

# 2016 Communities that Care Youth® Survey

## Summary of Highlights · Tompkins County

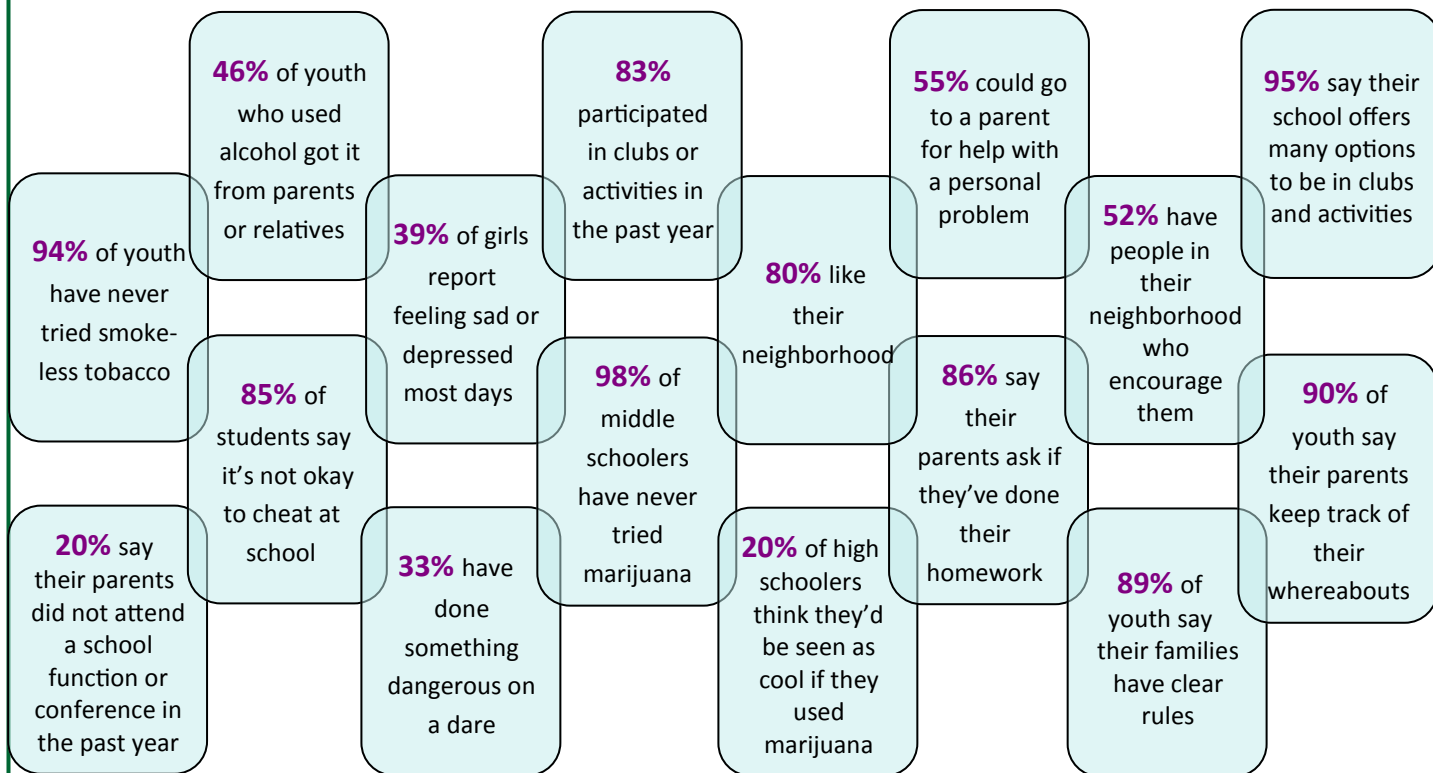
### Spring, 2017

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

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

In fall, 2016, 3,960 students in grades 7-12 in fifteen Tompkins County public schools completed the Communities that Care® Youth Survey. This represents a response rate of 81%. For most schools, this was the fifth time they participated in the biannual survey, allowing for time-trend analysis since 2008.

There is good news in terms of how well our Tompkins County young people are doing. In a majority of areas, we noted improvement from two years ago, but there is always room for further improvement. We hope this report will provide you with some answers about how well our young people are doing and will also spur you to ask yourself, “What can I do to make a difference?”



