YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY

CHIPPEWA COUNTY - 2019

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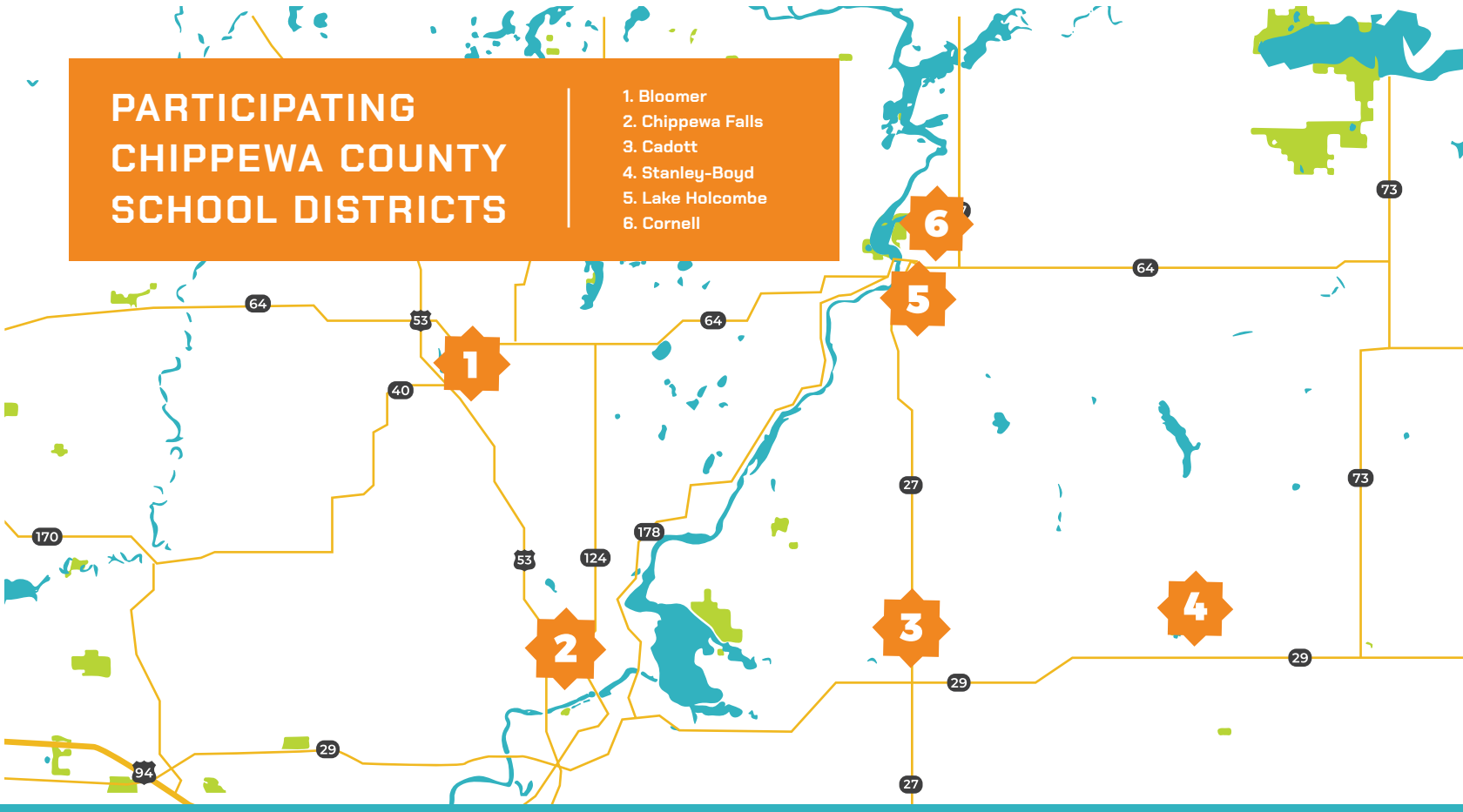


SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The 2019 Chippewa County Youth Risk Behavior Survey highlights areas where students are doing well, in addition to areas for concern related to youth health and wellness.

One area that has been of concern in Chippewa County and nationwide is the use of e-cigarettes by young people. In recent years, while cigarette use has continued to decrease, vaping has increased and has become the most commonly used tobacco product among Chippewa County youth. In 2019 in Chippewa County, 23% of high school students reported using an electronic vapor product in the past month, and almost half (46%) reported that they have tried vaping in their life.

Mental health continues to be another key health concern for youth. 47% of all high school students and 45% of middle school students reported experiencing anxiety, and 29% of high school students and 25% of middle school students reported depression. Also, 18% of high school students and 15% of middle school students reported having seriously considered suicide in the past year. Just 24% of high school students and 43% of middle school students reported that they most of the time or always get emotional help when needed. Among high school students, 52% indicated that they rely on peers for support, and 31% said they rely on a parent, teacher, or other adult.

Positive trends identified in the 2019 survey include the high level of protective factors reported by youth. Having protective factors in place helps adolescents cope with stress and increases their ability to avoid risky behavior, such as substance abuse. 75% of both middle and high school youth reported they have a trusted adult they can talk to at school, and about 2 out of 3 reported high levels of school belonging and participation in extracurricular activities.

WHAT IS THE YRBS?

BACKGROUND

In 2019, six of seven public school districts in Chippewa County completed the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) in coordination with the Chippewa County Department of Public Health. Administered every other year, the YRBS provides the county with a snapshot of youth health behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems. Topic areas include safety, mental health, alcohol, tobacco, other drug use, sexual health, nutrition, and physical activity. The YRBS is an online survey that students complete in the classroom.

The YRBS is a national survey developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In Wisconsin, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) supports the implementation of the YRBS. DPI provides both technical assistance for survey implementation and hosts an online survey platform that school districts use to conduct the survey. In 2019, DPI changed to a new online platform and changed some of the questions included in the survey.

This report provides county-level survey results for students in grades 6th through 12th. Cornell schools participated at the high school level only, and New Auburn schools did not participate in 2019.

METHODS

The YRBS is a self-administered, anonymous questionnaire. The Chippewa County YRBS included 84 questions for high school and 70 questions for middle school. Survey procedures protected the privacy of students by allowing anonymous and voluntary participation. Schools informed parents of the survey using a passive permission process; willingness to participate was assumed unless the parents elected to opt-out of having their child participate.

All schools completed the survey in January and February 2019, using the Wisconsin Department of Education online YRBS system. Schools scheduled the survey during the school day at a time to best meet the goal of having all students complete the survey.

2019 was the first time that local data collection and analysis were fully aligned with state-level processes, which allowed DPI to produce a standard county-level report for all counties. DPI analyzed data in accordance with CDC procedures, and have provided county-level reports on the Wisconsin YRBS website. Comparisons with 2017 data should consider any differences in analytic methods and participation levels.

READING THE REPORT

This report includes comparisons for each item to high school results at the state level. State of Wisconsin numbers are for high school only. Also, because middle school survey questions and high school survey questions differ in many cases, direct comparisons are not always possible between middle and high school students for the county. Where they are available, middle school results are included in the topic area in **orange** adjacent to high school results in this report.

SURVEY RESPONSE

1,818 high school students participated in the YRBS in 2019. This represents an estimated 68% response rate for high school students across the 6 participating schools.

1,572 middle school students participated in the YRBS in 2019. This represents an estimated 76% response rate for middle school students across the 5 participating schools.

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

HIGH SCHOOL

GENDER

Female 51%
Male 49%

GRADE LEVEL

9th Grade 28%
10th Grade 28%
11th Grade 23%
12th Grade 21%

RACE/ ETHNICITY

American Indian/Native American .. 1%
Asian/Pacific Islander 2%
Black/African American 1%
Hispanic/Latino 5%
White 86%
More than one race 5%

MIDDLE SCHOOL

GENDER

Female 52%
Male 48%

GRADE LEVEL

6th Grade 31%
7th Grade 33%
8th Grade 36%

RACE/ ETHNICITY

American Indian/Native American .. 2%
Asian/Pacific Islander 1%
Black/African American 2%
Hispanic/Latino 3%
White 85%
More than one race 7%

Focus on: Health Disparities

Some groups of youth are at higher risk for poor mental health and other problems. For example, on the 2019 YRBS, 41% students who reported food insecurity (i.e., said yes to having experienced hunger in the past month because there was not enough food at home) reported that they had a sense of belonging at school compared to 65% of students who did not report food insecurity. Food insecure students were also more likely to report being bullied and to have a mental health concern.

