

It's time to talk...

about what youth are telling us!

In 2009, the Council for Union County Families, following a strategic planning process, began surveying youth throughout the county. The survey was developed using the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) nationally recognized Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). Additional questions were added to reflect concerns raised in Union County but not addressed by the CDC's tool. The survey was conducted in 2009, 2010, and 2012. During the three implementation periods, different grade levels were surveyed but the major focus since 2010 has been 7th, 9th and 11th graders. Below is a brief summary of what the youth (1,518 students) surveyed in 2012 have told us about parent interaction, drug use, bullying, and sex.

Drug Use

- While alcohol (20.4%), tobacco (11.6%), and marijuana (8.8%) are still the most commonly used substances among youth, 4.3% of Union County teens indicated misusing prescription drugs in the last 12 months to get high.
 - By comparison, 3.6% of students surveyed reported using hallucinogenic drugs, 3.4% of students indicated misusing over the counter drugs, 2.8% of respondents stated using cocaine, and 1.8% of the youth reported using heroin.
 - Additionally, 3.4% of those surveyed reported using inhalants, 2.0% of students said they have used steroids, and 1.3% of respondents indicated injection drug use
- Of the students who reported using alcohol anytime during the last 30 days, 50.1% of students obtained alcohol from their friends/peers; 30.0% acquired it from their parents
- 45.6% of students who reported misusing prescription drugs misused doctor prescribed medication while 48.5% of those misusing were given the substance
- 32.1% of students who used alcohol all 30 days in the past month also stated an adult in their household did the same
- A majority of students who indicated using cocaine, heroin, and intravenous drugs (IDU) at least once in the previous 12 months were actually using on three or more occasions demonstrating the addictiveness of these drugs
 - Used at all: Cocaine (2.8%), Heroin (1.8%), and IDU (1.3%)
 - Used 3 or more times: Cocaine (2.2%), Heroin (1.6%), and IDU (1.1%)



Youth Risk Behavior Survey Summary

Sexting

(*Sexting* is the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photographs, primarily between mobile phones)

- 13.0% of the Union County students surveyed reported sending a sext at least once while 18.1% of those surveyed reported receiving a sext at least once. When asked about receiving an unwanted sext, 11.3% of students reported they had received at least one and 3.8% of those surveyed said they received an unwanted sext on four or more occasions.



Sex

- 26.4% of students surveyed report having had sexual intercourse. 39.3% of these students have had 3 or more partners and 48.8% of these students report first having sex at 14 years of age or younger. 22.9% of these students report drinking or using drugs “Sometimes,” “Most of the Time,” or “Always” before sex.

Bullying

- Approximately 1 in 4 (24.3%) of the Union County students surveyed reported having been bullied at school. When asked about cyber bullying, 18.2% indicated having been a victim.

Depression

- 41.0% of students have a moderate to high risk of experiencing depression (51.0% were females).

Suicide

- 12.9% of the Union County YRBS respondents have intentionally harmed themselves. 18.4% of those surveyed have thought about committing suicide while 10.5% of respondents have planned their suicide and 5.2% of respondents have attempted suicide.
- According to the survey, females (16.7%) have more self-harming tendencies compared to males (9.3%). Likewise, 20.4% of females have thought about attempting suicide compared to 16.4% of male respondents.
- Additionally, 7th graders report (15.1%) more self-harming behaviors than 9th (13.2%) or 11th graders (9.5%).



Parents / Support

- Respondents of the 2012 Union County YRBS report receiving “Some” to “A Lot” of support from parents or caregivers (96.4%), a sibling (77.8%), a boyfriend or girlfriend (51.6%), a relative (89.2%), and a teacher (84.9%)
- Many parents are not aware of teen prescription drug abuse. 48.5% of Union County teens say that their parents never or seldom talk to them about alcohol and drugs. Teens say their parents are not discussing these dangers with them, even though research shows that parental disapproval is a powerful way to keep teens from using drugs.

