

**Qualitative Assessment of Alexandria Youth Substance Use
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Description of Alexandria Sample and Data Collection

From May 19, 2008 to August 1, 2008, qualitative information was collected via structured focus groups (n = 72), key informant interviews (n = 40), and online surveys (n = 366), in the city of Alexandria. This report is a summary of responses to every question or item presented in these different formats.

There were four youth focus groups with a total of 40 ethnically diverse students, all conducted in English by two George Mason University (GMU) doctoral students with one group each from the two Alexandria public middle schools and two groups from the city’s public high school with grades ten to twelve. The first group included 8 middle school students: five girls and three boys. Seven were black and one was Hispanic. Six reported that they were in the sixth grade and one each was from the seventh and eighth grades. The second focus group included 12 high school girls: ten black, one white, and one Hispanic. The third focus group included 13 high school boys: seven black, four Hispanic, and two white. The fourth focus group included 7 black middle school girls: five in the eighth grade, one in the seventh grade, and one in the sixth grade.

There were four parent focus groups with a total of 32 participants. Two groups were conducted in English and two in Spanish that included one group in each language for parents of middle school students and the other group for parents of high school students. Two GMU doctoral students conducted the groups and were assisted by a Spanish interpreter for two of the groups. The first focus group was conducted in English for parents of high school students. The group included one father and five mothers and four participants were white and two were black. The second focus group was conducted in Spanish, and included nine Hispanic mothers of middle school students. The third focus group was conducted in English and included eight mothers of

middle school students. Their ethnic distribution was four European Americans, two African Americans, one Hispanic, and one Moroccan. The fourth focus group was conducted in Spanish and included six mothers, two fathers, and one male teenager who were all Hispanics.

There were 40 key informant interviews conducted by members of the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria (SAPCA) including 18 with youth services providers such as therapists, recreation center and Boys and Girls club leaders and staff, school support staff, youth organizers, and prevention specialists. There were also interviews with 7 students from public and private schools, 6 law enforcement officers, 4 parents, 2 faith community members, and 3 government employees, including a member of the city council.

There were a total of 366 participants who answered some questions on online surveys on Survey Monkey designed by GMU and SAPCA and 308 completed the surveys. The 366 participants included: 92 parents, 53 youth, 94 general community members, 62 youth service providers, 29 law enforcement officers, 20 faith community members, and 16 business community members. The 308 survey completers included: 79 parents, 51 youth, 77 general community members, 50 youth service providers, 26 law enforcement officers, 14 faith community members, and 11 business community members. The 92 parents included 63 European Americans, 13 African Americans, 9 Hispanics, 5 biracial, 1 Asian American, and 1 unknown. Seventy-eight parents said they were born in the U.S. and 14 were born in another country. Twenty-three parents had one child, 39 had two children, 26 had three children, and 4 had four children. Forty-five parents had 1 boy, 21 had 2 boys, and one had 3 boys. Thirty-six parents had 1 girl, 19 had 2 girls, and 10 had 3 girls. The 51 youth consisted of 26 girls and 25 boys and included 24 African Americans, 10 European Americans, 9 Hispanics, 2 biracial, 1 Filipino, 1 South Asian, 1 Moroccan, and 1 African. Twenty-four of the youth said that their families came to the U.S. from another country.

Summary of Youth Focus Groups (n = 40)

1. What do you think about students your age drinking alcohol?

A number of teens reported that they thought that drinking among teens their age was a “bad idea” and could be associated with negative consequences such as physical illness, addiction, and family problems. However, all teens reported that it is very common, noting that “everyone does it.” Some stated that it is starting to be a “daily” occurrence and that teens will walk around “with alcohol in water bottles in school.” They noted that teens do it for a number of reasons including because they think it is cool and fun, they like the feeling, their friends and/or family members are doing it, and it helps them alleviate their boredom and stress.

2. How do students your age get alcohol?

Teens reported a number of ways that they could obtain alcohol including: 1) asking people to buy for them; 2) getting it from their older friends, cousins, older siblings, or parents; 3) taking it out of their fridge at home; 4) standing outside a liquor store, waiting for someone to go in, and paying them to buy it for them; 5) stores that don’t ID or sell to minors; 6) using a fake ID to buy it; and 7) stealing it.

3. What are the most common reasons for students your age to drink alcohol?

The most common reasons cited for teen alcohol use include peer pressure/desire to fit in, to “act older and be cool”, to relax and relieve stress, to escape from school or family problems that they cannot deal with, to have fun, to relieve boredom and curiosity, to get drunk or “messed up”, and modeling others around them doing it such as their parents.

4. What do you think about students your age smoking cigarettes?

Most teens reported that smoking cigarettes is a “bad habit” and acknowledged that it could have physical health consequences such as lung cancer as well as addiction. However, others stated that “it is harmless.” They agreed that it is common and some said “everyone is doing it.” They reported that teens do it out of peer pressure, to act cool, to relieve stress or nerves, out of boredom, and to “boost the high when you’re on marijuana or the drunk when you’ve been drinking.”

5. How do students your age get cigarettes?

Teens reported a number of ways that they could gain access to cigarettes including: 1) having a stranger on the street or someone older that they know buy them; 2) stealing from their parents or relatives; 3) stealing from stores; 4) buying them from kids who sell them at school; 5) buying them from a store or off the street; 6) bumming them off other people like friends or parents; 7) using a fake ID to purchase them; and 8) finding them.

6. What are the most common reasons for students your age to smoke cigarettes?

They reported that teens do it out of peer pressure, because friends smoke, to act cool, to relieve stress or nerves, out of boredom, because they see parents and other family members smoke, to relieve stress, they are tricked into it through advertising, out of addiction, and to “boost the high when you’re on marijuana or the drunk when you’ve been drinking.”

7. What do you think about students your age smoking marijuana?

Many teens thought that smoking marijuana was bad (worse than cigarettes). They noted that it is illegal, addictive, can be harmful, kills brain cells, affects concentration, and can lead to anger problems. However, many teens stated that they did not think there was anything wrong with teens using marijuana. They stated that “it is used as a medicine for cancer so it is a double standard to say that kids at school shouldn’t do it”, “life is boring without it”, “people just like the feeling of being high”, it is a “very relaxing” drug, and that it “brings many people together, like when everyone smokes a blunt together.” They also noted that it is very common and many said that “everybody had tried it at least once.” Some also stated that it is easier to get than alcohol noting that “you can pretty much go up to anyone and get a gram/ounce.” Many also noted that it is more acceptable than drinking, parents stress more about alcohol than marijuana use, and that marijuana is used more than alcohol. One teen stated “alcohol around here is more for special occasions, but weed is more for everyday use.”

8. How do students your age get marijuana?

Teens noted that it “is really easy to find” and that it is “everywhere, you just have to ask the right person.” They reported many ways that marijuana can be obtained including: 1) drug dealers or other kids selling it; 2) from friends, siblings, people in the neighborhood, or parents; 3) stealing it from relatives and others; and 4) growing it. One teen noted that “a lot of people are making a profit from it, it circles through from dealers to students.”

9. What are the most common reasons for students your age to smoke marijuana?

The most common reasons cited by teens for smoking marijuana included: to be cool, to relieve boredom, peer pressure, see others doing it, to relieve stress, like the feeling, able to forget about everything when high, addictive “lots of people smoke everyday”, and to “make school go by quicker”. One teen noted that “if you smoke marijuana, then you can smoke a cigarette to get more high” and that “some people take a Tylenol after they smoke marijuana.”

10. What does your school do to teenagers who are caught with cigarettes? Alcohol? Marijuana? Does it discourage teens from bringing them on school grounds?

While some teens said that they were unaware of potential consequences of getting caught with cigarettes, alcohol, and/or marijuana in school, others generated a number of potential consequences including suspension, expulsion, placement in juvenile detention, and placement in an alternative school. However, a number of teens also stated that some teens that are seen with substances are not reported and others stated that the consequences depend on the status of the individual students. One teen noted “if you’re in good standing and involved in school activities, you really just get a slap on the wrist. If you have bad grades, 9 times out of 10, you’ll get in a lot more trouble.” Similarly, another teen noted that there were “several athletes who were caught drinking/smoking and according to school rules were supposed to be suspended from the team for an entire year and suspended from school. But, nothing was done to them. It’s a double standard, and sometimes it also has to do with your race.”

11. What would your parents do if they caught you with cigarettes? Alcohol? Marijuana?

Teens reported a number of ways their parents might handle their involvement with cigarettes, alcohol, and/or marijuana. Most reported that their parents would likely just take it from them and give them a long lecture. Others stated that their parents would punish them, beat them, call the police on them, or threaten to/actually throw them out of the house. A number of teens noted that “once they are 18, their parents can’t do anything about it.” Others noted that their parents don’t do anything about it. One teen stated “My parents are real cool; they’re not hypocrites because in high school they were smoking and drinking too. They tell me I have to be able to control myself – they won’t get mad at me for something they did at the same age.”

12. What do you think the police would do if they caught you with cigarettes? Alcohol? Marijuana?

Teens reported a number of potential outcomes of getting caught by the police with cigarettes, alcohol and/or marijuana ranging from little to no consequences to significant consequences. Responses included that the cops would do nothing (particularly for cigarettes), give a warning, do a sobriety test and then either take them to or call their parents, take them to detention, and assign them a probation officer. Some reported that it depends on the number of times teens are caught, their circumstances, and their personal characteristics. One teen noted that the first time teens are caught, the police may confiscate the alcohol or drugs and the second time the teen will be taken to juvenile detention. Another teen noted that teens that are caught and do not yet have their license yet, may have to wait an additional 6 months. One teen noted that consequences depend on the teen's race noting "I know kids who have gotten pulled over who've been drinking and their parents have been called to pick them up, but others get DUIs." Another teen noted that "if you're under 18 and caught with alcohol then the police will write you a citation and your parents will be called to pick you up, but if you're over 18 you're done. Some comments suggested that teens were not discouraged by current penalties and that there are ways to stay out of trouble. One teen noted that "a lot of us don't care, because it's just a misdemeanor (for marijuana)." Others stated that police cannot get into a party without a search warrant and once the police arrive, everyone leaves. Finally, one teen noted that "as long as you know your rights you're good to go."

13. What do you think are the best ways for your school to discourage teen substance use?

Teens generated a number of methods that the school could employ to discourage teen substance use including random locker checks, checking book bags, having metal detectors and an x-ray machine for book bags, having police dogs around, random drug tests, sticking to school policies and actually carrying out consequences, increasing the length of the school day, increasing the number of after school activities, providing more education in school about alcohol and drug use, having groups where kids can come and talk, and more advertising about the dangers of alcohol and drug use.

14. What do you think are the best ways for parents to discourage teen substance use?

Teens generated a number of methods that parents could use to discourage teen substance use including talking with their teens about the dangers of substance use, bonding with their teens so that their teens will talk to them when they have problems, set and enforce rules and consequences for use, check their teen's person and rooms for alcohol or drugs, serve as role models/set an example, not allow smoking or alcohol in the house, monitor the movies their teens watch, and live in areas where substance use is not prevalent. Some teens noted that parents should be honest about their histories with substances but also let them know about all of the negative consequences associated with their use.

15. What do you think are the best ways for the police to discourage teen substance use?

Teens reported that the best ways for police to discourage teen alcohol and drug use is to be visible, visit classrooms, patrol neighborhoods more frequently and pull teens aside, use a search dog in schools, show videos in schools about what happens when they find kids with substances, talk to kids at school, send newsletters around neighborhoods and home with kids from school, talk to parents, visit homes, and refrain from using scare tactics that don't work like intimidation. Some teens reported that there needs to be harsher punishment than juvenile detention because teens are not scared of it and many actually brag about it. They suggested that police should threaten to put substance related arrests on the teen's permanent record and then inform teens about how their record could influence their ability to get a job. Teens also noted that police should be less stereotypical in who they target, noting that "police walk right by the girls and focus on the boys. The girls have more stuff than the boys."

16. What could people in your community do to discourage teen substance use?

Teens had a number of ideas about what could be done by the community to discourage teen substance use including cracking down on those who sell it (e.g., stores that sell to minors), offering more after school activities, throwing more functions to keep teens busy, talking to kids in the community, increasing police patrols to make the community more safe, keeping the recreation centers open later, creating additional recreational centers, eliminating "the trap house where they sell drugs", caring more about teens using out in the open, making a curfew for teens, encouraging community meetings and neighborhood watch, setting up cameras in areas known for alcohol and drug use, developing mentoring programs like "big brother or big sister", and inviting teens in the community to get involved in a walk against substance use which they sponsor.

17. What activities are available at school or in your community that provide good alternatives to teen substance use?

Teens reported that activities currently available to discourage teen substance use include sports programs, recreation centers, clubs, chat rooms, after school programs, groups, safety patrols, and student counselors. Teens also identified a few activities that were particularly helpful including the "Kids are Terrific Camp" which takes kids on field trips to learn about substance use and its negative effects, the "Not on Tobacco" group at school for cigarette smokers, the "National Urban League Incentive To Excel" program, and the DARE program which was offered in elementary schools.

Summary of Parent Focus Group Responses (n = 32)

1. How much alcohol use, cigarette smoking, and marijuana use do you think is going on in the Alexandria community?

Parents reported that they thought anywhere from 50-80% of teens use cigarettes, alcohol, and/or marijuana. They all noted that it is "readily available" and "prevalent." With regard to alcohol, parents reported overhearing teens say, "they have total access to alcohol", "some parents allow

drinking to go on in their home because they can supervise their teens” and that teens “can be seen grabbing beers outside 7-11.” With regard to marijuana, they noted that teens “smoke weed in the park in the middle of the day like its natural”, that teens say “almost all their friends do pot”, “there’s some kids that do drugs behind the elementary school”, and that teens can be heard “talking about parties all the time.”

2. What do you think of the extent of the problem given this data?

Some parents reported that they were surprised by the prevalence of youth substance use, but many were not. They noted that many parents view the problem as “inevitable” and assume a helpless stance. They also provided examples in which alcohol use is condoned by parents, such as beach week. During this week, parents rent beach houses for their teenagers and are aware that their teens are partying unsupervised during this time. With regard to schools, most parents noted that schools keep alcohol and drug problems “under wraps” and that there is a lack of communication between schools and parents. They said they wanted more meetings with families and students at school to make the parents conscious of alcohol and drug problems within the school. Some said that parents need to become more responsible, involved, communicative with their teenagers, and consistent in their parenting.

3. Why do you think Alexandria has this level of substance use, abuse?

Parents generated multiple reasons for substance use in Alexandria. A number reported that parents were partially responsible. Specifically, they noted that some parents support use by “turning a blind eye” to the problem, some lack rules to prohibit use, some become intoxicated in front of their children, a general lack of communication between parents and children, and that teens spend too much time unsupervised because parents work long hours. Others cited a lack of communication between schools and parents as a source of problems. Some blamed peer pressure as well as a mental health problems and a general lack of knowledge of the effects of alcohol and drugs. Further, most noted that alcohol and drugs are “everywhere” in Alexandria and are easily accessible. They also stated that there is “too much partying by teens”.

4. Do you know where youth get alcohol and if so, where?

Parents reported a number of places where youth obtain alcohol including their own homes, stores, parties, friends’ houses, clubs, and the street.

5. Do you know of parents who provide alcohol to their children? What is your opinion of this?

While most parents stated that they do not personally know of any parents who provide alcohol to their children, almost all agreed that their children have said “many parents allow it”, “parents would rather have them drink in the house than outside in the community”, and that oftentimes parents will throw the parties noting that “kids are going to do it so we’ll let them do it in our house.” While most parents stated that they strongly disagreed with parents throwing parties for teens in their homes, a few suggested that it may be okay to provide their own child with small amounts of alcohol.

