



# Arkansas Statewide Collegiate Substance Use Assessment, 2021-2025

## 5-year Retrospective



**Arkansas Collegiate Substance Use Assessment 2021-2025**

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**ARKANSAS  
DEPARTMENT OF  
HUMAN  
SERVICES**

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**Office of Substance  
Abuse and Mental Health**

*ABOUT THIS REPORT:*

Sponsored by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock MidSOUTH Center for Prevention and Training.

Funded by Arkansas Department of Human Services, Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (OSAMH) with continued support from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (SAMHSA/CSAP) via the Substance Abuse Block Grant.



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Research coordination and management of the assessment facilitated through the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Survey Research Center.

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*Short Reference: UA Little Rock Survey Research Center (2026) 2025 Arkansas Collegiate Substance Use Assessment.*



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## Student Respondents by Year

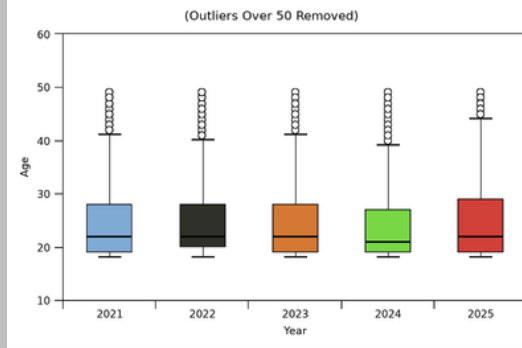
Year  
● 2021 ● 2022 ● 2023 ● 2024 ● 2025



| Year | n    | Relative % |
|------|------|------------|
| 2021 | 3344 | 24.1       |
| 2022 | 4268 | 30.76      |
| 2023 | 1360 | 9.8        |
| 2024 | 2302 | 16.59      |
| 2025 | 2601 | 18.75      |

# WHO RESPONDED?

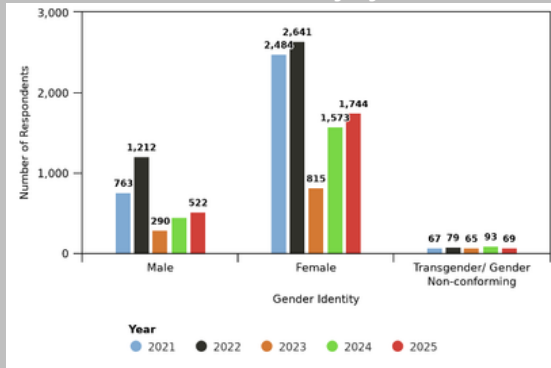
## Respondents Age Breakdown by Year



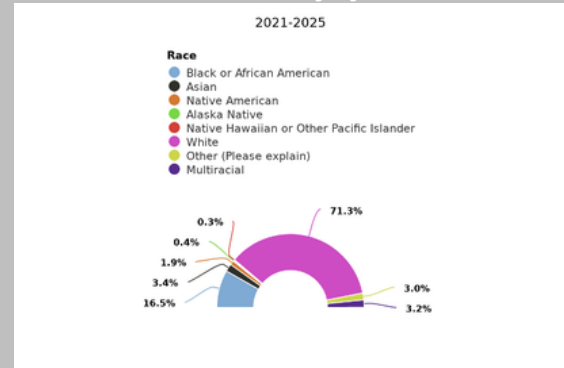
| Year | M     | n    | Mode | Mdn |
|------|-------|------|------|-----|
| 2021 | 25.5  | 3295 | 18   | 22  |
| 2022 | 25.58 | 3952 | 18   | 23  |
| 2023 | 26.26 | 1183 | 18   | 22  |
| 2024 | 25.48 | 2129 | 18   | 21  |
| 2025 | 26.59 | 2349 | 18   | 22  |

A total of 13,875 students were surveyed, and 4,268 responded in 2022, accounting for 30.76 percent of the response group. The age range stayed stable, averaging 25 to 26, and the age most often reported by residents was 18.

## Gender Identity by Year



## Racial Identity by Year



Student participation showed a broad range of backgrounds, with women responding at higher rates than men. The majority of respondents identified as White, making up 71.3% of the group.

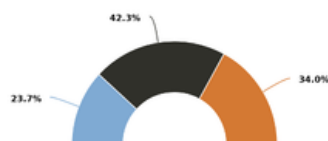
## Student Degree Status

2021-2025  
Degree\_Status  
● Non-degree seeking ● Undergraduate ● Associate  
● Graduate ● Other (please specify)



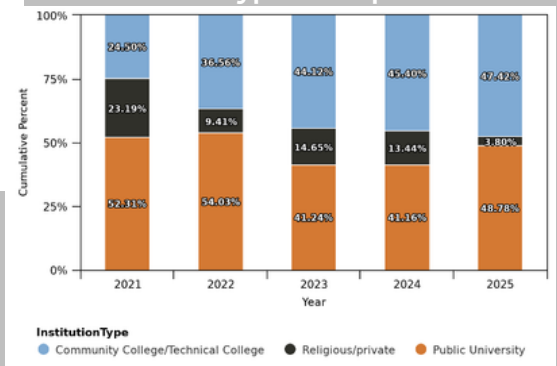
## Course Modality for Respondent

2021-2025  
Course\_Mod  
● Fully online courses ● Hybrid (both online and in-person courses) ● Fully in-person courses



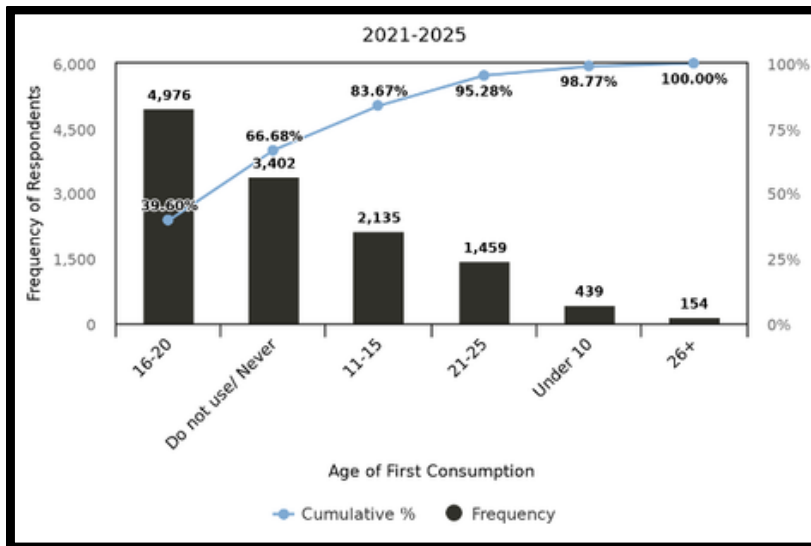
More than half of all respondents were undergraduate students. Responses reflected a blend of learning formats, with hybrid being the most frequent choice. Community college involvement also increased in 2025, marking a stronger presence than in previous years.

## Institution Type of Respondent



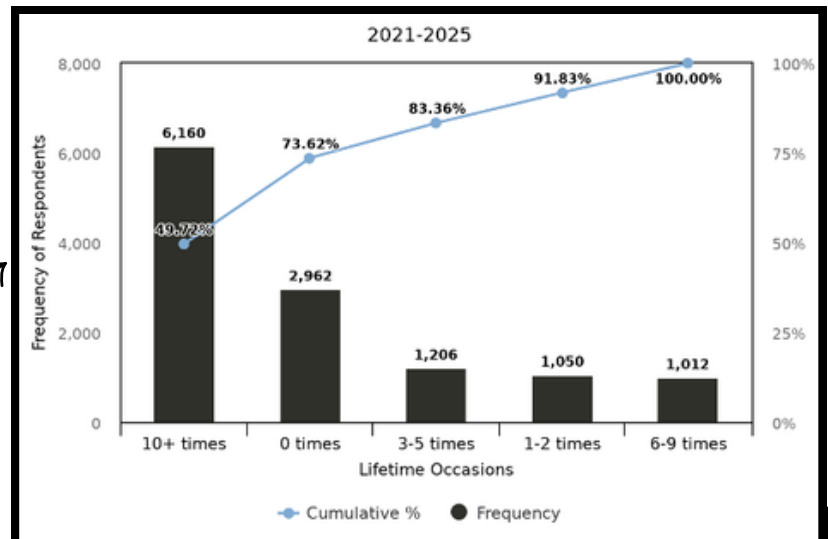
# ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

## EARLY INITIATION AND SUSTAINED LIFETIME ALCOHOL EXPOSURE



Looking at the chart, first use of alcohol is most common in the later teen years. The pattern shows that drinking typically starts before or early into college. This remains consistent across all assessment years.

The data suggests that students' alcohol use is shaped by repeated experiences instead of rare or isolated trials. A large share of students report many drinking occasions, showing that their relationship with alcohol grows through ongoing behavior rather than first-time attempts.



### THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Research consistently shows that earlier initiation is associated with higher lifetime consumption and greater vulnerability to later adverse outcomes. Developmental models of emerging adulthood suggest that early exposure interacts with ongoing cognitive and behavioral development, reinforcing risk trajectories.

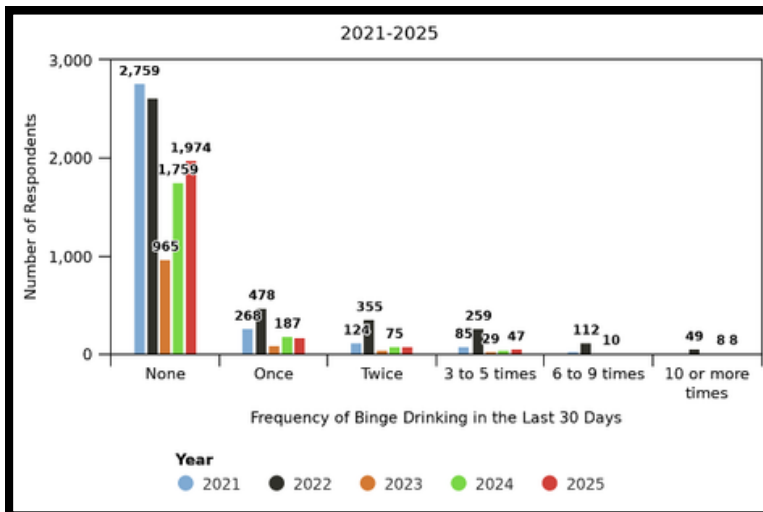
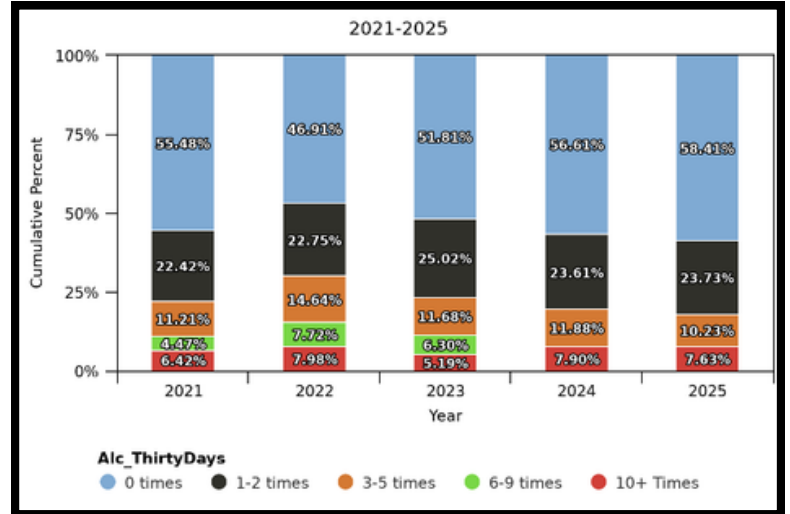
### Key Takeaways

- Alcohol exposure frequently begins before or early into college years.
- Lifetime use patterns reflect sustained engagement rather than isolated experimentation.
- Early and repeated exposure establishes the baseline from which later behavioral and academic outcomes emerge.

# ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

## Recent Alcohol Use and Binge Drinking Patterns

ACROSS ALL THE YEARS MEASURED, ALCOHOL USE IN THE PAST MONTH STAYS FAIRLY STEADY. THE NUMBERS RISE AND FALL SLIGHTLY FROM YEAR TO YEAR, BUT NOTHING SUGGESTS A SHARP DECLINE. THIS PATTERN SHOWS THAT DRINKING IS STILL HAPPENING NOW, NOT ONLY IN THE PAST. IN SHORT, ALCOHOL USE CONTINUES TO BE PRESENT AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS.



### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- RECENT ALCOHOL USE REMAINS CONSISTENT ACROSS ASSESSMENT YEARS.
- BINGE DRINKING REPRESENTS INTENSIFIED EXPOSURE WITHIN THE BROADER CONSUMPTION PATTERN.
- ONGOING AND EPISODIC HIGH-RISK USE CREATES CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH ADVERSE OUTCOMES BECOME MORE LIKELY.

### THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Behavioral and developmental models of emerging adulthood suggest that risk-taking and reward-seeking behaviors are elevated during the college years. Binge drinking, in particular, aligns with social norms and peer reinforcement dynamics that amplify episodic high-risk consumption. The persistence of recent use and binge behavior reflects the interaction of developmental vulnerability and collegiate social environments.

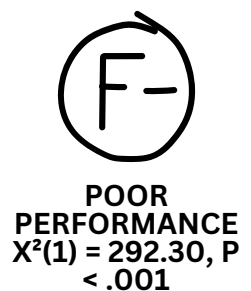
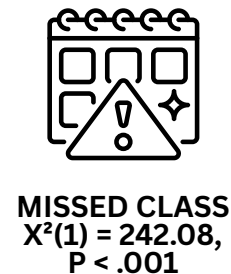
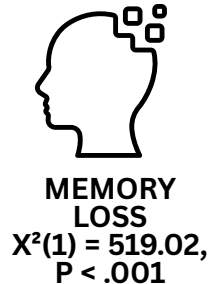
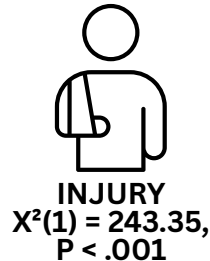
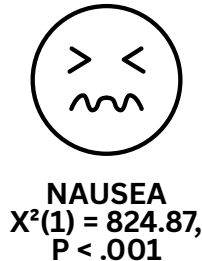
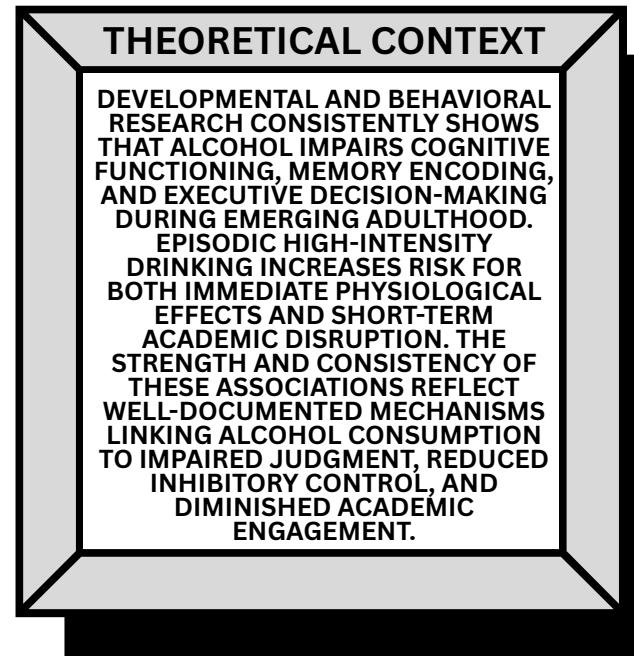
The data illustrates a steady presence of binge drinking over multiple years. Episodes of drinking heavily stand out as a meaningful part of alcohol behavior, showing that the danger often lies in short bursts of high use rather than general drinking habits. This helps clarify that alcohol risk includes both regular use and the sharp spikes that come with intensified drinking.

# ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

## Recent Alcohol Use Is Strongly Associated With Adverse Outcomes

### Physical Consequences

RECENT ALCOHOL USE WAS CLOSELY LINKED TO SEVERAL HARMFUL EXPERIENCES. STUDENTS WHO HAD USED ALCOHOL WERE FAR MORE LIKELY TO REPORT HANGOVERS, NAUSEA OR VOMITING, AND INJURIES. IN CONTRAST, STUDENTS WHO HAD NOT USED ALCOHOL WERE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO REPORT NO PROBLEMS AT ALL. THESE PATTERNS SHOW THAT ALCOHOL-RELATED HARM IS NOT RANDOM BUT CONCENTRATED AMONG THOSE WHO RECENTLY DRANK.



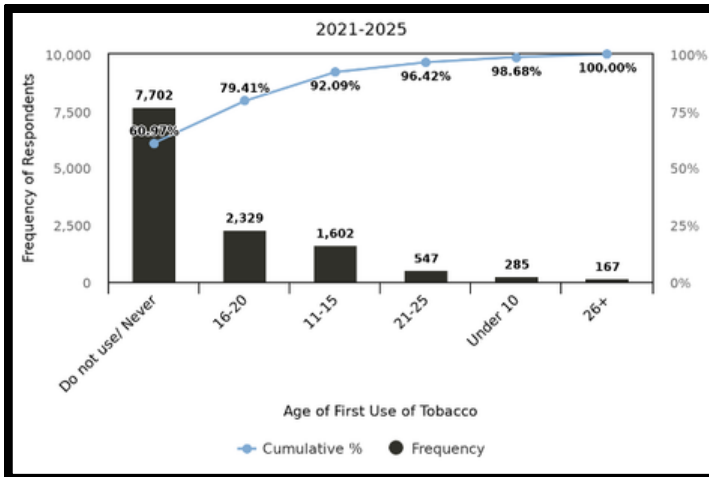
#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- RECENT ALCOHOL USE IS STRONGLY AND CONSISTENTLY LINKED TO PHYSICAL HARM.
- COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT AND ACADEMIC DISRUPTION ARE MEASURABLY ASSOCIATED WITH ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION.
- ADVERSE OUTCOMES CLUSTER PREDICTABLY AMONG RECENT USERS RATHER THAN OCCURRING RANDOMLY ACROSS THE STUDENT POPULATION.

RECENT ALCOHOL USE SHOWED A CLEAR PATTERN IN THE DATA. PEOPLE WHO DRANK WERE FAR MORE LIKELY TO REPORT MEMORY PROBLEMS, MISS CLASSES, AND STRUGGLE WITH SCHOOL OR WORK TASKS. THESE OUTCOMES APPEARED AT RATES MUCH HIGHER THAN EXPECTED. IN CONTRAST, THOSE WHO DID NOT DRINK WERE MORE LIKELY TO REPORT NO PROBLEMS AT ALL. ALTOGETHER, THE FINDINGS SHOW THAT ALCOHOL USE IS TIED NOT ONLY TO PHYSICAL EFFECTS, BUT REAL ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES.

# TOBACCO PRODUCTS

## Early Initiation and Sustained Lifetime Tobacco Use



MOST STUDENTS FIRST TRY TOBACCO IN THEIR EARLY OR LATE TEEN YEARS. THIS EARLY START HAS STAYED CONSISTENT ACROSS THE YEARS SHOWN IN THE CHART.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

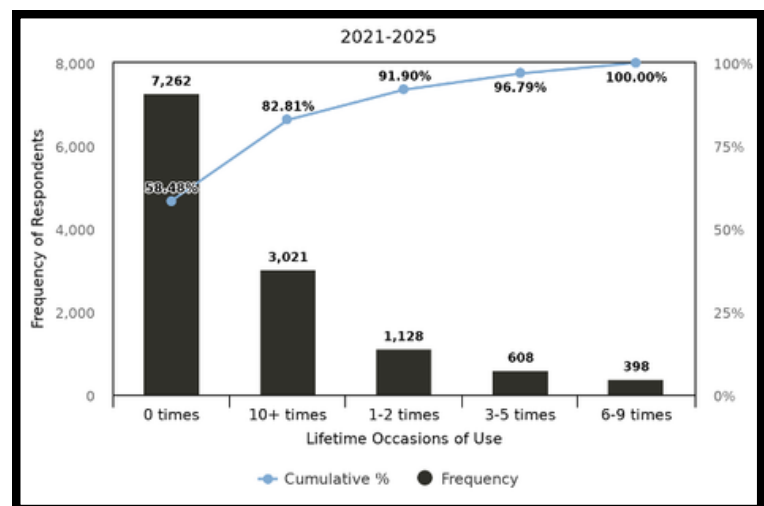
1. TOBACCO INITIATION FREQUENTLY OCCUR AROUND COLLEGE ENTRY.
2. LIFETIME USE REFLECTS SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT RATHER THAN BRIEF EXPERIMENTATION.
3. EARLY EXPOSURE INCREASES THE LIKELIHOOD OF CONTINUED USE DURING COLLEGE YEARS.

BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH INDICATES THAT EARLIER INITIATION OF NICOTINE USE IS ASSOCIATED WITH STRONGER REINFORCEMENT PATTERNS AND GREATER DIFFICULTY DISCONTINUING USE. NICOTINE'S ADDICTIVE PROPERTIES INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT EARLY EXPOSURE TRANSLATES INTO SUSTAINED LIFETIME CONSUMPTION. DEVELOPMENTAL MODELS SUGGEST THAT EARLY BEHAVIORAL NORMALIZATION STRENGTHENS HABIT FORMATION PRIOR TO FULL EXECUTIVE MATURITY.