Another group at higher risk for problems compared to their peers are youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT). 89% of LGBT students reported mental health concerns compared to 49% of straight/cisgender students. Health disparities can exist for other groups as well, including for rural populations and by race/ethnicity.

Efforts that address disparities for these groups include reviewing and updating policies to address disparities (e.g., bullying policies, disciplinary practices), staff training for how to intervene to improve school climate, and creating groups or programs to connect students at risk for disparities with each other and with caring adults.

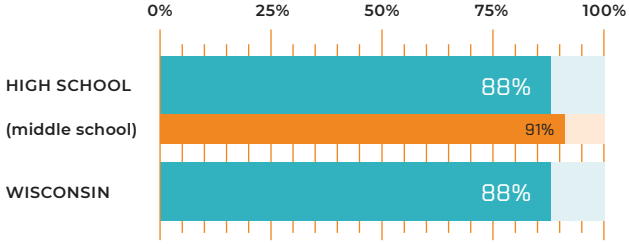
SAFETY & VIOLENCE

TRAFFIC SAFETY

Most middle and high school youth in Chippewa County reported wearing a seatbelt when riding in a car in 2019. Of those who drive, just under half have texted while driving, and 7% reported driving after drinking. Nationally and in Wisconsin, traffic safety trends for teens have been positive, with increased seatbelt use and fewer traffic deaths. Still, according to the National Safety Council, half of all teens will be involved in a car crash before graduating from high school. Teen drivers who continue to practice driving with their parents increase their chances of avoiding a crash.

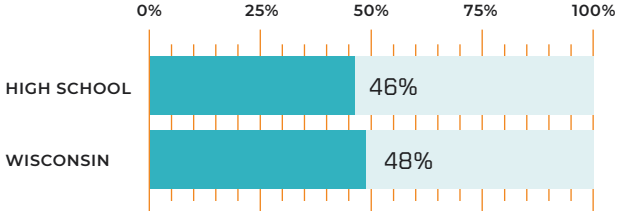
during the past 30 days...

% wore a seatbelt most of the time or always



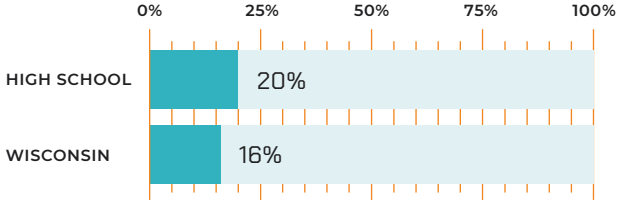
during the past 30 days...

% texted or emailed 1 or more times while driving a car (of those who drove)



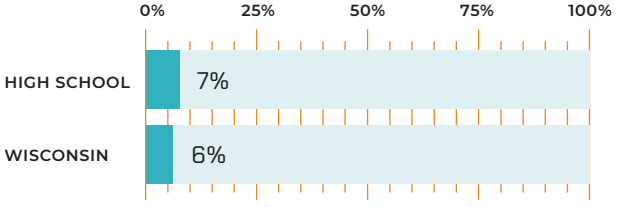
during the past 30 days...

% rode with someone 1 or more times who had been drinking alcohol



during the past 30 days...

% drove 1 or more times when they had been drinking alcohol

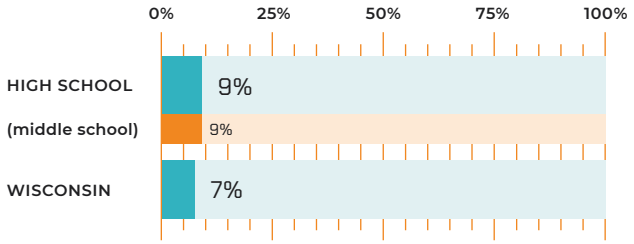


SCHOOL SAFETY

School safety is defined as schools and school-related activities where students are safe from violence, bullying, harassment, and substance use. Emotional and physical safety in school are related to better academic performance and attendance. In Chippewa County, the majority of middle and high school students reported feeling safe at school, although about 1 in 4 (26%) of high school students agreed that violence is a problem at school.

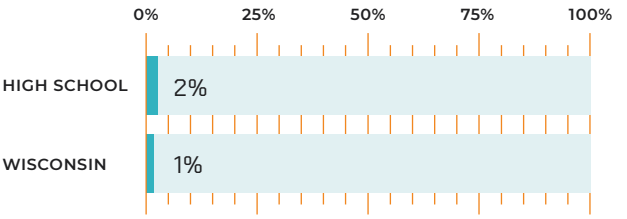
during the past 30 days...

% did not go to school one or more days because they felt unsafe



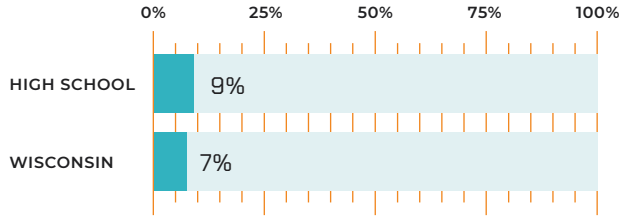
during the past 30 days...

% brought a gun to school on one or more days



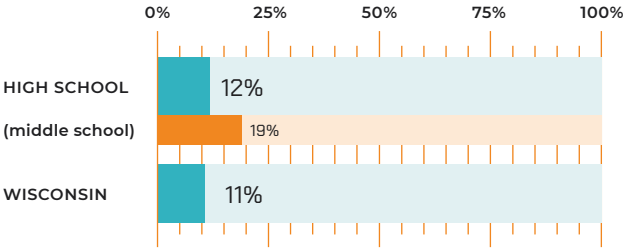
in the past 12 months...

% threatened or injured one or more times with a weapon on school property

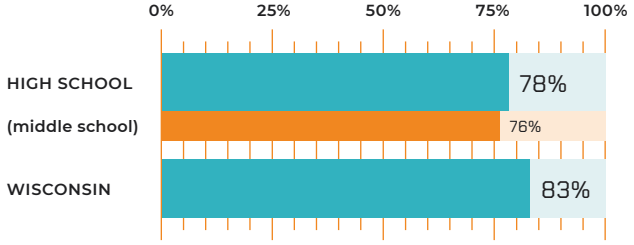


in the past 12 months...

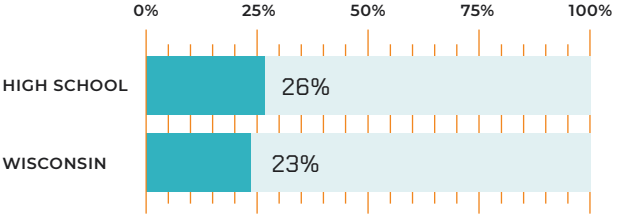
% in a physical fight one or more times on school property



% feel safe from physical harm at school most of the time or always



% agree or strongly agree that violence is a problem at school

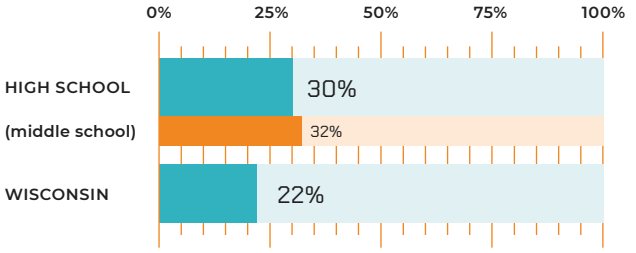


BULLYING

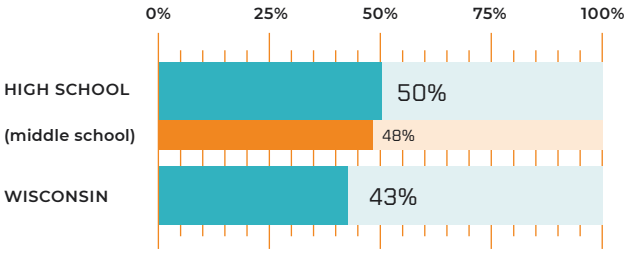
In Chippewa County, 36% of high school students and 39% of middle school students reported that they have been bullied in person, online, or both.

in the past 12 months...

