



**BROOKFIELD CARES**

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

# 2025 Student Attitudes & Behaviors Survey

## Key Results



# Who we are

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- **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 do this by engaging with all members of the community to reduce harmful behaviors, destigmatize mental health issues, and promote and support healthy choices.

# Who we are

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- **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.



**SAMHSA**

Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

<https://www.samhsa.gov>



**CONNECTICUT**

Mental Health & Addiction Services

<https://portal.ct.gov/dmhas>



<https://www.brookfieldct.gov>



**WCTC**

<https://www.wctcoalition.org>

# Summary

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- 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 8–12 in February of 2025. *Note: We surveyed grades 7–12 in 2022 and 2019.*
- Results shown are aggregated from multiple questions, providing more representative results.
- This is the seventh time we've worked with the Schools to survey students since 2009.
- **BROOKFIELD CARES** fully funds the survey.

# Process

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- **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 vaping, Zyn, and E-cigarettes were added as well as questions about social media use.
- The survey was reviewed and approved by school administration and principals prior to being given.
- Parents and guardians 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 students out. 32 students were opted out this year.



# Process

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- Students were allowed to opt out the day of the survey as well, but none took 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

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- 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

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- The Survey — developed by Search Institute — provides data in a wide range of areas including alcohol and drug use, depression & suicide, gambling, vaping, internet use (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: <https://searchinstitute.org>



# The Survey's Acceptance

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- Of the 25 Local Prevention Councils in our region (**BROOKFIELD CARES** is an LPC), 14 have utilized the Attitudes and Behaviors Survey in some fashion since 2019, including New Milford and Bethel.
- Over 6-million students have taken Search Institute surveys 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

