



ASAP Youth & Community Survey Findings

October 2021



ASAP is a nonprofit community based organization focused on reducing substance abuse by promoting healthy lifestyles through education, prevention, and positive activities across all age groups in Bethlehem and Woodbury.



Prevention Works! Research over the past two decades has proven that drug and alcohol addiction is preventable.

The longer youth delay the use of substances, the less likely they will develop addictions to those substances.

WHAT ARE TEENS IN BETHLEHEM & WOODBURY TELLING US?

In May 2021, 668 youth from Region 14 in grades 7 to 12 completed the ASAP Youth Questionnaire. This survey is conducted every 2 years and allows ASAP to:

- systematically “hear” from youth
- utilize information to enhance and plan initiatives and activities for youth in the community

Information describes youth’s perceptions and experiences regarding their emotional well-being, substance use, and other risky behaviors. In 2021, questions around the impact of COVID were included.

Reducing Risks & Building Protective Factors

Since 2009 drug and alcohol rates among our teens have **DECREASED**.

Bethlehem & Woodbury teens are making healthier choices around substance use and related risky behaviors.

Since 2009, the percentage of teens who report

- drinking alcohol in the past 30 days has **DECREASED** from 31% to 9%
- using marijuana in the past 30 days has **DECREASED** from 16% to 6%

In 2021, only 2% of teens reported driving a car after drinking and 3% after using marijuana.

Reported rates on perceived parental disapproval are **STRONG**.

A young person’s perception of their parent’s disapproval is correlated to their choice to use substances. If teens perceive their parents believe it is wrong for them to drink or use substances, when faced with the opportunity, they are less likely to do so.

- In 2021, **more than 91%** of all Bethlehem & Woodbury teens surveyed believe that their **parents disapprove** of them using alcohol, cigarettes, prescription drugs (without a prescription) or a vaping device.

More Youth Survey Highlights

Emotional Health

Self reports on emotional well-being indicate many teens are struggling.

During the past 12 months...

did you ever feel so **sad or hopeless** almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities? **39% responded YES**

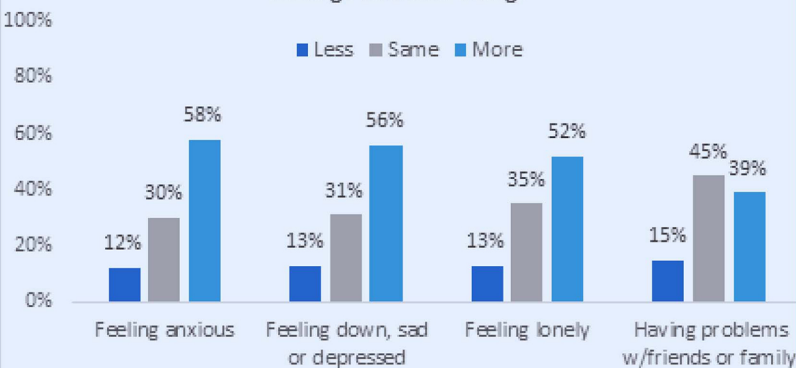
did you ever seriously consider **attempting suicide**? **19% responded YES**

What causes high school teens **EXTREME** levels of **day to day stress**? **44%** reported 'academics', **36%** reported 'college & post high school planning' and **24%** reported their 'schedule'.

Impacts of COVID

As a result of the pandemic, teens reported feeling more anxious, depressed and lonely.

In what ways has the COVID pandemic affected your feelings and well-being?



Very few teens (6% or less) reported an increase of substance use (including alcohol, marijuana, and prescription medications, without a prescription) during the COVID pandemic.

Perception of Harm

Perception of harm around marijuana use is steadily **DECREASING** among our teens.

In 2021, only **55%** of the surveyed teens felt that regular use of marijuana caused risk or harm to a person. This is a **29% DECREASE SINCE 2009**.

Access to Substances

The majority of surveyed teens believe it is 'easy' to get alcohol.

