

St. Mary County Youth and Young Adults Perceptions of Mental Health and Substance Use  
Focus Group Questions

**Participant Age Range:**

- **Youth:** 18 and Under \*Parental consent to participate\*
- **Young Adults:** 18-25

**Number of Participants:** 6 –10 for each focus group

**Young Adult and Youth Focus Group Questions**

**Community Norms**

- Can you tell us about alcohol/marijuana/THC products use in your community or at your school?
- How common is it for youth to drink alcohol in St. Mary County?
- How common is it for youth to use marijuana/THC products in St. Mary County?
- Are the beliefs and behaviors about marijuana/THC products different from other drugs and alcohol?  
Probe: is alcohol/ marijuana/THC products associated with certain school events? i.e. concerts, fairs, sports, prom, graduation?
- What word is most used to talk about marijuana/THC products?  
Probe: Weed, pot, grass, dope, hash, ganga, etc.
- Who is using alcohol/marijuana/THC products?
- In your opinion, why do youth start using marijuana/THC products or drinking alcohol?  
Probe: How old are they? Do certain groups of kids smoke/drink alcohol more than others?
- What about vaping? Do older teens smoke or vape with younger teens? Is there an image associated with teens who use marijuana/THC products?
- How is marijuana/THC products being used?  
Probe: joints, pipes, bongos, brownies, vaporizers, other? Are there any rituals, games? Are they laced with other drugs?
- When is marijuana/THC products being used?  
Probe: before/after/at school, weekends, sporting events, school break?
- How much are teens using marijuana/THC products?  
Probe: How often and what quantity? What influences how much they use?
- Where do young people smoke or use marijuana/THC products?
- What is your exposure to the marijuana/THC products culture? How is the marijuana/THC products culture changing?
- Are stores selling alcohol to minors? Which ones? Are they checking IDs?
- What does peer pressure look like for drinking alcohol/or using marijuana/THC products?
- Are some teens allowed to use at home? Under supervision of parents? Together with their parents?

**Attitude/Beliefs**

- What are your thoughts on Alcohol/marijuana use/THC products?  
Probe: Is it safe? Are kids using it? How old do they start?
- Are marijuana/ THC products safer to use than Alcohol?
- Is marijuana/THC product(s) legal?

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Probe: Do you think marijuana/THC products should be legal?

- At what age do you think it is OK to use marijuana/THC products?
- Which is easiest to get: alcohol or marijuana/THC products?
- How do you describe a healthy and successful teen?

**Availability**

- How are youth getting marijuana/THC products?  
Probe: friends, siblings, parents, strangers
- Are there specific locations where youth can hang out to buy or get alcohol/marijuana/THC products?

**Knowledge**

- What are some of the down-sides to alcohol/ marijuana/THC products?
- Do teens use marijuana/THC products and drive? Is it safe?
- Do youth feel like they will get caught drinking alcohol/ using marijuana/THC products?  
Probe: \_\_ by parents \_\_ by law enforcement \_\_ at school
- Where and from whom do you get your information about alcohol drinking/ marijuana/THC products use prevention?
- What are some of the negative consequences of youth using alcohol/marijuana/THC products?
- In your opinion, how do youth get a hold of alcohol/ marijuana/THC products in order to use it?

**Health-Seeking Behaviors**

- Do your parents talk with you about alcohol/marijuana/THC products prevention?  
Probe: *Ask if yes, why? If not, why not?*
- What messages do you get from your parents about alcohol/ marijuana/THC products?
- What reasons might encourage you not to use or stop using marijuana/THC products?
- Is there any reason you would not talk to your parents about alcohol/marijuana/THC products prevention?
- What should be done in your community to support teens to be healthy and successful?

**Available info/ Awareness**

- Have you seen information about Alcohol/ marijuana /THC products prevention?
- What are the main sources of information available to you on Alcohol/ marijuana /THC products prevention?
- What is the best way for the County Health Department to share information in your community?
- What information would you like to know about marijuana/THC products prevention?

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- What are your favorite radio stations/ ways to listen to music?
- Probe: Do you listen to Spotify, Pandora, etc.....?
- Do you read ads and watch advertising videos on Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok or YouTube?