

BULLETIN 5 ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

WHAT IS A CAPPELLA NORTH 2?

A Cappella North 2 (ACN2) is the name of a study conducted in late 2001 on behalf of the Government of Yukon Women's Directorate and the Department of Education.

This bulletin is the fifth in a series to be released over the next year, reporting the results of the survey. We hope the information will enhance policy and program development, educate youth and parents, and inform Yukoners about young people in the territory.

A detailed survey methodology, the questionnaire and the previous four bulletins are available from the Women's Directorate at (867) 667-3030 or on our website at http://www.gov.yk.ca/depts/eco/women/index.html.

WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE STUDY?

We distributed over 800 surveys to grade 8 to 12 students in school and in youth groups, and held focus groups in Whitehorse and in rural areas. There was an excellent response rate (84%) to the study. Details of the sex, ethnic group, grade and geographical area of the young people surveyed can be found in bulletin 1 and in the methodology.

NATIONAL ADDICTIONS AWARENESS WEEK

National Addictions Awareness Week (NAAW) is celebrated nationally every year. Its purpose is to raise awareness of substance abuse and its consequences, and to encourage healthy lifestyles that do not include alcohol or other drugs. NAAW also celebrates those in recovery from addictions. In 2002, NAAW ran from November 17 to 23 and its theme was *Take Time to Live: Make Healthy Choices*. If you would like information about prevention activities for youth or services for families please contact the Yukon Alcohol and Drug Secretariat at 667-5777.

This bulletin of results from the ACN2 survey was published to coincide with NAAW. It provides a picture of Yukon youth's beliefs and attitudes towards alcohol and drugs, their experience of using them, their feelings about discussing them at home, and their ideas about prevention of substance abuse. For results relating to the impact of alcohol on sexual behaviour, please refer to Bulletin 1: Sexual Assault.

"People do drugs and alcohol because they don't care. I care, so I don't do them."

(Male, Whitehorse school)

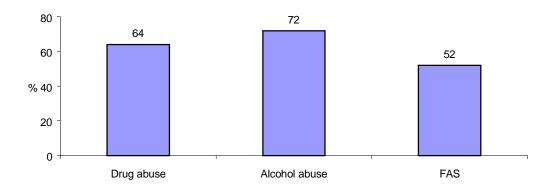


ATTITUDES TO DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

How serious are drug abuse, alcohol abuse and fetal alcohol syndrome in the Yukon?

Chart 1 shows that the majority of young people surveyed rated drug abuse, alcohol abuse and fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) as *very serious* issues in the Yukon.

CHART 1: DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE AND FAS RATED VERY SERIOUS IN THE YUKON



Young women were more likely than young men to rate drug abuse as a *very serious* issue (67% compared to 59% of young men). First Nations were more likely than non-First Nations to rate FAS as a *very serious* issue in the Yukon (61% compared to 49% of non-First Nations).

"Teaching parents not to drink when pregnant or nursing is very serious."

(Male, rural school)

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the use of marijuana should be legalized?

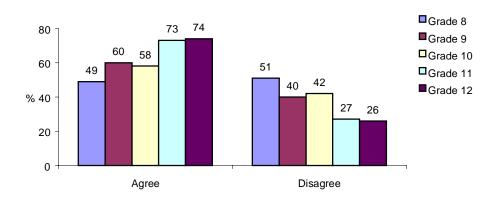
Possible answers were *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree*, *strongly disagree*. The majority, 62%, of young people were in agreement with the statement: 36% *strongly agreed* that it should be legalized and a further 26% *agreed*. A fifth of young people, 22%, *strongly disagreed*.

Young men were more likely to *strongly agree* with legalization than young women (42% compared to 30% of young women), while young women were more likely to *strongly disagree* (24% compared to 18% of young men).

First Nations youth were more likely to *strongly agree* with marijuana legalization (45% compared to 33% of non-First Nations). Conversely, non-First Nations youth were more likely to *strongly disagree* (24% compared to 12% of First Nations).

