



BROOKFIELD CARES

Promoting social health and emotional well-being in our community.

2022 Student Attitudes & Behaviors Survey

Key Results



Who we are

- **BROOKFIELD CARES** is a non-profit volunteer community based organization dedicated to creating awareness and positive change around the issues of substance misuse, depression, suicide, and other mental health concerns.
- We work to reach all sectors of the community through their representation on Brookfield CARES as well as through direct outreach. We believe that the more the community can be informed, the more we can destigmatize mental health issues, and the more healthy our community will become.

Who we are

- **BROOKFIELD CARES'** work is funded through donations from the town of Brookfield and individuals, and by grants for specific projects from the organizations depicted here.



Summary

- In order to gain a better understanding of student attitudes and actions relating to at-risk behaviors, **BROOKFIELD CARES** and the Brookfield Public Schools surveyed students in grades 7–12 in November of 2022. *Note: We surveyed these grades in 2019 and grades 6 and 8–12 in 2016.*
- Results shown are aggregated from multiple questions, providing more representative results.
- This is the sixth time we've worked with the Schools to survey students since 2009.

Process

- **BROOKFIELD CARES** works closely and collaboratively with school administration on the survey, including the survey itself, which grades to survey, and the need for additional questions (this year questions on school safety were added at their request).
- The survey was reviewed and approved by school principals prior to being given.
- Parents were notified by the schools of the survey before it was given. They were offered the opportunity to view survey questions at the schools and opt their children out. 22 parents opted their children out this year.

Process

- Students were allowed to opt out the day of the survey as well, and a number of students did take advantage of that option.
- The survey is totally anonymous. Results are not and cannot be tied back to individual students.
- Brookfield's survey results are provided only to **BROOKFIELD CARES**, who shares results with the town, the schools, and with Western CT Coalition who only reports aggregated data trends (not town specific) to DMHAS.

Data Security

- Data is stored on Search Institute's secure servers and is only accessible to Search Institute employees who work on the analysis. Datasets have a unique number assigned to them. Organizational names and youth identification information are not stored in these databases.
- The web pages are SSL encrypted and all data are stored on secure servers.
- Search Institute does not use data for any purposes outside of what is listed in the parental fact sheet and consent letter. **BROOKFIELD CARES** only receives an aggregated report of student survey results.
- Neither **BROOKFIELD CARES** or Search Institute sell or profit from data generated by the survey.

The Survey

- The Survey — developed by Search Institute — provides data in a wide range of areas including alcohol and drug use, depression & suicide, gambling, vaping, safety (for the first time), and more.
- Search Institute also reports results as **Developmental Assets** — a research-based framework that shows a clear relationship between high asset scores and thriving behaviors.
- To learn more, visit: search-institute.org

The Survey's Acceptance

- Of the 25 Local Prevention Councils in our region (**BROOKFIELD CARES** is an LPC), 18 have utilized the Attitudes and Behaviors Survey in some fashion during the last 15 years, including New Milford and Bethel.
- Over 5-million students have taken the survey nationwide in thousands of schools.

Developmental Assets

This framework of **Developmental Assets** identifies a set of skills, experiences, relationships, and behaviors that enable young people to develop into successful and contributing adults.

External Assets

- *Support*
- *Empowerment*
- *Boundaries & Expectations*
- *Constructive Use of Time*

Internal Assets

- *Commitment to Learning*
- *Positive Values*
- *Social Competencies*
- *Positive Identity*

Grade-specific descriptions of the Developmental Assets can be downloaded here:

