

2025 ONEIDA COUNTY TAP REPORT



County Executive
Anthony J. Picente Jr.

Commissioner of Planning
James J. Genovese II

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	Page 1
Background	Page 2
About Yourself	Page 3
<i>Section Summary</i>	<i>Page 4</i>
About Your Living Situation	Page 5
<i>Section Summary</i>	<i>Page 6</i>
Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drug Use	Page 7
Alcohol.....	Page 7
Marijuana.....	Page 8
Tobacco and Vaping.....	Page 9
Prescription and Over-the-Counter Misuse.....	Page 11
<i>Section Summary</i>	<i>Page 12</i>
Personal Issues	Page 13
Mental Health and Well-Being.....	Page 13
<i>Emotional Distress</i>	<i>Page 13</i>
<i>Suicidal Ideation and Behavior</i>	<i>Page 13</i>
<i>Self-Harm</i>	<i>Page 14</i>
<i>Cyberbullying</i>	<i>Page 15</i>
<i>Section Summary</i>	<i>Page 16</i>
Sexual Behaviors.....	Page 17
<i>Section Summary</i>	<i>Page 17</i>
Sexual Harassment and You	Page 18
<i>Section Summary</i>	<i>Page 19</i>
About Your School	Page 20
Perceived Safety.....	Page 20
<i>Section Summary</i>	<i>Page 20</i>
About Your Community and Your Friends	Page 21
Peer Support and Belonging.....	Page 21
<i>Section Summary</i>	<i>Page 21</i>
You and Your Parents	Page 22
Family Support and Communication.....	Page 22
<i>Section Summary</i>	<i>Page 22</i>
How You Spend Your Time	Page 23
Screen Time.....	Page 23
<i>Section Summary</i>	<i>Page 23</i>
Conclusion and Recommendations	Page 24



Executive Summary

The 2025 Teen Assessment Project (TAP) provides a comprehensive look at the well-being, behaviors, and environments of Oneida County youth, allowing direct comparison with the 2019 pre-pandemic baseline and the 2022 mid-pandemic follow-up. Some 2022 questions were excluded from comparison because of substantial changes or removal from this year's survey. The TAP Survey is a voluntary, anonymous, and confidential survey of Oneida County youth in 7th, 9th, and 11th grades. This report will focus on the results of the seventh TAP Survey to be administered in a series that started in 1999. The TAP Survey is administered through a partnership with Herkimer-Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program, Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES, and the financial support of the Oneida County Department of Planning.

The TAP Survey traditionally examines teen concerns, behaviors, and opinions on a wide variety of topics, including but not limited to how they spend time, what worries them, how parents monitor their behavior, substance abuse, sexual behavior, and depression. The combined results will paint an important picture of life for today's teens. The information will be shared with the community so that parents can better understand and guide their children, schools can work more effectively with students, and human service organizations can more effectively tailor their services.

The Teen Assessment Project (TAP) Survey plays a critical role in understanding the needs, challenges, and perspectives of youth in Oneida County. The decision to administer the survey every four years is based on strategic considerations that maximize its impact and ensure the most effective use of resources.

Background

The Oneida County Teen Assessment Project (TAP) is a confidential survey administered every four years to capture the experiences of youth across various domains, including health, safety, family, peers, and community engagement. This report contains the analysis of the survey that was conducted and completed via SurveyMonkey in Spring 2025 by students in grades 7th, 9th, and 11th.

The survey was anonymous and voluntary, and all 91 questions were optional. A total of 3,644 students from 11 participating school districts completed the survey. The participating school districts included:

- Clinton Central School District
- Holland Patent Central School District
- Oriskany Central School District
- Remsen Central School District
- Rome City School District
- Sauquoit Valley Central School District
- Utica City School District
- Vernon- Verona- Sherrill (VVS) Central School District
- Waterville Central School District
- Westmoreland Central School District
- Whitesboro Central School District

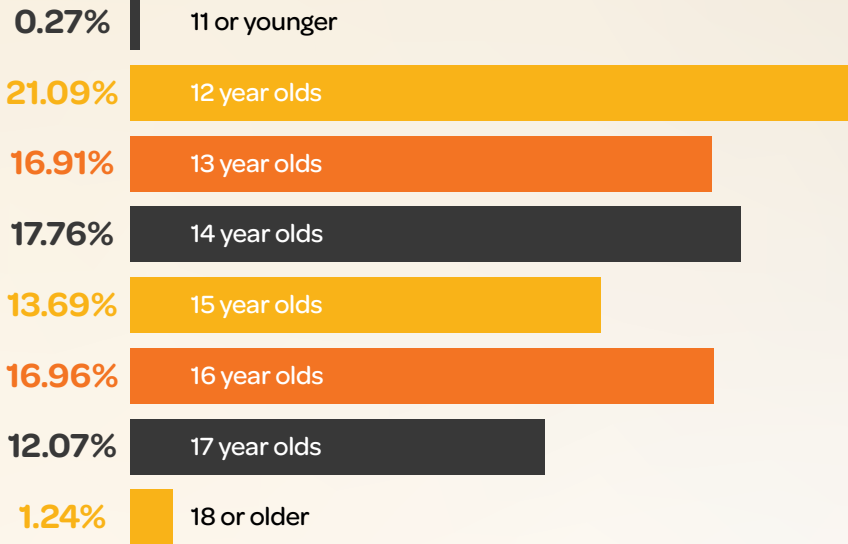
The TAP Survey has been administered at three key points in recent history: 2019 served as the pre-pandemic baseline, 2022 captured the mid-pandemic recovery period when virtual and hybrid schooling were still in effect, and 2025 reflects a post-pandemic stabilization phase. Across these three survey years, most questions remained consistent, allowing for reliable trend analysis. In cases where wording or response options were modified, particularly in 2022, comparisons have been interpreted with caution to preserve the integrity of longitudinal insights.

The data is presented as the percentage of respondents who selected each option. Please note that some percent measures do not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding errors. Comparative tables include data, where available, with particular emphasis on 2019 and 2022 for a more focused analysis. Narrative commentary is used to highlight changes that are both statistically and practically significant. To maintain consistency with earlier reports, no weighting or demographic adjustments have been applied.

About Yourself

The overall number of respondents or sample size (N) was 3,644. The data below summarizes the respondents' demographic background.

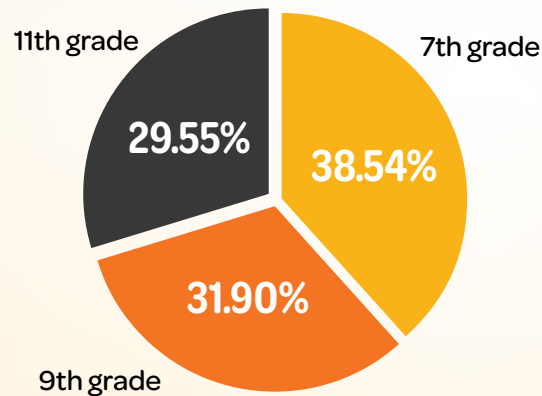
Age



The age distribution of respondents reveals that the majority fall within the early adolescent range. The largest single age group is 12-year-olds, who represent 21.09% of the total sample. This is followed closely by 14-year-olds (17.76%), 16-year-olds (16.96%), and 13-year-olds (16.91%). These figures suggest a strong representation of students in middle school and early high school. 15-year-olds account for 13.69% of the sample, while 17-year-olds make up 12.07%. The youngest group, those aged 11 or younger, comprises only 0.27%, and those aged 18 or older represent 1.24% of the sample. These two groups are likely outliers or represent students who are either ahead or behind their typical grade level. The response rate for the age category is exceptionally high at 99.8%, indicating that nearly all participants provided their age, which enhances the reliability of this data.

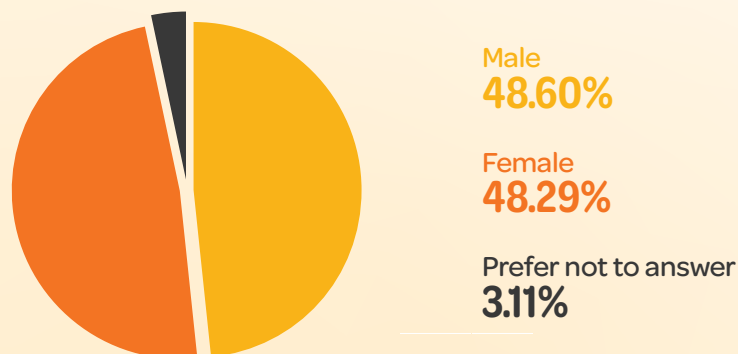
Grade

The distribution across grade levels shows a relatively balanced sample, with a slight skew toward younger students. Seventh-grade students make up the largest portion at 38.54%, which aligns with the high number of 12-year-olds in the age category. Ninth-grade students represent 31.90% of the sample, and eleventh-grade students account for 29.55%.



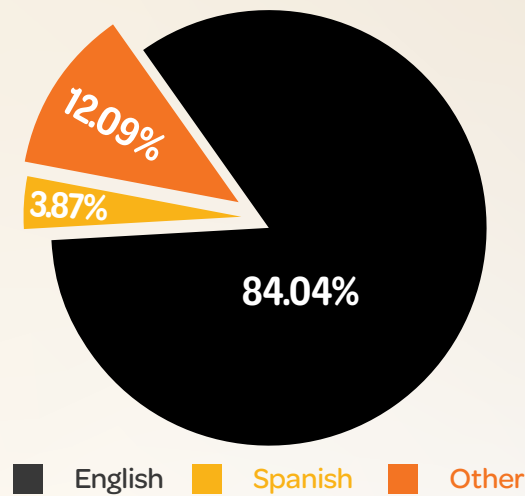
Gender

The gender distribution is nearly even, with males comprising 48.60% and females 48.29% of the sample. This balance suggests that the survey reached a representative cross-section of students in terms of gender. Additionally, 3.11% of respondents selected "Prefer not to answer," which is a meaningful inclusion that respects participants' privacy and acknowledges gender diversity.



Language

The majority of respondents (84.04%) reported English as their primary language, Spanish speakers make up 3.87% of the sample, while 12.09% reported speaking a language other than English or Spanish. This linguistic diversity is important to note, as it may have implications for communication strategies, educational support services, and cultural inclusivity. The response rate for the language category is the highest among all categories at 99.9%, suggesting that the question was clearly understood and accessible to participants.



Section Summary

Overall, the demographic data reflects a well-distributed and highly engaged sample of adolescents, with strong representation across age, grade, gender, and language. The high response rates across all categories enhance the credibility of the findings and suggest that the survey was effectively administered.

About Your Living Situation

Between 2019 and 2025, living arrangements among youth show notable shifts in family structure. Two-parent households, while still the most common, declined from 56.2% in 2019 to 53.45% in 2025 after a brief rise in 2022. Single-mother households steadily increased, reaching 16.18% in 2025, while father-only households also rose slightly to 3.9%. Parent/stepparent arrangements fluctuated, dipping in 2022 before returning to 2019 levels. A newly tracked category—parent with a partner—appeared in 2019 and remained relatively stable. Part-time parental arrangements stayed consistent, hovering around 7.6%, while living with relatives saw a modest decline. Group home or foster care placements decreased steadily, and living alone or with friends remained rare and largely unchanged. These trends reflect evolving definitions of family, shifting custody dynamics, and broader social changes influencing household composition.

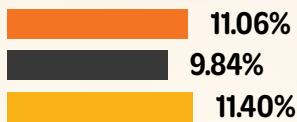
Who do you live with most of the time?

2025 **2022** **2019**

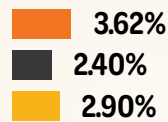
Two parents (biological or adoptive)



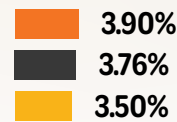
A parent and a step-parent



My parent and their partner



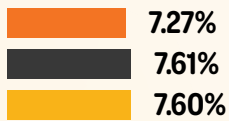
My father



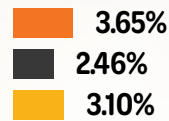
My mother



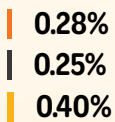
Mother part of the time, father part of the time



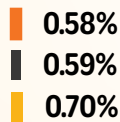
With relatives (Aunt, Uncle, Grandparents, etc.)