% bullied on school property

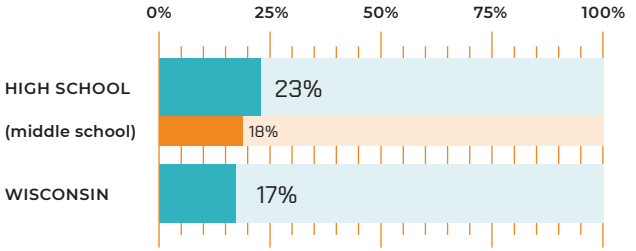


% agree or strongly agree that bullying is a problem at school



in the past 12 months...

% electronically bullied



Focus on... Bullying

What is bullying?

- *Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.*
- *The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.*
- *Some groups are at higher risk for being bullied or harassed, such as LGBTQ youth and students with disabilities.*

What are the consequences of bullying?

- *Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.*
- *In addition to the risk of physical injury, victims of bullying are at risk for depression, anxiety, suicidal behavior, physical health problems, substance abuse into adulthood, low academic achievement, and poor social and school adjustment.*

How can we prevent bullying?

- *Parents, school staff, and other adults can help prevent bullying by helping youth understand bullying, communicating with youth and listening to them, encouraging them to do what they love, and modeling how to treat others.*

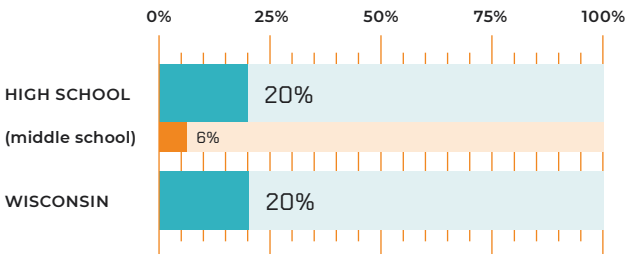
For more information, visit stopbullying.gov and cyberbullying.org.

SEXUAL & DATING VIOLENCE

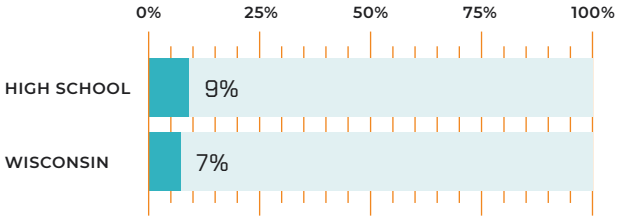
6% of middle school students and 20% of high school students in Chippewa County reported that they have been forced to do something sexual (e.g., kissing, touching, or being physically forced to have sexual intercourse) they didn't want to do during their lifetime, and some high school students reported experiencing physical or sexual dating violence.

Chippewa County Department of Public Health supports prevention programs that aim to stop sexual violence from happening in the first place through raising awareness of the issue, providing healthy relationships education for youth, and policy development.

% ever been forced to do anything sexual

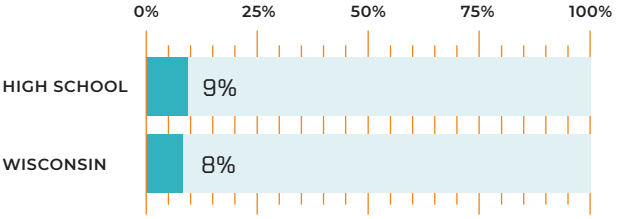


% ever been raped



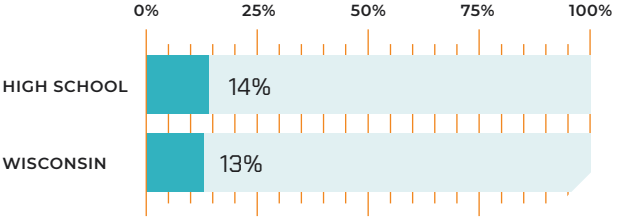
in the past 12 months...

% physical violence by a dating partner



in the past 12 months...

% forced to do something sexual by a dating partner

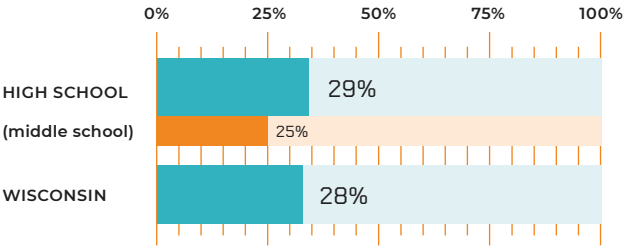


MENTAL HEALTH

About 1 in 4 middle and high school students reported depression in Chippewa County, and just under half indicated they have felt very anxious in the past year. 22% percent of high school students reported self-harm and about 18% reported considering suicide in the past 12 months. Students do not always get the emotional support they need, especially in high school, when only 24% reported receiving emotional support when needed.

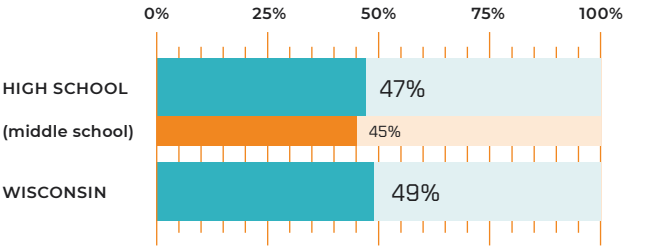
in the past 12 months...

% felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities

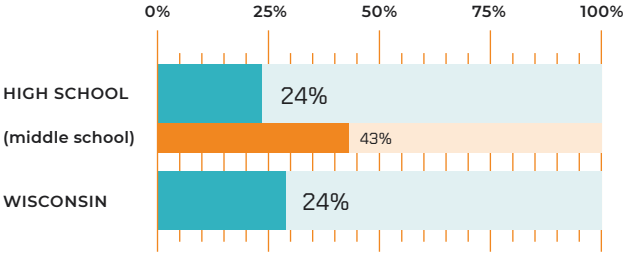


in the past 12 months...

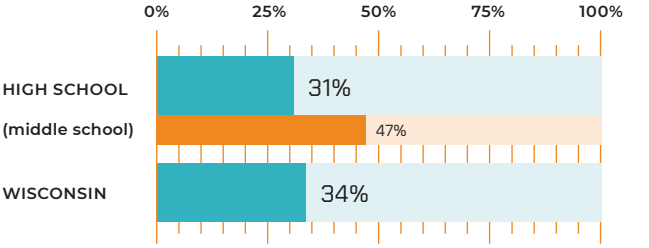
% had significant problems with feeling very anxious, nervous, tense, scared, or like something bad was going to happen



% most of the time or always get emotional support when needed

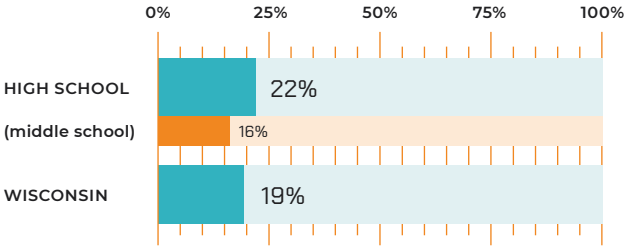


% list adult as most likely source of emotional support



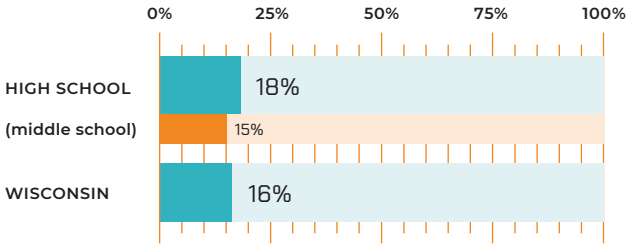
in the past 12 months...

% hurt themselves on purpose (self-harm)



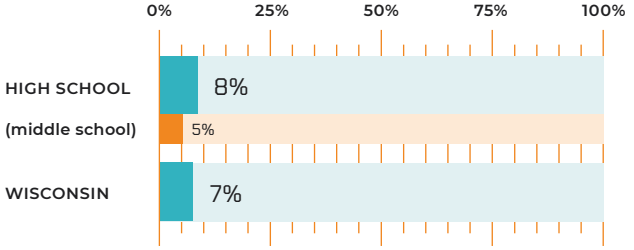
in the past 12 months...

