



2016

Social Norms Survey Results

South East Youth Action Coalition

South East Youth Action Coalition
Social Norms – Survey Report 2016

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2. Executive Summary

The South East Youth Action Coalition (SEYAC) surveyed youth and adults engaged in activities in Mill Woods to learn more about perceptions of youth behaviours and substance use. The surveys explored youth and adult perceptions of the amount of substance use Mill Woods youth engage in, as well as the actual behaviours of youth respondents for comparison.

299 youth and 268 adults completed surveys between July 2013 and July 2015. Youth respondents largely indicated they had not used alcohol, tobacco or other drugs in the last 30 days, demonstrating a norm of non-use for the youth respondents. When asked to estimate the rates of use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs over the last 30 days among Mill Woods youth, youth and adult respondents both estimated rates of use much higher than the rates reported by the youth respondents.

Table 1. *Summary of Reported and Estimated Use by Youth, 2013-2015*

Substance Type	Actual Use Reported by Survey Respondents	Percent of Youth Respondents Who Over-Estimated Rates of Use (Compared to Reported Rates)
Smoking Cigarettes	8.3% (2013) 10.3% (2014-2015)	96.9% (2013) 90.6% (2014-2015)
Alcohol Use	32.3% (2013) 28.6% (2014-2015)	76.1% (2013) 75.6% (2014-2015)
Illegal Drugs or Non-Prescribed Prescription Medication	6.3% (2013)	86.8% (2013)
Marijuana Use	14.4% (2014-2015)	86.8% (2014-2015)
Illegal Drugs (not incl. Marijuana) or Non-Prescribed Prescription Medication	6% (2014-2015)	91.5% (2014-2015)

While this project utilized convenience sampling of youth engaged in activities and events in Mill Woods, these findings of over-estimation are consistent with the results of thousands of social norms surveys administered to youth in grades 6-12 in the United States (Perkins, 2013).

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Youth respondents identified health professionals, the police (or police programs), and their parents as the most believable sources of information about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Sharing information about the actual norms of non-use among survey respondents may help normalize non-use, and promote positive behaviours. Among outcomes, SEYAC anticipates survey results may support youth to feel more confident making positive lifestyle choices, and empower adults to share accurate information with youth.

3. South East Youth Action Coalition (SEYAC)

The South East Youth Action Coalition (SEYAC) is a comprised of community stakeholders interested in issues affecting youth in South East Edmonton. SEYAC members include agencies, organizations, faith-based groups, business community members, and community leaders. Coalition members are interested in where youth spend their time, feel safe, and what types of spaces they wish were available to them.

SEYAC originated after community conversations with South East Edmonton residents identified a need for action. Following these conversations, REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities and former Public School Trustee Leslie Cleary brought together community stakeholders interested in discussing and addressing issues affecting local youth. Together they formed the Mill Woods Youth Advisory Committee, which was later re-envisioned as the South East Youth Action Coalition.

4. Social Norms Surveys

4.1 Background

Wanting to challenge public perceptions that Mill Woods is unsafe¹ and youth are engaged in negative behaviours, a small group of SEYAC members initiated a Social Norms project.

Social Norms theory² suggests that:

- 1) We tend to over-estimate the amount of negative behaviour peers engage in,
- 2) This misperception can lead to misbeliefs which normalize negative behaviours, and
- 3) Capturing and sharing accurate data can correct misbeliefs, and promote positive behaviours

The SEYAC Social Norms Action Plan asserts the following beliefs:

- Mill Woods youth are making healthy lifestyle choices
- Youth and adults inadvertently reinforce inaccurate norms

In capturing and demonstrating any misperceptions of actual vs. perceived youth participation in negative behaviours, SEYAC's anticipated outcomes include:

¹ <http://www.avenueedmonton.com/August-2014/The-Hoods-Arent-That-Rough/>

² For more information, see H. Wesley Perkins' "A Brief Summary of Social Norms Theory and the Approach to Promoting Health"

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- Demonstrating incongruence between actual and perceived behaviours of Mill Woods youth and adults
- Correcting misperceptions about youth attitudes and behaviour
- Youth will feel more valued by adults in the community
- Youth will feel more confident in making positive lifestyle choices
- Adults will feel empowered to share accurate information with youth
- Adults will feel strengthened in their roles as parents/mentors/supports
- Increased feeling of safety among youth and adults in Mill Woods

Careful consideration was given to different Social Norms approaches and campaigns. Given that the Social Norms approach has demonstrated some success with campaigns focused on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, it was decided that the SEYAC Social Norms project would also focus on behaviours related to the use of these substances.

4.2 Survey Development

To guide the survey design, the following questions were adapted from *Social Norms Marketing: The Logic and Necessary Data to Demonstrate Effectiveness* (Keller, 2011):

1. What are the perceptions of youth regarding peer behavior?
2. What are the actual behaviors of youth?
3. What kinds of protective behaviors do youth report?
4. Are the perceptions of youth accurately reflecting youth behavior?
5. Is there a correlation between perceived levels of higher-risk behavior and participation in higher-risk behavior?