In chart 2 *agree* and *strongly agree* have been combined, as have *disagree* and *strongly disagree*. It shows that students in older grades were more likely to show overall agreement with legalization than were those in younger grades. Conversely, students in younger grades were more likely to show overall disagreement.

CHART 2: AGREE AND DISAGREE THAT MARIJUANA SHOULD BE LEGALIZED. SHOWN BY GRADE.



"I don't think pot's a drug, I think it should be legal.

Alcohol should be illegal, if pot is."

(Female, Whitehorse school)

Agreement with attitudinal statements about drugs and alcohol

We asked young people the extent of their agreement or disagreement with each of a series of statements about drugs and alcohol. They could answer *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The results have been combined into two categories *agree* (composed of *strongly agree* and *agree*) and *disagree* (composed of *strongly disagree* and *disagree*).

The statement with the highest level of agreement was "I like being high or drunk once in a while." The statement with the lowest level of agreement was "alcohol helps you forget your problems."

"I like being high or drunk once in a while": overall, 51% *agreed* and 49% *disagreed*. Students in older grades were more likely to *agree* (66% of students in grade 12 compared to 34% of students in grade 8).



- **'Drugs are so dangerous you can't safely use them even once'**: overall, 41% *agreed* (59% *disagreed*). Students in younger grades were more likely to *agree* (59% of grade 8 students compared to 28% of grade 12s). Those living in rural areas were more likely to *agree* (50% of youth in the communities compared to 37% of Whitehorse youth).
- "I don't want to hang around with people who smoke cigarettes": overall, 40% agreed and 60% disagreed. Young men were more likely to agree (43% compared to 37% of young women), a fifth of them strongly agreed (20% of young men compared to 9% of young women). A higher proportion of non-First Nations agreed (42% of non-First Nations compared to 24% of First Nations).

"I can't stand to even be in the same room as a smoker." (Female, rural school)

- "Taking drugs is part of growing up": overall, 36% agreed and 64% disagreed. Young men were more likely to agree (46% compared to 29% of young women). A higher proportion of First Nations youth agreed (41% compared to 35% of non-First Nations). Older grades were more likely to agree that taking drugs is part of growing up (48% of grade 12 students and 30% of grade 8s).
- **"I don't want to hang around with people who use drugs"**: overall, 34% *agreed*. A higher proportion of First Nations youth *agreed* that they don't want to hang around people who use drugs (39% compared to 32% of non-First Nations). Students in younger grades were more likely to *agree* (55% of grade 8s compared to 23% of grade 12s).
- **"I don't want to hang around with people who drink alcohol"**: overall, 30% *agreed* and 70% *disagreed*. Again, First Nations youth and students in younger grades were more likely to agree that they don't want to hang around people who drink alcohol: 42% of First Nations compared to 27% of non-First Nations and 52% of grade 8s compared to 15% of grade 12s.
- "Drugs help you forget your problems": overall, 24% agreed and 76% disagreed. All the young people surveyed shared this view regardless of their sex, ethnic group, grade or geographical area.
- "Alcohol helps you forget your problems": overall, 21% agreed and 79% disagreed. Again, this view was shared regardless of sex, ethnic group, grade or geographical area.

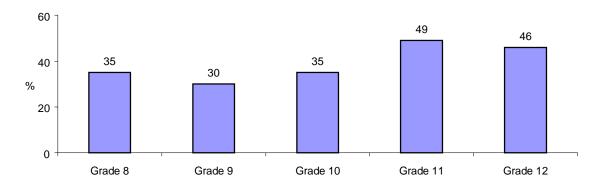


USE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Do you have a close friend who has a severe drug or alcohol problem?

Of the young people surveyed 37% said they have a friend who has a severe problem with drugs/alcohol. Chart 3 shows older grades were more likely to say so.

CHART 3: HAVE A CLOSE FRIEND WHO HAS A SEVERE DRUG OR ALCOHOL PROBLEM. SHOWN BY GRADE.

