



2019 VERMONT YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY

Report for Subjective Social Status (SSS)



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The Vermont Department of Health would like to acknowledge the work and effort of all the schools, teachers and students who participate in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey each year.

This report includes the overall results or prevalence by Subjective Social Status (SSS). Copies of the questionnaires, state-wide reports, data briefs, and additional sub-state reports are available online. Visit the Vermont Department of Health YRBS website at:
<https://www.healthvermont.gov/yrbs>

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About the YRBS

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is a national school-based survey that monitors the health-risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth and young adults. These include:

- Behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Tobacco use
- Unhealthy dietary behaviors
- Inadequate physical activity
- Sexual health behaviors related to pregnancy and STDs

The YRBS also measures other high priority health-related behaviors and protective factors. These include:

- Prevalence of obesity
- Attitudes and perceptions related to substance use
- Food and housing insecurity
- Youth assets
- Academic achievement
- Sexual Orientation and gender identity

In Vermont, the YRBS has been conducted during the spring semester of odd years since 1993.

Methodology

The Department of Health works with the Agency of Education and the CDC to conduct two separate surveys: a high school survey of students in grades 9 through 12, and a middle school survey of middle school students in grades 6 through 8. These surveys are conducted as a census at all public schools and select independent schools across the state.

The middle school and high school surveys differ slightly. The shorter middle school survey focuses more on lifetime behaviors and includes questions on fighting, bullying, suicidality, substance use, attitudes and perceptions about substance use, sexual activity, nutrition, physical activity, youth assets, and other factors related to health equity. The high school survey includes questions on these topics as well as more in-depth questions on current behaviors as well as self-reported height and weight, driving behaviors, and other drugs used.

Student participation in the YRBS is anonymous and voluntary.

In addition, to protect students anonymity, data is suppressed when less than 50 students respond to a question or less than 5 students answer a question in a particular way.

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How Accurate are the Results?

Numerous precautions are taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the results. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) runs over 100 consistency checks on the data to exclude careless, invalid, or logically inconsistent answers. These internal reliability checks help identify the small percentage of students who falsify their answers. These precautions can reduce some sources of error, but not all.

The CDC also weights data, a mathematical procedure that makes data representative of the population from which it was drawn. Only states with an overall response rate of at least 60% are weighted based on gender, grade, and race/ethnicity.

Information about the methodology of the national, state, and large urban school district YRBS has been described elsewhere and can be found online from the CDC's Healthy Youth-DASH website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/data/yrbs/methods>

Other information including "Do students tell the truth" is available on the Vermont Department of Health YRBS webpage at: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/yrbs>

Populations in Focus

Adverse health outcomes and behaviors experienced by specific populations are not intrinsic to youth themselves and are often instead due to social, economic, and environmental inequities.

The Vermont Department of Health acknowledges that these inequities can have a greater impact than individual choices. To identify disparities and help tell the complex story of youth across Vermont, health-related factors and behaviors experienced by specific populations of youth are analyzed.

This report uses subjective social status (SSS) as a proxy for socioeconomic status (SES) and focuses on health disparities experienced students who believe their family is worse off than other families in the United States.

SSS was a new question added to the YRBS in 2019. It provided students with an image of a ladder and asked students to "Imagine this ladder pictures how American society is set up. At the top of the ladder are people who are best off – they have the most money, the highest amount of schooling, and the jobs that bring the most respect. At the bottom are people who are worse off – they have the least money, little or no education, no job or jobs that no one wants or respects." Students indicated where they thought their family would be on the ladder from 1 (worst off) to 8 (best off).

Students who responded that their family would fall on the lowest three rungs were grouped into a 'worse off' or low SSS category. This report compares low SSS students with those who believe their family is similar or better off than other Americans.

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Using the YRBS Results

Engaging students, schools, and communities

The YRBS can detect changes in risk behaviors over time and identify differences among ages, grades, and genders. With these data, school and community organizations can focus prevention efforts and determine whether school policies and community programs are having the intended effect on student behaviors.

Think of the YRBS as a tool for starting discussions, for educating the community, for planning and evaluating programs, and for comparing Vermont students with other students nationwide.

Start the Conversation: Use the YRBS to begin a conversation with teens about the personal choices they make or about the health of their community. Ask them if the results accurately reflect what they see happening around them. How do they explain the results? From their perspective, what is or is not working? How would they promote healthy behaviors?

