

# **The Dane County Youth Assessment 2000: Final Report**

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Any publication, presentation or news release of these survey findings should include acknowledgment of the Teen Assessment Project - School of Human Ecology, University of Wisconsin-Madison,

# Executive Summary

The Dane County Youth Assessment 2000 is the product of a collaborative partnership between the Dane County Youth Commission, the University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension, CESA 2 of Dane County, and twelve Dane County School Districts. The 160-item questionnaire used in the Youth Assessment 2000 was developed jointly by the collaborating partners and representatives from two additional school districts. It includes many items from previous surveys as well as additional items which address issues of current and future interest to Dane County teens. All students who were present in school on the day the survey was administered were asked to participate. In all, 80% of the target population (n=18,572) in grades 7 through 12 were surveyed. Six percent (n=1,107) of the surveys were judged invalid and eliminated prior to data analysis. A random sample of 6,695 students stratified by school and grade was then selected from the remaining 17,465 valid responses to represent the youth of Dane County in this report. The estimated error rate is between 1% - 2%.

The Dane County Youth Assessment 2000: Final Report summarizes student responses to many of the survey questions and examines how a variety of personal, social and environmental factors relate to both positive and problematic outcomes among youth. In addition, a twenty year retrospective examination of trends in youth behavior is provided in the final chapter of the report. For a complete grade by gender summary of student responses to all 160-items on the questionnaire, please see the Dane County Youth Assessment 2000: Addendum.

## About the Sample - Chapter 1.

- ✓ The sample is distributed fairly evenly by gender and grade.
- ✓ Twenty-one percent of the sample are students of color, 79% are White.
- ✓ Most students report they live with both parents (67%).
- ✓ Ninety percent of fathers and 66% of mothers are reported to work at least 30 hours a week.
- ✓ Eighty-six percent of fathers and 89% of mothers are reported to have at least a high school education.

## Youth Employment, Volunteerism and Leadership - Chapter 2.

- ✓ Sixty percent of youth (age 16+) report being regularly employed during the school year.
- ✓ Teens who work 16 or more hours per week are less likely to have a GPA of 3.0 or better (60%) than those who work fewer hours (79%) or who choose not to work at all (76%).
- ✓ White (47%), Black/African-American (43%) and Other Asian (43%) females are the most likely of all youth to report volunteering.
- ✓ Among youth who do not volunteer, Hmong females (42%) are most likely to report interest in learning more about volunteering.
- ✓ Black/African-American (20%) and Hispanic (19%) females are the most likely of all youth to report participating in leadership activities.
- ✓ Hmong males (56%) are the most likely of all youth to report a lack of leadership opportunities.

## Family Relationships - Chapter 3.

- ✓ Youth who are well-monitored by parents are less likely than poorly-monitored youth to engage in a variety of problem behaviors such as binge drinking (23% vs. 48%).
- ✓ Teens who experience high support from parents are more likely than youth who feel little support to exhibit positive outcomes (e.g., GPA of 3.0 or better: 75% vs. 49%).
- ✓ Students of color are more likely than White students to report experiencing multiple sources

of family stress (e.g., witnessing domestic violence: 16% vs. 6%).

- ✓ Experiencing multiple sources of family stress is related to more problem behaviors on the part of teens and less monitoring and support from parents.
- ✓ Sexually experienced teens who discuss birth control with their parents are more likely than those who do not discuss it to "Always" use birth control (11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> graders: 77% vs. 59%).
- ✓ Youth are far less likely to have had sex (15% vs. 54%) or binge drink (22% vs. 49%) if they believe their parents disapprove of these behaviors for teens their age.
- ✓ Teens are more likely to use tobacco when an adult at home smokes cigarettes, even among youth whose parents clearly disapprove of teen tobacco use (27% vs. 16%).

#### **School Experiences - Chapter 4.**

- ✓ The vast majority of students believe their school curriculum is relevant and that school personnel are helpful when needed (White students, 83%; students of color, 78%).
- ✓ Black/African-American and Hispanic youth are more likely than White youth to participate in part-time (13% vs. 6%) or full-time (6% vs. 2%) special education classes or programs.
- ✓ 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grade Black/African-American youth who frequently talk to an adult at school about their future plans are far more likely to plan to continue their education past high school than those who receive little or no counseling (91% vs. 58%).
- ✓ Students of color are more likely than White students to report negative school experiences such as racial bias from teachers (24% vs. 7%).
- ✓ Youth who participate 5 or more hours per week in school activities are more likely than those who do not participate to have a GPA of 3.0 or better (males: 75% vs. 47%; females: 86% vs. 55%). Among these youth, females are also less likely to report binge drinking (35% vs. 48%). However, this relationship is not as strong for males (44% vs. 49%).
- ✓ A lack of interest (males, 32%; females, 21%) and after school jobs (males, 10%; females, 12%) are the main reasons teens select for not participating in school sports or extracurricular activities.

#### **Community and Peer Relations - Chapter 5.**

- ✓ The most common activities teens spend 5 or more hours per week in are: homework or studying (52%), school sports/extracurricular activities (44%) and family activities (35%).
- ✓ The cost of entertainment or recreational activities is perceived as a problem for about half of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders (males, 48%; females, 54%).
- ✓ Youth who live in neighborhoods where adults are vigilant of their activities are less likely than poorly monitored youth to exhibit problem behaviors such as being truant from school (13% vs. 25%).

- ✓ Teens are more likely to have a GPA of 3.0 or better, and less likely to be either truant from school or considering suicide, if they have at least one adult in addition to their parents that they can rely on for help.
- ✓ Most teens in Dane County (85%) report they have access to the Internet.
- ✓ Black/African-American (34%) and Hispanic (32%) females are the most likely of all youth to report they lack Internet access.
- ✓ Most teens spend between 2 and 10 hours per week online (males, 68%; females, 69%).
- ✓ Teens are far more likely to drink alcohol (55% vs. 9%) or use tobacco (44% vs. 4%) if their friends smoke or drink than if their friends do not.

## **Teen Health - Chapter 6.**

- ✓ More teens worry about getting good grades (66%) than about any other issue.
- ✓ Most students who report experiencing serious problems do not receive the help they need (e.g., AOD problem of a family member: 7% need help vs. 2% receiving help).
- ✓ The vast majority of teen smokers (86%) have friends who smoke or use tobacco.
- ✓ Thirty-one percent of females report skipping meals in order to loose weight.
- ✓ Half (51%) of all youth report they always use a seatbelt when driving in a motor vehicle. However, 24% report they ride unprotected most of the time.
- ✓ Females are more likely than males to report feeling depressed in the past month, especially females who live in small towns (20%).
- ✓ Teens are more likely to be sexually experienced if they believe their friends are sexually active (e.g., among youth 16 or older: 47% vs. 65%).
- ✓ Forty-two percent of sexually experienced youth report having unprotected sex.
- ✓ Sexually experienced youth are more likely to use birth control consistently when access to birth control information or supplies is not a problem.

## **Delinquency, Violence and Victimization - Chapter 7.**

- ✓ Ten percent of teens report they have run away from home in the past year.
- ✓ Thirty-two percent of teens report being in a physical fight without weapons in the past year.
- ✓ Twelve percent of teens report being in a physical fight with weapons in the past year.
- ✓ Males (5%) are more likely than females (2%) to carry a weapon to school.
- ✓ Black/African-American (18%) youth report the highest rate of past or present gang membership.
- ✓ More females than males report experiencing sexual (7% vs. 2%) and physical (12% vs. 10%) abuse by an adult and sexual harassment (38% vs. 17%) from a student at school.
- ✓ Forty-three percent of youth report they have personally witnessed someone being beaten or physically abused.
- ✓ Twenty-four percent of youth report they have been the victim of a crime.
- ✓ Teens who have been the victim of a crime are less likely than non-victims to feel they can count on police officers if they are in trouble and need help (58% vs. 74%).

## **Alcohol, Tobacco, Marijuana & Other Drugs - Chapter 8.**

- ✓ About half of both male (50%) and female (47%) high school seniors report they drink beer or wine at least once a month.
- ✓ Eighteen percent of all teens report riding in a motor vehicle with an adult driver who was under the influence of alcohol or other drugs at least once in the past month.
- ✓ Twenty-one percent of youth age 16 or older report riding in a motor vehicle with a teen driver who was under the influence of alcohol or other drugs at least once in the past month.
- ✓ More than half (54%) of youth who drink alcohol once a month or more report they do not consistently use a designated driver when out drinking with friends. This is especially true for males (58%).
- ✓ Teens whose primary source of alcohol is their parents are far less likely to report binge drinking in the past month than teens whose primary source of alcohol is some other adult (31% vs. 80%). The primary source of alcohol for one quarter (26%) of youth age 16 or older is an adult who is not their parent.
- ✓ Females (21%) are more likely than males (17%) to report smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days. However, males are just as likely as females to smoke excessively.
- ✓ Twenty one percent of males and 18% of females who smoke report they first began smoking when they were 11 years old or younger.
- ✓ Few teens report using hard drugs in the past year. The exception is among youth age 16 or older who report a relatively high level of hallucinogen use (11%).

## **Trends Over Time - Chapter 9.**

- ✓ The proportion of students of color in Dane County has increased substantially in the past two decades from 5% in 1980, to 10% in 1990, to 21% in 2000.
- ✓ The proportion of youth who report their mother works full-time increased from one half (51%) in 1985 to two thirds (66%) in 2000.
- ✓ Teens in 2000 are less likely than teens in 1990 to work occasional jobs (18% vs. 28%) and slightly more likely to be regularly employed (33% vs. 31%).
- ✓ In 2000, 37% of teens report volunteering their time in comparison to 11% in 1985.
- ✓ Teen pregnancies dropped from a high of 10% in 1990 to a low of 3% in 2000. In 2000, 92% of teens report having easy access to birth control in comparison to 87% in 1990.
- ✓ The proportion of teens who always use a designated driver increased from 5% in 1990 to 18% in 1995, but has since leveled off at 19% in 2000.
- ✓ Teens in 2000 report the lowest levels of alcohol use in 20 years. In 1985, 43% of teens drank beer or wine at least once a month in comparison to 26% of teens in 2000.
- ✓ Teen smoking rose from 14% in 1980/1985 to a high of 20% in 1995, but has since dropped back to 14% in 2000.
- ✓ Marijuana use dropped from a high of 37% in 1980 to a low of 20% in 1990. The rate then increased to 27% in 1995 and has since leveled off at 25% in 2000.



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## Chapter 1: About the Sample

In November and December of 1999, 12 public school districts and one private high school participated in the *Dane County Youth Assessment 2000*. Altogether, these schools serve 79% of the total population of middle and high school students in Dane County. Parents were notified of the survey in writing several weeks prior to its administration and were given the option to withhold their consent if they did not wish their child to be surveyed. All students in grades seven through twelve whose parents did not object and who were present in school on the day the survey was administered were invited to participate. The survey process itself was completely voluntary and anonymous.

In all, 80% (N=18,572) of students in the participating districts were surveyed. Survey responses were carefully screened by trained individuals at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to ensure that only valid responses were included in the findings. This process resulted in the elimination of 6% (n=1,107) of the surveys which were identified as invalid and removed prior to the data analysis. The 17,465 remaining surveys represent a valid response rate of 75% for the participating districts.

This report is based upon a stratified sample of 6,695 students randomly selected from the population of valid respondents to represent the youth of Dane County. The sample is stratified by school district and grade level. For the Madison Metropolitan School District, it is further stratified by school. All students in each school district had an equal chance of being selected for the County sample. In order to provide a representative snapshot of local youth, sample proportions are based upon enrollment data for the 1999-2000 school year available from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction<sup>1</sup>. The estimated error rate for the sample is between 1% - 2%.

To give readers a sense of the students included in this study, this chapter provides an overview of the demographic and family characteristics of the teens surveyed.

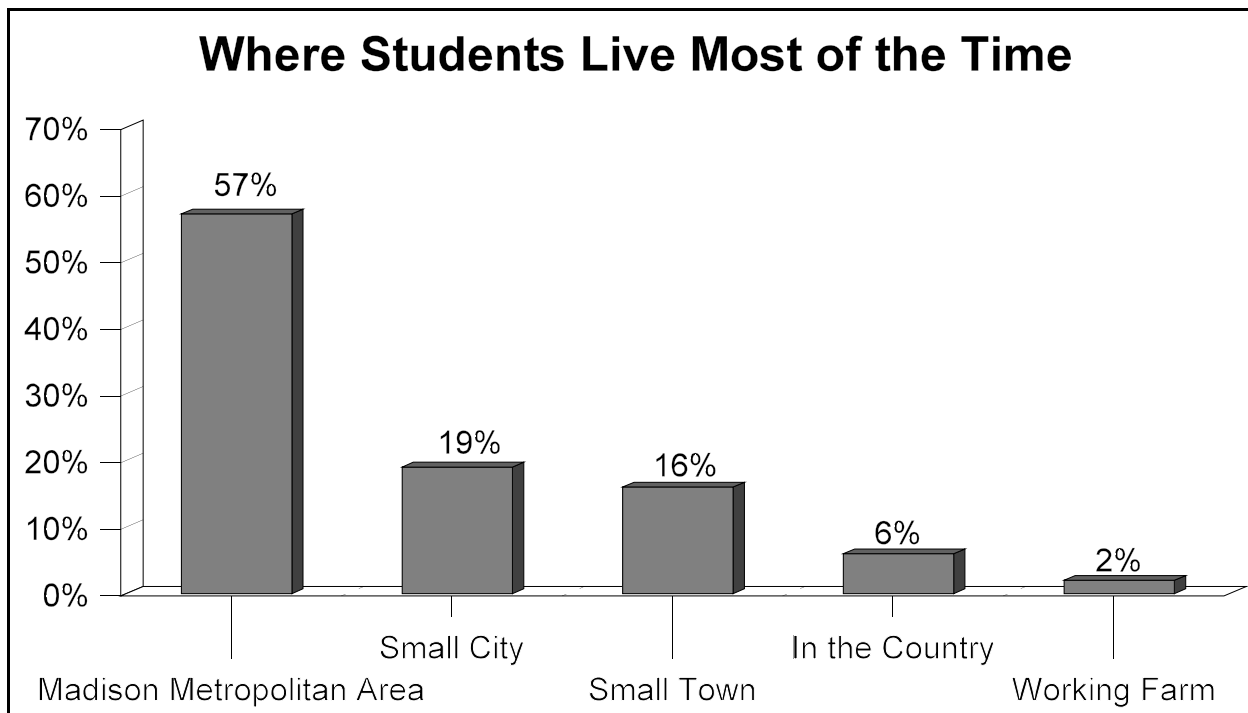
### **The questions examined in this chapter include:**

- What is the geographical distribution of students in the study?
- How does the sample break down by grade and gender?
- What proportion of the sample are students of color?
- What is the family living situation and work status of parents for youth in the study?

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<sup>1</sup>For more information visit the WI-DPI website at: <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/>

## 1.1 Distribution of the Sample by Location



DC2000: Q8

### **Key Findings:**

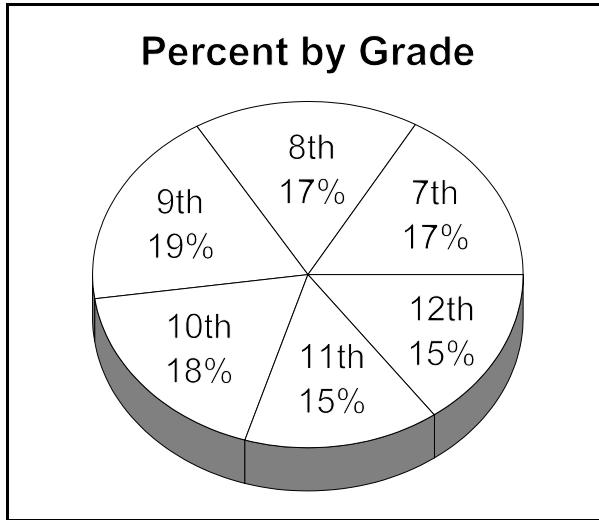
- The majority of students (57%) report that they live in the Madison Metropolitan Area (Madison, Middleton, Monona, Fitchburg).
- About one third of students (35%) report that they live in cities or towns outside the Madison area.
- A small proportion of students (8%) report that they live in rural areas.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

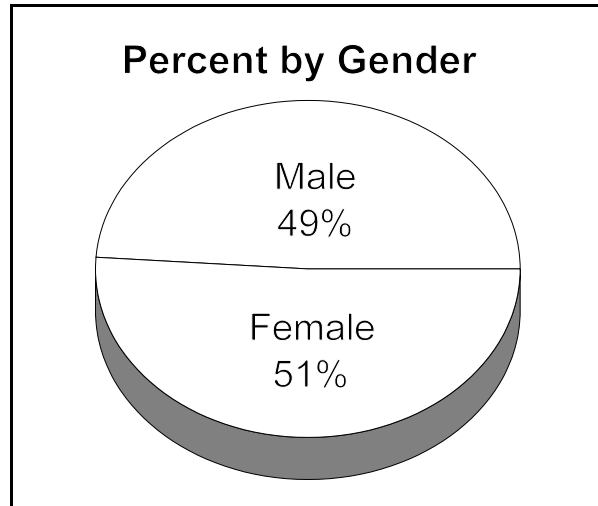
- The geographical distribution of students in Dane County remained relatively stable between 1995 and 2000.



## 1.2 Students' Grade and Gender



DC2000: Q4



DC2000: Q1

### **Key Findings:**

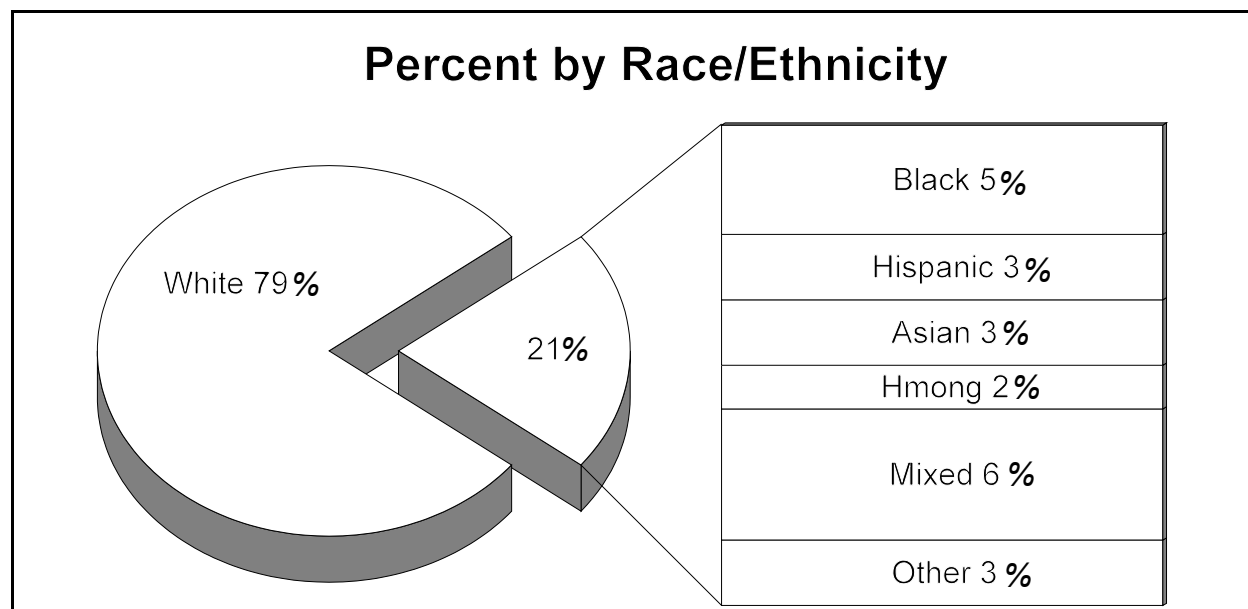
- The sample is quite evenly distributed by grade and gender.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- The majority of students in the sample (69%) are between the ages of 13 and 16.



## 1.3 Race/Ethnic Distribution



DC2000: Q2

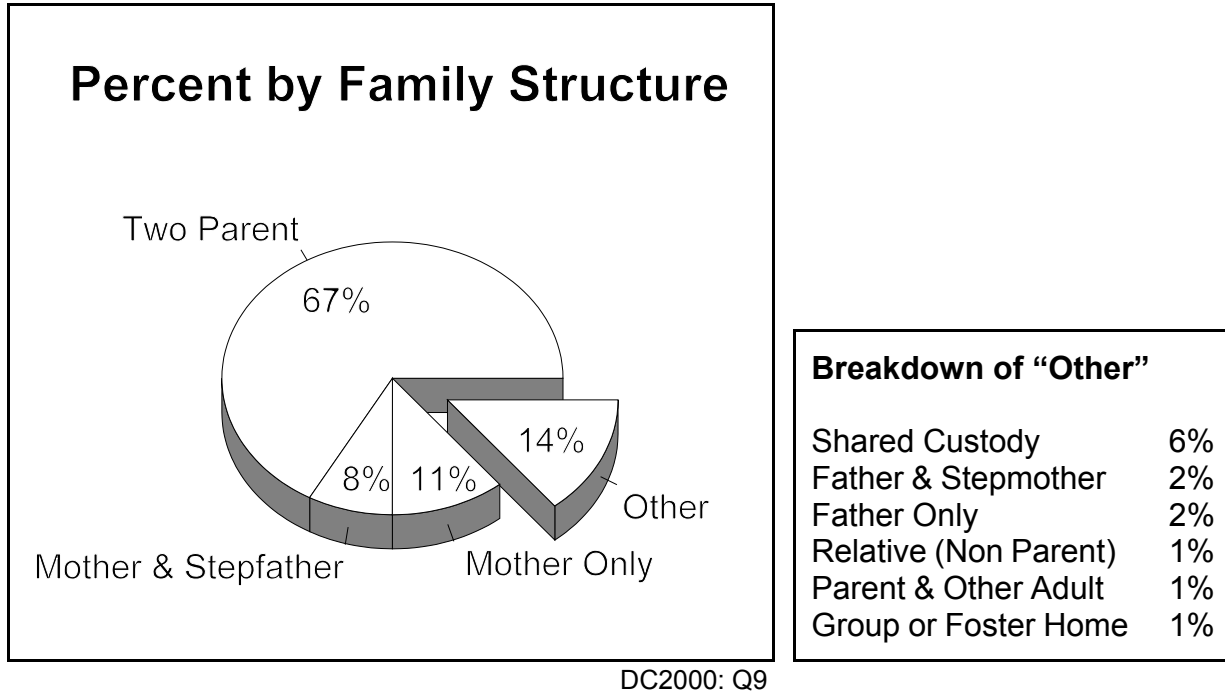
### **Key Findings:**

- Although most students (79%) report their race as “White”, students of color make up 21% of the sample.
- Six percent of students report being “Mixed Race”. For example, part Black/African-American and part White.
- Three percent of students are listed as some “Other” racial group. This includes Native American students who are less than one percent of the sample.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Between 1995 and 2000, the proportion of students of color in Dane County increased from 16% to 21%.
- For more information regarding the terminology used in this report with respect to racial/ethnic designations, please see preface page iv, “Clarification of Terms Used In This Report”.

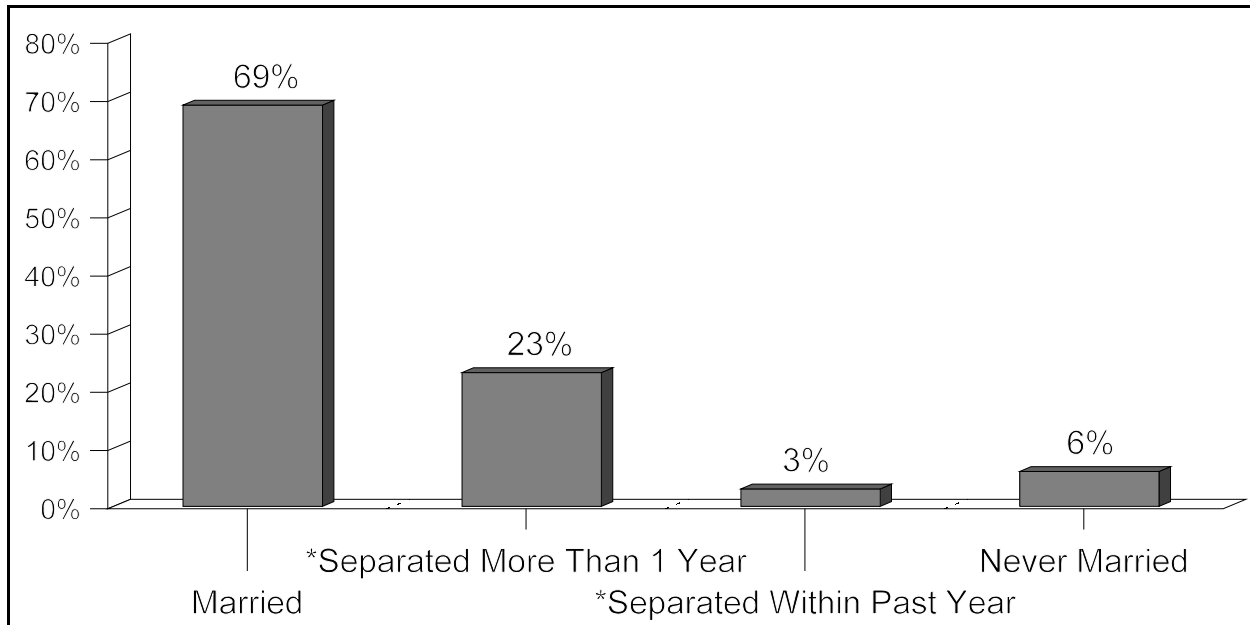
## 1.4 Family Living Situation



### **Key Findings:**

- Two out of three students in Dane County (67%) report that they live with both of their parents (either biological or adoptive).
- One out of five students in Dane County (19%) live with their mother, but not their biological or adoptive father (i.e., mother only, 11%; mother & stepfather, 8%).

## 1.5 Marital Status of Parents



\*Includes parents who are divorced

DC2000: 14

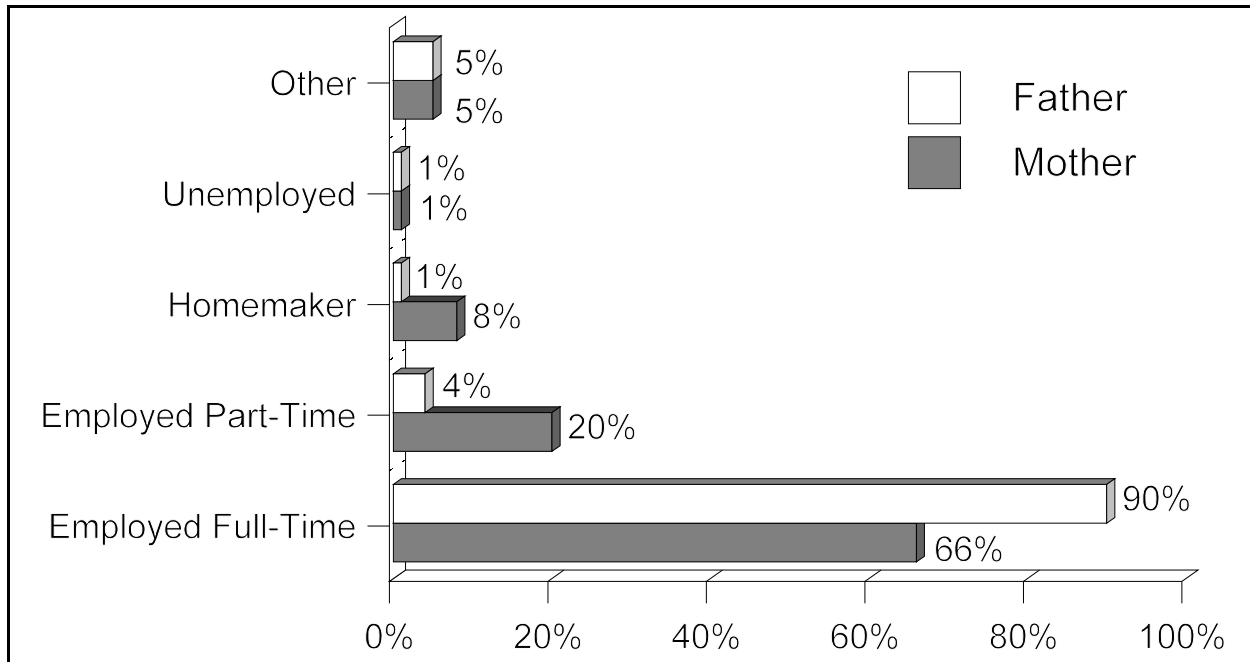
### **Key Findings:**

- More than one quarter (26%) of students in Dane County have experienced the divorce or separation of their parents.
- The majority of these youth (23%) experienced this event more than one year ago.
- Most youth in Dane County (69%) report that their parents have never divorced or separated.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- The marital status of parents in Dane County has remained relatively stable between 1995 and 2000.

## 1.6 Parents' Work Status

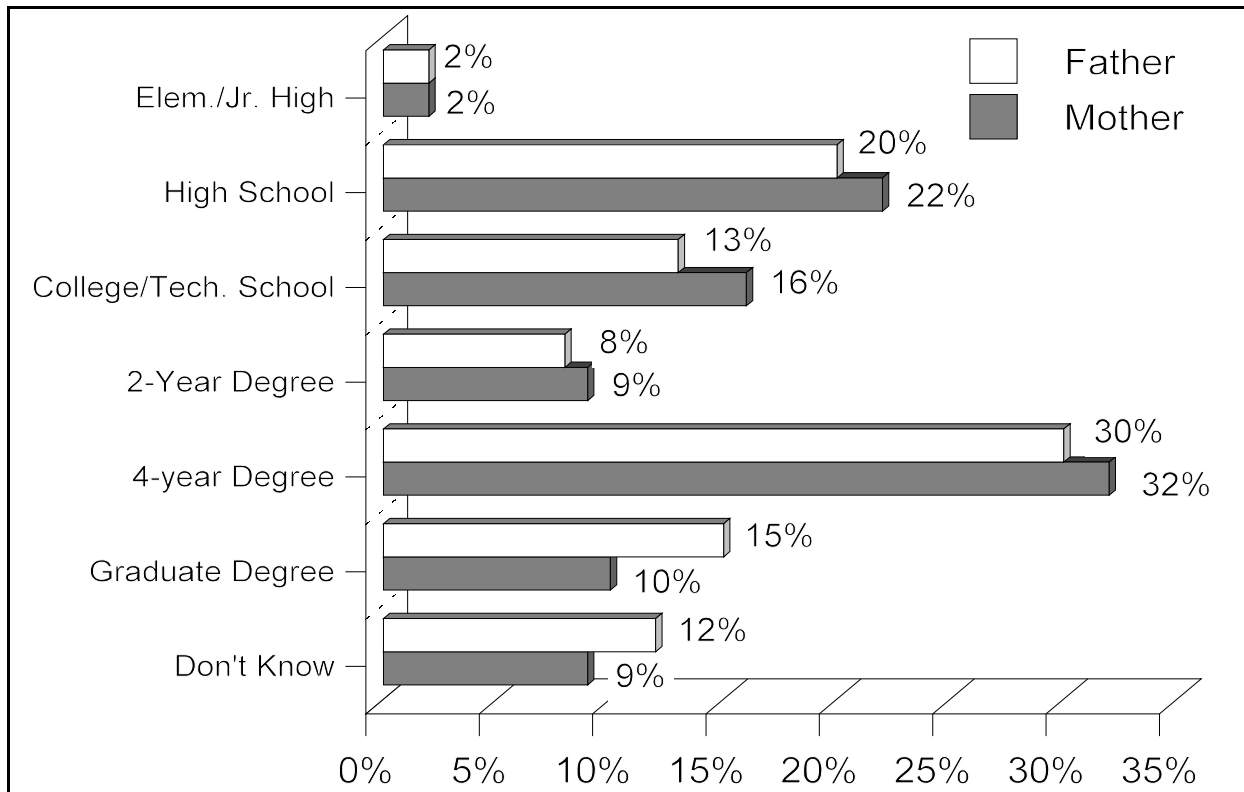


DC2000: Q10, 11

### **Key Findings:**

- Nearly all fathers (90%) and two thirds (66%) of mothers in Dane County are reported to work full-time (i.e. 30 or more hours per week). Few teens (1%) report that their parents are unemployed.
- One in five mothers (20%) work part-time, and 8% are full-time homemakers.
- Parents whose work status is “Other” than those specified above include parents who are full-time students or who are retired or disabled.

## 1.7 Parents' Education: Highest Level of Education Attained



DC2000:Q12 & 13

### Key Findings:

- Parents in Dane County are generally well educated. Most fathers (86%) and mothers (89%) have at least a high school education.
- Two thirds of fathers (66%) and mothers (67%) have some education past high school, ranging from some college or technical training to a graduate or professional degree.



## Chapter 2: Youth Employment, Volunteerism and Leadership

Youth are vital, contributing members of our communities. Whether it is for financial gain or the experience and reward of volunteering, the work done by young people adds to the productivity and health of our local economy. Teens work at area businesses and volunteer in community centers and outreach programs. Young people intern with corporations and serve in leadership roles or on advisory boards, some of which are responsible for distributing thousands of dollars to social programs and service agencies.

At some point during their high school years, most teenagers seek regular employment in paid positions.<sup>1</sup> Working enhances youth development by providing young people with an opportunity to explore possible vocations and test new skills. Although working long hours may undermine academic engagement, research indicates that high school seniors who work part-time tend to perform better in school than their non-working counterparts.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the experience of community service through volunteering benefits a youth by strengthening his or her sense of social responsibility. Finally, teenagers who hold leadership roles within their school and community learn skills and develop prosocial attitudes which provide a strong foundation for leadership activities in adulthood.

However, not all youth who wish to work, volunteer, or hold leadership positions have the opportunity to do so. Many perceive their community as lacking avenues for these activities. Identifying these youth, and providing them with greater opportunities to participate, enables both the community and teens to tap into the benefits of youth employment and community service.

### The questions examined in this chapter include:

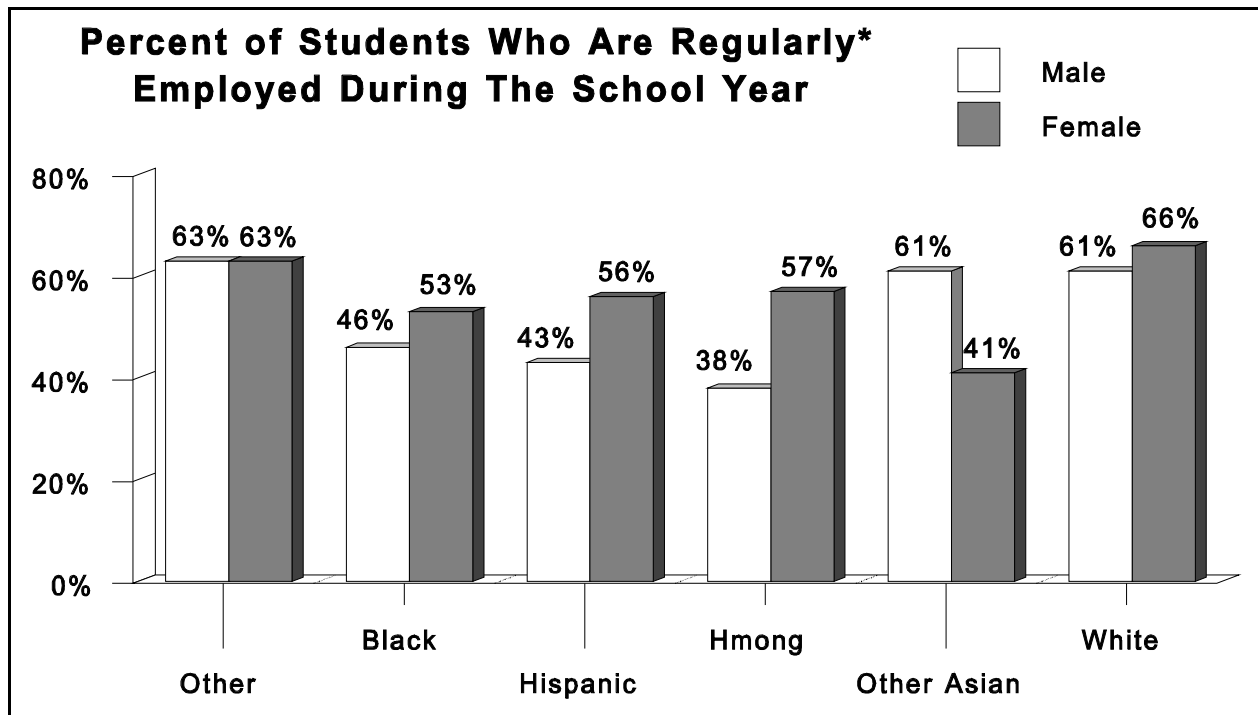
- # What is the work status of teens in Dane County?

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<sup>1</sup>Stone, J.R. & Mortimer, J.T. (1998). The effect of adolescent employment on vocational development: Public and educational policy implications. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 53, 184-214.

<sup>2</sup>Entwisle, D.R., Alexander, K.L., Olson, L.S., & Ross, K. (1999). Paid work in early adolescence: Developmental and ethnic patterns. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 19, 363-388.

- # How is employment related to a youth=s academic achievement?
- # Who are the youth that volunteer or wish to volunteer?
- # Who are the youth that report too few volunteer or leadership opportunities?
- # What barriers do youth perceive to employment or volunteering?



\*Teens who regularly work between one and thirty or more hours per week.

## 2.1 Employment Among Youth Age 16 Years or Older

### Key Findings:

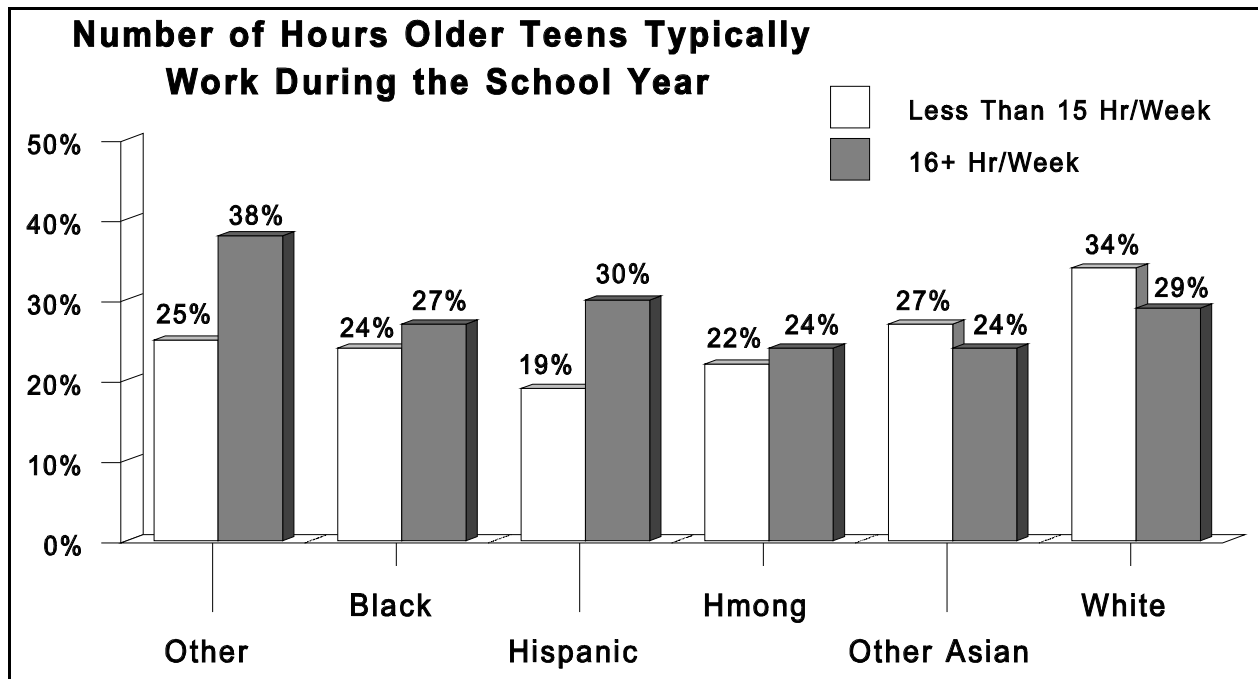
- # In comparison to White males (61%), Black/African-American (46%), Hispanic (43%), and Hmong (38%) males are much less likely to be employed.
- # Among students of color, females are generally more likely than males to report being employed. The exception to this are Other Asian females who report one of the lowest rates of employment (41%).
- # Hmong males (38%) report the lowest rate of employment of any youth.

### Other Notable Findings:

- # Sixty percent of youth age 16 or older report being regularly employed during the school year.



- # Nearly two thirds of White youth (64%) work regularly during the school year, compared to less than half of Hmong youth (46%).



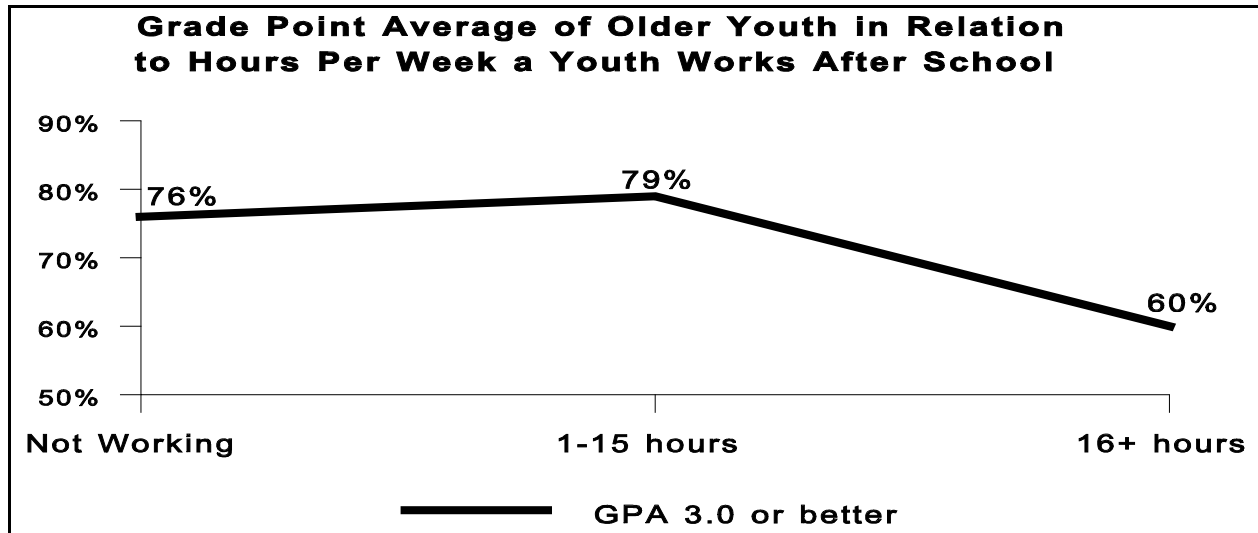
## 2.2 Hours Teens Work During the School Year: Youth 16 Years or Older

### Key Findings:

- # Students of color who are employed tend to work more (16+) rather than fewer (1-15) hours per week. This is especially true of youth from other racial/ethnic groups such as Native America or mixed race youth.
- # In contrast, White students who are employed tend to work fewer (1-15) rather than more (16+) hours per week. However, due to a higher overall employment rate among White students the proportion who work 16 or more hours per week (29%) is comparable to that of students of color.

