

News and Notes from the Prevention Coordinator

One of our main sources of information about substance use among students within the CESU district comes from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, a collaborative effort between schools, the Vermont Department of Health and the Vermont Department of Education. Every other year, students from 8th-12th grade are asked to complete the anonymous survey.

The 2007 survey results are now out. There is good news and bad.

Among the good news at CESU:

Tobacco use among students has been dropping consistently for years and continues to do so.

Fewer students reported being offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property.

Fewer students reported riding in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been smoking marijuana.

Fewer students reported using marijuana 1 or more times during the past 30 days.

Fewer students made a plan about how to commit suicide.

More students report feeling valued by their community.

More students are volunteering in their community.

These are positive trends and our students as well as their parents, teachers, administrators and the community, in general, deserve our congratulations.

Among the bad news at CESU:

Much of our bad news centers around alcohol use, including binge drinking and riding in cars with drivers who have been drinking. Alcohol use among MMU students is very high, with 42% of seniors reporting having binged on alcohol (had 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row within a couple of hours) within the past 30 days. That is close to ½ the class! Previous surveys have shown similar statistics so it is not just one group of kids we are talking about, but rather a trend among MMU seniors. Binge drinking is a high risk behavior often resulting in illness, addiction, accidents, violence, and over dose.

Of students that say they drank alcohol, 26% of females and 21% of males report getting their alcohol from home. Most parents are not intentionally supplying their teens with alcohol. However, many of us have alcohol in our homes, and kids are taking it. To cut down on underage drinking, let's make it harder for those under the age of 21 to get it. Please keep all alcohol out of the hands of your teens.

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