



# YOUTH SAFETY AND SUBSTANCE USE

SUMN.org FACT SHEET

2015

## Feeling Safe

### Definition

A sense of safety has long been recognized as a protective factor related to substance use. The 2013 Minnesota Student Survey examined 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students' feelings of safety in their surroundings by asking them whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements:

- I feel safe going to and from school
- I feel safe at school
- I feel safe in my neighborhood
- I feel safe at home

Here, the “agree” and “strongly agree” response options are combined to denote feeling safe.

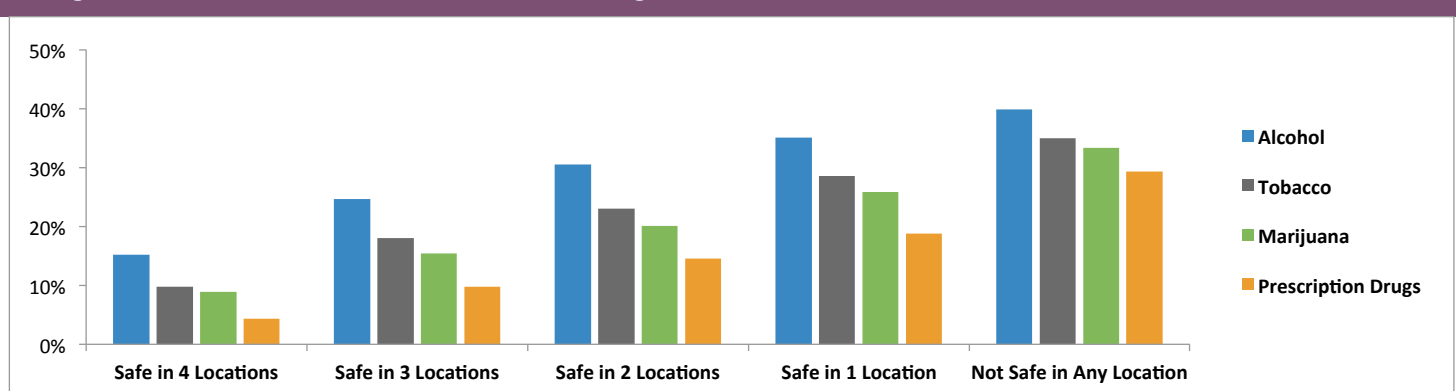
*For more information on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, consequences, contributing factors, and treatment, as well as mental health data, visit [SUMN.org](http://SUMN.org)*

### Feelings of Safety

According to the 2013 Minnesota Student Survey (MSS):

- Most Minnesota students feel safe in their surroundings: 95% feel safe going to and from school; 93% at school; 94% in their neighborhoods; and 97% at home
- Feelings of safety remain stable between 5<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades
- Feelings of safety are also similar between male and female students, for all locations
- Feelings of safety vary somewhat among races/ethnicities. They vary more widely depending on students' sexual orientation
- For both race/ethnicity and for sexual orientation, the location with biggest disparity in feeling safe was in school

## Past 30-Day Substance Use by Students Reporting They Feel Safe in Their Surroundings, 2013 MSS Going to and from School, at School, in Their Neighborhoods, and at Home: 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Graders

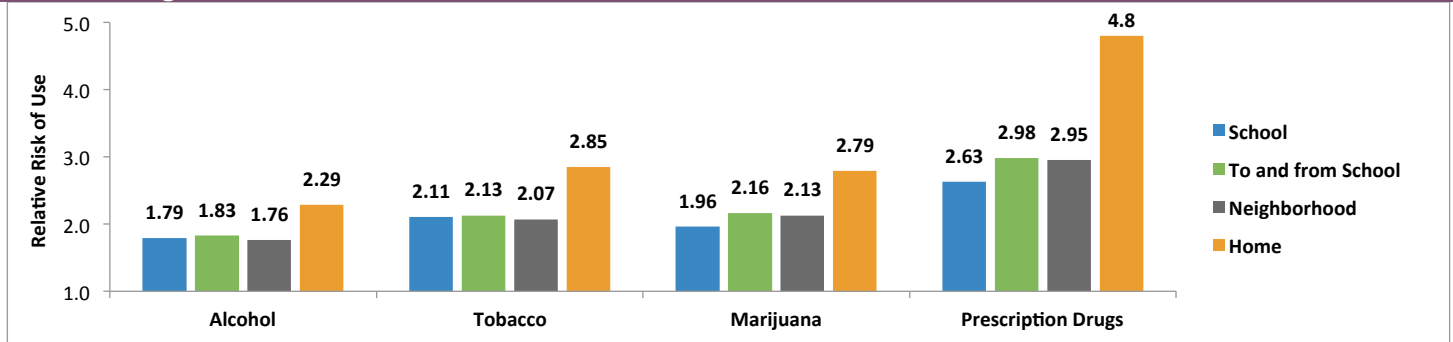


## Risk for Substance Use

### Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs

- Those students who don't feel safe are significantly more likely to report past 30-day substance use
- Prescription drug abuse is most highly correlated with feeling unsafe. For instance, those who feel unsafe at home are 4.8 times more likely to report prescription drug abuse
- Students who feel unsafe at home (as compared to other locations) are the most likely to report past 30-day substance use

**Relative Risk of Substance Use for Minnesota Students Reporting They Don't Feel Safe in Their Surroundings, 2013 MSS**



### Buffering Risk

- Perhaps unsurprisingly, feeling safe can buffer the effects of other risk factors. For instance, of students who have been the victims of bullying, those who feel safe at home are about half as likely to report past 30-day alcohol use (21% vs. 41%). They are also less than half as likely to report past 30-day tobacco use (13% vs. 33%) and marijuana use (12% vs. 28%), and almost a third as likely to report past 30-day prescription drug abuse (7% vs. 25%).

## State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup

Minnesota's SEOW has been monitoring substance abuse trends since 2007. The Workgroup helps guide prevention planning at the state level, and provides training and technical assistance to communities. In, 2008 the SEOW launched the Substance Use in Minnesota (SUMN) website to ensure quick and easy access to data for prevention professionals.

### SUMN.org

SUMN is a one-stop-shop for data, tools, and prevention resources. Visitors can search county, regional, and state level data by topic, by location, and by demographic producing tables, charts, graphs, and maps. View and download data products, such as this fact sheet, and find tips on finding, analyzing, translating, using, and disseminating data.

## Contact Us

For questions or more information regarding the State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup or SUMN.org, please email: [info@sumn.org](mailto:info@sumn.org)

To contact the Regional Prevention Coordinator for your region, please visit: [www.rpcmnmn.org](http://www.rpcmnmn.org)

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