

292 surveys were collected via Survey Monkey November 2020 to April 2021

273 were completed in English, 18 in Spanish, and 1 in Creole

### Demographics

<b>Zip code of residence n=289</b>	<b>%</b>
06850	19.7
06851	36.7
06853	16.6
06854	20.4
06855	6.6
<b>Gender n=270</b>	<b>%</b>
I identify as female	47.4
I identify as male	49.3
I prefer to self-describe	1.9
I prefer not to say	1.5
<b>Age n=268</b>	<b>%</b>
18 to 24	13.1
25 to 34	31.3
35 to 44	19.4
45 to 54	15.0
55 to 64	9.7
65 or older	7.8
Prefer not to respond	3.7
<b>Race (multiple responses allowed) n=270</b>	<b>%</b>
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2.2
Asian	1.9
Black/African American	5.6
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	.7
White	79.6
Other/Multi-Race	9.9
Prefer not to respond	3.7

<b>Ethnicity n=265</b>	<b>%</b>
Hispanic	56.6
Non-Hispanic	30.2
Prefer not to respond	13.2

<b>Primary Language spoken in household n=270</b>	<b>%</b>
English	86.3
Haitian Creole	1.1
Spanish	11.1
Prefer not to respond	1.1
Other	.4
<b>How do you identify? (multiple responses allowed) n=267</b>	<b>%</b>
Bisexual	4.1
Gay/Lesbian	4.5
Queer	2.6
Straight/Heterosexual	83.5
Transgender	1.1
Prefer not to respond	6.4

### Available Resource

<b>Which of the following services are you aware of that connect people in need to available resources? n=289</b>	<b>%</b>
2-1-1	38.8
City of Norwalk website	57.4
Norwalk Health Dept website	50.5
TheHubCT.org (mental health/substance use)	17.0
Local agencies that offer support	28.4

## Impact of COVID-19

In what ways has COVID-19 affected the following? n=290	WORSE %	No change/ the same %	BETTER %
Your emotional wellbeing	43.1	42.4	14.5
Your relationships with family/friends	26.5	46.7	26.8
Your physical health	28.0	48.8	23.2
Your access to health care (ex. doctors, dentists)	31.1	55.2	13.6
Your access to mental health supports (ex. counselors, therapists, etc.)	21.5	62.6	15.9
Your access to food	16.6	67.5	15.9
Your financial security	33.8	52.8	13.4
Your access to transportation	13.9	71.8	14.2

In what ways has the COVID-19 pandemic affected you in terms of the following behaviors: n=291	Do not use/ not applicable %	LESS %	No change/ the same %	MORE %
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

## Mental Health – Self Reported Depression & Anxiety

On the PHQ-4, 62% of respondents scored as having some level of Psychological Distress and 29% are at risk for moderate or severe anxiety & depression.

PHQ4 total scores fell into the following categories of 'psychological distress':

- 38%: None
- 32%: Mild
- 22%: Moderate
- 7%: Extreme

For subscales a score of 3 or more is considered positive for screening purposes:

- Depression Subscale: 30% scored a 3+
- Anxiety Subscale: 34% scored a 3+

PHQ4 Over the past 2 weeks how often have you been bothered by the following problems: n=290	Not at all %	Several days %	More than half the days %	Nearly every day %
Little interest or pleasure in doing things	38.6	36.2	21.3	3.8
Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	41.2	35.6	17.0	6.2
Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge	35.3	39.8	18.2	6.6
Worrying too much about different things	29.6	39.4	22.2	8.8

PHQ4 Source and Scoring:

[https://www.utahmed.org/docs/CS\\_Resources/PHQ-4%20Patient%20Health%20Questionnaire.pdf](https://www.utahmed.org/docs/CS_Resources/PHQ-4%20Patient%20Health%20Questionnaire.pdf)

