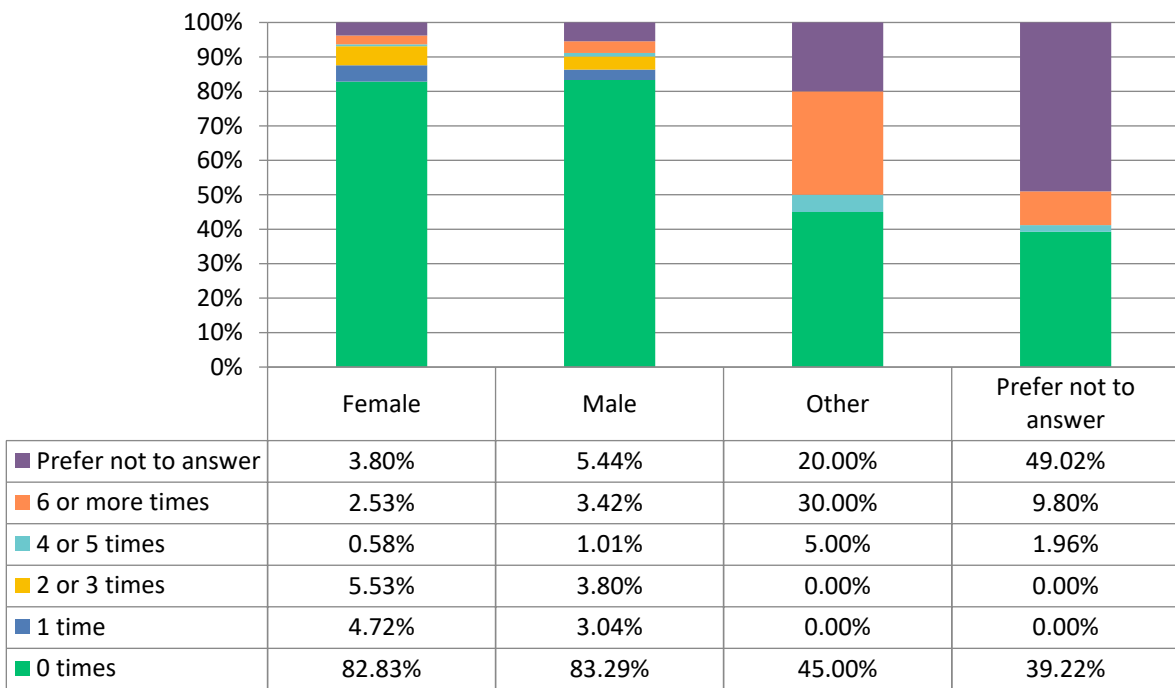
Key Findings on Alcohol-Impaired Driving

- County-wide Trends:** Most students did not drive after drinking alcohol. A large portion (45.58%) reported "0 times," while 45.29% indicated they "Did not drive" in the past 30 days. However, 1.85% reported driving "6 or more times," with smaller percentages reporting "1 time" (0.69%) or "4 or 5 times" (0.23%). Additionally, 5.32% of students preferred not to answer. The data shows that the majority refrained from driving after drinking, though a small group engaged in this risky behavior multiple times.
- Gender Differences:** Most males and females reported either not driving or not driving after drinking alcohol. Among females, 49.19% reported "Did not drive," and 46.54% indicated they had not driven after drinking ("0 times"), compared to 42.53% and 47.09%, respectively, among males. Among students identifying as "Other," 35.00% did not drive, while 25.00% reported driving after drinking "6 or more times." While most students refrained from drinking and driving, those identifying as "Other" were more likely to report engaging in this behavior.
- Grade Differences:** Most students either did not drive or did not drive after drinking alcohol. The percentage of students who reported "Did not drive" decreased with grade level, from 67.16% in 9th grade to 23.24% in 12th grade. A small percentage of students in each grade reported engaging in this behavior, with 2.43% of 12th graders and 2.05% of 10th graders driving after drinking "6 or more times." Among students in the ungraded or other category, 16.67% reported driving after drinking "6 or more times," and the same percentage reported "4 or 5 times."

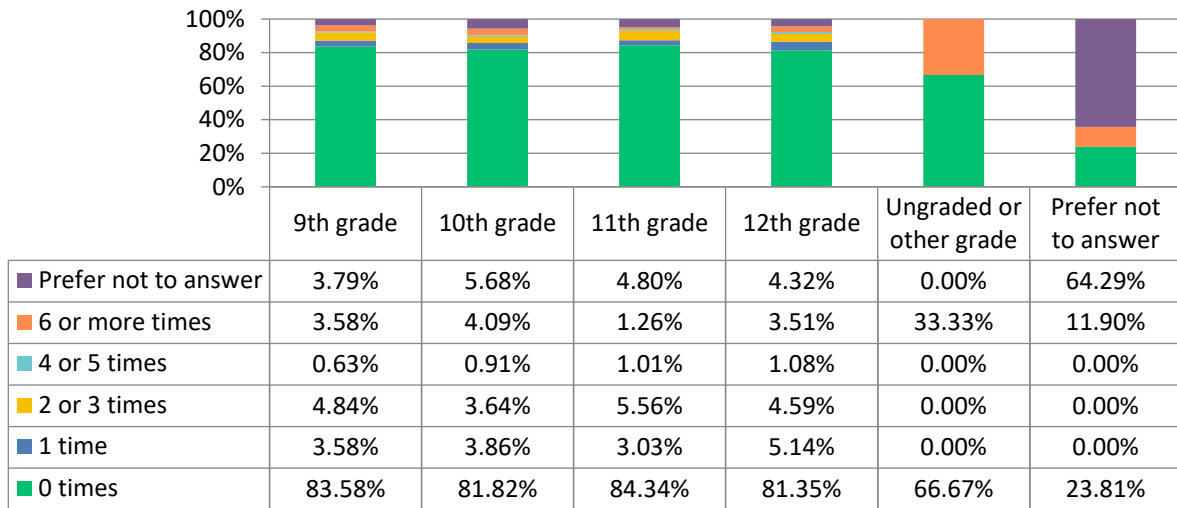
During the past 30 days, how many times did you ride in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol?



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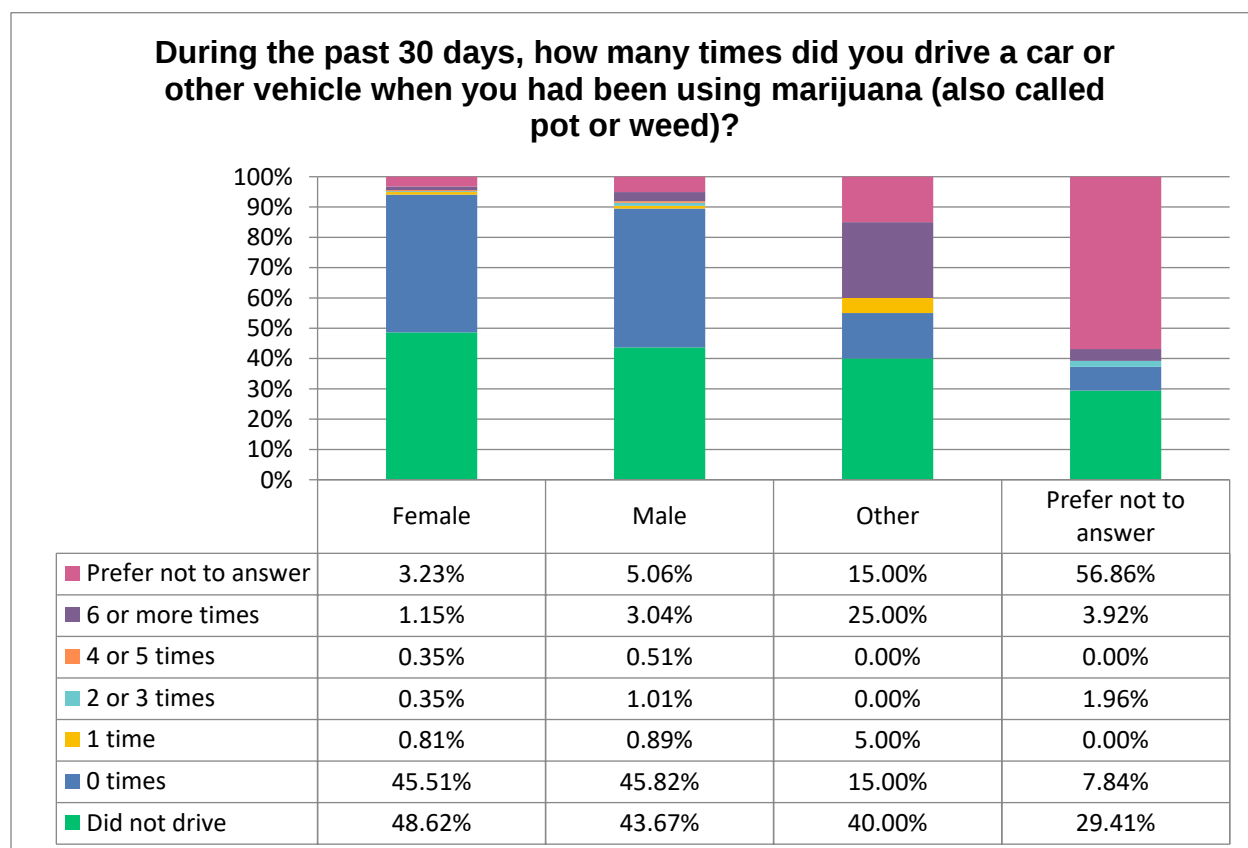
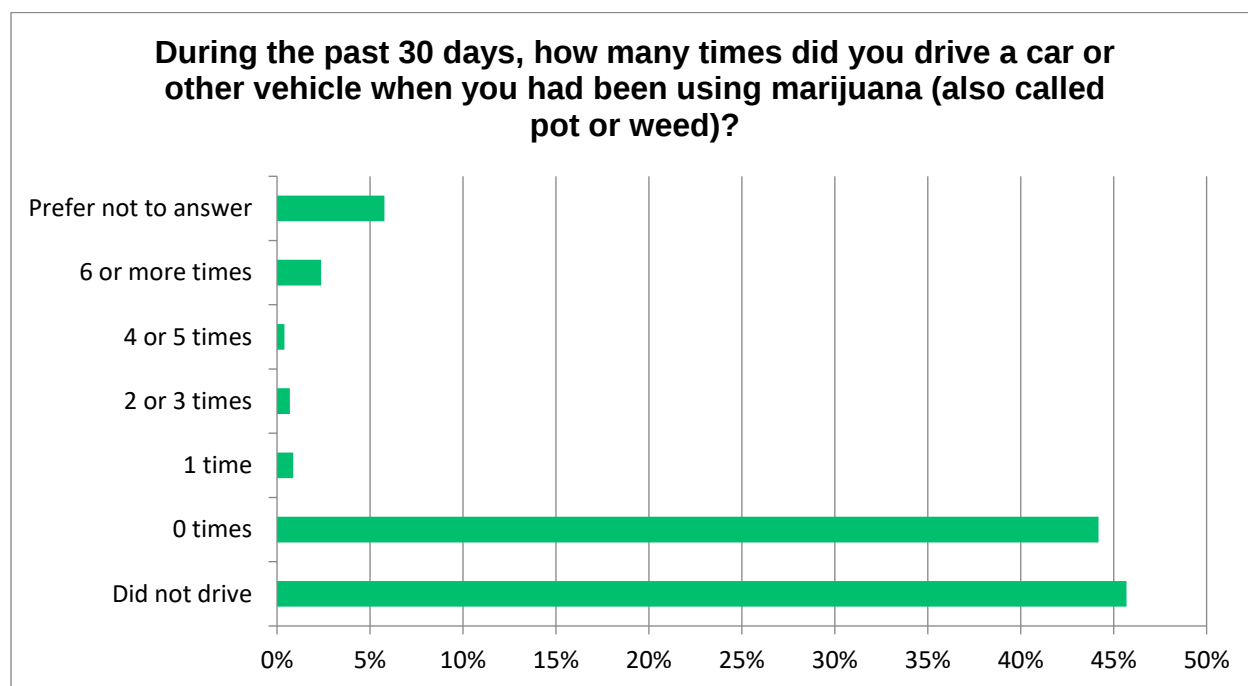
During the past 30 days, how many times did you ride in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol?



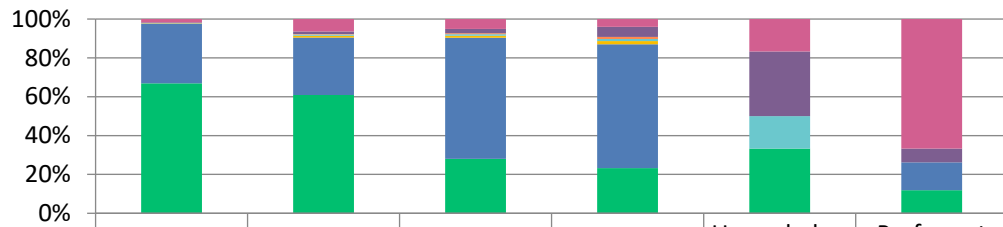
Key Findings on Riding with Drivers Who Have Been Drinking Alcohol

- County-wide Trends:** Most students did not ride in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol. A vast majority (81.32%) reported "0 times," indicating they had not engaged in this risky behavior. Notably, 3.47% reported doing so "6 or more times," and smaller percentages reported lower frequencies, such as "2 or 3 times" (4.51%) and "1 time" (3.76%). Additionally, 6.07% of students preferred not to answer. The data suggests that most students avoided riding with an impaired driver.
- Gender Differences:** Most males and females reported not riding in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol. Similarly, 82.83% of females and 83.29% of males reported "0 times." A small percentage of males (3.42%) and females (2.53%) reported doing so "6 or more times." Lower frequencies were also reported, with 5.53% of females and 3.80% of males riding with an impaired driver "2 or 3 times." Among students identifying as "Other," 45% reported "0 times," while 30% reported "6 or more times." The data suggests that most students avoided this risky behavior.
- Grade Differences:** Most students did not ride in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol, with "0 times" reported by at least 80% cross all grades. A small percentage engaged in this behavior, with 4.09% of 10th graders and 3.51% of 12th graders reporting "6 or more times." Lower frequencies were also noted, with 5.56% of 11th graders and 4.59% of 12th graders reporting "2 or 3 times." Among students in the ungraded or other category, 33.33% reported "6 or more times." While most students refrained, a small group, particularly in the ungraded or other category, reported riding with drivers under the influence.

Motor Vehicles and Marijuana Use



During the past 30 days, how many times did you drive a car or other vehicle when you had been using marijuana (also called pot or weed)?

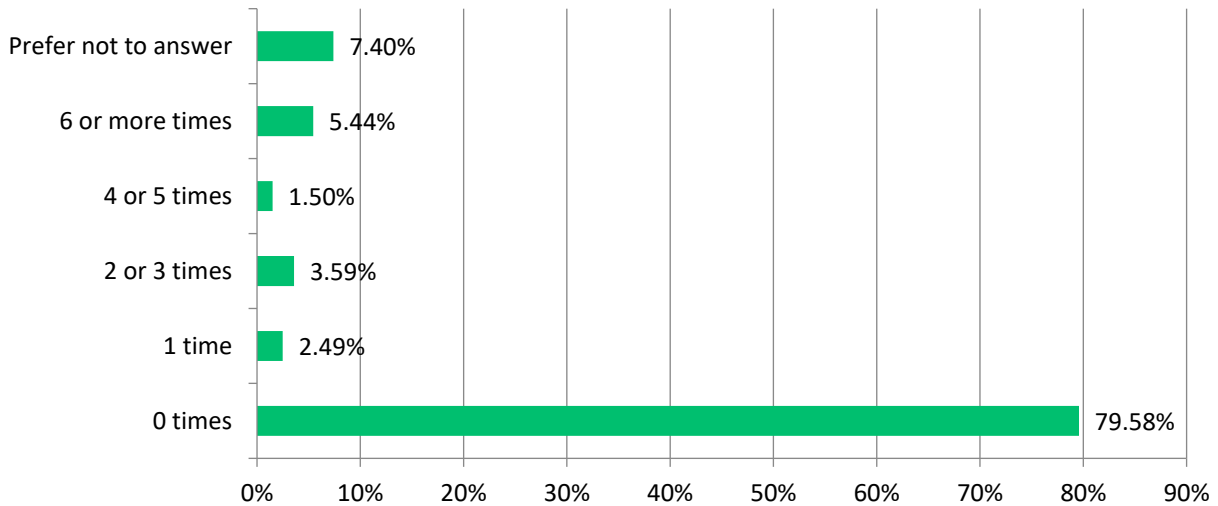


■ Prefer not to answer	1.68%	6.36%	5.05%	4.05%	16.67%	66.67%
■ 6 or more times	0.42%	1.36%	2.27%	5.14%	33.33%	7.14%
■ 4 or 5 times	0.00%	0.23%	0.51%	1.08%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 2 or 3 times	0.21%	0.68%	0.76%	1.08%	16.67%	0.00%
■ 1 time	0.21%	0.91%	1.01%	1.62%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 0 times	30.53%	29.55%	62.37%	63.78%	0.00%	14.29%
■ Did not drive	66.95%	60.91%	28.03%	23.24%	33.33%	11.90%

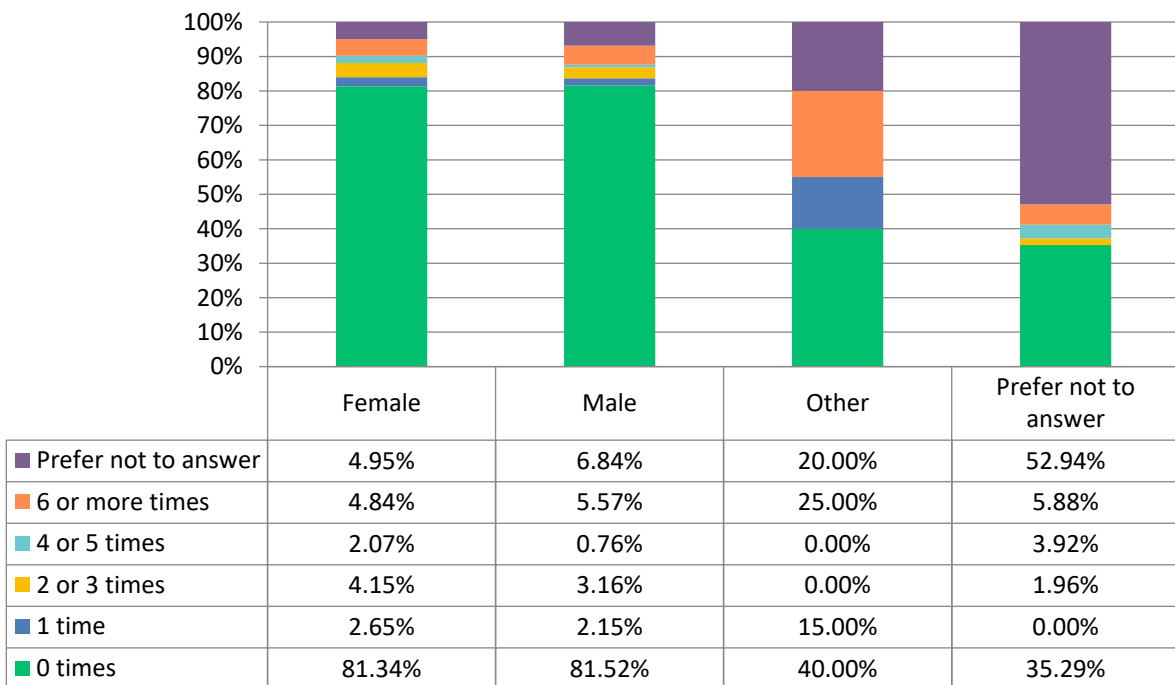
Key Findings on Driving After Using Marijuana

- County-wide Trends:** Most students did not drive after using marijuana. A large portion reported "0 times" (44.78%), while a similar percentage indicated they "Did not drive" (45.92%) in the past 30 days. However, a small percentage engaged in this behavior, with some driving after using marijuana "6 or more times" (3.27%). Smaller percentages reported lower frequencies, such as "1 time" (0.89%) or "2 or 3 times" (1.23%). Additionally, some students preferred not to answer (3.91%). The data shows that the majority refrained from driving after using marijuana, though a small group engaged in this risky behavior multiple times.
- Gender Differences:** Most males and females did not drive after using marijuana. Among females, 48.62% reported "Did not drive," and 45.51% reported "0 times," compared to 43.67% and 45.82%, respectively, among males. Among students identifying as "Other," 40% reported "Did not drive," while 25.00% reported "6 or more times." The data suggests that most students refrained from driving after using marijuana. However, those identifying as "Other" were more likely to report engaging in this behavior.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across grades either did not drive or did not drive after using marijuana. A small percentage engaged in driving after using marijuana, with 5.14% of 12th graders and 2.27% of 11th graders reporting "6 or more times." Among students in the ungraded category, 33.33% reported driving after using marijuana "6 or more times."

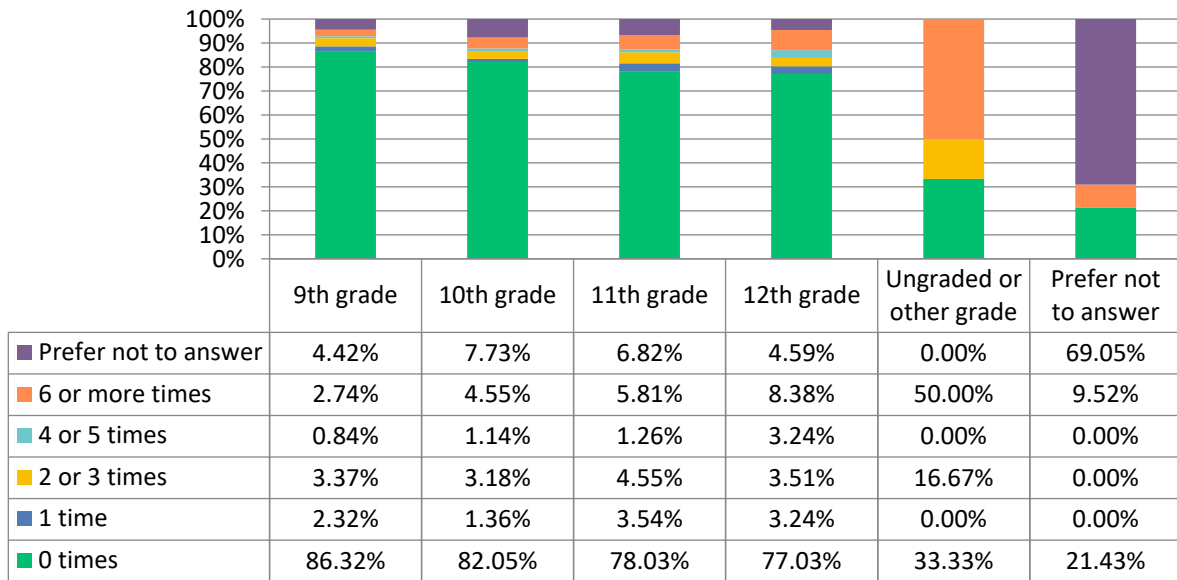
During the past 30 days, how many times did you ride in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been using marijuana (also called pot or weed)?



During the past 30 days, how many times did you ride in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been using marijuana (also called pot or weed)?



During the past 30 days, how many times did you ride in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been using marijuana (also called pot or weed)?



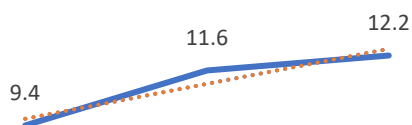
Key Findings on Riding in a Vehicle Driven by Someone Using Marijuana

- County-wide Trends:** Most students did not ride in a vehicle driven by someone who had been using marijuana, with 79.58% reporting "0 times." However, 5.44% reported doing so "6 or more times," while smaller percentages reported "2 or 3 times" (3.59%) or "1 time" (2.49%). Additionally, 7.40% of students preferred not to answer. The data suggests that while the majority avoided this risky behavior, a small group reported repeated instances of riding with an impaired driver.
- Gender Differences:** Most males and females did not ride in a vehicle driven by someone who had been using marijuana, with 81.34% of females and 81.52% of males reporting "0 times." A small percentage engaged in this behavior multiple times, with 5.57% of males and 4.84% of females reporting "6 or more times." Among students identifying as "Other," 40.00% reported "0 times," while 25.00% reported "6 or more times." The data suggests that most students did not report riding with someone under the influence.
- Grade Differences:** Most students did not ride in a vehicle driven by someone using marijuana, with "0 times" reported by the vast majority of students (77.03-86.32%) Although minimal, higher grades reported a more varied range of engagement in the behavior compared to lower grades. Among students in the ungraded or other category, 50% reported riding with someone under the influence 6 or more times. The data suggests that while most students avoided this risk, older students and those in the ungraded or other category were more likely to report doing so.

Risky Driving Behaviors Over Time

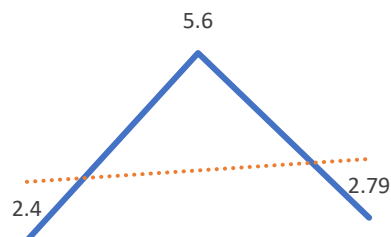
This section examines patterns of risk behaviors related to motor vehicle use among students over the past 3 years (2020-2023). This analysis includes trends in behaviors such as texting while driving, driving under the influence of alcohol or marijuana, and riding with drivers who are under the influence. By observing these behaviors across multiple years, we can identify whether risky behaviors are increasing, decreasing, or remaining steady among students.

**RODE IN A CAR OR OTHER VEHICLE
DRIVEN BY SOMEONE WHO HAD
BEEN DRINKING ALCOHOL, %**



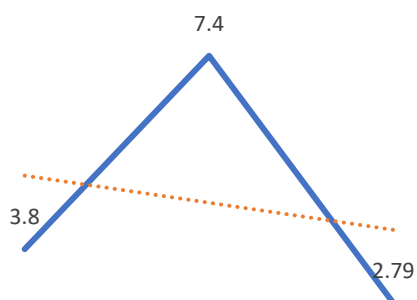
2020-2021 2021-2022 2022-2023

**DROVE A CAR OR OTHER
VEHICLE WHEN YOU HAD BEEN
DRINKING ALCOHOL, %**



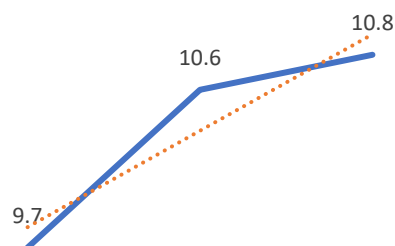
2020-2021 2021-2022 2022-2023

**DROVE A CAR OR VEHICLE WHEN
YOU HAD BEEN USING
MARIJUANA, %**

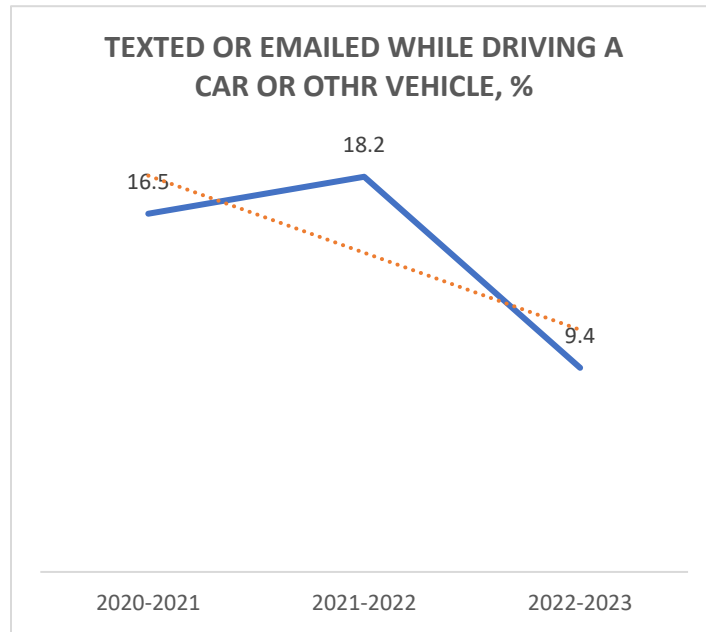


2020-2021 2021-2022 2022-2023

**RODE IN A CAR OR OTHER
VEHICLE DRIVEN BY SOMEONE
WHO HAD BEEN USING
MARIJUANA, %**



2020-2021 2021-2022 2022-2023



Key Findings in Risky Driving Behaviors Over Time

- **Reduced Driving Under Alcohol Influence:** Driving after drinking alcohol saw an initial rise, reaching 5.6% in 2021-2022, followed by a decline to 2.79% in 2022-2023, showing a general decrease in this behavior over time.
- **Stable Rates of Riding with Alcohol-Influenced Drivers:** The rate of students who reported riding with a driver under the influence of alcohol remained mostly steady, moving slightly from 9.4% in 2020-2021 to 12.2% in 2022-2023, suggesting that this behavior persists at a steady level.
- **Fluctuations in Driving Under Marijuana Influence:** The percentage of students who reported driving under the influence of marijuana peaked at 7.4% in 2021-2022, before declining to 2.79% in 2022-2023, showing an overall decrease with some variability across the years.
- **Rates of Riding with Marijuana-Influenced Drivers:** The percentage of students riding with drivers under the influence of marijuana increased slightly from 9.7% in 2020-2021 to 10.8% in 2022-2023, with minimal fluctuation. This suggests that the behavior has remained relatively stable.
- **Decrease in Texting or Emailing While Driving:** Over the past three years, the percentage of students who reported texting or emailing while driving decreased from 16.5% in 2020-2021 to 9.4% in 2022-2023, reflecting a downward trend in this risky behavior.

Violence-related Behaviors

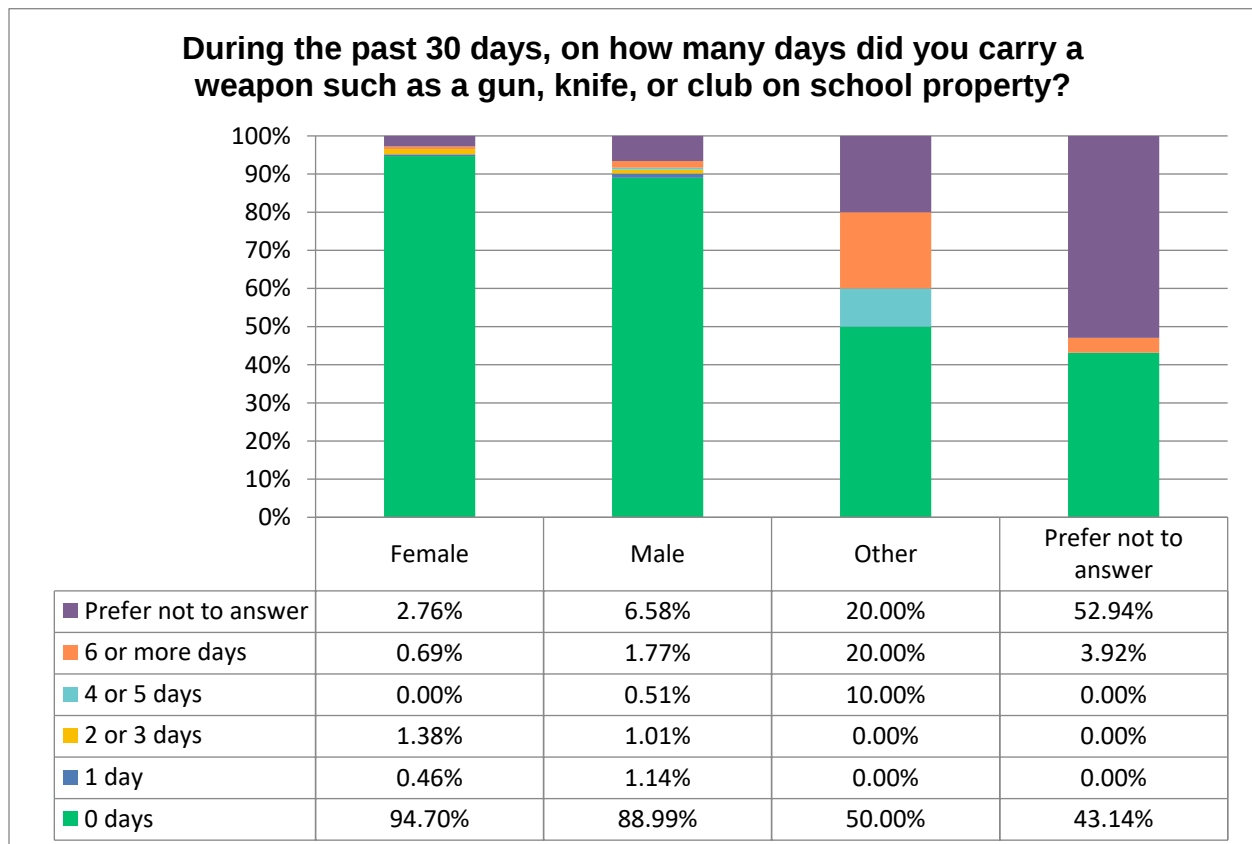
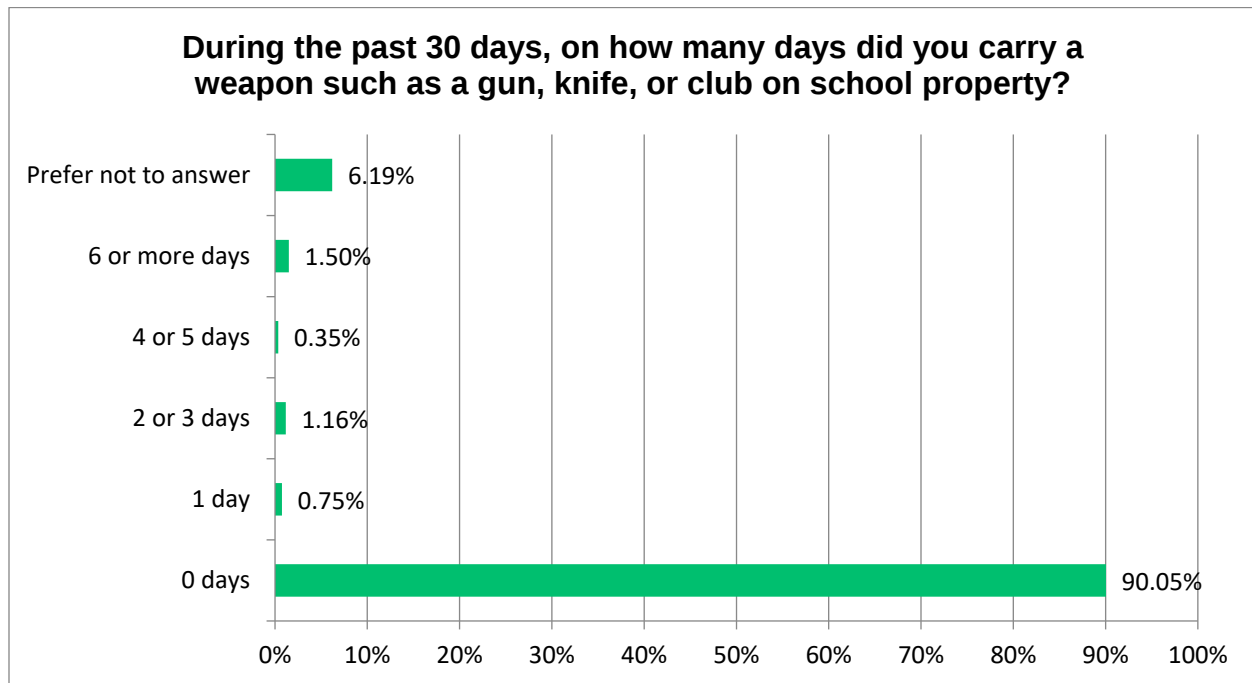
Exposure to violence during adolescence can significantly impact health, academic performance, and social well-being. Experiencing or witnessing violent behaviors is associated with poorer mental and physical health outcomes, increased absenteeism, and challenges to academic success. The presence of violence in students' lives, whether at school or in their neighborhoods, can also heighten feelings of insecurity and lead to lower academic engagement.³

Most students reported feeling safe at school and did not engage in violence-related behaviors. The majority did not carry weapons on school property, experience threats or injuries involving weapons, or miss school due to safety concerns. Physical fights were relatively uncommon, though males and younger students were slightly more likely to report involvement.

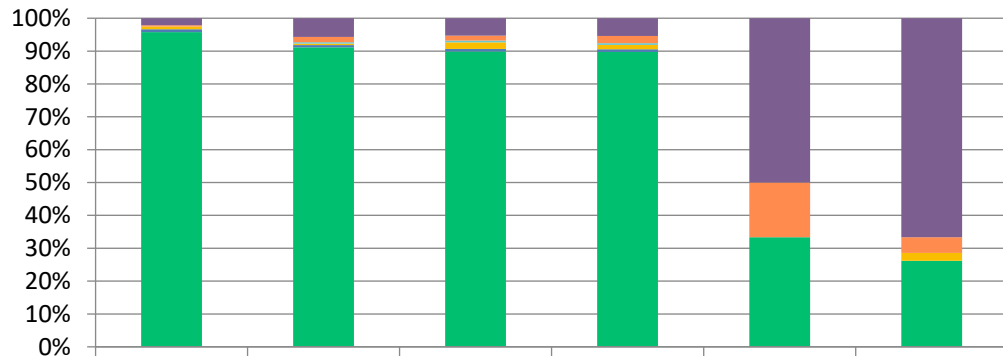
However, a small subset of students engaged in these behaviors. Males were more likely than females to report carrying a weapon on school property or being involved in a physical fight. Older students, particularly 12th graders, were more likely to report carrying a weapon on school property or missing school due to safety concerns. Among students identifying as "Other," responses varied, but a higher percentage reported experiencing threats or injuries with weapons. Due to the small sample size, interpretations for this group should be made with caution.

Trends over time show fluctuations. Reports of being threatened or injured with a weapon declined after peaking in 2021-2022. However, weapon carrying and physical fights increased in recent years. These findings highlight the importance of continued efforts to promote school safety and reduce violence-related risks.

Violence and Weapons



During the past 30 days, on how many days did you carry a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property?

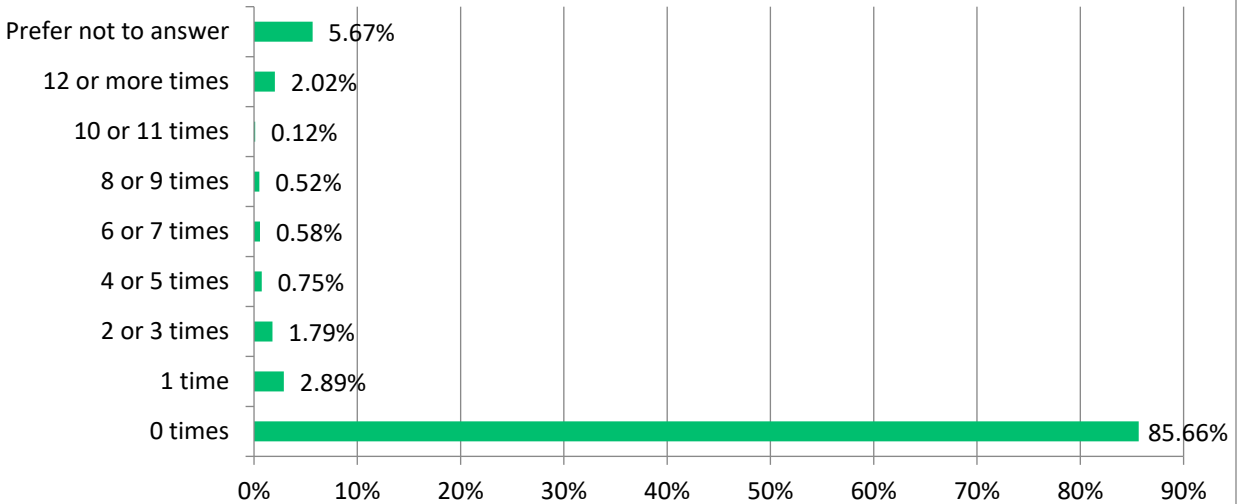


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	2.11%	5.68%	5.30%	5.41%	50.00%	66.67%
6 or more days	0.42%	1.59%	1.52%	2.16%	16.67%	4.76%
4 or 5 days	0.00%	0.45%	0.51%	0.54%	0.00%	0.00%
2 or 3 days	0.84%	0.45%	2.02%	1.35%	0.00%	2.38%
1 day	0.84%	0.68%	0.76%	0.81%	0.00%	0.00%
0 days	95.79%	91.14%	89.90%	89.73%	33.33%	26.19%

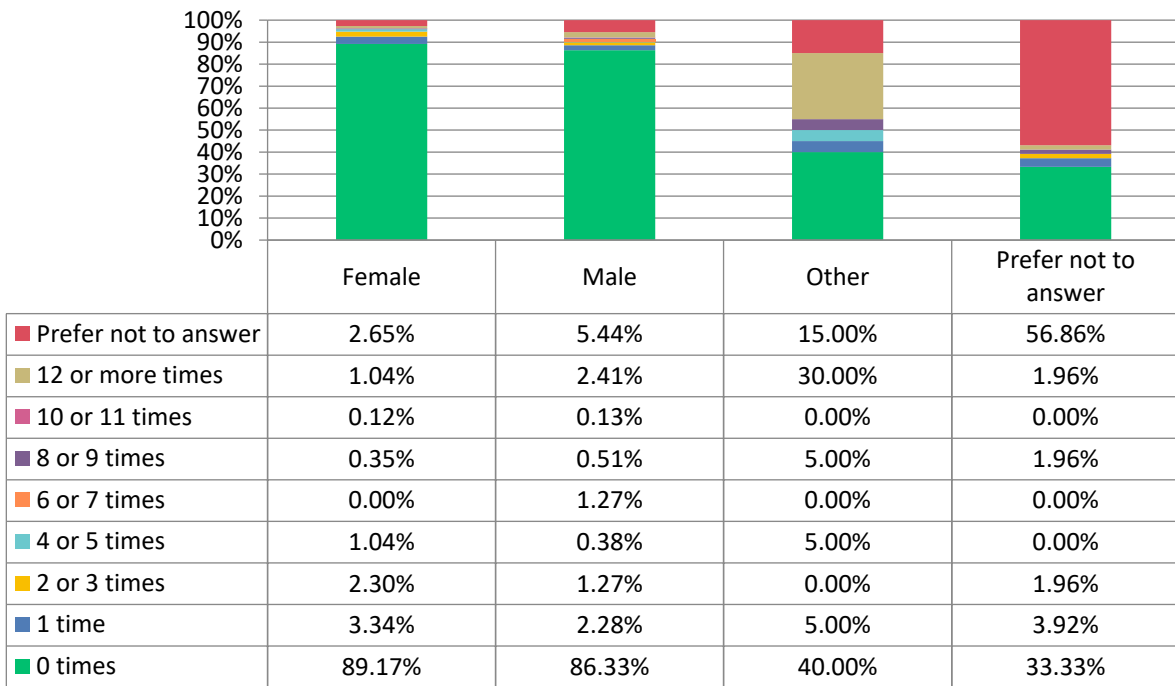
Key Findings on Weapon Carrying on School Property

- County-wide Trends:** Most students did not carry a weapon on school property, with 90.05% reporting "0 days." A small percentage engaged in this behavior, with 1.50% carrying a weapon "6 or more days." Smaller percentages reported "2 or 3 days" (1.16%) or "1 day" (0.75%). Additionally, 6.19% of students preferred not to answer. The data suggests that weapon carrying on school property was rare.
- Gender Differences:** Most males and females did not carry a weapon on school property, with 94.70% of females and 88.99% of males reporting "0 days." Among students identifying as "Other," responses varied, but due to the small sample size, interpretations should be made with caution. The data suggests that weapon carrying was uncommon overall.
- Grade Differences:** Most students did not carry a weapon on school property, with "0 days" reported by 89.73-95.79% across grades. A small percentage engaged in this behavior, with reports of carrying a weapon "6 or more days" increasing slightly from 0.42% in 9th grade to 2.16% in 12th grade. Lower frequencies were also reported, such as "2 or 3 days" (2.02% in 11th grade and 1.35% in 12th grade). Among students in the ungraded or other category, responses varied, but due to the small sample size, interpretations should be made with caution. The data suggests that weapon carrying on school property was uncommon across all grades, with only minor variations by grade level.

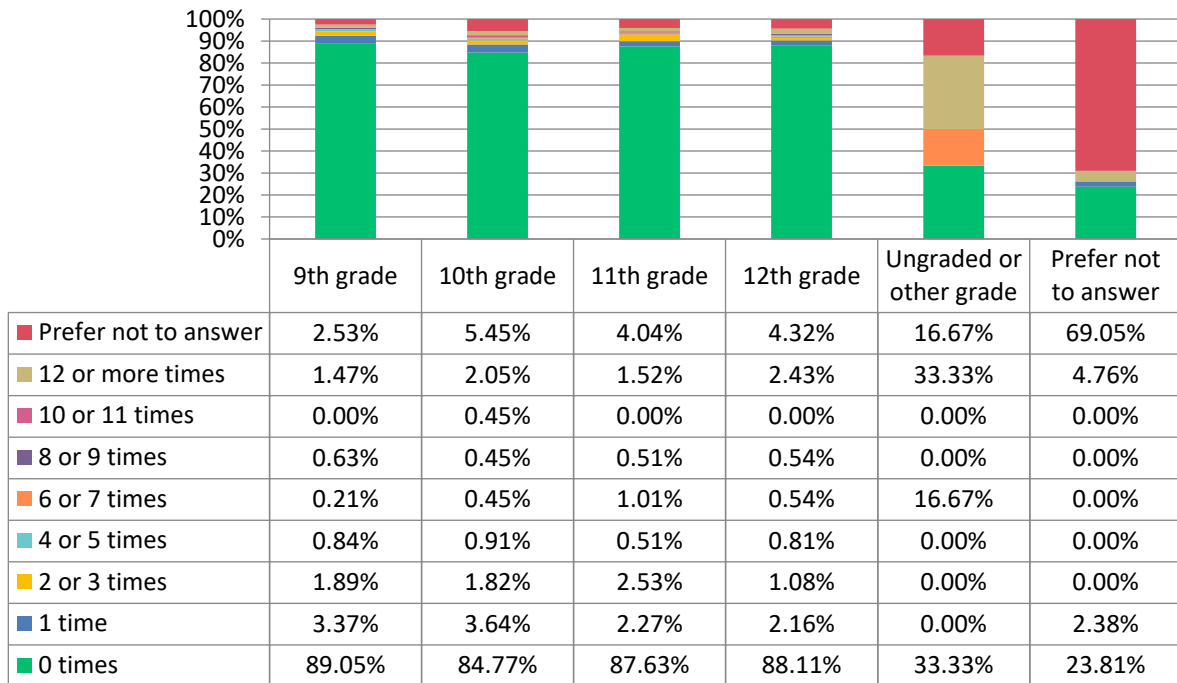
During the past 12 months, how many times has someone threatened or injured you with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property?



During the past 12 months, how many times has someone threatened or injured you with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property?



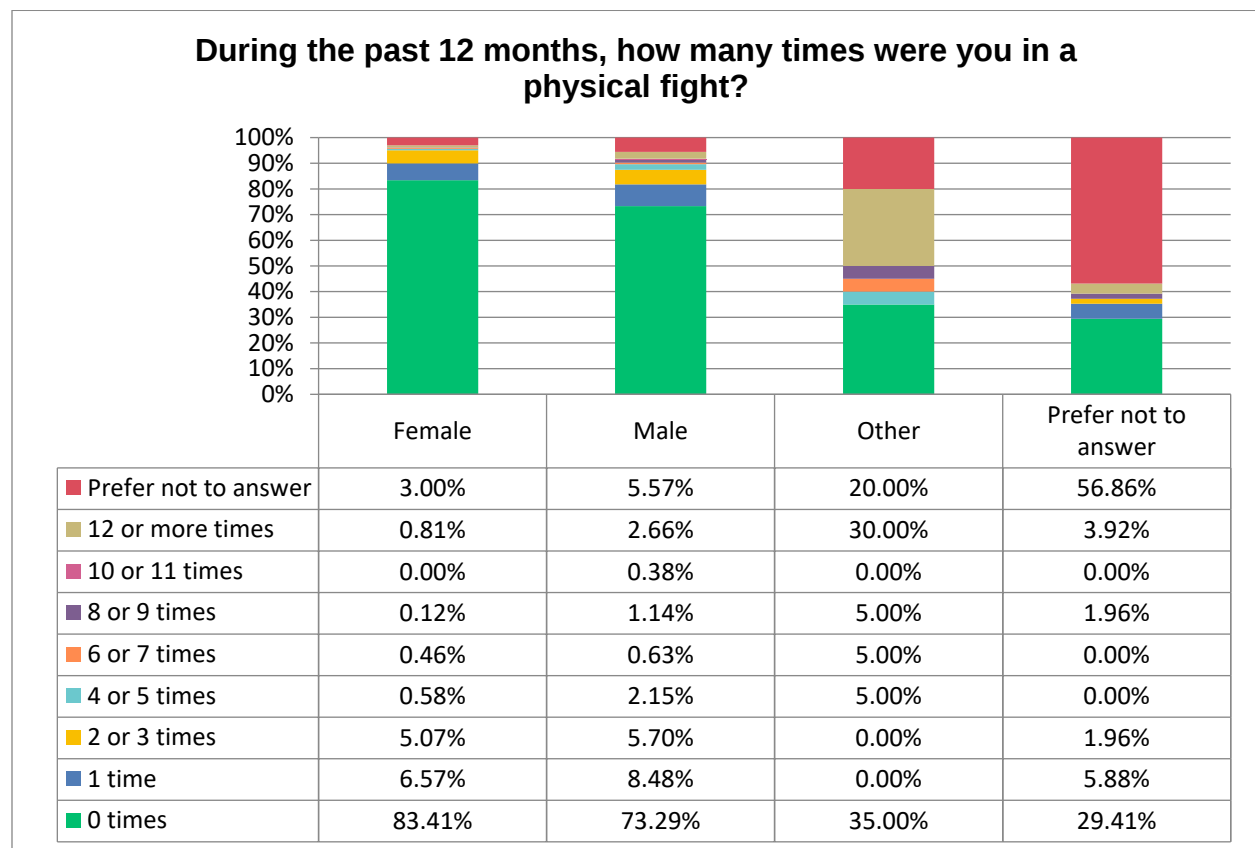
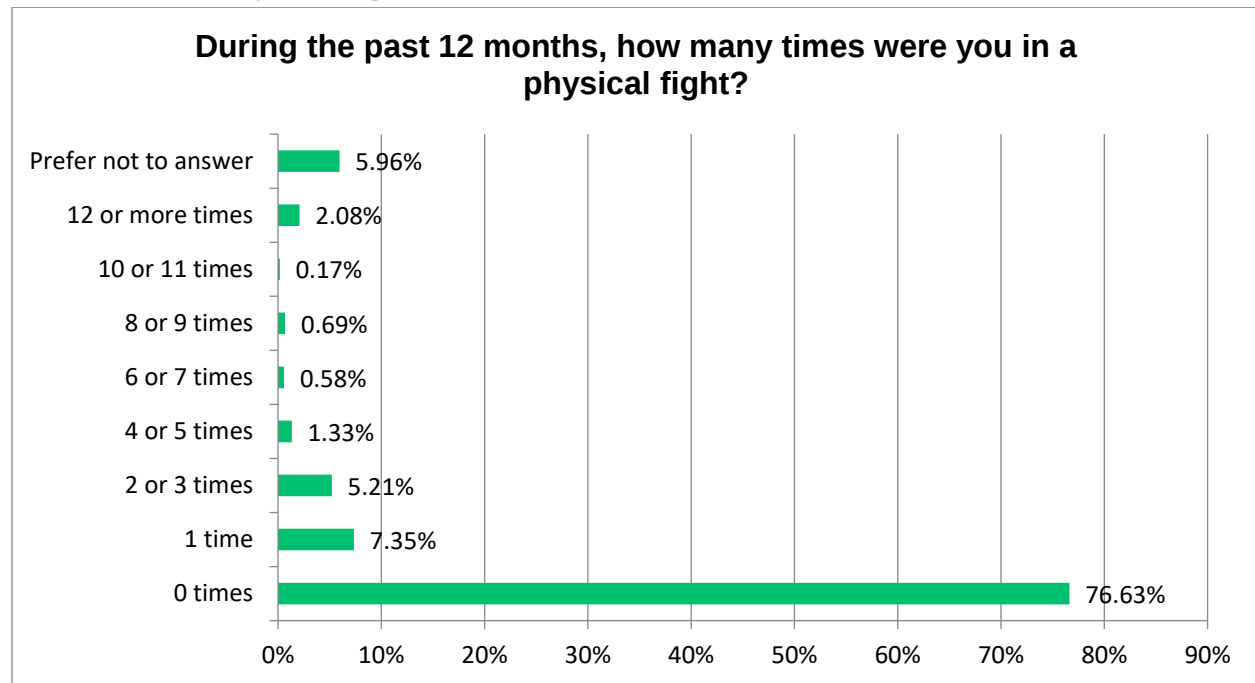
During the past 12 months, how many times has someone threatened or injured you with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property?



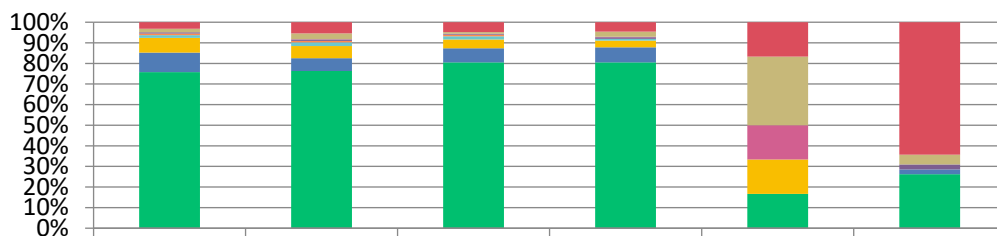
Key Findings on Threats and Injuries with Weapons on School Property

- County-wide Trends:** Most students were not threatened or injured with a weapon on school property in the past year, with 85.66% reporting "0 times." A small percentage reported experiencing this at least once, with 2.89% reporting "1 time" and 1.79% reporting "2 or 3 times." More frequent occurrences were less common, with 2.02% reporting "12 or more times." Additionally, 5.67% of students preferred not to answer. The data suggests that most students did not experience this type of violence.
- Gender Differences:** Most males and females were not threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, with 89.17% of females and 86.33% of males reporting "0 times." Among students identifying as "Other," responses varied, with 40% reporting "0 times," though a higher percentage (30%) reported "12 or more times." Due to the small sample size of this gender group, interpretations should be made with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students were not threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, with "0 times" reported by 89.05% of 9th graders and 88.11% of 12th graders. Reports of "12 or more times" varied slightly, increasing from 1.47% in 9th grade to 2.43% in 12th grade. Among students in the ungraded or other category, responses were more varied, with 33.33% reporting "12 or more times." Due to the small sample size of this group, interpretations should be made with caution.

Violence and Physical Fights



During the past 12 months, how many times were you in a physical fight?

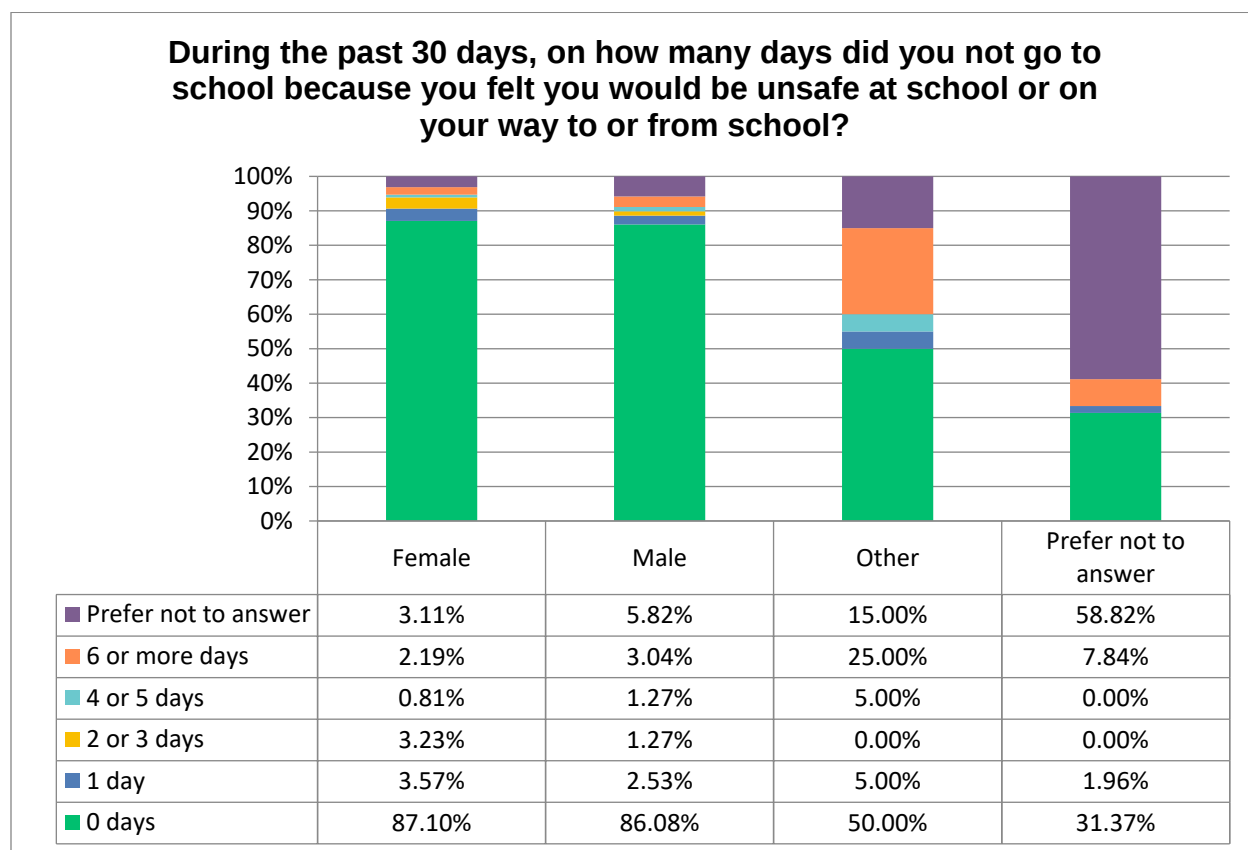
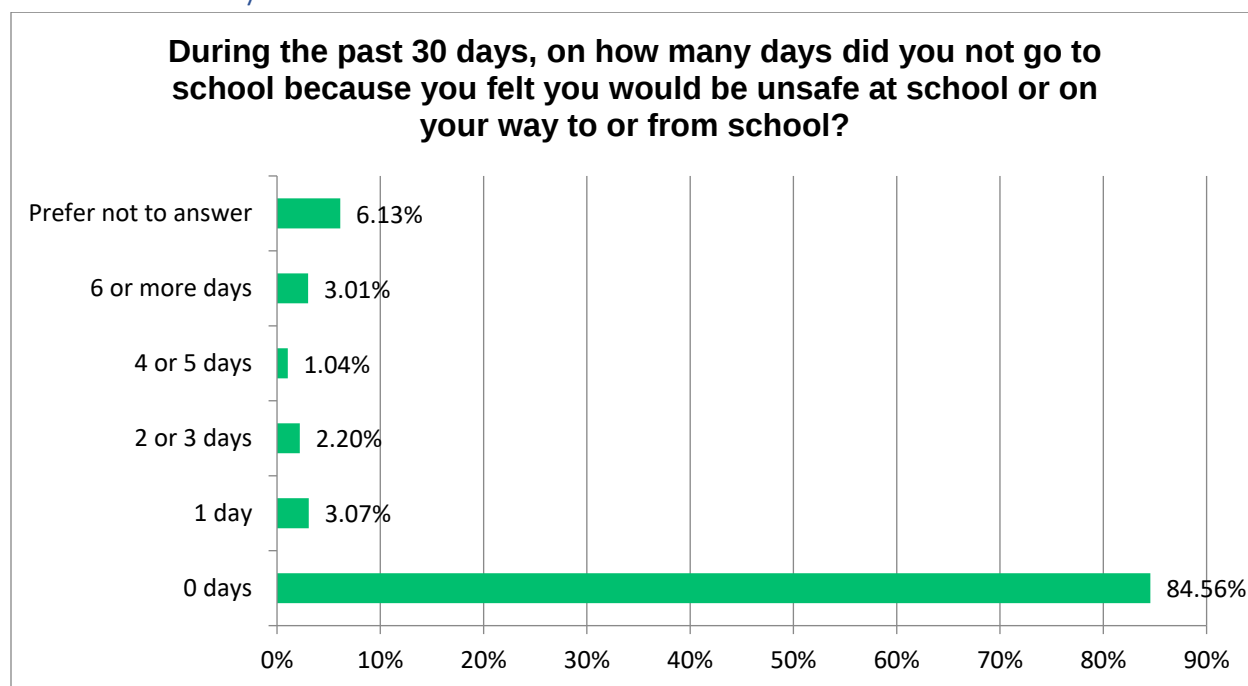


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	3.16%	5.45%	4.80%	4.59%	16.67%	64.29%
12 or more times	1.68%	2.73%	0.76%	2.43%	33.33%	4.76%
10 or 11 times	0.00%	0.23%	0.00%	0.27%	16.67%	0.00%
8 or 9 times	0.63%	0.68%	0.51%	0.81%	0.00%	2.38%
6 or 7 times	0.84%	0.68%	0.76%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
4 or 5 times	1.26%	1.82%	1.52%	0.81%	0.00%	0.00%
2 or 3 times	7.16%	5.91%	4.29%	3.24%	16.67%	0.00%
1 time	9.47%	6.14%	6.82%	7.30%	0.00%	2.38%
0 times	75.79%	76.36%	80.56%	80.54%	16.67%	26.19%

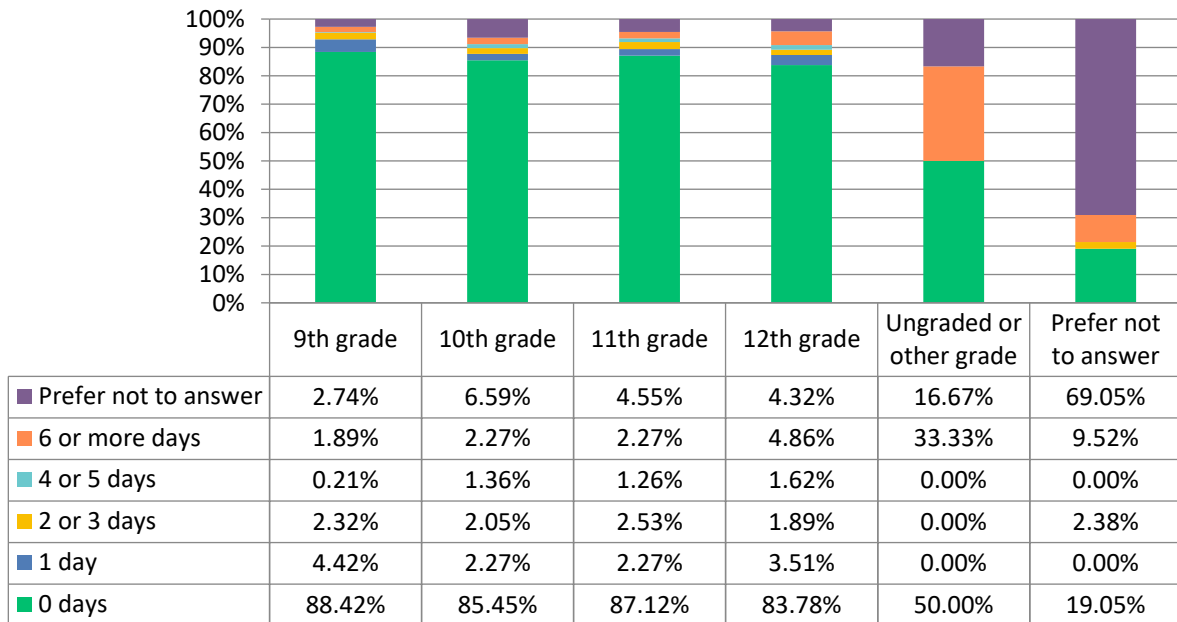
Key Findings on Involvement in Physical Fights

- County-wide Trends:** Most students were not involved in a physical fight in the past 12 months, with 76.63% reporting "0 times." A small percentage experienced at least one fight, with 7.35% reporting "1 time" and 5.21% reporting "2 or 3 times." More frequent occurrences were less common, with 2.08% reporting "12 or more times." Additionally, 5.96% of students preferred not to answer.
- Gender Differences:** Most males and females did not engage in physical fights, with 83.41% of females and 73.29% of males reporting "0 times." Males were more likely to report involvement in fights, with 8.48% reporting "1 time" compared to 6.57% of females, and 2.66% reporting "12 or more times" compared to 0.81% of females. Among students identifying as "Other," responses varied, though this group had a small sample size. The data suggests that while most students did not engage in fights, males were more likely to report frequent involvement.
- Grade Differences:** Most students did not engage in physical fights, with "0 times" reported by 75.79% of 9th graders and 80.54% of 12th graders. Reports of fighting generally declined as grade level increased, though small percentages of students in each grade reported engaging in fights, such as "1 time" (9.47% in 9th grade and 7.30% in 12th grade) and "2 or 3 times" (7.16% in 9th grade and 3.24% in 12th grade). The data suggests that while most students did not engage in physical fights, lower-grade students were slightly more likely to report involvement.

Perceived Safety at School



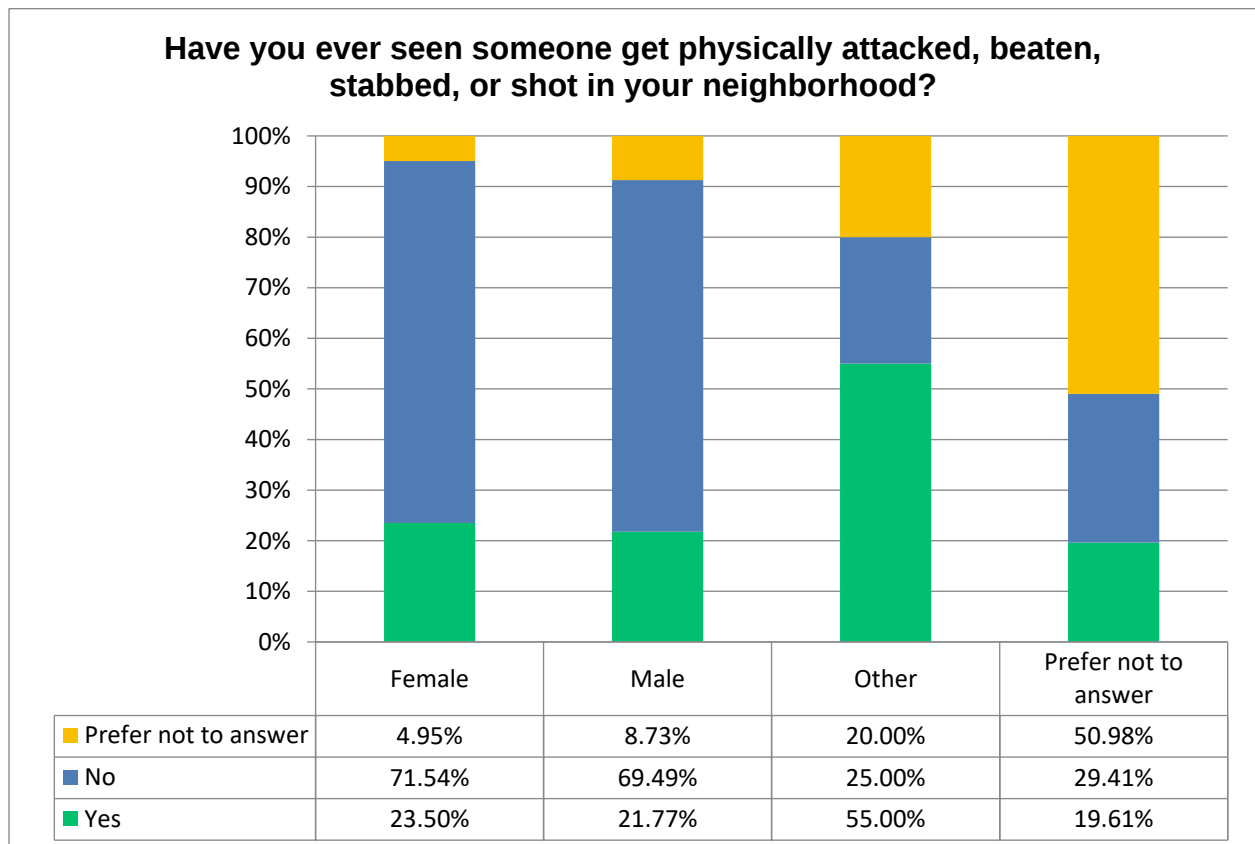
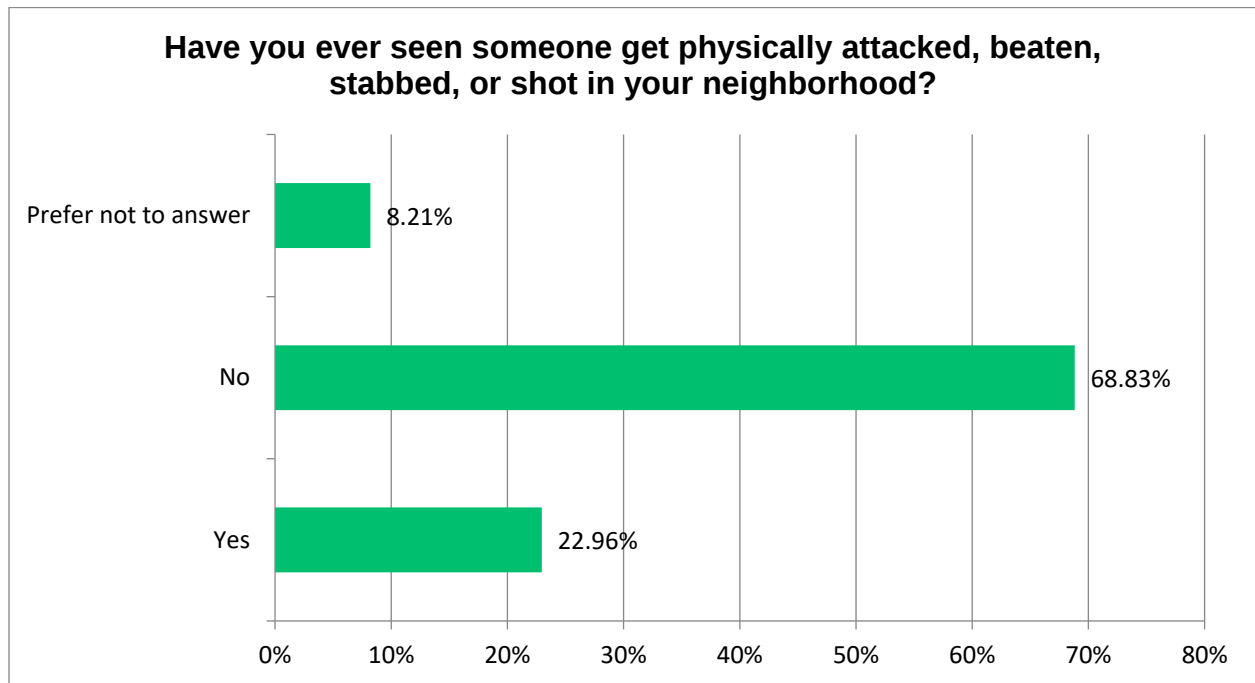
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you not go to school because you felt you would be unsafe at school or on your way to or from school?

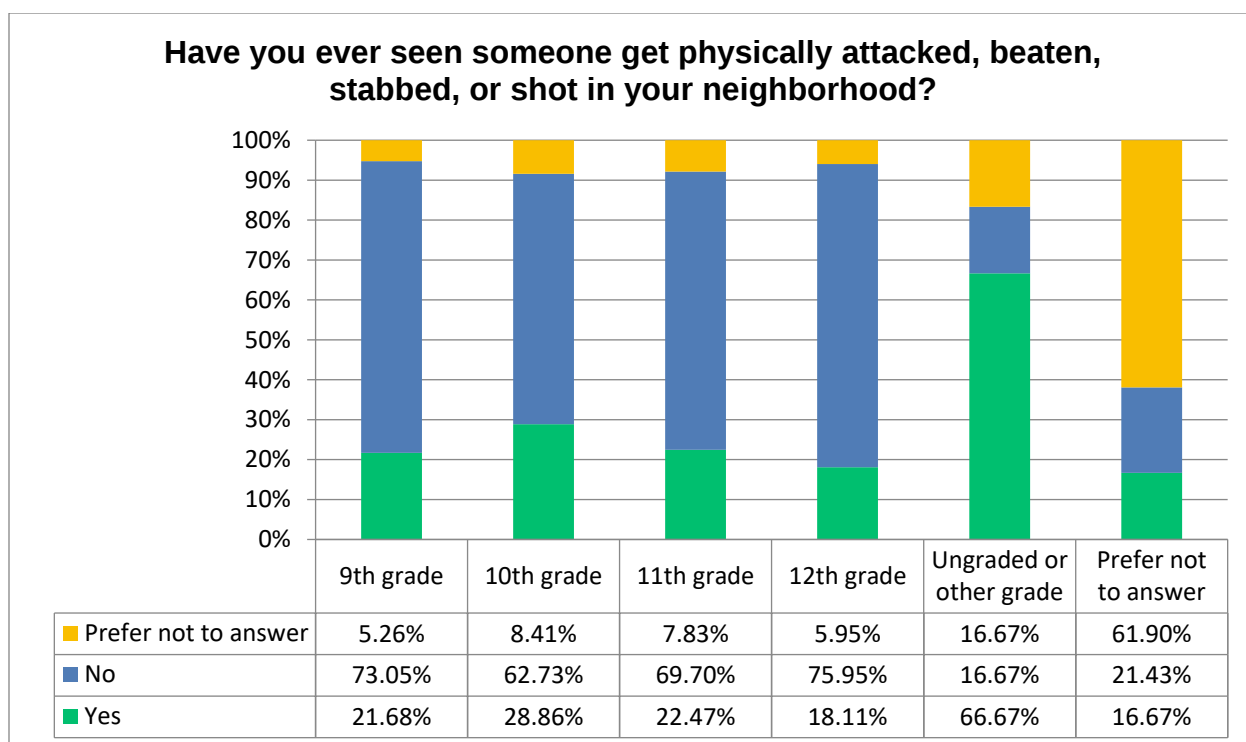


Key Findings on Perceived Safety at School

- County-wide Trends:** Most students attended school without interruption due to safety concerns, with 84.56% reporting "0 days" of missed school. A small percentage reported missing school for safety reasons, with 3.07% absent for "1 day" and 2.20% for "2 or 3 days." Reports of extended absences were minimal, with 3.01% missing school for "6 or more days." Additionally, 6.13% of students preferred not to answer. The data suggests that most students did not report missing school because they felt unsafe.
- Gender Differences:** Most males and females did not miss school due to safety concerns, with 87.10% of females and 86.08% of males reporting "0 days" missed. A small percentage of males (3.04%) and females (2.19%) missed school for "6 or more days." Reports of missing "1 day" were similar among females (3.57%) than males (2.53%). Among students identifying as "Other," 50% reported "0 days," while 25% missed school for "6 or more days." Due to the small sample size of this group, interpretations should be made with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students did not miss school due to safety concerns, with "0 days" missed reported by 88.42% of 9th graders and 83.78% of 12th graders. Reports of missing "6 or more days" were low across grades but slightly higher among 12th graders (4.86%) compared to 9th graders (1.89%). Among students in the ungraded or other category, 50.00% reported "0 days," while 33.33% reported missing school "6 or more days," though this group had a small sample size.

Violence in Community Setting



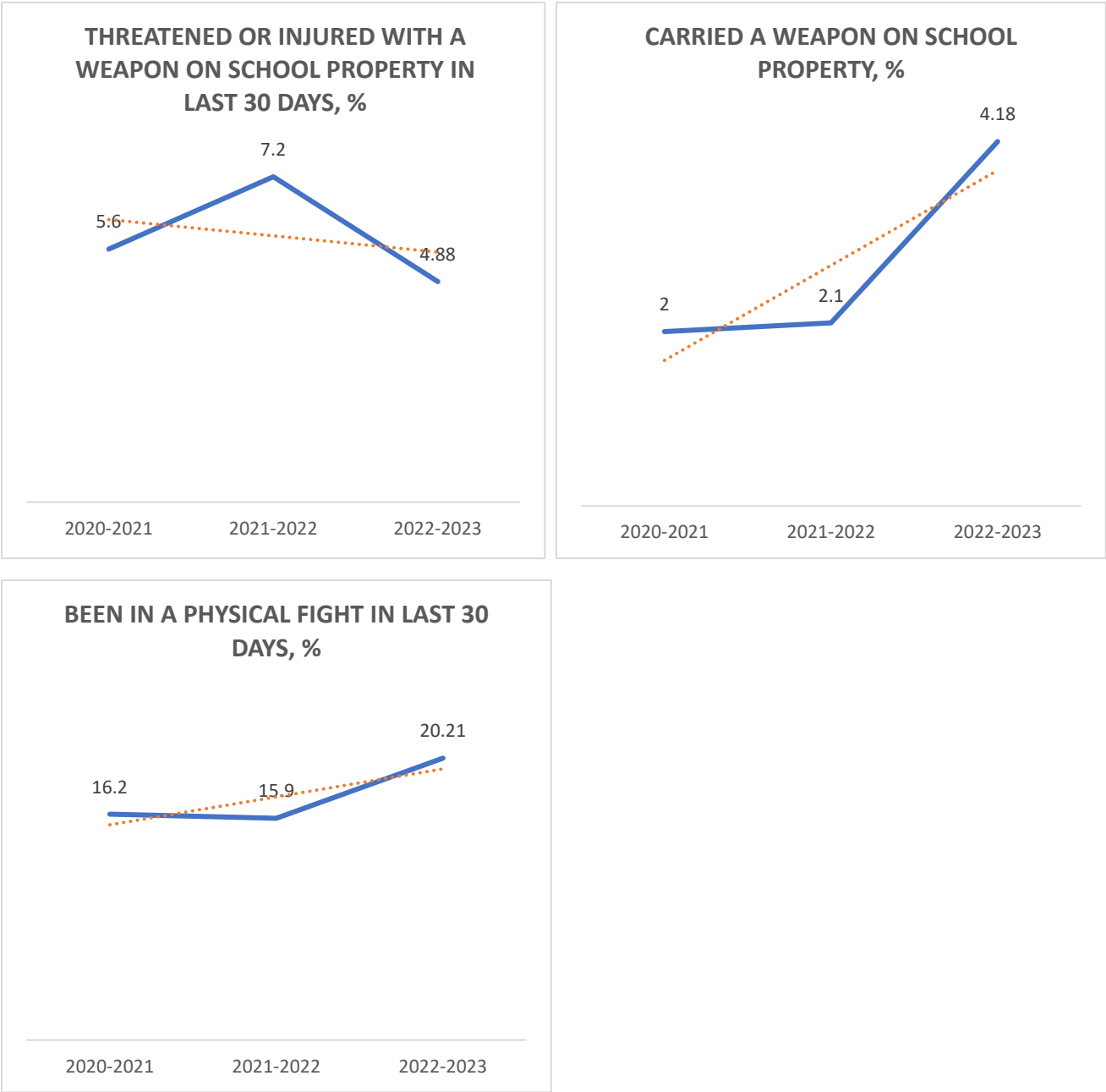


Key Findings on Violence in the Community Setting

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (68.83%) reported never witnessing someone being physically attacked, beaten, stabbed, or shot in their neighborhood. However, 22.96% indicated they had witnessed such incidents, while 8.21% preferred not to answer. The data suggests that while the majority of students had not experienced this exposure to violence, a notable subset reported witnessing violent incidents in their neighborhood.
- Gender Differences:** Most males (69.49%) and females (71.54%) reported never witnessing someone being physically attacked, beaten, stabbed, or shot in their neighborhood. A smaller percentage indicated they had observed such incidents, with 21.77% of males and 23.50% of females reporting exposure to neighborhood violence. Among students identifying as "Other," a larger percentage (55.00%) reported witnessing these events, though this group had a small sample size. The data suggests that while most students had not experienced exposure to neighborhood violence, a subset across all gender groups reported having witnessed such incidents.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported not witnessing physical attacks, beatings, stabbings, or shootings in their neighborhood. The percentage of students reporting "No" ranged from 62.73% in 10th grade to 75.95% in 12th grade. Reports of witnessing such incidents were more frequent among younger students, with 28.86% of 10th graders and 22.47% of 11th graders indicating they had observed neighborhood violence. Among students in the ungraded or other category, 66.67% reported witnessing these events, though this group had a small sample size.

Violent Behavior Trends Over Time

The following graphs depict data collected over 3 years, tracking specific behaviors that impact students' sense of safety and security within the school environment. These behaviors include incidents where students reported being threatened or injured by a weapon at school, feeling unsafe at school, carrying a weapon on school property, and involvement in physical fights. By examining these trends, we can identify patterns and shifts in student experiences related to violence on campus.



Key Findings of Violence-Related Behaviors on School Property Over Time

- **Threatened or Injured with a Weapon on School Property:** Reports of students being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property fluctuated over time, increasing from 5.6% in 2020-2021 to 7.2% in 2021-2022 before declining to 4.88% in 2022-2023.
- **Carried a Weapon on School Property:** The proportion of students carrying weapons on school property reflects an upward trend. It rose from 2% in 2020-2021 to 4.18% in 2022-2023. This fluctuation suggests that while there was an increase in weapon-carrying behavior initially, recent years may show a stabilization or small reduction.
- **Been in a Physical Fight:** Reports of physical fights have gradually increased over the years, with a peak of 20.21% in 2022-2023.

Bullying

Bullying, as defined by the CDC, involves aggressive, unwanted behavior among youth that often includes a real or perceived power imbalance. Such behavior can be repetitive and has the potential to leave lasting impacts, contributing to mental health challenges, academic difficulties, and substance abuse among affected youth.⁴

The YRBS is an essential tool for understanding bullying and discrimination among students and capturing data on victimization and perpetration. This section presents YRBS findings on students' experiences with bullying and unfair treatment based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity, offering valuable insights for schools and communities working to create safe, inclusive environments.

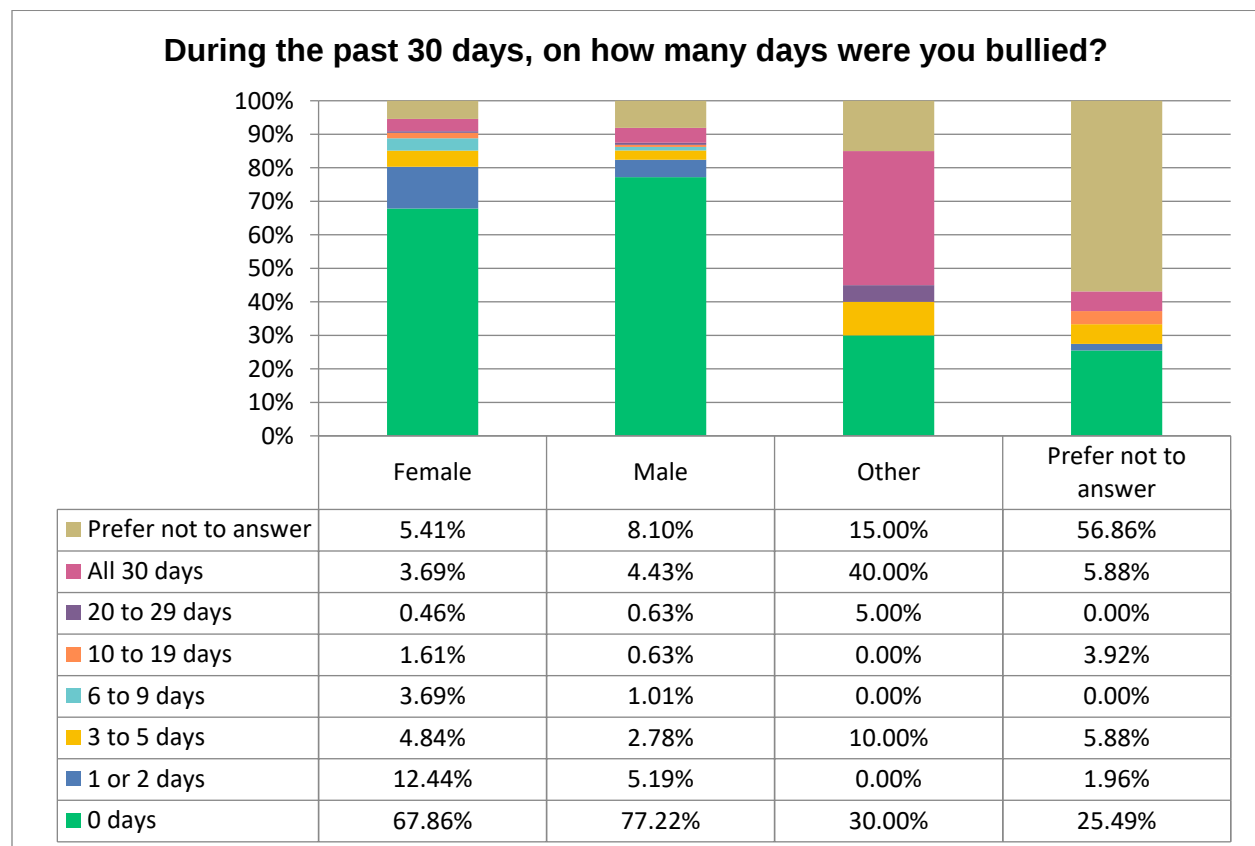
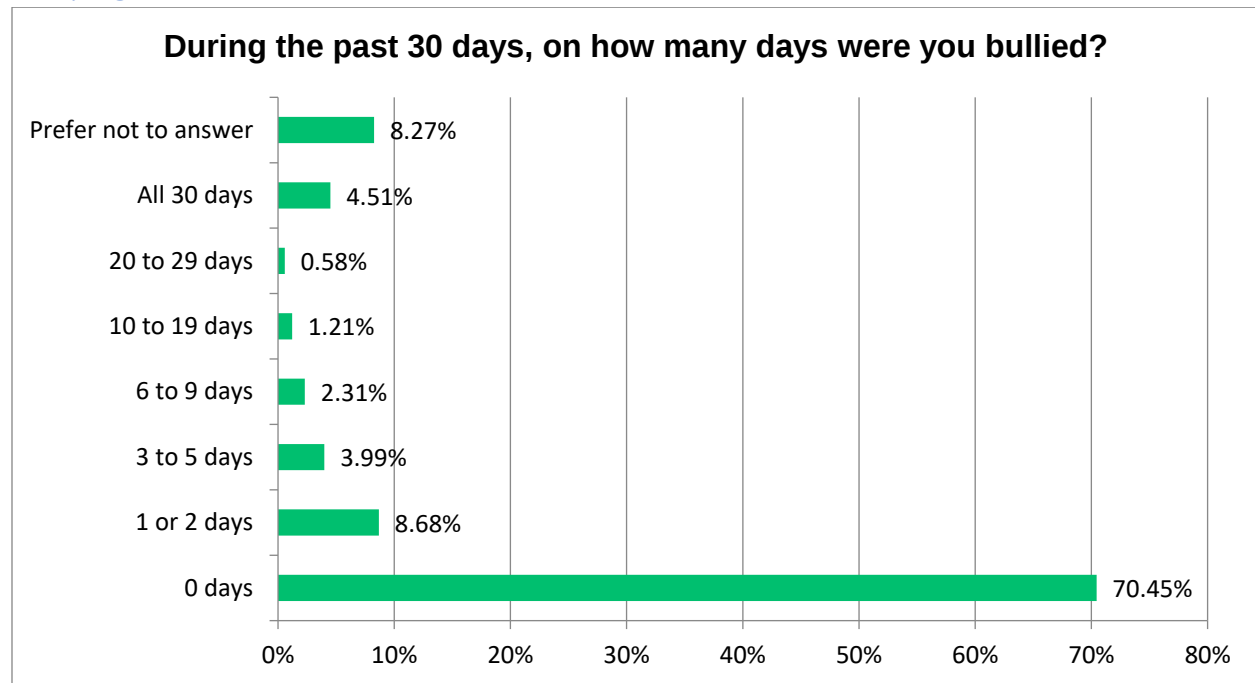
The majority of students reported not experiencing bullying, discrimination, or harassment. However, a notable subset indicated challenges related to peer victimization and unfair treatment. Most students said they had not been bullied recently and did not report bullying others. Still, nearly one in five students described having experienced bullying in some form, either as a victim or perpetrator.

Teasing based on physical appearance affected approximately one-third of students, with higher rates reported among females and younger students. Electronic bullying was also a concern, with nearly 20% of students indicating they had been targeted online. Females and students identifying as “Other” reported higher rates of cyberbullying than males, though findings for the “Other” gender group should be interpreted with caution due to a small sample size.

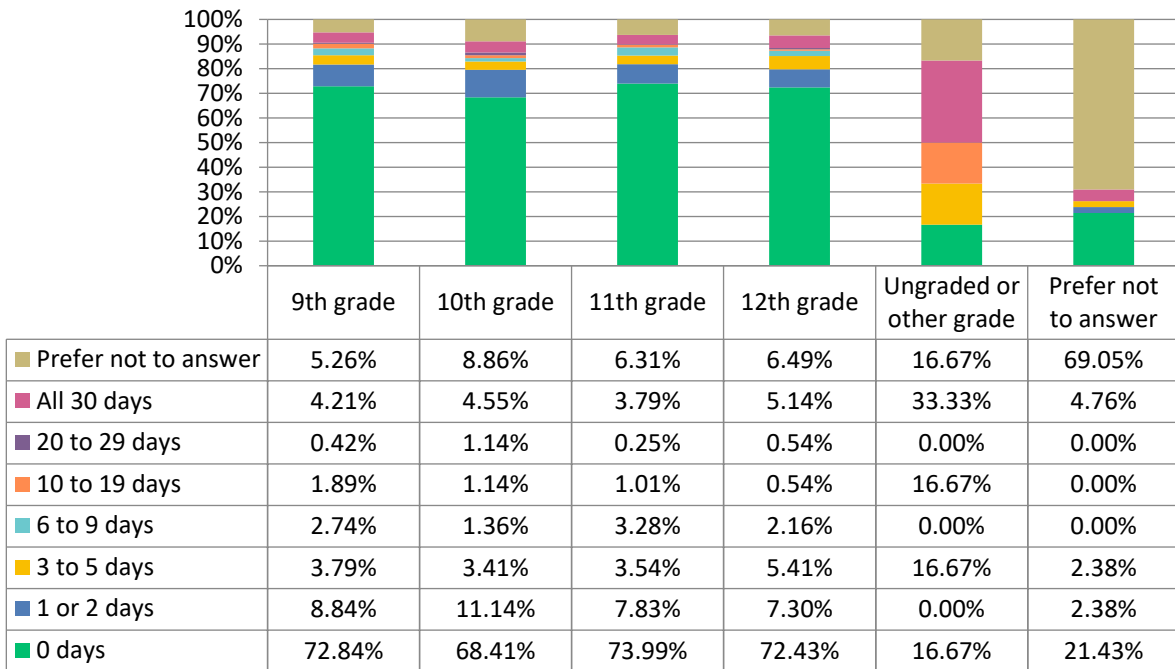
Most students indicated they were not treated unfairly due to their race, ethnicity, cultural background, sexual orientation, or gender identity. However, students with a gender identity of “Other” were more likely to report mistreatment based on sexual orientation or gender identity. As with other findings, responses from this group should be interpreted cautiously due to limited representation.

Longitudinal trends shows a gradual increase in both reported bullying victimization and students admitting to bullying others over the past 3 years. These patterns underscore the continued importance of monitoring student well-being, promoting inclusive environments, and addressing persistent peer aggression and discrimination in schools.

Bullying Behaviors



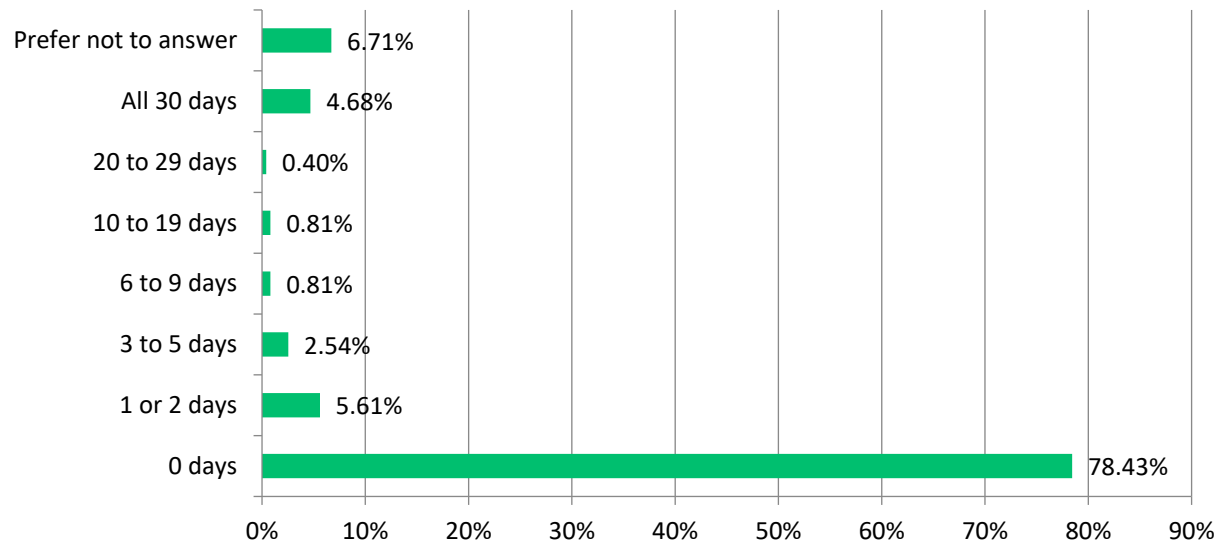
During the past 30 days, on how many days were you bullied?



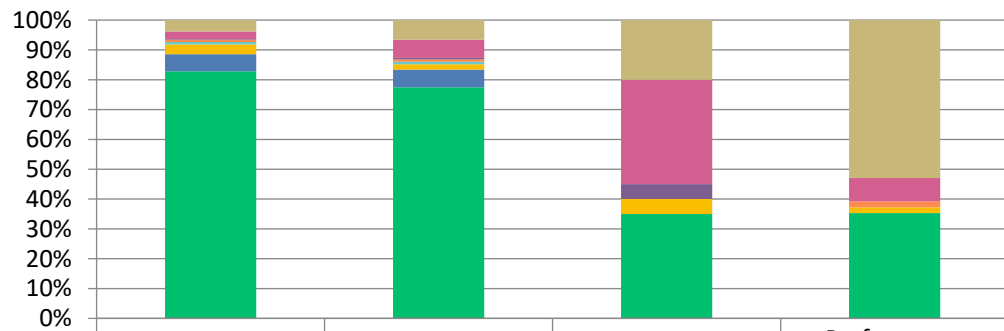
Key Findings on Bullying Incidence Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** The majority of students (70.45%) reported not being bullied in the past 30 days. A smaller percentage experienced bullying at least once, with 8.68% reporting it on "1 or 2 days" and 3.99% on "3 to 5 days." More frequent occurrences were less common, with 4.51% reporting being bullied "All 30 days" and 2.31% experiencing it on "6 to 9 days." Additionally, 8.27% of students preferred not to answer. The data suggests that while most students did not report bullying, a subset experienced it at varying frequencies.
- Gender Differences:** Most males (77.22%) and females (67.86%) reported not being bullied in the past 30 days. 12.44% of females reported bullying occurring on "1 or 2 days," compared to 5.19% of males. Frequent bullying was reported by a small subset, with 3.69% of females and 4.43% of males indicating they were bullied "All 30 days." Among students identifying as "Other," responses varied, with 30.00% reporting "0 days," while a notably higher percentage (40%) experienced bullying "All 30 days." Due to the small sample size of this gender group, interpretations should be made with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported not being bullied in the past 30 days, with "0 days" reported by 68.41-73.99% of students. Reports of bullying "1 or 2 days" were highest among 10th graders (11.14%). Among students in the ungraded or other category, responses varied, with 33.33% reporting bullying "All 30 days."

During the past 30 days, on how many days did you bully someone?

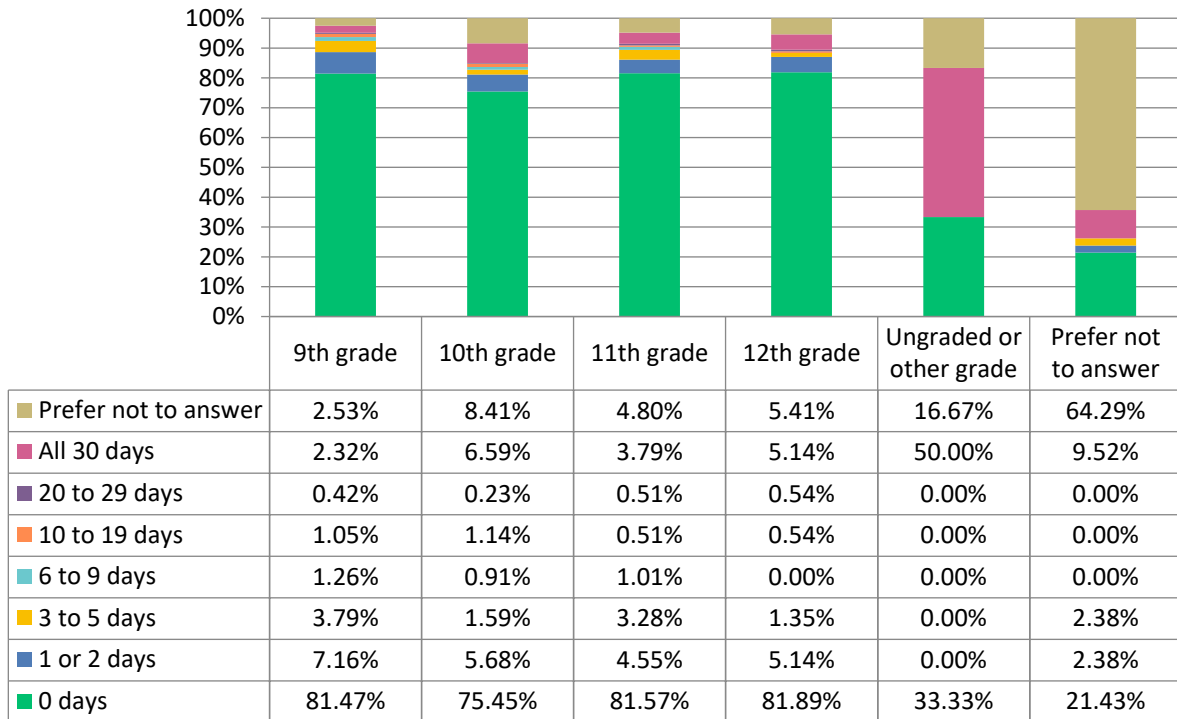


During the past 30 days, on how many days did you bully someone?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	3.80%	6.58%	20.00%	52.94%
All 30 days	2.53%	6.08%	35.00%	7.84%
20 to 29 days	0.23%	0.51%	5.00%	0.00%
10 to 19 days	0.81%	0.76%	0.00%	1.96%
6 to 9 days	0.81%	0.89%	0.00%	0.00%
3 to 5 days	3.23%	1.77%	5.00%	1.96%
1 or 2 days	5.76%	5.95%	0.00%	0.00%
0 days	82.83%	77.47%	35.00%	35.29%

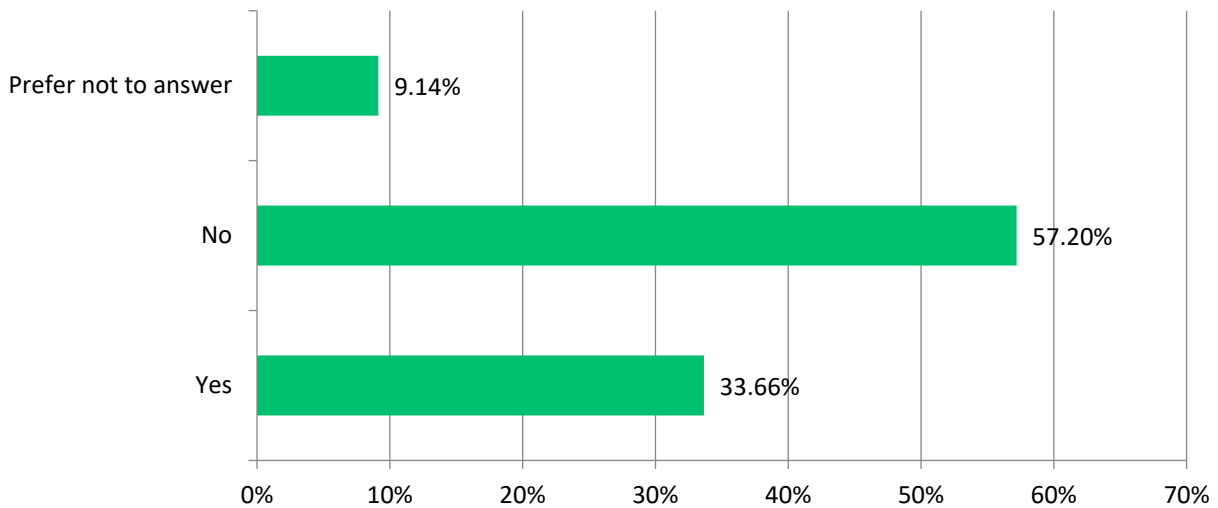
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you bully someone?



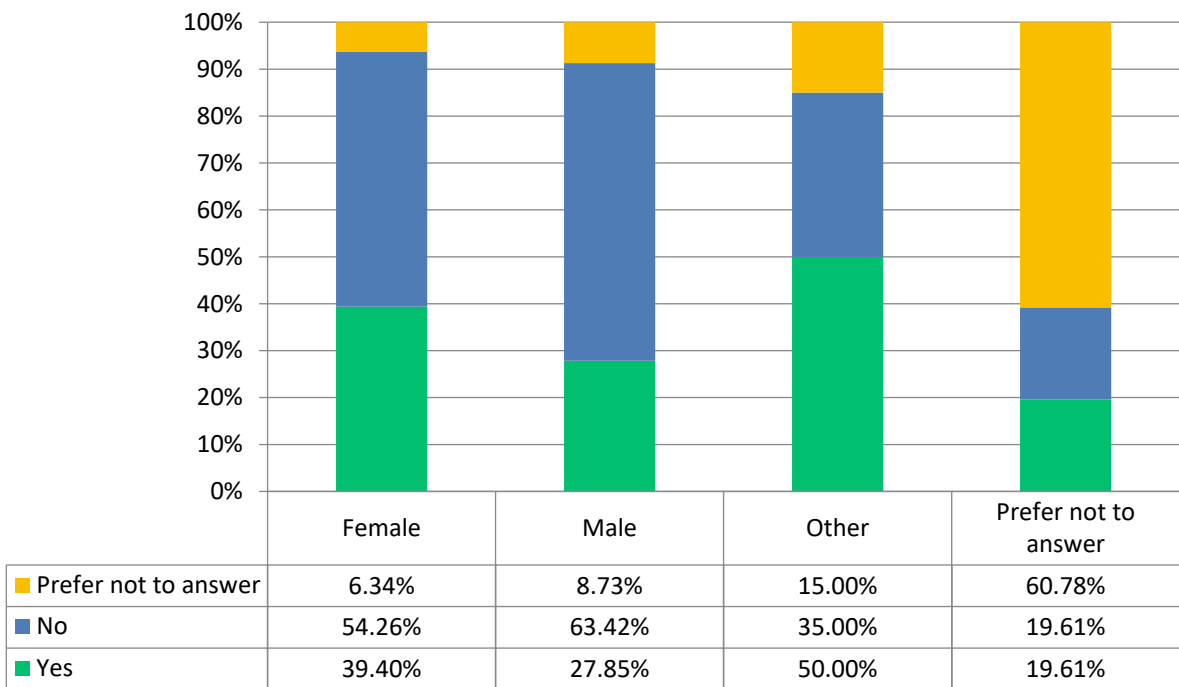
Key Findings on Student-Reported Bullying Behaviors

- County-wide Trends:** Most students did not report bullying someone in the past 30 days, with 78.43% indicating "0 days." A small percentage engaged in this behavior, with 4.68% reporting bullying others "All 30 days." Lower frequencies were also reported, such as "1 or 2 days" (5.61%) and "3 to 5 days" (2.54%). Additionally, 6.71% of students preferred not to answer. The data suggests that while bullying behavior was not widespread, a small subset of students engaged in it, with some reporting frequent involvement.
- Gender Differences:** Most males and females did not report bullying someone in the past 30 days, with 82.83% of females and 77.47% of males indicating "0 days." A small percentage engaged in this behavior, with 6.08% of males and 2.53% of females reporting bullying others "All 30 days." Lower frequencies were also reported, such as "1 or 2 days" (5.95% of males and 5.76% of females). Among students identifying as "Other," responses varied, with 35.00% reporting "All 30 days," though this group had a small sample size.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grades did not report bullying someone in the past 30 days, with "0 days" reported by 75.45-81.89% of students in 9th through 12th grade. Among students in the ungraded or other category, 50% reported bullying "All 30 days," though this group had a small sample size.

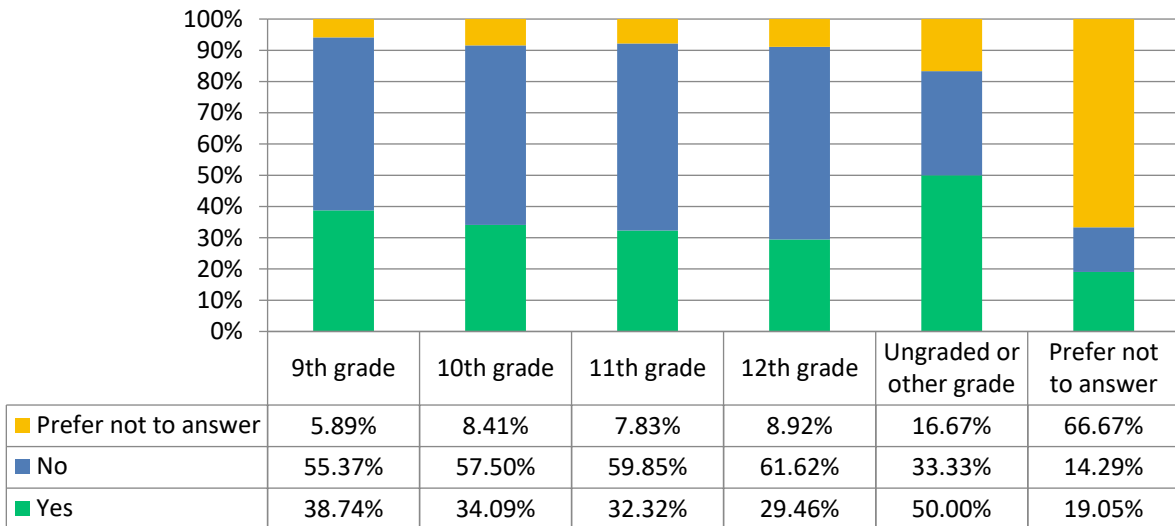
During the past 12 months, have you ever been the victim of teasing or name calling because of your weight, size, or physical appearance?



During the past 12 months, have you ever been the victim of teasing or name calling because of your weight, size, or physical appearance?



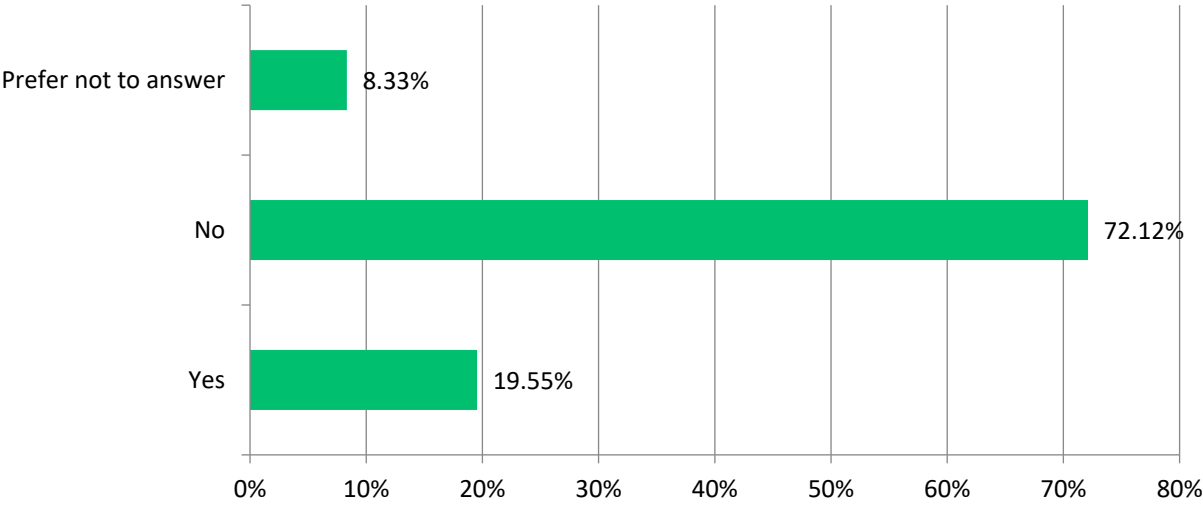
During the past 12 months, have you ever been the victim of teasing or name calling because of your weight, size, or physical appearance?



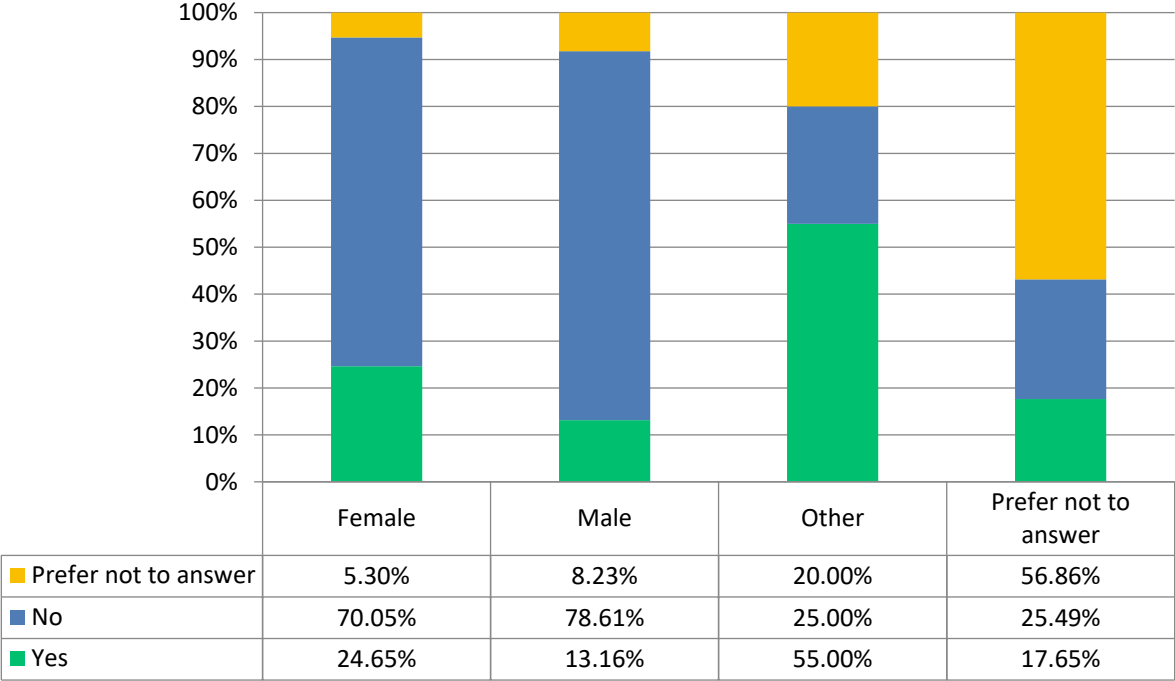
Key findings on Bullying Based on Physical Appearance

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported not being teased or name-called because of their weight, size, or physical appearance in the past year, with 57.20% responding "No." However, 33.66% indicated they had experienced this type of teasing, and 9.14% preferred not to answer. The data suggests that while a majority of students did not experience weight- or appearance-based teasing, a substantial portion reported being affected by this issue.
- Gender Differences:** Most males and females reported not being teased or name-called because of their weight, size, or appearance, with 63.42% of males and 54.26% of females selecting "No." However, 39.40% of females reported experiencing this type of teasing, compared to 27.85% of males. Among students identifying as "Other," 50.00% reported experiencing teasing and 35.00% reported not experiencing it. Due to the small sample size for this group, findings should be interpreted with caution. The data shows that a notable portion of students, particularly females, reported experiencing teasing related to their appearance.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported not being teased or name-called because of their weight, size, or physical appearance. The percentage of students who answered "No" marginally increased with grade level, from 55.37% in 9th grade to 61.62% in 12th grade. Reports of experiencing this form of teasing declined with grade, with 38.74% of 9th graders and 29.46% of 12th graders responding "Yes." Overall, teasing related to physical appearance was marginally more common among younger students.

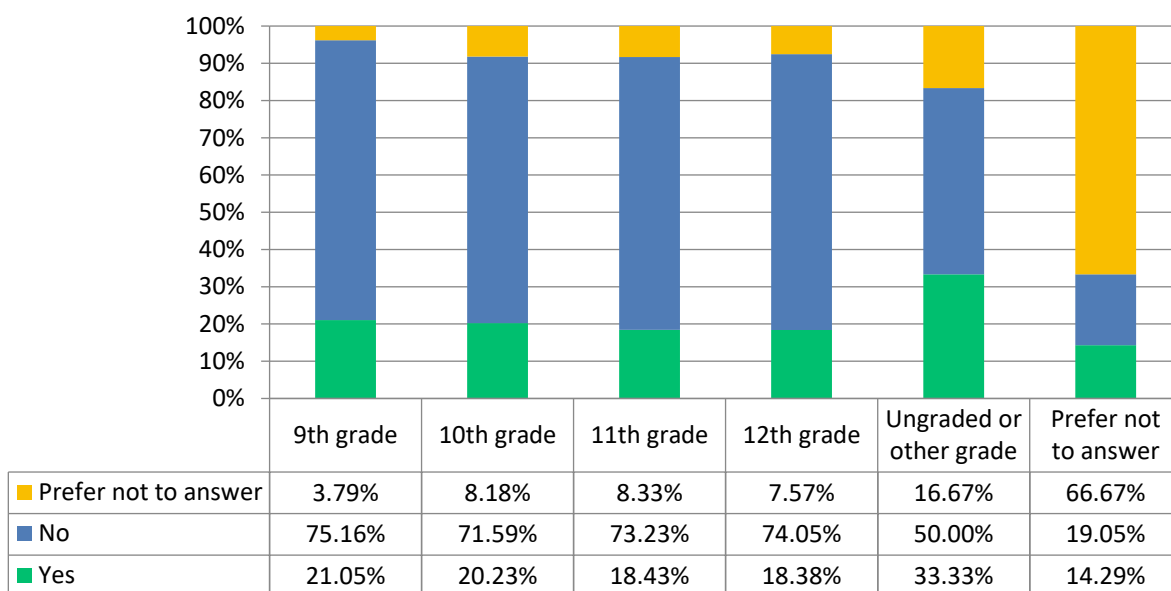
During the past 12 months, have you ever been electronically bullied? (Count being bullied through texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media.)



During the past 12 months, have you ever been electronically bullied? (Count being bullied through texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media.)



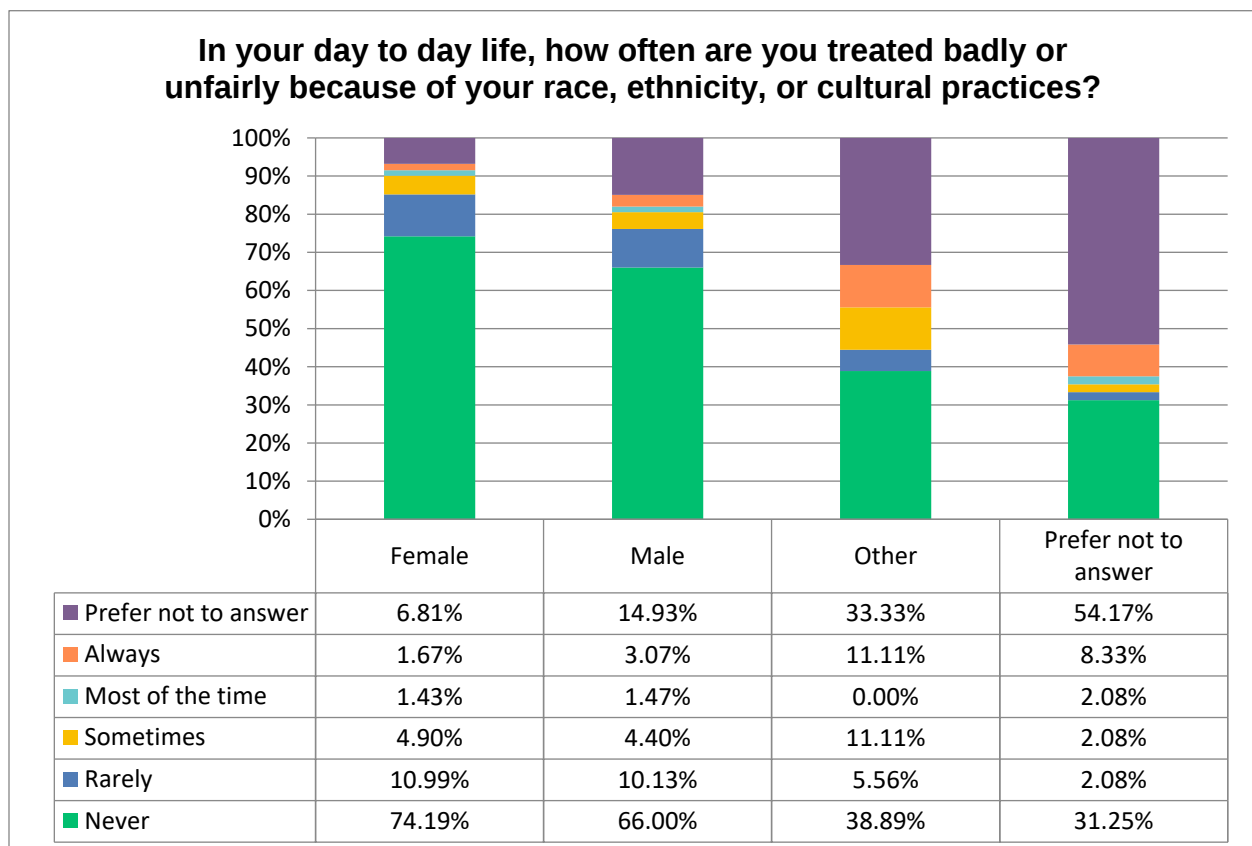
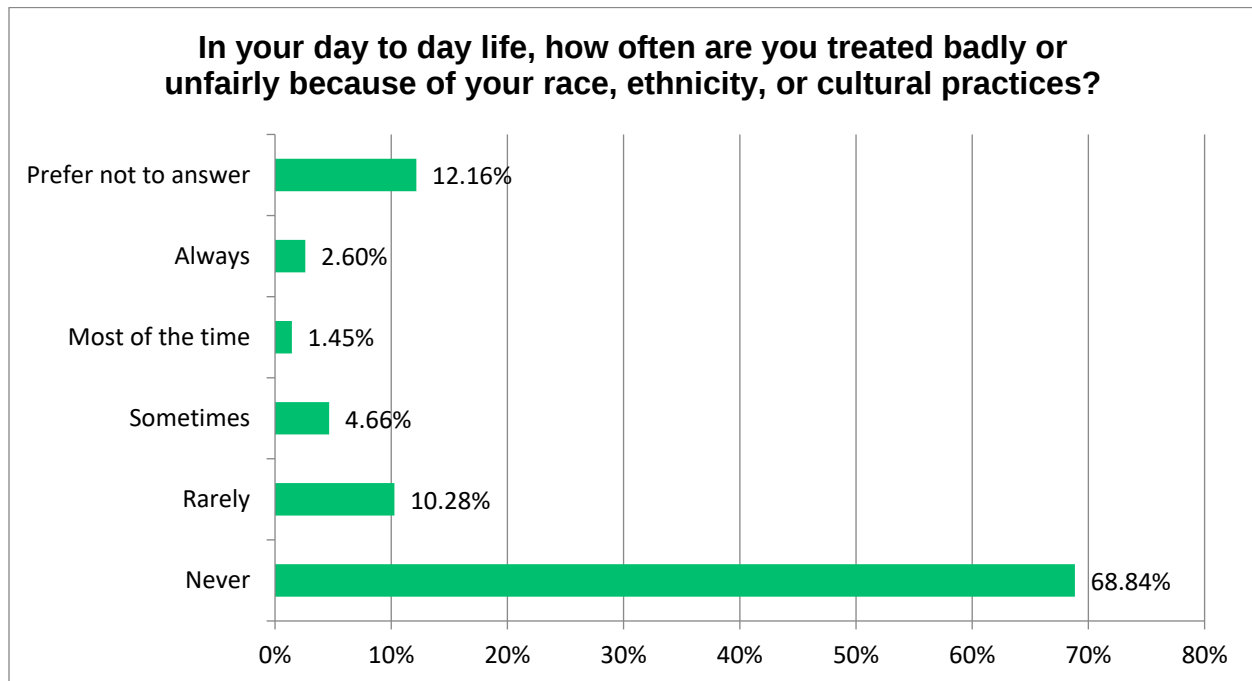
During the past 12 months, have you ever been electronically bullied? (Count being bullied through texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media.)



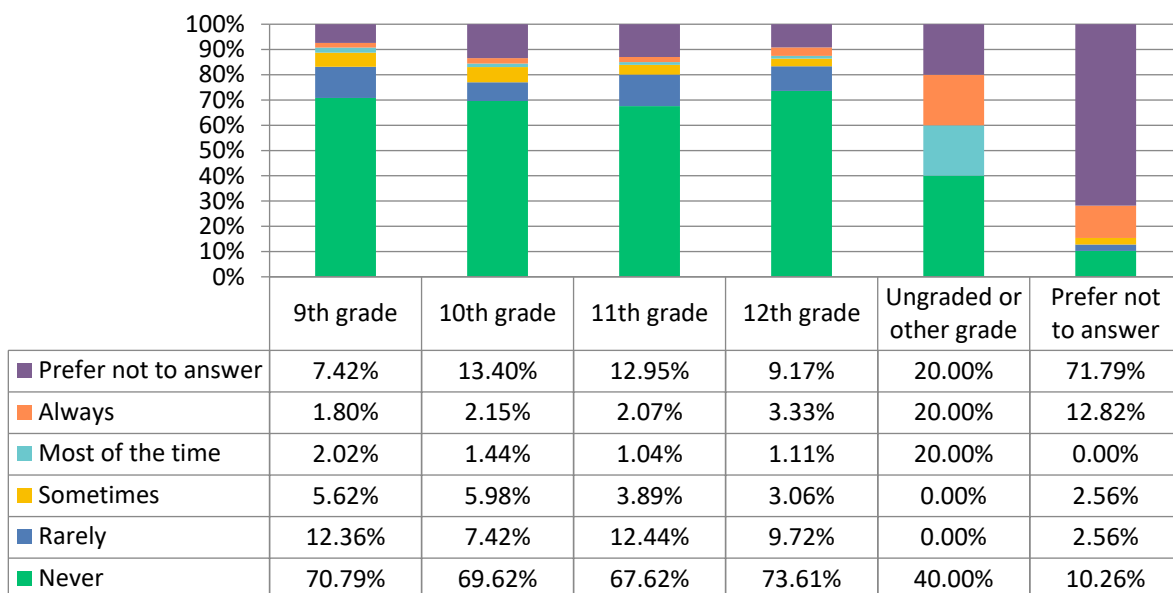
Key Findings on Cyber Bullying

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported not being electronically bullied in the past 12 months. A total of 72.12% of students said "No," while 19.55% reported that they had experienced electronic bullying. Additionally, 8.33% of students preferred not to answer the question. While the majority of students did not report being targeted through social media or texting, nearly one in five students experienced electronic bullying.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across gender groups reported they were not electronically bullied in the past year. Among males, 78.61% said they were not bullied, compared to 70.05% of females. However, 24.65% of females reported being electronically bullied, nearly double the rate of males (13.16%). Among students identifying as "Other," 55% reported being electronically bullied. However, this group had a small sample size and should be interpreted cautiously. The data suggests that while most students did not report electronic bullying, females and students identifying as "Other" were more likely to report experiencing it.
- Grade Differences:** Reports of electronic bullying were relatively similar across grade levels. Most students in each grade reported they had not been electronically bullied in the past year, with responses ranging from 71.59% to 75.16%. The percentage of students who reported being electronically bullied ranged from 18.43% to 21.05%. Among students in the ungraded or other category, 33.33% reported being bullied, though this group had a small sample size.

Perceived Unfair Treatment



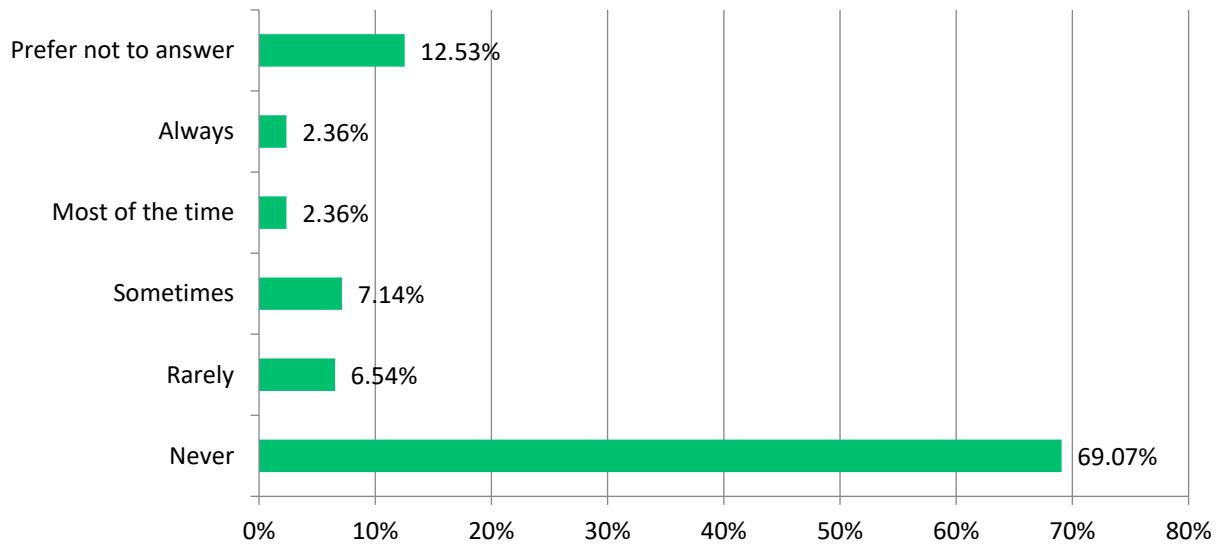
In your day to day life, how often are you treated badly or unfairly because of your race, ethnicity, or cultural practices?



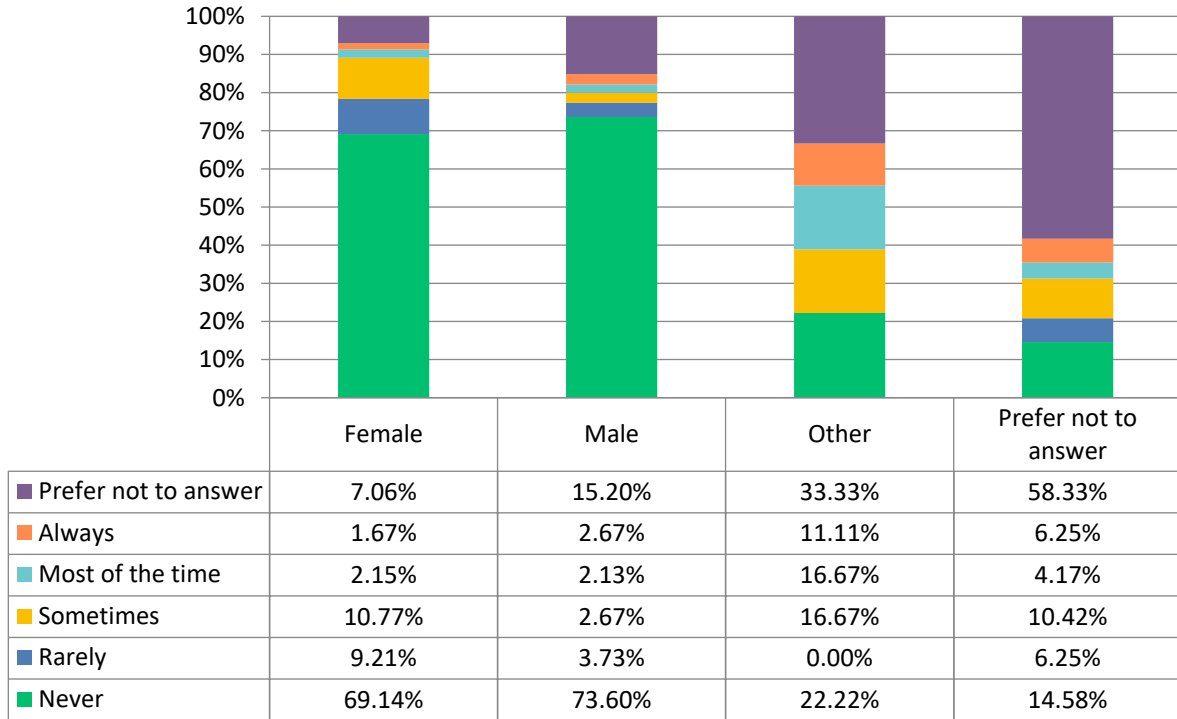
Key Findings on Unfair Treatment Based on Race, Ethnicity, or Cultural Practice

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported they were not treated unfairly due to their race, ethnicity, or cultural practices, with 68.84% selecting “Never.” A smaller portion of students reported experiencing unfair treatment “Rarely” (10.28%), “Sometimes” (4.66%), or “Always” (2.60%). A notable 12.16% of students preferred not to answer this question. These findings suggest that the majority of students did not report experiencing racial or cultural discrimination.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across all gender groups reported they were not treated unfairly due to their race, ethnicity, or cultural practices, with 74.19% of females and 66.00% of males selecting “Never.” Males were more likely to select “Prefer not to answer” (14.93%) compared to females (6.81%). Otherwise, male and female responses were generally similar across all categories. Among students identifying as “Other” or those who preferred not to disclose their gender, responses varied. However, due to the small sample size of these groups, interpretations should be made with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported that they were not treated unfairly due to their race, ethnicity, or cultural practices, with “Never” selected by 67.62% to 73.61% of students in grades 9 through 12. Responses for “Rarely” and “Sometimes” also remained fairly consistent across these grades, generally ranging between 3% and 12%. Students in the ungraded or other category showed greater variability in their responses, though this group represented a small sample and should be interpreted with caution. Overall, reports of being treated unfairly because of race or cultural identity were relatively similar across grade levels.