Group home or foster home

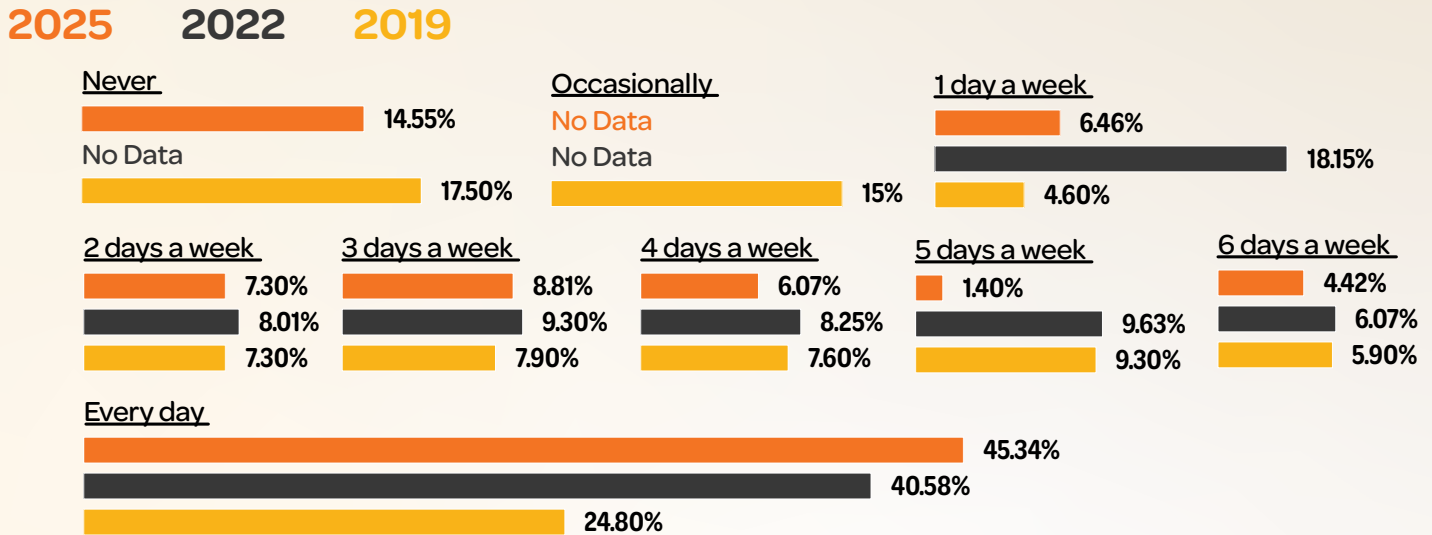


Alone/With friends



Survey data from 2019 to 2025 shows a clear increase in families eating meals together every day. In 2019, 24.80% of respondents reported daily family meals, rising to 45.34% by 2025. This upward trend suggests a growing emphasis on consistent family time. Meanwhile, the percentage of families eating together five or six days a week declined significantly, indicating that many may have shifted to eating together every day instead. Mid-range frequencies, such as three or four days per week, remained relatively stable, while occasional meals (one or two days per week) saw a noticeable drop. However, in 2025, 14.55% of respondents still reported never eating meals with their family, highlighting that some households continue to face barriers to shared mealtime routines.

During a typical week on how many days did all the family members who live in your household eat a meal together?



Section Summary

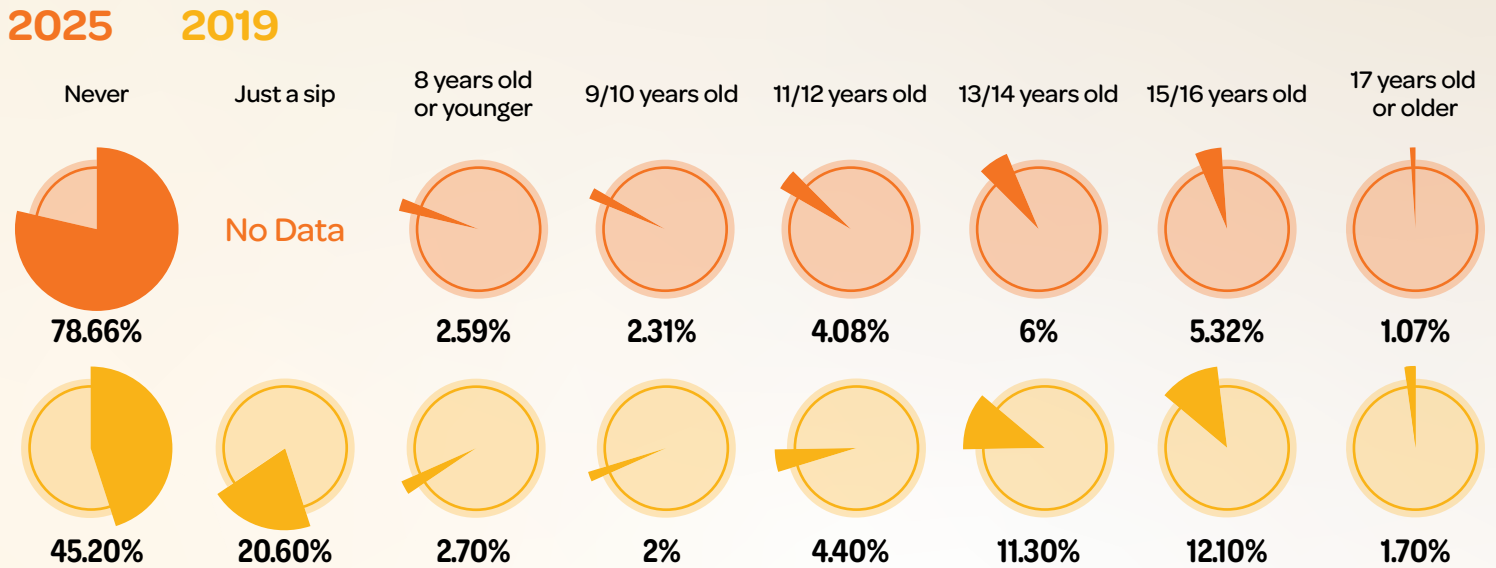
The data reflects evolving family dynamics and shifting priorities in household routines. The gradual decline in two-parent households and rise in single-parent arrangements, particularly 'mother-only', suggest changing social norms and family structures. The emergence of 'parent-with-partner' households points to broader recognition of non-traditional living arrangements. At the same time, the increase in daily family meals indicates a growing emphasis on quality time and routine, even as some families continue to face challenges in maintaining shared mealtimes. Together, these trends highlight both the diversity of modern family life and the importance of fostering environments that support connection and stability.

Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drug Use

Alcohol

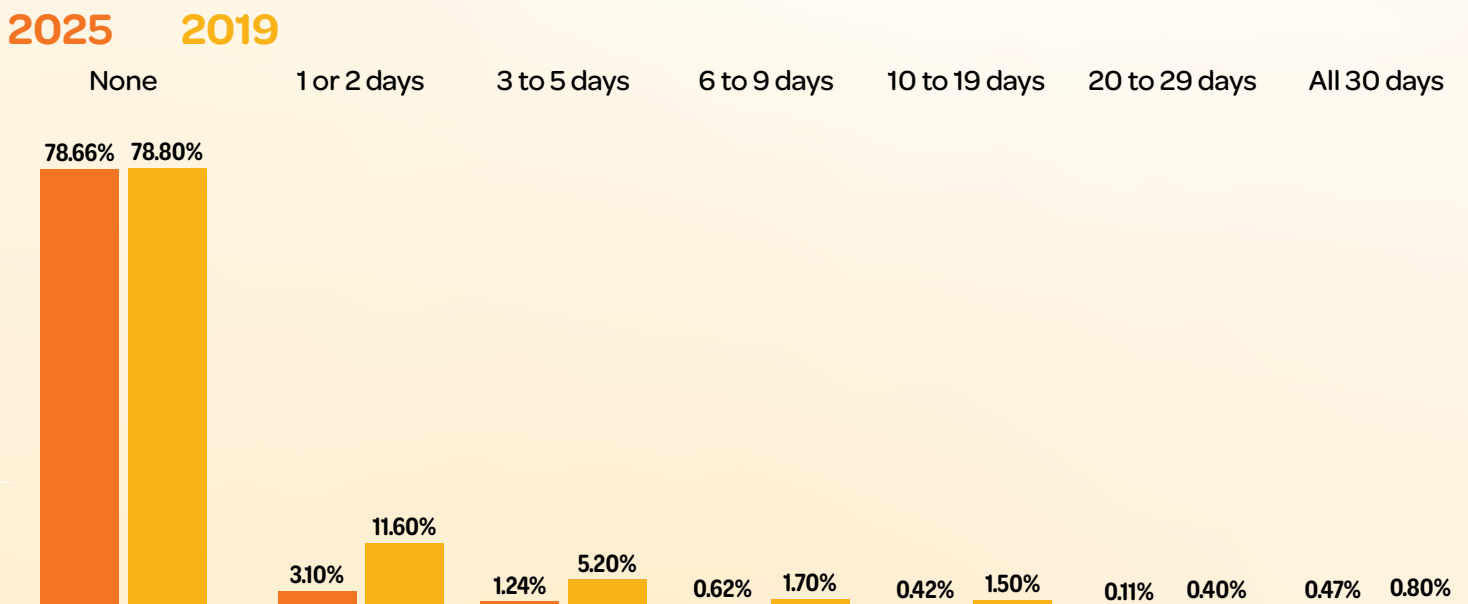
Between 2019 and 2025, there was a significant decline in early alcohol exposure and recent alcohol use among youth. In 2019, only 45.2% of respondents reported never having had a drink, but by 2025, that number rose dramatically to 78.66%, indicating a major shift toward abstinence. Early experimentation also declined: fewer youth reported having their first drink between ages 13–16, with the most notable drops among those aged 15–16 (from 12.1% to 5.32%) and 13–14 (from 11.3% to 6%). Rates in Oneida County are lower than national percentages, with 22% of students reporting drinking alcohol within the past 30 days in 2023, according to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary and Trends Report for 2013–2023 (p. 28). This suggests that underage drinking is being delayed or avoided more frequently.

How old were you when you drank for the first time?



The data below reinforces this trend. In both years, the majority of youth reported no alcohol use in the past 30 days, 78.8% in 2019 and 78.66% in 2025. However, among those who did drink, frequency of use declined sharply. For example, youth drinking on 1–2 days dropped from 11.6% to just 3.1%, and those drinking more than 10 days per month became extremely rare. This points to a reduction not only in the number of youth drinking but also in how often they drink.

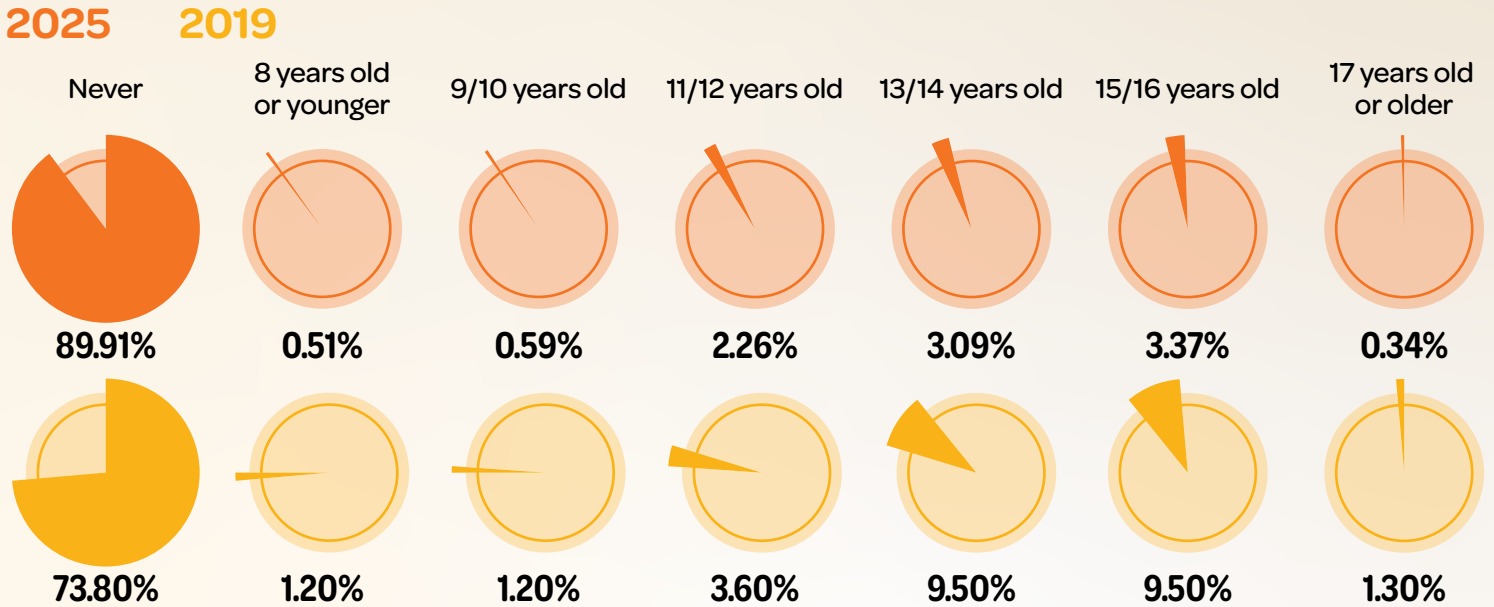
During the past 30 days on how many days did you have at least one alcoholic drink?



