

# TEEN ASSESSMENT PROJECT

2020 Report



## Tapping into Teen Concerns, Perceptions and Behaviors in Southampton Town, NY

### SPONSORED BY:

Town of Southampton Youth Bureau

### ADMINISTERED BY:

Town of Southampton Youth Bureau

### ANALYSIS AND REPORT BY:

Town of Southampton Youth Bureau and the  
Stony Brook University School of Social Welfare



Southampton Youth Bureau

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[www.southamptontownny.gov/Youth-Bureau](http://www.southamptontownny.gov/Youth-Bureau)



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## **Hampton Bays Union Free School District**

Mr. Lars Clemensen, Superintendent

Mr. Christopher Richardt, Principal, Hampton Bays High School

Mr. Dennis Shug, Principal, Hampton Bays Middle School

Mr. Drew Walker, Director of Physical Education, Health, and Athletics

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## **Sag Harbor Union Free School District**

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Ms. Lindsay Reilly, Social Worker

## **Southampton Union Free School District**

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## **Tuckahoe Common School District**

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## **Westhampton Beach Union Free School District**

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*This survey also could not have been completed without the cooperation of the 1829 youth who participated in the project.*

Permission is granted to duplicate parts or sections of this report for planning and program development, educational use and administration, and community awareness. Please send copies of printed use of these data to the Town of Southampton Youth Bureau, 655 Flanders Rd., Flanders, NY 11901.

This report contains analysis of selected data findings. Additional data and further analysis is available by contacting Cara Sultan at [csultan@southamptontownny.gov](mailto:csultan@southamptontownny.gov).

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Teen Assessment Project (TAP) is sponsored by the Town of Southampton Youth Bureau with technical assistance provided by Dr. Robert Marmo and the Stony Brook University School of Social Welfare Graduate Research Methods classes. In November 2020, the Youth Bureau conducted the TAP, surveying 1,525 youth in 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades in Southampton Town and an additional 304 youth from Riverhead Town, asking them specific questions about their quality of life and their sense of the community in which they live. The survey asked youth about risk behaviors, recreational and work activities, parental involvement, and protective factors that affect adolescent lives. This report will present data from the 1,525 youth from Southampton Township for use in planning and supporting programs that address the needs of youth and families in the Town of Southampton and to improve out-of-school resources and supervision.

This is the seventh administration of this survey. The first administration was conducted in 2002 and included all 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade youth in Southampton Town. The TAP survey was originally chosen as the instrument for this project after evaluation of other survey programs. It was a broader survey, intended to establish a baseline of data with which to compare future data and determine patterns of behavior and community influences in adolescent lives.

The second administration was conducted in November of 2005 and surveyed only 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade youth. Due to the wealth of national data that exists for youth in grades 8, 10, and 12, the Town opted to survey these same three grades in order to best compare local data to national data. A modified version was used in 2005, reducing the number of questions from 160 to 103, while adding some new topics. The instrument was again modified in 2008 and included some additional topics of inquiry, resulting in an instrument of 100 questions. Additional modifications were made in 2011 and in 2014, again adding some new topics and removing questions that were no longer providing useful data, resulting in a 101-question instrument.

Further modifications were implemented in the 2017 survey, which included clarifying questions regarding gender identity and sexual orientation, adding questions on vaping, use of marijuana edibles, stress and anxiety, and removing questions on steroid use and weight. The survey was administered exclusively online in 2017 through Qualtrics.

The 2020 survey was modified yet again due to the unique circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. New questions were introduced to assess the impact of the pandemic on mental health. In

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addition, the students across the Township completed the survey in different settings, some at home during remote learning and some in person at school. Thus, this year, the testing conditions were not consistent across all schools, as had been the case in years prior.

The seven school districts serving Southampton Town youth that participate in the survey are: Bridgehampton Union Free School District (UFSD), Hampton Bays UFSD, Riverhead Central School District, Sag Harbor UFSD, Southampton UFSD, Tuckahoe Common School District, and Westhampton Beach UFSD. All survey data are combined in one database, which includes survey findings from these participating districts. Prior to completing the survey, youth are encouraged to respond honestly to the questions and assured all answers will be anonymous.

