



Governor Dan McKee's Overdose Task Force

April 12, 2023

Ana Novais, MA; Acting Secretary, Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Richard Charest, MBA; Director, Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals

Thomas Joyce, LCDP, CPRS; Task Force Community Co-Chair

Cathy Schultz, MPH; Task Force Director, Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services

**RHODE
ISLAND**



Welcome and Announcements

**RHODE
ISLAND**



2022

**Rhode Island
Student Survey**

**BARRINGTON BRISTOL–WARREN BURRILLVILLE
COVENTRY CRANSTON CUMBERLAND
EAST PROVIDENCE EXETER–WEST GREENWICH
JOHNSTON LITTLE COMPTON MIDDLETOWN
NEWPORT NORTH KINGSTOWN
NORTH PROVIDENCE PAWTUCKET
PORTSMOUTH SCITUATE SMITHFIELD
SOUTH KINGSTOWN TIVERTON WARWICK
WEST WARWICK WOONSOCKET**

Participating School Districts in 2022. Note: Providence School District not included in survey.

Background and Purpose

- The Rhode Island Student Survey (RISS) is a collaboration among BHDDH, RIDOH, and RIDE
- Examines risk and prevalence of topics such as substance use, bullying, violence, parent support, and mental health in middle and high school students throughout RI
- Aims to identify areas of needs among students and inform the allocation of resources for prevention programs
- The 2022 RISS took place from 3/11/2022 to 6/11/2022
- Data was collected from 51 schools in 23 school districts throughout RI
- The full 2022 RISS report can be found here: [2022 \(ri.gov\)](#)



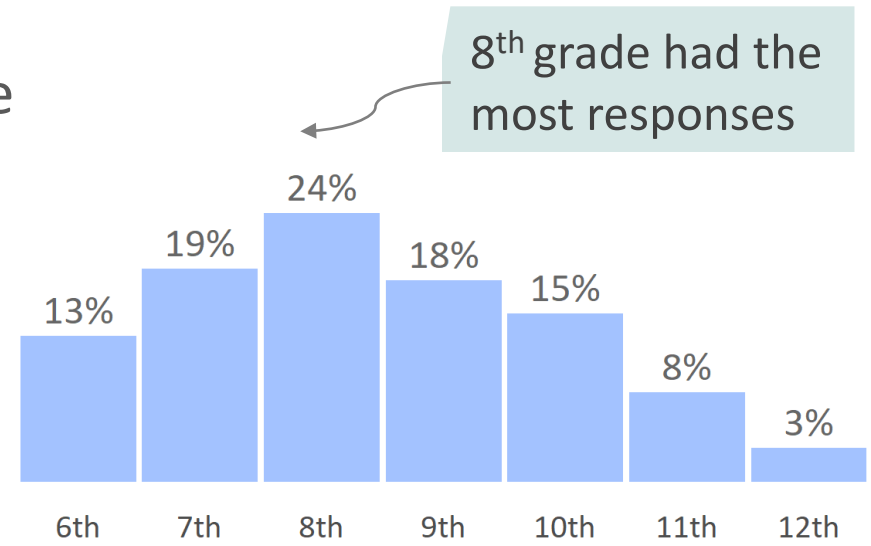
Demographics



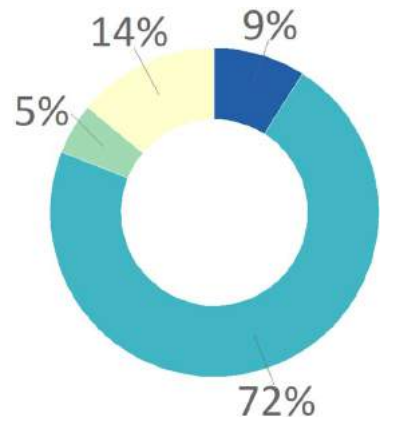
20,411

students participated in the survey*

Grade

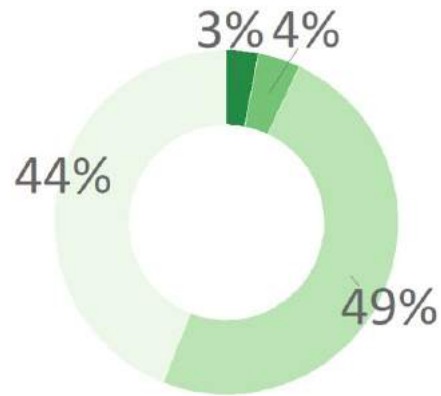


Sexual Orientation



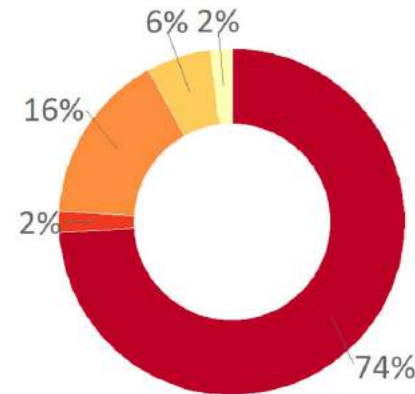
- Bisexual
- Gay or Lesbian
- Heterosexual
- Not Sure

Gender Identity



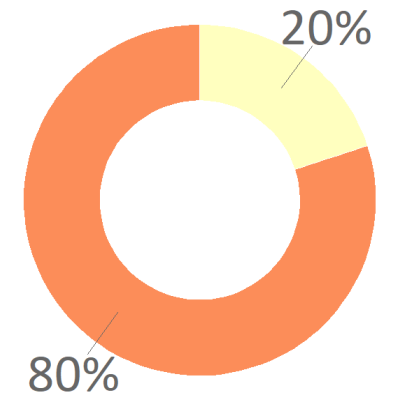
- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

Race



- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian American
- Black/African American
- Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander
- White