Increase Awareness: The YRBS provides an opportunity to break through “denial” and make community members aware of the risks that their young people face. It can also dispel myths and correct misinformation about the “average teenager.” The YRBS can accentuate the positive and celebrate the fact that many students are abstaining from behaviors that endanger their health and their ability to succeed.

Plan and Evaluate Programs: The YRBS can serve as the basis of a community needs assessment. It can help identify strengths and weaknesses in communities and can inform strategies to address those weaknesses.

Remember to Look at the Positive Side: In most cases, the majority of adolescents are NOT engaging in risky behaviors. Although most of the charts examine the prevalence of risk behaviors, please do not forget about the percentage of adolescents who are NOT engaging in these behaviors.

Participate in Getting to 'Y': Getting to Y provides an opportunity for students to take a lead in bringing meaning to their own Youth Risk Behavior Survey data and taking steps to strengthen their school and community based on their findings. Schools and districts across the state form teams to analyze local level data, identify areas of strength and concern, and create a preliminary action plan. Through the Getting to 'Y' program, students attend a training day where they learn tools and strategies to examine data, explore root causes, and create next action steps. In addition, teams plan and host a community dialogue event to share their executive summary with the school and community.

For more information on upcoming Getting to Y trainings, newsletters, and resources visit Getting to Y at <http://www.upforlearning.org/initiatives/getting-to-y>

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Understanding and Interpreting the Results

The results in this report are weighted by gender, grade, and race/ethnicity in order to compensate for absenteeism and incomplete surveys. The weighting allows the results to be fully representative of middle school students in grades six through eight (middle school survey) and high school students grades nine through twelve (high school survey). Weighting permits us to draw inferences about the school-based student population in Vermont.

Throughout this report, statistically significant differences are noted. Statistical significance is calculated by comparing the 95% confidence intervals of two or more values. If the confidence intervals overlap, the percentages are not different. In other words, the two groups are not statistically different from one another. If the confidence intervals do not overlap, there is a statistical difference between the two groups.

A 95% confidence interval is a range of values and can vary due to the size of a particular population or how consistently students responded to an item. Sometimes, when comparing the responses of two or more groups, the difference between the overall percentages may look very different, but the two numbers are not statistically different. Other times, the two values may be very close but differ statistically.

While this report notes statistical differences, we encourage you to consider meaningful difference: does the disparity merit a targeted intervention, show a real change in health, or otherwise mean something important to the community (statistics aside).

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HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS

Report for Subjective Social Status (SSS)

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Sex	VT%
Female	48
Male	52

Grade	VT%
9th grade	25
10th grade	25
11th grade	25
12th grade	25

Race	VT%
Students of Color	16
White, non-Hispanic	84

Sexual Orientation / Gender Identity	VT%
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender	14
Heterosexual / Cisgender	86

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Subjective Social Status		VT%
1		1
2		2
3		8
4		19
5		30
6		26
7		10
8		4

Subjective Social Status		VT%
Worse off than other families		3
Same as or better off		97

Violence and Unintentional Injuries

Physical Violence	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Were in a physical fight, past year	39	18	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Carried a weapon on school property, past 30 days	17	5	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, past 30 days	20	7	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school, past 30 days	18	6	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

Bullying	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Were electronically bullied, past year	28	16	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Were bullied, past 30 days	34	17	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Bullied someone, past 30 days	24	10	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

. = Too few students to report

Violence and Unintentional Injuries

Sexual and Dating Violence	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Report someone has ever done sexual things to them that they did not want	31	17	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Experienced physical dating violence, past year	24	7	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Reported someone they were dating or going out with purposely tried to control them or emotionally hurt them one or more times, past year	41	28	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Have sent or received a revealing or sexual photo of someone using social media, email, or texting on their smartphone, computer, iPad or other tablet, past 30 days	41	27	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

Motor Vehicle Safety	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol, past 30 days	32	17	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Rode in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been using marijuana, past 30 days	45	23	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

. = Too few students to report

Violence and Unintentional Injuries

Motor Vehicle Safety, Among Students Who Drive	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Texted or e-mailed while driving a car or other vehicle, past 30 days	42	35	
Drove a car or other vehicle when they had been drinking alcohol, past 30 days	22	6	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Drove a car or other vehicle when they had been using marijuana, past 30 days	41	14	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