### Knowledge of Laws and Proper Disposal

How familiar are you with... n=291	Unfamiliar %	Somewhat familiar %	Very familiar %
the Connecticut law that took effect in October 2019 raising the age to 21 to purchase tobacco and vaping products?	28.6	47.2	24.1
the state's Social Host Law that makes it illegal to provide a place for teens to drink?	36.3	37.0	26.6
proper ways to safely store prescription medications in your home?	23.0	43.3	33.7
proper ways to dispose of unused, or excess prescription drugs that are in your home?	21.5	48.4	30.1

### Community Norms around Substance use

Please choose the response that best describes how you feel: n=270	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Neither agree/ disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Alcohol consumption is common at our local beaches.	11.9	9.6	35.6	38.1	4.8
Alcohol consumption is common on school grounds when families are attending sports games or band concerts.	17.8	17.0	42.2	18.9	4.0
Drinking alcohol is a normal part of growing up.	18.6	19.3	33.8	24.5	3.7
It is easy to find substance-free social activities in our community.	14.1	13.0	35.9	31.1	5.9

Please choose the response that best describes how you feel: n=270	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Neither agree/ disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
In our community, marijuana (weed, THC) is commonly used in homes.	17.0	14.1	38.9	26.7	3.3
Using marijuana (weed, THC) is a normal part of growing up.	28.0	24.2	31.3	13.8	2.6
It is okay to use marijuana recreationally.	27.9	20.8	26.8	18.9	5.6
Vaping nicotine (e-cigarettes, JUUL, Puff Bars, Blue, etc.) is socially acceptable.	31.7	20.5	29.1	14.9	3.7
Vaping nicotine is safer than smoking cigarettes.	43.0	20.7	22.9	11.5	1.9

**Parent Section**

<b>Do you have a Middle School or High School-age child who resides in Norwalk? n=268</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	38%

The following data includes only respondents who indicated having a school-age child in grade 6 to 12.

<b>My oldest child is in grade: n=101</b>	<b>%</b>
6	21.8
7	16.8
8	17.8
9	9.9
10	11.9
11	10.9
12	10.9

**Concern around Child’s Wellness**

<b>How concerned are you about your child’s current level of: n=102</b>	<b>Not at all concerned %</b>	<b>Slightly concerned %</b>	<b>Very concerned %</b>	<b>Extremely concerned %</b>
Stress and anxiety	16.7	43.1	33.3	6.9
Depression	22.2	41.4	28.3	8.0
Social isolation	17.0	33.0	36.0	14.0
Academic achievement (compared with last year)	20.4	40.8	26.5	12.2

**Family Norms around Substance Use**

<b>Please choose the response that best describes how you feel: n=102</b>	<b>Never %</b>	<b>Seldom %</b>	<b>Some of the time %</b>	<b>Most of the time %</b>
If my child had an important concern about drugs, alcohol, sex, depression or some other serious issue, they would talk to me about it.	9.8	20.6	47.1	22.5
I talk to my child about the dangers of substance use.	9.7	20.4	31.1	38.8
I take steps to ensure that kids/teens do not drink alcohol in our home.	10.8	23.5	22.5	43.1
I take steps to ensure that kids/teens do not use marijuana or other drugs in our home.	11.8	13.7	22.5	52.0
I lock up all prescription medications in our home.	21.4	20.4	30.1	28.2

<b>Please choose the response that best describes how you feel:</b> n=102	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Neither disagree/ agree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
I have very little control over whether my teen drinks alcohol.	25.5	23.5	26.5	19.6	4.9
I have very little control over whether my teen uses marijuana (weed, cannabis, edibles, THC).	25.5	28.4	21.6	13.7	10.8
In my own choices around alcohol, vaping, marijuana, and prescription drugs, I have considered the behavior I am modeling for my child.	13.7	12.7	18.6	30.4	24.5
I think teenagers should be allowed to drink during high school, so they learn how to drink responsibly.	29.4	18.6	19.6	24.5	7.8
I prefer that my child drink at our house to avoid driving under the influence.	23.8	14.9	22.8	24.8	13.9
I teach my child not to drink until they are 21 or older.	16.5	10.7	20.4	30.1	22.3
I teach my child that marijuana is an illegal drug.	15.8	8.9	25.7	21.8	27.8