Hispanic or Latino



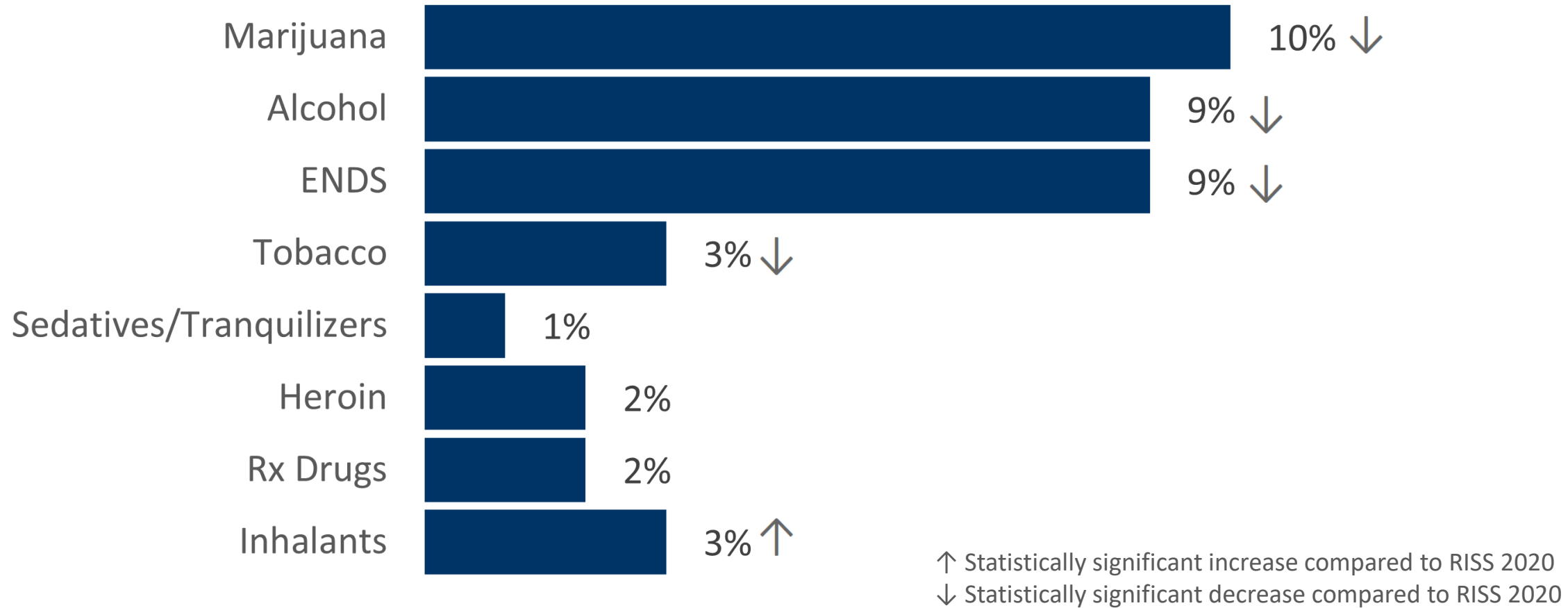
- No
- Yes

741 (4%) of students identified as transgender



Substance Use

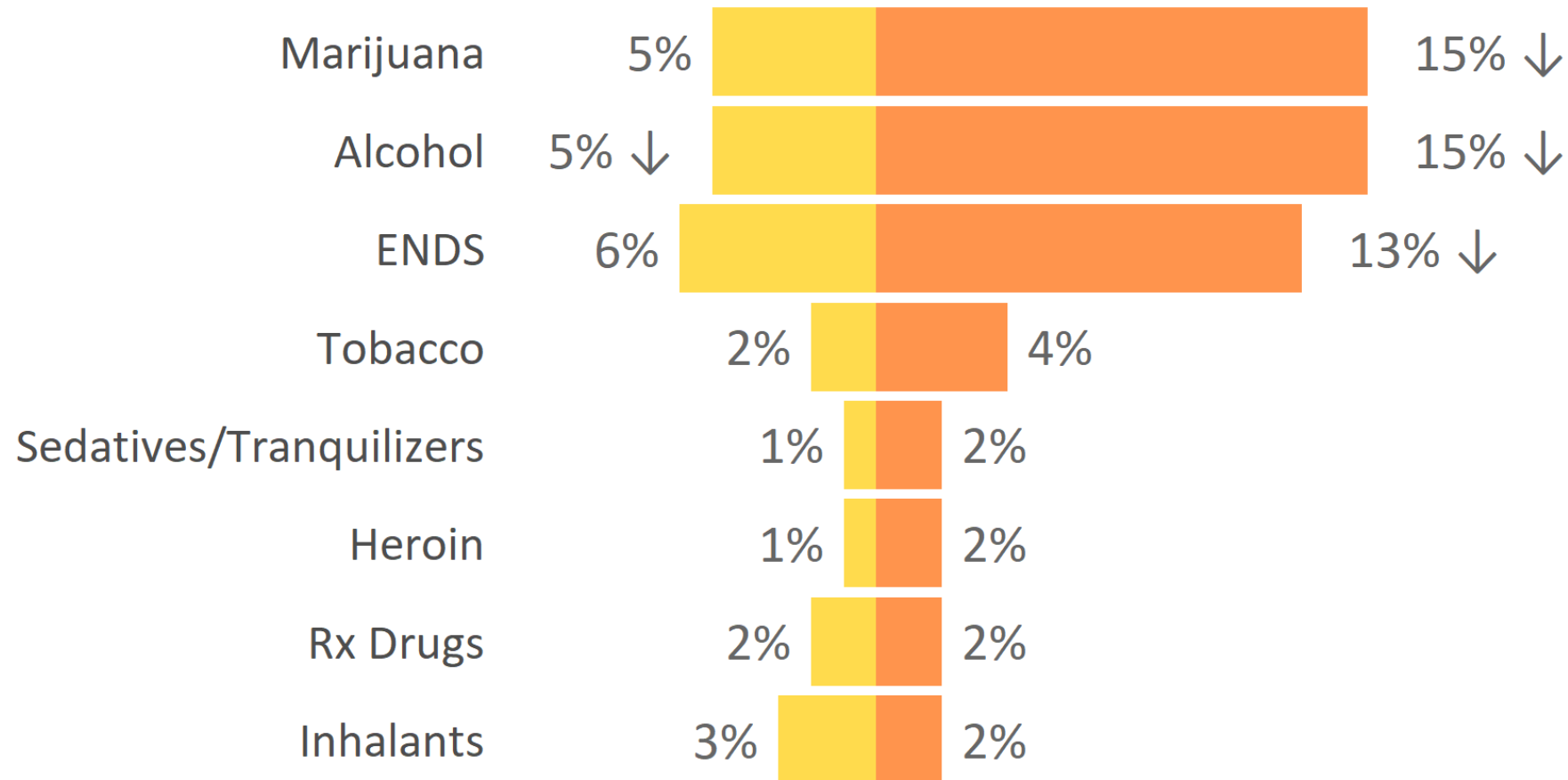
Past 30-Day Use



Among all students, there was a statistically significant decrease in use of alcohol, marijuana, ENDS, and tobacco yet a significant increase in use of inhalants.

Substance Use

Past 30-Day Use



■ Middle School ■ High School

↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020
↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020

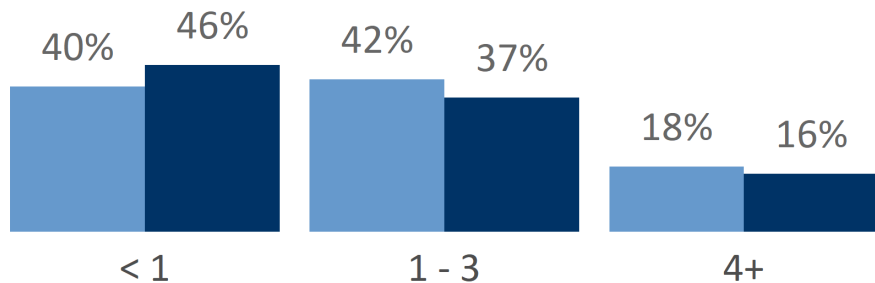
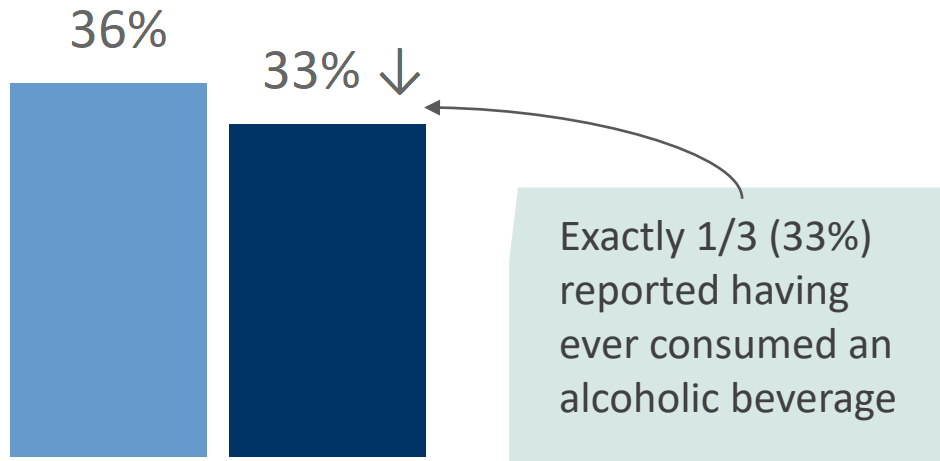
Among high school students, there was a statistically significant decrease in use of alcohol, marijuana, and Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), also known as e-cigarettes or vape pens or devices.



Access and Availability

Alcohol

Among high school students...



High school students are consuming less drinks on average compared to previous years.