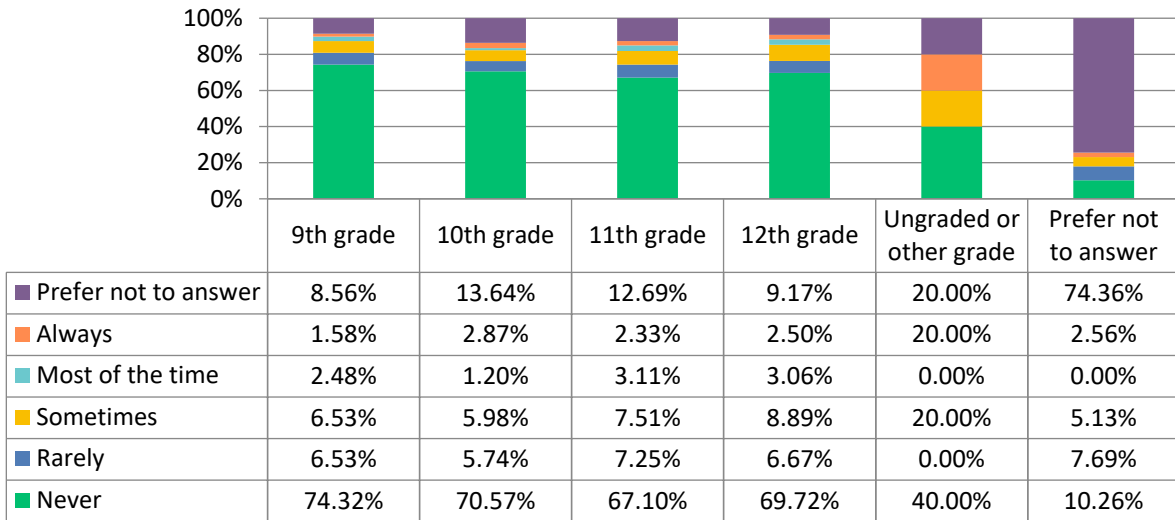
In your day to day life, how often are you treated badly or unfairly because of your sexual orientation or gender identity?



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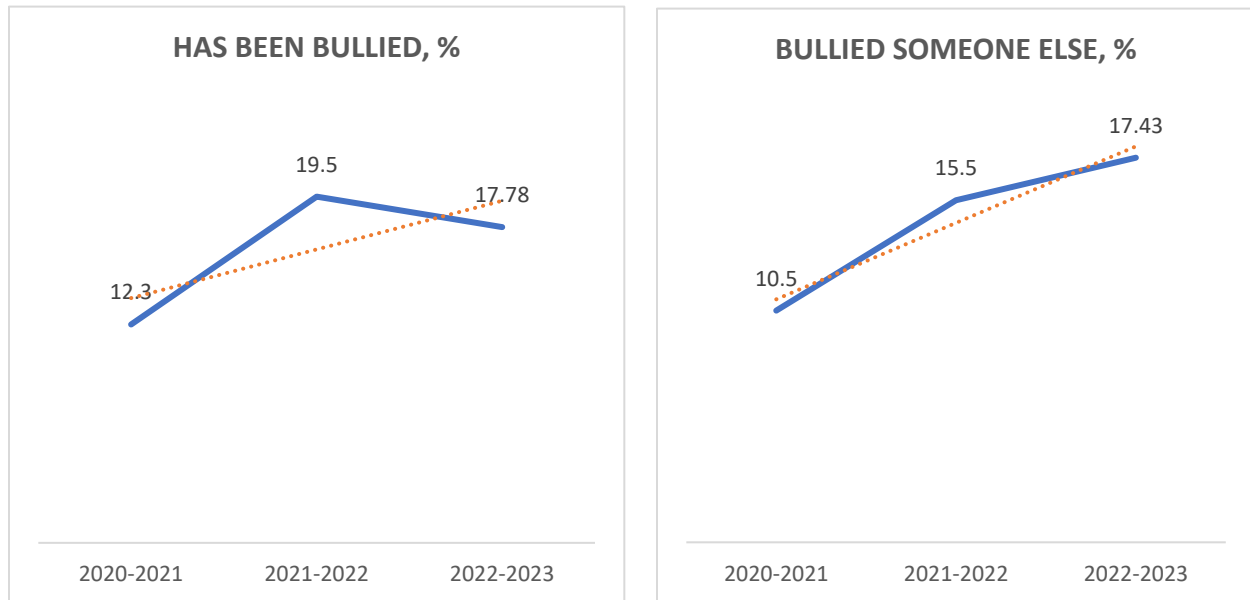


Key Findings on Unfair Treatment Based on Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported that they were not treated badly or unfairly because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, with 69.07% selecting “Never.” A smaller portion reported experiencing unfair treatment “Rarely” (6.54%), “Sometimes” (7.14%), or “Always” and “Most of the time” (2.36% each). Additionally, 12.53% of students preferred not to answer. The data suggests that the majority did not experience this type of discrimination.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students reported never being treated badly or unfairly because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, with 73.60% of males and 69.14% of females selecting “Never.” Reports of mistreatment “Sometimes” were higher among females (10.77%) than males (2.67%). The proportion of students preferring not to answer was larger among males (15.20%) than females (7.06%). Among students identifying as “Other,” responses were more distributed, with only 22.22% selecting “Never” and 16.67% each reporting mistreatment “Sometimes” or “Most of the time.” Due to the small sample size for this group, results should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported never being treated badly or unfairly because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, ranging from 67.10% to 74.32%. Reports of mistreatment “Sometimes” were generally low, with the highest being 8.89% among 12th graders. A small percentage of students in each grade reported experiencing this “Always” or “Most of the time.” Overall, experiences of mistreatment due to sexual orientation or gender identity were relatively infrequent and consistent across grade levels.

Bullying Behavior Over Time

Examining trends in bullying behaviors over the past three years provides insight into both the prevalence and persistence of bullying among students. The following graphs present data on the percentage of students who reported experiencing bullying and those who admitted to bullying others.



Key Findings on Bullying Behaviors Over Time

- **Increase in Reported Bullying Victimization:** The percentage of students who reported being bullied gradually increased over the past years, rising from 12.3% in 2020–2021 to 17.89% in 2023–2024, with a peak of 19.5% in 2021–2022. This trend highlights an ongoing issue with bullying victimization among students.
- **Increase in Bullying Others:** The percentage of students who reported bullying others also gradually increased, from 10.5% in 2020–2021 to 17.43% in 2022–2023.

Mental Health

Supporting youth mental health requires a comprehensive approach that fosters emotional resilience and provides the skills for healthy social interactions. Adolescence is a critical time when mental and emotional challenges can influence development, academic performance, physical health, and relationships. Challenges with mental health, even without a formal diagnosis, can impact decision-making and may lead to risky behaviors. Establishing supportive habits during this period can contribute significantly to lifelong well-being.

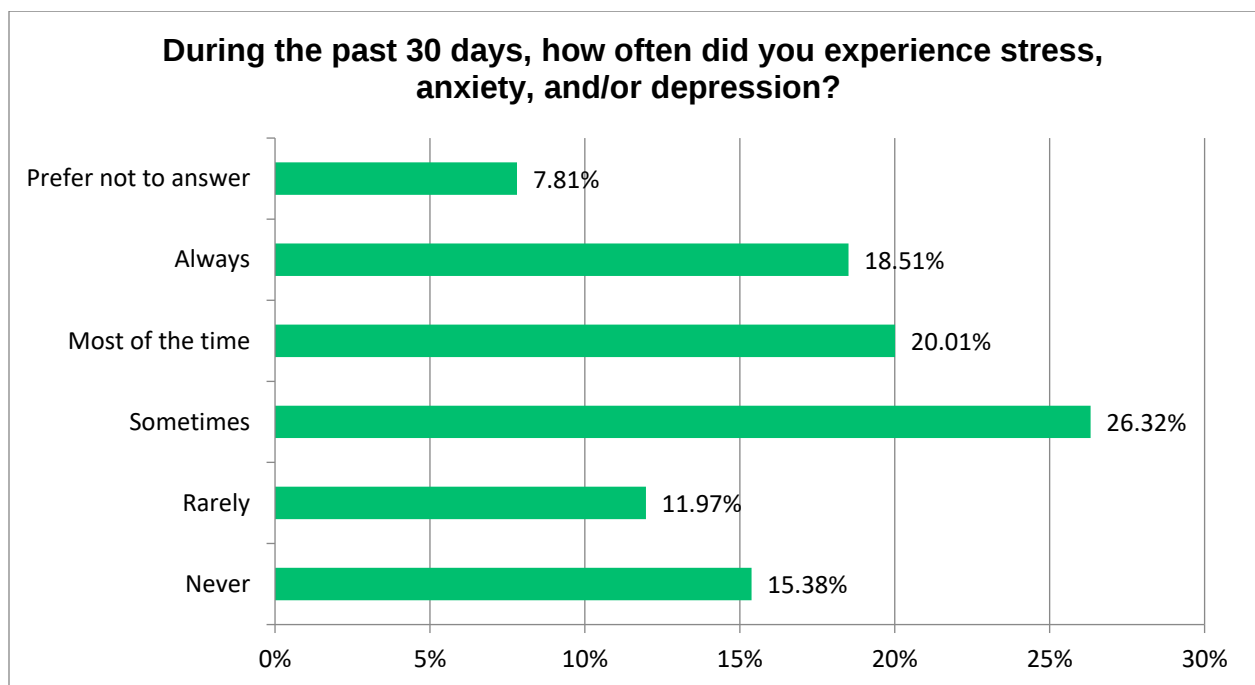
The 2022-2023 YRBS results indicated that emotional distress was a common experience among students, with many reporting stress, anxiety, or depression in the past month. While the severity of these experiences varied, most students indicated at least occasional symptoms. Female students consistently reported higher levels of emotional distress than males, and reports were generally consistent across grade levels.

Roughly one in four students reported feeling persistently sad or hopeless for two weeks or more. A slightly smaller proportion indicated they had experienced self-harm or suicidal thoughts or behaviors. Though most students did not report suicide planning or attempts, a small but notable minority did.

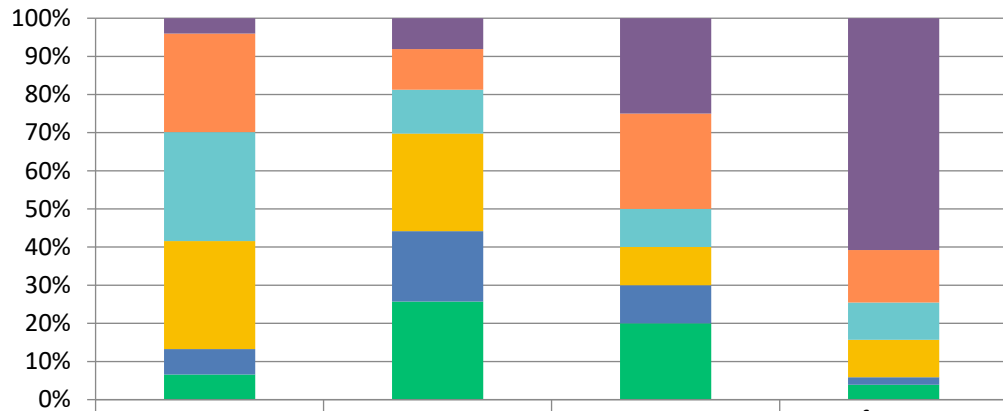
Trends over the past 3 years show an initial rise followed by a decline in suicide planning, suicide attempts, and self-harm behaviors, as well as a steady decrease in reports of persistent sadness or hopelessness.

Access to support remained inconsistent. While some students reported receiving help when they felt sad or anxious, many others described rarely or never getting the help they needed. Overall, the findings emphasize the need for consistent, accessible support systems.

Feelings of Anxiety and Depression Among Students

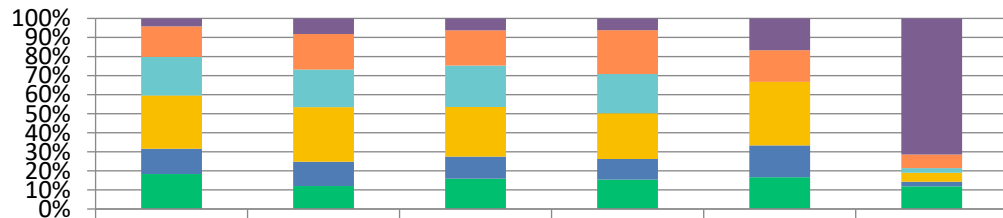


During the past 30 days, how often did you experience stress, anxiety, and/or depression?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	4.03%	8.10%	25.00%	60.78%
Always	25.81%	10.63%	25.00%	13.73%
Most of the time	28.57%	11.52%	10.00%	9.80%
Sometimes	28.34%	25.57%	10.00%	9.80%
Rarely	6.68%	18.48%	10.00%	1.96%
Never	6.57%	25.70%	20.00%	3.92%

During the past 30 days, how often did you experience stress, anxiety, and/or depression?



	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	4.21%	8.18%	6.31%	6.22%	16.67%	71.43%
Always	16.00%	18.64%	18.43%	22.97%	16.67%	7.14%
Most of the time	20.21%	19.77%	21.72%	20.54%	0.00%	2.38%
Sometimes	28.00%	28.64%	26.01%	24.05%	33.33%	4.76%
Rarely	13.26%	12.73%	11.62%	10.81%	16.67%	2.38%
Never	18.32%	12.05%	15.91%	15.41%	16.67%	11.90%

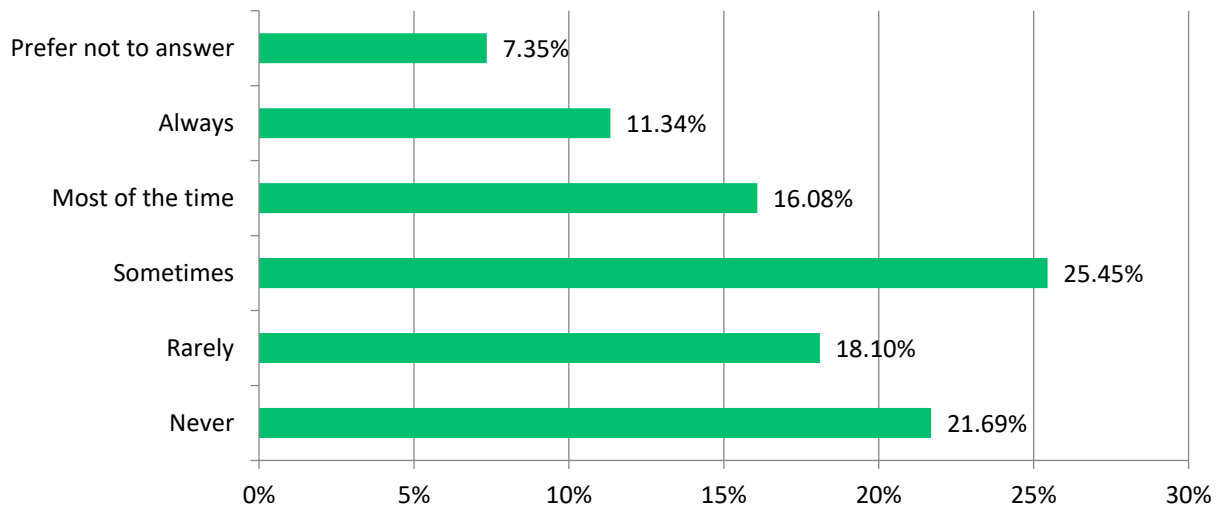
Key Findings on Anxiety and Depression Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** Most students experienced stress, anxiety, and/or depression to some degree in the past 30 days. The most common response was “Sometimes” (26.32%), followed by “Most of the time” (20.01%) and “Always” (18.51%). Fewer

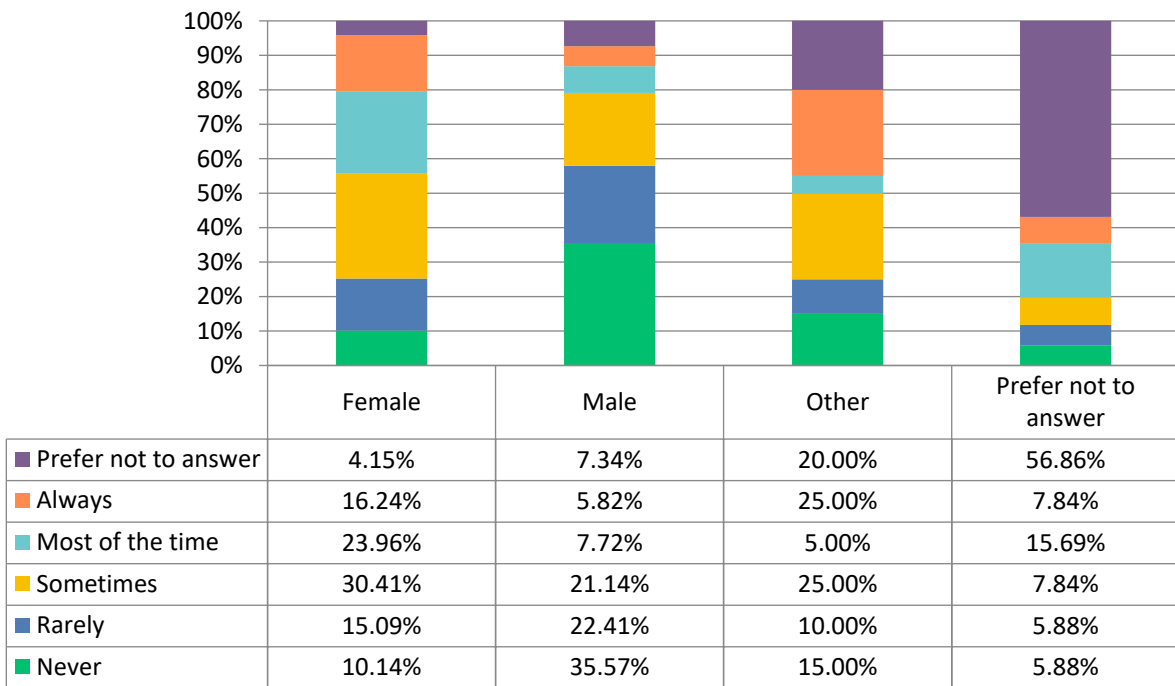
students reported experiencing these feelings “Rarely” (11.97%) or “Never” (15.38%). Additionally, 7.81% of students preferred not to answer. These findings suggest that while the intensity varied, a majority of students reported experiencing stress, anxiety, or depression at least occasionally.

- **Gender Differences:** Female students were more likely to report frequent experiences of stress, anxiety, and/or depression. Among females, 25.81% reported feeling this way “Always,” and 28.57% reported it “Most of the time,” compared to 10.63% and 11.52% of males, respectively. Males were more likely to report “Never” (25.70%) or “Rarely” (18.48%) experiencing these feelings than females (6.57% and 6.68%, respectively). Among students identifying as “Other,” 25% reported feeling this way “Always,” though responses were more evenly distributed across categories. Due to the small sample size of this group, interpretations should be made with caution.
- **Grade Differences:** Reports of stress, anxiety, and/or depression were relatively consistent across grade levels. Most students reported experiencing these feelings at least occasionally, with “Sometimes” being the most common response, ranging from 24.05% to 33.33% across grades. The proportion of students reporting they “Always” experienced these symptoms increased with grade level, from 16.00% in 9th grade to 22.97% in 12th grade. Reports of “Never” experiencing stress, anxiety, or depression were lower across all grades, ranging from 12.05% to 18.32%.

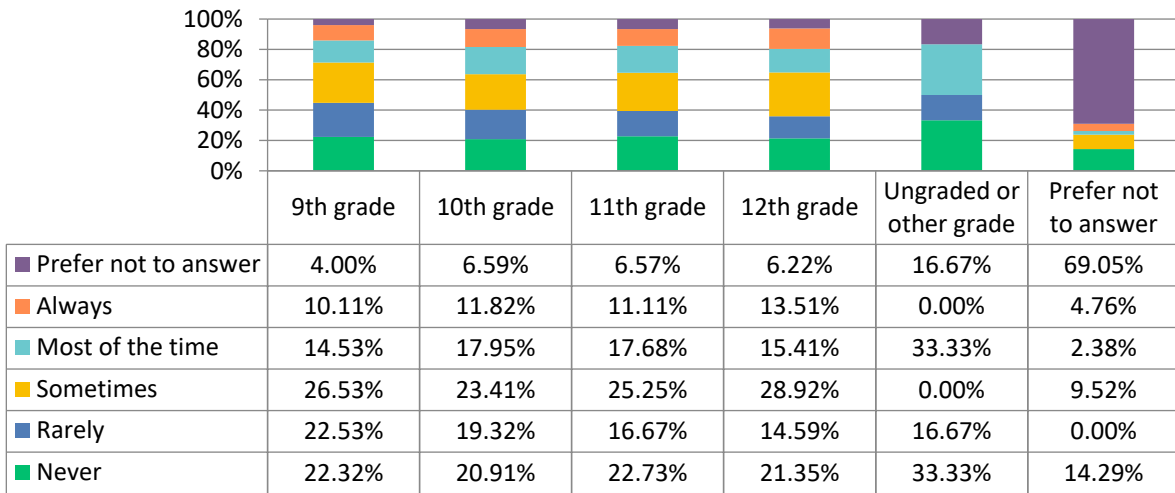
During the past 12 months, how often have feelings of being nervous, anxious, or on edge interfered with your day or your activities?



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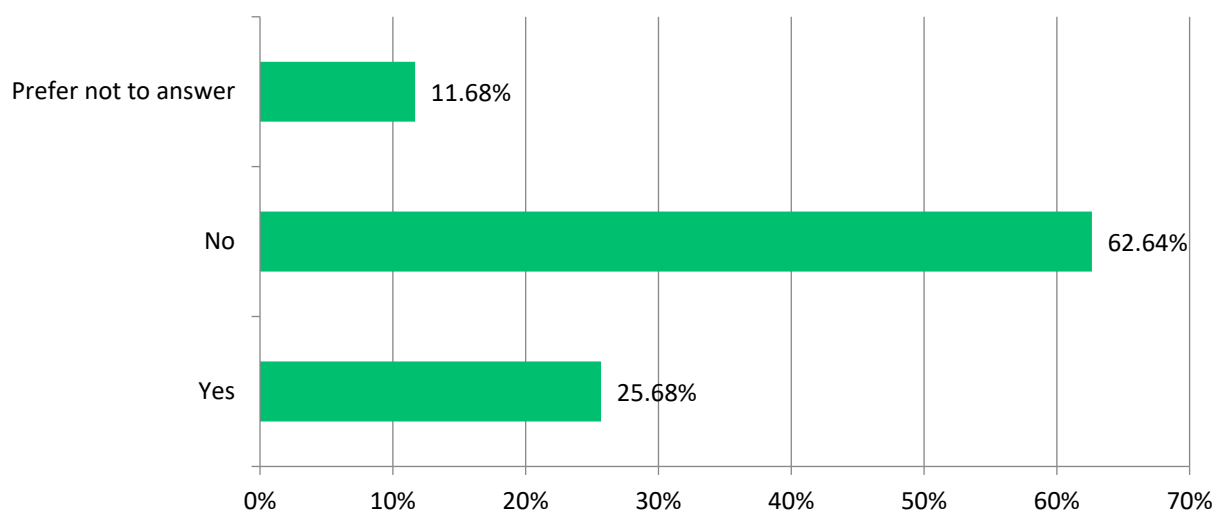
During the past 12 months, how often have feelings of being nervous, anxious, or on edge interfered with your day or your activities?



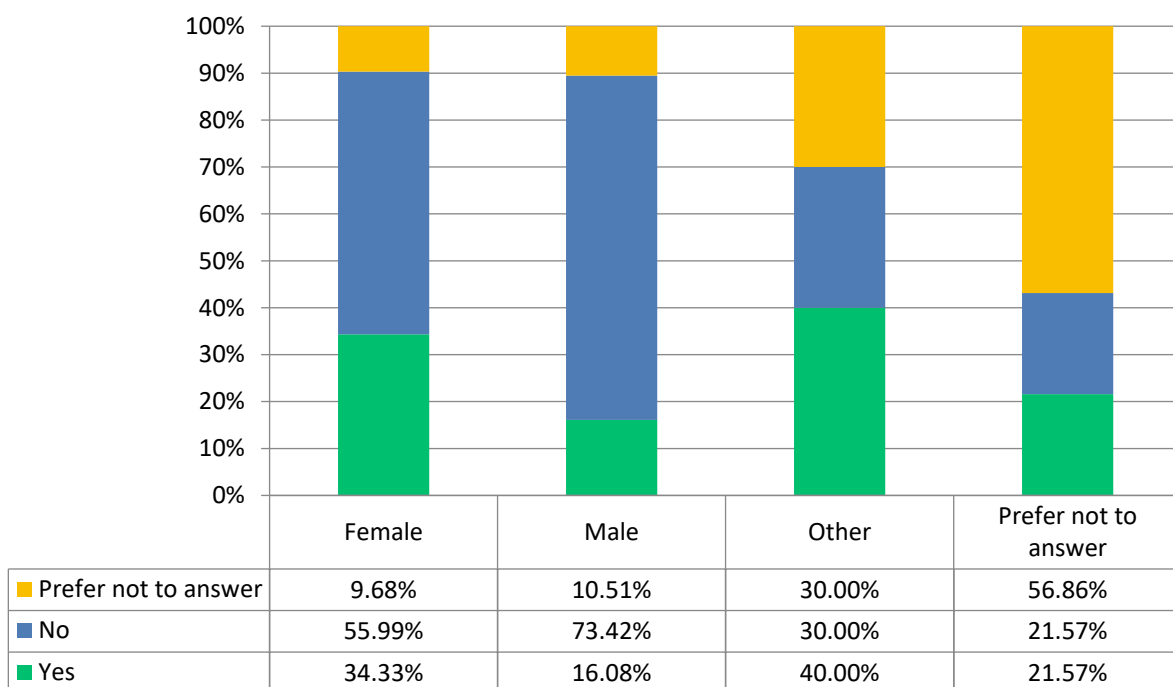
Key Findings on Feelings of Nervousness, Anxiety, or Being on Edge

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported that feelings of nervousness, anxiety, or being on edge interfered with their daily activities to some degree in the past 12 months. The most common response was “Sometimes” (25.45%), followed by “Never” (21.69%) and “Rarely” (18.10%). Smaller percentages reported that these feelings interfered “Most of the time” (16.08%) or “Always” (11.34%). Additionally, 7.35% of students preferred not to answer. These findings indicate that while many students experienced some interference from anxiety-related feelings, the frequency varied.
- Gender Differences:** Female students were more likely to report frequent interference, with 23.96% indicating it occurred “Most of the time” and 16.24% selecting “Always.” In contrast, only 7.72% of males selected “Most of the time” and 5.82% chose “Always.” Males were more likely to report no interference, with 35.57% selecting “Never,” compared to 10.14% of females. Students identifying as “Other” had varied responses, with 25% reporting “Always” and another 25% selecting “Sometimes,” though this group had a small sample size. These findings suggest that female students were more likely to report frequent anxiety-related interference compared to males.
- Grade Differences:** Across grade levels, most students reported that feelings of nervousness or anxiety occasionally interfered with their daily activities. Reports of such interference “Sometimes” ranged from 23.41% to 28.92%, while “Most of the time” ranged from 14.53% to 17.95%. Reports of no interference (“Never”) remained fairly consistent, from 20.91% to 22.73% across 9th through 12th grades. A small percentage of students reported experiencing this interference “Always,” with responses ranging from 10.11% to 13.51%.

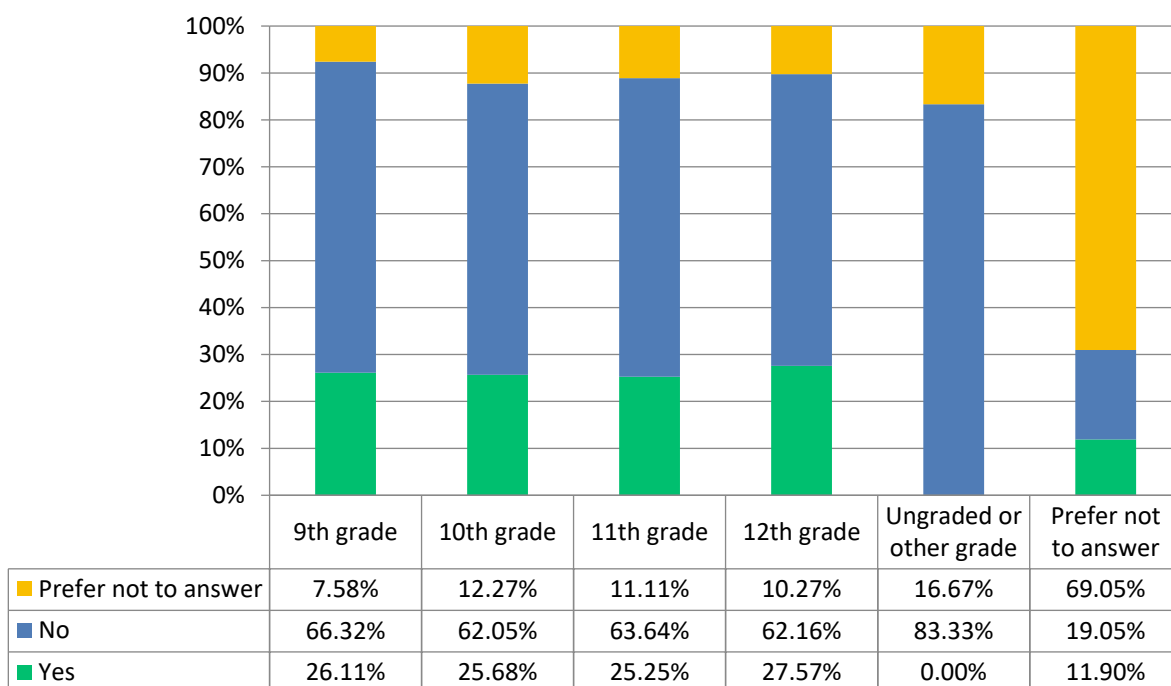
During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?



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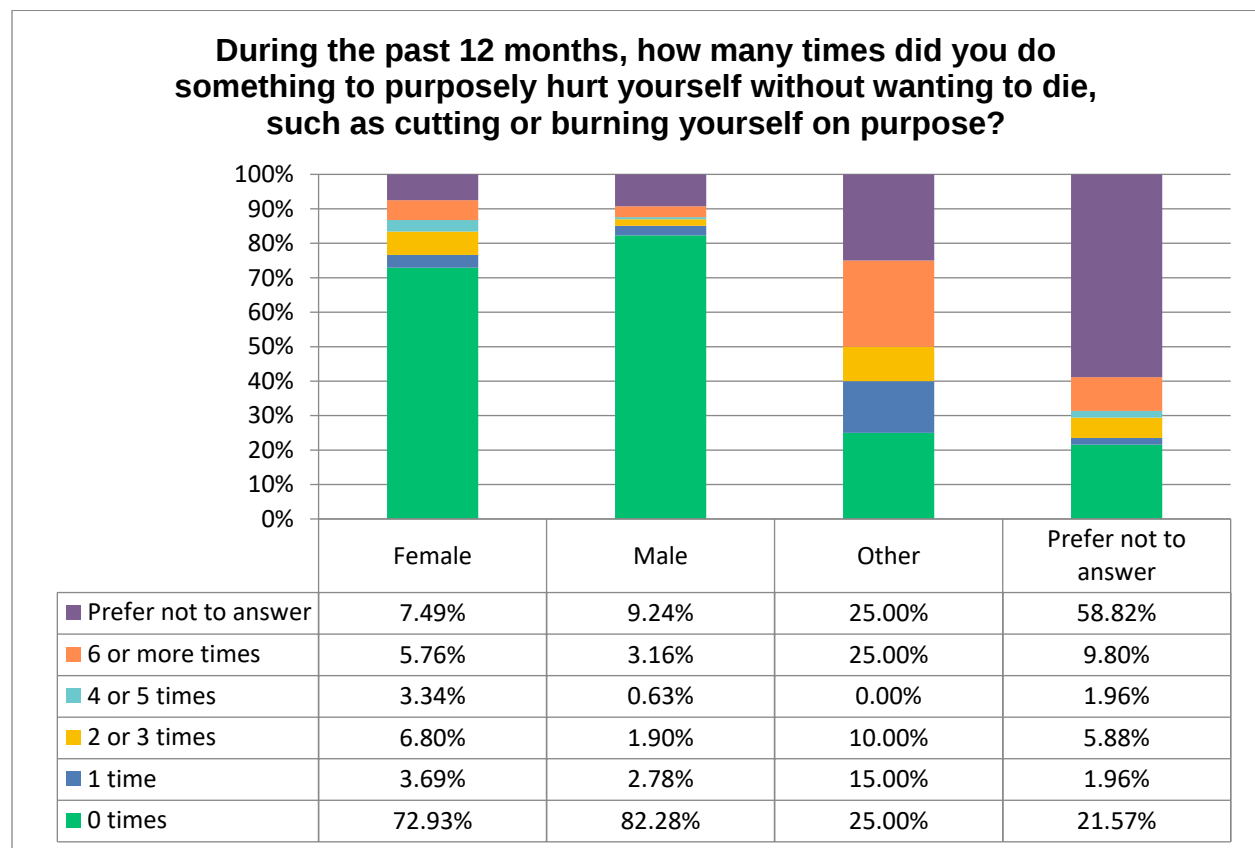
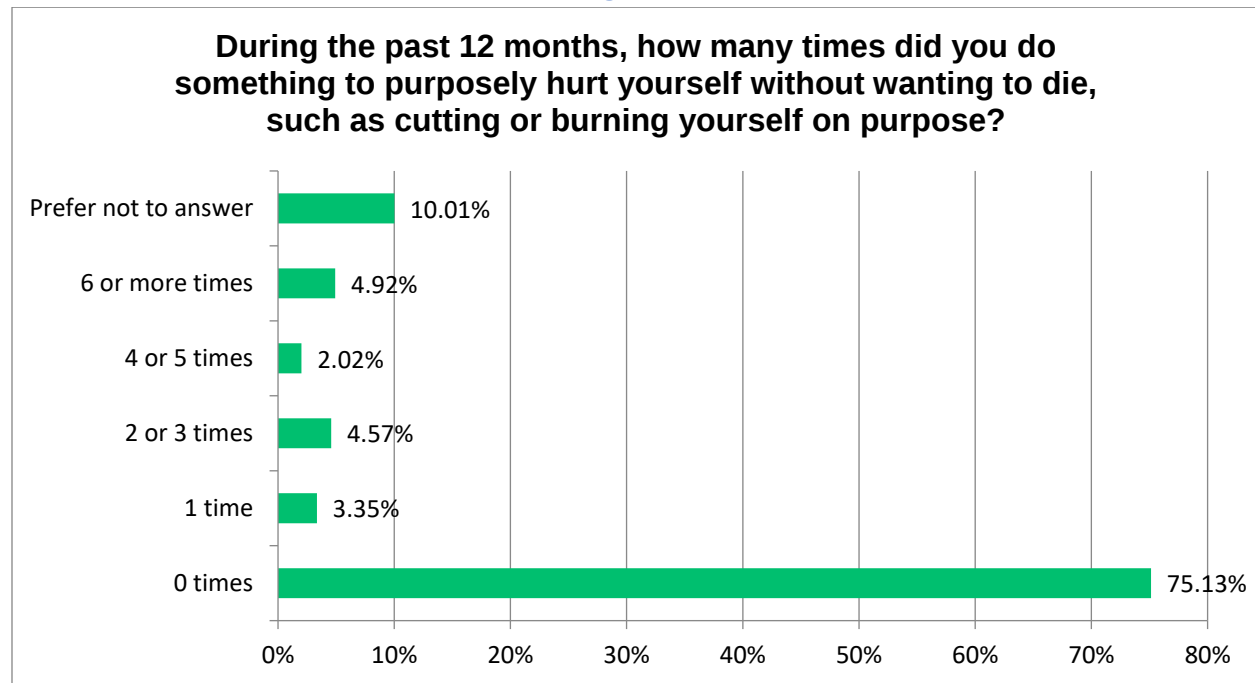
During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?



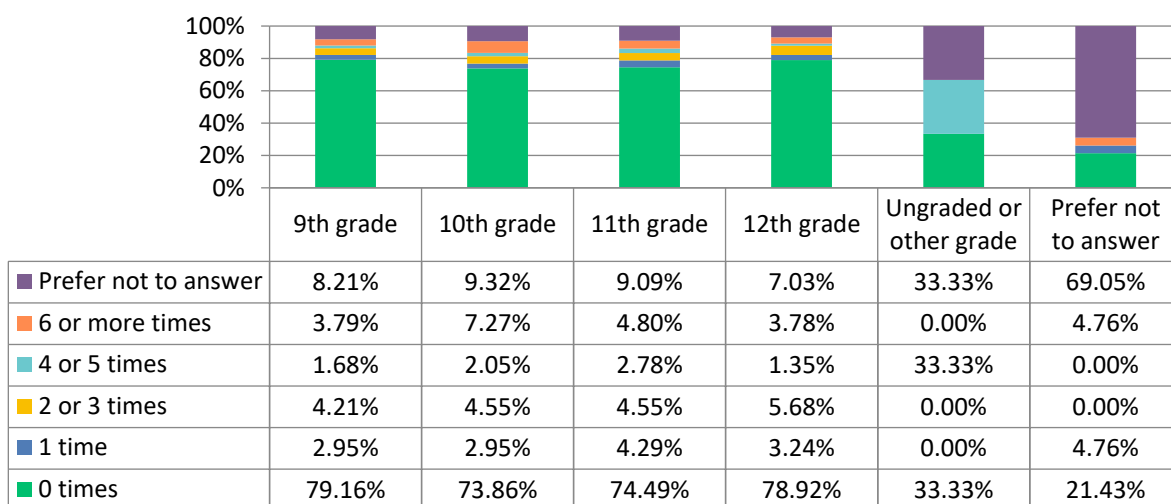
Key Findings on Persistent Feelings of Sadness or Hopelessness

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (62.64%) reported not feeling so sad or hopeless for two or more weeks in a row that they stopped doing usual activities. However, 25.68% of students indicated that they had experienced this level of emotional distress in the past year. Additionally, 11.68% of students preferred not to answer. While the majority of students did not report prolonged periods of sadness or hopelessness, approximately one-quarter reported experiencing such emotional challenges.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students reported they did not feel so sad or hopeless for two or more weeks that they stopped doing usual activities, with 73.42% of males and 55.99% of females responding “No.” However, 34.33% of females reported experiencing this level of emotional distress, compared to 16.08% of males. Among students identifying as “Other,” 40.00% answered “Yes” and only 30.00% answered “No.” Due to the small sample size of this group, interpretations should be made with caution. In general, most students did not report extended period
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported they did not feel so sad or hopeless for two weeks or more that they stopped doing their usual activities. Reports of this experience were relatively consistent, with 25.25% to 27.57% of students in grades 9 through 12 answering “Yes.” Overall, emotional distress of this severity affected about one in four students across grade levels.

Self-Harm and Suicidal Behaviors Among Students

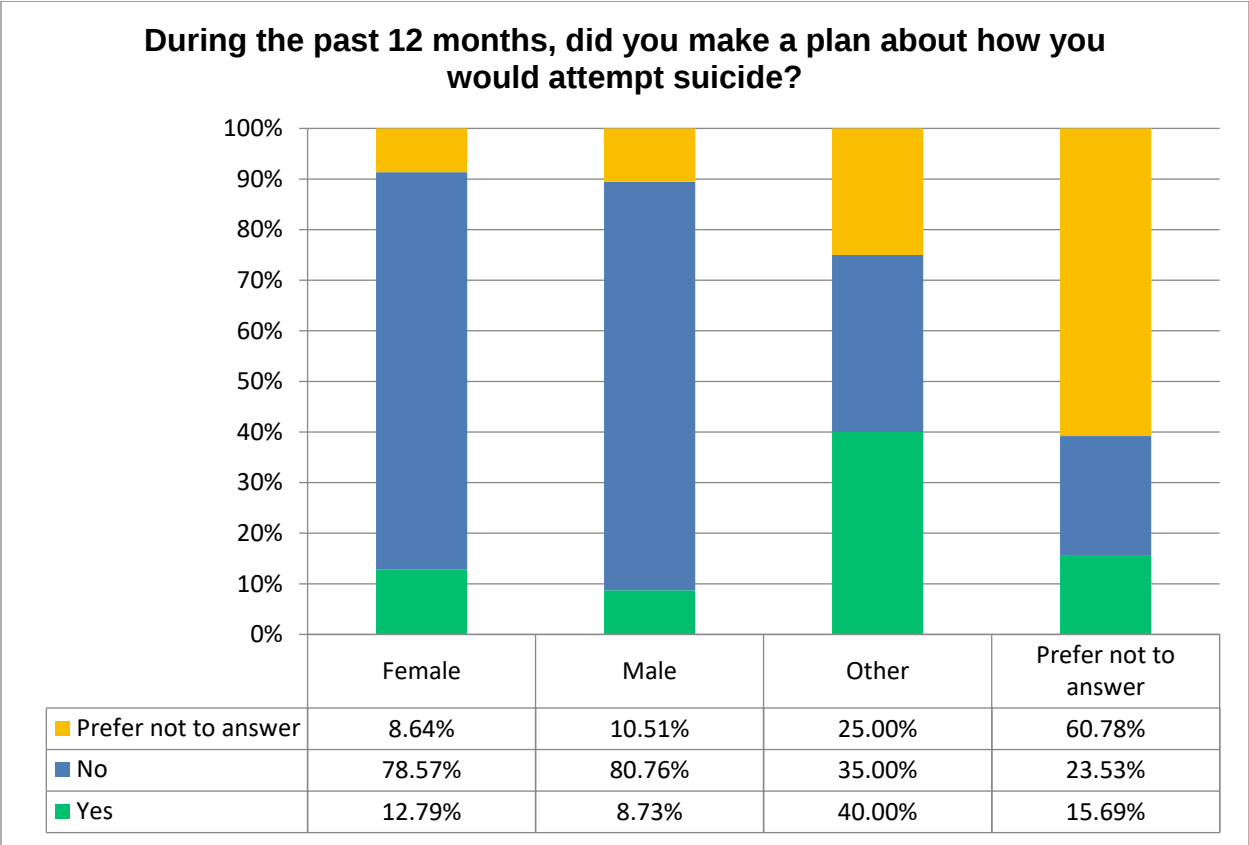
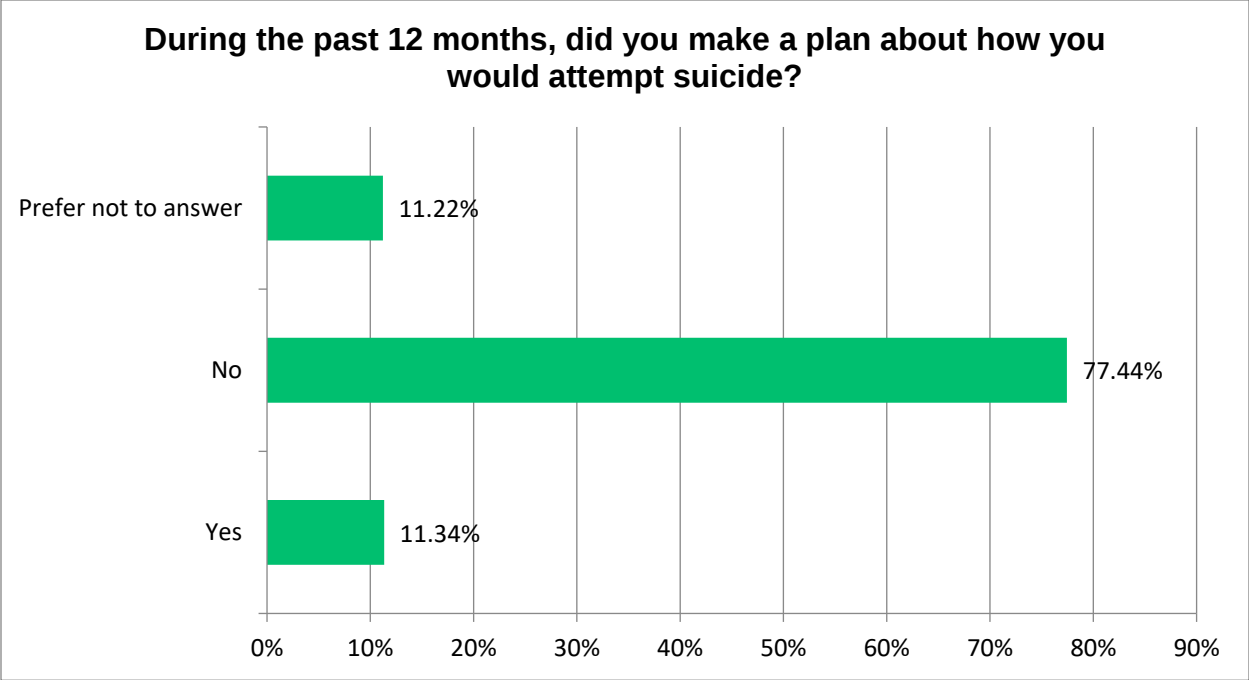


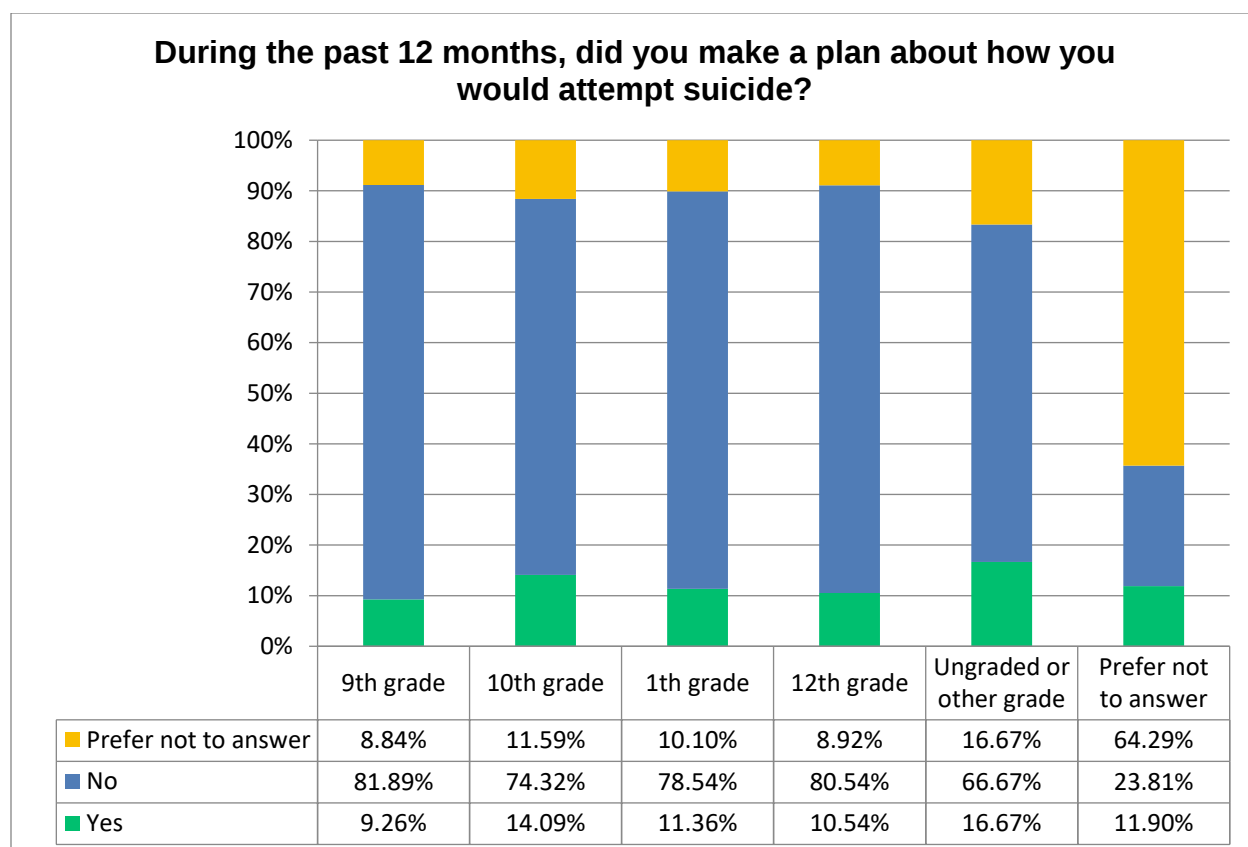
During the past 12 months, how many times did you do something to purposely hurt yourself without wanting to die, such as cutting or burning yourself on purpose?



Key Findings on Self-Harm Behaviors

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (75.13%) reported that they did not intentionally hurt themselves in the past 12 months. However, 14.86% reported engaging in self-harm at least once, with 3.35% doing so one time, 4.57% two or three times, and 4.92% six or more times. A smaller portion (2.02%) reported doing so four or five times. Additionally, 10.01% of students chose not to answer. While self-harm was not widespread, the data indicated that a small subset of students engaged in this behavior, with varying frequency.
- Gender Differences:** Most males (82.28%) and females (72.93%) reported not intentionally hurting themselves in the past 12 months. Self-harm was more frequently reported among females, with 6.80% engaging in it two or three times and 5.76% reporting six or more instances. Among males, lower rates were seen across all frequency categories. Students identifying as “Other” reported higher rates of self-harm, with 25.00% engaging in it six or more times and another 25.00% selecting “0 times.” This group also had the highest percentage choosing “Prefer not to answer” (25.00%), though interpretation should be cautious due to the small sample size.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported not engaging in self-harm in the past year, with “0 times” reported by 73.86% to 79.16% of students in grades 9 through 12. Reports of self-harming behaviors were slightly higher in the 10th and 11th grades, where 7.27% and 4.80%, respectively, indicated they had hurt themselves six or more times. Responses varied more among students in the ungraded or other grade categories, but interpretation should be cautious due to the small sample size.

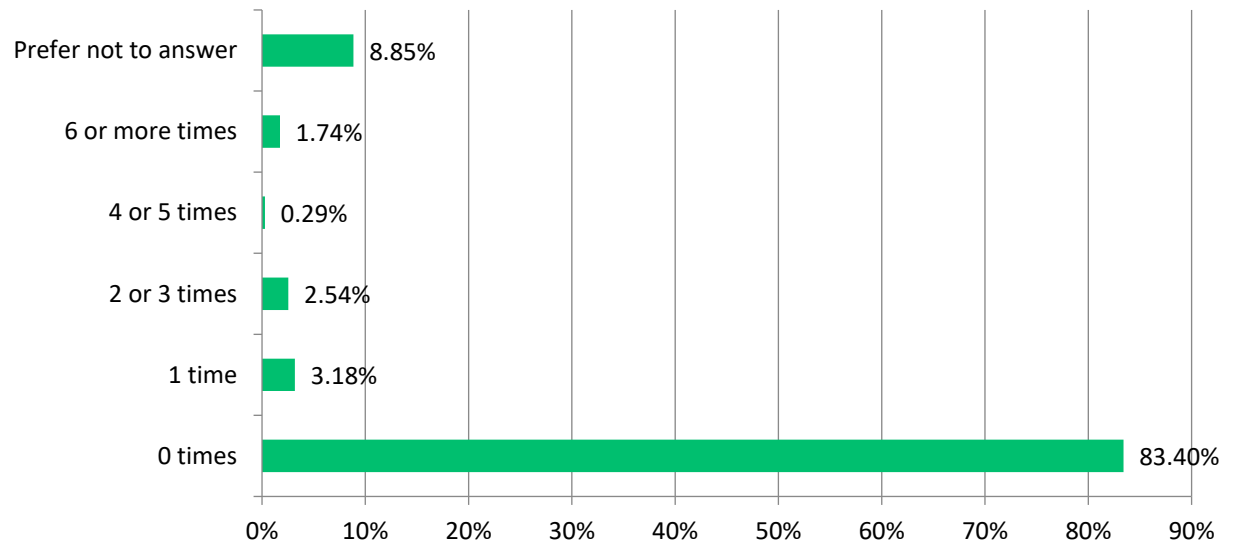




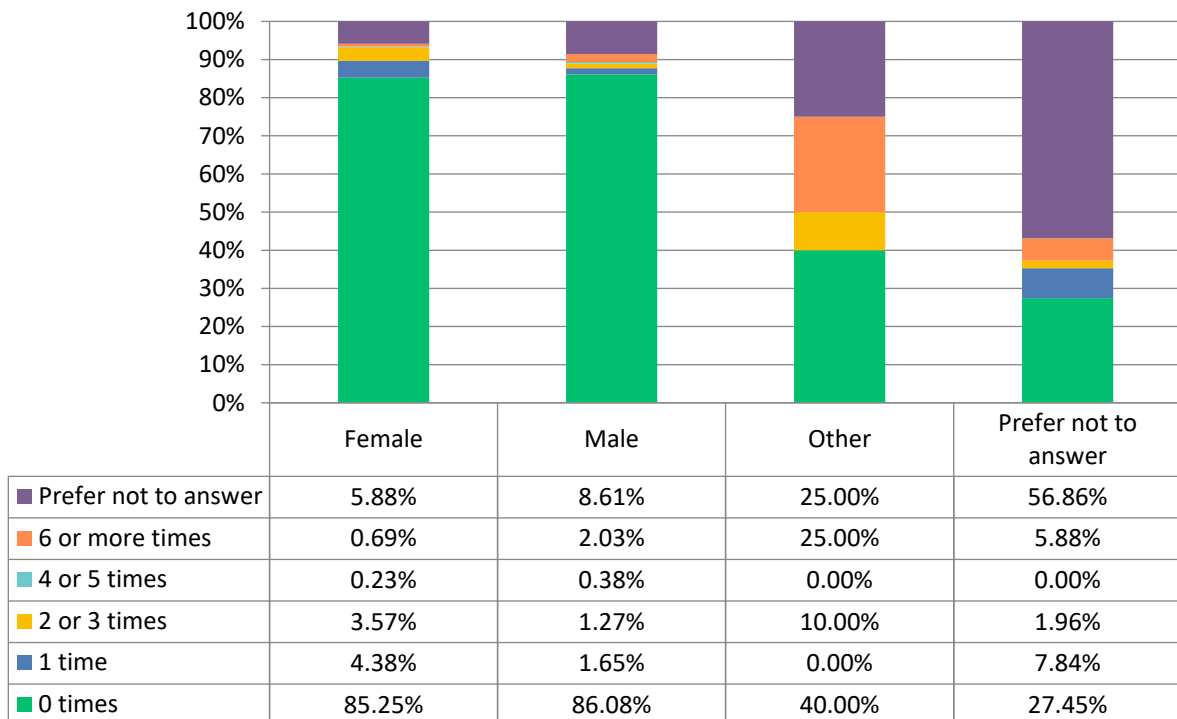
Key Findings on Suicide Planning Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (77.44%) reported that they had not made a plan to attempt suicide in the past 12 months. However, 11.34% indicated they had made such a plan, and 11.22% preferred not to answer. The data showed that a vast majority of students did not report that they made a suicide plan.
- Gender Differences:** Most female (78.57%) and male (80.76%) students reported that they had not made a suicide plan in the past 12 months. A small but notable percentage of females (12.79%) and males (8.73%) indicated they had made such a plan. Among students identifying as “Other,” 40.00% reported making a suicide plan, and 25.00% preferred not to answer. However, findings for this group should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size. Overall, most students did not report suicidal planning.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported that they did not make a suicide plan in the past year, with “No” responses ranging from 74.32% to 81.89%. Reports of making a suicide plan ranged from 9.26% to 14.09%, with 10th graders reporting the highest rate. A small portion of students in each grade chose “Prefer not to answer,” with the highest percentage among 10th graders (11.59%). Overall, suicidal planning was reported by a minority of students in each grade.

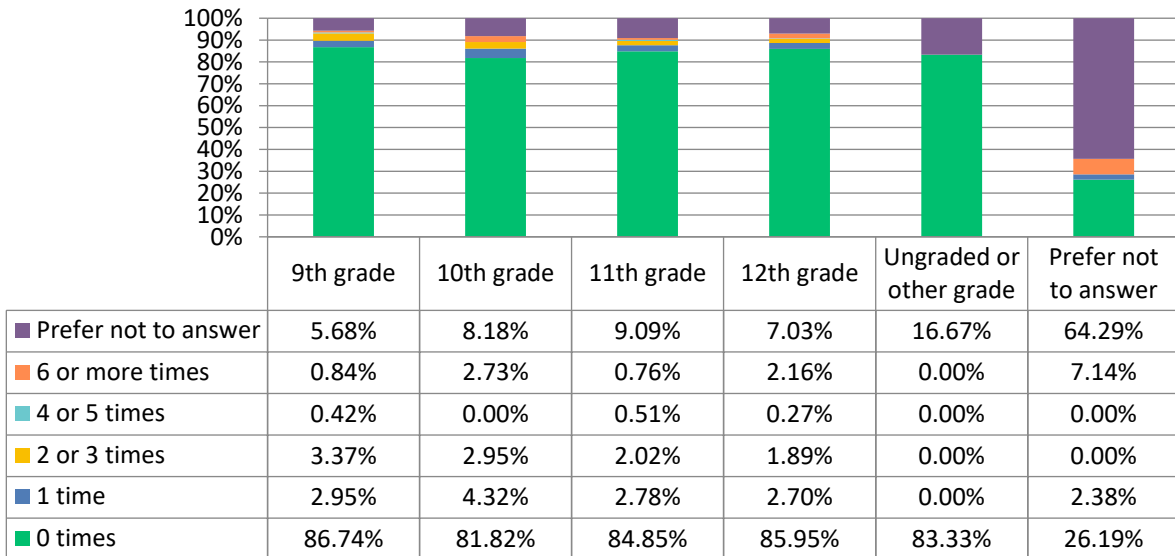
During the past 12 months, how many times did you actually attempt suicide?



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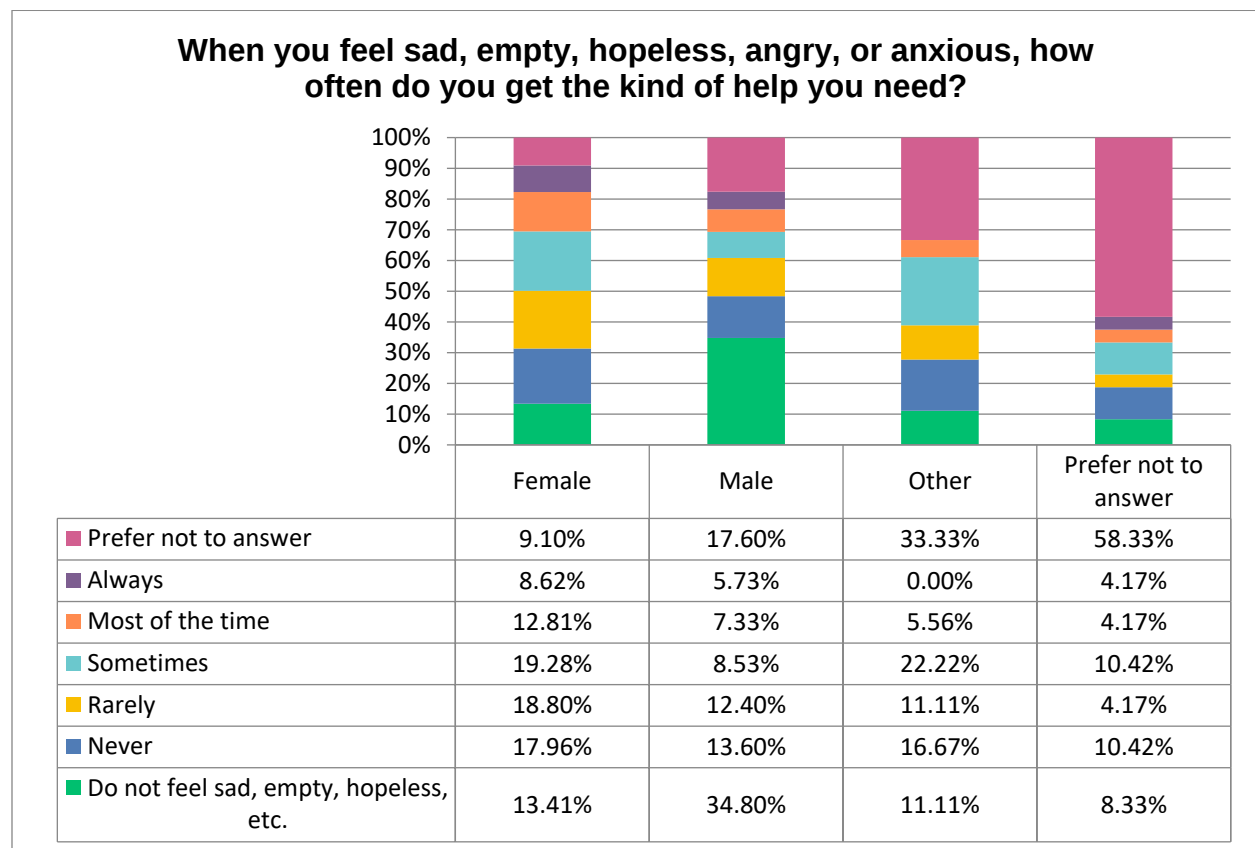
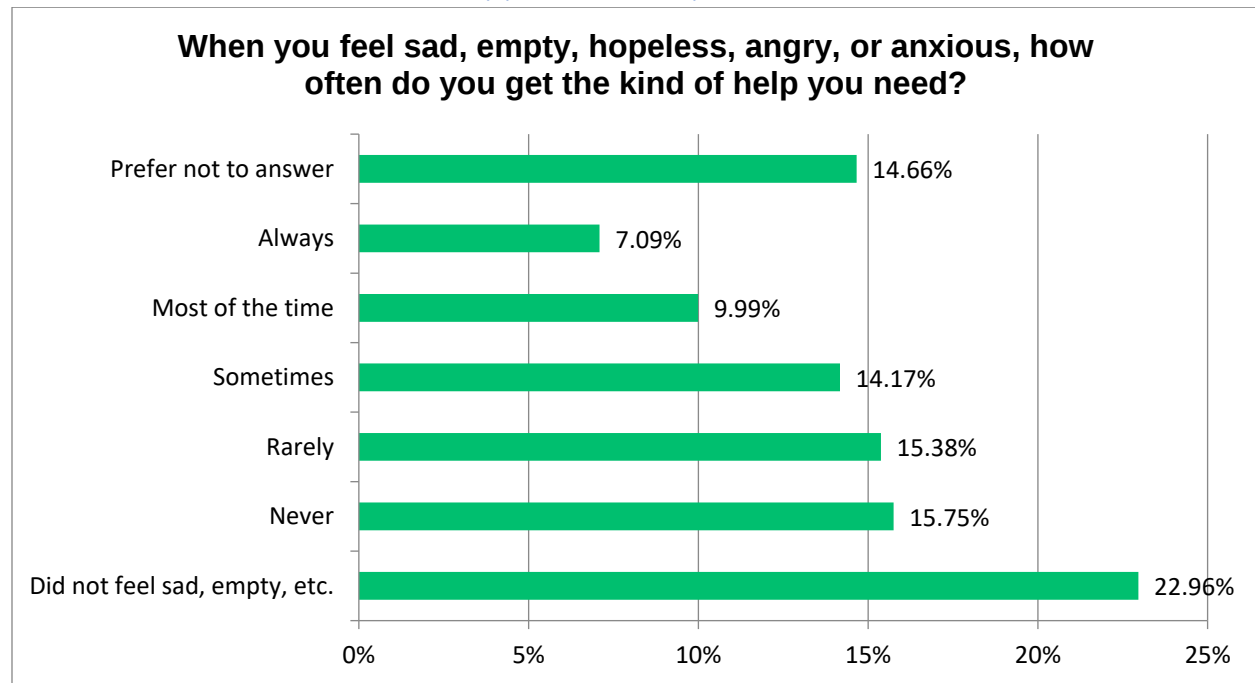
During the past 12 months, how many times did you actually attempt suicide?



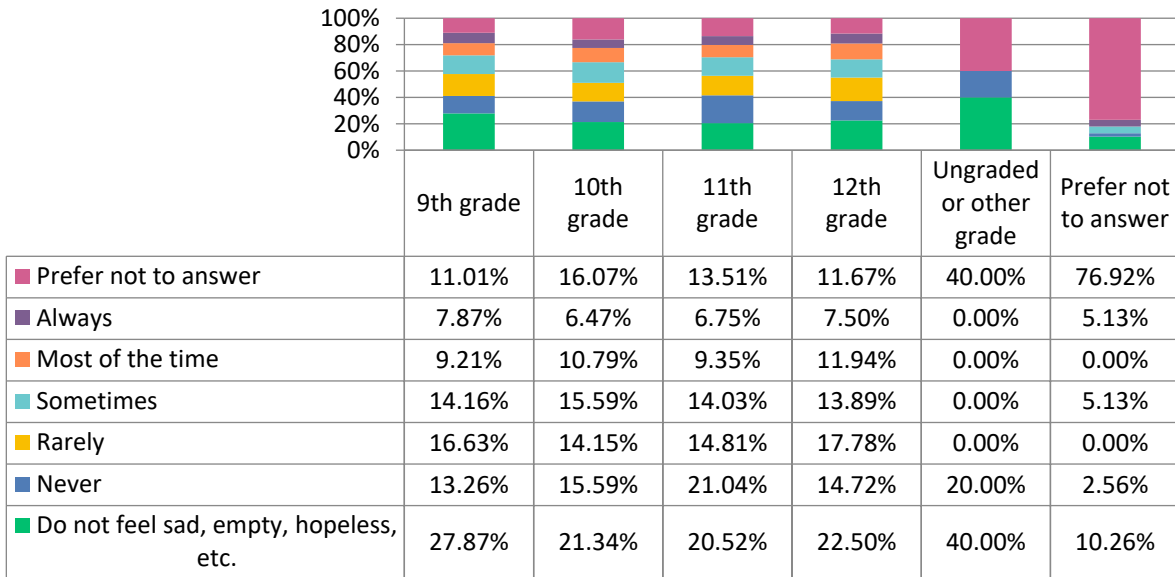
Key Findings on Suicide Attempts

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported not attempting suicide in the past 12 months, with 83.40% selecting "0 times." A small percentage reported attempting suicide once (3.18%) or two to three times (2.54%), while fewer reported four to five times (0.29%) or six or more times (1.74%). Additionally, 8.85% of students chose "Prefer not to answer." Overall, suicide attempts were reported by a minority of students.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across all gender groups reported not attempting suicide in the past 12 months, with 85.25% of females and 86.08% of males selecting "0 times." A small percentage of students reported attempting suicide once (4.38% of females and 1.65% of males) or two to three times (3.57% of females and 1.27% of males). Among students identifying as "Other," 40.00% selected "0 times," while higher rates were reported for repeated attempts, including 25.00% for "6 or more times." Due to the small sample size in this group, findings should be interpreted with caution. Overall, suicide attempts were reported by a minority of students, with most indicating no such behavior.
- Grade Differences:** Across all grade levels, the majority of students reported not attempting suicide, with rates ranging from 81.82% to 86.74% selecting "0 times." Reports of a single attempt were highest among 10th graders (4.32%), while attempts of "6 or more times" were most frequently reported by 10th graders as well (2.73%). Overall, suicide attempts were reported infrequently and were relatively consistent across grade levels.

Student Access to Emotional Support and Help



When you feel sad, empty, hopeless, angry, or anxious, how often do you get the kind of help you need?

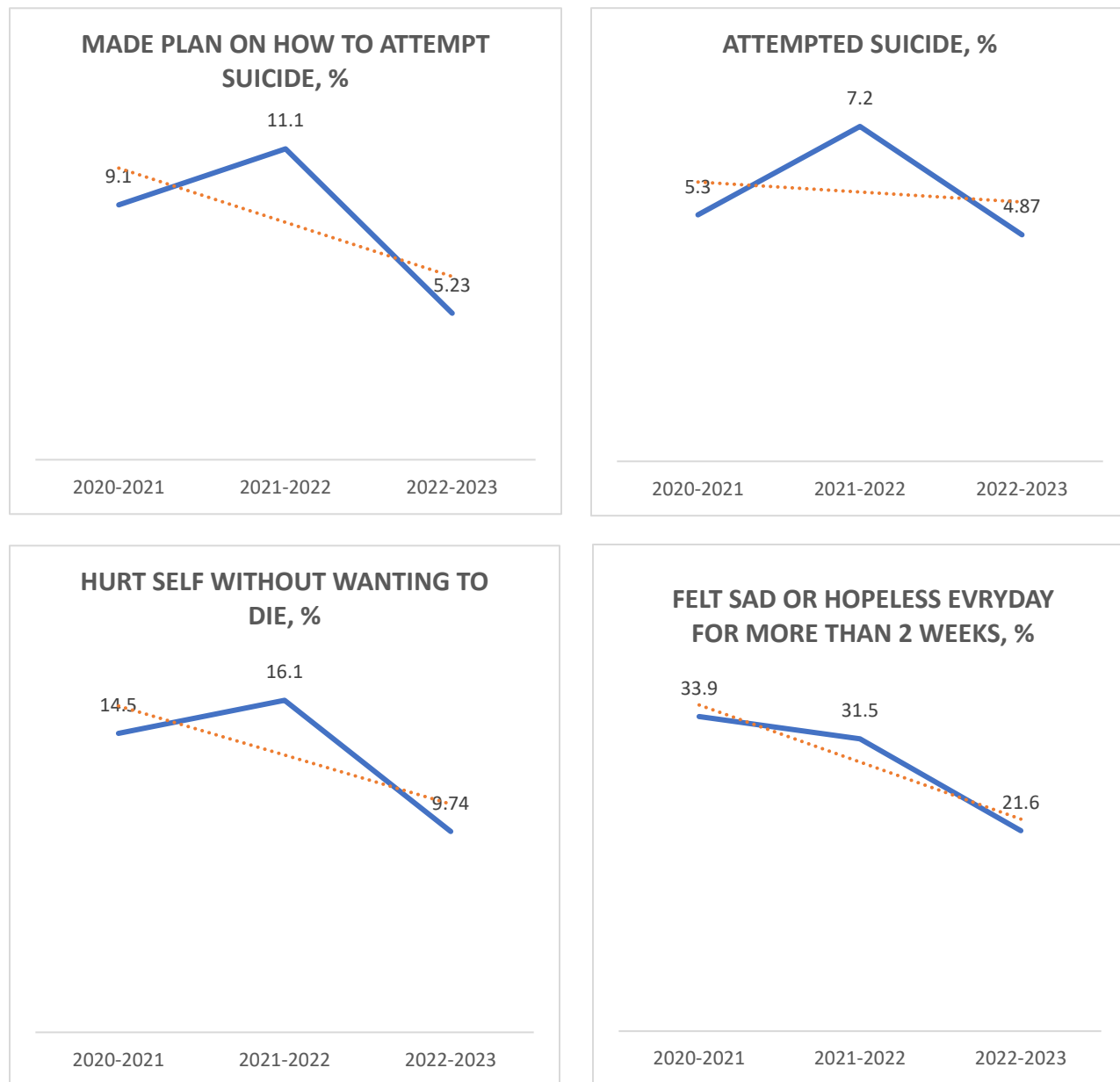


Key Findings in Access to Emotional Support and Help

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported varying levels of access to support when feeling sad, empty, hopeless, angry, or anxious. While 22.96% of students said they did not experience these feelings, only 7.09% of the remaining students reported "Always" receiving the help they needed. An additional 9.99% said they received help "Most of the time." A larger portion of students reported inconsistent or limited support, with 14.17% saying they received help "Sometimes," 15.38% "Rarely," and 15.75% "Never." An additional 14.66% preferred not to answer. Overall, students who experienced emotional distress reported inconsistent access to the help they needed.
- Gender Differences:** Students across gender groups reported varying access to support when feeling emotionally distressed. Males were most likely to report not experiencing these feelings (34.80%), compared to 13.41% of females and 11.11% of students identifying as "Other." Consistent access to help was limited. Only 8.62% of females and 5.73% of males said they "Always" received help. A notable portion of students reported rarely or never receiving support, with rates highest among females.
- Grade Differences:** Responses were generally consistent across grade levels. Between 20% and 28% of students in each grade said they did not feel sad, empty, or hopeless. Among remaining students, support access varied, with similar proportions across grades reporting they "Always" (6.47%–7.87%), "Sometimes" (13.89%–15.59%), or "Never" (13.26%–21.04%) received help. Overall, students across grades reported similar experiences accessing support when facing emotional distress.

Mental Health and Self-Harm Over Time

The following graphs highlight three-year trends in reported experiences of depression, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts among youth. By examining these patterns, we can identify growing concerns and prioritize efforts to support mental health within Herkimer County.



Key Trends in Mental Health and Self-Harm Over Time

- **Suicide Planning:** The percentage of students who reported making a suicide plan rose from 9.1% in 2020–2021 to 11.1% in 2021–2022 before dropping sharply to 5.23% in 2022–2023. This pattern reflects an initial increase followed by a notable decline in suicide planning.
- **Attempted Suicide:** The percentage of students reporting a suicide attempt increased from 5.3% in 2020–2021 to 7.2% in 2021–2022, then declined to 4.87% in 2022–2023. This trend indicates an initial rise followed by a notable decrease in reported suicide attempts.
- **Self-Harm (Non-Suicidal):** The percentage of students engaging in non-suicidal self-harm rose from 14.5% in 2020–2021 to 16.1% in 2021–2022, then declined to 9.74% in 2022–2023. This pattern reflects an initial increase followed by a notable decrease in reported self-harm behaviors. Despite the fluctuation, the overall trend suggests a decrease in non-suicidal self-harm behaviors.
- **Persistent Sadness and Hopelessness:** The proportion of students who felt persistently sad or hopeless for more than two weeks declined steadily from 33.9% in 2020–2021 to 31.5% in 2021–2022 and then to 21.6% in 2022–2023. This trend reflects a consistent decrease in prolonged sadness or hopelessness reports over time.

Sexual Activity, Reproductive Health, and Dating Violence

Understanding adolescent experiences with sexual activity and dating violence is vital for promoting healthy relationships and mitigating risks among youth. These experiences can significantly impact physical, emotional, and mental health, potentially leading to unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, and long-term psychological effects. Data from the YRBS sheds light on trends in sexual activity and dating violence among students, guiding schools and communities in their support of adolescents as they build safe and healthy relationships.

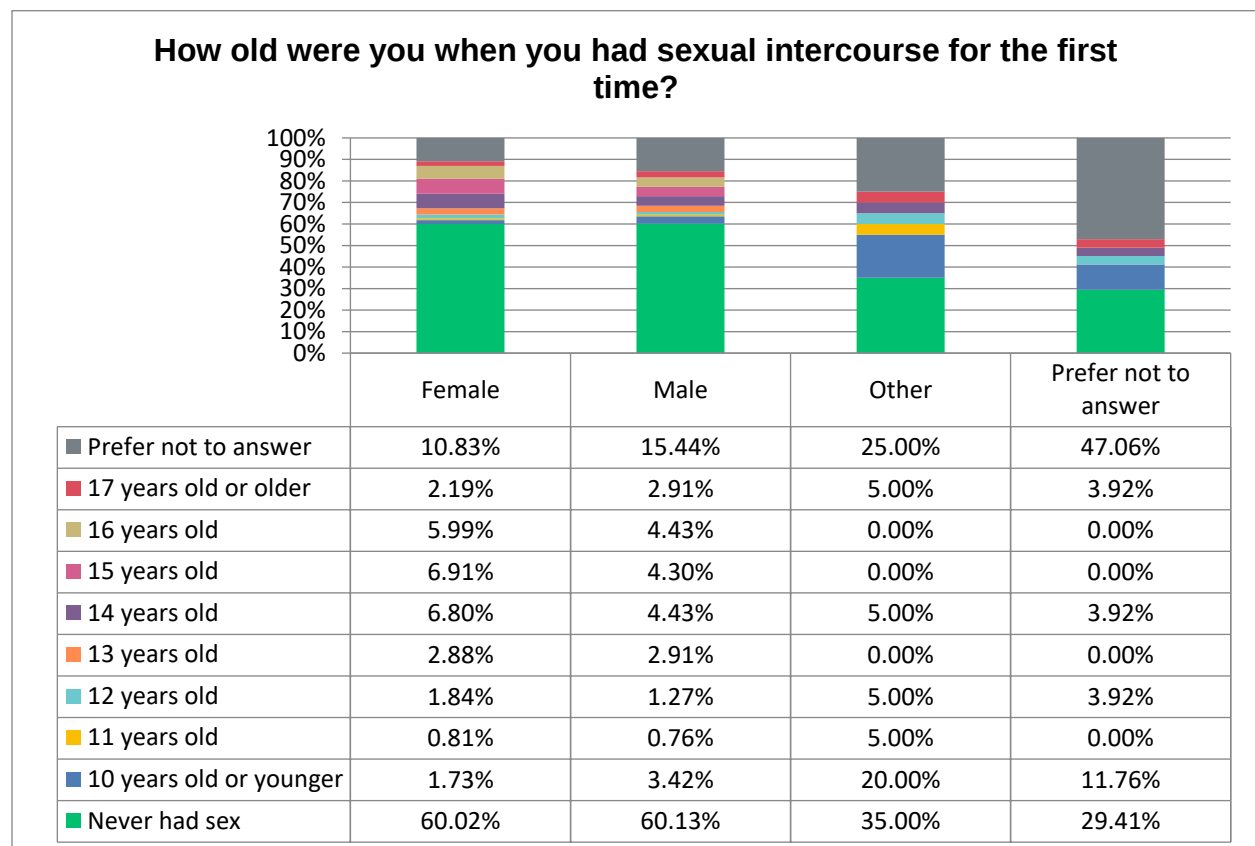
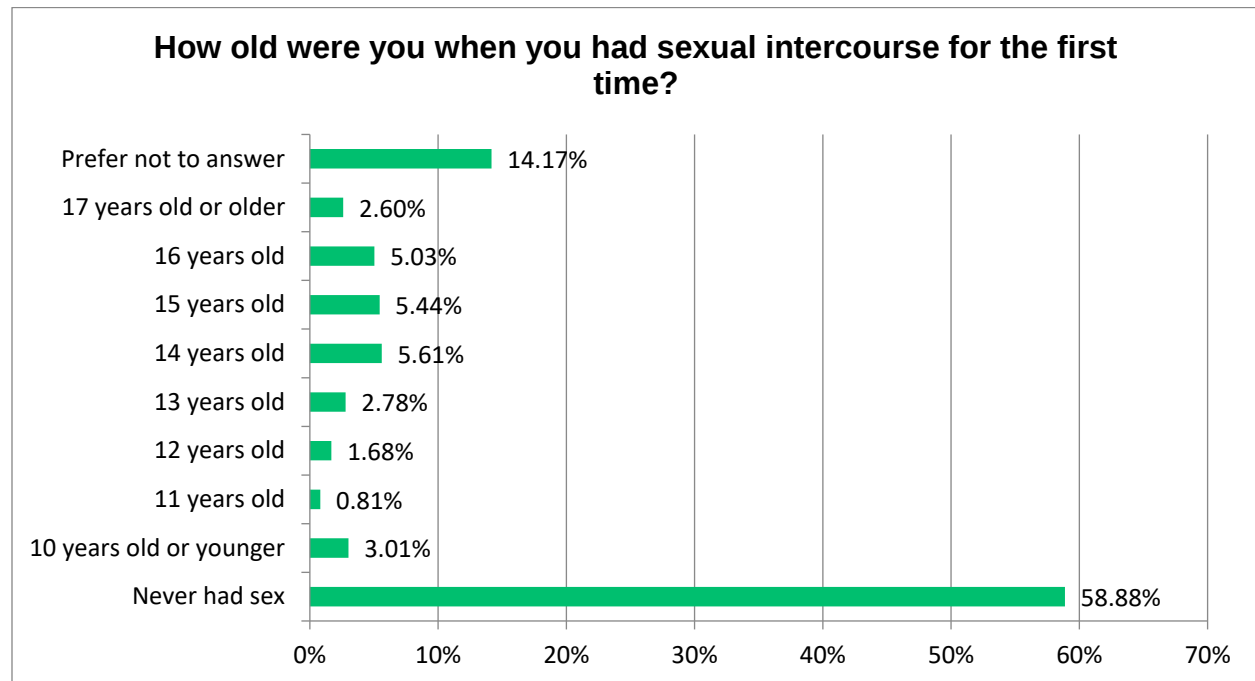
The 2022-2023 YRBS revealed that the majority of students in Herkimer County reported never having had sexual intercourse, with rates of abstinence highest among younger grades and decreasing with grade. Among sexually active students, most reported a small number of partners and commonly initiated sex between ages 14 and 16. While many students described their first sexual experience as consensual, a notable portion indicated experiences that were non-consensual or uncertain, with females more likely than males to report non-consensual encounters.

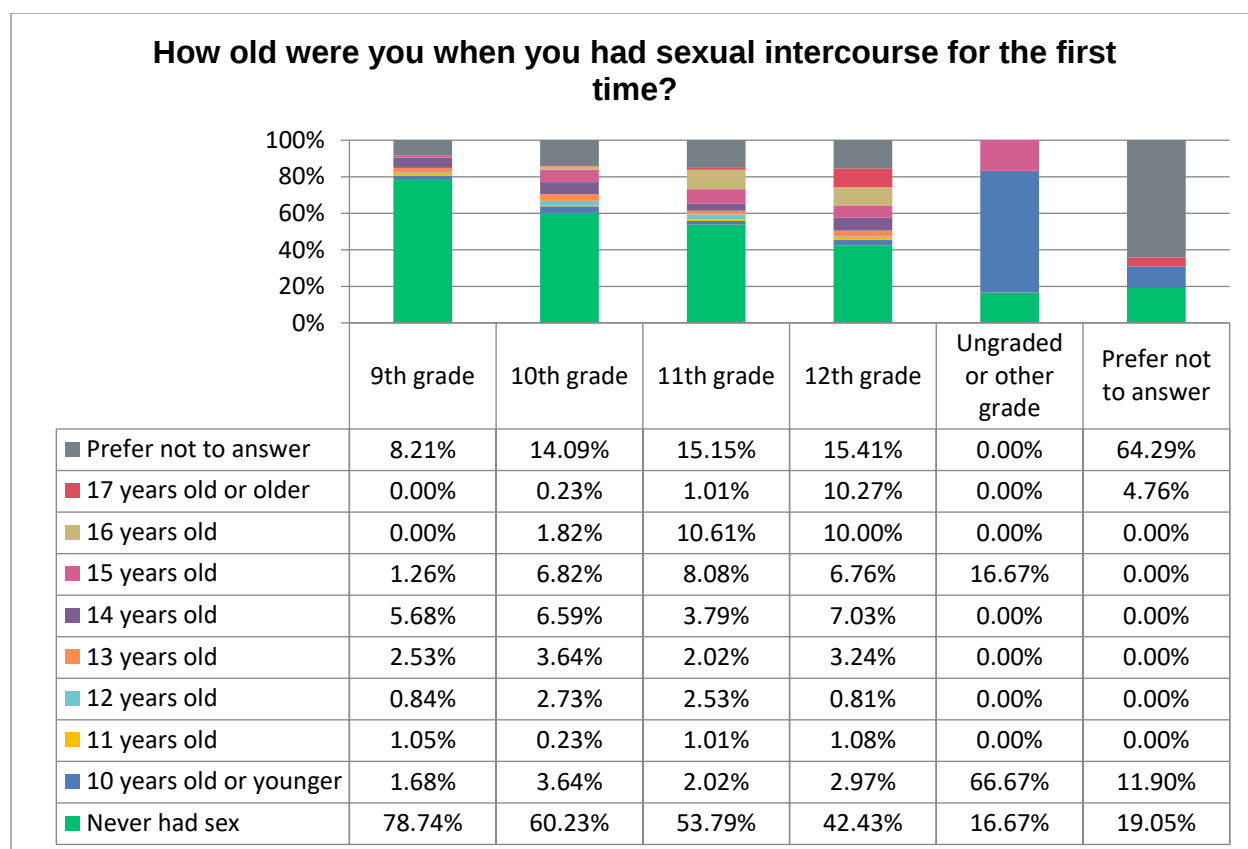
Recent sexual activity was limited to a minority of students, and most of those who were active reported only one partner in the past three months. Substance use before sex was relatively uncommon and showed a decline over time. Condom use at last intercourse was reported by about half of sexually active students, with rates increasing by grade. HIV and STD testing remained uncommon among students overall, though testing rates were slightly higher among older students.

In terms of violence-related experiences, most students did not report being physically or emotionally harmed by a dating partner in the past year. However, a small portion of students did experience emotional harm or physical violence, with these experiences more frequently reported by students identifying as “Other” or in the ungraded/other category. About 17% of students indicated they had experienced unwanted sexual contact at some point in their lives, with higher rates reported among females and older students.

Overall, the data suggest that while many students are delaying sexual activity and practicing safe behaviors, a portion still face risks related to consent, relationship violence, and inconsistent contraceptive use. These findings highlight the need for continued education on healthy relationships, consent, and access to preventive resources.

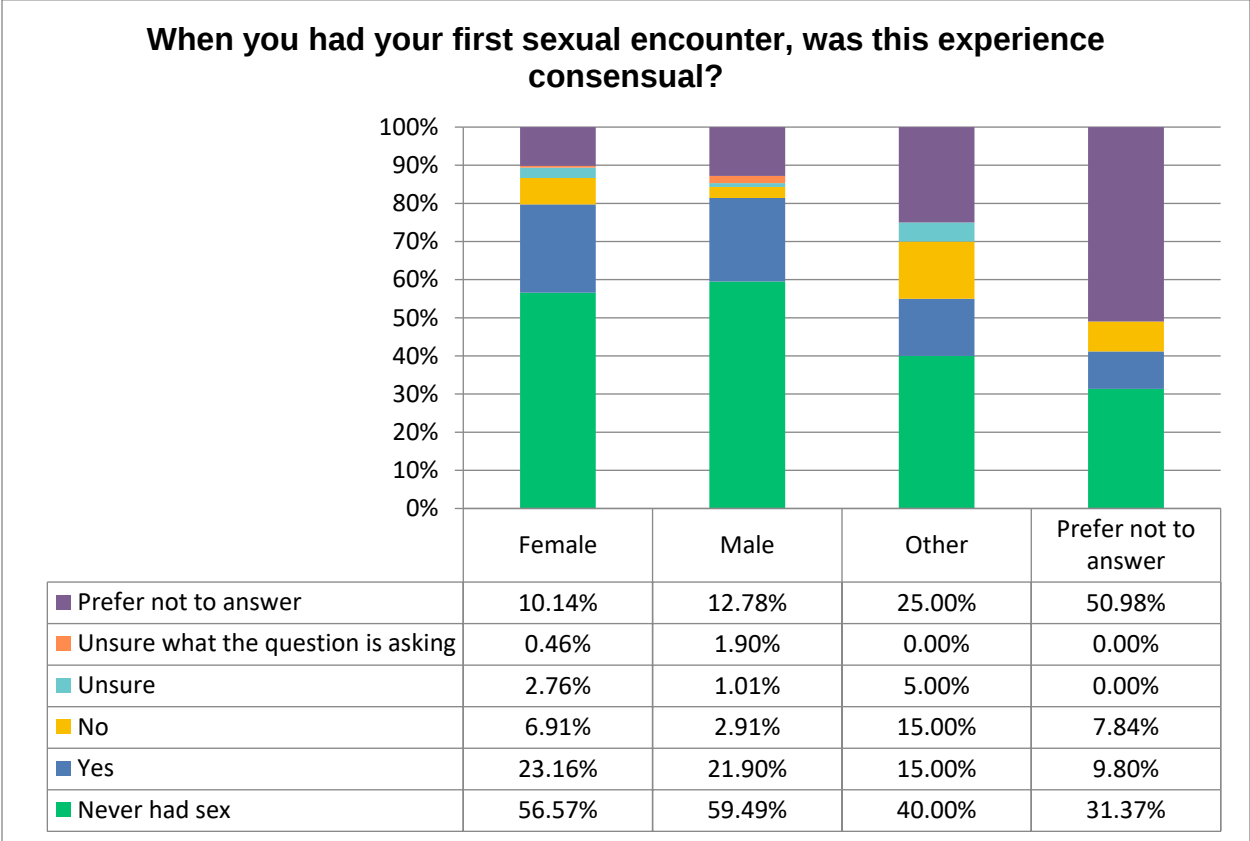
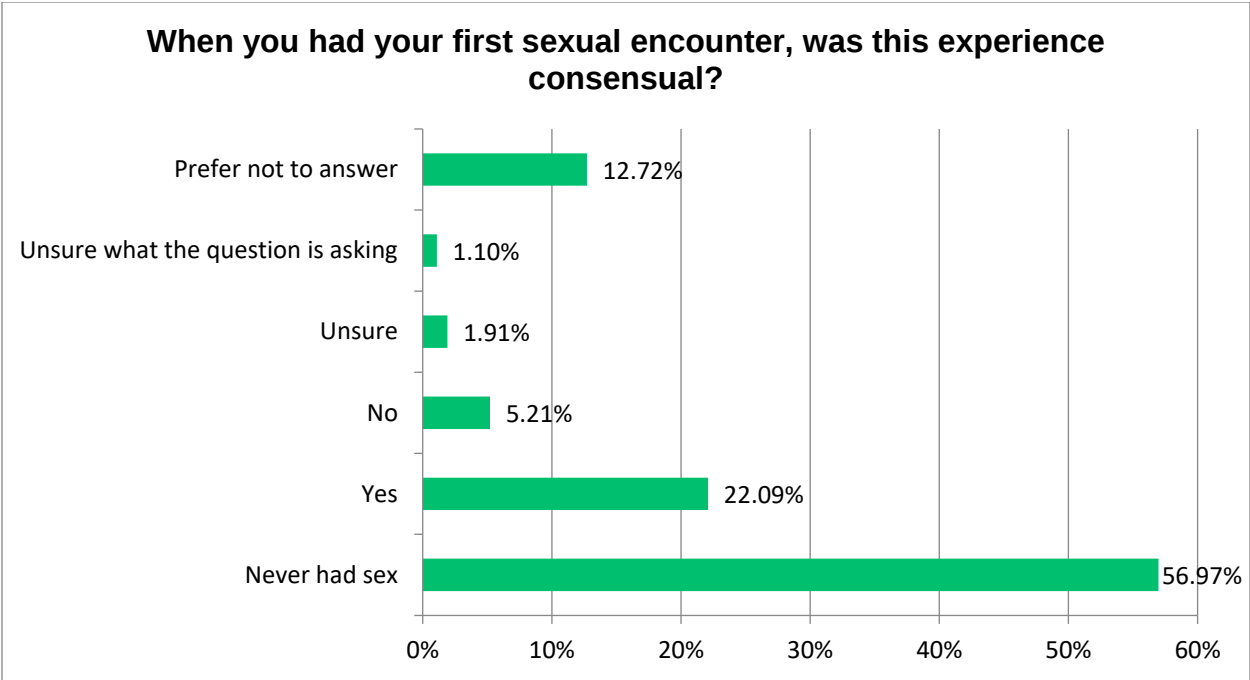
Sexual Activity Behaviors Among Students

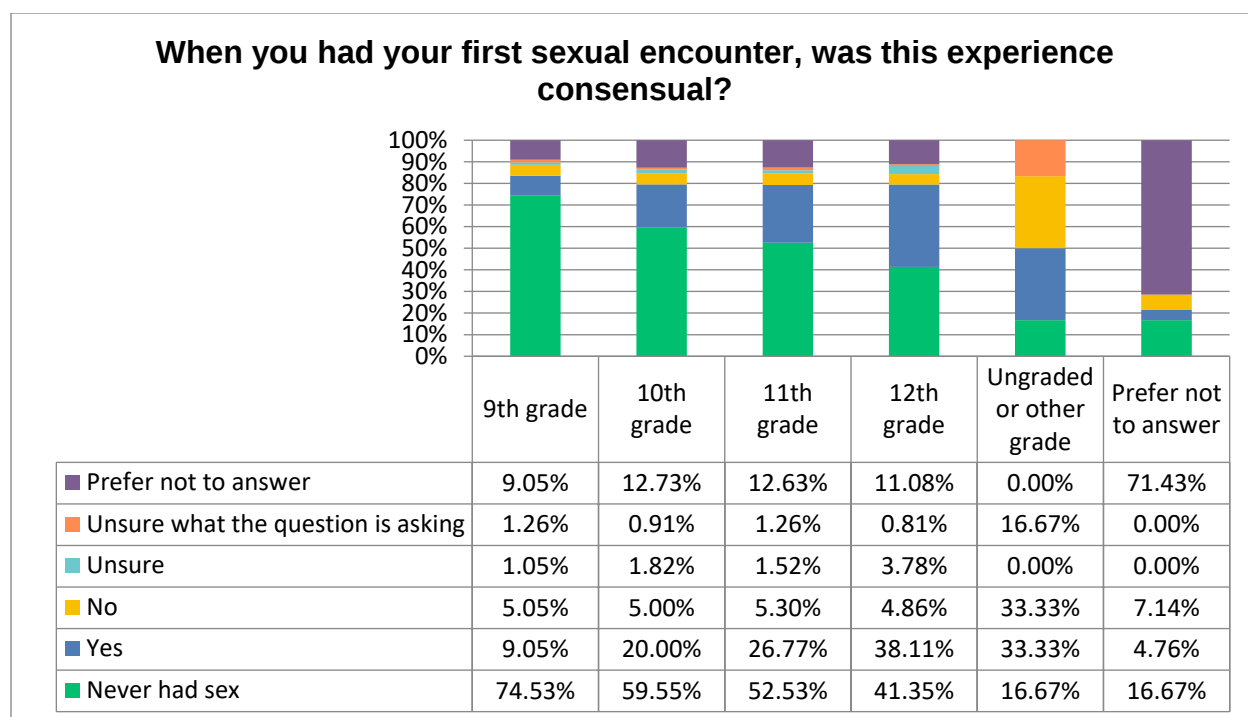




Key Findings on Age of First Sexual Intercourse

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported they had never had sex (58.88%). Among students, the most common ages for first sexual intercourse were 14 (5.61%), 15 (5.44%), and 16 years old (5.03%). A smaller portion reported initiating sex at younger ages, including 10 years old or younger (3.01%) and 13 years old (2.78%). Only 2.60% indicated first sex occurred at age 17 or older. Additionally, 14.17% of students selected “Prefer not to answer.”
- Gender Differences:** Most male (60.13%) and female (60.02%) students reported never having had sex. Among those who did, first sexual experiences typically occurred between ages 14 and 16 across both groups. Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to report never having had sex (35.00%) and more likely to report earlier initiation, including 20.00% at age 10 or younger. Due to the small sample size in this group, findings should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** The percentage of students who reported never having had sex declined with grade level, from 78.74% of 9th graders to 42.43% of 12th graders. Among sexually active students, first intercourse was most often reported at ages 15 and 16, especially in higher grades. Early initiation (age 10 or younger) was more common among students in the ungraded/other category (66.67%), though this group had a small sample size.

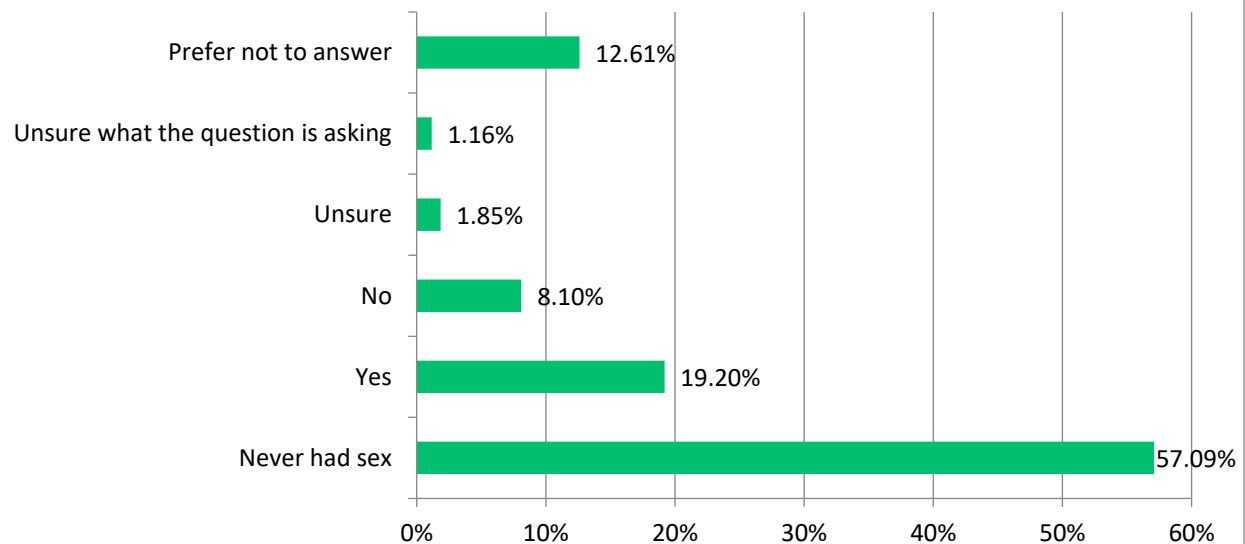




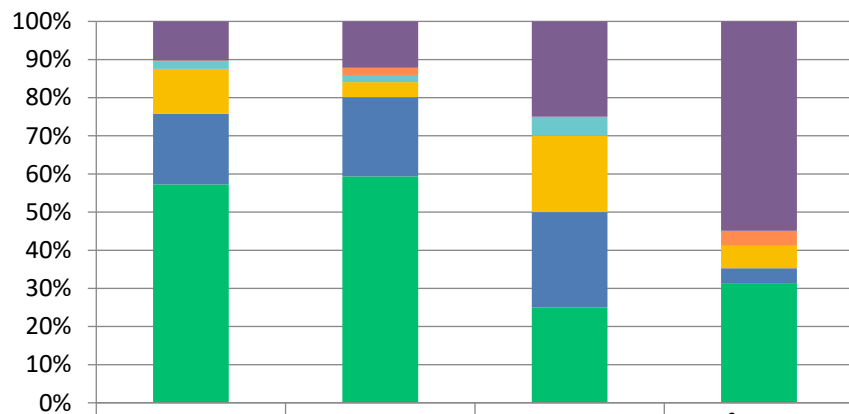
Key Findings on Consensual Experiences

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (56.97%) reported never having had sex. Among students, 22.09% said their first sexual experience was consensual. A smaller percentage (5.21%) reported it was not consensual, while 1.91% were unsure, and 1.10% did not understand the question. An additional 12.72% preferred not to answer. Overall, the data suggest that while many students reported consensual first experiences, a portion faced uncertainty or lack of consent.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students reported never having had sex, with 59.49% of males and 56.57% of females selecting this response. A similar proportion of students reported a consensual first experience (21.90% of males and 23.16% of females). A slightly higher percentage of females (6.91%) than males (2.91%) reported a non-consensual experience. Among students identifying as “Other,” 40% reported never having had sex, while responses were more varied across consent categories. Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported never having had sex, with this response decreasing by grade: 74.53% in 9th grade, to 41.35% in 12th grade. The percentage of students who reported a consensual first experience increased with grade level, from 9.05% in 9th grade to 38.11% in 12th grade. Reports of a non-consensual experience remained relatively consistent across grades, ranging from 4.86% to 5.30%. Overall, older students were more likely to report sexual activity and higher rates of consensual first experiences.

Have all of your sexual intercourse experiences been consensual?

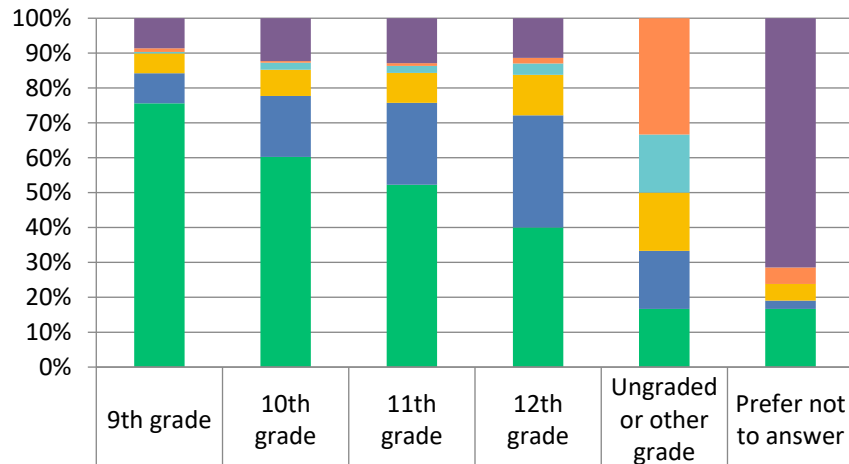


Have all of your sexual intercourse experiences been consensual?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	10.25%	12.15%	25.00%	54.90%
Unsure what the question is asking	0.35%	1.90%	0.00%	3.92%
Unsure	1.84%	1.90%	5.00%	0.00%
No	11.75%	3.92%	20.00%	5.88%
Yes	18.55%	20.76%	25.00%	3.92%
Never had sex	57.26%	59.37%	25.00%	31.37%

Have all of your sexual intercourse experiences been consensual?

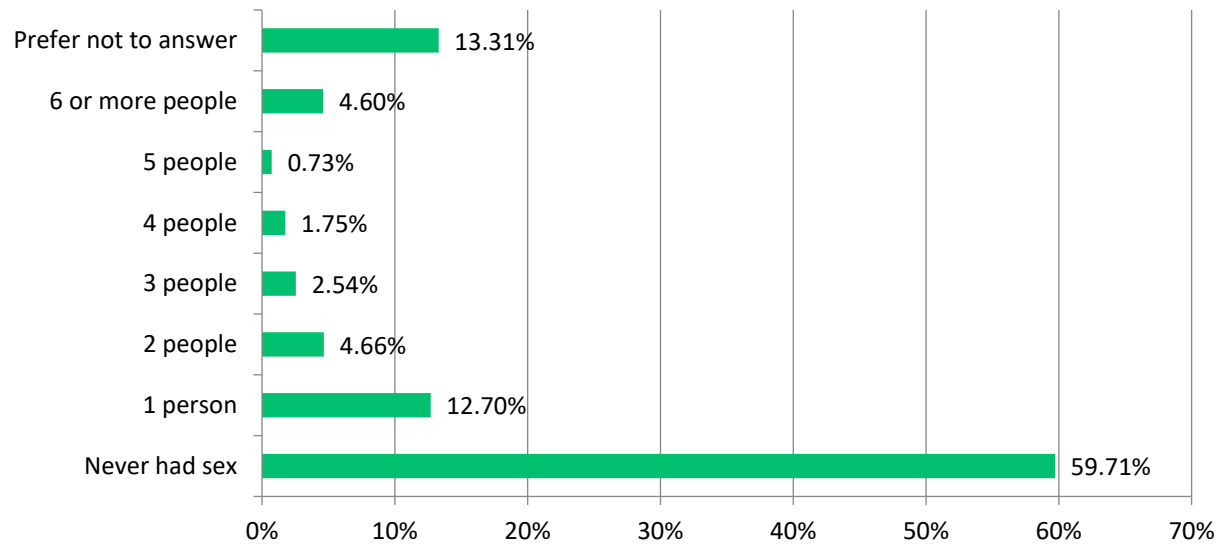


■ Prefer not to answer	8.63%	12.27%	12.88%	11.35%	0.00%	71.43%
■ Unsure what the question is asking	1.05%	0.45%	0.76%	1.62%	33.33%	4.76%
■ Unsure	0.42%	2.05%	2.02%	3.24%	16.67%	0.00%
■ No	5.68%	7.50%	8.59%	11.62%	16.67%	4.76%
■ Yes	8.63%	17.50%	23.48%	32.16%	16.67%	2.38%
■ Never had sex	75.58%	60.23%	52.27%	40.00%	16.67%	16.67%

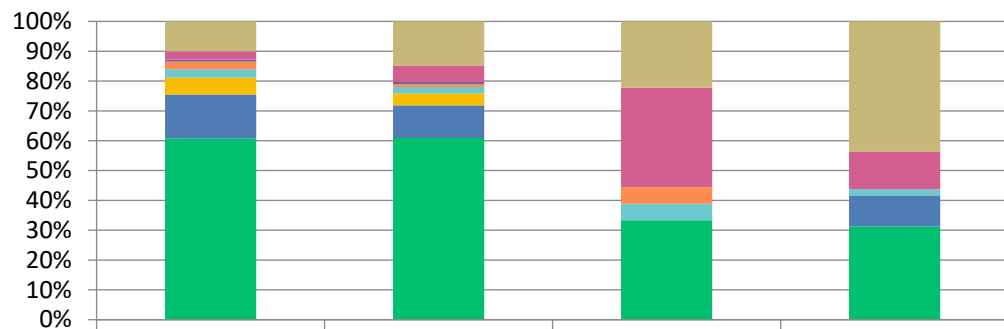
Key Findings on Consensual Sexual Encounters Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** The majority of students (57.09%) reported never having had sex. Among respondents, 19.20% indicated that all of their sexual experiences had been consensual, and 8.10% reported that not all experiences were consensual. Smaller portions were unsure (1.85%), did not understand the question (1.16%), or preferred not to answer (12.61%). Overall, the majority of students either did not have sex or reported consensual experiences.
- Gender Differences:** Most female (57.26%) and male (59.37%) students reported never having had sex. Similar rates of respondents reported that all sexual encounters were consensual (18.55% of females and 20.76% of males). A higher percentage of females (11.75%) than males (3.92%) reported that not all experiences were consensual. Among students identifying as “Other,” 25% reported fully consensual experiences, and 20% reported some non-consensual ones.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported never having had sex, with this percentage decreasing from 75.58% in 9th grade to 40.00% in 12th grade. The proportion of students reporting all sexual experiences were consensual increased with grade level, from 8.63% in 9th grade to 32.16% in 12th grade. Reports of non-consensual experiences also rose slightly in upper grades, from 5.68% in 9th grade to 11.62% in 12th grade.

During your life, with how many people have you had sexual intercourse?

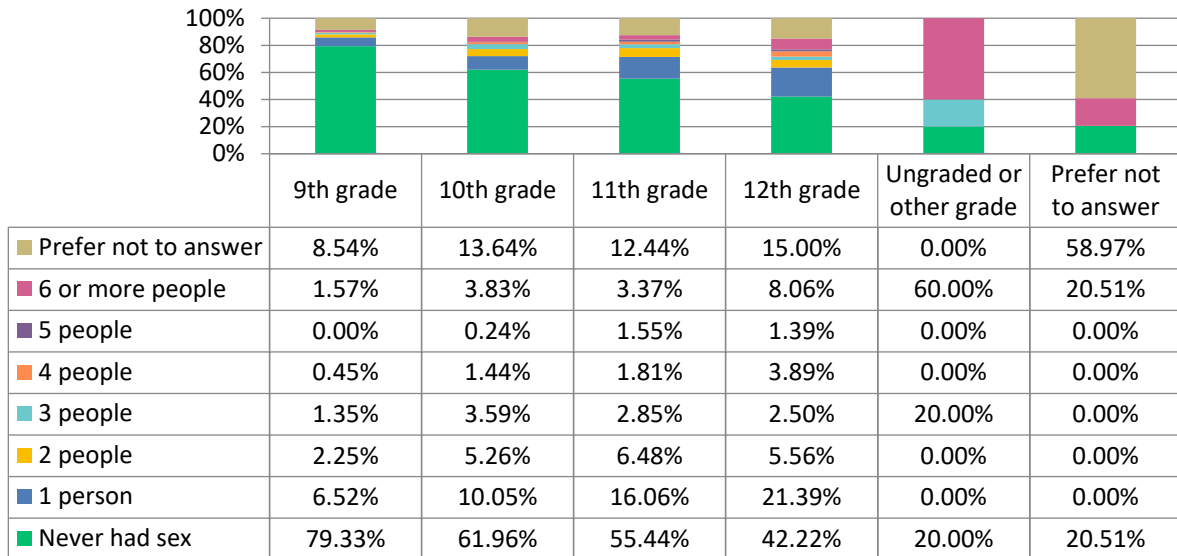


During your life, with how many people have you had sexual intercourse?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	10.04%	14.80%	22.22%	43.75%
6 or more people	2.75%	5.47%	33.33%	12.50%
5 people	0.72%	0.80%	0.00%	0.00%
4 people	2.51%	0.93%	5.56%	0.00%
3 people	2.87%	2.13%	5.56%	2.08%
2 people	5.62%	4.00%	0.00%	0.00%
1 person	14.70%	10.93%	0.00%	10.42%
Never had sex	60.81%	60.93%	33.33%	31.25%

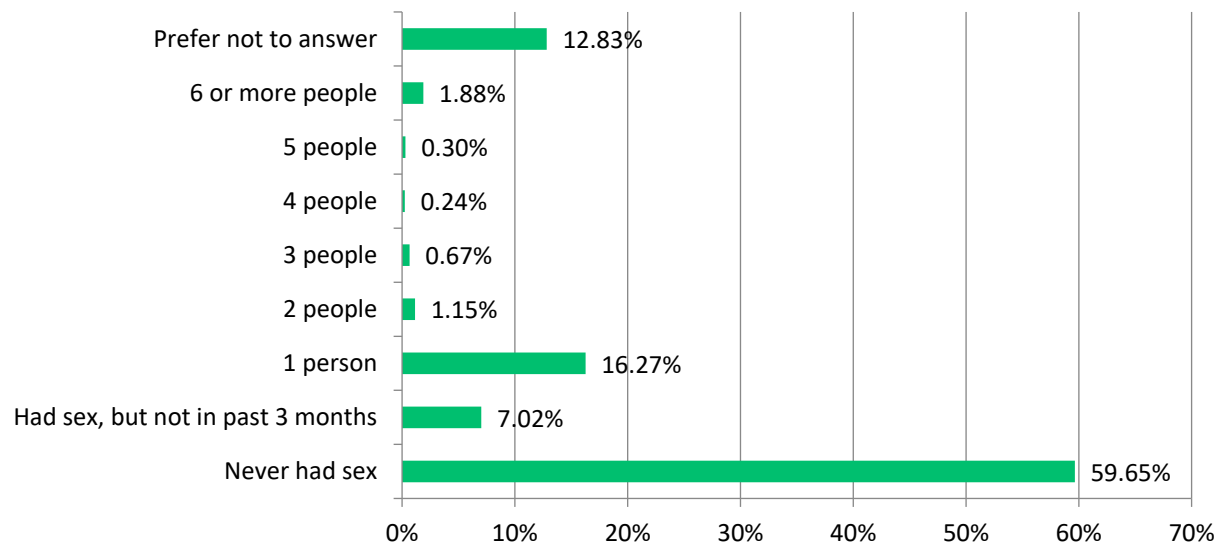
During your life, with how many people have you had sexual intercourse?



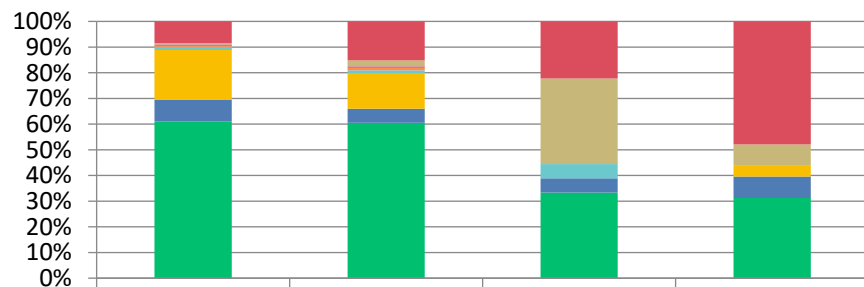
Key Findings on the Number of Sexual Partners

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (59.71%) reported never having had sexual intercourse. Among respondent, 12.70% reported having sex with one person, while 4.66% reported two people, and 2.54% reported three. Smaller proportions reported higher numbers, with 4.60% indicating six or more people. Additionally, 13.31% of students preferred not to answer. Overall, the data showed that the majority of students had not engaged in sexual intercourse. Among those who had, most reported a small number of lifetime partners.
- Gender Differences:** Most female (60.81%) and male (60.93%) students reported never having had sexual intercourse. Among respondents, 14.70% of females and 10.93% of males reported having one partner. Males reported slightly higher rates of having six or more partners (5.47%) than females (2.75%). Students identifying as “Other” had the lowest rate of “Never had sex” (33.33%) and the highest for six or more partners (33.33%). Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution. In general, most students reported no lifetime sexual activity, and among those who were sexually active, reported partner counts tended to be low.
- Grade Differences:** The percentage of students who reported never having sex declined from 79.33% in 9th grade to 42.22% in 12th grade. Higher-grade students were more likely to report multiple partners, with 21.39% of 12th graders indicating one partner and 8.06% reporting six or more. Lower-grade students had fewer reported partners overall and higher rates of “Never had sex.” Overall, sexual activity increased by grade, and partner counts were typically low among those who reported any activity.

During the past 3 months, with how many people did you have sexual intercourse?

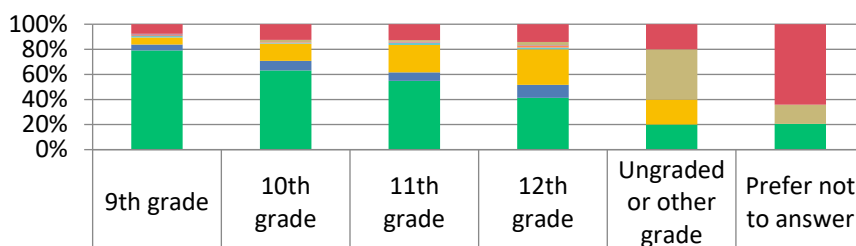


During the past 3 months, with how many people did you have sexual intercourse?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	8.48%	15.20%	22.22%	47.92%
6 or more people	0.48%	2.27%	33.33%	8.33%
5 people	0.24%	0.40%	0.00%	0.00%
4 people	0.24%	0.27%	0.00%	0.00%
3 people	0.48%	0.93%	0.00%	0.00%
2 people	1.19%	1.07%	5.56%	0.00%
1 person	19.47%	13.87%	0.00%	4.17%
Had sex, but not in past 3 months	8.36%	5.47%	5.56%	8.33%
Never had sex	61.05%	60.53%	33.33%	31.25%

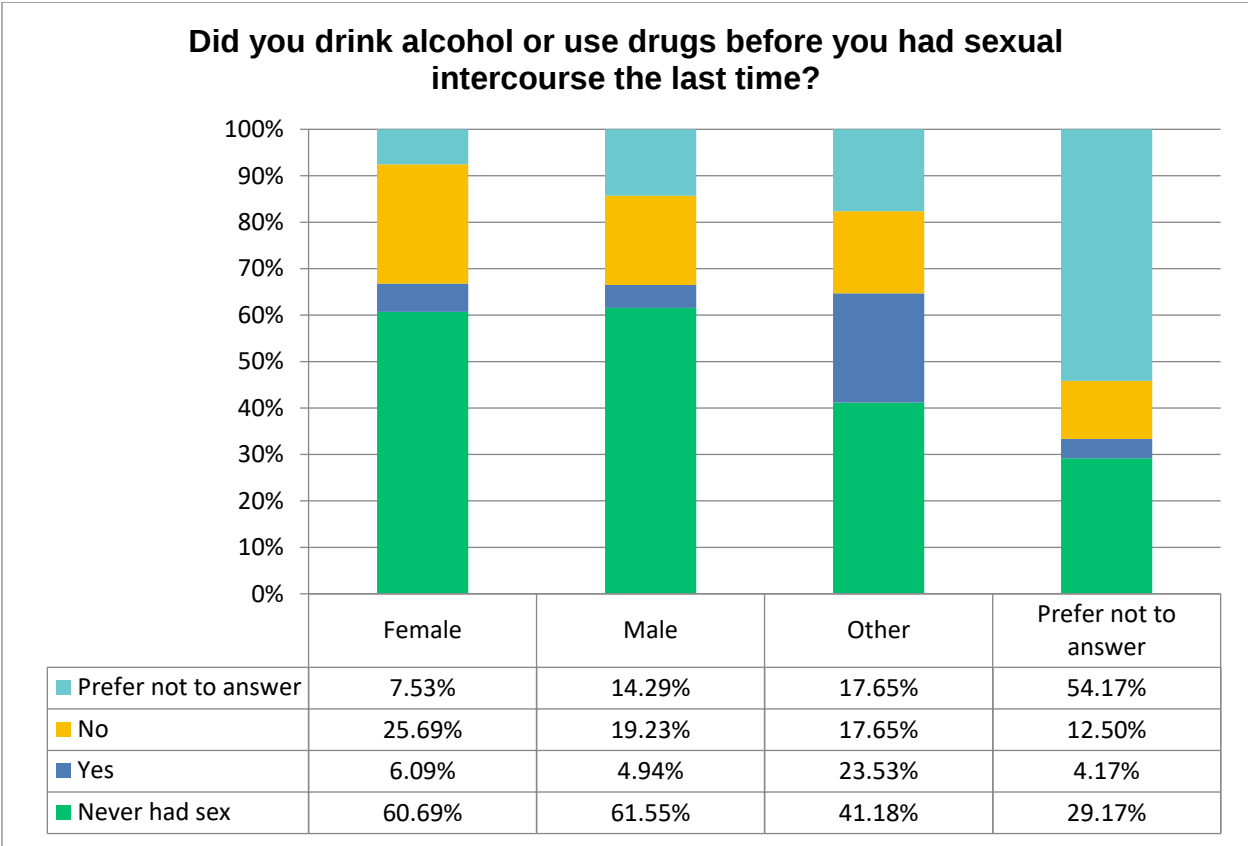
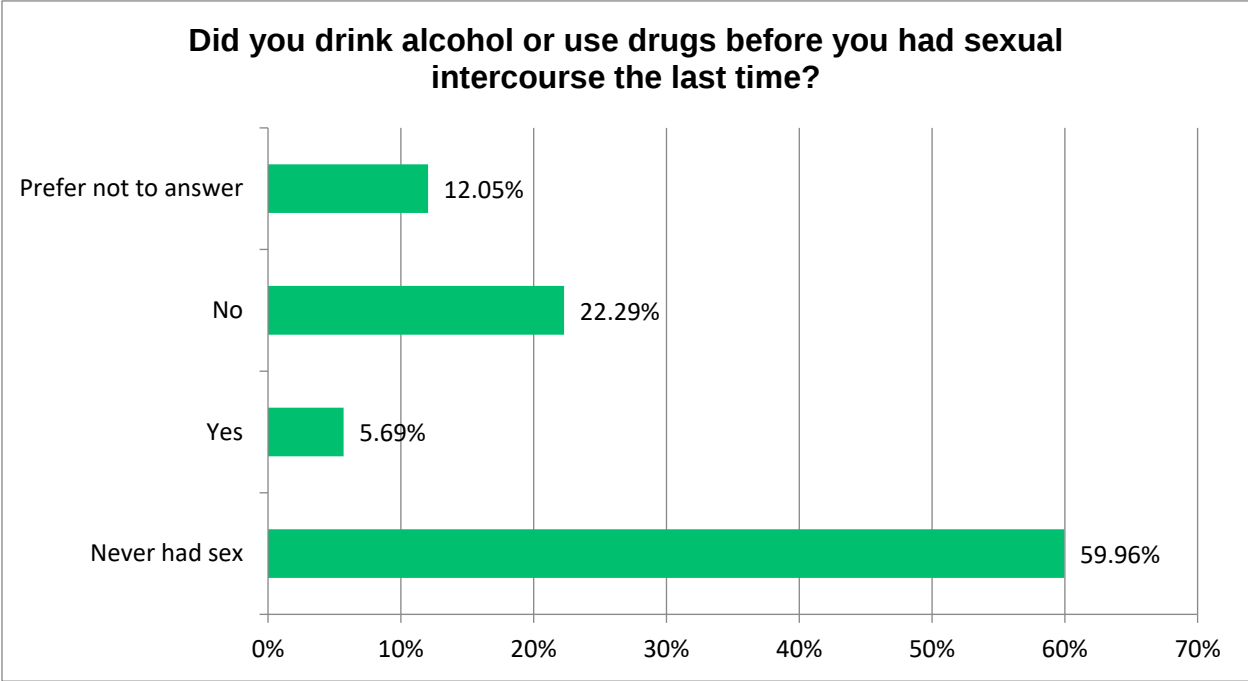
During the past 3 months, with how many people did you have sexual intercourse?



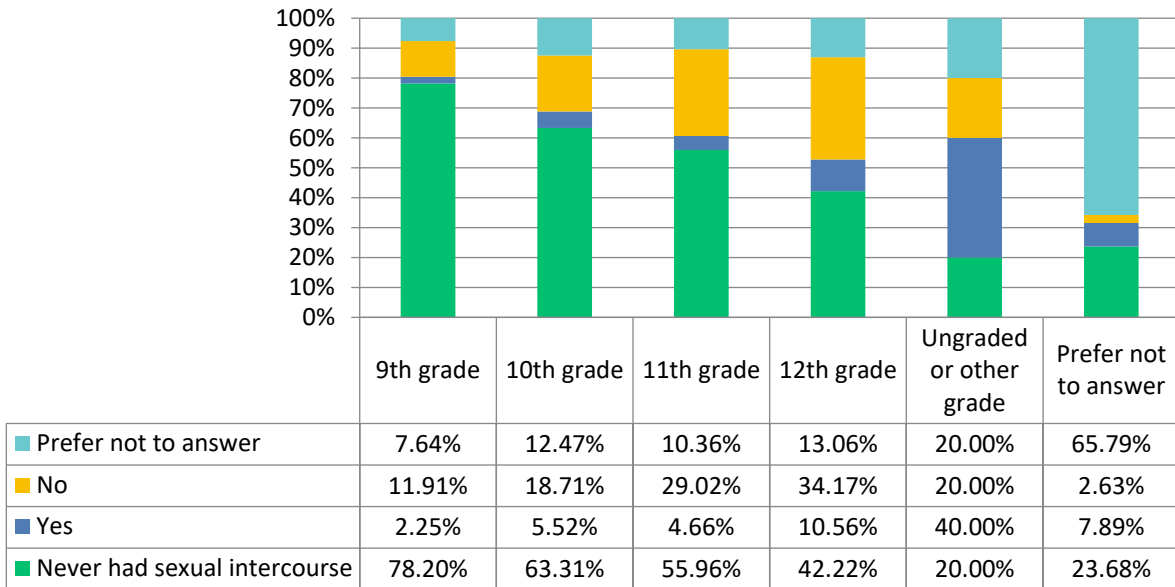
■ Prefer not to answer	7.64%	12.44%	12.69%	14.17%	20.00%	64.10%
■ 6 or more people	0.22%	1.91%	1.30%	2.50%	40.00%	15.38%
■ 5 people	0.22%	0.24%	0.52%	0.28%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 4 people	0.67%	0.00%	0.00%	0.28%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 3 people	0.67%	0.48%	0.26%	1.39%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 2 people	1.12%	0.48%	1.81%	1.39%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 1 person	5.62%	13.64%	21.76%	28.33%	20.00%	0.00%
■ Had sex, but not in past 3 months	4.72%	7.66%	6.74%	10.28%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Never had sex	79.10%	63.16%	54.92%	41.39%	20.00%	20.51%

Key Findings on Recent Sexual Partners

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (59.65%) reported never having had sex, and 7.02% said they had been sexually active in the past but not within the last three months. Among respondents, 16.27% reported having sex with one person. Smaller percentages reported multiple partners, ranging from 1.15% (two people) to 1.88% (six or more people). An additional 12.83% of students preferred not to answer. Overall, recent sexual activity was limited to a minority of students, and most of those who were active reported having only one partner.
- Gender Differences:** Most female (61.05%) and male (60.53%) students reported never having had sex. Among respondents, 19.47% of females and 13.87% of males had sex with one person in the past three months. Males reported slightly higher rates of having multiple partners, including 2.27% with six or more people. Students identifying as "Other" had lower rates of sexual inactivity (33.33%) and higher rates of reporting six or more partners (33.33%). Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** The percentage of students who reported not having had sex decreased with grade level, from 79.10% in 9th grade to 41.39% in 12th grade. Among all students, the most common response was having one partner in the past three months, increasing from 5.62% in 9th grade to 28.33% in 12th grade. Reports of having multiple partners (two or more) were low across all grades but slightly higher among older students.



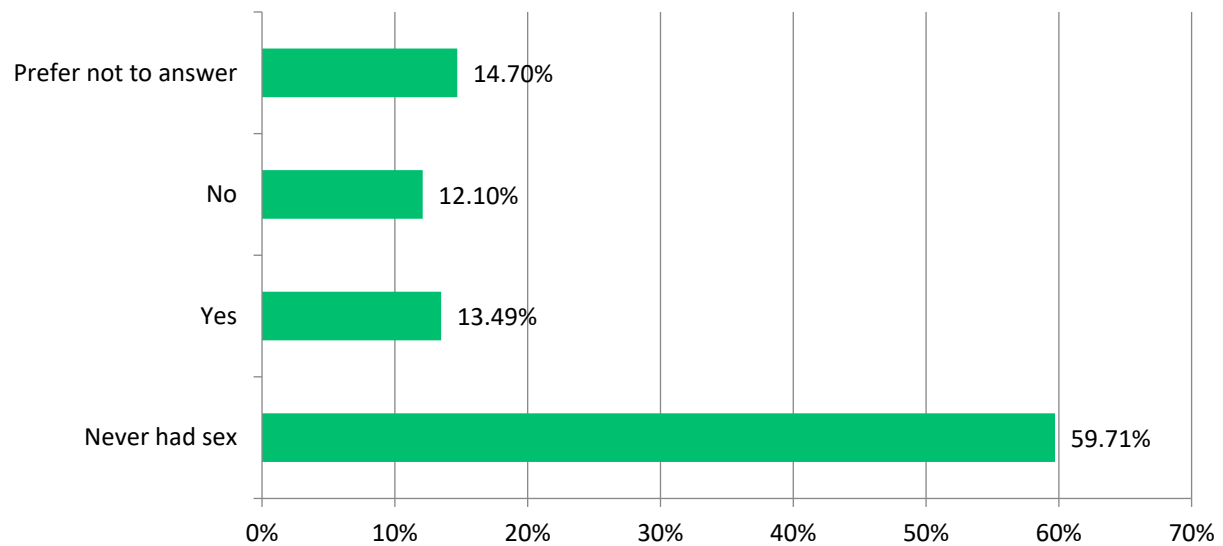
Did you drink alcohol or use drugs before you had sexual intercourse the last time?



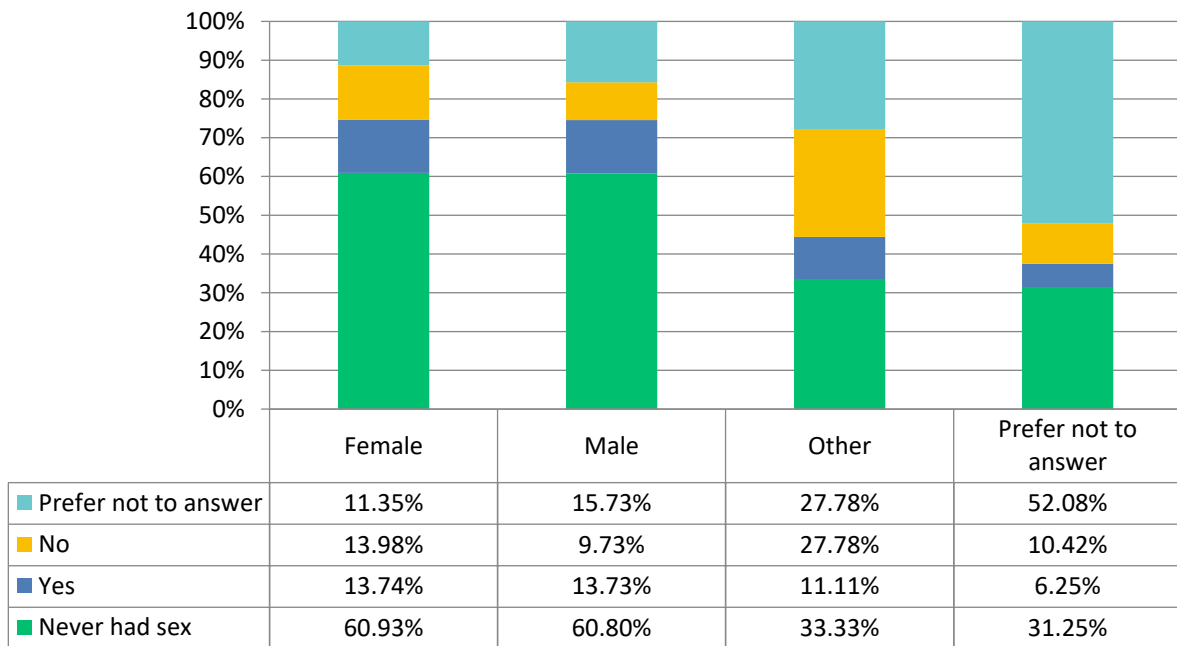
Key Findings on Use of Drugs or Alcohol During Sex

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (59.96%) reported never having had sex. Among respondents, 22.29% reported that they did not use alcohol or drugs before their last sexual encounter, while 5.69% reported that they did. An additional 12.05% chose not to answer. Overall, only a small portion of students reported using substances before their most recent sexual encounter.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students reported never having had sex, with similar rates of 61.55% for males and 60.69% for females. Among respondents, 25.69% of all females and 19.23% of all males reported not using alcohol or drugs before their last sexual encounter. Substance use before sex was similar among females (6.09%) than males (4.94%). Students identifying as “Other” reported lower rates of never having had sex (41.18%) and the highest rate of substance use before their last sexual encounter (23.53%). Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** The percentage of students who reported never having had sexual intercourse declined across grade levels, from 78.20% in 9th grade to 42.22% in 12th grade. Student reports of alcohol or drug use before their last sexual encounter increased with grade level, from 2.25% in 9th grade to 10.56% in 12th grade. Similarly, the percentage who reported not using substances before sex also rose from 11.91% in 9th grade to 34.17% in 12th grade.

