

2023-2024

HERKIMER COUNTY YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEILLANCE SURVEY



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Acknowledgement

The creation, administration, and analysis of this survey 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 not only enhances our understanding but also strengthens our ability to implement meaningful change within our community. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the following contributors: We sincerely thank the following contributors for their invaluable support:

- **Herkimer County System of Care and SAMHSA**
 - Katherine Driscoll, Project Director
 - Christina Cain, Primary Investigator
 - SOC Planning Team
- **Herkimer County Integrated County Planning**
 - Gina Giacobelli, Integrated County Planner
- **Herkimer County Public Health**
 - Andrea Blowers, Population Health Specialist
- **Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES**
 - DJ Shephardson, Superintendent
- **Herkimer County School Districts**

Overview and Methodology

The Herkimer County System of Care administered the 2023-2024 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to local high school students. A total of 1,213 students in grades 9-12 participated, across ten school districts. Participating districts included, Town of Webb (TOW), Richfield Springs, Pathways, Frankfort-Schuyler, Central Valley Academy (CVA), Herkimer, Mount Markham, Owen D. Young (ODY), 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 10 districts. However, certain groups, such as students in alternative education settings, homeschooled students, and private school students, were not included. The participation count of 1,213 is considered sufficient to reflect the high school population in Herkimer County. 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.

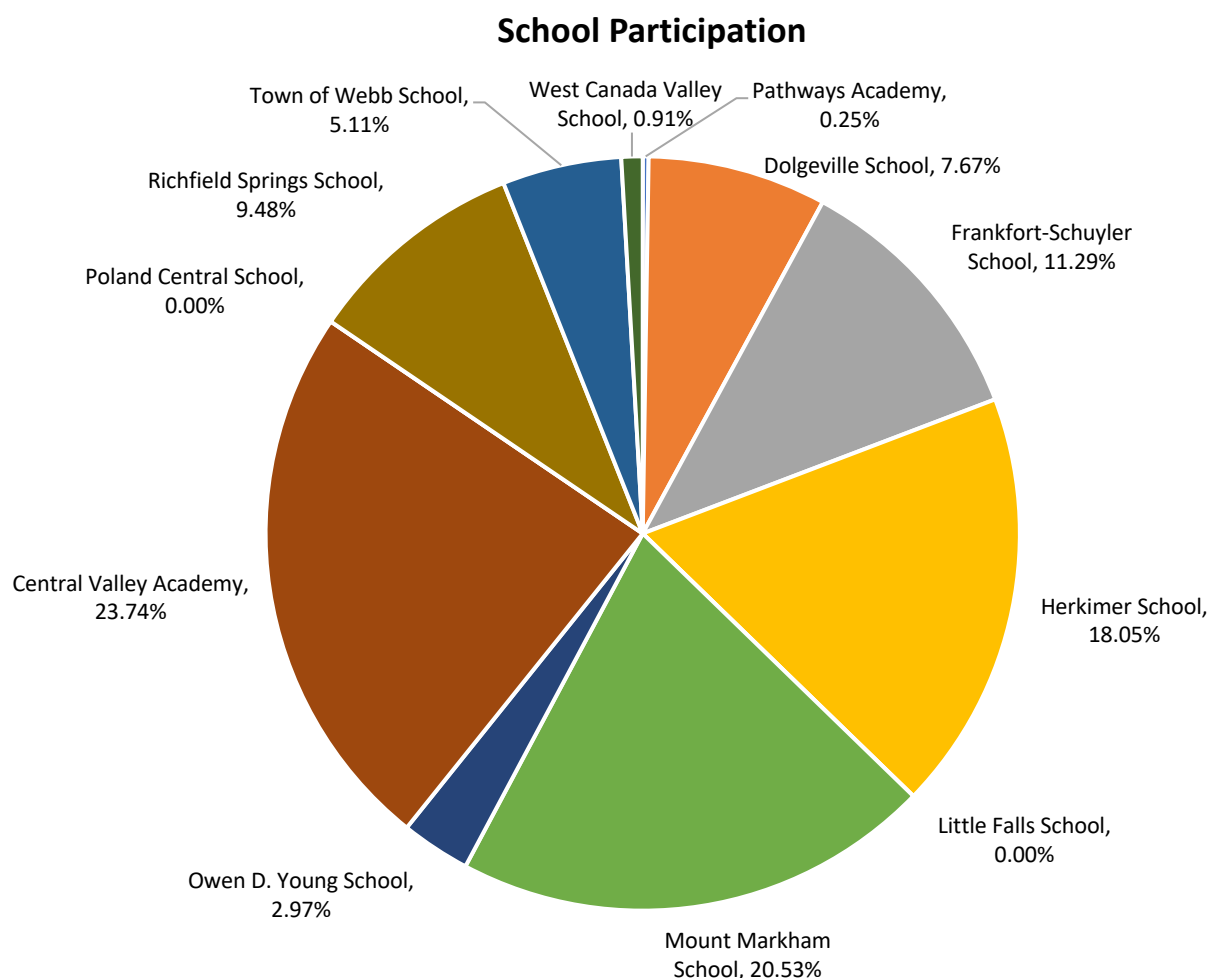
This survey aims to describe the prevalence of various risk behaviors among Herkimer County youth rather than explain the motivations behind these behaviors. Individual district reports will be provided for each participating school. We caution against direct comparisons between districts due to differences in community dynamics, resources, and district-specific challenges. 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 2023-2024 YRBS. This year, ten districts participated in the survey: Dolgeville, Town of Webb, Richfield Springs, Pathways, Frankfort-Schuyler, Central Valley Academy, Herkimer, Mount Markham, Owen D. Young, and West Canada Valley. Little Falls declined to participate due to scheduling conflicts. Poland Central School District did not participate because it conducted its own internal analysis. Student participation rates varied by school. Overall, 1,213 students completed the survey, with varying student participation rates across school districts.

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



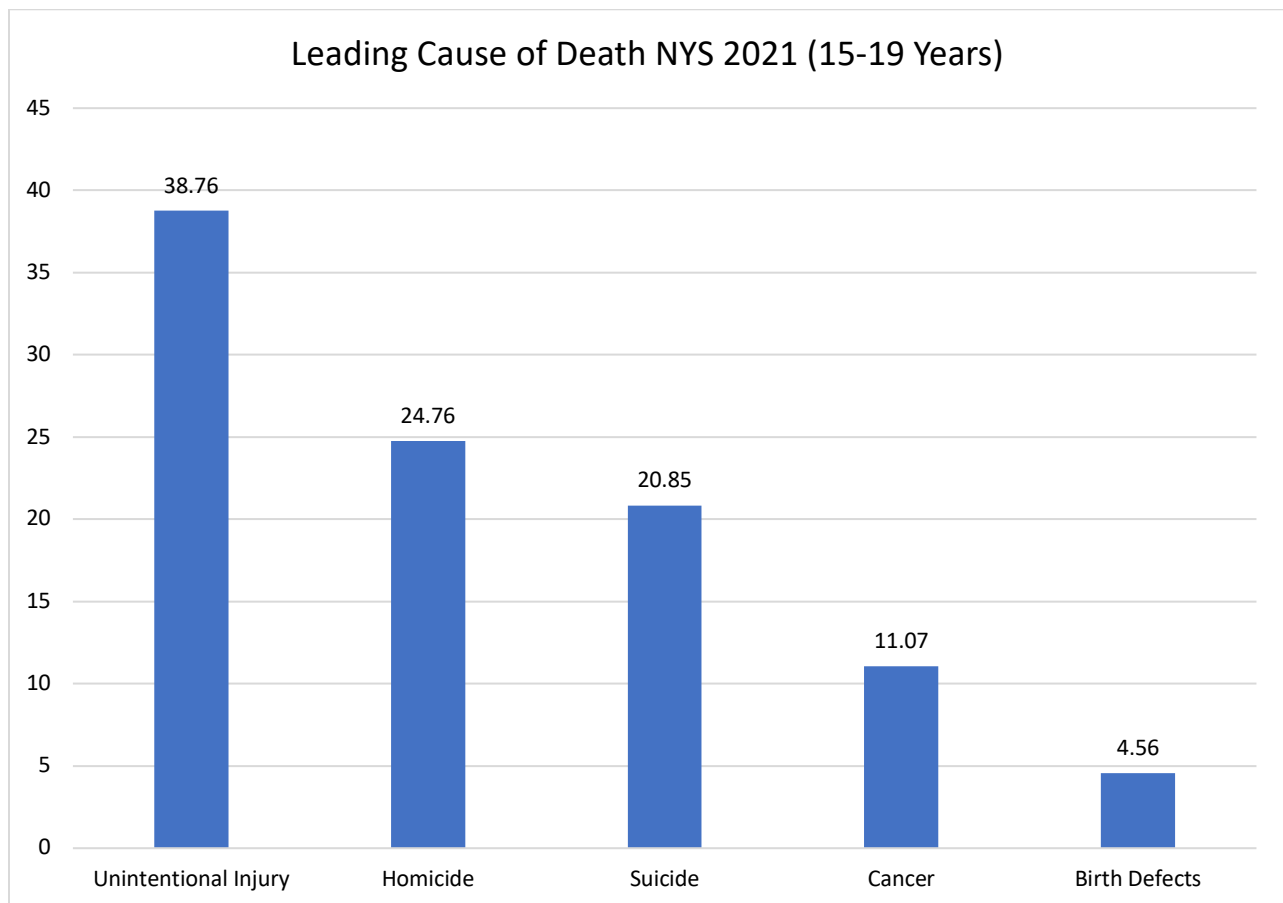
Adolescent Mortality

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 15-19 in New York State are unintentional injury, homicide, and suicide. Cancer and birth defects also rank among the top five causes.¹

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

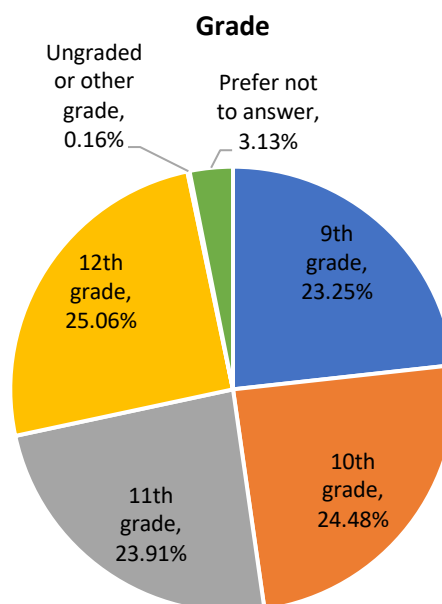
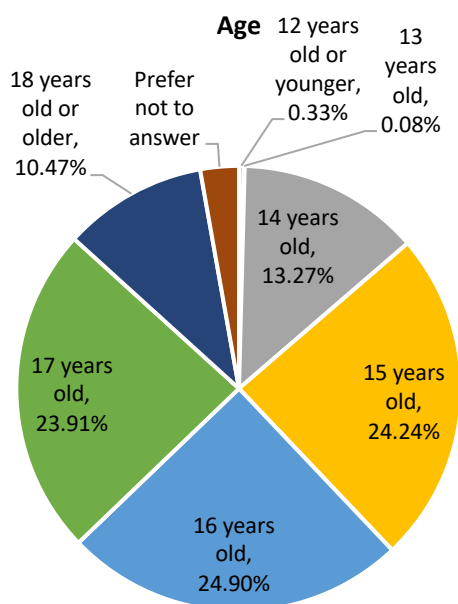
These statistics underscore the importance of addressing risky behaviors and mental health concerns among local youth, with a particular focus on preventing motor vehicle injuries and supporting mental health initiatives to reduce suicide rates.

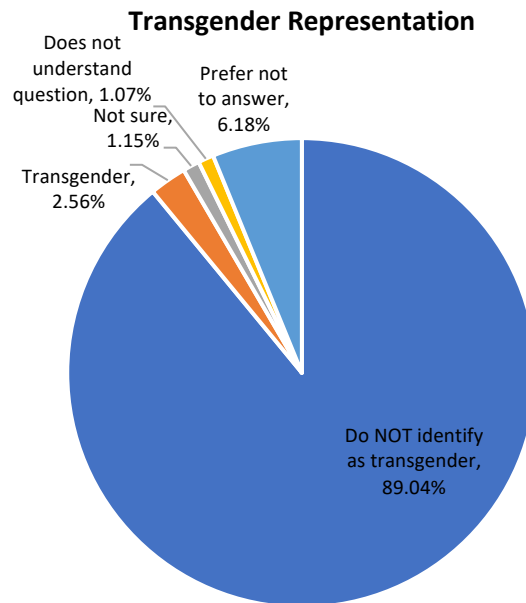
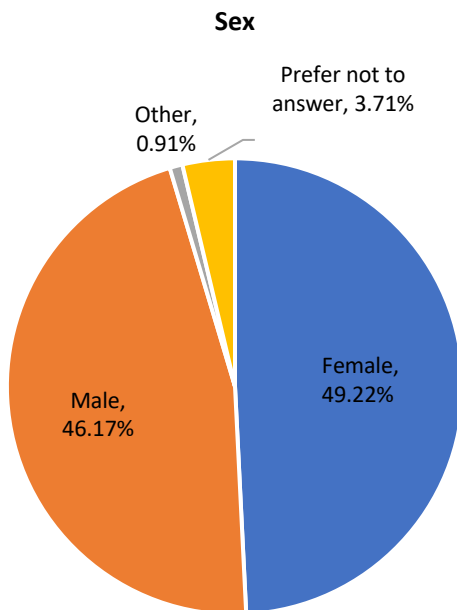
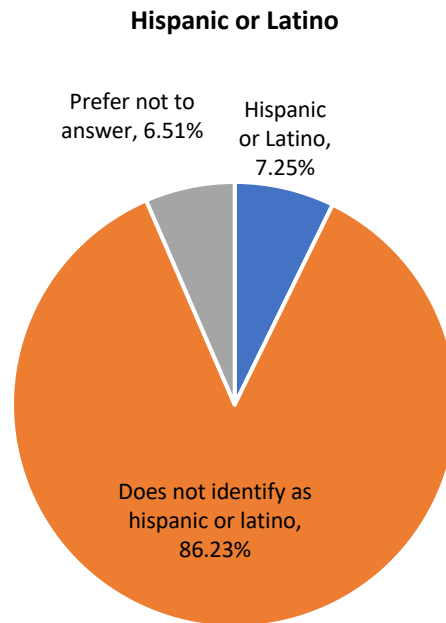
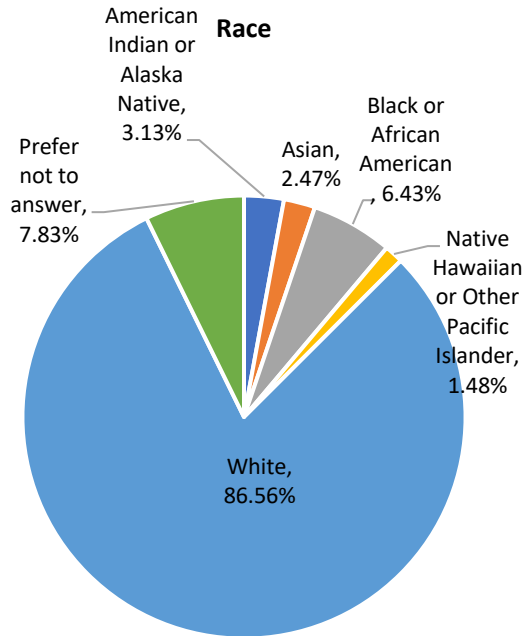


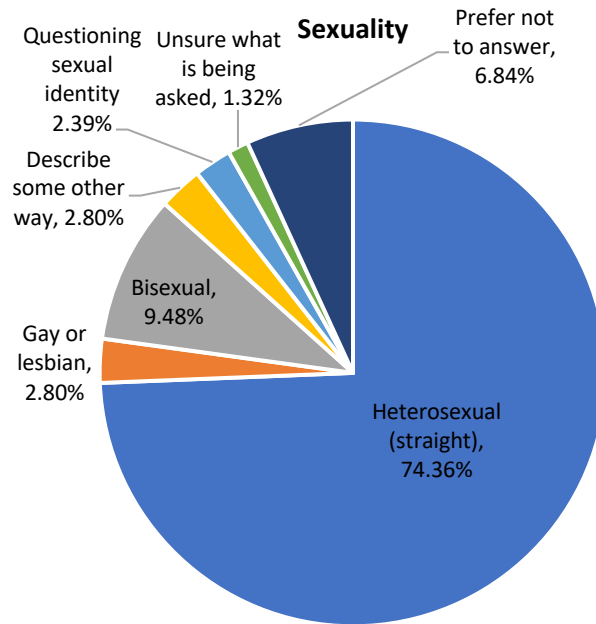
Demographics

The following tables provide an overview of the demographic characteristics of students who participated in the 2023-2024 YRBS in Herkimer County. The survey captured a balanced representation across various ages, grades, and sexes, closely reflecting the overall adolescent population within the county.

Most respondents identified as White and Non-Hispanic. The survey included a range of gender identities and sexual orientations, with responses grouped where necessary to ensure privacy. These demographic details help to contextualize the survey results and inform targeted health initiatives that address the specific needs of Herkimer County's youth.







Demographic Summary

Key Findings of Participant Demographic Characteristics

- **Grade Distribution:** The majority of respondents are in 12th (25.06%) and 10th grade (24.48%), with small percentages ungraded or opting not to answer.
- **Age Distribution:** Most respondents are 16 (24.90%) and 15 years old (24.24%), with a smaller portion aged 13 or younger and some preferring not to answer.
- **Ethnicity:** The majority (86.23%) do not identify as Hispanic or Latino, with 7.25% identifying as Hispanic or Latino, and 6.51% preferring not to answer.
- **Race:** Most respondents identify as White (86.56%), followed by Black or African American (6.43%) and smaller representations from other racial groups; 7.83% preferred not to answer.
- **Sex:** The sample is relatively balanced, with 49.22% identifying as female, 46.17% as male, 0.91% as other, and 3.71% preferring not to answer.
- **Transgender Representation:** A majority (89.04%) do not identify as transgender, with 2.56% identifying as transgender and 6.18% preferring not to answer.
- **Sexuality:** The majority identify as heterosexual (74.36%), with bisexuality as the second-largest group (9.48%). Smaller percentages identify as gay or lesbian (2.80%), describe their sexuality in other ways (2.80%), or are questioning (2.39%). Of note, 6.84% preferred not to answer.

Motor Vehicle Safety

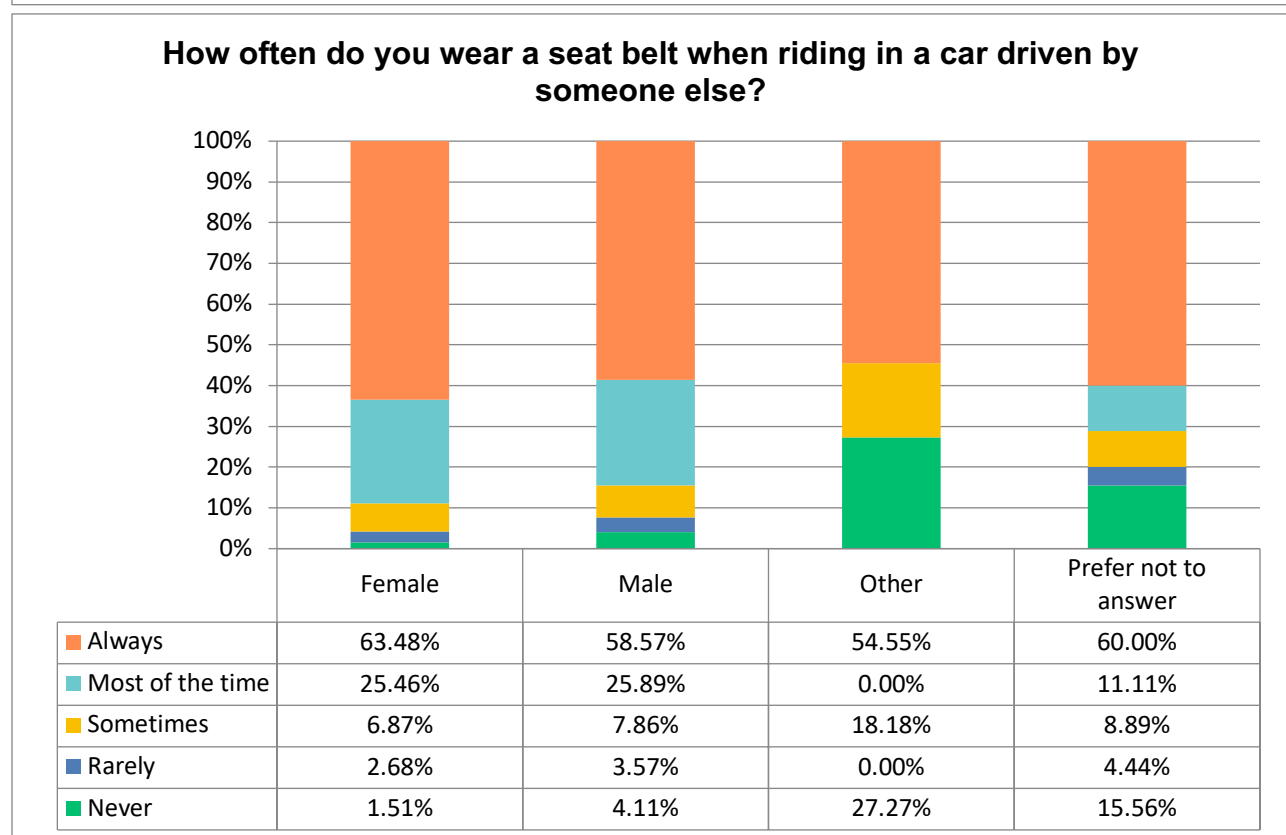
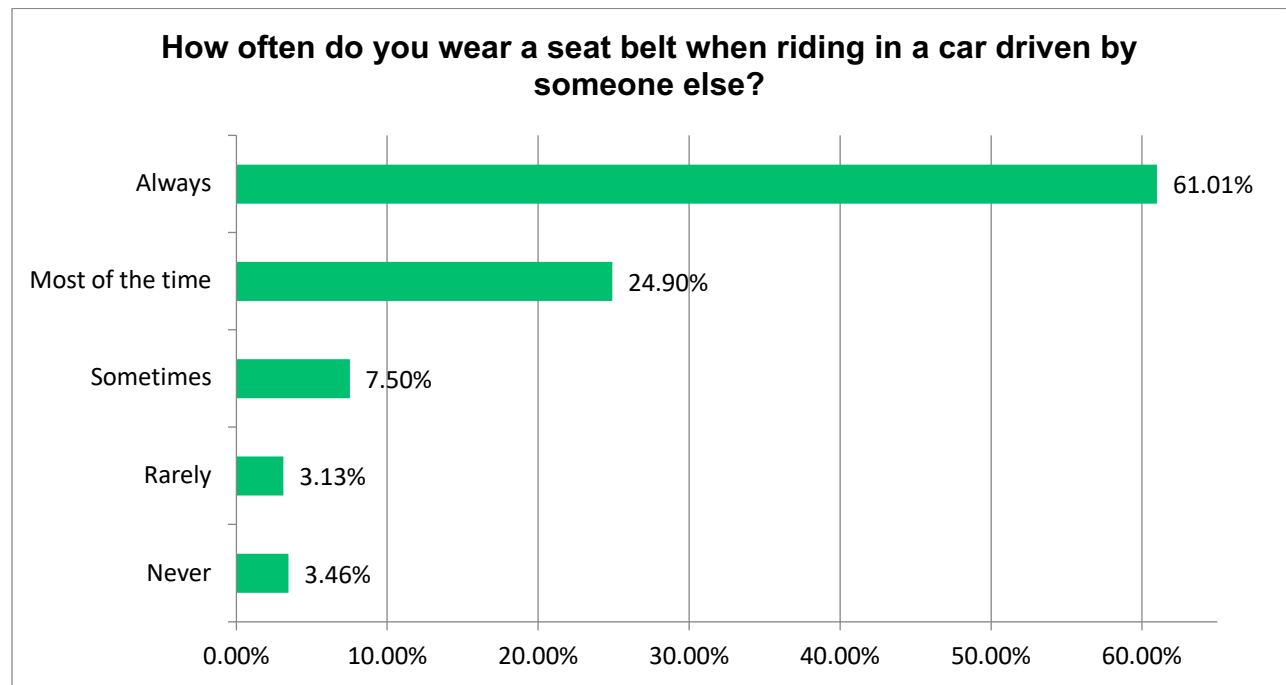
Motor vehicle crashes continue to be a leading cause of death among U.S. teenagers, with the CDC reporting an average of seven teen fatalities each day due to crash-related injuries.³ These incidents are largely preventable, highlighting the importance of understanding teen driving and passenger behaviors to shape effective initiatives that reduce road risks.

The YRBS examines a range of 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 drivers who are impaired. This comprehensive approach allows us to identify both positive habits and areas of concern, helping to inform targeted interventions.

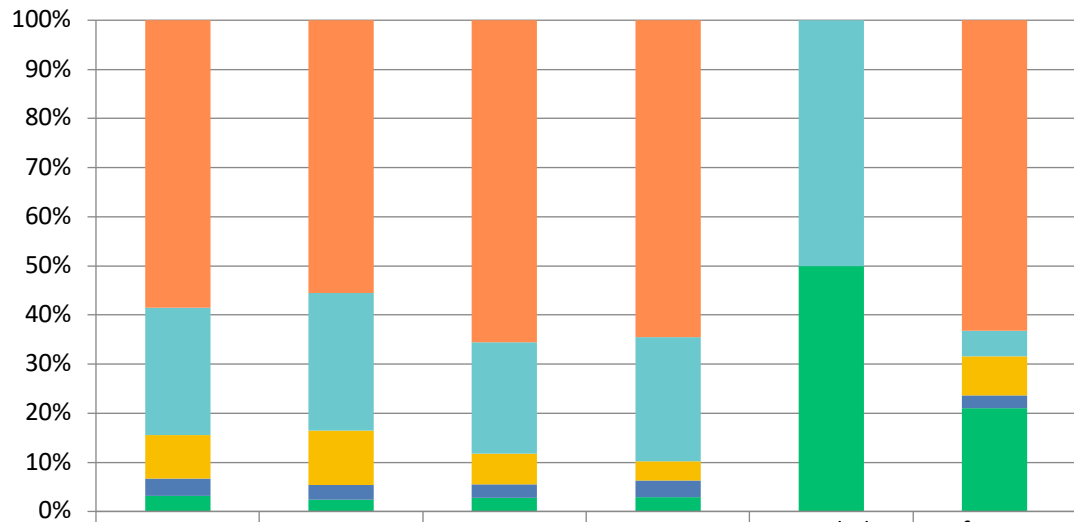
This year's survey findings reveal a mix of positive behaviors and areas for concern among students regarding motor vehicle safety. Many students report avoiding high-risk behaviors, such as driving under the influence of alcohol or marijuana and texting while driving. However, some risky behaviors persist: a subset of students still report occasionally riding in vehicles with drivers who have been drinking or using marijuana. This suggests that peer influence and impaired driving remain issues. Seatbelt use is generally high, though variations across grade levels and demographics indicate a need for continued awareness and reinforcement of safety practices.

While trends show increased caution, there are still areas where students could benefit from further education on safe driving and decision-making skills. The following graphs represent responses from youth about their recent driving behaviors. Students also had the option to indicate if they had not driven in the past 30 days, offering clearer insight into those who may not yet be licensed or who do not regularly drive.

General Vehicle Safety Behaviors



How often do you wear a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else?

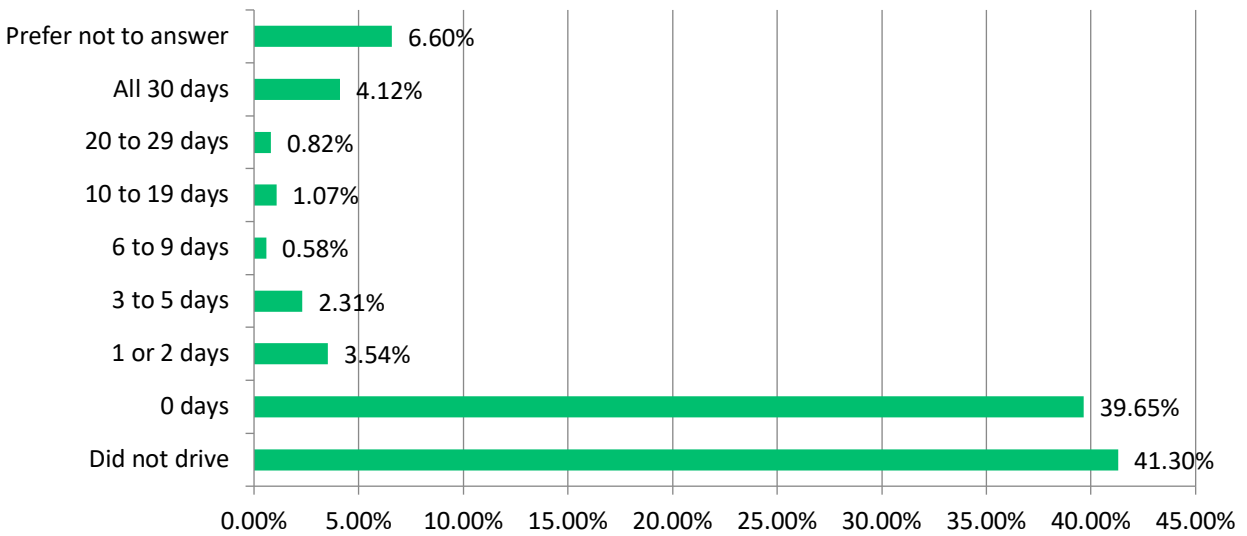


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Always	58.51%	55.56%	65.52%	64.47%	0.00%	63.16%
Most of the time	25.89%	27.95%	22.76%	25.33%	50.00%	5.26%
Sometimes	8.87%	11.11%	6.21%	3.95%	0.00%	7.89%
Rarely	3.55%	3.03%	2.76%	3.29%	0.00%	2.63%
Never	3.19%	2.36%	2.76%	2.96%	50.00%	21.05%

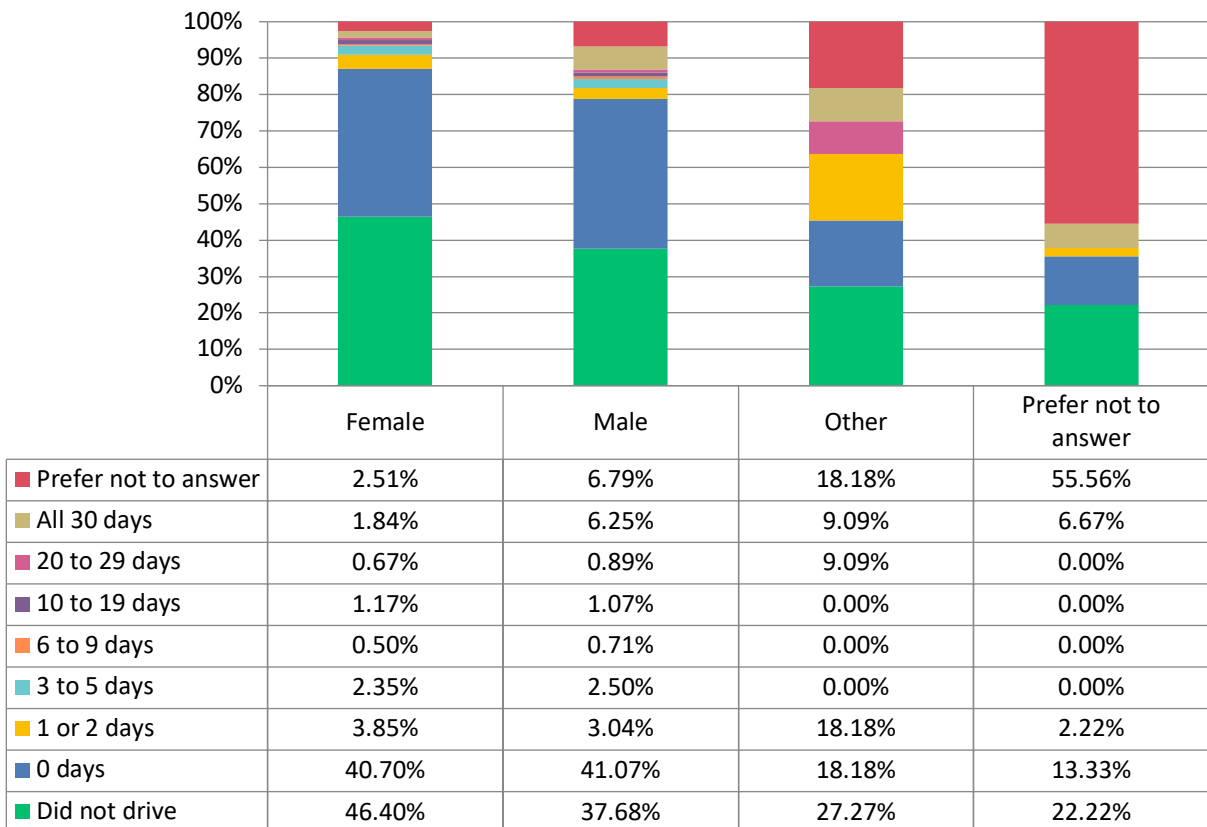
Key Findings on Seat Belt Usage

- High Consistency in Seat Belt Use:** A majority of students consistently wear seat belts, with 61.01% reporting they "Always" wear a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else. Additionally, 24.90% wear a seat belt "Most of the time," bringing the overall frequent usage to 85.91%. A small proportion of students report "Never" wearing a seat belt (3.46%).
- Gender Differences:** There are slight gender differences in seat belt usage. Female students have the highest rate of consistent seat belt use at 63.48%, followed by males at 58.57%, and students identifying as "Other" at 54.55%. Notably, a notable percentage of students identifying as "Other" gender report "Never" wearing a seat belt (27.27%).
- Grade Differences:** Seat belt usage increases slightly by grade level. For instance, 58.51% of 9th graders report "Always" wearing a seat belt, which rises to 64.47% among 12th graders. This gradual increase might suggest greater seat belt awareness or responsibility with age.

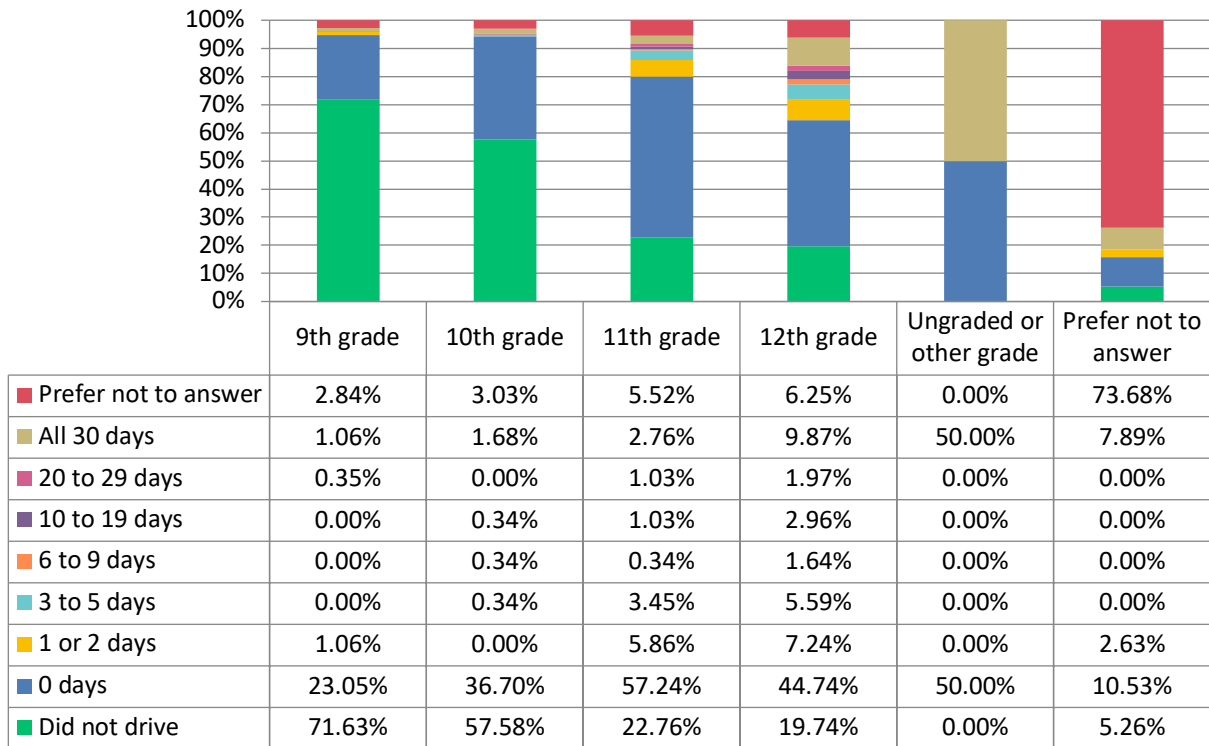
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you text or e-mail while driving a car or other vehicle?



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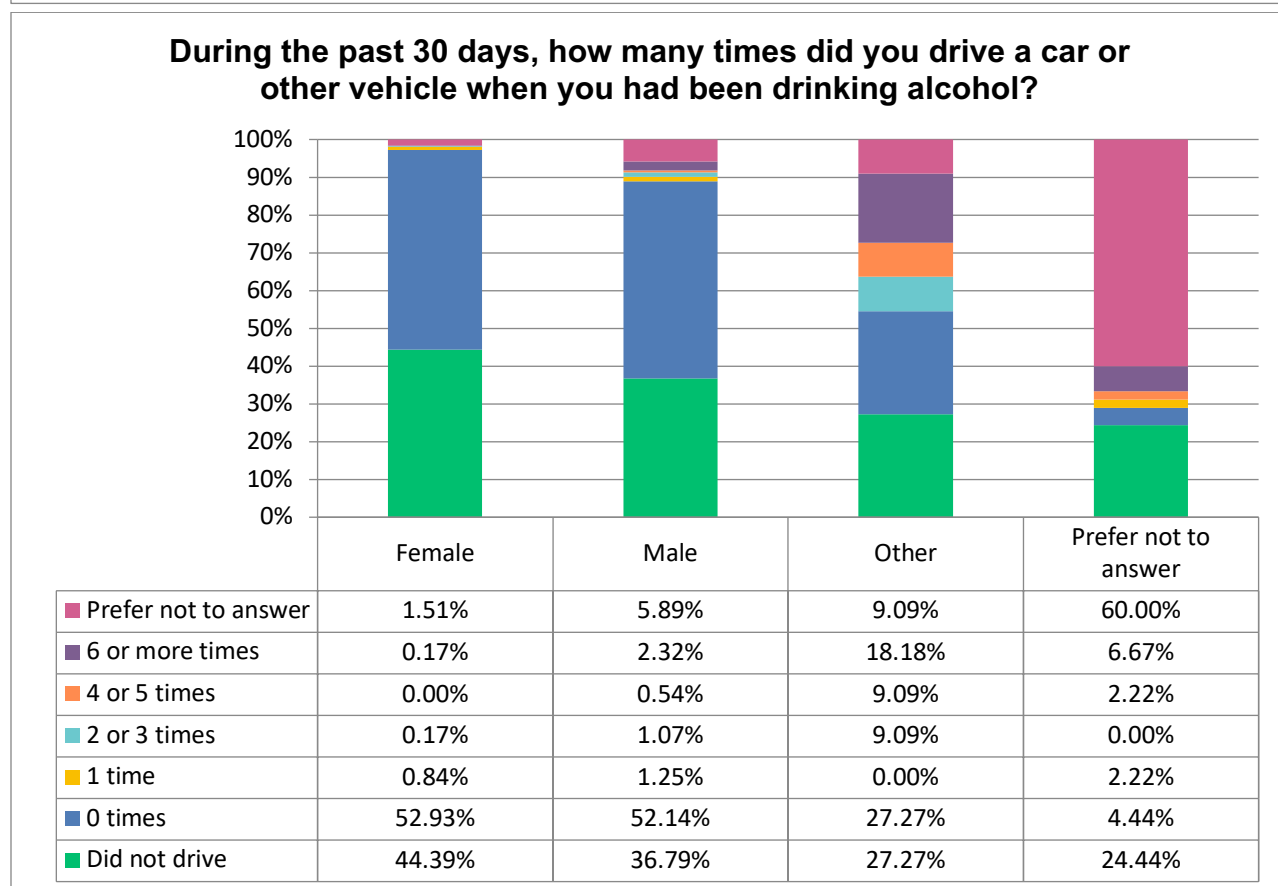
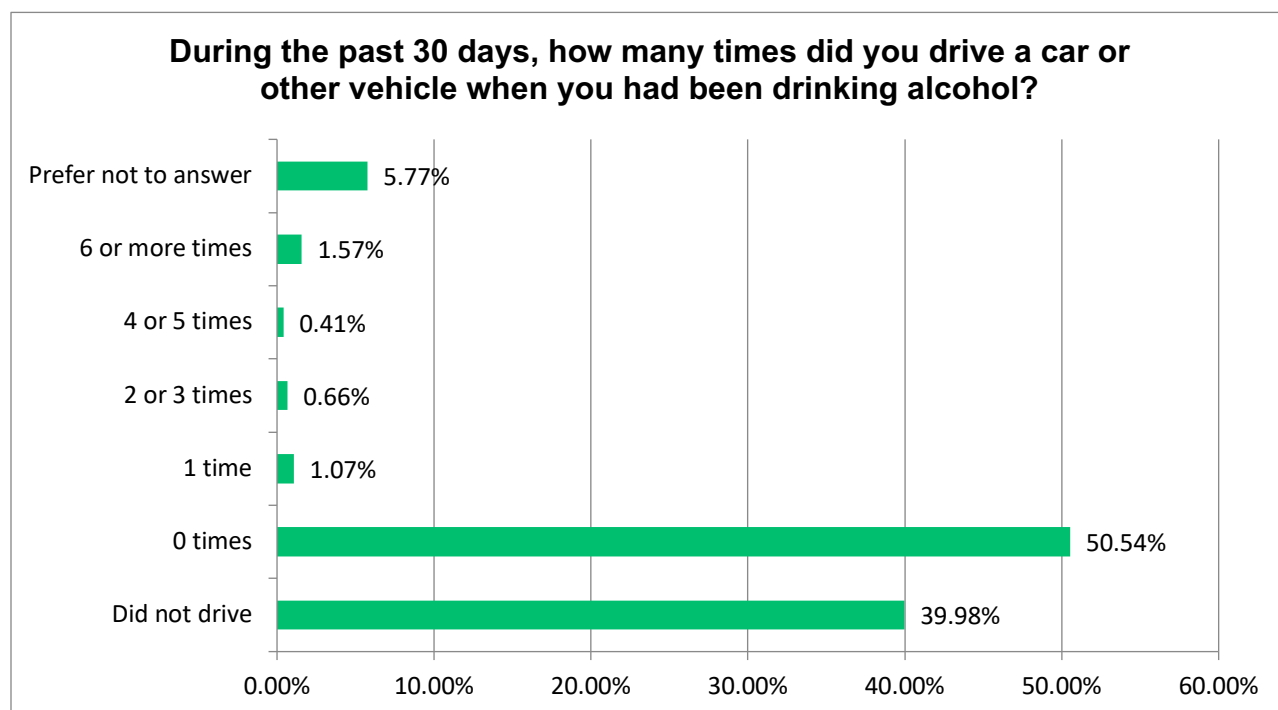
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you text or e-mail while driving a car or other vehicle?



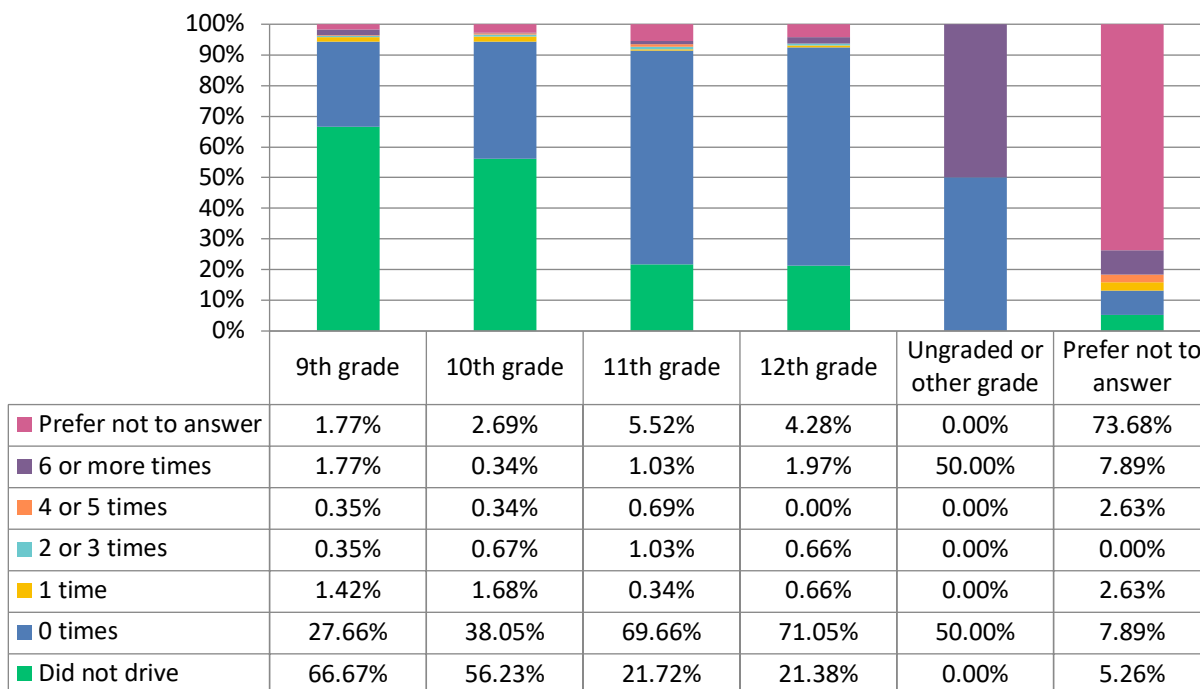
Key Findings on Texting or Email While Driving Among Students

- **High Rate of Non-Drivers:** A large portion (41.30%) of respondents reported that they did not drive in the past 30 days, with this percentage varying slightly across demographics. Of those who did drive, a large proportion indicated they refrained from texting or emailing while driving, with 39.65% of respondents reporting "0 days" of texting/emailing while driving in the past month.
- **Gender Differences:** Males reported a slightly higher frequency of texting or emailing while driving compared to females. Specifically, 6.25% of males admitted to texting/emailing while driving all 30 days, compared to 1.84% of females.
- **Grade Differences:** The likelihood of texting or emailing while driving increases with grade level. In 9th grade, only 1.06% reported texting while driving all 30 days, while this percentage rose to 9.87% by 12th grade. The percentage of students reporting that they did not drive decreased across grades, from 71.63% in 9th grade to 19.74% in 12th grade. This suggests a trend towards more frequent driving and potentially more frequent distracted driving as students progress through school.

Motor Vehicles and Alcohol Use



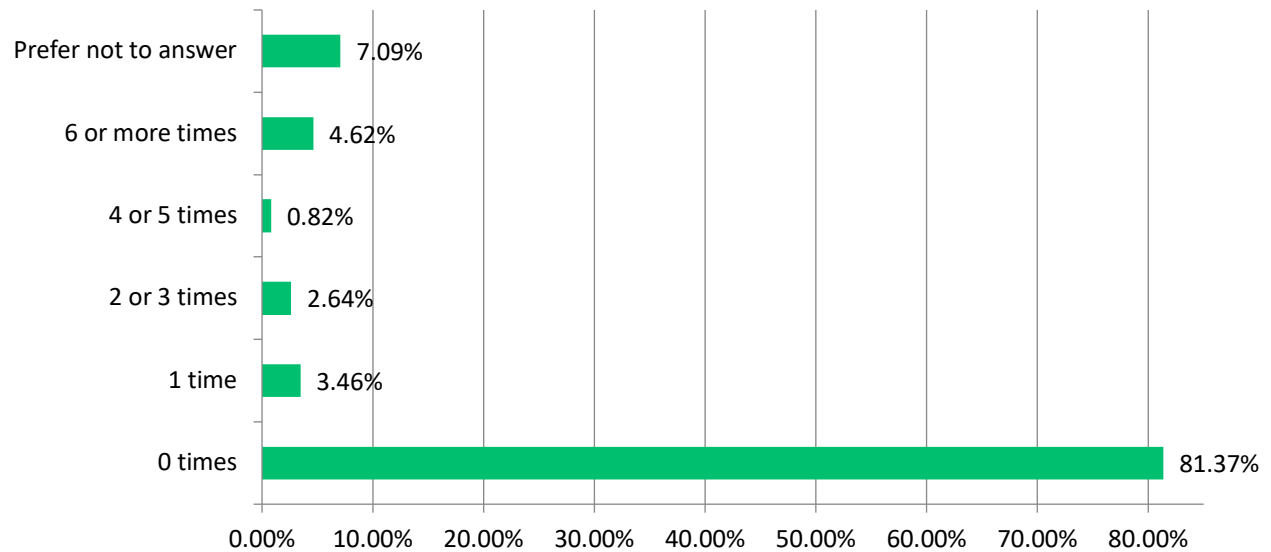
During the past 30 days, how many times did you drive a car or other vehicle when you had been drinking alcohol?



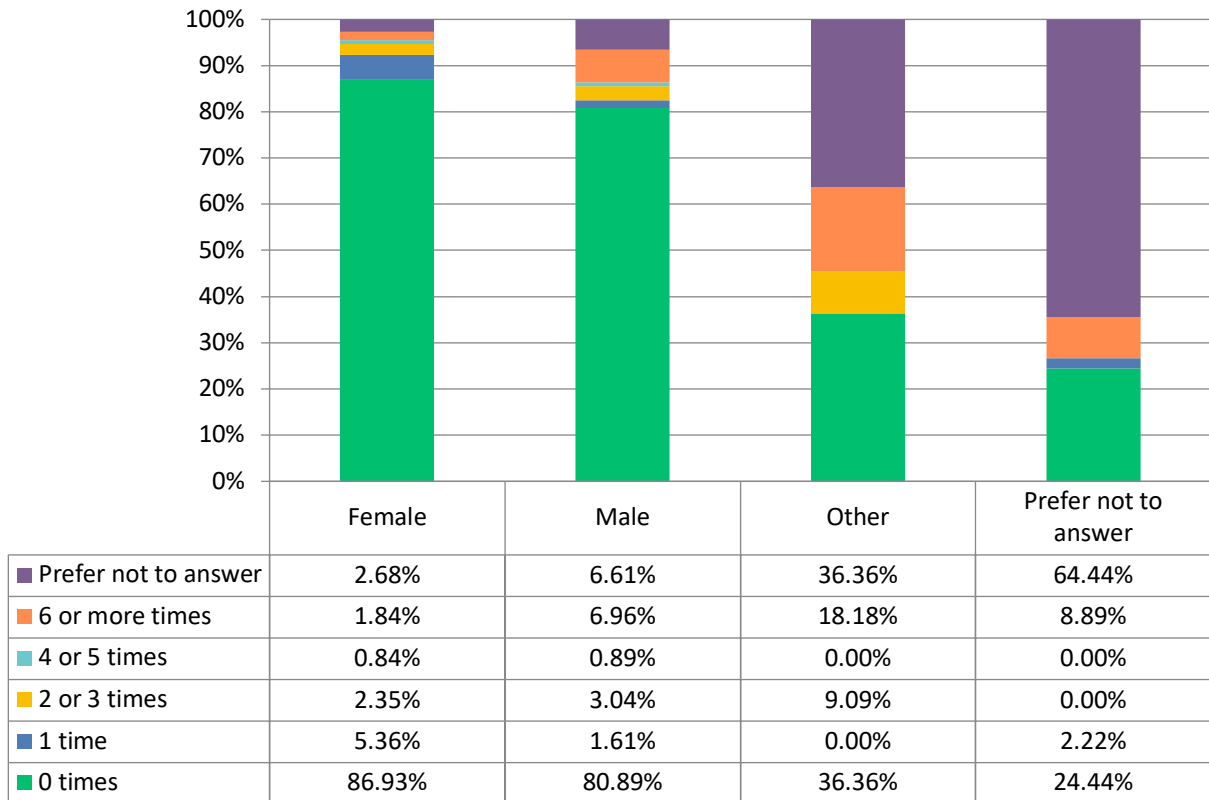
Key Findings on Alcohol-Impaired Driving

- Majority Abstain from Drinking and Driving:** A large portion of students (50.54%) reported not driving after consuming alcohol in the past 30 days. An additional 39.98% indicated they did not drive at all. Only a small percentage of students reported repeated occurrences of drinking and driving. Specifically, 1.57% drove after drinking six or more times, 0.41% four or five times, and 0.66% two or three times.
- Gender Differences:** Male students showed slightly higher rates of drinking and driving, with 2.32% reporting six or more instances compared to only 0.17% among females. Females reported the highest rate of abstention, with 52.93% stating they never drove after drinking, followed by 52.14% of males.
- Grade Differences:** The likelihood of driving after drinking alcohol appears to decrease with grade level. Specifically, 27.66% of 9th graders and 38.05% of 10th graders reported not driving after consuming alcohol, with this rate rising to 71.05% among 12th graders.
- Uncertainty and Non-Disclosure:** A notable percentage of students preferred not to answer (5.77%), with higher non-disclosure rates (73.68%) among those who did not specify a grade. This reluctance may indicate privacy concerns or a lack of comfort in disclosing drinking and driving behavior.

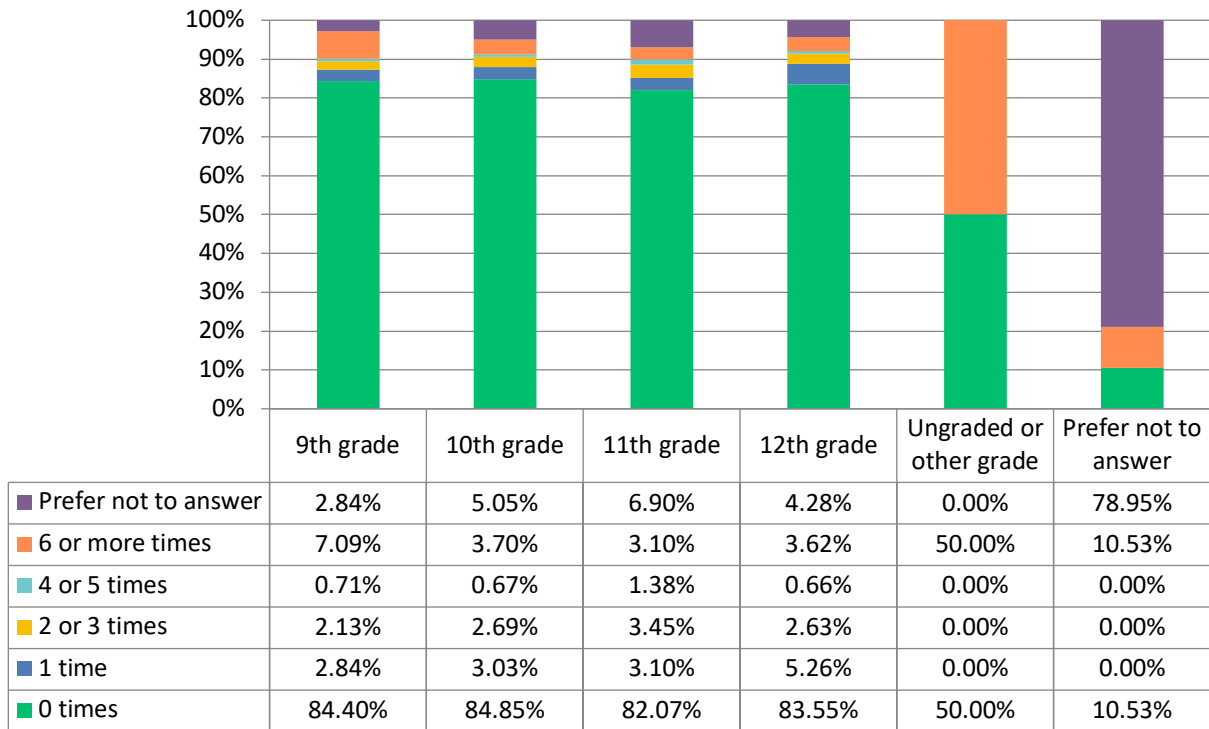
During the past 30 days, how many times did you ride in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol?



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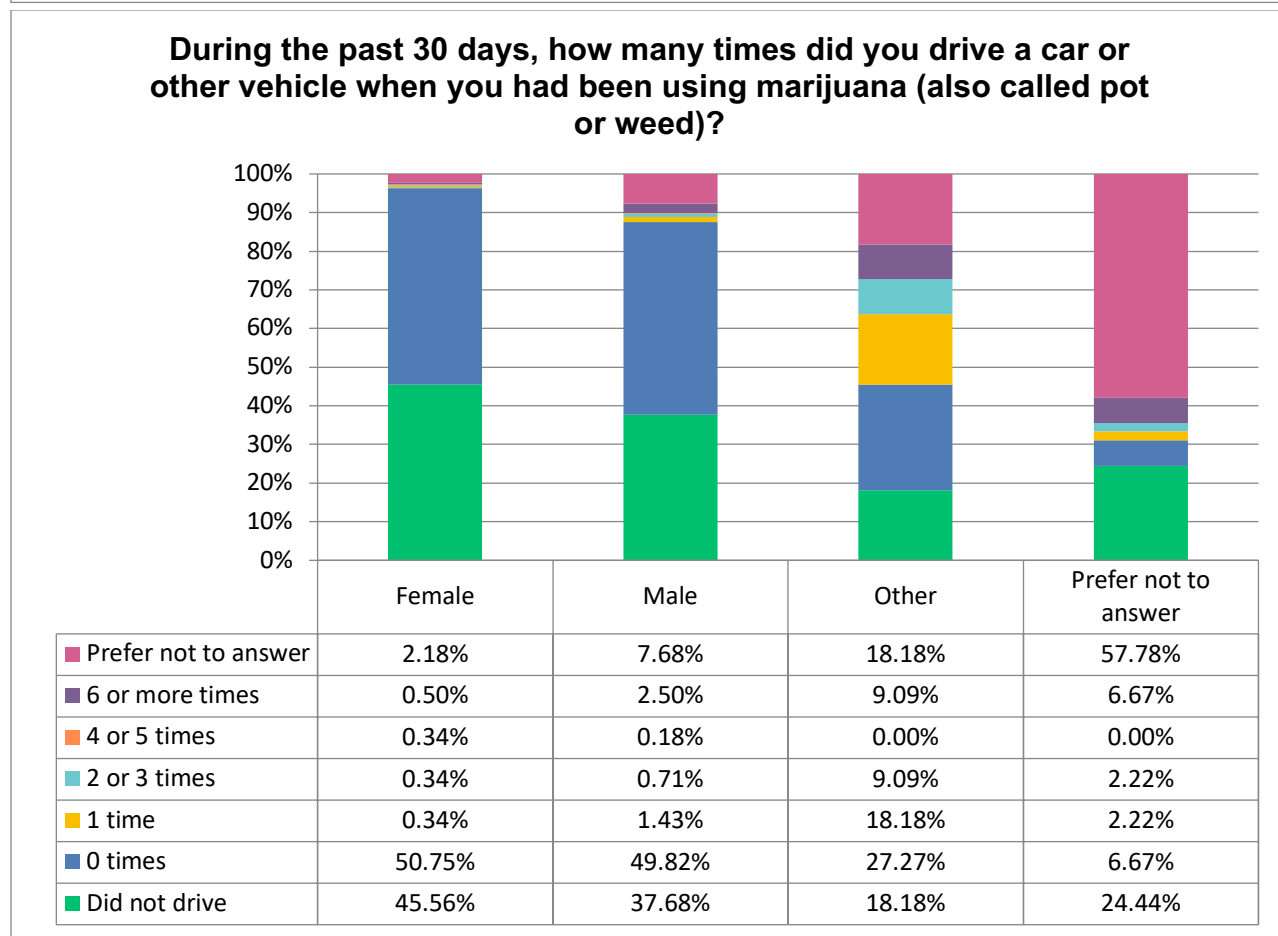
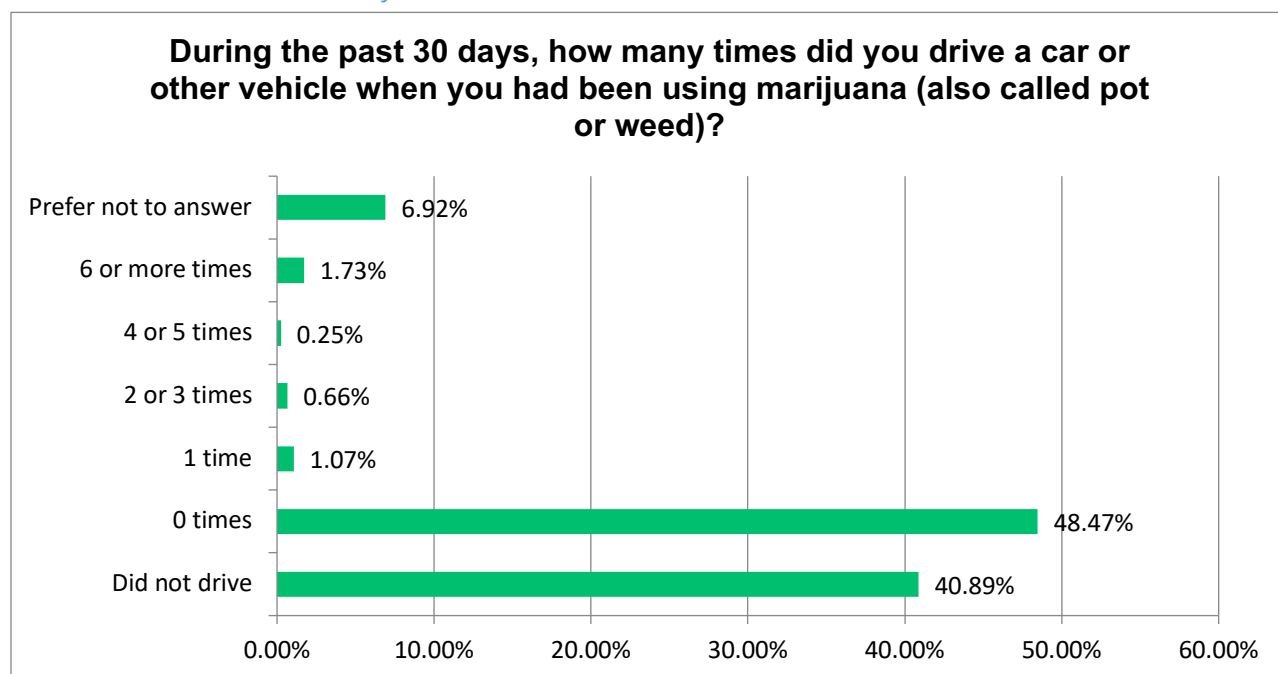
During the past 30 days, how many times did you ride in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol?



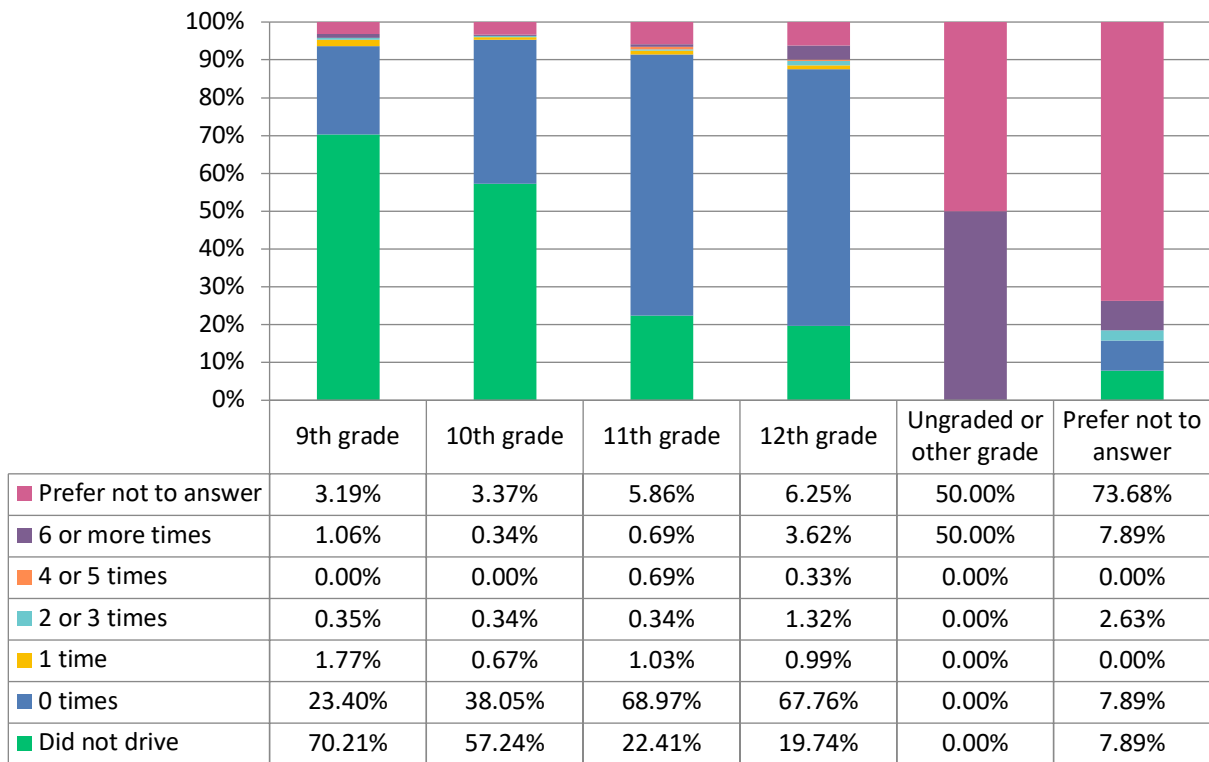
Key Findings on Riding with Drivers Who Have Been Drinking Alcohol

- **High Level of Avoidance:** The vast majority of students (81.37%) reported that they did not ride in a car driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol in the past 30 days, indicating strong adherence to safety practices among the majority.
- **Gender Differences:** There are notable gender differences in responses. A larger percentage of female students (86.93%) reported never riding with someone who had been drinking, compared to 80.89% of male students and 36.36% of students who identified as "Other."
- **Grade Differences:** While younger students, such as 9th graders, report higher levels of avoidance (84.40% of 9th graders said "0 times"), this number decreases slightly by 12th grade, where 83.55% of students report never riding with someone who had been drinking.
- **Privacy Concerns in Certain Groups:** A notable percentage of students, especially those who chose not to disclose their grade level (78.95%), selected "Prefer not to answer," indicating either privacy concerns or hesitation to disclose this behavior.

Motor Vehicles and Marijuana Use



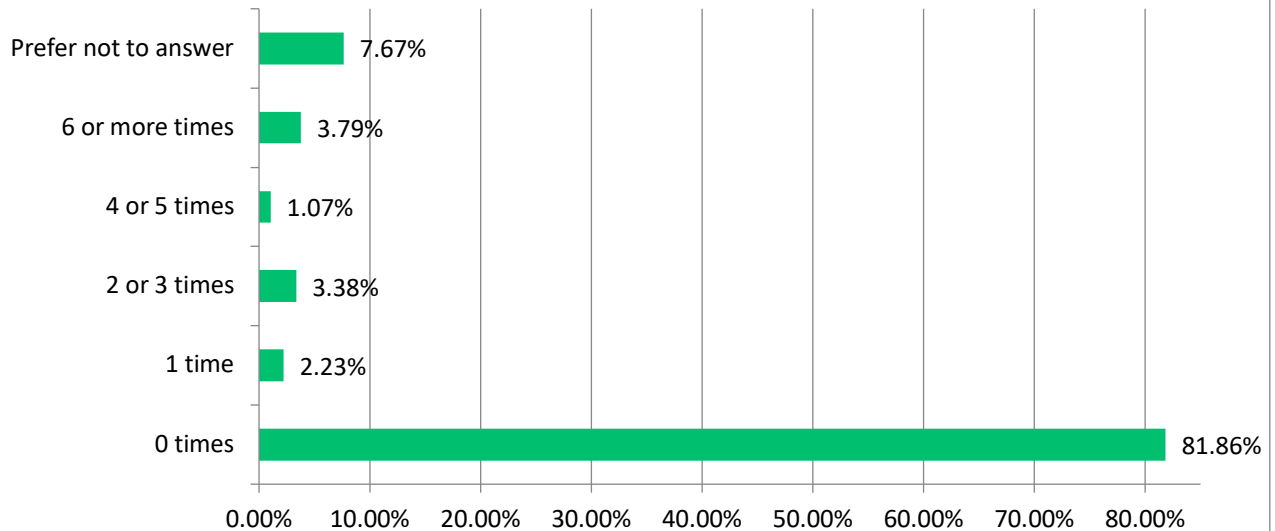
During the past 30 days, how many times did you drive a car or other vehicle when you had been using marijuana (also called pot or weed)?



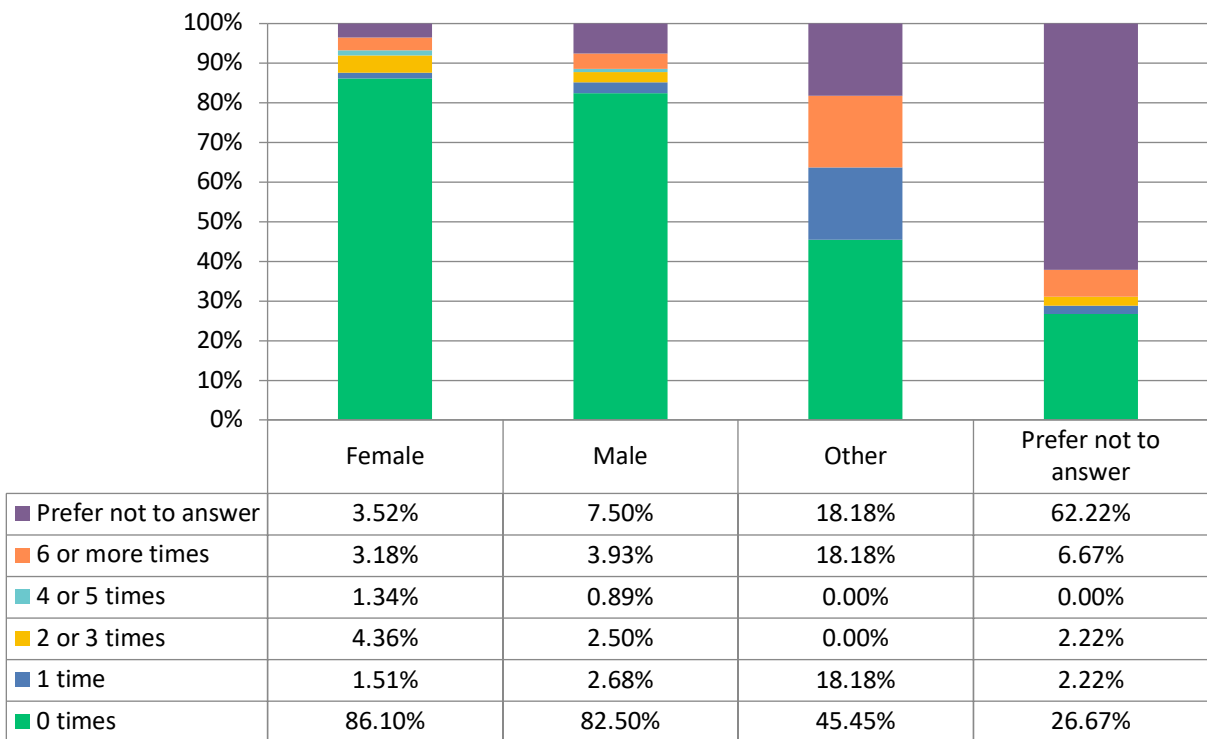
Key Findings on Driving After Using Marijuana

- **Majority Not Driving After Using Marijuana:** Nearly half (48.47%) of students reported that they did not drive after using marijuana in the past 30 days. Additionally, 40.89% of students reported not driving at all. A small percentage reported driving multiple times after using marijuana, with 1.07% reporting one instance, 0.66% reporting two or three times, and 1.73% indicating they drove six or more times after using marijuana.
- **Gender Differences:** Those identifying as "Other" (18.18%) were more likely to report driving after using marijuana compared to males (1.43) and females (0.34%).
- **Grade Differences:** Reports of driving after using marijuana vary across grade levels. Among 9th graders, 70.21% did not drive and 23.40% reported zero times. By 12th grade, this shifted, with 19.74% not driving and 67.76% reporting zero times. Higher grades also showed a slight increase in students who drove once or twice after marijuana use, especially among 11th and 12th graders.
- **Privacy Concerns:** A portion of students (6.92%) preferred not to answer, and this percentage was notably high among the "Other" gender group (18.18%).

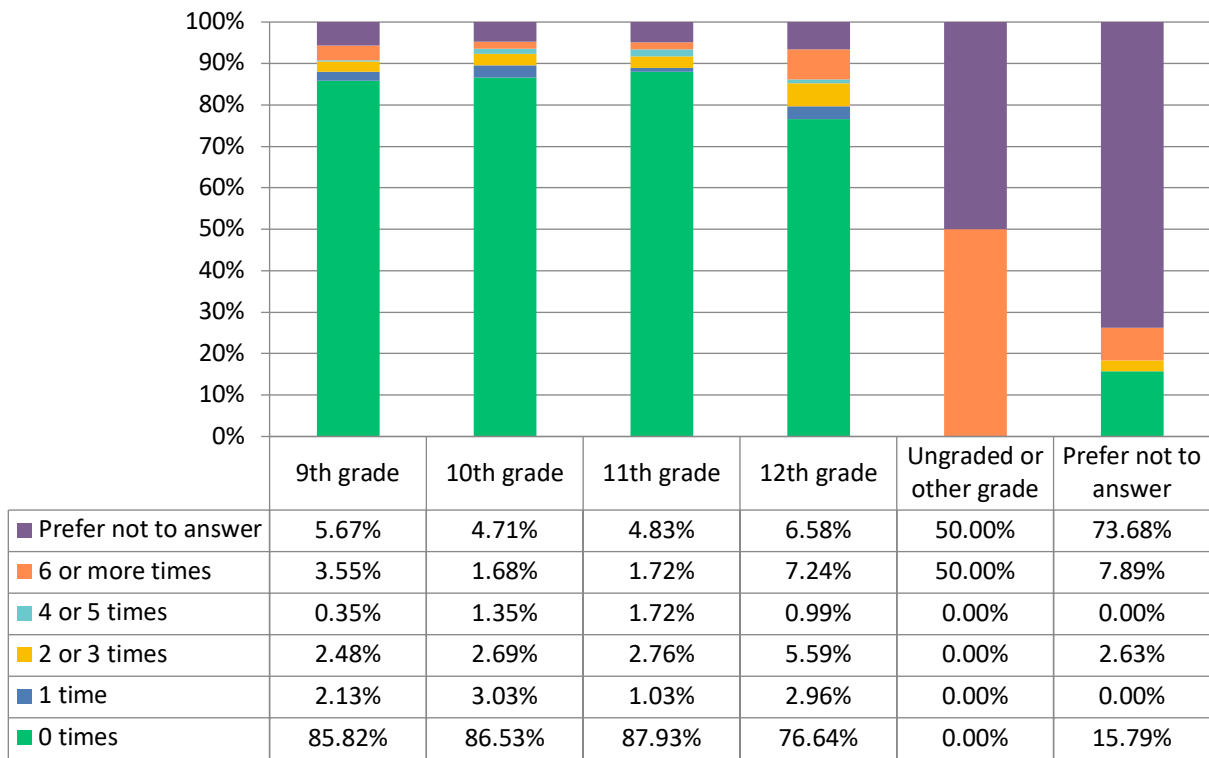
During the past 30 days, how many times did you ride in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been using marijuana (also called pot or weed)?



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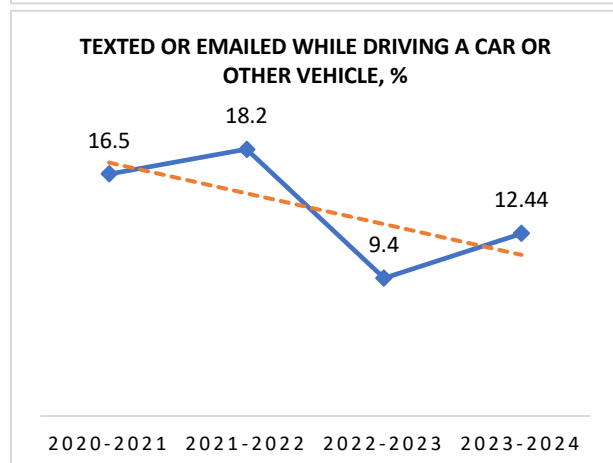
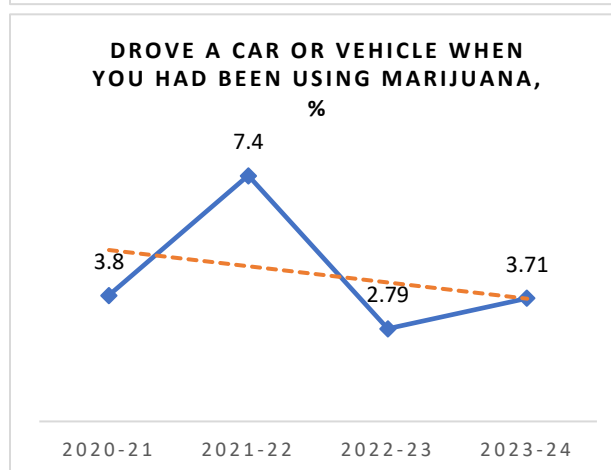
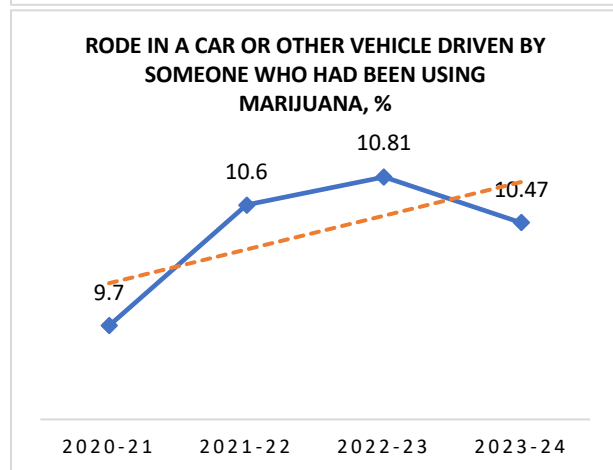
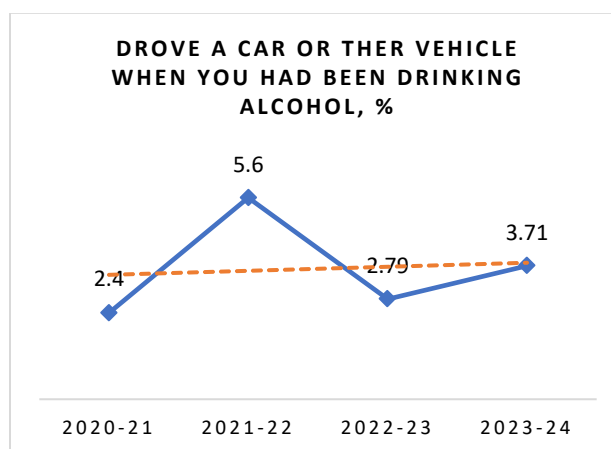
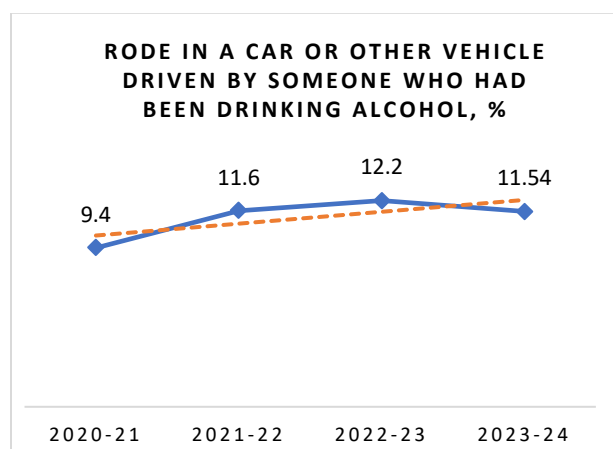


Key Findings on Riding in a Vehicle Driven by Someone Using Marijuana:

- **High Rates of Avoidance:** A majority (81.86%) of respondents reported never riding in a car driven by someone under the influence of marijuana. This suggests a high level of awareness or caution regarding this behavior.
- **Gender Differences:** Females reported the highest avoidance rate, with 86.10% indicating they never rode with someone using marijuana, followed by males at 82.50%. Those who identified as "Other" reported a lower avoidance rate at 45.45%.
- **Grade Differences:** The percentage of students who reported never riding with someone using marijuana slightly decreases as grade level progresses, from 85.82% in 9th grade to 76.64% in 12th grade.
- **Privacy Concerns:** A notable portion of students (7.67%) preferred not to answer, with the rate being particularly high among ungraded students (50.00%) and those who chose "Prefer not to answer" (73.68%), indicating possible privacy concerns or reluctance to disclose this information.

Risky Driving Behaviors Over Time

This section examines patterns of risk behaviors related to motor vehicle use among students over the past four years. 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.



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 3.71% in 2023-2024, 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 11.54% in 2023-2024, 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 3.71% in 2023-2024, showing an overall decrease with some variability across the years.
- **Consistent 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 10.47% in 2023-2024, with minimal fluctuation, indicating that this behavior has remained relatively stable.
- **Decrease in Texting or Emailing While Driving:** Over the past four years, the percentage of students who reported texting or emailing while driving decreased from 16.5% in 2020-2021 to 12.44% in 2023-2024, reflecting a downward trend in this risky behavior.

Violence-related Behaviors

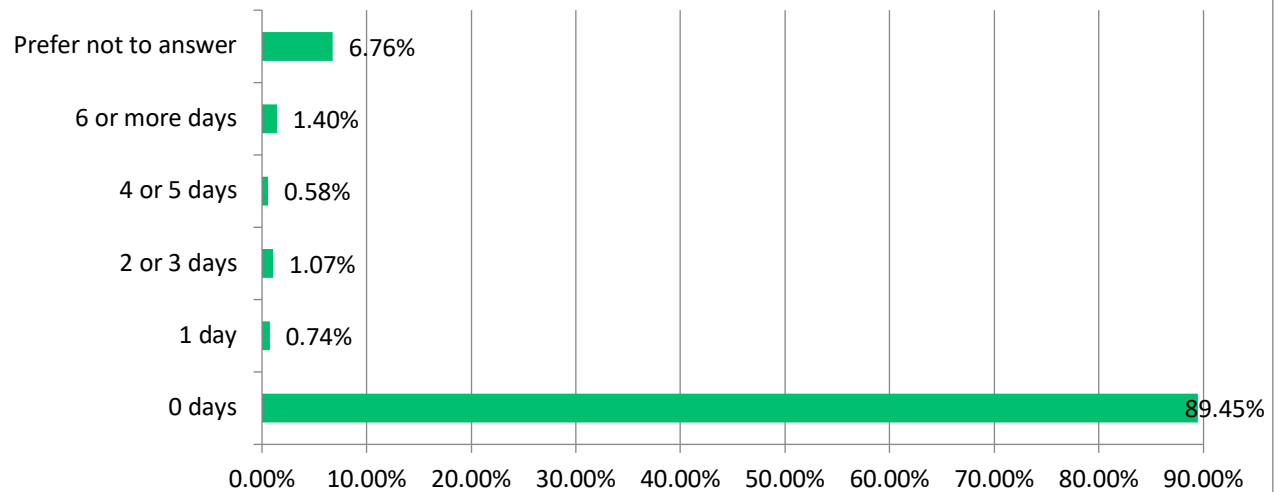
Adolescent violence is a significant issue that impacts health, academics, and overall well-being. Exposure to violence, whether through witnessing, experiencing, or participating in violent behaviors, can disrupt a young person's physical and mental health, academic performance, and social stability. This exposure often leads to poorer health outcomes, reduced economic prospects, and a shorter life expectancy. Beyond the immediate health risks, violence also affects academic success, contributing to school absences and lower grades.⁴

The latest YRBS data from Herkimer County provides insight into various violence-related behaviors. While most students report feeling safe and avoiding violent activities, a subset still report experiences with or involvement in violent incidents. Notably, there is a rising trend in reported threats or injuries involving weapons on school property, highlighting ongoing safety concerns. Although weapon-carrying on school grounds has recently declined slightly, it remains above previous levels.

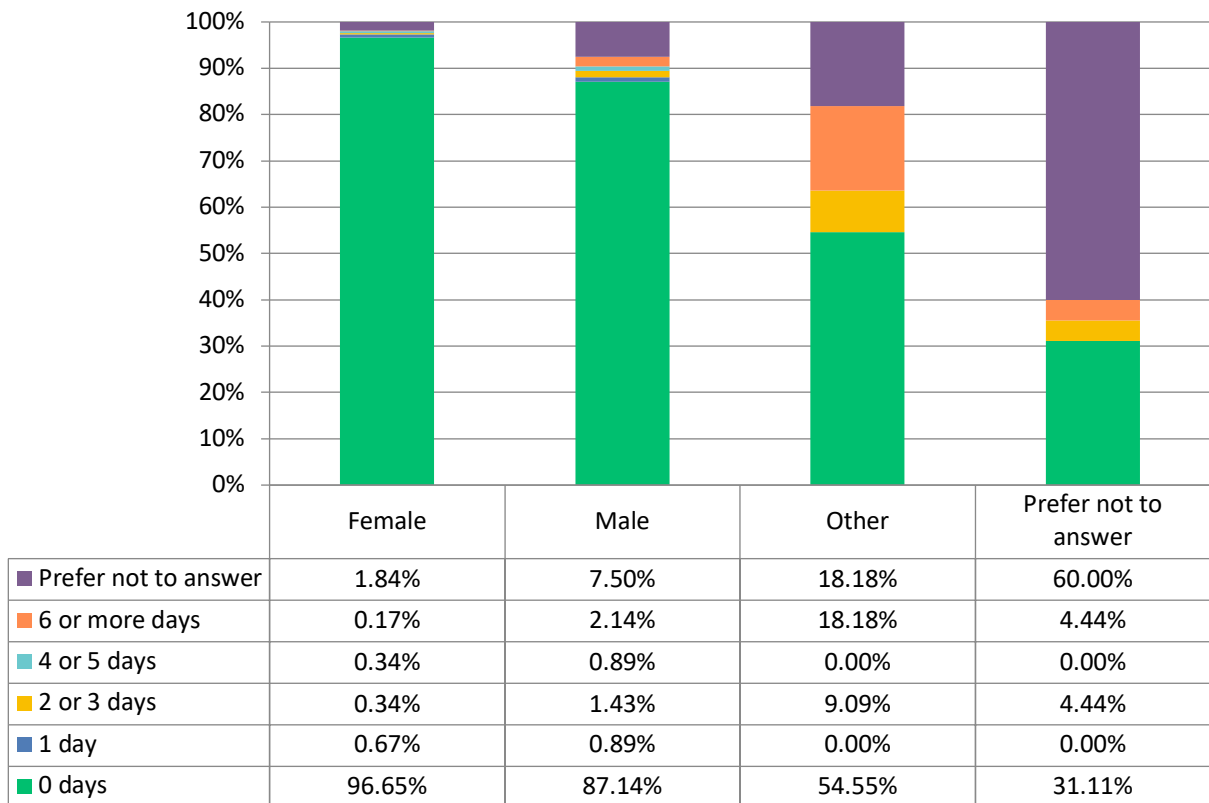
Physical altercations on school property have decreased recently, though they continue to fluctuate, reflecting ongoing student conflicts. Exposure to neighborhood violence is also prevalent, with nearly one in five students reporting that they have witnessed serious altercations. These findings underscore the need for targeted initiatives, such as conflict resolution programs, peer support systems, and enhanced security measures, to promote safer environments and strengthen students' sense of safety and support in both school and community settings.

Violence and Weapons

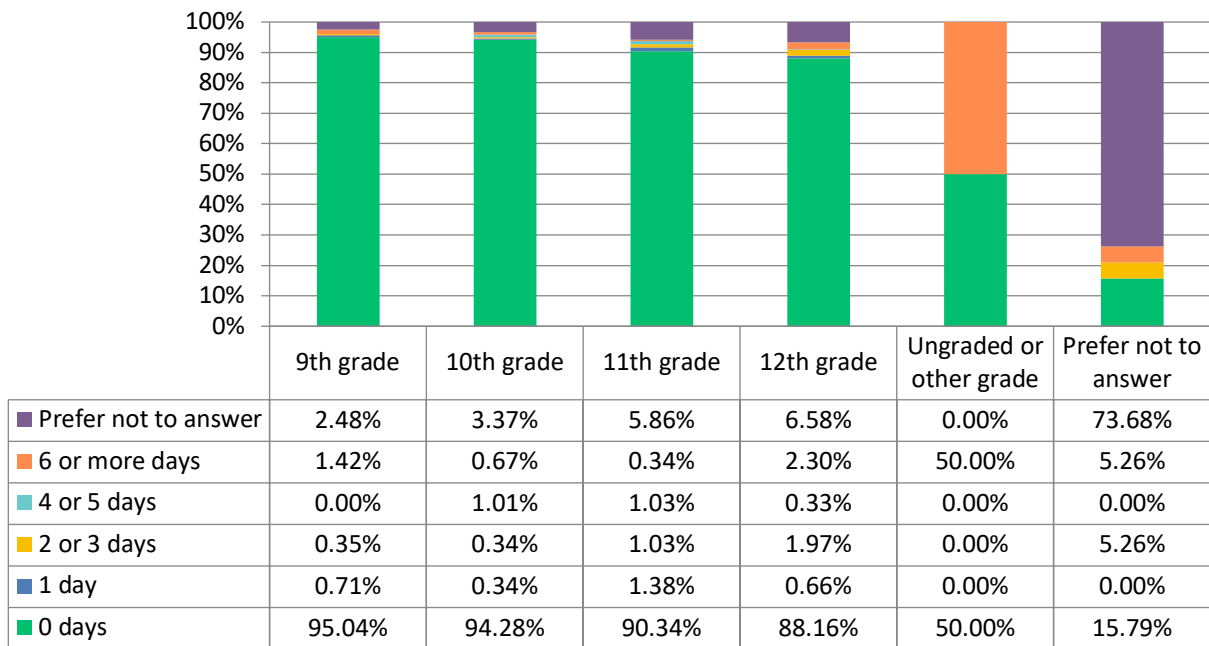
During the past 12 months, on how many days did you carry a gun? (Do not count the days when you carried a gun only for hunting or for a sport, such as target shooting).



During the past 12 months, on how many days did you carry a gun? (Do not count the days when you carried a gun only for hunting or for a sport, such as target shooting).



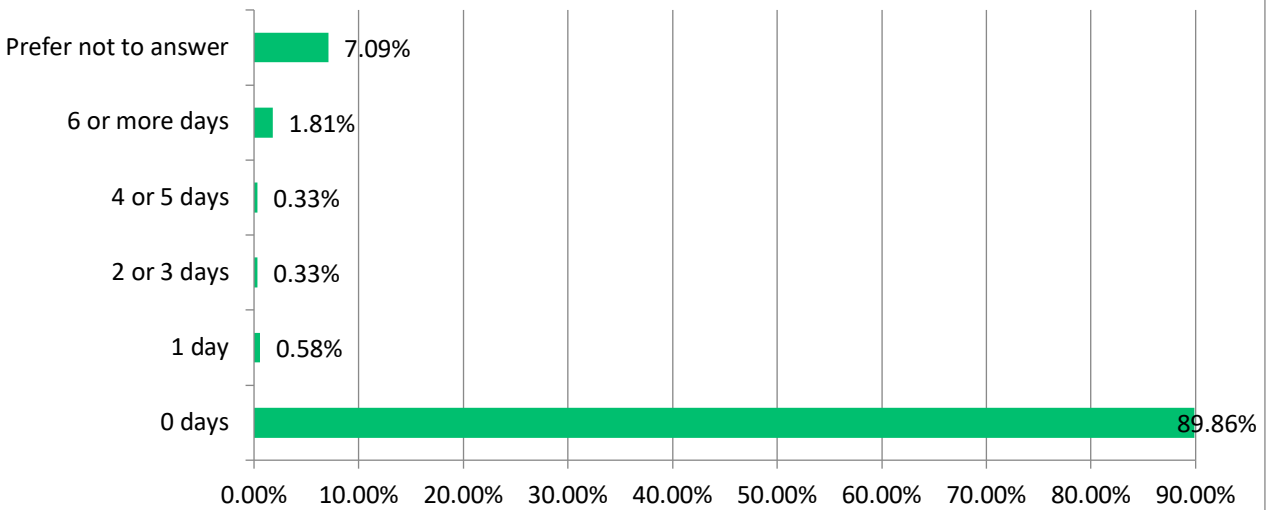
During the past 12 months, on how many days did you carry a gun? (Do not count the days when you carried a gun only for hunting or for a sport, such as target shooting).



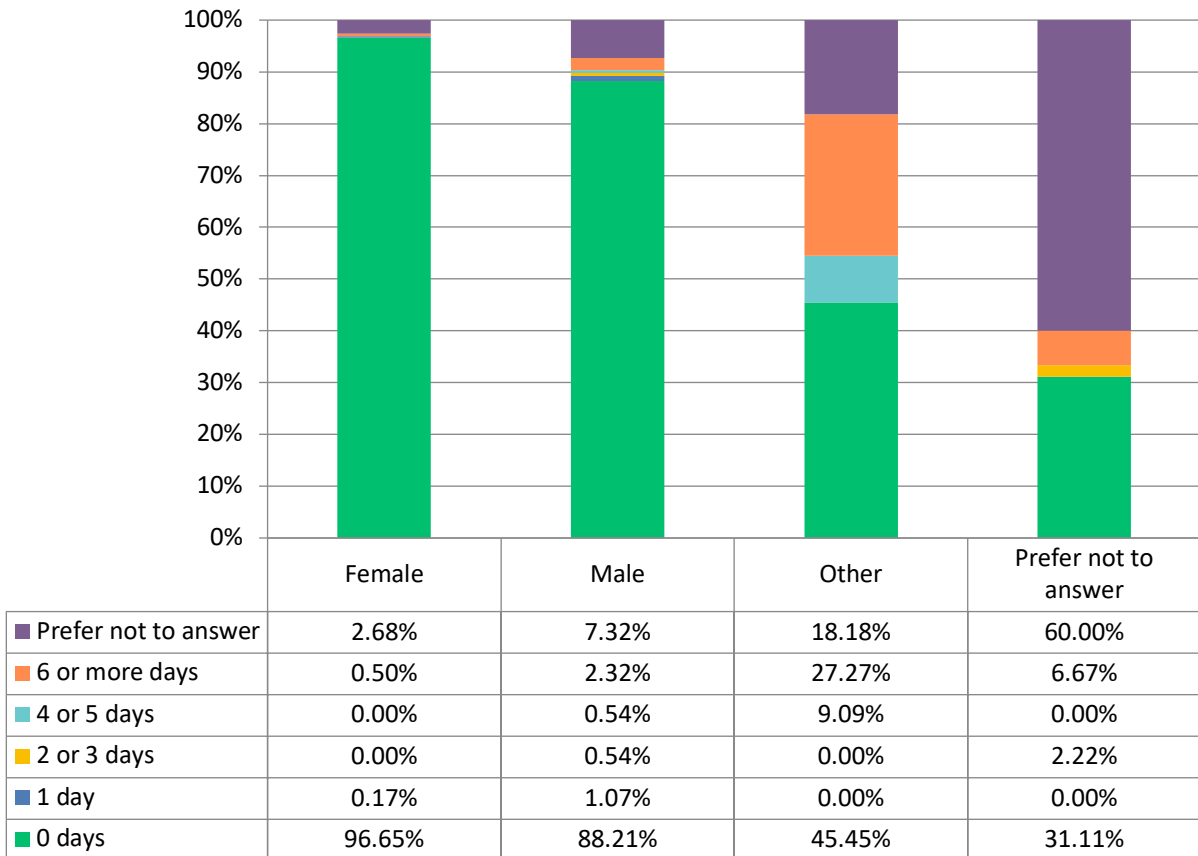
Key Findings on Carrying a Gun

- **Low Prevalence of Gun Carrying:** A large majority of students (89.45%) reported not carrying a gun in the past 12 months, suggesting that gun-carrying behavior in non-sporting contexts is relatively rare among surveyed students.
- **Gender Differences:** There are notable variations between genders, with 2.14% of males reporting carrying a gun six or more days, compared to only 0.17% of females. Meanwhile, students identifying as “Other” had the highest reported rates of carrying a gun for multiple days, with 18.18% indicating six or more days.
- **Grade Differences:** Gun-carrying incidents tend to increase slightly with grade level, with 1.42% of 9th graders reporting carrying a gun six or more times, rising to 2.30% in 12th grade.
- **Privacy and Non-Disclosure:** Approximately 7.09% of students preferred not to answer this question, with non-disclosure rates particularly high among students who identify as “Other” (18.18%) and those ungraded or in “other” grade categories (73.68%). This may suggest a level of discomfort or privacy concerns surrounding this sensitive topic.

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



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



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

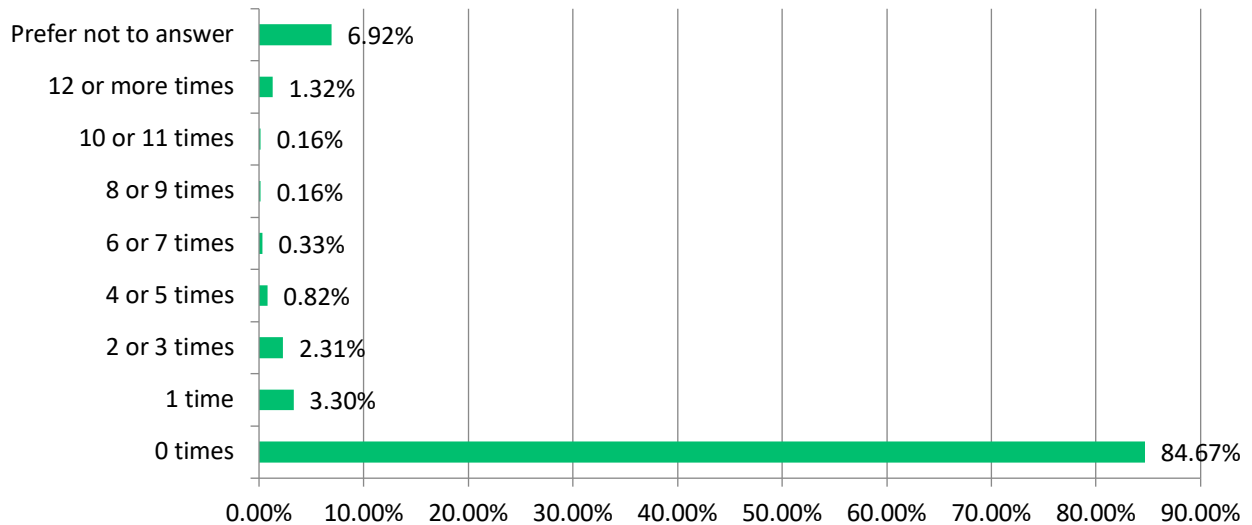


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	1.77%	4.38%	6.21%	6.91%	0.00%	76.32%
6 or more days	1.77%	0.67%	2.07%	1.97%	50.00%	5.26%
4 or 5 days	0.35%	0.34%	0.34%	0.33%	0.00%	0.00%
2 or 3 days	0.00%	0.00%	0.69%	0.33%	0.00%	2.63%
1 day	0.71%	0.34%	1.03%	0.33%	0.00%	0.00%
0 days	95.39%	94.28%	89.66%	90.13%	50.00%	15.79%

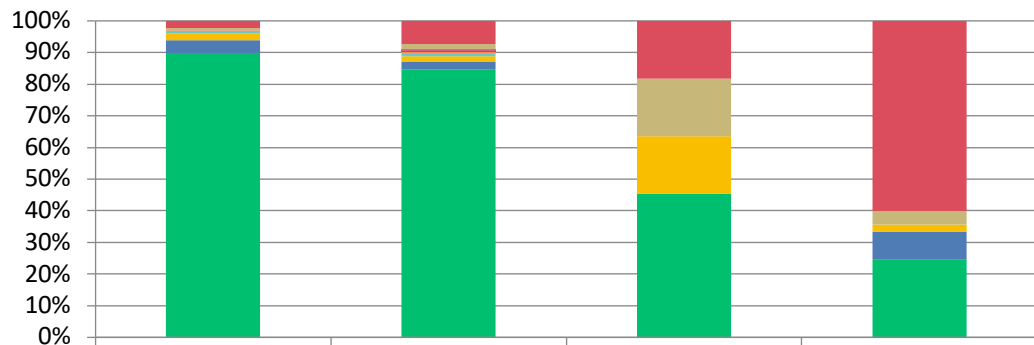
Key Findings on Weapon Carrying on School Property

- Majority of Students Abstain from Carrying Weapons:** The overwhelming majority of students (89.86%) reported not carrying a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property within the past 30 days. This suggests that weapon-carrying behavior among students is relatively rare.
- Gender Differences:** Weapon-carrying rates varied by gender. A slightly higher percentage of males (4.47%) reported carrying a weapon at least once compared to females (0.67%). Among those who identified as "Other," 27.27% admitted to carrying a weapon for six or more days, which is higher than both males and females. This finding indicates a need to explore the experiences of students who fall outside traditional gender categories.
- Grade Differences:** Weapon-carrying behavior also varied across grade levels. The lowest reported rates of carrying a weapon were among 9th graders, with 95.39% reporting no incidents. However, ungraded students showed the highest rates of weapon-carrying, with 50.00%, respectively, admitting to at least one instance. These findings suggest that older or non-traditionally enrolled students may face unique risk factors contributing to weapon carrying.
- Privacy Concerns Noted Among Some Respondents:** A notable percentage of students (7.09%) chose the "Prefer not to answer" option, especially among those who opted not to disclose their grade level (76.32%).

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?

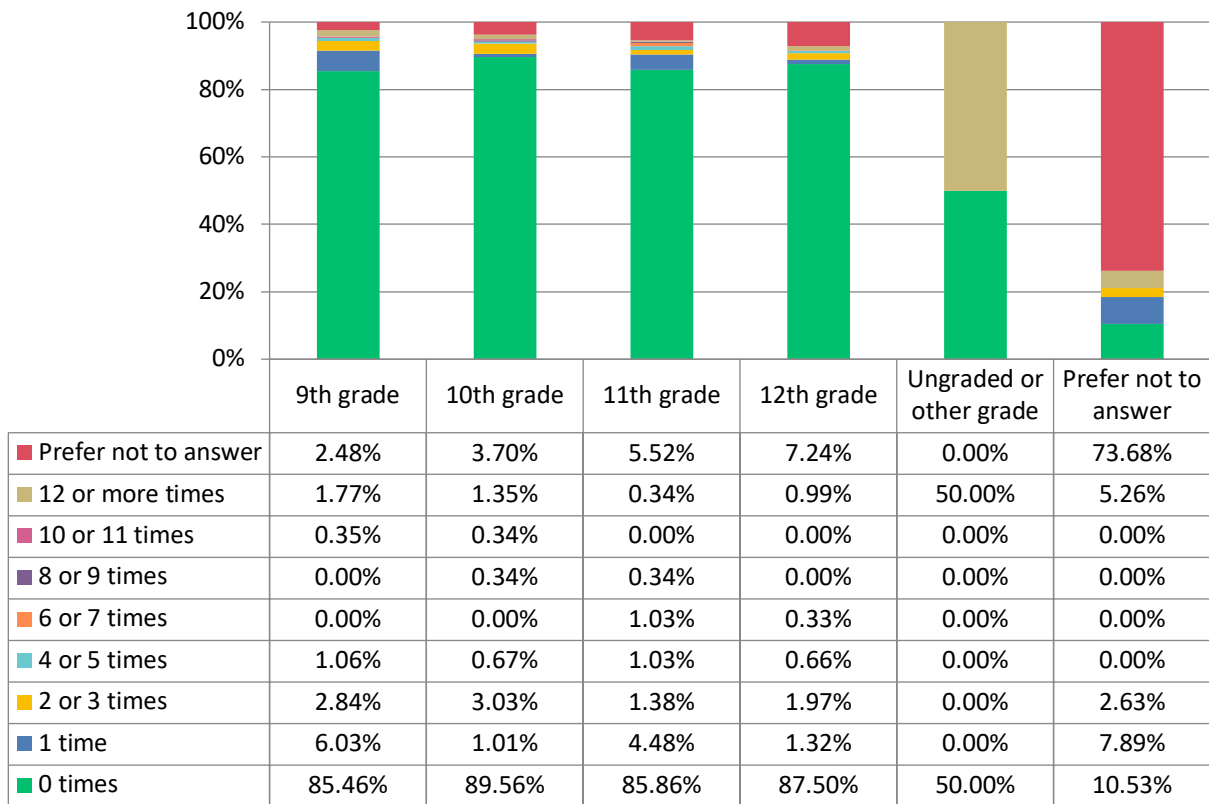


During the past 12 months, how many times has someone threatened or injured you with a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	2.35%	7.32%	18.18%	60.00%
12 or more times	0.50%	1.61%	18.18%	4.44%
10 or 11 times	0.00%	0.36%	0.00%	0.00%
8 or 9 times	0.00%	0.36%	0.00%	0.00%
6 or 7 times	0.17%	0.54%	0.00%	0.00%
4 or 5 times	0.84%	0.89%	0.00%	0.00%
2 or 3 times	2.35%	1.96%	18.18%	2.22%
1 time	3.85%	2.32%	0.00%	8.89%
0 times	89.95%	84.64%	45.45%	24.44%

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?

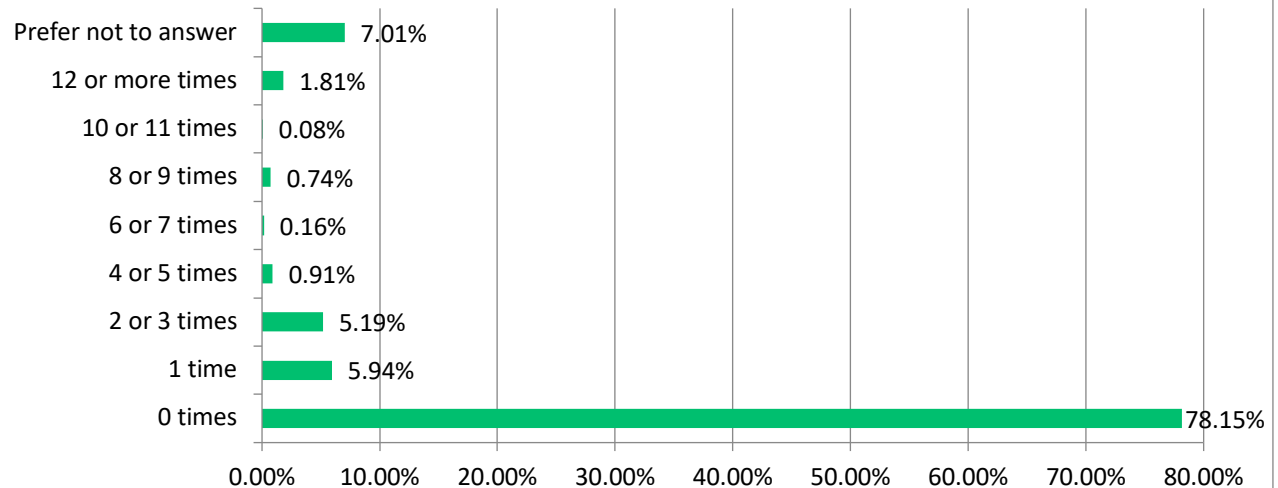


Key Findings on Threats and Injuries with Weapons on School Property

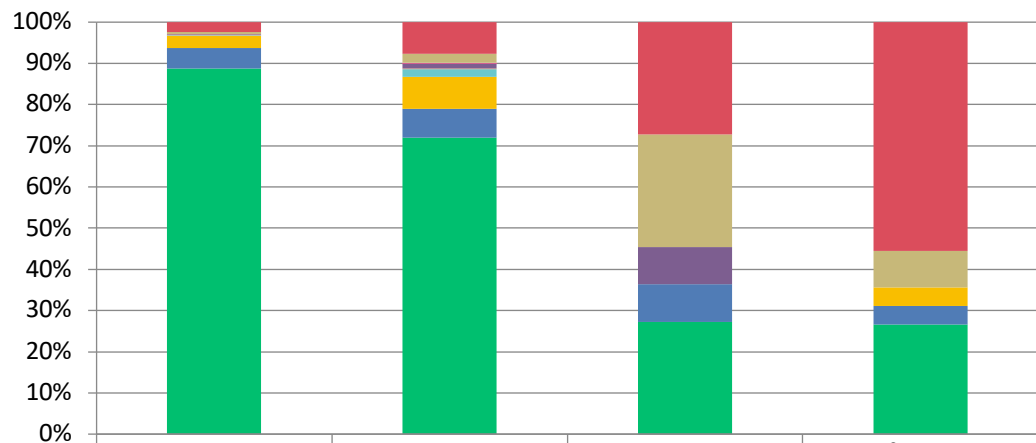
- **Predominant Safety:** The majority of students (84.67%) reported not experiencing threats or injuries with a weapon on school property in the past year. This indicates that, for most students, threats or injuries involving weapons remain relatively rare.
- **Gender Differences:** Students identifying as "Other" reported the highest rate of incidents, with 36.36% experiencing at two or more threats or injuries. These findings highlight that, while the majority of students across genders avoid such incidents, certain groups may be more vulnerable.
- **Grade Differences:** Most students reported no incidents of being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, with abstention rates above 85% across most grades. Although rare, some students reported repeated incidents of threats or injuries with weapons. For instance, 1.77% of 9th graders and 1.35% of 10th graders reported twelve or more incidents, indicating a need for targeted interventions in specific groups.

Violence and Physical Fights

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

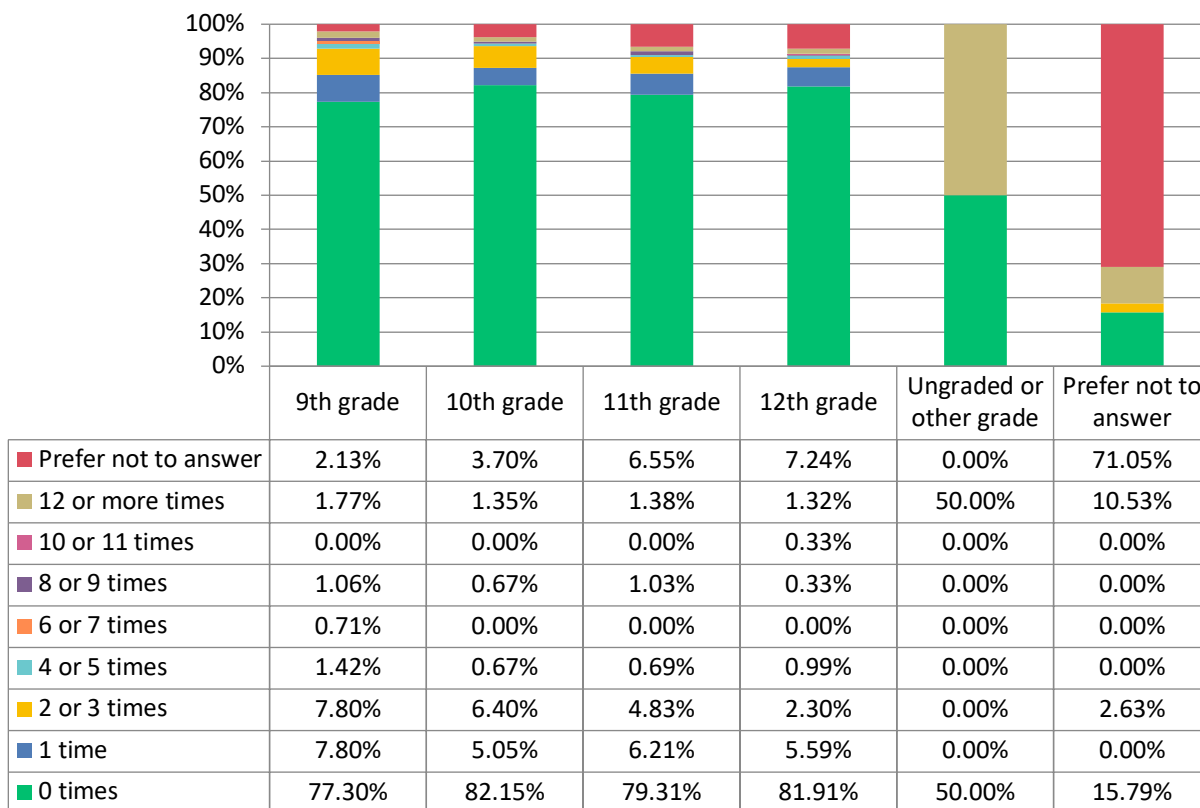


During the past 12 months, how many times were you in a physical fight?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	2.35%	7.68%	27.27%	55.56%
12 or more times	0.50%	2.14%	27.27%	8.89%
10 or 11 times	0.00%	0.18%	0.00%	0.00%
8 or 9 times	0.17%	1.25%	9.09%	0.00%
6 or 7 times	0.17%	0.18%	0.00%	0.00%
4 or 5 times	0.17%	1.79%	0.00%	0.00%
2 or 3 times	2.85%	7.86%	0.00%	4.44%
1 time	5.03%	6.96%	9.09%	4.44%
0 times	88.78%	71.96%	27.27%	26.67%

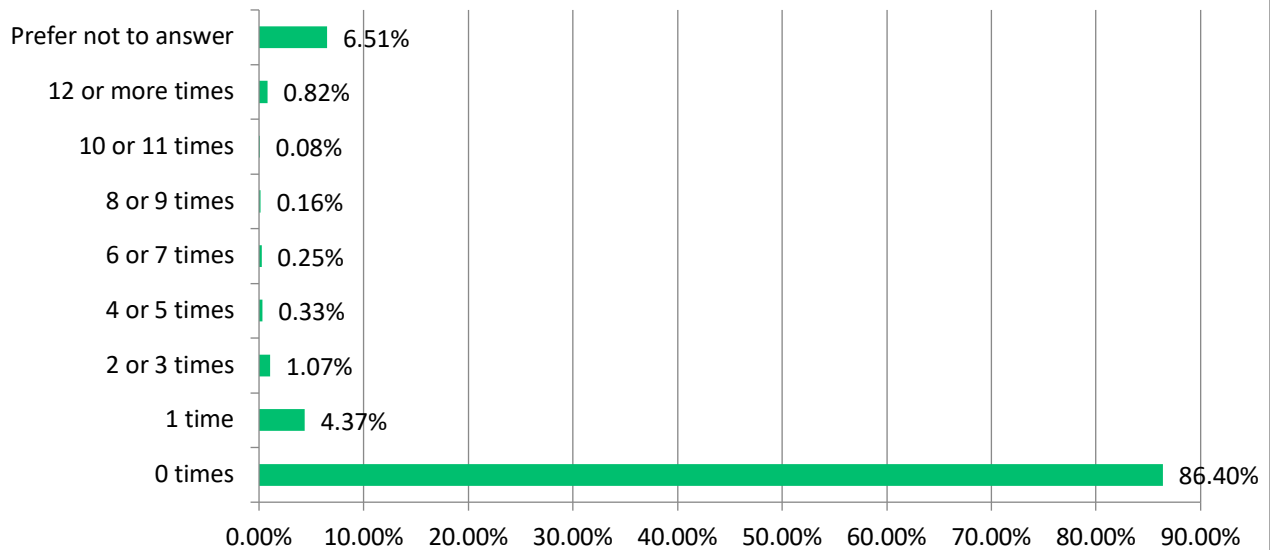
During the past 12 months, how many times were you in a physical fight?