■ 2020 ■ 2022

A family member gave it to me for free

A friend gave it to me for free

Other

I took it from someone

I bought it from a friend

I asked someone to buy it for me

A store sold it to me without an ID

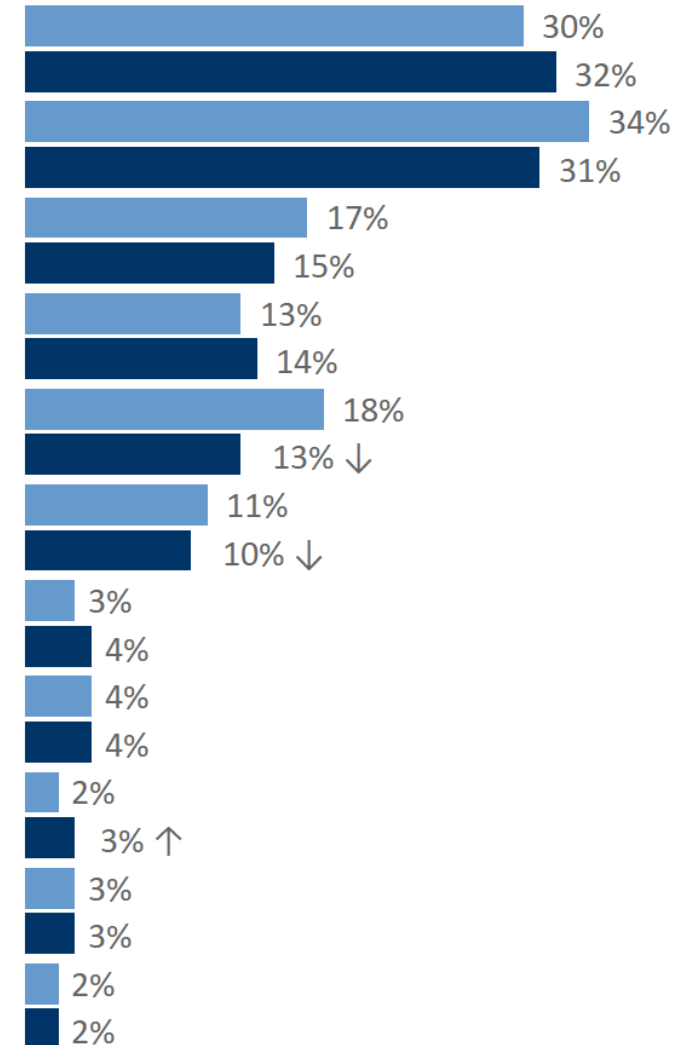
I bought it from a family member

I took it from a store

I bought it from a store with a fake ID

I bought it on the Internet

Most reported obtaining alcohol from a family member for free



↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020

↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020

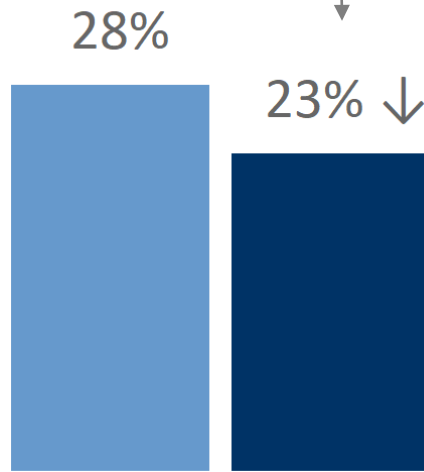


Access and Availability

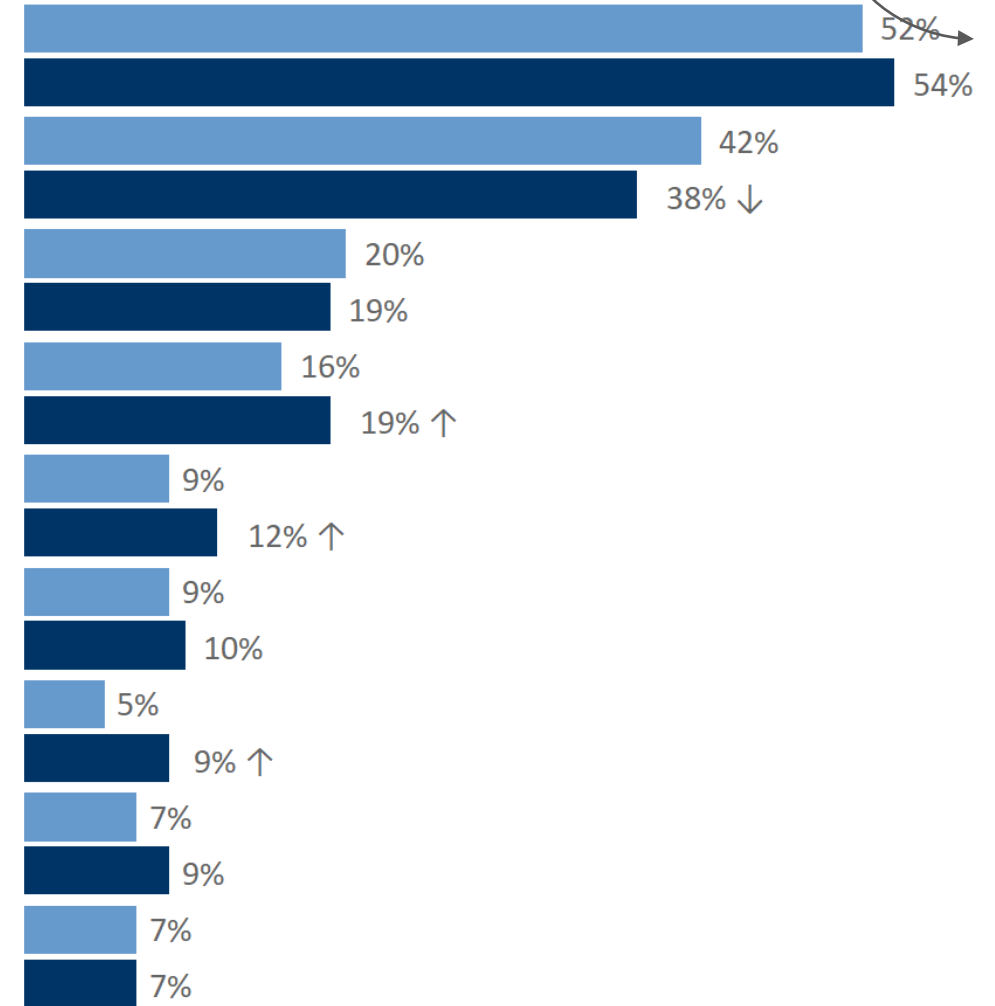
Marijuana

Among high school students...

Just under ¼ reported having ever used marijuana



- A friend gave it to me for free
- I bought it from a friend
- Other
- A family member gave it to me for free
- I took it from someone
- I bought it from a medical marijuana cardholder
- I bought it on the Internet
- I bought it from a family member
- I got it from a medical marijuana cardholder for free



Most students reported obtaining marijuana from a friend for free

■ 2020 ■ 2022

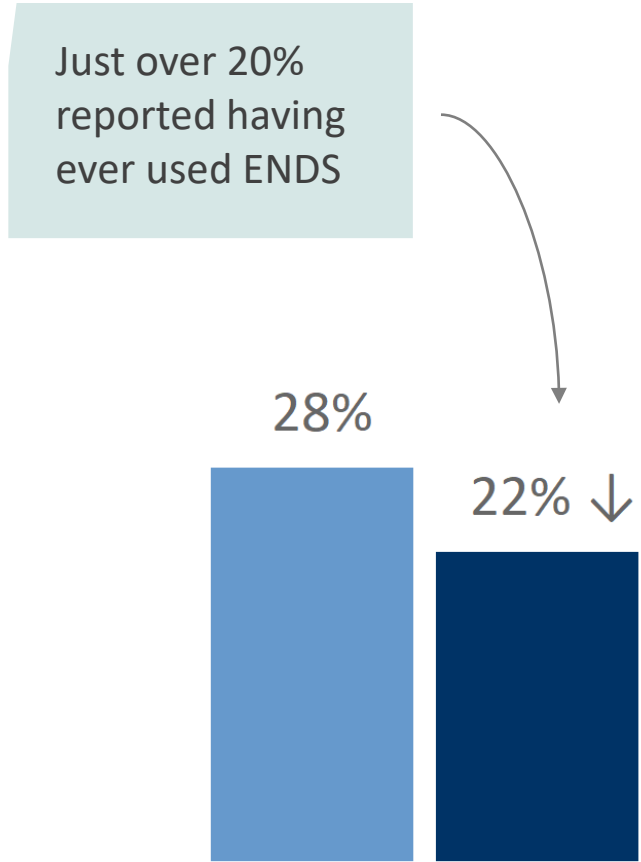
↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020
↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020



Access and Availability

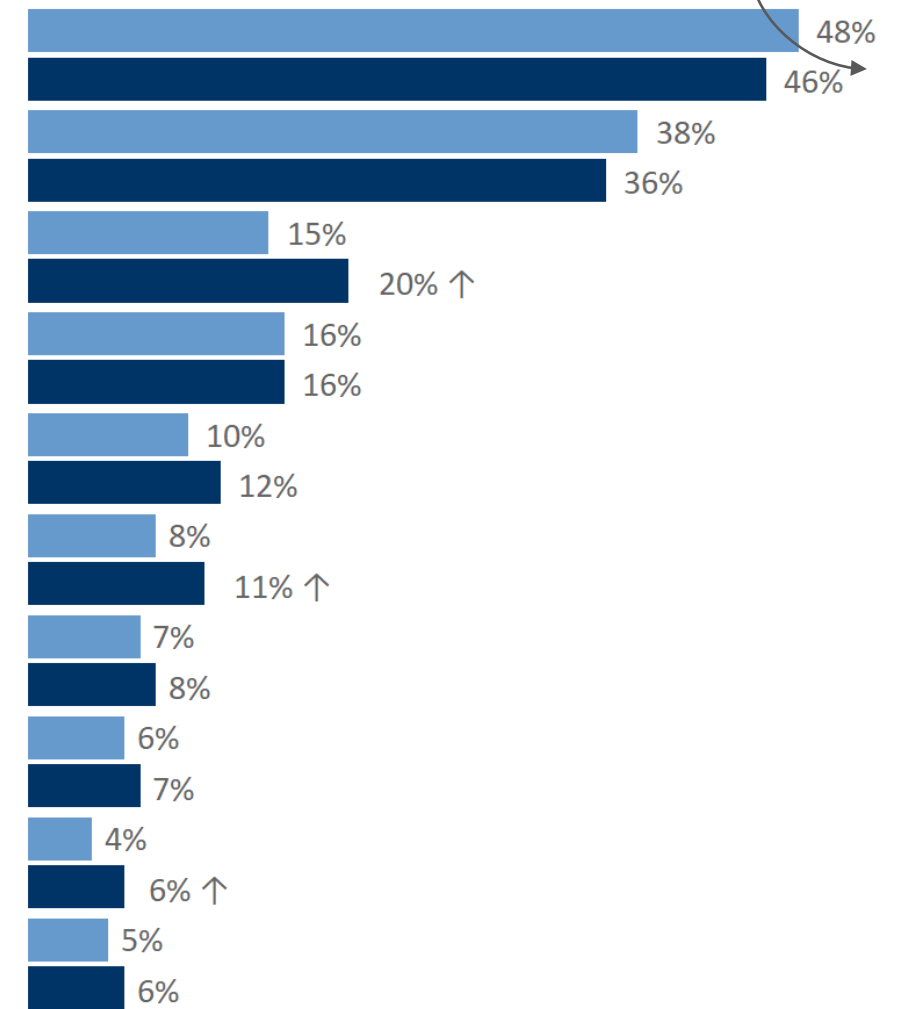
ENDS

Among high school students...



- A friend gave it to me for free
- I bought it from a friend
- A store sold it to me without an ID
- Other
- A family member gave it to me for free
- I took it from someone
- I bought it on the Internet
- I bought it from a family member
- I took it from a store
- I bought it from a store with a fake ID

Most students reported obtaining ENDS from a friend for free



■ 2020 ■ 2022

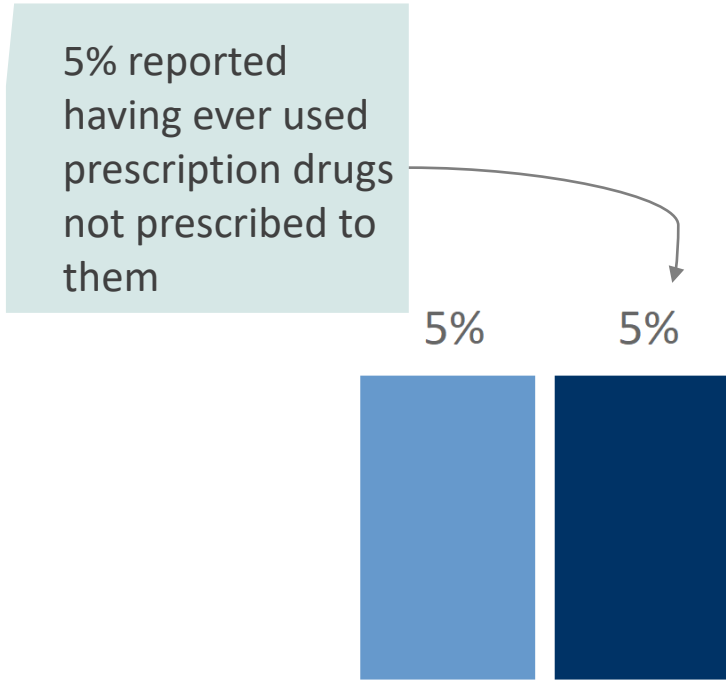
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Access and Availability