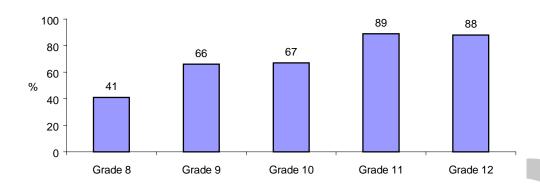


Young people in Whitehorse were more likely to say they have a close friend with a severe drug or alcohol problem (40% compared to 34% in the communities).

Have you ever used drugs or alcohol?

Overall 67% said they had used drugs or alcohol. Young people, regardless of sex, ethnic group or area of residence, were equally likely to say they had used drugs or alcohol. Chart 4 shows that use of drugs or alcohol was, however, related to grade.

CHART 4: HAVE USED DRUGS OR ALCOHOL. SHOWN BY GRADE.





How often do you use drugs and alcohol?

There were five possible answers but where numbers were small we combined *every day* with *once or twice a week*. Percentages refer to the whole survey sample – the 220 people who said they had not used drugs/alcohol are included in the category *never*.

The substances young people were most likely to use at least once a week were alcohol, marijuana and tobacco.

DRINK BEER, WINE OR OTHER ALCOHOL

Chart 5 shows that over a third of young people surveyed never drink alcohol.

CHART 5: HOW OFTEN DO YOU DRINK BEER, WINE OR OTHER ALCOHOL?

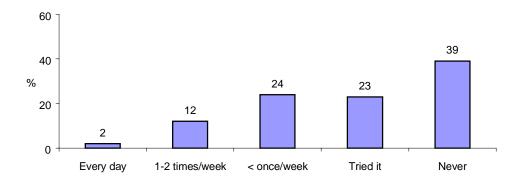
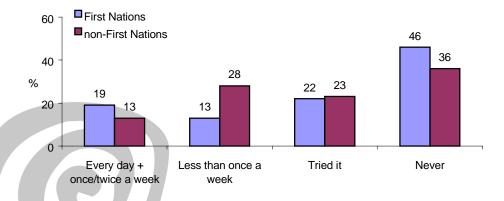


Chart 6 shows that First Nations youth were both more likely to *never* drink alcohol and to drink *every day or once/twice a week*.

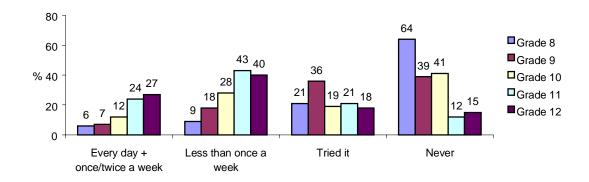
CHART 6: HOW OFTEN DO YOU DRINK BEER, WINE OR OTHER ALCOHOL? SHOWN BY ETHNIC GROUP.



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Chart 7 shows that younger grades are less likely to consume alcohol than older grades.

CHART 7: HOW OFTEN DO YOU DRINK BEER, WINE OR OTHER ALCOHOL? SHOWN BY GRADE.



"Alcohol has done the most harm in the Yukon, we drink more up here."

(Male, Whitehorse school)

SMOKE MARIJUANA

Chart 8 shows that about half of the youth surveyed (47%) have at least tried smoking marijuana.

CHART 8: HOW OFTEN DO YOU SMOKE MARIJUANA OR HASHISH?

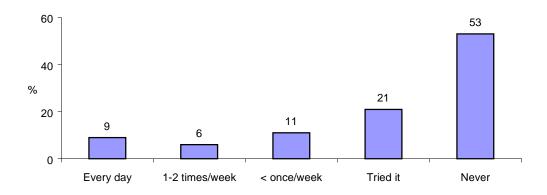




Chart 9 shows that First Nations youth were more likely to smoke marijuana at least once a week.

CHART 9: HOW OFTEN DO YOU SMOKE MARIJUANA OR HASHISH? SHOWN BY ETHNIC GROUP.