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

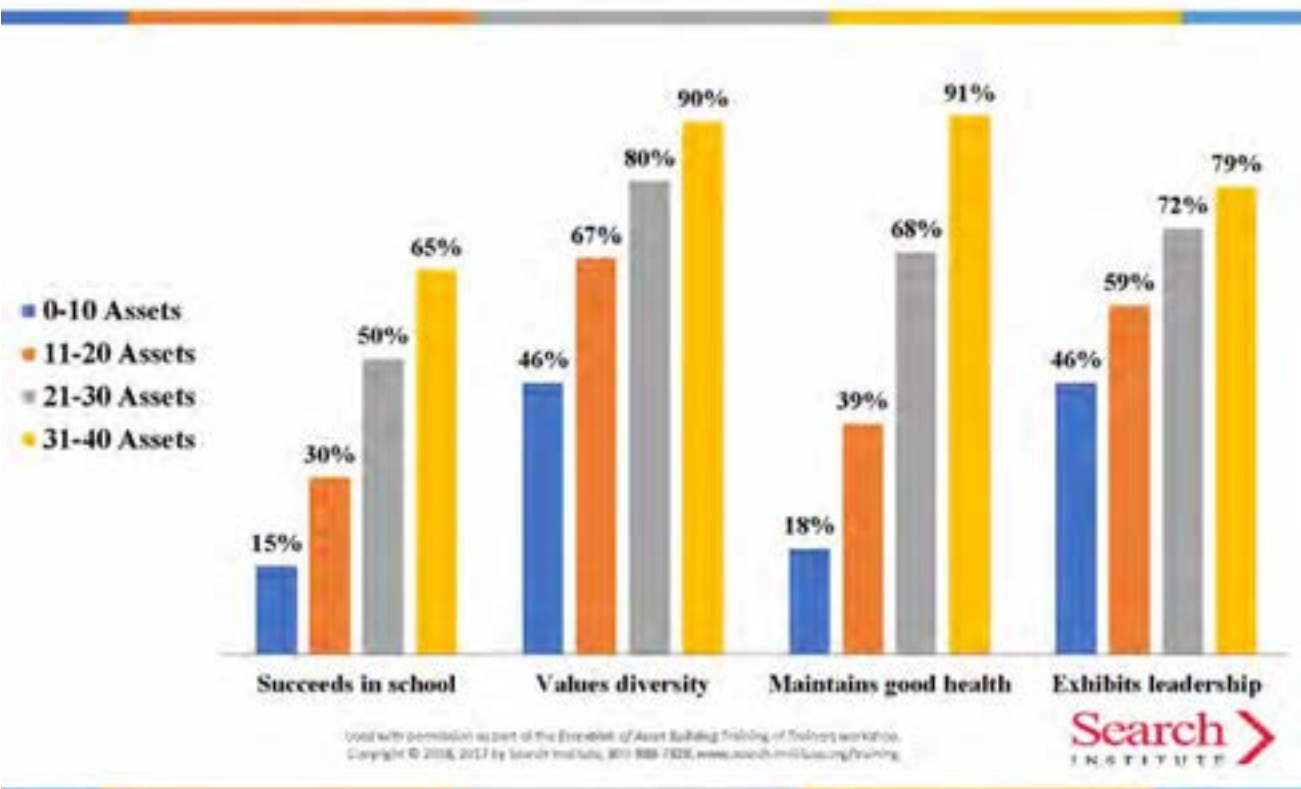


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPY67eea5h4>

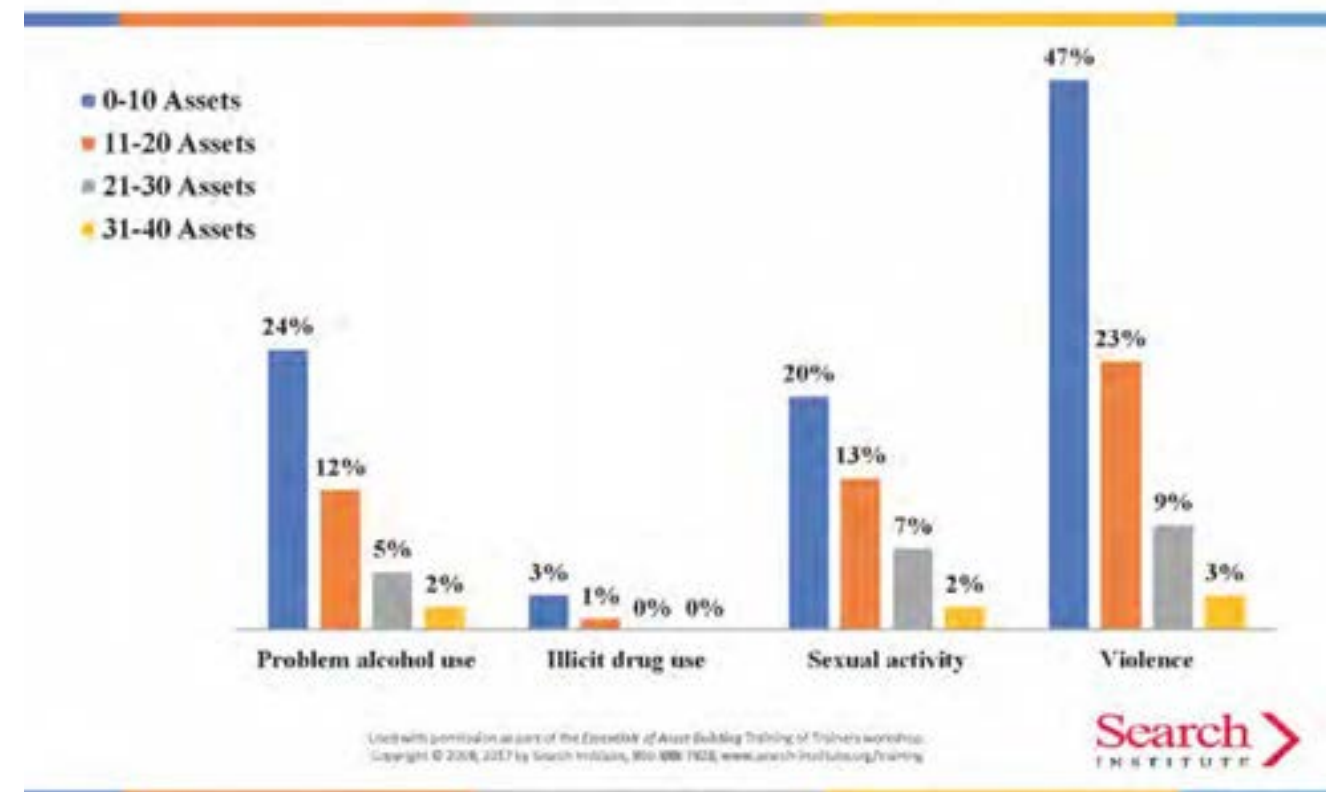
# The Power of Assets

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.

## Power of Assets to Promote

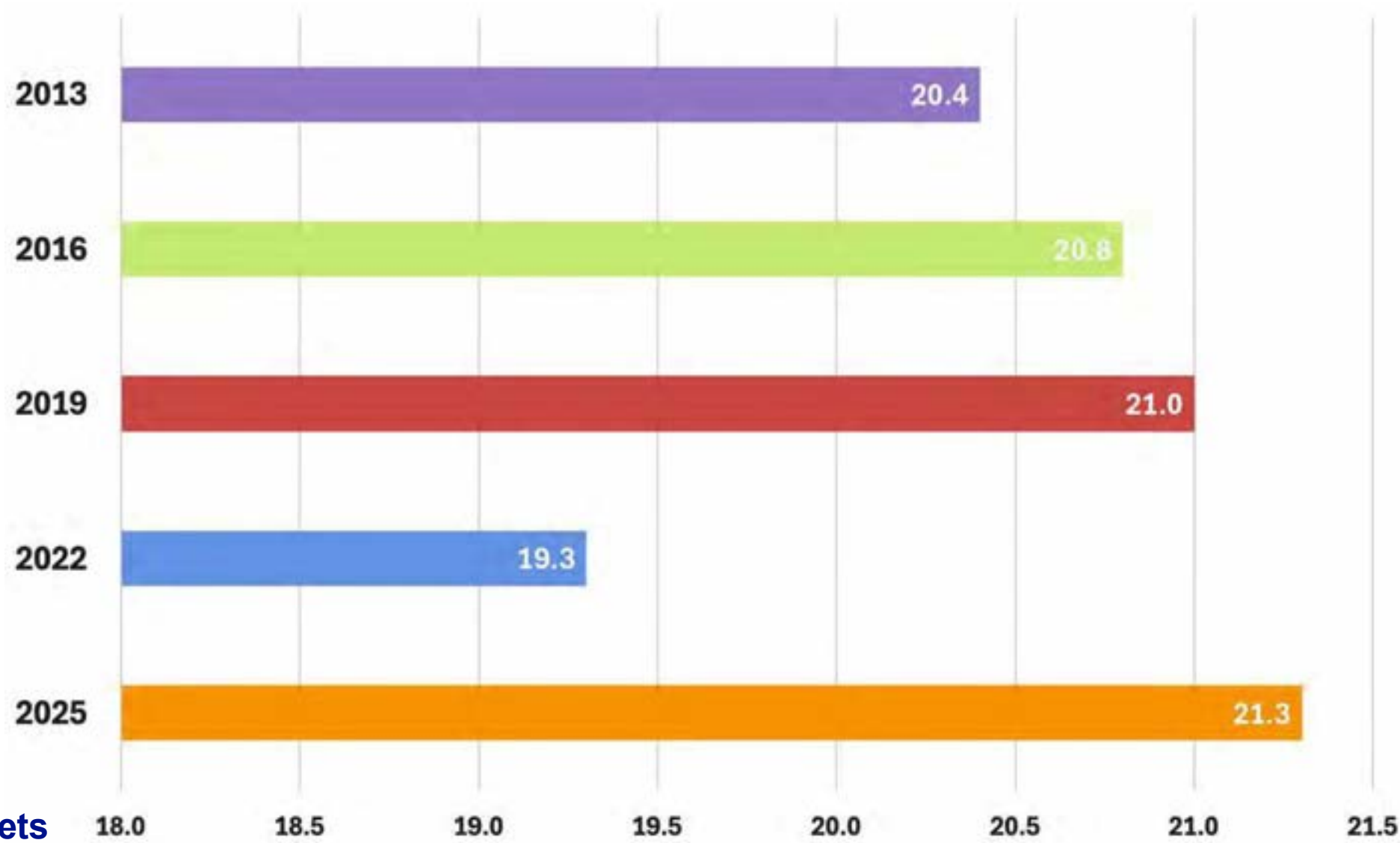


## Power of Assets to Protect



# Average Assets

With the exception of Covid, the average number of assets reported by our youth has increased over time.