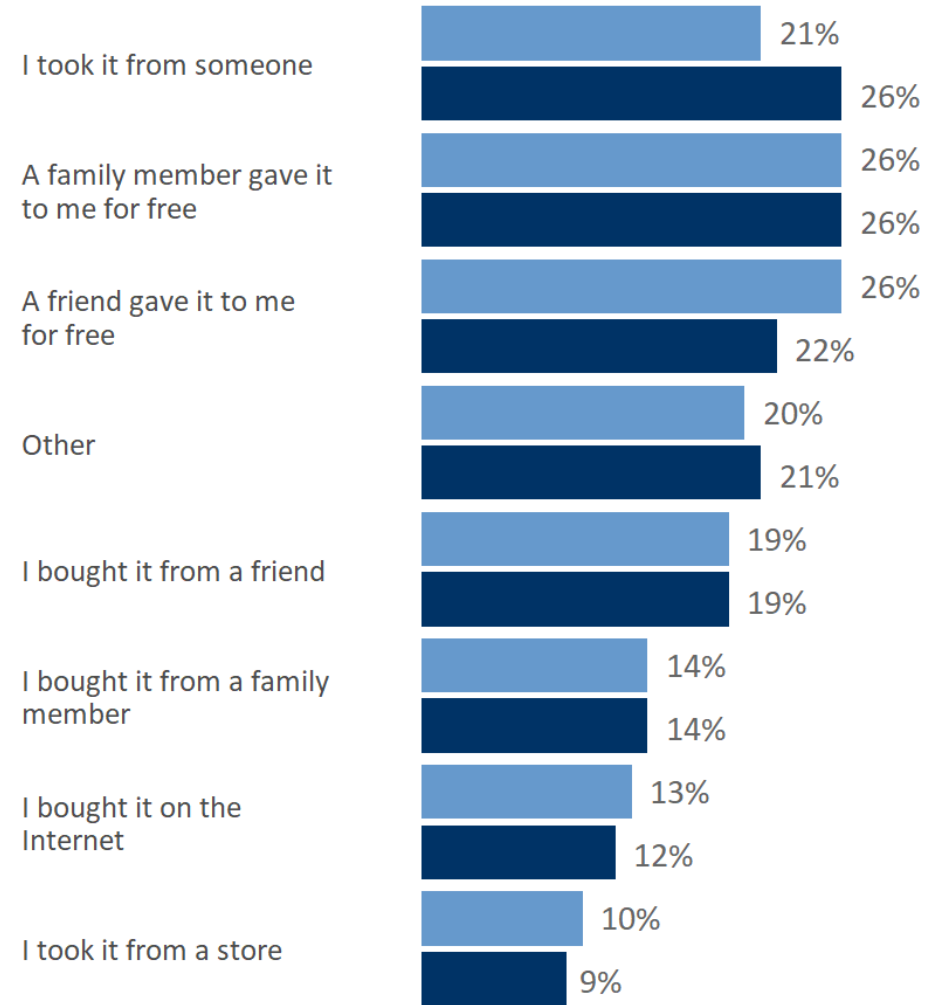
Prescription Drugs

Among high school students...



 Students reporting use of prescription drugs not prescribed to them listed pain relief pills, ADHD medications, and sedatives

Most students reported obtaining prescription drugs for free from a family member



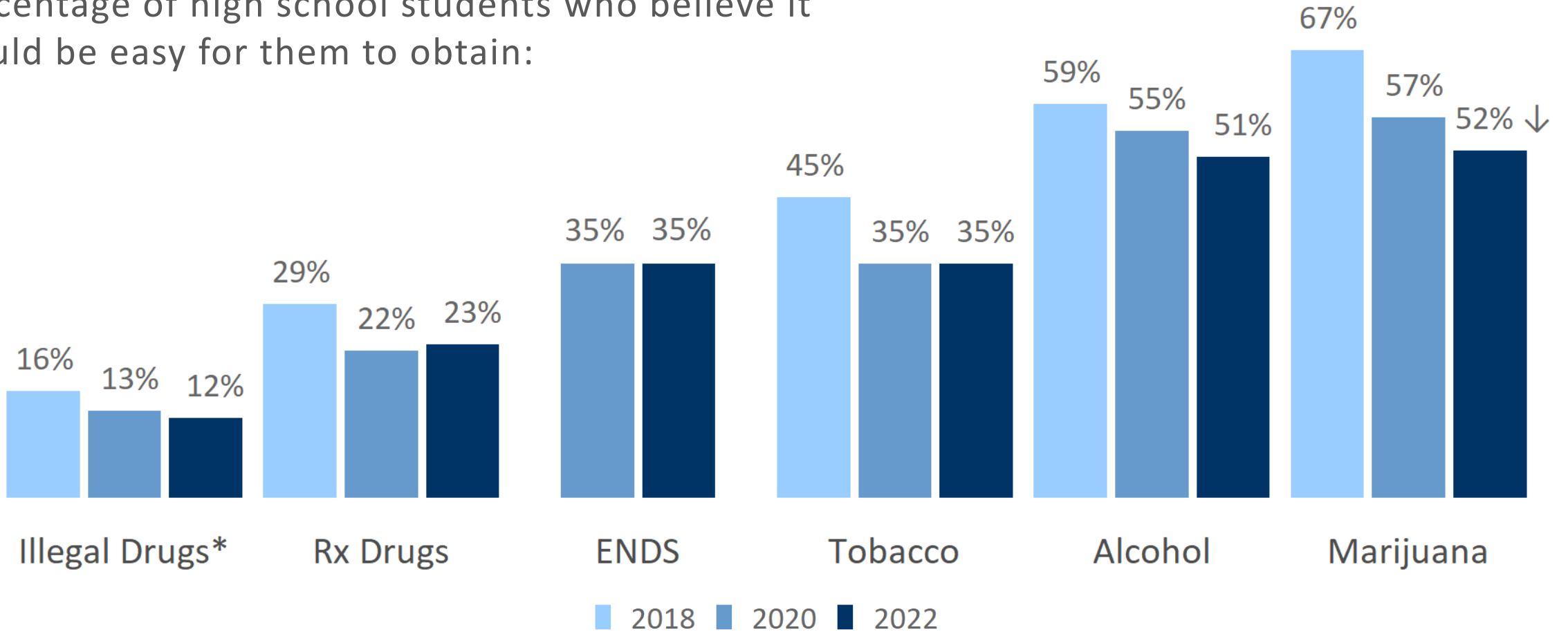
■ 2020 ■ 2022

↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020
 ↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020



Access and Availability

Percentage of high school students who believe it would be easy for them to obtain:



↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020
↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020

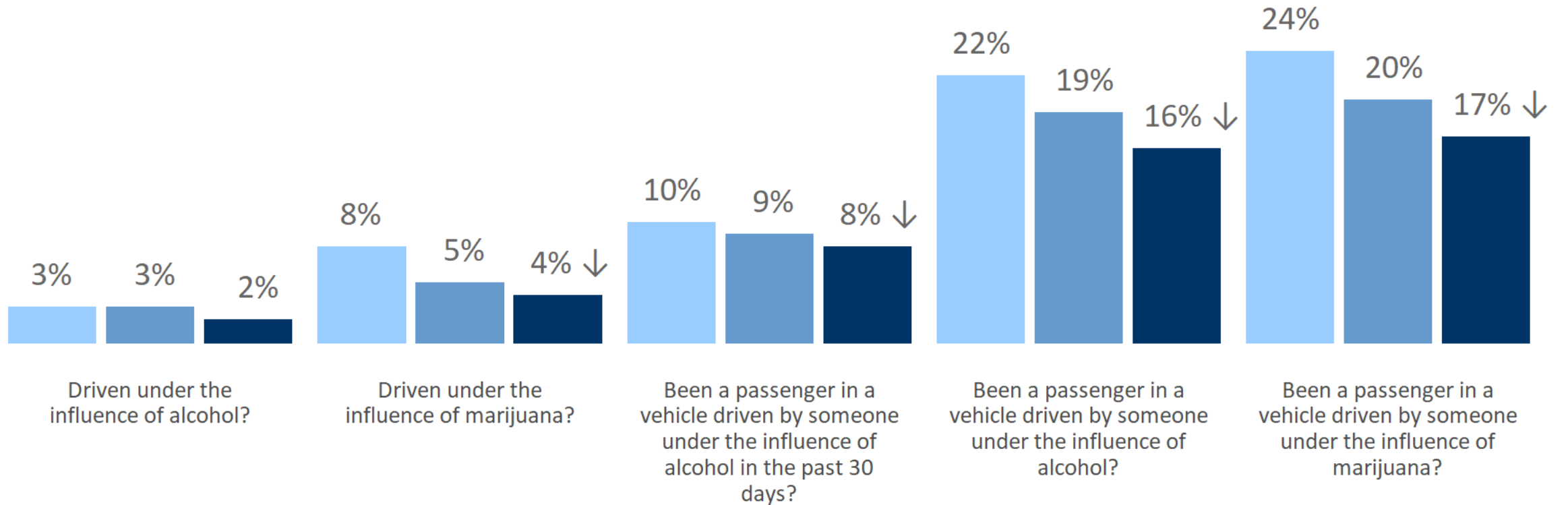
The percentage of students reporting ease of obtaining substances has decreased over time, particularly for alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco.

*Cocaine, LSD (acid), methamphetamine (meth), or club drugs (ecstasy, roofies), etc.



Under the Influence

Percentage of high school students who have ever:



■ 2018 ■ 2020 ■ 2022

↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020

↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020

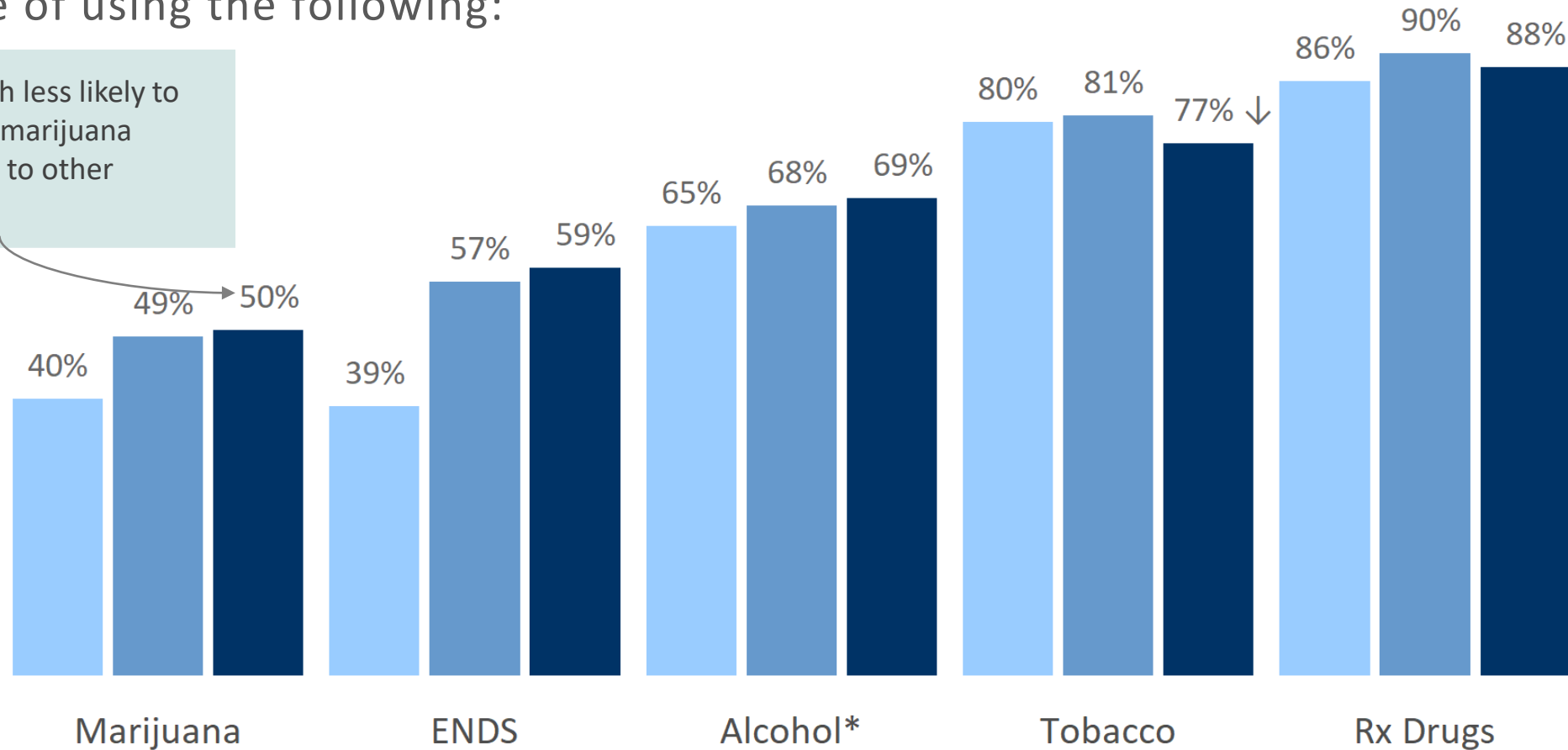
The percentages of students who report driving or riding with under the influence continues to decrease, with rates falling below 20%



