

Frequency of Current Marijuana Use and Other Risk Behaviors Among High School Students

2015 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey

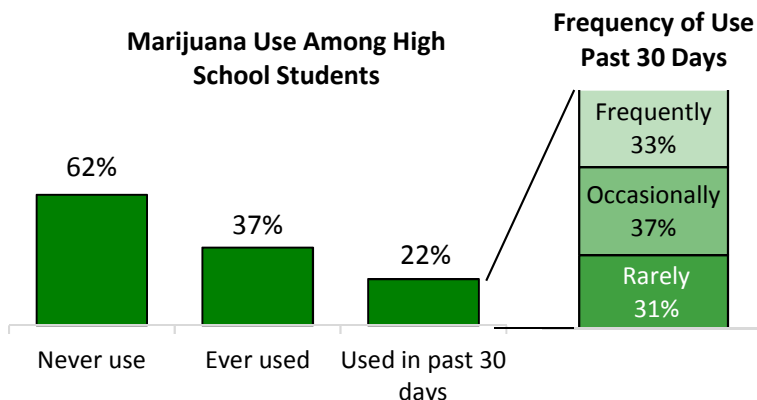
Background

There are many factors associated with marijuana and other drug use among youth such as perceptions of risk, history of violence and other substance use, increased stressors and demands of adolescence, as well as family and social influences.¹ In 2015, the Vermont high school youth risk behavior survey² (YRBS) asked students about marijuana use, including frequency of use as well as perceptions about marijuana.

Marijuana Use

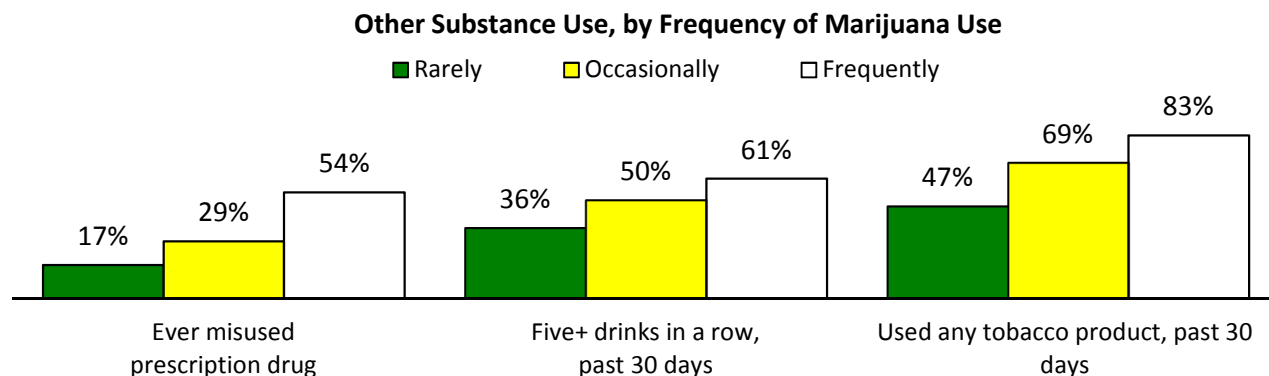
Overall, 37% of high school students reported ever using marijuana in 2015. By the time they graduate, nearly half of all students (49%) have tried marijuana.

In the last 30 days, 22% of students reported marijuana use. Among students using marijuana in the past 30 days, nearly a third reported using it rarely (1-2 times), 37% used it occasionally (3-19 times), while another third reported frequent use (20+ times).



Other Substance Use

As frequency of recent marijuana use increases, use of other substances also increases. Students who use marijuana more often are more likely to have ever misused a prescription drug, binge drank in the last month, or to currently use tobacco products (including e-cigarettes).

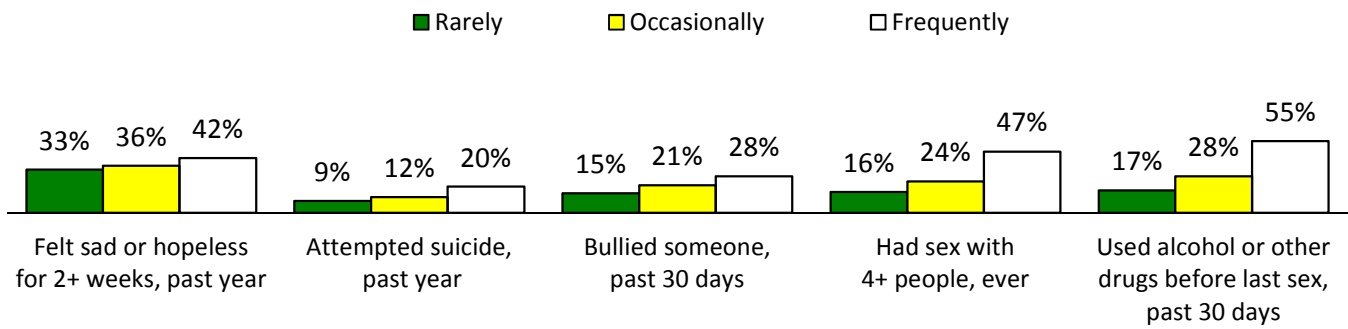


Mental Health and Other Risk Behaviors

As marijuana use increases among high school students, indicators of suicidality and feelings of hopelessness also increase. This includes feeling so sad or hopeless for two or more weeks in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities, making a suicide plan in the past year (data not shown), and attempting suicide in the last 12 months