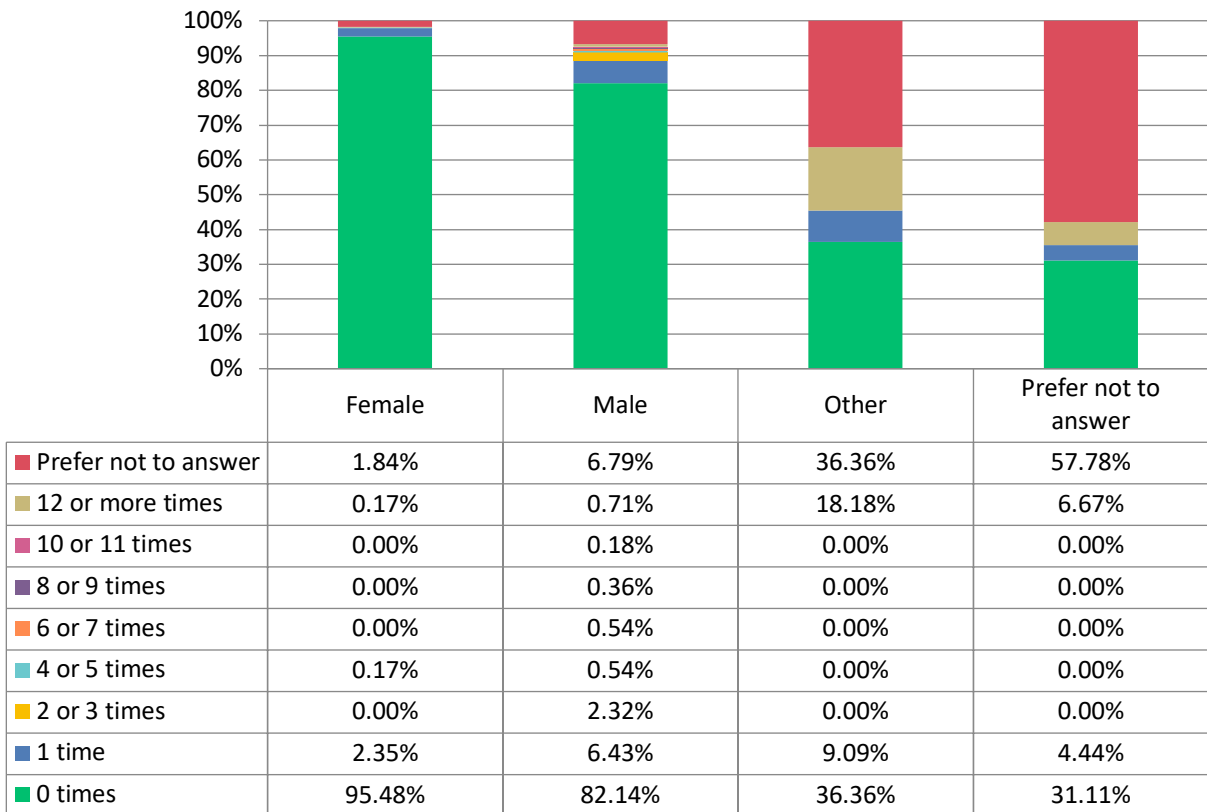
Key Findings on Physical Fights in the Past 12 Months

- High Rate of Non-Involvement:** A large majority of students (78.15%) reported no involvement in physical fights over the past year, indicating that most students avoid physical altercations. Among those who did report fighting, the most common response was involvement in one fight, with 5.94% of students experiencing a single altercation.
- Gender Differences:** Females reported the highest rate of non-involvement in physical fights (88.78%), compared to 71.96% of males. Students identifying as "Other" had the lowest rate of non-involvement (27.27%) and reported higher frequencies of multiple fights.
- Grade Differences:** Most students in all grades reported no physical fights in the past 12 months, with 10th graders at the highest (82.15%) and 9th graders at the lowest (77.30%). A small portion in each grade reported multiple fights, with higher frequencies seen among those who preferred not to disclose their grade.

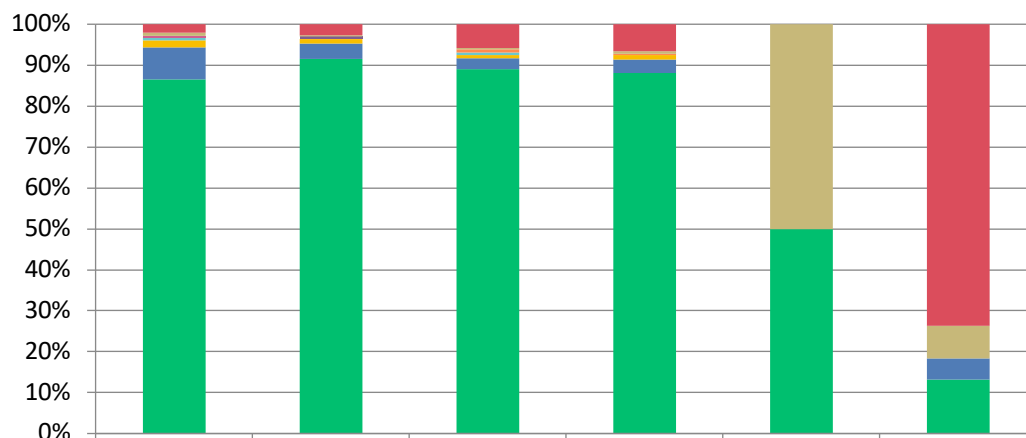
During the past 12 months, how many times were you in a physical fight on school property?



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



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

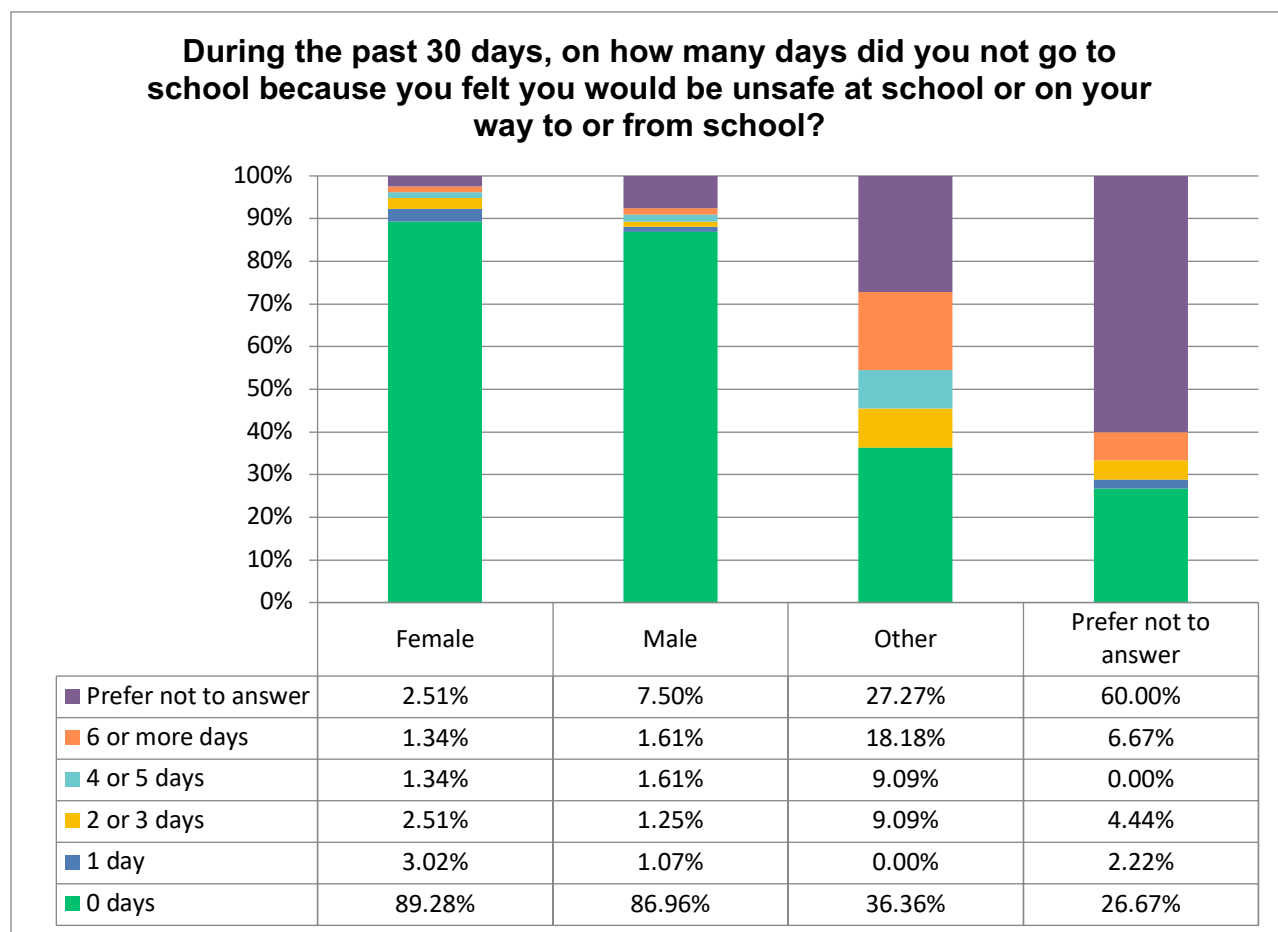
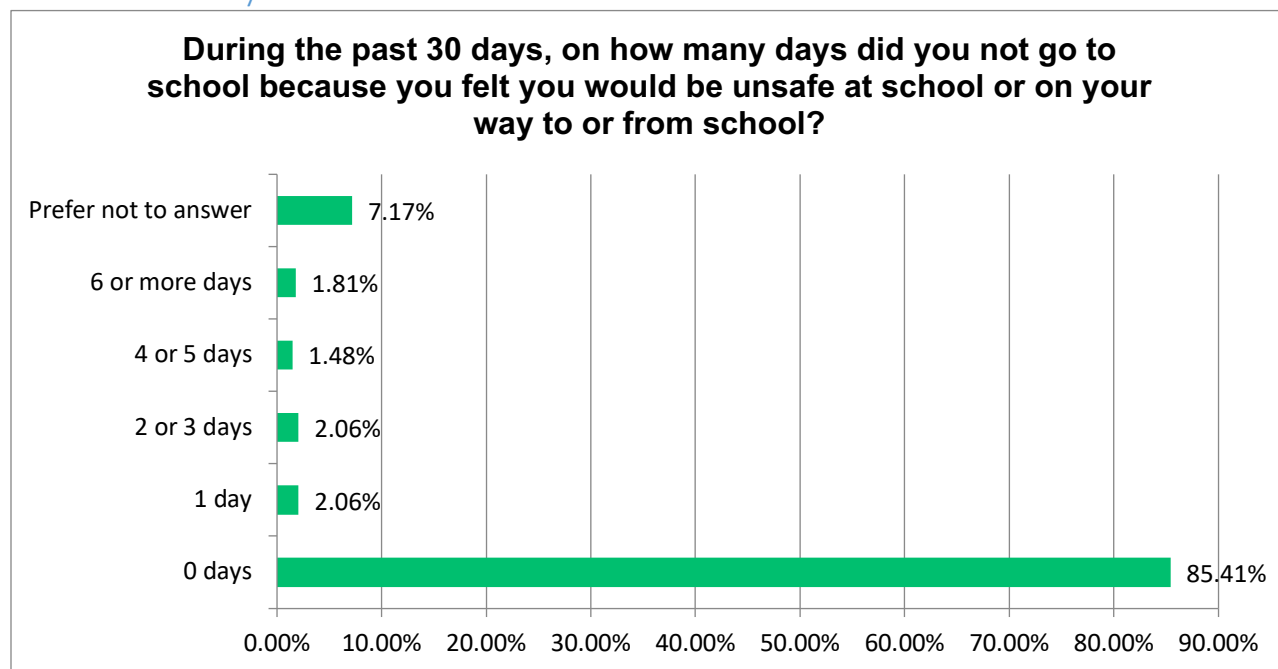


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
■ Prefer not to answer	2.13%	2.69%	5.86%	6.58%	0.00%	73.68%
■ 12 or more times	0.71%	0.34%	0.34%	0.66%	50.00%	7.89%
■ 10 or 11 times	0.35%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 8 or 9 times	0.00%	0.67%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 6 or 7 times	0.00%	0.00%	0.69%	0.33%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 4 or 5 times	0.71%	0.00%	0.69%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 2 or 3 times	1.77%	1.01%	0.69%	0.99%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 1 time	7.80%	3.70%	2.76%	3.29%	0.00%	5.26%
■ 0 times	86.52%	91.58%	88.97%	88.16%	50.00%	13.16%

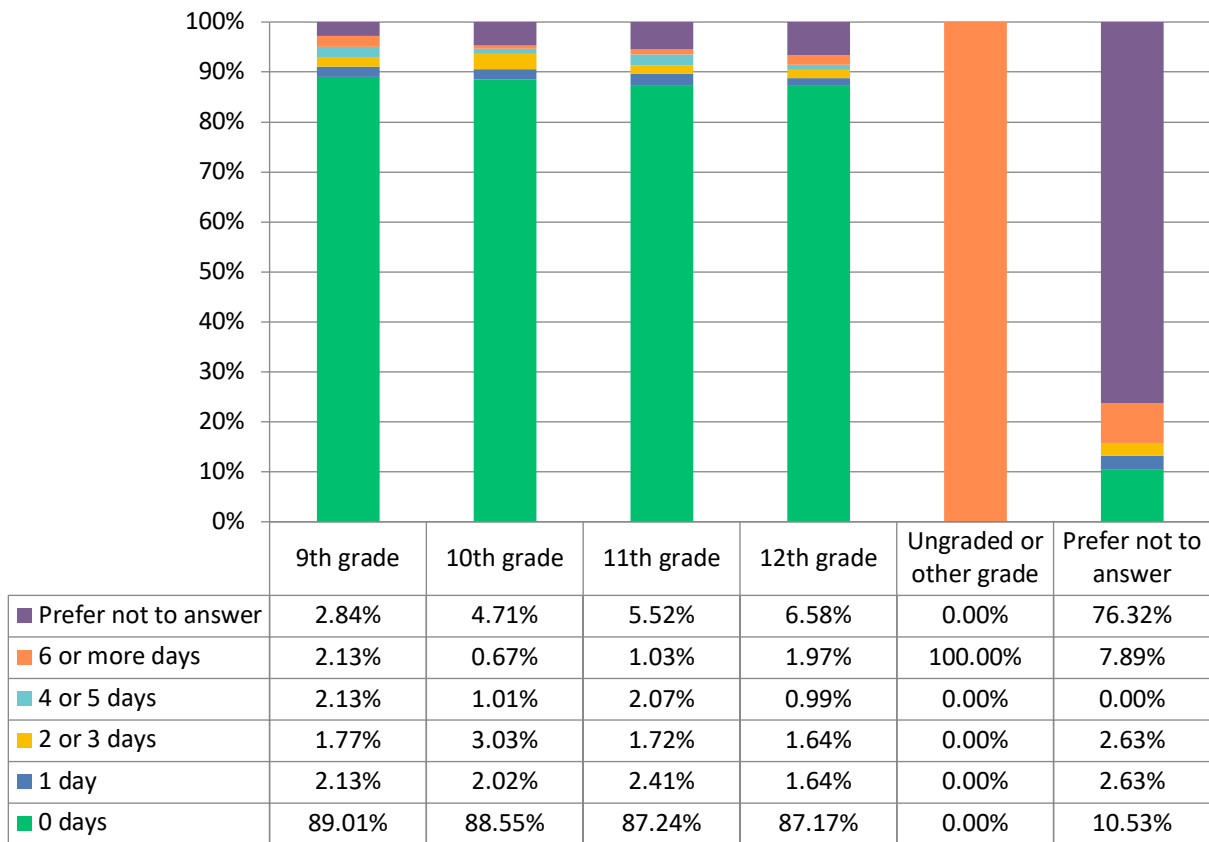
Key Findings on Physical Fights on School Property:

- **Low Incidence Overall:** A large majority of students (86.40%) reported they had not been in a physical fight on school property in the past year, indicating that physical altercations on campus are relatively infrequent.
- **Gender Differences:** Male students reported higher rates of physical fights on school property than female students, with 6.43% of males involved in at least one fight compared to 2.35% of females. This suggests that males are more likely than females to engage in physical altercations at school. A notable 18.18% of students who identified as "Other" reported being involved in twelve or more physical fights on school property, suggesting higher rates of physical altercations among this group.
- **Grade Differences:** The likelihood of being involved in a physical fight on school property decreases slightly with grade level. Ninth-grade students had a slightly higher incidence (7.80%) of involvement in at least one fight compared to 12th-grade students (3.29%).

Perceived Safety at School



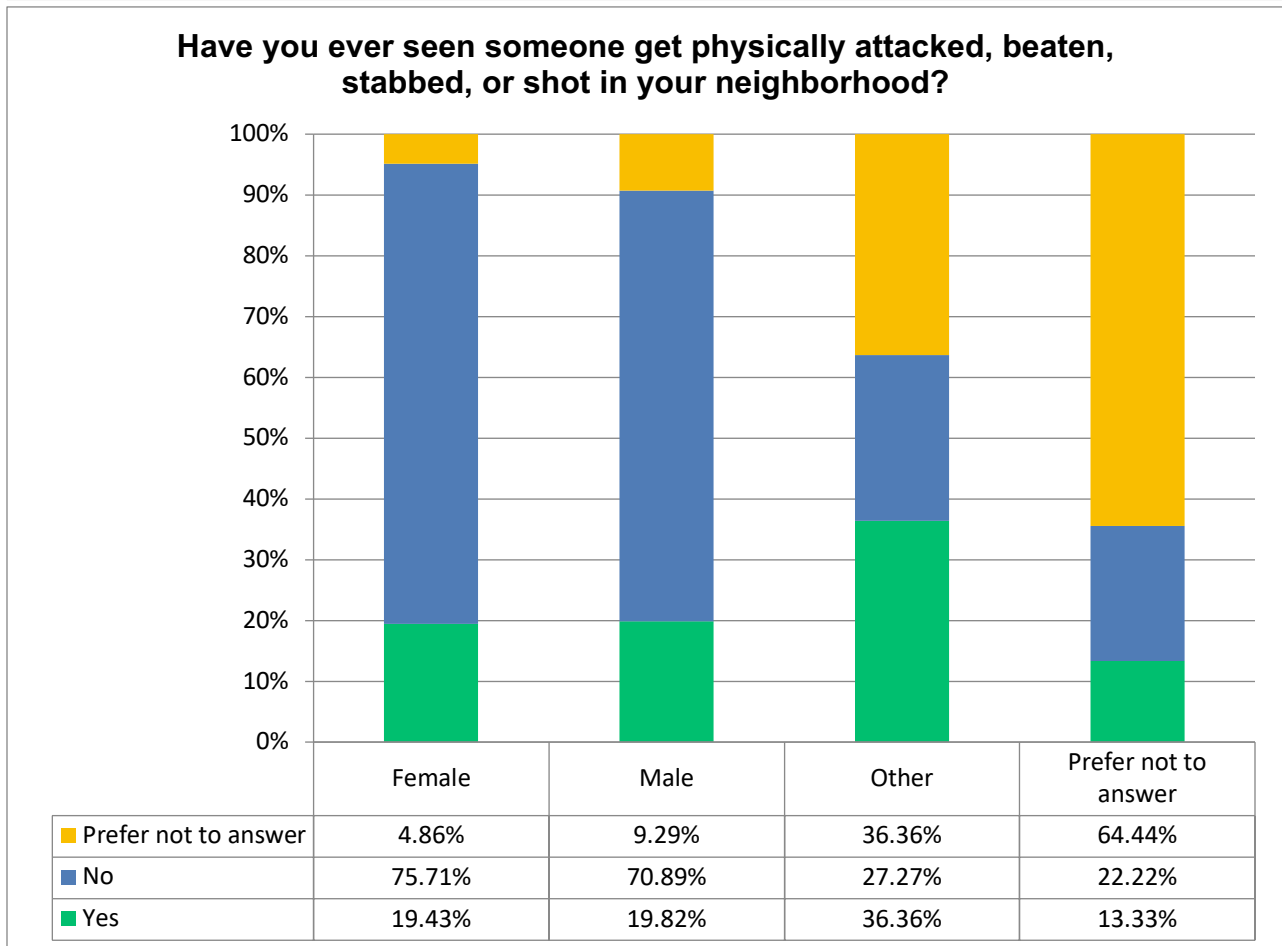
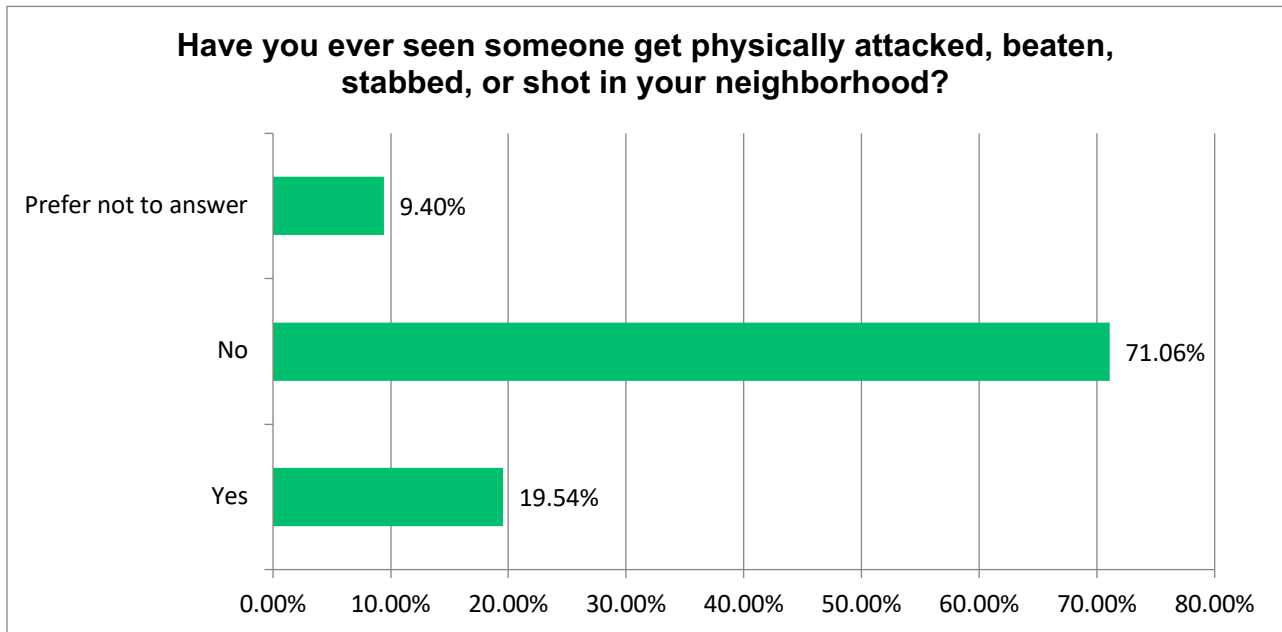
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you not go to school because you felt you would be unsafe at school or on your way to or from school?



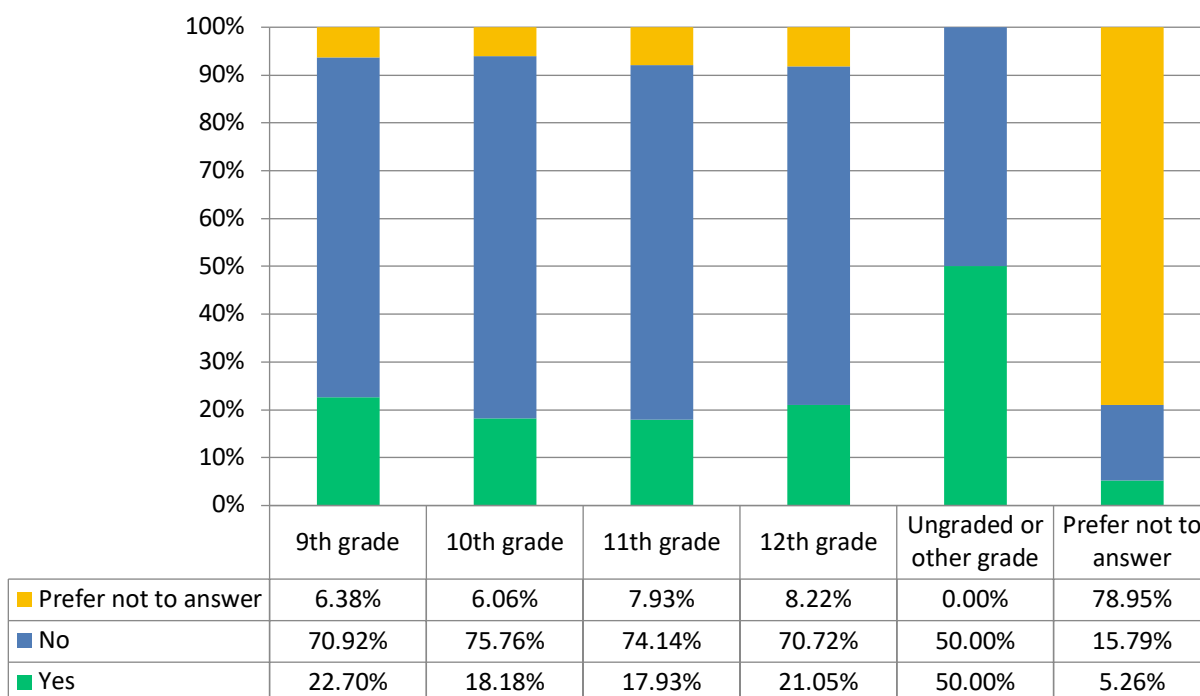
Key Findings on Feelings of Safety and Attendance Among Students

- **High Attendance Due to Perceived Safety:** The majority of students (85.41%) reported not skipping school in the past 30 days because of safety concerns, indicating that most feel secure about their school environment.
- **Gender Differences:** Female and male students reported similar attendance patterns due to perceived safety (89.28% of females and 86.96% of males reported no days missed). Students identifying as "Other" had lower levels of perceived safety, with only 36.36% reporting no absences, suggesting they may face unique challenges regarding school safety.
- **Grade Differences:** Across grades, there is a very slight decline in reported attendance due to safety from 9th grade (89.01%) to 12th grade (87.17%).

Violence in Community Setting



Have you ever seen someone get physically attacked, beaten, stabbed, or shot in your neighborhood?

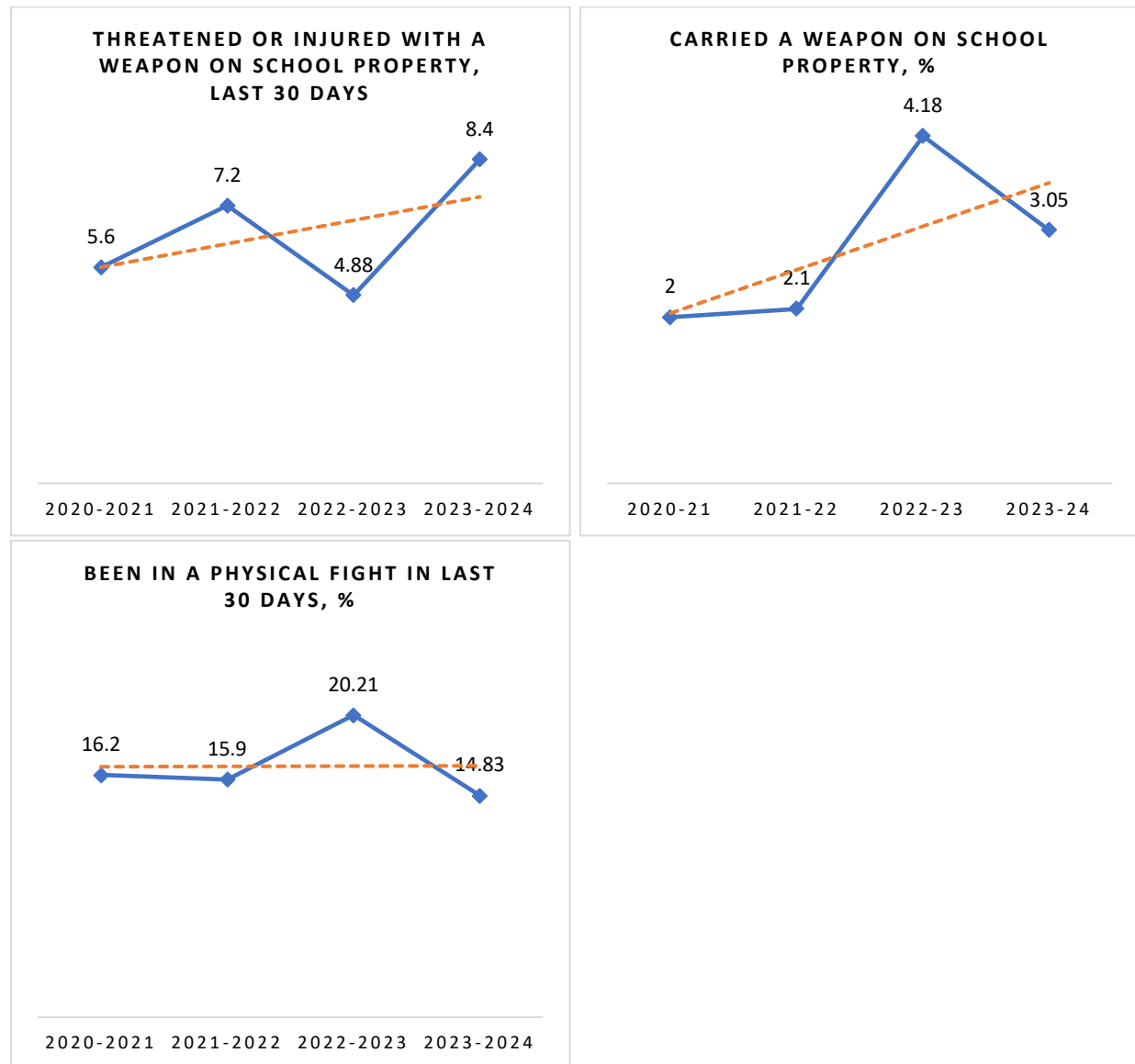


Key Findings on Exposure to Neighborhood Violence Among Students

- Prevalence of Witnessing Violence:** Approximately 19.54% of students reported having witnessed someone get physically attacked, beaten, stabbed, or shot in their neighborhood, while a majority (71.06%) indicated they had not.
- Gender Differences:** Male and female students reported similar rates of witnessing violence (19.82% of males and 19.43% of females). However, students identifying as "Other" reported a noticeably higher rate at 36.36%, suggesting potentially greater exposure to violence in this group.
- Grade Differences:** The likelihood of witnessing violence showed some variation by grade level. Ninth graders reported the highest rate at 22.70%, while 11th graders reported the lowest at 17.93%. 12th graders experienced an increase in reported exposure, with 21.05% indicating they had witnessed such events.
- Reluctance to Answer:** There are particularly high rates of non-response (64.44%) in students who identified as "Prefer not to answer" for gender. This may reflect discomfort or sensitivity around the subject of neighborhood violence among certain groups.

Violent Behavior Trends Over Time

The following graphs depict data collected over four 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:** There has been a notable increase in the percentage of students who reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, rising from 5.6% in 2020-2021 to 8.4% in 2023-2024. This upward trend indicates an increasing concern for physical safety on school premises over the last four years.
- **Carried a Weapon on School Property:** The proportion of students carrying weapons on school property also reflects an upward trend, although it slightly decreased in the last year. It rose from 2% in 2020-2021 to 4.18% in 2022-2023, then slightly decreased to 3.05% in 2023-2024. 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 fluctuated over the years, with a peak of 20.21% in 2022-2023 before decreasing to 14.83% in 2023-2024. This recent decline suggests a possible reduction in physical confrontations, although the trend has varied over the observed period.

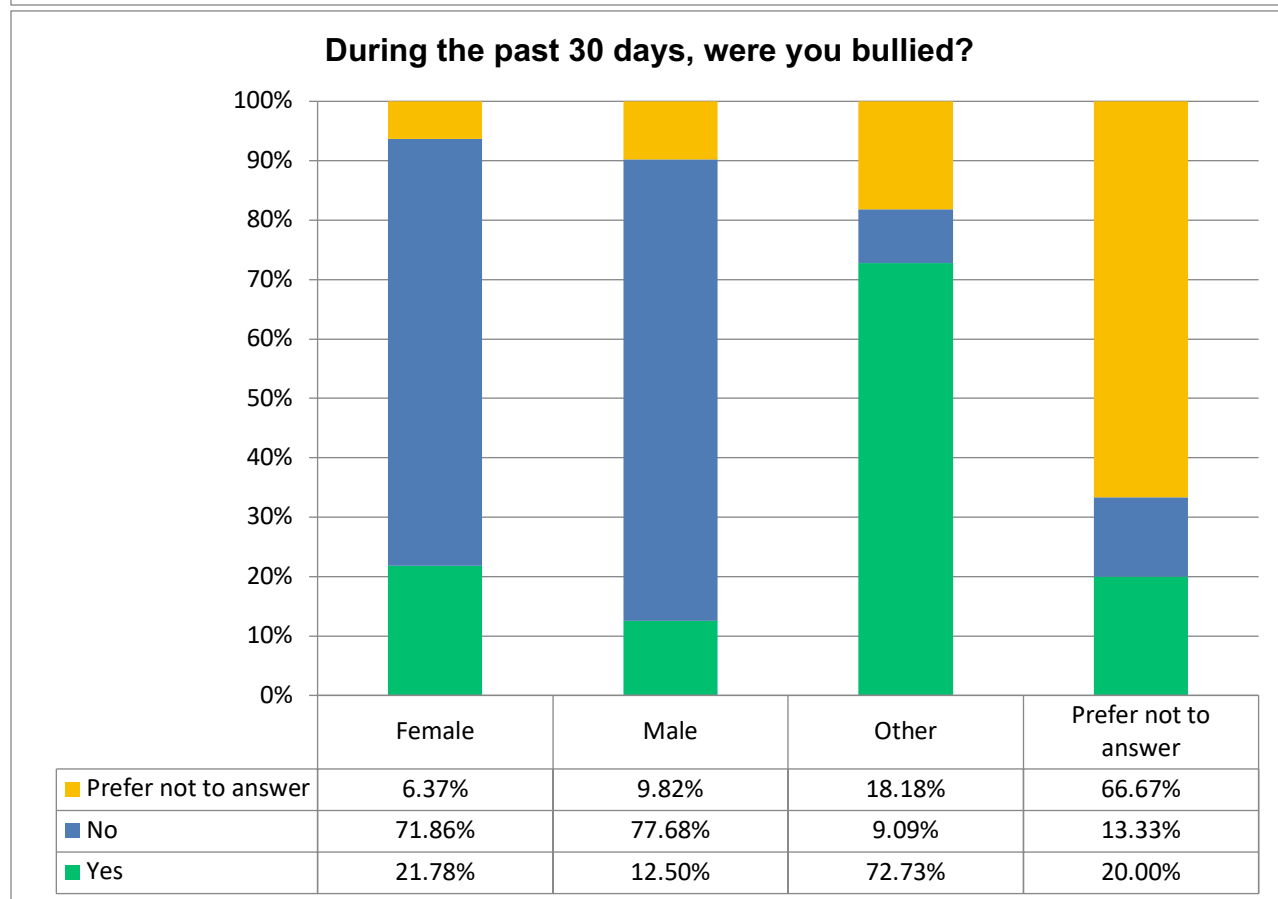
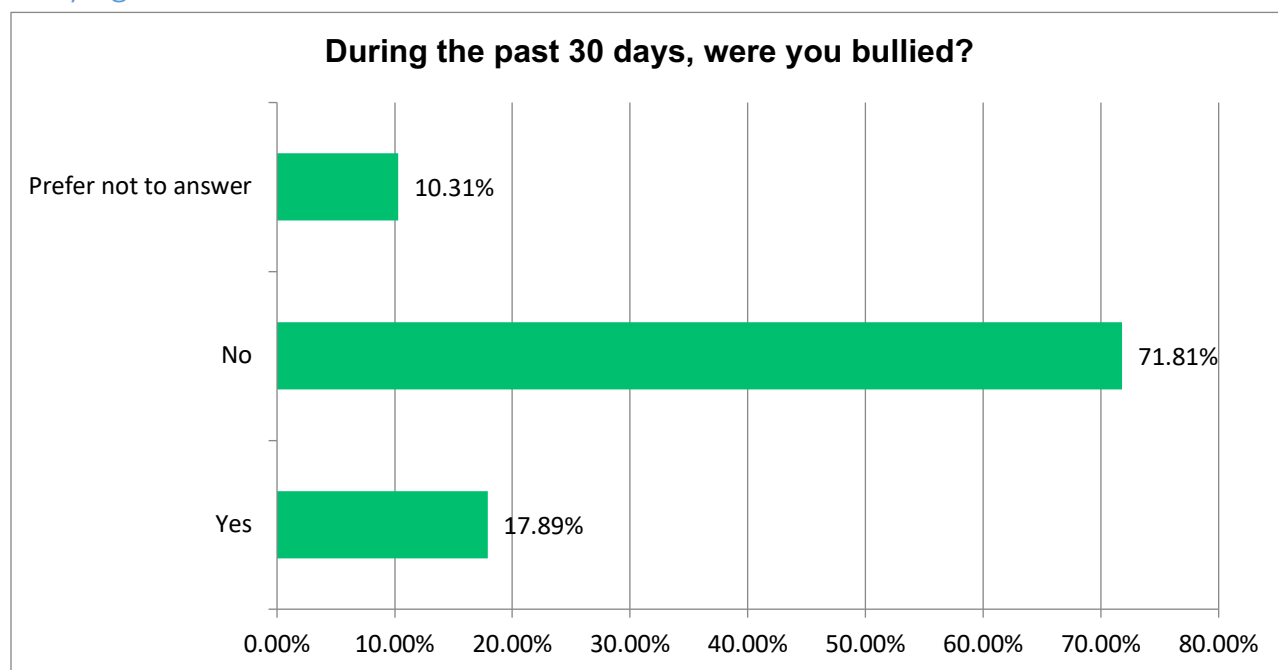
Bullying

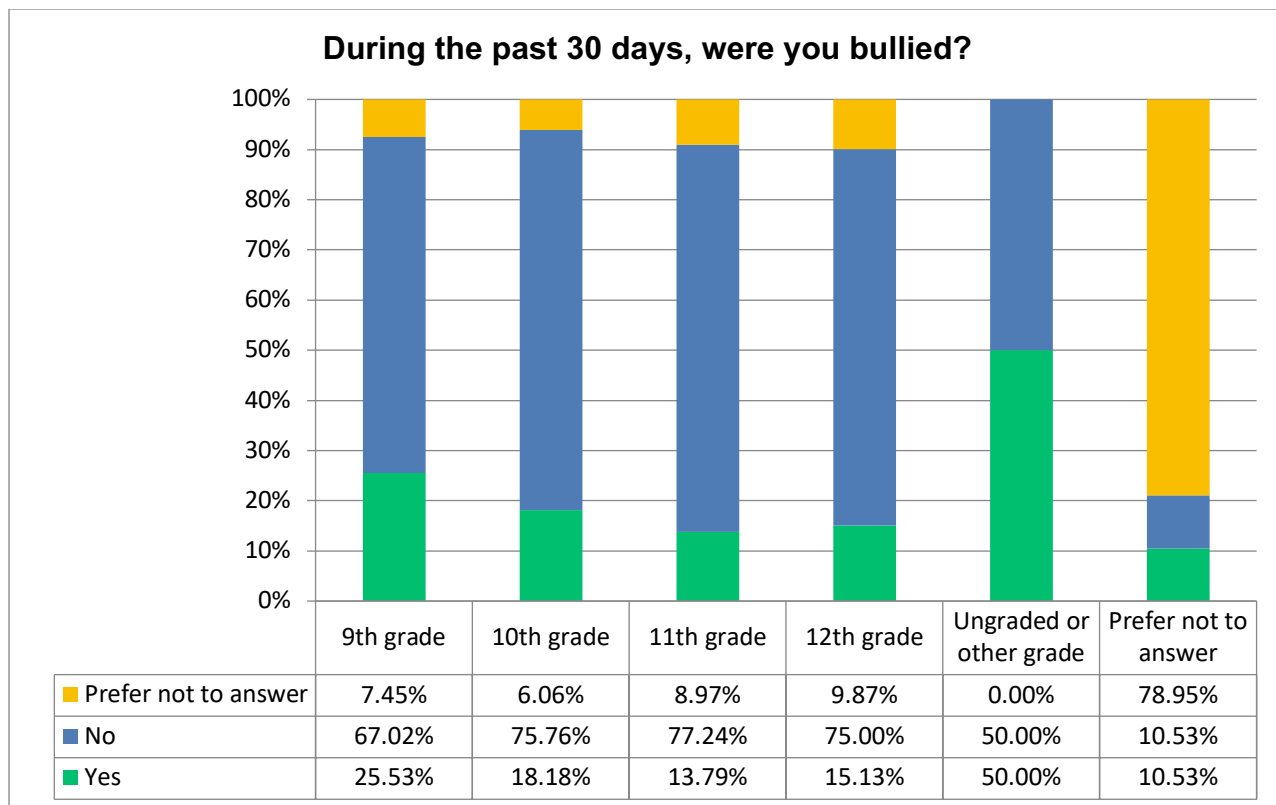
Bullying, as defined by the CDC, is aggressive, unwanted behavior by one youth towards another (excluding siblings or dating partners) and is often characterized by a real or perceived power imbalance.⁵ This behavior can be repetitive and have lasting effects, putting youth at higher risk for mental health issues such as depression, suicidal thoughts, academic struggles, and substance abuse.⁵

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) plays a vital role in capturing these behaviors, offering a comprehensive look at how bullying impacts students within Herkimer County. By asking targeted questions about both bullying and victimization, the YRBS provides critical data on the prevalence of these behaviors and their effects on youth well-being. This section examines YRBS findings on bullying behaviors, offering valuable insights into the experiences of Herkimer County students and helping schools and communities understand where intervention is most needed.

In 2023-2024, the majority of students reported no involvement in bullying, either as victims or perpetrators. However, a subset still experiences or engages in bullying behaviors. Notably, around 18% of students reported being bullied, while 11% admitted to bullying others. These behaviors, while less prevalent overall, display disparities across demographic groups, with some reporting higher incidences of both being bullied and acting as bullies. Additionally, some students expressed feelings of unfair treatment based on race, ethnicity, or gender identity, reflecting underlying social challenges. Understanding these patterns is crucial for developing effective anti-bullying strategies and fostering a safer, more inclusive school environment.

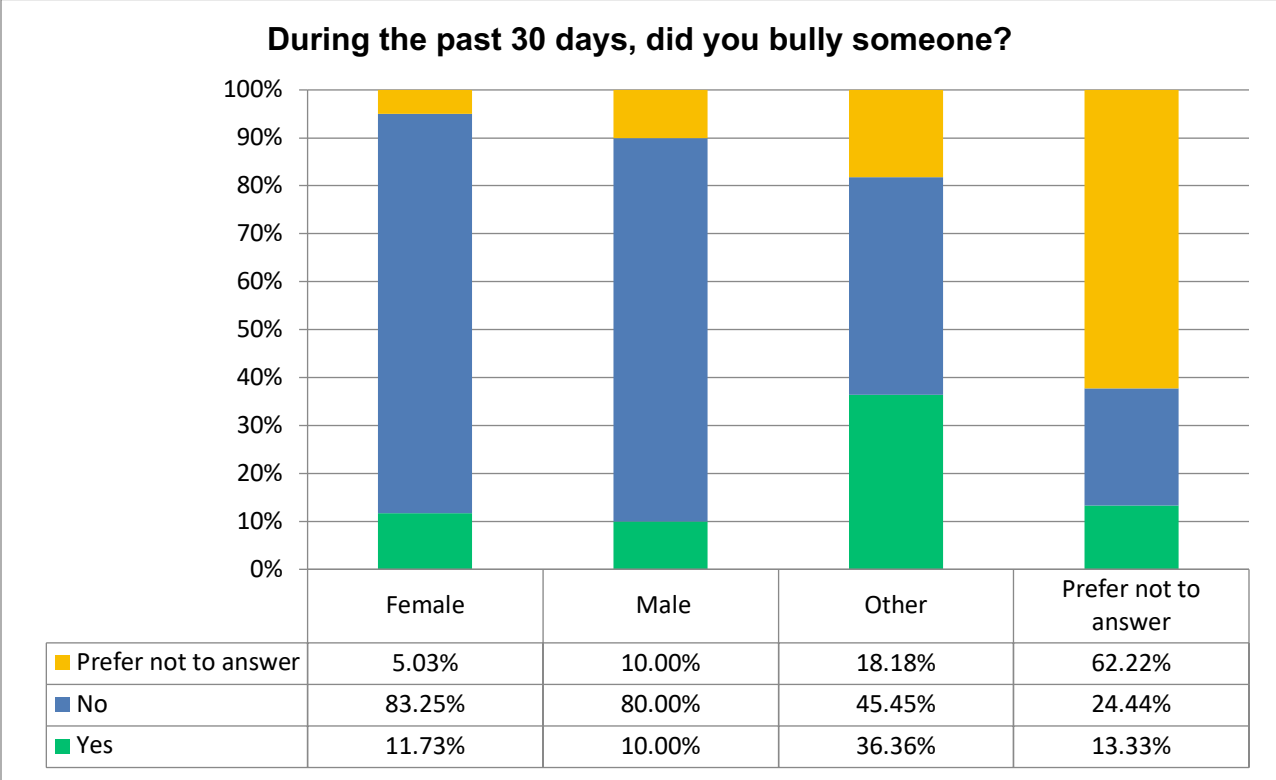
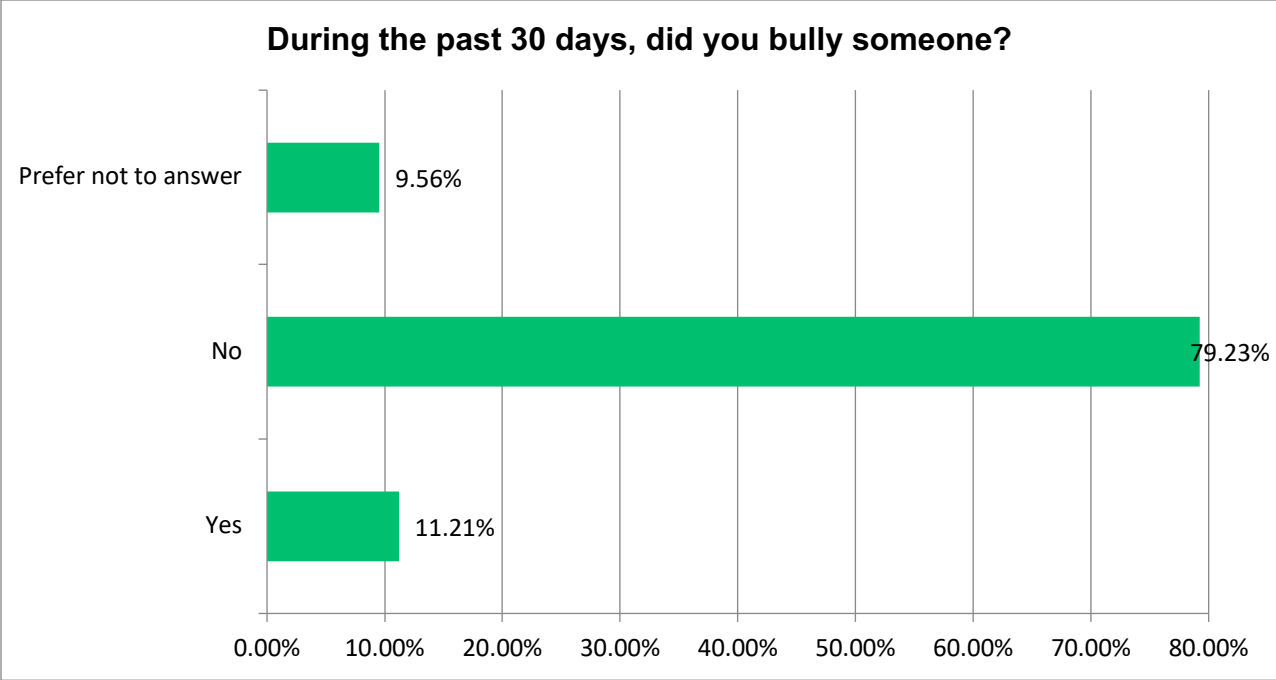
Bullying Behaviors

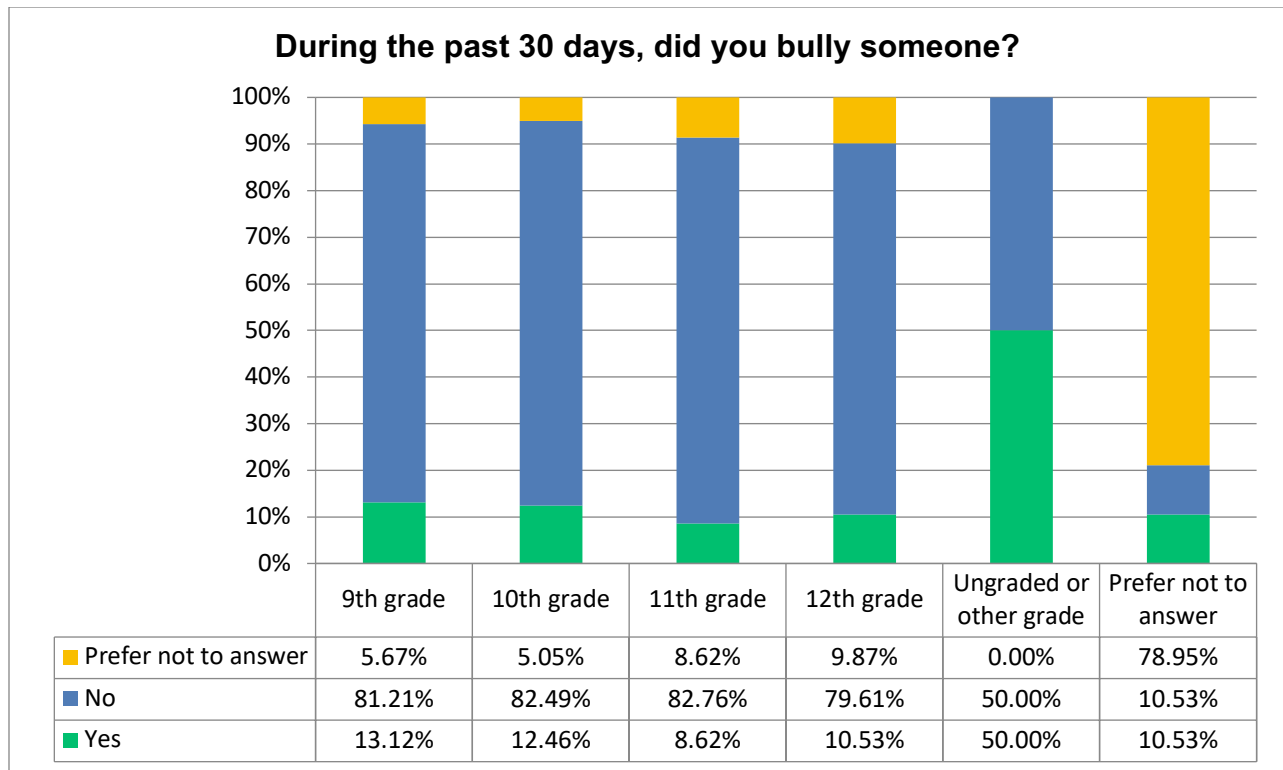




Key Findings on Bullying Incidence Among Students

- Overall Bullying Incidence:** Approximately 17.89% of students reported experiencing bullying in the past 30 days, while 71.81% reported no bullying experiences. A smaller portion, 10.31%, preferred not to disclose their experiences.
- Gender Differences:** Female students reported a slightly higher incidence of bullying (21.78%) compared to male students (12.50%). A large portion of students identifying as "Other" experienced bullying, with 72.73% indicating they were bullied. These findings highlight a possible disparity in bullying experiences based on gender identity.
- Grade Differences:** The experience of bullying generally decreases across grade levels, with 25.53% of 9th graders reporting being bullied compared to 15.13% of 12th graders. This pattern suggests that younger students may be more vulnerable to bullying, with a decline as they progress through high school.

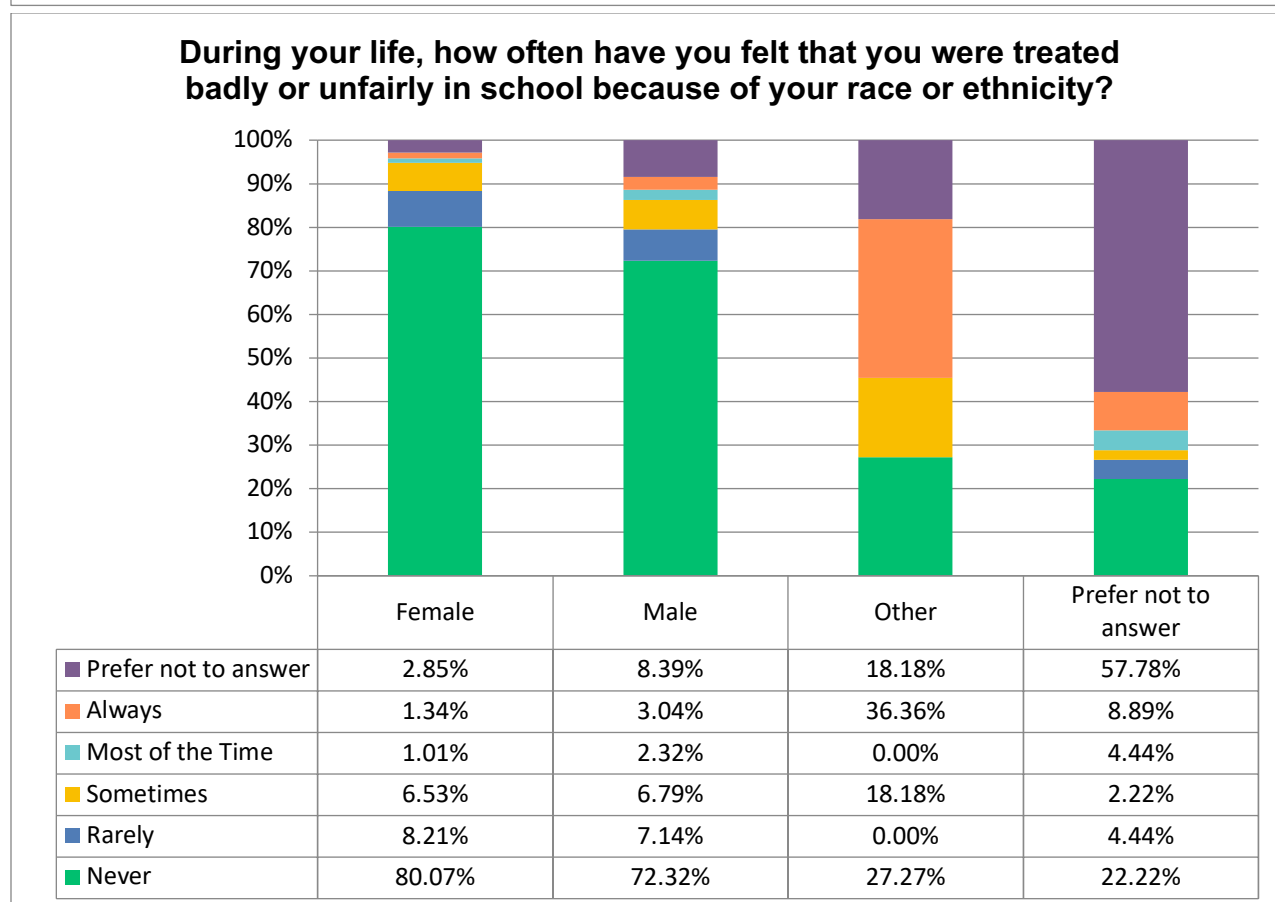
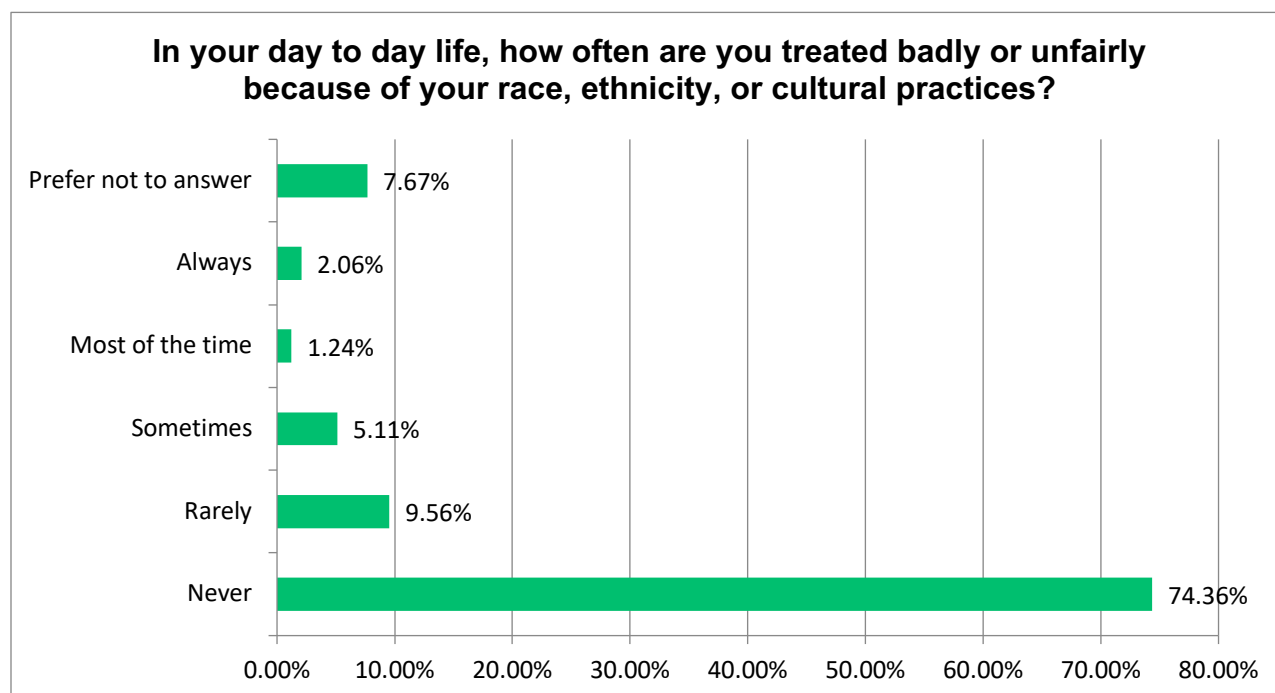


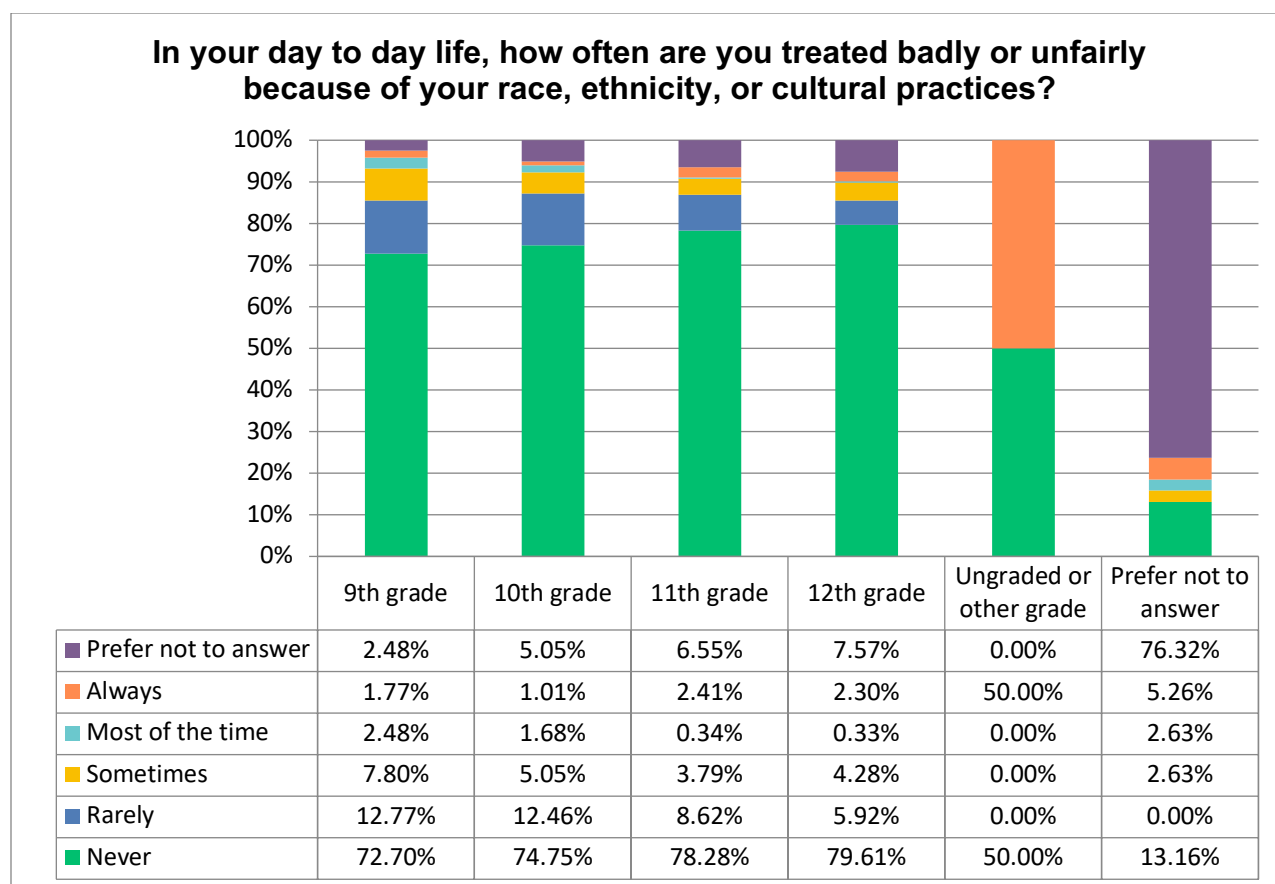


Key Findings on Student-Reported Bullying Behaviors:

- **Bullying Others:** A majority (79.23%) of students report not engaging in bullying behaviors. However, 11.21% admit to bullying others, highlighting a concerning level of active bullying.
- **Gender Differences:** Among students identifying as “Other,” 36.36% reported bullying someone, a notably higher rate compared to males (10%) and females (11.73%).
- **Grade Differences:** Bullying behaviors decrease slightly as students progress through high school, from 13.12% in 9th grade to 8.62% in 11th grade. However, some students still engage in these behaviors across all grades.

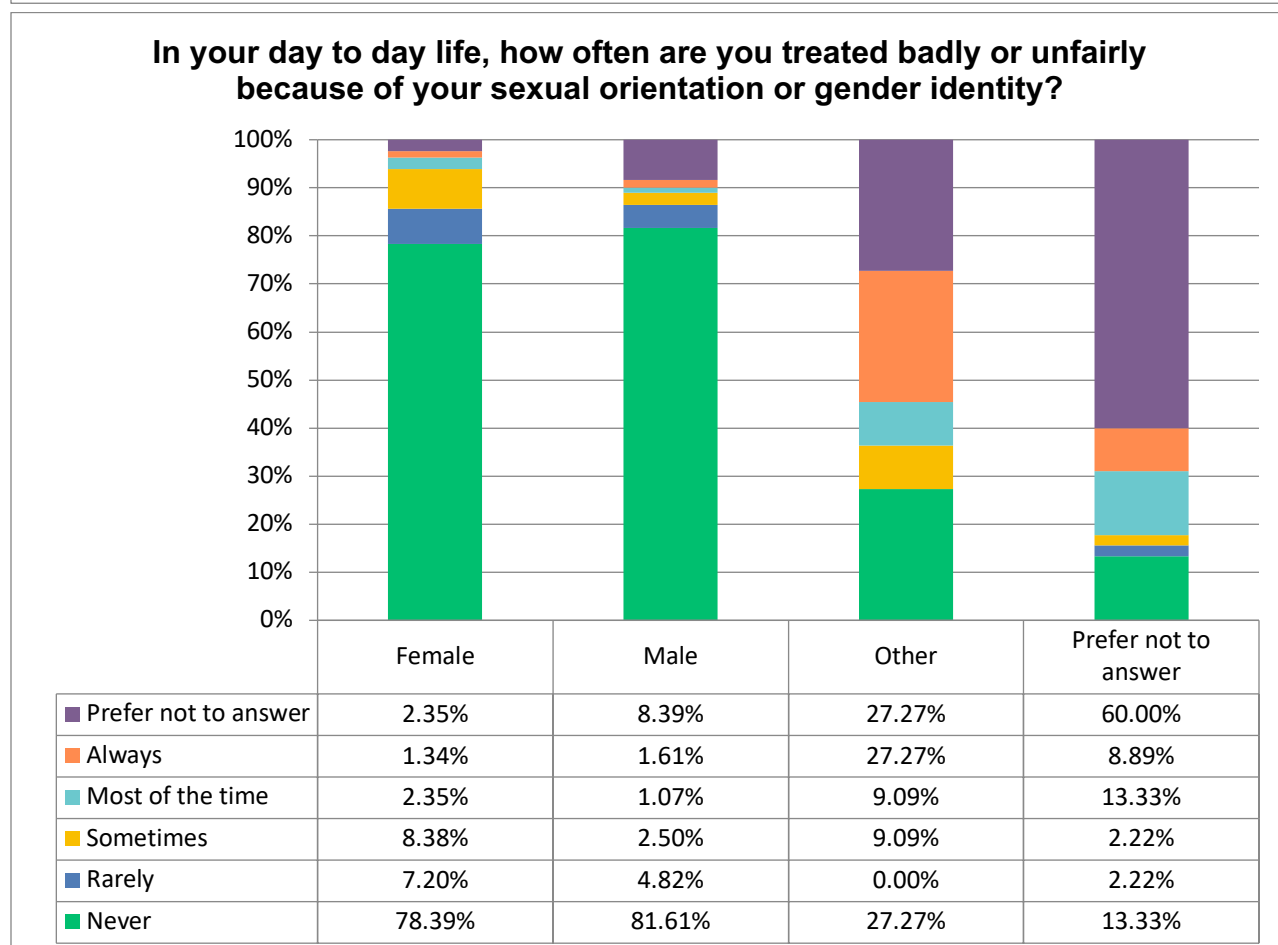
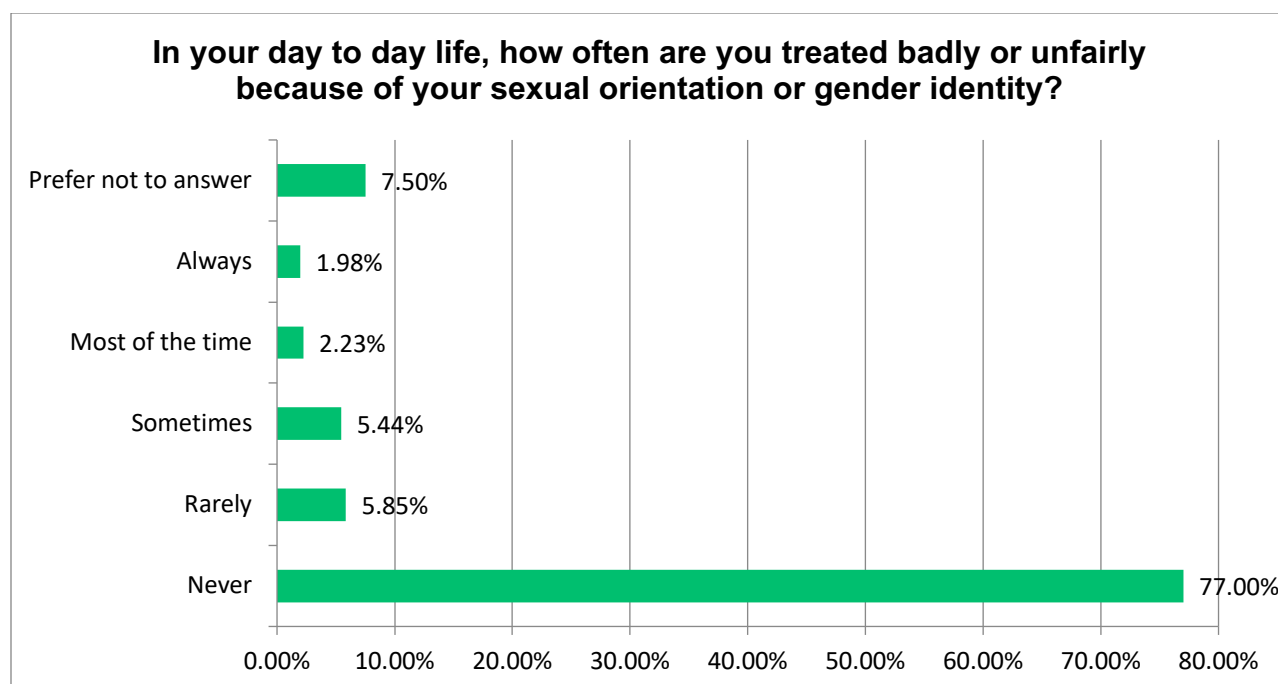
Perceived Unfair Treatment



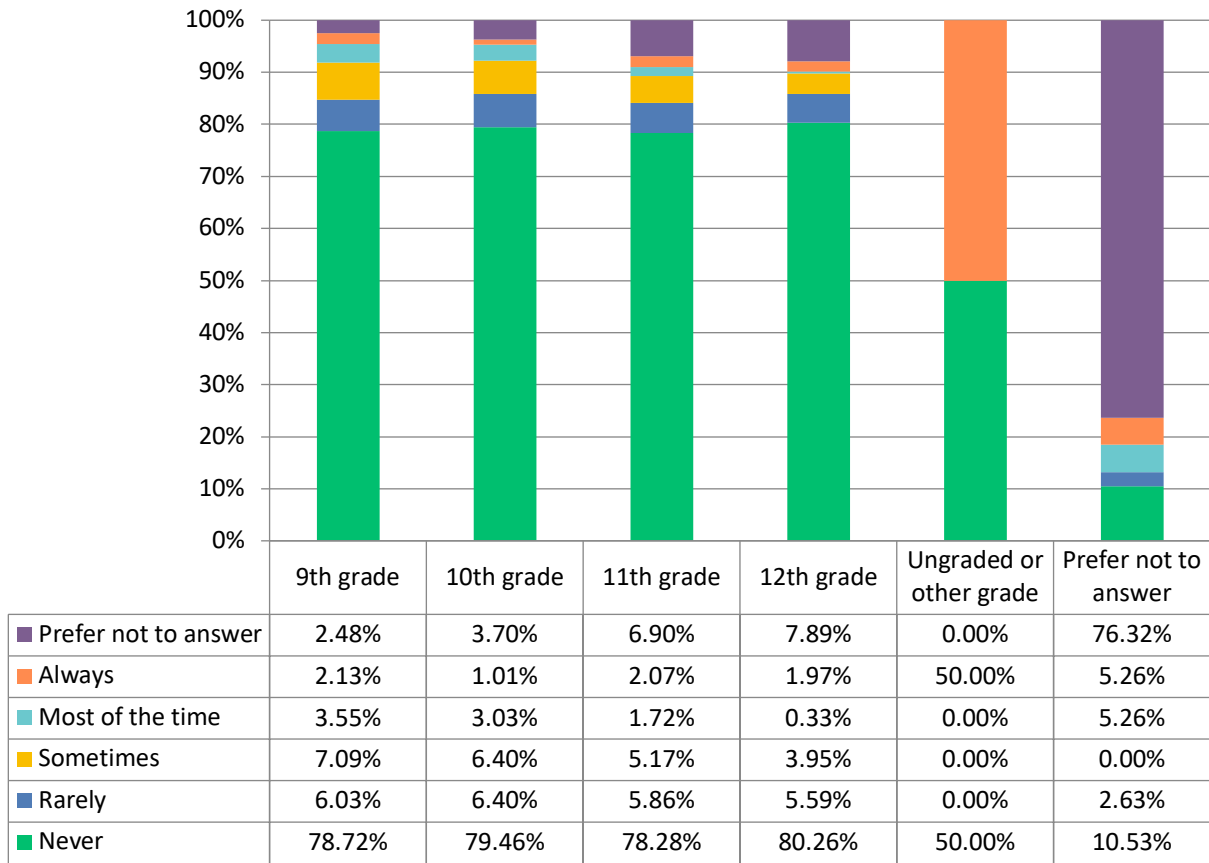


Key Findings on Perceived Unfair Treatment Due to Race or Ethnicity

- Unfair Treatment in Daily Life:** The majority of students (74.35%) report never feeling treated unfairly in day-to-day life due to race, ethnicity, or cultural practices. Smaller , proportions of students experienced unfair treatment at varying frequencies, including 9.56% rarely and 5.11% sometimes.
- Gender Differences:** Female students are least likely to report unfair treatment, with 80.07% indicating it never happens, compared to 72.32% of males. Students identifying as “Other” report higher frequencies, with 36.36% experiencing unfair treatment always and only 27.27% saying it never occurs.
- Grade Differences:** The percentage of students reporting they never experience unfair treatment remains high across grade levels: 72.70% of 9th graders, 74.75% of 10th graders, 78.28% of 11th graders, and 76.92% of 12th graders. However, 12th grade shows a slight increase in those experiencing unfair treatment always (2.30%).



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

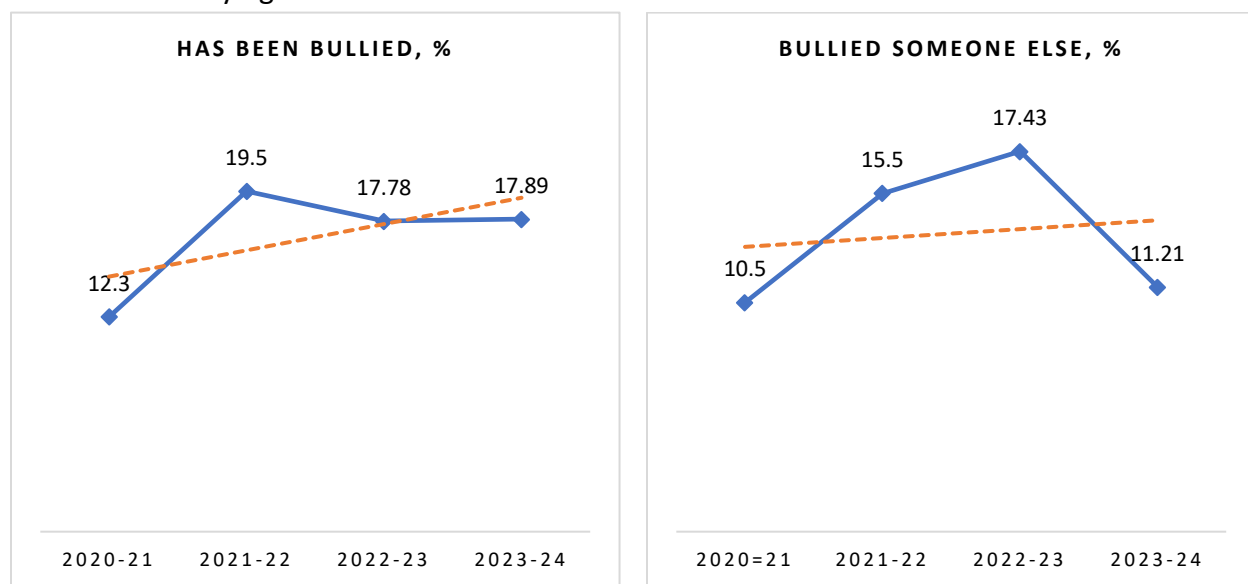


Key Findings on Unfair Treatment Based on Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

- **Overall Experience of Fair Treatment:** A large majority of students (77%) reported never experiencing unfair treatment in their daily lives based on sexual orientation or gender identity. This suggests that most students feel treated fairly in this regard.
- **Gender Differences:** Female (78.39%) and male students (81.61%) reported similar levels of never experiencing unfair treatment due to sexual orientation or gender identity. However, students identifying as "Other" showed a notably higher percentage of unfair treatment, with 27.27% reporting they always experienced unfair treatment. This suggests that this group faces a higher risk of discrimination.
- **Grade Differences:** Across grade levels, the percentage of students who reported never experiencing unfair treatment due to sexual orientation or gender identity remained relatively consistent, ranging from 78.72% in 9th grade to 80.26% in 12th grade. This reflects stable experiences of fair treatment as students progress through school.

Bullying Behavior Over Time

Examining trends in bullying behaviors over the past four 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 has shown a gradual increase over the past four years, from 12.3% in 2020-2021 to 17.89% in 2023-2024, peaking at 19.5% in 2021-2022. This trend highlights an ongoing issue with bullying victimization among students.
- **Decrease in Bullying Others:** The percentage of students who reported bullying others has fluctuated, with a notable decline in the most recent year. After peaking at 17.43% in 2022-2023, the percentage dropped to 11.21% in 2023-2024, suggesting a potential improvement in student behavior related to bullying others.

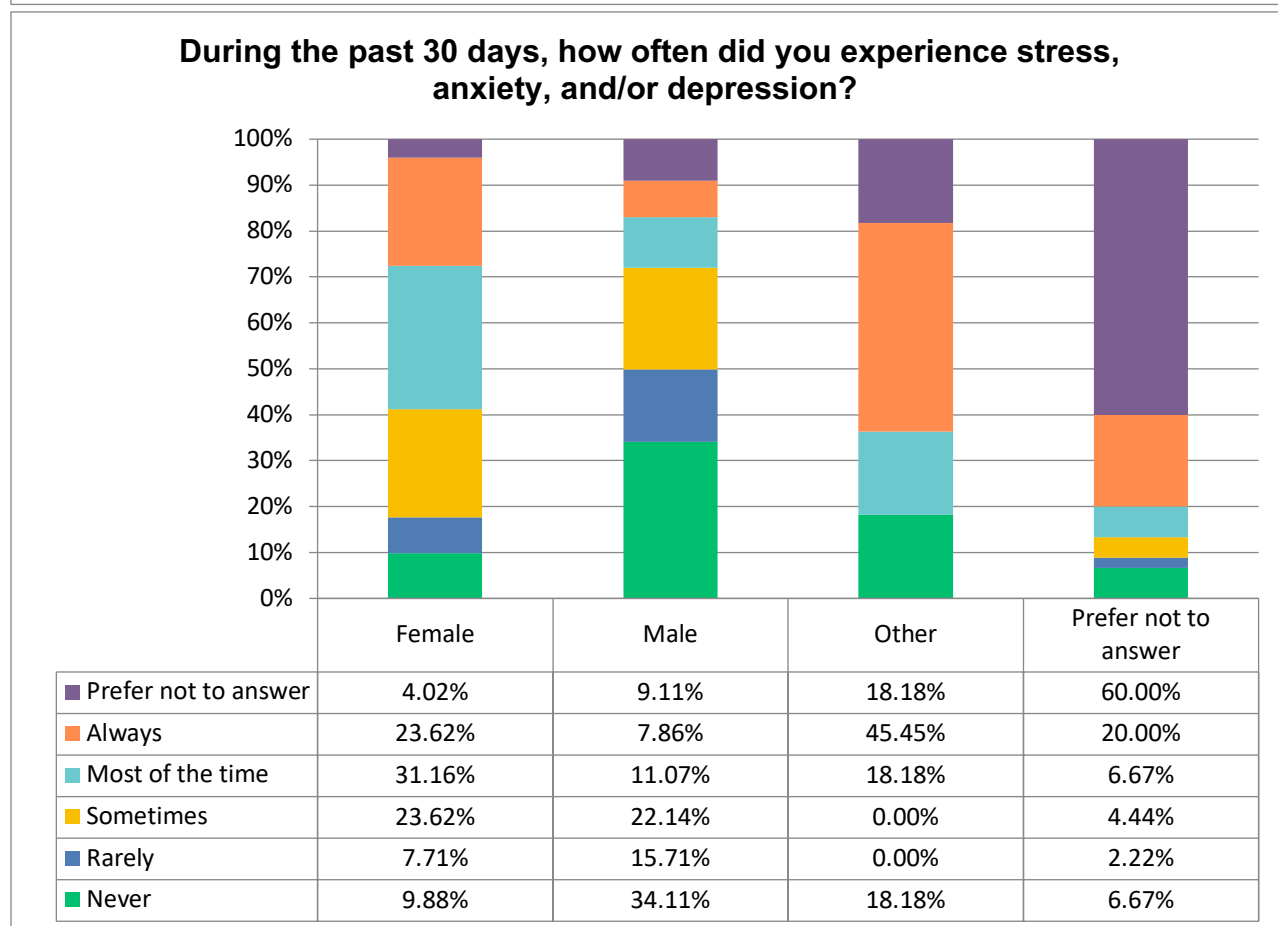
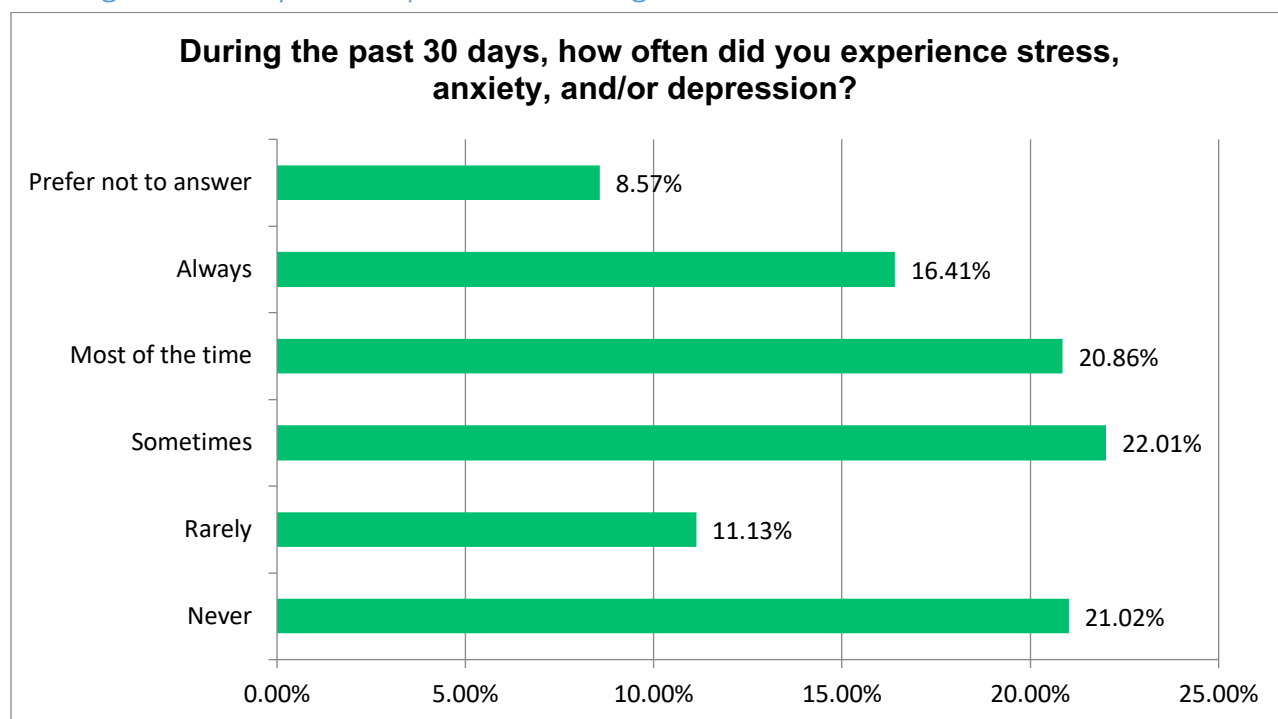
Mental Health

Supporting youth mental health involves more than just addressing mental illness; it also means fostering emotional resilience and the skills needed for healthy social interactions. Even without a formal diagnosis, many adolescents encounter challenges that can impact their development, academics, physical health, and relationships. Poor mental health can impair decision-making and is often linked to risky behaviors, including substance use and violence. Adolescence is a critical period for establishing habits that will contribute to lifelong well-being.

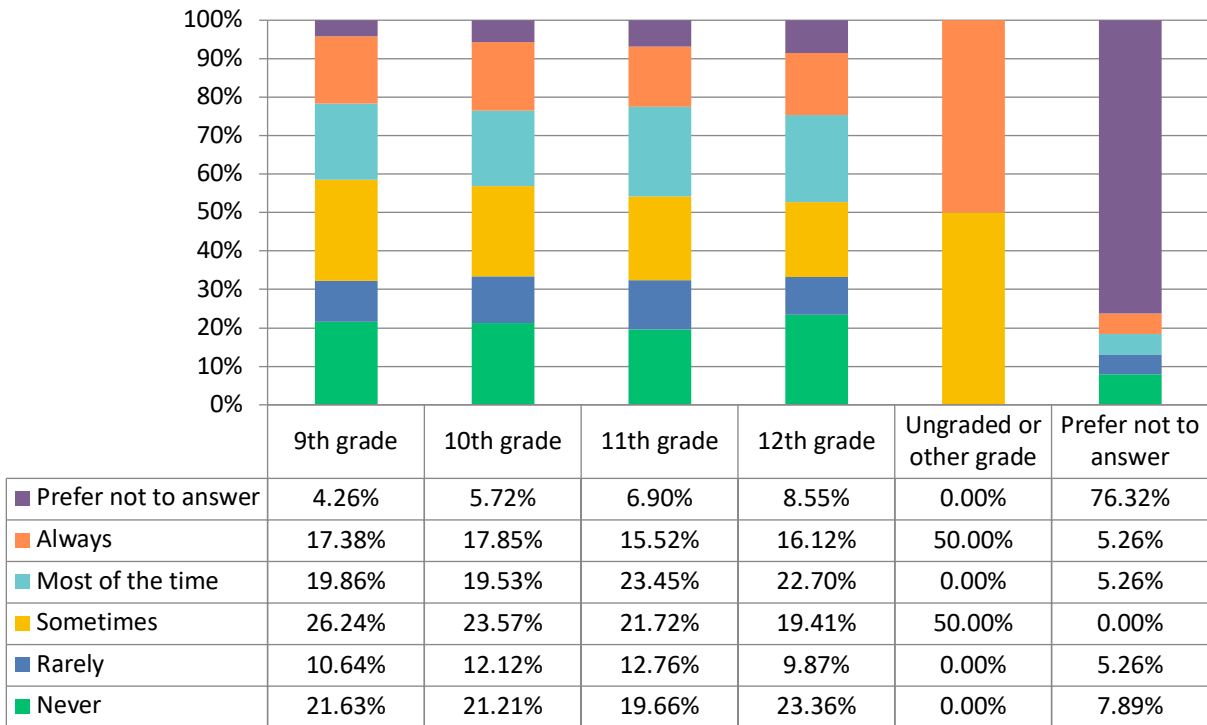
The YRBS data offers insights into the mental health experiences of students in Herkimer County, revealing both positive trends and areas of concern. While most students report stable mental health, a portion continues to experience persistent stress, anxiety, depression, and feelings of hopelessness. This year's data shows a decline in reports of prolonged sadness, suicidal planning, and non-suicidal self-harm compared to previous years, suggesting positive effects from mental health initiatives. However, around 24% of students still report frequent sadness, and approximately 5.5% have attempted suicide in the past year, underscoring the need for continued attention and resources.

Gender differences indicate that female students and those identifying outside the male/female binary are more likely to experience frequent stress and depressive symptoms. These findings highlight the importance of accessible mental health resources and targeted support, especially for vulnerable groups.

Feelings of Anxiety and Depression Among Students



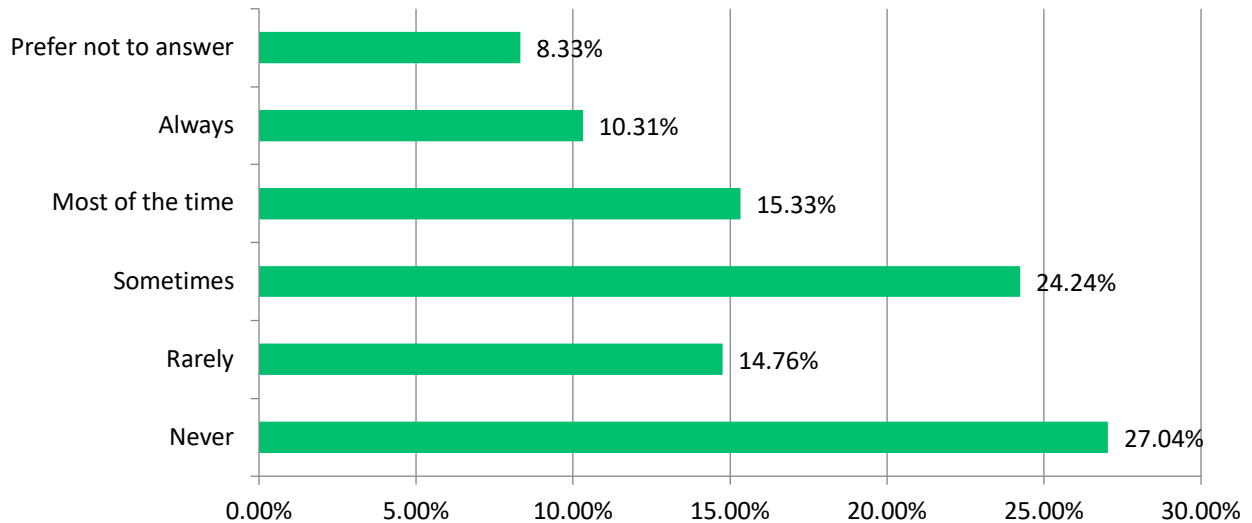
During the past 30 days, how often did you experience stress, anxiety, and/or depression?



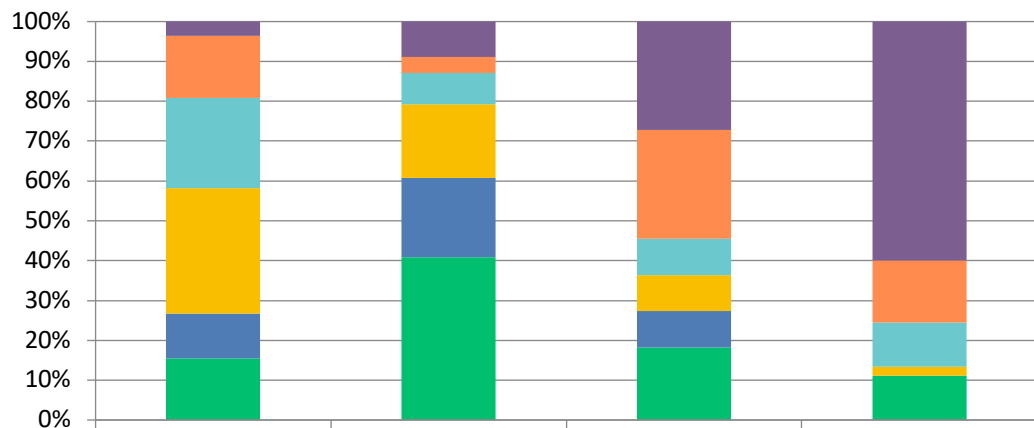
Key Findings on Stress, Anxiety, and Depression Among Students

- **Overall Frequency:** About 22% of students reported feeling stress, anxiety, or depression "sometimes," with 20.86% experiencing it "most of the time" and 16.41% "always."
- **Gender Differences:** Female students reported the highest frequency of feeling stress, anxiety, or depression "Always" (23.62%), compared to 7.86% of males. Students identifying as "other" showed even higher rates, with 45.45% experiencing these feelings "Always."
- **Grade Differences:** The experience of stress, anxiety, or depression shows variation across grades. Reports of "always" experiencing these emotions peak in 9th (17.38%) and 10th grade (17.85%) but slightly decline by 12th grade (16.12%). Conversely, 12th graders report the highest rates of "never" experiencing these emotions (23.36%), with a gradual decrease through 11th (19.66%), 10th grade (21.21%), and 9th grade (21.63%). A substantial number of students across grades experience these emotions "sometimes" or "most of the time," indicating the need for mental health support throughout high school. Non-response rates are notably high among those preferring not to disclose their grade (76.32%), suggesting potential discomfort with discussing mental health openly.

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

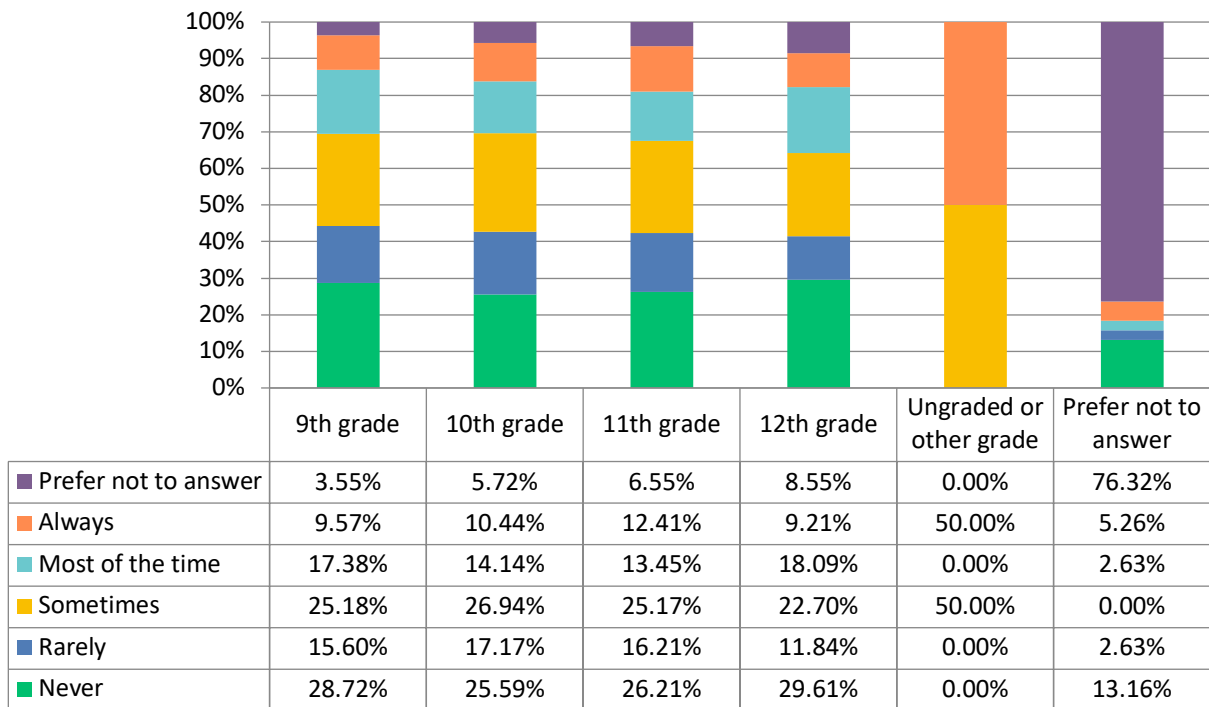


During the past 12 months, how often have feelings of being nervous, anxious, or on edge interfered with your day or your activities?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	3.52%	8.93%	27.27%	60.00%
Always	15.58%	3.93%	27.27%	15.56%
Most of the time	22.78%	7.86%	9.09%	11.11%
Sometimes	31.49%	18.57%	9.09%	2.22%
Rarely	11.22%	19.82%	9.09%	0.00%
Never	15.41%	40.89%	18.18%	11.11%

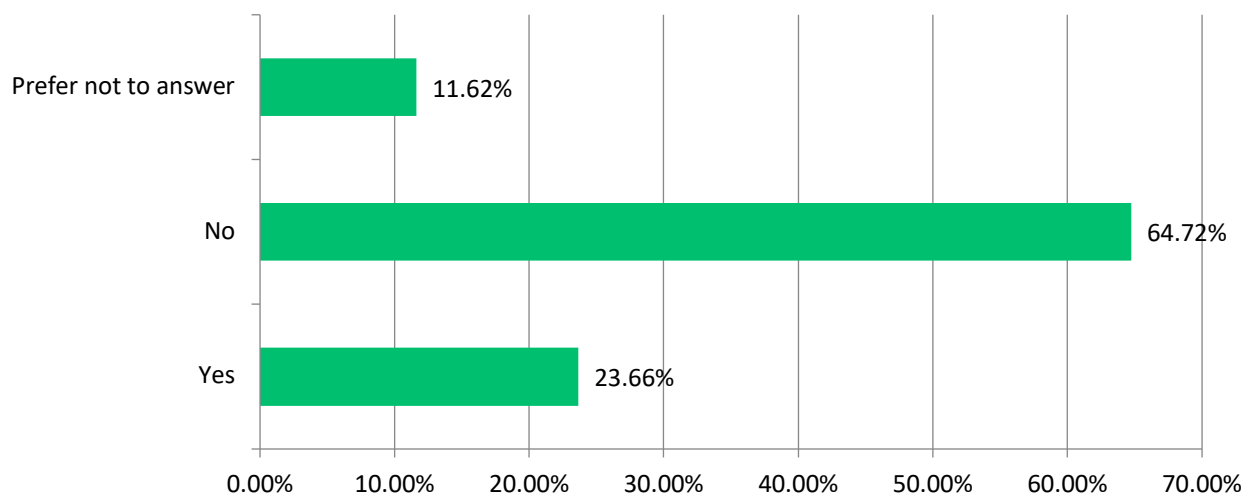
During the past 12 months, how often have feelings of being nervous, anxious, or on edge interfered with your day or your activities?



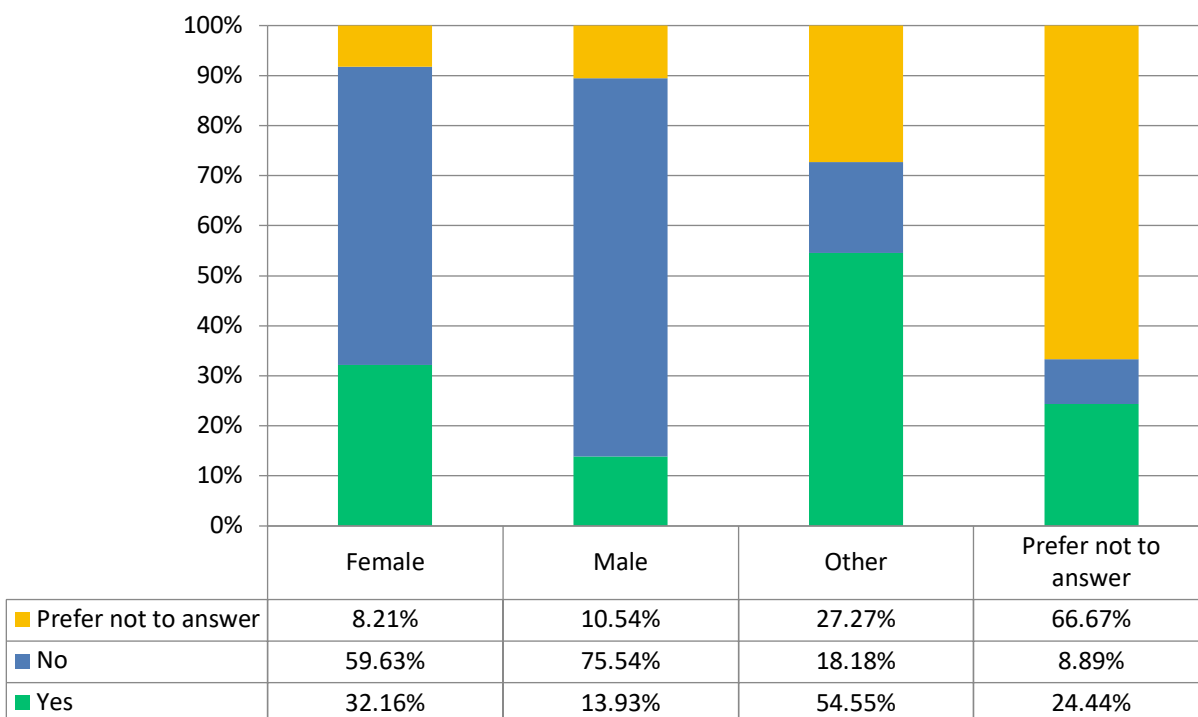
Key Findings on Feelings of Nervousness, Anxiety, or Being on Edge

- **Overall Frequency:** Most students experienced feelings of nervousness, anxiety, or being on edge with varying regularity, with 24.24% reporting they felt this way "sometimes," 15.33% "most of the time," and 10.31% "always." Only 27.04% indicated they "never" had such feelings.
- **Gender Differences:** Male students were the least likely to report frequent feelings of nervousness or anxiety, with 40.89% indicating they "never" experienced such feelings, compared to 15.41% of female students and 18.18% of students identifying as another gender. In contrast, 27.27% of those who identify as "Other" gender reported feeling nervous or anxious "always," suggesting elevated stress levels within this group.
- **Grade Differences:** Twelfth graders reported the highest percentage of students who said feelings of nervousness or anxiety "never" interfered with their activities (29.61%), followed by 9th graders (28.72%). Tenth graders reported higher frequencies of "sometimes" (26.94%) and "rarely" (17.17%) compared to other grades. Reports of "always" experiencing interference peak in 11th grade (12.41%). Non-response rates were notably high among students who preferred not to disclose their grade (76.32%).

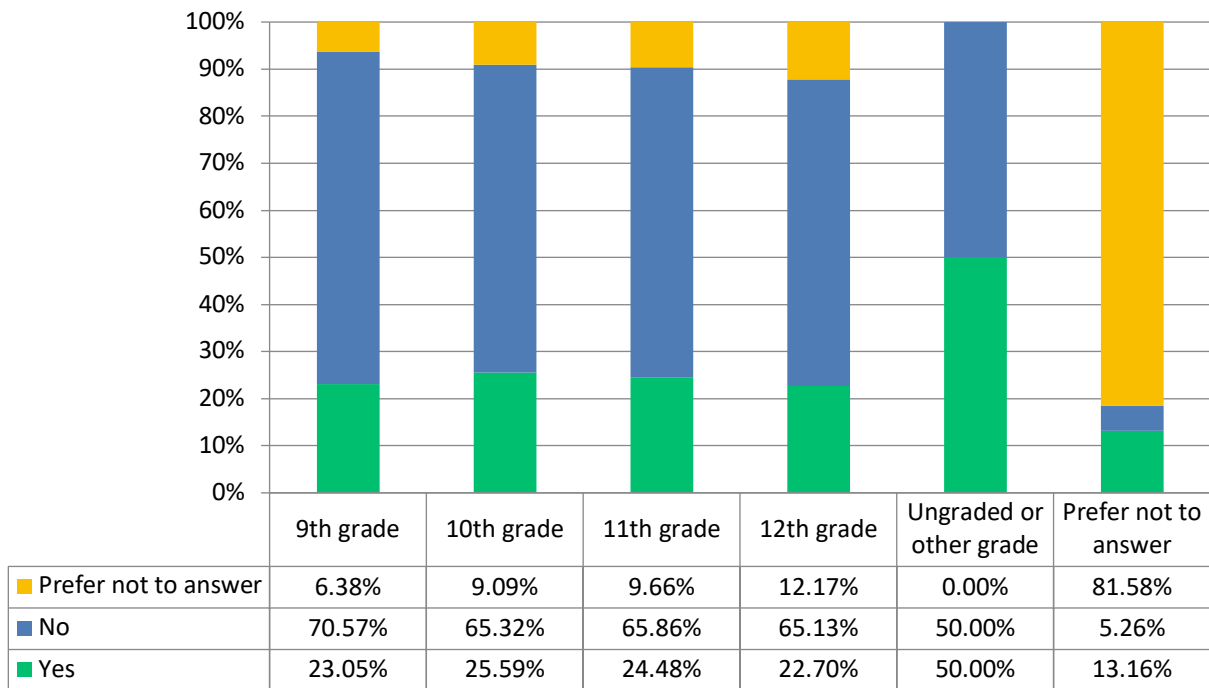
During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?



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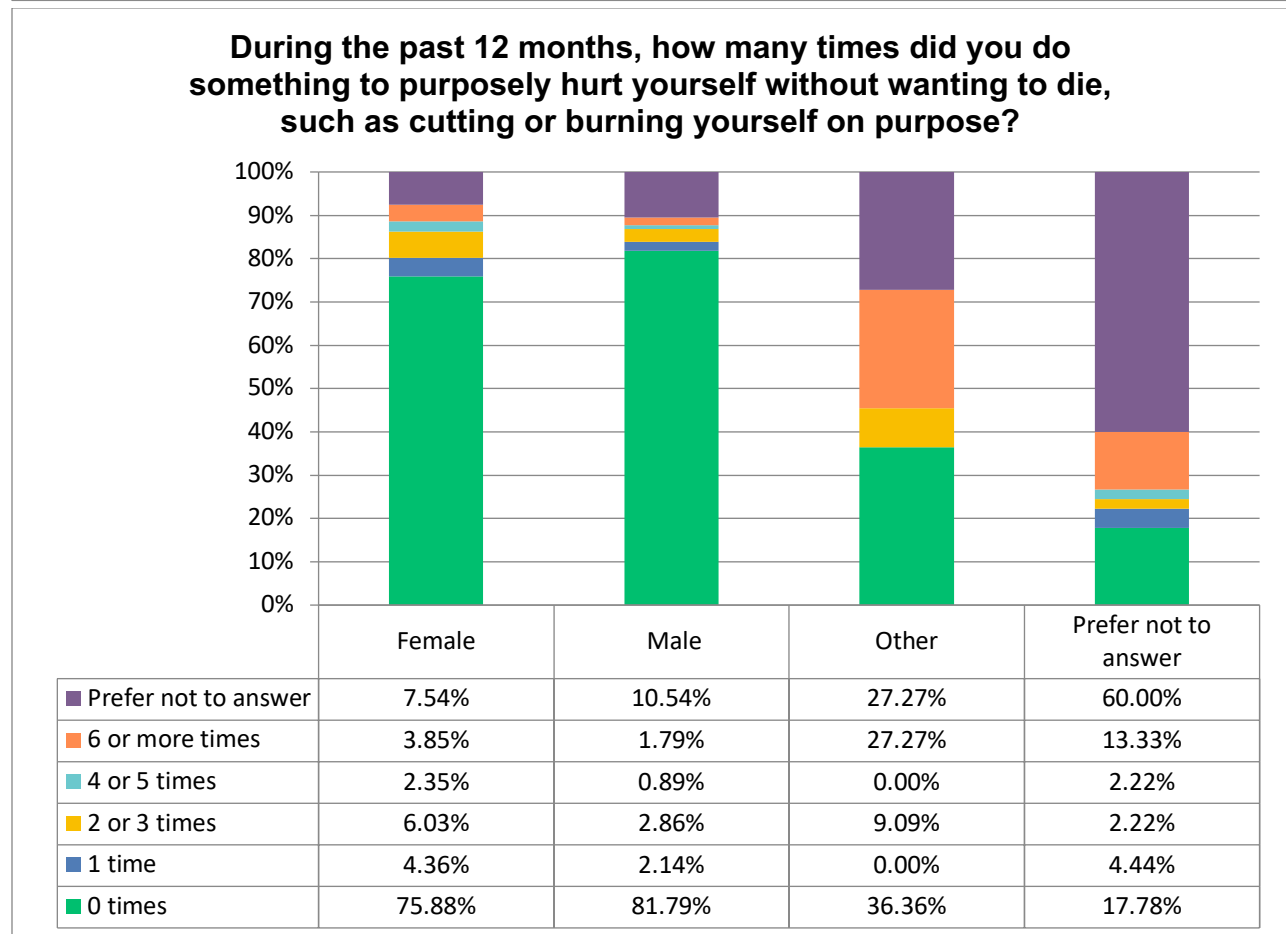
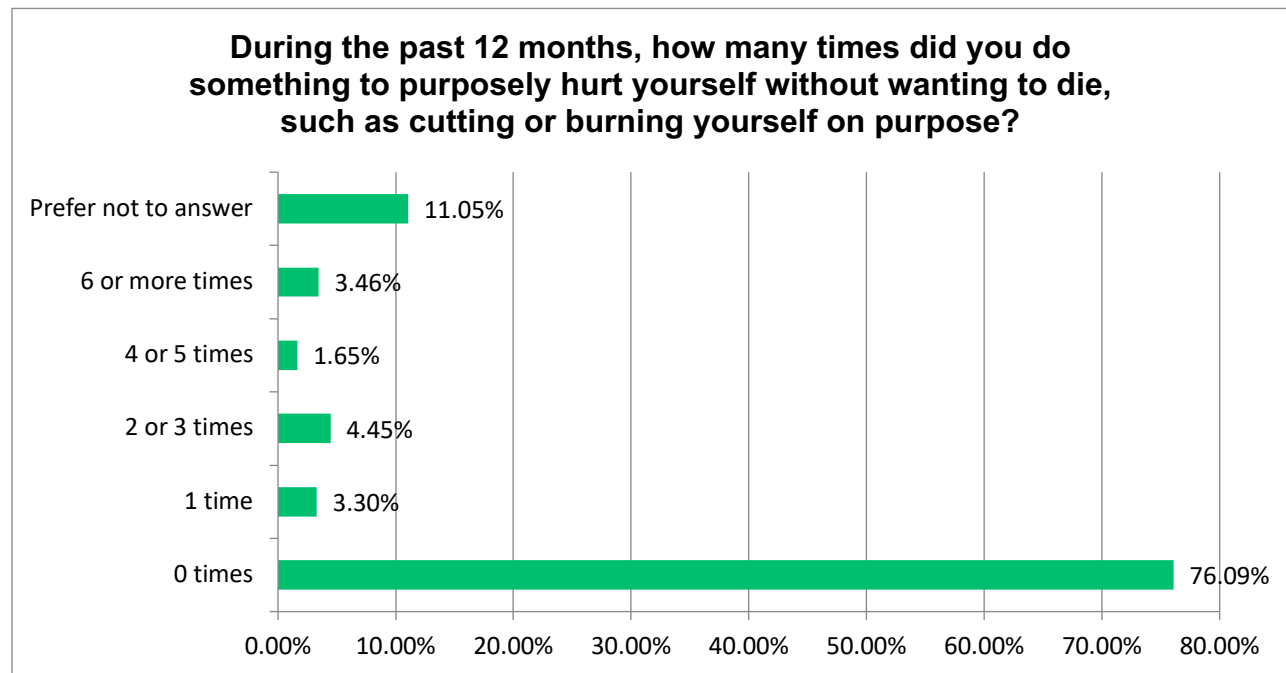
During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?



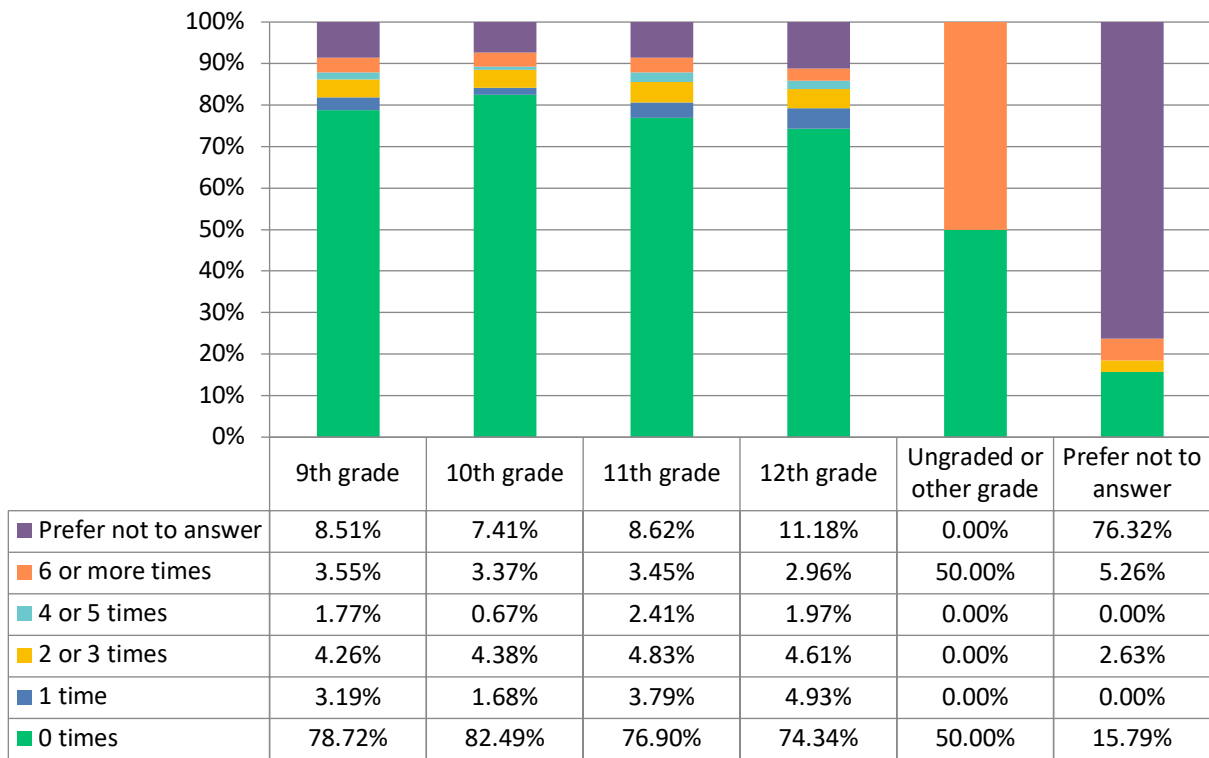
Key Findings on Persistent Feelings of Sadness or Hopelessness

- **Overall Trend:** Approximately 24% of students reported feeling persistently sad or hopeless, impacting their ability to engage in regular activities. A majority of students (64.72%) indicated they did not experience these feelings, while 11.62% chose not to answer.
- **Gender Differences:** Among students who experienced persistent sadness, 32.16% were female, notably higher than 13.93% of males. Alarming, 54.55% of students identifying as “other” reported feeling sad or hopeless, underscoring greater mental health challenges in this group.
- **Grade Differences:** Sadness and hopelessness appear to affect students across all grade levels, with reported rates of 23.05% in 9th grade, 25.59% in 10th grade, 24.48% in 11th grade, and 22.70% in 12th grade. This consistency suggests that emotional challenges are prevalent throughout high school.

Self-Harm and Suicidal Behaviors Among Students



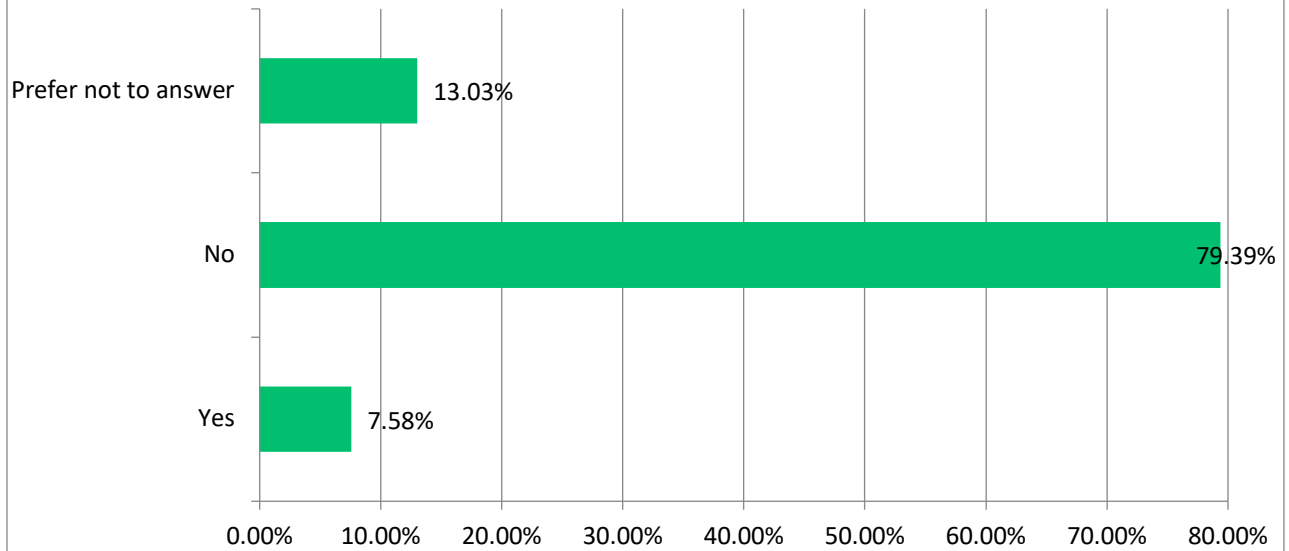
During the past 12 months, how many times did you do something to purposely hurt yourself without wanting to die, such as cutting or burning yourself on purpose?