## **II. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS (2020)**

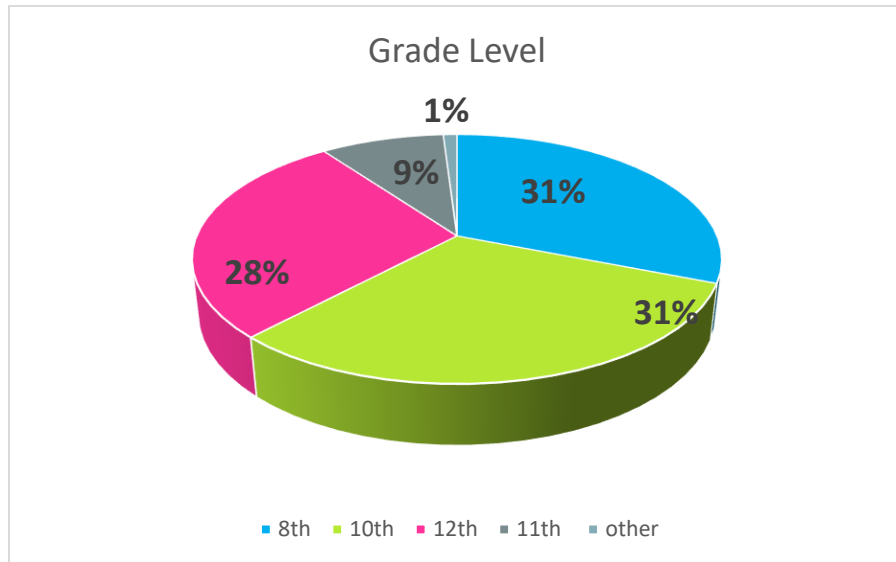
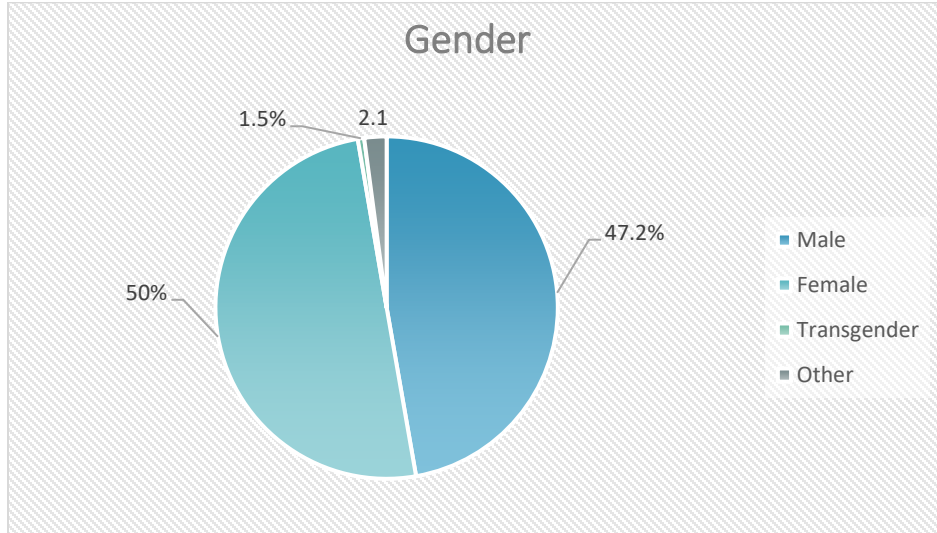
A total of 1,525 youth completed the 2020 TAP survey. Youth identified their gender as 47% male, 50% female, 1% transgender, and 2% other.

Youth completing the survey ranged in age from 11 through 18 with a majority of youth identified as 13 years old (28%), 15 years old (27%), or 17 years old (25%). Grades included 8th grade (31%), 10th grade (31%), and 12th grade (28%). All school districts in Southampton Township were included with the majority reporting their district as Westhampton Beach (31%), Southampton (29%), Hampton Bays (16.5%), and Pierson (12%).

Seventeen percent (17%) of youth reported having a special need. For all youth, 6% report a learning disability, 4% report an emotional or behavioral disability, 1% report a physical disability, 3% report some other disability, and 1% reported more than one special need.

Students reported their sexual orientation, with 80% identifying as heterosexual, 2% as homosexual, 7% as bisexual, 3% as other, and 7% as unsure. Eleven percent (11%) identify themselves as an immigrant or refugee, while 16% of students and 83% identify English as their primary language. Half of all students (50%) reported earning grades above 90, and another 35% reported earning grades of 80 or above. Only 2% reported earning failing grades. This profile defines the majority of youth (83%) as having no special needs and being successful in school. In the balance of this report, we will look beyond the profile to

understand some of the challenges that exist in these young peoples' lives and identify clues as to how the Southampton Town community can continue to meet those challenges.