*Search Institute reports that the national average was 20.4 in 2022.*



# What our students 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	2025 Survey
15	Positive peer influence	55	68	37	74	75	85	83
22	School engagement	57	78	69	70	82	84	82
1	Family support	71	68	73	77	79	70	81
21	Achievement motivation	67	78	77	78	75	77	77
28	Integrity	72	74	77	76	79	73	76
30	Responsibility	63	66	66	67	76	66	75
20	Time at home	97	73	75	70	69	73	74
29	Honesty	95	70	68	38	74	66	73

# What our students 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	2025 Survey
25	Reading for Pleasure	23	23	16	15	12	21	17
17	Creative Activities	20	24	19	17	18	16	18
7	Community Values Youth	13	20	20	25	22	16	24
6	Parent Involvement in Schooling	17	25	27	24	23	16	24
8	Youth (Children) as Resources	21	27	29	30	31	27	31
13	Neighborhood Boundaries	33	41	43	40	35	34	33
5	Caring School Climate	18	30	33	30	27	23	34
4	Caring neighborhood	35	36	34	37	34	31	36

# Current Behaviors

Category	Definition	% Reporting Risk Taking Behaviors			
		Whisconier Middle School		Brookfield High School	
		2022	2025	2022	2025
Alcohol	Used alcohol once or more in the last 30 days	5%	4%	21%	17%
	Got drunk once or more in the last 2 weeks	2%	1%	11%	8%
Driving & Alcohol	Drove after drinking once or more in the last 12 months	1%	0%	3%	4%
	Rode once or more in the last 12 months with a driver who had been drinking*	16%	17%	21%	17%

\* 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	
		2022	2025	2022	2025
Gambling	Gambled once or more in the last 12 months	13%	22%	14%	25%
Illicit drug use	Used heroin or other narcotics multiple times in the last 12 months	0%	0%	2%	1%
Violence	Threatened physical harm to someone once or more in the last 12 months	17%	14%	16%	14%

# Current Behaviors

Category	Definition	% Reporting Risk Taking Behaviors			
		Whisconier Middle School		Brookfield High School	
		2022	2025	2022	2025
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	10%	16%	17%	15%
Anti-Social Behavior	Has been involved in 3 or more incidents of shoplifting, trouble with police, or vandalism in the last 12 months	3%	5%	9%	9%



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

Behavior	% Reporting Risk Taking Behaviors	
	WMS	BHS
Anti-Social	Once or more in the last 12 months	Once or more in the last 12 months
Shoplifting	7	14
Vandalism	11	8
Police	7	8
Violence		
Hit someone	20	14
Hurt someone	12	6
Weapon use	3	3
Group fight	12	8
Weapon carry	7	10
Threatened harm	14	14

# Current Behaviors

Category	Definition	% Reporting Risk Taking Behaviors			
		Whisconier Middle School		Brookfield High School	
		2022	2025	2022	2025
Eating Disorder	Has engaged in bulimic or anorexic behavior	22%	19%	28%	22%
Depression	Felt sad or depressed most of the time in the last month	10%	18%	25%	16%
Attempted suicide	Has attempted suicide one or more times	6%	13%	16%	11%

Category	Definition	Whisconier Middle School		Brookfield High School	
		2022	2025	2022	2025
Alcohol	Past 30-Day Use	5%	2%	21%	17%
	Perception of Risk	86%	89%	79%	87%
	Perception of Parental Disapproval	98%	99%	95%	95%
	Perception of Peer Disapproval	94%	94%	82%	82%
Marijuana	Past 30-Day Use	1%	0%	7%	8%
	Perception of Risk	85%	86%	61%	70%
	Perception of Parental Disapproval	98%	96%	89%	93%
	Perception of Peer Disapproval	95%	93%	71%	73%
Prescription Drugs not prescribed to you	Past 30-Day Use	2%	2%	3%	2%
	Perception of Risk	91%	93%	91%	93%
	Perception of Parental Disapproval	98%	98%	96%	97%
	Perception of Peer Disapproval	96%	91%	89%	90%

