

The Council of Elders Community Academy:

Social Emotional Well-Being & Substance Misuse

Information for Families
December 2023



Consuela Robinson, Ed.D, LCSW-C
Coordinator of Social Work Services



Objectives

Participants will:

- receive a definition of mental health and well-being
- receive data on adolescent mental health and substance use, misuse & abuse
- identify symptoms of depression, anxiety & substance abuse
- identify warning signs and protective factors
- learn how parents and caregivers can support students
- receive information about HCPSS and community resources

YOUTH WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH



Defining Well-Being:

Well-Being includes:

- Physical and Mental Health
- Experiencing positive emotions and relationships
- Functioning well
- Feeling content
- Feeling safe
- Having a sense of purpose

Defining Mental Health:

Mental Health is part of well-being and includes the ability to:

- Develop supportive relationships
- Practice healthy coping skills
- Adapt to change
- Express feelings in healthy ways
- Navigate and function effectively in different settings (home, school and community)

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FACTS & DATA

Facts: Adolescent Mental Health and Substance Use

- Depression and anxiety are among the most commonly diagnosed mental health disorders in children aged 3-17.
- Rates of depression and anxiety among youth have increased over time.
- Substance use is associated with poor mental health, suicide risk, sexual risk behavior, and experiences of violence.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among teens**

Adolescent Mental Health: Some Groups are More Affected Than Others

- Youth involved in the juvenile justice and/or foster care systems have a higher incidence of suicidal behavior
- Feelings of sadness and hopelessness are more common among LGBTQIA+ students, female students, and students of color
- In 2021 almost half of all LGBTQIA+ students seriously considered suicide
- Black students were more likely to consider suicide than students of other races and ethnicities

Adolescent Mental Health: National and State Data

National:

- Males aged 10-24 die by suicide 3.4 times more than females (2019)
- In 2021, more than 4 in 10 students felt persistently sad or hopeless, and nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ experienced poor mental health

Maryland:

- In 2021:
 - 20.3% of students in grades 9-12 seriously considered attempting suicide in the previous 12 months, and 16.1% attempted suicide.

Howard County Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2021 Results

Percentage of students who felt sad or hopeless almost everyday for more than a 2 week period during the 12 months before the survey:

Race/Ethnicity	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Asian	Not reported	29.6%
Black	32%	38%
Hispanic/Latino	44.3%	49.8%
White	28.6%	36.2%
Multiple Races	29.4%	42.2

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY



Depression in Youth

Symptoms include:

- Feelings of sadness, guilt, or hopelessness
- Lack of energy or motivation
- Irritability
- Behavioral outbursts
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Changes in appetite or eating
- Poor concentration
- Withdrawal from friends or family
- Loss of interest in activities that were previously enjoyable
- Unexplained physical problems (e.g. headaches)

Anxiety in Youth

Anxiety:

Excessive fear or worry that interferes with daily activities

Fears or worries may be related to:

- The future or bad things happening
- Different social situations or places with lots of people
- Separation from parents or loved ones
- Specific things or situations (going to the doctor, insects, etc.)

Source: Centers for Disease Control (2021)

MENTAL HEALTH AND WARNING SIGNS

Mental Health: Warning Signs

Pay attention to patterns that are unusual or different for your child. If you are concerned that your child's behaviors are atypical for them, it is important to seek help.

Is my Child:

- Not engaging with friends?
- Getting into fights at school or with family?
- Experiencing declining grades?
- Having mood swings?
- Having different eating or sleeping patterns?
- Talking, writing, drawing, or gesturing about feeling hopeless
- Posting concerning messages on social media