Likewise, participation in other risk behaviors such as bullying and risky sex also increase as the frequency of marijuana use increases. Students who frequently use marijuana are more likely than those with less frequent use to be bullied or to have bullied someone else. Frequent marijuana users are also more likely to have had sex with four or more people in their lifetime or to have used drugs or alcohol before their last sexual intercourse.

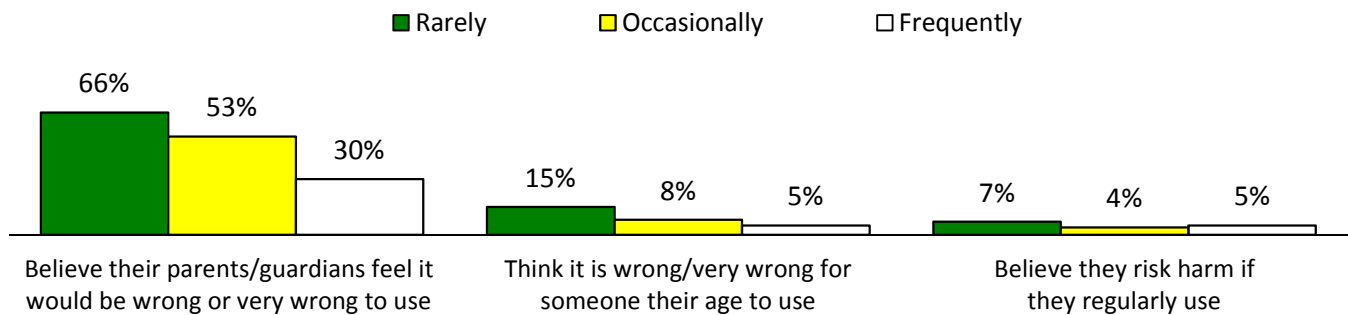
Selected Risk Behaviors, by Frequency of Use



Perceptions of Marijuana Use

As marijuana use increases, student perceptions of marijuana use as wrong or risky decreases. Students who frequently use marijuana are less likely than those with less frequent use to think their parents or someone their age feel it would be wrong for them to use marijuana. Frequent marijuana users are also less likely to believe they risk harming themselves by regularly using marijuana.

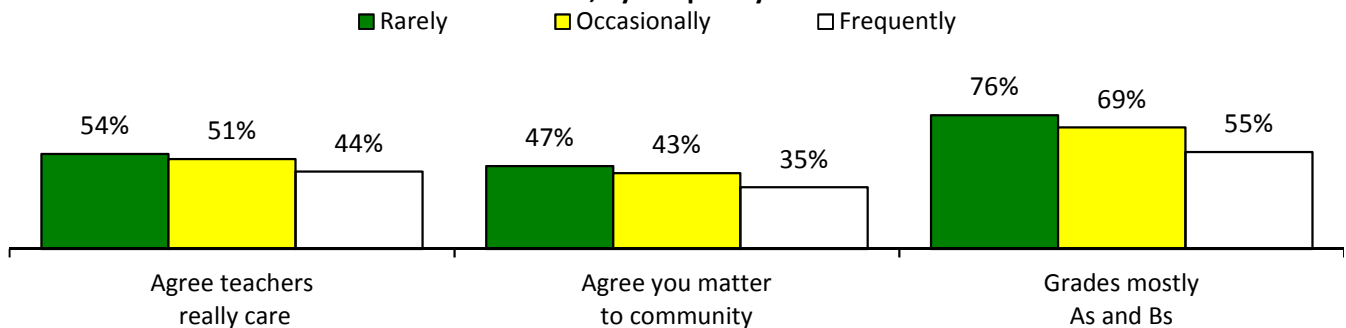
Perceptions of Use, by Frequency of Use



Youth Assets

As marijuana use increases, perceptions about ones' school and community, after school involvement and grades tend to decrease. Students who use marijuana more often are less likely to think their teachers really care about them, that they matter in their community, or to get mostly grades of A's and B's.

Student Assets, by Frequency of Use



¹ For more information on marijuana and other substances, resources, and services available visit:

<http://healthvermont.gov/adap/drugs/marijuana.aspx>; <http://parentupvt.org/>; <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/marijuana>.

² **Interpreting the Data:** These tables demonstrate the association between marijuana use and other behaviors. It is important to remember that YRBS data does not indicate causality as all data is collected at the same time. As a result, we cannot say that marijuana use causes a student to use other substances or experience other risky behaviors, only that there is a correlation between frequency of marijuana use and these behaviors and perceptions.

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