CONTEXT

THEORETICAL

LIFETIME TOBACCO USE TENDS TO BUILD OVER TIME, WITH MANY STUDENTS MOVING BEYOND SIMPLE EXPERIMENTATION. INSTEAD OF TRYING IT ONCE, A NOTICEABLE GROUP CONTINUES USING IT ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, SHOWING A PATTERN OF REPEATED AND ONGOING USE.



# TOBACCO

## PRODUCTS

*Recent Tobacco and Nicotine Vaping  
Reflect High-Frequency Use Patterns*

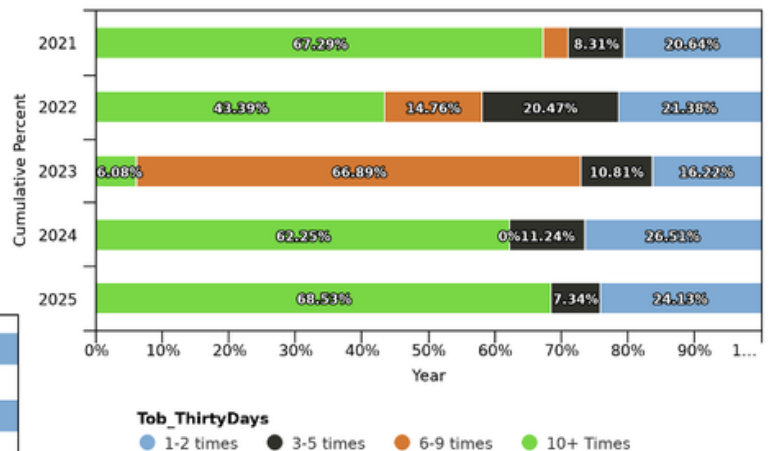
### KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. RECENT TOBACCO AND NICOTINE VAPING ARE CONCENTRATED AMONG HIGH-FREQUENCY USERS.
2. PATTERNS REFLECT SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT RATHER THAN OCCASIONAL EXPERIMENTATION.
3. REPEATED EXPOSURE INCREASES THE LIKELIHOOD OF DEPENDENCE AND ASSOCIATED ADVERSE HEALTH OUTCOMES.

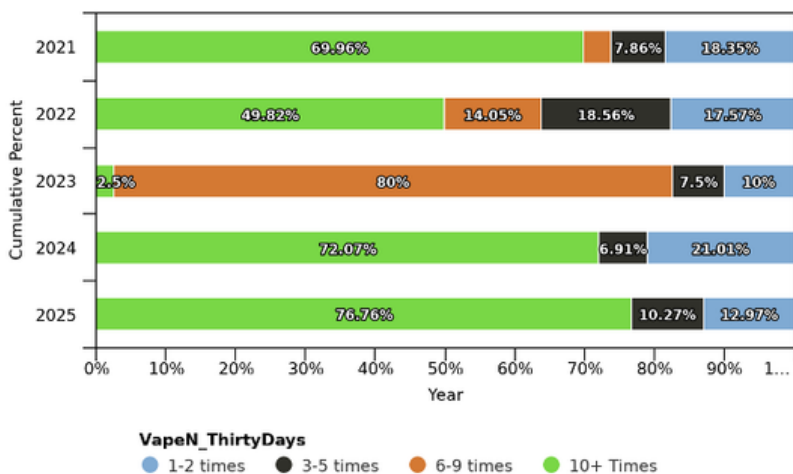
ACROSS THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, STUDENTS HAVE MOSTLY REPORTED NO RECENT TOBACCO USE, WITH NON-USE STAYING HIGH IN NEARLY EVERY YEAR MEASURED. FOR THE SMALLER GROUP THAT DOES USE TOBACCO, MANY REPORT USING IT MORE THAN TEN TIMES IN A MONTH, ESPECIALLY IN 2021, 2024, AND 2025. ALTHOUGH 2023 SAW A SLIGHT RISE IN MID-LEVEL USE, THE OVERALL PATTERN STILL POINTS TO HEAVY AND REPEATED USE. LIGHT OR ONE-TIME USE REMAINS UNCOMMON, HIGHLIGHTING THAT TOBACCO USE IS OFTEN A STEADY HABIT RATHER THAN AN OCCASIONAL CHOICE.



Propensity when Used, 2021-2025



Propensity when Used, 2021-2025



ACROSS THE FIVE-YEARS, THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO AVOIDED VAPING CHANGED, BUT ONE PATTERN STAYED THE SAME: THOSE WHO VAPED FOR NICOTINE TENDED TO DO IT MANY TIMES. THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF FREQUENT USE APPEARED IN 2024 AND 2025, WHEN OVER SEVENTY PERCENT OF RECENT USERS REPORTED USING TEN OR MORE TIMES THAT MONTH. OCCASIONAL USE MADE UP ONLY A SMALL SLICE OF REPORTS, SHOWING THAT VAPING WAS NOT JUST A ONE-OFF BEHAVIOR FOR MOST.

NICOTINE IS CHARACTERIZED BY STRONG REINFORCEMENT PROPERTIES AND RAPID HABIT FORMATION. BEHAVIORAL AND NEUROBIOLOGICAL RESEARCH INDICATES THAT REPEATED EXPOSURE STRENGTHENS DEPENDENCE PATHWAYS, INCREASING THE LIKELIHOOD THAT USE BECOMES ROUTINE RATHER THAN SITUATIONAL. THE CONCENTRATION OF USERS IN HIGHER-FREQUENCY CATEGORIES ALIGNS WITH ESTABLISHED ADDICTION MODELS, WHICH EMPHASIZE ESCALATION FROM EXPERIMENTATION TO SUSTAINED USE WHEN EXPOSURE IS REPEATED WITHIN SHORT INTERVALS.

CONTEXT

THEORETICAL

# TOBACCO

## PRODUCTS

*Strongly Associations With Social, Behavioral, and Academic Consequences*

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. RECENT TOBACCO USE IS STRONGLY ASSOCIATED WITH SOCIAL CRITICISM AND DRUG-RELATED PROBLEMS.
2. A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF USERS REPORT ATTEMPTING TO STOP, INDICATING RECOGNITION OF NEGATIVE IMPACT.
3. ACADEMIC DISRUPTION IS MEASURABLY LINKED TO TOBACCO USE, EXTENDING CONSEQUENCES BEYOND HEALTH EFFECTS.

THE DATA SHOWS THAT TOBACCO USE CARRIES REAL SOCIAL AND PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES. USERS ARE TRYING TO CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOR, DEMONSTRATED BY 780 QUIT ATTEMPTS WHEN ONLY 215 WERE EXPECTED. THEY ARE ALSO FACING STRONG REACTIONS FROM THOSE AROUND THEM, WITH 595 REPORTS OF CRITICISM COMPARED TO JUST 157 PREDICTED. THESE PATTERNS REVEAL HOW STRONGLY TOBACCO USE IS TIED TO TENSION, CONCERN, AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HARM.

THE NUMBERS REVEAL A CONSISTENT TREND. TOBACCO USERS FACED FAR MORE ACADEMIC INTERRUPTION THAN PREDICTED—784 MISSED CLASSES VERSUS 374 EXPECTED, AND 816 PERFORMANCE DECLINES VERSUS 399 EXPECTED. THOSE WHO DID NOT USE TOBACCO SHOWED UP MOST OFTEN IN THE GROUPS WITH NO SIGNS OF DISRUPTION.

### OVERALL STATISTICAL OBSERVATIONS

ACROSS ALL RELATIONSHIP TESTS, THE RESULTS SHOWED A CLEAR AND CONSISTENT PATTERN. EACH ASSOCIATION REACHED A VERY STRONG LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE, AND EVERY TEST POINTED IN THE SAME DIRECTION. USERS APPEARED FAR MORE OFTEN IN CATEGORIES TIED TO NEGATIVE OUTCOMES, WHILE NON-USERS APPEARED MORE OFTEN IN CATEGORIES WITH NO NEGATIVE OUTCOME. THE ESPECIALLY LARGE CHI-SQUARE VALUES FOR CRITICISM, DRUG PROBLEMS, AND ATTEMPTS TO QUIT SUGGEST THAT THESE LINKS ARE NOT SMALL—THEY REFLECT STRONG, MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS.

#### RECENT TOBACCO USE WAS SIGNIFICANTLY ASSOCIATED WITH:

BEING CRITICIZED FOR USE  
 $\chi^2(1) = 1,595.71, P < .001$

DRUG-RELATED PROBLEMS  
 $\chi^2(1) = 1,449.53, P < .001$

ATTEMPTING TO STOP USE  
 $\chi^2(1) = 1,995.76, P < .001$

NICOTINE DEPENDENCE MODELS EMPHASIZE RAPID REINFORCEMENT CYCLES THAT STRENGTHEN HABITUAL USE. AS FREQUENCY INCREASES, PHYSIOLOGICAL DEPENDENCE AND WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS MAY AFFECT CONCENTRATION, MOOD REGULATION, AND DAILY FUNCTIONING. SOCIAL CRITICISM AND CESSATION ATTEMPTS REFLECT AWARENESS OF NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES, WHILE ACADEMIC DISRUPTION ALIGNS WITH RESEARCH LINKING NICOTINE DEPENDENCE TO ATTENTIONAL INSTABILITY AND BEHAVIORAL REGULATION CHALLENGES.

THE STRENGTH OF RELATIONSHIPS REFLECTS PREDICTABLE CLUSTERING OF ADVERSE OUTCOMES AMONG RECENT USERS.