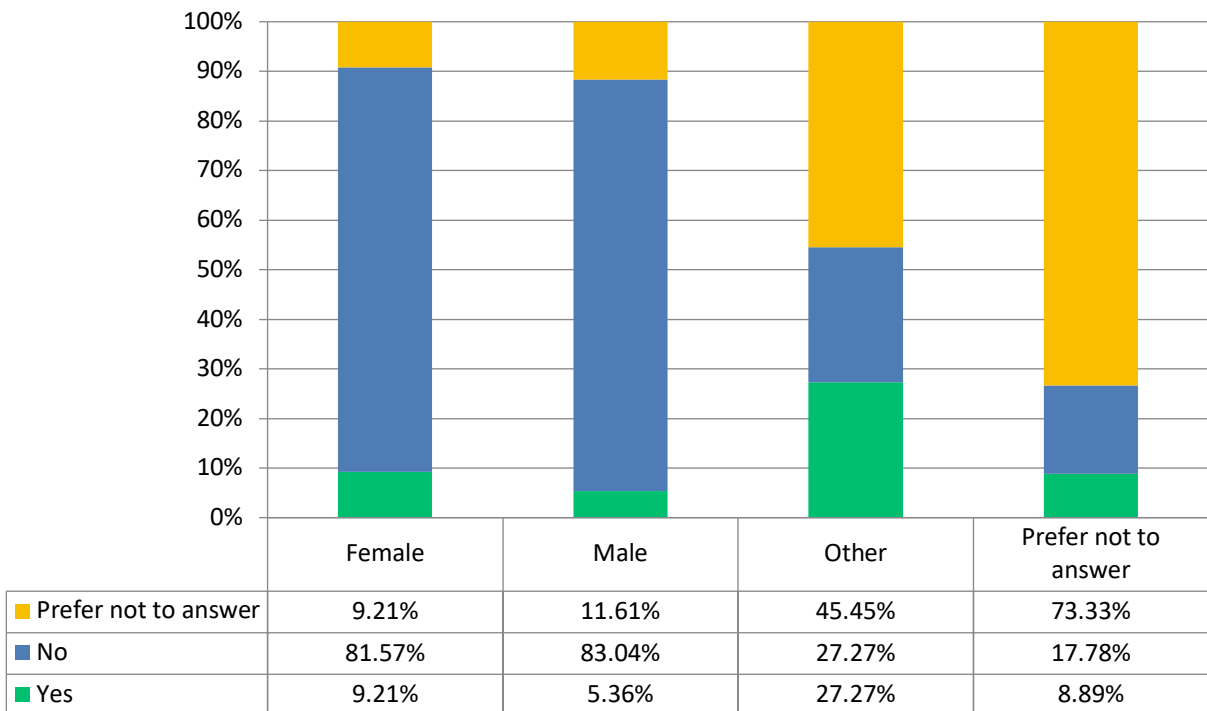
Key Findings on Self-Harm Behaviors

- **Overall Prevalence:** A large majority (76.09%) of students reported not engaging in self-harm behaviors such as cutting or burning in the past year, while a smaller portion reported varying frequencies of such behaviors.
- **Gender Differences:** Female students showed a higher rate of self-harm compared to male students, with 16.59% of females engaging in self-harm at least once, compared to 7.68% of males. Notably, 36.36% of students who identify as "Other" reported self-harming behaviors, suggesting a heightened vulnerability within this group.
- **Grade Differences:** Self-harm was reported at least once by a portion of students across all grades, with the lowest rates observed in 10th grade (82.49% reported no self-harm).

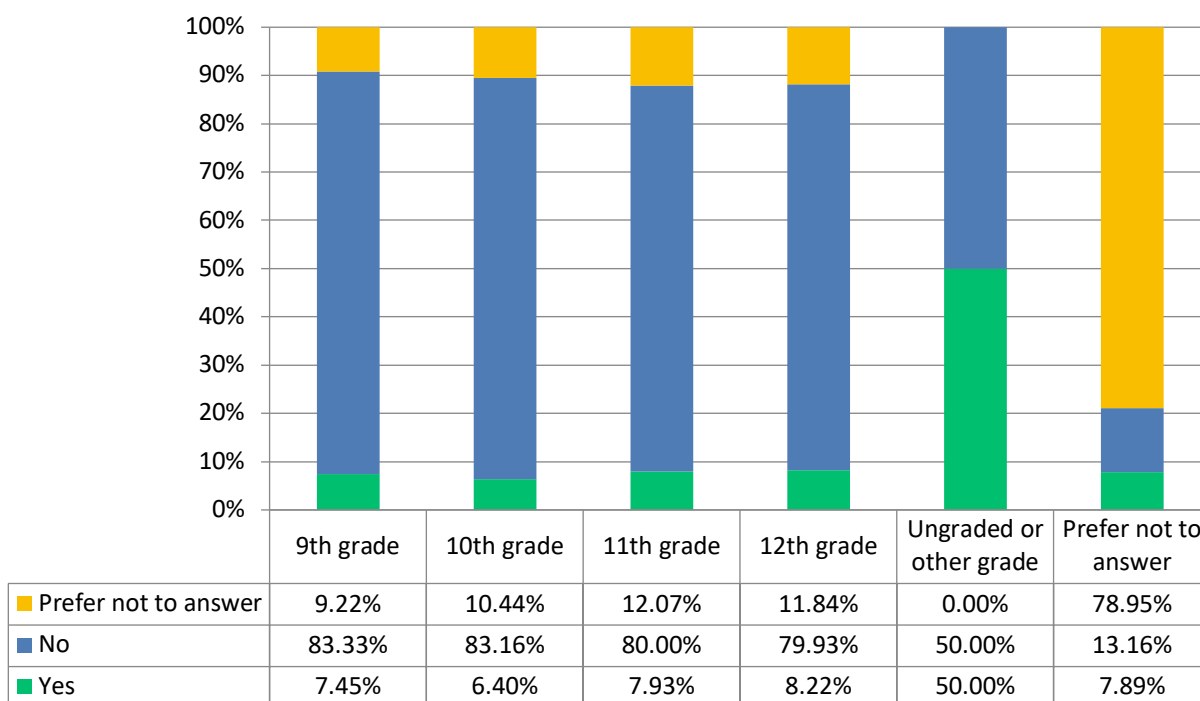
During the past 12 months, did you make a plan about how you would attempt suicide?



During the past 12 months, did you make a plan about how you would attempt suicide?



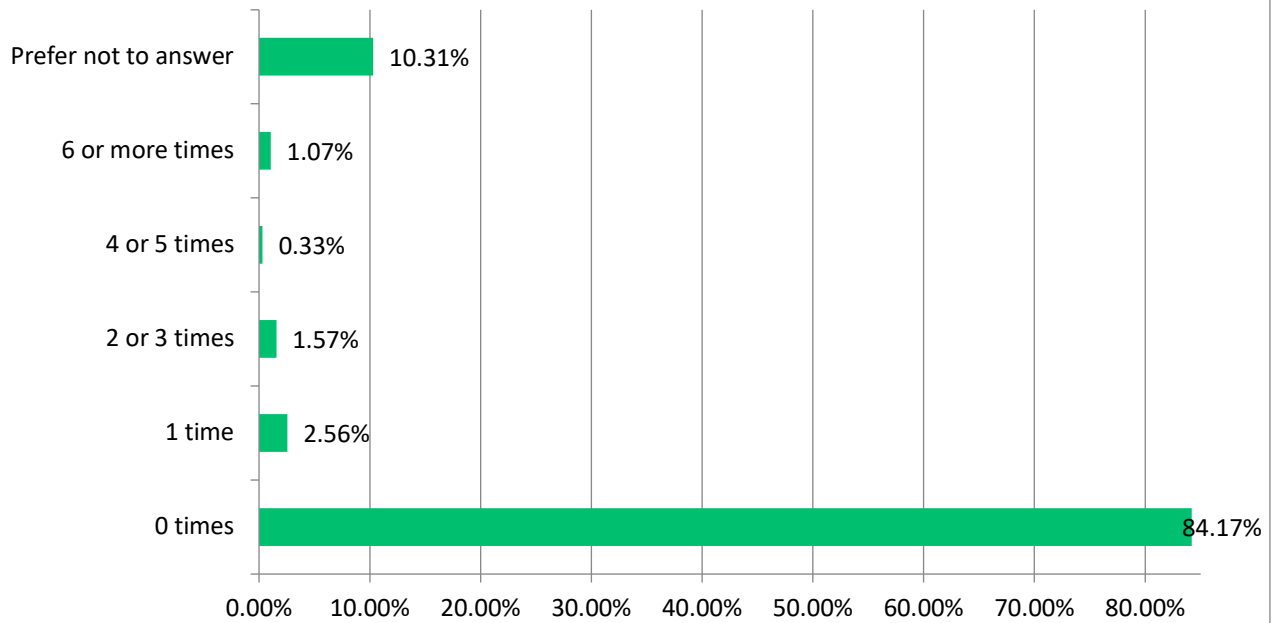
During the past 12 months, did you make a plan about how you would attempt suicide?



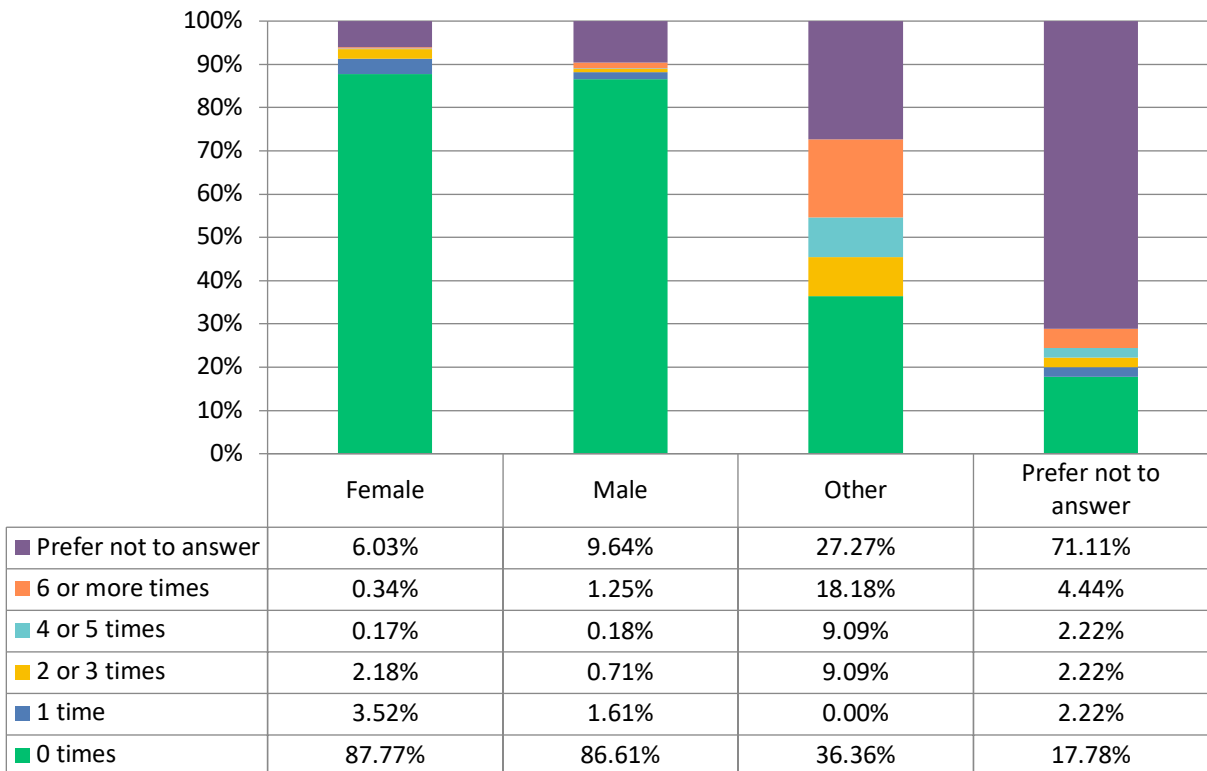
Key Findings on Suicide Planning Among Students

- **Overall Prevalence:** The majority of students (79.39%) reported they did not make a suicide plan in the past 12 months, with 7.58% indicating they had considered a plan.
- **Gender Differences:** Female students had a slightly higher rate (9.21%) of reporting a suicide plan compared to male students (5.36%). Students identifying as “other” showed a much higher rate (27.27%) of planning, pointing to unique challenges within this group.
- **Grade Differences:** Across grade levels, the percentage of students who made a suicide plan remained relatively consistent, with slight increases in upper grades. Ninth graders reported 7.45% making a plan, while 12th graders reported a slightly higher 8.22%.
- **Students Preferring Not to Answer:** A proportion of students (13.03%) opted not to answer this question, with the highest non-response rate (73.33%) observed among students who did not disclose their gender. This suggests a potential sensitivity or reluctance around this topic among certain demographic groups.

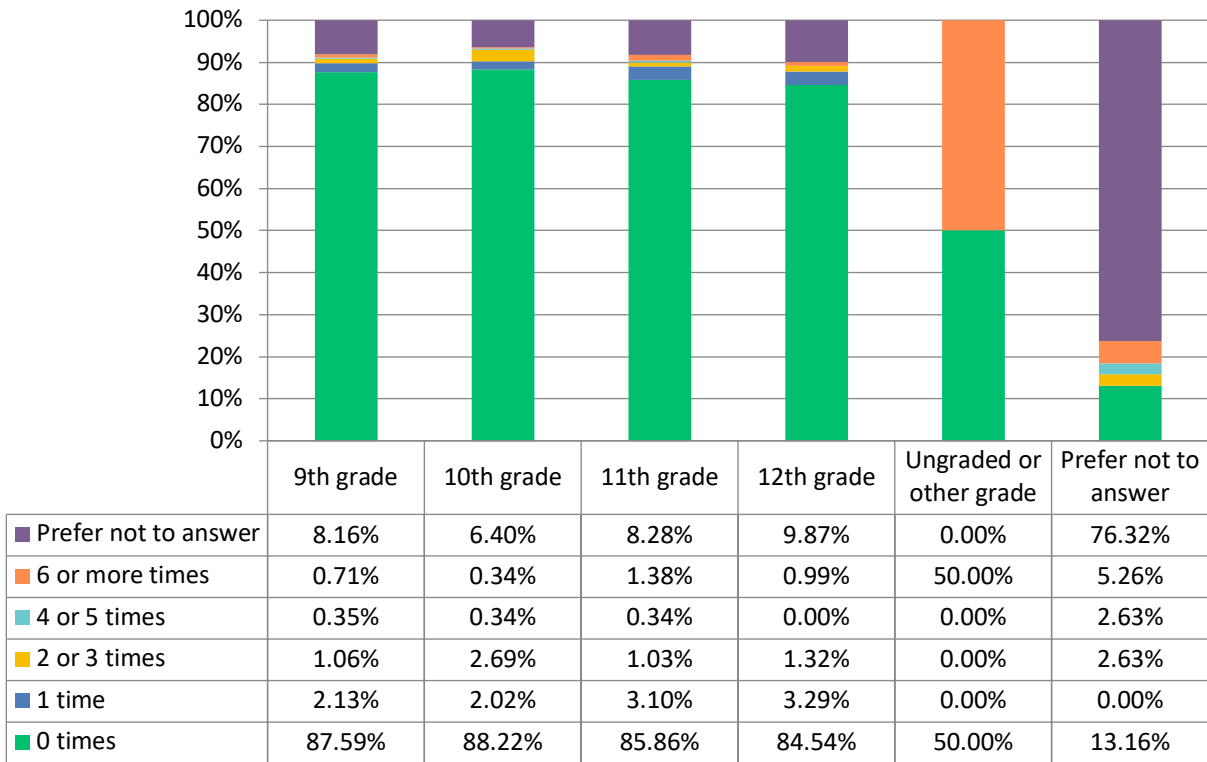
During the past 12 months, how many times did you actually attempt suicide?



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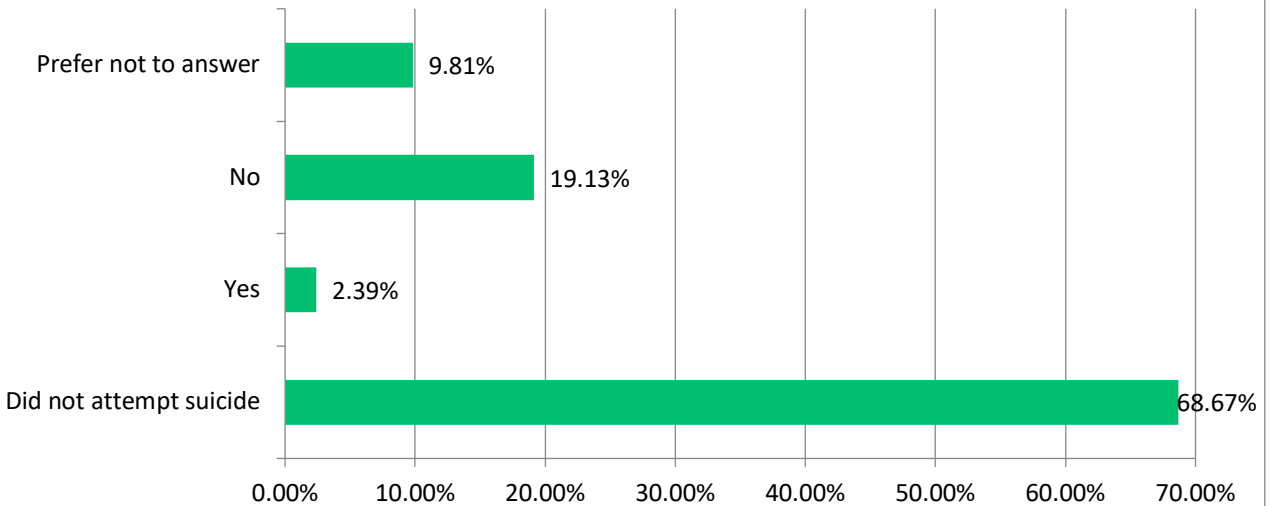
During the past 12 months, how many times did you actually attempt suicide?



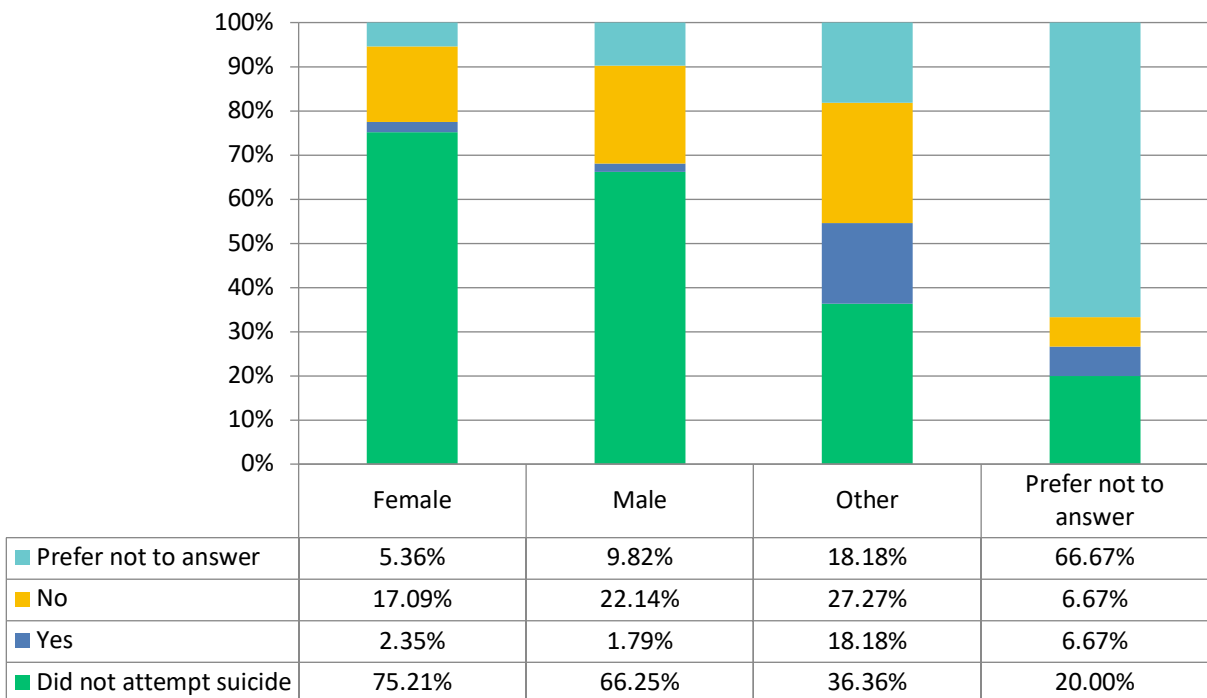
Key Findings on Suicide Attempts and Plans

- **General Trends:** A majority of students (84.17%) reported not having attempted suicide in the past year, with 10.31% preferring not to answer. Only a small fraction reported multiple attempts, with 1.07% attempting suicide six or more times.
- **Gender Differences:** Among female students, 3.52% attempted suicide once, while male students reported a slightly lower rate at 1.61%. Students identifying outside male/female categories reported the highest attempt rate, with 18.18% attempting suicide six or more times, while only 36.36% reported no attempts.
- **Grade Differences:** Across grades, reported suicide attempts were relatively consistent, though slightly higher in 12th grade. Specifically, 3.29% of 12th graders reported one attempt. In the “ungraded or other grade” category, 50% reported an attempt or preferred not to answer, suggesting variability in reporting patterns across grade levels.

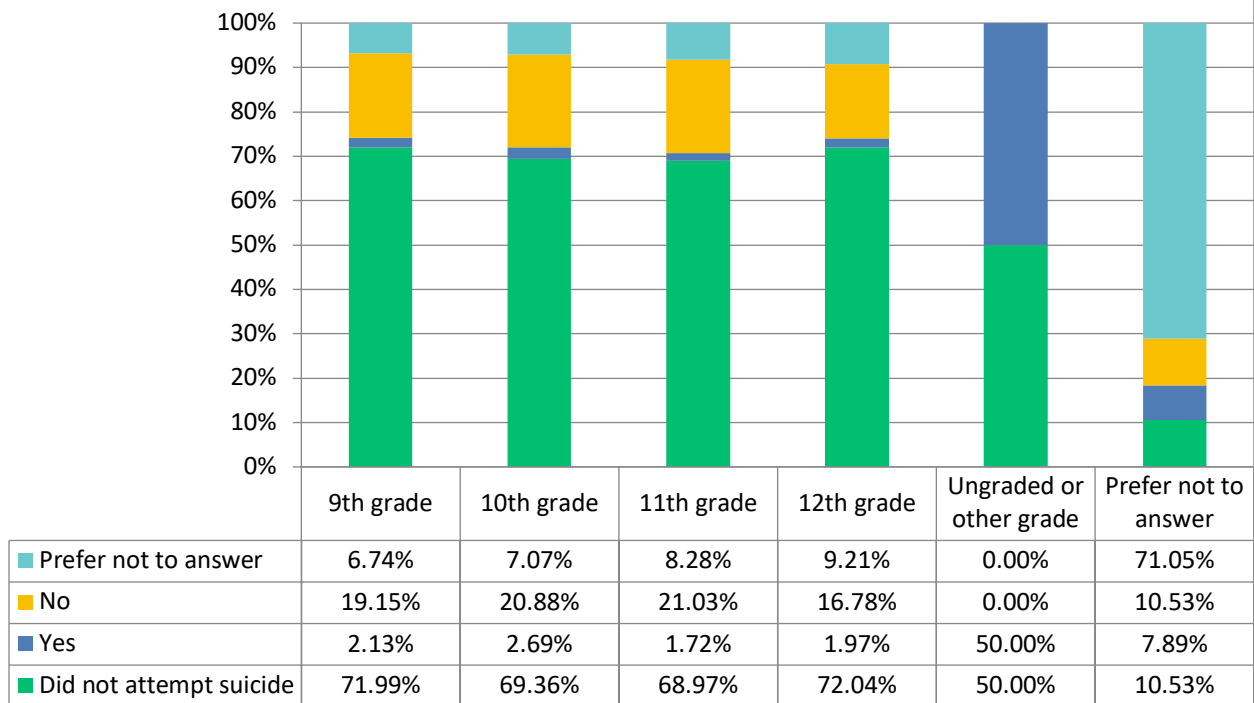
If you have attempted suicide during the past 12 months, did any attempt result in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse?



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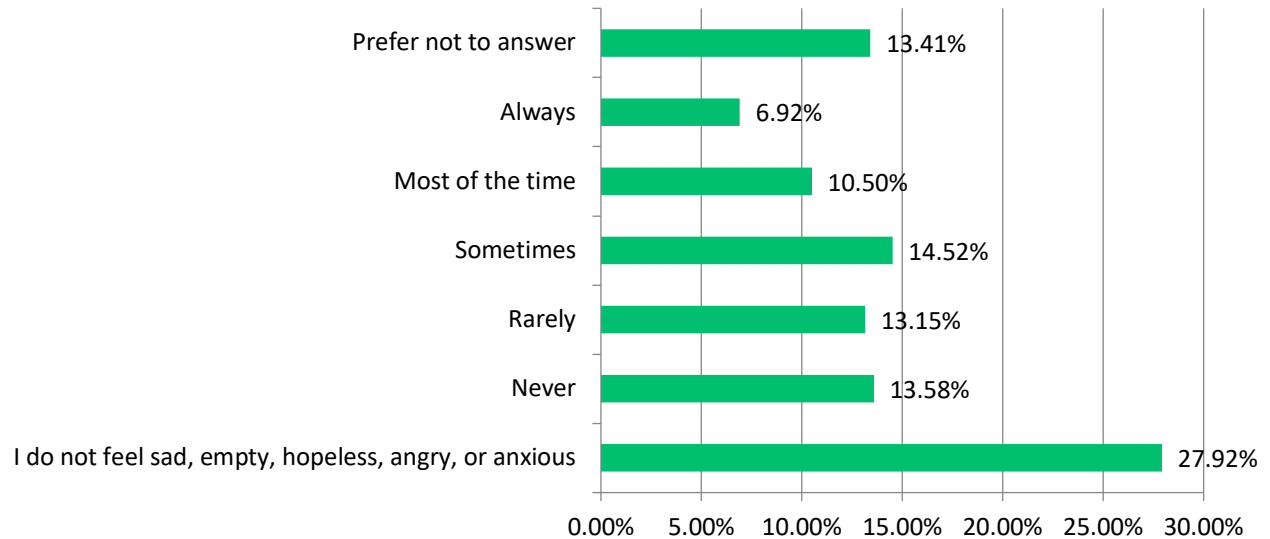


Key Findings on Injury or Medical Treatment Following Suicide Attempts:

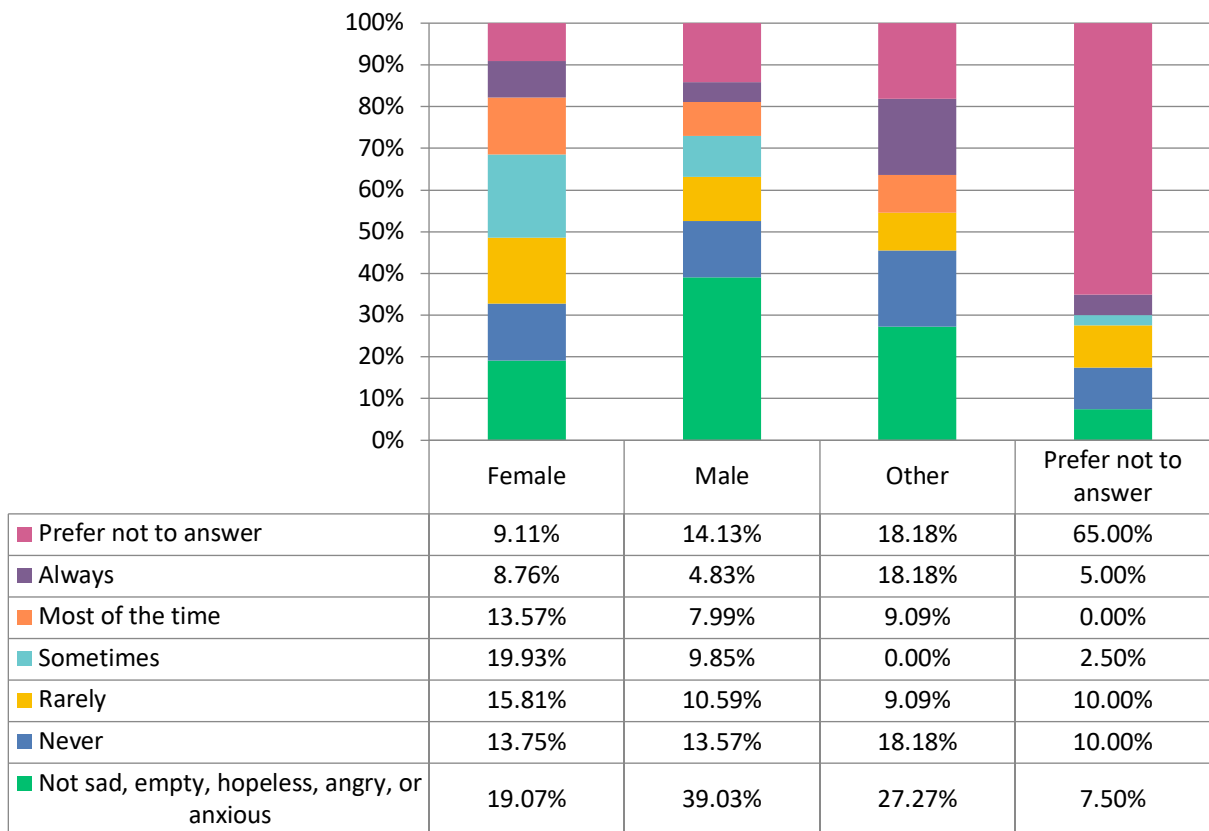
- **Overall Prevalence:** Most students (68.67%) reported not attempting suicide in the past 12 months. Among those who did, 2.39% indicated that their attempt resulted in an injury or overdose that required medical treatment. In contrast, 19.13% reported no resulting injuries.
- **Gender Differences:** Female students were slightly more likely to report a suicide attempt leading to injury and treatment (2.35%) compared to males (1.79%). However, a notable portion of students identifying as "Other" (18.18%) reported attempts resulting in injury or overdose.
- **Grade Differences:** The prevalence of medically treated suicide attempts varied across grade levels, with around 2-3% of students in each grade (9th-12th) indicating an attempt with resulting injury. However, the majority of students across all grades reported no suicide attempts.

Student Access to Emotional Support and Help

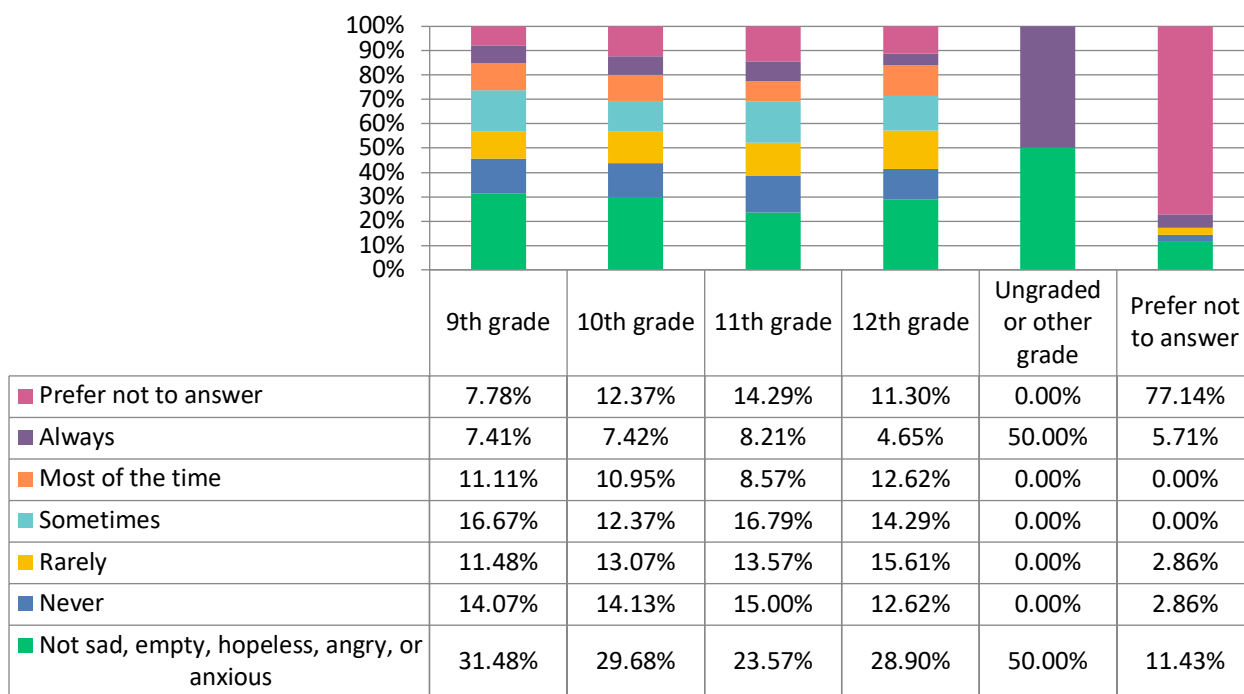
When you feel sad, empty, hopeless, angry, or anxious, how often do you get the kind of help you need?



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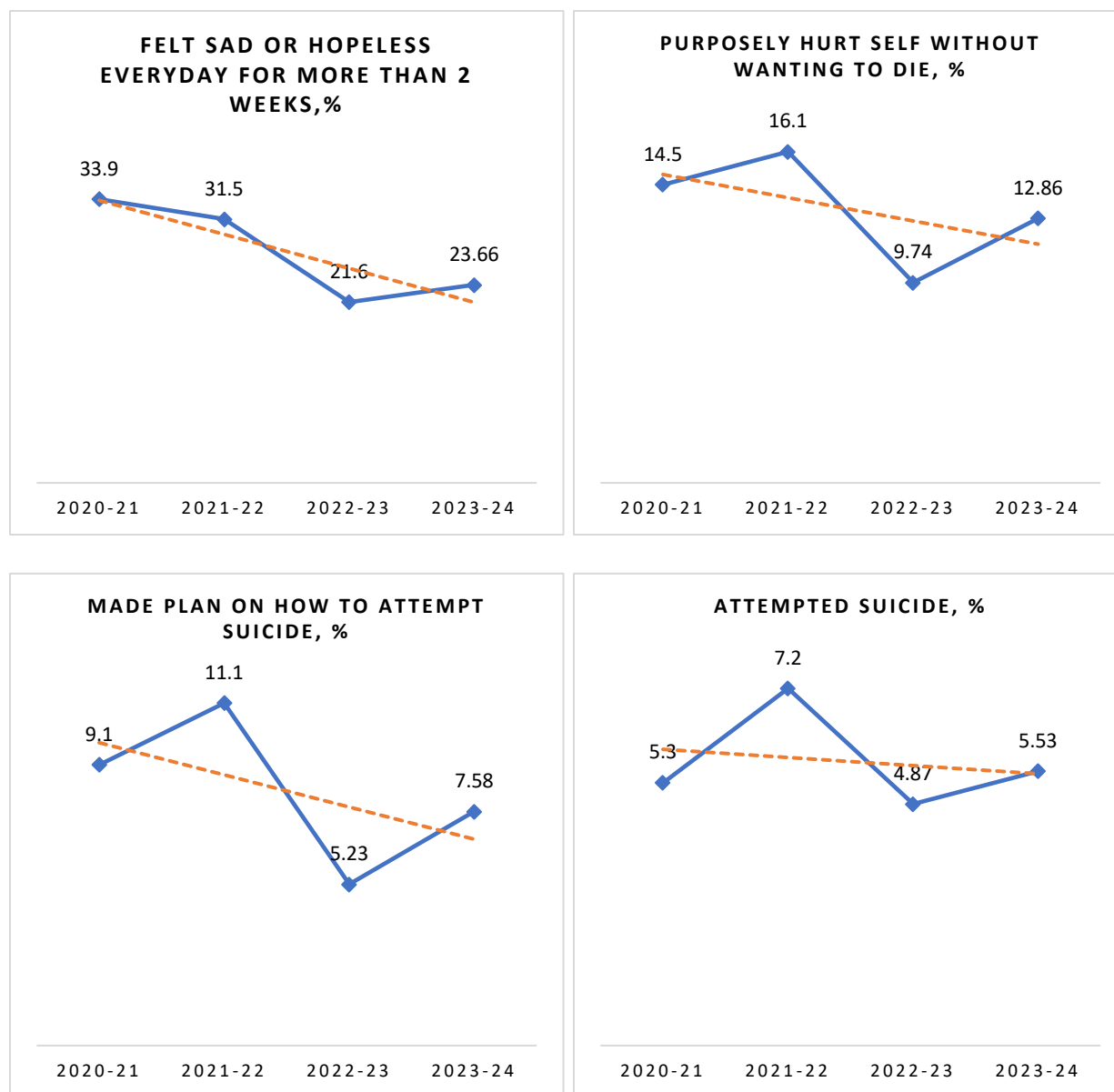


Key Findings in Access to Emotional Support and Help

- Overall Help-Seeking Frequency:** Nearly 28% of students reported not experiencing persistent negative emotions like sadness, anger, or anxiety. Among those who did feel such emotions, responses varied widely on how often they received the help they needed. Specifically, 14.52% reported receiving help “sometimes” and 13.58% “never” receiving the needed support.
- Gender Differences:** Male students were the least likely to report frequent emotional distress, with 39.03% indicating they didn’t feel these negative emotions. Female students reported the highest frequency of occasionally receiving help, with 19.93% saying they sometimes got the help they needed. Students identifying as “other” had the most variation in experiences, with 27.27% not feeling persistent negative emotions and others showing varying levels of support access.
- Grade Differences:** The percentage of students reporting no need for help declined with grade level, from 31.48% in 9th grade to 23.57% in 11th grade, then rose slightly to 28.90% in 12th grade. Students in all grades most commonly reported “sometimes” receiving help, with 16.67% in 9th grade, 12.37% in 10th grade, 16.79% in 11th grade, and 14.29% in 12th grade.

Mental Health and Self-Harm Over Time

The following graphs highlight four-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

- **Attempted Suicide:** The percentage of students reporting a suicide attempt shows fluctuations over the years. There was an increase from 5.3% in 2020-2021 to a peak of 7.2% in 2021-2022, followed by a decrease to 4.87% in 2022-2023 and a slight rise to 5.53% in 2023-2024. This trend suggests a general decline, despite recent variability.
- **Suicide Planning:** The percentage of students making suicide plans has shown a gradual decline. From 9.1% in 2020-2021, the rate increased slightly to 11.1% in 2021-2022 but dropped to 5.23% in 2022-2023 before settling at 7.58% in 2023-2024. The overall trend points to a reduction in suicide planning behavior, although recent years show minor fluctuations.
- **Persistent Sadness and Hopelessness:** The proportion of students feeling persistently sad or hopeless for more than two weeks shows a steady downward trend. Starting at 33.9% in 2020-2021, the rate decreased to 31.5% in 2021-2022, further dropping to 21.6% in 2022-2023, and stabilizing at 23.66% in 2023-2024. This consistent decrease is a positive indication of potentially improving mental health conditions among students.
- **Self-Harm (Non-Suicidal):** The percentage of students engaging in non-suicidal self-harm, such as cutting or burning, has generally declined. From 14.5% in 2020-2021, it increased to 16.1% in 2021-2022 but dropped to 9.74% in 2022-2023, with a slight increase to 12.86% in 2023-2024. Despite the fluctuation, the overall trend suggests a decrease in non-suicidal self-harm behaviors.

Sexual Activity and Dating Violence

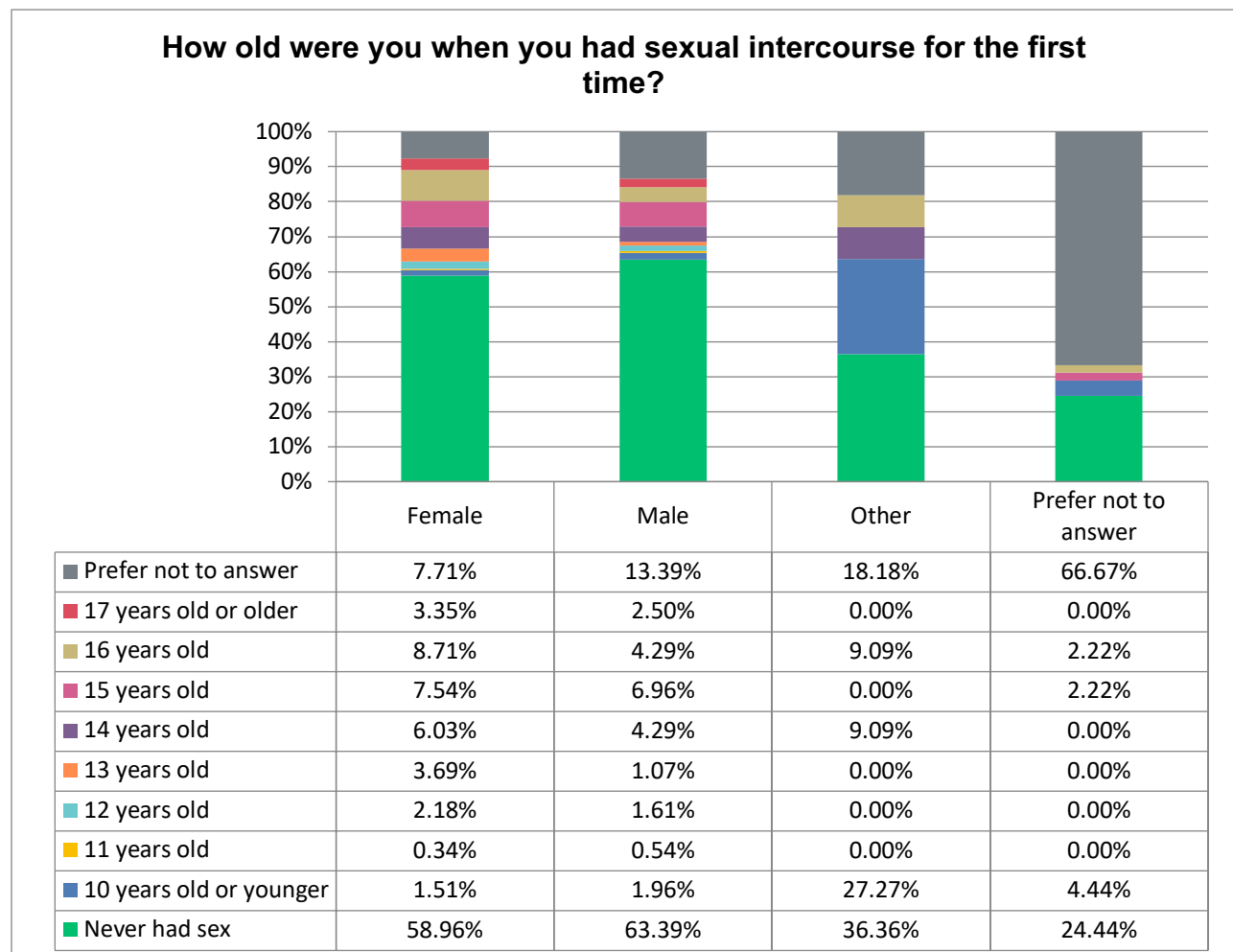
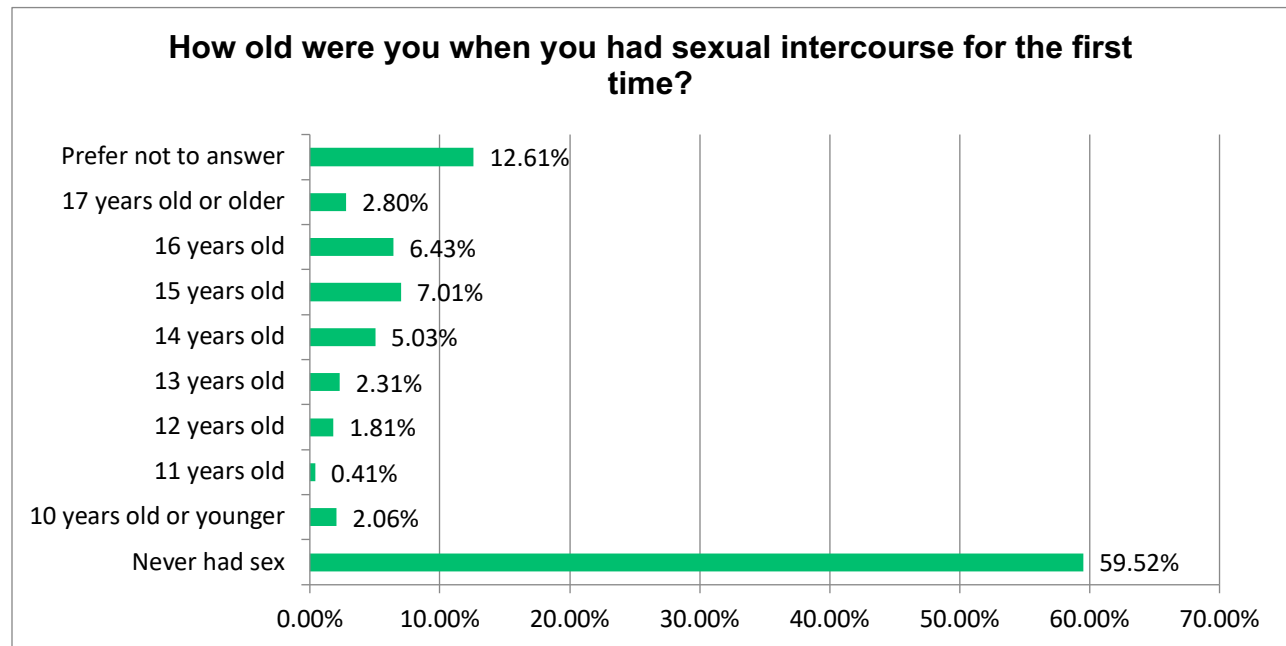
Understanding adolescent experiences with sexual activity and dating violence is essential for promoting healthy relationships and reducing risks among youth. These experiences can have a significant impact on physical, emotional, and mental health, potentially resulting in unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, and long-term psychological effects. Data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) provides valuable insights into trends in sexual activity and dating violence among students in Herkimer County. This information helps guide schools and communities in supporting adolescents as they build safe and healthy relationships.

Recent survey data shows a steady decline in sexual activity among Herkimer County students. In 2023-2024, 27.86% of students reported having had sexual intercourse, down from 36% in 2020-2021. Among those who are sexually active, most report that their first experience occurred in their mid-to-late teenage years, though a smaller subset began earlier. The rate of substance use before sexual encounters has also dropped, with only 4.62% now reporting alcohol or drug use before their last sexual activity. This decrease suggests that students may be showing greater caution or awareness regarding substance use and sexual activity.

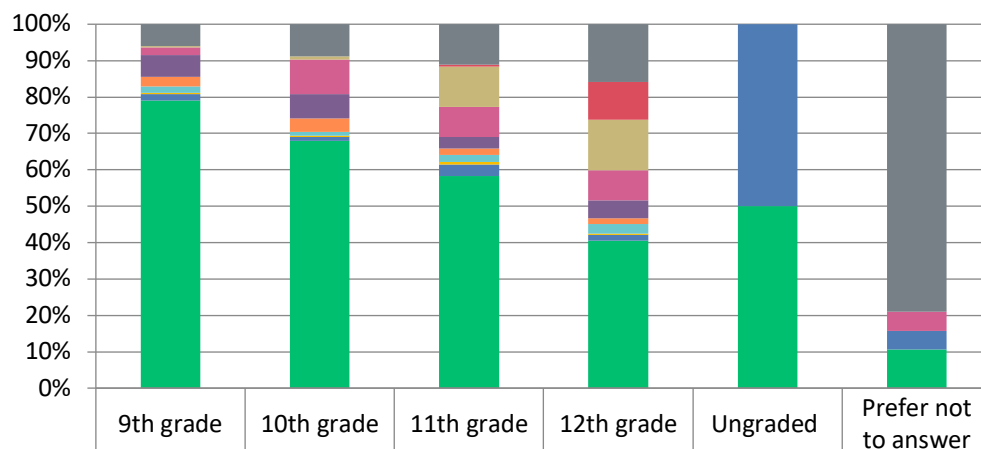
The findings on consent and contraceptive use are mixed. A majority of students report never having engaged in sexual activity. Among those who have, only 22.59% confirm that all encounters were consensual, with some students indicating uncertainty or non-consensual experiences. Condoms and birth control pills are the most commonly used contraceptive methods, though a notable portion of students did not use any form of contraception during their last encounter. These results point to an opportunity for further education on contraceptive options and safe practices.

Unwanted sexual advances and dating violence continue to be concerns. A small subset of students report experiencing unwanted sexual contact, while other students report emotional or physical harm within dating situations. These findings highlight the need for comprehensive sexual education that extends beyond contraceptive use and consent. By fostering respect and promoting healthy relationship practices, schools and communities can help safeguard the well-being of students.

Sexual Activity Behaviors Among Students



How old were you when you had sexual intercourse for the first time?

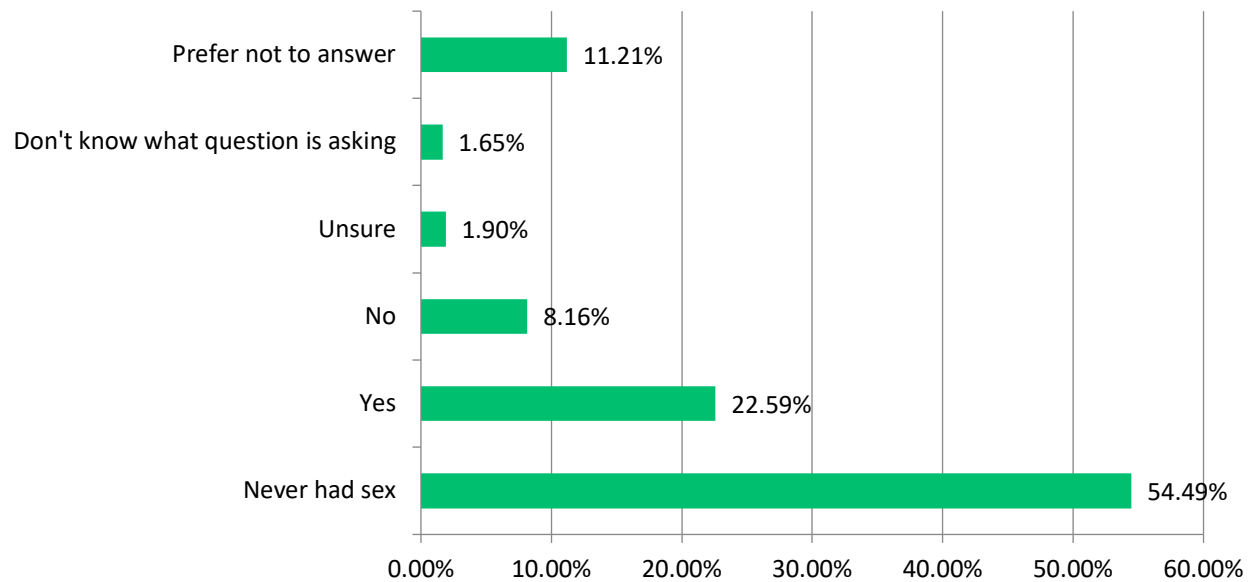


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded	Prefer not to answer
■ Prefer not to answer	6.03%	8.75%	11.03%	15.79%	0.00%	78.95%
■ 17 years old or older	0.00%	0.00%	0.69%	10.53%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 16 years old	0.35%	1.01%	11.03%	13.82%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 15 years old	2.13%	9.43%	8.28%	8.22%	0.00%	5.26%
■ 14 years old	6.03%	6.73%	3.10%	4.93%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 13 years old	2.48%	3.70%	1.72%	1.64%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 12 years old	1.77%	1.01%	2.07%	2.63%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 11 years old	0.35%	0.34%	0.69%	0.33%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 10 years old or younger	1.77%	1.01%	3.10%	1.64%	50.00%	5.26%
■ Never sexual intercourse	79.08%	68.01%	58.28%	40.46%	50.00%	10.53%

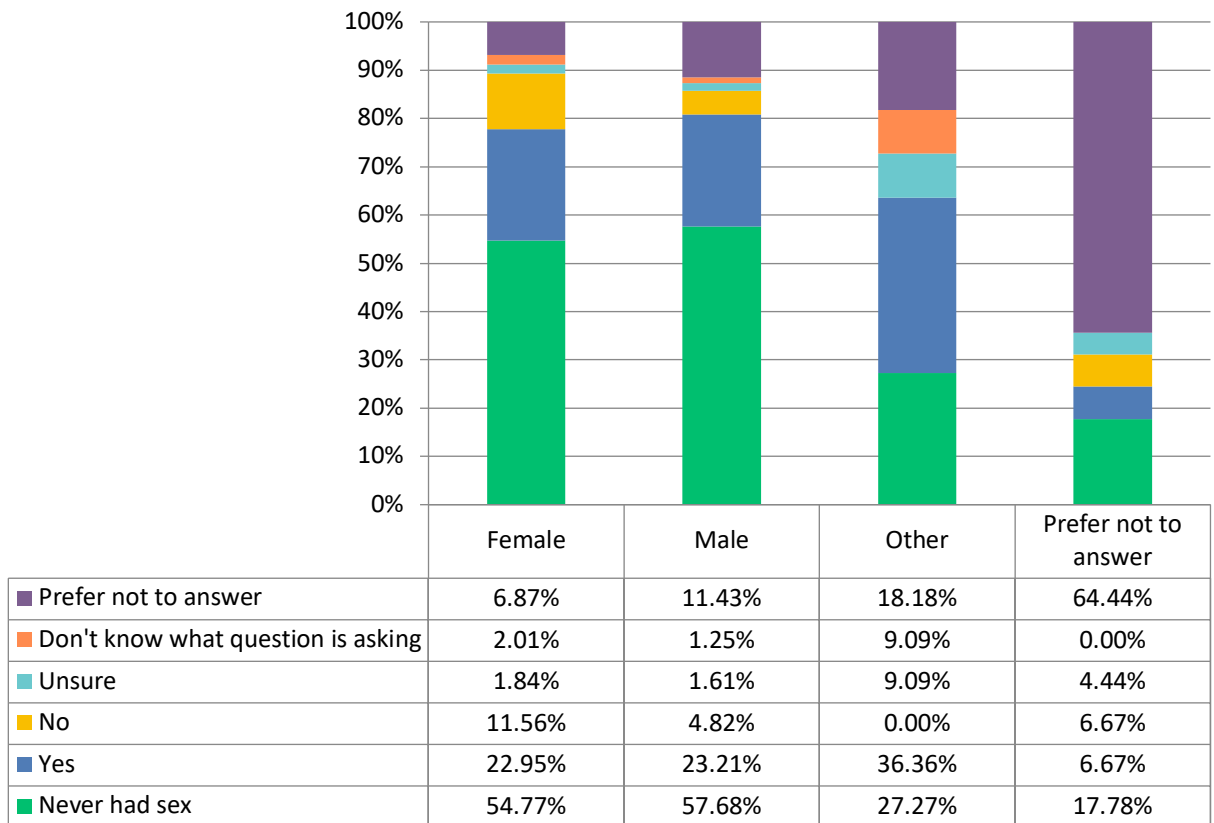
Key Findings on Age of First Sexual Intercourse

- Overall Trends:** The majority of students, 59.52%, report never having had sexual intercourse. Among those who have, initiation varies across ages, with a gradual increase in percentages as students get older.
- Gender Differences:** Male students report the highest percentage of never having had sex (63.39%), followed by female students (58.96%) and students identifying as "Other" (36.36%). A notable proportion of students identifying as "Other" report having had sexual intercourse at earlier ages compared to males and females.
- Grade Differences:** A clear trend emerges by grade, with younger students (79.08% in 9th grade) reporting higher rates of abstinence, which decreases steadily by 12th grade (40.46%).

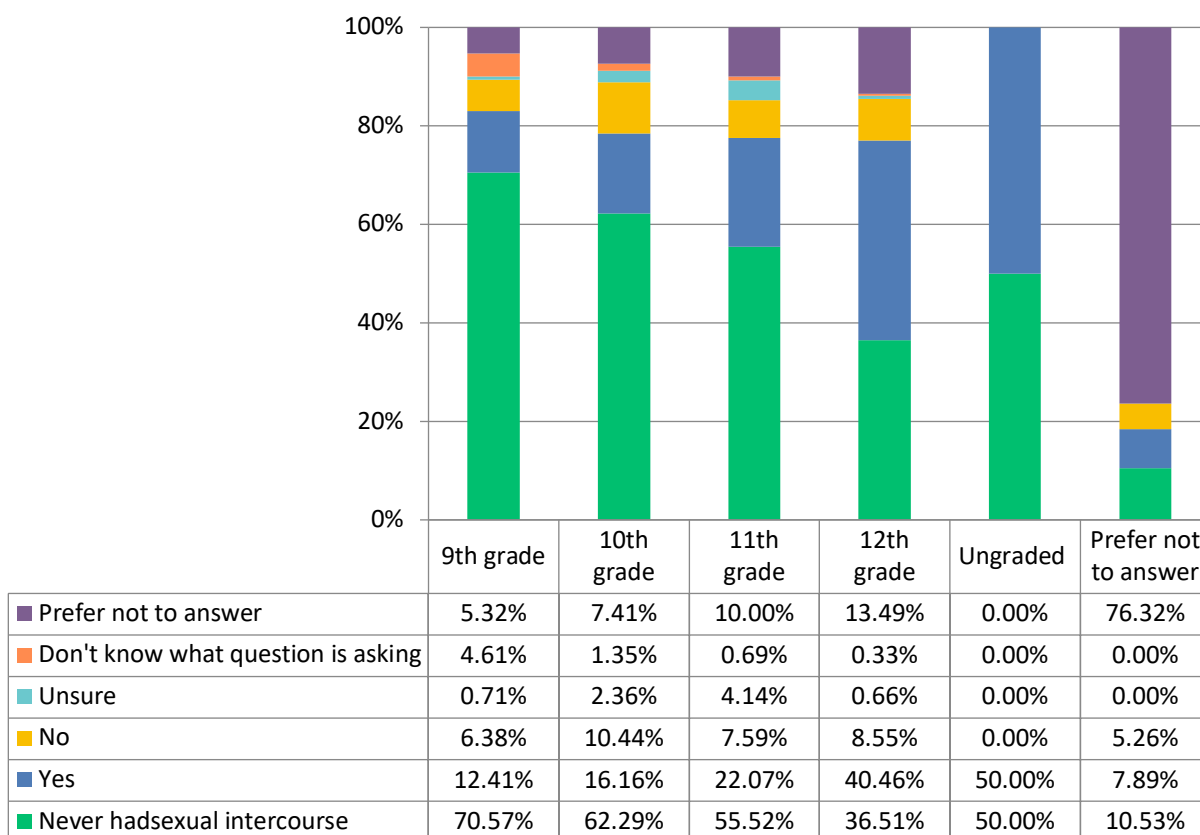
Have all of your sexual encounters been consensual?



Have all of your sexual encounters been consensual?



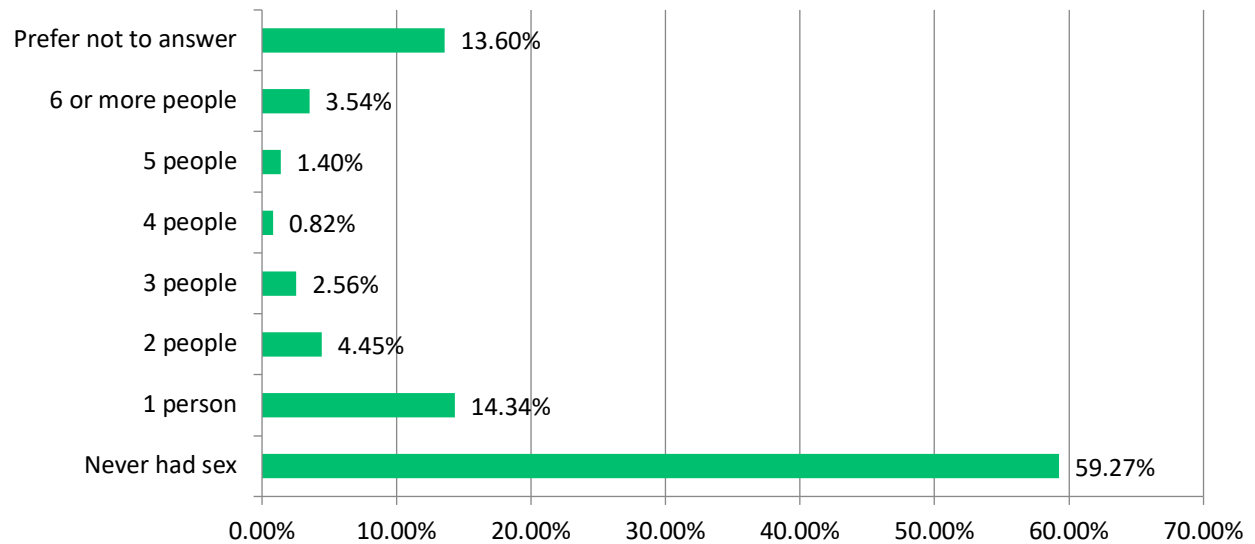
Have all of your sexual encounters been consensual?



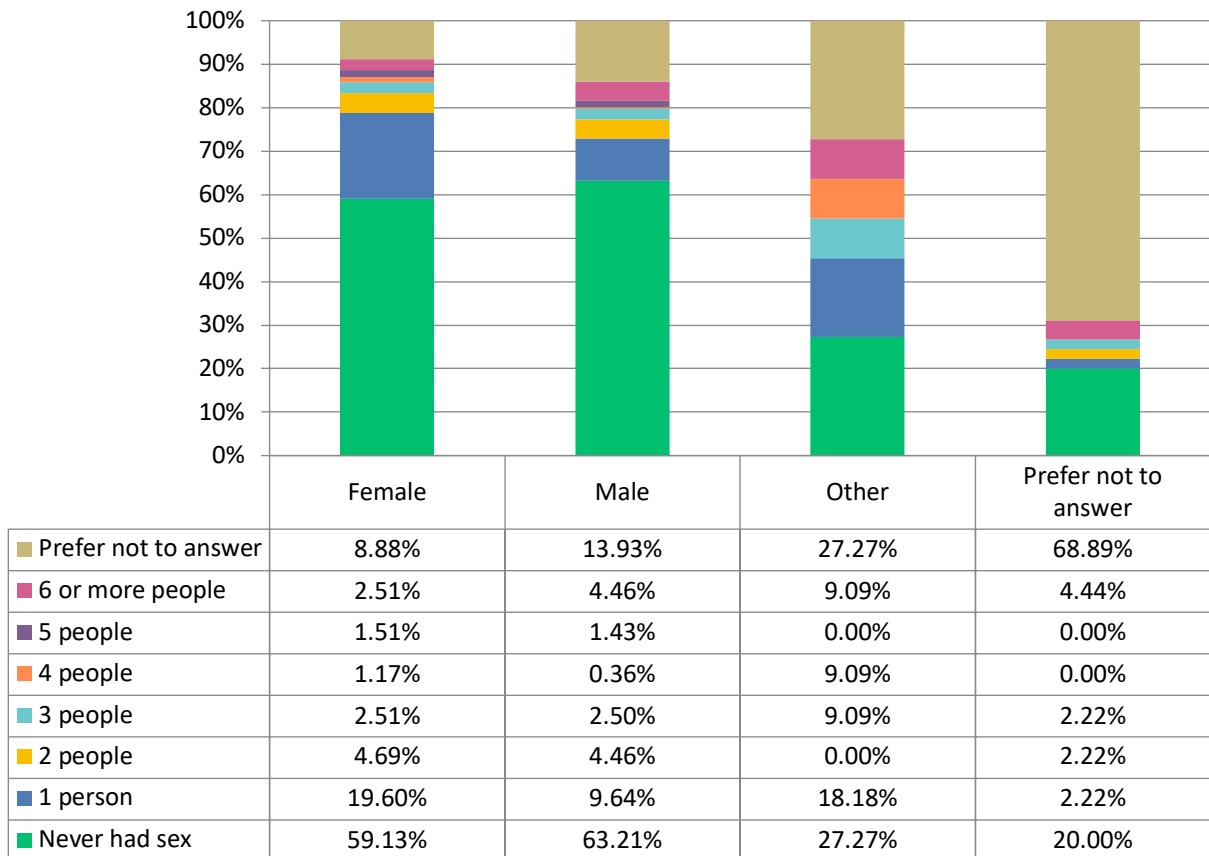
Key Findings on Consensual Sexual Encounters Among Students

- Overall Consensual Encounters:** Approximately 22.6% of students report that all of their sexual encounters have been consensual, while 8.2% indicated they have had non-consensual experiences. A majority (54.5%) report never having had sex.
- Gender Differences:** Female students report a higher rate of non-consensual encounters (11.6%) compared to male students (4.8%). For students identifying as "Other," 0% reported non-consensual encounters, though 9% indicated uncertainty about the question.
- Grade Differences:** Consensual experiences among sexually active students increase with grade level, with 12.4% of 9th graders reporting consensual experiences compared to 40.46% of 12th graders. Correspondingly, the percentage of students reporting no sexual experiences decreases from 70.6% in 9th grade to 36.5% in 12th grade. Non-consensual reports remain relatively stable across grade levels, with minor variations.

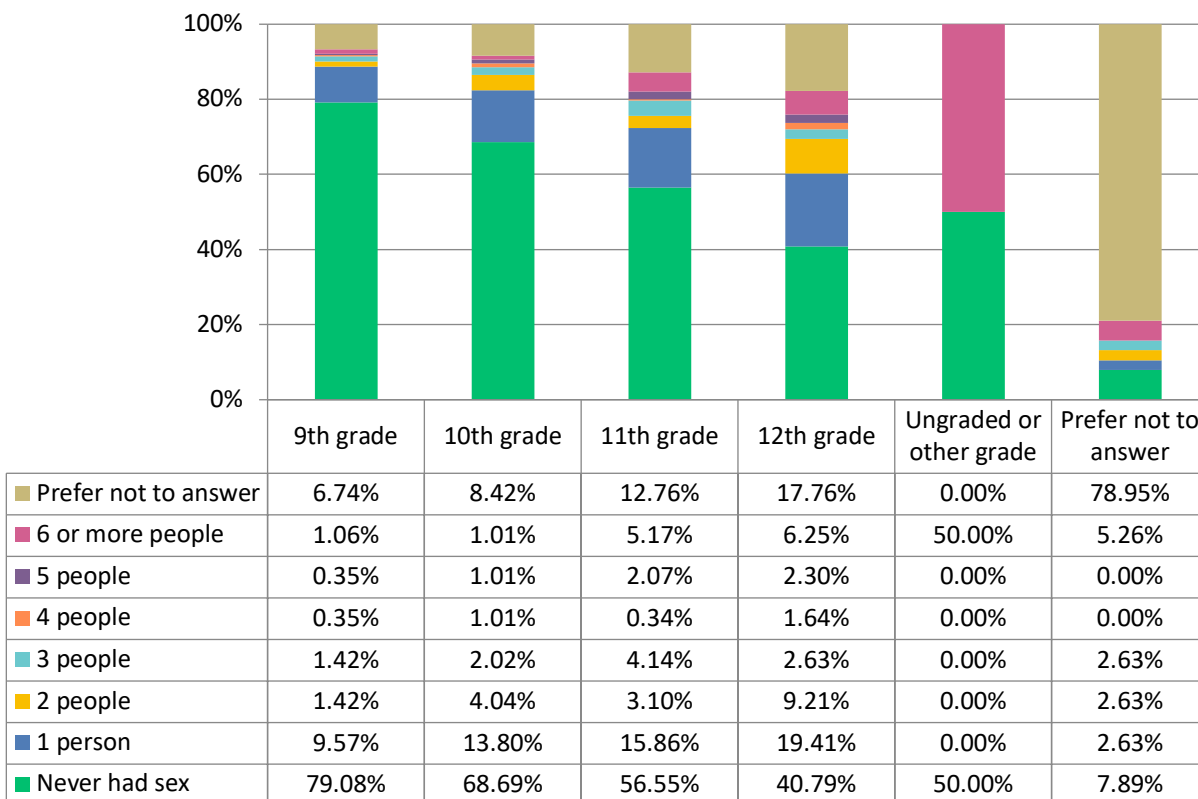
During your life, with how many people have you had sexual intercourse?



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



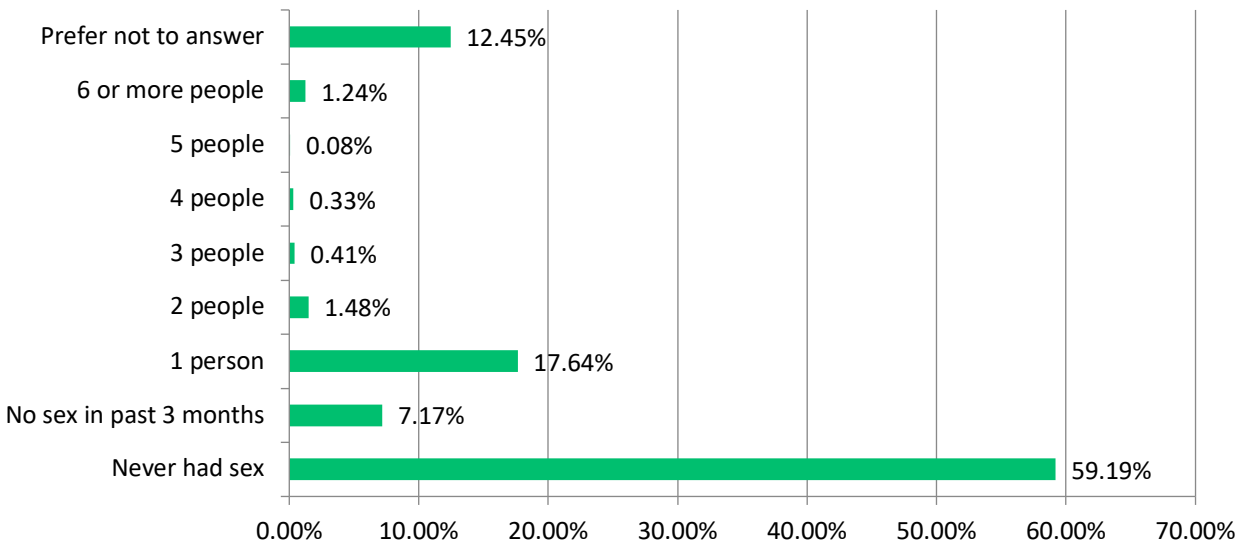
During your life, with how many people have you had sexual intercourse?



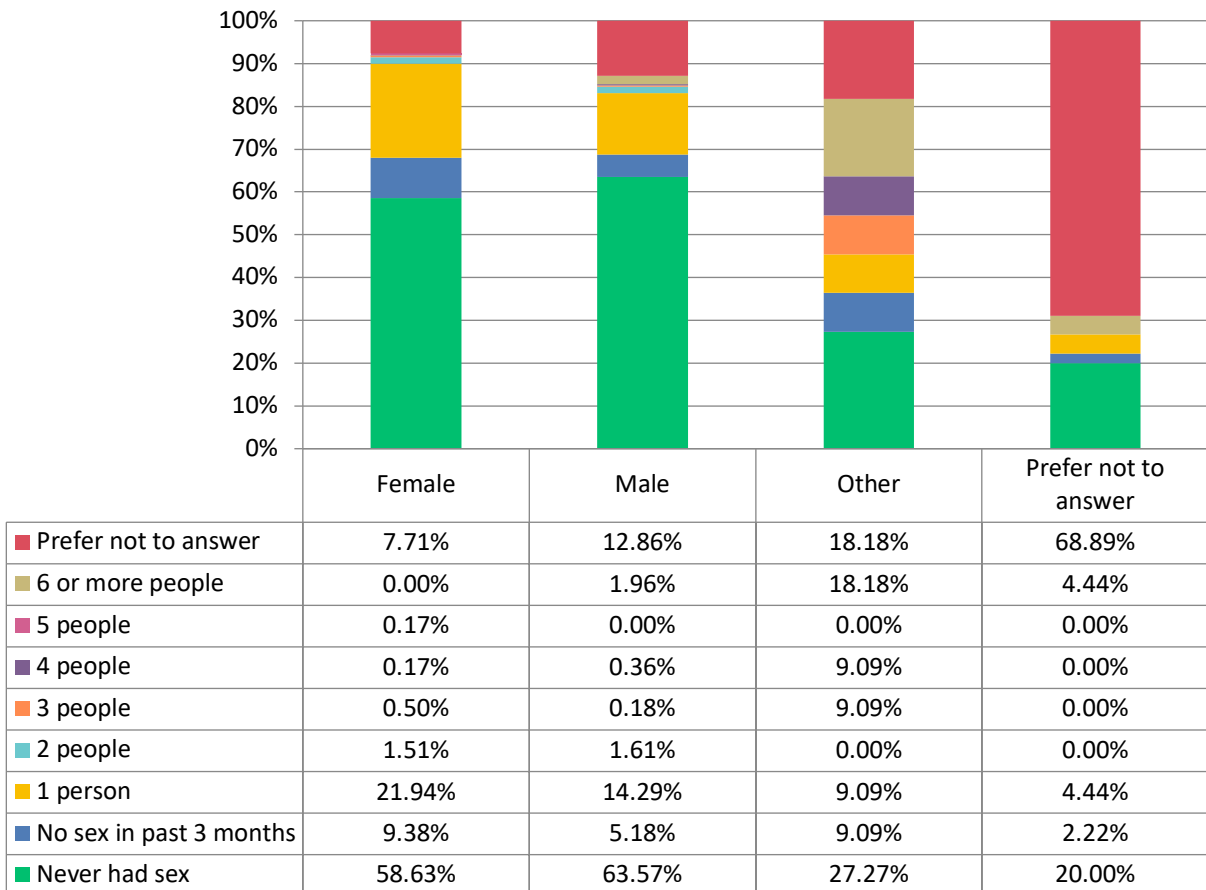
Key Findings on Sexual Activity Among Students

- Overall Sexual Activity Experience:** The majority of respondents (59.27%) reported never having had sexual intercourse, while 14.34% reported having had sex with one partner, and 4.45% with two partners. Smaller percentages indicate having had sex with three or more partners.
- Gender Differences:** Among respondents, 63.21% of male students and 59.13% of female students reported never having had sexual intercourse, compared to 27.27% of those identifying as "Other." Additionally, 9.09% of students identifying as "Other" reported having six or more sexual partners, compared to 2.51% of females and 4.46% of males.
- Grade Differences:** Sexual experience increased with grade level, with 79.08% of 9th graders reporting they had never had sex, compared to 40.46% of 12th graders. Additionally, a higher percentage of 12th graders (6.25%) reported having had six or more partners compared to younger grades.

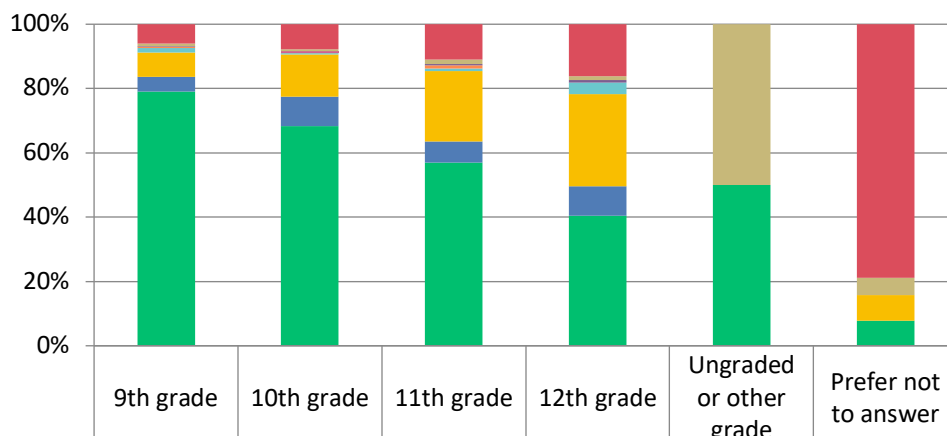
During the past 3 months, with how many people did you have sexual intercourse?



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



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

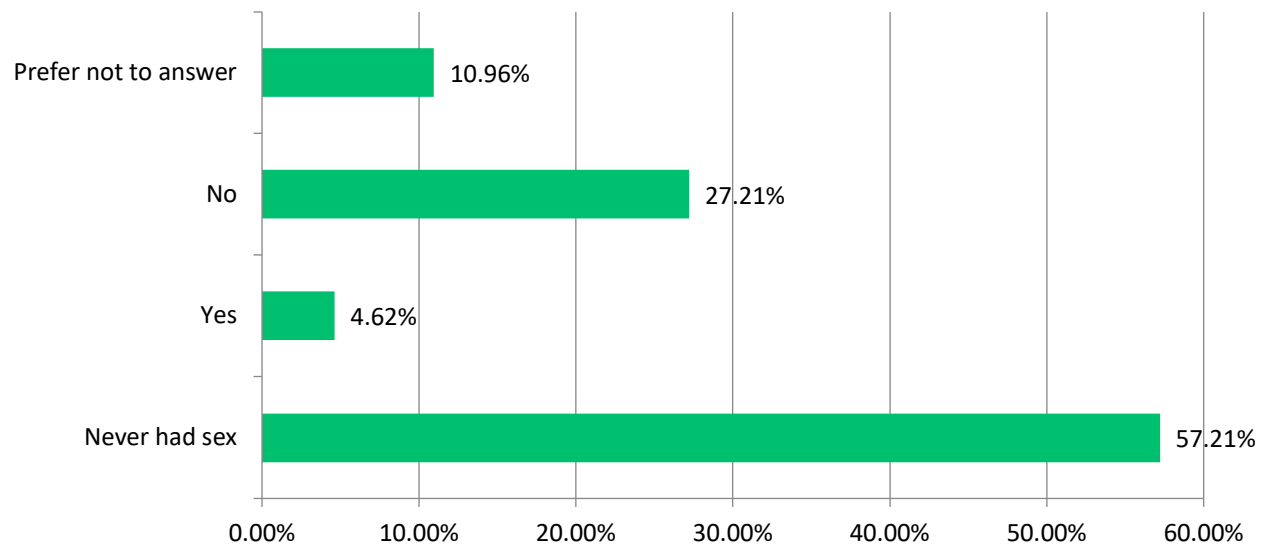


■ Prefer not to answer	6.03%	7.74%	11.03%	16.12%	0.00%	78.95%
■ 6 or more people	0.71%	0.67%	1.38%	1.32%	50.00%	5.26%
■ 5 people	0.00%	0.34%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 4 people	0.35%	0.00%	0.34%	0.66%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 3 people	0.35%	0.34%	1.03%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 2 people	1.42%	0.34%	0.69%	3.62%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 1 person	7.45%	13.13%	22.07%	28.62%	0.00%	7.89%
■ No sex in the past 3 months	4.61%	9.09%	6.55%	9.21%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Never had sex	79.08%	68.35%	56.90%	40.46%	50.00%	7.89%

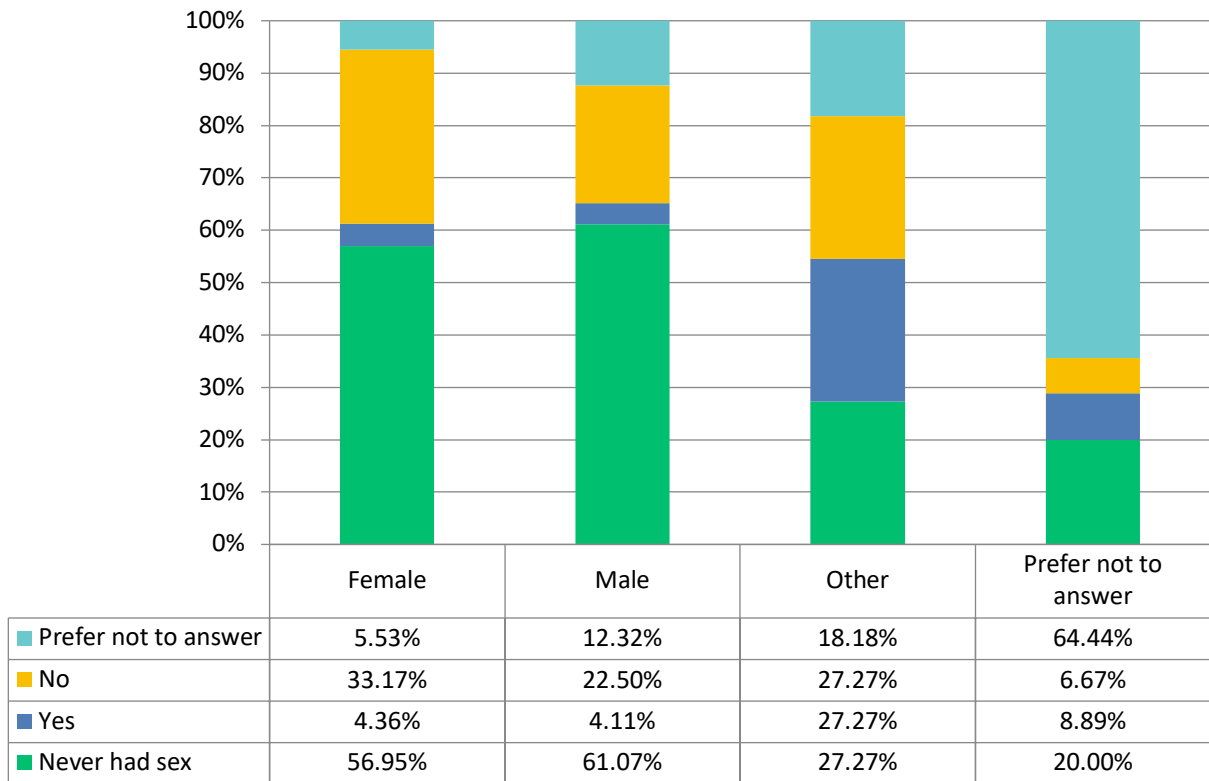
Key Findings on Recent Sexual Activity

- General Trends:** The majority of students (59.19%) indicated they have never had sexual intercourse, and an additional 7.17% reported no sexual activity in the past three months. Of those who reported having sex in the past three months, 17.64% had only one partner.
- Gender Differences:** Female students report the highest rate of having only one partner in the past three months (21.94%), while students identifying as “Other” report higher rates across multiple partners, including 18.18% indicating six or more partners.
- Grade Differences:** Sexual activity tends to increase with grade level. Across grades, most sexually active students have had only one partner in the past three months.

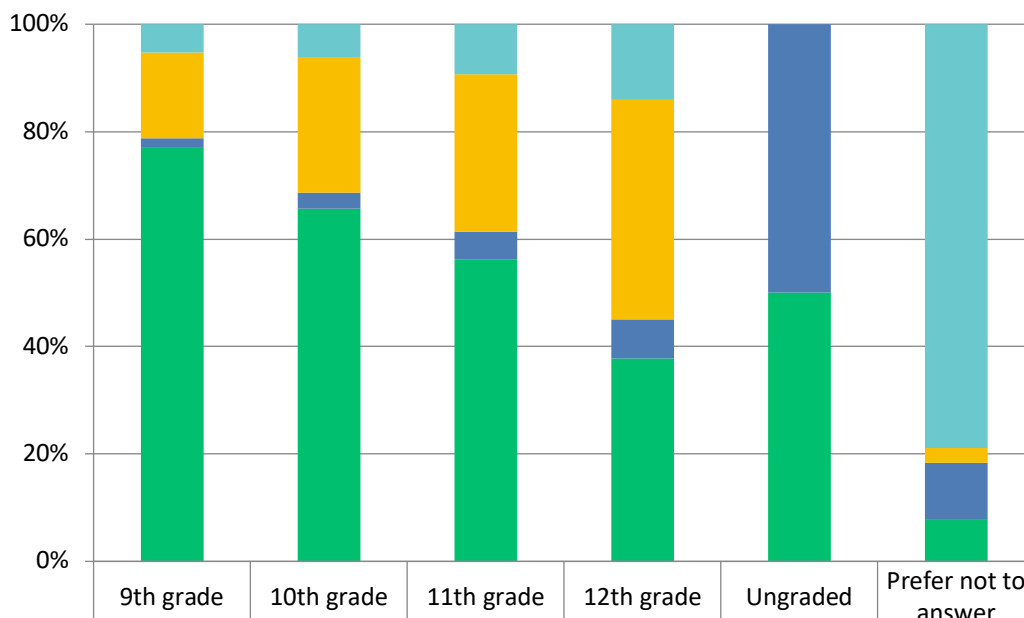
Did you drink alcohol or use drugs before you had sexual intercourse the last time?



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



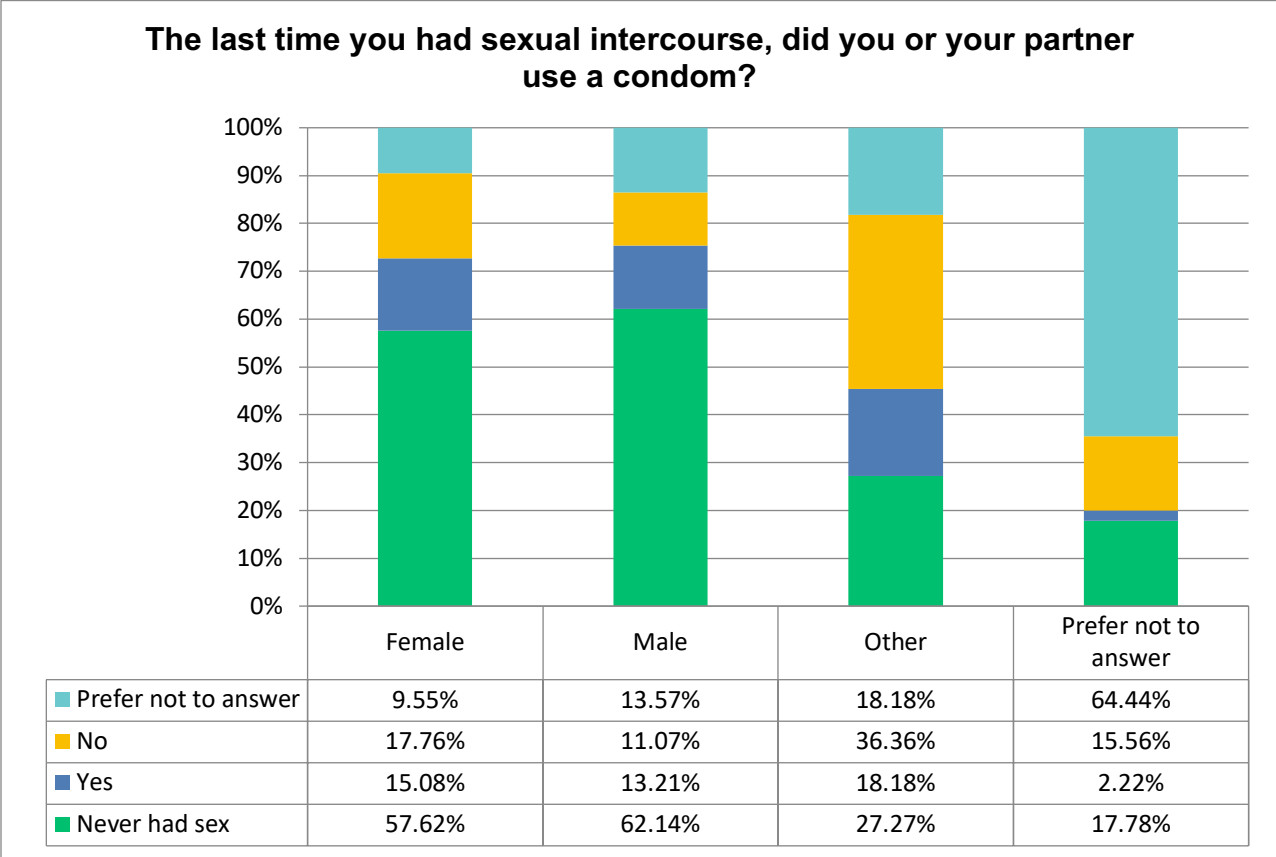
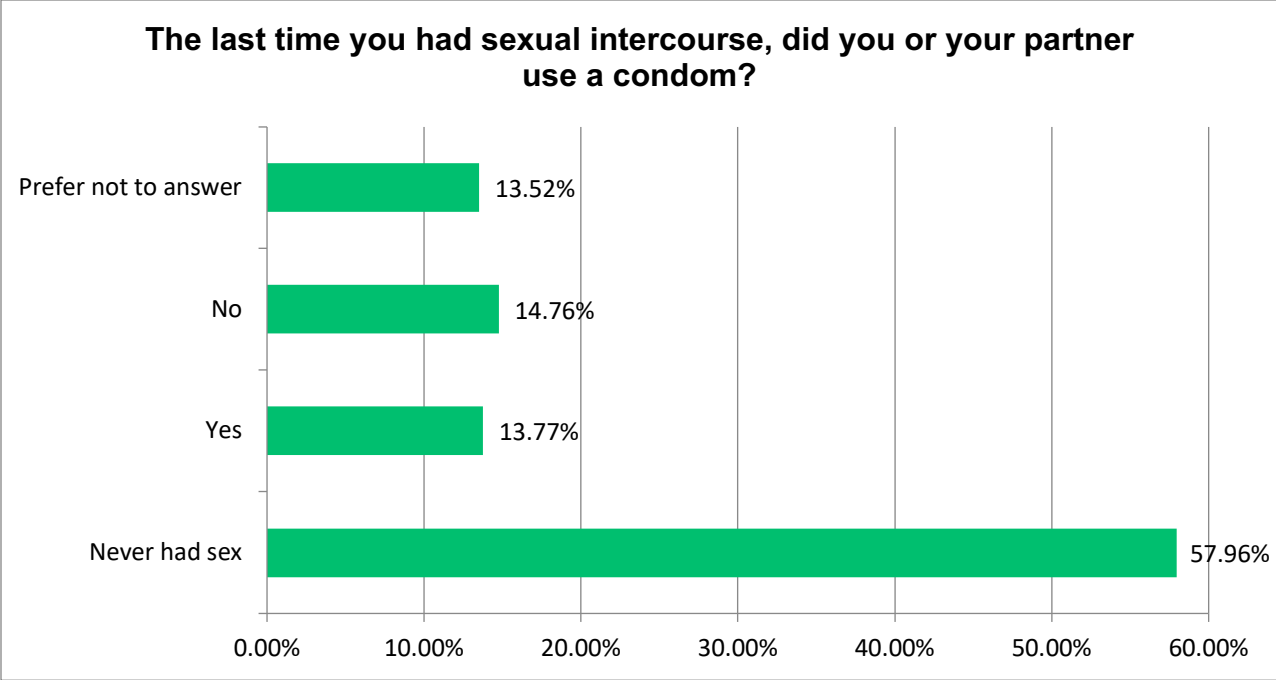
Did you drink alcohol or use drugs before you had sexual intercourse the last time?

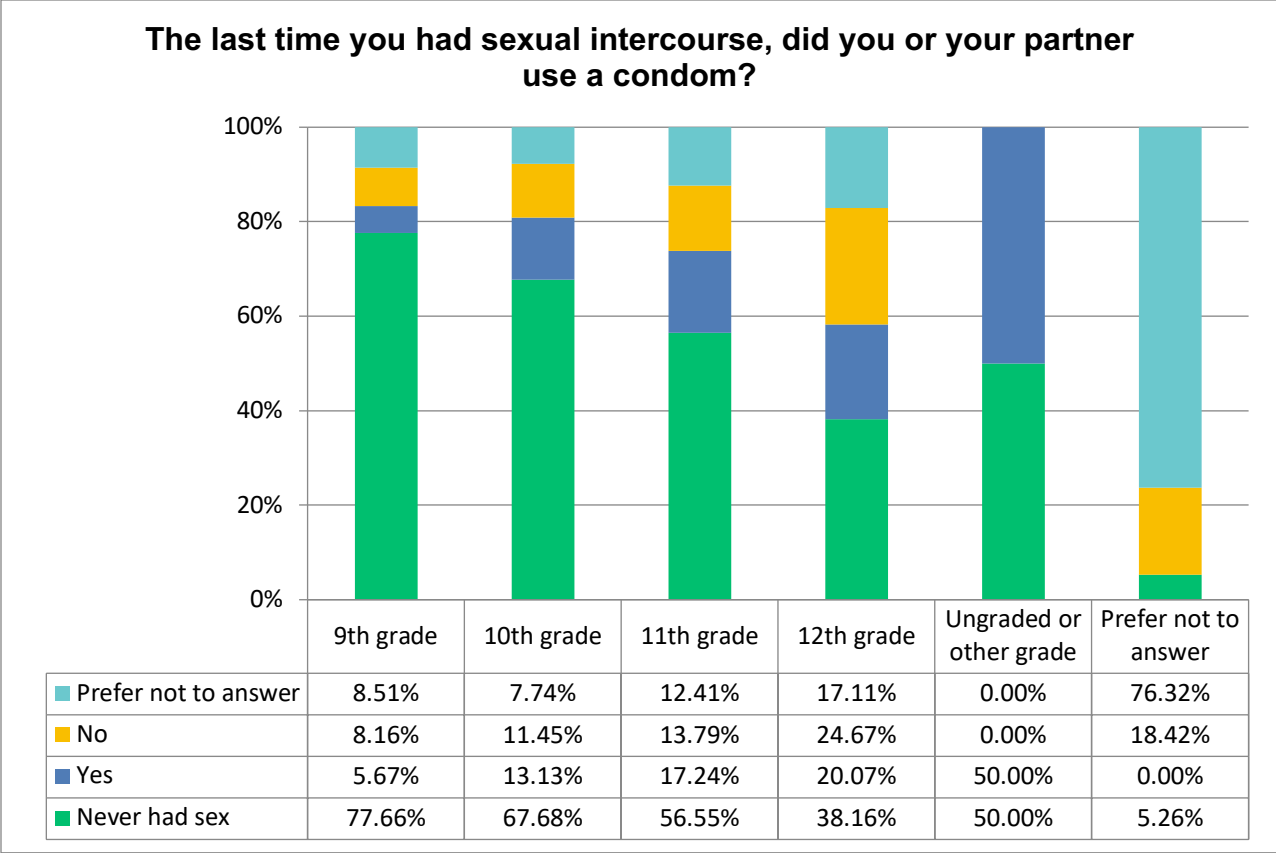


■ Prefer not to answer	5.32%	6.06%	9.31%	14.14%	0.00%	78.95%
■ No	15.96%	25.25%	29.31%	40.79%	0.00%	2.63%
■ Yes	1.77%	3.03%	5.17%	7.24%	50.00%	10.53%
■ Never had sex	76.95%	65.66%	56.21%	37.83%	50.00%	7.89%

Key Findings on Substance Use Before Last Sexual Encounter

- **Overall Behavior:** A majority of students (57.21%) reported they had never had sexual intercourse. Of those who had intercourse, most (27.21%) stated they did not consume alcohol or drugs prior to their last encounter. Only a small proportion (4.62%) indicated substance use before sexual activity.
- **Gender Differences:** Among students who reported having had sex, 4.36% of females and 4.11% of males indicated they used substances before their last sexual encounter. A notably higher proportion (27.27%) of those identifying as "other" reported substance use before sex.
- **Grade Differences:** Substance use before last sexual encounter appears to increase with grade level. Among students who had sex, 7.24% of 12th graders reported substance use before their last sexual encounter, compared to only 1.77% of 9th graders.

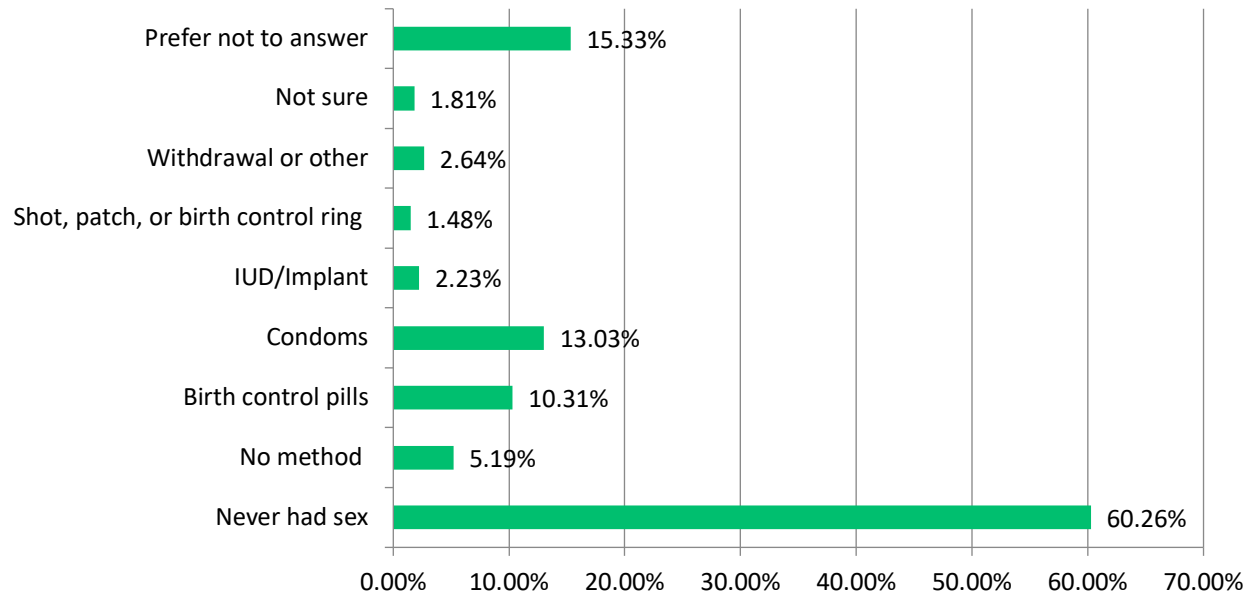




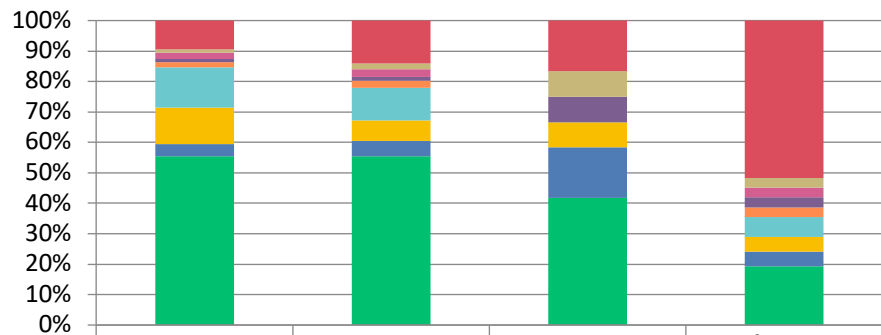
Key Findings on Condom Use

- Overall Use:** 57.96% of respondents report they have never had sexual intercourse. Among those who have, 13.77% used a condom during their last sexual encounter, 14.76% did not, and 13.52% preferred not to answer.
- Gender Differences:** Females reported higher condom use (15.08%) compared to females (15.08%). Those who identified outside the male/female binary had the highest rate of unprotected encounters (36.36%).
- Grade Differences:** Condom use generally increases with grade level, with 9th graders reporting the lowest rate of use (5.67%) and 12th graders the highest (20.07%).

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

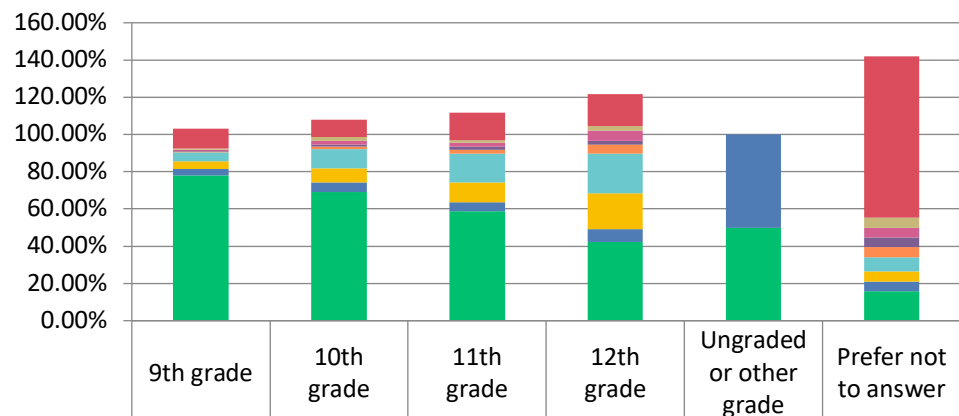


The last time you had sexual intercourse with an opposite-sex partner, what method did you or your partner use to prevent pregnancy?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	10.22%	16.25%	18.18%	71.11%
Not sure	1.17%	2.14%	9.09%	4.44%
Withdrawal or some other method	2.18%	3.04%	0.00%	4.44%
Shot, patch, or birth control ring	1.17%	1.43%	9.09%	4.44%
IUD or implant	1.68%	2.68%	0.00%	4.44%
Condoms	14.24%	12.32%	0.00%	8.89%
Birth control pills	12.90%	7.86%	9.09%	6.67%
No method	4.36%	5.71%	18.18%	6.67%
Never had sex	59.63%	63.93%	45.45%	26.67%

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

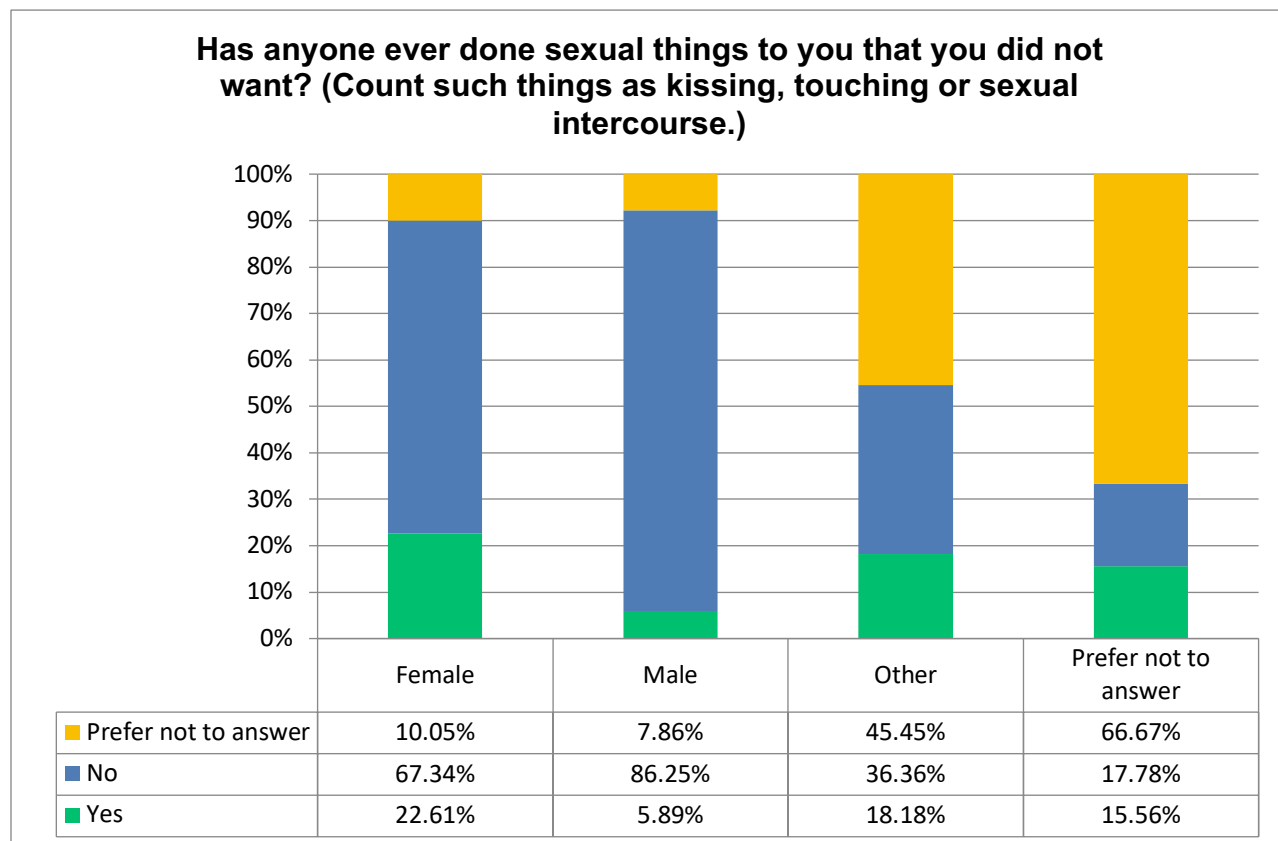
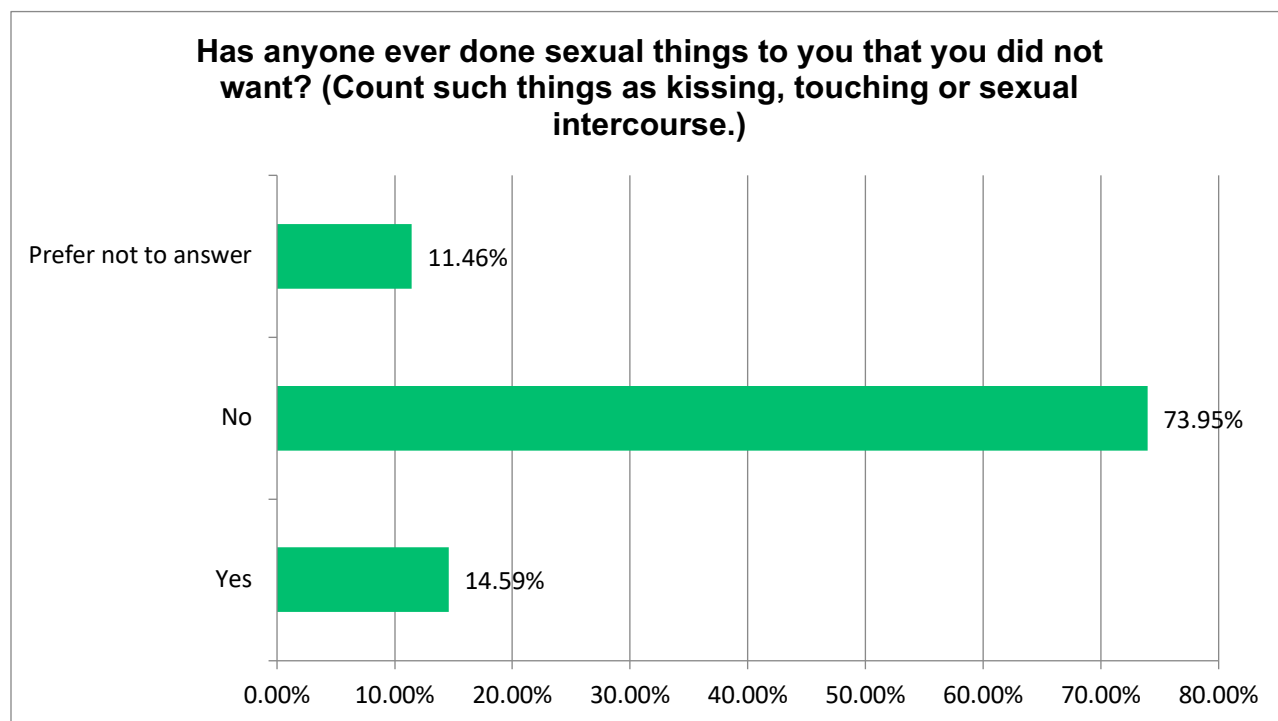


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	10.64%	9.43%	14.83%	17.11%	0.00%	86.84%
Not sure	0.71%	2.02%	1.38%	2.63%	0.00%	5.26%
Withdrawal or some other method	0.71%	2.02%	2.07%	5.26%	0.00%	5.26%
Shot, patch, or birth control ring	0.35%	1.01%	1.72%	2.30%	0.00%	5.26%
IUD or implant	0.35%	1.35%	2.07%	4.61%	0.00%	5.26%
Condoms	4.96%	10.44%	15.52%	21.38%	0.00%	7.89%
Birth control pills	3.90%	7.41%	10.69%	19.41%	0.00%	5.26%
No method	3.55%	5.39%	4.83%	6.58%	50.00%	5.26%
Never sexual intercourse	78.01%	69.02%	58.62%	42.43%	50.00%	15.79%

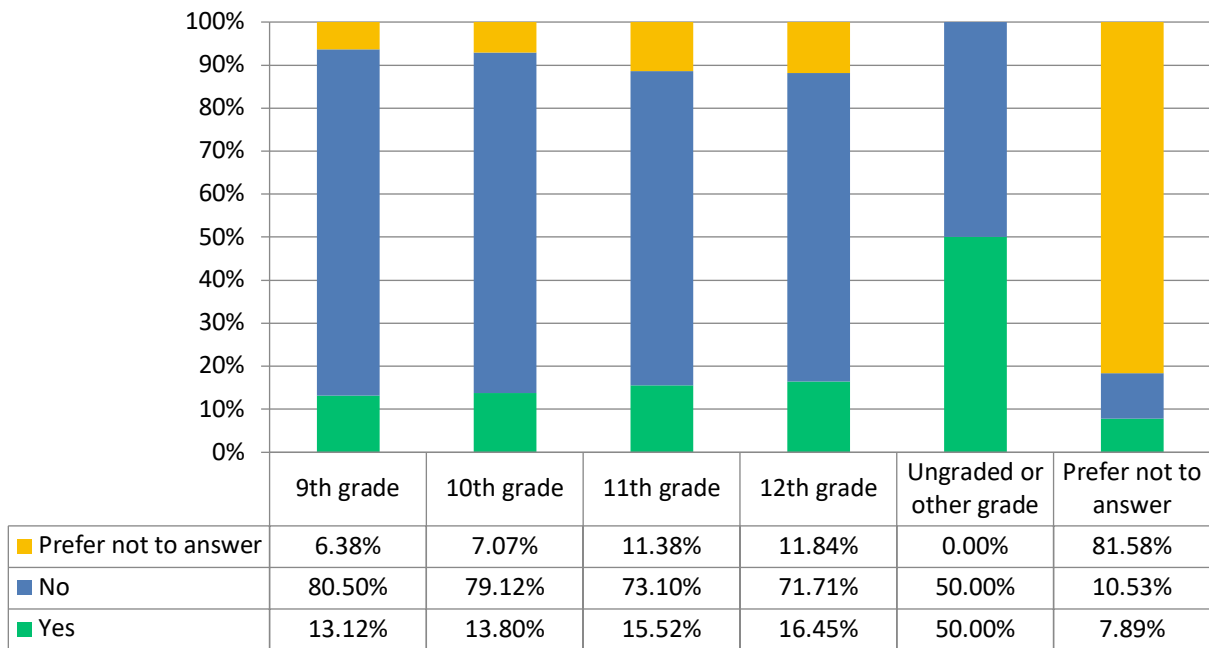
Key Findings on Contraceptive Use and Pregnancy Prevention Among Youth

- Contraceptive Use:** A majority of students (60.26%) report that they have never engaged in sexual intercourse. Among sexually active students, 13.03% reported using condoms during their last sexual encounter with an opposite-sex partner, while 10.31% relied on birth control pills. Other methods used include IUDs or implants (2.23%) and withdrawal or another method (2.64%).
- Gender Differences:** Female students are more likely to report using birth control pills (12.9%) compared to male students (7.9%). In addition, condom use is slightly higher among female students (14.3%) than male students. Of note, students who identify as “Other” reported the highest percentage of students who reported using no method (18.18%).
- Grade Differences:** As students progress in grade level, contraceptive use rates vary, with 21.38% of 12th graders reporting condom use, compared to 4.96% of 9th graders. Older students also report higher rates of birth control pill use, with 19.4% of 12th graders using pills compared to 3.9% of 9th graders.

Dating Violence and Sexual Activity



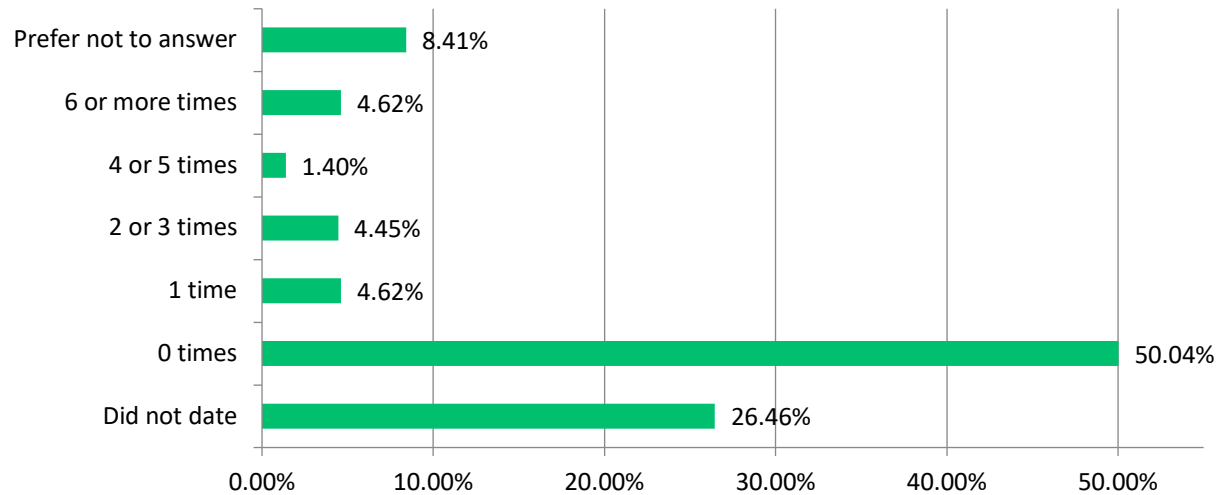
Has anyone ever done sexual things to you that you did not want? (Count such things as kissing, touching or sexual intercourse.)



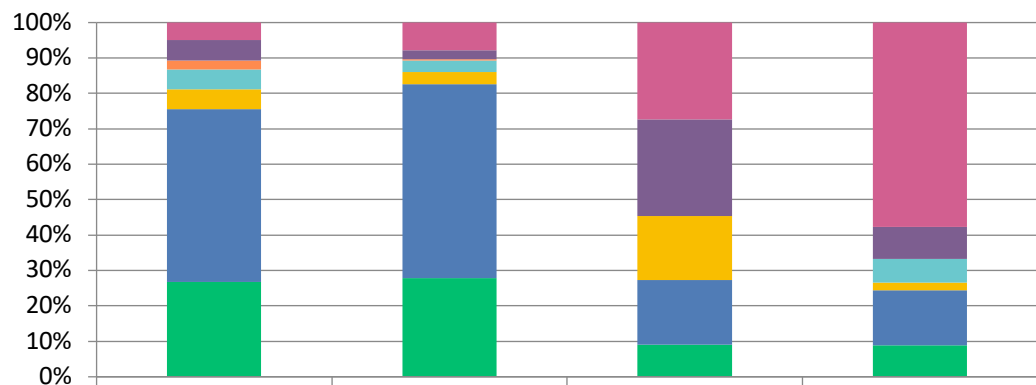
Key Findings on Unwanted Sexual Contact Among Students

- **General Overview:** The majority of students (73.95%) reported that they have not experienced unwanted sexual contact. However, a concerning 14.59% reported that someone had done sexual things to them without their consent, highlighting the need for preventative measures and supportive resources for affected students.
- **Gender Differences:** Female students were more likely to report experiences of unwanted sexual contact, with 22.61% indicating they had encountered such situations, compared to only 5.89% of male students. Those identifying as a gender outside male or female also reported a higher incidence at 18.18%.
- **Grade Differences:** Reports of unwanted sexual contact vary slightly across grade levels, with rates generally increasing in higher grades. Ninth-grade students reported the lowest rate (13.12%), while twelfth-grade students reported a slightly higher rate (16.45%).

