

Developmental Relationships Survey Results for

Norwalk Public Schools

November 2nd, 2021



Prepared by:



Discovering what kids need to succeed

Introduction

This report is based on your young peoples' responses to the Developmental Relationships Survey. The report was prepared by Search Institute, a non-profit organization that partners with schools, youth programs, and other organizations to conduct and apply research that promotes positive youth development and advances equity. Search Institute generates new knowledge through mixed-methods studies and develops and delivers workshops, surveys, and other resources that enable practitioners and parents to understand and act on the science of youth development.

In this report, you will find actionable data on developmental relationships, social and emotional competencies, and equitable practices. We hope that these data will help you make the case that developmental relationships are the lever through which we can advance social and emotional competence and create more equitable environments where all young people are equipped to continue on their paths to thrive.



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Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction	1
Table of Contents	2
What are Developmental Relationships	3
Developmental Relationships Framework	4
Description of Your Study & Sample	5
Demographics	6
How to Read the Report & Interpret Results	8
Core Measure 1: Developmental Relationships	10
Core Measure 2: Social and Emotional Competencies	15
Core Measure 3: Equitable Practices	17
Additional Measures: Outcomes	19
Outcomes: DFC Four Core Measures	20

What are Developmental Relationships

Over the past decade, Search Institute has conducted a multi-year effort to better understand the role relationships play in positive youth development. This work has led to extensive literature reviews and numerous qualitative and quantitative studies to inform our understanding of the power of relationships young people have with parenting adults, educators, and youth workers (e.g., mentors, program staff, among others). It is through this work that Search Institute has defined these high-quality relationships as “developmental relationships.” Developmental relationships are close connections through which young people discover who they are (identity), gain abilities to share their own lives (agency), and learn how to interact with and contribute to the world around them (committed to their community).






Developmental relationships are characterized by five interconnected elements (with specific actions within each): express care, challenge growth, provide support, share power, and expand possibilities. To date, Search Institute’s research has shown that when young people experience developmental relationships with caring adults, they tend to report a wide range of positive outcomes including social-emotional strengths (Syvertsen et al., 2015), increased resiliency (Roehlkepartain et al., 2017), and greater academic motivation (Scales et al., 2019).

Just as a system of roots supports and nourishes trees as they develop and grow, nurturing relationships with adults provide a foundation for young people’s development by offering them guidance, encouragement, and new opportunities. Cultivating strong roots nourishes young people and supports their development and growth while creating a foundation of stability.



The Developmental Relationships Framework

Young people are more likely to grow up successfully when they experience developmental relationships with important people in their lives. Developmental relationships are close connections through which young people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them. Search Institute has identified five elements—expressed in 20 specific actions—that make relationships powerful in young people’s lives.

Elements	Actions	Definitions
 <p>Express Care Show me that I matter to you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be dependable • Listen • Believe in me • Be warm • Encourage 	<p>Be someone I can trust. Really pay attention when we are together. Make me feel known and valued. Show me you enjoy being with me. Praise me for my efforts and achievements.</p>
 <p>Challenge Growth Push me to keep getting better.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect my best • Stretch • Hold me accountable • Reflect on failures 	<p>Expect me to live up to my potential. Push me to go further. Insist I take responsibility for my actions. Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks.</p>
 <p>Provide Support Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate • Empower • Advocate • Set boundaries 	<p>Guide me through hard situations and systems. Build my confidence to take charge of my life. Stand up for me when I need it. Put limits in place that keep me on track.</p>
 <p>Share Power Treat me with respect and give me a say.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect me • Include me • Collaborate • Let me lead 	<p>Take me seriously and treat me fairly. Involve me in decisions that affect me. Work with me to solve problems and reach goals. Create opportunities for me to take action and lead.</p>
 <p>Expand Possibilities Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire • Broaden horizons • Connect 	<p>Inspire me to see possibilities for my future. Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places. Introduce me to people who can help me grow.</p>

NOTE: Relationships are, by definition, bidirectional, with each person giving and receiving. So each person in a strong relationship both engages in and experiences each of these actions. However, for the purpose of clarity, this framework is expressed from the perspective of one young person.

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[Download a PDF of the framework](#)

Description of Your Study & Sample

Search Institute's Developmental Relationships Survey was used for this study. This survey is designed for young people in grades 4 through 12+ and is typically administered online independently or in a group setting. Some young people may choose to use the included audio prompts to assist with comprehension. Standardized administration procedures were provided to staff who administered the survey to enhance the quality of the data.

The specific characteristics of your survey participants are shown in the table and waffle charts on the next two pages. When reviewing demographic data in this report, it is important to note that survey participants self-reported on each of these attributes. As such, it may not entirely align with your own demographic data. Understanding who participated is vital for appropriate interpretation and application. If your sample reflects the population you seek to engage, then you can have more confidence that the results will be broadly applicable. If your sample does not match your target population, you will need to consider these differences when interpreting the findings.

This report will only show results for samples of at least 30 young people. This reduces the risk that results on particular young people will be singled out and discussed, particularly in public settings. In addition, results from very small samples of young people should not be applied more broadly, nor should assumptions be made that their perspectives are generalizable or transferrable to larger groups. Their results may be true for them, but there may not be enough young people in the sample to account for measurement and sampling errors.

Discussion Questions

- ① What worked with the survey administration? What challenges were present? How can we avoid these problems going forward?
- ① How did youth respond to being asked to complete the survey? Were staff and young people sufficiently aware of the survey's purpose?
- ① In what ways does the sample in your survey reflect (or not reflect) the young people you seek to hear from as you develop your priorities and action plans?
- ① What characteristics of the survey sample make it particularly valuable? (For example, perhaps there is a subgroup included that you haven't heard from before. Or perhaps it includes young people who participate regularly but don't always speak up.)
- ① If your study does not include all the perspectives of young people you would want to include, how might you engage those additional voices moving forward? (This might include asking them to be part of the study interpretation and planning process.)

Demographics Tables

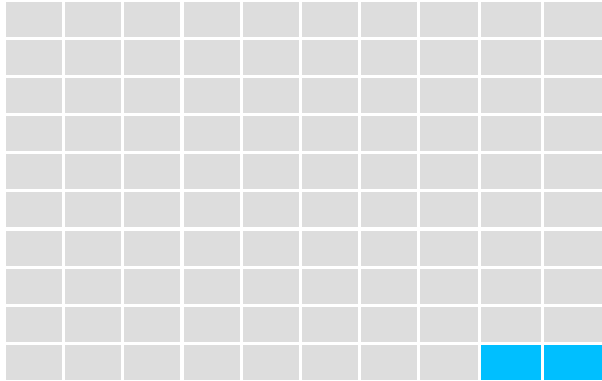
Youth Demographics Sample Size

Total	261
Age	
<10	1
10	0
11	1
12	43
13	132
14	72
15	4
16	0
17	0
18	0
19+	1
Grade	
Not enrolled	0
Grade 4	0
Grade 5	1
Grade 6	0
Grade 7	123
Grade 8	124
Grade 9	0
Grade 10	0
Grade 11	0
Grade 12	1
Post-secondary	0
Gender	
Girl	106
Boy	130
Other	7
Race	
Asian/Pacific Islander	13
Black	20
Hispanic/Latinx	87
Native American	0
White	72
Other	19
Multiracial	43

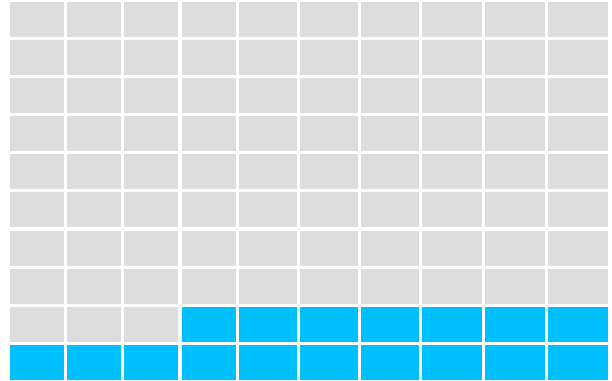
Demographics Charts

The following waffle charts contain additional descriptive information about your young people who participated in the survey.