The Assessment of Norms, Behaviors, and Attitudes/Teen Norms Survey³ from the National Social Norms Resource Center was selected as the preferred instrument due to its relevance and availability. Questions from this survey were selected for use, and a version of the survey for adults was also developed. The surveys were administered at a Canada Day festival in Mill Woods in 2013, and at a community BBQ the same summer. Longer and more comprehensive versions of the surveys were then developed and administered in 2014 and 2015. The youth surveys were targeted to youth ages 13 – 19 years of age, and the adult surveys included adults 20 years of age and over.

In total, four surveys were developed and administered during the project:

1. 2013 Youth Survey
2. 2014 – 2015 Youth Survey

³ This survey can be found in *A Guide to Marketing Social Norms for Health Promotion in Schools and Communities*, National Social Norms Research Centre

3. 2013 Adult Survey
4. 2014 - 2015 Adult Survey

4.3. Survey Administration

The surveys were administered from July 2013 – July 2015. The youth survey was offered at a number of activities and events organized by service providers working with youth in Mill Woods, and at the Canada Day festival in Mill Woods in 2013, 2014 and 2015. The adult survey was also offered at the Canada Day festival 2013-2015 and at other community events. Online versions of the surveys were also developed and shared by a few community partners in their newsletters.

Table 2. *Number of Respondents per Survey*

Youth Survey	Number of Respondents	Adult Survey	Number of Respondents
2013	96	2013	74
2014 – 2015	203	2014-2015	194
Total Youth	299	Total Adult	268

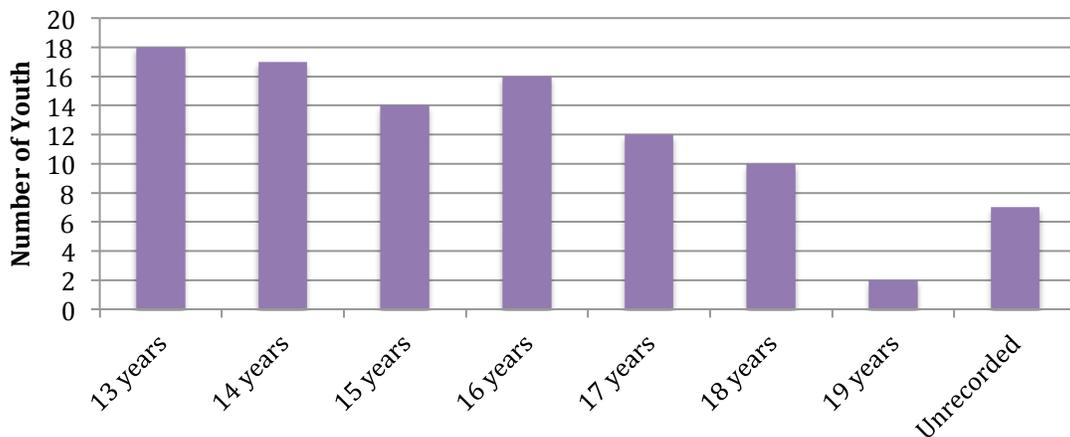
4.4 Results

2013 Youth Survey Results

Respondents

- 96 youth ages 13-19 years of age (see chart for age distribution)
- 58 female, 31 male (7 unrecorded)

Ages of Youth Respondents, 2013 Survey



Youth Perceptions of Youth Behaviour Compared to Actual Reported Use by Survey Respondents

Smoking Cigarettes

- 8.3% of youth respondents (8 youth total) reported smoking cigarettes within the last 30 days, but 96.9% of youth respondents thought 10% or more of Mill Woods teens smoked cigarettes within the last 30 days.
- See Table A1, Appendix A, for more information (page 20).

Alcohol Use

- 32.3% of youth respondents (31 youth) reported using alcohol in the last 30 days, but 76.1% of respondents thought 40% or more of Mill Woods teens used alcohol in the last 30 days
- See Table A2, Appendix A, for more information (page 20).
- 9 of 31 youth respondents who reported drinking were 18-19 years, legal age for alcohol consumption
- There was a statistical relationship ($p < 0.005$) between the age of teen respondents and reported drinking of alcohol in the past 30 days. Teens greater than 15 years of age were ~10 times more likely to have reported drinking in the last 30 days than younger respondents.
- There was a statistical relationship ($p < 0.05$) between age of respondents and perception of drinking. Teens older than 15 years of age were ~4 times more likely to report they believe that 50% of their peers used alcohol in the past 30 days.
- A note that a large number of the surveys were conducted on Canada Day, which would be a time of celebrating with potential increased use of alcohol. As well, many high school students would be celebrating the end of the school year and/or graduation.

Illegal Drugs (or Prescription Medication not Prescribed to You)

- 6.3% of respondents (6 youth) replied they used illegal drugs or prescription medication not prescribed to them in the past 30 days, but 88.6% of youth thought 10% or more of Mill Woods teens used illegal drugs (or prescription medication not prescribed to them) in the last 30 days
- See Table A3, Appendix A, for more information (page 21).