Marijuana

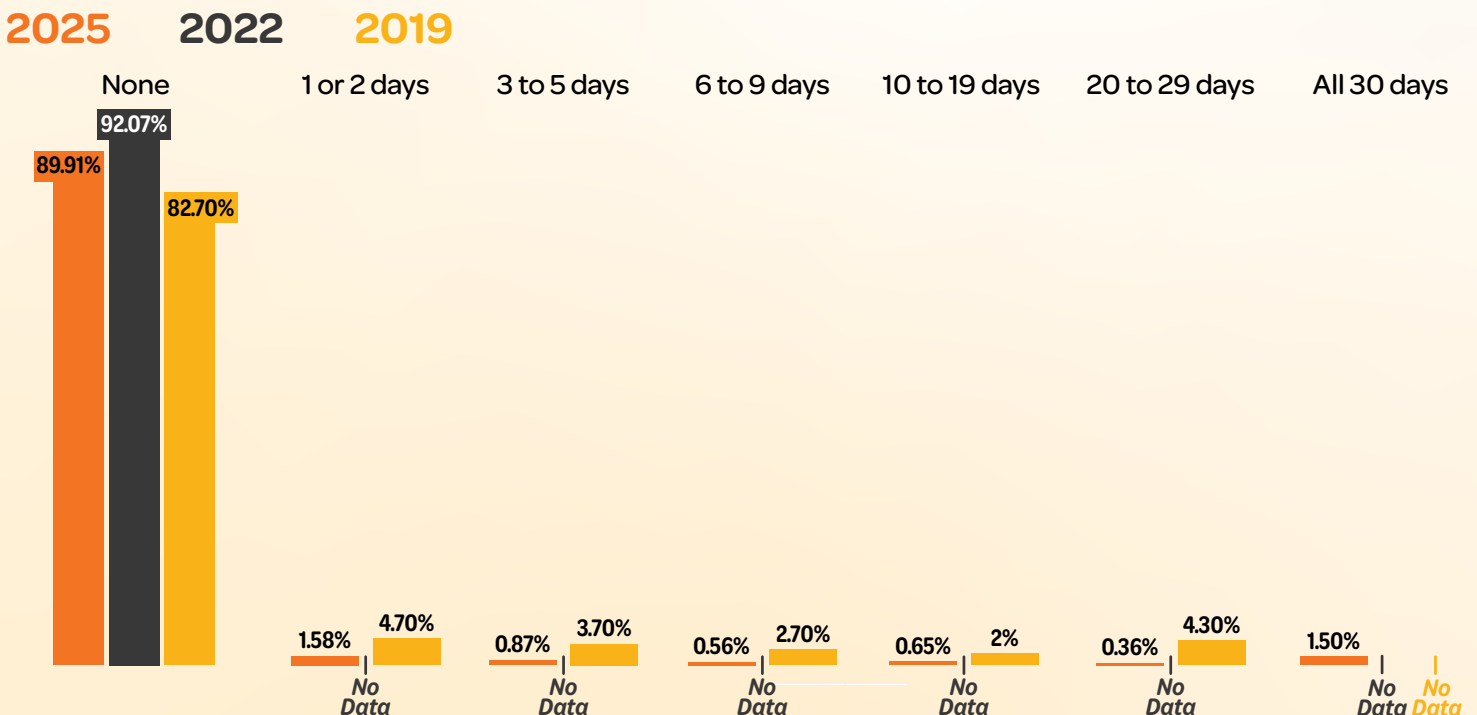
In 2019, 73.8% of respondents reported never having used marijuana, but by 2025, that number rose sharply to 89.91%, indicating a strong shift toward abstinence. Early initiation also declined across all age groups. For example, use between ages 13–14 dropped from 9.5% to 3.09%, and use at ages 15–16 fell from 9.5% to 3.37%. These reductions suggest that fewer youth are experimenting with marijuana at younger ages, possibly due to increased awareness, prevention efforts, or shifting social norms.

How old were you when you used marijuana for the first time?



The trend is echoed in the data on marijuana use in the past 30 days. Like alcohol use, the national percent of students in 2023 using marijuana within the past 30 days is higher (17%) than use among Oneida County students (Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary and Trends Report, 2013-2023, p. 30). In 2019, 82.7% of youth reported no recent use, which increased to 92.07% in 2022 and remained high at 89.91% in 2025. Meanwhile, frequent use (10+ days per month) dropped significantly. For instance, those using marijuana 20–29 days per month fell from 4.3% in 2019 to just 0.36% in 2025. Occasional use (1–5 days) also declined, indicating that both casual and habitual use are becoming less common among youth.

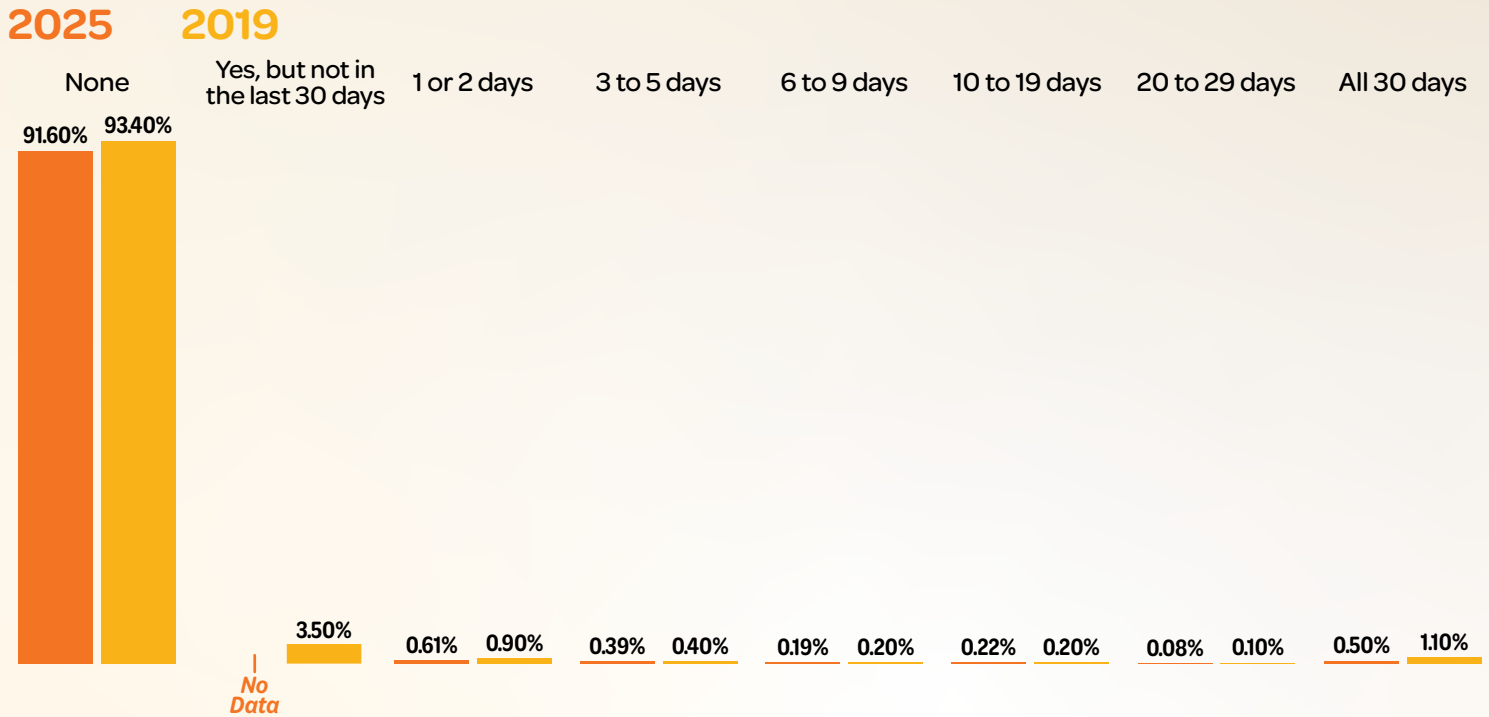
During the past 30 days on how many days did you use marijuana?



Tobacco and Vaping

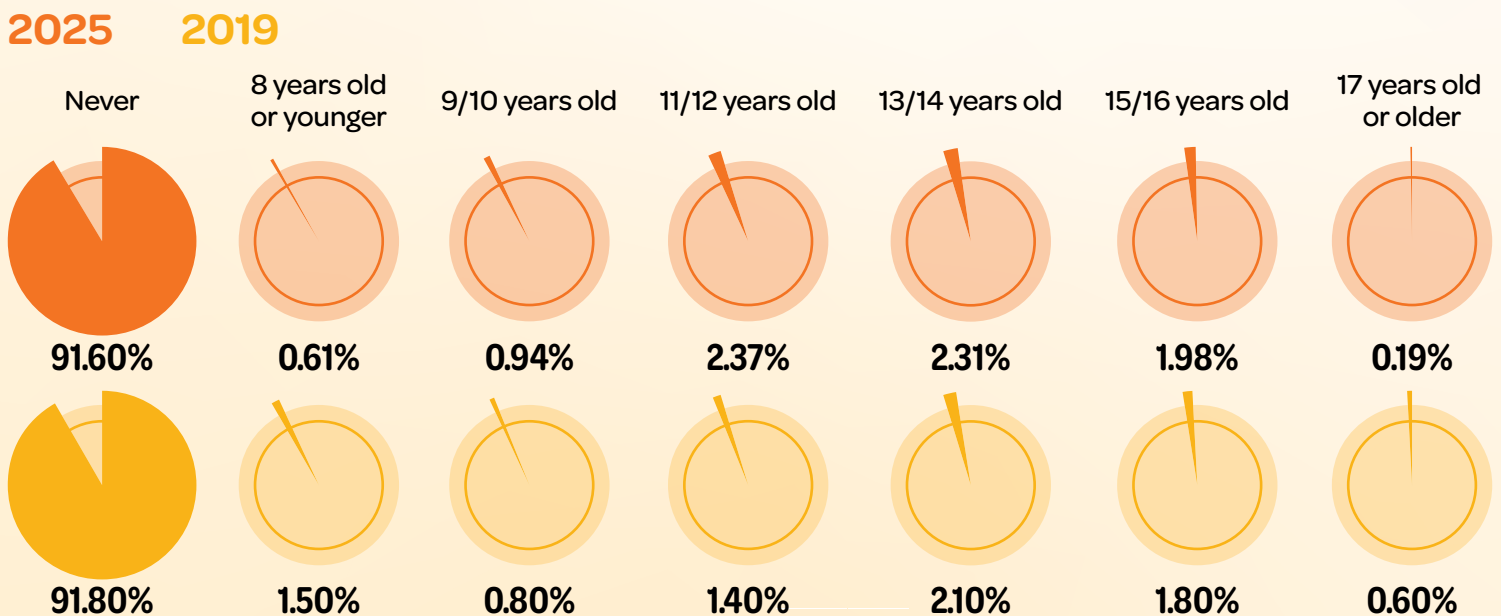
Between 2019 and 2025, tobacco use among youth remained consistently low, with only minor changes. In 2025, 91.6% of respondents reported no tobacco use in the past 30 days, slightly down from 93.4% in 2019. Daily use (all 30 days) dropped from 1.1% to 0.5%, indicating a decline in habitual use, while occasional use (1–9 days) remained minimal and relatively stable.

During the past 30 days on how many days did you use tobacco products such as chewing tobacco, snuff, dip or dissolvable tobacco products such as Copenhagen, Grizzly or Skoal?