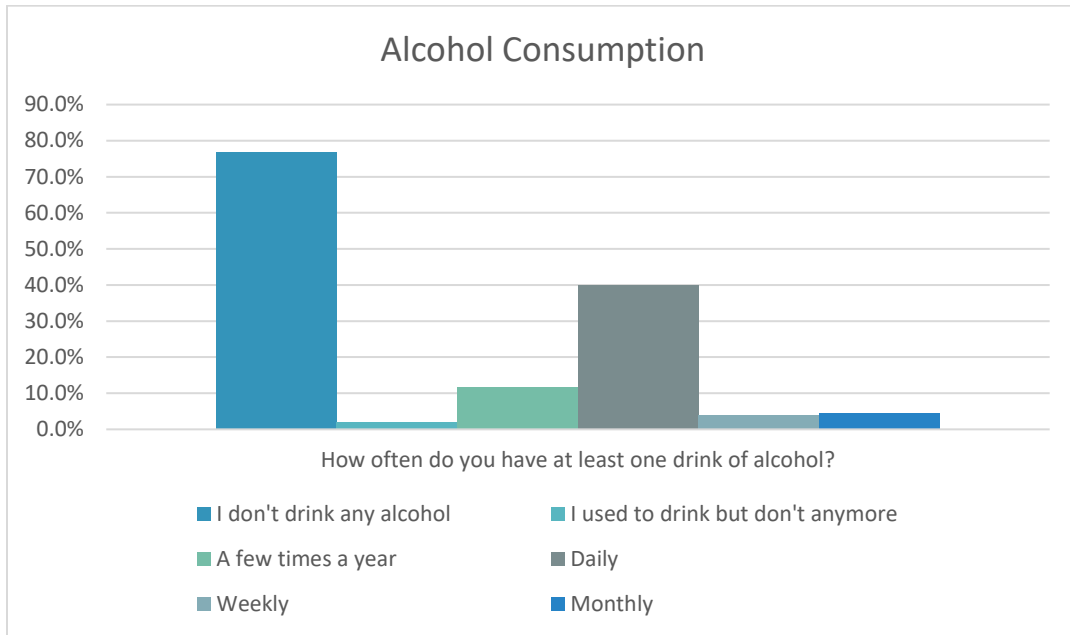


### III. REPORTED RISK BEHAVIORS

#### Substance Abuse

##### Alcohol

A total of 315 respondents (21%) cited current alcohol consumption ranging from a few times a year (12%) to weekly (4%) or daily (.4%) use.



Roughly 15% of youth consume 5 or more alcoholic beverages in under 2 or 3 hours. This translates to approximately 200 youth at any given time.



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Surveyed youth stated that they obtained alcohol from their home (2.3%) or a friend's home (1.9%) without parental or guardian awareness. Additionally, 5.9% of youth were able to obtain alcohol from someone of legal age whom purchased it for them or, specifically, from their parents (2.8%). Only 2% of youth (31 respondents) purchased alcohol at a store or bar, while 7.3% of youth obtained alcohol from "some other source".

### **Tobacco and Related Products**

Almost all youth (98.4%) of all youth surveyed report never using cigarettes. Less than half of one percent (.5%) cited daily cigarette use, and less than one percent (.9%) smoked cigarettes weekly or monthly.

The majority of youth (77%) reported they did not vape tobacco or use e-cigarettes, juul, or hookah with tobacco. A total of 151 respondents (10%) stated that they tried vaping once, while 1% cited weekly use and 2% admitted to vaping daily. Overall, 7.5% of respondents stated previous but not current use.

Additionally, youth were asked to provide information on their consumption of other forms of tobacco products (chewing tobacco, snuff, plug, dip). Almost all youth (98.2%) stated that they do not currently use any of these tobacco-related products.

### **Marijuana**

The majority of youth (87%) reported never using marijuana, while 3% reported smoking marijuana in the past but not currently. A total of 139 youth reported smoking marijuana either a few times a year (3%), daily (2%), weekly (2%) or monthly (1%).

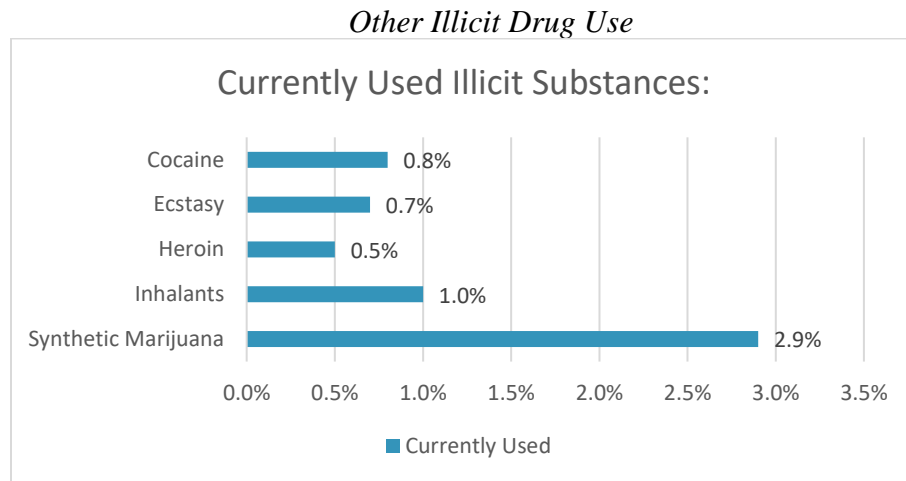
Youth were also surveyed about vaping with marijuana. Overall, 2% of respondents stated that they vape with marijuana a few times a year, while 3% reported vaping with marijuana either monthly, weekly, or daily.