### Perceived Ease of Access

<b>How easy or hard do you think it would be for a teen in your child's grade to get access to:</b> n=98	Very Hard %	Somewhat hard %	Somewhat easy %	Very Easy %
Alcohol from their own home or a friend's home	14.4	29.9	38.1	17.5
Alcohol from somewhere else	17.5	38.1	27.8	16.5
Marijuana/THC/Cannabis/Weed/Edibles	20.8	34.4	37.5	7.3
Vapes/Electronic cigarettes/E-cigs/JUUL/Puff bars/Blu	15.3	31.6	35.7	17.3
Prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them, including pain relievers, tranquilizers (e.g., Xanax) and stimulants (e.g., Ritalin)	24.5	40.8	21.4	13.3
Drugs through social media, Amazon, or other online sources	24.0	36.5	27.0	12.5

### Knowledge of Supports & Resources

<b>Which of the following free supports &amp; resources for Norwalk youth are you aware of?</b> n=88	%
School-Based Health Centers (middle and high schools)	48.9
Teen Talk crisis counselors/Kids in Crisis	54.5
Norwalk SMART Recovery Teen support group	31.8
Norwalk Alateen support group	20.5
Norwalk Youth Services Bureau – Peer Connections support group	36.4
Family Navigators - available through the Norwalk human services department	15.9
Crisis Text Line	9.0

### Information and Training Interest

<b>What information or training are you most interested in to support your child's health &amp; wellbeing? (check all that apply) n=94</b>	<b>%</b>
Risks of underage drinking	43.6
The new marijuana	28.7
Risks of vaping	30.9
Is my child using drugs?	34.0
The power of parenting	30.9
Stress management	37.2
Recognizing & responding to a mental health crisis	25.5
Communicating with teens	36.2
Social emotional learning	29.8

<b>Which of the following would be <u>best</u> for you if you wanted to attend a training or presentation? n=95</b>	<b>%</b>
Resource table at my school where I can ask questions and gather information	25.3
Live, socially distanced event in the community	49.5
Online event on a school night	43.2
Watch a recorded presentation on the web at a time of my choosing	55.8
Access short videos on different topics on the web	35.8

### School Resources

<b>The Norwalk Partnership would like to know the best way to get information to you. Which of the following school resources do you read regularly? n=96</b>	<b>%</b>
Peachjar	35.4
PTO newsletter	30.2
Email from school principal	54.2
Monthly newsletter from Norwalk Public Schools	44.8
Parent social media groups	36.5
Other	3.1

### Comments

**Is there anything else you would like to share with us about your experiences or observations related to substance use, mental health or the impacts from COVID-19?**

For a complete list of comments please refer to Appendix A

### **Some experiences/observations around mental health and impacts from COVID-19:**

#### **Community Members -**

- "I often feel nervous and can't relax"
- "Anxiety has gotten worse since the beginning of pandemic"
- "The effects of the pandemic on the youth adult population is underestimated. The phrase 'Kids are resilient' is overused..."
- "I do pastoral care check ins with the elderly and many homebound people. Seems like increase in depression for those that are alone or having difficulty not being able to go out or socialize due to COVID..."

### Parents -

- "Watch your child's behavior"
- "Pay more attention to your child's movement"
- "Providing more meaningful community services for minors"
- "The oxygen mask is real. All the work I put into my own well-being has been reflected in the well-being on my family members...."