2014 – 2015 Youth Survey Results

The 2014-2015 youth survey was longer and more comprehensive than the 2013 survey. Questions regarding ethnicity and believability of sources of information were added, along with other additional questions.

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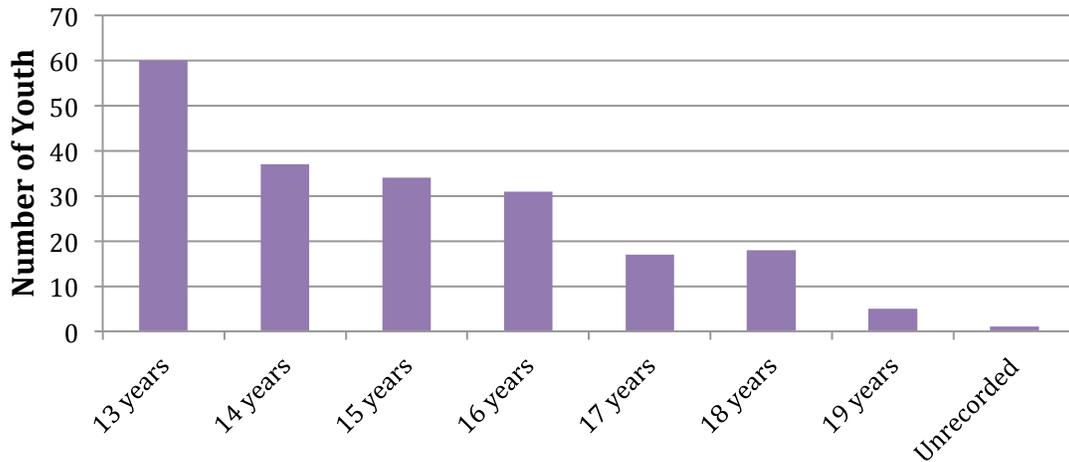
Respondents

- 203 youth between 13 and 19 years of age
- Gender: 85 female, 97 male, 9 not male or female (e.g. transgender), 12 unrecorded

Table 3. *Ethnicity of 2014-2015 Youth Survey Respondents*

Ethnicity	Percentage of Youth Respondents
South Asian	24.1%
White	19.2%
Filipino	15.3%
Multi-Cultural	11.3%
Black	10.3%
Unrecorded	5.9%
Native/Aboriginal	5.4%
Other	3.4%
Chinese	2.5%
Latin-American	1%
South East Asian	1%
Japanese	0.5%

Ages of Youth Respondents, 2014-2015 Survey



Believability of Sources of Information

In the 2014-2015 survey, youth were asked to rate how believable different sources of information were about tobacco, alcohol or other drugs. The ratings scale included: Very Believable, Somewhat Believable, Don't Know, Somewhat Unbelievable and Very Unbelievable. Survey administrators reported this question

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was slightly confusing for some youth, so it is advised to take this into consideration while viewing the results.

Believability of Sources of Information, Ranked Highest to Lowest:

- 74.4% of students said information from a **nurse, doctor or health professional** would be very (63.1%) or somewhat (11.3%) believable
- 68.5% of youth said information from the **police or DARE programs** would be very (53.2%) or somewhat (15.3%) believable.
- 67% of youth said information from their **parents** is very (47.8%) or somewhat (19.2%) believable.
- 58.6% of students said information from a **school counselor** would be very (34%) or somewhat (24.6%) believable.
- 57.7% of youth said information from their **teachers** was very (42.4%) or somewhat (15.3%) believable.
- 49.8% of students said information from a **student peer educator** would be very (20.7%) or somewhat (29.1%) believable
- 49.2% of youth said information from their **friends** was very (19.2%) or somewhat (30%) believable.
- 48.7% of youth said information from a **coach** would be very (24.1%) or somewhat (24.6%) believable.
- 47.3% of youth said information from a **religious organization or leader** would be very (25.1%) or somewhat (22.2%) believable
- 45.3% of youth said information on the **Internet** was very (20.2%) or somewhat (25.1%) believable.
- 44.8% of youth said information from the **school newspaper** is very (17.2%) or somewhat (27.6%) believable.
- 41.9% of youth said they find information on a **poster at school** very (14.8%) or somewhat (27.1%) believable.
- 35.5% of youth said information from a **flyer or handout** was very (9.4%) or somewhat (26.1%) believable.

Youth Perceptions of Youth Behaviour Compared to Actual Reported Use by Survey Respondents

One of the differences between the 2013 and 2014-2015 youth surveys is that the 2013 survey asked youth their perceptions of “Mill Woods teens” and the 2014-2015 survey asked youth their perceptions of “Mill Woods teens your age”. Another difference is separate questions were included for marijuana use and other illegal substances, whereas in the 2013 survey marijuana use was not a separate question.

In this section online responses for perceived use were excluded in the analysis due to inconsistent scoring methodology, eliminating 33-38 responses from each perceived use question.