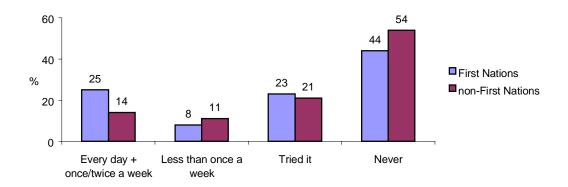
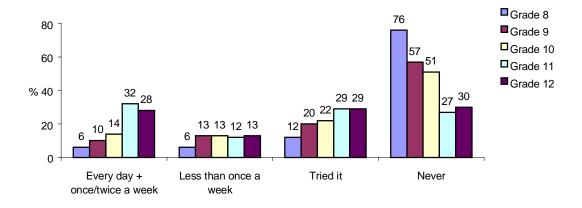


Chart 10 shows that smoking marijuana was more common among youth in older grades than those in younger grades.

CHART 10: HOW OFTEN DO YOU SMOKE MARIJUANA OR HASHISH? SHOWN BY GRADE.



SMOKE CIGARETTES

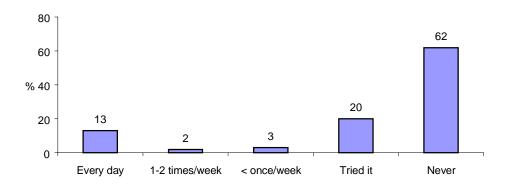
The results for smoking should be used with caution due to the question design: young people only answered the question on frequency of smoking cigarettes if they had answered *yes* to the question 'Have you ever used drugs or alcohol?' Tobacco may not necessarily be thought of as a drug by all the young people surveyed and therefore those who have smoked tobacco but not used other drugs or alcohol may have said that they have not ever used drugs or alcohol. These people are absent from the results for

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cigarette smoking. Consequently the frequency of cigarettes smoking is likely to be under-reported here.

With the above caution, the results in chart 11 show that almost two thirds of the young people who answered the question said they had *never* smoked cigarettes.

CHART 11: HOW OFTEN DO YOU SMOKE CIGARETTES?



- Young men were more likely to have *never* smoked cigarettes (68% compared to 57% of young women);
- Young women were more likely to smoke *at least once a week* (19% compared to 11% of young men);
- Non-First Nations were more likely to have *never* smoked (64% compared to 47% of First Nations);
- First Nations were more likely to smoke *at least once a week* (33% compared to 12% of non-First Nations).
- Younger grades were more likely to have *never* smoked (77% of grade 8s, 40% of grade 11s and 51% of grade 12s).
- Smoking *at least once a week* was most common among grade 12 students and least common among grade 8s (29% of grade 12s and 7% of grade 8s).

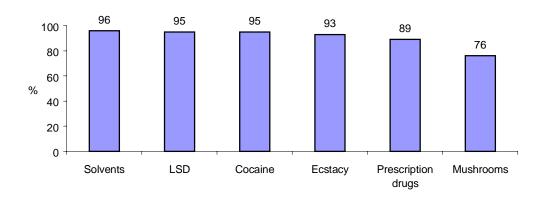
TAKE OTHER DRUGS

The remaining drugs we asked about were not taken with such frequency as alcohol, marijuana or tobacco. Chart 12 shows the percentages of students who said they have *never* taken solvents, LSD, cocaine, ecstasy, non-prescribed prescription drugs, and mushrooms. The substance young people were least likely to have never used (i.e. most likely to have used) was mushrooms.

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CHART 12: PERCENTAGE WHO HAVE NEVER USED THE FOLLOWING....

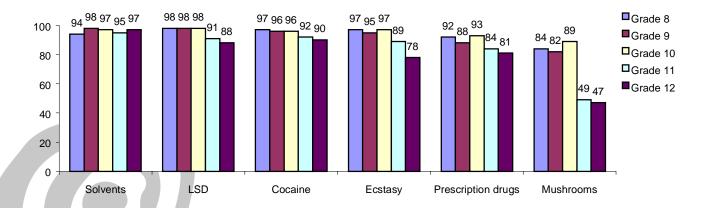


Mushrooms were the drug most commonly *tried* (by 17%). A further 7% said they used mushrooms more often than trying them. Solvent inhalation was the drug least commonly *tried* (by 3%). The number of people who said they used any of these substances with any frequency was very small.