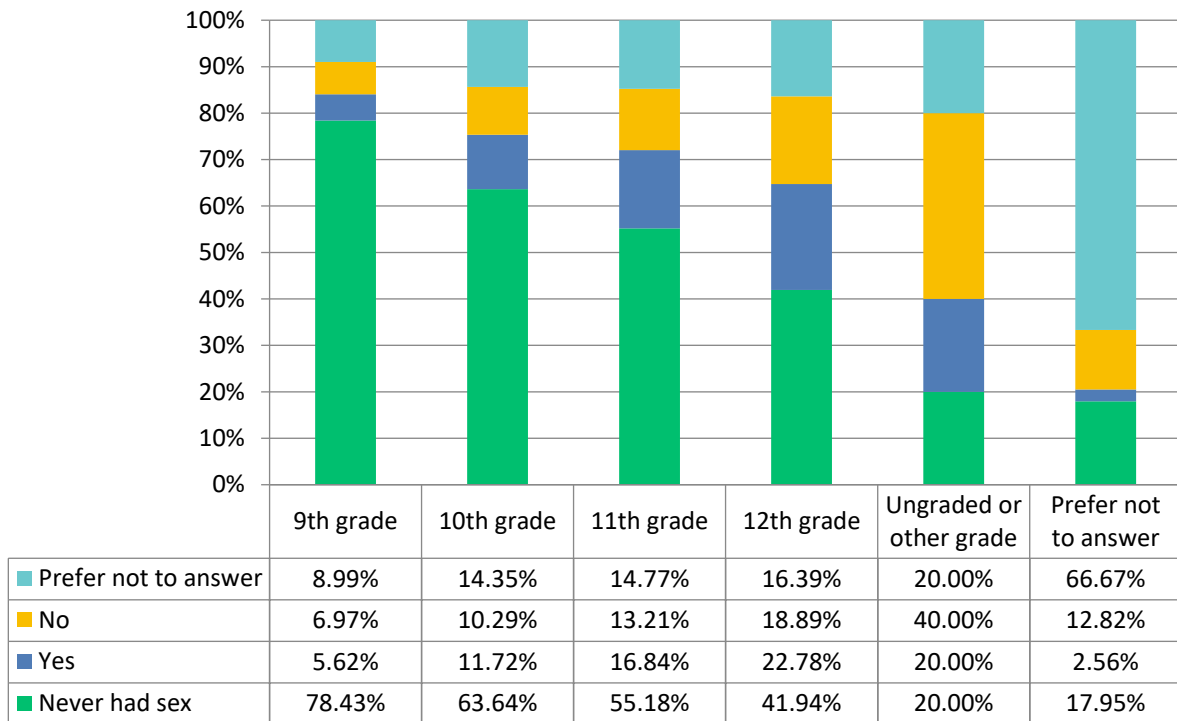
The last time you had sexual intercourse, did you or your partner use a condom?



The last time you had sexual intercourse, did you or your partner use a condom?



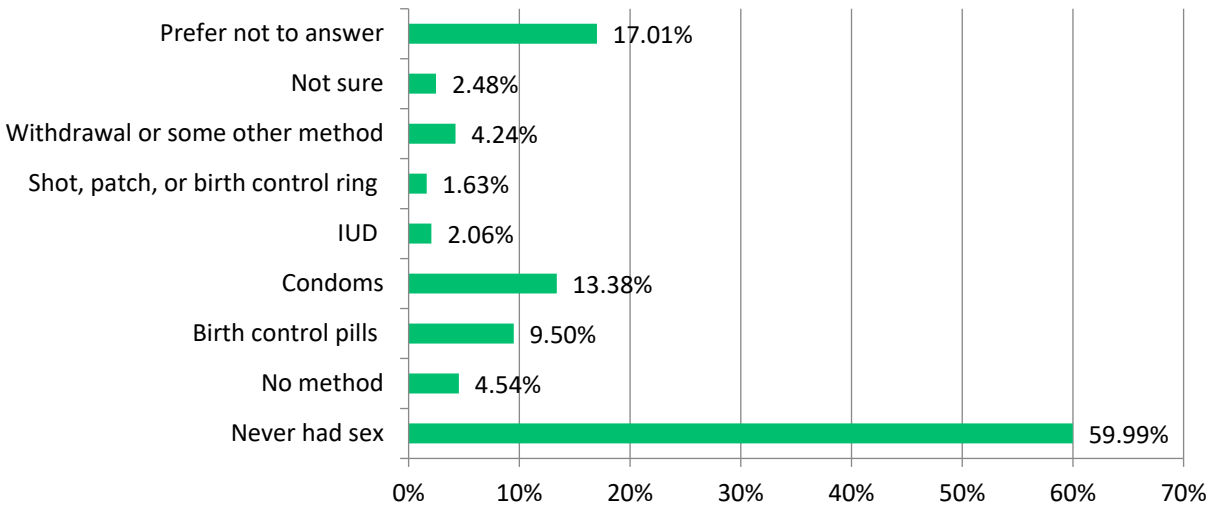
The last time you had sexual intercourse, did you or your partner use a condom?



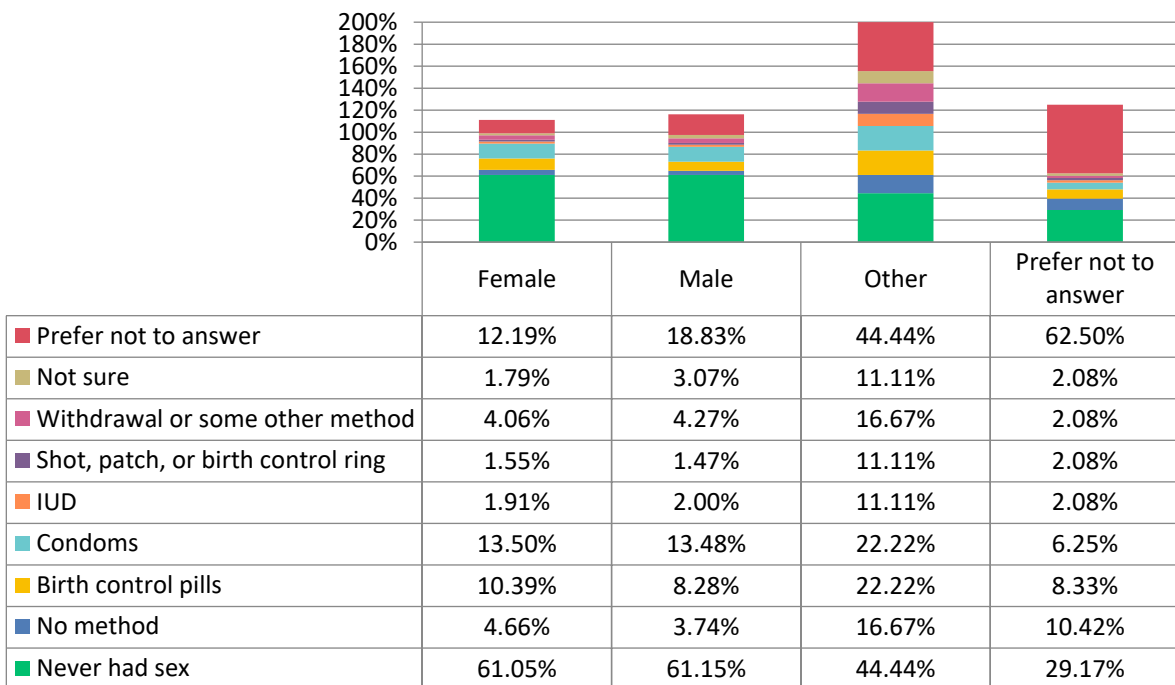
Key Findings on Condom Use Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (59.71%) reported never having had sex. Among students, 13.49% reported using a condom during their last sexual encounter, while 12.10% did not. Additionally, 14.70% of students preferred not to answer the question. Overall, condom use among sexually active students was nearly evenly split between those who reported using one and those who did not.
- Gender Differences:** Most female (60.93%) and male (60.80%) students reported never having had sex. Among respondents, condom use at last intercourse was similar for females (13.74%) and males (13.53%). A marginally higher percentage of females (13.98%) than males (9.73%) reported not using a condom. Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to report condom use (11.11%) and more likely to report not using one (27.78%), though this group also had a higher rate of nonresponse (27.78%). Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported never having had sex, with the proportion declining by grade: 78.43% of 9th graders, 63.64% of 10th graders, 55.18% of 11th graders, and 41.94% of 12th graders. Correspondingly, reported condom use at last intercourse increased with grade, from 5.62% in 9th grade to 22.78% in 12th grade. Reports of not using a condom also increased slightly with grade, ranging from 6.97% in 9th to 18.89% in 12th grade.

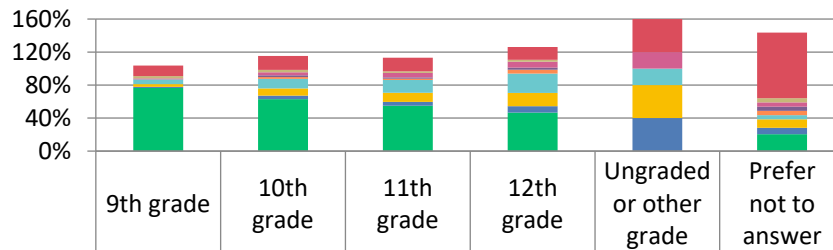
The last time you had sexual intercourse with an opposite-sex partner, what one method did you or your partner use to prevent pregnancy?



The last time you had sexual intercourse with an opposite-sex partner, what one method did you or your partner use to prevent pregnancy?



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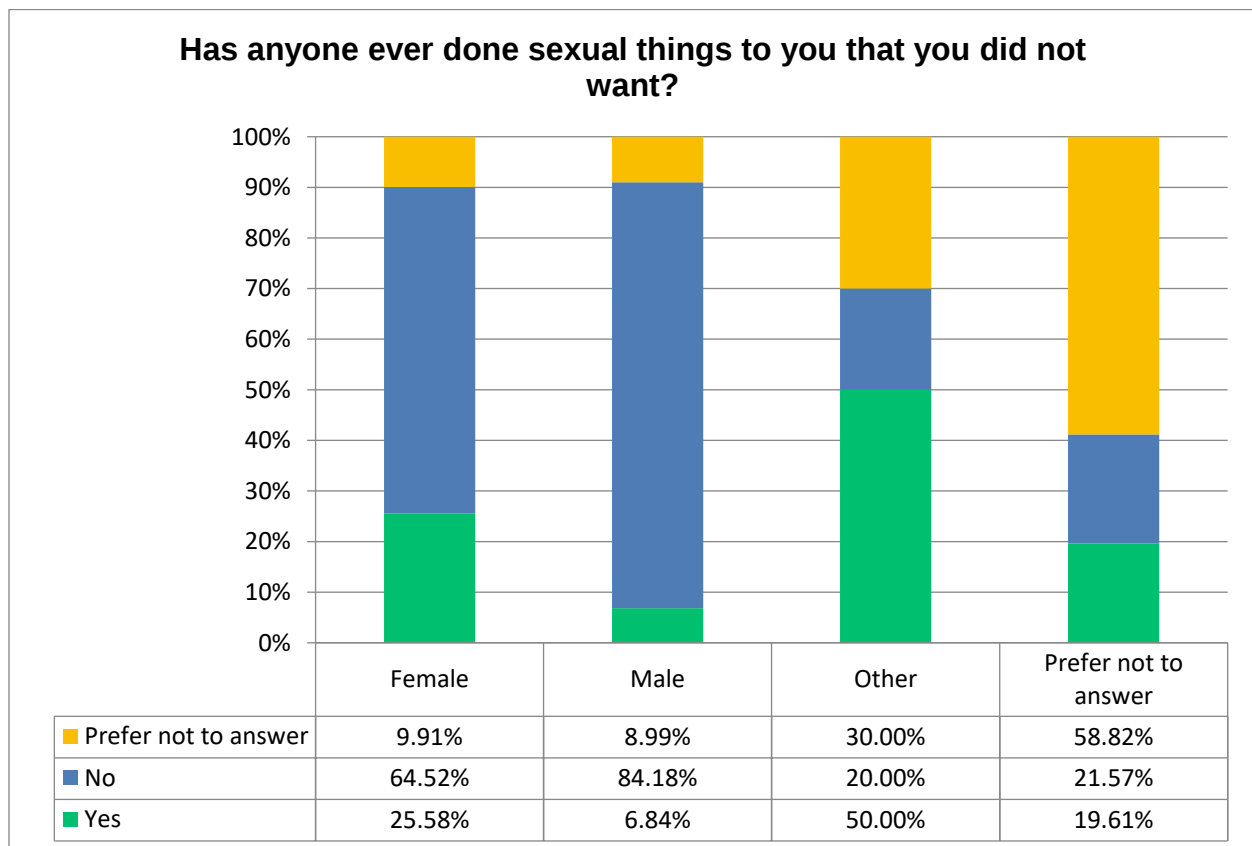
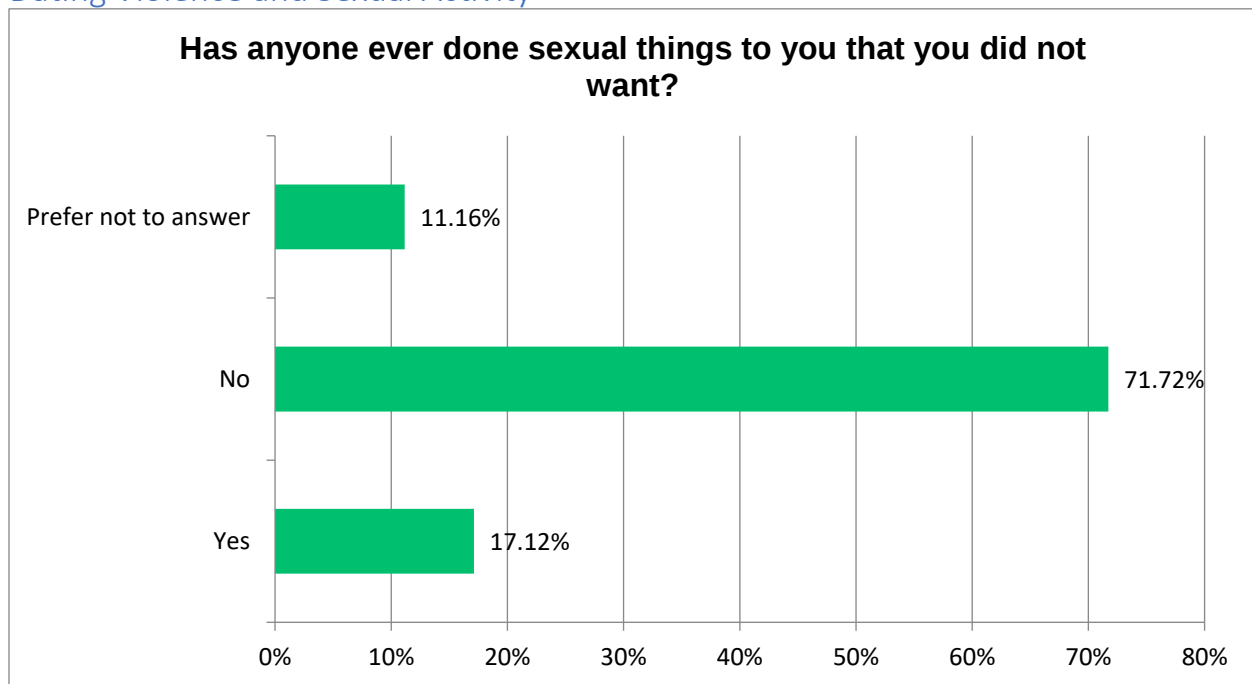


■ Prefer not to answer	12.84%	16.99%	16.58%	15.56%	40.00%	79.49%
■ Not sure	2.70%	2.87%	1.81%	2.22%	0.00%	5.13%
■ Withdrawal or some other method	1.13%	3.59%	5.44%	7.22%	20.00%	5.13%
■ Shot, patch, or birth control ring	0.23%	2.15%	1.55%	2.50%	0.00%	5.13%
■ IUD	0.00%	2.15%	1.55%	4.72%	0.00%	5.13%
■ Condoms	5.63%	11.72%	15.54%	23.33%	20.00%	5.13%
■ Birth control pills	3.15%	8.61%	11.14%	16.11%	40.00%	10.26%
■ No method	1.35%	4.31%	4.66%	7.78%	40.00%	7.69%
■ Never had sex	76.58%	62.92%	54.92%	46.67%	0.00%	20.51%

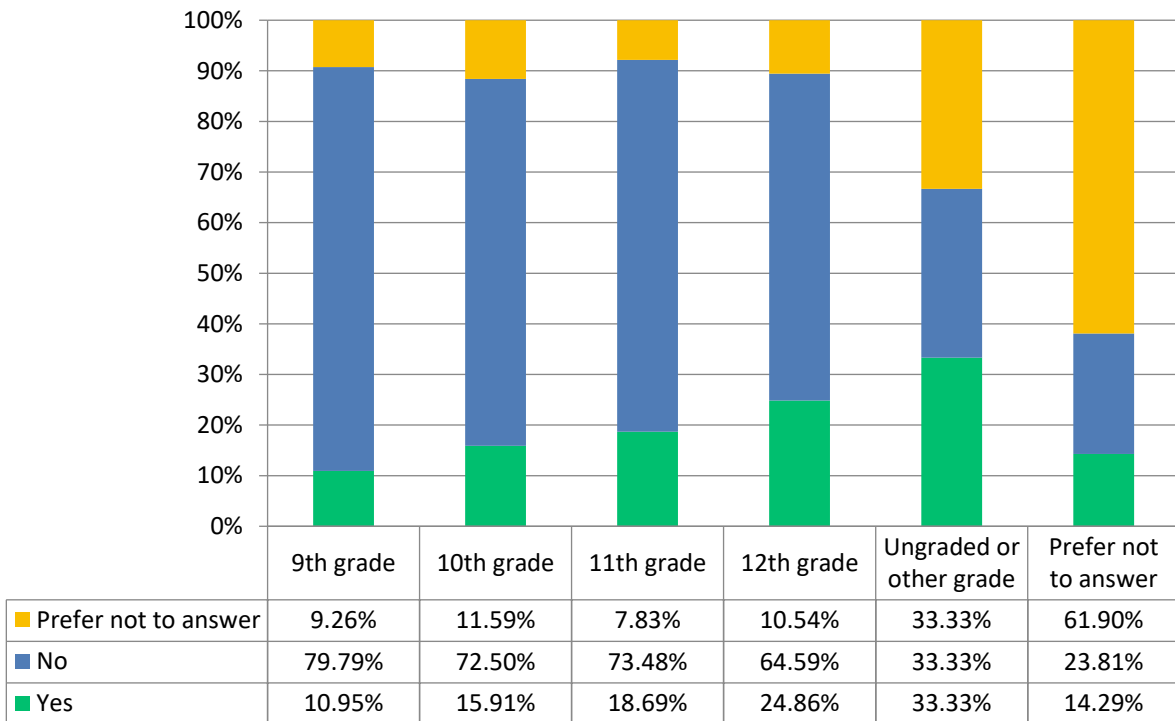
Key Findings on Contraceptive Use and Pregnancy Prevention Among Youth

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (59.99%) reported never having had sex. Among respondents, the most commonly reported pregnancy prevention method was condoms (13.38%), followed by birth control pills (9.50%). A smaller percentage used methods such as withdrawal (4.24%), IUDs (2.06%), the shot/patch/ring (1.63%), or reported using no method at all (4.54%). An additional 2.48% were unsure, and 17.01% preferred not to answer.
- Gender Differences:** Most female (61.05%) and male (61.15%) students reported never having had sex. Condom use was the most commonly reported method of pregnancy prevention for both females (13.50%) and males (13.48%). Birth control pills were more frequently reported by females (10.39%) than males (8.28%). Students identifying as “Other” reported more varied responses, including higher rates of condom use (22.22%), pill use (22.22%), and withdrawal (16.67%).
- Grade Differences:** Most students across grade levels reported never having had sex. However, this percentage declined by grade from 76.58% of 9th graders to 46.67% of 12th graders. Correspondingly, condom use increased with grade level from 5.63% in 9th grade to 23.33% in 12th grade. Use of birth control pills also rose by grade, peaking at 16.11% in 12th grade. Reports of using no method increased slightly, from 1.35% in 9th grade to 7.78% in 12th grade.

Dating Violence and Sexual Activity



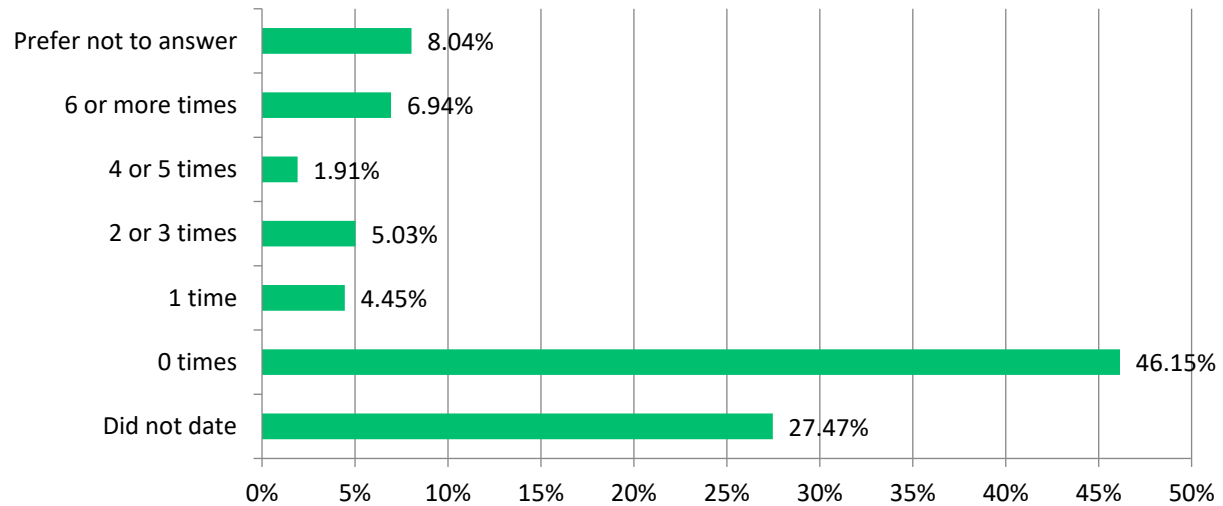
Has anyone ever done sexual things to you that you did not want?



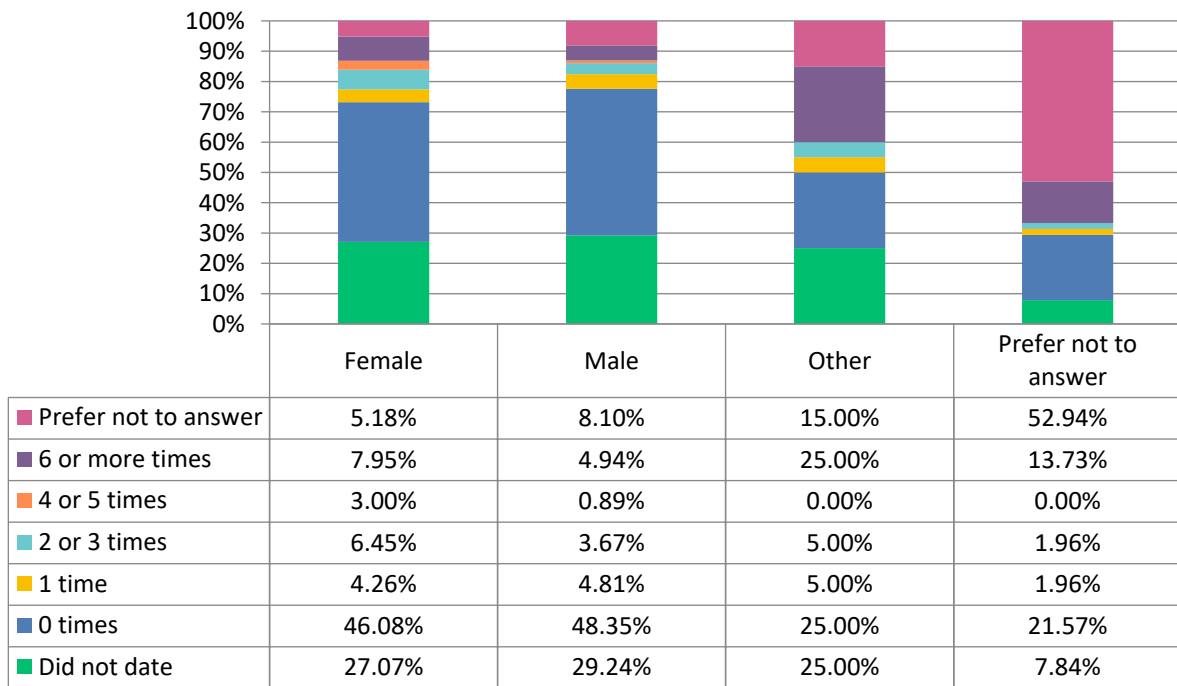
Key Findings on Unwanted Sexual Contact

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (71.72%) reported that no one had ever done sexual things to them that they did not want. However, 17.12% answered “Yes,” indicating they had experienced unwanted sexual behavior. An additional 11.16% of students selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, the majority of students reported not experiencing unwanted sexual acts, with a notable minority indicating otherwise.
- Gender Differences:** Most male students (84.18%) reported not experiencing unwanted sexual behavior, while only 6.84% answered “Yes.” Among female students, 64.52% reported “No” and 25.58% said “Yes,” indicating a higher prevalence among females. Half of the students identifying as “Other” reported experiencing unwanted sexual behavior. Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across grades did not report unwanted sexual experiences, with “No” responses decreasing from 79.79% in 9th grade to 64.59% in 12th. Reports of unwanted sexual experiences increased with grade level. Among 9th graders, 10.95% answered “Yes,” compared to 15.91% in 10th grade, 18.69% in 11th, and 24.86% in 12th.

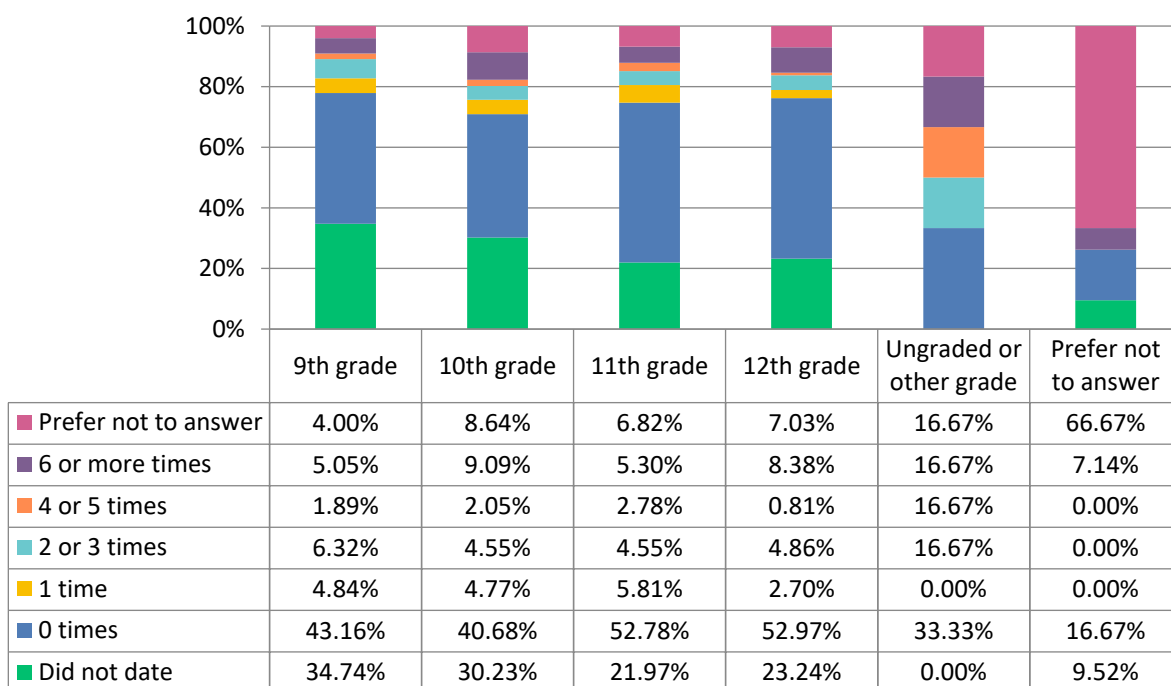
During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with purposely try to control you or emotionally hurt you?



During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with purposely try to control you or emotionally hurt you?



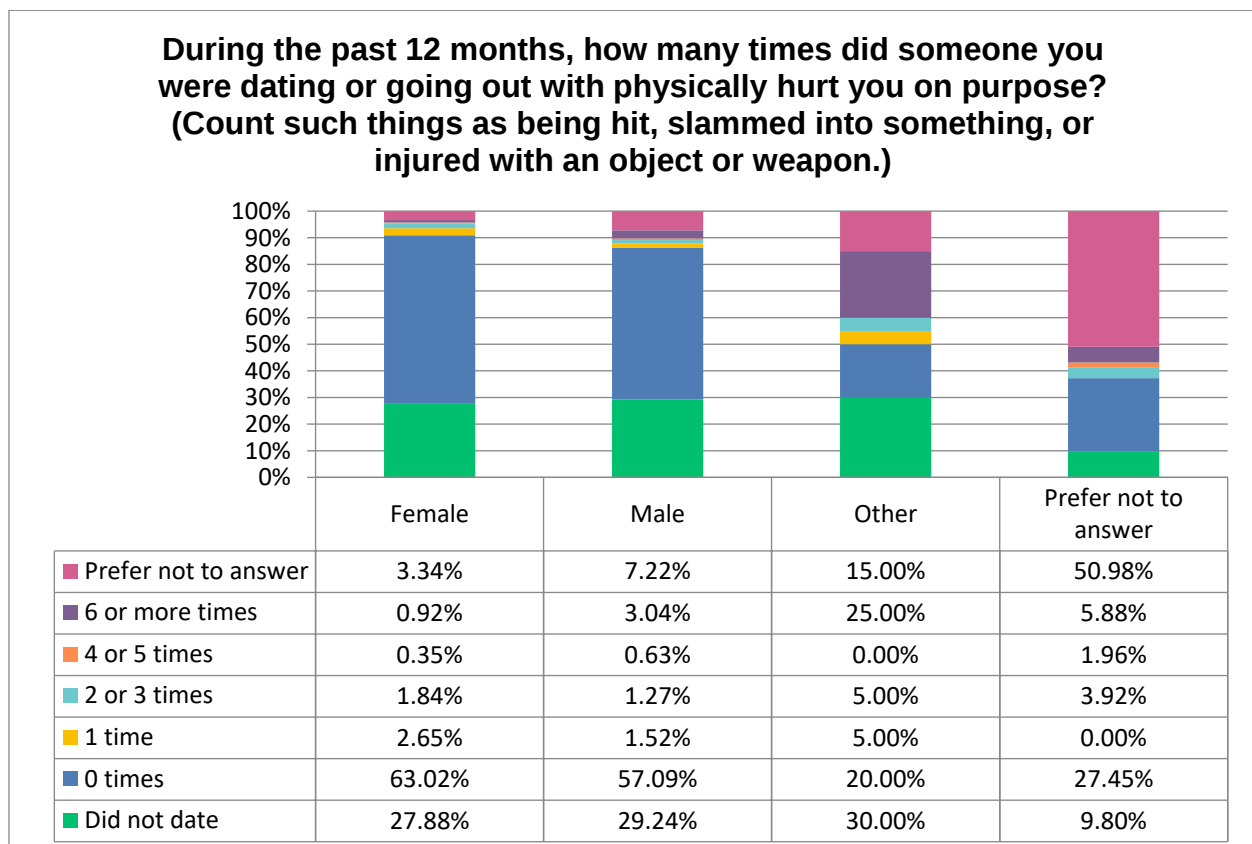
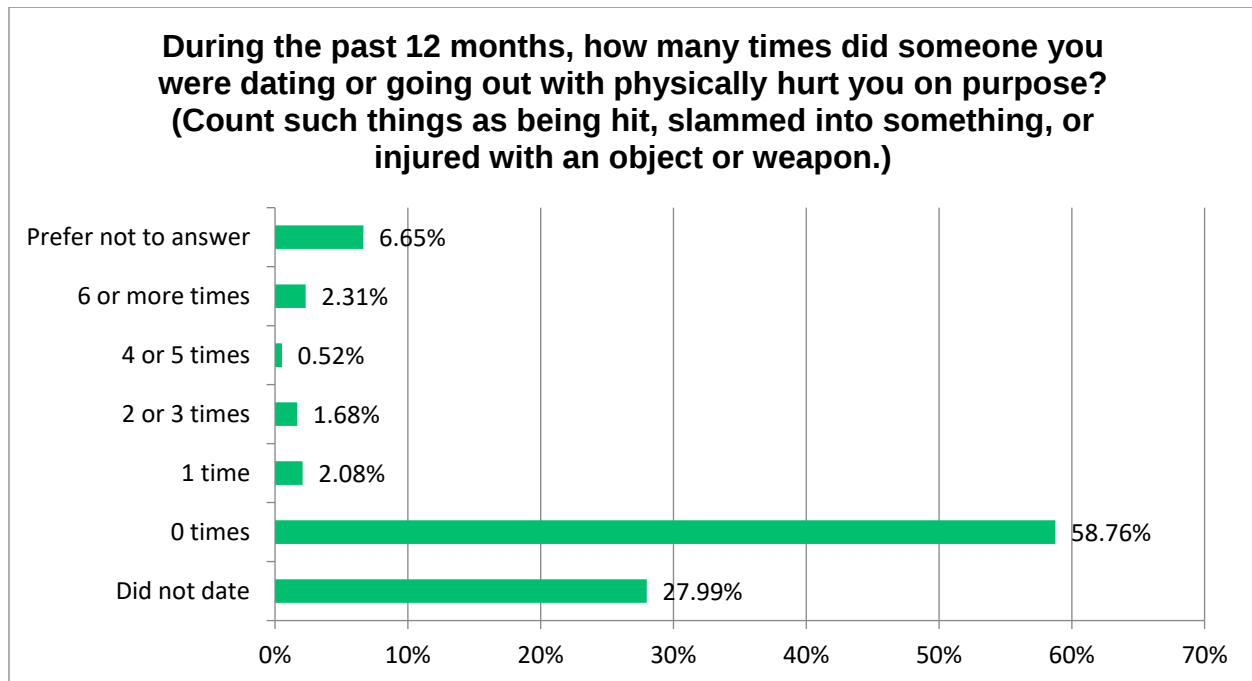
During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with purposely try to control you or emotionally hurt you?



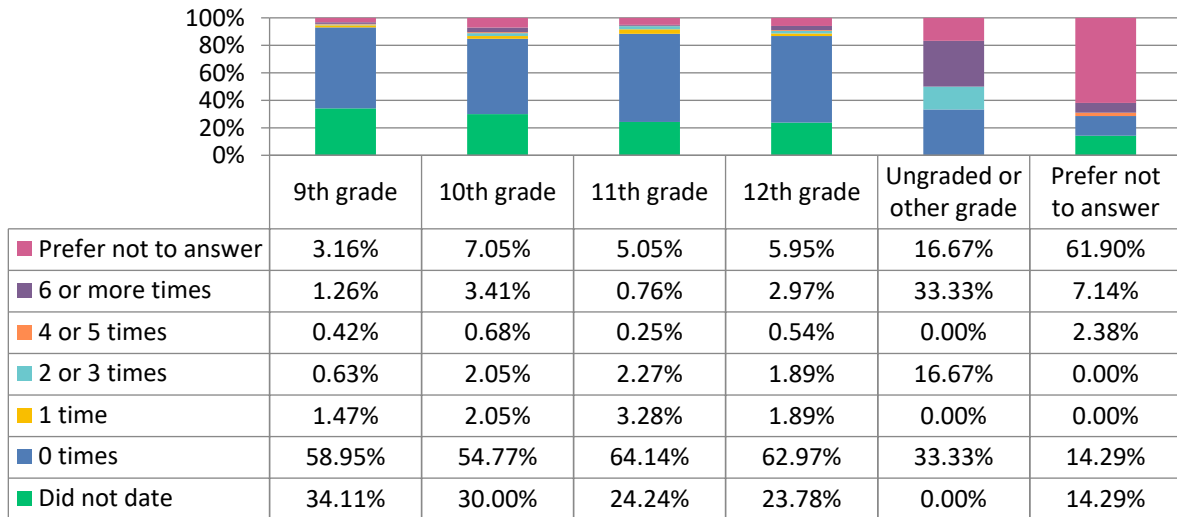
Key Findings on Control and Emotional Harm in Dating

- County-wide Trends:** Most students either did not date (27.47%) or did not experience controlling or emotionally hurtful behavior in a relationship (46.15%) during the past 12 months. Among respondents, 18.33% indicated it happened at least once, including 6.94% who experienced it six or more times. An additional 8.04% preferred not to answer. These findings suggest that most students did not encounter emotional harm in dating relationships.
- Gender Differences:** Most students did not date or did not experience controlling or emotionally hurtful behavior from a dating partner in the past year. Specifically, 27.07% of females and 29.24% of males reported they did not date, and 46.08% of females and 48.35% of males reported no such experiences. Females were slightly more likely to report frequent occurrences, with 7.95% experiencing it six or more times, compared to 4.94% of males. Students identifying as “Other” had higher rates of reported emotional harm, with 25.00% experiencing it six or more times. Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students did not date or experience controlling or emotionally hurtful behavior from a dating partner in the past year. The proportion who did not date decreased by grade level, from 34.74% in 9th grade to 23.24% in 12th grade. Reports of not experiencing this type of behavior (“0 times”) were common across all grades,

ranging from 40.68% to 52.97%. A small portion of students in each grade reported experiencing emotional harm multiple times. The highest percentage reporting it "6 or more times" was among 10th graders (9.09%).



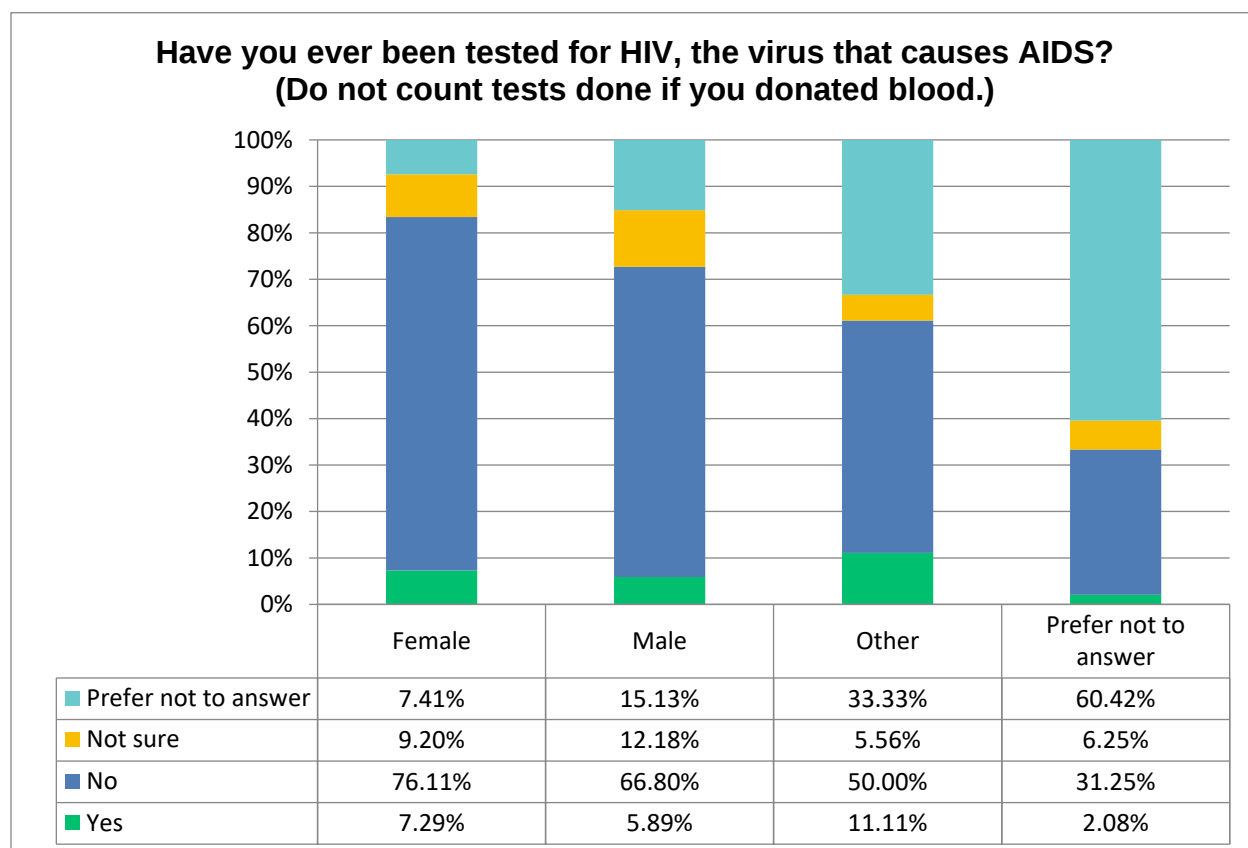
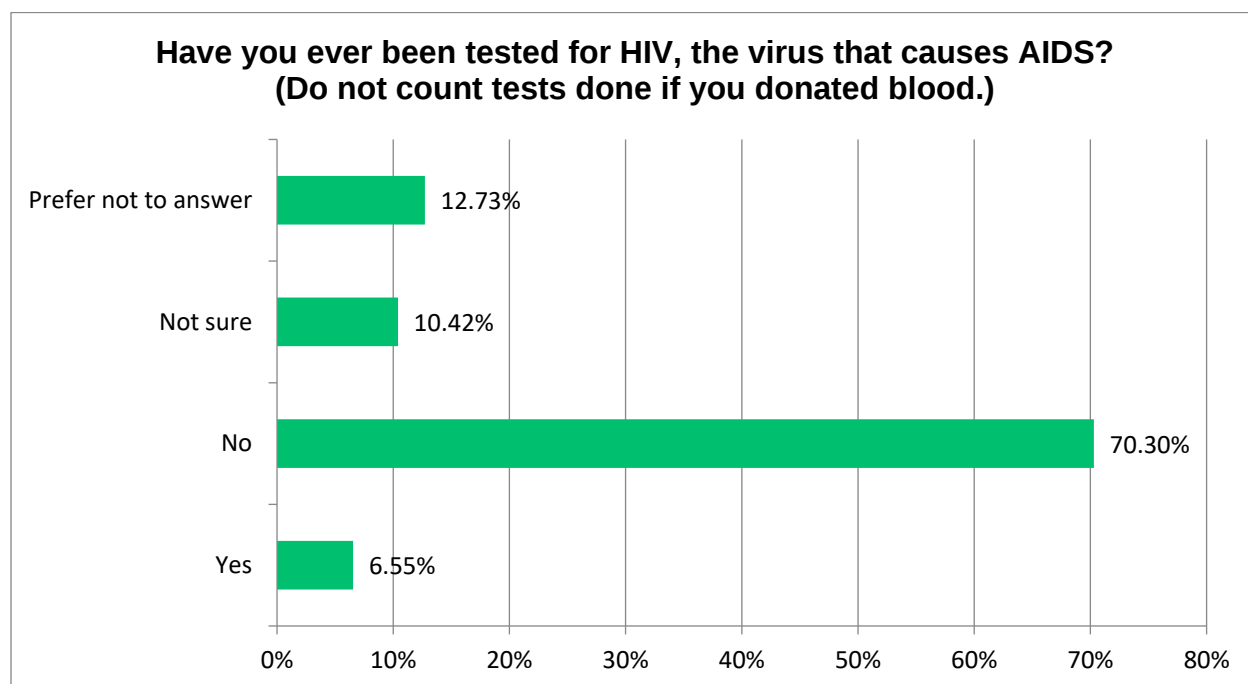
**During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with physically hurt you on purpose?
(Count such things as being hit, slammed into something, or injured with an object or weapon.)**

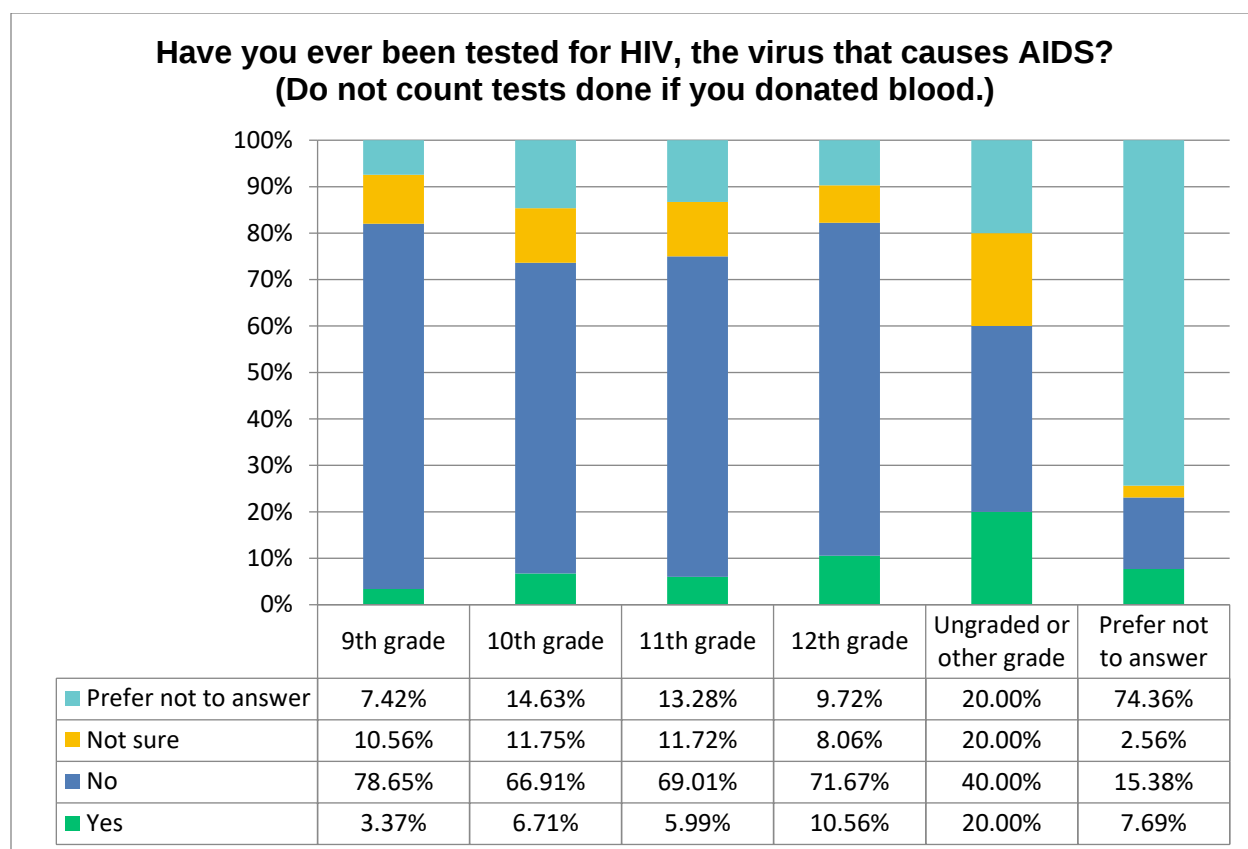


Key Findings on Physical Dating Violence Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** Most students either did not date (27.99%) or reported that no one they dated had physically hurt them on purpose in the past year (58.76%). Reports of physical dating violence were less common, with small percentages indicating such experiences occurred once (2.08%), two or three times (1.68%), or more frequently. Only 2.31% of students reported being physically hurt by a dating partner six or more times.
- Gender Differences:** Most students, regardless of gender, either did not date or did not experience physical dating violence in the past year. Among females, 27.88% did not date, and 63.02% reported no physical harm from a partner. Among males, 29.24% did not date, and 57.09% reported no such harm. Reports of repeated physical harm were more common among students identifying as "Other," with 25% reporting six or more instances, compared to 3.04% of males and 0.92% of females. Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Regardless of grade, most students either did not date or reported no incidents of physical dating violence in the past year. Across all grade levels, more than half of students reported no physical harm, with the highest rate in 11th grade at 64.14%. Reports of repeated harm (two or more times) were generally low across grades. Students in the "Ungraded or other" category reported the highest levels of frequent harm, including 33.33% experiencing six or more incidents. Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.

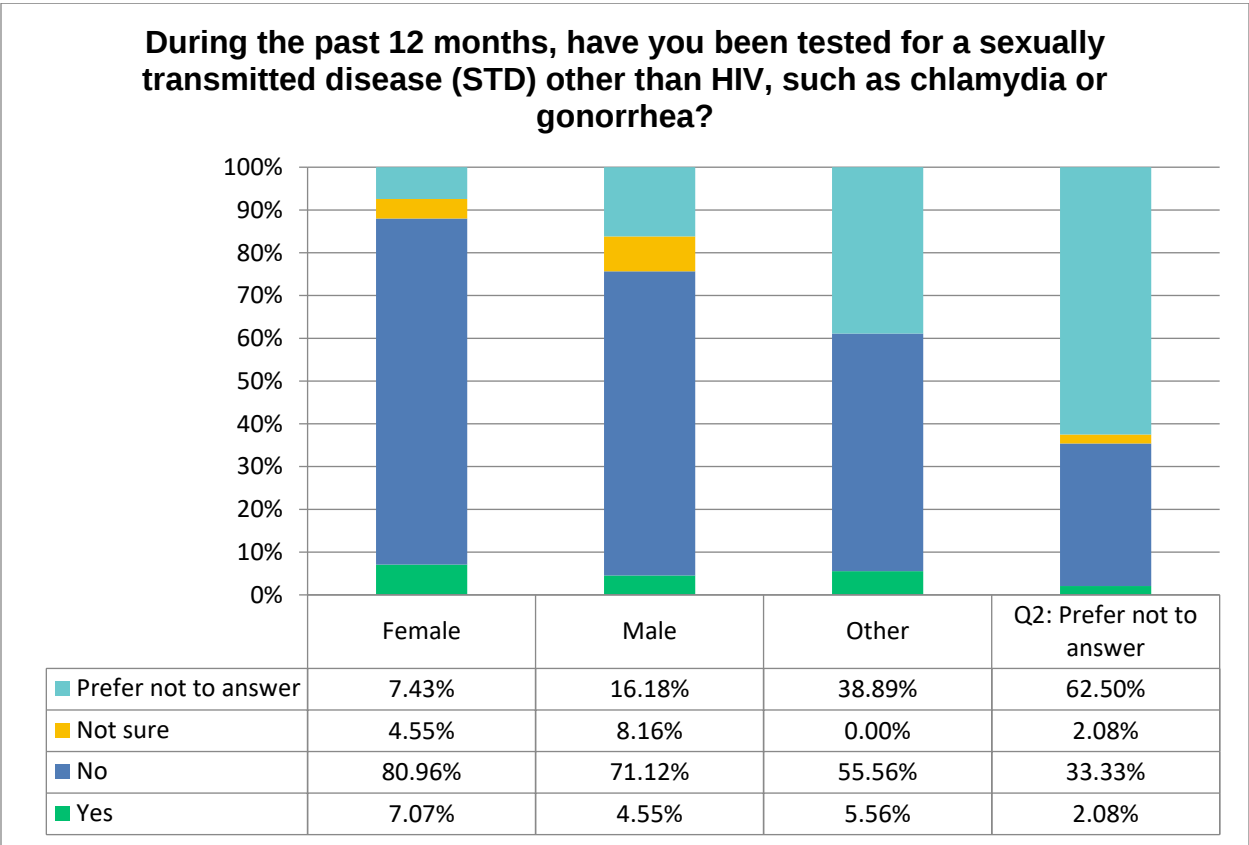
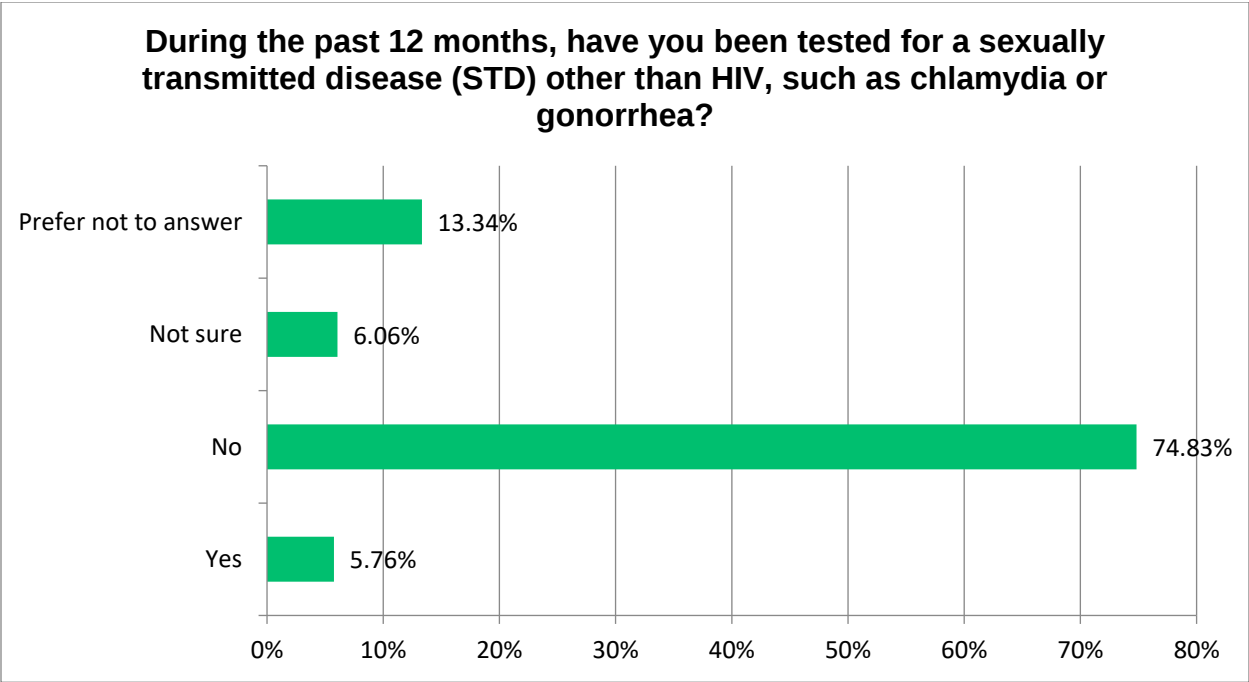
Reproductive Health



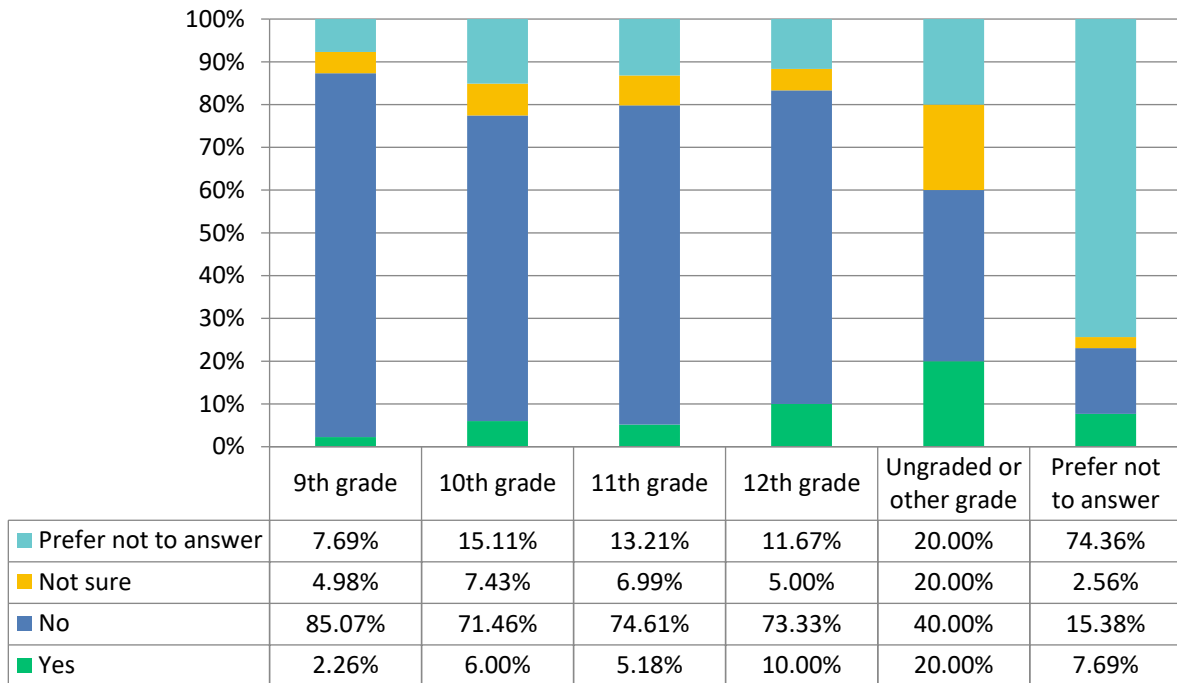


Key Findings on HIV Testing

- County-wide Trends:** The majority of students (70.30%) reported they had never been tested for HIV, while only 6.55% indicated they had. Additionally, 10.42% were unsure, and 12.73% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, HIV testing was relatively uncommon among students, with most either reporting no testing or uncertainty about whether they had been tested.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across all gender groups reported never having been tested for HIV, with 76.11% of females, 66.80% of males, and 50.00% of students identifying as "Other" selecting "No." A small portion of each group reported having been tested, ranging from 5.89% of males to 11.11% of students identifying as "Other." Overall, HIV testing appeared infrequent among students regardless of gender.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported never having been tested for HIV, ranging from 66.91% to 78.65%. Reported testing increased slightly in upper grades, with 10.56% of 12th graders indicating they had been tested, compared to 3.37% in 9th grade. Overall, HIV testing remained uncommon across grade levels, though slightly more students reported testing as grade increased.



During the past 12 months, have you been tested for a sexually transmitted disease (STD) other than HIV, such as chlamydia or gonorrhea?

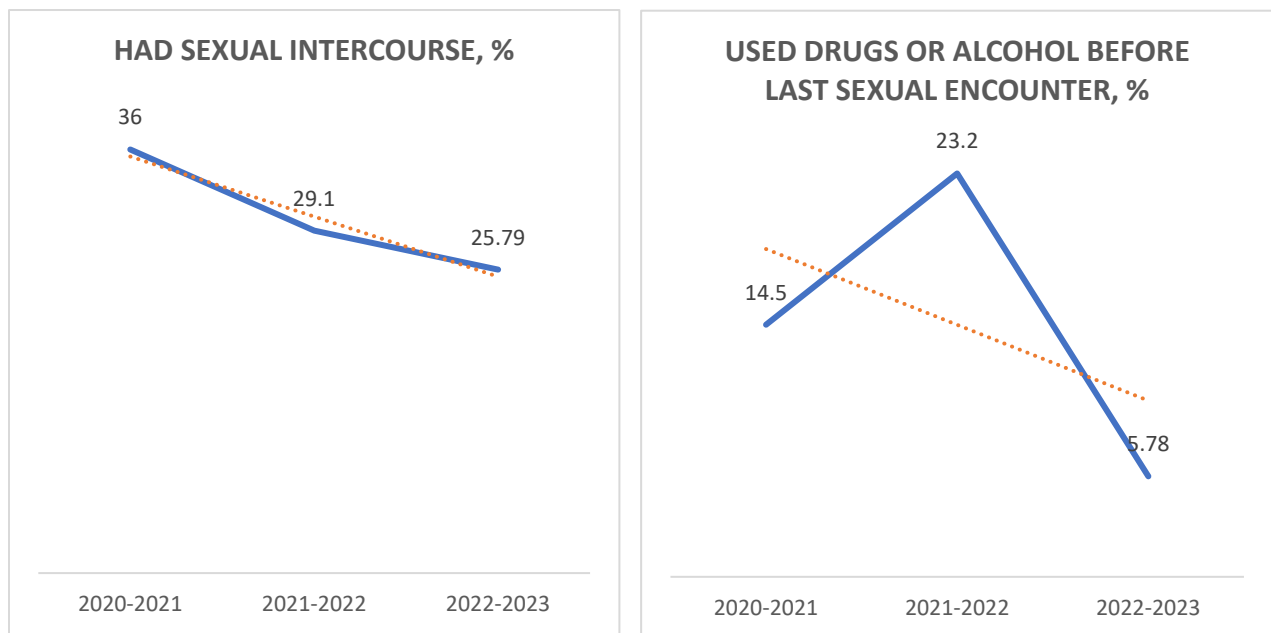


Key Findings on STD Testing

- County-wide Trends:** The majority of students (74.83%) reported not being tested for a sexually transmitted disease other than HIV in the past year. A small portion (5.76%) indicated they had been tested, while 6.06% were unsure. An additional 13.34% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, routine STD testing appeared uncommon among students.
- Gender Differences:** Most students reported they had not been tested for an STD other than HIV in the past 12 months, with 80.96% of females and 71.12% of males selecting “No.” Reported testing was low across groups, ranging from 4.55% of males to 7.07% of females. A notable portion of respondents, particularly among students identifying as “Other” (38.89%), chose not to disclose. Overall, recent STD testing was uncommon.
- Grade Differences:** Most students reported they had not been tested for an STD other than HIV in the past year. Reported testing rates increased by grade, from 2.26% in 9th grade to 10.00% in 12th grade and 20.00% among ungraded or other students. “Prefer not to answer” responses also rose with grade level, reaching 20.00% among ungraded students. Overall, STD testing remained relatively uncommon, though it was more frequently reported among older students.

Trends in Sexual Behaviors Over Time

The following graphs display 3-year trends in sexual activity and experiences of dating violence among Herkimer County students. Understanding these patterns offers a clearer picture of potential risks and helps inform programs to foster healthier decision-making among Herkimer County youth.



Key Findings on Sexual Activity Over Time

- **Reduction in Sexual Activity:** The percentage of students who have ever had sexual intercourse declined from 36% in 2020–2021 to 29.1% in 2021–2022 and further to 25.79% in 2022–2023. This downward trend suggests a continued shift toward reduced sexual activity among students over time.
- **Decline in Substance Use Before Sex:** The percentage of students who reported using alcohol or drugs before their last sexual encounter rose from 14.5% in 2020–2021 to 23.2% in 2021–2022, then sharply declined to 5.78% in 2022–2023. Despite the brief spike, the overall trend reflects a notable decrease, which may indicate growing awareness or caution around substance use during sexual activity.

Tobacco Use

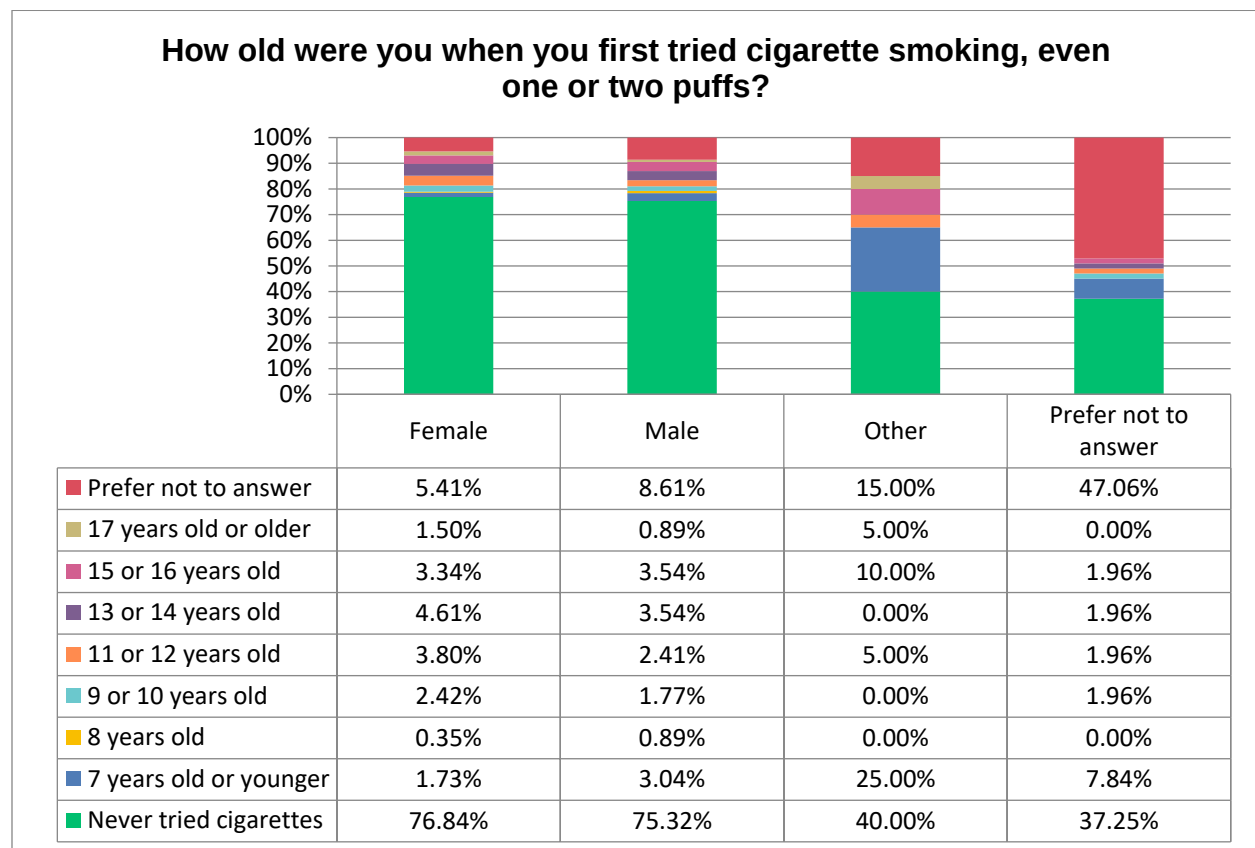
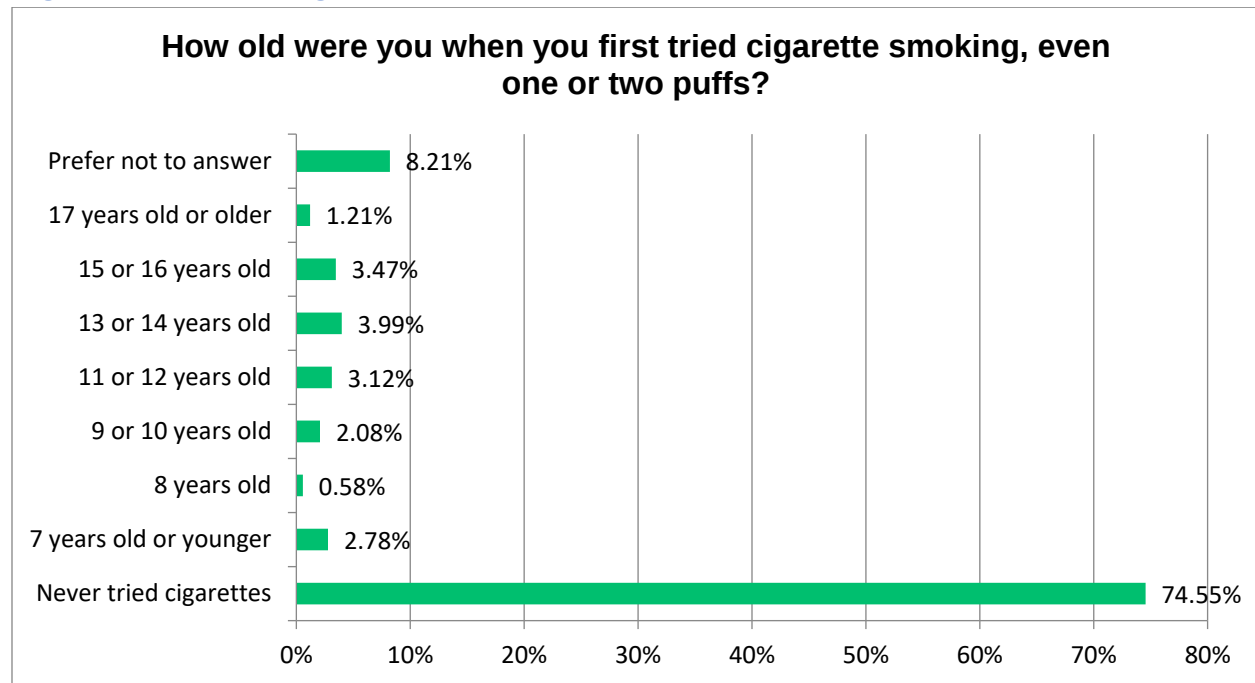
Understanding adolescent tobacco use is critical for promoting healthy behaviors and preventing long-term health issues. Data from the YRBS reveals significant insights into the prevalence and patterns of cigarette smoking and other tobacco products among students.

Tobacco use among Herkimer County students remained relatively low in 2022–2023, with most students reporting no recent use of cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, or flavored tobacco products. Among those who did smoke, most reported infrequent or light use. Similarly, experimentation with flavored tobacco was uncommon, with most students initiating use, if at all, during early adolescence. Use of cigars and smokeless tobacco products was also limited, with less than 12% of students reporting any recent use.

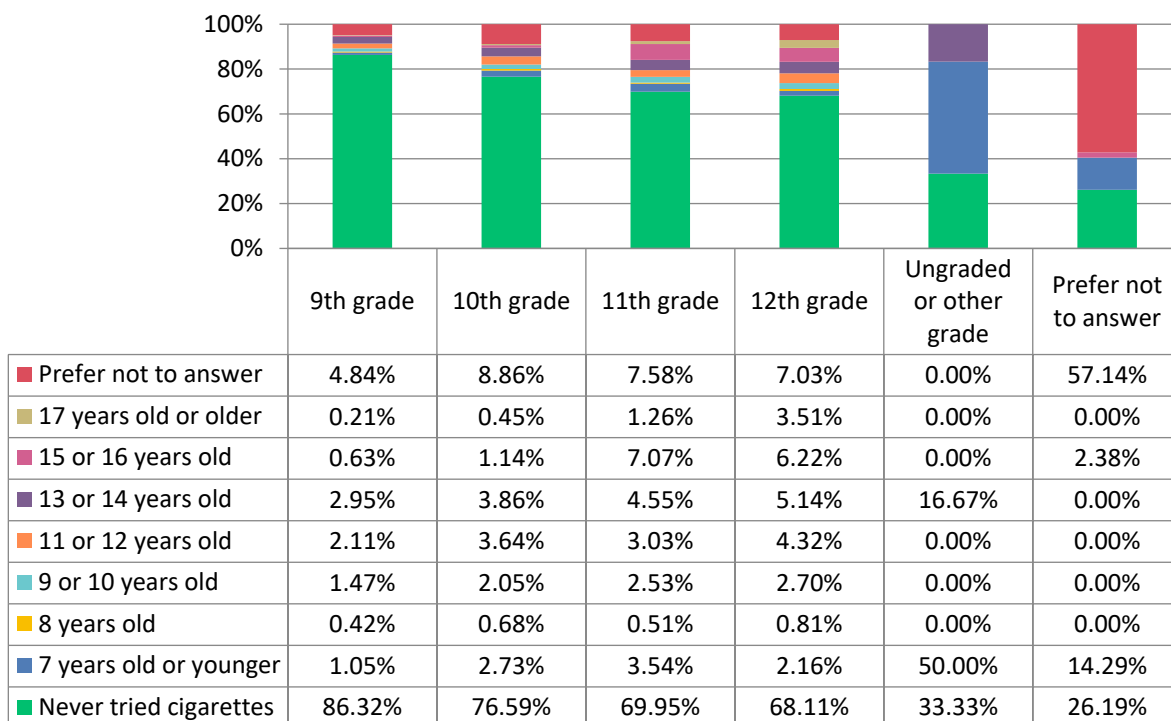
Tobacco use patterns varied by grade and gender. Older students were more likely to have tried tobacco products or reported more frequent use. Conversely, younger students consistently reported higher rates of non-use. Males generally reported higher daily use rates than females. In addition, students identifying as “Other” gender reported the lowest non-use rates and the highest rates of daily use across all product types. However, this group had a limited sample size.

Most students who used tobacco reported not attempting to quit in the past year. Additionally, less than half of students recalled being asked about tobacco use by a doctor, dentist, or nurse in the past 12 months. Overall, tobacco use among youth has declined over time.

Cigarette Use Among Students



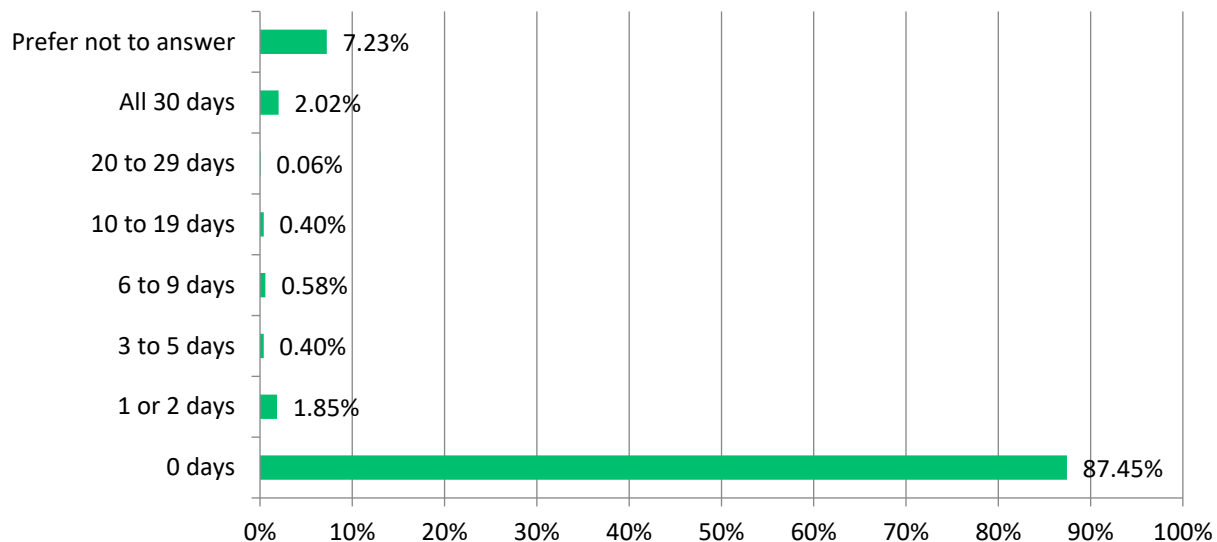
How old were you when you first tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?



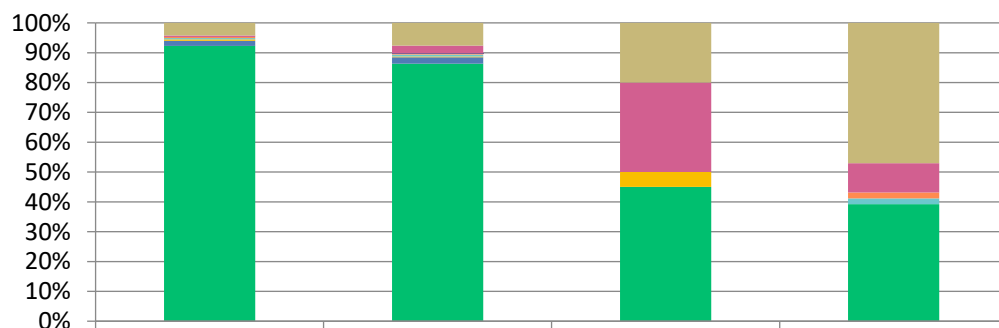
Key Findings on Age of First Cigarette Use

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (74.55%) reported never having tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs. Among respondents, the most common ages of initiation were 13 or 14 years old (3.99%), followed by 15 or 16 (3.47%), and 11 or 12 (3.12%). A smaller percentage reported trying cigarettes at 10 years old or younger, including 2.78% at age 7 or younger. Only 1.21% reported initiating smoking at age 17 or older, and 8.21% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, the majority of students had not experimented with cigarette smoking, and early initiation was relatively uncommon.
- Gender Differences:** Most males (75.32%) and females (76.84%) reported never having tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs. A small portion of each group reported trying cigarettes, with males and females most commonly reporting trying around 13 to 14 years old.
- Grade Differences:** The percentage of students who reported never trying cigarettes declined across grade levels, from 86.32% in 9th grade to 68.11% in 12th grade. Early experimentation was more frequently reported in higher grades, with 7.07% of 11th graders and 6.22% of 12th graders indicating they first tried cigarettes at age 15 or 16. Initiation before age 11 was uncommon across all grades. Overall, younger students were less likely to have tried cigarette smoking, while older students reported higher rates of experimentation.

During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigarettes?

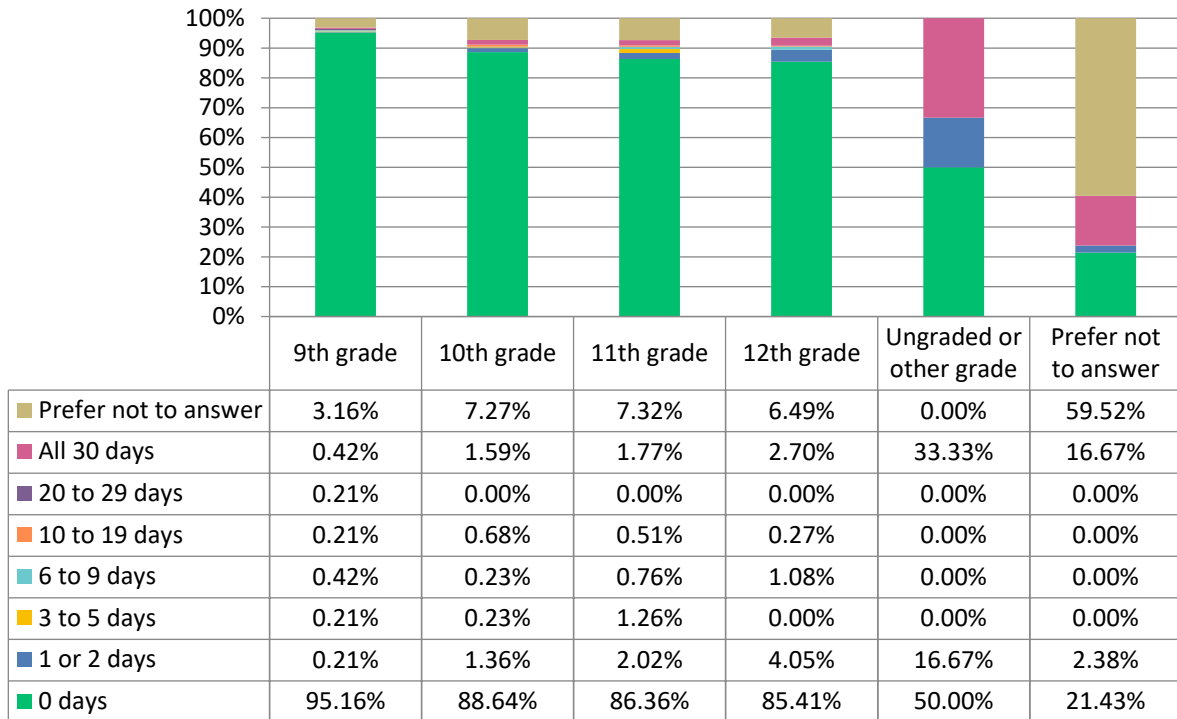


During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigarettes?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	4.26%	7.59%	20.00%	47.06%
All 30 days	0.46%	2.53%	30.00%	9.80%
20 to 29 days	0.00%	0.13%	0.00%	0.00%
10 to 19 days	0.35%	0.38%	0.00%	1.96%
6 to 9 days	0.46%	0.63%	0.00%	1.96%
3 to 5 days	0.46%	0.25%	5.00%	0.00%
1 or 2 days	1.73%	2.15%	0.00%	0.00%
0 days	92.28%	86.33%	45.00%	39.22%

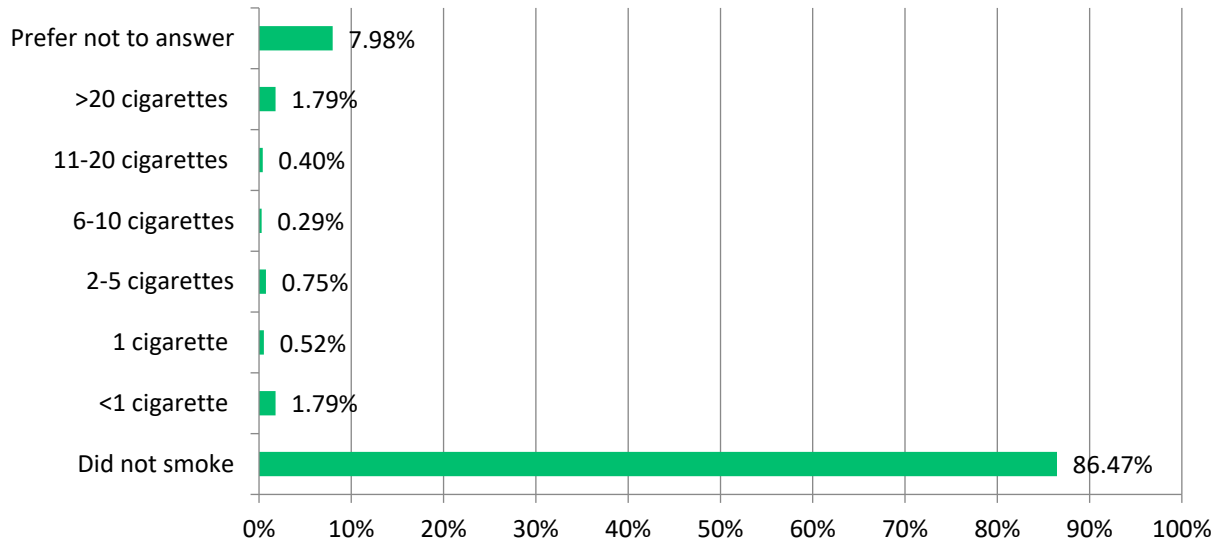
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigarettes?



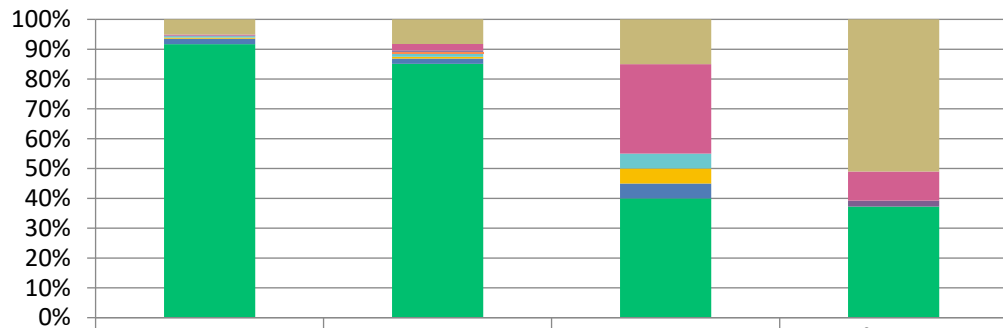
Key Findings on Recent Cigarette Use

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (87.45%) reported not smoking cigarettes on any of the past 30 days. Occasional smoking was rare, with 1.85% indicating use on 1 or 2 days and fewer than 2% reporting use between 3 and 29 days. Daily smoking was reported by 2.02% of students, and 7.23% chose not to answer. Overall, cigarette use in the past month was uncommon among students, with the vast majority reporting no recent use.
- Gender Differences:** Most female (92.28%) and male (86.33%) students reported not smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days. Daily cigarette use was higher among males (2.53%) than females (0.46%). Students identifying as “Other” reported the lowest rate of non-use (45.00%) and the highest rate of smoking all 30 days (30.00%). Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported not smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days, with non-use decreasing slightly by grade: 95.16% in 9th grade, 88.64% in 10th, 86.36% in 11th, and 85.41% in 12th. Daily use (all 30 days) increased gradually with grade level, from 0.42% in 9th grade to 2.70% in 12th grade. Students in the ungraded/other group had the lowest rate of non-use (50.00%) and the highest rate of daily use (33.33%). Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.

During the past 30 days, on the days you smoked, how many cigarettes did you smoke per day?

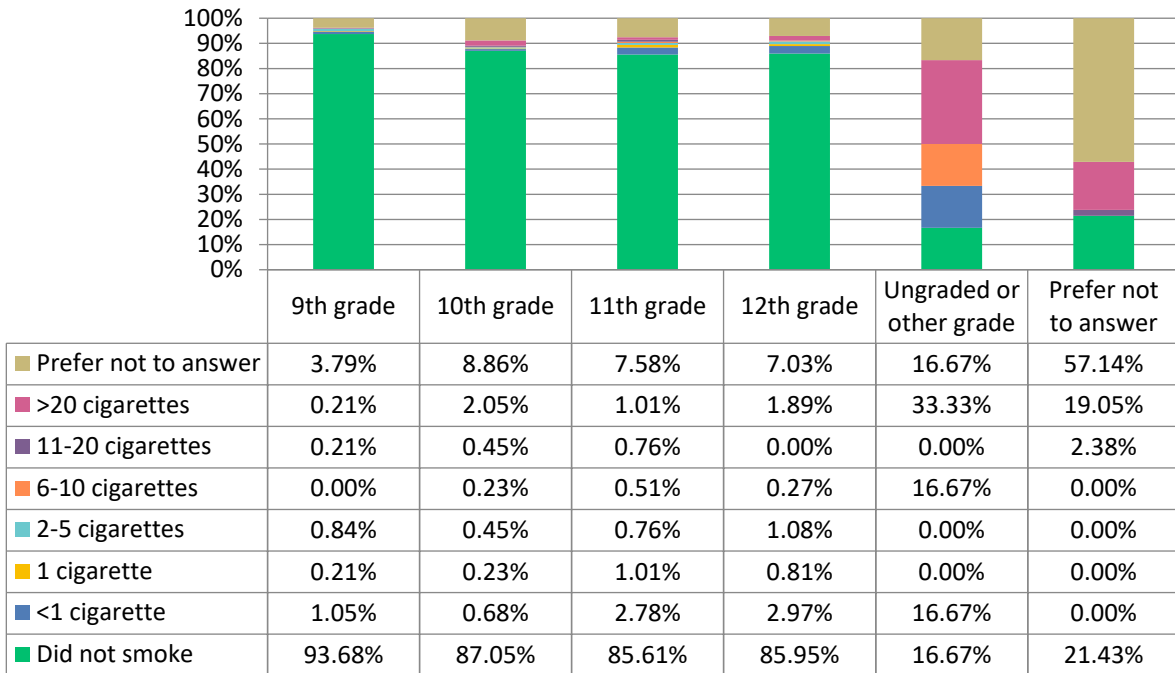


During the past 30 days, on the days you smoked, how many cigarettes did you smoke per day?



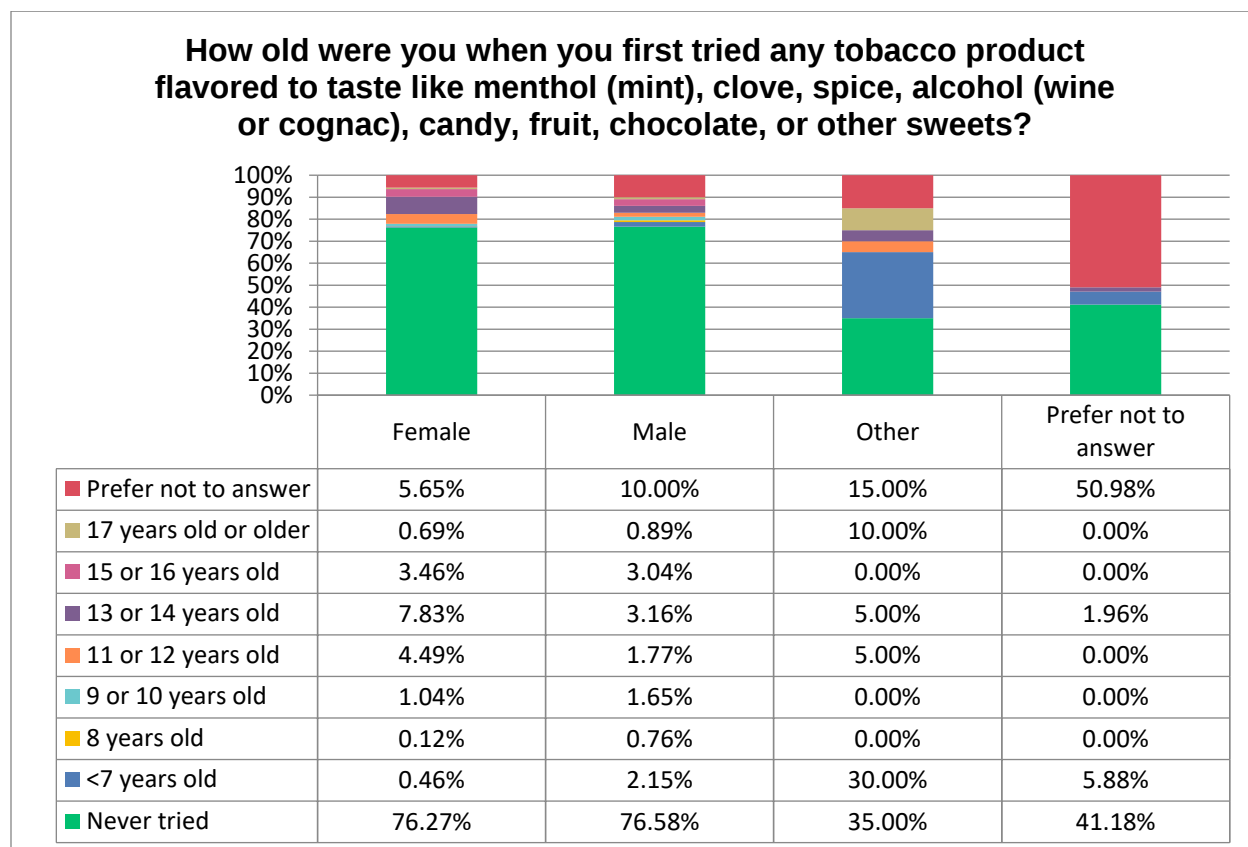
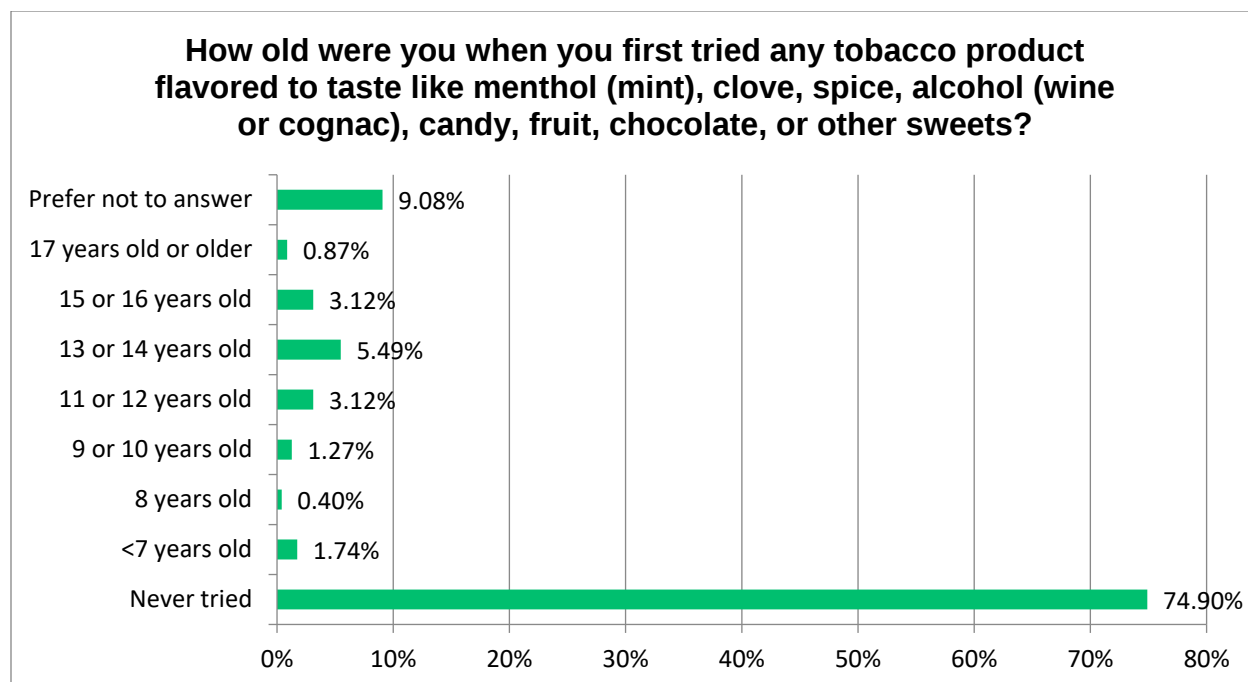
	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	5.07%	8.23%	15.00%	50.98%
>20 cigarettes	0.35%	2.15%	30.00%	9.80%
11-20 cigarettes	0.23%	0.51%	0.00%	1.96%
6-10 cigarettes	0.00%	0.63%	0.00%	0.00%
2-5 cigarettes	0.46%	1.01%	5.00%	0.00%
1 cigarette	0.35%	0.63%	5.00%	0.00%
<1 cigarette	1.84%	1.77%	5.00%	0.00%
Did not smoke	91.71%	85.06%	40.00%	37.25%

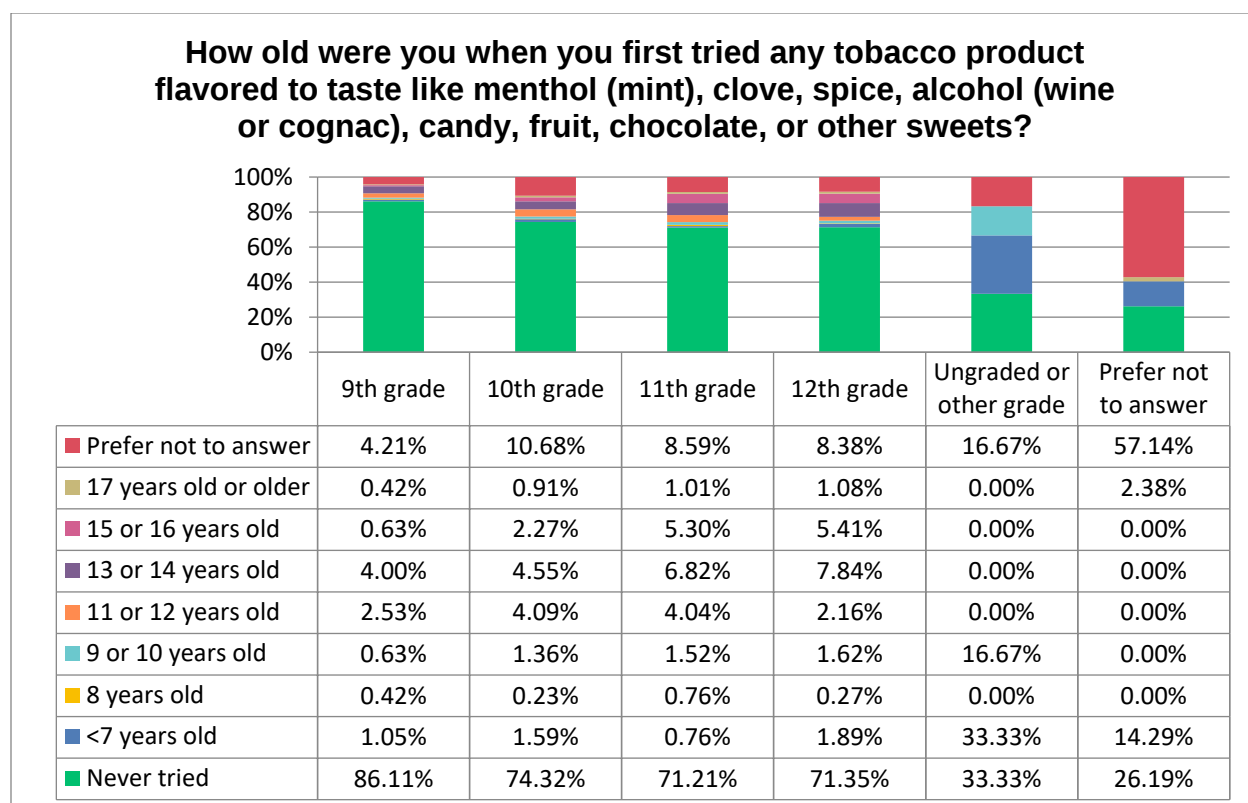
During the past 30 days, on the days you smoked, how many cigarettes did you smoke per day?



Key Findings on Cigarette Smoking Frequency Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (86.47%) reported not smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days. Small percentages of students reported low daily cigarette use, including less than 1 cigarette (1.79%) or just 1 cigarette (0.52%) per day. Slightly fewer reported smoking 2–5 cigarettes (0.75%) or 6–10 (0.29%). An additional 1.79% reported smoking more than 20 cigarettes per day and 7.98% of students selected "Prefer not to answer." In general, cigarette use was minimal.
- Gender Differences:** Most female (91.71%) and male (85.06%) students reported not smoking in the past 30 days. Males reported slightly higher rates of daily smoking, with 2.15% indicating they smoked more than 20 cigarettes per day, compared to 0.35% of females. Students identifying as "Other" had the lowest rate of non-smoking (40.00%) and the highest rate of heavy use, with 30.00% reporting over 20 cigarettes per day. Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across grade levels reported not smoking in the past 30 days, with non-use highest among 9th graders (93.68%) and slightly lower among 12th graders (85.95%). Reports of lighter use (fewer than 10 cigarettes per day) remained low across all grades. Among students in the ungraded or other category, responses were more varied, with 33.33% reporting smoking more than 20 cigarettes per day and only 16.67% indicating they did not smoke. Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.

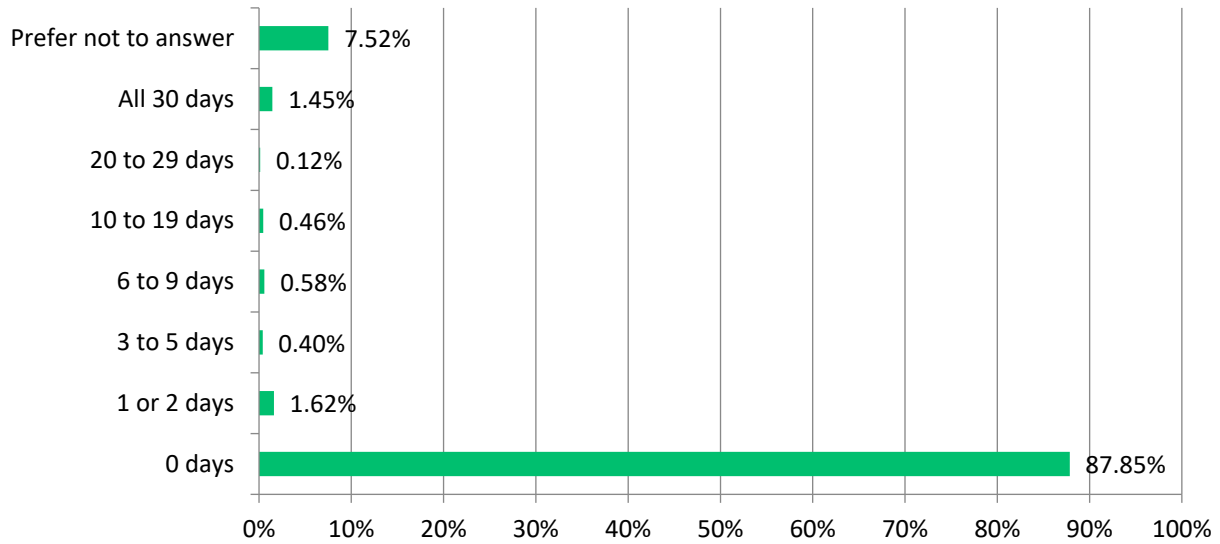




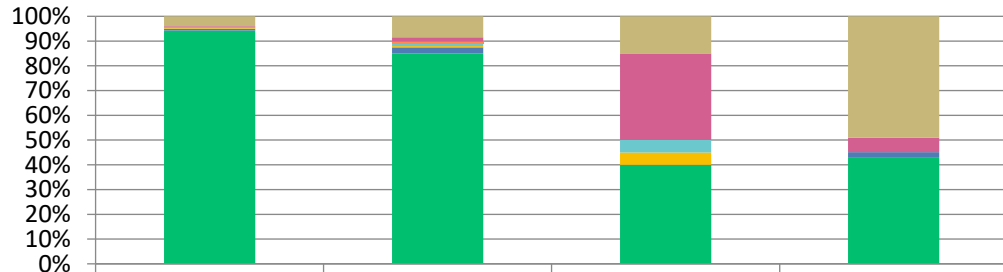
Key Findings on Use of Flavored Tobacco Products

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (74.90%) reported never trying a flavored tobacco product. Among respondents, initiation was most commonly reported at ages 13 or 14 (5.49%), followed by 15 or 16 years old (3.12%) and 11 or 12 years old (3.12%). Smaller percentages reported trying these products at younger ages, including under 7 years old (1.74%) and 8 years old (0.40%). An additional 9.08% of students selected "Prefer not to answer." In general, flavored tobacco experimentation was relatively uncommon.
- Gender Differences:** Most female (76.27%) and male (76.58%) students reported never trying flavored tobacco products. Among respondents, initiation was most common at ages 13 or 14 for females (7.83%) and males (3.16%). Students identifying as "Other" were less likely to report never trying flavored tobacco (35.00%) and had higher rates of early initiation, including 30.00% at age 7 or younger. Results for this group should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size.
- Grade Differences:** The majority of students across all grade levels reported never trying flavored tobacco products. This percentage declined with grade from 86.11% in 9th grade to 71.35% in 12th grade. Initiation most commonly occurred between ages 13 and 16, with 10th to 12th graders reporting higher experimentation at these ages compared to 9th graders. Students in the ungraded or other category were less likely to report never trying flavored tobacco (33.33%) and had higher rates of early initiation, including 33.33% before age 7 and 16.67% at ages 9 or 10.

During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars?

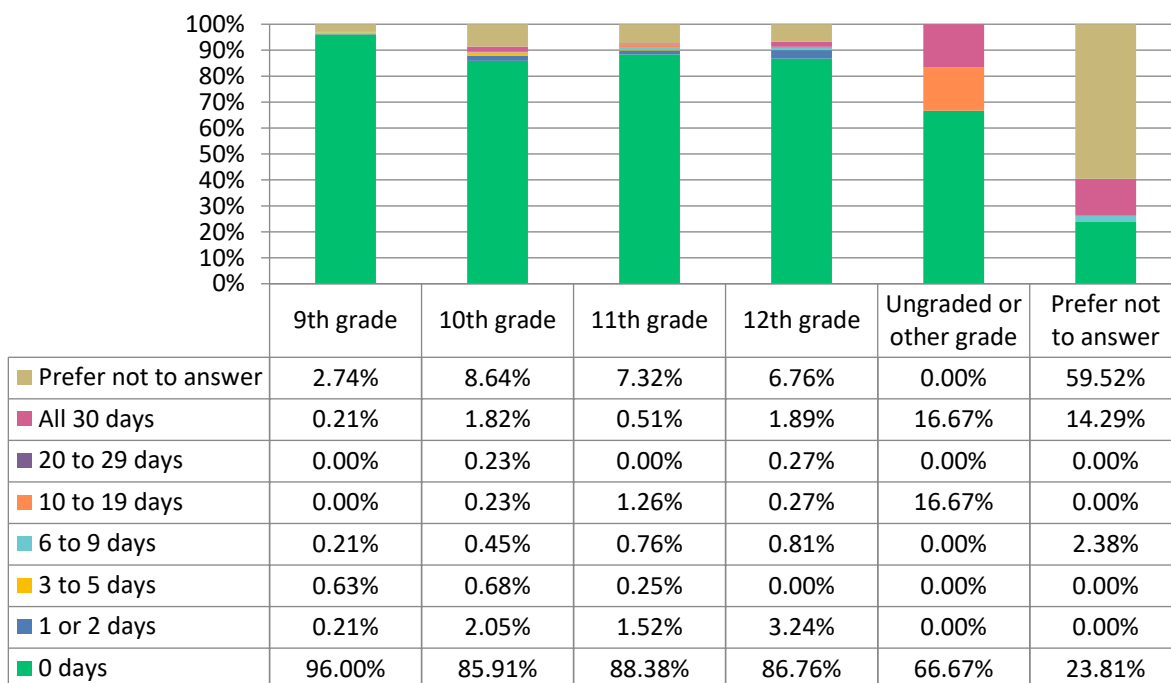


During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	4.03%	8.48%	15.00%	49.02%
All 30 days	0.35%	1.52%	35.00%	5.88%
20 to 29 days	0.12%	0.13%	0.00%	0.00%
10 to 19 days	0.00%	1.01%	0.00%	0.00%
6 to 9 days	0.23%	0.89%	5.00%	0.00%
3 to 5 days	0.23%	0.51%	5.00%	0.00%
1 or 2 days	0.81%	2.53%	0.00%	1.96%
0 days	94.24%	84.94%	40.00%	43.14%

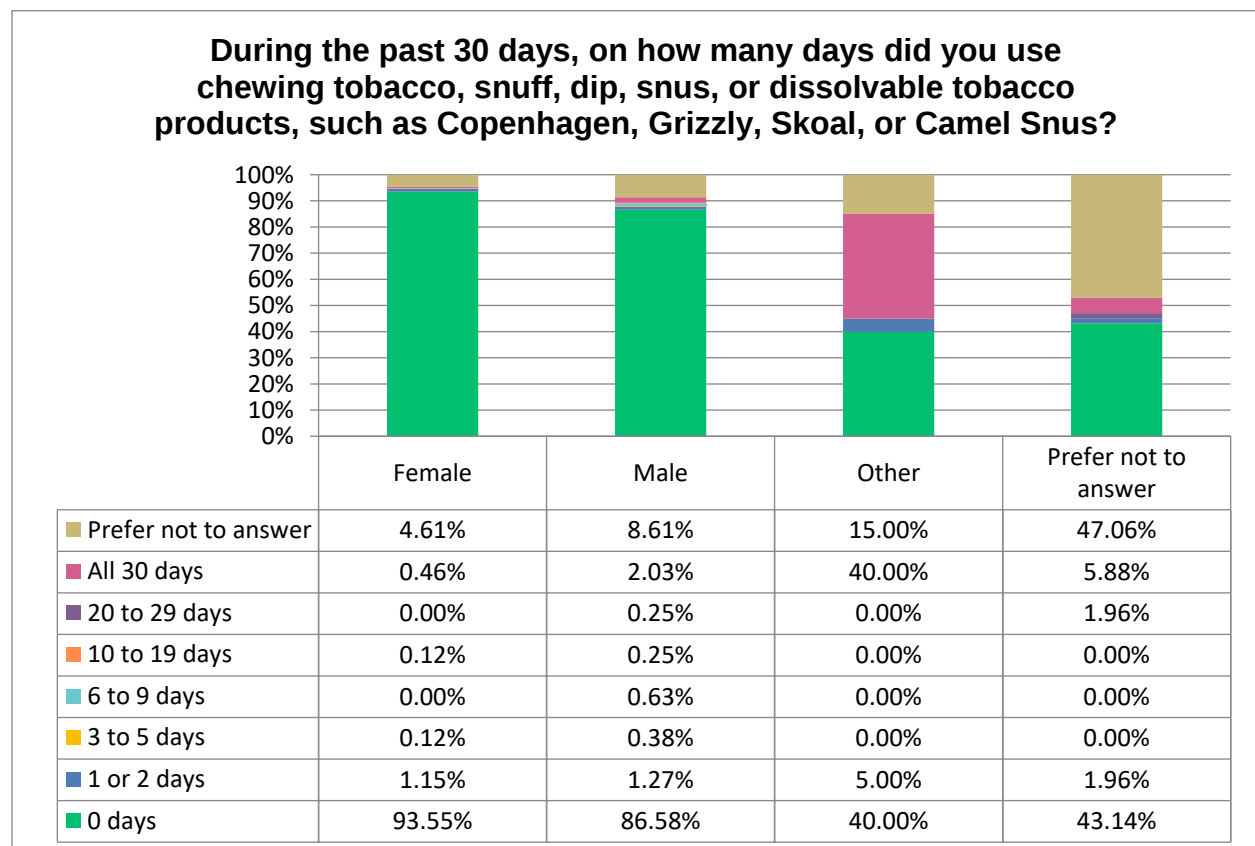
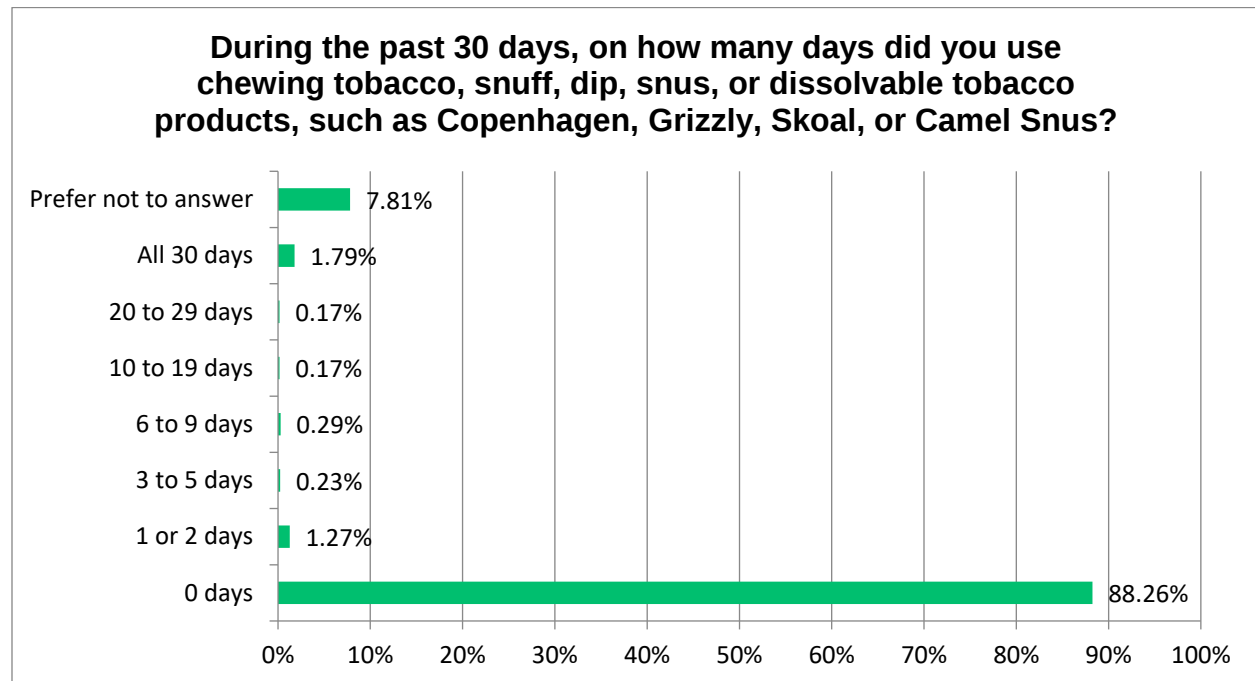
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars?



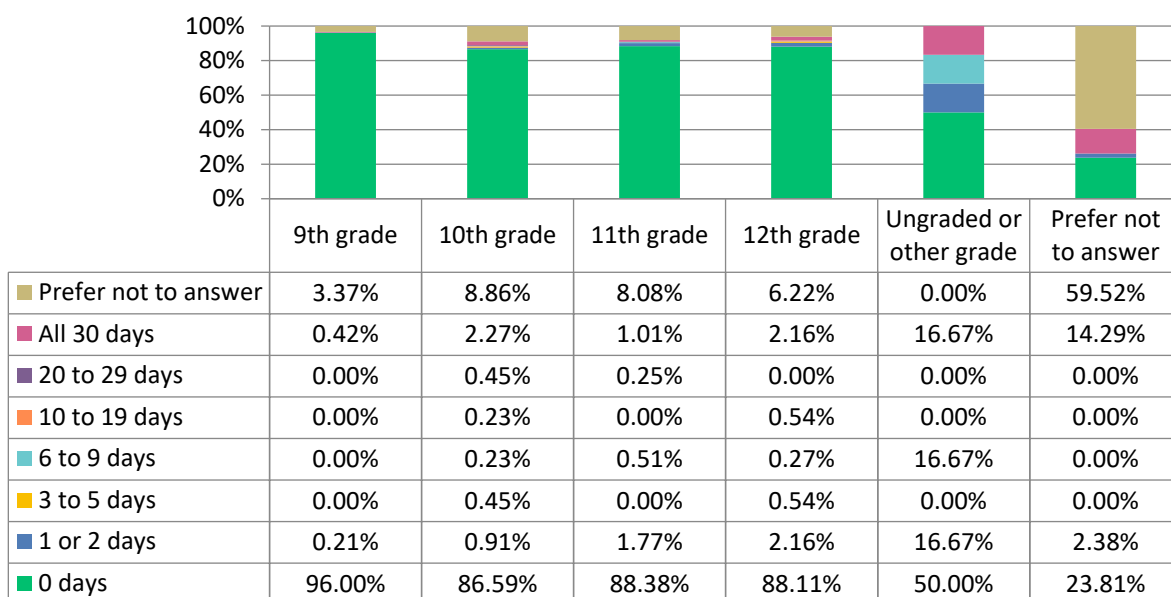
Key Findings on Cigar, Cigarillo, and Little Cigar Use Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (87.85%) reported not smoking cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars during the past 30 days. A small portion of students reported smoking on one or two days (1.62%) or daily (1.45%). Very few reported usage on 3 to 29 days. An additional 7.52% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, cigar product use in the past 30 days was uncommon, with the majority of students reporting no use.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across all gender groups reported not smoking cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars in the past 30 days, including 94.24% of females and 84.94% of males. Use on one or two days was reported by 2.53% of males and 0.81% of females. Among students identifying as "Other," only 40.00% reported no use and 35.00% indicated daily use, the highest across all groups. Results for this group should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported not smoking cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars in the past 30 days. The percentage reporting no use declined slightly with grade level, including 96.00% of 9th graders and 86.76% of 12th graders. Regular use (all 30 days) was highest among 10th graders (1.82%) and 12th graders (1.89%). Among ungraded students, 66.67% reported no use, and 16.67% reported smoking daily. Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.

Smokeless Tobacco Use Among Students



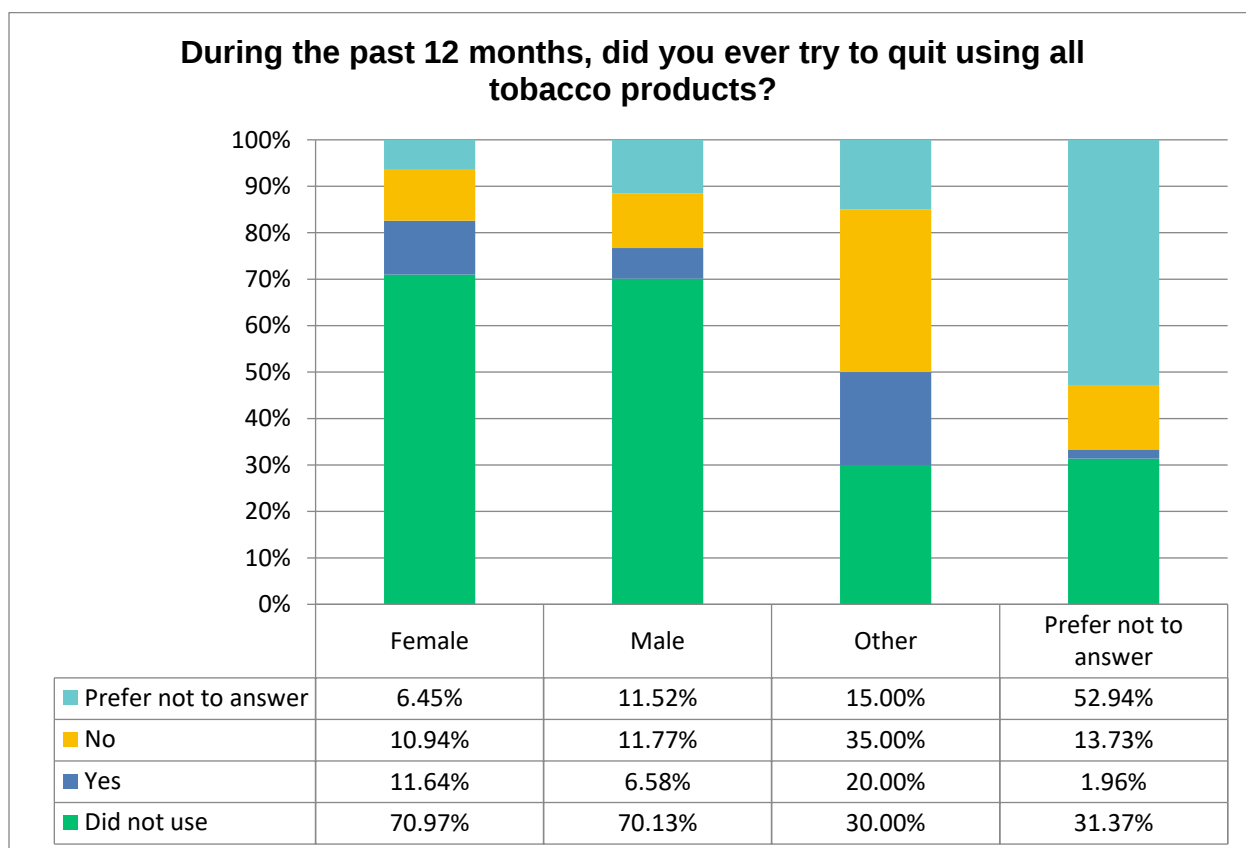
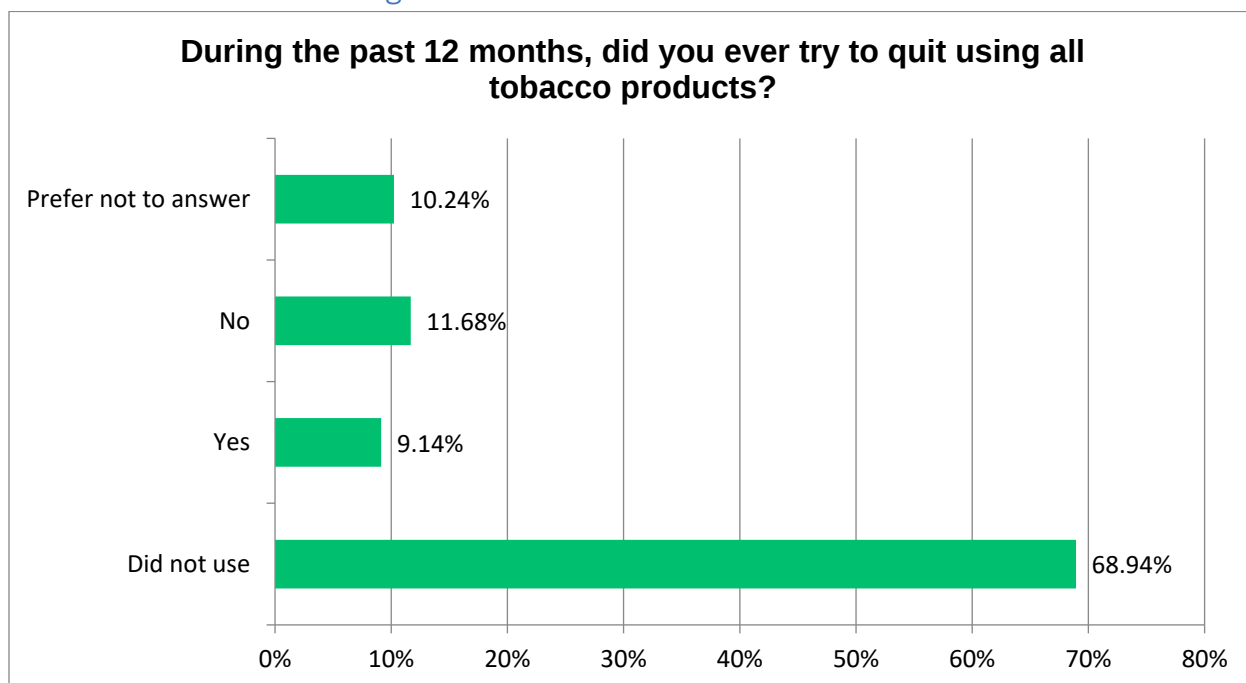
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use chewing tobacco, snuff, dip, snus, or dissolvable tobacco products, such as Copenhagen, Grizzly, Skoal, or Camel Snus?



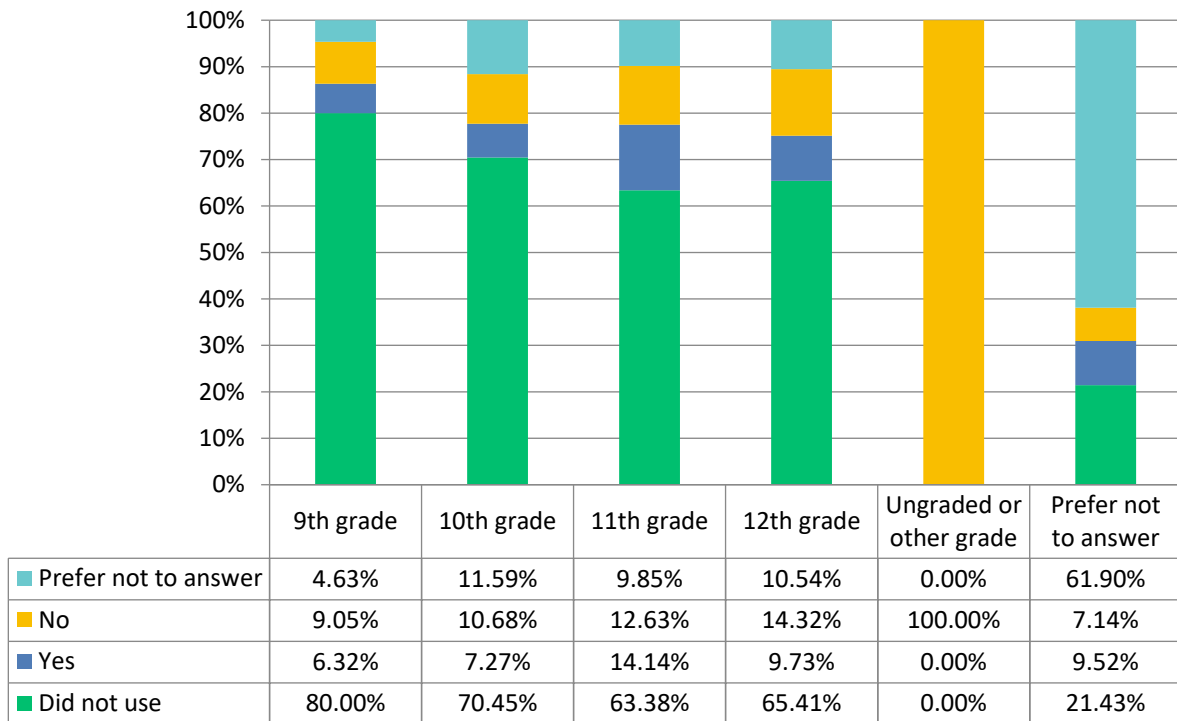
Key Findings on Use of Chewing Tobacco, Snuff, or Dissolvable Tobacco Products

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (88.26%) reported no use of chewing tobacco, snuff, dip, snus, or dissolvable tobacco products in the past 30 days. A small percentage reported limited use, including 1.27% who used it on 1 or 2 days and 1.79% who used it daily. Lower percentages reported usage in any other frequency category. An additional 7.81% of students selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, the use of smokeless tobacco products was uncommon among students, with nearly 9 in 10 reporting no use in the past month.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across all gender groups reported no use of smokeless tobacco products in the past 30 days. This included 93.55% of females and 86.58% of males. Males reported higher daily use (2.03%) than females (0.46%). Students in the "Other" group also showed the highest rates of any use, with additional reports of using on 1 or 2 days (5.00%). Due to the small sample size in this group, findings should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** The majority of students across all grade levels reported no use of smokeless tobacco in the past 30 days. Daily use ("All 30 days") increased with grade level, from 0.42% in 9th grade to 2.27% in 10th and 2.16% in 12th. Use on 1 or 2 days also rose from 0.21% in 9th grade to 2.16% in 12th. Students in the ungraded or other category had the highest reported use overall, with only 50.00% reporting 0 days and 16.67% indicating daily use. Due to the small sample size in this group, findings should be interpreted with caution.

Tobacco Cessation Among Students



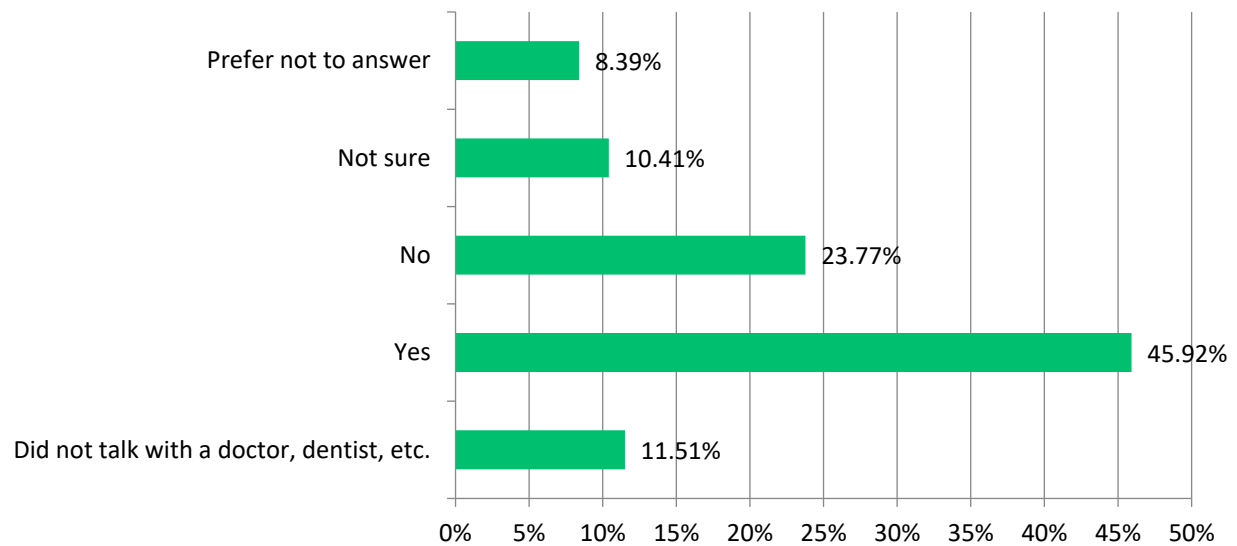
During the past 12 months, did you ever try to quit using all tobacco products?



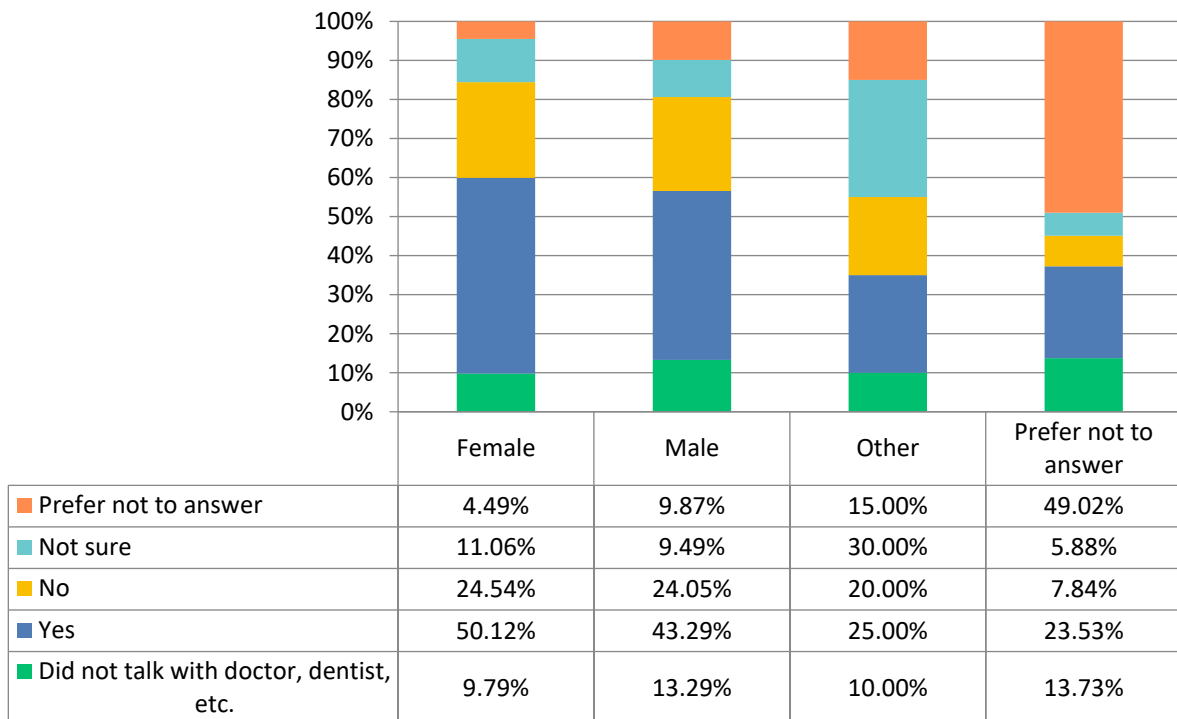
Key Findings on Tobacco Cessation

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (68.94%) reported not using any tobacco products in the past 12 months. Among respondents, 9.14% reported trying to quit, while 11.68% said they did not try. An additional 10.24% of students selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, tobacco use appeared limited among students, with only a small portion indicating recent use or quit attempts.
- Gender Differences:** Most female (70.97%) and male (70.13%) students reported not using tobacco products in the past year. Among respondents, 11.64% of females and 6.58% of males attempted to quit. A similar percentage of males (11.77%) and females (10.94%) reported no quit attempts. Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to report non-use (30.00%) and more likely to report no quit attempts (35.00%). Due to the small sample size in this group, findings should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grades reported not using tobacco products in the past year. Notably, this percentage declined from 80.00% in 9th grade to 63.38% in 11th grade. Among respondents, quit attempts peaked at 14.14% in 11th grade. Reports of no quit attempts also rose with grade, reaching 14.32% in 11th grade. The ungraded/other group showed 100% reporting no quit attempt but had a small sample.