# Male/Female Perspective

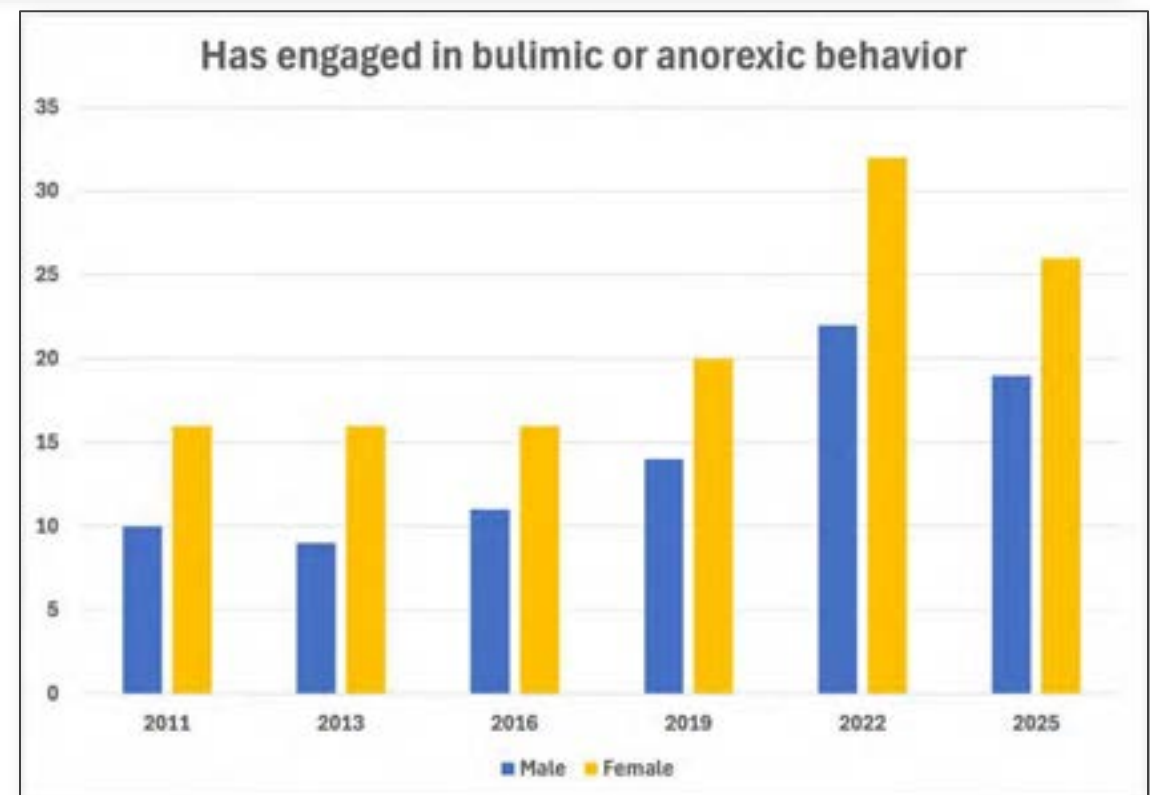
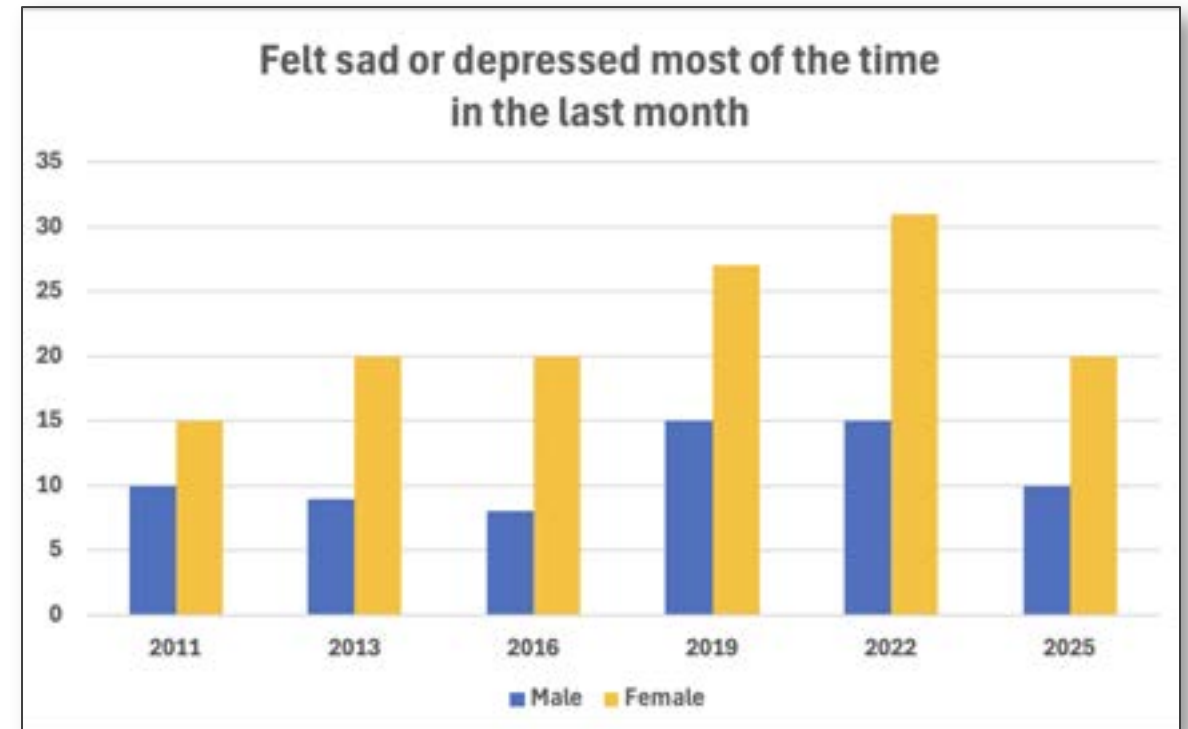
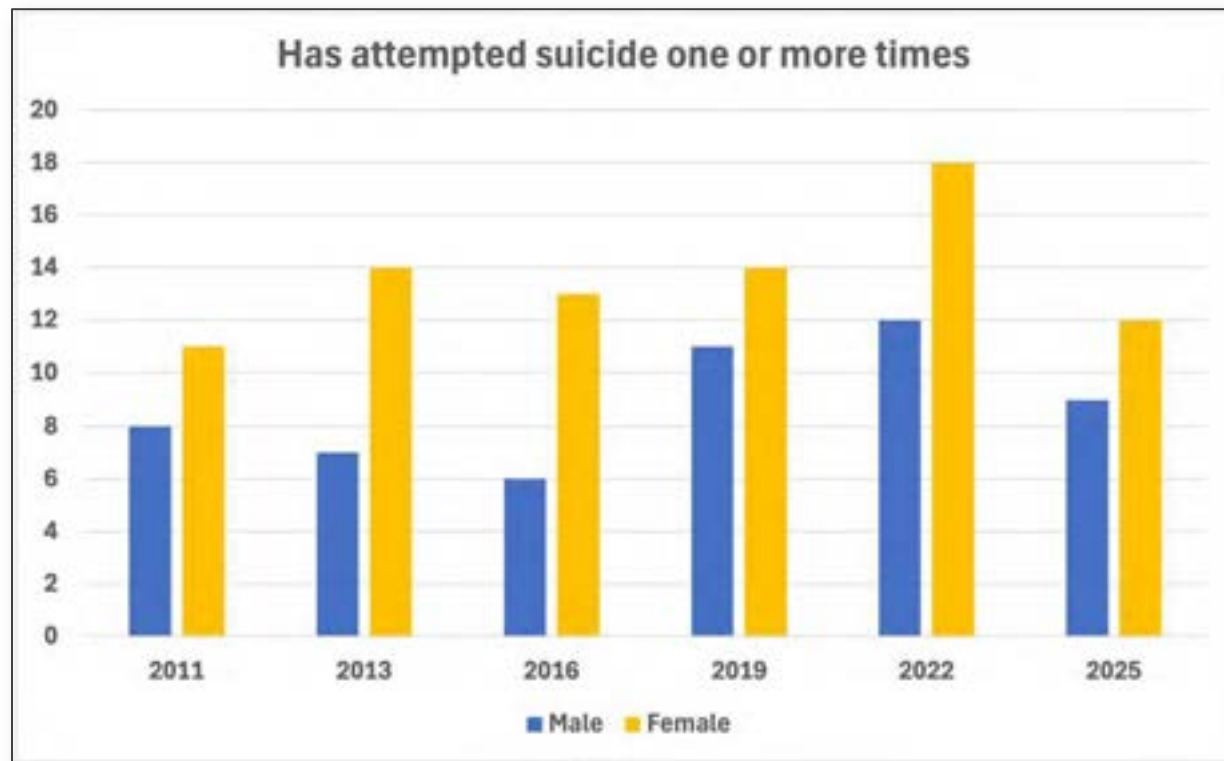
Often, responses to the survey are similar for males and females – but there are notable differences. Here are the assets with the widest gaps in each school.