### Other Notable Findings:

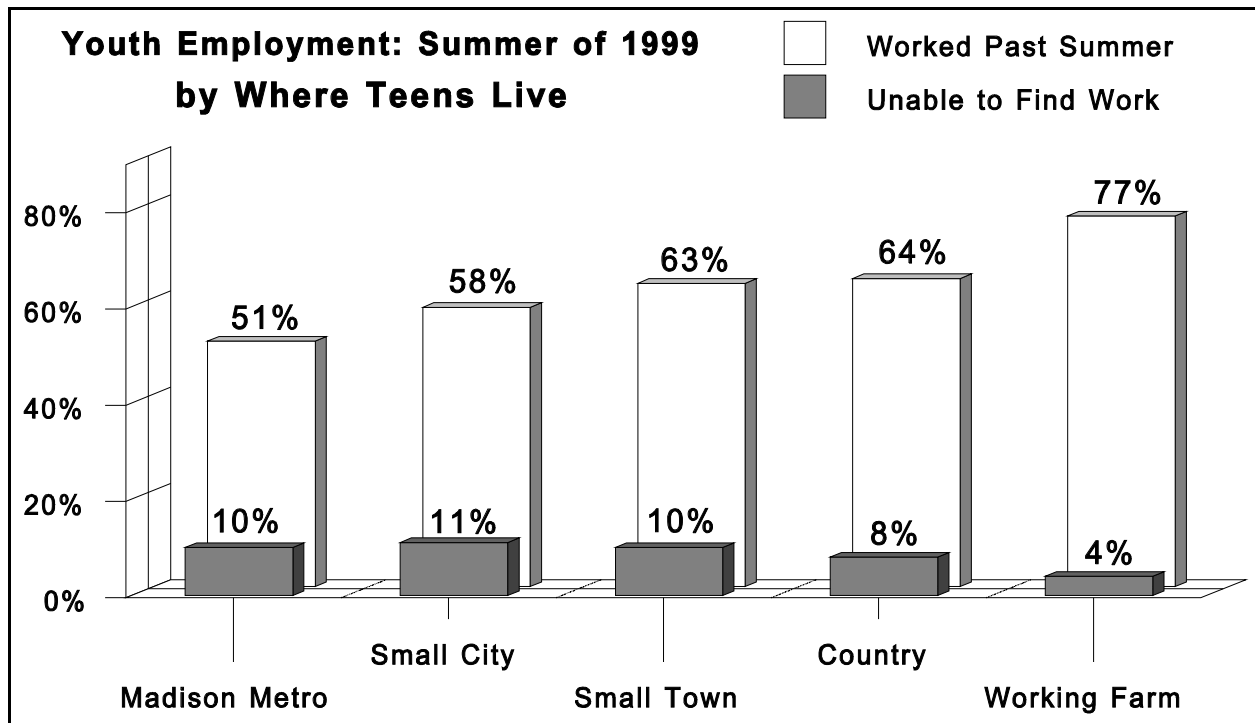
- # One quarter of 10<sup>th</sup> graders (26%) and more than one third of 11<sup>th</sup> (35%) and 12<sup>th</sup> (34%) graders report they currently work part-time (1-15 hours per week).
  
- # One third of youth 16 years old or older (33%) work part-time (1-15 hours per week) and over 27% work more than 16 hours per week.



## 2.3 Academic Achievement in Relation to Employment During the School Year

### Key Findings:

- # Teens who work part-time (i.e., 1-15 hours per week) are slightly more likely than those who do not work at all to report having a GPA of 3.0 or better (79% vs. 76%).
- # However, teenagers who work 16 or more hours per week are less likely to be doing well academically than those who work fewer hours or who do not work at all.



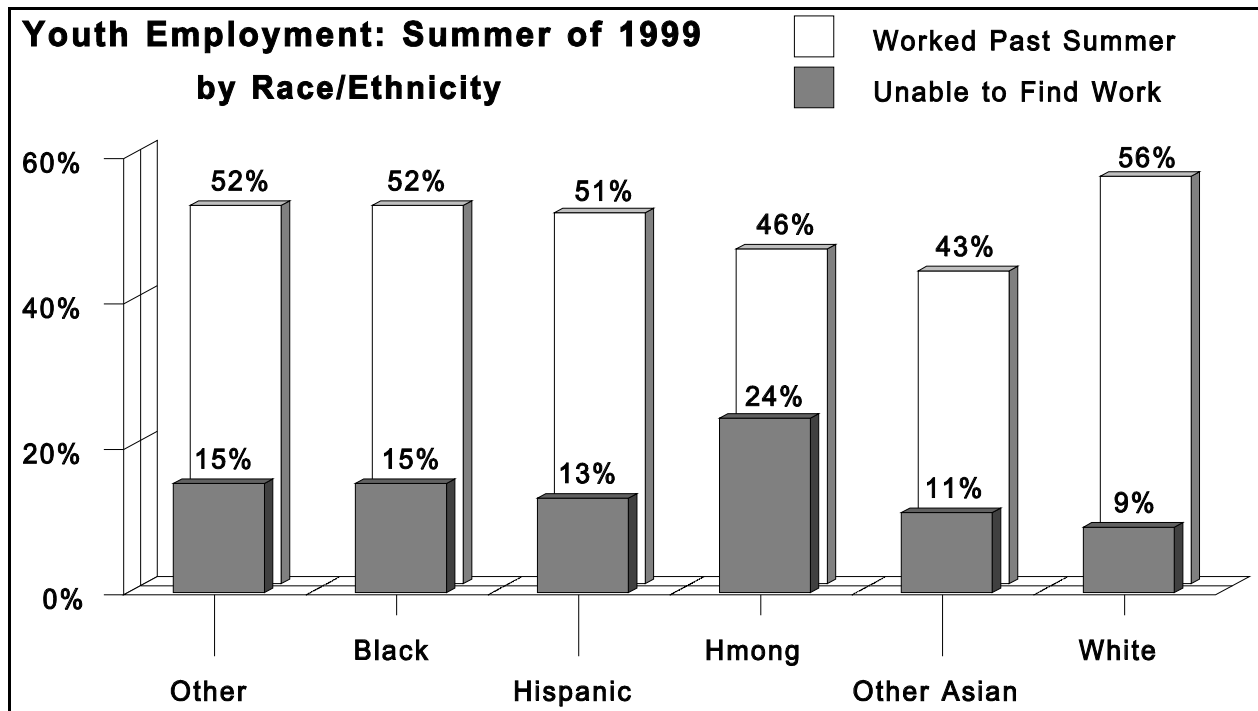
## 2.4 Summer Employment: Youth 16 Years or Older

### Key Findings:

- # Youth in communities outside the Madison Metropolitan area are more likely to have had a summer job than those more centrally located.
- # Generally, few teens who wish to work are unable to find jobs during the summer. Only one out of ten teens (10%-11%) who live in the cities and small towns of Dane County report having trouble finding summer employment.

### Other Notable Findings:

- # Males (68%) are somewhat more likely than females (63%) to be interested in working during the summer.

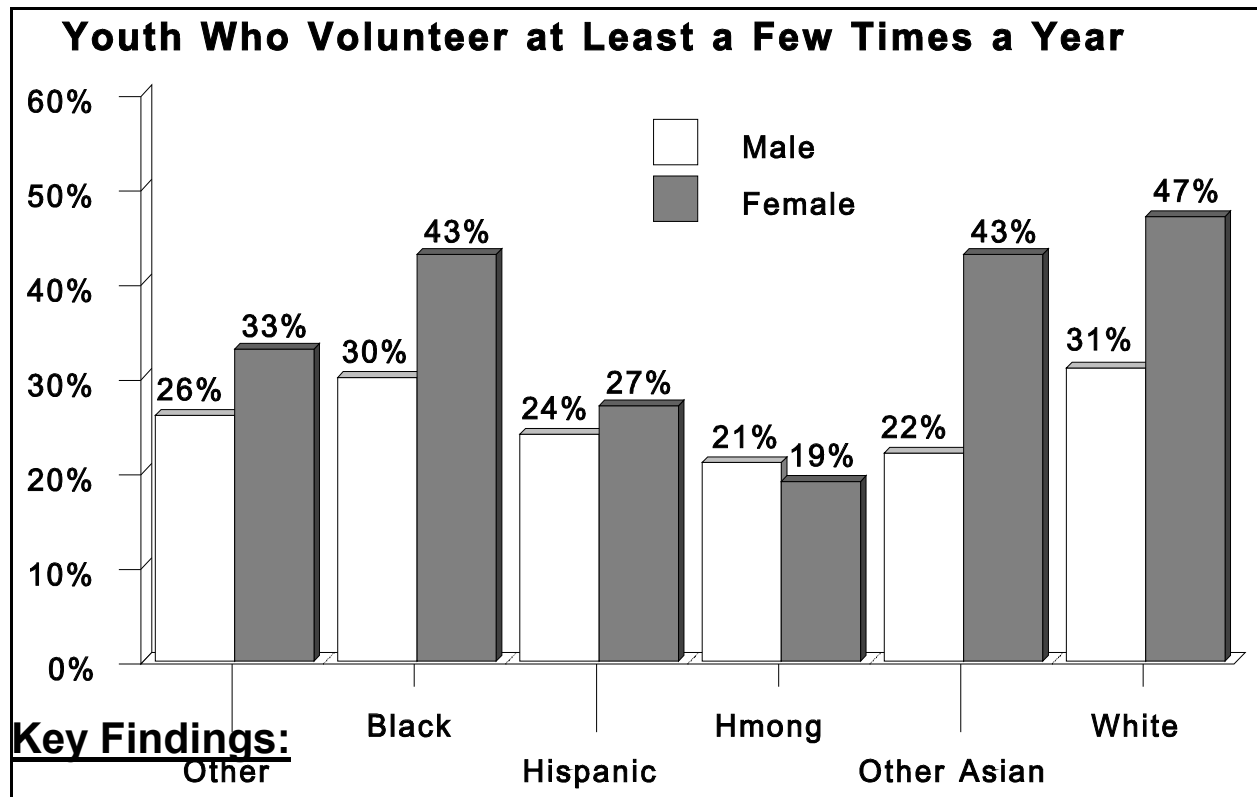


## 2.5 Summer Employment by Race/Ethnicity: Youth 16 Years or Older

### Key Findings:

- # Most students of color in Dane County who are interested in working during the summer are able to find jobs.
- # However, in comparison to White students, a higher proportion of students of color report not being able to find a job in the previous summer.
- # This is especially true of Hmong youth, 24% of whom report being unable to find a job in the previous summer.

## 2.6 Volunteerism by Gender & Race/Ethnicity



- # Except for Hmong youth, females from all racial/ethnic groups are more likely than males to volunteer.
- # White (47%), Black/African-American (43%), and Other Asian (43%) females are most likely to report volunteering.

### Other Notable Findings:

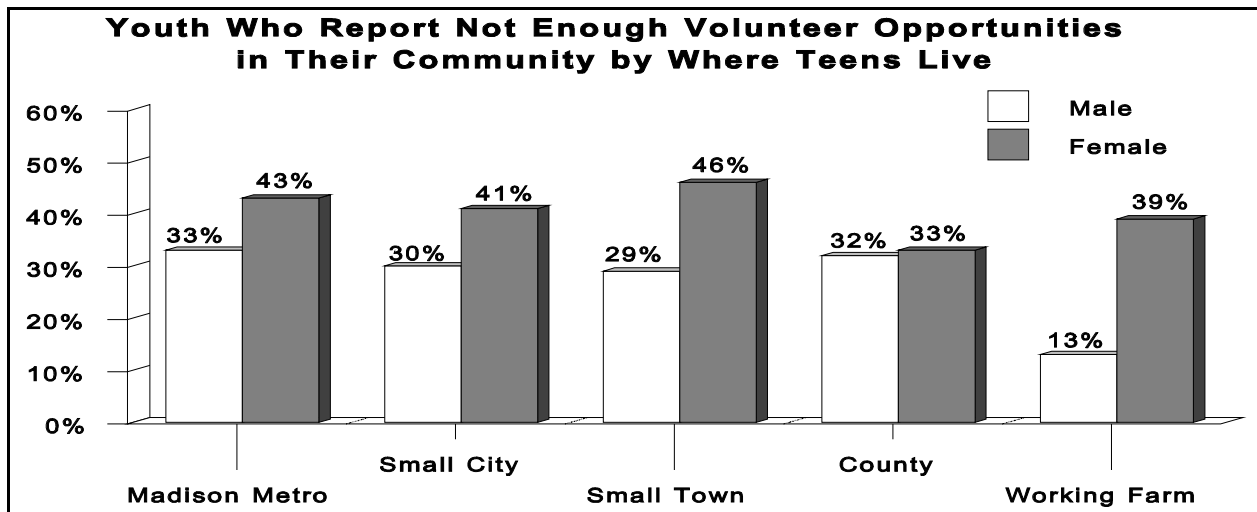
- # Overall, 30% of males and 44% of females report volunteering at least a few times a



year.

- # The proportion of students who report volunteering increased from 27% in 1995 to 37% in 2000.





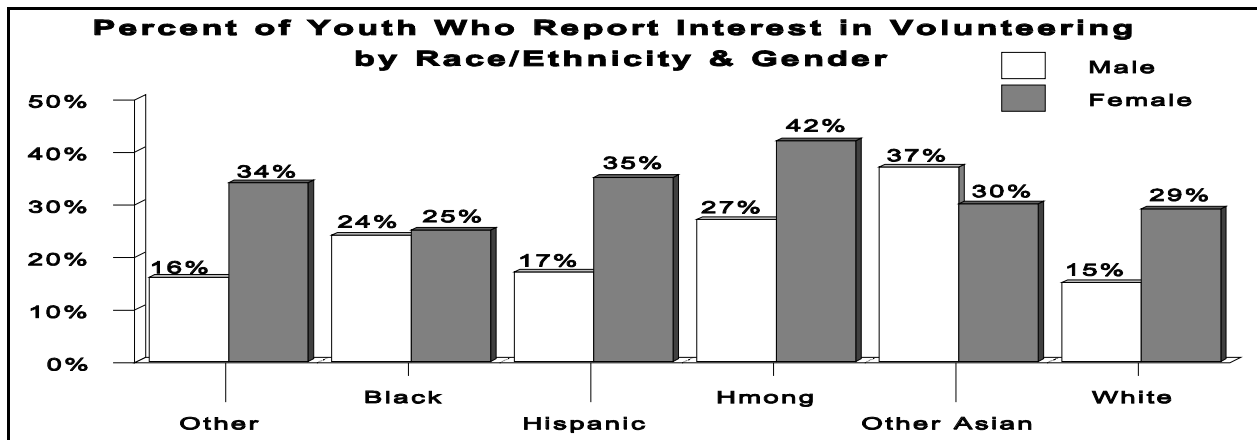
## 2.7 Lack of Volunteer Opportunities by Where Teens Live

### Key Findings:

- # Regardless of where they live, females are more likely than males to report a lack of volunteer opportunities.
- # Females in small towns (46%) are the most likely of all youth to report too few volunteer opportunities.
- # Males on working farms (13%) are the least likely of all youth to report too few volunteer opportunities.

### Other Notable Findings:

- # Between 1995 and 2000, the proportion of youth surveyed who reported that their community did **not** have enough volunteer opportunities dropped from 41% to 37%.



## 2.8 Potential Volunteers by Gender and Ethnicity

- # Among youth who do not volunteer, Hmong females (42%) are most likely to report interest in learning more about volunteering.

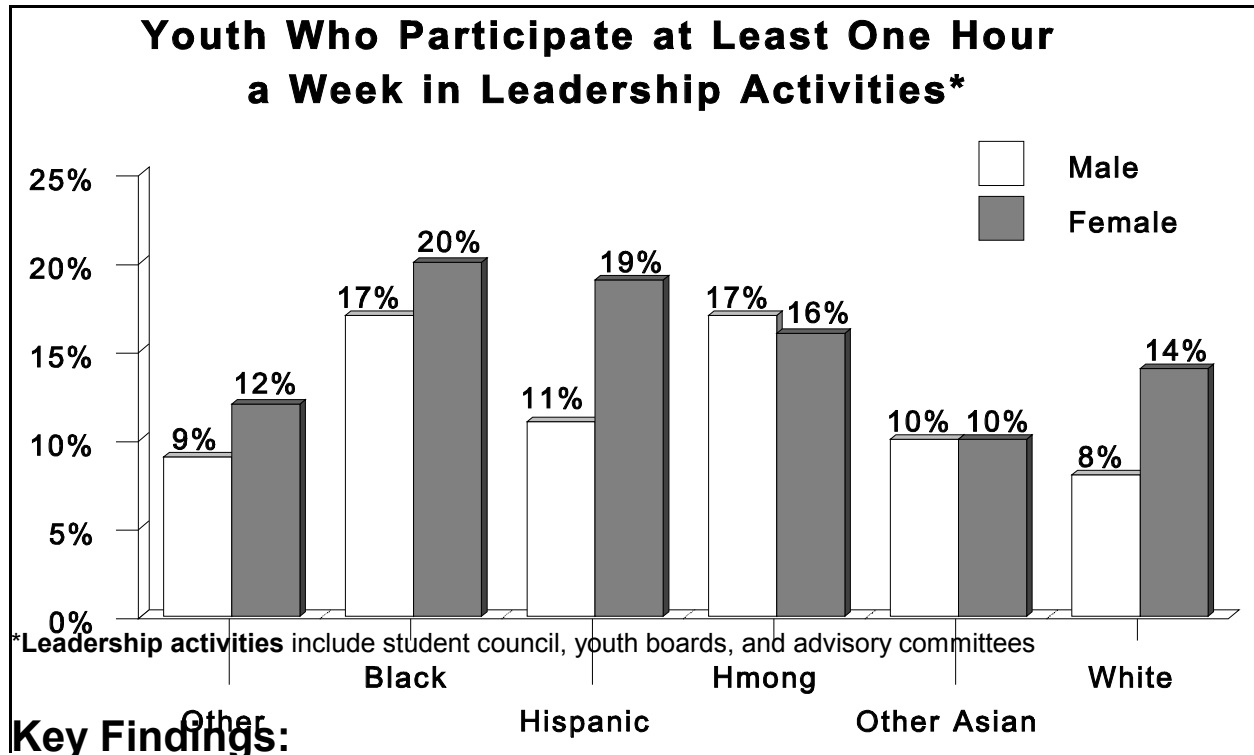
### Key Findings:

- # Apart from Asian youth, potential volunteers are more likely to be female than male.
- # Among youth who are Hispanic, White or some other racial/ethnic group (e.g., Native American or mixed race youth), females are twice as likely as males to report interest in learning more about volunteering if they do not already volunteer.

### Other Notable Findings:

- # Overall, males (53%) are twice as likely as females (26%) to report no interest in either volunteering or learning more about volunteer opportunities.
- # The proportion of youth who are interested but do not volunteer decreased from 31% in 1995 to 23% in 2000. However, during this same period the proportion of actual youth volunteers increased from 27% to 37% (see Fig. 9.4).

## 2.9 Youth Participation in Leadership Activities



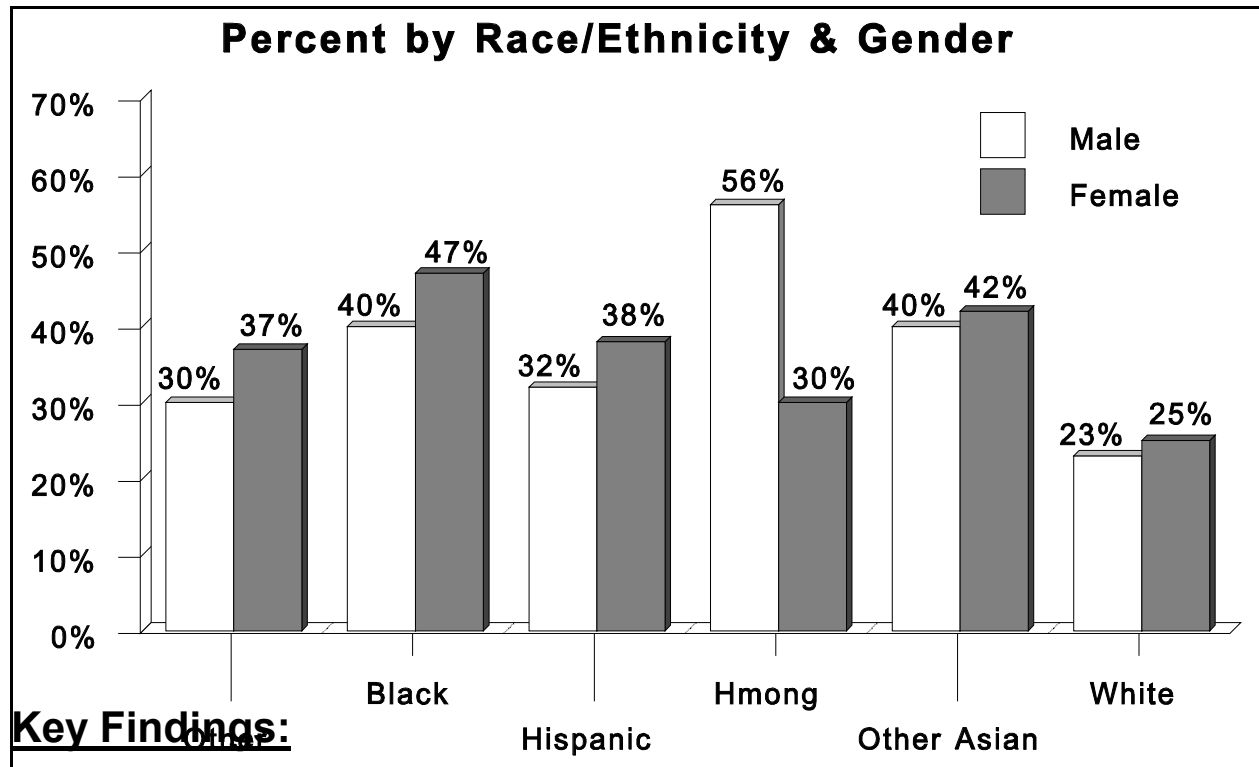
- # Black/African-American, Hispanic, and Hmong youth are most likely to report participating in youth leadership activities.
- # Approximately one out of five Black/African-American (20%) and Hispanic (19%) females participate at least one hour a week in leadership activities.
- # Except for Hmong and Other Asian youth, females are generally more likely than males to report participating in leadership activities.

### Other Notable Findings:



- # Overall, 8% of males and 14% of females participate in leadership activities.
  
- # The proportion of females who participate at least one hour per week in leadership activities increases between 7th (11%) and 8th (16%) grade, but then drops among 9th grade females (9%). The rate then begins to increase again across the high school years, reaching its peak (20%) among 12th grade females.

## 2.10 Youth Reporting Too Few Leadership Opportunities

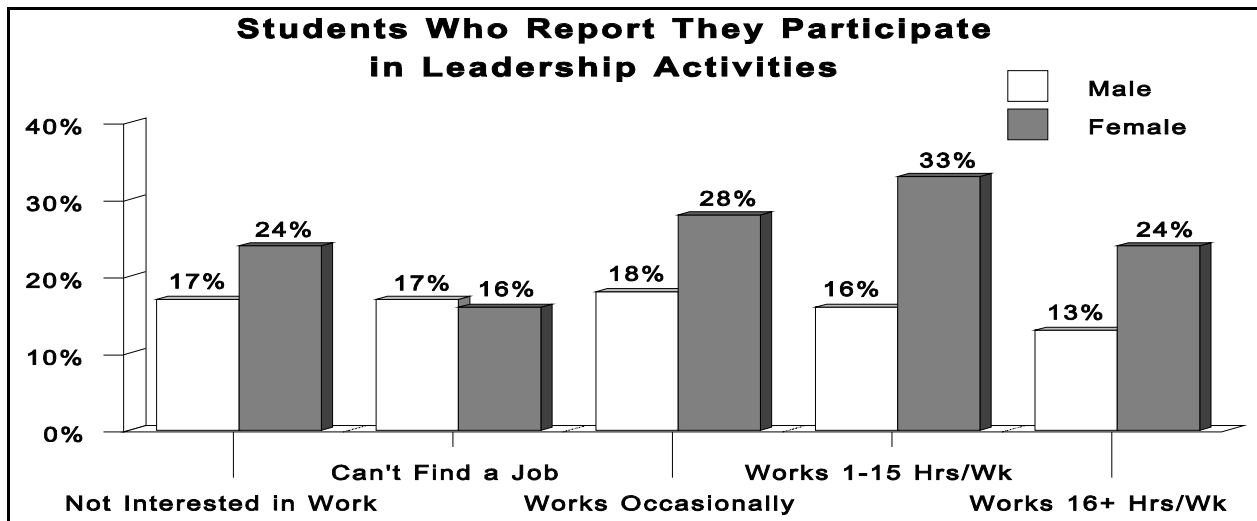


- # Students of color are more likely than White students to report a lack of leadership opportunities in their community.
- # More than half of Hmong males (56%) report too few leadership opportunities in their community.
- # With the exception of Hmong youth, females are generally more likely than males to report too few leadership opportunities.

### Other Notable Findings:



- # Overall, 26% of males and 28% of females report too few leadership opportunities.
- # More than 30% of youth living in the Madison Metropolitan area report too few leadership opportunities in comparison to approximately 21% of suburban and rural youth.



## 2.11 Participation in Leadership Activities by Gender and Employment Status

### Key Findings:

# Among males there is little relationship between how much time a youth spends working and whether or not he participates in leadership activities.

# However, among females participation in leadership activities is highest among youth who work less than 15 hours per week (33%) or occasional jobs (28%) and lowest among youth who report they are unable to find a job (16%).

### Other Notable Findings:

# Among youth who work regularly, 30% of males and 57% of females report participating in leadership activities.

# One quarter of teens who participate in school sports or extracurricular activities also participate in leadership activities.



## Chapter 3: Family Relationships

At the core of positive youth development is a foundation of care, structure and encouragement that comes from a secure and supportive family environment. Much of what a youth learns about morality, decision-making, social responsibility, self respect, and respect for others is derived from the day to day interactions between parent and child. As adolescents mature and begin to encounter the many opportunities and hazards that exist in today's society, their choices and behaviors continue to be influenced by their parents' values, even when they are beyond their parents' direct control and supervision.

Parents foster youth development by monitoring and supporting their teenager, by making an effort to communicate with them about important issues, and by providing clear behavioral guidelines. Research shows that parents who provide their children with emotional support are more likely to have teenagers with high self-esteem, a greater sense of social responsibility and healthier peer relationships.<sup>1</sup> Other research demonstrates that youth who are carefully monitored by their parents are not only more likely to avoid risky behaviors, but also tend to perform better in school than youth who are not carefully monitored.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter examines issues related to the parent-child relationship, and the relationship between family stress and youth outcomes.

### The questions examined in this chapter include:

- How are parental monitoring and support related to youth outcomes?
- What impact does family stress have on youth development and parents' ability to monitor and support their adolescent?
- Do teens benefit from parents' efforts to communicate with them about such important issues as a youth's future plans or the use of birth control?
- How does a young person's perception of his or her parents' values regarding teen sexual activity and substance use relate to his or her own behavior in these areas?

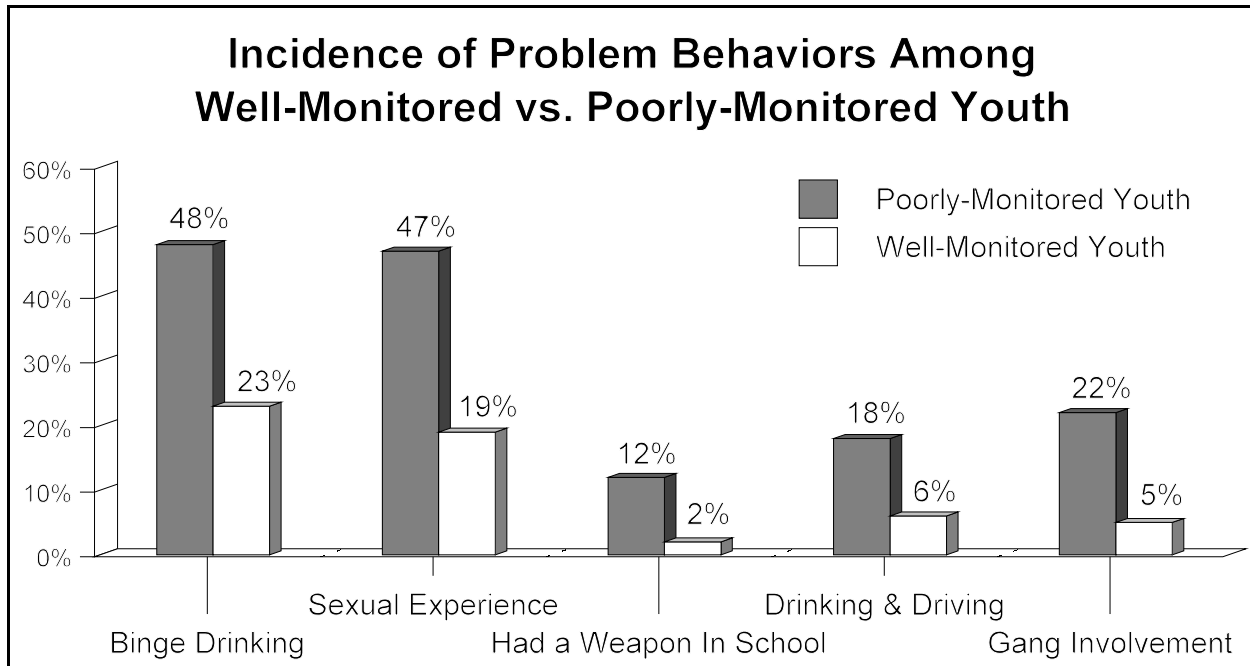
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<sup>1</sup>Peterson, G.W. & Hann, D. (1997). Socializing parents and families. In M. Sussman & S.K. Steinmetz (Eds.), Handbook of marriage and the family. New York: Plenum.

<sup>2</sup>Muller, C. & Kerbow, D. (1993). Parent involvement in the home, school, and community. In B. Schneider & J.S. Coleman (Eds.), Parents, their children, and schools (pp. 13-39). Boulder, CO: Westview.



### 3.1 Parental Monitoring in Relation To Problem Behaviors



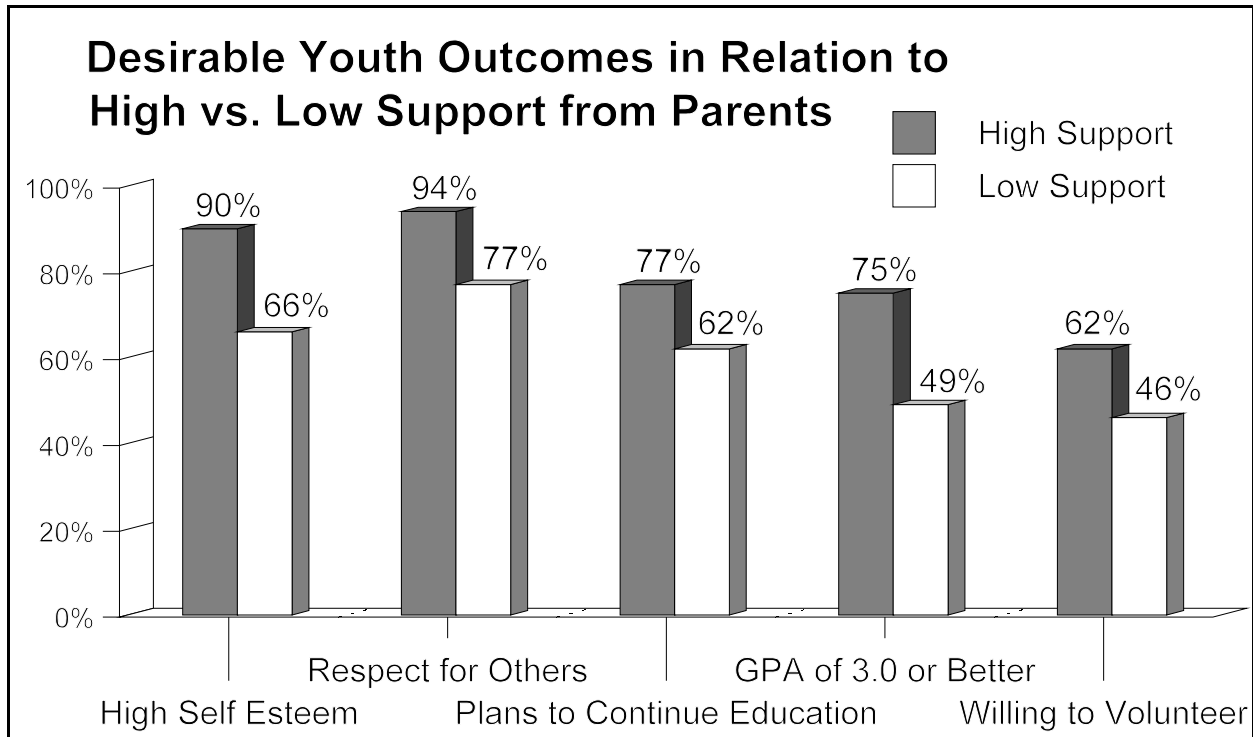
DC2000: Q55,81,92,55,52 by 127-130

**Well-monitored** youth report that their parents are aware of their whereabouts and activities. **Binge drinking** is defined as having five or more alcoholic drinks at one sitting (a drink is a glass of wine or beer, a shot of liquor or a mixed drink). **Sexual Experience** is defined as having had sexual intercourse at least once.

#### Key Findings:

- Teenagers who report that their parents are aware of their whereabouts and activities are much less likely to engage in problem behaviors than are teenagers whose parents know little about what they are doing.
- Poorly-monitored youth are six times more likely to carry a weapon to school, three times more likely to drive a motor vehicle after drinking alcohol, and four times more likely to be gang-involved than well-monitored youth.
- Poorly-monitored youth are also more than twice as likely to be sexually experienced and to drink excessively (i.e. binge drink) than well-monitored youth.

## 3.2 High vs. Low Support from Parents in Relation to Desirable Youth Outcomes

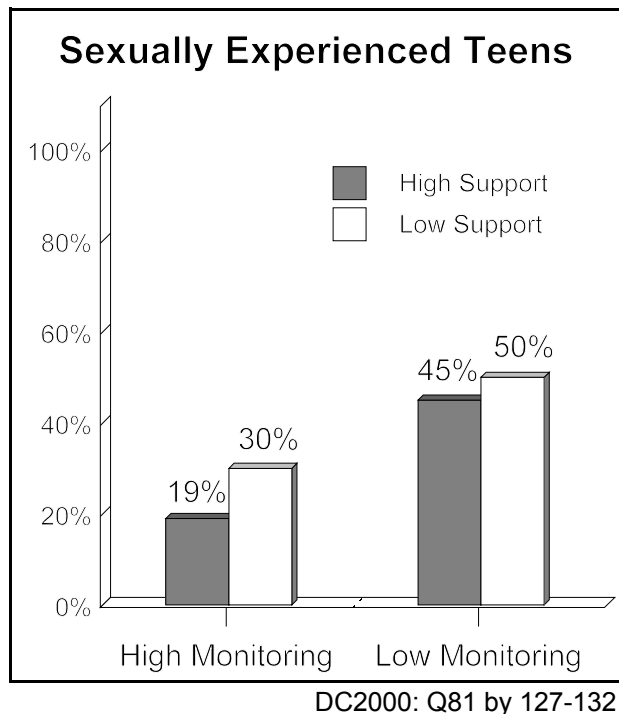
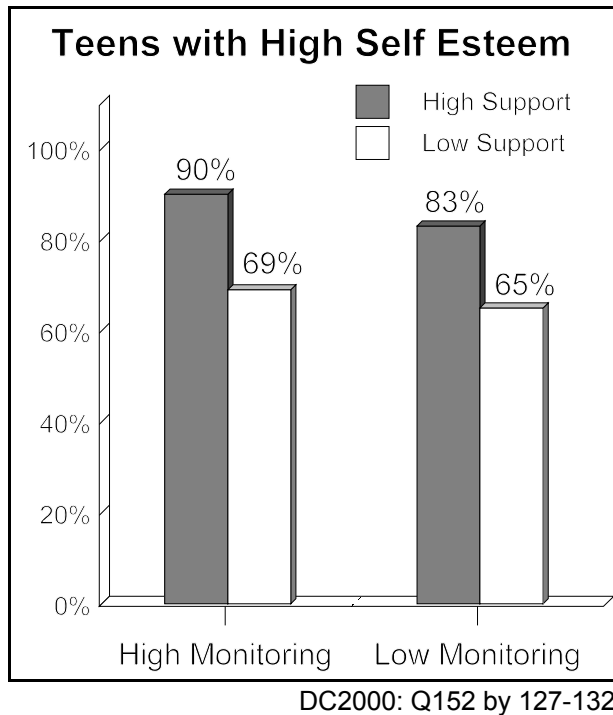


DC2000: 152, 153, 19, 7, 6 by 131 &amp; 132

### **Key Findings:**

- Teenagers who report that their parents are supportive (i.e., their parents care about them and are there when needed) are more likely to exhibit characteristics associated with good personal and social adjustment.
- Teenagers who report high levels of parental support are more likely than those with low support to report having high self esteem (90% vs. 66%), respect for others (94% vs. 77%), and a willingness to volunteer (62% vs. 46%).
- Emotional support from parents is also associated with teens being better prepared for the future. Youth who receive high levels of emotional support are more likely than those with low support to get good grades (75% vs. 49%) and to plan to continue their education past high school (77% vs. 62%).

### 3.3 Parental Monitoring and Support in Relation to Self Esteem and Sexual Experience



#### **Key Findings:**

- Teens are most likely to have high self esteem (90%) and least likely to be sexually experienced (19%) when their parents both monitor and support them.
- High levels of parental monitoring without the additional element of emotional support is associated with a reduced likelihood of sexual experience among teens (30% vs. 45%), but at the expense of a youth’s self esteem (69% vs. 83%).

#### **Other Notable Findings:**

- The majority of youth surveyed (80%) report they receive high levels of both monitoring and support from parents. This combination of parenting strategies is associated with the most favorable of youth outcomes.



### 3.4 Sources of Family Stress

Stressors:	White Students	Students of Color
A member of the youth's family has been charged with a crime in the past year.	13%	28%
Youth has changed schools four or more times since the first grade.	7%	21%
Youth has witnessed someone being physically abused in his or her home.	6%	16%
Both of the youth's parents have a high school education or less.	11%	15%
Youth needs help or is receiving help coping with a family member's drug or alcohol problem.	8%	11%
Youth reports difficulty getting affordable medical or dental treatment.	4%	11%
Youth has experienced two or more of the above stressors.	10%	24%

DC2000: Q133, 15, 89, 12&13, 73, 67 by 2

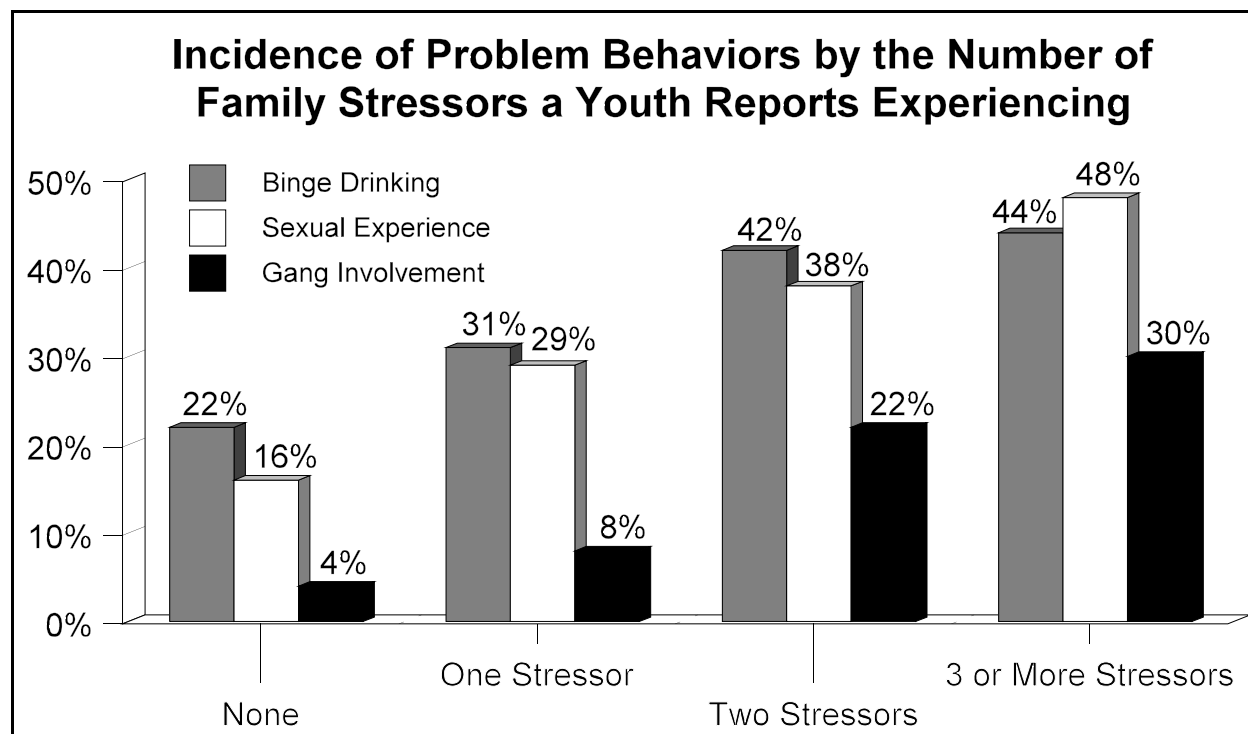
#### **Key Findings:**

- Students of color are more likely than White students to report experiencing some form of family stress. This is consistent across all indicators of family stress.
- The most common source of family stress is having a family member charged with a crime in the past year. Students of color (28%) are more than twice as likely as White students (13%) to report having experienced this recently.
- Nearly one in four students of color (24%) report experiencing multiple sources of family stress in comparison to one in ten White students (10%).

#### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Black/African-American teens are the most likely of all youth to report having a family member charged with a crime in the past year (42%). Among youth are the most likely of all youth to report witnessing domestic violence (21%).
- In the 1995, 16% of White students and 31% of students of color reported having a family member charged with a crime in the past year.

