

Evalumetrics Youth Survey © ¹

Young peoples' use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs remains a major concern for parents, health professionals, law enforcement and schools. Since the 1990's, substance abuse prevention has developed programs based on the Risk and Protective Factor Model developed at the University of Washington by J. David Hawkins, Richard Catalano, and Janet Miller. The model was developed by reviewing two decades of research that identified a link between certain risk factors and several problem behaviors and between protective factors and avoidance of problem behaviors. A major strength of this model is that in addressing alcohol and other drug abuse risks for adolescents, it also addresses other negative behaviors, such as violence, delinquency, teen-pregnancy, gambling and dropping out of school.

Students in schools throughout upstate New York have participated in the Evalumetrics Youth Survey (EYS) since 1999. The original Risk and Protective Factor Survey was developed by Hawkins and Catalano and measures critical individual, school; family and community factors that have been demonstrated to either increase the likelihood of substance abuse and violence (Risk Factors) or decrease the likelihood of these behaviors (Protective Factors)². Public domain items from that survey provide the data for calculating risk and protective scales.

Factor scores are calculated for each student on each of 32 scales. The proportion of students scoring above the statistical risk level on each factor, as well as results of analysis of the relationship of each factor to target problems, e.g. underage drinking, bullying, are vital for understanding the root causes of these problems and establishing prevention priorities.

To preview the EYS survey click [here](#) or copy and paste the link to your internet browser address line.

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/1154483/Evalumetrics-Youth-Survey-C-2013-Evalumetrics-Research>

METHOD

The EYS survey instrument is an interactive, web-based self-report survey³. The web-based survey provides for rapid completion (25% less time than paper and pencil surveys), assures accurate compliance with "skip patterns", and reduces cost by as much as 75% by eliminating printing and data entry costs. The sample for the survey is generally all middle and high school students in a given district. Each Risk and Protective Factor is represented by one or more scale consisting of one or more item from the survey. Each student is given a score for each of the scales. Separate analyses, using age-specific statistical parameters, are conducted for middle

¹ *The EYS Survey form is copyrighted by Evalumetrics Research. Some individual items are public domain and are not, as individual items, copyrighted.*

² *Note: The survey does not measure all risk or protective factors. For example, poverty is a significant risk factor.*

³ *A paper and pencil form version is also available to be completed by students in a classroom setting.*

school (grades 6-8) and high school (grades 9-12). Based on the distribution of scores for over 20,000 students in a 2001 survey in the five-county Finger Lakes, Southern Tier and Central regions of New York State, standard scores (z-scores) are calculated by subtracting the mean score from each individual's score and dividing by the standard deviation. Students with a standard score of 1 or greater on any risk factor were considered to be at-risk. A standard score of -1 or less on any protective factor was considered a lack of protection and therefore at-risk.

In addition to measuring risk and protective factors, the survey measures self-reported use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and other substances (prevalence). It also asks about students' behaviors related to bullying, depression, suicide ideation and self-injury. The 2013 EYS also has questions about students' feelings of discrimination based on areas covered by the Dignity for All Students Act that requires all school in New York State to develop plans to address bullying and other forms of discrimination.

The EYS can be modified to include items that ask students about local issues and their participation local prevention initiatives. These "exposure" items are invaluable in conducting evaluations of prevention strategies.

SAMPLE

Participating schools arrange for students to have access to computers with web access, e.g. computer labs or laptops/iPads distributed in classrooms. When technology is unavailable, paper surveys are distributed in group settings. It is strongly recommended that staff from the sponsoring agency and/or school personnel supervise all surveys.

In all cases the survey must be voluntary. The survey is anonymous and, under most circumstances, qualifies for passive consent, that is, parents are notified about the survey and are given the option of having their child opt out of the survey without prejudice. Students are instructed not to put their name or any identifying information on the survey form. Students are also told that they can choose not to participate or to skip any questions they prefer not to answer.