6. What do you think is the appropriate age to begin conversations with your son or daughter about drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes or using drugs?

Across all parents, ages ranged from 5-12, with most parents stating that the appropriate age to start talking with children about cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs is age 10.

7. Let's say that your child chose to use alcohol, cigarettes, or marijuana, what do you think would have influenced him/her the most in their making that decision? For example, parents, peers, siblings, media, advertising, or something else?

Parents reported a number of factors that influence adolescent cigarette, alcohol, and drug use including parental attitudes/use, peers, mental health issues, too much stress, the media/advertising, and the internet.

8. How can you tell whether your teenager has been drinking alcohol or smoking marijuana? What signs do you look for?

Parents reported a number of signs that may indicate a teenager has used alcohol or marijuana including dilated pupils, red eyes, change in attitude/demeanor, change in appearance, change in grades, missing school, lack of respect toward parents, defensiveness, isolation, breath, smell on clothes, cologne sprayed on clothes, use of breathe mints, won't look you in the eyes, and don't want to be around you.

9. What do you know about the effects of alcohol/drugs on teens? For example, the effects on brain development, future patterns of addiction, or injuries?

While many parents reported that they were unaware of the effects of adolescent alcohol and drug use, a number of problems were identified. These include drinking and driving, family problems, potential for alcoholism, liver damage, memory loss, "crazy" behavior, change of attitude, stunted growth, destruction of brain cells, change in physical appearance, health problems, diminished concentration, altered speech, accidents, blackouts, and potential homicidality and homelessness. Some parents believed that it depended on how the adolescent used the substances noting that "it is okay every once in a while."

10. Do you think the community is doing enough to prevent substance use?

The large majority of parents reported that they do not think the community is doing enough to prevent adolescent substance use. They noted that teachers know what is going on, but they hide it from parents. They feel that students caught using substances should have consequences. Many agreed that there needs to be more anti-substance advertising such as TV ads and banners.

11. What role do you think parents/police/schools/others have in substance abuse prevention?

The majority of parents felt that parents and schools should play a large role in substance abuse prevention. With regard to parents' roles, they felt that parents should talk with their kids and

serve as role models. In instances where parents made their own mistakes, it is important to admit to them and talk with their kids about not repeating their mistakes. They also felt it would help if parents became more involved in their child's school including whether they are doing well and whether they are attending their classes regularly and on-time.

With regard to the role of the school, parents felt that it was the school's responsibility to provide early education about the dangers of alcohol and drugs as well as to communicate any problems to the parents. Many noted that much more substance abuse prevention material was needed which could be provided through workshops. Parents also stated that teachers should also serve as positive role models. In addition, more security and police officers were recommended. Many felt that parents, schools, and law enforcement need to work together to achieve the best results.

12. Is there anything that could be done differently by parents/police/schools/others?

A number of parents felt that it would be helpful to be given guidelines on Alexandria city rules as well as what is considered to be illegal for adolescents. They also thought it would be helpful to receive information on how to best parent teens.

Parents also noted that there are a number of things that parents, schools, law enforcement, and the community could do differently. Many noted that parents often "look the other way" when confronted with teen substance abuse issues. Instead, it was recommended that parents communicate with their children and become more involved in their schooling. With regard to schools, parents felt that schools should provide more discipline for substance related offenses, communicate with parents, use metal detectors, take attendance regularly throughout the day, and provide more education on the dangers of alcohol and drugs, including movies and examples of real life consequences. Many parents also believed that improving the relationship between police and adolescents could be beneficial. They noted that many teens tend to view "the police as evil and out to get them." They thought that additional training in how to best deal with adolescents would help police interact with the teens in a more positive way. Last, many parents also felt that developing and implementing youth leadership opportunities and programs could be helpful.

13. If we developed a substance abuse prevention workshop for parents to attend, what type of material do you think should be covered in the workshop? How could we get parents to attend the workshop?

A number of suggestions were made about the material that should be covered including, how to talk with your child about alcohol and drugs, general psycho-education about drugs (drugs most prevalent in community, rates of use, appearance, smell, effects, reasons for use), videos, testimonials from people affected by alcohol and drugs particularly other adolescents, and incorporation of local information/examples in the community and schools.

Strategies recommended to enhance attendance included flexible scheduling (evenings), creating flyers, asking parents to invite other parents, asking city organizations to distribute materials, providing transportation, food, and childcare if needed, and potentially collaborating with churches "as people always manage to get to church".

Summary of Key Informant Interviews (n = 40)

Questions.

1. What concerns do you have about teenagers drinking alcohol in Alexandria?

The concerns of youth service providers included: the young age that teens start drinking, too easy to obtain, who is providing the alcohol, development will be stunted, unhealthy behavior, accepted by society, too much drinking and driving that causes accidents, harm themselves and others, public intoxication, imitating parents, and peer pressure. The concerns of law officers included: drunk driving resulting in death, will lead to other substance use, different prosecution due to social and economic differences, the lack of parental responsibility, frequent events on most weekends, limited and ineffective prevention, and how they are getting it. The concerns of government employees included: no one under age should be drinking, people are looking the other way, and when they drink they get crazy. The concerns of faith community members included: most teens are drinking and it is a commonplace practice. The concerns of parents included: drinking is too frequent and it leads to other drug use, it will affect them in the future, and parties occur where parents are not home. The concerns of teens included: drinking and driving that threatens others, kids do not take the options offered by the school or city, excessive drinking becomes a habit, alcoholic students, friends in juvenile detention, and brain damage.

2. What concerns do you have about teens smoking cigarettes?

The concerns of youth service providers included: the young age that teens start smoking, the reasons why they choose to smoke, too easy to obtain, physical problems that will occur, psychological effects, lack of concern about the negative consequences, poor personal hygiene, peer pressure, limiting their future, addiction, and it leads to other substance use. The concerns of law officers included: bad for their health, will lead to other substance use, the availability, the lack of parental responsibility, and how are they getting it. The concerns of government employees included: it is unhealthy and they should wait until they are of legal age. The concerns of faith community members included: teens show a lack of concern about the health risks and it may lead to other things. The concerns of parents included: it is illegal, it leads to other drug use, it is a health risk, and dependence occurs more easily. The concerns of teens included: students smoke across the street from the school and are allowed back in school, it becomes a habit, people are showing off, and cancer.

3. What concerns do you have about teens smoking marijuana?

The concerns of youth service providers included: the early age that they start, reasons why they choose to smoke, who introduced them to smoking, effects on brain development, children imitating adults, not seen as addictive, teens look forward to smoking and it becomes normal, illegal behavior, lung cancer, peer pressure, and it is difficult for teens to study. The concerns of law officers included: zero tolerance must be enforced, will lead to other substance use, teens downplay its seriousness, courts treat its use lightly, using marijuana in combination with more powerful drugs, whether kids are educated on the effects of marijuana, and are they getting it from their parents. The concerns of government employees included: it is unhealthy, will have a

negative effect on their futures, and it will mess up their thinking. The concerns of faith community members included: it is too readily available and teens see nothing wrong with it. The concerns of parents included: it is easy to hide the evidence, it is more accepted in some groups, it is illegal, and it leads to other drug use. The concerns of teens included: students think it is safer than cigarettes, students believe that if others use it for medicine then they can use it too, it is easier to hide than alcohol, legal penalties, it is a gateway drug, an eighth grader got caught selling in class, and cancer.

4. What concerns do you have about other drug use by teens?

The concerns of youth service providers included where they get drugs, lack of awareness of side effects of medication and illegal drugs, addictive nature of drugs, more likely to use other drugs, mixing drugs together, deadly nature of drugs, incarceration, peer pressure, dependence on caffeine, and it leads to other dangerous behaviors. The concerns of law officers included: zero tolerance must be enforced, will lead to other substance use, affects job opportunities and education, teens grow up to be the main dealers in the city, burden on society because of the cost of intervention, experimentation with crack and methamphetamine, whether kids are educated on the effects of drugs, and are they getting it from their parents. The concerns of government employees included: teens should not be using and it will mess up their thinking. The concerns of faith community members included that there is more going on than is known. The concerns of parents included: prescription drug abuse, leads to criminal activity, and it keeps them from learning coping skills. The concerns of teens included: students brag about using drugs, ADHD medications are sold to others, and teens become dependent.

5. How concerned are people in your community about teen substance use?

Most youth service providers said very or extremely concerned. Some said somewhat concerned, not too concerned, and not concerned unless there is a problem in the immediate family. Most law officers did not answer or said they did not know. One said that government and non-profit organizations are concerned and address it as often as possible, but parental involvement is staggeringly lacking. Another said that most citizens do not believe that teen substance use affects them. Government employees said there are no visible signs of parental disapproval, or community efforts to dissuade kids. Faith community members said very concerned. Most parents said concerned or very concerned. One parent said not very concerned. Teens said it varies from very concerned to not concerned.

6. Please describe anything that makes teen substance use more likely in your community.

Youth service providers said: parents and family members who are using, lack of parental involvement, peer pressure, poverty, being around other users, lack of community involvement and engagement, parents' attitudes about their own experimentation, affluence, teens and parents do not take responsibility for their own actions, more likely at parties and certain locations, television, music, rap videos, stress, parents lack education on how to talk to their children, easy access to drugs from older people, lack of youth activities, parents at work, lack of parenting classes, unsupervised parties, drug houses, and lack of police presence. Three law officers did not answer and three did and said the lack of attention and prevention directed at earlier ages,

lack of facilities for positive activities, lack of parental involvement, and ready availability of drugs. Government employees said there is a lack of positive after school or weekend programs in the city, lack of employment opportunities, and parents and others who set bad examples. Faith community members said availability of drugs and alcohol, use by peers puts pressure on teens, perceptions that everyone does it, teens with unsupervised time and access to cars, and stress relief. Parents said lack of adult supervision, lack of accountability for whereabouts, parents who work long hours, parents who serve alcohol, parents do not enforce curfews, parents go out of town and leave their teens alone, small independent markets where teens can purchase beer, not enough after-school programs, and lack of parent skills and education. Teens said peer pressure and acceptance, ease of access, addiction, stress, fake IDs, businesses that sell to minors, parental modeling, lack of parents, to be cool, pop culture – tv, music, and movies – glamorize drinking and smoking.

7. What do you think should be done to reduce teen substance use in your community?

Youth service providers said: increased education and workshops, continue educating youth about the harmful effects, engage all youth in positive activities, expose them to various positive lifestyles at an early age, stricter penalties for those caught using, no differential treatment, more teen outreach, more police activity, more jobs, more interesting programs, interview young people and ask them about the problem, more safe places to hang out, less harassment by the police, more teen sports or cultural activities, and add locks on apartment building doors. Three law officers did not answer and three did and said greater emphasis on treatment, parents should be held accountable, stricter penalties, and better education for parents and teens. Government employees said we need to continue outreach and education programs, educate parents and families on substance abuse prevention, have community groups work together, and more workshops for kids. Faith community members said more programs in school that emphasize the consequences of being caught, more alcohol free events, counseling, mentoring and raising the driving age. Parents said that parents should supervise their children more, schools should consistently enforce policies such as eliminating student participation in sports if they possess alcohol on or off school grounds, students should sign contracts to abide by the school's alcohol policy, there should be awareness programs, after-school programs, Atlas and Athena peer mentoring programs for avoiding substance use, and community involvement. Teens said improve communication in families, after-school activities, church organizations, require workshops for kids who are caught, more open discussions with adults that include input from youth, lowering drinking age and decriminalizing marijuana to reduce the appeal, focus groups, and more activities outside of school in community centers.

8. How effective is law enforcement in reducing teen substance use in your community?

Youth service providers gave a variety of answers including: very effective, not effective, relatively effective, positive relationship between police and students in middle school, but very negative in high school, 20% effective, and the community is afraid of the police. Law officers gave a variety of answers including: fairly effective, potential to be very effective (if working with other City agencies), not effective, and teen substance abuse is conducted behind closed doors and it is difficult to break through that barrier. Government employees said they are effective, but should not be viewed as the primary solution, and we need a community-wide

initiative to reduce teen substance use. Faith community members said that it is effective, but some kids get around the law with adults buying them alcohol. Parents said moderately effective given the low number of officers in the schools. Some teens said effective and others said not at all effective.

9. What types of changes to existing laws or law enforcement practices to reduce substance use would you support?

Youth service providers said raise the legal age for cigarettes, increase punishment to stores, provide more rehabilitation, community service, more education about laws and penalties, increased police involvement in education process in high school, enforcement on loitering, invite officers to recreation centers, mandate treatment, drug free zones, less criminalization of youths of color, ban smoking in public places, more enforcement of sales to minors, and ban advertising of substances. Law officers said build in legal accountability for parents, juvenile court system must bring stricter sanctions, increase mandatory penalties, easier access to juvenile records, more extensive use of CCTV cameras, financing more police-youth programs, require mental health evaluation, require courses on effects of drugs and alcohol, and more officers working in the area of prevention. Government employees said teen groups should work with police, regular enforcement and consistent consequences, and cannot think of anything that has not already been tried, and would like to hear of new ideas. Faith community members said no legal changes, but encouraging a more collaborative approach among law enforcement, educators, and teenagers. Parents said that police should get involved in youth programs, after-school programs, and early intervention with a first offense that requires 12 step programs, peer mediation, therapy, and parental involvement. Teens said more education instead of enforcement, provide drug-free zones, lower the drinking age and socialize teens to drink moderately, and provide more immediate punishment.

10. How concerned are people at your place of employment about teen substance use?

Most youth service providers said very or extremely concerned. Law officers said extremely concerned, very concerned, and two said not concerned. Government employees said very concerned. Faith community members said very or extremely concerned. Parents said concerned or extremely concerned. One teen said not at all concerned and another said too concerned. Other teens did not answer.

11. What do you think should be done to reduce teen substance use through your place of employment?

Youth service providers said: more focus groups, continued education about the harmful effects, increase outreach efforts to parents, increase awareness on future impact on themselves and home life, introduce topic of substance abuse in the Family Life curriculum in elementary schools, provide jobs, after school activities, more programs for students aged 10 to 12, teach coping skills, random drug tests, cultural or sports activities, and more collaboration between schools and other city agencies. Law officers said: we have to be diligent about raising the importance of this with our staff, more youth programs, develop a closer relationship with state and city agencies to share information, more mentoring, and classes at schools. Government

employees said: facts about use could be presented with posters. Faith community members said: offering more options for treatment and more residential programs and teaching about God's love that gives a purpose and plan for life. Parents said: no tolerance on drug usage and continue educating the community and youth about the harms and effects of drugs and alcohol. Teens said: drug testing and what they are doing now.

12. How effective do you think schools are in preventing teen substance use?

Most youth service providers said that schools are not very effective. One mentioned that they provide a lot of materials and are very effective, Law officers said not effective, DARE program was removed, schools put forth a good effort, and the schools are the primary lead in applying resources about drug education. Government employees said very effective and not effective at all. Faith community members said not very effective and it depends on how receptive the child is. One parent said somewhat effective in education about drugs. Another parent said very effective. Teens' answers ranged from very effective to somewhat effective.

13. What do you think schools should do to prevent teen substance use?

Youth service providers said: more groups about substance abuse prevention, more security, require counseling for those caught using, include all youth in positive activities, pull in more adults to work with youth, mandatory victim impact panels in each year of high school, keep posting flyers, conduct prevention programs, more after school programs, provide counseling and mentoring groups, drug testing, presentations by former drug users, and schools should work with recreation centers. Law officers said: schools should align themselves with other agencies so there is no redundancy in efforts, more counselors, more drug monitors to test kids, and more prevention and disciplinary measures. Government employees said: the schools should continue their efforts to provide information and have peer groups. Faith community members said: to have panels with people who have been affected by drunk drivers, inform community when there are incidents involving drugs or alcohol, begin drug and alcohol awareness as early as possible, having police officers conduct programs in the high school, and focusing on the development of moral character. Parents said: include information on drugs early in the curriculum, provide awareness of long term consequences, and continue to work with different programs. One parent said that it is not the school's job to prevent substance abuse. Teens said: there should be more programs to raise awareness, having a real person tell about their experience, include education in required courses, more presentation of facts instead of scare tactics, provide help, and create more coalitions like this one.