We found that a higher percentage of First Nations said they *tried* mushrooms (29% compared to 14% of non-First Nations), while a higher percentage of non-First Nations said they had *never* used them (79% compared to 64% First Nations).

Chart 13 shows that students in grades 11 and 12 are the least likely to have *never* tried the drugs shown here (i.e. are most likely to have at least tried them), with the exception of solvent inhalation where there was no difference between grades.

CHART 13: PERCENTAGE WHO HAVE NEVER USED THE FOLLOWING.... SHOWN BY GRADE.

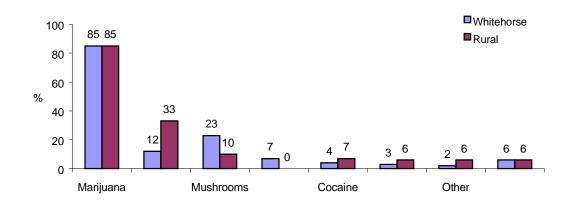


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What drug is the most popular in your community?

In an open question we asked young people to tell us which is the most popular drug in their community. Chart 14 shows that the most common answer by far was marijuana, both in Whitehorse and in the communities. Alcohol was thought to be more popular by those in rural areas than those in Whitehorse, while mushrooms were thought be more popular by Whitehorse youth.

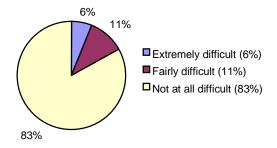
CHART 14: WHAT DRUG IS THE MOST POPULAR IN YOUR COMMUNITY? SHOWN BY GEOGRAPHICAL AREA.



If you wanted to use drugs, how difficult would you say it would be for you to obtain them?

Chart 15 shows that the vast majority of the Yukon youth we surveyed thought it would be *not at all difficult* to obtain drugs.

CHART 15: HOW DIFFICULT WOULD IT BE FOR YOU TO OBTAIN DRUGS?



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Those most likely to say that it would *not be at all difficult* to obtain drugs were:

- Non-First Nations (88% compared to 65% of First Nations);
- Older grade students (94% of grade 12s and 70% of grade 8s); and
- Whitehorse youth (89% compared to 68% in the communities).

"It's way too easy to access drugs and alcohol."

(Male, Whitehorse school)

Is there someone in your home who uses drugs or alcohol?

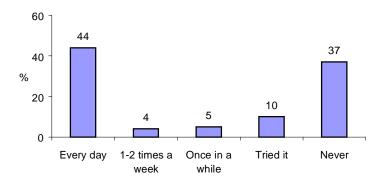
As well as asking young people about their own behaviour related to alcohol and drugs, we asked about the behaviour of the other people in their home. Specifically, we asked about the frequency of use of alcohol, marijuana, cigarettes, solvents, non-prescribed prescription drugs and other drugs (cocaine, etc.) by others in the home.

The young people surveyed most commonly said that cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana were consumed by someone in their homes.

SMOKING CIGARETTES

Chart 16 shows that for almost half of young people surveyed someone smokes cigarettes *every day* in their homes.

CHART 16: HOW OFTEN ARE CIGARETTES SMOKED BY SOMEONE IN YOUR HOME?



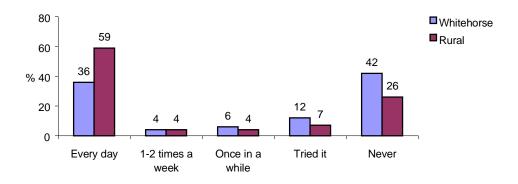
This increased further among First Nations youth, 72% of whom said that someone smokes cigarettes *every day* in their homes (compared to 38% of non-First Nations). Only 15% of First Nations youth said there is *never* smoking in their homes (compared to 41% of non-First Nations).