2% experienced financial strain



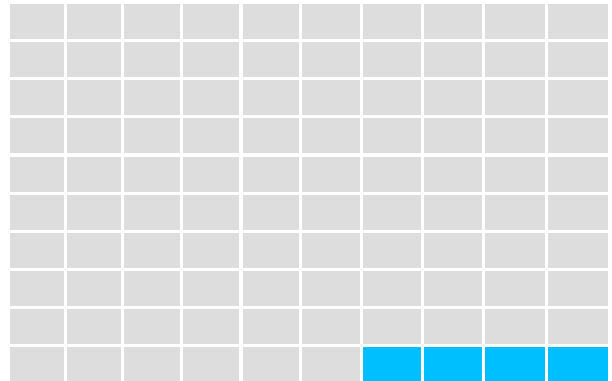
17% identify as LGBTQIA+



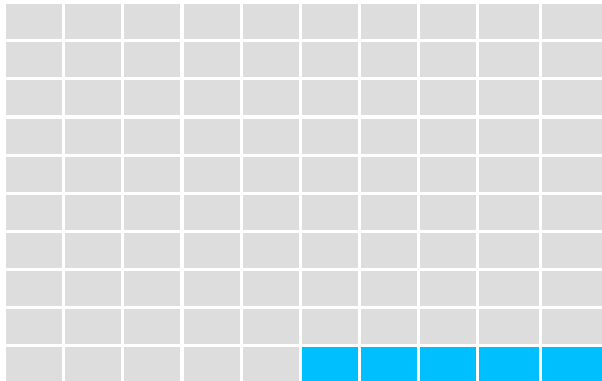
19% are in ESL/ELL programming



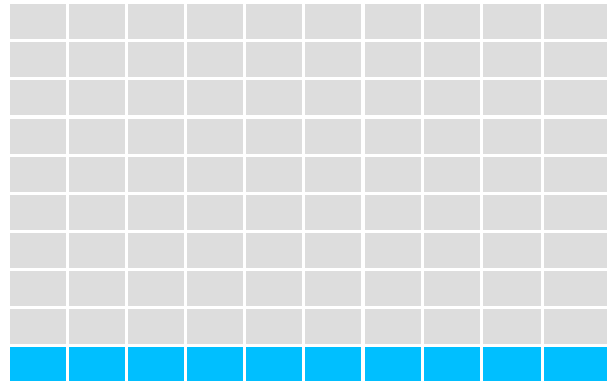
4% experienced food insecurity



5% experienced shelter insecurity



10% have an IEP



How to Read the Report & Interpret Results

This report offers unique information on your young people and their experiences with your organization. It emphasizes the relationships and equitable practices that are essential for young people to develop the social and emotional competencies critical for success in life. These data are meant to guide schools and youth-serving organizations to put in place research-informed strategies to boost their intentional practices in building developmental relationships.

This report provides information from several angles. We recommend you review your results in several stages that allow you to both see the broad context and focus on specific issues, needs, gaps, or priorities. As you do this, consider the following:

1. Examine the broadest findings, such as the overall scores for each category of developmental relationships and social and emotional competencies. This high-level review will give you an overall sense of what is happening with your young people. Note any clear patterns, surprises, or questions you see.
2. Pay attention to both averages and distribution. The report shows both average scores, which gives you a sense of your young people overall, and the “distribution” of scores, which shows the percentages of young people who scored low and high in each area. These different groups are referred to as “Weak,” “Moderate,” and “Strong” within this report.
3. Access the online dashboard to examine the data for subgroups of young people, particularly those that are most relevant to your work. Do you see surprises or meaningful differences that need further exploration?
4. Focus on data in which you and your organization have a particular stake. You may have goals related to specific indicators. Reflect on how they either align with or offer a counterpoint to the general patterns you noticed earlier.

These data are best examined in conversation with multiple stakeholders, including young people, staff, parenting adults, positional leaders, and others—all of whom will bring different perspectives to the interpretation. If you do not already have a diverse guiding team for your planning process, convene one or more groups to work together to internalize, interpret, and then use the data for change. This process will build shared understanding and commitment to actions you ultimately take based on the findings.

You will note that this report does not have “norm” data to which to make comparisons. Though it can be interesting to compare your own results to others, Search Institute’s experience in working with schools and other organizations is that it can be distracting or counterproductive. Your population can be quite different from those on which national norms are based, making it difficult to interpret differences. Furthermore, the most important context is your local context, your shared priorities, and the gaps between your current realities and your targets for growth. In other words, the most relevant comparison is to your hopes, aspirations, and goals for your young people. Thus, we encourage emphasizing the local context as a comparison point, rather than focusing on comparing your data to other organizations.

It is important to remember that these survey data represent just one source of information. No single source of information—no matter how valid—can tell the whole story about how your young people are doing. For those reasons, among others, these data should not be used for accountability purposes. It is important to review these data (like all information and data) critically and in context of other information, experience, and research. If it reinforces other data points, you can have more confidence in it. If it contradicts other findings or perspectives, dig deeper to understand the reason for the differences.

As you look at the detailed tables of data, it can be tempting to over-interpret small differences between groups of young people. A difference between scores that may look meaningful, might not reach a level of statistical significance. That is, small differences may be due to measurement error. Small differences are less likely to be significant with smaller samples.

With these general guidelines in mind, we believe you will find important results, patterns, and insights in this report that offer a fresh perspective on how young people are experiencing the essential relationships and equitable practices that matter to their success.

This report is structured into three core sections: Developmental Relationships, Social and Emotional Competencies, and Equitable Practices. Additional sections may be present depending on your organization's customizations.

How are average scores calculated?

Each survey item has four response choices, scored on a scale from 1-4. Individual item scores are added together then divided by the total number of items. The resulting number (1-4) is then converted to a 0-100 range with the following formula $((x-1)*100)/3$ to assist with interpretation.

How are responses distributed?

Scores are shown in three levels. These three levels are: weak (scores of 0-33 that reflect responses of the first two response options), moderate (scores of 33.33-66.33 that reflect the third response option), and strong (scores of 66.67-100 that reflect the fourth response option). From this, you may identify areas where young people are either particularly high or low, which may not always be evident from the average score. In our pilot studies, young people who reported having higher developmental relationship scores typically had better youth development outcomes.

As you make meaning of the data, follow a reflective process with the following questions:

- ① What stands out? We recommend that you start by naming objective stats (e.g. Express Care was our strongest element with a score of 80).
- ① What encourages you? What discourages you?
- ① What surprises you? What is not clear?
- ① What is the importance of this?
- ① What may have led to this result?
- ① What action ideas come to mind? Note that actions may come in different forms (e.g. things we should do more often or less often; things that should be kept the same; making something more widely available or systematic).

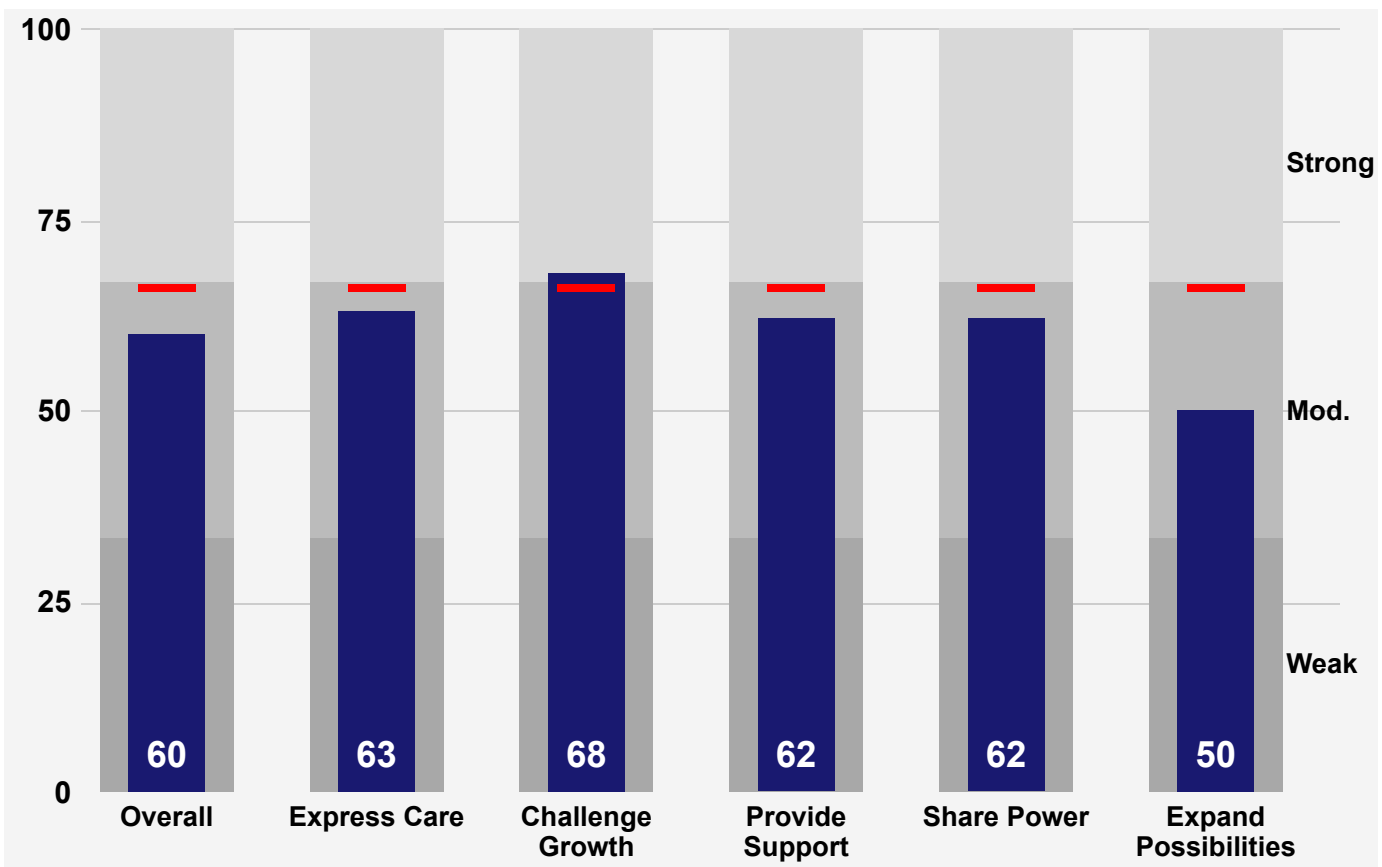
Core Measure 1: Developmental Relationships

Developmental relationships are close connections through which young people discover who they are (identity), gain abilities to share their own lives (agency), and learn how to interact with and contribute to the world around them (committed to their community).

