



CARING RELATIONSHIPS AND SUBSTANCE USE

SUMN.org FACT SHEET

2015

Caring Relationships

Definition

Caring relationships are important to emotional well-being at all ages. Adolescents are particularly affected by relationships with their parents, friends, and adults in their schools and communities—and students' perceptions of caring are significantly correlated with their substance use patterns. The 2013 Minnesota Student Survey examined 5th, 8th, 9th, and 11th grade students' perceptions of the level of caring in their relationships by asking how much they felt that:

- Their parents care about them
- Friends care about them
- Teachers and other adults at school care about them
- Adults in their communities care about them

Response options were “not at all,” “a little,” “some,” “quite a bit,” and “very much.” Here, “quite a bit” and “very much” are aggregated to represent caring.

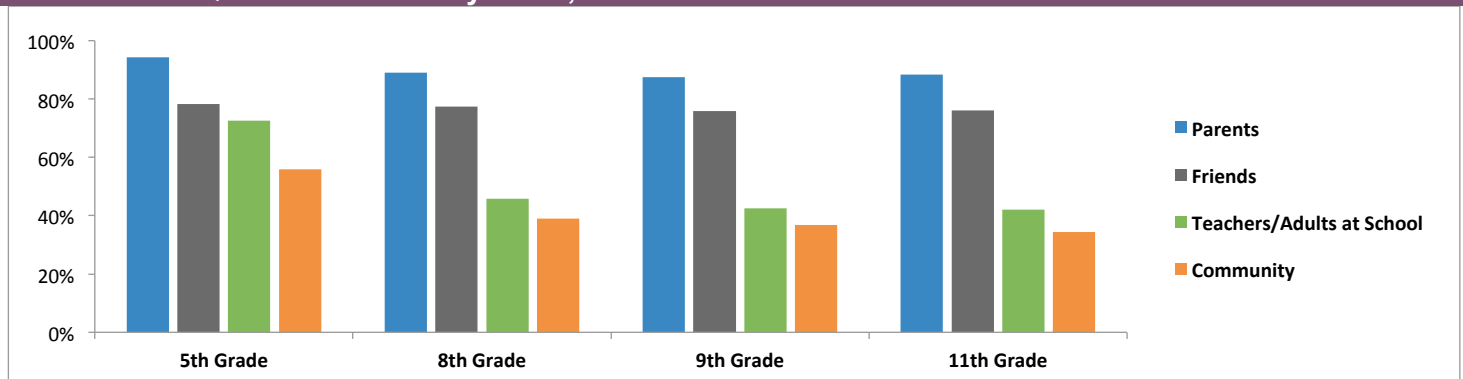
For more information on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, consequences, contributing factors, and treatment, as well as mental health data, visit SUMN.org

Levels of Caring

According to the 2013 Minnesota Student Survey (MSS):

- Perceived level of care is highest from parents (89.8%), followed by friends (76.9%), teachers and other adults at school (50.6%), and community adults (41.5%)
- Levels of perceived care vary little by gender, although female students feel slightly less cared-for by parents and slightly more cared-for by friends, compared to male students
- A more pronounced difference is found between grades: 5th graders report higher levels of care than 11th graders, for all groups (see graph below)

Percentage of 5th, 8th, 9th, and 11th Grade Students Reporting They Feel People in Their Lives Care about Them “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much,” 2013 MSS



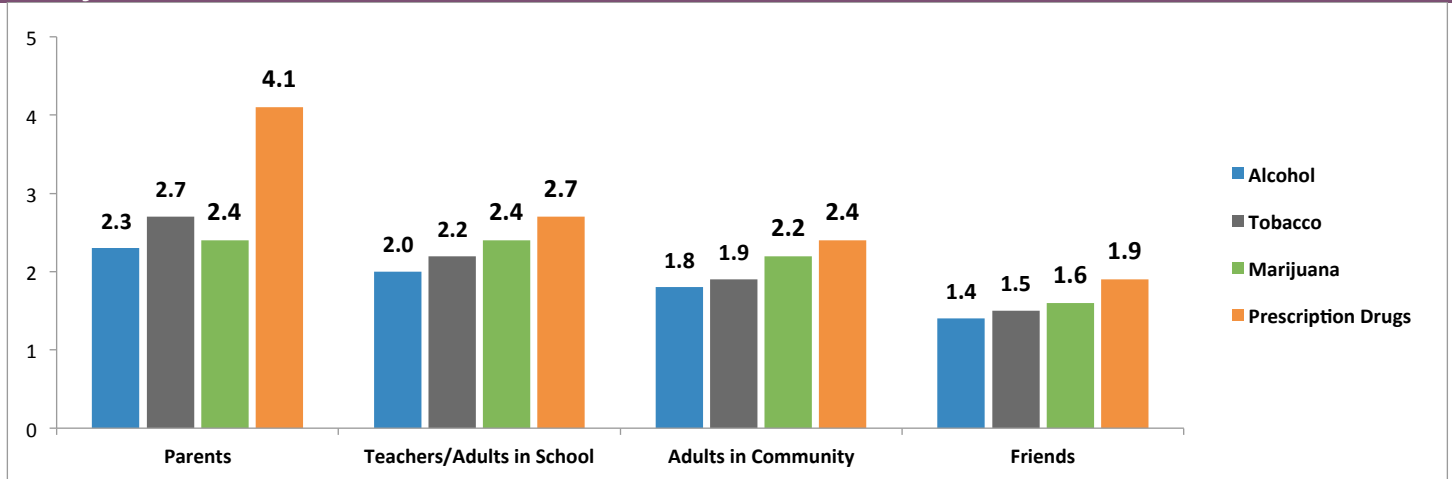
Risk for Substance Use

Students who feel their parents and other adults care for them are substantially less likely to have engaged in past 30-day substance use. Although the association is strongest for parental care, lower perceived levels of care are correlated with higher levels of substance use for every relationship category.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs

- Students who feel that their parents care about them “very much” or “quite a bit” are less likely to report past month alcohol use, past month tobacco use, past month marijuana use, and past month prescription drug misuse, as compared to those who feel their parents care only “some,” “a little,” or “not at all” (see graph below for comparisons between substances)
- For each relationship group, alcohol shows the smallest association with care levels, and prescription drugs the highest
- The association between care and substance use is strongest for parents, followed by teachers, community adults, and friends

Factor by Which 8th, 9th, and 11th Grade Students Who Feel Cared For Are Less Likely to Engage in Past 30-Day Substance Use, 2013 MSS



Disparities in Perceptions of Care

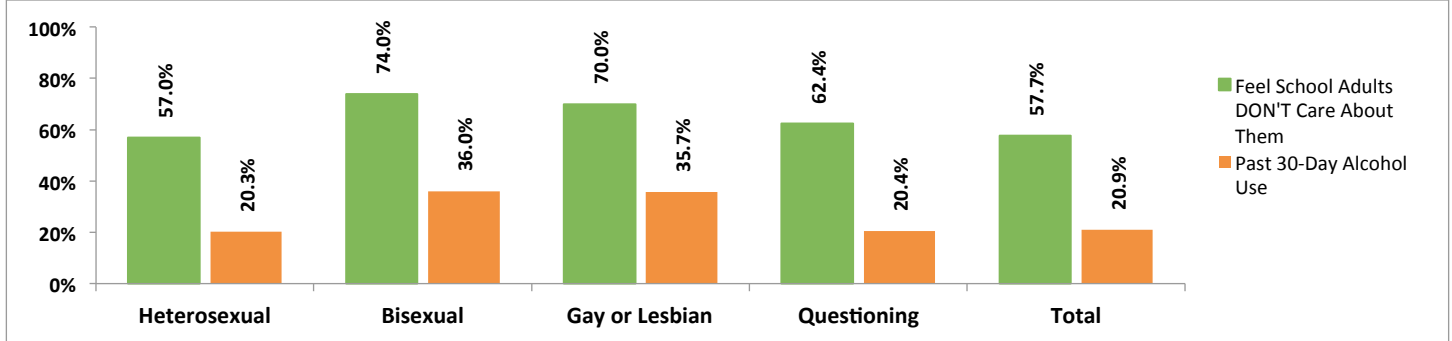
Perception of Caring by Parents

- Most students, regardless of race or ethnicity, believe that their parents care about them; while the average for Minnesota students is 89.8%, 91.1% of White students; 87.6% of Black, African, or African-American students; 85.3% of Asian students; 84.7% of Multiracial students; 83.4% of American Indian students; and 83.0% of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students believe that their parents care quite a bit or very much for them
- Perception of caring by parents varies more widely by sexual orientation; 89.2% of heterosexual students report their parents care about them quite a bit or very much, while 76.6% of questioning students, 69.4% of gay and lesbian students, and 64.6% of bisexual students report the same

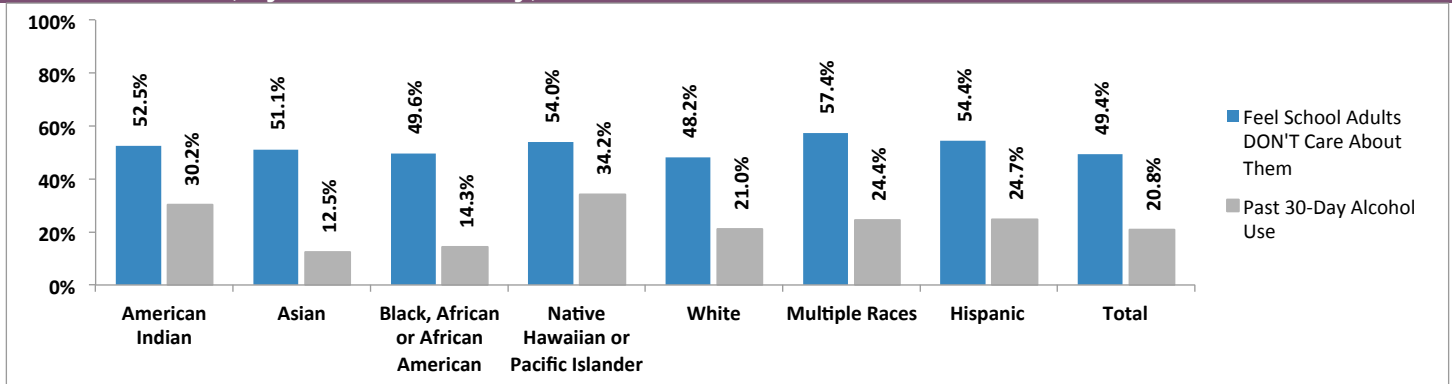
Perception of Caring by Teachers and Adults in School

- Perception of caring by teachers and other school adults varies widely by sexual orientation, and less widely by race or ethnicity
- When compared by sexual orientation, perception of caring by teachers and other adults in school varies with levels of substance use; for comparisons by race and ethnicity, the association is less consistent

Students Reporting They Don't Feel School Adults Care For Them, and Past 30-Day Alcohol Use, 9th and 11th Graders, by Sexual Orientation, 2013 MSS



Students Reporting They Don't Feel School Adults Care For Them, and Past 30-Day Alcohol Use, 9th and 11th Graders, by Race or Ethnicity, 2013 MSS



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

To contact the Regional Prevention Coordinator for your region, please visit: www.rpcmn.org

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