Regarding marijuana edible use (pot brownies, cookies, gummies, lollipops, etc.), 6% of surveyed youth reported using marijuana edibles either monthly, weekly, or daily.

Overall, 4% of respondents stated that they use other forms of marijuana (liquid THC, dabbing, synthetic) either monthly, weekly, or daily.

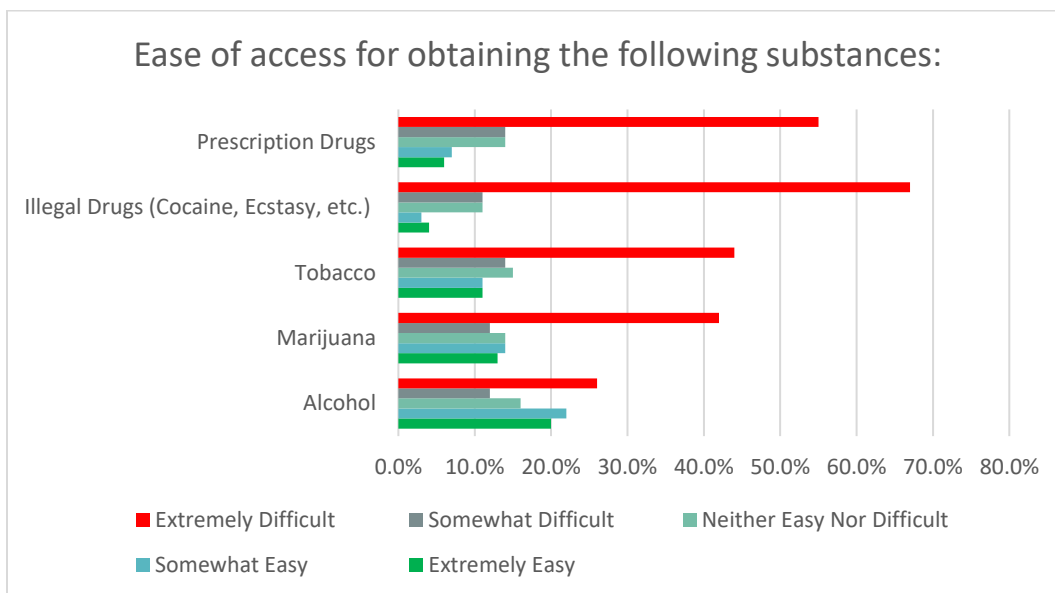
## Illicit Drug Use

The majority of youth surveyed reported no use of illicit drugs.



## Ease of Access

Youth reported that obtaining heroin, prescription drugs, and other illicit substances would be difficult while obtaining marijuana, tobacco, and alcohol were deemed relatively easy to access.



## Perception of Risk

An important predictor of substance abuse is how risky that behavior is perceived to be by the user.

Those perceiving higher levels of risk are less likely to use while those perceiving lower levels of risk are

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more likely to use. In 2020, 49% of respondents reported no or slight risk in using alcohol and 56% of respondents reported no or slight risk in using marijuana.

## Sexual Activity

Youth who report ever having sexual intercourse (18%) has decreased from the last survey conducted in 2017, which indicated 24.5%, reported ever having sexual intercourse.

Those who report ever having oral sex (17%) also decreased from the last survey conducted in 2017, which indicated 24%, reported ever having oral sex.

Overall, 76% of youth reported never engaging in sexual intercourse or oral sex. Seventeen percent (17%) of youth reported use of birth control (condoms, birth control pills) and 6% of respondents stated that they never use any form of birth control.

Sexting, the sending or receiving of sexually explicit photos, images, text messages, or emails by using a cellphone or other device, is a risk behavior that was first addressed by our survey in 2014. Nineteen percent (19%) of youth reported receiving or sending naked pictures of themselves or another person through text, email or social media. Six percent (6%) of youth reported sending a sext only one time and 13% reported sending or receiving an explicit message more than one time.

## Trends and Comparisons

### Local Data

The Southampton Town Teen Assessment Project (TAP) has recorded an overall decline in teenage alcohol consumption since 2002 which has continued through 2020.