Smoking

- 10.3% of youth respondents (21/203) reported smoking in the last 30 days, but 90.6% of youth respondents believed 20% or more of teens their age smoked during the last month.
- See Table B1, Appendix B, for more information (page 22).

Marijuana

- 14.4% of respondents noted using marijuana in the last 30 days, but 86.8% of youth respondents believed 20% or more of teens their age had used marijuana in the last 30 days.
- See Table B2, Appendix B, for more information (page 22).

Alcohol Use (specified as 1 drink or more)

- 28.6% of respondents reported having at least 1 drink of alcohol in the last 30 days, but 75.6% of youth respondents estimated 40% or more of Mill Woods teens their age used alcohol in the last 30 days.
- 11.4% of youth respondents were ages 18 or 19 years of age
- Consistent with the 2013 survey results, there was a strong statistical relationship ($p < 0.05$) between the age of the respondent and self-reported drinking. As young people get older they report significantly more drinking behaviour.
- Again it is worth noting that a large number of the surveys were conducted on Canada Day, which would be a time of celebrating with potential increased use of alcohol. As well, many high school students would be celebrating the end of the school year and/or graduation.
- See Table B3, Appendix B, for more information (page 23).

Illegal Drugs (other than Marijuana) or Non-Prescribed Prescription Medications

- 6% of respondents reported using illegal drugs (other than marijuana), or prescriptions not prescribed to them, in the last 30 days, but 91.5% of youth believed 10% or more of teens their age used illegal drugs (other than marijuana) or prescription medication not prescribed to them in the last 30 days
- See Table B4, Appendix B, for more information (page 23).

Avoiding Smoking and Alcohol Behaviours

Youth were offered a series of statements to agree or disagree with. Percentages below after the statements indicate how many youth selected “yes” to agree with the below statements.

When you have been at a party or just hanging-out with other teens, what, if anything, have you done to avoid smoking cigarettes?

- I don't smoke, so I have not done anything special – 80.3%
- I am a smoker, so I don't try to avoid smoking – 8.9%
- I don't hang out with people who smoke – 57.6%
- I tell people "I don't want to smoke" or "no thanks" if I am offered cigarettes – 80.8%
- I try to get friends who smoke to stop smoking – 54.2%

When you have been at a party or just hanging-out with other teens, what, if anything, have you done to avoid drinking alcohol?

- I don't drink alcohol, so I have not done anything special - 63.5%
- I drink alcohol, so I don't try to avoid drinking – 23.6%
- I don't hang out with people who drink – 45.3%
- I tell people "I don't want to drink" or "no thanks" if I am offered alcohol – 63.5%
- I try to get friends who drink to stop drinking – 44.3%

Perception of Parent Beliefs

A question on youth perceptions of parent beliefs around substance use was included on the survey. The questions were framed as "how wrong do you think your parents feel it would be for you to [engage in specific substance use]?" with responses scaled as very wrong, wrong, a little bit wrong, and not wrong at all.

- 69% of youth respondents thought their parents would think it was very wrong or wrong for the youth respondent to drink alcohol
- 88.2% of youth respondents thought that their parents would think it was wrong or very wrong for the youth respondent to smoke cigarettes
- 88.5% of youth respondents thought their parents would feel it was wrong or very wrong for the youth respondent to use marijuana

Dating Preferences

A question on dating preferences when it comes to substance use was included on the survey.

- 85.7% of youth respondents would prefer to date a non-smoker
- 67.5% of youth respondents would prefer to date a non-drinker

2013 Adult Survey Results

Respondents:

- 74 respondents
- 50 male, 24 female
- Average age was 40 years for females, and 38 years for male respondents
- 74.3% of adult respondents were parents
- 23% were parenting (or had parented) teenagers
- 10.8% worked with youth in Mill Woods (but were not teachers)
- Almost all surveys were completed at the 2013 Mill Woods Canada Day festival

Adult Perception of Mill Woods Teen Cigarette Smoking

Adults were asked “What percentage of Mill Woods teens do you think have smoked cigarettes in the last 30 days?”

- Reported use by youth in the 2013 Youth Survey was 8.3%, but 95.9% of adult respondents in 2013 estimated 10% or more of Mill Woods teens smoked cigarettes in the last 30 days
- 59.5% of adult respondents estimated at least 50% of Mill Woods teens had smoked cigarettes in the last 30 days
- There was a strong statistical relationship ($p>0.05$) between age of adult respondent and perception of teen smoking. Younger adults (<50 years of age) were ~18 times more likely to estimate more than 50% of teens had smoked cigarettes within the last 30 days
- There was no statistical relationship ($p>0.05$) between gender of respondent and perception of teen smoking
- See Table C1, Appendix C, for more information (page 25)