% seriously considered suicide



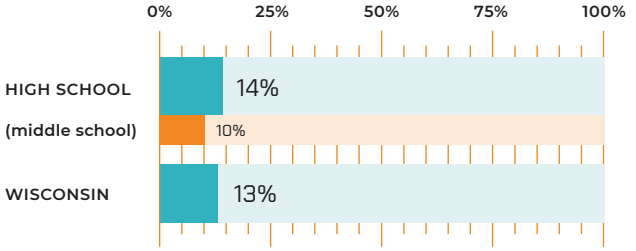
in the past 12 months...

% attempted suicide



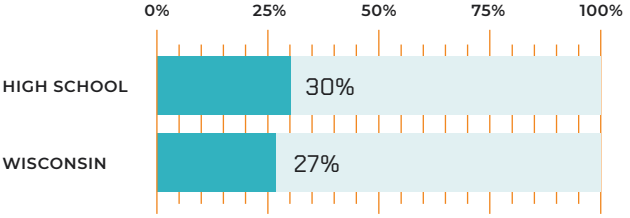
in the past 12 months...

% made a suicide plan



in the past 12 months...

of students who attempted suicide, % who received medical attention



Focus on... Suicide Prevention

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people between 10 to 24.
In Chippewa County, about 1 in 12 high school students reported they attempted suicide in the past year. For some groups of youth—including those who are involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender; and American Indian/Alaska Native—the incidence of suicidal behavior is even higher. Everyone—parents, guardians, family members, friends, teachers, school administrators, coaches and extracurricular activity leaders, mentors, service providers, and many others—can play a role in preventing suicide and supporting youth.

Evidence shows that providing support services, talking about suicide, reducing access to means of self-harm, and following up with loved ones are just some of the actions we can all take to help others.

Know the warning signs

- *Talking about wanting to die or to kill themselves*
- *Looking for a way to kill themselves, like searching online or buying a gun*
- *Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live*
- *Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain*
- *Talking about being a burden to others*
- *Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs*
- *Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly*
- *Sleeping too little or too much*
- *Withdrawing or isolating themselves*
- *Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge*
- *Extreme mood swings*

If you are thinking about suicide, are worried about a friend or loved one, or would like emotional support, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) or the local Northwest Connections Crisis Line 888-552-6642 to connect to a skilled, trained counselor in your area. These lines are available 24/7 and are free and confidential.

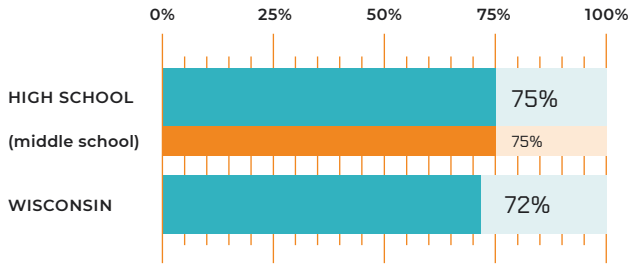
PROTECTIVE FACTORS & STABILITY AT HOME

When youth have protective factors in place, they are more resilient, less likely to engage in risky behaviors, and more likely to succeed academically. Protective factors can be thought of as "buffers," or characteristics or conditions that reduce the negative effects of adversity on healthy outcomes. Important protective factors include having support at home, in school, and in the community.

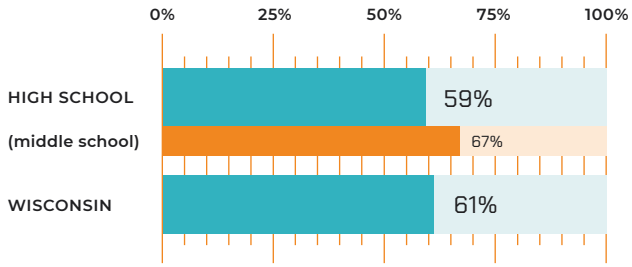
Many Chippewa County youth reported having protective factors in place at school, including feeling they belong at school, having an adult to talk to, and participating in school activities. Likewise, a majority of middle and high school students reported having a supportive adult in their lives other than their parents and feeling safe in their neighborhoods. An area of concern is that 1 in 4 middle and high school students reported experiencing hunger due to a lack of food at home.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS AT SCHOOL

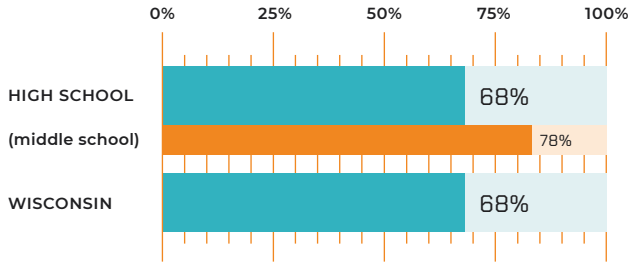
% with at least one teacher or other adult at school to talk to



% agree or strongly agree that they belong at school

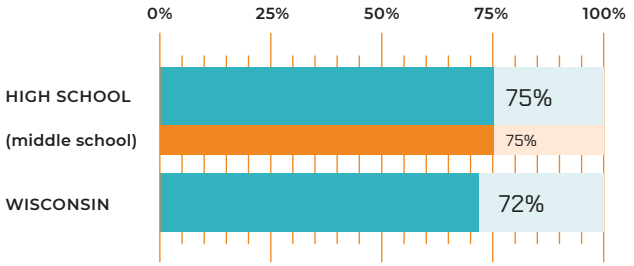


% participate in school activities, teams, or clubs

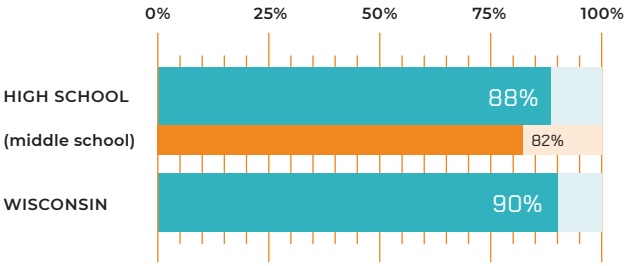


FACTORS IN THE COMMUNITY & AT HOME

% have at least one supportive adult besides parent(s)

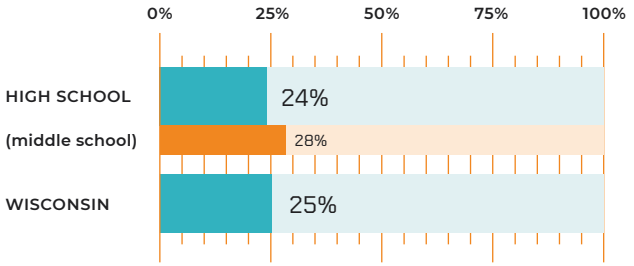


% feel safe in their neighborhood most of the time or always

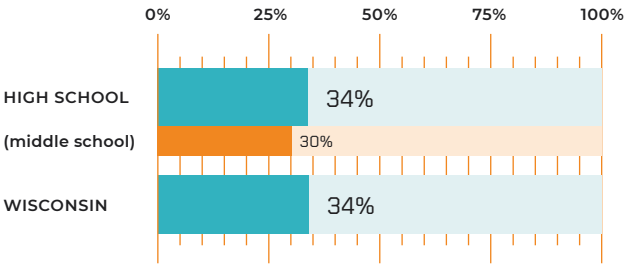


during the past 30 days...