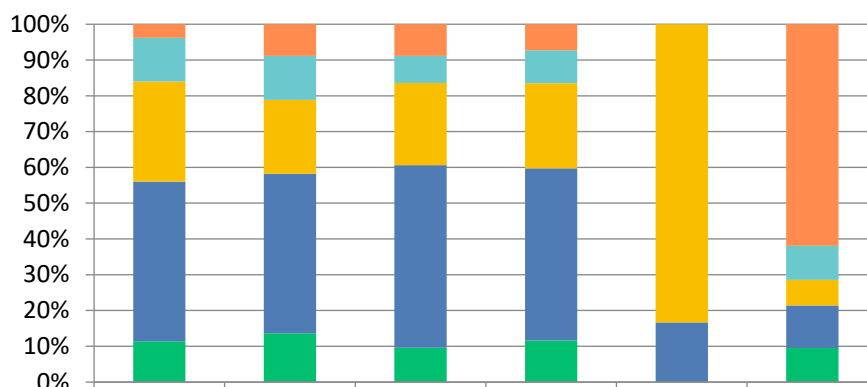
During the past 12 months, did a doctor, dentist, or nurse ask you if you smoke?



During the past 12 months, did a doctor, dentist, or nurse ask you if you smoke?



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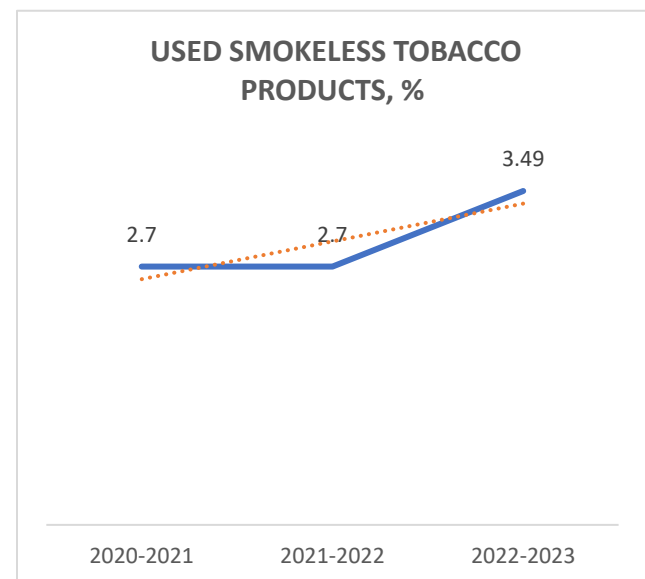
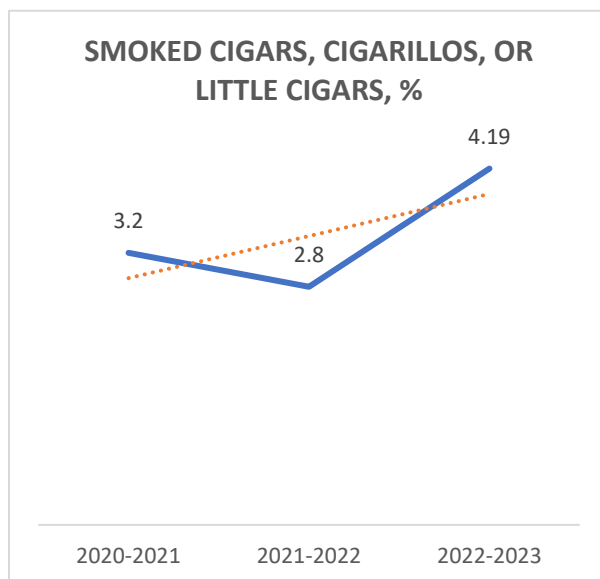
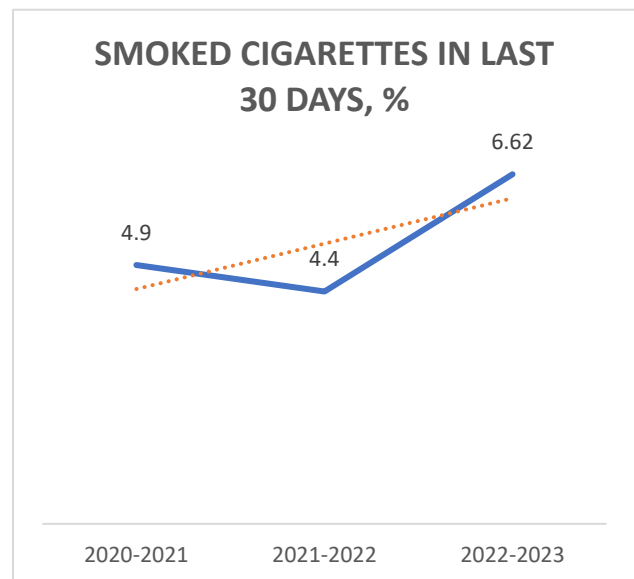
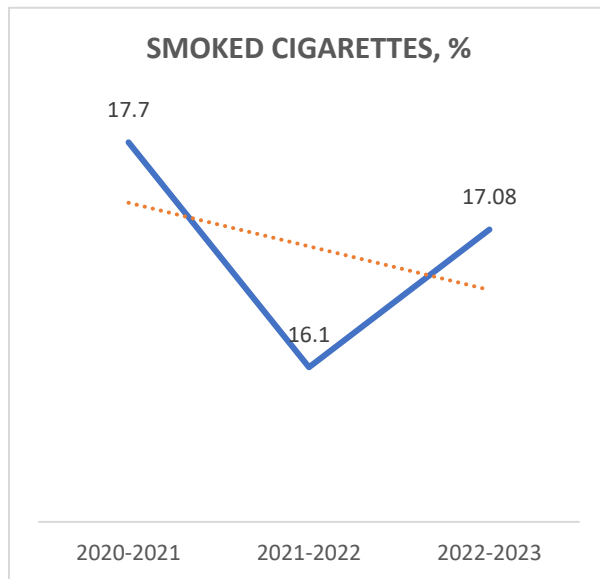
	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	3.79%	8.86%	8.84%	7.30%	0.00%	61.90%
Not sure	12.21%	12.27%	7.58%	9.19%	0.00%	9.52%
No	28.00%	20.68%	22.98%	23.78%	83.33%	7.14%
Yes	44.63%	44.55%	51.01%	48.11%	16.67%	11.90%
Did not talk with doctor, dentist, etc.	11.37%	13.64%	9.60%	11.62%	0.00%	9.52%

Key Findings on Medical Provider Tobacco Screenings

- County-wide Trends:** In the past year, 45.92% of students reported that a doctor, dentist, or nurse asked if they smoked, while 23.77% said they were not asked. An additional 11.51% did not speak with a healthcare provider, and 10.41% were unsure. Another 8.39% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, less than half of students reported being asked about smoking by a healthcare provider
- Gender Differences:** Female students (50.12%) were most likely to report that a doctor, dentist, or nurse asked if they smoked, followed by male students (43.29%). Only 25.00% of students identifying as "Other" recalled being asked. Female and male students reported similar rates of not being asked (24.54% and 24.05%, respectively). Responses of "Did not talk with a doctor, dentist, etc." ranged from 9.79% to 13.73% across all groups.
- Grade Differences:** Many students across all grades reported that a medical professional asked them if they smoked, ranging from 44.55% to 51.01% of respondents in grades 9 through 12. Across grades 9-12, students reported similar rates of not being asked (20.68%-28%). Responses of "Did not talk with a doctor, dentist, etc." ranged from 0% to 13.64% across all grades.

Tobacco Use Among Students Over Time

Despite declining rates, tobacco use still poses serious risks for youth. The following data explores 3-year trends in tobacco use among students, shedding light on patterns that inform prevention efforts.



Key Findings on Tobacco Use Among Students Over Time

- **Lifetime Cigarette Use:** The percentage of students who have ever smoked cigarettes declined marginally from 17.7% in 2020–2021 to 17.08% in 2022–2023.
- **Recent Smoking Behavior:** A small portion of students reported recent smoking, with rates fluctuating slightly but ultimately increasing from 4.9% in 2020–2021 to 6.62% in 2022–2023.
- **Smokeless Tobacco Use:** Use of smokeless tobacco products has steadily increased, rising from 2.7% in 2020–2021 to 3.49% in 2022–2023. This trend may reflect growing interest in alternative forms of tobacco.
- **Stable Cigar Use with Minor Fluctuations:** The use of cigars, cigarillos, and little cigars has remained relatively low, with a slight increase from 3.2% to 4.19% over the same period. This suggests minor but stable interest in these products among students.

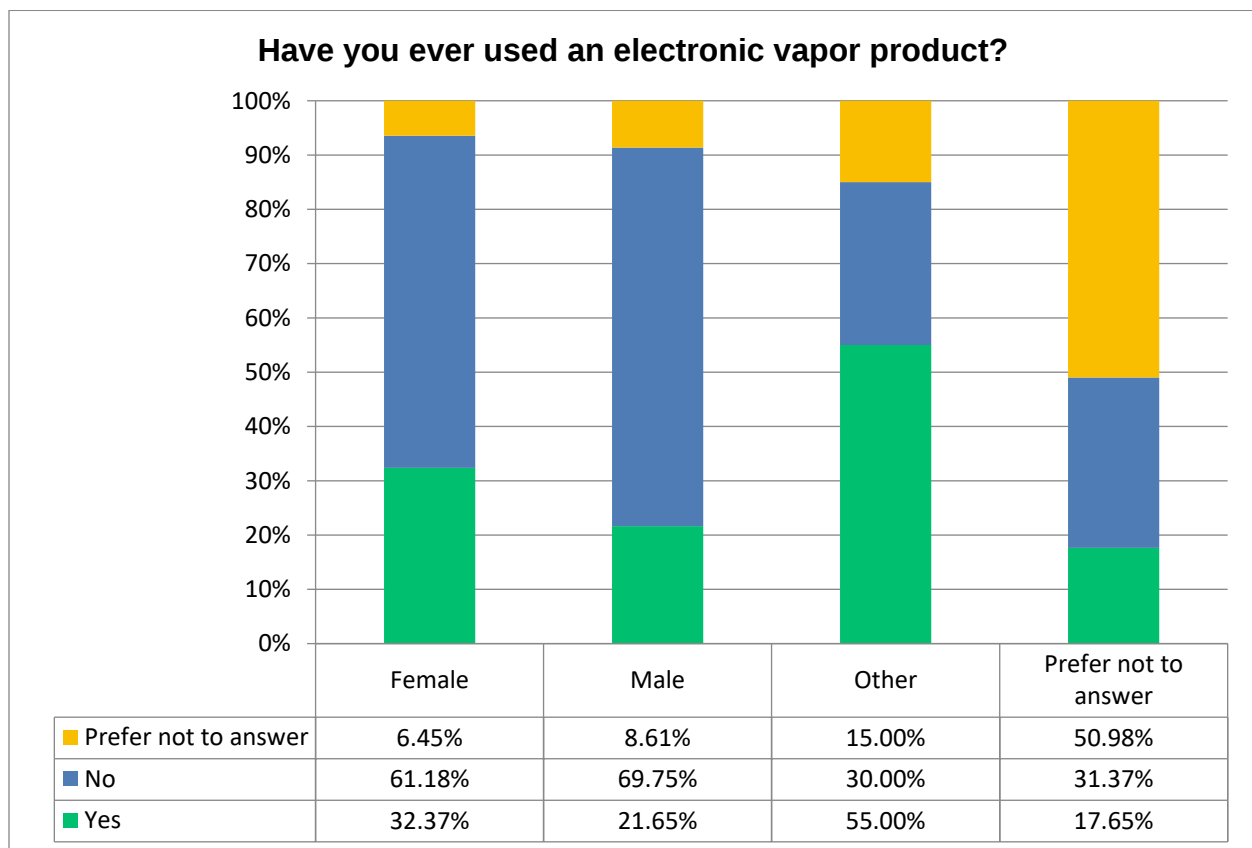
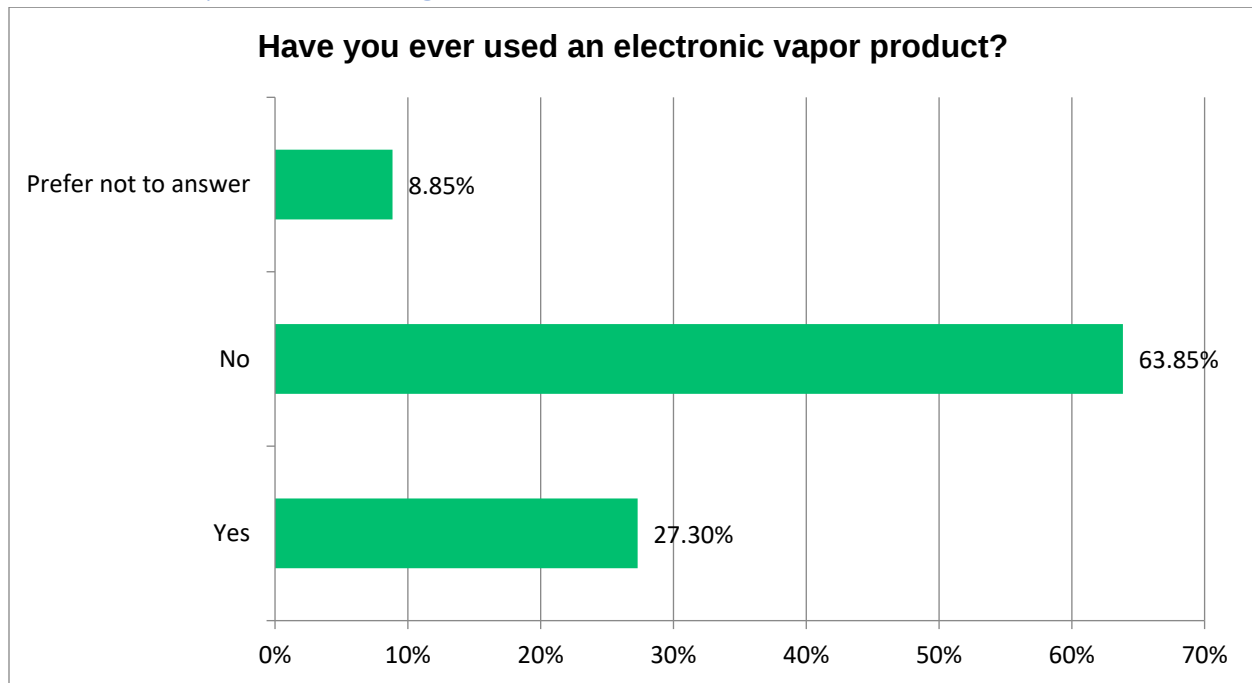
Electric Vapor Products

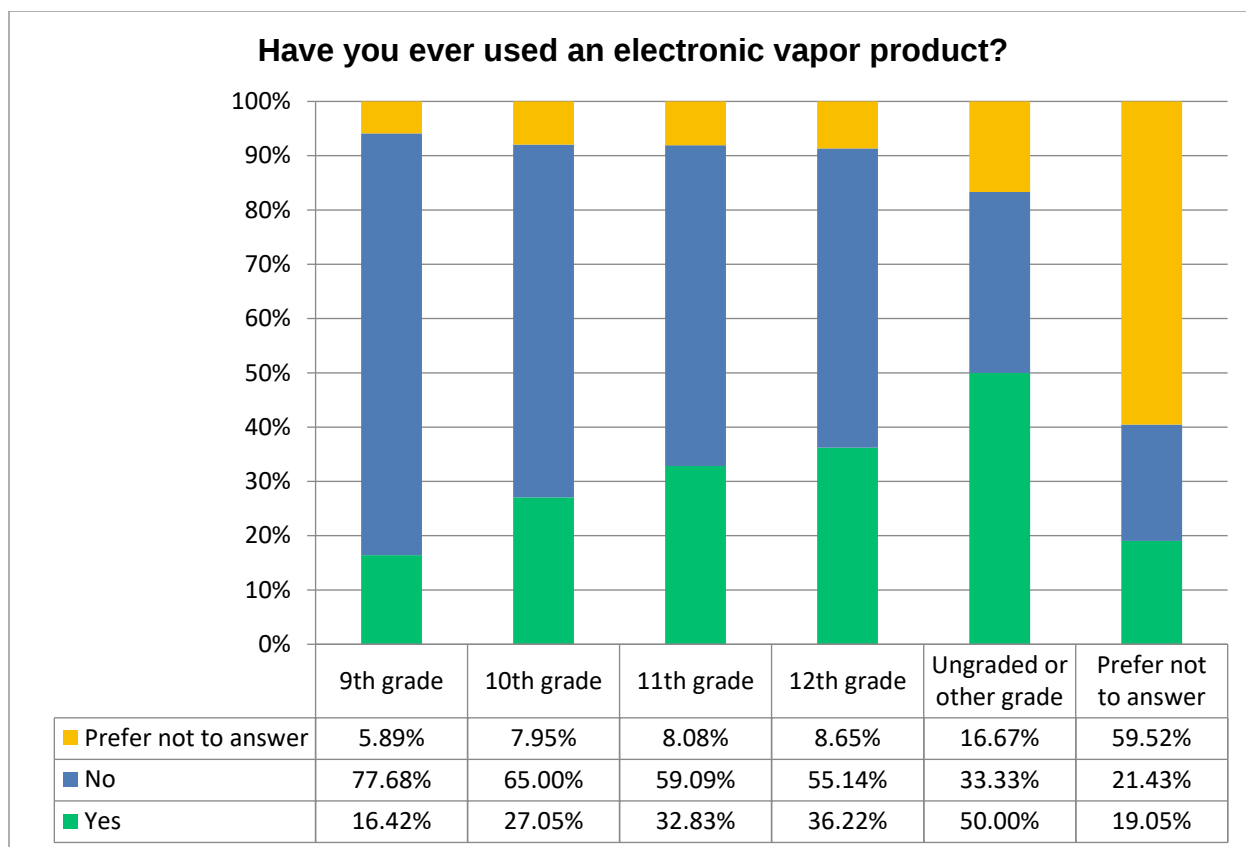
Youth vaping remains a critical concern despite increased awareness of its risks. Survey questions on electronic vapor products provide insight into initiation and use frequency patterns among adolescents. Findings from the YRBS allow schools and communities to target prevention efforts and reduce the risk of long-term health consequences and addiction during this developmental stage.

Nearly two-thirds of students indicated they had never tried an electronic vapor product, while just over one-quarter reported experimenting with one at least once. Recent use was less frequent, with three-quarters of students reporting no use in the past 30 days. Daily vaping was reported by a small subset (7.46%), and most students accessed products socially, often through friends or family. Across grade levels, vaping increased with age, with 12th graders consistently reporting higher rates of lifetime use, recent use, daily use, and perceived ease of access compared to younger students. Students in the “Other” gender category reported notably higher rates of use and access, though results for this group should be interpreted with caution due to a small sample size.

Students' perceptions largely reflected awareness of potential harm and social disapproval. Most students believed it was wrong for someone their age to use vapor products, and even more believed their parents would strongly disapprove of their use. From 2020-2023, rates of both lifetime and recent use have steadily declined, suggesting a positive shift in vaping trends among students in recent years.

Electronic Vapor Use Among Students

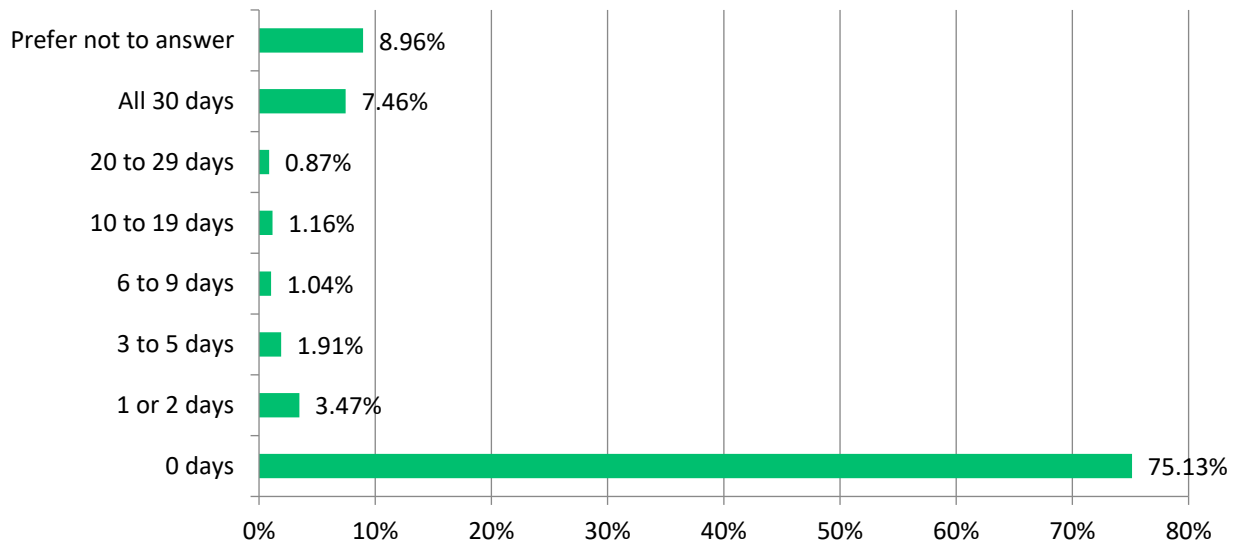




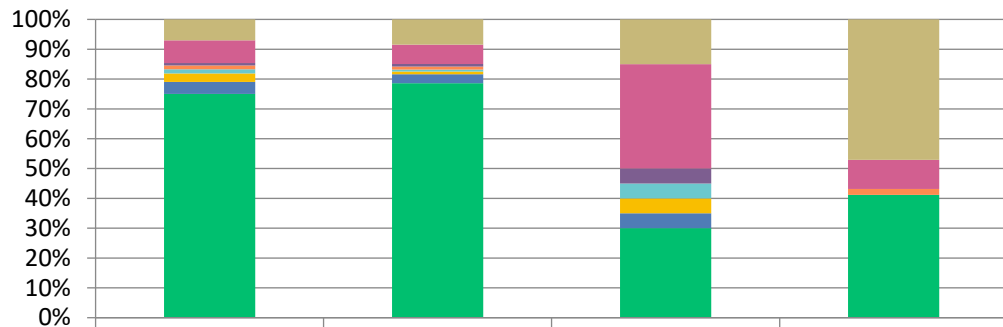
Key Findings on Vaping Usage Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (63.85%) reported never having used an electronic vapor product, while 27.30% indicated they had tried one at least once. An additional 8.85% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, most students had not reported that they had vaped, though over a quarter reported some experimentation.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across all gender groups reported never having used an electronic vapor product, including 69.75% of males and 61.18% of females. Among respondents, 32.37% of females and 21.65% of males indicated they had tried vaping. Students identifying as “Other” reported the highest rate of use at 55.00% and the lowest rate of non-use (30.00%). Due to the small sample size in this group, findings should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Reported use of electronic vapor products increased with grade level. Among 9th graders, 16.42% reported having ever used a vape product, compared to 36.22% of 12th graders. Correspondingly, the percentage of students reporting non-use declined from 77.68% in 9th grade to 55.14% in 12th grade. Students in the ungraded/other category had the highest rate of use at 50.00% and the lowest rate of non-use (33.33%). Due to the small sample size in this group, findings should be interpreted with caution.

During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use an electronic vapor product?

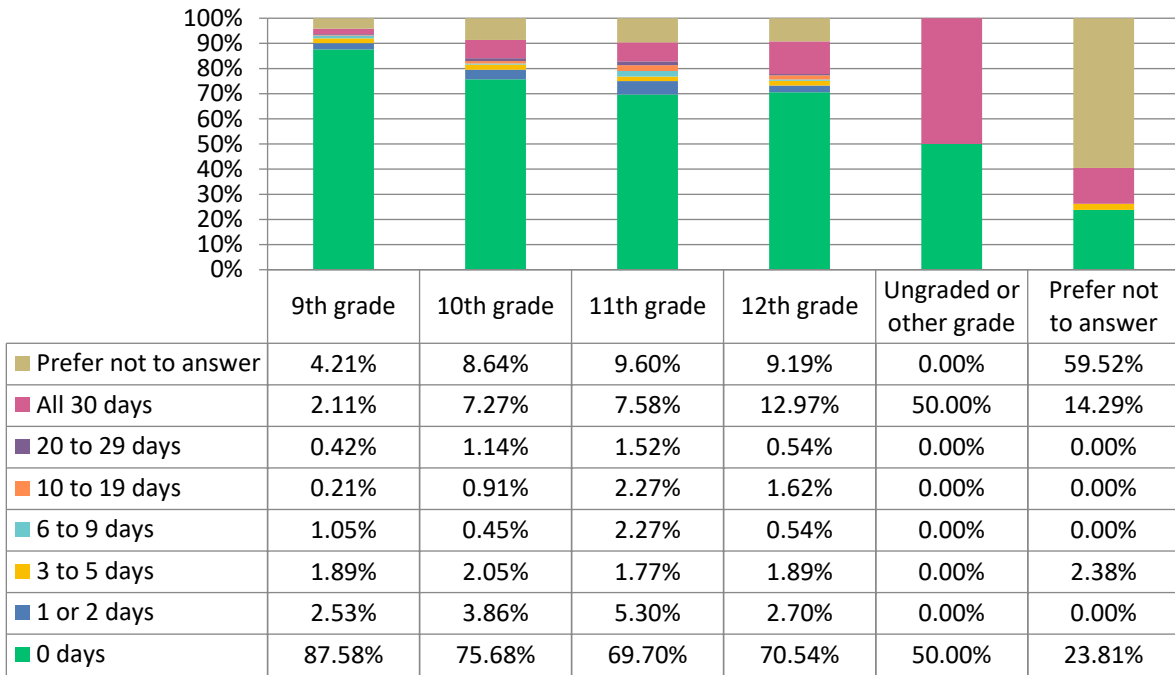


During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use an electronic vapor product?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	7.03%	8.48%	15.00%	47.06%
All 30 days	7.60%	6.46%	35.00%	9.80%
20 to 29 days	0.81%	0.89%	5.00%	0.00%
10 to 19 days	1.27%	1.01%	0.00%	1.96%
6 to 9 days	1.38%	0.63%	5.00%	0.00%
3 to 5 days	2.88%	0.89%	5.00%	0.00%
1 or 2 days	4.03%	3.04%	5.00%	0.00%
0 days	75.00%	78.61%	30.00%	41.18%

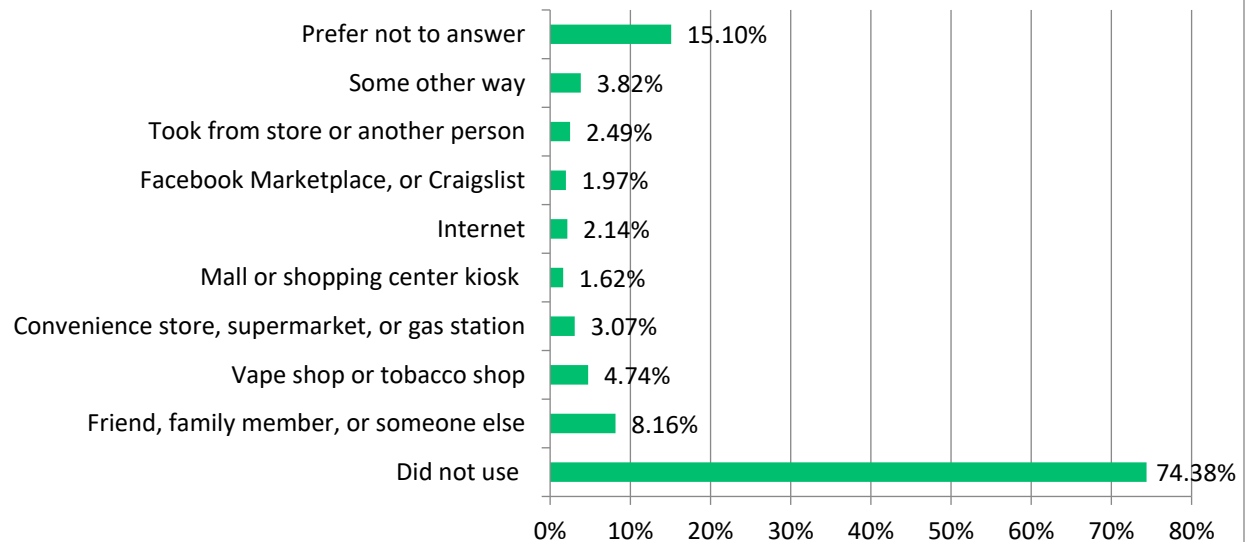
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use an electronic vapor product?



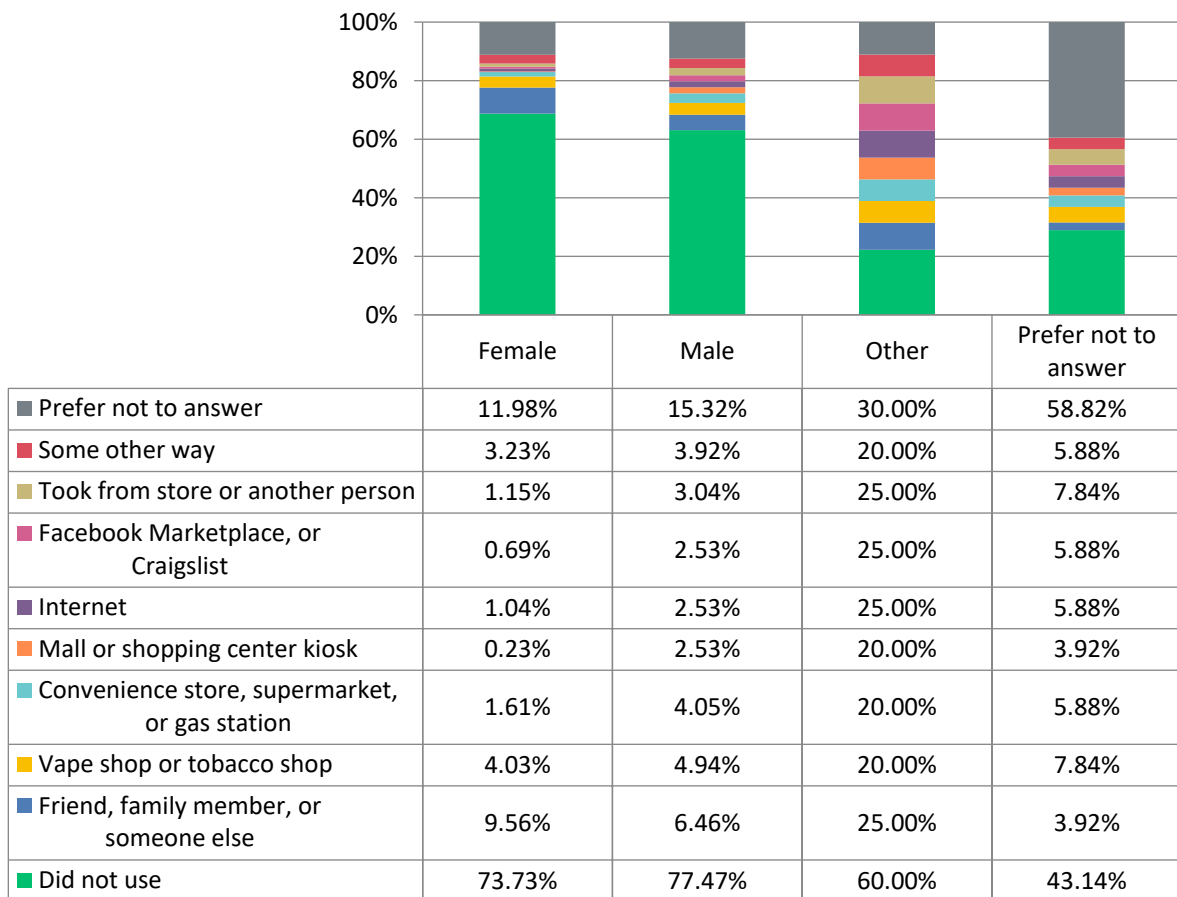
Key Findings on Vaping Frequency Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (75.13%) reported not using an electronic vapor product in the past 30 days. A small percentage reported occasional use, including 3.47% who vaped on 1 or 2 days and 1.91% on 3 to 5 days. Daily use was reported by 7.46% of students, while fewer than 4% reported use in any of the mid-range categories (6 to 29 days). An additional 8.96% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, the majority of students did not use electronic vapor products recently, and frequent use was limited to a small subset.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across gender groups reported no electronic vapor product use in the past 30 days, including 78.61% of males and 75.00% of females. Daily use (all 30 days) was similar between females (7.60%) and males (6.46%). However, students identifying as “Other” reported the lowest rate of non-use (30.00%) and the highest daily use (35.00%). Due to the small sample size, data for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across grade levels reported no use of electronic vapor products in the past 30 days. Non-use declined with grade, reaching 69.70% in 11th grade and 70.54% in 12th. Daily vaping (all 30 days) increased with grade, from 2.11% in 9th grade to 12.97% in 12th grade. Students in the ungraded or other category showed a 50.00% non-use rate and 50.00% reporting daily use. Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.

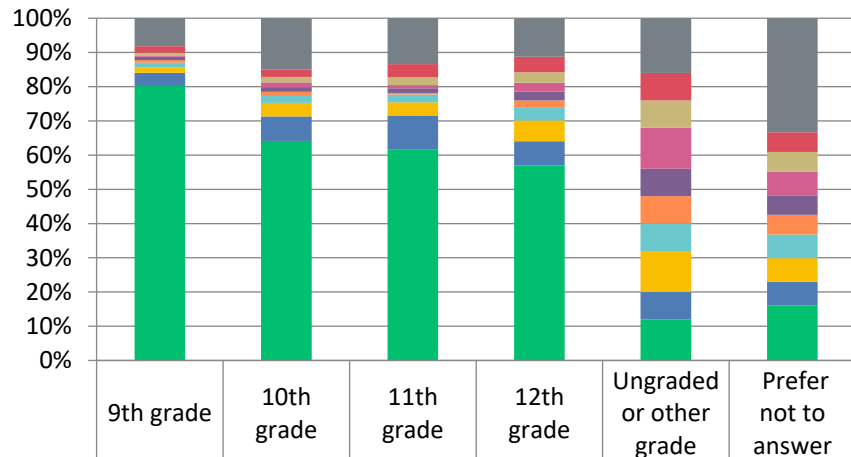
During the past 30 days, how did you usually get your electronic vapor products?



During the past 30 days, how did you usually get your electronic vapor products?



During the past 30 days, how did you usually get your electronic vapor products?



	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
■ Prefer not to answer	8.84%	17.05%	14.90%	14.05%	66.67%	69.05%
■ Some other way	2.11%	2.50%	4.29%	5.68%	33.33%	11.90%
■ Took from store or another person	0.84%	1.82%	2.53%	3.78%	33.33%	11.90%
■ Facebook Marketplace, or Craigslist	0.42%	1.59%	1.01%	3.24%	50.00%	14.29%
■ Internet	1.05%	1.59%	1.52%	3.24%	33.33%	11.90%
■ Mall or shopping center kiosk	0.84%	1.36%	0.51%	2.43%	33.33%	11.90%
■ Convenience store, supermarket, or gas station	1.47%	2.27%	2.53%	4.86%	33.33%	14.29%
■ Vape shop or tobacco shop	1.68%	4.55%	4.29%	7.57%	50.00%	14.29%
■ Friend, family member, or someone else	4.21%	8.18%	11.11%	8.92%	33.33%	14.29%
■ Did not use	86.95%	73.18%	68.43%	71.08%	50.00%	33.33%

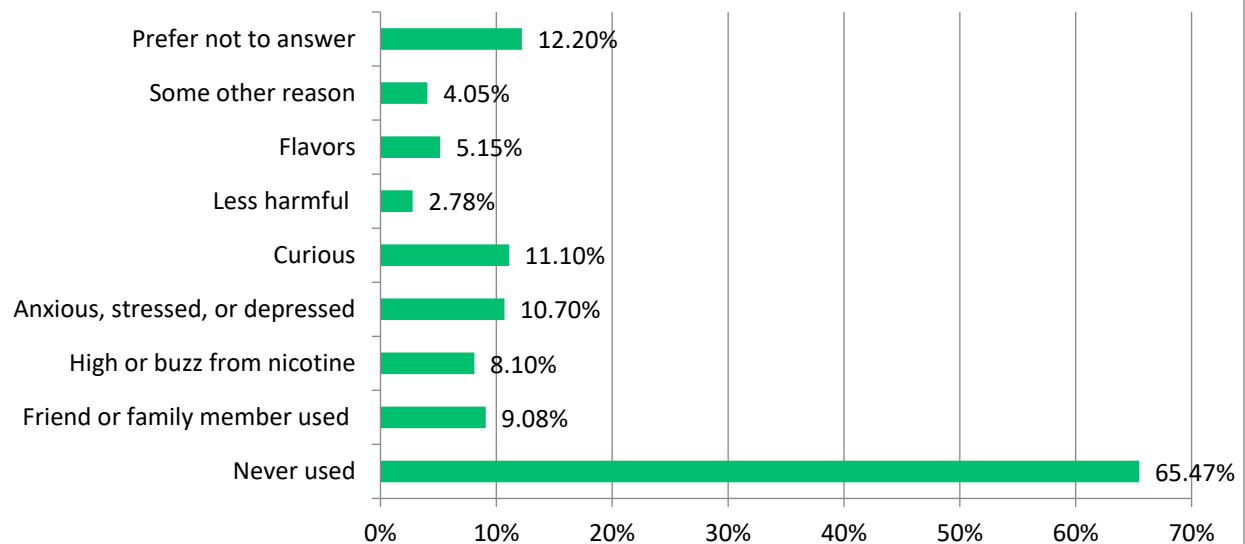
Key Findings on Accessing Vapor Products

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (74.38%) reported not using electronic vapor products in the past 30 days. Among respondents, the most common source was a friend, family member, or someone else (8.16%), followed by vape or tobacco shops (4.74%). Smaller percentages reported obtaining products from convenience stores (3.07%), the internet (2.14%), or other means such as taking them from a person or store (2.49%). An additional 15.10% of students selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, access to vapor products among youth appeared limited, with social sources being the most frequently reported method of acquisition.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across all gender groups reported not using electronic vapor products. The most common source was a friend, family member, or someone else, reported by 9.56% of females and 6.46% of males. Students identifying as "Other" were less likely to report non-use (60.00%) and reported higher rates of

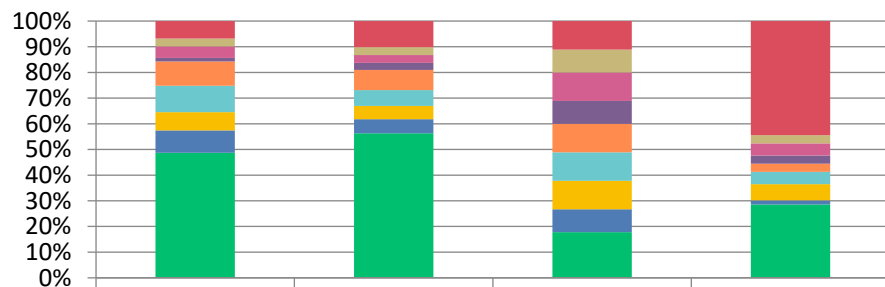
acquisition through various sources, including friends or family (25.00%) and online marketplaces (25.00%). Due to the small sample size, findings for this group should be interpreted with caution.

- **Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported not using electronic vapor products in the past 30 days. The percentage reporting non-use declined with grade level. Correspondingly, acquisition through social sources such as friends or family increased from 4.21% in 9th grade to 11.11% in 11th grade. Students in the ungraded or other category reported lower non-use (50.00%) and more evenly distributed responses across various sources. Due to the small sample size, findings for this group should be interpreted with caution.

What is the main reason you have used electronic vapor products?

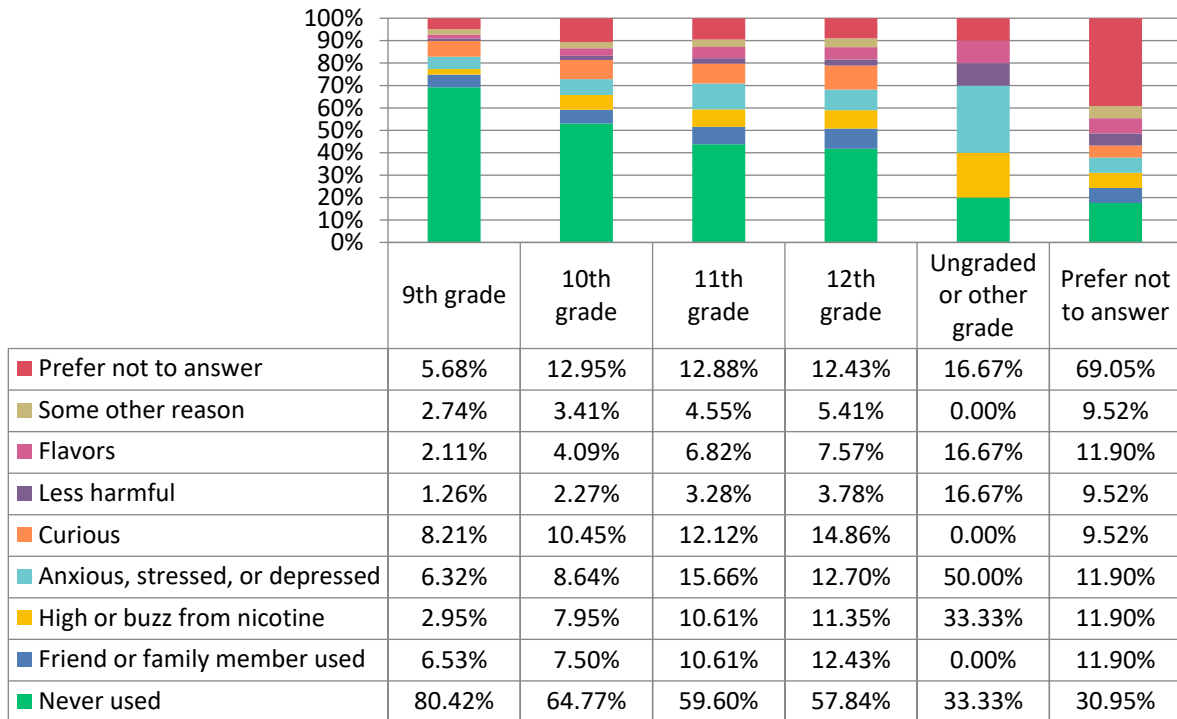


What is the main reason you have used electronic vapor products?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
■ Prefer not to answer	8.87%	12.78%	25.00%	54.90%
■ Some other reason	3.92%	3.80%	20.00%	3.92%
■ Flavors	5.88%	3.80%	25.00%	5.88%
■ Less harmful	1.73%	3.42%	20.00%	3.92%
■ Curious	12.33%	9.87%	25.00%	3.92%
■ Anxious, stressed, or depressed	13.36%	7.72%	25.00%	5.88%
■ High or buzz from nicotine	9.22%	6.46%	25.00%	7.84%
■ Friend or family member used	11.29%	6.84%	20.00%	1.96%
■ Never used	63.25%	70.51%	40.00%	35.29%

What is the main reason you have used electronic vapor products?

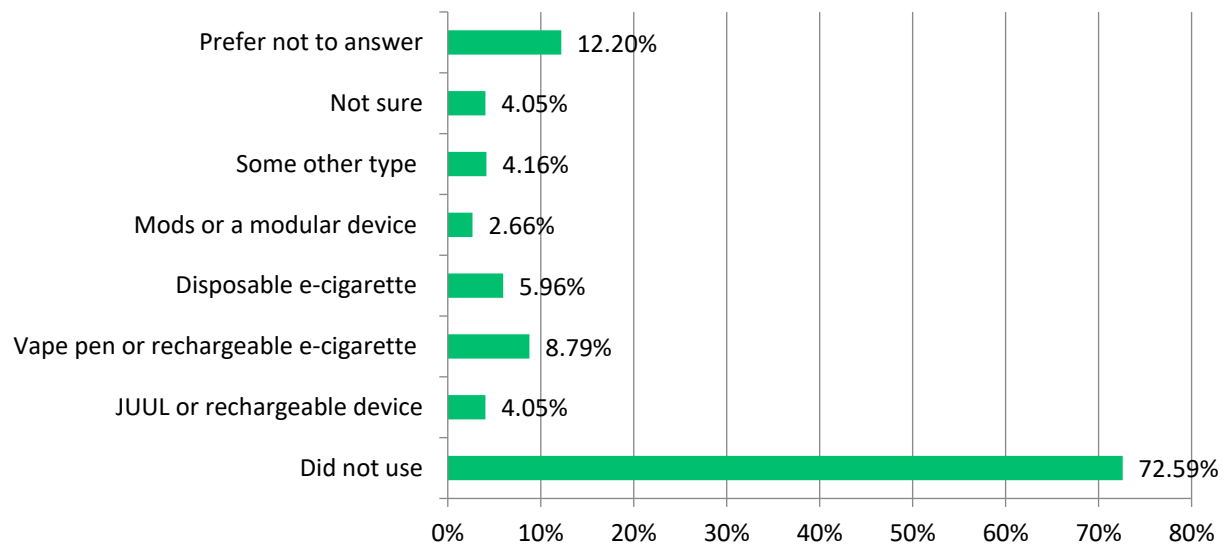


Key Findings on Vaping Behaviors and Access

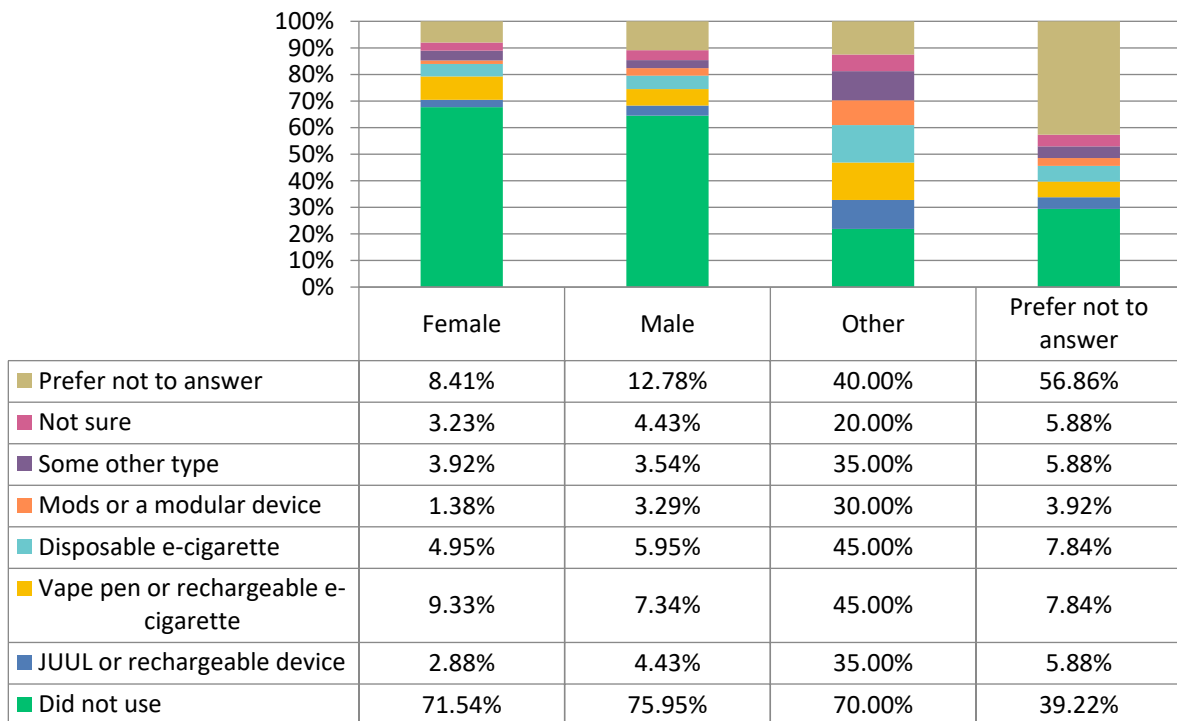
- County-wide Trends:** Most students (65.47%) reported never having used an electronic vapor product. Among respondents, the most common reasons were curiosity (11.10%) and feeling anxious, stressed, or depressed (10.70%), followed by use due to a friend or family member (9.08%) and the desire to get a high or buzz from nicotine (8.10%). Fewer students cited flavors (5.15%) or the perception that vaping is less harmful (2.78%) as their main reason. An additional 12.20% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, the majority of students had never used vapor products, and those who did most often cited curiosity or emotional stress as their primary motivation.
- Gender Differences:** Most female (63.25%) and male (70.51%) students reported never using electronic vapor products. Among students, curiosity (12.33%) and stress or anxiety (13.36%) were the most commonly cited reasons for females. In contrast, males most often reported curiosity (9.87%) and influence from friends or family (6.84%). Students identifying as "Other" were less likely to report never using (40.00%) and cited multiple reasons for use at equal rates (25.00%), including curiosity, stress, flavors, and social influence. Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most 9th grade students (80.42%) reported never using electronic vapor products, with this percentage decreasing across grades to 57.84% by 12th

grade.9th and 12th grade students most commonly cited curiosity (8.21% and 14.86%, respectively) and influence from a friend or family member (6.53% and 12.43%). In contrast, 10th and 11th graders most frequently reported curiosity (10.45% and 12.12%) and feeling anxious, stressed, or depressed (8.64% and 15.66%). Students in the ungraded or other group were less likely to report never using (33.33%) and more frequently cited stress, curiosity, and flavors as reasons for use.

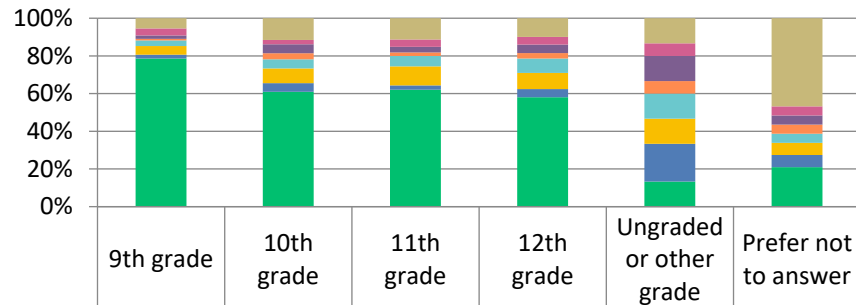
During the past 30 days, which type of electronic vapor product did you usually use?



During the past 30 days, which type of electronic vapor product did you usually use?



During the past 30 days, which type of electronic vapor product did you usually use?

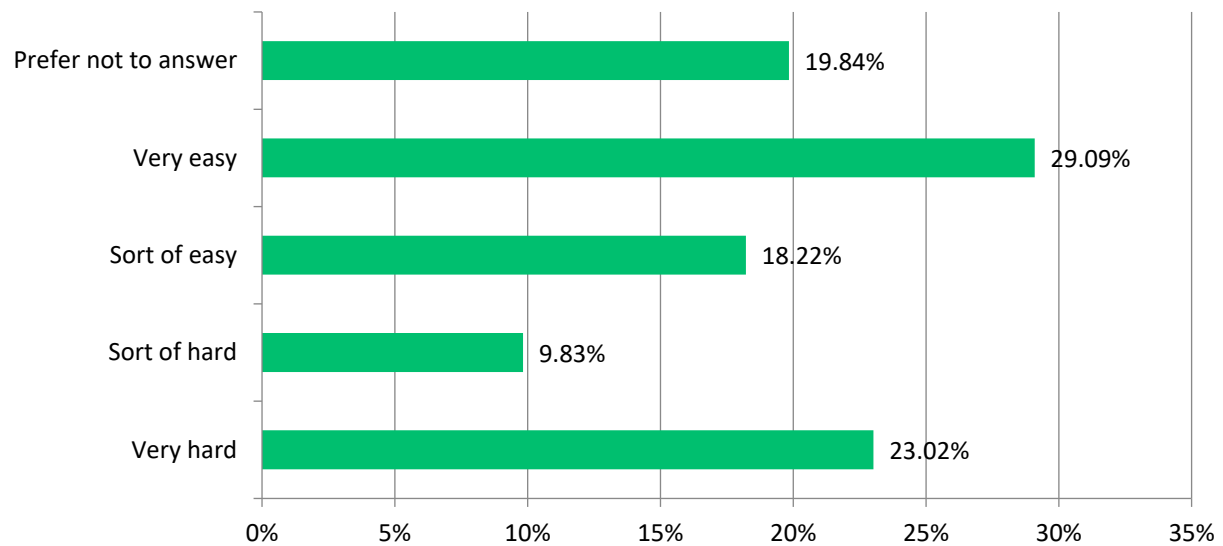


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
■ Prefer not to answer	5.68%	13.64%	12.37%	11.89%	33.33%	69.05%
■ Not sure	4.00%	2.73%	4.29%	4.86%	16.67%	7.14%
■ Some other type	1.89%	5.68%	3.28%	5.41%	33.33%	7.14%
■ Mods or a modular device	0.84%	3.86%	2.02%	3.51%	16.67%	7.14%
■ Disposable e-cigarette	3.16%	5.68%	6.06%	9.19%	33.33%	7.14%
■ Vape pen or rechargeable e-cigarette	4.84%	9.32%	11.11%	10.27%	33.33%	9.52%
■ JUUL or other rechargeable device	2.11%	5.45%	2.53%	5.14%	50.00%	9.52%
■ Did not use	82.95%	72.27%	68.18%	69.73%	33.33%	30.95%

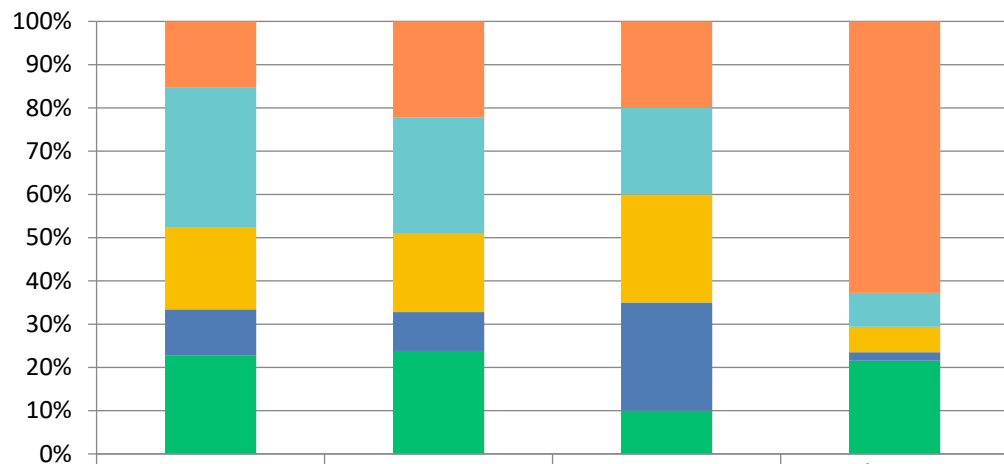
Key Findings on Electronic Vapor Product Type Usage

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (72.59%) reported not using any type of electronic vapor product in the past 30 days. Among respondents, vape pens or rechargeable e-cigarettes were the most commonly used (8.79%), followed by disposable e-cigarettes (5.96%). Smaller percentages reported using JUUL or other rechargeable devices (4.05%) or mods/modular devices (2.66%). An additional 12.20% of students selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, the majority of students reported no recent use.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across all gender groups reported not using any electronic vapor product in the past 30 days, including 75.95% of males, 71.54% of females. Vape pens or rechargeable e-cigarettes were the most commonly reported device type for both males (7.34%) and females (9.33%). Students identifying as “Other” reported higher usage across all device types, including 45.00% for both vape pens and disposable e-cigarettes. Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported not using electronic vapor products in the past 30 days. Across all grades, vape pens or rechargeable e-cigarettes were the most commonly reported type, increasing from 4.84% in 9th grade to 11.11% in 11th grade. Students in the ungraded or other group reported higher use across all product types and lower non-use (33.33%). Overall, non-use was the most common response, but experimentation increased slightly in higher grades.

If you wanted to get electronic vapor products, how hard or easy would it be for you to get some?

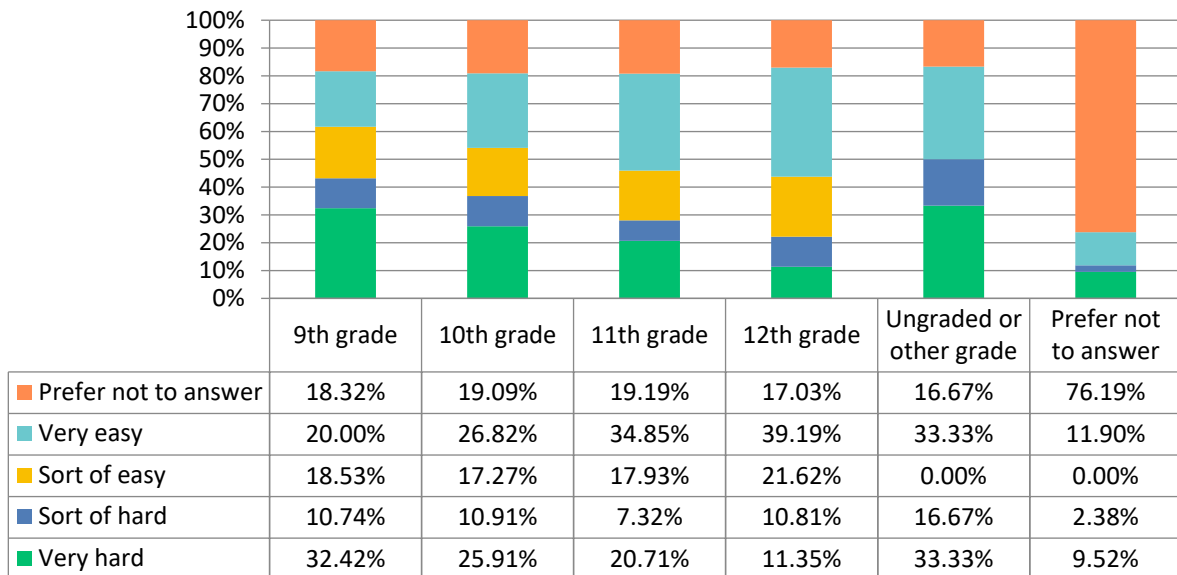


If you wanted to get electronic vapor products, how hard or easy would it be for you to get some?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	15.21%	22.15%	20.00%	62.75%
Very easy	32.49%	26.96%	20.00%	7.84%
Sort of easy	18.89%	18.10%	25.00%	5.88%
Sort of hard	10.71%	8.99%	25.00%	1.96%
Very hard	22.70%	23.80%	10.00%	21.57%

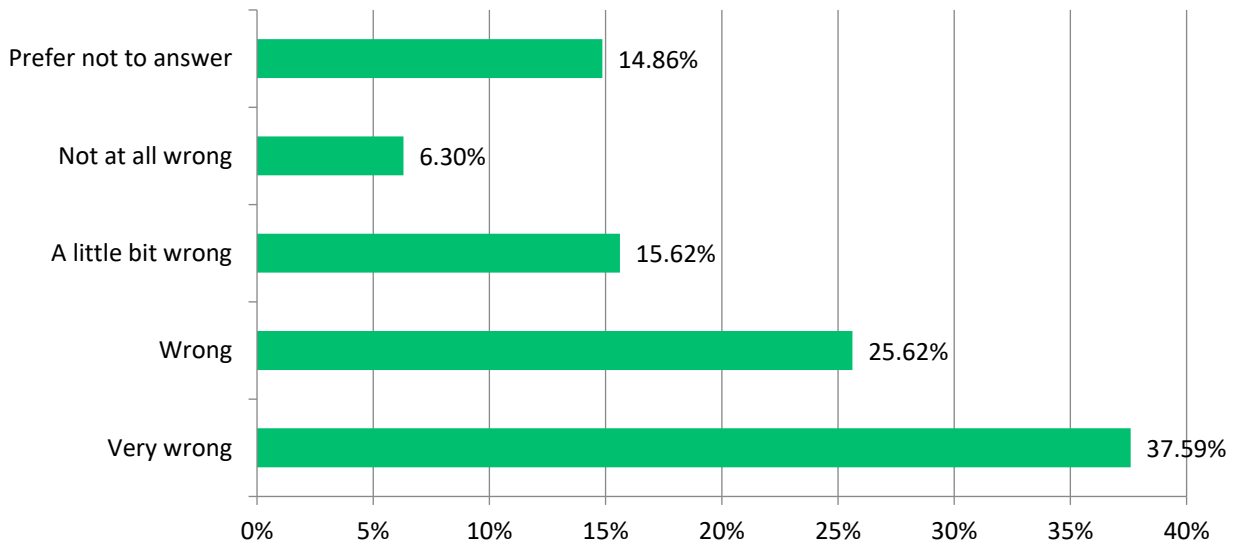
If you wanted to get electronic vapor products, how hard or easy would it be for you to get some?



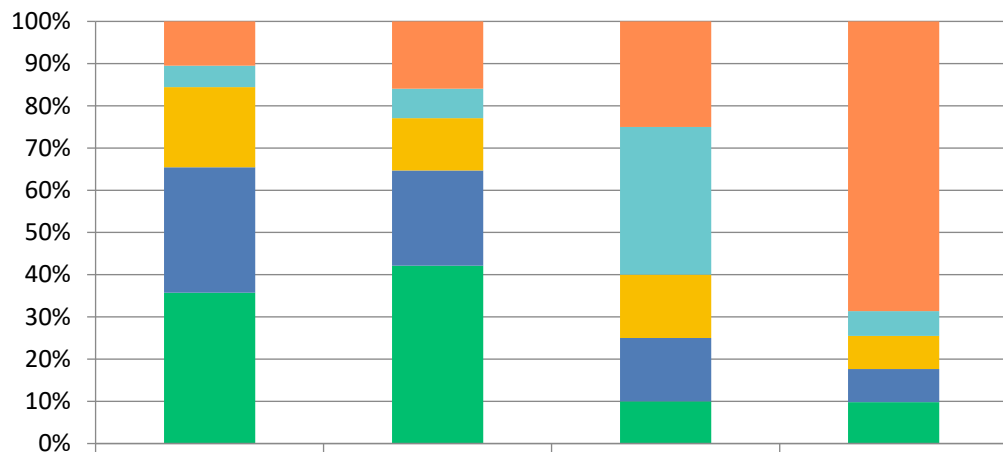
Key Findings on Ease of Access

- County-wide Trends:** Nearly half of students perceived electronic vapor products as accessible, with 29.09% saying it would be "Very easy" and 18.22% reporting it would be "Sort of easy" to get them. In contrast, 23.02% said it would be "Very hard" and 9.83% said "Sort of hard." An additional 19.84% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, students were more likely to view electronic vapor products as easy rather than difficult to obtain.
- Gender Differences:** Perceptions of ease in accessing electronic vapor products varied slightly by gender. Female students were somewhat more likely to report that access was "Very easy" (32.49%) compared to male students (26.96%). Students identifying as "Other" most commonly selected "Sort of easy" (25.00%) or "Sort of hard" (25.00%), showing a more mixed perception. Males and females had similar rates of reporting it would be very hard (23.80% and 22.70%, respectively).
- Grade Differences:** Perceptions of how easy it was to access electronic vapor products shifted by grade. The percentage of students who reported it would be "Very easy" increased with grade level, from 20.00% in 9th grade to 39.19% in 12th grade. Meanwhile, the proportion who said it would be "Very hard" declined from 32.42% in 9th grade to 11.35% in 12th grade. Students in the ungraded/other category also showed relatively high perceptions of access, with 33.33% reporting it would be "Very easy" and 33.33% "Very hard." Overall, older students were more likely to report that accessing vapor products would be easy, while younger students more often perceived it as difficult.

How wrong do you think it is for someone your age to use electronic vapor products?

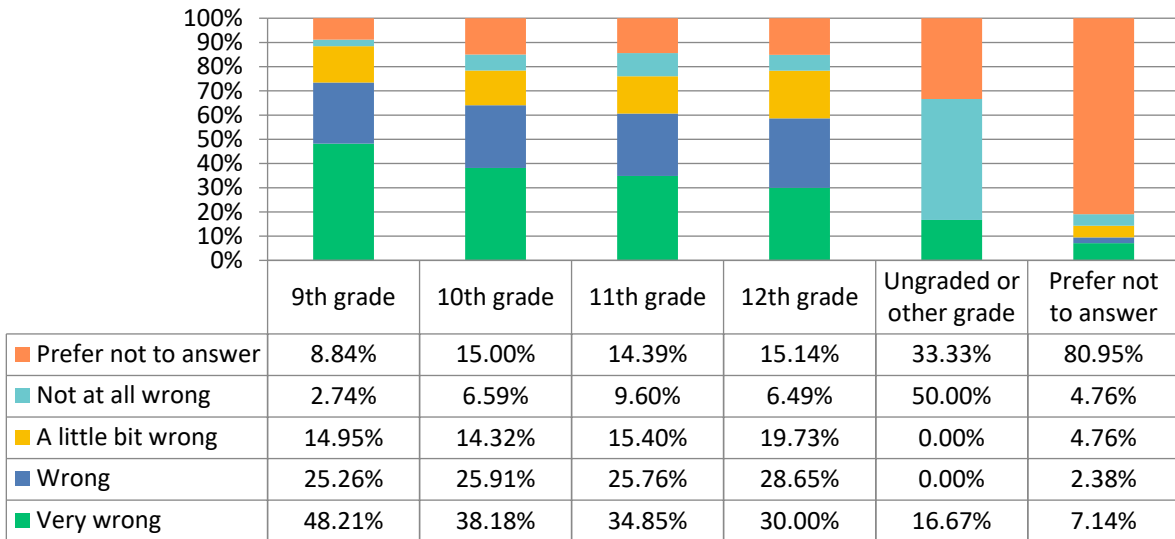


How wrong do you think it is for someone your age to use electronic vapor products?



Prefer not to answer	10.48%	15.95%	25.00%	68.63%
Not at all wrong	5.07%	6.96%	35.00%	5.88%
A little bit wrong	19.01%	12.41%	15.00%	7.84%
Wrong	29.72%	22.53%	15.00%	7.84%
Very wrong	35.71%	42.15%	10.00%	9.80%

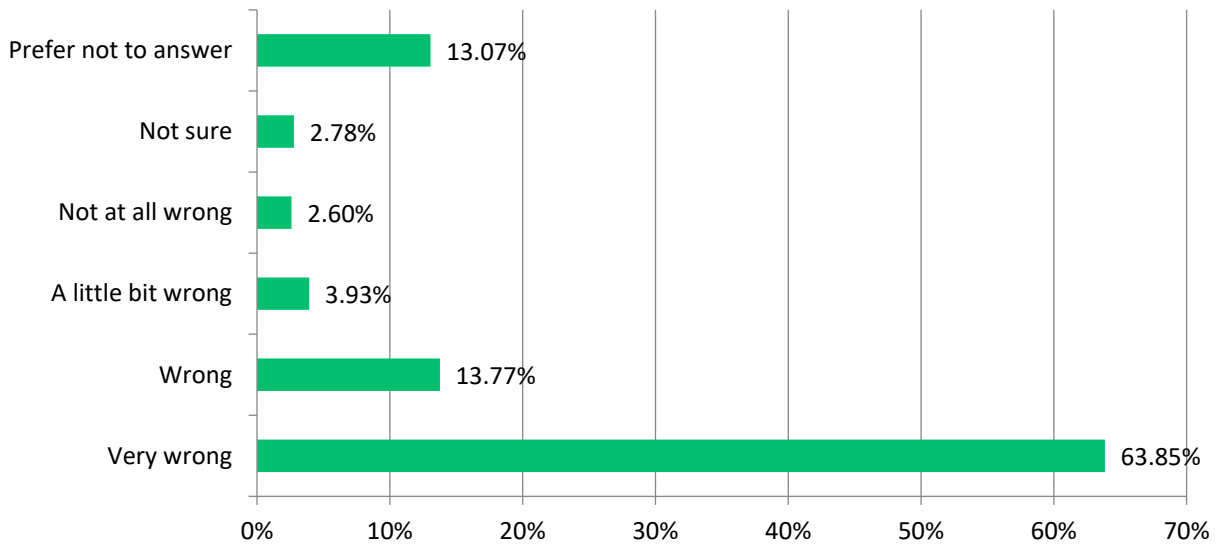
How wrong do you think it is for someone your age to use electronic vapor products?



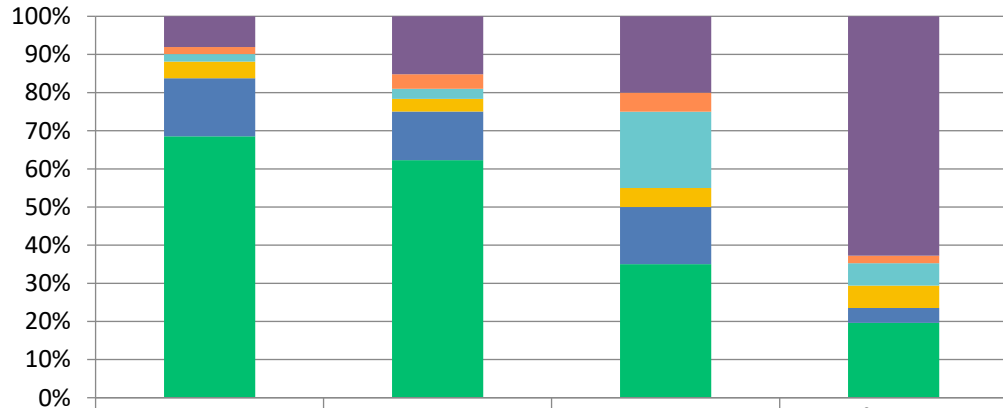
Key Findings on Perception of Vaping

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported using electronic vapor products was wrong for someone their age. Specifically, 37.59% said it was "Very wrong" and 25.62% said it was "Wrong." Smaller percentages felt it was "A little bit wrong" (15.62%) or "Not at all wrong" (6.30%). An additional 14.86% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, the majority of students expressed clear disapproval of youth vapor product use.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across gender groups believed it was wrong for someone their age to use electronic vapor products. Among females, 35.71% said it was "Very wrong," and 29.72% said, "Wrong." Males reported similar views, with 42.15% choosing "Very wrong" and 22.53% "Wrong." Students identifying as "Other" had lower rates of disapproval, with only 10.00% selecting "Very wrong" and 15.00% "Wrong," while 35.00% said it was "Not at all wrong." Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grades believed it was wrong for someone their age to use electronic vapor products. The percentage of students who said it was "Very wrong" was highest among 9th graders (48.21%) and gradually declined by grade, with 30.00% of 12th graders selecting this option. Reports of "Wrong" remained relatively steady across grades, ranging from 25.19% to 28.65%. In contrast, "Not at all wrong" reports were more common among older students, increasing from 2.74% in 9th grade to 6.49% in 12th. Students in the ungraded/other category showed more varied responses, with 50.00% saying "Not at all wrong" and only 16.67% selecting "Very wrong." Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.

How wrong do your parents or guardians feel it would be for you to use electronic vapor products?

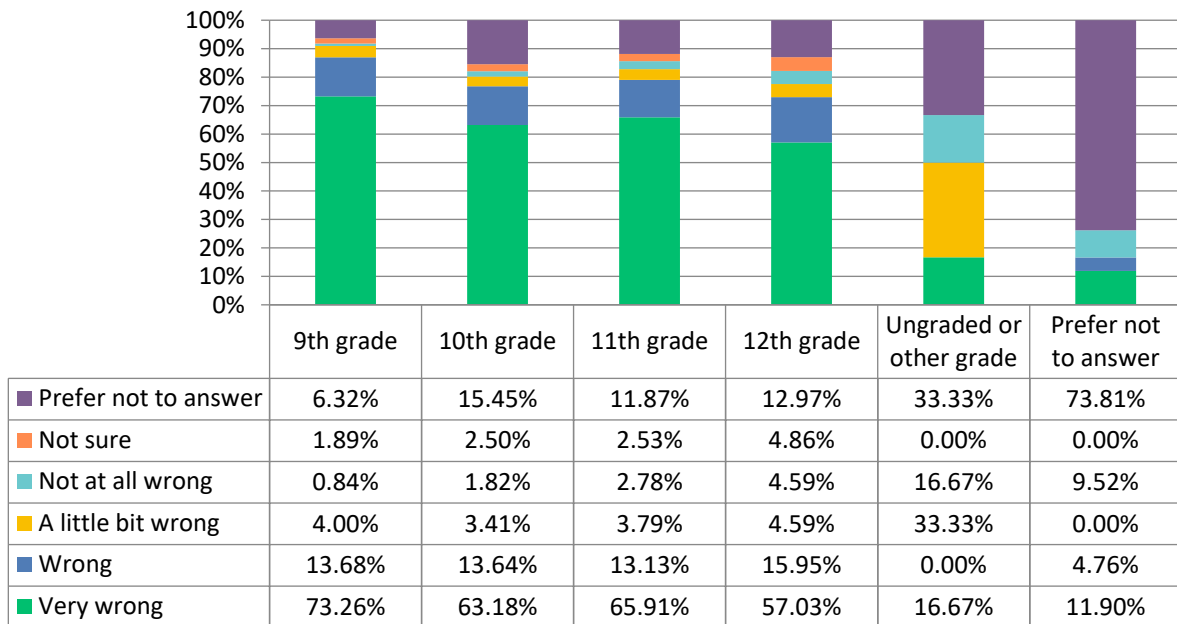


How wrong do your parents or guardians feel it would be for you to use electronic vapor products?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	8.06%	15.19%	20.00%	62.75%
Not sure	1.84%	3.80%	5.00%	1.96%
Not at all wrong	1.96%	2.66%	20.00%	5.88%
A little bit wrong	4.38%	3.29%	5.00%	5.88%
Wrong	15.21%	12.78%	15.00%	3.92%
Very wrong	68.55%	62.28%	35.00%	19.61%

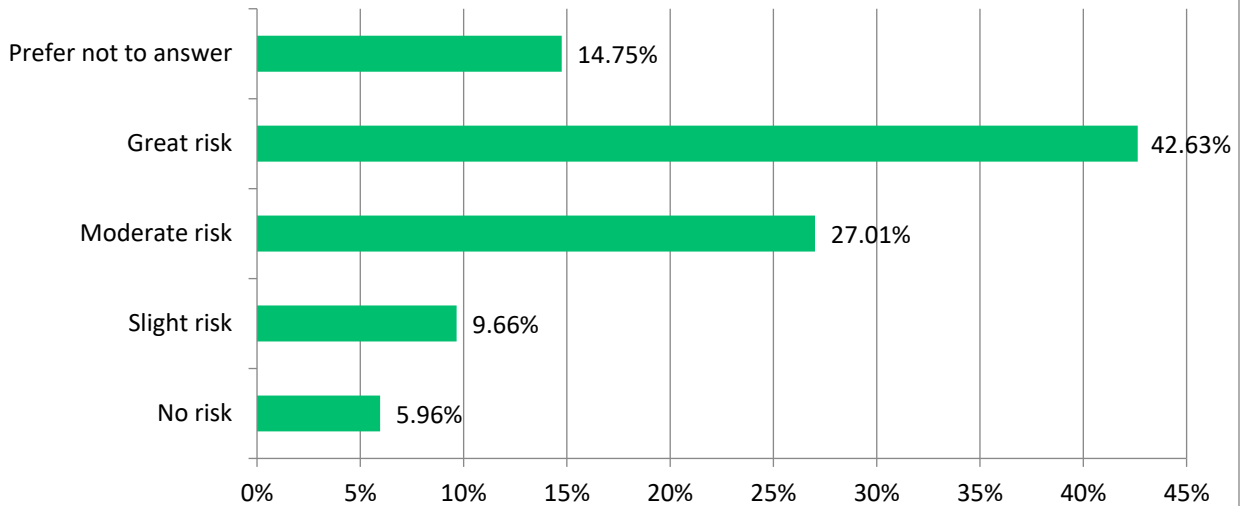
How wrong do your parents or guardians feel it would be for you to use electronic vapor products?



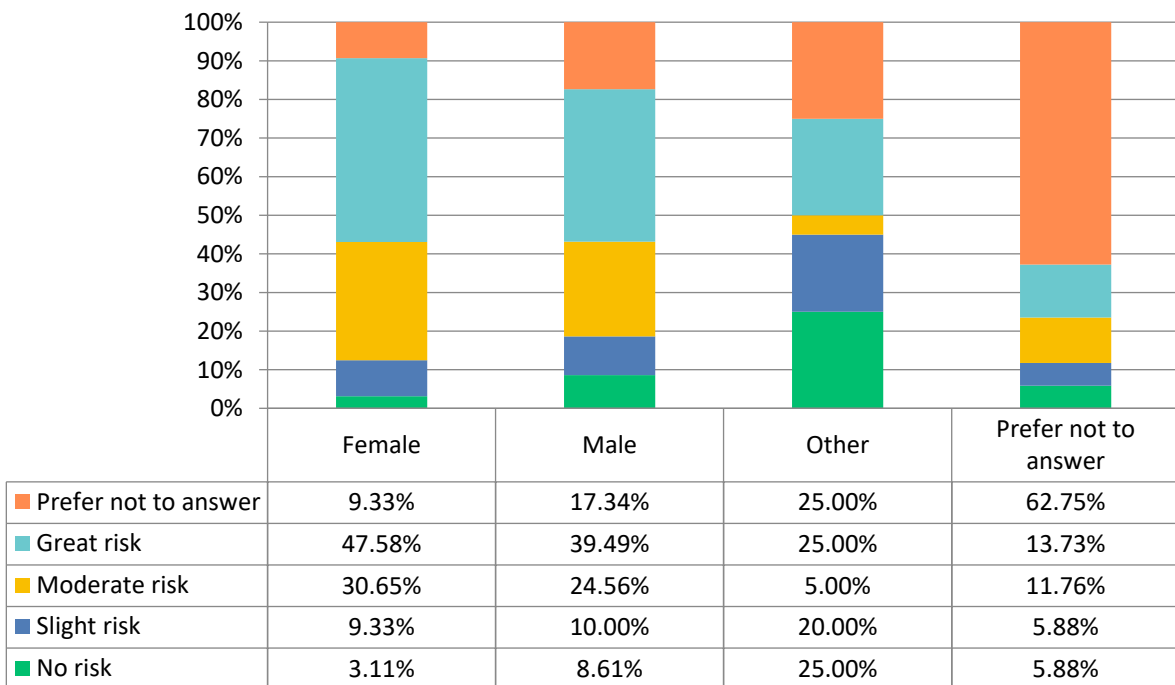
Key Findings on Guardian Perception

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (63.85%) reported that their parents or guardians would view their use of electronic vapor products as “Very wrong,” while 13.77% said their parents would consider it “Wrong.” Only a small percentage of students believed their parents viewed it as “A little bit wrong” (3.93%), “Not at all wrong” (2.60%), or “Not sure” (2.78%). An additional 13.07% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, the majority of students believed their parents strongly disapproved of electronic vapor product use.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across all gender identities reported that their parents or guardians viewed electronic vapor product use as “Very wrong,” including 68.55% of females and 62.28% of males. Rates of perceived parental disapproval declined among students identifying as “Other,” who also had higher rates of reporting “Not at all wrong” (20.00%). Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grades reported that their parents or guardians viewed electronic vapor produce use as “Very wrong,” with slight fluctuations from grade to grade. Reports of “Not at all wrong” or uncertainty (“Not sure”) increased slightly in upper grades, as did responses indicating lesser degrees of disapproval. Students in the ungraded/other category were less likely to report parental disapproval, with only 16.67% indicating “Very wrong.” Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.

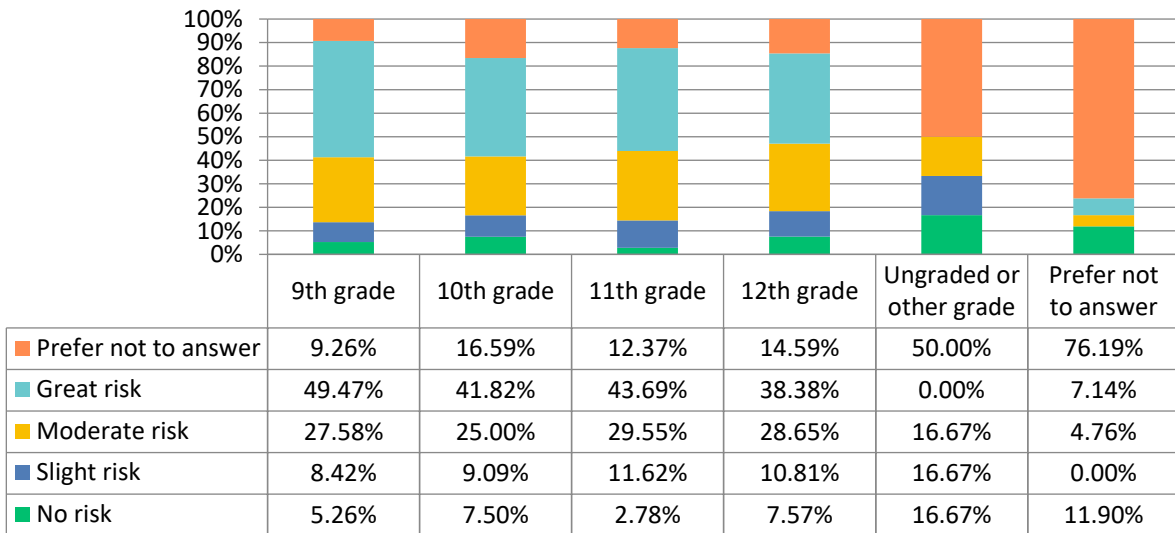
How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they use electronic vapor products regularly?



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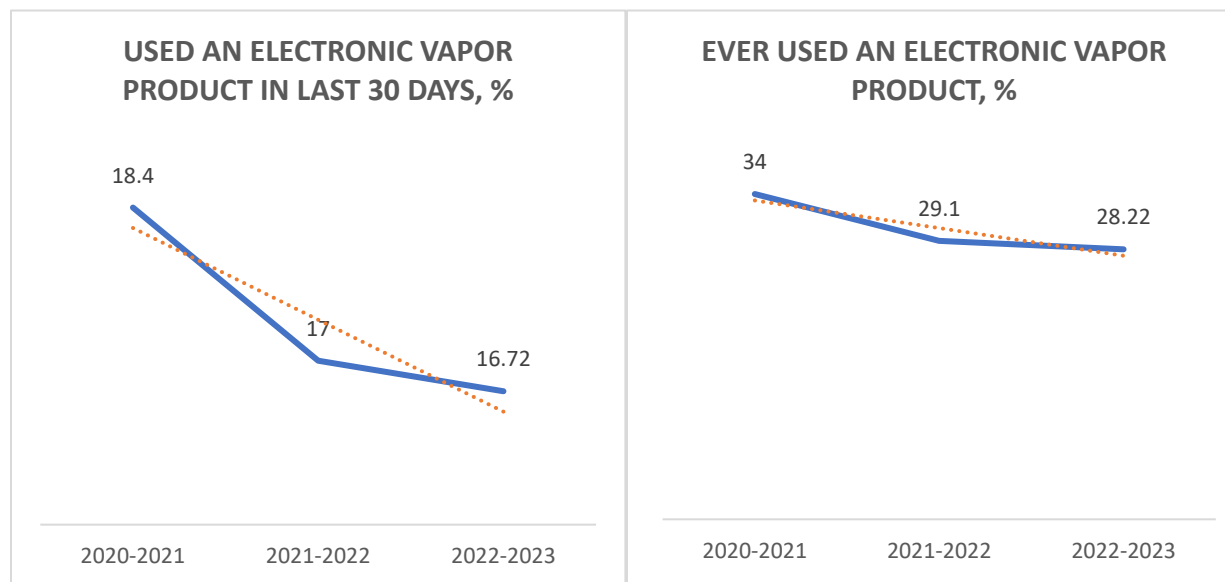


Key Findings on Perceived Vaping Risk

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (42.63%) reported there was "Great risk" of harm from regularly using electronic vapor products, followed by 27.01% who perceived a "Moderate risk." Fewer students viewed regular use as only a "Slight risk" (9.66%) or "No risk" (5.96%), while 14.75% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, students generally recognized regular vapor product use as harmful, with the majority associating it with at least moderate health risks.
- Gender Differences:** Perceptions of risk from regular vapor product use varied by gender. Female students were most likely to report "Great risk" (47.58%) and "Moderate risk" (30.65%), with only 3.11% perceiving "No risk." Male students also largely perceived harm, with 39.49% selecting "Great risk" and 24.56% choosing "Moderate risk." Males had a higher rate of selecting "Prefer not to answer" (17.34%) compared to females (9.33%). Students identifying as "Other" reported lower perceived harm, with only 25.00% selecting "Great risk" and a combined 45.00% indicating "Slight risk" or "No risk." Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported that regular use of vapor products posed a "Great risk" or "Moderate risk." In 9th grade, 49.47% selected "Great risk" and 27.58% selected "Moderate risk," with similar patterns in 10th (41.82% and 25.00%), 11th (43.69% and 29.55%), and 12th grades (38.38% and 28.65%). Reports of "No risk" and "Slight risk" were low across all grades but slightly increased in higher grade levels.

Electronic Vapor Produce Use Over Time

Vaping has surged in popularity among adolescents, which is often viewed as a less harmful alternative to traditional smoking. However, the health risks associated with vaping remain significant, especially for developing youth. The following data captures recent trends in vape product use among students, highlighting shifts that may reflect changes in accessibility, social norms and perceptions of risk.



Key Findings on Electronic Vapor Product Use Over Time

- **Lifetime Vaping Experience:** There is a clear downward trend in the percentage of students who report ever having used an electronic vapor product over the past three years. There was a notable decrease from 34% in 2020-2021 to 28.22% in 2022-2023. This suggests a reduction in experimentation with vaping among students over time.
- **Reduction in Recent Vaping Use:** The proportion of students who reported using an electronic vapor product within the past 30 days has also decreased consistently, from 18.4% in 2020-2021 to 16.72% in 2022-2023. This drop highlights a positive trend, indicating fewer students reported regular or recent vaping behavior.

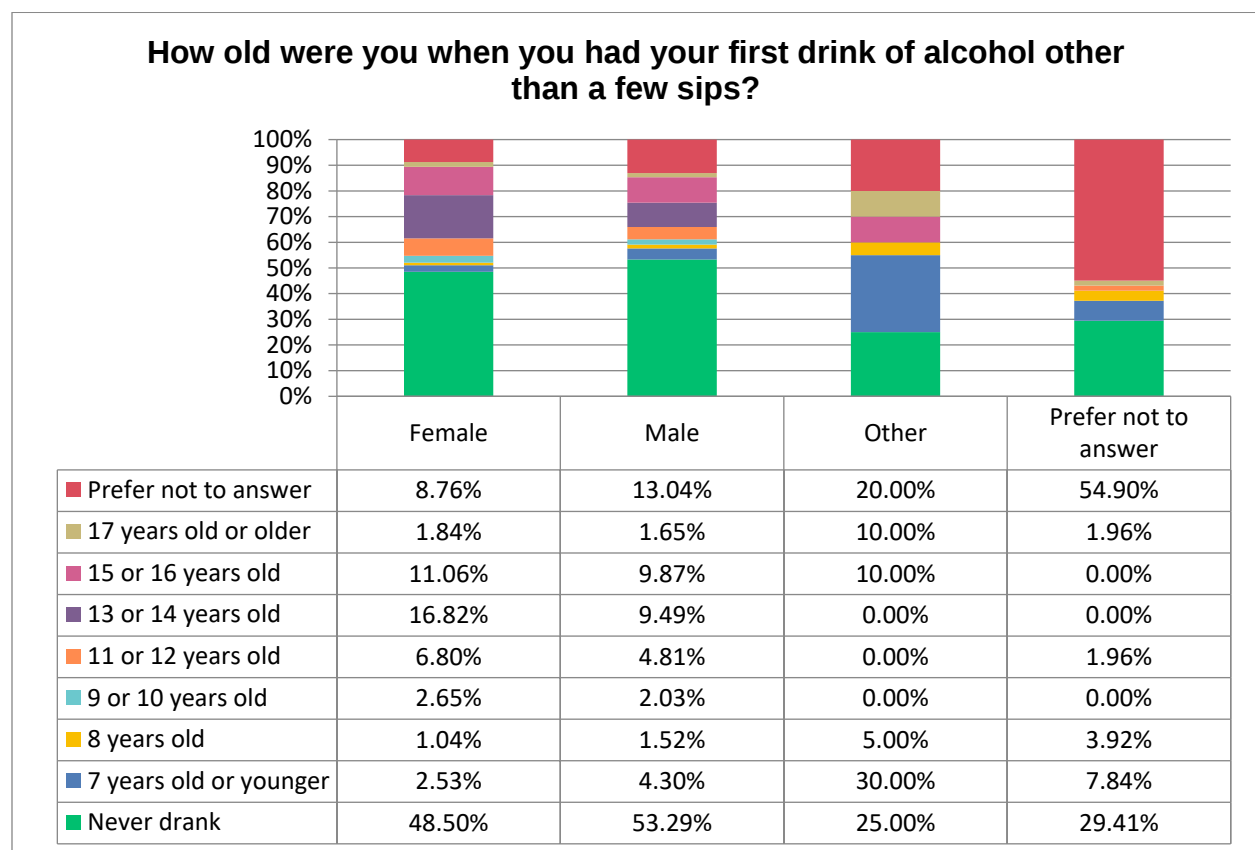
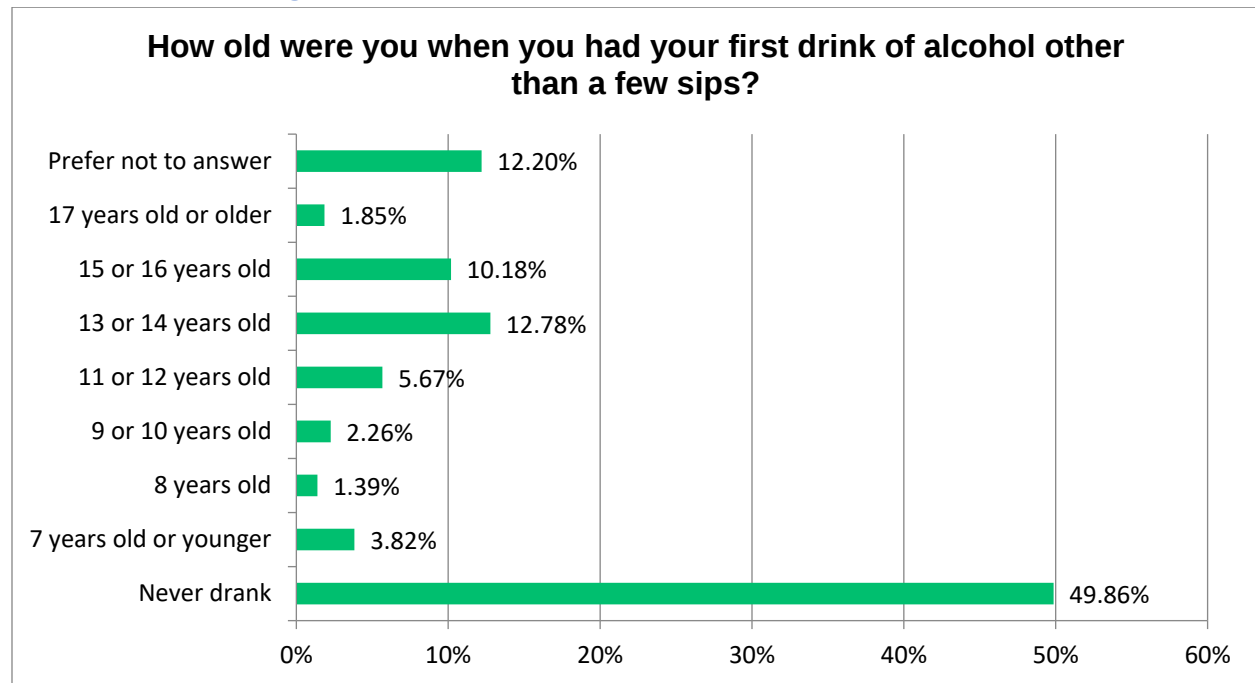
Alcohol

Alcohol use among teens remains a persistent concern due to its potential impact on adolescent development and the risk of long-term health consequences. The survey collected data on students' drinking habits, including age of first use, frequency of consumption, and binge drinking behavior. This information offers valuable insights into the prevalence and patterns of alcohol use within youth communities.

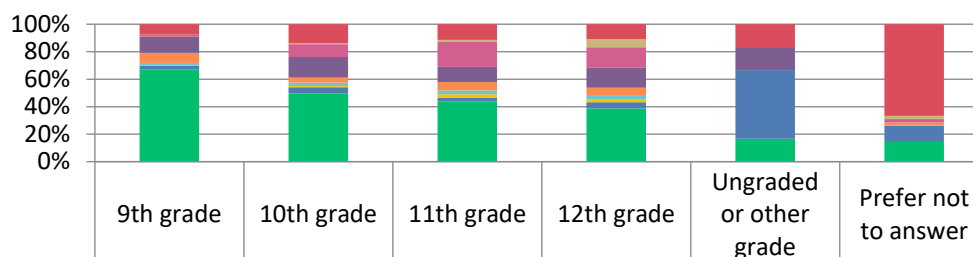
The 2022-2023 report indicates that alcohol use is slightly declining among students. Nearly half of students reported never having had a full drink of alcohol. Among those who did drink, the most common ages of first use were 13 to 16 years old. Recent alcohol use was relatively low, with just under 13% of students reporting drinking in the past 30 days, and most use occurred only occasionally. Binge drinking remained uncommon. However, some students reported consuming large quantities of alcohol, particularly among older grades and those identifying as "Other."

Perceptions of accessibility and risk varied by age and gender. Older students were more likely to view alcohol as easy to obtain, and perceived ease of access increased steadily from 9th to 12th grade. At the same time, those in lower grades were more likely to perceive underage drinking and binge behavior as harmful or wrong. Most students believed their parents strongly disapproved of underage drinking, though this perception also declined with grade level. Overall, while most students abstained from alcohol and recognized its risks, patterns of use and perception suggest increased experimentation and access among older students.

Alcohol Use Among Students



How old were you when you had your first drink of alcohol other than a few sips?

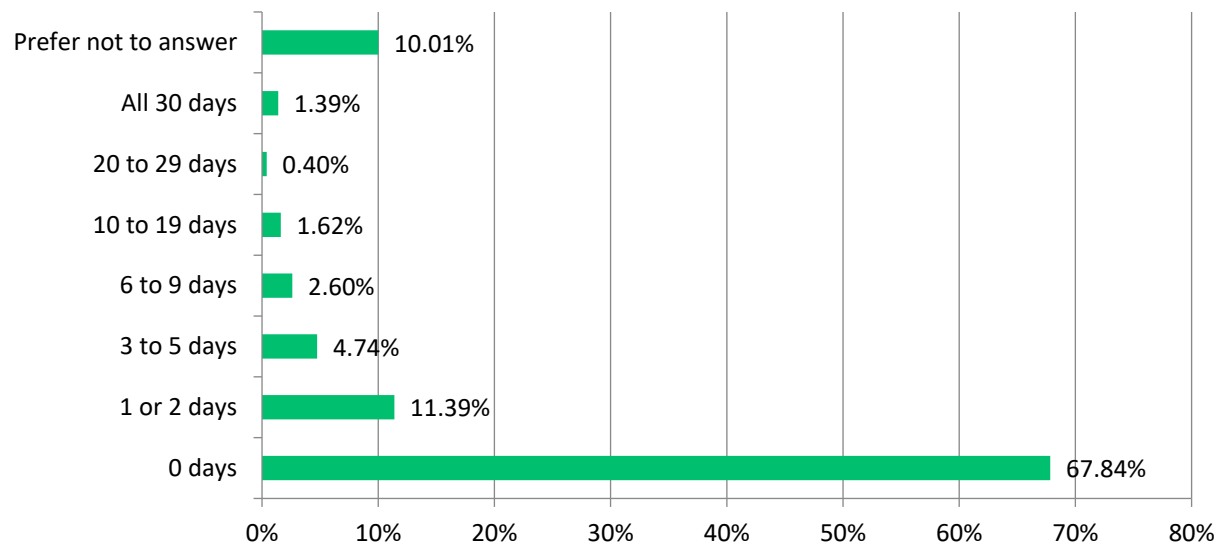


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	7.58%	13.86%	11.36%	10.81%	16.67%	66.67%
17 years old or older	0.00%	0.68%	1.52%	5.95%	0.00%	2.38%
15 or 16 years old	1.47%	9.32%	18.18%	14.86%	0.00%	2.38%
13 or 14 years old	11.79%	15.00%	11.11%	14.59%	16.67%	0.00%
11 or 12 years old	7.37%	3.64%	6.06%	5.95%	0.00%	2.38%
9 or 10 years old	1.47%	2.50%	2.78%	2.70%	0.00%	0.00%
8 years old	0.63%	0.91%	2.53%	1.89%	0.00%	0.00%
7 years old or younger	2.53%	4.32%	2.53%	4.59%	50.00%	11.90%
Never drank	67.16%	49.77%	43.94%	38.65%	16.67%	14.29%

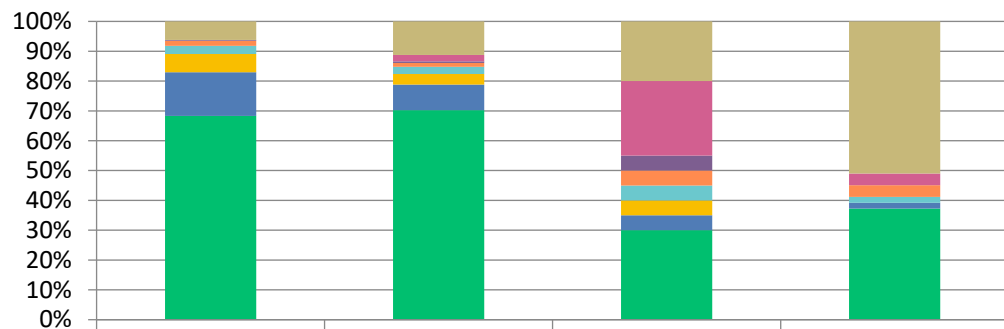
Key Findings on Age of First Alcohol Use

- County-wide Trends:** Nearly half of students (49.86%) reported never having had a full drink of alcohol. Among respondents, the most commonly reported ages of initiation were 13 or 14 years old (12.78%) and 15 or 16 years old (10.18%). Smaller percentages reported trying alcohol at younger ages, including 7 years old or younger (3.82%) and 8 years old (1.39%). Only 1.85% of students reported initiating alcohol use at age 17 or older. An additional 12.20% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, most students had not consumed alcohol beyond a few sips.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across all gender groups reported never having had a full drink of alcohol, including 53.29% of males and 48.50% of females. The most commonly reported age of first use for females was 13 or 14 years old (16.82%), while males most often reported starting at 15 or 16 years old (9.87%). Students identifying as “Other” reported lower rates of non-use (25.00%) and higher rates of early initiation. Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported never having had a full drink of alcohol, though this percentage declined with grade. As grade level increased, reported age of initiation shifted toward older age groups. 1.47% of 9th graders first drank at age 15 or 16, while 18.18% of 11th graders and 14.86% of 12th graders reported initiating at that age. Students in the ungraded or other category had the lowest rate of non-use (16.67%) and the highest percentage of early initiation.

During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have at least one drink of alcohol?

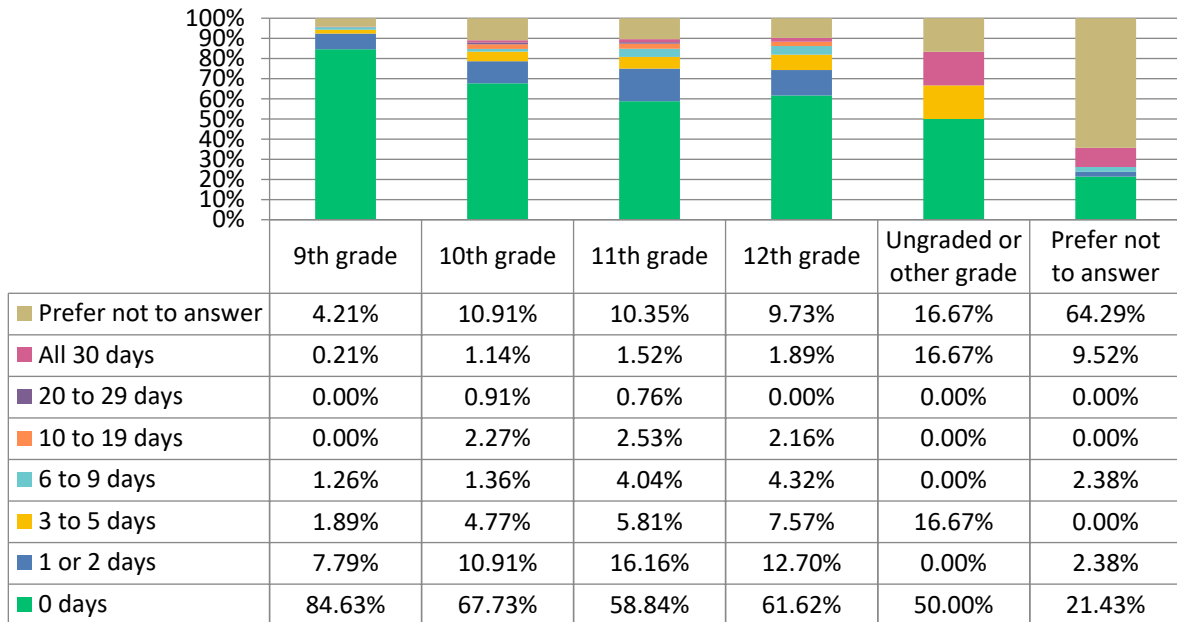


During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have at least one drink of alcohol?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	6.22%	11.27%	20.00%	50.98%
All 30 days	0.00%	2.15%	25.00%	3.92%
20 to 29 days	0.23%	0.51%	5.00%	0.00%
10 to 19 days	1.73%	1.27%	5.00%	3.92%
6 to 9 days	2.76%	2.41%	5.00%	1.96%
3 to 5 days	6.11%	3.54%	5.00%	0.00%
1 or 2 days	14.63%	8.61%	5.00%	1.96%
0 days	68.32%	70.25%	30.00%	37.25%

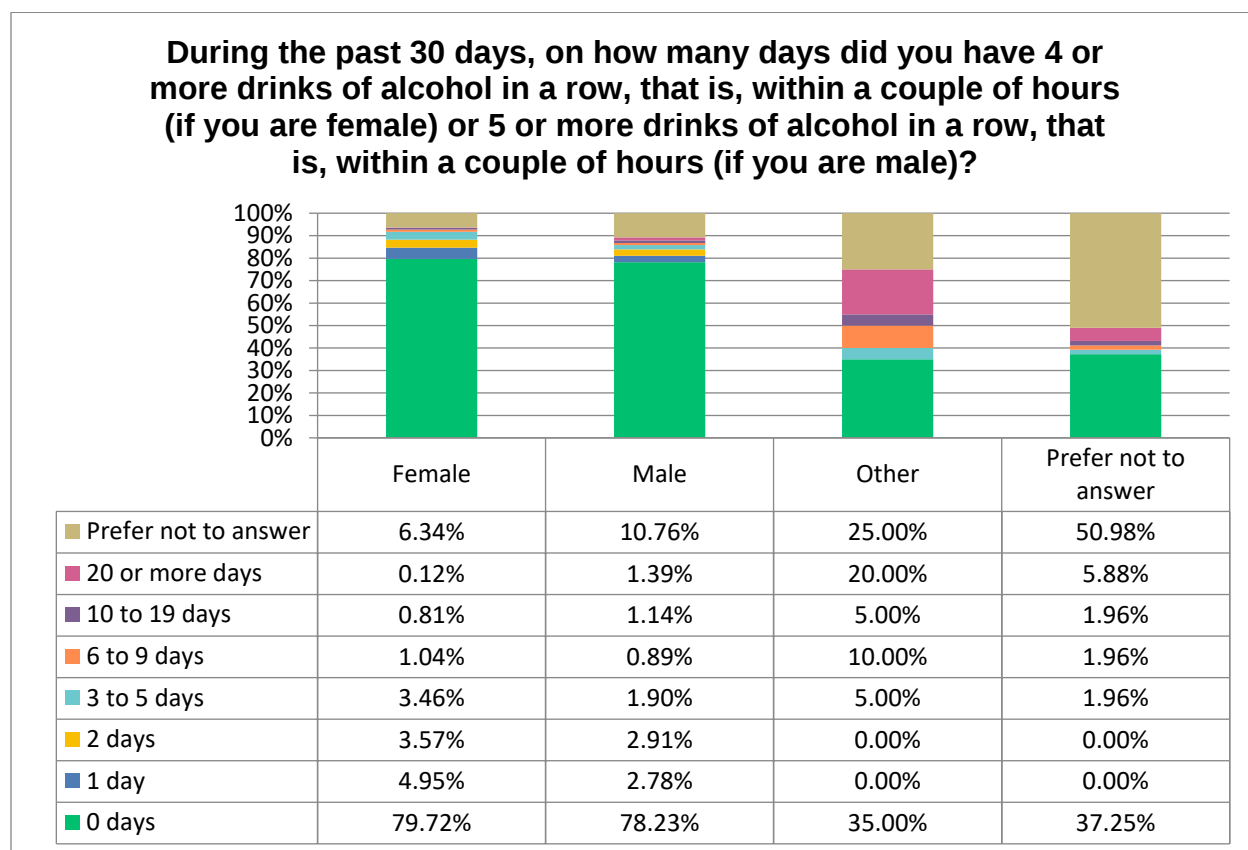
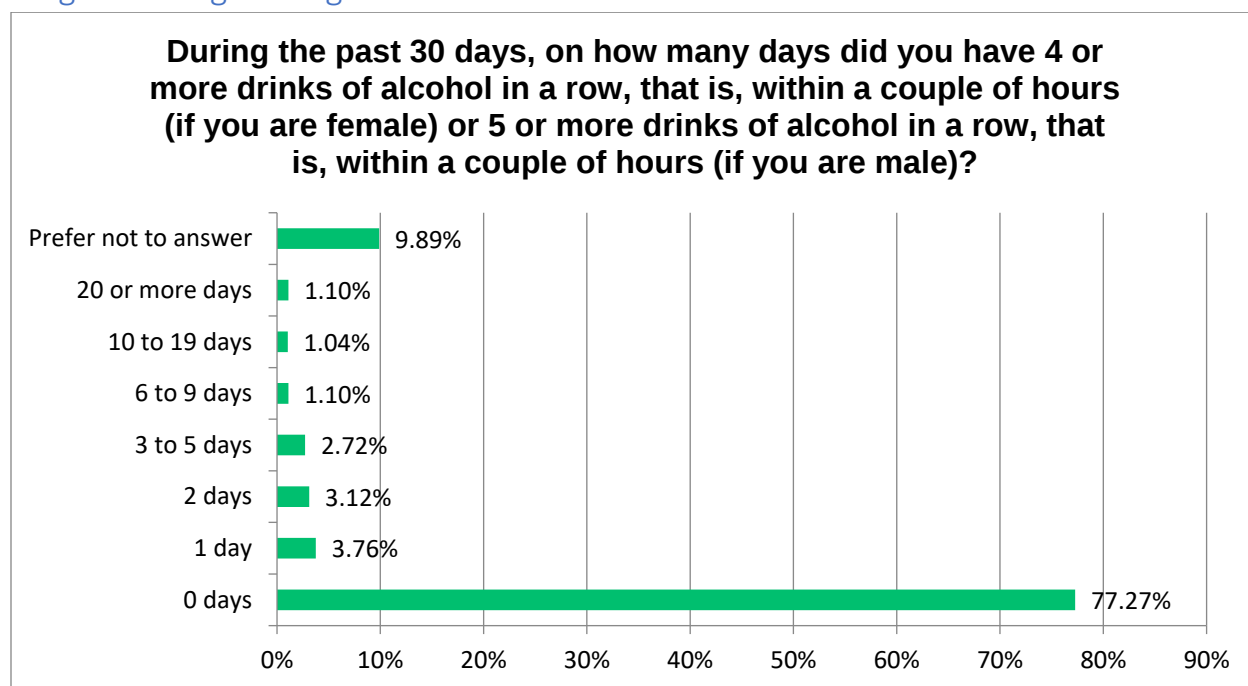
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have at least one drink of alcohol?



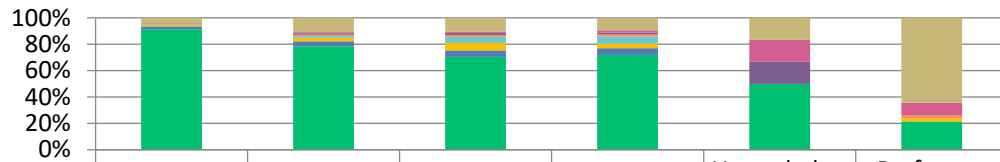
Key Findings on Alcohol Consumption Frequency in the Past 30 Days Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (67.84%) reported not drinking alcohol at all in the past 30 days. Occasional use was more common than frequent use, with 11.39% reporting drinking on 1 or 2 days and 4.74% on 3 to 5 days. A smaller percentage reported more regular drinking, including 2.60% on 6 to 9 days, 1.62% on 10 to 19 days, and 1.39% on all 30 days. An additional 10.01% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, the majority of students did not report recent alcohol use.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across gender groups reported not drinking alcohol in the past 30 days, including 70.25% of males and 68.32% of females. Female students were more likely to report drinking on 1 or 2 days (14.63%) compared to males (8.61%). Males had slightly higher rates of daily drinking (2.15%) than females (0.00%). Students identifying as “Other” reported significantly lower non-use (30.00%) and higher rates of frequent drinking, including 25.00% reporting alcohol use on all 30 days. Due to the small sample size, findings for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported not drinking alcohol in the past 30 days, with non-use highest among 9th graders (84.63%) and gradually decreasing in higher grades, reaching 58.84% in 11th grade and 61.62% in 12th grade. Daily drinking (all 30 days) was low across grades but slightly higher among older students, peaking at 1.89% in 12th grade. Students in the ungraded or other group reported the lowest non-use (50.00%) and the highest rate of daily use (16.67%). Due to the small sample size, findings for this group should be interpreted with caution.

Binge Drinking Among Students



During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have 4 or more drinks of alcohol in a row, that is, within a couple of hours (if you are female) or 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row, that is, within a couple of hours (if you are male)?

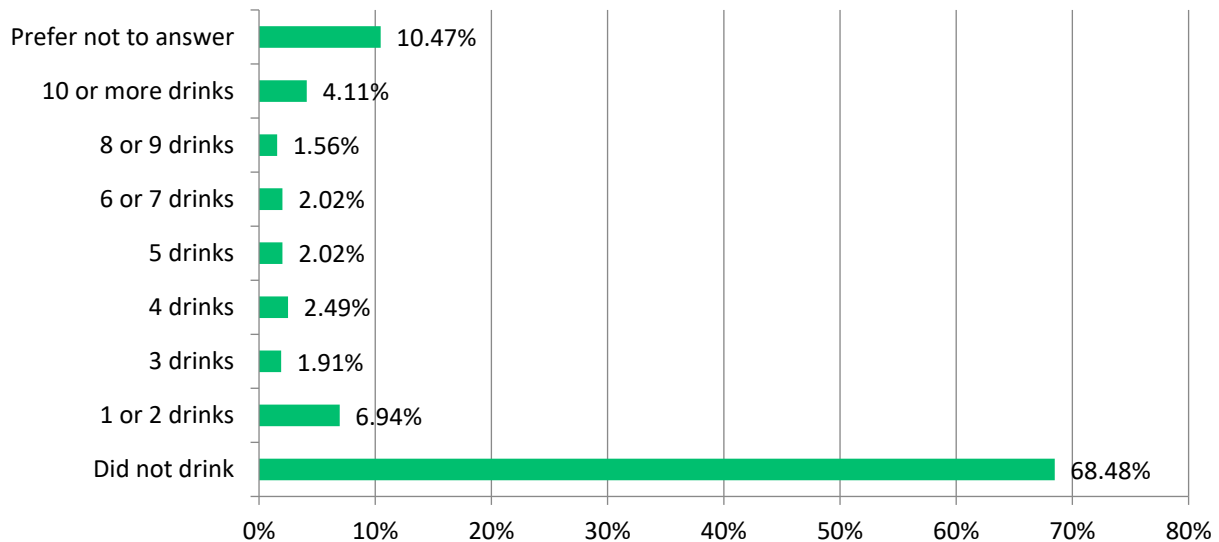


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
■ Prefer not to answer	4.00%	10.91%	10.35%	9.46%	16.67%	64.29%
■ 20 or more days	0.21%	0.68%	1.01%	1.62%	16.67%	9.52%
■ 10 to 19 days	0.21%	1.14%	1.52%	1.35%	16.67%	0.00%
■ 6 to 9 days	0.21%	1.14%	1.52%	1.62%	0.00%	2.38%
■ 3 to 5 days	0.63%	1.36%	4.55%	5.41%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 2 days	1.26%	2.50%	5.81%	3.51%	0.00%	2.38%
■ 1 day	2.11%	3.86%	4.80%	5.14%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 0 days	91.37%	78.41%	70.45%	71.89%	50.00%	21.43%

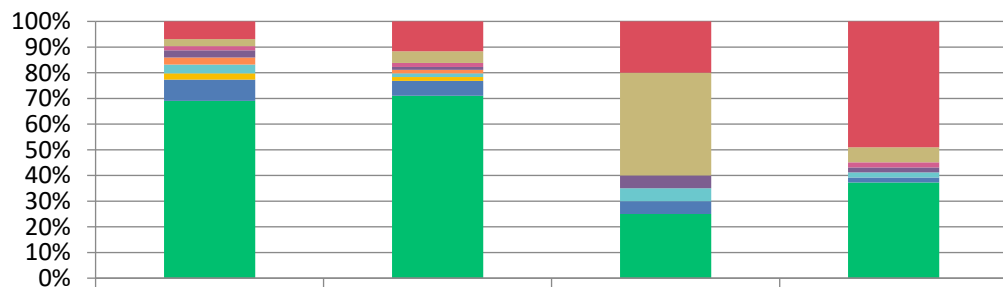
Trends in Binge Drinking Frequency Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (77.27%) reported not engaging in binge drinking during the past 30 days. A small percentage reported binge drinking on 1 day (3.76%) or 2 days (3.12%), with fewer students reporting it on 3 to 5 days (2.72%). Less than 4% reported binge drinking on 6 or more days. An additional 9.89% selected “Prefer not to answer.” The vast majority of students did not report recent binge drinking, and frequent episodes were rare.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across gender groups reported not engaging in binge drinking in the past 30 days, including 79.72% of females and 78.23% of males. Binge drinking on 1 or 2 days was reported by 4.95% of females and 2.78% of males, while higher-frequency use was uncommon among both groups. Students identifying as “Other” reported lower non-use (35.00%) and higher rates of binge drinking on 20 or more days (20.00%), though findings should be interpreted cautiously due to small sample size.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across gender groups reported not engaging in binge drinking in the past 30 days, including 79.72% of females and 78.23% of males. Binge drinking on 1 or 2 days was reported by 4.95% of females and 2.78% of males, while higher-frequency use was uncommon among both groups. Students identifying as “Other” reported lower non-use (35.00%) and higher rates of binge drinking on 20 or more days (20.00%), though findings should be interpreted cautiously due to small sample size for this group.

During the past 30 days, what is the largest number of alcoholic drinks you had in a row, that is, within a couple of hours?

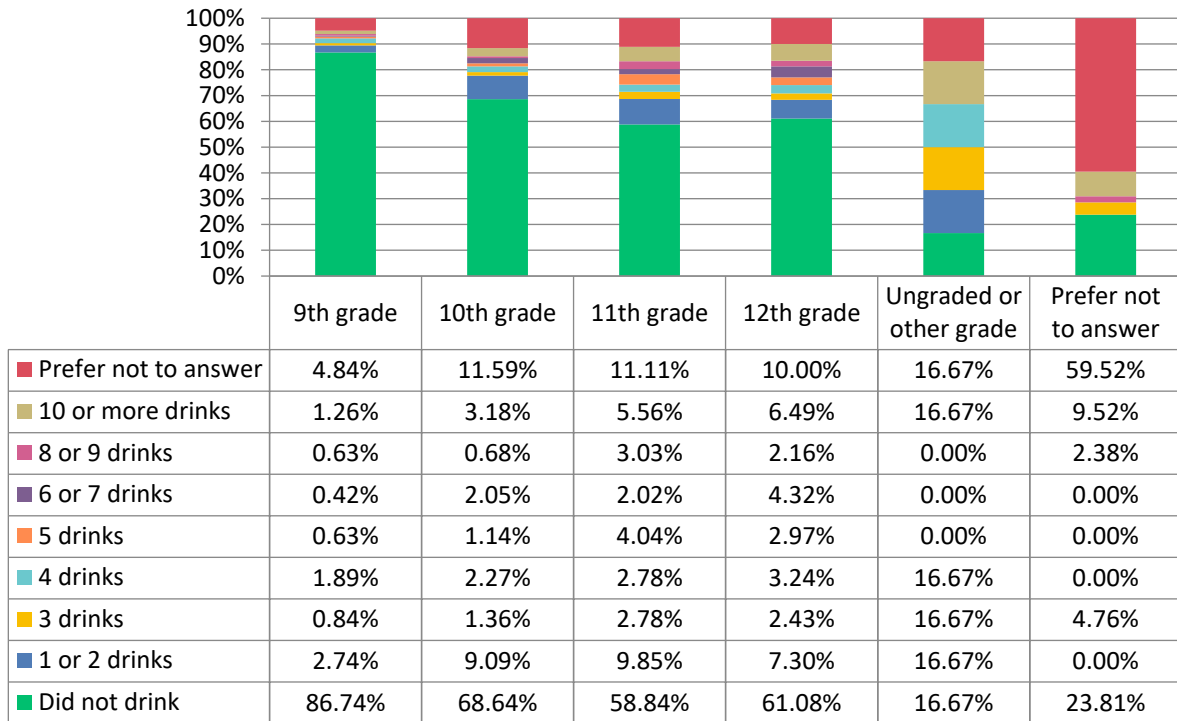


During the past 30 days, what is the largest number of alcoholic drinks you had in a row, that is, within a couple of hours?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	6.91%	11.65%	20.00%	49.02%
10 or more drinks	2.76%	4.56%	40.00%	5.88%
8 or 9 drinks	1.61%	1.52%	0.00%	1.96%
6 or 7 drinks	2.76%	1.14%	5.00%	1.96%
5 drinks	2.76%	1.39%	0.00%	0.00%
4 drinks	3.46%	1.39%	5.00%	1.96%
3 drinks	2.42%	1.52%	0.00%	0.00%
1 or 2 drinks	8.29%	5.82%	5.00%	1.96%
Did not drink	69.01%	71.01%	25.00%	37.25%

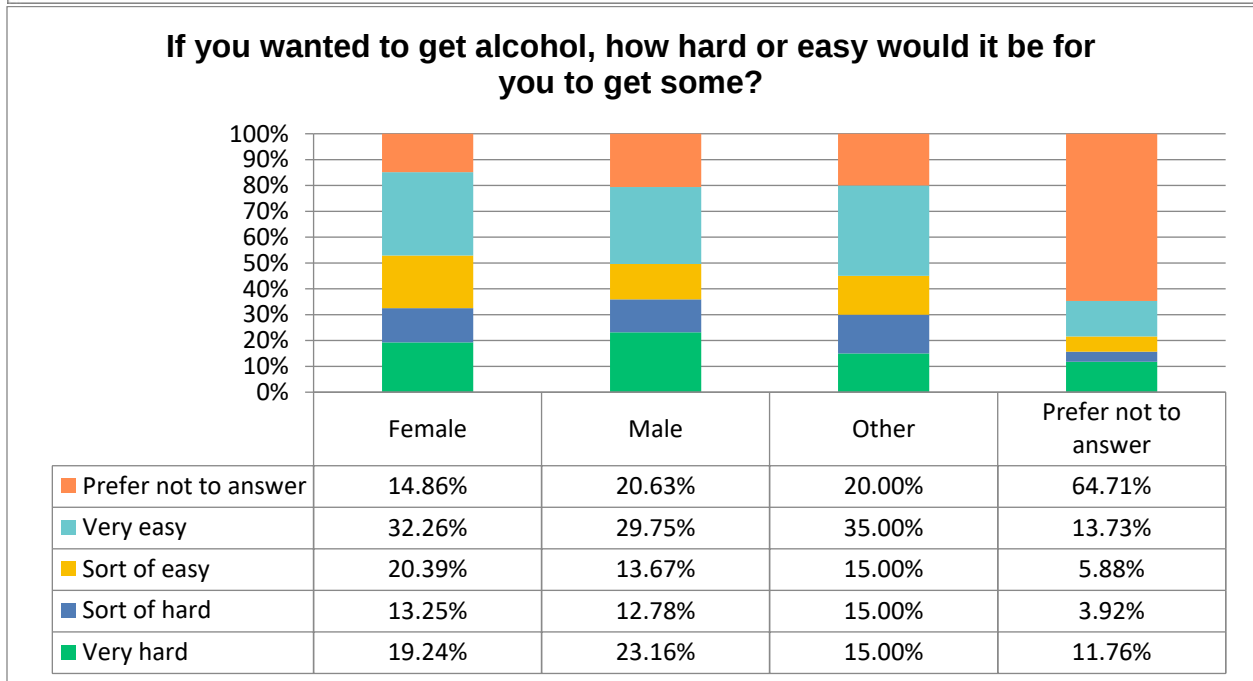
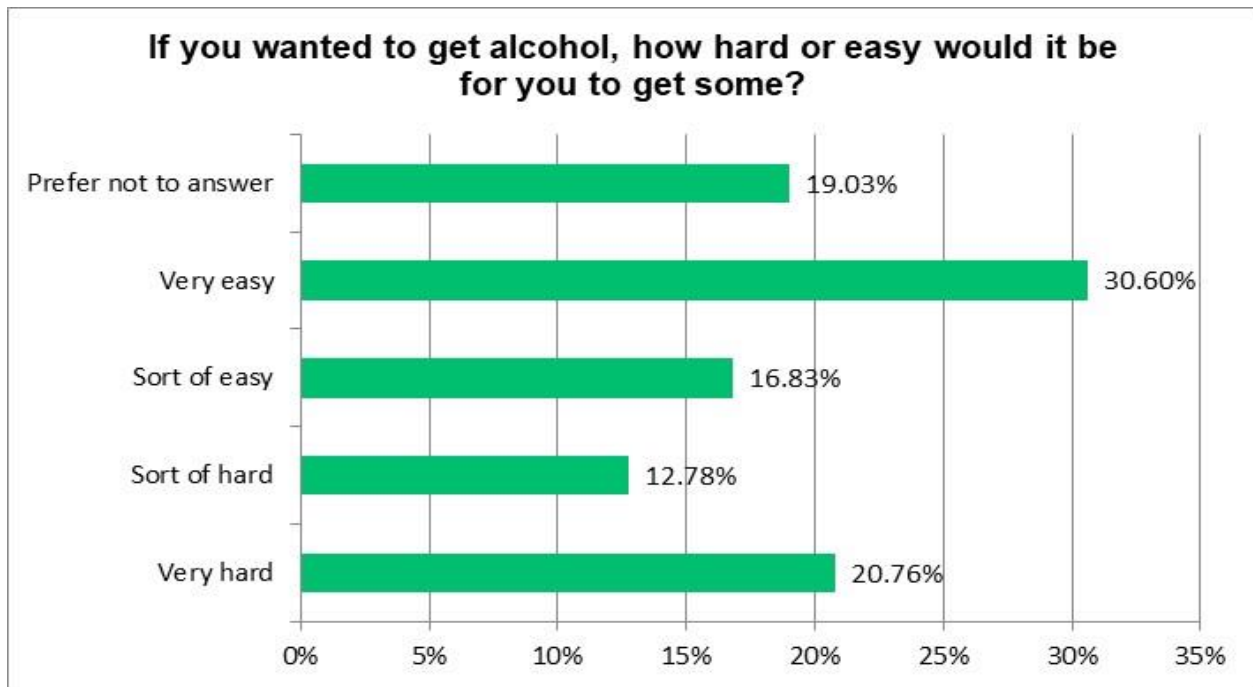
During the past 30 days, what is the largest number of alcoholic drinks you had in a row, that is, within a couple of hours?



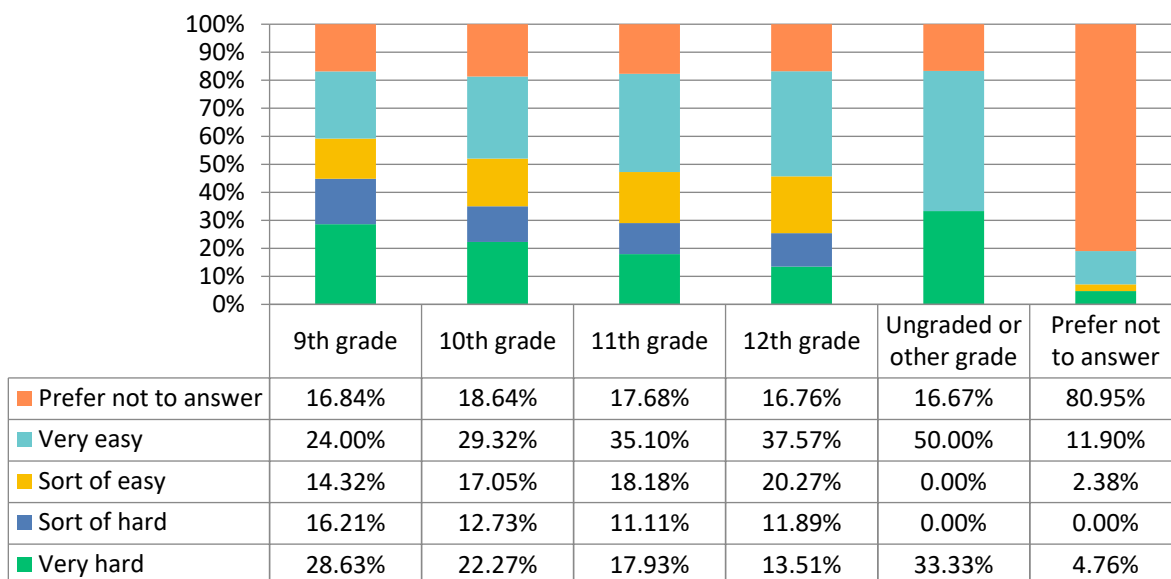
Key Findings on Binge Drinking

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (68.48%) reported not drinking alcohol in the past 30 days. Among respondents, the largest number of drinks consumed in a row was most commonly 1 or 2 drinks (6.94%). A smaller percentage reported binge-level quantities, including 2.49% who had 4 drinks and 4.11% who had 10 or more drinks. An additional 10.47% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, the majority of students did not drink.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across all gender groups reported not drinking alcohol in the past 30 days, including 71.01% of males and 69.01% of females. Among respondents, the largest reported quantity was 1 or 2 drinks (8.29% of females and 5.82% of males). Students identifying as “Other” had the lowest non-drinking rate (25.00%) and the highest percentage reporting 10 or more drinks (40.00%). Due to the small sample size, results for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported not drinking alcohol in a row during the past 30 days. The percentage of students reporting 10 or more drinks in a row increased with grade level, from 1.26% in 9th grade to 6.49% in 12th grade. Students in the ungraded or other category reported more varied drinking behaviors, though results should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size. Overall, heavy episodic drinking remained uncommon, but prevalence increased among older students.