### Reported use of alcohol – at least one drink in your lifetime:

	2002	2005	2008	2011	2014	2017	2020
8 <sup>th</sup> grade	41%	32%	23%	15%	7%	12%	5%
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	67%	67%	61%	47%	35%	35%	13%
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	85%	81%	74%	73%	57%	54%	56%

**Reported use of drugs other than alcohol since 2002:**

	<b>2002</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2020</b>
Ever used prescription pain medications	11%	12%	12%	7%	5%	6%	2%
Ever used over the counter medications	n/a	10%	9%	6%	6%	6%	4%
Ever used tobacco products	34%	29%	25%	20%	13%	35%	25%
Ever used marijuana products	38%	37%	36%	29%	30%	20%	15%

Since 2002, reported use of prescription pain medications, over the counter medications, tobacco, and marijuana have declined.

**State and National Data**

Southampton Town’s reported rates of alcohol use among youth are lower than nationwide rates. Marijuana rates were also lower than nationally reported averages for all grades. Vaping with nicotine products or marijuana was lower for Southampton Town students with the exception of nicotine vaping among 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Southampton 12<sup>th</sup> grade students reported higher use of vaping with nicotine (40%) than the national average (34.5%).

**Past Year Alcohol Use**

	<b>National (NIDA)</b>	<b>Southampton</b>	<b>New York State</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> grade	20.5%	3%	NA
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	40.7%	22%	20.6%
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	55.3%	41%	33.4%

**Past Year Marijuana Use**

	<b>National (NIDA)</b>	<b>Southampton</b>	<b>New York State</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> grade	11.4%	0%	NA
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	28%	21%	14.6%
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	35.2%	24%	23.8%

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## Past Year Nicotine Vaping

	National (NIDA)	Southampton	New York State
8 <sup>th</sup> grade	16.6%	9%	NA
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	30.7%	19%	NA
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	34.5%	40%	NA

## Past Year Marijuana Vaping

	National (NIDA)	Southampton	New York State
8 <sup>th</sup> grade	8.1%	.6%	NA
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	19.1%	7%	NA
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	22.1%	9%	NA

National data can be acquired from the Monitoring the Future Study, courtesy of the National Institute of Drug Abuse: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drug-topics/related-topics/trends-statistics/infographics/monitoring-future-2020-survey-results>

NYS Data from YRBS (2019) <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm>

## IV. HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE INDICATORS

### Impact of COVID-19

This year's survey included six new questions to assess the potential impact of COVID 19 on mental health and well-being. While the experiences of youth during the pandemic have been diverse, data indicates that the impact of COVID-19 added to pre-existing challenges youth may have been facing.

Seventy six percent (76%) of youth report feeling more stress or anxiety than usual. Eighty one percent (81%) indicated more concern about their family or their family's health. Food insecurity was felt by 18 % of youth surveyed who indicated having more difficulty that usual getting adequate food.

Lengthy school closures and hybrid and/or remote schooling due to the pandemic resulted in 75% of students having more difficulty keeping up with school work.

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Even before the COVID-19 pandemic began, concerning mental health trends and major were noted among adolescents in the United States. According to data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an estimated 13.3% of US adolescents aged 12-17 experienced at least 1 episode of major depressive disorder in 2017. Our study indicated that over half (54%) of students felt more depressed than usual as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The full picture of the impact of COVID 19 on youth well-being and mental health will continue to emerge in coming years. Later survey administration will track these trends.