<https://brookfield-cares.org/wp-content/files/Developmental-Assets.pdf>

Developmental Assets

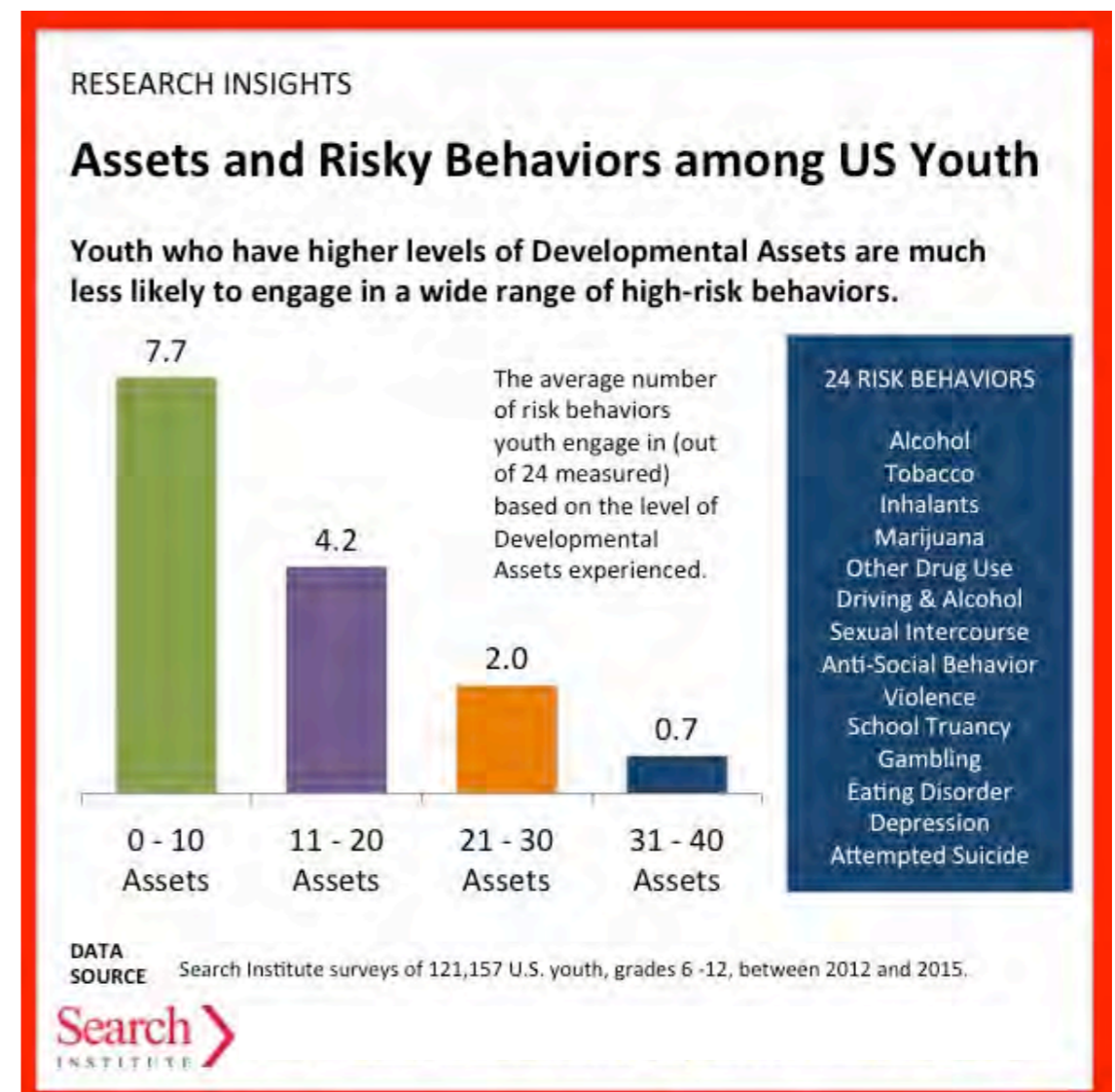
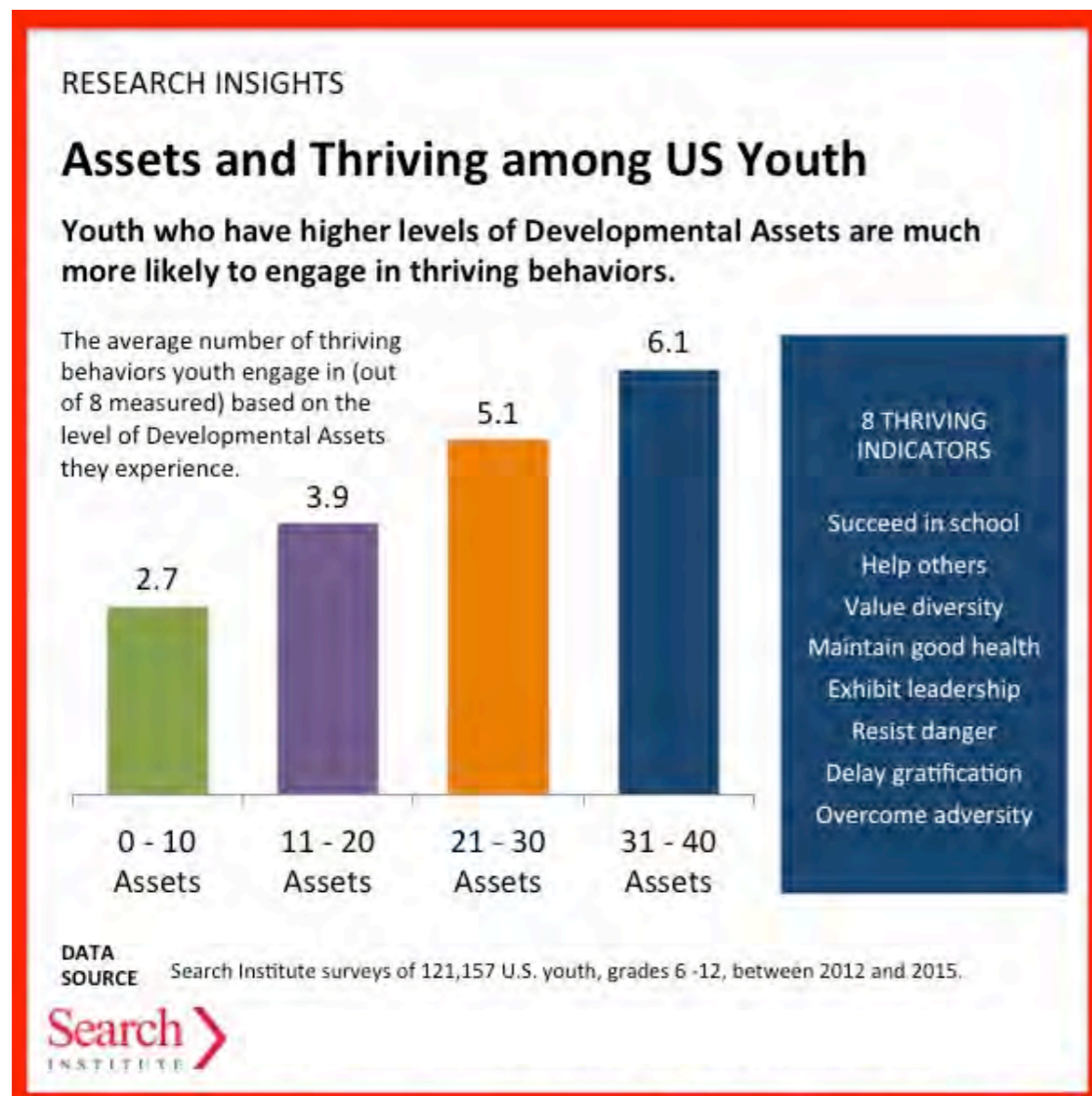
To learn more about the 40 Developmental Assets that help kids succeed, watch this brief video.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPY67eea5h4>