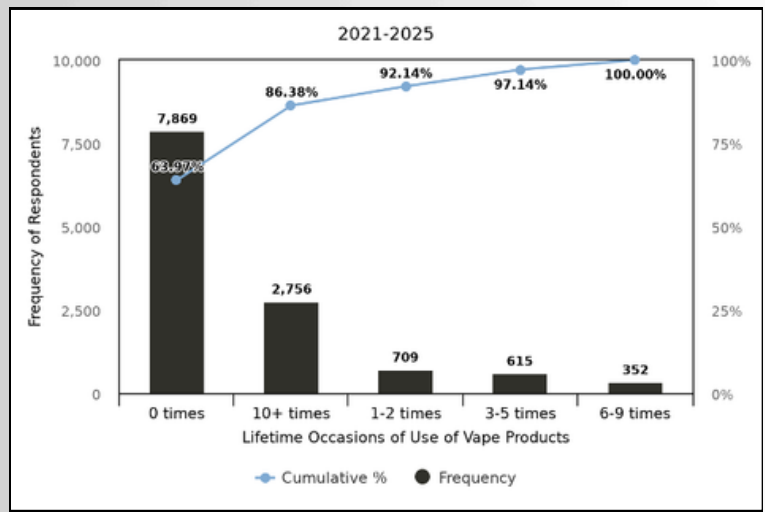
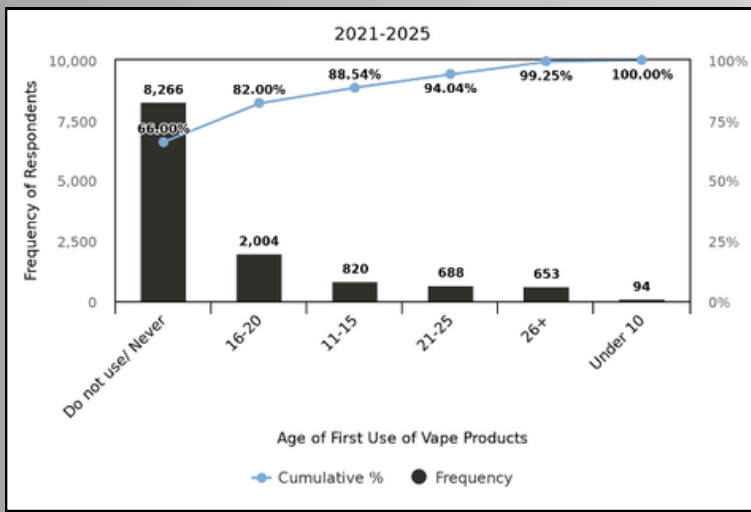
CONTEXT

THEORETICAL

#### RECENT TOBACCO USE WAS SIGNIFICANTLY ASSOCIATED WITH:

MISSED CLASS  
 $\chi^2(1) = 663.38, P < .001$

POOR ACADEMIC/WORK PERFORMANCE  
 $\chi^2(1) = 652.97, P < .001$



**MOST STUDENTS WHO TRY VAPING START BETWEEN 16 AND 20, WITH VERY FEW STARTING BEFORE AGE 10.  
AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE EVER VAPED, HIGHER-USE GROUPS MAKE UP THE BIGGEST SHARE.**

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

**MOST EXPERIMENTATION BEGINS IN THE LATE-TEEN YEARS  
MANY USERS VAPE MORE THAN JUST A FEW TIMES  
A PORTION OF STUDENTS SHOW ONGOING VAPE INVOLVEMENT**

### RELATIONSHIP OF TOBACCO & MARIJUANA (30-DAY USE)

**RECENT TOBACCO USE AND RECENT MARIJUANA USE WERE SIGNIFICANTLY ASSOCIATED:**

$$X^2(1) = 1,009.93, P < .001$$

**KEY TAKEAWAYS — RELATIONSHIP TEST  
TOBACCO AND MARIJUANA USE APPEAR TO CLUSTER TOGETHER RATHER THAN OCCURRING INDEPENDENTLY.  
POLYSUBSTANCE BEHAVIOR IS STATISTICALLY REINFORCED IN THE 30-DAY WINDOW.**

**SINGLE-SUBSTANCE PREVENTION FRAMEWORKS MAY OVERLOOK OVERLAPPING RISK PATTERNS.**

### THEORETICAL CONTEXT ○○○

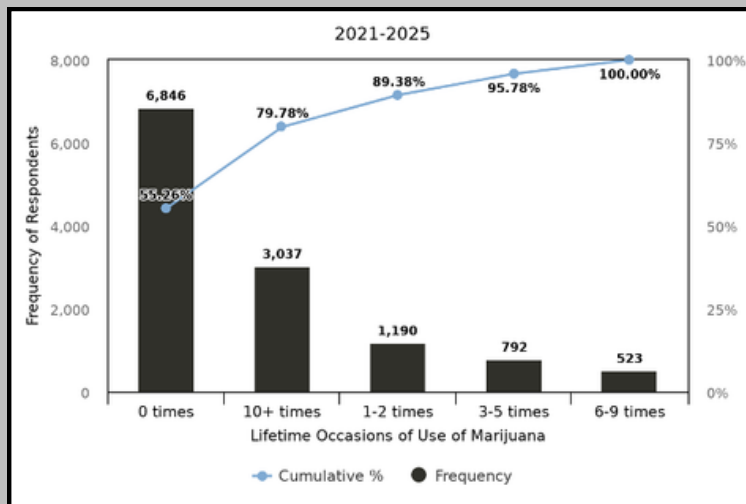
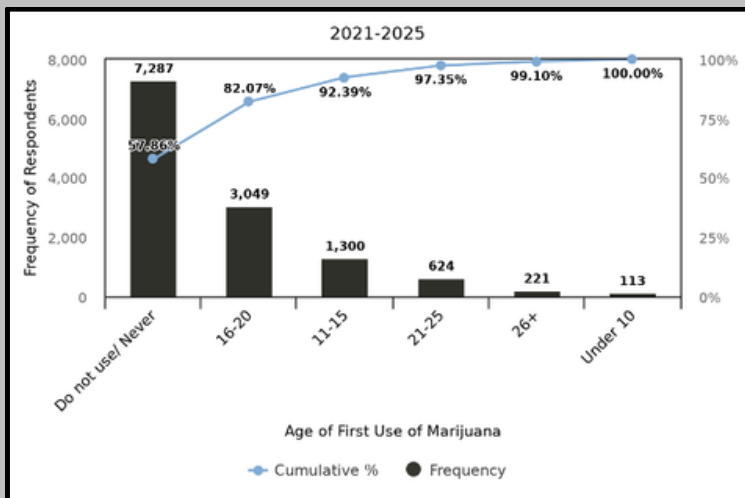
**POLYSUBSTANCE USE MODELS SUGGEST THAT SHARED SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS, PEER NETWORKS, AND BEHAVIORAL REINFORCEMENT PATHWAYS INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT NICOTINE AND MARIJUANA USE CO-OCCUR. NICOTINE EXPOSURE MAY ALSO FUNCTION AS A BEHAVIORAL GATEWAY THROUGH NORMALIZATION OF INHALATION-BASED SUBSTANCE USE. THE STRENGTH OF THE CHI-SQUARE ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS CLUSTERING THEORY, WHICH HOLDS THAT SUBSTANCE BEHAVIORS FREQUENTLY CO-AGGREGATE RATHER THAN OPERATE INDEPENDENTLY WITHIN EMERGING ADULT POPULATIONS.**

# Vaping Patterns and Polysubstance Clustering

**VAPING INITIATION AND LIFETIME USE PATTERNS INTERSECT WITH BROADER TOBACCO AND MARIJUANA BEHAVIORS**

## LIFETIME USE OF MARIJUANA

This chart indicates about 45% of people report trying marijuana at least once, but most who try it go on to use it again. The largest group is those who have used it ten or more times, showing that repeated use is far more common than brief experimentation. Instead of a one-time event, marijuana use often becomes something to which people return. →



## AGE OF FIRST USE

← The data shows clearly that most people never try marijuana, but for those who do, the first experience usually happens in the late teen years. Many begin between 16 and 20, with a smaller group starting as early as 11 to 15. A very small number start before age 10. Overall, the first use tends to happen well before or right as young people step into college life.

# MARIJUANA USAGE

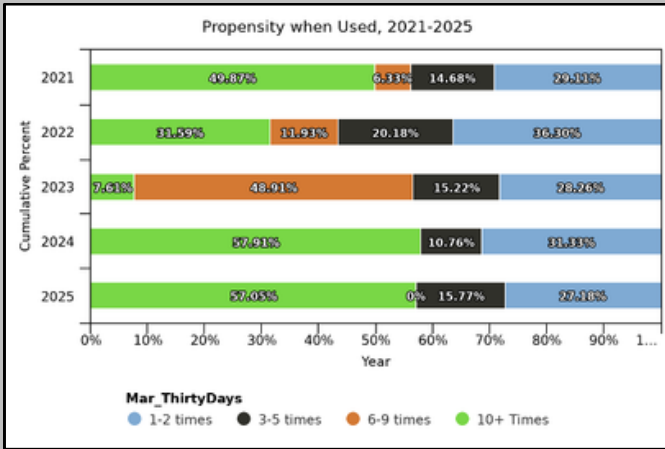
## Early Initiation and Sustained Lifetime Marijuana Use

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Marijuana initiation is concentrated in adolescent and late-teen years.
2. A substantial portion of students report lifetime use.
3. Sustained lifetime use categories exceed minimal experimentation among users.

Emerging adulthood research indicates that marijuana use frequently begins during adolescence and is influenced by peer norms and shifting perceptions of risk. Earlier initiation is associated with higher probability of continued use patterns. Reinforcement and social normalization processes may contribute to sustained engagement, particularly when exposure begins before college entry.

### THEORETICAL CONTEXT



Within the smaller group of users, the data reveals a noticeable share who reported using marijuana multiple times within the month. This pattern highlights that use among this group is more sustained and not limited to isolated experimentation. The frequency levels help show that the behavior, while not common across the full student body, is more habitual for those who do take part.

Across each year represented, most respondents shared that they had not used marijuana within the past 30 days. These high non-use percentages form a reliable trend, suggesting that marijuana remains something the majority of students do not engage with regularly. Even with minor changes between years, the overall story remains one of limited widespread use.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. The majority of students report no recent marijuana or marijuana vaping use.
2. Among users, repeated and higher-frequency patterns are evident.
3. Intensity, rather than prevalence alone, is central to understanding risk exposure.

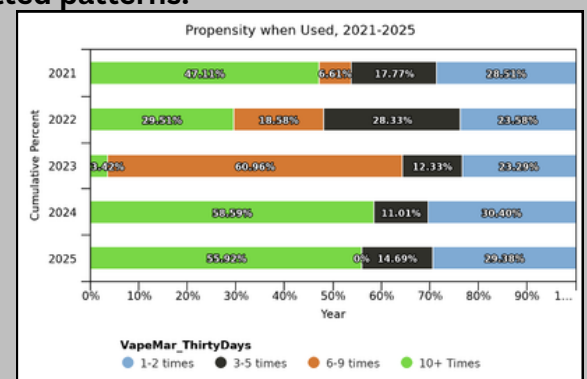
# MARIJUANA USAGE

## Recent Marijuana and Marijuana Vaping Patterns

Substance use research emphasizes distinguishing between prevalence and intensity. While overall recent use rates remain limited to a minority of students, behavioral risk models highlight that adverse outcomes are more strongly associated with repeated or high-frequency use. Vaping delivery systems may alter perceived risk and convenience, potentially influencing intensity among active users. The combination of limited prevalence but meaningful intensity underscores the importance of focusing not only on who uses, but how frequently.

## THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Across the timeline, the data tells a steady story. Large majorities consistently reported no marijuana vaping in the past 30 days, even as the totals shifted slightly from year to year. For those who did vape, use often gathered in the higher-frequency levels, showing that this group tended to be more engaged than experimental. The changes from one year to the next suggest that outside conditions may play a role in how often students choose to vape. In the end, marijuana vaping remained far less widespread than other forms of marijuana use, yet the users who were active showed signs of repeated and committed patterns.