Unintentional Injuries	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Rarely or never wore a helmet when skiing or snowboarding, past year	32	10	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Had a concussion from playing a sport or being physically active, past year	27	17	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Had a sunburn, past year	60	74	Low SSS < Mid-High SSS

. = Too few students to report

Mental Health

Mental Health	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Did something to purposely hurt themselves without wanting to die, past year	35	18	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Felt sad or hopeless, past year	56	30	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Made a plan about how they would attempt suicide, past year	29	13	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Attempted suicide, past year	20	6	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

. = Too few students to report

Lifetime Substance Use

Lifetime Substance Use - Alcohol, Marijuana, & Tobacco	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Ever tried cigarette smoking	47	21	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Ever used an electronic vapor product	63	50	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Ever used a flavored tobacco product	44	27	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Ever drank alcohol	68	56	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Ever used marijuana	60	40	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

Used Tobacco, Alcohol, or Marijuana Before Age 13	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
First tried cigarette smoking before age 13 years	26	6	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Used a flavored tobacco product before age 13	38	14	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Drank alcohol before age 13	30	12	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Tried marijuana for the first time before age 13 years	23	5	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

. = Too few students to report

Lifetime Substance Use

Lifetime Substance Use - Prescription Drug Misuse	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Ever used a prescription drug	30	11	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Ever took prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it	26	9	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Have taken prescription stimulants without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it one or more times	20	7	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

Lifetime Substance Use - Other Drug Use	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Ever used cocaine	16	3	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Ever used inhalants	20	7	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Ever used heroin	10	2	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Ever used methamphetamines	11	2	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

. = Too few students to report

Past 30 Day Substance Use

Past 30 Day Tobacco Use	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Currently smoked cigarettes or cigars or used smokeless tobacco or electronic vapor products	49	28	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Currently smoked cigarettes or cigars or used smokeless tobacco	27	10	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Tried to quit using all tobacco products, past year	47	44	

Past 30 Day Tobacco Use	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Currently smoked cigarettes	22	6	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Currently used an electronic vapor product	43	26	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Currently used smokeless tobacco	12	3	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Currently smoked cigars	18	5	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

Past 30 Day Alcohol and Other Use	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Currently drank alcohol	42	31	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Binge drank, past 30 days	27	15	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Currently used marijuana	47	26	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Currently took any prescription medication without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it	15	4	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

. = Too few students to report

Other Substance Use Related Topics

Substance Use Exposure and Prevention	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Were asked by a doctor, dentist, or nurse if they smoked, past year	62	62	
Most of the time or always see ads for cigarettes or other tobacco products	57	50	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

Substance Use on School Property	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Attended school under the influence of alcohol or other illegal drugs, past year	33	14	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Were offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property, past year	34	19	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

. = Too few students to report

Perceptions of Substance Use

Perceptions of Substance Use - Peer Use	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Think it is wrong or very wrong for someone their age to use electronic vapor products	45	57	Low SSS < Mid-High SSS
Think it is wrong or very wrong for someone their age to drink alcohol	52	53	
Think it is wrong or very wrong for someone their age to use marijuana	40	51	Low SSS < Mid-High SSS

Perceptions of Substance Use - Parental Beliefs	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Responded that their parents or guardians feel it would be wrong or very wrong for the student to use electronic vapor products	63	85	Low SSS < Mid-High SSS
Responded that their parents or guardians feel it would be wrong or very wrong for the student to drink alcohol	62	70	Low SSS < Mid-High SSS
Responded that their parents or guardians feel it would be wrong or very wrong for the student to use marijuana	50	76	Low SSS < Mid-High SSS

. = Too few students to report

Perceptions of Substance Use

Perceptions of Substance Use - Ease of Access	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Say if they wanted to get electronic vapor products, it would be sort of easy or very easy for them to get some	76	73	
Think it would be easy or very easy to get EVP, under 18	74	72	
Say if they wanted to get alcohol, it would be sort of easy or very easy for them to get some	65	68	
Say if they wanted to get marijuana, it would be sort of easy or very easy for them to get some	69	62	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