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Students in grades 8 and 9 were more likely to say that someone smokes cigarettes in their home *every day* (49% of grade 8s, 53% of grade 9s and 36% of grade 12s).

Chart 17 shows that young people in the communities were much more likely to say that someone smokes cigarettes *every day* in their homes.

CHART 17: HOW OFTEN ARE CIGARETTES SMOKED BY SOMEONE IN YOUR HOME? SHOWN BY GEOGRAPHICAL AREA.



DRINK BEER, WINE OR OTHER ALCOHOL

Chart 18 shows that most young people say that alcohol is drunk in their homes, though for most this is less than once a week (*every day* plus *1-2 times a week*).

CHART 18: HOW OFTEN IS ALCOHOL DRUNK BY SOMEONE ELSE IN YOUR HOME?

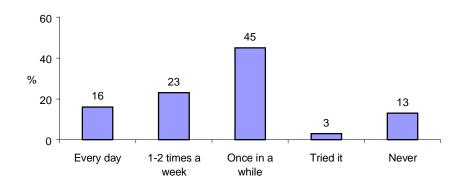
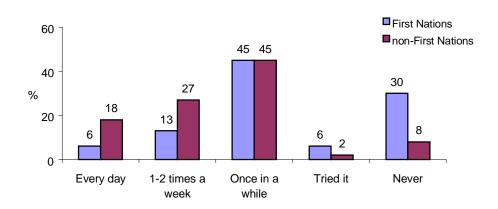


Chart 19 shows that non-First Nations youth are far more likely to say that someone drinks alcohol in their homes once a week or more, while a third of First Nations youth said that alcohol is *never* drunk in their homes.

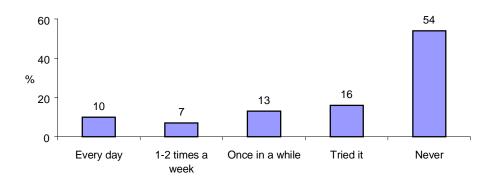
CHART 19: HOW OFTEN IS ALCOHOL DRUNK BY SOMEONE ELSE IN YOUR HOME? SHOWN BY ETHNIC GROUP.



SMOKE MARIJUANA

Chart 20 shows that the majority of young people said marijuana is *never* smoked by someone in their home. According to 17% of young people, marijuana is smoked at least once a week in their homes (*every day* plus 1-2 times a week).

CHART 20: HOW OFTEN IS MARIJUANA OR HASHISH SMOKED BY SOMEONE IN YOUR HOME?



First Nations youth were more likely to say that marijuana is smoked *every day* by someone in their homes (19%, compared to 9% of non-First Nations).



TAKE OTHER DRUGS

The vast majority of young people said the following drugs are *never* consumed in their home:

- 96% said solvents are *never* inhaled in their homes;
- 89% said other drugs (cocaine, ecstasy, etc.) are *never* used in their homes; and
- 84% said non-prescribed prescription drugs are *never* used in their homes

PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) AND DRUGS AND ALCOHOL Do you feel comfortable talking to your parent(s) or guardian(s) about drugs and/or alcohol?

We asked young people how often they feel comfortable talking to their parent(s) or guardian(s) about drugs and/or alcohol. We found:

- 37% said they *always* feel comfortable;
- 31% said *sometimes*:
- 16% said rarely; and
- 17% said they *never* feel comfortable talking to their parent(s) or guardian(s) about drugs and/or alcohol.

There were no differences found between sexes, ethnic groups, grades or geographical areas.

"I love my parents and that's because we talk."

(Male, Whitehorse school)

When your parent(s) or guardian(s) have disagreements with you, how often do they involve concern about drinking, drugs or smoking?

We asked young people how often disagreements with their parent(s) or guardian(s) involve concern about drinking, drugs and smoking. The results are shown in table 1.

TABLE 1: HOW OFTEN DO DISAGREEMENTS WITH YOUR PARENT(S) OR GUARDIAN(S) INVOLVE CONCERN ABOUT DRINKING, DRUGS AND SMOKING? PERCENTAGES OF YOUTH SURVEYED.

