

2018 Info Brief

For over 20 years, we have asked Stratford teens about their experiences and commitments, values, skills and identity. Their answers to key questions about risky behaviors and developmental assets guide the Stratford Partnership to set priorities and implement effective strategies*.

REDUCING RISKS

Most Stratford teens are making **healthy choices** around **alcohol use**. Since 1998...

- **Alcohol use rates** have decreased 48% and **binge drinking rates** have decreased 46%.
- Stratford teens who report **driving after drinking** (in the past year) have decreased 45%.
- Teens who report **riding with a driver who had been drinking** (in the past year) have decreased 29%.

Fewer Stratford teens are reporting **risky behaviors**. Reports of...

- **School truancy** have decreased 13%.
- Having **sexual intercourse** have decreased 32%.
- **Hitting someone** have decreased 33%.
- **Gambling** have decreased 52%.



BUILDING ASSETS

The Stratford Partnership increases the positive supports, qualities and experiences (developmental assets) that are critical to children and youth. Since 1998, Stratford teens have reported higher rates of...

- Parents and other adults modeling positive, responsible behaviors (19% increase).
- Their best friends modeling responsible behaviors (36% increase).
- Families having clear rules and consequences and monitoring their whereabouts (28% increase).
- Schools providing clear rules and consequences (20% increase).
- Stratford youth report **high rates of parent and peer disapproval** of substance use. Teens who perceive their parents and peers disapprove of using a substance are **less likely to use** the substance themselves.

*Source for student survey data: Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors, Search Institute, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2016, 2018 reports, 7th to 12th grade Stratford Public School students; 2018, n=1594; SAMHSA: National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2017.

PREVENTION WORKS

The Stratford Partnership mobilizes youth and community partners to prevent and reduce youth substance abuse and create a safe, healthy and drug-free environment.

Some of our efforts:



PREVENTION NEVER STOPS

While progress has been made, the Stratford Partnership's work continues...

- **Alcohol use is still unacceptably high.** In 2018, close to 1 in 3 high school students reported drinking alcohol in the past month.
- **Vaping is now the second highest used substance** among Stratford teens. Perception of harm around vaping is low.
- 45% of Stratford teens feel it is *"okay to smoke marijuana."*
- Stratford's past 30-day use rate of **prescription drugs** among 7th-12th graders of 5.7% is more than 3 times higher than the national average of 1.5%.
- In 2018, close to 1 in 4 of Stratford teens **reported feeling sad or depressed** most or all of the time in the past month.

BE A PREVENTION PARTNER

Kids look up to you. Use your influence.

- Encourage positive peer pressure by having older youth talk to younger youth about their healthy choices.
- Safely secure alcohol and medications.
- Talk early and often about the consequences of risky behaviors, but don't lecture.
- Tell them why you want them to be healthy and safe. Be sure to listen.
- Help kids develop an exit strategy if they feel uncomfortable.
- Be a mentor and role model.
- Keep kids safe and call the anonymous TIPS411 line if you have a concern.