14. How effective do you think parents are in preventing teen substance use?

Most youth service providers said there was a range of effectiveness. Some parents are extremely effective and others are not. One said there is a lack of consequences when teens are caught. Law officers said some are effective and some are not, not really effective, 50%, and tend not to be effective once drug use has occurred. Government employees said parents are very effective and play the most important role and another said they could be effective, but don't try hard enough. Faith community members said parents can be very effective and at times they are and at other times they are not. One parent said highly effective and another said

ineffective, especially around the alcohol issue. Teens said it depends on the parents and about half are effective.

15. What do you think parents should do to prevent teen substance use?

Youth service providers said: no use of substances themselves, educate themselves, talk to their children about the dangers of drug use, spend quality time with their children, teach children coping skills, know who their friends are and their activities, set values, send a clear message that drinking and drug use is unacceptable, and talk with children at an early age and set boundaries. Law officers said: more involvement in their children's lives, become more educated, ask children regularly about drug use, be aware of children's friends and activities, and keep kids involved in positive activities such as after school programs, boy/girl scouts, sports teams, and mentoring. Government employees said: talk regularly with their teens, learn as much as they can about prevention and teach it, and set positive examples through their own actions. Faith community members said: they must set boundaries and be consistent with consequences. Also, they must send messages that underage drinking is unacceptable. Parents said: that parents need to be home, talk to their kids, participate in programs with their children, and set better examples. Teens said: control who their kids hang out with, have kids call in and check with parents from where they are supposed to be, ask kids questions about what they are doing, lock up the liquor, always say they will be there to help them, have open discussions, describe their own lives, and do not smoke around kids.

16. If we developed a substance abuse prevention workshop for community members to attend, what type of material do you think should be covered in the workshop?

Youth service providers said: effects of peer pressure, anger management, tobacco prevention, types of drugs, why teenagers use drugs, where to get help, harmful effects of drugs, describe substance abuse in Alexandria, describe current efforts to reduce substance abuse, describe what community members can do to help, physical effects of drug and alcohol use on the body and brain, describe legal consequences of being caught using drugs or alcohol, include speakers who have been abusers, list of organizations that provide services, show different types of drugs, and compare Alexandria with other communities. Law officers said: visual displays of drugs, photographs of a healthy lung before smoking and after, latest information on drug usage, a regional historical perspective, a sample case study on how a child began on drugs and the resources used to address the problem, follow-up attempts in the case study and the successes or failures experienced, legal commentary on the impact on youth and parental responsibility, a one-fold handout on available resources, and effects of drugs on the individual, family, and society. Government employees said: present facts about teen substance use in Alexandria, describe the effects of different drugs, discuss best practices, and discuss new ideas. Faith community members said: provide statistics about substance abuse in Alexandria, guidelines for people who speak to youth about drugs and alcohol, have people give personal stories of how alcohol and drugs affected their lives, have the coalition generate ideas to present at the workshop to help adults, describe the reasons for substance use, how to say "no," and where to get help. Parents said: focus on parents' role as supervisors and how to establish and enforce consequences for substance abuse, describe the laws about curfew, describe the physiological effects of alcohol and drugs, and describe effective intervention strategies. Teens said: describe

the effects of drugs on health, have someone in prison system talk about it, have someone in recovery talk about it, describe the laws about kids riding with friends who have alcohol in the car, and talk about improving family communication.

Additional questions for Law Enforcement Officer interviews.

1. What are the barriers to law enforcement in stopping teen substance use?

Police said the barriers are parents, historical division between the youth and the police, no money budgeted for youth program, lack of staffing to apply prevention methodologies, the parents, existing laws are not equitably applied and are determined by social and economic class,

2. How comfortable are you in enforcing the laws about teen substance possession and use when parents and teens do not support you?

Police said it's the law and we will continue to enforce it. Parents in more affluent communities tend to be less supportive of law enforcement efforts against their children and their children's friends. Lack of support has no effect on what I do.

3. Do you think law enforcement in Alexandria could benefit from more information about teen substance use? If so, what kind of information?

Yes. Regular updates on available resources for parents and children for treatment and prevention, why kids do drugs, the kinds of drugs, where the drugs are coming from, how much is being used and in what setting, what do the parents know about drug use, information about mentorship and kid's behavior issues, and handouts and reading materials.

Additional questions for Business Community Member interviews.

1. What do you do currently at your employment setting to help prevent teen substance use?

No answers.

2. What additional activities could you offer at your employment setting that should help prevent teen substance use?

No answers.

3. Do you think the business community in Alexandria could benefit from more information about teen substance use? If so, what kind of information?

No answers.

Additional questions for Youth Services Provider interviews.

1. What activities/programs do you offer through your place of work to help prevent teen substance use?

Groups for parents, education, teen prevention programs, after school programs, field trips, outreach to educate community, peer advising, and mentoring.

2. What additional activities could you offer that would help prevent teen substance use?

More educational workshops for parents, take teens to a detox program to hear stories, provide information at a younger age, summer retreats, and after school programs.

3. Do you think youth services providers in Alexandria could benefit from more information about teen substance use? If so, what kind of information?

Yes, statistics and research about what kids are doing and what age they are starting to use substances, legal and personal consequences of substance abuse, prevalence of use in Alexandria, available resources in community, drug use impact on society, and family roles and perceptions.

Additional questions for Faith Community Member interviews.

1. What faith messages do you provide that are aimed at preventing teen substance use?

There are messages to respect your body, challenge yourself to be the best you can and you cannot do that if you are drunk or high, avoid excess, teaching that you are valued, and cope with peer pressure by looking to God for strength and guidance.

2. What activities do you offer through your faith community to help prevent teen substance use?

There are after-school programs, fellowship, Bible Study, and Saturday night events.

3. Do you think faith community members in Alexandria could benefit from more information about teen substance use? If so, what kind of information?

They said: specific statistics about substance abuse and behavior of Alexandria youth, counseling resources, materials and resources for parents, and networking information.

Summary of Online Survey

Item 1: Are you a resident of the City of Alexandria OR do you work in the City of Alexandria?

Item 2: Please select one of the following surveys.

Youth Survey Responses (n = 53)

3. Have you ever talked to your parents about smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, using marijuana or using other drugs?

Approximately 81% reported that they have talked to their parents about smoking cigarettes, 68% about drinking alcohol, 55% about using marijuana, and 55% about using other drugs.

4. Who usually brings up these topics?

Approximately 11% of youth reported that they never talked about any of these topics with their parents, 36% said their parents brought up these topics, 8% said that they did, and 45% both did.

5. How old were you the first time you and your parents talked about these topics?

Teens reported a range of ages of 5-17 when they first talked to their parents about these topics, with an approximate average age of 11 to 12.

6. In your lifetime, how many times have you and your parents talked about drinking alcohol or using drugs?

Approximately 9% of teens reported that they never talk with their parents about drinking alcohol or using drugs, 8% said once, 49% said a few times, and 34% said a lot.

7. How helpful were these discussion?

Approximately 9% of teens reported that they never had these discussions, 11% said these discussions were “not at all helpful”, 43% said “somewhat helpful”, and 36% said “very helpful”.

8. What is a typical kind of thing your parents say about drinking alcohol?

Most reported that their parents merely told them “don’t drink”. Sometimes this was followed by “it is not safe in party settings, its stupid, it messes up your liver, it is bad for your health, it can bring consequences, it can ruin your life, it is addictive, it reduces your ability to drink clearly, it brings you down and makes you feel numb, and look at how it affected relatives who were alcoholics or died from drinking too much. Others reported that their parents tell them that it is okay to drink but “don’t drink too much” and to “be responsible and do it in your own house so you don’t drive.”

9. What is a typical kind of thing your parents say about smoking cigarettes?

Most reported that their parents merely told them “don’t smoke cigarettes”. Sometimes this was followed by “it is a bad habit”, “it is bad for you”, “it can give you lung cancer and kill you”, “I used to do it and it was hard to quit”, “it is addictive”, and “look at your family, many died from cancer.”

10. What is a typical kind of thing your parents say about using marijuana?

Most reported that their parents merely told them “don’t smoke marijuana”. Sometimes this was followed by “it is bad for you”, “it is stupid”, “it slows you down”, “it kills brain cells”, “it is addictive”, “you could ruin your life”, “it can lead to other drugs”, “it can kill you”, and “its illegal and you could go to jail for using it.”

11. What is a typical kind of thing your parents say about using other drugs?

Most reported that their parents merely told them “don’t use drugs”. Sometimes this was followed by “it is bad for you”, “you will mess up your future”, “you can get diseases”, “it is risky and deadly”, “it is illegal and you can go to jail for using them”, “it is bad for your health”, and “you can become addicted.”

12. How comfortable do you feel when you discuss these topics with your parents?

Approximately 9% of teens reported that they never discussed these topics with their parents, 9% said that were “very uncomfortable” talking about these topics, 19% said they feel “a little uncomfortable”, 26% said they feel “somewhat comfortable”, and 36% said they feel “very comfortable.”

13. Have your parents ever talked to you about choosing friends that don’t drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, use marijuana, or other drugs?

Approximately 15% said they never talked with their parents about choosing friends that don’t use substances and 85% reported that they did.

14. Have your parents ever talked to you about how to handle peer pressure by your friends to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, use marijuana, or other drugs?

Approximately 23% said they never talked with their parents about how to handle peer pressure associated with substance use and 77% reported that they did.

15. Now thinking about all of these topics about alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs, tell me if you strongly agree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree with these statements.

My parents don’t know enough about topics like alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs to talk to me.

When asked whether they think that their parents don’t know enough about topics like alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs to talk to them, approximately 45% reported that they “strongly disagree”, 43% said they “disagree”, 6% said they “agree”, and 6% said they “strongly agree.”

My parents want to know my questions about alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs.

When asked whether they think their parents want to know their questions about alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs, approximately 8% reported that they “strongly disagree”, 11% said they “disagree”, 57% said they “agree”, and 25% said they “strongly agree.”

My parents try to understand how I feel about alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs.

When asked whether their parents try to understand how they feel about alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs, approximately 15% reported that they “strongly disagree”, 13% said they “disagree”, 45% said they “agree”, and 26% said they “strongly agree.”

When my parents talk to me about alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs, they warn or threaten me about the consequences.

When asked whether their parents warn or threaten them about the consequences of alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs, approximately 15% reported that they “strongly disagree”, 13% said they “disagree”, 40% said they “agree”, and 32% said they “strongly agree.”

If I talked to my parents about alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs, they would think I am using them.

When asked whether their parents would think they are using alcohol, cigarettes or drugs if they talked with their parents about them, approximately 38% reported that they “strongly disagree”, 28% said they “disagree”, 21% said they “agree”, and 13% said they “strongly agree.”

16. How likely is it that you would become addicted to cigarettes if you smoked often?

Approximately 25% said it is “not likely” that they would become addicted to cigarettes if they smoked often, 15% said “a little likely”, 17% said “somewhat likely” and 43% said it is “very likely.”

17. How likely is it that you would become addicted to alcohol if you drank often?

Approximately 30% said it is “not likely” that they would become addicted to alcohol if they drank often, 11% said “a little likely”, 19% said “somewhat likely” and 40% said it is “very likely.”

18. How likely is it that you would become addicted to marijuana if you smoked often?

Approximately 32% said it is “not likely” that they would be come addicted to marijuana if they smoked often, 13% said “a little likely”, 13% said “somewhat likely” and 42% said it is “very likely.”

19. What are your grades like this year?

Approximately 34% of teens reported that their grades were “mostly As”, 34% reported “mostly Bs”, 28% reported “mostly Cs”, 2% reported “mostly Ds”, and 2% reported “mostly Fs”.

20. During the LAST FOUR WEEKS how many whole days of school have you missed because you skipped or “cut”?

Approximately 70% of teens said that they did not miss any whole days of school in the LAST FOUR WEEKS because they skipped or “cut”, 9% said “2 days”, 9% said “3 days”, 8% said “4-5 days” 2% said “6-10 days” and 2% said “11 or more days”.

21. Now think back over the past year in school, how often did you....

Enjoy being in school?

Approximately 6% said they “never” enjoyed being in school, 45% said “sometimes”, 38% said “often” and 11% said “almost always”.

Hate being in school?

Approximately 11% said they “never” hated being in school, 60% said “sometimes”, 23% said “often” and 6% said “almost always”.

Try to do your best in school?

Approximately 4% said they “never” try to do their best in school, 17% said “sometimes”, 43% said “often” and 36% said “almost always”.

22. Think of your four best friends (the friends you feel closest to). In the past year (12 months), how many of your best friends have....

Smoked cigarettes?

Approximately 47% said “none of my friends” smoked cigarettes, 19% said “1 of my friends”, 15% said “2 of my friends”, 8% said “3 of my friends”, 11% and said “4 of my friends”.

Tried beer, wine, or hard liquor (for example, vodka, whiskey or gin) when their parents didn’t know about it?

Approximately 28% said “none of my friends” tried beer, wine, or hard liquor when their parents didn’t know about it, 25% said “1 of my friends”, 9% said “2 of my friends”, 9% said “3 of my friends”, 28% and said “4 of my friends”.

Drank 5 or more drinks in a row when drinking?

Approximately 62% said “none of my friends” drank 5 or more drinks in a row when drinking, 11% said “1 of my friends”, 9% said “2 of my friends”, 4% said “3 of my friends”, 13% and said “4 of my friends”.

Used marijuana?

Approximately 49% said “none of my friends” used marijuana, 9% said “1 of my friends”, 11% said “2 of my friends”, 8% said “3 of my friends”, 23% and said “4 of my friends”.

Been suspended from school?

Approximately 49% said “none of my friends” have been suspended from school, 8% said “1 of my friends”, 19% said “2 of my friends”, 6% said “3 of my friends”, 19% and said “4 of my friends”.

23. What are the top two reasons that youth in Alexandria smoke cigarettes?

Most teens reported that youth in Alexandria smoke cigarettes due to peer pressure and because they think it is “cool”. Teens also reported that youth use cigarettes to relieve stress and because they are surrounded by other teens and friends who use.

24. What are the top two reasons that youth in Alexandria drink beer, wine or liquor?

Most teens reported that youth in Alexandria drink beer, wine or liquor because their friends do it/peer pressure and because it is fun. Other reasons teens reported that youth drink are to relieve stress, to cope, addiction, its cool, they like the feeling, and to get drunk.

25. What are the top two reasons that youth in Alexandria use marijuana?

Most teens reported that youth in Alexandria use marijuana due to peer pressure/to fit in and they like the feeling of being high. Other reasons teens reported that youth use marijuana are to relieve stress, to forget their problems, to feel better, they think its cool, and to relax with friends.

26. How wrong do your parents feel it would be for you to:

Drink beer, wine or hard liquor (for example vodka, whiskey, or gin) occasionally?

Approximately 61% of teens reported that their parents would feel it was “very wrong” to drink beer, wine or hard liquor occasionally, 24% said “wrong”, 10% said “a little bit wrong”, and 6% said “not wrong at all”.

Drink beer, wine or hard liquor (for example vodka, whiskey, or gin) regularly?