	Drinking:	Drugs:	Smoking:
Often	16%	18%	15%
Sometimes	29%	21%	19%
Never	55%	61%	66%

"My parents are usually concerned that I stay out of trouble, i.e. drugs, drinking, etc.

Their main concern is that I make the right choices."

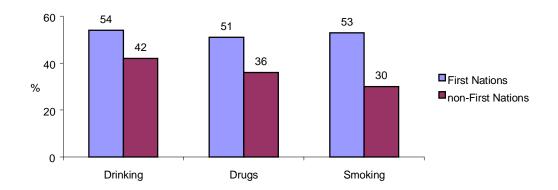
(Female, Whitehorse school)



Comparing young women and men, disagreements with parents/guardians about **drugs** were more common for young men than women (21% of young men said disagreements *often* involved concern about drugs, compared to 15% of young women).

Chart 21 shows that First Nations youth were more likely to say that arguments with their parents/guardians concern drinking, drugs and smoking. *Often* and *sometimes* have been combined in the chart below.

CHART 21: ARGUMENTS WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS OFTEN/SOMETIMES INVOLVE CONCERN ABOUT DRINKING, DRUGS AND SMOKING. SHOWN BY ETHNIC GROUP.



Looking at differences between grades, we found that grades 8 and 10 were the least likely to have arguments about **drinking** and grade 11 was the most likely (39% of grades 8 and 10 said arguments involved drinking *often/sometimes* compared to 60% of grade 11s). Conversely, grade 8 was the most likely to have arguments about **smoking** and grade 12 was the least (45% of grades 8s said arguments involved smoking *often/sometimes* compared to 24% of grade 12s).

Comparing youth in Whitehorse and in the communities, we found that a higher percentage of young people in the communities said that disagreements with their parents/guardians *often/sometimes* involved concern about **smoking** (44% compared to 30% of Whitehorse youth).

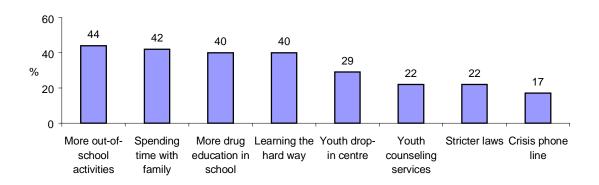
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PREVENTION

What would help young people decide not to use drugs and alcohol?

We suggested eight prevention strategies and the young people surveyed could pick as many answers as they wanted. Chart 22 shows that none of the strategies listed was picked by a majority of young people, the most common response was *more out-of-school activities*.

CHART 22: WHAT WOULD HELP YOUNG PEOPLE DECIDE NOT TO USE DRUGS AND ALCOHOL?



The most common answer among young women was *more drug education in schools* and among young men it was *learning the hard way*. Young women and men had different ideas about how to help young people decide not to use drugs and alcohol. Young men were more likely than young women to say *stricter laws* (26% compared to 19% of young women), while young women were more likely than young men to say:

- *More out-of-school activities* (47% compared to 40% of young men);
- Spending time with the family (46% compared to 38% of young men);
- *More drug education in schools* (48% compared to 31% of young men);
- Youth drop-in centre (33% compared to 24% of young men);
- Youth counseling services (26% compared to 16% of young men); and
- Crisis phone line (20% compared to 14% of young men).

The most common answer for First Nations and non-First Nations youth was *more out-of-school activities*. First Nations youth were more likely to say that a *youth drop-in centre* would help young people decide not to use drugs and alcohol (39% compared to 27% of non-First Nations). While non-First Nations youth were more likely to suggest *stricter laws* (26% compared to 10% of First Nations).

Students in different grades had different ideas about how to help young people decide not to use drugs and alcohol. The most common answer among grade 8 and 9 students



was more out-of-school activities. Among grade 10 students it was more drug education in schools; among grade 11 and 12 students it was learning the hard way. Younger grade students were more likely than older to suggest a youth drop-in centre (32% of grade 8s compared to 19% of grade 12s), while older grade students were more likely to suggest learning the hard way (49% of grade 11 and 12 students compared to 34% of grade 9s).