This report compares responses of Tompkins youth with those of national peers when national data are available. Survey results are used in each district and at the county level to guide school and community efforts to improve outcomes for youth. See notes on P. 5 for definitions. The 2016 Tompkins County Survey Report lists all questions and combined answers of all students. The Report is on file with Tompkins County Youth Services Dept. and TST BOCES. Each school superintendent and building principal has a copy of their district/building results.

The survey was a joint effort of the Community Coalition for Healthy Youth, TST BOCES, Alcohol & Drug Council of Tompkins County, Tompkins County Youth Services Department, and Dryden, Groton, Ithaca, Lansing, Newfield, and Trumansburg school districts and New Roots Charter School. We thank the principals and superintendents for their support and participation in the survey and the students who took the time and effort to share their experiences with us.



## RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTOR FRAMEWORK

To prevent a problem from happening, we need to identify the factors that increase the risk of that problem developing and then find ways to reduce the risks. Just as eating a high-fat diet is a risk factor for heart disease and getting regular exercise is a protective factor for heart disease, there are characteristics of the community, school, family, peer groups and individual youth that can help protect youth (protective factors), or put them at risk (risk factors) for drug use and other problem behaviors including delinquency, teen pregnancy, violence, and school drop-out.

The survey and this report examine data in each domain (family, school, community, individual/peer) to see where Tompkins youth are doing well and where there is room for improvement. Only one risk area in Tompkins County was higher than the national norm in 2016, Community Transitions and Mobility. (In 2014, two areas were higher than the national norm.) More details are found inside this report and at [www.healthyouth.org](http://www.healthyouth.org).

### **FAMILY** – All risk and protective factors are better than the national norm. All improved since 2014.

Most Tompkins youth say their parents value and involve them in family life. Their parents provide clear expectations, monitor their behavior, and encourage and praise them.

Youth with opportunities to participate meaningfully in the responsibilities and activities of caring families that set clear expectations are less likely to engage in negative behaviors.

#### **Tompkins Students and their Families**

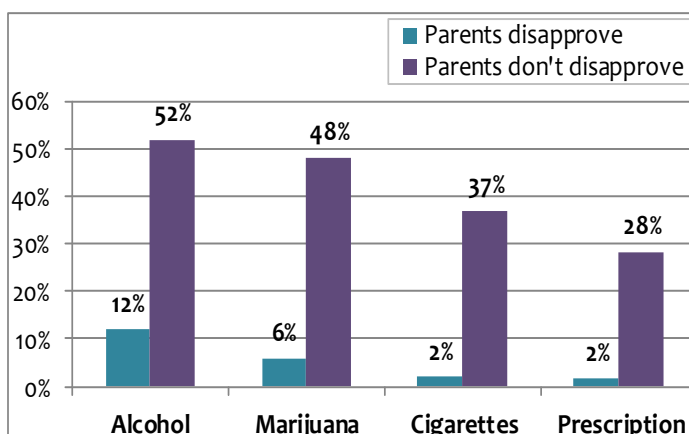
Scores in the Family domain are consistently strong, showing that overall, Tompkins youth have healthy bonds to their family. Though these connections weaken as students get older, even in 12th grade, a majority report that they feel close to their parents, enjoy spending time with them, and could go to them if they needed help. By late high school, however, a majority of youth report poor parental supervision, lack of follow through on family rules, and low parental disapproval of substance use.

Here's what Tompkins youth say about their relationships with their parents:

- 88%** enjoy spending time with their mother
- 85%** feel close to their mother
- 82%** enjoy spending time with their father
- 79%** say their parents give them many chances to do fun things with them
- 74%** feel close to their father
- 72%** say their parents often say they're proud of something they've done
- 71%** report their parents involve them before family decisions affecting them are made

Parental involvement at school decreases as students get older. 87% of 7th graders report that their parents had met with someone at school or attended a school function in the past year; by 12th grade only 79% report parental participation at school.

#### **Impact of Parents' Disapproval on Youth 30-day Use**



**Parental disapproval reduces the likelihood that young people will use alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs.**

#### **How Parent Involvement at School Impacts Youth Outcomes**

	Yes	No
Like school	50%	29%
Get mostly A's & B's	88%	70%
Alcohol use	12%	20%
Marijuana use	9%	17%
Cigarette use	2%	6%
Sad/depressed most days	27%	40%

**Parental involvement at school has positive impacts at school and in other areas of a young person's life.**

**SCHOOL – All risk and protective factors are better than the national norm.**

A majority of Tompkins youth say that they have opportunities to be a part of important activities at school and are rewarded for their contributions. A majority also report a high commitment to school and that they are meeting academic expectations.