Approximately 75% of teens reported that their parents would feel it was “very wrong” to drink beer, wine or hard liquor regularly, 18% said “wrong”, 6% said “a little bit wrong”, and 2% said “not wrong at all”.

Smoke cigarettes?

Approximately 71% of teens reported that their parents would feel it was “very wrong” to smoke cigarettes, 20% said “wrong”, 4% said “a little bit wrong”, and 6% said “not wrong at all”.

Use marijuana?

Approximately 80% of teens reported that their parents would feel it was “very wrong” to use marijuana, 12% said “wrong”, 4% said “a little bit wrong”, and 4% said “not wrong at all”.

27. Has anyone in your family ever had a severe alcohol or drug problem?

Approximately 43% said no one in their family ever had a severe alcohol or drug problem and 57% said someone did.

28. Please answer the following questions.

My parents ask if I’ve gotten my homework done?

Approximately 14% of teens said “no” their parents do not ask if they have gotten their homework done, 26% said “sometimes” and 61% said “most of the time”.

Would your parents know if you did not come home on time?

Approximately 10% of teens said “no” their parents do not know if they come home on time, 24% said “sometimes” and 67% said “most of the time”.

The rules in my family are clear.

Approximately 8% of teens said “no” their family rules are not clear, 51% said “sometimes” and 41% said “most of the time”.

If you drank some beer or wine or liquor without your parents’ permission, would you be caught by your parents?

Approximately 45% of teens said “no” they would not be caught by their parents if they drank without their permission, 26% said “sometimes” and 45% said “most of the time”.

When I am not at home, one of my parents knows where I am and who I am with.

Approximately 12% of teens said “no” their parents do not know where they are or who they are with when they are not home, 37% said “sometimes” and 51% said “most of the time”.

29. These questions ask about the neighborhood and community where you live.

If you wanted to get some beer, wine or hard liquor how easy would it be for you to get some?

Approximately 22% of teens stated it would be “very hard” to get alcohol if they wanted some, 20% said “sort of hard”, 26% said “sort of easy”, and 33% said “very easy”.

If you wanted to get some cigarettes, how easy would it be for you to get some?

Approximately 28% of teens stated it would be “very hard” to get cigarettes if they wanted some, 12% said “sort of hard”, 22% said “sort of easy”, and 39% said “very easy”.

If you wanted to get some marijuana, how easy would it be for you to get some?

Approximately 33% of teens stated it would be “very hard” to get marijuana if they wanted some, 16% said “sort of hard”, 20% said “sort of easy”, and 31% said “very easy”.

30. Where do you or others your age get alcohol?

Teens reported a number of ways that they could obtain alcohol including: 1) asking people to buy for them; 2) getting it from their older friends, cousins, older siblings, or parents; 3) taking it out of their fridge at home or their friends house; 4) stores (liquor, convenience, grocery); and 5) getting it from parties.

31. Where do you or others your age get cigarettes?

Teens reported a number of ways that they could gain access to cigarettes including: 1) having someone older buy them; 2) businesses that sell to minors; 3) stealing from their parents or relatives; 4) stealing from stores; 5) from friends, siblings, and/or parents; and 6) from school.

32. Where do you or others your age get marijuana?

Teens reported many ways that marijuana can be obtained including: 1) drug dealers or other kids selling it; 2) from friends, siblings, and people in the neighborhood; 3) school; 4) the metro; 5) the street; and 6) parties.

33. Where do you or others your age get other drugs?

Teens reported many ways that other drugs can be obtained including: 1) drug dealers or other kids selling it; 2) from parents’ friends; 3) from their friends; 4) school; 5) the street; 6) doctors; 7) drug stores; and 8) houses.

34. How many people your age in Alexandria do you think are using the following?

Over the counter drugs to get high?

Approximately 18% of teens reported “none” when asked how many teens in Alexandria use over the counter drugs to get high, 8% reported “almost none”, 35% reported “a few”, 20% reported “some”, and 20% reported “a lot”.

Prescription drugs to get high?

Approximately 18% of teens reported “none” when asked how many teens in Alexandria use prescription drugs to get high, 22% reported “almost none”, 28% reported “a few”, 18% reported “some”, and 16% reported “a lot”.

Household products to get high?

Approximately 29% of teens reported “none” when asked how many teens in Alexandria use household products to get high, 20% reported “almost none”, 31% reported “a few”, 10% reported “some”, and 10% reported “a lot”.

Cocaine?

Approximately 29% of teens reported “none” when asked how many teens in Alexandria use cocaine to get high, 18% reported “almost none”, 18% reported “a few”, 18% reported “some”, and 18% reported “a lot”.

Methamphetamine?

Approximately 39% of teens reported “none” when asked how many teens in Alexandria use methamphetamine to get high, 18% reported “almost none”, 16% reported “a few”, 18% reported “some”, and 10% reported “a lot”.

Heroin?

Approximately 37% of teens reported “none” when asked how many teens in Alexandria use heroine to get high, 18% reported “almost none”, 18% reported “a few”, 14% reported “some”, and 14% reported “a lot”.

35. How wrong would most adults (over 21) in your community think it is for kids your age:**To use marijuana?**

Approximately 8% of teens reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to use marijuana, 22% said “a little bit wrong”, 24% said “wrong”, and 47% said “very wrong”.

To drink alcohol?

Approximately 12% of teens reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to drink alcohol, 33% said “a little bit wrong”, 26% said “wrong”, and 29% said “very wrong”.

To smoke cigarettes?

Approximately 10% of teens reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to smoke cigarettes, 41% said “a little bit wrong”, 18% said “wrong”, and 31% said “very wrong”.

To use other drugs?

Approximately 2% of teens reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to use other drugs, 12% said “a little bit wrong”, 28% said “wrong”, and 59% said “very wrong”.

36. If a kid smoked marijuana in your community would he/she be caught by the police?

When asked whether a teen in their community would be caught by the police if he/she smoked marijuana, approximately 35% of teens reported “no”, 53% reported “sometimes”, and 12% reported “most of the time”.

37. If a kid drank some beer, wine, or hard liquor in your neighborhood would he/she be caught by the police?

When asked whether a teen in their community would be caught by the police if he/she drank alcohol, approximately 35% of teens reported “no”, 49% reported “sometimes”, and 16% reported “most of the time”.

38. There are lots of adults in my community I could talk to about something important.

When asked whether there are lots of adults in the community that teens could talk to about something important, 45% of teens said “no” and 55% said “yes”.

39. Please use this space to write anything else you have to add on the topic of youth substance use in Alexandria.

One teen stated “drug use is really starting to be a problem in Alexandria. It’s really just alcohol and marijuana that are a problem”. A number of teens stated that this survey was a great idea.

40. How old are you?

When asked for their ages, teens reported 11 (2%), 12 (4%), 13 (8%), 14 (14%), 15 (10%), 16 (10%), 17 (33%), and 18 (20%).

41. What grade are you in?

When asked for their grade, teens reported 6th (2%), 7th (8%), 8th (8%), 9th (14%), 10th (16%), 11th (10%), and 12th (43%).

42. Are you:

When asked for their gender, 51% of teens reported female and 49% reported male.

43. What do you consider yourself to be?

When asked for their race/ethnicity, 47% said African American, 18% said Hispanic/Latino, 20% said White, 4% said Asian American, 0% said American Indian, 2% said Biracial, and 10% said other.

44. Did your family come here from another country?

When asked whether their family came here from another country, 53% said no and 47% said yes.

45. Thank you for completing this survey. Would you like to enter the drawing to win an iPod Shuffle or one of two \$50 Target Gift Cards?

69% reported “yes” and 31% reported “no.”

Parent Survey Responses (n = 92)

46. How many children do you have?

The number of children of parents who completed the survey included 1 (25%), 2 (42%), 3 (28%), or 4 (4%).

47. What are their ages?

Parents who completed the survey reported a wide age range for their children, ranging from toddlers to young adults, with most stating that they had at least one teenager.

48. How many are boys?

Parents reported that they had 0 (27%), 1 (49%), 2 (23%), or 3 (1%) boys.

49. How many are girls?

Parents reported that they had 0 (29%), 1 (39%), 2 (21%), or 3 (11%) girls.

50. What do you consider yourself to be?

When asked for their race/ethnicity, 14% said Black or African America, 10% said Hispanic/Latino, 69% said White, 1% said Asian American, 0% said American Indian, 5% said Biracial, and 1% said other.

51. Did you or your spouse come here from another country?

When asked whether the parent of his/her spouse came here from another country, 85% said no and 15% said yes.

52. Have you ever talked to your daughter or son about....

drinking alcohol?

Approximately 91% of parents reported that they have talked to their child about drinking alcohol.

using marijuana?

Approximately 70% of parents reported that they have talked to their child about using marijuana.

using other drugs?

Approximately 72% of parents reported that they have talked to their child about using other drugs.

using tobacco?

Approximately 92% of parents reported that they have talked to their child about using tobacco.

the risk of using alcohol, drugs, and tobacco?

Approximately 94% of parents reported that they have talked to their child about the risk of using alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.

how to handle pressures by his/her friends to drink alcohol, use marijuana, or use other drugs?

Approximately 78% of parents reported that they have talked to their child about how to handle pressures by his/her friends to drink alcohol, use marijuana, or use other drugs.

53. How comfortable do you feel when you discuss these topics with your son/daughter?

Approximately 2% of parents reported that they never discussed these topics with their child, 7% said that were “very uncomfortable” talking about these topics, 11% said they feel “a little uncomfortable”, 20% said they feel “somewhat comfortable”, and 60% said they feel “very comfortable”.

54. How wrong would most adults (over 21) in your community think it is for youth

To drink alcohol?

Approximately 2% of parent reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to drink alcohol, 17% said “a little bit wrong”, 52% said “wrong”, and 29% said “very wrong”.

To smoke cigarettes?

Approximately 3% of parents reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to smoke cigarettes, 20% said “a little bit wrong”, 38% said “wrong”, and 39% said “very wrong”.

To use marijuana?

No parents reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to use marijuana, 6% said “ a little bit wrong”, 39% said “wrong”, and 56% said “very wrong”.

To use other drugs?

No parents reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to use other drugs, 3% said “a little bit wrong”, 16% said “wrong”, and 81% said “very wrong”.

55. What best described your attitude toward youth drinking?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to drink.

Approximately 81% of parents reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to drink.

Because it is illegal to drink, youth should not drink.

Approximately 46% of parents said that they believe youth should not drink because it is illegal.

I think youth drinking is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

Approximately 3% said they believe that drinking is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow drinking in their home where they can model moderate drinking and control youth consumption.

Approximately 10% of parents reported that they believe that parents should allow drinking in their home where they can model moderate drinking and control youth consumption because youth will soon go off and live on their own.

I think the drinking age should be lowered because current laws don't stop youth from drinking.

Approximately 7% of parents reported that they believe the drinking age should be lowered because current laws don't stop youth from drinking.

56. What best described your attitude toward marijuana use?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to use marijuana.

Approximately 90% of parents reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth use marijuana.

Because it is illegal to use marijuana, youth should not use it.

Approximately 46% of parents said that they believe youth should not use marijuana because it is illegal.

I think youth marijuana use is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

Approximately 1% said they believe marijuana use is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow marijuana use in their home where they can monitor use.

No parents reported that they believe that parents should allow marijuana use in their home where they can monitor it.

I think marijuana should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

Approximately 3% of parents reported that they believe marijuana use should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

57. What other drugs do you think teens in Alexandria are using to get high?

Parents listed other drugs that they think teens in Alexandria are using to get high including household products (such as glue and aerosol sprays), cocaine, prescription drugs (such as Ritalin), heroin, sedatives, inhalants, methamphetamine, oxycontin, oxycodin, over-the-counter drugs (such as cold medicines), ecstasy, speed, uppers, dippers, barbiturates, PCP, and LSD.

58. What best described your attitude toward other drugs to get high?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to use these other drugs.

Approximately 94% of parents reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth use other drugs to get high.

Because it is illegal to use other drugs, youth should not use it.

Approximately 41% of parents said that they believe youth should not use other drugs because it is illegal.

I think youth drug use is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

No parents said they believe drug use is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow drug use in their home where they can monitor use.

No parents reported that they believe that parents should allow drug use in their home where they can monitor it.

I think that these other drugs should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

Approximately 1% of parents reported that they believe marijuana use should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using them.

59. What best described your attitude toward youth tobacco use?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to smoke.

Approximately 98% of parents reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to smoke.

Because it is illegal to buy cigarettes, youth should not smoke.

Approximately 38% of parents said that they believe youth should not smoke because it is illegal to buy cigarettes.

I think youth smoking is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

No parents said they believe smoking is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow youth smoking in their home where they can monitor use.

No parents reported that they believe that parents should allow smoking in their home where they can monitor use.

60. How comfortable do you feel setting limits on the use of tobacco with your child?

When parents were asked how comfortable they feel setting limits on the use of tobacco with their child, approximately 7% said "I have never set limits", 0% said they feel "very uncomfortable", 0% said they feel "a little uncomfortable", 1% said they feel "somewhat comfortable", and 92% said they feel "very comfortable".

61. How comfortable do you feel setting limits on the use of alcohol with your child?

When parents were asked how comfortable they feel setting limits on the use of alcohol with their child, approximately 7% said “I have never set limits”, 0% said they feel “very uncomfortable”, 1% said they feel “a little uncomfortable”, 7% said they feel “somewhat comfortable”, and 85% said they feel “very comfortable”.

62. How comfortable do you feel setting limits on the use of marijuana with your child?

When parents were asked how comfortable they feel setting limits on the use of marijuana with their child, approximately 7% said “I have never set limits”, 1% said they feel “very uncomfortable”, 1% said they feel “a little uncomfortable”, 2% said they feel “somewhat comfortable”, and 88% said they feel “very comfortable”.

63. How comfortable do you feel setting limits on the use of other drugs with your child?

When parents were asked how comfortable they feel setting limits on the use of other drugs with their child, approximately 7% said “I have never set limits”, 0% said they feel “very uncomfortable”, 0% said they feel “a little uncomfortable”, 1% said they feel “somewhat comfortable”, and 92% said they feel “very comfortable”.

64. Have you ever talked with the parents of your child’s friends about youth substance use?

Approximately 61% of parents stated that they have talked with the parents of their child’s friends about youth substance use.

65. How much do you think youth risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they....

Smoke one or more packs of cigarettes per day?

No parents reported “no risk” of youth harming themselves physically or in other ways if they smoke one or more packs of cigarettes a day, 0% said “slight risk”, 9% said “moderate risk”, and 91% said “great risk”

Try marijuana once or twice?

Approximately 6% of parents reported “no risk” of youth harming themselves physically or in other ways if they try marijuana once or twice, 37% said “slight risk”, 33 % said “moderate risk”, and 24% said “great risk”

Smoke marijuana regularly?

No parents reported “no risk” of youth harming themselves physically or in other ways if they smoke marijuana regularly, 1% said “slight risk”, 16% said “moderate risk”, and 83% said “great risk”

Drink one or two alcoholic beverages (beer, wine liquor) one or more times a month?

Approximately 2% of parents reported “no risk” of youth harming themselves physically or in other ways if they drink one or two alcohol beverages one or more times a month, 8% said “slight risk”, 45% said “moderate risk”, and 45% said “great risk”

Drink 5 or more drinks in a row?

No parents reported “no risk” of youth harming themselves physically or in other ways if they drink 5 or more drinks in a row, 1% said “slight risk”, 4 % said “moderate risk”, and 95% said “great risk”

66/67. To your knowledge, has your child ever smoked cigarettes? If yes, how frequently?

Approximately 10% of parents reported that their child has smoked cigarettes. Of those who reported that their child has smoked, approximately 7% of parents reported that their child smokes “daily”, 0% said “weekly”, 33% said “occasionally, and 60% said “they don’t know”.

