

2009 Community Profile –Summary of Key Findings

In 2009, the Falmouth Prevention Partnership conducted an initial needs assessment on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use among Falmouth teens.



As part of a comprehensive assessment, Falmouth youth in grades 7-12 were surveyed using the Communities that Care Survey and students in grade 6 were surveyed using the Pride Questionnaire. The following is a summary of the key findings:

Alcohol, Marijuana, and Tobacco Use

Underage alcohol use is by far the most frequently used drug by Falmouth teens. Students surveyed in grades 6 through 12 report incremental increases in alcohol use as they age – grade 6 = 1.1% and grade 12 = 68.6%.

Marijuana is the second most widely used drug with a similar pattern of incremental increases in use rates by age – grade 6 = 1.4% and grade 12 = 42.8%.

Cigarette and tobacco use by Falmouth youth is significantly lower than either alcohol or marijuana use – grade 6 = 0.4% and grade 12 = 27.3%. A variety of illegal street drugs – such as heroin, cocaine and oxycontin – are used by a small number of youth. These lower use rates seem to be supported by the student's perceptions that these drugs are potentially more harmful and that their parents strongly disagree with the use of these substances.

Student Attitudes

Student's perceptions seem to support and coincide with these use rates. Students report that alcohol and marijuana are more accessible the older they get and that the disapproval of their parents regarding these substances decreases over time. Many adults express the view that it is a rite of passage for teens to drink alcohol and the community as a whole is supported by a tourist industry where drinking is a normal vacation activity. Furthermore, there is a significant decline in student's perception of the severity of the risks associated with smoking marijuana the older they get – grade 6 = 94.6% and grade 12 = 49.7%.

Community Factors

A number of protective factors exist in the Falmouth community as well as some that may need to be strengthened. Falmouth youth report feeling connected and well supported by their

families. However, youth feel less supported and experience few opportunities from the community at large. Lack of transportation, cost, and cultural differences are cited as potential barriers to youth involvement in the community.

Falmouth Prevention Partnership

Many organizations and individuals have been working for several years to enhance the social development of Falmouth's youth. The communication and coordination between these projects has been an ongoing challenge that is within the scope of work for the Falmouth Prevention Partnership.

The accumulation of information about the Falmouth community has allowed the Falmouth Prevention Partnership to focus on those risk factors which may place Falmouth youth at higher risk for using alcohol and drugs at an early age. Those factors are:

- Easy access to alcohol and drugs
- Community norms that support routine alcohol use
- Attitudes and perceptions of youth that are favorable to alcohol and drug use
- Attitudes and perceptions of parents that are favorable to alcohol and drug use.

Read the complete report: **2009 Community Profile on Youth Substance Abuse**