## General Mental Health

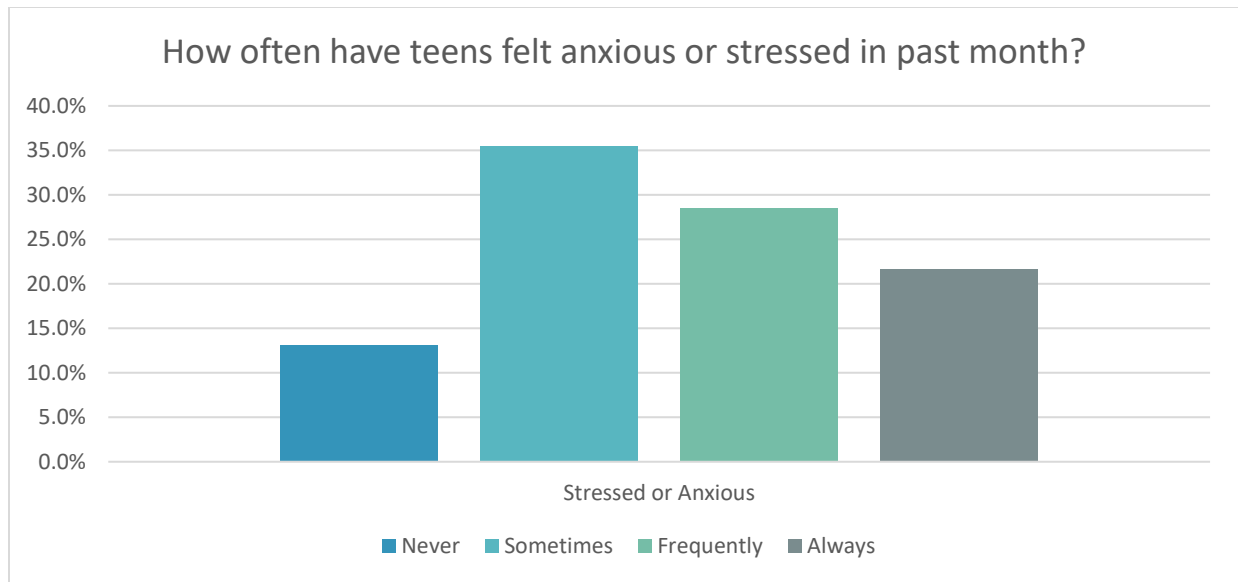
### Stress & Anxiety

In addition to COVID-19 specific mental health questions, youth were asked if they had recently experienced anxiety or stress within the past 30 days. Approximately 87% of surveyed youth stated that they had experienced stress within the past 30 days either sometimes, frequently, or always. Only thirteen percent of youth stated that they had not experienced stress within the preceding thirty days. This is unchanged from the 2018 TAP report.

Additionally, a majority of surveyed youth reported difficulties in their social life, school activities and school work due to stress. A total of 83% of youth reported stress or anxiety causing difficulties in their school work either sometimes (32.5%), frequently (28.9%), or always (21.1%).

Approximately 77% of youth reported stress or anxiety related difficulties in their school activities either sometimes (32.5%), frequently (17.8%), or always (12.5%).

Approximately 70% of youth reported stress or anxiety causing difficulties in their social lives either sometimes (35.8%), frequently (17.8%), or always (14.8%).



## Depression

Youth completing the TAP survey completed questions pertaining to depressive symptoms.

Approximately 48% of youth reported feeling depressed, helpless, hopeless, or very sad for a period of two weeks or longer. This includes youth that reported these feelings once (17.7%), more than once (16.7%), or many times (12.5%).

Females are more likely to have experienced these feelings, reporting them 60% of the time, as opposed to males who report these feelings 33% of the time. These percentages are similar to those reported in the 2018 TAP report.

When examined by grade level, 37% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 48% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 52% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported these feelings associated with depression. Overall, these percentages similar to those reported in the 2018 TAP report.

## Suicidality

Suicidal thoughts are another important indicator of mental health related issues. A total of 81% of respondents stated that they had never considered suicide. A total of 10% of youth reported considering suicide without a plan in place, 4% reported seriously considering suicide with a plan, and 2% reported a past suicide attempt. In total, about 19% of Southampton Town youth have at least contemplated suicide.

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Youth identifying as their gender as Transgender or Other, are more likely to report suicidal thoughts than either females or males. About 39% of youth identifying as Transgender or Other youth reported thoughts of suicide, with 20% reporting past suicide attempts. Females reported suicidal thoughts 23% of the time, as opposed to 8% of males.

When examined by grade level, 17% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 16% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 16% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders have considered suicide.

### Self-injury

Self-injury can often take many forms, but the most commonly reported method involves cutting. Youth usually engage in self-injury in an attempt to relieve emotional pain; causing physical pain may take one's mind off the experiences of invisible trauma. The rate of self-injury reported by Southampton Town youth has remained relatively steady at approximately 11%. Youth reported self-injurious behaviors within the past year either once (5.6%), more than once (3.1%), or many times (1.8%).

### Running away from home

About 2% of respondents stated that they had run away from home with past year. Approximately 9% of youth reported only thinking about running away without doing so.

### Sleep Habits

More than half of youth (54.2%) reported sleeping 6-7 hours a night while 26.4% of youth reported sleeping 8 or more hours a night and 19% reported sleeping less than 6 hours a night.

## V. SOCIAL AND RELATIONAL HEALTH

### Intimate Partner Violence and Domestic Assault

Youth were asked to complete questions regarding their relationships among peers and adults. Two Percent (2%) of youth reported being physically hit, slapped, physically or sexually hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend. Rates of physical or sexual violence among youth reporting their gender as transgender or other was higher with 10% of reporting experiencing some form of relational violence.

Additionally, rates of partner violence were higher for youth identifying their sexual orientation as other and homosexual. Approximately 8% of youth identifying as other and homosexual or other reported experiencing some form of relational violence as opposed to heterosexual who reported 2%.

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Approximately 7% of youth reported experiencing a physical attack by an adult in their home within the past year. This included youth who reported being kicked, beat up, or attacked with an object by an adult in their home.

### Victims of Bullying/Harassment

About 14% of respondents in Southampton Town reported that they have been bullied or harassed (including cyberbullying) by their peers in the past year. Approximately 12% of youth stated that they had been treated poorly due to their race, religion and/or cultural background.

