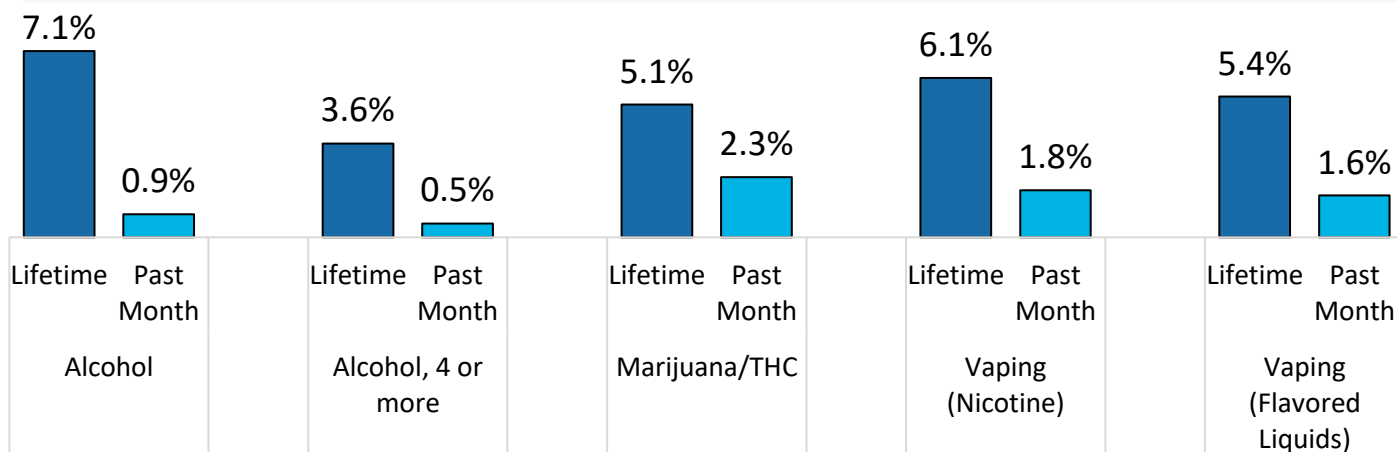


In April 2023, students in Meriden Public Schools grades 6-12 participated in the Youth Voices Count Survey on youth lifestyles, substance use, mental health, related risk and protective factors. The overall response rate was 61%.



**Alcohol is the most used substance in youths' lifetimes.  
Marijuana is the most used substance in the past month.**

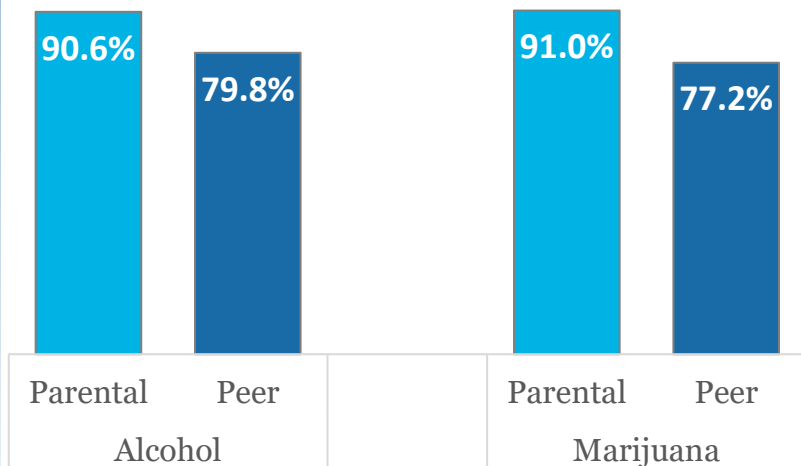


Meriden youth who have used **any substance in their lifetime** are more likely to have increased behavioral health concerns including: experiencing anxiety in the past year, thoughts about self-harm and self-harm behaviors, feeling sad or hopeless two or more weeks in a row, having considered suicide, and feeling less comfortable seeking help from a parent/guardian.