### 3.5 Youth Problem Behaviors in Relation to Family Stressors



See Figure 3.4 for a summary of individual stressors

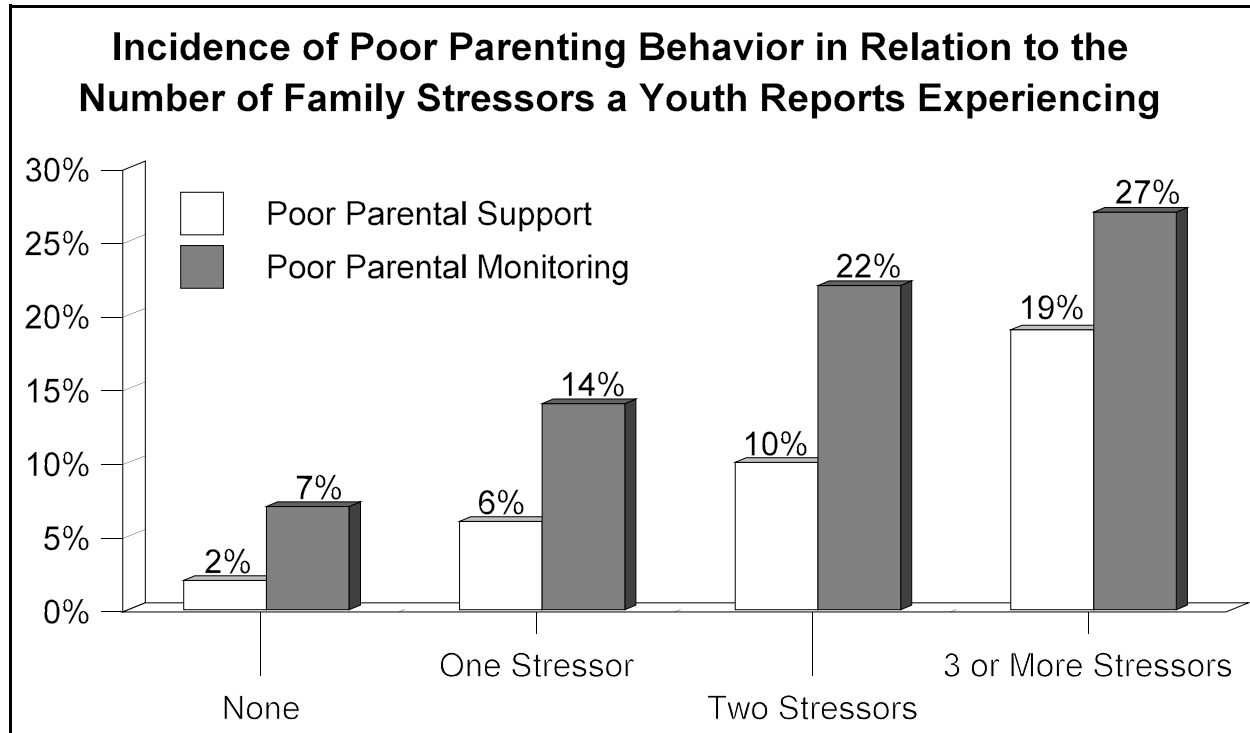
#### Key Findings:

- The more sources of family stress that a youth experiences the more likely it is that he or she will engage in problem behaviors.
- Teens who experience three or more types of family stress are twice as likely to drink excessively (44% vs. 22%) and three times more likely to be sexually experienced (16% vs. 48%) as teens who experience no family stress.
- Experiencing **two** sources of family stress increases fivefold the likelihood that a youth will be gang involved (4% vs. 22%); while experiencing **three or more** sources of family stress increases the likelihood of gang involvement more than sevenfold (4% vs. 30%).

#### Other Notable Findings:

- Teens who experience three or more sources of family stress are six times more likely to carry a weapon to school (2% vs. 13%) and three times more likely to drink and drive (6% vs. 17%) than teens who report experiencing no stressors.

## 3.6 Poor Parenting Behavior in Relation to Family Stressors



See Figure 3.4 for a summary of individual stressors

### **Key Findings:**

- The more family stressors a youth reports experiencing the higher the likelihood that he or she receives little monitoring or emotional support from parents.
- Poor parental monitoring, which is strongly related to problem behaviors among teens, is four times more likely to occur in families experiencing three or more sources of stress (27%) than in those experiencing no stress (7%).
- The likelihood that a teen will report he or she cannot rely on his or her parents for support increases threefold with the addition of a single stressor (2% vs. 6%), fivefold with the addition of two stressors (10%), and nearly tenfold with the addition of three or more stressors (19%).

### 3.7 Parent-Teen Communication

#### Percent of Youth Who Report Discussing the Following Issues with Their Parents in the Past Year

Issue	Male	Female
Youth's future plans	72%	78%
Youth's personal problems	48%	65%
Risks associated with drinking alcohol or taking drugs	43%	48%
Whether or not it is okay for teenagers to have sexual intercourse	34%	43%
The dangers of getting AIDS, HIV or STDs	26%	30%
Birth Control	20%	30%

DC2000: Q134 - 139 by 1

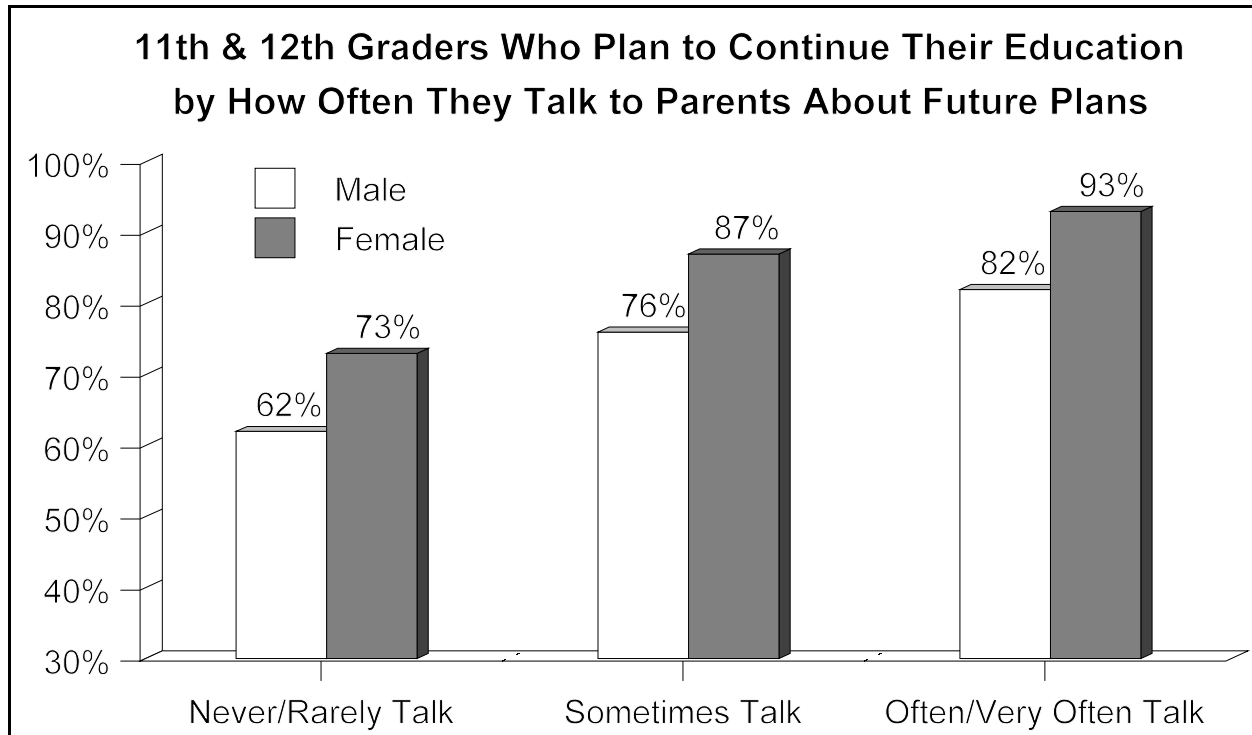
#### **Key Findings:**

- Females are more likely than males to discuss personal issues with their parents.
- Three out of four teens (males, 72%; females, 78%) report recently having discussed their future plans with their parents.
- Females (65%) are much more likely than males (48%) to report discussing personal problems with their parents.
- One out of five males (20%) and nearly one out of three females (30%) report recently having discussed birth control issues with their parents.

#### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Seventh graders are just as likely as 12<sup>th</sup> graders to discuss the risks of drinking alcohol or taking drugs, whether or not it's okay for teenagers to have sex, and personal problems with their parents.

### 3.8 Parent-Teen Communication About Youth's Plans For After High School



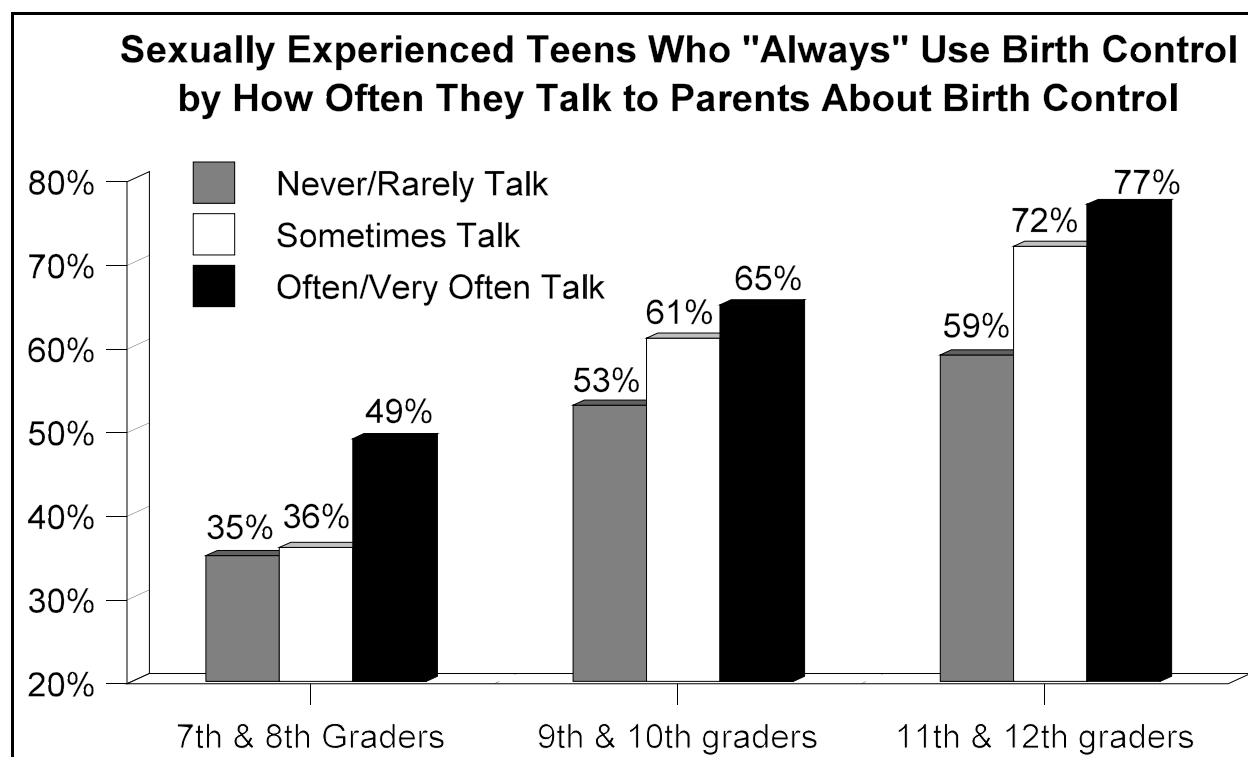
DC2000: Q7 by 139 &amp; 1

#### **Key Findings:**

- The more often teenagers discuss their future plans with parents the more likely they are to plan to continue their education past high school.
- Both males and females benefit from even moderate amounts of communication with parents about their future plans.
- Teens who discuss their future plans with parents at least sometimes are more likely to plan to continue their education past high school than are those who never or rarely communicate with parents about this issue.



### 3.9 Parent-Teen Communication About Birth Control



DC2000: Q82 by 136

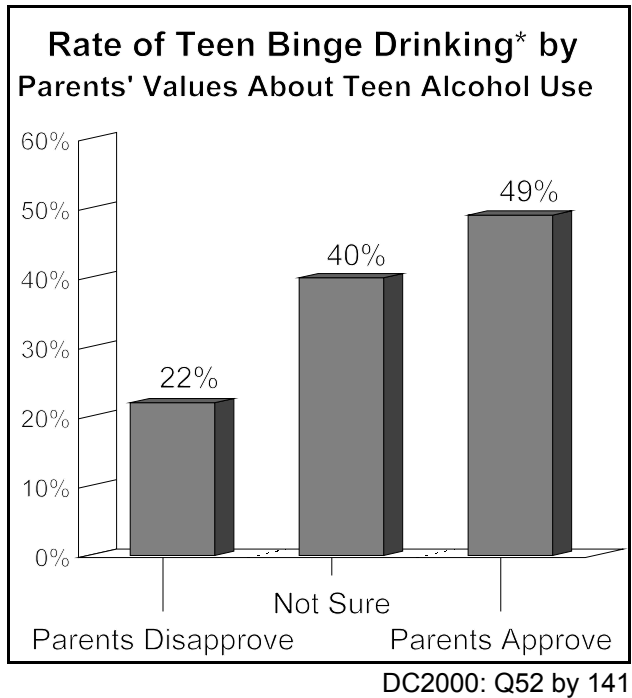
#### **Key Findings:**

- Among sexually experienced youth, older teens are more likely than younger teens to report they “Always” use birth control.
- Talking to parents about birth control increases the likelihood that teens of all ages will use birth control if they are sexually experienced.
- Younger teens, who are least likely to use birth control, benefit the most from frequent discussions about birth control with their parents.

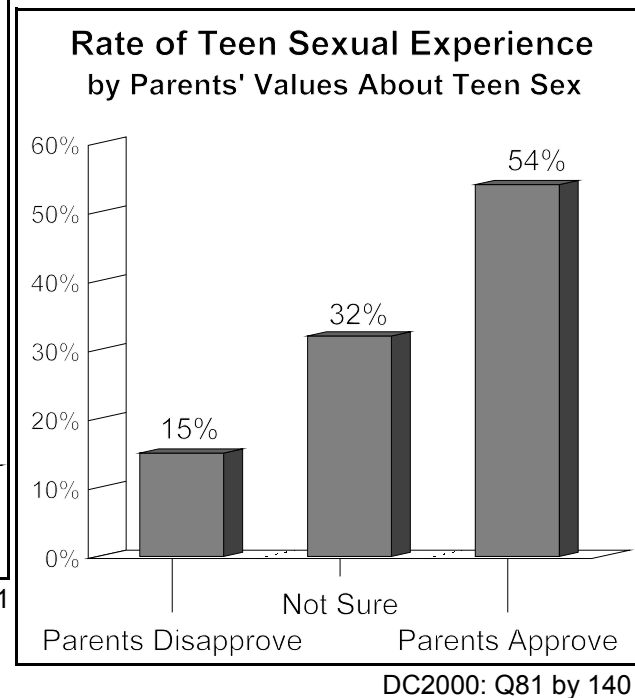
#### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Parents are more likely to discuss birth control with their teenager if he or she is sexually experienced (41%) than if he or she is not (21%).

## 3.10 Parents' Values: Teen Sexual Activity & Binge Drinking



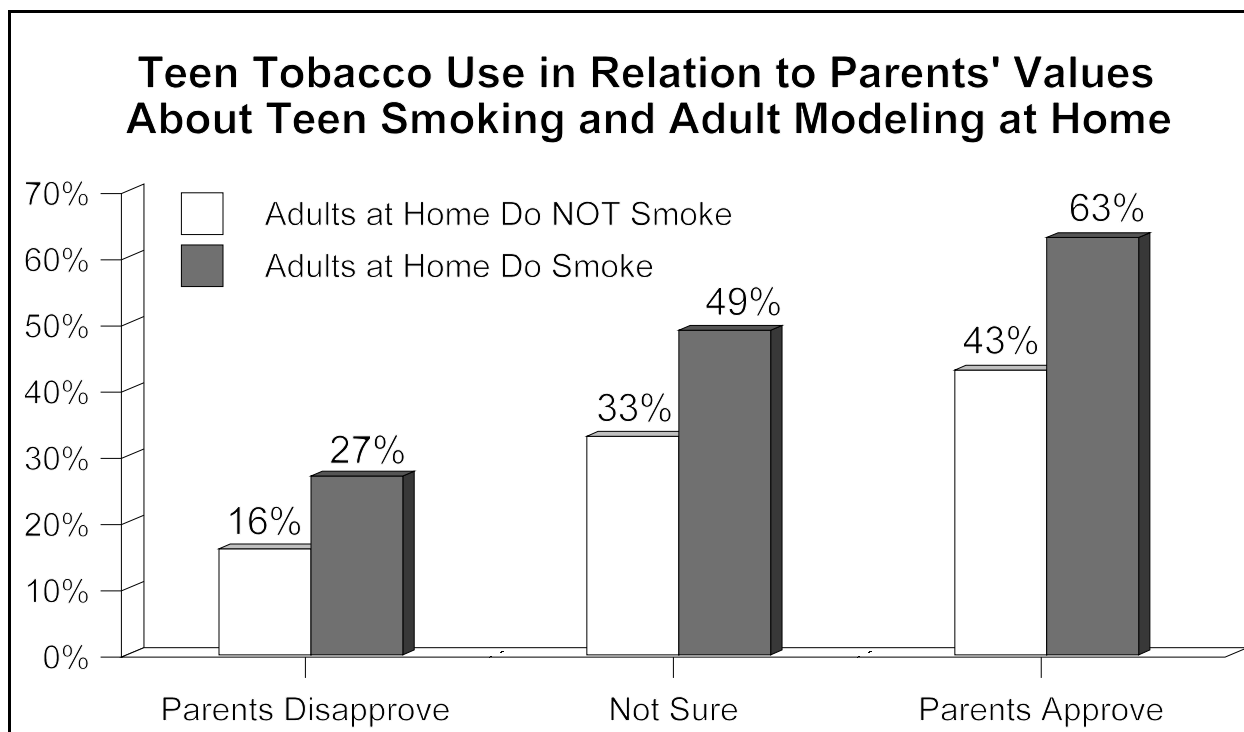
\*5+ drinks in a row at least once in the past month



### Key Findings:

- Teens are less likely to drink excessively (i.e. binge drink) or be sexually experienced if their parents clearly communicate their disapproval of these behaviors for young people their age.
- Inconsistent or unclear messages that leave teens unsure of their parents' values increases the likelihood that a youth will drink excessively or be sexually experienced.
- Teens are three times more likely to be sexually experienced if they believe their parents approve (54%) as opposed to disapprove (15%) of young people their age having sexual intercourse, and are twice as likely to be sexually experienced if they are not sure of their parents' values (32%).
- Teens are twice as likely to report drinking excessively in the past month if they believe their parents approve (49%) as opposed to disapprove (22%) of young people their age drinking alcohol, and are nearly twice as likely to report drinking excessively in the past month if they are not sure of their parents' values (40%).

### 3.11 Parents' Values vs. Adult Modeling in Relation to Teen Tobacco Use



DC2000: Q59 by 142 & 143

#### **Key Findings:**

- Teens are least likely to use tobacco (16%) when their parents clearly communicate their disapproval of this behavior for young people their age and the adults in their home do not smoke tobacco themselves.
- When adults at home smoke, teens are more likely to use tobacco even when their parents clearly communicate their disapproval of teen tobacco use (16% vs. 27%).
- Among youth who report their parents approve of teen smoking, teens are less likely to use tobacco if the adults in their home do not smoke (43% vs. 63%).

#### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Overall, 19% of youth in Dane County report smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days.



## Chapter 4: School Experiences

A positive school experience is essential to a young person's academic success as well as to his or her social and emotional well being. Schools which are responsive to the needs of students are more likely to establish learning environments which foster excellence and success for all youth.<sup>1</sup> In turn, students who feel committed and connected to their school are more likely to succeed academically and to exhibit positive development across a wide range of domains.<sup>2</sup>

Schools also serve as a bridge between adolescents and the wider society. Extracurricular activities provide young people with the opportunity to learn and succeed beyond the classroom. School and community partnerships give students a chance to develop and exercise skills they will need to begin a productive career.<sup>3</sup> By identifying teenagers as assets, the wider community also benefits by providing young people with opportunities to make meaningful contributions while still in school.

### The questions examined in this chapter include:

- How do teens in Dane County feel about their school?
- How academically successful are youth in Dane County?
- Do adults at school influence teenagers' plans for the future?
- How do negative school experiences relate to youth behavior and school success?
- What proportion of young people participate in extracurricular activities?
- What reasons do teens cite for not participating in extracurricular activities?
- How do students differ on these issues with respect to gender and race?

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<sup>1</sup>Lipsitz, J. (1984). Successful schools for young adolescents. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

<sup>2</sup>Resnick, M.D., Bearman, P.S., Blum, R.W., Bauman, K.E., Harris, K.M., Jones, J., Tabor, J., Beuhring, T., Sieving, R.E., Shew, M., Ireland, M., Bearinger, L.H., & Udry, R. (1997). Protecting adolescents from harm: Findings from the national longitudinal study of adolescent health. Journal of the American Medical Association, 278, 823-832.

<sup>3</sup>William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship. (1988, February). The forgotten half: Noncollege-bound youth in America. New York: William T. Grant Foundation.

## 4.1 How Teens Feel About Their School

### Percent of All Youth Who Agree or Strongly Agree to the Following Statements

	White Students	Students of Color
In school, I am getting the education and skills I need to be successful after I graduate.	83%	78%
Generally, counselors, nurses, social workers, and psychologists at my school are helpful when needed.	82%	78%
I believe I am getting a good, high quality education at my school.	80%	74%
My teachers care about me and how well I do in school.	75%	72%
I enjoy going to school.	60%	63%
The rules in my school are enforced fairly.	60%	58%

DC2000: Q97-100, 103 &amp;105 by 2

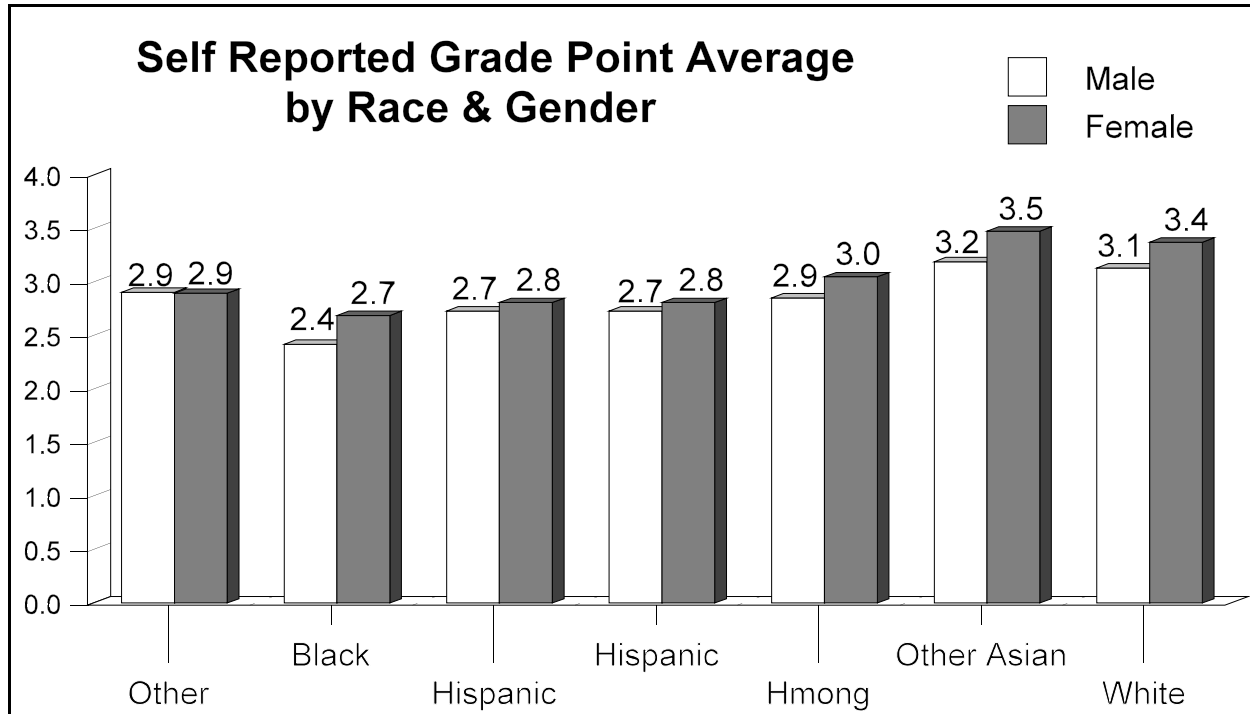
### Key Findings:

- Overall, the majority of teens surveyed have a positive attitude toward school. This is especially true with respect to the relevance of the education they receive and the helpfulness of school personnel.
- Students of color are generally more critical than White students about their school experience. However, they are nevertheless as likely as White students to report that they enjoy going to school and that school rules are enforced fairly.
- While most teens have a favorable view of their teachers, still one in four (25%) feel that their teachers care little about them or their school success. This is true of both White students and students of color.

### Other Notable Findings:

- Males are generally more critical than females about their school experience. However, the difference is fairly minor, with the largest variation occurring between males and females who report they enjoy going to school (males, 58%; females, 64%).

## 4.2 Students' Grade Point Average by Race and Gender



DC2000: Q6 by 2,1

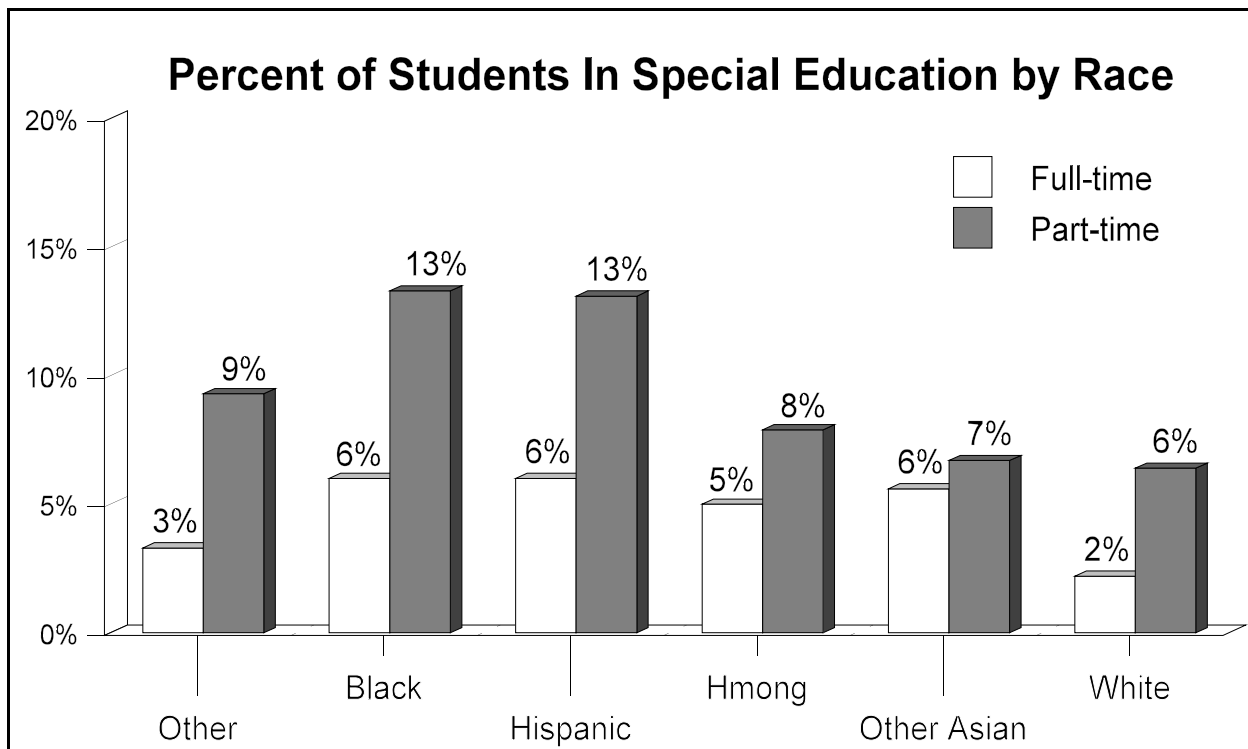
### **Key Findings:**

- Asian and White females report the highest grade point average of all youth in Dane County. In general, they report receiving mostly A's and B's in their courses at school.
- Black/African-American males report the lowest grade point average of all youth in Dane County.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Asian (59%) and White (54%) youth are more likely than Black/African-American youth (35%) to report spending at least 5 hours per week studying or doing homework.

### 4.3 Student Enrollment in Special Education Classes or Programs: Racial Differences



DC2000: Q5 by 2

#### **Key Findings:**

- Black/African-American and Hispanic youth are more likely than White youth to participate in either **part-time** (13% vs. 6%) or **full-time** (6% vs. 2%) in special education classes or programs.
- In comparison to White youth, Hmong (5%) and Other Asian (6%) youth also report higher rates of participation in **full-time** special education classes and programs.

#### **Other Notable Findings:**

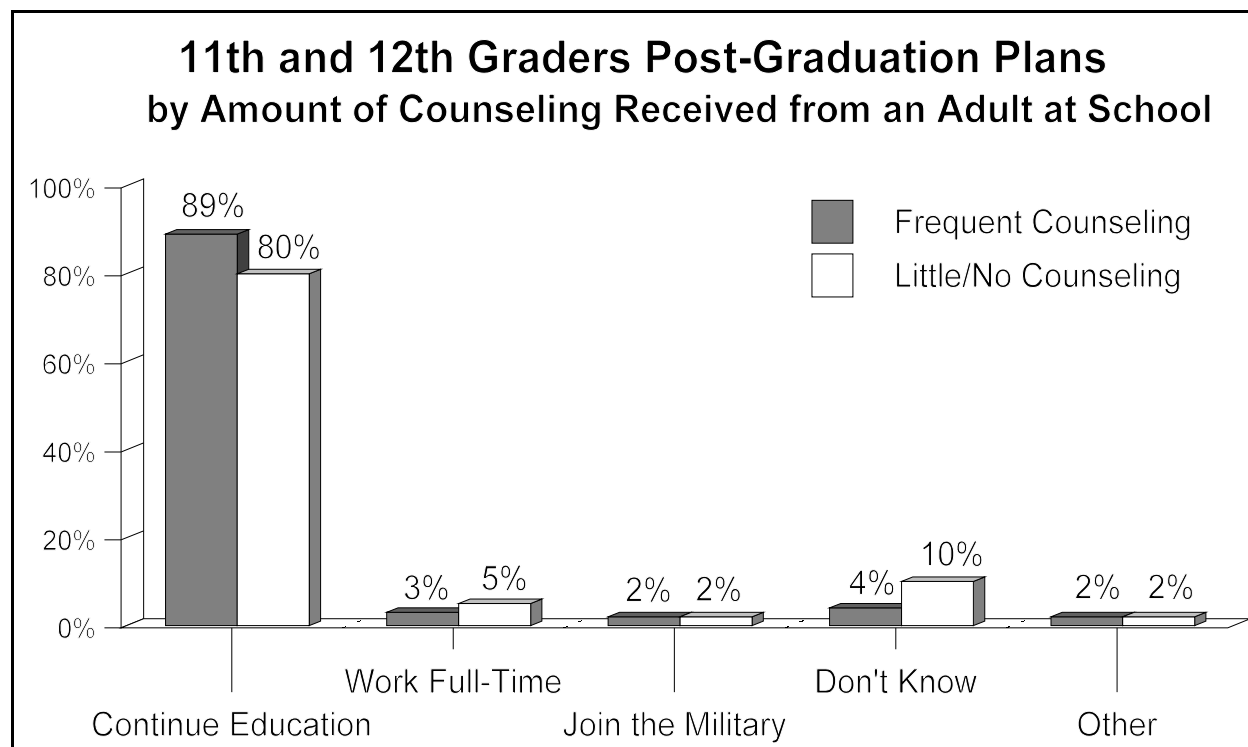
- Overall, 2% of students in the participating school districts are enrolled full-time in special education classes or programs, and 7% are enrolled part-time.
- African-American males (18%) report the highest rate of **part-time** participation in special education. Other Asian and White females (5%) report the lowest rate of part-time participation.
- Hispanic males (11%) report the highest rate of **full-time** participation in special



education. White youth report the lowest rate of full-time participation (2%).



## 4.4 Youths' Future Plans by Counseling Received from an Adult at School: 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> Graders



DC2000: Q7 by 108, 4

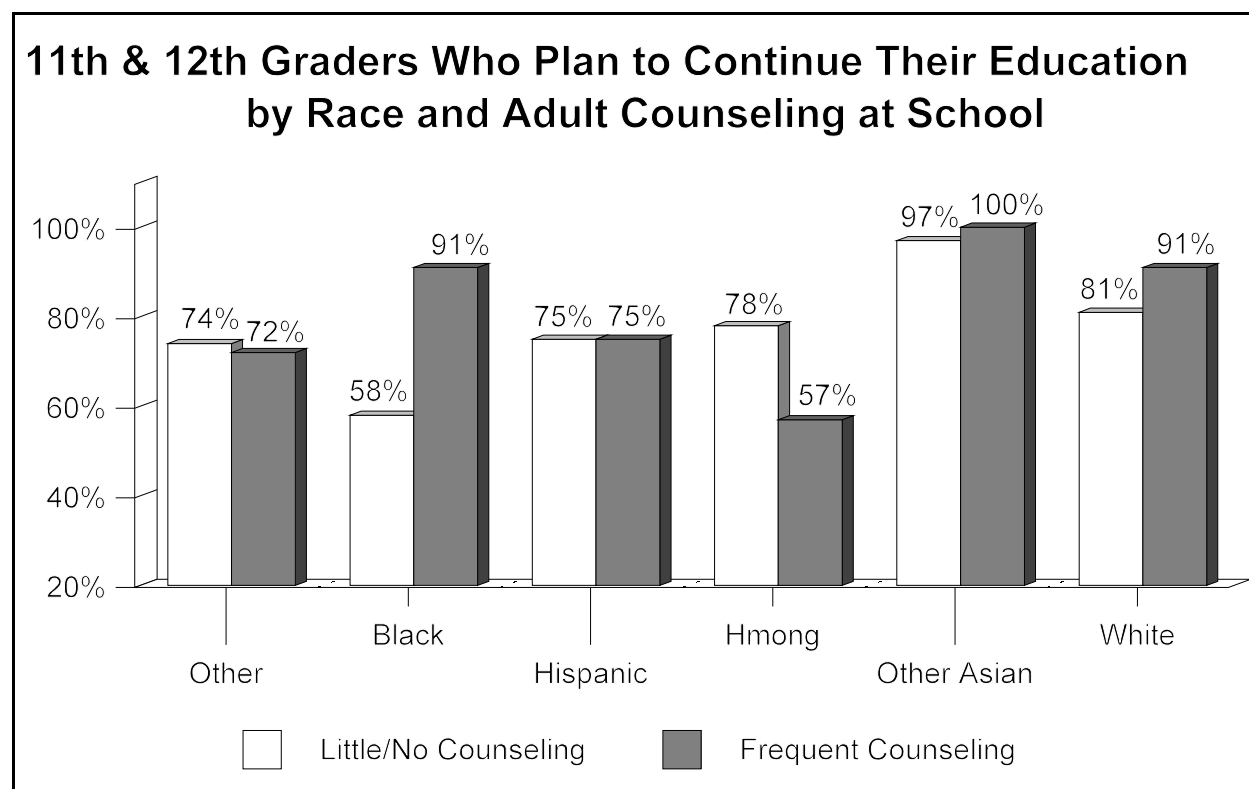
### **Key Findings:**

- The vast majority of high school juniors and seniors in Dane County plan to continue their education past high school.
- In general, students who receive counseling about the future from an adult at school are more likely to plan to continue their education past high school and less likely to be unsure of their future plans than those who receive little or no counseling.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Less than 1% of all youth report they plan to drop out before finishing high school.
- 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade females (89%) are more likely than their male counterparts (77%) to plan to continue their education past high school.
- Counseling from an adult at school is related to a substantial increase in the proportion of both males (74% vs. 83%) and females (86% vs. 94%) who plan to continue their education past high school.

## 4.5 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Graders Who Plan to Continue Their Education



DC2000: Q7 by 108,2,4

### **Key Findings:**

- White 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders who receive frequent counseling from an adult at school are more likely than those who receive little or no counseling to plan to continue their education past high school (91% vs. 81%).
- 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade Black/African-American youth who frequently talk to an adult at school about their future plans are far more likely to plan to continue their education past high school than those who receive little or no counseling (91% vs. 58%).
- However, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade Hmong youth who frequently talk to an adult at school about their future plans are **less** likely to plan to continue their education past high school than those who receive little or no counseling (57% vs. 78%).

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Among 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> graders, Black/African-American teens (33%) are the most likely of all youth to receive frequent counseling about their future plans from an adult at school. Asian youth (15%) are the least likely to receive frequent counseling.

## 4.6 Negative School Experiences: Safety, Racism and Harassment

### Percent of all youth who report having had the following experiences

	White students	Students of color
Youth does not feel safe in certain places at school.	23%	29%
Youth has been treated unfairly by teachers because of his or her race.	7%	24%
Youth has been treated unfairly by kids at school because of his or her race or ethnicity.	8%	21%
Youth has experienced sexual harassment from a student at school one or more times.	27%	31%
Youth has experienced some other form of harassment from a student at school one or more times.	39%	40%

DC2000: Q101, 104, 102, 106, 107

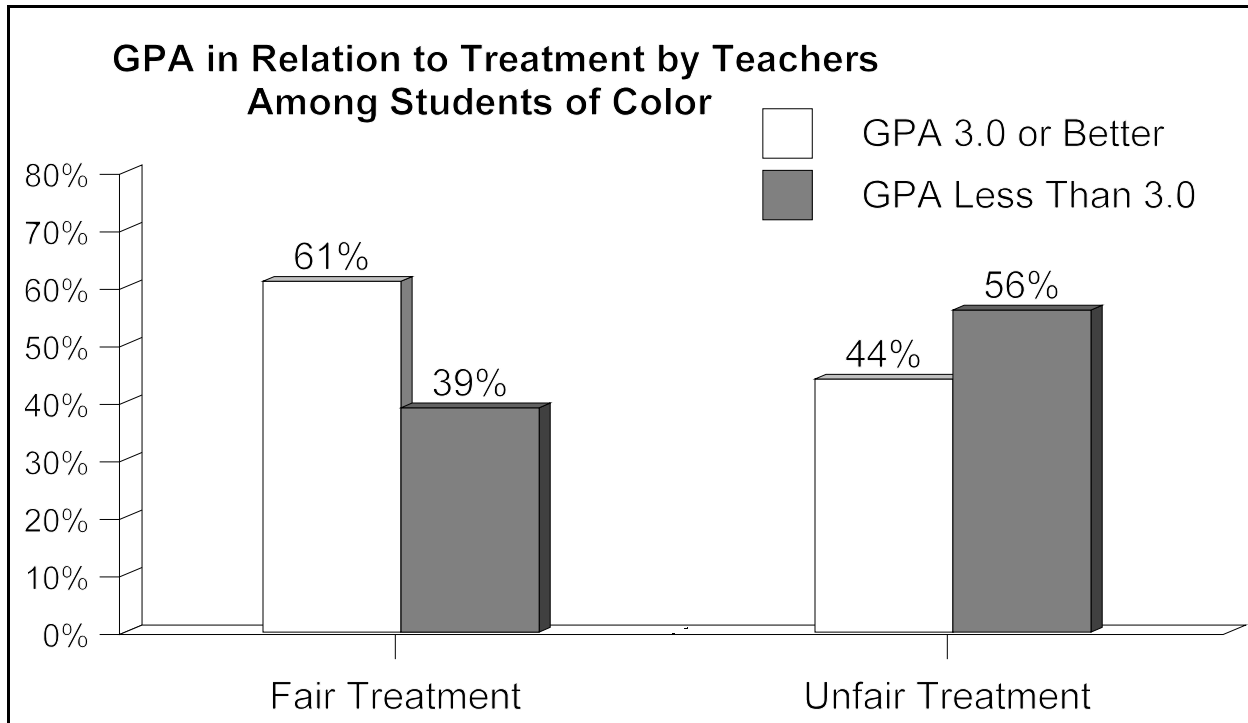
### Key Findings:

- In general, students of color are more likely than White students to report having negative experiences at school.
- Nearly one in four students of color (24%) report being treated unfairly by teachers because of their race, and one in five (21%) report being treated unfairly by fellow students.
- Students of color are also more likely than White students to report feeling unsafe at school (29% vs. 23%) and to have experienced sexual harassment from a student at school at least once (31% vs. 27%).
- However, students of color (40%) are no more likely than White students (39%) to report experiencing other forms of harassment from a student at school.

### Other Notable Findings:

- Females (38%) are more likely than males (17%) to report experiencing sexual harassment from a student at school at least once.

## 4.7 School Success Among Students of Color in Relation to Unfair Treatment by Teachers



DC2000: Q6 by 104, 2

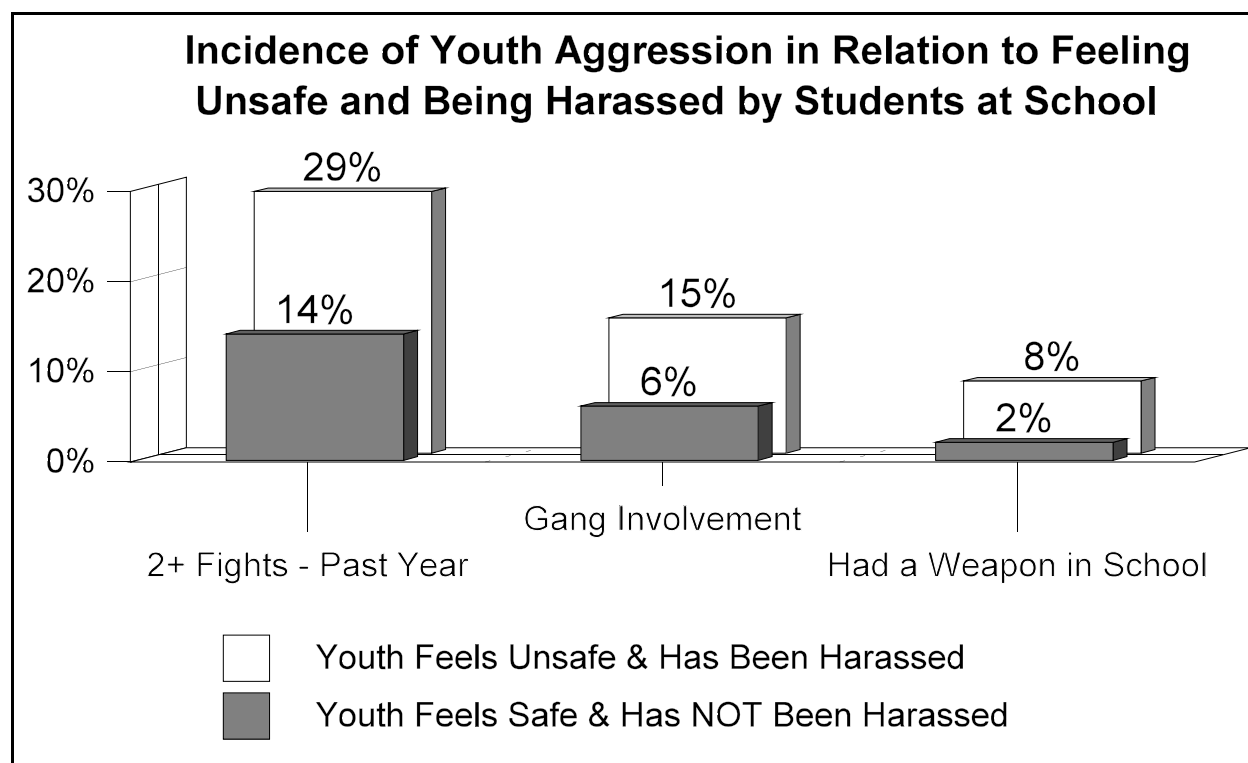
### **Key Findings:**

- Students of color who report being treated unfairly due to their race or the color of their skin are less likely to have a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or better than students of color who have not experienced unfair treatment (44% vs. 61%).
- Two in five (44%) students of color who have experienced racial bias do well academically (i.e. report a GPA of 3.0 or better) despite feeling they have been treated unfairly by teachers due to their race

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Black/African-American youth are the most likely of all students of color to report being treated unfairly by teachers because of their race. More than one out of three Black/African-American teens (36%) feel this way.
- Overall, most students of color report fair treatment by teachers (81% with GPA 3.0 or better; 69% with GPA less than 3.0).

