

Behavior during adolescence is influenced by multiple factors within the individual, social, and environmental contexts.ⁱ Many risk behaviors developed during adolescence persist into adulthood. Research in youth development has consistently shown that participation in extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, band, drama, and religious groups is associated with increasing positive outcomes, while buffering the impact of other experiences and reducing risk behaviors.^{ii, i}

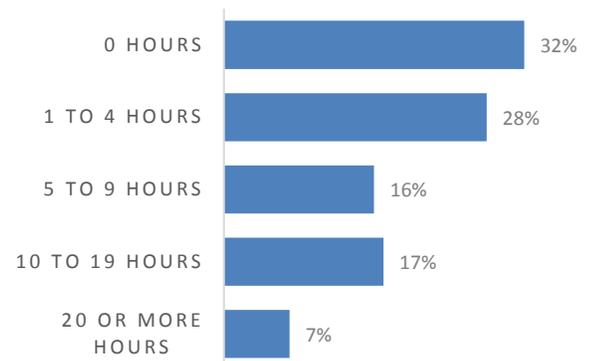
While participation in extracurricular activities is strongly associated with positive outcomes, the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and positive outcomes is not always straightforward. Those who participate in extracurricular activities typically have greater positive outcomes than those who do not participate in any, however, there is evidence that participation at a high frequency (20+ hours per week), as compared with those with less frequent participation, can be associated with increased risk behaviors, a reduction in positive outcomes, and decreased psychosocial development.^{iii, iii} The same is true of participation in certain contexts (e.g., sports) and higher levels.

The following sections use [Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) data to look at the impact of extracurricular activity participation on youth outcomes, focusing on comparing no participation with increasing amounts of participation.

Extracurricular Involvement

Regardless of grade, sex, or race about one-third of high school students do not participate in any extracurricular activities during an average week. Six in ten high school students participate in less than five hours per week of structured activities outside of school. About a third participate in 5 to 19 hours per week. Less than one in ten participate in 20 or more hours per week.

AVERAGE TIME SPENT PER WEEK IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

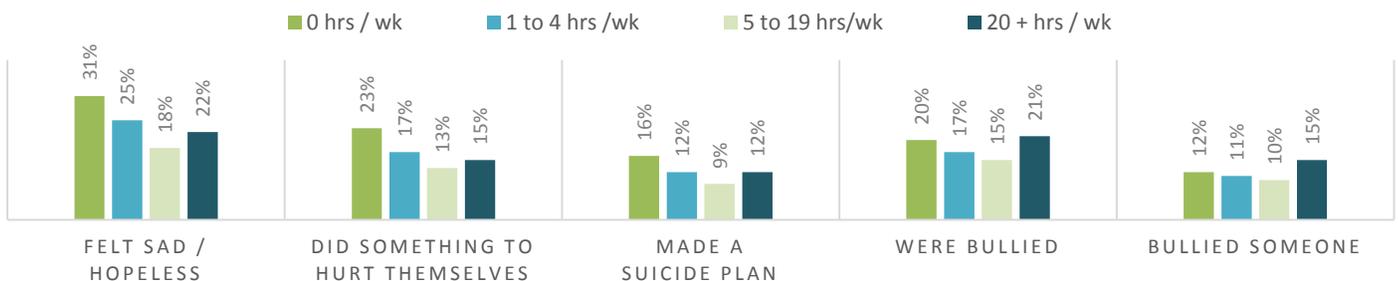


Extracurricular Involvement and Personal Safety

In the past 12 months, a quarter (24%) of high school students felt sad or hopeless for two or more weeks, 17% of students did something to hurt themselves, and 12% made a plan about how they would attempt suicide. During the past 30 days, nearly one in five (18%) students were bullied, one in ten (11%) bullied someone else.

Feelings of hopelessness, self-harm, and suicidality, and being bullied significantly decreased with participation in up to 19 hours of activities per week. Excluding bullying behaviors, students with 20 or more hours of weekly extracurricular activities are more likely than those with five to 19 hours, and are less likely than those without any extracurricular activities to experience each of these outcomes. Students with 20 or more hours of extracurricular activities are more likely to be bullied and bully others than all other groups.

EXTRACURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT AND PERSONAL SAFETY

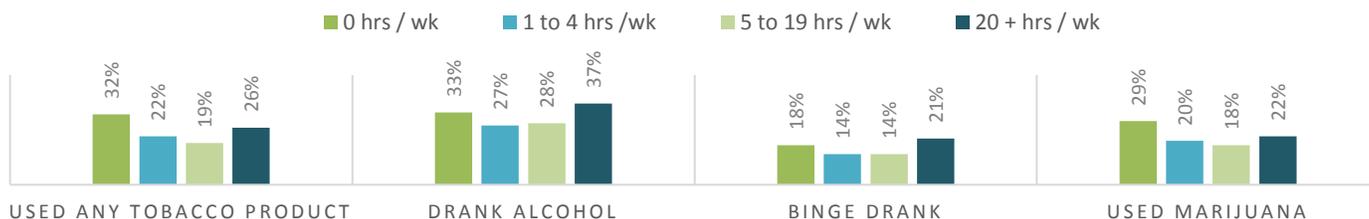


Extracurricular Involvement and Substance Use

In 2015, three in ten high school students reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days, one in six binge drank. A quarter used any tobacco products (includes cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, and electronic vapor products), while over one in five students (22%) used marijuana at least one time during the past thirty days.

Students with any extracurricular activities each week are significantly less likely to use any alcohol, tobacco or marijuana than to those who did not participate in any activities. However, alcohol consumption (any and binge) is significantly higher among students with 20 or more vs. all other levels of activity participation, including none.

EXTRACURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT AND SUBSTANCE USE

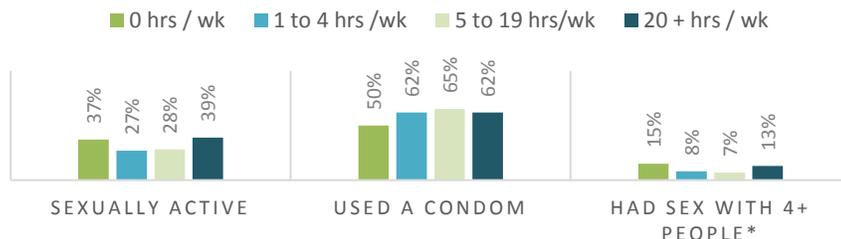


Extracurricular Involvement and Sexual Activity

A third (31%) of high school students are currently sexually active, and six in ten (58%) used a condom during their most recent sexual intercourse.

Students with any weekly extracurricular activities are less likely to be sexually active and more likely to use a condom, compared with those with none. Students with 20+ hours of weekly activities are more likely than those in all other participation categories to be sexually active, including none. Condom use by students with 20+ hours of activities per week is lower than those with fewer activities, but higher than among students with no activities.

EXTRACURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT AND SEXUAL ACTIVITY



Extracurricular Involvement and Protective Factors

About eight in ten students speak to their parents about school at least once a week (76%) and earn mostly A's and B's (79%). Six out of ten (62%) agree or strongly agree that their teachers really care about them and half (50%) believe they matter to people in their community.

Presence of youth assets increases with participation in extracurricular activities, through 19 hours per week. Students with 20+ hours of activities are less likely than those with fewer hours to talk to their parents about school, earn mostly A's/B's, and think teachers care, but more likely than those with no activities to experience these youth assets.

EXTRACURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS



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ⁱ Larson, R., Hansen, D., & Moneta, G. [Differing profiles of developmental experiences across types of organized youth activities.](#) *Developmental Psychology*, 2006:4 (5), 849-863

ⁱⁱ Mahoney JL, Harris AL, Eccles JS. [Organized activity participation, positive youth development, and the over-scheduling hypothesis.](#) *Society for Research in Child Development: Social Policy Report*. 2006; 20:1-30

ⁱⁱⁱ Lee, K.T.H. & Vandell, D.L. [Out-of-school time and adolescent substance use.](#) *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2015; 57(5); 532-529