68/69. To your knowledge, has your child drunk beer, wine, or hard liquor – more than just a few sips? If yes, how frequently?

Approximately 20% of parents reported that their child has drunk more than just a few sips of alcohol. Of those who reported that their child has drunk, approximately 0% of parents reported that their child drinks “daily”, 0% said “weekly”, 55% said “occasionally, and 45% said “they don’t know”.

70/71. To your knowledge, has your child ever used marijuana? If yes, how frequently?

Approximately 12% of parents reported that their child has used marijuana. Of those who reported that their child has used marijuana, approximately 0% of parents reported that their child smoked “daily”, 0% said “weekly”, 38% said “occasionally, and 63% said “they don’t know”.

72/73. To your knowledge, has your child ever used other drugs? If yes, how frequently?

No parents reported that their child has used other drugs.

74. How much youth alcohol use is going on in our community?

No parents reported “no” alcohol use is going on in their community, 1% said “a little”, 30% said “some”, 65% said “a lot”, and 4% said “they don’t know”.

75. How much youth marijuana use is going on in our community?

No parents reported “no” marijuana use is going on in their community, 8% said “a little”, 38% said “some”, 48% said “a lot”, and 6% said “they don’t know”.

76. How much youth tobacco use is going on in our community?

No parents reported “no” tobacco use is going on in their community, 7% said “a little”, 31% said “some”, 57% said “a lot”, and 5% said “they don’t know”.

77. If your child wanted to get some beer, wine or hard liquor, how easy would it be for him/her to get some?

Approximately 16% of parents said it would be “very hard” for their child to get some beer, wine or hard liquor, 30% said “sort of hard”, 30% said “sort of easy”, and 23% said “very easy”.

78. How would he/she get alcohol?

Parents reported a number of places where youth obtain alcohol including: 1) their own homes; 2) older kids, friends, relatives, parents or other adults; 3) ask a stranger to buy it for them and pay them to do it; 4) stores (liquor, 7-11, convenience, supermarkets); 5) using a fake ID to get it; 6) stealing from homes and stores; and 7) friends' houses.

79. If your child wanted to get some cigarettes, how easy would it be for him/her to get some?

Approximately 22% of parents said it would be "very hard" for their child to get cigarettes, 24% said "sort of hard", 24% said "sort of easy", and 29% said "very easy".

80. How would he/she get cigarettes?

Parents reported a number of places where youth obtain cigarettes including: 1) their own homes; 2) older kids, friends, relatives, parents or other adults; 3) ask a stranger to buy it for them and pay them to do it; 4) stores that don't card (liquor, 7-11, convenience, supermarkets); 5) using a fake ID to buy it or borrowing an ID from someone else; 6) stealing from homes and stores; 7) friends' houses; and 8) school.

81. If your child wanted to get some marijuana, how easy would it be for him/her to get some?

Approximately 27% said it would be "very hard" for their child to get marijuana, 33% said "sort of hard", 24% said "sort of easy", and 16% said "very easy".

82. How would he/she get marijuana?

Parents reported a number of places where youth can obtain marijuana including: 1) drug dealers or other kids selling it; 2) from classmates, friends, friend's older siblings, and people in the neighborhood; and 3) school.

83. If a youth drank some beer, wine, or hard liquor in your neighborhood would he/she be likely to be caught by the police?

When asked whether a teen in their community would be caught by the police if he/she drank alcohol, approximately 58% of parents reported "no", 38% reported "sometimes", and 3% reported "most of the time".

84. If a youth smoked marijuana in your neighborhood would he/she be likely to be caught by the police?

When asked whether a teen in their community would be caught by the police if he/she used marijuana, approximately 52% of parents reported "no", 43% reported "sometimes", and 5% reported "most of the time".

85. If a youth used another illegal drug in your neighborhood would he/she be likely to be caught by the police?

When asked whether a teen in their community would be caught by the police if he/she used another illegal drug, approximately 50% of parents reported "no", 48% reported "sometimes", and 2% reported "most of the time".

86. If you saw a youth drink alcohol in your neighborhood, how likely is it that you would report this to the youth's parents?

Approximately 17% of parents reported they are “not sure” whether they would tell the parents of a neighborhood kid if they saw him/her drinking, 7% said it is “likely”, 34% said it is “somewhat likely”, and 42% said it is “very likely”.

87. What do you think of the extent of this problem given the data?

Some parents thought that teens may have over-reported the problem and others thought that teens under-reported usage. One noted that too much was being made of the data as it “just reflects normal adolescent experimentation”. Most were troubled by the data noting that parents need to keep talking with their children about the dangers of drugs and alcohol no matter what their age. Many also reported that teens are not being monitored adequately in part due to the fact that parents have to work. Many parents said that teens need to be educated about the dangers of alcohol and drug use, particularly in school and by their parents. Parents also indicated that the community is not doing enough to stop the problem – they felt that there should be campaigns and a greater police presence. In essence, parents reported that community, school, parental, and law enforcement efforts are needed to address the problem.

88. Why do you think Alexandria has this level of youth substance use and abuse?

Parents reported a range of reasons that Alexandria may have a high level of youth substance use. The most common reasons reported include: 1) there is an affluent population of teens that have the money to buy substances; 2) there is great diversity in Alexandria - some parents may be uneducated about the dangers of alcohol and drugs and some may feel uncomfortable discussing these issues with their children depending in part on their background and culture; 3) Alexandria is more of an urban area and located close to a very large urban city so drugs may be more readily accessed and available, 4) schools do not consistently enforce alcohol and drug policies or communicate with parents; 5) there is a lack of publicity about the problem in Alexandria; 6) parental attitude and behavior - many parents turn a blind eye to the problem , think it would be hypocritical to set and enforce rules with regard to alcohol and drugs due to their own personal histories, still use themselves and set a bad example, think it is fine to allow teens to use in their own home, and do not adequately monitor their children; and 7) lack of activities and leadership programs available to youth in the community.

89. Do you know of parents who provide alcohol to their children?

Approximately 27% of parents reported that they know of parents who provide alcohol to their children.

90. What is your opinion of this?

While most parents stated that they strongly disagreed with parents throwing parties for teens in their homes, a few suggested that it may be okay to provide their own child with small amounts of alcohol. For example, one parent stated “I would rather have my child drink at home (once he/she reaches high school age) than out somewhere.” A number of parents felt that a small amount of alcohol with a sit down family dinner or a special occasion is culturally acceptable and should be permitted in the US. One parent reported that the drinking age should be changed to 18.

91. What do you think is the appropriate age to begin conversations with your son/daughter about drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, and using illegal drugs?

Across all parents, ages ranged from 3 to 21, with most parents stating that the appropriate age to start talking with children about alcohol, smoking cigarettes, and using illegal drugs is elementary school age. Many also stated that it is “never too early”.

92. Let’s say that your child chose to use alcohol, cigarettes, or marijuana, what do you think would have influenced him/her the most in making that decision?

When asked what they believe might have influenced their child’s decision to use alcohol, cigarettes, or marijuana if they chose to use, approximately 17% of parents said “parents”, 98% said peers, 15% said siblings, 37% said media, 32% said advertising, and 16% said something else.

93. How can you tell whether your child has been drinking alcohol?

Parents reported a number of signs that may indicate a their child has used alcohol including “red or glassy eyes, smell/odor on breath, smell on clothes, change in attitude/demeanor, isolating self, lying, change in appearance, change in speech, lack of coordination, diminishing amounts of alcohol in the home, talking with other parents, change in schoolwork/drop in grades, change in friends, unexplained money expenditures, disappearing for periods of time, needing more money than usual, grades, missing school, lack of respect toward parents, over the counter testing kits, hangover behavior (sleeping later, vomiting, etc), silliness, won’t look you in the eyes, doesn’t want to be around you, attends more parties, and being vague about what he/she is doing with friends.”

94. How can you tell whether your child has been smoking cigarettes?

Parents reported a number of signs that may indicate their child has used cigarettes including smell on breath, smell on person or clothes, change in behavior, change in friends, finding cigarettes or residue in child’s room or belongings, fingernails, cigarette burns, change in color of lips, finding matches, monitoring their behavior, asking other parents and child’s friends, telling parents that his/her friends smoke, masking smell on clothes with some scent, increased spending, stains on hands, uses chewing gum or breath mints, negative attitude, and rushing into house and taking a shower.

95. How can you tell whether your child has been smoking marijuana?

Parents reported a number of signs that may indicate a teenager has used marijuana including bloodshot or glassy eyes, dilated pupils, poor memory, change in attitude/demeanor, lack of motivation, change in appearance, breath, smell on person or clothes, cologne sprayed on clothes, change in friends, change in schoolwork, increased hunger, poor coordination, talking about friends who use, inappropriate humor, increased spending, monitor their behavior, ask friends parents or friends, mood changes, urine drug screen, running into the house to take a shower, and lying about whereabouts.

96. Do you think the Alexandria is doing enough to prevent youth substance use?

Approximately 23% of parents said yes, Alexandria is doing enough to prevent youth substance use, and 77% of parents said no.

97. What role do you think parents/police/schools/others have in youth substance use prevention in Alexandria?

Overall, the majority of parents reported that education, monitoring, good modeling, and enforcement of consequences (for teens, parents, dealers, store vendors or anyone who breaks laws) is needed and that parents, police, schools, and the community need to work together to accomplish these aims.

98. If a substance use prevention workshop was offered to parents and their children, would you consider attending?

Approximately 79% of parents said yes, they would attend a substance use prevention workshop if offered to parents, and 22% said no.

99. How likely is it that you would attend a presentation for parents on youth substance use prevention?

Approximately 22% of parents said it is “not likely” that they would attend a presentation for parents on youth substance use prevention, 28% said it is “somewhat likely”, and 51% said it is “very likely”.

100. What would be the best place to hold a presentation for parents on youth substance use prevention?

Parents reported that the best place to hold presentations for parents on youth substance use prevention include city schools, churches, after PTA meetings, in the same neighborhood, recreation/community centers, and somewhere parents can get to via public transportation. One parent recommended that it be made a school graduation requirement.

101. What topics should be covered?

A number of suggestions were made about the material that should be covered including, how to talk with your child about alcohol and drugs, role playing discussions and receiving feedback from professionals, general psycho-education about drugs (drugs most prevalent in community, rates of use, appearance, smell, effects, reasons for use), videos, testimonials from people affected by alcohol and drugs particularly other adolescents, incorporation of local information/examples in the community and schools, how to help teens resist peer pressure, how community members can create coalitions to support healthy adolescent development and discourage substance use, how to manage the problem if it occurs, how to form strong and healthy relationships with your child, substance use and its relation to unprotected sex, problem-solving skills, how to administer in-home drug tests, good disciplinary techniques, legal ramifications of substance use and the judiciary process, potential negative effects on ones future, and resources available in the community to treat adolescent substance abuse.

102. Please use this space to write anything else you have to add on the topic of youth substance use in Alexandria.

There were several comments including: “I think it was sad awhile back that the City schools have a zero tolerance policy regarding drinking, yet the head of the Schools was allowed to remain employed after being arrested for DUI. I think that was very "do as I say, not as I do." I doubt there would be high attendance at a presentation like this. I think the best place to educate is during school. Just like we have city wide contests for making posters and celebrating history,

let's create the same for encouraging the spread of information about health and prevention of these abuses. Let's keep track of it and constantly show the changes in performance in our papers, presentations, city council, etc. Because many Alexandria residents have their children in private schools throughout the metro area, I think it's important to get the message out about programs through non-school channels. Perhaps we should use neighborhood listserves to get the word out about seminars, or a targeted mailing to all city residents with kids in the 6th-12th grade age range. Please have the results of this study available where parents can access it and find out what the community thinks.”

Law Enforcement Survey Responses (n = 29)

103. How wrong would most adults (over 21) in your community think it is for youth

To drink alcohol?

Approximately 7% of police reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to drink alcohol, 35% reported “a little bit wrong”, 28% reported “wrong”, and 31% reported “very wrong”.

To smoke cigarettes?

Approximately 14% of police reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to smoke cigarettes, 31% reported “a little bit wrong”, 28% reported “wrong”, and 28% reported “very wrong”.

To use marijuana?

No police reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to use marijuana, 28% reported “a little bit wrong”, 28% reported “wrong”, and 45% reported “very wrong”.

To use other drugs?

No police reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to use other drugs, 3% reported “a little bit wrong”, 38% reported “wrong”, and 59% reported “very wrong”.

104. What best described your attitude toward youth drinking?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to drink.

Approximately 62% of police reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to drink.

Because it is illegal to drink, youth should not drink.

Approximately 48% of police reported that they believe youth should not drink because it is illegal.

I think youth drinking is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

Approximately 3% reported that they believe that drinking is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow drinking in their home where they can model moderate drinking and control youth consumption.

Approximately 14% of police reported that they believe that parents should allow drinking in their home where they can model moderate drinking and control youth consumption because youth will soon go off and live on their own.

I think the drinking age should be lowered because current laws don't stop youth from drinking.

Approximately 10% of police reported that they believe the drinking age should be lowered because current laws don't stop youth from drinking.

105. What best describes your attitude toward marijuana use?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to use marijuana.

Approximately 72% of police reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to use marijuana.

Because it is illegal to use marijuana, youth should not use it.

Approximately 66% of police reported that they believe youth should not use marijuana because it is illegal.

I think youth marijuana use is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

No police reported they believe marijuana use is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow marijuana use in their home where they can monitor use.

No police reported that they believe that parents should allow marijuana use in their home where they can monitor it.

I think marijuana should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

Approximately 3% of police reported that they believe marijuana use should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

106. What other drugs do you think teens in Alexandria are using to get high?

Police listed other drugs that they think teens in Alexandria are using to get high including helium, cocaine, prescription drugs, MDMA, salvia, heroin, sedatives, inhalants, methamphetamine, whippets, mushrooms, ecstasy, speed, barbiturates, PCP, and LSD.

107. What best described your attitude toward other drugs to get high?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to use these other drugs.

Approximately 86% of police reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth use other drugs to get high.

Because it is illegal to use other drugs, youth should not use it.

Approximately 52% of police reported that they believe youth should not use other drugs because it is illegal.

I think youth drug use is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

No police reported they believe drug use is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow drug use in their home where they can monitor use.

No police reported that they believe that parents should allow drug use in their home where they can monitor it.

I think that these other drugs should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

No police reported that they believe marijuana use should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using them.

108. What best described your attitude toward youth tobacco use?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to smoke.

Approximately 97% of police reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to smoke.

Because it is illegal to buy cigarettes, youth should not smoke.

Approximately 38% of police reported that they believe youth should not smoke because it is illegal to buy cigarettes.

I think youth smoking is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

No police reported they believe smoking is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow youth smoking in their home where they can monitor use.

No police reported that they believe that parents should allow smoking in their home where they can monitor use.

109. In your opinion,

what percent of youth who USE marijuana in Alexandria are caught by the police?

54% of police reported that 0 to 10% of youth are caught. 21% of police reported that 10 to 20% of youth are caught.

what percent of youth who SELL marijuana in Alexandria are caught by the police?

57% of police reported that 0 to 10% of youth are caught. 14% of police reported 10 to 20% of youth are caught.

what percent of youth who USE alcohol in Alexandria are caught by the police?

61% of police reported that 0 to 10% of youth are caught. 25% of police reported 10 to 20% of youth are caught.

what percentage of adults who purchase alcohol for minors are caught by the police?

82% of police reported that 0 to 10% of youth are caught. 7% of police reported 10 to 20% of youth are caught.

