



FOCUS COUNSELLING

— SERVICES —

"Substance Use and Youth - Is there a problem?"

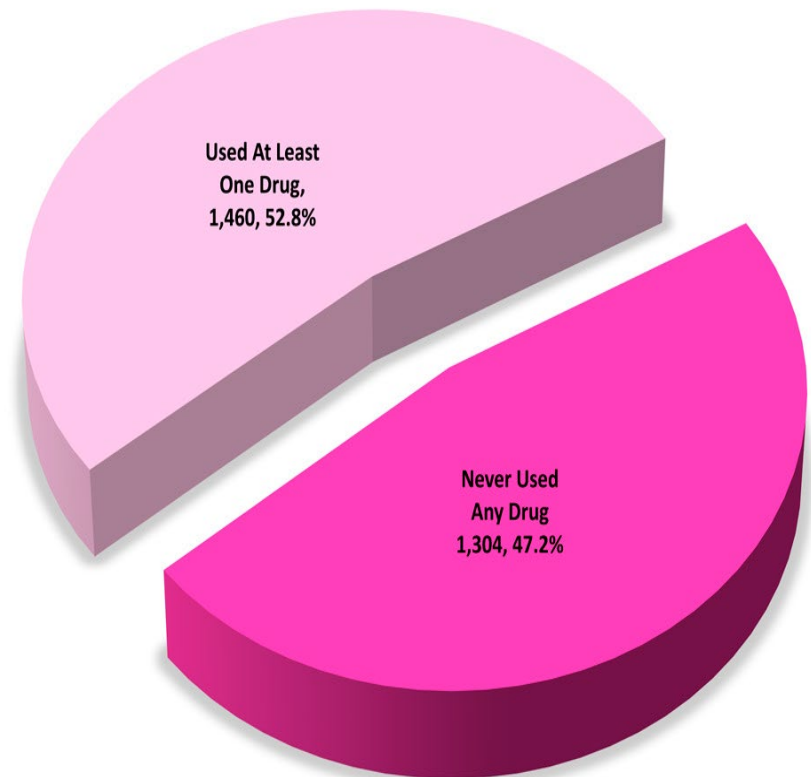


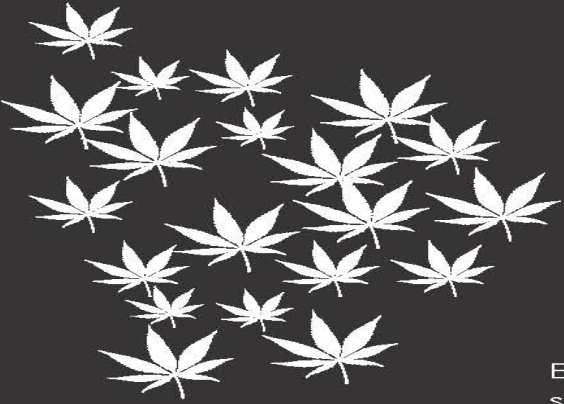
NATIONAL SCHOOL SURVEY 2019

Students were asked to report if they “*have ever consumed any of the surveyed substances...*” and “*when was the first time you tried...*”. Their negative responses (“*no*” or “*never*”) to these questions provide the number and proportion of students who reported that they have never used any of the drugs surveyed. Overall, 52.8% (1,460) of all survey respondents reported use of at least one drug in their lifetime. This includes the use of all legal and illegal drugs.

ATOD prevalence for all students, M2 through S4, is presented and The results show, students recorded the highest lifetime prevalence-of-use for energy drinks (51.8%), alcohol (45.2%), marijuana (18.3%), and inhalants (10.2%). Other lifetime prevalence ranges from a low of 0.5% for poppers and GHB to a high of 5.2% for cigarettes.

