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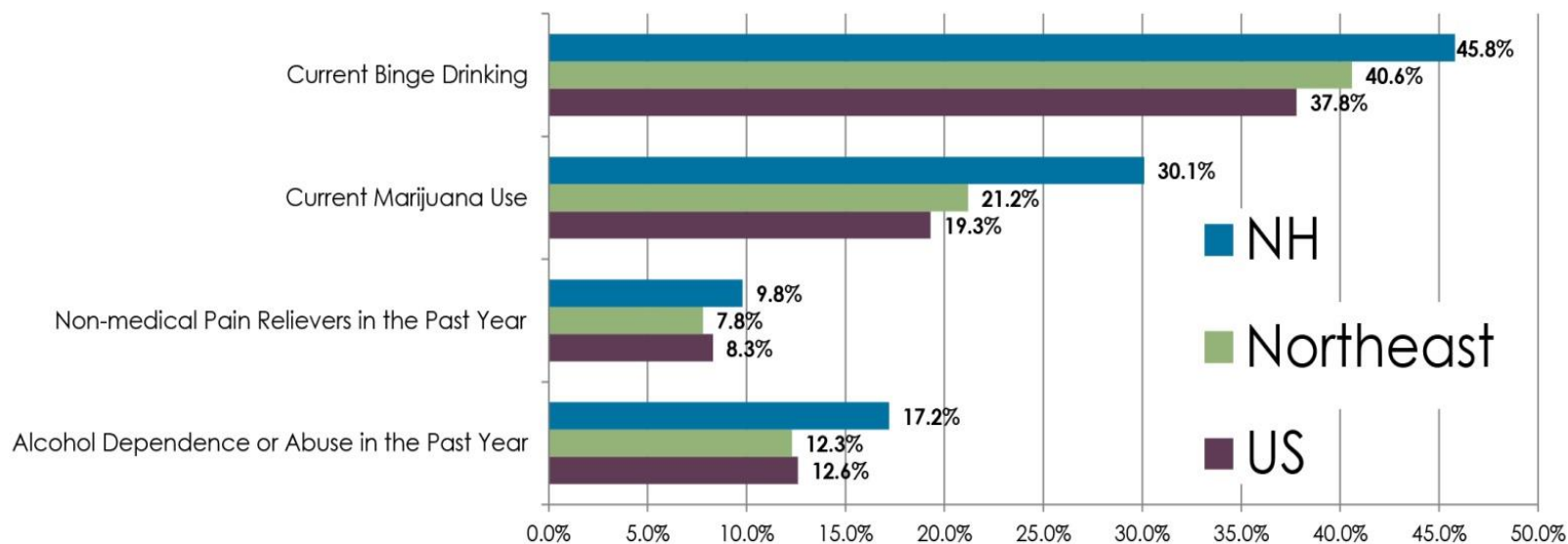
CHI
Community Health Institute



NH Center for Excellence, Community Health Institute/JSI | 501 South Street, 2nd Floor, Bow, NH 03304
603-573-3300 | www.nhcenterforexcellence.org

Background and Why Focus on Young Adults

Figure 1: CURRENT AND PAST YEAR SUBSTANCE USE AMONG 18-25 YEAR OLDS (NSDUH 2014)