Peer Disapproval

Percentage of high school students who believe peers would disapprove of using the following:

Peers are much less likely to disapprove of marijuana use compared to other substances.



■ 2018 ■ 2020 ■ 2022

*Alcohol use = 1 or 2 drinks nearly every day

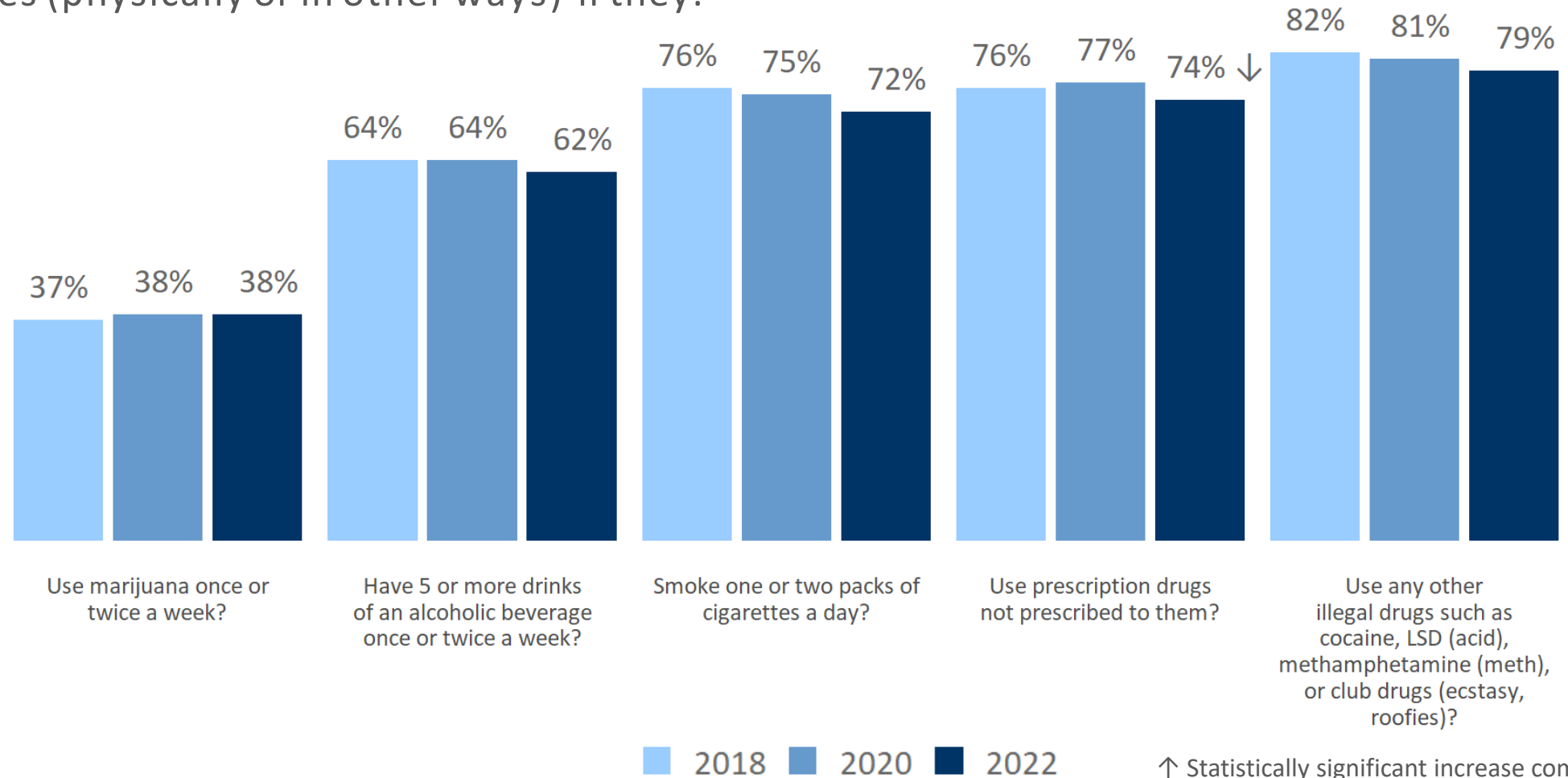
↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020

↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020



Perception of Risk

Percentage of high school students who agree that people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they:



↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020
↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020

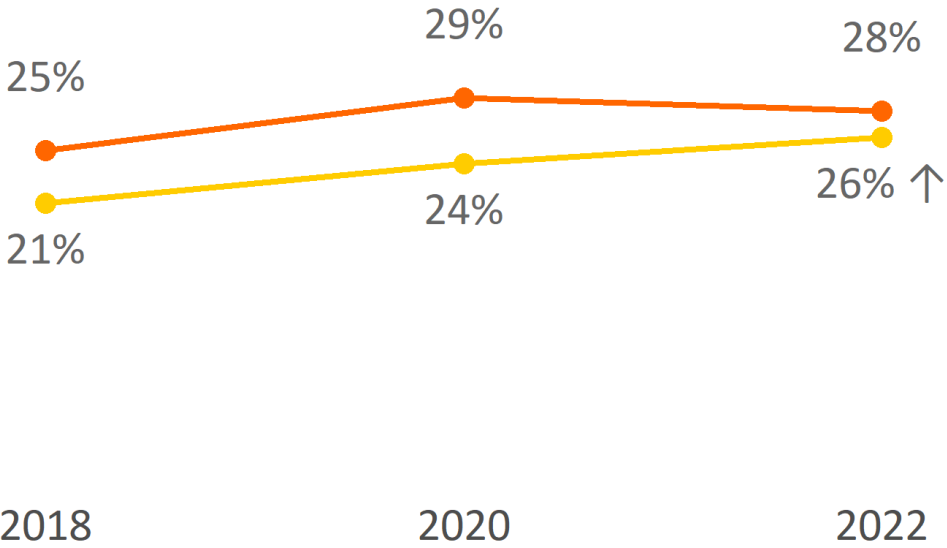
Compared to other substances, students report a low risk of harm with using marijuana, while risk for illegal drugs, prescription drugs, and tobacco remains above 70%



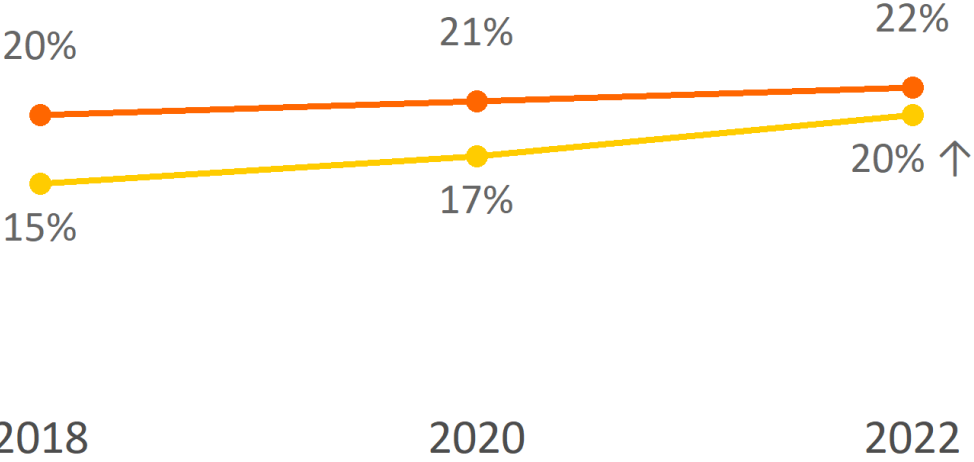
Mental Health

In the last 30 days...

Were you very sad?



Did you feel hopeless about the future?