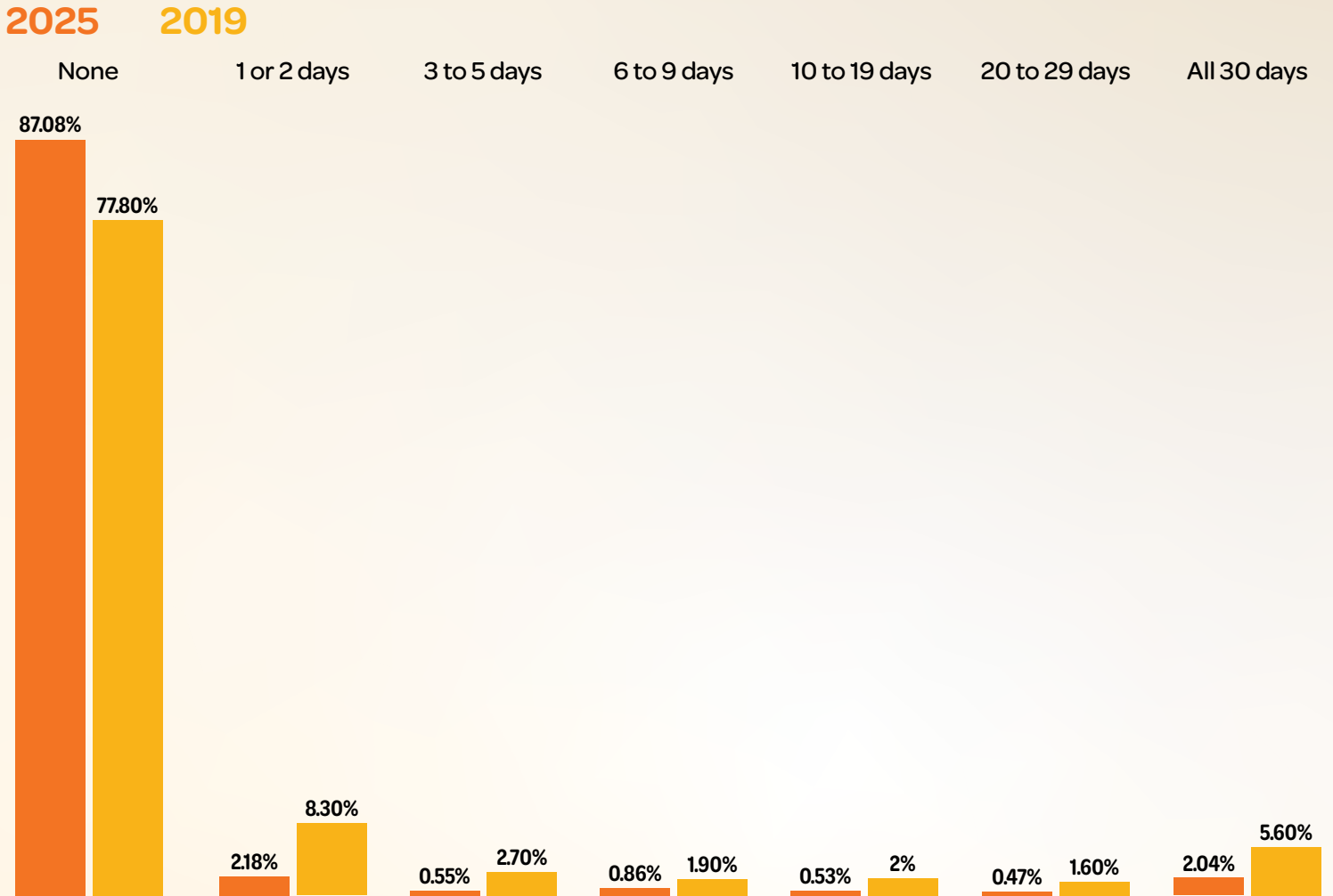
Regarding the age of first use, the percentage of youth who reported never using tobacco stayed nearly the same (91.8% in 2019 vs. 91.6% in 2025). However, there was a notable decrease in early initiation, especially among those aged 8 or younger (from 1.5% to 0.61%). Slight increases were observed in ages 11–12 and 15–16, suggesting that while overall use is low, experimentation may be shifting to slightly older age groups.

How old were you when you used tobacco products for the first time?



Vaping saw a more significant decline in use. In 2025, 87.08% of youth reported no vaping in the past 30 days, up from 77.8% in 2019. Occasional use (1–5 days) dropped sharply from 11% to just 2.73%, and daily use (all 30 days) fell from 5.6% to 2.04%. These reductions suggest that vaping is becoming less common and less frequent among youth, possibly due to increased awareness of health risks, policy changes, or shifts in social norms.

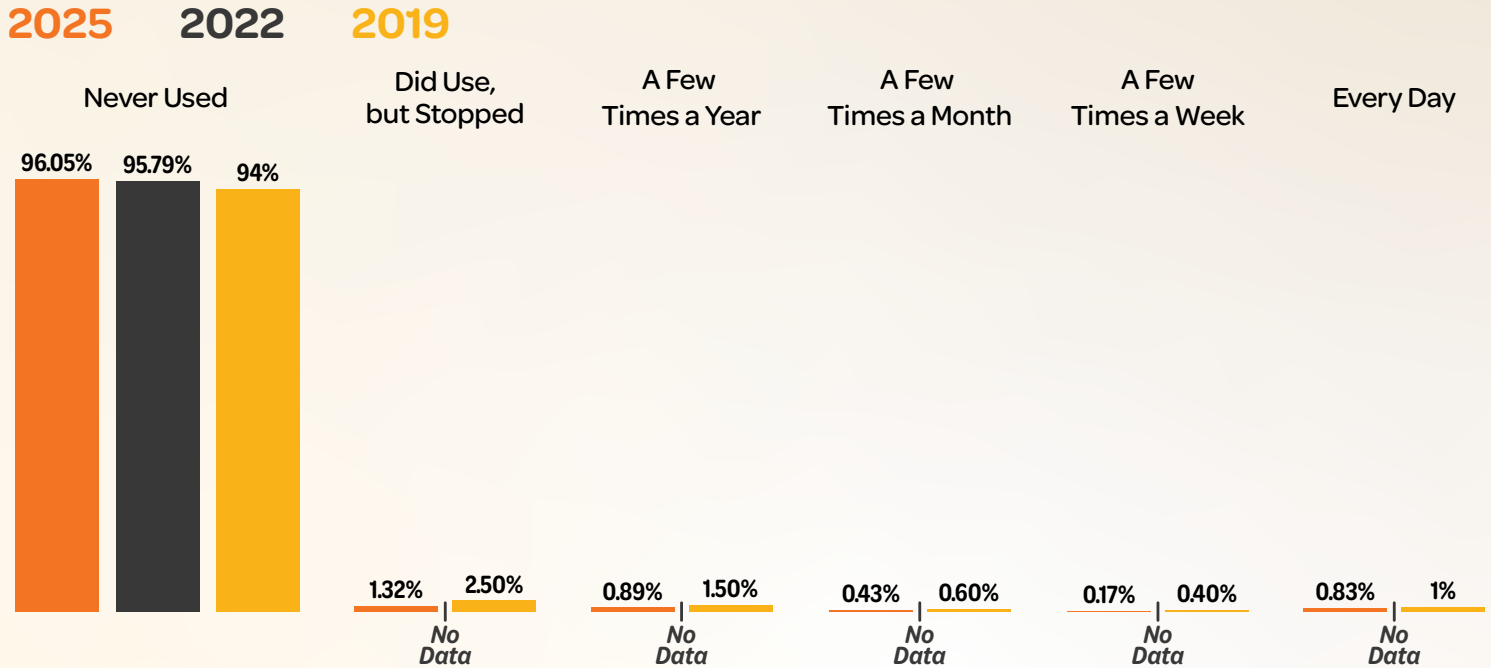
During the past 30 days on how many days did you use an electronic vaping product?



Prescription and Over-the-Counter Misuse

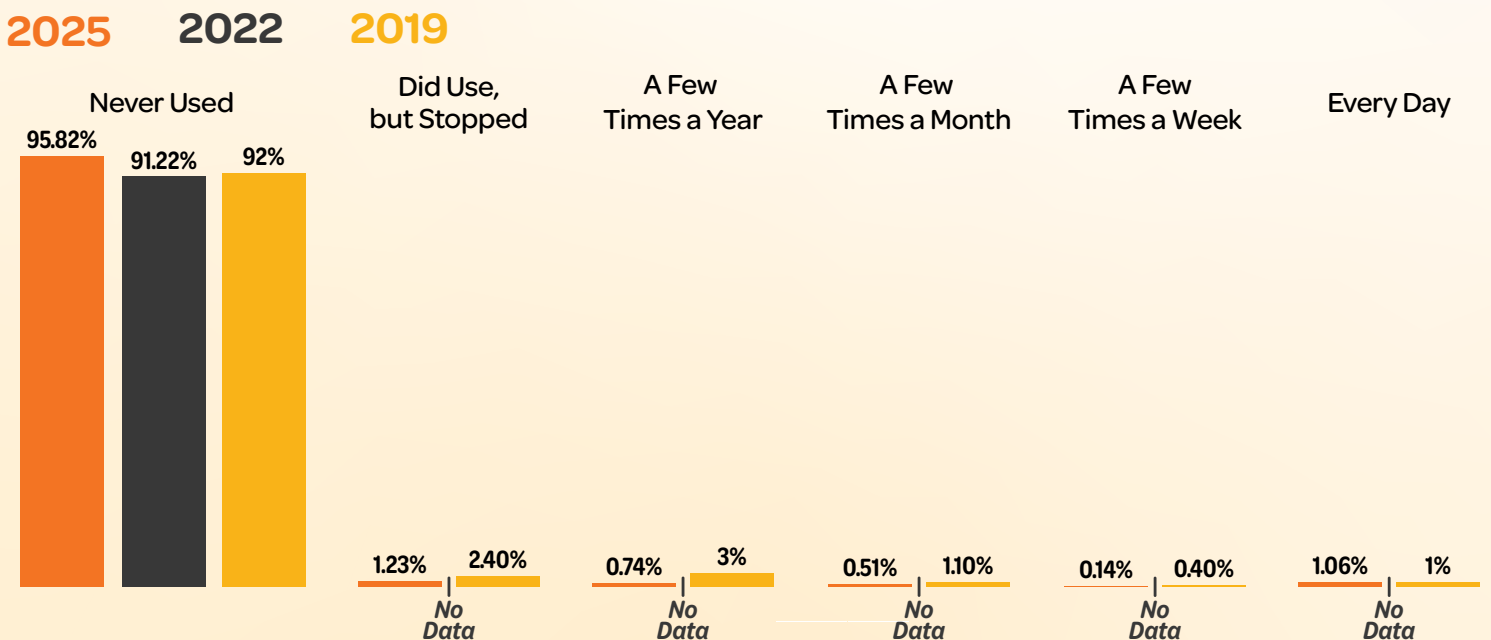
From 2019 to 2025, there was a steady decline in the misuse of someone else's prescription drugs among youth. In 2019, 94% of respondents reported never using another person's prescription, which increased to 96.05% by 2025. All other categories of misuse, ranging from occasional use to daily use, showed consistent decreases. For example, daily misuse dropped from 1% in 2019 to 0.83% in 2025, and weekly misuse fell from 0.4% to just 0.17%. These trends suggest that awareness and prevention efforts may be effectively discouraging prescription drug misuse among youth.

How often you use medicines prescribed to someone other than yourself (such as Oxycodone, Hydrocodone, Percocet, Codeine, Xanax, etc.)



Misuse of over-the-counter drugs followed a similar pattern. The percentage of youth who reported never misusing over-the-counter drugs rose from 92% in 2019 to 95.82% in 2025, indicating a positive shift in behavior. Occasional misuse (monthly or weekly) declined significantly, and daily misuse remained low but stable (1% in 2019 vs. 1.06% in 2025). This suggests that while daily misuse persists among a small group, overall misuse is becoming less common.

How often you use over-the-counter medications (used in a way not intended)?



Section Summary

Between 2019 and 2025, youth substance use across alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, vaping, and drug misuse showed a clear and encouraging decline, suggesting that prevention efforts, education, and shifting cultural norms are having a positive impact. Alcohol and marijuana use saw the most significant reductions, with sharp increases in the percentage of youth reporting never having used these substances and notable drops in both early initiation and frequent use. While national data still shows higher usage rates, particularly in alcohol and marijuana, local data from Oneida County reflects lower-than-average prevalence, indicating regional progress.

Tobacco use remained consistently low, with minor fluctuations in age of initiation, while vaping declined more substantially, especially in occasional and daily use. Prescription and over-the-counter drug misuse also decreased, with more youth reporting no misuse at all, although targeted intervention is still recommended.

Overall, these trends point to a growing culture of abstinence and reduced experimentation among youth, but also emphasize the importance of continued education, monitoring, and localized support to address emerging concerns and maintain progress.

Personal Issues

Mental Health and Well-Being

Emotional Distress

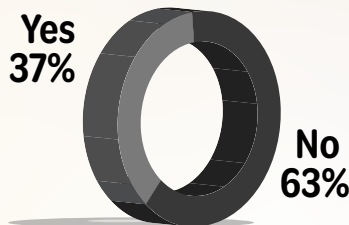
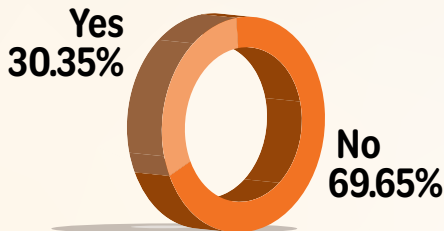
The data shows fluctuating trends in self-reported depression among youth over the three survey years. In 2019, 31.8% of respondents reported feeling depressed in the past year. This number increased to 37% in 2022, suggesting a possible rise in mental health challenges during or following the COVID-19 pandemic, a time marked by social isolation, academic disruption, and increased stress.

By 2025, the percentage of youth reporting depression had declined to 30.35%, the lowest rate across the three years. This drop may reflect the positive impact of increased mental health awareness, school-based support services, and broader societal efforts to reduce stigma and improve access to care.

Meanwhile, the percentage of youth who reported not feeling depressed rose from 63% in 2022 to 69.65% in 2025, surpassing even pre-pandemic levels. This suggests a potential rebound in emotional well-being and resilience among youth.

During the past year did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost everyday for 2 weeks in a row or more that you stopped doing some usual activities?