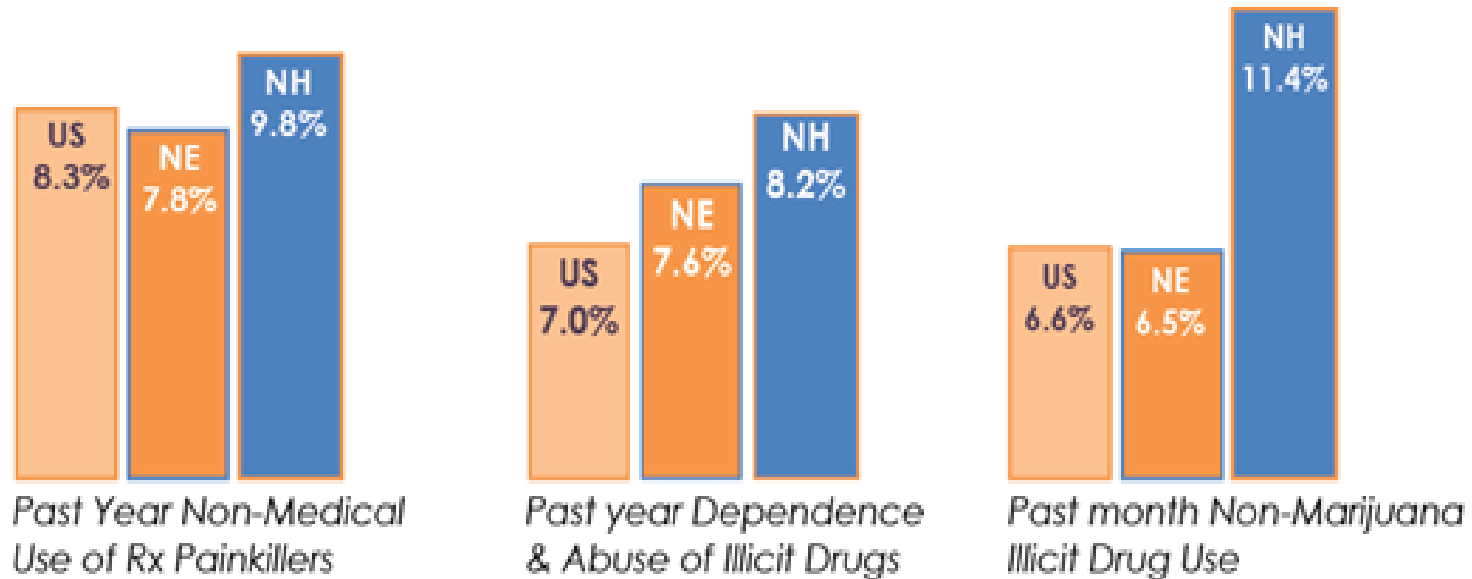


¹ Northeast Region includes: CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI and VT.

Why Focus on Young Adults?

The percentage of individuals in the United States with past year illicit drug dependence or abuse was highest among young adults between the ages of 18-25.

YOUNG ADULT USE AND DEPENDENCE (NSDUH 2014)



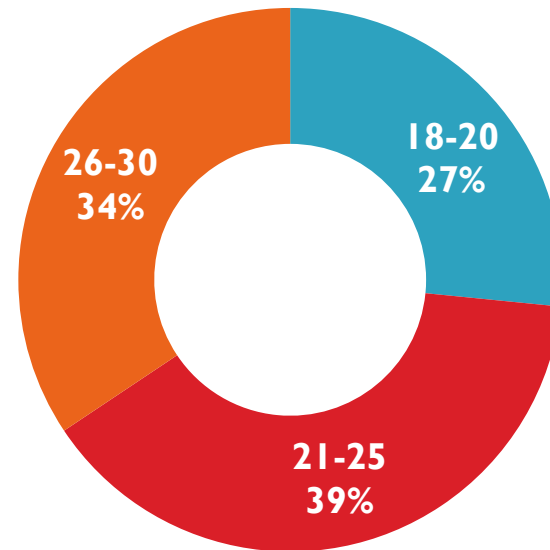
Rapid Assessment Process

- Recognized we needed to do a deeper dive to better understand the substance use behaviors of young adults
- Mixed Methodology-Focus Groups and Geo-Targeted Facebook Online Survey
- 57 Focus Groups with 366 participants in 11 of 13 Regions
- 4,334 respondents to the online survey of NH young adults between the ages of 18-30

Demographics

- 50.4% Male
- 91.9% Caucasian
- 29.7% Enrolled in school/college/training
- 84.8% Employed full or part-time

Age Range of Survey Respondents



Why was this done?