● Middle School ● High School

↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020
↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020

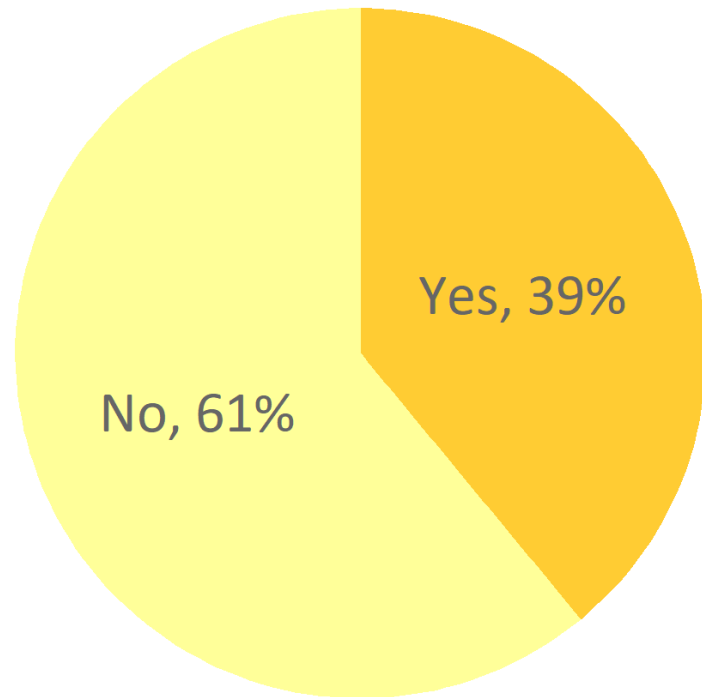
Compared to 2020, there was a statistically significant increase in negative feelings surrounding mental health among middle schoolers.



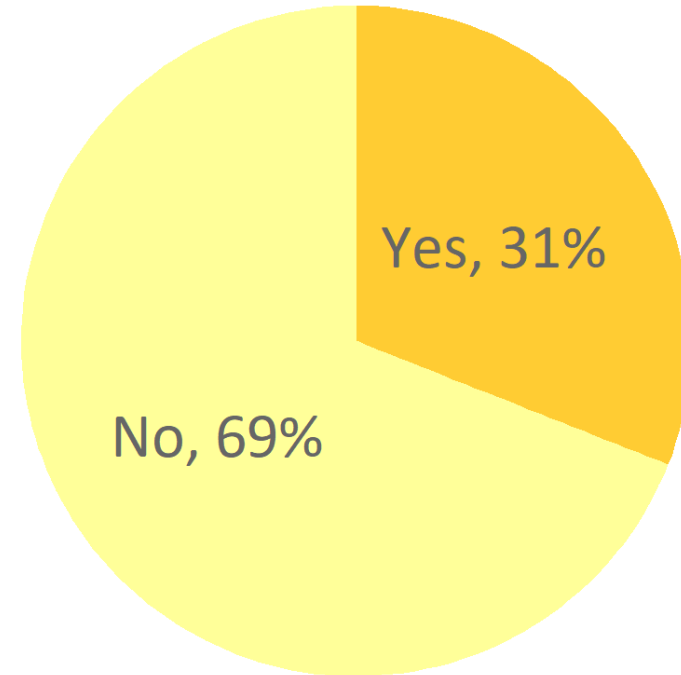
Mental Health - Pandemic

Percentage of middle school students who...

Struggled with mental health issues during the pandemic?



Talked with a school counselor either in-person or on zoom?

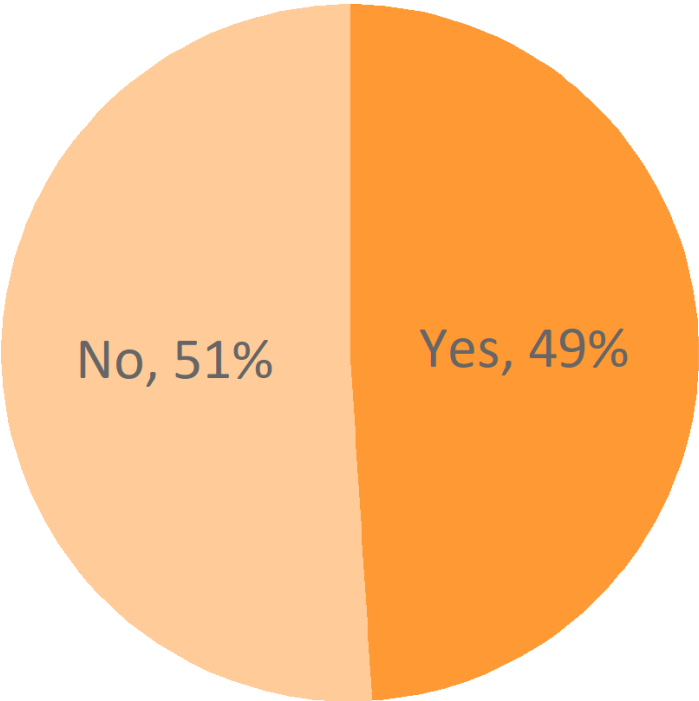


Of the 40% of middle school students who reported struggling with mental health, roughly 1/3 spoke with a school counselor.

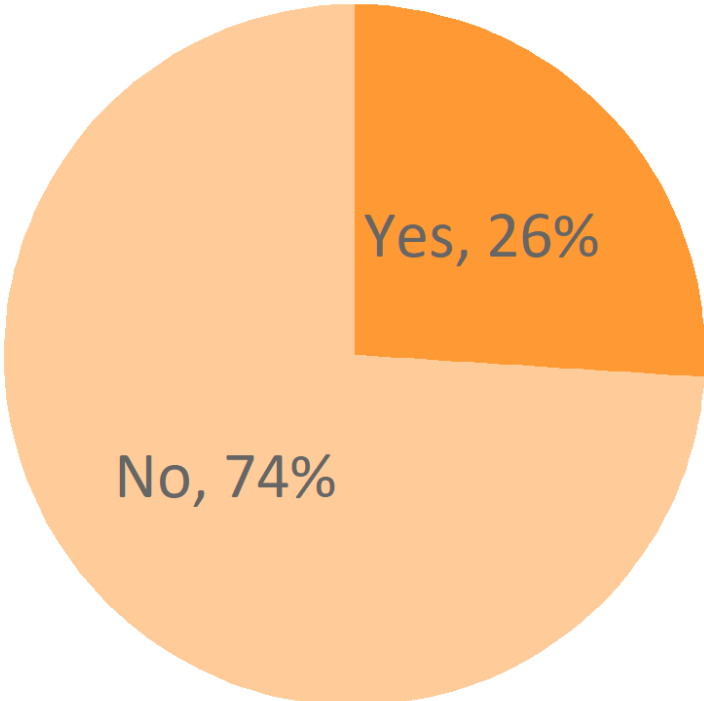
Mental Health - Pandemic

Percentage of high school students who...

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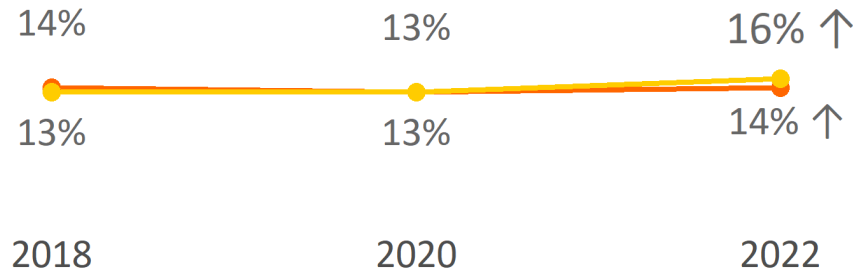
Among the 50% of high school students who reported struggling with mental health, only 25% spoke with a school counselor.



Suicide

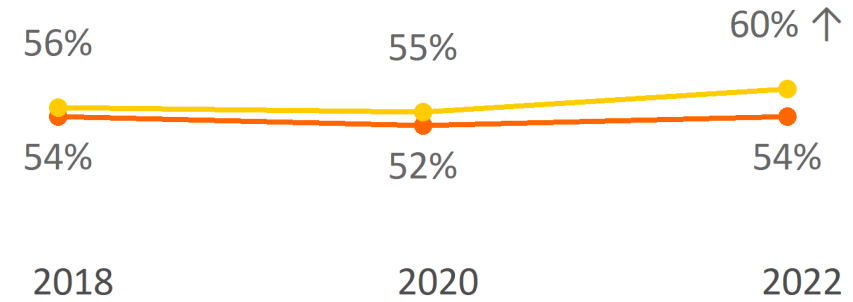
Among all students...

Number of students who have ever considered attempting suicide



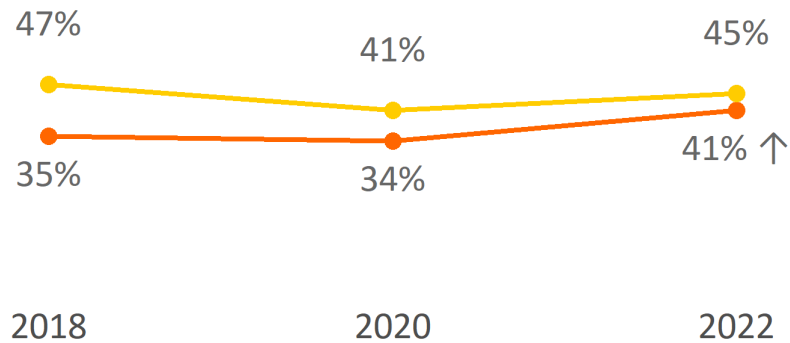
Among students who have ever considered attempting suicide...

Number of students who have ever made a plan about how they would attempt suicide



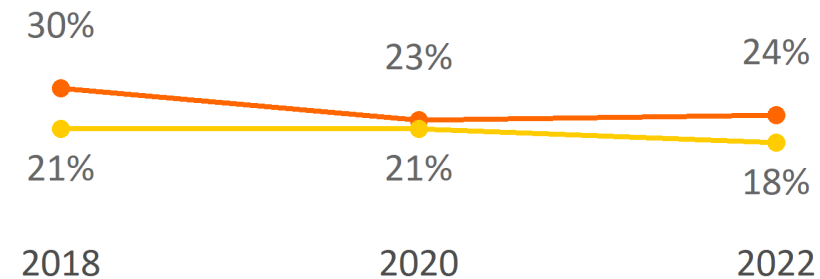
Among students who have ever considered attempting suicide...

Number of students who have ever attempted suicide



Among students who have ever attempted suicide...

Number of students who have ever attempted suicide which resulted in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse



● Middle School ● High School

↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020
 ↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020

Suicide rates have started rising back to pre-pandemic levels and has increased significantly among high school students compared to 2018.



Thank you!

The Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals would like to acknowledge the cooperation and effort of all the schools and students who participate in the Rhode Island Student Survey each administration year.