When young people like school, participate meaningfully in activities, and are recognized for their hard work and achievement, they are less likely to engage in drug use and other problem behaviors.

**Tompkins Students’ School Life**

**In 2016, students reported these positives. . .**

**. . . and these areas for improvement**

- 96%** of students report getting C’s or better in school
- 86%** say they feel safe at school
- 86%** have many chances to talk 1-on-1 with teachers
- 84%** usually try to do their best work at school
- 71%** report that teachers notice when they’re doing a good job and let them know about it
- 54%** have lots of chances to decide things like class rules and activities
- 53%** have an adult at school who can help them with problems

- 40%** of students say school rules are fairly enforced
- 40%** say the school notifies their parents when they’ve done something well
- 37%** report that students treat each other with respect
- 26%** say they often/almost always hate being in school
- 25%** have been called names or experienced verbal put-downs at school in the past month
- 23%** say their courses are dull
- 11%** of high school students say they have been high or drunk at school in the past year

**COMMUNITY – Although the three highest (worst) risk factors are in this domain, all improved since 2014.**

A majority of Tompkins youth say there are many opportunities to be involved in community activities. However, they report frequent transitions and moves, contributing to a low sense of attachment to their neighborhoods and low levels of recognition by their neighbors when they do well.

When young people have opportunities for positive participation in their community and the community supports and recognizes them for their involvement, youth are less likely to engage in substance use or other problem behaviors.

**Tompkins Students and their Community**

From 8th grade on, Tompkins youth are less likely than national peers to say their neighbors support and encourage them.

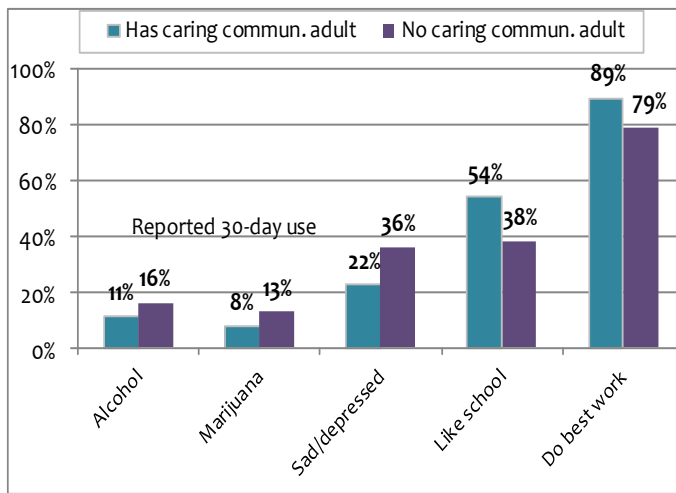
Ease of Access to Substances	M.S.	H.S.
	Alcohol	15%
Cigarettes	12%	29%
Marijuana	12%	49%

Perceived drug availability has decreased since 2014 for both middle and high schoolers and is lower than national peers. Perceived drug availability is highest for 11th & 12th grade; nearly half of high schoolers say it would be easy to get marijuana if they wanted.

Other findings about Tompkins youth and their community:

- 86%** feel safe in their neighborhood
- 74%** would miss their neighborhood if they had to move
- 14%** of high school students have changed homes 5 or more times since kindergarten