## 4.8 Youth Aggression in Relation to School Safety and Experiencing Harassment from Students

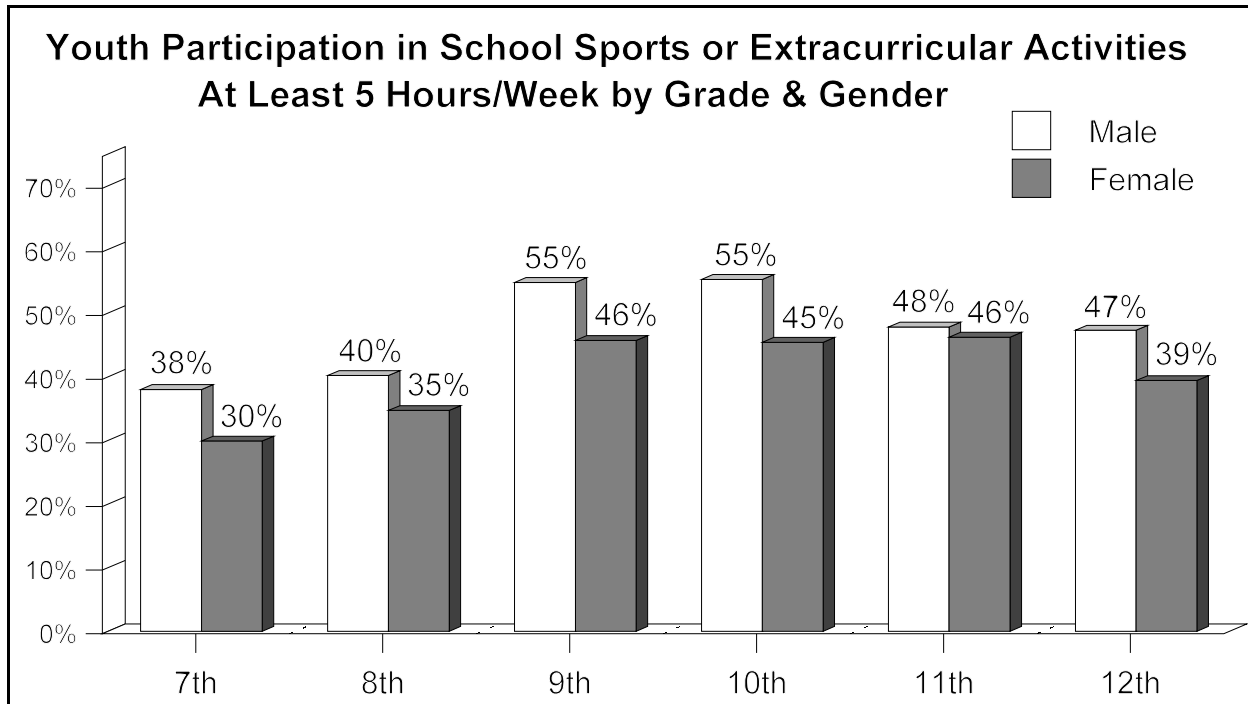


DC2000: Q88, 90, 92 by 101 & 107

### **Key Findings:**

- With the exception of fist fights (i.e. fighting without weapons present), the actual incidence of aggressive behavior among Dane County youth is fairly low.
- Teens who report they feel unsafe at school and have been harassed by other students are more likely to report acting in aggressive ways (i.e., by fighting, associating with gang members, and carrying a weapon to school) than teens who feel safe and have not been harassed.
- Teens who feel unsafe at school and have been harassed by other students are twice as likely as teens who do not experience these concerns to report fighting (14% to 29%) and gang involvement (6% to 15%).
- The likelihood that a youth will carry a weapon to school increases fourfold (from 2% to 8%) among teens who feel unsafe at school and have been harassed by other students in comparison to youth who feel safe and have not been harassed.

## 4.9 Extracurricular School Sports or Other Activities by Grade and Gender



DC2000:20 by 4,1

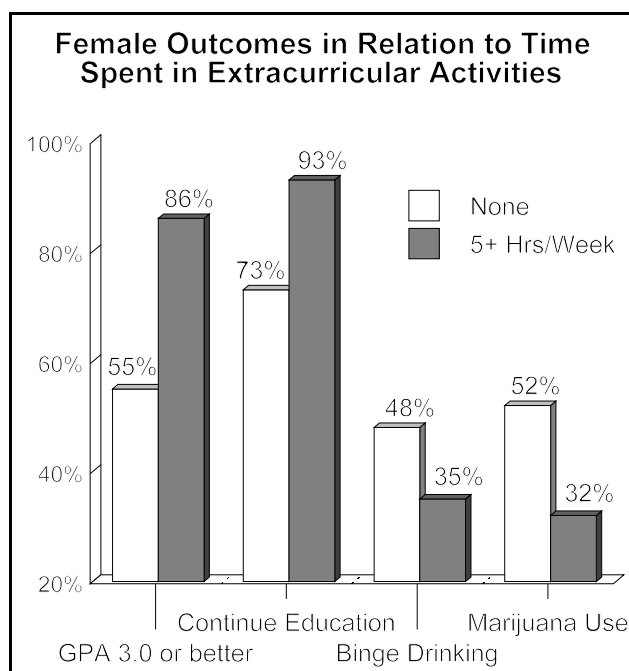
### **Key Findings:**

- Across all grades, males are more likely than females to participate at least 5 hours per week in school sports or other extracurricular activities.
- Middle school youth are less likely than high school youth to devote at least 5 hours per week to school sports or other extracurricular activities.
- Among high school students, participation rates are highest among 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders (especially males) and lowest among 12<sup>th</sup> graders.
- More than half of all 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade males (55%) report spending at least 5 hours per week in school sports or other extracurricular activities. In contrast, a little over one third of 12<sup>th</sup> grade females do so (39%).

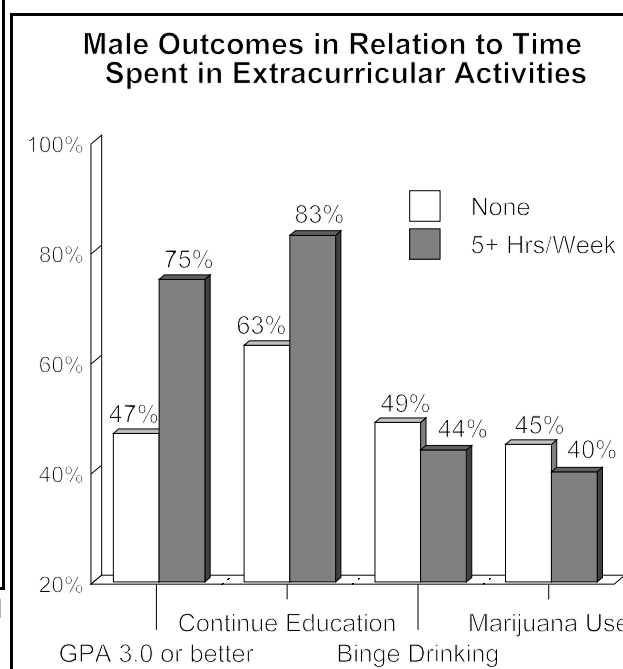
### **Other Notable Findings:**

- White youth (39%) report the highest overall participation rates, while Hispanic (22%) and Hmong (15%) youth report the lowest participation rates.

## 4.10 Extracurricular Participation in Relation to Positive & Negative Youth Outcomes



DC2000: Q6, 13, 52, 44 by 20, 1



DC2000: Q6, 13, 52, 44 by 20, 1

### Key Findings:

- Participating five or more hours per week in school sports or extracurricular activities is associated with a greater school success and fewer problem behaviors among both males and females.
- Youth who participate 5 or more hours per week in school activities are more likely than those who do not participate to have a GPA of 3.0 or better (males: 75% vs. 47%; females: 86% vs. 55%).
- Females who participate 5 or more hours per week in school activities are less likely than those who do not participate to report binge drinking (35% vs. 48%) and using marijuana (32% vs. 52%). However, these relationships are not as strong for males (binge drinking: 44% vs. 49%; marijuana use: 40% vs. 45%).



## 4.11 Teens' Top Reason for Not Participating in School Sports or Extracurricular Activities

Reason	Males	Females
Lack of Interest	32%	21%
After-School Job	10%	12%
Lack of Awareness	4%	3%
Transportation Problems	3%	4%
Family Responsibilities	3%	7%
High Cost	2%	1%
Other	11%	13%

DC2000: Q29 by 1

### **Key Findings:**

- A lack of interest (males, 32%; females, 21%) and after-school jobs (males, 10%; females, 12%) are the top reasons teens select for not participating in school sports or extracurricular activities.
- Females (7%) are twice as likely as males (3%) to select family responsibilities as their top reason for not participating in school sports or extracurricular activities.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- More than one third (37%) of students report they do participate in school sports or extracurricular activities.
- Hmong (20%), Hispanic (11%), and Black/African-American (10%) youth are more likely than White (4%) youth to cite family responsibilities as their top reason for not participating in school sports or extracurricular activities.
- Older teens (age 16+) are more likely than younger teens (under 16) to cite an after-school job as their top reason for not participating in school sports or activities.





## Chapter 5: Community and Peer Relationships

An important feature of contemporary adolescence in our society is the broadening of a youth's sphere of interaction and influence from home and school to include peers, other adults, and the community. As a young person matures, he or she spends more time in these highly influential - though less formally structured social contexts. With the advent of Internet communication both the rewards and challenges of access to a wider society are being realized in ways we can only begin to imagine. As a result, learning to independently meet the challenges of an expanding world has become a fundamental goal of contemporary adolescent development.

A teen may perceive the community in which he or she lives as offering either support and opportunities or barriers and hazards. The nature of these perceptions may depend on whether or not local institutions and neighborhood adults regard adolescents as valued and welcomed members of the community.<sup>1</sup> Rather than focusing exclusively on eliminating problem behaviors, institutions and individuals who make an effort to reach out to young people in a positive manner foster the type of environment which encourages healthy youth development.

The importance of positive peer relationships during adolescence cannot be overstated, especially with respect to what teenagers themselves regard as fundamental to their lives. Adolescent friendships serve several functions: companionship, entertainment, emotional support, social comparison, intimacy and affection<sup>2</sup>. However, the desire to be accepted may lead a youth to conform to peer expectations in ways which may jeopardize his or her development.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, understanding the impact of peer influence on young people is essential to understanding youth behavior.

### The questions examined in this chapter include:

- What social opportunities and barriers to participation are perceived by youth in Dane County?
- In what ways do community adults influence youth behavior?
- How much time do teens generally spend using the Internet?
- To what extent do peers influence a youth's own behavior?

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<sup>1</sup>Benson, P. (1996). A national initiative to embrace kids. Lutheran Brotherhood Bond, (Spring 1996). pp. 4 - 7.

<sup>2</sup>Sanrock, J. W. (1996). Adolescence. Chicago: Brown & Benchmark

<sup>3</sup>Camarena, P. M. (1991). Conformity in adolescence. In R. M. Lerner, A. C. Petersen, & J. Brooks-Gunn (Eds.), Encyclopedia of adolescence (Vol. 1). New York: Garland.

## 5.1 How Teens Spend Their Time

Percent of All Youth Who Participate in the Following Activities:	1 - 4 hours / week	At least 5 hours / week
Doing homework or studying	35%	52%
Family activities (not watching T.V.)	39%	35%
School sports or extracurricular activities	22%	44%
In music or dance lessons	17%	12%
Non-school sports or other activities	16%	11%
Religious activities	21%	4%
Volunteering	11%	4%
In leadership activities	8%	3%
At a community or youth center	5%	3%

DC2000: Q20 by 28

### **Key Findings:**

- The most common activities teens spend 5 or more hours per week in are homework or studying (52%), school sports/extracurricular activities (44%), and family activities (35%).
- One in four teens (25%) report spending time each week in religious activities.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Older teens (16 or older) are less likely than younger teens (under 16) to report spending 5 or more hours per week in family activities (30% vs. 38%).
- Older females (24%) are more likely than younger females (15%) or males in general (11%) to report spending time in volunteer activities.
- Among youth who spend 1-4 hours per week in religious activities, the rate of participation is lower among older youth, especially among older males (15%) in comparison to younger males (21%).



## 5.2 Community Opportunities

### Youth Reporting “Not Enough” of the Following Community Opportunities:

Opportunity	Male	Female
Social activities (e.g. dances, ski trips, etc.)	50%	58%
Volunteer opportunities	31%	43%
Community youth or neighborhood centers	34%	41%
Peer helping programs	33%	41%
Performing arts (music, dance, plays, etc.)	31%	41%
Youth leadership activities	26%	28%
Organized team sports	25%	24%
Activity clubs	21%	22%

DC2000: Q118 - 125

### **Key Findings:**

- More than half of all teens (males, 50%; females, 58%) report that there are not enough fun social activities in their community (e.g. dances, lock ins, ski trips, etc.)
- With respect to other recreation, more than one third of all youth report that their community does not have enough youth or neighborhood centers (males, 34%; females, 41%), or performing arts activities (males, 31%; females, 41%).
- With respect to community service, more than one-third of all youth report that their community does not have enough volunteer opportunities (males, 31%; females, 43%) or peer helping programs (males, 33%; females, 41%).
- Where differences exist, females are generally more likely than males to report not having enough opportunities to participate in community activities.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Older teens are more likely than younger teens to report too few fun social activities (12<sup>th</sup> graders, 56% vs. 7<sup>th</sup> graders, 42%), and a lack of youth or neighborhood centers in their community (12<sup>th</sup> graders, 41% vs. 7<sup>th</sup> graders, 36%).

### 5.3 Barriers to Community Participation

#### Percent of Teens Who Agree/Strongly Agree with the Following Statements:

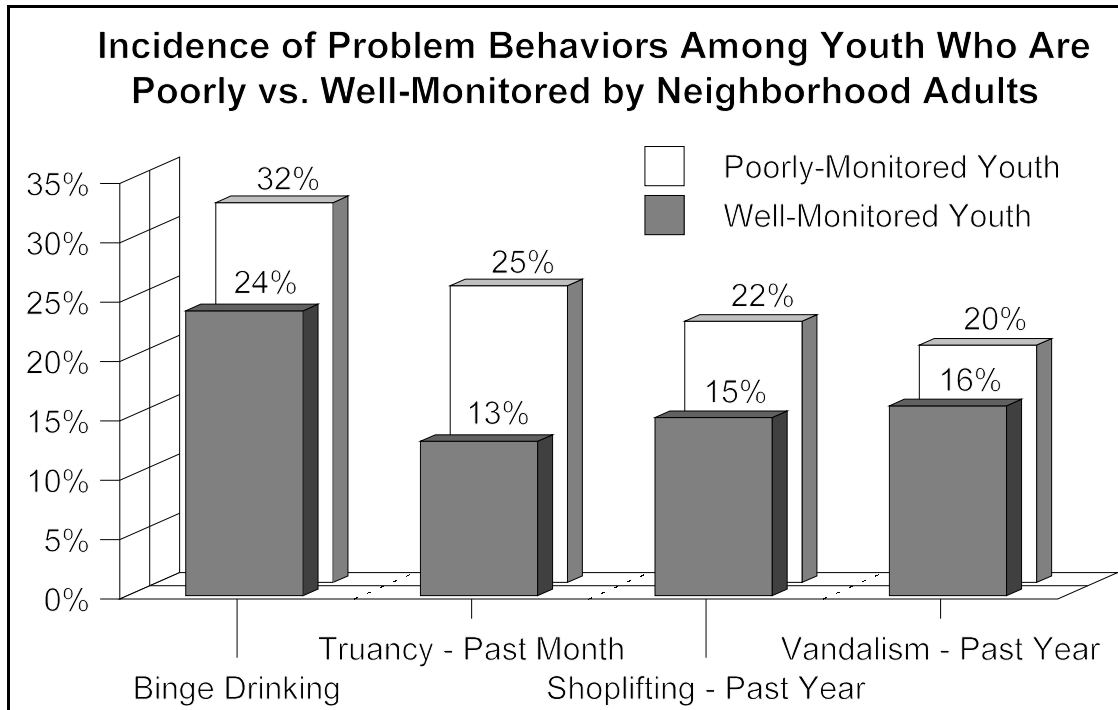
		<u>Grade</u>			
		7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup> /10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup> /12 <sup>th</sup>	All
Entertainment/recreational activities cost too much	Male	24%	37%	48%	36%
	Female	31%	42%	54%	42%
Recreation, school or community centers are not open when wanted	Male	21%	28%	26%	25%
	Female	23%	27%	29%	26%
Lack of transportation to or from recreational activities	Male	25%	37%	21%	28%
	Female	34%	45%	23%	35%

DC2000: Q155-157

#### **Key Findings:**

- The cost of entertainment or recreational activities is perceived as a problem for more than one in three teens. Females in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade (54%) are the most likely to view cost as a barrier to participation.
- One in four teens (25%) report that recreation, school or community centers are not open when wanted. Older teens are slightly more likely than younger teens to identify this as a problem.
- Transportation to and from activities is more of a problem for 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> graders than for either younger or older teens. This may be because younger teens are more likely to have adult assistance in obtaining transportation and older teens are better able to provide transportation for themselves.

## 5.4 Monitoring by Neighborhood Adults in Relation to Youth Problem Behaviors



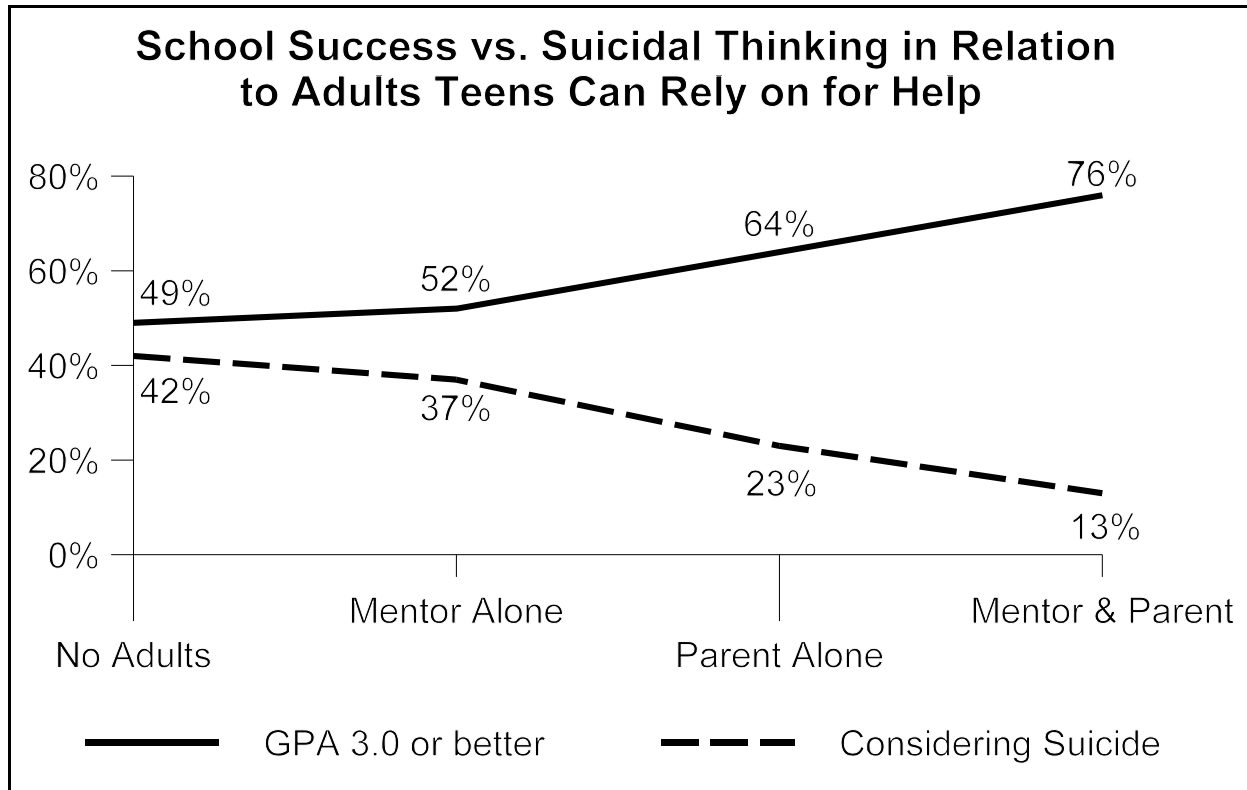
DC2000: Q110 & 112 by 52, 94 - 96

**Well-monitored** youth believe the adults in their neighborhood keep an eye on what teens are up to and would tell their parents if they did something wrong.

### **Key Findings:**

- Well-monitored youth are less likely to engage in problem behaviors than youth who feel neighborhood adults care little about what they are doing.
- Youth who are poorly-monitored by neighborhood adults are nearly twice as likely as those who are well-monitored to report being truant from school in the past month (25% vs. 13%).
- Rates of binge drinking, shoplifting and vandalism are substantially lower among youth who are well-monitored by adults in their neighborhoods in comparison to those who are poorly-monitored.

## 5.5 Mentoring by Community Adults in Relation to School Success and Suicidal Ideation



DC2000: Q6, 80 by 78

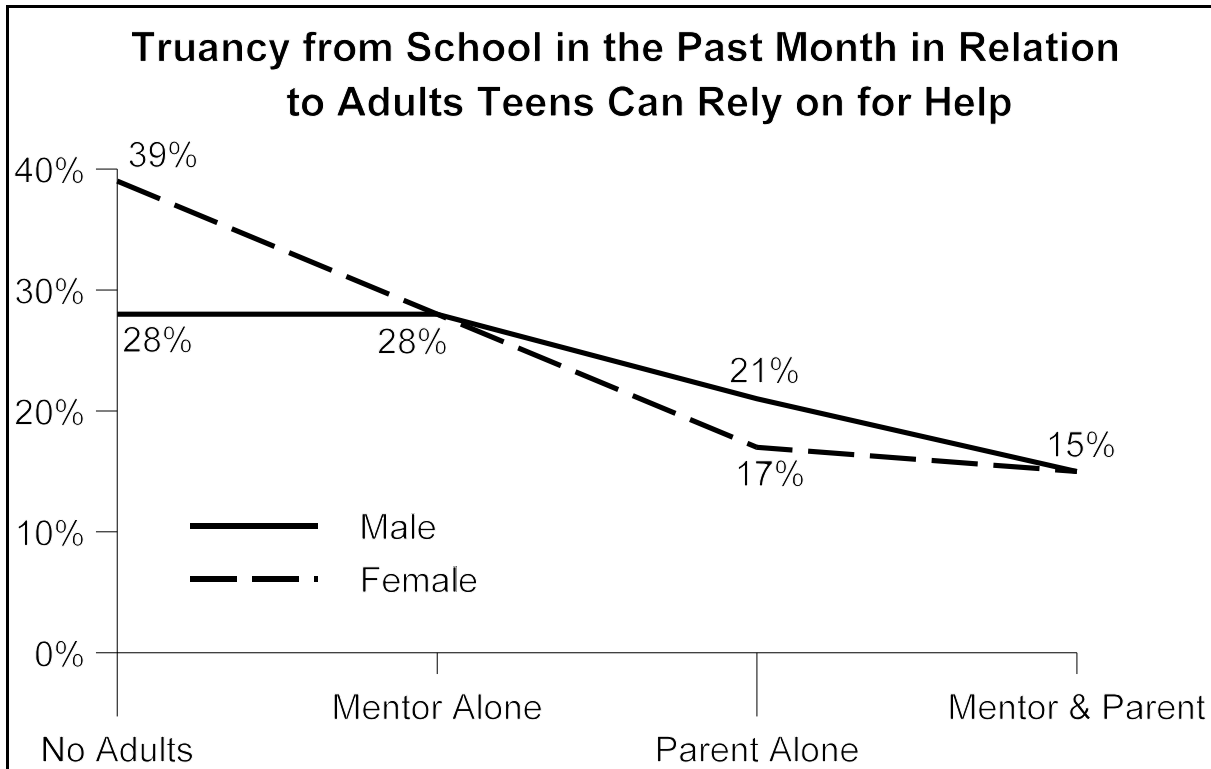
### **Key Findings:**

- Teens are more likely to be successful in school and less likely to consider suicide if they have both their parents and other adults available to help when needed.
- Reliable parents are most important in a youth's life. However, when parents are unavailable, the presence of an adult mentor is positively related to better youth outcomes.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Adult mentors may include grandparents, an aunt or uncle, a teacher or coach, a priest or rabbi, etc.
- Most teens (83%) report having at least two adults other than a parent that they could rely on if they needed help. A majority of teens (51%) report having at least four adults available.

## 5.6 Mentoring by Community Adults in Relation To School Truancy



DC2000: Q94 by 131, 78, 1

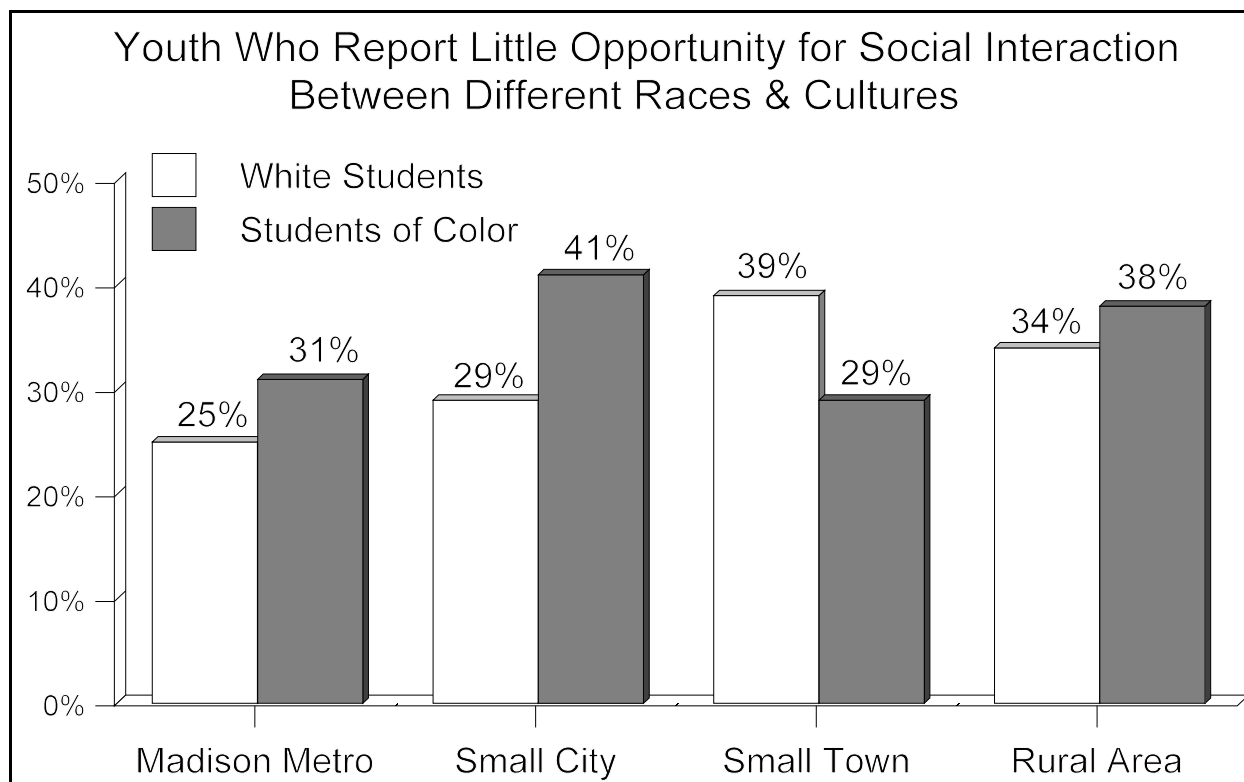
### **Key Findings:**

- When parents are not available, the presence of another caring adult substantially reduces the likelihood that an adolescent female will be truant from school.
- While both males and females do best when mentors and parents are both available, mentors appear to have less of an impact on male truancy.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- More than one quarter (28%) of students report being absent from school without a valid excuse at least once in the past month.

## 5.7 Cultural Isolation Among Dane County Youth by Where Teens Live



DC2000: Q116 by 8, 2

### **Key Findings:**

- Students of color, especially those who live in small cities (41%), are generally more likely than White students to report a lack of social interaction between different races or cultures.
- White students living in the Madison Metropolitan Area (25%) are the least likely of all youth to perceive a lack of opportunity for social interaction between different races or cultures.
- Only in small towns are White students (39%) more likely than students of color (29%) to perceive a lack of opportunity for social interaction between youth of different races or cultures.

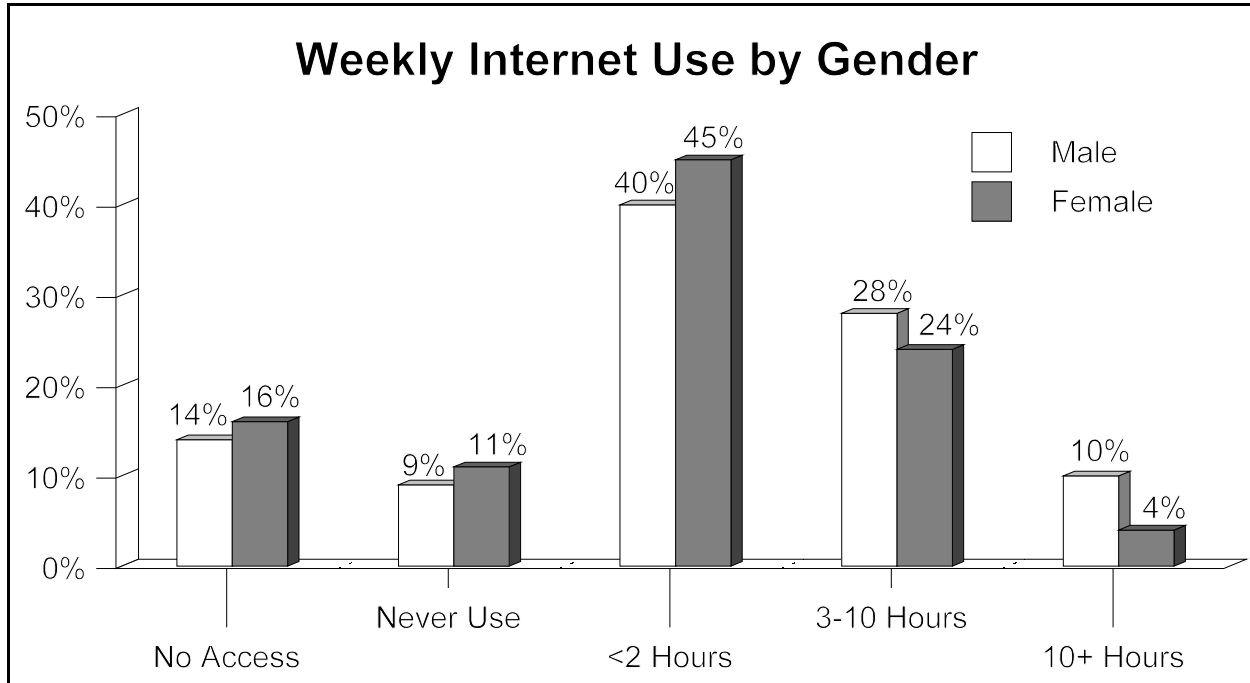
### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Overall, 27% of males and 31% of females report little opportunity for social interaction between different races and cultures.





## 5.8 Internet Use Among Dane County Youth

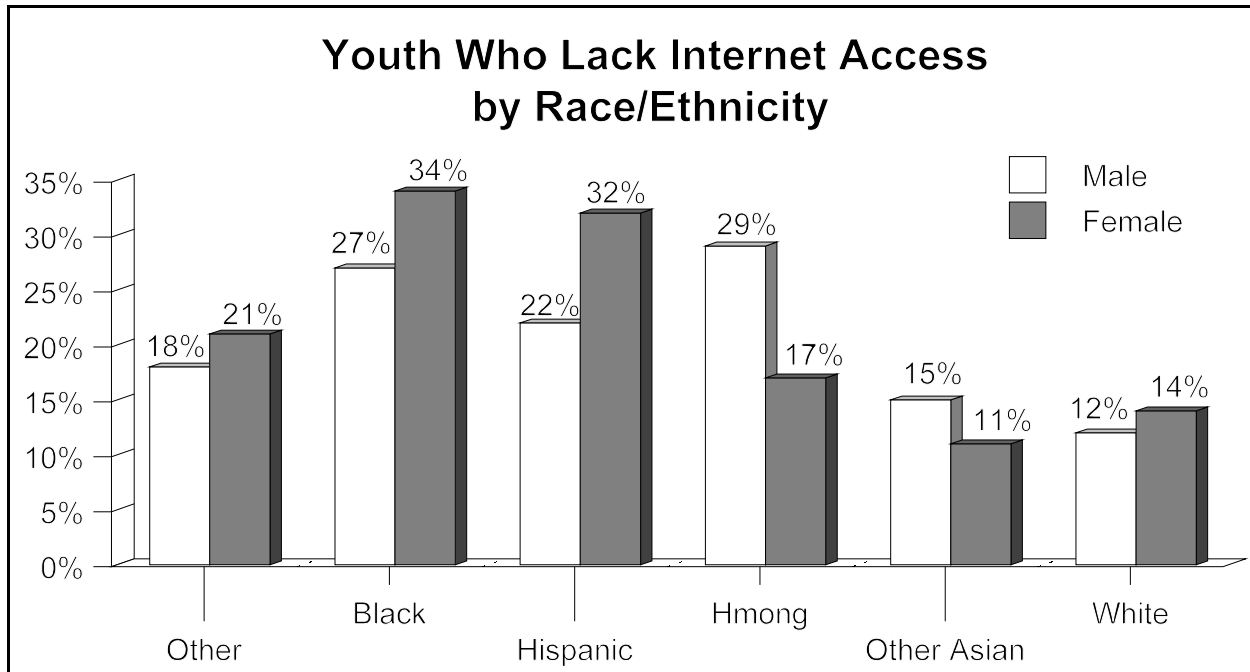


DC2000: Q30 by 1

### **Key Findings:**

- The majority of youth in Dane County (85%) report they have access to the Internet.
- Most teens report they spend 2 or fewer hours per week online.
- Males are more likely than females to use the Internet (78% vs. 73%) and to spend at least three hours per week online (38% vs. 28%).

## 5.9 Youth Who Lack Internet Access



DC2000: Q30 by 2,1

### **Key Findings:**

- With the exception of Other Asian youth, students of color are far more likely than White youth to report they lack Internet access.
- Black/African American (34%) and Hispanic (32%) females and Hmong males (29%) are the most likely of all youth to report they lack Internet access.



## 5.10 Peer Behavior vs. Self Reported Behavior

	Youth under 16 years of age	Youth 16 years or older
<b><u>Sexual Activity</u></b>		
Friends have had sexual intercourse	14%	42%
Youth has had sexual intercourse	13%	40%
<b><u>Alcohol Use</u></b>		
Most friends drink alcohol or do drugs	29%	62%
Youth drinks alcohol once a month or more	18%	45%
<b><u>Tobacco Use</u></b>		
Most friends use tobacco	23%	45%
Youth uses tobacco once a month or more	13%	35%

DC2000: Q40/41,42/43,81,145-147 by 3

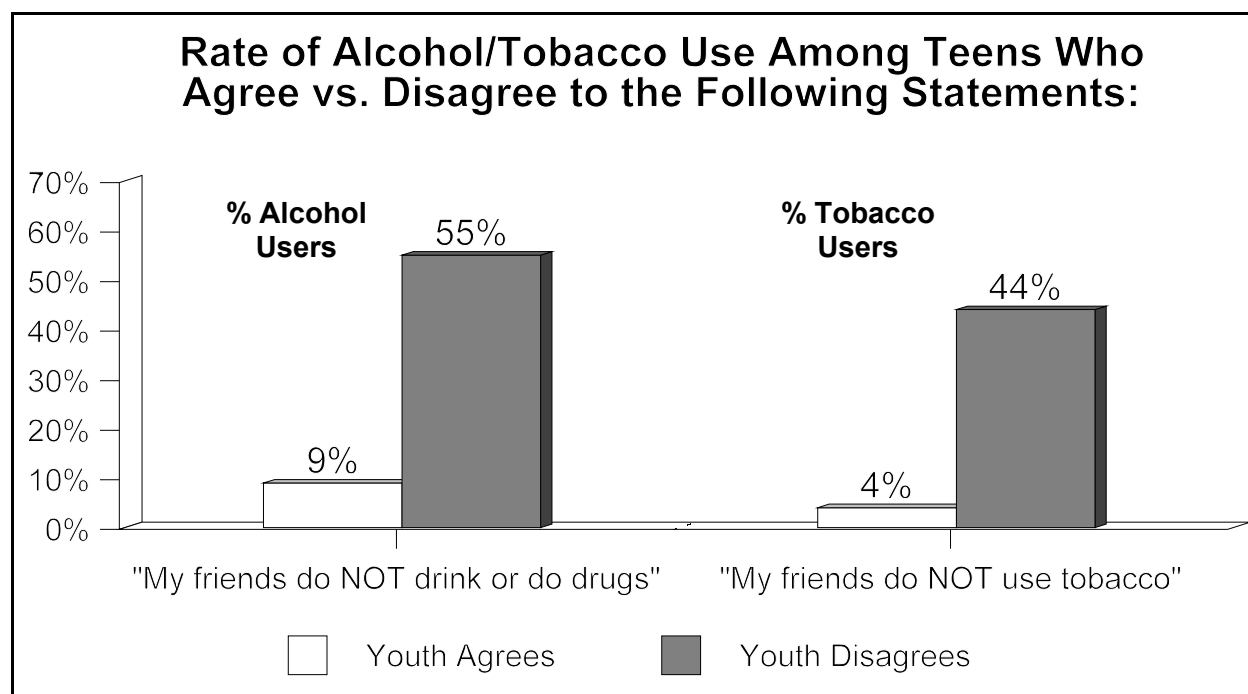
### **Key Findings:**

- With respect to sexual activity, about the same proportion of youth admit to being sexually active as report that their friends are sexually active.
- However, with respect to alcohol use, teens are about one third more likely to report that their friends drink alcohol or use drugs than to admit they personally use alcohol at least once a month.
- Similarly, with respect to tobacco use, teens are much more likely to indicate that their friends smoke or chew tobacco than to admit they personally use tobacco at least once a month.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Males and females do not differ with respect to their judgements of their friends' behavior versus reporting on their own behavior.

## 5.11 Peer Influences on Youth Behavior: Alcohol and Tobacco Use



DC2000: Q40/41 by 147; Q42/43 by 146

**Alcohol use** is defined as drinking beer, wine, or hard liquor once a month or more. **Tobacco use** is defined as smoking/chewing tobacco at least once a week.

### Key Findings:

- A teen's reported alcohol and tobacco use is strongly related to whether or not his or her friends use alcohol and tobacco.
- Teens who report that their friends drink or do drugs are six times more likely to use alcohol at least once a month than teens who report that their friends do not drink or do drugs (55% vs. 9%).
- Teens who report that their friends use tobacco are eleven times more likely to use tobacco at least once a week than teens who report that their friends do not use tobacco (44% vs. 4%).

### Other Notable Findings:

- Teens who report that their friends are sexually active are more than five times as likely to be sexually experienced as teens who report that their friends are not sexually active (59% vs. 11%). See Figure 6.9 for more on this topic.



## Chapter 6: Teen Health

Adolescence is a time of rapid physical, social and emotional development. It is a period of life when a young person experiences a level of energy and strength he or she has never had before nor will ever match again. Despite increased social awareness of the importance of good nutrition and exercise, many people struggle in adulthood with poor health habits acquired during adolescence. Teenagers tend to believe that they are either invulnerable, or that they will always have plenty of time in the future to moderate and improve their health practices.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, it is often just this type of thinking that leads a young person to engage in health compromising behaviors, such as unprotected sexual intercourse and substance abuse (see Chapter 8), which may have an immediate and lasting impact on his or her life.

The primary threats to adolescent health result from social, behavioral and economic factors. The leading cause of death for youth 10 -19 years of age is accidental injury which accounts for more deaths than all other causes combined.<sup>2</sup> Homicide and suicide rank second and third. Despite their increasing independence, young people are still very much in need of guidance when dealing with the many choices and problems they face in today's society. Therefore, it is the responsibility of caring adults to help young people make good choices with respect to their health practices, developing sexuality, and emotional well being.

In Chapter 7, we examine issues related to youth safety and victimization. In this chapter we take a closer look at the emotional and physical well-being of youth.

### The questions examined in this chapter include:

- What are the top concerns of Dane County teens?
- To what extent are local teens receiving the help they need in order to cope with serious problems?
- In what ways are Dane County youth exposed to health risks associated with second-hand smoke and poor personal safety practices?
- How well do youth in Dane County look after themselves in terms of diet and exercise?
- How well do local youth cope with issues of sexuality and safe sex practices?

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<sup>1</sup>Millstein, S.G., Petersen, A.C., & Nightingale, E.O. (1993). Promoting the health of adolescents. New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>2</sup>National Woman's Health Information Center, Office of Woman's Health - US Department of Health and Human Services. <http://4woman.gov/faq/adoles.htm> (June, 2000)

## 6.1 Top Concerns of Dane County Teens

### Percent of Teens Who Worry “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” About the Following:

	7 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>
Getting good grades	61%	62%
How I look	28%	28%
How well my parents get along with each other	22%	13%
Not fitting in with other kids at school	16%	9%
Getting AIDS or an STD	12%	11%
That I might get pregnant or get someone else pregnant	7%	12%
Being picked on or physically hurt by another teen	10%	4%

DC2000: 31-39 by 4

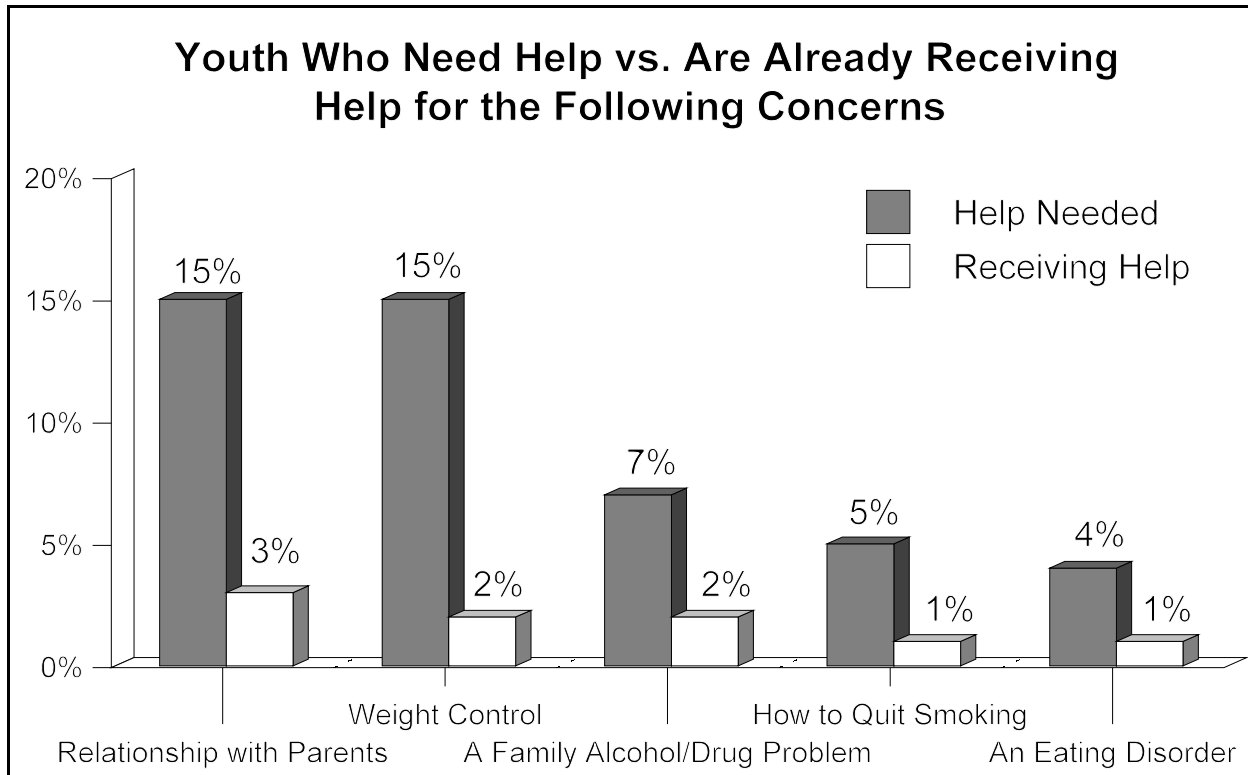
### **Key Findings:**

- Academic performance (i.e., “getting good grades”) and personal appearance (i.e., “how I look”) top the list of concerns reported by both 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders.
- A top concern of 7th graders (22%) is how well their parents get along with each other. Older teens worry less about this issue.
- With the exception of concern over possible pregnancies, younger teens are generally more likely than older teens to worry about most issues.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Females are more likely than males to worry about getting good grades (71% vs. 61%) and how they look (41% vs. 21%).
- In both the 1995 and 2000 surveys, getting good grades was the top concern of youth in Dane County (61% in 1995; 66% in 2000).
- The proportion of youth who are worried about being picked on or physically hurt by another teen (7%) has not changed since 1995.