ADOLESCENT SUBSTANCE USE AND MISUSE



FACTS & NATIONAL AND LOCAL DATA

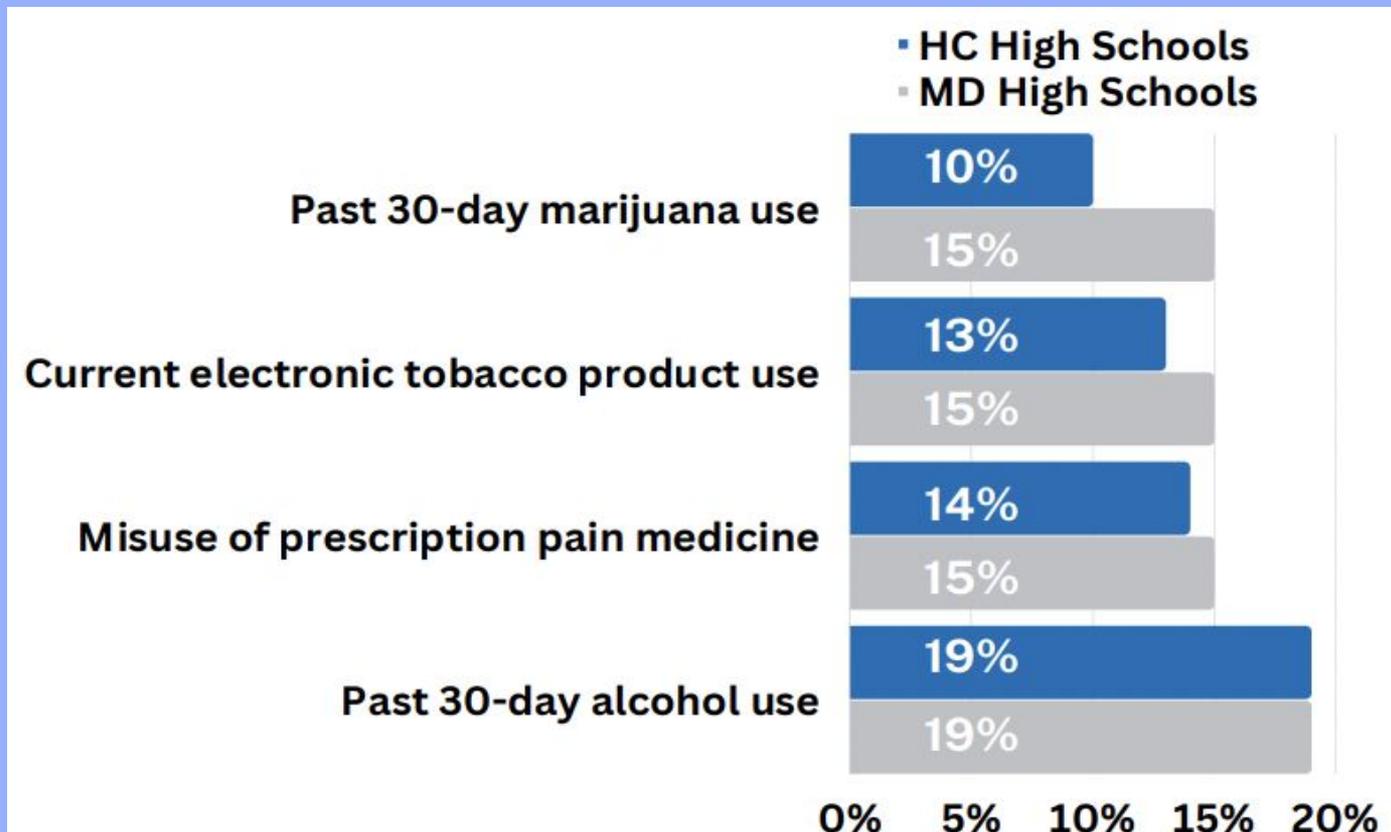
Youth and Substance Use and Misuse: National and Local Data

- Nationally, 15% of high school students reported having ever used select illicit or injection drugs (i.e. cocaine, inhalants, heroin, methamphetamines, hallucinogens, or ecstasy)
- 14% of students reported misusing prescription opioids (Methadone, OxyContin, Vicodin)
- Prescription drug misuse in Howard County Middle School Students had a 182% increase from 2017 (3.4%) to 2022 (9.6%).*

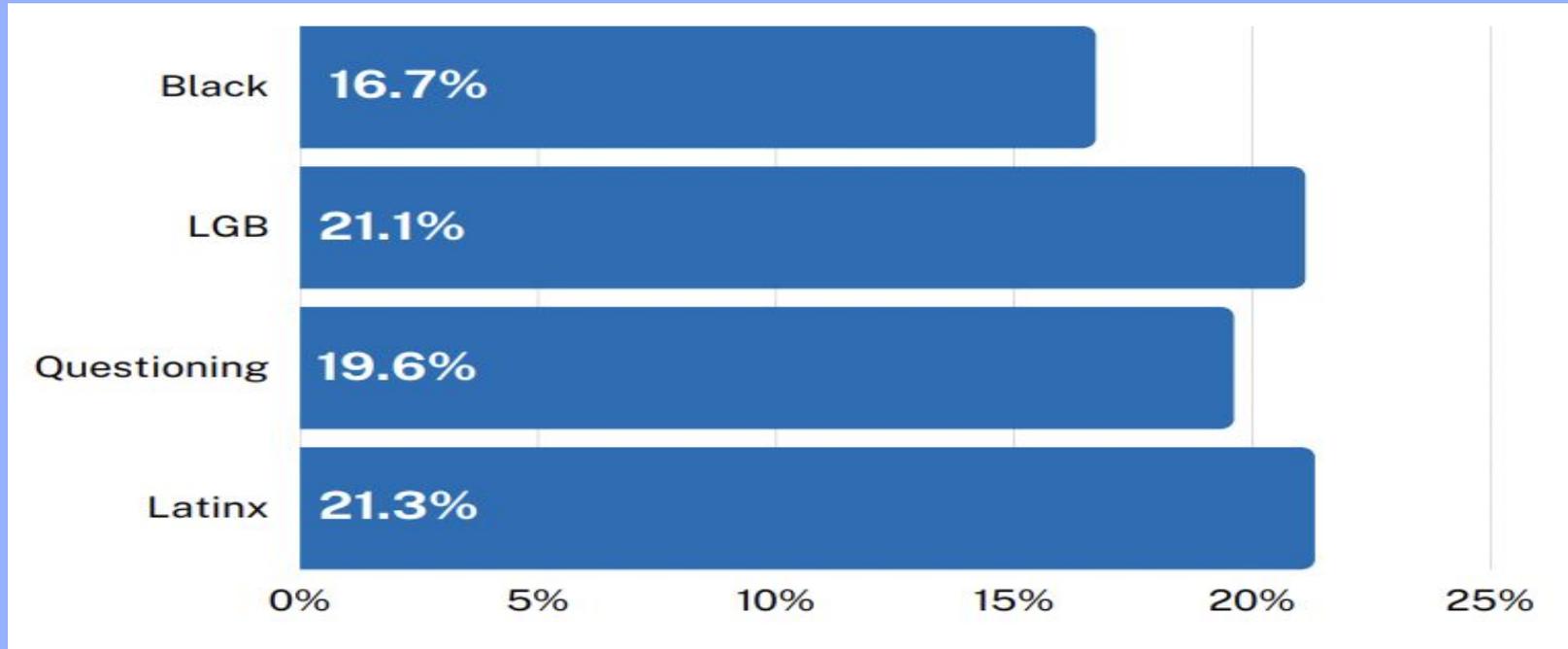
Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Youth and Substance Use and Misuse: State and Local Data