Perceptions of Substance Use - Harm	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Think people greatly risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they use electronic vapor products regularly	24	29	
Think people greatly risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they have five or more drinks of alcohol (beer, wine, or liquor) once or twice each weekend	37	39	
Think people greatly risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they use marijuana regularly	19	23	

. = Too few students to report

Sexual Health

HIV and STD Testing	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Were ever tested for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)	23	12	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Were ever tested for a sexually transmitted disease (STD)	21	11	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

Sexual Activity	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Ever had sexual intercourse	57	39	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Had sexual intercourse for the first time before age 13 years	12	2	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Had sexual intercourse with four or more persons during their life	23	8	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Were currently sexually active	45	30	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

. = Too few students to report

Sexual Health

Sexual Activity Among Students Who Had Sexual Intercourse During the Previous Three Months

Substance Use, Among Sexually Active Students	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Drank alcohol or used drugs before last sexual intercourse, among sexually active students	37	20	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

Condom & Birth Control Use, Among Sexually Active Students	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Used a condom during last sexual intercourse, among sexually active students	49	55	
Used birth control pills; an IUD or implant; or a shot, patch, or birth control ring, among sexually active students	49	57	
Used both a condom during last sexual intercourse and birth control pills; an IUD or implant; or a shot, patch, or birth control ring before last sexual intercourse, among sexually active students	19	21	
Did not use any method to prevent pregnancy, among sexually active students	11	5	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

. = Too few students to report

Weight, Physical Activity, and Nutrition

Weight and Weight Perceptions	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Were obese	23	13	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Were overweight	17	14	
Described themselves as slightly or very overweight	45	30	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Were trying to lose weight	44	43	

Physical Activity	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Did not participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity on at least one day, past week	22	14	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Were physically active at least 60 minutes per day every day, past week	19	22	
Were physically active at least 60 minutes per day on 5 or more days, past week	38	46	Low SSS < Mid-High SSS
Play video or computer games or used a computer 3 or more hours per day	56	48	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

. = Too few students to report

Weight, Physical Activity, and Nutrition

Physical Activity at School	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Report they participate in physical activity or other short breaks during class at least 1x per week	58	62	
Report they participate in physical activity or other short breaks during class, every day	21	23	

Nutrition	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Ate fruit or drank 100% fruit juices two or more times per day, past week	33	31	
Ate vegetables three or more times per day, past week	24	19	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Ate 5+ fruits/vegetables every day, past week	25	21	
Drank three or more glasses per day of water, past week	43	54	Low SSS < Mid-High SSS
Drank a can, bottle, or glass of soda or a sugar-sweetened beverage, past week	29	17	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS

. = Too few students to report

Weight, Physical Activity, and Nutrition

Breakfast	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Did not eat breakfast, past week	22	11	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Ate breakfast on all 7 days, past week	27	37	Low SSS < Mid-High SSS

. = Too few students to report

Social Determinants of Health

Social Determinants of Health	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Have ever slept away from their parents or guardians because they were kicked out, ran away, or were abandoned	20	4	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Most of the time or always went hungry because there was not enough food in their home, past 30 days	11	2	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Report they are most likely to attend a 4-year college or university, a community college, or technical school after high school	52	77	Low SSS < Mid-High SSS
Described their grades in school as mostly A's or B's	58	79	Low SSS < Mid-High SSS

. = Too few students to report

Youth Assets and Other Protective Factors

Protective Factors - Family	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Did not eat dinner at home with parents, past week	24	9	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Ate dinner at home with parent at least 2x, past week	69	87	Low SSS < Mid-High SSS
Ate dinner at home with at least one of their parents or other adult family member on 4+ days, past week	52	75	Low SSS < Mid-High SSS

Protective Factors - School Connectedness	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Reported there is at least one teacher or other adult in their school that they can talk to if they have a problem	62	78	Low SSS < Mid-High SSS
Strongly agree or agree that their school has clear rules and consequences for behavior	44	57	Low SSS < Mid-High SSS
Do not participate in any afterschool activities	51	33	Low SSS > Mid-High SSS
Spend 10 or more hours participating in afterschool activities	19	24	Low SSS < Mid-High SSS

Protective Factors - Community	Low SSS	Mid-High SSS	
Strongly agree or agree that in their community they feel like they matter to people	31	59	Low SSS < Mid-High SSS

. = Too few students to report