Whisconier Middle School		
Asset	M	F
Sense of purpose	81%	51%
Caring neighborhood	56%	31%
Religious community	53%	31%
Safety	54%	33%
Positive family communication	51%	33%
School boundaries	80%	62%

Brookfield High School		
Asset	M	F
Safety	74%	46%
Achievement motivation	65%	88%
Interpersonal competence	35%	57%
Planning and decision making	32%	52%
Homework	38%	57%
Equality and social justice	58%	77%

# Male/Female Perspective

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



Results shown are from Brookfield High School students (grades 9 –12).

**Note:** Our results mirror our neighboring towns (Western CT Coalition tells us that other districts in our region conducted the Attitudes and Behaviors Survey recently and they report depression and suicide rate increases similar to Brookfield schools) as well as national statistics as reported 8/6/24 by the CDC in their most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey.



# More points of note

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- 8% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at WMS and 70% of students in all grades at BHS reported attending parties in the past year where other kids their age were drinking.
- 24% of WMS and 22% of BHS students have gambled (bought lottery tickets or tabs, bet money on sports teams or card games. etc.).
- 81% of WMS and 77% 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.
- 61% of WMS and 59% of BHS 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 at home or when to introduce topics into Health curriculum.

Category	% Reporting Risk Taking Behaviors				
	Whisconier Middle School	Brookfield High School			
	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>
Percent of students that has had sexual intercourse once or more	1%	11%	9%	19%	31%
Percent of those students that seldom or never used birth control	50%	40%	36%	23%	17%

# Vaping and Zyn

This year – for the third time – the Survey included questions on vaping, and for the first time – Zyn.

	Whisconier Middle School	Brookfield High School
	2025	2025
Used a vaping device in the past 30 days	2%	10%
Perceived risk of vaping is moderate to great	0%	80%
Used Zyn device in the past 30 days	0%	4%
Perceived risk of using Zyn is moderate to great	86%	75%

**Observation:** Vaping continues to be a key focal point for **Brookfield Cares**, where we annually receive state grants specifically targeted to address this issue. But Zyn is emerging as a real concern.

# Perceived Disapproval

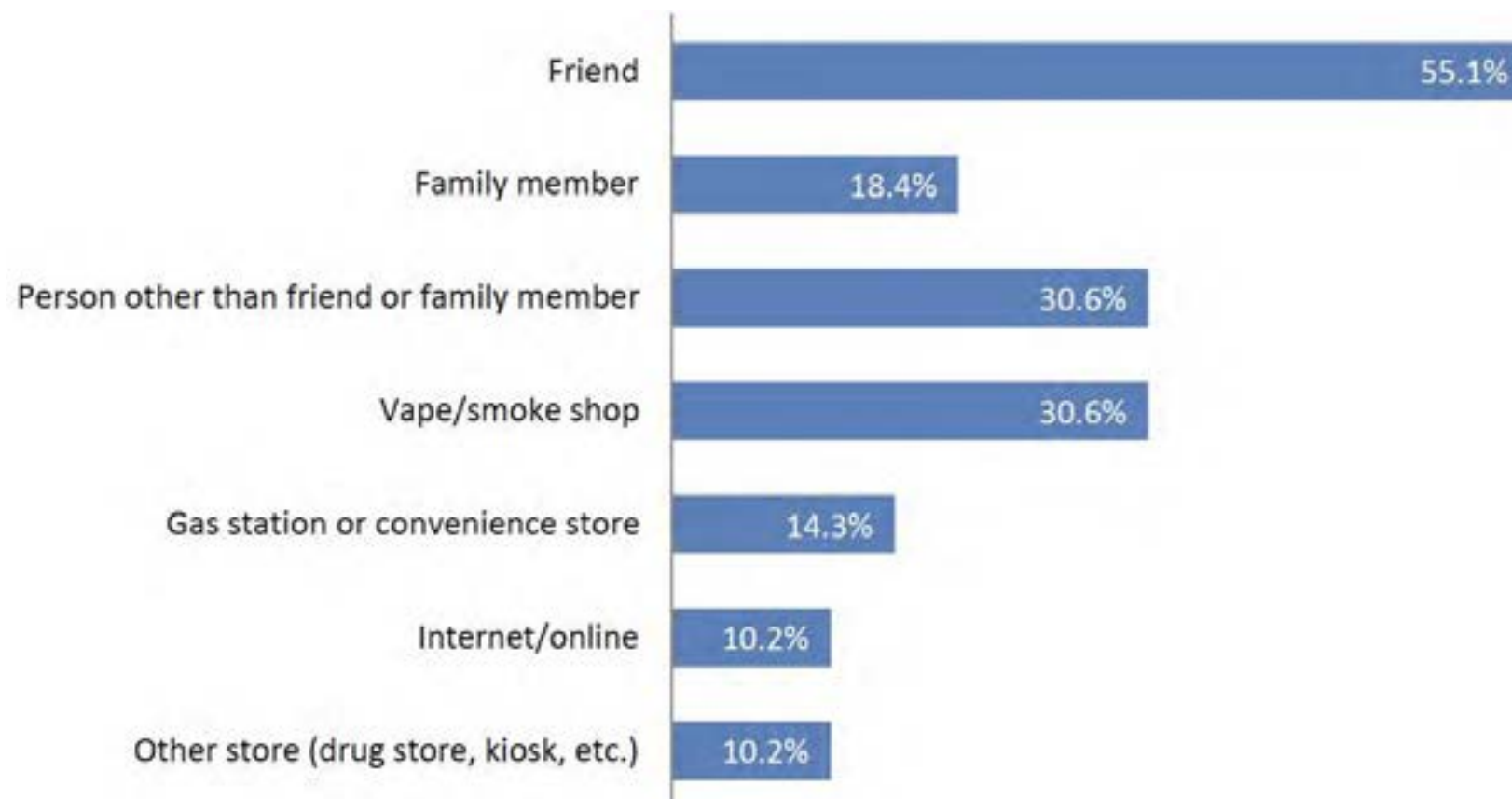
While peer and parent disapproval is generally high, Zyn is either less known or less understood to be addictive with potential health issues.