Dan McKee
Governor



Anna Novais
Acting Secretary



Richard Charest
Director



Dr. Utpala Bandy
Interim Director



Angelica Infante-Green
Commissioner,
RI Department of Education



Prevention Strategy Work Group

Co-Chairs: Elizabeth Farrar, Tara Cooper, and Obed Papp

Prevention Strategy Work Group Priorities: May 2022-May 2023

Goal:

The mission of the Prevention Strategy Work Group is to prevent overdoses, overdose deaths, and opioid misuse by identifying, developing, and evaluating multi-level strategies and interventions. The Prevention Strategy Work Group is a collaboration of state and community partners.

Top Evidence Update Priorities

- A. Invest in mental-health and community resiliency: **Trauma-informed behavioral health services** across the lifespan, with a focus on addressing ACEs, toxic stress, family and community violence-reduction programs
- B. Pursue policies around social determinants or social experiences that help **reduce desires to turn to drug use**. Also, pursue prevention policies that safeguard against social isolation (i.e., against cyber bullying, or to promote grief supports)
- C. Invest in proven **prevention educational programs**, including updated facts about the crisis (i.e., significant rise of fentanyl), the existence of harm reduction strategies (Narcan and fentanyl test strips), and strategies for mental health resilience
- D. Prevention programs should be **across the lifespan**, with focus on youth (high school and middle school) as well as older adults, including seniors who may be at risk of casual opioid, benzodiazepine, or alcohol misuse
- E. Prioritize prevention strategies that **recognize race equity, eliminate structural racism and disparities** based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, and ability

PREVENTION STRATEGY WORK GROUP

- ▶ Many partners around the table
 - ▶ Treatment organizations
 - ▶ Recovery organizations
 - ▶ Individuals with lived experience
 - ▶ Prevention organizations



BHDDH-Funded Prevention Providers



Rhode Island Department of
Behavioral Healthcare,
Developmental Disabilities &
Hospitals (BHDDH)

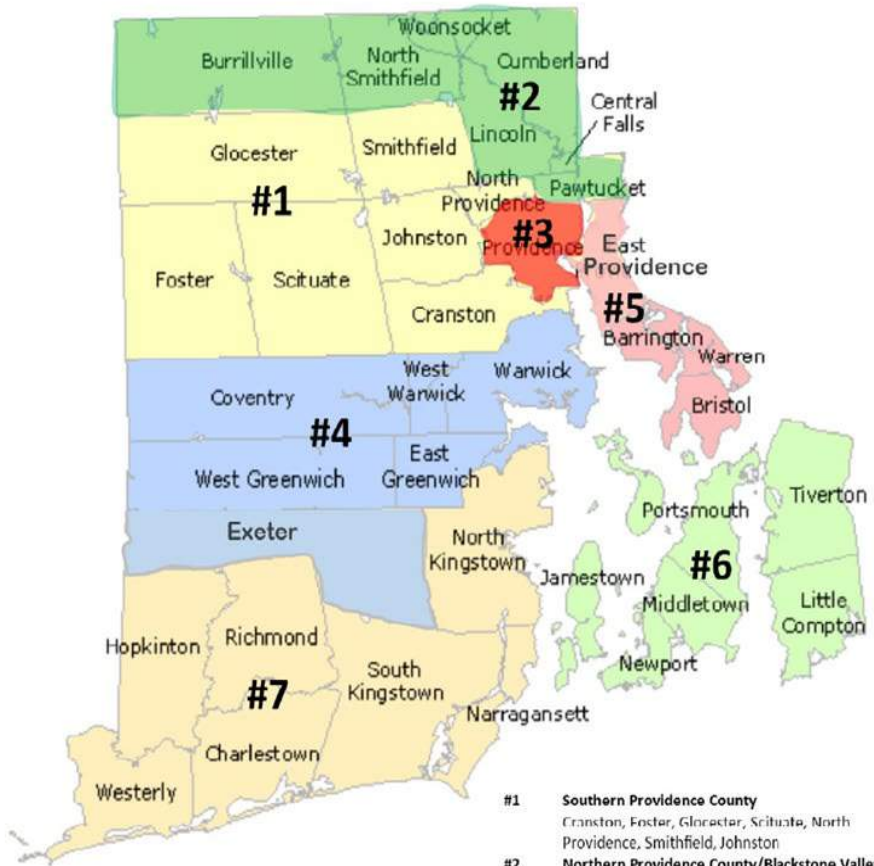
BHDDH-Funded Prevention Partners

- ▶ RI Substance Abuse Prevention Act (RISAPA) Regional Prevention Task Forces (RPTF)
- ▶ Student Assistance Program (SAP)
 - Project Success



Regional Prevention Task Forces (RPTF)

- **Funds 7 Regions**
- **Promotes comprehensive, community prevention programming**
 - Local needs assessment and strategic plan created with community input
 - Planning, capacity building, and implementation of evidence-based programs
 - Evaluation of strategies, policies and programs to produce long-term reduction of substance use and misuse and wellness promotion across the lifespan



- #1 **Southern Providence County**
Cranston, Foster, Gloucester, Scituate, North Providence, Smithfield, Johnston
- #2 **Northern Providence County/Blackstone Valley**
Burrillville, Woonsocket, Cumberland, Lincoln, Pawtucket, North Smithfield, Central Falls
- #3 **Providence**
- #4 **Kent County**
Coventry, Exeter, West Greenwich, East Greenwich, West Warwick, Warwick
- #5 **East Bay**
East Providence, Barrington, Warren, Bristol
- #6 **Newport County**
Portsmouth, Tiverton, Little Compton, Jamestown, Middletown, Newport
- #7 **South County**
North Kingstown, Narragansett, South Kingstown, Hopkinton, Richmond, Charlestown, Westerly, New Shoreham

#1: Southern Providence County

Cranston, Foster, Gloucester, Scituate, North Providence, Smithfield, Johnston

#2: Northern Providence County/Blackstone Valley

Burrillville, Woonsocket, Cumberland, Lincoln, Pawtucket, North Smithfield, Central Falls

#3: Providence

#4: Kent County

Coventry, Exeter, West Greenwich, East Greenwich, West Warwick, Warwick

#5: East Bay

East Providence, Barrington, Warren, Bristol

#6: Newport County

Portsmouth, Tiverton, Little Compton, Jamestown, Middletown, Newport

#7: South County

North Kingstown, Narragansett, South Kingstown, Hopkinton, Richmond, Charlestown, Westerly, New Shoreham

Rhode Island Student Assistance



Utilizes the evidence-based program Project Success



Implemented in 39 High Schools and 31 Middle Schools



In 2022, more than 10,000 students were served by Master's-level counselors



Use an early identification and referral strategy

Questions

Prevention Strategy Work Group Co-Chairs

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Division of Behavioral Health, BHDDH

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Student Assistance
Programs: An Effective
Strategy for Preventing
Youth Substance Use
and Promoting Mental
Health

Sarah C. Dinklage, LICSW
Chief Executive Officer
Rhode Island Student Assistance
Services

Samantha Rosenthal, PhD, MPH
Epidemiologist Consultant
Department of Behavioral
Healthcare, Developmental
Disabilities & Hospitals

Who We Are

Rhode Island Student Assistance Services (RISAS) is a statewide school and community-based substance use prevention/early intervention program operating since 1987.

RISAS is funded by the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals (BHDDH) and Rhode Island school districts

Who We Serve



By fall 2023, Project SUCCESS will be operating in **80** middle and high schools, representing **32** school districts.



Over 53,000 students have access to a student assistance counselor in their school.

WHY IS
PREVENTION
IMPORTANT IN
THE EFFORT TO
END THE
OVERDOSE
EPIDEMIC?

- Early age of onset is an important predictor for the development of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) later in life.
- The majority of individuals diagnosed with SUD, including Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) started using substances before age 18.

National Drug Control Strategy Report from The White House Executive Office of the President, 2022

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/National-Drug-Control-2022Strategy.pdf>

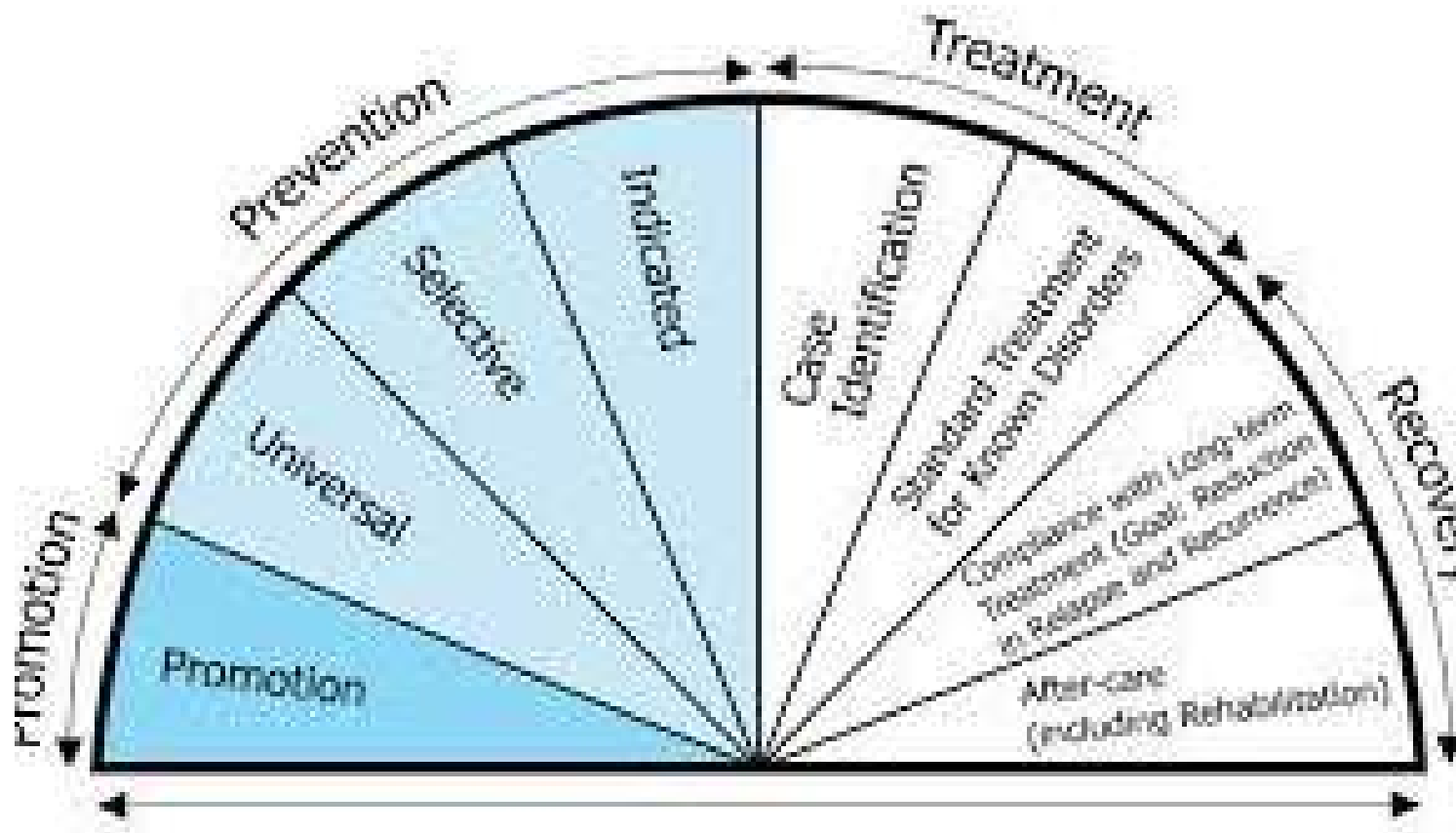
ROLE OF STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