Access to Alcohol

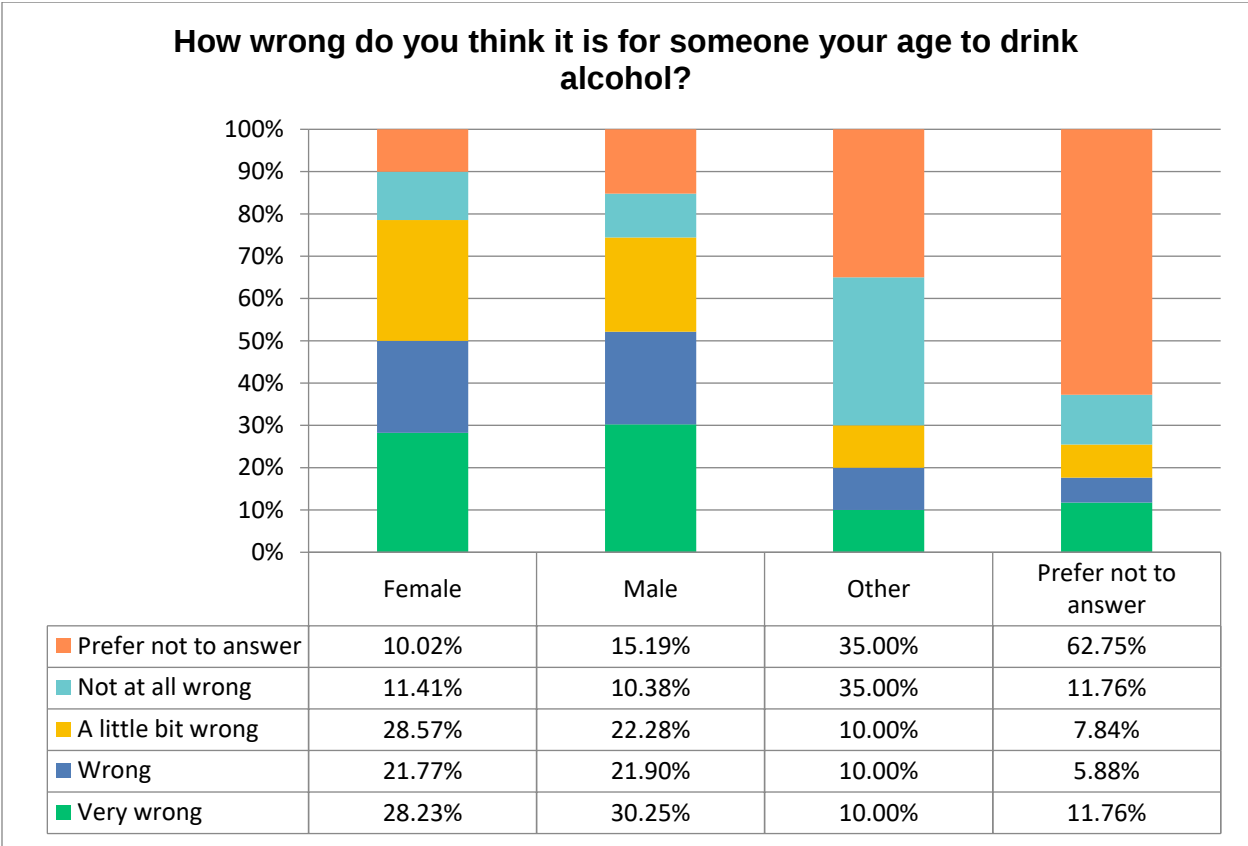
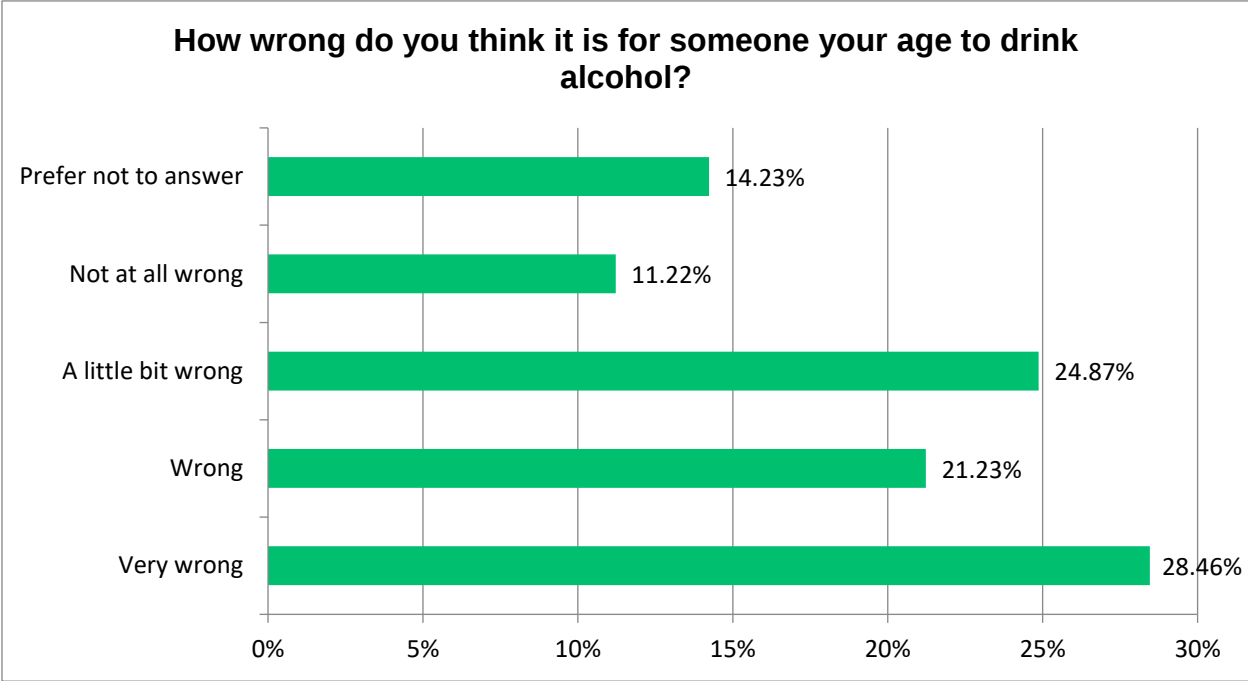


If you wanted to get alcohol, how hard or easy would it be for you to get some?

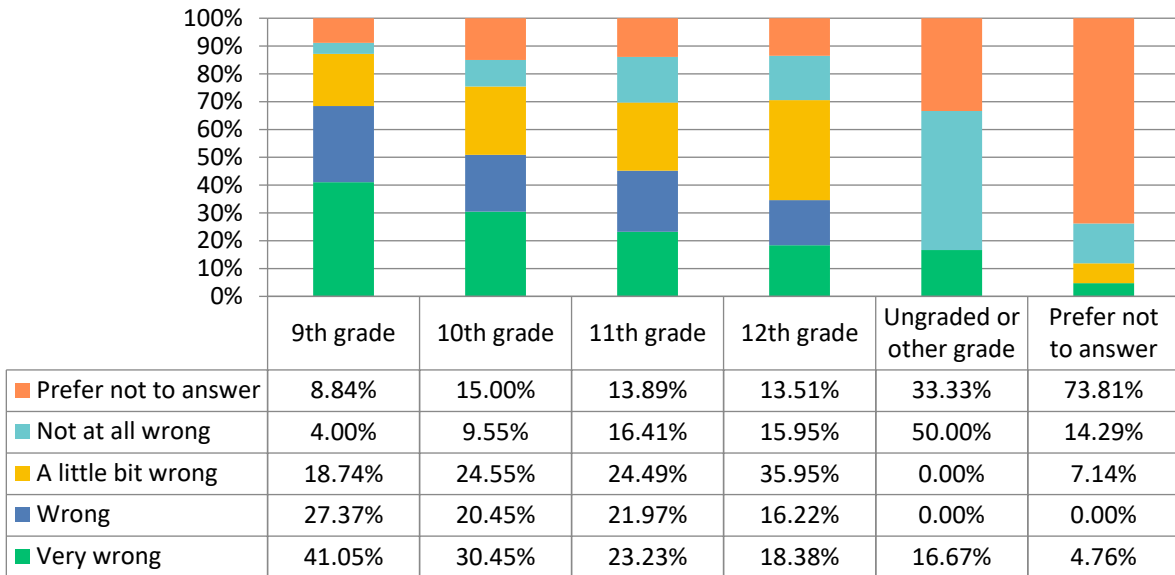


Key Findings on Ease of Access

- County-wide Trends:** Nearly one-third of students (30.60%) reported that obtaining alcohol would be “Very easy,” while an additional 16.83% said it would be “Sort of easy.” In contrast, 20.76% of students reported it would be “Very hard,” and 12.78% said it would be “Sort of hard.” A notable 19.03% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, students were more likely to perceive alcohol as easy rather than difficult to access.
- Gender Differences:** Female students were most likely to say it would be “Very easy” to get alcohol (32.26%), followed closely by males (29.75%). Males reported slightly higher as “Very hard” (23.16%) compared to females (19.24%). Males had a higher rate of selecting “Prefer not to answer” (20.63%) than females (14.86%). Students identifying as “Other” also showed the most even distribution across the “easy” and “hard” categories. Due to the small sample size, results for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution. Overall, most students across gender groups perceived alcohol as accessible, with slight variation in perceived difficulty.
- Grade Differences:** Perceived ease of alcohol access increased with grade level. Among 9th graders, 24.00% said it would be “Very easy” to get alcohol, rising to 37.57% in 12th grade. The percentage of students who said it would be “Very hard” declined steadily from 28.63% in 9th grade to 13.51% in 12th grade. Students in the ungraded or other category had the highest rate of perceiving alcohol access as “Very easy” (50.00%) and the lowest rate of saying it would be “Very hard” (0.00%). Due to the small sample size, findings for this group should be interpreted with caution.

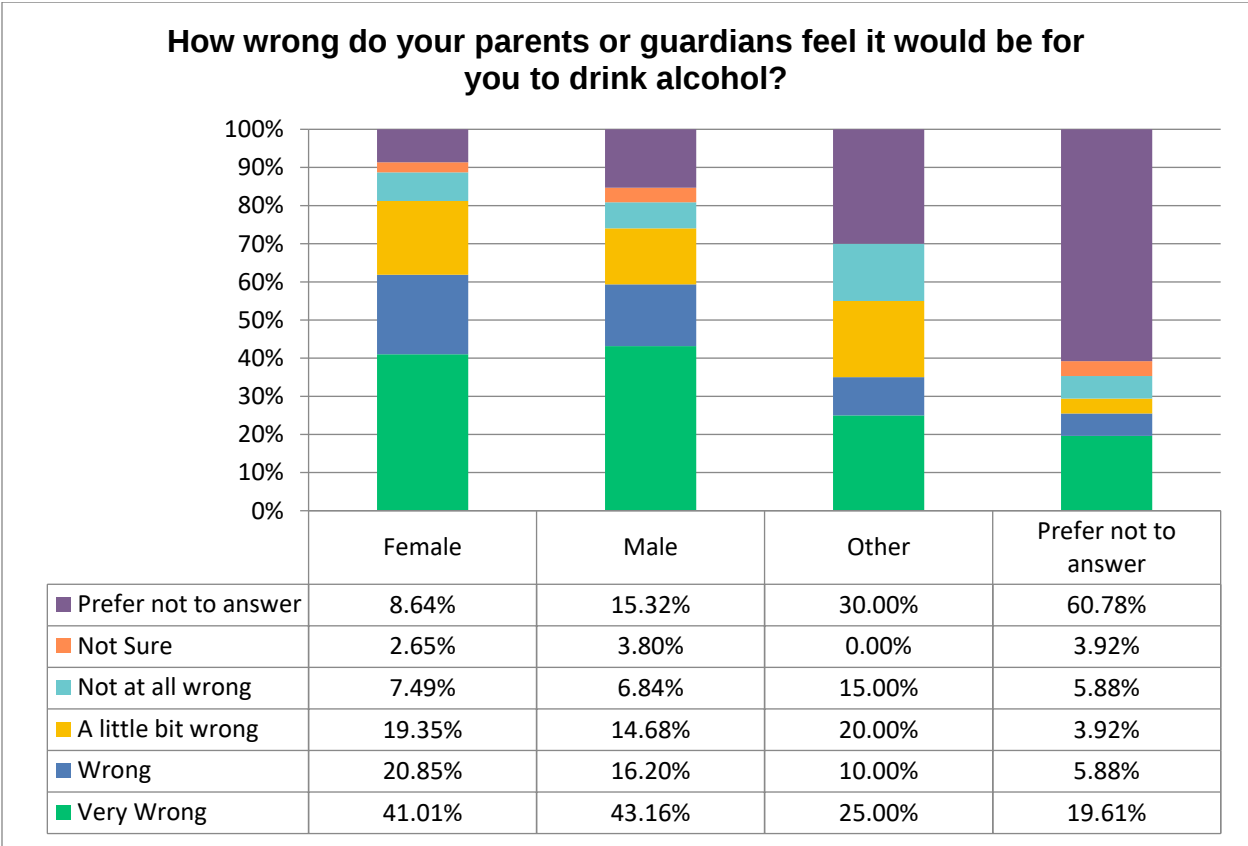
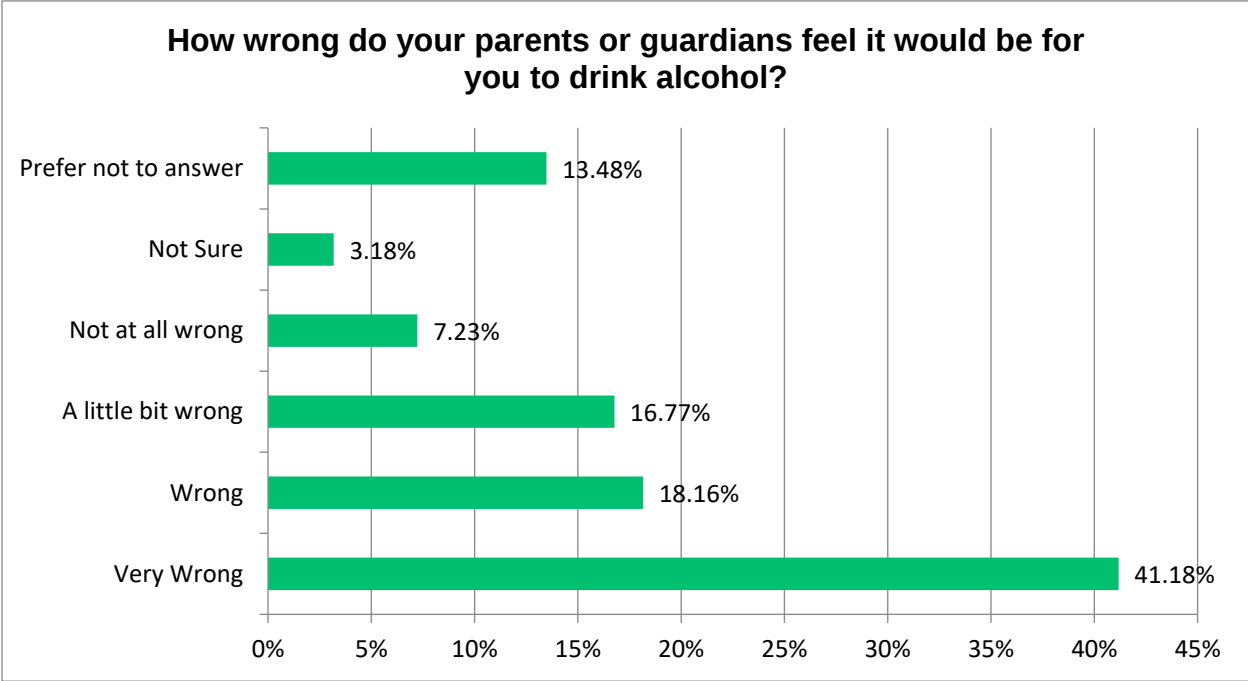


How wrong do you think it is for someone your age to drink alcohol?

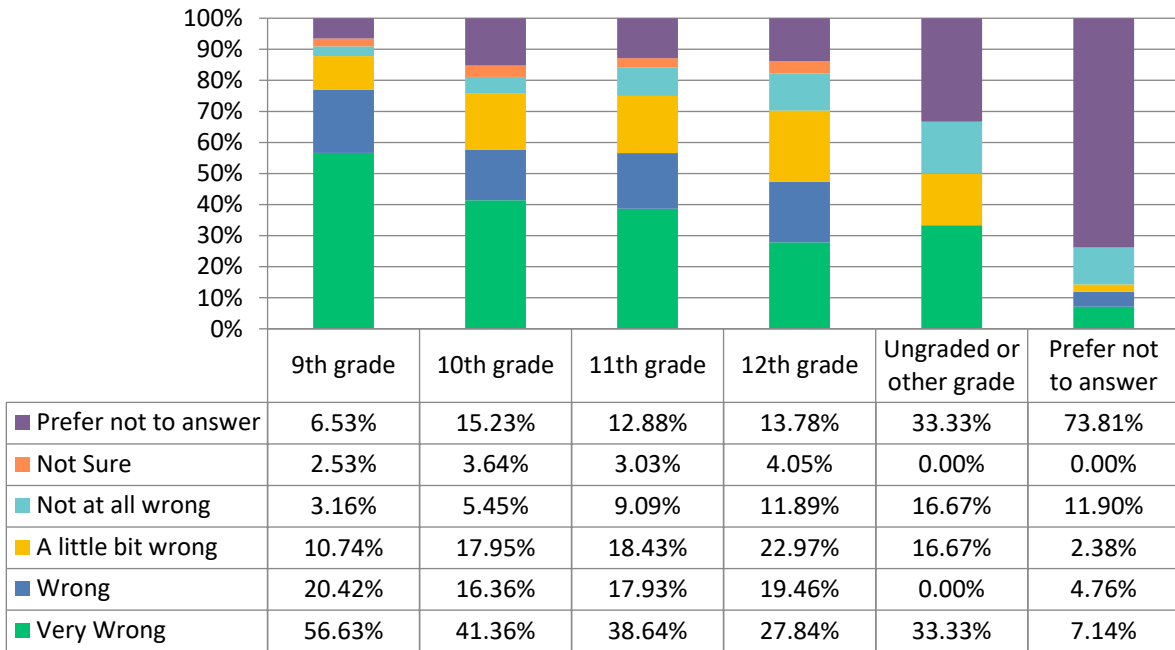


Key Findings on Perception of Alcohol Use

- County-wide Trends:** Most students expressed disapproval of underage drinking. Specifically, 28.46% of students said it was “Very wrong” for someone their age to drink alcohol, while 21.23% said it was “Wrong.” An additional 24.87% believed it was “A little bit wrong,” and 11.22% said it was “Not at all wrong.” A further 14.23% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, a majority of students believed underage drinking was at least somewhat wrong, with nearly half selecting one of the two strongest disapproval categories.
- Gender Differences:** Among females, 28.23% said it was “Very wrong” and 21.77% said it was “Wrong.” Male students reported similarly high rates of strong disapproval, with 30.25% selecting “Very wrong” and 21.90% choosing “Wrong.” Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to disapprove, with only 10.00% choosing “Very wrong” and 10.00% selecting “Wrong,” while 35.00% said it was “Not at all wrong.” Due to the small sample size in the “Other” category, findings for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Perceptions of underage drinking shifted with grade level. Among 9th graders, 41.05% said it was “Very wrong” and 27.37% said it was “Wrong,” with disapproval decreasing in higher grades. By 12th grade, only 18.38% reported: “Very wrong.” Reports of “Not at all wrong” also rose with grade level, from 4.00% in 9th grade to 15.95% in 12th. Students in the ungraded/other category were less likely to report disapproval, with half stating it was “Not at all wrong.” Due to the small sample size, findings for this group should be interpreted with caution.



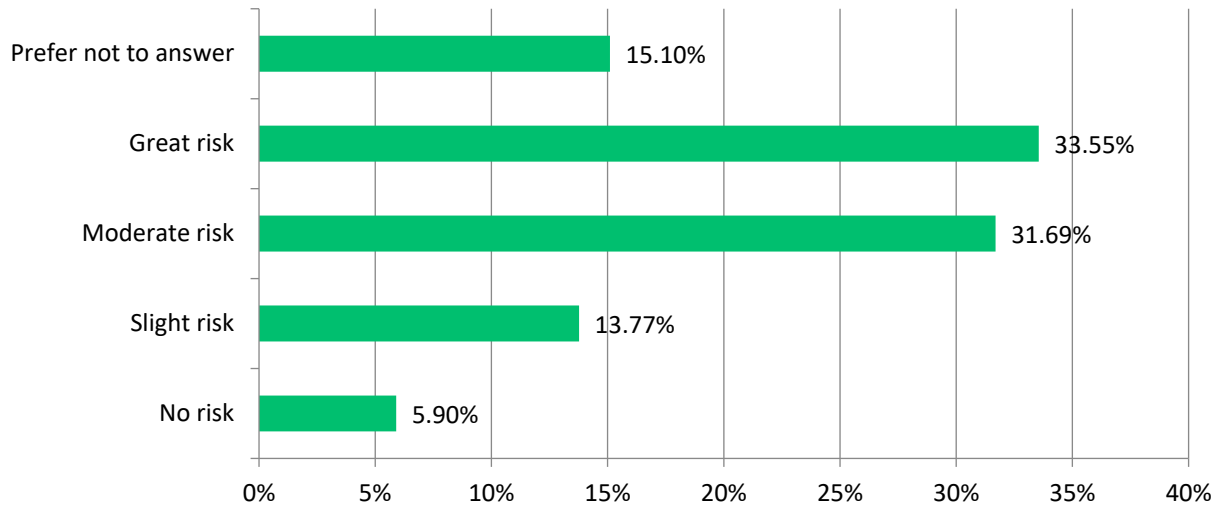
How wrong do your parents or guardians feel it would be for you to drink alcohol?



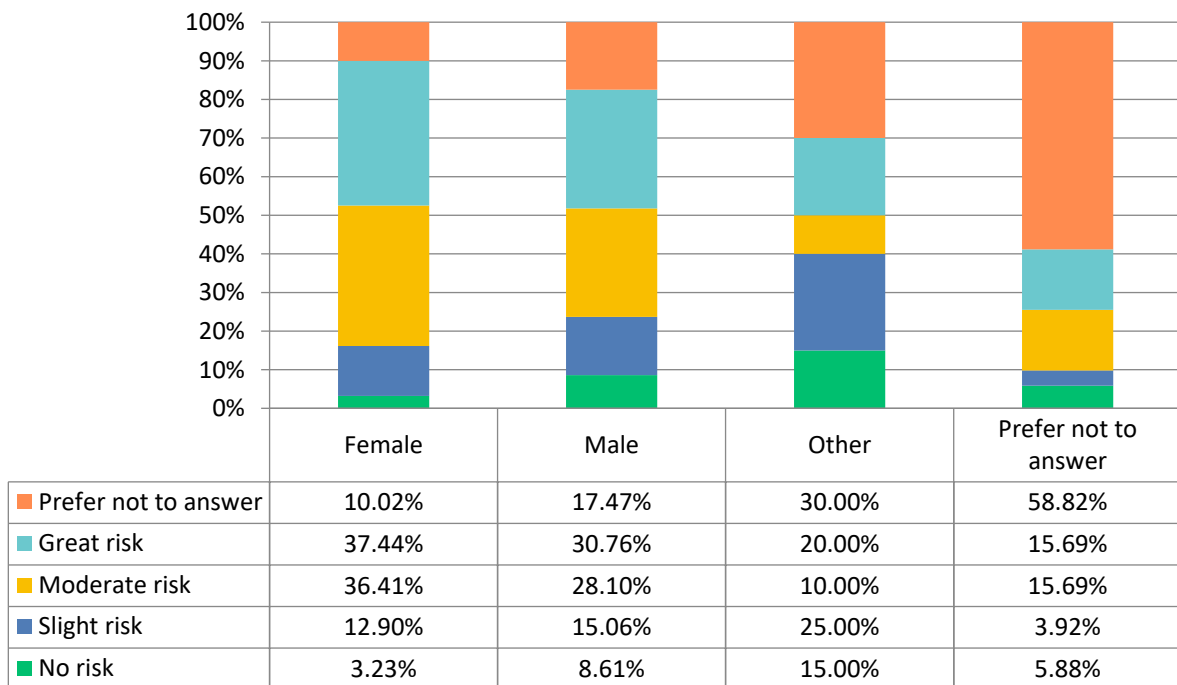
Key Findings on Parental Views of Underage Drinking

- County-wide Trends:** Most students believed their parents or guardians viewed underage drinking negatively. Specifically, 41.18% said their parents thought it was “Very wrong,” and 18.16% said “Wrong.” An additional 16.77% felt their parents would consider it “A little bit wrong,” while smaller percentages believed their parents viewed it as “Not at all wrong” (7.23%) or were unsure (3.18%). A total of 13.48% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, the majority of students perceived strong parental disapproval of underage alcohol use.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across gender identities reported that their parents or guardians would strongly disapprove of them drinking alcohol. Among male students, 43.16% said their parents would view it as “Very wrong,” compared to 41.01% of females. A slightly larger share of females (20.85%) selected “Wrong” compared to males (16.20%). Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to report strong parental disapproval, with 25.00% selecting “Very wrong” and 10.00% “Wrong.” Due to the small sample size, findings for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Perceptions of parental view of underage drinking shifted with grade level. Among 9th graders, 56.63% said it was “Very wrong” and 20.42% said it was “Wrong,” with disapproval decreasing in higher grades. At 12th grade, only 27.84% reported “Very wrong.” Reports of “Not at all wrong” also rose alongside grade level, from 3.16% in 9th grade to 11.89% in 12th.

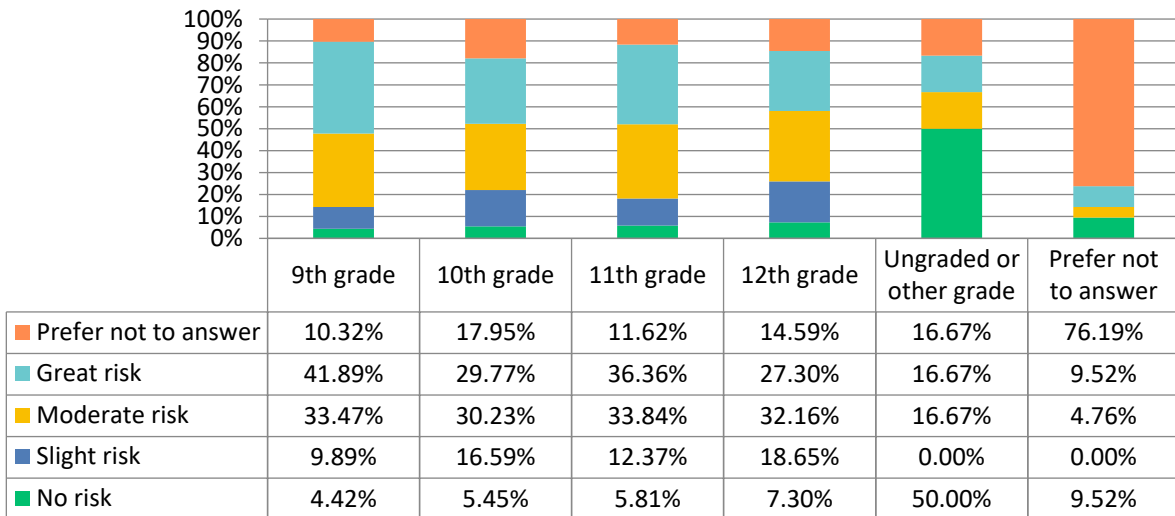
**How much do you think people risk harming themselves
(physically or in other ways) if they have five or more drinks of
alcohol (beer, wine, or liquor) once or twice each weekend?**



**How much do you think people risk harming themselves
(physically or in other ways) if they have five or more drinks of
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How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they have five or more drinks of alcohol (beer, wine, or liquor) once or twice each weekend?

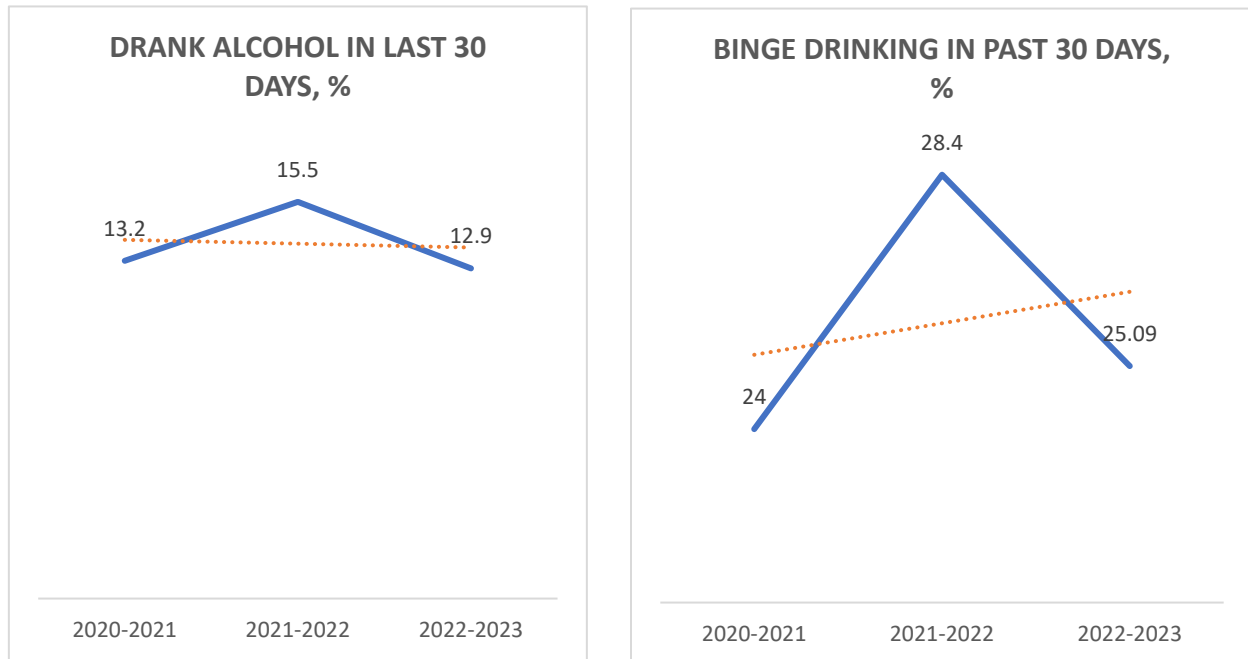


Key Findings on Perceived Risk of Harm

- County-wide Trends:** Most students believed there was some level of harm associated with having five or more drinks of alcohol once or twice each weekend. Specifically, 33.55% reported “Great risk” and 31.69% reported “Moderate risk.” Smaller shares viewed it as only a “Slight risk” (13.77%) or “No risk” (5.90%). An additional 15.10% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, students largely recognized weekend binge drinking as a harmful behavior, with most associating it with at least moderate health or safety risks.
- Gender Differences:** Female students were most likely to report “Great risk” (37.44%) and “Moderate risk” (36.41%). Male students also identified harm, with 30.76% selecting “Great risk” and 28.10% selecting “Moderate risk.” Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to perceive great or moderate risk, with 25.00% reporting “Slight risk” and 15.00% selecting “No risk.” Due to the small sample size, findings for this group should be interpreted with caution. Overall, most male and female students recognized the risks associated with regular binge drinking.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grades reported either “Great risk” or “Moderate risk,” including 75.36% of 9th graders and 66.20% of 12th graders. Perceived “Great risk” declined with grade, from 41.89% in 9th grade to 27.30% in 12th. Reports of “Slight risk” and “No risk” increased with grade, though they remained relatively low. Students in the ungraded or other group reported the highest combined rate of “Slight risk” and “No risk” (66.67%). Overall, most students perceived regular binge drinking as harmful, though concern appeared to decrease with age.

Alcohol Use Among Students Over Time

With changing social influences and accessibility, it's important to track how alcohol use patterns evolve among youth. The following data examines recent shifts in alcohol consumption among students, providing a closer look at trends that may signal emerging risks or changes in behavior.



Key Findings on Alcohol Use Among Students Over Time

- **General Alcohol Use:** The percentage of students who reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days showed a slight fluctuation over time. Rates increased from 13.2% in 2020–2021 to 15.5% in 2021–2022, before declining to 12.9% in 2022–2023. Despite a brief rise, the overall trend indicates a modest decrease in recent alcohol use among students over the three-year period.
- **Reduction in Binge Drinking:** The percentage of students who reported binge drinking in the past 30 days increased from 24% in 2020–2021 to a peak of 28.4% in 2021–2022, then declined to 25.1% in 2022–2023. Although rates dropped in the most recent year, they remained slightly higher than initial levels, indicating ongoing concern around binge drinking behavior.

Marijuana

Marijuana use among teens is a significant concern due to its potential impact on physical, mental, and emotional health during critical developmental years. The YRBS examines various aspects of marijuana use, including the age of first use, frequency of use, and preferred methods of consumption. As such, the findings offer a detailed overview of the prevalence of marijuana use among students.

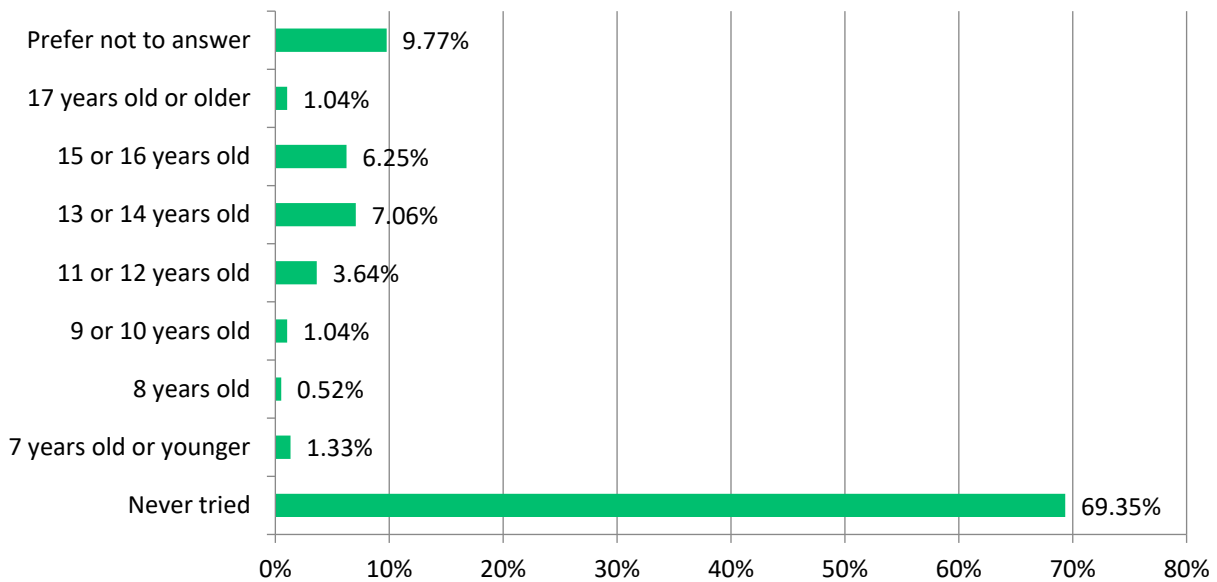
Marijuana use remained relatively limited among students, with 69% reporting they had never tried it and 77% indicating no use in the past 30 days. Among those who had used marijuana, the most common ages of initiation were 13 to 16 years old. Occasional use was more common than frequent use, and only a small percentage reported using marijuana more than 10 times in the past month.

When students did use marijuana, smoking was the most frequently reported method, followed by vaping, edibles, and dabbing. Use across all methods increased with grade level, particularly smoking. Students identifying as “Other” reported the highest rates of frequent use and method variety, though findings for this group should be interpreted cautiously due to small sample size.

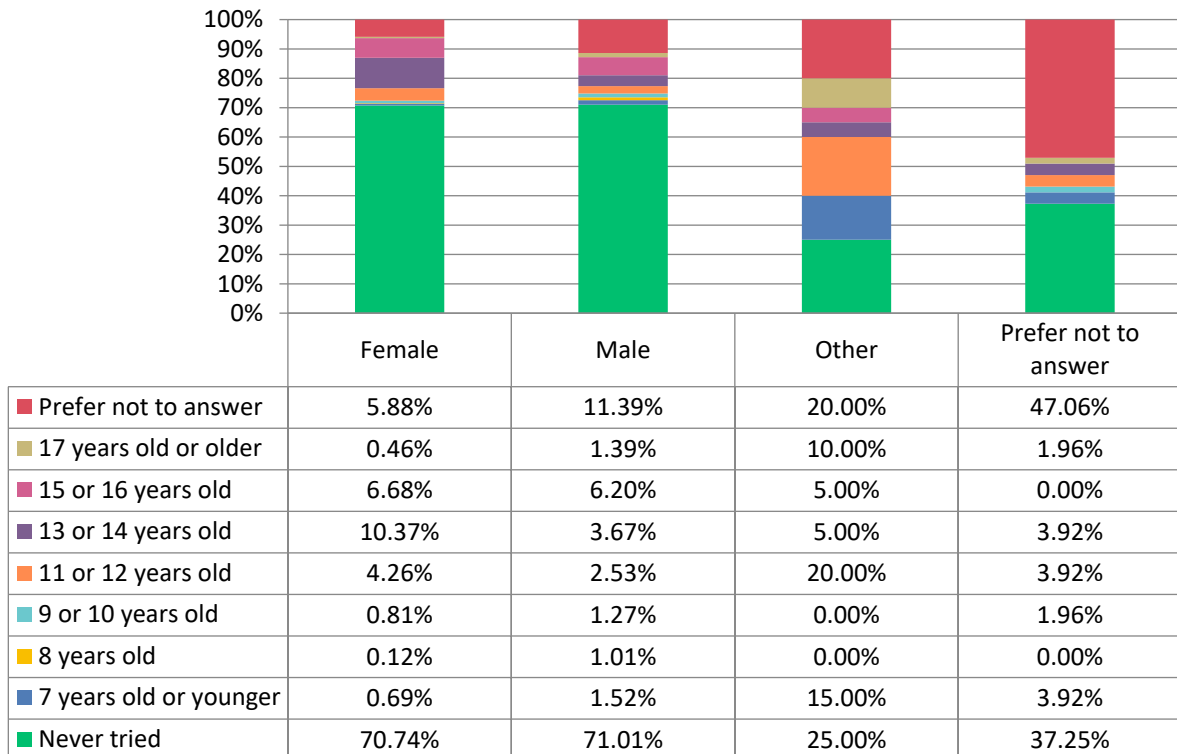
Perceptions of access to marijuana shifted notably by age. Younger students were more likely to say it would be difficult to obtain, while older students increasingly viewed access as easy. Similarly, perceptions of harm and disapproval declined with age. Ninth graders were more likely to believe marijuana use was “Very wrong” and risky, while 12th graders were more likely to view it as less harmful and more acceptable.

Most students reported that their parents strongly disapproved of marijuana use, though this perception also declined across grade levels. Despite these shifts, the majority of students still viewed marijuana use as at least somewhat wrong and recognized potential risks. Overall, marijuana use among students was relatively low. However, patterns of initiation, frequency, and perception suggest that both access and acceptance increased as students got older.

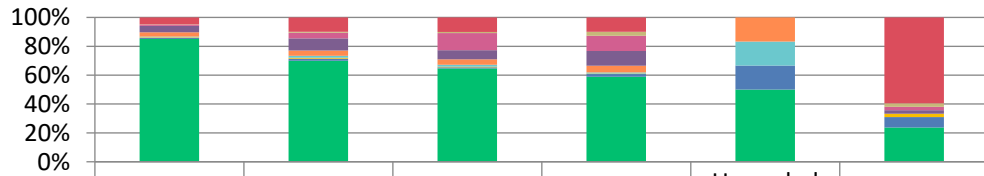
How old were you when you tried marijuana for the first time?



How old were you when you tried marijuana for the first time?



How old were you when you tried marijuana for the first time?

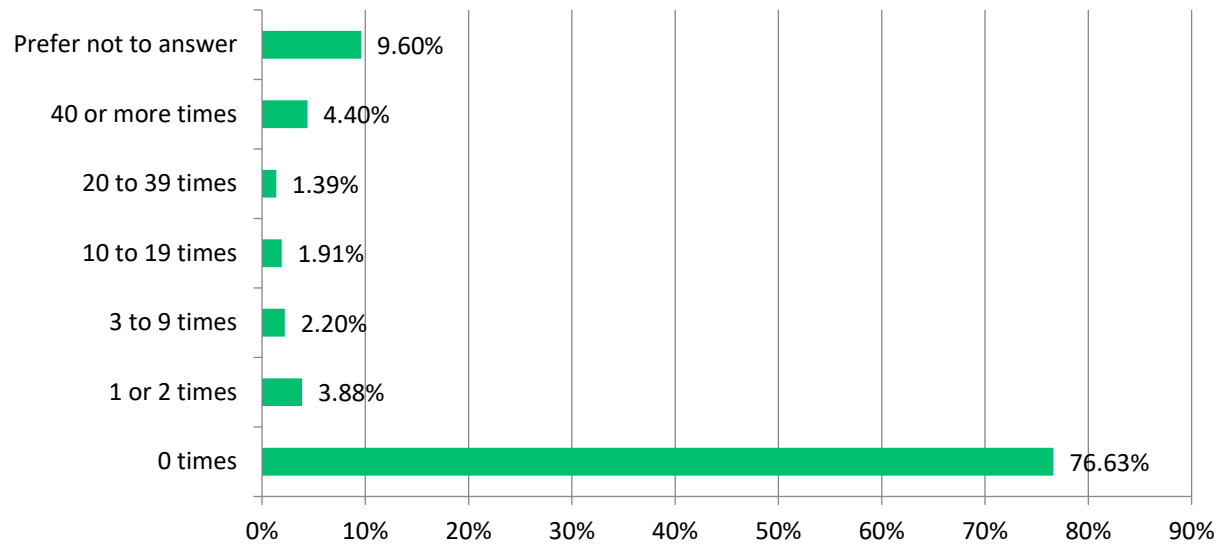


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
■ Prefer not to answer	4.84%	10.00%	10.10%	10.00%	0.00%	59.52%
■ 17 years old or older	0.21%	0.68%	0.76%	2.70%	0.00%	2.38%
■ 15 or 16 years old	0.84%	3.86%	11.87%	10.54%	0.00%	2.38%
■ 13 or 14 years old	4.42%	8.41%	6.31%	10.27%	0.00%	2.38%
■ 11 or 12 years old	2.95%	3.64%	3.79%	4.59%	16.67%	0.00%
■ 9 or 10 years old	0.63%	1.36%	1.26%	0.81%	16.67%	0.00%
■ 8 years old	0.42%	0.68%	0.51%	0.27%	0.00%	2.38%
■ 7 years old or younger	0.63%	1.36%	0.76%	1.89%	16.67%	7.14%
■ Never tried	85.05%	70.00%	64.65%	58.92%	50.00%	23.81%

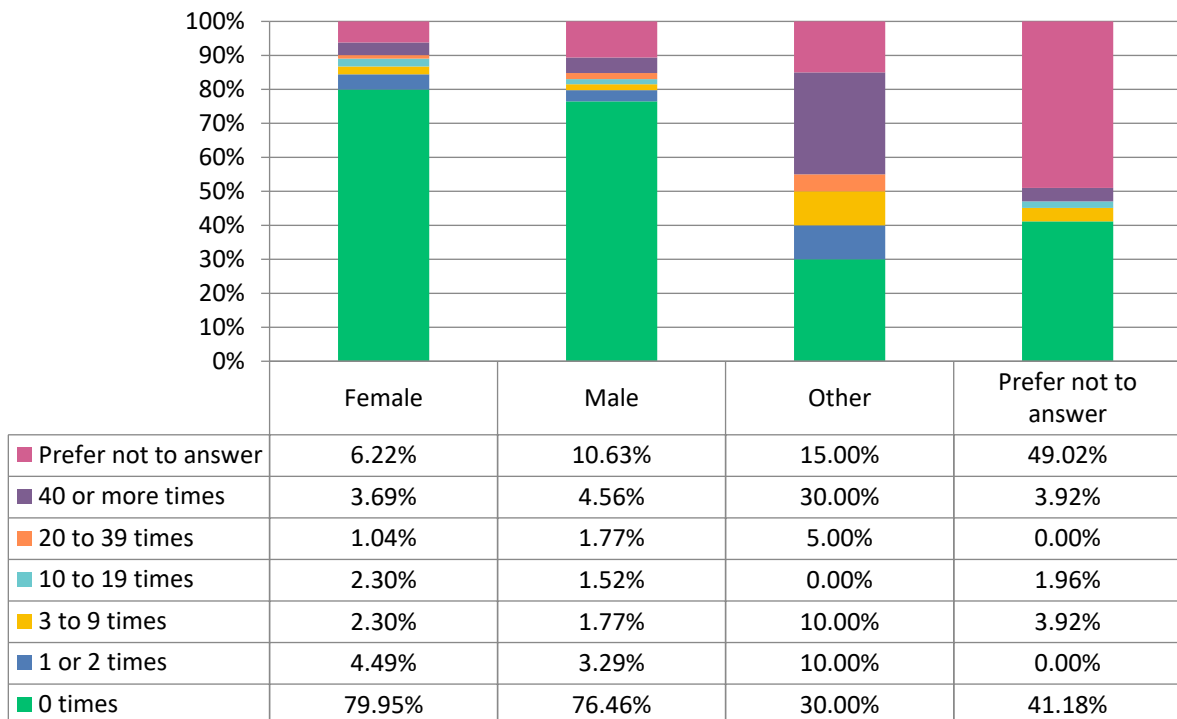
Key Findings on Age at First Marijuana Use

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (69.35%) reported never having tried marijuana. Among respondents, the most common ages of initiation were 13 or 14 years old (7.06%) and 15 or 16 years old (6.25%). Smaller percentages reported trying marijuana at earlier ages, including 7 years old or younger (1.33%) and 11 or 12 years old (3.64%). Only 1.04% reported initiating use at 17 years old or older. An additional 9.77% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, marijuana initiation remained relatively uncommon among students, with the majority reporting no prior use.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across all gender groups reported never having tried marijuana, including 71.01% of males and 70.74% of females. Both males and females most commonly reported first trying marijuana at ages 13 or 14, or 15 or 16. Students identifying as “Other” reported lower rates of non-use (25.00%) and higher rates of early initiation, particularly at 7 years old or younger (15.00%) and 11 or 12 years old (20.00%). Due to the small sample size, findings for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported never trying marijuana, with non-use highest among 9th graders (85.05%) and decreasing across higher grades to 58.92% in 12th grade. Among students who had used marijuana, the most commonly reported ages of initiation were 13 or 14 and 15 or 16, with these age ranges becoming increasingly prevalent in upper grades. Early initiation (at age 11 or younger) was more frequently reported in the ungraded or other group.

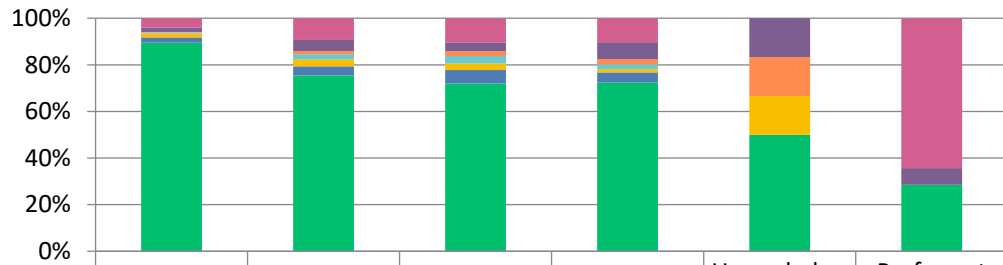
During the past 30 days, how many times did you use marijuana?



During the past 30 days, how many times did you use marijuana?



During the past 30 days, how many times did you use marijuana?

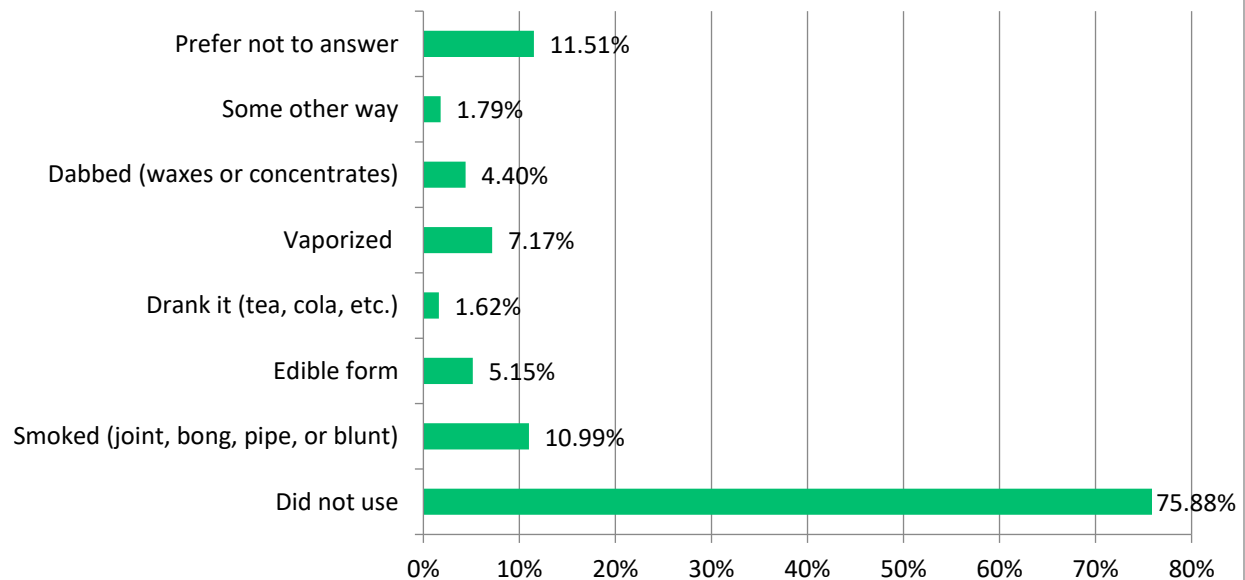


Prefer not to answer	4.00%	9.32%	10.35%	10.27%	0.00%	64.29%
40 or more times	1.89%	4.77%	3.79%	7.30%	16.67%	7.14%
20 to 39 times	0.21%	1.36%	2.02%	2.16%	16.67%	0.00%
10 to 19 times	0.42%	2.27%	3.28%	2.16%	0.00%	0.00%
3 to 9 times	1.68%	2.95%	2.78%	1.35%	16.67%	0.00%
1 or 2 times	2.32%	3.86%	5.81%	4.32%	0.00%	0.00%
0 times	89.47%	75.45%	71.97%	72.43%	50.00%	28.57%

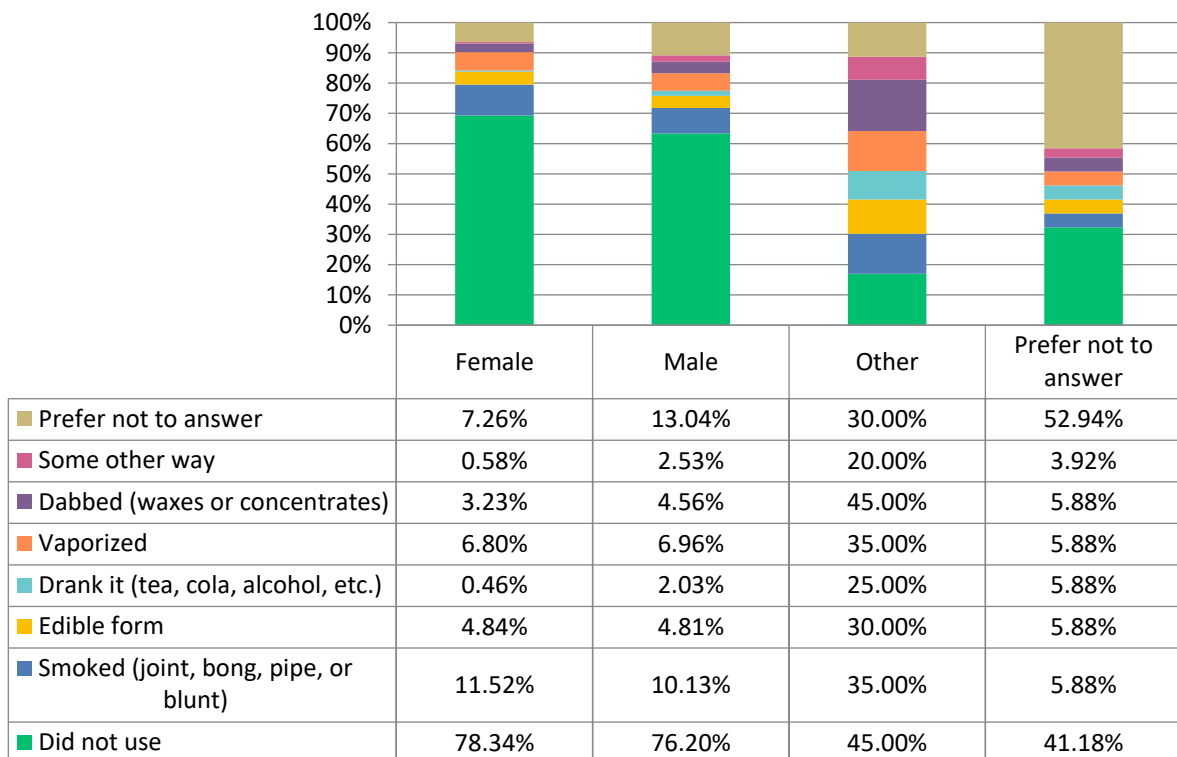
Key Findings on Recent Marijuana Use Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (76.63%) reported not using marijuana in the past 30 days. Among those who did, occasional use was more common than frequent use. Specifically, 3.88% used marijuana 1 or 2 times, while 2.20% used it between 3 to 9 times. Fewer students reported higher frequency use, including 1.91% who used it 10 to 19 times and 1.39% who used it 20 to 39 times. A small group (4.40%) reported using marijuana 40 or more times. An additional 9.60% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, the majority of students did not report recent marijuana use, and frequent use remained limited to a small percentage of respondents.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across gender groups reported not using marijuana in the past 30 days, including 79.95% of females and 76.46% of males. Occasional use (1 or 2 times) was similar among females (4.49%) and males (3.29%). Students identifying as “Other” reported notably lower rates of non-use (30.00%) and substantially higher levels of frequent use, including 30.00% who used marijuana 40 or more times. Due to the small sample size, findings for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across grade levels reported not using marijuana in the past 30 days, though non-use declined with grade. Non-use was highest among 9th graders (89.47%) and decreased to 71.97% in 11th grade and 72.43% in 12th grade. Occasional use (1 or 2 times) increased slightly with grade, from 2.32% in 9th grade to 5.81% in 11th grade. Frequent use (40 or more times) also rose with age, reported by 1.89% of 9th graders and 7.30% of 12th graders.

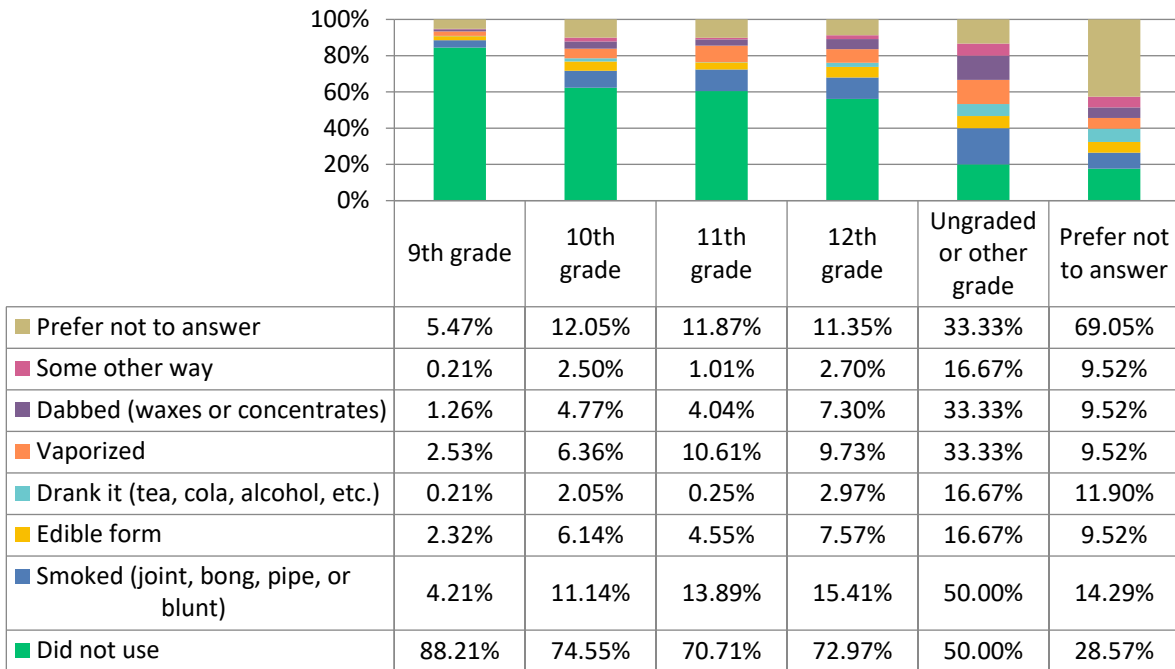
During the past 30 days, how did you usually use marijuana?



During the past 30 days, how did you usually use marijuana?

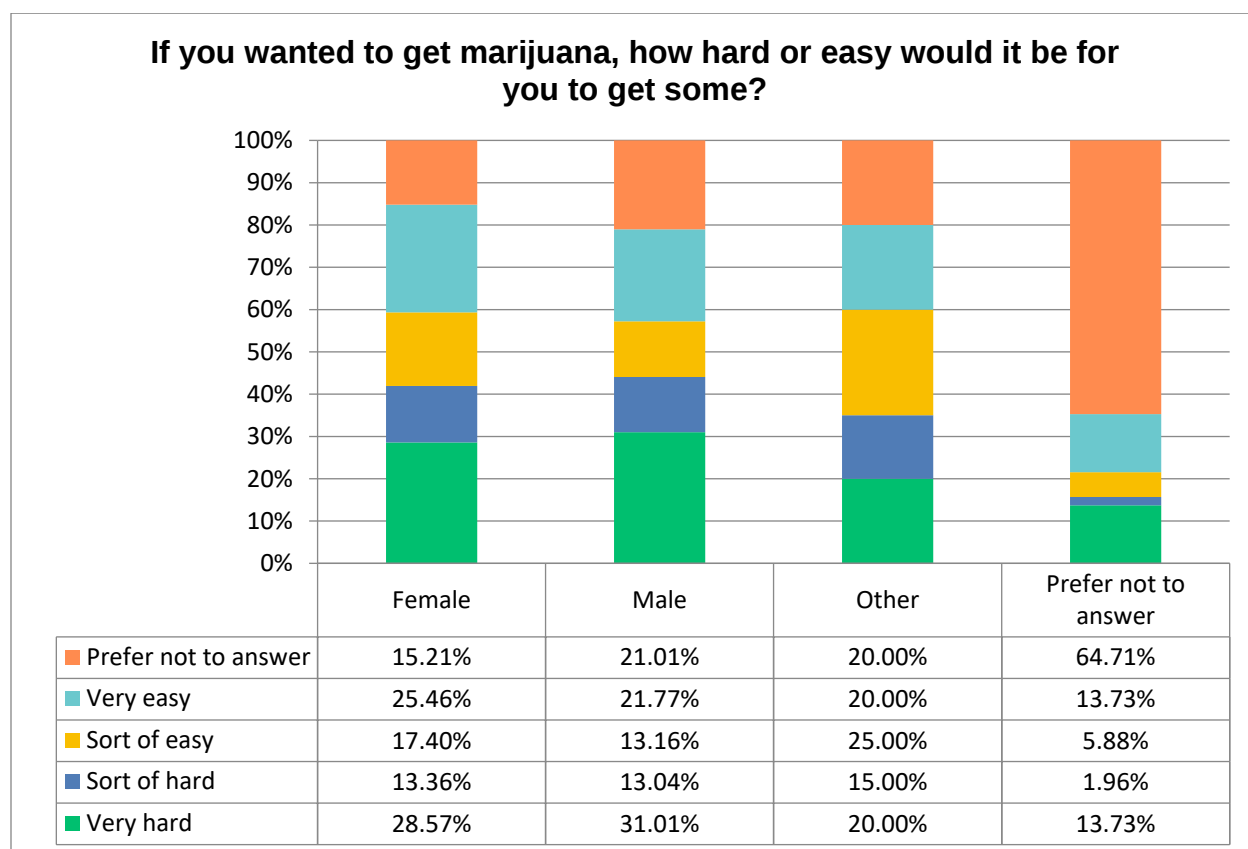
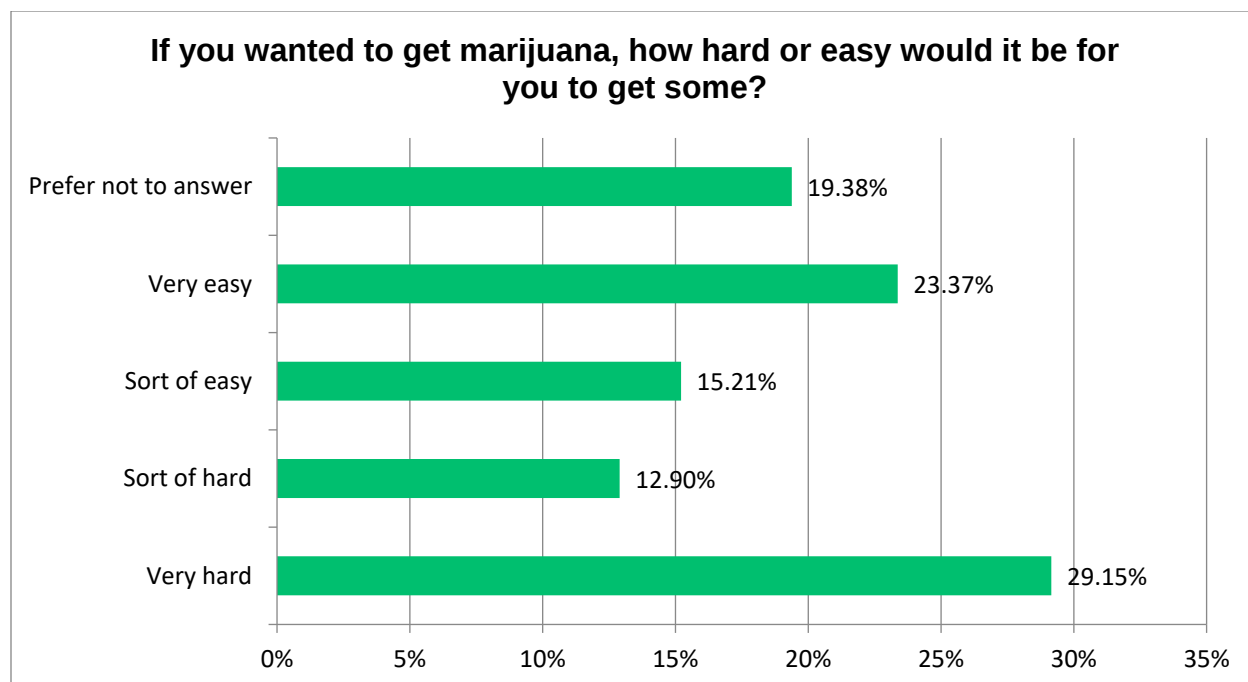


During the past 30 days, how did you usually use marijuana?

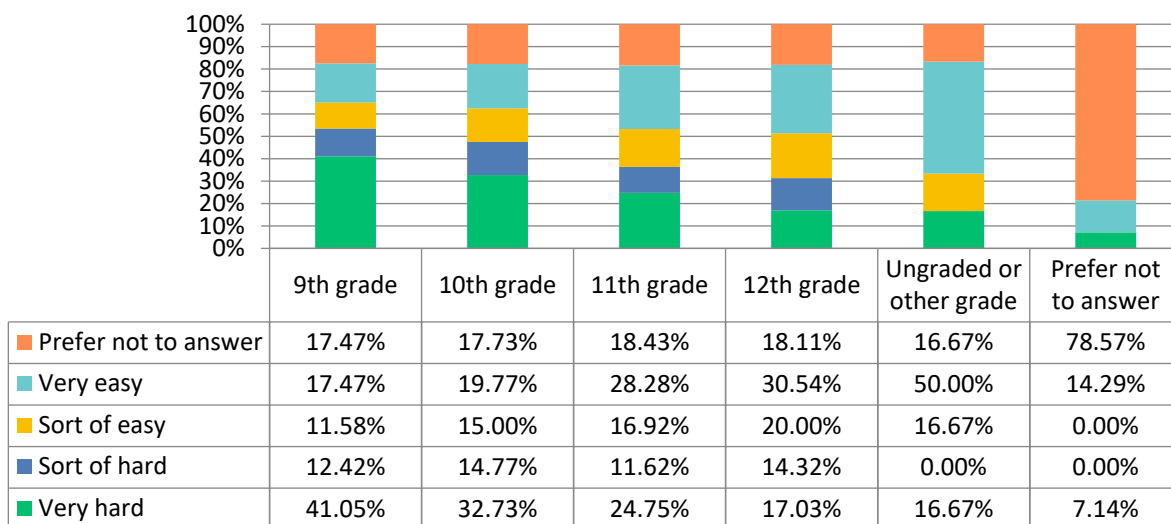


Key Findings on Marijuana Use Methods Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (75.88%) reported not using marijuana in the past 30 days. Among respondents, smoking (e.g., joints, bongs, pipes, or blunts) was the most common method (10.99%), followed by vaporizing (7.17%), using edibles (5.15%), and dabbing (4.40%). Less common methods included drinking marijuana-infused beverages (1.62%) or using it in other unspecified ways (1.79%). An additional 11.51% of students selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, marijuana use was limited, and among users, traditional smoking remained the most frequently reported method of consumption.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across gender groups reported not using marijuana in the past 30 days, including 78.34% of females and 76.20% of males. Among respondents, smoking was the most common method (11.52% females, 10.13% males), followed by vaporizing (6.80% females, 6.96% males) and using edibles (4.84% females, 4.81% males). Students identifying as “Other” reported lower rates of non-use (45.00%) and higher use across multiple methods, especially dabbing (45.00%) and smoking (35.00%). Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported not using marijuana in the past 30 days, with non-use highest among 9th graders (88.21%) and gradually declining through 12th grade (72.97%). The most common method of use was smoking, increasing from 4.21% in 9th grade to 15.41% in 12th grade.

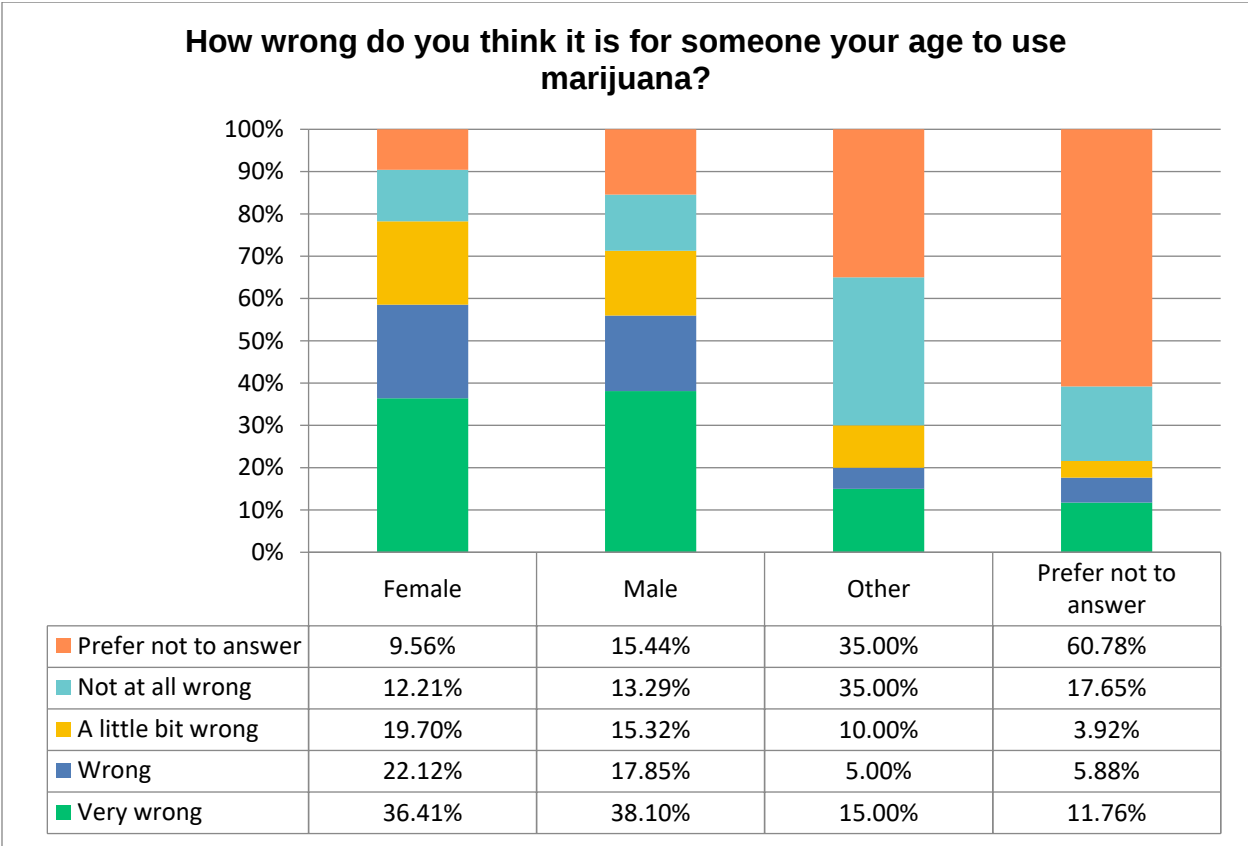
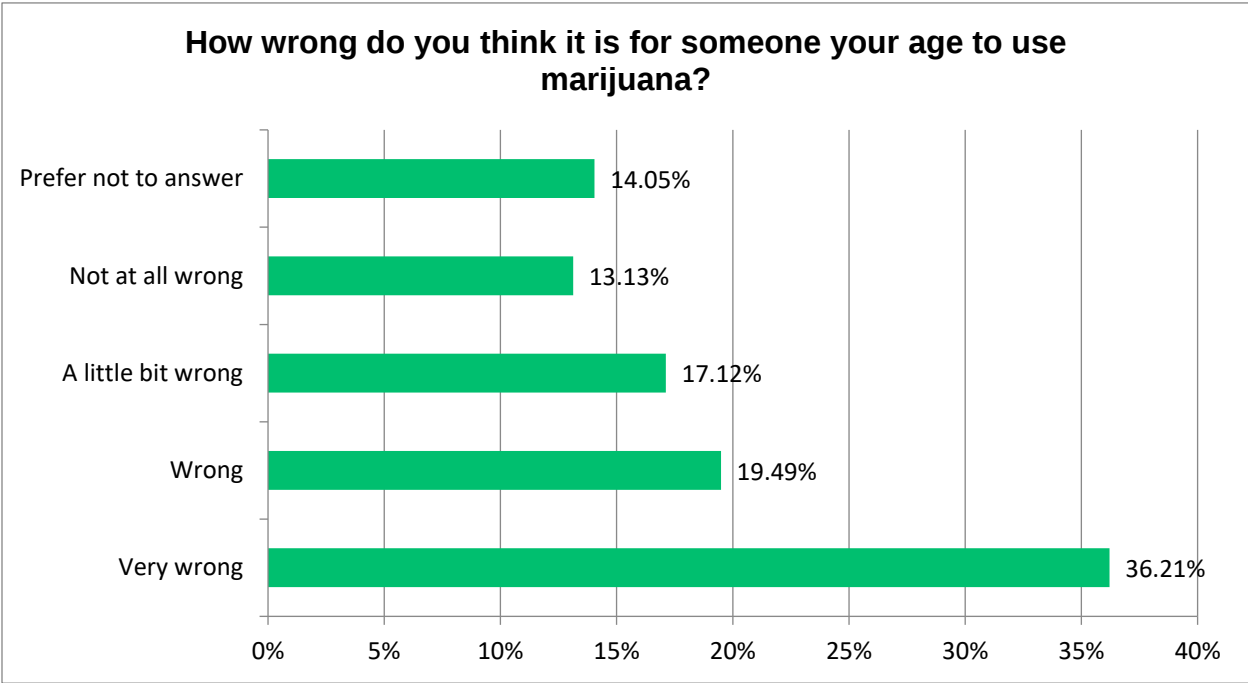


If you wanted to get marijuana, how hard or easy would it be for you to get some?

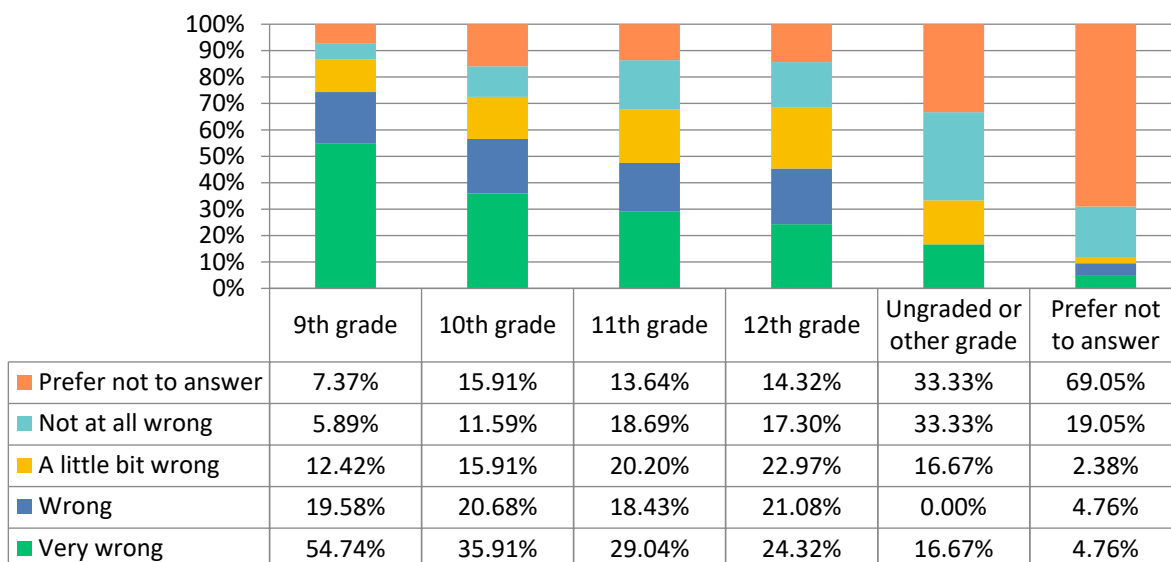


Key Findings on Ease of Access

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported that obtaining marijuana would be difficult, with 29.15% saying it would be “Very hard” and 12.90% selecting “Sort of hard.” However, nearly 40% believed access would be relatively easy, with 23.37% saying “Very easy” and 15.21% selecting “Sort of easy.” An additional 19.38% chose “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, students were more likely to perceive marijuana as difficult rather than easy to obtain, though opinions were mixed.
- Gender Differences:** Perceptions of marijuana accessibility were similar across male and female students, with comparable rates reporting it would be “Very hard” (28.57% of females and 31.01% of males) or “Sort of hard” (13.36% of females and 13.04% of males). Female students were slightly more likely to say it would be “Very easy” (25.46%) compared to males (21.77%). Students identifying as “Other” reported more evenly distributed responses, with 25.00% saying access would be “Sort of easy” and 20.00% each selecting “Very easy,” “Very hard,” and “Prefer not to answer.”
- Grade Differences:** Perceptions of marijuana accessibility varied by grade level. Among 9th graders, 41.05% reported it would be “Very hard” to get marijuana, the highest among all grades. This percentage declined with grade level, dropping to 17.03% by 12th grade. Meanwhile, the belief that marijuana was “Very easy” to access increased steadily, from 17.47% in 9th grade to 30.54% in 12th grade. Students in the ungraded or other group were the most likely to view marijuana as “Very easy” to obtain (50.00%) and least likely to report it as “Very hard” (16.67%). Overall, older students were more likely to perceive marijuana as accessible, while younger students viewed access as more difficult.

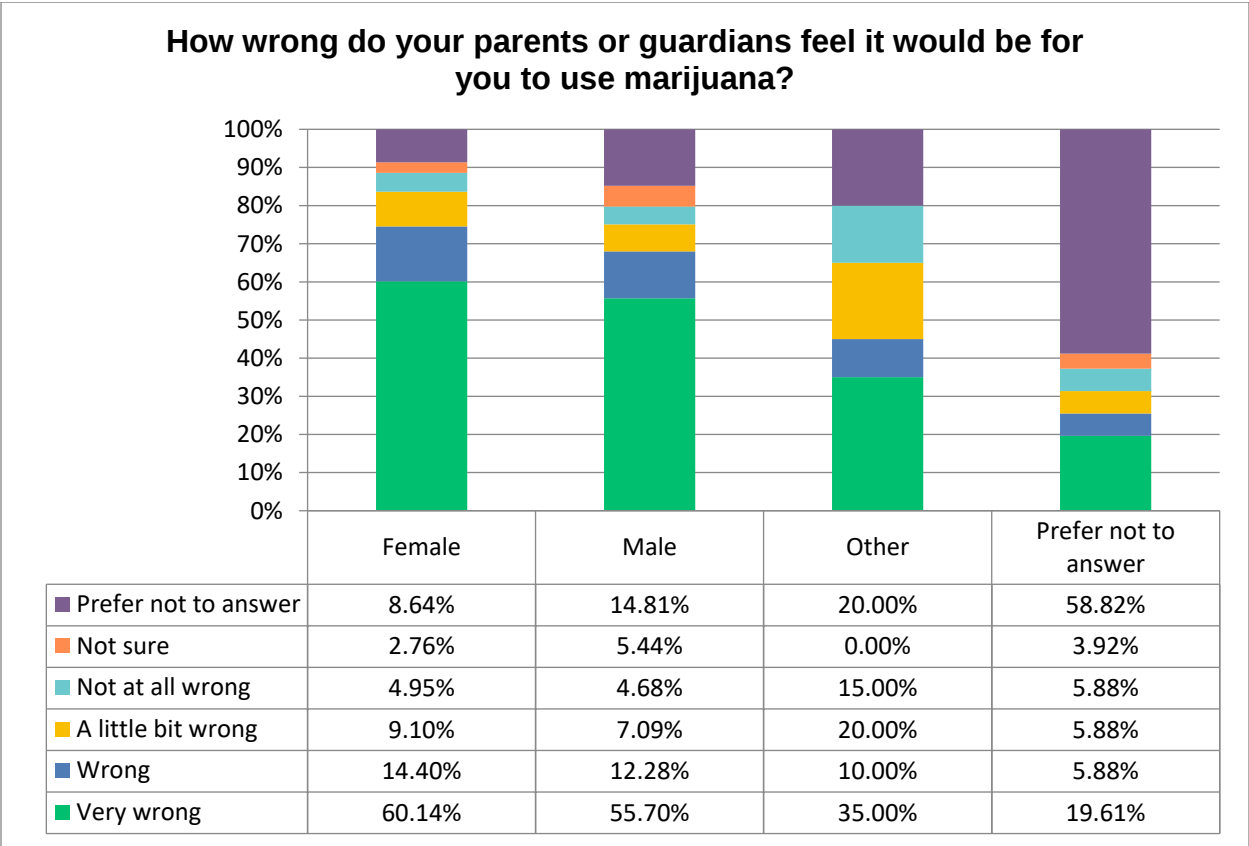
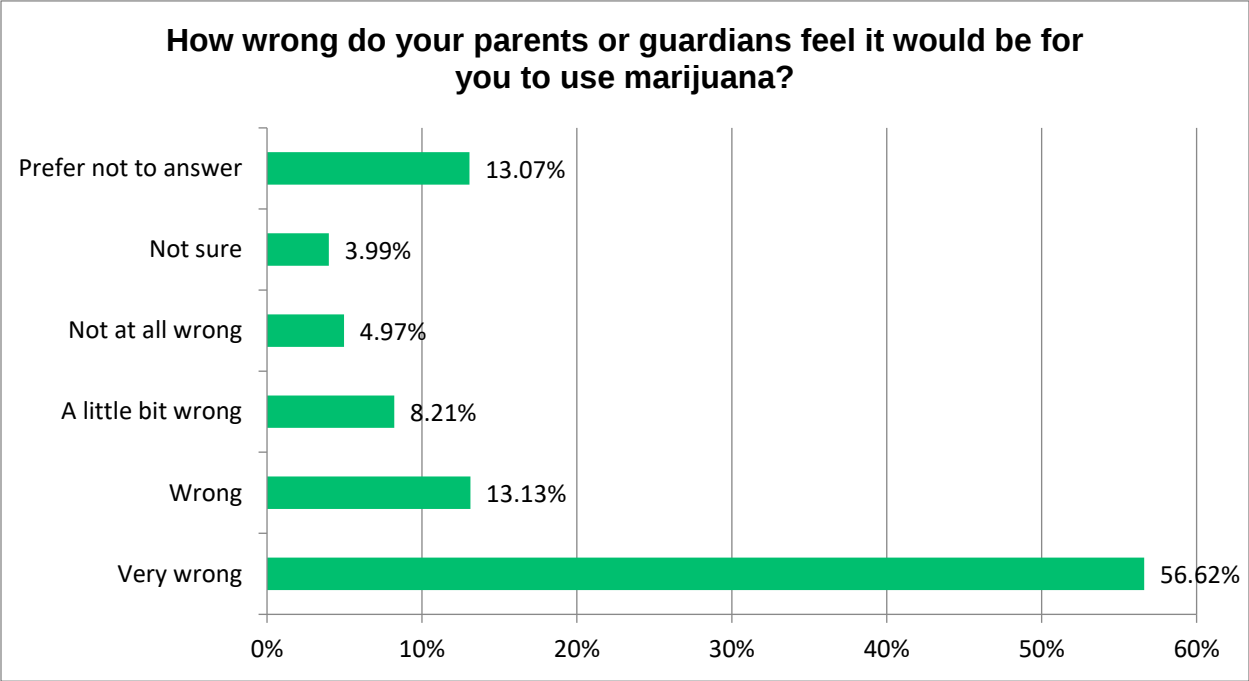


How wrong do you think it is for someone your age to use marijuana?

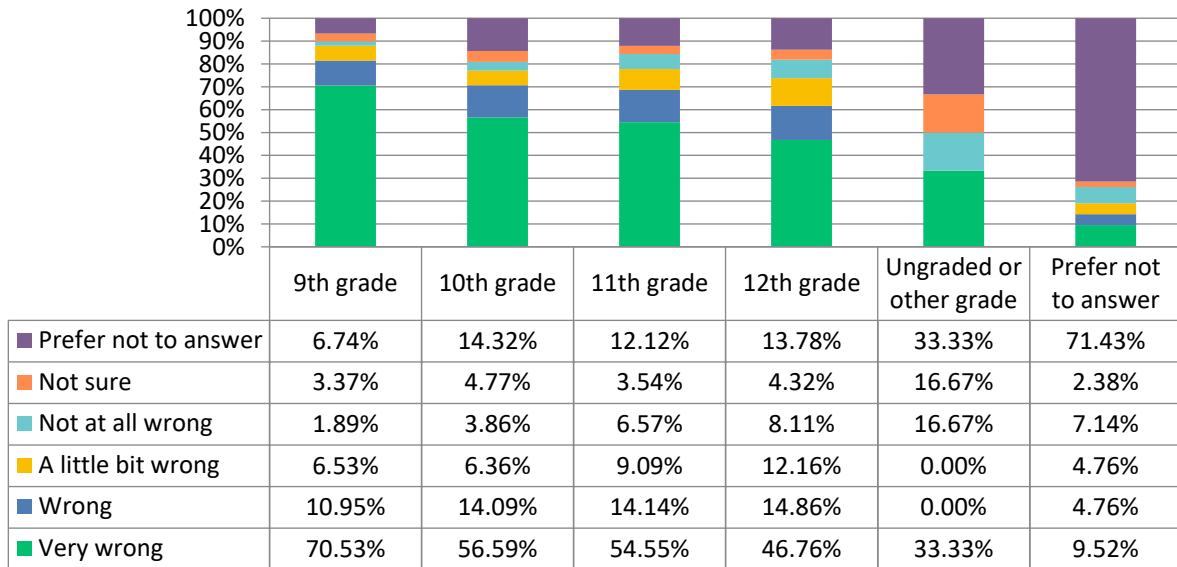


Key Findings on Perception of Marijuana Use

- County-wide Trends:** Most students expressed disapproval of marijuana use for someone their age. Specifically, 36.21% said it was “Very wrong,” followed by 19.49% who said it was “Wrong.” Another 17.12% considered it “A little bit wrong,” while 13.13% said it was “Not at all wrong.” An additional 14.05% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, a majority of students viewed marijuana use as at least somewhat wrong, with more than half selecting one of the two strongest disapproval categories.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across gender identities expressed disapproval of marijuana use. Among females, 36.41% said it was “Very wrong” and 22.12% said “Wrong,” while 38.10% of males selected “Very wrong” and 17.85% said “Wrong.” In contrast, students identifying as “Other” were less likely to disapprove, with only 15.00% selecting “Very wrong” and 5.00% choosing “Wrong,” and 35.00% saying it was “Not at all wrong.” Due to the small sample size, results for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Perceptions of marijuana use varied notably by grade level. Among 9th graders, more than half (54.74%) said it was “Very wrong,” but this declined steadily to 24.32% in 12th grade. Conversely, the percentage of students who said it was “Not at all wrong” rose from 5.89% in 9th grade to 17.30% in 12th grade. The share of students who said it was “A little bit wrong” or “Wrong” remained fairly consistent across grades. Students in the ungraded or other group reported lower disapproval overall, with only 16.67% selecting “Very wrong” and 33.33% saying it was “Not at all wrong.” Overall, strong disapproval of marijuana use declined as grade level increased.



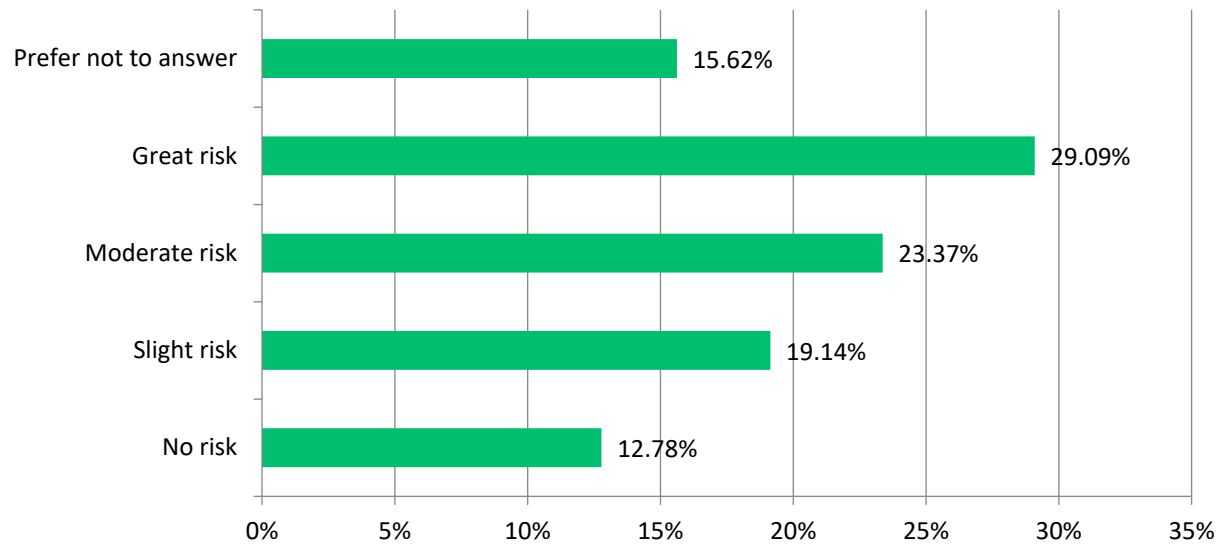
How wrong do your parents or guardians feel it would be for you to use marijuana?



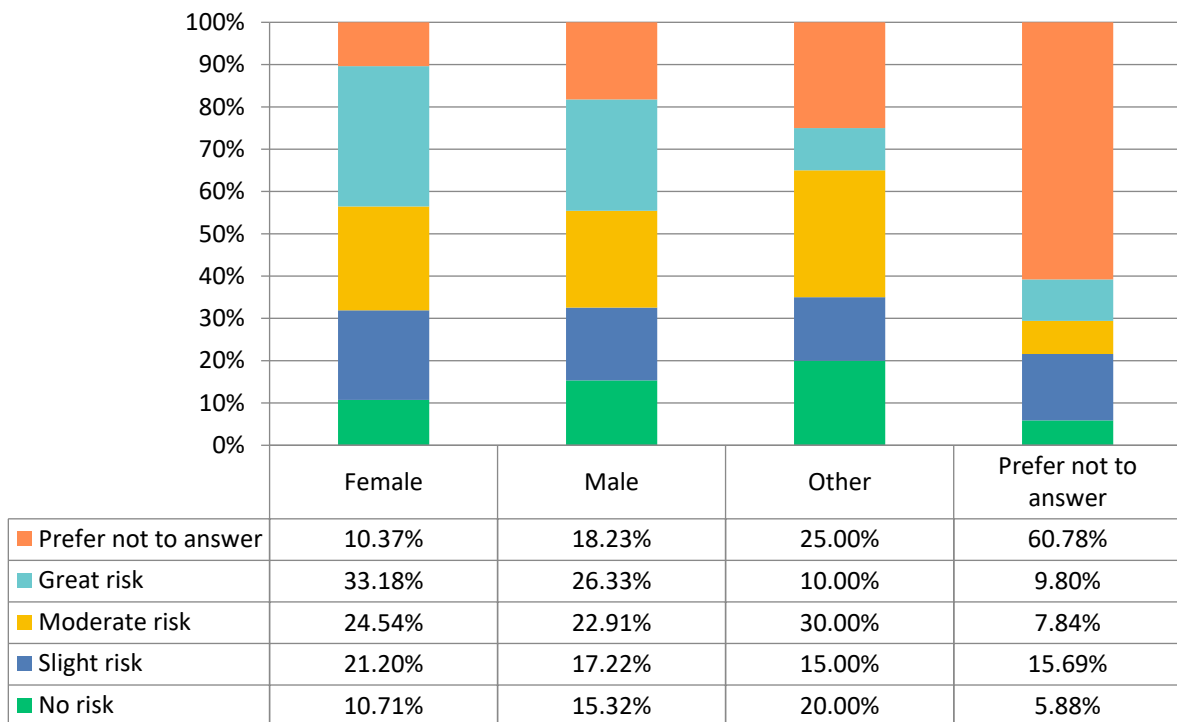
Key Findings on Parental Views of Marijuana Use

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported that their parents or guardians strongly disapproved of marijuana use. Over half (56.62%) believed their parents would view it as “Very wrong,” and 13.13% selected “Wrong.” Smaller shares felt their parents considered it “A little bit wrong” (8.21%) or “Not at all wrong” (4.97%). A further 3.99% were unsure, and 13.07% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, the majority of students perceived clear parental disapproval of marijuana use.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across gender groups believed their parents or guardians strongly disapproved of marijuana use. Similar proportions of female (60.14%) and male (55.70%) students reported that their parents viewed marijuana use as “Very wrong.” Perceptions of moderate disapproval were also comparable, with “Wrong” selected by 14.40% of females and 12.28% of males. Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to perceive strong disapproval, with 35.00% selecting “Very wrong” and 20.00% selecting “A little bit wrong.” Due to the small sample size, results for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Student reports of parental perceptions of marijuana use varied notably by grade level. Among 9th graders, more than half (70.53%) believe their parents viewed marijuana use as “Very wrong,” but this declined steadily to 46.76% in 12th grade. Conversely, perceptions of minimal disapproval (“Not at all wrong”) rose from 1.89% in 9th grade to 8.11% in 12th grade. The ungraded or other group reported lower disapproval overall, with only 33.33% selecting “Very wrong” and 16.67% saying it was “Not at all wrong.” Overall, strong disapproval declined as grade level increased.

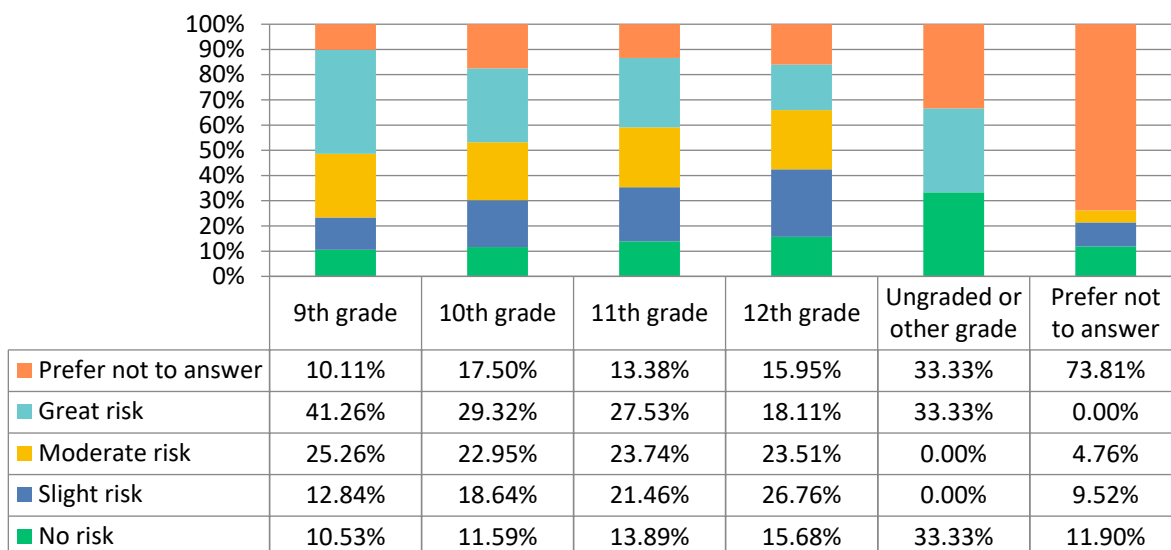
**How much do you think people risk harming themselves
(physically or in other ways) if they use marijuana regularly?**



**How much do you think people risk harming themselves
(physically or in other ways) if they use marijuana regularly?**



How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they use marijuana regularly?

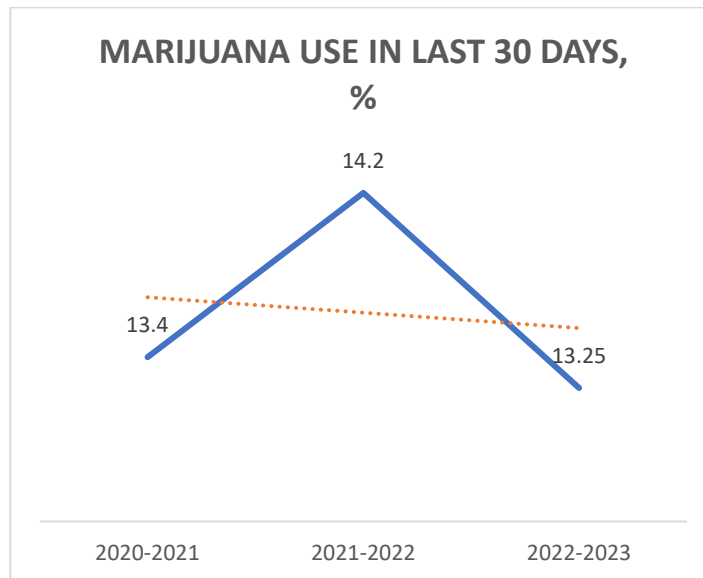


Key Findings on Perceived Risk of Marijuana Risk

- County-wide Trends:** Most students believed that regular marijuana use posed at least some risk of harm. Specifically, 29.09% perceived “Great risk” and 23.37% reported “Moderate risk.” Smaller percentages viewed it as only a “Slight risk” (19.14%) or “No risk” (12.78%), while 15.62% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, the majority of students associated regular marijuana use with moderate to significant harm.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across gender groups perceived regular marijuana use as risky, though levels of perceived harm varied. Female students were most likely to report “Great risk” (33.18%) and “Moderate risk” (24.54%). Males showed slightly lower perceptions of harm, with 26.33% selecting “Great risk” and 22.91% “Moderate risk.” Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to perceive great risk (10.00%) but more likely to report “Moderate risk” (30.00%) or “No risk” (20.00%). Overall, most students recognized some level of harm from regular marijuana use, though perceived severity differed by gender identity.
- Grade Differences:** Perceptions of harm from regular marijuana use declined as grade level increased. Among 9th graders, 41.26% reported “Great risk,” compared to 18.11% of 12th graders. At the same time, 12th graders were more likely to select “Slight risk” (26.76%) and “No risk” (15.68%) than 9th graders (12.84% and 10.53%, respectively). Reports of “Moderate risk” remained relatively stable across grades. Students in the ungraded or other group reported the highest combined rates of “Slight risk” and “No risk” (66.66%). Overall, concern about harm from regular marijuana use appeared to decline as students got older.

Marijuana Use Among Students Over Time

As marijuana becomes more widely accessible, understanding its use among adolescents has become increasingly important. Marijuana use in youth can affect areas critical to development, including cognitive function and emotional well-being. The following data explores how marijuana use among students has shifted over recent years, revealing potential areas of concern and change in attitudes or behaviors.



Key Findings on Marijuana Use Over Time

- **Decline in Recent Marijuana Use:** The percentage of students reporting marijuana use in the past 30 days showed a slight increase from 13.4% in 2020–2021 to 14.2% in 2021–2022, followed by a decline to 13.25% in 2022–2023. Despite the brief rise, the overall trend over the three-year period suggests a modest decrease in recent marijuana use among students.

Substance Use and Abuse

Substance use among students poses significant risks to health and development. It is crucial to understand both the prevalence and patterns of misuse. The YRBS collects data on a variety of substances, including prescription medications, illicit drugs, and alcohol. The information helps identify trends, track progress, and inform interventions aimed at reducing substance misuse and its associated harms.

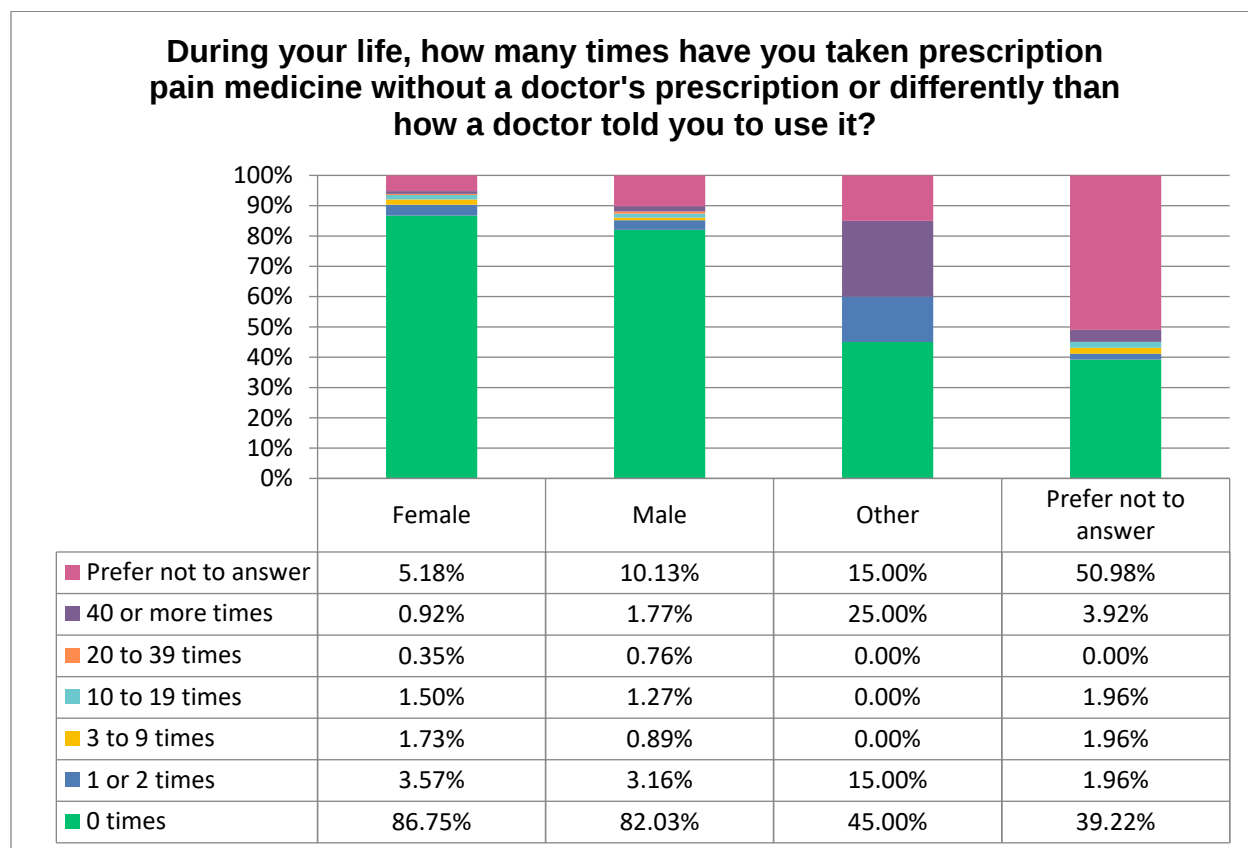
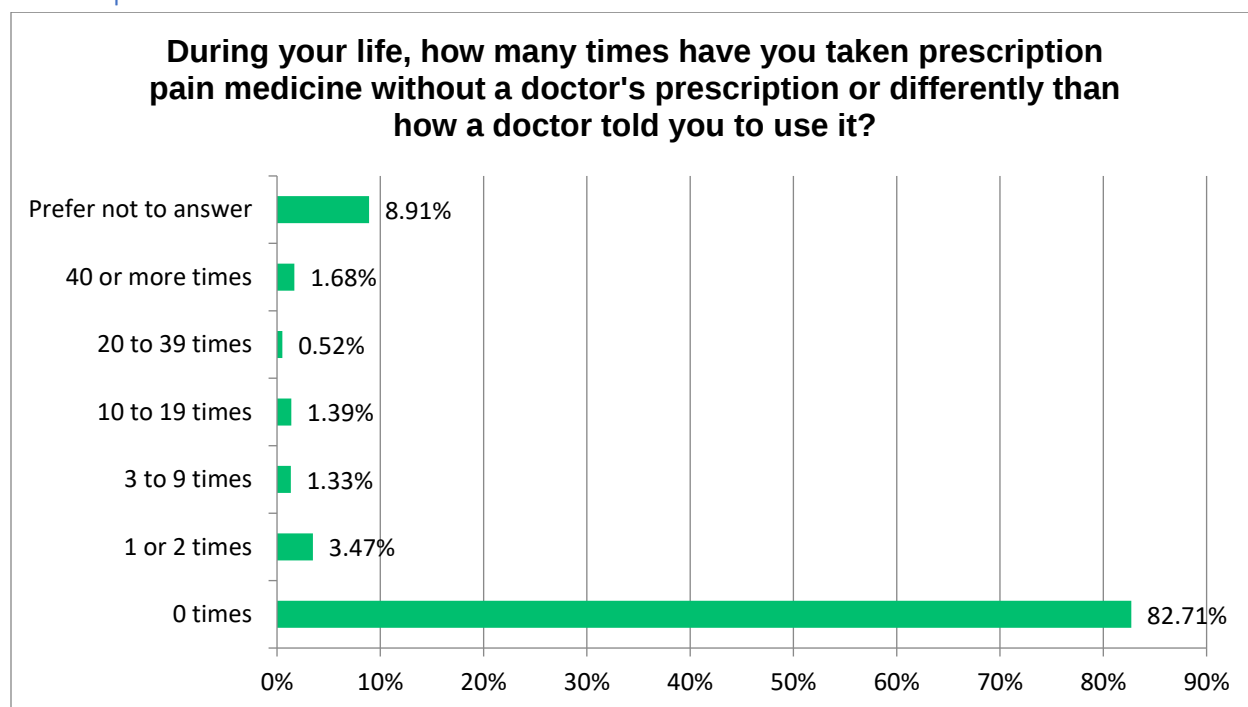
The data indicates that most students reported never misusing prescription drugs, including pain medications, stimulants, or other medications. Lifetime misuse remained relatively low across all substances, with the vast majority of students indicating no use.

Gender and grade differences showed some variation. Female and male students reported similar patterns of non-use, while students identifying as “Other” reported higher levels of frequent misuse across nearly all substances. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size of this group. By grade, non-use was highest among 9th graders and decreased slightly through 12th grade, with occasional and frequent use more commonly reported in upper grades. Ungraded students consistently reported lower rates of non-use and higher rates of frequent use, though this group also had a smaller sample size.

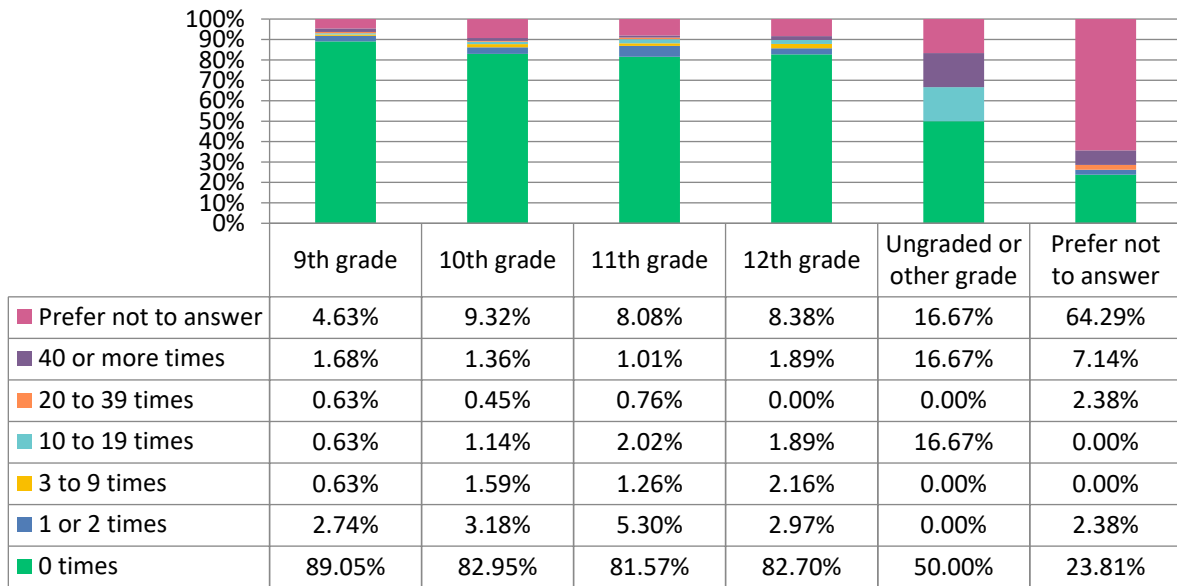
Use of specific drugs like heroin, cocaine, methamphetamines, and inhalants was rare among students, with most reporting no lifetime use. Inhalant use was slightly more common than other substances but still limited. A small percentage of students reported being offered drugs on school property or attending school under the influence of substances, though these behaviors remained infrequent.

In addition, students generally perceived misuse of prescription drugs as wrong and risky. Most believed using someone else’s medication was “Very wrong,” and a majority recognized a “Great risk” of harm from misuse. These strong perceptions were also reflected in how students believed their parents or guardians would view such behavior, with most reporting perceived parental disapproval.

Prescription Pain Medicine Misuse



During your life, how many times have you taken prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told you to use it?

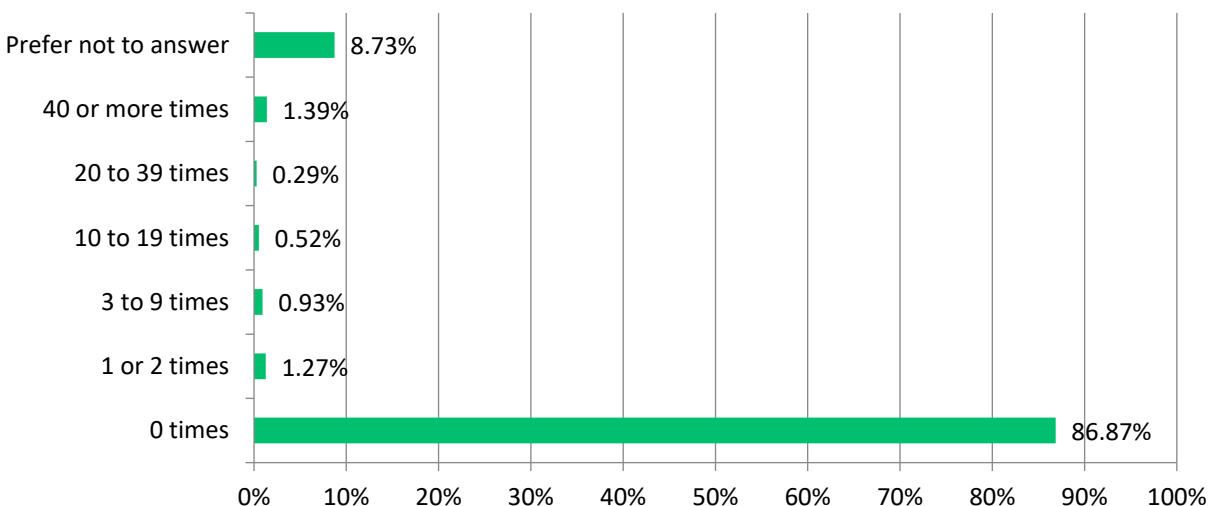


Key Findings on Prescription Pain Medicine Misuse

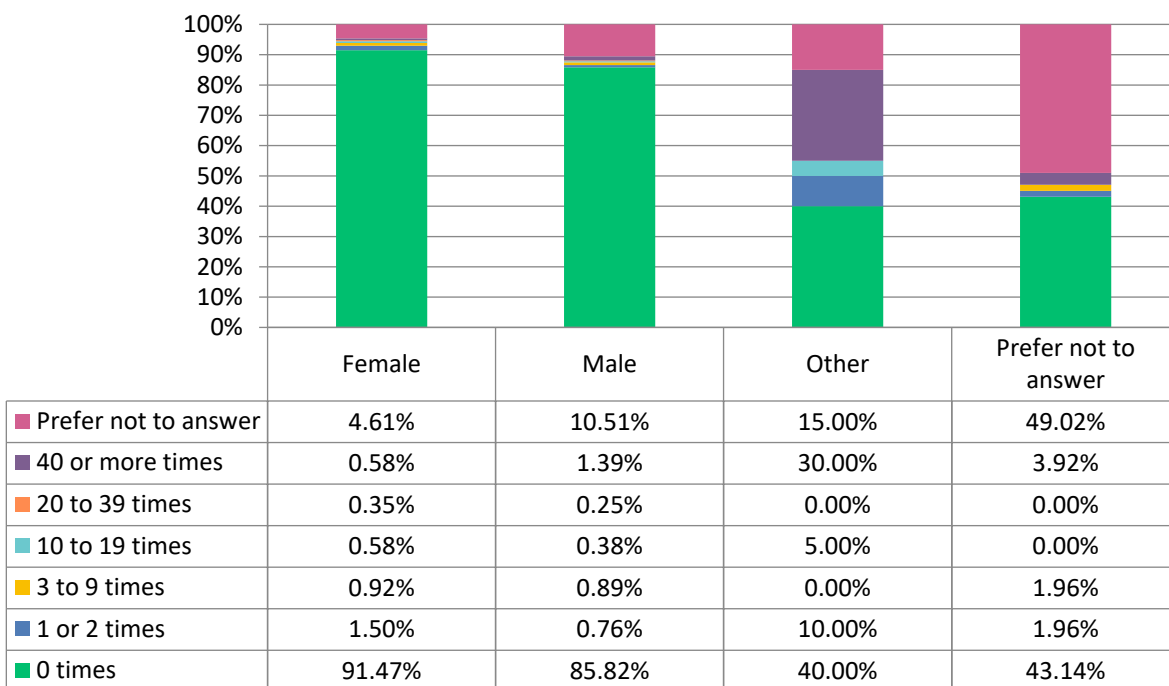
- County-wide Trends:** Most students (82.71%) reported never misusing prescription pain medication. Among respondents, misuse was most often limited to 1 or 2 times (3.47%). A small percentage reported more frequent misuse, with 1.33% using 3 to 9 times and 1.68% using 40 or more times. An additional 8.91% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, lifetime misuse of prescription pain medicine was uncommon among students.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across all gender groups reported never using prescription pain medicine without a prescription or in a way not directed by a doctor. Non-use was similar among female (86.75%) and male (82.03%) students. A small percentage reported misuse 1 or 2 times, with similar rates between females (3.57%) and males (3.16%). Students identifying as "Other" reported higher rates of misuse, with 15.00% using 1 or 2 times and 25.00% reporting use 40 or more times. Due to the small sample size, findings for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported never misusing prescription pain medicine. Non-use was highest among 9th graders (89.05%) and decreased slightly through 12th grade (82.70%). Reported misuse of 1 or 2 times was generally low across grades. Higher frequency misuse (10 times or more) was uncommon, with minimal variation across grades. Students in the ungraded or other group reported the lowest rate of non-use (50.00%) and the highest levels of more frequent misuse, including 16.67% for both 10 to 19 and 40 or more uses. Due to the small sample size, findings for this group should be interpreted with caution.

Prescription Stimulant Misuse

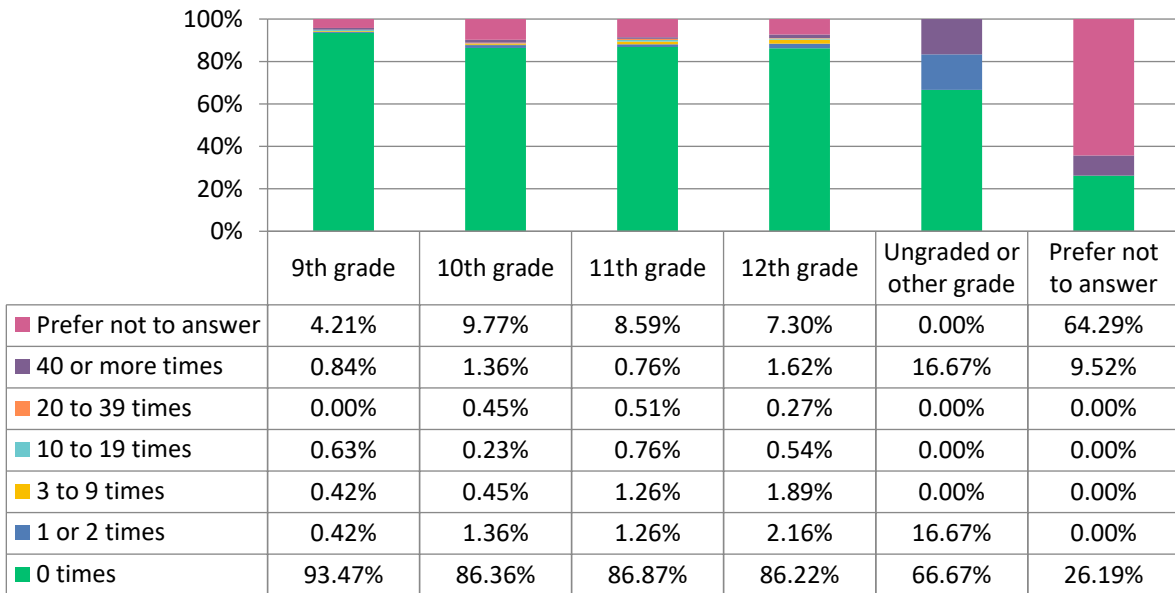
During your life, how many times have you taken prescription stimulants without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told you to use it?



During your life, how many times have you taken prescription stimulants without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told you to use it?



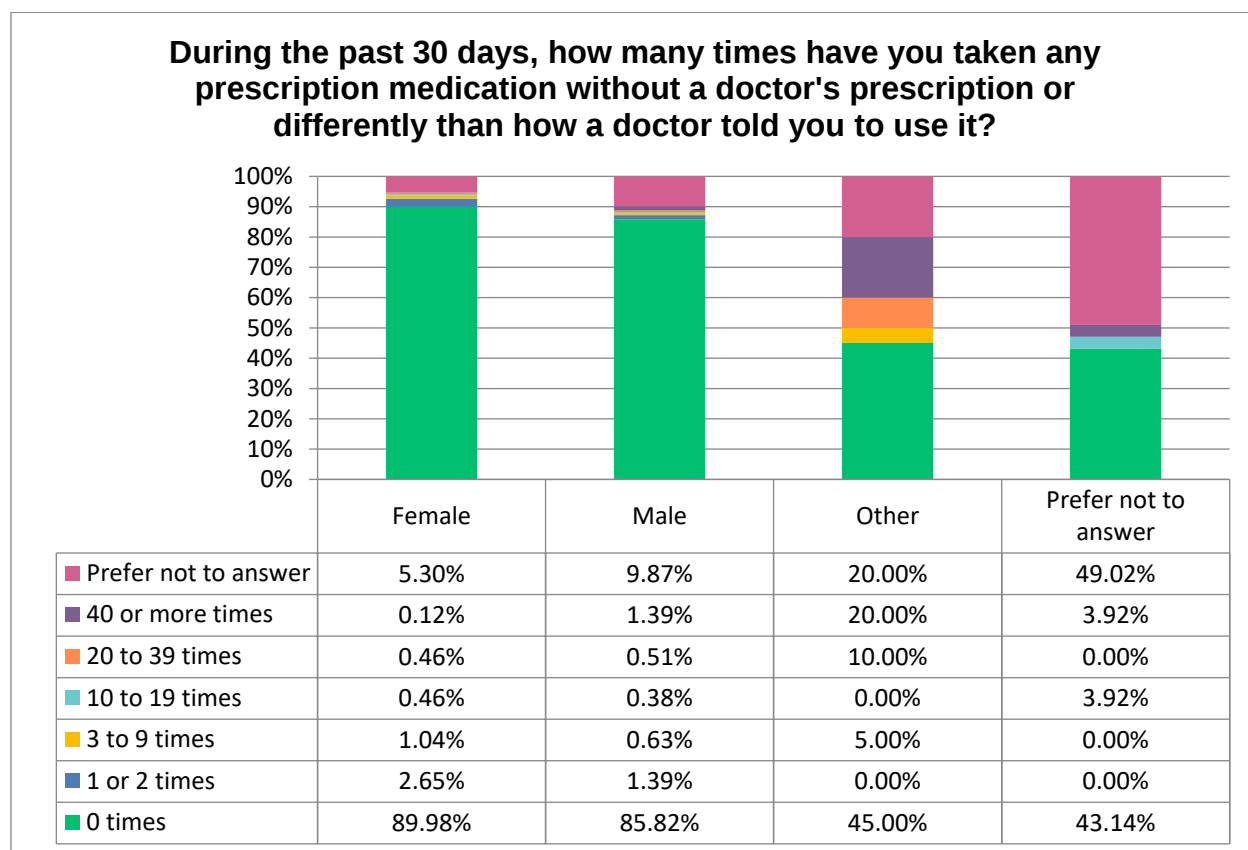
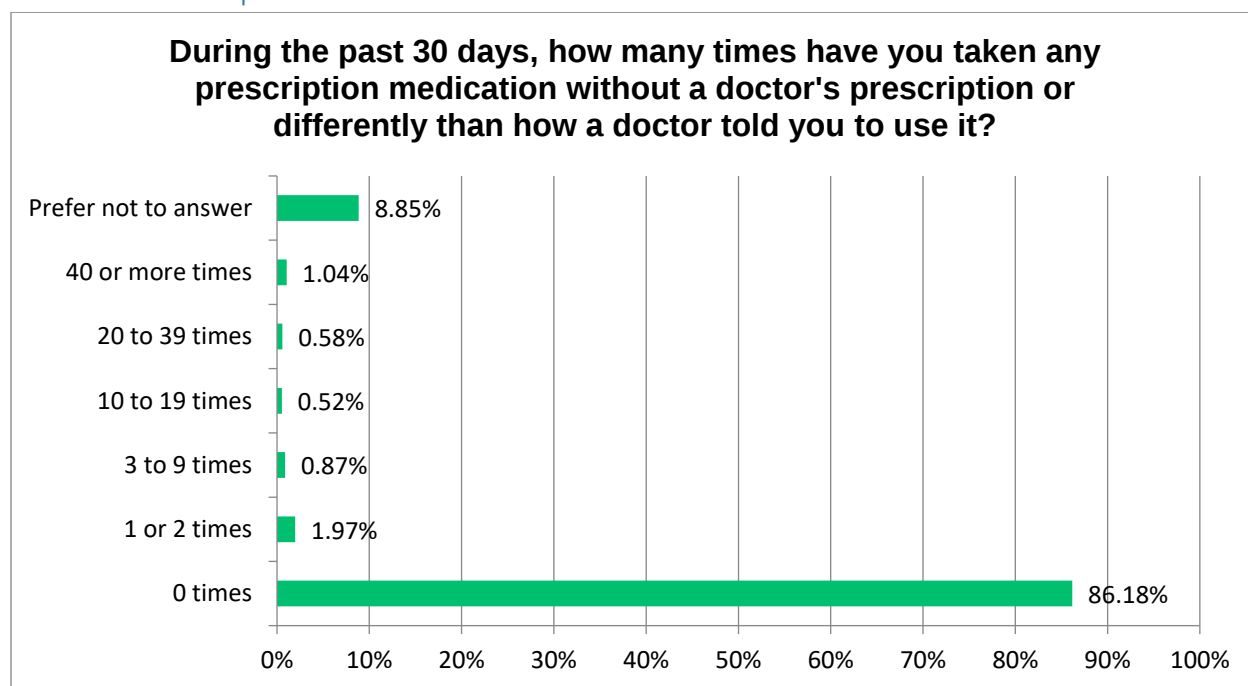
During your life, how many times have you taken prescription stimulants without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told you to use it?



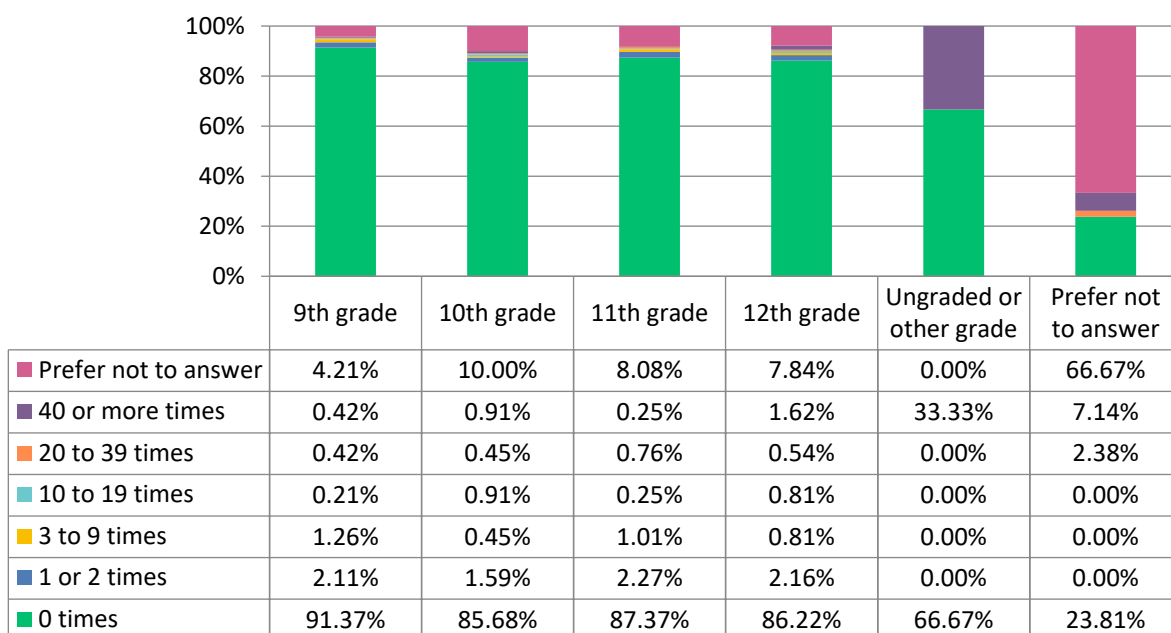
Key Findings on Prescription Stimulant Misuse

- County-wide Trends:** The majority of students (86.87%) reported never using prescription stimulants without a doctor's prescription or against medical instructions. A small percentage reported limited misuse, with 1.27% using 1 or 2 times and less than 1% each reporting 3 to 9 times (0.93%) or 10 to 19 times (0.52%). Very few students reported high-frequency misuse, including 0.29% for 20 to 39 times and 1.39% for 40 or more times. An additional 8.73% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, nonmedical use of prescription stimulants was rare among students.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across gender identities reported never misusing prescription stimulants. Non-use was highest among females (91.47%) and males (85.82%). Misuse was infrequent, with 1 or 2 time use reported by 1.50% of females and 0.76% of males. Students identifying as "Other" reported lower rates of non-use (40.00%) and substantially higher rates of frequent misuse, including 30.00% who reported use 40 or more times. The "Other" group also showed higher percentages for multiple use categories, though results should be interpreted cautiously due to small sample size.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across grade levels reported never misusing prescription stimulants, with non-use highest among 9th graders (93.47%) and gradually decreasing through 12th grade (86.22%). Occasional misuse (1 or 2 times) remained low across all grades but was slightly more common in upper grades. Reported use of 40 or more times increased from 0.84% in 9th grade to 1.62% in 12th grade.

General Prescription Misuse



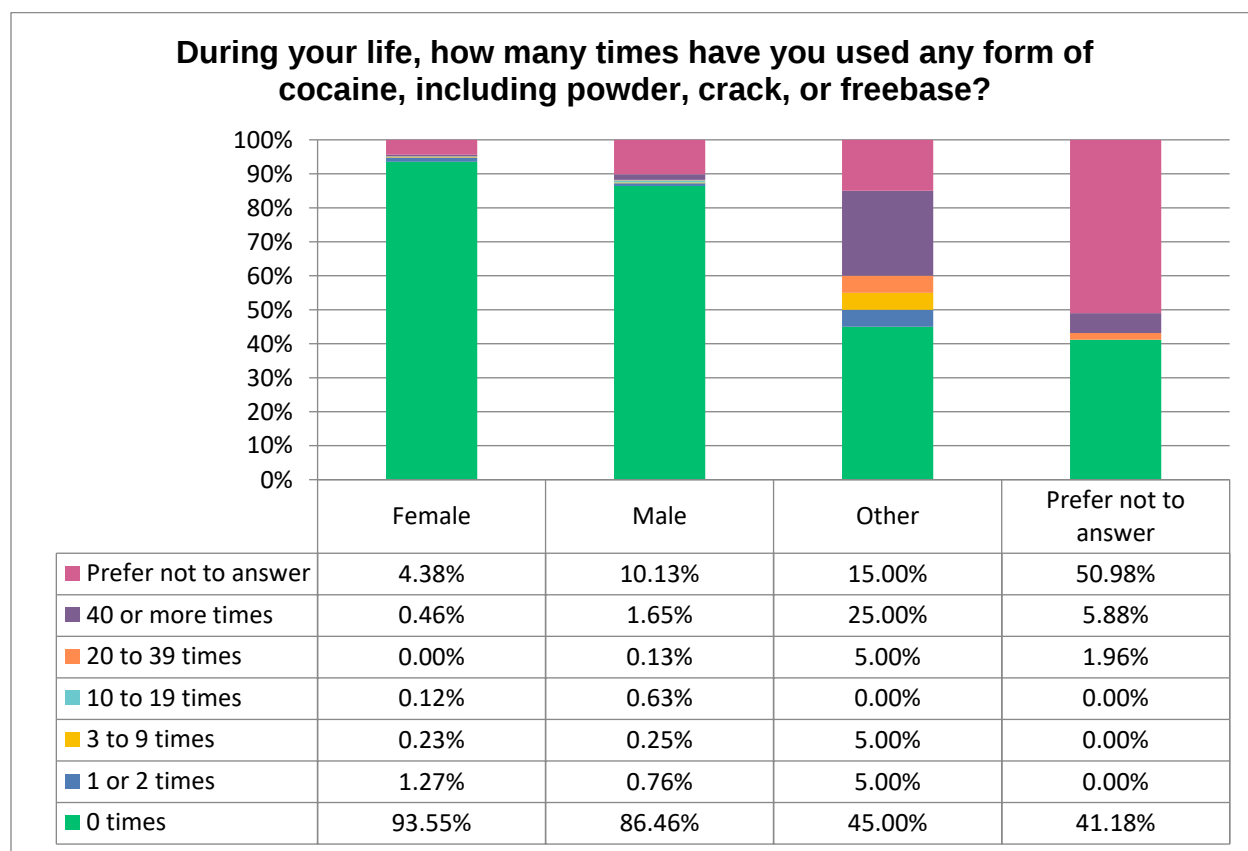
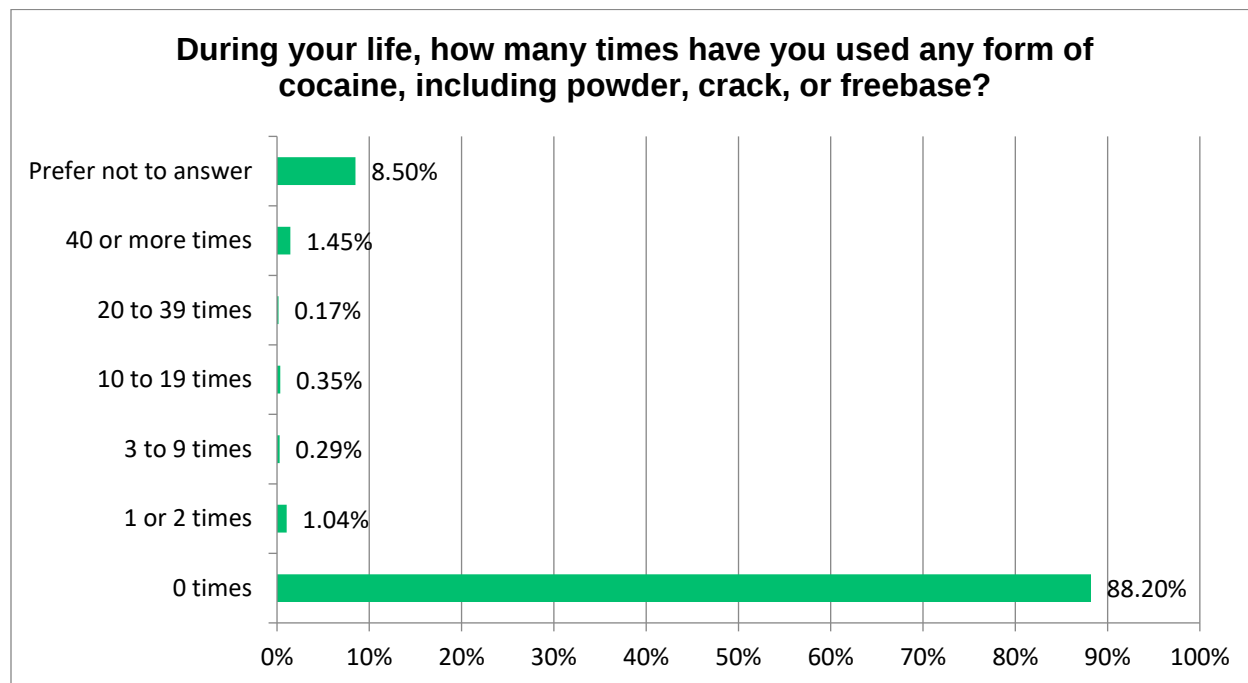
During the past 30 days, how many times have you taken any prescription medication without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told you to use it?