	Whisconier Middle School	Brookfield High School
	2025	2025
Perceive their peers disapprove of vaping	97%	96%
Perceive their parents disapprove of vaping	98%	92%
Perceive their peers disapprove of Zyn	86%	71%
Perceive their parents disapprove of Zyn	91%	77%

# Vaping

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

## Grades 9–12



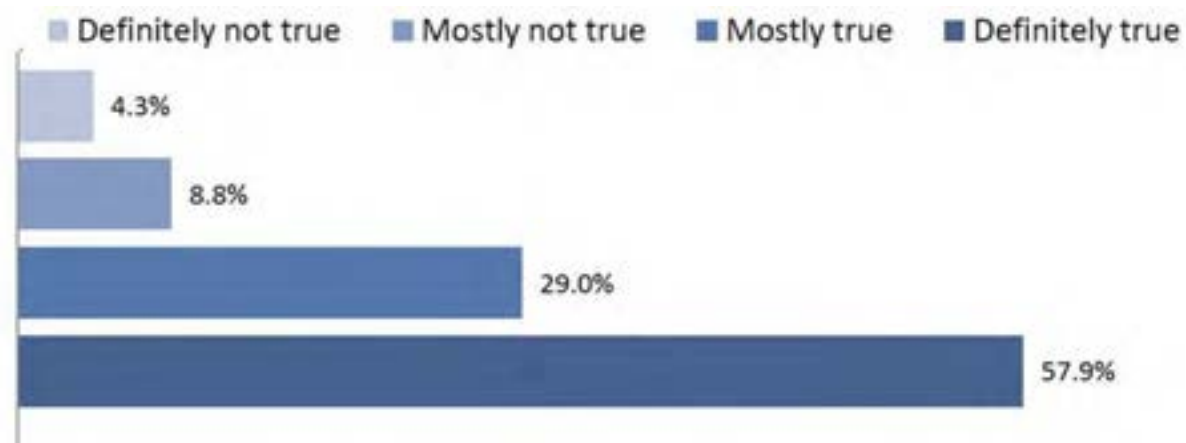
**Note:** On 12/20/2019 a federal law known as **Tobacco 21** became effective that made it illegal for a retailer to sell any tobacco product—including cigarettes, cigars, and e-cigarettes—to anyone under 21. The new federal minimum age of sale applies to all retail establishments and persons with no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



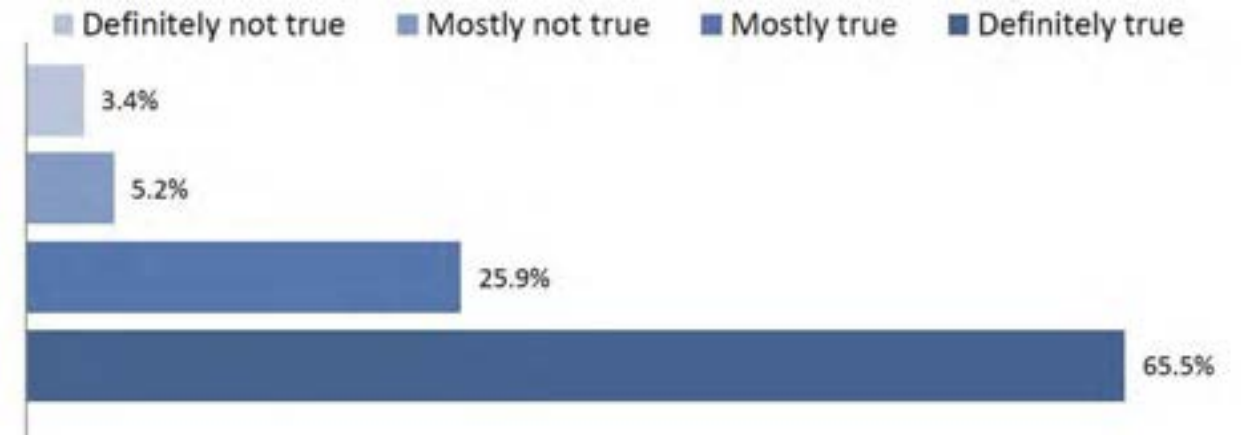
# Vaping and family

My family has rules discouraging me from vaping.

## Whisconier Middle School

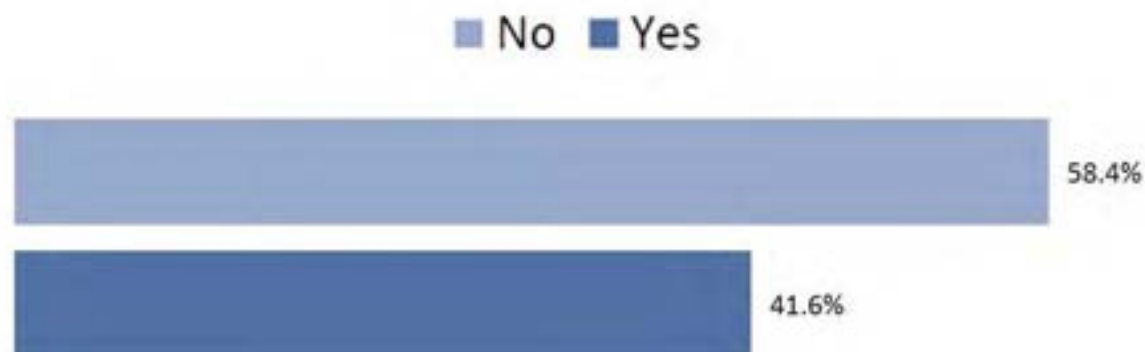


## Brookfield High School

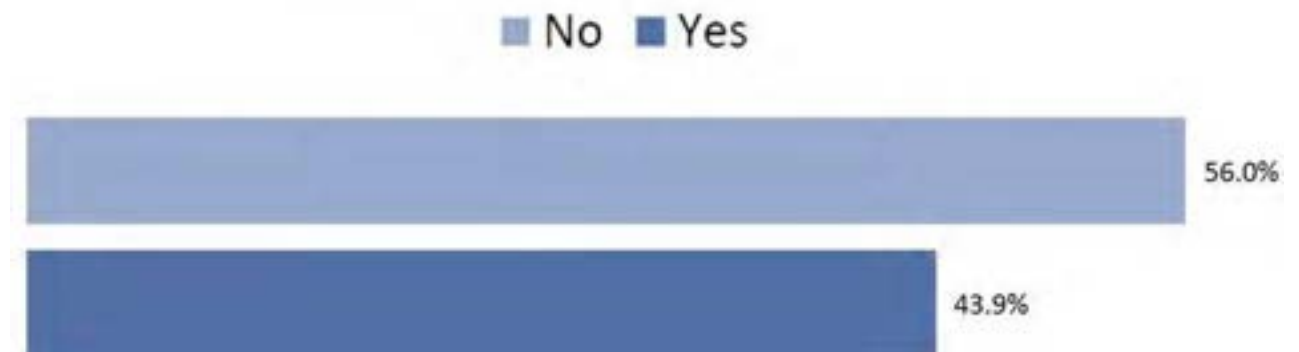


Talked during the past 12 months with at least one of your parents about the dangers of vaping.