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?

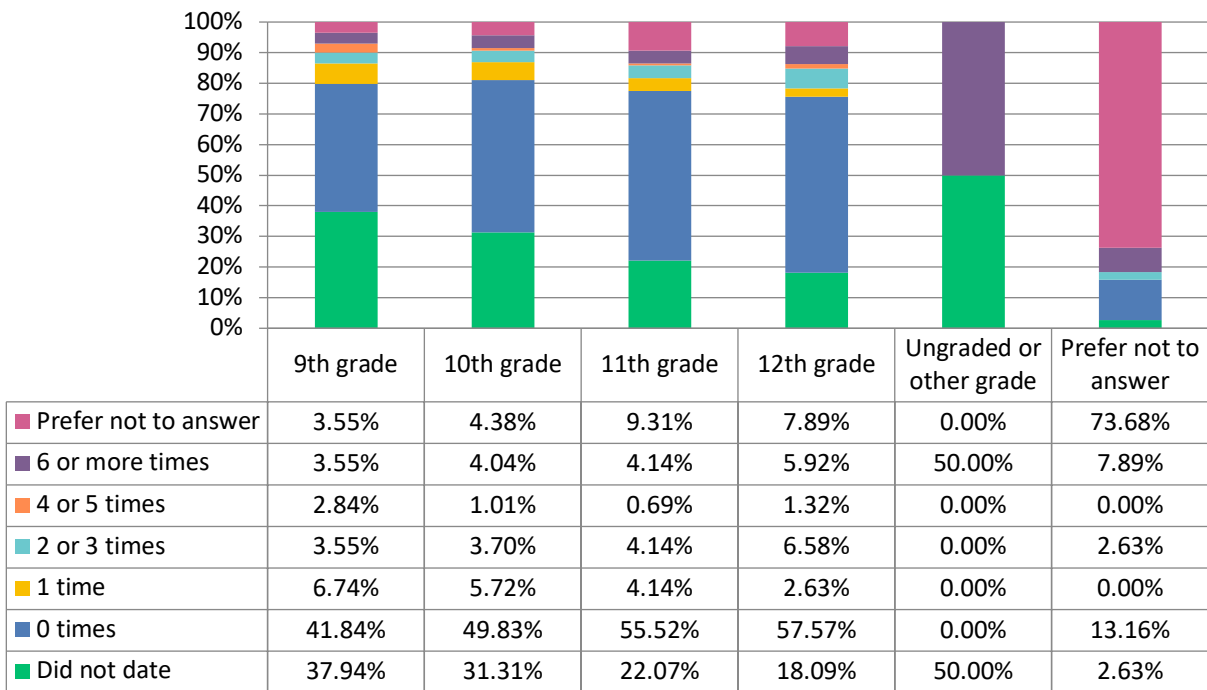


During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with purposely try to control you or emotionally hurt you?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	4.86%	7.86%	27.27%	57.78%
6 or more times	5.86%	2.50%	27.27%	8.89%
4 or 5 times	2.51%	0.36%	0.00%	0.00%
2 or 3 times	5.53%	3.21%	0.00%	6.67%
1 time	5.70%	3.39%	18.18%	2.22%
0 times	48.74%	54.82%	18.18%	15.56%
Did not date	26.80%	27.86%	9.09%	8.89%

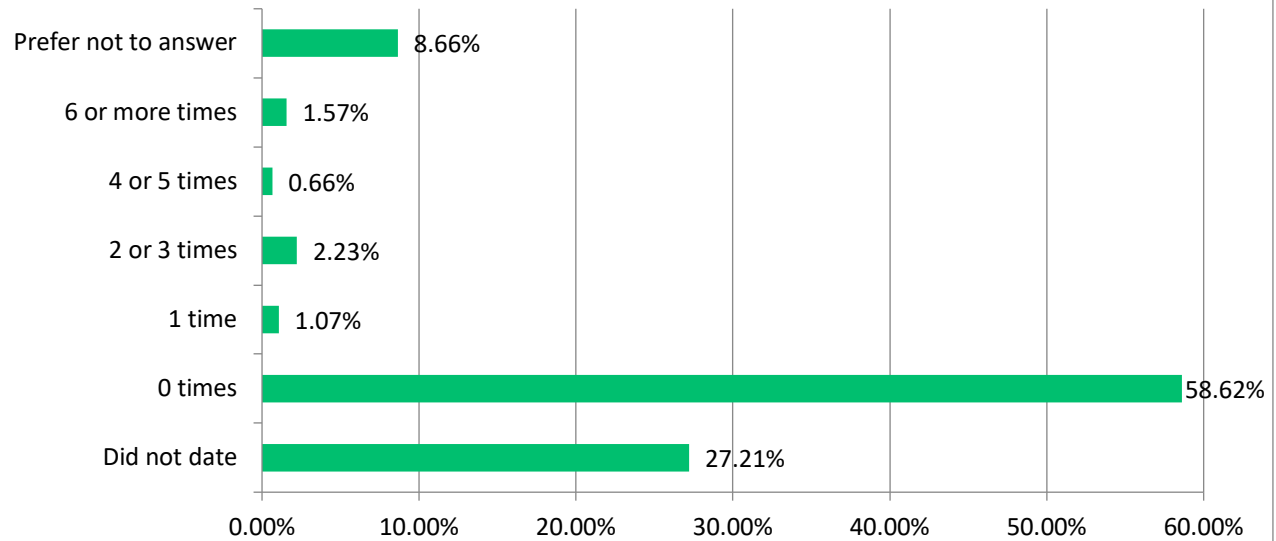
During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with purposely try to control you or emotionally hurt you?



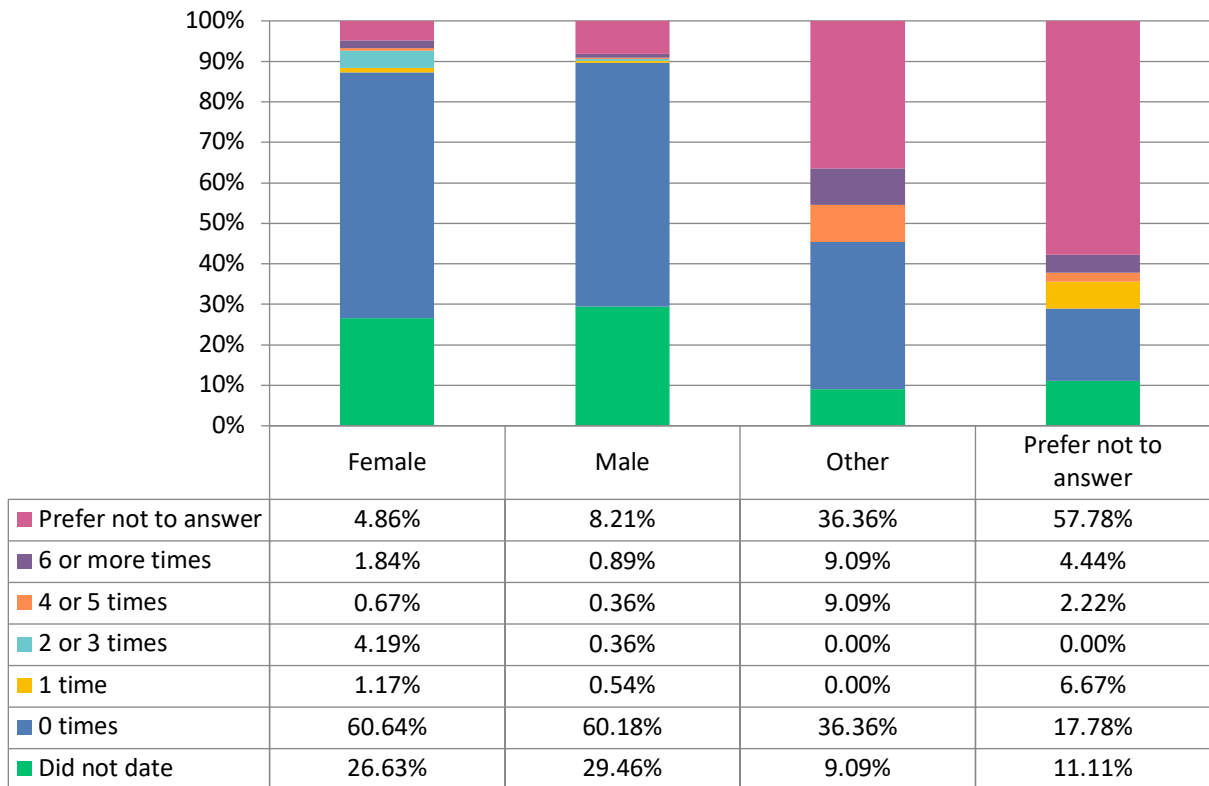
Key Findings on Control and Emotional Harm in Dating

- **Low Prevalence of Reported Control and Emotional Harm:** About half of the students (50.04%) reported not experiencing any attempts at control or emotional harm from a dating partner in the past 12 months. Additionally, 26.46% indicated they did not date, leaving a smaller portion of students potentially exposed to this behavior.
- **Gender Differences:** Female students reported slightly higher instances of control and emotional harm compared to male students, with 5.70% of females experiencing it once and 5.86% experiencing it six or more times. In contrast, only 3.39% of males reported experiencing control or emotional harm once, and 2.50% six or more times. Students identifying as "Other" reported the highest rates, with 18.18% experiencing such incidents once and 27.27% six or more times.
- **Grade Differences:** Reports of control or emotional harm vary across grade levels, with 9th graders indicating the lowest rate of experiencing it frequently (3.55% reporting six or more times), which increases in 12th grade (5.92%). However, these rates are relatively low across all grades.

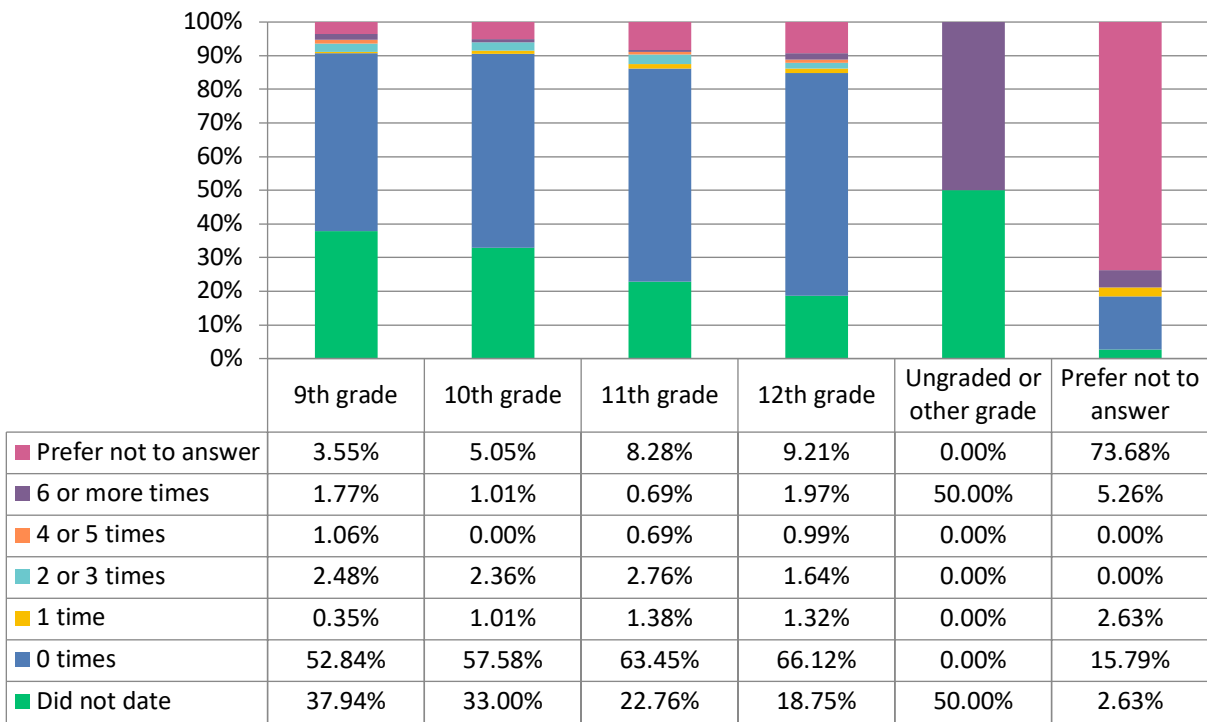
During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with force you to do sexual things that you did not want to do?



During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with force you to do sexual things that you did not want to do?



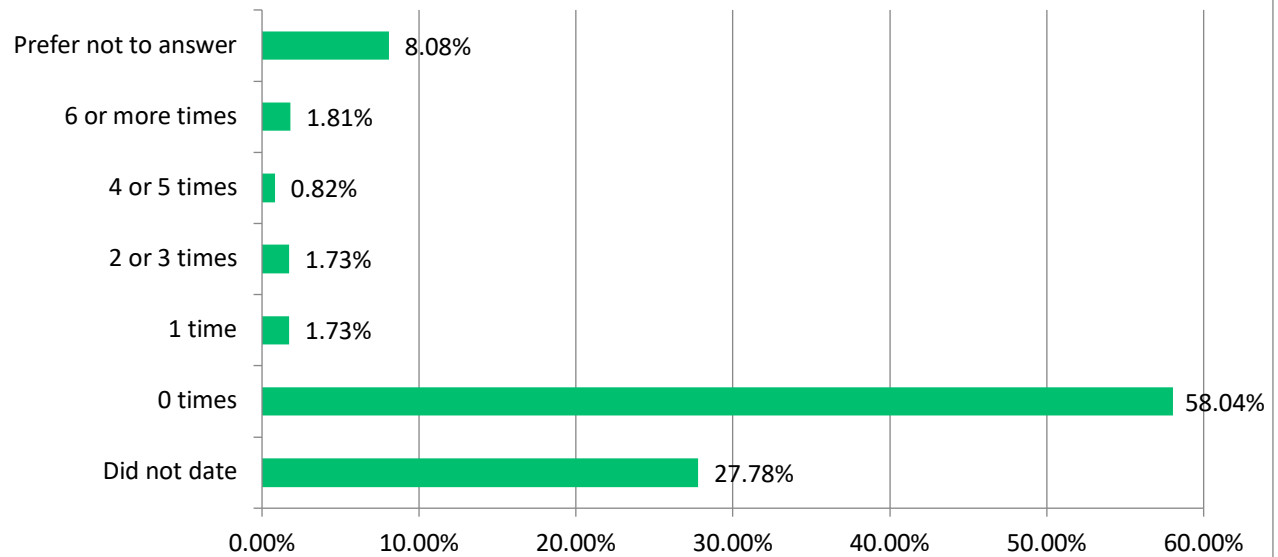
During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with force you to do sexual things that you did not want to do?



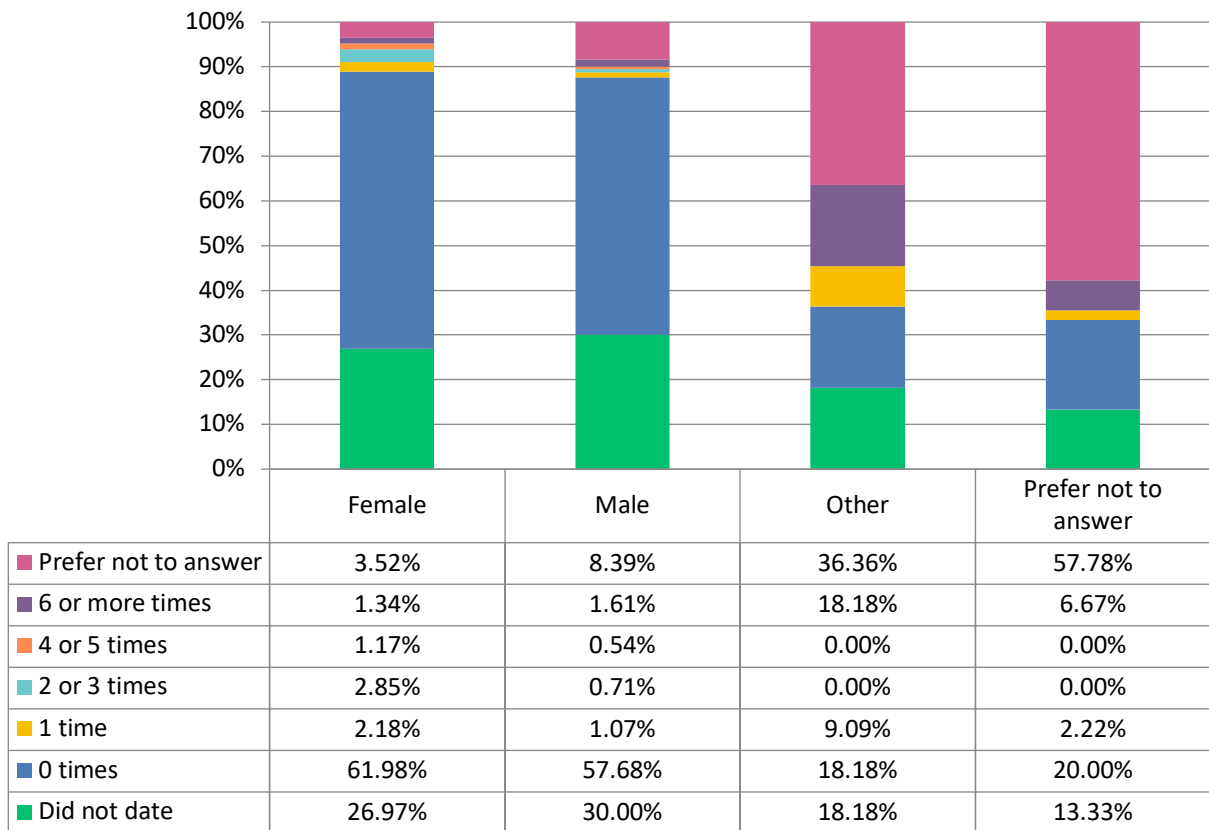
Key Findings on Forced Sexual Activity Within Dating Relationships

- Prevalence of Forced Sexual Activity:** A majority (58.62%) of students reported that they had not experienced forced sexual activities by someone they were dating or going out with in the past 12 months. However, 5.53% indicated they had experienced forced sexual activities at least once, highlighting an area of concern.
- Gender Differences:** Female students reported higher instances of forced sexual activity compared to male students, with 4.19% of females indicating they experienced this two or three times, compared to only 0.36% of males. Students identifying as “Other” had notably higher rates, with 9.09% reporting incidents six or more times.
- Grade Differences:** Reports of forced sexual activity varied across grade levels, with 11th graders reporting the highest frequency of such incidents (2.48%) occurring two or three times. Twelfth graders had the highest percentage of students who chose not to answer (9.21%), indicating potential discomfort in disclosing these experiences. Notably, 12th-grade students also showed the highest abstention rate, with 66.12% indicating that no such incidents occurred.

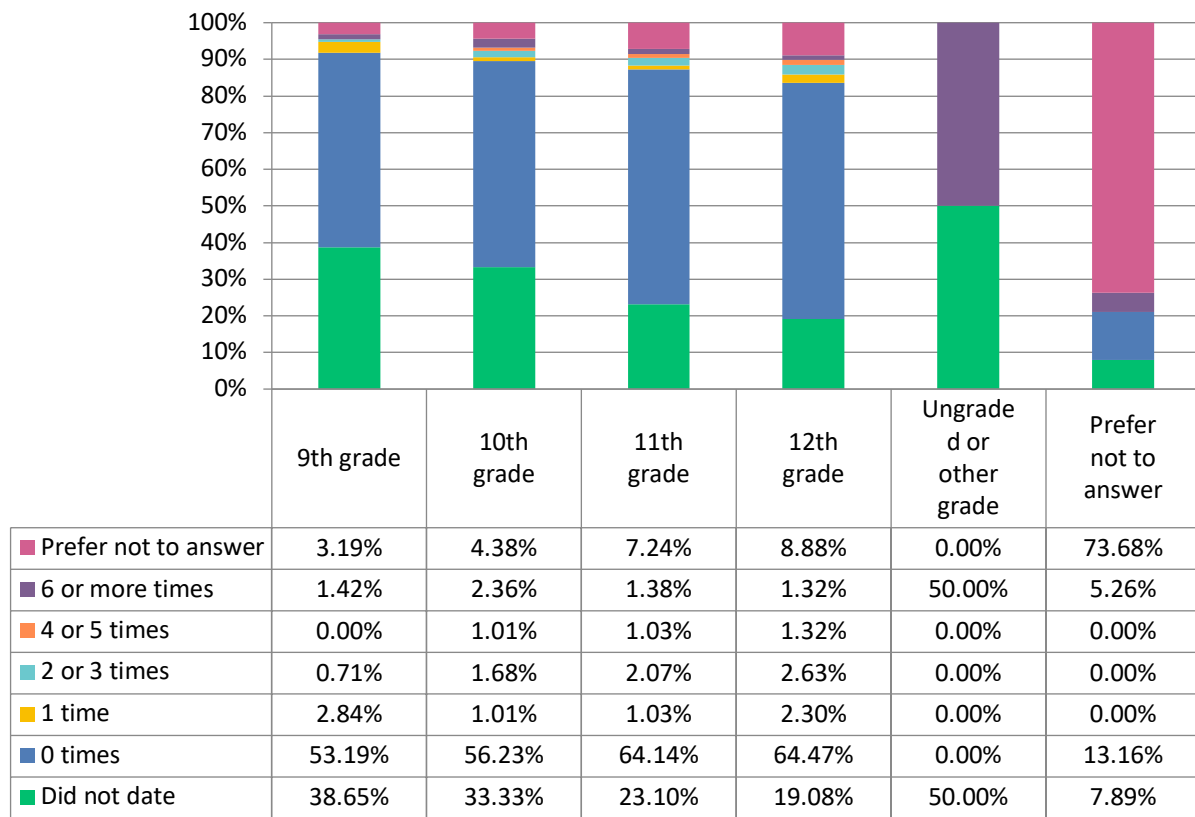
During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with physically hurt you on purpose?



During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with physically hurt you on purpose?



During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with physically hurt you on purpose?

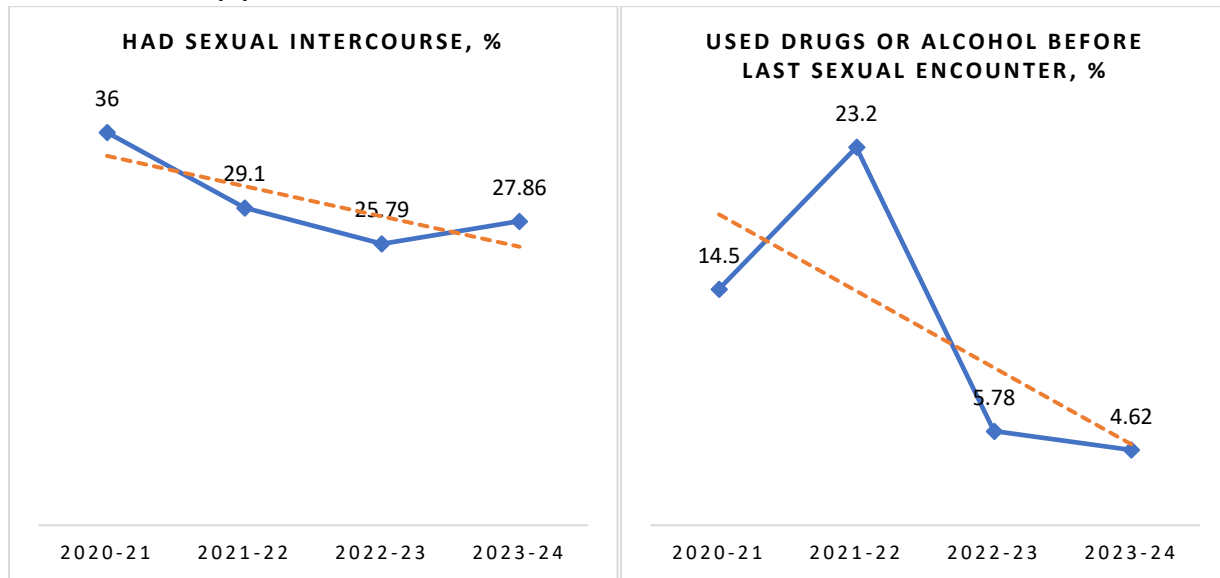


Key Findings on Physical Dating Violence Among Students

- **Prevalence of Physical Dating Violence:** A majority of students (58.04%) reported not experiencing physical harm by a dating partner in the past 12 months. In contrast, 27.78% did not date, indicating that dating violence was relatively uncommon among those surveyed.
- **Gender Differences:** Among those who dated, female students (61.98%) reported the highest rate of not experiencing physical harm, followed closely by male students (57.68%). Students identifying as "Other" reported higher rates of experiencing physical harm multiple times, with 18.18% experiencing harm six or more times.
- **Grade Differences:** Experiences of physical harm by a dating partner varied across grade levels. The highest proportion of students who reported no incidents were in the 12th grade (64.47%). Of note, 50% of ungraded students reported experiencing physical harm multiple times.

Trends in Sexual Behaviors Over Time

The following graphs display four-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 has gradually declined from 36% in 2020-2021 to 27.86% in 2023-2024. This suggests a potential shift toward delayed sexual initiation or decreased 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 has decreased, from 23.2% in 2021-2022 to 4.62% in 2023-2024. This steady downward trend may reflect increased awareness or caution among students regarding substance use in conjunction with sexual activity.

Tobacco Use

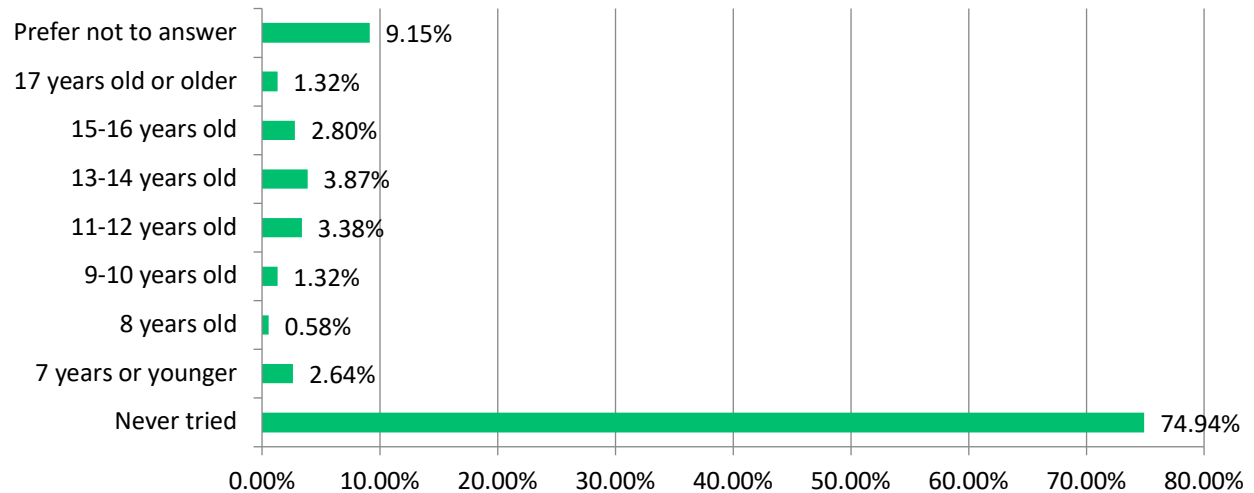
Despite widespread awareness of the risks, tobacco use among youth remains a concern. The YRBS provides valuable insights into tobacco use trends among students in Herkimer County, helping to identify patterns in smoking initiation, frequency, and the use of various tobacco products. This information is essential for schools and communities to strengthen anti-tobacco education and support efforts to prevent long-term health consequences and addiction during this critical developmental stage.

Overall, the findings show a decline in traditional cigarette use, both in lifetime and recent usage. Fewer students report ever having smoked cigarettes, and current smoking rates have dropped in recent years. Additionally, there is a trend toward delayed smoking initiation, with fewer students trying cigarettes at a young age. This is an encouraging sign that anti-smoking education may be effective.

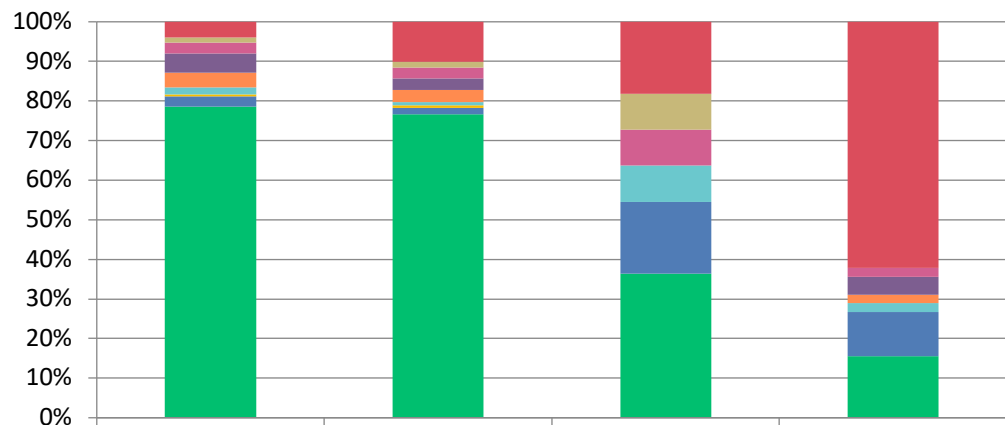
While cigarette smoking is on the decline, the data indicates an increase in the use of smokeless tobacco products, such as chewing tobacco and snus, suggesting that some students may be turning to alternative forms of tobacco. Cigar usage remains low and relatively stable, though slight fluctuations have been observed over time. While the reduction in cigarette use among adolescents is a positive development, these trends emphasize the importance of continued monitoring and targeted education efforts to address all forms of tobacco use.

Cigarette Use Among Students

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

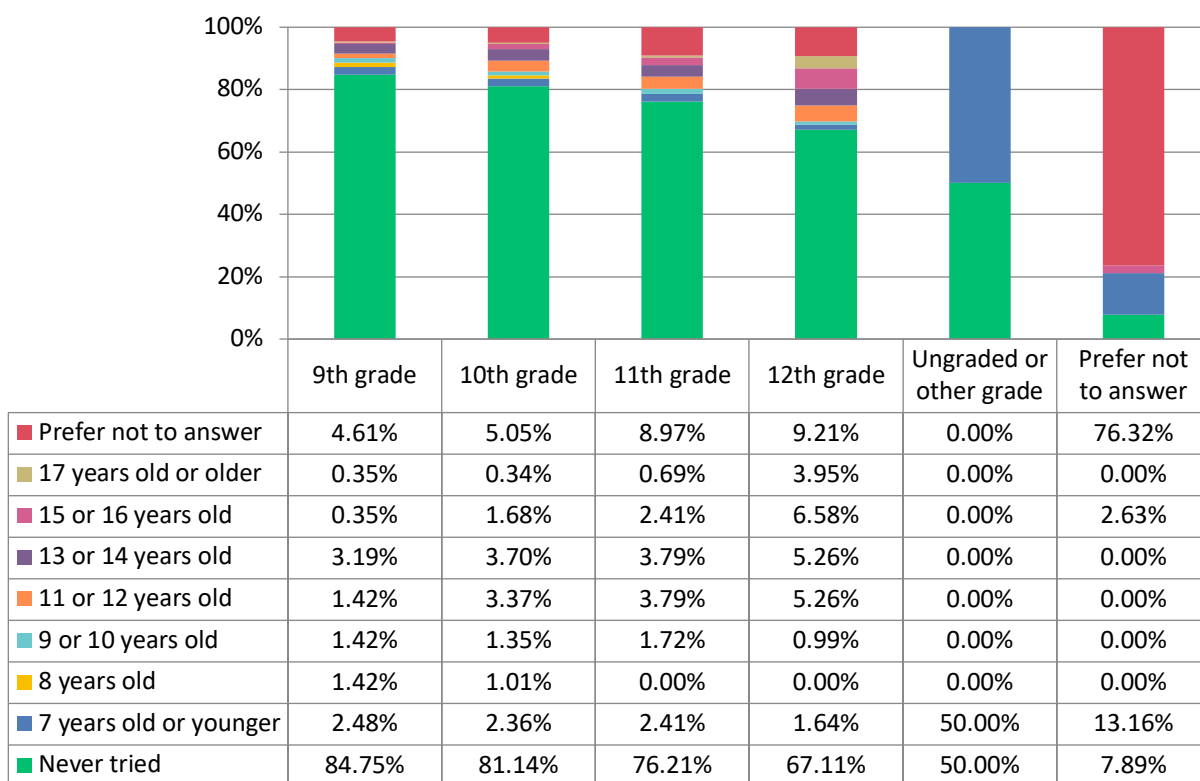


How old were you when you first tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	4.02%	10.18%	18.18%	62.22%
17 years old or older	1.17%	1.43%	9.09%	0.00%
15 or 16 years old	2.85%	2.68%	9.09%	2.22%
13 or 14 years old	4.86%	2.86%	0.00%	4.44%
11 or 12 years old	3.69%	3.21%	0.00%	2.22%
9 or 10 years old	1.68%	0.71%	9.09%	2.22%
8 years old	0.50%	0.71%	0.00%	0.00%
7 years old or younger	2.68%	1.61%	18.18%	11.11%
Never smoke cigarettes	78.56%	76.61%	36.36%	15.56%

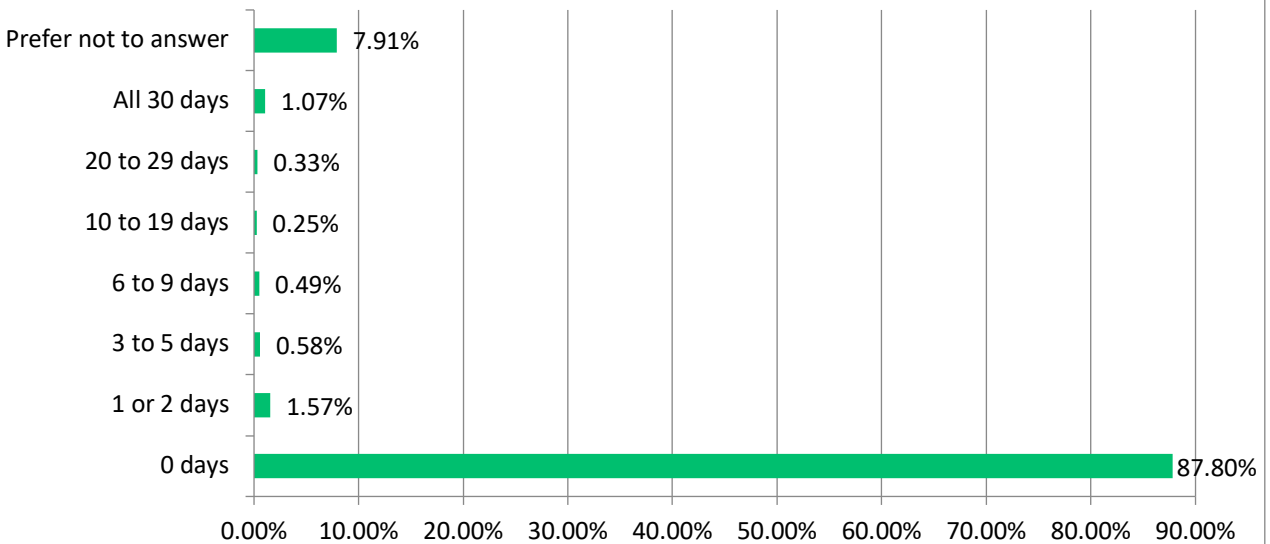
How old were you when you first tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?



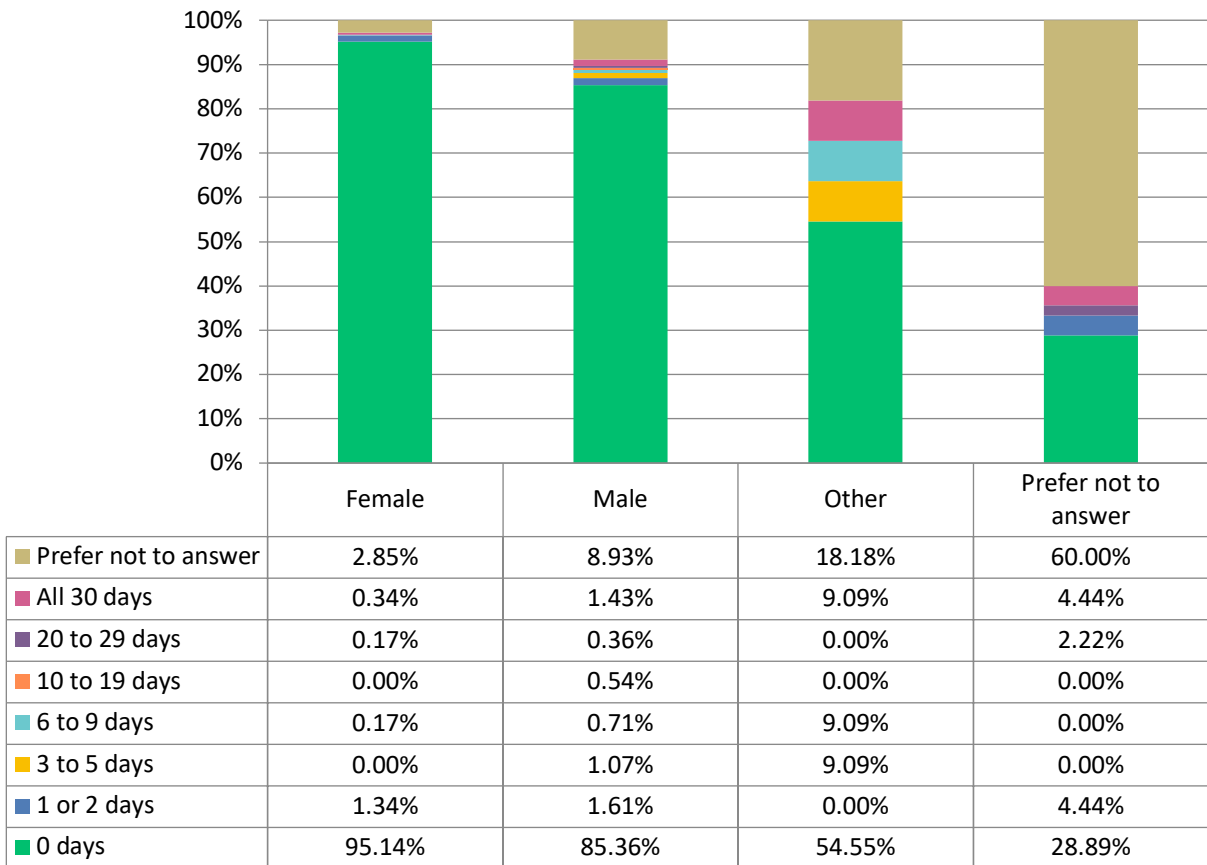
Key Findings on Age of First Cigarette Use

- **Low Prevalence of Cigarette Experimentation:** A large majority of students (74.94%) reported never having tried cigarette smoking, suggesting that cigarette experimentation remains relatively low among surveyed students.
- **Gender Differences:** Slight variations in experimentation are observed between genders. Female students reported the highest rate of never trying cigarettes (78.56%), followed closely by males (76.61%). Students identifying as “Other” had the lowest rate of not trying cigarettes (36.36%), indicating a higher prevalence of experimentation within this group.
- **Grade Differences:** The likelihood of students trying cigarettes increases slightly as grade level rises, with 9th graders showing the highest rate of never trying cigarettes (84.75%), and 12th graders having the lowest rate of never trying (67.11%). This may suggest increased experimentation with age among students.

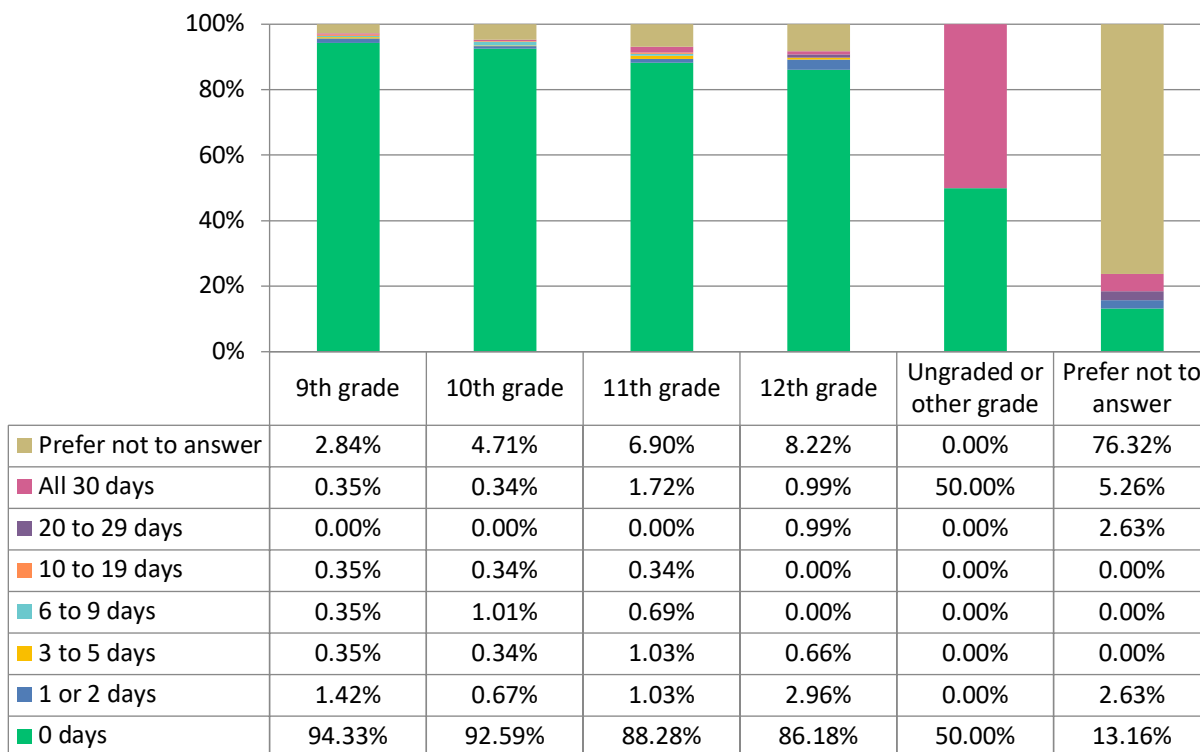
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigarettes?



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



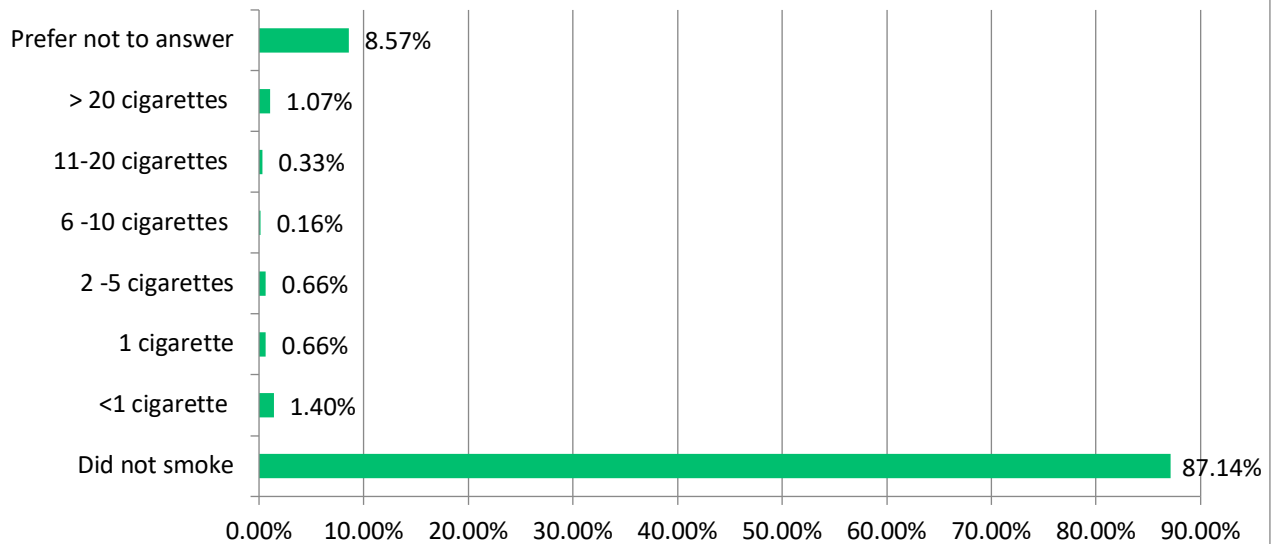
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigarettes?



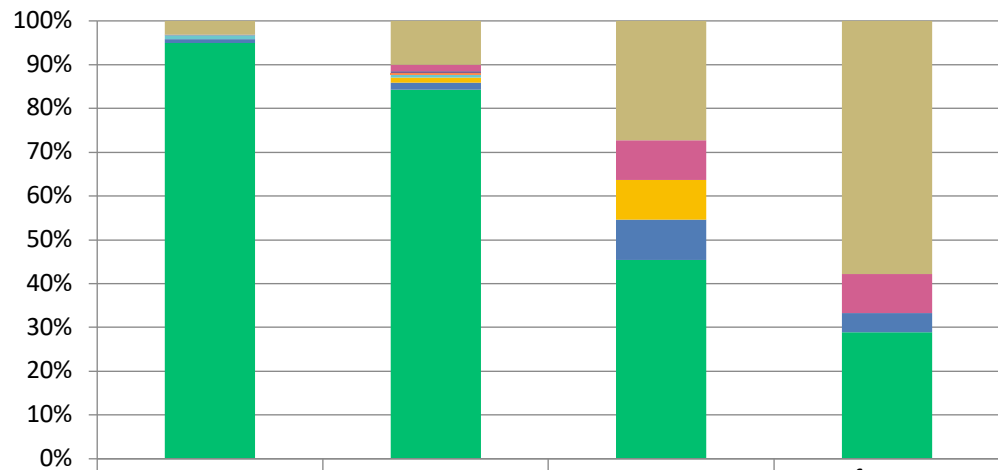
Key Findings on Recent Cigarette Use

- Low Rates of Current Cigarette Smoking:** A substantial majority of students (87.80%) reported no cigarette use in the past 30 days, indicating that regular smoking is relatively rare among the student population.
- Gender Differences:** Female students had the highest rate of non-smoking in the past 30 days (95.14%), while male students reported slightly higher instances of occasional smoking. Among students identifying as "Other," there was a larger proportion reporting smoking on multiple days (9.09% smoking all 30 days).
- Grade Differences:** Non-smoking rates decrease slightly with grade level, with 9th graders reporting the highest rate of non-smoking (94.33%) and 12th graders reporting a lower rate of 86.18%, showing a trend of increased smoking as students progress through high school.

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

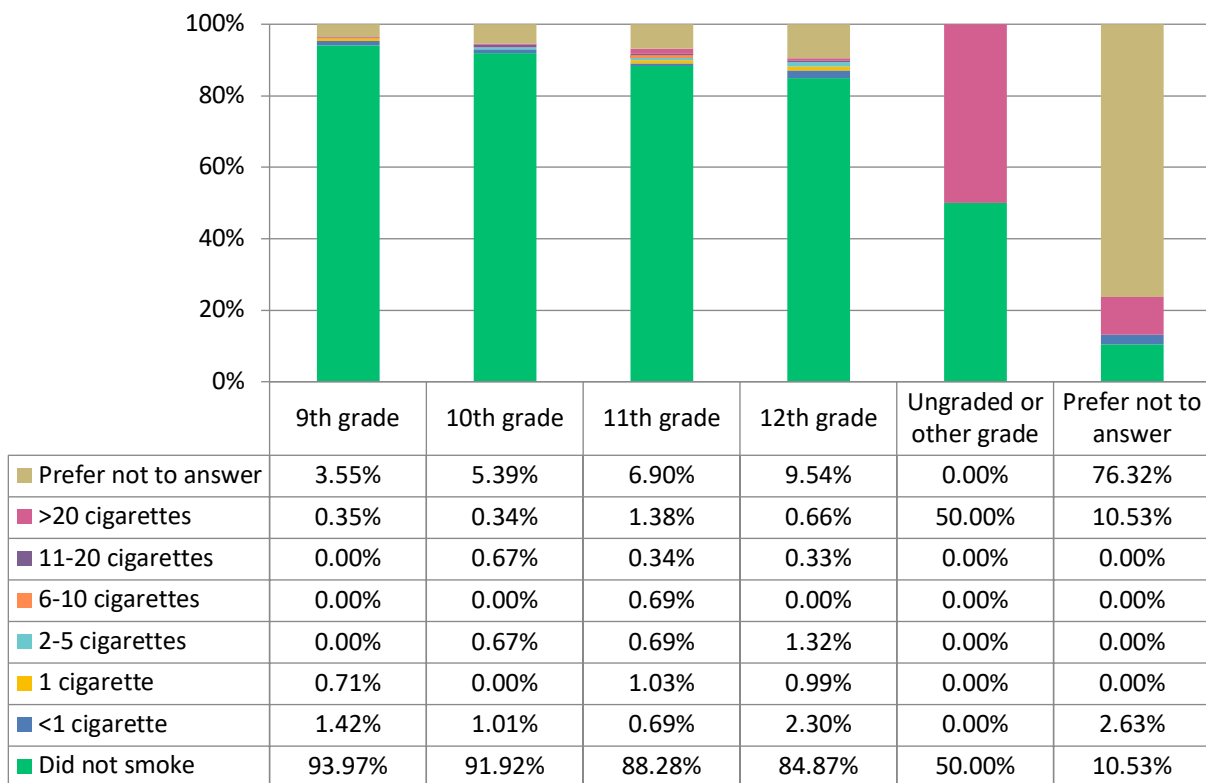


During the past 30 days, on the days you smoked, how many cigarettes did you smoke per day?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	3.18%	10.00%	27.27%	57.78%
>20 cigarettes	0.00%	1.43%	9.09%	8.89%
11-20 cigarettes per day	0.17%	0.54%	0.00%	0.00%
6 -10 cigarettes per day	0.00%	0.36%	0.00%	0.00%
2-5 cigarettes	0.84%	0.54%	0.00%	0.00%
1 cigarette	0.00%	1.25%	9.09%	0.00%
<1 cigarette	0.84%	1.61%	9.09%	4.44%
Did not smoke	94.97%	84.29%	45.45%	28.89%

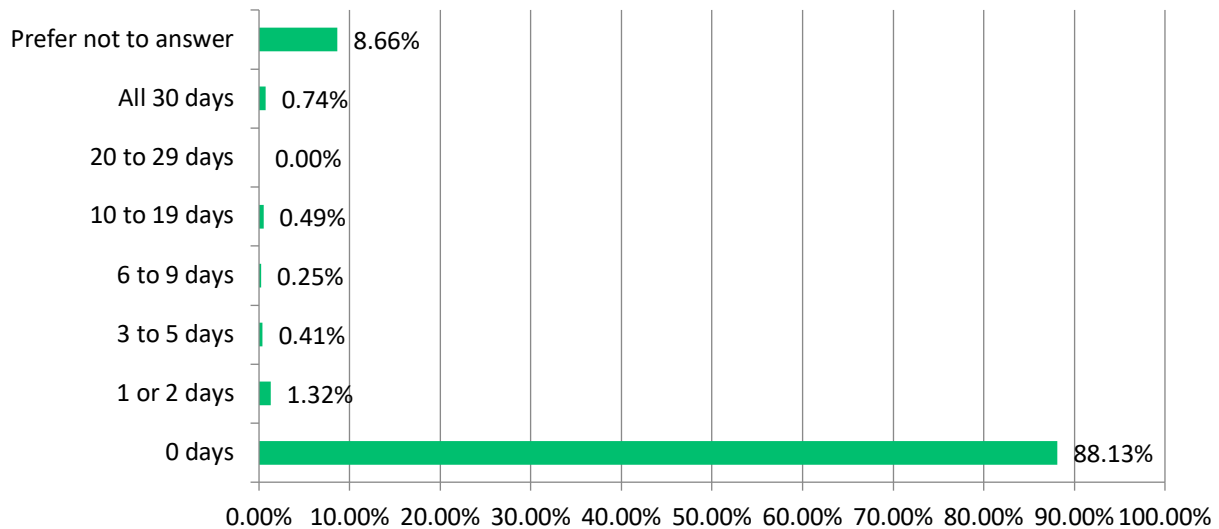
During the past 30 days, on the days you smoked, how many cigarettes did you smoke per day?



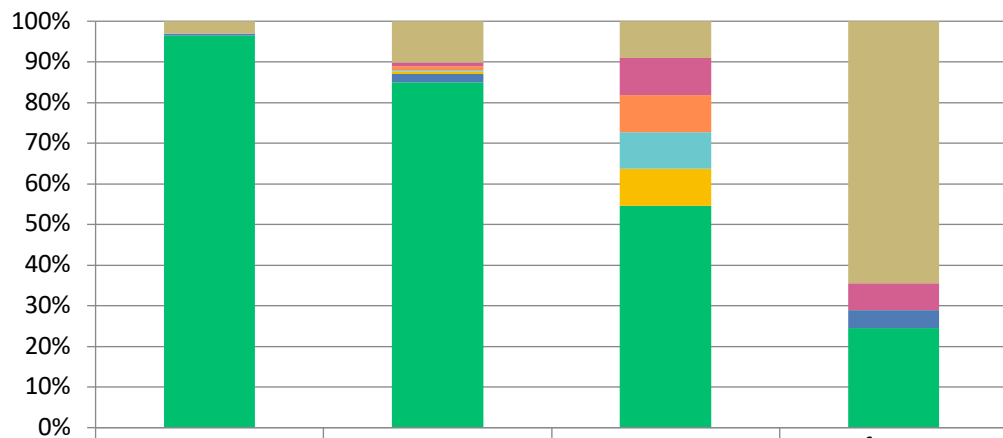
Key Findings on Cigarette Smoking Frequency Among Students

- **Low Prevalence of Smoking:** A majority of students (87.14%) reported not smoking cigarettes on any day in the past 30 days, indicating relatively low cigarette usage among the surveyed students.
- **Gender Differences:** Among those who smoked, students identifying as "Other" reported the highest rate of smoking multiple cigarettes per day, with 9.09% smoking more than 20 cigarettes per day. Male students followed, with 1.43% smoking over 20 cigarettes per day. Female students had the highest rate of non-smoking, with 94.97% reporting they did not smoke at all.
- **Grade Differences:** Smoking prevalence was lowest among younger students, with 9th graders reporting the highest rate of not smoking (93.97%), which gradually decreased through higher grades.

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

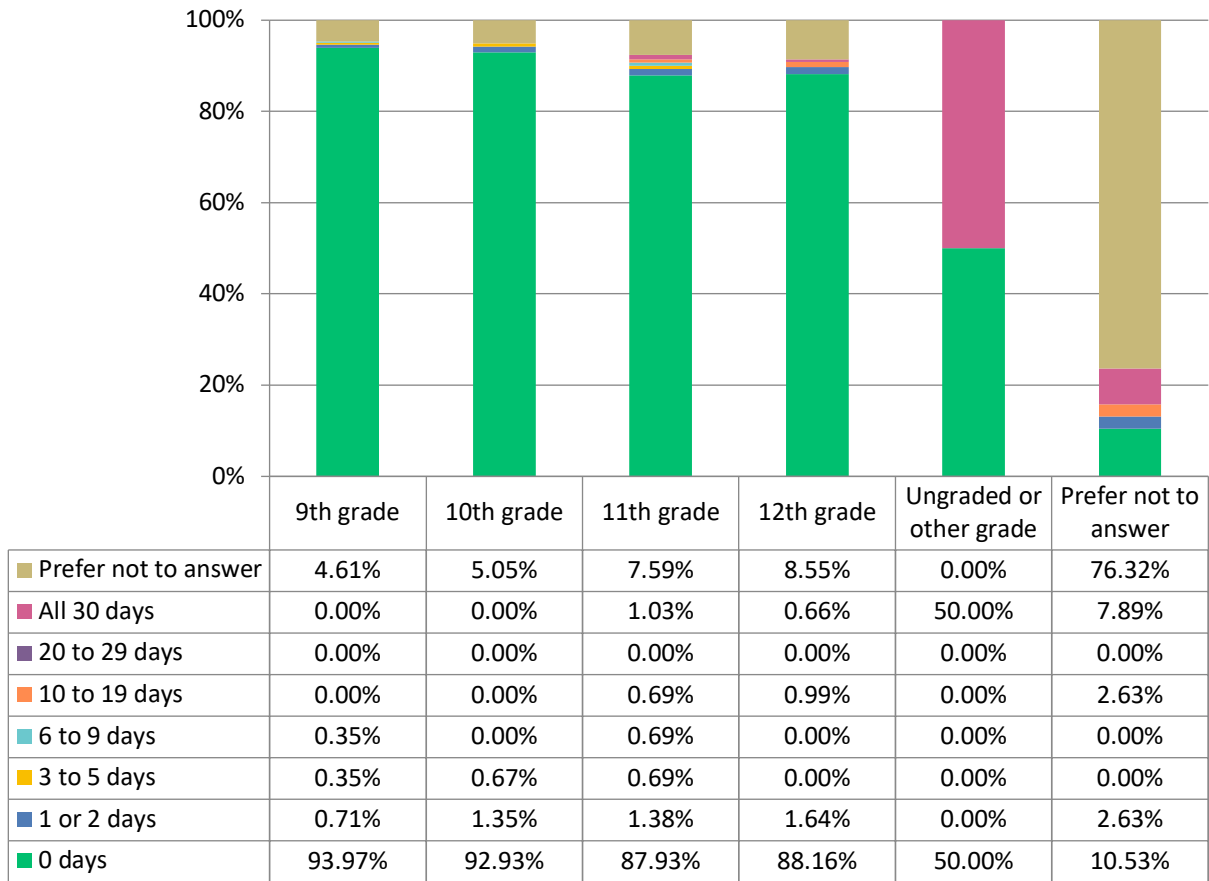


During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars?



■ Prefer not to answer	3.02%	10.18%	9.09%	64.44%
■ All 30 days	0.00%	0.89%	9.09%	6.67%
■ 20 to 29 days	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 10 to 19 days	0.00%	0.89%	9.09%	0.00%
■ 6 to 9 days	0.00%	0.36%	9.09%	0.00%
■ 3 to 5 days	0.00%	0.71%	9.09%	0.00%
■ 1 or 2 days	0.50%	1.96%	0.00%	4.44%
■ 0 days	96.48%	85.00%	54.55%	24.44%

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

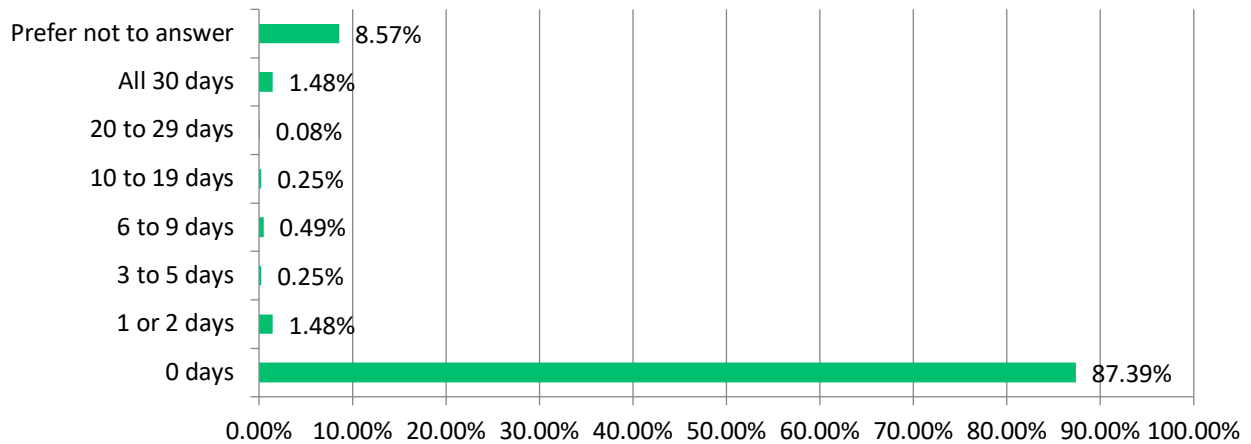


Key Findings on Cigar, Cigarillo, and Little Cigar Use Among Students

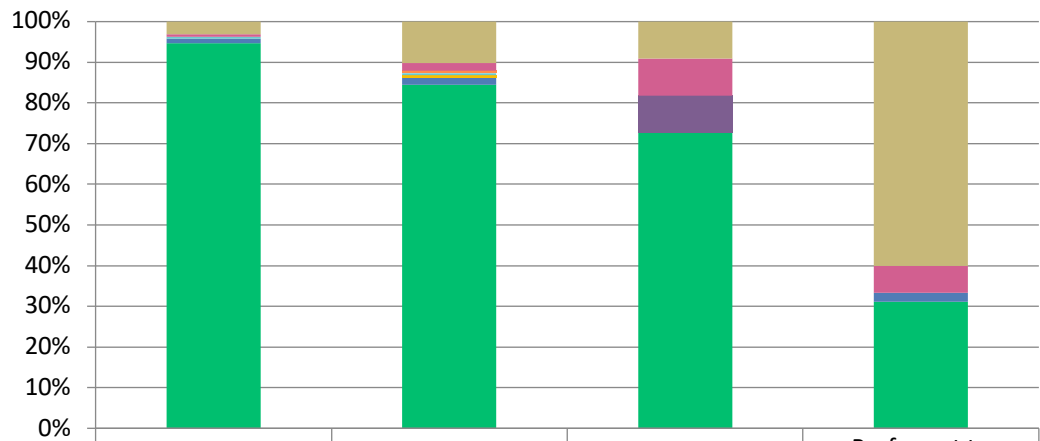
- **Low Prevalence of Cigar Use:** A large majority of students (88.13%) reported not smoking cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars on any day in the past 30 days, indicating that cigar use is relatively uncommon among the surveyed students.
- **Gender Differences:** Female students reported the highest rate of non-use, with 96.48% indicating no cigar use, compared to 85.00% of male students. Students identifying as “Other” had the lowest rate of non-use at 54.55%, with a greater variety in reported usage frequency. Males showed a slightly higher tendency for regular use, with .89% smoking cigars every day in the past month, compared to 0% of females.
- **Grade Differences:** Cigar non-use rates were generally high across grade levels, with the highest non-use reported among 9th graders (93.97%). However, non-use rates gradually decreased in higher grades, with 88.16% of 12th graders reporting no cigar use. Students in ungraded or alternative grade categories showed only a 50% non-use rate, suggesting different patterns of cigar use within this group.

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?

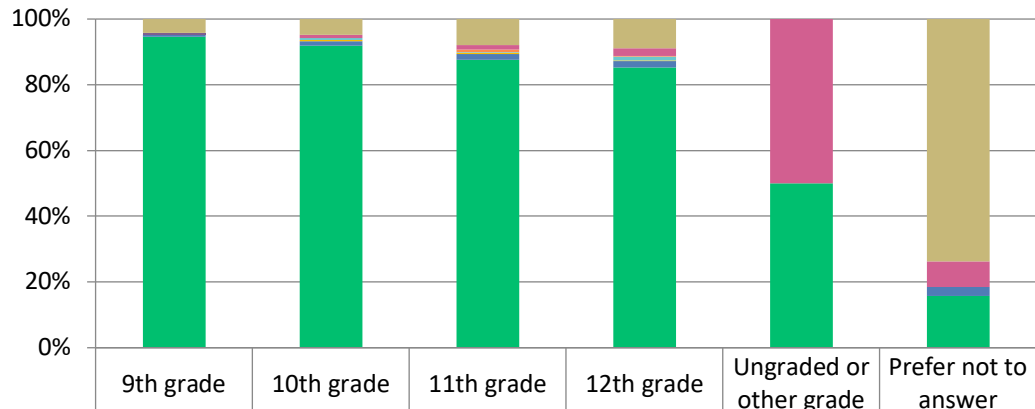


During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use chewing tobacco, snuff, dip, snus, or dissolvable tobacco products, such as Copenhagen, Grizzly, Skoal, or Camel Snus?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	3.18%	10.18%	9.09%	60.00%
All 30 days	0.50%	1.96%	9.09%	6.67%
20 to 29 days	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	0.00%
10 to 19 days	0.00%	0.54%	0.00%	0.00%
6 to 9 days	0.50%	0.54%	0.00%	0.00%
3 to 5 days	0.00%	0.54%	0.00%	0.00%
1 or 2 days	1.17%	1.79%	0.00%	2.22%
0 days	94.64%	84.46%	72.73%	31.11%

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?

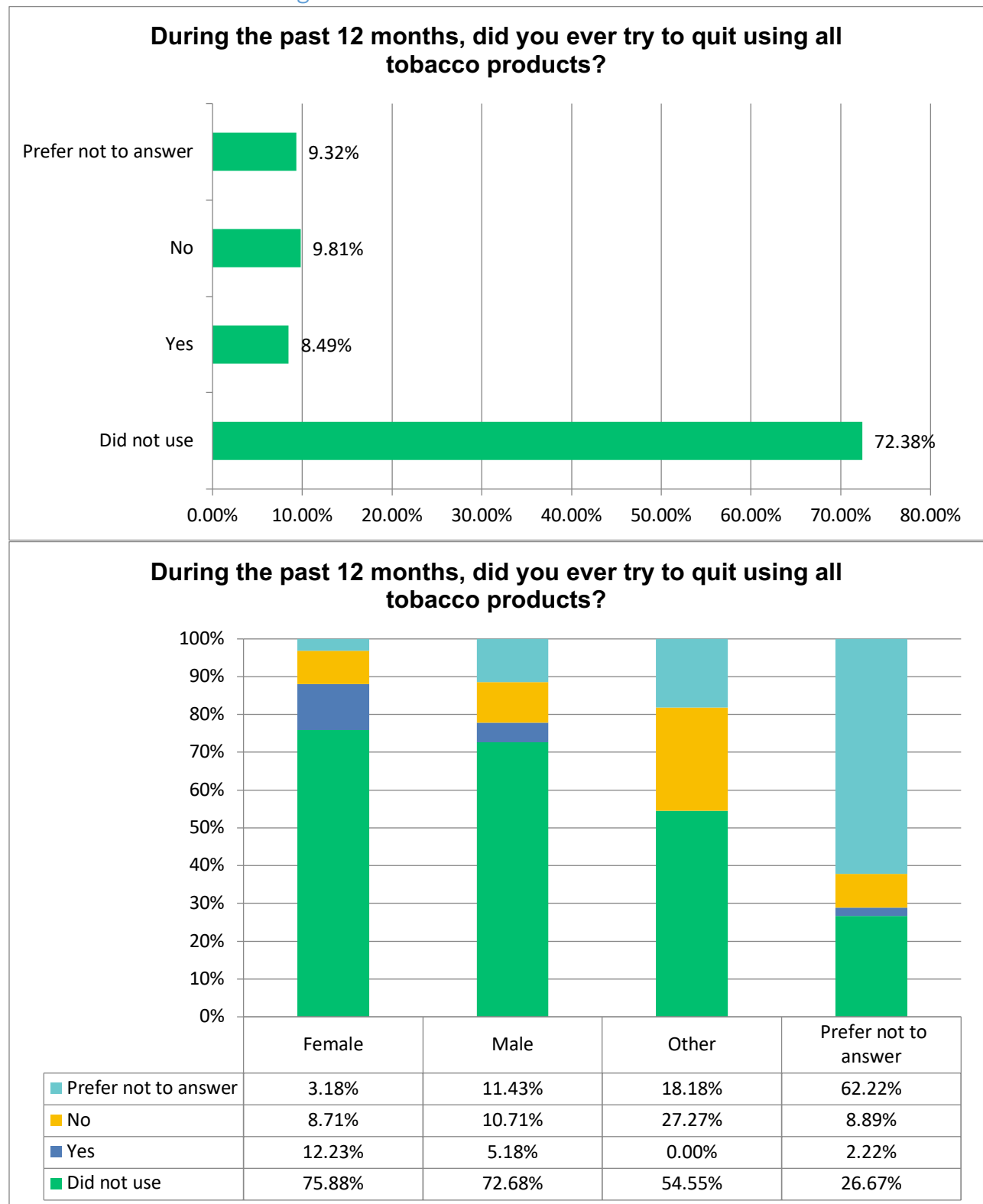


■ Prefer not to answer	4.26%	4.71%	7.93%	8.88%	0.00%	73.68%
■ All 30 days	0.00%	1.01%	1.38%	2.30%	50.00%	7.89%
■ 20 to 29 days	0.35%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 10 to 19 days	0.00%	0.00%	0.69%	0.33%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 6 to 9 days	0.00%	0.67%	0.34%	0.99%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 3 to 5 days	0.00%	0.34%	0.34%	0.33%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 1 or 2 days	0.71%	1.35%	1.72%	1.97%	0.00%	2.63%
■ 0 days	94.68%	91.92%	87.59%	85.20%	50.00%	15.79%

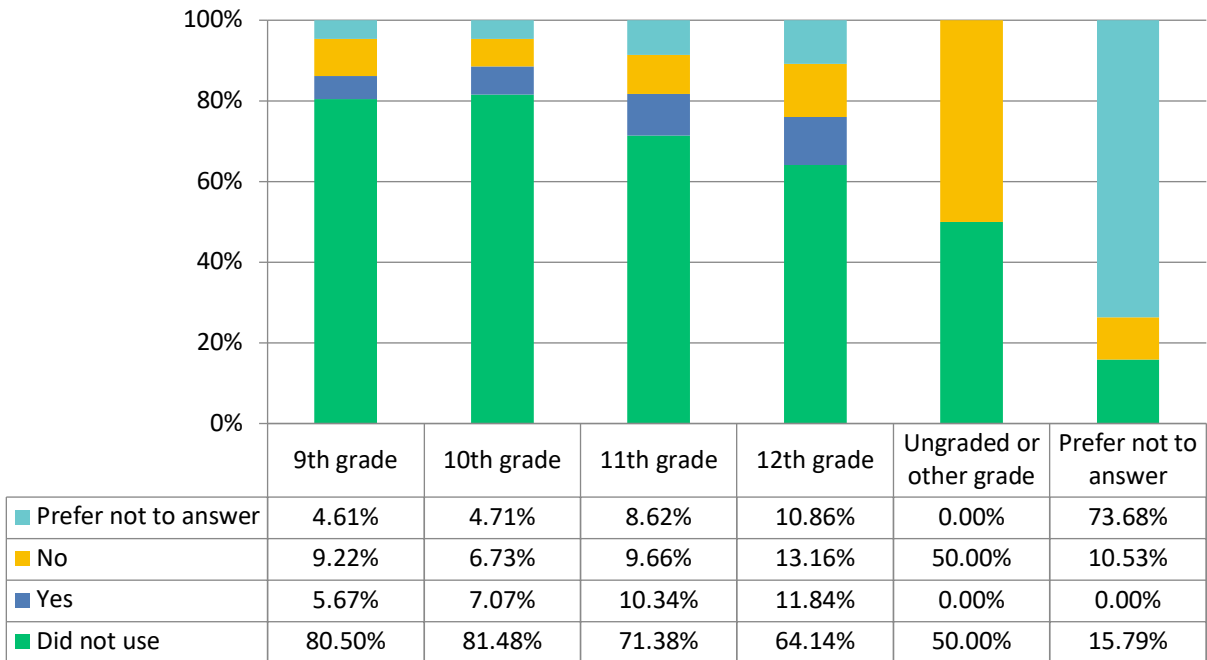
Key Findings on Use of Chewing Tobacco, Snuff, or Dissolvable Tobacco Products

- **Low Prevalence of Usage:** A majority (87.39%) of students reported not using chewing tobacco, snuff, dip, snus, or dissolvable tobacco products in the past 30 days. This suggests relatively low usage of these products among surveyed students.
- **Gender Differences:** Male students had a higher rate of reported use of chewing tobacco and similar products compared to female students. Specifically, 84.46% of male students reported no use, with 1.96% using all 30 days. In comparison, 94.64% of females reported no use, with very few indicating any level of regular use.
- **Grade Differences:** Usage of chewing tobacco and similar products appears to slightly increase with grade level. 9th graders report the highest non-usage at 94.68%, with usage gradually becoming more varied by 12th grade. This suggests a gradual increase in experimentation or use among older students.

Tobacco Cessation Among Students



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

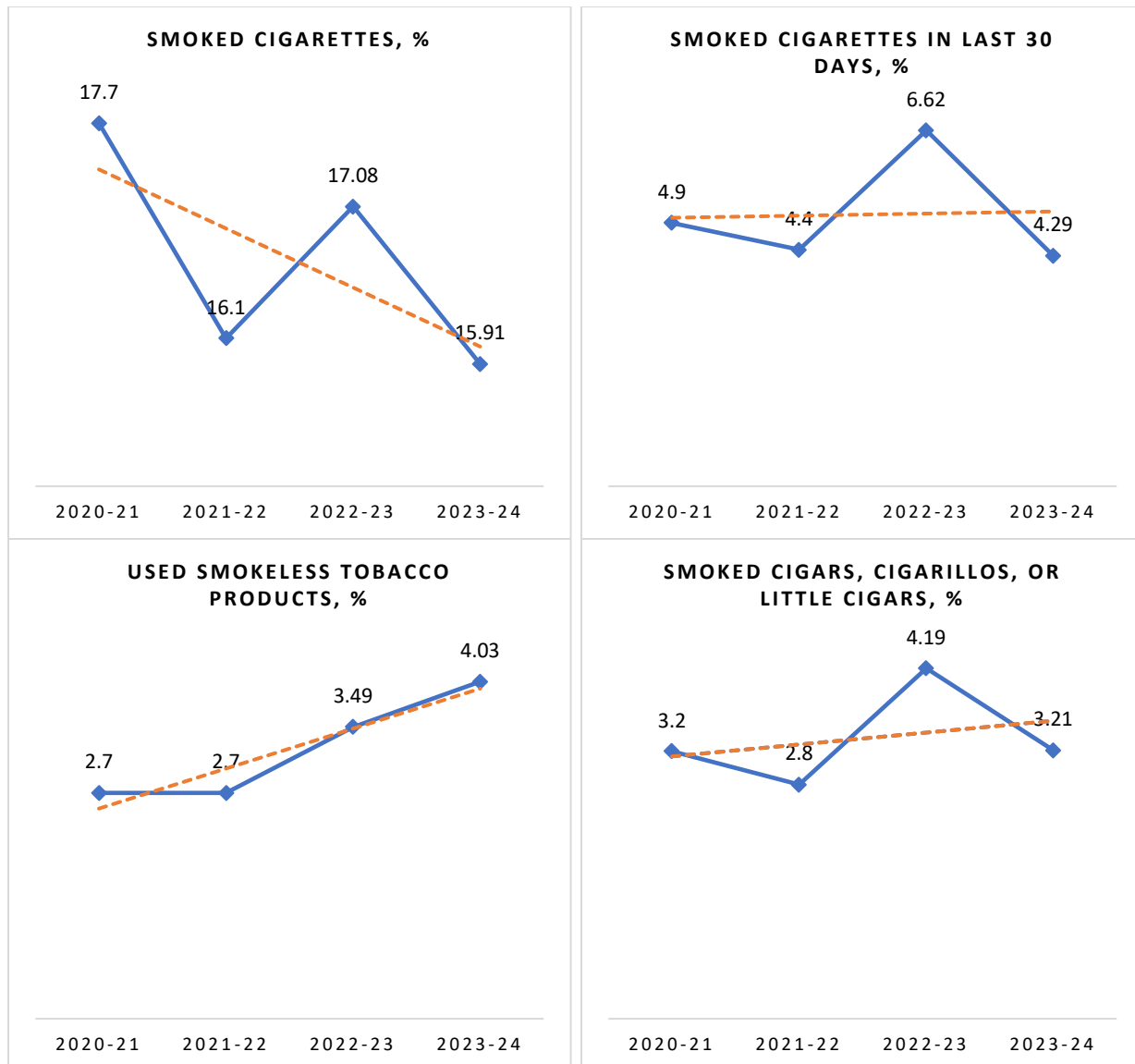


Key Findings on Tobacco Cessation

- **High Rate of Non-Usage:** A majority of students (72.38%) reported they did not use any tobacco products in the past 12 months, indicating a strong non-smoking trend among the surveyed population. Among those who did use tobacco products, 8.49% attempted to quit within the last year.
- **Gender Differences:** Female students had a slightly higher rate of attempting to quit (12.23%) compared to male students (5.18%). This difference may indicate varying levels of awareness or motivation to quit between genders.
- **Grade Differences:** Quitting attempts vary by grade, with higher grades (such as 12th graders) showing increased efforts to quit (11.84%) compared to younger students.

Tobacco Use Among Students Over Time

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



Key Findings on Tobacco Use Among Students Over Time

- **Decline in Lifetime Cigarette Use:** There has been a steady decline in students who have ever smoked cigarettes, from 17.7% in 2020-2021 to 15.91% in 2023-2024. This shows a gradual reduction in overall cigarette experimentation among students over the years.
- **Recent Smoking Behavior:** Only a small proportion of students reported smoking, with the percentage slightly fluctuating over the years but ultimately decreasing from 6.62% in 2022-2023 to 4.29% in 2023-2024. This decline suggests fewer students are currently engaging in cigarette smoking.
- **Increase in Smokeless Tobacco Use:** Smokeless tobacco use has been increasing, rising from 2.7% in 2020-2021 to 4.03% in 2023-2024. This growth indicates a shift in preference or experimentation with alternative tobacco products.
- **Stable Cigar Use with Minor Fluctuations:** Cigar, cigarillo, and little cigar usage has remained relatively stable, with minor fluctuations. This suggests low but consistent interest in cigars among students.

Electric Vapor Products

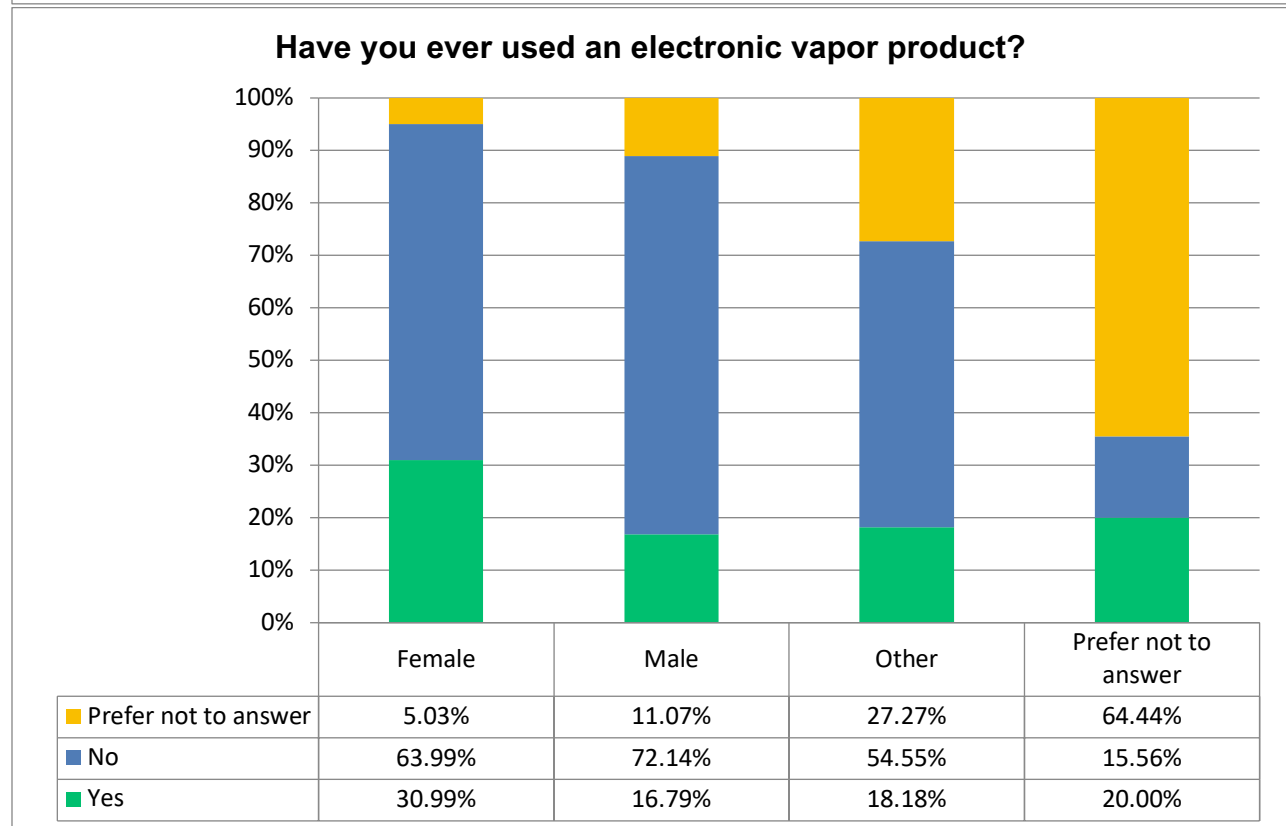
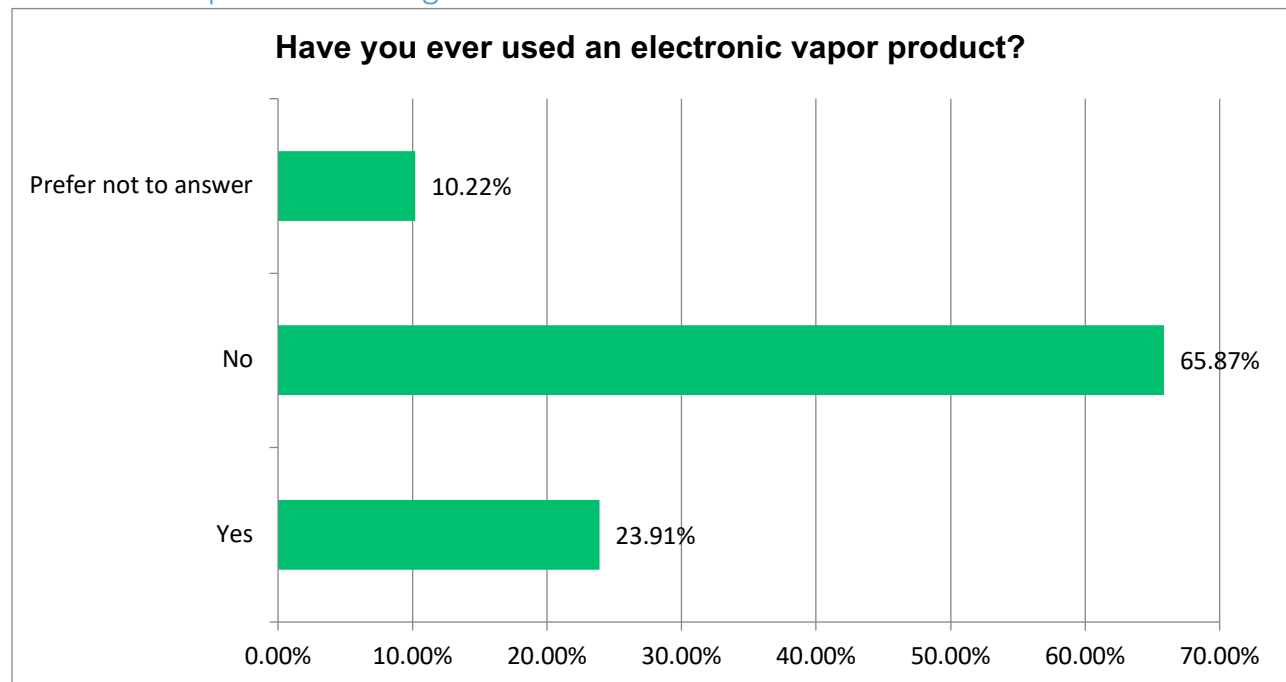
Youth vaping remains a critical concern despite increased awareness of its risks. Survey questions on electronic vapor products provide insight into patterns of initiation and use frequency among adolescents, allowing schools and communities to target prevention efforts and reduce the risk of long-term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

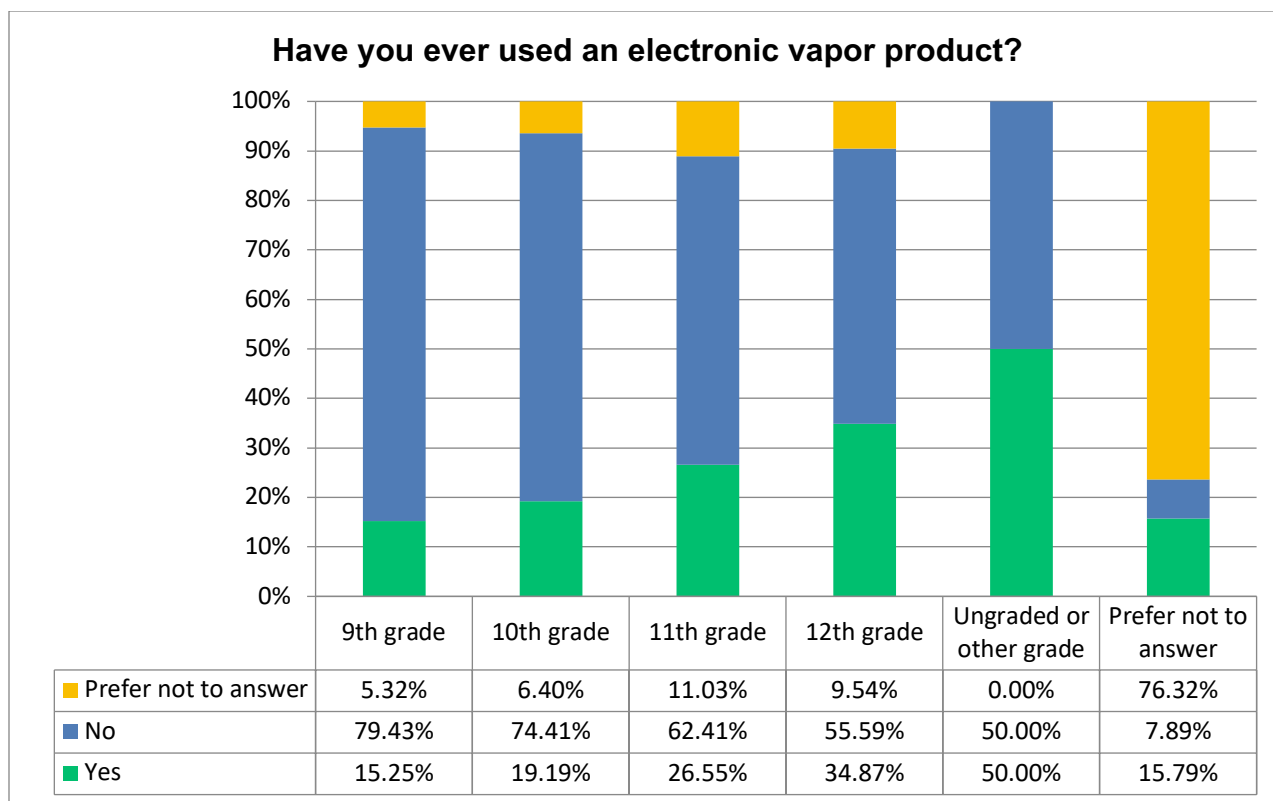
The vaping section of this report offers a detailed analysis of electronic vapor product use among students. Over the past four years, vaping rates have steadily declined, with the percentage of students using an electronic vapor product dropping from 34% in 2020-2021 to 23.91% in 2023-2024. Recent use has also decreased from 18.4% to 11.54%, suggesting a decline in initiation rates.

However, specific subgroups continue to exhibit higher levels of use. Female students report higher lifetime vaping rates than males. Vaping prevalence also increases with grade level, with nearly one-third of 12th graders having tried vaping, compared to fewer younger students. Frequent use remains a concern, as a small but significant portion of students report vaping nearly every day. Additionally, students identifying as "Other" show elevated rates of frequent use, highlighting the need for targeted support.

These findings emphasize the importance of sustained vaping education, particularly for older students and groups with higher usage rates. Continued awareness campaigns and preventive measures are essential to maintaining this downward trend in vaping.

Electronic Vapor Use Among Students

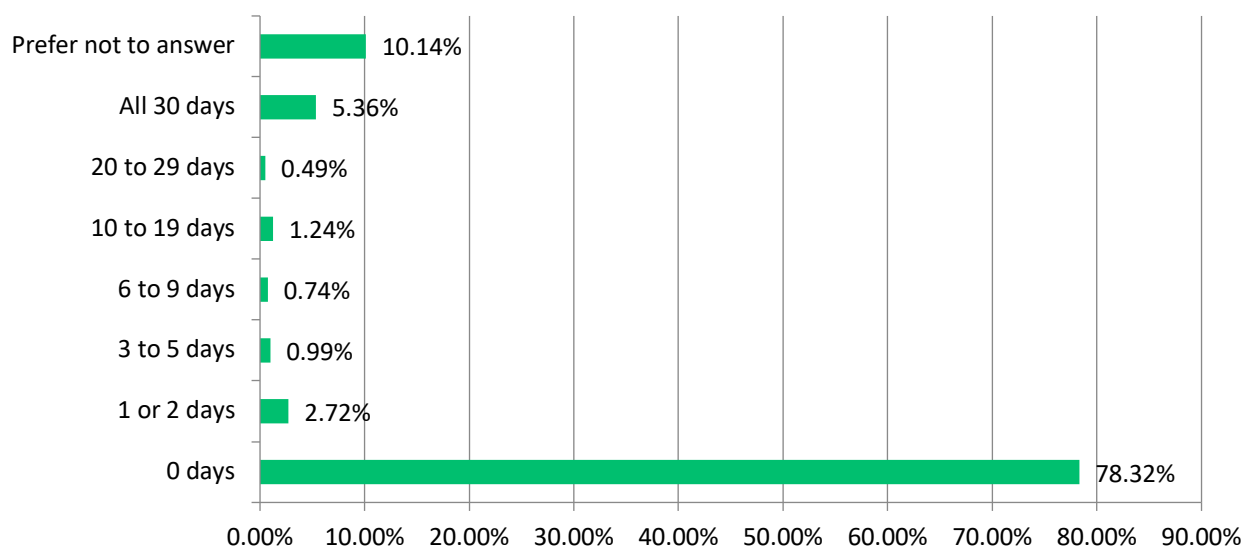




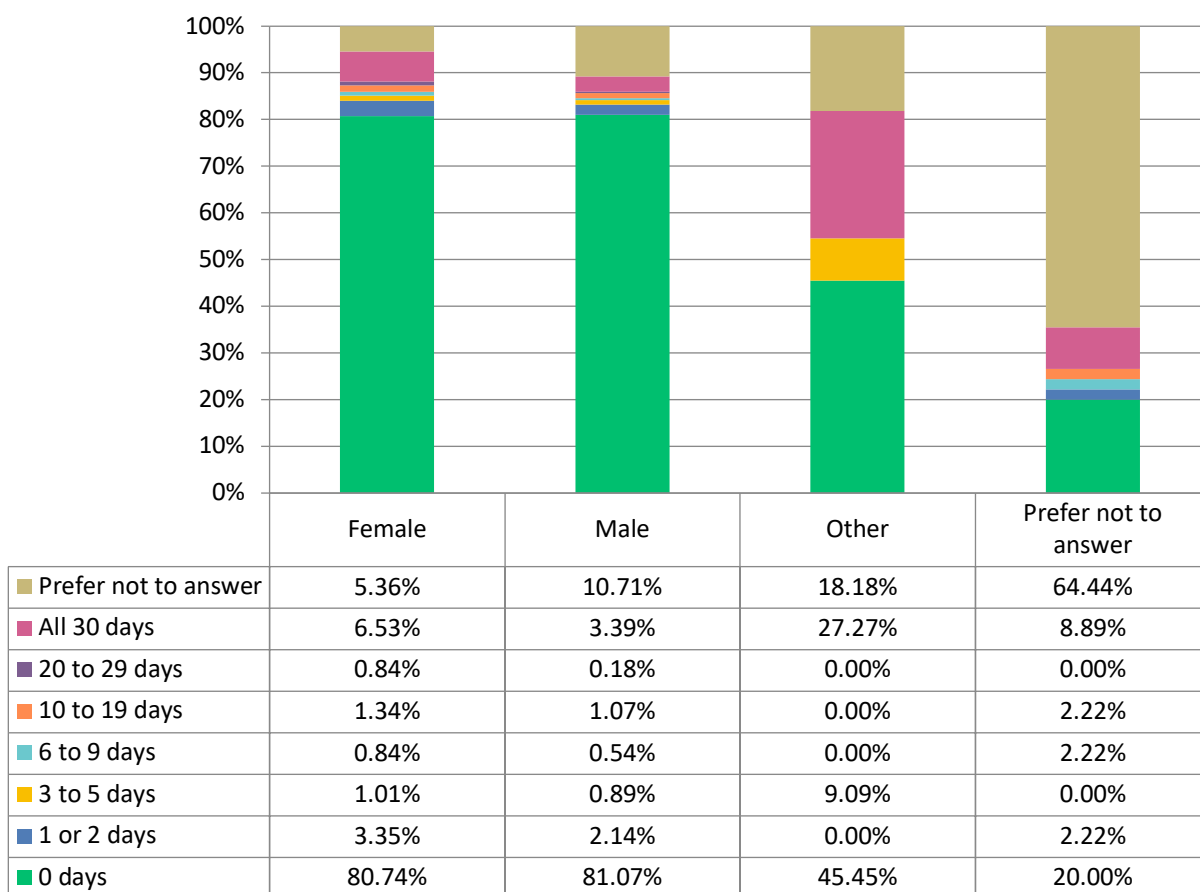
Key Findings on Vaping Usage Among Students

- Overall Vaping Prevalence:** A majority of students (65.87%) report that they have never used an electronic vapor product. In contrast, 23.91% indicate they have tried vaping, and 10.22% preferred not to answer.
- Gender Differences:** Female students report higher usage rates, with 30.99% indicating they have tried vaping, compared to 16.79% of male students and 18.18% of students identifying as "Other." Male students have the highest rate of non-use at 72.14%.
- Grade Differences:** Vaping usage increases as students progress through grade levels. Among 9th graders, 15.25% report having used a vaping product, which gradually rises to 34.87% by 12th grade. The rate of non-use declines from 79.43% in 9th grade to 55.59% by 12th grade. Additionally, older students have slightly higher "Prefer not to answer" rates, possibly indicating increased privacy concerns with age.

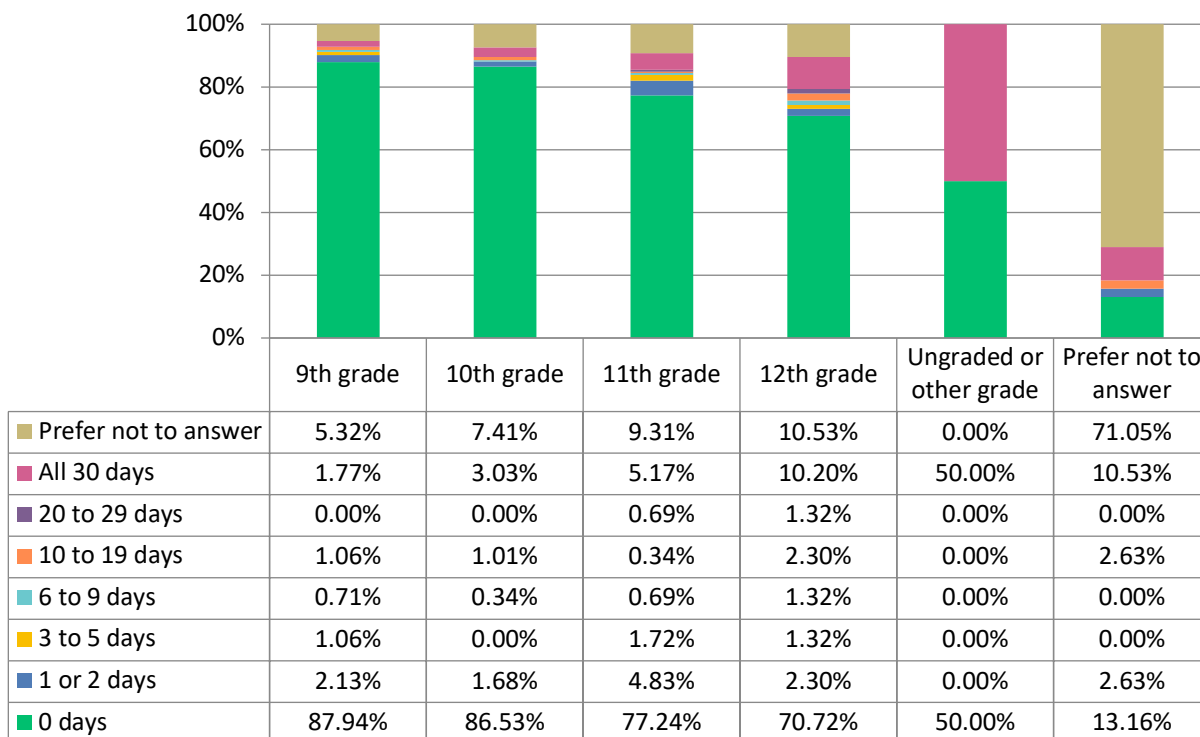
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use an electronic vapor product?



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



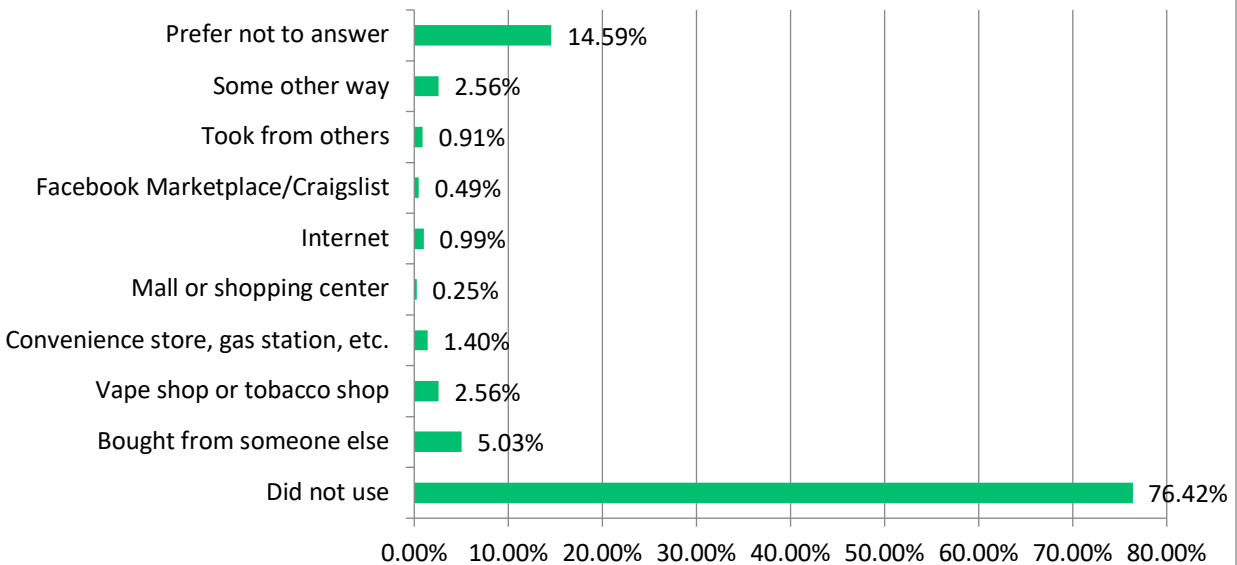
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use an electronic vapor product?



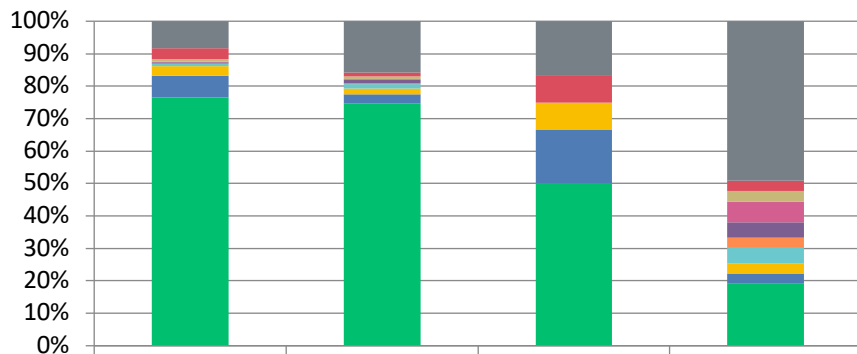
Key Findings on Electronic Vapor Product Use Among Students

- **High Rate of Non-Use:** A substantial majority of students (78.32%) reported not using electronic vapor products on any day in the past 30 days, indicating a relatively low usage rate within the surveyed population.
- **Gender Differences:** Among students who reported using electronic vapor products, students identifying as "Other" showed a notably higher usage with 27.27% reporting use on all 30 days. In contrast, 6.53% of females reported daily use. Male students fell in between, with 3.39% reporting daily use. These differences suggest that regular vaping may be more prevalent among students identifying outside the traditional gender categories.
- **Grade Differences:** Vaping usage increased with grade level, as 9th graders reported the lowest usage (1.77% daily), whereas 12th graders reported the highest at 10.20% for daily use. Moderate use (1 to 2 days in the past month) was also more common among upper grades, with 4.83% of 11th graders and 2.30% of 12th graders using at this frequency, compared to only 1.68% of 10th graders. This suggests that as students grow older, the likelihood of both occasional and regular vaping increases.

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

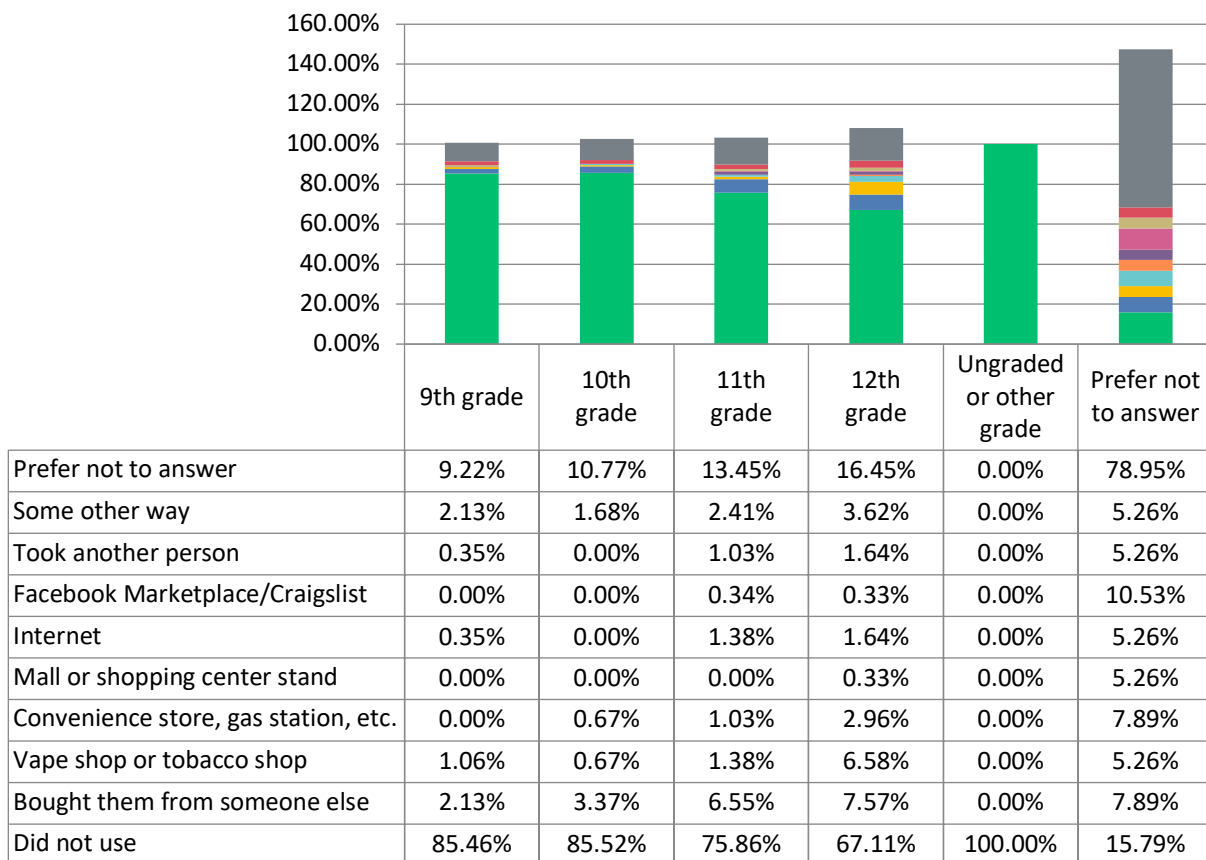


During the past 30 days, how did you usually get your electronic vapor products?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
■ Prefer not to answer	8.54%	16.61%	18.18%	68.89%
■ Some other way	3.52%	1.25%	9.09%	4.44%
■ Took from others	0.84%	0.71%	0.00%	4.44%
■ Facebook Marketplace, or Craigslist	0.17%	0.18%	0.00%	8.89%
■ Internet	0.34%	1.25%	0.00%	6.67%
■ Mall or shopping center	0.00%	0.18%	0.00%	4.44%
■ Convenient store, gas station, etc.	0.84%	1.61%	0.00%	6.67%
■ Vape shop or tobacco shop	3.02%	1.79%	9.09%	4.44%
■ Bought from someone else	6.87%	2.86%	18.18%	4.44%
■ Did not use	78.89%	78.21%	54.55%	26.67%

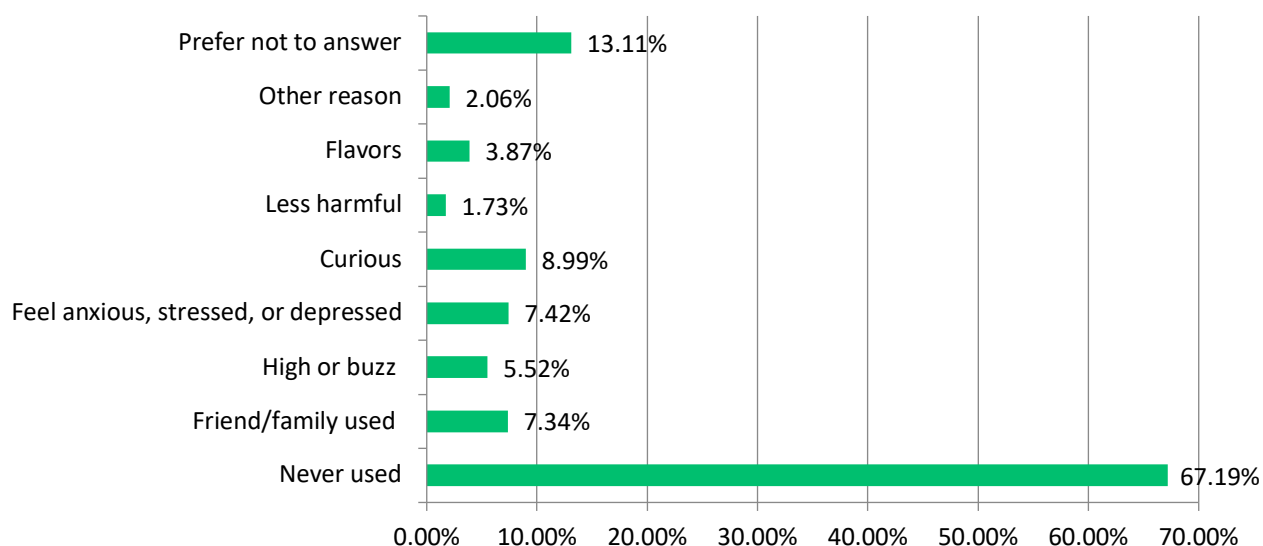
During the past 30 days, how did you usually get your electronic vapor products?



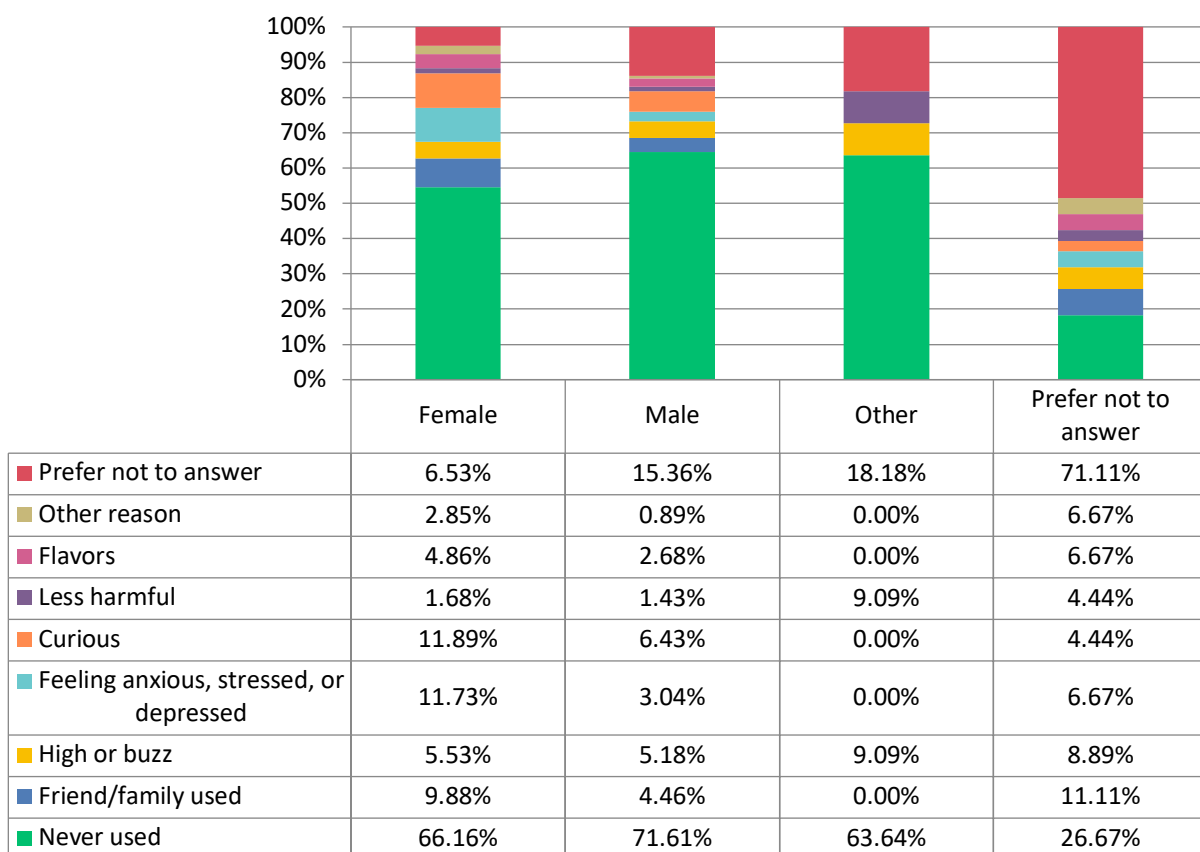
Key Findings on Accessing Vapor Products

- Overall Findings:** A majority of students reported not using electronic vapor products in the past 30 days, with an overall non-use rate of 76.42%. Among those who did use, the most common sources included buying from someone else (5.03%) and obtaining products from vape or tobacco shops (2.56%).
- Gender Differences:** Female students more commonly reported purchasing from others (6.87%), while males had higher rates of self-purchasing. Students identifying as "Other" showed higher usage of vape shops (9.09%).
- Grade Differences:** Older students, particularly in 11th and 12th grades, were more likely to obtain products by purchasing from others or visiting vape shops. These findings suggest that access methods and usage rates increase as students advance in grade level.

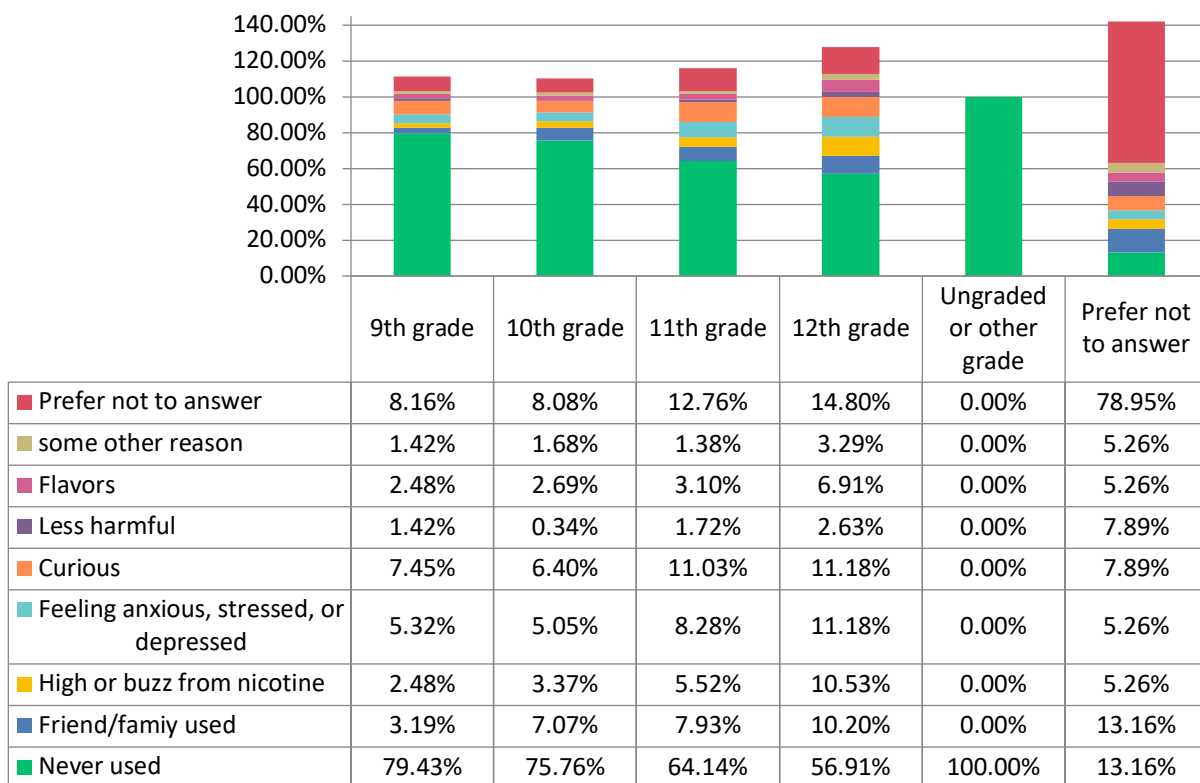
What is the main reason you have used electronic vapor products? (Check all that apply.)



What is the main reason you have used electronic vapor products? (Check all that apply.)