- To make data driven decisions for prevention efforts for this age group
 - To ensure prevention strategies are culturally sensitive and relevant to the target population and subpopulations
 - To help inform prevention efforts for early childhood and youth
 - To establish baseline data to track implemented prevention efforts
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Voices of Young Adults

“I honestly think that it’s pretty surprising that they are concerned with how young adults feel about their futures. But I’m glad they are because it is important since we are the future leaders. So, I’m glad the current leaders are taking action in trying to help better our futures to make the world a better place to live in.”

THEMES AND KEY MESSAGES

Themes

Themes and discussion threads that came out of the focus groups and the survey results

1. Community
2. Physical Environment
3. Job Opportunities and Growth
4. Communication Approaches
5. Generational Differences
6. Sense of Hope or Optimism
7. Stress Coping Mechanisms
8. Perception of Substance Misuse
9. Consequences of Substance Misuse
10. Substance Use

“All parts of the New Hampshire are relatively safe. People have each other’s back around here; there is a sense of community.”

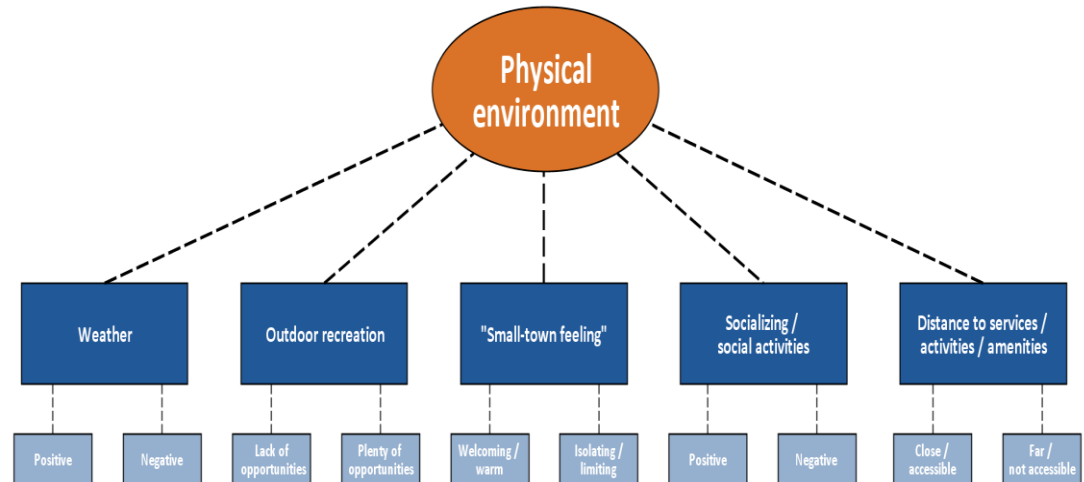


- Tell us about your likes and dislikes as young adults living in NH?
- What are you and other young adults living in NH excited about?
- What is frustrating to you and other young adults living in NH?

Key Messages: Community

- Young adults in New Hampshire want to be heard
- Would talk to friends about serious problems
 - *Value family support and role of friends*
 - *5% reported that they had “nobody I can talk to”*
- Want to be engaged but have trouble with availability or affordability
- Desire to be connected to their communities
- Dual role in community as parent and child

“Living in the White Mountains, there is always something to do outside. It’s nice to be in a small town with a homey feel.”



Key Messages: Physical Environment

- Not all young adults engage in outdoor activities; People who don't want to be outdoors lack activities to engage in (may be potentially vulnerable)
- Ambivalence about living in NH: Contrasting view on physical environment, and small town feeling which contributes to decision making
- Perspective about NH is based on where they live and how connected they feel to their community.
- Voiced concern on inaccessibility to physical amenities, social groups (lack of transportation services)

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“I’m really excited because I finished school. I have a nice lineup of things I put in for. My dream goal is getting closer and closer.”