% experienced hunger due to lack of food at home



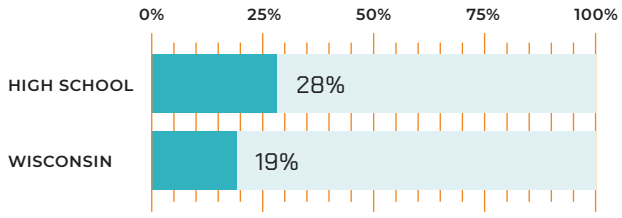
% lived in 4 or more residences in their life



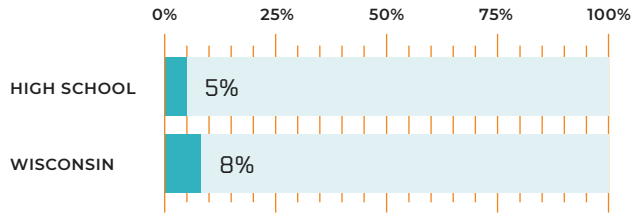
TOBACCO

Trends in tobacco use indicate that while cigarette smoking has decreased among youth, e-cigarette use has increased, becoming the most used tobacco product among youth in Chippewa County. In 2019, compared to cigarette use, more than 1.5 times as many high school students reported ever trying e-cigarettes/vaping and more than two times as many reported current vaping (10% versus 23%). Also, some groups reported more use than others, for example, more high school youth who identify as LGBT reported ever smoking cigarettes (45% compared to 25%) and current cigarette smoking (16% versus 9%) compared to straight/cis identifying youth.

% ever tried cigarettes

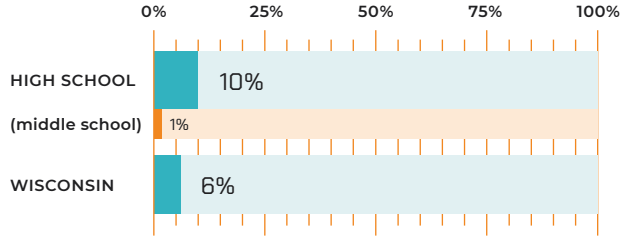


% first tried cigarette smoking before age 13

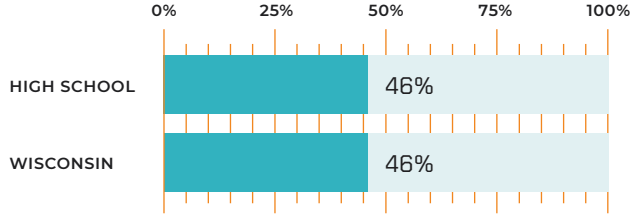


during the past 30 days...

% smoked cigarettes

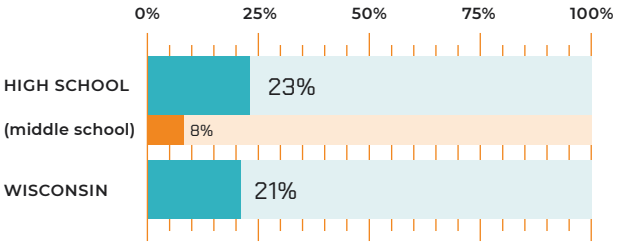


% ever tried e-cigarettes/ vaping/juul



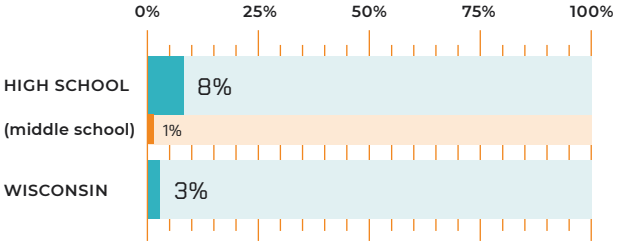
during the past 30 days...

% used e-cigarettes/vape/juul



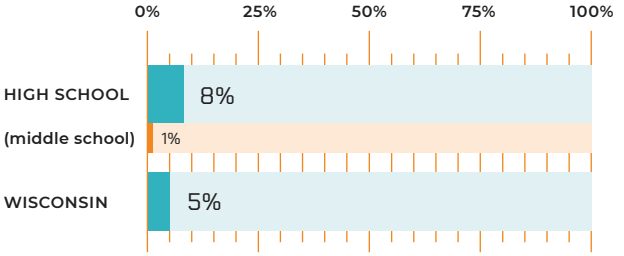
during the past 30 days...

% used smokeless tobacco (chew, etc)



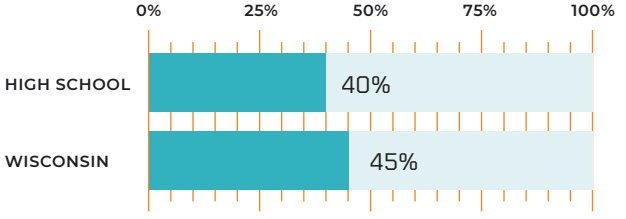
during the past 30 days...

% smoked cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars



during the past 12 months...

% tried to quit tobacco (of those who have used tobacco)



Focus on... Vaping

4 reasons to be concerned about e-cigarettes/vaping:

1. **Use of e-cigarettes has been increasing among youth:**
   Across Wisconsin, past 30-day use of e-cigarettes increased 154% from 2014 to 2018 (tobwis.org). Aggressive marketing and candy flavoring appeal to youth.
2. **E-cigarettes produce more than just water vapor:**
   E-cigarettes emit an aerosol that may contain nicotine, ultrafine particles, heavy metals, and cancer-causing chemicals.
3. **E-cigarettes cause health risks:**
   Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine which is highly addictive and can harm brain development up to age 25. A consensus report shows e-cigarettes contain and emit several potentially toxic substances; can cause short term lung changes and irritations; and use is linked to increased risk for cough and wheezing and an increase in asthma exacerbations among youth.
4. **E-cigarettes have not been approved by the FDA to help smokers quit**

Informing youth about the potential risks of vaping is an important first step to begin to change the trend of increased e-cigarette use by Chippewa County youth.

Find more facts and information about vaping here:

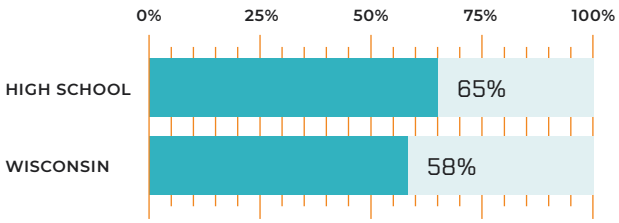
- *https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/*
- *https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/*
- *https://tobwis.org/*

ALCOHOL, MARIJUANA, & PRESCRIPTION DRUG USE

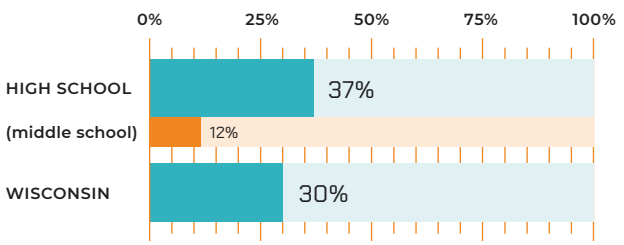
Alcohol use among Chippewa County youth has decreased over time; however, alcohol remains the most used substance among youth with over 1 in 3 high school students reporting that they drank in the past month, and 2 out of 3 reporting they have ever had alcohol. Marijuana use in the previous month has stayed consistent from year to year, with 15% reporting use 2019. Prescription drug misuse rose slightly from 4% in 2017 to 7% in 2019 for Chippewa County high school students, and reported use of heroin and methamphetamine remained very low.

