

columbia/boone county adolescent health needs assessment

Columbia/Boone County Department of Public Health and Human Services

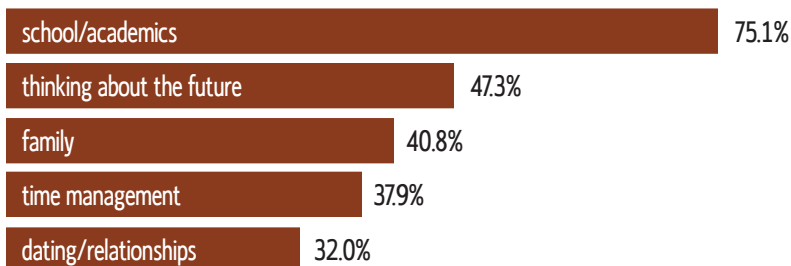
Recently-published studies show that, in the **United States**, **45%** of high-schoolers currently use alcohol, **2.1 million** teens abuse prescription drugs, **25%** of 10th graders use marijuana and **26%** of 14-19 year olds are currently infected with an STD.

In Fall 2010, the Columbia/Boone County Department of Public Health and Human Services, with assistance from Columbia Public Schools (CPS) and in collaboration with the University of Missouri's Master of Public Health Program, analyzed various local, state and national youth survey data. Additional data was collected via focus groups and adolescent health provider surveys. The goal of the assessment was to determine current health behaviors of adolescents in Columbia/Boone County and share those findings with the community.

- what adolescents feel & do -

Almost 20% of CPS students (grades 9-12) said they felt **sad either often or always** in the last 30 days. Over 25% said they felt **very grouchy or irritable**.

Over 31% of CPS students said they felt **a lot of stress** and 44% said they felt **some stress**. The **top five sources of stress** for CPS high school students were:



33% of CPS students **used alcohol** at least once in the past 30 days. Nearly 1/5 of those students reported **binge drinking**.

18% said they had been in a physical fight at least once and up to 12 or more times in the last year.

- what adolescents want & need -

- 1 Additional help in class as well as outside help or tutoring.
- 2 Confidentiality and non-judgemental behavior from teachers and counselors.
- 3 More information on how to lead healthy lifestyles and prepare for "real life" through genuine health messages.

- what adolescents think & say -

It is very hard to be physically active, have healthy eating habits and get the recommended amount of sleep with a full day of school, homework and other activities. Some teens lack resources to make healthy choices and they understand the impact this has on their health.

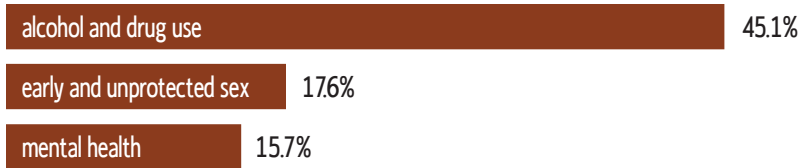
Teens didn't feel they had a person or agency to go to when they felt stress or had other mental health needs.

Teens are under a lot of stress, with much of it related to school. They said teachers or tutors are not readily available and they would like to see less busy work.

Boone County teens and providers indicated four primary health concerns: **mental health issues, alcohol and drug use, poor nutrition and lack of physical activity.**

- what school personnel & providers said -

What do you believe to be the top three health risks to adolescents?



In this focus group, the professionals mentioned mental health as the primary concern, citing difficulty accessing care.



Where do you feel there are gaps in health services for the youth you serve?



What do you think are some of the barriers that youth face in accessing services?



- what data tells us -

Columbia vs. National Comparison of Drug Use (ever in your life)

Drug	Columbia	National
Marijuana	28.7%	36.8%
Prescription Drugs (without doctor's prescription)	13.2%	20.2%
Inhalants	6.4%	11.7%
Hallucinogens	5.3%	8.0%
Cocaine	3.5%	6.4%
Heroin	1.2%	2.5%
Methamphetamines	0.9%	4.1%
Steroids (without doctor's prescription)	0.7%	3.3%
Ecstasy	N/A	6.7%

Source: Columbia - Missouri Safe and Drug Free Schools 2010 Survey; National - 2009 Youth Risk Behavioral Survey

- future directions -

- Continued and more focused collaboration between community agencies and schools to bridge gaps in mental health/stress management for youth.
- Look at summary of best practices from other states and communities related to adolescent health issues.
- Work with youth on promotion and education of available adolescent resources and services.
- Partner with others working to address identified issues such as school food choices, physical activity and leisure time activities.



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