### Themes:

- Increased anxiety (tied to COVID, finances, isolation)
- The impact of COVID and how it affects so many areas of life (being underreported)
- Big concern for people who live alone or have been isolated
- More people are willing to talk about mental health

### Some experiences and observations around substance use:

#### Community Members -

- "A few days ago, I saw my neighbor's daughters sitting with her drinking beer and smoking marijuana with her. First it made me sad and then worries because she said, "do you see how big my girls are getting" and they're between 12 and 15. It's really worrisome that many parents support this type of vice."
- "I wish there were informational talks in the schools using people with or without experience with drugs & alcohol. We need to teach kids early using videos with real stories."
- "Strengthen the supervision of minors' drinking"
- "You can't take drugs. It's bad for you and your family."
- "...many families drink socially and the teenagers either take the liquor from their parents, and if they know friends who are just older than 21 they pay them to make the purchase for the minors."
- "I see more substance abuse in our area and more fights."
- I believe this pandemic has put many more students and parents at risk of leaning towards many types of substance abuse: cigarettes, vaping, liquor or other. However it is readily available to teens today due to Vaping Stores selling to underage minors, of age buyers giving or buying for minors as well as parents doing this as well. Also many families drink socially and the teenagers either take the liquor from their parents, and if they know friends who are just older than 21 and then they pay them to make the purchase for the minors."

#### Parents -

- "FYI marijuana is legal for certain conditions and I have my card. My children know that I use it for a health condition and are aware that it is illegal unless prescribed."
- ...Google on youtube videos about weed, juuling, drinking, cutting - there is this underworld of all these things being done under a parents watch and many of them feel useless in trying to help or guide their teens.
- More controls in the schools like periodic bag checks, desk checks, etc. without notifying the kids.

### Themes:

- Not using drugs for many reasons -bad for health, harmful, endangers others.
- More supervision needed
- Importance of communication with kids
- Importance of supervision
- Pay attention to what is going on with your kids.

## APPENDIX A

### Comments

**Is there anything else you would like to share with us about your experiences or observations related to substance use, mental health or the impacts from COVID-19?**

- Me gustaría que hubieran charlas informativas en las escuelas de personas con o sin experiencias sobre drogas alcohol. Debemos informar a los chicos desde ya con videos con historias reales [I wish there were informational talks in the schools using people with or without experience with drugs & alcohol. We need to teach kids early using videos with real stories.]
- Si ase unos dias vei las hijas de mi vesina Sentada con ella tomando con ella cerbesas y fumando marijuana me dio primero tristeza y despues preocupacion por que me dijo vistes que grandes estan mis hijas y estan entre los 12 y 15 años es preocupante que muchos Padres apoyen este tipo de vicios . [ A few days ago I saw my neighbor's daughters sitting with her drinking beer and smoking marijuana with her. First it made me sad and then worries because she said "do you see how big my girls are getting" and they're between 12 and 15. It's really worrisome that many parents support this type of vice.]
- 
- More people are willing to talk about mental health.
- Our world is so screwed up. Not enough faith in the home, less hopefulness, too much govt interference, and not enough good parenting & prayer in the home. We have to wake up!
- The scandemic destroyed our country and our twenty to thirty somethings. They are a bunch of libtards. The covid was a social experiment and they performed perfectly. You can definitely be controlled now. Bow down, you filthy maggots
- Thank you
- The ignorance of some folks in the community who think they are immune.
- We need to normalize the mentor program. My 18 year old son could use a mentor but there is too much stigma for him to make use of it. Thank you!
- Do harm to others and yourself
- be not afraid of
- Taking drugs endangers oneself and others
- Appropriate communication, you can know each other's ideas
- Watch your child's behavior
- Appropriate communication, you can know each other's ideas
- Strengthen the supervision of minors' drinkin
- Try Not to let the children go out at night
- Strengthen the supervision of minors' drinking
- Appropriate communication, you can know each other's ideas
- Observe your child's circle of friends
- Appropriate communication, you can know each other's ideas
- Strengthen the supervision of tobacco and alcohol
- Try not to choose drugs to harm yourself and others
- To determine if the child had any contact with such a person
- Drugs can destroy a family
- You can't take drugs. You die fast