## 6.2 Health and Social Service Needs of Youth in Dane County



DC2000: Q70 -77

### **Key Findings:**

- The vast majority of youth who report experiencing serious problems do **not** receive the help they desire to cope with these concerns.
- The most common concerns students report needing or receiving help for are relationships with parents (18%) and weight control (17%).
- Overall, nearly one out of ten teens (9%) in Dane County report being concerned about a drug or alcohol problem of a family member. However, the majority of these youth (7%) report they need, but do not yet receive help coping with this issue.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- There has been no change since 1995 in the proportion of youth in Dane County who report needing or receiving help on any of these concerns.

### 6.3 Exposure to Individuals Who Smoke or Use Tobacco

Types of Exposure	Teen Nonsmokers	Teen Smokers
Youth works at a place that allows employees or customers to smoke.	15%	47%
Youth reports that at least one adult at home smokes cigarettes.	28%	54%
Youth reports that most of his/her friends smoke or use tobacco.	25%	86%
Exposed to 2 of the above	13%	47%
Exposed to 3 of the above	2%	22%

DC2000: Q65, 143, 147 by 59

#### **Key Findings:**

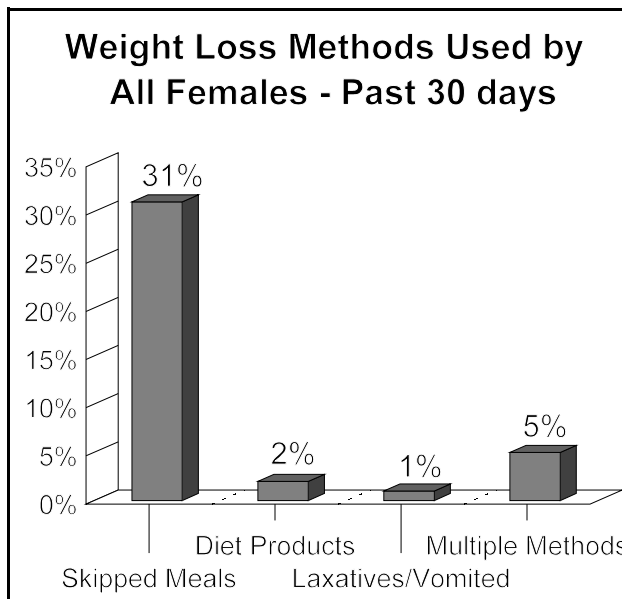
- In comparison to nonsmokers, youth who smoke are much more likely to interact with individuals who also smoke or use tobacco.
- The vast majority of teen smokers (86%) report that their friends also smoke or use tobacco.
- One in four teens who do not smoke are nevertheless exposed to individuals who smoke or use tobacco either at home (28%) or when with friends (25%).

#### **Other Notable Findings:**

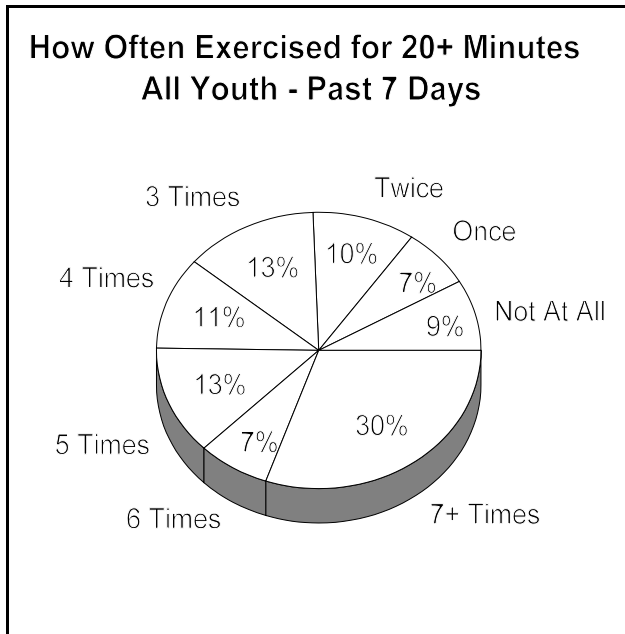
- Overall, 19% of youth report smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days.



## 6.4 Teen Health: Weight Loss Methods and Physical Activity



DC2000: Q61



DC2000: Q62

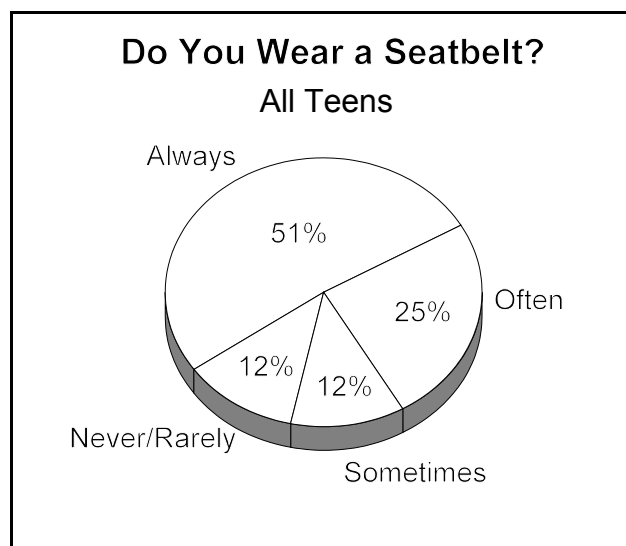
### **Key Findings:**

- More than one out of three females (39%) report using an unhealthy weight loss strategy in the past 30 days. By far the most common method reported was skipping meals (31%).
- Most youth in Dane County report being physically active four or more times in the past 7 days (61%). Many teens (30%) report being physically active at least 7 times in the past week.

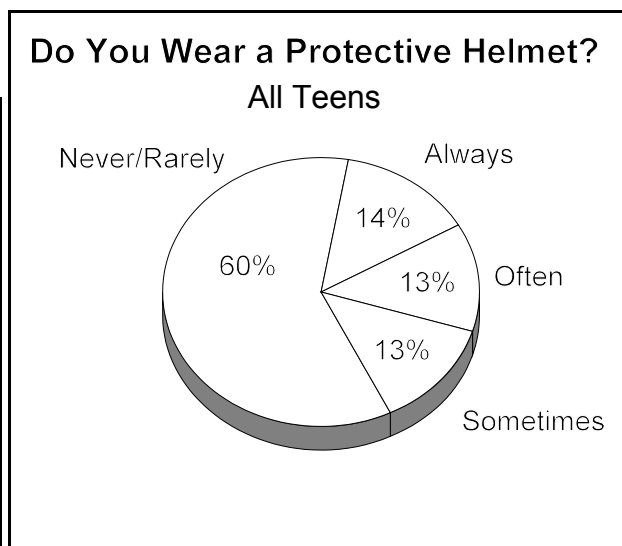
### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Among males, 16% report skipping meals in the past 30 days in order to lose weight and an additional 2% report using some other unhealthy weight loss method.

## 6.5 Teen Health: Safety Practices



DC2000: Q64



DC2000: Q66

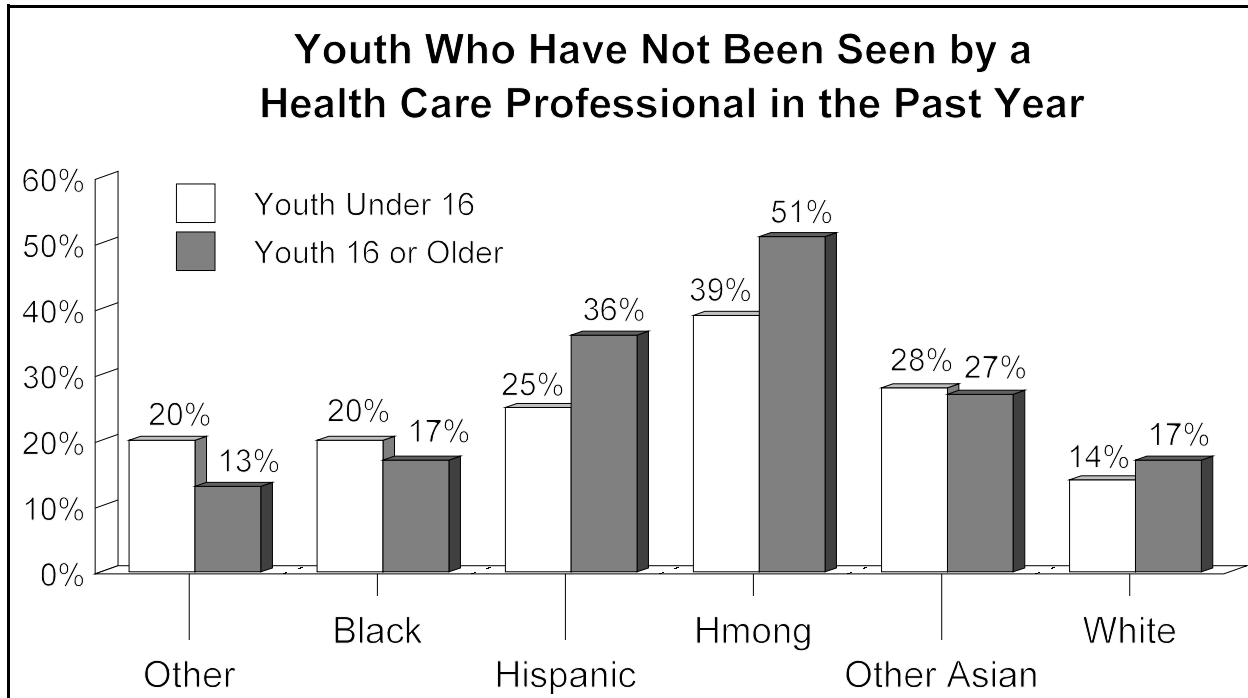
### **Key Findings:**

- Half (51%) of Dane County youth report always using a seatbelt when in a motor vehicle. However, nearly a quarter (24%) go unprotected most of the time.
- Only 14% of youth consistently wear a protective helmet when participating in sports such as biking, rollerblading, or skateboarding. Most youth (60%) do not use a helmet when engaged in these activities.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- The percent of youth who report they “Always” wear a seatbelt when riding in a motor vehicle increased from 44% in 1995 to 51% in 2000.
- Among youth age 16 years old or older who admit to drinking and driving in the past month, one out of three males (34%) and one out of four females (24%) report they rarely or never wear seatbelts.

## 6.6 Health Care Access or Use

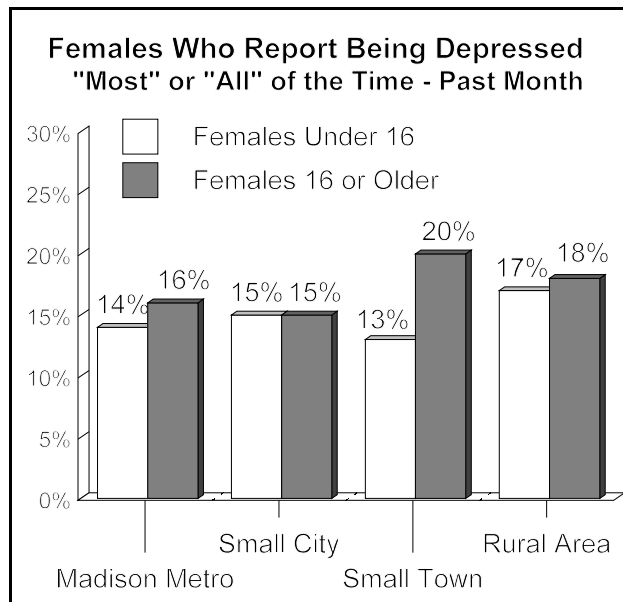


DC2000: Q63 by 2 &amp; 3

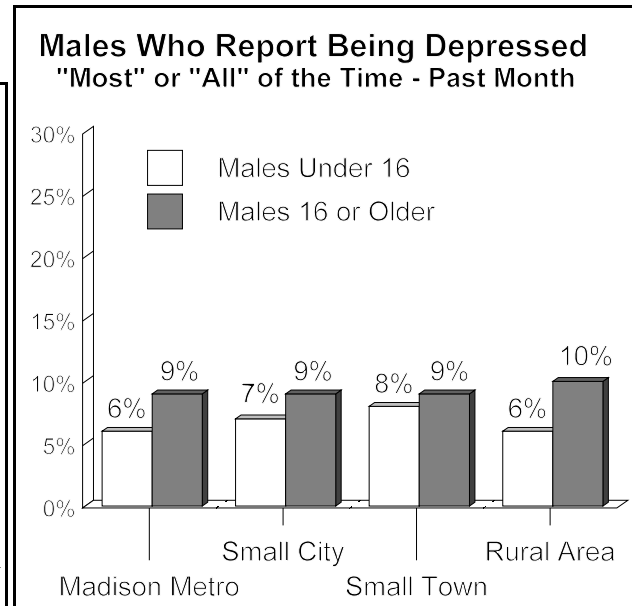
### **Key Findings:**

- Overall, Hmong youth are the most likely of all youth to report they have not been seen by a health care professional in the past year. This is especially true of older Hmong youth (51%).
- Hispanic youth are also likely to report experiencing a lack of professional medical attention. Again, this is especially true of older Hispanic teens (36%).
- A fair proportion of Other Asian youth (27%) report they have not been seen by a health care professional in the past year. This is one of the few areas in which Other Asian youth report a deficit in relation to youth of other racial/ethnic groups.

## 6.7 Feelings of Depression in the Past Month



DC2000: Q79 by 8, 1, 3



DC2000: Q79 by 8, 1, 3

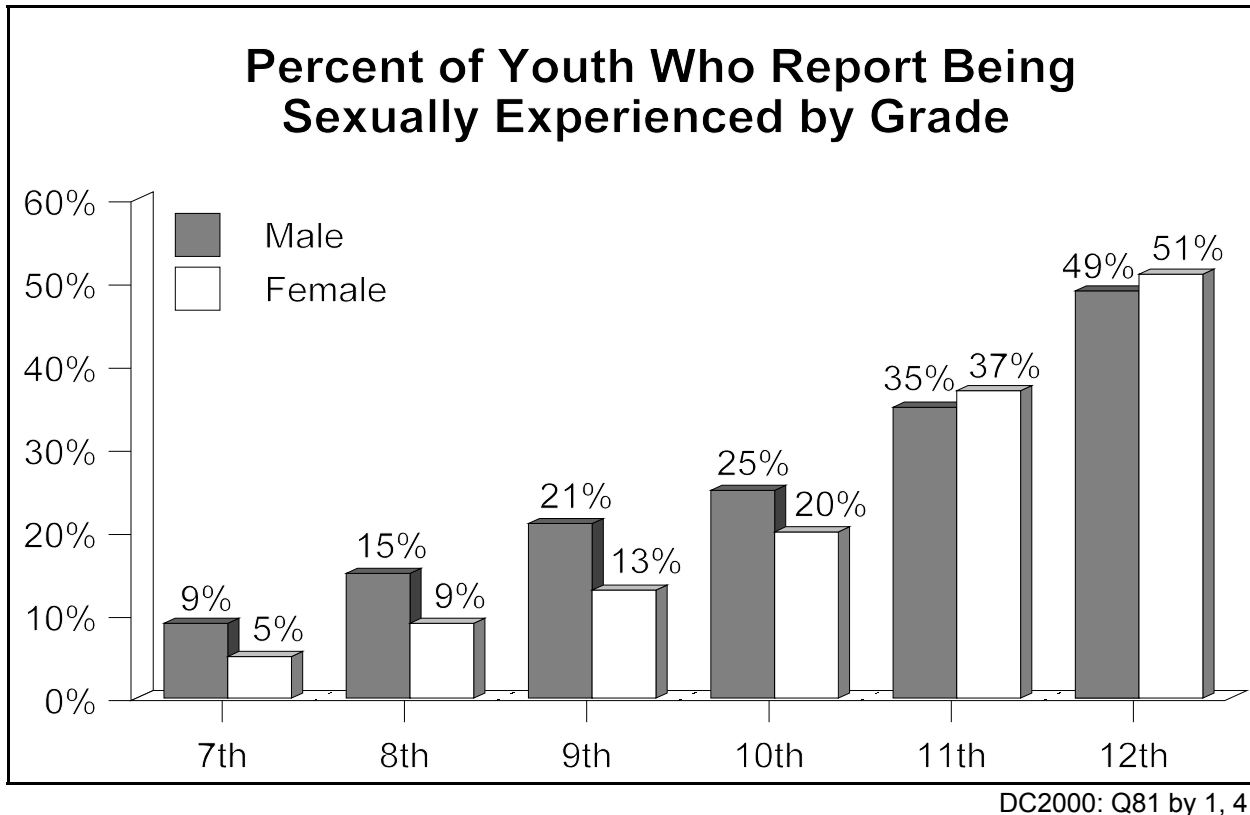
### Key Findings:

- In general, females are more likely than males to report feeling depressed most or all of the time in the past month.
- Older teens are also more likely than younger teens to report feeling depressed.
- The proportion of males who report feeling depressed is fairly constant across location. However, females who live in small towns or rural areas are more likely to report feeling depressed than those who live in cities.

### Other Notable Findings:

- Teens who identify themselves as Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual are more likely than straight teens to report feeling depressed (77% vs. 68%) or to have considered suicide (26% vs. 14%) in the past month.
- Females are generally more likely than males to report having thought about committing suicide in the past month (19% vs. 12%). However, the highest rate of suicidal ideation is reported by males who live on a working farm (32%).

## 6.8 Sexual Experience by Grade and Gender



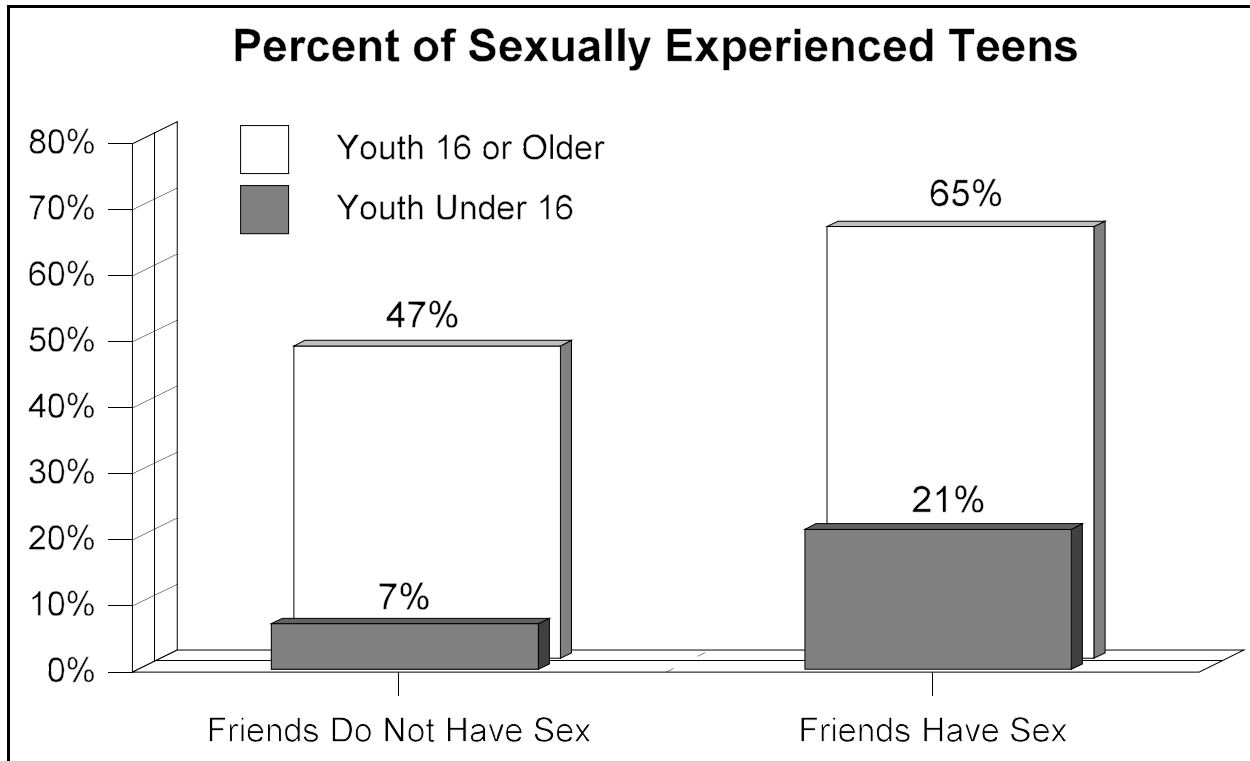
### **Key Findings:**

- With each increase in grade level, a higher proportion of youth report having had sexual intercourse at least once in their life.
- In middle and early high school, male students are more likely than female students to report being sexually active.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- According to youth reports, the average age of first sexual intercourse is 14.
- The most frequent response for age of first sexual intercourse is 16 for males (19%) and 15 for females (24%).

## 6.9 Sexual Experience in Relation to Beliefs About Friends' Sexual Activity



DC2000: Q81 by 145

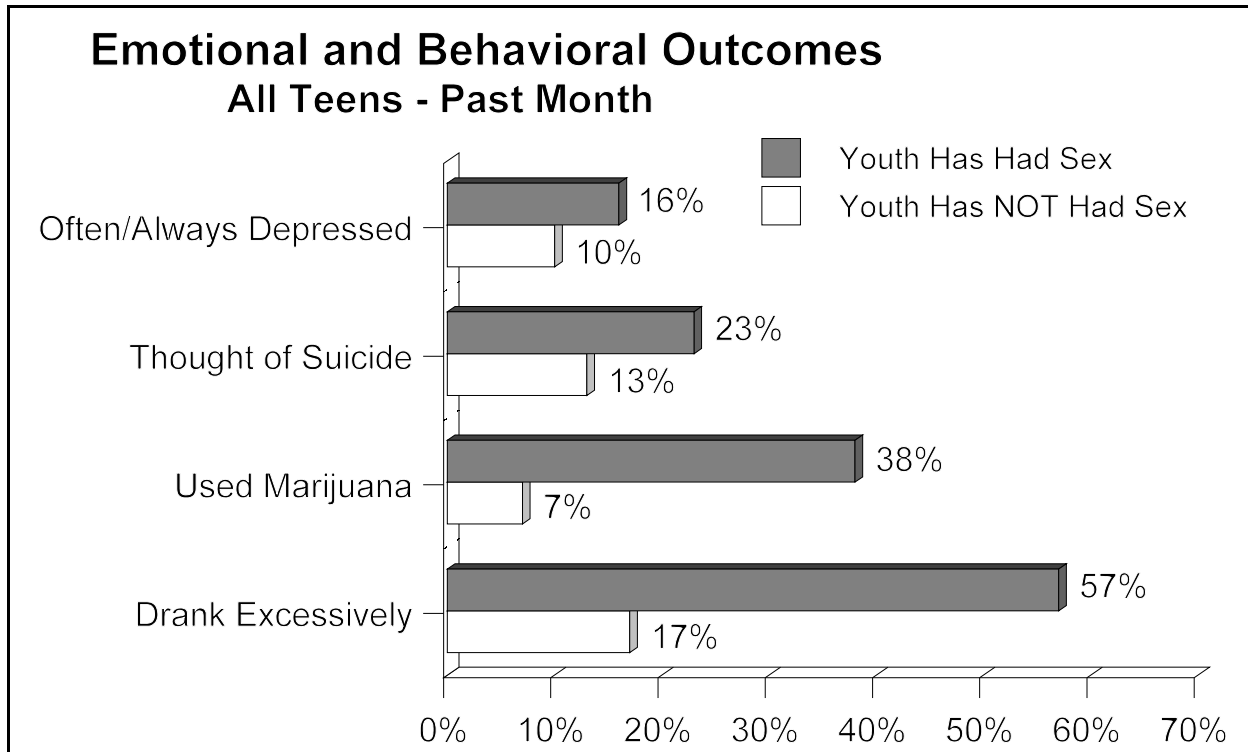
### **Key Findings:**

- Younger teens are three times more likely to be sexually experienced if they believe their friends are sexually active than if they believe their friends are not sexually active (21% vs. 7%).
- Older teens are also more likely to be sexually experienced if they believe their friends are sexually active than if they believe their friends are not sexually active (65% vs. 47%).

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Teens are *least* likely to be sexually experienced if they disapprove of teen sex and believe their friends do not have sex (4%). In contrast, teens are *most* likely to be sexually experienced if they approve of teen sex and believe their friends are sexually active (67%).
- For more about peer influences on youth behavior see Figure 5.11.

## 6.10 Sexual Experience in Relation to Negative Emotional and Behavioral Outcomes



DC2000: Q79, 80, 44, 52 by 81

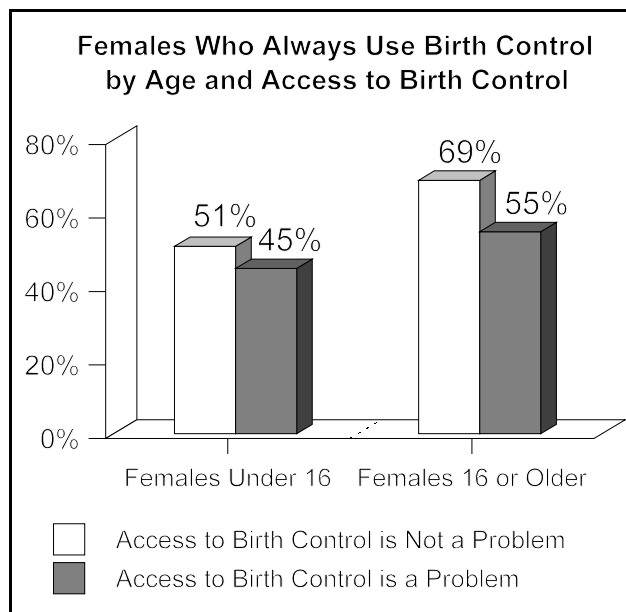
### Key Findings:

- Youth who have had sex are more likely than those who have not had sex to report having negative emotional or behavioral experiences in the past month.
- Teens who are sexually experienced are more likely to report feeling depressed (16% vs. 10%) or to have considered suicide (23% vs. 13%) in the past month than teens who are not sexually experienced.
- Teens who are sexually experienced are far more likely to report using marijuana (38% vs. 7%) in the past year and binge drinking (57% vs 17%) in the past month than teens who are not sexually experienced.

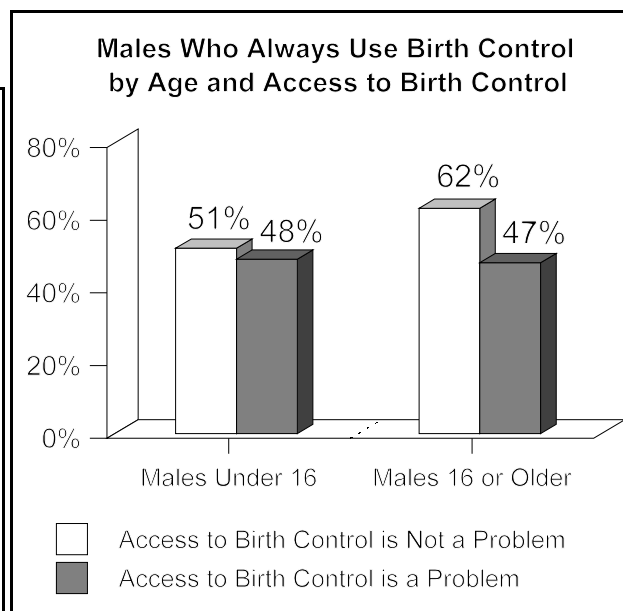
### Other Notable Findings:

- Among sexually experienced youth, younger teens are slightly more likely than older teens to report suicidal thoughts in the past month (27% vs. 21%). However, they are no more likely to report feeling depressed.
- Older teens who are sexually experienced are nearly four times more likely to use marijuana (40% vs. 11%) and twice as likely to drink excessively (61% vs. 27%) in comparison to their peers who are not sexually experienced.

## 6.11 Birth Control Access and Use Among Sexually Experienced Youth



DC2000: Q82 by 68,1



DC2000: Q82 by 68,1

### Key Findings:

- Sexually experienced youth are more likely to use birth control consistently when access to birth control information or supplies is not a problem.
- Younger teens are less likely than older teens to consistently use birth control. However, among younger teens there is little difference in the proportion of males and females who report they “Always” use birth control.
- Unless access is a problem, older females are generally more likely than older males to report they “Always” use birth control.

### Other Notable Findings:

- Overall, 42% of sexually experience youth in Dane County (males, 44%; females, 39%) report having unprotected sex (i.e., they do not “Always” use birth control).
- In addition, 17% of sexually active youth in Dane County (males, 13%; females, 22%) report that access to birth control information or supplies is a problem.





## Chapter 7: Delinquency, Violence and Victimization

In order to develop in a healthy manner, all young people need the security of growing up in a safe environment. Unfortunately, the prevalence of violence and crime in our society often makes it difficult to protect young people from negative influences and victimization. This issue becomes particularly important during adolescence, because teenagers are often both the perpetrators and the victims of violence and abuse.<sup>1</sup> In addition to status offenses such as running away from home and being truant from school, teenagers too often also engage in criminal behavior such as shoplifting and the vandalism of property. Most disturbingly, recent episodes of youth violence in school have raised national awareness to the hazards of gang involvement, and the deadly impact that even a single youth may have when he or she brings a weapon to school.

Due to a fear of victimization, teens who perceive their home, school or community as unsafe may find it difficult to take full advantage of growth-enhancing opportunities these contexts have to offer. As we have seen in previous chapters, this may result in poor academic performance and a greater likelihood of problem behaviors among youth. As a group, adolescents are particularly vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse.<sup>2</sup> Such abuse can have a devastating impact on all areas of a teen's life. In addition, those who witness abusive situations at home or in other contexts can suffer from its effects even if they are not personally the target.

### The questions examined in this chapter include:

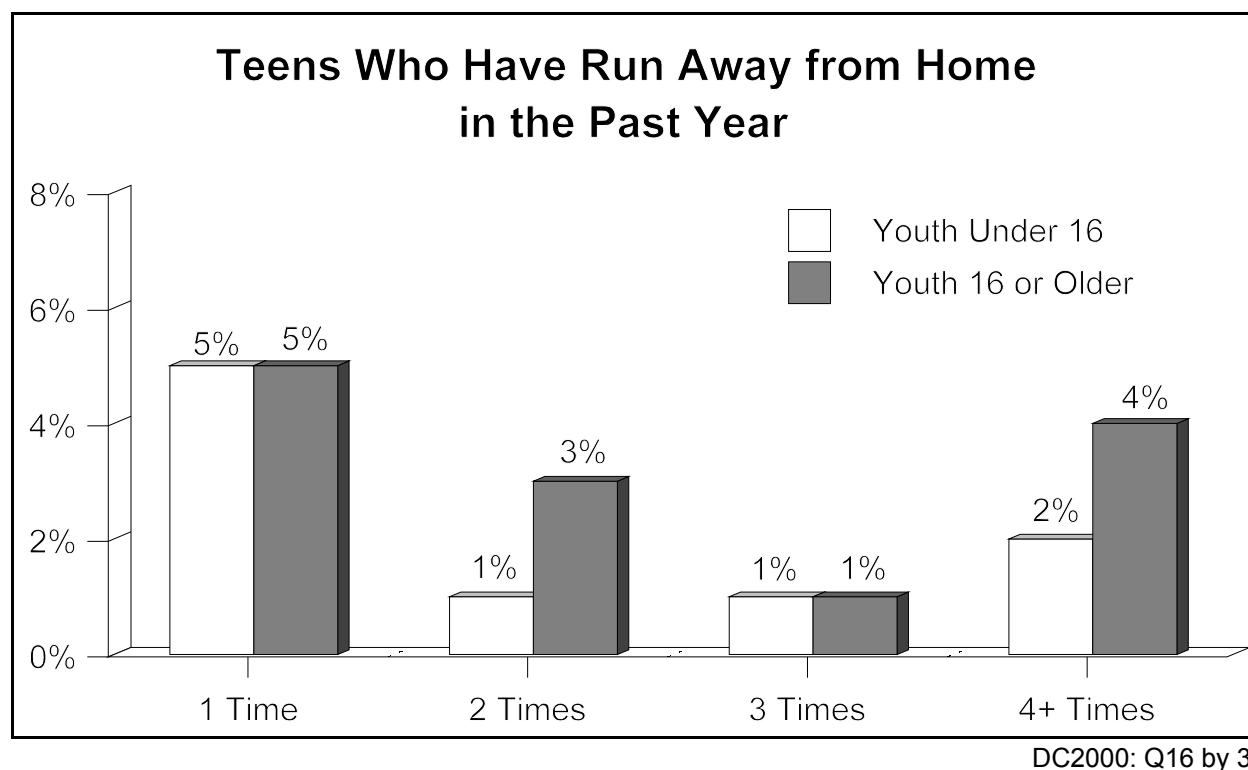
- What are the rates of self-reported nonviolent offenses such as running away, truancy, school suspension, and shoplifting among the youth of Dane County?
- How often do teens participate in physical fights with or without the presence of weapons, and how often do they carry weapons to school?
- What is the rate of gang involvement among males and females in Dane County?
- What percentage of teens in Dane County report having experienced either sexual or physical abuse by an adult?
- What is the relationship between crime victimization and a youth's perception of safety in his or her neighborhood and his or her view of police officers?

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<sup>1</sup>Fox, J.A. (1996). Trends in juvenile violence: A report to the United States Attorney General on current and future rates of juvenile offending. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, United States Department of Justice.

<sup>2</sup>Gains, J.E., Blyth, D.A., Elster, A.B., & Lundgren, L. (1990). America's adolescents: How healthy are they?, Profiles of Adolescent Health Series, 1, American Medical Association.

## 7.1 Teens Who Run Away from Home



### **Key Findings:**

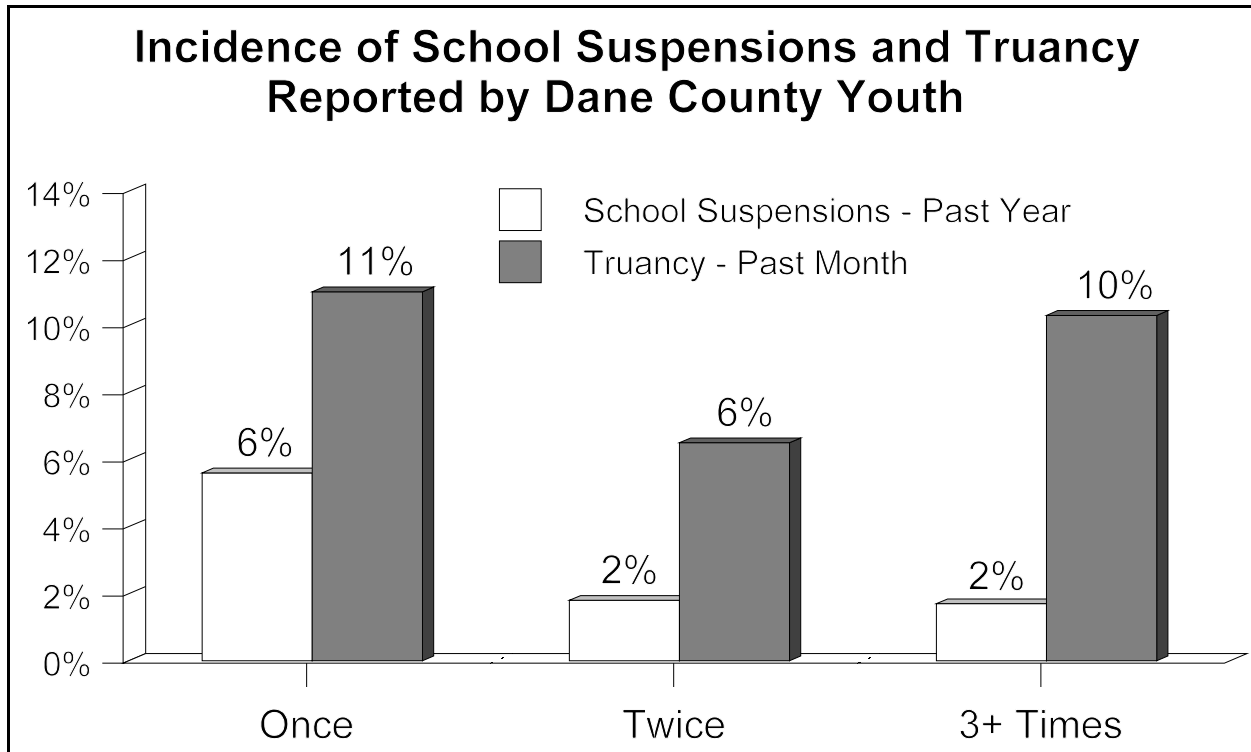
- Overall, one out of ten teens in Dane County (10%) report they have run away from home and stayed away at least over night in the past year.
- About half of teens who run away (5%) report doing so only once in the past year, while about one third (3%) appear to be chronic runaways who report leaving home four or more times in the past year.
- Older teens are only slightly more likely than younger teens to report running away from home and staying away at least over night.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- There is no gender difference with respect to the proportion of youth who report running away or the frequency with which they leave home.



## 7.2 Truancy and School Suspensions



DC2000: Q93 &amp; 94

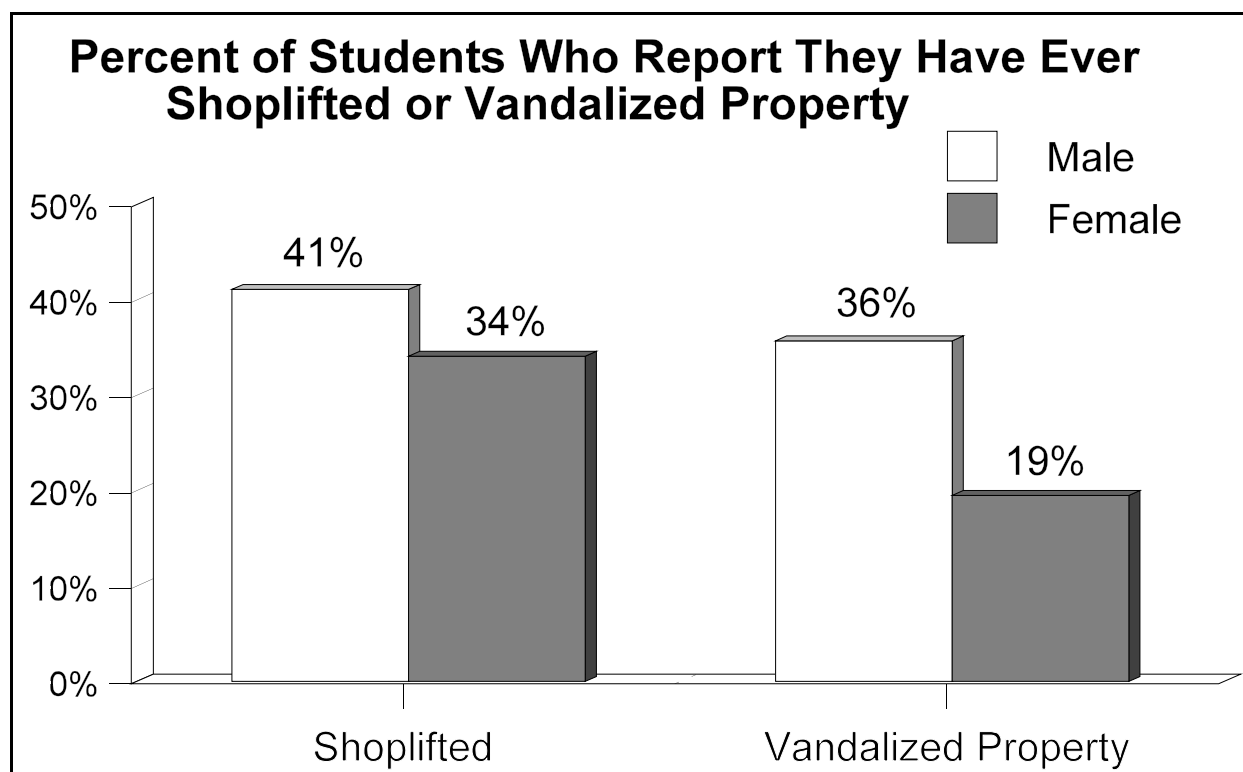
### **Key Findings:**

- More than one quarter of Dane County teens (28%) report being absent from school at least once in the past month without a valid excuse.
- One out of ten teens (10%) report having been suspended from school at least once in the past year.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Males are twice as likely as females to report having been suspended from school at least once in the past year (13% vs. 6%).
- With respect to truancy, there is no gender difference in the proportion of youth who report being truant, or the frequency with which they skip school.

## 7.3 Compromising Property: Shoplifting and Vandalism



DC2000: Q95 & 96 by 1

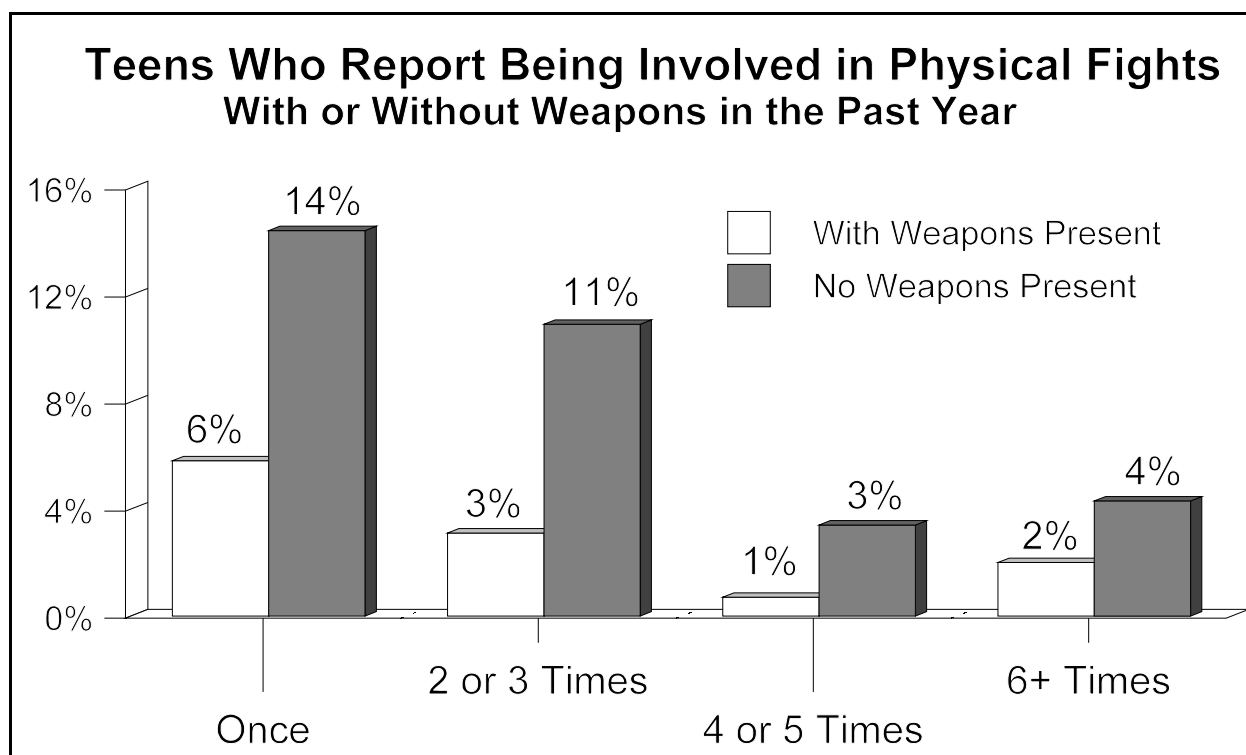
### **Key Findings:**

- Males are more likely than females to report they have shoplifted and vandalized property at some time in the past.
- Two out of five males (41%) and one out of three females (34%) report that they have shoplifted at some time in the past.
- One out of three males (36%) and one in five females (19%) report they have vandalized property at some time in the past.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- One in five males (22%) and one in eight females (12%) report they have vandalized property in the past year.
- The rates of shoplifting and vandalism for both males and females has decreased since 1995, when 52% of males and 40% of females reported shoplifting at some time in the past, and 44% of males and 26% of females reported they had vandalized property at some time in the past.