### Illegal Activities

Responses to the Southampton Town survey included information on whether youth were aware of or involved with an adult (21 years of age or older) whom was involved in specific types of illegal or dangerous activity. Approximately 18% of youth reported knowing an adult who used illegal drugs within the past year. Additionally, 8% of youth reported knowing an adult that sold illegal drugs in the past year. Another 17% of youth reported knowing an adult that had done something that could get them in trouble with the police within the past year. A total of 12% of youth reported carrying or knowing someone that carried a weapon, such as a gun or a knife within the past year.

Regarding gang activity, only 1% of youth reported being involved in a gang and 2.5% of youth reported being approached to join a gang.

### Use of Time Outside of School

Respondents were asked how they spend their time outside of the classroom. Students reported they spent one or more hours a week in the following activities:

- ❖ *Social networking (TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, etc...)* – 89%
- ❖ *Doing homework or studying* – 97%
- ❖ *Reading for fun* – 51%
- ❖ *Texting friends* – 75%
- ❖ *Participating in school or community sponsored activities (clubs, dances, etc.)* – 54%
- ❖ *Participating in school/community sports* – 45%
- ❖ *Participating in community sports (PAL, summer league, private)* – 32%
- ❖ *Exercising* – 86%
- ❖ *Spending time with parents and family* – 86%
- ❖ *Working a job* – 39%

## VI. PROTECTIVE FACTORS

### Avoiding Illegal Activities

One of the final survey questions asked youth to order, in importance from 1 to 5, the programs, specific persons, or activities that help keep them from involvement in illegal or harmful activities. A ranking of 1 was considered most important, while a ranking of 5 was considered least important. Youth were asked to rate which of the following were most helpful in keeping them from illegal or harmful activities.

❖ Family members	57%
❖ Positive role models	21%
❖ Afterschool programs	14%
❖ School counselor/social worker	11 %
❖ In-school prevention programs	3%

In the past ten years, TAP respondents have rated the most important factors help keep them from involvement in illegal or harmful activities. Most have stayed consistent with the exception of family members increasing in important for the 2020 survey.

	2011	2014	2017	2020
Family members	26%	25%	49%	57%
Positive role models	26%	31%	21%	21%
Afterschool programs	30%	24%	16%	14%
School counselor/social worker	12%	12%	10%	11%
In-school prevention programs	6%	6%	4%	3%

### Community Activities

Youth were asked to report whether they believed there were fun things to do for people their age within the local community. Since 2011, the majority of youth have reported agreement with having fun things to do in the community.

	2011	2014	2017	2020
Agree	62%	67%	69%	69%

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The final question on the survey asked youth an open-ended question about whether there were programs or activities a youth would like to see developed in their community. Youth responses were analyzed and then categorized according to topic area. The most frequent response to the question related to the addition of recreational activities. Youth suggestions included parks, movies, roller rink, hiking, bowling and special interest clubs. Youth also request more opportunities to engage in recreational sports with access not limited by ability to pay.

*A very strong response was had to the need for more programs and mental health services.* Topics suggested included anti-racism training, bullying prevention, LGBTQ+ support, sexual assault awareness raising, mental health initiatives, and programs for Hispanic youth, community service opportunities, motivational interviewing, mentoring, drug awareness and mental health initiatives.

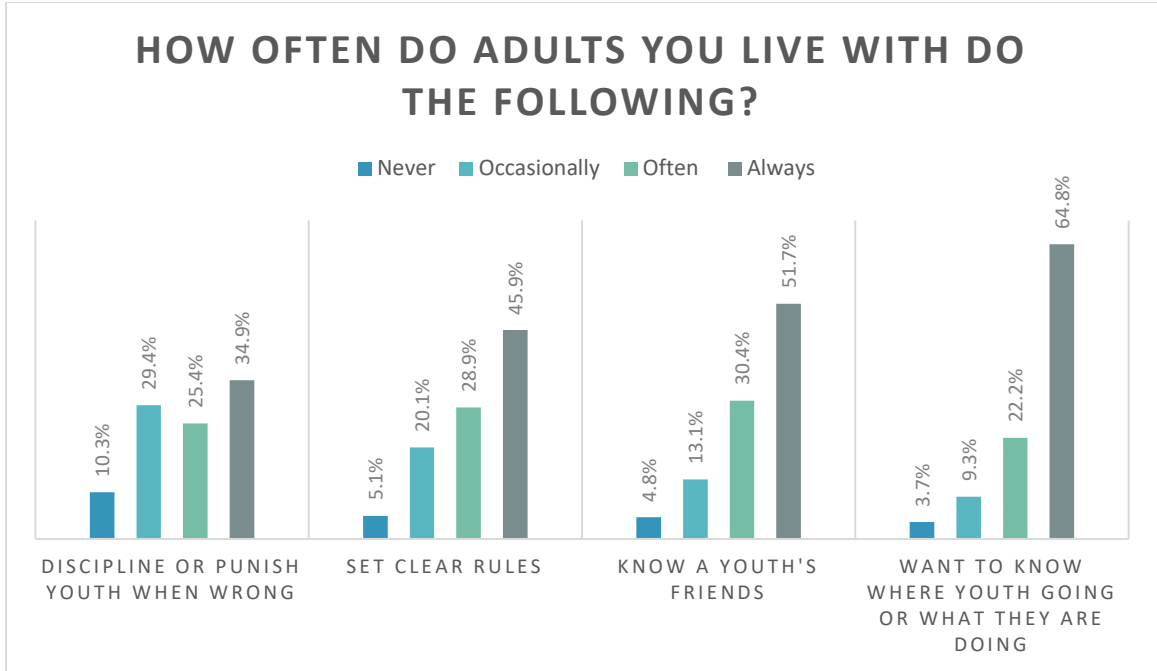
Like all teens, the teens of the Town of Southampton have struggled during the pandemic. Their ideas and response to what they seek in the community are a strong indicator of where they hope to find community support.

