

Maryvale High School has implemented the High School Health and Wellness (HSHW) grant in partnership with the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family. HSHW is a substance use prevention grant that allows the Maryvale community to utilize a comprehensive evidenced based prevention curriculum, provide prevention resources, and workshops/in services to all stakeholder groups. The goal of the HSHW grant is to create a drug-free learning environment by increasing awareness to prevent, reduce or eliminate risk behaviors. The HSHW team has created this newsletter to educate staff members on substance use trends and empower staff to support and refer students who may be at-risk. For more information or to schedule a workshop, please reach out to a HSHW Prevention Team member.

Side Note

Why is the AYS Survey data Important?

Most teens do not escalate from trying drugs to developing an addiction or other substance use disorder; however, even experimenting with drugs is a problem.

Drug use can be part of a pattern of risky behavior and in cases when a teen does develop a pattern of repeated use, it can pose serious social and health risks, including:

- School failure
- Problems with family and other relationships
- Loss of interest in normal healthy activities
- Risky sexual behavior
- Mental health problems
- Overdose

Knowing this data can help staff be cognizant of the needs of students and be better prepared to provide the appropriate support and resources.



What's impacting schools today?

Summary of Substance Use Data from the 2018 Arizona Youth Survey (AYS)

Survey Findings: The findings of the Arizona Youth Survey discuss some of the important attitudes and behaviors of 48,708 youth from 245 schools across Arizona. The data presented are valid and representative of youth in the 8th, 10th, and 12th grades across Maricopa County who responded to the 2018 survey. **Below are some highlights that stood out:**

- #1 most commonly reported substance ever used across 8th, 10th, and 12th grade youth was alcohol (45 percent), followed by e-cigarettes (37.1 percent), and then Emily Pollinger <Emily.Pollinger@worldbook.com> marijuana (29.8 percent).
- Alcohol Use, 20.2 percent of youth reported drinking alcohol during the past 30 days.
- In 2018, the most frequently reported source for youth obtaining alcohol was at a party (47.1 percent) and from a relative over 21 (22.6 percent).
- E-Cigarette Use 19.9 percent of youth reported e-cigarette use in the past 30 days. This rate has increased across all grade levels since it was first assessed in 2016.
- Marijuana Use 15.7 percent of youth reported using marijuana in the past 30 days, and 12.3 percent of youth reported smoking or vaping marijuana concentrates in the past 30 days.
- In 2018, the most frequently reported source for youth obtaining marijuana was from friends (67.4 percent) or at a party (27.1 percent).
- 56.3 percent of youth do not perceive drug use to be risky

School Connectedness Data

- ✓ 51.7 percent of youth reported not feeling connected to or having a low commitment to school.
- ✓ 69.6 percent of youth reported receiving rewards for working hard in school and the community.
- ✓ 68.5 percent of youth reported opportunities for prosocial involvement in school
- ✓ 68.1 percent of youth have particularly lower chances of participating in antisocial behaviors.



Why do Teens Use Drugs?

Many factors influence a teen's likelihood to use illegal substances or develop a substance abuse disorder. Effective drug prevention focuses on reducing the risk factors and strengthening the protective factors that are most closely related to substance abuse.

Risk factors are circumstances or events that increase a child's use and abuse of drugs. The more risk factors present, the more likely a child may be to use drugs and develop problems.

Risk factors for drug use include:

- Low grades or failure in school
- Victim of bullying or cyberbullying
- Low self esteem
- Permissive parenting
- Parent or older sibling drug/alcohol use
- Living in a community with a high tolerance for smoking, drinking, or drug use among youth
- Attending a school without strict rules for tobacco, alcohol, or drugs and inconsistent enforcement for breaking those rules
- Belief that there is little risk in using a drug.



Protective Factors are those characteristics that can reduce a person's risk for substance abuse or addiction. Protective factors that may decrease the risk of drug use include:

- Strong bond with a caring adult (Teacher, Coach, Family member, etc.)
- High self esteem
- Teacher, Coach, or Parent/Guardian who talks regularly about substance use
- Active in school, athletic, or community activities
- Spending time around positive role models e.g. staff on campus
- Living in a community that offers teen activities where drugs and alcohol are not tolerated
- Attending a school with an effective alcohol and drug education program and prevention programming e.g. Too Good for Drugs, Sobriety Support Groups, etc.
- Belief that using drugs may be harmful or risky



Why do Teens Perceive Using Drugs and Alcohol as a Low Risk?

The part of the brain that controls reasoning and impulses—known as the prefrontal cortex—develops last in teenagers. This part of the brain does not fully mature until the age of 25. The **staggered** development of certain parts of the brain can have noticeable effects on adolescent behavior like difficulty holding back or controlling emotions and decision making (such as rarely thinking of negative consequences) in addition to more risky and impulsive behaviors. Teens are 98% less likely to become addicted to substances if they delay use until the age of 21 or older.

What to Watch For!

How can I tell if a student has been using drugs or alcohol? Here are some warning signs:

- Exhibits mood changes or emotional instability
- Sullen, withdrawn, depressed
- Hostile, angry, uncommunicative
- Less motivated
- Smell of smoke or other unusual smell or breath on clothes
- Messy appearance
- Poor hygiene
- Red flushed cheeks or face
- Burns or soot on fingers or lips
- Unusually tired
- Unable to speak intelligibly, slurred speech, or rapid fire speech
- Wetting lips or excessive thirst
- Sudden or dramatic weight loss or gain

There are many tell tail signs of substance use, but it is important that staff are vigilant and paying attention to behavioral or physical changes in students. Do not be afraid to reach out to your HSHW Team and ask how you can support students you think might be using illicit substances.

Did you know: The likelihood of developing a substance use disorder is greatest for those who begin use in their early teens?