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graph TD; A([Job opportunities and growth]) -.- B[Plenty of job opportunities]; A -.- C[Low salaries / pay]; A -.- D[Education<br/>(High school / college)]; A -.- E[Lack of job opportunities]; A -.- F[Lack of benefits]; D -.- G[Accessible / attainable]; D -.- H[Not accessible / not attainable];
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Job opportunities and growth

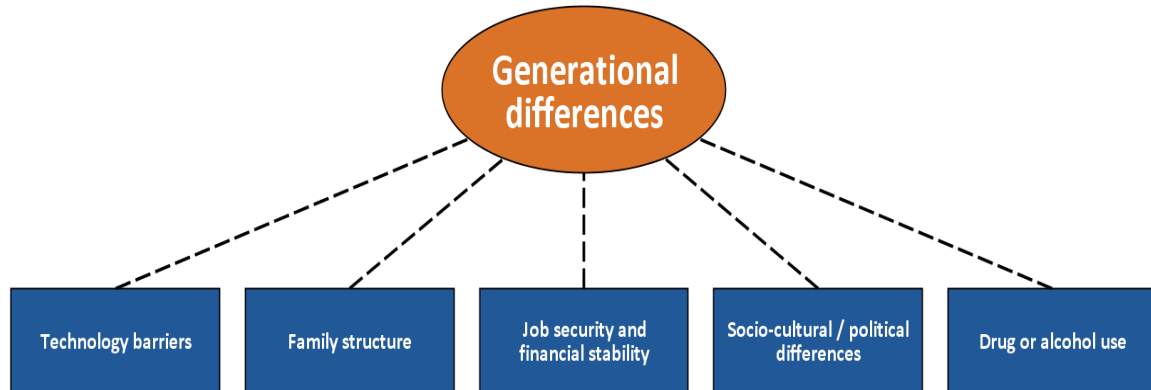
- Plenty of job opportunities
- Low salaries / pay
- Education (High school / college)
 - Accessible / attainable
 - Not accessible / not attainable
- Lack of job opportunities
- Lack of benefits

Key Messages: Job Opportunities and Growth

- Acknowledge opportunity as a benefit, want to move up but cost is a barrier
 - Social media influences perspective of expectations/Pressure to achieve status
 - Lack of awareness about opportunities/limited resources to learn about what is available to them
 - Want educational opportunities to translate to work opportunities
 - Opportunities available provide low wages and few/no benefits
 - Interested in moving out of state to access opportunities that don't exist here
- 

“I would like to own a house and have children, but I'm concerned my wages will not be enough/increase enough to facilitate that. I know that it will take longer to obtain those things compared to my parents.”

How do your own challenges differ from your parents experiences at your age?