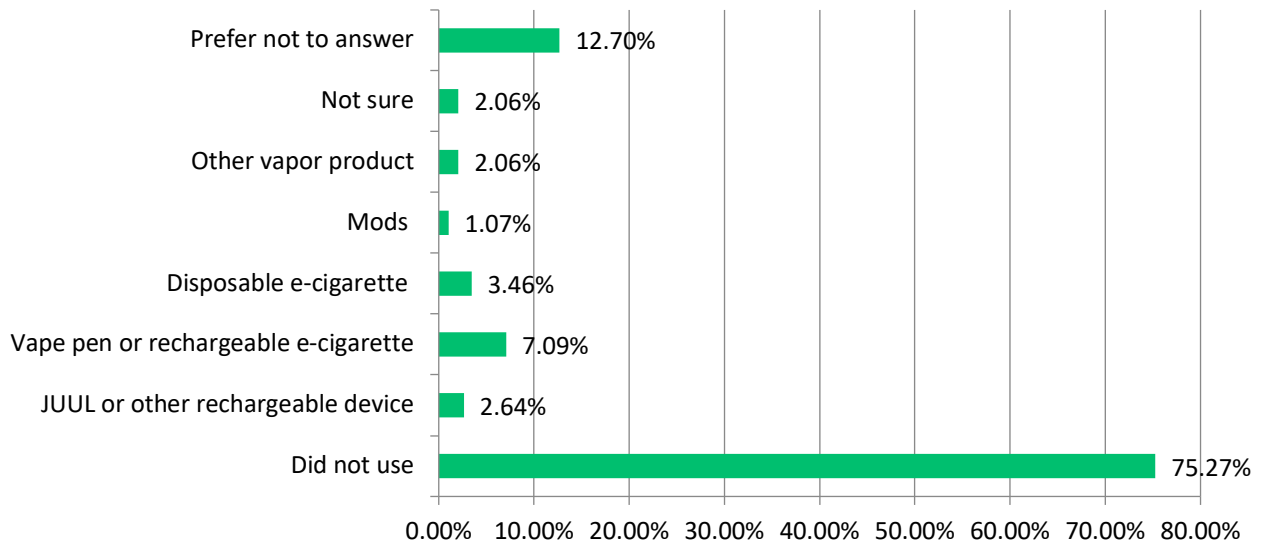
What is the main reason you have used electronic vapor products?



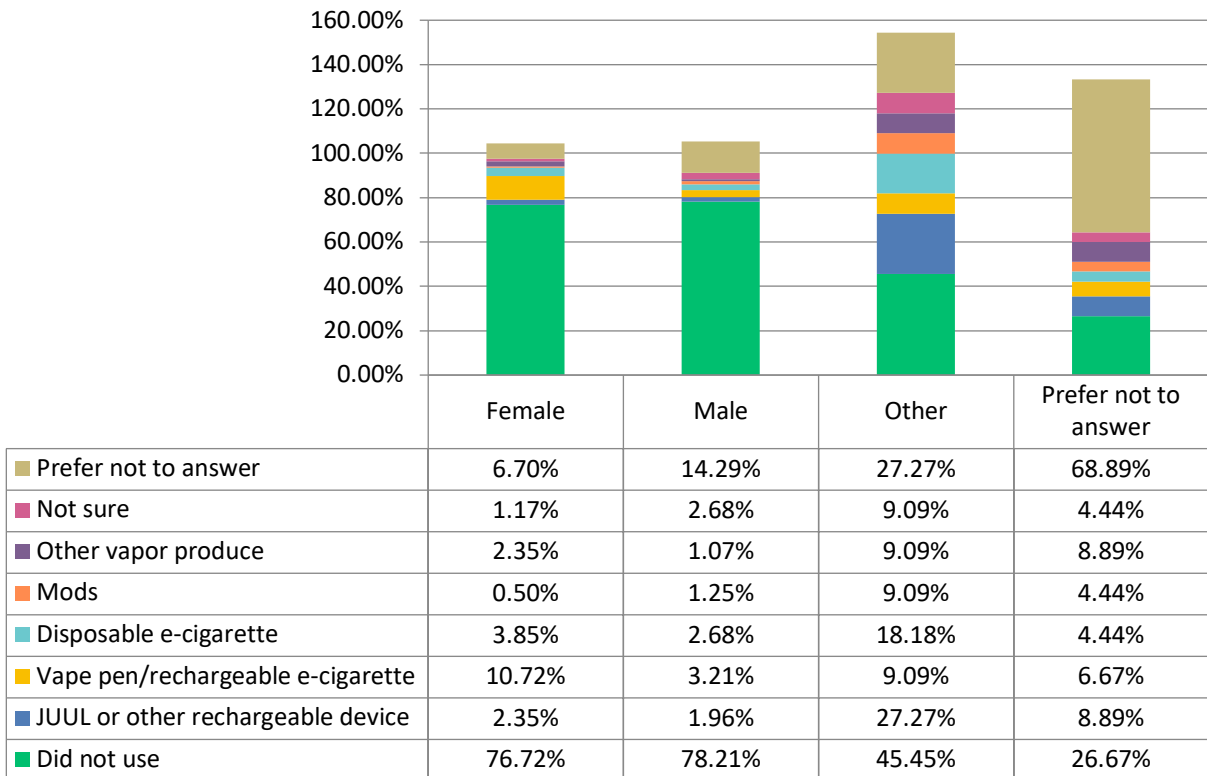
Key Findings on Vaping Behaviors and Access

- Overall Usage Patterns:** The majority of students reported not using electronic vapor products in the past 30 days, with a non-use rate of 67.19%. Among users, common motivations included curiosity, stress relief, and influence from friends or family. Additionally, a portion of students preferred not to disclose their reasons or access methods, indicating privacy concerns around vaping behaviors.
- Gender Differences:** Non-use rates are relatively similar for females (66.16%) and males (71.61%). However, males were slightly less likely to report reasons for using. Among users, females cited curiosity (11.89%) and managing stress (11.73%) as top reasons for using. Males and the "Other" gender group had a higher rate of reporting the desire for a "high or buzz" as a motivation for using.
- Grade Differences:** Non-use decreases progressively with grade level, from 79.43% in 9th grade to 56.91% in 12th grade. Higher grades, especially 11th and 12th, show increased usage for curiosity, managing stress, and getting a high or buzz.

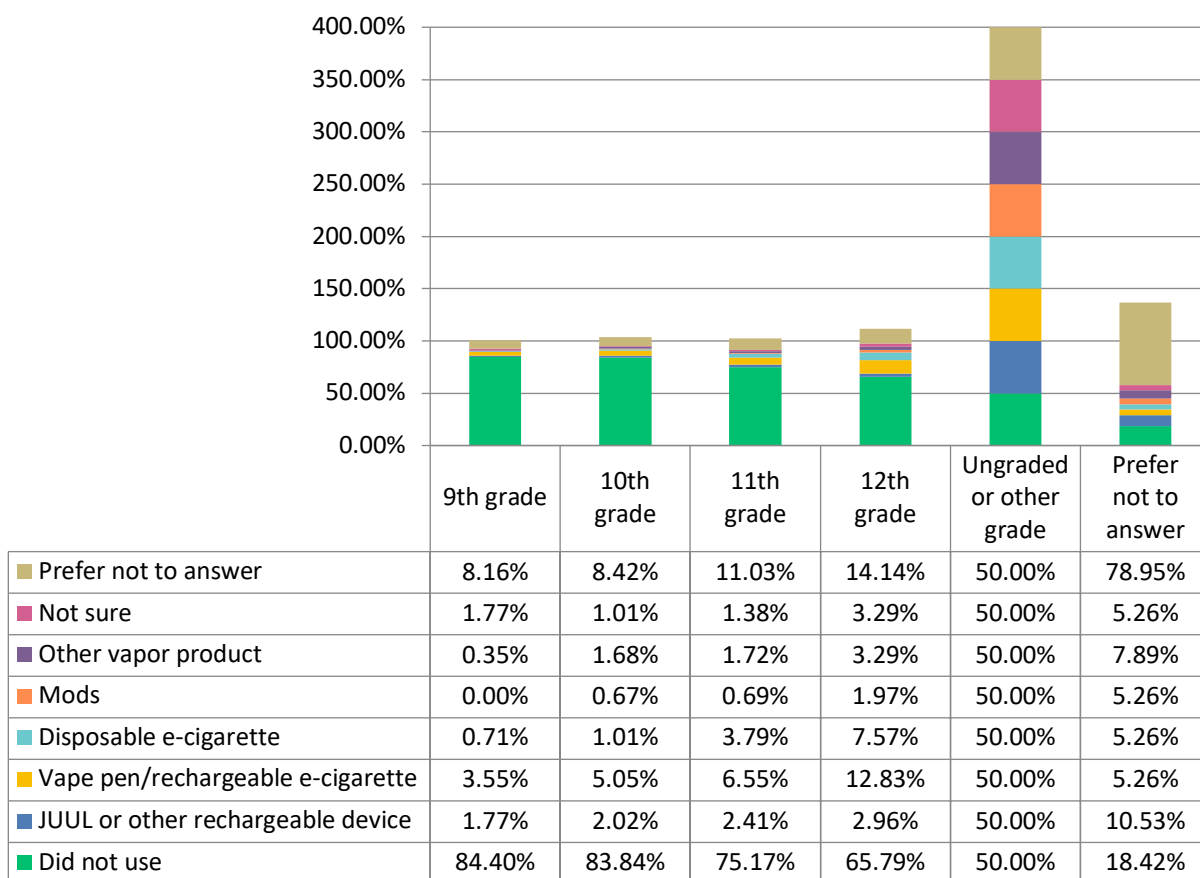
During the past 30 days, which type of electronic vapor product did you usually use? (Check all that apply.)



During the past 30 days, which type of electronic vapor product did you usually use? (Check all that apply.)



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

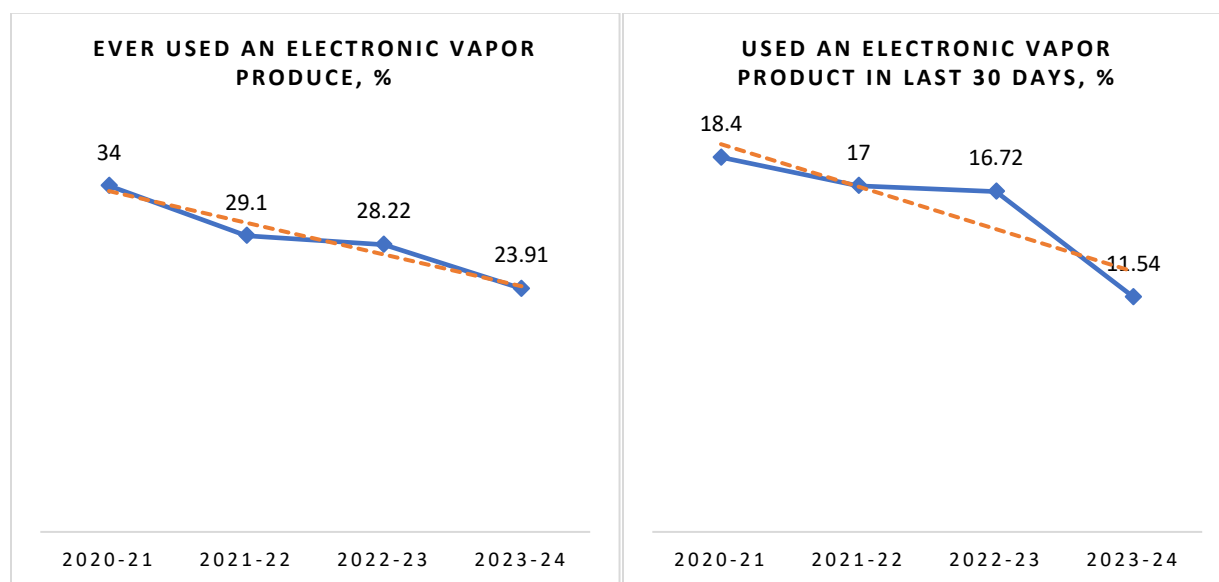


Key Findings on Electronic Vapor Product Type Usage

- Broad Trends in Product Type Usage:** The majority of students (75.27%) reported not using any type of electronic vapor product in the past 30 days. Among those who did use, vape pens or rechargeable e-cigarettes were the most popular (7.09%), followed by disposable e-cigarettes (3.46%).
- Gender Differences:** Non-use rates are similar among females (76.72%) and males (78.21%), but lower among those identifying as "Other" (45.45%). Among users, females and males preferred vape pens or disposable e-cigarettes. In contrast, those identifying as "Other" showed a more diverse usage, including higher rates of use of disposable e-cigarettes, JUUL, vape pens, and mods.
- Grade Differences:** Non-use rates decrease with grade level, from 84.4% in 9th grade to 65.79% in 12th grade. Older students, particularly in 12th grade, reported a higher preference for vape pens (12.83%) and disposable e-cigarettes (7.57%). This shows a shift towards these product types as they advance in grade.

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 produce 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

- **Steady Decline in 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 four years. There was a notable decrease from 34% in 2020-2021 to 23.91% in 2023-2024. This suggests a reduction in experimentation with vaping among students over the four-year period.
- **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 11.54% in 2023-2024. This drop highlights a positive trend, indicating fewer students engage in regular or recent vaping behaviors.

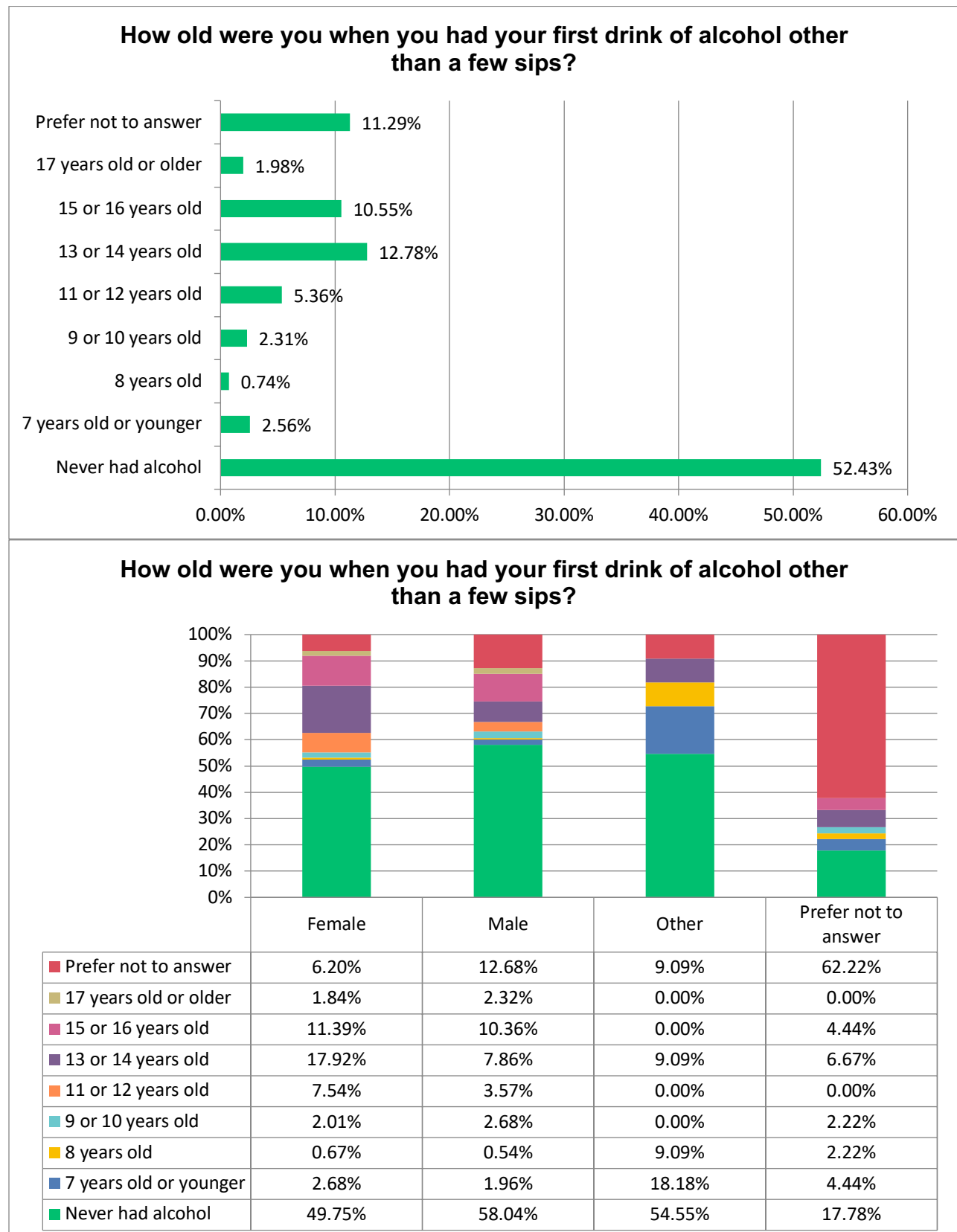
Alcohol

Alcohol use among teens is a persistent concern due to its potential to impact adolescent development and lead to long-term health consequences. The survey gathers data on students' drinking habits, including the age of first use, frequency of consumption, and binge drinking behavior, providing an in-depth look into the prevalence and patterns of alcohol use in youth communities.

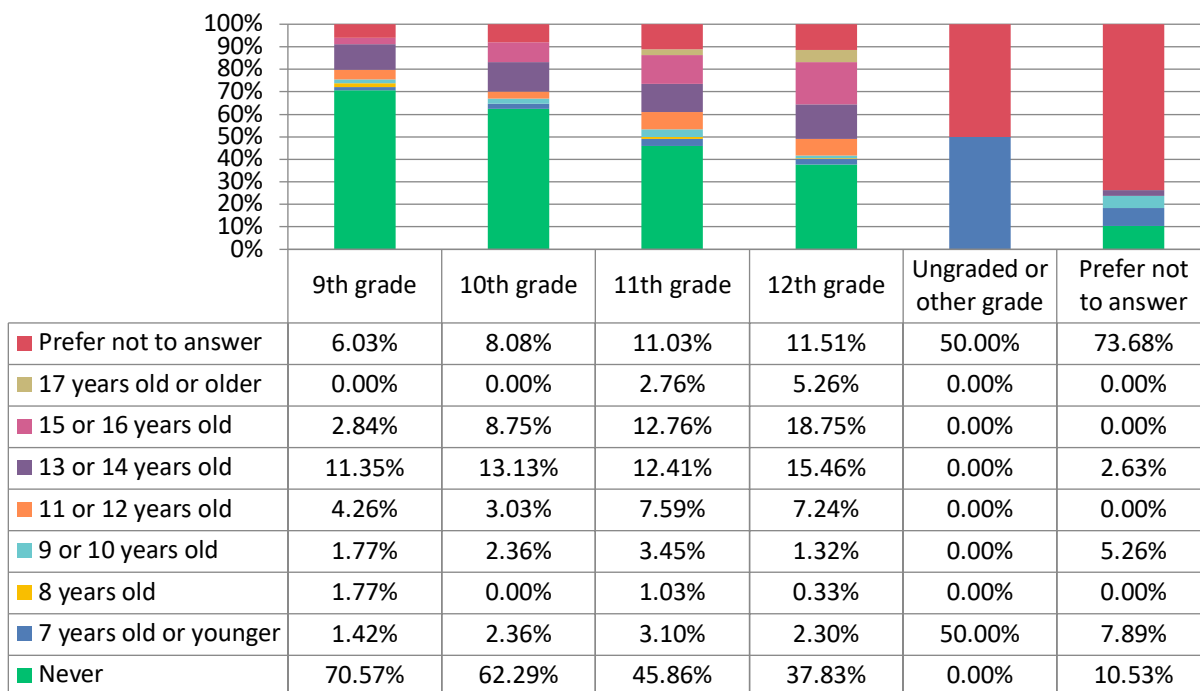
Key findings indicate that while most students report abstaining from alcohol, those who drink often start experimenting around 13 to 16 years old. Recent alcohol use among students has shown a steady decline, dropping from 24% in 2020-2021 to 16.32% in 2023-2024. This signals a positive trend of reduced alcohol consumption. Similarly, binge drinking rates have fallen over the same period, with 8.74% of students reporting binge drinking in the last 30 days in 2023-2024, down from 13.7% in 2020-2021.

When exploring drinking patterns, the majority of students who consume alcohol report drinking on one or two occasions within a 30-day span, indicating that frequent drinking is less common. Access to alcohol appears to vary, with most students reporting receiving it from friends or family members rather than purchasing it themselves. This data emphasizes the need for targeted education and prevention efforts, especially around early alcohol initiation and access.

Alcohol Use Among Students



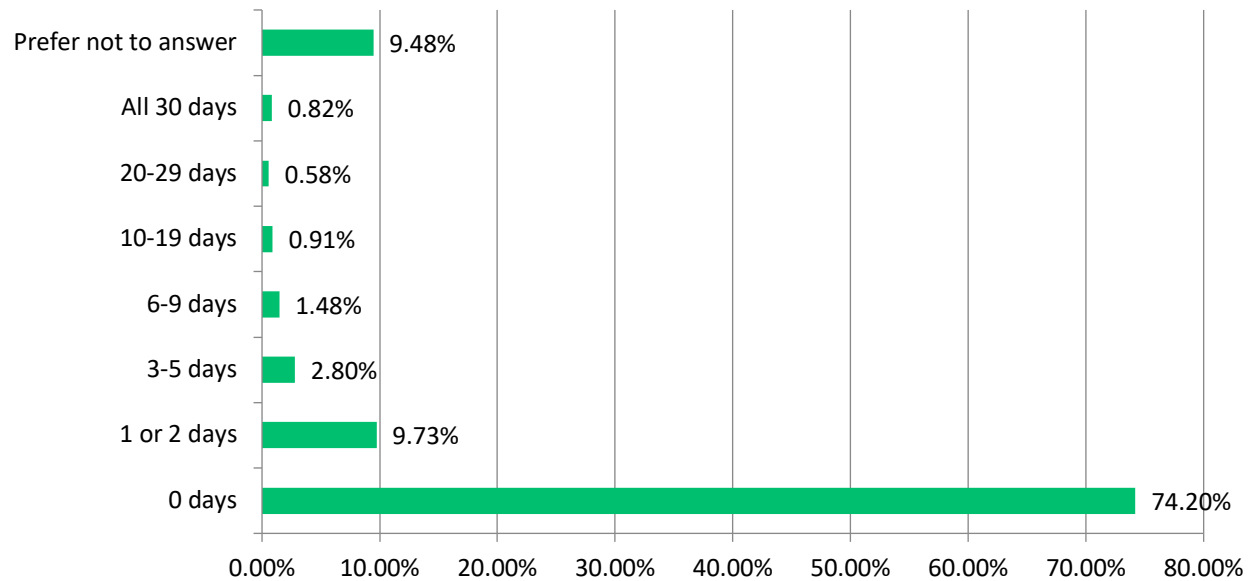
How old were you when you had your first drink of alcohol other than a few sips?



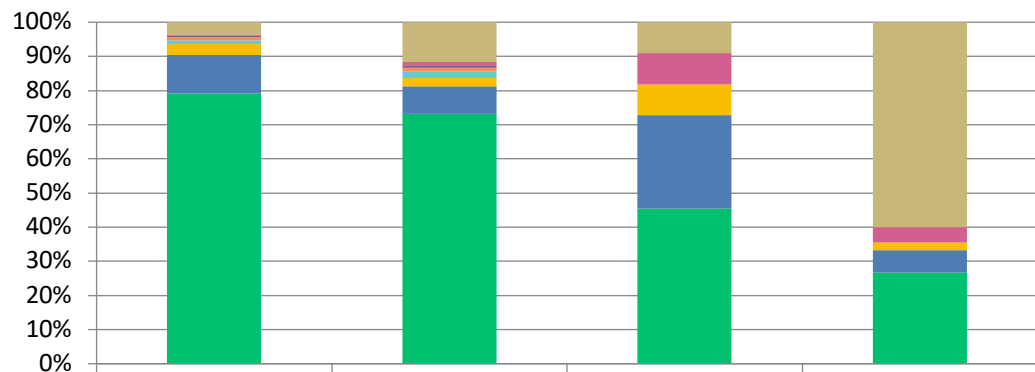
Key Findings on Age of First Alcohol Use

- High Rate of Abstinence:** Over half of the surveyed students (52.43%) report never having consumed alcohol, suggesting a level of abstinence among students. Of those who have tried alcohol, the most common initiation age is between 13 and 16 years (23.33%). This suggests that early teenage years are a typical period for first exposure to alcohol.
- Gender Differences:** Male students report a higher rate of abstinence (58.04%) compared to female students (49.75%) and those identifying as "Other" (54.55%). Additionally, female students show a slightly higher tendency to start drinking at younger ages (11 or 12 years), with 7.54% reporting first alcohol use at this age compared to 3.57% of males.
- Grade Differences:** Alcohol experience increases with grade level, as abstinence rates decline from 70.57% in 9th grade to 37.83% by 12th grade. Most students tend to try alcohol for the first time between 13 and 16 years. However, ungraded students reported a notable percentage participating in early initiation (7 years or younger, 50%).

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

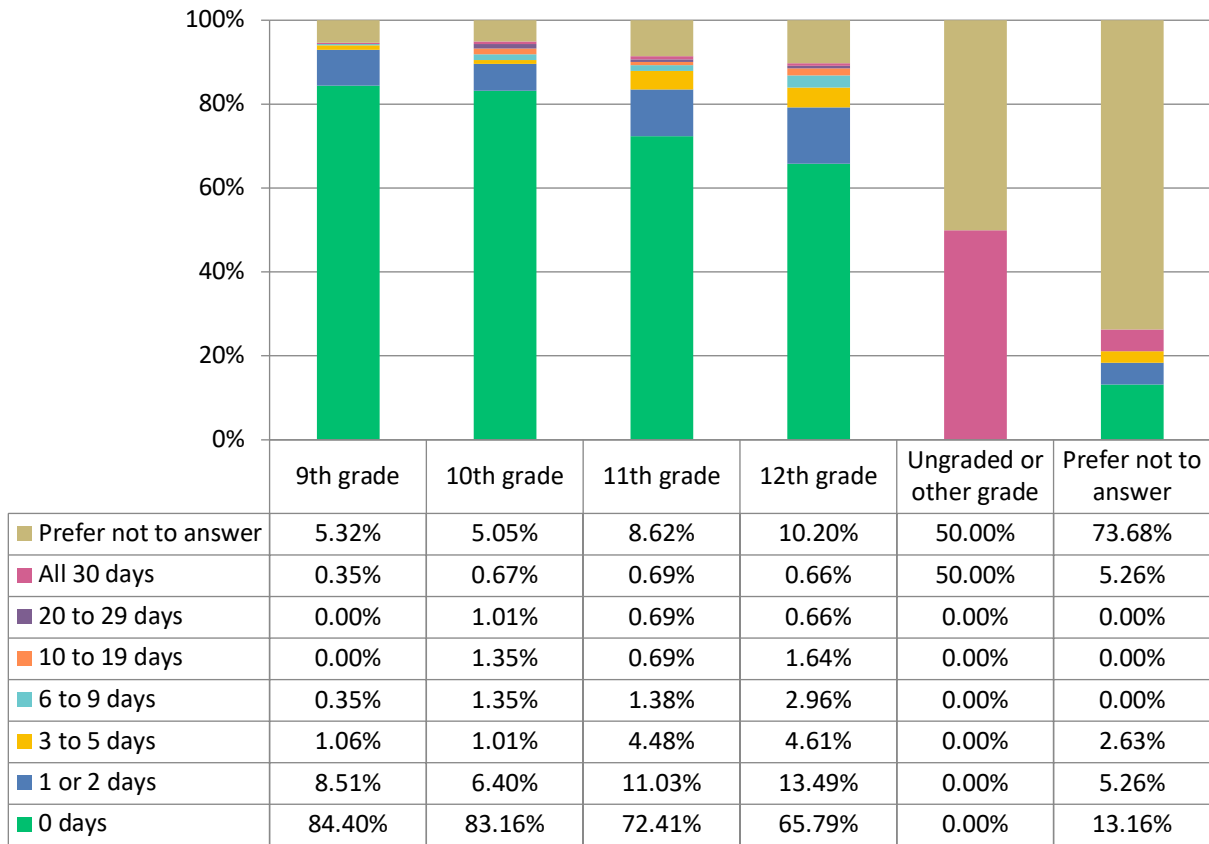


During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have at least one drink of alcohol?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	3.69%	11.61%	9.09%	60.00%
All 30 days	0.34%	0.89%	9.09%	4.44%
20 to 29 days	0.34%	0.89%	0.00%	0.00%
10 to 19 days	0.84%	1.07%	0.00%	0.00%
6 to 9 days	1.17%	1.96%	0.00%	0.00%
3 to 5 days	3.18%	2.32%	9.09%	2.22%
1 or 2 days	11.22%	8.04%	27.27%	6.67%
0 days	79.23%	73.21%	45.45%	26.67%

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

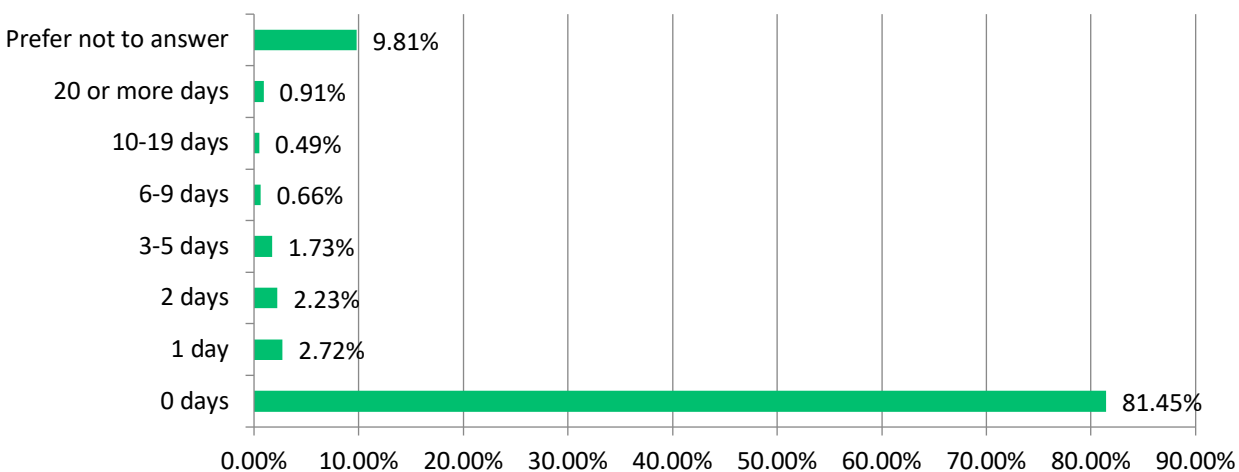


Key Findings on Alcohol Consumption Frequency in the Past 30 Days Among Students

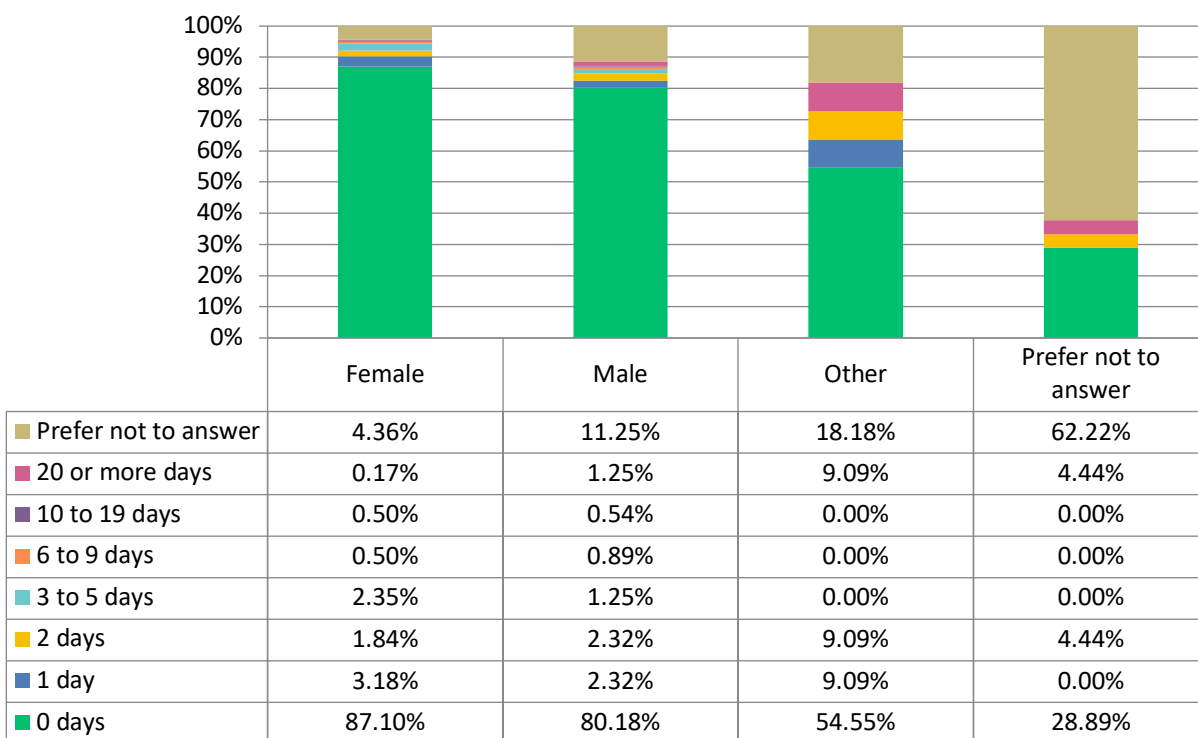
- **High Rate of Non-Consumption with Limited Regular Drinking:** A large majority of students (74.20%) reported not drinking alcohol at all in the past 30 days. Among those who did drink, 9.73% consumed alcohol on only 1 or 2 days, while regular drinking (20 or more days) was rare.
- **Gender Differences:** Female students have a slightly higher rate of drinking on 1 or 2 days (11.22%) compared to male students (8.04%). Additionally, male students showed a slightly lower rate of non-consumption at 72.85% compared to 75.46% for female students, indicating subtle differences in drinking patterns between genders.
- **Grade Differences:** Alcohol consumption increases slightly as students progress through high school. Meanwhile, 9th graders reported the highest rate of non-consumption at 84.40%. This percentage gradually decreased, reaching 65.79% in 12th grade. Additionally, the frequency of drinking on 1 or 2 days also rises in higher grades, reaching 13.49% among 12th graders. This suggests a trend toward increased experimentation with alcohol among older students.

Binge Drinking Among Students

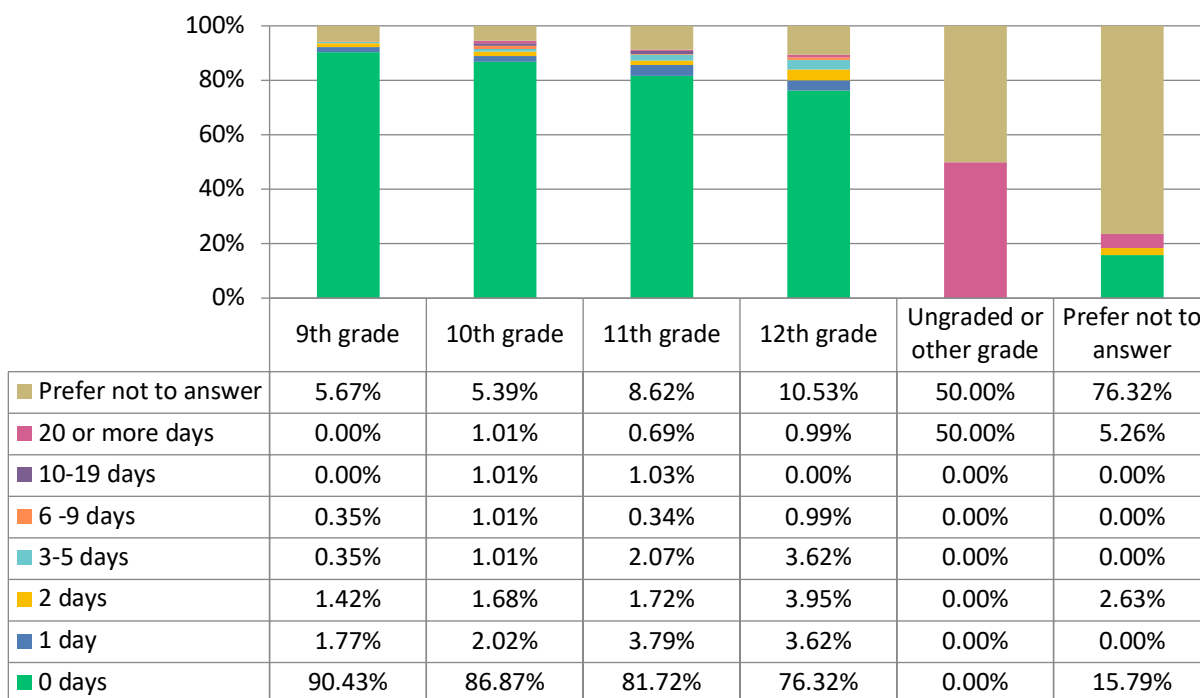
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have 4 or more drinks of alcohol in a row, that is, within a couple of hours (if you are female) or 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row, that is, within a couple of hours (if you are male)?



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)?



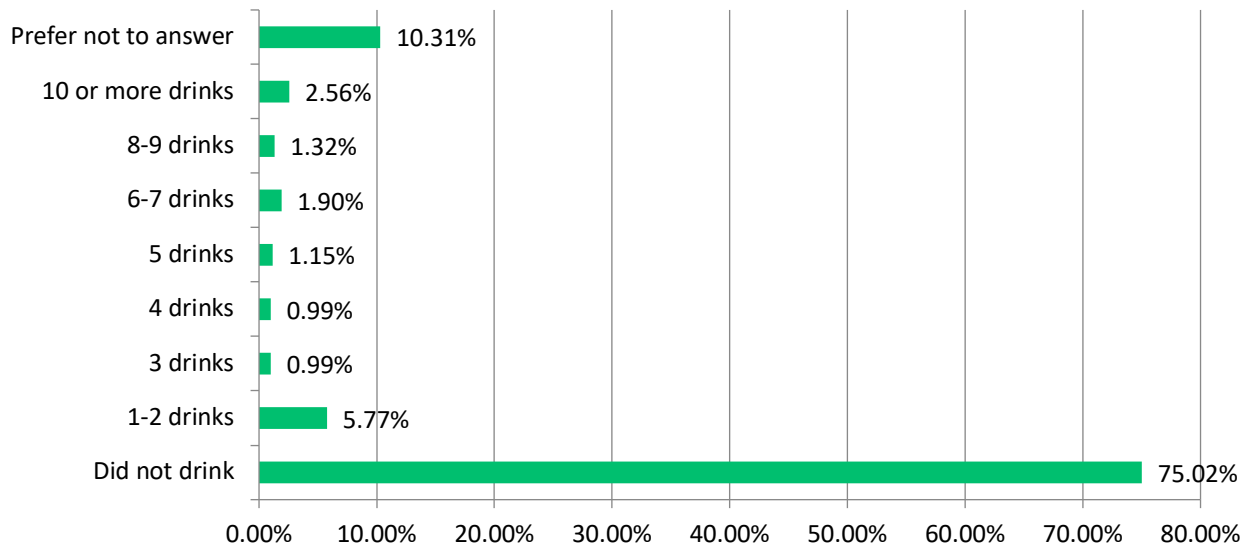
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have 4 or more drinks of alcohol in a row, that is, within a couple of hours (if you are female) or 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row, that is, within a couple of hours (if you are male)?



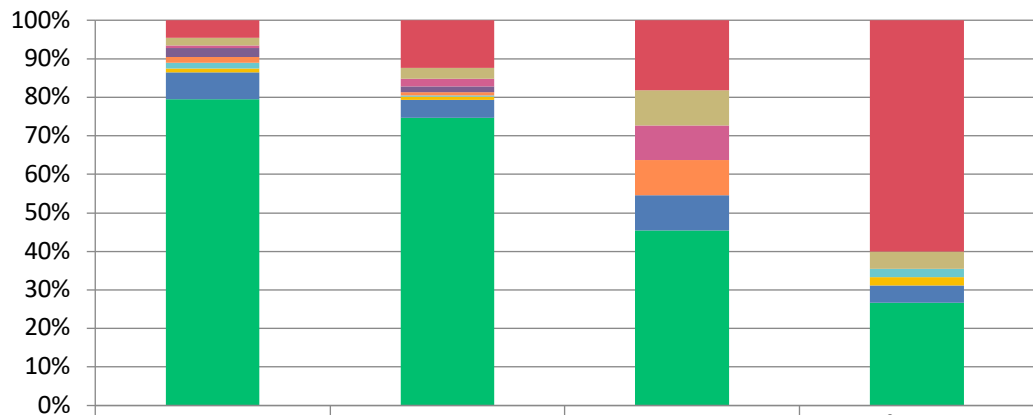
Trends in Binge Drinking Frequency Among Students

- Overall Abstention and Binge Drinking Frequency:** A significant of students (81.45%) reported not engaging in binge drinking in the past 30 days. Among those who did report binge drinking, the most common frequency was a single day (2.72%), followed by two days (2.23%) and three to five days (1.73%). There was minimal engagement beyond that.
- Gender Differences:** Binge drinking was slightly more prevalent among male students, with 11.25% opting not to disclose their frequency and 1.25% indicating they engaged in binge drinking on 20+ days. Female students reported higher rates of abstention (87.10%). In contrast, students identifying as “Other” showed more varied responses, with 9.09% binge drinking for 20 or more days and 18.18% binge drinking for one or two days.
- Grade Differences:** Younger students showed higher rates of abstention, with 90.43% of 9th graders reporting no binge drinking. This percentage gradually decreased with grade level, with 76.32% of 12th graders abstaining from binge drinking.

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?

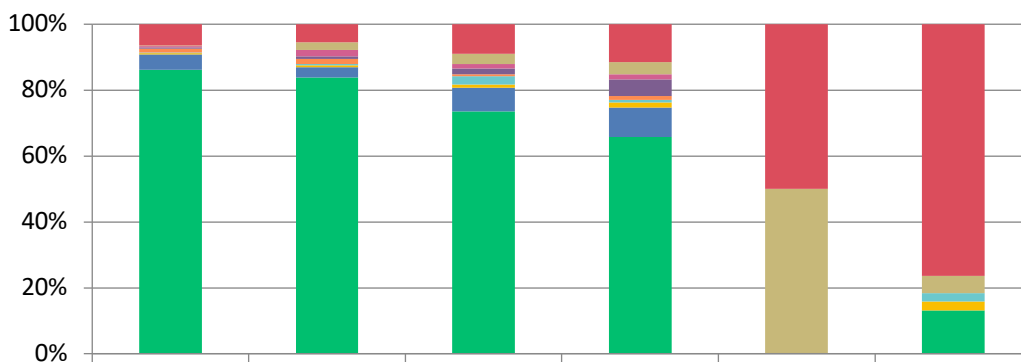


During the past 30 days, what is the largest number of alcoholic drinks you had in a row, that is, within a couple of hours?



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
■ Prefer not to answer	4.52%	12.32%	18.18%	60.00%
■ 10 or more drinks	2.01%	2.86%	9.09%	4.44%
■ 8 or 9 drinks	0.67%	1.96%	9.09%	0.00%
■ 6 or 7 drinks	2.35%	1.61%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 5 drinks	1.51%	0.71%	9.09%	0.00%
■ 4 drinks	1.51%	0.36%	0.00%	2.22%
■ 3 drinks	1.01%	0.89%	0.00%	2.22%
■ 1 or 2 drinks	6.87%	4.64%	9.09%	4.44%
■ Did not drink alcohol	79.56%	74.64%	45.45%	26.67%

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?



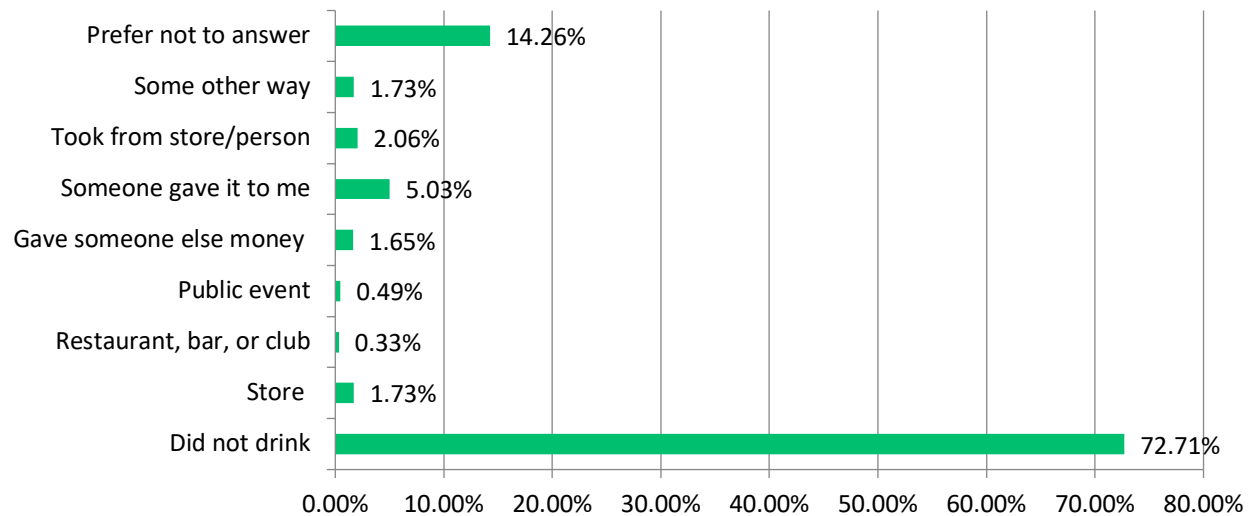
	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
■ Prefer not to answer	6.38%	5.39%	8.97%	11.51%	50.00%	76.32%
■ 10 or more drinks	0.35%	2.36%	3.10%	3.62%	50.00%	5.26%
■ 8 or 9 drinks	0.35%	2.02%	1.38%	1.64%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 6 or 7 drinks	0.35%	0.67%	1.72%	4.93%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 5 drinks	1.06%	1.68%	0.69%	1.32%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 4 drinks	0.35%	0.34%	2.41%	0.66%	0.00%	2.63%
■ 3 drinks	0.35%	0.67%	1.03%	1.64%	0.00%	2.63%
■ 1 or 2 drinks	4.61%	3.03%	7.24%	8.88%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Did not drink alcohol	86.17%	83.84%	73.45%	65.79%	0.00%	13.16%

Key Findings on Binge Drinking

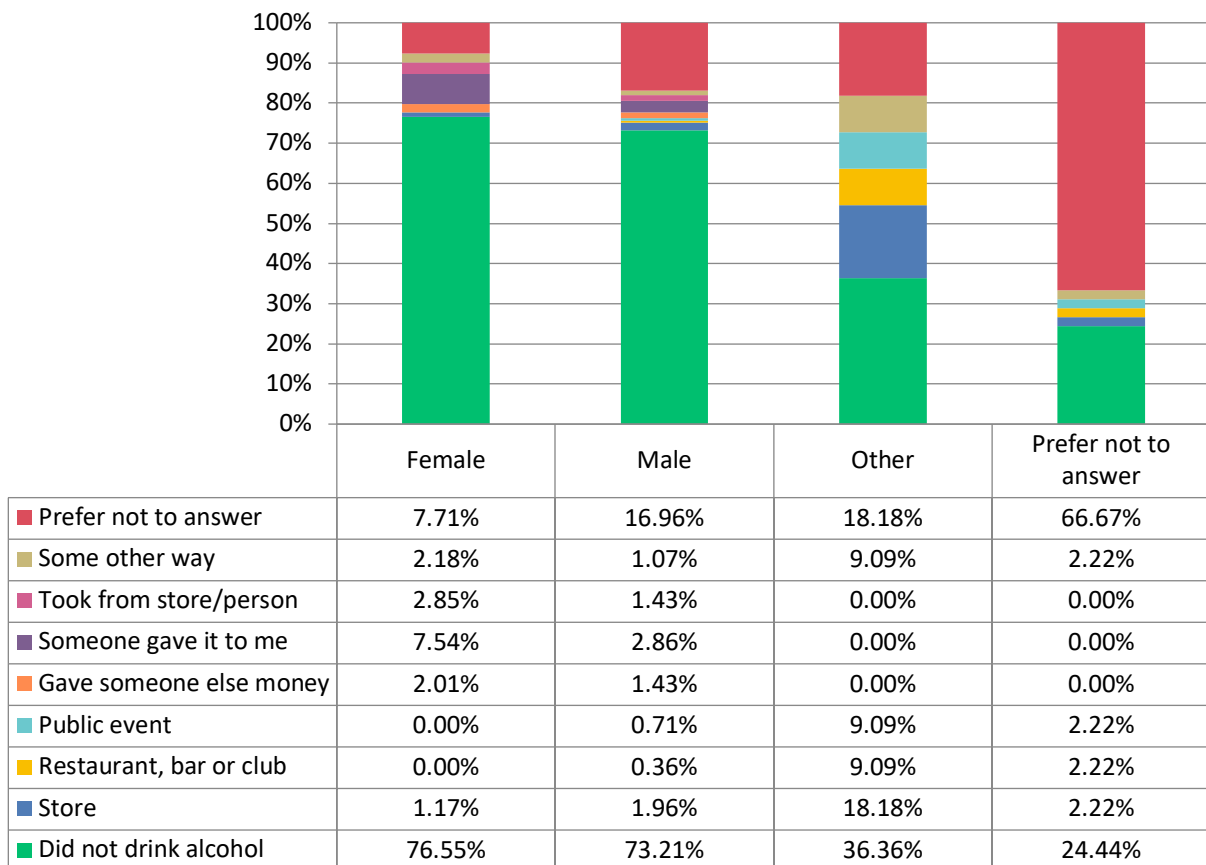
- **High Rate of Non-Consumption:** A majority of students, 75.02%, reported not consuming any alcohol in the past 30 days. Among those who did drink, the most common response was having 1-2 drinks in a row (5.77%). Smaller percentages reported drinking larger amounts, with 2.56% consuming 10 or more drinks on a single occasion.
- **Gender Differences:** Female students had the highest rate of non-drinking at 79.56%, compared to 74.64% of male students and 45.45% of students identifying as “Other.” In terms of heavier drinking, 2.86% of male students reported having 10 or more drinks, compared to 2.01% of females. Students identifying as “Other” reported a higher tendency to consume larger quantities, with 9.09% indicating 10 or more drinks in one sitting.
- **Grade Differences:** The data shows that non-drinking rates decrease with grade level, from 86.17% among 9th graders to 65.79% among 12th graders. The percentage of students consuming 10 or more drinks increases slightly with age, with 3.62% of 12th graders reporting this level of drinking compared to 0.35% in 9th grade. This suggests increased alcohol consumption as students progress through high school.
-

Access to Alcohol

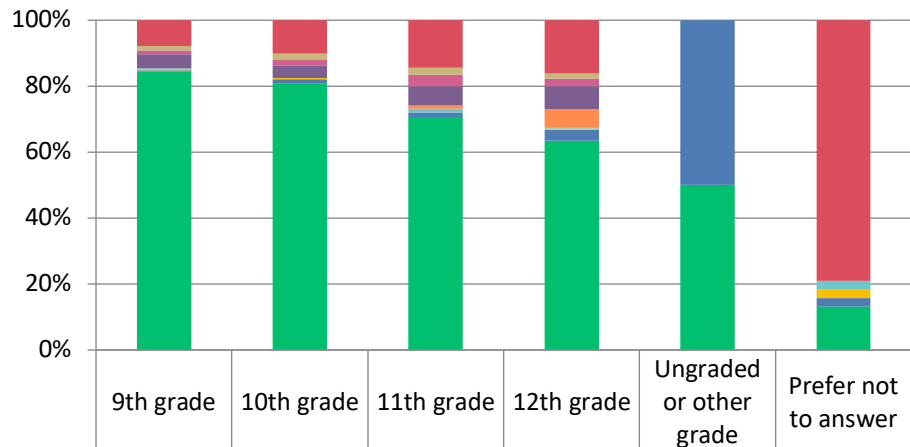
During the past 30 days, how did you usually get the alcohol you drank?



During the past 30 days, how did you usually get the alcohol you drank?



During the past 30 days, how did you usually get the alcohol you drank?



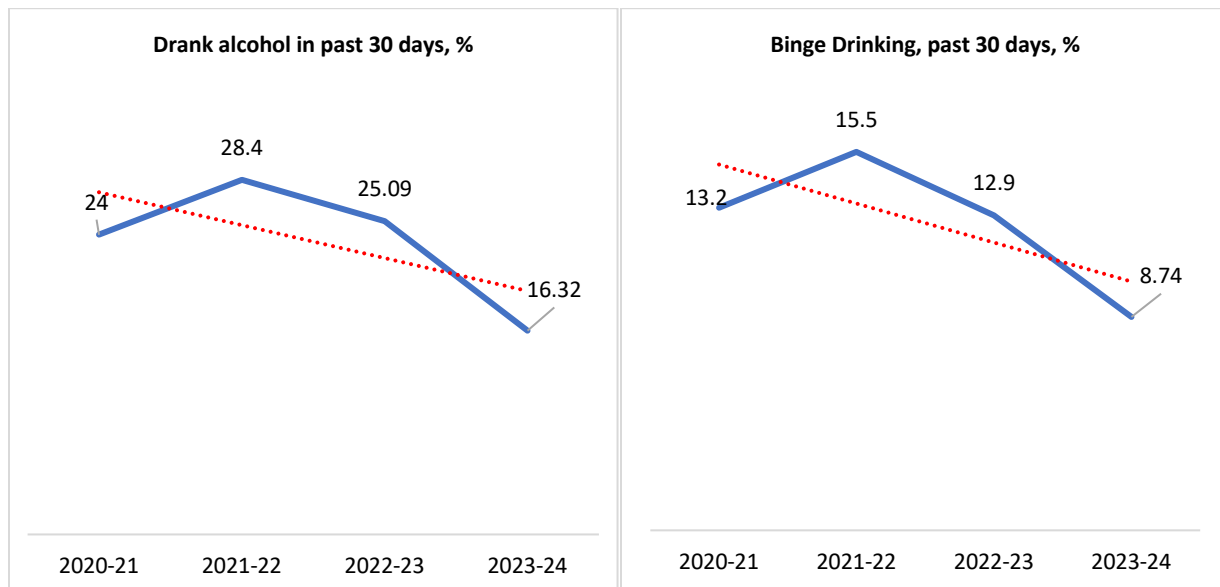
■ Prefer not to answer	7.80%	10.10%	14.48%	16.12%	0.00%	78.95%
■ Some other way	1.42%	2.02%	2.07%	1.64%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Took from store/family member	1.06%	1.68%	3.45%	2.30%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Gave it to me	4.26%	3.70%	5.86%	6.91%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Gave someone else money	0.00%	0.00%	1.03%	5.59%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Public event	0.35%	0.00%	1.03%	0.33%	0.00%	2.63%
■ Restaurant, bar, or club	0.35%	0.34%	0.00%	0.33%	0.00%	2.63%
■ Store (Liquor store, gas station, etc.)	0.35%	1.35%	1.38%	3.29%	50.00%	2.63%
■ Did not drink	84.40%	80.81%	70.69%	63.49%	50.00%	13.16%

Key Findings on Sources of Alcohol Acquisition Among Students

- Primary Sources of Alcohol:** The majority of students (72.71%) reported not drinking alcohol in the past 30 days. Among those who did drink, the most common ways of obtaining alcohol were receiving it from someone else (5.08%) or taking it from a store or person (2.06%). Other methods included purchasing alcohol directly from a store (1.73%) or giving someone money to buy it (1.65%).
- Gender Differences:** Female students reported higher rates of receiving alcohol from someone else (7.54%) compared to male students (2.86%). Males, on the other hand, had a slightly higher rate of purchasing alcohol directly from a store (1.96%) than females (1.17%).
- Grade Differences:** Alcohol consumption increases by grade level, with 84.40% of 9th graders reporting not drinking compared to 63.49% of 12th graders. Among those who drank, 12th graders were more likely to obtain alcohol from someone (6.91%) or purchase it from a store (3.29%) than younger students.

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

- **Decline in General Alcohol Use:** The percentage of students who reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days has decreased significantly, from 24% in 2020-2021 to 16.32% in 2023-2024. This downward trend suggests a reduction in alcohol use among students over the last few years.
- **Reduction in Binge Drinking:** Binge drinking also shows a downward trend, with the percentage of students engaging in this behavior decreasing from 13.7% in 2020-2021 to 8.74% in 2023-2024. This reflects a 5 percentage point decrease in students participating in binge drinking episodes over this period, indicating a positive shift toward lower rates of excessive alcohol consumption among students.

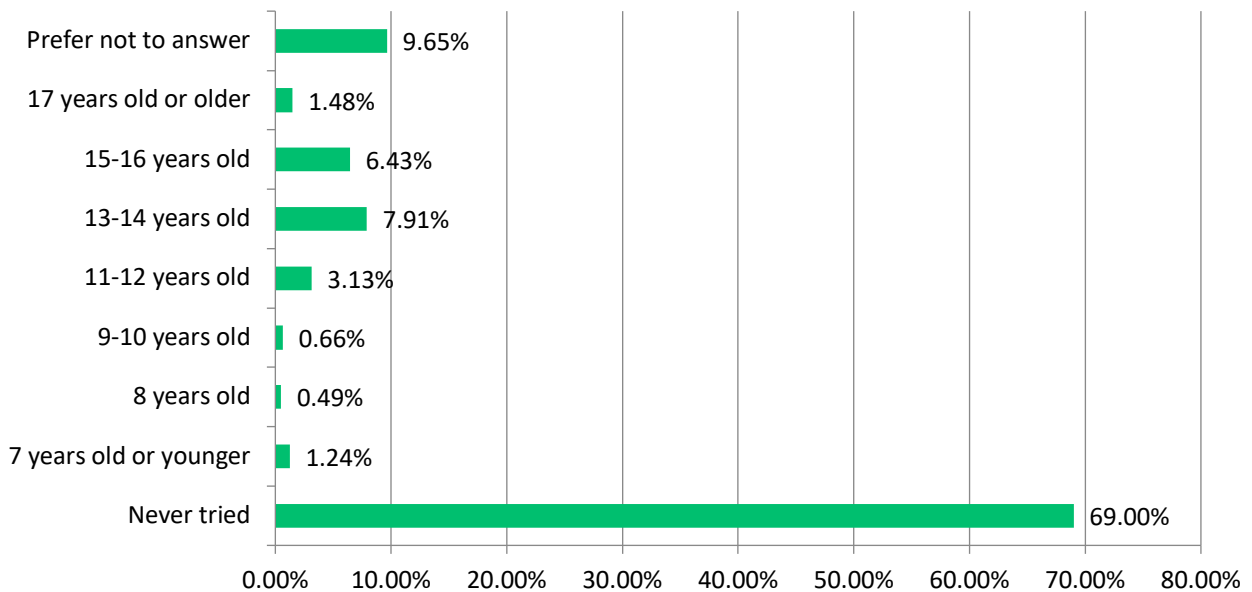
Marijuana

Marijuana use among teens is a significant concern due to its potential effects on physical, mental, and emotional health during formative years. The survey explores various dimensions of marijuana use, including the age of first use, frequency of use, and preferred methods of consumption, providing a comprehensive picture of its prevalence among students.

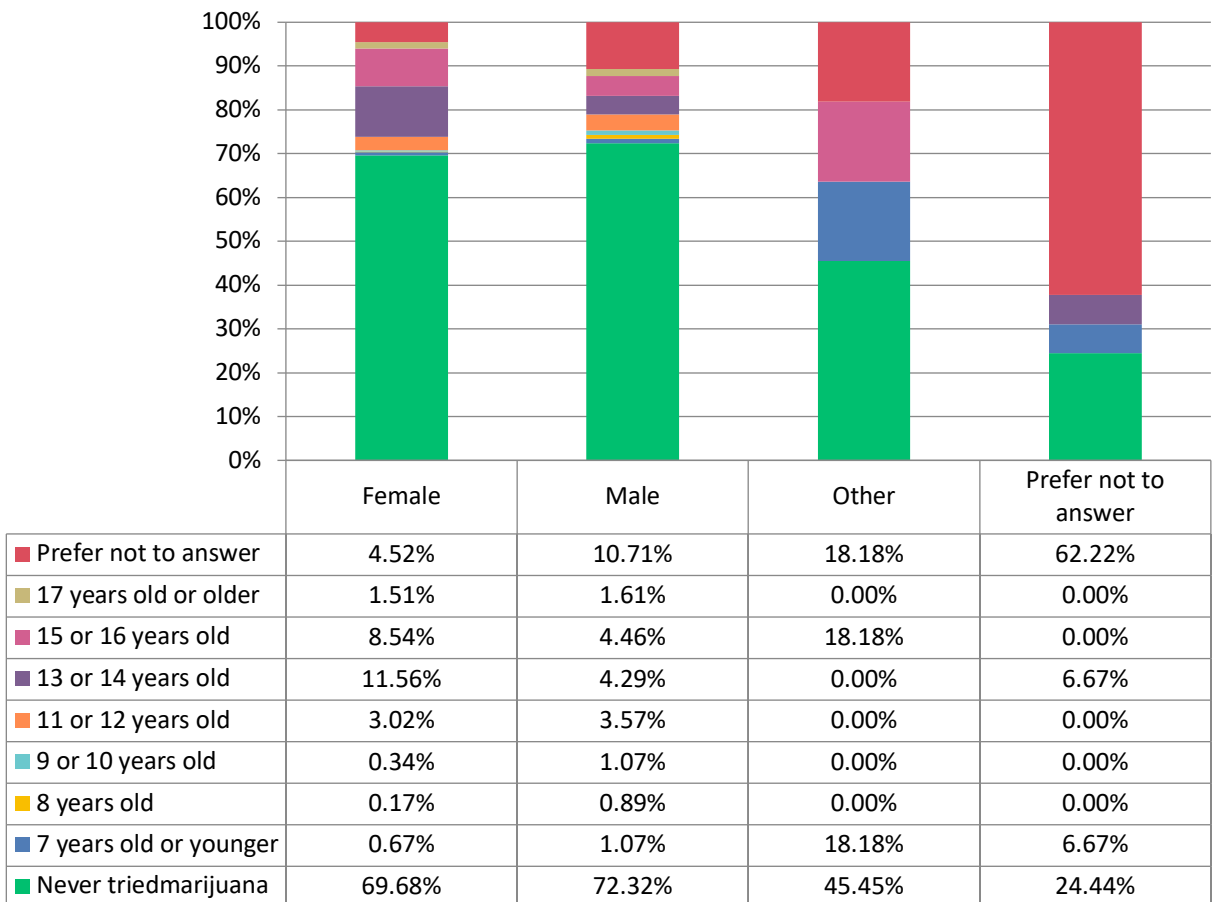
Key findings reveal that while most students have not tried marijuana, those who do tend to initiate use around early high school years, with 13 to 16 years being a common starting age. Additionally, a majority of students reported no marijuana use in the past 30 days, with usage decreasing over the last four years from 13.4% in 2020-2021 to 10.88% in 2023-2024. However, among those who do use, there is a small segment engaging in frequent or intensive use.

In terms of consumption methods, smoking remains the most common, although students are also experimenting with newer forms like dabbing concentrates and edible products. These insights provide valuable guidance for developing targeted education and intervention programs, equipping schools and communities to address marijuana use trends and encourage healthier lifestyle choices among young people.

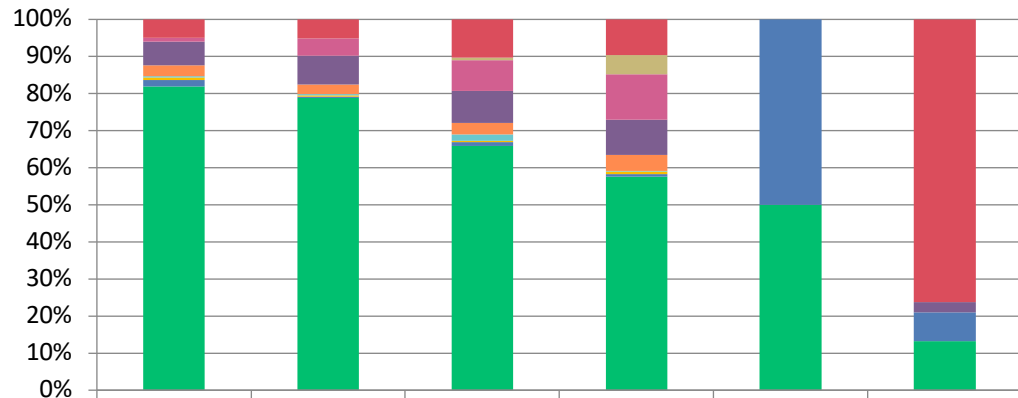
How old were you when you tried marijuana for the first time?



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



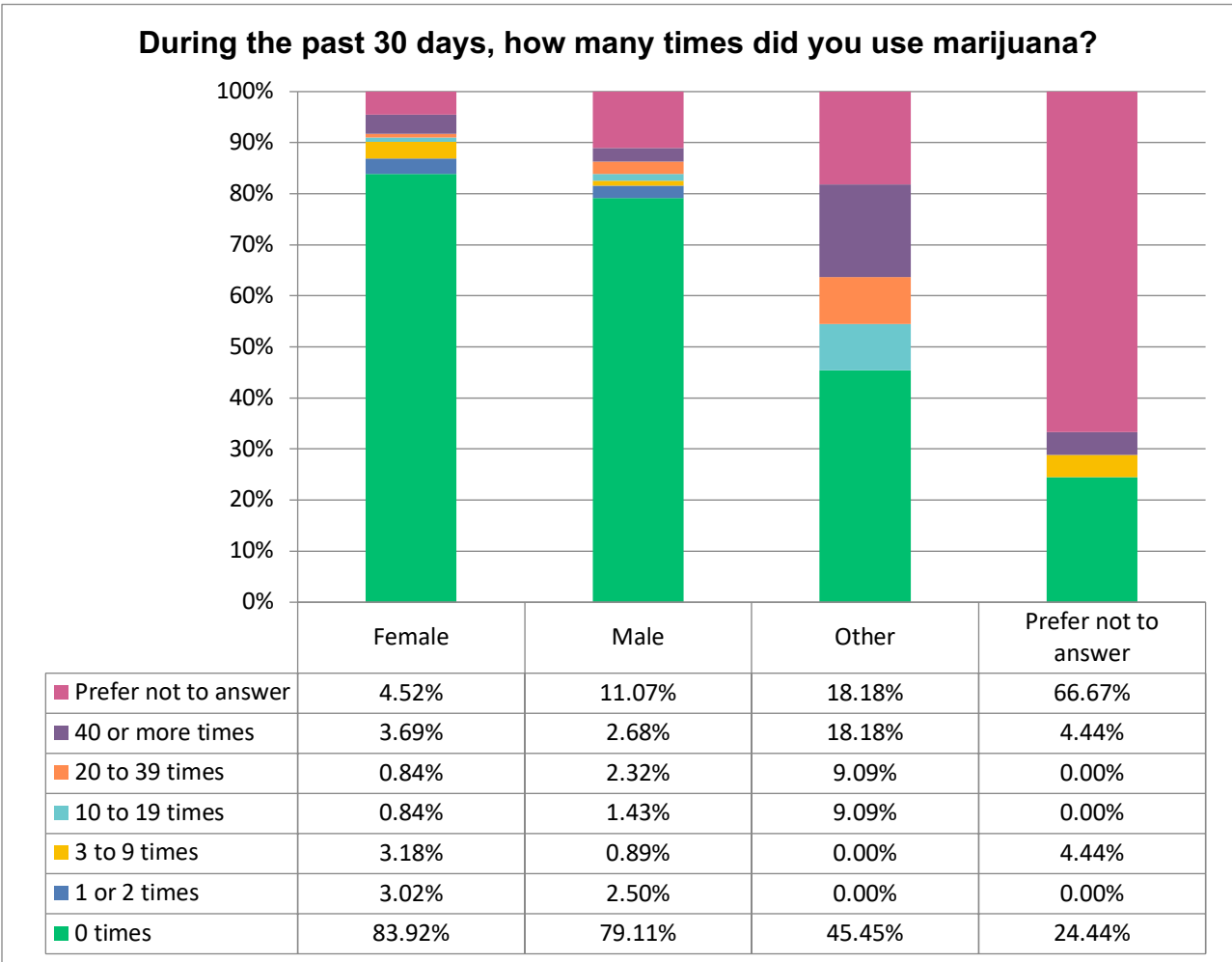
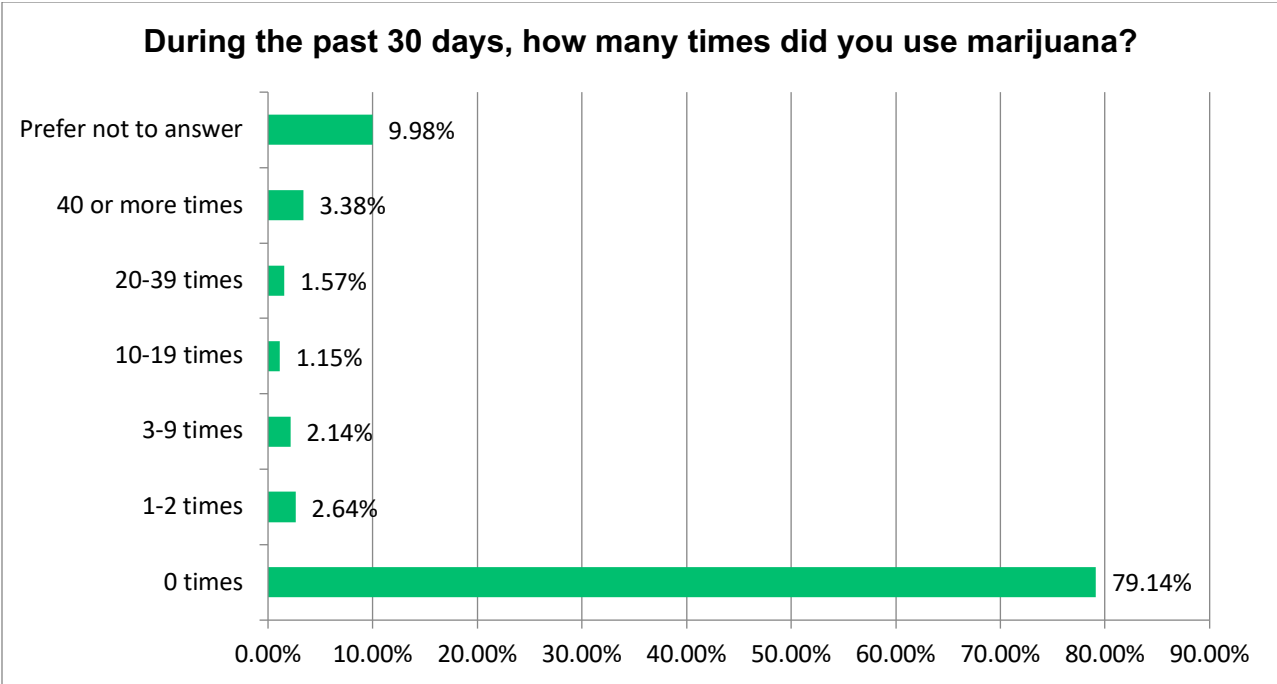
How old were you when you tried marijuana for the first time?

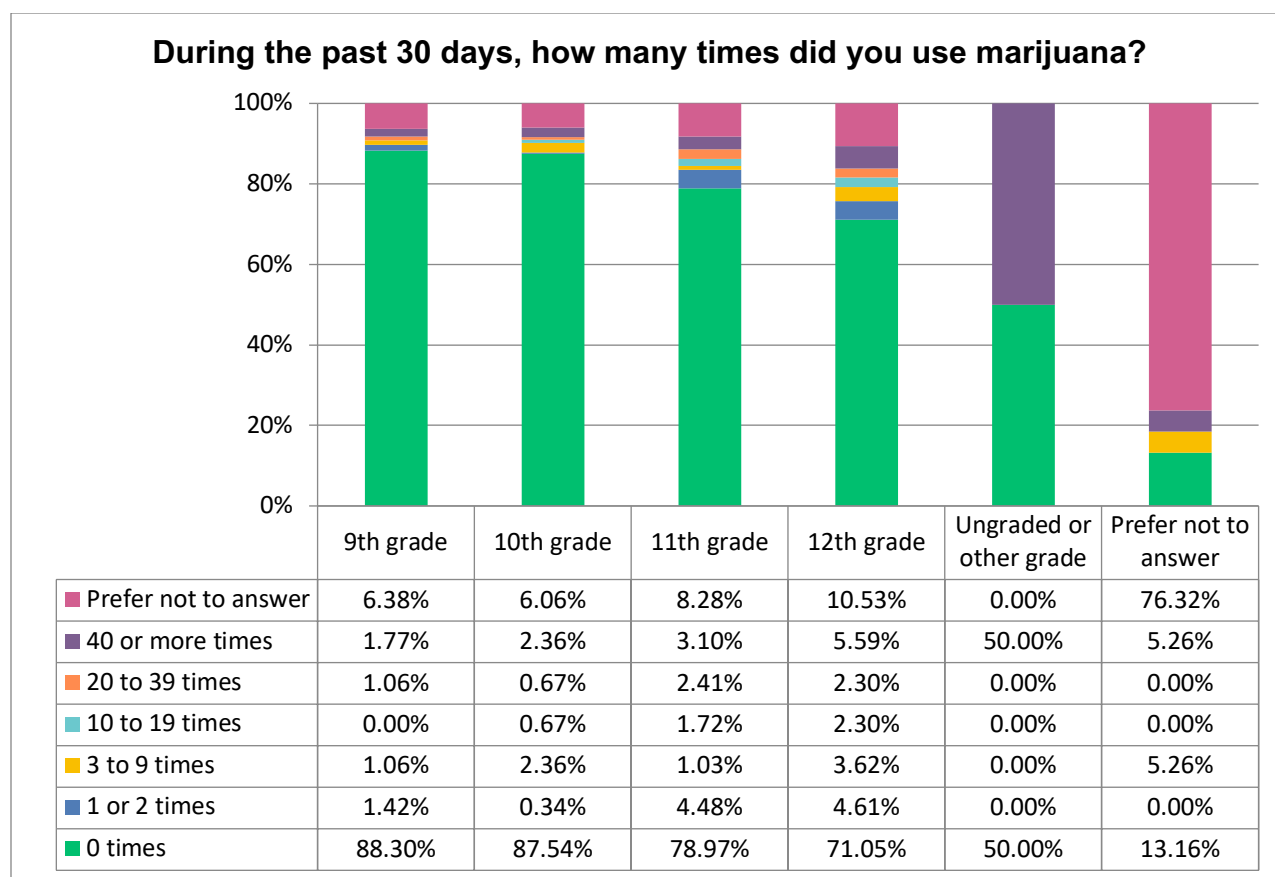


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	4.96%	5.05%	10.34%	9.54%	0.00%	76.32%
17 years old or older	0.00%	0.00%	0.69%	5.26%	0.00%	0.00%
15 or 16 years old	1.06%	4.71%	8.28%	12.17%	0.00%	0.00%
13 or 14 years old	6.38%	7.74%	8.62%	9.54%	0.00%	2.63%
11 or 12 years old	2.84%	2.69%	3.10%	4.28%	0.00%	0.00%
9 or 10 years old	0.35%	0.34%	1.72%	0.33%	0.00%	0.00%
8 years old	0.71%	0.34%	0.34%	0.66%	0.00%	0.00%
7 years old or younger	1.77%	0.34%	1.03%	0.66%	50.00%	7.89%
Never tried marijuana	81.91%	78.79%	65.86%	57.57%	50.00%	13.16%

Key Findings on Age at First Marijuana Use

- General Findings:** Among students surveyed, 69% reported never trying marijuana. For those who had tried, the most common ages for first use were 13-14 years (7.91%) and 15-16 years (6.43%). Smaller percentages of students initiated use as young as 7 years old (1.24%) or at age 17 or older (1.48%).
- Gender Differences:** A slightly higher percentage of males (72.32%) reported never using marijuana compared to females (69.68%). Among those who had tried marijuana, females were more likely to initiate at ages 13-14 (11.56%) and 15-16 (8.54%). Similarly, most males started at ages 13-14 (4.29%) and 15-16 (4.46%). Students who identified as “Other” were more likely to initiate at ages 15-16 (18.18%) and 7 (18.18%).
- Grade Differences:** The proportion of students who have never tried marijuana decreases with advancing grade levels. For instance, 81.91% of 9th graders reported no use, compared to 57.57% of 12th graders. Initiation primarily occurs between ages 15-16 among older students, with 12.17% of 12th graders reporting first use within this age range.

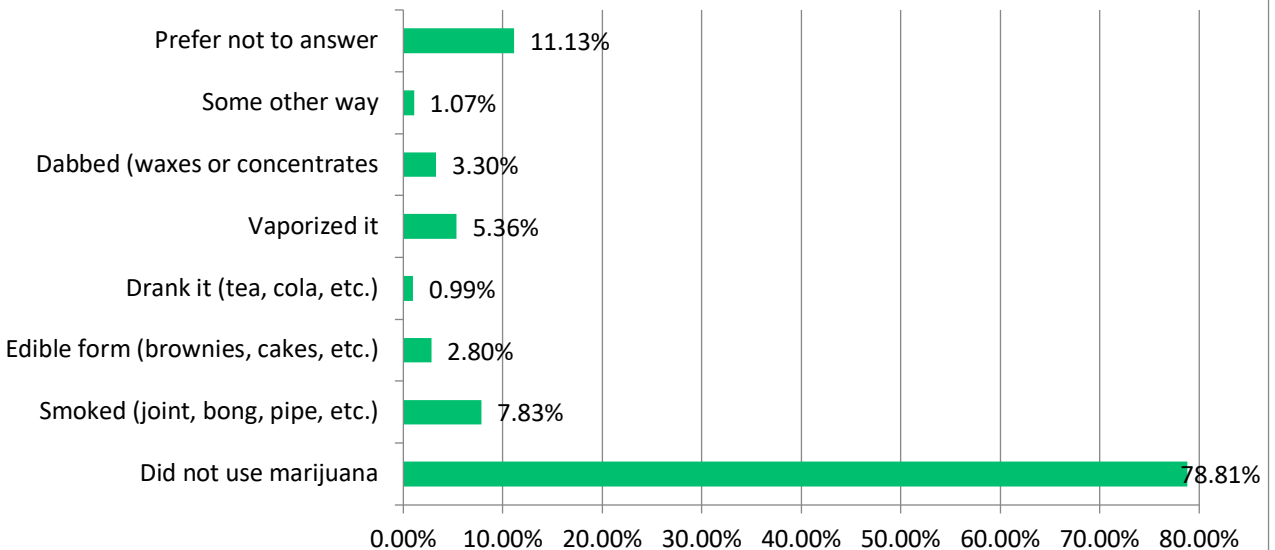




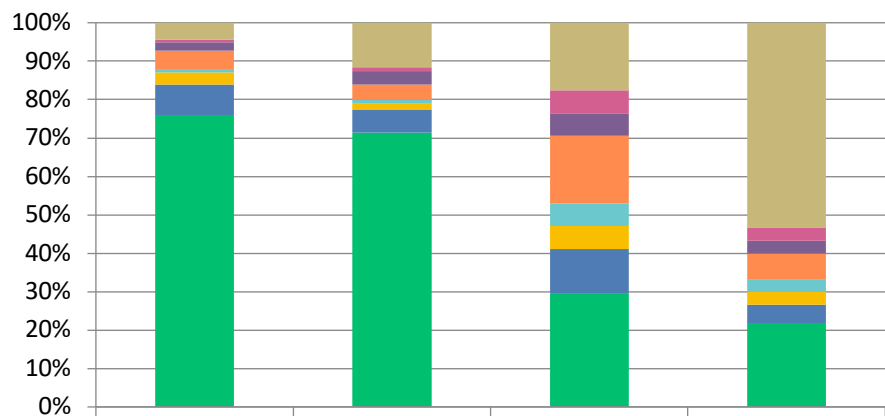
Key Findings on Recent Marijuana Use Among Students

- Overall Usage and Frequency:** A majority, 79.14%, reported not using marijuana at all in the past 30 days. This indicates low recent usage rates among the survey participants. Among those who did report usage, 2.64% used it 1-2 times, 2.14% used it 3-9 times, and 3.38% reported high-frequency use of 40 or more times within this period.
- Gender Differences:** Females reported slightly higher usage rates than males. Specifically, 3.69% of females reported using 40 or more times, while 2.68% of males reported 40 or more uses. This slight variation can be seen in lower usage categories as well. Other genders represented the highest reported usage, with 18.18% each for 20-39 times and 40 or more times. This suggests higher marijuana engagement among this group.
- Grade Differences:** The majority of 9th and 10th graders reported no usage (88.3% and 87.54%, respectively), showing relatively low marijuana engagement in these younger grades. Usage increased with grade level, with 11th graders showing 4.48% who used it 1-2 times and 12th graders having 5.59% who used it 40 or more times.

**During the past 30 days, how did you usually use marijuana?
(Check all that apply.)**

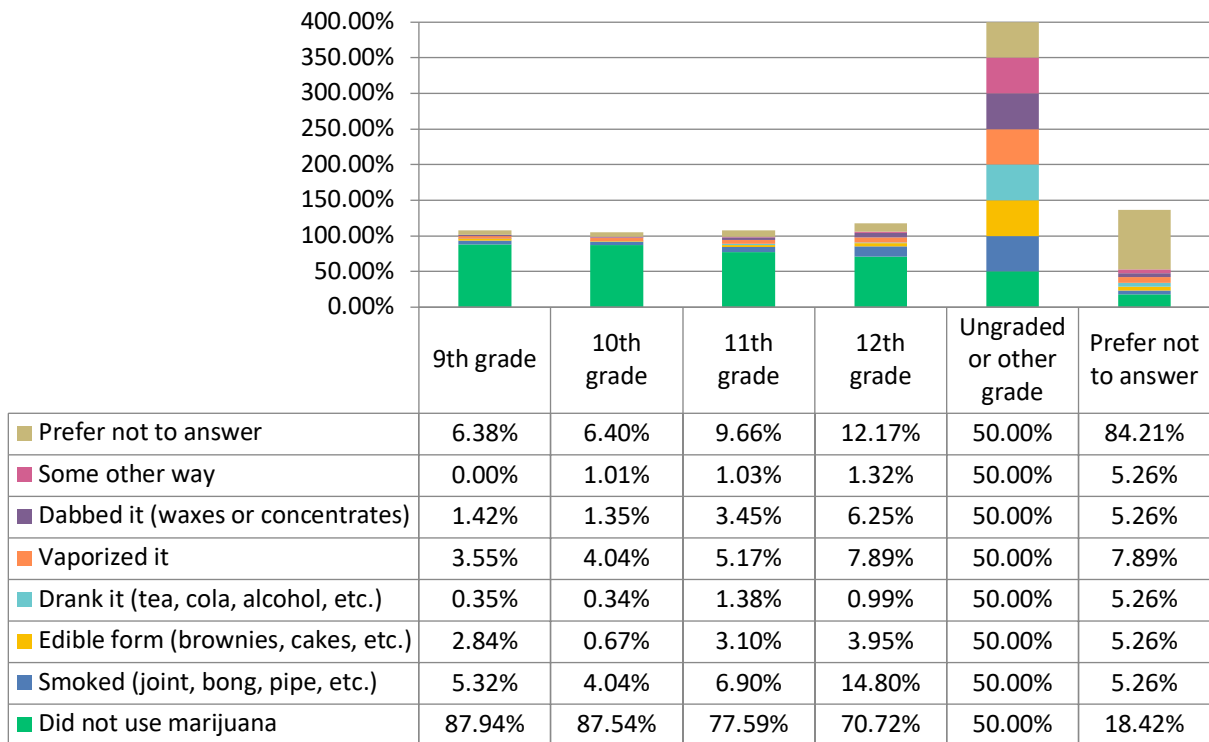


**During the past 30 days, how did you usually use marijuana?
(Check all that apply.)**



	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	4.86%	12.68%	27.27%	71.11%
Some other way	0.67%	1.07%	9.09%	4.44%
Dabbed (waxes or concentrates)	2.51%	3.93%	9.09%	4.44%
Vaporized it	5.53%	4.46%	27.27%	8.89%
Drank it (tea, cola, alcohol, etc.)	0.67%	0.89%	9.09%	4.44%
Edible form (brownies, cakes, etc.)	3.52%	1.79%	9.09%	4.44%
Smoked (joint, bong, pipe, etc.)	8.88%	6.61%	18.18%	6.67%
Did not use marijuana	83.58%	78.39%	45.45%	28.89%

**During the past 30 days, how did you usually use marijuana?
(Check all that apply.)**

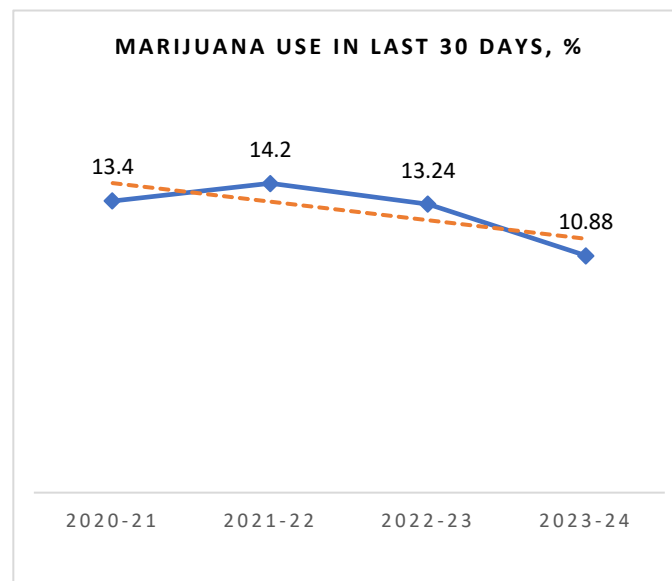


Key Findings on Marijuana Use Methods Among Students

- Method of Use:** The majority of students, 78.81%, reported not using marijuana over the past 30 days. Among those who did use, smoking (through joints, bongs, or pipes) was the most common method at 7.83%, followed by vaporizing at 5.36%, dabbing (waxes or concentrates) at 3.30%. Smaller percentages reported drinking marijuana (0.99%) or using it in other unspecified ways (1.07%).
- Gender Differences:** Female students reported slightly higher rates of smoking (8.88%), vaporizing (5.53%), and edible usage (3.52%) compared to males. Respondents identifying as "Other" showed varied usage methods, with notable rates for vaporizing (27.27%) and smoking (18.18%).
- Grade Differences:** Marijuana use increased with grade level, with 12th graders showing the highest rates of smoking at 14.80%, compared to 5.32% in 9th grade. Vaporizing and dabbing also saw higher rates in older students, indicating a trend toward increasing marijuana use and method variety as students progress through school.

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 has decreased over the past four years. Beginning at 13.4% in 2020-2021, it increased slightly to 14.2% in 2021-2022 before gradually declining to 13.24% in 2022-2023 and further to 10.88% in 2023-2024. This reflects an overall decline of approximately 2.5 percentage points.

Substance Use and Abuse

Substance use among students poses critical risks to health and well-being, making it essential to understand both the prevalence and patterns of misuse. The YRBS includes questions on a range of substances—such as prescription medications, illicit drugs, and alcohol—providing schools with valuable insights into students' substance use behaviors. This data helps identify trends, monitor progress, and guide interventions to reduce substance misuse and its associated harms.

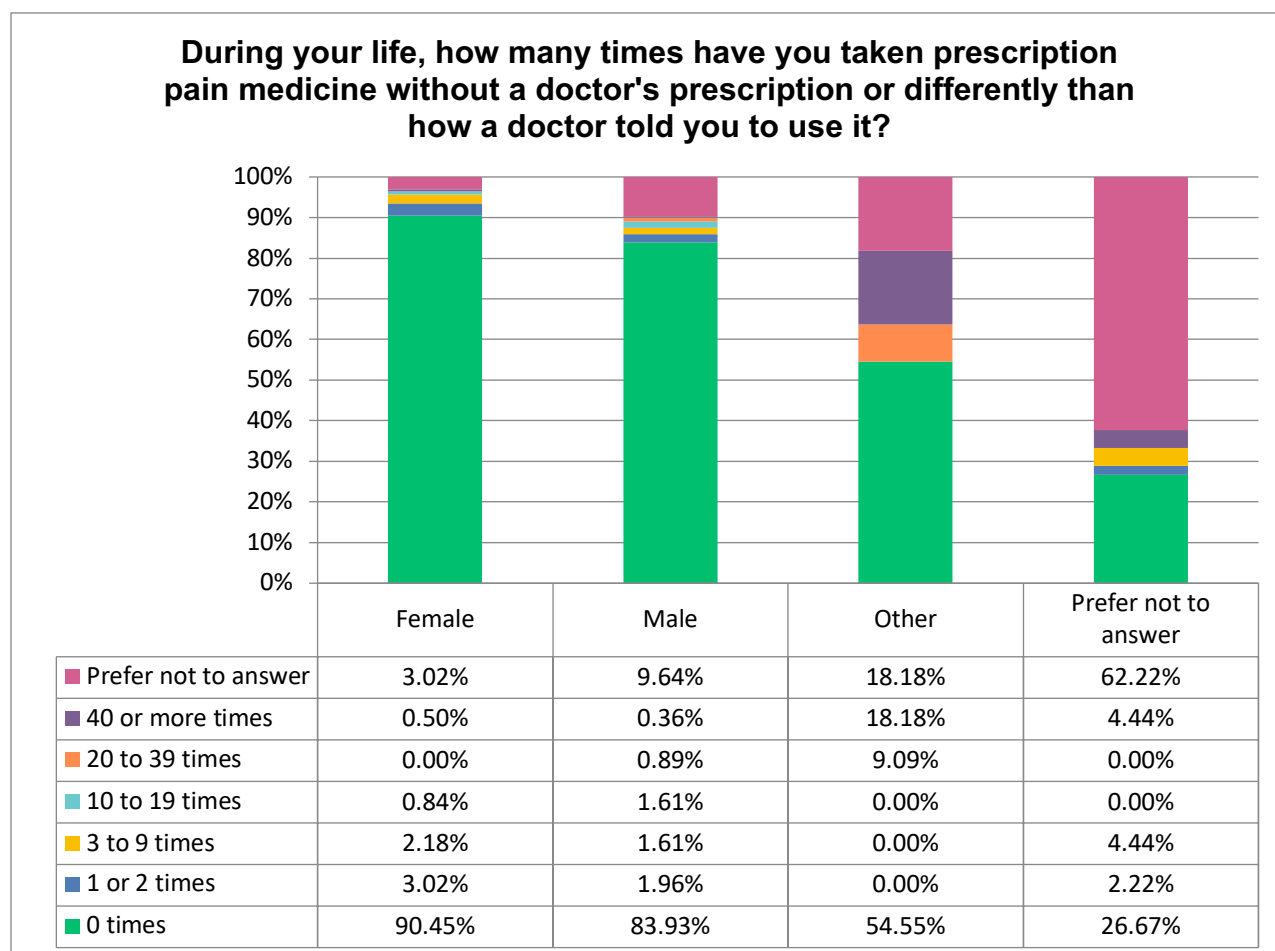
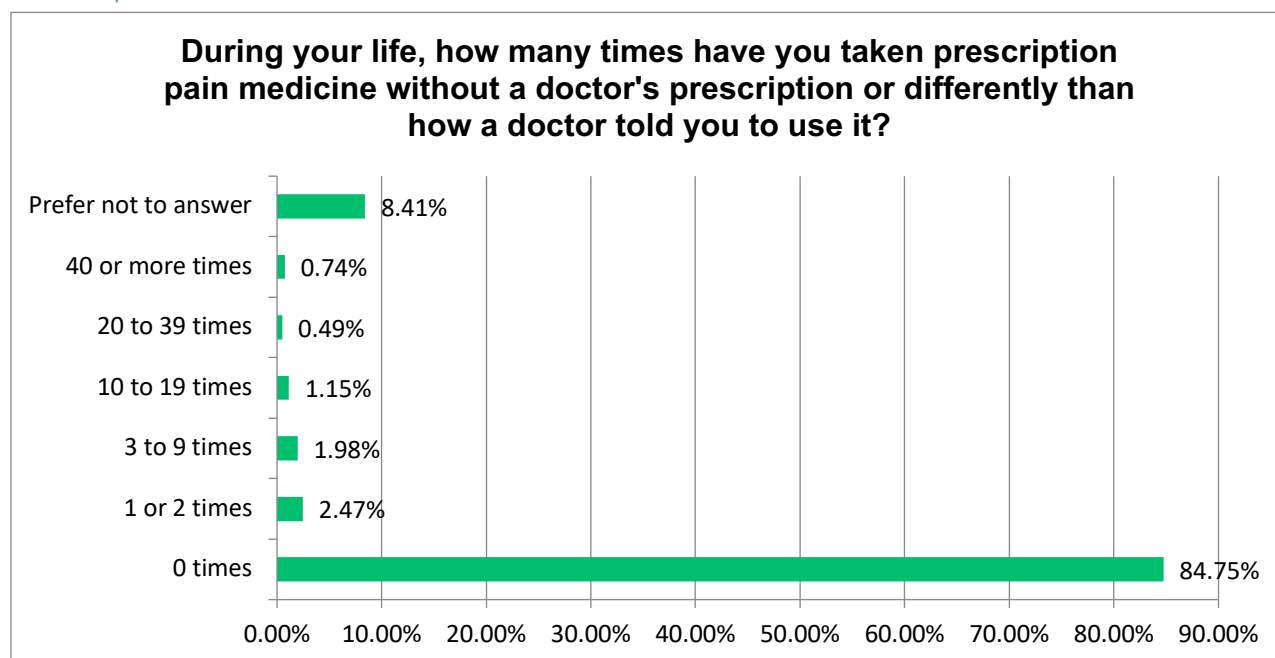
Overall, YRBS data shows that most students avoid substance misuse. Non-use rates remain high across various substances like cocaine, inhalants, and heroin. However, the data also reveals areas of concern, with small percentages of students engaging in substance misuse.

Gender differences are also notable, with female students generally reporting higher rates of non-use compared to males. However, students identifying as "Other" show elevated levels of misuse across multiple substances, including prescription medications and illicit drugs like methamphetamines, ecstasy, and heroin. This suggests that gender identity plays a role in substance use patterns and highlights the importance of addressing diverse student experiences.

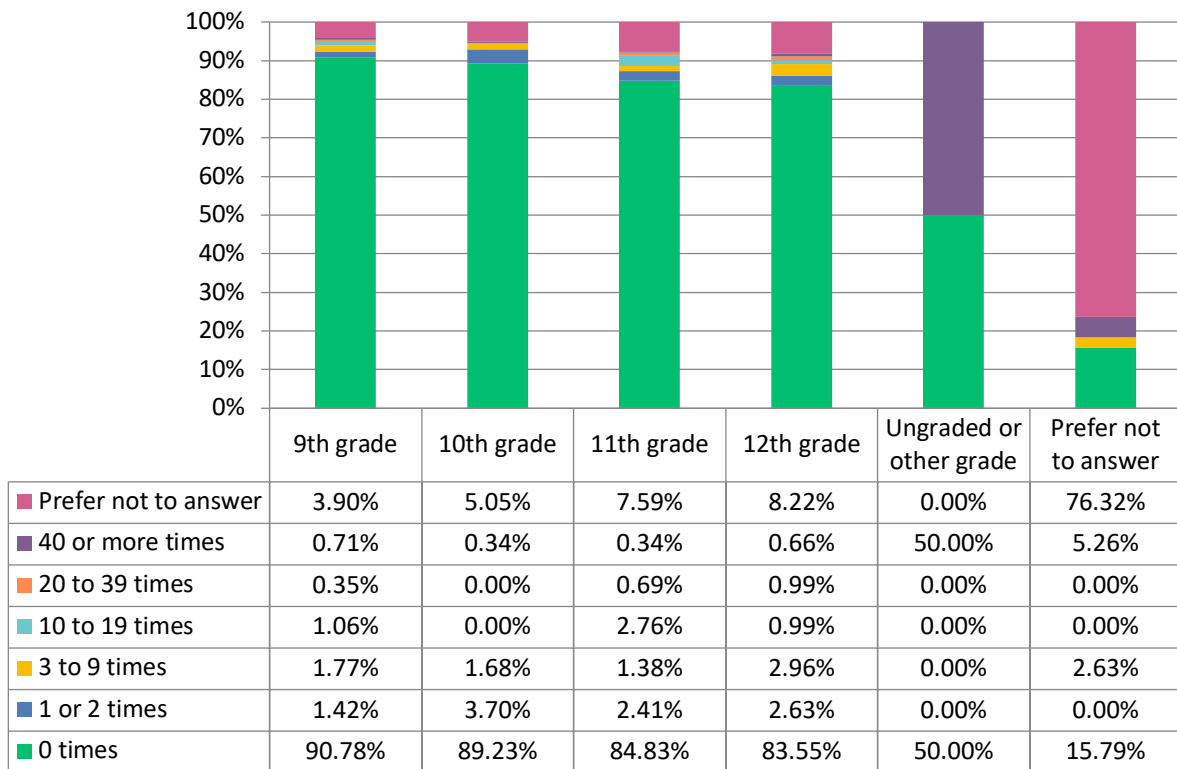
The YRBS also tracks behaviors related to attending school under the influence of drugs or alcohol and being offered drugs on school property. While most students reported abstaining from attending school under the influence, the percentage fluctuated over recent years. Similarly, the percentage of students reporting drug offers on school property rose to 8.24% in 2023-2024, reflecting the need for ongoing vigilance in school settings.

Overall, the YRBS data on substance use helps schools and communities monitor trends, identify at-risk groups, and implement effective prevention strategies. By examining how and why students engage with substances, schools can better support their efforts to create safe and healthy environments for all students.

Prescription Pain Medicine Misuse



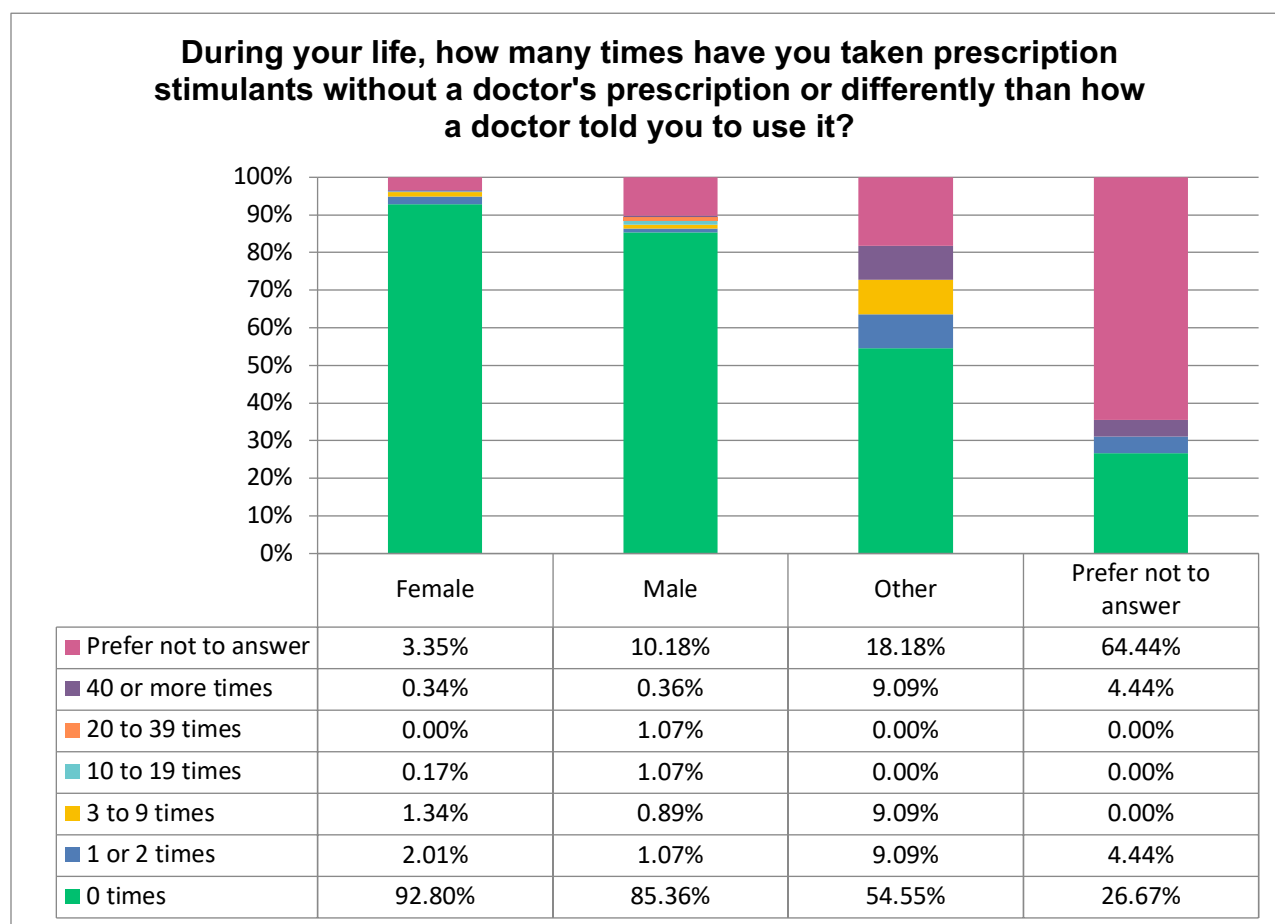
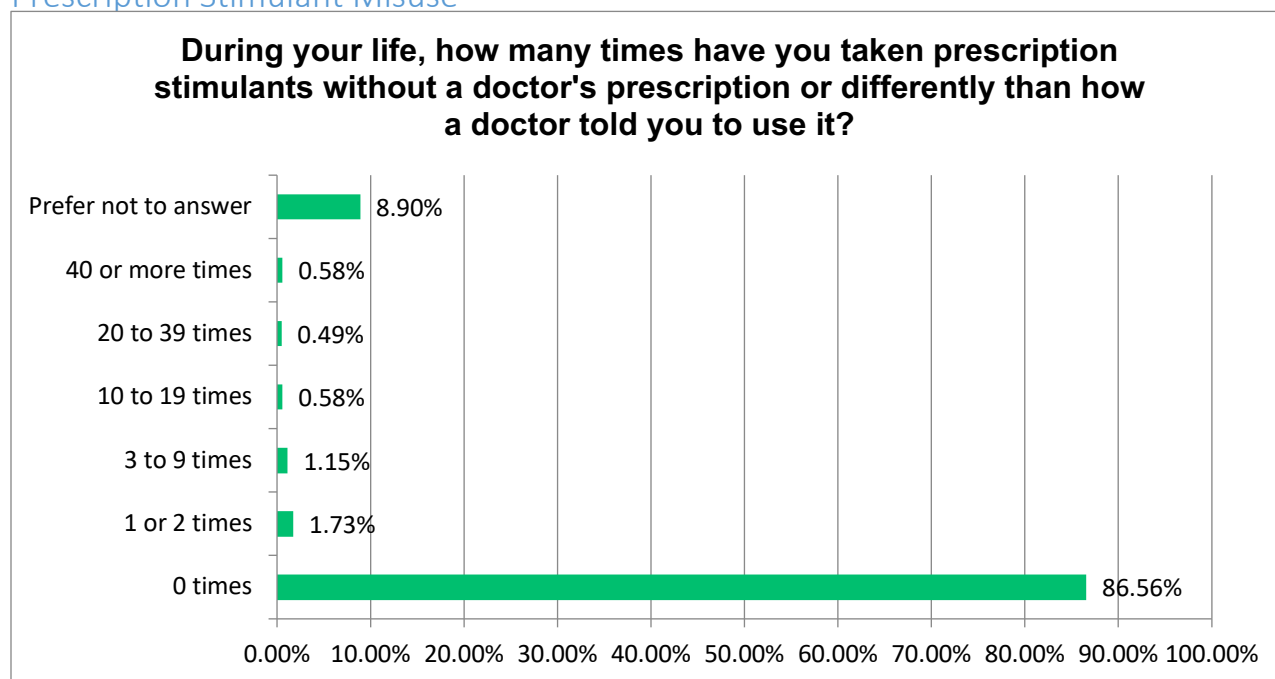
During your life, how many times have you taken prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told you to use it?

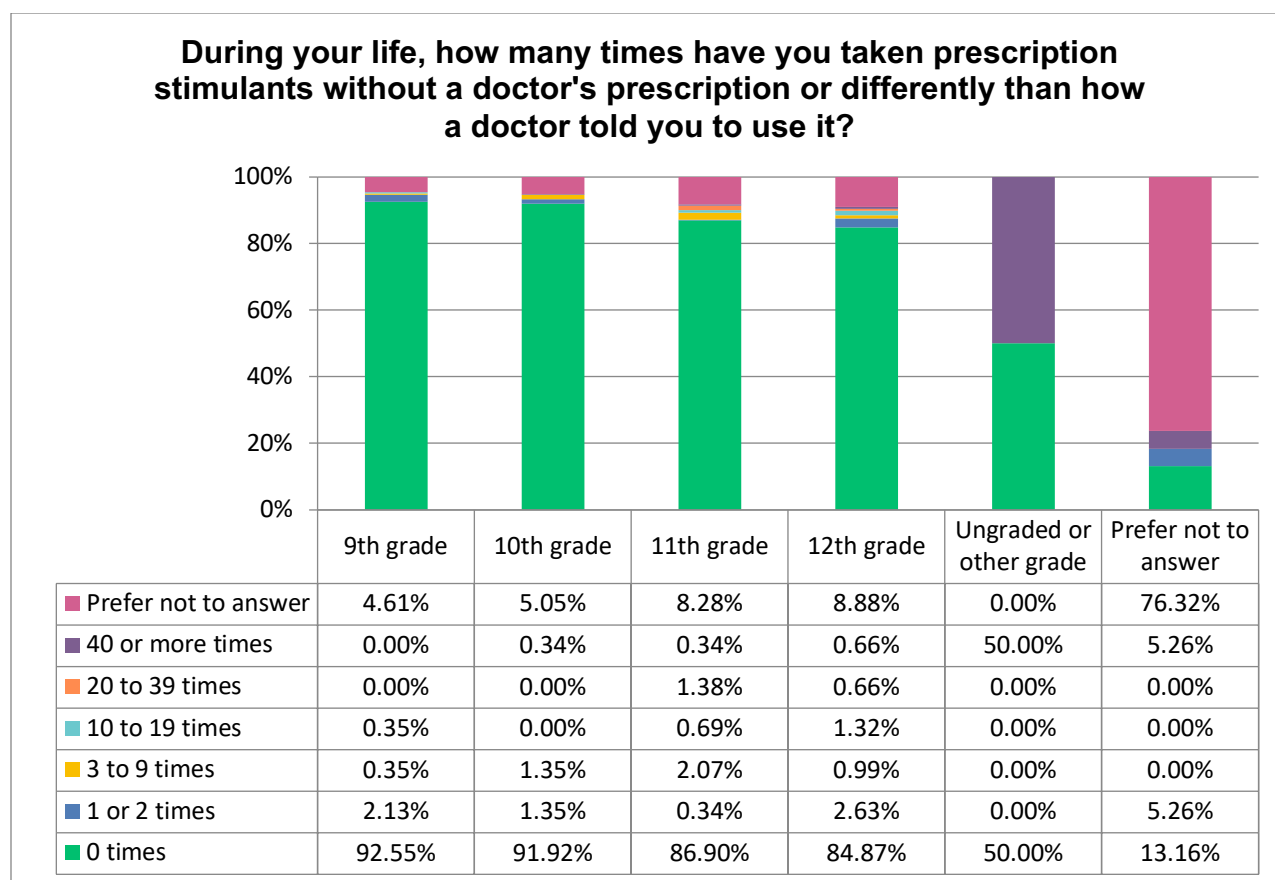


Key Findings on Prescription Pain Medicine Misuse

- **Low Overall Misuse:** The majority of students, 84.75%, reported never misusing prescription pain medication. Among those who did report misuse, the most common frequency was one or two times (2.47%), followed by 3-9 times (1.98%). This suggests that while misuse does exist, it remains relatively uncommon.
- **Gender Differences:** Female students reported a high rate of non-misuse at 90.45%, slightly higher than the 83.93% for male students. Among females, 3.02% reported misusing prescription pain medication one or two times, which is marginally greater than the 1.96% reported by males for the same frequency. Students identifying as "Other" reported the highest frequency of misuse, with 18.18% indicating 40 or more times.
- **Grade Differences:** Misuse rates were lowest in 9th grade, with 90.78% reporting no misuse, and gradually decreased with grade level, showing 83.55% of 12th graders reporting no misuse.

Prescription Stimulant Misuse



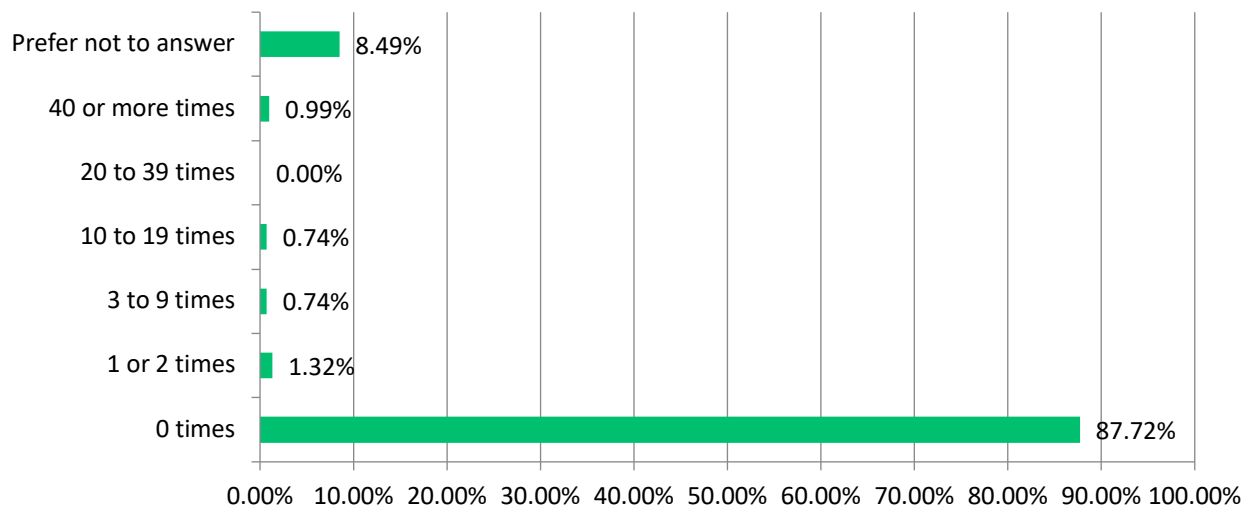


Key Findings on Prescription Stimulant Misuse

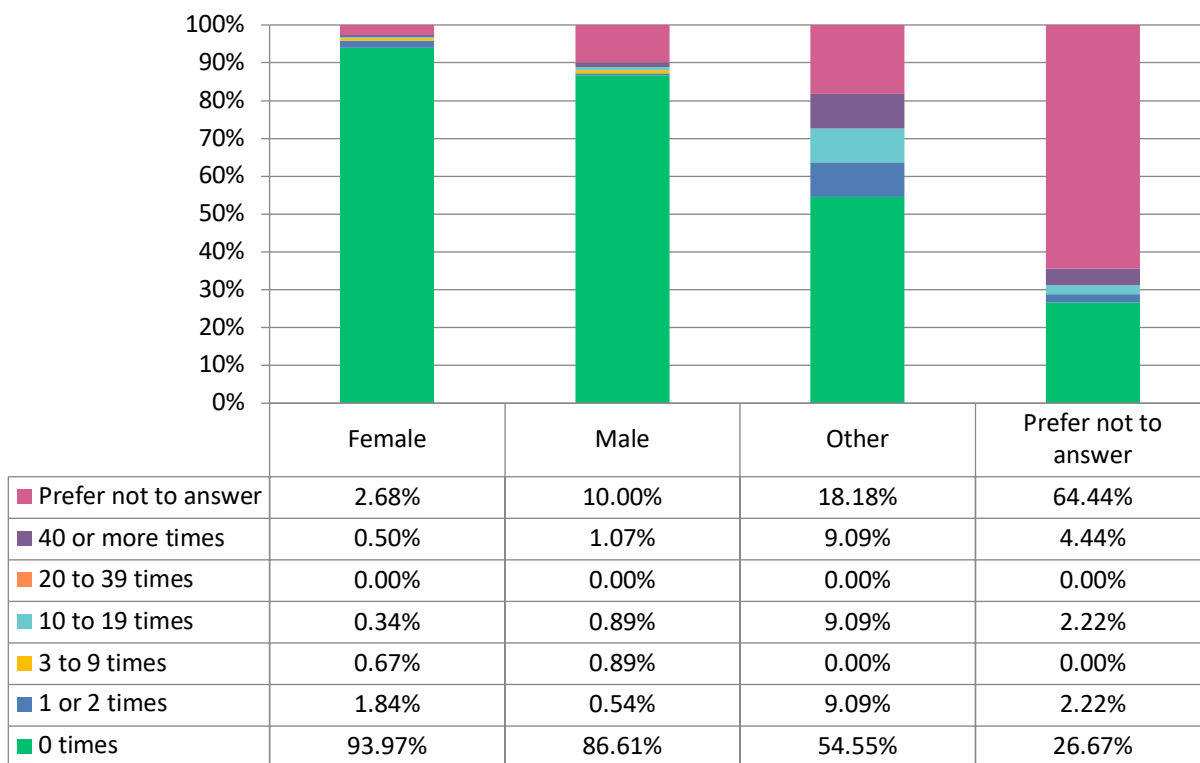
- Prevalence of Misuse:** A majority of students (86.56%) reported never misusing prescription stimulants. Among those who did report misuse, 1.73% misused stimulants 1 or 2 times and 1.15% did so 3 to 9 times. Smaller percentages engaged in more frequent misuse (0.58% for both 10–19 times and 40 or more times).
- Gender Differences:** Female students had the lowest misuse rate, with 92.8% reporting no misuse, followed by a small proportion who misused stimulants 1 or 2 times (2.01%). Male students showed 10.18% preferring not to answer and 85.36% reporting no misuse. Students identifying as “Other” had the highest rates of frequent misuse, with 9.09% reporting misuse across various categories, including 40 or more times.
- Grade Differences:** Non-use rates were relatively consistent across grade levels, with 9th-grade students at 92.55% and 12th-grade students at 84.87%. Older students, especially in 12th grade, had slightly higher rates of reported misuse, with 2.63% reporting 1 or 2 instances of misuse and 0.66% reporting 40 or more times.

General Prescription Misuse

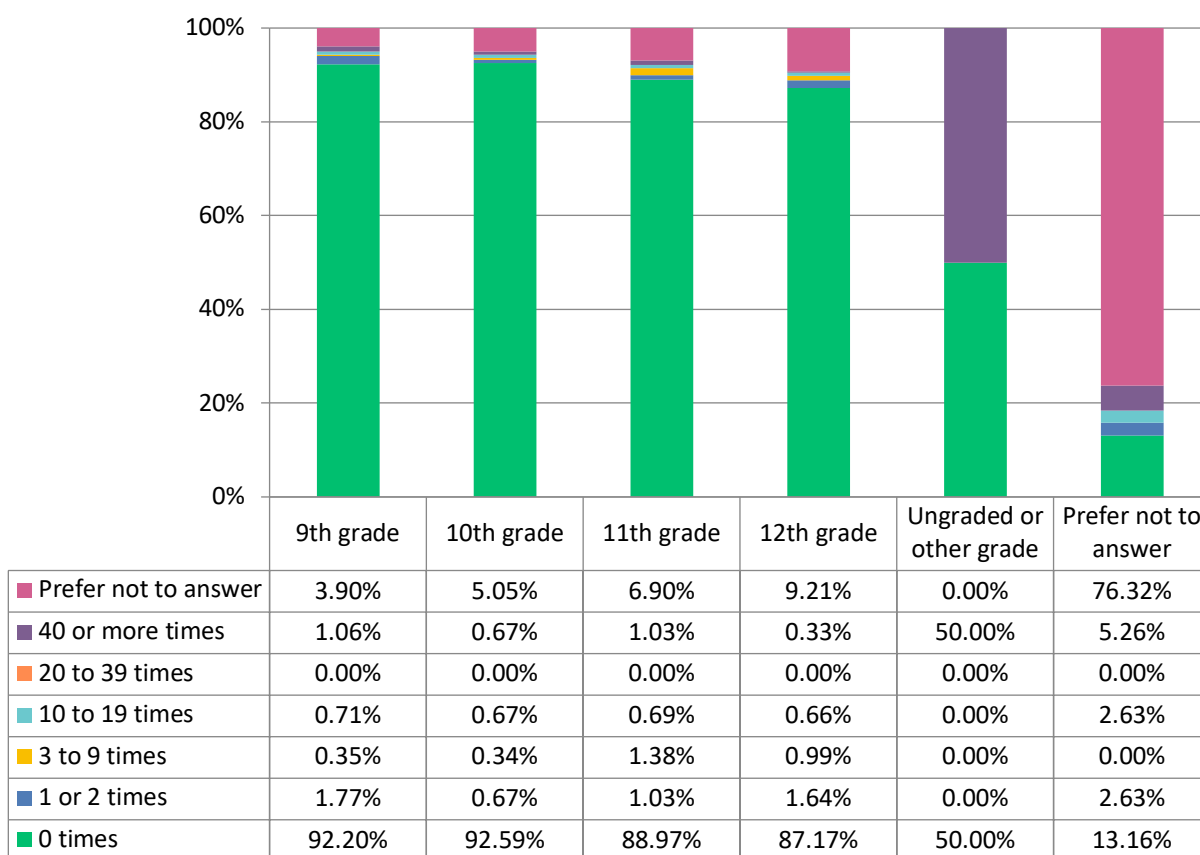
During the past 30 days, how many times have you taken any prescription medication without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told you to use it?



