

# SUBSTANCE USE HEALTH EXPERIENCES OF YOUTH IN OTTAWA

## Alcohol and cannabis continue to be the most frequently used substances among Ottawa students

This information is from the 2021 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS) conducted by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

NOTE: \* denotes estimates that should be interpreted with caution due to high sampling variability/small sample size.

**10%** of grade 7-12 students in Ottawa report the non-medical use of prescription opioid pain relievers in the past year.

Opioids (non-medical) were the only substances for which a similar number of grade 7-8 students compared to grade 9-12 students reported use.

**1 in 10\***

grade 9-12 students report using cannabis to cope with a mental health issue in the past year.

Differences in the mode of delivery of the 2021 OSDUHS (online, at home) compared to previous surveys (on paper, in school) may have impacted how students responded to the questions and therefore how comparable the findings are between survey years.

## The substance use health and addictions of youth are impacted by many factors

Of the drugs asked about, the most common ones used by grade 9-12 students were alcohol (42%), cannabis (21%\*), and vapes/e-cigarettes (12%\*). Significantly fewer grade 9-12 students in 2021 reported binge drinking in the past 4 weeks compared to in 2019 (6%\* vs. 19%\*).

Significantly more grade 7-12 students with one or more parent born in Canada compared to students with no parents born in Canada reported using alcohol and cannabis. Significantly more non-racialized compared to racialized grade 7-12 students reported using alcohol (37% vs. 18%) and vapes/e-cigarettes (11%\* vs. 5%\*).

Significantly more grade 7-12 females (12%) used vapes/e-cigarettes than males (7%\*) in the past year. Nearly 1 in 10\* students in grade 7-12 bet money on online games in the past year.