## 7.4 Physical Fighting Among Teens



DC2000: Q87 &amp; 88

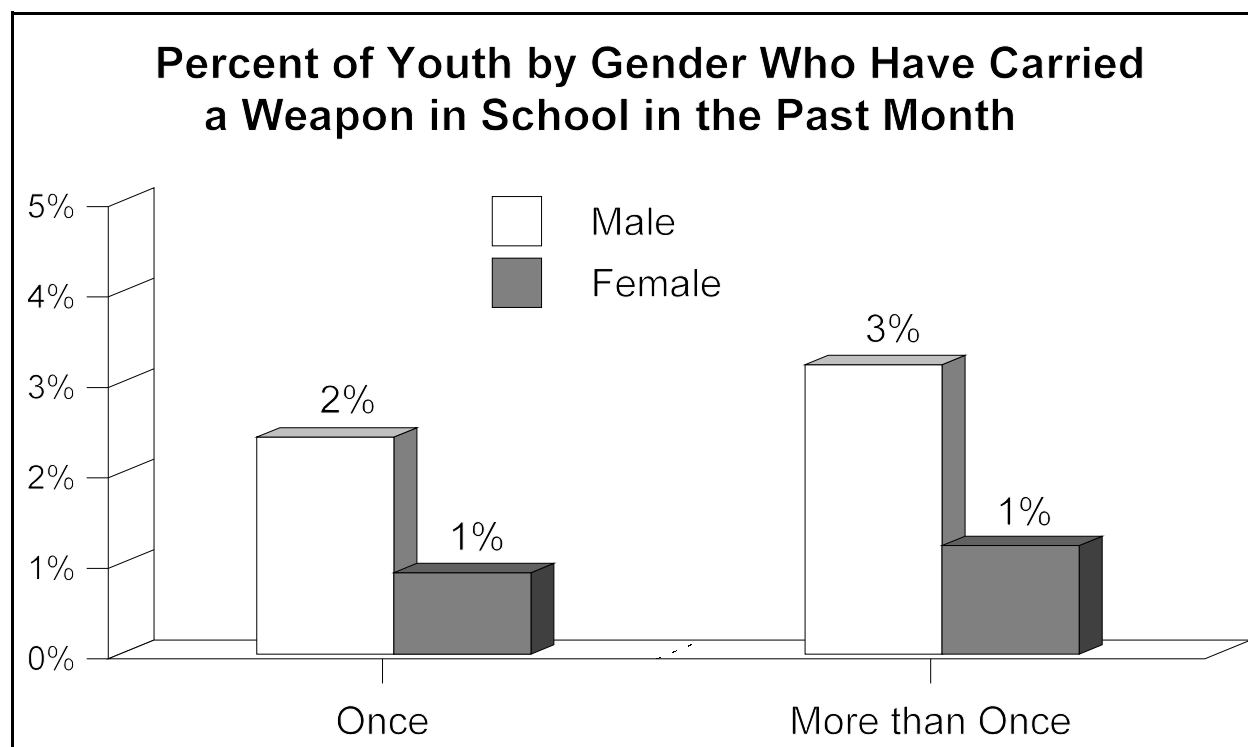
### **Key Findings:**

- One third of all teens (32%) report being involved in a physical fight **without** the presence of weapons at least once in the past year.
- More than one in ten teens (12%) report being involved in a physical fight with weapons at least once in the past year. Half of these youth (6%) report being in more than one such encounter.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Males are twice as likely as females to report being in a physical fight either with weapons (16% vs. 8%) or without weapons (45% vs. 22%) present.
- In 1995, 48% of males and 29% of females reported being in a physical fight without weapons at least once in the past year. These values are slightly higher than what teens report in 2000 (males, 45%; females, 22%).

## 7.5 Weapons in School



DC2000: Q92 by 1

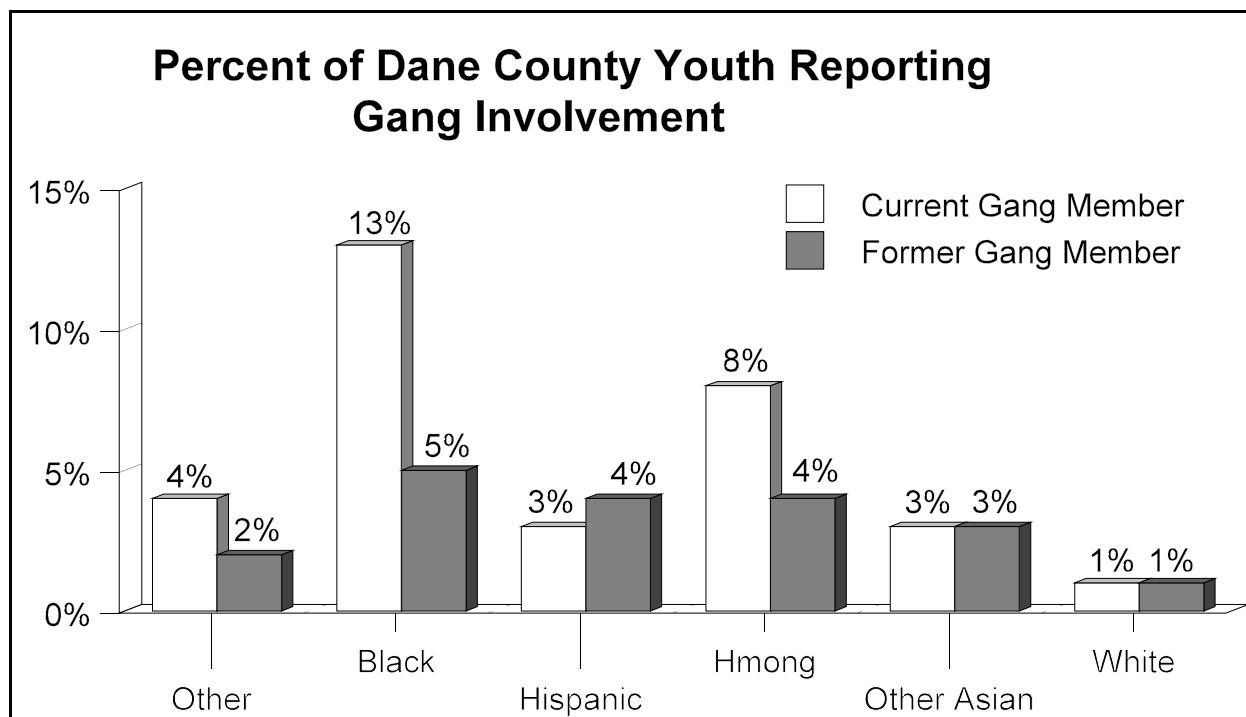
### **Key Findings:**

- A small proportion of teens in Dane County (4%) report they have carried a weapon to school at least once in the past month.
- Males (5%) are more likely than females (2%) to report carrying a weapon to school.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- The proportion of youth who report carrying a weapon to school at least once in the past month dropped from 10% in 1995 to 4% in 2000.
- While these findings may not seem alarming, it is important to recognize that 4% of the population of the *participating* school districts (N=23,233) is equivalent to at least 929 Dane County teens who report having carried a weapon to school in the past month.

## 7.6 Gang Involvement by Race



DC2000: Q90 by 2

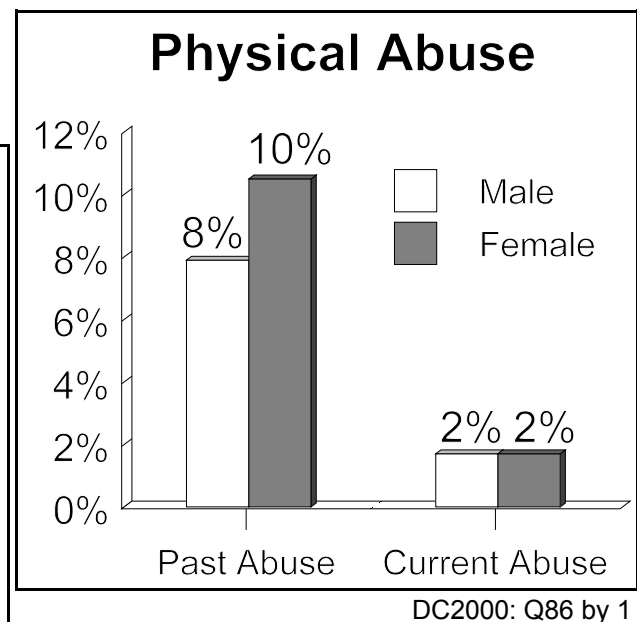
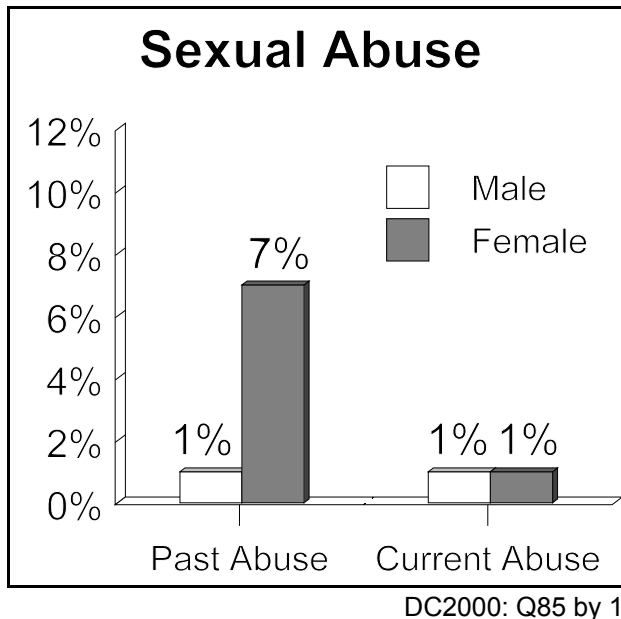
### **Key Findings:**

- Black/African-American youth are the most likely of all youth to report gang involvement. Nearly one in five (18%) African-American teens report past or present gang membership.
- Hmong youth are the second most likely of all youth to report gang involvement. Twice as many Hmong youth (8%) report being current gang members in comparison to former (4%) gang members.
- White teens (1%) report the lowest incidence of present gang membership.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Overall, 5% of Dane County youth report being pressured to join a gang. Hispanic youth (10%) are the most likely to report pressure, followed closely by Hmong youth (9%), and youth from other racial/ethnic backgrounds (e.g., Native American or mixed-race youth; 9%).
- Males (6%) are twice as likely as females (3%) to report being either former or current gang members.

## 7.7 Percent of Teens Experiencing Sexual and Physical Abuse by an Adult



### **Key Findings:**

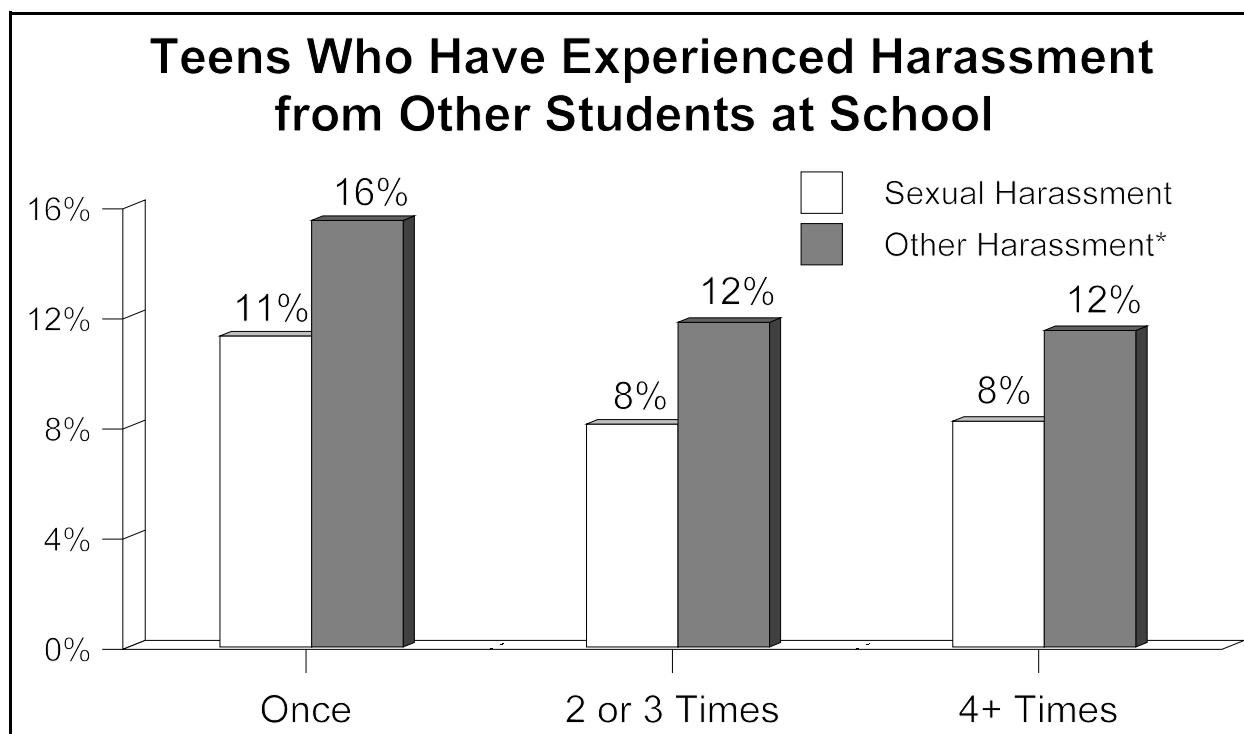
- With respect to current abuse, there is no gender difference in the proportion of males and females who report being either sexually (1%) or physically (2%) abused.
- With respect to past abuse, females are more likely than males to report having been either sexually (7% vs. 1%) or physically abused (10% vs. 8%).

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Between 1995 and 2000, there was a decrease in the overall proportion of youth who report ever being either sexually (9% vs. 5%) or physically (15% vs. 11%) abused.



## 7.8 Incidence of Sexual and Other Forms of Harassment



\*Harassment due to race, appearance, sexual orientation, disability, etc.

DC2000: Q106 & 107

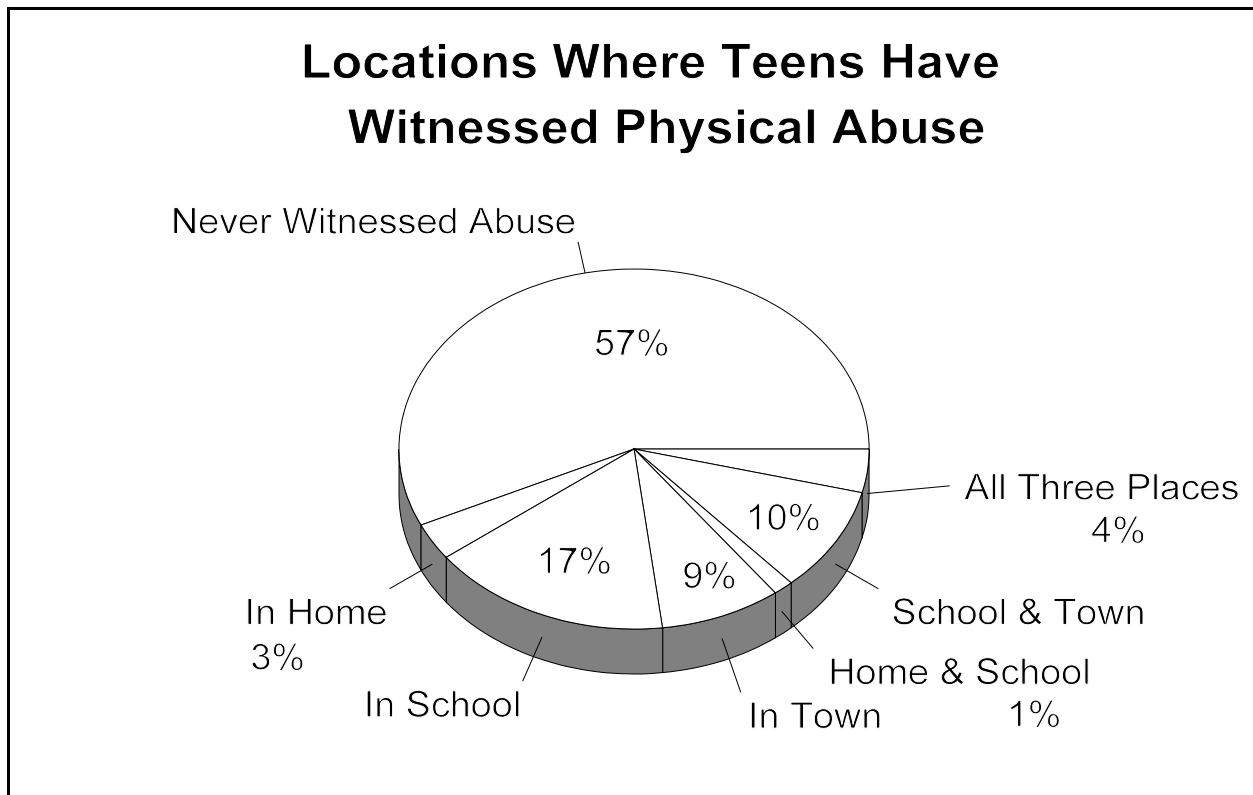
### **Key Findings:**

- More than one in four teens (27%) report having been sexually harassed by another student at school. More than half of these youth (16%) report multiple experiences of sexual harassment.
- Two in five teens (40%) report experiencing some other form of harassment from another student at school.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Females are more than twice as likely as males to report being sexually harassed by a student at school (38% vs. 17%).
- Males and females are about equally likely to report experiencing some other form of harassment from a student at school (38% vs. 40%).

## 7.9 Witnessing Physical Abuse



DC2000: Q89

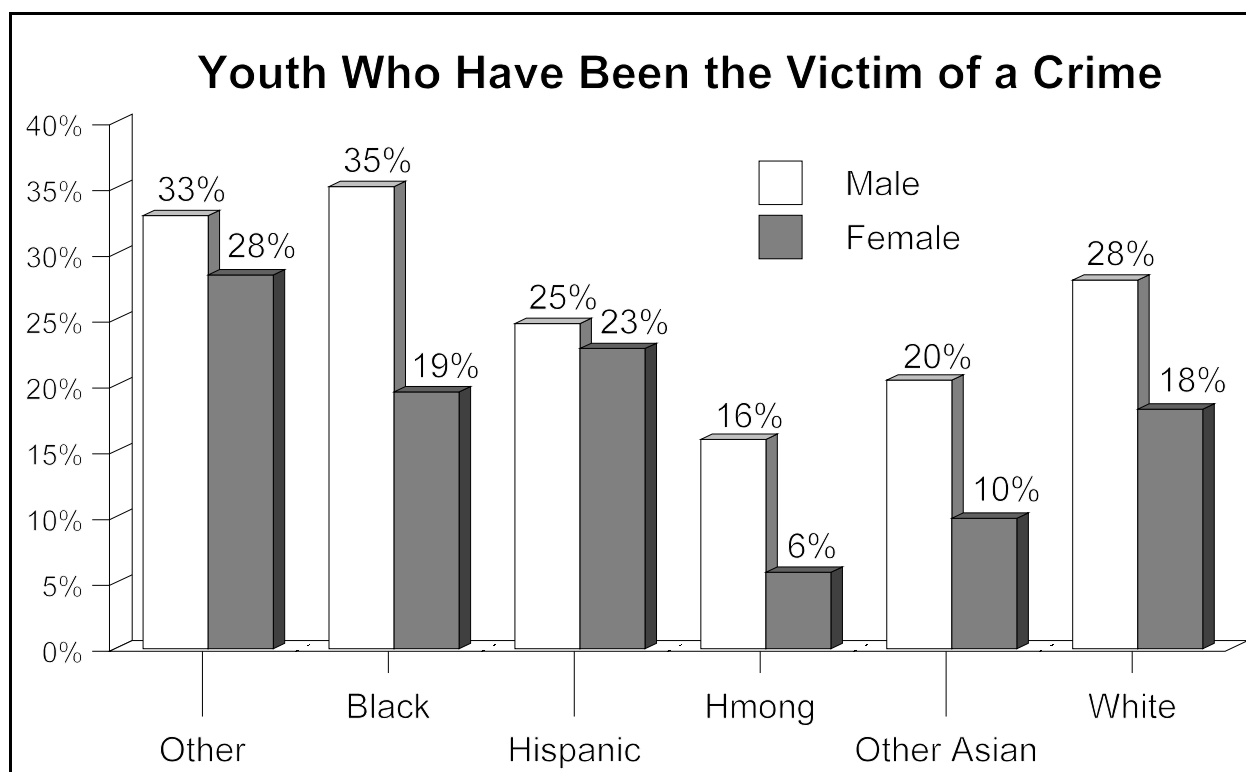
### **Key Findings:**

- More than two out of five (43%) teens in Dane County report they have personally witnessed someone being beaten or physically abused.
- Most teens report witnessing such abuse in either their school (17%), the community (9%), or both (10%).
- A total of 8% of Dane County youth report witnessing domestic violence. This includes youth who report witnessing abuse just in their home (3%), in their home & school (1%) and in all three of these places (4%).

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- There have been few changes since 1995 in the proportion of teens who report witnessing abuse overall (46% in 1995; 43% in 2000) or witnessing domestic violence in particular (9% in 1995; 8% in 2000).

## 7.10 Youth Who Have Been the Victim of a Crime



DC2000: Q91 by 2, 1

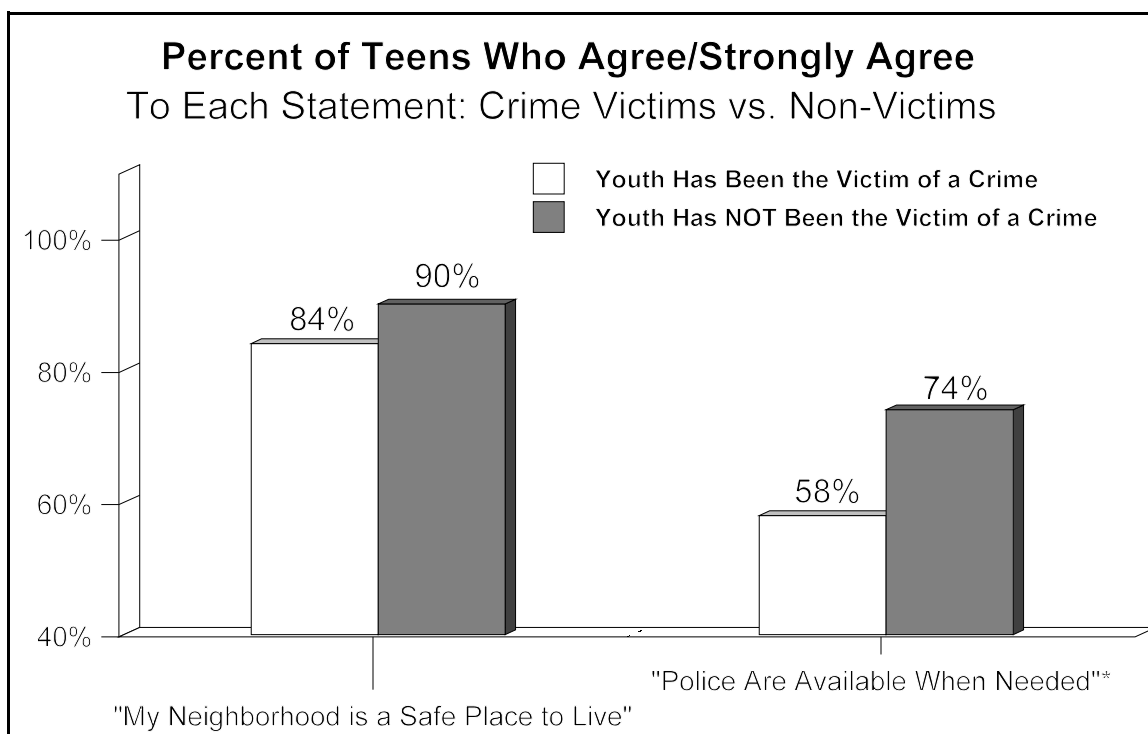
### **Key Findings:**

- Across all racial and ethnic groups, males are more likely than females to report having been the victim of a crime.
- Black/African-American males (35%) and males from other racial or ethnic groups (e.g., Native American and mixed-race youth; 33%) are the most likely of all youth to report having been the victim of a crime.
- Hmong males (16%) and females (6%) report the lowest levels of victimization.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Overall, one in four (24%) teens in Dane County report having been the victim of a crime. While most crime victims (15%) report only one instance of victimization, one third of crime victims (8%) report multiple instances of victimization.
- Between 1995 and 2000, the rate of victimization dropped substantially for both males (37% in 1995; 28% in 2000) and females (26% in 1995; 19% in 2000).

## 7.11 Neighborhood Safety and Police Reliability in Relation to Victimization



DC2000: Q114 by 109, 91

\*Actual wording: "I can count on police if I am having a problem or need help"

### **Key Findings:**

- Most youth in Dane County feel that their neighborhood is a safe place to live. However, crime victims are less likely than non-victims to feel this way (84% vs. 90%).
- Teens who have been the victim of a crime are less likely than non-victims to feel they can count on police officers if they are in trouble or need help (58% vs. 74%).

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Black/African-American (40%), Hmong (40%), and Hispanic (34%) youth are the most likely of all youth to report that they cannot count on police officers if they have a problem and need help.



## Chapter 8: Alcohol, Tobacco, Marijuana & Other Drugs

As teenagers gain greater independence, they become increasingly responsible for making decisions that effect their health and safety. Unfortunately, many adolescents choose to engage in behaviors which have the potential to put not only their health, but their lives and the lives of others at risk. The use of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, by young people is a primary factor which undermines adolescent health.<sup>1</sup> According to a recent statewide survey of Wisconsin high school students, 62% have tried cigarettes, 77% have used alcohol, and 39% have used marijuana.<sup>2</sup> This same survey indicates that episodic heavy drinking, often referred to as binge drinking (i.e. having five or more alcoholic drinks at one time), is a problem among 34% of 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders in Wisconsin.

Substance abuse also poses an immediate threat to the lives of both teens and others due to fatalities encountered in automobile accidents involving teenagers who were driving while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Young drivers are involved in 14% of all fatal automobile crashes, and twenty-one percent of young drivers involved in fatal crashes had been drinking.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the immediate threat posed by driving while under the influence, alcohol and other drugs can also negatively impact the long term health of young people. Frequent alcohol use during adolescence may lead to problem drinking in adulthood. It also puts individuals at risk for various behavioral, psychological, and social problems. For these reasons, it is important to understand the alcohol and other drug related problems of our youth.

### The questions examined in this chapter include:

- What proportion of Dane County youth who drink alcohol drink it in excess?
- How often do young people in Dane County risk serious injury by riding in a car with a driver who has been drinking or using other drugs?
- How many teens in Dane County smoke or are heavy smokers of cigarettes?
- To what extent do youth in Dane County use marijuana and other drugs?

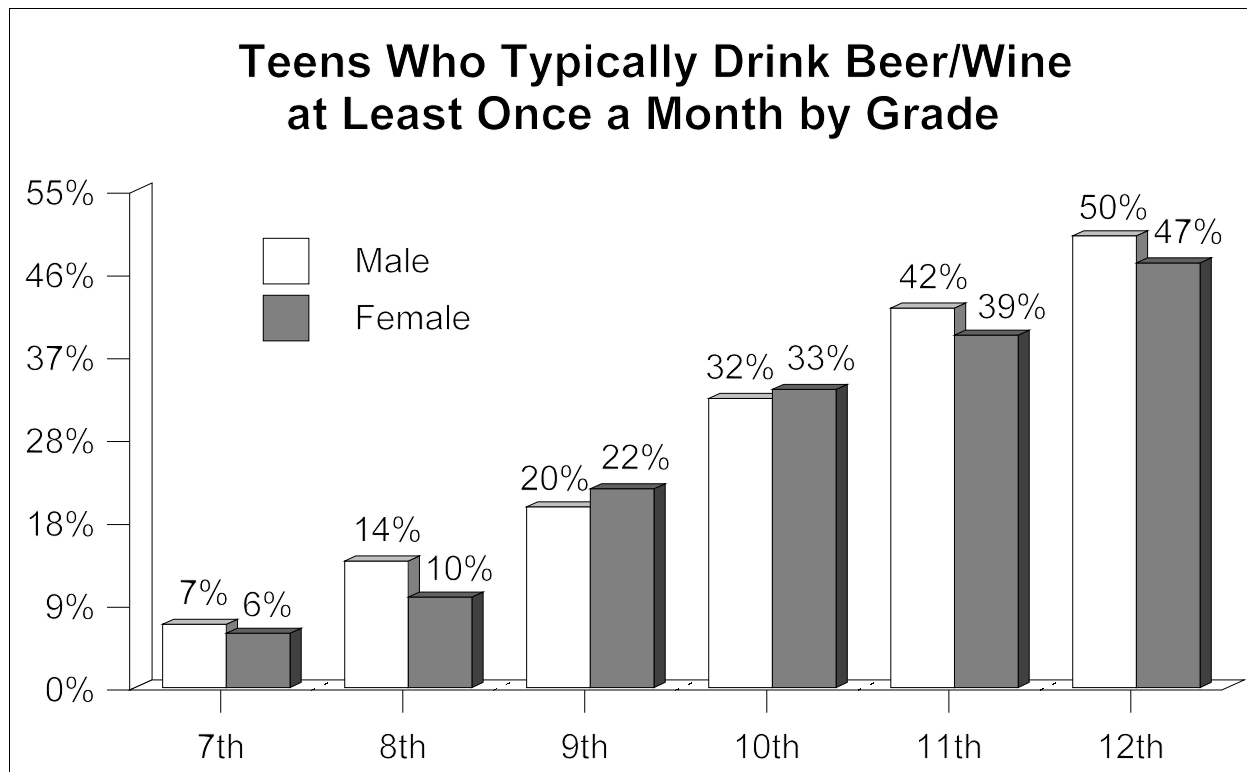
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<sup>1</sup>Resnick, M.D. et al., (1997). Protecting adolescents from harm: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health. Journal of American Medical Association, 278, 823-832.

<sup>2</sup>Sloan, M. (2000). Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Executive Summary and Report. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction & Wisconsin Survey Research Laboratory, University of Wisconsin-Extension.

<sup>3</sup>National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (1998). Appendix C: Teen Crash Statistics, Saving Teenage Lives: The Case for Graduated Licensing. <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/newdriver/SaveTeens/>

## 8.1 Beer/Wine Use Among Dane County Youth



DC2000: Q42 by 4, 1

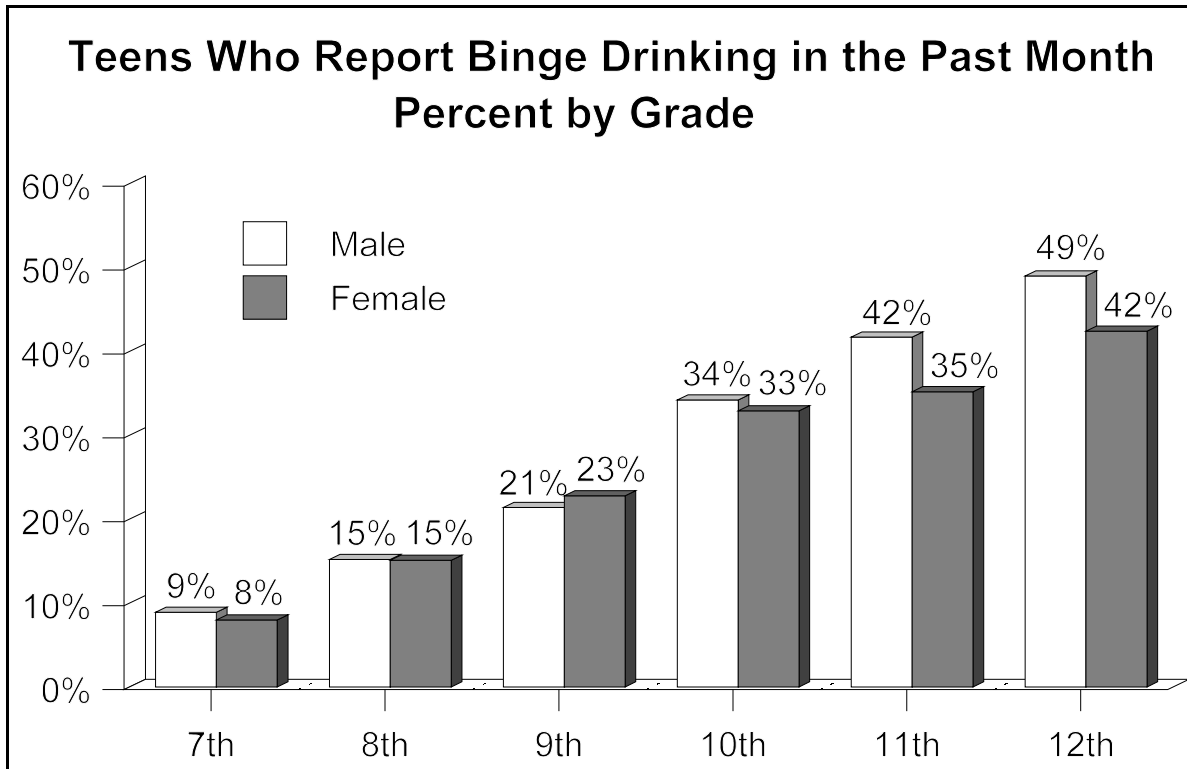
### **Key Findings:**

- By the time teens are in their senior year of high school about half of both males (50%) and females (47%) report they typically drink beer or wine at least once a month.
- Overall, there is little gender difference between males and females with respect to the frequency in which they drink alcohol.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Overall, 51% of Dane County youth report drinking beer or wine at least once in the past year. Half of these youth (26%) report they typically drink at least once a month.
- Nearly one in five teens (19%) report drinking hard liquor in the past month.
- Since 1995, monthly alcohol use has changed little among high school seniors (49% in 1995; 48% in 2000). However, it has dropped among teens in 7<sup>th</sup> (10% in 1995; 6% in 2000) and 8<sup>th</sup> (20% in 1995; 12% in 2000) grade.

## 8.2 Excessive Alcohol Use: Binge Drinking



Binge drinking is defined as drinking five or more alcoholic beverages at one time

DC2000: Q52 by 4,1

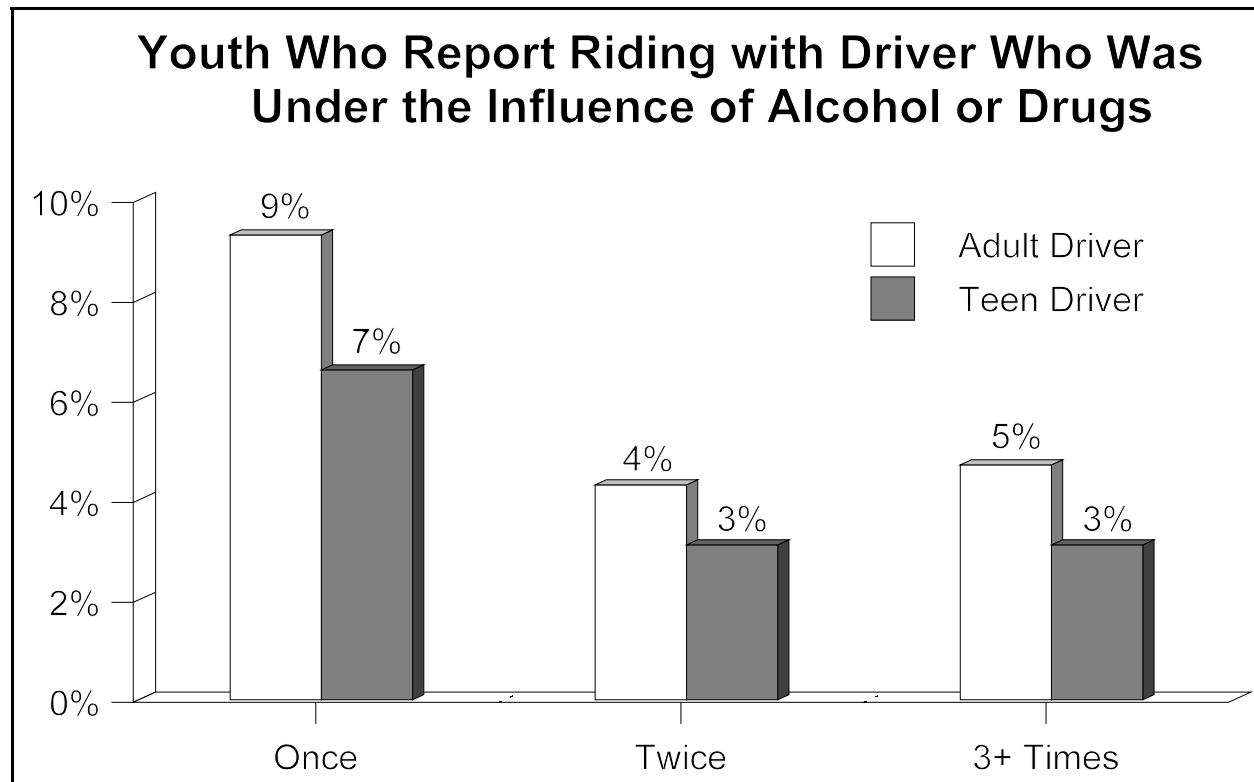
### **Key Findings:**

- Among high school seniors, half of males (49%) and two out of five females (42%) report at least one episode of binge drinking (i.e., drinking five or more alcoholic beverages at one time) in the past month.
- Among 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> graders, males are more likely than females to report drinking excessively in the past month.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- When teens drink alcohol they tend to drink excessively. Thus, one third (31%) of teens who drink only once or twice a year, and three out of four (77%) teens who drink at least once a month, report binge drinking in the past month.
- Four out of five 12<sup>th</sup> graders (82%) who drink at least once a month report binge drinking in the past month.
- The overall rate of binge drinking among Dane County youth (27%) did not change between 1995 and 2000.

### 8.3 Teen Passengers of Drivers Who are Under the Influence of Alcohol or Other Drugs



DC2000: Q54 & 56

#### **Key Findings:**

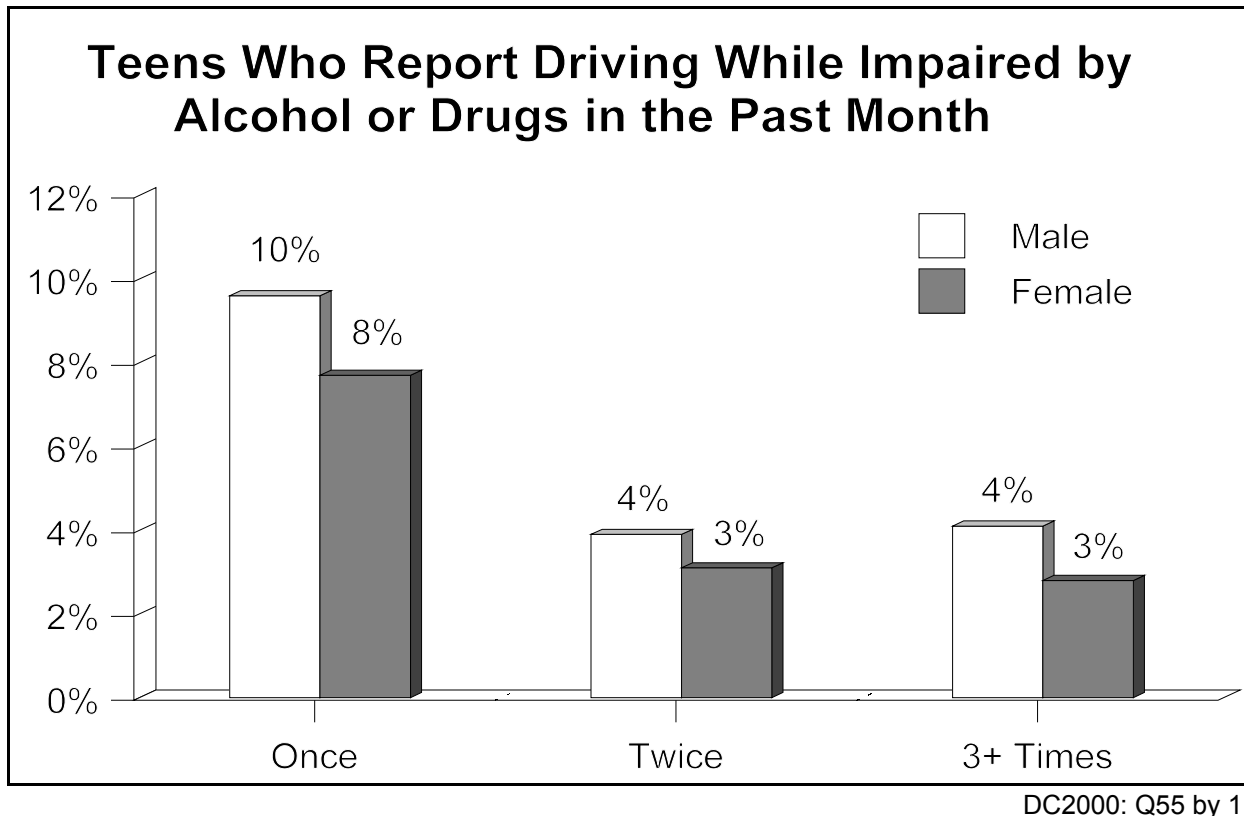
- Nearly one in five teens (18%) report riding at least once in the past month with an adult driver who was under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Half of these youth (9%) were exposed to this risk multiple times.
- More teens report riding with an **adult** driver who was under the influence of alcohol or drugs than report riding with a teen driver who was under the influence of alcohol or other drugs (18% vs. 13%).

#### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Teens 16 years old or older are more than twice as likely as teens under 16 to report riding with a **teen** driver who was under the influence of alcohol or other drugs (21% vs. 8%). However, this age difference is not found with respect to teens who ride with an **adult** driver who was under the influence (19% vs. 18%).
- Teens who need but do not yet receive help for a drug or alcohol problem of a family member are more likely to ride with an impaired adult driver (42%) than those who receive help (33%) or those who report they do not need help (16%).