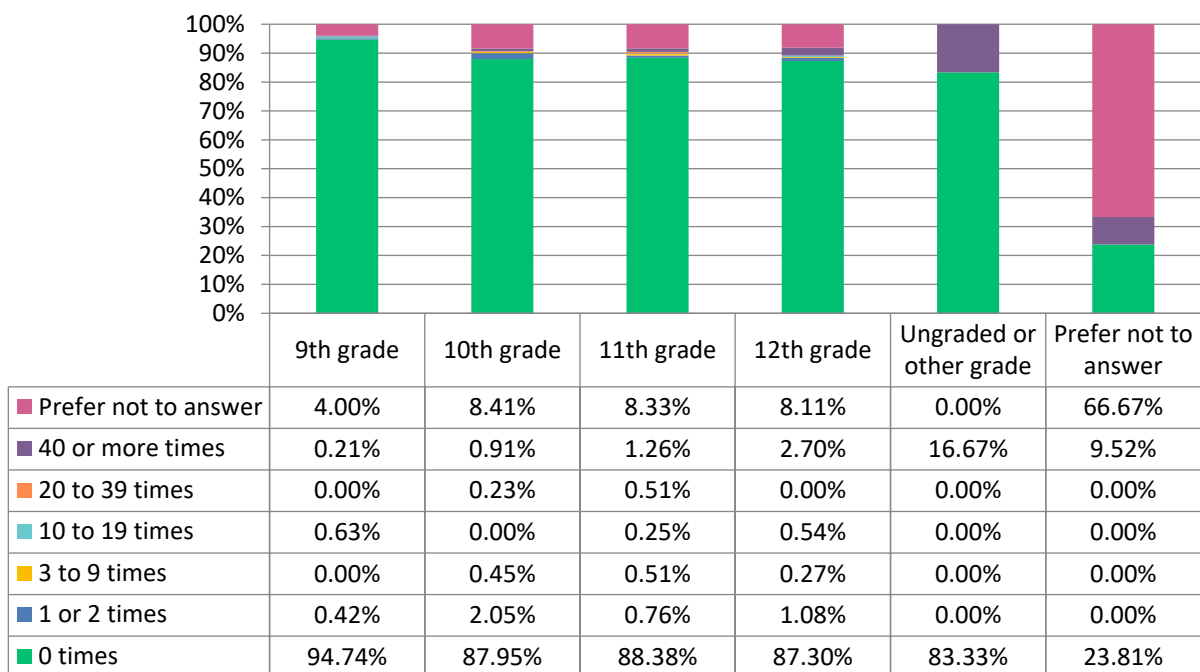
Key Findings on Prescription Medication Misuse (Past 30 Days)

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (86.18%) reported no prescription medication misuse in the past 30 days. Occasional use (1 or 2 times) was reported by 1.97%, while fewer reported use across all higher frequency categories. Specifically, 0.87% used medication 3 to 9 times, 0.52% used it 10 to 19 times, 0.58% used it 20 to 39 times, and 1.04% used it 40 or more times. An additional 8.85% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, recent misuse of prescription medication was uncommon, with the vast majority of students reporting no use.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across all gender groups reported not misusing prescription medication in the past 30 days, including 89.98% of females and 85.82% of males. Occasional misuse (1 or 2 times) was similar among females (2.65%) than males (1.39%). Students identifying as “Other” reported significantly lower rates of non-use (45.00%) and higher rates of frequent misuse, including 20.00% who reported using medication 40 or more times and 10.00% who used it 20 to 39 times. Due to the small sample size, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported not misusing prescription medication in the past 30 days. Non-use was highest among 9th graders (91.37%) and remained around 85% through 12th grade. Occasional misuse (1 or 2 times) was relatively consistent, ranging from 1.59% to 2.27%. Reports of higher frequency misuse (10 or more times) were rare across grades.

Cocaine Use



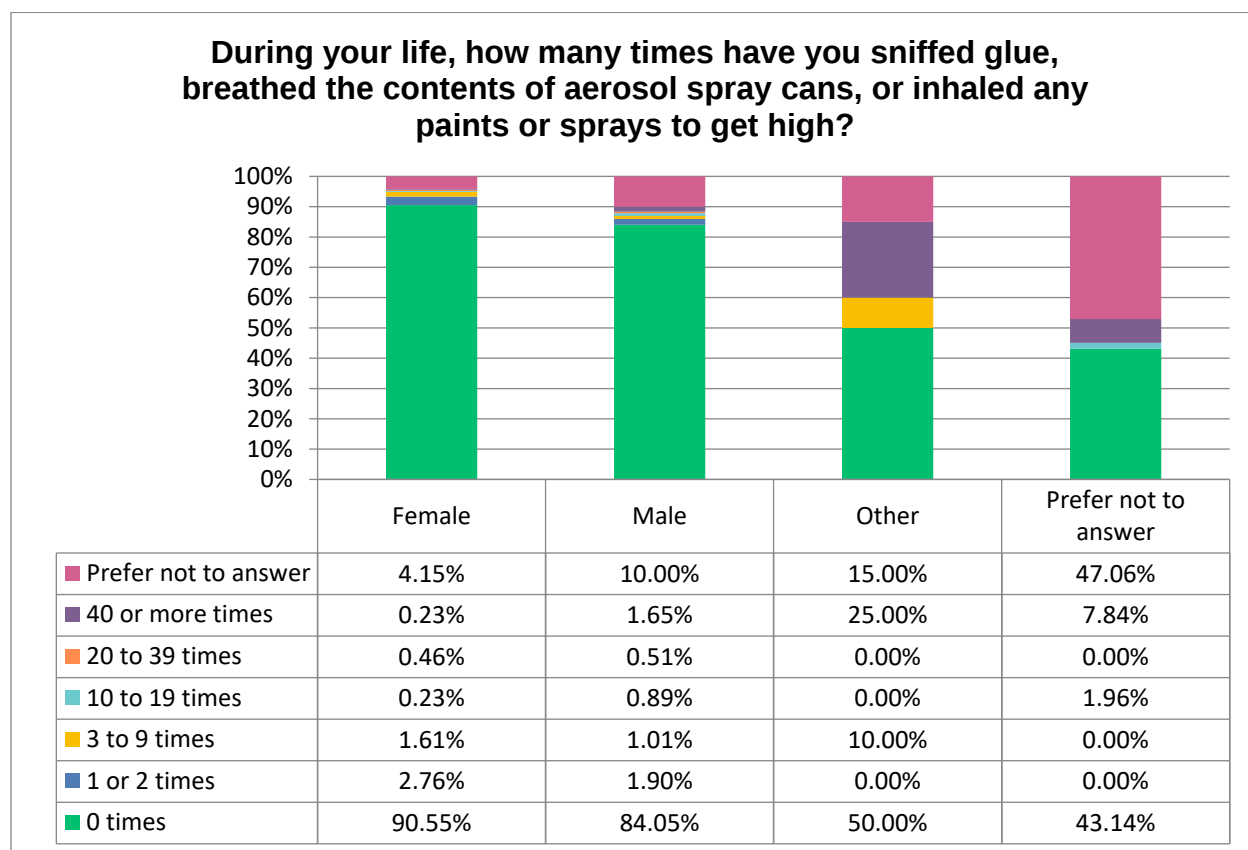
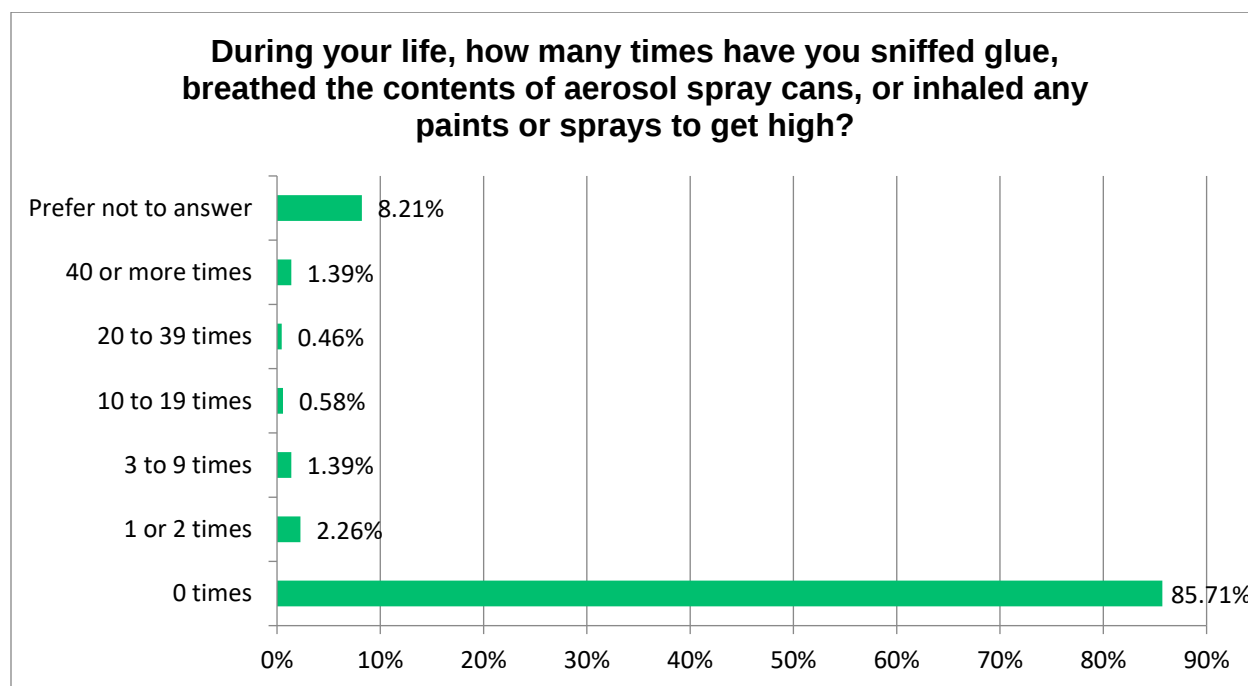
During your life, how many times have you used any form of cocaine, including powder, crack, or freebase?



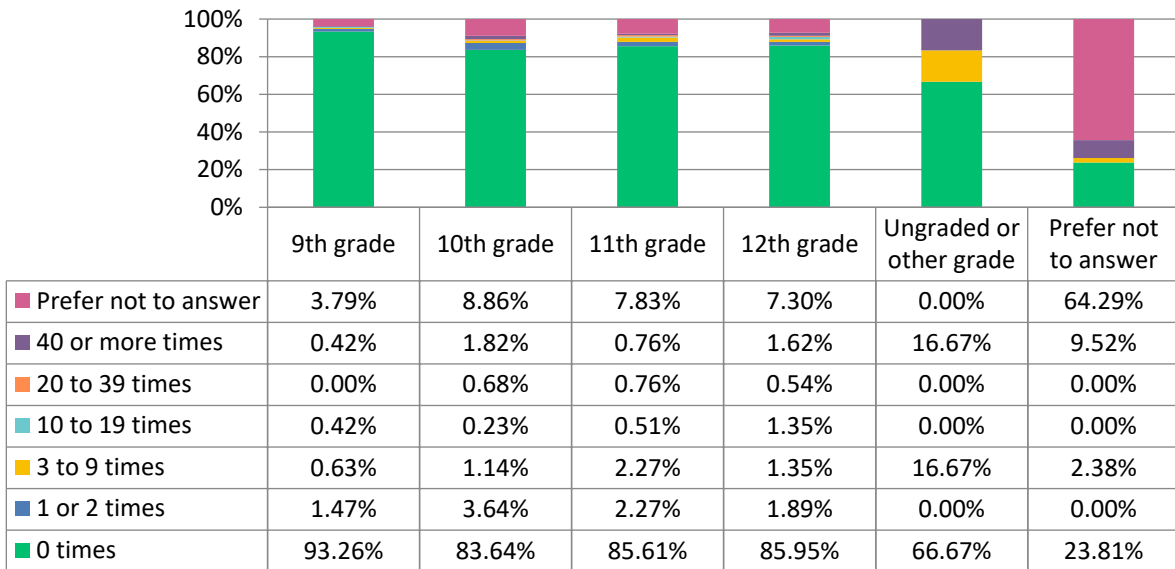
Key Findings on Cocaine Use Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (88.20%) reported never using any form of cocaine. Occasional lifetime use was rare, with only 1.04% reporting use 1 or 2 times. Reports of more frequent use were minimal. However, 1.45% reported using 40 or more times. A small percentage (8.50%) selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, lifetime cocaine use was uncommon among students.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across all gender groups reported never using any form of cocaine, including 93.55% of females and 86.46% of males. Occasional use (1 or 2 times) was slightly more common among females (1.27%) than males (0.76%). Students identifying as “Other” reported substantially lower rates of non-use (45.00%) and higher rates of frequent use, with 25.00% indicating use 40 or more times. Due to the small sample size, findings for this group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported never using cocaine, with non-use highest among 9th graders (94.74%). Occasional use (1 or 2 times) was slightly more common among upper grades, rising from 0.42% in 9th grade to 2.05% in 10th grade. Frequent use (40 or more times) remained very low but increased slightly from 0.21% in 9th grade to 2.70% in 12th grade. Students in the ungraded or other category reported the highest rates of frequent use (16.67%) and the lowest rate of non-use (83.33%). Due to the small sample size, findings for this group should be interpreted with caution.

Inhalant Misuse



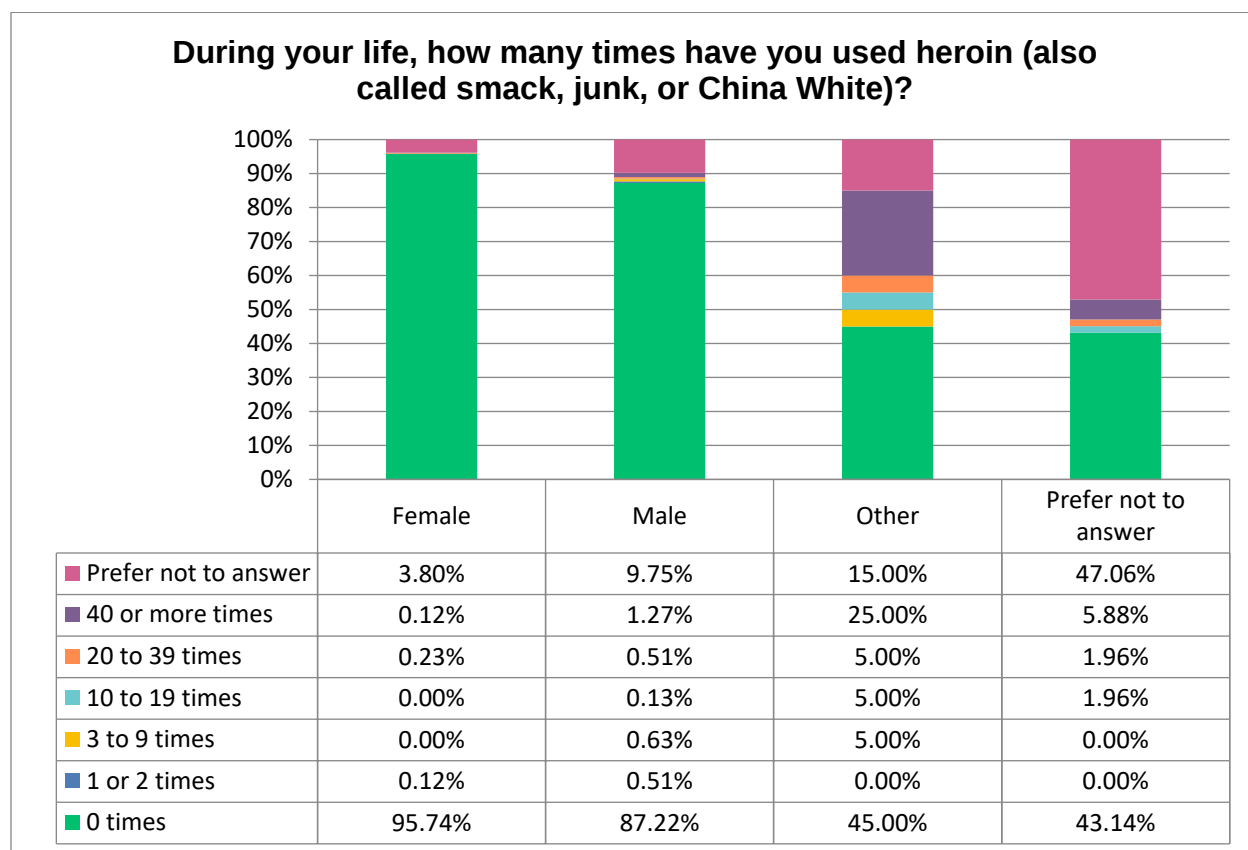
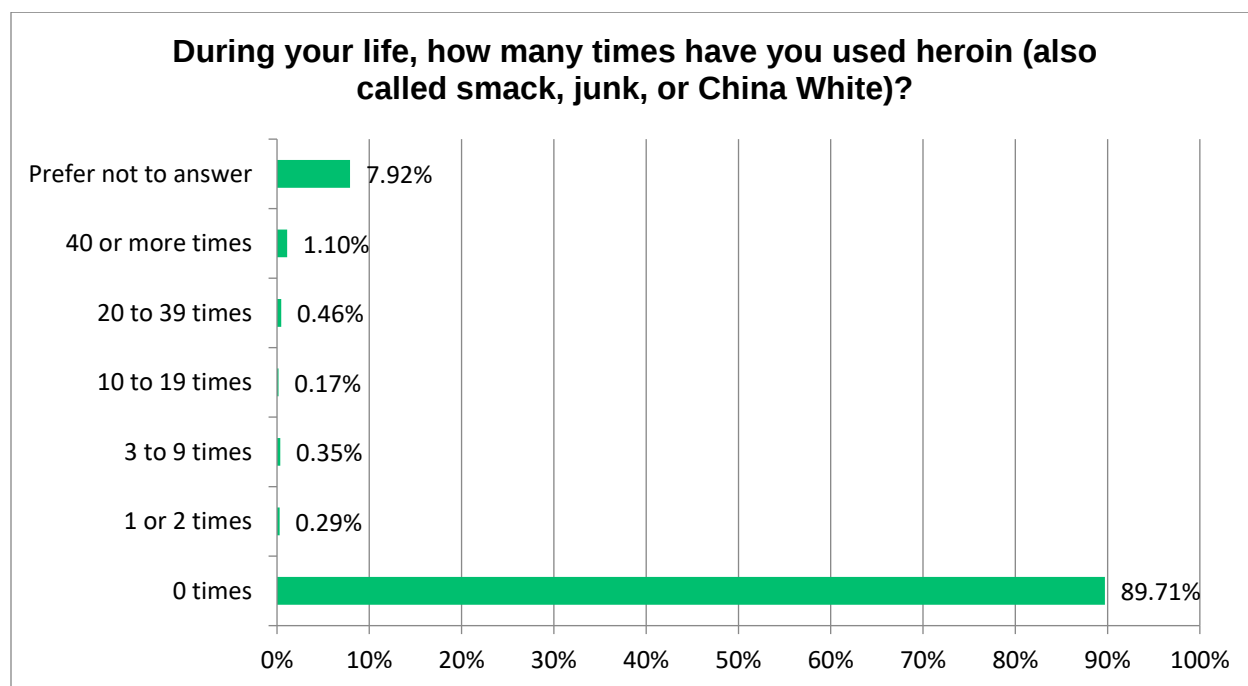
**During your life, how many times have you sniffed glue,
breathed the contents of aerosol spray cans, or inhaled any
paints or sprays to get high?**



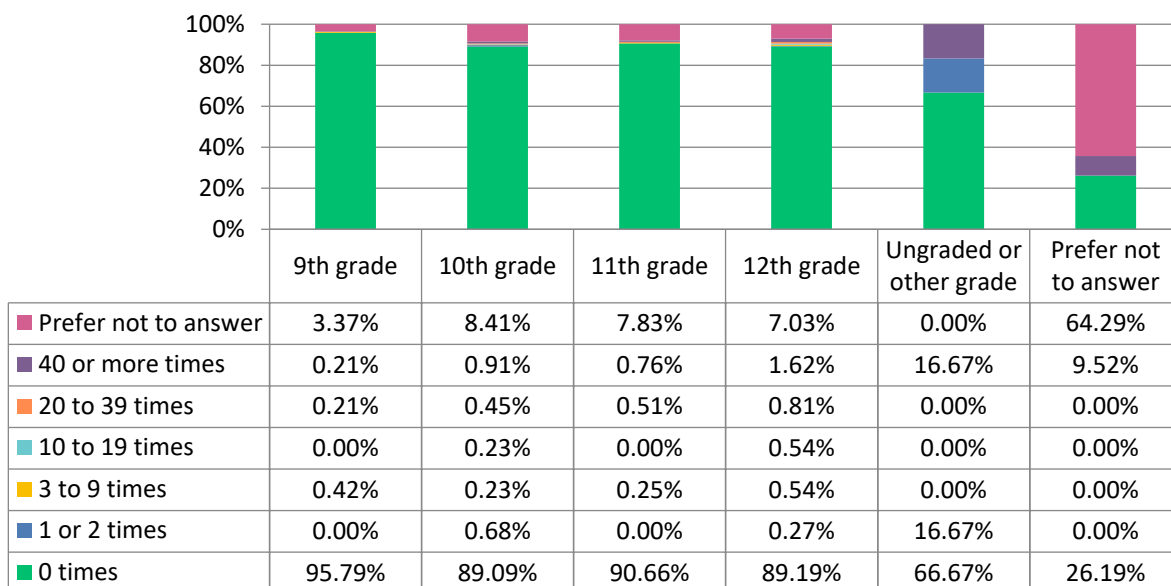
Key Findings on Inhalant Misuse

- County-wide Trends:** The majority of students (85.71%) reported never using inhalants to get high. Occasional use was low, with 2.26% reporting use 1 or 2 times and 1.39% using 3 to 9 times. Few students in each higher-use category reported more intermediate use. Of note, 1.39% reported use 40 or more times. An additional 8.21% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, inhalant use was relatively uncommon among students, with most reporting no lifetime use.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across gender groups reported never using inhalants, with 90.55% of females and 84.05% of males selecting "0 times." Occasional use (1 or 2 times) was similar among females (2.76%) compared to males (1.90%). Students identifying as “Other” reported the lowest rate of non-use (50.00%) and the highest levels of frequent use, including 25.00% who used inhalants 40 or more times. Due to the small sample size, findings for the "Other" group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported never using inhalants, with non-use highest among 9th graders (93.26%) and lowest among the ungraded or other group (66.67%). Occasional use (1 or 2 times) was slightly more common in 10th (3.64%) and 12th grade (1.89%). Reports of frequent use, including 40 or more times, were highest in the ungraded or other group (16.67%) and generally low across all other grades. Due to the small sample size, findings for the "Ungraded or other" group should be interpreted with caution.

Heroin Use



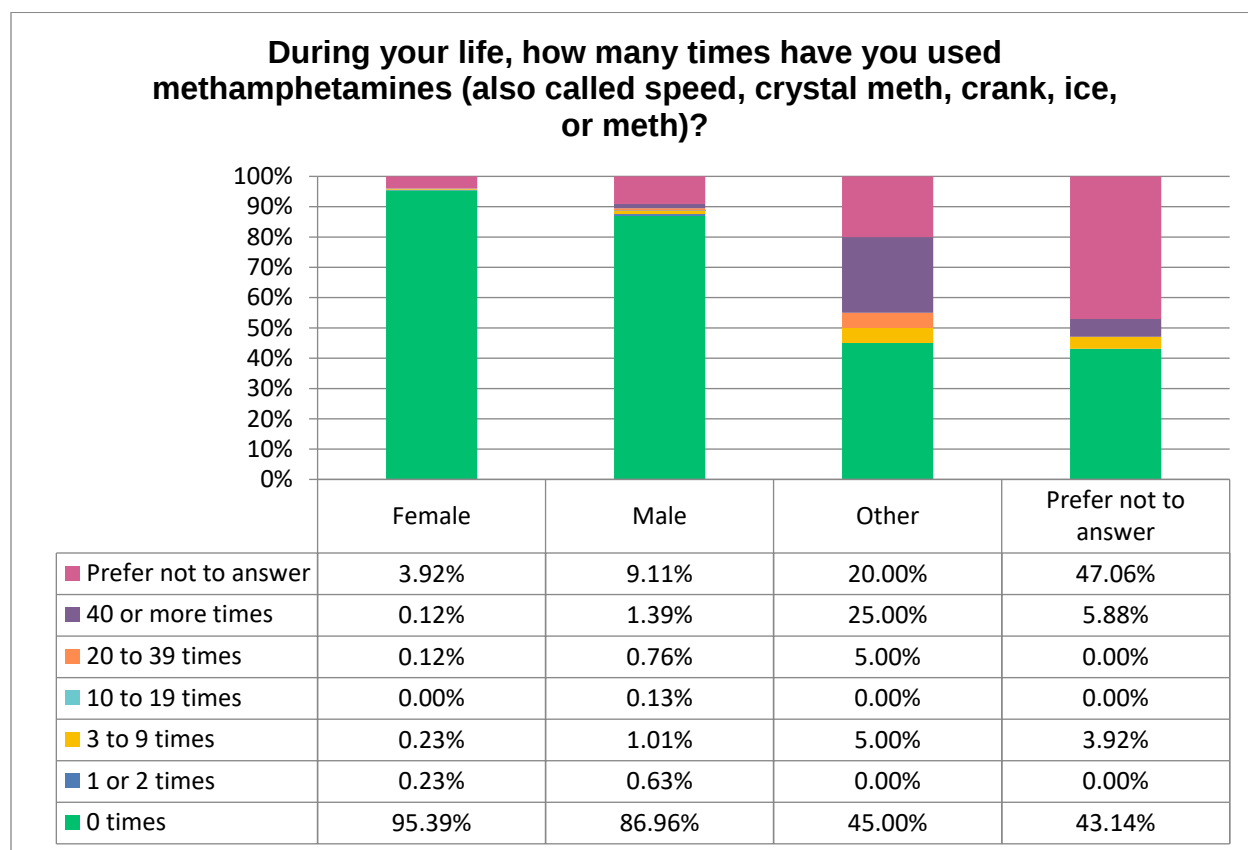
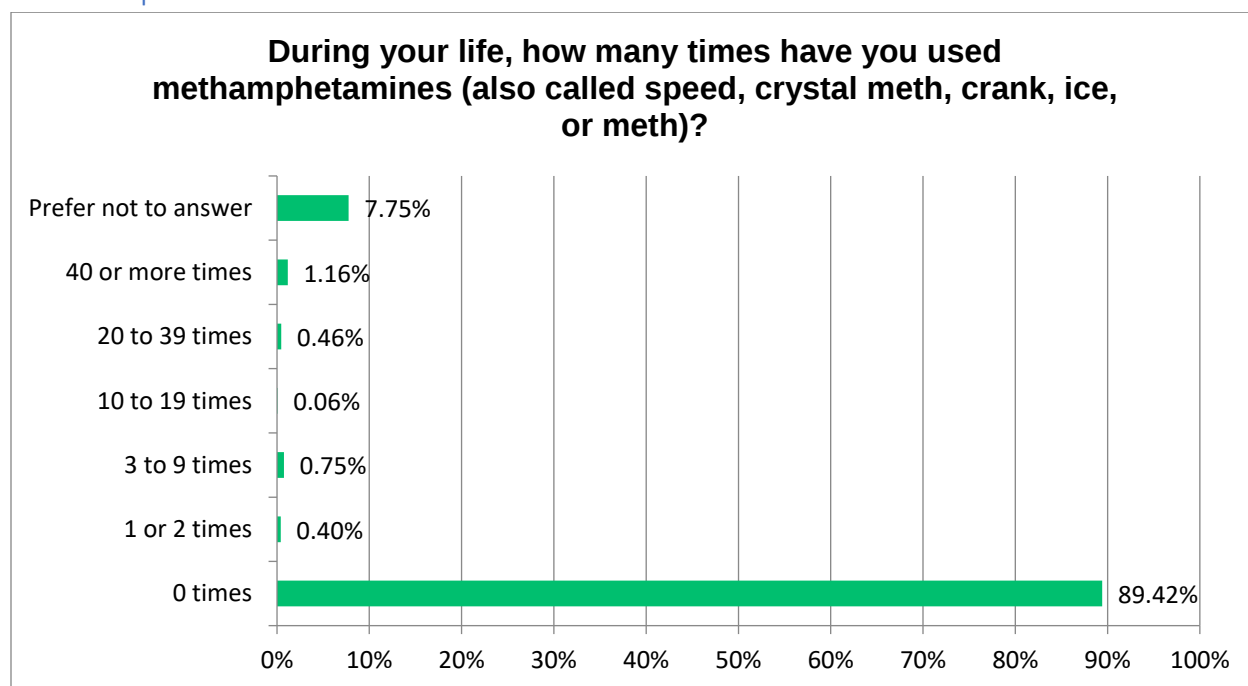
During your life, how many times have you used heroin (also called smack, junk, or China White)?



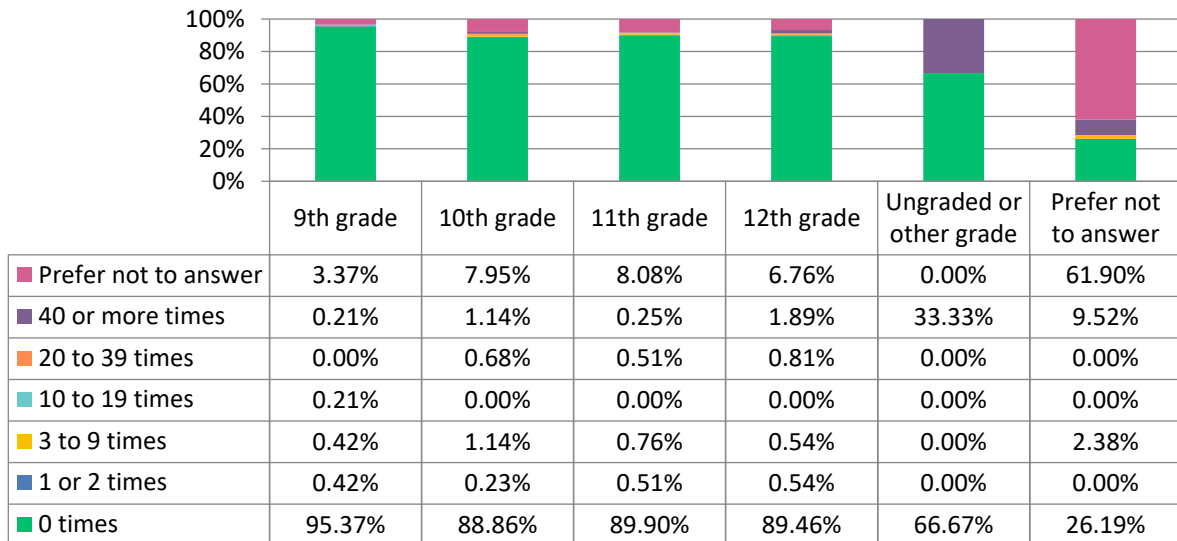
Key Findings on Heroin Use Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (89.71%) reported never using heroin in their lifetime. A very small percentage reported any lifetime use, including 0.29% who used it 1 or 2 times, and 1.10% who reported use 40 or more times. Other frequency categories, such as 3 to 9 times (0.35%), 10 to 19 times (0.17%), and 20 to 39 times (0.46%), were each under 1%. An additional 7.92% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, heroin use among students was rare, with the overwhelming majority reporting no lifetime use.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across gender identities reported never using heroin. Female students had the highest rate of non-use at 95.74%, followed by males at 87.22%. Students identifying as “Other” reported the lowest rate of non-use (45.00%) and the highest levels of frequent use, including 25.00% who used heroin 40 or more times. Among male students, 1.27% reported using heroin 40 or more times, compared to 0.12% of females. The “Other” group also had more distributed use across all frequency categories. Due to the small sample size, findings for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported never using heroin. Non-use was highest among 9th graders (95.79%). A small share of students in each grade reported any lifetime use across grades. Students in the ungraded or other group reported the highest rates of frequent use, including 16.67% who used heroin 40 or more times and 16.67% who used it 1 or 2 times. Due to the small sample size, findings for the “Ungraded or other” group should be interpreted with caution.

Methamphetamine Use



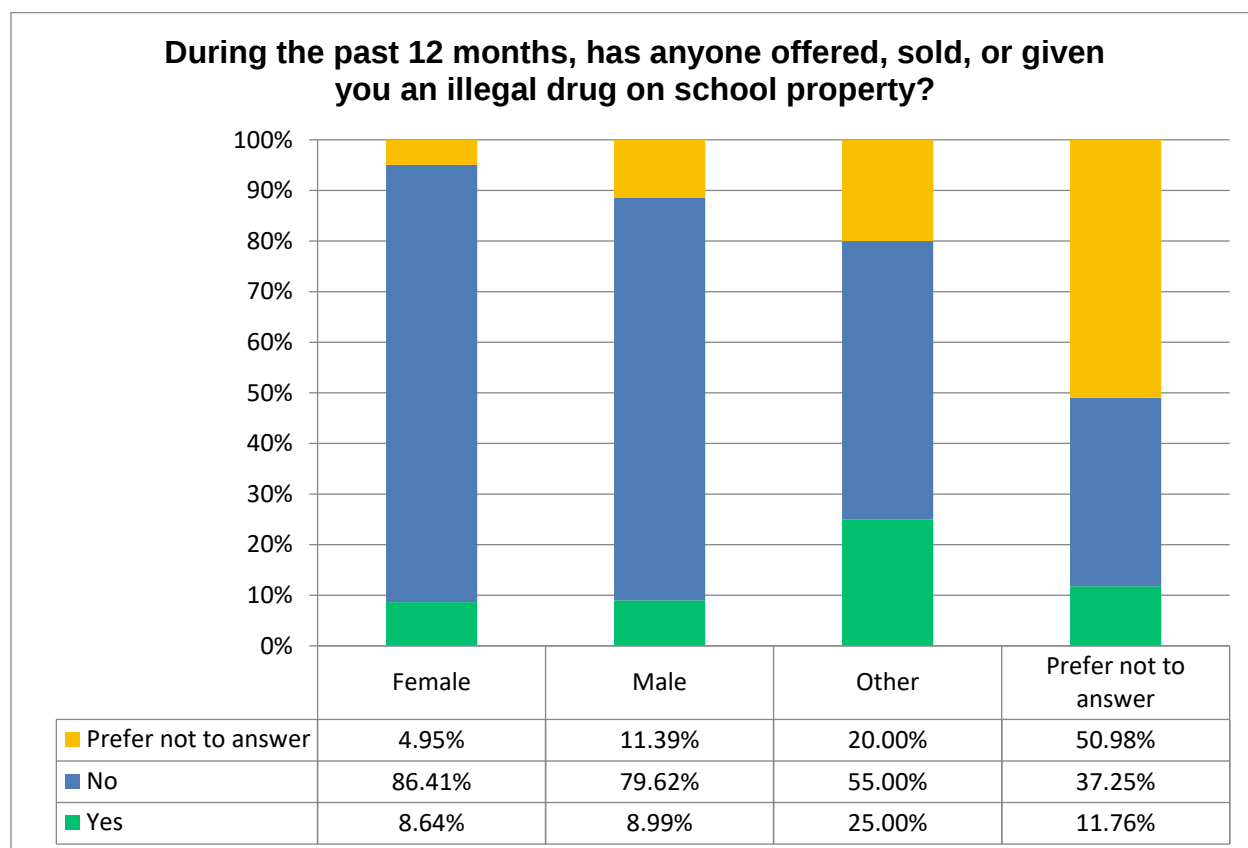
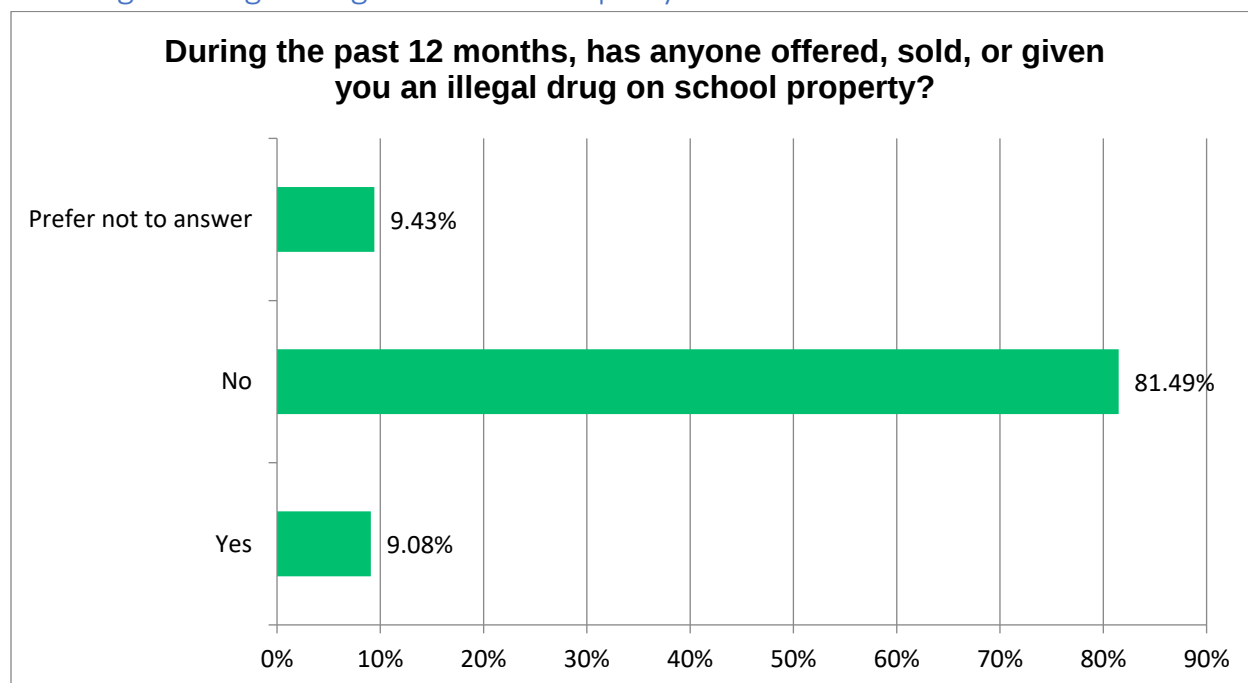
**During your life, how many times have you used
methamphetamines (also called speed, crystal meth, crank, ice,
or meth)?**

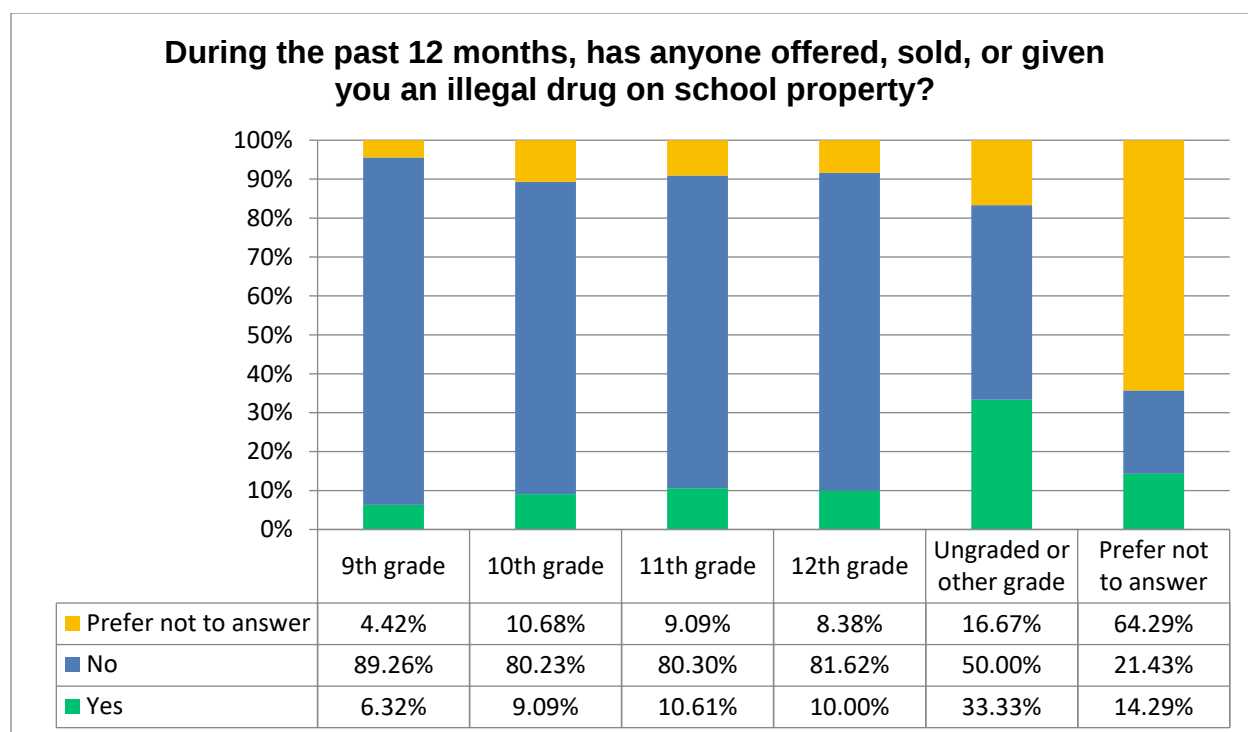


Key Findings on Lifetime Methamphetamine Use

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (89.42%) reported never using methamphetamines in their lifetime. A small portion indicated use, with 0.40% using 1 or 2 times and 0.75% using 3 to 9 times. Higher frequency use was rare, with 1.16% reporting use 40 or more times and less in all other categories. An additional 7.75% of students selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, lifetime methamphetamine use among students was very uncommon.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across all gender groups reported never using methamphetamines, including 95.39% of females and 86.96% of males. Reported use was low among these groups, with few indicating more than 1 or 2 uses. Students identifying as "Other" reported a substantially lower non-use rate (45.00%) and higher rates of frequent use, including 25.00% who used methamphetamines 40 or more times. Due to the small sample size for this demographic category, findings for the "Other" group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported never using methamphetamines, including 95.37% of 9th graders and 89.46% of 12th graders. Reported use was low overall, though slight increases appeared in higher grades. For example, 1.89% of 12th graders reported methamphetamine use 40 or more times, compared to 0.21% of 9th graders. Students in the ungraded or other group had the highest rate of frequent use, with 33.33% reporting use 40 or more times and a lower non-use rate (66.67%). Due to the small sample size for this demographic category, findings for the "Ungraded" group should be interpreted with caution.

Exchange of Illegal Drugs on School Property

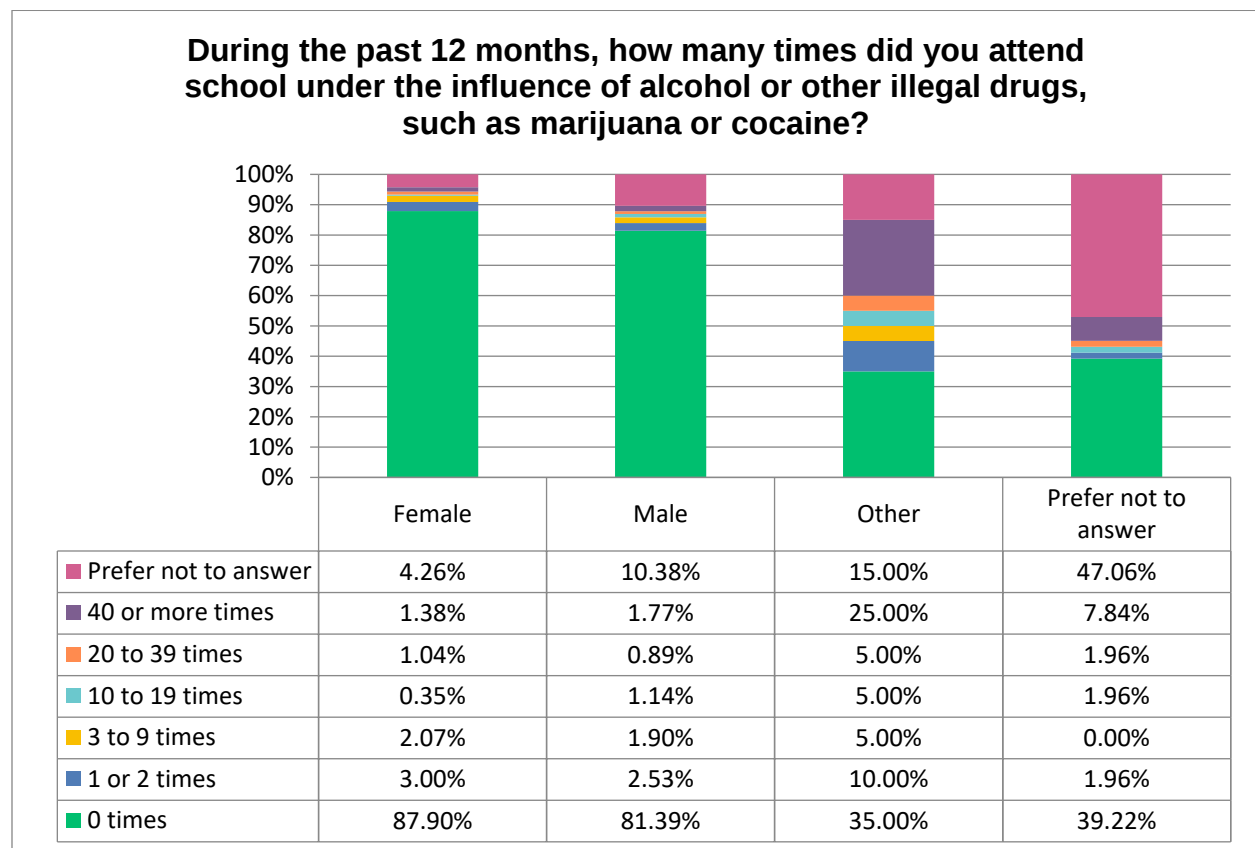
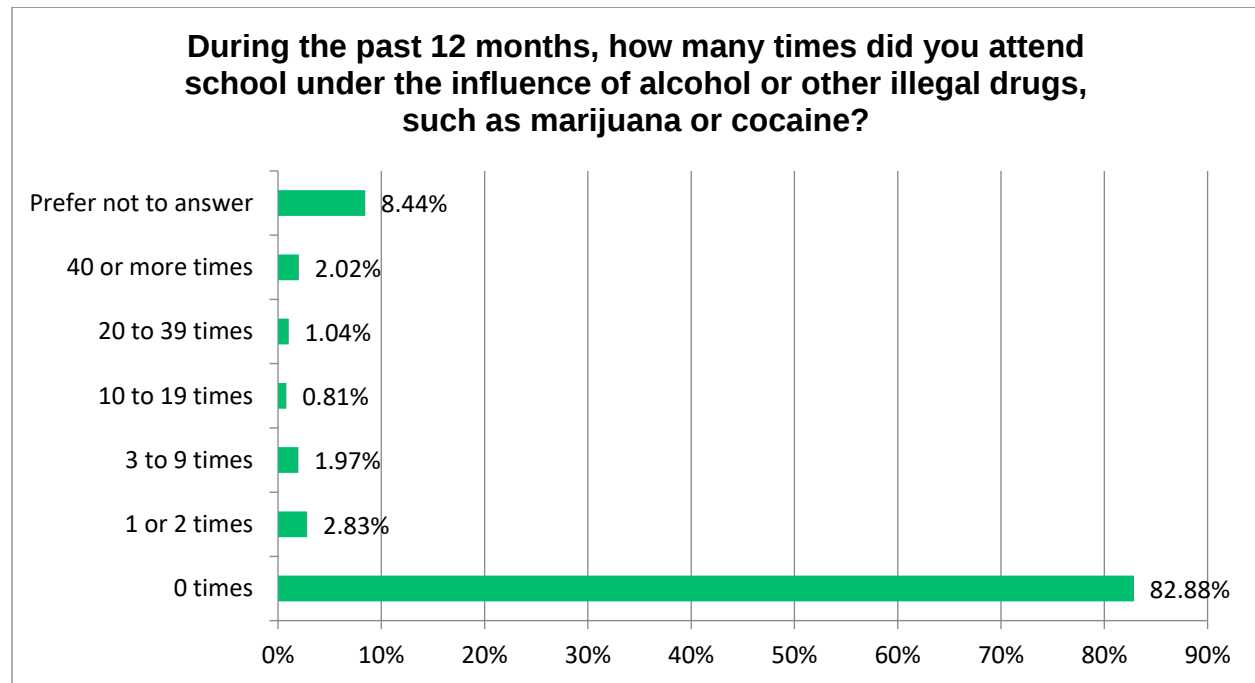




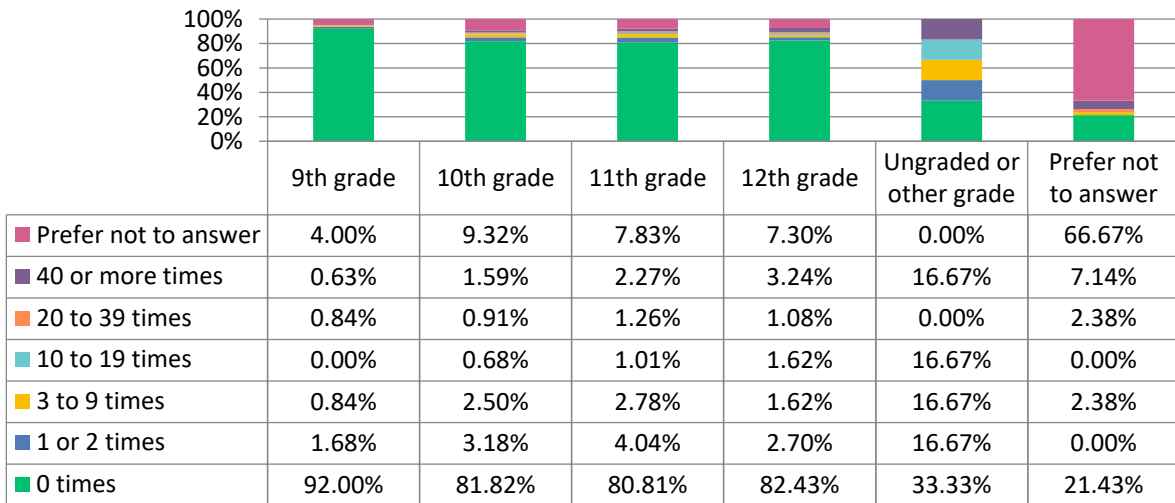
Key Findings on the Exchange of Illegal Drugs on School Property

- County-wide Trends:** The majority of students (81.49%) reported that they were not offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property in the past 12 months. A smaller percentage (9.08%) indicated that they had been, while 9.43% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, most students did not report exposure to illegal drugs at school, though nearly 1 in 10 did experience some form of drug-related offer or interaction.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across gender groups reported not being offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property in the past 12 months, including 86.41% of females and 79.62% of males. A higher percentage of students identifying as “Other” reported being offered drugs (25.00%) compared to females (8.64%) and males (8.99%). The “Other” group also had a lower percentage reporting “No” (55.00%) and a higher rate of “Prefer not to answer” (20.00%). Due to the small sample size for this demographic category, findings for the "Other" group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grade levels reported not being offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property in the past 12 months. Reports of drug offers increased slightly by grade, from 6.32% in 9th grade to 10.61% in 11th grade. The ungraded or other group had the highest percentage of students who reported being offered drugs (33.33%) and the lowest percentage reporting “No” (50.00%). Due to the small sample size for this demographic category, findings for the "Ungraded" group should be interpreted with caution.

Student Attendance Under the Influence



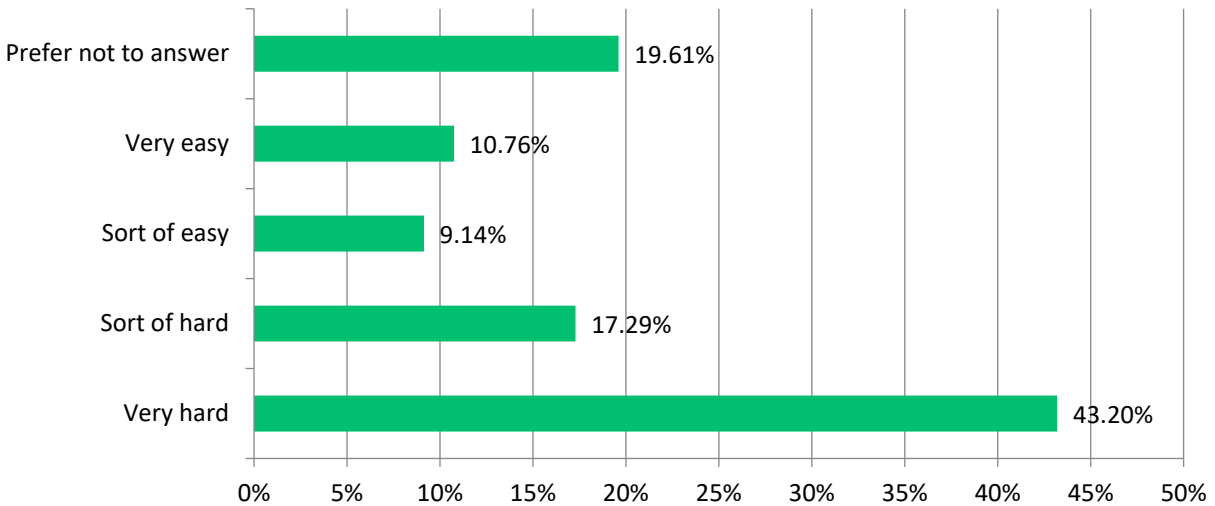
During the past 12 months, how many times did you attend school under the influence of alcohol or other illegal drugs, such as marijuana or cocaine?



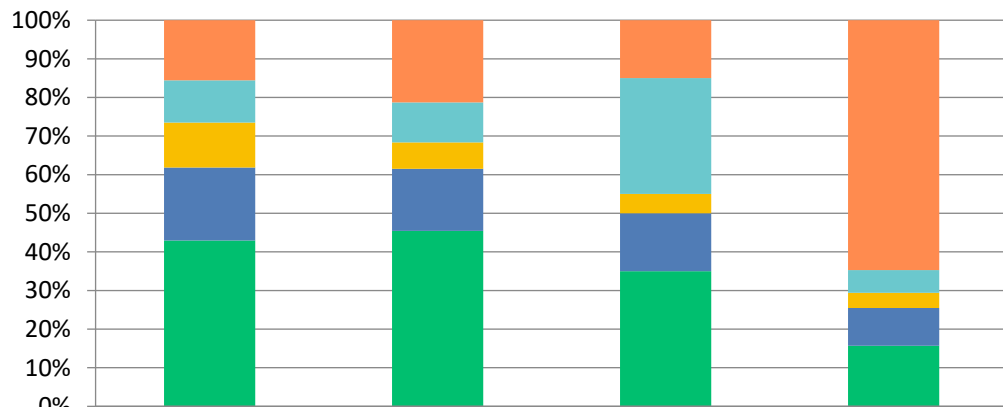
Key Findings on Student Attendance Under the Influence

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (82.88%) reported not attending school under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the past 12 months. A small percentage reported doing so 1 or 2 times (2.83%) or 3 to 9 times (1.97%). In addition, 2.02% attended while under the influence 40 or more times. Of note, 8.44% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, school attendance while under the influence was relatively uncommon among students.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students reported not attending school under the influence of alcohol or other illegal drugs, with slightly higher non-use among females (87.90%) compared to males (81.39%). Rates of occasional attendance under the influence (1 or 2 times) were similar between the two groups, with 3.00% of females and 2.53% of males reporting this behavior. Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to report non-use (35.00%) and more likely to report frequent attendance under the influence, including 25.00% who reported doing so 40 or more times. These findings for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution due to the smaller sample size.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, the vast majority reported not attending school under the influence of alcohol or other illegal drugs. Reports of attending school under the influence 1 or 2 times increased with grade level. Similarly, higher-frequency attendance (10 or more times) was more commonly reported in upper grades, particularly 11th and 12th. Students in the ungraded or other group showed notably lower rates of non-use (33.33%) and higher rates across all frequency categories. Findings for the ungraded students should be interpreted cautiously due to the smaller sample size of this demographic group.

If you wanted to get prescription pain medications or prescriptions stimulants that were not yours, how hard or easy would it be for you to get some?

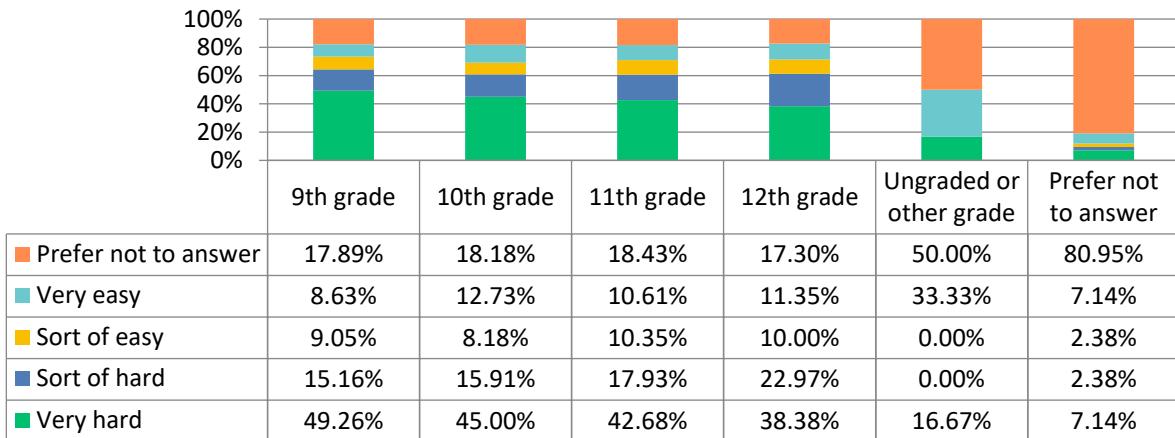


If you wanted to get prescription pain medications or prescriptions stimulants that were not yours, how hard or easy would it be for you to get some?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	15.55%	21.27%	15.00%	64.71%
Very easy	10.94%	10.38%	30.00%	5.88%
Sort of easy	11.64%	6.84%	5.00%	3.92%
Sort of hard	18.89%	16.08%	15.00%	9.80%
Very hard	42.97%	45.44%	35.00%	15.69%

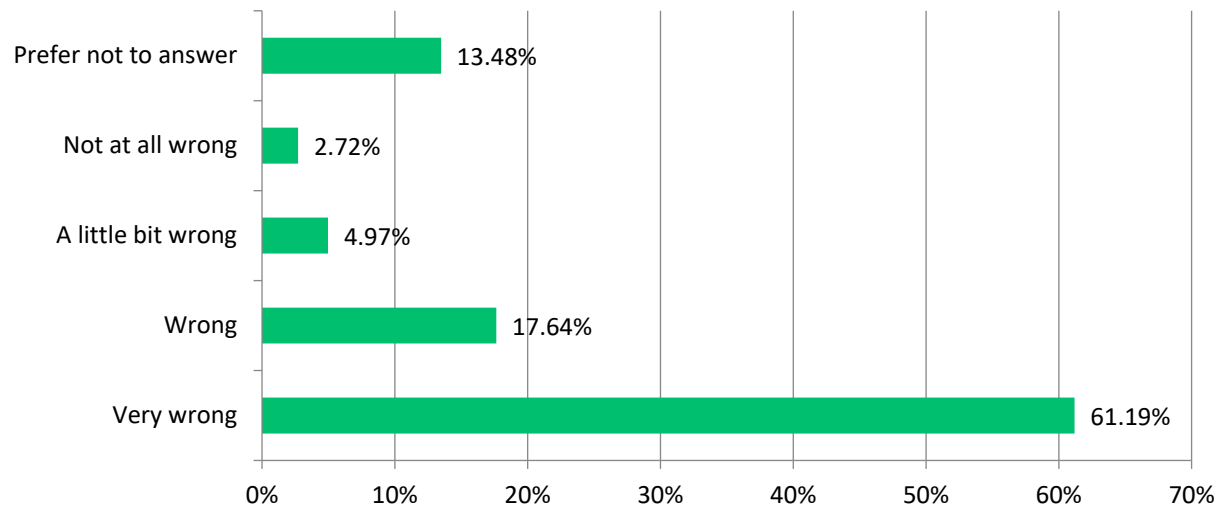
If you wanted to get prescription pain medications or prescriptions stimulants that were not yours, how hard or easy would it be for you to get some?



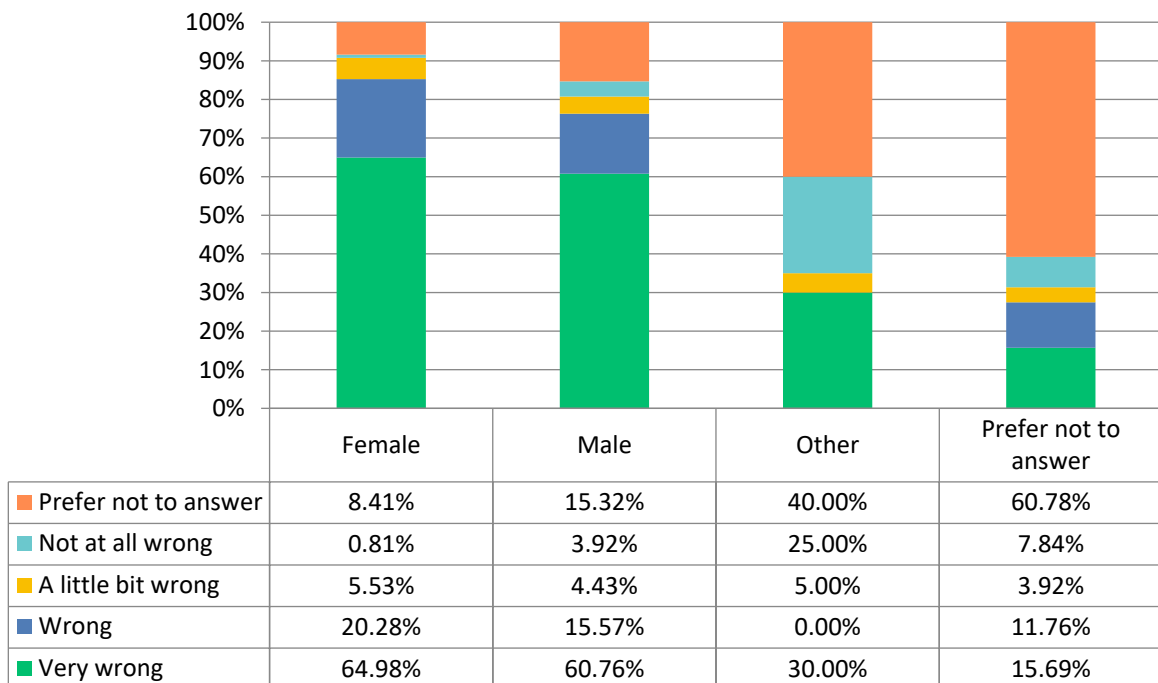
Key Findings on Ease of Access

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported that obtaining prescription pain medications or stimulants not prescribed to them would be difficult. Specifically, 43.20% said it would be “Very hard” and 17.29% said “Sort of hard.” In contrast, 10.76% reported it would be “Very easy” and 9.14% said “Sort of easy.” An additional 19.61% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, student perceptions leaned toward limited access to prescription medications not prescribed to them.
- Gender Differences:** Male and female students reported similar perceptions of access to prescription medications that were not theirs. Among males, 45.44% said it would be “Very hard” to obtain such medications, while 42.97% of females said the same. Smaller proportions of both groups reported access would be “Very easy” (10.38% of males and 10.94% of females). However, females were slightly more likely to view access as “Sort of easy” (11.64%) compared to males (6.84%). Students identifying as “Other” showed different patterns, with a higher percentage (30.00%) indicating it would be “Very easy” to access these medications. These findings for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution due to the smaller sample size of this demographic group.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th graders, perceived difficulty accessing non-prescribed medications generally decreased with grade level. While 49.26% of 9th graders said access would be “Very hard,” that figure dropped to 38.38% by 12th grade. Older students were slightly more likely to report access as “Very easy” or “Sort of easy,” with 11.35% of 12th graders selecting “Very easy” compared to 8.63% of 9th graders. Students in the ungraded or other category were more likely to perceive access as easy, with 33.33% reporting “Very easy.” Findings for the ungraded students should be interpreted cautiously due to the smaller sample size of this demographic group.

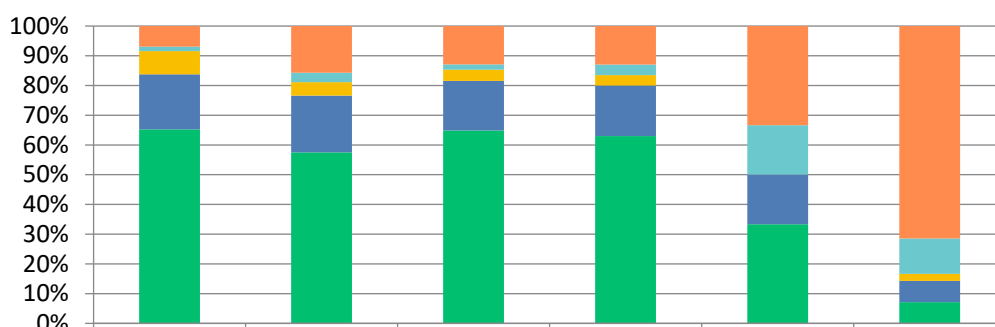
How wrong do you think it is for someone your age to use prescription pain medications or prescription stimulants that do not belong to you?



How wrong do you think it is for someone your age to use prescription pain medications or prescription stimulants that do not belong to you?



How wrong do you think it is for someone your age to use prescription pain medications or prescription stimulants that do not belong to you?

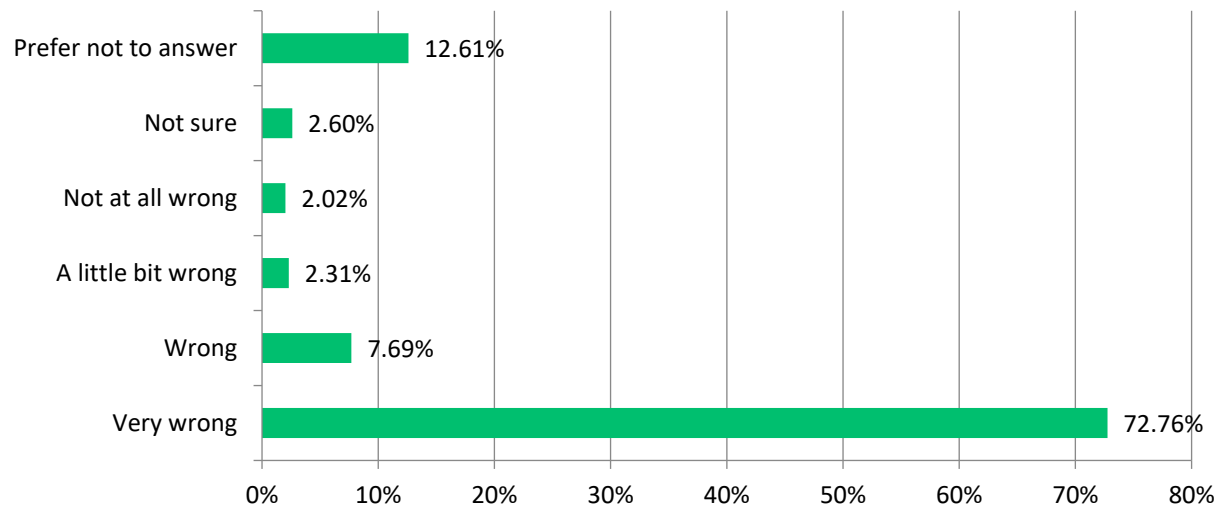


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	6.95%	15.68%	12.88%	12.97%	33.33%	71.43%
Not at all wrong	1.47%	3.18%	1.77%	3.51%	16.67%	11.90%
A little bit wrong	7.79%	4.55%	3.79%	3.51%	0.00%	2.38%
Wrong	18.53%	19.09%	16.67%	17.03%	16.67%	7.14%
Very wrong	65.26%	57.50%	64.90%	62.97%	33.33%	7.14%

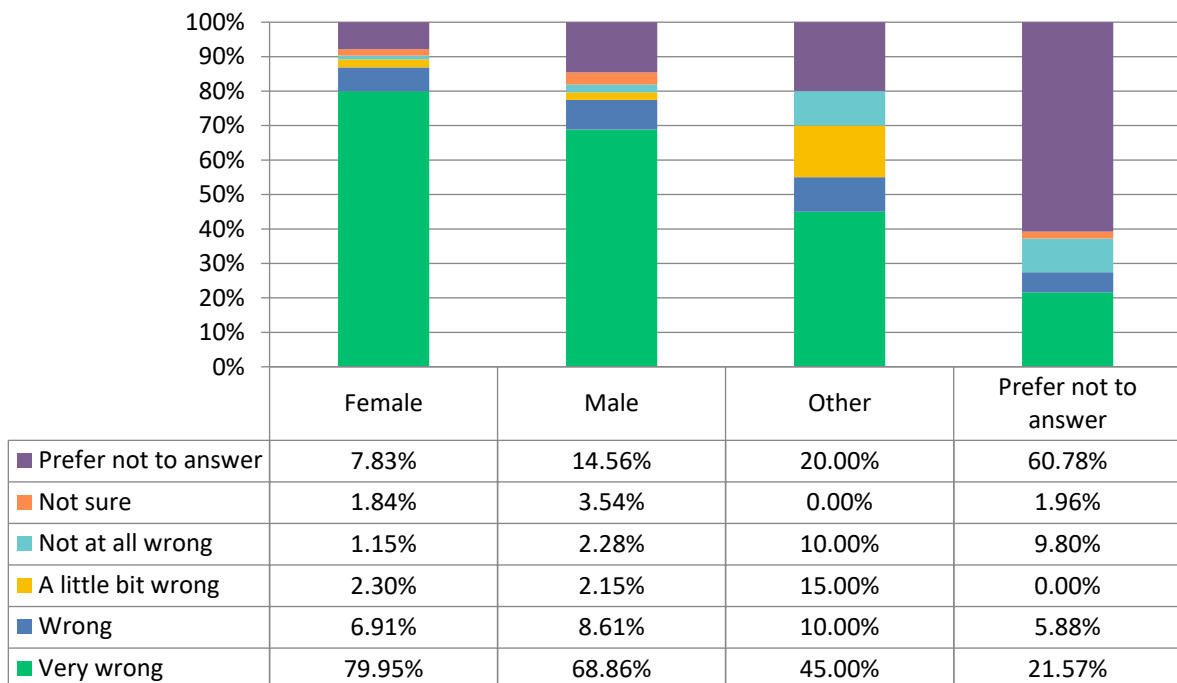
Key Findings on Perception of Misuse

- County-wide Trends:** Most students viewed misuse of prescription medications as wrong. A majority (61.19%) said it was “Very wrong,” and an additional 17.64% said it was “Wrong.” Smaller percentages considered it “A little bit wrong” (4.97%) or “Not at all wrong” (2.72%). About 13.48% chose “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, student perception of misuse leaned heavily toward disapproval.
- Gender Differences:** Female and male students both largely disapproved of prescription drug misuse. Among females, 64.98% said it was “Very wrong” and 20.28% said it was “Wrong.” Males showed similar views, with 60.76% selecting “Very wrong” and 15.57% choosing “Wrong.” Only small percentages in either group considered it “Not at all wrong” or “A little bit wrong.” Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to view it as “Very wrong” (30%) and more likely to choose “Not at all wrong” (25%). These findings for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution due to the smaller sample size of this demographic group.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, the majority believed it was “Very wrong” to use someone else’s prescription medication. Smaller percentages in each grade believed it was only “Wrong,” while very few considered it “A little bit wrong” or “Not at all wrong.” Students in ungraded or other grades were less likely to select “Very wrong” (33.33%) and more likely to choose “Not at all wrong.” Findings for the ungraded students should be interpreted cautiously due to the smaller sample size of this demographic group.

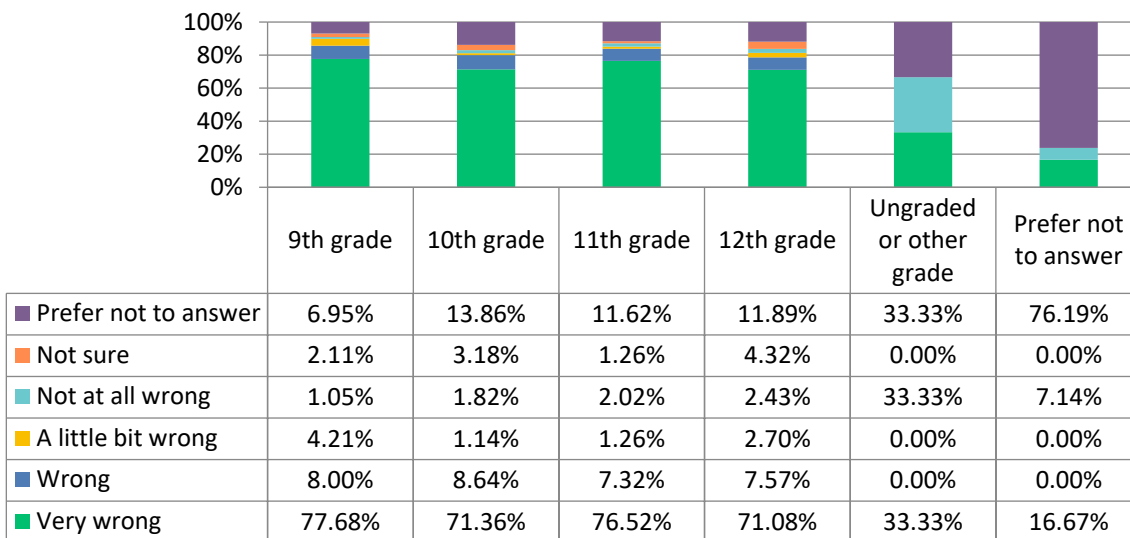
How wrong do your parents or guardians feel it would be for you to use prescription pain medications or prescription stimulants that do not belong to you?



How wrong do your parents or guardians feel it would be for you to use prescription pain medications or prescription stimulants that do not belong to you?



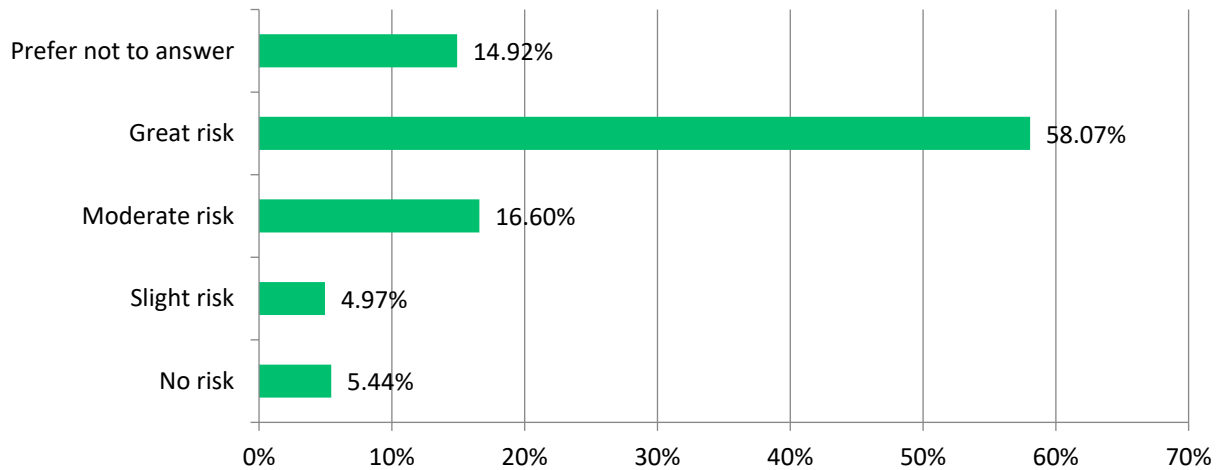
How wrong do your parents or guardians feel it would be for you to use prescription pain medications or prescription stimulants that do not belong to you?



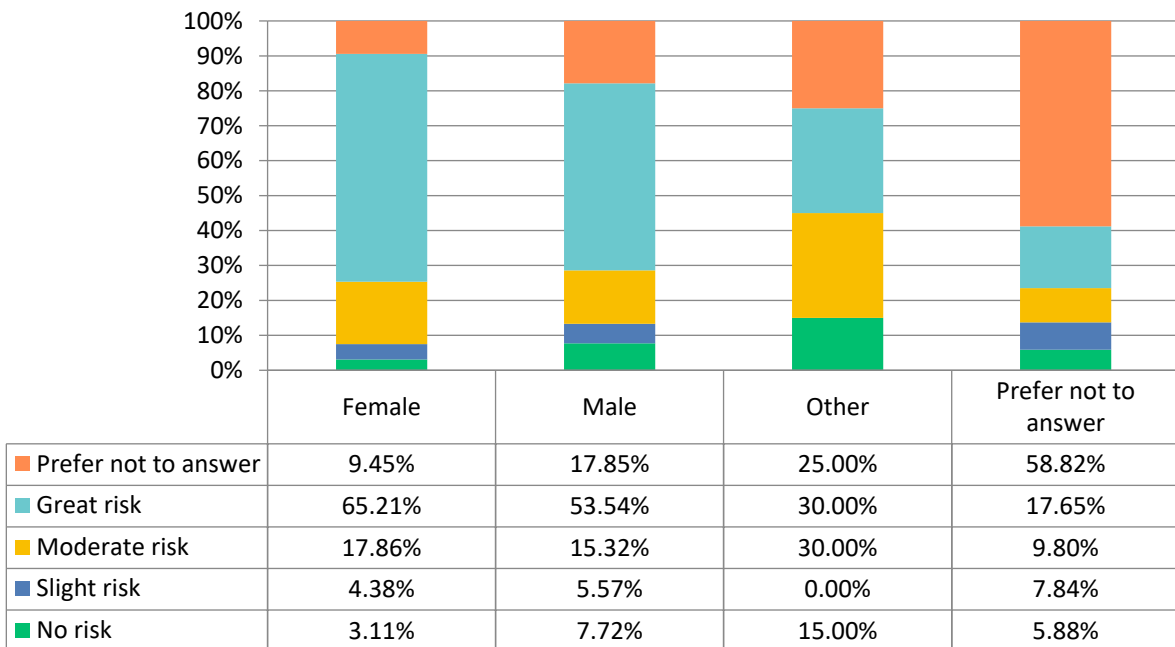
Key Findings on Parental Views

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (72.76%) reported that their parents or guardians would view using someone else's prescription medications as "Very wrong," with an additional 7.69% selecting "Wrong." Only small percentages believed their parents viewed it as less serious, including "A little bit wrong" (2.31%) or "Not at all wrong" (2.02%). A small portion was unsure (2.60%), and 12.61% preferred not to answer. Overall, students perceived strong parental disapproval of prescription misuse.
- Gender Differences:** Most female (79.95%) and male (68.86%) students believed their parents or guardians would view using someone else's prescription medications as "Very wrong". Smaller percentages of males (8.61%) and females (6.91%) selected "Wrong," while very few in either group believed their parents would find it acceptable. Among students who identified as "Other," responses were more varied, with only 45.00% selecting "Very wrong" and higher proportions indicating less disapproval. Findings for the "Other" group should be interpreted with caution due to the smaller sample size of this demographic group.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th graders, most students believed their parents or guardians viewed prescription misuse as "Very wrong," ranging from 71.08% of 12th graders to 77.68% of 9th graders. Only a small percentage in each grade thought their parents would view it as less wrong or acceptable. Among ungraded students, perceptions were more mixed, with 33.33% indicating their parents would see it as "Very wrong" and another 33.33% selecting "Not at all wrong," suggesting varied beliefs in a group with a smaller sample size.

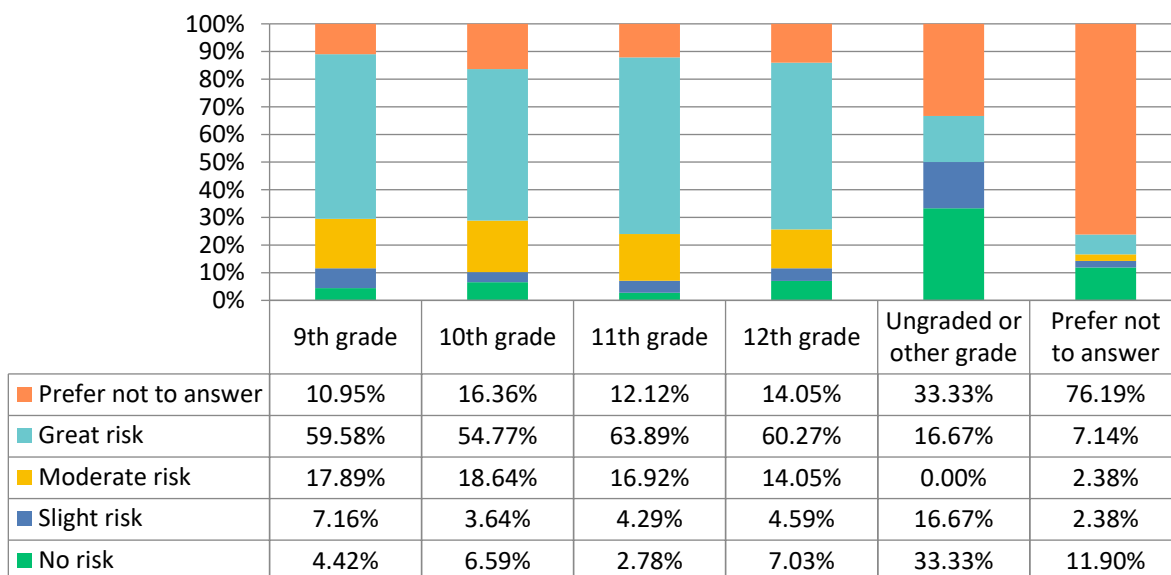
How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they use prescription pain medications or prescription stimulants that do not belong to them regularly?



How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they use prescription pain medications or prescription stimulants that do not belong to them regularly?



**How much do you think people risk harming themselves
(physically or in other ways) if they use prescription pain
medications or prescription stimulants that do not belong to
them regularly?**

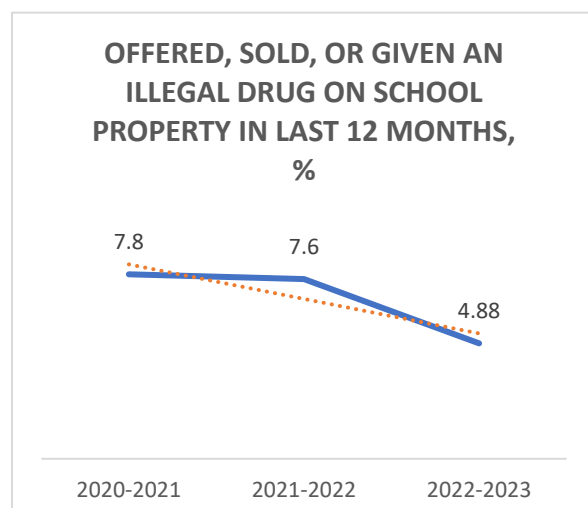
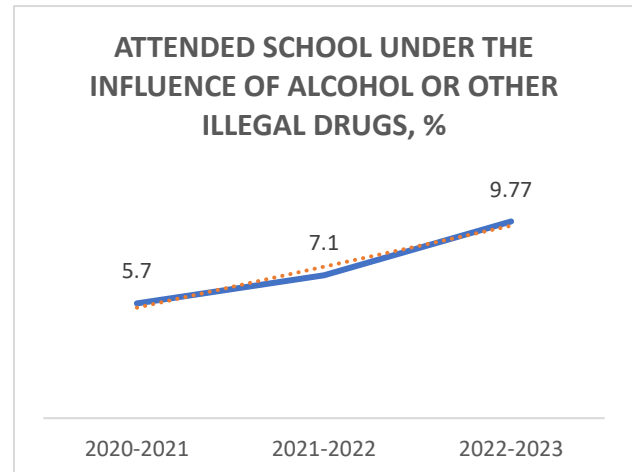
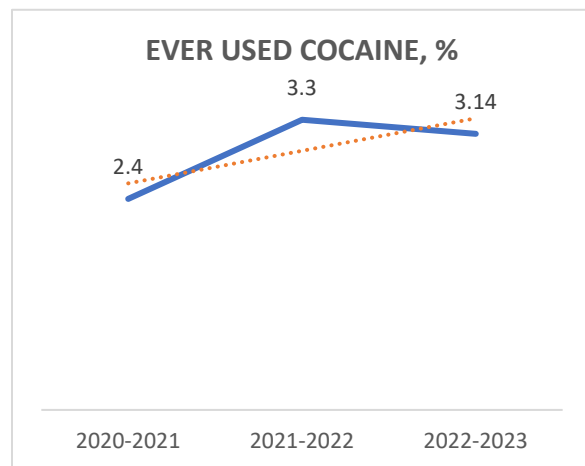
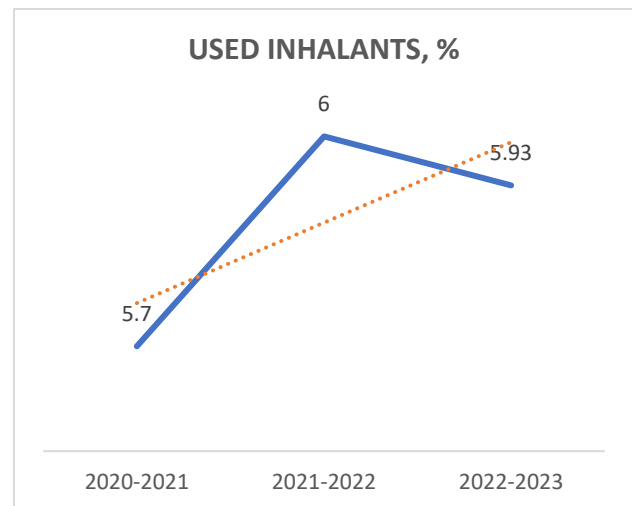
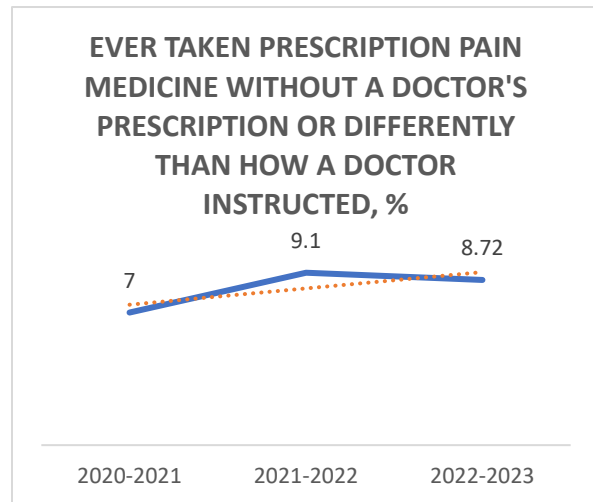


Key Findings on Perceived Risk

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (58.07%) believed there was a great risk of harm from regularly using prescription pain medications or stimulants that did not belong to them. An additional 16.60% perceived a moderate risk, while fewer students saw only slight (4.97%) or no risk (5.44%). Overall, the majority of students recognized harm associated with regular misuse of prescription drugs.
- Gender Differences:** Most female (65.21%) and male (53.54%) students believed there was a great risk of harm from regularly using prescription medications that did not belong to them. Moderate risk was selected by 17.86% of females and 15.32% of males, while only small percentages viewed the behavior as posing slight or no risk. Among students who selected "Other" for gender, fewer (30.00%) believed there was a great risk, and 30.00% chose moderate risk. This group also had higher rates of selecting no risk (15.00%) or prefer not to answer (25.00%) compared to male and female students.
- Grade Differences:** Among students in grades 9 through 12, the majority perceived great risk in using prescription medications not belonging to them. Moderate risk was selected by 14.05% to 18.64% across these grades, while fewer than 8% in any grade perceived slight or no risk. Students in the ungraded or other grade group were less likely to view this behavior as risky, with only 16.67% selecting "Great risk" and 33.33% choosing "No risk." Findings for the ungraded students should be interpreted cautiously due to the smaller sample size of this demographic group.

Substance Use and Abuse Over Time

Monitoring trends in substance use among students helps identify shifts in behaviors related to alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs. The following data presents recent trends in substance use, offering valuable insights into areas where additional prevention and support may be needed



Key Findings in Substance Use and Abuse Among Students Over Time

- **Prescription Pain Medicine Misuse:** The percentage of students misusing prescription pain medicine peaked at 9.1% in 2021-2022, then slightly declined to 8.87% by 2022-2023.
- **Inhalant Use:** Inhalant use saw a slight increase from 5.7% in 2020-2021 to 6% in 2021-2022 but has dropped to 5.93% by 2022-2023.
- **Cocaine Use:** Cocaine use rose from 2.4% in 2020-2021 to 3.3% in 2021-2022 but has marginally decreased to 3.14% by 2022-2023.
- **Attending School Under the Influence:** Attendance under the influence of alcohol or drugs increased to a peak of 9.77% in 2022-2023.
- **Drug Offers on School Property:** After a drop to 4.88% in 2022-2023, the percentage of students reporting being offered, sold, or given drugs on school property rose to 8.24% in 2023-2024.

Physical Activity, Injury, and Activity

Physical activity is essential for students' healthy development, but injuries, especially concussions, can have lasting effects. The YRBS gathers data on both students' physical activity levels and their experiences with injuries. This information helps schools understand how students engage in healthy and safe practices and where improvements may be needed.

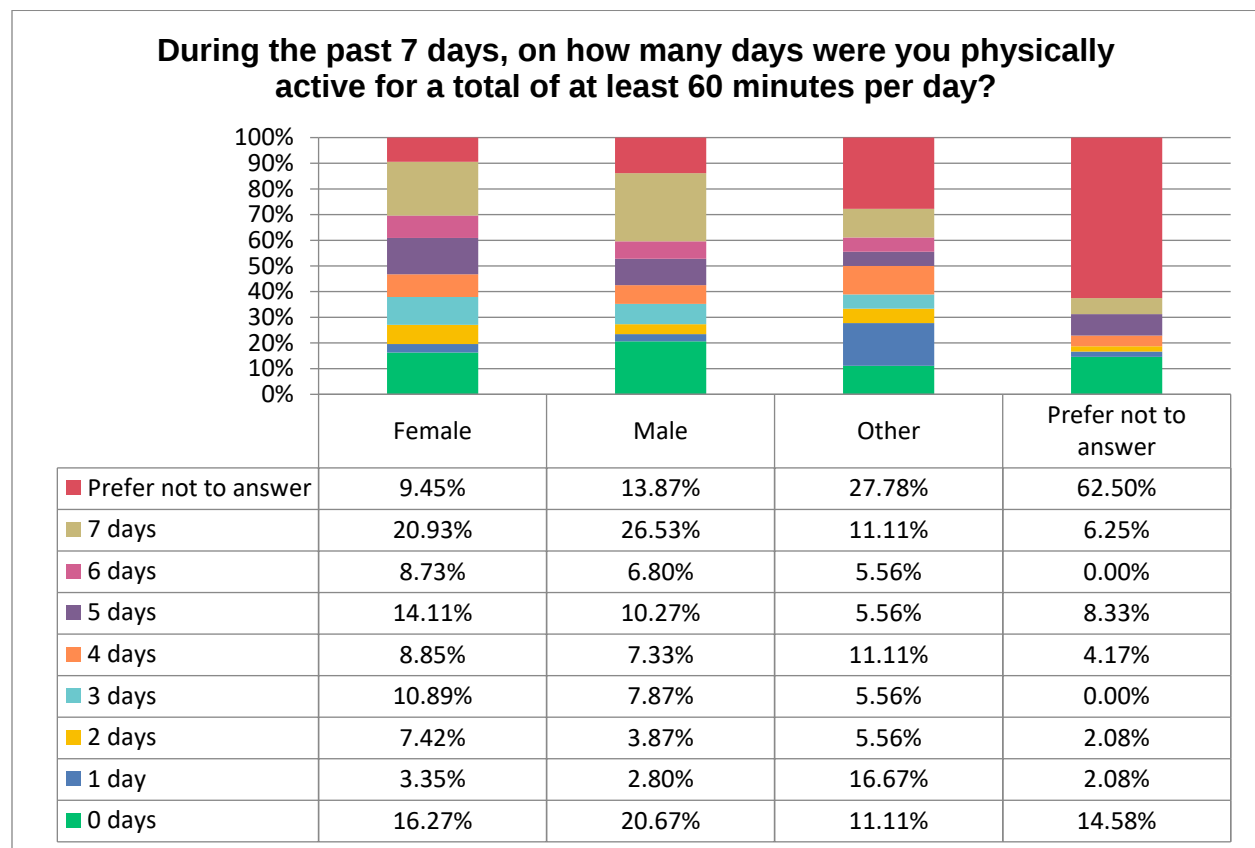
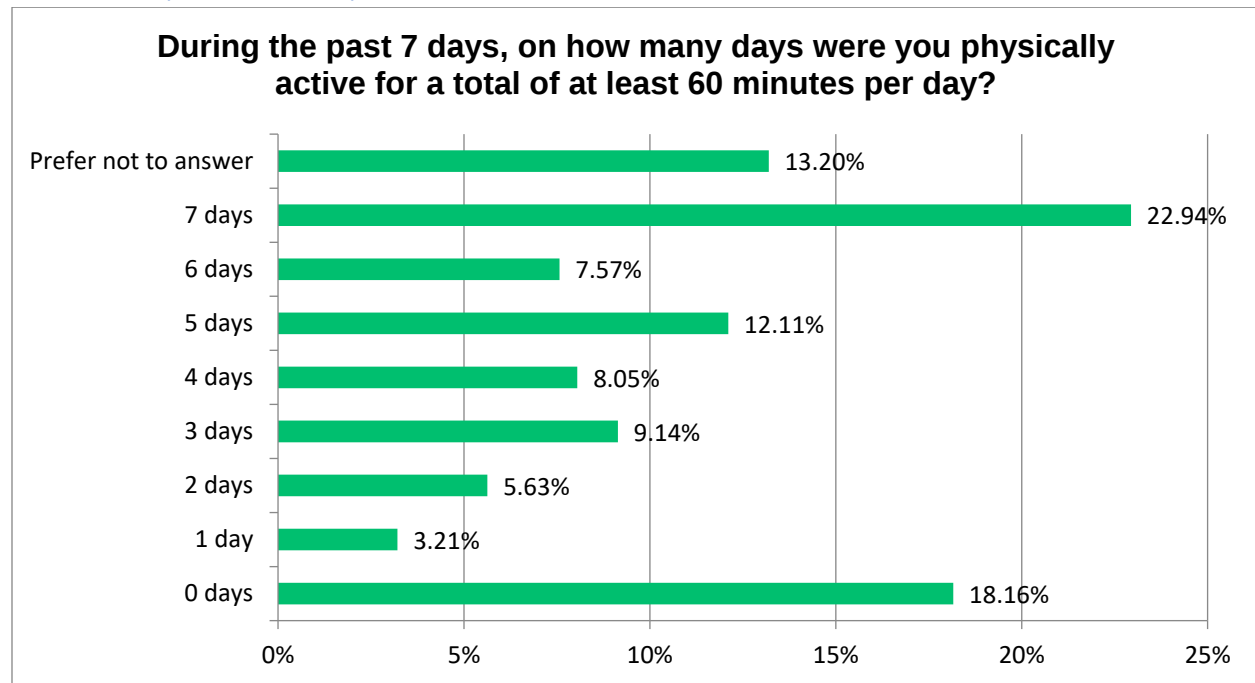
The data showed that students engaged in some form of physical activity. However, only about one in five met the recommendation of being active for 60 minutes per day. Encouragingly, the percentage of students reporting daily physical activity has increased over time. Male students were slightly more likely than females to be active all 7 days, while female students were more likely to report activity on 3 to 5 days. Physical activity levels generally declined slightly by grade, and students identifying as “Other” were less likely to report daily activity.

Screen time was consistently high across all groups, with over one-third of students spending five or more hours on screens per school day. Female students reported the highest rates of screen use, while male students were more likely to report lower screen time.

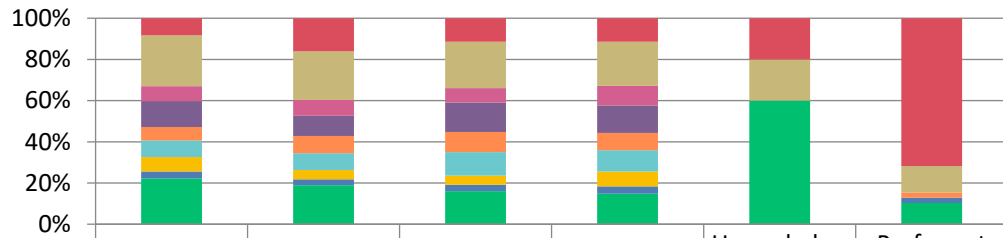
Most students (75.14%) reported not having a concussion in the past year, but a small percentage experienced one or more. Males were slightly more likely than females to report multiple concussions. Similarly, most students did not report having a disability or long-term health problem affecting daily life.

Regarding sun safety, more than one in four students reported no sunburns in the past year. However, frequent sunburns were not uncommon, with 15.67% reporting having five or more. Female students were more likely than males to report frequent sunburns. Overall, the data reflect a mix of promising trends in physical activity alongside ongoing concerns related to screen time, injury risk, and sun safety.

Recent Physical Activity



During the past 7 days, on how many days were you physically active for a total of at least 60 minutes per day

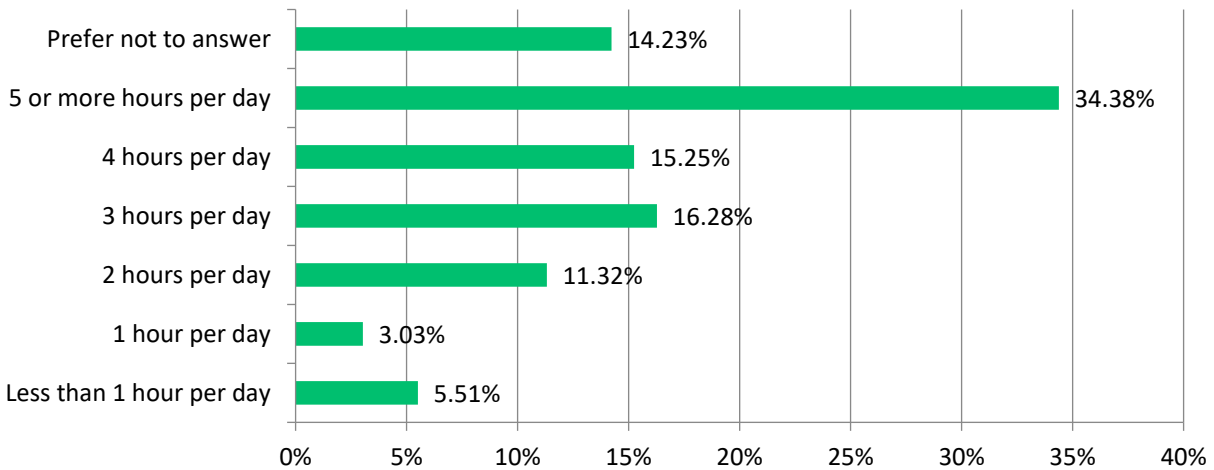


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
■ Prefer not to answer	8.31%	16.03%	11.40%	11.42%	20.00%	71.79%
■ 7 days	24.72%	23.68%	22.54%	21.45%	20.00%	12.82%
■ 6 days	7.19%	7.66%	6.99%	9.47%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 5 days	12.58%	9.81%	14.25%	13.37%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 4 days	6.52%	8.37%	9.84%	8.36%	0.00%	2.56%
■ 3 days	8.09%	8.13%	11.40%	10.31%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 2 days	6.97%	4.55%	4.40%	7.24%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 1 day	3.37%	2.87%	3.11%	3.62%	0.00%	2.56%
■ 0 days	22.25%	18.90%	16.06%	14.76%	60.00%	10.26%

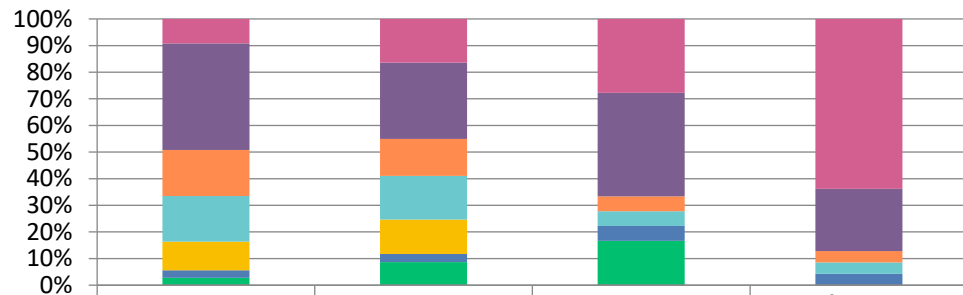
Key Findings on Recent Physical Activity Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported some level of physical activity during the past week, with 22.94% being active all 7 days for at least 60 minutes per day. However, 18.16% of students indicated no physical activity on any day, and 13.20% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Daily activity for 5 or more days was reported by 42.62% of students, while smaller percentages engaged in activity 1 to 4 days. Student physical activity patterns varied, with a notable portion meeting recommended levels.
- Gender Differences:** Male students were slightly more likely than females to report daily physical activity, with 26.53% of males active all 7 days compared to 20.93% of females. Males also had a slightly higher rate of reporting no activity (20.67%) than females (16.27%). Female students more frequently reported being active 5 days (14.11%) or 3 days (10.89%) than males. Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to report daily activity (11.11%) and more likely to report inactivity or fewer days of activity. Findings for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution due to the smaller sample size of this demographic group.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th graders, the percentage of students reporting physical activity every day decreased slightly alongside grade, from 24.72% in 9th grade to 21.45% in 12th grade. Inactivity (0 days) was most common among 9th graders (22.25%) and gradually declined to 14.76% by 12th grade. Activity on 5 or more days was relatively consistent across grade levels.

On an average school day, how many hours do you spend in front of a TV, computer, smart phone, or other electronic device watching shows or videos, playing games, accessing the Internet, or using social media (also called "screen time")?

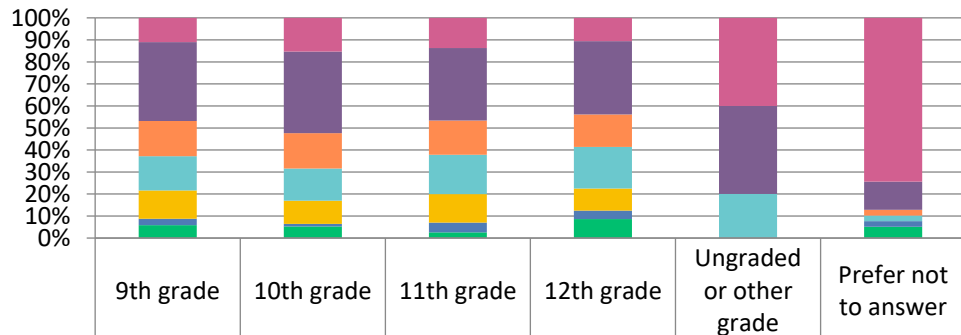


On an average school day, how many hours do you spend in front of a TV, computer, smart phone, or other electronic device watching shows or videos, playing games, accessing the Internet, or using social media (also called "screen time")?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	9.20%	16.40%	27.78%	63.83%
5 or more hours per day	40.02%	28.67%	38.89%	23.40%
4 hours per day	17.32%	13.87%	5.56%	4.26%
3 hours per day	17.08%	16.40%	5.56%	4.26%
2 hours per day	10.75%	12.93%	0.00%	0.00%
1 hour per day	2.87%	3.07%	5.56%	4.26%
Less than 1 hour per day	2.75%	8.67%	16.67%	0.00%

On an average school day, how many hours do you spend in front of a TV, computer, smart phone, or other electronic device watching shows or videos, playing games, accessing the Internet, or using social media (also called "screen time")?

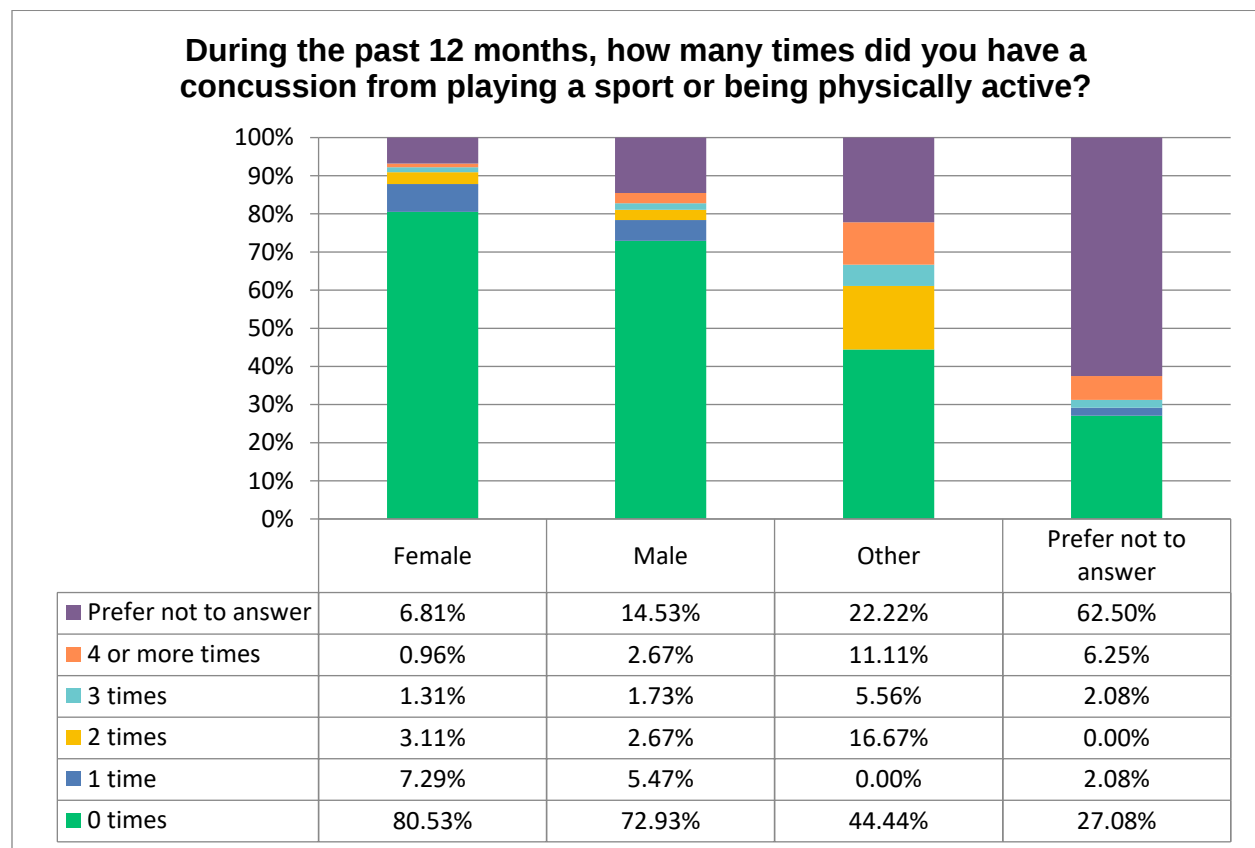
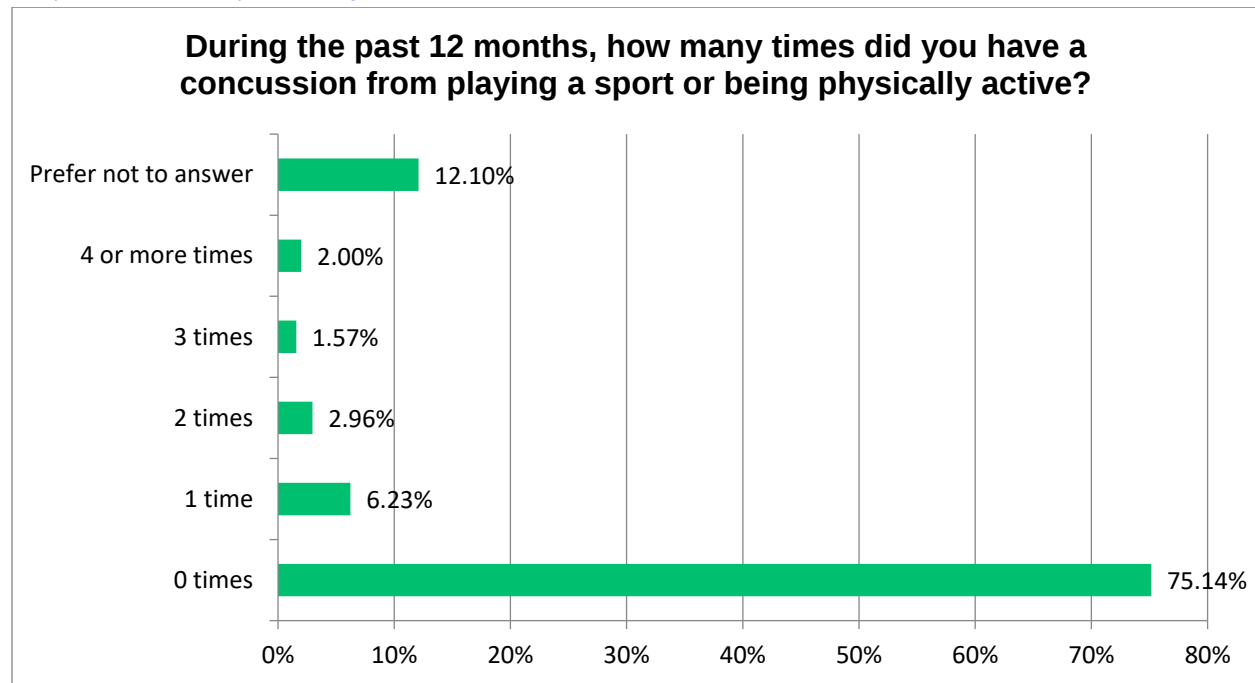


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	11.04%	15.31%	13.73%	10.56%	40.00%	74.36%
5 or more hours per day	35.81%	37.08%	32.90%	33.33%	40.00%	12.82%
4 hours per day	15.99%	16.03%	15.54%	14.72%	0.00%	2.56%
3 hours per day	15.54%	14.59%	17.88%	18.89%	20.00%	2.56%
2 hours per day	12.84%	10.53%	12.95%	10.00%	0.00%	0.00%
1 hour per day	2.93%	1.20%	4.40%	3.89%	0.00%	2.56%
Less than 1 hour per day	5.86%	5.26%	2.59%	8.61%	0.00%	5.13%

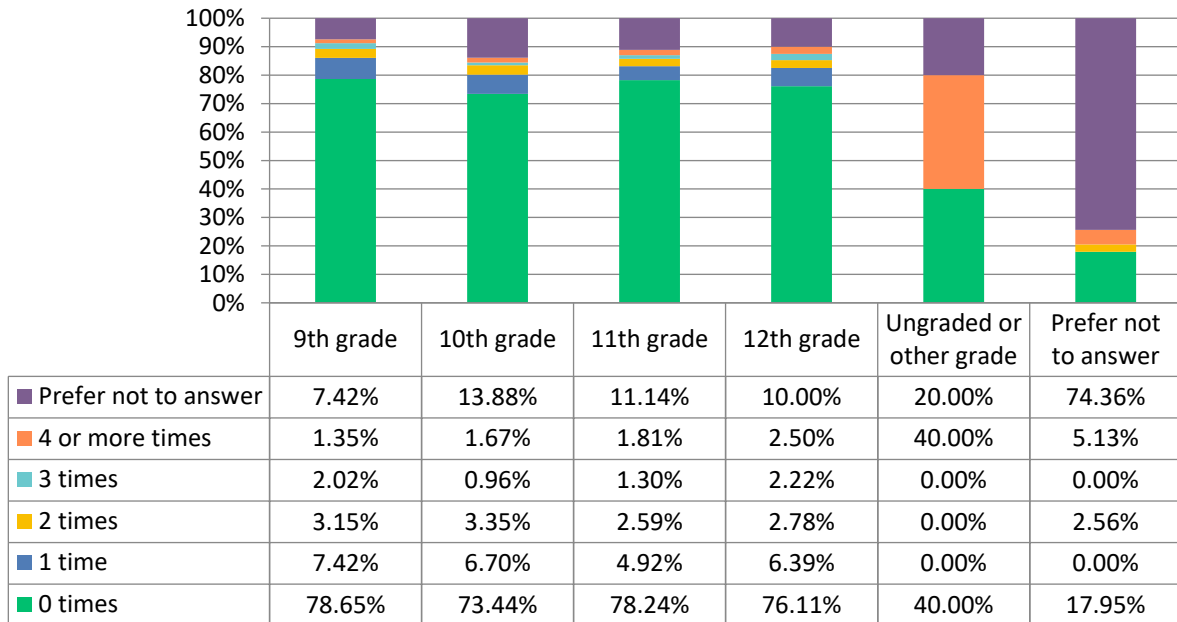
Key Findings on Screen Time

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (34.38%) reported spending 5 or more hours per day on screens during an average school day. Smaller percentages reported 4 hours (15.25%) or 3 hours (16.28%) per day, while 11.32% spent 2 hours daily. Very few students reported limited screen time, with 5.51% spending less than 1 hour and 3.03% reporting only 1 hour. An additional 14.23% selected “Prefer not to answer.” The majority of students reported high levels of screen time, with more than one-third exceeding 5 hours per day.
- Gender Differences:** Female students were more likely to report high screen time, with 40.02% spending 5 or more hours per day compared to 28.67% of male students. Male students were more likely than females to report lower usage of 2 hours (12.93%) and less than 1 hour per day (8.67% vs. 2.75%). Students identifying as “Other” had varied responses, with 38.89% reporting 5 or more hours and 16.67% selecting less than 1 hour per day.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, a large portion reported high daily screen time, with 5 or more hours most common across all grades (ranging from 32.90% to 37.08%). Reports of moderate use (3 to 4 hours) remained relatively steady, while low screen time (1 hour or less) was less frequently reported. Notably, 12th graders had the highest percentage reporting less than 1 hour per day (8.61%).

Physical Activity and Injuries



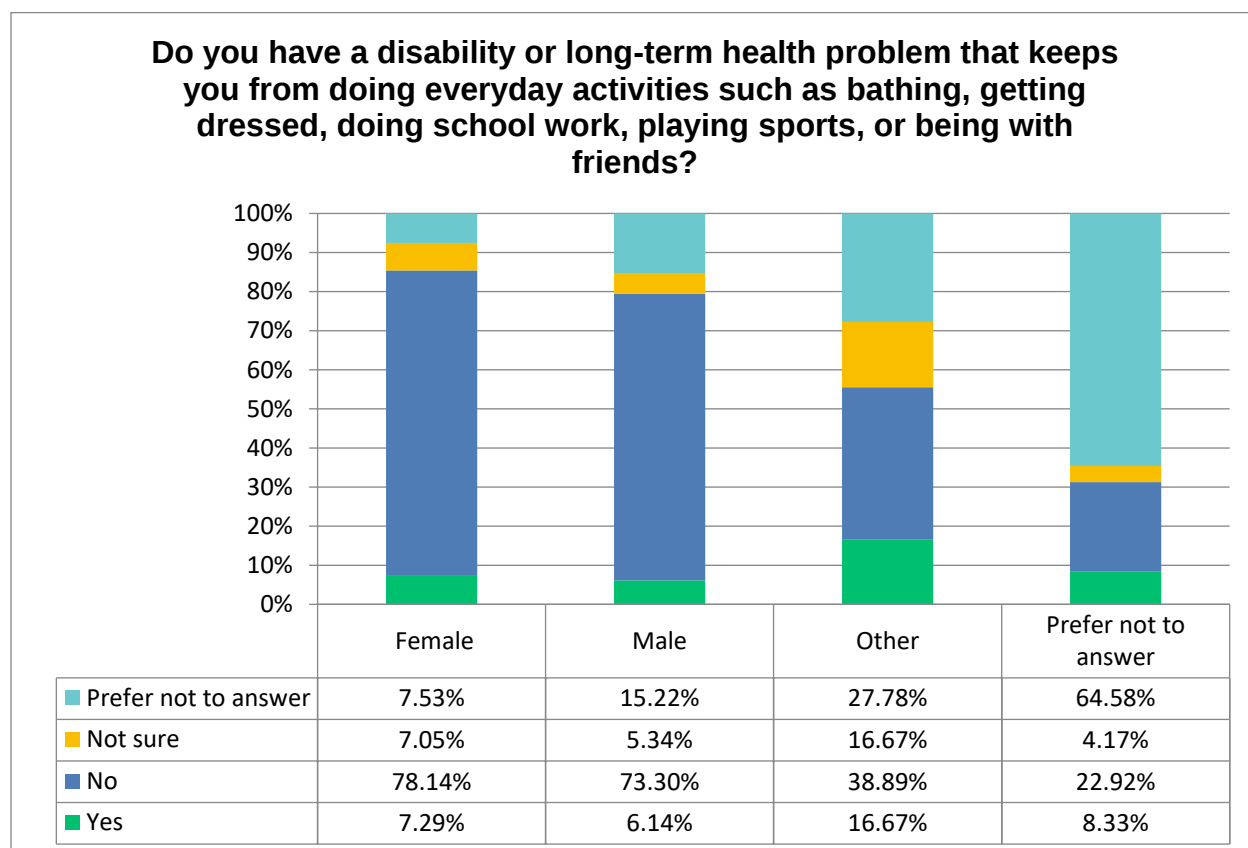
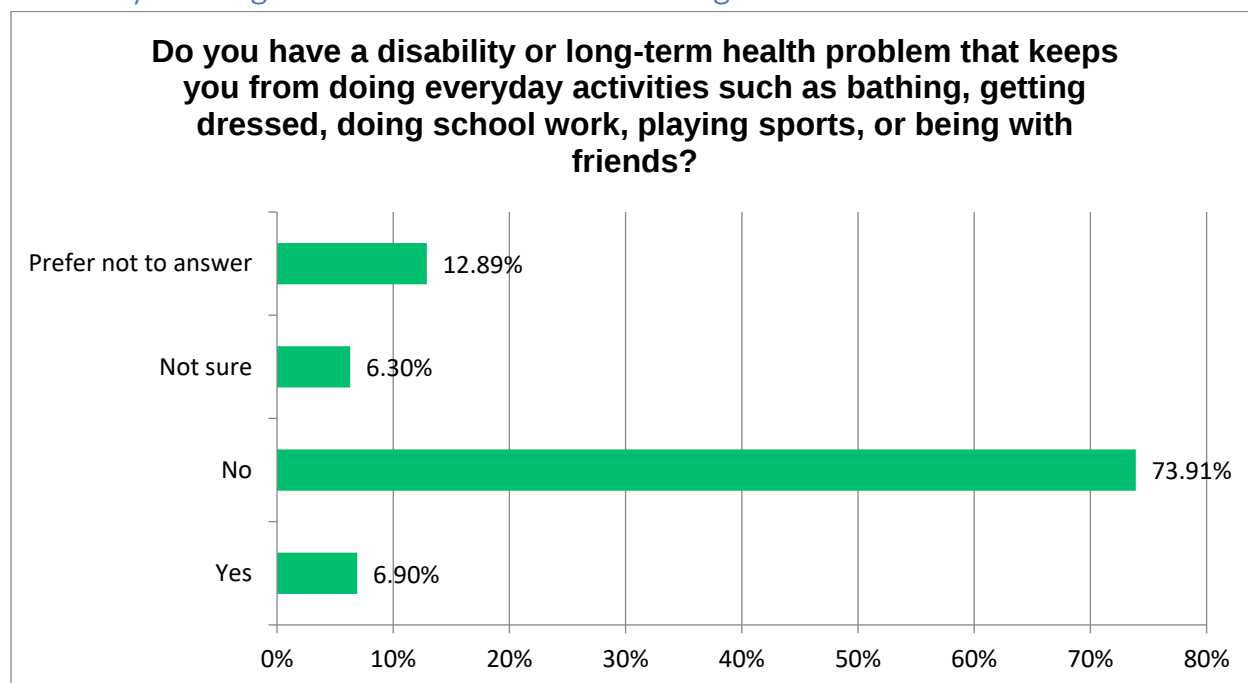
During the past 12 months, how many times did you have a concussion from playing a sport or being physically active?



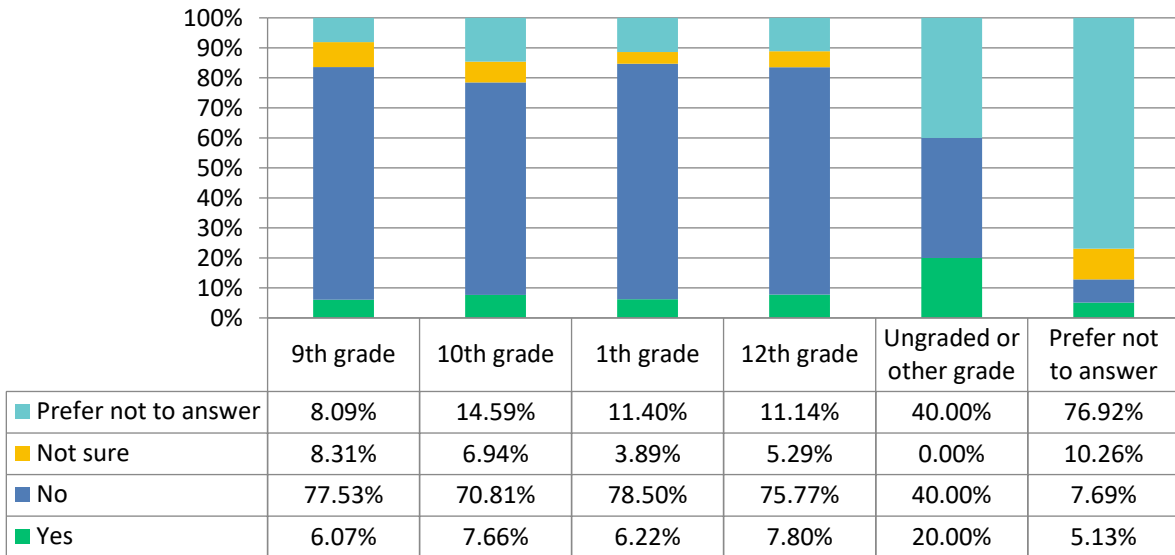
Key Findings on Concussion from Sports Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (75.14%) reported not having a concussion from playing sports or being physically active in the past 12 months. A smaller portion (6.23%) experienced one concussion. Even fewer reported multiple concussions, including 2 times (2.96%), 3 times (1.57%), or 4 or more times (2.00%). An additional 12.10% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, most students did not report having a concussion in the past year, while a minority experienced one or more.
- Gender Differences:** Most female (80.53%) and male (72.93%) students reported not having a concussion in the past 12 months. A slightly higher percentage of males reported experiencing multiple concussions, with 2.67% reporting four or more times, compared to 0.96% of females. Students identifying as “Other” reported a lower rate of no concussions (44.44%) and higher rates of multiple concussions, including 16.67% for two times and 11.11% for four or more times. Findings for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution due to the smaller sample size of this demographic group.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, most reported not experiencing a concussion in the past year, with rates ranging from 73.44% in 10th grade to 78.65% in 9th grade. Reports of concussions one or more times were similar across grades. Students in the ungraded or other category were less likely to report no concussions (40.00%) and more likely to report frequent concussions, including 40.00% who experienced one four or more times. Findings for the ungraded students should be interpreted cautiously due to the smaller sample size of this demographic group.

Disability or Long-Term Health Problems Among Students



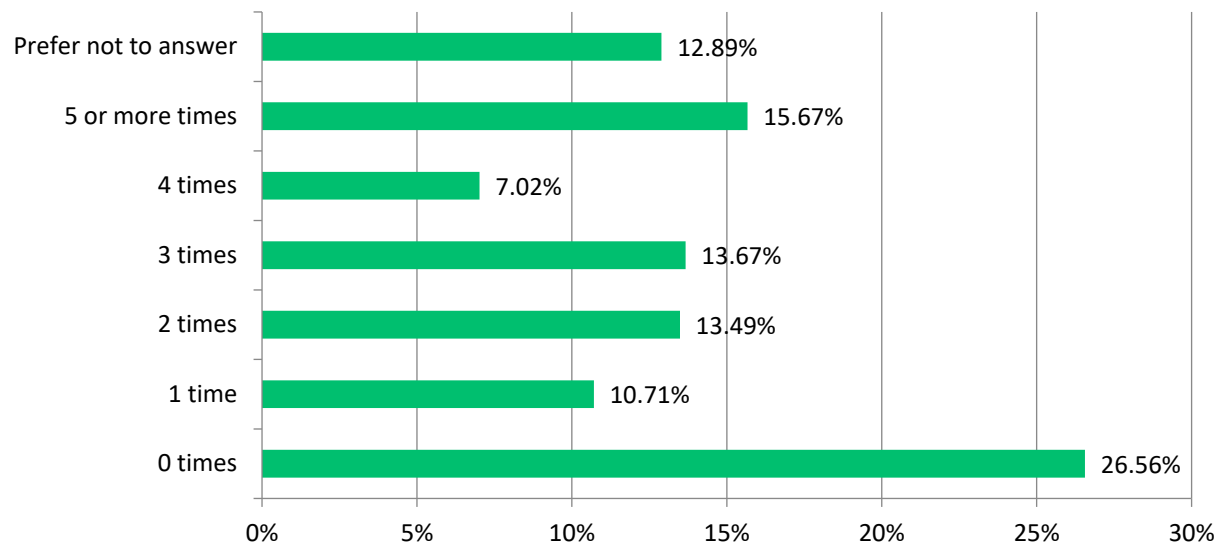
Do you have a disability or long-term health problem that keeps you from doing everyday activities such as bathing, getting dressed, doing school work, playing sports, or being with friends?



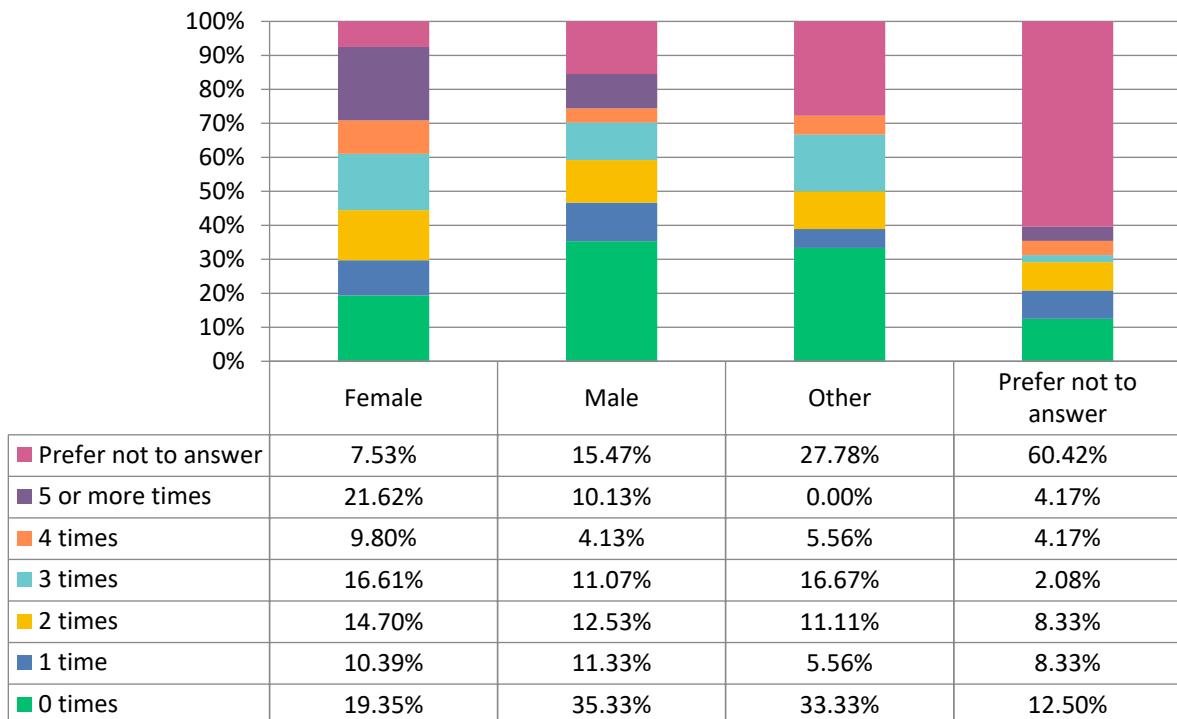
Key Findings on Disability or Long-Term Health Problems Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (73.91%) reported not having a disability or long-term health condition that limited their ability to perform daily activities. A small percentage (6.90%) indicated they did have such a condition, while 6.30% were unsure. An additional 12.89% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, the majority of students did not report a disability or long-term health condition impacting their daily functioning.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students reported not having a disability or long-term health problem that limited their daily activities, with 78.14% of females and 73.30% of males selecting “No.” Reported disability rates were similar between groups, with 7.29% of females and 6.14% of males answering “Yes.” Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to report “No” (38.89%) and more likely to indicate a disability (16.67%) or uncertainty (16.67%). Findings for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution due to the smaller sample size of this demographic group.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, most reported not having a disability or long-term health problem that limited daily activities. Reported disability rates were relatively consistent across grades, ranging from 6.07% to 7.80%, and uncertainty (“Not sure”) ranged from 3.89% to 8.31%. Students in the ungraded or other category reported lower rates of “No” (40.00%) and higher rates of disability (20.00%) compared to graded peers. Findings for the ungraded students should be interpreted cautiously due to the smaller sample size of this demographic group.

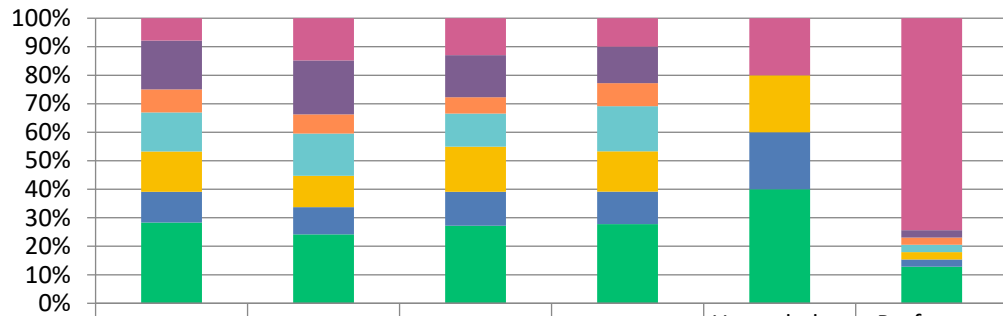
During the past 12 months, how many times have you had a sunburn?



During the past 12 months, how many times have you had a sunburn?