ALCOHOL

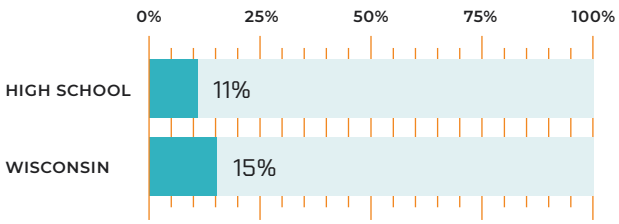
% ever have had at least one drink of alcohol



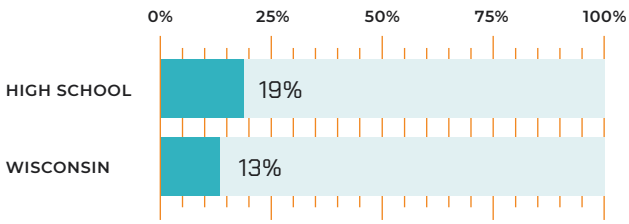
% drank alcohol on at least one of the past 30 days



% had their first drink of alcohol before 13 years

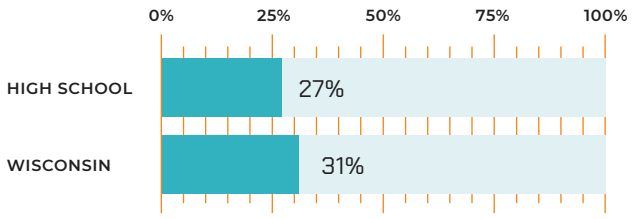


% binge drank on at least one of the past 30 days

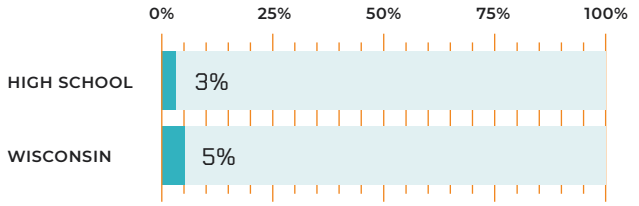


MARIJUANA

% ever used marijuana

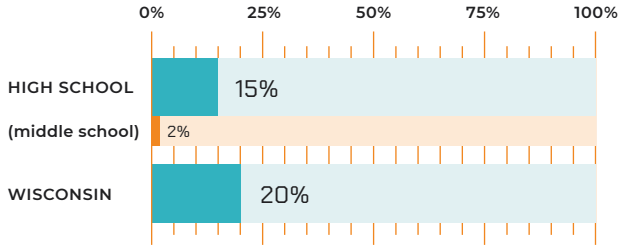


% tried marijuana for the first time before age 13



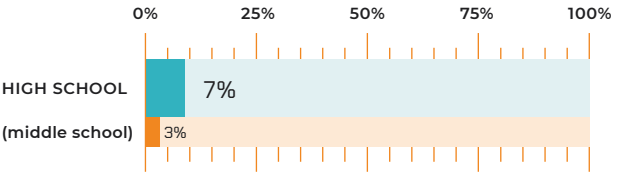
during the past 30 days...

% who used marijuana at least one time

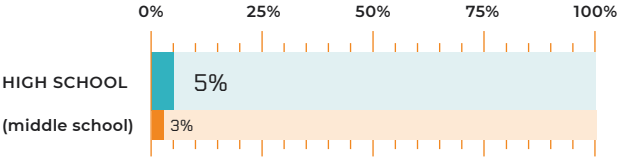


during the past 30 days...

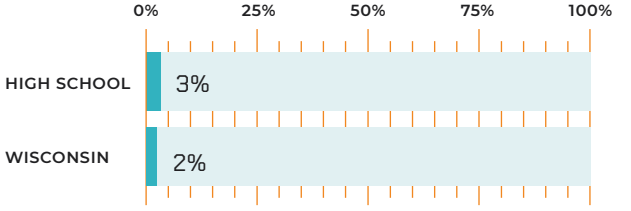
% misused any prescription drug



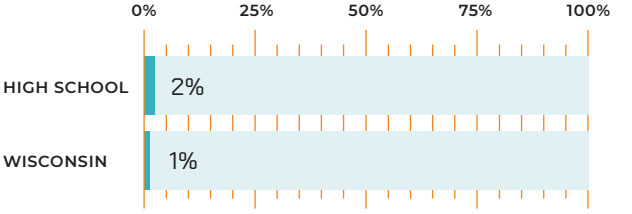
% ever misused an over-the-counter drug



% ever used methamphetamines

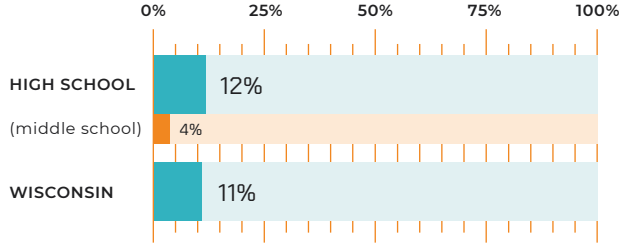


% ever used heroin



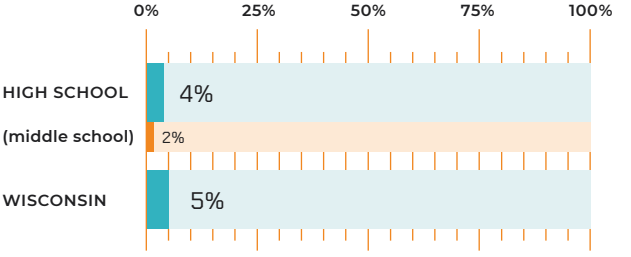
PRESCRIPTION AND OTHER ILLEGAL DRUGS

% ever misused a prescription pain medication



during the past 12 months...

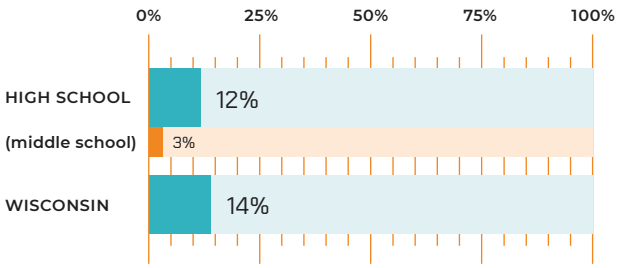
% used any illegal drugs besides marijuana



ALCOHOL & DRUGS AT SCHOOL

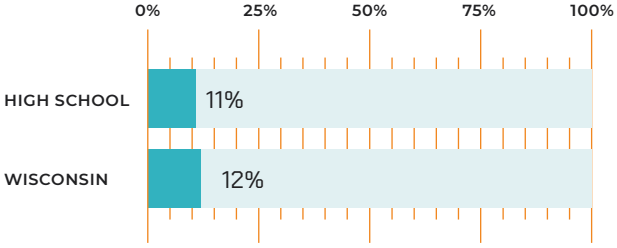
during the past 12 months...

% offered, sold, or given drugs on school property

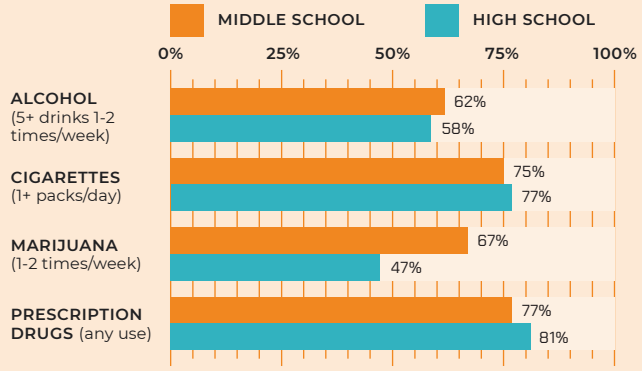


during the past 12 months...

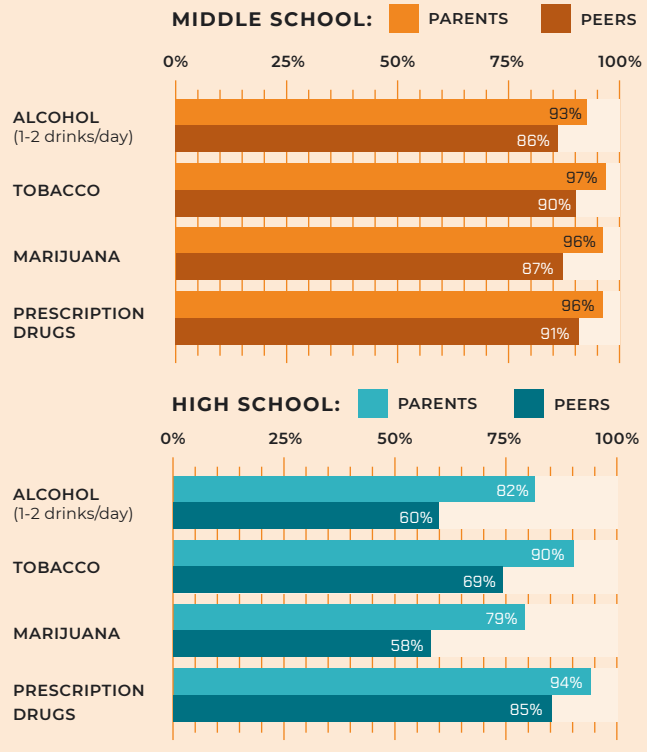
% attended school under the influence of alcohol or drugs



% who believe that using alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, and prescription drugs is risky



% who believe that parents or peers disapprove of substance use:



Focus on... Youth beliefs about alcohol, tobacco, and drugs

How risky is use?