## 8.4 Teens Who Drive While Impaired: Youth Age 16 Years or Older



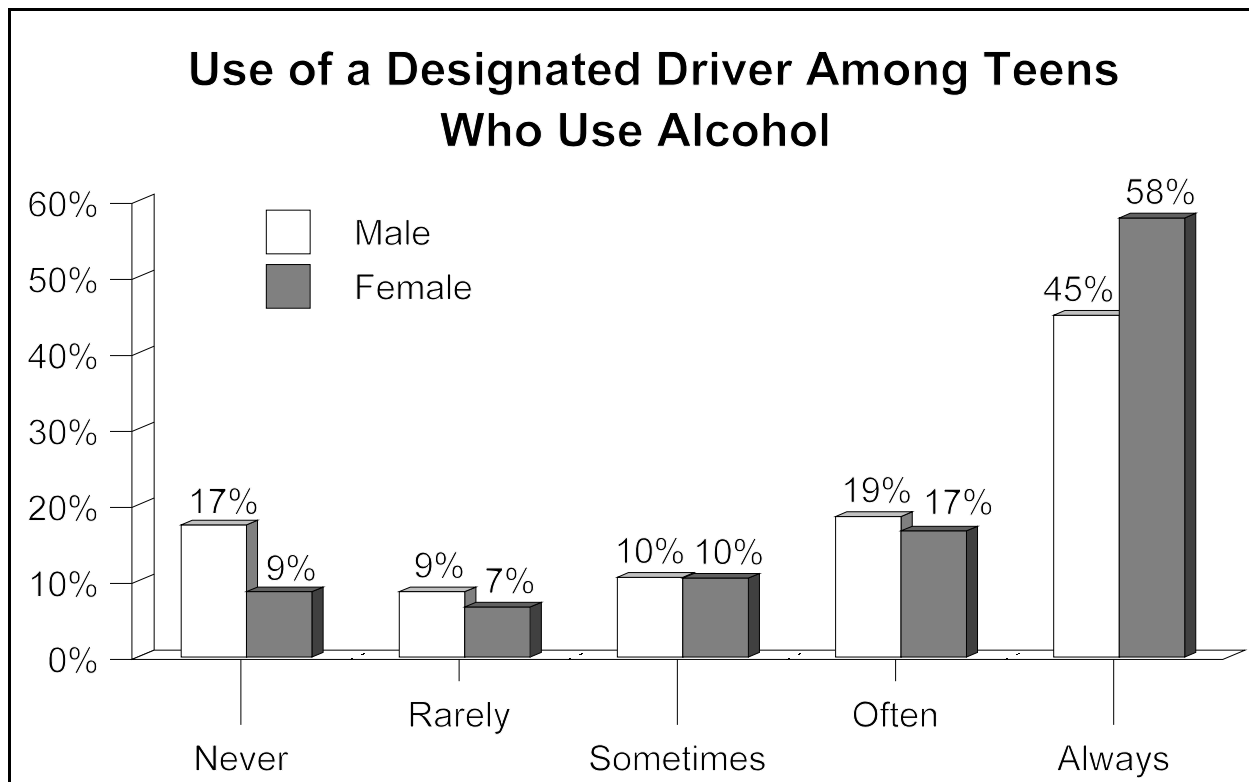
### **Key Findings:**

- Among teens who are old enough to drive, males (18%) are more likely than females (14%) to report driving a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs at least once in the past month.
- Most teens who drive while under the influence say they engaged in this behavior only once in the past month (males, 10%; females, 8%).
- However, 8% of males and 6% of females who are old enough to drive report multiple instances of driving while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs in the past month alone.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Overall, 16% of teens age 16 years or older report driving while impaired by alcohol or other drugs at least once in the past month.
- Teens age 16 or older are two and a half times more likely to drive while impaired in the past month if they themselves were the passenger of an adult who was driving while impaired (30% vs. 12%).

## 8.5 Use of a Designated Driver Among Teen Drinkers



DC2000: Q53 by 1

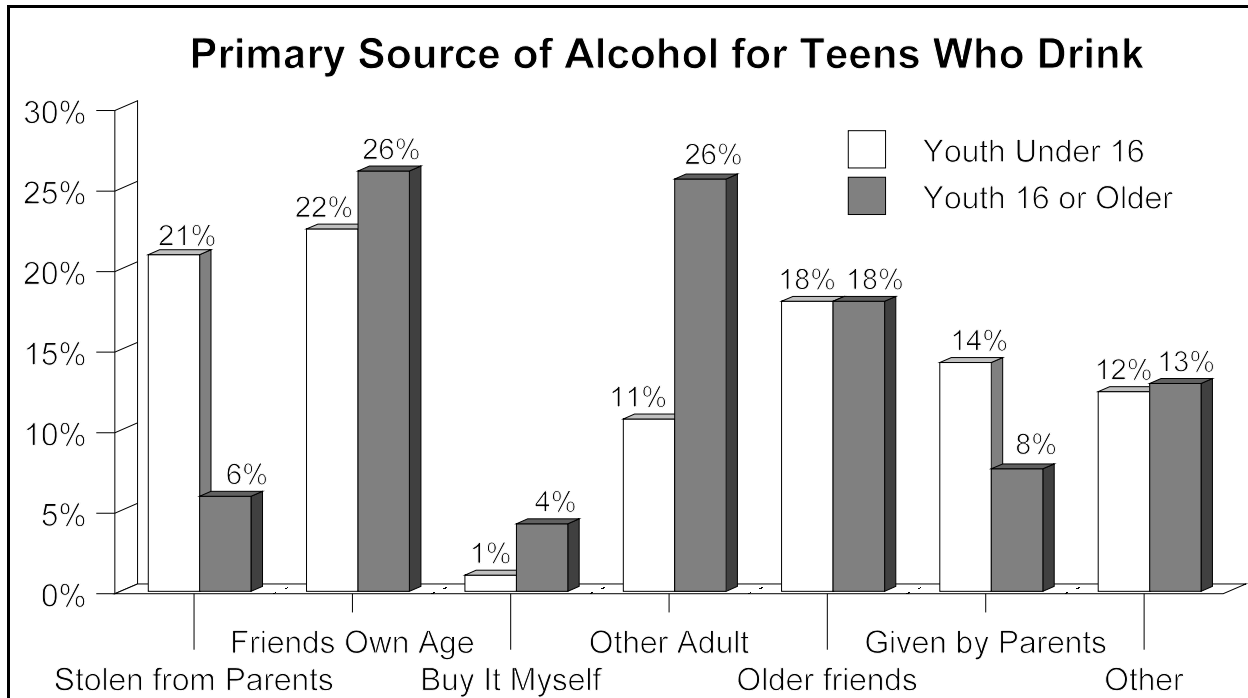
### **Key Findings:**

- Among youth who drink alcohol, females are more likely than males to reduce their risk of experiencing an automobile accident by using a designated driver.
- Females are more likely than males to report “Always” using a designated driver (58% vs. 45%) and less likely than males to report “Never” using a designated driver (9% vs. 17%) when out drinking with friends.
- More than one quarter (26%) of males who drink alcohol report they “Never” or “Rarely” use a designated driver when out drinking with friends.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Overall, 48% of Dane County youth who drink alcohol report that they do not consistently use a designated driver when out drinking with friends. This value increases to 54% among youth who regularly drink alcohol once a month or more, and 58% among males who drink once a month or more.

## 8.6 Youths' Primary Source of Alcohol by Age



DC2000: Q57 by 3

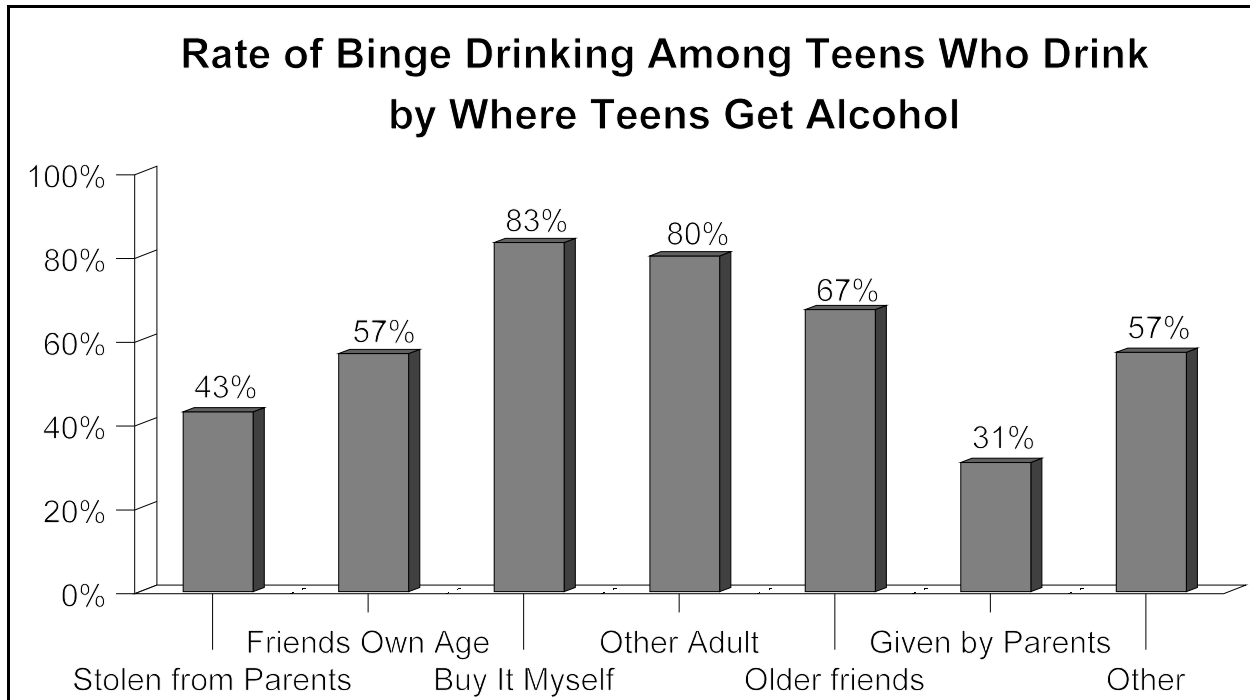
### **Key Findings:**

- Among younger teens who drink, the primary sources of alcohol are friends their own age (23%), stealing it from parents (21%), and older friends (18%).
- Among older teens who drink, the primary sources of alcohol are friends their own age (26%), other adults who buy it for them (26%), and older friends (18%).
- Very few teens report buying alcohol themselves (1% younger; 4% older).
- Older teens are unlikely to report stealing alcohol from their parents (6%) despite the fact that this is a primary method of obtaining alcohol among younger teens.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Overall, 11% of teens who drink report that their primary source of alcohol is their parents.

## 8.7 Excessive Alcohol Use in Relation to a Teen’s Primary Source of Alcohol



DC2000: Q52 by 57

**Binge Drinking** is defined as having 5 or more alcoholic drinks in a row.

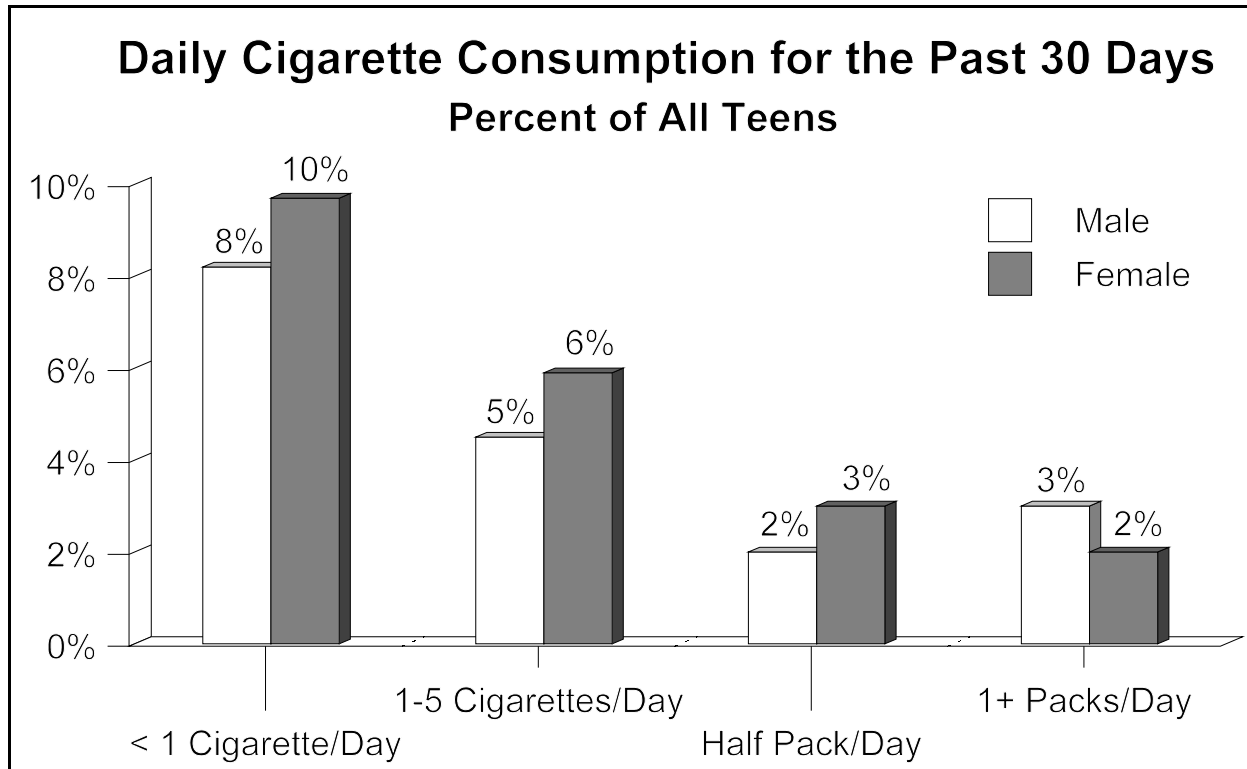
### **Key Findings:**

- Teens are most likely to report drinking excessively (83%) if they primarily get alcohol by purchasing it themselves. However very few teens overall (3%) obtain alcohol this way (see Figure 8.6).
- A greater concern is the rate of binge drinking (80%) among youth who report their primary source of alcohol is an adult other than a parent who buys if for them. More than one quarter (26%) of teens 16 years old or older report that this is their primary source of alcohol (see Figure 8.6).
- Teens whose parents give them alcohol are the least likely of all youth who drink alcohol to report drinking excessively in the past month (31%).

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Binge drinking among teens who typically drink at least once a month is lowest among youth whose parents give them alcohol (49%) and highest among youth whose primary source of alcohol is some other adult (89%), who buy it themselves (86%), or who get if from older friends (84%).

## 8.8 Daily Cigarette Consumption: Percent of All Teens



DC2000: Q59 by 1

### **Key Findings:**

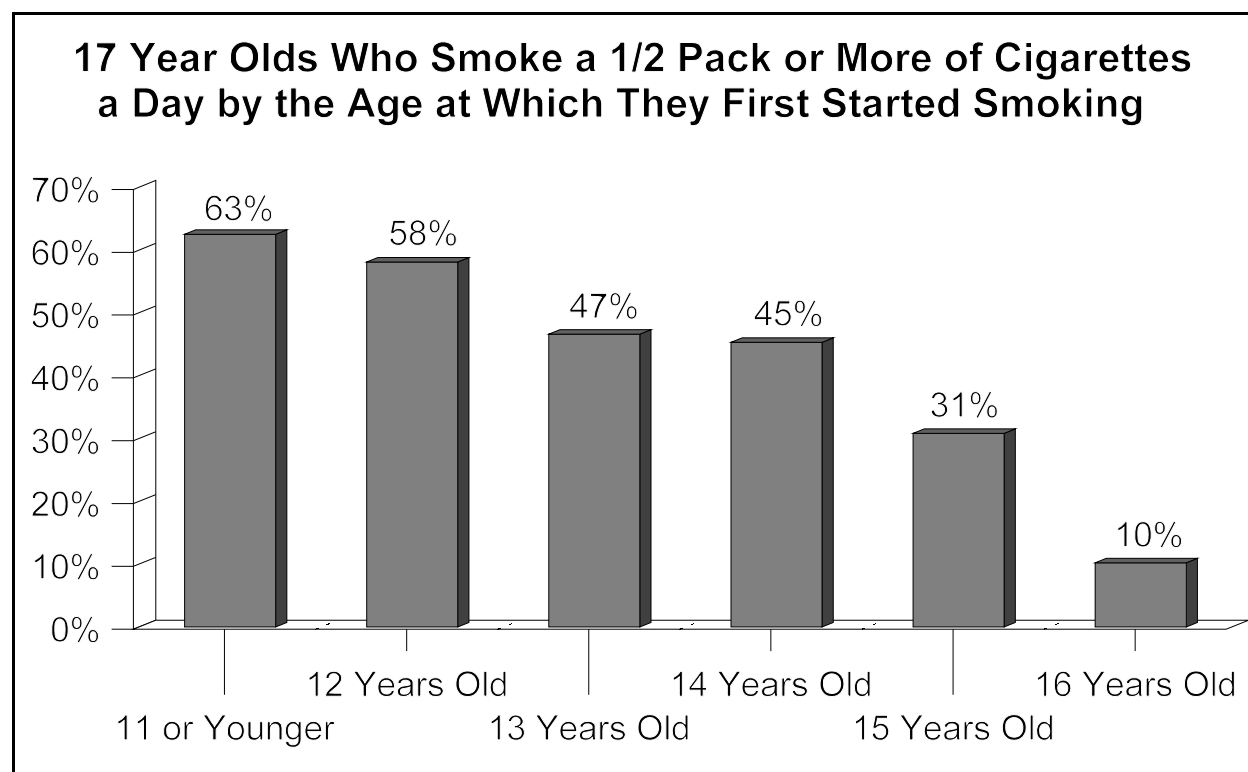
- Most teens in Dane County (males, 83%; females, 79%) do not smoke.
- Teens who do smoke generally smoke less than one cigarette a day.
- Females are more likely than males to report smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days (21% vs. 17%). However, they are no more likely than males to be heavy smokers.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- As teens get older, there is a steady increase in the proportion who report smoking. The overall smoking rate by grade is as follows:
 

7 <sup>th</sup> grade - 4%	10 <sup>th</sup> grade - 23%
8 <sup>th</sup> grade - 11%	11 <sup>th</sup> grade - 28%
9 <sup>th</sup> grade - 18%	12 <sup>th</sup> grade - 33%
- The proportion of teens who smoke at least a half pack of cigarettes a day has decreased from 9% in 1995 to 5% in 2000.

## 8.9 Heavy Smoking in Relation to When Teens First Started Smoking Cigarettes: 17 Year Old Teens



DC2000: Q59 by 58, 3

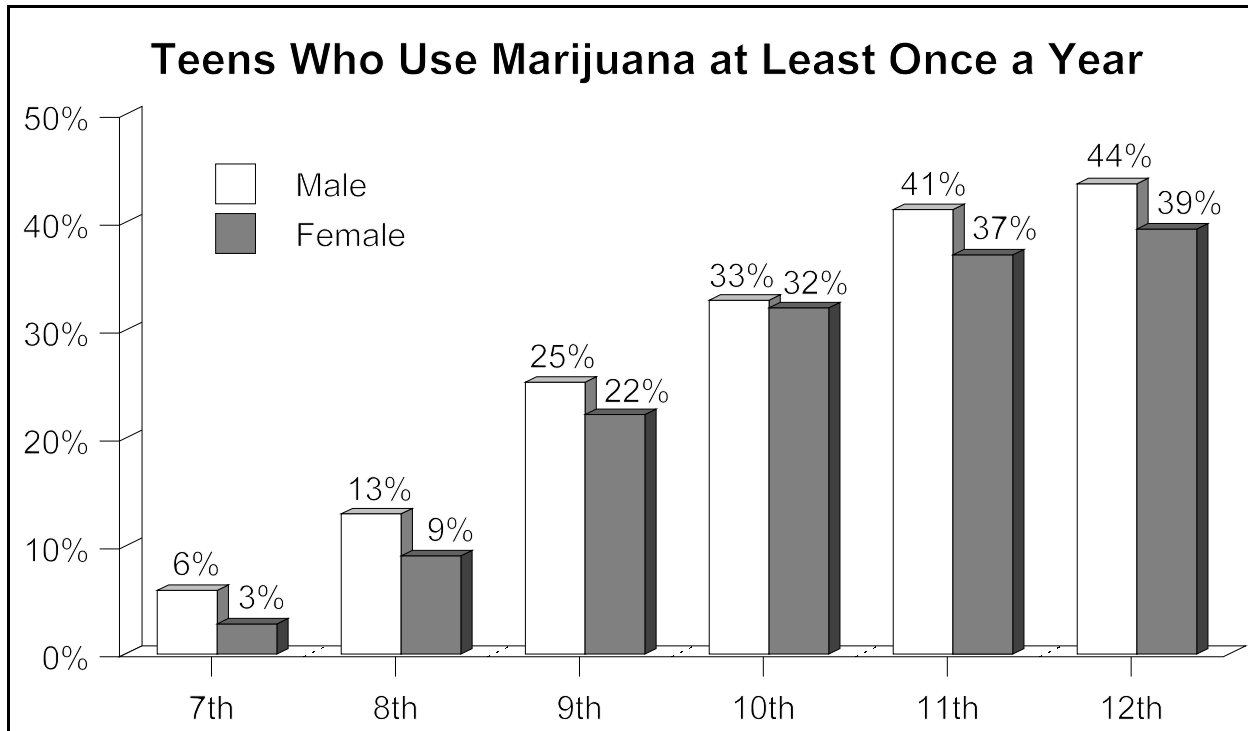
### **Key Findings:**

- The longer teens have been smoking the more likely it is that they smoke heavily.
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of 17 year olds who began smoking at age 11 or younger report smoking at least a half pack of cigarettes a day.
- Seventeen year olds who have been smoking for about two years (i.e., started at age 15; 31%) are three times more likely to smoke heavily than their peers who began smoking about one year ago (i.e., started at age 16; 10%).

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Twenty-one percent of males and 18% of females who smoke report they first began smoking when they were 11 years old or younger.
- Three quarters of teens who smoke (75%) report they first began smoking when they were fourteen years old or younger.

## 8.10 Marijuana Use



DC2000: Q44 by 4,1

### **Key Findings:**

- Older teens are far more likely than younger teens to report using marijuana at least once in the past year.
- The likelihood that a youth has used marijuana at least once in the past year increases about eightfold between 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Across all grades, males are more likely than females to report using marijuana at least once in the past year.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Overall, 26% of males and 24% of females report using marijuana at least once in the past year. More than half of these youths (males, 16%; females, 13%) report they use marijuana once a month or more.
- One in three (35%) teens who use marijuana once a month or more report they have also used other hallucinogens in the past year in comparison to only 2% of non-marijuana users.

## 8.11 Other Drug Use: 2000 vs. 1995

Type of Drug: 2000 Survey	Youth Under 16	Youth 16 or Older	All Teens
Inhalants	4%	3%	3%
Hallucinogens*	3%	11%	6%
Cocaine/Crack	2%	3%	2%
Stimulants	2%	5%	3%
Steroids	2%	3%	2%
Unauthorized prescription drugs	4%	7%	5%

DC2000: Q46 - 51 by 3

Type of drug: 1995 Survey	Youth Under 16	Youth 16 or Older	All Teens
Inhalants	11%	11%	11%
Hallucinogens*	6%	14%	9%
Cocaine/Crack	4%	4%	4%

\*Hallucinogens other than Marijuana (e.g., LSD, acid, STP, psilocybin, mushrooms, mescaline, peyote, PCP, angel dust, etc.)

### Key Findings:

- For the most part, only a small proportion of youth in the 2000 survey report using hard drugs in the past year.
- The exception to this are older teens (i.e., youth 16 or older) who report a relatively high rate of hallucinogen use (11%).
- The second most commonly used drug listed on the 2000 survey is unauthorized prescription drugs. Older teens (7%) are more likely than younger teens (4%) to use them.
- In comparison to the 1995 survey, fewer teens in 2000 report using inhalants, hallucinogens or cocaine/crack

### Other Notable Findings:

- The 1995 survey did not question youth about their use of stimulants, steroids or unauthorized prescription drugs.





## Chapter 9: Trends Over Time

As time passes, fads come and go, crises emerge and are resolved, and young people grow, develop and prepare to take up their roles as adults in our society. For the past twenty years, the Dane County Youth Commission has been keeping track of these changes at five-year intervals. Five years is a long time in the life of an adolescent. A tremendous amount of development takes place during these years. The seventh graders who were first surveyed in 1980 became the 12<sup>th</sup> graders who were surveyed in 1985. Today they are in their thirties, and most likely have jobs and families of their own.

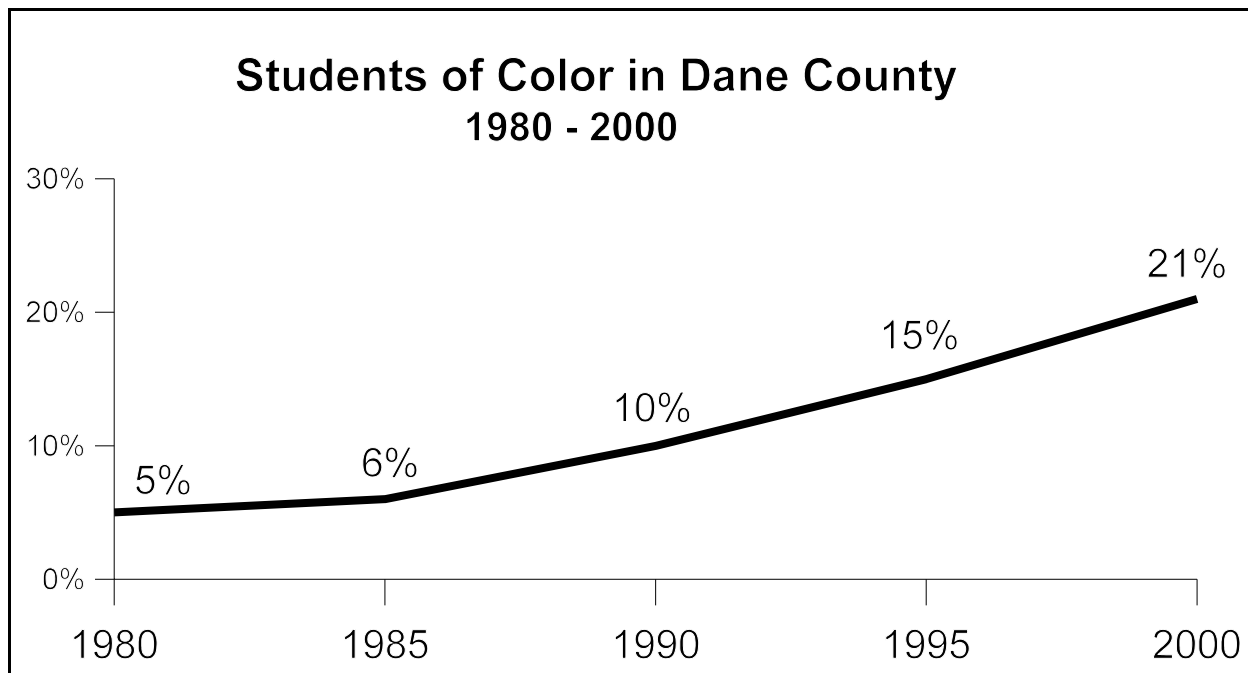
Every five years new cohorts are asked to come forward and add their perspective on the trials and triumphs which characterize adolescence. In doing so they provide us with insight into both the continuity of the developmental process, and the differences that exist in the life experiences of one cohort versus another as each adapts to the ever-changing, ever-widening, and increasingly unpredictable society in which we live. These five year snapshots of our young people also provide us with an understanding of long term trends, such as whether the health of our youth and opportunities they encounter have changed over the past twenty years.

In this chapter, we look back over twenty years of Dane County youth surveys and examine what the teens in our communities have said and now say about their lives.

### **The trends examined in this chapter include:**

- The increasing racial and ethnic diversity of Dane County Youth.
- Changes in youth employment, volunteerism, and aspirations for the future.
- Teen safety and health with respect to school, access to birth control, and use of a designated driver.
- Changes in drug use patterns as they relate to alcohol, tobacco and marijuana.

## 9.1 Racial / Ethnic Diversity Among Dane County Youth: 1980 - 2000



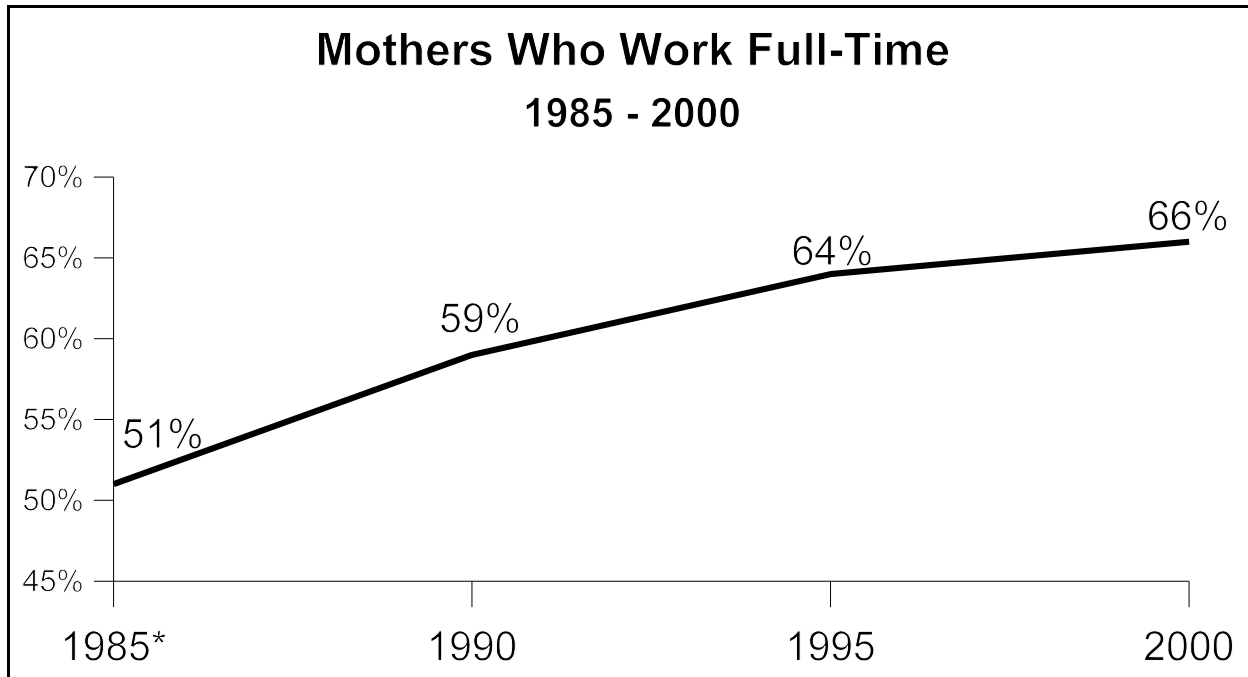
### **Key Findings:**

- For the past two decades the proportion of students of color in Dane County has increased steadily.
- In 1980, one in twenty (5%) teens were students of color, in comparison to one in ten (10%) in 1990, and one in five (21%) in 2000.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Students of color include Black/African-American, Hispanic, Hmong, Other Asian, Native American, Mixed Race, and other racial/ethnic groups. However, across the years individuals have been classified differently among these groups making it difficult to provide direct comparisons of population changes.
- For the full distribution of youth by race for the 2000 survey, please see Figure 1.3 of this report.

## 9.2 Work Status of Mothers: 1985 - 2000



\*The first year in which data was collected

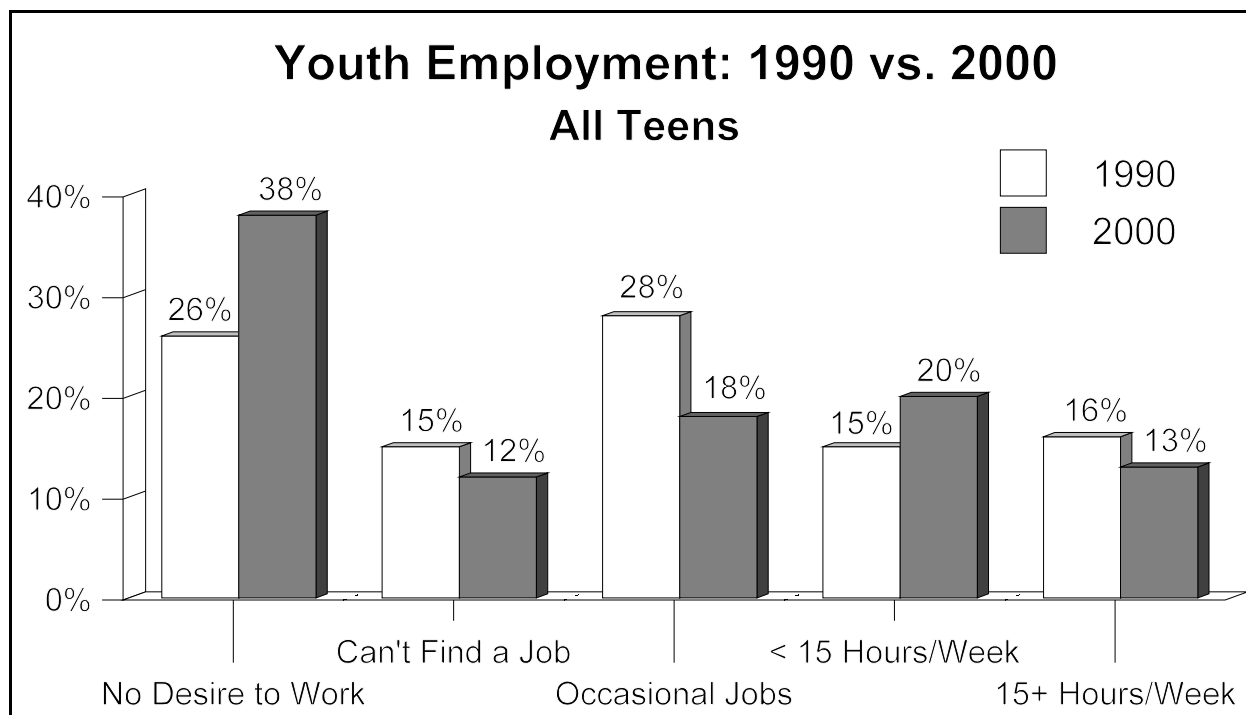
### **Key Findings:**

- Mothers who work full-time are steadily becoming the norm among families with adolescents in Dane County.
- The proportion of youth who report their mother works full-time has increased from one half (51%) in 1985 to two thirds (66%) in 2000.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- As more mothers are working full-time fewer are working part time. In 1985, 24% of mothers were reported to work part-time in comparison to 19% in 2000.
- Mothers who are homemakers (i.e., who do not work outside the home) are steadily decreasing. In 1985, one in five teens (19%) reported that their mother did not work outside the home. In 2000, less than half as many did so (8%).
- The proportion of youth who report that their fathers are employed full-time dropped from 84% in 1980 to 82% in 1990, but then increased to 88% in 1995 and 90% in 2000.

### 9.3 Employment Among Dane County Youth: 1990 vs. 2000



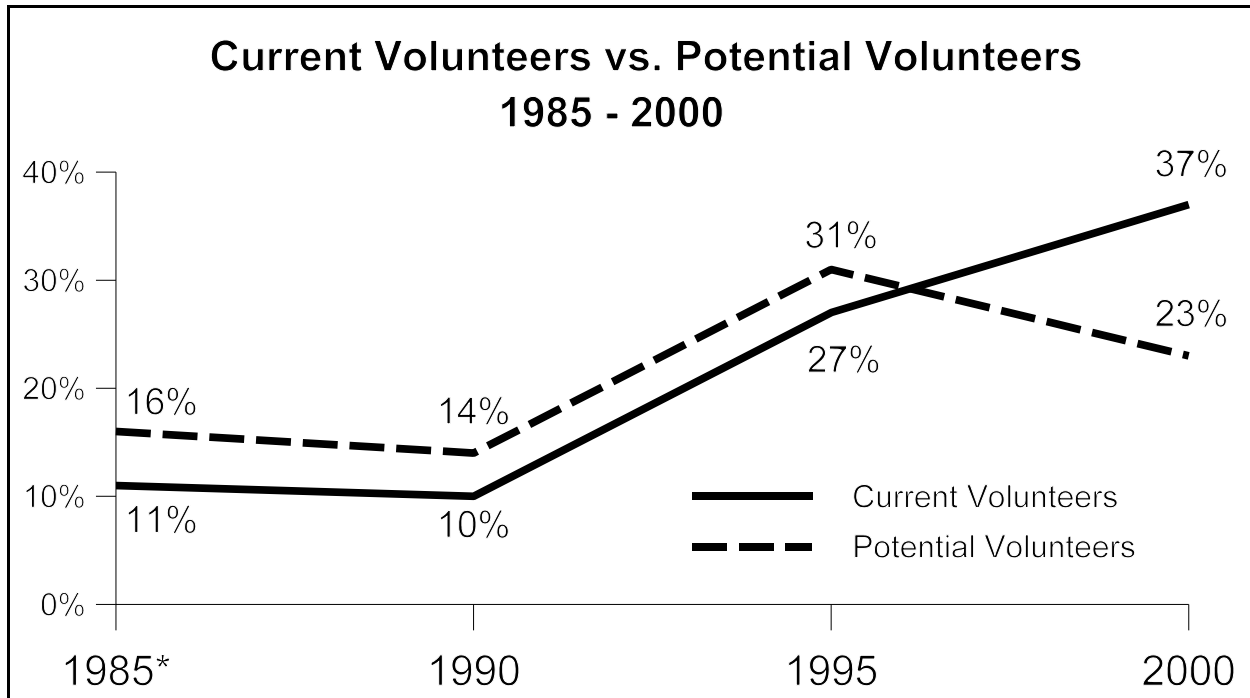
#### Key Findings:

- In the 2000 survey, a measure of youth employment used in 1990 but removed in 1995 was reinstated. An examination of the results indicate that the profile of youth employment has indeed changed over the course of the decade.
- In 2000, more than one third (38%) of teens reported having no desire to work. In 1990, a little over one quarter (26%) responded this way.
- In comparison to 1995, teens in 2000 who do work are more likely to work at a regular job, but for fewer hours. In 1995, slightly more teens (15%) reported having difficulty finding a job in comparison to 2000 (12%).

#### Other Notable Findings:

- In 1995, 46% of youth reported not working, 22% reported working 5 - 15 hours per week, and 14% reported working more than 16 hours per week. However, one must compare these values to those above with caution, because these youth were not given the option to report working occasional jobs or being unable to find a job, as opposed to having no desire to work.

## 9.4 Current Vs. Potential Volunteers: 1985 - 2000



\*The first year in which data was collected

**Potential** volunteers are youth who do not volunteer, but are interested in knowing more about volunteering.

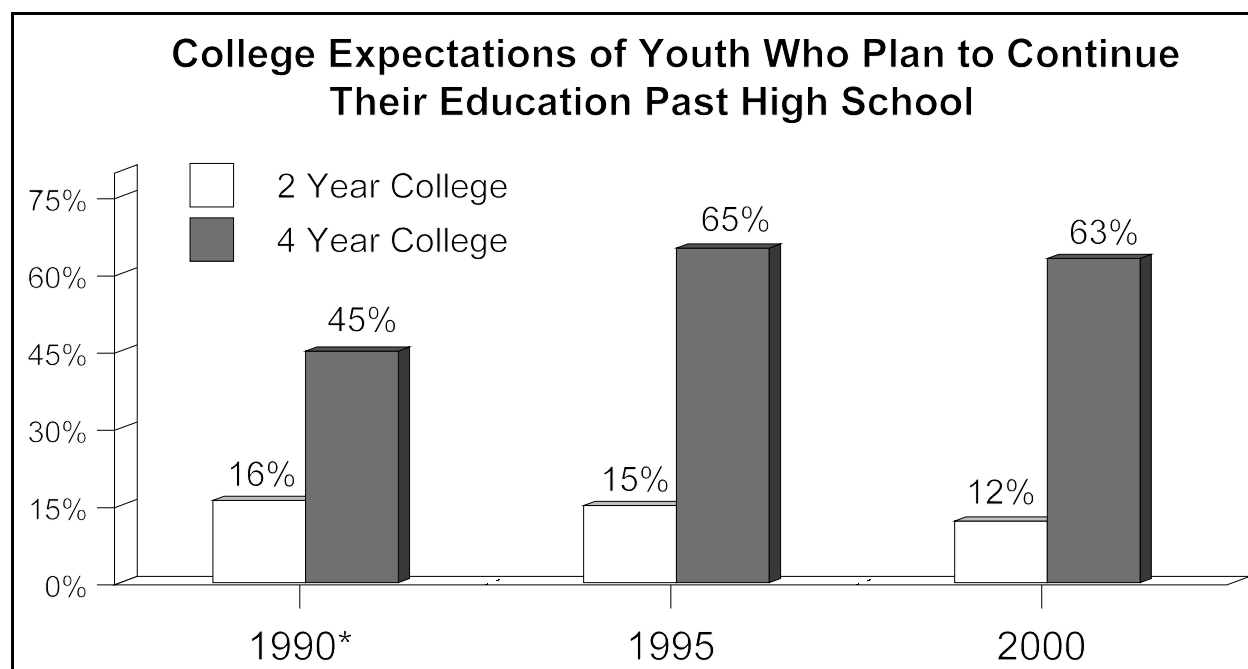
### **Key Findings:**

- In the 2000 sample, the relationship between potential volunteers (i.e., youth who are interested but do not yet volunteer) and current volunteers changed dramatically in relation to past trends.
- In 1985, one in ten teens (11%) reported volunteering their time in comparison to more than one in three (37%) in 2000.
- Current youth volunteers now substantially outnumber potential volunteers, suggesting that efforts to encourage youth to participate in their community have been successful.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- In 1985, 73% of youth (males, 78%; females, 68%) reported having no interest in volunteering. This rate has dropped to 40% in the year 2000 (males, 53%; females, 26%).

## 9.5 Youth Who Plan to Continue Their Education Past High School: 1990 - 2000



\*The first year in which data was collected

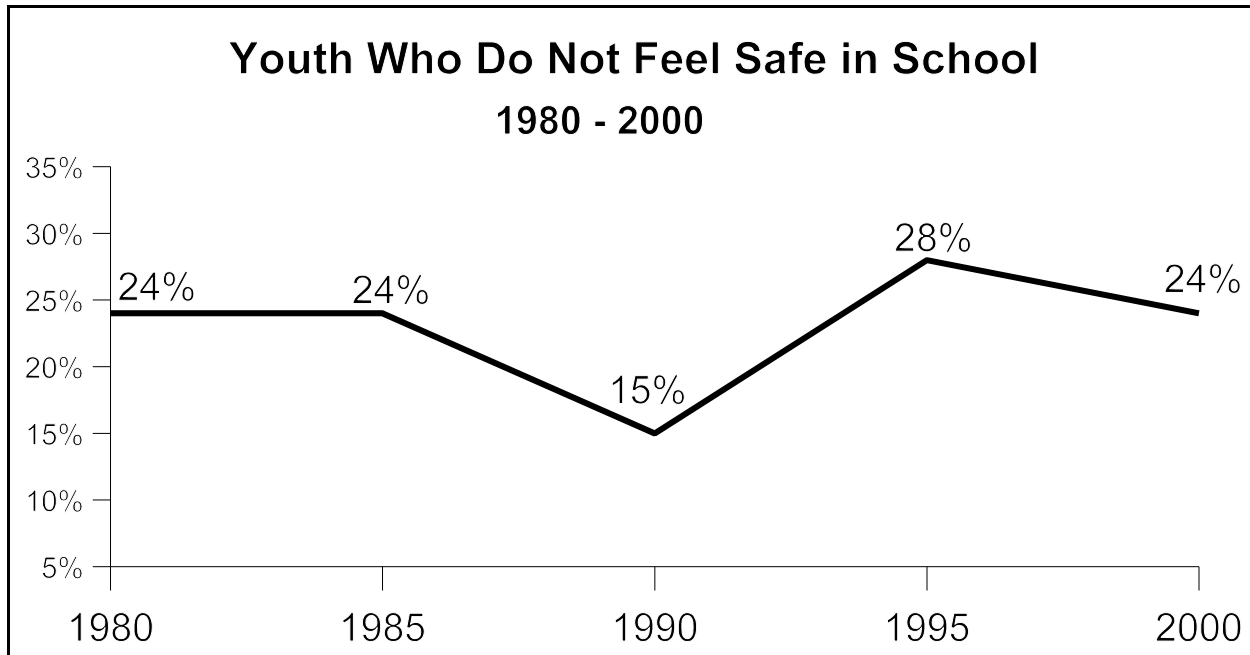
### **Key Findings:**

- In general, students who plan to continue their education past high school expect to attend a four-year college.
- The proportion of youth who plan to attend a four-year college or university after high school increased substantially between 1990 (45%) and 1995 (65%), after which it leveled out in 2000 (63%).
- On the other hand, there has been a slight decrease from 1990 (16%) to 2000 (12%) in the proportion of youth who plan to attend a two-year college.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- In previous surveys males were more likely than females to report they plan to continue their education past high school. However, in the 2000 survey this gender difference was reversed, with more females (80%) than males (70%) planning to continue their education in some manner.

