



# EMPOWERMENT & SUBSTANCE USE

SUMN.org FACT SHEET

2016

## Empowerment

### Definition

The Developmental Assets framework was devised by the Search Institute\* to identify skills and behaviors that contribute to positive adolescent development. Survey questions were generated and grouped to compose a series of scales to assess such development. For the Minnesota Student Survey (MSS), questions were added to facilitate analysis of the following scales: Social Competency, Positive Identity, and Empowerment (please visit SUMN.org for additional fact sheets).

The modified Empowerment Scale comprises 3 subsets of a question included on the 2016 Minnesota Student Survey as follows:

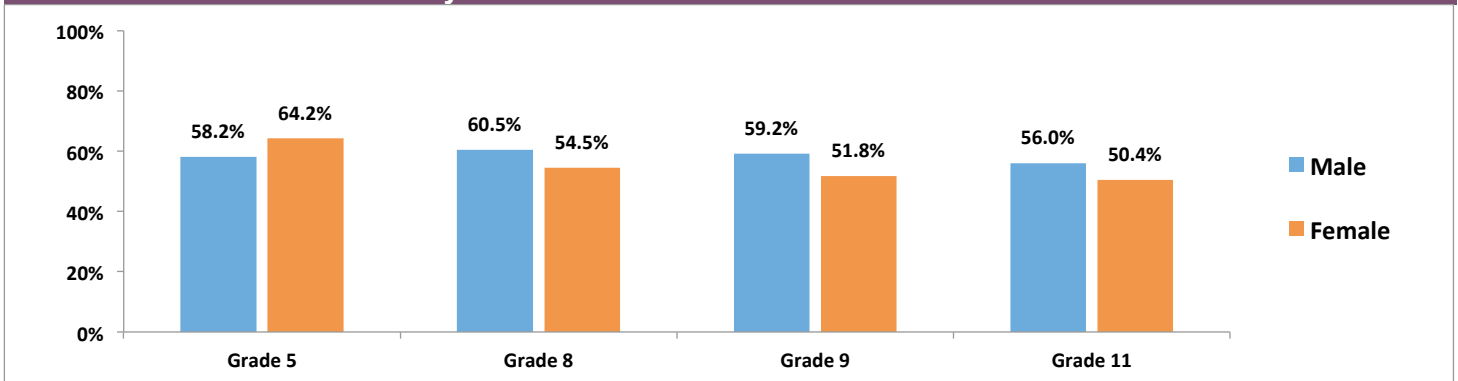
In general, how does each of the following statements describe you?

- I feel valued and appreciated by others
- I am included in family tasks and decisions
- I am given useful roles and responsibilities

The response options to these statements were, “Not at all or rarely,” “Somewhat or sometimes,” “Very or often,” and “Extremely or almost always.” Students who answered “Very or often” or “Extremely or almost always” for each of the 3 questions are considered by this scale to possess more, or a higher level of, empowerment.

*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)*

Minnesota Students with Higher Levels of Empowerment, by Gender and Grade Level, 2016 Minnesota Student Survey



## Prevalence + Frequency

According to the 2016 Minnesota Student Survey (MSS):

- Using the Empowerment scale, 61.2% of 5<sup>th</sup> graders, 57.5% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 55.5% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders, and 53.2% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders reported higher levels of empowerment.
- Female students have higher levels of empowerment in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, while male students have higher levels in the upper grades.

## Risk for Substance Use

Substance use questions were not asked of 5<sup>th</sup> graders, so the data involving substance use refers only to 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> graders.

### Alcohol and Other Drugs

- Empowerment is a strong protective factor against students' substance use. Students with lower levels of empowerment are 2.1 times as likely to report past 30-day alcohol use. They are 2.9 times as likely to report tobacco use, 2.8 times as likely to report marijuana use, and 3.0 times as likely to report prescription drug misuse in the same time period (see graph).
- Likewise, students who report any past 30-day substance use are about half as likely as non-using students to report higher levels of empowerment.