## Whisconier Middle School



## Brookfield High School



# Vaping and family

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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.

## Grade 8

■ No ■ Yes



## Grades 9–12

■ No ■ Yes



# Safety

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

<b>Whisconier Middle School</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel safe at school.*	19%	53%	21%	5%	2%
I understand the safety protocols (fire, lockdown, etc.) at my school in case of an emergency.	44%	46%	6%	3%	1%
<b>Brookfield High School</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel safe at school.	20%	55%	17%	6%	3%
I understand the safety protocols (fire, lockdown, etc.) at my school in case of an emergency.	34%	51%	7%	1%	2%

\* We recommend further discussion to understand the nature of any perceived concerns.

# Online behavior

And the Survey also included questions about online behavior.

Whisconier Middle School		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Experienced mean behavior online or on social media?		31%	20%	25%	13%	12%
Been mean to others online or on social media?		24%	26%	11%	7%	3%
Brookfield High School		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Experienced mean behavior online or on social media?		39%	21%	21%	12%	7%
Been mean to others online or on social media?		62%	18%	11%	4%	5%

# Online behavior

And the Survey included questions about focus.

Whisconier Middle School		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Struggled to stay focused on one task?		4%	22%	35%	19%	20%
Had trouble completing tasks on time?		3%	18%	40%	19%	20%
Brookfield High School		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Struggled to stay focused on one task?		11%	19%	35%	23%	14%
Had trouble completing tasks on time?		11%	16%	36%	24%	13%

# Online behavior

Finally, the Survey asked what students use social media for.

	Whisconier Middle School	Brookfield High School
Communication with friends/family	87%	83%
Sharing personal updates/photos	42%	52%
Entertainment	91%	86%
News & information gathering	48%	56%
Joining online communities	24%	26%
Other	25%	12%



# What have we learned?

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- Alcohol continues to be the number one drug of choice.
- Digital gambling rates have soared.
- Zyn has emerged as a concerning tobacco trend.
- Onset of at-risk behaviors (drinking in particular) can start as early as age 10 or 11.
- The concerning rates of mental health issues — especially eating disorders, depression, suicide attempts — must continue to be addressed in a holistic manner.

# What can we do

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- Increase awareness of assets and behaviors in all constituent groups, including parents, school staff, care providers, clergy, safety professionals, 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.

# Final Thought

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- While we still have much work to do, we're pleased to see positive movements. Efforts through the schools, the community and families are effective. We need to continue to work together for the positive.

**You Matter**



**BROOKFIELD CARES**

# Special Thanks

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- 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.



# Next steps

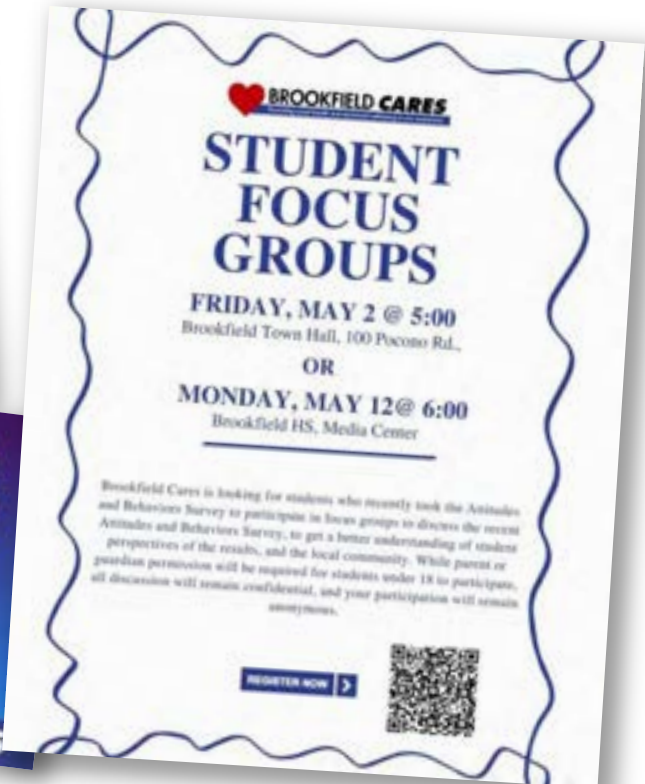
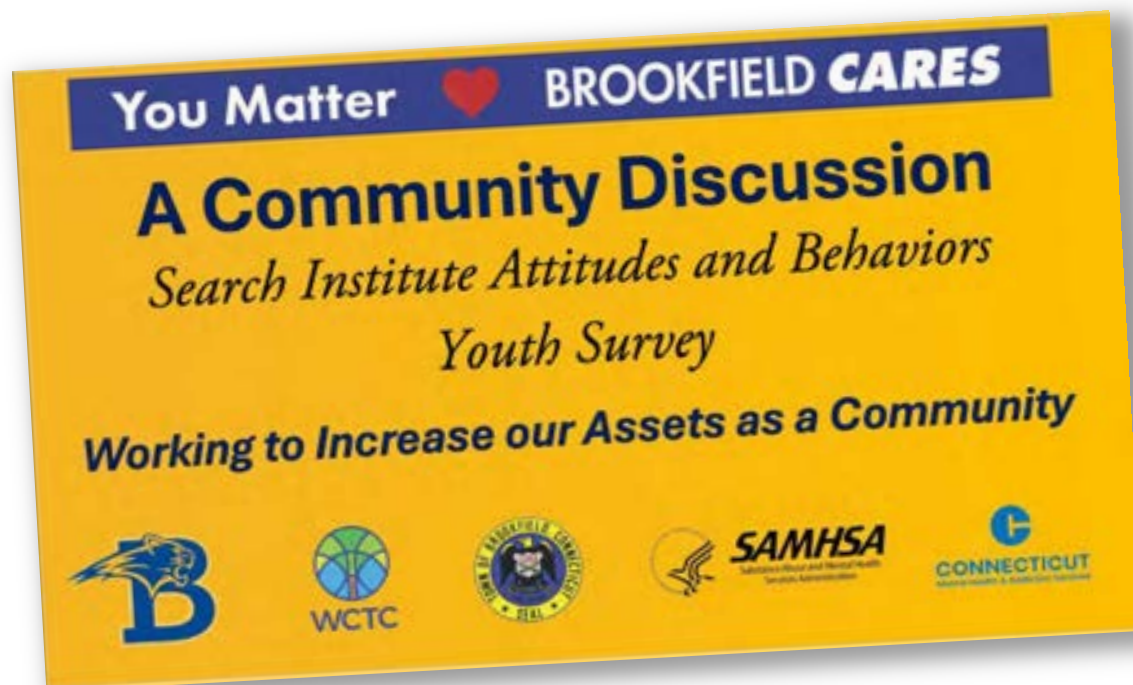
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- Continue to update the health curriculum in our schools to address issues starting in grades ***before*** at-risk behaviors begin.
- Continue a series of meetings/presentations/events to keep the community engaged and educated.
- Continue **BROOKFIELD 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.