Adult Perception of Mill Woods Teen Alcohol Use

- Reported use by youth in the 2013 Youth Survey was 32.3%, but 66.2% of adult respondents estimated 40% or more of youth used alcohol in the last 30 days
- 65% of adult respondents estimated at least 50% of Mill Woods teens had used alcohol in the last 30 days
- There was a statistical relationship ($p>0.05$) between age of adult respondent and perception of teen alcohol use. Younger adults (<50 years of age) were ~5 times more likely to estimate teen alcohol use to be greater than 50% of teens.
- There was no statistical relationship ($p>0.05$) between gender of respondent and perception of teen alcohol use
- See Table C2, Appendix C, for more information (page 25)

Adult Perception of Mill Woods Teen Illegal & Non-Prescribed Drug Use

- Reported use by youth in the 2013 Youth Survey was 6.3%, but 91.8% of adults estimated 10% or more of Mill Woods teens used illegal drugs (or prescription medication not prescribed to them) in the last 30 days
- 47.4% of adult respondents estimated at least 50% of Mill Woods teens had used illegal drugs or prescription medication not prescribed to them in the last 30 days
- There was a statistical relationship ($p>0.05$) between age of adult respondent and perception of illegal and non-prescribed prescription drug use. Younger adults (<50 years of age) were ~6 times more likely to estimate teen drug misuse to be greater than 50% of teens.
- There was no statistical relationship ($p>0.05$) between gender of respondent and perception of illegal and non-prescribed prescription drug use
- See Table C3, Appendix C, for more information (page 26)

2014-2015 Adult Survey Results

Respondents:

- 194 respondents
- 110 female, 76 male (8 unrecorded)
- 70.6% of the adult respondents were under the age of 50 years, 21.6% were over the age of 50
- 88.4% of the respondents were parents
- The majority of surveys (137 of the 194) were completed at the Mill Woods Canada Day festivals in 2014 and 2015, the remainder were completed at other community events or online

Adult Perception of Mill Woods Teen Cigarette Smoking

Adults were asked “What percentage of Mill Woods teens do you think have smoked cigarettes in the last 30 days?”

- Reported use by youth in the 2014-15 Youth Survey was 10.3%, but 96.9% of adult respondents in 2014-15 estimated 11% or more of Mill Woods teens smoked cigarettes in the last 30 days
- 38.2% of adult respondents estimated over 50% of Mill Woods teens had smoked cigarettes in the last 30 days
- There was no statistical relationship ($p>0.05$) between gender of respondent and perception of teen smoking
- There was no statistical relationship ($p>0.05$) between the age of adult respondent and perception of teen smoking

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- There was no statistical relationship ($p>0.05$) between the parental status of adult respondent and perception of teen smoking
- See Table D1, Appendix D, for more information (page 27)

Adult Perception of Mill Woods Teen Alcohol Use

- Reported use (1 drink or more in the last 30 days) by youth in the 2014-15 Youth Survey was 28.6%, but 78.4% of adult respondents estimated 30% or more of youth used alcohol in the last 30 days
- 49.1% of adult respondents estimated over 50% of Mill Woods teens had used alcohol in the last 30 days
- There was no statistical relationship ($p>0.05$) between gender of respondent and perception of teen alcohol use
- There was no statistical relationship ($p>0.05$) between the age of adult respondent and perception of teen alcohol use
- There was no statistical relationship ($p>0.05$) between the parental status of adult respondent and perception of teen alcohol use
- See Table D2, Appendix D, for more information (page 27)

Adult Perception of Mill Woods Teen Illegal & Non-Prescribed Drug Use

- Reported use of illegal drugs (not including marijuana) or prescription medication not prescribed to them in the last 30 days by youth in the 2014-15 Youth Survey was 6%
- Reported use of marijuana in the last 30 days in the 2014-15 Youth Survey was 14.4%
- The 2014-15 Adult Survey did not have a separate question for the estimation of the use of marijuana by youth.
- 84.5% of adults estimated at least 11% of Mill Woods teens used illegal drugs (or prescription medication not prescribed to them) in the last 30 days
- 66% of adults estimated more than 21% of youth used illegal drugs or prescription medication not prescribed to them in the last 30 days
- 19% of adult respondents estimated over 50% of Mill Woods teens had used illegal drugs or prescription medication not prescribed to them in the last 30 days
- There was no statistical relationship ($p>0.05$) between gender of respondent and perception of illegal and non-prescribed prescription drug use
- There was no statistical relationship ($p>0.05$) between age of respondent and perception of illegal and non-prescribed prescription drug use
- There was no statistical relationship ($p>0.05$) between parental status of respondent and perception of illegal and non-prescribed prescription drug use
- See Appendix D3, Appendix D, for more information (page 28)

Personal Beliefs of Adults about Youth Substance Use

On the 2014-2015 Adult Survey, adults were asked about their personal beliefs when it comes to the youth use of substances such as alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Respondents were offered 3-4 statements on each topic and asked to select the one that best fit their own personal beliefs. Results below are the percentage of adult respondents that agreed with each statement.