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?



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?

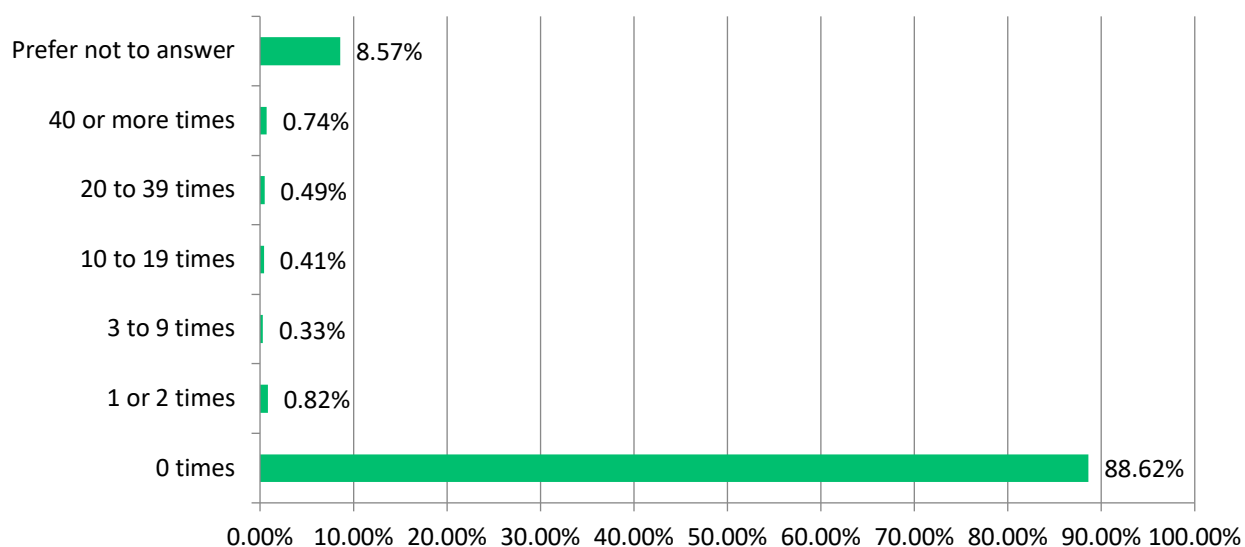


Key Findings on Prescription Medication Misuse (Past 30 Days)

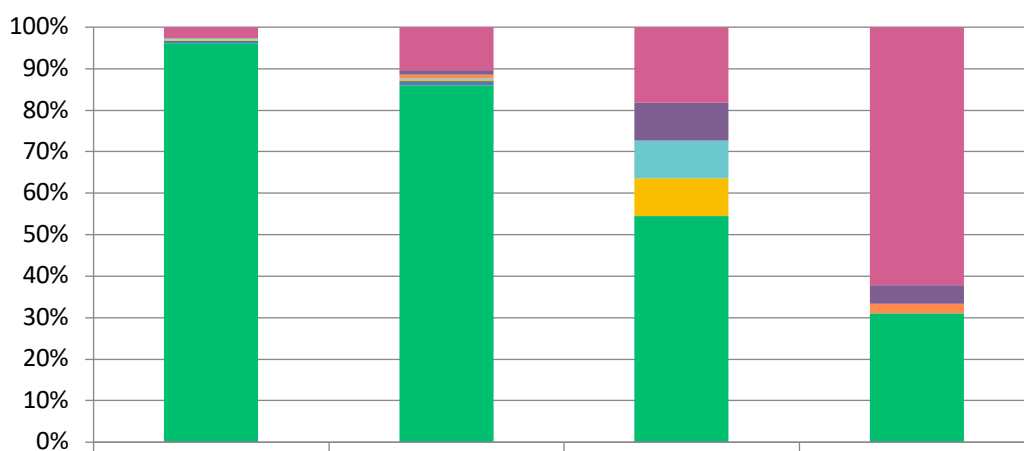
- **Non-Use and Occasional Misuse:** A large majority, 87.72%, of students reported not misusing any prescription medication in the past 30 days. Only 1.32% indicated they misused prescription medication one or two times during this period. This suggests that while most students avoid prescription misuse, a small portion may engage in occasional or experimental misuse.
- **Gender Differences:** Female students reported a higher rate of non-use at 93.97% compared to 86.61% among males. Males showed slightly higher levels of repeated misuse, with 1.07% reporting misuse 40 or more times. Respondents identifying as "Other" indicated elevated misuse in categories like 10-19 times (9.09%) and 40 or more times (9.09%).
- **Grade Differences:** Non-use rates decreased slightly with grade level, from 92.20% in 9th grade to 87.17% in 12th grade.

Cocaine Use

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

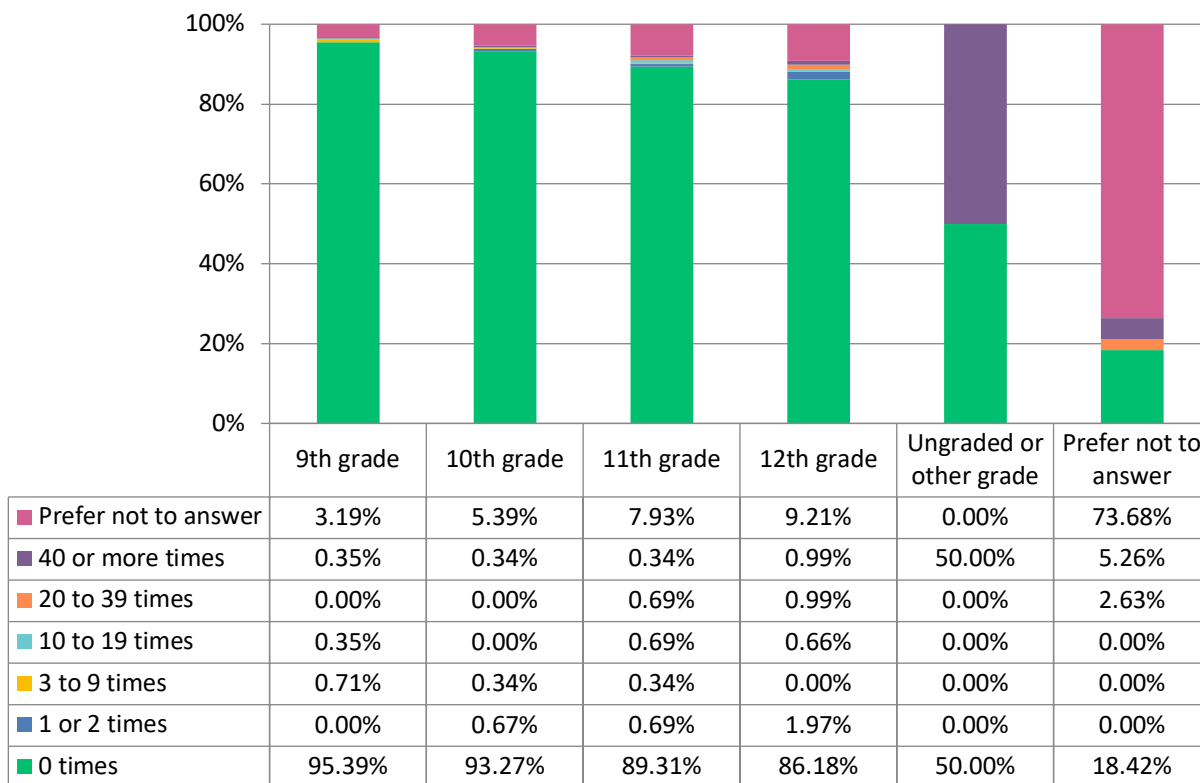


During your life, how many times have you used any form of cocaine, including powder, crack, or freebase?



■ Prefer not to answer	2.68%	10.36%	18.18%	62.22%
■ 40 or more times	0.00%	1.07%	9.09%	4.44%
■ 20 to 39 times	0.00%	0.89%	0.00%	2.22%
■ 10 to 19 times	0.34%	0.36%	9.09%	0.00%
■ 3 to 9 times	0.17%	0.36%	9.09%	0.00%
■ 1 or 2 times	0.67%	1.07%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 0 times	96.15%	85.89%	54.55%	31.11%

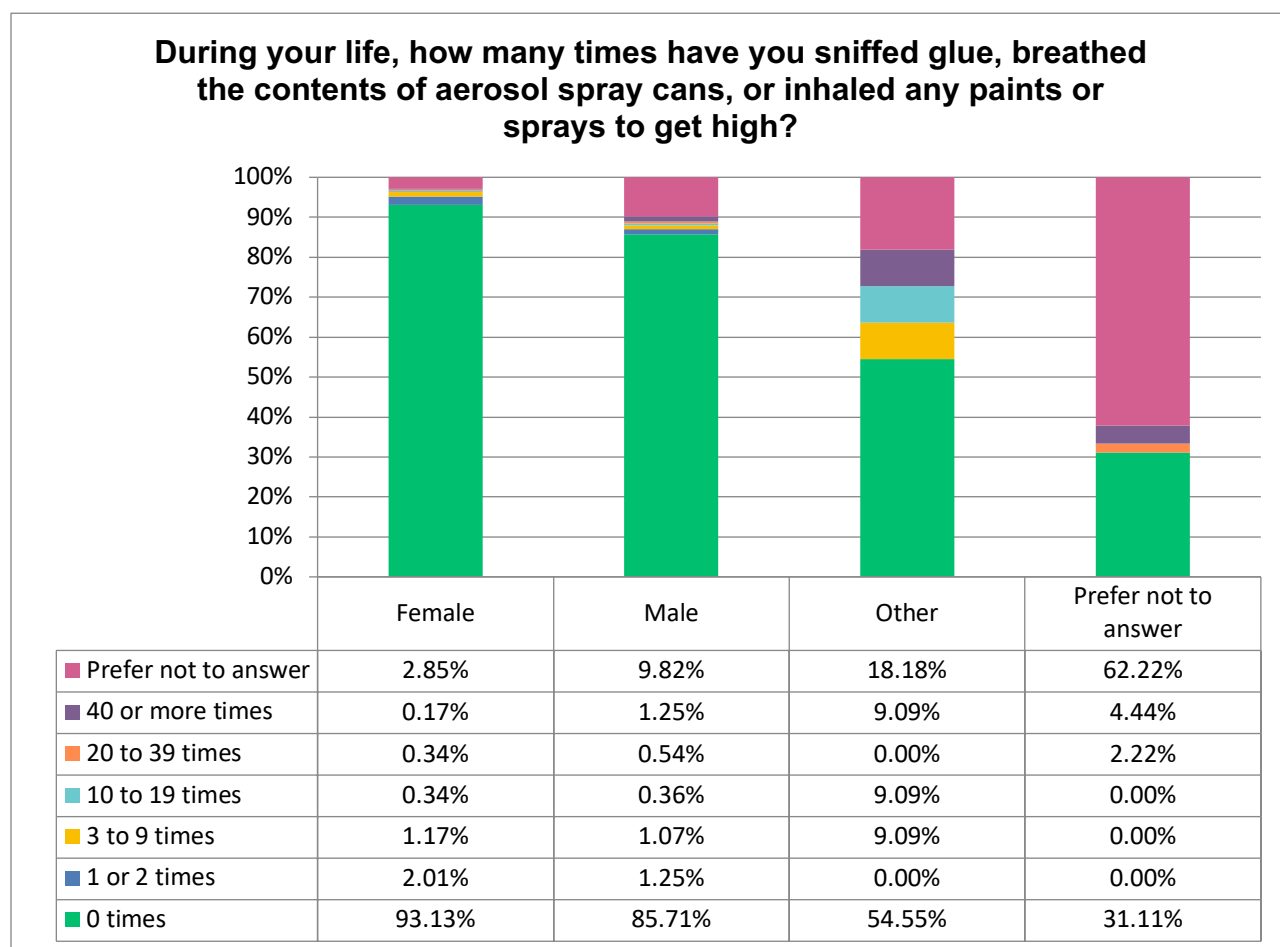
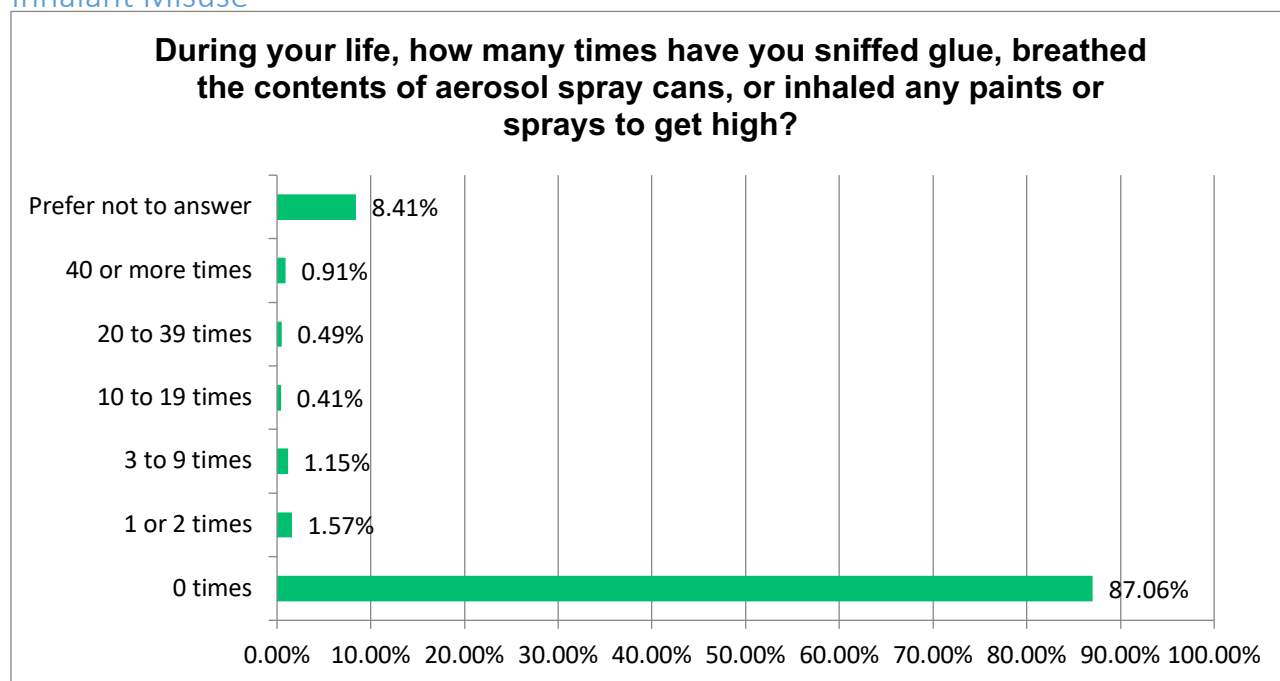
During your life, how many times have you used any form of cocaine, including powder, crack, or freebase?



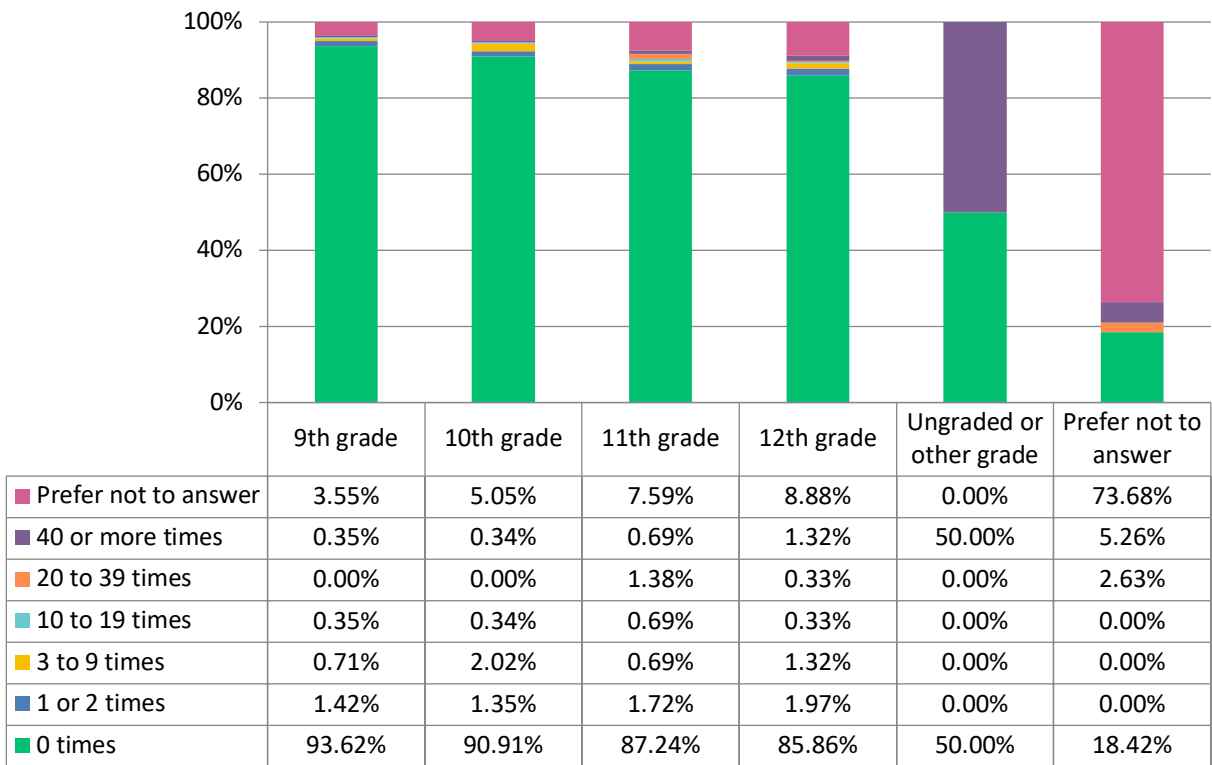
Key Findings on Cocaine Use Among Students

- Prevalence and Frequency:** A majority of students, 88.62%, reported never using any form of cocaine (including powder, crack, or freebase). Among those who reported usage, the most common response was experimentation 1 or 2 times (0.82%). Higher frequencies of use, such as 40 or more times (0.74%) and 20 to 39 times (0.49%), were rare.
- Gender Differences:** Female students reported the highest rate of non-use at 96.15%, compared to 85.89% for males. Among those who used cocaine, males showed slightly higher usage frequencies, with 1.07% indicating 40 or more uses. Respondents identifying as "Other" reported a lower non-use rate of 54.55%, with a higher presence in categories of multiple uses, such as 3 to 9 times and 40 or more times.
- Grade Differences:** Cocaine use appeared to increase with grade level, with non-use rates highest in 9th grade at 95.39% and decreasing to 86.18% in 12th grade. Additionally, 1.97% of 12th graders reported using cocaine 1 or 2 times, showing a slight rise in experimentation as students progress through high school.

Inhalant Misuse



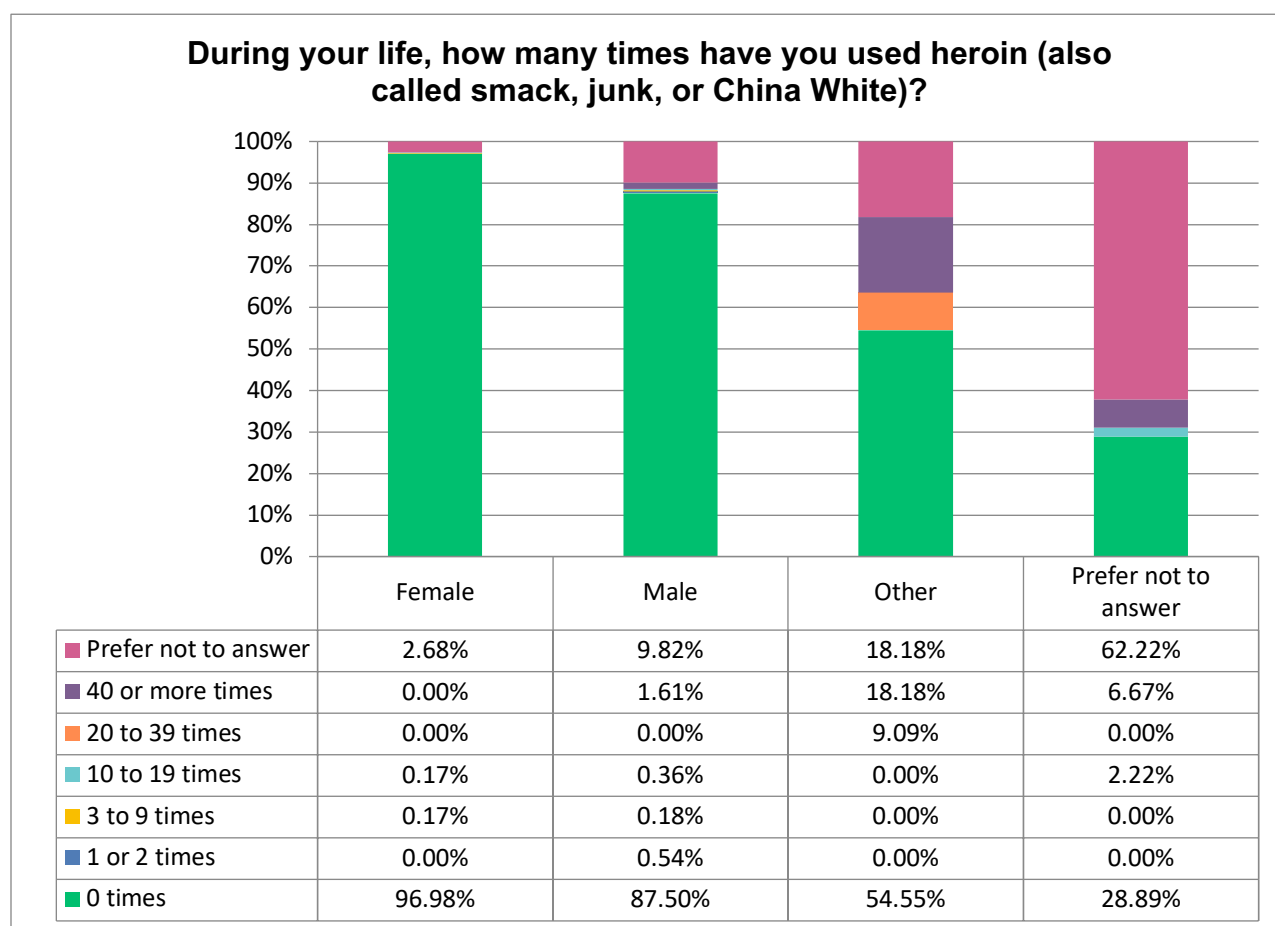
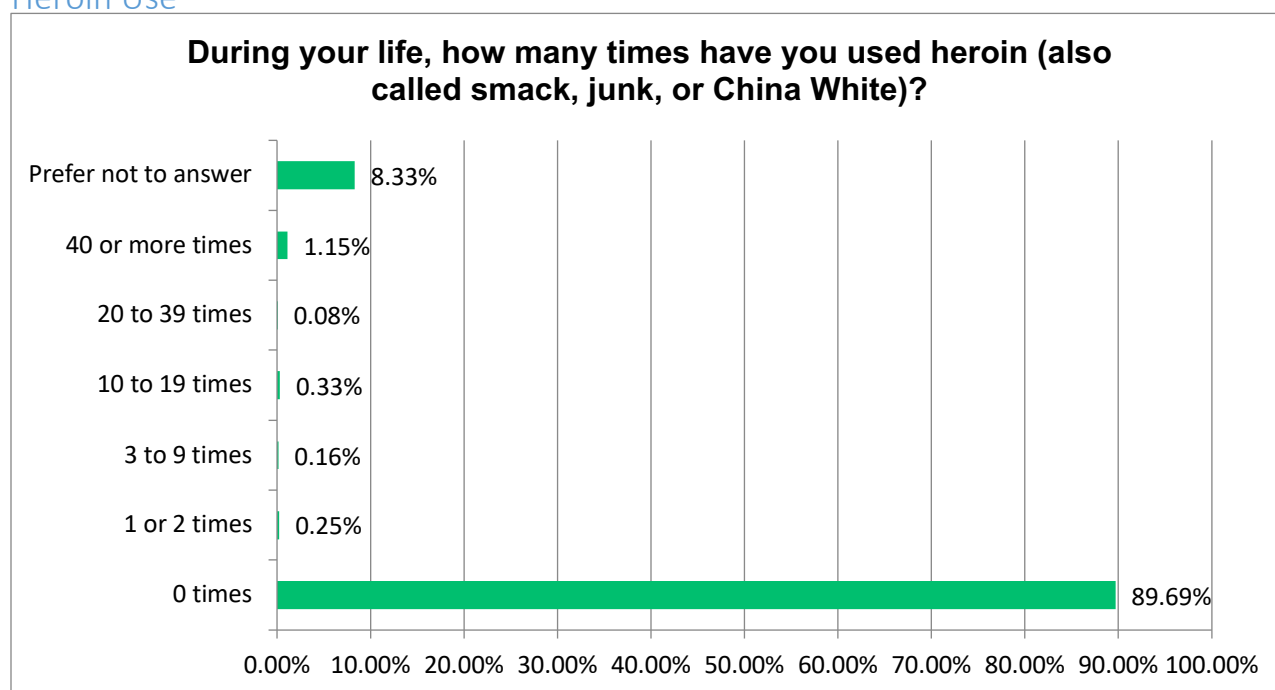
During your life, how many times have you sniffed glue, breathed the contents of aerosol spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high?



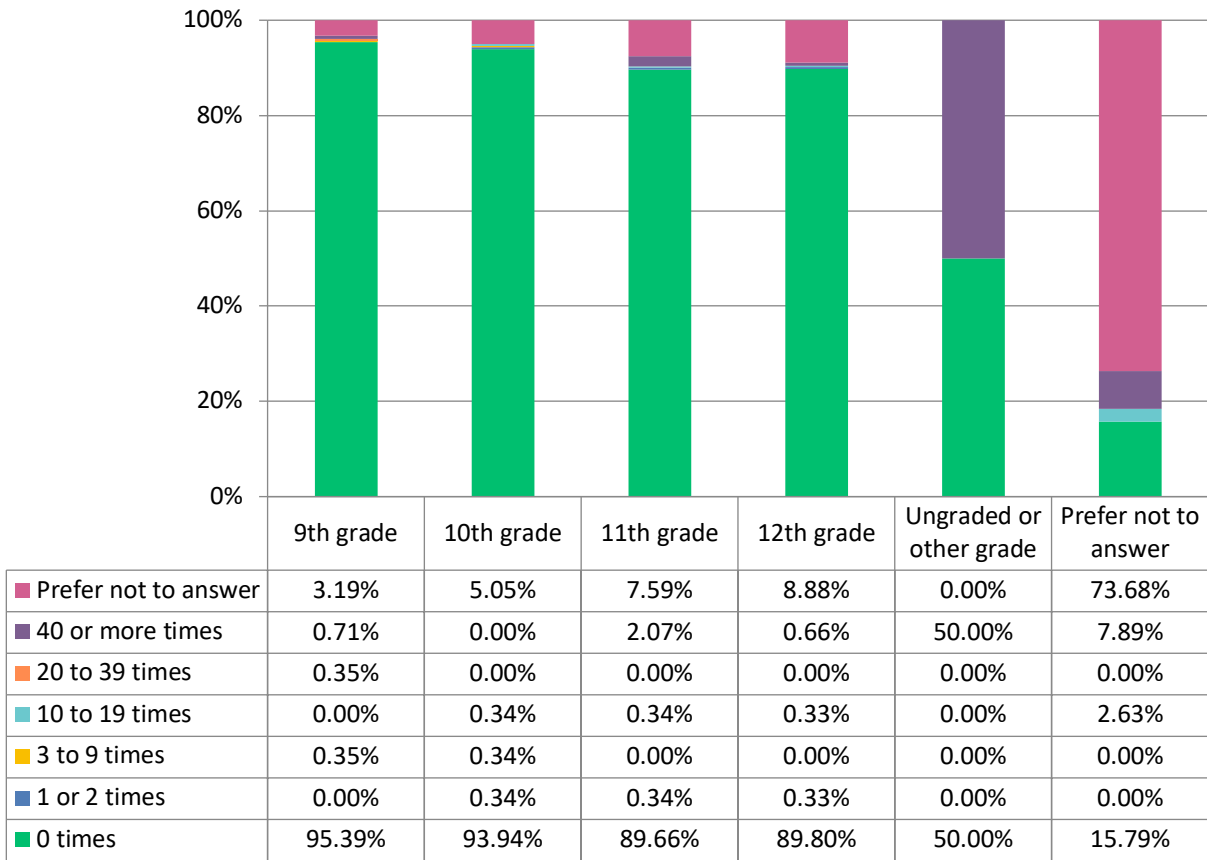
Key Findings on Inhalant Misuse

- **Non-Use:** The vast majority of students, 87.06%, reported that they had never misused inhalants, including substances like glue, aerosol spray cans, or paint.
- **Gender Differences:** Female students showed a high rate of non-use at 93.13%, while male students reported 85.71%. Additionally, about 2% of females reported experimenting with inhalants one or two times, while 1.25% of males reported using inhalants 40 or more times.
- **Grade Differences:** Non-use rates were generally high across grade levels, with 9th graders at 93.62% and a slight decline by 12th grade to 85.86%.

Heroin Use



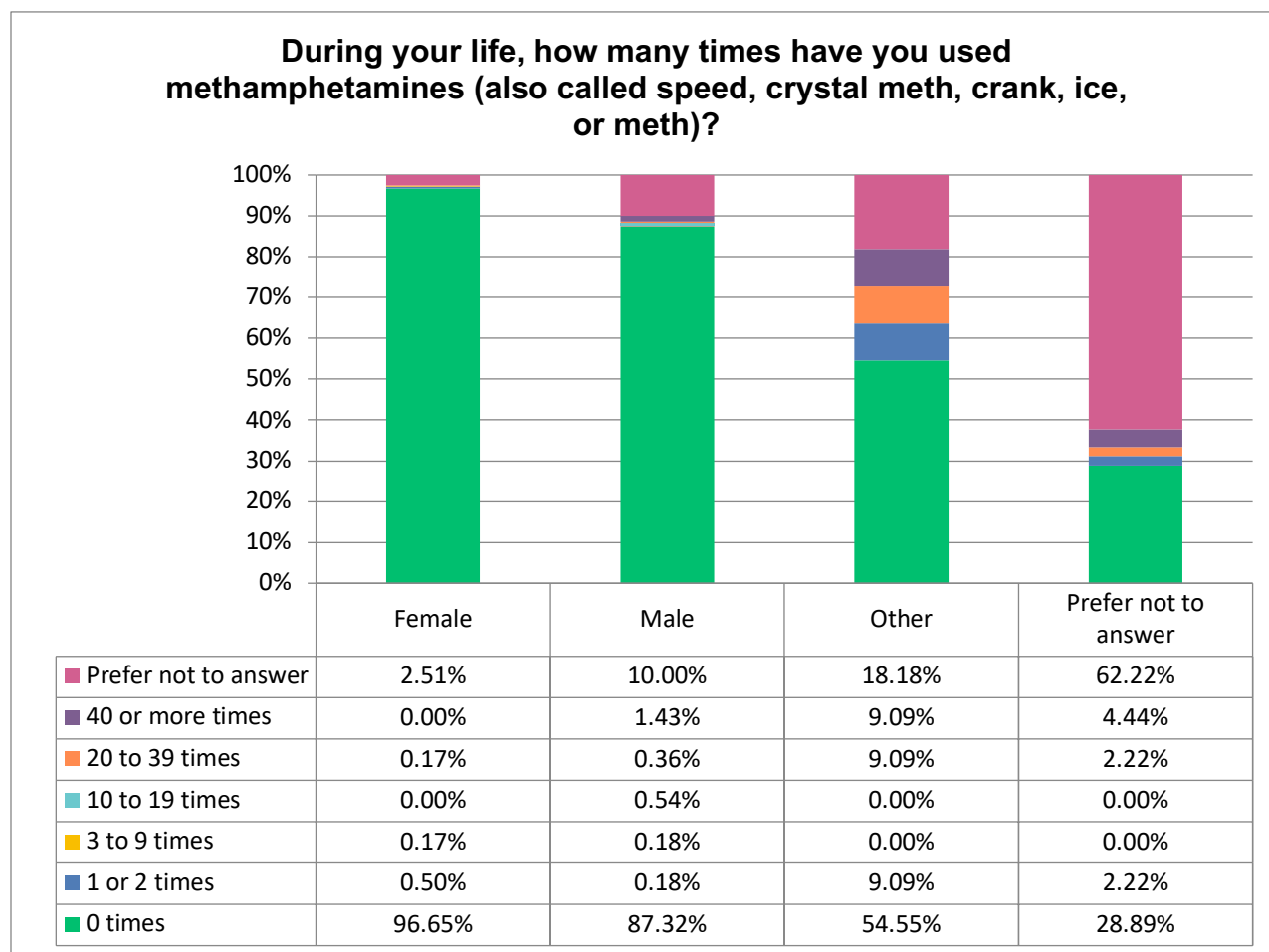
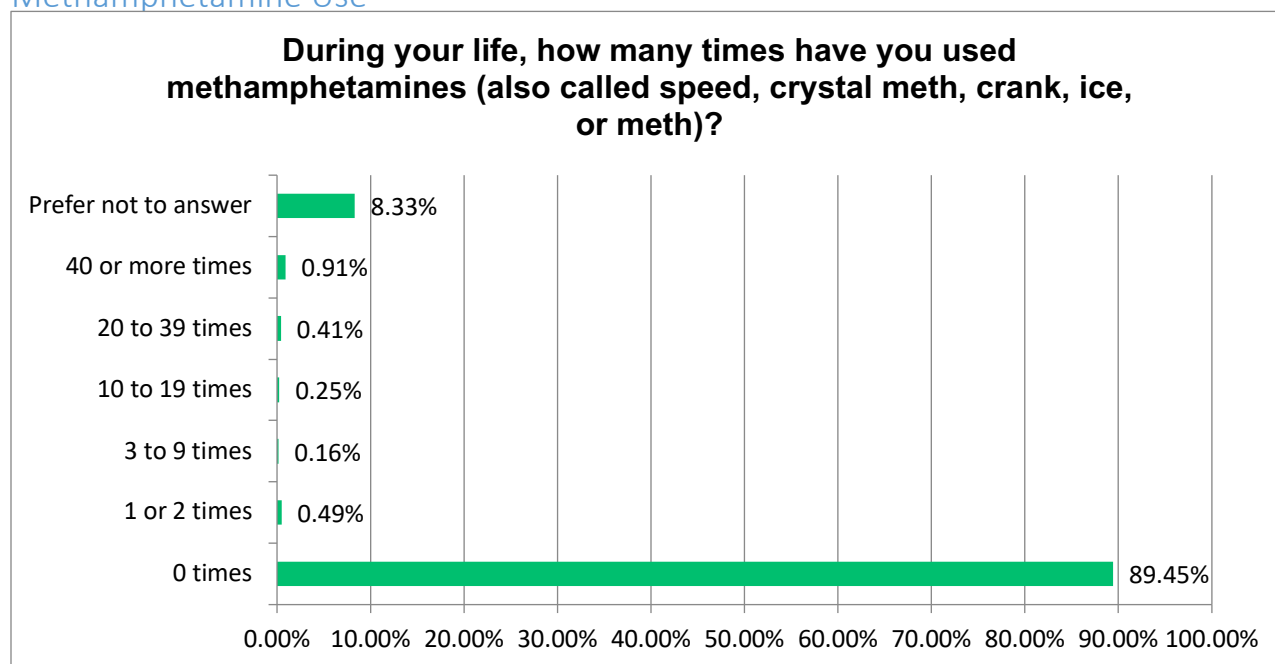
During your life, how many times have you used heroin (also called smack, junk, or China White)?



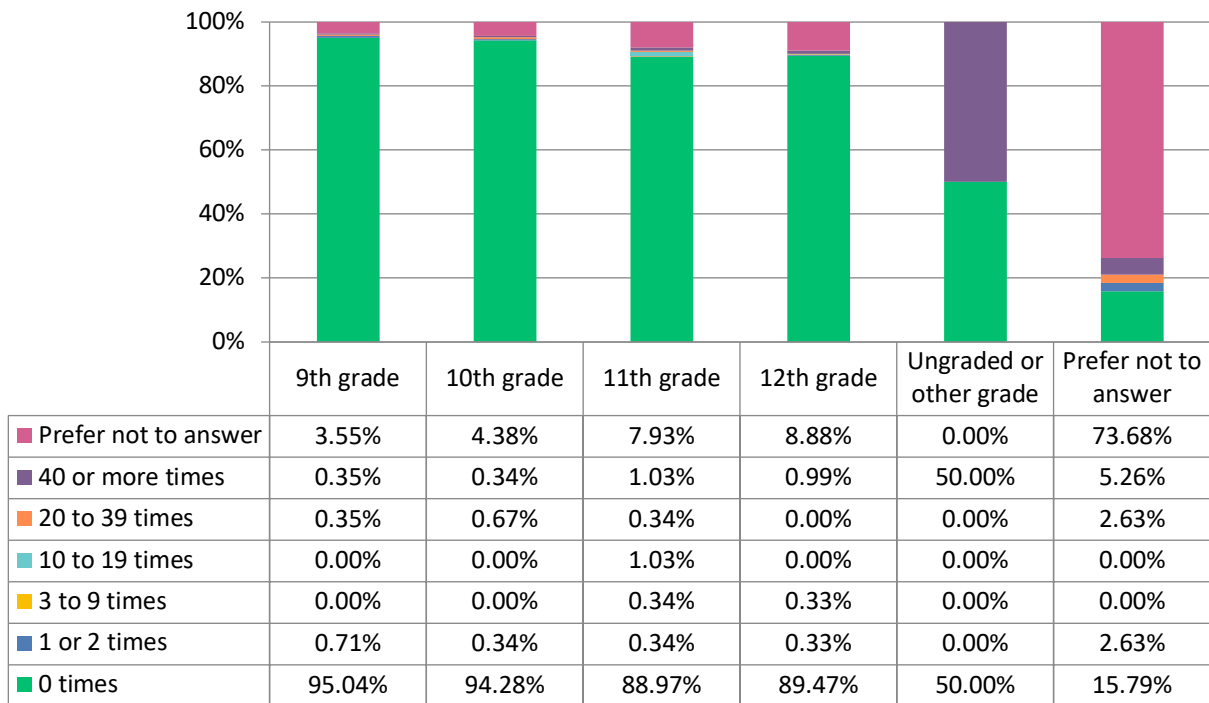
Key Findings on Heroin Use Among Students

- **Non-Use:** A substantial majority of students (89.69%) reported they had never used heroin, showing low engagement with this substance.
- **Gender Differences:** Female students showed the lowest usage rates, with 96.98% indicating they had never tried heroin. In contrast, male students reported a slightly higher lifetime usage rate, with 9.82% choosing not to answer and 1.61% using 40 or more times. Those identifying as "Other" had notably varied responses, with 54.55% indicating no use but higher percentages reporting multiple uses.
- **Grade Differences:** Lifetime heroin usage shows a gradual increase as students progress through high school. Among 9th graders, 1.41% reported any lifetime use of heroin, which rose slightly to 2.75% for 11th graders.

Methamphetamine Use



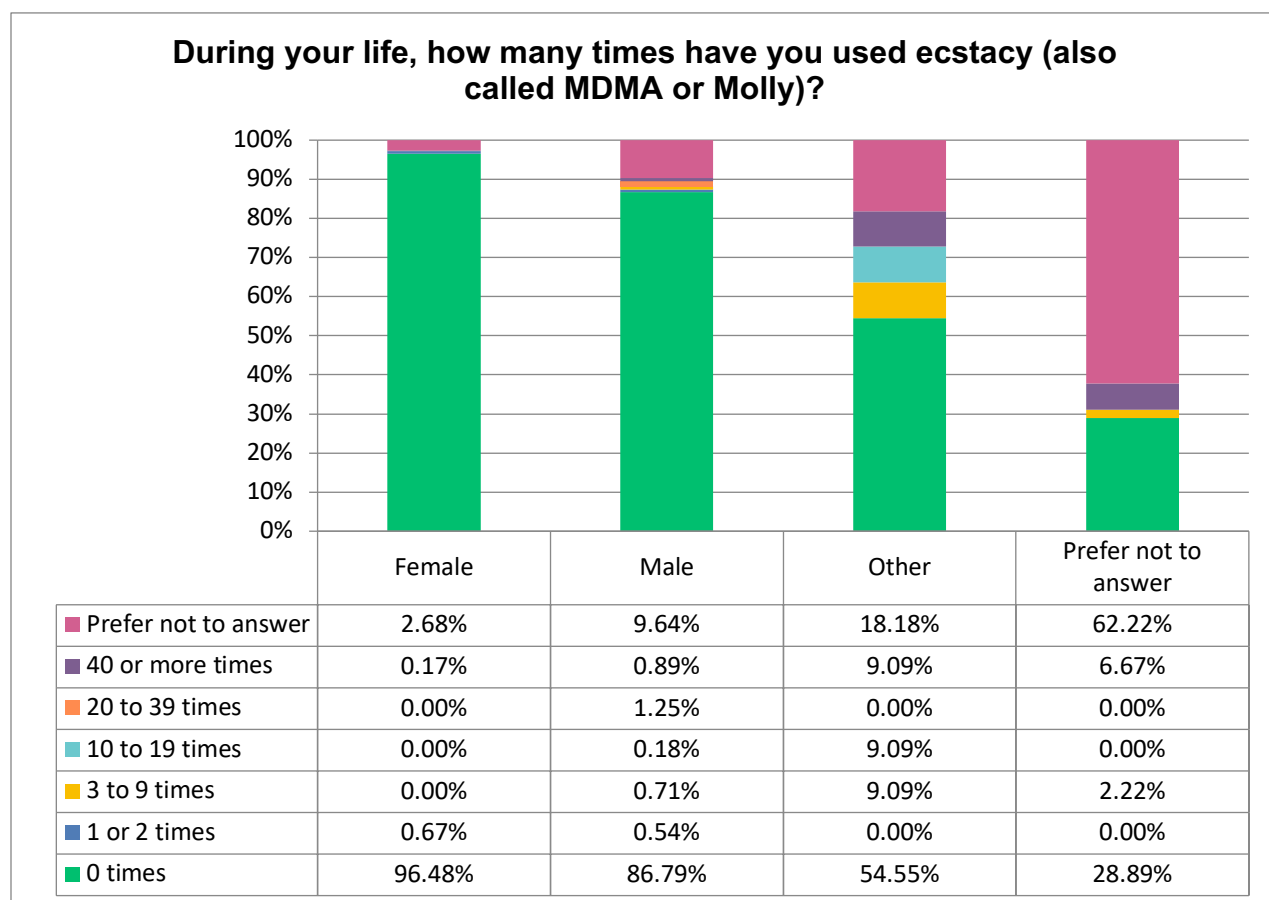
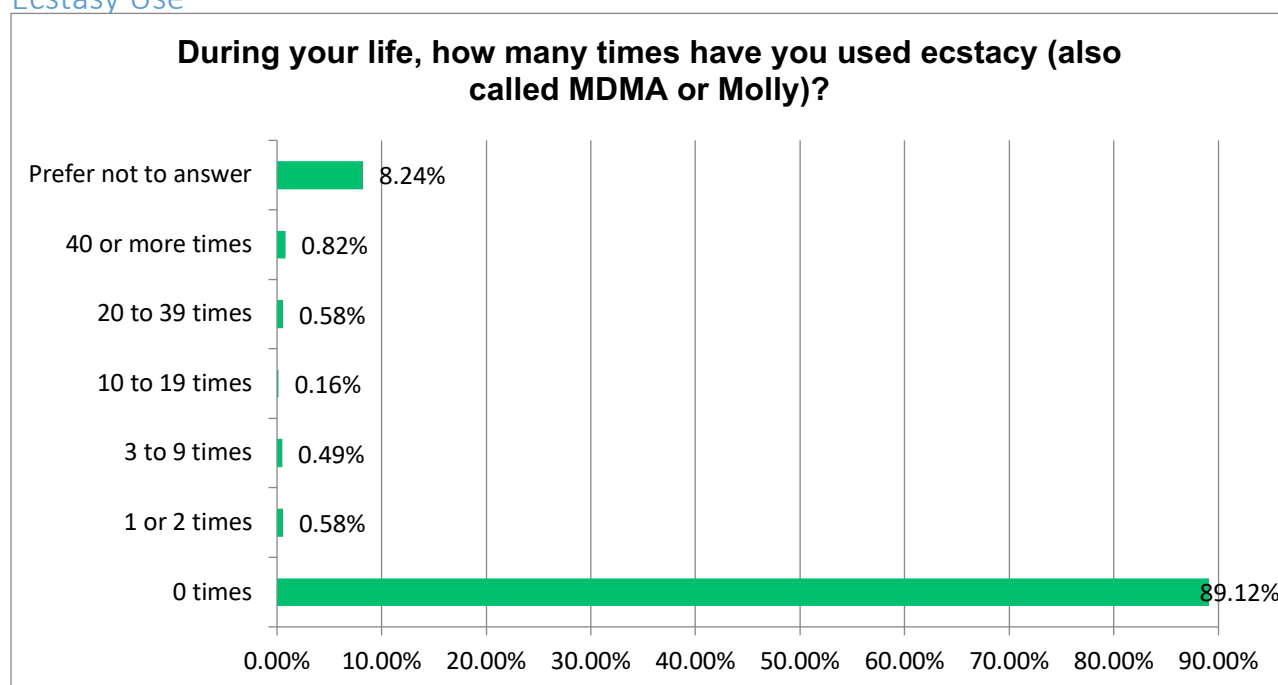
**During your life, how many times have you used
methamphetamines (also called speed, crystal meth, crank, ice,
or meth)?**



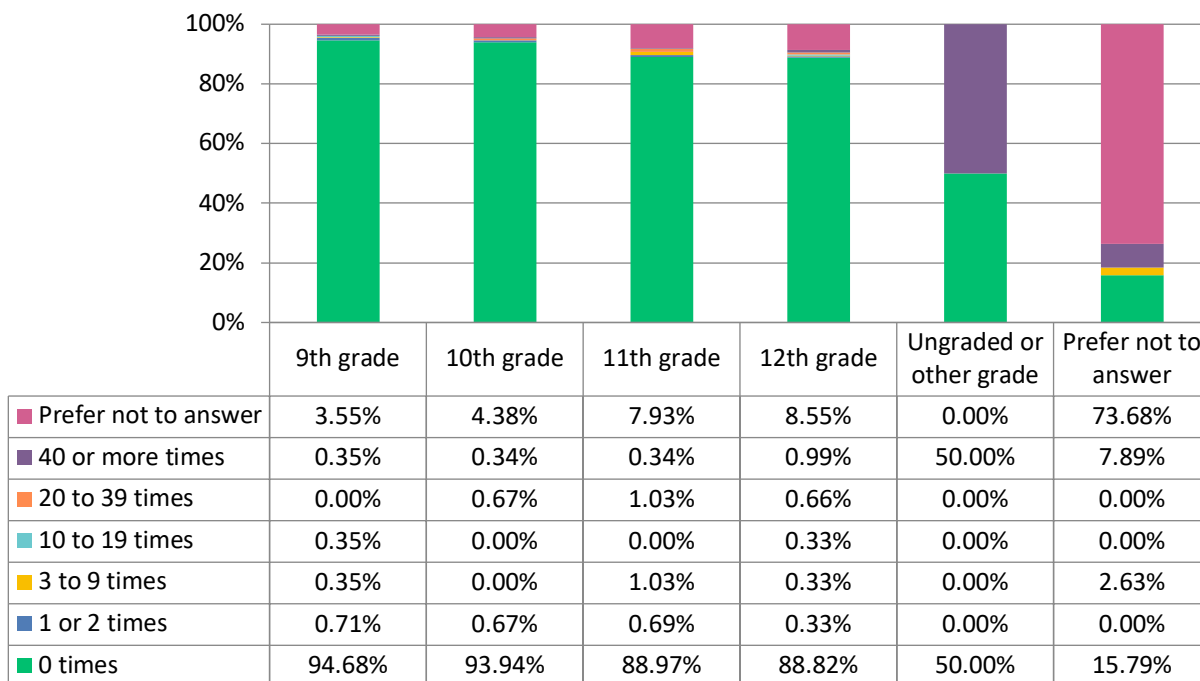
Key Findings on Lifetime Methamphetamine Use

- Lifetime Use:** While the majority of students (89.45%) reported never using methamphetamines, a small percentage did indicate some level of lifetime use. Among those who reported using methamphetamines, 0.49% used it 1 or 2 times, 0.16% used it 3 to 9 times, and 0.91% reported using it 40 or more times.
- Gender Differences:** Lifetime methamphetamine use varied by gender. Female students showed the lowest rates, with 0.8% reporting any lifetime use. In contrast, male students reported a slightly higher usage, with 1.43% using methamphetamines 40 or more times, 0.9% using 10-39 times, and 0.36% using 1-9 times. Students identifying as "Other" reported comparatively higher exposure, with 9.09% indicating usage 40 or more times.
- Grade Differences:** Older students showed slightly increased rates of methamphetamine use. Specifically, 0.99% of 12th graders and 1.03% of 11th graders reported using methamphetamines 40 or more times. In contrast, 0.35% of 9th graders reported similar frequency of use. This suggests a minimal increase in risk as students advance through high school.

Ecstasy Use



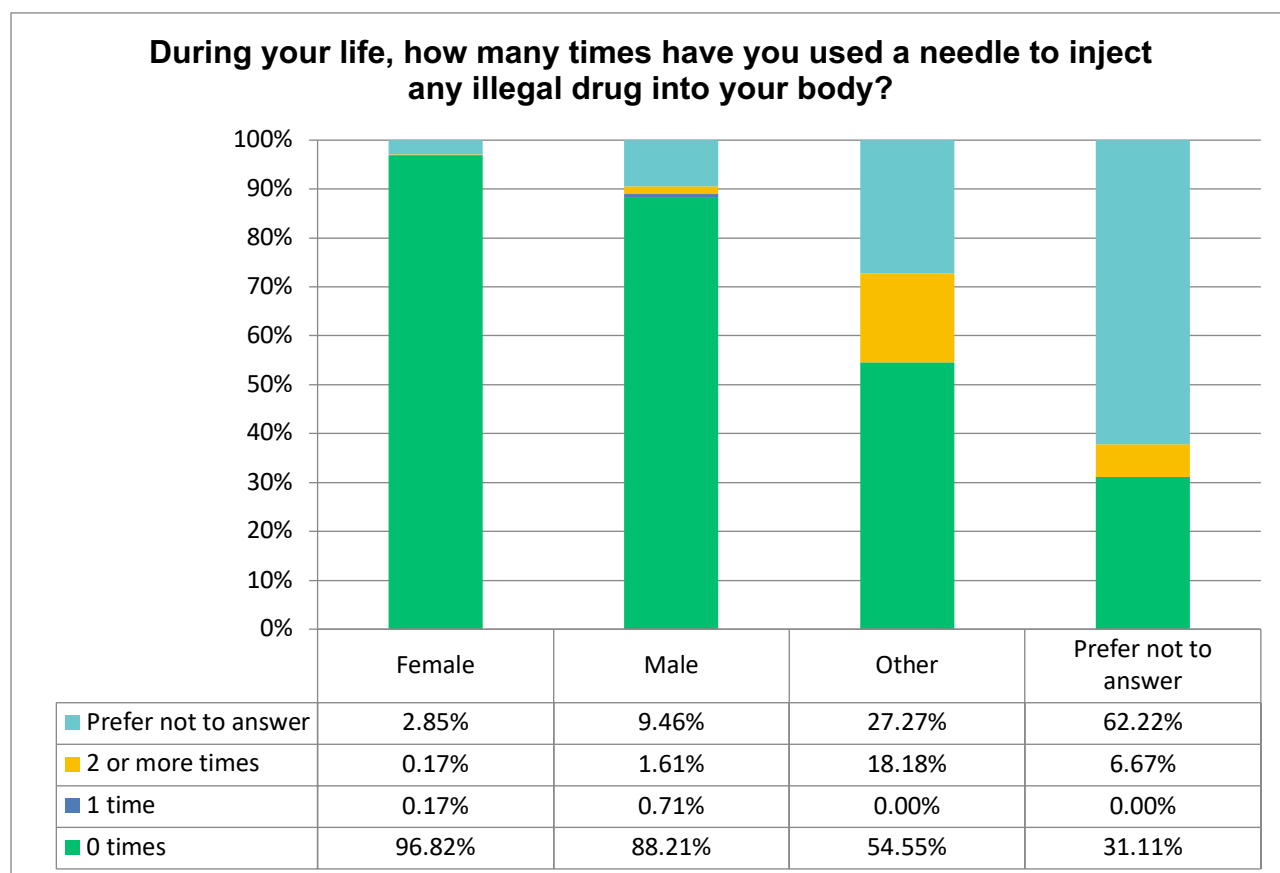
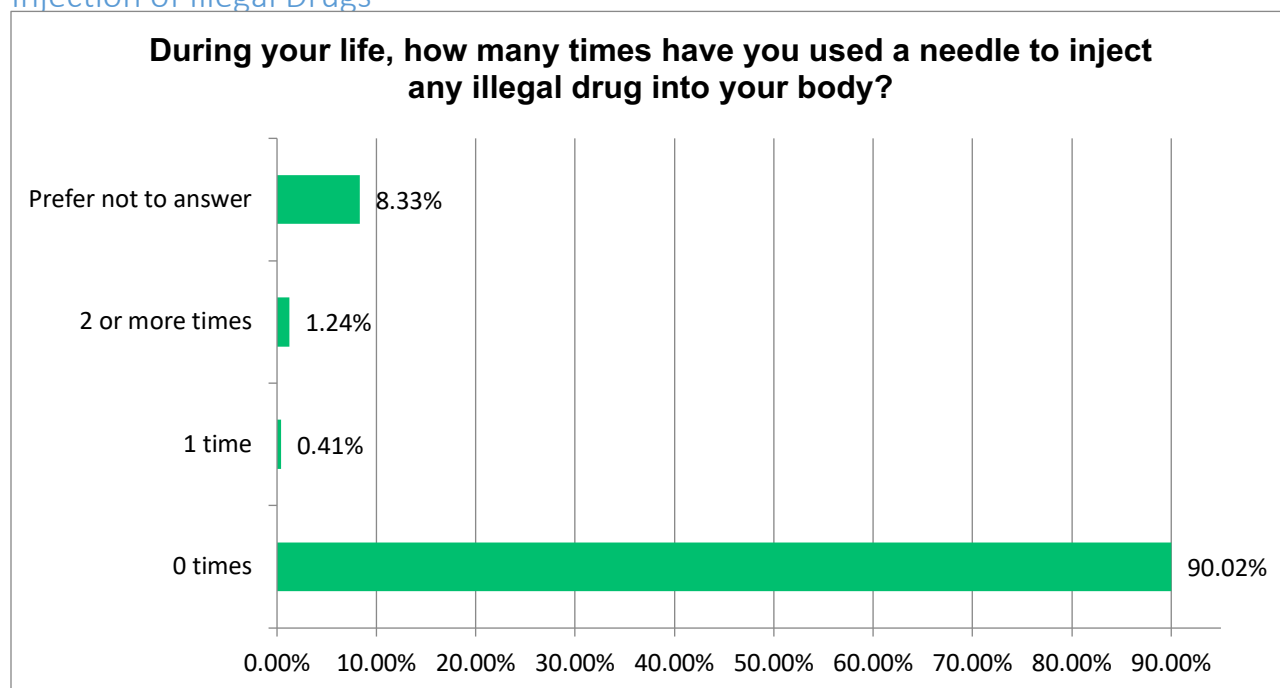
During your life, how many times have you used ecstasy (also called MDMA or Molly)?



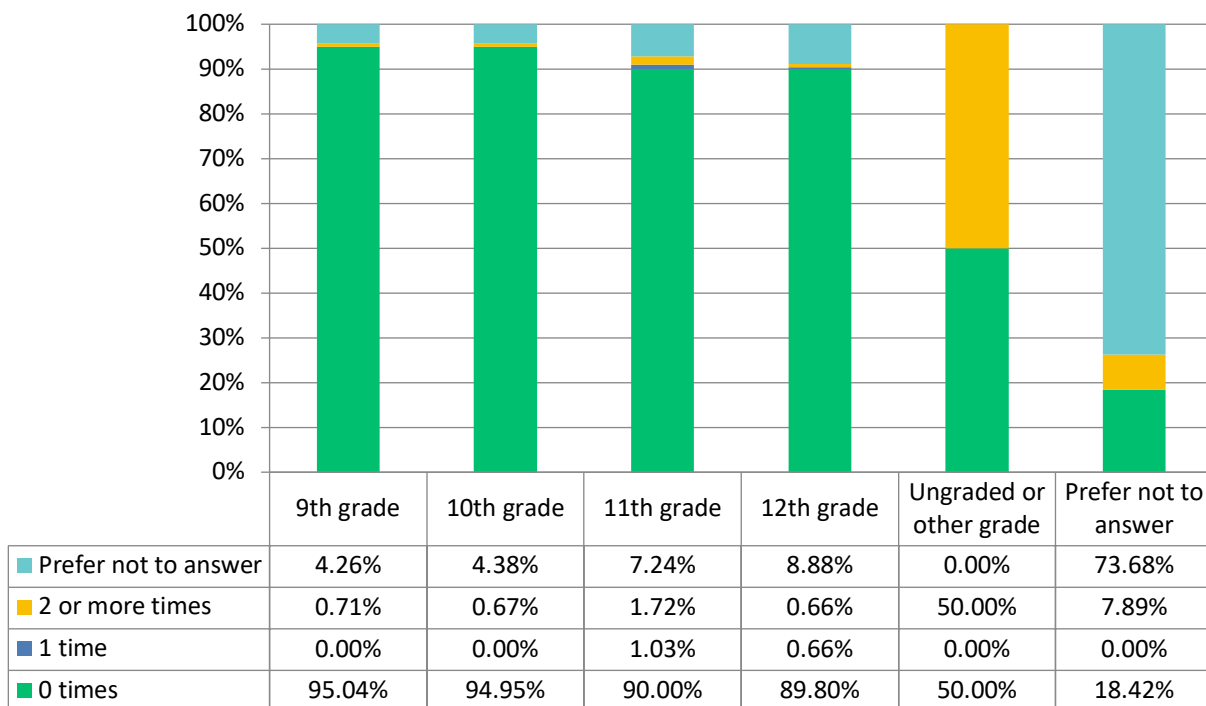
Key Findings on Ecstasy (MDMA or Molly) Use Among Students

- Prevalence of Non-Use:** The overwhelming majority of students (89.12%) reported never using ecstasy (MDMA or Molly) in their lifetime. This suggests that ecstasy usage remains relatively low among the student population.
- Gender Differences:** Among students who reported ecstasy use, males demonstrated slightly higher rates of frequent use compared to females, with 1.25% of males using ecstasy 20-39 times, while no females reported usage in this range. Additionally, 0.67% of females reported using ecstasy 1-2 times, slightly higher than the 0.54% reported by males. Notably, students identifying as "Other" exhibited higher lifetime use rates in multiple frequency ranges, with 9.09% reporting use in the 3-9, 10-19, and 40+ times categories. This highlights a broader distribution of ecstasy use in this group compared to their male and female counterparts.
- Grade Differences:** Usage rates appear to increase slightly by grade level, with 12th graders reporting marginally more varied and frequent lifetime ecstasy use.

Injection of Illegal Drugs



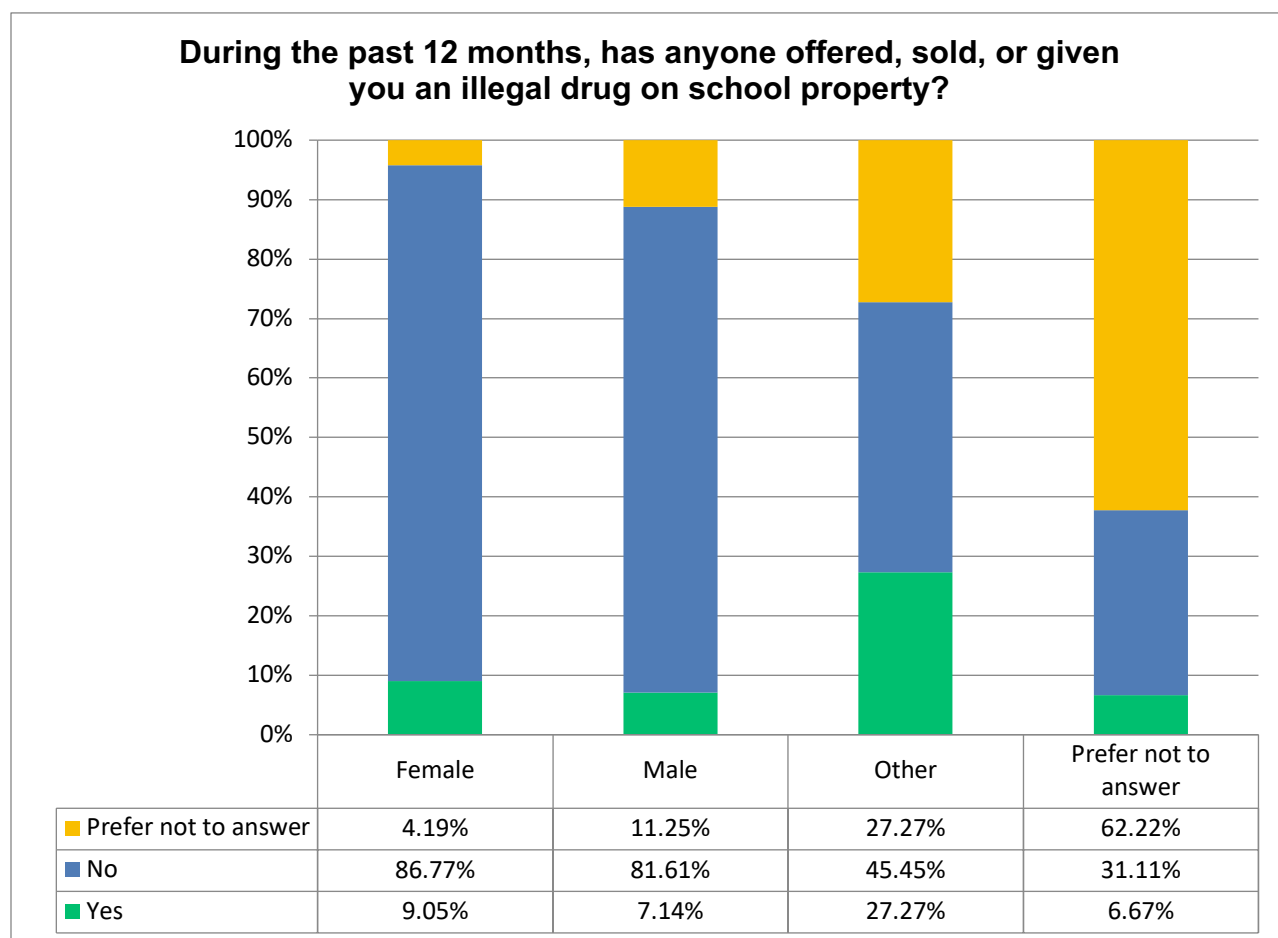
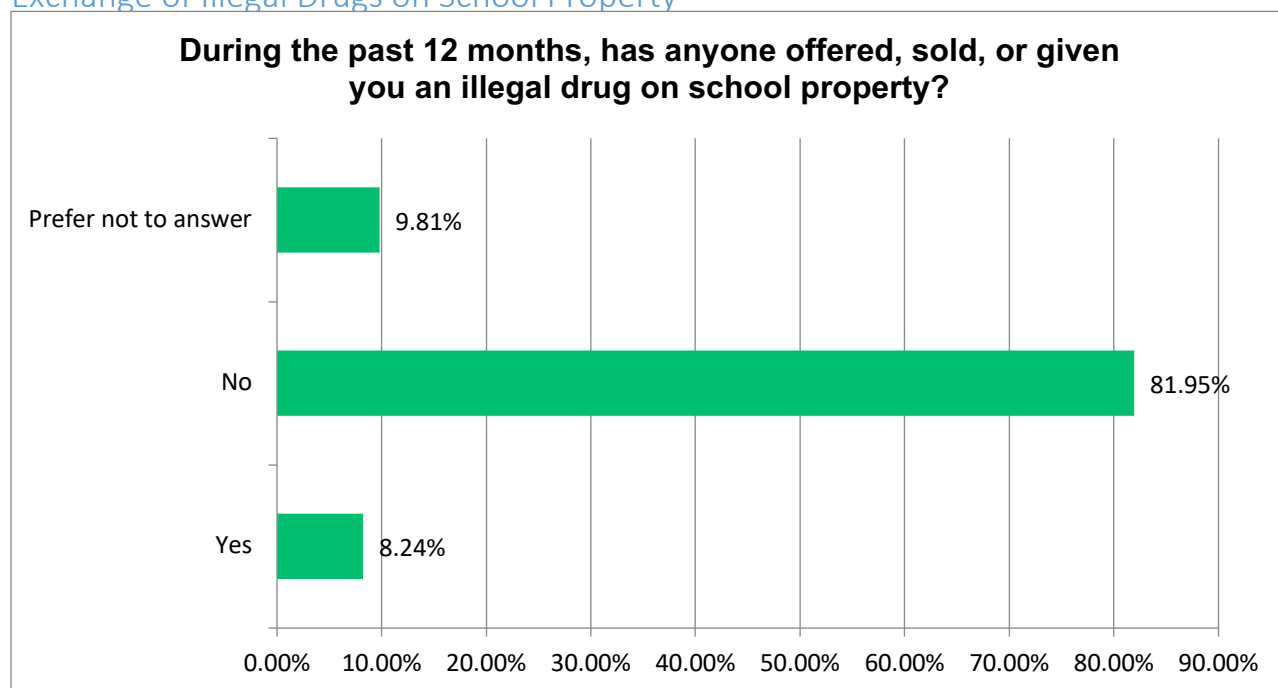
During your life, how many times have you used a needle to inject any illegal drug into your body?



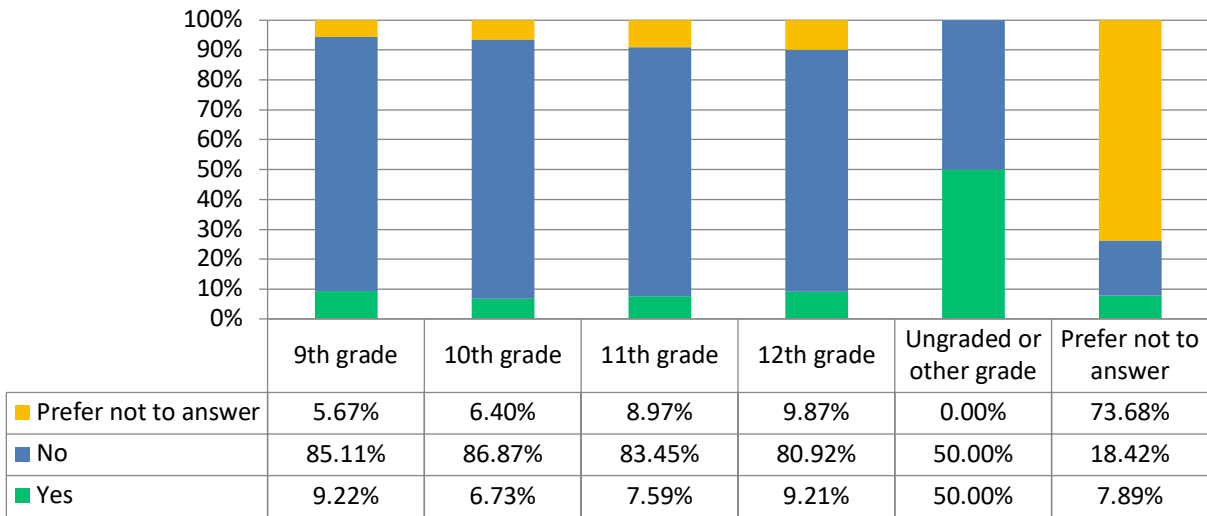
Key Findings on Lifetime Injection of Illegal Drugs

- Lifetime Use:** The majority of respondents (90%) reported never using a needle to inject illegal drugs. A small percentage indicated lifetime use: 0.41% reported using a needle once, while 1.24% reported injecting drugs two or more times. Additionally, 8.33% of respondents preferred not to disclose their drug injection history.
- Gender Differences:** There were notable variations in drug injection by gender. Female respondents had the lowest rates of injection, with 96.82% reporting never injecting drugs and only 0.34% admitting to any lifetime use. Male respondents had a slightly higher rate of use, with 2.32% reporting injection once or more. Students identifying as "Other" had the highest reported injection rates, with 18.18% indicating they injected drugs two or more times, while 54.55% reported never injecting drugs.
- Grade Differences:** Injection drug use also varied by grade level. Ninth and tenth graders reported similarly low rates, with 95.04% of ninth graders and 94.95% of tenth graders reporting never injecting drugs. By 12th grade, this number slightly decreased to 89.80%, with 1.32% reporting using a needle to inject drugs at least once. Among ungraded students or in other grades, 50% indicated they had used a needle twice or more times.

Exchange of Illegal Drugs on School Property



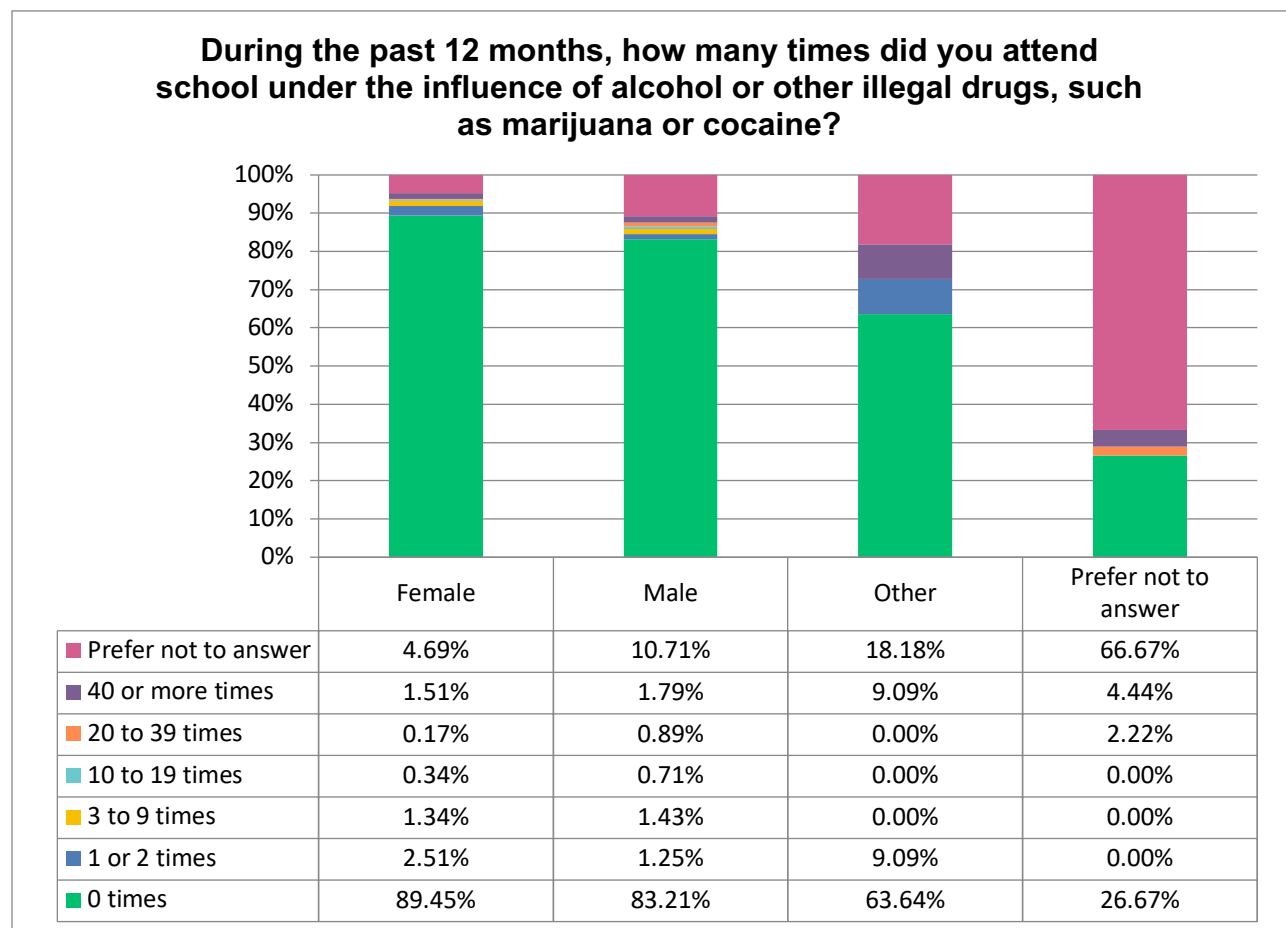
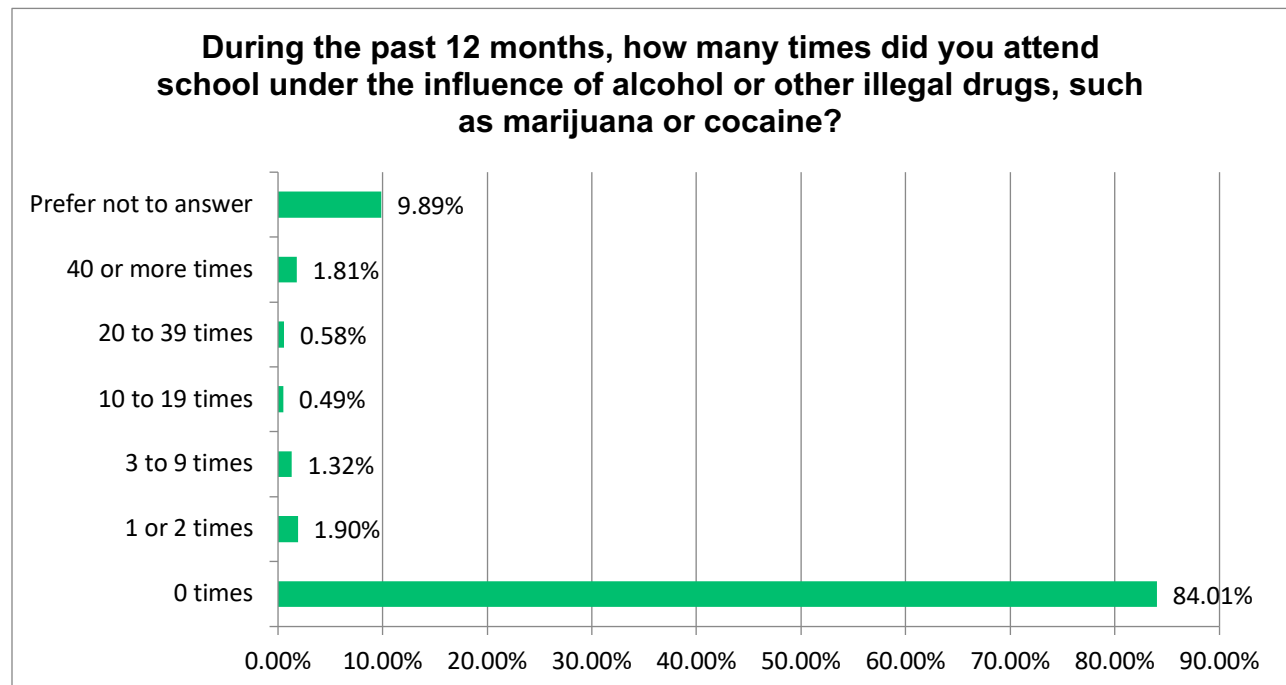
During the past 12 months, has anyone offered, sold, or given you an illegal drug on school property?



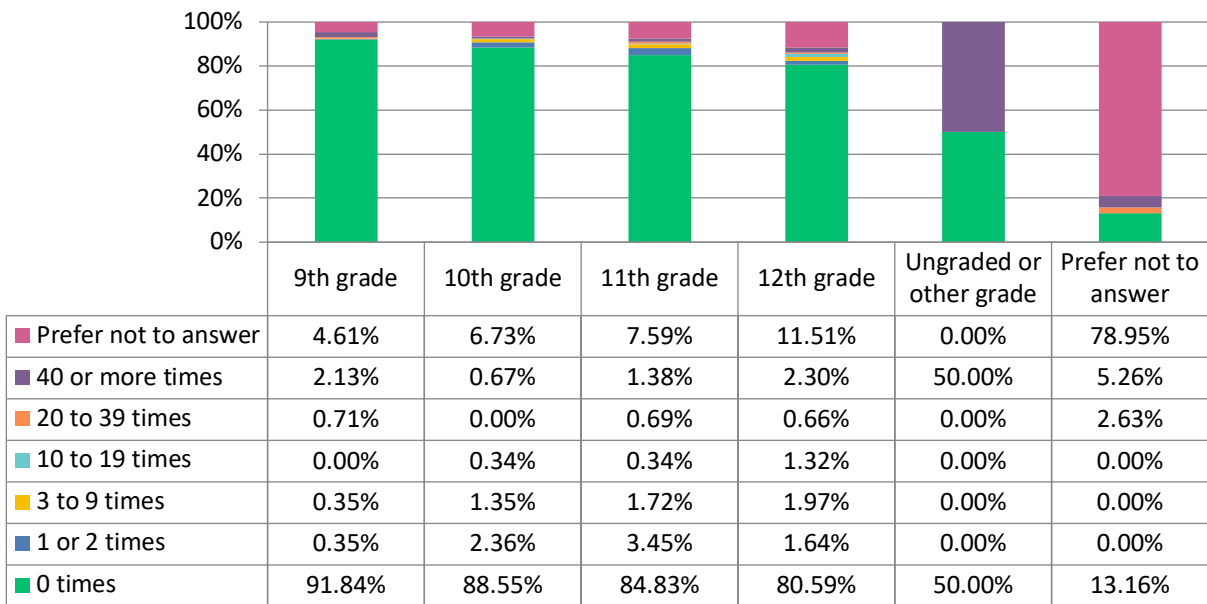
Key Findings on the Exchange of Illegal Drugs on School Property

- **Lifetime Exposure:** Most students reported not being exposed to illegal drug offers on school property in the past year.
- **Gender Differences:** Female students were slightly more likely to report being offered drugs on school property than their male peers, with 9.05% of females indicating "Yes," compared to 7.14% of males. Students identifying as "Other" had higher rates of exposure, with 27.27% reporting that they had been offered or sold drugs.
- **Grade Differences:** Ninth and twelfth graders reported the highest exposure to drug offers. Students in ungraded or other categories had a 50% exposure rate, which is higher than the general trend for traditional grade levels.
- **Non-Disclosure Rates:** A large portion of students in the "Prefer not to answer" grade category chose not to disclose their experiences, with 73.68% leaving the question unanswered. Among gender-based responses, 62.22% of those who preferred not to specify their gender also did not answer. These high non-disclosure rates skew the overall data for these groups.

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?

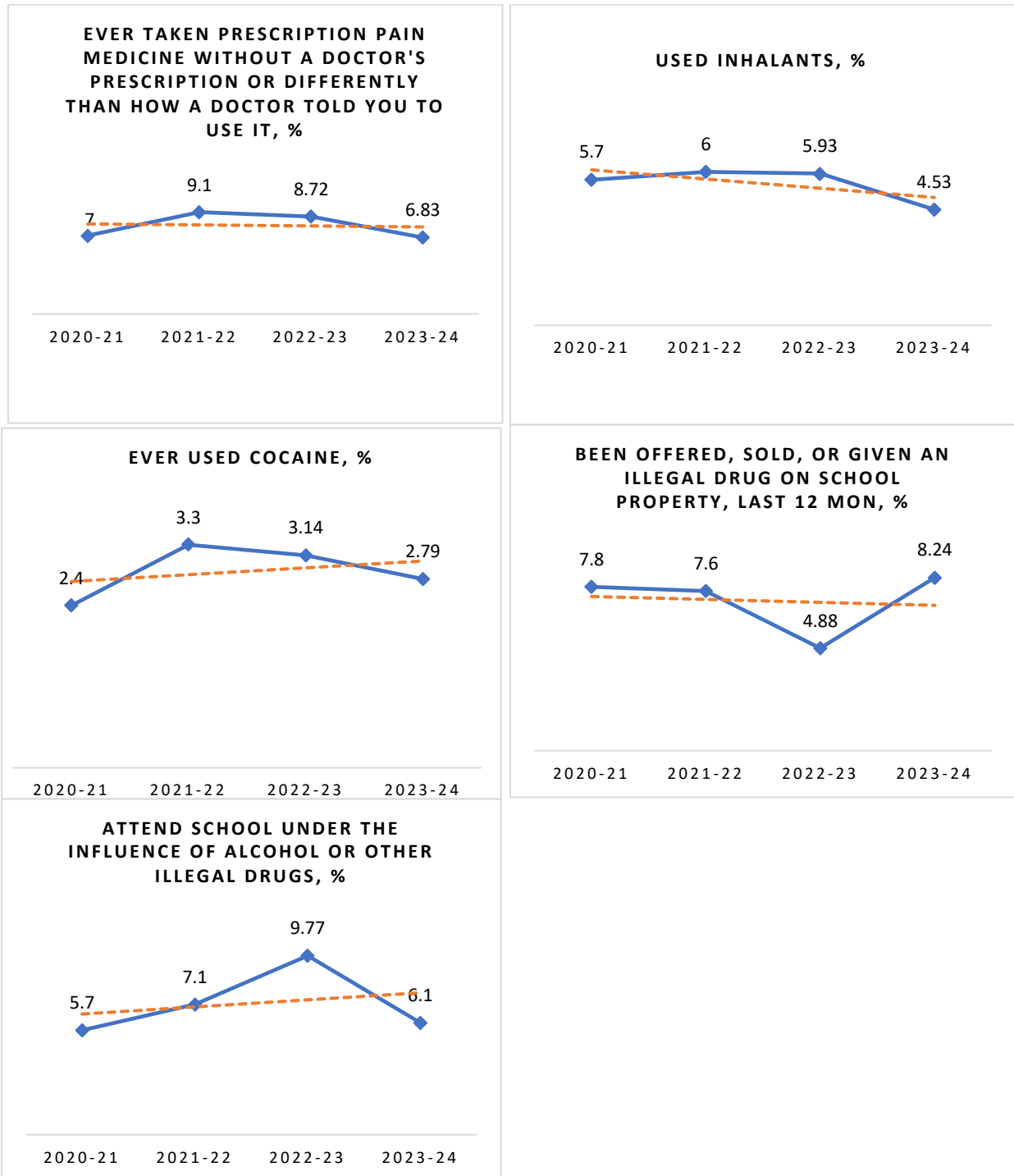


Key Findings on Student Attendance Under the Influence

- Lifetime Use:** The majority of students (84.01%) reported never attending school under the influence of alcohol or other illegal drugs. A smaller percentage indicated attending school under the influence, with 1.90% reporting 1 or 2 times and 1.81% reporting 40 or more times.
- Gender Differences:** Male and female students had similarly low rates of attending school under the influence. Notably, 89.45% of females reported "0 times" and 2.51% indicated they had attended under the influence 1 or 2 times. Among male students, 83.21% reported "0 times," with 1.25% reporting 1 or 2 times. Students identifying as "Other" had the highest rates of attending school under the influence, with only 63.64% reporting "0 times," and 9.09% reporting they attended school under the influence 40 or more times.
- Grade Differences:** Ninth graders had the highest rate of abstention (91.84%), while 2.13% attended school 40 or more times under the influence. By 12th grade, the abstention rate dropped to 80.59%, and 2.30% reported 40 or more instances. In between, 10th and 11th graders reported 88.55% and 84.83% abstention, respectively, with a slight increase in reported instances of attending school 1 or 2 times under the influence (up to 3.45% in 11th grade). Students in ungraded or other categories showed the highest reported use, with 50% attending school 40 or more times under the influence.

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 steadily declined to 5.83% by 2023-2024.
- **Decline in Inhalant Use:** Inhalant use saw a slight increase from 5.7% in 2020-2021 to 6% in 2021-2022 but has since steadily dropped to 4.53% by 2023-2024.
- **Stabilization and Decline in Cocaine Use:** Cocaine use rose from 2.4% in 2020-2021 to 3.3% in 2021-2022 but has gradually decreased to 2.79% by 2023-2024.
- **Fluctuation in Attending School Under the Influence:** Attendance under the influence of alcohol or drugs increased to a peak of 9.77% in 2022-2023, followed by a reduction to 6.1% in 2023-2024.
- **Increase in 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.

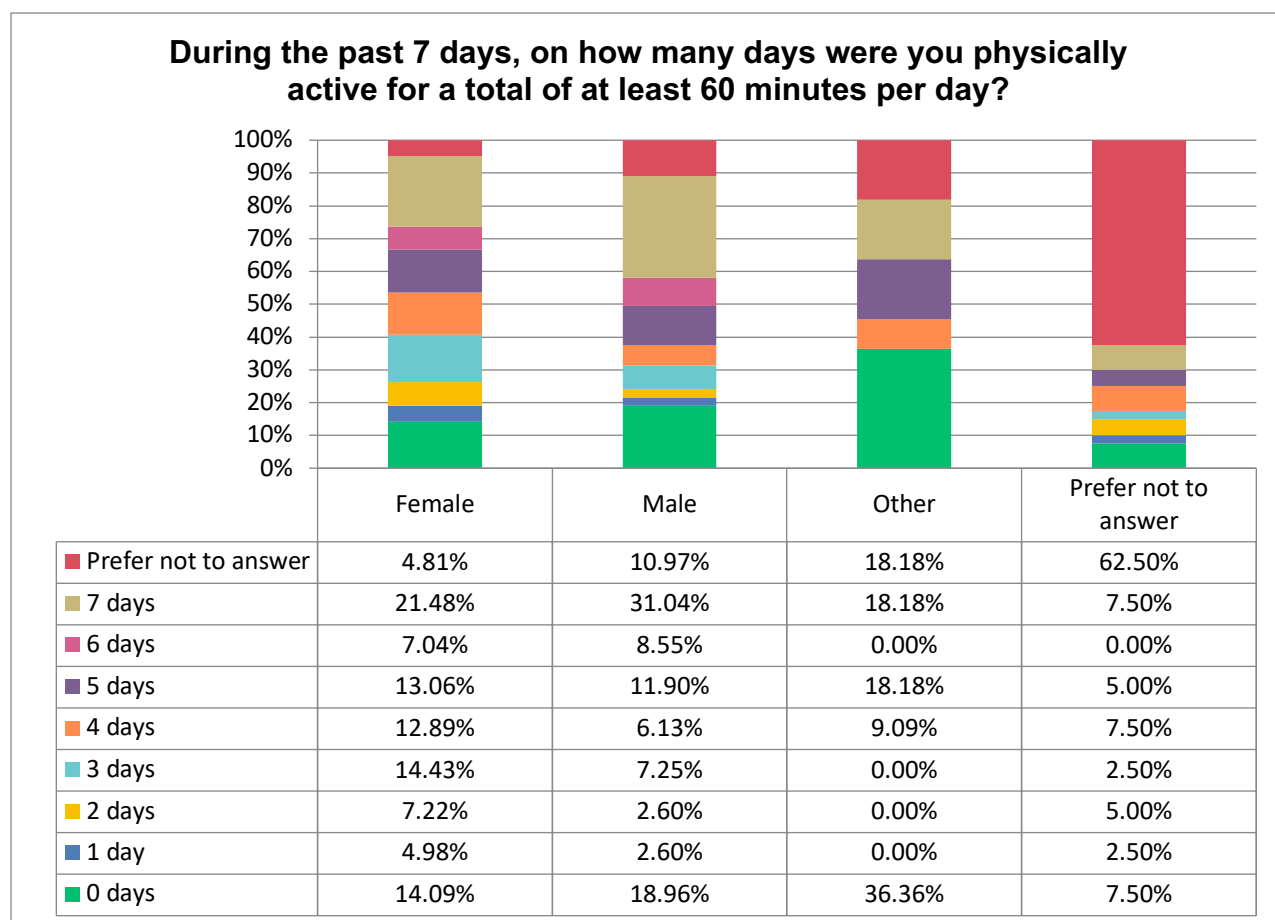
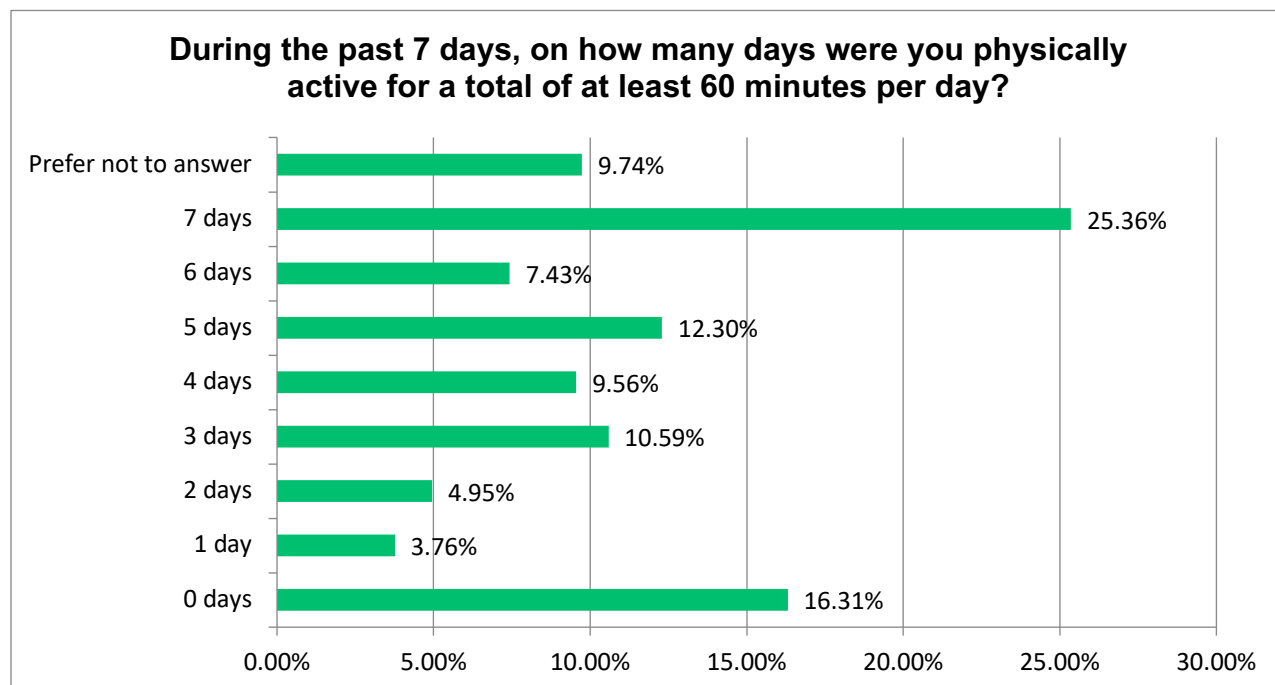
Physical Activity, Injury, and Activity

Physical activity is crucial for students' healthy development, but injuries, especially concussions, can have lasting impacts. The YRBS includes questions designed to assess both students' physical activity levels and their experiences with injuries. By gathering this data, schools can better understand how students are engaging in healthy, safe practices and where improvements are needed.

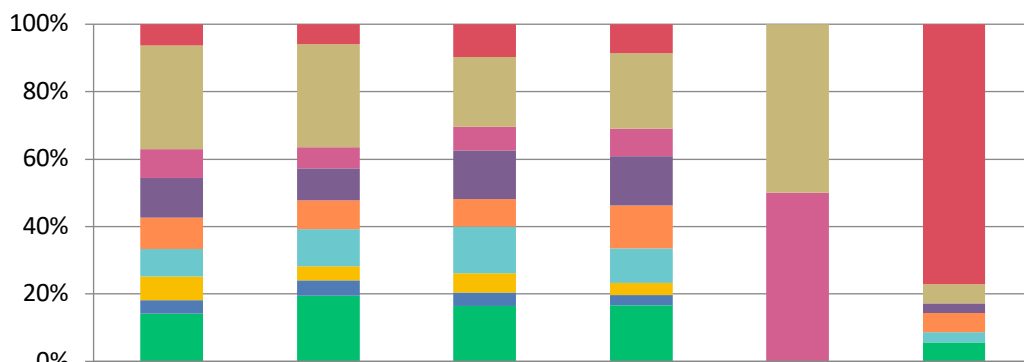
Physical activity among students has shown promising progress, with more students meeting the recommended 60 minutes of daily exercise. Activity levels remain highest among males, followed by females and students identifying as "Other." However, inactivity continues to be a concern, with students identifying as an "Other" gender experiencing the highest levels of inactivity. Additionally, inactivity tends to increase with grade level, peaking among older students.

At the same time, rising injury rates over the past few years highlight the need to prioritize student safety. While strides are being made in promoting physical activity, these trends emphasize the importance of fostering safe, sustainable habits and ensuring all students have access to opportunities for regular, healthy physical activity.

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?



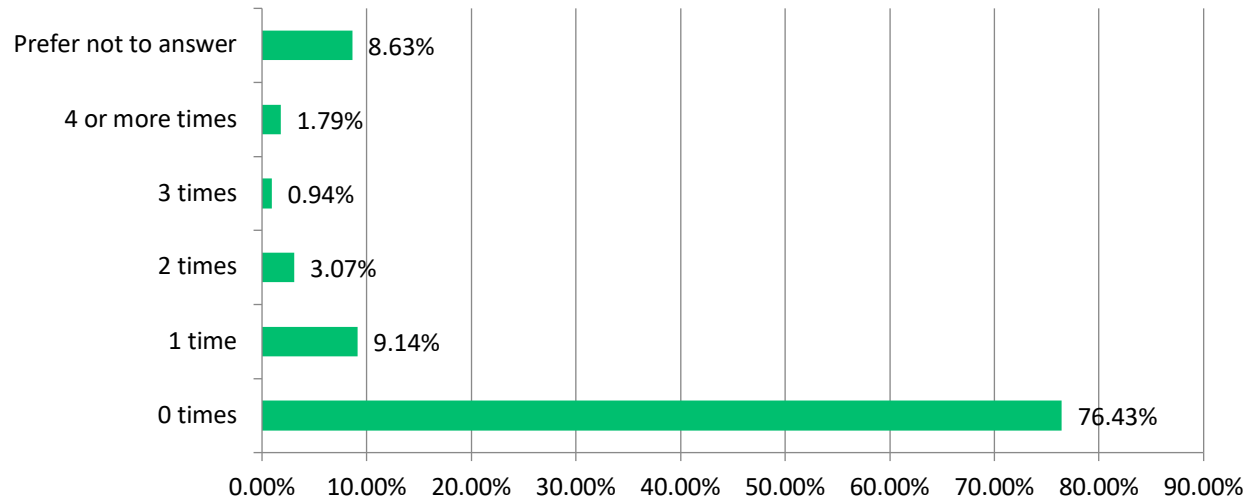
	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
■ Prefer not to answer	6.30%	6.01%	9.64%	8.64%	0.00%	77.14%
■ 7 days	30.74%	30.39%	20.71%	22.26%	50.00%	5.71%
■ 6 days	8.52%	6.36%	7.14%	8.31%	50.00%	0.00%
■ 5 days	11.85%	9.54%	14.29%	14.62%	0.00%	2.86%
■ 4 days	9.26%	8.48%	8.21%	12.62%	0.00%	5.71%
■ 3 days	8.15%	10.95%	13.93%	10.30%	0.00%	2.86%
■ 2 days	7.04%	4.24%	5.71%	3.65%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 1 day	4.07%	4.59%	3.93%	2.99%	0.00%	0.00%
■ 0 days	14.07%	19.43%	16.43%	16.61%	0.00%	5.71%

Key Findings on Recent Physical Activity Among Students

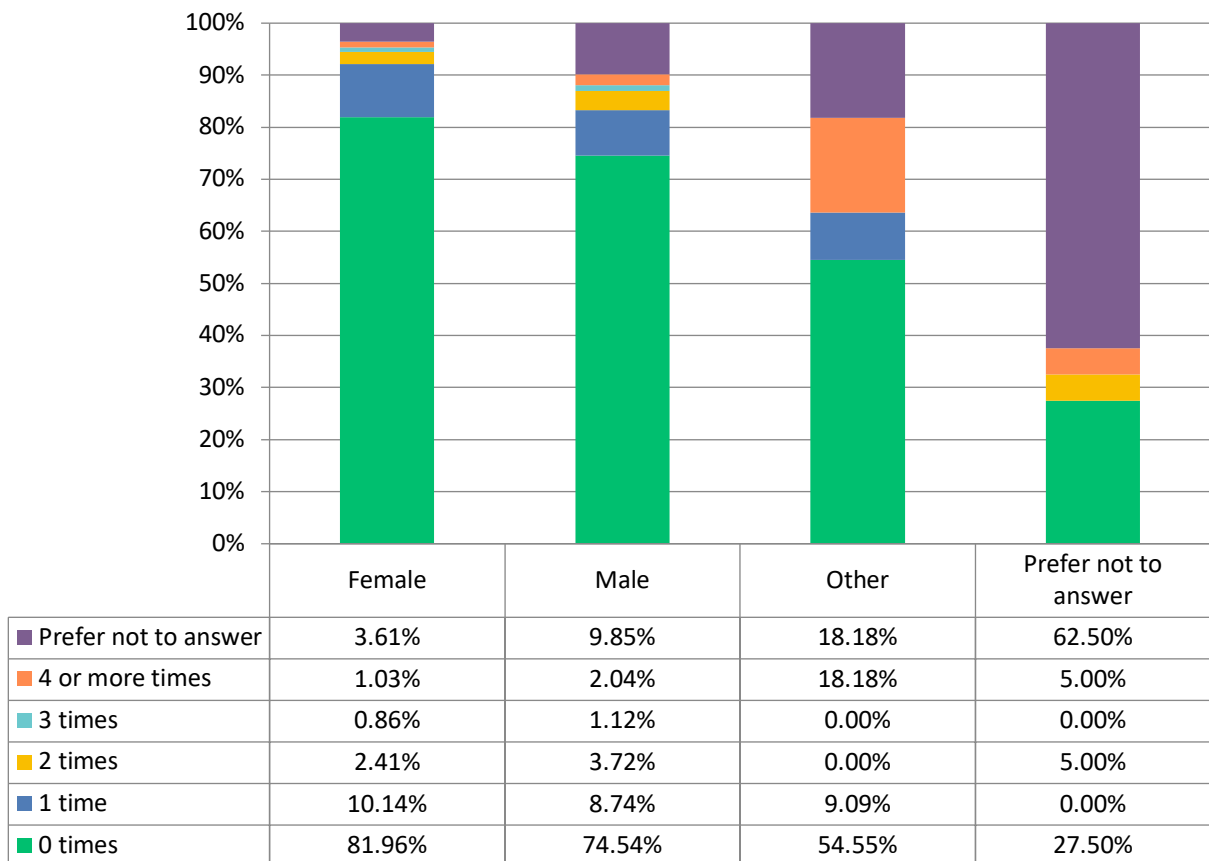
- **Majority Engage in Daily Physical Activity:** 25.36% of students reported being physically active for at least 60 minutes on all 7 days of the past week. This is the most common response, with only 16.31% reporting 0 days of activity.
- **Gender Differences:** Male students were the most likely to be active on all 7 days (31.04%), compared to females (21.48%) and students identifying as "Other" (18.18%). Males also had the lowest rate of inactivity, with 18.96% reporting 0 days, compared to 14.09% of females and 36.36% of students identifying as "Other."
- **Grade Differences:** Physical activity decreases slightly with grade level. Ninth graders were the most active, with 30.74% reporting 7 days of activity, compared to 22.26% of 12th graders. Inactivity also increased with grade level. To illustrate, 14.07% of 9th graders reported 0 days of physical activity, which rose to 16.61% for 12th graders.

Physical Activity and Injuries

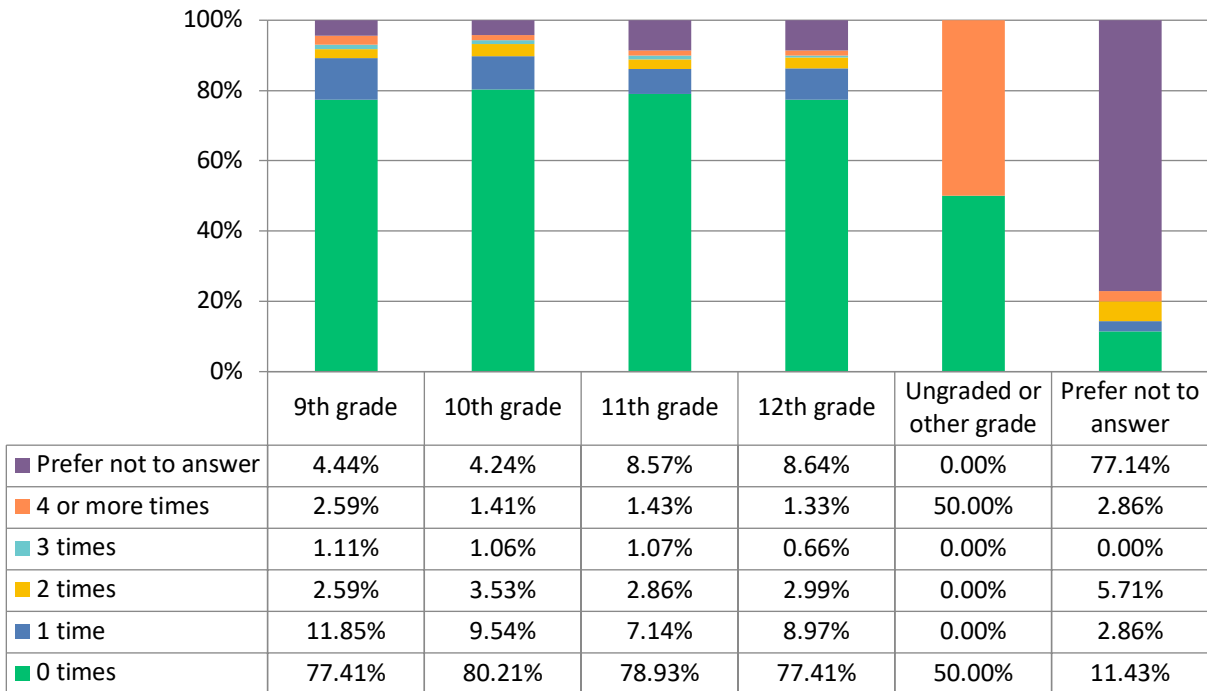
During the past 12 months, how many times did you have a concussion from playing a sport or being physically active?



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



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

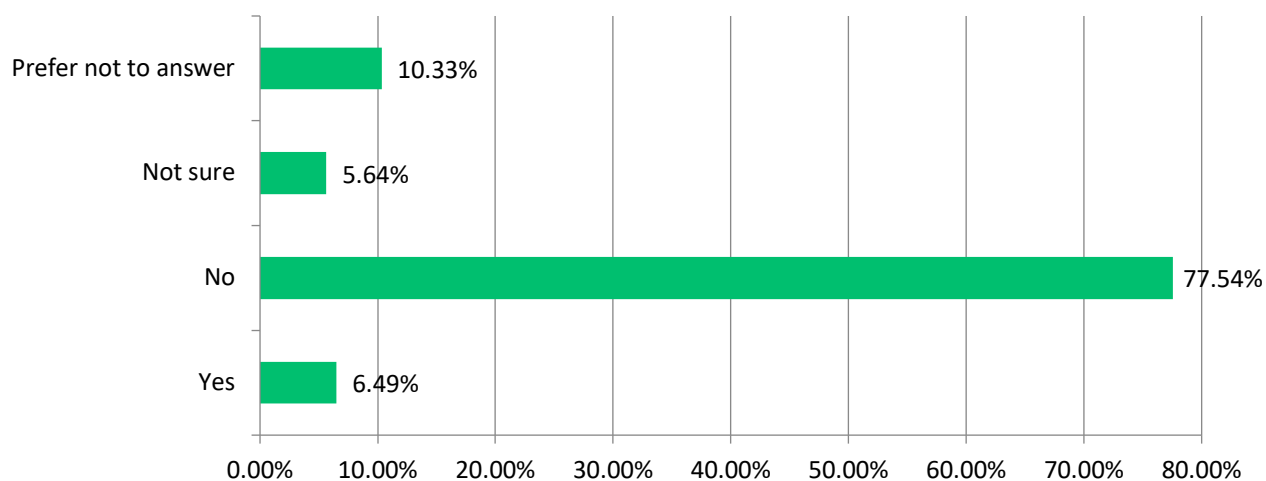


Key Findings on Concussion from Sports Among Students

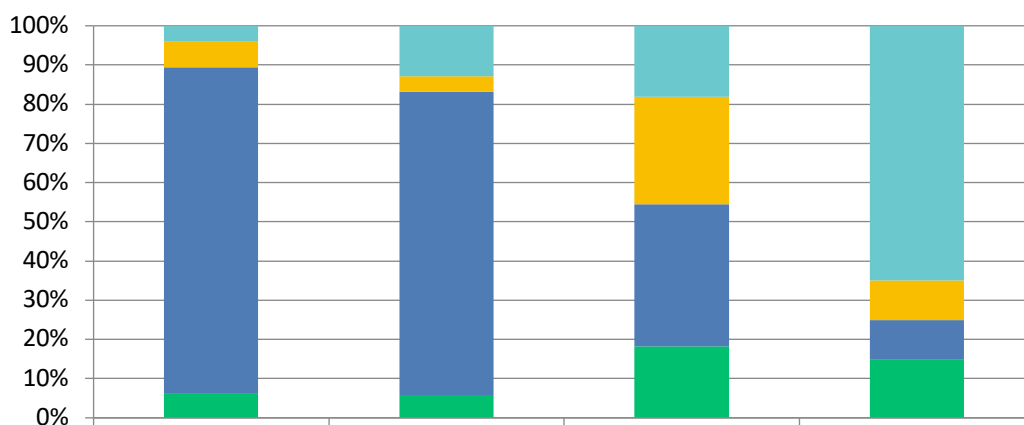
- **Majority Report No Concussions:** The majority of students (76.43%) reported not experiencing a concussion in the past 12 months, while 9.14% reported having one concussion.
- **Gender Differences:** Female students had the highest rate of reporting no concussions (81.96%), while male students reported slightly fewer (74.54%). Among students identifying as "Other," 54.55% reported no concussions, with a higher percentage experiencing multiple concussions, including 18.18% reporting 4 or more.
- **Grade Differences:** The rate of students reporting no concussions remained fairly consistent across grades, with around 77% to 80% reporting no concussions. Ninth graders had the highest rate of reporting 1 concussion (11.85%), while 10th graders reported the highest rate of 2 concussions (3.53%). Students in ungraded or other categories had a higher rate of multiple concussions, with 50% reporting 4 or more.

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?

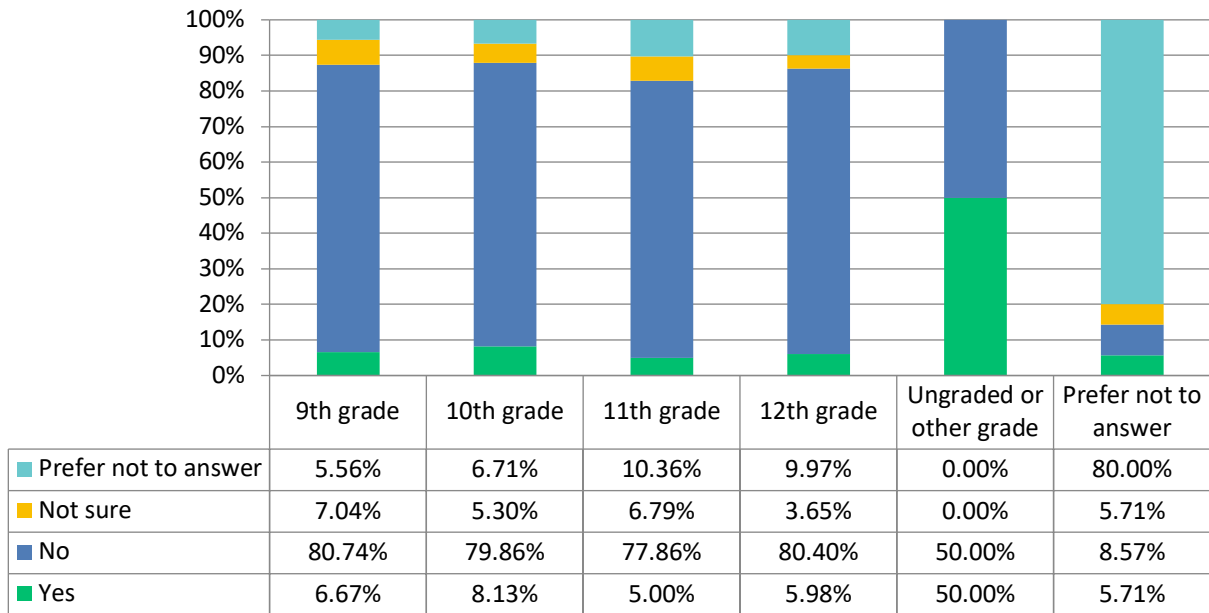


Do you have a disability or long-term health problem that keeps you from doing everyday activities such as bathing, getting dressed, doing school work, playing sports, or being with friends?



Prefer not to answer	4.12%	12.83%	18.18%	65.00%
Not sure	6.53%	3.90%	27.27%	10.00%
No	82.99%	77.51%	36.36%	10.00%
Yes	6.36%	5.76%	18.18%	15.00%

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?

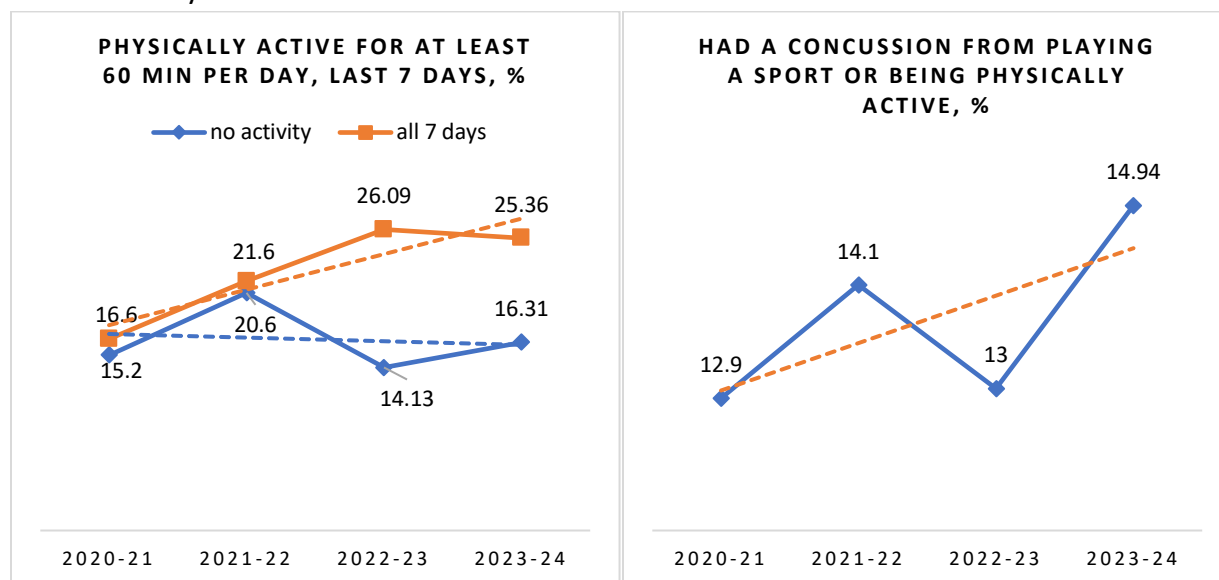


Key Findings on Disability or Long-Term Health Problems Among Students

- **Majority Report No Disability or Long-Term Health Problems:** 77.54% of students indicated they do not have a disability or long-term health problem that limits their ability to perform daily activities. Only 6.49% of students reported having such a condition.
- **Gender Differences:** Female students were more likely to report no limitations (82.99%) compared to males (77.51%) and those identifying as "Other" (36.36%). A notable percentage of students identifying as "Other" (18.18%) reported having a disability or long-term health problem. A smaller subset of males (5.76%) and females (6.36%) reported having such limitations.
- **Grade Differences:** Across grades, around 80% of students reported no limitations due to a disability or health issue. Ninth graders had the greatest proportion of students of reporting no disability (80.74%), while 11th graders reported slightly lower proportions (77.86%). Students in ungraded categories had the highest rate of reporting disabilities, with 50% indicating a condition affecting daily activities.

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 proportion of students engaging in daily physical activity (60 minutes) has steadily increased, reaching 25.36% in 2023–2024 from 16.6% in 2020–2021. This consistent rise suggests positive trends in daily exercise adherence.
- **No Physical Activity:** Conversely, the percentage of students reporting no physical activity has slightly fluctuated, peaking at 16.31% in 2023–2024. This highlights a small segment of students with low activity levels.
- **Concussion Rates from Physical Activity:** The percentage of students reporting a concussion from sports or physical activity has shown a gradual increase, from 12.9% in 2020–2021 to 14.94% in 2023–2024. This trend highlights an upward trajectory in concussion incidents over recent years.

Social Emotional Health

The social-emotional health of students plays a critical role in their overall development, influencing everything from their sense of belonging to their ability to resist peer pressure. To better understand these dynamics, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) asks students a range of questions about their social media use, feelings of community belonging, access to supportive adults, and more. These questions allow schools and communities to assess how students are navigating social pressures and whether they feel supported in their social environments.

Data from the YRBS shows that students are increasingly engaged with social media, with a majority of students using it multiple times per day. While social media use is prevalent across all grades, females tend to use it more frequently than males. At the same time, a small but notable portion of students report little to no social media use, especially among male students. Overall, this suggests different patterns of digital engagement.