- You can't take drugs. It's bad for you and your family
- It's illegal to take drugs and harm others
- Strengthen the supervision of minors' drinking
- Moderate opening of drinking types for minors
- Focus on your child's social circle
- I feel a little anxious that the income during the pandemic has decreased a lot
- Whether the child's heart is healthy or not
- Strengthen the supervision of minors' drinking
- Talk to your kids a lot
- A new disinfection plan is needed
- Moderate opening of drinking for minors
- Add legal tobacco categories
- Focus on your child's behavior
- Is there anything to say?
- This makes us more interesting
- I often feel nervous and can't relax
- I don't recommend drugs, but it's none of my business
- Be Aware of their state of mind
- Drug abuse is harmful to health,
- I need calm so I can continue to work
- Taking drugs endangers oneself and others
- Drugs are not good. I don't recommend drugs
- Talk to your children and pay attention to what they are saying
- My positive mental health during this time is due to great investment in my emotional and spiritual wellness this last year. We worked as a family to get above a crisis before COVID hit, and I was determined that we would not lose our ground.
- Pay More attention to your child's movements
- Minors are energetic and idle
- It's important to wear a mask
- Kids with a history of drug use are acting weird
- Provide psychological counseling
- Kids with a history of drug use are acting weird
- Strengthen the supervision of minors' drinking
- I think the impact of covid-19 is great
- Kids with a history of drug use are acting weird
- I don't smoke marijuana, but I respect people
- I have nothing to do with other people taking drugs. I don't take drugs
- Talk to your child regularly
- Drug abuse is shameful
- You can't take drugs. It's bad for your health
- A lot of parents don't take it very seriously
- It is not advisable to take drugs
- Better mental health counseling

- You can drink in moderation
- Strengthen the supervision of minors' drinking
- I believe this pandemic has put many more students and parents at risk of leaning towards many types of substance abuse: cigarettes, vaping, liquor or other.  
However it is readily available to teens today due to Vaping Stores selling to underage minors, of age buyers giving or buying for minors as well as parents doing this as well.  
Also many families drink socially and the teenagers either take the liquor from their parents, and if they know friends who are just older than 21 and then they pay for them to make the purchase for the minors. I also feel the school administration does not enforce the laws of smoking weed, they tell students if you do it do it off school grounds etc ...
- This is a scamdemic and the Dem's should be ashamed at the intense fear and anger they imposed upon people. OPEN UP
- Anxiety has gotten worst since the beginning of pandemic
- The effects of the pandemic on the young adult population is underestimated. The phrase "Kids are resilient" is overused. More attention should be drawn to the negative effects of this pandemic on our youth.
- Nothing on those topics. On the survey itself: I had to use "Neither Agree/Disagree" on a number of items because there was no "Don't know" option. I hope my responses are analyzed correctly as DKs.
- The fatigue of mostly isolating ourselves from the world is very real. Of course we're going to listen to science, but it's been rough to the point where days of the week blend together, especially since we both work from home. I can't imagine how hard it must be on people with substance or mental health issues, but I'm glad to see that you're working on addressing it.
- I think it has increased and is under reported.  
Substance abuse needs to include computer/tv & food addiction too.
- It affects so many different area of every day life.
- It is nearly impossible for those with substance abuse problems to find good quality care to detox and get follow-up support for an affordable price.
- Increase in medical related pain and limited options for treatment given Covid. Mostly prescription rather than non medicinal modalities.
- need legal changes to make suboxene (help) more available and affordable..current structure blocks patients from getting help due to patient number limits and doctor limits,become very expensive
- I do pastoral care check ins with the elderly and many homebound people. Seems like increase in depression for those that are alone or having difficulty not being able to go out or socialize due to COVID. Many miss attending the Norwalk Senior Center
- With sensible precautions about the things you can influence being done, mental health is a must yet most health plans and Medicare, limit your participation.
- abuse of alcohol & drugs is on the rise and 12 step programs are not meeting in person. suicide is on the rise as well. the isolation of the pandemic is hitting hard.
- being unemployed is particularly stressful and frightening now as benefits have run out and I am still unable to find work, looking daily
- My sister who normally babysits for her Granddaughter had to stop because of the virus and she became very anxious and depressed. She is now under a psychiatrists care to help her
- There hasn't been enough done for people who live alone and are experiencing total isolation trying to do the right thing while watching friends who don't give a shit go out to restaurants and parties in large groups. It's devastating!
- I see more substance abuse in our area and more fights