2025 2022 2019

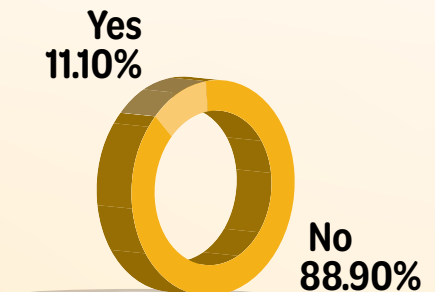
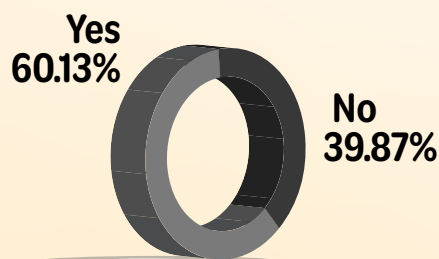
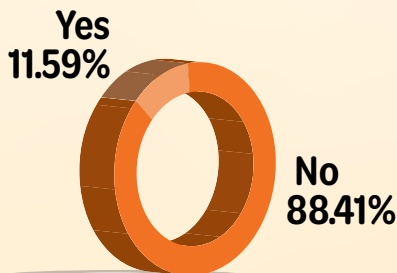


Suicidal Ideation and Behavior

In 2019, 11.1% of youth reported making a suicide plan in the past year, while 88.9% said they had not. This rate remained nearly unchanged in 2025, with 11.59% reporting a plan and 88.41% not. However, 2022 shows a dramatic spike, with 60.13% of youth reporting having made a suicide plan; more than five times higher than in 2019 and 2025. This sharp increase may reflect the mental health crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic, when isolation, uncertainty, and disruption to daily life significantly impacted youth well-being.

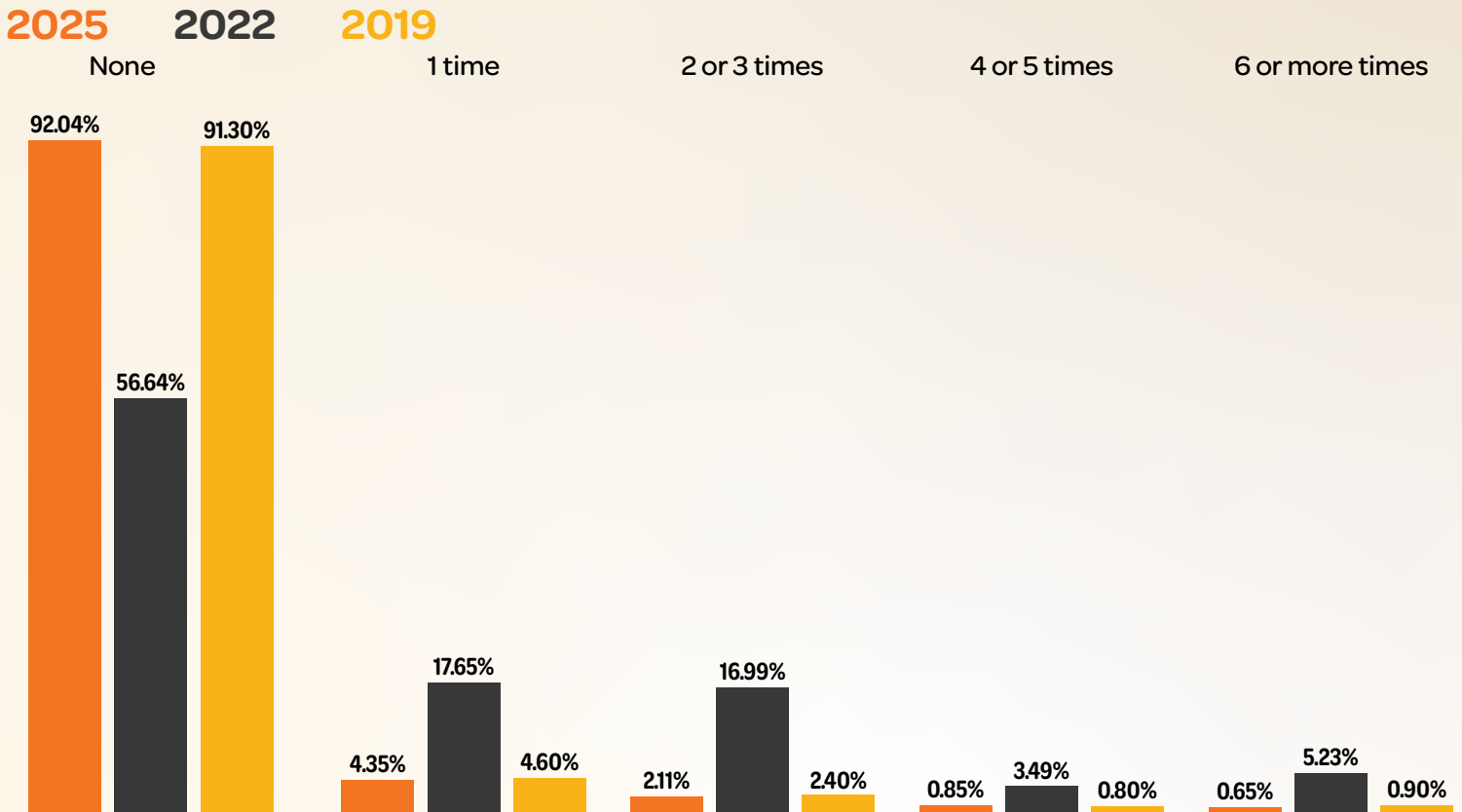
During the past year did you ever make a plan about how you would attempt suicide?

2025 2022 2019



A similar pattern is seen in suicide attempts. In 2019, 91.3% of youth reported no attempts, and this improved slightly to 92.04% in 2025. However, in 2022, only 56.64% reported no attempts, meaning over 43% had attempted suicide at least once that year. The percentage of youth attempting suicide multiple times also spiked in 2022, with 17.65% reporting one attempt and 16.99% reporting two or three attempts. These numbers dropped back to pre-pandemic levels by 2025.

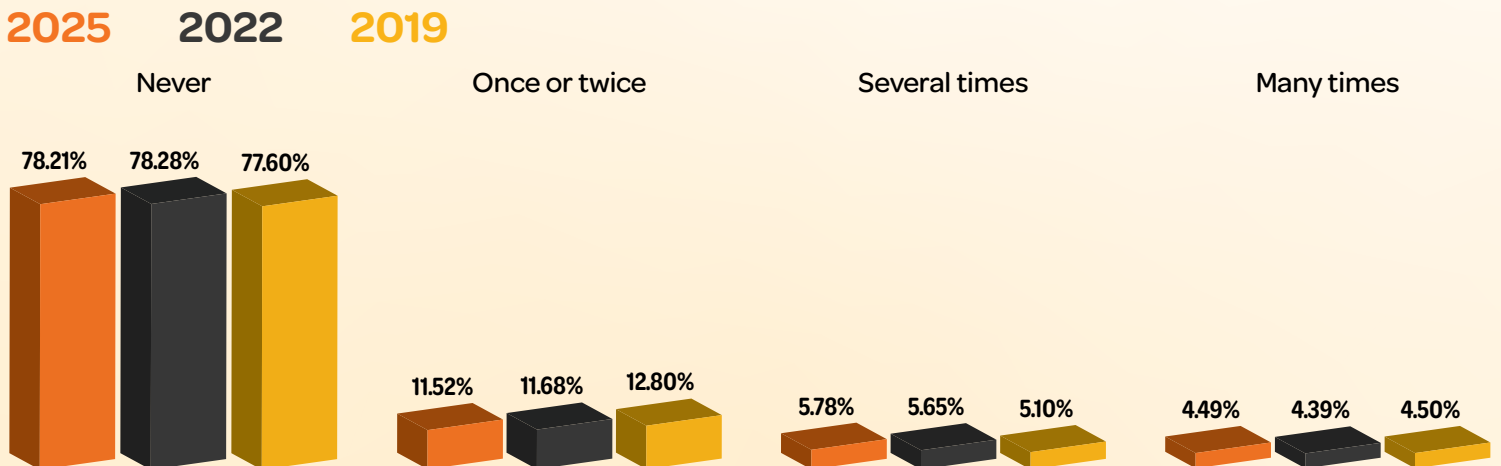
During the past year how many times did you actually attempt suicide?



Self-Harm

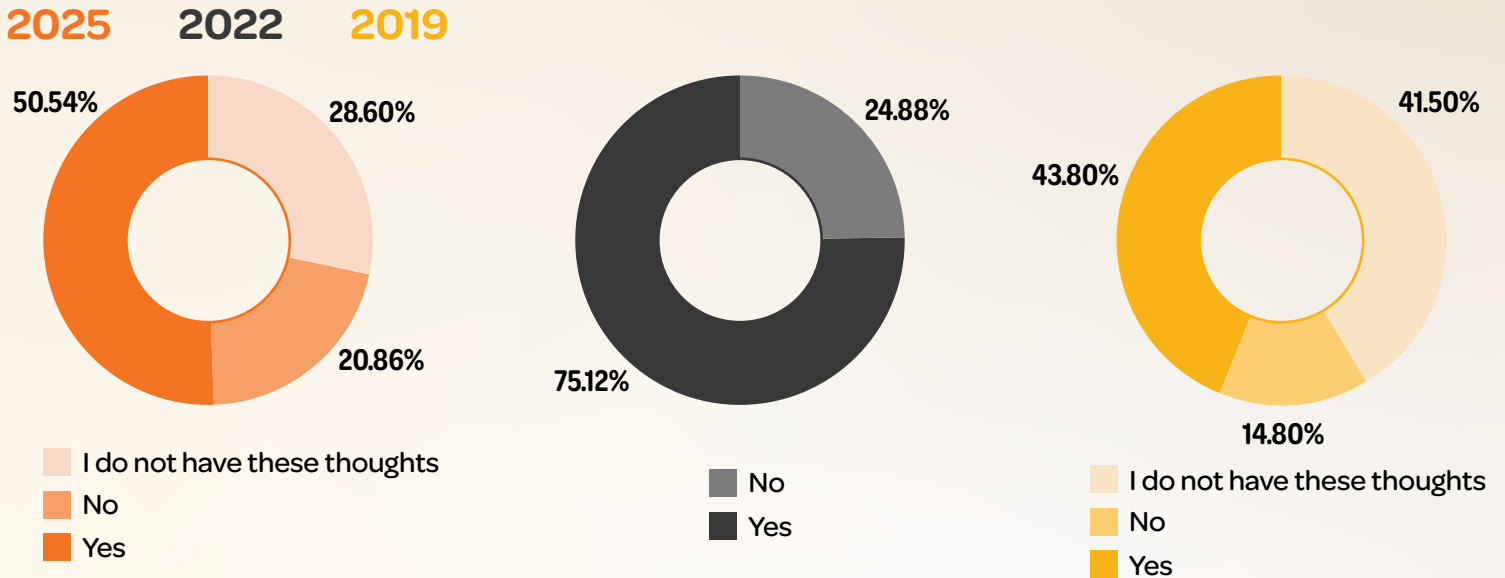
From 2019 to 2025, the percentage of youth who reported never hurting themselves on purpose remained relatively stable, increasing slightly from 77.6% in 2019 to 78.21% in 2025. The proportion of youth who reported hurting themselves once or twice declined modestly from 12.8% to 11.52%, while those reporting several or many instances of self-harm remained nearly unchanged. These trends suggest that while the majority of youth are not engaging in self-harm, a consistent minority continues to struggle, indicating a need for ongoing mental health support and early intervention.

During the past year how often have you hurt yourself on purpose (by cutting, burning, biting or bruising for example) without intending to commit suicide?



The data below reveals more dynamic changes in youth access to emotional support. In 2022, a striking 75.12% of youth reported having someone to talk to about depression, a sharp increase from 43.8% in 2019. However, by 2025, that number dropped to 50.54%, suggesting a decline in perceived support after the pandemic peak. Meanwhile, the percentage of youth who reported not having depressive thoughts decreased from 41.5% in 2019 to 28.6% in 2025, and those who had no one to talk to rose from 14.8% in 2019 to 20.86% in 2025.

If you have thoughts of sadness, hopelessness, or depression, do you have someone to talk to?

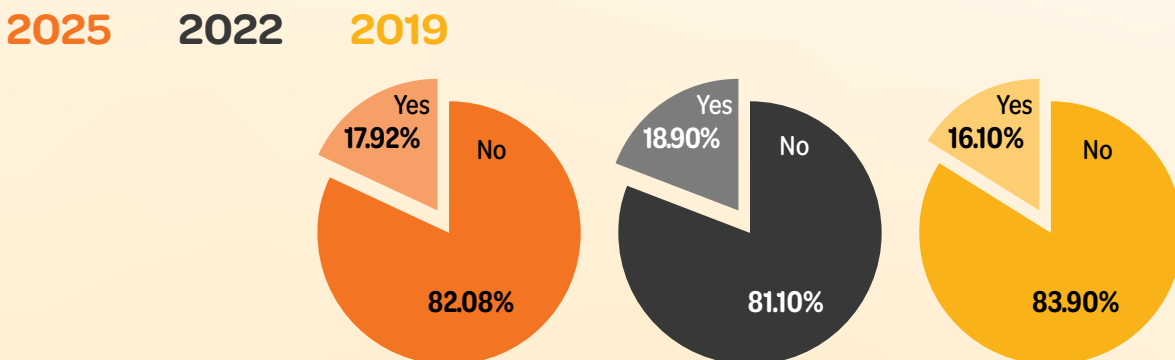


Cyberbullying

Between 2019 and 2025, the percentage of youth reporting experiences of cyberbullying remained relatively stable, with slight fluctuations. In 2019, 16.1% of respondents reported being cyberbullied in the past year. This number increased to 18.9% in 2022, possibly reflecting heightened online activity during the COVID-19 pandemic, when remote learning and social media use surged. By 2025, the rate decreased slightly to 17.92% but remained higher than pre-pandemic levels. Nationally, 16% of high school students reported some degree of electronic bullying according to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary and Trends Report for 2013-2023 (p. 45).

