

# Key Findings from the Ottawa Results of the 2023 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey

The Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS) has been conducted since 1977 by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and is administered every 2 years to Ontario students in grades 7-12 with an oversampling of approximately 1000 students in Ottawa.

Overall, the 2023 survey results showed small improvements in self-reported mental health and in students reporting feeling close to people at their school, but the results also highlighted areas of concern, including results on substance use, particularly opioids, stigma related to substance use, and thoughts of suicide. The data showcases that there is a vital need for continued and enhanced promotion, prevention and early intervention efforts, including stigma reduction, youth engagement and access to treatment.

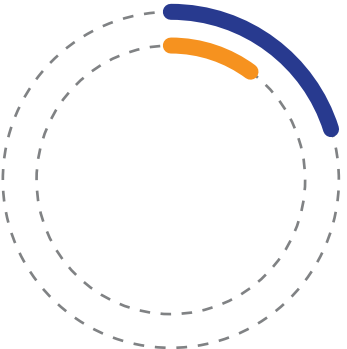
The Ottawa specific OSDUHS results are currently found on the **Mental Health, Addictions and Substance Use Health (MHASUH) Community Dashboard**.

For resources and services, visit the **Mental Health, Addictions and Substance Use Health Services and Resources** webpage.

## Are people well?



**37%** of grade 7-12 students in Ottawa reported their mental health as 'fair' or 'poor'. This is an improvement from 2021 but remains significantly higher than pre-pandemic.



Past year use of non-medical opioids doubled from **10% in 2021** to **20% in 2023**, with grade 7-8 students just as likely to report using them as high school students.



**18%** of grade 7-12 students in Ottawa reported thoughts about suicide in the past 12 months with **females** significantly more likely to report than **males (26% vs 9%\*)**.

## Are people free from stigma?



**41%** of grade 7-12 students agree that it's a sign of weakness to use alcohol or drugs to the point that it negatively affects their family relationships, friendships, sleep, grades, or health, with **males** significantly more likely to agree compared to females.

## Can people access treatment and services?



**31%** of grade 7-12 students saw a doctor, nurse or counsellor about their mental health in the past 12 months.

## Do people live with opportunity and equality?



There was a significant increase from 2021 in the percentage of students reporting they felt close to people at their school (**76% in 2023** vs. **65% in 2021**).



Socioeconomically advantaged students were significantly **more** likely to report feeling close to people at school compared to socioeconomically disadvantaged students.



Twice as many female students reported that they felt unsafe at school compared to their male counterparts.