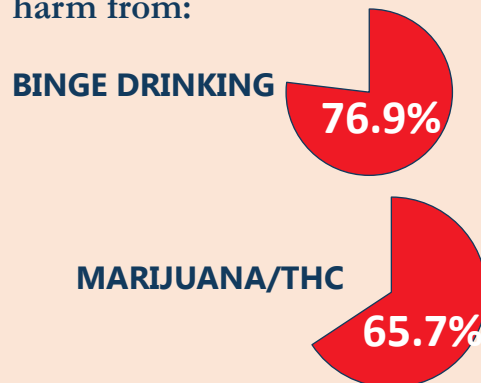
**Risk Factors**

Research shows that parents and peers are the leading influence on youths' decisions on whether to use substances or not. Below shows the percentage of youth reporting their parents or friends feel it is moderately or greatly wrong to use alcohol or marijuana.

**Perceived Disapproval**  
Grades 7-12



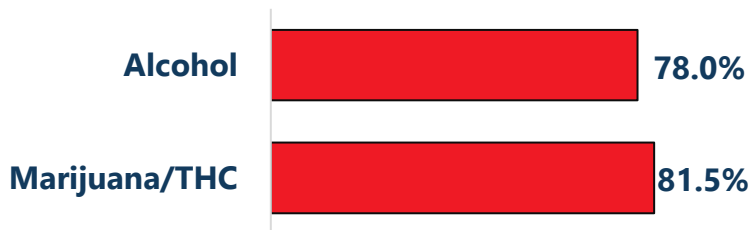
The percentage of Meriden youth reporting moderate or great risk of harm from:



## Access

Ease of access to substances has been shown to have a significant relationship with youth substance use. The figure below reflects the percentage of youth reporting it is very or sort of hard to access substances.

**Perception of Access –  
% of Youth Reporting Very/Sort of Hard**



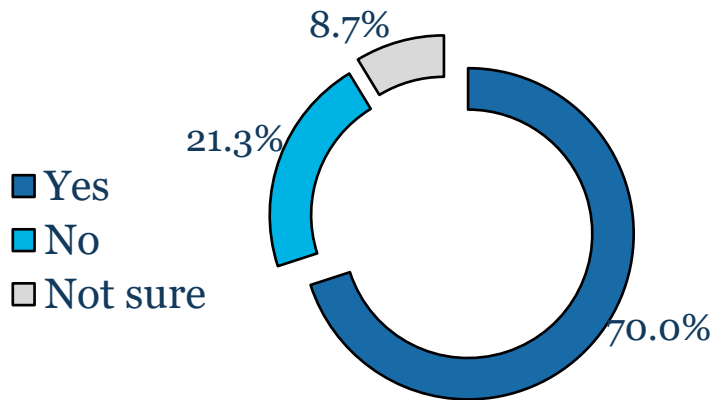
Meriden youth reported accessing **alcohol** most frequently from:

- Home with parents' permission
- Home without parents' permission
- Friends

**Marijuana** was most frequently acquired from:

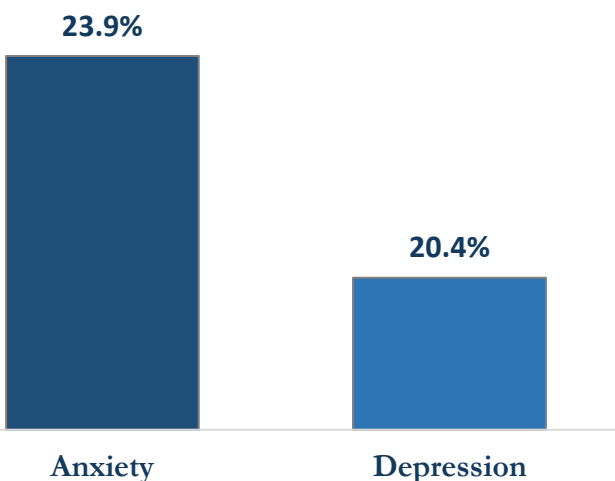
- Friends/peers
- Home without parents' permission
- Home with parents' permission

**Perception of Clear Family Rules around Underage Drinking**



70% of youth (grades 6-12) report clear family rules around alcohol use, compared to 73% around marijuana, and 74% around vaping nicotine.

## Mental Health in the Past Year



24% of Meriden youth reported having anxiety in the past year “always” or “almost always.” Most frequent sources of stress and anxiety included academics and post-high school plans.

20% of youth reported feeling sad or hopeless so much that it stopped them from doing usual activities 2 or more weeks in a row.