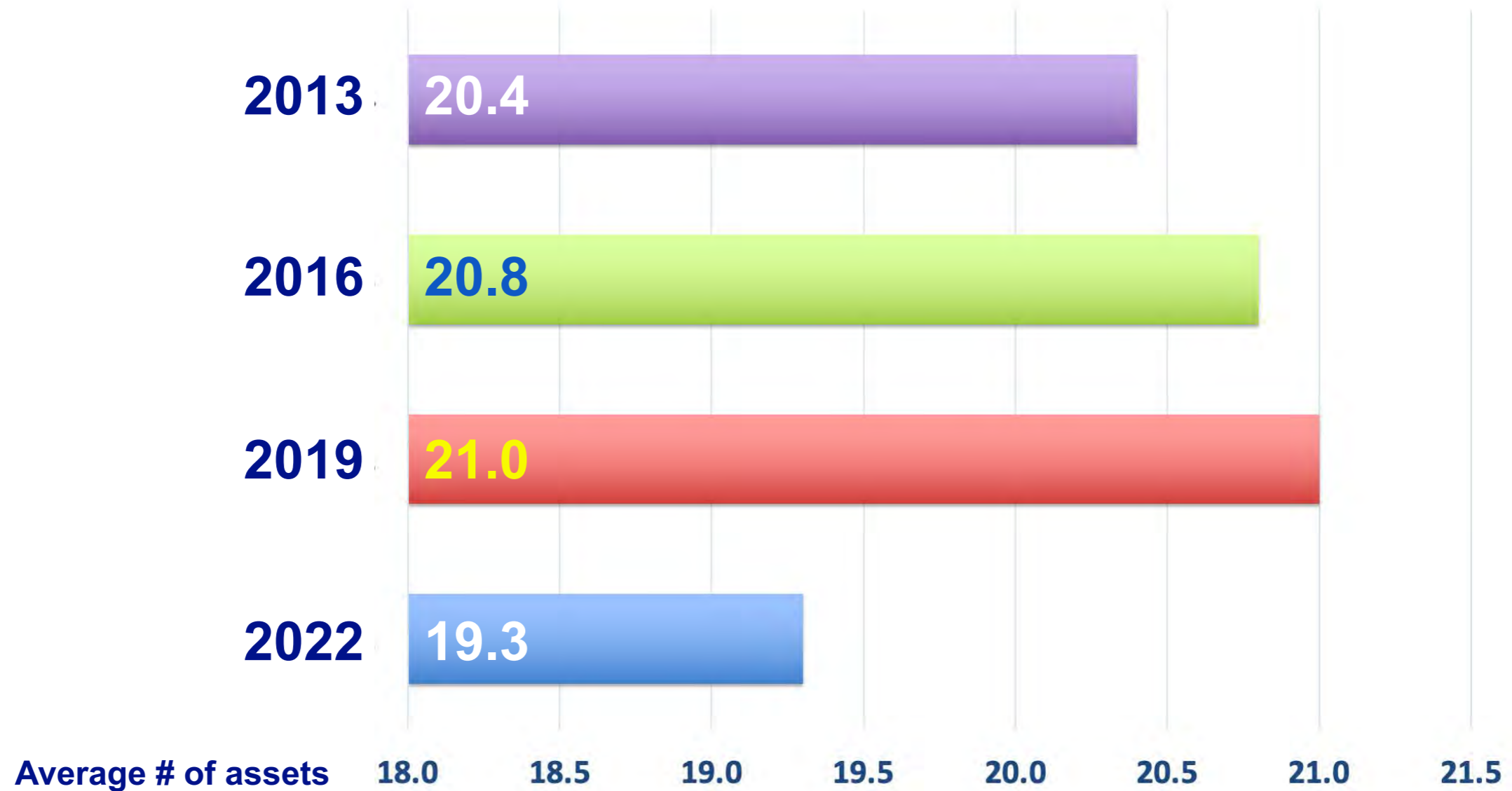
Developmental Assets

Search Institute has found that the more assets youth have the more they thrive and the less likely they are to engage in high-risk behaviors.



Average Assets

Over the years, the average number of assets reported by our youth has increased until now.



Search Institute reports that the national average was 21.6 in 2021.

What our children say

Students tell us we are ***strongest*** in the following Assets (% reporting Assets):

Asset #	Name	2009 Survey	2010 Survey	2012 Survey	2016 Survey	2019 Survey	2022 Survey
15	Positive peer influence	55	68	37	74	75	85
22	School engagement	57	78	69	70	82	84
21	Achievement motivation	67	78	77	78	75	77
28	Integrity	72	74	77	76	79	73
20	Time at home	67	73	64	70	69	73
1	Family support	71	68	73	77	79	70
27	Equality & social justice	44	52	56	57	72	68
18	Youth programs	73	79	78	75	71	66

What our children say

Students tell us we are *weakest* in the following Assets (% reporting Assets):

Asset #	Name	2009 Survey	2010 Survey	2012 Survey	2016 Survey	2019 Survey	2022 Survey
7	Community Values Youth	13	20	20	25	22	16
6	Parent Involvement in Schooling	17	25	27	24	23	16
17	Creative Activities	20	24	19	17	18	16
25	Reading for Pleasure	23	23	16	15	12	21
5	Caring School Climate	18	30	33	30	27	23
8	Youth (Children) as Resources	21	27	29	30	31	27
2	Positive family communications	29	29	33	34	36	29
4	Caring neighborhood	35	36	34	37	34	31

Results for grades 9 – 12

Current Behaviors

Category	Definition	% Reporting Risk Taking Behaviors			
		Whisconier Middle School		Brookfield High School	
		2019	2022	2019	2022
Alcohol	Used alcohol once or more in the last 30 days	7%	5%	24%	21%
	Got drunk once or more in the last 2 weeks	2%	2%	12%	11%
Driving & Alcohol	Drove after drinking once or more in the last 12 months	0%	1%	3%	3%
	Rode once or more in the last 12 months with a driver who had been drinking*	22%	16%	16%	21%

* It is reasonable to think that a portion of Middle School results may reference adults driving.

Current Behaviors

Category	Definition	% Reporting Risk Taking Behaviors			
		Whisconier Middle School		Brookfield High School	
		2019	2022	2019	2022
Gambling	Gambled once or more in the last 12 months	15%	13%	14%	14%
Illicit drug use	Used heroin or other narcotics multiple times in the last 12 months	0%	0%	1%	2%
Violence	Threatened physical harm to someone once or more in the last 12 months	17%	17%	17%	16%

Current Behaviors

Category	Definition	% Reporting Risk Taking Behaviors			
		Whisconier Middle School		Brookfield High School	
		2019	2022	2019	2022
Violence	Has engaged in 3 or more acts of fighting, hitting, injuring a person, carrying or using a weapon, or threatening physical harm in the last 12 months	13%	10%	14%	17%
Anti-Social Behavior	Has been involved in 3 or more incidents of shoplifting, trouble with police, or vandalism in the last 12 months	4%	3%	6%	9%

