

Executive Summary

Youth Risk Behavior Survey Lexington High School

2007 Results

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1,533 students completed the survey in spring 2007.
- Given to students in all grades. The following list provides the distribution of survey responses by grade.
 - 25% 9th grade (349)
 - 26% 10th grade (372)
 - 25% 11th grade (355)
 - 24% 12th grade (337)
- Similar survey given 1995 (n=655), 1999 (n=1,005), 2002 (1,422), and 2004 (1,455)
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey focuses on various areas of risk facing youth in Massachusetts (alcohol, drugs, sexual activity, nutrition, violence). Lexington High School has integrated a number of specific questions that deal with high risk issues that are being confronted by current programs (stress, academic competition, sexual activity).

Highlights from 2007 Survey

1. Alcohol and Drug Use

Students at Lexington High School report using a number of illegal or unhealthful substances. The most common drug among High School students is alcohol with around 43% of the students reporting that they used alcohol at least once during the past 30 days. This percentage of males is slightly higher than that of females.

- 43% of the students report having at least one drink of alcohol during the prior 30 days
- 20% of the students report having used marijuana during the prior 30 days
- 12% of the students report smoking cigarettes during the prior 30 days
- 8% of the students report sniffing glue or aerosol cans during their lifetime
- 4% of the students report using cocaine during their lifetime

2. Stress

- 96% of students being under some stress
- 12% report being under "extreme stress"
- 89% of students report that their level of stress has increased since they began attending Lexington High School
- Stress related to academic achievement appears to have particularly negative consequences for young women. When students feel they have not performed as well as they would have liked on an exam 46% of young women report it "bothers them a lot" compared to only 34% of young men.

3. Sex

Approximately 21% of Lexington students report that they have ever had sexual intercourse. Not surprisingly, sexual experience varies greatly by age. The following list indicates the proportion of students in each grade who reported that they have had sex at least once:

- 7% of 9th graders
- 14% of 10th graders
- 27% of 11th graders
- 34% of 12th graders

For those students who reported that they have had sexual intercourse, 73% reported that they used a condom in 2007 (up from 68% in 1995)

Due to growing concern about issue of oral sex, the 2004 survey introduced a number of new questions designed to find out more about this phenomena, which were continued in the 2007 survey. 32% of Lexington students report that they have ever had oral sex. Like intercourse, the proportion of students who report having oral sex at least once varies greatly by grade. The following list indicates the proportion of students in each grade who reported that they have had oral sex at least once:

- 14% of 9th graders
- 25% of 10th graders
- 40% of 11th graders
- 46% of 12th graders

The proportion of students having oral sex in each grade has had a slight decrease since the 2004 survey.

Of those who have had oral sex, 20% (down from 27% in 2004) of student report that they have had oral sex with 4 or more partners.

4. Risky Behaviors of Selected Groups of Students

a. Students reporting stress

Students who report being the most stressed are more likely to be engaged in risky and potentially self injurious behavior.

	Of students who report:		
	No or A Little Stress	A lot of Stress	Extreme Stress
In a fight	24.8%	29.5%	42.5%
Smoke cigarettes	12.8%	10%	16.2%
Sex against your will	4.3%	7.5%	20.7%
Self injury	9.3%	15.1%	30.4%
Consider suicide	6.5%	15%	38.1%
Trying to lose weight	33.9%	42.7%	59.1%

Drinking and using marijuana were not significantly related to different levels of stress.

b. Students who drank in last 30 days

Students who report drinking over the past 30 days are more likely to engage in other risky behaviors than students who do not report drinking.

	Of students who report:		
	No Drinks	Drank 1-5 days	Drank more than 5 days
In a fight	20.6%	37.6%	50.6%
Smoked cigarettes	2%	17.4%	47.4%
Smoked marijuana	4.7%	32.5%	63.5%
Had oral sex	14.5%	49%	72.7%
Had sexual intercourse	9.6%	26.6%	58%
Sex against your will	5.4%	11.5%	12.1%
Self injury	11%	20.9%	18.4%
Consider suicide	12.8%	15.4%	20.4%

5. Coping Strategies and Supports

The 2007 survey introduced a number of new questions dealing with student's views of themselves and their responses to certain situation or problems.

- 85% of students indicate that they can depend on their family and friends to support them if they encounter problems.
- When confronted with problems, 76% of students indicate they can usually find several solutions.

The survey also indicates that programming at LHS designed to help reduce stress may be having a positive impact.

- The proportion of students who report being under extreme stress decreased in 2007 compared to 2004.
- Students also report a number of healthy responses for dealing with stress. Nearly 30% indicated they listen to music when they experience stress and 25% reporting they exercise when they are feeling stress. Only 3% of students indicated that they dealt with stress by drinking.

The health education program also appears to have a positive impact on student decision making

- Sixty percent of students report that they receive the most accurate information about sex from their health teachers.
- Parents and friends are still the most important people that influence their decisions about sex and other risky behavior.