Developmental relationships are characterized by five interconnected elements (with specific actions within each): express care, challenge growth, provide support, share power, and expand possibilities. To date, Search Institute’s research has shown that when young people experience developmental relationships with caring adults, they tend to report a wide range of positive outcomes including social-emotional strengths (Syvertsen et al., 2015), increased resiliency (Roehlkepartain et al., 2017), and greater academic motivation (Scales et al., 2019).

In this chapter, we will explore young people’s experiences of developmental relationships and the five elements with the adults at Norwalk Public Schools.

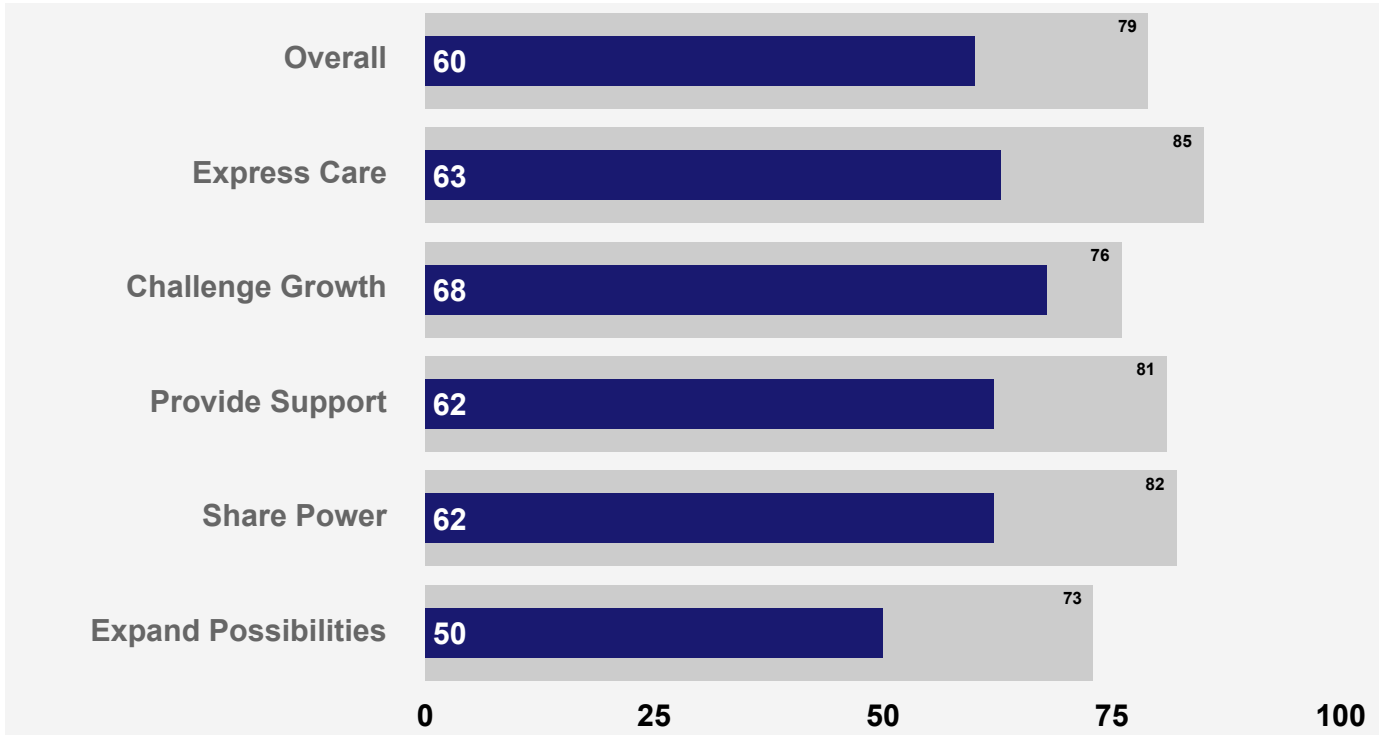
Youth generally reported experiencing **moderate** developmental relationships overall.



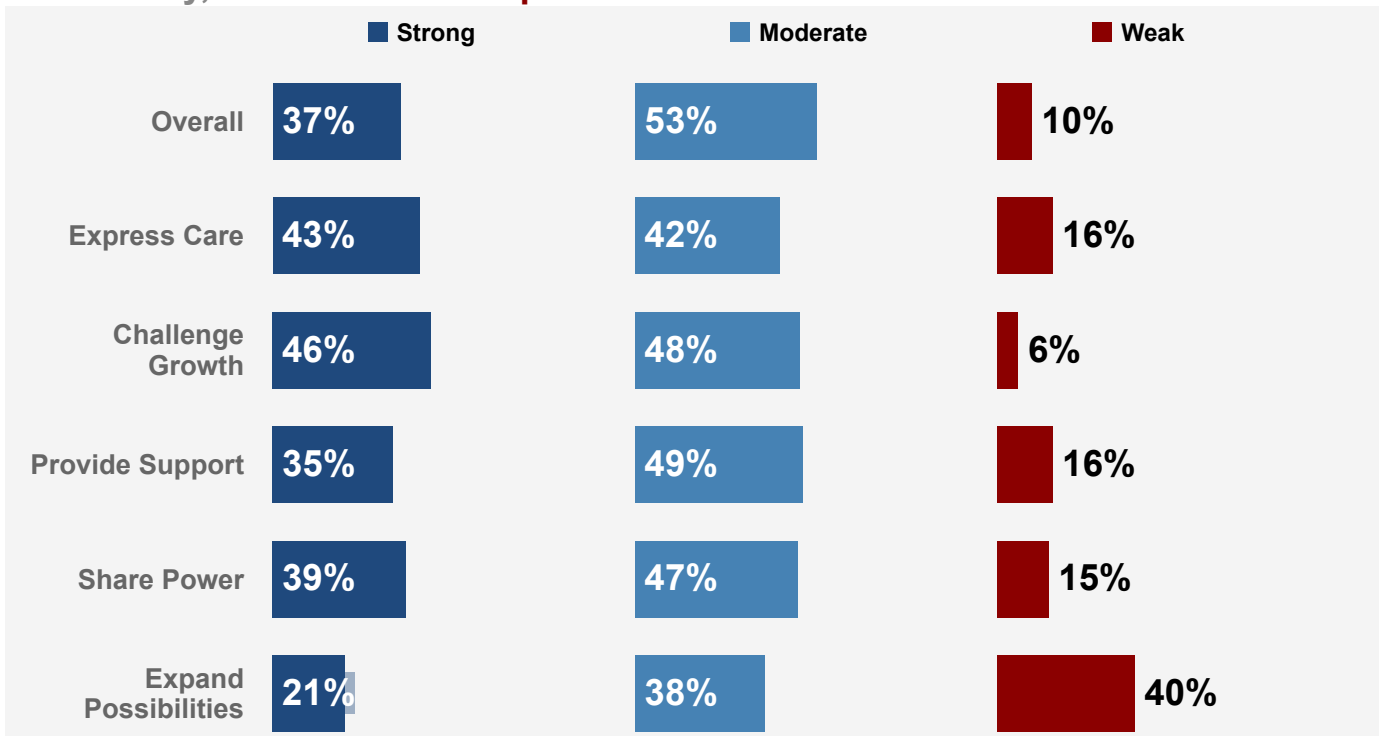
Note: The red bar indicates the score from your previous administration of the survey. If this is your time 1 survey, then it will reflect the minimum benchmark for a “strong” score.

Youth **reported a gap in their relational experiences** versus how adults described their own relational actions during the survey pilot.