**How Caring Community Adults Impact Youth**



**Youth who have community adults who care about them and recognize their efforts do better in school and life.**

## INDIVIDUAL/PEER – Most risk and protective factors are better than the national norm.

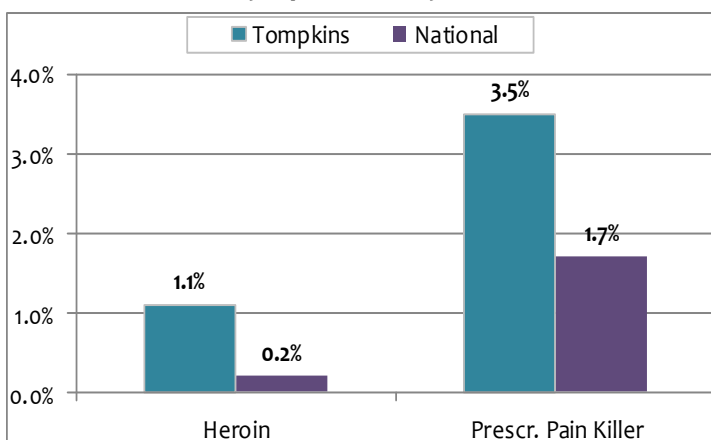
A majority of Tompkins youth are socially competent and have positive relationships with peers. They also have clear beliefs about what is right and wrong. Tompkins youth are less likely to attend regular religious services than national peers.

Participation in positive school and community activities helps provide protection for young people. These opportunities also build social skills, including skills to resist negative influences. The influence of peers increases as youth get older, positive peers lead to more strengths in youth while negative peers can have the opposite effect.

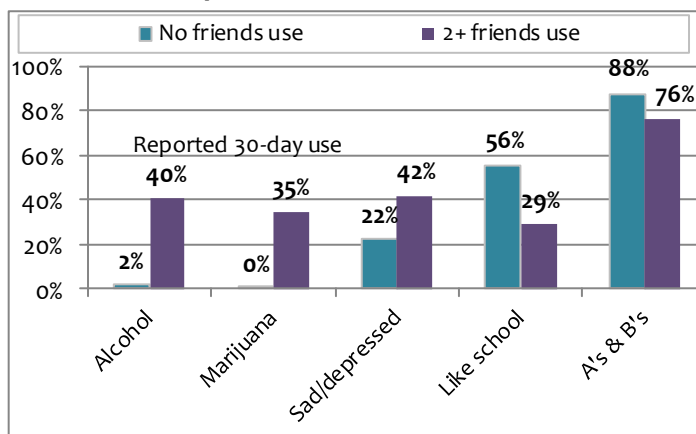
### Tompkins Students and their Peers

**Substance Use** (Details, Page 5) **Alcohol** remains the substance most commonly used by Tompkins youth. Use rates for all grades decreased since 2014, mirroring the national trend. 11% of local high schoolers report binge drinking in the previous two weeks. The second most commonly used substance is **marijuana**; Tompkins 12th graders report higher use rates than national peers. We also analyzed reported use of **opioids** by local youth. Overall use of both prescription pain killers (not prescribed by a doctor) and heroin decreased since 2014; however, use of both substances by local 12th graders is higher than for national peers though rates are still low. (See chart, below left, showing 12th grade use rates. Heroin rates are below 1% for grades 7-11; for prescription pain killers, rates go from below 1% for grades 7-8 to 3% for 11th.)

Past 30-Day Opioid Use by 12th Graders



Impact of Peer Substance Use

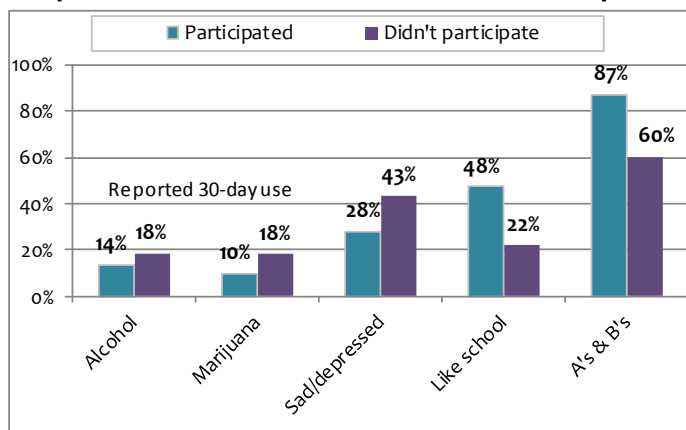


**Peer Influence** Being involved with peers who use either alcohol or marijuana greatly increases the likelihood that a young person will also use. Also, having friends who use increases a young person's incidence of being sad or depressed and reduces their positive connections at school. (See chart, above right) Students who used alcohol most often got it from a friend (49%).

**Participation in Extracurricular Activities** 83% of Tompkins students say they participated in activities or clubs sponsored either at school or in the community in the past year. 75% participated in sports, either at school or in the community. Participation improves outcomes for youth as shown in chart, below left.