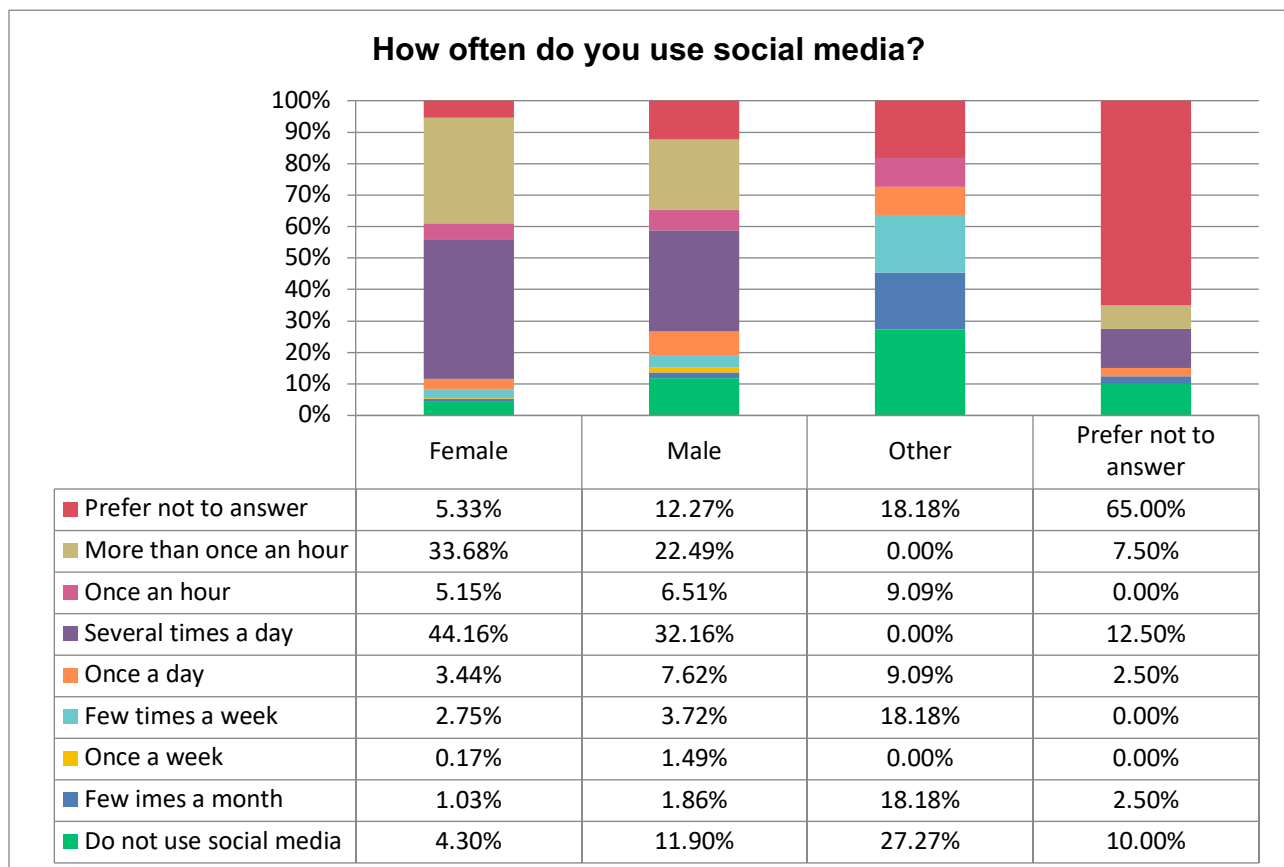
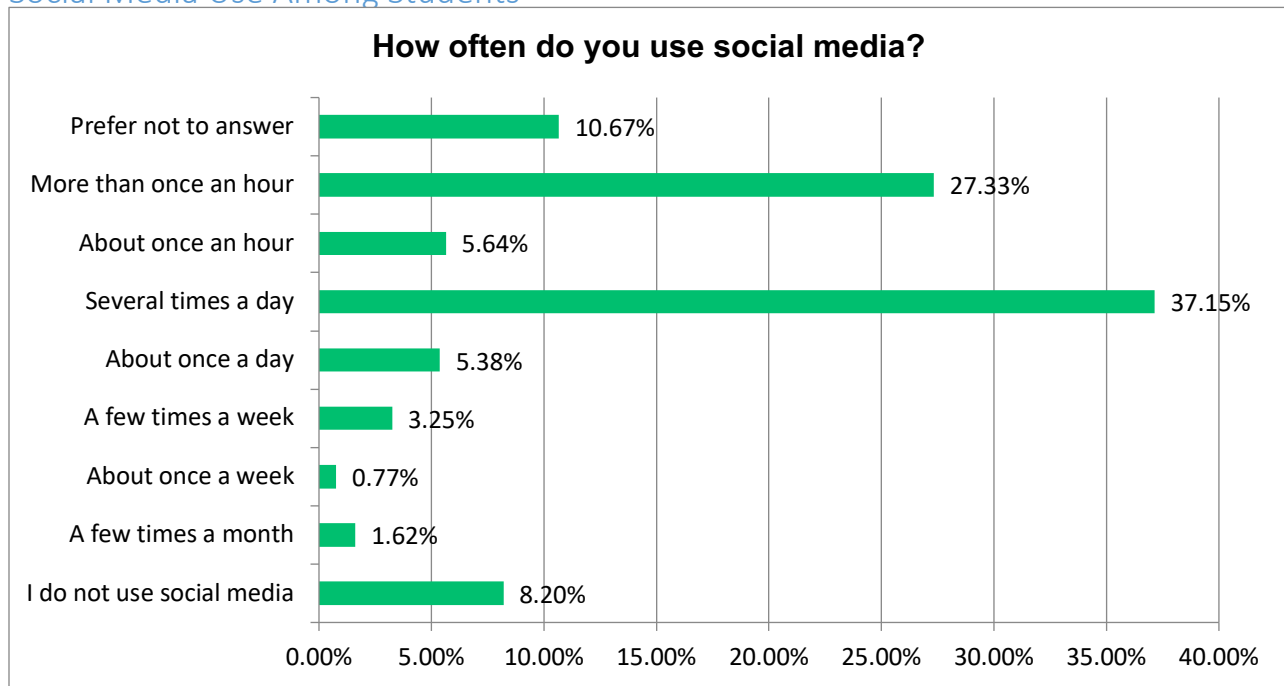
Parental oversight also remains strong, with over half of students reporting that their parents always know where they are or who they are with. However, this oversight decreases slightly as students progress through high school, possibly reflecting growing independence. Gender differences in parental involvement are notable, with females more likely to report constant oversight compared to males and students identifying as "Other."

In terms of community belonging, feelings of being valued in the community have declined over the past few years, dropping to 42.19% in 2023-2024. While some students report a strong sense of community, uncertainty remains high, especially among older students and those identifying as "Other," suggesting that many students may not feel fully connected to their community.

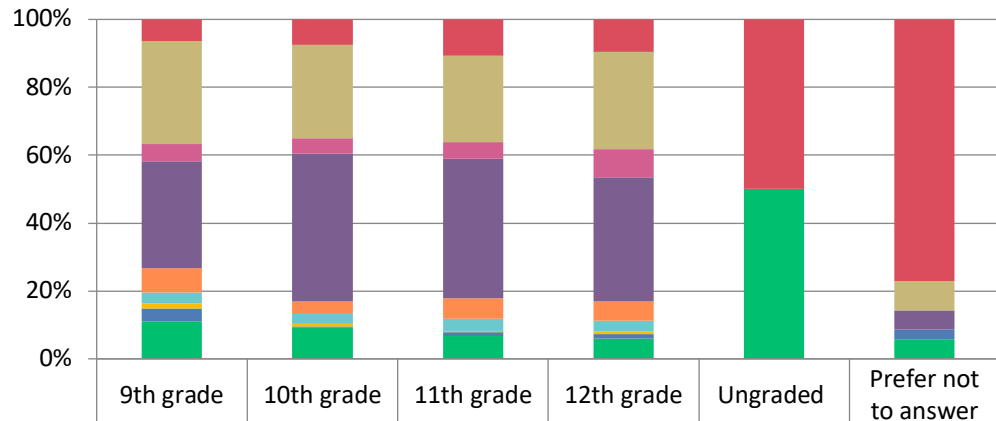
Finally, most students report having access to caring adults for emotional support, but this access appears to decrease slightly as students advance through school. In contrast, confidence in resisting peer pressure remains high, with 62% of students expressing confidence in their ability to make independent choices.

By asking these questions, the YRBS provides valuable insights into students' social-emotional well-being, helping schools identify areas where interventions may be needed to foster stronger connections, support systems, and a sense of belonging for all students.

Social Media Use Among Students



How often do you use social media?

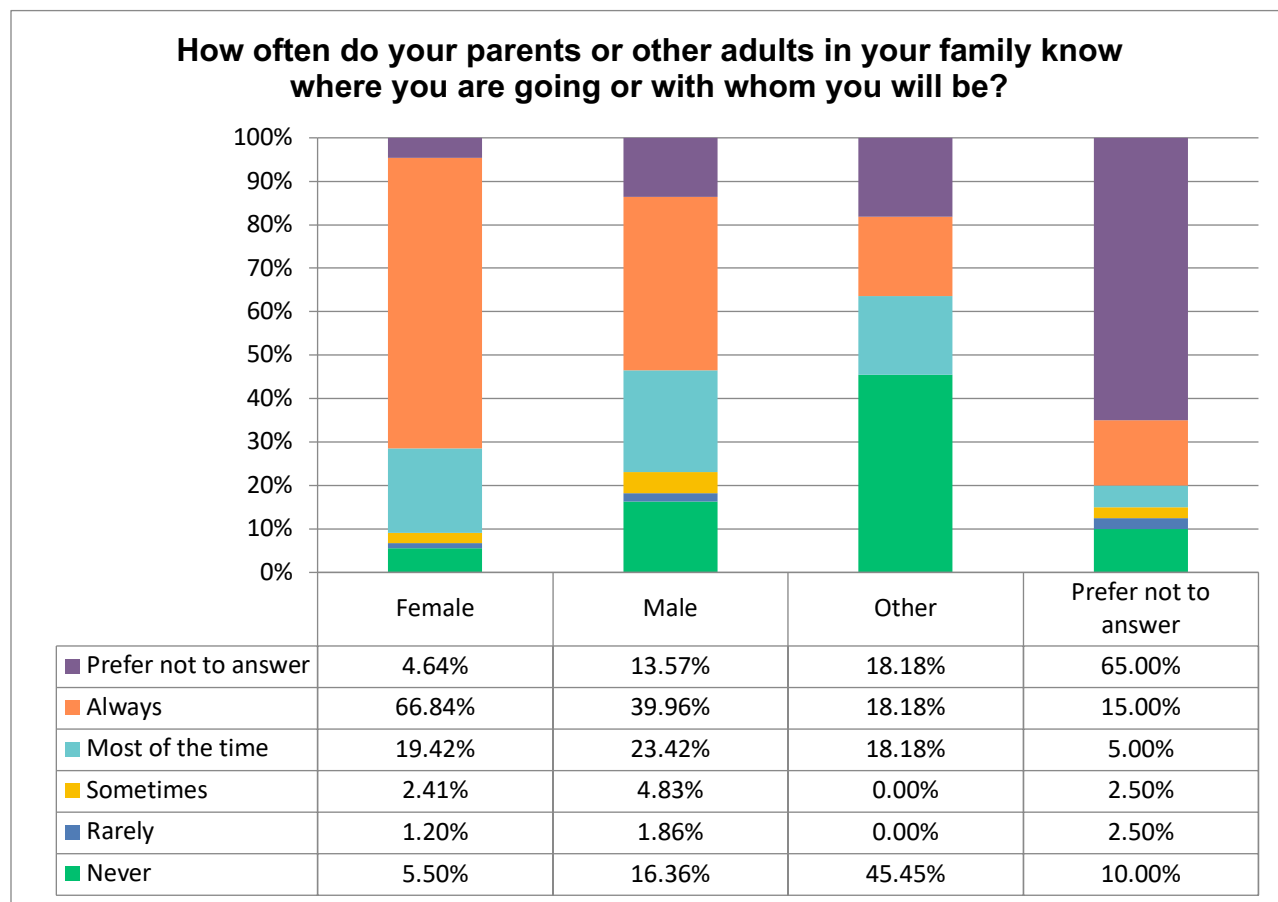
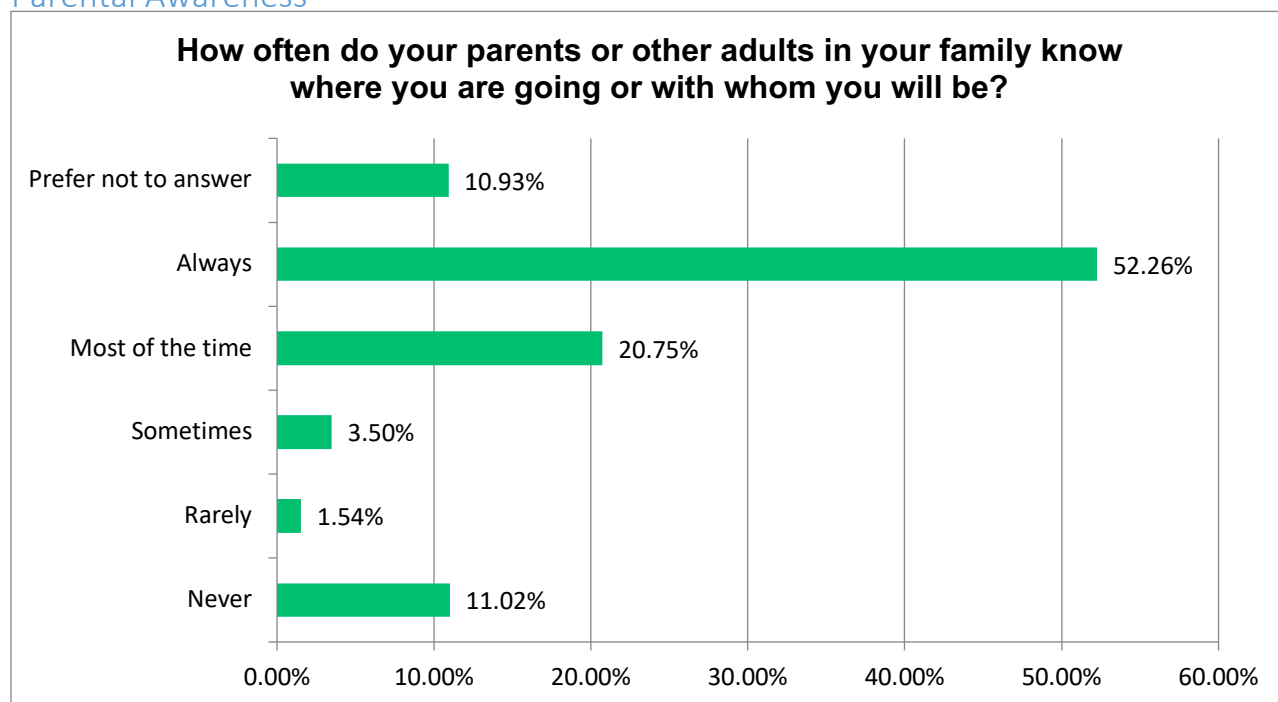


■ Prefer not to answer	6.30%	7.42%	10.71%	9.63%	50.00%	77.14%
■ More than once an hour	30.37%	27.56%	25.36%	28.57%	0.00%	8.57%
■ Once an hour	5.19%	4.59%	5.00%	8.31%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Several times a day	31.48%	43.46%	41.07%	36.54%	0.00%	5.71%
■ Once a day	7.04%	3.53%	6.07%	5.65%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Few times a week	3.33%	3.18%	3.57%	3.32%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Once a week	1.48%	0.71%	0.36%	0.66%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Few times a month	3.70%	0.35%	1.07%	1.33%	0.00%	2.86%
■ Do not social media	11.11%	9.19%	6.79%	5.98%	50.00%	5.71%

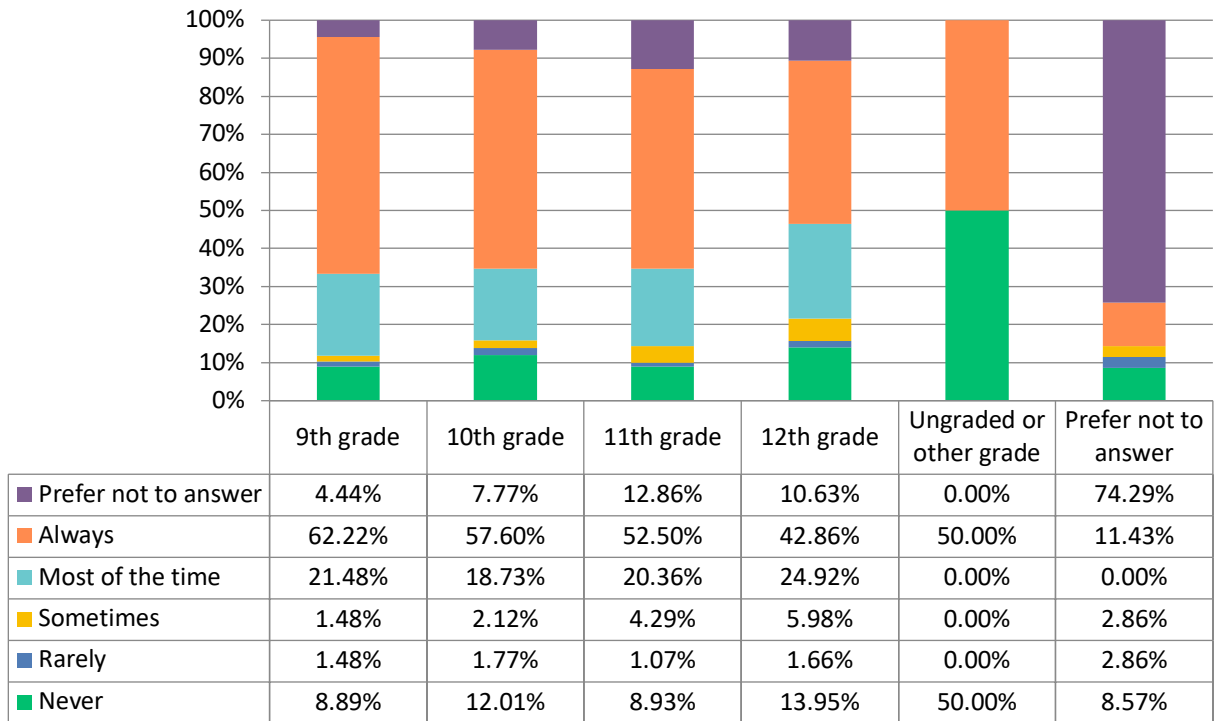
Key Findings on Social Media Use

- Frequent Social Media Use:** A majority of students use social media multiple times daily, with 37.15% reporting usage "several times a day" and 27.33% "more than once an hour." This indicates a high level of digital engagement among students.
- Gender Differences:** Female students show higher daily social media use, with 44.16% using it "several times a day," compared to 32.16% of males. Males, however, have a higher percentage (11.90%) reporting they do not use social media at all compared to females (4.30%).
- Grade Differences:** Social media usage frequency shows slight variations across grades. Usage "more than once an hour" decreases from 30.37% in 9th grade to 28.57% in 12th grade.
- Uncertainty and Reluctance to Answer:** A notable 10.67% of students selected "prefer not to answer," with this choice higher among those who did not specify gender (65%).

Parental Awareness



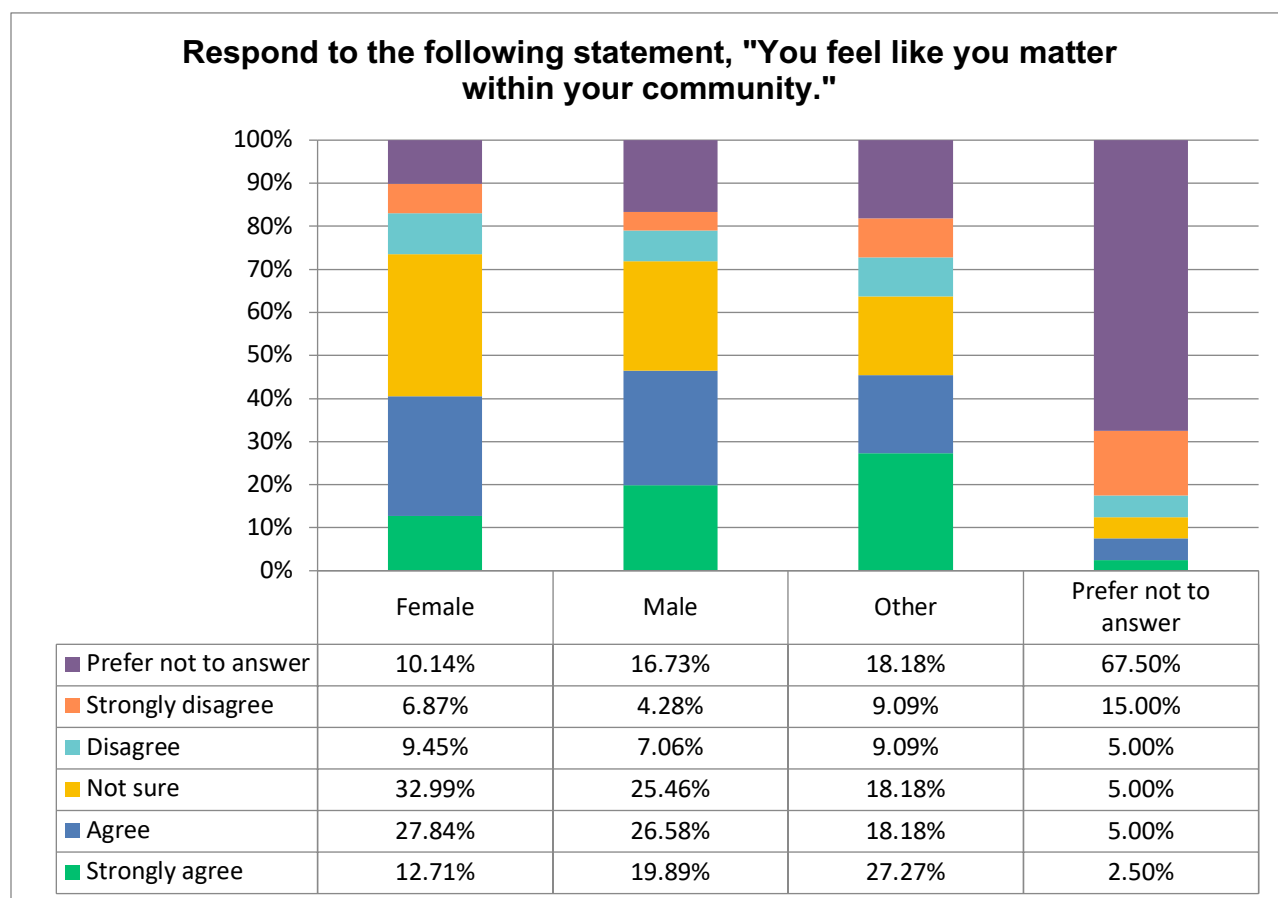
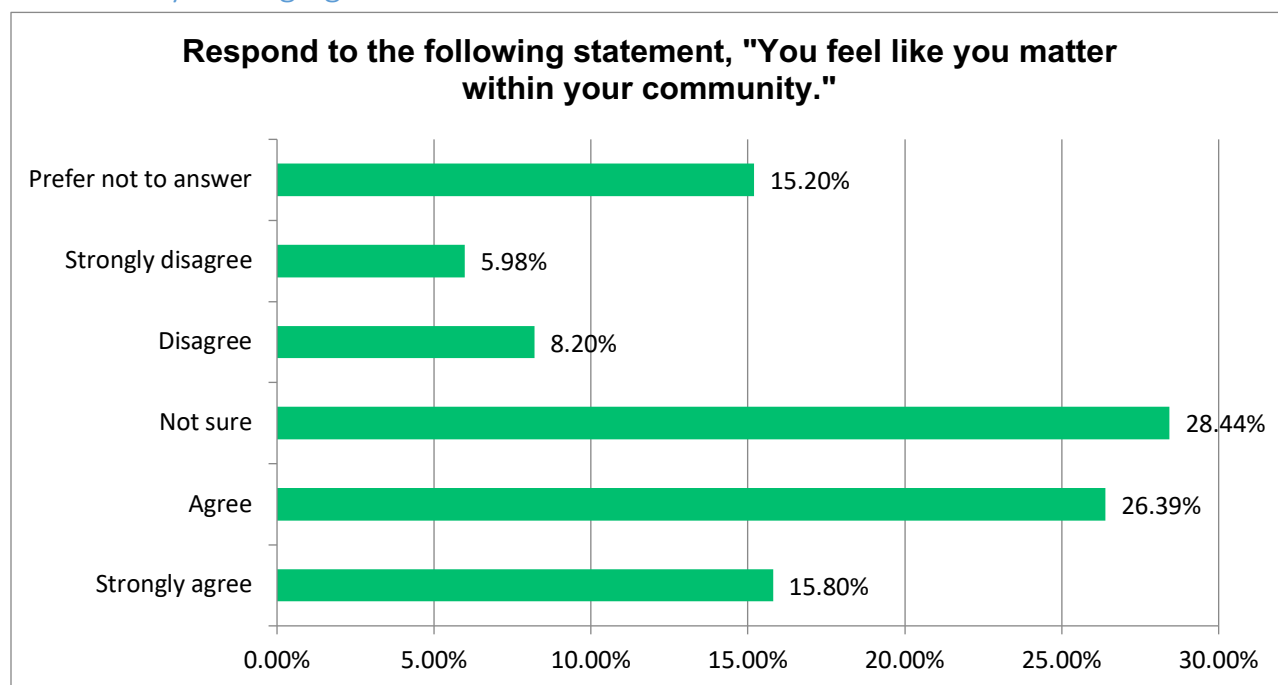
How often do your parents or other adults in your family know where you are going or with whom you will be?



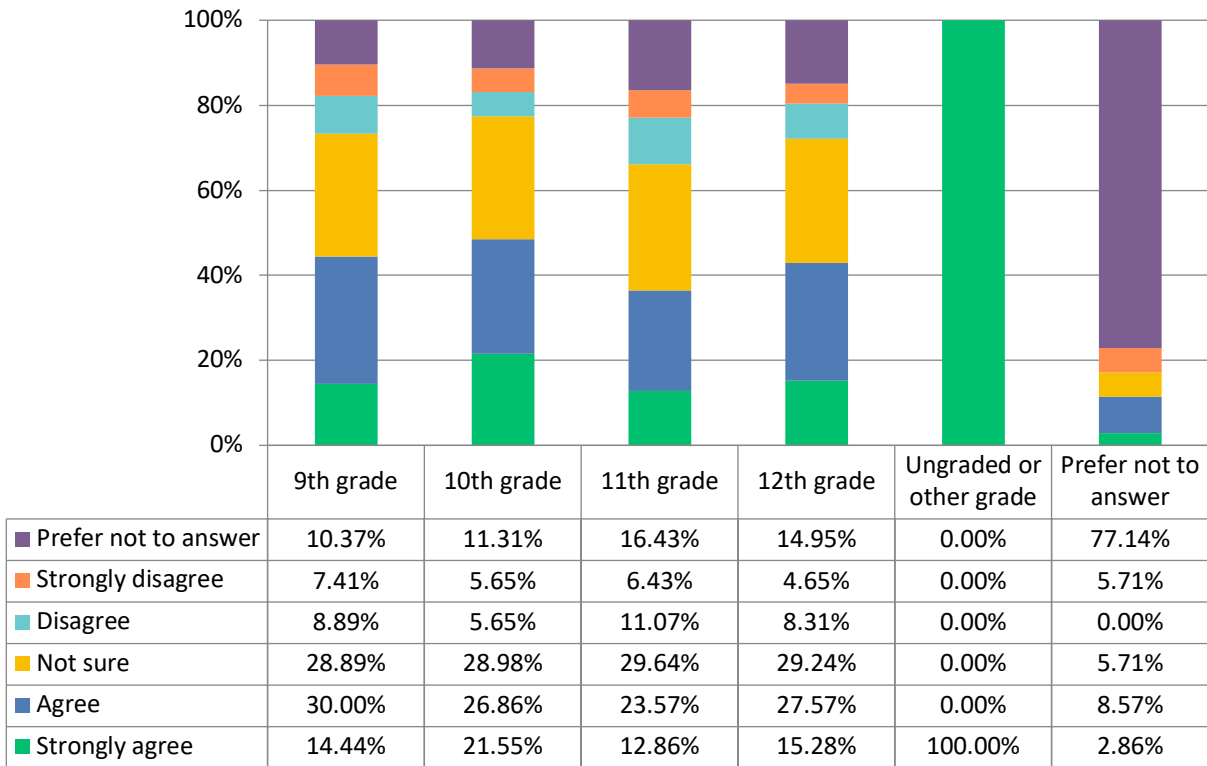
Key Findings on Parental Knowledge of Students' Whereabouts:

- **High Levels of Parental Awareness:** A majority of students (52.26%) reported that their parents or other adults "Always" know where they are going or with whom, indicating a strong sense of family oversight. An additional 20.75% stated that their parents know "Most of the time."
- **Gender Differences:** Female students are more likely to report that their parents "Always" know their plans (66.84%), compared to 39.96% of male students and 18.18% of students identifying as "Other." Male students are more likely to report "Never" (16.36%) compared to females (5.50%), suggesting gender-based differences in parental oversight.
- **Grade Differences:** The percentage of students who reported "Always" having their whereabouts known decreases slightly by grade, from 62.22% in 9th grade to 42.86% in 12th grade. This trend may reflect increasing independence as students progress through high school.
- **Reluctance and Privacy Concerns:** Overall, 10.93% of students selected "Prefer not to answer." This reluctance is notably higher among students in the "Other" gender category (18.18%) and those who chose "Prefer not to answer" their gender (65.00%).

Community Belonging



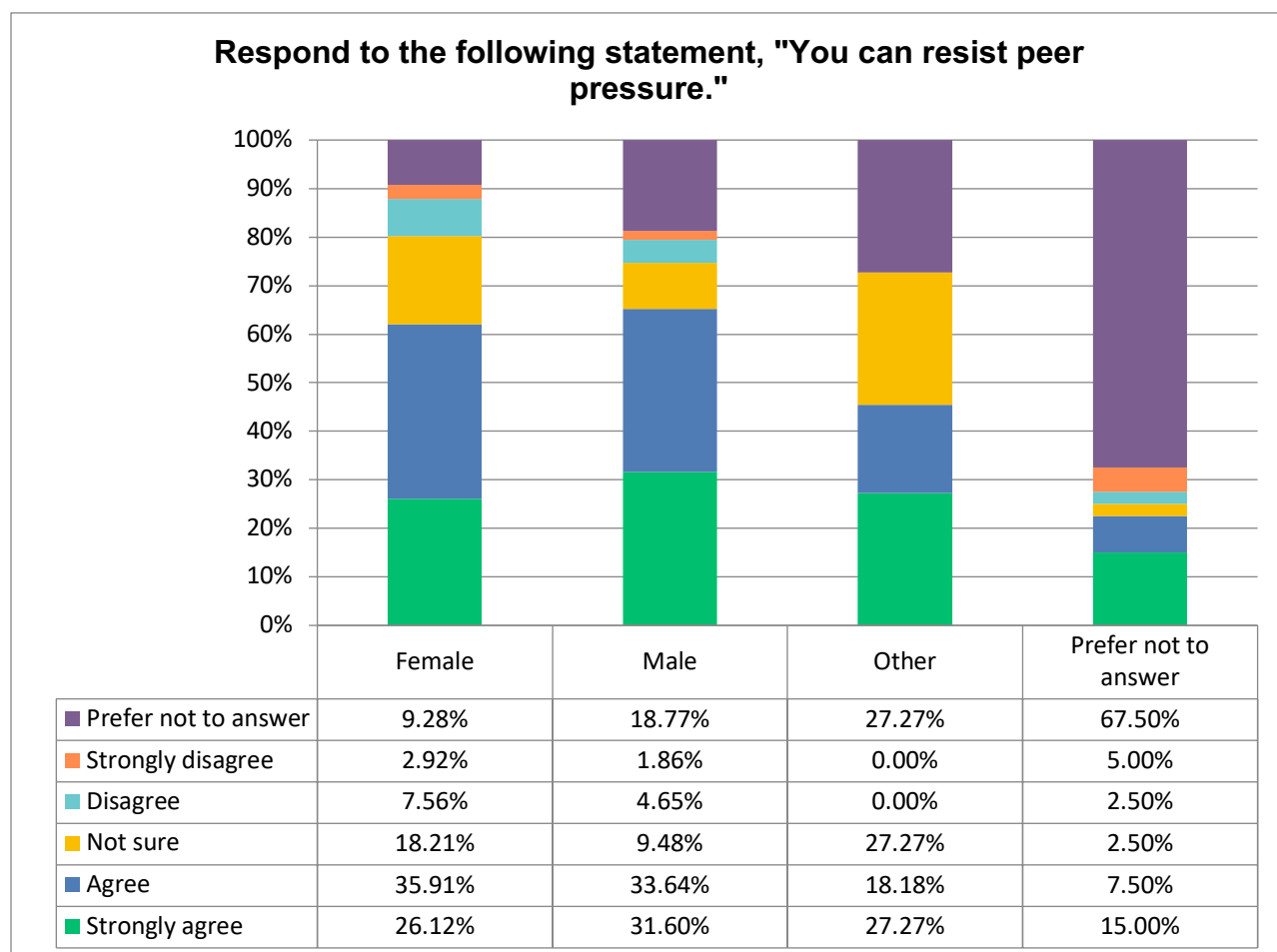
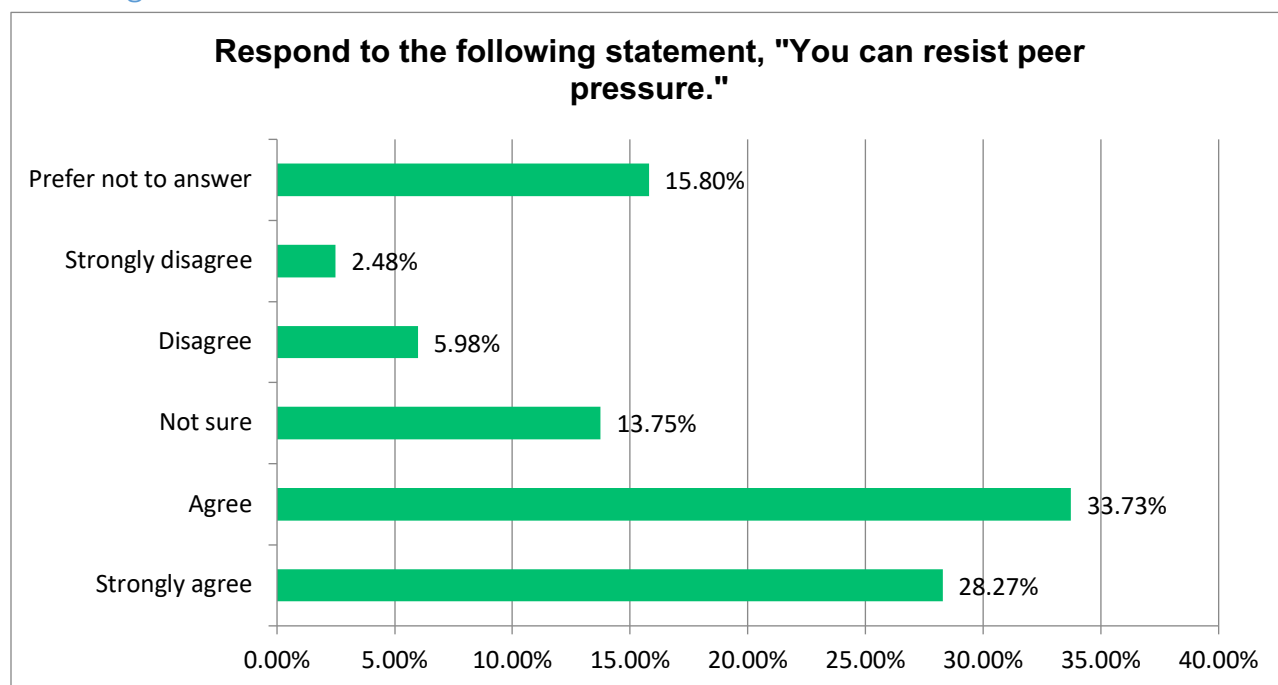
Respond to the following statement, "You feel like you matter within your community."



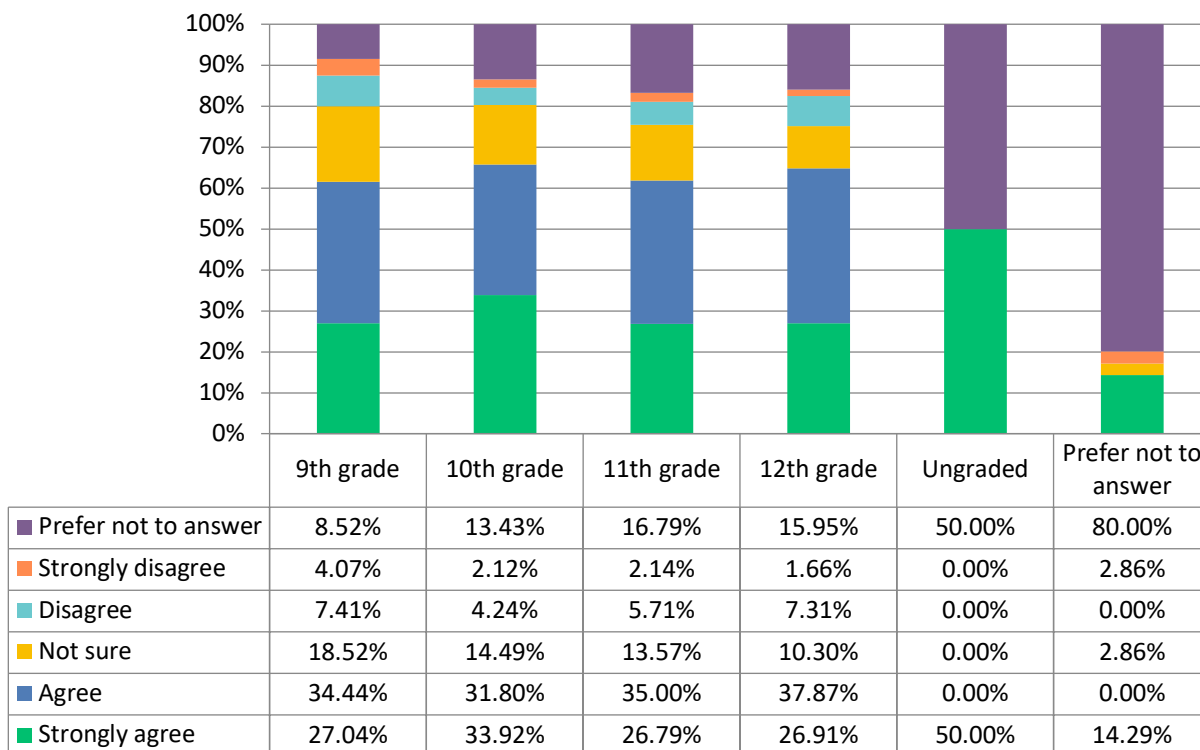
Key Finding on Community Belonging

- Mixed Sense of Belonging:** Over half of the students reported feeling like they matter in their community, with 26.39% agreeing and 15.80% strongly agreeing, for a combined 42.19% with positive responses. However, a notable 28.44% indicated uncertainty, reflecting mixed perceptions of community belonging.
- Gender Differences:** Gender-based responses show that male students are more likely to strongly agree they matter (19.98%) compared to females (12.71%). Moreover, females were more likely to indicate uncertainty (32.99%) than other groups. Those identifying as "Other" reported the highest rate of strongly agreeing at 27.27%, indicating differing levels of community belonging across gender identities.
- Grade Differences:** Agreement on feeling valued by the community decreases slightly with grade level. Notably, 30.00% of 9th graders agreed they matter within the community, compared to 27.57% of 12th graders. Likewise, the percentage of students who "Strongly agree" fluctuates, peaking in 10th grade at 21.55% before falling to 15.28% in 12th grade, suggesting a potential decline in community connectedness over time.

Resisting Peer Pressure



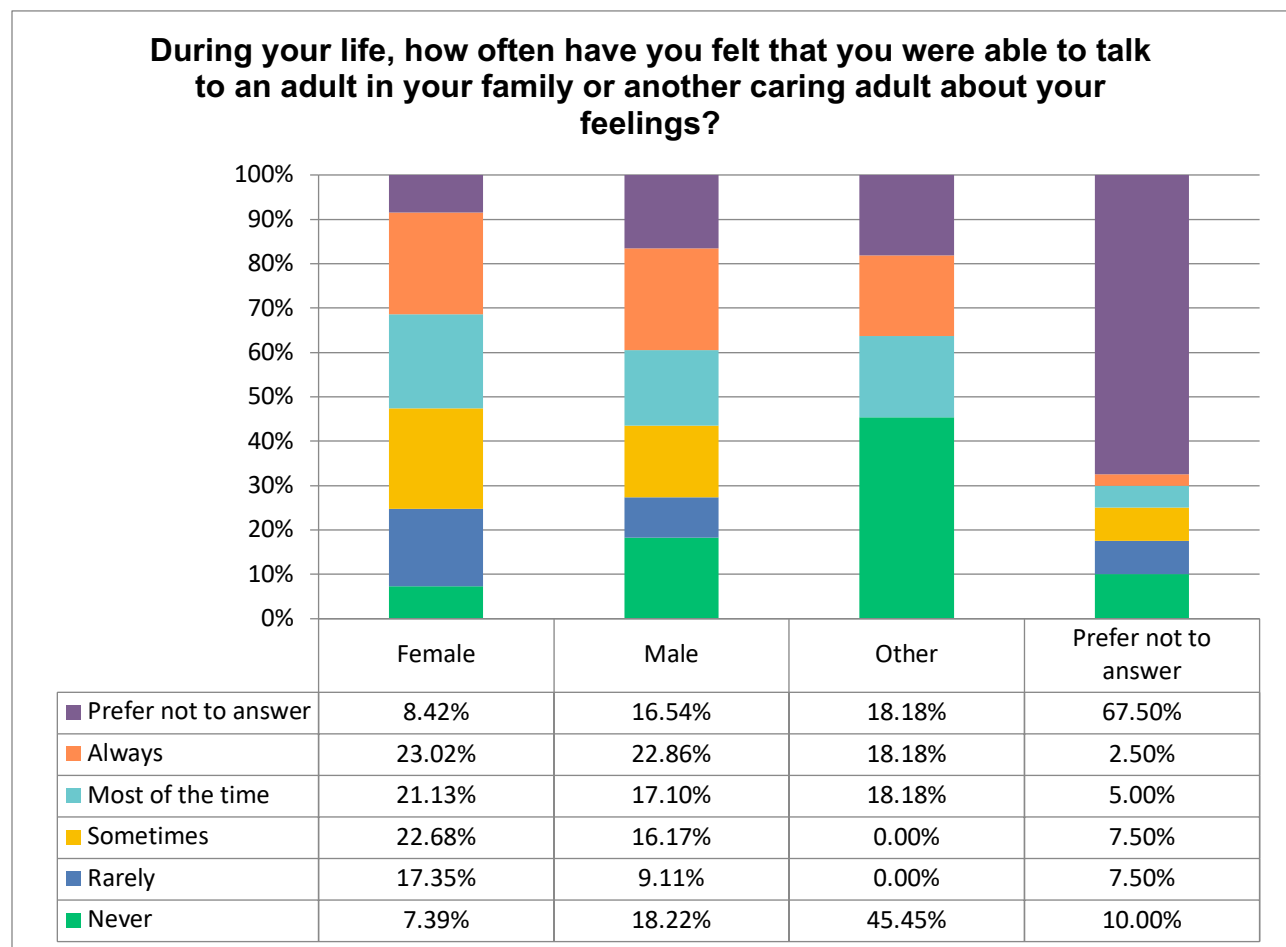
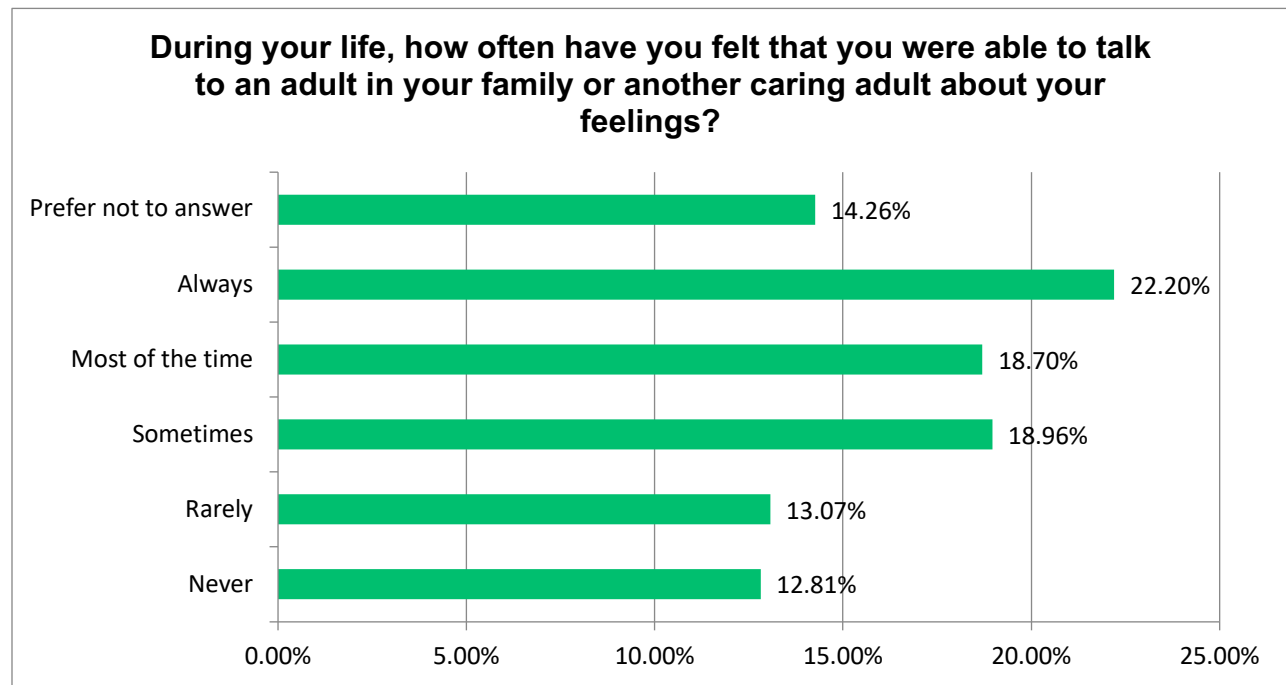
Respond to the following statement, "You can resist peer pressure."



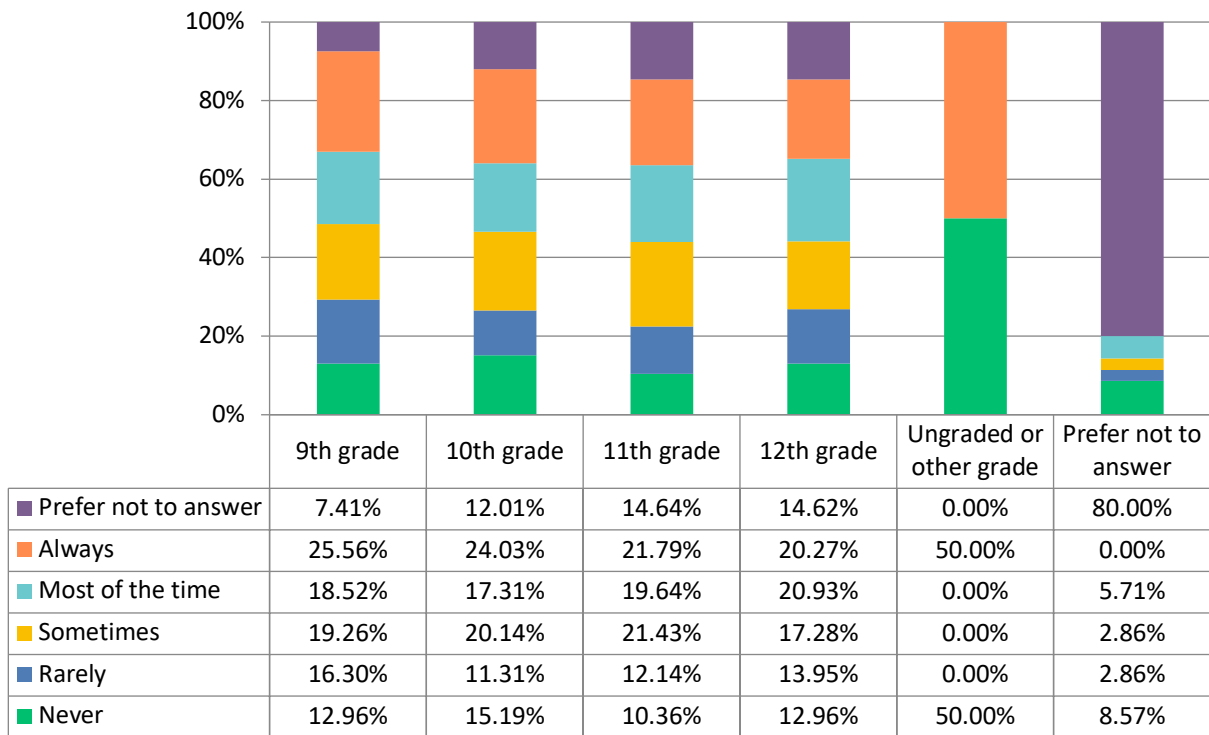
Key Finding on Peer Pressure

- **High Confidence in Peer Pressure Resistance:** A majority of students feel confident in resisting peer pressure, with 33.73% agreeing and 28.27% strongly agreeing. This totals to 62% overall who believe they can resist peer pressure.
- **Gender Differences:** Gender differences are notable, with 31.60% of males strongly agreeing in their resistance to peer pressure compared to 26.12% of females. Students identifying as "Other" also report high levels of confidence, with 27.27% strongly agreeing.
- **Grade Differences:** Self-reported confidence in resisting peer pressure shows a slight decline across grades. The percentage of students who "strongly agree" decreases slightly from 27.04% in 9th grade to 26.91% in 12th grade. In addition, younger students were more likely to indicate they were "Not sure" about their ability to resist peer pressure.

Access to Caring Adults for Emotional Support



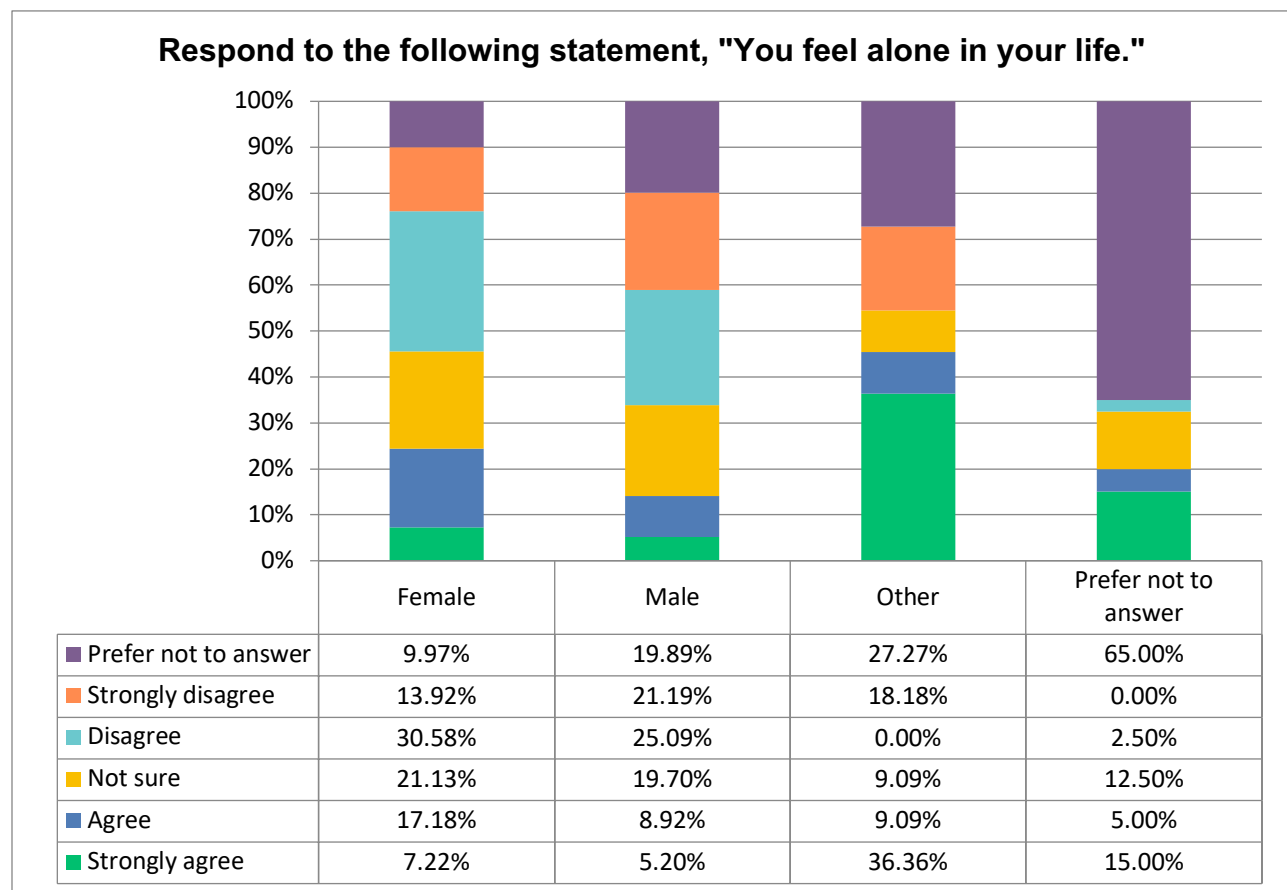
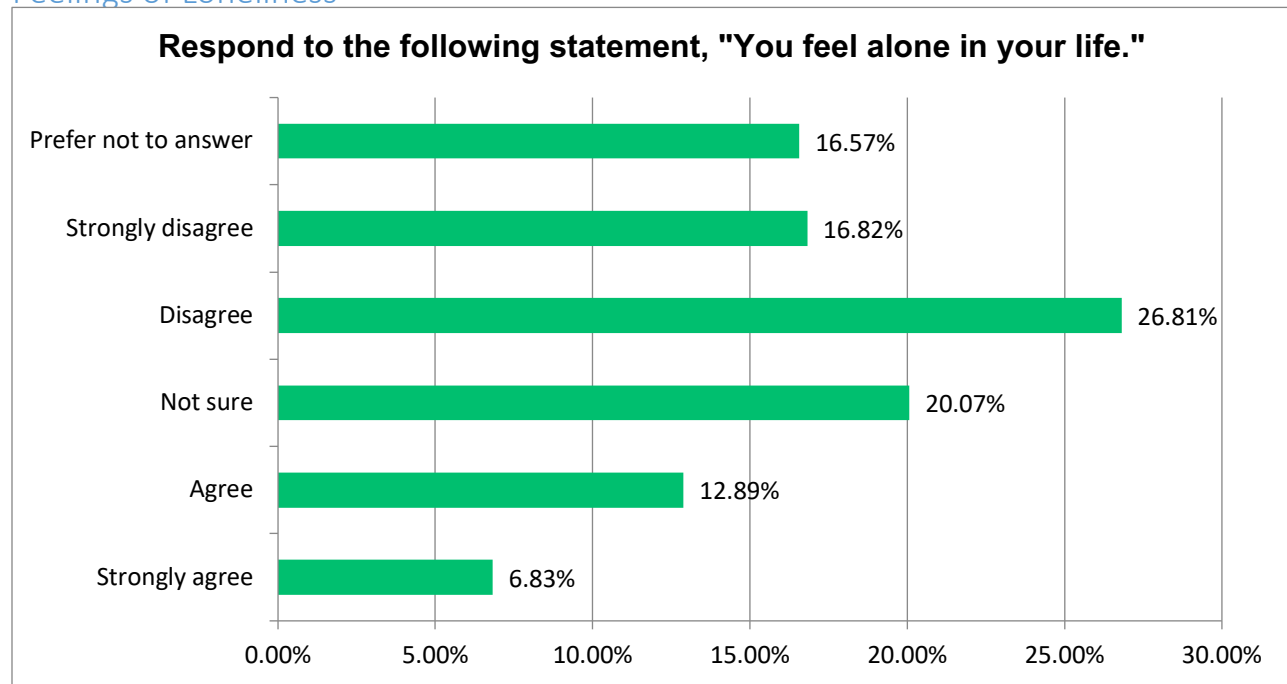
During your life, how often have you felt that you were able to talk to an adult in your family or another caring adult about your feelings?

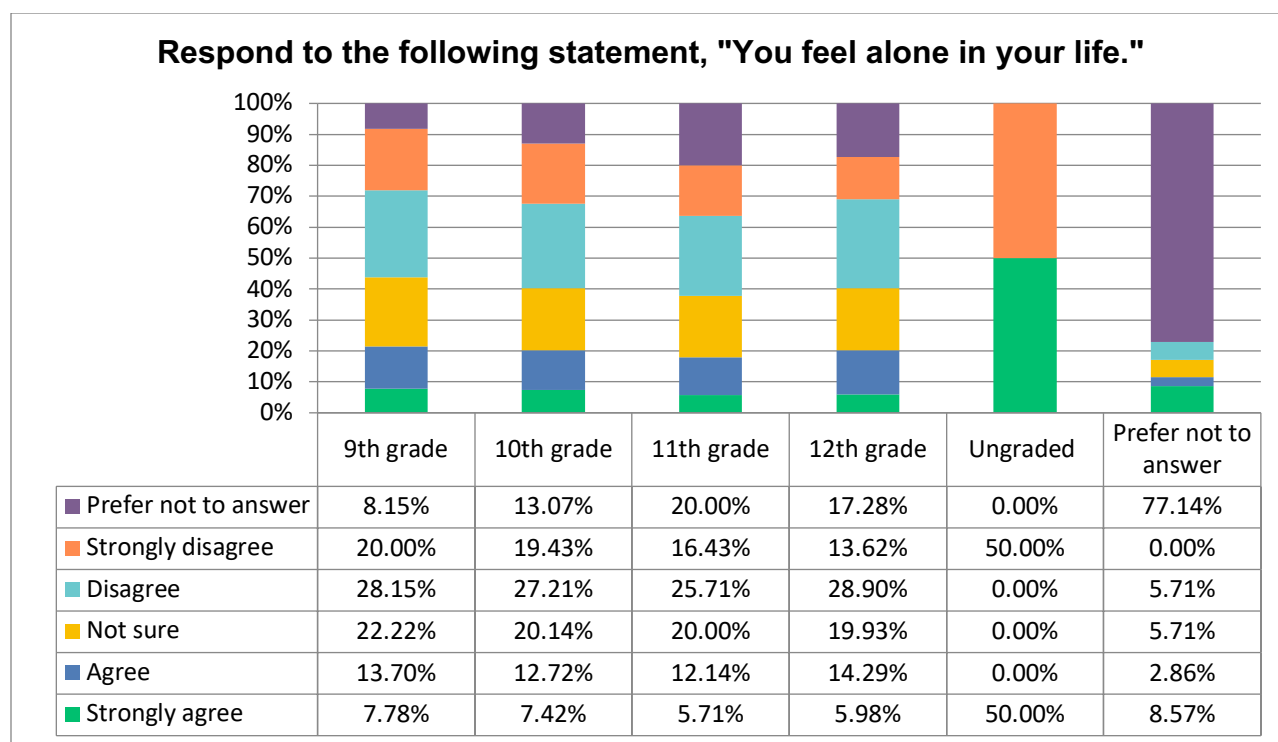


Key Findings on Access to Caring Adults for Emotional Support

- **Most Students Have Some Access to Supportive Adults:** Most students feel they can talk to an adult about their feelings at least some of the time. Specifically, 22.20% always felt they could talk to an adult, with an additional 18.70% able to do so most of the time. This suggests that around 40.9% experience reliable emotional support.
- **Gender Differences:** There are notable differences based on gender identity. Female students report the highest levels of consistent support (23.02% always). In contrast, students who identify as “Other” have higher rates of lower support access, with 45.45% reporting they rarely or never felt able to talk to an adult.
- **Grade Differences:** Access to caring adults appears to vary by grade. Ninth graders report the highest level of consistent support, with 25.56% always able to talk to an adult, while this percentage slightly decreases to 20.27% by 12th grade.
- **Uncertainty and Reluctance to Answer:** A notable portion (14.26%) of respondents preferred not to answer this question, with higher rates among ungraded or “Other” students. This suggests possible sensitivity or hesitation regarding the topic of emotional support.

Feelings of Loneliness

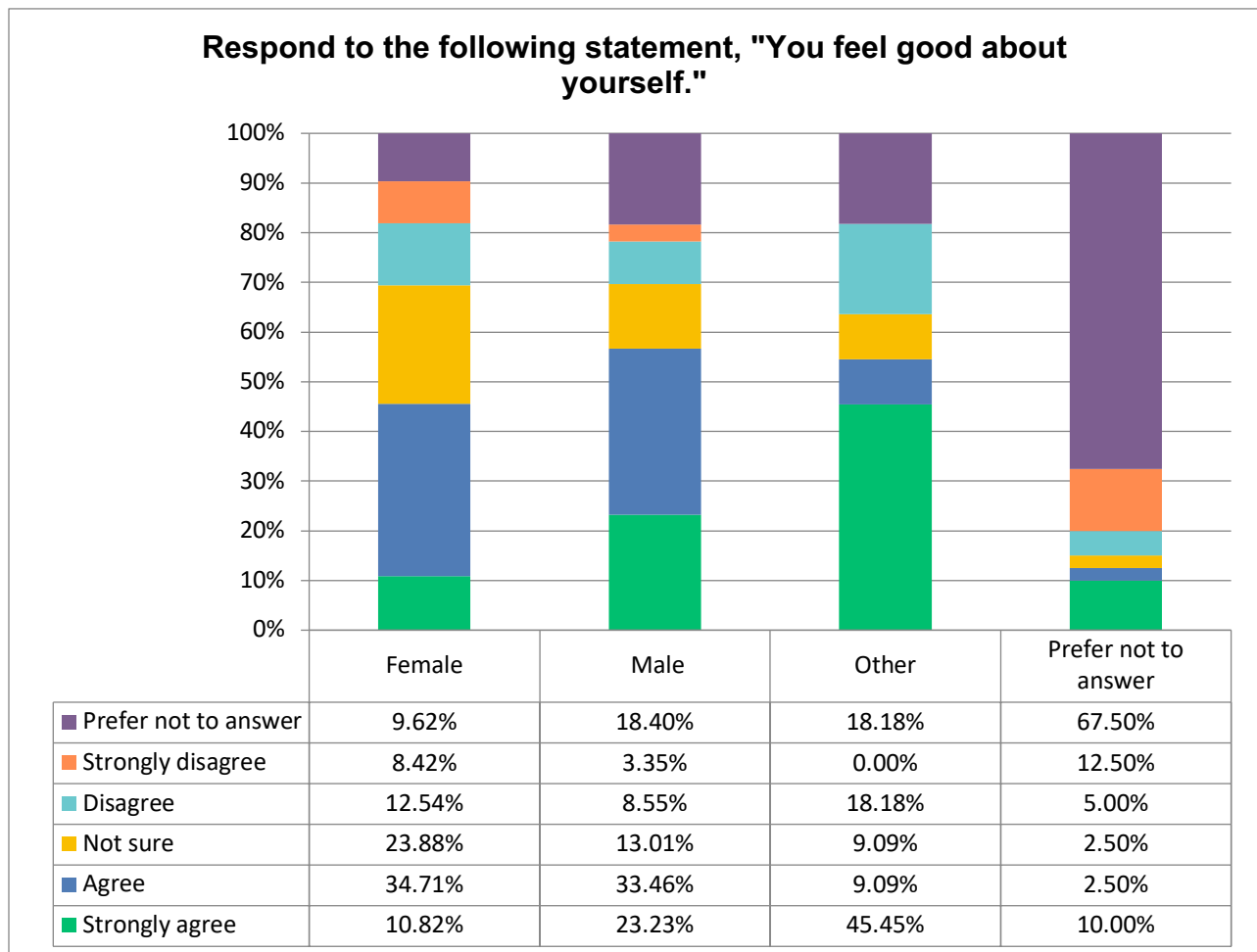
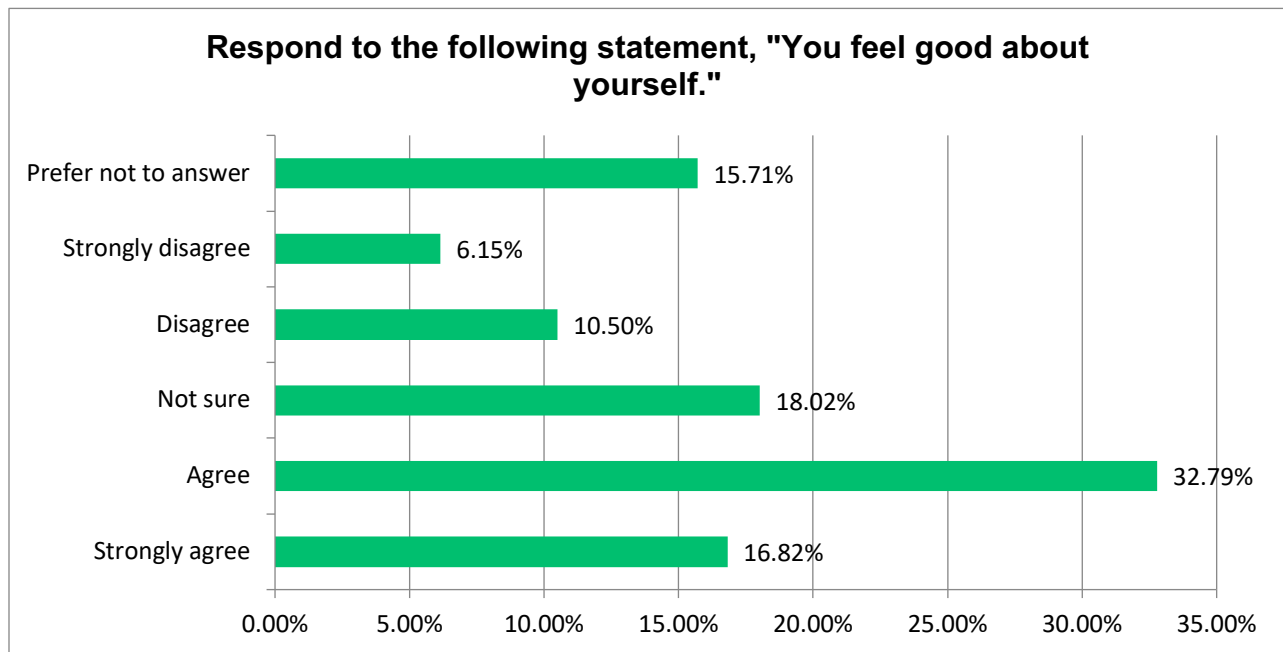




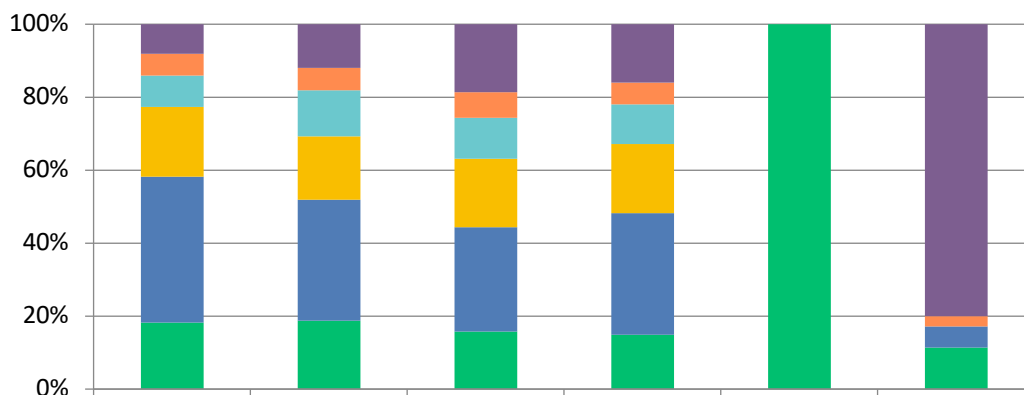
Key Findings on Feelings of Loneliness

- Mixed Experiences of Loneliness:** A majority of students report not feeling alone, with 26.81% disagreeing and 16.82% strongly disagreeing with the statement "You feel alone in your life." However, 12.89% agree and 6.83% strongly agree that they feel alone, highlighting that some students do experience loneliness.
- Gender Differences:** Gender differences are evident in feelings of loneliness. 17.18% of females report feeling alone compared to 8.92% of males. Students identifying as "Other" report a higher level of strong agreement at 36.36%.
- Grade Differences:** Feelings of loneliness show slight variations across grade levels. For example, the percentage of students who "Strongly agree" that they feel alone decreases from 7.78% in 9th grade to 5.98% in 12th grade, indicating a subtle trend toward reduced loneliness as students progress through high school. Similarly, those who "Agree" slightly decline from 13.70% in 9th grade to 14.29% in 12th grade.
- Uncertainty and Reluctance:** A notable 20.07% of students report being "Not sure" about their feelings of loneliness, with variation across grade levels ranging from 22.22% in 9th grade to 19.93% in 12th grade. Additionally, 16.57% preferred not to answer, with higher rates of reluctance among males (19.89%) and students identifying as "Other" (27.27%), suggesting privacy concerns or discomfort in expressing feelings of loneliness.

Student Self-Perception



Respond to the following statement, "You feel good about yourself."



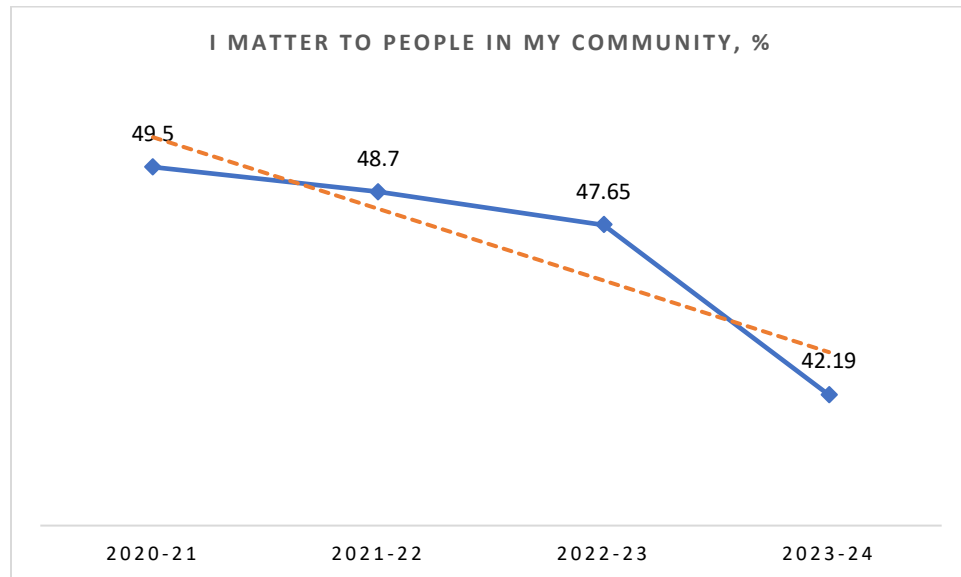
	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	8.15%	12.01%	18.57%	15.95%	0.00%	80.00%
Strongly disagree	5.93%	6.01%	7.14%	5.98%	0.00%	2.86%
Disagree	8.52%	12.72%	11.07%	10.96%	0.00%	0.00%
Not sure	19.26%	17.31%	18.93%	18.94%	0.00%	0.00%
Agree	40.00%	33.22%	28.57%	33.22%	0.00%	5.71%
Strongly agree	18.15%	18.73%	15.71%	14.95%	100.00%	11.43%

Key Findings on Self-Perception

- Positive Self-Perception Among Students:** A large portion of students reported positive self-perception, with a combined 49.61% of students either agreeing (32.79%) or strongly agreeing (16.82%).
- Gender Differences:** The data reveals gender differences in self-perception, with 23.23% of males strongly agreeing compared to 10.82% of females. Students who identified as "Other" had the highest rates of strongly positive self-perception at 45.45%.
- Grade Differences:** Self-perception varies slightly across grades. The percentage of students who strongly agree that they feel good about themselves decreases from 18.15% in 9th grade to 14.95% in 12th grade. Similarly, those who agree with the statement decrease from 40.00% in 9th grade to 33.22% in 12th grade, suggesting a potential decline in self-perception as students advance through school.
- Uncertainty and Reluctance:** A notable percentage of students (18.02%) reported being "Not sure" about feeling good about themselves. There were slight variations across grade levels, ranging from 19.26% in 9th grade to 18.94% in 12th grade. Additionally, 15.71% overall preferred not to answer, with this figure particularly high among 11th graders (18.57%) and students identifying as "Other" (18.18%), suggesting hesitancy or privacy concerns in reporting self-perception.

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 feel they matter to people in their community has gradually declined over the past four years, dropping from 49.5% in 2020-2021 to 42.19% in 2023-2024. This downward trend suggests a potential need for increased community engagement and support to help students feel valued.
- **Slight Yearly Decrease:** Each academic year has seen a slight decrease in this perception, indicating a consistent trend rather than a single-year anomaly. This gradual shift may reflect broader changes in community dynamics or support structures.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

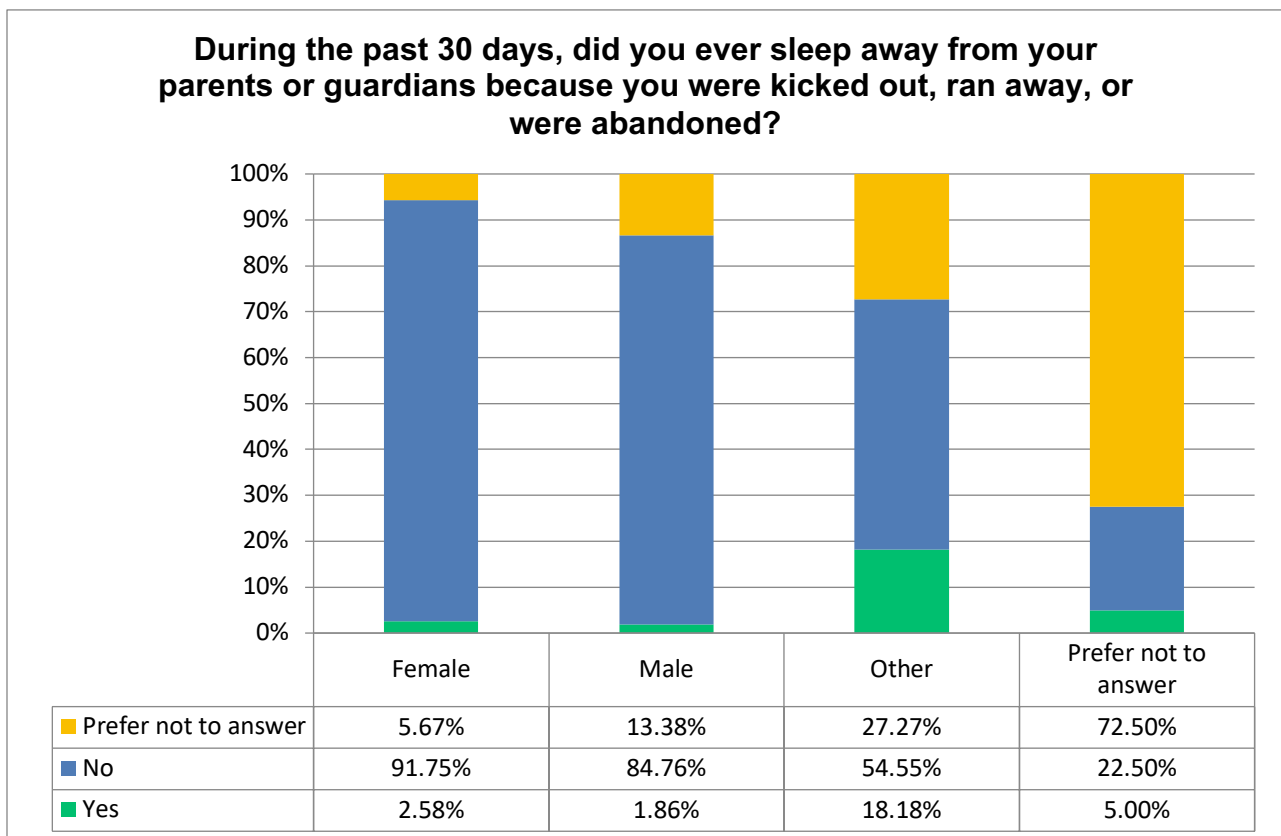
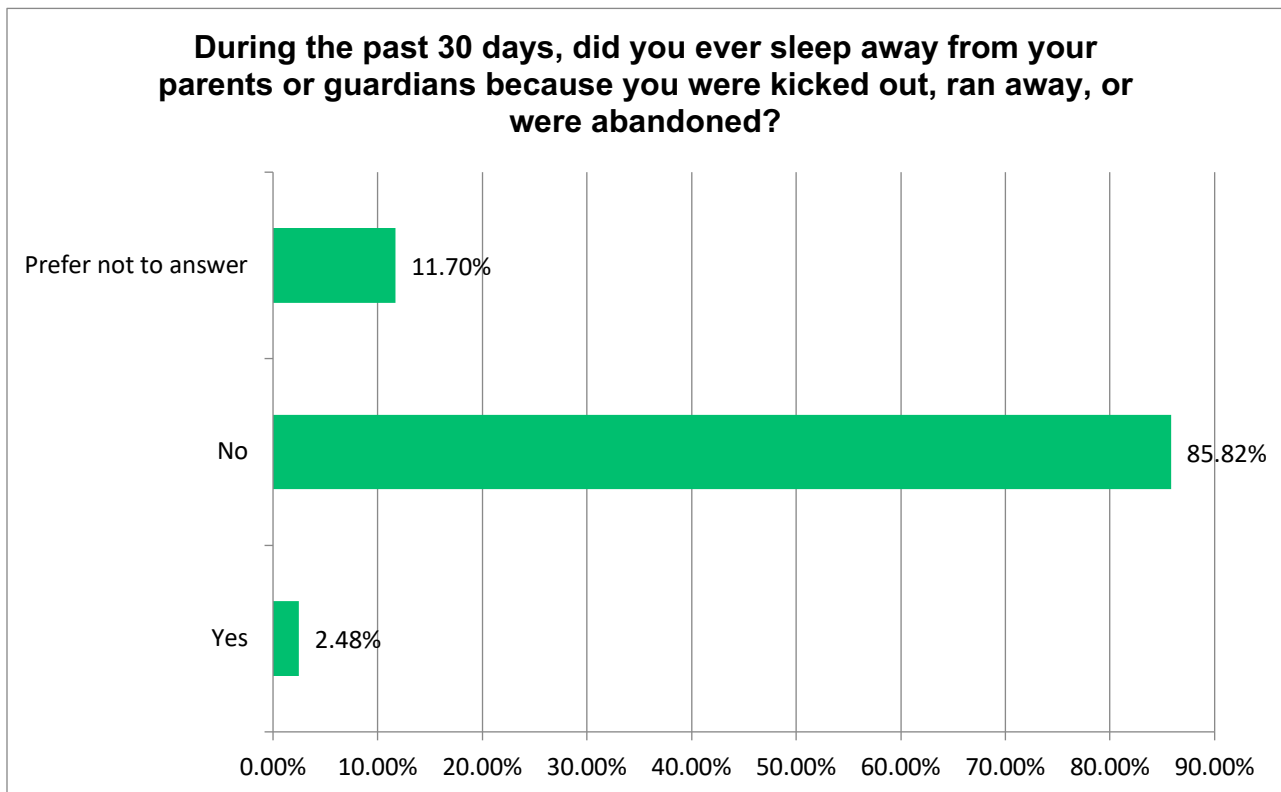
Understanding the prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) among youth is crucial in identifying the types of challenges students face outside of the classroom. These experiences, which include food insecurity, household instability, exposure to substance use, and emotional or physical harm, can have a profound impact on students' mental, emotional, and social development. The YRBS captures these elements to provide insights into the prevalence and effects of ACEs in Herkimer County, highlighting areas where additional support may be beneficial.

The ACEs findings in Herkimer County highlight several important trends. Food security has improved over recent years, with fewer students reporting hunger, though some students, particularly those with a gender identity of "Other", continue to experience food insecurity intermittently. Household support also varies, with most students reporting consistent adult presence to meet basic needs. However, students identifying as "Other" and some male students report higher rates of unmet needs, reflecting potential gaps in household support for these groups.

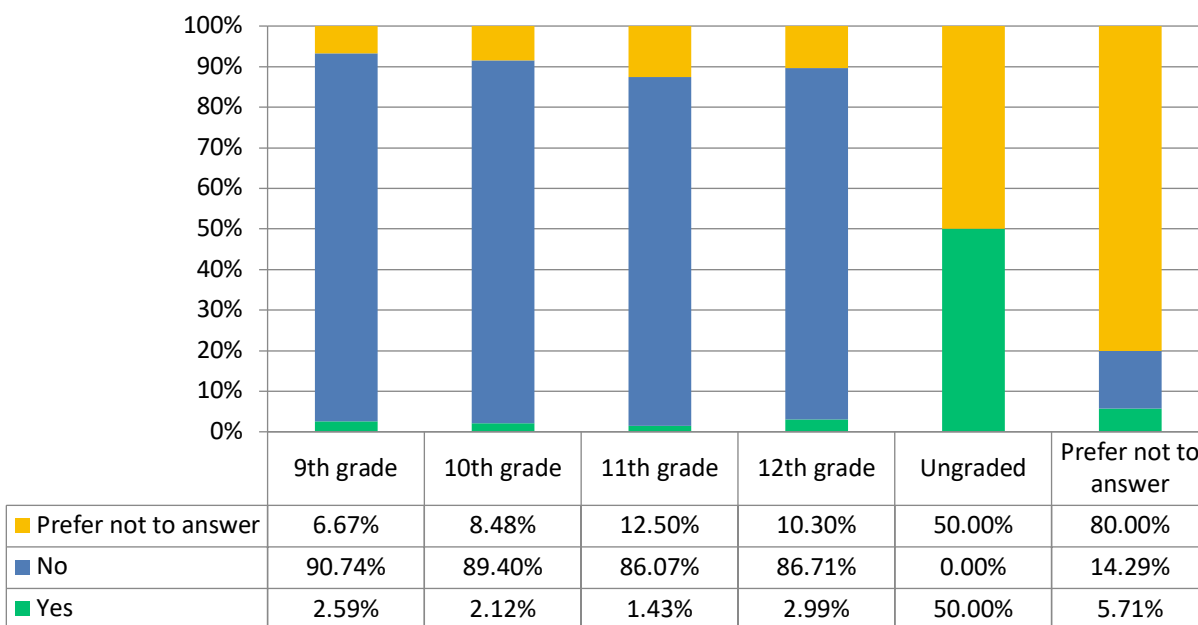
Reports of parental separation due to incarceration, mental health or substance abuse challenges within the household, and domestic violence reveal that a subset of students continue to experience significant hardships. While many students report stable and supportive home environments, others face occasional to frequent verbal or physical harm from household adults. These challenges increase slightly among older students and are more pronounced among students identifying as "Other." Additionally, high non-response rates among some students suggest discomfort or reluctance to share personal or sensitive experiences, especially as they mature.

Together, these findings emphasize the importance of maintaining robust support systems within schools and communities. By addressing the impacts of ACEs, these efforts can create safer, more supportive environments that promote the well-being and success of all students.

Youth Displacement



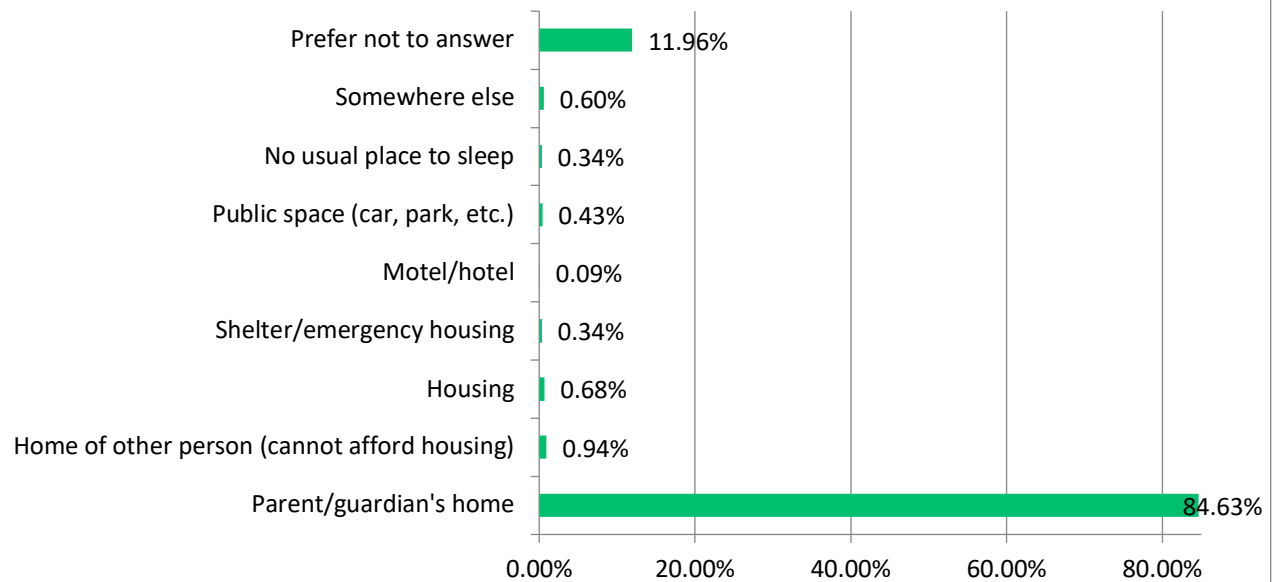
During the past 30 days, did you ever sleep away from your parents or guardians because you were kicked out, ran away, or were abandoned?



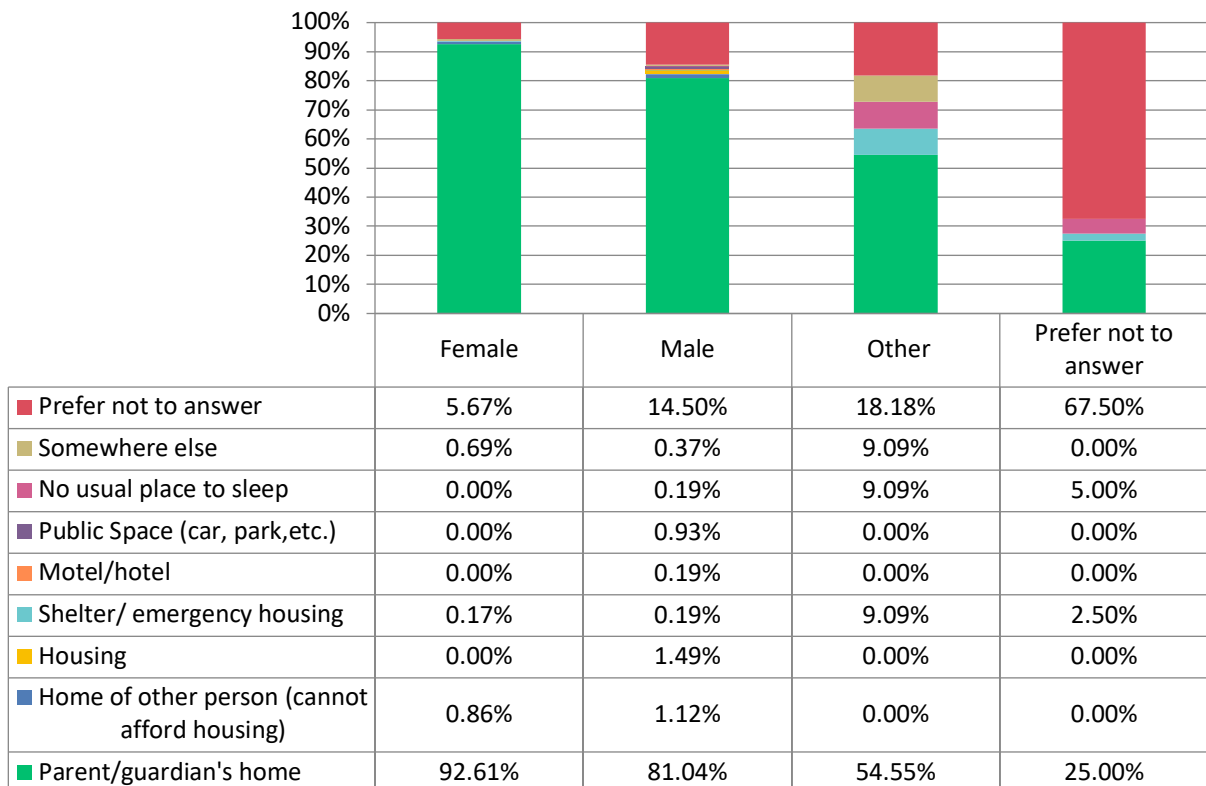
Key Findings on Instances of Youth Displacement

- **Predominant Stability:** Most students (85.82%) reported not having slept away from their parents or guardians due to being kicked out, running away, or abandoned in the past 30 days. Of note, 11.7% preferred not to answer. This suggests either privacy concerns or reluctance to disclose such experiences.
- **Gender Differences:** Students who identified as a gender other than male or female reported higher instances (18.18%) of staying away from home, reflecting unique vulnerabilities within this group.
- **Grade Differences:** Students sleeping away from home are slightly more common among ungraded students (50%). Across grades, there is a marginal percentage increase in students who answered "Yes" in 12th grade (2.99%) compared to 9th grade (2.59%). However, older students were more likely to select "Prefer not to answer" than younger students.

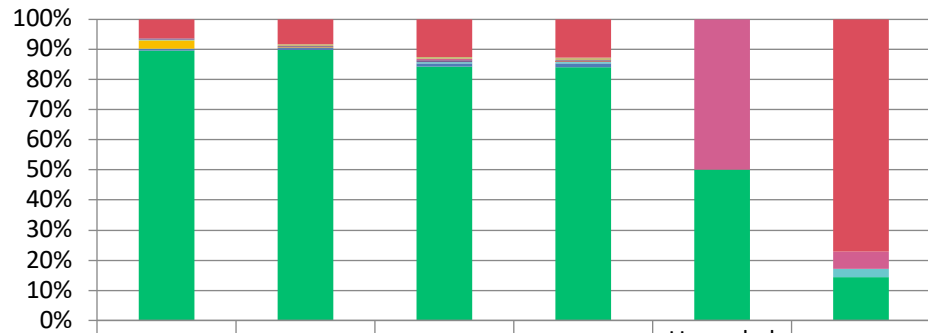
During the past 30 days, where did you usually sleep?



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



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

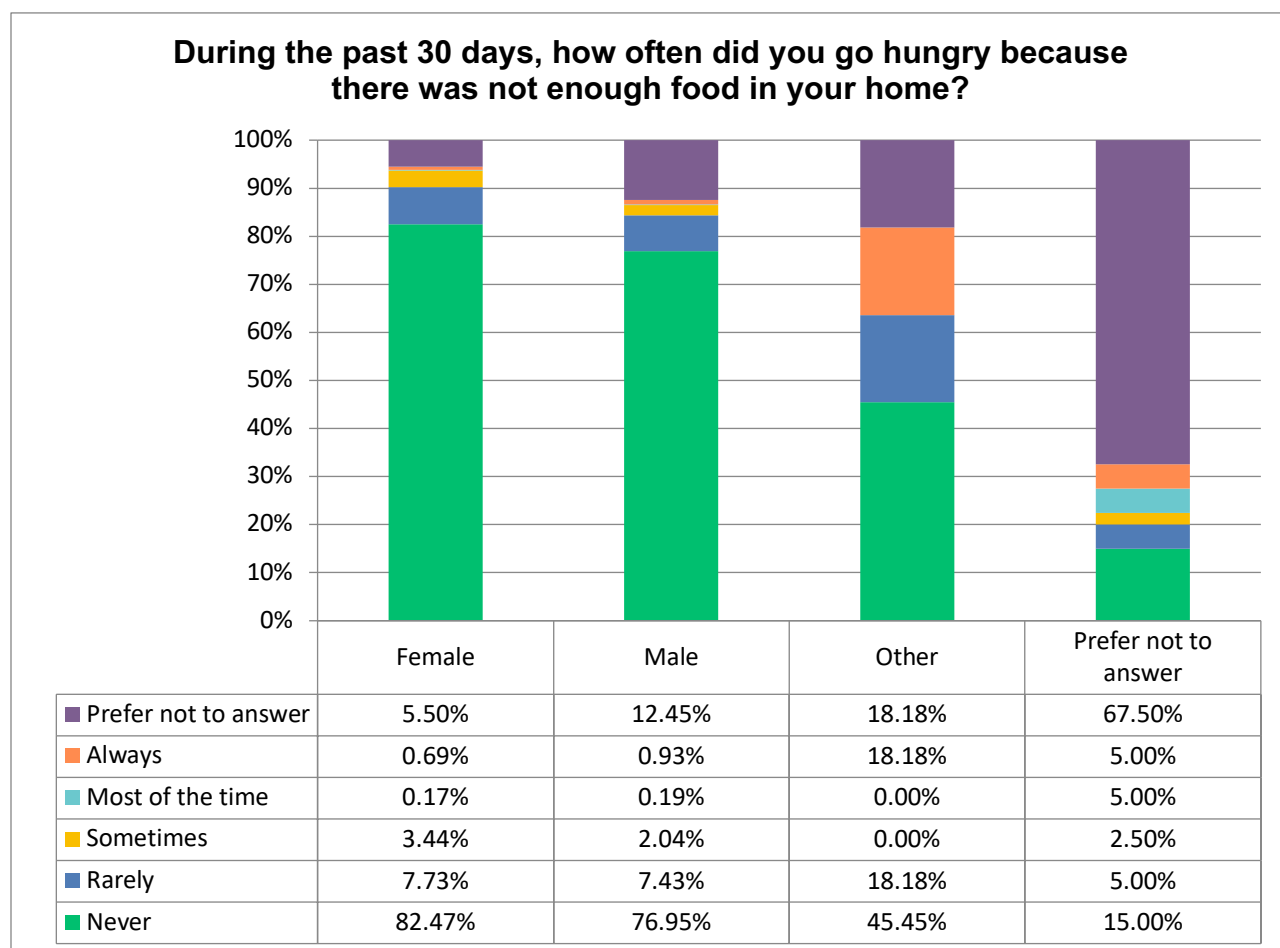
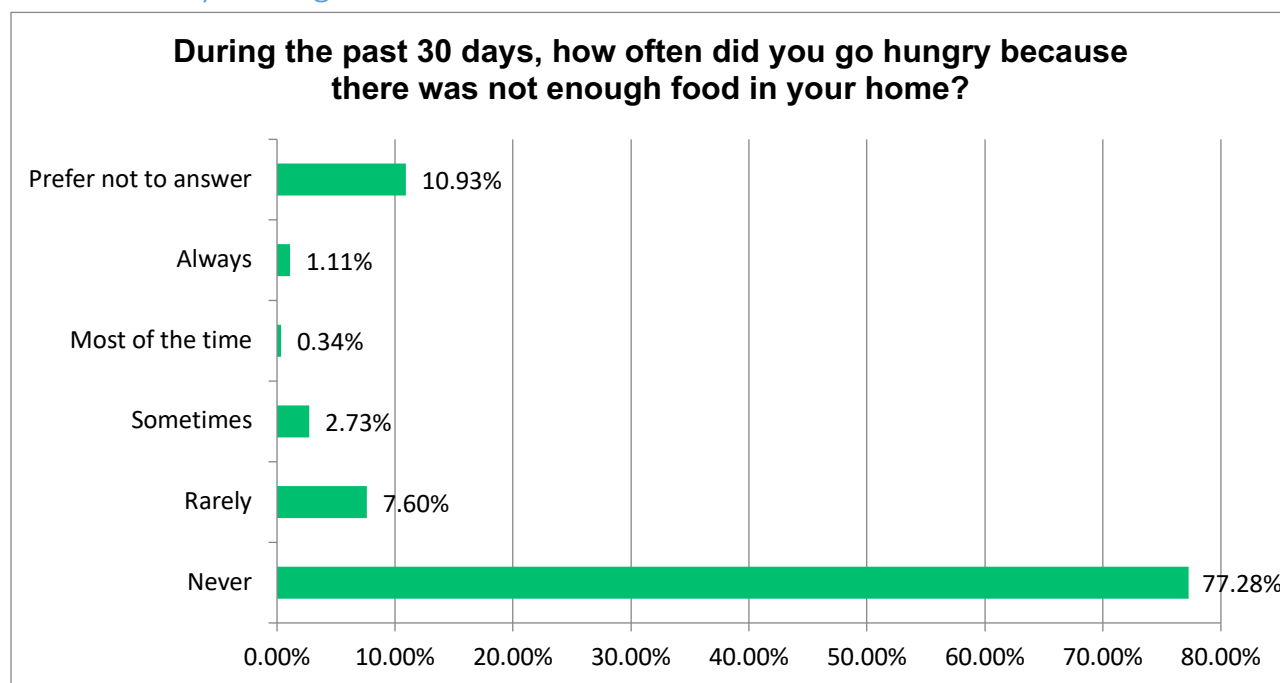


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded or other grade	Prefer not to answer
■ Prefer not to answer	6.30%	8.13%	12.50%	12.62%	0.00%	77.14%
■ Somewhere else	0.00%	0.71%	0.71%	1.00%	0.00%	0.00%
■ No usual place to sleep	0.00%	0.00%	0.36%	0.00%	50.00%	5.71%
■ Public Space (car, park, etc.)	0.37%	0.35%	0.71%	0.33%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Motel/hotel	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.33%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Shelter/emergency housing	0.37%	0.00%	0.36%	0.33%	0.00%	2.86%
■ Housing	2.59%	0.35%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Home of other person (cannot afford housing)	0.74%	0.71%	1.07%	1.33%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Parent/guardian's home	89.63%	89.75%	84.29%	84.05%	50.00%	14.29%

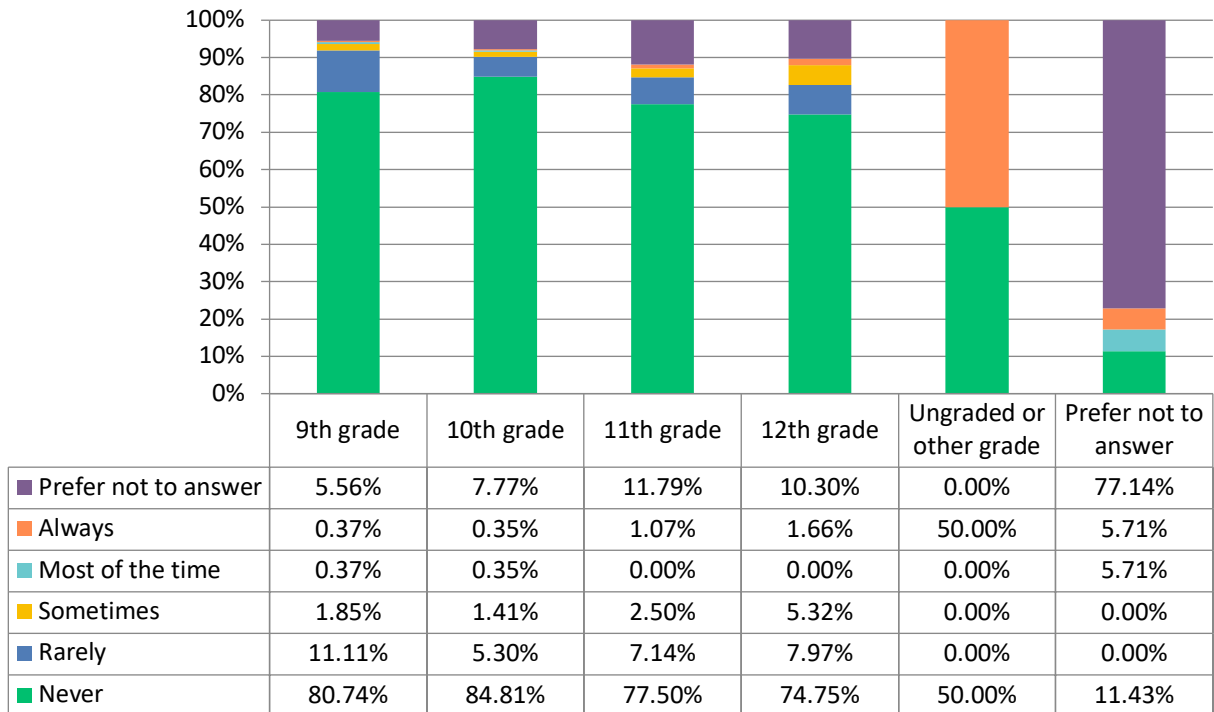
Key Findings on Student Sleeping Locations

- Stable Housing for Most Students:** The majority of students (84.63%) report usually sleeping at a parent's or guardian's home, indicating generally stable housing. A small subset of students reports alternative sleeping arrangements, such as staying at someone else's home due to financial issues (0.94%) or having no usual place to sleep (0.34%), suggesting occasional instability for a few students.
- Gender Differences:** Housing stability shows notable differences by gender. While 92.61% of females report sleeping at a parent's home, this percentage is lower among males (81.04%) and students identifying as "Other" (54.55%).
- Grade Differences:** The majority of students across all grades report usually sleeping at a parent or guardian's home, indicating stable housing for most. However, housing instability is more evident among ungraded students, with a higher proportion reporting alternative sleeping arrangements. Among students who preferred not to disclose grade, 77.14% left this question unanswered, potentially indicating discomfort or privacy concerns.

Food Security Among Students



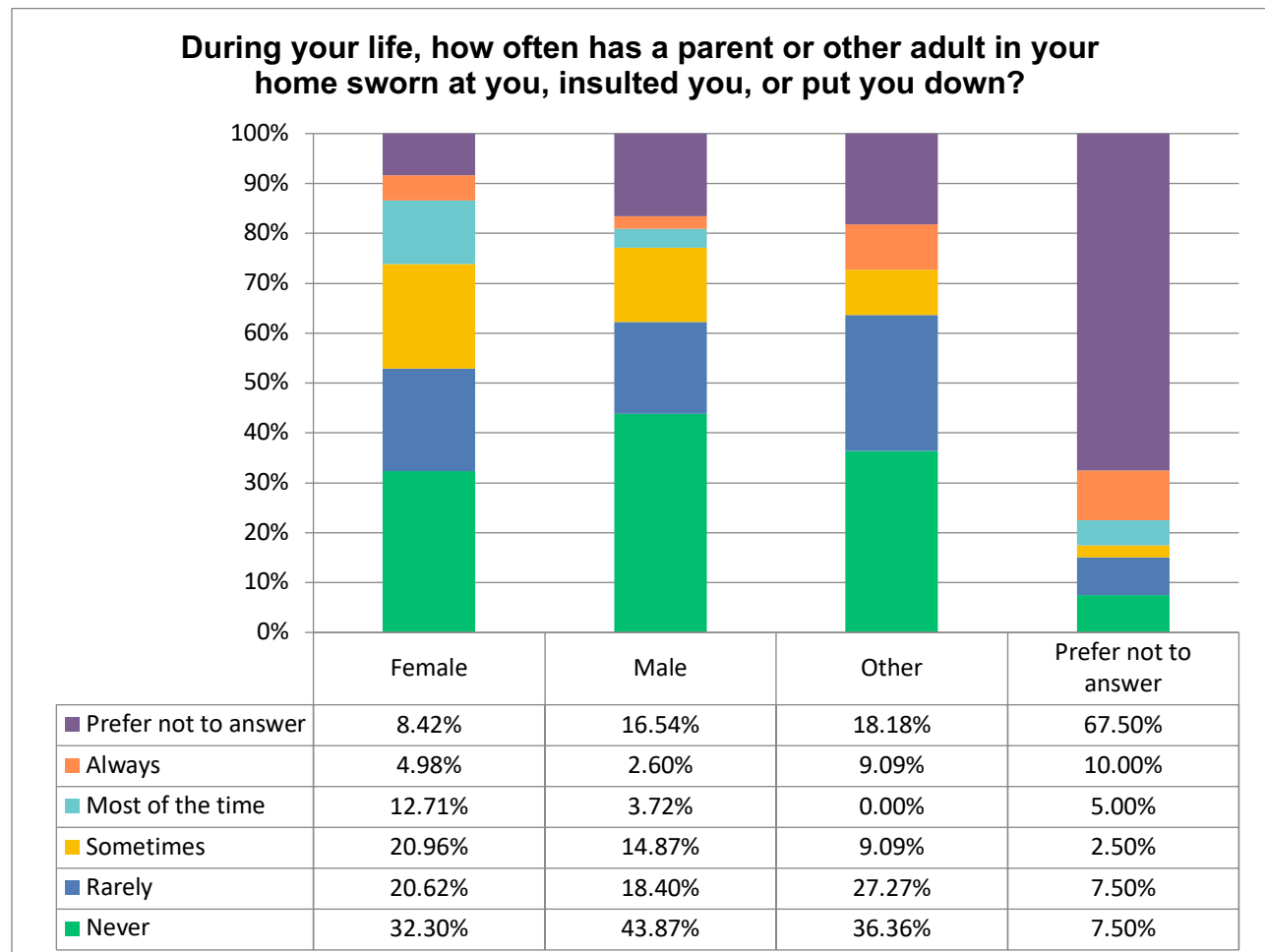
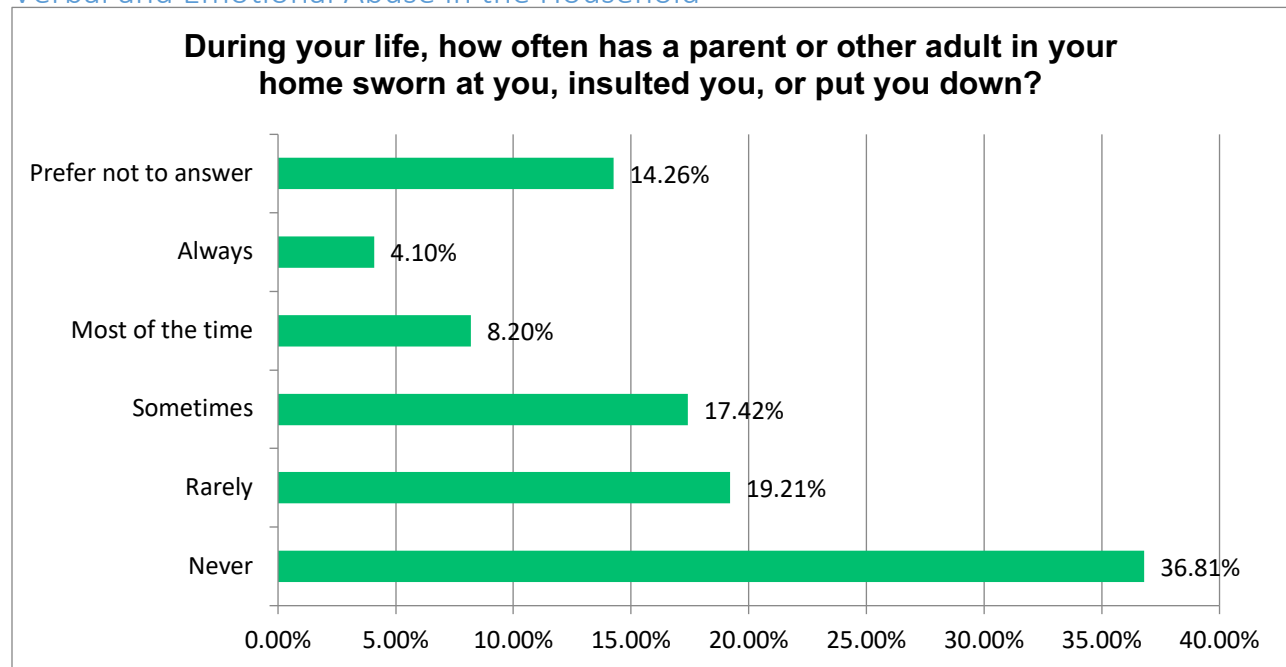
During the past 30 days, how often did you go hungry because there was not enough food in your home?



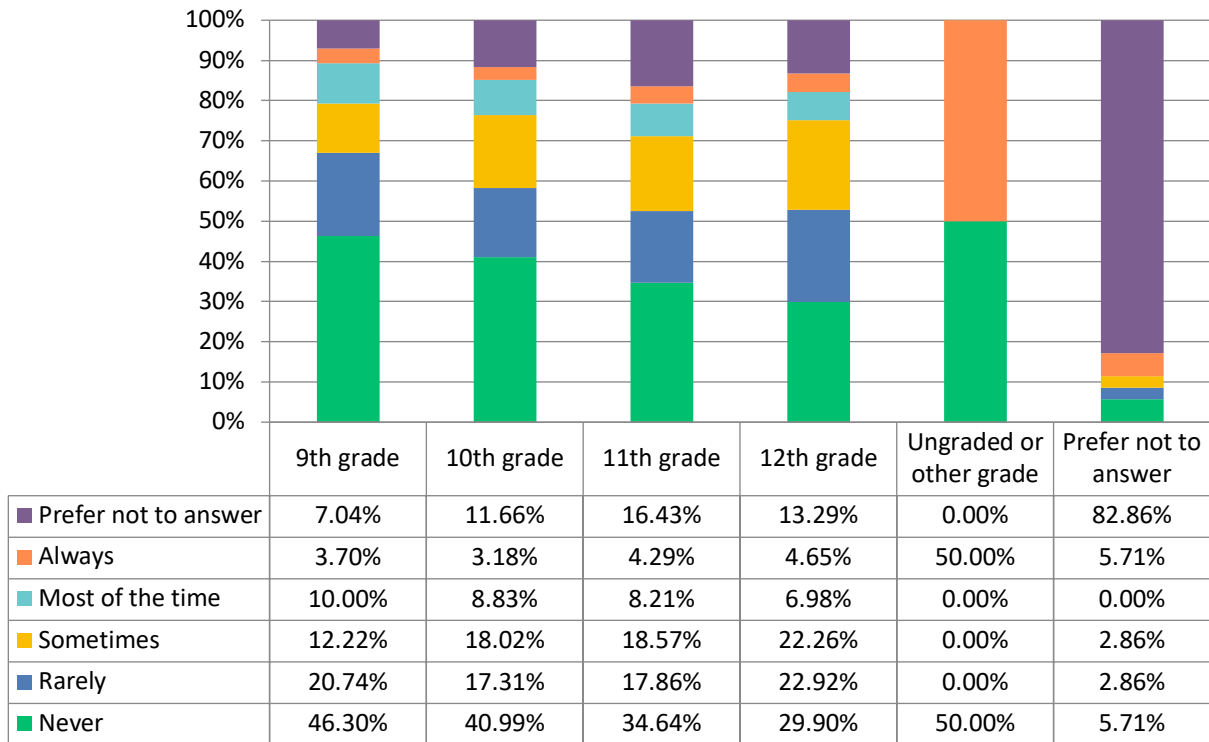
Key Findings on Food Security Among Students

- High Rate of Food Security:** The majority of respondents (77.28%) reported "Never" experiencing hunger due to lack of food at home in the past 30 days, indicating generally stable food security for most students. A small portion (1.11%) of students reported "Always" going hungry. This suggests that while rare, there are students consistently facing food insecurity.
- Gender Differences:** Most students reported never experiencing hunger, with 82.47% of females and 76.95% of males indicating they did not go hungry. Males showed slightly higher rates of frequent hunger, with 0.93% reporting they "always" experienced hunger, compared to 0.69% of females. Students identifying as "Other" reported the greatest food insecurity, with 45.45% never experiencing hunger but 36.36% reporting hunger sometimes or rarely.
- Grade Differences:** The majority of students across all grade levels reported never experiencing hunger. Notably, 50% of ungraded students reported experiencing hunger "always," highlighting a vulnerable group. Additionally, the "prefer not to answer" group showed high levels of non-disclosure, with 77.14% opting not to respond.

Verbal and Emotional Abuse in the Household



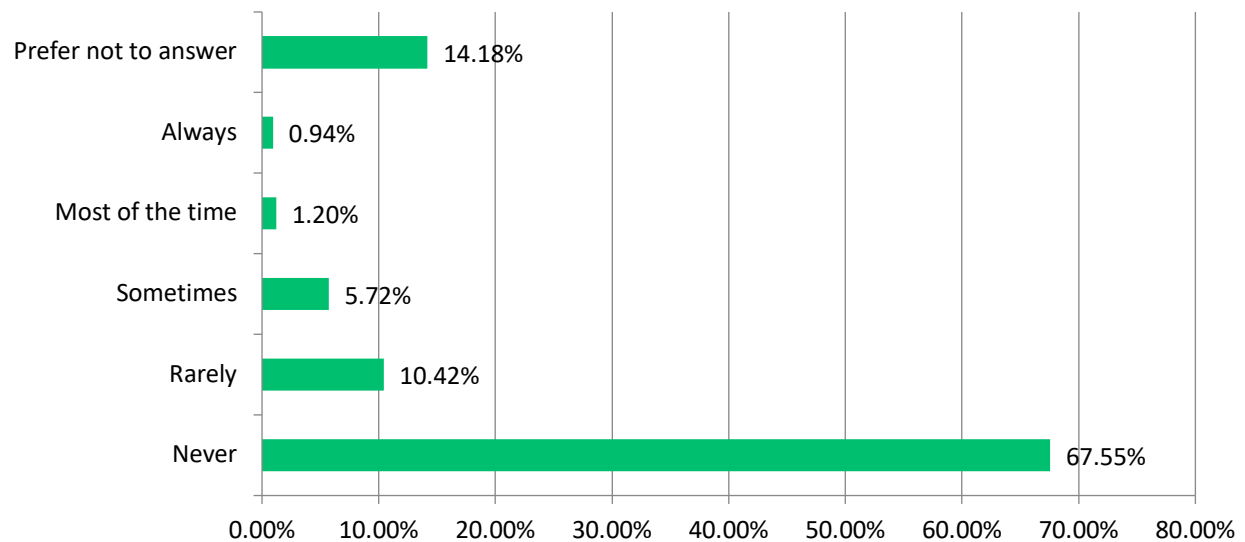
During your life, how often has a parent or other adult in your home sworn at you, insulted you, or put you down?



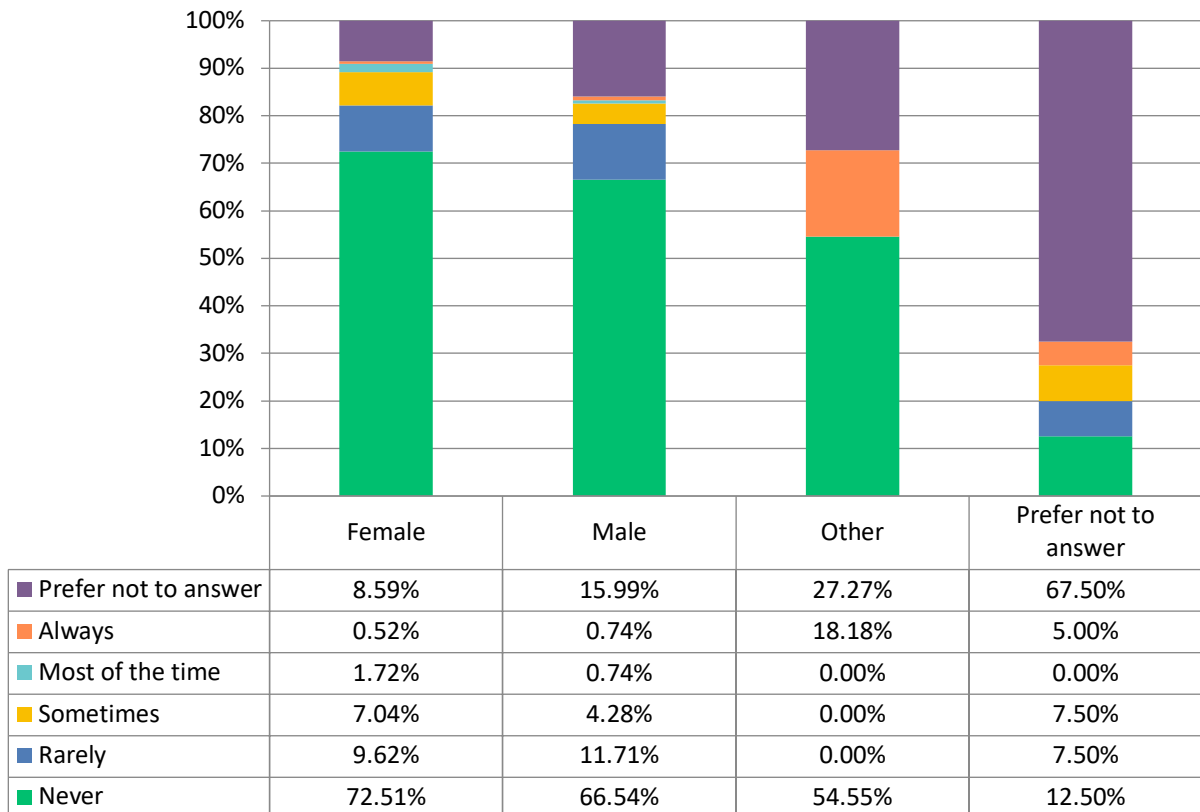
Key Findings on Verbal and Emotional Abuse by Household Adults

- Prevalence of Non-Exposure:** The largest group of students (36.81%) report that they "Never" experience verbal or emotional abuse (e.g., swearing, insults, or put-downs) from a parent or adult at home, indicating a positive environment for many students. A portion of students report some level of exposure to verbal or emotional abuse, with 19.21% experiencing it "Rarely" and 17.42% "Sometimes," highlighting that verbal and emotional abuse is an issue in some homes.
- Gender Differences:** Male students are more likely to report "Never" experiencing this type of abuse (43.87%) compared to female students (32.30%) and students identifying as "Other" (36.36%).
- Grade Differences:** The percentage of students choosing "Prefer not to answer" grows with grade level, peaking at 16.43% in 11th grade. In addition, students are less likely to report "Never" experiencing this type of abuse as they progress in grade.