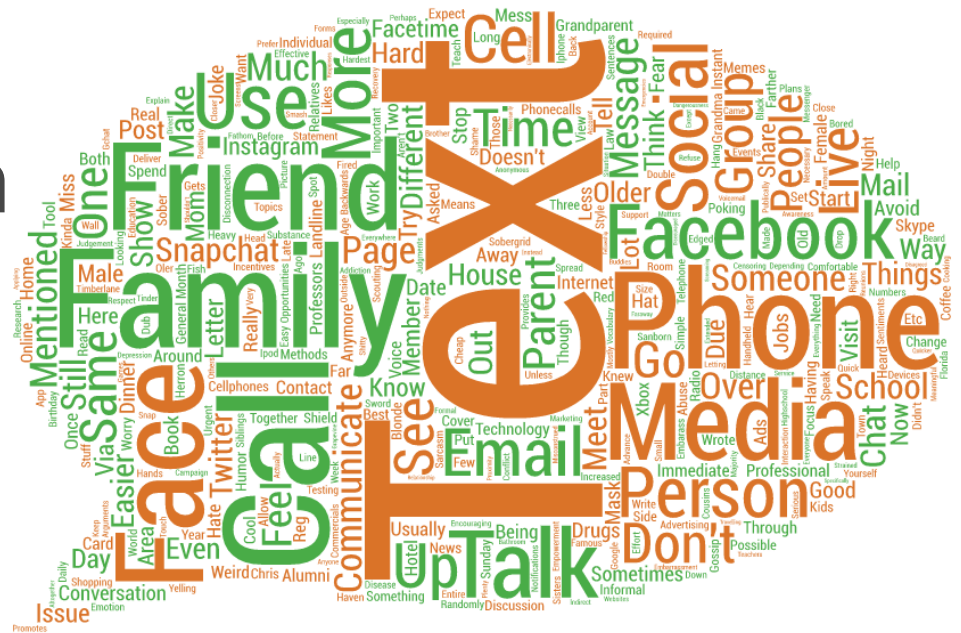


Key Messages: Generation Differences

- Strong family structure contributes to better choices/ foundation for good choices
- More likely to be burdened by financial hardship/won't have what their parents had and need more support from family
- Using technology differently – benefit to know how to use it but also agree it can be detrimental if not used properly
- Sense of safety has changed/heightened concerns about safety and security

“I think it's a good idea, I'm glad the ad was put on Facebook because I think a lot of young adults still use it. I don't know if there is any sort of focus group or face to face portion of this, but I think young adults would also enjoy open discussion about the topic.”

- What is the best way to reach young adults with information about the problems associated with binge drinking or prescription drug or heroin use?



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graph TD; A([Communication approaches]) -.- B[Social media and texting]; A -.- C[In-person and phone calls]
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Communication approaches

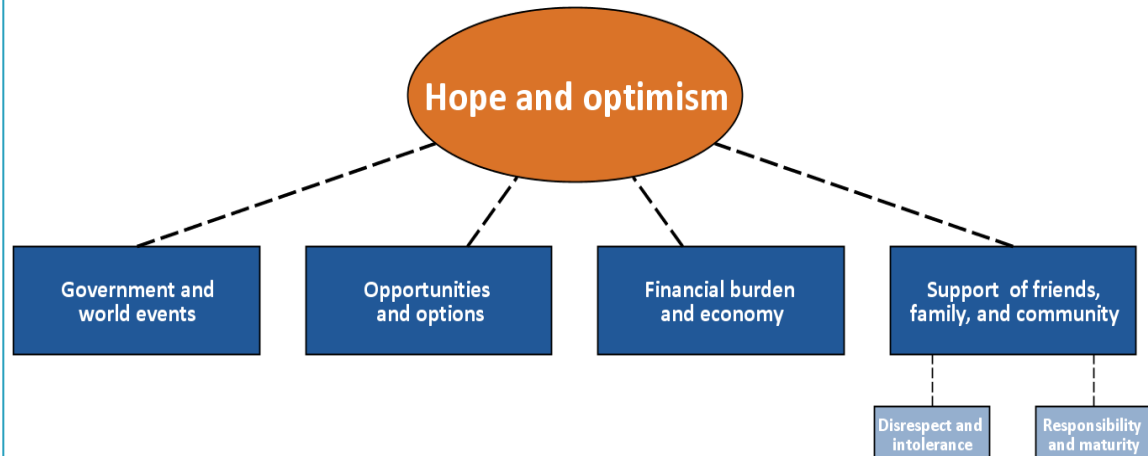
- Social media and texting
- In-person and phone calls

Key Messages: Communication

- Connected to peers with social media/text using top media platforms
- More likely to trust peers because of continual communication
- Comfort with using text to address serious issues, rather than face-to-face
- Family more face-to-face communication than with friends

“Support from my family, friends are a huge source of hope, seeing others get through hard times gives you hope.”

- What gives you hope or optimism?
 - What discourages you?



Key Messages: Hope or Optimism

- Family/Friends/Community are sources of hope
- Feeling in controlling about decisions
- Seeing Others succeed; Giving back to community (particularly in recovery community)
- Relationship between substance use on sense of hopeAcknowledge ongoing substance use epidemic and want to be involved in solutions
- Impact of being undervalued: attitudes and language of general population has a role in discouraging young adults
- Limitations in social groups/peers; Finding your “people”
- Financial concerns and burdens limit hope (cost of college, loans, debt, low wages, cost of healthcare)

“I was stressed in high school – I’m stressed now. When I was in high school I was put on a pedestal by my parents, and when I fell off, I was a black sheep. I graduated early so I had a lot of academic stress.”

