
NEWS

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NATIONAL STUDY: NEW DATA SHOW TEEN GIRLS MORE LIKELY TO SEE BENEFITS IN DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE

In Arizona, girls are becoming the predominant substance users in the lower grades

Survey data released today by the [Partnership for a Drug-Free America](#)® and [MetLife Foundation](#) found that teenage girls are more likely than teenage boys to perceive potential benefits from drug use and drinking, making teen girls more vulnerable to drug and alcohol abuse.

According to a new research analysis of the 2009 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATs), sponsored by MetLife Foundation, teen girls are more likely to associate “self-medicating” benefits with drinking and getting high. More than two-thirds of teen girls responded positively to the question “using drugs helps kids deal with problems at home” (an 11 percent increase, up from 61 percent in 2008 to 68 percent in 2009) and more than half reported that drugs help teens forget their troubles (a 10 percent increase, up from 48 percent in 2008 to 53 percent in 2009). Stress has been identified as a key factor leading to drinking, smoking and drug use among girls and more than three times as many young girls as boys reported having symptoms of depression in 2008ⁱ.

According to the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission research, Arizona girls in 8th, 10th and 12th grades indicated higher rates of alcohol and sedatives use. In addition, the survey found that girls may be experimenting with drug use at higher rates than males in the early grades, but as students get older, males take over as the more dominant substance user. Girls in the 8th grade indicated significantly higher use rates in seven of the 17 substance use categories. In the 10th grade, females have more similar, though still significantly higher, use rates in six of 17 categories. By the 12th grade, females had significantly higher use rates in only three of 17 categoriesⁱⁱ.

“Parents of teen girls have to be especially attentive to their daughters’ moods and mental health needs, which can have a direct effect on their child’s decision to risk her health by getting high and drinking,” said Shelly Mowrey, director of programs and communications for the Partnership’s Arizona Affiliate.

Partnership President and CEO Steve Pasierb added that “parents can help prevent alcohol and drug abuse by recognizing and addressing their daughters’ worries and stresses, by supporting her positive decisions and by taking immediate action if they suspect or know she has been experimenting with drugs and alcohol.”

[PartnerUpAz.org](#): Online Resource to Help Parents

- i. The 21st national PATS study of 3,287 teens in grades 9-12 is nationally projectable with a +/- 2.3 percent margin of error. Conducted for the Partnership and MetLife Foundation by the Roper Public Affairs Division of GfK Custom Research, the 2009 PATS teen study was administered in private, public and parochial schools. For more information or to view the full PATS Report, please visit [drugfree.org](#).
- ii. The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission Youth Use Survey 2008.

About The Partnership

The Partnership at [Drugfree.org](#) is a nonprofit organization that helps parents prevent, intervene in and find treatment for drug and alcohol use by their children. Bringing together renowned scientists, parent experts, and communications professionals, the Partnership translates current research on teen behavior, addiction and treatment into easy to understand resources at [drugfree.org](#). The Partnership depends on donations from individuals, corporations, foundations and government. The Partnership thanks SAG/AFTRA and the advertising and media industries for their ongoing generosity.

About the Arizona Affiliate

The Arizona Affiliate was established in 2003 to carry out The Partnership’s mission to reduce illicit drug use in Arizona while meeting the unique needs of communities. Through its programs, the Arizona Affiliate inspires and empowers Arizonans to join in a united effort to prevent illicit drug use among teens through community-based education. The Arizona Affiliate is a non profit 501-c-3 organization.

For more information, visit the Affiliate website at [www.PartnerUpAz.org](#).

ⁱ (National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2009)

ii (Arizona Criminal Justice Commission Youth Use Survey, 2008)