110. What are some of the reasons that youth who use alcohol are not caught by the police?

The most common response was that youth drink at home or in a private residence. Other responses included “it is supported by parents, it is hard to monitor, the changed focus of the street crimes unit, youth are discreet, it is not an enforcement priority, and police do not have the resources to deal with this on a daily basis.”

111. What are some of the reasons that youth who use marijuana are not caught by the police?

Most reported similar responses to the previous item. The most common response was that “youth smoke at home or in a private residence. Other responses included it is supported by parents, it is hard to monitor, the changed focus of the street crimes unit, youth are discreet, police do not have the resources, and there is not enough under cover policing.”

112. What are some of the reasons that youth who sell marijuana are not caught by the police?

The most common response was that there are not enough police. Other responses included “acceptance of drug use by peers, youthful dealers have small well vetted customers with little chance of undercover success, lack of informants, changed focus of the street crimes unit, youth are discreet, sell only to friends, and peer pressure on youth to not report it.”

113. How much do each of the following statements describe Alexandria compared with other communities?

Crime and/or drug selling among youth

43% of police reported less than other cities, 46% reported the same as other cities, and 11% reported more than other cities.

Fights among youth

36% of police reported less than other cities, 57% reported the same as other cities, and 7% reported more than other cities.

Empty or abandoned buildings

86% of police reported less than other cities, 14% reported the same as other cities, and no one reported more than other cities.

Graffiti

57% of police reported less than other cities, 43% reported the same as other cities, and no one reported more than other cities.

114. How often are youth substance possession charges dropped and what are the typical reasons when this occurs?

Most reported they did not know. Other responses included “charges dropped due to age, diversion programs, plea agreements, approximately 50% are dropped due to first time offenders, rarely dropped but often diverted, and dropped when youth attend counseling/education classes.”

115. How often are youth drunk driving charges dropped and what are the typical reasons when this occurs?

Most reported they did not know. Other responses included “rarely, dropped due to age and given probation, sentencing is drastically reduced, very often, 50% of the time, not often because youth must attend mandatory ASAP class, and almost never.”

116. How comfortable are you in enforcing the laws about youth substance possession and use when parents and youth do not support you?

Most reported they were very comfortable enforcing the law. Other responses included that “somebody has to do the job, not very comfortable when parents do not support the police, and it makes no difference.”

117. If you were able to change existing laws or law enforcement practices with regard to youth substance use, what changes would you recommend?

Most reported stiffer penalties. Other responses included “more education in the schools, greater focus on undercover policing, hold parents accountable, strengthen the laws punish adults for providing alcohol to underage drinkers, take discretion away from judges, and no changes.”

118. What are the barriers to law enforcement in stopping youth substance use?

The most common response was parental support. Other responses included “lack of citizens who report offenses, easy access to items in the house, lack of resources, lack of education by parents and schools, no barriers, limited focus on street level drug enforcement, not enough support from the court and the community, juvenile justice system does not fully enforce sentencing guidelines, and parental consent.”

119. Compared with other cities...

How much youth alcohol use do you think is going on in the Alexandria community?

19% of police reported less than other cities, 77% reported the same as other cities, and 4% reported more than other cities.

How much youth tobacco use do you think is going on in the Alexandria community?

15% of police reported less than other cities, 81% reported the same as other cities, and 4% reported more than other cities.

How much youth marijuana use do you think is going on in the Alexandria community?

19% of police reported less than other cities, 69% reported the same as other cities, and 12% reported more than other cities.

120. What do you think of the extent of the problem given this data?

Some reported that it is similar to other cities. Other responses included that “we need more citizens to report alcohol violations, more prevention programs, not out of control, Alexandria has a problem on its hands, I am shocked, this shows cultural differences, parents need to start doing a better job of parenting, normal, kids experiment, white people have easier access to use everything in their high school years due to house parties, minorities do not have a safe place to consume and take the risk in public and eventually get caught, about what I expected, more pervasive than I anticipated, resources should be directed toward reducing alcohol and marijuana use, kids are learning this behavior at an early age and we should be holding parents accountable, and more should be done in education such as bring back funding for DARE.”

121. Why do you think Alexandria has this level of youth substance use, abuse?

The most common responses were “I do not know, and the actions of parents.” Other responses included “increase in broken homes, too much free time and available money, Alexandria does not take on the bigger city problems of money, poverty, and education, kids trying to fit in, accepted by community standards, wide availability of tobacco, alcohol, and narcotics at school (especially TCW), liberal society in Alexandria, lack of punishment from courts, difference in values and morals, peer pressure, lack of activities, and the nature of teenagers to rebel against authority.”

122. Do you know where youth get alcohol and, if so, where?

The most common responses were parents and friends. Other responses included “stores, Chinatown DC, older siblings, 7-11, fake IDs, they know businesses that sell to youth, adults, relatives, neighbors, a few bars, and Rite Aide Drugs on Richmond Highway has been cited for selling alcohol to minors.”

123. Do you know where youth get marijuana and if so, where?

The most common response was friends. Other responses included “streets, someone at school, older siblings, drug dealers, their neighborhood, and parents.”

124. Do you know of parents who provide alcohol to their children? What is your opinion of this?

The majority reported “no.” Other responses included “European culture raises children with alcohol so they appreciate and not abuse it, if identified they should be prosecuted, it is terrible, I am sure there are a lot of parents who provide their children with alcohol, parents should be charged with child neglect, they need to be educated about the law and punished for these crimes, it is illegal and dangerous, should not do it, and minimal objection to beer and wine to child 18-21 and served with a meal.”

125. Do you know of businesses in Alexandria that don't regularly card patrons to make sure they are over 21 before serving them alcohol?

81% reported “no” and 19% reported “yes.”

126. If yes, how big of a problem do you think this is in Alexandria?

27% reported less than other cities and 73% reported the same as other cities.

127. Do you know of situations where adults purchase alcohol for minors?

62% reported “no” and 38% reported “yes.”

128. If yes, how big of a problem do you think this is in Alexandria?

21% reported less than other cities and 79% reported the same as other cities.

129. What do you know about the effects of alcohol/drugs on youth?

The most common response was that drugs are harmful to youth’s physical and psychological health. Other responses included that “it causes them to make bad decisions that lead to all types of problems, causes addiction, damages their brains, more destructive the younger they start, changes their values and attitudes, inhibits ability to learn, causes accidents, not much, and nothing.”

130. Do you think the Alexandria community is doing enough to prevent youth substance use?

65% reported “yes” and 35% reported “no.”

131. What role do you think parents/law enforcement/schools/others have in youth substance use prevention in Alexandria?

The most common response was that parents are most important in prevention. Other responses included “more prevention programs, zero tolerance, work together, a community standard that does not vary by ethnicity, schools should provide education, courts should provide punishment for those who are convicted, law enforcement should arrest violators, the substance abuser first and the substance abuser’s parents next, and it is a partnership.”

132. Do you think law enforcement in Alexandria could benefit from more information about youth substance use?

54% reported “yes” and 46% reported “no.”

133. How likely is it that you would attend a presentation for law enforcement on youth substance use prevention?

35% reported “not likely”, 39% reported “somewhat likely”, and 27% reported “very likely.”

134. Please use this space to write anything else you have to add on the topic of youth substance use in Alexandria.

There were two comments. First, “school teachers and personnel are most likely to identify risky youth behaviors. They need to report that behavior and feel confident the community and that the system backs them. Police should be the last resort but should be recognized as a valuable resource and be supported when other efforts fail.” Second, “I believe that Alexandria, in general, is doing a great job as far as youth substance use in Alexandria.”

Business Community Members Survey Responses (n = 16)

135. How wrong would most adults (over 21) in your community think it is for youth

To drink alcohol?

Approximately 6% of business community members reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to drink alcohol, 25% reported “a little bit wrong”, 38% reported “wrong”, and 31% reported “very wrong”.

To smoke cigarettes?

Approximately 6% of business community members reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to smoke cigarettes, 25% reported “a little bit wrong”, 13% reported “wrong”, and 56% reported “very wrong”.

To use marijuana?

Approximately 6% of business community members reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to use marijuana, 6% reported “a little bit wrong”, 25% reported “wrong”, and 63% reported “very wrong”.

To use other drugs?

No business community members reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to use other drugs, 13% reported “a little bit wrong”, 6% reported “wrong”, and 81% reported “very wrong”.

136. What best described your attitude toward youth drinking?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to drink.

Approximately 50% of business community members reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to drink.

Because it is illegal to drink, youth should not drink.

Approximately 25% of business community members reported that they believe youth should not drink because it is illegal.

I think youth drinking is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

Approximately 6% reported they believe that drinking is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow drinking in their home where they can model moderate drinking and control youth consumption.

Approximately 38% of business community members reported that they believe that parents should allow drinking in their home where they can model moderate drinking and control youth consumption because youth will soon go off and live on their own.

I think the drinking age should be lowered because current laws don't stop youth from drinking.

Approximately 25% of business community members reported that they believe the drinking age should be lowered because current laws don't stop youth from drinking.

137. What best described your attitude toward marijuana use?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to use marijuana.

Approximately 63% of business community members reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth use marijuana.

Because it is illegal to use marijuana, youth should not use it.

Approximately 31% of business community members reported that they believe youth should not use marijuana because it is illegal.

I think youth marijuana use is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

Approximately 6% reported they believe marijuana use is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow marijuana use in their home where they can monitor use.

Approximately 6% of business community members reported that they believe that parents should allow marijuana use in their home where they can monitor it.

I think marijuana should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

Approximately 13% of business community members reported that they believe marijuana use should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

138. What other drugs do you think teens in Alexandria are using to get high?

Business community members listed other drugs that they think teens in Alexandria are using to get high including amphetamines, barbiturates, hallucinogens, alcohol, cocaine, methamphetamine, prescription drugs, ecstasy, heroin, paint, inhalants, and crack.

139. What best described your attitude toward other drugs to get high?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to use these other drugs.

Approximately 88% of business community members reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth use other drugs to get high.

Because it is illegal to use other drugs, youth should not use it.

Approximately 19% of business community members reported that they believe youth should not use other drugs because it is illegal.

I think youth drug use is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

No business community members reported they believe drug use is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow drug use in their home where they can monitor use.

Approximately 7% of business community members reported that they believe that parents should allow drug use in their home where they can monitor it.

I think that these other drugs should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

Approximately 7% of business community members reported that they believe marijuana use should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using them.

140. What best described your attitude toward youth tobacco use?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to smoke.

Approximately 94% of business community members reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to smoke.

Because it is illegal to buy cigarettes, youth should not smoke.

Approximately 25% of business community members reported that they believe youth should not smoke because it is illegal to buy cigarettes.

I think youth smoking is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

No business community members reported they believe smoking is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow youth smoking in their home where they can monitor use.

Approximately 6% of business community members reported that they believe that parents should allow smoking in their home where they can monitor use.

141. Do you think it's acceptable for parents to permit youth to drink beer and alcohol in their homes as long as adults are present?

73% reported "no" and 27% reported "yes."

142. How concerned are people at your place of business about youth substance use? Please explain.

There were a variety of responses including "none, not applicable, not overly concerned, somewhat, moderately, and very concerned."

143. What youth substance use prevention activities does your place of business offer?

The majority reported none. One reported that "we speak to them about the health issues of drug and alcohol use." Another reported that "we offer many in school prevention programs." Another reported that "we collaborated with the school system, Inova Fairfax, and Inova Alexandria hospitals."

144. What policies or programs are in place in your business to help employees with alcohol and or drug problems?

The most common response was none. Other responses were "coverage and support in rehab and detox, we have a referral policy, we supply health insurance, and employee assistance programs."

145. Are policies or programs in place to prevent teen substance use?

91% reported “no” and 9% reported “yes.”

146. What additional activities could you offer at your place of business that would help prevent teen substance use?

The most common responses were none and not applicable. Other responses included “speakers, education, internships, leadership by example, not sure, and become a collaborative mental health practice.”

147. What types of training, mentorship, internship or job opportunities at your place of business are offered to youth?

The most common response was summer jobs and internships. Other responses included none, entry level jobs, and not sure.

148. What types of incentives are offered to employees to spend time with youth?

The majority reported none. Other responses included family leave, limited, pay, and mentoring opportunities.

149. How much youth alcohol use do you think is going on in the Alexandria community?

91% reported the same as other cities and 9% reported less than other cities.

150. How much youth tobacco use do you think is going on in the Alexandria community?

18% reported less than other cities, 73% reported the same as other cities, and 9% reported more than other cities.

151. How much youth marijuana use do you think is going on in the Alexandria community?

82% reported the same as other cities and 18% reported more than other cities.

152. What do you think of the extent of the problem given this data?

There were a variety of responses including “I don’t think any differently, not surprising, these data aren’t very useful in the format presented, sorry this is a meaningless question, it is a serious problem, shocked, it is always a good idea to reduce the numbers, this is a definite community problem, good to see less cigarette use, and concern over drinking and driving and the unintended consequences of alcohol abuse such as rape, pregnancy, and accidents.”

153. Why do you think Alexandria has this level of youth substance use, abuse?

There were a variety of responses including “urban environment, large proportion of single families, high income area for whites with two working parents, blacks and Hispanics have low self esteem and supervision, affluence, liberal leaning, courts emphasize punishment instead of treatment which results in higher recidivism, rite of passage, alienation from society, pressure from parents to succeed early in everything, not enough time spent as a family, disparity in income levels, peer pressure, kids are left alone, and business let kids purchase very easily.”

154. Do you know where youth get alcohol and if so, where?

The majority reported no. Other responses were home, friends, illegally, strangers, family, and older adults.

155. Do you know where youth get marijuana and if so, where?

The majority reported no. Other responses were friends, school, family, and peers.

156. Do you know of parents who provide alcohol to their children? What is your opinion of this?

The majority reported no. Other responses included “yes, they are being irresponsible, parents should not promote substance abuse, and if it is done in moderation I have no problem with this.” One response stated that “parents should teach responsibility, if an older child (16-18) is introduced to a glass of watered wine with dinner or observes parents being responsible with alcohol use (and discussing it), it may help teach positive use, done elsewhere in the world for years.”

157. Do you know of businesses in Alexandria that don't regularly card patrons to make sure they are over 21 before serving them alcohol?

100% reported ‘no.’

158. If yes, how big of a problem do you think this is in Alexandria?

89% reported the same as other cities and 11% reported less than other cities.

159. What do you know about the effects of alcohol/drugs on youth?

There were a variety of responses including “general knowledge, lessens the youth’s educational interests, largely inconsequential assuming an otherwise supportive environment, very dangerous, prevalent in school dropouts, associated with depression, aggression, and conduct disorders, and marijuana use, to my knowledge and research, has no known long term effects.”

160. Do you think the city of Alexandria is doing enough to prevent youth substance use?

64% reported “no” and 36% reported “yes.”

161. What role do you think parents/police/schools/businesses/others have in youth substance use prevention in Alexandria?

The most common response was that parents have the primary responsibility. Other responses included “that schools can aid in the process, I don’t think it is the responsibility of businesses, businesses can mentor, businesses should report illegal activity, police should enforce the law, a collaborative approach, and keeping kids engaged in positive endeavors would help.”

162. For Restaurants the Serve Alcohol: Do you have an alcohol server education program in place?

There was one response of “no.”

163. For Restaurants the Serve Alcohol: Would you be interested in learning more about alcohol server education programs?

There was one response of “yes.”

164. Do you think businesses in Alexandria could benefit from more information about youth substance use?

55% reported “yes” and 45% reported “no.”

165. How likely is it that you would attend a presentation for the business community on youth substance use prevention?

46% reported “not likely”, 18 % reported “somewhat likely”, and 36% reported “very likely.”

