

## Key Findings from Community Participants - 2016



Both groups identified marijuana, alcohol, and prescription drugs as the **most commonly used** substances among youth in our community.



Both groups identified peers, older siblings, and the home (without parental knowledge) as **sources** for youth to obtain substances in our community.



Both groups identified having a sense of purpose or engaging in extracurricular activities as one of the most important **protective factors** against using drugs and alcohol for youth in our community.



Both groups identified substance use in the home by siblings or parents as a **risk factor** for substance use among youth in our community.

### Perceptions of Use

#### Most Commonly Used Substances

All participants identified alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs as the most commonly used substances. Social acceptance and accessibility of substances were the most frequently cited reasons why these are the most commonly used

#### Focus group participants

Ranked	Prevention/Treatment	General Public	Youth
1	Marijuana	Marijuana	Alcohol
2	Alcohol & Tobacco (tied)	Alcohol	Marijuana
3	Prescription drugs	Prescription drugs	Prescription drugs

## Survey Respondents

### Most Common

1. Alcohol
2. Marijuana
3. E-cigarettes
4. Cigarettes
5. Prescribed opioids

### Least Common

1. Steroids
2. Hallucinogens
3. Cocaine
4. Synthetic drugs (spice/bath salts)
5. Chewing tobacco

### Most Harmful Substances

Focus group participants identified alcohol, prescription drugs, and methamphetamine as the most harmful substances due to being widely accessible, higher potential to become addicted, and a person's tendency to lose their inhibitions while under the influence of those substances.

### Focus group participants

Ranked	General Public	Youth
1	Alcohol	Alcohol
2	Prescription drugs	Prescription drugs
3	Meth	

Survey respondents identified different substances to be either "very" or "extremely harmful", the different substances are listed below.

### Very or Extremely Harmful

1. Methamphetamines and Heroin (tie)
2. Ecstasy
3. Cocaine
4. Synthetic drugs (spice/bath salts) and Prescribed opioids (tie)
5. Cigarettes

### Least Harmful

1. Over-the-counter drugs
2. Marijuana
3. E-cigarettes
4. Chewing tobacco
5. Steroids

### Acceptability

- 92% of survey respondents have rules in their house against alcohol and drugs use among youth.
- 97% of survey respondents believe it is totally unacceptable for youth to use illegal drugs in their home.
- 68% of survey respondents believe it is totally unacceptable for youth under 21 to use alcohol in their home.
- 22% of survey respondents believe occasional underage drinking is ok, as long as it doesn't interfere with school, work, or other responsibilities.

## Risk and Protective Factors

### Risk Factors

Focus group participants' top 3 risk factors

1. The Reno culture of 24-hour partying, including drinking, pub crawls, wine walks, and gambling.

2. Situational issues with family or within the home, including family members who use substances, divorce, or other forms of trauma.
3. Peer pressure and media glamorization

Survey respondents' top 3 risk factors

1. Inadequate parental supervision and monitoring
2. Substance abuse among parents or siblings
3. Behavioral issues: poor impulse control, lack of self-regulation, antisocial behavior

### **Protective Factors**

Focus group participants' top 3 protective factors

1. Having a sense of belonging, or being involved with extracurricular activities as a protective factor, this includes having a job or being part of a church community.
2. Having parents who are engaged, set rules, and communicate with their children.
3. Having education and knowledge of the consequences of substance use as a primary factor as to why someone would choose not to use substances

Survey respondents' top 3 protective factors

1. Supportive relationship with family members with clear expectations of behavior
2. Emotional self-regulation and high self-esteem
3. Engagement in activities: sports, music, art, religious or cultural groups

### **Parental Attitudes and Control**

Nearly 40% of survey respondents had children of their own. A series of questions relating to their perception of drugs and alcohol use and how they communicate their feelings towards their children were asked.

- 10% of parents had never talked to their children about drug or alcohol use.
- 64% of parents had spoken to their children about drug or alcohol use in the past 30 days.
- 92% of parents stated they tell their children they do NOT approve of drug use.
- 89% of parents stated they tell their children they do NOT approve of alcohol use.

### **Accessibility of Substances**

- Among the 74% of parents who reported they have alcohol in their house, 90% do not lock up their alcohol.
- Among the 64% of parents who reported they have prescription drugs in their house, 56% do not lock up their prescription drugs.

### **Preventing Substance Use**

All focus groups collectively identified education as the key to prevent youth from trying or using substances, however there were differences in how to approach educating youth. The prevention/treatment and general public focus group participants identified utilizing interactive or real-life approaches as a way to better provide substance use education. Also commonly

mentioned was to get the messaging to parents and bringing substance use education back into the school setting.

### **Prevention/Treatment**

- Commonly cited addressing basic household needs such as adequate food, shelter, and clothes citing the foundation starts with the parents. The prevention/treatment participants gave examples of when the household environment is not ideal, there is inherent risk for the youth to start using substances either due to lack of parental supervision or as a coping mechanism.
- Prevention/treatment participants also stated consistent messaging should be delivered through a variety of people and resources, not just schools or parents.

### **General Public**

- Education needs to start at a younger age and be provided from people who have overcome addiction, as a personal testimony instead of law enforcement delivering the messages.
- Consequences of substance use need to be a focal point and should utilize the shock factor including progression pictures, side effects, or taking field trips to the jail.
- Participants in the general public focus groups stated they would have wanted/do want access to information so they can more involved in teaching their children about substance use.

### **Youth**

- Education was identified as a starting place, but youth did not perceive it to be as impactful. Instead they thought the approach should be to tell people the reason why people seek a drug (describe the “high”) as well as the consequences of addiction, including withdrawals and recovery.
- Youth participants also stated they would react to having real-life impacts presented to them, including statistics on tangible loss from substance use (unemployment rates, impact to health as it related to muscle loss, performance impacts for sports, or brain function etc.)
- Legal consequences of substance use should be greater to prevent youth from using substances.