RECENT PATTERNS OF MARIJUANA USE SHOW THAT IT RARELY STANDS ALONE. IT OFTEN RISES TOGETHER WITH CONCERNS ABOUT PERSONAL TROUBLE AND SOCIAL TENSION. REPORTS OF DRUG-RELATED PROBLEMS OCCUR AT LEVELS FAR BEYOND WHAT WOULD NORMALLY BE EXPECTED, HIGHLIGHTING A MEANINGFUL LINK BETWEEN USE AND NEGATIVE OUTCOMES. MANY INDIVIDUALS DESCRIBE BEING CRITICIZED BY OTHERS, POINTING TO THE SOCIAL REACTIONS THAT FOLLOW. THE HIGH NUMBER OF EFFORTS TO QUIT SHOWS THAT USERS MAY RECOGNIZE THE IMPACT THE BEHAVIOR IS HAVING ON THEIR LIVES.

BEHAVIORAL REINFORCEMENT MODELS AND EMERGING ADULTHOOD RESEARCH SUGGEST THAT REPEATED MARIJUANA USE MAY AFFECT MOTIVATION, EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING, AND SOCIAL REGULATION. SOCIAL FEEDBACK (CRITICISM) AND SELF-RECOGNITION (CESSATION ATTEMPTS) ARE CONSISTENT WITH PROBLEM ACKNOWLEDGMENT MODELS. ACADEMIC DISRUPTION ALIGNS WITH RESEARCH LINKING MARIJUANA USE TO ATTENTION VARIABILITY, REDUCED TASK PERSISTENCE, AND SHORT-TERM COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT. THE STRENGTH AND CONSISTENCY OF THE CHI-SQUARE RESULTS SUPPORT ESTABLISHED CLUSTERING THEORY, IN WHICH SUBSTANCE USE BEHAVIORS AGGREGATE WITH MEASURABLE NEGATIVE OUTCOMES.

#### THEORETICAL CONTEXT

#### ↓ SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL CONSEQUENCES

RECENT MARIJUANA USE WAS SIGNIFICANTLY ASSOCIATED WITH:

BEING CRITICIZED FOR USE  
 $\chi^2(1) = 1,129.97, P < .001$

DRUG-RELATED PROBLEMS  
 $\chi^2(1) = 1,348.58, P < .001$

ATTEMPTING TO STOP USE  
 $\chi^2(1) = 949.00, P < .001$

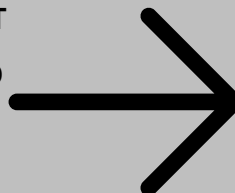
# MARIJUANA USAGE

## Marijuana Use and the Associated Adverse Outcomes

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. TESTS DEMONSTRATE STRONG ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN MARIJUANA USE AND ADVERSE OUTCOMES.
2. SOCIAL CRITICISM, DRUG-RELATED PROBLEMS, AND CESSATION ATTEMPTS ARE PARTICULARLY PRONOUNCED AMONG USERS.
3. ACADEMIC DISRUPTION IS MEASURABLY LINKED TO MARIJUANA USE.
4. ADVERSE OUTCOMES CLUSTER PREDICTABLY AMONG RECENT USERS RATHER THAN OCCURRING INDEPENDENTLY.

THE NUMBERS REVEAL THAT MISSED CLASSES AND DECLINES IN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OCCURRED MUCH MORE OFTEN AMONG STUDENTS WHO RECENTLY USED MARIJUANA THAN WHAT WOULD NORMALLY BE EXPECTED. MEANWHILE, STUDENTS WHO REPORTED NO USE WERE MORE COMMON IN THE GROUP SHOWING NO SIGNS OF DISRUPTION. ALTOGETHER, THE EVIDENCE POINTS TO A MEANINGFUL LINK BETWEEN MARIJUANA USE AND ACADEMIC CHALLENGES.



### ACADEMIC CONSEQUENCES

RECENT MARIJUANA USE WAS SIGNIFICANTLY ASSOCIATED WITH:

MISSED CLASS  
 $\chi^2(1) = 401.83, P < .001$

POOR ACADEMIC/WORK PERFORMANCE  
 $\chi^2(1) = 269.93, P < .001$

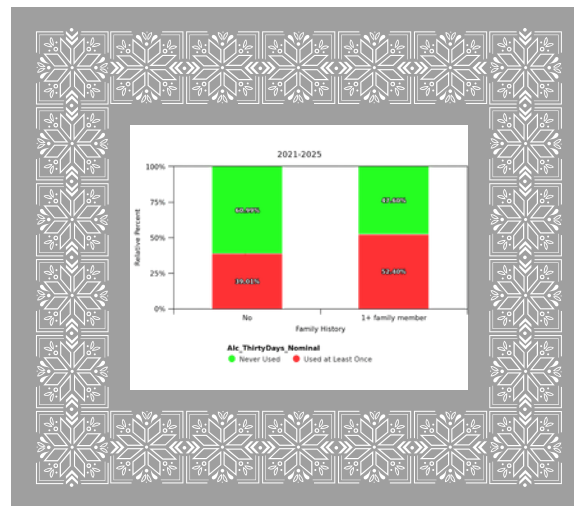
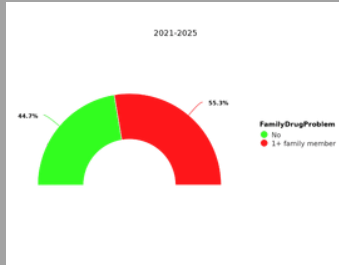
# FAMILY SUBSTANCE USE

## KEY TAKEAWAY

SUBSTANCE USE PASSES THROUGH FAMILIES BY BOTH BIOLOGY AND LEARNED BEHAVIOR. STUDENTS WITH THIS BACKGROUND SHOW HIGHER ALCOHOL USE AND HEAVIER USE PATTERNS THAN THEIR PEERS.



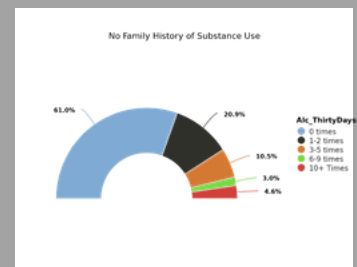
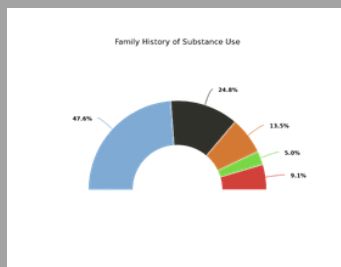
OVER HALF OF RESPONDENTS REPORT HAVING AT LEAST ONE FAMILY MEMBER WITH A SUBSTANCE USE PROBLEM, WHILE 44.7% REPORT NONE. THIS HIGHLIGHTS HOW COMMON EXPOSURE TO SUBSTANCE USE IS WITHIN STUDENTS' FAMILY ENVIRONMENTS.



RECENT DATA SHOWS STUDENTS WITH FAMILY SUBSTANCE USE HISTORY DRINK MORE OFTEN AND IN HIGHER AMOUNTS THAN THOSE WITHOUT SUCH HISTORY. THIS PATTERN APPEARS ACROSS BOTH OVERALL USE AND FREQUENCY LEVELS.

NO FAMILY HISTORY

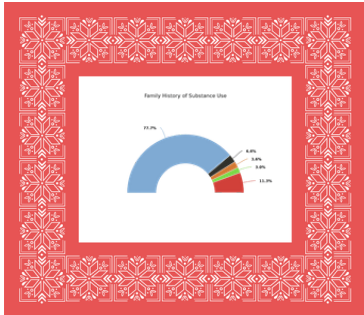
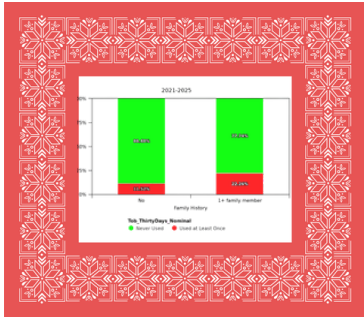
WITH FAMILY HISTORY



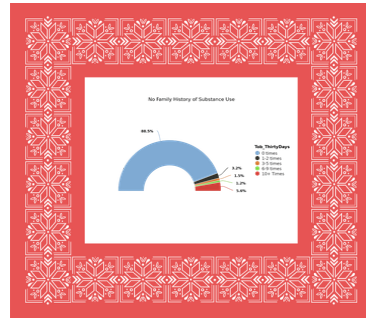
# HISTORY AND ALCOHOL RISK AMPLIFICATION

# FAMILY SUBSTANCE USE

## TOBACCO USE



FAMILY HISTORY



NO FAMILY HISTORY

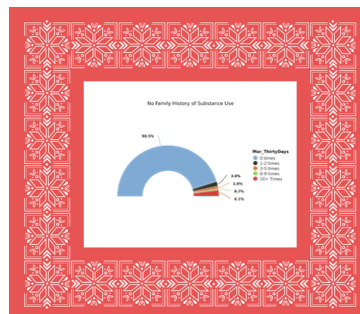
STUDENTS WITH FAMILY HISTORY REPORT TOBACCO USE AT MUCH HIGHER LEVELS, JUMPING FROM 11.52 PERCENT TO 22.66 PERCENT. THEY ALSO APPEAR MORE OFTEN IN HIGH-FREQUENCY GROUPS, INCLUDING 10 OR MORE USES IN 30 DAYS. THESE DIFFERENCES REVEAL A CLEAR CONNECTION BETWEEN FAMILY HISTORY AND HEAVIER TOBACCO BEHAVIOR.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

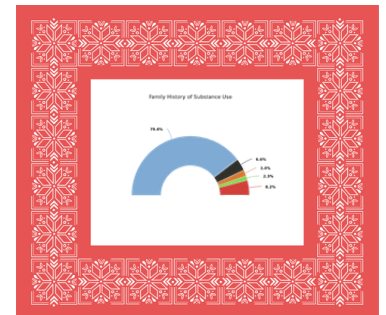
FAMILY SUBSTANCE EXPOSURE INCREASES VULNERABILITY ACROSS MULTIPLE SUBSTANCES, RAISING BOTH THE CHANCE OF STARTING USE AND THE INTENSITY OF USE. THESE PATTERNS SUGGEST THAT FAMILY HISTORY ACTS AS A BROAD, CROSS-SUBSTANCE RISK FACTOR.

