

Mental Health & Substance Use in Norwalk in 2021

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**The Norwalk
Partnership**
PREVENTING SUBSTANCE MISUSE
AMONG YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS


positivedirections
THE CENTER FOR PREVENTION AND COUNSELING

About The Norwalk Partnership (TNP)

- Norwalk's substance use prevention coalition (www.thenorwalkpartnership.org)
- Coalition of local residents & community organizations
 - Positive Directions-The Center for Prevention & Counseling is the manager and fiduciary for the federal Drug-Free Communities (DFC) grant
 - Human Services Council is the fiduciary for the state and local grants
- Data presented tonight were funded through Positive Directions' DFC grant
- Alignment with Norwalk ACTS to use data for mental health & substance use planning

TNP Leadership Team organizations:



In TNP's March 2021 survey of community members, Norwalk adults reported:

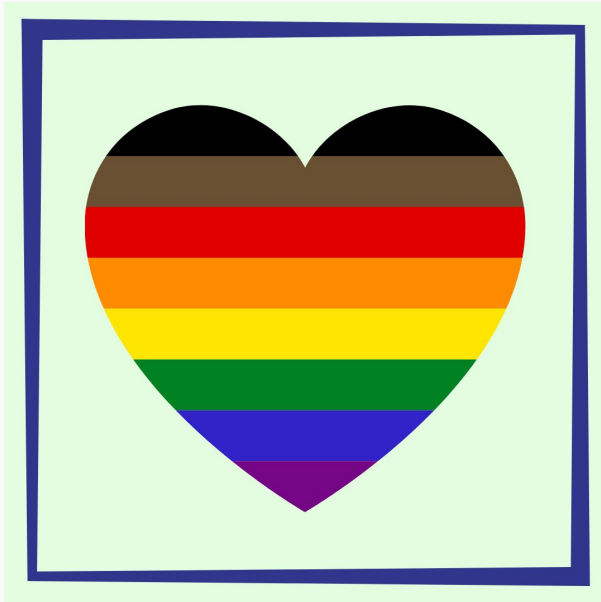


- **Biggest** negative impact of COVID is on emotional wellbeing (43%)
- 34% scored positive for anxiety
- 30% scored positive for depression
- 27% reported worse relationships with family/friends
- 22% reported poorer access to mental health services

In TNP's June 2021 youth survey of 7th-12 graders, Norwalk youth reported:

- 73% found pandemic very or somewhat stressful
- 61% do not feel connected to other kids at school
- 39% reported depression (32% MS, 46% HS)
- **13%** reported suicidal ideation
- **7%** reported suicide attempt





Groups experiencing above average depression rates, from 43%-49%:

- Blacks, Hispanics, English Language Learners
- Students in special education
- Multiracial students
- Students experiencing financial strain
- Girls

Highest risk group:

- LGBTQ (>70% depression, 20% suicide attempt)

Adult Substance Use in Norwalk



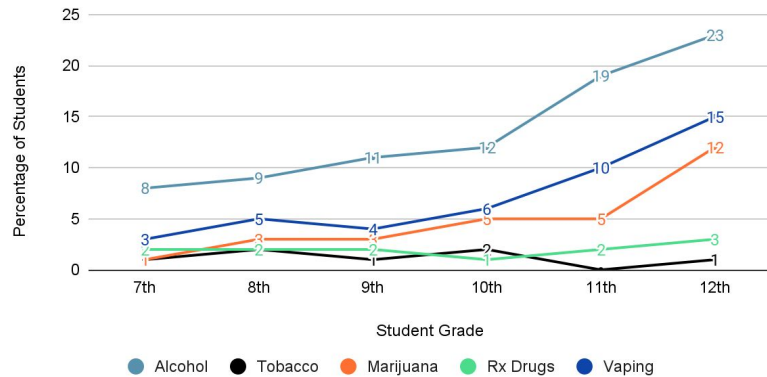
In what ways has the COVID-19 pandemic affected you in terms of the following behaviors:	Do not use/ not applicable	No change/ the same		MORE %
	%	LESS %	%	
Using alcohol	30.3	18.3	33.4	17.9
Using nicotine (cigarettes or vapes)	60.6	9.8	21.6	8.0
Using marijuana (THC, weed, edibles)	67.9	10.7	15.2	6.2
Using prescription drugs for the purpose of getting high or to feel good	70.4	10.3	15.1	4.1

Youth Substance Use in Norwalk

Substance use rates decreased compared with the November 2018 youth survey by Positive Directions.

Past 30 Day Use of Substances, NPS

June 2021



- Alcohol remains the most consumed substance, with 15% of 7th-12 graders drinking (almost ¼ of seniors).
- Among students who drink, 1 in 3 vapes and 1 in 5 uses marijuana.
- Higher rates: LGBTQ, students with depression, special education, financial strain, girls.

Norwalk Community Knowledge & Attitudes around Substance Use



Adults:

- 28% think drinking alcohol is a normal part of growing up.
- 16% think marijuana is a normal part of growing up.
- 43% think alcohol consumption is common at Norwalk beaches.
- 23% think alcohol is common on school grounds during band/sports events.

Teens:

- 23% do not think drinking 5+ drinks at a time, 1-2 times per week, is harmful.
- 35% do not think using marijuana 1-2 times per week is harmful.

Laws & Practices:

- 36% of adults are unaware of the Social Host law.
- 29% of adults are unaware that the legal age for tobacco/vaping is 21.
- 22-23% are unaware of safe storage & disposal for Rx drugs.

Considerations for City

MENTAL HEALTH

Need for Social Supports:

- Friendship benches, chess tables in parks
- Teen center
- Outdoor eating
- Neighborhood block parties
- Maximize mentor program

Visible Supports for At Risk Groups:

- LGBTQ signage
- Gender neutral bathrooms
- Spanish / other cultural programs

Commitment to Mental Health & Suicide prevention:

- 988 signage on bridges, at mall
- All City staff QPR trained, LGBTQ trained / affirming
- Advocacy for Crisis Stabilization / Respite

SUBSTANCE USE

- Lighting, signage at beaches
- Enhanced police patrols at beaches
- Local ordinances around marijuana sales
- Environmental scans around vaping/marijuana
- Signage around legal age for substance use
 - Digital signs (health & wellness)
 - Traditional signs
- Support campaigns
- Restorative practices (schools > YSB)
- Work toward making the City a Recovery Friendly Workplace

Where to Find Behavioral Health Services & Supports

<https://www.thenorwalkpartnership.org/get-help>

- Read about the mental health, substance use, and support services programs in Norwalk
- Download behavioral health resource list in English or Spanish
- Download list of free emotional supports for teens

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<https://www.thehubct.org/treatment>

- Get regional resource list of treatment providers
- Get regional list of support groups

Questions?

Contact:

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Visit www.thenorwalkpartnership.org for information and resources related to substance use prevention in Norwalk.

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