**Mental Health** For the first time since 2008, rates decreased for students who reported feeling sad or depressed.

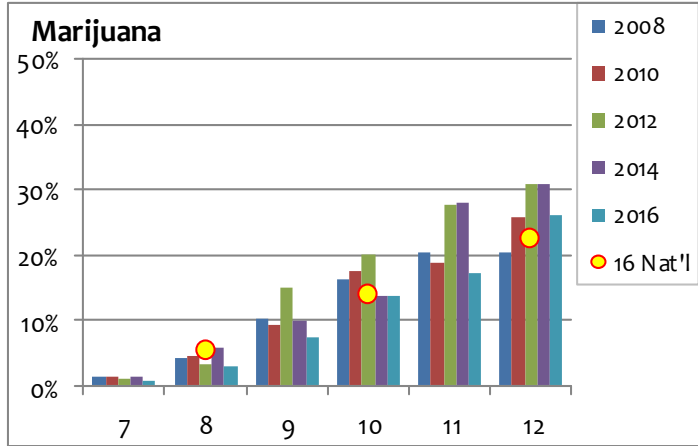
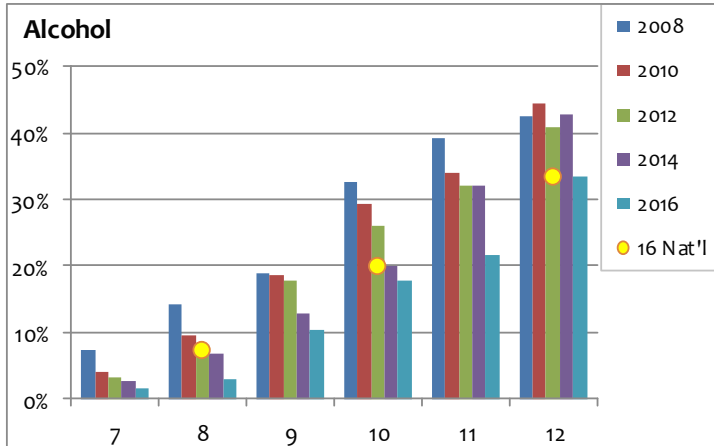
Impact of Involvement in Extracurriculars or Sports



Mental Health	M.S.	H.S.
Sometimes I think life isn't worth it	21%	27%
At times I think I'm no good at all	31%	36%
I think I'm a failure	18%	23%
In the past year I felt sad or depressed most days	28%	31%
Nationally, 29% of high school students report feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for the past 2 weeks.		

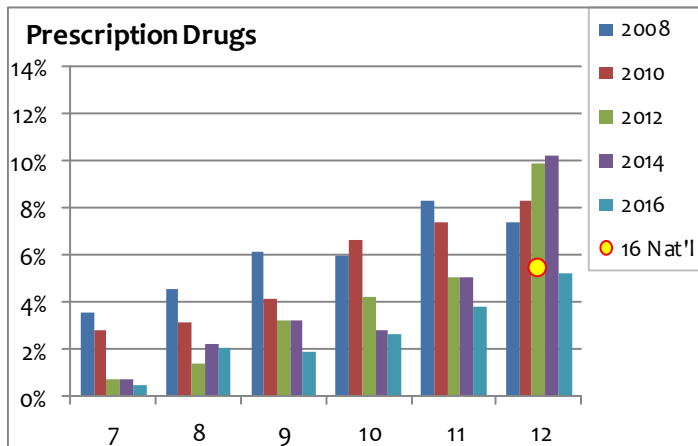
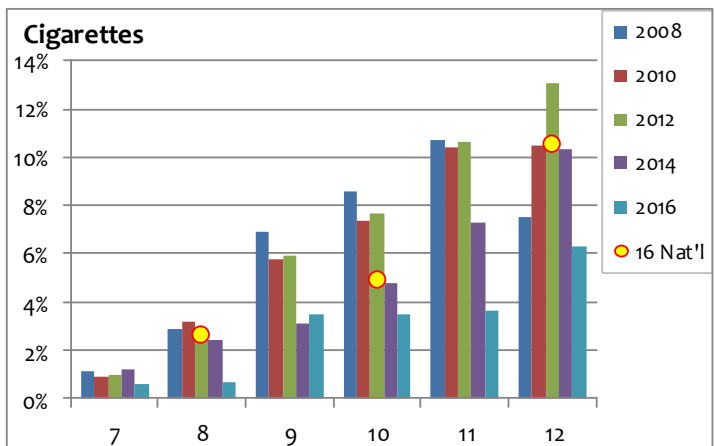
APPENDIX

**TOMPKINS COUNTY TIME TRENDS: CURRENT (PAST 30-DAY) SUBSTANCE USE BY GRADE**



Mirroring the national trend, Tompkins youth **alcohol** use decreased from 2014 to 2016 for all grades. Use by area 12th graders is slightly higher than national peers.