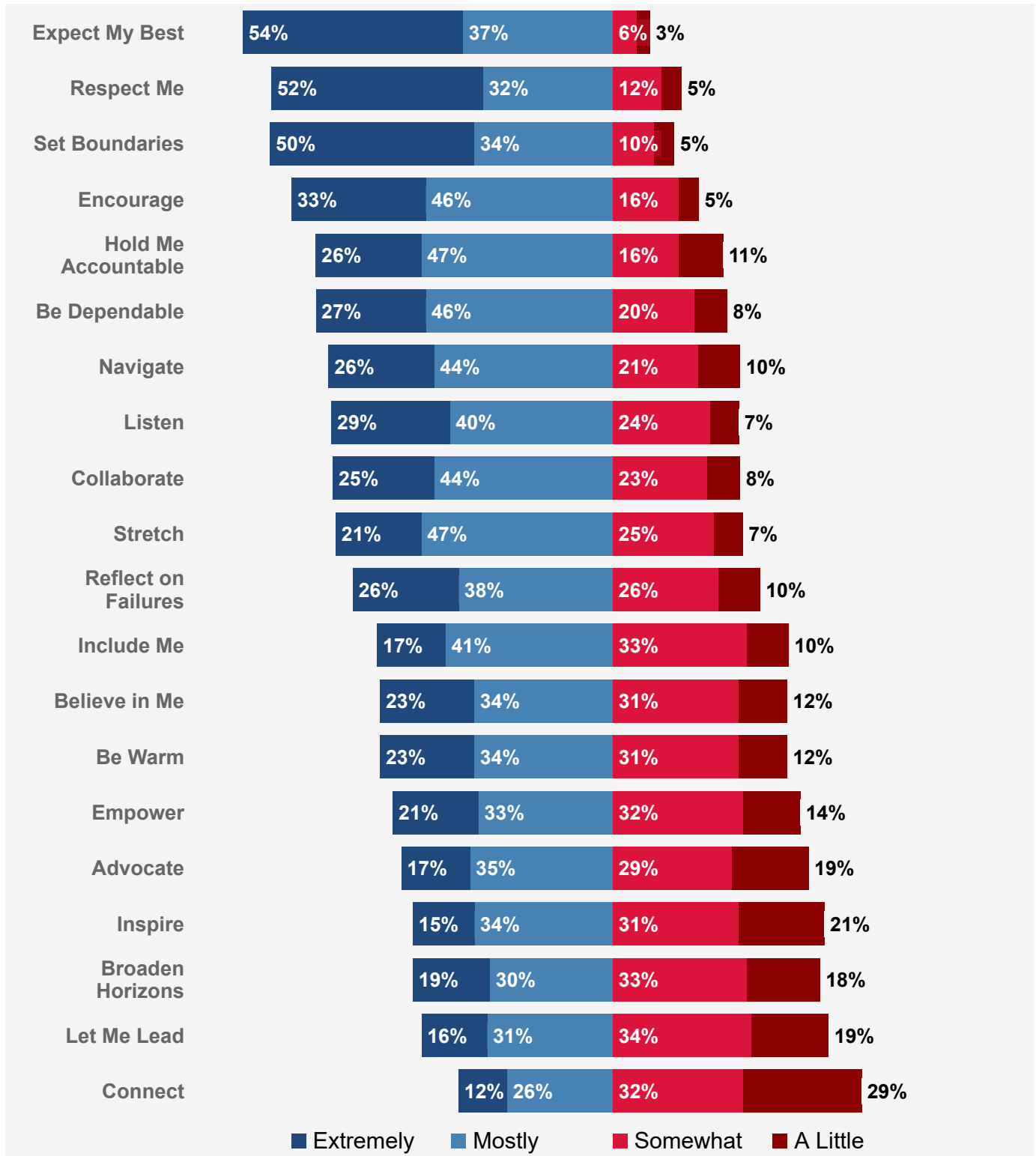
■ Adults in Pilot Survey
■ Your Youth



Overall, **37% of youth had strong experiences** of developmental relationships. Conversely, **10% had weak experiences**.

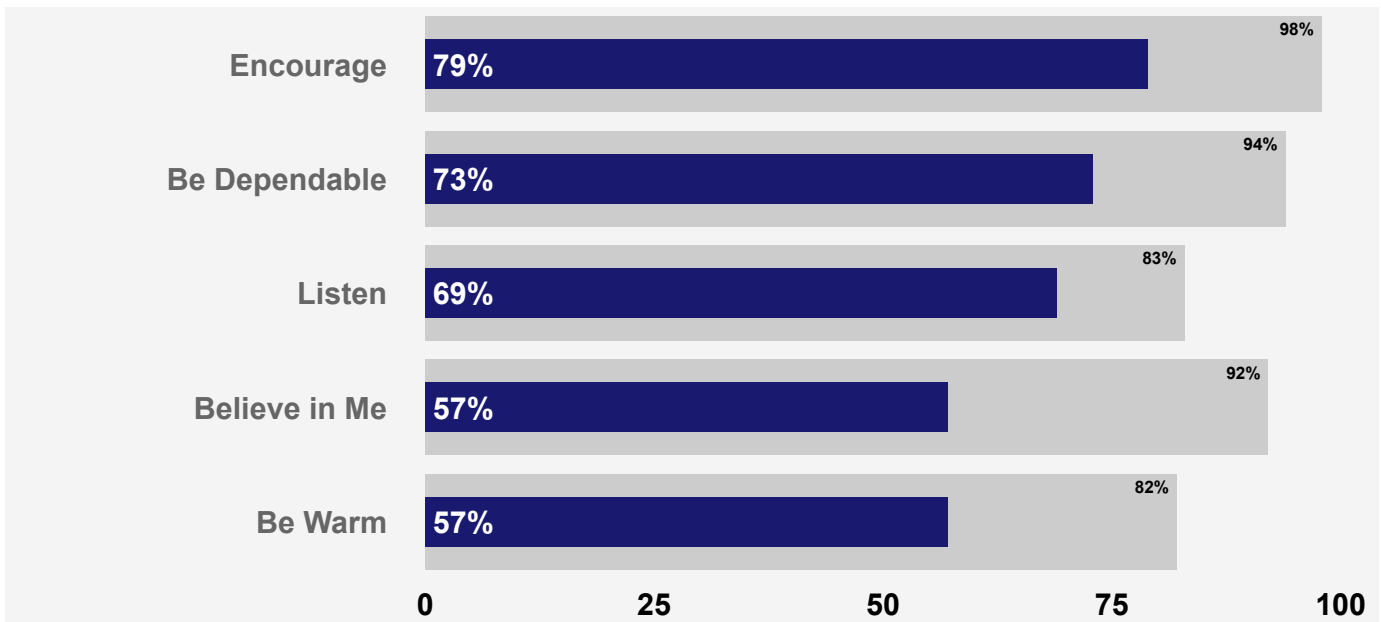


Youth reported different experiences of each of the 20 actions in the Developmental Relationships Framework.



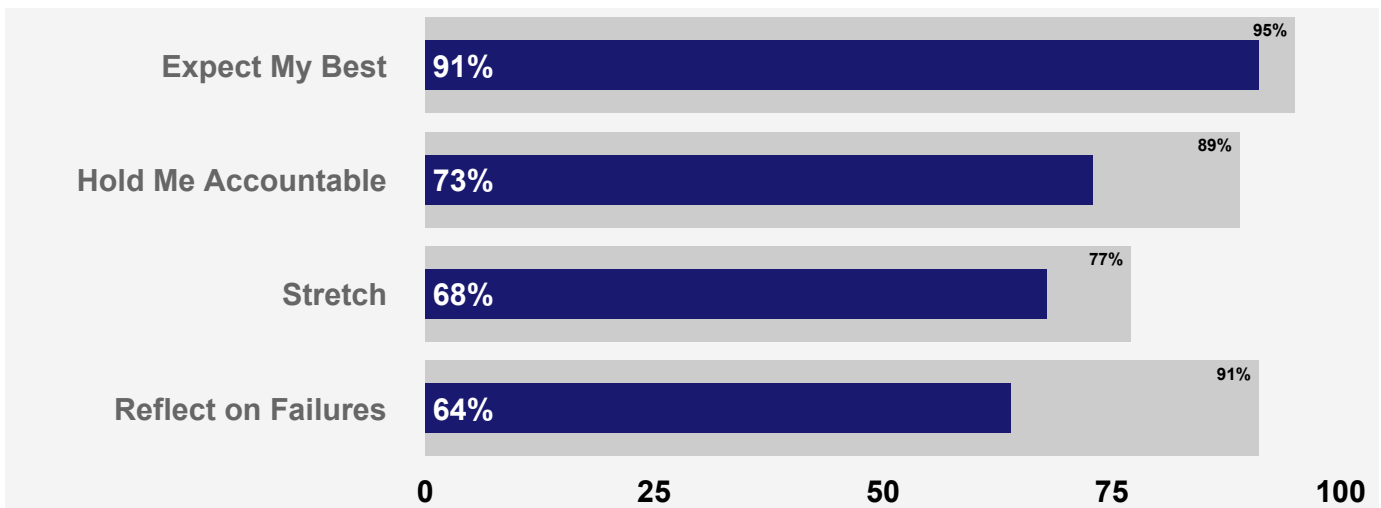
Youth reported a gap in moderate/strong Express Care actions vs how adults described their actions during the survey pilot.

■ Adults in Pilot Survey
■ Your Youth



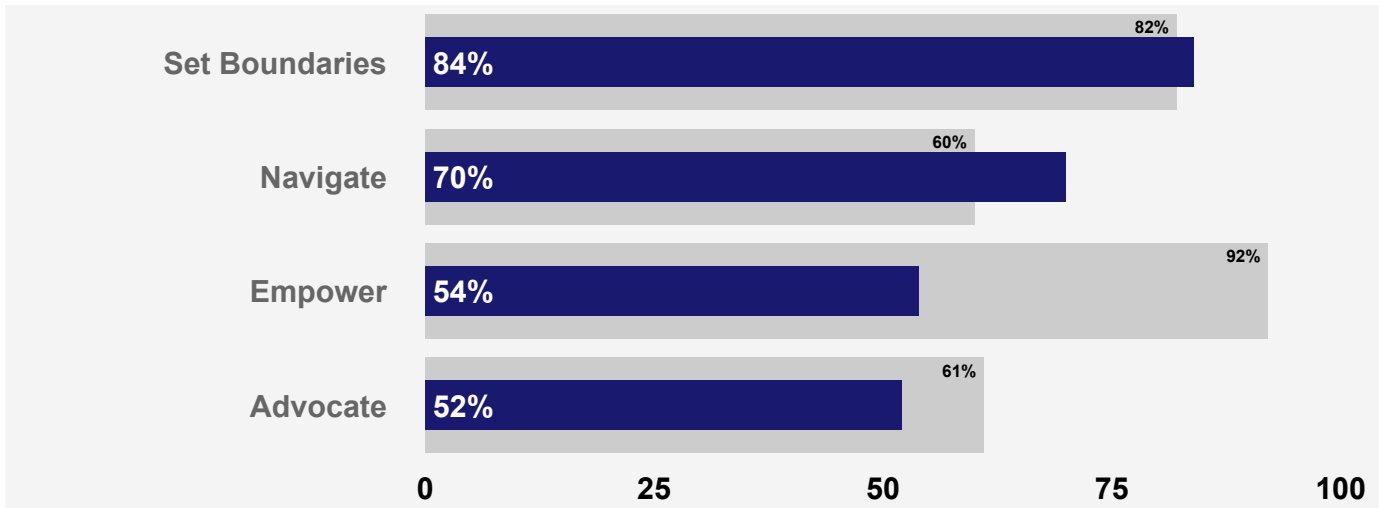
Youth reported a gap in moderate/strong Challenge Growth actions vs how pilot survey adults described their actions.