MARIJUANA USE IS 20.60% AMONG STUDENTS WITH FAMILY HISTORY, MORE THAN TWICE THE 9.49% SEEN IN THOSE WITHOUT. WHILE MOST STUDENTS REPORT ZERO USE, REPEATED-USE LEVELS RISE NOTICEABLY WHEN FAMILY HISTORY IS PRESENT. THESE PATTERNS SHOW THAT FAMILY HISTORY STRENGTHENS BOTH PREVALENCE AND HEAVIER-USE TENDENCIES.

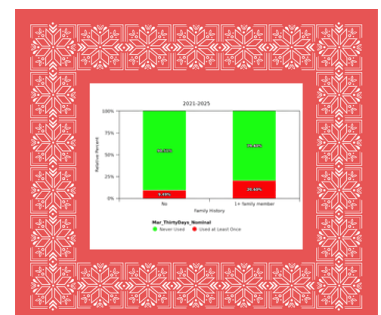
## NO FAMILY HISTORY



## FAMILY HISTORY



## MARIJUANA USE



# HISTORY AMPLIFIES TOBACCO AND MARIJUANA RISK

# CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

STUDENTS OVERWHELMINGLY PERCEIVE STRONG CAMPUS POLICY PRESENCE AND ENFORCEMENT. PREVENTION PROGRAMMING IS WIDELY AVAILABLE BUT MINIMALLY UTILIZED. RECENT USERS ARE NOT CONSISTENTLY MORE ENGAGED IN PREVENTION EFFORTS THAN NON-USERS. THE DATA SUGGEST AN IMPLEMENTATION GAP RATHER THAN A POLICY ABSENCE.

THE DATA SHOWS THAT STUDENTS WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGE EXISTING SUBSTANCE POLICIES, THEIR ENFORCEMENT, AND THE PRESENCE OF PREVENTION EFFORTS. THIS STRONG RECOGNITION SIGNALS THAT CAMPUSES HAVE BUILT A CLEAR AND NOTICEABLE POLICY FRAMEWORK. OVERALL, THE INSIGHT IS THAT THE REAL CHALLENGE LIES BEYOND POLICY AWARENESS AND ENFORCEMENT.

| Substance Use                     | Involvement in Prevention |               |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
|                                   | Yes                       | No            |
| <i>Recent Alcohol Use</i>         |                           |               |
| Never Used                        | 905 (17.26%)              | 4338 (82.74%) |
| Used at Least Once                | 874 (18.05%)              | 3967 (81.95%) |
| <i>Recent Tobacco Use</i>         |                           |               |
| Never Used                        | 1233 (14.93%)             | 7025 (85.07%) |
| Used at Least Once                | 543 (29.77%)              | 1281 (70.23%) |
| <i>Recent Marijuana Use</i>       |                           |               |
| Never Used                        | 1492 (17.75%)             | 6913 (82.25%) |
| Used at Least Once                | 280 (16.93%)              | 1374 (83.07%) |
| <i>Recent Vaping of Marijuana</i> |                           |               |
| Never Used                        | 1457 (16.79%)             | 7220 (83.21%) |
| Used at Least Once                | 312 (22.77%)              | 1058 (77.23%) |
| <i>Recent Vaping of Nicotine</i>  |                           |               |
| Never Used                        | 1263 (16.03%)             | 6616 (83.97%) |
| Used at Least Once                | 509 (23.34%)              | 1672 (76.66%) |

| Question                                                               | n    | %     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------|
| Does your campus have alcohol, tobacco, and other drug policies?       |      |       |
| Yes                                                                    | 9502 | 95.46 |
| No                                                                     | 452  | 4.54  |
| If there is a policy, is it enforced?                                  |      |       |
| Yes                                                                    | 6678 | 89.14 |
| No                                                                     | 814  | 10.86 |
| Does your school have a substance use prevention program?              |      |       |
| Yes                                                                    | 4748 | 87.99 |
| No                                                                     | 648  | 12.01 |
| Do you believe your campus is concerned with substance use prevention? |      |       |
| Yes                                                                    | 8001 | 88.30 |
| No                                                                     | 1060 | 11.70 |

MOST STUDENTS ACROSS ALL SUBSTANCE CATEGORIES REPORT NOT TAKING PART IN PREVENTION PROGRAMS, AND THE GAP BETWEEN USERS AND NON-USERS IS MINIMAL. EVEN WHEN USERS PARTICIPATE SLIGHTLY MORE, OVERALL INVOLVEMENT REMAINS LOW. THESE PATTERNS SUGGEST THAT PREVENTION PROGRAMMING IS WIDELY AVAILABLE BUT NOT MEANINGFULLY USED.

## THEORETICAL CONTEXT

PREVENTION SCIENCE DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN PROGRAM AVAILABILITY AND PROGRAM UPTAKE. IMPLEMENTATION THEORY EMPHASIZES THAT AWARENESS AND ACCESS DO NOT ENSURE ENGAGEMENT. BEHAVIORAL ENGAGEMENT MODELS SUGGEST THAT VOLUNTARY PREVENTION PROGRAMMING OFTEN UNDER-REACHES HIGH-RISK INDIVIDUALS, PARTICULARLY WHEN PARTICIPATION REQUIRES SELF-SELECTION.

THE DATA REFLECT AN IMPLEMENTATION GAP: POLICY INFRASTRUCTURE EXISTS, YET PREVENTION SYSTEMS MAY NOT BE EMBEDDED DEEPLY ENOUGH TO REACH THE POPULATIONS MOST AT RISK.

**Policy Visibility Is High –  
Prevention Engagement Is  
Limited**

# CAMPUS POLICIES AND USE

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. STUDENTS WHO PERCEIVE STRONGER CAMPUS POLICY STRUCTURES TEND TO REPORT LOWER RECENT SUBSTANCE USE.
2. POLICY ENFORCEMENT SHOWS A MORE CONSISTENT RELATIONSHIP WITH LOWER USE THAN POLICY EXISTENCE ALONE.
3. CAMPUS CONCERN FOR SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION IS ASSOCIATED WITH LOWER RECENT USE ACROSS ALL SUBSTANCE CATEGORIES.
4. THE RELATIONSHIPS ARE STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT BUT SMALL, MEANING POLICY PERCEPTIONS MATTER, BUT THEY ARE ONLY ONE PART OF THE BROADER RISK ENVIRONMENT.

PERCEIVING THAT A CAMPUS HAS ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUG POLICIES WAS ASSOCIATED WITH LOWER RECENT ALCOHOL USE, NICOTINE VAPING, MARIJUANA VAPING, AND TOBACCO USE. MARIJUANA USE WAS THE EXCEPTION, SHOWING NO SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP WITH POLICY EXISTENCE ALONE. THIS SUGGESTS THAT SIMPLY KNOWING A POLICY EXISTS MAY HELP SHAPE SOME BEHAVIORS, BUT POLICY PRESENCE BY ITSELF IS NOT ENOUGH TO INFLUENCE ALL FORMS OF SUBSTANCE USE.

| Relationship                         | <i>r</i> | 95.00 % CI   | <i>n</i> | <i>p</i> |
|--------------------------------------|----------|--------------|----------|----------|
| Campus Policy-Alcohol Use_30 Days    | -0.04    | [-.06, -.02] | 9921     | < .001   |
| Campus Policy-Vape Nicotine_30 Days  | -0.03    | [-.05, -.01] | 9896     | 0.01     |
| Campus Policy-Vape Marijuana_30 Days | -0.07    | [-.09, -.06] | 9885     | < .001   |
| Campus Policy-Tobacco Use_30 Days    | -0.09    | [-.10, -.07] | 9919     | < .001   |
| Campus Policy-Marijuana Use_30 Days  | 0.01     | [-.01, .03]  | 9896     | 0.275    |

| Relationship                            | <i>r</i> | 95.00% CI    | <i>n</i> | <i>p</i> |
|-----------------------------------------|----------|--------------|----------|----------|
| Enforcing Policy-Alcohol Use_30 Days    | -0.1     | [-.12, -.08] | 7468     | < .001   |
| Enforcing Policy-Vape Nicotine_30 Days  | -0.07    | [-.09, -.05] | 7446     | < .001   |
| Enforcing Policy-Vape Marijuana_30 Days | -0.11    | [-.13, -.09] | 7436     | < .001   |
| Enforcing Policy-Tobacco Use_30 Days    | -0.1     | [-.12, -.07] | 7463     | < .001   |
| Enforcing Policy-Marijuana Use_30 Days  | -0.03    | [-.05, -.00] | 7448     | 0.022    |

PERCEIVED ENFORCEMENT WAS MORE CONSISTENTLY CONNECTED TO LOWER RECENT USE. STUDENTS WHO REPORTED THAT CAMPUS POLICIES ARE ENFORCED TENDED TO REPORT LOWER ALCOHOL USE, TOBACCO USE, NICOTINE VAPING, MARIJUANA VAPING, AND MARIJUANA USE. THIS PATTERN SUGGESTS THAT ENFORCEMENT MAY MAKE POLICY MORE VISIBLE, CONCRETE, AND BEHAVIORALLY MEANINGFUL FOR STUDENTS.

CAMPUS CONCERN SHOWED THE MOST CONSISTENT RELATIONSHIP ACROSS SUBSTANCE CATEGORIES. STUDENTS WHO BELIEVED THEIR CAMPUS IS CONCERNED WITH SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION REPORTED LOWER RECENT USE ACROSS ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, NICOTINE VAPING, MARIJUANA VAPING, AND MARIJUANA. THIS POINTS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF CAMPUS CLIMATE: STUDENTS MAY RESPOND NOT ONLY TO RULES, BUT TO WHETHER THE INSTITUTION APPEARS ACTIVELY ATTENTIVE TO STUDENT WELL-BEING.

| Relationship                          | <i>r</i> | 95.00% CI    | <i>n</i> | <i>p</i> |
|---------------------------------------|----------|--------------|----------|----------|
| Campus Concern-Alcohol Use_30 Days    | -0.11    | [-.13, -.09] | 9029     | < .001   |
| Campus Concern-Vape Nicotine_30 Days  | -0.09    | [-.11, -.07] | 9003     | < .001   |
| Campus Concern-Vape Marijuana_30 Days | -0.13    | [-.15, -.11] | 8994     | < .001   |
| Campus Concern-Tobacco Use_30 Days    | -0.08    | [-.10, -.06] | 9027     | < .001   |
| Campus Concern-Marijuana Use_30 Days  | -0.07    | [-.09, -.05] | 9007     | < .001   |

## THEORETICAL CONTEXT

PREVENTION AND CAMPUS CLIMATE RESEARCH SUGGEST THAT POLICY EFFECTS DEPEND ON VISIBILITY, CREDIBILITY, AND PERCEIVED INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT. RULES MAY SHAPE BEHAVIOR WHEN STUDENTS BELIEVE THEY ARE ENFORCED AND CONNECTED TO A BROADER CULTURE OF CONCERN. THE SMALL EFFECT SIZES INDICATE THAT POLICY PERCEPTIONS ARE NOT SUFFICIENT ON THEIR OWN, BUT THEY MAY CONTRIBUTE TO A CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT THAT DISCOURAGES HIGHER-RISK USE.