2022 Deep Dive: *Anti-Social & Violent Behavior*

Behavior	% Reporting Risk Taking Behaviors			
	WMS		BHS	
Anti-Social	Once or more	3 times or more	Once or more	3 times or more
Shoplifting	5%	2%	14%	5%
Vandalism	5%	0%	7%	2%
Police	8%	1%	9%	2%
Violence				
Hit someone	19%	6%	13%	5%
Hurt someone	8%	1%	8%	3%
Weapon use	1%	0%	4%	3%
Group fight	12%	3%	10%	3%
Weapon carry	8%	3%	13%	5%
Threatened harm	17%	3%	16%	6%

Current Behaviors

Category	Definition	% Reporting Risk Taking Behaviors			
		Whisconier Middle School		Brookfield High School	
		2019	2022	2019	2022
Eating Disorder	Has engaged in bulimic or anorexic behavior	15%	22%	17%	28%
Depression	Felt sad or depressed most of the time in the last month	15%	10%	21%	25%
Attempted suicide	Has attempted suicide one or more times	10%	6%	13%	16%

Category	Definition	Whisconier Middle School		Brookfield High School	
		2019	2022	2019	2022
Alcohol	Past 30-Day Use	7%	5%	24%	21%
	Perception of Risk	87%	86%	81%	79%
	Perception of Parental Disapproval	98%	98%	95%	95%
	Perception of Peer Disapproval	93%	94%	73%	82%
Marijuana	Past 30-Day Use	1%	1%	16%	7%
	Perception of Risk	83%	85%	55%	61%
	Perception of Parental Disapproval	97%	98%	89%	89%
	Perception of Peer Disapproval	93%	95%	60%	71%
Prescription Drugs not prescribed to you	Past 30-Day Use	1%	2%	2%	3%
	Perception of Risk	92%	91%	92%	91%
	Perception of Parental Disapproval	99%	98%	96%	96%
	Perception of Peer Disapproval	96%	96%	90%	89%

Male/Female Perspective

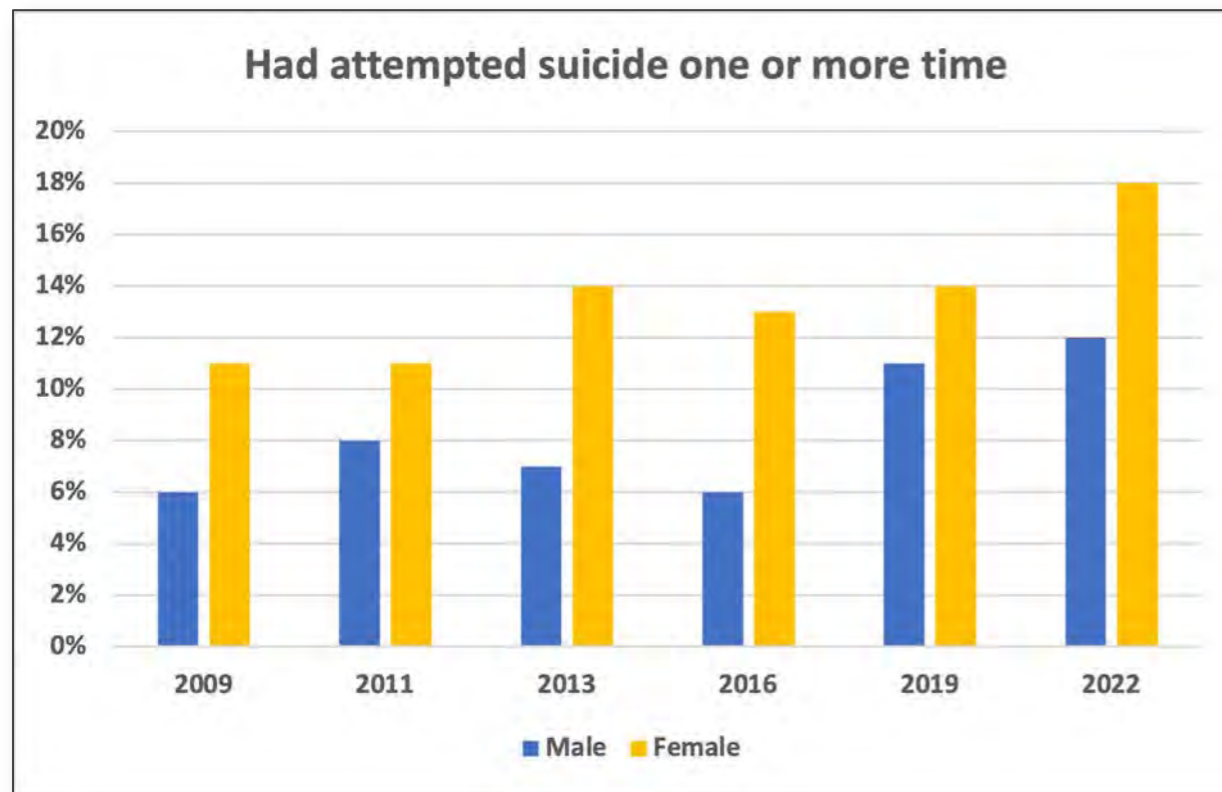
Often, responses to the survey are similar for males and females – but there are notable differences. Here are the assets with the widest gaps in each school.

Whisconier Middle School		
Asset	M	F
Self esteem	52%	32%
Safety	52%	32%
Adult role models	32%	52%
Achievement motivation	65%	85%
Peaceful conflict resolution	45%	65%
High expectations	76%	57%

Brookfield High School		
Asset	M	F
Positive view of personal future	68%	30%
Religious community	68%	37%
Caring	51%	80%
Equality and social justice	54%	80%
Planning and decision making	35%	59%
Safety	64%	43%