Conversely, the percentage of youth who reported not being cyberbullied dropped from 83.9% in 2019 to 81.1% in 2022, before rising again to 82.08% in 2025. These trends suggest that while cyberbullying is not experienced by the majority of youth, it continues to affect nearly 1 in 5 students, underscoring the need for ongoing digital safety education, monitoring, and support systems.

During the past year have you ever been harassed online by being sent hurtful messages or images on social media platforms, and/or by hurtful messages or calls on our cell phone?



Section Summary

The data reflects a complex but overall encouraging picture of youth mental health between 2019 and 2025. Depression rates peaked in 2022, likely due to the emotional toll of the COVID-19 pandemic, but showed improvement by 2025, suggesting a rebound in youth resilience and well-being. Suicide-related behaviors followed a similar pattern, with dramatic increases in planning and attempts in 2022, then returning to pre-pandemic levels by 2025. Self-harm rates remained relatively stable, indicating that while most youth are not engaging in these behaviors, a consistent minority continues to struggle.

Access to emotional support saw a sharp rise in 2022, possibly due to increased mental health awareness and resources during the pandemic, but declined by 2025, highlighting a need to sustain support systems even as crisis conditions fade. Cyberbullying rates fluctuated slightly, peaking in 2022 and remaining elevated in 2025 compared to 2019, reinforcing the importance of continued digital safety education and intervention.

Together, these trends suggest that while youth mental health was significantly impacted during the pandemic, many indicators have improved. However, persistent challenges, especially around access to support and digital safety, require ongoing attention to ensure lasting progress.

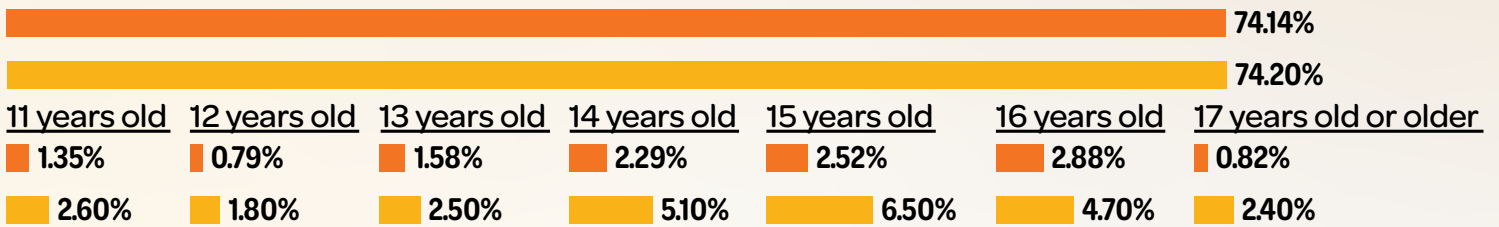
Sexual Behaviors

Between 2019 and 2025, the data shows a notable decline in early sexual activity among youth. The percentage of respondents who reported never having had intercourse remained nearly unchanged (74.2% in 2019 vs. 74.14% in 2025), indicating that the majority of youth continue to abstain. However, among those who did report sexual activity, the age of initiation shifted upward, with fewer youth engaging in intercourse at younger ages. For example, intercourse at age 14 dropped from 5.1% to 2.29%, and at age 15 from 6.5% to 2.52%. Nationally, 32% of high school students have reported ever having sex in 2023, according to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary and Trends Report for 2013-2023 (p. 11). This suggests a trend toward delayed sexual initiation, possibly influenced by increased education, awareness, or shifting cultural norms.

How old were you the first time you had sexual intercourse?

2025 2019

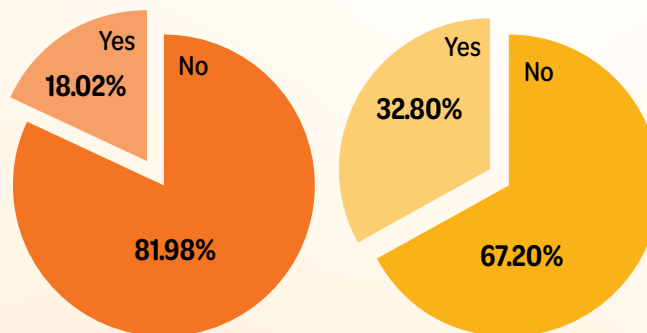
Never Had



The data below reinforces this trend. In 2019, 32.8% of youth reported engaging in sexual activity beyond kissing, but by 2025, that number dropped significantly to 18.02%. Meanwhile, those reporting no sexual activity beyond kissing rose from 67.2% to 81.98%, indicating a strong shift toward abstinence or reduced sexual exploration during adolescence.

Have you ever had any form of sexual activity with someone that involved more than kissing?

2025 2019



Section Summary

Between 2019 and 2025, youth sexual activity showed a clear decline, with most respondents continuing to abstain from intercourse and fewer initiating sexual behavior at younger ages. The data suggest a trend toward delayed sexual activity, likely influenced by increased education and shifting social norms. Additionally, sexual activity beyond kissing dropped significantly, indicating a broader move toward caution and reduced exploration during adolescence.

Sexual Harassment and You

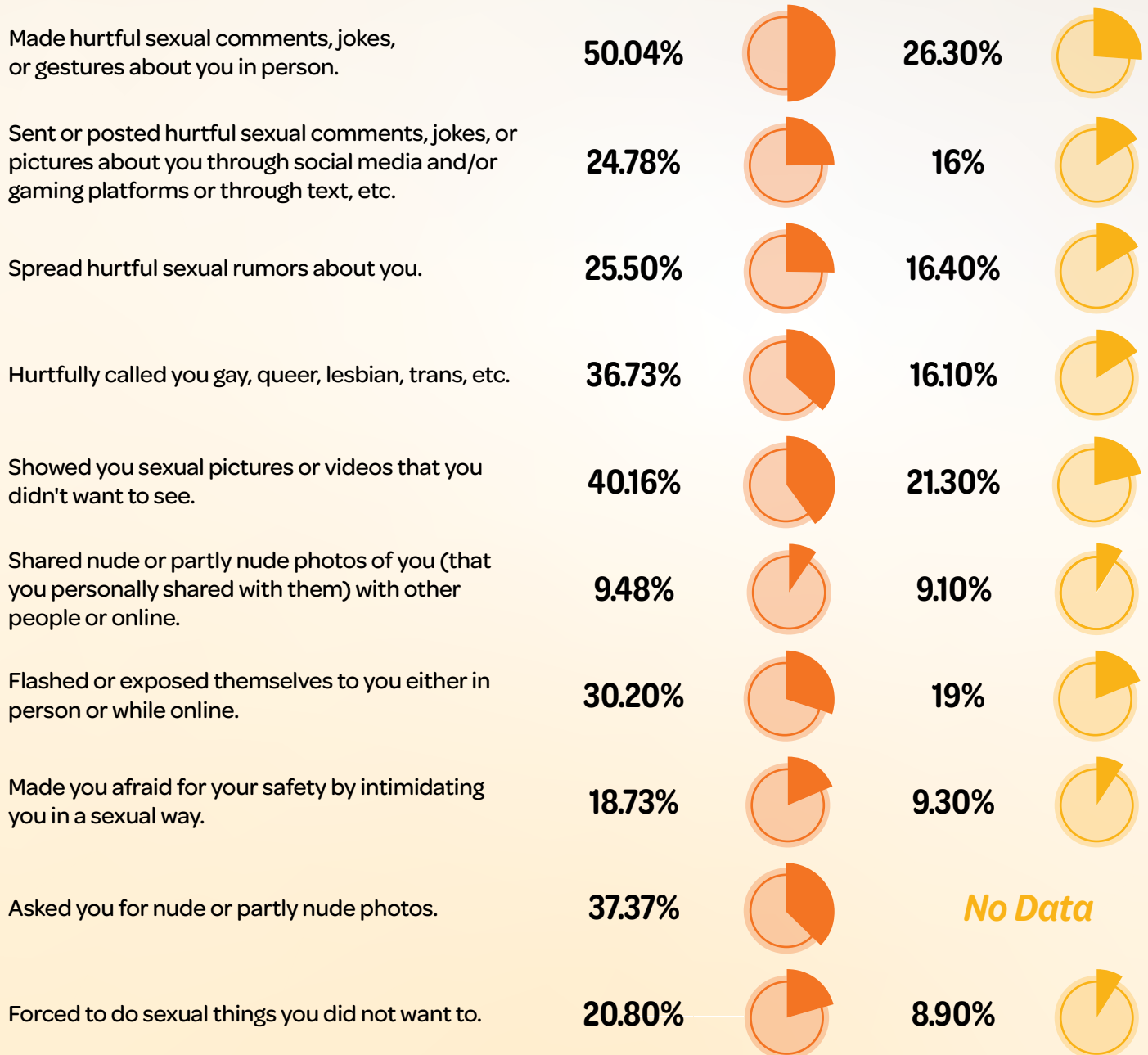
Based on the data provided from 2019 to 2025, there is a concerning upward trend in reported experiences of sexual harassment and abuse among students. The analysis reveals significant increases across nearly all categories, suggesting a growing prevalence of harmful behaviors that impact student safety, mental health, and well-being.

Reports of students being subjected to hurtful sexual comments in person nearly doubled, rising from 26.3% in 2019 to 50.04% in 2025. Similarly, hurtful sexual comments on social media increased from 16% to 24.78%, indicating that online harassment is also becoming more widespread. The percentage of students who reported that hurtful sexual rumors were spread about them rose from 16.4% to 25.5%. Reports of being called derogatory terms related to sexual orientation or gender identity jumped from 16.1% to 36.73%, highlighting a sharp rise in identity-based harassment. Students who were shown unwanted sexual images or videos increased from 21.3% to 40.16%. Flashing or exposure incidents also rose significantly, from 19% to 30.2%. The percentage of students who reported being asked for nude or partially nude photos in 2025 was 37.37% (no 2019 comparison provided). Reports of non-consensual sharing of nude or partially nude photos remained relatively stable, with a slight increase from 9.1% to 9.48%. The number of students who reported being made to fear for their safety doubled, from 9.3% to 18.73%. Most alarmingly, reports of being forced to engage in unwanted sexual acts more than doubled, rising from 8.9% to 20.8%.

Has anyone ever done any of the following to you personally (Select all that apply)?

*Note in 2019 this was posed as a yes or no question and the results for 2019 are based off those who answered yes

2025 **2019**

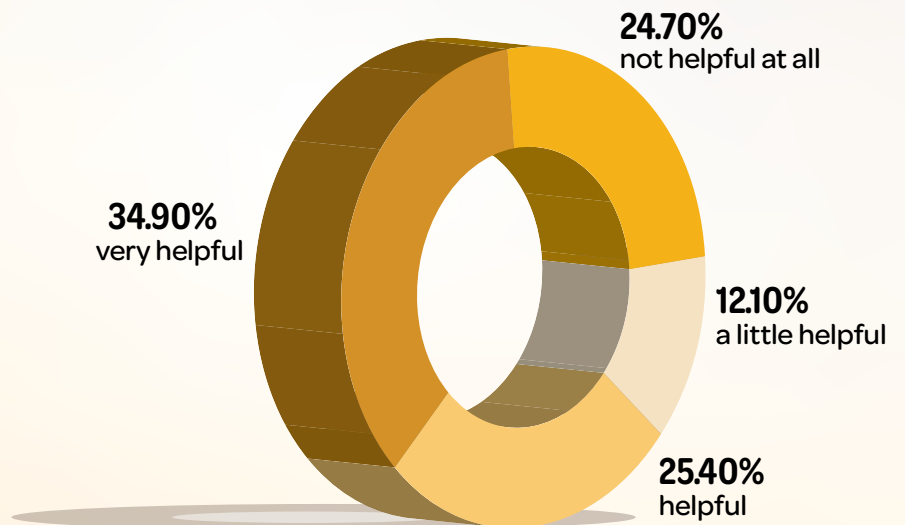
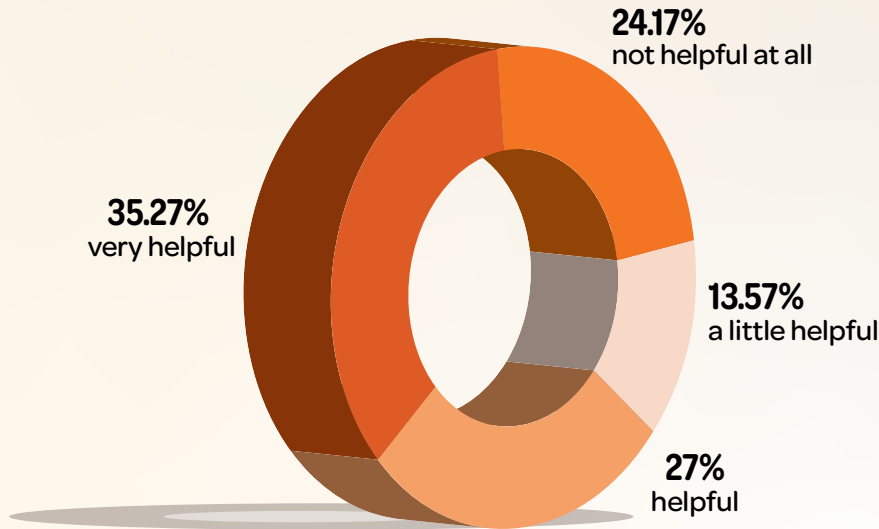


Despite these alarming increases, students' views on how helpful it would be to report such incidents to authorities remained largely unchanged. The percentage of students who believed reporting would be "not helpful at all" stayed nearly the same (24.7% in 2019 vs. 24.17% in 2025). Those who felt it would be "very helpful" increased only slightly, from 34.9% to 35.27%.