# SUBSTANCE USE CONSEQUENCES EXTEND BEYOND USE ITSELF

*Biological Responses Resulting from Recent Substance Use*

| Biological Response                         | n     | %     |
|---------------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Had a Hangover in the Last 30 Days          |       |       |
| Never Occurred                              | 9710  | 80.43 |
| Occurred at Least Once                      | 2363  | 19.57 |
| Felt Nauseus or Vomited in the Last 30 Days |       |       |
| Never Occurred                              | 9825  | 81.47 |
| Occurred at Least Once                      | 2235  | 18.53 |
| Sustained an Injury in the Last 30 Days     |       |       |
| Never Occurred                              | 10816 | 90.01 |
| Occurred at Least Once                      | 1200  | 9.99  |

BIOLOGICAL RESPONSES WERE AMONG THE MORE COMMON REPORTED CONSEQUENCES ASSOCIATED WITH RECENT SUBSTANCE USE. HANGOVERS WERE REPORTED BY 19.57% OF RESPONDENTS, FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY NAUSEA OR VOMITING AT 18.53%. PHYSICAL INJURY WAS LESS FREQUENT, BUT STILL REPORTED BY NEARLY ONE IN TEN RESPONDENTS. THESE PATTERNS SUGGEST THAT RECENT SUBSTANCE USE IS CONNECTED NOT ONLY TO BEHAVIORAL CHOICES, BUT ALSO TO IMMEDIATE PHYSICAL EFFECTS.

## THEORETICAL CONTEXT

RISK BEHAVIOR FRAMEWORKS EMPHASIZE THAT SUBSTANCE USE CONSEQUENCES OFTEN CLUSTER ACROSS DOMAINS RATHER THAN APPEARING IN ISOLATION. PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS, ACADEMIC DISRUPTION, UNSAFE BEHAVIORS, AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL DISTRESS MAY REFLECT OVERLAPPING FORMS OF VULNERABILITY. BECAUSE THESE DATA ARE DESCRIPTIVE, THE FINDINGS SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED CAUSALLY; INSTEAD, THEY SHOW THE RANGE OF RISKS THAT CAN ACCOMPANY RECENT SUBSTANCE USE AND HELP IDENTIFY WHERE CAMPUS PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS MAY NEED TO FOCUS.

*Psycho-Social Effects Resulting from Recent Substance Use*

| Psycho-Social Effect                                   | n     | %     |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Tried to Stop Substance Use in the Last 30 Days        |       |       |
| Never Occurred                                         | 10806 | 89.79 |
| Occurred at Least Once                                 | 1229  | 10.21 |
| Criticized by Someone for Use in the Last 30 Days      |       |       |
| Never Occurred                                         | 11144 | 92.55 |
| Occurred at Least Once                                 | 897   | 7.45  |
| Had Suicidal Thoughts in the Last 30 Days              |       |       |
| Never Occurred                                         | 10719 | 89.07 |
| Occurred at Least Once                                 | 1315  | 10.93 |
| Acknowledged having a Drug Problem in the Last 30 Days |       |       |
| Never Occurred                                         | 11051 | 91.72 |
| Occurred at Least Once                                 | 998   | 8.28  |

THE MOST VISIBLE ASSOCIATED OUTCOMES WERE ACADEMIC AND COGNITIVE. POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE WAS REPORTED BY 18.79% OF RESPONDENTS, MISSED CLASS BY 17.68%, AND MEMORY LOSS BY 12.44%. THESE FINDINGS REINFORCE THAT SUBSTANCE USE IS CONNECTED TO STUDENT FUNCTIONING, NOT SIMPLY PERSONAL HEALTH OR CONDUCT. EVEN WHEN MORE SERIOUS OUTCOMES SUCH AS POLICE ENCOUNTERS OR BEING SEXUALLY ASSAULTED WERE LESS FREQUENTLY REPORTED, THEY REMAIN MEANINGFUL INDICATORS OF CAMPUS SAFETY RISK.

*Negative Associated Outcomes Resulting from Recent Substance Use*

| Outcome                                       | n     | %     |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Poor Academic Performance in the Last 30 Days |       |       |
| Never Occurred                                | 9809  | 81.21 |
| Occurred at Least Once                        | 2269  | 18.79 |
| Police Encounter in the Last 30 Days          |       |       |
| Never Occurred                                | 11484 | 95.22 |
| Occurred at Least Once                        | 576   | 4.78  |
| Missed Class in the Last 30 Days              |       |       |
| Never Occurred                                | 9914  | 82.32 |
| Occurred at Least Once                        | 2129  | 17.68 |
| Experienced Memory Loss in the Last 30 Days   |       |       |
| Never Occurred                                | 10551 | 87.56 |
| Occurred at Least Once                        | 1499  | 12.44 |
| Was Sexually Assaulted in the Last 30 Days    |       |       |
| Never Occurred                                | 11330 | 94.00 |
| Occurred at Least Once                        | 723   | 6.00  |

## NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS WERE LESS COMMONLY REPORTED

OVERALL, BUT THEY REPRESENT IMPORTANT RISK INDICATORS. FIGHTING WAS THE MOST FREQUENTLY REPORTED BEHAVIOR IN THIS GROUP AT 10.02%, FOLLOWED BY DUI AT 7.42%. PROPERTY DAMAGE, ATTEMPTED SUICIDE, AND COMMITTING OR ATTEMPTING SEXUAL ASSAULT WERE REPORTED LESS OFTEN, BUT THEIR SERIOUSNESS MAKES THEM IMPORTANT TO INCLUDE IN THE BROADER RISK PROFILE. THESE OUTCOMES SHOW HOW SUBSTANCE-RELATED RISK CAN EXTEND INTO PERSONAL SAFETY, LEGAL EXPOSURE, AND HARM TO OTHERS.

*Negative Behaviors Resulting from Recent Substance Use*

| Behavior                                                    | n     | %     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Received a DUI in the Last 30 Days                          |       |       |
| Never Occurred                                              | 11152 | 92.58 |
| Occurred at Least Once                                      | 894   | 7.42  |
| Got into a Fight in the Last 30 Days                        |       |       |
| Never Occurred                                              | 10849 | 89.98 |
| Occurred at Least Once                                      | 1208  | 10.02 |
| Caused Property Damage in the Last 30 Days                  |       |       |
| Never Occurred                                              | 11544 | 95.70 |
| Occurred at Least Once                                      | 519   | 4.30  |
| Attempted Suicide in the Last 30 Days                       |       |       |
| Never Occurred                                              | 11503 | 95.60 |
| Occurred at Least Once                                      | 530   | 4.40  |
| Committed (or attempted) Sexual Assault in the Last 30 Days |       |       |
| Never Occurred                                              | 11586 | 96.25 |
| Occurred at Least Once                                      | 451   | 3.75  |

PSYCHO-SOCIAL EFFECTS REFLECT THE EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF SUBSTANCE-RELATED RISK. SUICIDAL THOUGHTS WERE REPORTED BY 10.93% OF RESPONDENTS, WHILE 10.21% REPORTED TRYING TO STOP SUBSTANCE USE. SMALLER BUT STILL MEANINGFUL SHARES REPORTED BEING CRITICIZED FOR USE OR ACKNOWLEDGING A DRUG PROBLEM. THESE PATTERNS SUGGEST THAT SOME STUDENTS ARE NOT ONLY EXPERIENCING CONSEQUENCES, BUT ALSO RECOGNIZING CONCERN FROM THEMSELVES OR OTHERS.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. MOST STUDENTS DID NOT REPORT RECENT SUBSTANCE-RELATED CONSEQUENCES.
2. WHEN CONSEQUENCES WERE PRESENT, THEY APPEARED ACROSS MULTIPLE AREAS OF STUDENT LIFE.
3. BIOLOGICAL AND ACADEMIC EFFECTS WERE AMONG THE MORE FREQUENTLY REPORTED OUTCOMES.
4. SERIOUS BEHAVIORAL, SAFETY, AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL INDICATORS WERE LESS COMMON, BUT REMAIN IMPORTANT BECAUSE OF THEIR POTENTIAL SEVERITY.
5. THESE FINDINGS SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS RELATIONSHIPS ASSOCIATED WITH SUBSTANCE USE, NOT EVIDENCE THAT SUBSTANCE USE CAUSED EACH OUTCOME.

# MENTAL HEALTH RESPONSES

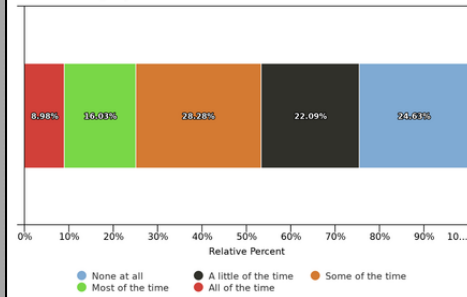
## THEORETICAL CONTEXT

MENTAL HEALTH AND RISK BEHAVIOR FRAMEWORKS EMPHASIZE THAT EMOTIONAL STRAIN CAN AFFECT STUDENT FUNCTIONING ACROSS ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, AND BEHAVIORAL DOMAINS. FEELINGS SUCH AS NERVOUSNESS, RESTLESSNESS, DEPRESSION, HOPELESSNESS, WORTHLESSNESS, AND LOW EFFORT MAY NOT OPERATE INDEPENDENTLY; THEY CAN OVERLAP AND COMPOUND VULNERABILITY. THESE DATA ARE DESCRIPTIVE, BUT THEY POINT TO THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRATING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT WITH BROADER CAMPUS SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION AND STUDENT WELL-BEING STRATEGIES.

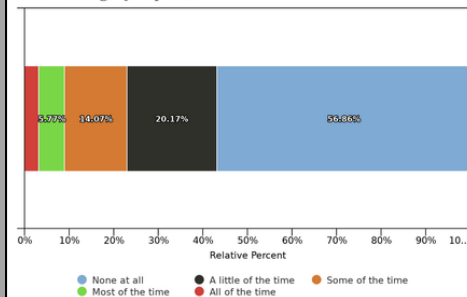
NERVOUSNESS AND RESTLESSNESS WERE BROADLY REPORTED ACROSS RESPONSE LEVELS, SUGGESTING THESE ARE COMMON FORMS OF RECENT STUDENT STRAIN. HOPELESSNESS WAS LESS FREQUENT, WITH MORE THAN HALF REPORTING NONE AT ALL, BUT THE SMALLER GROUP REPORTING IT MOST OR ALL OF THE TIME REMAINS IMPORTANT FOR CAMPUS SUPPORT.