166. Please use this space to write anything else you have to add on the topic of youth substance use in Alexandria.

One response was that “all this is old hat. We don't need knowledge and theories; we need funded programs to give kids jobs, and programs to get them into and keep them in school.” Another response was that “it is city-wide problem that needs to be addressed.” One other response was “collaboration of all sectors without blame!”

Youth Service Providers Survey Responses (n = 62)

167. How wrong would most adults (over 21) in your community think it is for youth

To drink alcohol?

Approximately 2% of service provider reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to drink alcohol, 31% reported “a little bit wrong”, 44% reported “wrong”, and 24% reported “very wrong”.

To smoke cigarettes?

No service providers reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to smoke cigarettes, 29% reported “a little bit wrong”, 45% reported “wrong”, and 26% reported “very wrong”.

To use marijuana?

No service providers reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to use marijuana, 18% reported “ a little bit wrong”, 24% reported “wrong”, and 58% reported “very wrong”.

To use other drugs?

No service providers reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to use other drugs, 5% reported “a little bit wrong”, 31% reported “wrong”, and 65% reported “very wrong”.

168. What best described your attitude toward youth drinking?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to drink.

Approximately 86% of service providers reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to drink.

Because it is illegal to drink, youth should not drink.

Approximately 42% of service providers reported that they believe youth should not drink because it is illegal.

I think youth drinking is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

Approximately 2% reported they believe that drinking is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow drinking in their home where they can model moderate drinking and control youth consumption.

Approximately 10% of service providers reported that they believe that parents should allow drinking in their home where they can model moderate drinking and control youth consumption because youth will soon go off and live on their own.

I think the drinking age should be lowered because current laws don't stop youth from drinking.

Approximately 5% of service providers reported that they believe the drinking age should be lowered because current laws don't stop youth from drinking.

169. What best described your attitude toward marijuana use?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to use marijuana.

Approximately 86% of service providers reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth use marijuana.

Because it is illegal to use marijuana, youth should not use it.

Approximately 47% of service providers reported that they believe youth should not use marijuana because it is illegal.

I think youth marijuana use is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

Approximately 2% reported they believe marijuana use is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow marijuana use in their home where they can monitor use.

No service providers reported that they believe that parents should allow marijuana use in their home where they can monitor it.

I think marijuana should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

Approximately 5% of service providers reported that they believe marijuana use should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

170. What other drugs do you think teens in Alexandria are using to get high?

Service providers listed other drugs that they think teens in Alexandria are using including cocaine, prescription drugs, Adderall, Ritalin, Vicadin, Percoset, Oxycontin, anti-anxiety drugs,

heroin, designer drugs, sedatives, inhalants, methamphetamine, pain killers, over-the-counter drugs, ecstasy, puffers, inhalants, aerosol cans, boat, speed, glue, barbiturates, PCP, and LSD.

171. What best described your attitude toward other drugs to get high?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to use these other drugs.

Approximately 97% of service providers reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth use other drugs to get high.

Because it is illegal to use other drugs, youth should not use it.

Approximately 42% of service providers reported that they believe youth should not use other drugs because it is illegal.

I think youth drug use is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

No service providers reported they believe drug use is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow drug use in their home where they can monitor use.

No service providers reported that they believe that parents should allow drug use in their home where they can monitor it.

I think that these other drugs should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

No service providers reported that they believe marijuana use should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using them.

172. What best described your attitude toward youth tobacco use?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to smoke.

Approximately 98% of service providers reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to smoke.

Because it is illegal to buy cigarettes, youth should not smoke.

Approximately 36% of service providers reported that they believe youth should not smoke because it is illegal to buy cigarettes.

I think youth smoking is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

No service providers reported they believe smoking is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow youth smoking in their home where they can monitor use.

Approximately 2% of service providers reported that they believe that parents should allow smoking in their home where they can monitor use.

173. What are the primary reasons that youth use your services?

The most common reason was counseling for various problems such as depression, anxiety, stress, suicide ideation, grief, loss, peer pressure, delinquent activities, sexual identity, parental problems, sexual abuse, sexual assault, pregnancy, substance abuse, and academic problems. Other responses were specific academic skills such as reading, recreational activities, court referrals, probation, medical, snacks, employment, and college planning.

174. What activities do you offer to youth to help prevent substance use?

The most common responses were counseling, drug education, and substance abuse prevention. Other responses included “alcohol diversion programs, urine drug screenings, employment, AA meetings, shelter care, Red Ribbon Week, Kick Butts Day, SASSI assessments, collaboration with school and community-based providers, peer pressure reversal skills, recreation, journaling, movies, sports programs, health instruction, Healthy Relationships programs, self-esteem building, goal setting, field trips, assessment, guest speakers, and none.”

175. How effective do you think these activities are in preventing youth substance use?

There were a variety of responses including very effective, moderately effective, somewhat effective, not very effective, and unsure.

176. What additional activities could you offer that would help prevent youth substance use?

The most common response was “not sure.” Other responses included “intensive outpatient treatment services for youth and the family, day treatment, residential treatment, 12 step programs in the community (not school), teen targeted messages to call hotlines, funded Detoxification for youth, parent education, more mentoring, more field trips, substance abuse screening at the Adolescent Health Center, increased recreation centers and hours, sports clinics, additional extra-curricular activities to encourage health and safety, team up more with the CSB, speakers on substance use, leadership activities, instructional videos, self-esteem enhancement, and jobs.”

177. What prevents you from offering these additional activities?

The most common responses were funding, time, and resources. Other responses included “current responsibilities, staffing, my position, just getting started, not my area of expertise, not our mission, still learning about the community, lack of interest in community, need more volunteers, and not sure.”

178. Compared with other communities...

How much youth alcohol use do you think is going on in the Alexandria community?

8% of youth service providers reported less than other cities, 80% reported the same as other cities, and 12% reported more than other cities.

How much youth tobacco use do you think is going on in the Alexandria community?

28% of youth service providers reported less than other cities, 61% reported the same as other cities, and 12% reported more than other cities.

How much youth marijuana use do you think is going on in the Alexandria community?

8% of youth service providers reported less than other cities, 75% reported the same as other cities, and 18% reported more than other cities.

179. What do you think of the extent of the problem given this data?

The most common response was that it is a serious problem. Other responses included “even worse than I thought, alarming, wasn’t aware of some facts, not surprised, I believe the numbers are low, if self-report I question the accuracy, appears greater than the national average, address alcohol use as the priority and target 13 and younger, good that you are doing this survey, hopefully some good ideas will come out of it, sad to see the heavy alcohol use, we need a different approach, and kids would rather listen to peers than adults.”

180. Why do you think Alexandria has this level of youth substance use and abuse?

The most common responses were easy availability and proximity to Washington, DC. Other responses included “lack of parental involvement and supervision, poverty, family discord, domestic violence, parental substance abuse, academic stress, rite of passage, peer influence, single parent families, youth have lower self-esteem, lower value for life, poor role models and poor coping skills, need for more summer and after-school activities, lack of involvement of adults in the lives of children, negative media images, teen exploration, and don’t know.”

181. Do you know where youth get alcohol and if so, where?

The most common response was from parents with or without their knowledge. Other responses included “older siblings, older friends, kids pay drunks or homeless individuals to buy alcohol, use fake IDs, 7-11 and other chain or grocery stores, and don’t know.”

182. Do you know where youth get marijuana and if so, where?

The most common responses were no and from friends. Other responses included dealers, peers, adults, siblings, and parents.

183. Do you know of parents who provide alcohol to their children? What is your opinion of this?

The most common responses were no and it is wrong. Other responses included “it sends the wrong message, parents should model responsible drinking behavior and never drink and drive, and the parents should be fined, jailed, or reprimanded.” One other response was that “it depends on the context. I have friends who have lived in Europe and their kids will have a glass of wine on special occasions (usually the wine is cut with seltzer). I don't see the problem with that.”

184. What do you know about the effects of alcohol/drugs on youth?

The most common responses were that it affects brain development and is unhealthy. Other responses included “enough to be concerned, thwarts emotional growth, personality changes, dependency issues, affects family system, becomes a habit, affects school performance, social and family relationships, and hides mental health concerns, different drugs have different effects, leads to drunk driving, more sexual behavior, date rapes, and general idiotic behavior, affects reasoning ability and judgment, blurs vision, linked to depression, and affects the liver.”

185. Do you think the Alexandria community is doing enough to prevent youth substance use?

74% reported “no” and 26% reported “yes.”

186. What role do you think parents/police/schools/youth service providers/others have in youth substance use prevention in Alexandria?

The most common responses were that they all have important roles and should work together. Other responses included “parental involvement is vital, parents need to set an example of moderation in alcohol use, fact-based education that doesn’t try to scare kids but opens up dialogue, parents have to be aware of the signs and symptoms to look for, offer recreational options to youth, and there could be a website for students, parents, and interested people in the city to give medical information about the effects of drugs and stories by parents, children, teachers, and police about the negative effects of drugs.”

187. Do you think youth services providers in Alexandria could benefit from more information about youth substance use?

90% reported “yes” and 10% reported “no.”

188. How likely is it that you would attend a presentation for youth service providers on youth substance use prevention?

46% reported “very likely”, 42% reported “somewhat likely”, and 12% reported “not likely.”

189. Please use this space to write anything else you have to add on the topic of youth substance use in Alexandria.

The comments included that “prevention will be more effective when we begin treating the parents, families, older siblings and friends of our youth, more treatment options and resources please, link abuse of alcohol/drugs to sex crimes/abuse to get more attention, more variety of treatments should be applied, drug counselors in the schools are not very effective because kids do not want to be seen going to them, and stop kicking God out of the plans, outreach from recovery program is necessary, and thanks for bringing attention to this issue.” One other response was that “we need to have more appropriate age-based programs that teach the problems with usage and skills for refusal for both the younger ones and the teens. It doesn't do to just 'preach' to them. We have to give them the skills! We also need to engage the older teens in dialogue about 'why' they like using and have the teens lead the discussion/activities/programs/etc.”

Community Members Survey Responses (n = 94)

190. How wrong would most adults (over 21) in your community think it is for youth

To drink alcohol?

Approximately 9% of community members reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to drink alcohol, 22% reported “a little bit wrong”, 47% reported “wrong”, and 23% reported “very wrong”.

To smoke cigarettes?

Approximately 6% of community members reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to smoke cigarettes, 16% reported “a little bit wrong”, 49% reported “wrong”, and 29% reported “very wrong”.

To use marijuana?

Approximately 4% of community members reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to use marijuana, 11% reported “a little bit wrong”, 32% reported “wrong”, and 53% reported “very wrong”.

To use other drugs?

Approximately 4% of community members reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to use other drugs, 3% reported “a little bit wrong”, 17% reported “wrong”, and 75% reported “very wrong”.

191. What best described your attitude toward youth drinking?**I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to drink.**

Approximately 67% of community members reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to drink.

Because it is illegal to drink, youth should not drink.

Approximately 48% of community members reported that they believe youth should not drink because it is illegal.

I think youth drinking is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

Approximately 4% reported they believe that drinking is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow drinking in their home where they can model moderate drinking and control youth consumption.

Approximately 23% of community members reported that they believe that parents should allow drinking in their home where they can model moderate drinking and control youth consumption because youth will soon go off and live on their own.

I think the drinking age should be lowered because current laws don't stop youth from drinking.

Approximately 12% of community members reported that they believe the drinking age should be lowered because current laws don't stop youth from drinking.

192. What best describes your attitude toward marijuana use?**I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to use marijuana.**

Approximately 73% of community members reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth use marijuana.

Because it is illegal to use marijuana, youth should not use it.

Approximately 54% of community members reported that they believe youth should not use marijuana because it is illegal.

I think youth marijuana use is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

Approximately 2% reported they believe marijuana use is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow marijuana use in their home where they can monitor use.

No community members reported that they believe that parents should allow marijuana use in their home where they can monitor it.

I think marijuana should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

Approximately 12% of community members reported that they believe marijuana use should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

193. What other drugs do you think teens in Alexandria are using to get high?

Community members listed other drugs that they think teens in Alexandria are using including cocaine, prescription drugs, Ritalin, Oxycontin, nitrous oxide, mushrooms, anti-anxiety drugs, heroin, designer drugs, sedatives, inhalants, methamphetamine, pain killers, over-the-counter drugs, ecstasy, puffers, inhalants, aerosol cans, cold medicines, barbiturates, PCP, and LSD.

194. What best describes your attitude toward other drugs to get high?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to use these other drugs.

Approximately 93% of community members reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth use other drugs to get high.

Because it is illegal to use other drugs, youth should not use it.

Approximately 45% of community members reported that they believe youth should not use other drugs because it is illegal.

I think youth drug use is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

Approximately 1% of community members reported they believe drug use is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow drug use in their home where they can monitor use.

No community members reported that they believe that parents should allow drug use in their home where they can monitor it.

I think that these other drugs should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

No community members reported that they believe marijuana use should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using them.

195. What best described your attitude toward youth tobacco use?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to smoke.

Approximately 98% of community members reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to smoke.

Because it is illegal to buy cigarettes, youth should not smoke.

Approximately 42% of community members reported that they believe youth should not smoke because it is illegal to buy cigarettes.

I think youth smoking is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

No community members reported they believe smoking is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow youth smoking in their home where they can monitor use.

No community members reported that they believe that parents should allow smoking in their home where they can monitor use.

196. How much do you think youth risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they...

smoke one or more packs of cigarettes per day?

87% reported great risk, 9% reported moderate risk, 2% reported slight risk, and 1% reported no risk.

try marijuana once or twice?

11% reported great risk, 37% reported moderate risk, 40% reported slight risk, and 13% reported no risk.

smoke marijuana regularly?

67% reported great risk, 25% reported moderate risk, 7% reported slight risk, and 1% reported no risk.

drink one or two alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, liquor) one or more times a month?

22% reported great risk, 49% reported moderate risk, 25% reported slight risk, and 4% reported no risk.

drink 5 or more drinks in a row?

92% reported great risk, 5% reported moderate risk, 2% reported slight risk, and 1% reported no risk.

197. What do you know about the effects of alcohol/drugs on youth?

There were a variety of responses. Some responses focused on the amount including “nothing, not much, a moderate amount, quite a bit, enough, and a lot.” Some responses focused on the effects including “it is harmful, habit forming, can stunt emotional growth, strained relationships

with others, poor behavior, lowers inhibitions, poor decisions, alcohol is related to most fatal automobile accidents involving youth, can lead to overdose and death, affects brain development, greater risk for teenage pregnancy and STDs, academic problems, criminal behavior, depression/anxiety, can damage body organs, and more negative effects for youth than adults.”

198. How much youth alcohol use do you think is going on in the Alexandria community?

8% of community members reported less than other cities, 81% reported the same as other cities, and 11% reported more than other cities.

199. 10. How much youth tobacco use do you think is going on in the Alexandria community?

23% of community members reported less than other cities, 66% reported the same as other cities, and 11% reported more than other cities.

200. How much youth marijuana use do you think is going on in the Alexandria community?

13% of community members reported less than other cities, 77% reported the same as other cities, and 11% reported more than other cities.

201. If a youth drank some beer, wine or hard liquor in your neighborhood would he or she be likely to be caught by the police?

20% reported “Not sure”, 59% reported “not likely”, 19% reported “somewhat likely”, and 2% reported “very likely.”

202. If a youth smoked marijuana or used another illegal drug in your neighborhood would he or she be likely to be caught by the police?

17% reported “not sure”, 54% reported “not likely”, 27% reported “somewhat likely”, and 2% reported “very likely.”

203. If you saw a youth drink some beer, wine or hard liquor in your neighborhood, how likely would you report this to the youth’s parents?

22% reported “not sure”, 22% reported “not likely”, 40% reported “somewhat likely”, and 16% reported “very likely.”

204. What do you think of the extent of the problem given this data?

The most common response was that it is a serious problem. Other responses included “it is surprising, not surprising, very dangerous, not concerned, do not think this indicates a big problem, like to see more detailed statistics before making a judgment, worse than I imagined, kids are escaping crappy environments and that is sad, especially frightening that the younger ages are using drugs and alcohol, something needs to be done, comparisons to national averages indicates that Alexandria needs more preventative programs, lack of monitoring by parents, it is pervasive and action needs to be taken, Alexandria is doing pretty well, much higher than I would have expected for minority groups in middle school years, we need a greater focus on Hispanic and black youth, and this is a problem that clearly affects all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.”

205. Why do you think Alexandria has this level of substance use and abuse?

The most common response was don't know. Other responses included "easy access, widely available, the city is full of young experimenters, lack of parental supervision, drugs are more available in urban areas, close to DC, lack of other activities, easy access to money, lack of enforcement, lack of cooperation between state and local authorities, youth follow peers without regard to the consequences, peer pressure, Hispanics have fewer alternatives for self-expression, economic power, and group identity, insufficient supervision in all daily activities, no random student drug testing, discrepancy between wealthy and poor, and society glamorizes it."

206. Do you know where youth get alcohol and if so, where?

The majority reported no. Other responses included "it is purchased by friends, parents, and relatives, 7-11 near Braddock Road metro station, and convenience stores in the Arlandria or North Del Ray areas, by using fake IDs or having someone older buy it."

207. Do you know where youth get marijuana and if so, where?

The majority reported no. Other responses included "friends, black market, dealers, siblings, Seven Eleven is one of the more popular spots, kids from Arlington County distribute marijuana to youths at school, and street vendors in Old Town and Del Ray areas."

208. Do you know of parents who provide alcohol to their children? What is your opinion of this?

Nearly half of the responses were no. Other responses included "it is dangerous, the parents should be arrested, If parents are providing alcohol to their own children at their own family functions in their own home that is their business and culture, as long as parents are teaching their kids responsible drinking behavior then it's fine, many prominent families in Alexandria provide alcohol, they are European and the children think that drinking to get drunk is funny, makes sense if part of overall parenting strategy, I allowed my children to drink at home when anyone else was drinking, and provide alcohol, no; but giving a chance to taste wine with a meal and learn about wine, yes; Another response was I allowed my children to drink at home when anyone else was drinking. They are all legally of drinking age now and have had no problems related to alcohol."

209. Do you think the Alexandria community is doing enough to prevent youth substance use?

77% reported "no" and 23% reported "yes."

210. What role do you think parents/police/schools/others have in youth substance use prevention in Alexandria?

The most common responses were that "parents have the primary responsibility and that everyone has to be involved." Other responses included that "parents and schools have the greatest responsibility to teach kids about the dangers of alcohol and drugs, we should get input from the kids to find out why they do these things, police are there to prevent disasters and clean up afterwards, law enforcement must be provided with the support necessarily (financially, community backing, etc) to ensure proactive and active enforcement of the laws existing, community coalitions should include all sectors of the population to ensure consistency in messaging, seems to me that our Department on Mental Health, MR, and Substance Abuse needs

more funding for working with our children in our schools, and store owners who provide alcohol to teens should be deeply punished for those actions.”

211. If a substance use prevention workshop were to be offered to community members, would you be interested in participating?

54% reported “no” and 46% reported “yes.”

212. How likely is it that you would attend a presentation for community members on youth substance use prevention?

40% reported “not likely”, 43% reported “somewhat likely”, and 17% reported “very likely.”

213. In your opinion, where is the best place to hold a presentation on youth substance use prevention?

The most common response was at schools. Other responses included “community centers, malls, recreation centers, churches, TC Williams high school, GW middle school, neighborhoods, Del Ray, Arlandria, center of town, PTA meetings, community association meetings, coffee houses, near bus lines, at a movie theatre, and at a park.”

214. What topics should be covered?

The responses included “rates of teen substance use, what drugs are being used, what factors increase the risks that a teen will begin to use drugs, warning signs, what factors protect youth from using, where different kinds of drugs are concentrated within the city, risks vs. social/emotional benefits of drug use, short- and long-term effects, how to talk with youth about alcohol and drug use, how to prevent peer pressure, medical information about the effects of drug use, statistics and tips on prevention, approaches that have worked in other communities, discussion of random drug testing in Alexandria high schools, parents’ and teachers’ roles in prevention, risk of criminal record and what this can do to one’s life, status of substance abuse in Alexandria (all age categories), consequences of being a substance abuser (physical, legal, etc.), impact of substance abuse in Alexandria and the U.S. (cost, competitiveness), personal stories from happy substance abusers, personal stories from unhappy substance abusers, peers speaking about their friends and their hopes, role models (adults) driving home the messages, parenting that leads to little or no substance use, and results of this survey.”

215. Please use this space to write anything else you have to add on the topic of youth substance use in Alexandria.

The responses included that “the worst consequences of underage drinking or smoking or use of illegal drugs results from being caught by authorities not from the act, pleased the City has a Coalition but need more active involvement by parents, police, and schools, look at best practices in other communities, driving age should be raised to age 18, young people are “given” freedom to “be themselves” instead of being given practice in learning self-discipline and the importance of a shared value system, I commend you for moving on these issues for our community, and the best presentations include follow up action steps.”

216. What do you consider yourself to be? (Choose one best response.)

87% reported “white”, 7% reported “black”, 4% reported “Asian American”, and 1% reported “Arab.”

Faith Community Members Survey Responses (n = 20)

217. How wrong would most adults (over 21) in your community think it is for youth

To drink alcohol?

Approximately 5% of faith community members reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to drink alcohol, 25% reported “a little bit wrong”, 50% reported “wrong”, and 20% reported “very wrong”.

To smoke cigarettes?

Approximately 5% of faith community members reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to smoke cigarettes, 25% reported “a little bit wrong”, 60% reported “wrong”, and 10% reported “very wrong”.

To use marijuana?

No faith community members reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to use marijuana, 5% reported “a little bit wrong”, 45% reported “wrong”, and 50% reported “very wrong”.

To use other drugs?

No faith community members reported that most adults in the community would think it is “not at all wrong” for teens to use other drugs, 5% reported “a little bit wrong”, 30% reported “wrong”, and 65% reported “very wrong”.

218. What best described your attitude toward youth drinking?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to drink.

Approximately 90% of faith community members reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to drink.

Because it is illegal to drink, youth should not drink.

Approximately 60% of faith community members reported that they believe youth should not drink because it is illegal.

I think youth drinking is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

No faith members reported they believe that drinking is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow drinking in their home where they can model moderate drinking and control youth consumption.

Approximately 5% of faith community members reported that they believe that parents should allow drinking in their home where they can model moderate drinking and control youth consumption because youth will soon go off and live on their own.

I think the drinking age should be lowered because current laws don't stop youth from drinking.

Approximately 5% of faith community members reported that they believe the drinking age should be lowered because current laws don't stop youth from drinking.

219. What best described your attitude toward marijuana use?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to use marijuana.

Approximately 95% of faith community members reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth use marijuana.

Because it is illegal to use marijuana, youth should not use it.

Approximately 70% of faith community members reported that they believe youth should not use marijuana because it is illegal.

I think youth marijuana use is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

No faith community members reported they believe marijuana use is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow marijuana use in their home where they can monitor use.

Approximately 5% of faith community members reported that they believe that parents should allow marijuana use in their home where they can monitor it.

I think marijuana should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

Approximately 5% of faith community members reported that they believe marijuana use should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

220. What other drugs do you think teens in Alexandria are using to get high?

Faith members listed several other drugs that they think teens in Alexandria are using to get high including cocaine, pain killers, glue, prescription drugs, crystal methamphetamine, inhalants, crack, barbiturates, inhalants, ecstasy, aerosols, and PCP.

221. What best described your attitude toward other drugs to get high?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to use these other drugs.

Approximately 90% of faith community members reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth use other drugs to get high.

Because it is illegal to use other drugs, youth should not use it.

Approximately 65% of faith community members reported that they believe youth should not use other drugs because it is illegal.

I think youth drug use is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

No faith community members reported they believe drug use is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow drug use in their home where they can monitor use.

No faith community members reported that they believe that parents should allow drug use in their home where they can monitor it.

I think that these other drugs should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using it.

No faith community members reported that they believe marijuana use should be legal because current laws don't stop youth from using them.

222. What best described your attitude toward youth tobacco use?

I think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to smoke.

100% of faith community members reported that they think it is unhealthy and dangerous for youth to smoke.

Because it is illegal to buy cigarettes, youth should not smoke.

Approximately 60% of faith community members reported that they believe youth should not smoke because it is illegal to buy cigarettes.

I think youth smoking is a rite of passage, and parents should accept it.

No faith community members reported they believe smoking is a rite of passage so parents should accept it.

Because youth will soon go off and live on their own, parents should allow youth smoking in their home where they can monitor use.

No faith community members reported that they believe that parents should allow smoking in their home where they can monitor use.

223. There are lots of adults in my faith community that youth could talk to about something important.

33% reported "very true", 61% reported "somewhat true", and 6% reported "somewhat untrue."

224. How is youth alcohol use viewed by your faith community?

The most common response was that it is wrong. Other responses included that "it is not encouraged, not condoned, not good, unhealthy, strongly discouraged, not talked about, sinful, unlawful, and suspect adults would officially disapprove of teen alcohol use, but they wouldn't be alarmed by moderate consumption apart from driving."

225. How is youth tobacco use viewed by your faith community?

The most common response was that it was strongly discouraged. Other responses included "it is not good, not condoned, no one talks about it, dangerous to health, sinful, and unlawful."

226. How is youth marijuana use viewed by your faith community?

The most common responses were that it was strongly discouraged and not good. Other responses included “it is not condoned, no one talks about it, view it as unhealthy, sinful, and illegal.”

227. How do you handle reports of youth substance use in your faith community?

The most common response was to talk to the youth and parents. Other responses included “we counsel them, provide encouragement from our own experiences, and teach them about how receiving God's compassion enables us to make better choices, possibly refer for professional counseling, has not happened, and provide sympathy and support for struggling parents. Another response was I have given lectures to the ministers at my church and it seems to embarrass them. They deny there is a problem, or they just don't talk about it.”

228. Does your faith community provide any messages that are aimed at preventing youth substance use?

The most common response was yes. Some additional responses included “in Sunday school classes and sermons, during confirmation we discuss that our bodies are a gift from God and that we should take care of them appropriately, not particularly and not very purposefully, and in the context of what the Bible has to say about taking care of our bodies and obeying the laws of the land.”

229. How often do you talk about youth substance use in your faith community's meetings?

The most common responses were rarely and seldom. Other responses included “a couple of times each year, monthly, frequently, never, and fairly often in youth education.”

230. What activities for youth do you offer through your faith community to help prevent youth substance use?

There were a variety of responses including “none, youth groups, service groups, confirmation programs, regular Sunday and Tuesday nights, camps, concerts, mission trips, workshops, after school and mentoring programs, skiing, laser tag, picnics, bowling, and loving relationships.”

231. In what ways do you collaborate with other community organizations to help prevent youth substance use?

The most common response was none. Other responses included “we were unsuccessful in starting an Alateen group at TC Williams because no one came, invite speakers, referrals are routinely made to agencies that handle these issues well, and we invite city professionals like Dr. Rohrer to events.”

232. What else do you think you and/or other faith community members could do to help reduce youth substance use?

There were a variety of responses including “be better organized and work together more, talk more, offer a regularly-scheduled weekly activity that youth could participate in on weekend evenings, involving youth in service to people with substance abuse demonstrates the tragic results of substance abuse, stop the parents from drinking so much, have a healthier attitude about abuse - come out of denial, educate both parents and kids and give them the tools to deal

with situations that encourage abuse, focus on the family and not only on the abusing student, and Sunday sermons need to talk about real life issues that affect youth.”

233. How much youth alcohol use do you think is going on in the Alexandria community?

7% of religious community members reported less than other cities, 87% reported the same as other cities, and 7% reported more than other cities.

234. How much youth tobacco use do you think is going on in the Alexandria community?

13% of religious community members reported less than other cities, 87% reported the same as other cities, and no one reported more than other cities.

235. How much youth marijuana use do you think is going on in the Alexandria community?

7% of religious community members reported less than other cities, 80% reported the same as other cities, and 13% reported more than other cities.

236. What do you think of the extent of the problem given this data?

The most common responses indicated that it is a large problem. Some of the responses included “it is big with the potential to grow, alcohol abuse and binge drinking seem to be the most pressing issues along with marijuana, there is room to improve, suspect the data is lower than actual based on conversations with my own teens, we have a problem that needs to be addressed more aggressively, it is a problem in all communities, these statistics aren’t as bad as I would have originally thought, and it is about what I thought it would be.”

237. Why do you think Alexandria has this level of youth substance use, abuse?

There was a mix of responses including “wealth and poverty, lack of parental supervision, illegal substances are easier to get in an urban environment, liberal points of view among Alexandrians and adults such as former school administrators modeling alcohol use, high level of stress and not enough entertainment, high pressured community, Hispanic use because of language barriers, glamorous to use in wealthier families, parent workload is heavier and unsupervised time at home, broken homes, kids with too much time, boredom, peer pressure, and seeing adults who are abusers but still functional.”

238. Do you know where youth get alcohol and if so, where?

The majority reported they did not know. Other responses included “would assume most youth know older teens with fake IDs or young adults who can purchase alcohol, friends, and parent’s home.”

239. Do you know where youth get marijuana and if so, where?

The majority reported they did not know. Other responses included “dealers, other kids, parents, and classmates. “

240. Do you know of parents who provide alcohol to their children? What is your opinion of this?

The majority reported “no.” Other responses included “a small amount is okay as a part of special family gatherings, my teens have indicated that they knew friends who were allowed to have alcohol parties at home, it is a poor example, and disapprove of it.”

241. What do you know about the effects of alcohol/drugs on youth?

There were a variety of responses including “it can become addictive, more effect on youth than adults and youth have less tolerance, hurts academic performance and leads to other criminal behavior, stunting growth and brain development, leads to alcohol and drug problems as adults, marijuana can impair memory, communication, and judgment, leads to depression, sexual promiscuity, and poor relationships, death after car accidents involving alcohol, and disorganized lives. “

242. Do you think the Alexandria community is doing enough to prevent youth substance use?

79% reported “no” and 21% reported “yes.”

243. What role do you think parents/police/schools/faith communities/others have in youth substance use prevention in Alexandria?

The most common response was that all play a role. Other responses included that “as a faith community we could offer activities for youth, parents and schools are primary, we need coordination to avoid duplicate programs, and mentoring.”

244. What is your denomination or how do you identify your faith?

The responses were 3 Presbyterian, 2 Baptist, 2 Episcopal, 1 Lutheran, 1 Catholic, 1 Disciples of Christ, 1 United Methodist, 1 Wesleyan holiness, 1 Reformed Judaism, and 1 non-denominational.

245. Do you think faith communities in Alexandria could benefit from more information about youth substance use?

93% reported “yes” and 7% reported “no.”

246. How likely is it that you would attend a presentation on youth substance use prevention sponsored by your faith community?

7% reported “not likely”, 57% reported “somewhat likely”, and 36% reported “very likely.”

247. Please use this space to write anything else you have to add on the topic of youth substance use in Alexandria.

Comments included that “I did not know we were higher than the national average, I am always ready to share how Al-Anon saved my life and I would love to see more kids take advantage of Alateen, efforts to reach out to the faith community should be intensified, I would like to be more involved at the community level but I am not sure how, and long live youth without alcohol and substance use.”