During the past 12 months, how many times have you had a sunburn



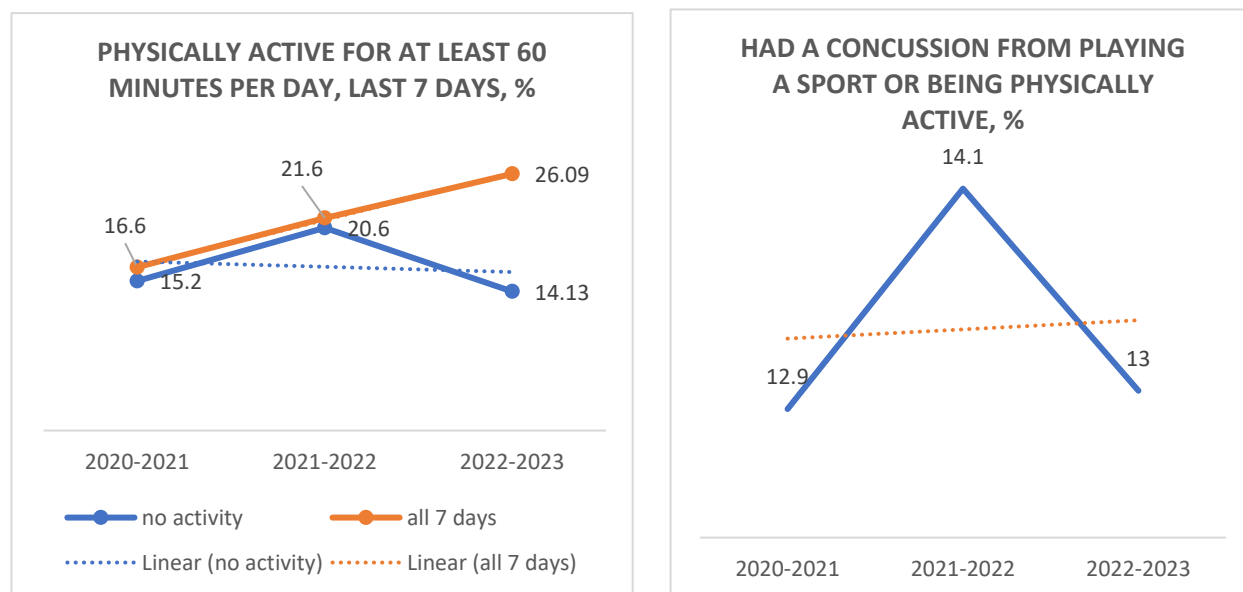
	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	7.87%	14.83%	12.95%	10.00%	20.00%	74.36%
5 or more times	17.08%	18.90%	14.77%	12.78%	0.00%	2.56%
4 times	8.09%	6.70%	5.70%	8.06%	0.00%	2.56%
3 times	13.71%	14.83%	11.66%	15.83%	0.00%	2.56%
2 times	14.16%	11.00%	15.80%	14.17%	20.00%	2.56%
1 time	10.79%	9.57%	11.92%	11.39%	20.00%	2.56%
0 times	28.31%	24.16%	27.20%	27.78%	40.00%	12.82%

Key Findings on Sun Safety

- County-wide Trends:** Students most commonly reported not having a sunburn in the past 12 months (26.56%). However, many students reported that they had experienced sunburns, including 10.71% who had one, 13.49% who had two, 13.67% who had three, and 7.02% who had four. Notably, 15.67% reported having five or more sunburns, indicating a subgroup at higher risk for repeated exposure. An additional 12.89% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, a considerable portion of students avoided sunburn altogether. However, frequent sunburns were not uncommon.
- Gender Differences:** Female students reported higher rates of frequent sunburns, with 21.62% experiencing five or more in the past year compared to 10.13% of males. Males were more likely to report no sunburns (35.33%) than females (19.35%). Among students identifying as “Other,” 33.33% reported no sunburns, while a smaller proportion experienced repeated sunburns.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, the percentage reporting no sunburns in the past year ranged from 24.16% to 28.31%, with little variation across grades. Reports of five or more sunburns were most common in 10th grade (18.90%). The distribution across 1 to 3 sunburns was fairly consistent among all grades. Students in the ungraded or other category reported the highest rate of no sunburns (40.00%). Findings for the ungraded students should be interpreted cautiously due to the smaller sample size of this demographic group.

Physical Activity, Injury and Activity Over Time

Physical activity is essential for promoting both physical and mental health in adolescents, contributing to fitness, stress management, and academic focus. Tracking trends in physical activity levels among students provides insight into lifestyle habits that can impact long-term health outcomes. The following data examines changes in student participation in regular physical activity over recent years, highlighting areas where further encouragement or resources may be needed.



Key Findings on Physical Activity, Injury, and Activity Over Time

- **Consistent Physical Activity:** The percentage of students who were physically active for at least 60 minutes on all 7 days rose from 16.6% in 2020–2021 to 26.09% in 2022–2023. This steady increase suggests improved consistency in student physical activity over time.
- **No Physical Activity:** The percentage of students reporting no physical activity declined slightly from 15.2% in 2020–2021 to 14.13% in 2022–2023, with a small peak at 20.6% in 2021–2022. This indicates a modest overall decline in inactivity, despite some fluctuation.
- **Concussion Rates from Physical Activity:** The percentage of students reporting a concussion from sports or physical activity increased from 12.9% in 2020–2021 to a peak of 14.1% in 2021–2022, then declined slightly to 13% in 2022–2023. This trend suggests a temporary rise followed by a modest decrease in reported concussion incidents.

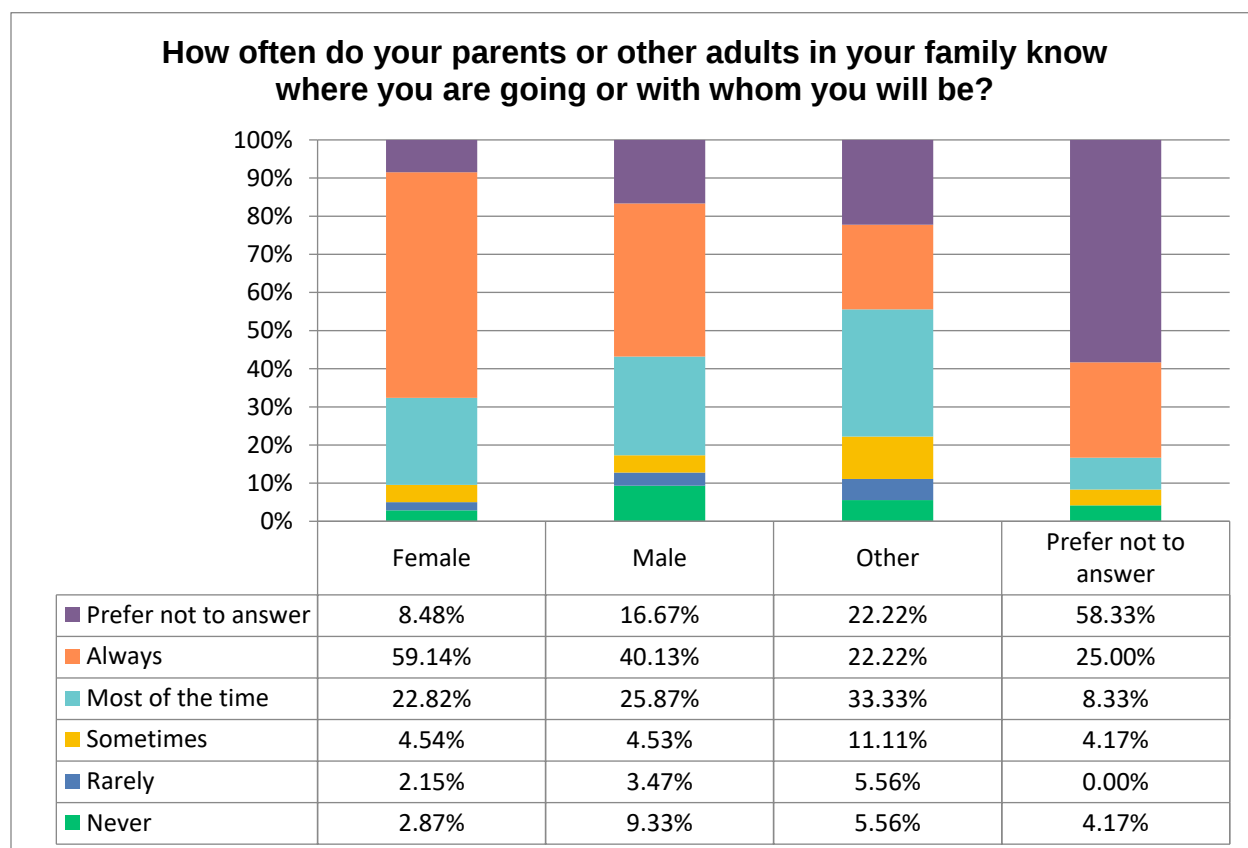
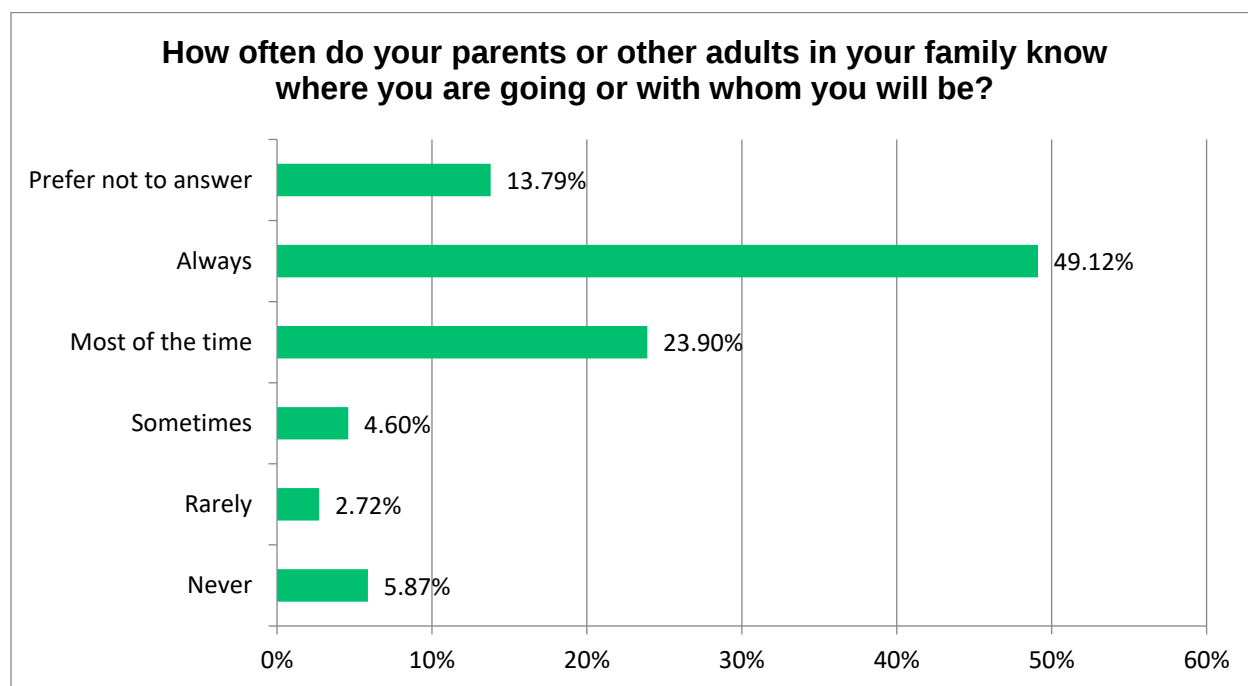
Social Emotional Health

The social-emotional health of students is a crucial determinant of their overall development, influencing key areas such as their sense of belonging, resilience to peer pressure, and ability to navigate social environments. To better understand these dynamics, the YRBS gathers data on students' social media habits, feelings of community connectedness, access to supportive adults, and emotional well-being. This data offers valuable insights into how students interact with their peers and how well they feel supported in their social environments.

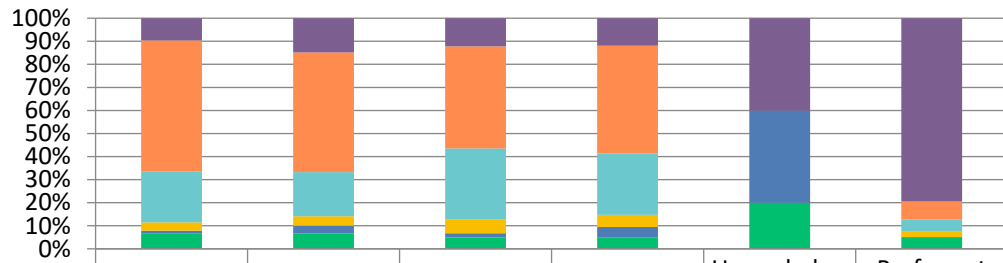
Findings from the survey reflect a mixed picture of students' social-emotional well-being across Herkimer County. Most students reported consistent parental awareness of their whereabouts. Many also recognized that their families had clear household rules, indicating strong family structure and oversight. While a majority felt confident in their ability to make decisions and resist peer pressure, fewer students reported always feeling able to talk to a caring adult. Similarly, fewer felt like they mattered in their community. In addition, perceptions of community belonging have declined slightly over time.

Responses around loneliness and self-worth were varied. Most students expressed a positive self-perception, though a notable portion reported uncertainty or disagreement. Together, these findings suggest that while many students experience foundational supports, opportunities remain to strengthen emotional connection, community engagement, and access to trusted adults.

Parental Awareness



How often do your parents or other adults in your family know where you are going or with whom you will be?

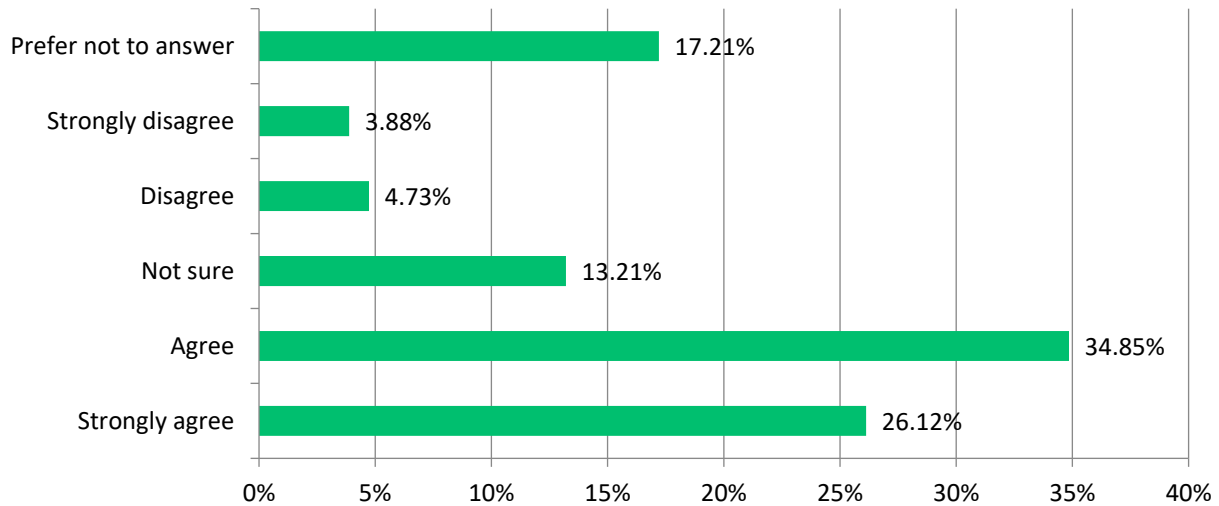


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	9.66%	14.83%	12.18%	11.94%	40.00%	79.49%
Always	56.85%	51.91%	44.30%	46.67%	0.00%	7.69%
Most of the time	22.02%	19.14%	30.83%	26.67%	0.00%	5.13%
Sometimes	3.60%	4.07%	5.96%	5.28%	0.00%	2.56%
Rarely	1.35%	3.35%	1.81%	4.44%	40.00%	0.00%
Never	6.52%	6.70%	4.92%	5.00%	20.00%	5.13%

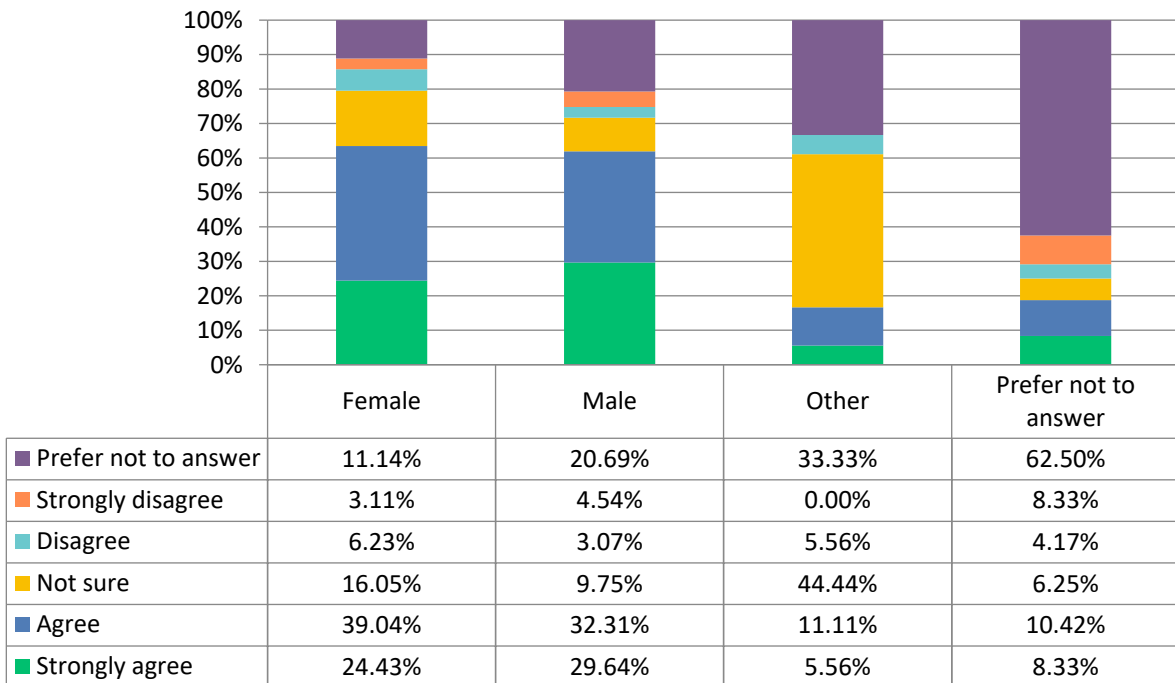
Key Findings on Parental Knowledge of Students' Whereabouts

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported that their parents or other adults in their family often knew where they were or with whom they would be. Nearly half (49.12%) said their parents "Always" knew, while 23.90% said this was true "Most of the time." Smaller percentages reported less frequent parental awareness, including 4.60% "Sometimes", 2.72% "Rarely", and 5.87% "Never." An additional 13.79% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, most students experienced consistent parental awareness of their whereabouts.
- Gender Differences:** Female students were more likely than male students to report that their parents or other adults always knew where they were or with whom they would be (59.14% vs. 40.13%). Male students were slightly more likely to select "Never" (9.33%) than females (2.87%). Students identifying as "Other" were less likely to report "Always" (22.22%) and more likely to report lower levels of parental awareness. These findings for the "Other" group should be interpreted with caution due to the smaller sample size.
- Grade Differences:** In general, the percentage who reported that their parents or other adults always knew where they were or with whom they would be declined slightly by grade, from 56.85% in 9th grade to 44.30% in 11th grade. Reports of "Never" remained relatively low across all grades. Students in the ungraded or other group were less likely to report consistent parental awareness and more likely to select "Rarely" (40.00%) or "Never" (20.00%). Findings for the ungraded students should be interpreted cautiously due to the smaller sample size of this demographic group.

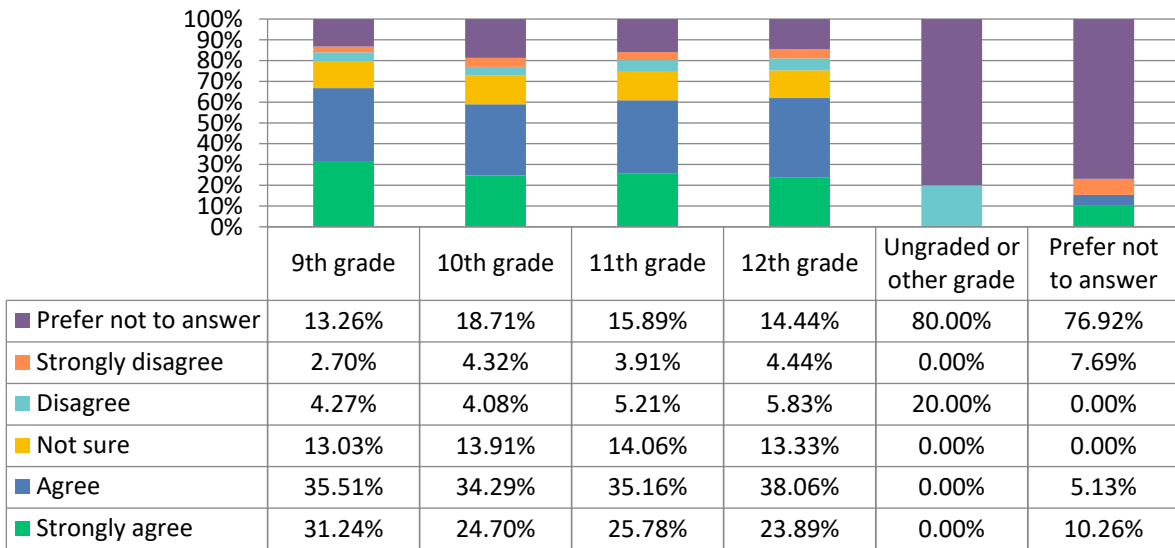
Do you agree or disagree that your parents or other adults in your family have clear rules and consequences for your behavior?



Do you agree or disagree that your parents or other adults in your family have clear rules and consequences for your behavior?



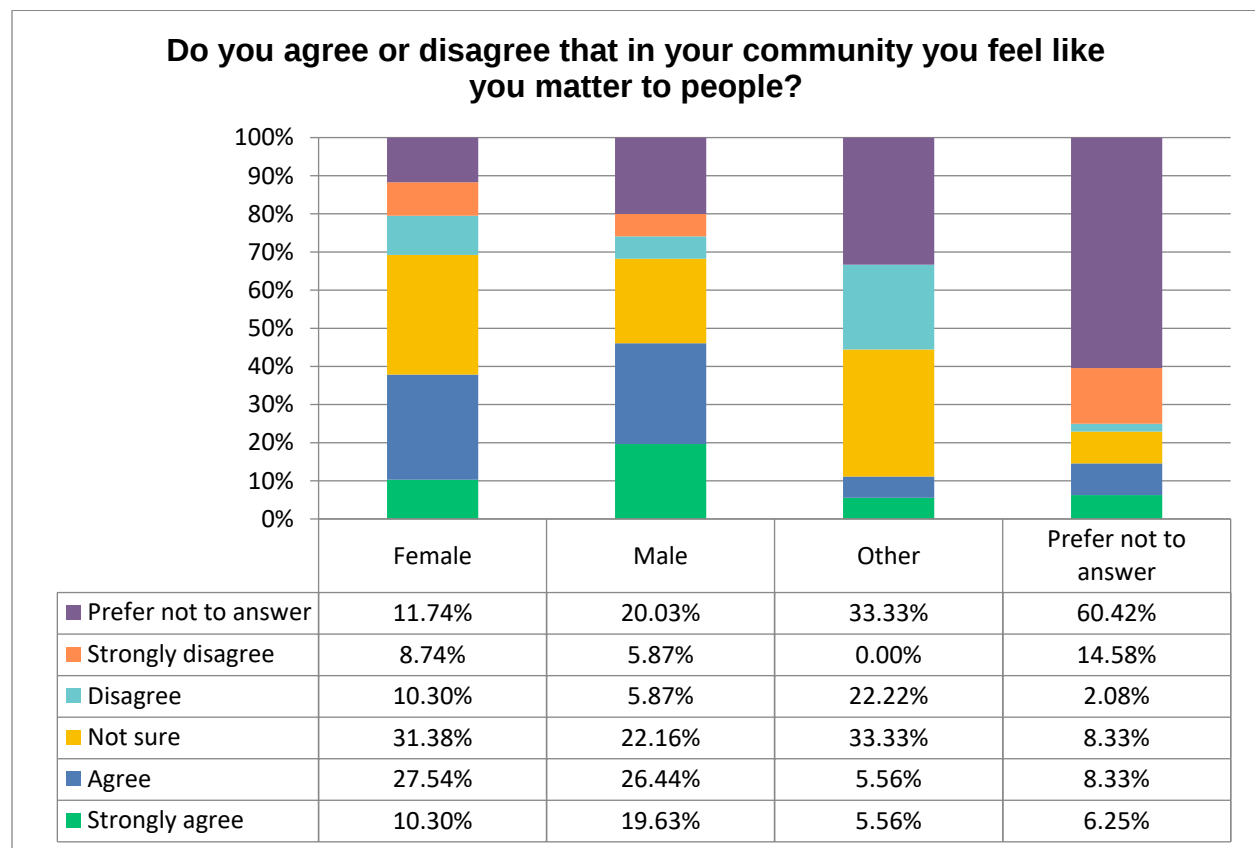
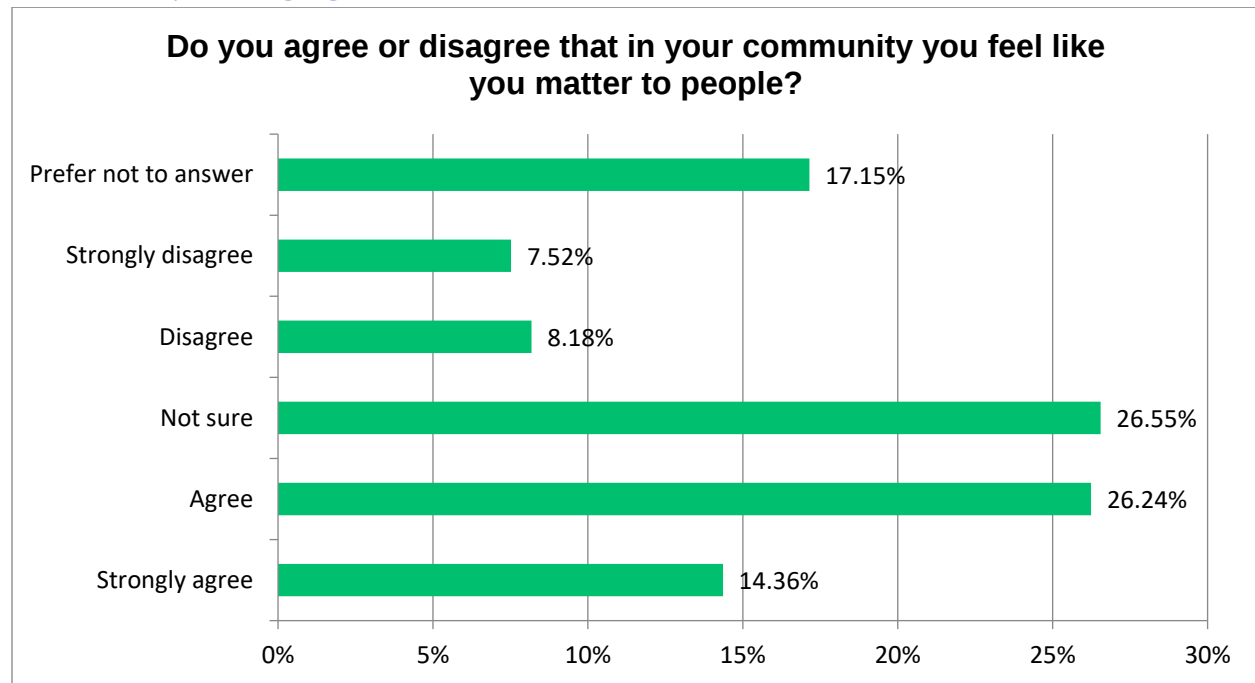
Do you agree or disagree that your parents or other adults in your family have clear rules and consequences for your behavior?



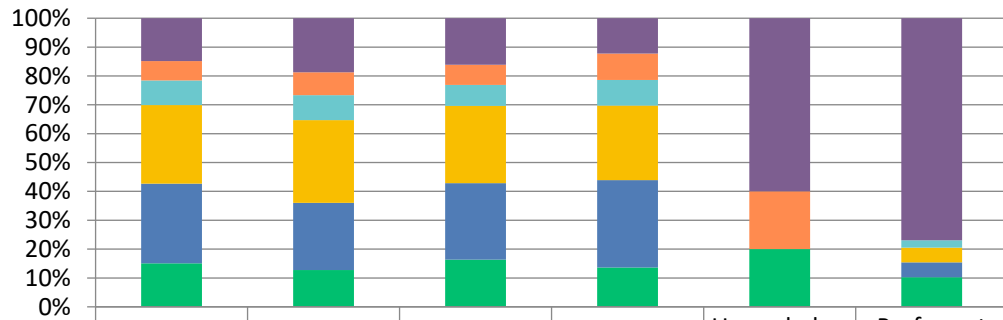
Key Findings on Household Rules

- County-wide Trends:** Most students agreed that their parents or other adults had clear rules and consequences for behavior. Specifically, 34.85% agreed and 26.12% strongly agreed. A smaller portion was unsure (13.21%) or disagreed (4.73%). 3.88% strongly disagreed, and 17.21% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, the majority of students recognized the presence of clear household rules and expectations.
- Gender Differences:** Female and male students both commonly agreed that their families had clear rules and consequences. Among females, 39.04% agreed, and 24.43% strongly agreed. For males, 32.31% agreed, and 29.64% strongly agreed. Female students were more likely to be unsure (16.05%) compared to males (9.75%), while males had a higher rate of "Prefer not to answer" (20.69% vs. 11.14%). Students identifying as "Other" were less likely to agree or strongly agree (11.11% and 5.56%) and more likely to be unsure (44.44%). Findings for the "Other" group should be interpreted with caution due to the smaller sample size of this demographic category.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, most agreed or strongly agreed that their families had clear rules and consequences. The percentage of students who were unsure remained fairly consistent across grades, ranging from 13.03% to 14.06%. A small percentage in each grade reported disagreement or strong disagreement. Students in the ungraded or other category were less likely to agree and had higher rates of selecting "Prefer not to answer" (80.00%). Findings for the ungraded group should be interpreted cautiously due to the smaller sample size of this demographic group.

Community Belonging



Do you agree or disagree that in your community you feel like you matter to people?

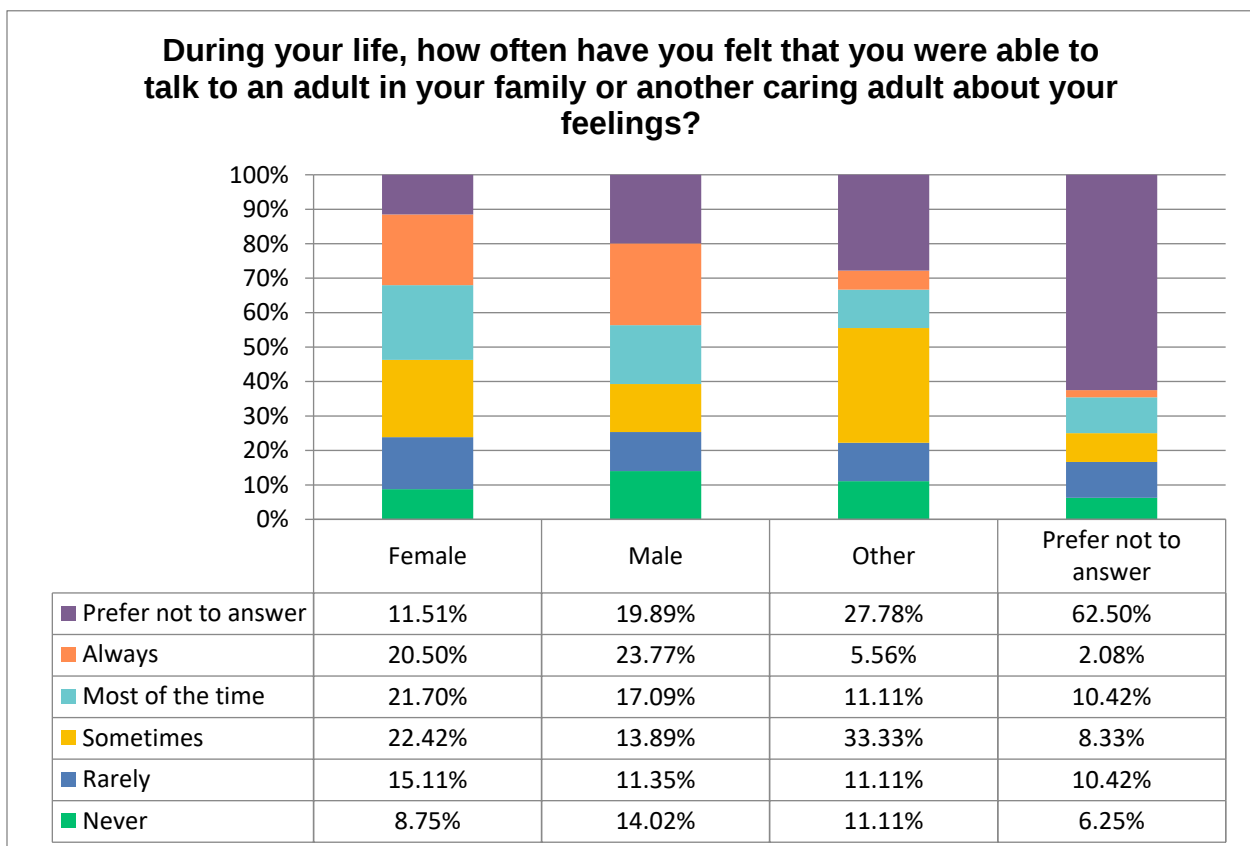
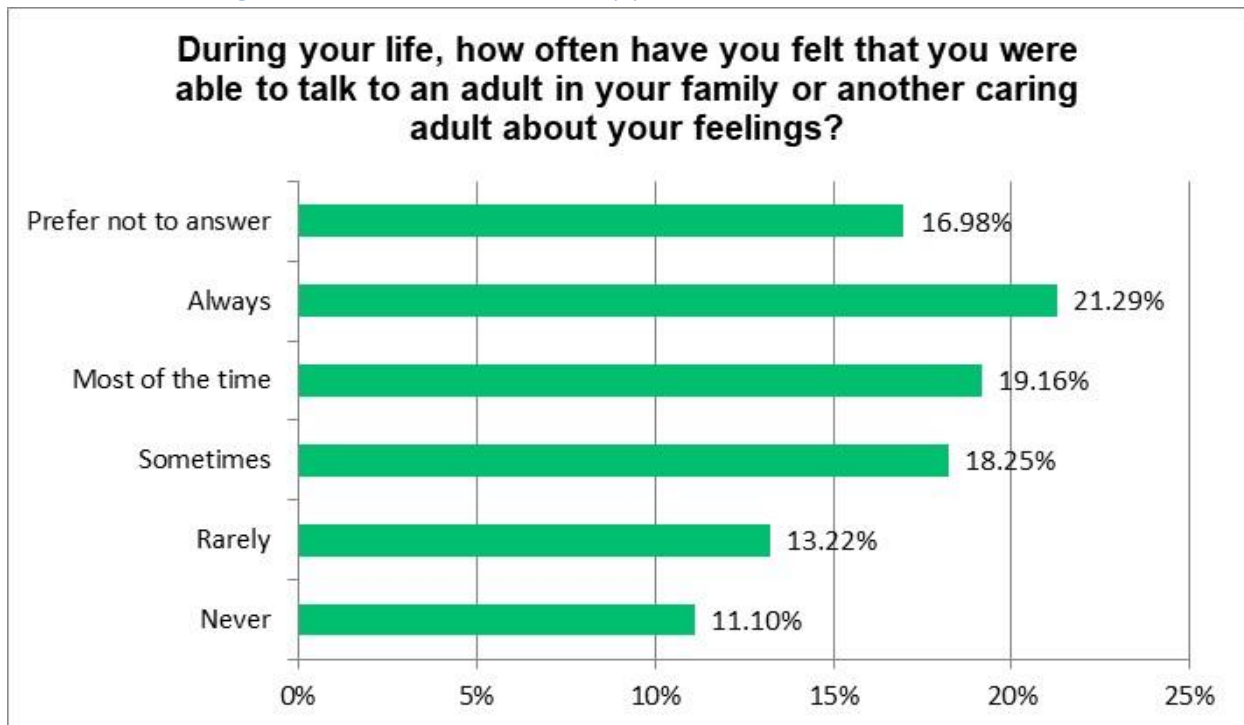


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	14.83%	18.75%	16.10%	12.22%	60.00%	76.92%
Strongly disagree	6.74%	7.93%	7.01%	9.17%	20.00%	0.00%
Disagree	8.54%	8.65%	7.27%	8.89%	0.00%	2.56%
Not sure	27.19%	28.61%	26.75%	25.83%	0.00%	5.13%
Agree	27.64%	23.32%	26.49%	30.28%	0.00%	5.13%
Strongly agree	15.06%	12.74%	16.36%	13.61%	20.00%	10.26%

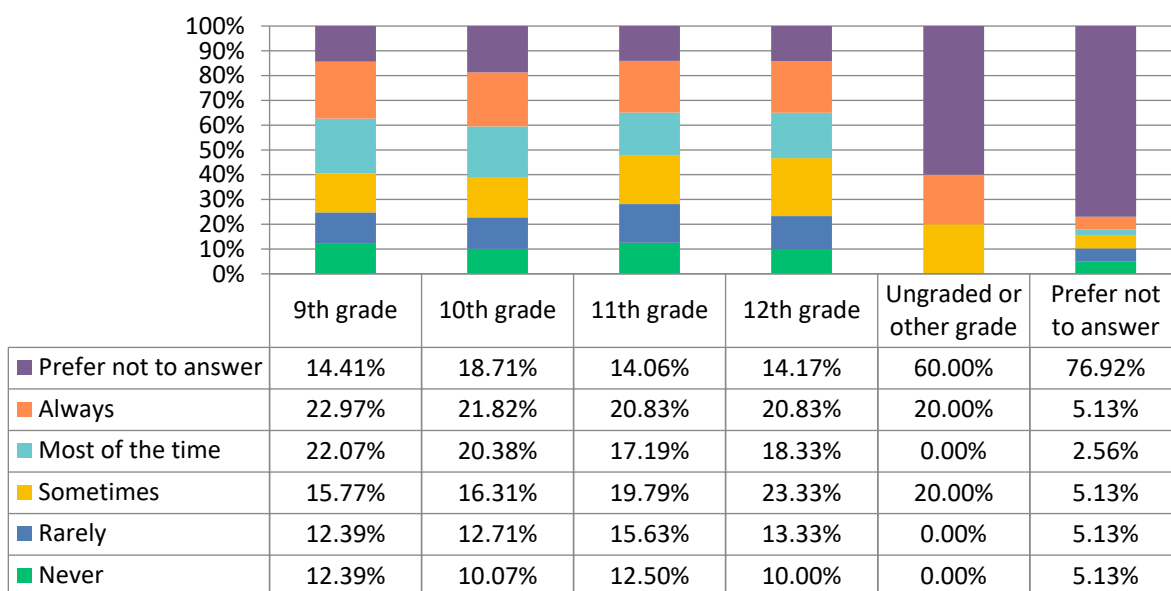
Key Findings on Community Belonging

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported mixed responses about feeling like they mattered in their community. Specifically, 26.55% were unsure, while 26.24% agreed and 14.36% strongly agreed. Smaller proportions disagreed (8.18%) or strongly disagreed (7.52%). An additional 17.15% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, responses were mixed, with roughly equal shares expressing positive feelings and uncertainty about their value in the community.
- Gender Differences:** Male students were more likely than female students to report feeling like they mattered in their community, with 19.63% strongly agreeing, compared to 10.30% of females. Females were more likely to be unsure (31.38% vs. 22.16%) or disagree (10.30% vs. 5.87%). Agreement levels were similar between the groups, with 27.54% of females and 26.44% of males selecting “Agree.” Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to express agreement, with just 5.56% strongly agreeing and 5.56% agreeing. Findings for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution due to the smaller sample size of this demographic category.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, perceptions of mattering in the community were mixed. The percentage of students who strongly agreed ranged from 12.74% to 16.36%. “Not sure” responses were common across all grades, with the highest rate in 10th grade (28.61%). Reported disagreement remained consistent, ranging from 7.27% to 8.89%. Students in the ungraded group were more likely to select “Prefer not to answer.”

Access to Caring Adults for Emotional Support



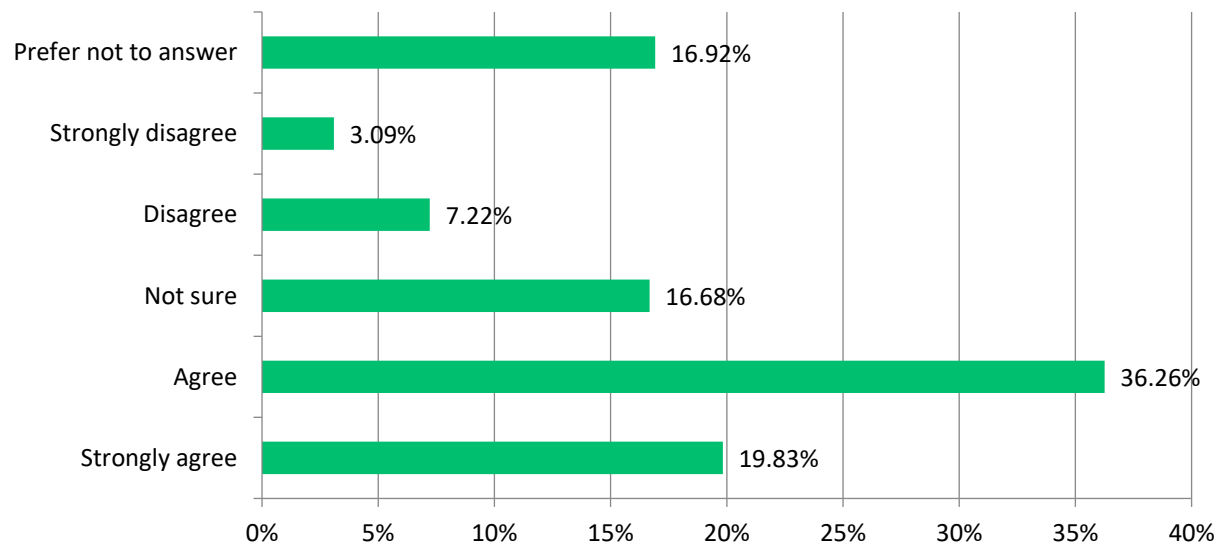
During your life, how often have you felt that you were able to talk to an adult in your family or another caring adult about your feelings?



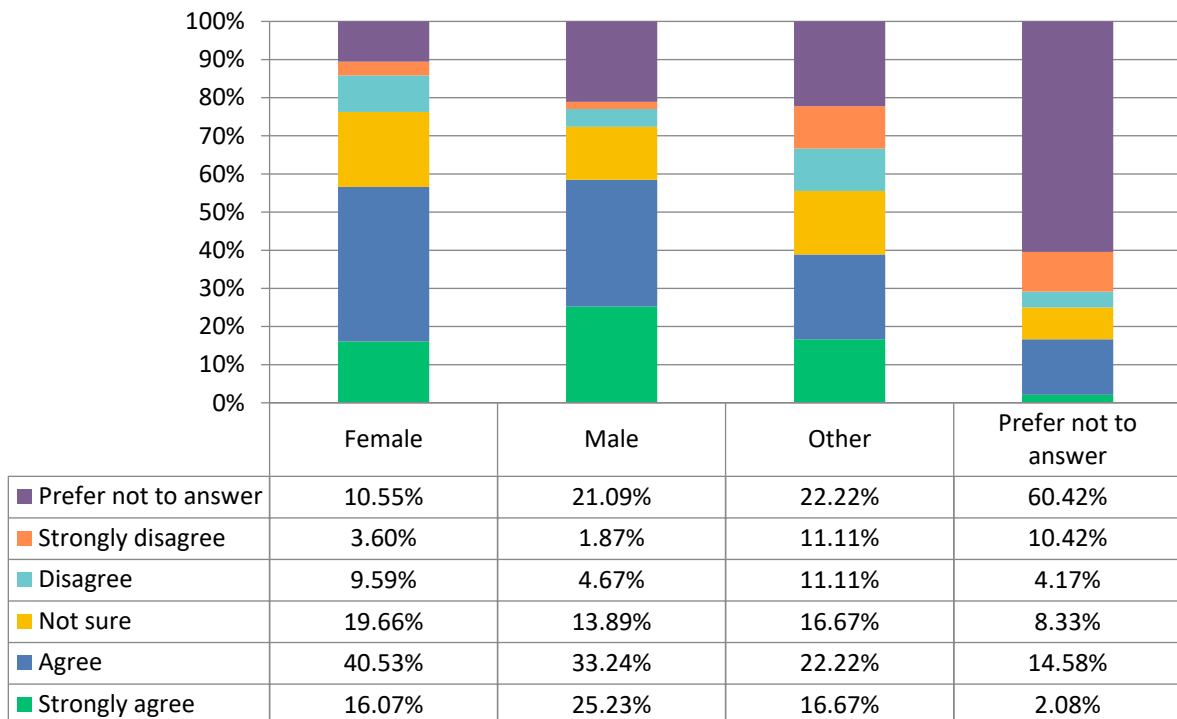
Key Findings on Access to Caring Adults for Emotional Support

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported feeling able to talk to an adult about their feelings at least some of the time. Specifically, 21.29% said “Always,” and 19.16% said “Most of the time.” An additional 18.25% said “Sometimes.” However, 13.22% of students said they “Rarely” felt able to do so, and 11.10% reported “Never.” Another 16.98% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, while a majority of students indicated some access to supportive adults, a notable portion reported limited or no such connection.
- Gender Differences:** Male students were slightly more likely than female students to report always feeling able to talk to an adult about their feelings (23.77% vs. 20.50%). Female students were more likely to report “Most of the time” (21.70%) and “Sometimes” (22.42%) compared to males (17.09% and 13.89%, respectively). Males were also more likely to select “Never” (14.02%) than females (8.75%). Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to report consistent support, with only 5.56% saying “Always” and “Never” (11.11%). Findings for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution due to the smaller sample size of this demographic category.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, reported ability to talk to a caring adult remained relatively consistent across grades. The percentage who said “Always” ranged from 20.83% to 22.97%, and “Most of the time” ranged from 17.19% to 22.07%. Responses for “Rarely” and “Never” were also similar across grades, with no clear upward or downward trend. The ungraded or other group showed more variability.

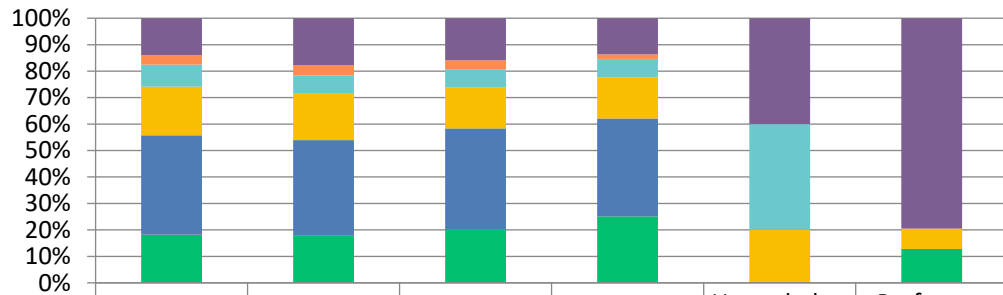
Do you agree or disagree that you are good at making decisions and following through on them?



Do you agree or disagree that you are good at making decisions and following through on them?



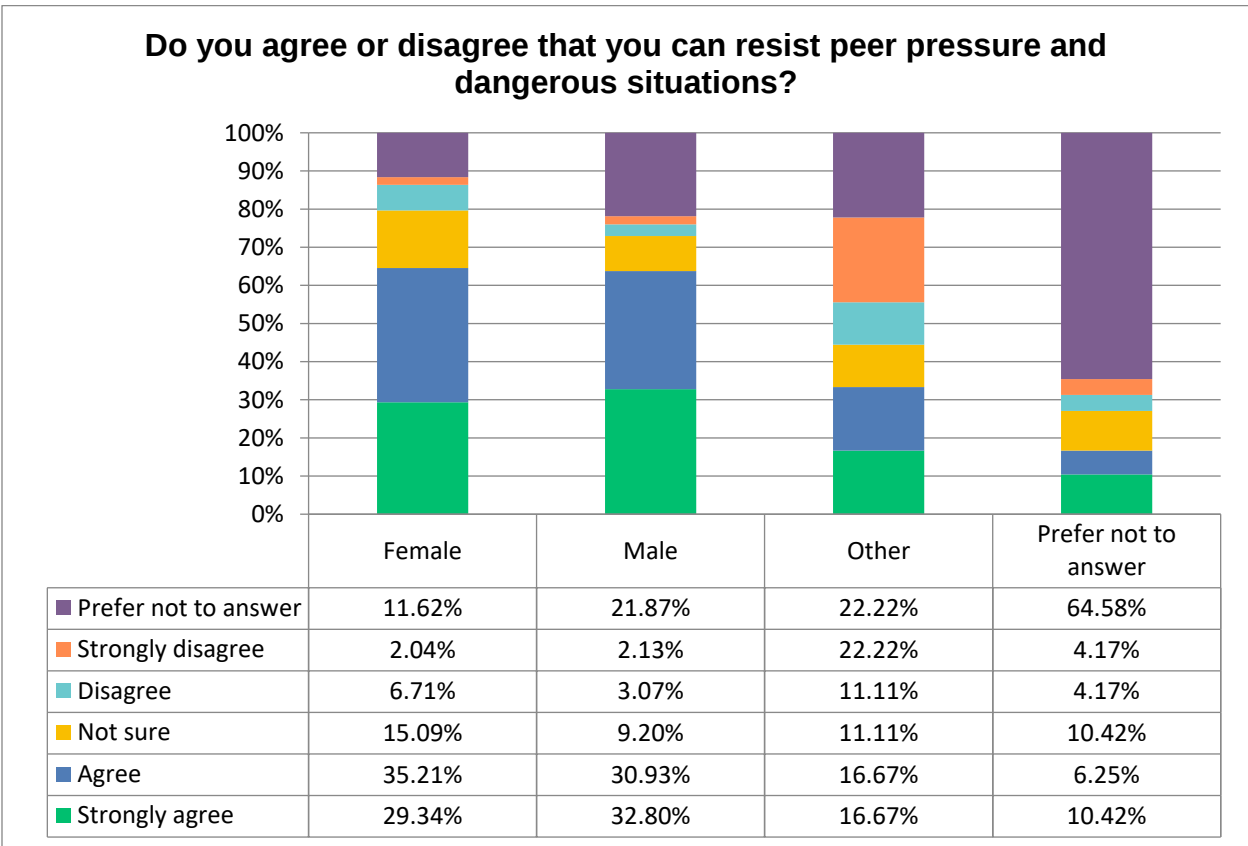
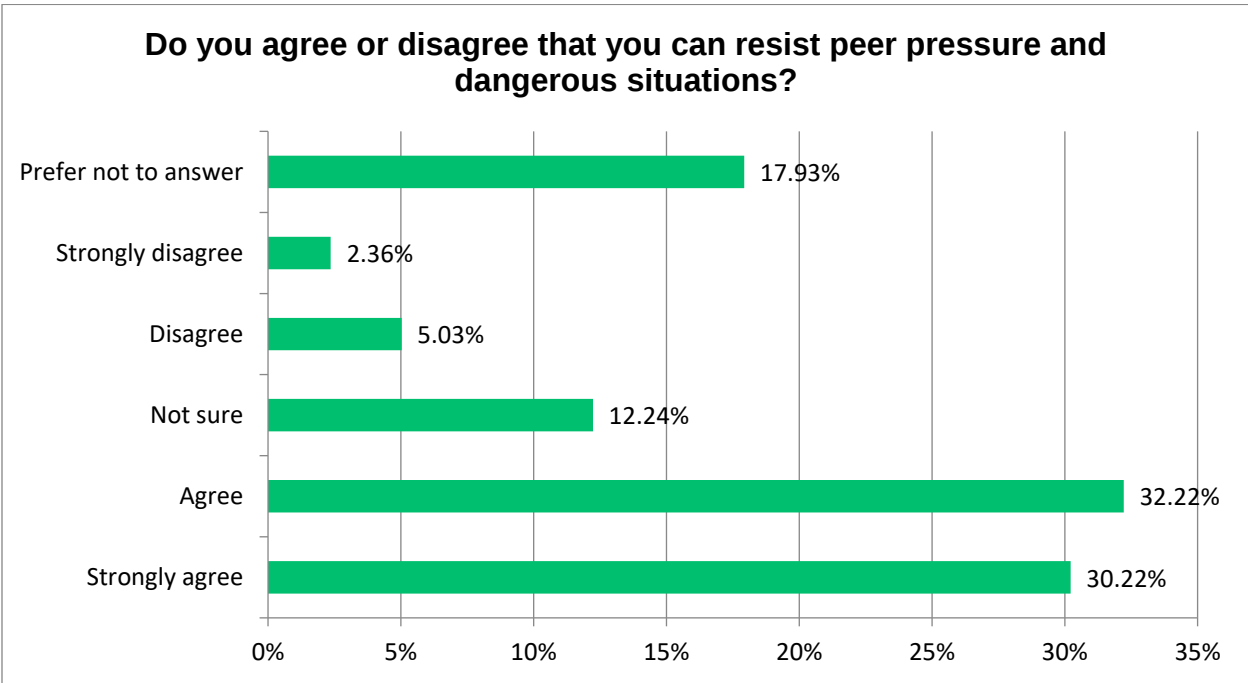
Do you agree or disagree that you are good at making decisions and following through on them?

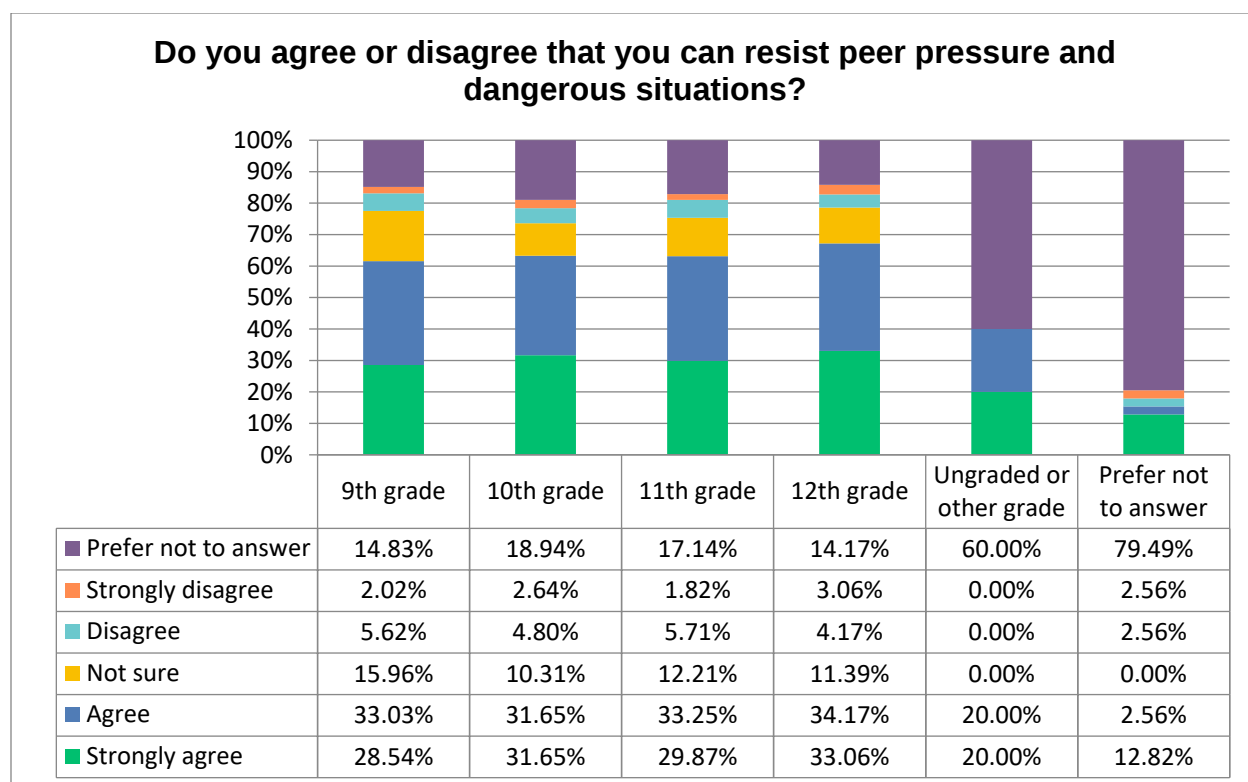


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	13.93%	17.75%	15.89%	13.65%	40.00%	79.49%
Strongly disagree	3.60%	3.84%	3.39%	1.67%	0.00%	0.00%
Disagree	8.31%	6.95%	6.77%	6.96%	40.00%	0.00%
Not sure	18.43%	17.51%	15.63%	15.60%	20.00%	7.69%
Agree	37.53%	36.21%	38.28%	37.05%	0.00%	0.00%
Strongly agree	18.20%	17.75%	20.05%	25.07%	0.00%	12.82%

Key Findings in Student Decision-Making

- County-wide Trends:** Most students expressed confidence in their decision-making abilities. A total of 36.26% agreed and 19.83% strongly agreed that they were good at making decisions and following through. About 16.68% were unsure, while smaller percentages disagreed (7.22%) or strongly disagreed (3.09%). An additional 16.92% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, the data suggest that a majority of students viewed themselves as capable decision-makers.
- Gender Differences:** Male students were slightly more likely than females to strongly agree they were good at making decisions and following through, with 25.23% of males and 16.07% of females selecting this option. However, a greater percentage of females (40.53%) agreed compared to males (33.24%). Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to agree overall and more likely to report disagreement. Findings for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution due to the smaller sample size of this demographic category.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, most agreed they were good at making decisions and following through. Strong agreement rose from 18.20% in 9th grade to 25.07% in 12th grade. Reports of uncertainty or disagreement were relatively consistent across grades. Students in the ungraded category were less likely to report agreement and more likely to select "Disagree" (40.00%) or "Not sure" (20.00%). Findings for the ungraded group should be interpreted cautiously due to the smaller sample size of this demographic group.

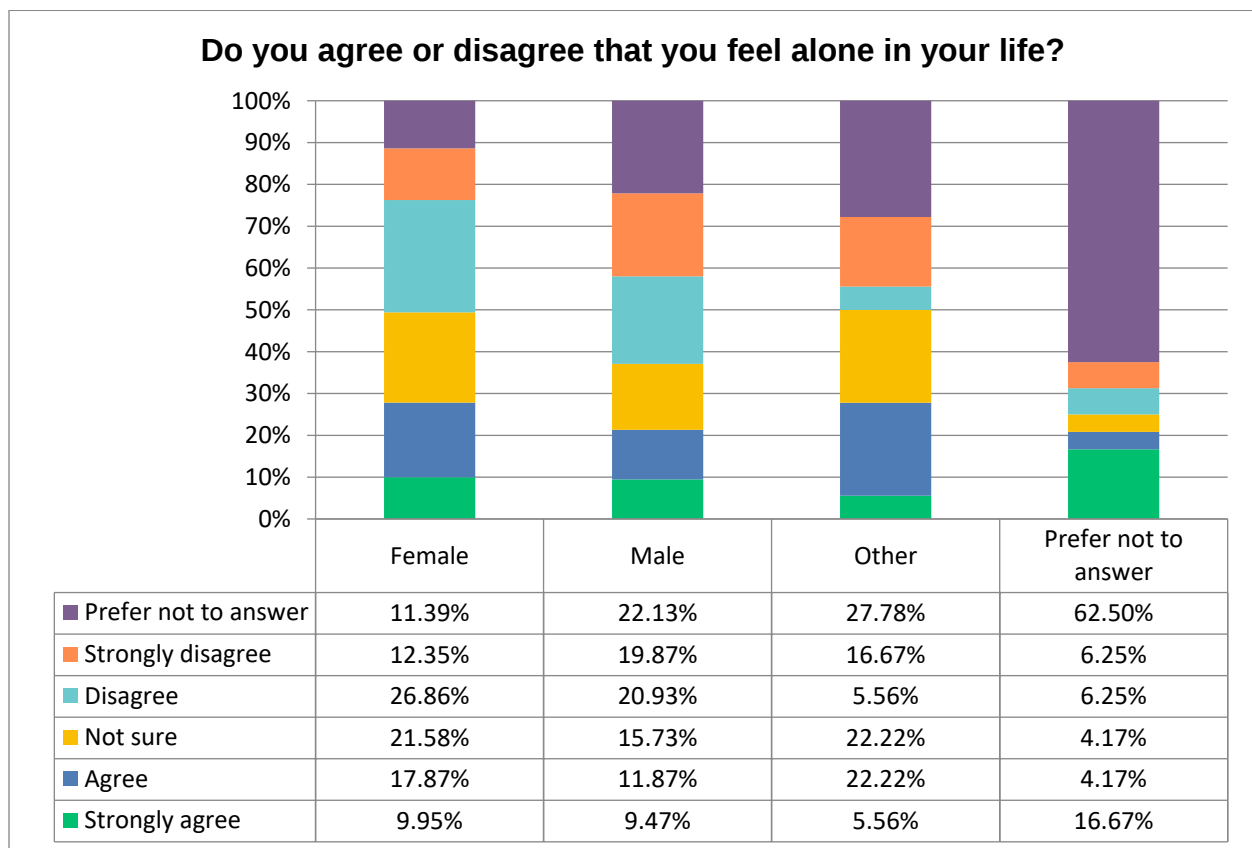
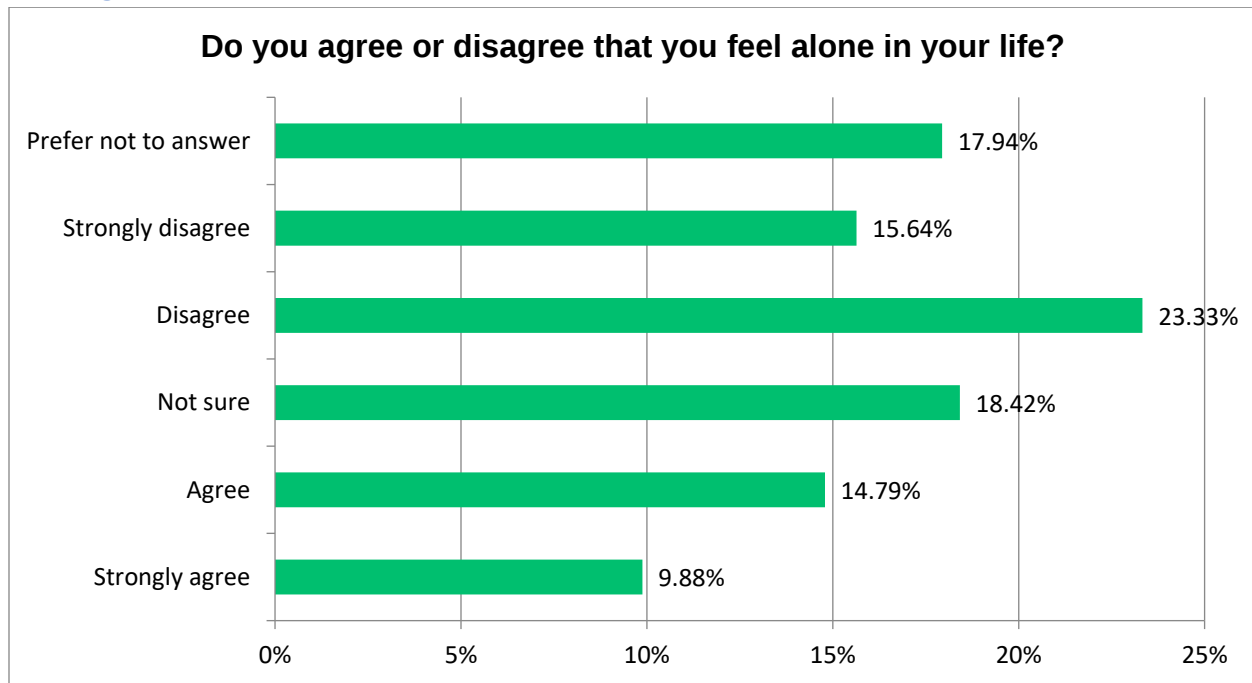




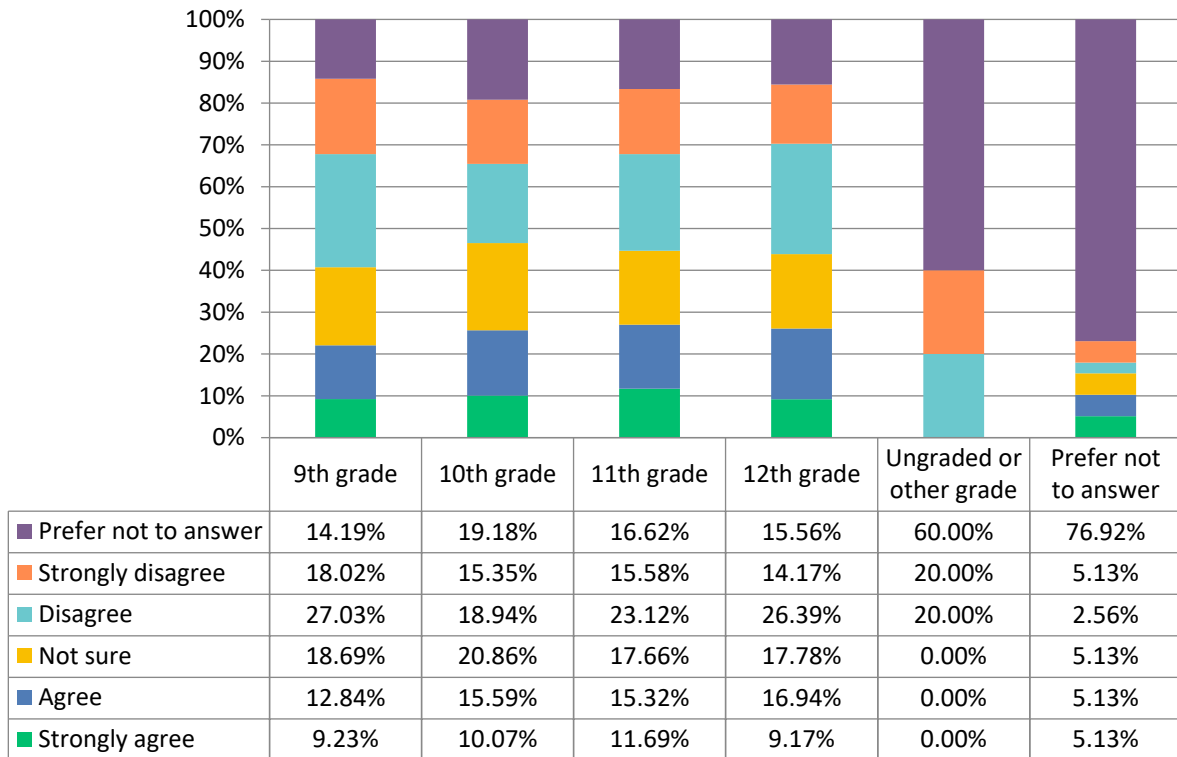
Key Findings on Peer Pressure

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported feeling confident in resisting peer pressure and dangerous situations. A total of 62.44% either agreed (32.22%) or strongly agreed (30.22%) with this statement. A smaller proportion were unsure (12.24%) or disagreed (5.03%), and only 2.36% strongly disagreed. An additional 17.93% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, the majority of students expressed confidence in their ability to navigate risky situations.
- Gender Differences:** Male and female students showed similar levels of confidence in resisting peer pressure, with 32.80% of males and 29.34% of females strongly agreeing, and 30.93% of males and 35.21% of females agreeing. Females were more likely to report uncertainty (15.09%) or disagreement (6.71%) than males (9.20% and 3.07%, respectively). Students identifying as "Other" reported lower levels of agreement overall, with only 16.67% strongly agreeing and 16.67% agreeing. They were also more likely to strongly disagree (22.22%). Findings for the "Other" group should be interpreted with caution due to the smaller sample size of this demographic category.
- Grade Differences:** Across 9th–12th grade students, the ability to resist peer pressure was consistently high. Strong agreement increased slightly by grade, from 28.54% in 9th grade to 33.06% in 12th grade. Similarly, agreement ranged from 31.65% to 34.17%. Reports of uncertainty or disagreement were generally low and showed no clear pattern by grade.

Feelings of Loneliness



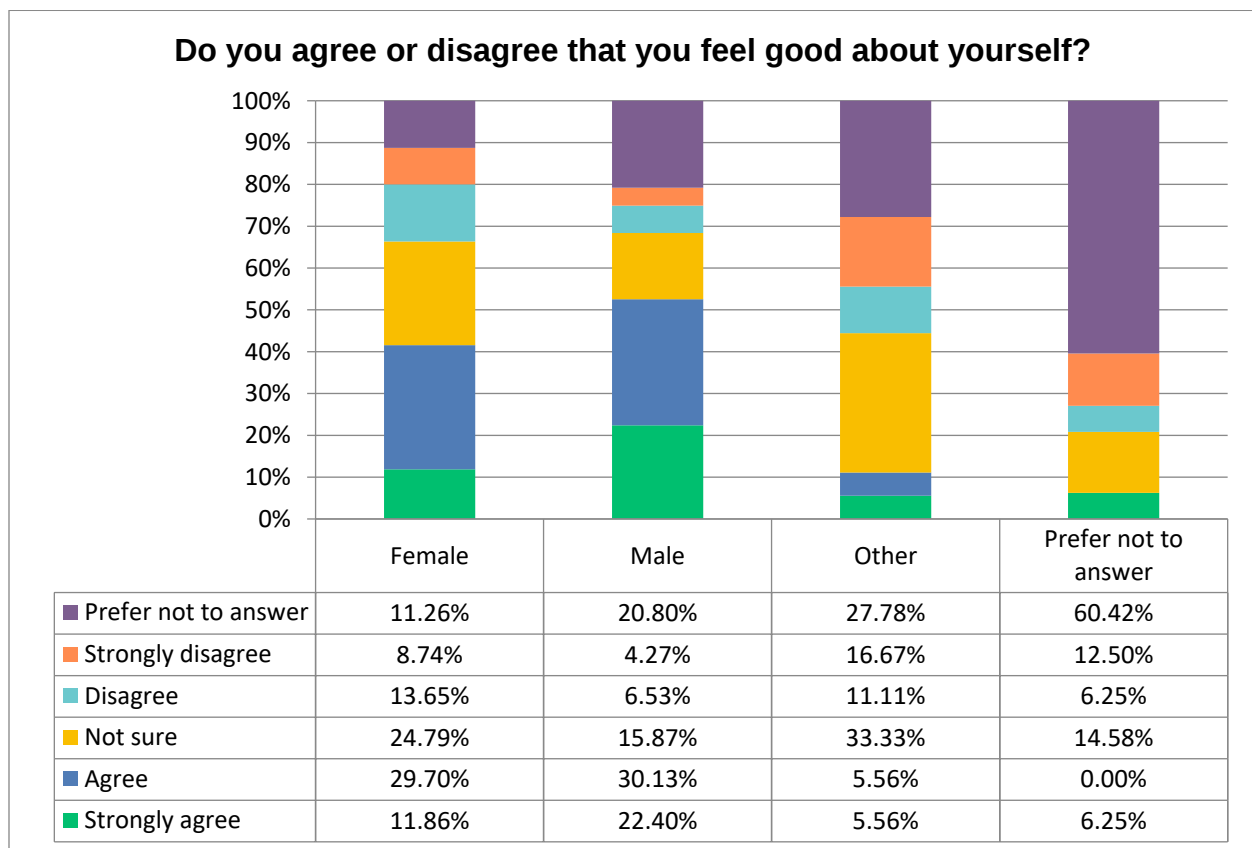
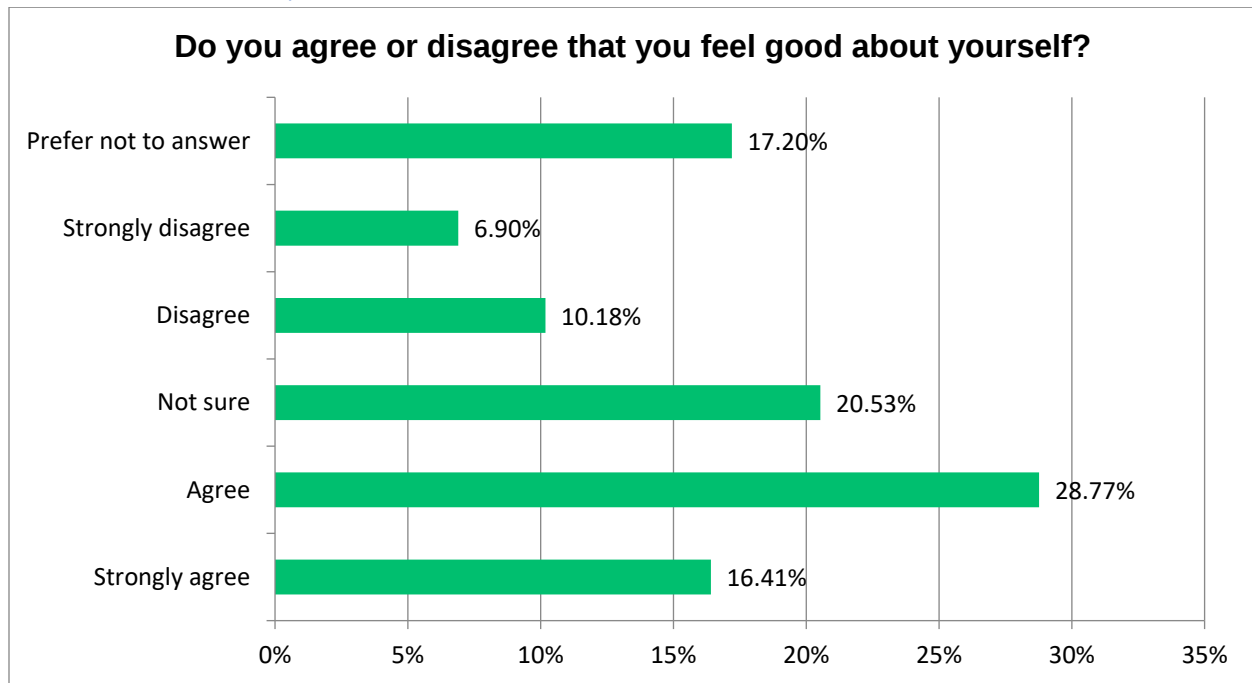
Do you agree or disagree that you feel alone in your life?



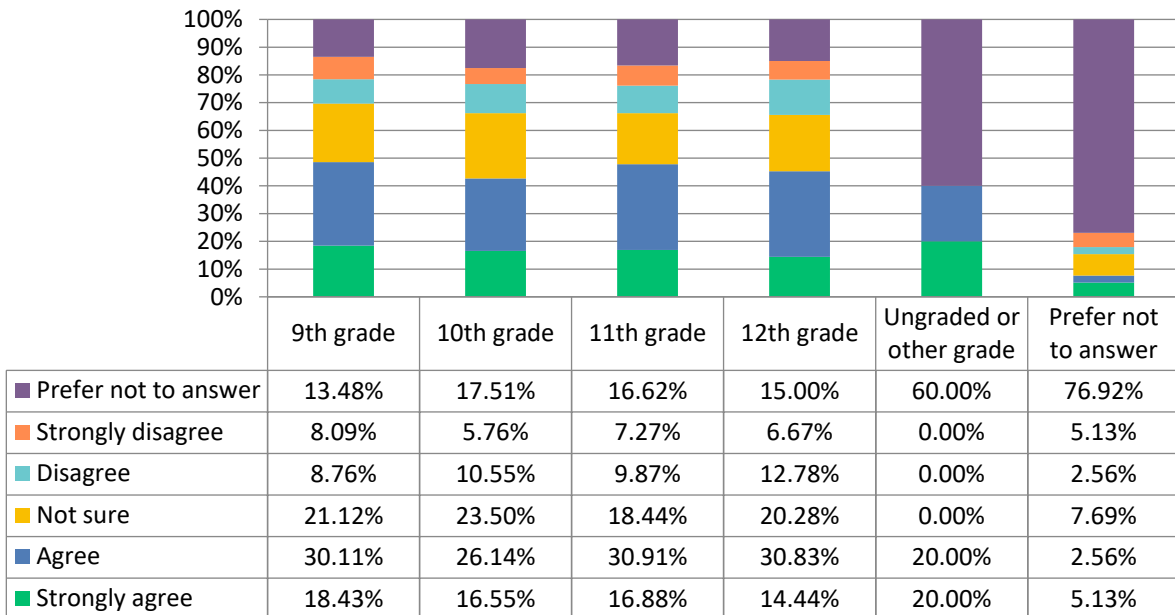
Key Findings on Loneliness

- County-wide Trends:** Most students did not agree that they felt alone in their life. A combined 38.97% disagreed or strongly disagreed, compared to 24.67% who agreed or strongly agreed. Another 18.42% were unsure, while 17.94% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, more students disagreed than agreed with feeling alone, though responses reflected a mix of experiences with loneliness.
- Gender Differences:** Female students were more likely than males to disagree with feeling alone, with 26.86% selecting “Disagree” compared to 20.93% of males. Males, however, had higher rates of both “Strongly disagree” (19.87% vs. 12.35%) and “Prefer not to answer” (22.13% vs. 11.39%). A greater percentage of females reported feeling alone “Always” (9.95%) and “Most of the time” (17.87%) compared to males (9.47% and 11.87%, respectively).
- Grade Differences:** Overall, reports of feeling alone remained relatively stable across grade levels, with slight variations in agreement and disagreement. Agreement levels (combined “Agree” and “Strongly agree”) ranged from 22.07% to 25.84% in 10th grade. Disagreement (“Disagree” and “Strongly disagree”) was highest in 9th grade at 45.05% and dipped in 11th grade to 38.70%. The percentage of students who selected “Not sure” remained relatively consistent, around 17–21% across all grades.

Student Self-Perception



Do you agree or disagree that you feel good about yourself?

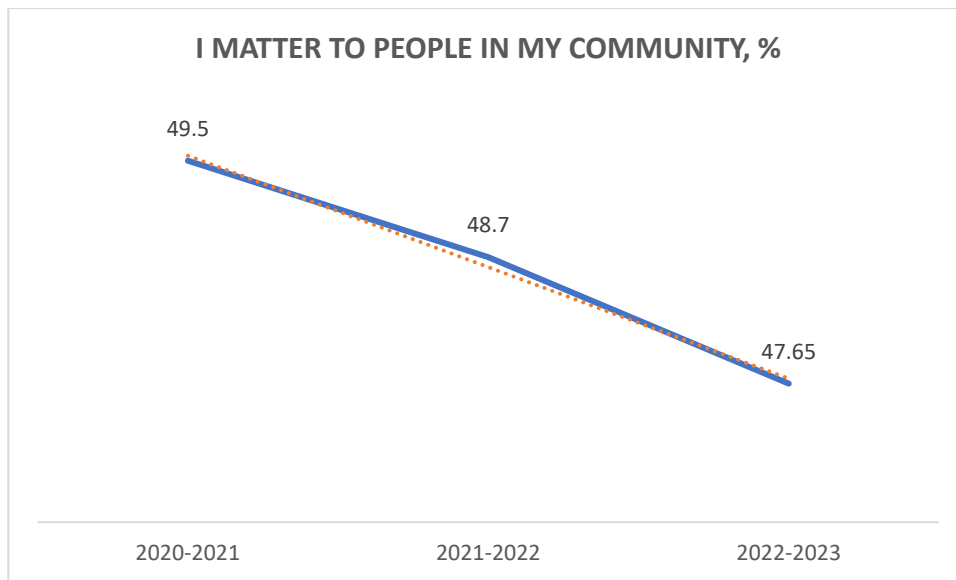


Key Findings on Self-Perception

- County-wide Trends:** A majority of students reported feeling positively about themselves, with 28.77% selecting "Agree" and 16.41% selecting "Strongly agree." However, 10.18% reported "Disagree" and 6.90% "Strongly disagree," reflecting a smaller but notable group with lower self-perception. An additional 20.53% were unsure, and 17.20% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, most students expressed a positive sense of self, though some uncertainty and disagreement were present.
- Gender Differences:** Male students were more likely than females to report feeling good about themselves, with 22.40% selecting "Strongly agree" compared to 11.86% of females. Rates of agreement ("Agree") were similar between males (30.13%) and females (29.70%). Female students were more likely to be unsure (24.79% vs. 15.87%) and to report disagreement. Students identifying as "Other" were less likely to report feeling good about themselves, with only 5.56% selecting either "Agree" or "Strongly agree" and higher rates of uncertainty and disagreement. Findings for the "Other" group should be interpreted with caution due to the smaller sample size of this demographic category.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, reported agreement that they felt good about themselves remained relatively stable, with "Agree" responses ranging from 26.14% in 10th grade to 30.91% in 11th grade. Uncertainty ("Not sure") was highest in 10th grade at 23.50%. Students in the ungraded group were less likely to report agreement and more likely to select "Prefer not to answer." These findings suggest moderate consistency in self-perceptions across grades.

Social Emotional Health Over Time

A sense of connection to one's community is fundamental to a young person's social-emotional well-being. Feeling valued and supported by their community can enhance students' resilience, self-esteem, and overall mental health. The following data tracks trends in students' feelings of community connection over recent years, providing insight into how supported and engaged youth feel within Herkimer County.



Key Findings on Perceived Community Value

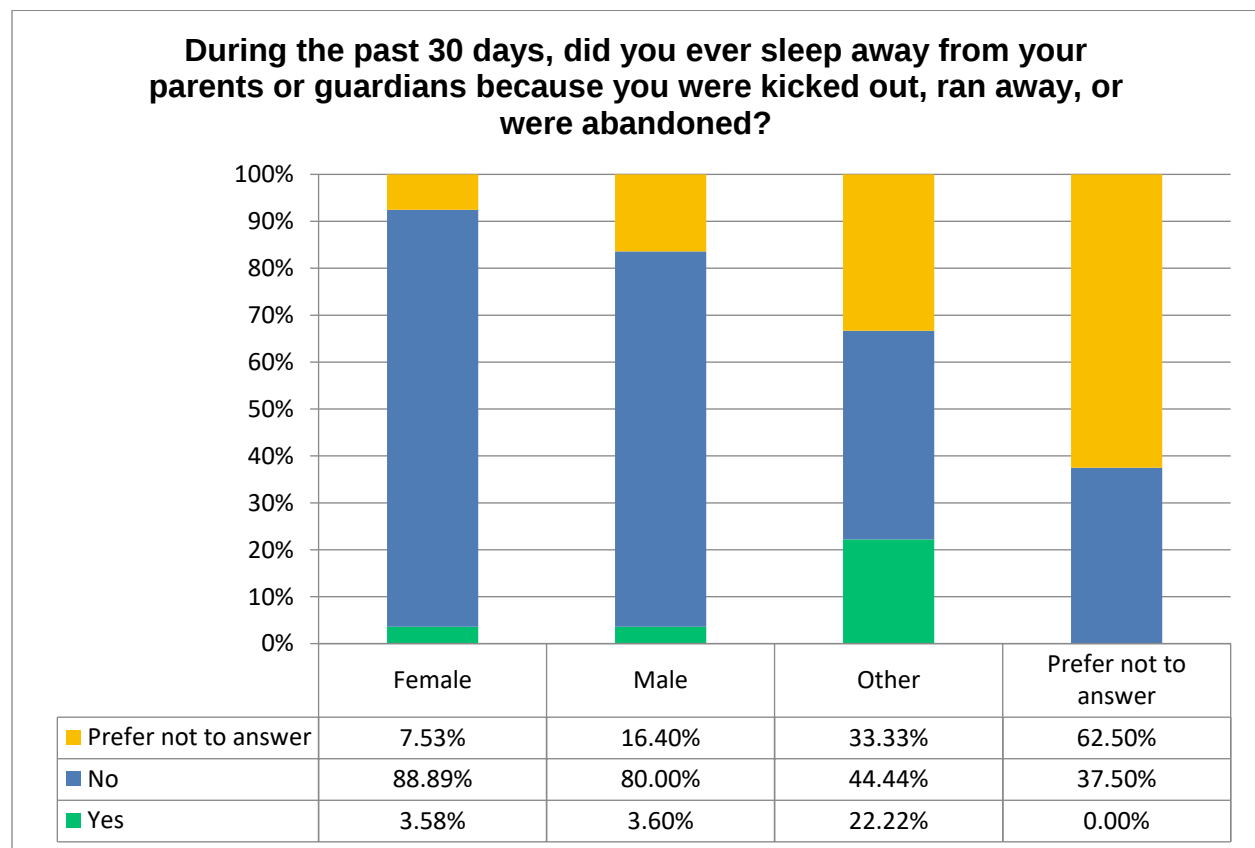
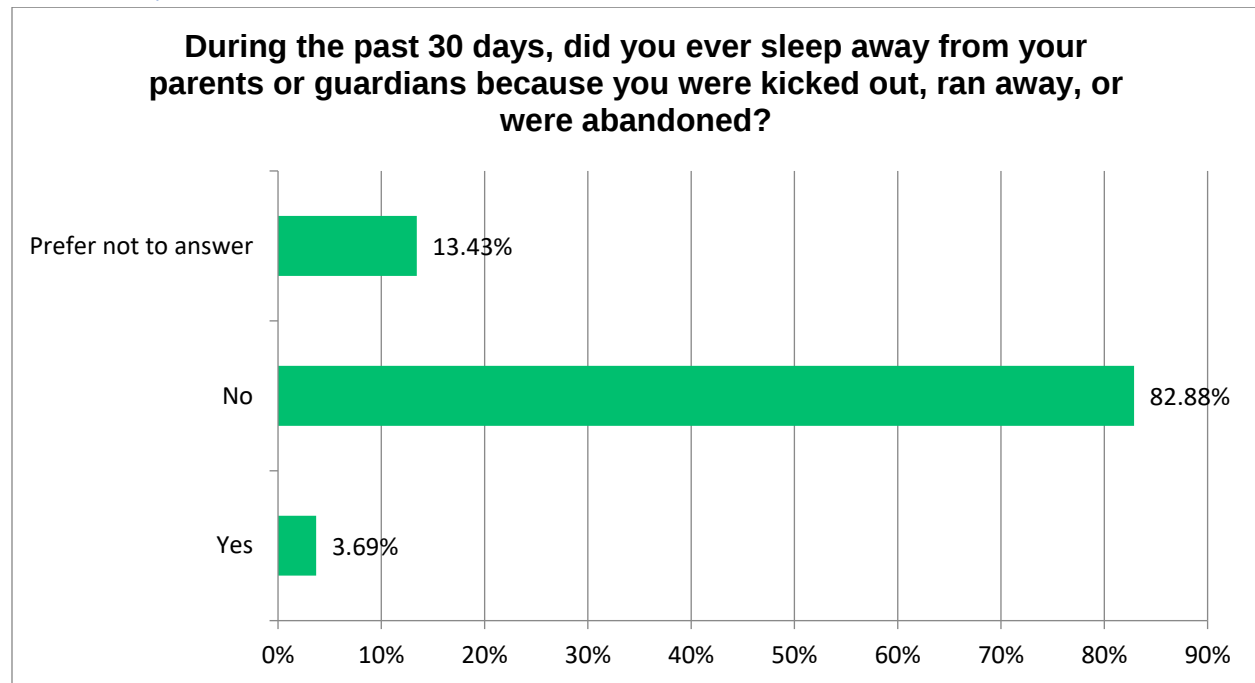
- **Decline in Perceived Importance:** The percentage of students who felt they mattered to people in their community declined slightly over the past three years, from 49.5% in 2020–2021 to 47.65% in 2022–2023. This gradual decrease may reflect a need for increased efforts to foster student connection and belonging within their communities.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

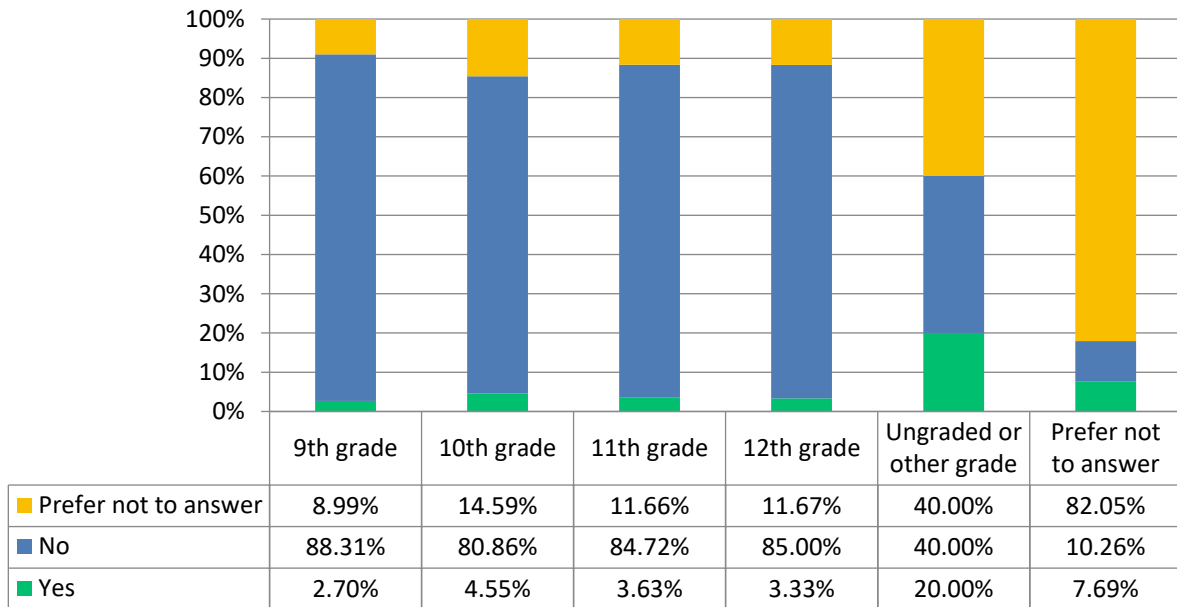
Understanding the prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) among youth is crucial for identifying students' challenges outside the classroom. ACEs, including food insecurity, household instability, exposure to substance abuse, and emotional or physical harm, can have a profound impact on students' mental, emotional, and social development. The YRBS provides valuable data on these factors, offering insights into the scope and effects of ACEs in Herkimer County. By highlighting these challenges, the YRBS helps identify areas where targeted support and intervention are needed to promote student well-being and academic success.

The data revealed that most students across the county reported stable living conditions and consistent support from adults in their household. The majority had not experienced displacement, food insecurity, or separation due to incarceration, and most indicated that an adult consistently worked to meet their basic needs. However, a notable minority of students reported experiences linked to instability, including exposure to verbal or physical harm, hunger, and household substance use or mental illness. Gender and grade-level patterns were generally consistent, though students identifying as “Other” and those in the ungraded group were more likely to report challenges across multiple indicators. While most students described safe and supportive home environments, the data reveal that a meaningful subset of youth continue to face adversity.

Youth Displacement



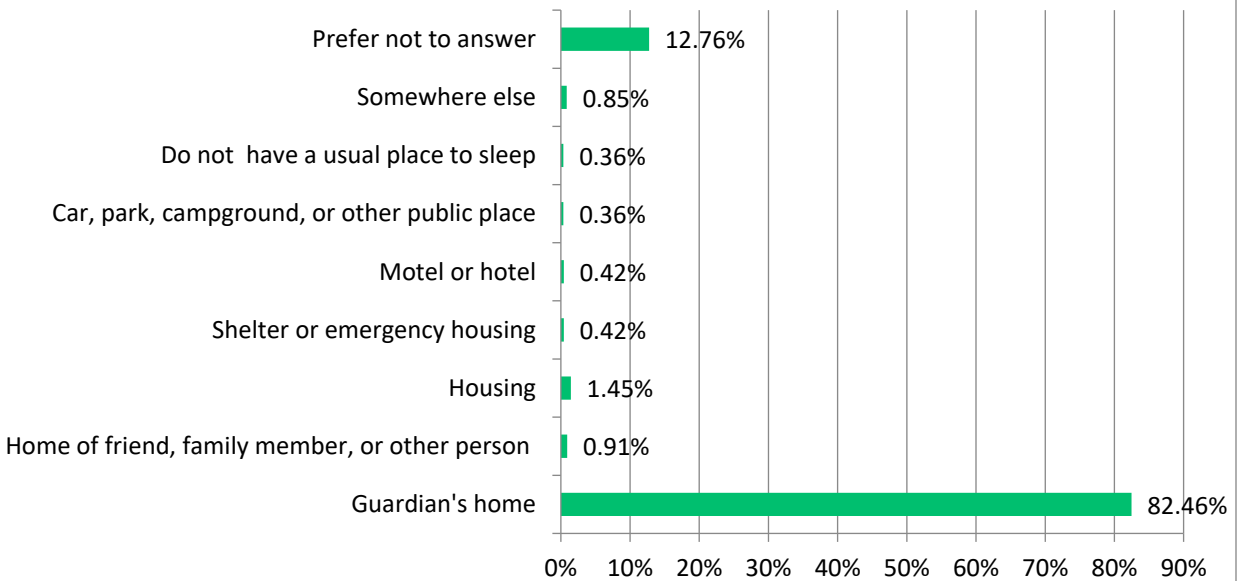
During the past 30 days, did you ever sleep away from your parents or guardians because you were kicked out, ran away, or were abandoned?



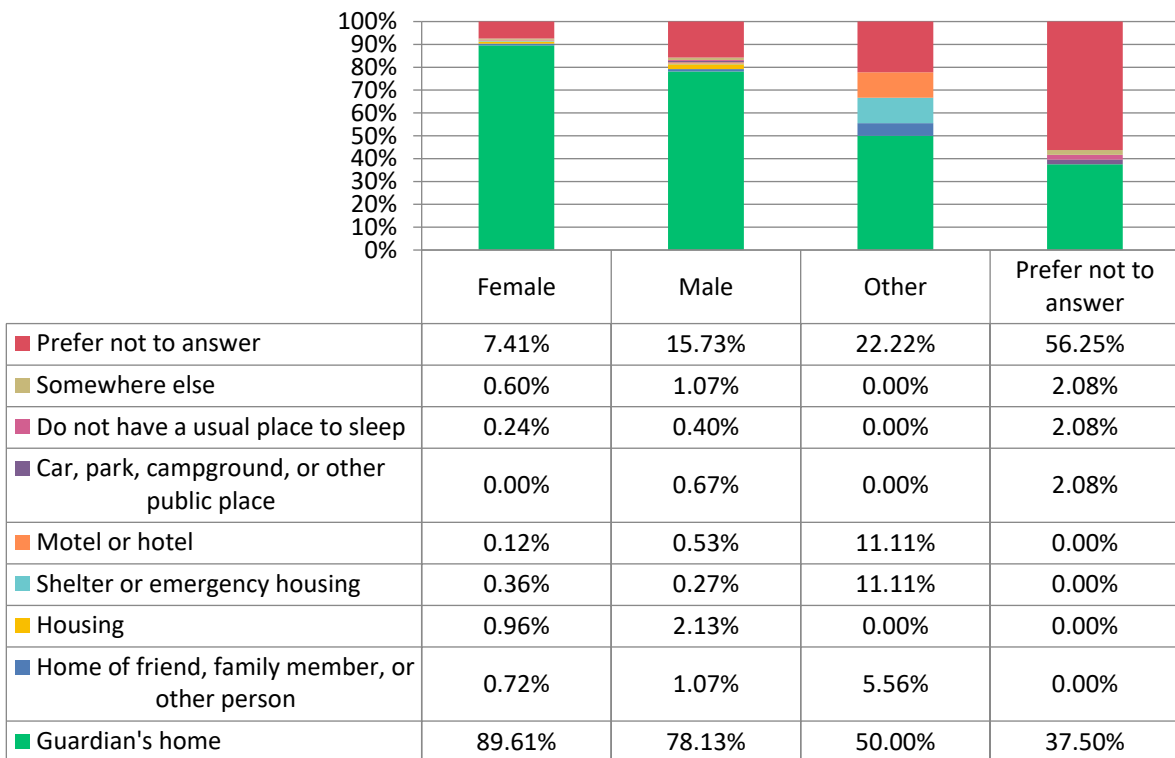
Key Findings on Instances of Youth Displacement

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported that they had not slept away from home due to being kicked out, running away, or being abandoned in the past 30 days (82.88%). A small portion (3.69%) indicated that they had experienced this, while 13.43% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, the majority of students did not report experiencing this form of housing instability.
- Gender Differences:** Female and male students reported similar rates of sleeping away from home due to being kicked out, running away, or being abandoned (3.58% and 3.60%, respectively). However, female students were more likely to report “No” (88.89% vs. 80.00%), while males had a higher rate of selecting “Prefer not to answer” (16.40% vs. 7.53%). Students identifying as “Other” were more likely to report this experience (22.22%) and less likely to select “No” (44.44%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, most did not report sleeping away from home due to being kicked out, running away, or abandonment. Reports of this experience were slightly higher in 10th grade (4.55%) and lowest in 9th grade (2.70%). The majority across all grades said “No,” ranging from 80.86% to 88.31%. Students in the ungraded or other group were more likely to report “Yes” (20.00%) and less likely to report “No” (40.00%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the “Ungraded” group should be interpreted with caution.

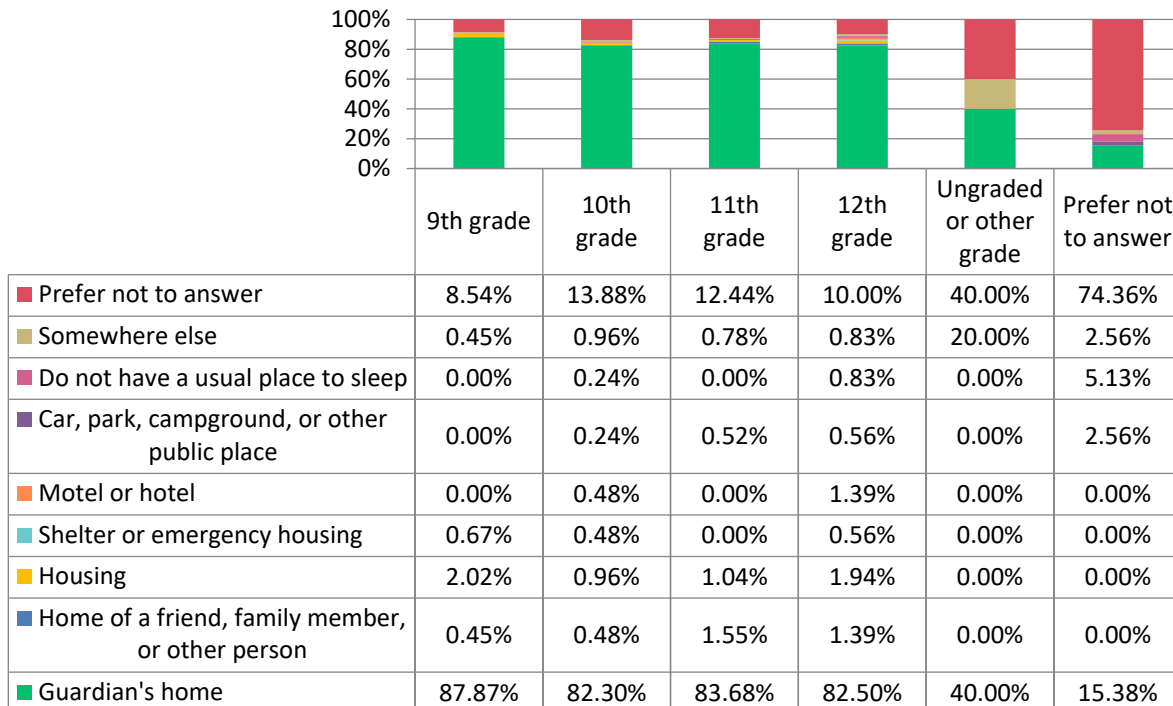
During the past 30 days, where did you usually sleep?



During the past 30 days, where did you usually sleep?



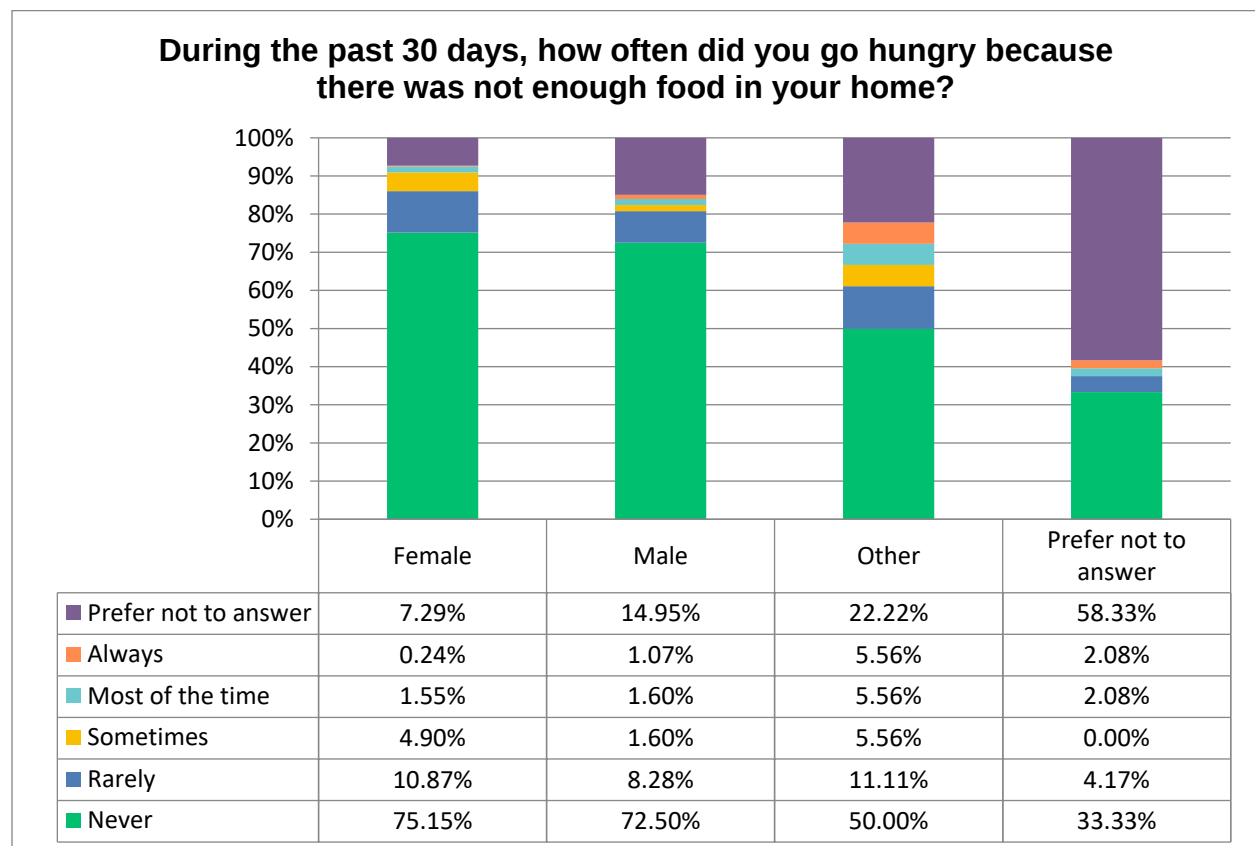
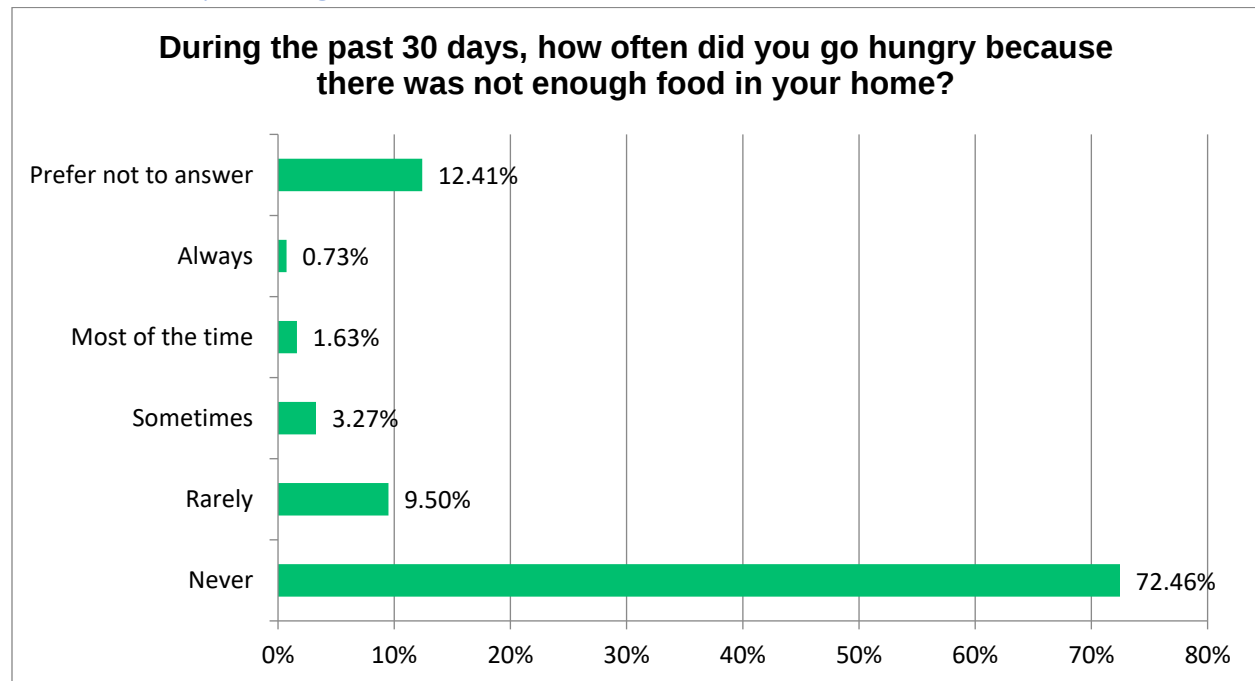
During the past 30 days, where did you usually sleep?



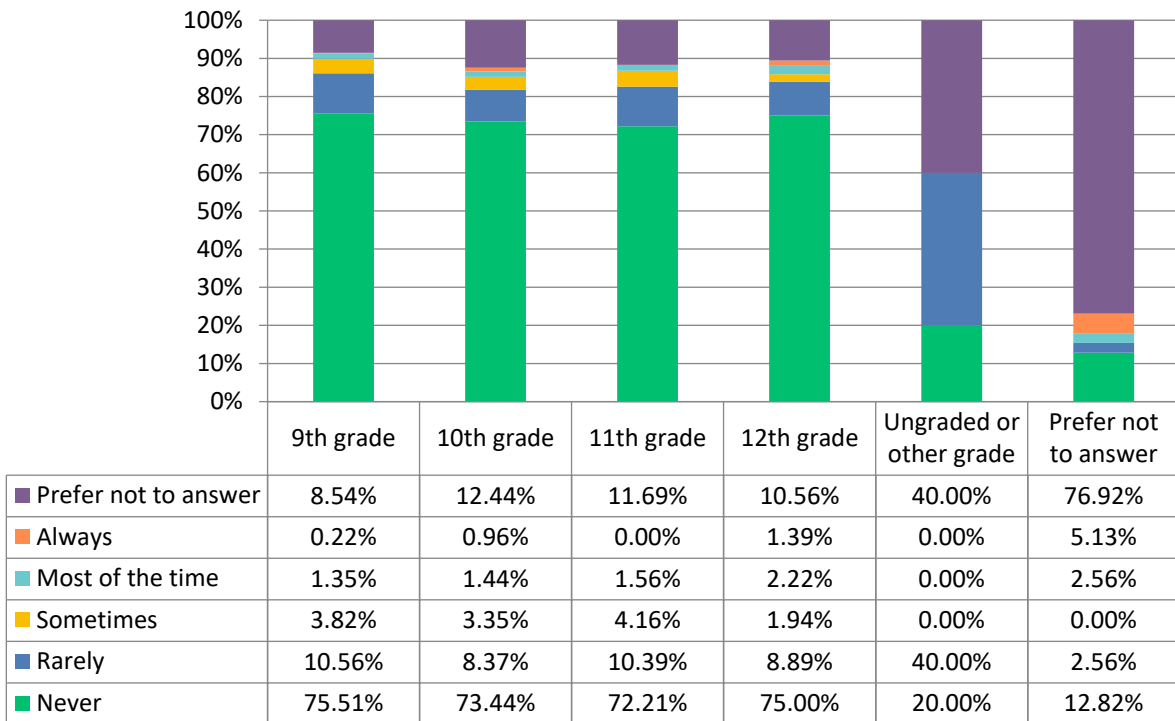
Key Findings on Student Sleeping Locations

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported usually sleeping at a guardian's home in the past 30 days (82.46%). Small percentages reported staying in other settings, including housing (1.45%), the home of a friend or family member (0.91%), a motel or hotel (0.42%), or a shelter or emergency housing (0.42%). Less than 1% indicated they slept in a car, park, or other public place, or that they had no usual place to sleep. An additional 12.76% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, the majority of students reported stable housing.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students reported usually sleeping at a guardian's home in the past 30 days, though the percentage was higher among females (89.61%) compared to males (78.13%). Students identifying as "Other" were less likely to report sleeping at a guardian's home (50.00%) and more likely to report a variety of housing instability indicators. Due to the smaller sample size, results for the "Other" group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, the majority reported usually sleeping at a guardian's home, with percentages ranging from 82.30% to 87.87%. Students in the ungraded or other group were less likely to report sleeping at a guardian's home (40.00%) and more likely to select "Somewhere else" (20.00%) or "Prefer not to answer" (40.00%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the "Ungraded" group should be interpreted with caution.

Food Security Among Students



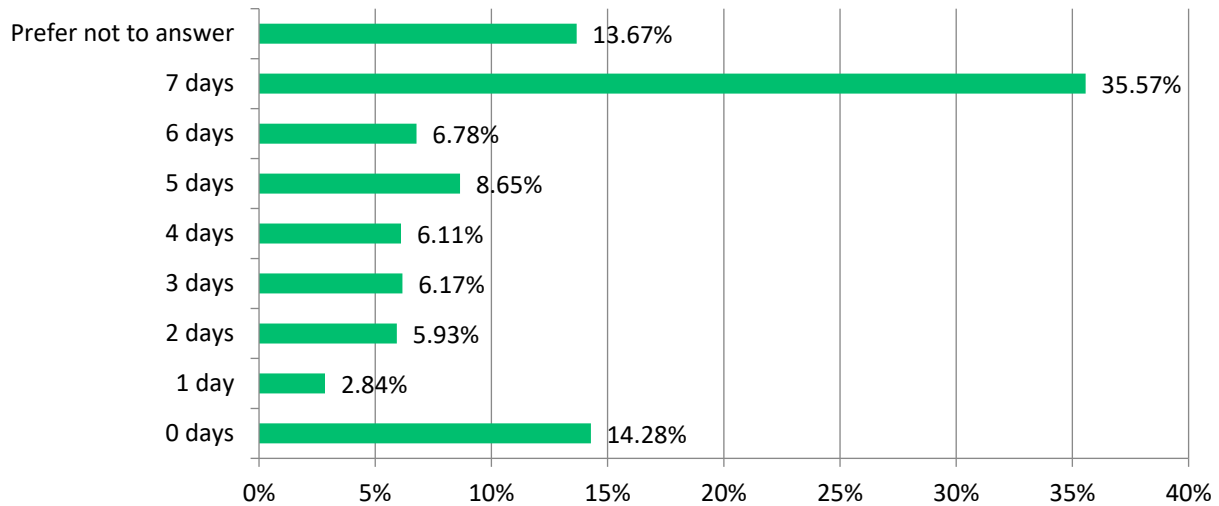
During the past 30 days, how often did you go hungry because there was not enough food in your home?



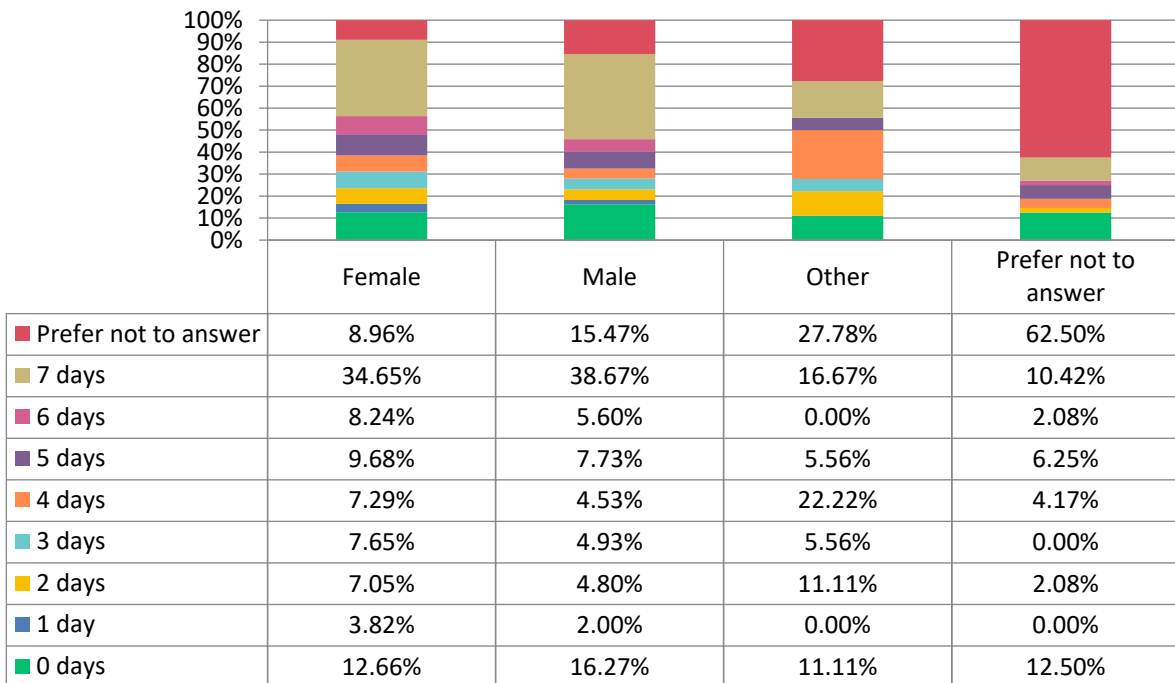
Key Findings on Food Security Among Students

- County-wide Trends:** The majority of students (72.46%) reported that they never went hungry due to a lack of food in the home during the past 30 days. Smaller percentages indicated experiencing hunger “Rarely” (9.50%), “Sometimes” (3.27%), “Most of the time” (1.63%), or “Always” (0.73%). An additional 12.41% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, most students did not report food insecurity.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students reported they never went hungry due to a lack of food in the past 30 days, with similar rates between groups (72.50% for males, 75.15% for females). Female students were more likely to report going hungry “Sometimes” (4.90%) or “Rarely” (10.87%) compared to males (1.60% and 8.28%, respectively). Males were more likely to select “Prefer not to answer” (14.95%) than females (7.29%). Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to report “Never” (50.00%) and more likely to report higher frequencies of hunger. Due to the smaller sample size, results for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, most reported they never went hungry due to a lack of food in the past 30 days, with “Never” responses ranging from 72.21% to 75.51%. A small portion reported going hungry “Rarely” (8.37%–10.56%) or “Sometimes” (1.94%–4.16%), while less than 2.5% in any grade said it happened “Most of the time” or “Always.”

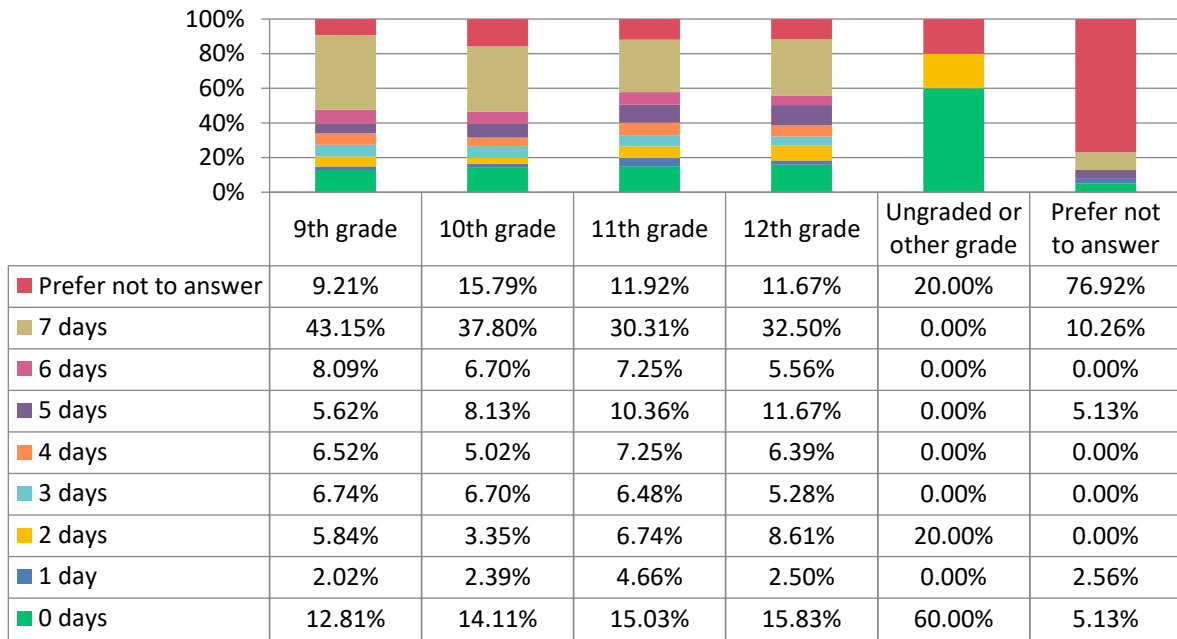
During the past 7 days, on how many days did you eat dinner at home with at least one of your parents or other adult family member?



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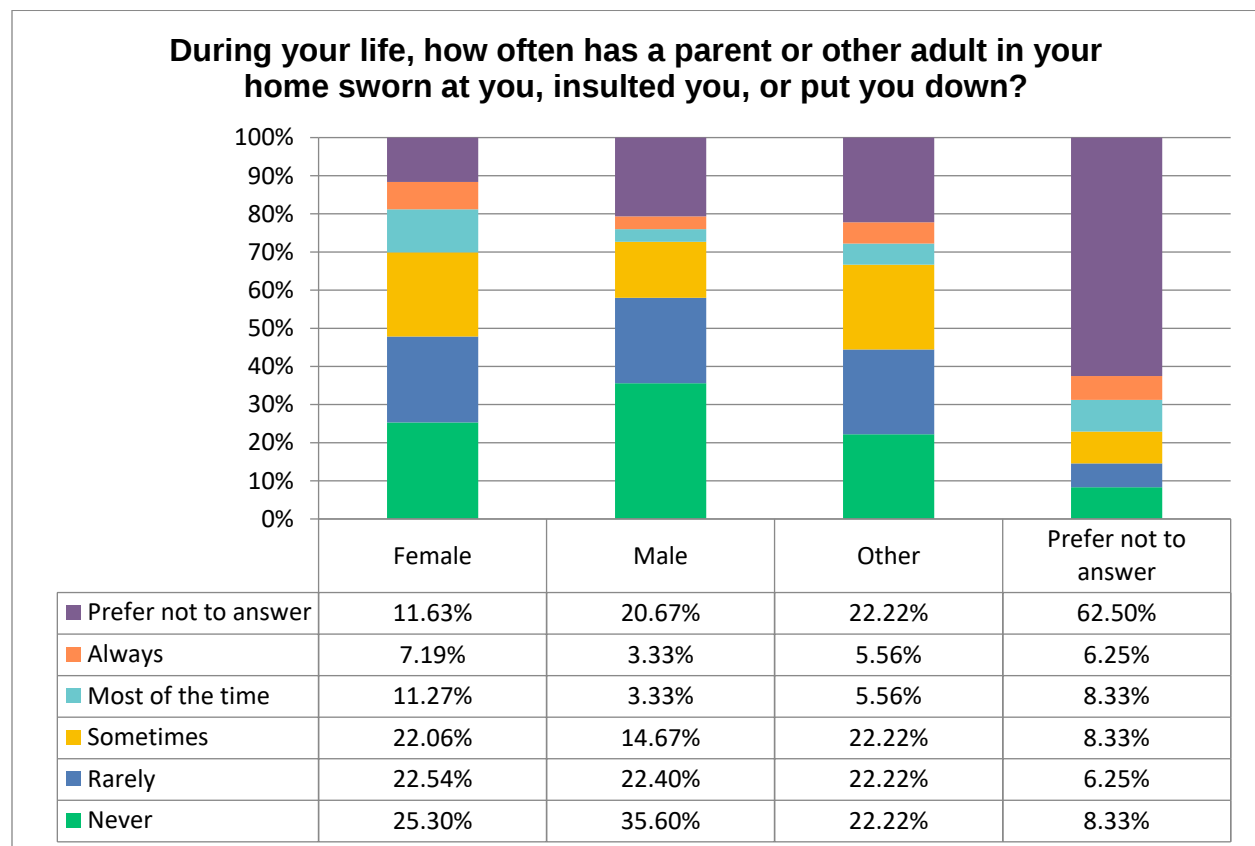
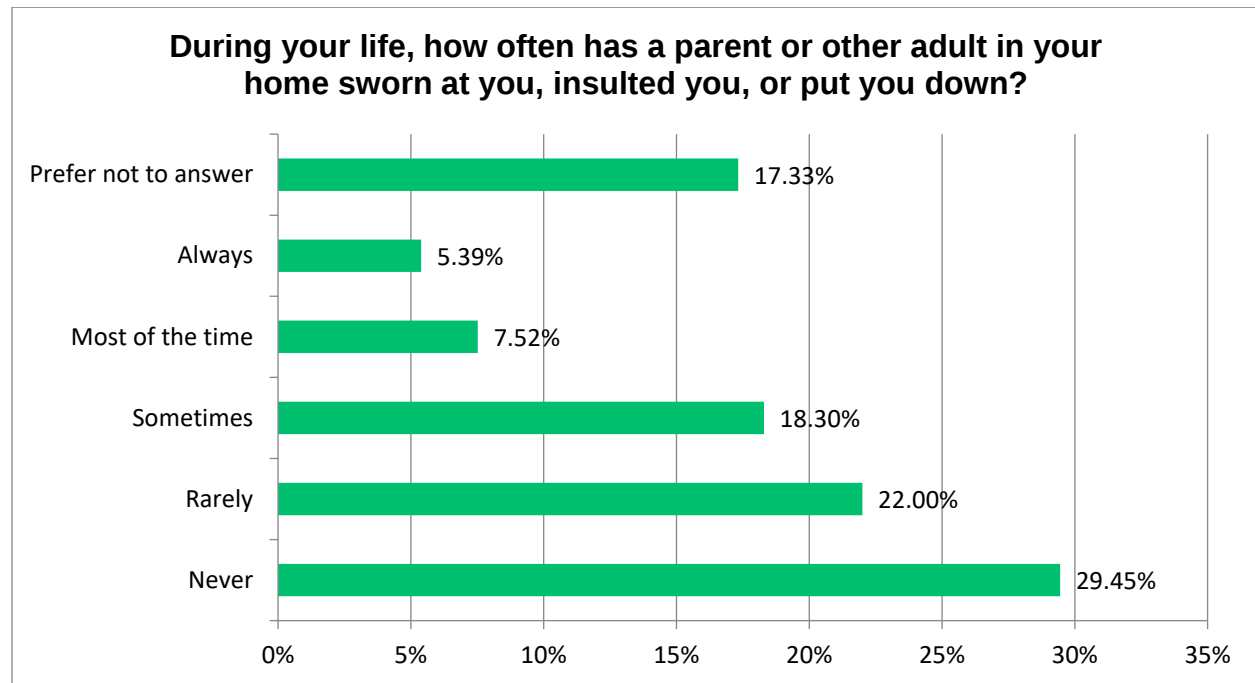
During the past 7 days, on how many days did you eat dinner at home with at least one of your parents or other adult family member?



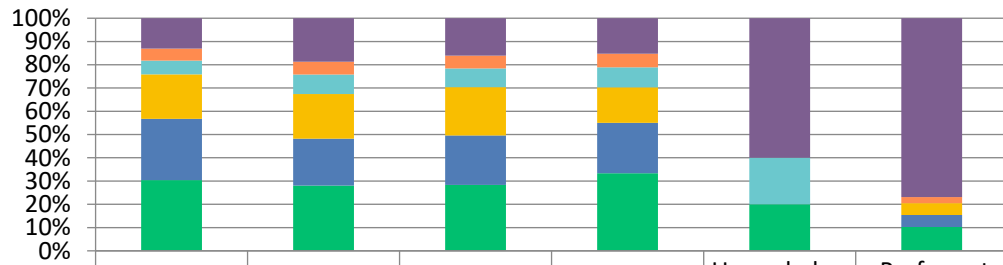
Key Findings on Family Dinners

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported eating dinner at home with a parent or adult family member at least once in the past week. Over one-third (35.57%) said this occurred all 7 days, while 8.65% reported 5 days and 6.78% reported 6 days. However, 14.28% said they did not eat dinner with an adult family member on any day. A smaller portion indicated occasional shared dinners ranging from 1 to 4 days (2.84%–6.17%). An additional 18.67% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, students’ experiences varied, but most indicated at least some regular family mealtime.
- Gender Differences:** Male and female students reported similar rates of eating dinner at home with a parent or adult family member daily (38.67% vs. 34.65%). Female students had slightly higher rates of responses between 1–6 days, with 12.66% reporting 0 days compared to 16.27% of males. Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to report daily shared dinners (16.67%) and more likely to select “Prefer not to answer” (27.78%) or report variable frequency. Due to the smaller sample size, results for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, the percentage who ate dinner with a parent or adult family member every day decreased by grade level, from 43.15% in 9th grade to 30.31% in 11th grade. The percentage reporting 0 days was fairly consistent, ranging from 12.81% to 15.83%. Responses of 5–6 days remained steady across grades, with only slight variation.

Verbal and Emotional Abuse in the Household



During your life, how often has a parent or other adult in your home sworn at you, insulted you, or put you down?

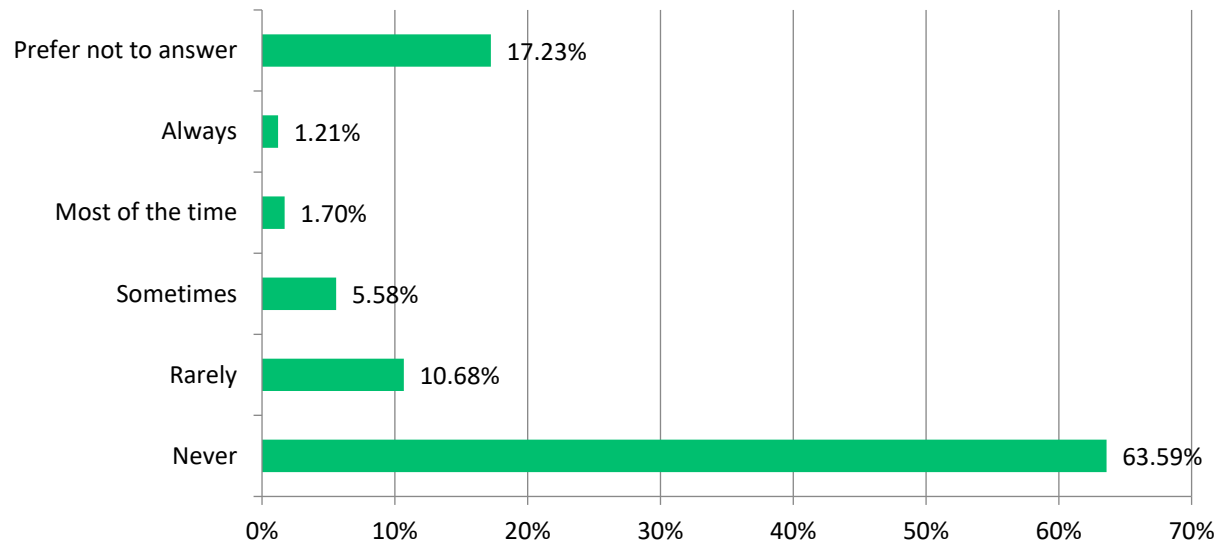


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	13.06%	18.71%	16.10%	15.28%	60.00%	76.92%
Always	5.18%	5.52%	5.45%	5.83%	0.00%	2.56%
Most of the time	5.86%	8.39%	8.05%	8.61%	20.00%	0.00%
Sometimes	19.14%	19.18%	20.78%	15.28%	0.00%	5.13%
Rarely	26.35%	20.14%	21.30%	21.67%	0.00%	5.13%
Never	30.41%	28.06%	28.31%	33.33%	20.00%	10.26%

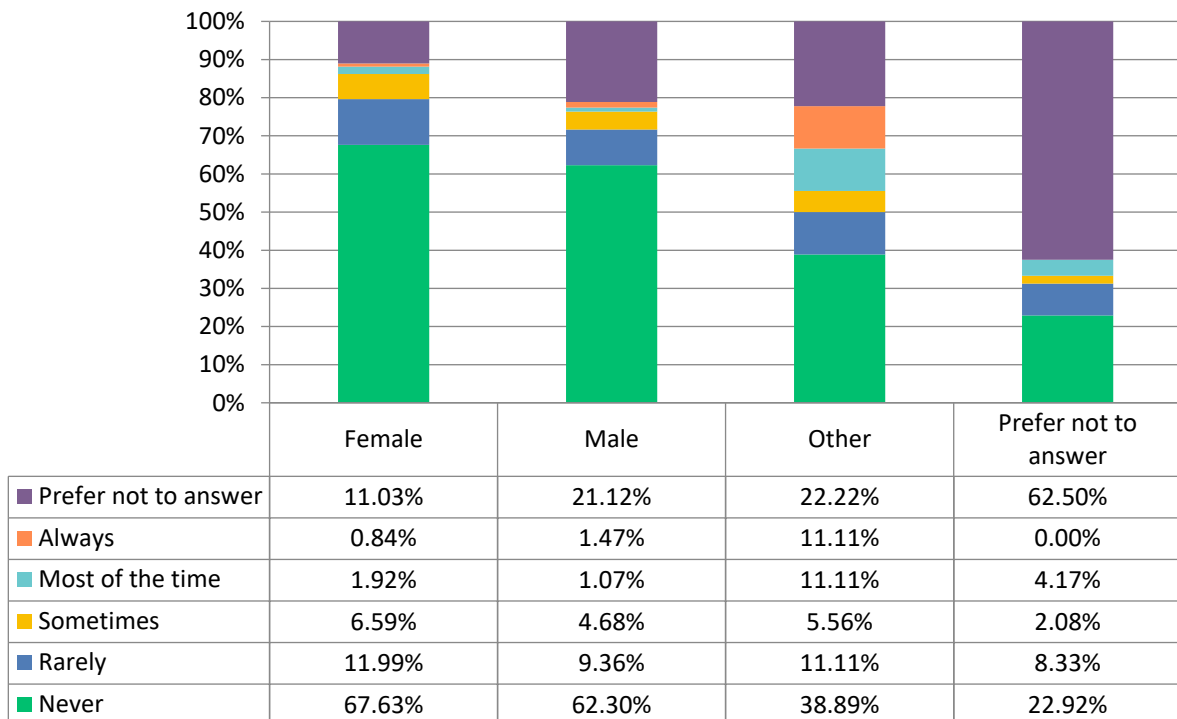
Key Findings on Verbal and Emotional Abuse by Household Adults

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported that a parent or other adult in their home had “Never” (29.45%) or “Rarely” (22.00%) sworn at them, insulted them, or put them down. Another 18.30% said this happened “Sometimes,” while smaller percentages reported “Most of the time” (7.52%) or “Always” (5.39%). An additional 17.33% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, while most students experienced little or no verbal mistreatment at home, a notable portion reported more frequent occurrences.
- Gender Differences:** Male students were more likely than females to report that a parent or adult in their home “Never” treated them with verbal harm (35.60% vs. 25.30%). Female students more often reported this occurred “Sometimes” (22.06% vs. 14.67%) or “Most of the time” (11.27% vs. 3.33%). Rates of “Rarely” were similar between groups. Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to select “Never” (22.22%) and more likely to report “Sometimes” (22.22%) or “Rarely” (22.22%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution. Overall, male students more often reported no experience of verbal harm.
- Grade Differences:** Most 9th–12th grade students reported that a parent or adult in the home had “Never” or “Rarely” sworn at them, insulted them, or put them down. The combined percentage for “Never” and “Rarely” ranged from 48.20% to 54.76%. Reports of “Always” or “Most of the time” remained low across grades, each under 9%. Students in the ungraded group were less likely to report “Never” and more likely to select “Prefer not to answer” or higher-frequency categories. Due to the smaller sample size, results for the “Ungraded” group should be interpreted with caution.