- How do you cope with stress?
 - How has this changed since high school?



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graph TD; A([Stress-coping mechanisms]) -.- B[External / environmental methods and strategies]; A -.- C[Internalizing]; A -.- D[Risk taking]; A -.- E[Personal protection]
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Stress-coping mechanisms

- External / environmental methods and strategies
- Internalizing
- Risk taking
- Personal protection

Key Messages: Stress-Coping Mechanisms

- Increase of stress after high school graduation
- Start early with stress coping mechanisms (before high school)
- Use is a means of escape – need access to mental health services to cope before use begins
- Found a number of positive ways to cope with stress, not just substances
- 25% felt sad or hopeless which contributes to self-medication

What was asked?

- Do you think there is a problem with binge drinking, prescription drug use or heroin in your community?
 - If yes, in what way is binge drinking a problem? If not, why not?
 - prescription drug use
 - heroin use
- What do you see as the top reasons young adults binge drink?
 - Why do you think some people your age don't binge drink?
- What do you see as the top reasons young adults misuse pain medication? (misuse means using pain pills not prescribed to them, or misusing their own pain medication in a way not as prescribed).
 - Why do you think some people your age don't misuse prescription drugs or heroin?



“Everyone including my parents drink heavily and often here in [my] area.”

Key Messages: Perception About Use

- Broadly recognized that drinking has become normalized/
Lack of understanding about binge drinking and consequences
- Common perception that there is a high amount of use but it is not a problem/ Low perception of risk for binge drinking
- Changes as young adults move into an “adult” environment
- Boredom/stress and peer pressure were primary reasons for use
- It is easier to find a party than a healthy activity/
Drugs are easier to get than alcohol
- Primary concern is rise in heroin – getting to younger generations, cheap, very easy access, and becoming normal/ Not concerned about prescription drug misuse
- Stigma plays a role in avoiding asking for help/
Stigma of not using/ not the norm to not use

“Binge drinking is dangerous not only for you but other people around you. You could do something while drunk to harm others.”

- What negative impacts of alcohol or drug misuse do you see among people your age?
 - Is it different for alcohol misuse compared to prescription drug misuse?
- Think about yourself or someone you know who may need help for alcohol or drug problems. Who have they turned to for help?
 - How have they sought help??



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graph TD; A([Consequences of use]) -.- B[Legal consequences]; A -.- C[Physical and mental health]; A -.- D[Social impact]; A -.- E[Economic cost];
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Key Messages: Consequences of Misuse

- Everybody knows somebody who has been affected by misuse (legal consequences, health, economic, etc.)
- Direct exposure/seeing impact on others was a deterrent
- Impact on access to jobs and opportunities
- Stigma/shame/embarrassment: impact on social relationships
- Seen as a rite of passage but there is a line you don't want to cross
- Mixed messages about the prevention messaging (you will die) and actual experience (it wasn't that bad)/ use of fear-based messaging
- High rate of unprotected sex (19.7%)/risks to child (pregnancy, fetal alcohol syndrome)
- Economic cost is a deterrent to use

Substance Use

“I think [young adults] are so glad to get away from their families, and all the rules, that they overdo it and just let go.”

Over two-thirds (69.4%) indicated that it was somewhat or very easy to heroin or fentanyl in their community.