## Buffering Risk Factors

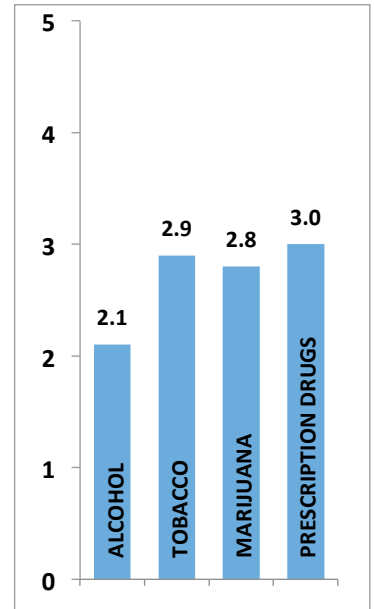
Empowerment is related to other risk and protective factors that also affect students' substance use. It may, therefore, buffer or enhance those factors.

### Behaviors

- Students with more empowerment are about half as likely to engage in bullying behavior than students with lower levels.
- Students who are bullied are twice as likely to have lower levels of empowerment. And students with higher levels of empowerment are 3 times less likely to be bullied.
- While being the target of bullying is a risk factor for substance use, students who are bullied but also have more empowerment are about half as likely to report marijuana use or prescription drug misuse in the past month, compared to their bullied peers with lower levels of empowerment.

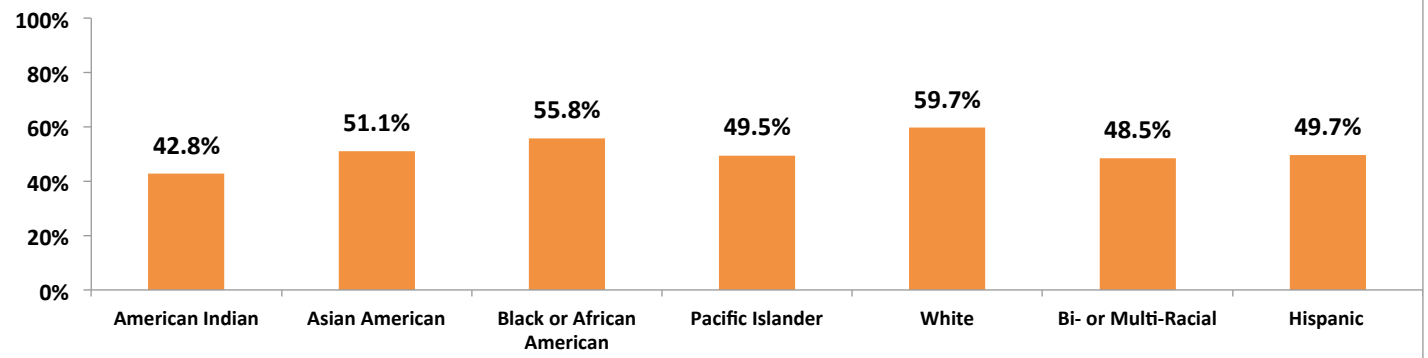
### Relationships

- Students who feel their parents care about them are over 7 times as likely to have higher levels of empowerment. Perhaps predictably, students with parents who are verbally abusive are nearly 3 times less likely to possess higher levels of empowerment.
- However, empowerment may buffer risk: although students who feel their parents don't care about them are more likely to report past 30-day alcohol use, those who feel less cared for but also are more empowered are 1.4 times less likely to report alcohol use.



**Factor by Which Students are More Likely to Engage in Substance Use if They Report Lower Levels of Empowerment (8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Graders, 2016 Minnesota Student Survey)**

## Minnesota Students with Higher Levels of Empowerment, by Race or Ethnicity, 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> Graders, 2016 Minnesota Student Survey



## Disparities

### Race and Ethnicity

- White students are most likely to have higher levels of empowerment (59.7%), followed by African American or Black students, at 55.8%. American Indian students are least likely to report higher levels of empowerment, at 42.8%.

### Sexual Orientation

- Heterosexual 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders are most likely to report more empowerment, at 57.4%, with questioning students at 35.3%. Bisexual students have a more difficult time, with 30.2% of male bisexuals and 21.7% of female bisexuals with higher levels of empowerment. For gay and lesbian students, the gender gap continues to increase, with 35.8% and 21.9% reporting higher levels of empowerment, respectively.

\*Note: The Search Institute's Empowerment Scale uses 6 indicators, rather than the 3 used by the MSS. Items used and adapted with permission from Search Institute (2004). *The Developmental Assets Profile*. Minneapolis: Author. Copyright © 2004 by Search Institute ([www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)). All rights reserved.

## 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.rpcmn.org](http://www.rpcmn.org)

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