Teens who believe that using alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs is risky are less likely to use these substances. In Chippewa County, similar percentages of middle and high school students believe alcohol, cigarettes, and prescription drug use are risky. Fewer high school students think marijuana use is risky compared to other substances.

Influence of peers and parents:

Most Chippewa County middle and high school students report that they believe their parents would disapprove of them using tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, or prescription drugs. However, when asked about their friends, there is a big drop off from middle to high school, with fewer students reporting their friends would disapprove, especially for alcohol and marijuana. Local programs should consider targeting the transition between middle and high school as a time to focus on substance abuse prevention messages, especially for alcohol and marijuana.

Also, it is important for parents to continue to talk to older youth about substances to counteract messages they receive from their peers. Studies show that parents can make a big impact on their kids' choices about alcohol and drugs through open communication and honest conversations. Short, frequent discussions can make a difference on a child's decision to use alcohol or drugs. Visit the Wisconsin Department of Health Services website to learn more: https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/small-talks/index.htm

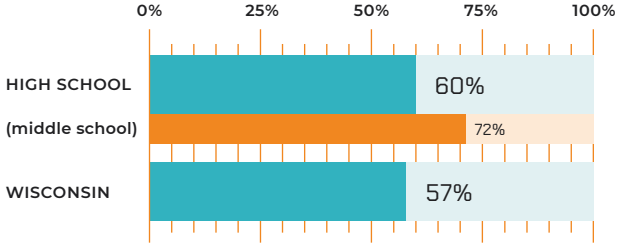
HEALTH HABITS & CONDITIONS

Adequate sleep, physical activity, and good nutrition are all important for youth. Sleep is an area of concern for Chippewa County youth with just 31% of high school students reporting that they get more than 8 hours of sleep on average on a school night. Many middle and high school students reported that they skip breakfast one or more days a week. About half of high school students report that their health is very good or excellent.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

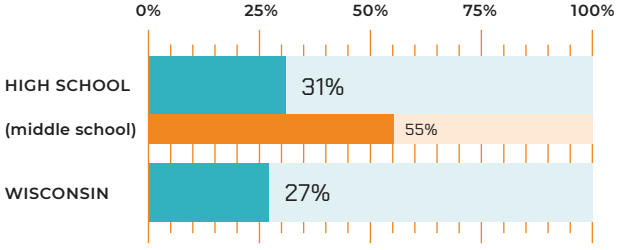
during the past 7 days...

% physically active 60 min/day 5+ days



SLEEP

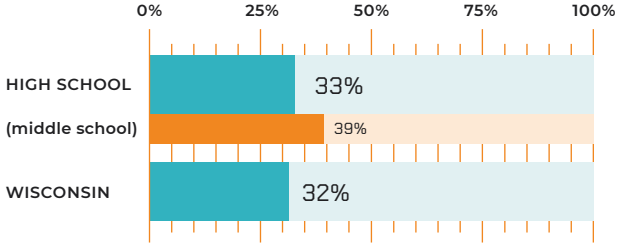
% get 8 or more hours sleep on average on a school night



NUTRITION

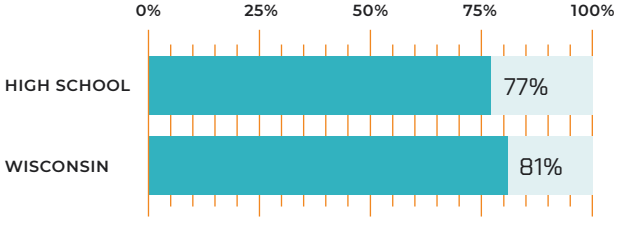
during the past 7 days...

% ate breakfast every day



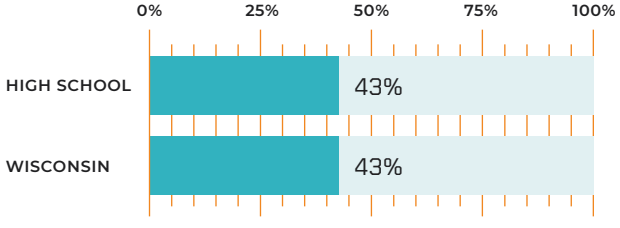
during the past 7 days...

% drank water every day



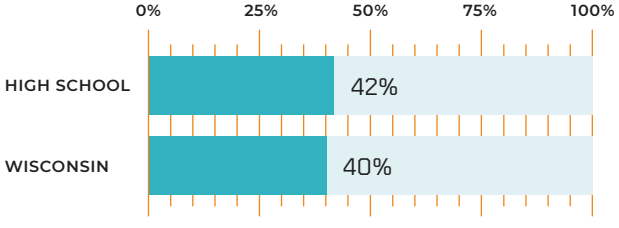
during the past 7 days...

% ate fruit every day



during the past 7 days...

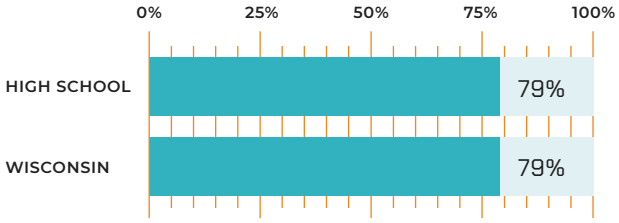
% ate vegetables every day



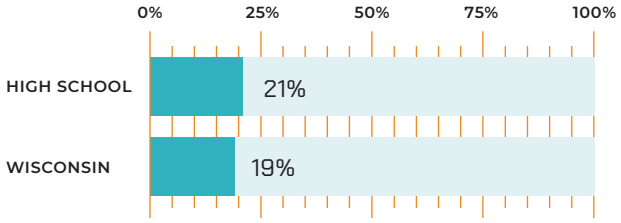
OTHER HEALTH HABITS

during the past 12 months...

% saw a dentist

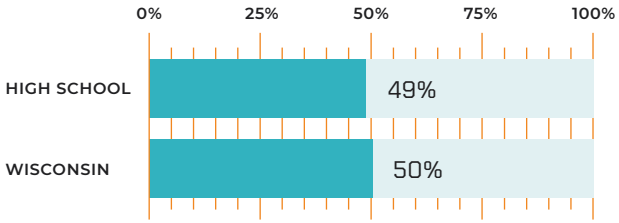


% use sunscreen most of the time or always



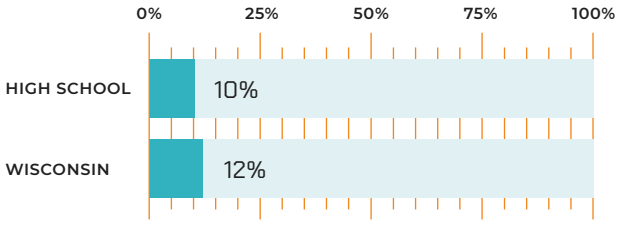
OVERALL HEALTH

% describe general health as very good or excellent

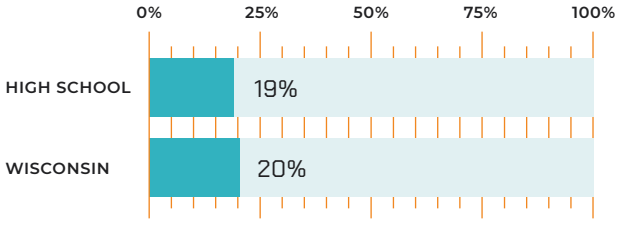


HEALTH CONDITIONS

% have physical disability or chronic health problem

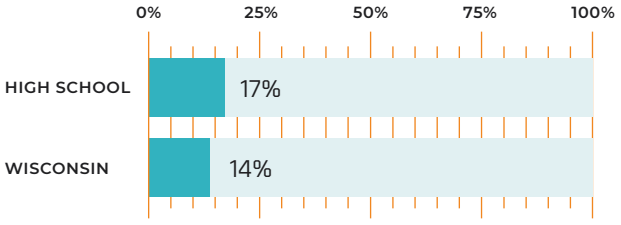


% ever diagnosed with asthma



during the past 12 months...