- Ensuring access to multi-tiered school-based prevention programs is “essential to support the health, well-being, and futures of the nation’s 74 million children”
- “Student Assistance Programs play a key role in the effort to prevent and reduce youth substance misuse.”

*National Drug Control Strategy Report from The White House
Executive Office of the President, 2022*

Project SUCCESS:
Schools Using
Coordinated
Community
Efforts to
Strengthen
Students

- Project SUCCESS is multi-tiered student assistance program model.
- Project SUCCESS is located in schools where adolescents have easy access to highly trained student assistance counselors and where substance use-related risk factors are more likely to be detected.



- **Universal**, all youth
- **Selected**, vulnerable youth
- **Indicated**, youth already engaged in substance use

Prevention Strategies

UNIVERSAL STRATEGIES

Prevention Education Series

Topic 1:

Being an
Adolescent

Topic 2:

Alcohol,
Marijuana,
opioids and
other drugs

Topic 3:

Relationships:
Family and
Friends

Topic 4:

Skills for
Coping

Objectives-RISAS Opioid Module

- **Raise awareness** about the opioid crisis.
- **Identify** who is at risk.
- **Define** opioid, medical uses and illicit opioids.
- **Discuss** the dangers.
- **Describe** how opioids work in the brain.
- **Examine** how people become addicted.
- **Discuss** problems associated with addiction.
- **Learn** to avoid risks associated with opioids.
- **Teach** dangers of taking another's prescription.
- **Identify** support systems and how to seek help.
- **Recognize** that rescue and recovery is possible.

Selected Strategies

Target children and teens at elevated risk for developing substance use disorders

- Individual and group support for children living with a parent or sibling with SUD
- Interventions with youth exhibiting multiple risk factors
e.g., Lack of school bonding, parental neglect/abuse, parental rejection of child's sexual identity/orientation, anxiety, depression

Indicated Strategies

Target children and teens who have started using substances.

- Motivational Interviewing
- Screening Brief Intervention Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)
- Brief Challenges
- Groups for students who are using substances

How are Students Referred to the Student Assistance Counselor?

Self Referral


School Administrators

Guidance Counselors

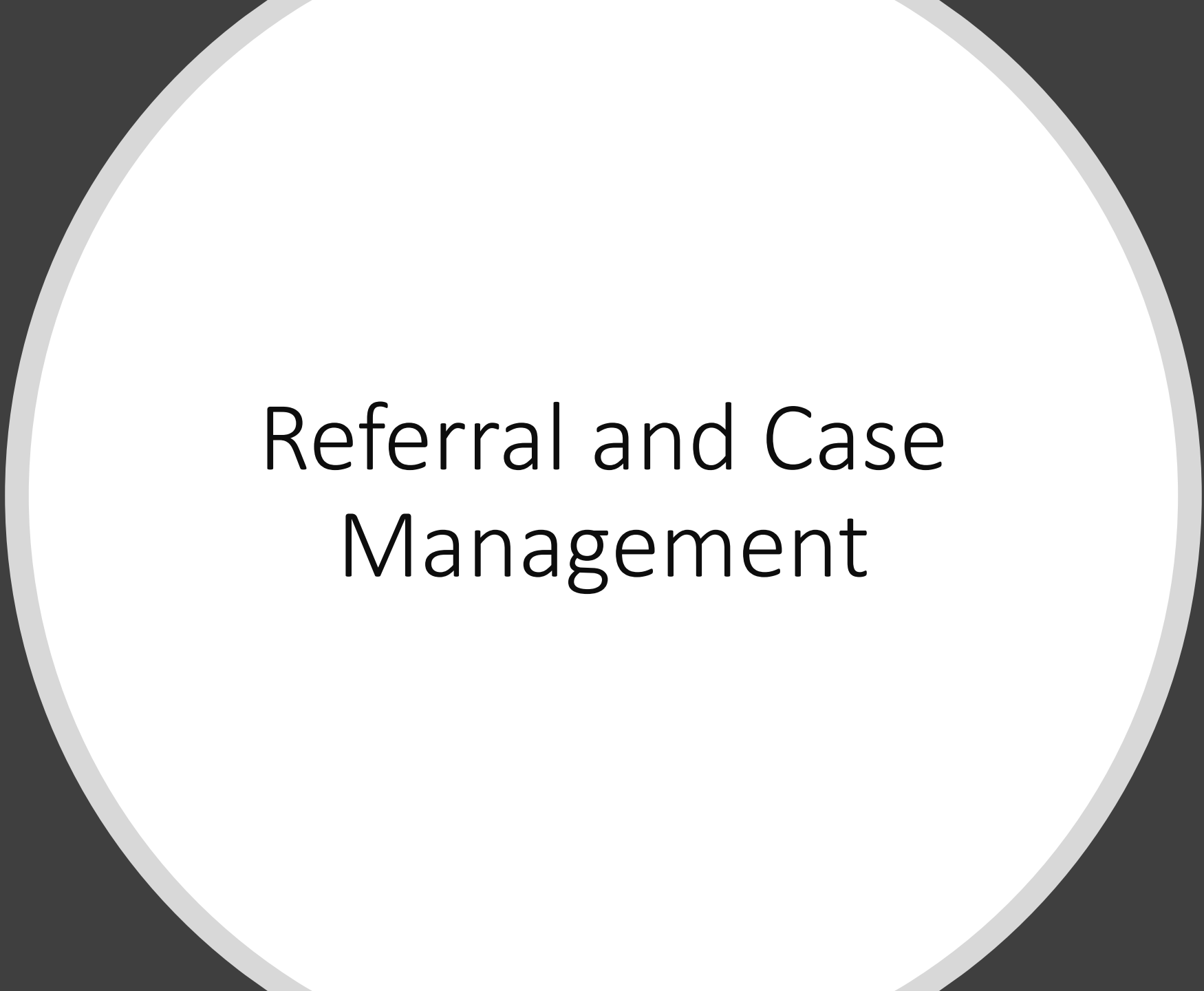
Teachers

Parents

Friends



Assessment and Brief
Intervention:
Individual and group
sessions



Referral and Case Management

Suicide Prevention

Screening

Use of the Columbia Suicide
Severity Rating Scale

Referral

Follow up

What are the Qualifications of Student Assistance Counselors?

- Student Assistance Counselors have a master's degree in social work, psychology or other counseling field
- Expertise with adolescents and the ability to connect and engage with substance-using teens
- Certified or working toward certification for Student Assistance Counselor (CSAC)

Students at schools with
Project SUCCESS had . . .

fewer
depressive
symptoms



35%

lower past month
use of cigarettes



20%

lower past month
use of alcohol



27%

lower past month
use of marijuana

20%

lower suicide
ideation



28%

lower past month
vaping

NOTE: Results are from the Rhode Island Student Survey 2020-2021 administration. Depressive symptoms were measured by the Modified Depression Score, a continuous score ranging from 0 to 24. Percent difference was calculated by adjusted logistic and linear regressions controlling for age, sexual and gender identity, pre-post COVID lockdown, %White, %Free/reduced lunch, urban classification, and school level. All results are significant at $p < 0.05$. Analyses conducted by SR Rosenthal, 1/1/2023.

TEEN INSTITUTE

A POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
APPROACH

IDENTIFIES FORMAL AND INFORMAL
LEADERS INVOLVED, IN BOTH POSITIVE
AND NEGATIVE ACTIVITIES

TRAINS, MOBILIZES, AND MOTIVATES
YOUTH LEADERS TO BECOME
PREVENTION ADVOCATES

TEEN INSTITUTE 2023

APPLICATIONS BEING ACCEPTED FOR RI TEEN INSTITUTE!



August 21-25, 2023

Camp JORI, Wakefield, RI

Leadership Training for RI Youth entering the 10th-12th grade. Youth are nominated by an adult "sponsor" who recognizes leadership abilities or potential in the teen.

\$25 fee includes:

5 days/4 nights lodging and food, team-building, action planning, Project Adventure, workshops, talent show, general sessions, dance, process groups, and optional activities such as swimming, athletics, crafts, and more!

Scholarships available!

Email RITeenInstitute@gmail.com for a youth application, adult staff application, or adult sponsor form.



@RITeenInstitute@gmail.com



risas.org/our-programs/teen-institute/

KEY TAKEAWAYS

WE WILL NOT ADDRESS THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC LONG TERM UNLESS WE PREVENT AND REDUCE YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS ARE AN EFFECTIVE, MULTI-TIERED STRATEGY TO PREVENT AND REDUCE YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING.



Rhode Island

RISAS

Student Assistance Services



- Sarah C. Dinklage, LICSW
- Chief Executive Officer
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- www.risas.org

Public Comment

**RHODE
ISLAND**