Youth in rural areas were more likely to suggest a *youth drop-in centre* (37% compared to 25% in Whitehorse) and *youth counseling services* (26% compared to 20% in Whitehorse).

There was space on the survey form for people to add *other* answers; thirty-eight did so and their comments included:

- There's nothing can be done, kids will be kids, it's down to individual choice, "It's your own choice, no one can stop you from wanting to try them" (female, Whitehorse school);
- More activities for young people, sports and non-sports, "I don't do drugs anymore because I'm committed to soccer" (male, Whitehorse school);
- Change the law; comments were about both more and less severe laws, "Less strict laws, it's because they are banned that you want to do them" (male, rural school);
- Support or direction from friends and from family, "Friends, they're the ones who advise you to do them or not" (male, rural school); and
- Educate about the real life consequences, "People telling their stories of bad drug use" (female, Whitehorse school).

SUMMARY

ATTITUDES TO DRUGS AND ALCOHOL:

- The majority of young people surveyed believe that drug abuse, alcohol abuse and fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) are *very serious* in the Yukon.
- At the same time, nearly two thirds agreed that marijuana should be legalized. Young men, youth in grades 11 and 12, and First Nations youth were the most likely to agree.
- Attitudes were closely associated with age. Younger grades showed less tolerance towards alcohol and drugs (and to the people who use them) than older grades.

USE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL:

• Overall, two thirds of young people said they had used drugs or alcohol.

- Drug and alcohol use mirrored the age-related attitudes towards them. Compared to grade 8 students, those in grades 11 and 12 were twice as likely to say they had used drugs or alcohol.
- The most frequently used substances were marijuana, tobacco and alcohol.
- About half of the young people surveyed had at least *tried* marijuana; this rose to three quarters of the grade 12 students surveyed.
- Over half had at least *tried* drinking alcohol; this rose to nearly 90% of grades 11 and 12.
- The results for tobacco use are likely under-reported and show that about 40% have at least *tried* smoking cigarettes.
- Fewer than 10% said they had tried solvents, LSD, cocaine, ecstasy or non-prescribed prescription drugs. Overall about 25% had at least tried mushrooms and this doubled to over 50% among grade 11 and 12 students.
- This survey found that young women and men's alcohol and drug use was very similar, with the exception that cigarette smoking was higher among young women.
- Compared to non-First Nations, First Nations youth were both more likely to *never* drink alcohol and to drink it *at least once a week*. They were also more likely to smoke marijuana and smoke cigarettes *at least once a week*.

DRUGS IN THE COMMUNITY:

- The drug perceived to be the most popular throughout the Yukon was marijuana.
- Most young people said it is *not at all difficult* to obtain drugs (including 70% of students in grade 8). Those most likely to say access is *not difficult at all* were non-First Nations, older grade students, and those living in Whitehorse (compared to First Nations, younger grades and those in the communities).

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL IN THE HOME:

- Nearly half the young people said they live in homes where someone smokes cigarettes *every day*. This rose to over 70% for First Nations youth.
- 40% of young people said they live in homes where alcohol is consumed *at least once a week*. Alcohol is more likely to be consumed in the homes of non-First Nations youth than First Nations.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

- Most young people said they feel comfortable talking to their parents/guardians about drugs and alcohol.
- For most young people surveyed, disagreements with their parents/guardians did not involve concern about drinking, drugs or smoking.

DECIDING NOT TO USE DRUGS AND ALCOHOL:

 The most common answer (though by less than half) to the question of how to help young people decide not to use drugs and alcohol was to have more *out-of-school activities*.

• Answers varied between sexes, ethnic groups, grades and areas of residence.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

The bulletins and a more detailed methodology are available on our web site. An Executive Summary of the study will be available towards the end of 2002. It will summarize the results and include tables of most of the data.

For further information about the study and this bulletin please contact:

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