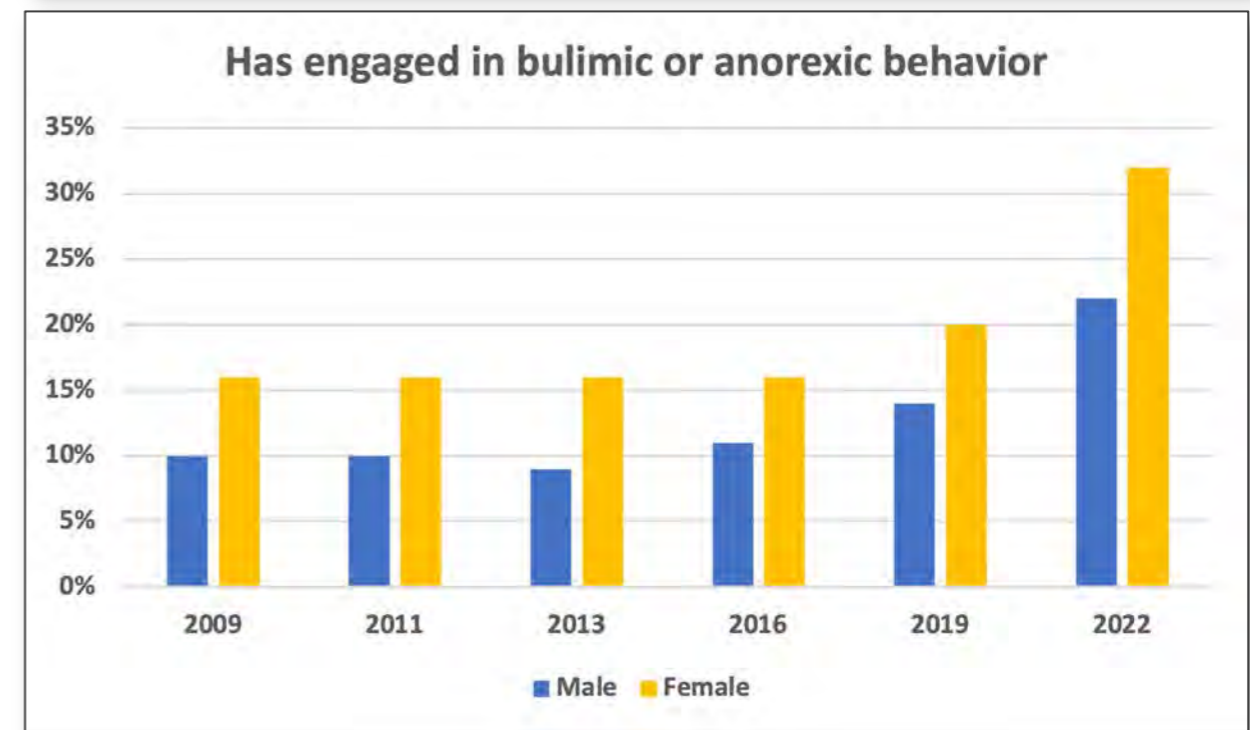
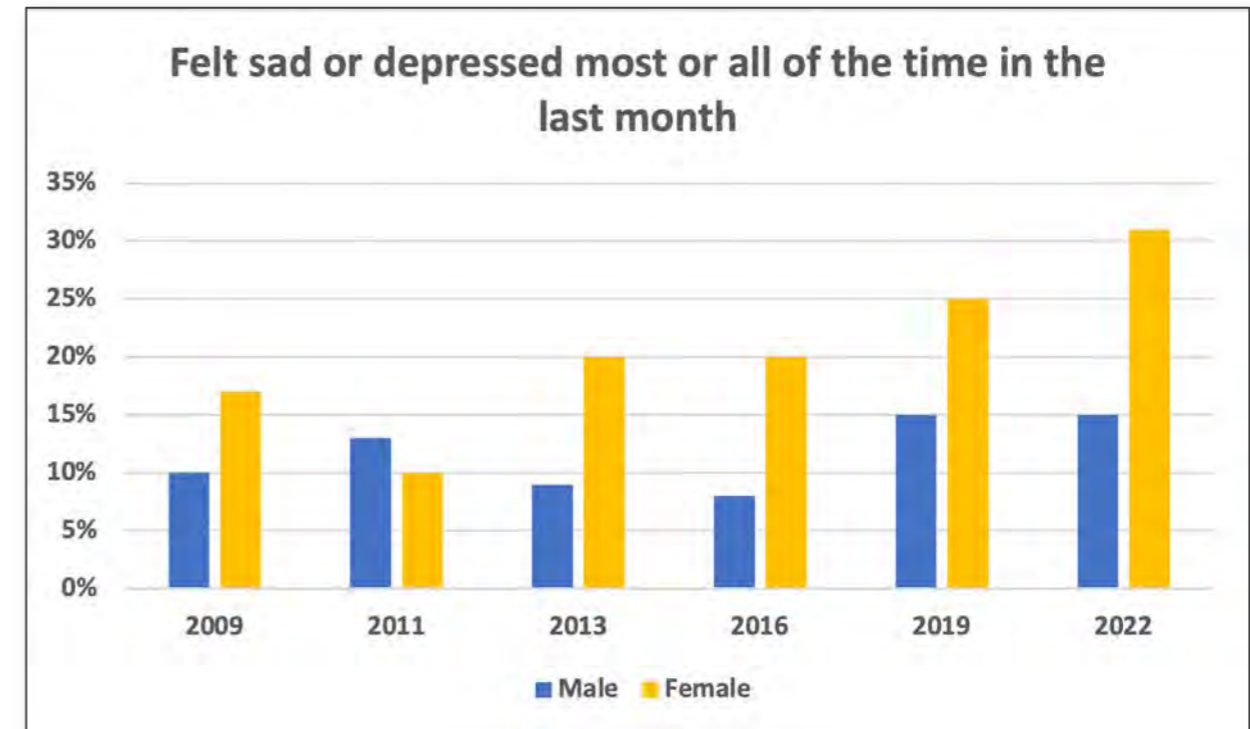
Male/Female Perspective

Over time, results show increased mental health concerns — for males as well as females.



Results shown are from grades 8–12 for 2009 and 2011, and from Brookfield High School for the last 4 surveys.

Note: On 2/13/2023 the CDC released a report showing an alarming increase in mental health challenges for teen girls with 30% seriously considered attempting suicide — up nearly 60% from a decade ago, mirroring our results. Western CT Coalition also reports that 4 other districts in our region conducted the Attitudes and Behaviors Survey in 2021 and 2022, and they report depression and suicide rate increases similar to Brookfield schools.



More points of note

- 4% of 7–8 students and 32% of 9–12 students reported attending parties in the past year where other kids their age were drinking.
- In both Whisconier Middle School and Brookfield High School, all 4 assets related to positive identity (personal power, self esteem, sense of purpose, positive view of personal future) declined.
- 71% of WMS and 80% of BHS students use a computer, cell phone, or tablet to email, play games, surf the web, message, or text with friends for 2 hours or more a day.
- 58% of all students watch 2 or more hours of TV or videos each school day.