WORTHLESSNESS WAS AMONG THE LEAST FREQUENTLY REPORTED RESPONSES, WHILE DEPRESSIVE FEELINGS AND DIFFICULTY GIVING MUCH EFFORT APPEARED ACROSS A WIDER SHARE OF STUDENTS. TOGETHER, THESE PATTERNS SHOW THAT EMOTIONAL STRAIN MAY AFFECT BOTH MOOD AND DAILY FUNCTIONING, INCLUDING MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT.

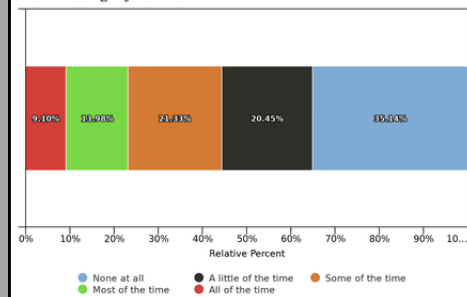
Recent Feelings of Nervousness



Recent Feelings of Hopeless



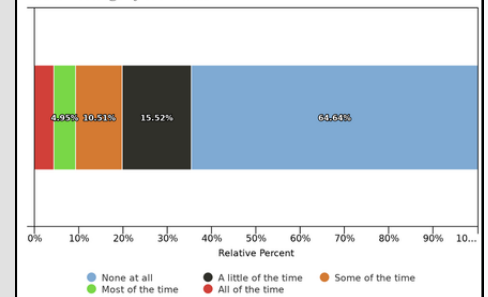
Recent Feelings of Restless



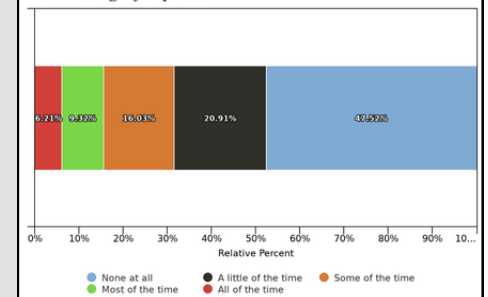
## KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. EMOTIONAL STRAIN APPEARS ACROSS MULTIPLE MENTAL HEALTH INDICATORS, EVEN WHEN SEVERE RESPONSES ARE LESS COMMON.
2. NERVOUSNESS AND RESTLESSNESS SHOW BROADER DISTRIBUTION ACROSS FREQUENCY CATEGORIES THAN SEVERAL OTHER INDICATORS.
3. HOPELESSNESS AND WORTHLESSNESS ARE LESS FREQUENTLY REPORTED, WITH MOST STUDENTS INDICATING NONE AT ALL.
4. DEPRESSION AND DIFFICULTY GIVING MUCH EFFORT SHOW MEANINGFUL SHARES OF STUDENTS REPORTING SYMPTOMS SOME, MOST, OR ALL OF THE TIME.
5. THESE PATTERNS POINT TO A STUDENT WELL-BEING ENVIRONMENT WHERE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE EFFORTS SHOULD INCLUDE BOTH SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS.

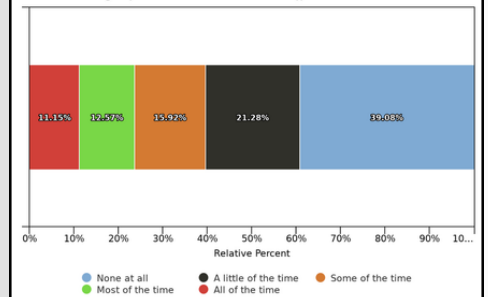
Recent Feelings of Worthless



Recent Feelings of Depression



Recent Feelings of Failure to Give Much Effort



# Five-Year Integrated Model of Risk and Institutional Response

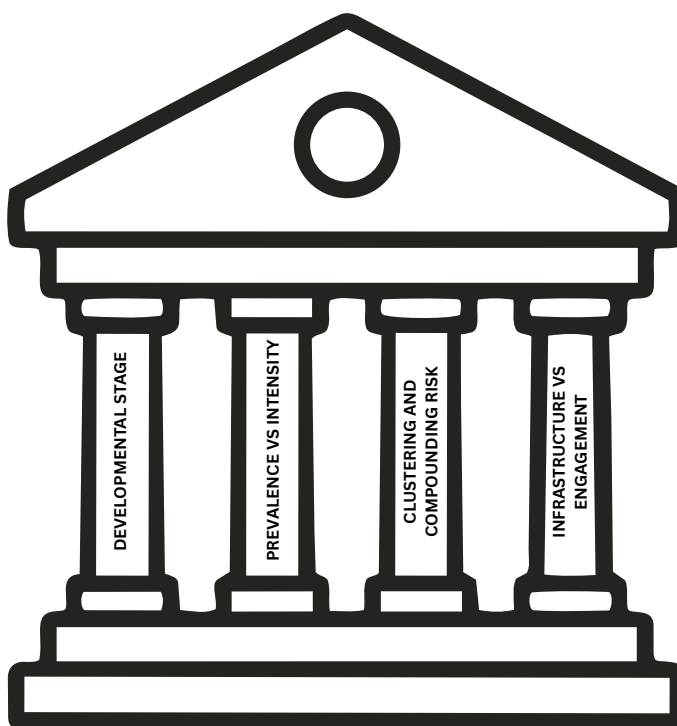
## 2021–2025 Statewide College Student Substance Use Patterns

### PREVALENCE VS. INTENSITY: A MINORITY WITH CONCENTRATED RISK

ACROSS FIVE YEARS, MOST STUDENTS USED TOBACCO, MARIJUANA, AND VAPING PRODUCTS RARELY OR NOT AT ALL, WITH ALCOHOL REMAINING MORE COMMON. YET AMONG USERS, HIGH-FREQUENCY USE STOOD OUT. THIS HIGHLIGHTS THAT RISK IS DRIVEN LESS BY HOW MANY STUDENTS PARTICIPATE AND MORE BY HOW INTENSELY A SMALLER GROUP USES.

### THE DEVELOPMENTAL STARTING POINT: EXPOSURE BEFORE COLLEGE

USE OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, VAPING, AND MARIJUANA TYPICALLY BEGINS BEFORE OR DURING LATE ADOLESCENCE, AND OFTEN CONTINUES BEYOND EARLY EXPERIMENTATION. AS STUDENTS ENTER ARKANSAS COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, MANY ARRIVE WITH SET BEHAVIOR PATTERNS ALREADY IN PLACE. INSTITUTIONS ARE WORKING WITH TRAJECTORIES THAT STARTED LONG BEFORE COLLEGE.



### INFRASTRUCTURE VS. ENGAGEMENT

COLLEGES OFFER POLICIES, ENFORCEMENT, AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS, BUT MOST STUDENTS NEVER ENGAGE WITH THEM. THIS MISMATCH SHOWS A BREAK BETWEEN WHAT INSTITUTIONS PROVIDE AND HOW STUDENTS RESPOND. MORE FOCUSED STRATEGIES MAY HELP REACH STUDENTS WHERE THEY ARE.

### CLUSTERING AND COMPOUNDING RISK

SUBSTANCE USE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES TENDED TO CLUSTER, SHOWING STRONG TIES BETWEEN RECENT USE AND A WIDE RANGE OF PROBLEMS. THESE ISSUES DID NOT SPREAD EVENLY BUT GATHERED AROUND THE SAME STUDENTS. THIS PATTERN FITS A MODEL WHERE VULNERABILITY AND REPEATED EXPOSURE INCREASE THE CHANCES OF HARM AND INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT.

### THE FIVE-YEAR PATTERN ARCHITECTURE

EARLY SOCIALIZATION → STABILITY OF PATTERNS → INTENSITY AMONG USERS → CLUSTERING OF CONSEQUENCES → INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE PRESENT

TOGETHER, THESE FINDINGS SUGGEST THAT HIGHER EDUCATION'S ROLE IS OFTEN POSITIONED WITHIN A RESPONSE-AND-MITIGATION FRAMEWORK, RATHER THAN PRIMARY PREVENTION OF FIRST USE.

# Theoretical and Practical Integration for Policymakers and Campus Leaders

## Evidence-Informed Options Across Two Tiers

### **TIER ONE: CAMPUS-LEVEL STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT**

#### **1. SHIFT FROM UNIVERSAL AWARENESS TO TARGETED INTENSITY RESPONSE**

INTEGRATING SUBSTANCE  
CONVERSATIONS INTO ACADEMIC  
ADVISING AND EARLY-ALERT  
SYSTEMS.  
ALIGNING OUTREACH WITH  
INDICATORS OF INTENSITY (MISSED  
CLASSES, PERFORMANCE  
DECLINES, HEALTH VISITS).  
FRAMING PROGRAMMING AROUND  
HARM REDUCTION AND  
PERFORMANCE STABILITY RATHER  
THAN INTRODUCTORY EDUCATION  
ALONE.

#### **2. ADDRESS POLYSUBSTANCE CLUSTERING**

SCREENING AND INTERVENTION  
STRATEGIES MAY BENEFIT FROM  
INTEGRATED SUBSTANCE  
ASSESSMENT.  
SINGLE-SUBSTANCE MODELS MAY  
OVERLOOK OVERLAPPING RISK  
PATTERNS.

#### **3. LEVERAGE EXISTING INSTITUTIONAL ENCOUNTER POINTS**

ACADEMIC DISRUPTION  
SOCIAL CRITICISM  
CESSATION ATTEMPTS

### **TIER TWO: STATEWIDE COORDINATION OPPORTUNITIES**

#### **1. CROSS-CAMPUS DATA INTEGRATION**

SHARED DASHBOARDS OR ANNUAL  
BENCHMARKING COULD ENHANCE  
STATEWIDE LEARNING.  
INSTITUTIONS MAY BENEFIT FROM  
COMPARATIVE MODELING OF  
INTENSITY TRENDS RATHER THAN  
PREVALENCE ALONE.

#### **2. STANDARDIZED ENGAGEMENT METRICS**

DEVELOP SHARED DEFINITIONS OF  
PREVENTION PARTICIPATION.  
IDENTIFY DELIVERY MODELS  
ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER REACH.  
EXAMINE STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TO  
ENGAGEMENT ACROSS INSTITUTION  
TYPES.

#### **3. ALIGNMENT WITH DEVELOPMENTAL FRAMING**

SUBSTANCE BEHAVIORS OFTEN  
PRECEDE COLLEGE ENTRY.  
HIGHER EDUCATION'S LEVERAGE LIES  
IN MITIGATION, INTENSITY REDUCTION,  
AND CONSEQUENCE INTERRUPTION.

STATEWIDE COMMUNICATION  
STRATEGIES MAY BENEFIT FROM  
POSITIONING INSTITUTIONS AS  
STABILIZATION AND RESPONSE  
ENVIRONMENTS RATHER THAN SOLE  
ORIGIN POINTS OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE.



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