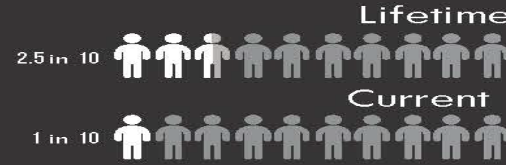
Students reported the highest current prevalence-of-use for energy drinks (19.2%), alcohol (13.2%), and marijuana (7.6%). Other current use prevalence ranges from a low of 0.2% for heroin to a high of 2.2% for inhalants.





PREVALENCE

(Proportion of students who has used drugs in a given reference period.)



Equal prevalence between the sexes at both reference periods.

AVERAGE AGE OF FIRST USE

Just after 13 years – as early as 10 years and as late at 14 years, on average; later for females (14 years) than males (13 years).

SOURCE & LOCATION OF USE

Mainly from friends (14% of those who used marijuana in the past year) and use it mainly at a friend's house (7% of those used used in the past year).

PERCEPTIONS OF HARM

Smoking marijuana sometimes is perceived to be harmful by 7 in 10 students; and 8 in 10 felt the same about smoking marijuana frequently. In contrast, these proportions are lower than for those who perceived harm in smoking cigarette or drinking alcohol.



YOUTH MARIJUANA STATISTICS

8 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

REACTION OF FRIENDS



2 in 10 students said none of their friends would try to convince them to stop if they knew they were smoking marijuana; or would not disapprove if they knew they were smoking marijuana.

RELATIONSHIP WITH MARIJUANA USE



Students are more likely to use marijuana if:

- they are curious about trying an illegal drug and have the opportunity
- it is easily accessible
- their friends smoke marijuana
- their friends approve of them smoking marijuana and do not try to stop them
- they have tried hashish and cannabis resin
- they know adults who use marijuana or who sold or dealt drugs

EASE OF ACCESS

4 in 10 students felt that marijuana is easy to obtain.



SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT/ PERCEPTIONS

4 in 10 students believe that there are drugs at their school; and that students bring, try, or deal with drugs at their school.



The target population comprised all students in grade levels M2 through S4, attending public, private, and home schools on the Island. In total 3,017 students (53% females, 46% males) completed the self-administered questionnaire; the majority of whom considered themselves as Black (53%).

SOURCE: 2015 National School Survey





- Focus Counselling Services has in the last year worked with eight young men ages ranging from 11 to 18, all cannabis users diagnosed with severe substance use disorder.
- Two of those persons have co-occurring illnesses
- Three of those persons were siblings aged 11, 15 and 18 all cannabis users who have had death threats due to antisocial activity and have relocated.
- Despite the negative consequences all of the eight young men did not see any issue with using cannabis and all shared family substance use as a contributing factor, with one sharing that he uses to help keep him calm when he feels anxious.



- Substance use and substance use disorder and its associated behaviors are largely or at least strong contributors to the increase of violent crime amongst the youth in our community.
- Three in ten violent incidents are directly related to substance use.
- Alcohol is used in large amounts by our youth as early as 15 years old. There are groups of S1 and S2 students that congregate at our parks and beaches to consume alcohol and cannabis.
- Concerned parents and guardians report that they have challenges accessing services for their young ones i.e., do not know where to seek assistance or services do not seem easily accessible.



Cannabis by products shatter and concentrates appear to be the substances of choice for our youth today due to its easy availability, low cost and lack of smell.

Shatter and other concentrates are extremely popular for several reasons:

- Higher levels of THC
- They are also cheaper and goes further
- Generally, they do not have that burnt green smell that cannabis has when burnt.
- These substances are highly addictive. some call them “Green Crack”.
- Vape pens are also becoming very popular, not just for nicotine but also used to smoke cannabis and its concentrates.
- There are vape pens that can be modified to smoke plant material concentrates and oils.



How can the community help?

The community could help by putting a larger more consistent focus on providing substance use education, prevention and available treatment options with an emphasis on:

Educating, Equipping and Empowering our youth in making informed decisions about their choice of activities and lifestyle choices.



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