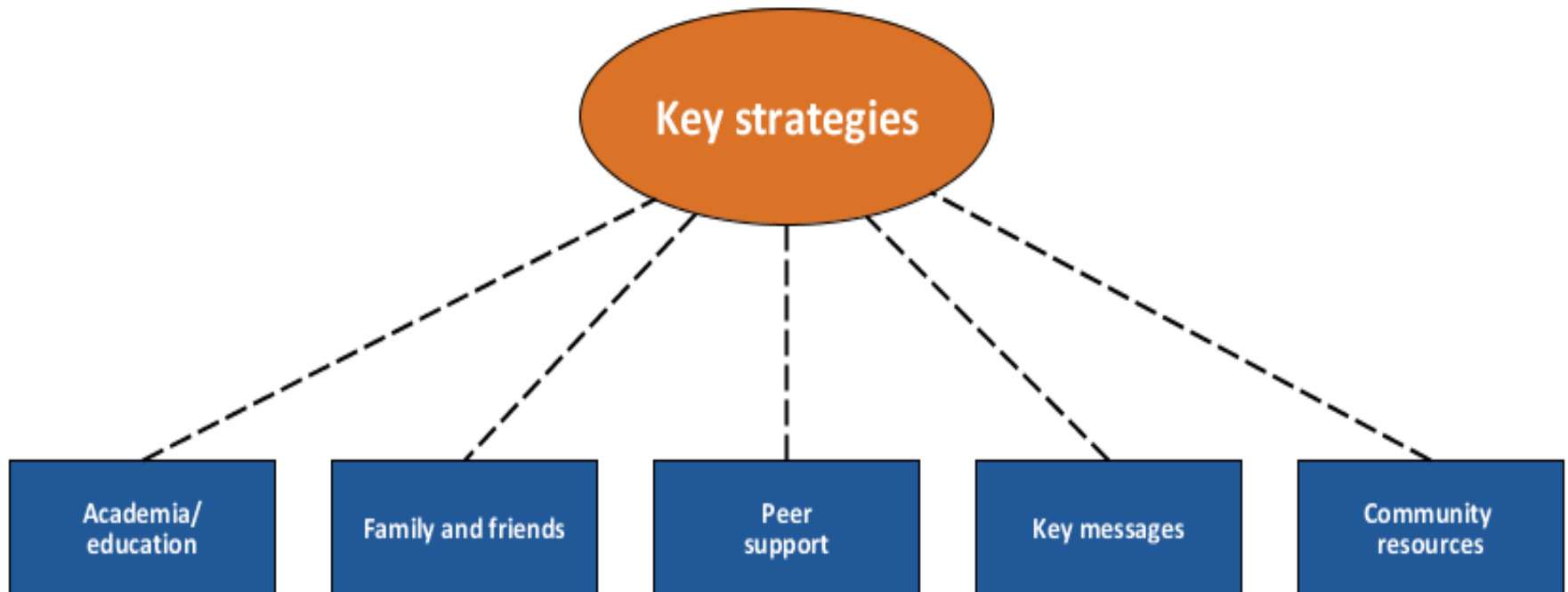
CURRENT SUBSTANCE USE BY AGE GROUP

	18-20	21-25	26-30	P-VALUE
	%	%	%	
Binge Drinking	31.2	40.2	30.7	p<.0001
Tobacco	34.2	35.7	33.7	ns
E-cigarettes	15.4	10.2	9.0	p=.0002
Marijuana (nonmedical purposes)	34.0	27.7	25.4	p=.0004
Cocaine	2.0	3.0	2.4	p=.0004
Club drugs	3.5	2.0	1.8	ns
Prescriptions drugs (without doctor's orders)	4.5	4.9	5.3	ns
I have not used any of these	48.5	50.8	54.2	ns

Key Messages: Substance Use

- 50.8% (21-25) state that they have not used any substances
- Tobacco is very high among young adults
- Mixed messages about pro-legalization of marijuana
- College/non-college drinking and prescription drug exposure differs

KEY STRATEGIES



Key Messages: Key Strategies

- Education should start early, info about other drugs and not just alcohol
- Mental health should be part of the curriculum
- Peer to peer message are really successful and have greatest impact/
- Stigma prevents communications and strains relationships, creates psychological burden preventing recovery and treatment
- Need for a comprehensive approach/collective response
- More trusting of medical providers due to confidentiality laws/ not willing to talk to family (don't want to let them down)
- Want to see effort from state/local government, want to feel they're working for the "common man"
- Encouraged that law enforcement are shifting to help them rather than prosecute them



For More Information on The Assessment or Strategies Selected Please Contact

Jill.A. Burke, MPA

**Chief of Prevention and Education/Acting Prevention
Administrator**

NH Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services

603-271-6112

Jill.Burke@dhhs.nh.gov