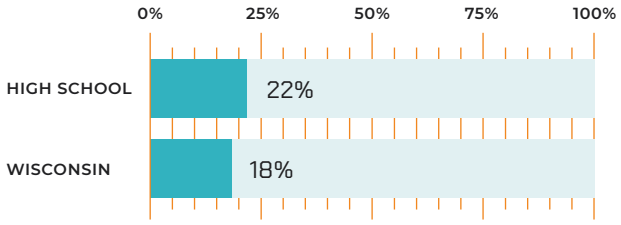
% had a sports-induced concussion



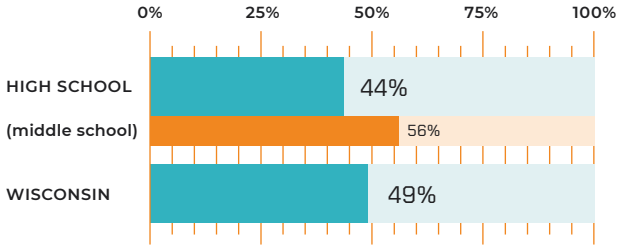
TECHNOLOGY USE & SCREEN TIME

55% of middle school and 44% of high school youth in Chippewa County reported using technology for more than 3 hours a day. Half of high schoolers reported using a device after midnight on a school night. A new question on the 2019 YRBS asked youth about sexting, and 1 in 4 high school students reported sending, receiving, or sharing sexual photos or images in the past month.

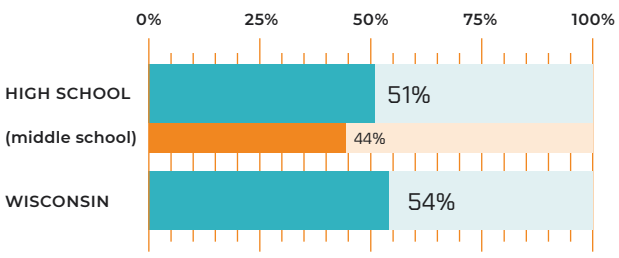
% watched television 3 or more hours per day on an average school day



% spent 3 or more hours per day on phone, Xbox, or other device on an average school day

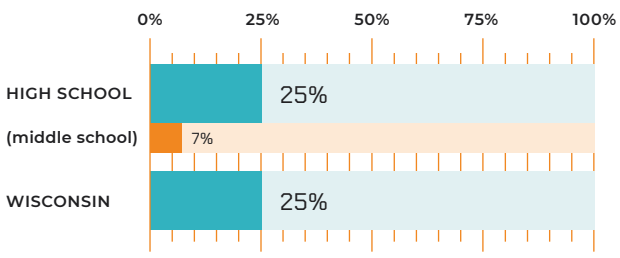


% used phone, Xbox, or other device after midnight on a school night (not for homework)



during the past 30 days...

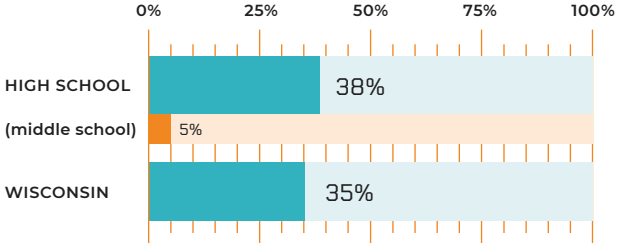
% sent, received, or shared sexual photos or images



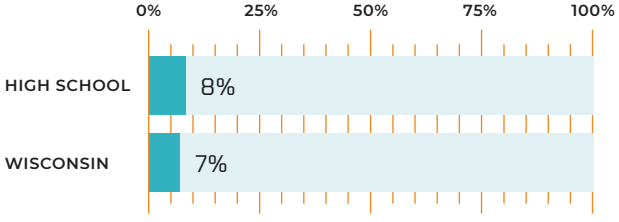
SEXUAL HEALTH & RELATIONSHIPS

The percent of high school students who reported they have ever had sex increased slightly from 35% in 2017 to 38% in 2019. Among high school students who have had sex, 2 out of 3 reported using a condom the last time they had sex. 1 out of 5 students who reported having sex in the past 3 months reported having 4 or more partners.

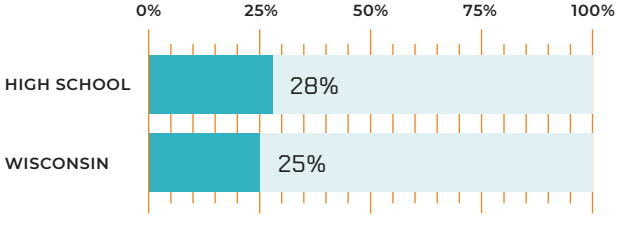
% ever had sexual intercourse



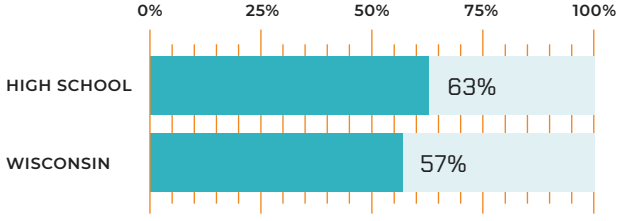
% had sexual intercourse for the first time before age 13 years (of those who have had sex)



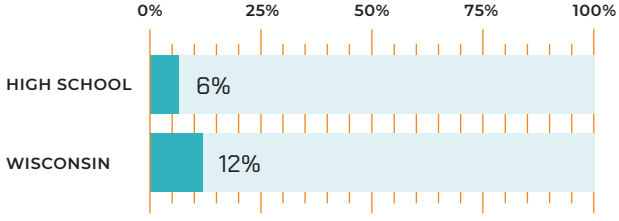
% currently sexually active (past 3 months)



% used a condom during last sexual intercourse (of those who have had sex)

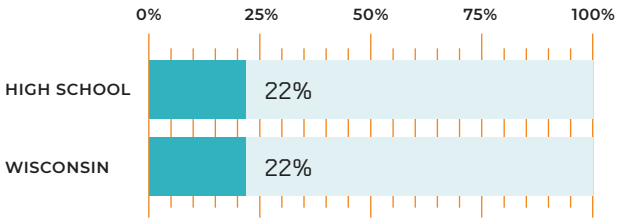


% had sex without any pregnancy prevention method (of those who have had sex)

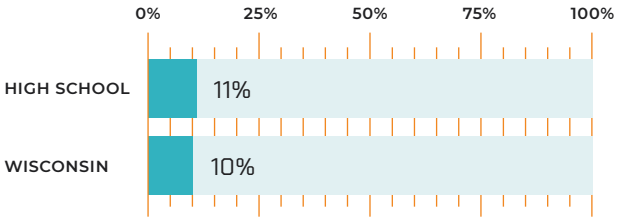


SEXUAL HEALTH CONT...

% who have had 4 or more partners (of those who have had sex in the past 3 months)



% identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender



Focus on... Healthy Relationships

To encourage healthy dating behavior for teens, here are 5 signs of a healthy teen relationship to share with young people:

- **They give each other space to hang out with friends and family.** *It's a good sign when teens are balancing all the relationships in their lives, as well as continuing to pursue hobbies and activities outside of their romantic partnership.*
- **It's OK to disagree.** *If one partner isn't feeling comfortable speaking their mind or seems afraid to disagree with their girlfriend/boyfriend, it could be a red flag.*
- **Physical boundaries are respected.** *Constant and affirmative consent is key, including not pressuring someone to drink alcohol or do drugs to engage in sexual activity.*
- **They are in control.** *Teens should feel able to wear clothing they choose, go where they want to go, and do what they like to do – without fear of a partner being upset or trying to control them.*
- **They exhibit healthy texting behavior.** *As long as the texts aren't excessive or interrupting daily life, it's not necessarily what we call "textual harassment." If texts become abusive or if someone is pressuring them to send private photos, it might be time to talk digital boundaries.*

*from **futureswithoutviolence.org***

This report was prepared by the Chippewa County Department of Public Health in partnership with Chippewa County schools. This project is funded by the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

To request additional copies, email health@co.chippewa.wi.us