Personal beliefs about youth under 18 drinking alcohol (more than a few sips, e.g. 1 drink or more)	% Agreed
It's never okay	69.1%
It's okay, if an adult is supervising	23.2%
It's okay without adult supervision, so long as no one is driving drunk	5.7%
It's okay (including without adult supervision)	0.5%

Personal beliefs about parents permitting youth under 18 to drink alcohol (more than a few sips, e.g. 1 drink or more)	% Agreed
Parents should not permit their teenagers under 18 to drink alcohol	67.0%
It's okay for parents to permit their teenagers under 18 to drink alcohol, if there is adult supervision	25.8%
It's okay for parents to permit their teenagers under 18 to drink alcohol without adult supervision, so long as no one is driving drunk	4.1%
It's okay for parents to permit their teenagers under 18 to drink alcohol (including without adult supervision)	1.0%

Personal beliefs about teens smoking cigarettes	% Agreed
It's never okay	92.3%
It's okay, if an adult is supervising	3.6%
It's okay (including without adult supervision)	1.5%

Personal beliefs about parents permitting their teenagers to smoke cigarettes	% Agreed
Parents should not permit their teenagers to smoke cigarettes	94.3%
It's okay for parents to permit their teenagers smoke cigarettes, if there is adult supervision	2.6%
It's okay for parents to let their teenagers smoke cigarettes (including without adult supervision)	1.0%

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Personal beliefs about teens using pot (marijuana)	
It's never okay	86.6%
It's okay, if an adult is supervising	7.2%
It's okay (including without adult supervision)	4.1%

Personal beliefs about parents permitting their teenagers to use pot (marijuana)	% Agreed
Parents should not permit their teenagers to use pot	86.1%
It's okay for parents to permit their teenagers to use pot, if there is adult supervision	7.7%
It's okay for parents to let their teenagers use pot (including without adult supervision)	2.6%

Personal beliefs about teens using illegal drugs (or prescriptions not prescribed to them)	% Agreed
It's never okay	93.8%
It's okay, if an adult is supervising	1.5%
It's okay (including without adult supervision)	0.5%

Personal beliefs about parents permitting their teenagers to use illegal drugs or prescriptions not prescribed to them	% Agreed
Parents should not permit their teenagers to use illegal drugs or prescriptions not prescribed to them	94.8%
It's okay for parents to permit their teenagers to use illegal drugs or prescriptions not prescribed to them, if there is adult supervision	N/A
It's okay for parents to let their teenagers use illegal drugs or prescriptions not prescribed to them (including without adult supervision)	1.5%

5. Discussion & Implications

Considerations

Our survey sample size of 299 youth, while considerable, does have some limitations. All of the youth respondents were engaged in events and activities for youth in South East Edmonton, and less engaged youth may have had different responses. As well, our sample is more heavily weighted towards younger youth than older teens, and younger youth are less likely to engage in substance abuse. It is advised that the results of this survey be considered as the views and behaviours of the actual survey respondents.

Perkins' "Reign of Error"

Social norms surveys with over 52,000 US students in Grades 6-12 illustrate what researcher H. Wesley Perkins refers to as the "Reign of Error" (2013). Wide discrepancies between actual behaviour and perceived norms were demonstrated, with many students over-estimating the number of peers using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, and over-estimating the frequency of use.

Our Mill Woods youth surveys found similar over-estimations. Not only did youth over-estimate the rates of youth amongst their peers and other Mill Woods youth, they sometimes vastly over-estimated. For example, on the 2014-2015 survey 60% of Mill Woods youth respondents estimated that 40-70% of Mill Woods teens their age had smoked cigarettes in the last 30 days, while actual reported use was only 10.3% (see Appendix B).

The low youth smoking rate found in our surveys is consistent with other surveys of Canadian youth. The 2012-2013 Canadian Youth Smoking Survey reported 4% of students in grades 6-12 were current smokers, with 2% daily smokers, and 2% occasional smokers (Health Canada, 2014). 41% of students in grades 7-12 reported alcohol use within the last 12 months (Health Canada, 2014).

There is some evidence that personal drinking behaviours can be strongly influenced by perceptions of peer drinking norms, though systematic reviews of social norms interventions are mixed (Kubacki, 2015; Foxcroft, 2015). Youth may be reassured by sharing information that many youth over-estimate how many of their peers smoke, drink or use other drugs, and that the norm (the most commonly occurring behaviour in the past month) is no use at all. They may feel less peer pressure that they need to engage in substance abuse to fit in, and may be more readily able to identify problematic behaviours as atypical (Perkins, 2006).

The results also indicate that adults engaged in activities in Mill Woods, many of them parents, also over-estimate the amount of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs Mill Woods youth engage in. Parents and other adults may inadvertently reinforce norms. Wanting to caution their children, adults may discuss the dangers of

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substance abuse in a manner that inadvertently conveys that substance use is the norm, rather than the actual norm of no use. Misperceptions by adults can also contribute to other concerns; a recent study (Jones, 2015) examined why some parents provide or do not provide alcohol for their underage children, and wanting their children to fit in with peers was a factor for parents who provided alcohol.