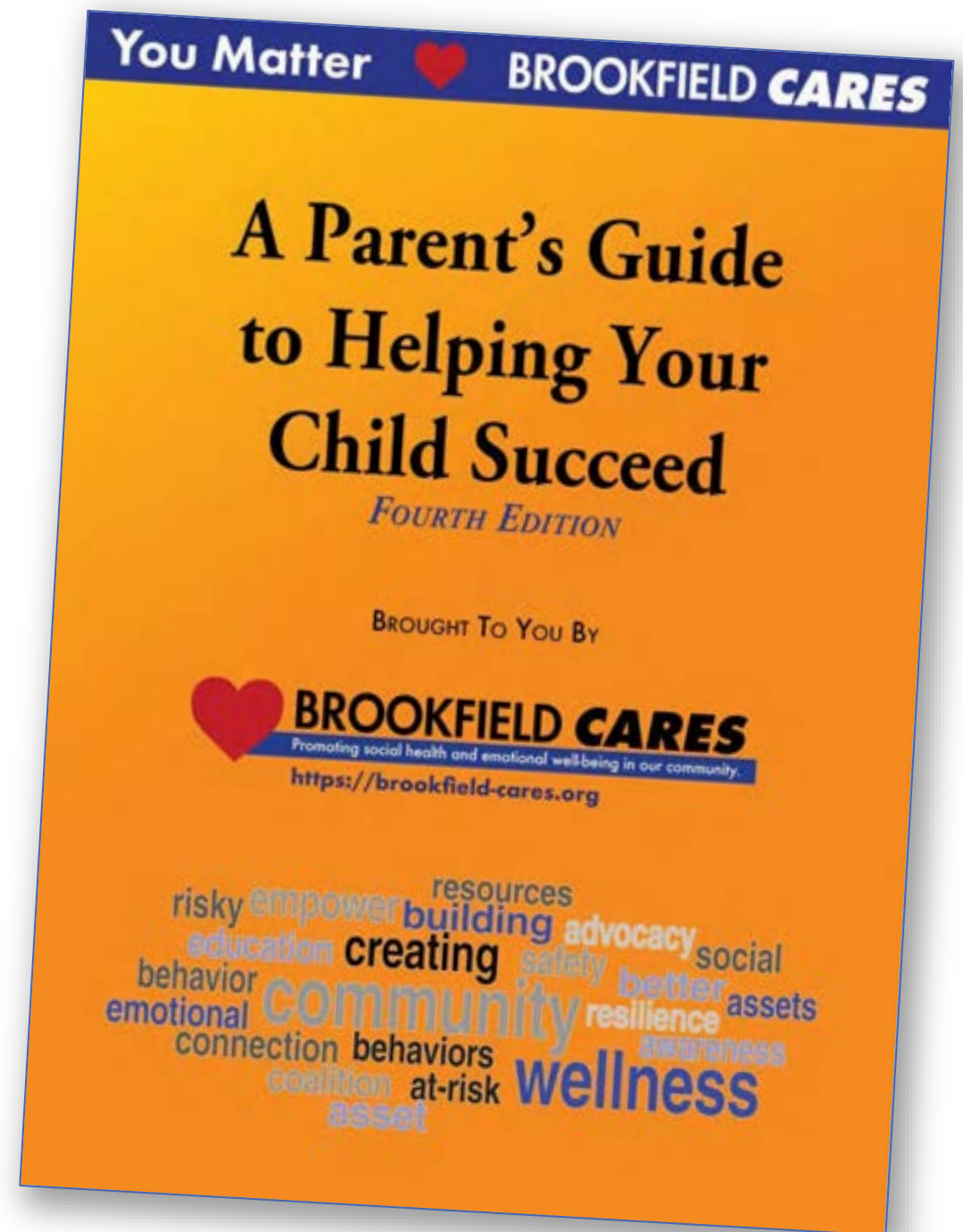
- **Discussion with students who participated in the survey**

- ✓ 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.



# You Matter





# BROOKFIELD CARES



## Vaping has risks!

- Nicotine addiction
- Mouth and throat irritation
- Coughing & wheezing
- Worsening asthma
- Chest pain
- Raised blood pressure
- Raised heart rate
- Upset stomach
- Nausea

To learn more or for help quitting, visit [brookfield-cares.org](https://brookfield-cares.org) or scan the QR code.



Home About Us Resources & Support Blog Get Involved Donate

## 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline now active

Lifeline Chat is available 24/7

### Welcome to Brookfield CARES

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 do this by engaging with all members of the community to reduce harmful behaviors, de-stigmatize mental health issues, and promote and support healthy choices.

[Download Parent's Guide](#)



#### Explore Our Resources



##### Access Vital Mental Health Resources

Explore our comprehensive guide to resources for mental health issues, including the parent's guide, the youth guide, and the community guide.



##### Connect with Parent Resources

Find out how to connect with parents and other community members who are experiencing mental health issues and provide support.



##### Mental Health Resources

Explore our comprehensive guide to resources for mental health issues, including the parent's guide, the youth guide, and the community guide.



##### Discover Support for College Students

Learn about the support and resources available for college students who are experiencing mental health issues and provide support.

<https://brookfield-cares.org>