Categories	Frequency
Recreation	82
Sports	71
Mental health services	42
Creative and Visual Arts	24
Tech (gaming and computer)	10
Restaurants	4

## Parental Involvement

### Adults Youth Live With

Data collected in the Southampton Town survey highlight the role parents and guardians play in a youth's life. Youth reported that the adults they live with either often or always set clear rules, know their friends, want to know their whereabouts, and implement discipline in the home. Youth reported less frequent instances of adults failing to provide this structure in their lives.



Youth were asked if they had a conversation with the adults they live with regarding the risk of using drugs or the risks of sexual activity.

- ❖ Risk of using drugs – Yes 58%
- ❖ Risk of sexual activity – Yes 48%

### Parenting Practices

The TAP survey explored positive parenting practices and risk factors among youth. Specifically, setting clear rules, following through with consequences when rules are broken, knowing your child’s friends, and knowing where your child is and what they are doing were compared to reported risk factors. The comparisons where statistically significant differences occurred are outlined below.

When Parents Set Clear Rules	When Parents Don't Set Clear Rules
1% smoke tobacco	6.5% smoke tobacco
86% report grades above B	71% report grades above B
88% felt anxious or stressed	60% felt anxious or stressed
47% report symptoms of depression	35% report symptoms of depression

When Parents Discipline Consistently	When Parents Don't Discipline Consistently
88% report grades above B	80% report grades above B
73% felt anxious or stressed	88% felt anxious or stressed
49% report symptoms of depression	39% report symptoms of depression

<b>When Parents Know Friends</b>	<b>When Parents Don't Know Friends</b>
1% smoke tobacco	6% smoke tobacco
86% report grades above B	73% report grades above B
88% felt anxious or stressed	69% felt anxious or stressed

<b>When Parents Ask Where Youth are Going</b>	<b>When Parents Don't Ask Where Youth are Going</b>
1.5% smoke tobacco	5.5% smoke tobacco
86% report grades above B	70% report grades above B
88% felt anxious or stressed	64% felt anxious or stressed

## Adults in the Community

The TAP survey findings also tell us about the impact adults in the community can have on youth participation in risk behaviors. While 84% of respondents report that there is an adult in the community that they can go to with a serious problem, the data also illustrate that when youth know adults who engage in risk behaviors, they consistently show elevated rates of risk behaviors.

Below are the comparisons where statistically significant differences in risk behaviors among youth based upon their knowing adults who engaged in risky behaviors.

### Know Any Adults Who Have Sold or Dealt Any Drugs

<b>Youth Behavior</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Use Alcohol	62%	20%
Vape with Nicotine	62%	17%
Vape with Marijuana	27%	5%
Experience Anxiety	92%	87%
Experience Depression	68%	43%
Engage in Sext Messaging	59%	16%
Sexually Active	47%	15%

### Know Any Adults Who Have Done Something That Could Get Them in Trouble with the Police

<b>Youth Behavior</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Use Alcohol	47%	18%
Vape with Nicotine	50%	17%
Vape with Marijuana	19%	5%
Experience Anxiety	93%	86%
Experience Depression	68%	56%
Engage in Sext Messaging	46%	14%
Sexually Active	34%	14%

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### Know any adults who have used illegal drugs

Youth Behavior	Yes	No
Use Alcohol	51%	17%
Vape with Nicotine	52%	17%
Vape with Marijuana	21%	4%
Experience Anxiety	95%	85%
Experience Depression	68%	43%
Engage in Sext Messaging	44%	14%
Sexually Active	36%	13%



**SOUTHAMPTON YOUTH BUREAU**  
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