While **marijuana** use rates by local 12th graders is higher than national peers, rates decreased for most grades since 2014. Use increases significantly after 8th grade.



**Cigarette** use by Tompkins youth is well below national peer rates. Use dropped for all grades except 9th which showed a small increase.

Non-medical use of **prescription drugs** dropped from 2014 to 2016 for all grades. 12th grade use rates are now below national rates.

**TOMPKINS COUNTY TIME TRENDS: AGE OF FIRST USE (GRADES 7-12)**

	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016
<b>Alcohol</b>	13.0	13.3	13.1	13.3	13.3
<b>Marijuana</b>	13.8	13.9	13.8	13.8	13.9
<b>Cigarettes</b>	12.7	13.0	13.1	12.9	12.9

Onset of drug use before age 15 is a consistent predictor of drug abuse, and a later age of first drug use has been shown to predict lower drug involvement. Age of first use for Tompkins youth has remained fairly steady for marijuana and has increased slightly for alcohol and cigarettes since 2008.

**Notes:**

**National (Nat'l):** Refers to the Monitoring the Future survey given annually to a national sample of 50,000 students in grades 8, 10, and 12. Exception: national youth depression comparison is from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, a survey of students in grades 9-12, conducted annually by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

**Current Use:** Use within the past 30 days.

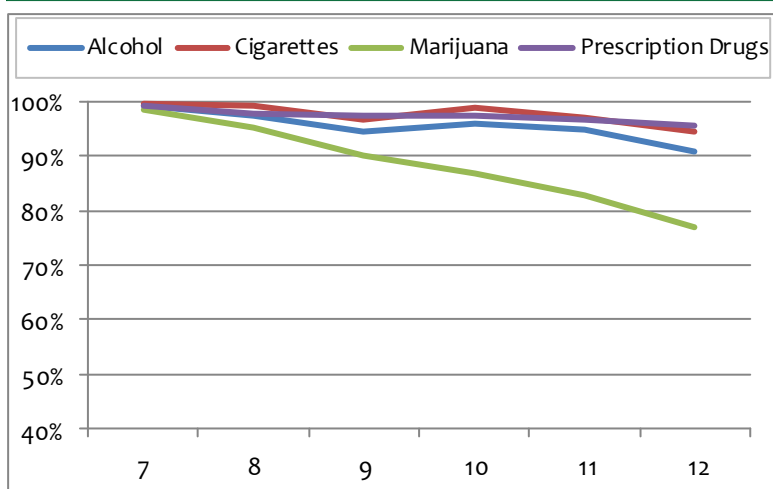
**Regular Use:** Cigarettes: smoke one or more packs per week; Alcohol: one or more alcoholic drinks nearly every day; Marijuana: not specified.

**Prescription Drugs:** Use of prescription pain killers, sedatives, tranquilizers, and/or stimulants without a doctor's instructions to take them.

**Participating Schools:** Dryden Middle and High School; Groton Middle and High School; Ithaca's Boynton and DeWitt Middle Schools, Lehman Alternative Community School and Ithaca High School; Lansing Middle and High School; Newfield Middle and High School, Trumansburg Middle and High School; New Roots Charter School. MS refers to students in grades 7 and 8; HS refers to students in grades 9-12.

**Research references** are drawn from Pride Surveys, Communities that Care®, Monitoring the Future, and Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System.