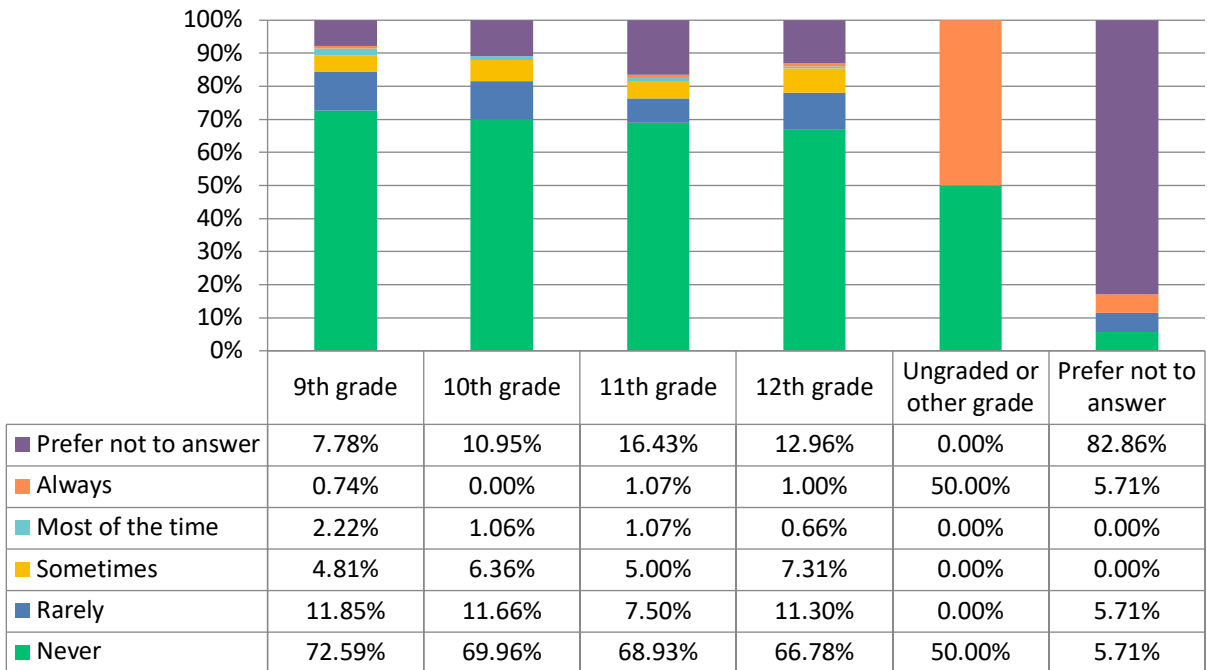
During your life, how often has a parent or other adult in your home hit, beat, kicked, or physically hurt you in any way?



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



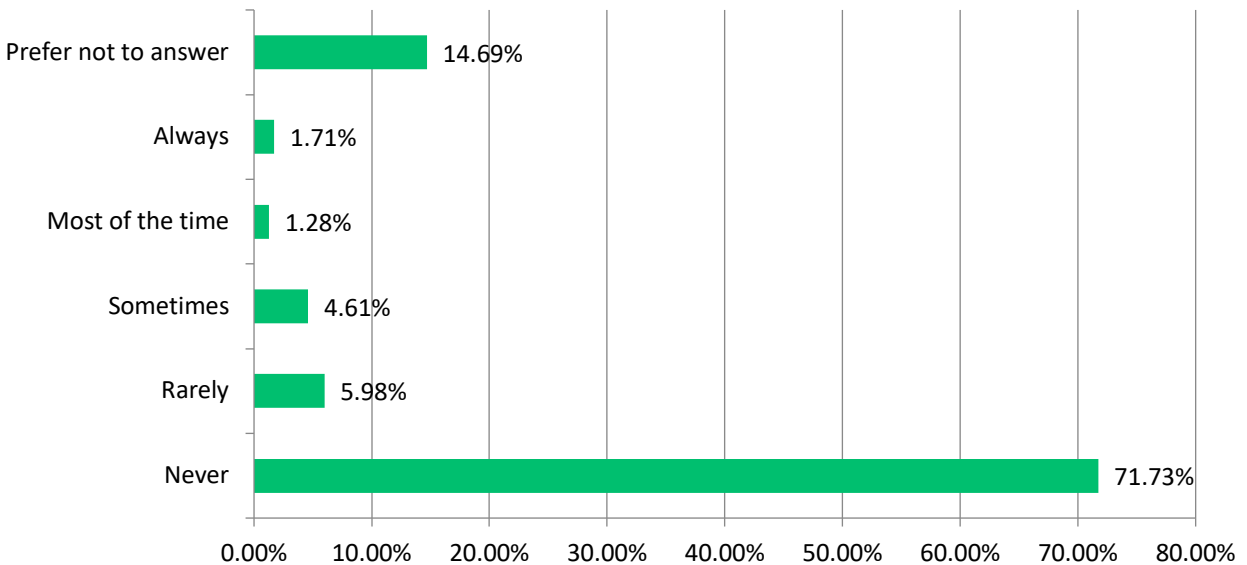
During your life, how often has a parent or other adult in your home hit, beat, kicked, or physically hurt you in any way?



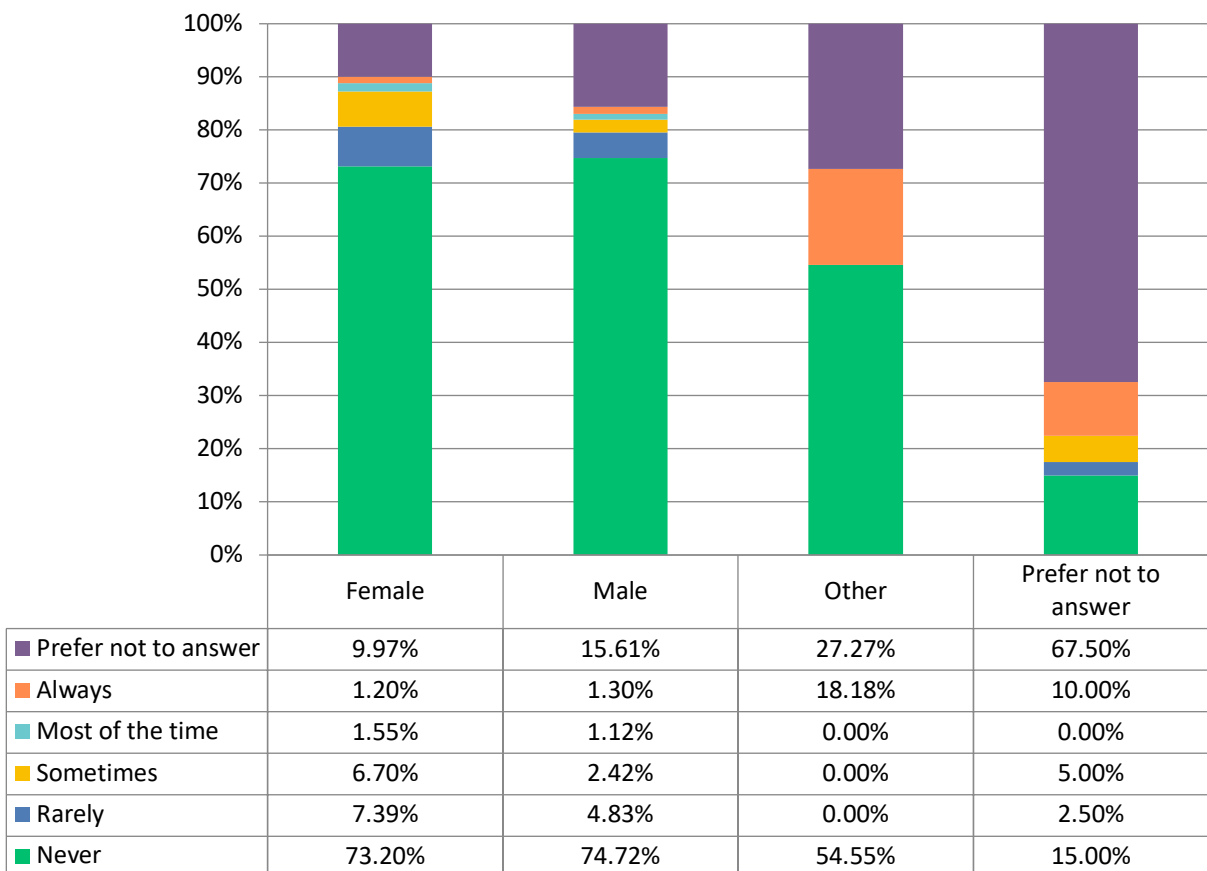
Key Findings on Exposure to Physical Harm by Household Adults

- Majority Report No Exposure:** The majority of students (67.55%) report "Never" experiencing physical harm (e.g., hitting, beating, or kicking) from a parent or adult in their household, indicating that most students feel safe from physical abuse in their home environments. A smaller percentage of students report occasional exposure, with 10.42% experiencing this "Rarely" and 5.72% "Sometimes." This shows that, while limited, some students are affected by physical harm in their homes.
- Gender Differences:** Female students (72.51%) and male students (66.54%) report similar rates of never experiencing physical harm. Conversely, a lower percentage (54.55%) of students identifying as "Other" report the same. Students identifying as "Other" also have higher rates in the "Prefer not to answer" category (27.27%), suggesting privacy or sensitivity concerns among certain demographics.
- Grade Differences:** The majority of students reported never experiencing physical harm from a parent or adult at home, with the highest rates among 9th (72.59%) and 11th graders (68.93%). However, reports of physical harm "sometimes" increased slightly among older students, with 12th graders showing higher instances of occasional harm. Notably, ungraded students displayed increased vulnerability, with 50% reporting "Always" experiencing harm.

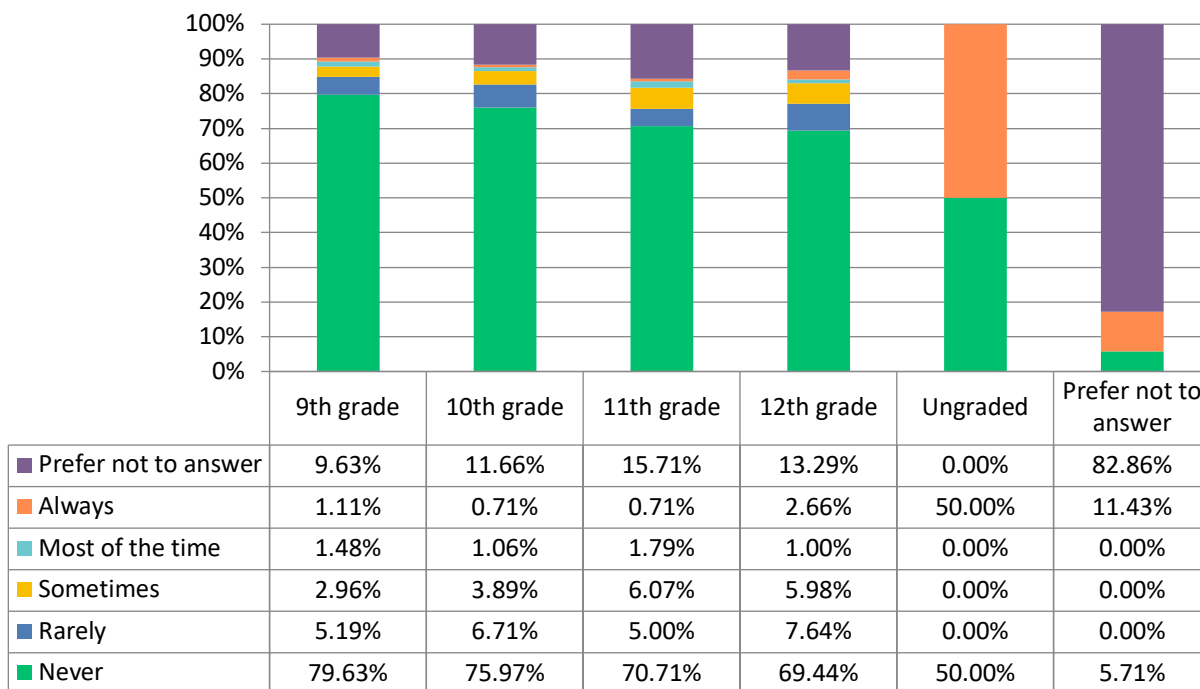
During your life, how often have your parents or other adults in your home slapped, hit, kicked, punched, or beat each other up?



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



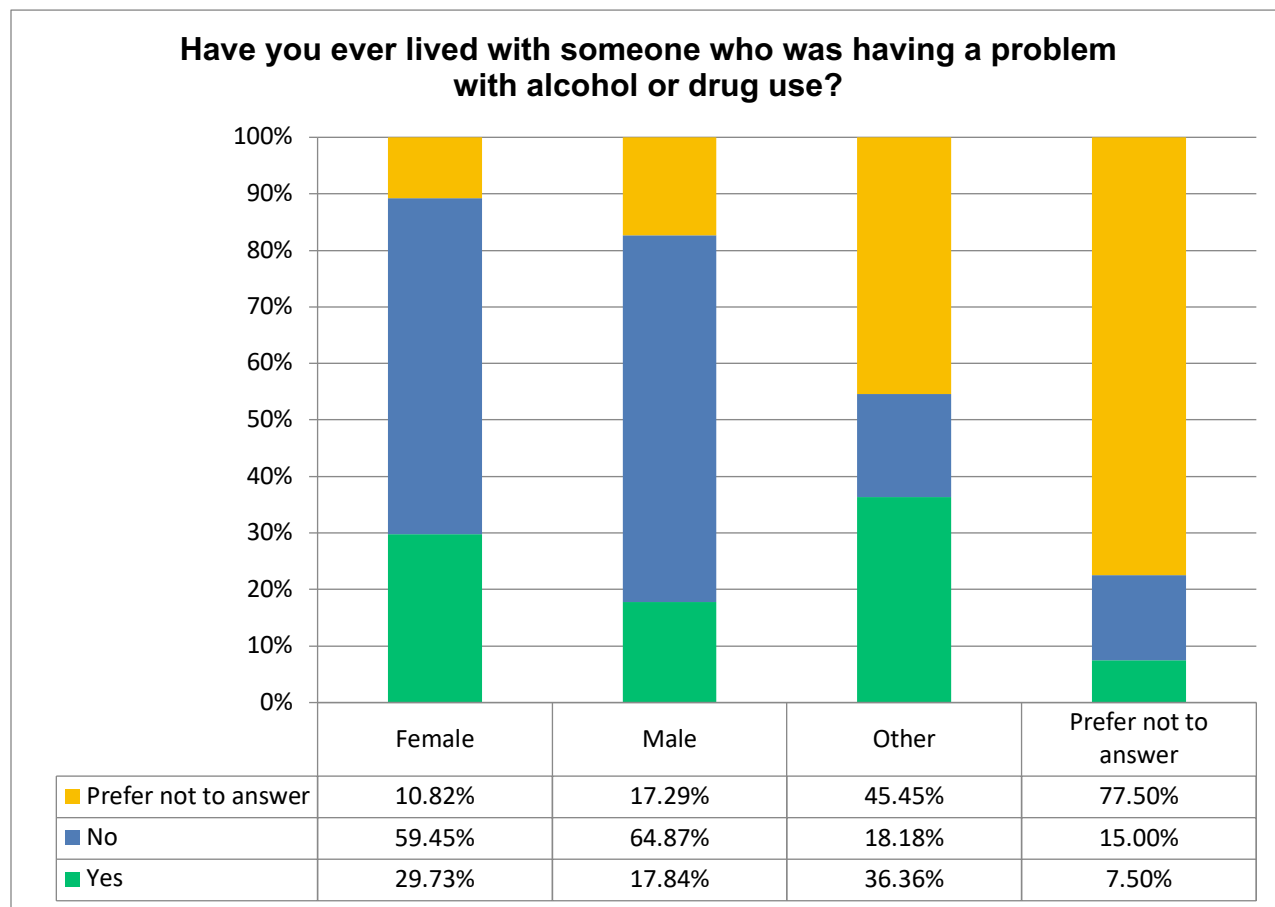
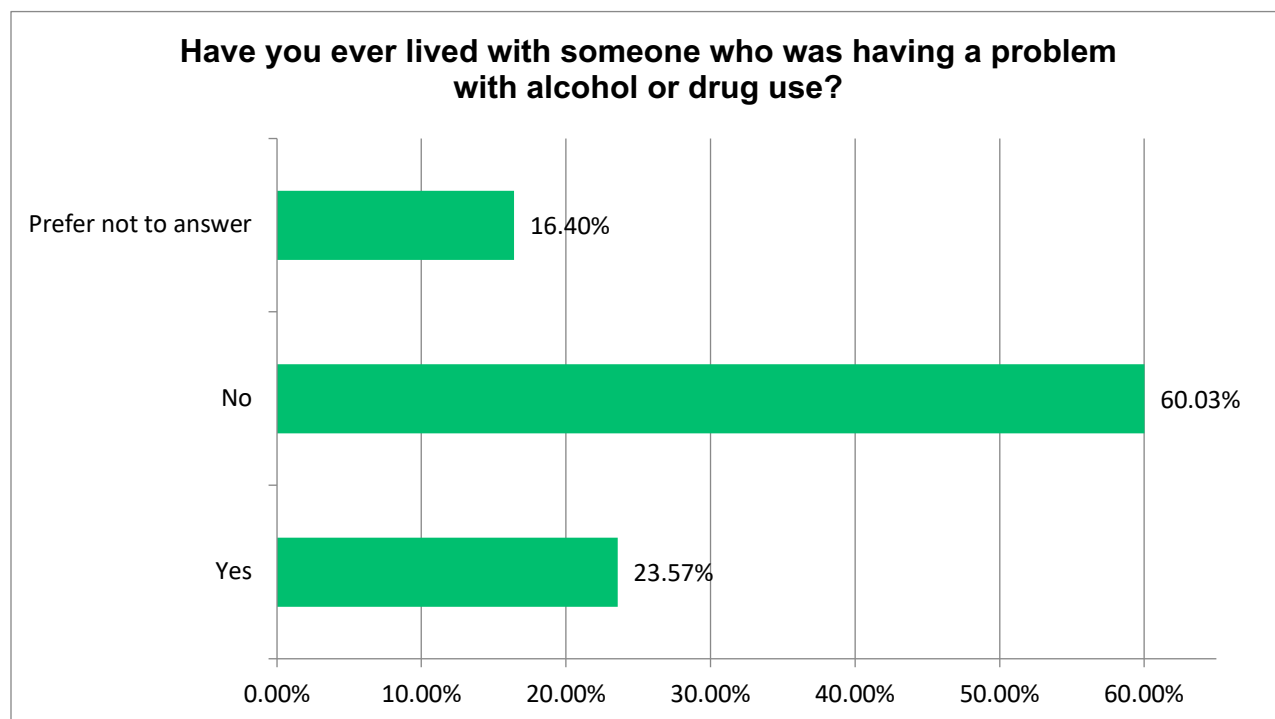
During your life, how often have your parents or other adults in your home slapped, hit, kicked, punched, or beat each other up?



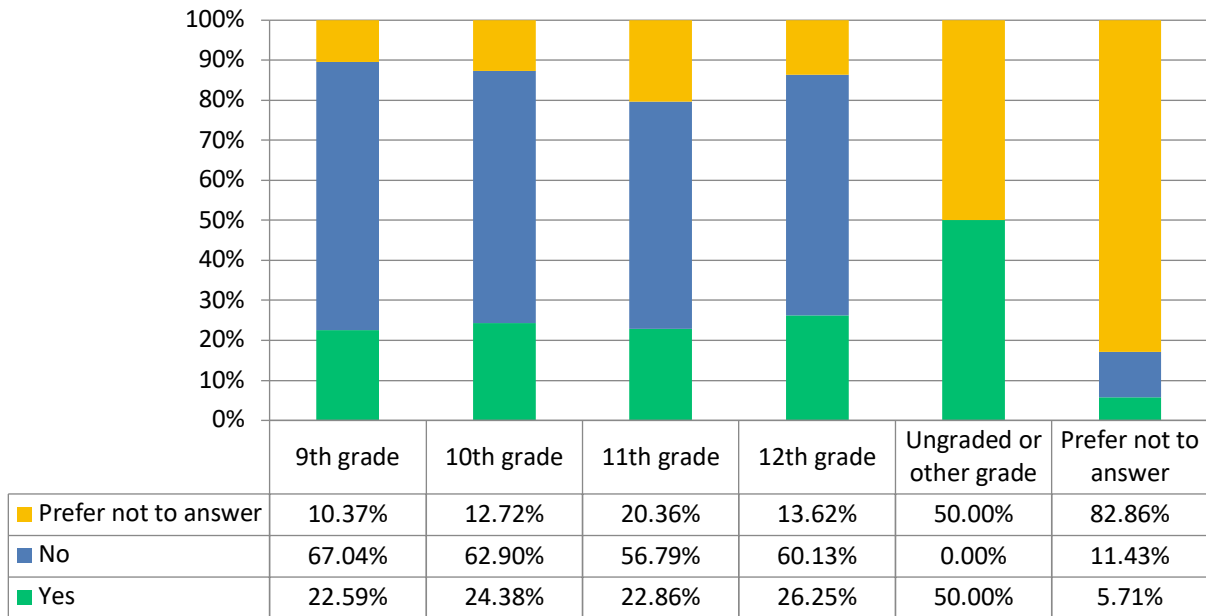
Key Findings on Exposure to Domestic Violence

- Majority Report No Exposure:** The majority of students (71.73%) report "Never" witnessing adults in their home engaging in physical altercations, such as slapping, hitting, kicking, or punching. While the overall percentage is low, 5.98% report "Rarely" witnessing such violence, and 4.61% report observing it "Sometimes." This suggests that a subset of students have occasional exposure to domestic violence.
- Gender Differences:** Female (73.20%) and male (74.72%) students report similar rates of never witnessing domestic violence, while a notably lower percentage (54.55%) of students identifying as "Other" report the same. However, females reported slightly higher percentages of "Rarely" or "Sometimes" witnessing household violence than males. Students identifying as "Other" also have higher rates in the "Prefer not to answer" category (27.27%), which may indicate greater privacy concerns.
- Grade Differences:** Most students reported never witnessing physical violence between adults in their home, with the highest rates of non-exposure among 9th (79.63%) and 10th graders (75.97%). However, occasional violence ("sometimes" or "rarely") was reported more frequently by 12th graders and ungraded students. Notably, 12th graders reported higher instances of consistent exposure, with 2.66% witnessing violence "always."

Household Alcohol, Drug, or Mental Illness



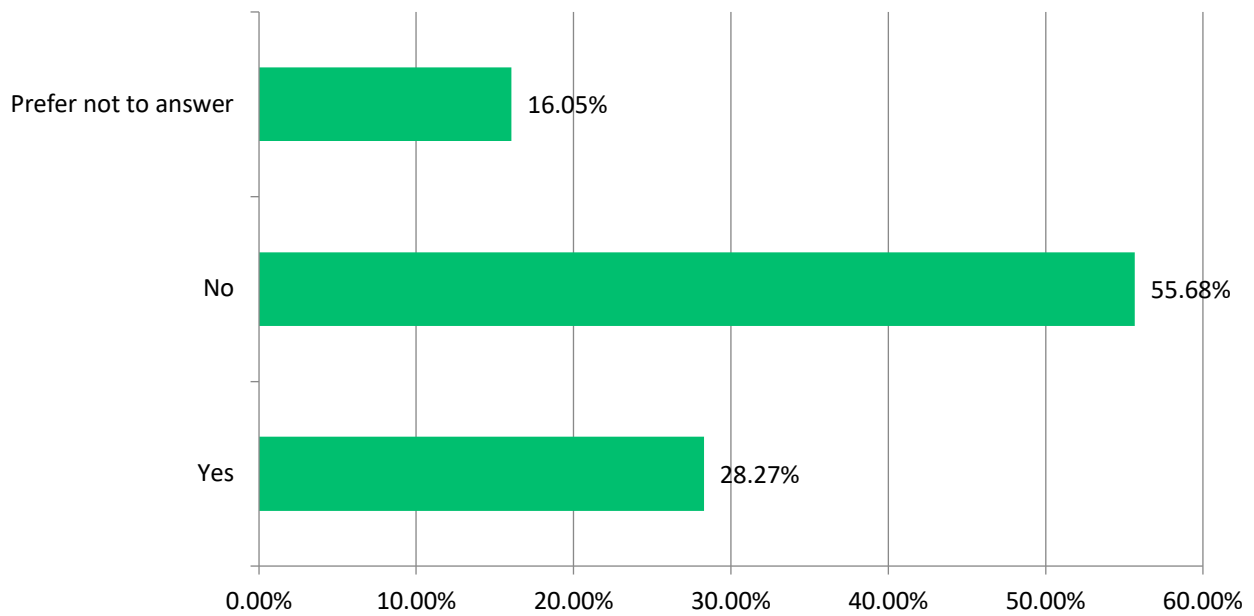
Have you ever lived with someone who was having a problem with alcohol or drug use?



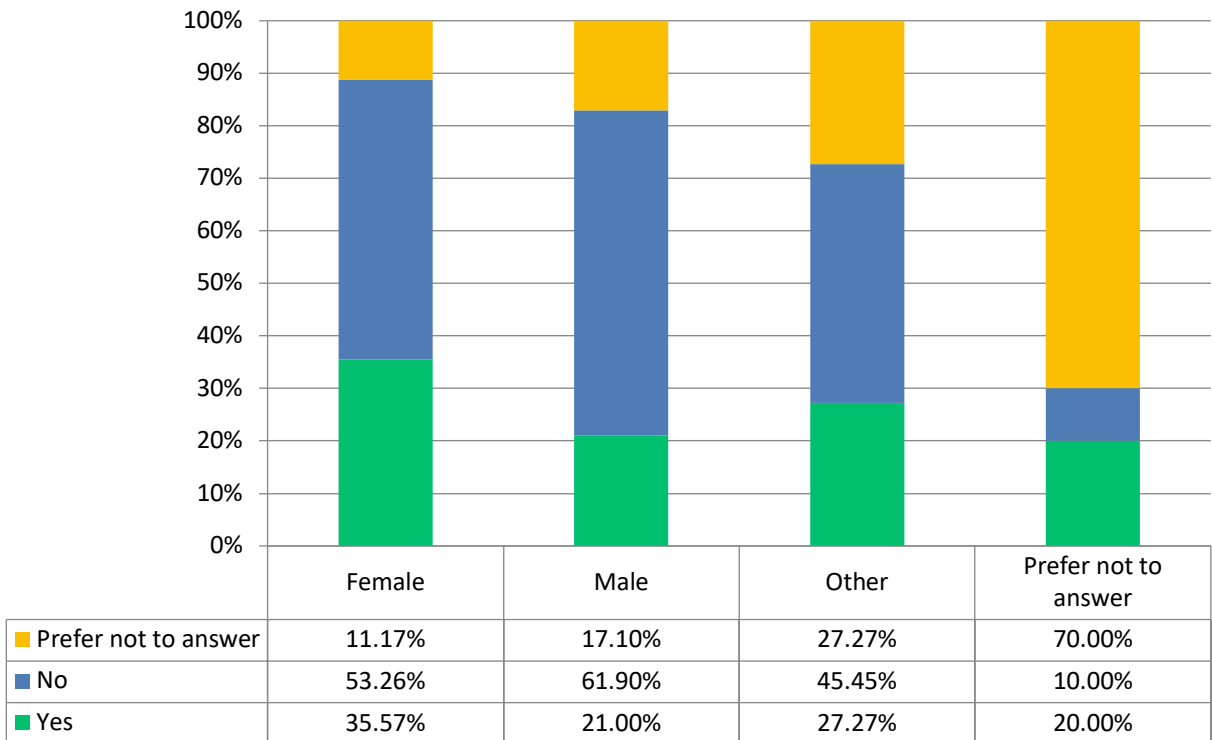
Key Findings on Household Alcohol or Drug Issues

- Majority Without Direct Exposure:** The majority of students (60.03%) report they have not lived with someone dealing with substance issues, reflecting a general trend of limited exposure for most. However, 23.57% of students report having lived with someone who struggled with alcohol or drug use, indicating that nearly one-fourth of students have had personal exposure to substance issues within their household.
- Gender Differences:** Students who identified as “Other” report the highest rate of exposure (36.36%) compared to female students (29.73%) and male students (17.84%). This suggests that specific demographics may be more likely to experience or disclose these household challenges.
- Grade Differences:** A subset of students reported having lived with someone experiencing substance abuse issues, with higher rates of exposure in upper grades. The percentage of students who answered "yes" slightly increased from 9th grade (22.59%) to 12th grade (26.25%). In contrast, the 9th grade had the highest rate of students reporting "no" (67.04%), suggesting lower exposure among younger students. Ungraded students had a mixed response, with 50% reporting exposure. A large proportion (82.86%) of students in the "prefer not to answer" group did not disclose their experiences, possibly indicating discomfort with the topic.

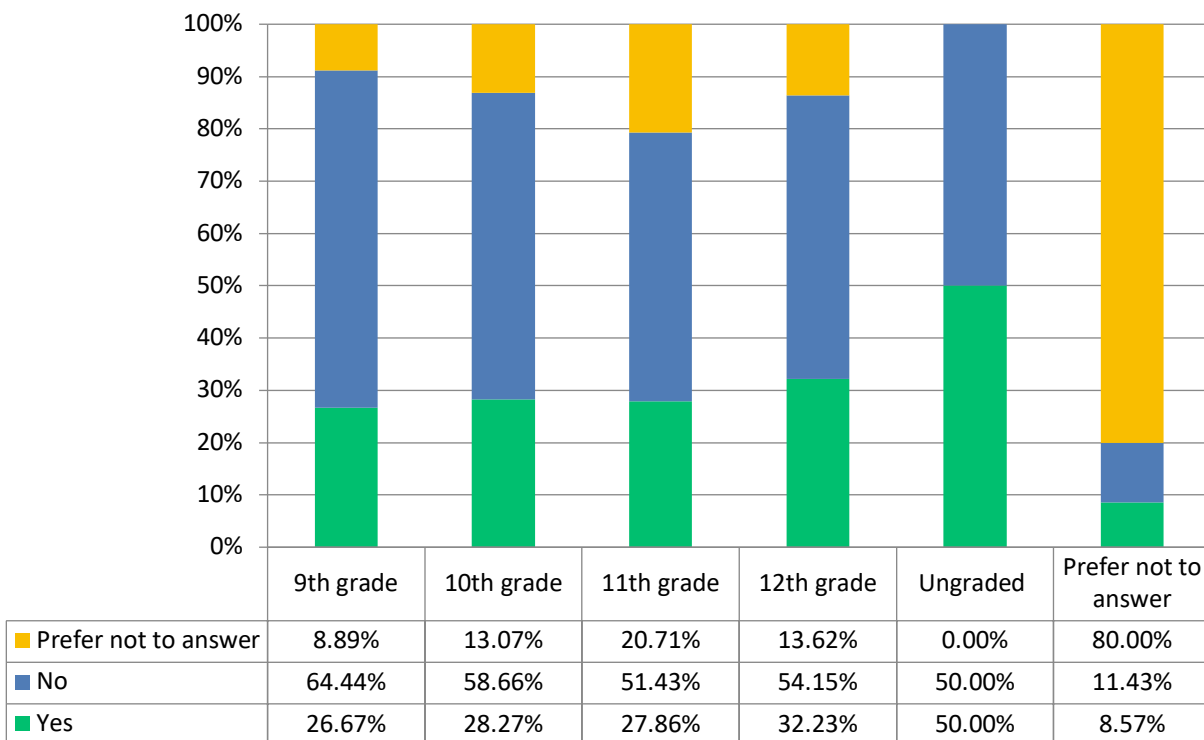
Have you ever lived with someone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal?



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



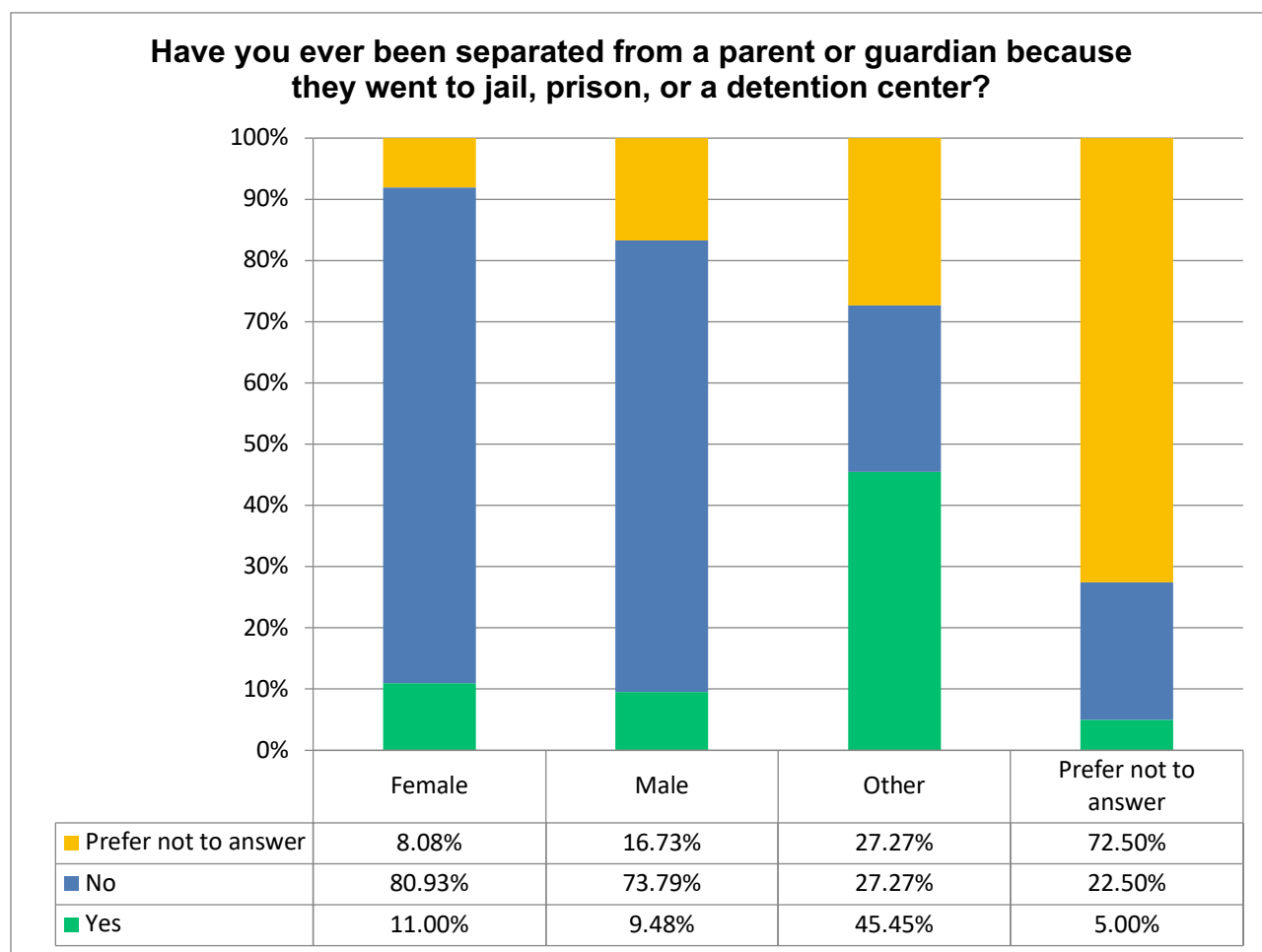
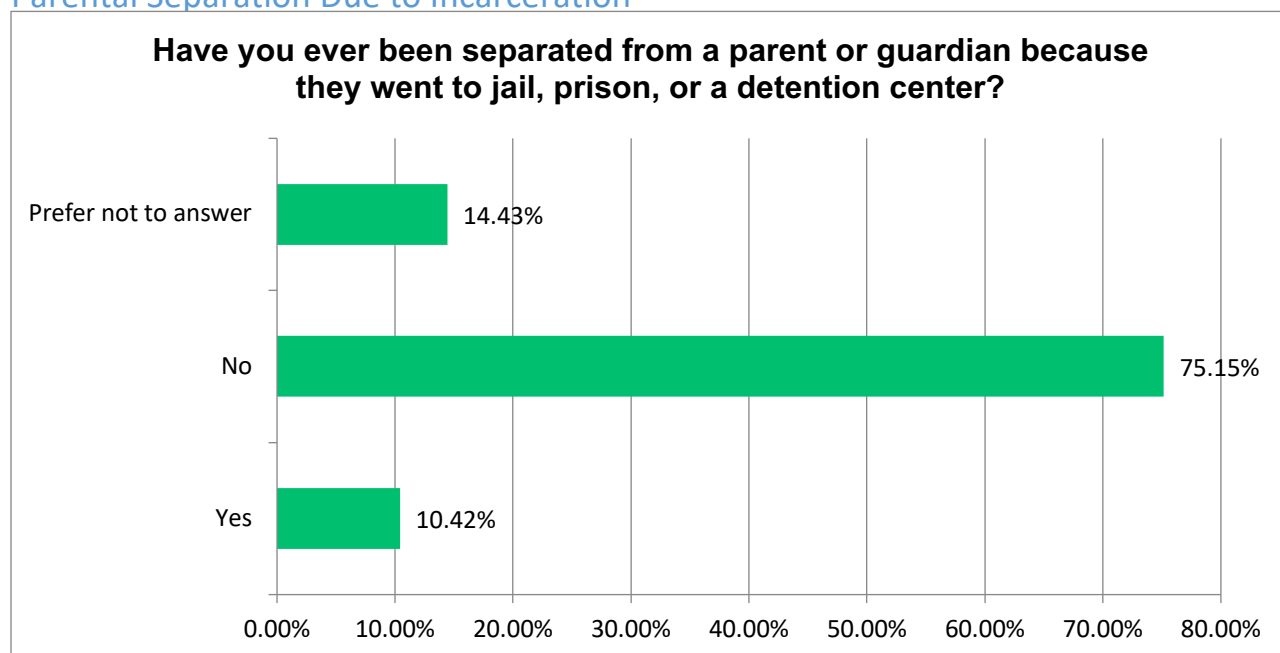
Have you ever lived with someone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal?



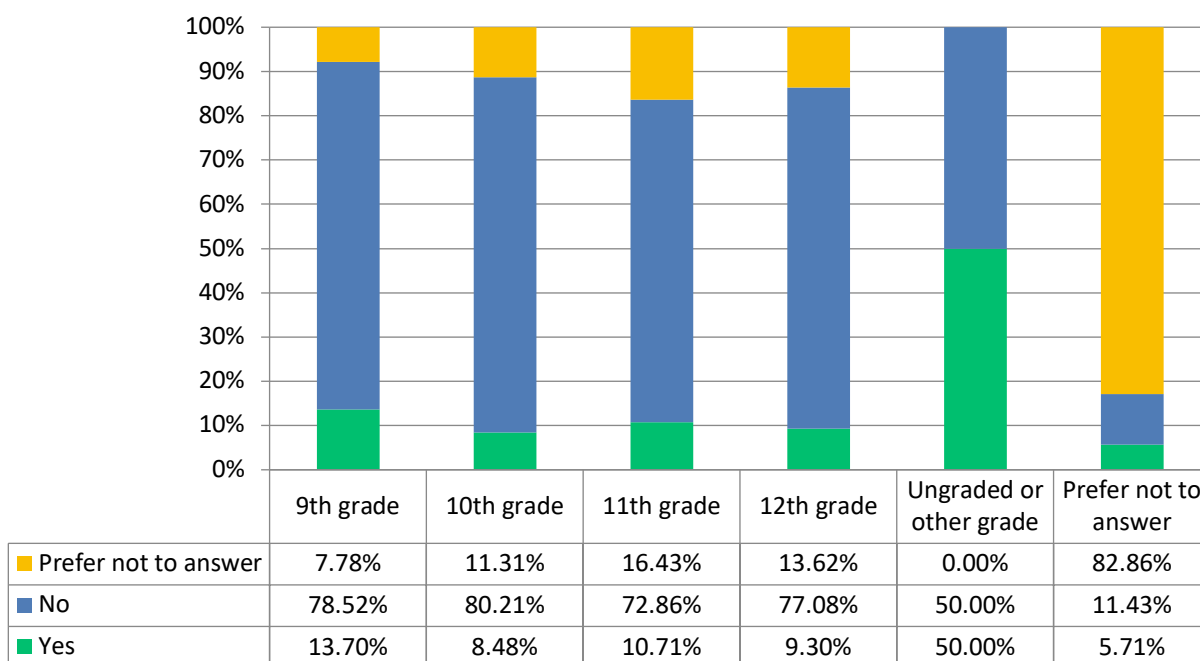
Key Findings on Living with Someone with Mental Health Challenges

- Overall Majority Without Direct Experience:** A majority of students (55.68%) report they have not lived with someone struggling with mental health issues. However, approximately 28.27% of students report having lived with someone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal. As such, a notable portion of students have had personal exposure to mental health challenges within their household.
- Gender Differences:** Female students report higher rates of having lived with someone facing mental health issues (35.57%) compared to male students (21.00%) and students identifying as "Other" (27.27%). This suggests potential gender differences in household experiences or reporting tendencies.
- Grade Differences:** The prevalence of students who have lived with someone experiencing depression, mental illness, or suicidal thoughts increases with grade level. Reports of such experiences rise from 26.67% in 9th grade to 32.23% in 12th grade, indicating greater exposure among older students. Conversely, the percentage of students reporting no exposure declines across grades, with 64.44% in 9th grade and only 54.15% in 12th grade. Ungraded students showed an even split, with 50% reporting exposure and 50% indicating no such experiences.

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?

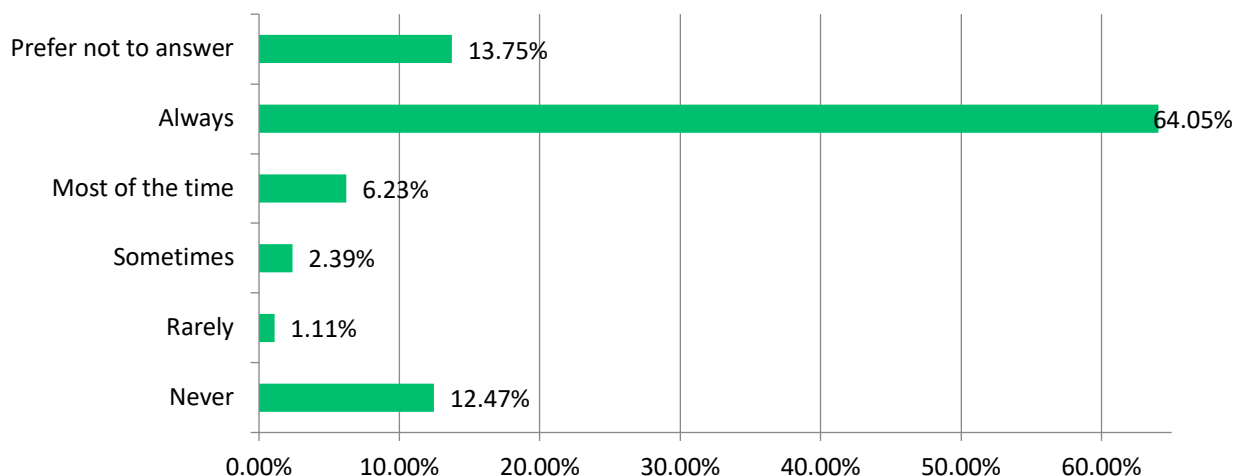


Findings on Parental Separation Due to Incarceration

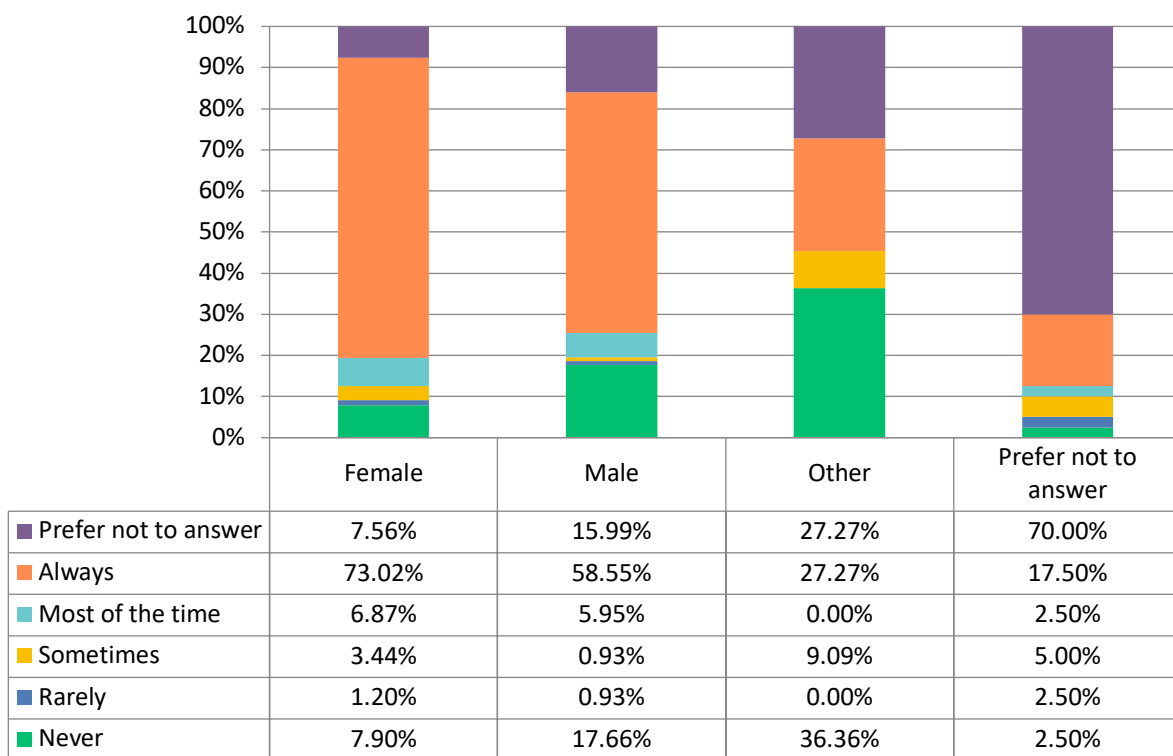
- Majority Unaffected by Separation:** The majority of students (75.15%) report they have not experienced separation from a parent or guardian due to incarceration. About 10.42% of students report experiencing parental separation due to incarceration.
- Gender Differences:** Female students report slightly lower rates of parental separation due to incarceration (11.00%) than male students (9.48%), while the percentage increases among students identifying as “Other” (45.45%).
- Grade Differences:** The data reveals that a portion of students across all grade levels have experienced separation from a parent or guardian due to incarceration. Reports of this separation tend to decline as students progress through grades, with 13.7% of 9th graders, compared to 9.3% in 12th grade. While most students across all grades reported not experiencing separation due to incarceration, a notable portion of ungraded students (50%) reported such separation. Additionally, the high non-response rate among students selecting "prefer not to answer" (82.86%) may suggest discomfort or stigma associated with disclosing these experiences.

Household Support for Basic Needs

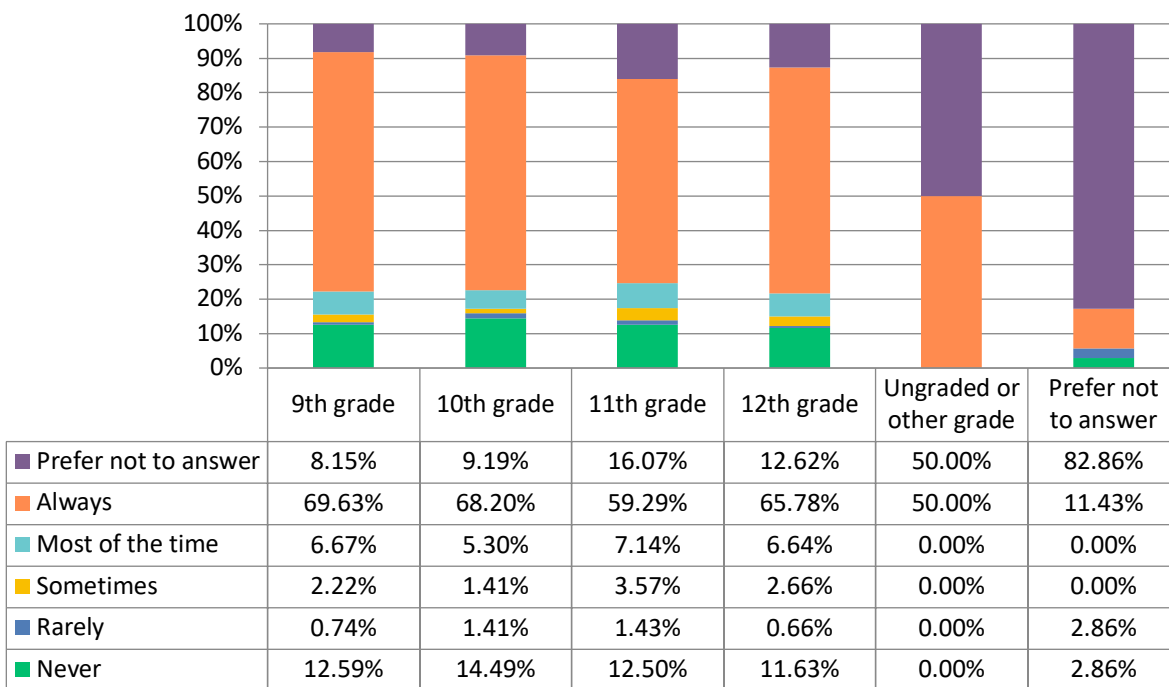
During your life, how often has there been an adult in your household who tried hard to make sure your basic needs were met, such as looking after your safety and making sure you had clean clothes and enough to eat?



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?



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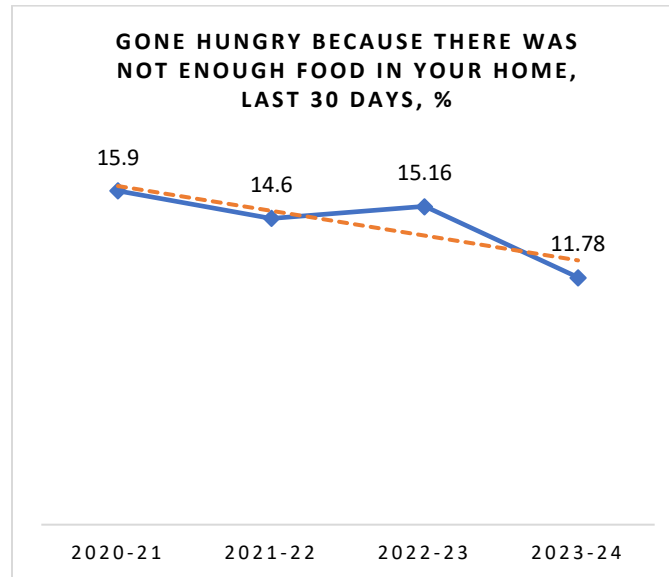


Key Findings on Household Support for Basic Needs

- High Level of Consistent Support:** A majority of students (64.05%) report that there has "Always" been an adult in their household who ensured their basic needs were met, such as safety, clothing, and food. However, approximately 12.47% of students report "Never" having a consistent adult presence to meet basic needs.
- Gender Differences:** Female students report higher rates of consistent support, with 73.02% saying "Always," compared to 58.55% of male students and 27.27% of students identifying as "Other." In addition, males (17.66%) and students who identify as "Other" (36.36%) report higher rates of "Never" having a consistent adult presence for meeting basic needs. This suggests potential variations in perceived or actual household support across gender identities.
- Grade Differences:** Most students across all grades reported that an adult in their household "always" made efforts to meet their basic needs. Ninth-grade students reported the highest level of consistent support, while 11th-graders had the lowest rate of "always" responses.

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

- **Decline in Reports of Hunger:** There is a noticeable downward trend in the percentage of students who reported going hungry due to insufficient food at home, decreasing from 15.9% in 2020-2021 to 11.78% in 2023-2024. This suggests a positive shift, with fewer students experiencing food insecurity over time.
- **Overall Reduction of 4.12%:** From 2020-2021 to 2023-2024, the rate of students reporting hunger dropped by 4.12%, which may reflect improved access to resources or community support for food security.

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 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) explores these educational factors, shedding light on potential barriers to students' success and social development.

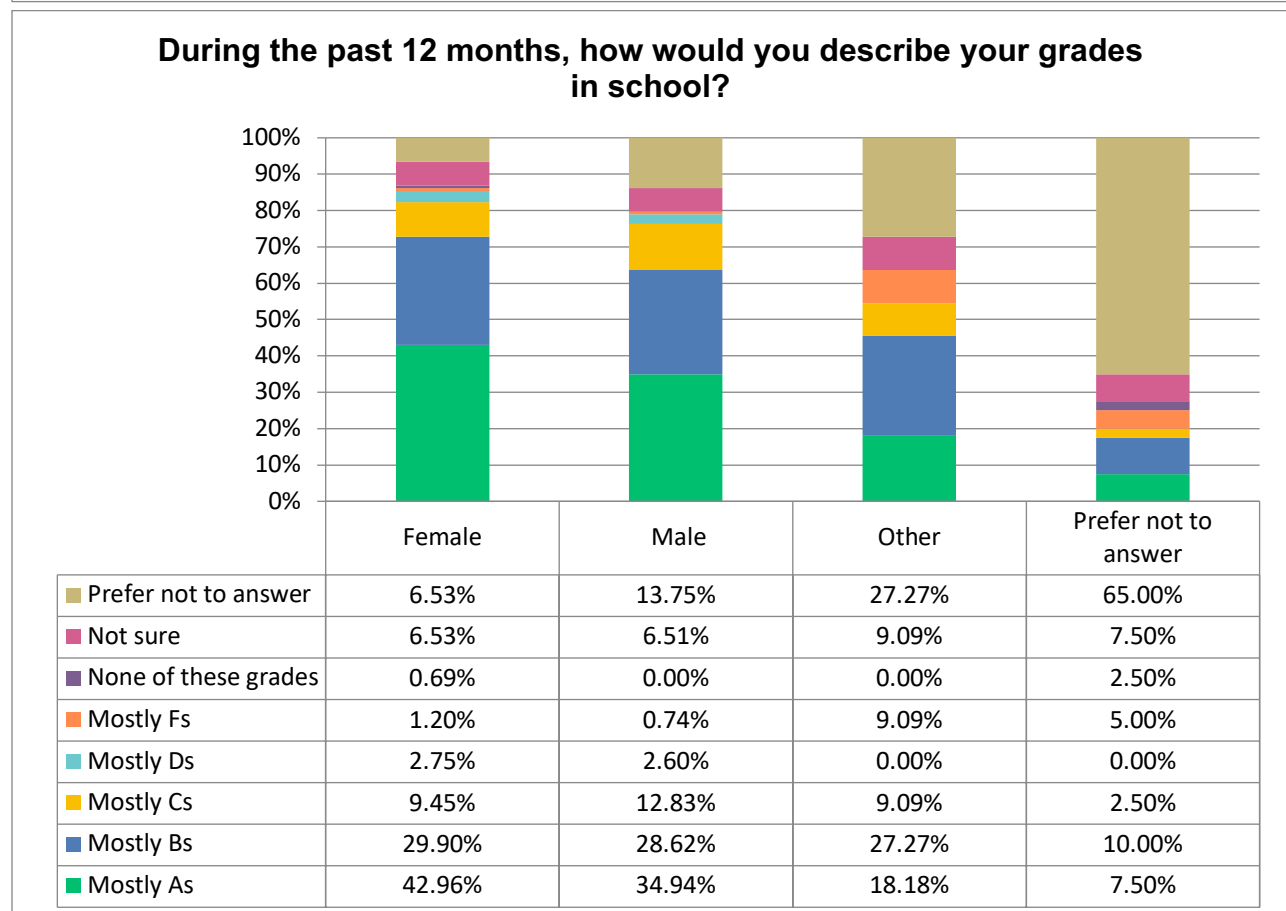
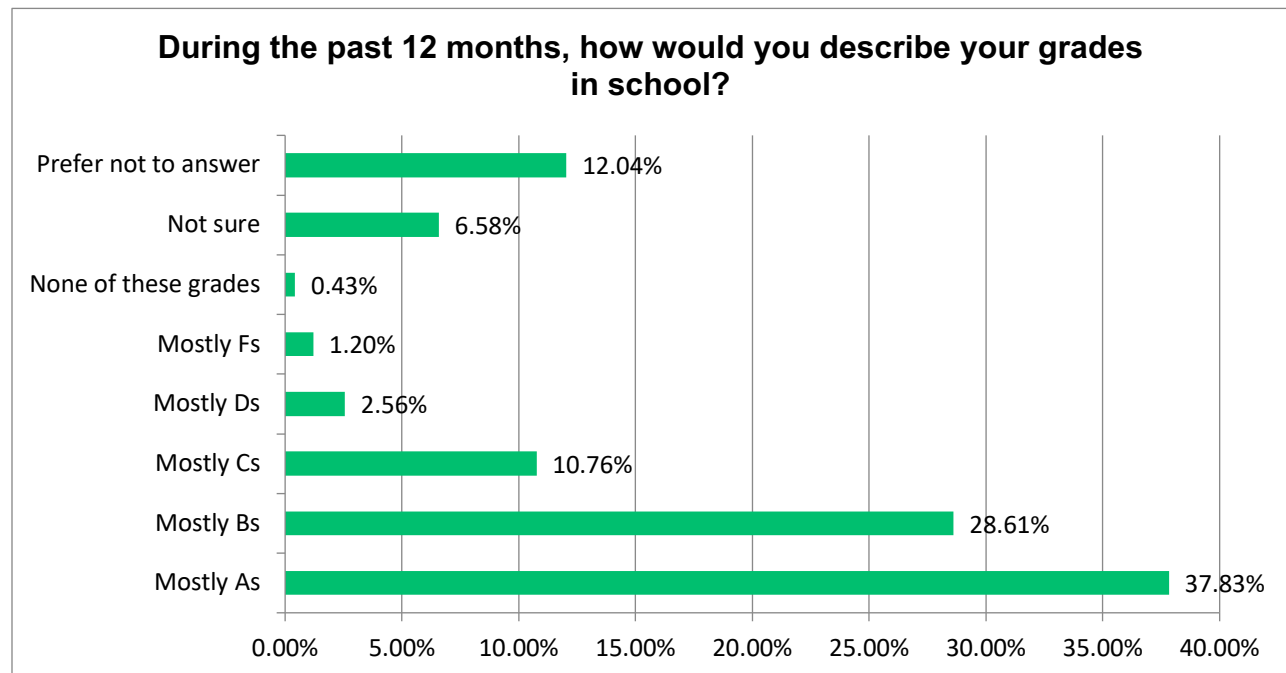
The YRBS findings highlight key trends in Herkimer County. While plans to attend college remain common, fewer students are pursuing higher education, with a shift toward community college, technical education, and workforce entry. Attendance remains strong overall, but unexcused absences increase slightly in higher grade levels, with students identifying as "Other" reporting the highest absenteeism.

Perceptions of teacher support are generally positive, with over half of students feeling encouraged by their teachers. However, younger students express more uncertainty, and privacy concerns grow among older students. IEP and 504 Plan participation remain limited, though students identifying as "Other" gender report higher usage, indicating greater support needs.

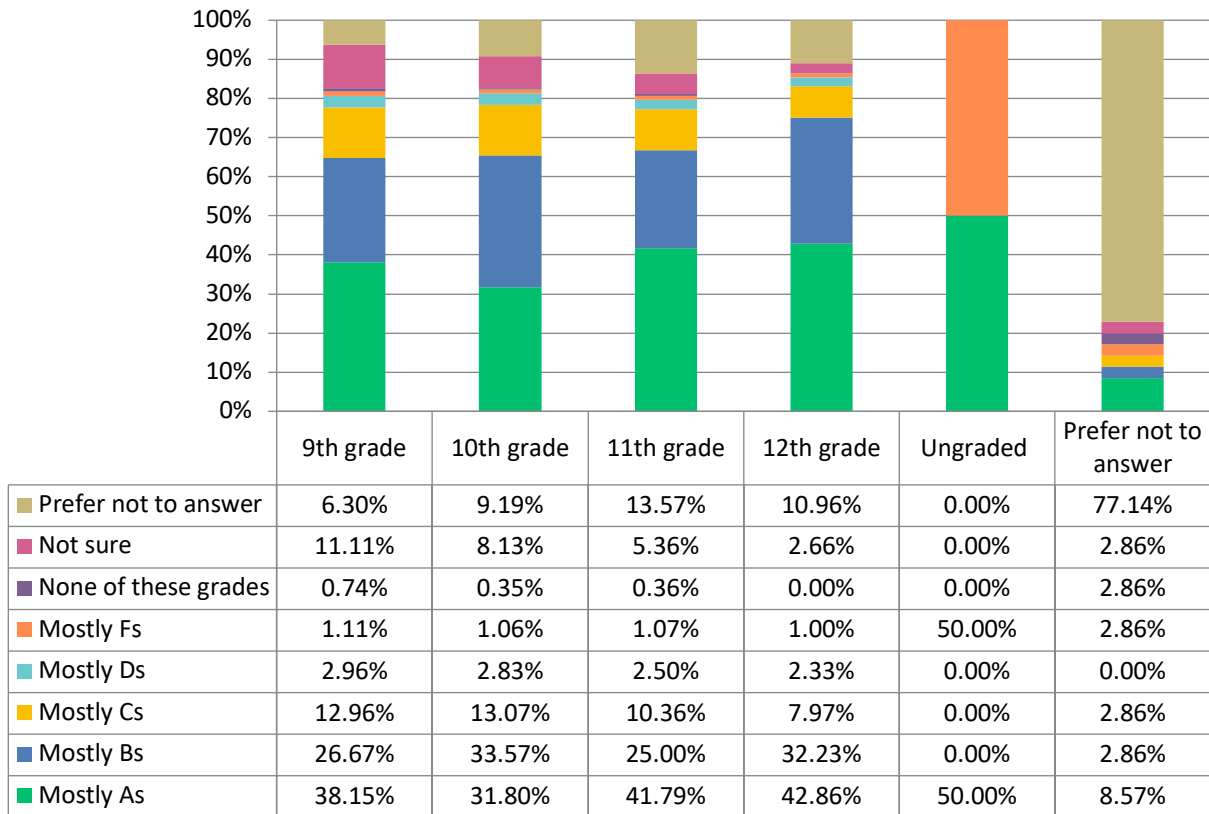
Afterschool participation varies widely. While many students engage in activities for 1-4 hours per week, nearly a third report no involvement. This trend is notable among older students and males. Academically, the majority of students report earning As and Bs, with stronger performance among females and upper-grade students. However, a small subset of students report lower grades, indicating areas where additional academic support could be beneficial.

These findings highlight students' evolving interests, achievements, and engagement patterns. By addressing gaps in participation, academic performance, and absenteeism, schools can create a more supportive and effective learning environment that meets the needs of all students.

Self-Reported Grades



During the past 12 months, how would you describe your grades in school?

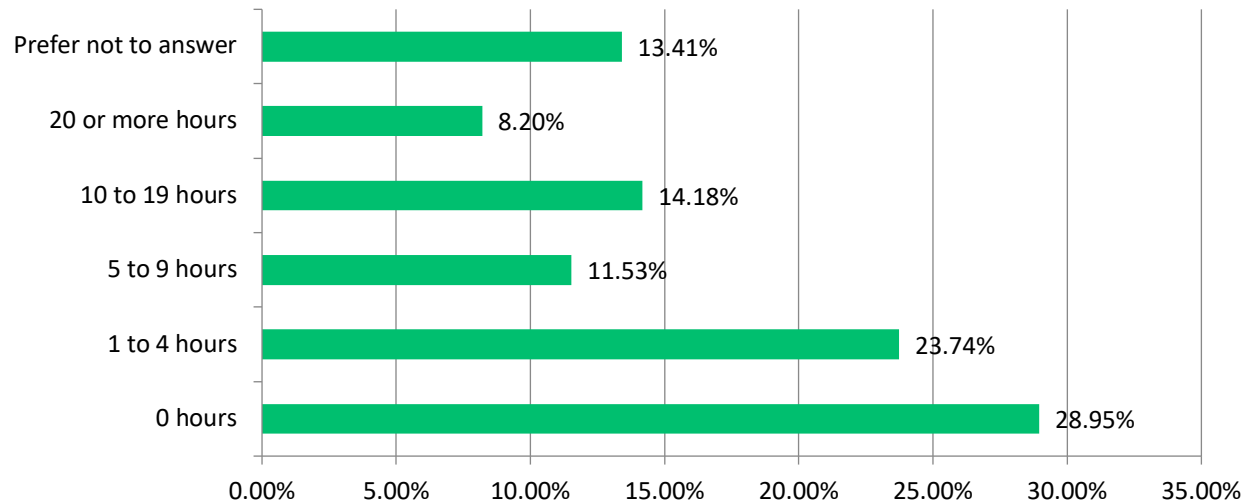


Key Findings on Self-Reported Grades

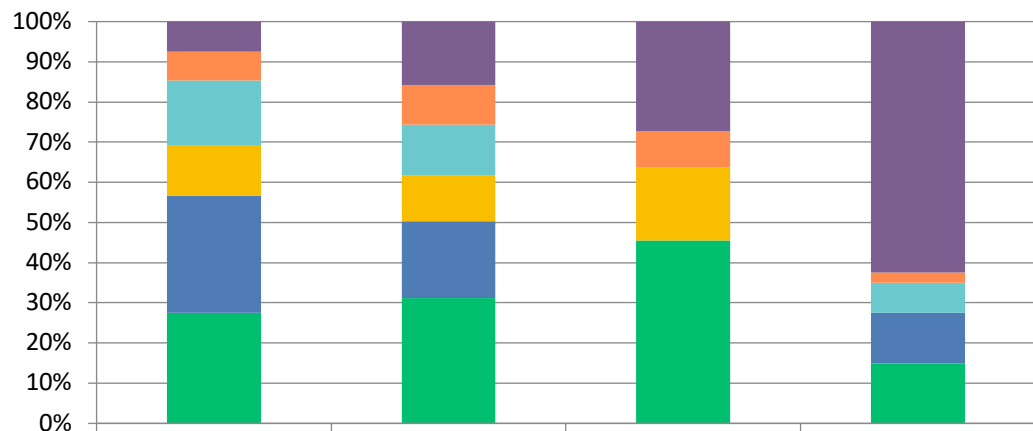
- Mostly A and B Students:** The majority of students report earning "Mostly As" (37.83%) or "Mostly Bs" (28.61%), indicating a generally high level of academic achievement. A minority of students report earning "Mostly Cs" (10.76%) or lower, with "Mostly Ds" at 2.56% and "Mostly Fs" at 1.20%. This indicates that while lower grades are present, they are not widespread among the student body.
- Gender Differences:** The majority of students reported earning mostly As, with female students showing the highest percentage of A grades (42.96%), followed by males (34.94%) and students identifying as "Other" (18.18%). Although a smaller subset of students reported earning Cs, Ds, or Fs, students identifying as "Other" had higher percentages in these categories, highlighting potential academic challenges for this group.
- Grade Differences:** The percentage of students reporting "Mostly As" gradually increases with grade level, from 9th grade (38.15%) to 12th grade (42.86%). Younger students had a slightly higher prevalence of Cs and Ds, with 12.96% of 9th graders and 13.07% of 10th graders reporting mostly Cs.

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?

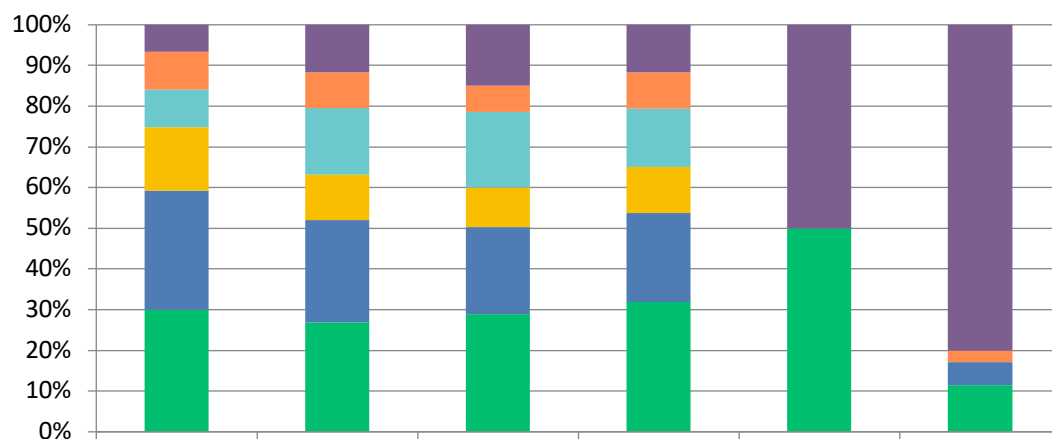


In an average week when you are in school, how many total hours do you participate in afterschool activities such as sports, band, drama, or clubs run by your school or community groups?



Prefer not to answer	7.56%	15.80%	27.27%	62.50%
20 or more hours	7.04%	9.85%	9.09%	2.50%
10 to 19 hours	16.32%	12.64%	0.00%	7.50%
5 to 9 hours	12.37%	11.34%	18.18%	0.00%
1 to 4 hours	29.21%	19.14%	0.00%	12.50%
0 hours	27.49%	31.23%	45.45%	15.00%

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?

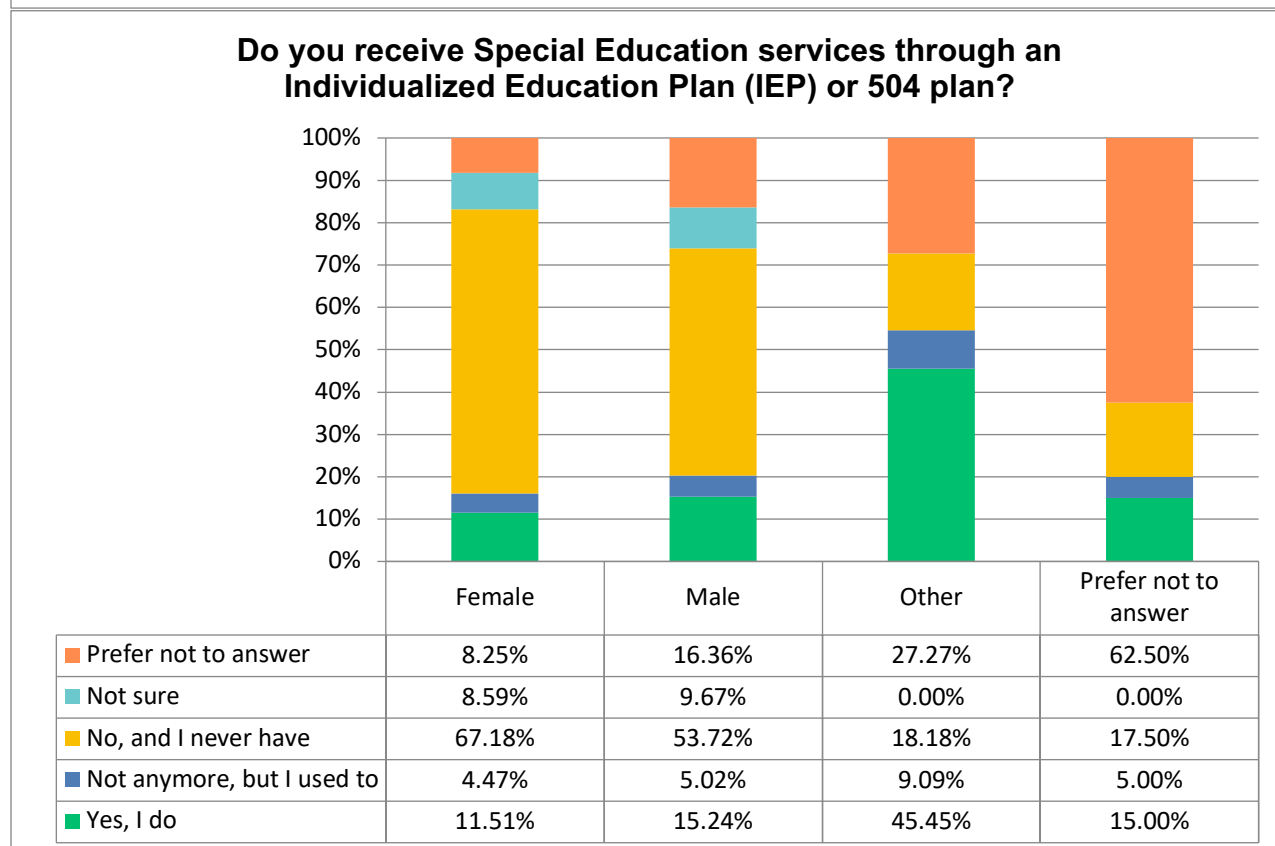
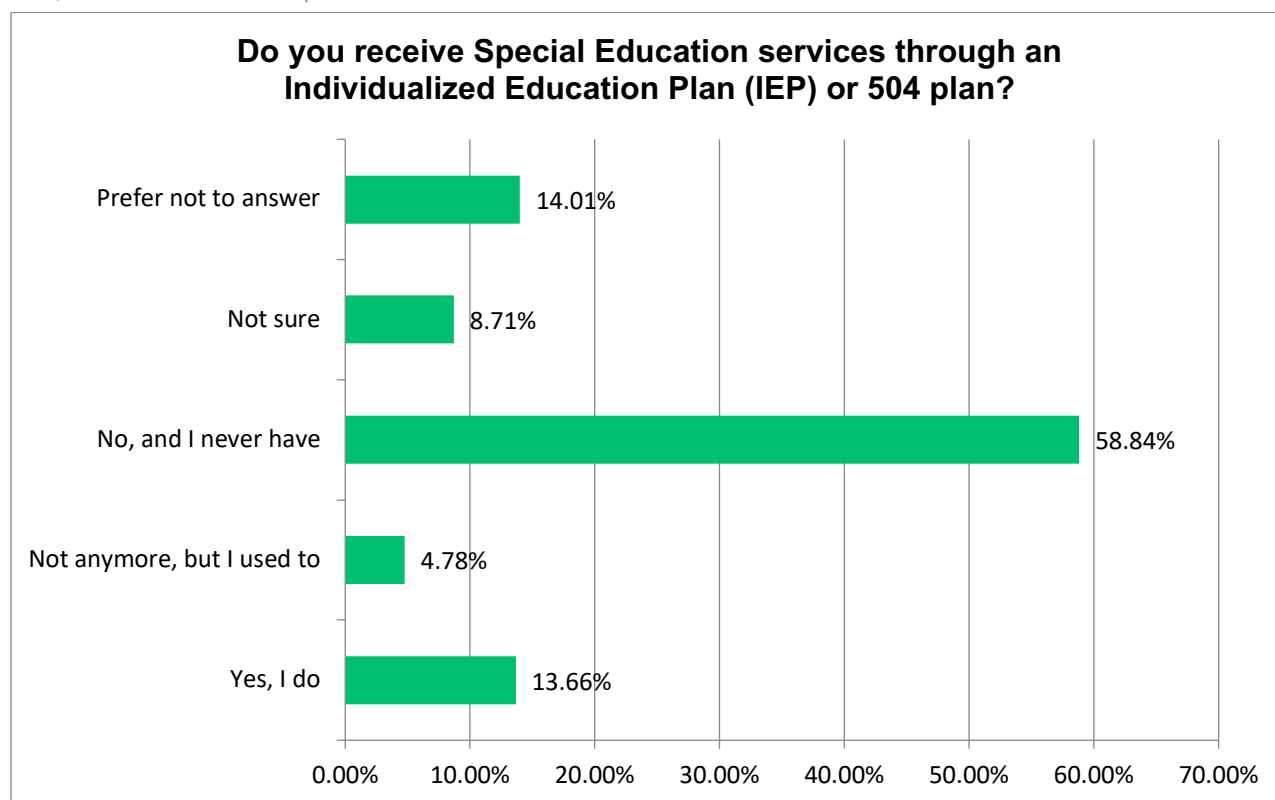


	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	6.67%	11.66%	15.00%	11.63%	50.00%	80.00%
20 or more hours	9.26%	8.83%	6.43%	8.97%	0.00%	2.86%
10 to 19 hours	9.26%	16.25%	18.57%	14.29%	0.00%	0.00%
5 to 9 hours	15.56%	11.31%	9.64%	11.30%	0.00%	0.00%
1 to 4 hours	29.26%	25.09%	21.43%	21.93%	0.00%	5.71%
0 hours	30.00%	26.86%	28.93%	31.89%	50.00%	11.43%

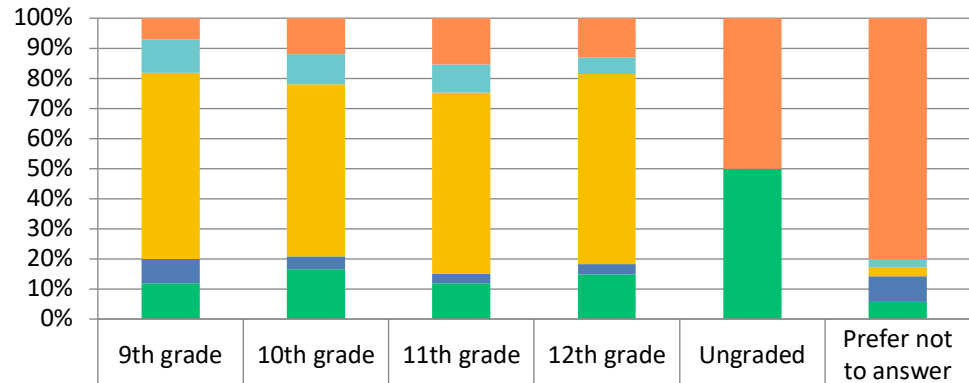
Key Findings on Afterschool Activity Participation

- **Non-Participation:** The largest portion of students, 28.95%, report not participating in any afterschool activities. For students who participate, 1 to 4 hours per week is the most common time commitment, with 23.74% overall in this category.
- **Gender Differences:** Females are more likely to engage for 1 to 4 hours (29.21%) compared to males (19.14%). However, a higher proportion of males (31.23%) report no participation, with the highest non-participation rate among students identifying as “Other” (45.45%). Participation of 10 or more hours per week is reported more frequently by males, with 9.85% spending 20 or more hours in activities, while 7.04% of females report the same.
- **Grade Differences:** Ninth and twelfth graders report relatively higher engagement, with 9.26% and 8.97%, respectively, participating for 20 or more hours per week. Reported non-participation increases slightly among older students, with 31.89% of 12th graders reporting no involvement in activities, compared to 26.86% of 10th graders. Ungraded students show the highest non-participation rate (50%). A notable portion of students across all grades engage for 1 to 4 hours weekly.

IEP/504 Plan Participation



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

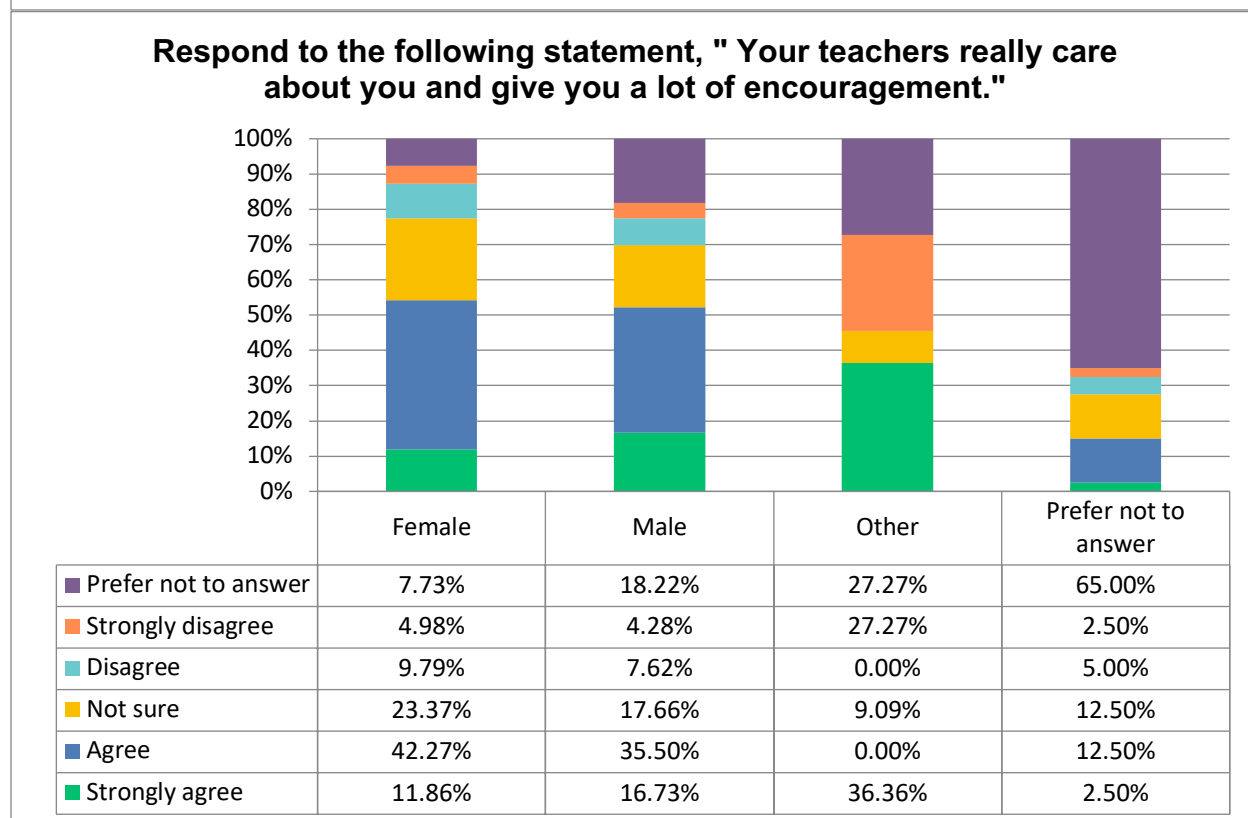
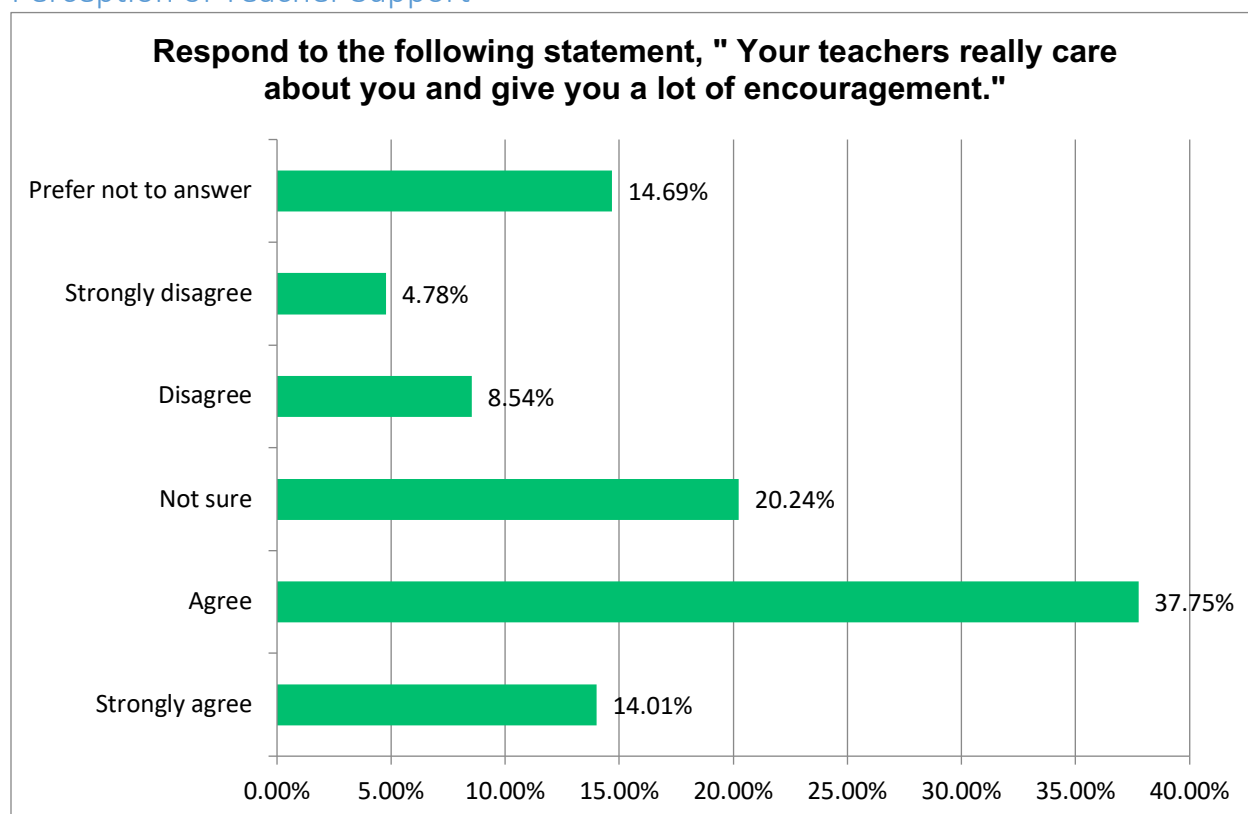


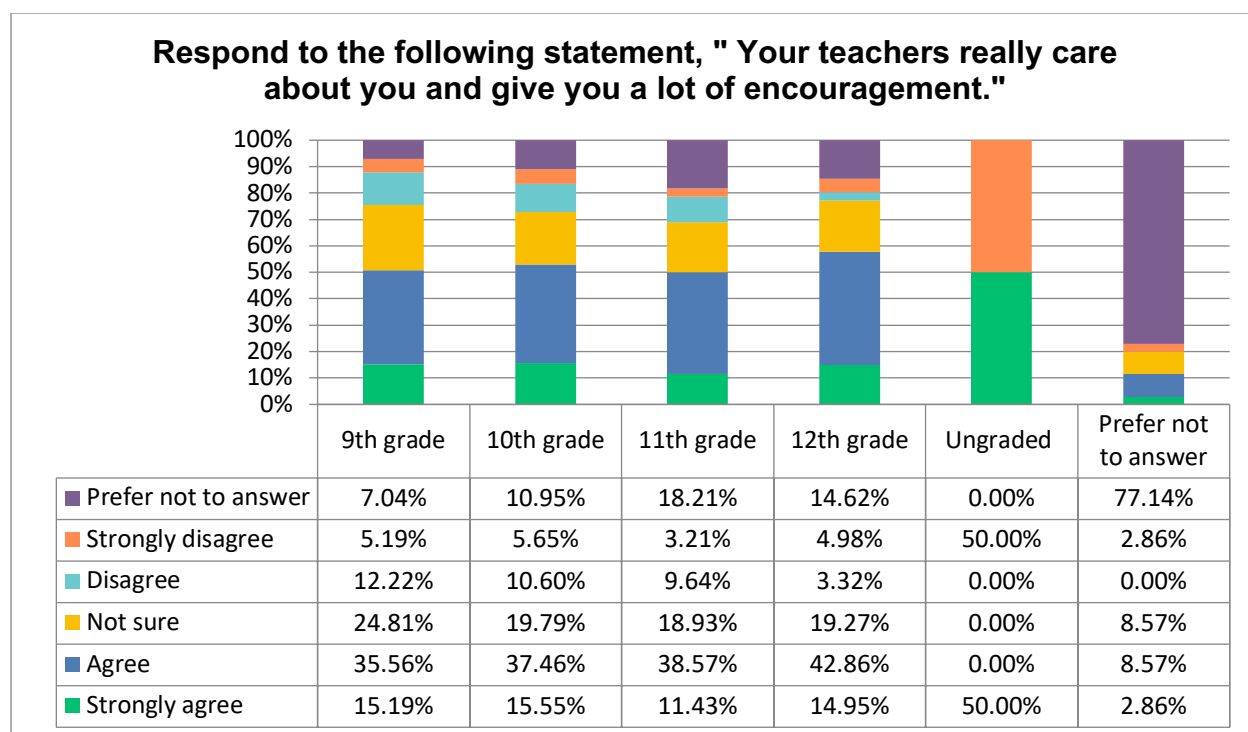
	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded	Prefer not to answer
Prefer not to answer	7.04%	12.01%	15.36%	12.96%	50.00%	80.00%
Not sure	11.11%	9.89%	9.29%	5.65%	0.00%	2.86%
No, and I never have	61.85%	57.24%	60.36%	63.12%	0.00%	2.86%
Not anymore, but I used to	8.15%	4.24%	3.21%	3.32%	0.00%	8.57%
Yes	11.85%	16.61%	11.79%	14.95%	50.00%	5.71%

Key Findings on IEP/504 Plan Participation

- Majority Without IEP/504 Plans:** The majority of students (58.84%) report they do not receive and have never received services through an IEP or 504 plan. This percentage is relatively consistent across grade levels and genders. About 13.66% of students currently receive services through an IEP or 504 plan.
- Gender Differences:** Most students across gender groups report never having received Special Education services through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan, with females (67.18%) and males (53.72%) indicating they have not used these services. However, a notable portion of students identifying as "Other" (45.45%) currently receive these services, suggesting greater support needs within this group. Additionally, about 11.51% of females and 15.24% of males currently receive services, reflecting some ongoing use across student demographics.
- Grade Differences:** The majority of students across grade levels report never having received such services, with percentages ranging from 61.85% in 9th grade to 63.12% in 12th grade. A smaller portion of students, particularly in the 10th grade (16.61%), currently receive these services, showing some ongoing support needs. Additionally, some students, especially in 9th grade, report previously receiving these services but no longer do, highlighting transitions in service needs over time.

Perception of Teacher Support

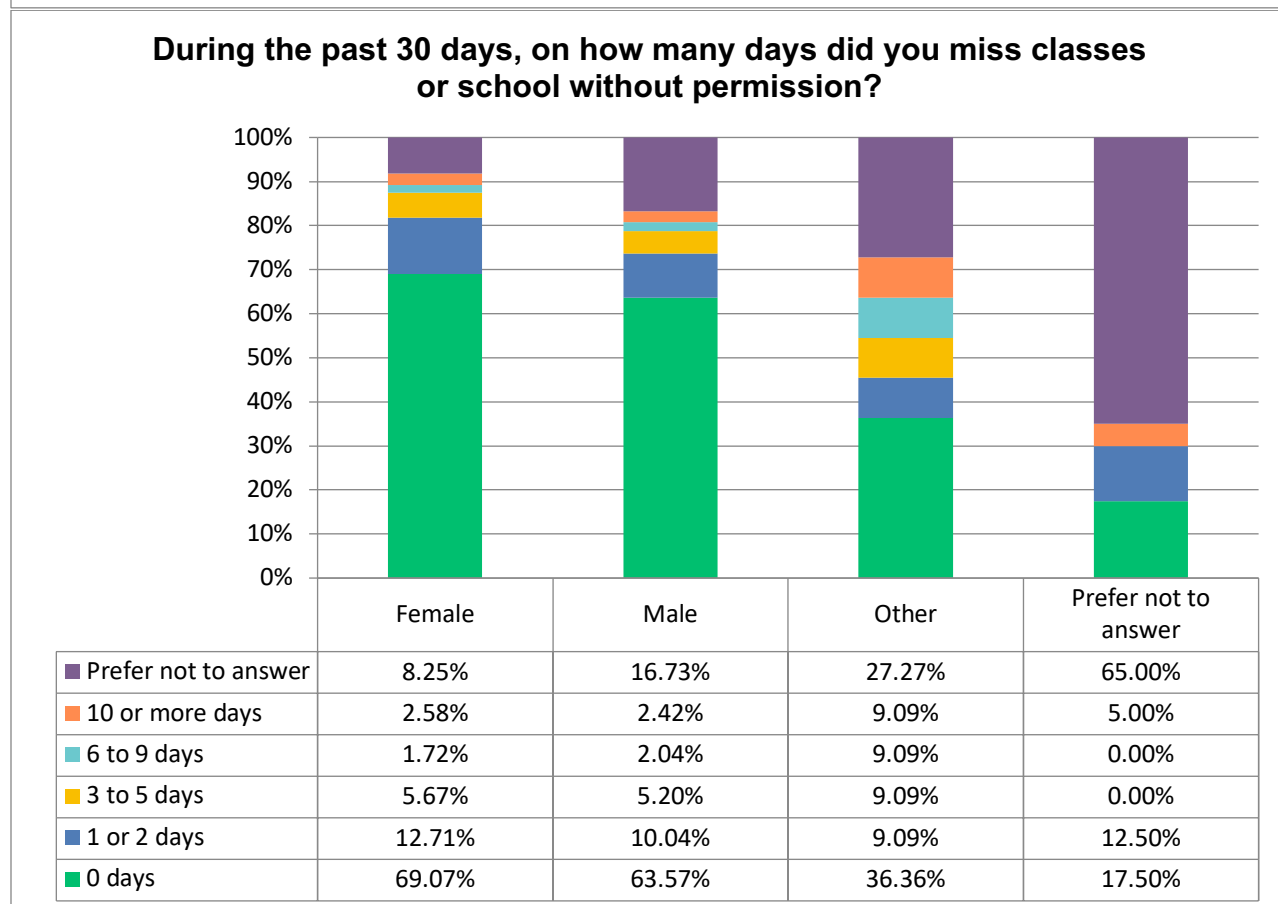
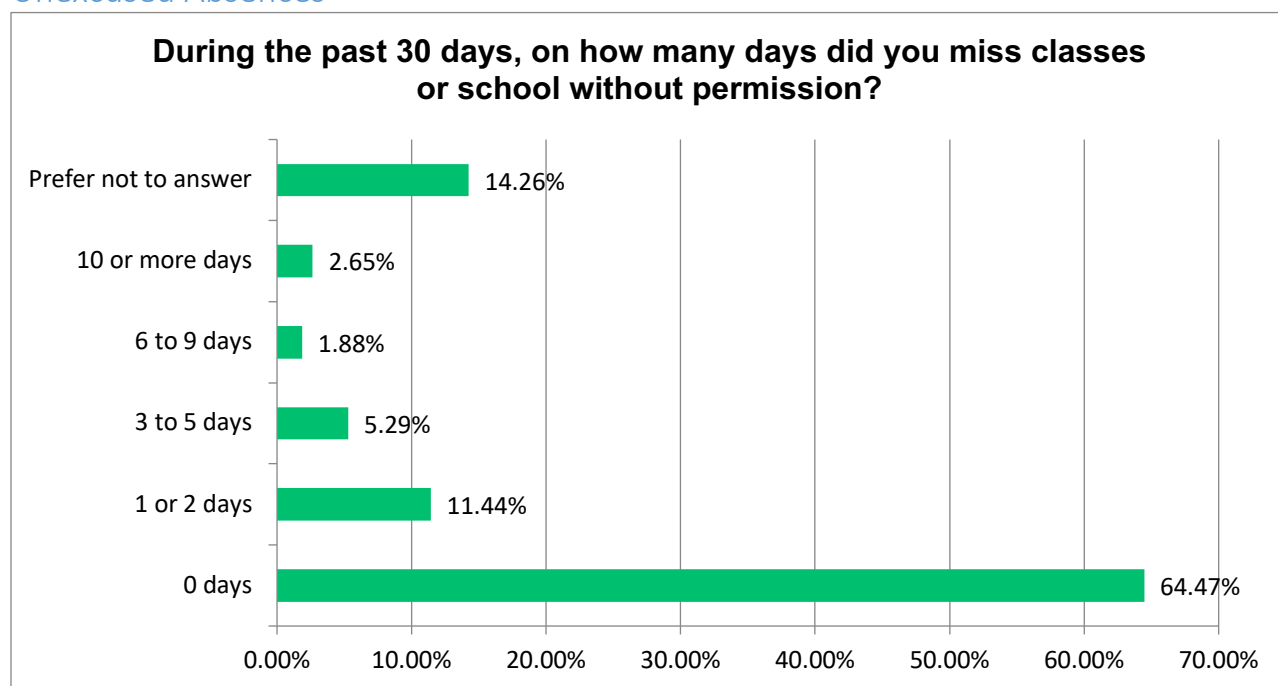




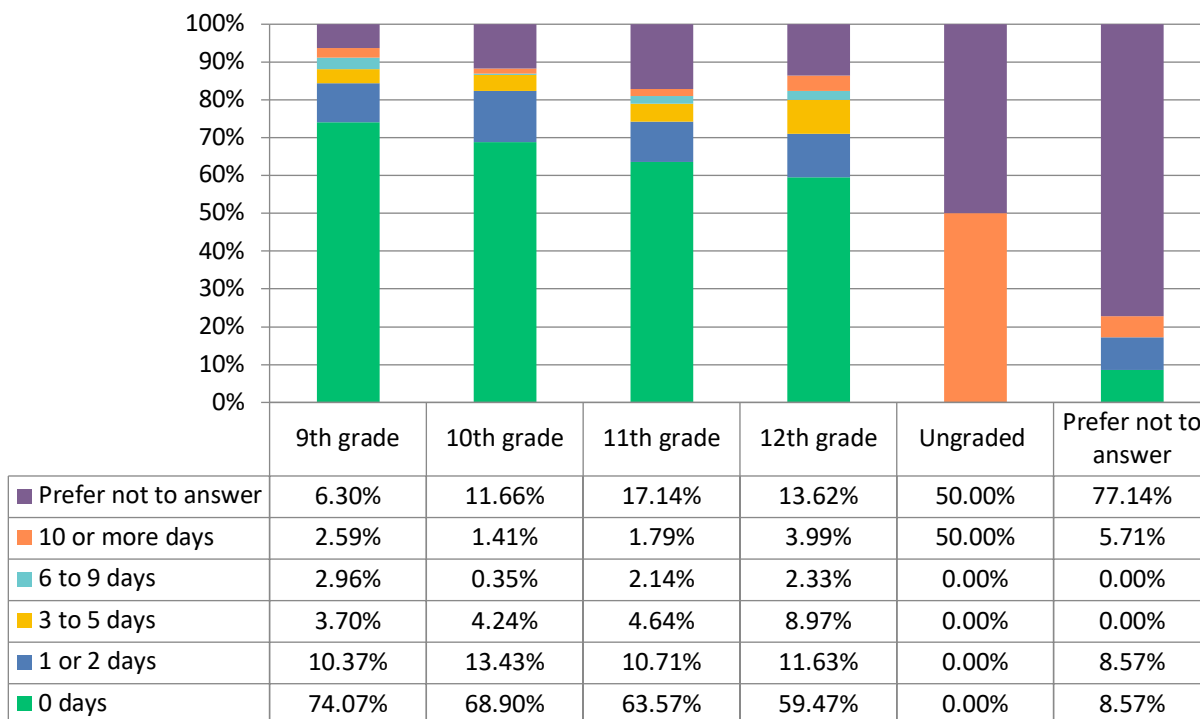
Key Findings on Teacher Support Perception

- Positive Perception of Teacher Support:** Overall, 51.76% of students either "Agree" (37.75%) or "Strongly Agree" (14.01%) that their teachers care about them and provide encouragement, showing a majority of students feel supported by their teachers. Around 20.24% of students responded with "Not sure," indicating some uncertainty regarding teacher support. Additionally, 8.54% disagreed, and 4.78% strongly disagreed, reflecting a mix of experiences.
- Gender Differences:** A majority of students express positive sentiments, with many females (42.27%) and males (35.50%) agreeing that their teachers care and offer encouragement. However, students identifying as "Other" report more polarized experiences, with 36.36% strongly agreeing but also 27.27% strongly disagreeing. Some uncertainty is also present, as a portion of students, particularly females (23.37%), are unsure about their teachers' support.
- Grade Differences:** The data shows that most students generally feel supported by their teachers, with agreement rates increasing slightly in higher grades. A large portion of 12th graders (42.86%) agree that teachers care about and encourage them, while 9th graders show slightly less agreement (35.56%). However, uncertainty is common, especially among younger students, with 24.81% of 9th graders unsure about their teachers' support. Strong disagreement is minimal across grades, but some variance exists, with ungraded students reporting the highest rates of strong disagreement (50%).

Unexcused Absences



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

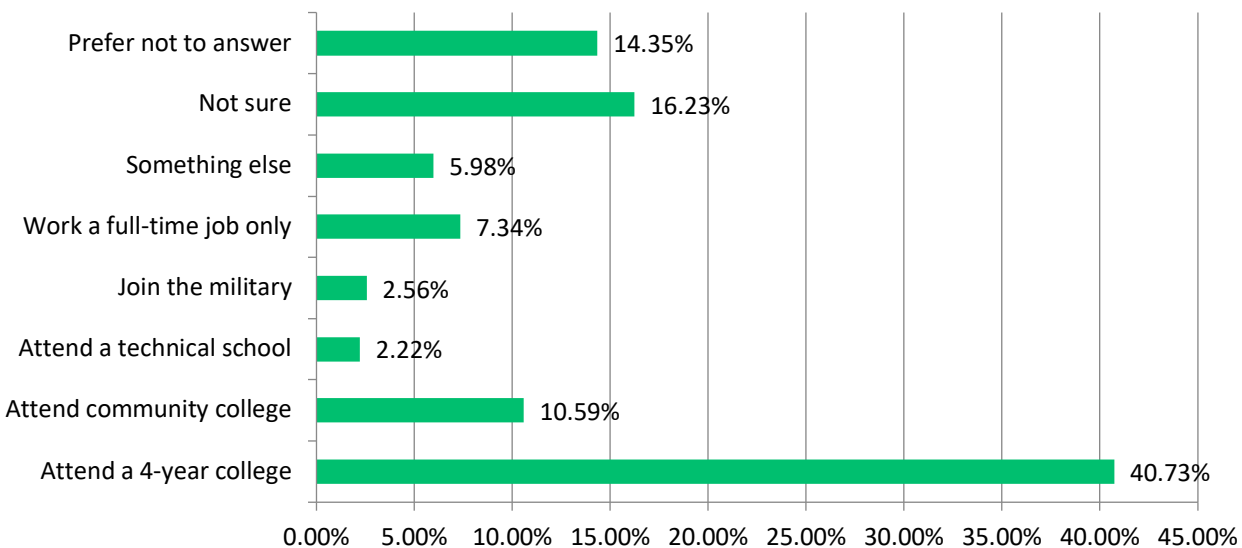


Key Findings on Unexcused Absences

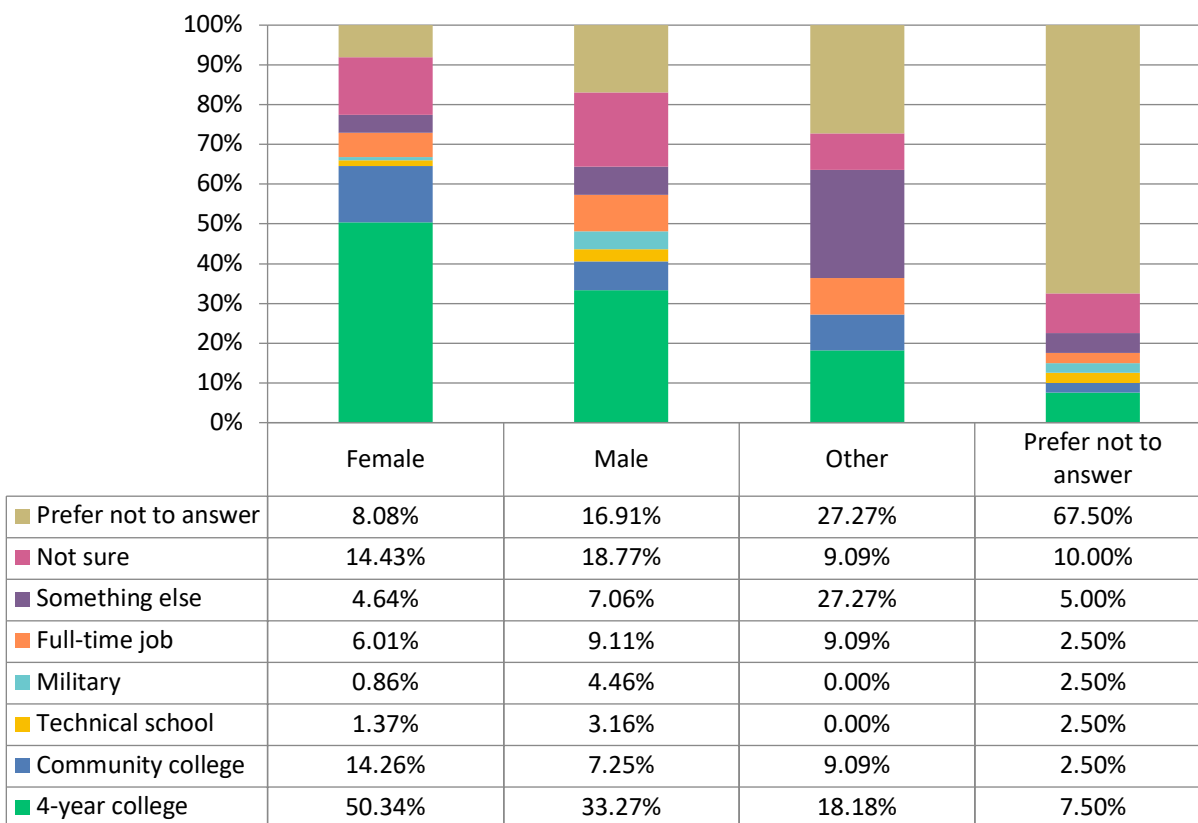
- **High Attendance Rates:** The majority of students (64.47%) reported not missing any classes or school without permission in the past 30 days, indicating strong attendance habits. However, a smaller portion admitted to skipping school, with 11.44% missing 1 or 2 days and 5.29% missing 3 to 5 days. A more concerning subset (2.65%) reported missing 10 or more days.
- **Gender Differences:** Most students reported not missing any classes or school without permission, with females (69.07%) showing slightly higher attendance rates compared to males (63.57%). However, 9.09% of students identifying as “Other” reported missing 10 or more days, indicating higher absenteeism in this group.
- **Grade Differences:** Most students reported not missing any classes or school without permission, with attendance rates declining slightly in higher grades. Ninth graders had the highest rate of no absences (74.07%), while 12th graders reported the lowest (59.47%). A small subset of students in all grades admitted to skipping 10 or more days, with ungraded students showing the highest absenteeism (50%).

Post-High School Plans

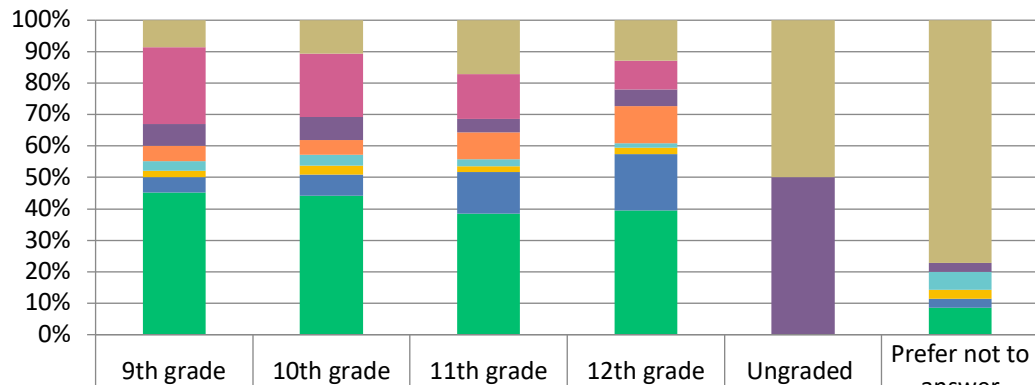
Which of the following are you planning to do after you complete high school?



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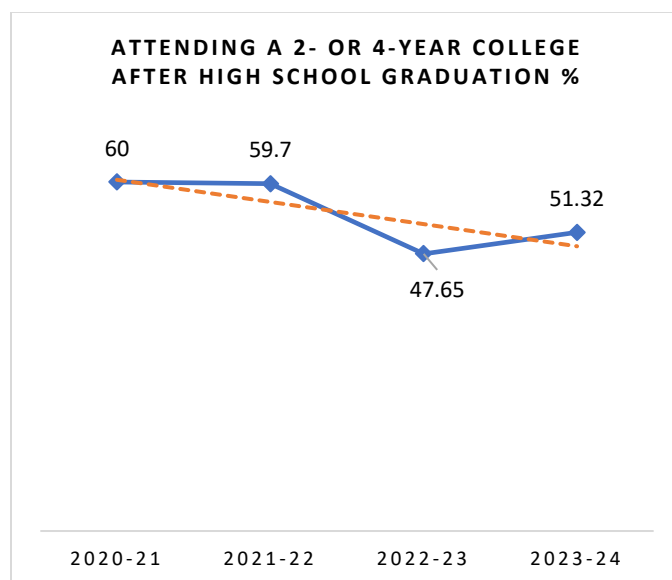
	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	Ungraded	Prefer not to answer
■ Prefer not to answer	8.52%	10.60%	17.14%	12.96%	50.00%	77.14%
■ Not sure	24.44%	20.14%	14.29%	8.97%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Something else	7.04%	7.42%	4.29%	5.32%	50.00%	2.86%
■ Full-time job	4.81%	4.59%	8.57%	11.96%	0.00%	0.00%
■ Military	2.96%	3.53%	2.14%	1.33%	0.00%	5.71%
■ Technical school	2.22%	2.83%	1.79%	1.99%	0.00%	2.86%
■ Community college	4.81%	6.71%	13.21%	17.94%	0.00%	2.86%
■ 4-year college	45.19%	44.17%	38.57%	39.53%	0.00%	8.57%

Key Findings on Post-High School Plans

- 4-Year College as the Leading Choice:** The most common post-graduation plan among students is attending a 4-year college, with 40.73% selecting this option. A smaller portion (10.59%) plans to attend community college. Of note, fewer students indicated intentions to pursue technical school (2.22%) or the military (2.56%).
- Gender Differences:** A large portion of female students (50.34%) plan to attend a 4-year college, compared to 33.27% of males and 18.18% of students identifying as "Other." Males show a higher preference for entering the workforce directly (9.11%) or pursuing technical education (3.37%) than other students. Students identifying as "Other" demonstrate more varied responses, with higher rates of uncertainty (27.27%) or choosing non-traditional options.
- Grade Differences:** Interest in attending a 4-year college declines slightly with grade level, with 45.19% of 9th graders planning to attend compared to 39.53% of 12th graders. Community college attendance shows a gradual increase, peaking among senior students (17.94%). Uncertainty about post-graduation plans is highest among 9th graders (24.44%), reflecting early-stage decision-making.

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

- **Decline in College Attendance Plans:** There is a noticeable downward trend in students planning to attend a 2- or 4-year college after high school, decreasing from 60% in 2020-2021 to 51.32% in 2023-2024.
- **Largest Drop:** The most significant drop occurred between 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, with a decrease from 59.7% to 47.65%, suggesting potential changes in student interests or the impact of external influences.
- **Overall Decline of 8.68%:** Over the four-year period, the percentage of students planning to attend college has dropped by approximately 8.68%, which may warrant further investigation into contributing factors.

Key Insights from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey

The 2023-2024 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) offers critical insights into the health, safety, and well-being of students in Herkimer County. 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

While many students report engaging in safe driving behaviors, such as wearing seatbelts and avoiding impaired driving, risky behaviors persist. A subset of students continues to ride with drivers impaired by alcohol or drugs, reflecting the influence of peer behaviors. These findings highlight the need for ongoing education around safe driving and passenger decision-making to reduce risks on the road.

Violence and Bullying

Although most students feel safe in school and do not engage in violence, challenges remain. Weapon-related threats and exposure to neighborhood violence continue to impact some students. Bullying affects a smaller but concerning subset, with disparities across demographics. Female students and those who do not identify as male or female report higher rates of being bullied, while male students report more involvement in physical altercations or as perpetrators. Older students and those from ungraded categories experience higher rates of violence, weapon threats, and bullying incidents, underscoring the need for conflict resolution programs and supportive school environments.

Mental Health

While there have been declines in reports of severe mental health challenges, such as suicidal planning and non-suicidal self-harm, a significant portion of students still experience persistent stress, anxiety, and depression. Emotional distress is more prevalent among female students and those identifying outside the male/female binary. These findings underscore the need for accessible mental health resources and targeted interventions for vulnerable groups.

Substance Use and Vaping

Cigarette use continues to decline, but challenges remain with alternative forms of tobacco and vaping products. Although vaping rates have decreased, usage remains prevalent among older students and those identifying outside the male/female binary. Marijuana use has also declined. However, new consumption methods such as dabbing and edibles are becoming more common. Alcohol use, particularly binge drinking, has declined, but education efforts are still needed to prevent early initiation and mitigate risks associated with peer access to alcohol.

Sexual Activity and Dating Violence

Sexual activity among students has declined, with fewer students reporting early initiation or substance use before sex. However, concerns persist around non-consensual experiences and inconsistent contraceptive use. A small but significant number of students

report dating violence, highlighting the need for comprehensive education on consent, healthy relationships, and emotional well-being.

Physical Activity and Injury

There is positive progress in students meeting daily exercise guidelines. Nonetheless, Inactivity remains an issue among older students. Rising injury rates, particularly concussions, highlight the importance of promoting safe physical activity practices. Schools should focus on fostering safe environments where students can engage in regular exercise while minimizing injury risks.

Social-Emotional Health

Social media plays a central role in students' lives, presenting both opportunities and challenges. While many students feel supported by their families, parental oversight tends to decrease as students grow older. A sense of community belonging has declined, especially among older students and those identifying outside the male/female binary. These findings indicate a need to foster stronger connections and inclusion.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

The findings highlight a range of challenges affecting students' home environments. Although food security has improved, some students—particularly those not identifying within the male/female binary—continue to experience unmet needs. Parental separation due to incarceration, household substance use, and domestic violence are reported by a small subset of students. These findings support the need for comprehensive support systems within schools and communities.

Education and Engagement

The educational landscape is shifting, with fewer students planning to pursue traditional four-year college degrees. While attendance remains strong, unexcused absences increase with grade level, particularly among students identifying outside the male/female binary. Teacher support is generally perceived positively, though younger students express more uncertainty. Participation in afterschool activities varies, with many students not engaging in extracurriculars. Most students report earning As and Bs, indicating strong academic performance. However, a subset faces academic challenges, especially those who do not identify as male or female.

Concluding Remarks

The YRBS provides critical insights into the behaviors and challenges facing Herkimer County students, offering a roadmap for schools and communities to promote safer, healthier, and more inclusive environments. By addressing areas of concern while building on positive trends, stakeholders can work toward fostering a supportive environment that nurtures students' well-being and success. Through collaboration, education, and targeted interventions, schools and communities can empower youth to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

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