■ Adults in Pilot Survey
■ Your Youth



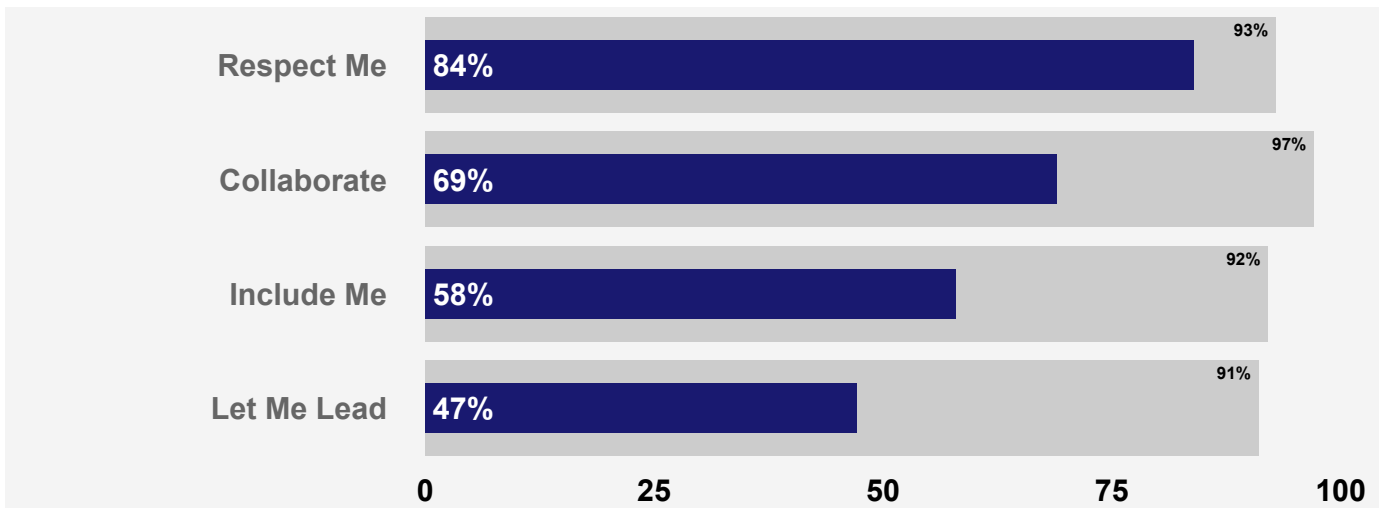
Youth reported a gap in moderate/strong Provide Support actions vs how pilot survey adults described their actions.

Adults in Pilot Survey
Your Youth



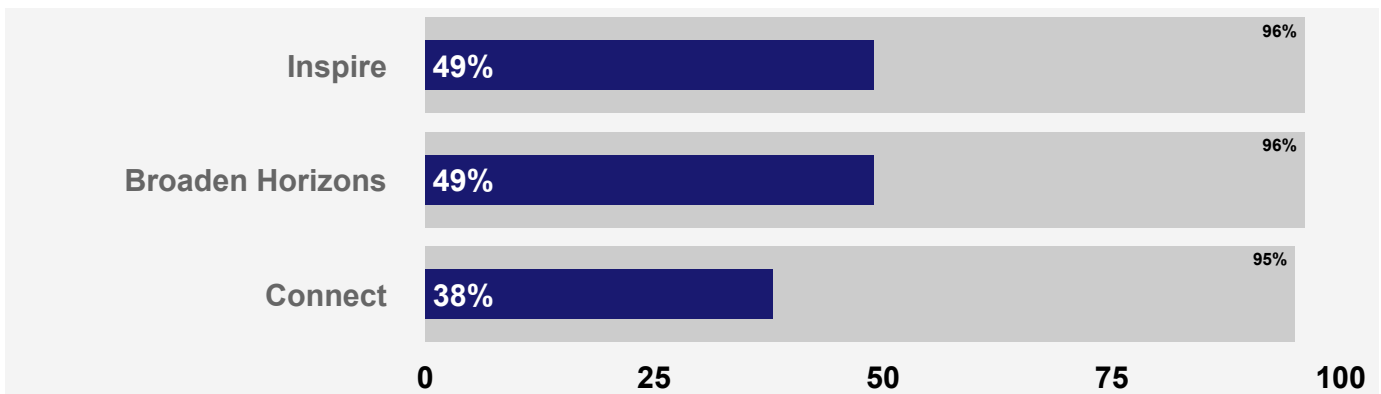
Youth reported a gap in moderate/strong Share Power actions vs how adults described their actions during the survey pilot.

Adults in Pilot Survey
Your Youth



Youth reported a gap in moderate/strong Expand Possibilities actions vs how pilot survey adults described their actions.

Adults in Pilot Survey
Your Youth

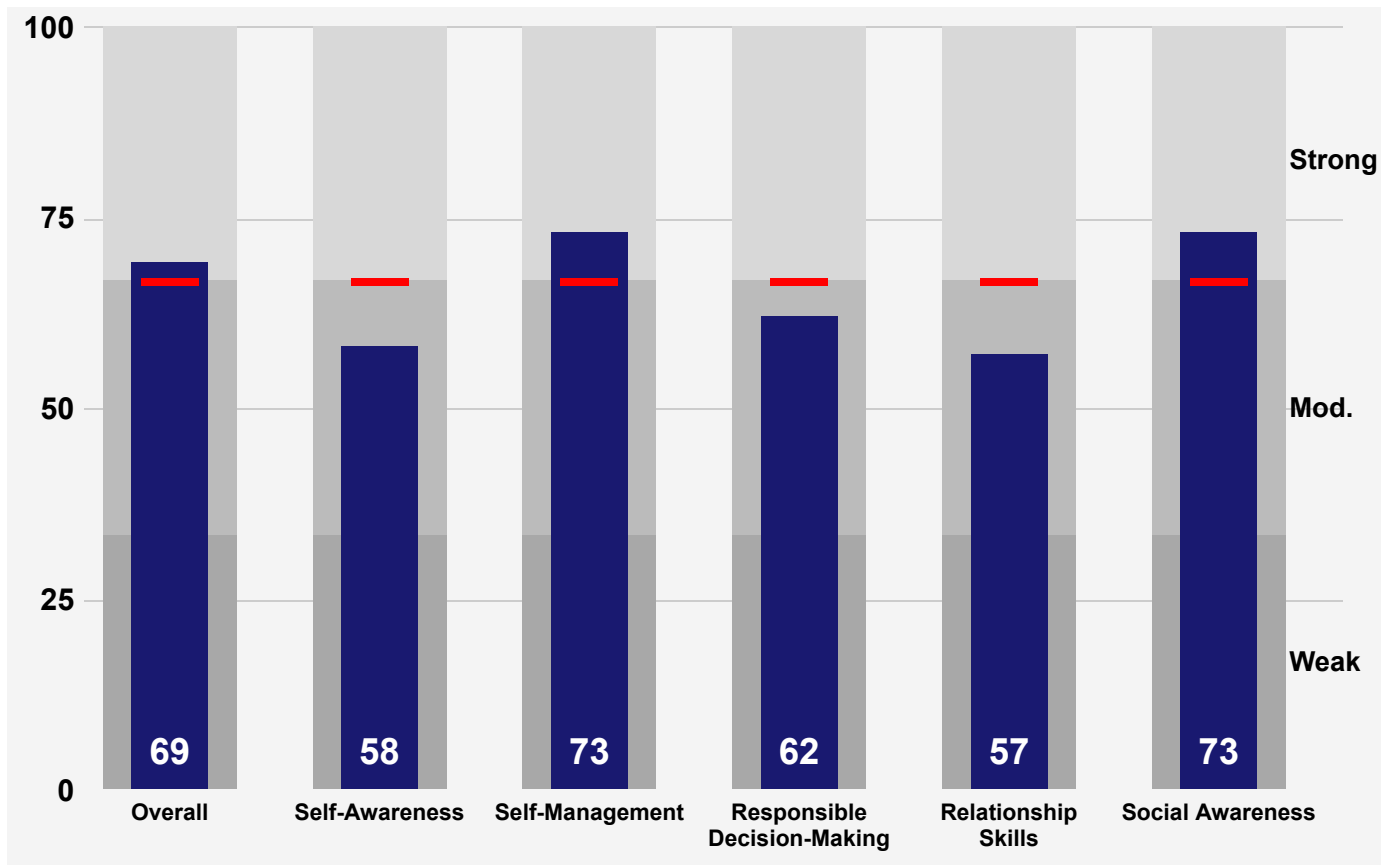


Core Measure 2: Social and Emotional Competencies

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning defines social and emotional learning (SEL) as the process through which young people understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2017). Their framework¹ includes five competencies: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Responsible Decision-Making, Relationship Skills, and Social Awareness.