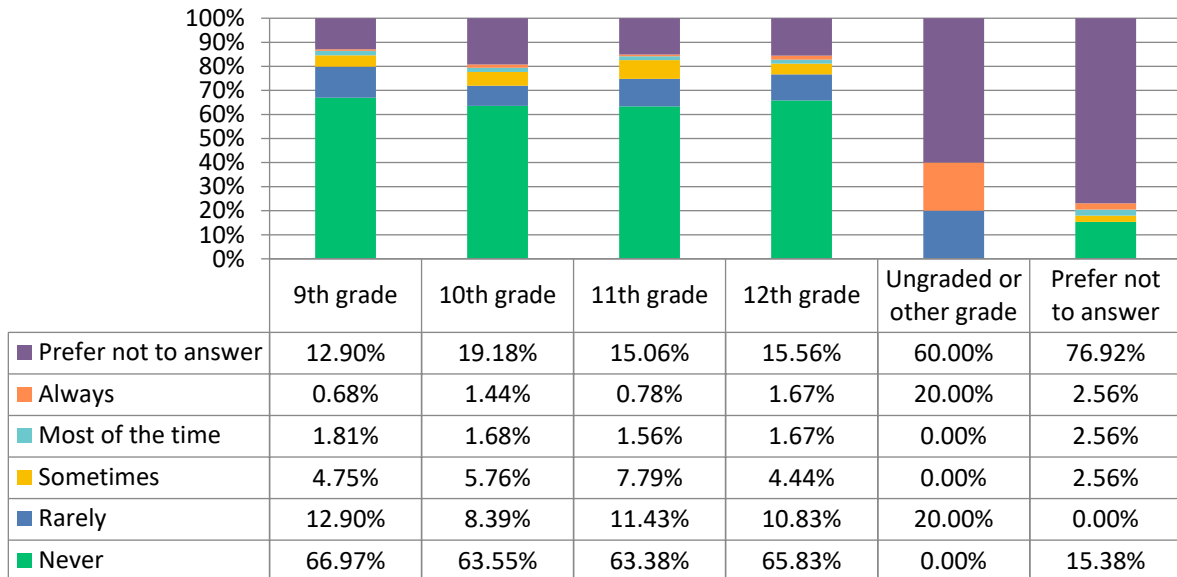
During your life, how often has a parent or other adult in your home hit, beat, kicked, or physically hurt you in any way?



During your life, how often has a parent or other adult in your home hit, beat, kicked, or physically hurt you in any way?

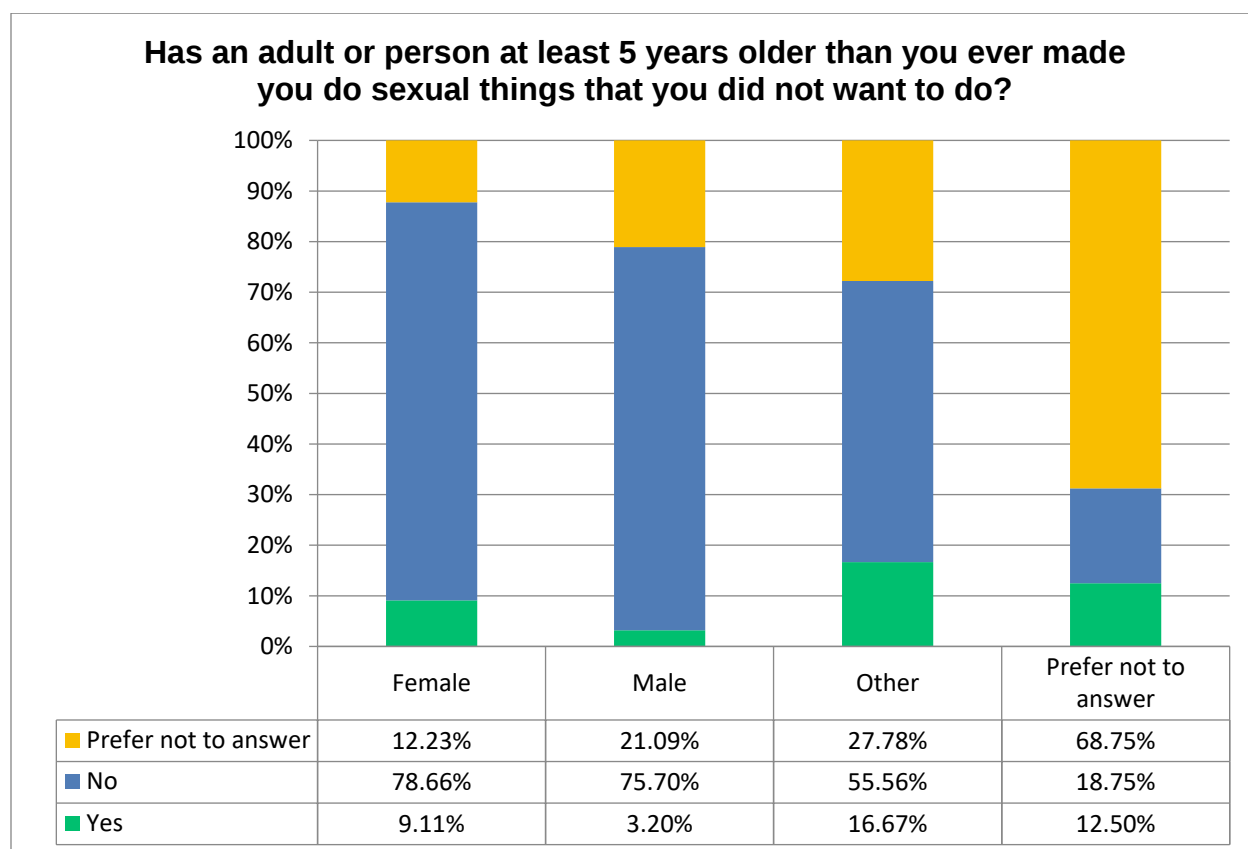
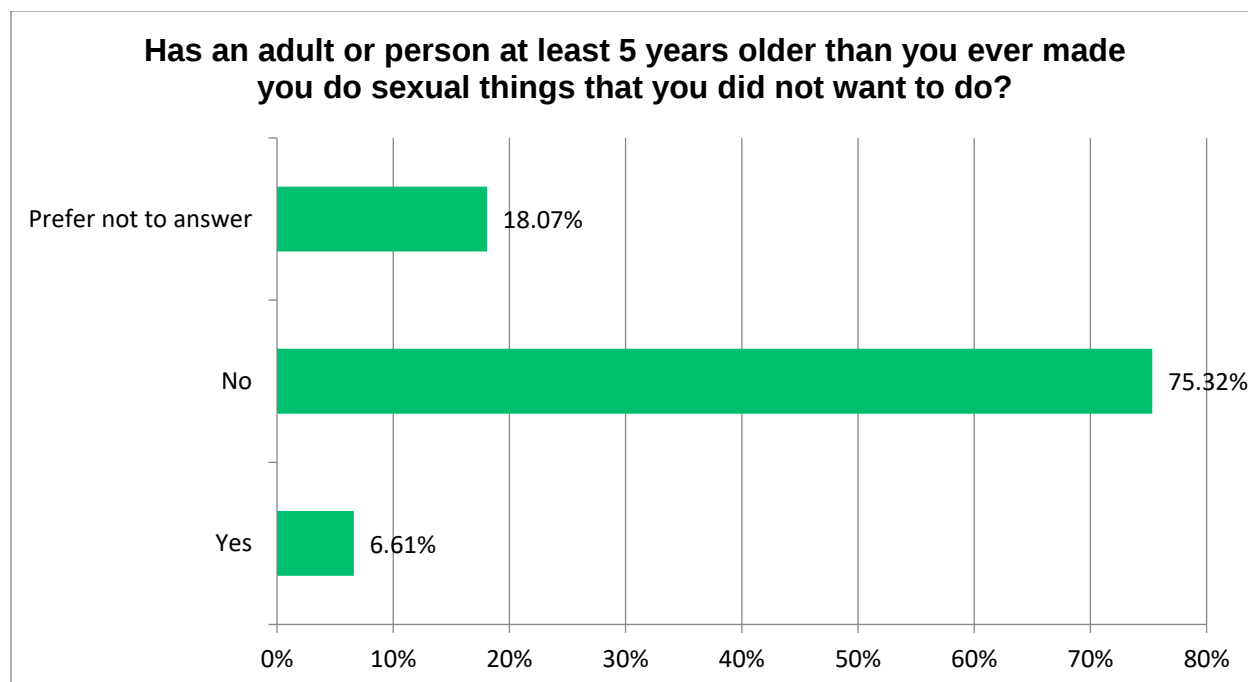


During your life, how often has a parent or other adult in your home hit, beat, kicked, or physically hurt you in any way?

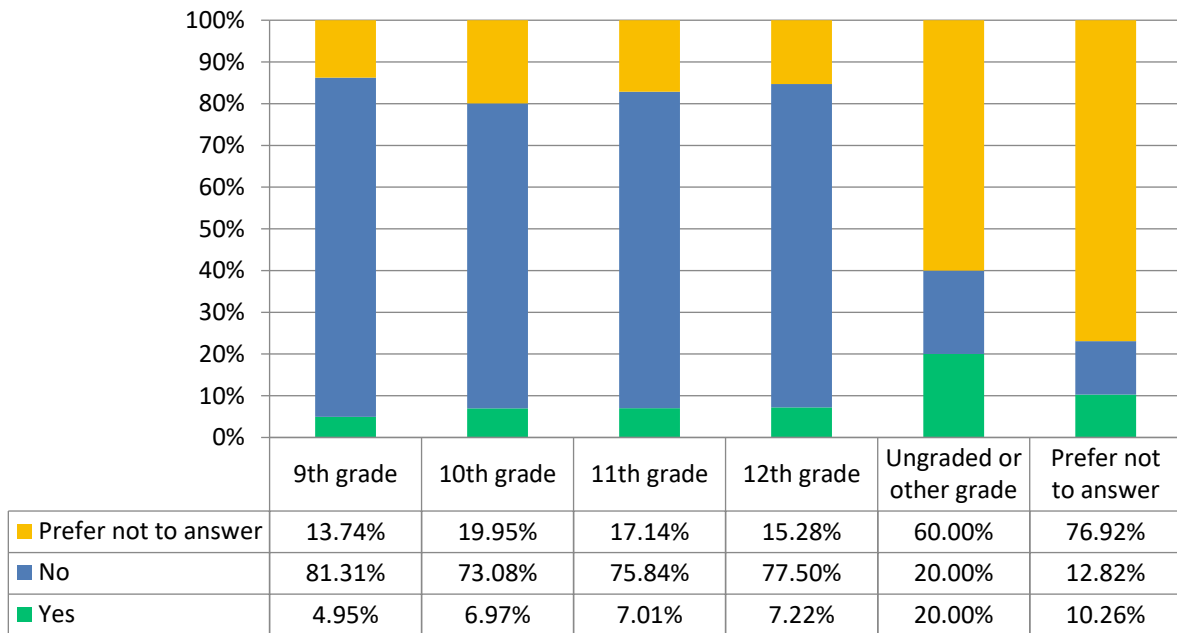


Key Findings on Exposure to Physical Harm by Household Adults

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported that a parent or other adult in the home had "Never" physically hurt them, with 63.59% selecting this response. Smaller percentages reported lower-frequency experiences, including "Rarely" (10.68%) and "Sometimes" (5.58%). Fewer reported this occurred "Most of the time" or "Always." An additional 17.23% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, the majority of students did not report experiencing physical harm at home, though a small portion indicated some level of exposure.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students reported that they had "Never" experienced physical harm from a parent or adult in the home, with 62.30% of males and 67.63% of females selecting this response. Students identifying as "Other" were less likely to select "Never" (38.89%) and more likely to report more frequent experiences of physical harm. Due to the smaller sample size, results for the "Other" group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most 9th–12th grade students reported they had "Never" experienced physical harm from a parent or adult in the home, with rates ranging from 63.38% to 66.97%. Reports of experiencing harm "Rarely" ranged from 8.39% to 12.90%, while reports of "Always" and "Most of the time" remained low across all grades. Students in the ungraded group were less likely to select "Never" (0.00%) and more likely to report higher-frequency experiences such as "Always" (20.00%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the "Ungraded" group should be interpreted with caution.



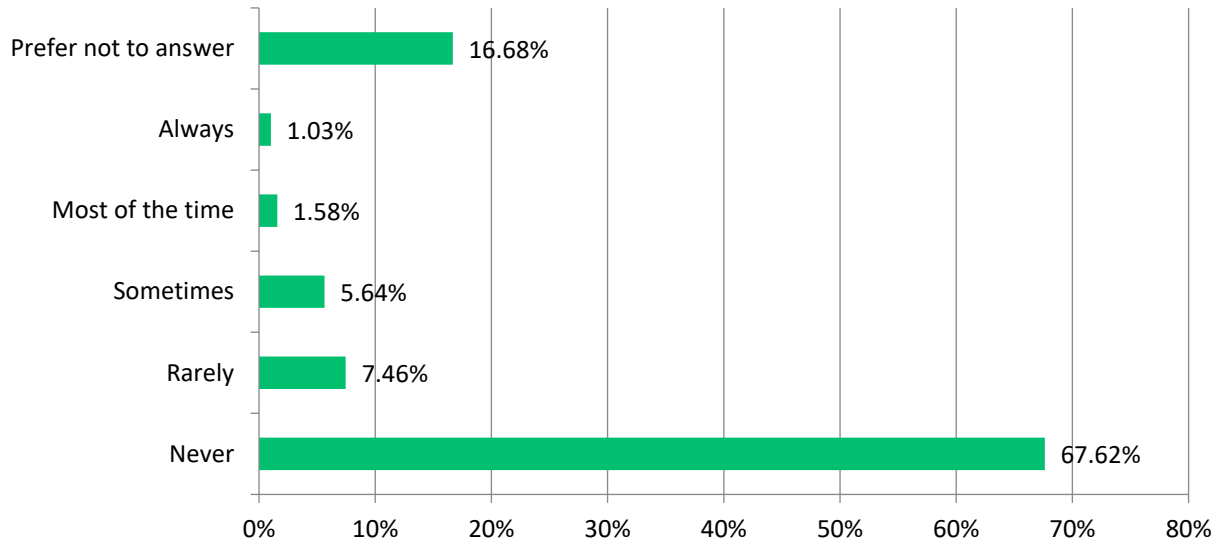
Has an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever made you do sexual things that you did not want to do?



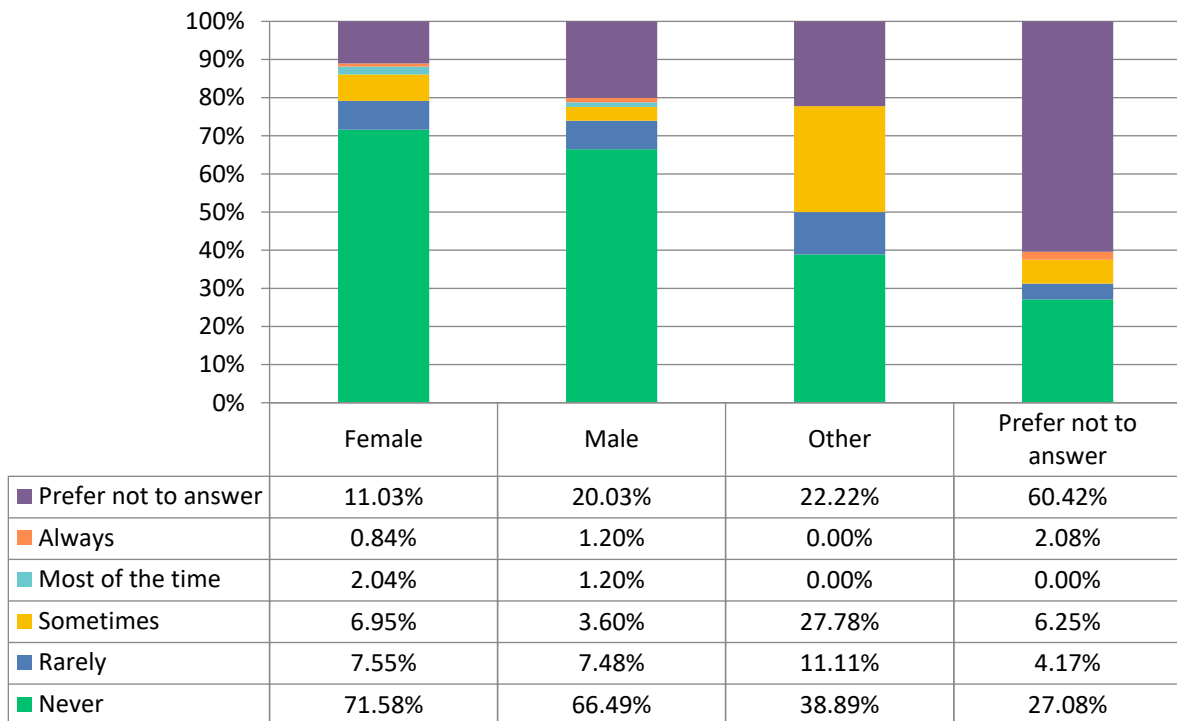
Key Findings on Sexual Abuse

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (75.32%) reported that they had not been made to do sexual things they did not want to do by an adult or someone at least five years older. A smaller proportion (6.61%) reported that this had happened to them. Additionally, 18.07% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, the majority of students did not report experiencing this form of sexual coercion, though a notable minority did.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students reported they had not been made to do sexual things they did not want to do by an adult or someone at least five years older (75.70% of males and 78.66% of females). Female students were more likely to report "Yes" (9.11%) than males (3.20%), while males were more likely to select "Prefer not to answer" (21.09% vs. 12.23%). Students identifying as "Other" reported higher rates of "Yes" (16.67%) and lower rates of "No" (55.56%). This group also had the highest rate of nonresponse (27.78%) among those who identified their gender.
- Grade Differences:** Across 9th–12th grade, most students reported that they had not been made to do sexual things they did not want to do by someone at least five years older. Reported "No" responses were highest in 9th grade (81.31%) and remained above 70% across all grades. "Yes" responses were relatively consistent, ranging from 4.95% in 9th grade to 7.22% in 12th grade. Students in the ungraded or other group were more likely to report "Yes" (20.00%) and less likely to report "No" (20.00%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the "Ungraded" group should be interpreted with caution.

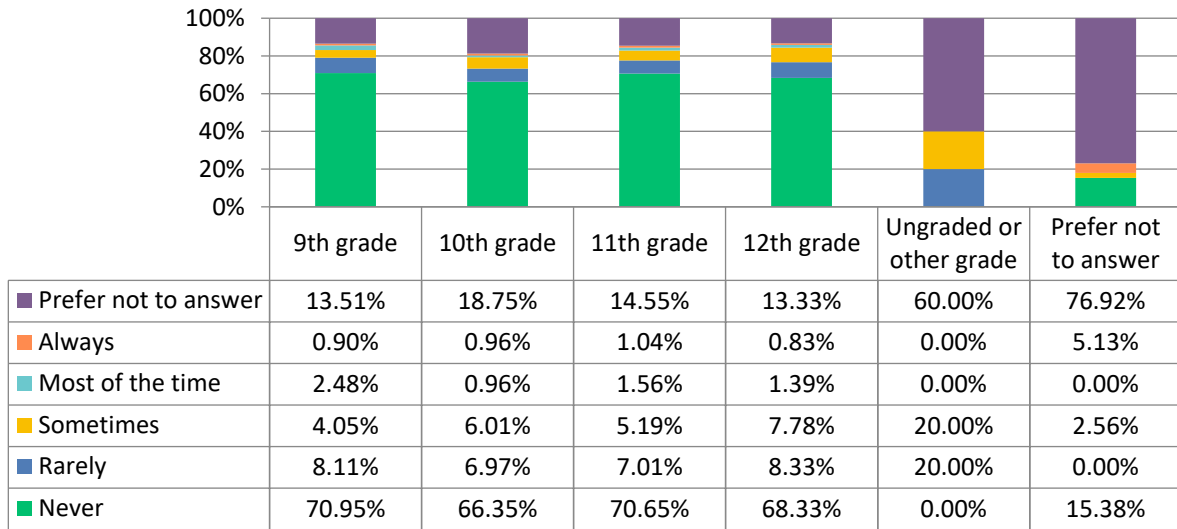
During your life, how often have your parents or other adults in your home slapped, hit, kicked, punched, or beat each other up?



During your life, how often have your parents or other adults in your home slapped, hit, kicked, punched, or beat each other up?



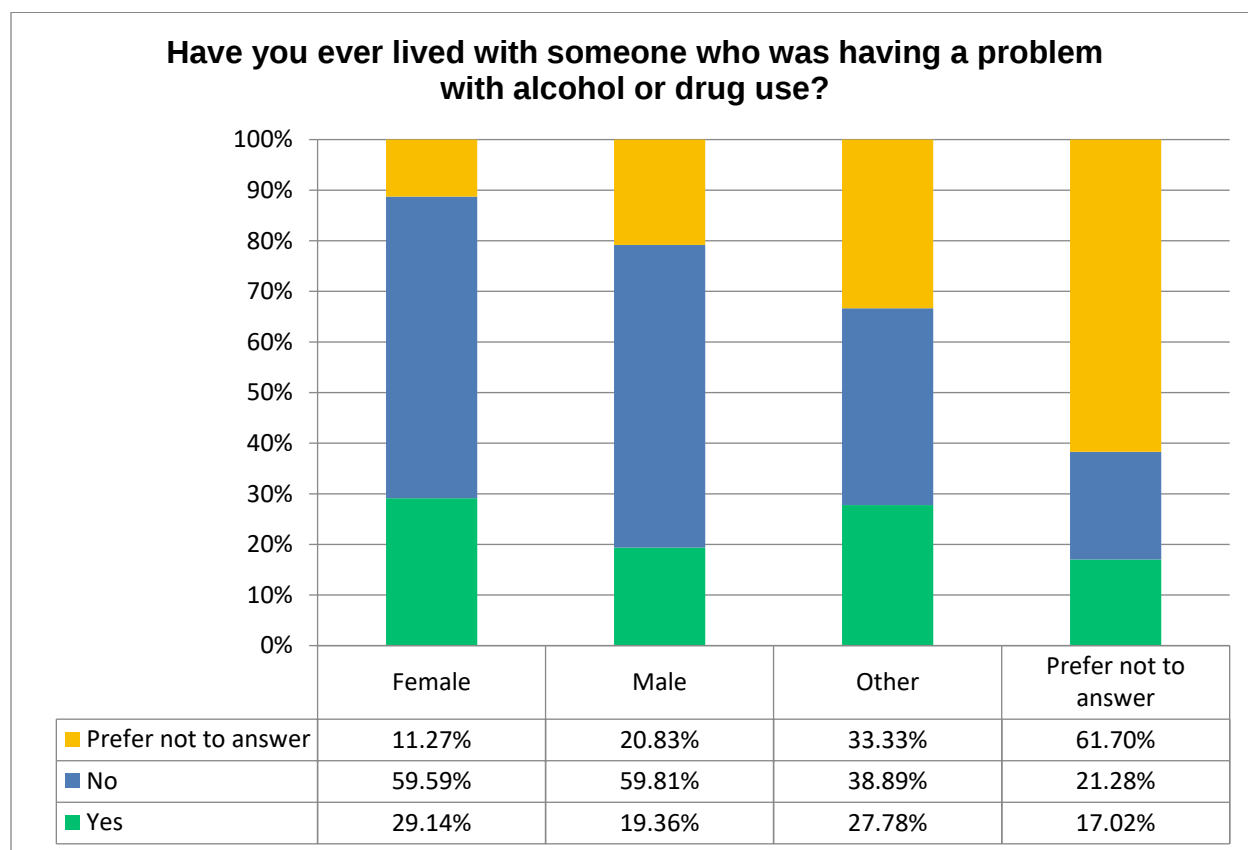
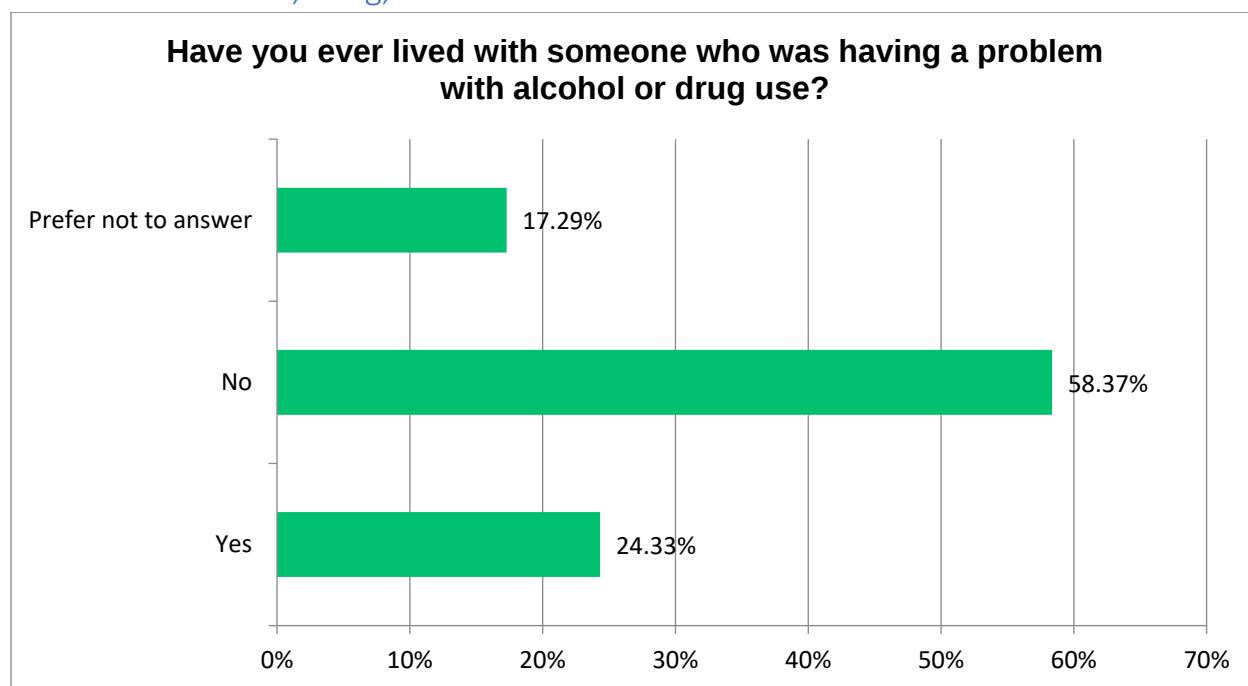
During your life, how often have your parents or other adults in your home slapped, hit, kicked, punched, or beat each other up?



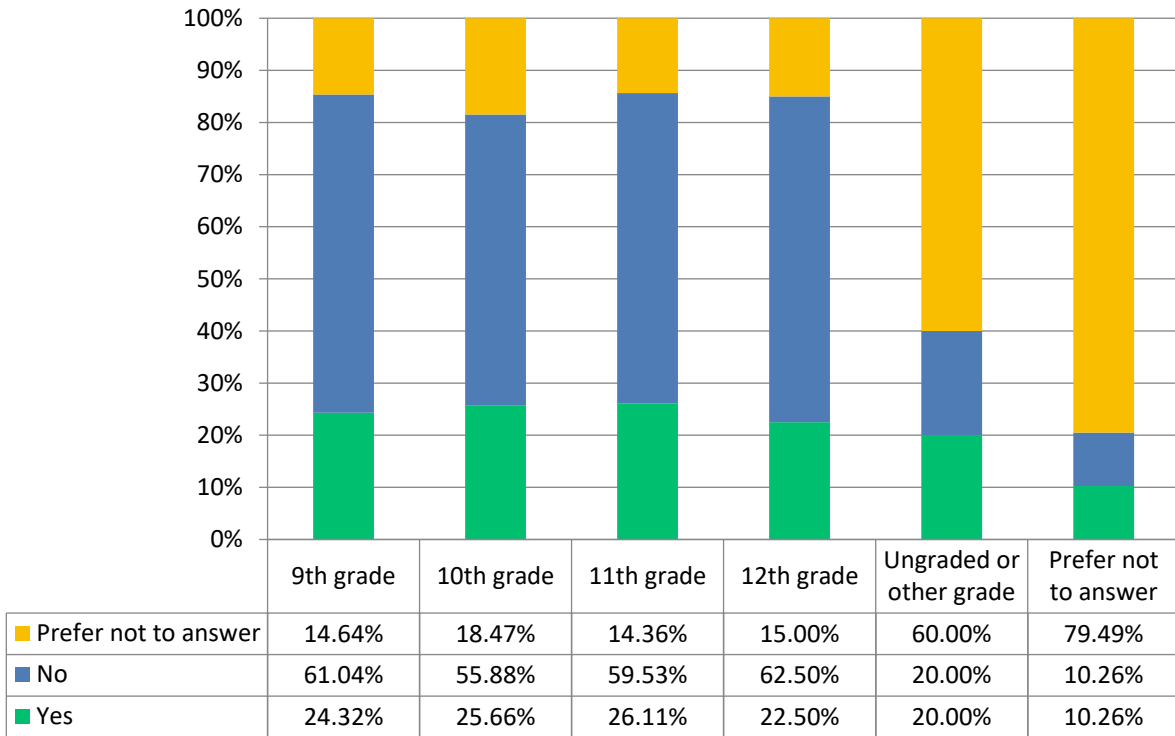
Key Findings on Exposure to Domestic Violence

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported that adults in their home had not physically hurt each other. Specifically, 67.62% selected "Never," while 7.46% selected "Rarely" and 5.64% selected "Sometimes." Smaller percentages reported "Most of the time" (1.58%) or "Always" (1.03%). An additional 16.68% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, the majority of students did not witness physical violence between adults in their home, though a small portion reported varying levels of exposure.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students reported that adults in their home had not physically hurt each other. "Never" was selected by 71.58% of females and 66.49% of males. Rates of "Rarely" were similar (7.55% for females and 7.48% for males), while a slightly higher percentage of females reported "Sometimes" (6.95%) than males (3.60%). Males were more likely to select "Prefer not to answer" (20.03% vs. 11.03%). Students identifying as "Other" were less likely to report "Never" (38.89%) and more likely to report "Sometimes" (27.78%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the "Other" group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most 9th–12th grade students reported that adults in their home had not physically hurt each other. "Never" was selected by 70.95% of 9th graders, 66.35% of 10th graders, 70.65% of 11th graders, and 68.33% of 12th graders. Reports of "Rarely" ranged from 6.97% to 8.11%, while responses for "Always" and "Most of the time" were very low across all grades. Students in the ungraded group were less likely to report "Never" (0.00%) and more likely to select "Rarely" (20.00%) or "Sometimes" (20.00%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the "Ungraded" group should be interpreted with caution.

Household Alcohol, Drug, or Mental Illness

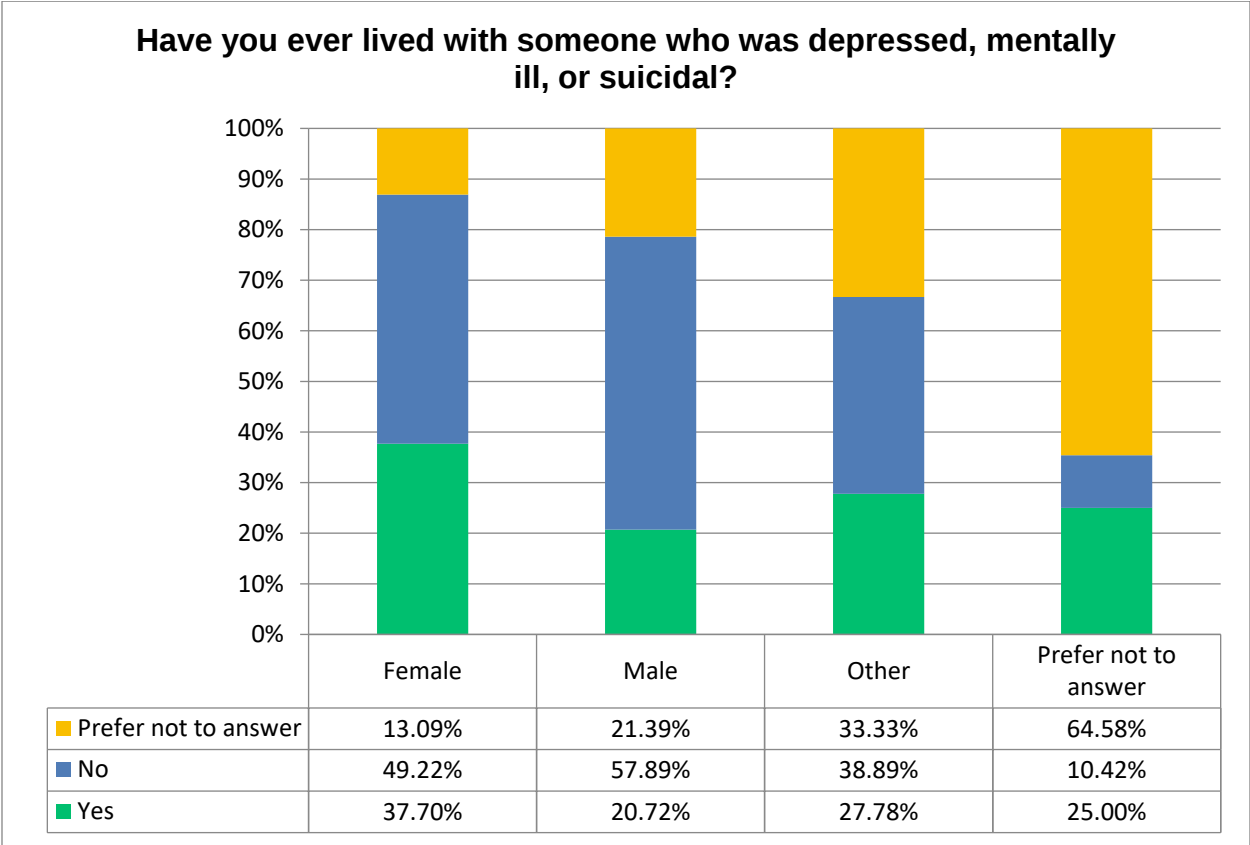
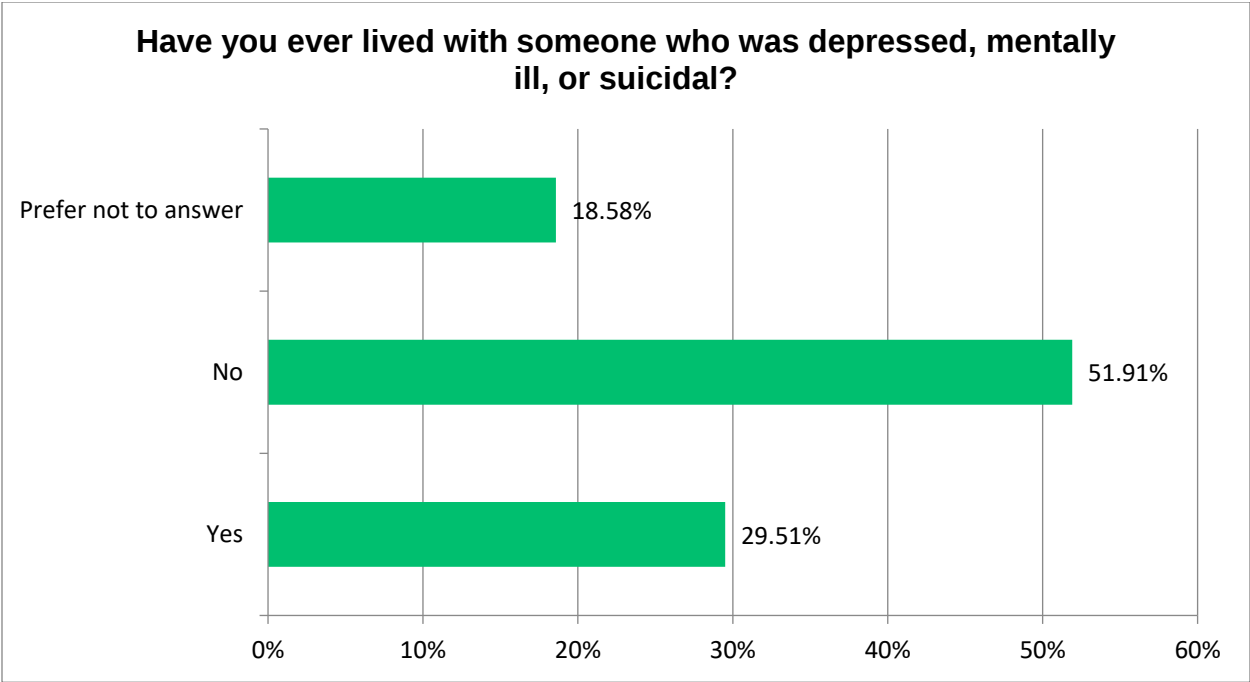


Have you ever lived with someone who was having a problem with alcohol or drug use?

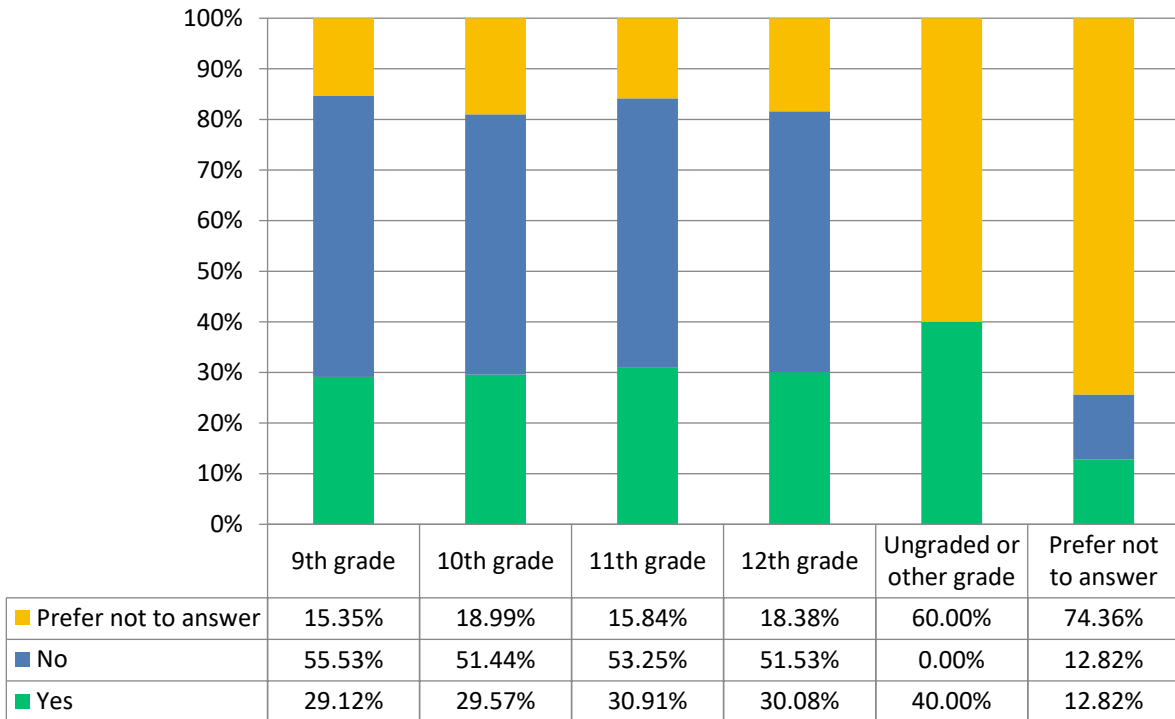


Key Findings on Household Alcohol or Drug Issues

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported they had not lived with someone who had a problem with alcohol or drug use. A total of 58.37% selected "No", while 24.33% said "Yes." An additional 17.29% chose "Prefer not to answer." Overall, while the majority of students had not experienced this situation, nearly 1 in 4 reported that they had.
- Gender Differences:** Most students reported they had not lived with someone experiencing alcohol or drug problems, with around 60% of both male and female students selecting "No." Female students were more likely than males to report "Yes" (29.14% vs. 19.36%), while males were nearly twice as likely to select "Prefer not to answer" (20.83% vs. 11.27%). Students identifying as "Other" were less likely to report "No" (38.89%) and more likely to choose "Prefer not to answer" (33.33%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the "Other" group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students in grades 9–12 reported they had not lived with someone who had a problem with alcohol or drug use, ranging from 55.88% to 62.50%. Reports of "Yes" were relatively consistent across these grades, varying between 22.50% and 26.11%. Students in the ungraded group were less likely to report "No" (20.00%) and more likely to select "Prefer not to answer" (60.00%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the "Ungraded" group should be interpreted with caution.



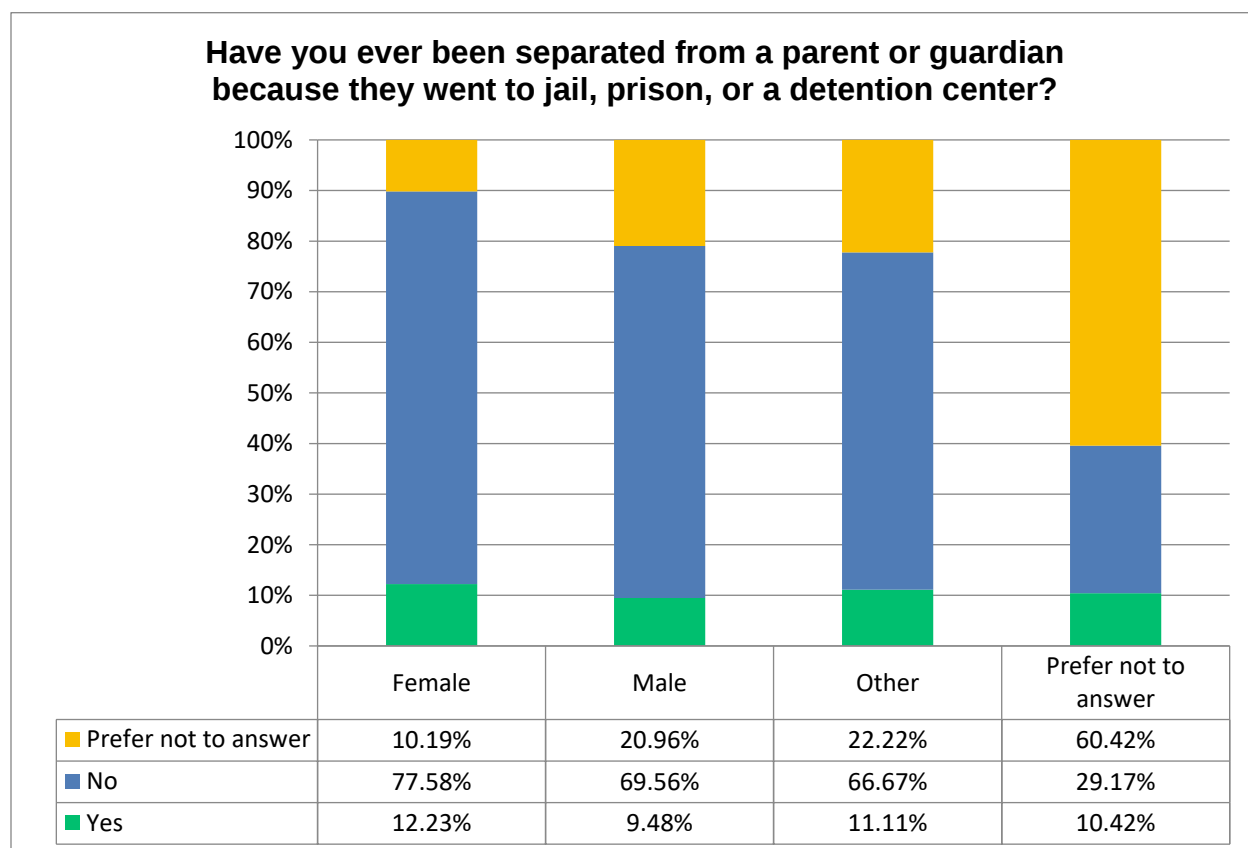
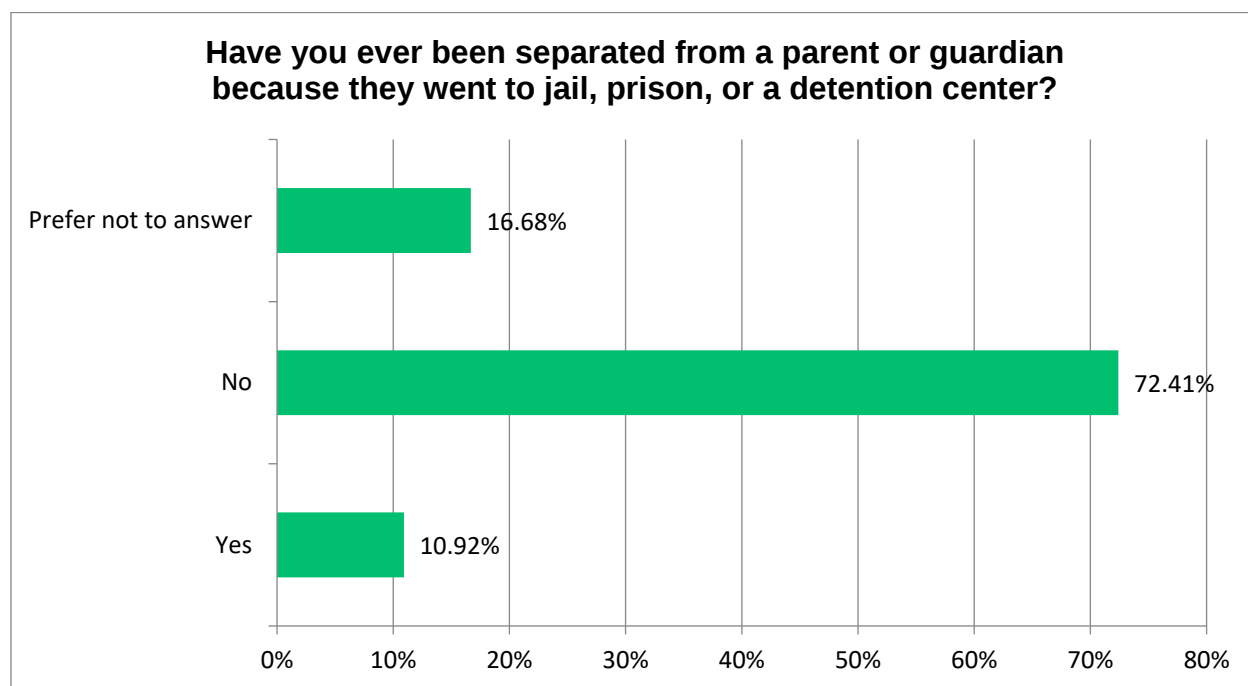
Have you ever lived with someone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal?



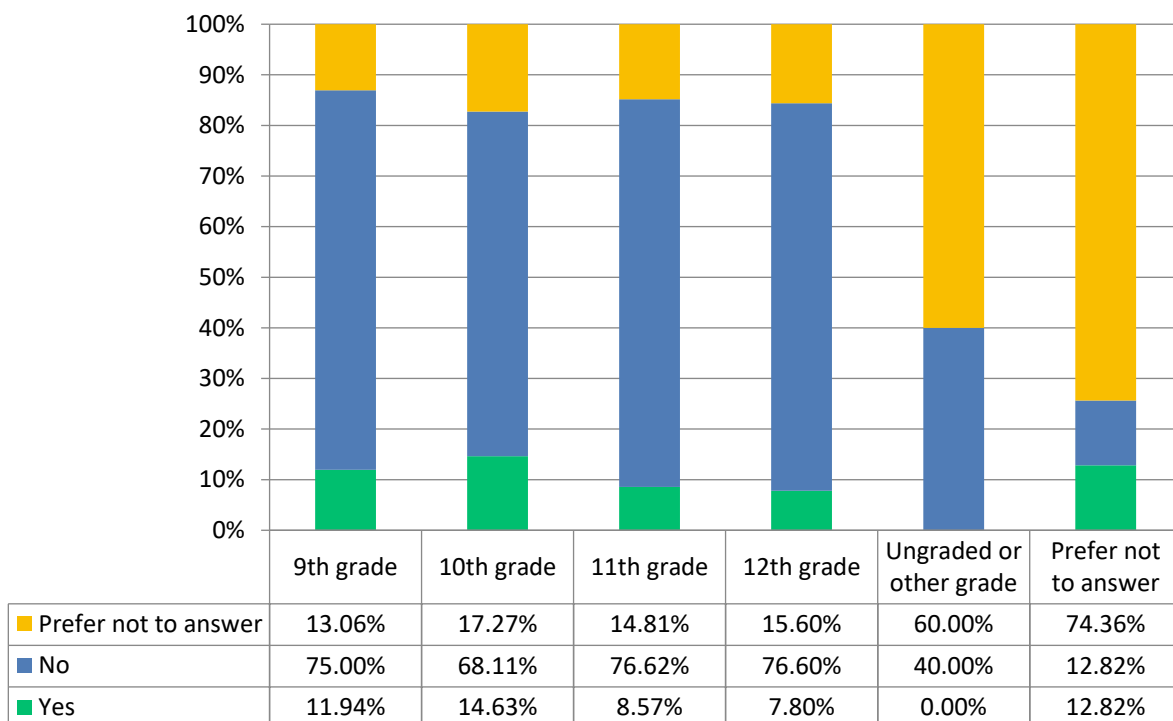
Key Findings on Living with Someone with Mental Health Challenges

- County-wide Trends:** About half of students (51.91%) reported they had not lived with someone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal, while 29.51% reported they had. An additional 18.58% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, while most students had not experienced this situation, nearly one-third indicated they had lived with someone facing serious mental health challenges.
- Gender Differences:** Most students reported they had not lived with someone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal. Males more often responded "No" (57.89%) and were more likely to select "Prefer not to answer" (21.39%) than females (13.09%). Correspondingly, female students (37.70%) were more likely than male students (20.72%) to report this experience. Students identifying as "Other" reported similar rates of exposure (27.78%) and had a higher rate of nonresponse (33.33%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the "Other" group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students in grades 9–12 reported they had not lived with someone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal, though nearly 30% across all four grades said they had. Among ungraded students, 40.00% reported having lived with someone experiencing these issues. Due to the smaller sample size, results for the "Ungraded" group should be interpreted with caution.

Parental Separation Due to Incarceration



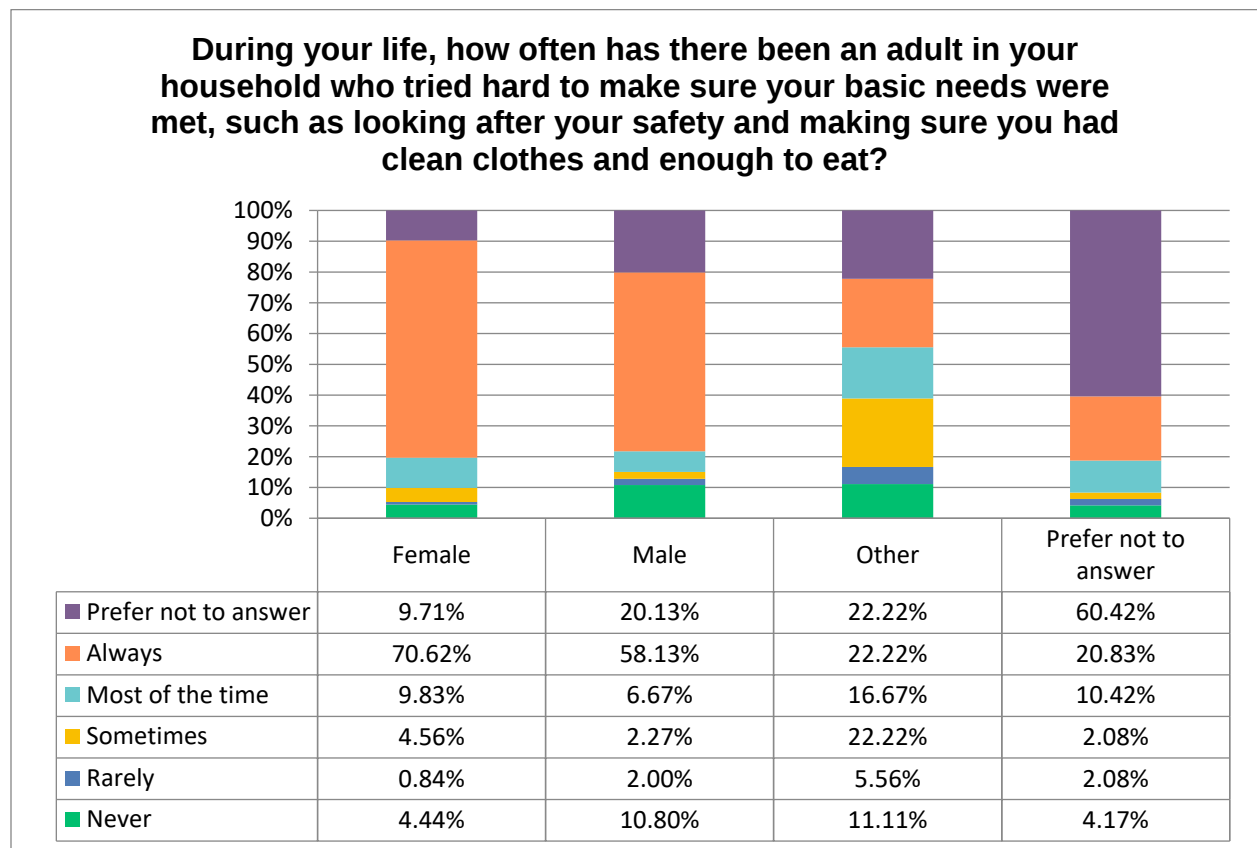
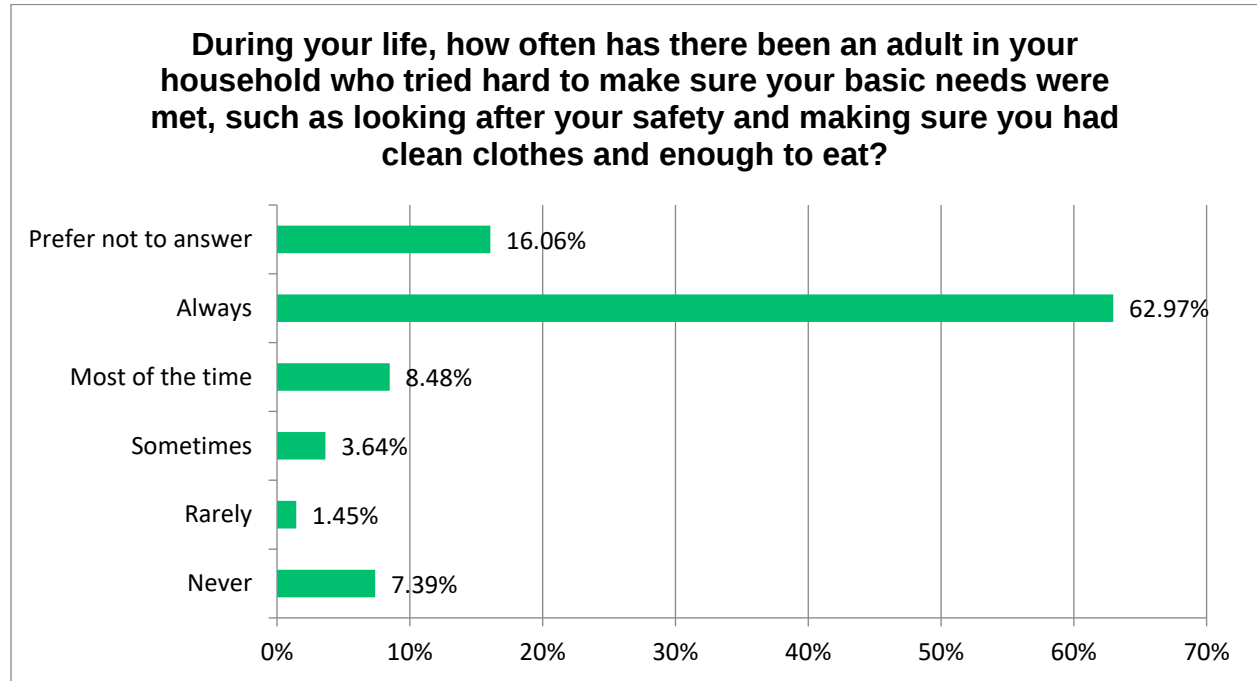
Have you ever been separated from a parent or guardian because they went to jail, prison, or a detention center?



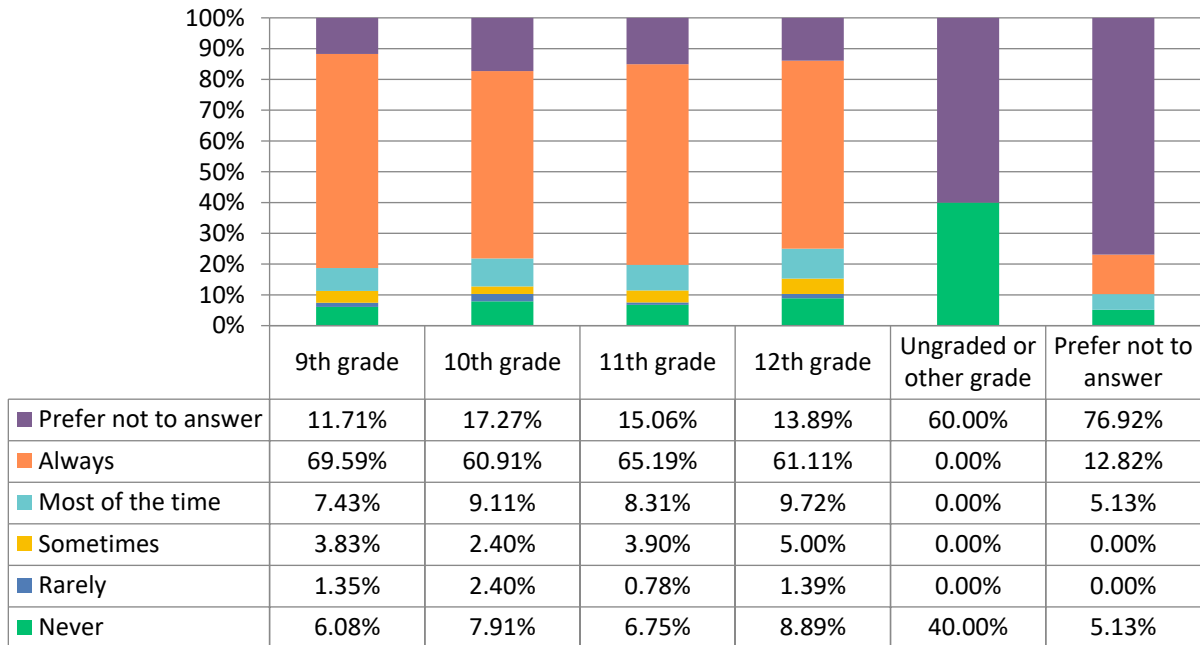
Findings on Parental Separation Due to Incarceration

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (72.41%) reported they had not been separated from a parent or guardian due to incarceration. However, 10.92% indicated they had experienced such separation. An additional 16.68% chose not to answer. Overall, most students had not faced this experience.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students reported they had not been separated from a parent or guardian due to incarceration, with 77.58% of females and 69.56% of males selecting "No." A slightly higher percentage of females (12.23%) than males (9.48%) answered "Yes" to experiencing this separation. Among students identifying as "Other," 11.11% reported being separated due to incarceration. Due to the smaller sample size, results for the "Other" group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students in grades 9–12 reported they had not been separated from a parent or guardian due to incarceration, with percentages ranging from 68.11% to 76.60%. The percentage who answered "Yes" ranged from 7.80% to 14.63%. Among ungraded or other students, 40.00% selected "No" and none reported "Yes." Due to the smaller sample size, results for the "Ungraded" group should be interpreted with caution.

Household Support for Basic Needs



During your life, how often has there been an adult in your household who tried hard to make sure your basic needs were met, such as looking after your safety and making sure you had clean clothes and enough to eat?

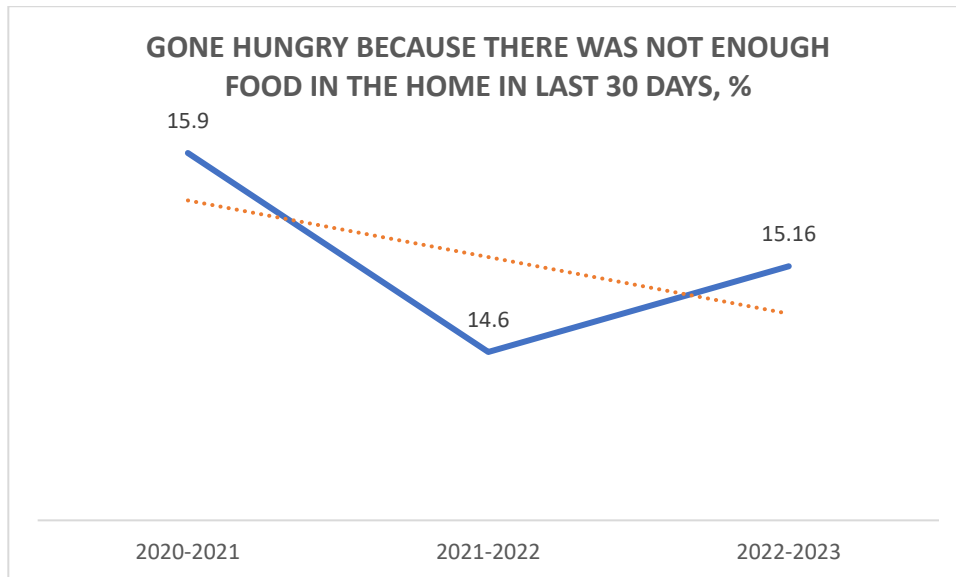


Key Findings on Household Support for Basic Needs

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported that an adult in their household had consistently tried to meet their basic needs, with 62.97% selecting "Always" and another 8.48% selecting "Most of the time." A smaller percentage reported less consistent care, including 3.64% "Sometimes," 1.45% "Rarely," and 7.39% "Never." Overall, the majority of students reported consistent support from an adult in their household to meet basic needs.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students reported that there was "Always" an adult in the household who tried hard to meet their basic needs, with 70.62% of females and 58.13% of males selecting this option. Males were slightly more likely than females to report "Never" (10.80% vs. 4.44%) or "Rarely" (2.00% vs. 0.84%) having this type of support. Among students who selected "Other," responses were more varied.
- Grade Differences:** Most students in grades 9 through 12 reported that there was "Always" an adult in the household who tried to meet their basic needs, ranging from 60.91% in 10th grade to 69.59% in 9th grade. Responses of "Never" or "Rarely" were low across grades, with fewer than 9% selecting either category in any grade. Among ungraded students, fewer reported "Always" (0.00%), and 40.00% reported "Never". Due to the smaller sample size, results for the "Ungraded" group should be interpreted with caution.

ACEs Over Time

Tracking trends in food security among students provides insight into economic and social challenges that may impact their development. The following data examines changes in students' access to adequate food over recent years, highlighting areas where additional support may be needed.



Key Findings on Food Insecurity

- **Reports of Hunger:** The percentage of students who reported going hungry due to lack of food in the home decreased slightly from 15.9% in 2020–2021 to 14.6% in 2021–2022, then rose to 15.16% in 2022–2023. Overall, rates remained relatively stable over the three-year period.

Education

Education is a cornerstone in shaping young people's futures, impacting their career prospects, life skills, and overall well-being. Beyond academics, school settings are critical in fostering social skills, resilience, and decision-making abilities. However, absenteeism, academic performance, and engagement challenges can significantly influence students' experiences and future outcomes. The YRBS explores these educational factors, shedding light on potential barriers to students' success and social development.

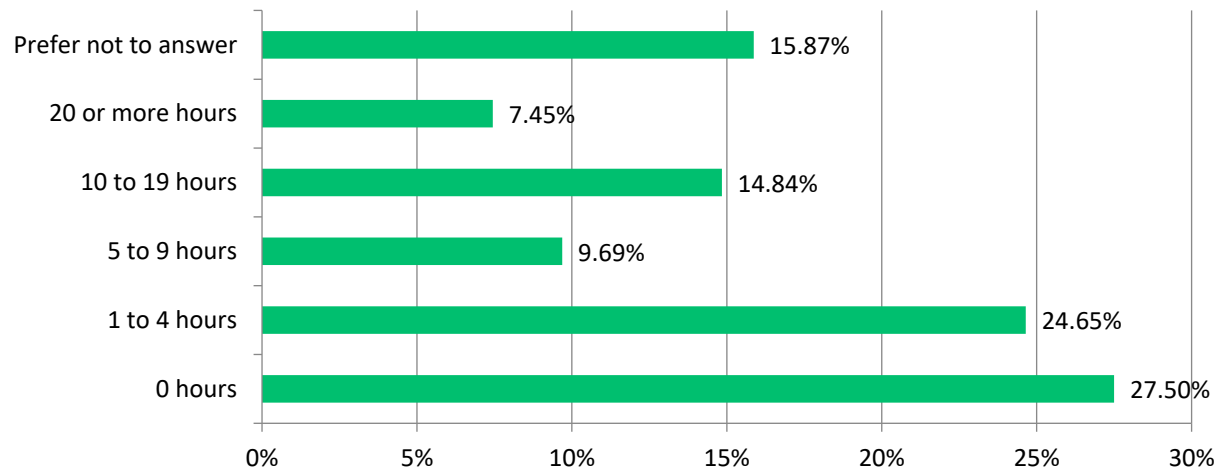
The data indicated that participation in afterschool activities was generally low, with over half of students reporting minimal or no weekly involvement. While most had never received special education services, more than 1 in 10 indicated current support through an IEP or 504 plan.

In terms of school climate, the majority of students felt their teachers cared about them and provided encouragement, and most agreed their schools had clear rules and consequences for behavior. However, some students expressed uncertainty or disagreement, highlighting differences in perception. Attendance patterns also reflected positive engagement, with most students reporting no unexcused absences in the past 30 days.

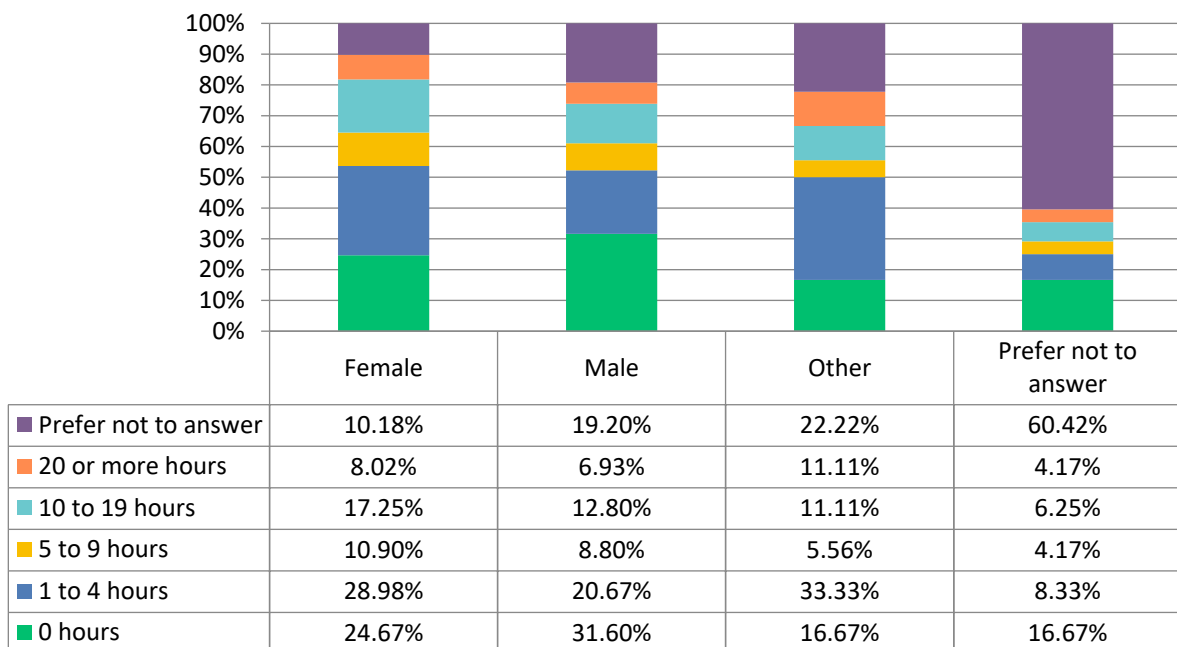
Looking ahead, nearly 40% of students planned to attend a 4-year college after graduation. However, interest in postsecondary education has declined over the past three years, and a sizable portion of students remained uncertain about their future plans or indicated interest in non-college pathways. Together, these findings provide insight into how students are engaging with school, the support systems in place, and their evolving plans for life after high school.

Afterschool Activity Participation

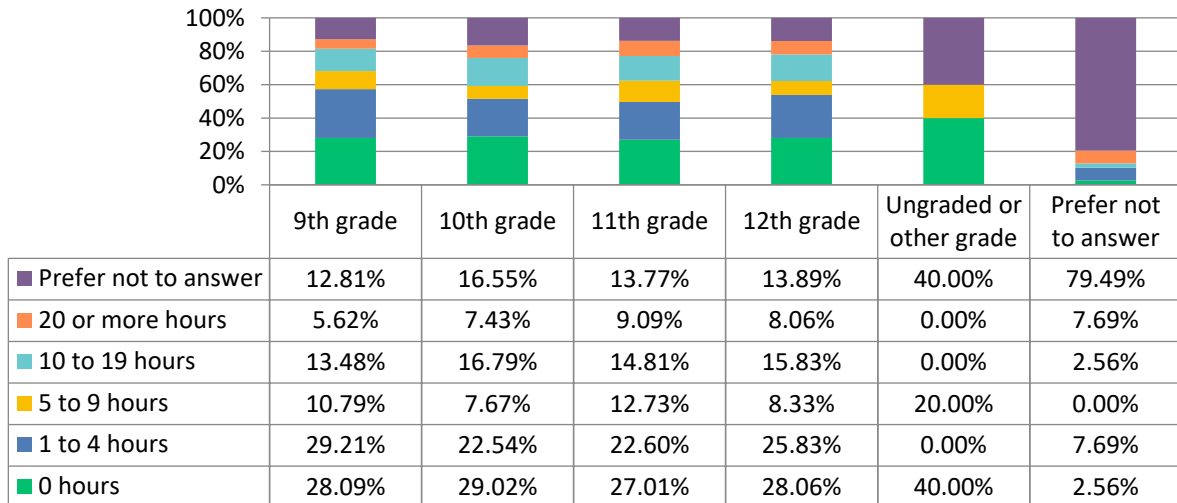
In an average week when you are in school, how many total hours do you participate in afterschool activities such as sports, band, drama, or clubs run by your school or community groups?



In an average week when you are in school, how many total hours do you participate in afterschool activities such as sports, band, drama, or clubs run by your school or community groups?



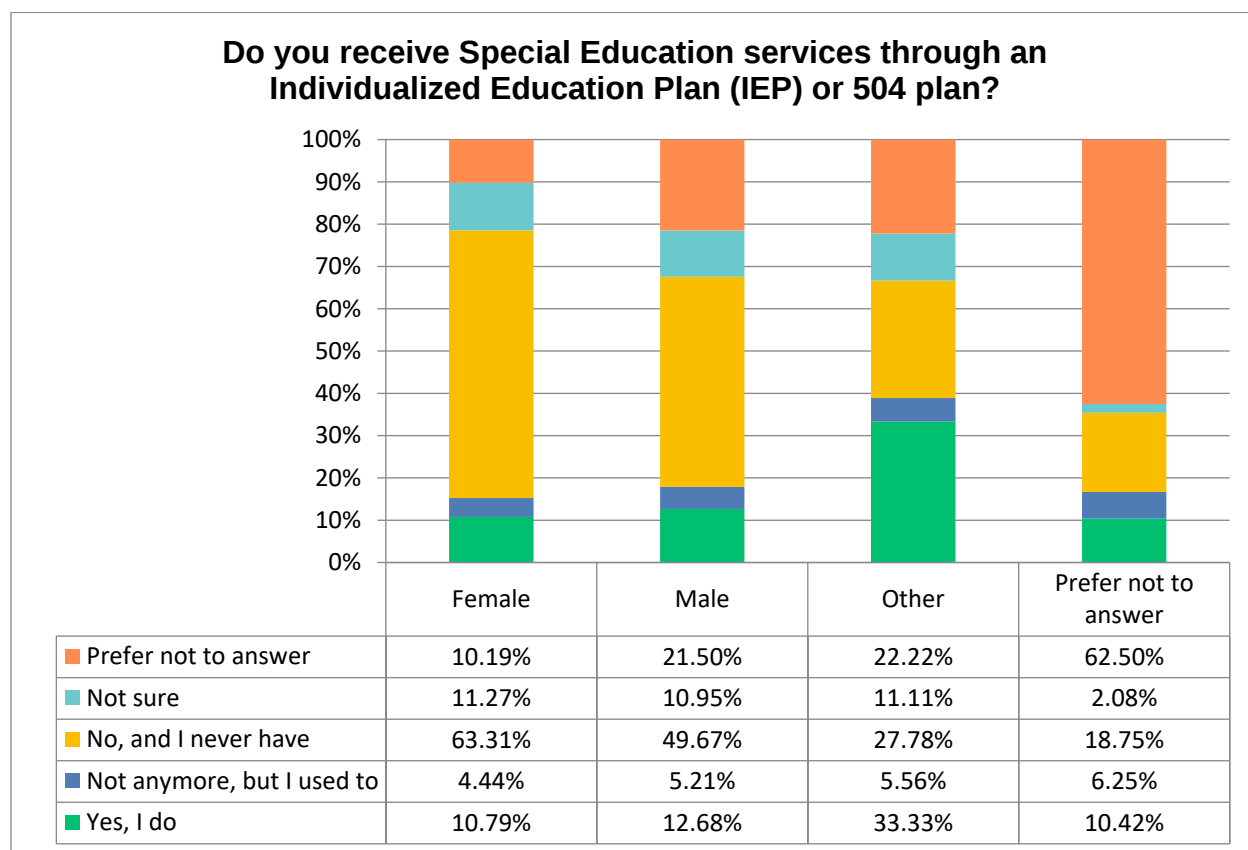
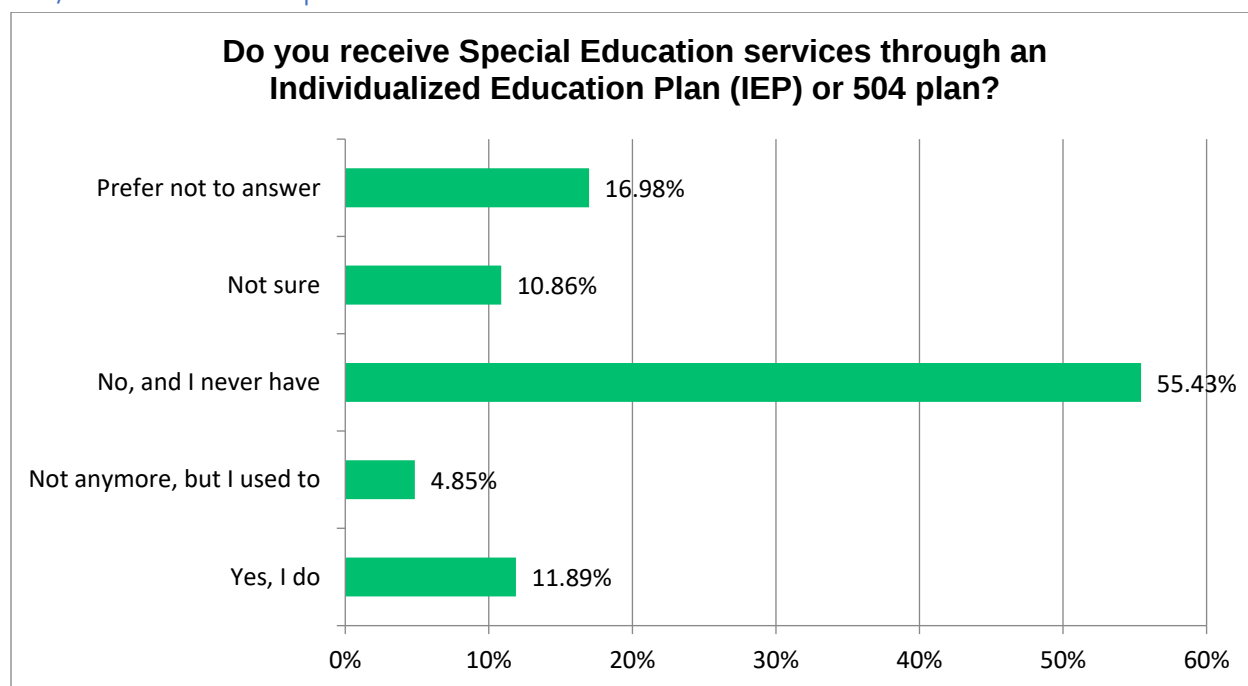
In an average week when you are in school, how many total hours do you participate in afterschool activities such as sports, band, drama, or clubs run by your school or community groups?



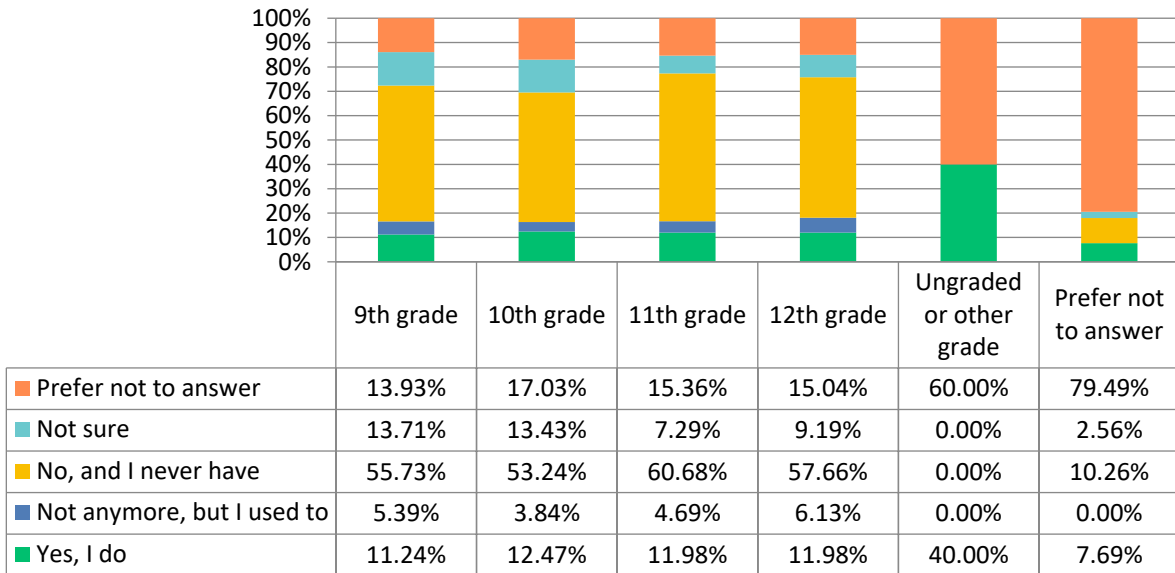
Key Findings on Afterschool Activity Participation

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported low or no participation in afterschool activities. Over half said they spent either "0 hours" (27.50%) or "1 to 4 hours" (24.65%) per week in programs. Fewer students reported higher levels of involvement, with 14.84% participating "10 to 19 hours" and only 7.45% engaging "20 or more hours" weekly. An additional 15.87% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, student participation in afterschool activities was limited, with the majority reporting minimal weekly involvement.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students reported participating in afterschool activities for "0 hours" or "1 to 4 hours" per week. Males were more likely to report no participation (31.60%) compared to females (24.67%), while females were more likely to participate "1 to 4 hours" per week (28.98% vs. 20.56%). Female students also had slightly higher rates of participation in "10 to 19 hours" and "5 to 9 hours" categories. Students identifying as "Other" were more likely to report "1 to 4 hours" (33.33%) and less likely to report "0 hours" (16.67%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the "Other" group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, most reported participating in afterschool activities for either "0 hours" or "1 to 4 hours" per week. Participation at "0 hours" was highest in 10th grade (29.02%) and lowest in 11th grade (27.01%), while "1 to 4 hours" ranged from 22.54% to 29.21%. A smaller portion of students in each grade reported participating for "10 to 19 hours" (13.48%–16.79%) or "20 or more hours" (5.62%–9.09%).

IEP/504 Plan Participation



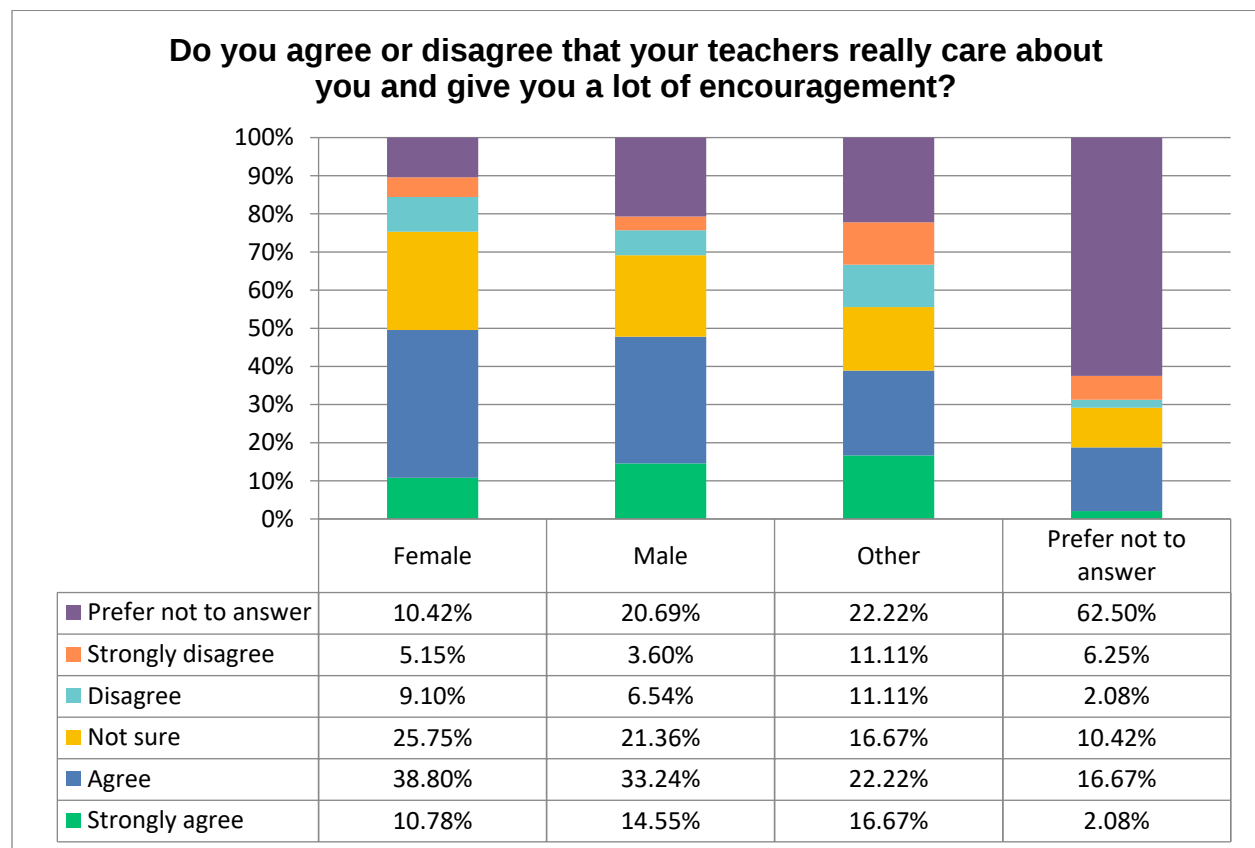
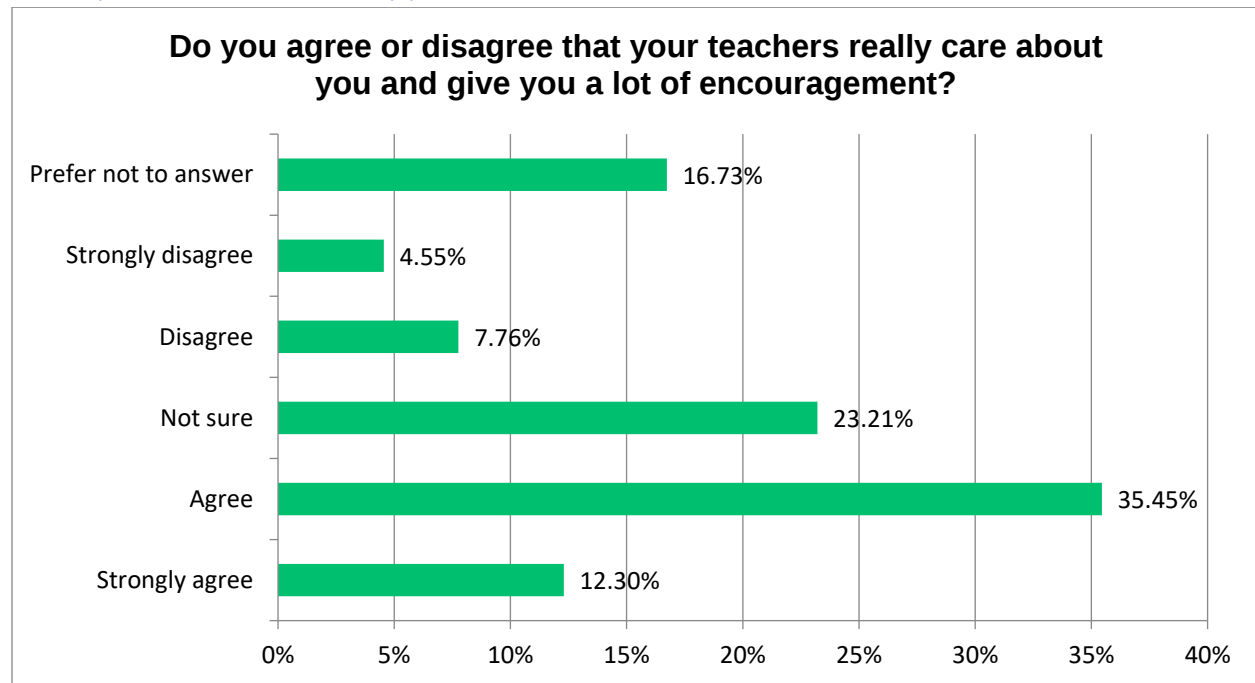
Do you receive Special Education services through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan?



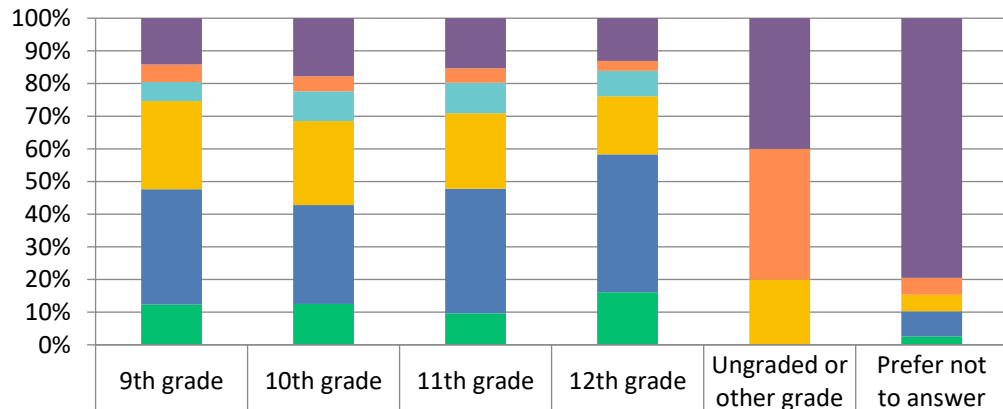
Key Findings on IEP/504 Plan Participation

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (55.43%) reported that they had never received special education services through an IEP or 504 plan. A smaller portion said they currently receive services (11.89%), while 4.85% indicated they used to but no longer do. Additionally, 10.86% were "Not sure" and 16.98% selected "Prefer not to answer." Overall, while most students had not received special education services, over 1 in 10 reported current participation.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students reported they had not received special education services through an IEP or 504 plan, with 63.31% of females and 49.67% of males selecting "No, and I never have." A similar percentage of males (12.68%) and females (10.79%) reported currently receiving services. Students identifying as "Other" were less likely to report "No, and I never have" (27.78%) and more likely to report "Yes, I do" (33.33%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the "Other" group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, most reported they had not received special education services through an IEP or 504 plan, ranging from 53.24% to 60.68% of students. The percentage of students who currently received services ("Yes, I do") was relatively consistent across grades, ranging from 11.24% to 12.47%. A small portion in each grade reported they had previously received services but no longer do (3.84%–6.13%). Students in the ungraded group were less likely to report "No" (0.00%) and more likely to report "Yes, I do" (40.00%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the "Ungraded" group should be interpreted with caution.

Perception of Teacher Support



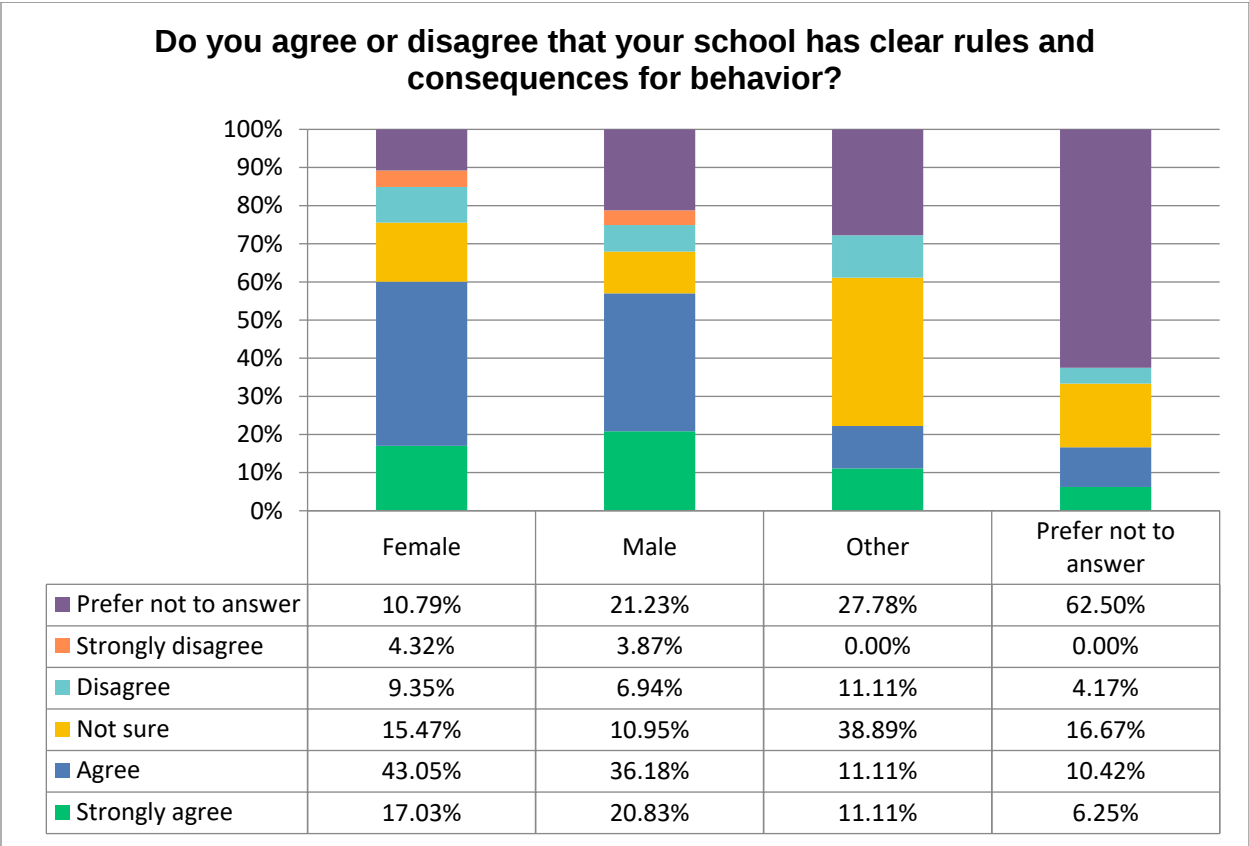
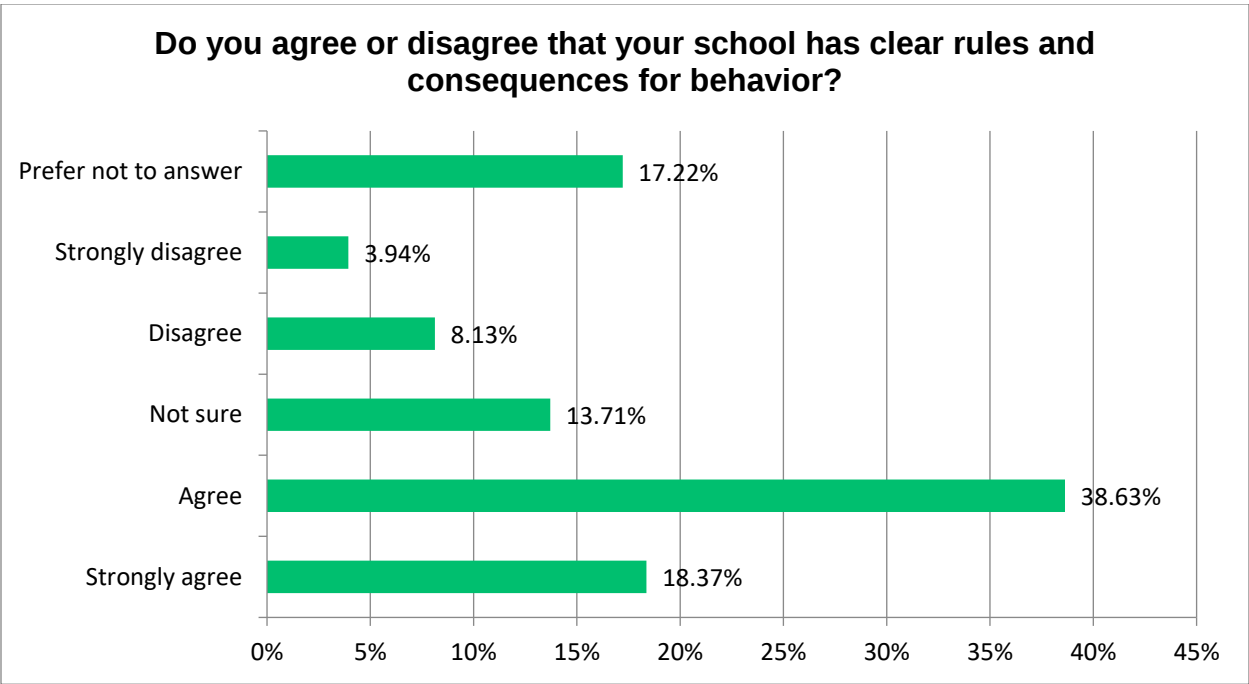
Do you agree or disagree that your teachers really care about you and give you a lot of encouragement?



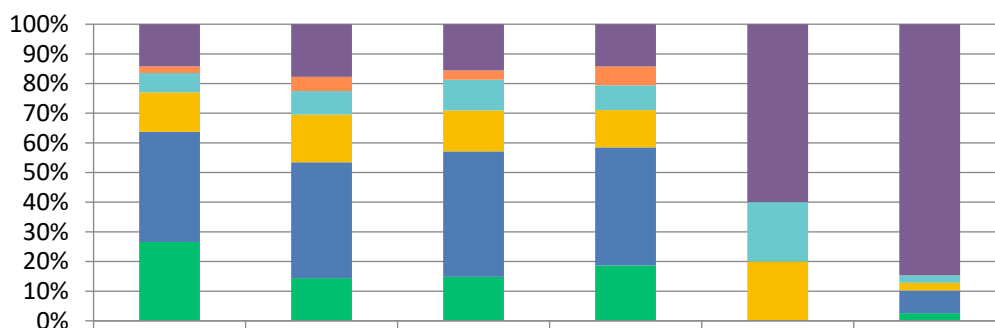
	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	14.16%	17.79%	15.32%	13.06%	40.00%	79.49%
Strongly disagree	5.39%	4.57%	4.42%	3.06%	40.00%	5.13%
Disagree	5.84%	9.13%	9.35%	7.78%	0.00%	0.00%
Not sure	26.97%	25.72%	23.12%	17.78%	20.00%	5.13%
Agree	35.28%	30.29%	38.18%	42.22%	0.00%	7.69%
Strongly agree	12.36%	12.50%	9.61%	16.11%	0.00%	2.56%

Key Findings on Teacher Support Perception

- County-wide Trends:** Most students agreed that their teachers cared about them and offered encouragement, with 35.45% selecting “Agree” and 12.30% choosing “Strongly agree.” Meanwhile, 23.21% were “Not sure,” and smaller portions reported disagreement, including 7.76% who “Disagree” and 4.55% who “Strongly disagree.” An additional 16.73% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, a majority of students perceived teacher support, though a notable portion remained uncertain or disagreed.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students reported feeling supported by their teachers, with 38.80% of females and 33.24% of males selecting “Agree.” Females were slightly less likely to “Strongly agree” (10.78% vs. 14.55%) and more likely to be “Not sure” (25.75% vs. 21.36%). Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to “Agree” (22.22%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, most agreed that their teachers cared and offered encouragement, with “Agree” ranging from 30.29% to 42.22%. “Strongly agree” responses remained relatively steady, ranging from 9.61% to 16.11%. Students in the ungraded group were less likely to report agreement and more likely to select “Strongly disagree” (40.00%) or “Prefer not to answer” (40.00%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the “Ungraded” group should be interpreted with caution.



Do you agree or disagree that your school has clear rules and consequences for behavior?

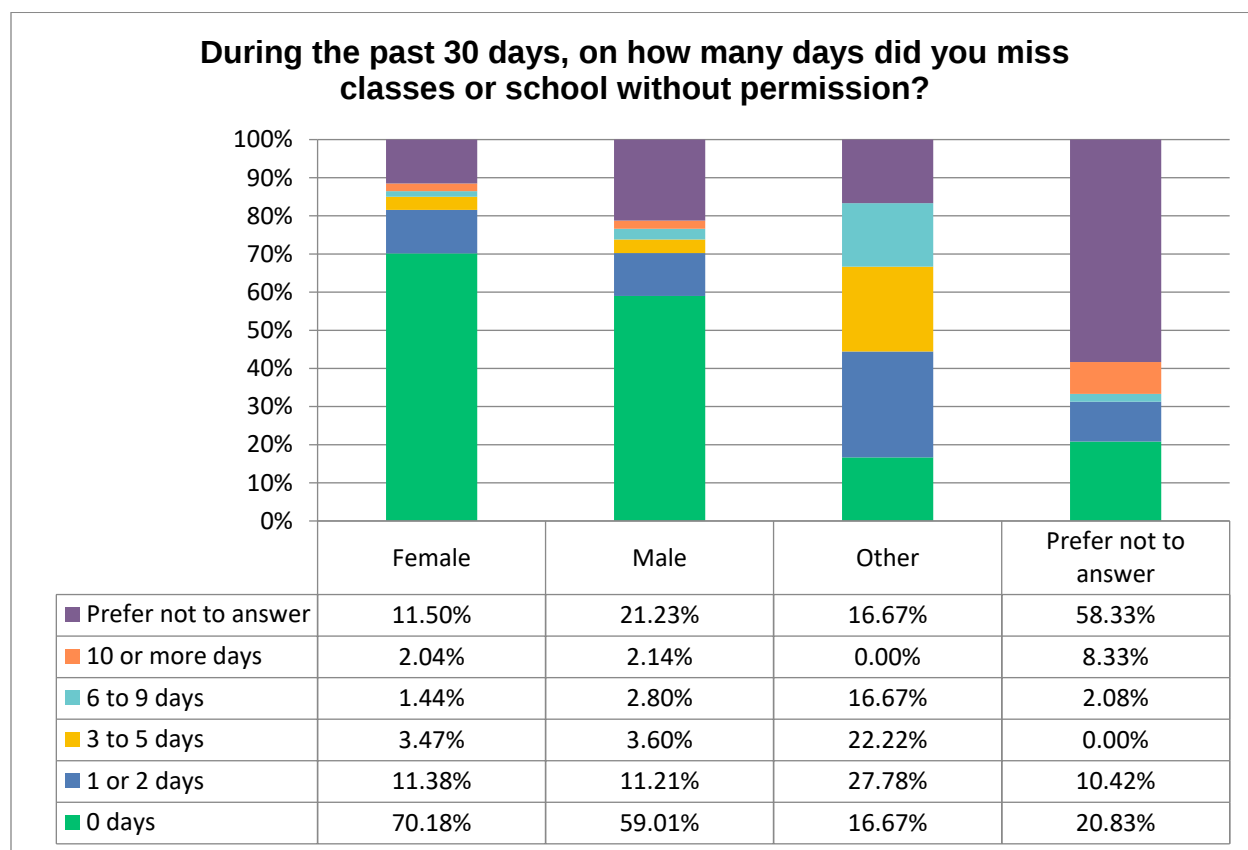
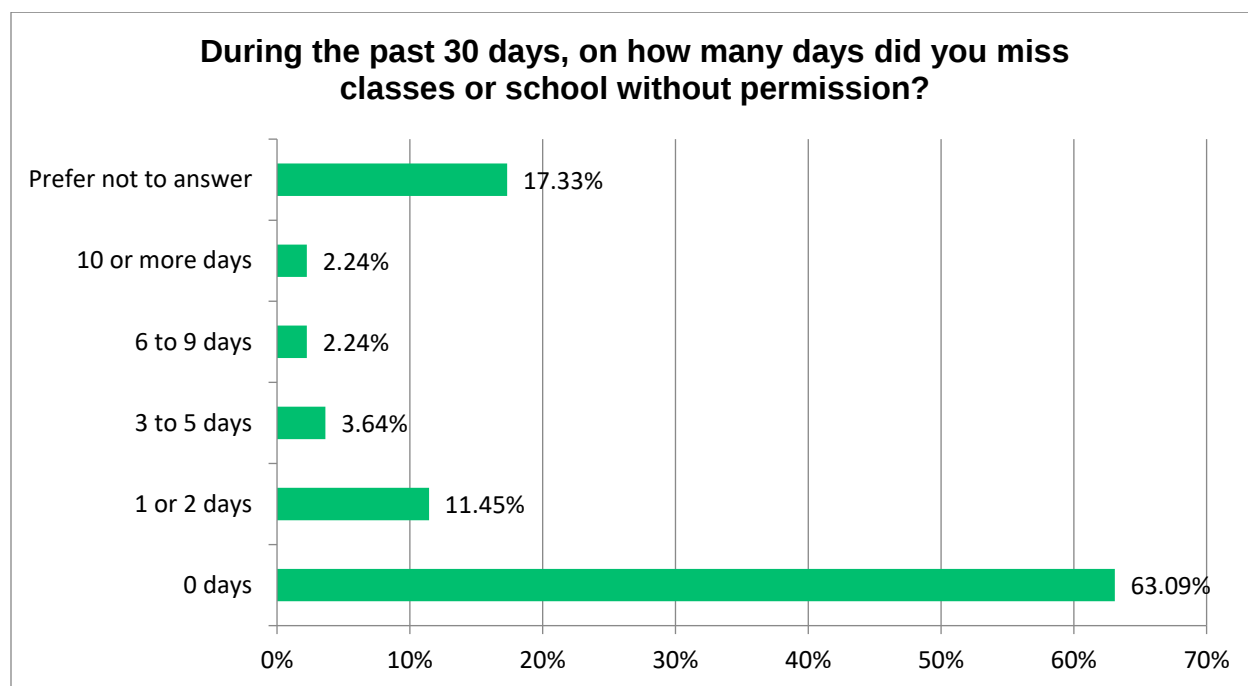


Prefer not to answer	14.19%	17.75%	15.58%	14.21%	60.00%	84.62%
Strongly disagree	2.25%	4.80%	3.12%	6.41%	0.00%	0.00%
Disagree	6.53%	7.91%	10.39%	8.36%	20.00%	2.56%
Not sure	13.29%	16.07%	13.77%	12.53%	20.00%	2.56%
Agree	37.16%	39.09%	42.34%	39.83%	0.00%	7.69%
Strongly agree	26.58%	14.39%	14.81%	18.66%	0.00%	2.56%

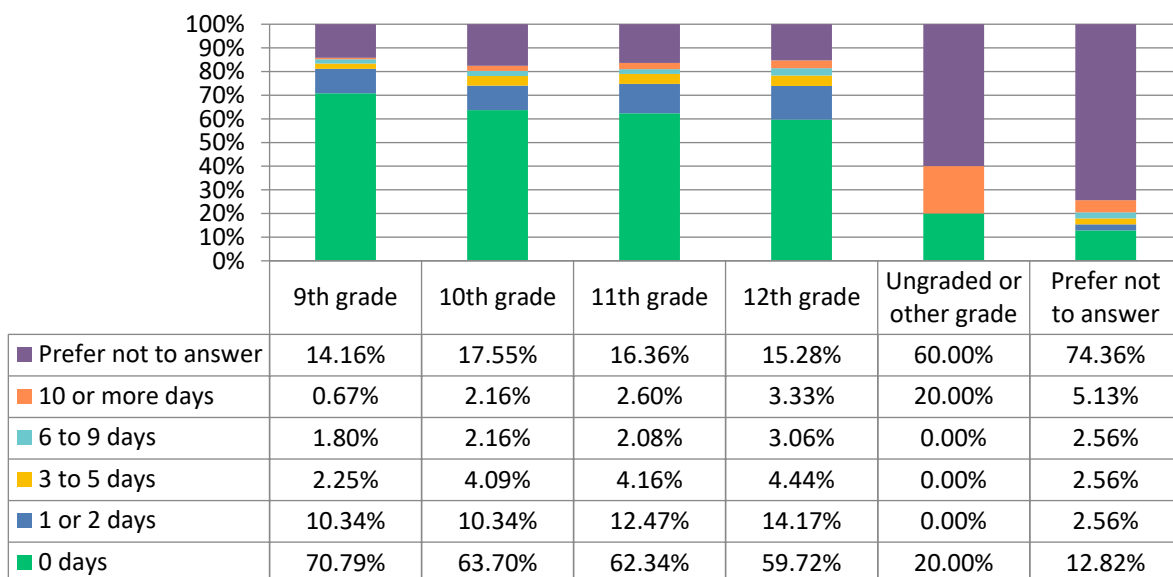
Key Findings on School Expectations

- County-wide Trends:** Most students agreed that their school had clear rules and consequences for behavior, with 38.63% selecting “Agree” and 18.37% selecting “Strongly agree.” A smaller portion indicated uncertainty (13.71%), while fewer students disagreed (8.13%) or strongly disagreed (3.94%). An additional 17.22% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, most students perceived clarity in school behavioral expectations.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students agreed that their school had clear rules and consequences for behavior, though agreement was slightly higher among females. A total of 43.05% of female students selected “Agree” and 17.03% selected “Strongly agree,” compared to 36.18% and 20.83% of males, respectively. Males were more likely to select “Prefer not to answer” (21.23%) than females (10.79%), while females were slightly more likely to express uncertainty (15.47% vs. 10.95%). Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to agree overall. Due to the smaller sample size, results for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, most agreed their school had clear rules and consequences for behavior. Across all grades, responses of “Disagree” or “Strongly disagree” remained relatively low. Students in the ungraded or other group were less likely to agree and more likely to select “Prefer not to answer” (60.00%), reflecting a higher level of nonresponse. Due to the smaller sample size, results for the “Ungraded” group should be interpreted with caution.

Unexcused Absences



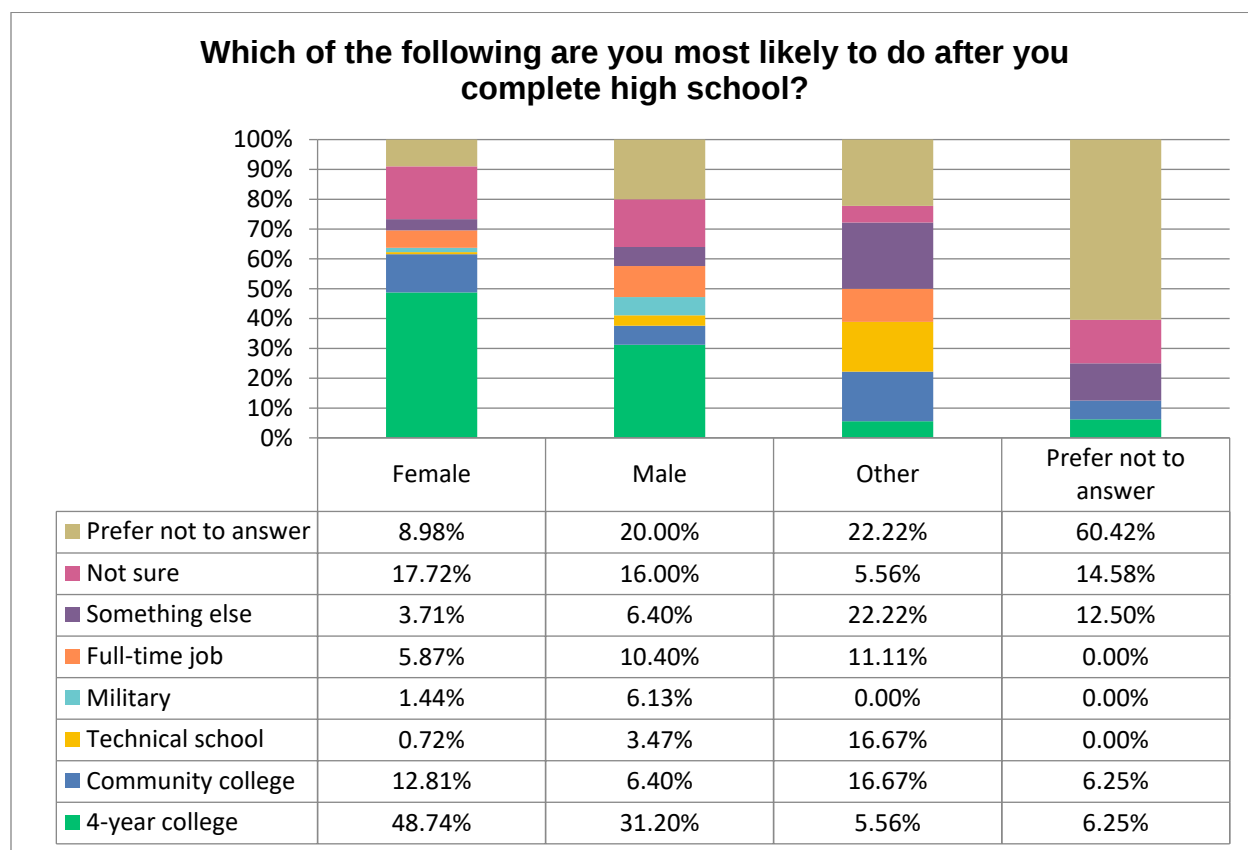
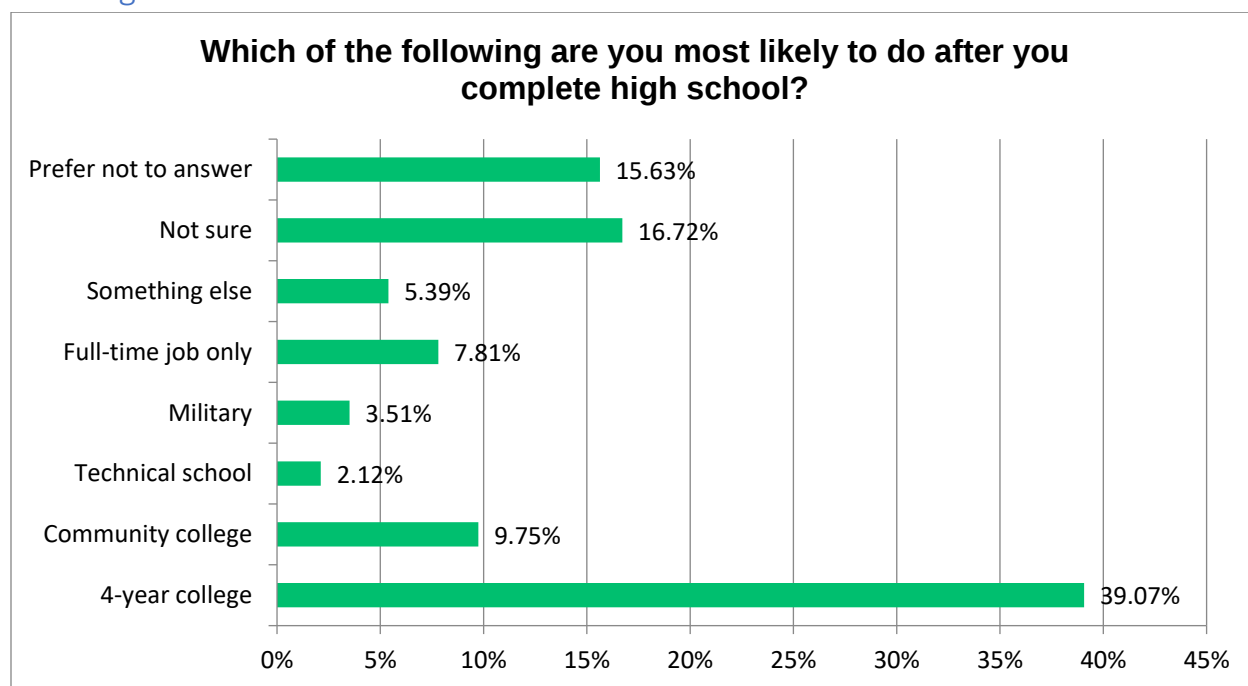
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you miss classes or school without permission?



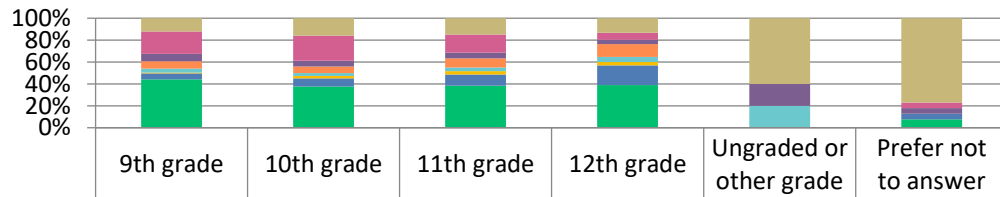
Key Findings on Unexcused Absences

- County-wide Trends:** Most students (63.09%) reported not missing any classes or school without permission in the past 30 days. A smaller portion indicated missing school without permission for “1 or 2 days” (11.45%). Fewer reported higher frequencies such as “3 to 5 days” (3.64%) or “6 to 9 days” and “10 or more days” (2.24% each). An additional 17.33% selected “Prefer not to answer.” Overall, the majority of students did not report unexcused absences from school.
- Gender Differences:** Most male and female students reported not missing any classes or school without permission in the past 30 days, with slightly more females selecting “0 days” (70.18%) compared to males (59.01%). Rates of unexcused absences across 1 or more days were similar between groups, though males had a higher rate of selecting “Prefer not to answer” (21.23% vs. 11.50%). Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to report “0 days” (16.67%) and more likely to report missing school for “1 or 2 days” (27.78%), “3 to 5 days” (22.22%), or “6 to 9 days” (16.67%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across grades reported not missing school without permission, with “0 days” responses ranging from 59.72% to 70.79%. The percentage reporting 1 or 2 unexcused absences was similar across grades (10.34%–14.17%), while higher-frequency absences remained relatively low. Students in the ungraded or other group were less likely to report “0 days” (20.00%) and more likely to select “Prefer not to answer” (60.00%) or higher-frequency absence categories. Due to the smaller sample size, results for the “Ungraded” group should be interpreted with caution.

Post-High School Plans



Which of the following are you most likely to do after you complete high school?



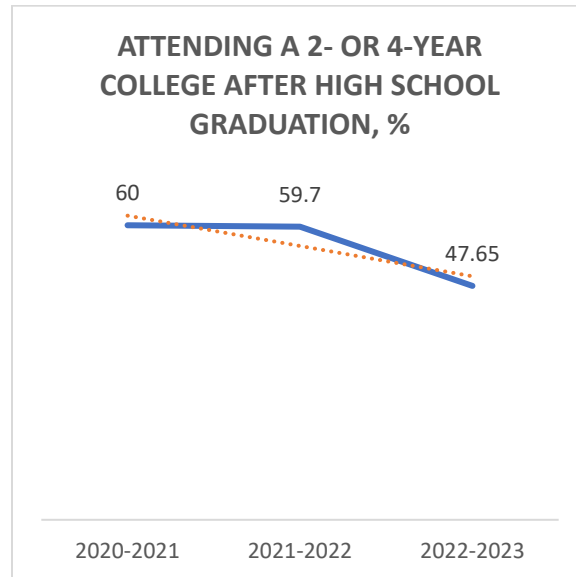
	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
■ Prefer not to answer	12.13%	15.83%	14.81%	13.33%	60.00%	76.92%
■ Not sure	20.45%	23.02%	16.62%	6.39%	0.00%	5.13%
■ Something else	6.74%	5.28%	5.19%	3.89%	20.00%	5.13%
■ Full-time job	6.74%	6.00%	8.31%	11.67%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Military	3.60%	2.64%	3.38%	4.72%	20.00%	0.00%
■ Technical school	0.67%	2.16%	3.12%	3.06%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Community college	5.39%	7.43%	10.13%	18.06%	0.00%	5.13%
■ 4-year college	44.27%	37.65%	38.44%	38.89%	0.00%	7.69%

Key Findings on Post-High School Plans

- County-wide Trends:** Most students reported that they were most likely to attend a 4-year college after high school (39.07%), followed by community college (9.75%) and full-time employment (7.81%). Smaller percentages selected military service (3.51%), technical school (2.12%), or “Something else” (5.39%). A notable portion of students were uncertain about their plans (16.72%) or selected “Prefer not to answer” (15.63%). Overall, while many students expressed interest in pursuing higher education, a sizable number remained unsure or chose alternative paths.
- Gender Differences:** Female students were more likely than male students to report plans to attend a 4-year college after high school (48.74% vs. 31.20%) and community college (12.81% vs. 6.40%). Males were more likely to indicate plans for full-time employment (10.40% vs. 5.87%), military service (6.13% vs. 1.44%), and technical school (3.47% vs. 0.72%). Students identifying as “Other” were less likely to report plans for college and more likely to select alternative paths such as “Something else” (22.22%) or technical school (16.67%). Due to the smaller sample size, results for the “Other” group should be interpreted with caution.
- Grade Differences:** Among 9th–12th grade students, the most common post-high school plan was attending a 4-year college, with rates ranging from 37.65% to 44.27%. The percentage planning to attend community college increased with grade level, from 5.39% in 9th grade to 18.06% in 12th grade. A notable portion of students in 9th and 10th grade reported being unsure (20.45% and 23.02%), compared to 6.39% in 12th grade. Plans to enter full-time work or the military remained below 12% across all grades.

Education Trends Over Time

Tracking trends in students' post-high school plans provides valuable insight into their aspirations, career readiness, and access to opportunities. The following data examines shifts over the years in students' intentions for life after graduation, including plans for college, vocational training, employment, or military service. Understanding these trends helps schools and community organizations in Herkimer County tailor programs that support career exploration, skill development, and pathways to success for all students.



Key Findings Education Trends Over Time

- **Graduation Plans:** The percentage of students planning to attend a 2- or 4-year college after high school declined over the past three years, dropping from 60.0% in 2020–2021 to 47.65% in 2022–2023. This downward trend suggests a decreasing interest in postsecondary college enrollment among students.

Key Insights from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey

The 2022-2023 YRBS offers critical insights into Herkimer County students' health, safety, and well-being. The survey highlights key trends across areas such as motor vehicle safety, violence, mental health, substance use, education, and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). These findings provide valuable guidance for shaping interventions, policies, and support systems to enhance student well-being.

Motor Vehicle Safety

Overall, most students reported safe driving and passenger behaviors. While texting while driving, driving under the influence, and riding with impaired drivers remained relatively low, these behaviors were more frequently reported among certain groups, such as students in higher grades and students identifying as "Other." Over time, declines in driving under the influence and texting while driving suggest progress, but stable rates of riding with impaired drivers indicate areas for continued intervention.

Violence

Efforts to ensure student safety remain essential, as most students reported feeling secure at school and did not engage in violence-related behaviors. However, a small subset of students did participate in these behaviors. Males and younger students were more likely to report involvement in physical fights, while older students were more likely to carry a weapon on school property or miss school due to safety concerns. Reports of being threatened or injured with a weapon declined after peaking in 2021-2022. However, weapon-carrying and physical fights have increased in recent years. These findings emphasize the need for ongoing prevention strategies to address violence-related risks and foster a safer school environment.

Bullying

Findings from the bullying section of the YRBS revealed that while most students did not report experiencing or engaging in bullying, a significant minority faced ongoing challenges. Nearly one in five students reported involvement in bullying, either as a victim or perpetrator. Appearance-based teasing affected about one-third of students, with higher rates among females and younger students. Similarly, electronic bullying impacted nearly 20% of students, particularly among females and those identifying as "Other." However, the latter group should be interpreted with caution due to a small sample size.

Most students reported they were not treated unfairly based on their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity. However, students identifying as "Other" were more likely to report mistreatment based on gender identity or sexual orientation. Trends over the past three years showed a gradual rise in both bullying victimization and perpetration, emphasizing the need for continued efforts to foster safe, inclusive school environments and to address persistent peer aggression.

Mental Health

In the area of mental health, many students reported symptoms of emotional distress, with nearly one in four experiencing persistent sadness and over 14% engaging in self-harm. Suicide-related behaviors, including planning and attempts, were reported by a small but consistent minority. Although trends over the past three years showed a decline in self-harm, suicidal planning, and persistent sadness, access to emotional support remained inconsistent. Together, these findings suggest that while most students were not engaged in high-risk behaviors, a considerable number faced emotional challenges that required sustained attention.

Sexual Activity and Dating Violence

The 2022–2023 YRBS findings highlight key patterns in sexual activity, reproductive health, and dating violence among Herkimer County students. Most students reported never having had sex, particularly in younger grades. Among those who were sexually active, most reported a small number of partners and said they initiated sex between ages 14 and 16. While many described their first sexual experience as consensual, a meaningful portion reported non-consensual or uncertain experiences. These reports were more common among females and older students.

Condom use and pregnancy prevention efforts increased with age, though HIV and STD testing remained relatively uncommon. A minority of students reported recent sexual activity and only a small percentage said they used drugs or alcohol before their last sexual encounter. This behavior has declined over time. Most students did not experience emotional or physical harm in dating relationships. However, a small group, particularly those identifying as “Other,” reported repeated harm. Additionally, about 1 in 6 students reported experiencing unwanted sexual contact in their lifetime. These findings underscore the need for continued education on consent, healthy relationships, and access to reproductive health resources to support youth well-being in Herkimer County.

Tobacco Use

Tobacco use among Herkimer County students remained relatively low, with the majority reporting no recent use of cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, or flavored products. When tobacco was used, it was typically infrequent and began during early adolescence. Older students and males were more likely to report use, while younger students and females reported higher rates of non-use. Students identifying as “Other” gender showed higher rates of daily use but represented a small sample. Most tobacco users did not attempt to quit, and fewer than half of students were screened for tobacco use by a healthcare provider. Overall, tobacco use among youth has declined over time, but targeted prevention efforts remain important.

Vaping

The data showed that most students reported never using electronic vapor products. In general, vaping behaviors increased with age, with 12th graders showing higher levels of use and greater perceived ease of access. Social sources, such as friends or family, were the most common ways students obtained products. In addition, many students recognized the health risks associated with vaping and believed it was wrong for someone their age to engage in the behavior. Most also believed their parents would strongly disapprove. Overall, the steady decline in both lifetime and recent use over time suggests a promising downward trend in youth vaping.

Alcohol

Survey findings from 2022–2023 show that while most students abstained from alcohol, patterns of use and perception varied by age and gender. Nearly half of students reported never having had a full drink, and recent alcohol use remained relatively low. Binge drinking was uncommon overall but more frequently reported among older students and those identifying as “Other.” Access to alcohol was perceived as easier with each advancing grade, while concern about the risks of underage drinking declined with age. Most students believed their parents disapproved of alcohol use, though this perception also weakened in higher grades. These trends highlight a general decline in use but point to increased vulnerability among older students.

Marijuana

Marijuana use among students remained relatively low, with most reporting no lifetime or recent use. Among those who had used, initiation most often occurred between ages 13 and 16. Smoking was the most common method of use, followed by vaping, edibles, and dabbing. Use and method diversity increased with grade level, especially among older students. Perceived ease of access also rose with age. In contrast, disapproval and perceived harm declined as students got older. Most students believed their parents strongly disapproved of marijuana use, though this perception weakened in higher grades. Overall, while marijuana use was limited, findings suggest increased access, experimentation, and acceptance as students aged.

Substance Abuse

Overall, the findings highlight that most students did not report misusing prescription or illicit substances, and behaviors such as heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and inhalant use were rare. While occasional and frequent misuse was more common among older students and those identifying as “Other,” most students reported no use across nearly all categories. Reports of being offered drugs on school property or attending school under the influence remained limited but were slightly more common among upper grades and ungraded students.

Students' attitudes and perceptions aligned with these behavioral trends. The majority viewed prescription drug misuse as highly wrong and risky, and most believed their parents shared this disapproval. These protective attitudes suggest an opportunity to reinforce positive norms and continue prevention efforts, particularly focused on older students and those reporting greater exposure to substances.

Physical Activity and Injury

The data showed that most students engaged in some physical activity, with daily activity rates improving over time. However, only about one in five met the recommended levels. Screen time remained high, with over one-third spending five or more hours per day on devices. Most students did not report concussions or disabilities affecting daily life, though small groups experienced these issues. Sun safety emerged as a concern, with many students reporting multiple sunburns, especially females. Overall, findings reflect progress in physical activity but highlight ongoing challenges with screen time, injury risk, and sun exposure.

Social-Emotional Health

Findings from the survey reflect a mixed picture of students' social-emotional well-being across Herkimer County. Most students reported consistent parental awareness of their whereabouts and recognized clear household rules, indicating strong family structure and oversight. While many felt confident in their ability to make decisions and resist peer pressure, fewer students reported being able to talk to a caring adult or feeling like they mattered in their community. Perceptions of community belonging have declined slightly over time. Responses around loneliness and self-worth were varied, with most students expressing positive self-perception, though a notable portion reported uncertainty or disagreement. Together, these findings suggest that while many students experience foundational support, opportunities remain to strengthen emotional connection, community engagement, and support systems.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

The data revealed that most students across the county reported stable living conditions and consistent support from adults in their household. The majority had not experienced displacement, food insecurity, or separation due to incarceration, and most indicated that an adult consistently worked to meet their basic needs. However, a notable minority of students reported experiences linked to instability, including exposure to verbal or physical harm, hunger, and household substance use or mental illness. Gender and grade-level patterns were generally consistent, though students identifying as "Other" and those in the ungraded group were more likely to report challenges across multiple indicators. While most students described safe and supportive home environments, the data reveal that a meaningful subset of youth continue to face adversity.

Education

Overall, findings from the education section highlighted important patterns in student engagement, support, and future planning. While most students reported some level of connection to school through positive teacher relationships and clear expectations for behavior, participation in after-school activities remained low for many. Most students had not received special education services, though a small but consistent portion reported current involvement with an IEP or 504 plan. Unexcused absences were relatively uncommon, with the majority of students attending regularly. Although many expressed intentions to pursue higher education, particularly 4-year college, interest in college enrollment has declined over the past three years. In addition, a notable portion of students were either unsure of their plans or considering alternative pathways. These trends reflect both areas of strength and opportunities for continued support as students navigate school and prepare for the future.

Concluding Remarks

The 2022–2023 YRBS provides a comprehensive view of the experiences and challenges facing students across Herkimer County. While most students reported positive health and safety behaviors, strong family support, and clear educational goals, areas of concern remain. Emotional well-being, exposure to adversity, and substance use risks continue to affect a subset of students, particularly older youth and those identifying outside traditional gender categories. Encouraging trends, such as declines in vaping, self-harm, and sexual risk behaviors, signal progress. However, the need for targeted prevention and support remains. Herkimer County can continue working toward a safer, healthier, and more supportive environment for all youth by using these findings to guide coordinated efforts among schools, families, and community partners.

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