How much do you feel reporting serious incidences of sexual harassment or sexual assault to someone in authority (a parent, the police, a teacher, etc.) would reduce sexual harassment and assault?

2025

2019



Section Summary

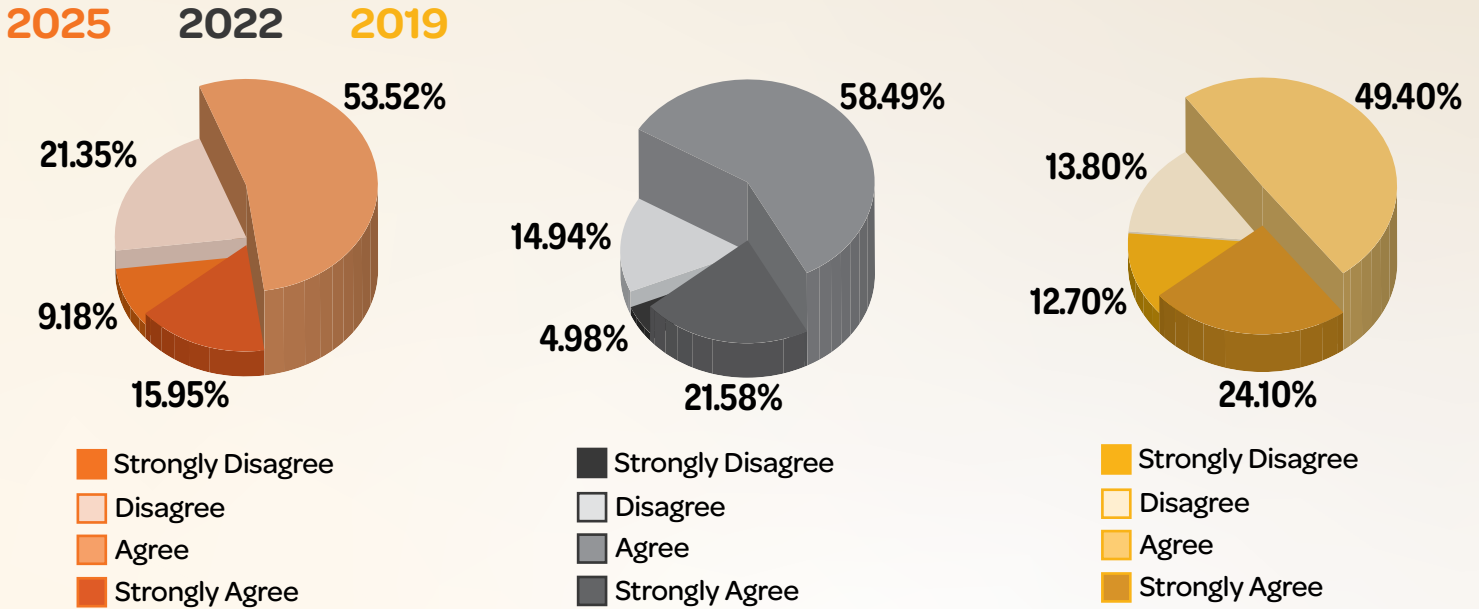
The data from 2019 to 2025 reveals a troubling rise in student-reported experiences of sexual harassment and abuse, both in person and online. Incidents such as hurtful sexual comments, exposure to unwanted sexual content, and identity-based harassment have increased significantly, pointing to a growing threat to student safety and emotional well-being. Most concerning are the sharp increases in reports of being forced into unwanted sexual acts and being made to fear for personal safety. Despite these escalating issues, students' perceptions of the effectiveness of reporting remain largely unchanged, suggesting a persistent lack of trust in support systems or institutional responses. This disconnect highlights an urgent need for stronger prevention efforts, improved reporting mechanisms, and more responsive support structures within schools and communities.

About Your School

Perceived Safety

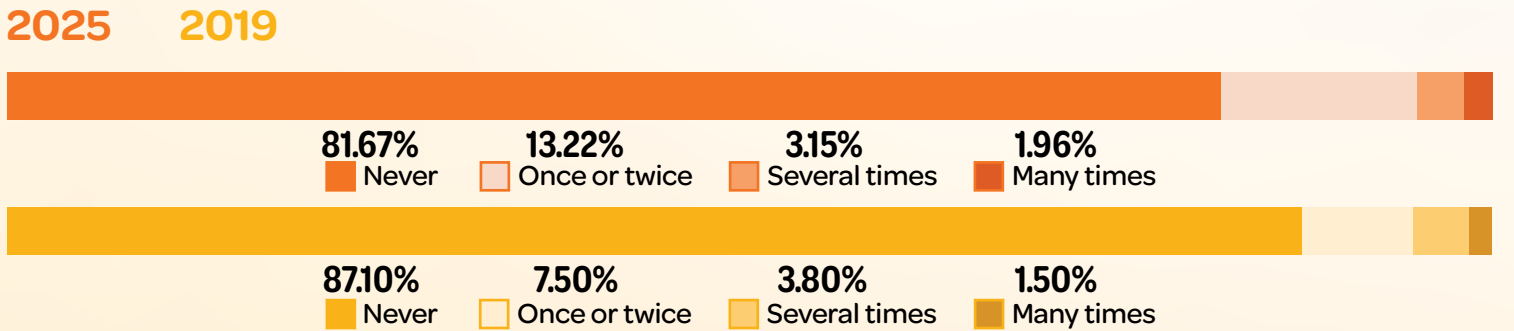
Survey results from 2019 to 2025 show that while most students continue to feel safe at school, there are signs of growing concern. The number of students who agree they feel safe has remained the highest across all years, but fewer students now strongly agree with that statement. At the same time, more students are reporting that they disagree or strongly disagree, especially in 2025.

I feel safe at school



More students are now reporting that they missed school at least once due to safety concerns, with the biggest increase seen in those who missed just one day. Although the number of students missing school several or many times has stayed relatively low, the overall trend suggests that feelings of unsafety at school are becoming more common and may be affecting student attendance. This shift suggests that although many students still feel generally safe, a growing number may be experiencing uncertainty or discomfort in their school environment.

How often during the past year have you missed school because you felt you would be unsafe at school or on your way to or from school?



Section Summary

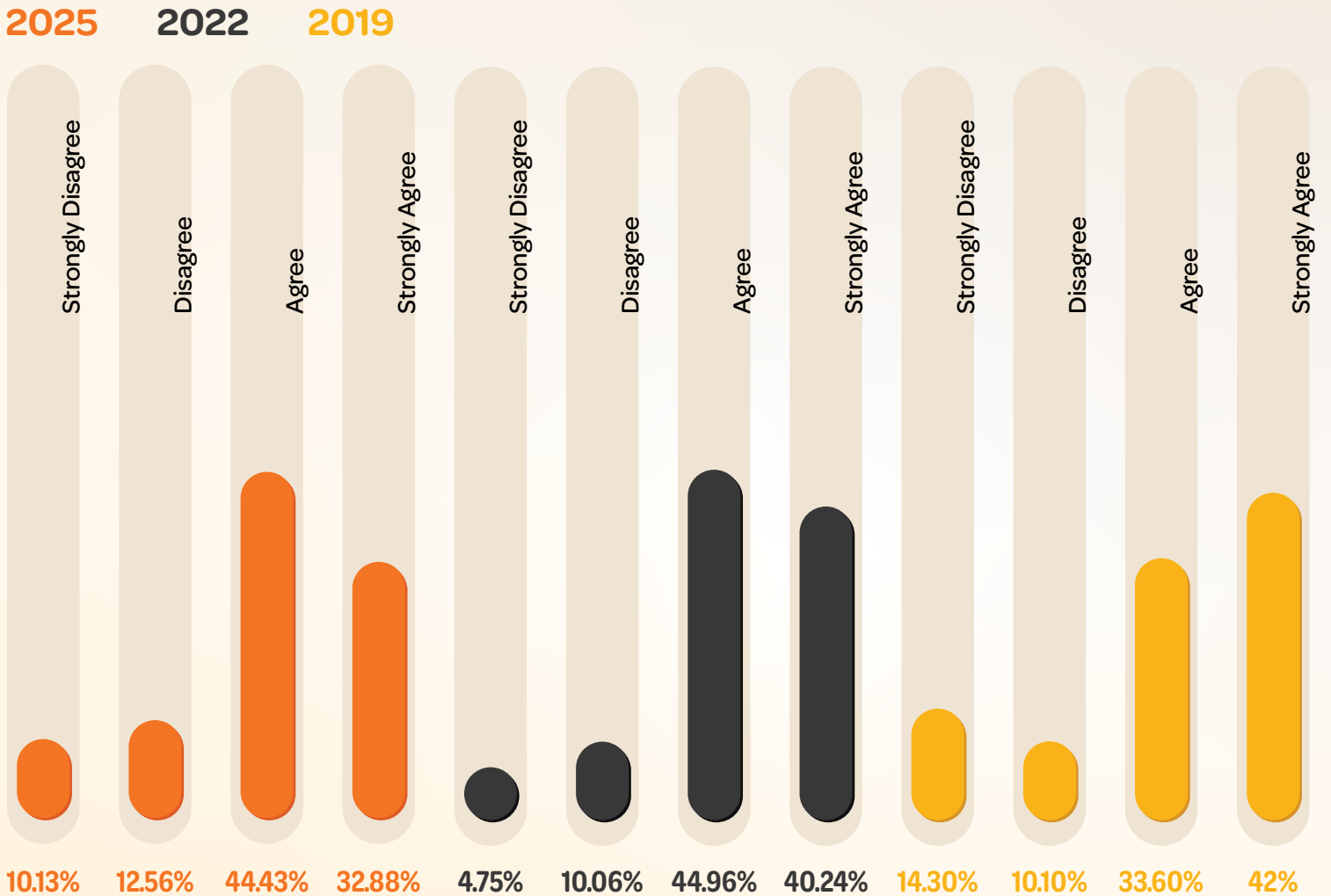
While most students continue to report feeling safe at school, survey data from 2019 to 2025 reveals a subtle but meaningful shift in perception. Fewer students now strongly agree that they feel safe, and more are expressing disagreement, particularly in 2025. This growing discomfort is further reflected in increased reports of students missing school due to safety concerns, especially those who missed just one day. Although chronic absenteeism due to safety remains low, the overall trend suggests that feelings of unease are becoming more common and may be beginning to impact attendance. These findings point to a need for schools to proactively address emerging safety concerns and foster environments where all students feel secure and supported.

About Your Community and Your Friends

Peer Support and Belonging

Survey results from 2019 to 2025 show that while most students feel they can turn to a friend with problems, the strength of that trust has shifted. The percentage of students who agree rose from 33.6% in 2019 to 44.43% in 2025, indicating a steady level of general confidence in peer support. However, those who strongly agree declined from 42% to 32.88% over the same period, suggesting a decrease in the intensity of that trust. Meanwhile, disagree and strongly disagree responses increased slightly by 2025, pointing to a growing number of students who may feel uncertain or unsupported by their peers. Overall, while friendships remain an important source of support, the data suggests a subtle shift toward more cautious or varied experiences with peer relationships.

I can turn to my friend(s) if I have a serious personal problem and need someone to talk to?