6. Conclusion

Both youth and adult survey respondents demonstrated misperceptions significantly over-estimating the amount of cigarettes, alcohol, and other drug use Mill Woods youth engage in. Sharing information about the actual norms of non-use among survey respondents may help normalize non-use and promote positive behaviours.

The SEYAC Committee looks forward to sharing these results with service providers and other stakeholders working with youth in South East Edmonton to both promote positive youth behaviours, and positive perceptions of youth in Mill Woods.

7. Appendix A – 2013 Youth Survey Estimations of Use

Table A1. Youth Estimates of Smoking Cigarettes, 2013 Survey

Responses in light grey are estimations higher than the reported use on the survey

What percentage of Mill Woods teens do you think have smoked cigarettes in the last 30 days? *	Percent of Youth Respondents who Selected this Response (Actual Reported Use = 8.3%)
0-10%	3.1%
10-20%	2.1%
20-30%	10.4%
21-30%	1.0%
30-40%	19.8%
41-50%	1.0%
50-60%	19.8%
60-70%	19.8%
61-70%	1.0%
70-80%	15.6%
71-80%	3.1%
81-90%	1.0%
90-100%	2.1%
Total	100.0%

* Responses are split due to a change in methodology between the online and paper surveys. For example, the paper surveys offered responses such as “20-30%” and the online survey offered the response “21-30%”.

Table A2. Youth Estimates of Alcohol Use, 2013 Survey

Responses in light grey are estimations higher than the reported use on the survey

What percentage of Mill Woods teens do you think have used alcohol in the last 30 days? *	Percent of Youth Respondents who Selected this Response (Actual Reported Use = 32.3%)
0-10%	3.1%
10-20%	2.1%
20-30%	4.2%
30-40%	12.5%
31-40%	1.0%
50-60%	27.1%
51-60%	2.1%

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60-70%	11.5%
70-80%	24.0%
81-90%	3.1%
90-100%	8.3%
X	1.0%
Total	100.0%

* Responses are split due to a change in methodology between the online and paper surveys. For example, the paper surveys offered responses such as “20-30%” and the online survey offered the response “21-30%”.

Table A3. Youth Estimates of Illegal Drugs (or Non-Prescribed Prescription Medication), 2013 Survey

Responses in light grey are estimations higher than the reported use on the survey

What percentage of Mill Woods teens do you think used illegal drugs (or prescription medication not prescribed to them) in the last 30 days? *	Percent of Youth Respondents who Selected this Response (Actual Reported Use = 6.3%)
0-10%	4.2%
10-20%	6.3%
11-20%	1.0%
20-30%	13.5%
21-30%	2.1%
30-40%	19.8%
50-60%	18.8%
51-60%	2.1%
60-70%	8.3%
70-80%	9.4%
81-90%	2.1%
90-100%	5.2%
X	7.3%
Total	100.0%

* Responses are split due to a change in methodology between the online and paper surveys. For example, the paper surveys offered responses such as “20-30%” and the online survey offered the response “21-30%”.

8. Appendix B – 2014 – 2015 Youth Survey Estimations of Use

Table B1. Youth Estimates of Smoking Cigarettes, 2014-2015 Survey

Responses in light grey are estimations higher than the reported use on the survey

What percentage of Mill Woods teens your age do you believe have smoked cigarettes during the last 30 days?	Percent of Youth Respondents who Selected this Response * (Actual Reported Use = 10.3%)
0%	4.7%
10%	4.7%
20%	9.4%
30%	9.4%
40%	14.7%
50%	10.6%
60%	18.2%
70%	16.5%
80%	2.9%
90%	8.8%
Total	100.0%

* Online responses were excluded for analysis due to inconsistent scoring methodology

Table B2. Youth Estimates of Alcohol Use, 2014-2015 Survey

Responses in light grey are estimations higher than the reported use on the survey

What percentage of Mill Woods teens your age do you believe have used alcohol (1 drink or more) during the last 30 days?	Percent of Youth Respondents who Selected this Response * (Actual Reported Use = 28.6%)
0%	4.9%
10%	6.1%
20%	6.7%
30%	6.7%
40%	11.5%
50%	10.9%
60%	10.9%
70%	15.1%
80%	12.1%
90%	15.1%
Total	100.0%

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* Online responses were excluded for analysis due to inconsistent scoring methodology

Table B3. Youth Estimates of Marijuana Use, 2014-2015 Survey

Responses in light grey are estimations higher than the reported use on the survey

What percentage of Mill Woods teens your age do you believe have used marijuana during the last 30 days?	Percent of Youth Respondents who Selected this Response * (Actual Reported Use = 14.4%)
0%	6.6%
10%	6.6%
20%	6.4%
30%	10.2%
40%	13.3%
50%	12.0%
60%	15.1%
70%	11.4%
80%	7.2%
90%	10.8%
Total	100.0%

* Online responses were excluded for analysis due to inconsistent scoring methodology

Table B4. Youth Estimates of Other Illegal Drugs (and Non-Prescribed Prescription Medication) Use, 2014-2015 Survey