How easy or hard would it be for you to get the following substances if you wanted them?

Teens who reported 'sort of easy' or 'very easy': **54%** for alcohol, **44%** vaping devices, **34%** marijuana or THC, **8%** other illicit drugs

Results from the 2020 ASAP Community Survey



Bethlehem and Woodbury residents believe in prevention efforts around substance use and support the work of the ASAP coalition.

- 78% believe it is possible to reduce alcohol and other drug problems through prevention
- 87% feel alcohol and other drug prevention programs are a good investment for the community
- 90% believe most community leaders would support efforts to reduce youth substance use

WHAT ARE ADULTS IN BETHLEHEM & WOODBURY TELLING US?

In December 2020, 107 community members from Bethlehem and Woodbury completed an on-line ASAP Community Survey. ASAP conducts community surveys to identify community norms and adult attitudes and behaviors around substance use, other risky behaviors, and prevention efforts.

This survey allows ASAP to:

- systematically "hear" from adults
- utilize information to enhance and plan initiatives and activities for youth in the community

Community Norms on Substance Use

in Bethlehem & Woodbury a small minority of adults feel use of substances is a NORMAL PART of growing up.

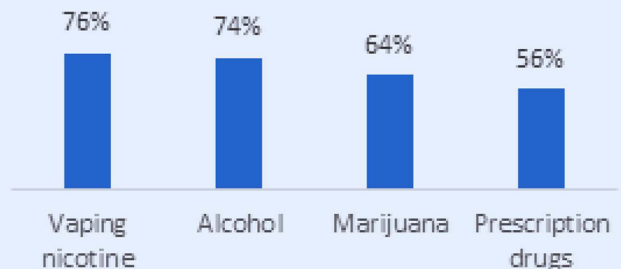
- 8% of adults reported that marijuana use is a normal part of growing up
- 15% of adults reported that drinking alcohol is a normal part of growing up and 9% felt it was 'okay' to drink sometimes even if you are underage

Use of vaping, alcohol and marijuana are all perceived to be **SERIOUS** issues among youth.



In Bethlehem/Woodbury how much of a problem do you think the following substances are for teens?

■ Moderate to Serious Problem



More Community Survey Highlights

Access to Substances

The majority of community members believe it is 'easy' for teens to access alcohol, marijuana and vaping devices.

The percent of community members who reported that it was easy for teens to get:

- +alcohol from a friend's home, 74%
- +alcohol from their own home, 69%
- +prescription drugs (without a prescription), 55%
- +vaping devices, 73%
- +marijuana, 67%

Perception of Harm

Perception of harm around teens use of substances remains high among community members.

In 2020, 83% of community members felt that regular use of marijuana caused risk or harm to a teen, compared to 55% of teens who were surveyed on the same question.

Supports

The majority of community members know where to go for help if they (or a family member) are struggling with behavioral health issues.

- 73% of community members know where to go for help if struggling with issues such as depression, anxiety, or an eating disorder
- 36% of community members know where to go if they (or a family member) are struggling with substance use or addiction issues

We Are Listening! Highlights of our Work

- ASAP provides support and collaborates with these and other groups:
 - Woodbury-Bethlehem Parent Connection - supports parents and our families in a confidential setting for those in crisis, who have experienced loss, and need self care skills. Holds annual "Walk Supporting Addiction Recovery" the Friday after Labor Day during National Recovery Month.
 - Woodbury & Bethlehem enforcement agencies - facilitates Drug Take Back Days and compliance checks.
 - Middle School & High School Youth Groups - assist with peer-to-peer education and supports so our youth will make healthy choices.
 - Region 14 - assists in survey collection and programming at our schools.
- ASAP is a co-founder of the Addiction & Recovery Resource Center located at the Woodbury and Bethlehem Public Libraries, as well as one that is age appropriate located at Nonnewaug High School.
- ASAP brings speakers and other resources to our youth, parents and community at large to provide information and enhance skills around substance use prevention.



For more information go to <https://www.woodburybethlehemasap.org/>