In this chapter, we will explore young people’s social and emotional competence. **This section is customizable, and your organization chose the following option: An overall score for Social and Emotional Competencies along with scores for each individual competency.**

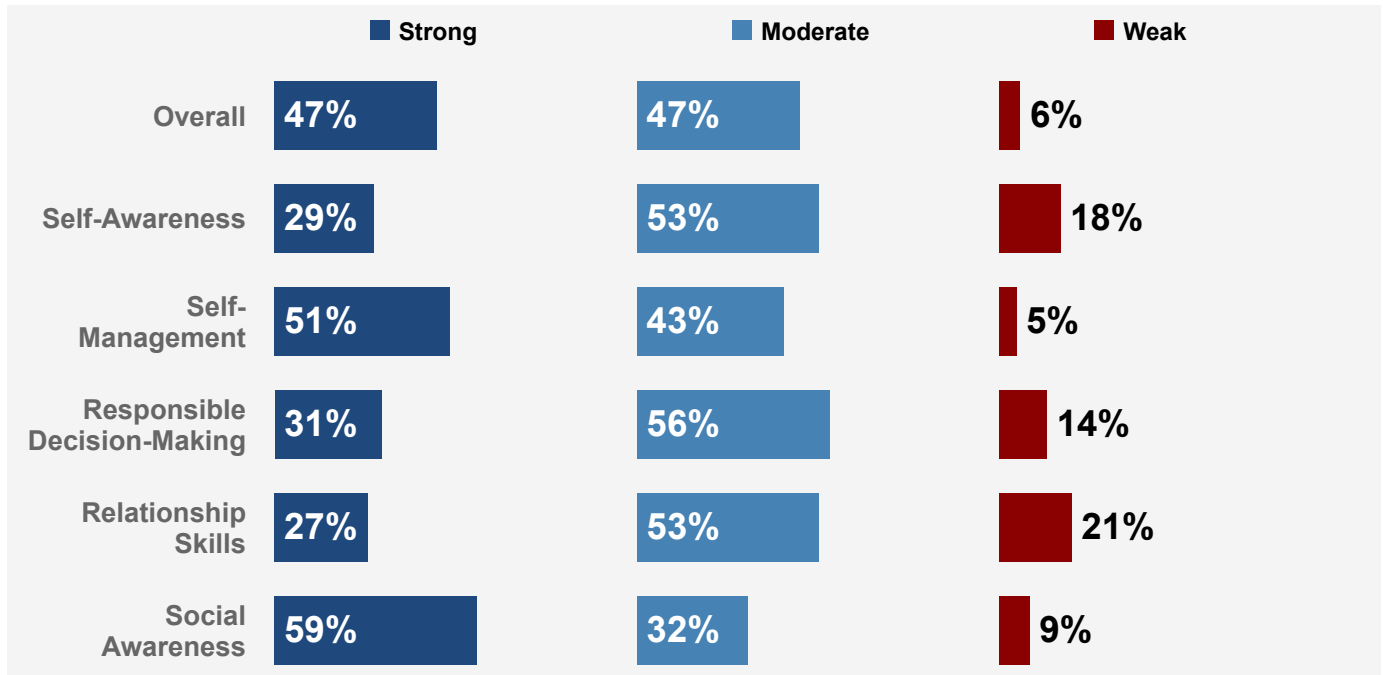
Overall, youth reported **strong** levels of social and emotional competence.



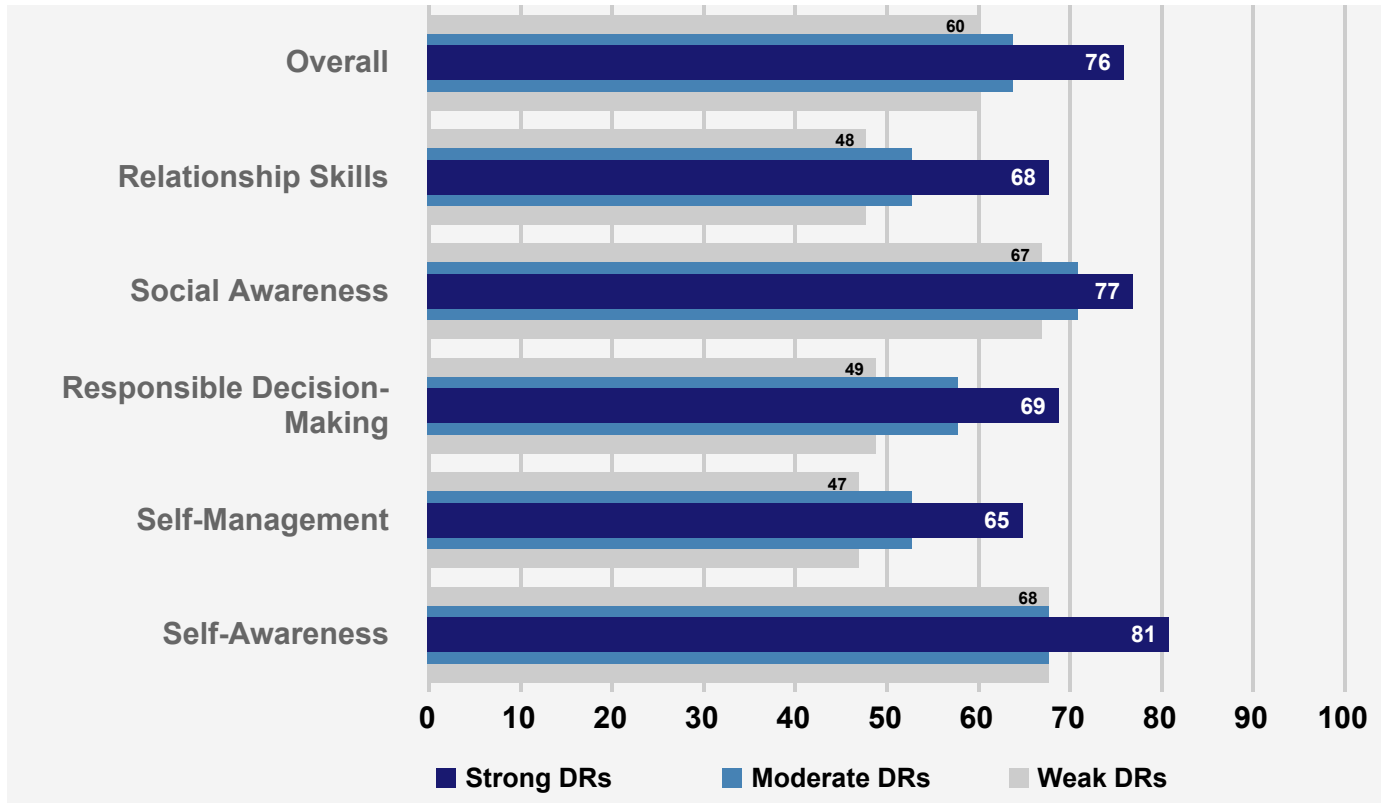
Note: The red bar indicates the score from your previous administration of the survey. If this is your time 1 survey, then it will reflect the minimum benchmark for a “strong” score.

¹ ©CASEL 2017. The five social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies were developed and defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). For more information, visit <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>

Overall, **47%** of youth reported **strong** social and emotional competence. Conversely, **6%** reported **weak** social and emotional competence.



Overall, youth who experienced **stronger levels of developmental relationships** had **stronger social and emotional competence scores**.