Responses in light grey are estimations higher than the reported use on the survey

What percentage of Mill Woods teens your age do you believe have used illegal drugs (other than marijuana) or prescription medication not prescribed to them in the last 30 days?	Percent of Youth Respondents who Selected this Response * (Actual Reported Use = 6%)
0%	8.5%
10%	15.1%
20%	14.0%
30%	15.8%
40%	12.1%
50%	13.3%

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60%	8.5%
70%	7.3%
80%	3.0%
90%	2.4%
Total	100.0%

* Online responses were excluded for analysis due to inconsistent scoring methodology

9. Appendix C – 2013 Adult Survey Estimations of Use

Table C1. Adult Estimates of Youth Cigarette Smoking, 2013 Survey

Responses in light grey are estimations higher than the reported use on the survey

What percentage of Mill Woods teens do you think have smoked cigarettes in the last 30 days? *	Percent of Adult Respondents who Selected this Response (Actual reported use – 8.3%)
0-10%	1.4%
10-20%	5.4%
20-30%	14.9%
30-40%	14.9%
41-50%	1.4%
50-60%	14.9%
60-70%	27.0%
70-80%	13.5%
71-80%	1.4%
90-100%	2.7%
X	2.7%
Total	100.0%

* Responses are split due to a change in methodology between the online and paper surveys. For example, the paper surveys offered responses such as “20-30%” and the online survey offered the response “21-30%”.

Table C2. Adult Estimates of Youth Alcohol Use, 2013 Survey

Responses in light grey are estimations higher than the reported use on the survey

What percentage of Mill Woods teens do you think have used alcohol in the last 30 days? *	Percent of Adult Respondents who Selected this Response (Actual reported use – 32.3%)
0-10%	1.4%
10-20%	2.7%
11-20%	1.4%
20-30%	5.4%
30-40%	20.3%
31-40%	1.4%
50-60%	29.7%
60-70%	9.5%
70-80%	23.0%
81-90%	1.4%
90-100%	1.4%
X	2.7%

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Total	100.0%
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* Responses are split due to a change in methodology between the online and paper surveys. For example, the paper surveys offered responses such as “20-30%” and the online survey offered the response “21-30%”.

Table C3. Adult Estimates of Youth Illegal and Non-Prescribed Prescription Drug Use, 2013 Survey

Responses in light grey are estimations higher than the reported use on the survey

What percentage of Mill Woods teens do you think have used illegal drugs (or prescription medication not prescribed to them) in the last 30 days? *	Percent of Adult Respondents who Selected this Response (Actual reported use – 6.3%)
0-10%	6.8%
10-20%	10.8%
11-20%	1.4%
20-30%	12.2%
30-40%	18.9%
31-40%	1.4%
50-60%	17.6%
51-60%	1.4%
60-70%	16.2%
70-80%	8.1%
90-100%	4.1%
X	1.4%
Total	100.0%

* Responses are split due to a change in methodology between the online and paper surveys. For example, the paper surveys offered responses such as “20-30%” and the online survey offered the response “21-30%”.

10. Appendix D – 2014-2015 Adult Survey Estimations of Use

Table D1. Adult Estimates of Youth Cigarette Smoking, 2014-2015 Survey
Responses in light grey are estimations higher than the reported use on the survey

What percentage of Mill Woods teens do you think have smoked cigarettes in the last 30 days?	Percent of Adult Respondents who Selected this Response (Actual reported use – 10.3%)
0-10%	2.1%
11-20%	11.9%
21-30%	18.0%
31-40%	16.0%
41-50%	12.9%
51-60%	10.8%
61-70%	12.9%
71-80%	8.8%
81-90%	5.2%
91-100%	.5%
X	1.0%
Total	100.0%

Table D2. Adult Estimates of Youth Alcohol Use, 2014-2015 Survey
Responses in light grey are estimations higher than the reported use on the survey

What percentage of Mill Woods teens do you think used alcohol in the last 30 days?	Percent of Adult Respondents who Selected this Response (Actual reported use – 28.6%)
0-10%	2.1%
11-20%	8.2%
21-30%	9.8%
31-40%	14.9%
41-50%	14.4%
51-60%	15.5%
61-70%	12.4%
71-80%	11.9%
81-90%	8.8%
91-100%	.5%
X	1.5%
Total	100.0%

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Table D3. Adult Estimates of Youth Illegal and Non-Prescribed Prescription Drug Use, 2014-2015 Survey

Responses in light grey are estimations higher than the reported use on the survey

What percentage of Mill Woods teens do you think used illegal drugs or prescription medication not prescribed to them in the last 30 days?	Percent of Adult Respondents who Selected this Response (Actual reported use – 6%)
0-10%	12.4%
11-20%	18.6%
21-30%	18.6%
31-40%	17.0%
41-50%	11.3%
51-60%	7.2%
61-70%	3.6%
71-80%	4.6%
81-90%	3.1%
91-100%	.5%
X	3.1%
Total	100.0%

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