In 2021, alcohol and prescription pain medicine were the most common substances used/misused by Howard County high school students, followed by electronic tobacco products and marijuana.



Prescription Pain Medication Misuse in HS Students 2021



13.6% of Howard County high school students reported misusing prescription pain medicine. This chart highlights the demographic groups with the highest percentages of misuse.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE RISK FACTORS, PROTECTIVE FACTORS & WARNING SIGNS

Risk Factors for Adolescent Substance Abuse:

- Family/ parent history of substance abuse
- Poor parental monitoring
- Lack of school connectedness
- Abuse and/or mental health issues
- Association with peers who are abusing substances
- Familial rejection of sexual orientation or gender identity
- Favorable parental attitude towards use of substances

Protective Factors:

Factors that may buffer or decrease adolescent substance abuse include:

- Family Support/ positive relationships
- Family/ parent disapproval of substance abuse
- Parent/ Family Engagement
- Parental Monitoring/ Awareness of Child's Activities and Peer Group
- Involvement in Extracurricular Activities/ School Connectedness

Substance Abuse: Warning Signs

Is my Child:

- Spending time with a different group of friends?
- Neglecting their appearance?
- Getting lower grades?
- Losing interest in activities they previously enjoyed?
- Getting in trouble in school or in the community?
- Having interactions with law enforcement?
- Skipping school?
- More irritable/ having conflict with family and/or peers?
- Having different eating or sleeping patterns?

WHAT CAN PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS DO TO HELP?



What Can I Do to Help?

- Talk openly and honestly with your child about feelings
- Actively listen & resist the urge to “fix” the problem
- Model and encourage the use of problem-solving, stress management, and conflict resolution skills
- Be engaged in your child’s education
- Help your child develop strong relationships within your family and school community

What Can I Do to Help?

- Empower your child to participate in activities that foster school connectedness
- Help your student focus on the things they can control
- Take Care of Your Own Emotional Health
- Know when to seek help and support from others

What if I Need Additional Support to Help my Child?

In School:

- Start with your child's school counselor, school social worker, or school psychologist

Also:

- Visit the following HCPSS websites:
 - [HCPSS Mental Health & Wellness Website](#)
 - [Substance Abuse Support & Resources](#)
 - [School-Based Mental Health Services & Social Work](#)
 - [Howard County Community Resources for Supporting Students and Families](#)
 - [Preventing Youth Suicide: Tips for Families](#)

What if I Need Additional Support to Help my Child?

- Contact your child's pediatrician
- Grassroots Crisis intervention Center & Mobile Crisis Team
 - 410-531-6677, or
 - Contact Crisis Text Line by texting HOME to 741 741
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Available 24/7- Dial 988
 - Hotline: 800-273-8255
 - Spanish: 866-628-9454
- Behavioral Health Navigator- 410-313-6340
www.howardcountymd.gov/health/behavioral-health-navigation
- Howard County Network of Care: Behavioral Health Resources
<https://howard.md.networkofcare.org/mh/index.aspx>
- Teen Health Matters: Connects teens to resources
Teenhealthmatters.org

THANK YOU!

“It takes a village to raise a child.”- African Proverb

*Thank you for the privilege
of serving as part of the village.*

Consuela Robinson, Ed.D., LCSW-C
HCPSS
Coordinator of Social Work Services
consuela_robinson@hcpss.org