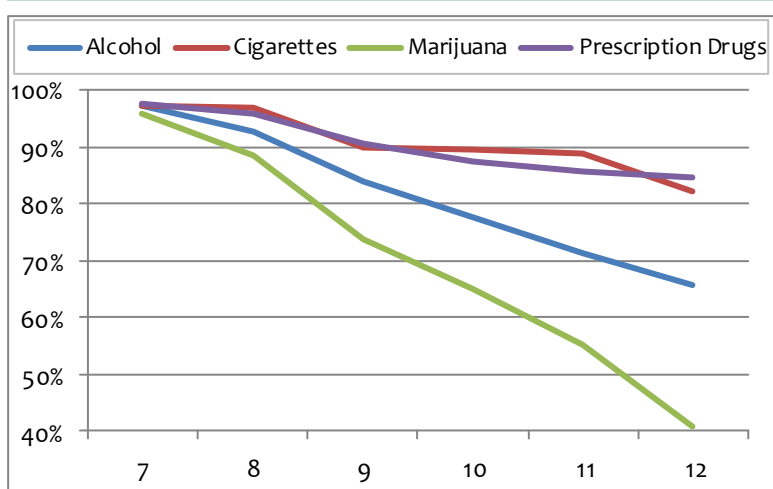
## TOMPKINS STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF PARENTAL DISAPPROVAL OF SUBSTANCE USE BY GRADE



Students who believe their parents would disapprove if they used substances are significantly less likely to use than young people whose parents do not disapprove. In families where parents are tolerant of their children's substance use, young people have increased risk of use.

Perceived parental disapproval is above 90% for all grades for alcohol, cigarettes, and prescription drugs. However, disapproval of marijuana use dips below 90% starting in 10th grade and drops to 77% in 12th grade. Since 2014, perceived parental disapproval of marijuana use decreased for grades 10 and 12.

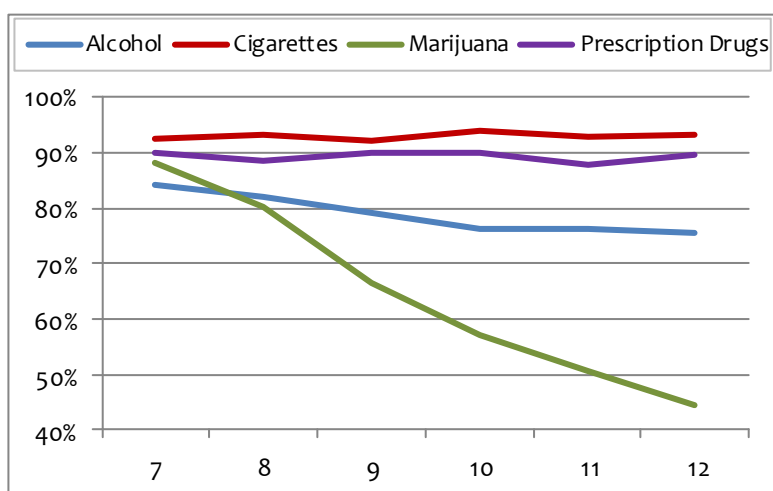
## TOMPKINS STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF FRIENDS' DISAPPROVAL OF SUBSTANCE USE BY GRADE



Peer drug use has consistently been found to be among the strongest predictors of substance use among youth. Even when young people come from well-managed families and do not experience other risk factors, spending time with friends who use drugs greatly increases the risk of this problem developing.

Since 2014, more students in all grades say their friends would disapprove of alcohol use. For all grades but 7th, students also report higher peer disapproval of cigarette use. Peer disapproval of marijuana use increased for four grades (7,8,10,11) but decreased for 12th grade with only 41% saying their friends would disapprove of marijuana use.

## TOMPKINS STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF HARM\* FROM REGULAR SUBSTANCE USE BY GRADE



When drugs are perceived as less harmful, the likelihood of use increases. On the other hand, when perceived risk of harm is high, reported use is low.

Students in all grades reported cigarettes as the most harmful substance, followed by prescription drugs. Perception of harm remains high for both of these substances through high school.

Perception of harm from regular alcohol use dips slightly from 7th (84%) to 12th (75%) grade.

In contrast, perception of harm from regular marijuana use plummets after 8th grade. By 12th grade, only 44% of students believe regular marijuana use is harmful.

\*Moderate or great harm from regular use

For more information contact the Community Coalition for Healthy Youth

c/o Tompkins County Youth Services Dept., 320 W. ML King Jr. (State) St., Ithaca, NY 14850 (607) 274-5310 or [www.healthyouth.org](http://www.healthyouth.org)