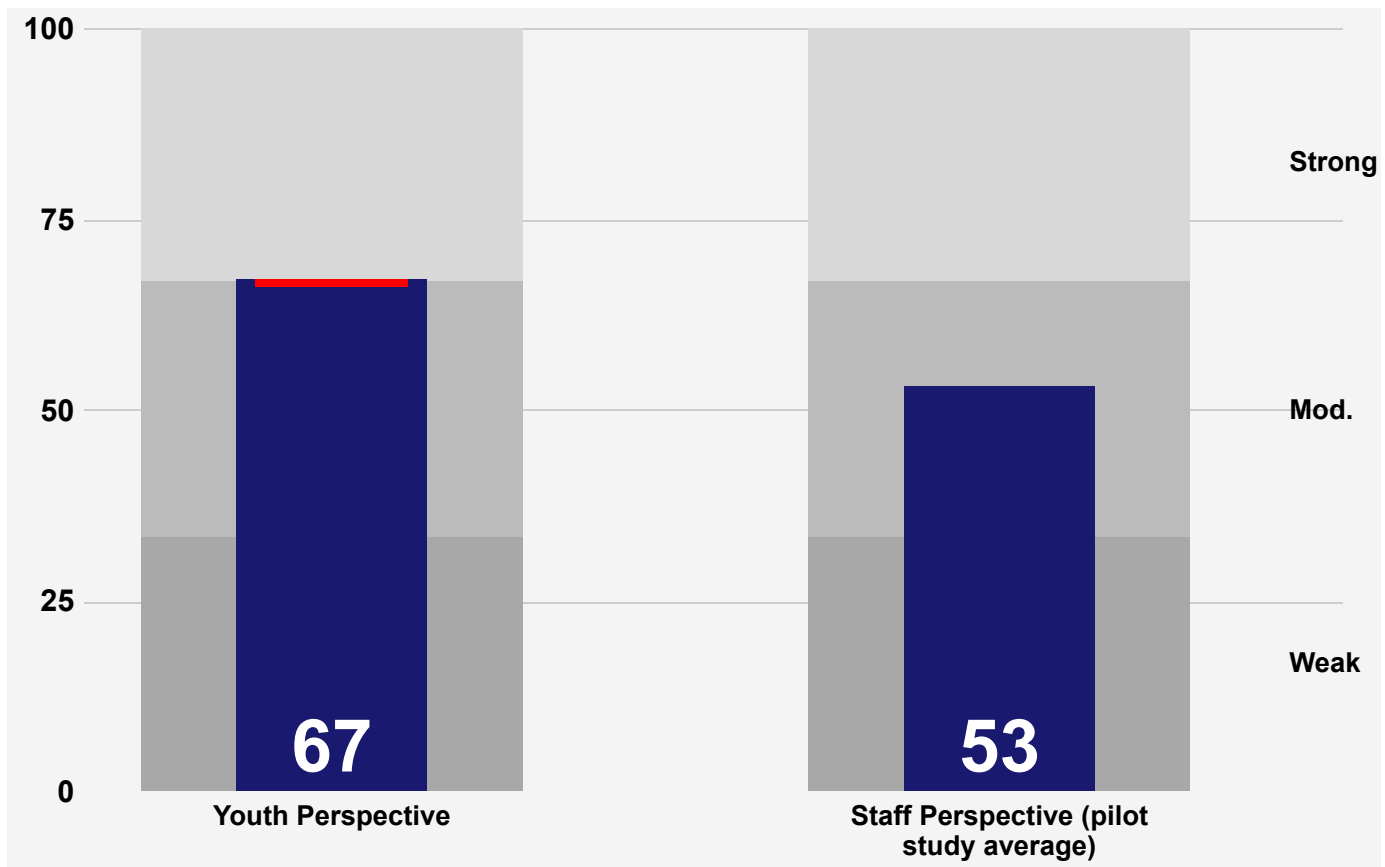


Core Measure 3: Equitable Practices

Whether young people experience their school and program culture as welcoming and inclusive has a direct impact on their experience, and the positive (or negative) repercussions of the experience. The measures in this survey examine how young people experience diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in their schools, OST, and student support programs.

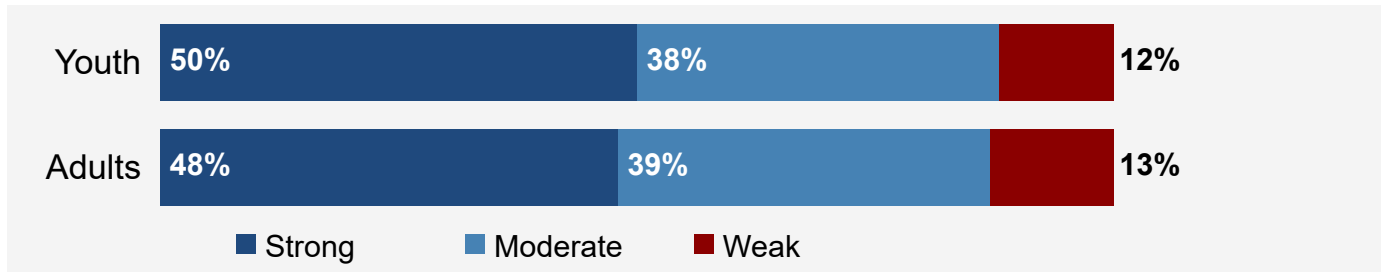
In this chapter, we will explore young people’s perceptions of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This section is customizable, and your organization chose the following options: A single overall score for your Organization’s Culturally Responsive Environment.

Youth generally reported that the organization had a **moderate** culturally responsive environment.

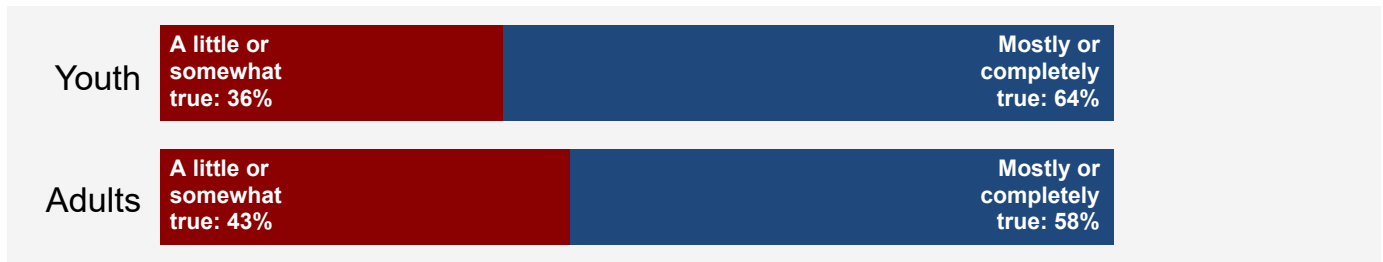


Note: The red bar indicates the score from your previous administration of the survey. If this is your time 1 survey, then it will reflect the minimum benchmark for a “strong” score.

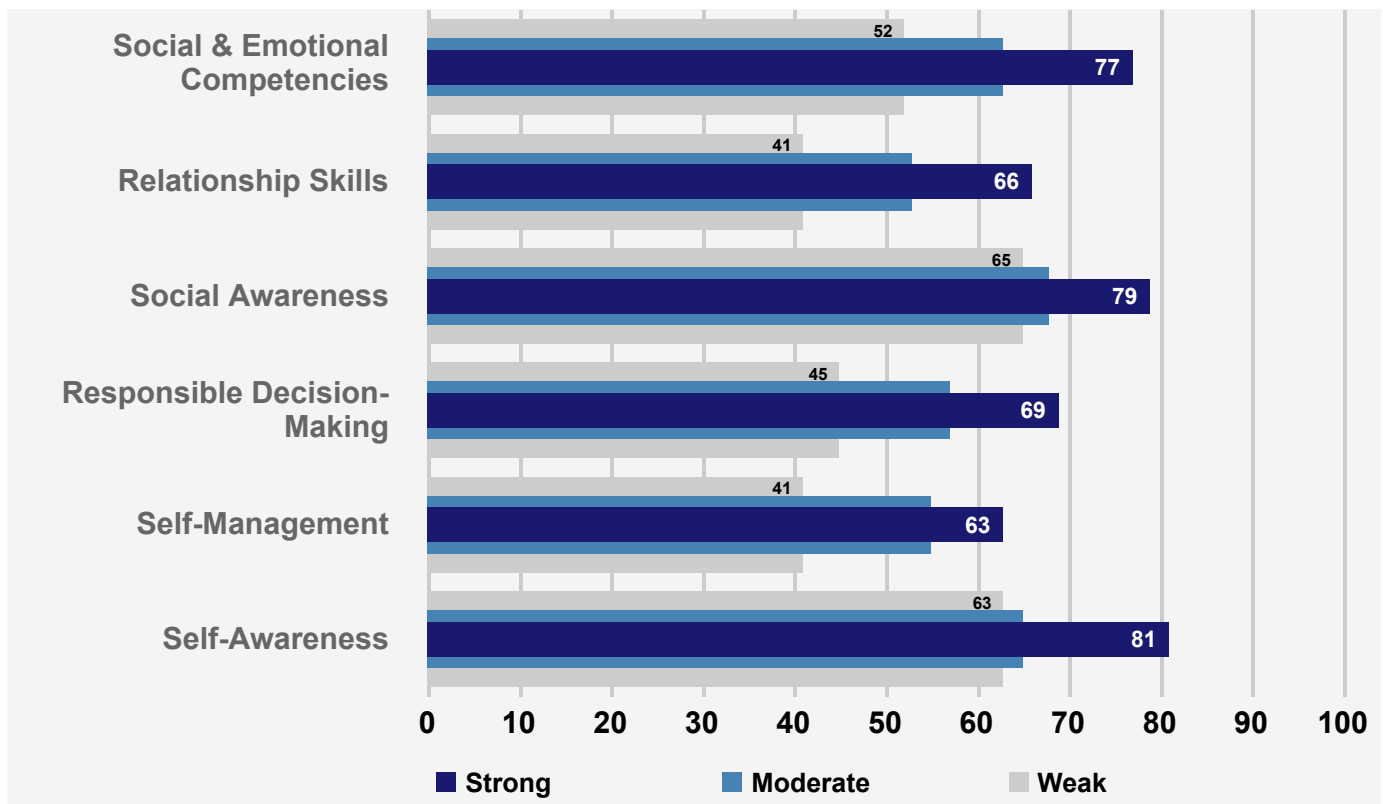
Here is a breakdown of how your youth and pilot study adults viewed their organization's culturally responsive environment:



Here is a breakdown of how your youth and pilot study adults felt when asked whether or not the adults reflect the diversity of the youth:



Youth who reported that the organization had a **strong culturally responsive environment** had **stronger social and emotional competence scores**.