Section Summary

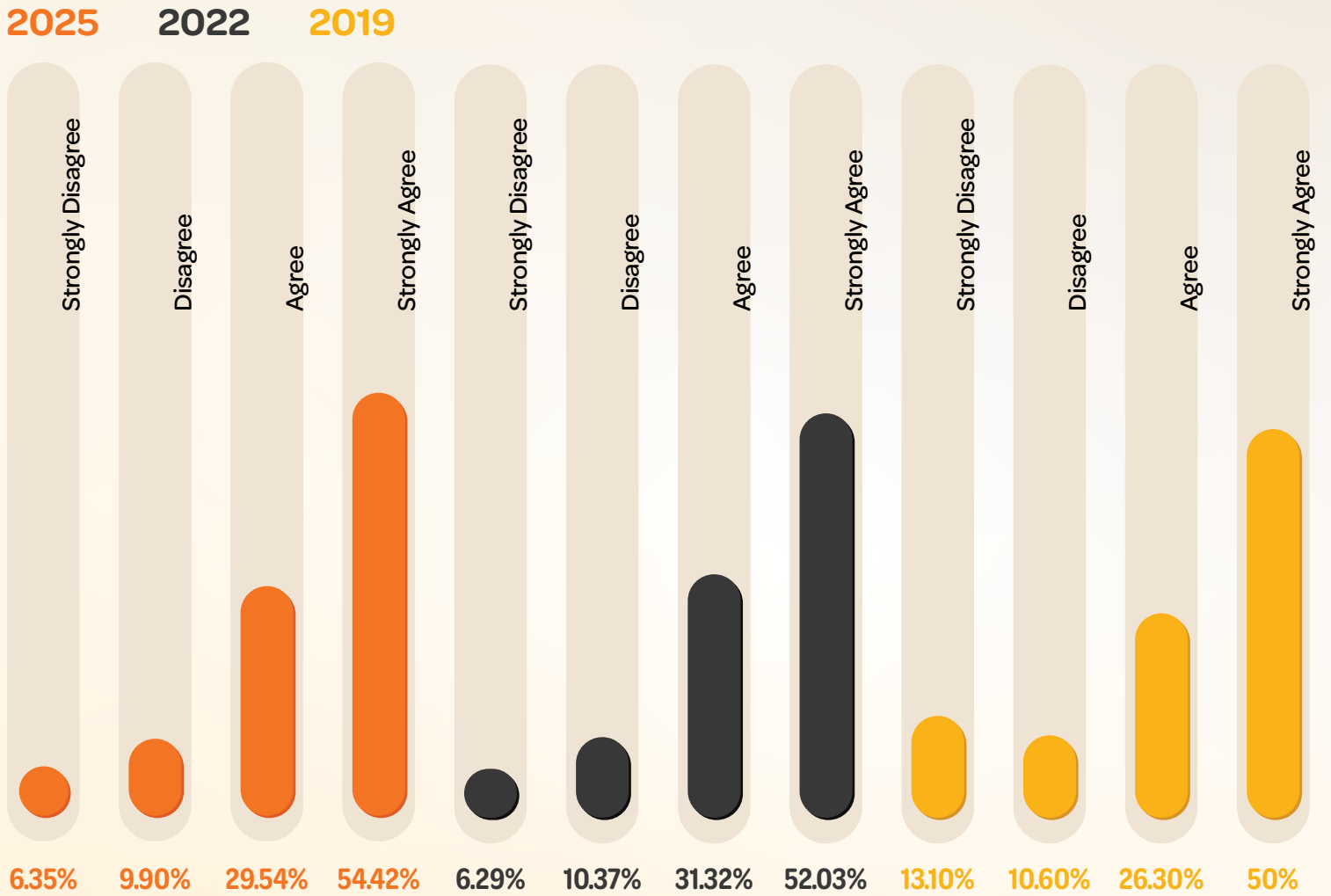
The data from 2019 to 2025 suggests that while peer relationships remain a vital source of support for students, the intensity of trust in those relationships may be weakening. More students now agree they can turn to a friend with problems, indicating a general sense of confidence in peer support. However, the decline in those who strongly agree, along with a slight rise in disagreement, points to a growing sense of caution or uncertainty. This shift may reflect changing social dynamics, increased emotional complexity, or a need for deeper, more reliable connections among youth.

You and Your Parents

Family Support and Communication

Recent survey data from 2019, 2022, and 2025 show a consistently high level of trust among students in their ability to turn to their parents with personal problems. The percentage of students who strongly agree with this statement increased from 50% in 2019 to 52.03% in 2022 and 54.42% in 2025, indicating a growing sense of confidence in parental support. At the same time, the percentage of students who agree declined slightly from 31.32% to 29.54%, suggesting that more students are moving from moderate to strong agreement. Negative responses remained low, with disagree decreasing from 10.37% to 9.9%, and strongly disagree holding steady at 6.35%. Overall, over 83% of students in recent years report feeling they can rely on their parents, reflecting a positive and stable trend in parent-child communication and trust.

I can turn to my parent/guardian if I have a serious personal problem and need someone to talk to?



Section Summary

Survey data from 2019 to 2025 reflects a consistently strong and slightly growing level of trust between students and their parents. The increase in students who strongly agree they can turn to a parent with personal problems suggests a deepening sense of emotional security and support at home. While moderate agreement declined slightly, this shift appears to reflect movement toward stronger affirmation rather than doubt. Negative responses remained low and stable, reinforcing the overall positive trend. These findings highlight the importance of parent-child communication and suggest that many students continue to view their parents as reliable sources of guidance and comfort.

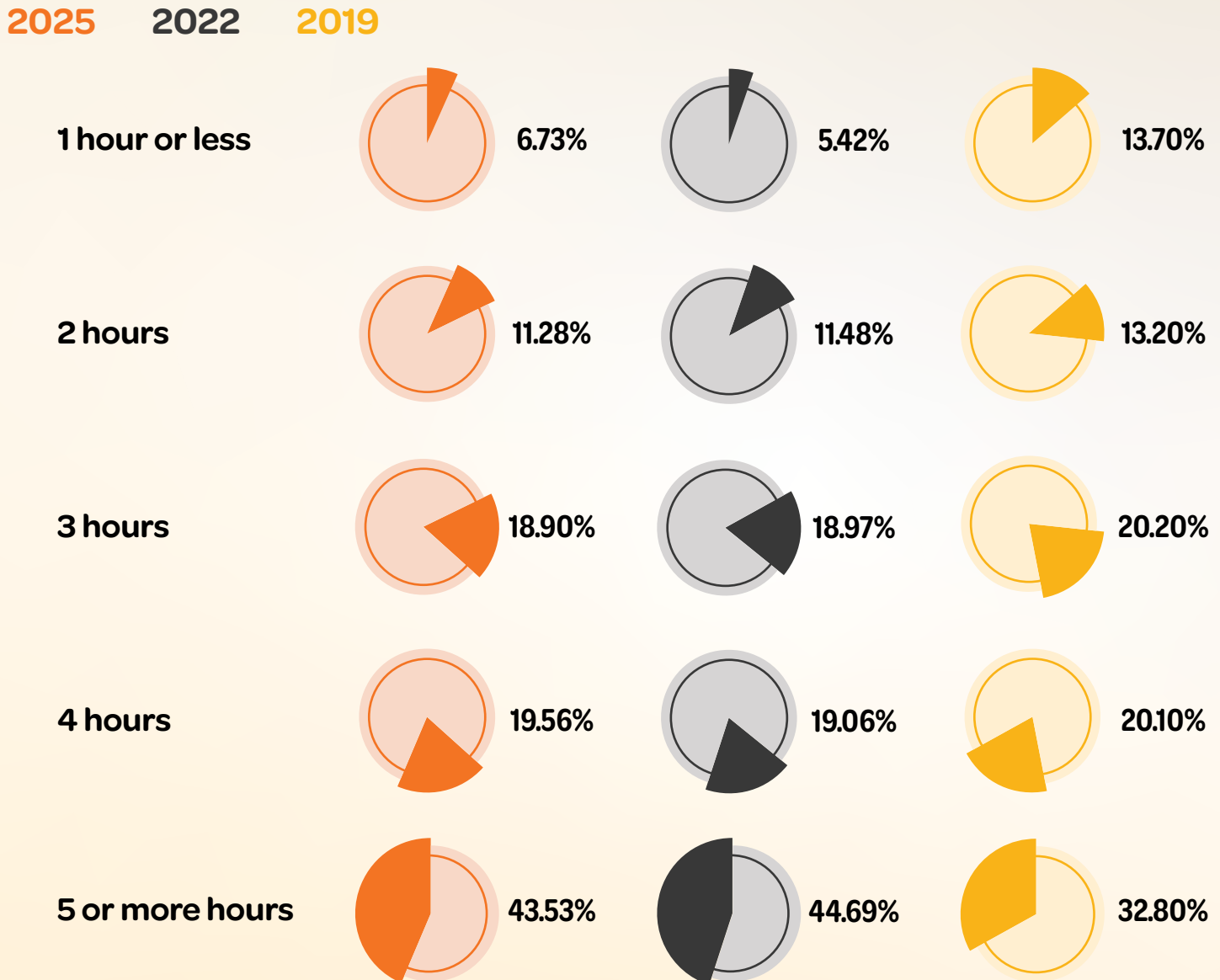
How You Spend Your Time

Screen Time

Between 2019 and 2025, there has been a clear increase in the amount of non-school-related screen time among youth. The percentage of students reporting five or more hours per day rose significantly from 32.8% in 2019 to 44.69% in 2022, and remained high at 43.53% in 2025. This suggests that extended screen use has become more common, likely influenced by the rise of digital entertainment, social media, and mobile device accessibility.

Meanwhile, the proportion of students spending one hour or less on screens dropped sharply from 13.7% in 2019 to just 5.42% in 2022, with only a slight recovery to 6.73% in 2025. Moderate screen time categories (2–4 hours) remained relatively stable, showing only minor fluctuations over the years.

How many total hours of screen time do you usually have in the hours of an average day? (Do not include any screen time spent doing school work.)



Section Summary

These trends indicate a shift toward heavier screen use, which may have implications for youth health, including sleep, physical activity, and mental well-being. The data underscores the importance of promoting balanced digital habits and encouraging offline activities to support healthier lifestyles.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The 2025 Teen Assessment Project (TAP) offers a comprehensive and nuanced portrait of youth in Oneida County, capturing a full cycle of pre-pandemic stability (2019), pandemic disruption (2022), and post-pandemic recalibration (2025). The data reveals encouraging signs of recovery and resilience, particularly in areas such as substance use, mental health, and family support. Youth are reporting lower rates of alcohol, marijuana, vaping, and prescription drug misuse, with many indicators showing significant improvement compared to both 2019 and 2022.

Mental health data suggests a rebound from the pandemic's emotional toll, with depression and suicidal ideation rates returning to pre-pandemic levels. However, persistent challenges remain, including elevated rates of cyberbullying, sexual harassment, and screen time overexposure. While most students report feeling safe at school and supported by family and peers, there is a noticeable decline in the intensity of those feelings, suggesting a need for deeper engagement and trust-building.

The TAP findings underscore the importance of sustained, coordinated efforts across schools, families, and community organizations. Youth are navigating a complex landscape shaped by digital saturation, evolving family structures, and shifting social norms. Yet, they also demonstrate strong self-awareness, a desire for connection, and optimism about the future.

Recommendations



Strengthen Mental Health Supports

- Expand access to school-based mental health professionals and peer support programs.
- Maintain universal screening and ensure timely follow-up care.
- Promote group-based coping strategies and emotional regulation workshops.



Enhance Family Engagement

- Support initiatives that encourage shared meals, open communication, and parental monitoring.
- Offer parent education on digital wellness, teen stress, and post-pandemic adjustment.
- Collaborate across sectors to reinforce family-centered supports.



Promote Digital Wellness

- Integrate digital literacy and online safety education into school curricula.
- Launch screen-time awareness campaigns targeting both youth and caregivers.
- Increase access to recreational and offline enrichment programs.



Sustain Substance Use Prevention

- Continue enforcement and education efforts around vaping, alcohol, and drug misuse.
- Use motivational interviewing and evidence-based interventions in school health services.
- Monitor emerging trends through TAP and local data systems to guide early response.



Address Sexual Harassment & Safety

- Implement comprehensive sexual harassment prevention programs.
- Improve reporting mechanisms and ensure responsive, trauma-informed support.
- Foster safe school climates through restorative practices and student leadership.



Support Peer and Civic Engagement

- Encourage youth-led initiatives in mentoring, volunteerism, and community planning.
- Establish youth advisory councils connected to local prevention and policy efforts.
- Promote inclusive environments that build trust and belonging among peers.

Looking Ahead

As Oneida County continues to recover and evolve beyond the pandemic era, the 2025 TAP results highlight both progress and areas requiring sustained attention. Youth are demonstrating resilience, but they also face ongoing emotional, social, and digital pressures. Efforts over the next four years should focus on deepening collaboration across systems to ensure every young person has access to supportive relationships, safe environments, and the tools to thrive.

By translating data into action, Oneida County can continue to lead in youth wellness and build a stronger foundation for the 2029 TAP cycle.