- I am a consumer advocate and I fight for the rights of the mentally ill all the time I testify before the State to get funding and I feel like everything fall of deaf ears,
- Due to covid, I ended up working remotely which limited my face to face interaction. the gyms closing impacted my husband's weight. I was also pregnant and had to deal with a lot of stress and anxiety on a different level bc I could not easily see family, have my husband go to any Dr appts and I couldn't celebrate having our first child all bc of covid fear. Even now, I'm forced to really be careful with my first child keeping him away for most people, having anyone hold him quarantine, can't have the out of state in laws visit and going to the stores is hard bc he has to stay home and I have to be extra cautious washing hands, showering and quarantining our purchases.

### Parent Comments

**Is there anything else you would like to share with us about your experiences or observations as a parent as it relates to substance use, mental health or the impacts from COVID-19?**

- Ener más control en las escuelas como revisar periódicamente sus bolsos ,casilleros,etc;sin avisar a los jóvenes. [More controls in the schools like periodic bag checks, desk checks, etc. without notifying the kids.]
- En general a sido un reto para nosotros como Padres y para los maestros y mucho mas para nuestros hijos pero hay que tener pasiencia, informacion y dedicacion para appear a nuestros hijos y ayudarle a superarsen en el dia a dia para sacar de esto todo lo positivo y aprender que todo se puede lograr con positivism. [In general it's been a challenge for us as parents and for the teachers and even more so for our kids but we have to have patience, info & dedication for our kids and help them to succeed day by day to get everything positive out of this and teach them that anything is possible with positivity.]
- No ninguno [no nothing]
- GET THESE CHILDREN BACK TO SCHOOL.  
My kids are in private schools. thank god. Someone has to lead the nation in the future
- FYI Marijuana is legal for certain conditions and I have my card. My children know that I use it for a health condition and are aware that it is illegal unless prescribed.
- I Constantly check in and speak with my child. I provide support wherever I can with her personal well being and education. I get her to get out, even if it's a drive and have her reach out to family members and do family games and assure she's checking in with friends.
- Watch your child's behavior
- Try to communicate with others
- Caring about her life, spending as much time with her as possible, and taking her to outdoor activities will release some of her pressure
- Try Not to let the children go out at night
- taking her to outdoor activities will release some of her pressure
- The risk of underage drinking
- Observe your child's circle of friends
- Caring about her life, spending as much time with her as possible, and taking her to outdoor activities will release some of her pressure
- Strengthen the supervision of tobacco and alcohol
- To determine if the child had any contact with such a person
- Focus on your child's social circle
- Whether the child's heart is healthy or not

- Talk to your kids a lot
- Moderate opening of drinking for minors
- Focus on your child's behavior
- There is nothing for the time being
- Be Aware of their state of mind
- Talk to your children and pay attention to what they are saying
- The oxygen mask is real. All the work I put into my own well-being has been reflected in the well-being of my family members. We are more connected and self-aware than we have ever been, individually and as a family.
- Pay More attention to your child's movements
- Minors are energetic and idle
- communication skills
- Providing more meaningful community services for minors
- Kids with a history of drug use are acting weird
- Ban on sale of marijuana to minors
- Pay Special attention to your child's behavior
- Must pay attention to the child's psychological changes
- Cognition and management of one's own behavior
- I think the DARE program needs to be relooked at? It is still about peer pressure but also how do we get teens to feel empowered about who they are and how to make better choices. DARE needs to do more modeling/acting out scenarios of situations where they learn teens first say , "yes," to taking a drug and or alcohol. And learn how its cooler to be an advocate then give in.  
Also Google on youtube videos about weed, juhling, drinking, cutting - there is this underworld of all these things being done under a parents watch and many of them feel useless in trying to help or guide their teens.
- Being stuck home during covid is a struggle and not being able to go anywhere or do anything and it brings a very stressful time on us