When to raise conversations

Our students are also giving us clear guidance on when to have conversations or when to introduce topics into Health curriculum.

Category	% Reporting Risk Taking Behaviors					
	Whisconier Middle School		Brookfield High School			
	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th
Percent of students that has had sexual intercourse once or more	0%	2%	3%	10%	27%	32%
Percent of those students that seldom or never used birth control	0%	50%	33%	29%	23%	19%

Vaping

This year — for the second time — the Survey included questions on vaping.

	Whisconier Middle School		Brookfield High School	
	2019	2022	2019	2022
Has vaped (“juuled”) during the past 30 days	2.2%	1.3%	17.7%	11.8%
Of those who indicated they had, # who vaped marijuana	11.0%	25.0%	48.1%	47.3%
My family definitely has specific rules discouraging me from vaping	65.8%	72.9%	52.8%	53.9%

Observation: Vaping has been a key focal point for **Brookfield Cares** over the past few years, where we’ve received state grants specifically targeted to address this issue.

Vaping

As our children get older, they believe it is easier to get electronic cigarettes or other vaping devices.

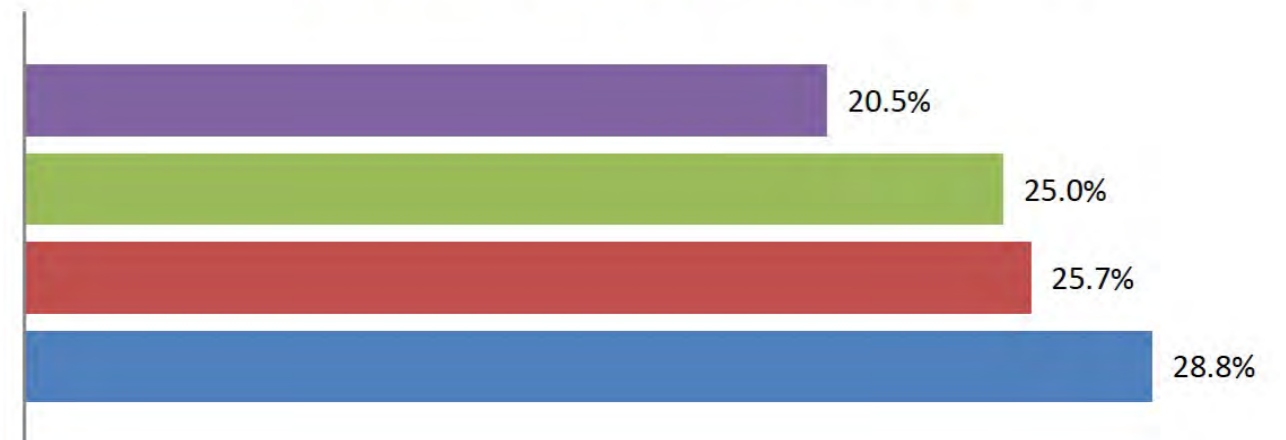
Grades 7–8

■ Very easy ■ Sort of easy ■ Sort of hard ■ Very hard



Grades 9–12

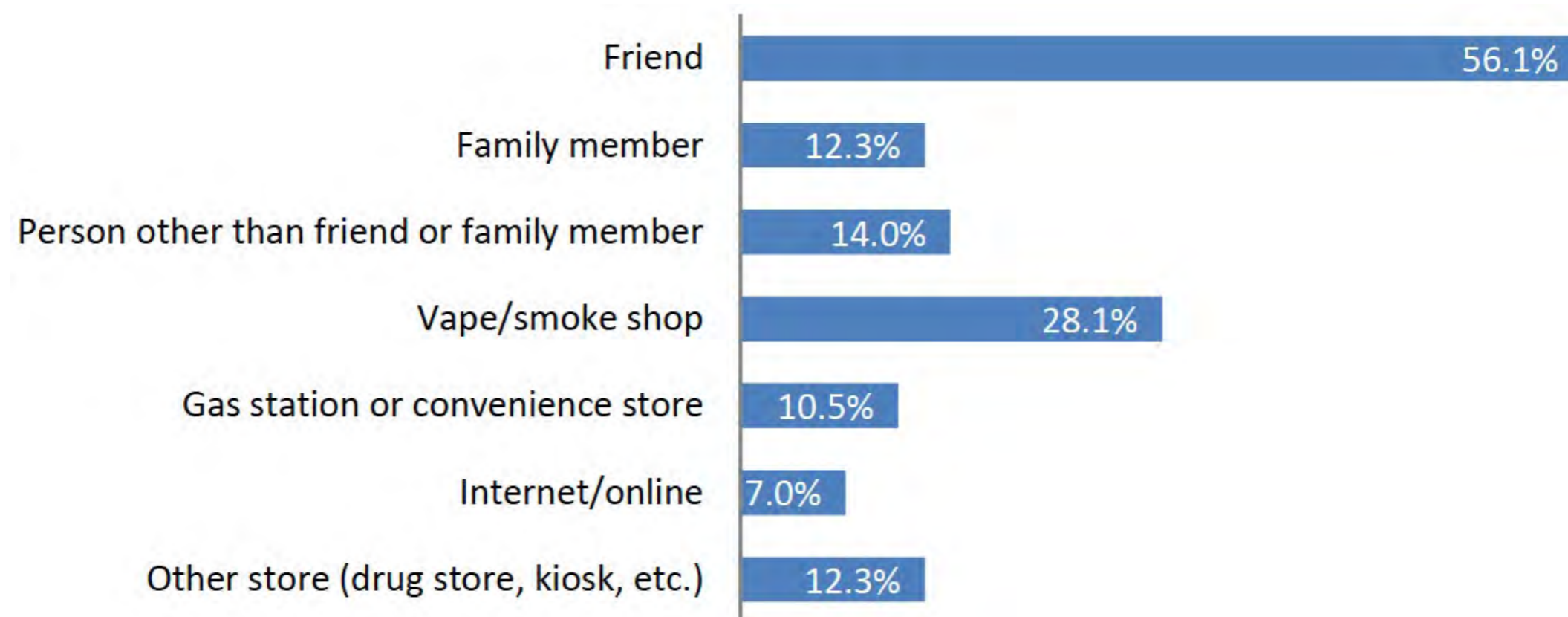
■ Very easy ■ Sort of easy ■ Sort of hard ■ Very hard



Vaping

Our high schoolers tell us they get their vaping devices from a variety of sources.