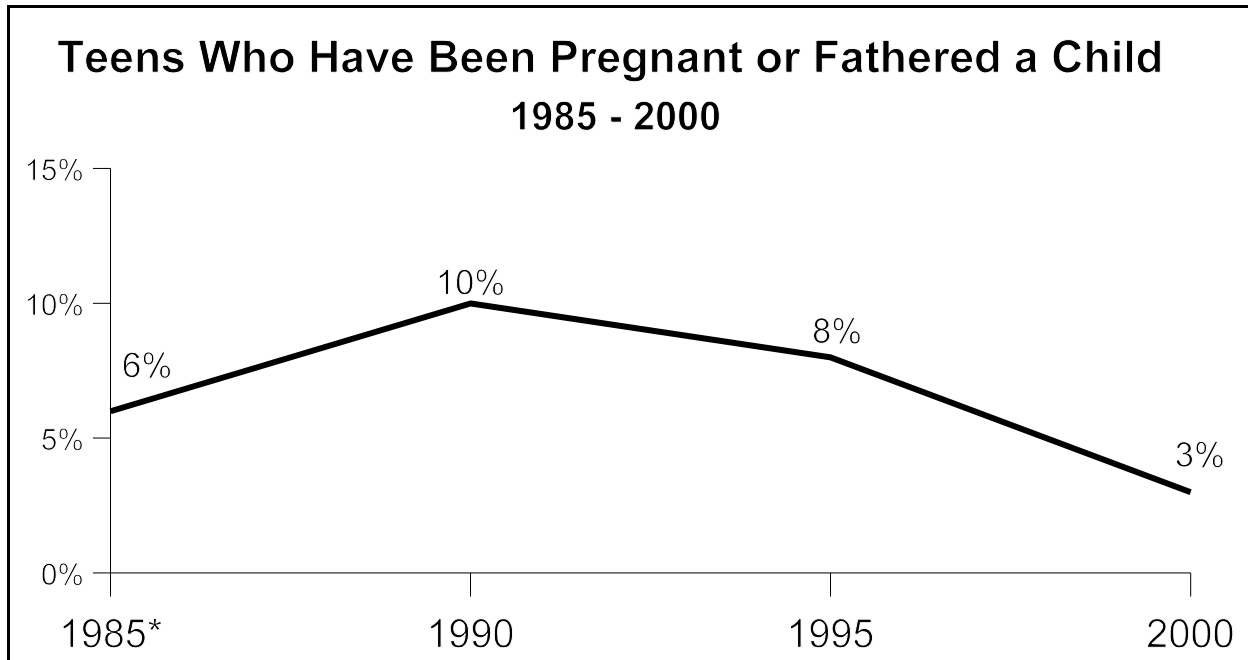
## 9.6 School Safety: 1980 - 2000



### **Key Findings:**

- The proportion of youth who report not feeling safe in school has fluctuated somewhat over the years.
- Between 1985 and 1990 there was a substantial drop in the proportion of youth who reported not feeling safe in school (24% in 1985; 15% in 1990).
- However, this trend reversed in 1995 when the proportion of youth who reported feeling unsafe in school peaked at 28%.
- Since 1995, the proportion of youth who report not feeling safe in school has once again returned to levels reported in the 1980's (i.e., 24%).

## 9.7 Trends in Teen Pregnancies: 1985 - 2000



\*The first year in which data was collected

### **Key Findings:**

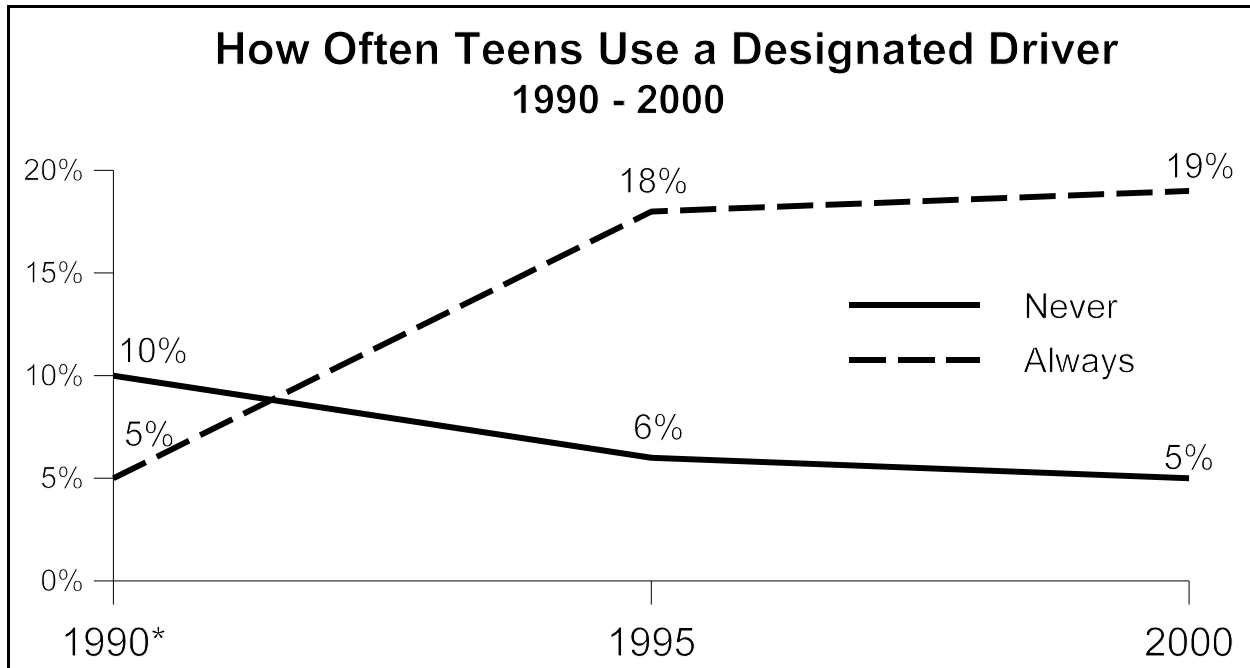
- Teens in the 2000 survey report the lowest pregnancy rate of all youth in the past 15 years.
- Pregnancy rates peaked in 1990 (10%) when one in ten teens reported they had been pregnant or fathered a child. Since then the proportion has steadily decreased to the current rate of 3%.

### **Other Notable Findings:**

- Between 1990 and 2000 teens reported that access to birth control became less of a problem. In 1990, 87% of Dane County youth reported having easy access to birth control in comparison to 92% in 2000.



## 9.8 Use of a Designated Driver: 1990 - 2000



\*The first year in which data was collected

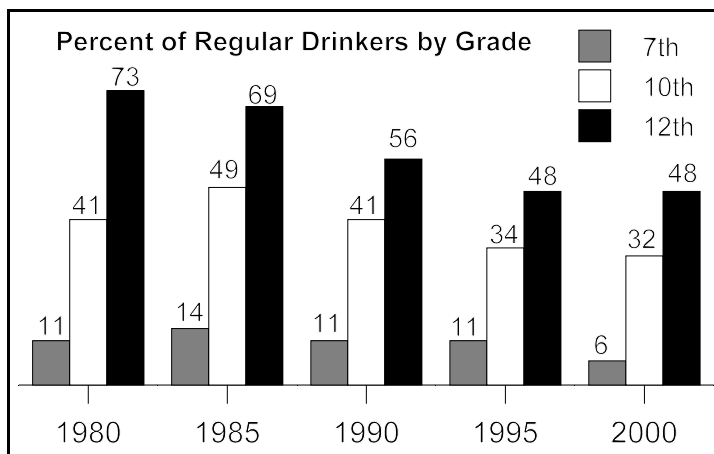
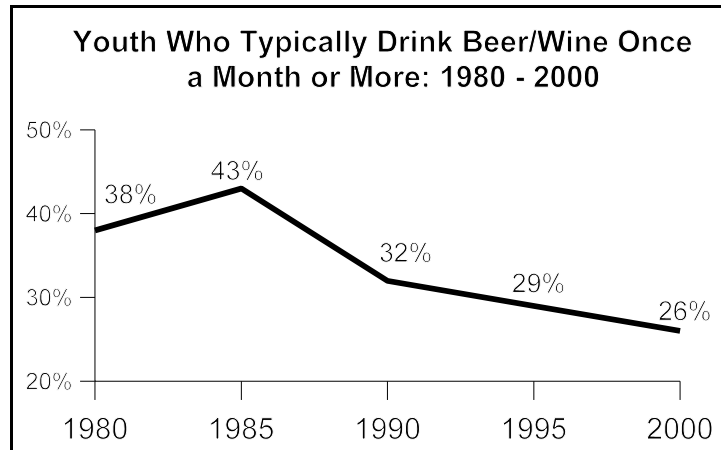
### Key Findings:

- The proportion of youth who report “Always” using a designated driver when out drinking with friends has increased from one in twenty (5%) in 1990 to one in five (19%) in 2000.
- Correspondingly, the proportion of youth who report “Never” using a designated driver has decreased by half (10% in 1990; 5% in 2000) during this same period.
- The term “designated driver” was first introduced in the late 1980's. As youth initially began to grasp its significance many appear to have changed their behavior accordingly. However, in recent years this trend has since leveled out.

### Other Notable Findings:

- In a more general sense, teens today seem to better understand the importance of not mixing driving with the use of alcohol or other drugs. This is demonstrated by a substantial decrease between 1990 and 2000 in the proportion of youth who report driving while impaired by alcohol or other drugs (19% vs. 8%).

## 9.9 Trends in Beer/Wine Use: 1980 - 2000

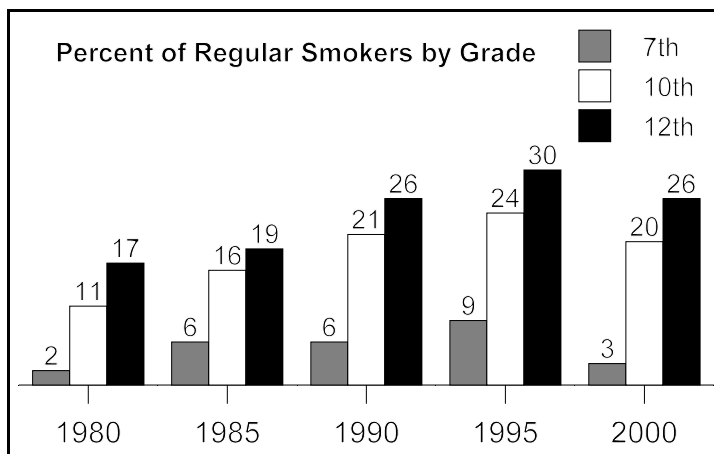
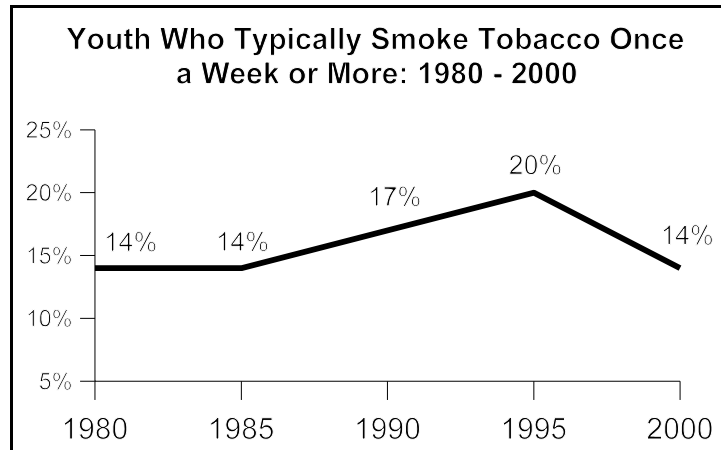


**Regular drinkers** are youth who typically drink beer/wine once a month or more.

### **Key Findings:**

- Teens participating in the 2000 assessment report the lowest levels of alcohol use in twenty years.
- In 1985, 43% of teens reported using beer or wine at least once a month compared to 26% in 2000.
- While the over time trend toward decreased in alcohol use tends to hold across all grade levels it is most pronounced among older teens.

## 9.10 Trends in Tobacco Use: 1980 - 2000

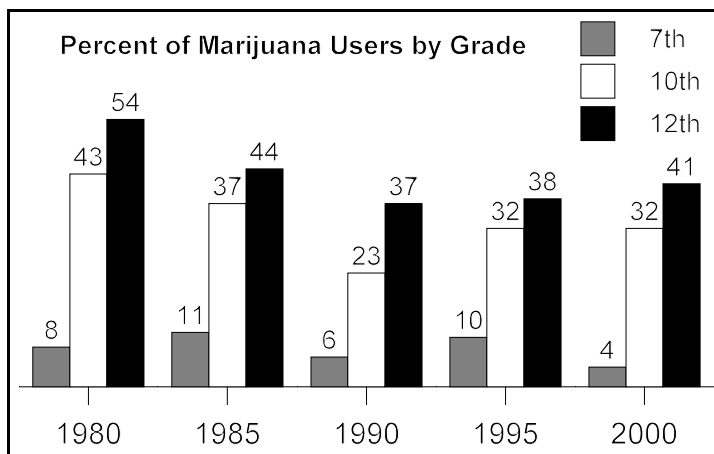
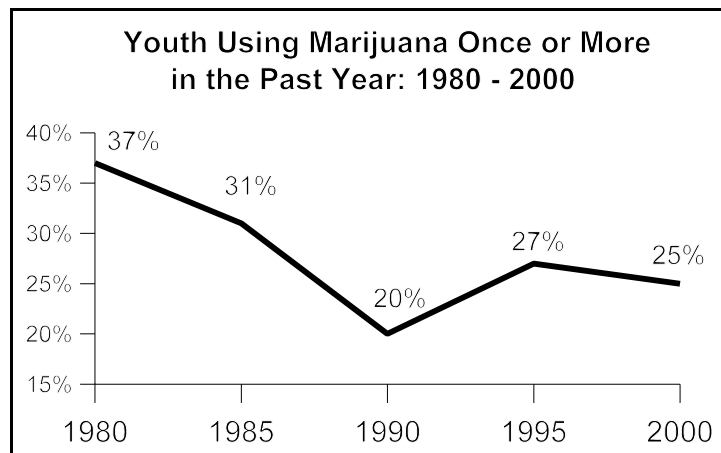


**Regular smokers** are youth who typically smoke tobacco once a week or more.

### **Key Findings:**

- Teen smoking peaked in 1995 when one in five teens (20%) reported using tobacco at least once a week.
- In the 2000 sample the proportion of teen smokers has dropped back to levels reported in the 1980s (14%).
- The decrease in smoking behavior among Dane County youth in the 2000 survey is most pronounced among middle school youth.

## 9.11 Marijuana Use Trends: 1980 - 2000



**Marijuana users** are youth who have used marijuana at least once in the past year.

### Key Findings:

- After reaching an all-time low in 1990 (20%), the proportion of youth who report using marijuana has increased to about one in four in both 1995 (27%) and 2000 (25%).
- Marijuana use among 10<sup>th</sup> graders in 1995 and 2000 (32%) is substantially lower than in any other year except for 1990.
- Younger teens in 2000 (i.e., 7<sup>th</sup> graders) report the lowest rate of marijuana use of all teens in the past 20 years (4%).
- The highest incidence of marijuana use was among 12<sup>th</sup> graders in 1980 (54%).

# Acknowledgments

The Dane County Youth Assessment is truly a community-wide collaborative project.

The Dane County Youth Commission, through the *Youth Assessment 2000 Oversight Committee*, provided leadership, guidance and coordination during all phases of the project. Members of this committee were:

Ruthann Faber, Chair      Mary Pat Berry      Mary Louise Gomez

The *Youth Assessment 2000 Coordinating Committee* included representatives from 14 Dane County school districts who worked with the Youth Commission and individuals from the University of Wisconsin- Madison to develop the content and format of the questionnaire. These individuals were also instrumental in coordinating the administration of the survey in their respective school districts. Members of the Coordinating Committee were:

Kim Hegstrom, Belleville School District  
Jim Lumb, Cambridge School District  
Katie Albrecht, Deerfield School District  
Laura Nyberg, DeForest School District  
Nick Burrows, Edgewood High School  
Kurt Kiefer, Madison Metropolitan School District  
Joan Lerman, Madison Metropolitan School District  
Joanne Bell, Marshall School District  
Sue Trentadue, McFarland School District  
Lynn Reining, Middleton-Cross Plains School District  
Catherlyne DuPont, Monona Grove School District  
Carol Clavey, Mount Horeb School District  
Fred Timm, Stoughton School District  
Lonna Stoltzfus, Sun Prairie School District  
Kurt Eley, Waunakee School District  
Alan Chittick, WI Heights School District  
Carole Klopp, CESA 2 Dane County

The following individuals from the University of Wisconsin-Madison provided survey construction expertise:

Marina Memmo  
Stephen Small  
Andrew Supple

Marina Memmo provided leadership for the final report as well as the data coding and analysis.

Ron Biendseil provided staff support and coordination for all phases of the project.

Mary Buss served as clerical staff to the Commission.

Funding for this project was provided in part by:

- Dane County
- The City of Madison Office of Community Services—Girl Power
- Dane County Promise (funding through United Way of Dane County)
- Tobacco Free Dane County
- Participating Dane County school districts.

## Clarification of Terms Used in This Report

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In order to avoid confusion regarding certain terms and captions used in this report, we provide in this section some definitions and clarifications.

The term **Key Findings** that accompanies each figure refers to findings from the survey which are directly related to the table or graph appearing on that page. The term **Other Notable Findings** refers to findings from the survey which are conceptually related to the figure, but are not actually presented in the table or graph.

The term **teen** is used generically to refer to all youth surveyed, including those who are twelve or younger. Unless specified otherwise, **older teens** refer to youth who are age 16 or older and **younger teens** refer to youth who are under 16 years of age.

Students of European descent are referred to as **White**. The term **students of color** is used to refer to youth whose heritage is non-European. This includes students of African-American, Hispanic, Native American, Hmong, and other Asian descent as well as youth of mixed race/ethnicity.

The authors recognize that various terms are preferred by individuals of Hispanic decent (e.g., Latino or Chicano). In this report we maintain the terminology used in the survey questionnaire and refer to these youth as **Hispanic**.

A special note should be made regarding the terminology used to refer to youth of African-American descent. In the text of the report we refer to these youth as **Black/African-American** which is consistent with the wording used on the survey questionnaire. However, in the graphs and tables these youth are referred to simply as **Black**.

With respect to youth outcomes, the term **sexually experienced** refers to youth who have had sexual intercourse at least once in their lifetime. The term **binge drinking** is defined as drinking five or more alcoholic beverages at one time. A drink is defined as a glass of wine or beer, a shot of hard liquor, or a mixed drink. Teens who are identified as **regularly employed** report they work more than occasional jobs (such as babysitting or doing yard work) during the school year.

Finally, below each figure is a caption which indicates the year of the survey and the item numbers of the actual survey questions upon which the findings are based. For example, the caption **DC2000: Q119 by 2** refers to the "Dane County 2000 survey: Question 119 in relation to question 2".

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# History & Overview of the Dane County Youth Assessment Project

At five-year intervals since 1980, Dane County youth in grades 7-12 have been surveyed regarding their opinions, concerns, attitudes, behaviors and experiences. The purpose of the survey is to provide area educators, service providers, parents, policy-makers and funding bodies with accurate and up-to-date information to be used as a basis for the planning and development of youth programs, services and public policies. Based on reports from community agencies, it is estimated that the youth assessment has been instrumental in capturing state and federal grants well in excess of \$1 million since 1980.

Each survey has been a collaborative effort involving the Dane County Youth Commission, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, area schools, non-profit youth-serving agencies, and various public and private funding sources. The survey is administered through middle and high schools on a voluntary and anonymous basis.

The final report is based upon a stratified random sample of students from each of the participating school districts.

Planning for the Dane County Youth Assessment 2000 began in the fall of 1998. The Youth Commission created a subcommittee, the *Youth Assessment 2000 Oversight Committee* - chaired by Ruthann Faber - to oversee all phases of planning, design and implementation of the project. Besides working with area agencies and schools to develop the survey questionnaire, the subcommittee identified funding and collaborative partners—such as the University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension, which provided technical assistance, data analysis, and the design and layout of this report.

In the spring of 1999 representatives from all Dane County school districts were invited to join the Youth Assessment 2000 Coordinating Committee. Representatives from 14 school districts met over a three-month period to determine the format and content of the 2000 questionnaire. During this time, the group critically reviewed the survey instrument to ensure that it continued to address issues of importance to Dane County teens. Questions were retained, modified or added to reflect emerging trends and interests.

Ultimately, 12 Dane County School Districts, plus Edgewood High School, elected to participate in the survey. These schools represent 79% of 7<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in Dane County.

In the fall of 1999, representatives from the 12 participating school districts were trained to administer the survey to their students. Staff from CESA 2 Dane County was responsible for coordinating the distribution and collection of the questionnaire and survey response forms. More than 18,000 students participated in the assessment process.



Data coding and analysis occurred throughout the early months of 2000. The Dane County Youth Assessment 2000: Final Report summarizes student responses to many of the survey questions and examines how a variety of personal, social and environmental factors relate to both positive and problematic youth outcomes. The addendum to this report, the Dane County Youth Assessment 2000: Addendum, provides a full grade by gender summary of students' responses to all items on the survey. These data also provide many additional opportunities for further analysis.

The 2000 assessment marks the fifth time the Youth Commission has facilitated and coordinated an opportunity for 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade youth in Dane County to voice their opinions, needs, concerns, interests and aspirations. This report provides an opportunity to track the trends and changes encountered by our middle and high school youth over a twenty-year period. The report is encouraging in a number of areas and challenging in others. We hope that youth-serving agencies and institutions, parents and youth will see where we have been in the past, will appreciate the successes and challenges of today and will be inspired to build on the past and present to create an even brighter future for Dane County youth.

## **Section 1: About Yourself**

1. Are you male or female?
2. To what ethnic or racial group do you belong?
3. How old are you?
4. What is your current grade in school?
5. Are you currently enrolled in a special education class or program?
6. What is the average grade you usually get in your courses at school?
7. What do you think you will do after you finish high school?

## **Section 2: Your Living Situation**

8. Which best describes where you live the majority of the time?
9. Whom do you live with most of the time?
10. Does your mother (or other adult female you live with) work for pay?
11. Does your father (or other adult male you live with) work for pay?
12. How much education did your mother/stepmother complete?
13. How much education did your father/stepfather complete?
14. Are your parents divorced or separated?
15. Since the time you began school (1st grade) how many times have you had to change school because you moved?
16. During the past year, have you run away from home and stayed away at least over night?

## **Section 3: How Do You Spend Your Time?**

17. Did you have a job this past summer?
18. Do you currently work at a job for pay?
19. Are you currently involved in any volunteer activities?
20. How many hours per week do you spend in school sports or extracurricular activities?
21. How many hours per week do you spend doing homework or studying?
22. How many hours per week do you spend in music or dance lessons?

23. How many hours per week do you spend in non-school sports or other activities such as Boy or Girl Scouts, 4-H or other such youth activities?
24. How many hours per week do you spend involved in activities sponsored by a religious institution?
25. How many hours per week do you spend doing things with your family (other than watching TV)?
26. How many hours per week do you spend at a community or youth center?
27. How many hours per week do you spend volunteering?
28. How many hours per week do you spend involved in youth leadership activities such as student council, youth boards, or advisory committees?
29. If you do not regularly participate in after-school programs/activities, which is the most important reason you don't? (Choose only one)
30. How much time do you spend using the Internet?

#### **Section 4: Student Worries**

31. How much do you worry about getting good grades?
32. How much do you worry about being pressured into having sex?
33. How much do you worry about being pressured into drinking or doing other drugs?
34. How much do you worry about being picked on or physically hurt by another teen?
35. How much do you worry about getting AIDS or a sexually transmitted disease?
36. How much do you worry about not fitting in with the other kids at school?
37. How much do you worry about how I look (my general appearance, such as that I am too fat, or too short, etc.)?
38. How much do you worry about that I might get pregnant or get someone else pregnant?
39. How much do you worry about how well my parents get along with each other?

#### **Section 5: Substance Use Past Year**

40. How often have you used smoking tobacco (cigarettes, cigars, pipe) during the past year?
41. How often have you used other tobacco (snuff, chewing) in the past year?
42. How often have you used beer/wine/wine coolers in the past year?
43. How often have you used hard liquor in the past year?
44. How often have you used marijuana (grass, pot, hash) during the past year?
45. How often have you used Alatrix (trix, trixie) during the past year?

46. How often have you used inhalants (sniffing fumes to get high) during the past year?
47. How often have you used hallucinogens (LSD, acid, STP, psilocybin, mushrooms, mescaline, peyote, PCP, angel dust, etc.) during the past year?
48. How often have you used cocaine/crack during the past year?
49. How often have you used stimulants (such as amphetamines, speed, crystal meth) during the past year?
50. How often have you used steroids (or other performance enhancing drugs) in the past year?
51. How often have you used unauthorized prescription drugs (such as Ritalin or Valium prescribed for someone else) in the past year?
52. During the past month, have you had 5 or more alcoholic drinks at one time? ( A "drink" is a glass of wine or beer, a bottle or can of beer, a shot of liquor, or a mixed drink)?
53. If you or your friends go out and consume alcohol, how often do you use a designated driver?
54. During the past month, have you ridden in a motorized vehicle (i.e., car, truck, motorcycle, snowmobile) with a teen driver who was drinking alcohol?
55. During the past month, have you driven a motorized vehicle (i.e., car, truck, motorcycle, snowmobile) after drinking alcohol?
56. During the past month, have you ridden in a motorized vehicle (i.e., car, truck, motorcycle, snowmobile) with an adult driver who was drinking alcohol?
57. If you drink alcohol, where do you usually get the alcohol that you drink?
58. If you smoke or chew tobacco, how old were you when you first started?
59. How frequently have you smoked cigarettes during the past 30 days?
60. During the past 30 days, did you ever drink alcohol or use drugs during school hours?

### **Section 6: About Your Health**

61. During the past 30 days, did you use any of the following methods to lose weight or keep from gaining weight?
62. In the past 7 days how often have you exercised or been physically active (e.g., rollerbladed, played basketball, done aerobics) for at least 20 minutes?
63. When was the last time you were seen by a doctor or other health professional (NOT including the school nurse)?
64. How often do you wear a seatbelt when driving or riding in a motor vehicle?
65. In the past year have you worked at a place that allows employees or customers to smoke in your presence?

66. How often do you wear a protective helmet for sports (such as for biking, rollerblading, skateboarding, or other such sports)?

### **Section 7: Health and Social Service Needs**

67. Has not being able to get affordable medical treatment or dental care ever been a problem for you?

68. Has not being able to get birth control information or supplies ever been a problem for you?

69. Has not being able to get professional counseling for a personal or family problem ever been a problem for you?

70. Do you currently feel the need for help with concerns about weight control?

71. Do you currently feel the need for help with concerns about relationship with parents?

72. Do you currently feel the need for help with concerns about sexual orientation (questions or other issues about being gay, lesbian or bisexual)?

73. Do you currently feel the need for help with concerns about alcohol/drug problems of a family member?

74. Do you currently feel the need for help with concerns about pregnancy?

75. Do you currently feel the need for help about personal alcohol/drug problems?

76. Do you currently feel the need for help with an eating disorder (such as excessive dieting or self-induced vomiting)?

77. Do you currently feel the need for help on how to quit smoking cigarettes or chewing tobacco?

### **Section 8: Personal Issues**

79. During the past month, have you felt depressed or very sad?

78. Not counting your parents, how many other adults could you rely on if you had a problem and needed help (for example your grandparents, an aunt/uncle, a teacher, coach, priest, rabbi, etc.)?

80. During the past month, have you seriously thought about killing yourself?

81. If you have ever been sexually active, how old were you the first time you voluntarily had sexual intercourse?

82. If you have had sexual intercourse, how often do you and/or your partner use some form of birth control?

83. Have you ever been pregnant or made someone pregnant?

84. Do you ever feel confused about whether you are lesbian, gay or bisexual?

85. Have you ever been sexually abused by an adult?

86. Have you ever been physically abused by an adult?

87. During the past year, how many times were you in a physical fight in which weapons were present?
88. During the past 12 months, how many times were you in a physical fight (no weapons present)?
89. Have you ever personally witnessed someone being beaten or physically abused?
90. Are you a member of a gang?
91. Have you ever been the victim of a crime?
92. During the past month, on how many days did you carry a weapon into the school building?
93. In the past year, have you been suspended from school?
94. In the past month, how many times have you skipped a day of school (been absent when you were not sick or did not have another valid excuse)?
95. Have you ever shoplifted before?
96. Have you ever vandalized public (including school) or private property?

### **Section 9: About Your School**

97. I enjoy going to school
98. The rules at my school are enforced fairly.
99. I am getting the education and skills I need to be successful after I graduate from high school
100. I believe I am getting a good, high quality education at my school.
101. There are places in my school where I don't feel safe.
102. Kids at school treat me unfairly because of my race or ethnicity.
103. My teachers care about me and how well I do in school.
104. The teachers in my school sometimes treat me unfairly because of my race.
105. Generally, counselors, nurses, social workers, and psychologists at my school are helpful when I need them.
106. How often in the past year have you experienced some form of sexual harassment from a student at school?
107. How often in the past year have you experienced some other form of harassment from a student at school?
- 108. In the past year, how often have you had a good talk with an adult at school about your future plans (such as college or employment plans)?**

### **Section 10: Opinions About Your Community**

109. I can count on police if I am having a problem or need help.

- 110. Adults in my community keep an eye on what teens are up to.
- 111. If I had a problem, there are neighbors whom I could count on to help me.
- 112. If I were doing something wrong, adults in my community would probably tell my parent(s).
- 113. People in my community know and care about each other.
- 114. My neighborhood is a safe place to live.
- 115. People sometimes treat me unfairly because of my race or ethnicity.
- 116. There are opportunities for youth from different races and cultures to talk with and do things with each other.
- 117. Have you ever been teased, threatened or harassed about being gay, lesbian or bisexual (such as called names like "fag" or "dyke", chased, cornered, etc.)?

Please indicate whether you think your community has about the right amount, too much, or too little of each of the following activities:

- 118. Organized team sports?
- 119. Social activities just for fun like dances, lock-ins, ski trips, etc.
- 120. Performing arts (music, dance, plays, etc.)
- 121. Organized activity clubs (school clubs, 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.)
- 122. Youth leadership activities to help develop youth programs and rules and regulations that affect young people (student council, youth boards, advisory committees, etc.)
- 123. Opportunities for young people to get involved in community volunteer programs and projects.
- 124. Community youth center or neighborhood center.
- 125. Peer helping programs (kids helping other kids) (i.e., peer education, peer listeners, peer counseling, peer tutoring)
- 126. Employment programs to help teens find part-time work or summer jobs

### **Section 11: Your Family**

Indicate how much of the following are true about the adults who live with you (e.g., your parent(s), stepparent, foster parent(s) or other guardian).

- 127. I tell them whom I'm going to be with before I go out
- 128. I talk to them about the plans I have with my friends
- 129. When I go out they ask me where I'm going
- 130. They usually know what I am doing after school

131. My parent(s) are there when I need them
132. My parent(s) care about me
133. In the past year, has there been a family member (other than yourself) charged with criminal activity?
134. How often in the past year have you had a good talk with at least one parent or an adult who lives with you about the risks of drinking or taking other drugs?
135. How often in the past year have you had a good talk with at least one parent or an adult who lives with you about whether or not it's okay for teenagers to have sex?
136. How often in the past year have you had a good talk with at least one parent or an adult who lives with you about birth control?
137. How often in the past year have you had a good talk with at least one parent or an adult who lives with you about the dangers or risks of getting AIDS, HIV or STDs?
138. How often in the past year have you had a good talk with at least one parent or an adult who lives with you about your personal problems?
139. How often in the past year have you had a good talk with at least one parent or an adult who lives with you about your future plans (such as college or employment plans)?
140. My parent(s) think it is wrong for teens my age to have sexual intercourse
141. My parent(s) think it is wrong for teens my age to drink alcohol
142. My parent(s) think it is wrong for teens my age to smoke/chew tobacco
143. How many adults in your household currently smoke cigarettes?

### **Section 12: Your Friends**

144. My friends help me to stay out of trouble
145. Most of my friends do not have sexual intercourse
146. Most of my friends do not drink or do drugs
147. Most of my friends do not smoke cigarettes or chew tobacco

### **Section 13: Your Views and Opinions**

148. I make a real effort to get along with people of different races or cultures
149. Sometimes I treat other people worse because of their race or the color of their skin
150. I would like to learn more about people of other races or cultures
151. I could never stay friends with someone who told me he or she was gay or lesbian



152. I am comfortable with who I am

153. I feel it is important to always be considerate and respectful of others

154. I believe teenagers should not be having sexual intercourse

155. Entertainment and other recreational activities cost too much

156. Recreation, school or community centers are not open when wanted

157. Lack of transportation to and from recreational activities

158. Summer or part-time jobs are not available

## Appendix B: Sampling Procedure

The Dane County Youth Assessment 2000 was administered in November and December of 1999 to 7<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in 12 public school districts and one private high school in Dane County.

Several weeks prior to the administration of the survey, parents were sent a letter by mail notifying them that the survey would be taking place, and were given the option of not having their child participate.

The survey was completely anonymous. To safeguard the identity of participants, all students recorded their responses on standardized computer answer sheets, which were sealed in an envelope and delivered to the University of Wisconsin - Madison to be coded and analyzed.

A total of 18,572 surveys were completed. Of these, 6% (n=1,107) were judged invalid and removed prior to data analysis. The 17,465 remaining surveys represent a valid response rate of 75% for the participating districts.

This report is based upon a stratified sample of 6,695 students randomly selected from the population of valid respondents to represent the youth of Dane County. The sample is stratified by school district and grade level. For the Madison School District it is further stratified by school.

All students in each school district had an equal chance of being selected for the County sample. To provide a representative snapshot of local youth, sample proportions are based upon school enrollment data for the 1999 -2000 school year available from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The error rate for the sample is 1%, with a maximum possible error rate of 2%.

Summary of School District Participation			
School District	Number of Students Included in the Sample	Percent of Sample	Response Rate*
Belleville	108	2%	0.80
Cambridge	152	2%	0.86
Deerfield	104	2%	0.83
Edgewood	176	3%	0.92
Madison	3158	47%	0.67
Marshall	145	2%	0.91
McFarland	261	4%	0.86
Middleton	683	10%	0.90
Monona Grove	333	5%	0.86
Mount Horeb	251	4%	0.76
Stoughton	511	8%	0.79
Sun Prairie	658	10%	0.84
Wisconsin Heights	155	2%	0.85
Total	6695	100.0%	

\*Response rate = The number of youth surveyed divided by DPI enrollment figures.

## Clarification of Terms Used in This Report

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In order to avoid confusion regarding certain terms and captions used in this report, we provide in this section some definitions and clarifications.

The term **Key Findings** that accompanies each figure refers to findings from the survey which are directly related to the table or graph appearing on that page. The term **Other Notable Findings** refers to findings from the survey which are conceptually related to the figure, but are not actually presented in the table or graph.

The term **teen** is used generically to refer to all youth surveyed, including those who are twelve or younger. Unless specified otherwise, **older teens** refer to youth who are age 16 or older and **younger teens** refer to youth who are under 16 years of age.

Students of European descent are referred to as **White**. The term **students of color** is used to refer to youth whose heritage is non-European. This includes students of African-American, Hispanic, Native American, Hmong, and other Asian descent as well as youth of mixed race/ethnicity.

The authors recognize that various terms are preferred by individuals of Hispanic decent (e.g., Latino or Chicano). In this report we maintain the terminology used in the survey questionnaire and refer to these youth as **Hispanic**.

A special note should be made regarding the terminology used to refer to youth of African-American descent. In the text of the report we refer to these youth as **Black/African-American** which is consistent with the wording used on the survey questionnaire. However, in the graphs and tables these youth are referred to simply as **Black**.

With respect to youth outcomes, the term **sexually experienced** refers to youth who have had sexual intercourse at least once in their lifetime. The term **binge drinking** is defined as drinking five or more alcoholic beverages at one time. A drink is defined as a glass of wine or beer, a shot of hard liquor, or a mixed drink. Teens who are identified as **regularly employed** report they work more than occasional jobs (such as babysitting or doing yard work) during the school year.

Finally, below each figure is a caption which indicates the year of the survey and the item numbers of the actual survey questions upon which the findings are based. For example, the caption **DC2000: Q119 by 2** refers to the "Dane County 2000 survey: Question 119 in relation to question 2".

## Instrument Validity and Reliability

A question that is sometimes asked about surveys like this one is "*How valid and reliable is it?*" In other words, how accurate is the information obtained? There is no simple answer to this question. In this appendix, we try to clarify some of the relevant issues, describe the strategies employed to increase the surveys validity and reliability, and speculate about the data's accuracy and limitations.

Validity is usually defined by the question "*Are we measuring what we intend to measure?*" In other words, how accurate is a measure at assessing a given behavior or belief?

Reliability is a necessary but not sufficient precondition for validity. It refers to the *consistency or reproducibility of a measure*. If a measure is not reliable, it will not even agree with itself. For example, if a student was administered a measure that has a low reliability on two consecutive days, it is likely that his or her response would differ from one day to the next.

One way to increase the accuracy of a survey is to use well-established measures, which have been demonstrated to be both reliable and valid. Whenever possible, this was done in the current survey.

Many of the questions that are asked in the Dane County Youth Assessment 2000 are established measures that have demonstrated strong reliability and validity. Most of the drug and alcohol questions come from widely used national survey instruments, as do the questions dealing with mental health, personal safety, sexuality, and social relationships.

Some items were tested in prior surveys conducted in other school districts. Others have a long history of use in previous Dane County assessments and have proven their worth in program and policy decision making for the past two decades.

Finally, it should be noted that all of the new measures developed specifically for the 2000 questionnaire were proposed and rigorously scrutinized by representatives from 14 public school districts and one private high school in Dane County (please see the *Acknowledgments* section of this report). The collective wisdom of this group with respect to issues that are important to local teens, and their understanding of how young people think about and respond to questions, was a powerful asset in the survey development phase of this project.

As with any self-report survey, especially one aimed at teenagers, there is always the possibility that a small percentage of respondents will not take the survey seriously. Fortunately, most teenagers who do not take the survey seriously are not subtle with their responses. They typically exaggerate their responses to such an extent that their surveys are easy to spot and remove.

In addition, questions can be added to a survey, which are specifically designed to assess student dishonesty and inaccuracy. Known as "lie scales" these items provide additional information about how honest or accurate student responses are. In the countywide sample of students drawn for this report, about 3% of students responded dishonestly or inaccurately to the "lie scale" embedded in the 2000 assessment.

All self-report surveys are susceptible to some bias in responding. For instance, there might be a slight under-reporting of socially undesirable behaviors (e.g., illicit drug use) and a slight over-reporting of behaviors that individuals perceive as socially desirable (e.g., sexual activity for early adolescent males).<sup>i</sup> Studies of this phenomenon indicate that such under-reporting is usually small—ranging anywhere from 2 to 10 percent depending on the conditions under which the survey is administered and the questions being asked.

While validity and reliability are usually discussed as if they are inherent in the survey instrument itself, much of what determines the accuracy of the data depends on the conditions under which the survey is administered. Students are more likely to answer honestly if they feel their responses are truly anonymous, if the atmosphere in which the survey is administered is serious and supportive, and if those who administer the survey are knowledgeable about it, believe in its importance, and convey its importance to students.<sup>ii</sup>

Another question often asked about surveys of this type is how representative are the findings for students in general. One factor to keep in mind is that the survey only represents the responses of students from the participating school districts. Although these school districts serve the majority of youth in Dane County, still about 21% of Dane County middle and high school students did not take part in the survey because their school district choose not to participate. However, in order to make a difference in the survey results, these students would have to be substantially different in many ways from the students who were actually surveyed.

In all, 6% of the surveys (n=1,107) were removed prior to data analysis either because they were incomplete or due to some other detected problem. In addition, based on enrollment figures obtained from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 20% of students in grades 7 through 12 who were enrolled in the participating school districts were not surveyed. These students may not have taken the survey because their parents did not wish them to do so, or because they were absent due to illness or truancy on the day the survey was administered.

Studies have shown that students who are more frequently absent or truant are also more likely to use illicit drugs, drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, and engage in potentially problematic and dangerous activities.<sup>iii</sup> For this reason, the current findings are likely to be a slight underestimate of the actual incidence of such problem behavior among youth that are currently enrolled in school.

It also should be noted that the findings in this report are not representative of students who have dropped out of school. There is some evidence to indicate that school dropouts are somewhat more likely than those enrolled in schools to be users of illicit drugs and alcohol, to engage in other problematic behaviors and to exhibit less optimal development and health. Consequently, the numbers presented in this report slightly underestimate the actual incidence of various problematic youth behaviors and slightly overestimate the degree of positive youth outcomes for all teens in Dane County.

While these limitations may have a small effect on the quality of the data reported here, it should be emphasized that for the most part they are inherent to all self-report surveys of middle and high school youth. There is no reason to believe that the results of the Dane County Youth Assessment 2000 are any less valid or reliable than other youth surveys that adhere to accepted standards of careful and scientific assessment.

In fact, the findings reported here are much better indicators of local youth behavior than results that are generalized from state or national data or are based on small numbers of youth drawn from convenience samples.

In addition, many of the findings in this report go beyond simple population descriptions to emphasize relationships between variables and sub-populations. Such relationships are less affected by sampling limitations than global population descriptions.

For a practical survey such as the present one, issues of reliability and validity are only a means to an end. The real question is "*How is the measure and the data it produces going to be used?*" If the objective is the diagnosis of a particular individual, then the precision of the instrument is extremely important and imprecision can be a problem.

However, the Youth Assessment 2000 survey is not meant to be a diagnostic tool for individual students. Rather its value is in highlighting important relations and trends, which characterize the population. For instance, it would probably not matter much to school officials whether 12<sup>th</sup> graders are seven times more likely or eight times more likely to use marijuana than 7<sup>th</sup> graders. What is important is that a substantial age difference has been identified and warrants further attention.

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iii. Johnson, L., & O'Malley, P. (1985). In B. Rouse, N. Kozel & L. Richards (Eds.). Self-Report Methods of Estimating Drug Use: Meeting Current Challenges to Validity. Rockville, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse.