

# 2016 Communities that Care Youth® Survey

## Summary of Highlights · Tompkins County · Spring, 2017

Comparison Report · Students reporting as straight, male or female (SMF), compared with students reporting as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, other (LGBTQ+)

Community Coalition for Healthy Youth [www.healthyouth.org](http://www.healthyouth.org)

Tompkins County Youth Services Dept. [www.tompkinscountyny.gov/youth](http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/youth)

This summary accompanies the 2016 Tompkins County Summary of Highlights which reports on responses of 3,960 Tompkins County 7-12th graders to the biannual Communities that Care® Youth Survey. This is one of several comparison reports that disaggregates and examines results by sub-groups. Please visit [www.healthyouth.org](http://www.healthyouth.org).

Two questions new to the survey in 2016 allow us to examine student responses by sexual orientation and by gender identity. This report provides a comparison between students who identify as straight/heterosexual students and as either male or female with students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning, transgender, or other. We realize that these two groupings—sexual orientation and gender identity—are different. However, we are grouping them here for two reasons. First, 111 youth identified their gender identity as 'transgender' or 'other option not listed'. We cannot make broad generalizations based on such a small number. Second, our goal with this comparison report is to compare the experience of students who, by being in the minority, may have a different experience than students considered to be in the majority.

The students who identified as straight, male or female (SMF) represent 81% of those surveyed. The students who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or other (LGBTQ+) represent 19% of those surveyed.

We examined all survey questions by domain areas (family, community, school, individual/peer) and noted differences of 10% or more between the SMF and LGBTQ+ students. These differences of 10% or greater are reflected in this report.

COMMUNITY LIFE			SCHOOL LIFE		
	SMF	LGBTQ+		SMF	LGBTQ+
There are many adults in my neighborhood I could talk to about something important	46%	32%	I often/always hate being in school	23%	38%
There are people in my neighborhood who are proud of me	45%	35%	I feel safe at school	89%	77%
There are people in my neighborhood who encourage me to do my best	54%	42%	Someone said something hurtful to me at school within the last 30 days	27%	38%
I'd like to get out of my neighborhood	22%	33%	I've had no experience with bullying (verbal, physical, cyber, excluding) at school in the past 30 days	60%	46%
I know at least one adult who used illegal drugs in the past year	31%	46%	School staff are available immediately to help with hurtful behaviors	42%	32%
I know at least one adult who got drunk or high in the past year	52%	63%	I try to do my best work at school	86%	76%
			What I'm learning at school will be important to me later in life	52%	40%

### OBSERVATIONS—COMMUNITY

SMF youth report more positive connections to community adults, with neighbors they could talk to, who encourage them and are proud of them. LGBTQ+ youth report connections of a different sort with community adults; they are more likely to know community adults who use drugs.

### OBSERVATIONS—SCHOOL

LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to have negative experiences at school: verbal harassment or other bullying-types of behaviors, and not feeling safe. They are less likely than SMF students to say school staff are available to help with these negative behaviors. Given this, it is not surprising that LGBTQ+ youth report higher rates of hating school than SMF youth. SMF youth report higher rates of working hard at school and seeing the relevance of what they're learning.

### FAMILY LIFE

	SMF	LGBTQ+
In my family we have serious arguments	26%	37%
People in my family often insult or yell at each other	25%	38%
We argue about the same things in my family over and over	34%	49%
Someone in my family has a history of problems with alcohol or drug use	28%	41%
My parents give me lots of chances to do fun things with them	82%	68%
My parents notice when I'm doing a good job and let me know	76%	65%
My parents tell me they're proud of me	76%	65%
If I had a personal problem, I could go to my mom or dad for help	88%	76%
My parents talk with me before making family decisions that affect me	73%	62%
I feel very close to my father	76%	62%
I share my thoughts and feelings with	61%	47%
I enjoy spending time with my father	84%	73%
My parents ask about my homework	56%	44%

#### OBSERVATIONS—FAMILY

LGBTQ+ students report more fighting in their families than SMF youth. On the other hand, SMF youth state more often than LGBTQ+ youth that their parents are proud of them, notice when they're doing a good job, and give them chances to spend time together doing fun things. SMF youth report closer relationships to their fathers than LGBTQ+ youth (data regarding relationships with mothers did not show a difference of 10% or more).

### INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE

	SMF	LGBTQ+
I participated on school or community sports teams in the past year	76%	55%
I like to see how much I can get away with.	19%	32%
I've experimented with alcohol use	35%	45%
I strongly disapprove of people my age using alcohol regularly	62%	48%
There is moderate/great risk of harm from trying marijuana	44%	33%
There is moderate/great risk of harm from using marijuana weekly or more	68%	57%
Marijuana use is wrong for people my age	79%	64%
When I'm an adult, I'll use marijuana	13%	26%
Sometimes I think life is not worth it	19%	47%
At times, I think I'm no good at all	28%	56%
All in all, I'm inclined to think I'm a failure	16%	40%
In the past year, I felt depressed or sad most days, even if I felt OK sometimes	24%	51%

#### OBSERVATIONS—INDIVIDUAL

With the exception of experimenting with alcohol which was reported more by LGBTQ+ youth, there was no difference of 10% or greater between LGBTQ+ and SMF youth for any of the substances included in the survey. However, there are attitude differences, especially with regard to marijuana. LGBTQ+ youth report lower perception of harm from marijuana use and higher likelihood of marijuana use as an adult than SMF youth. Most concerning are the substantial differences in the four questions concerning mental health. For all four, LGBTQ+ youth rates were at least twice those of SMF youth.

### EXPERIENCES WITH FRIENDS & PEERS

	SMF	LGBTQ+
Two or more of my 4 best friends have made a commitment to be drug-free	66%	56%
Two or more of my 4 best friends like school	70%	60%
My friends disapprove of marijuana use	73%	60%

#### OBSERVATIONS—FRIENDS AND PEERS

SMF youth say their peer group is committed to school and less approving of drug use than the friends of LGBTQ+ youth.