Grades 9–12



Note: On 12/20/2019 a federal law known as **Tobacco 21** became effective that made it illegal for a retailer to sell any tobacco product—including cigarettes, cigars, and e-cigarettes—to anyone under 21. The new federal minimum age of sale applies to all retail establishments and persons with no exceptions.

Vaping

Within the last 12 months, many more middle school students have talked with at least one of their parents about the dangers of vaping than high school students.

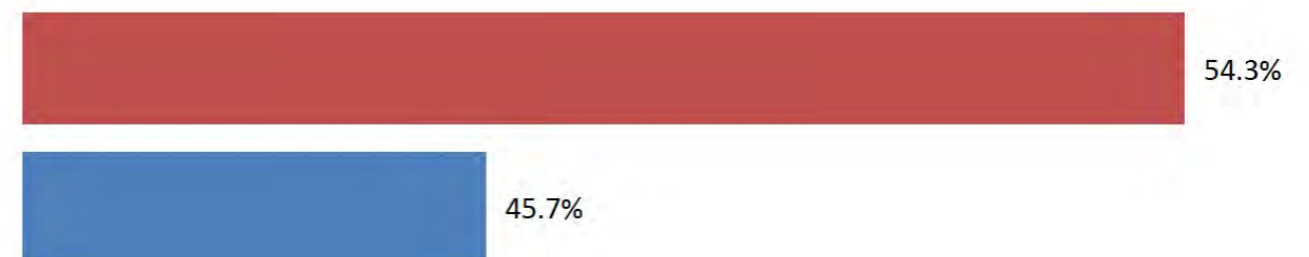
Grades 7–8

■ No ■ Yes



Grades 9–12

■ No ■ Yes



Safety

This year — for the first time — the Survey included questions on safety.

Whisconier Middle School	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel safe at school.*	26%	49%	18%	5%	3%
I understand the safety protocols (fire, lockdown, etc.) at my school in case of an emergency.	55%	38%	4%	2%	1%
Brookfield High School	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel safe at school.	20%	45%	24%	9%	2%
I understand the safety protocols (fire, lockdown, etc.) at my school in case of an emergency.	45%	44%	8%	2%	1%

* This needs further discussion to understand the nature of the perceived threat.

Online behavior

We also asked — for the first time — questions about online behavior.

Whisconier Middle School	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Experienced mean behavior online or on social media?	38%	29%	21%	7%	5%
Been mean to others online or on social media?	66%	18%	10%	4%	2%
Brookfield High School	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Experienced mean behavior online or on social media?	35%	23%	25%	11%	7%
Been mean to others online or on social media?	62%	19%	12%	3%	4%

What have we learned?

- Alcohol continues to be the number one drug of choice.
- Onset of at-risk behaviors (drinking in particular) can start as early as age 10 or 11.
- The concerning increase in mental health issues — especially eating disorders, depression, suicide attempts — must be addressed in a holistic manner.

What can we do

- Increase awareness of assets and behaviors in all constituent groups, including parents, school staff, care providers, clergy, elected officials, community members, more.
- Collectively work to identify Assets that we as a community can increase.
- Continue to listen to and talk with our children and neighbors.
- Work to lessen the stigma surrounding behavior and mental health issues.
- Do not be afraid to reach out for help or support.

Special Thanks

- We thank the **Brookfield Youth Commission** for its help in announcing the survey to students. We also thank them for their invaluable feedback on how to improve the administration of the survey in future years during lively and positive discussion at a Youth Commission meeting that **Brookfield Cares** was invited to attend.



Brookfield Youth Commission

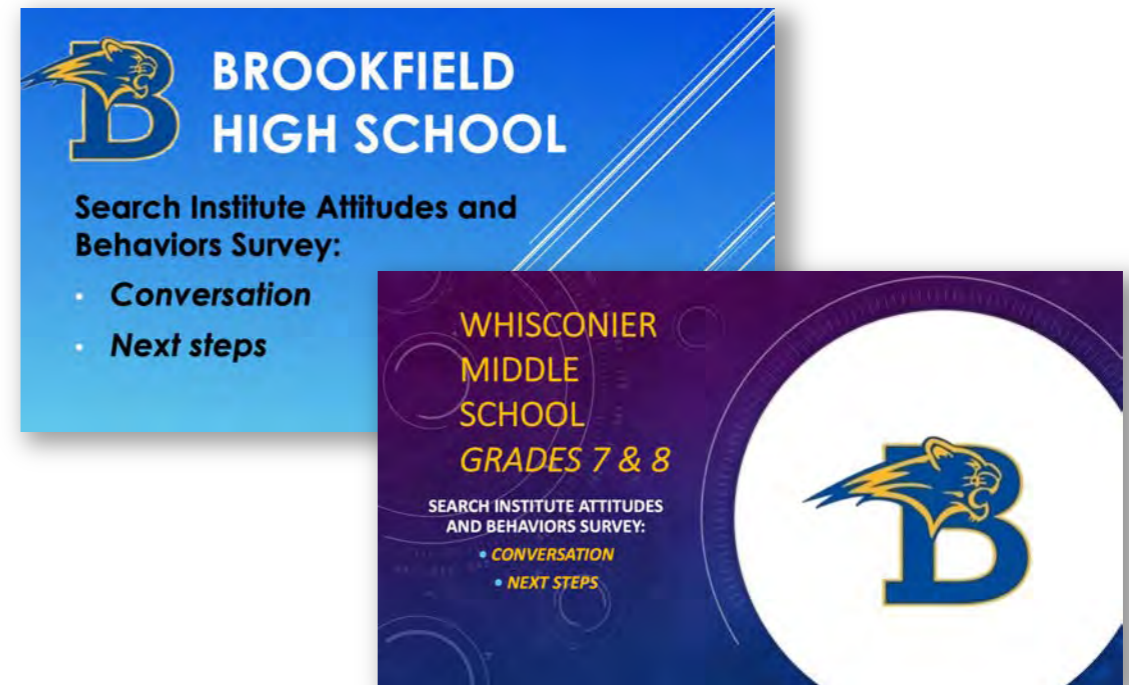
Advocacy • Information • Representation • Inclusion

Next steps

- Continue to update the health curriculum in our schools to address issues starting in grades **before** at-risk behaviors begin.
- Continue a series of meetings/presentations/events to keep the community engaged and educated.
- Continue **BROOKFIELD CARES** presence and initiatives throughout the schools and community.
- Work to continue to inform the community on relevant data regarding the volume of mental health and crisis issues in our town.
- Work to reduce the stigma of mental health issues through education, conversation, focus groups, and support.
- Ask for the community's continued support, understanding and involvement.