Additional Measures: Outcomes

In this chapter, we will explore the optional outcome modules that your organization opted to include. This section is customizable, and your organization chose the following options: Drug Free Communities – Four Core Measures.

Outcomes: DFC Four Core Measures

Drug-Free Communities – Four Core Measures

Young people are increasingly exposed to negative behaviors and opportunities for risk-taking. Those who experience low levels of developmental relationships and high levels of developmental deficit conditions are particularly vulnerable. In this section, you'll find data describing four core measures related to young people's use of alcohol, tobacco, prescription drugs, and marijuana. These data can be used to meet Drug-Free Communities (DFC) grantee reporting requirements established by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

This information is invaluable not only to your efforts to educate the community and develop an action plan for reducing substance use, associated risk behaviors, and deficit factors but also as a basis for strengthening protective factors critical to ensuring that your youth thrive.

The four core measures consist of:

- The percentage of youth who report using alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or prescription drugs at least once in the 30 days immediately preceding the survey date.
- The percentage of youth who report that their parents feel that substance use is wrong.
- The percentage of youth who report that their friends feel substance use is wrong.
- The percentage of youth who think there is a risk in the use of these substances.

Past 30-Day Use of Alcohol, Tobacco, Marijuana, Prescription Drugs, and Vaping

Category	Definition	Total Sample	Gender		Grade				
			F	M	5	7	8	12	
Alcohol	Used alcohol once or more in the past 30 days	15	17	9		13	17		
Tobacco	Smoked cigarettes once or more in the past 30 days	4	1	1		2	5		
Marijuana	Used marijuana once or more in the past 30 days	4	1	1		3	5		
Prescription Drugs	Used prescription drugs not prescribed to them in the past 30 days	5	2	2		4	5		
Vaping	Vaped tobacco, nicotine, or marijuana once or more in the past 30 days	6	3	4		5	7		

Youth Perception of Parental Disapproval of Alcohol, Tobacco, Marijuana, Prescription Drug Use, and Vaping

Category	Definition	Total Sample	Gender		Grade				
			F	M	5	7	8	12	
Alcohol	Drink regularly	90	91	93		93	88		
Tobacco	Smoke tobacco	94	99	95		96	92		
Marijuana	Use marijuana	93	97	94		96	91		
Prescription Drugs	Used prescription drugs not prescribed to you	94	97	97		97	93		
Vaping	Vape tobacco, nicotine, or marijuana	94	97	95		95	93		

Values for one or more cells were suppressed due to fewer than 10 youth in that category responding.

Youth Perception of Peer Disapproval of Alcohol, Tobacco, Marijuana, Prescription Drugs, and Vaping

Category	Definition	Total Sample	Gender		Grade			
			F	M	5	7	8	12
Alcohol	Drink regularly	84	84	87		84	86	
Tobacco	Smoke tobacco	90	94	93		89	93	
Marijuana	Use marijuana	87	89	91		87	88	
Prescription Drugs	Used prescription drugs not prescribed to you	88	91	91		87	92	
Vaping	Vape tobacco, nicotine, or marijuana	87	90	88		86	89	

Youth Perception of Risk of Alcohol, Tobacco, Marijuana, Prescription Drug Use, and Vaping

Category	Definition	Total Sample	Gender		Grade			
			F	M	5	7	8	12
Alcohol	Five or more drinks once or twice a week	78	81	76		81	75	
Tobacco	One or more packs of cigarettes per day	82	85	83		83	81	
Marijuana	Use marijuana once or twice a week	70	74	68		73	66	
Prescription Drugs	Used prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them	82	85	81		82	82	
Vaping	Vape tobacco, nicotine, or marijuana	76	75	77		76	75	

Values for one or more cells were suppressed due to fewer than 10 youth in that category responding.

Four Core Measures Data Summary

		Past 30-Day Use					Perception of Risk				
		Alc	Tob	Mar	Pre	Vape	Alc	Tob	Mar	Pre	Vape
Total Sample	*%	15	3.5	3.9	4.7	5.9	77.6	82.3	70.1	81.9	75.9
	n	38	9	10	12	15	197	209	178	208	192
	N	254	255	254	254	254	254	254	254	254	253
Female	*%	17.5	1	1	1.9	2.9	81.4	85.3	73.5	85.3	75.5
	n	18	1	1	2	3	83	87	75	87	77
	N	103	103	103	103	103	102	102	102	102	102
Male	*%	8.7	0.8	0.8	2.4	3.9	75.8	82.8	68	81.3	77.2
	n	11	1	1	3	5	97	106	87	104	98
	N	127	128	127	127	127	128	128	128	128	127
Not Enrolled	*%										
	n										
	N										
4	*%										
	n										
	N										
5	*%										
	n										
	N										
6	*%										
	n										
	N										
7	*%	12.6	1.7	2.5	4.2	5	80.7	83.2	73.1	81.5	76.5
	n	15	2	3	5	6	96	99	87	97	91
	N	119	120	120	119	119	119	119	119	119	119
8	*%	16.5	5	5	5	6.6	75.2	81	66.1	81.8	75
	n	20	6	6	6	8	91	98	80	99	90
	N	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	121	120
9	*%										
	n										
	N										
10	*%										
	n										
	N										
11	*%										
	n										
	N										
12	*%										
	n										
	N										
Post Secondary	*%										
	n										
	N										

Note:

% -- In this table, the rows marked with a percent sign (%) reflect percentages of youth who meet the criteria appropriate to the particular column for Past 30-Day Use, Perception of Risk, Perception of Parental Disapproval, and Perception of Peer Disapproval.

n -- Rows marked with a lower case n report the number of students who meet the criteria.

N -- Rows marked with an upper case N report the number of students who responded to the relevant question.

Values for one or more cells were suppressed due to fewer than 10 youth in that category responding.

Four Core Measures Data Summary - Part 2

		Perception of Parental Disapproval					Perception of Peer Disapproval				
		Alc	Tob	Mar	Pre	Vape	Alc	Tob	Mar	Pre	Vape
Total Sample	%	90.2	94.1	93.3	94.5	93.7	83.9	90.5	87.4	88.2	87
	n	230	238	236	240	238	213	228	222	224	221
	N	255	253	253	254	254	254	252	254	254	254
Female	%	91.3	99	97	97.1	97.1	84.5	94.1	89.2	91.3	90.2
	n	94	100	98	100	99	87	96	91	94	92
	N	103	101	101	103	102	103	102	102	103	102
Male	%	93	94.5	93.8	96.9	94.5	86.6	92.9	90.6	90.6	88.3
	n	119	121	120	123	121	110	117	116	115	113
	N	128	128	128	127	128	127	126	128	127	128
Not Enrolled	%										
	n										
	N										
4	%										
	n										
	N										
5	%										
	n										
	N										
6	%										
	n										
	N										
7	%	92.5	95.8	95.8	96.6	95	84	89.1	87.4	86.6	85.7
	n	111	115	114	115	114	100	106	104	103	102
	N	120	120	119	119	120	119	119	119	119	119
8	%	87.6	92.4	90.8	93.4	92.5	86	93.3	88.4	91.7	89.3
	n	106	110	109	113	111	104	111	107	111	108
	N	121	119	120	121	120	121	119	121	121	121
9	%										
	n										
	N										
10	%										
	n										
	N										
11	%										
	n										
	N										
12	%										
	n										
	N										
Post Secondary	%										
	n										
	N										

Note:

% -- In this table, the rows marked with a percent sign (%) reflect percentages of youth who meet the criteria appropriate to the particular column for Past 30-Day Use, Perception of Risk, Perception of Parental Disapproval, and Perception of Peer Disapproval.

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Filters Used in This Report

This report has been generated from a World Wide Web based system that includes the ability to filter the responses displayed based on a set of criteria selected by the viewer. When this report is printed or saved to a PDF file, it may not be clear what filtering if any has been used on the data set. That lack of clarity is what this section is designed to address. This section is shown only if filtering has reduced the number of responses shown to less than all responses available. **Currently displayed are 261 of 2550 survey responses**

Groups displayed:

BMHS Spring 2021: **Excluded**

CGS Spring 2021: **Excluded**

Nathan Hale Middle School Spring 2021: **Included** as main report data / post / time-2

Norwalk High School Spring 2021: **Excluded**

P-TECH Spring 2021: **Excluded**

Ponus Middle School Spring 2021: **Excluded**

Roton Middle School Spring 2021: **Excluded**

West Rocks Middle School Spring 2021: **Excluded**

Note: Checked values are included in the displayed data and unchecked values are excluded.

Grades displayed:

Unanswered

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

Genders displayed:

Unanswered

Girl

Boy

Other

Is LGBT+ displayed:

0

1

2

Financial Strain displayed:

Unanswered

Cannot buy the things we need sometimes

Have just enough money OR No problem

English Language Learner displayed:

- Unanswered
- Yes
- No
- I do not know

Have an Individual or Special Education Plan displayed:

- Unanswered
- Yes
- No
- I do not know

Races displayed:

- Black
- Asian
- Latinx
- Native
- White
- Other
- Unanswered