Next steps

We are working on presentations for important constituent groups, directed specifically to those groups.



- **Community event**

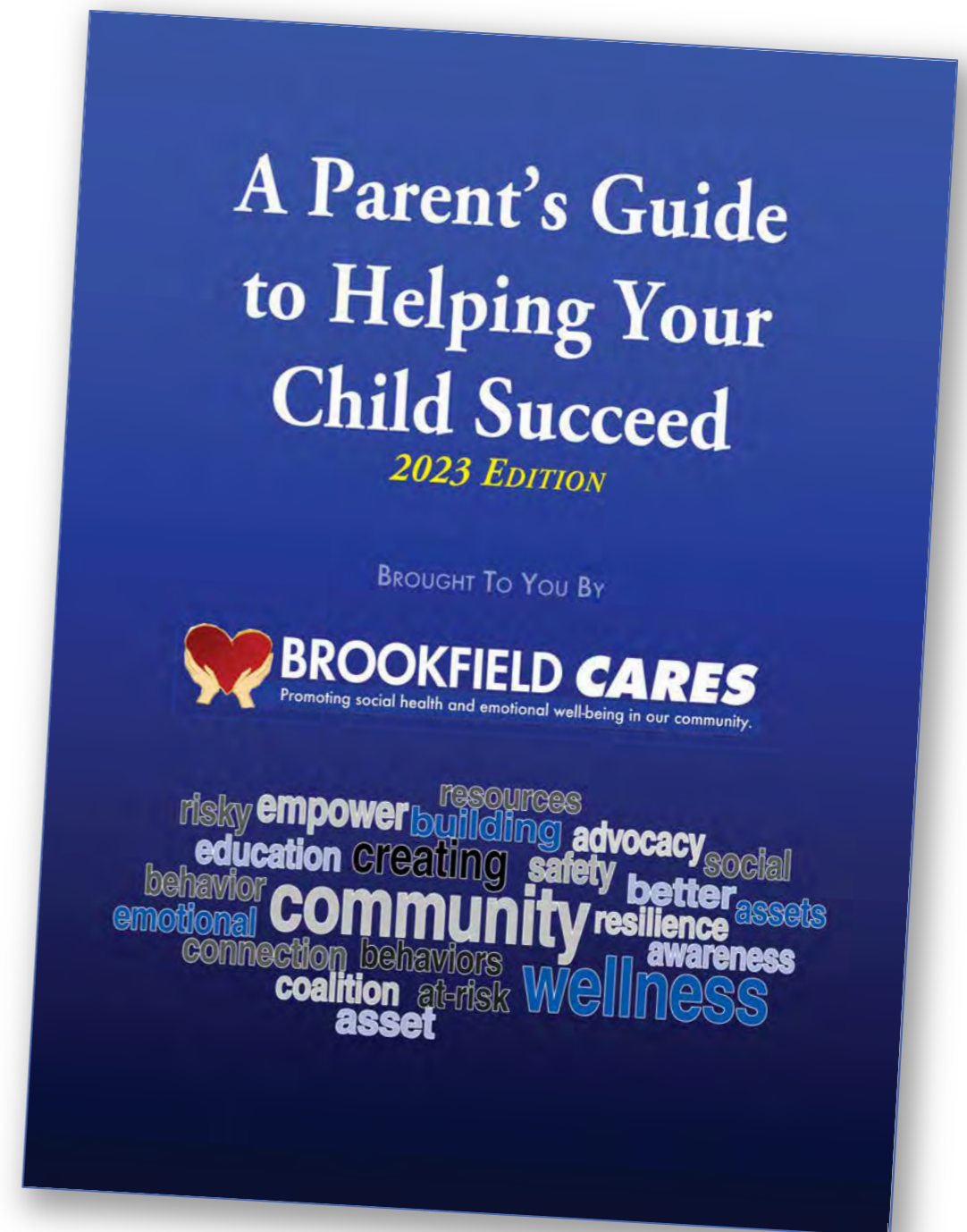
- ✓ Present key findings.
- ✓ Provide 'what can we do' ideas to parents, neighbors, caregivers, organizations, businesspersons.
- ✓ Include break-out sessions.

- **Discussion with students who participated in the survey**

- ✓ Present key findings.
- ✓ Ask for direct feedback.
- ✓ Engage our students in the process and discuss next steps.

Next steps

- Update the *Parent's Guide to Helping Your Child Succeed* with current updated information.
- Work with the schools to get a copy to every family with children in the schools.
- Work with town and local agencies to make the guide available to all interested parties.





BROOKFIELD CARES

Promoting social health and emotional well-being in our community.

It's OK to Ask

There *is* help if you ask. Go to brookfield-cares.org/its-ok-to-ask/

or scan this QR Code to learn about resources

that can provide you with support.



BROOKFIELD CARES

Promoting social and emotional wellness in our community.

The screenshot shows the Brookfield Cares website homepage. At the top is the logo and tagline. Below is a navigation menu with links for Home, About Us, News, Events, Surveys/Assets/Reports, Resources, and Videos. The main content area features a 'Welcome to Brookfield Cares' section with introductory text and a link to download a 'Wellness Guide - New for 2022'. Below this is a section for the '988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline' with a 'Lifeline Chat is available 24/7' button. At the bottom, there are three featured cards: one about school and social media stress, one for 'C.A.R.E.S. VIRTUAL HOPE & SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS', and one for 'Parent Support Network'.

brookfield-cares.org