



Social Norming



WHAT IS SOCIAL NORMING?

Social norming seeks to **close the gaps between youth perceptions of their peers' substance use and actual self-reported use data**, an approach that has been proven to lead to reduced use over time.¹

SUBSTANCE USE: PERCEPTION VS. REALITY 2018

Middle School Aged Youth (12 – 14)			% Who DIDN'T Use Drugs or Alcohol
ALCOHOL	Perceived Peer Use at School	19%	95%
	Perceived Peer Use in Grade	12%	
	Self-Reported 30-Day Use	5%	
MARIJUANA	Perceived Peer Use at School	21%	97%
	Perceived Peer Use in Grade	17%	
	Self-Reported 30-Day Use	3%	
PRESCRIPTION PAIN RELIEVERS	Perceived Peer Use at School	9%	99%
	Perceived Peer Use in Grade	6%	
	Self-Reported 30-Day Use	1%	
PRESCRIPTION STIMULANTS	Perceived Peer Use at School	7%	99%
	Perceived Peer Use in Grade	5%	
	Self-Reported 30-Day Use	1%	
METH	Perceived Peer Use at School	9%	99%
	Perceived Peer Use in Grade	5%	
	Self-Reported 30-Day Use	1%	
High School Aged Youth (15 – 17)			% Who DIDN'T Use Drugs or Alcohol
ALCOHOL	Perceived Peer Use at School	45%	86%
	Perceived Peer Use in Grade	35%	
	Self-Reported 30-Day Use	14%	
MARIJUANA	Perceived Peer Use at School	43%	91%
	Perceived Peer Use in Grade	36%	
	Self-Reported 30-Day Use	9%	
PRESCRIPTION PAIN RELIEVERS	Perceived Peer Use at School	19%	99%
	Perceived Peer Use in Grade	13%	
	Self-Reported 30-Day Use	1%	
PRESCRIPTION STIMULANTS	Perceived Peer Use at School	16%	99%
	Perceived Peer Use in Grade	12%	
	Self-Reported 30-Day Use	1%	
METH	Perceived Peer Use at School	11%	100%
	Perceived Peer Use in Grade	7%	
	Self-Reported 30-Day Use	0%	

Misperceptions increase over time, and misperceptions grow the further they extend from an individual's immediate surroundings (grade/school).

REPRESENTATION OF ACTUAL USE

Colorado's **total population of high school aged youth (15–17)** is the equivalent of **11 Pepsi Centers filled to capacity**:



RECENT ALCOHOL USE

14% ≈ 28,000



11 = 100%

RECENT MARIJUANA USE

9% ≈ 18,000



11 = 100%

RECENT PRESCRIPTION DRUG USE

1% ≈ 2,000



11 = 100%

¹LaMorte, Wayne W., MD, PhD, MPH. (2016, April 28). Social Norms Theory. Retrieved from <http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otlt/MPH-Modules/SB/BehavioralChangeTheories/BehavioralChange-Theories7.html>

↑ Denotes Statistically Significant Difference

SOCIAL NORMS: CHANGE IN OVERESTIMATION 2016 – 2018

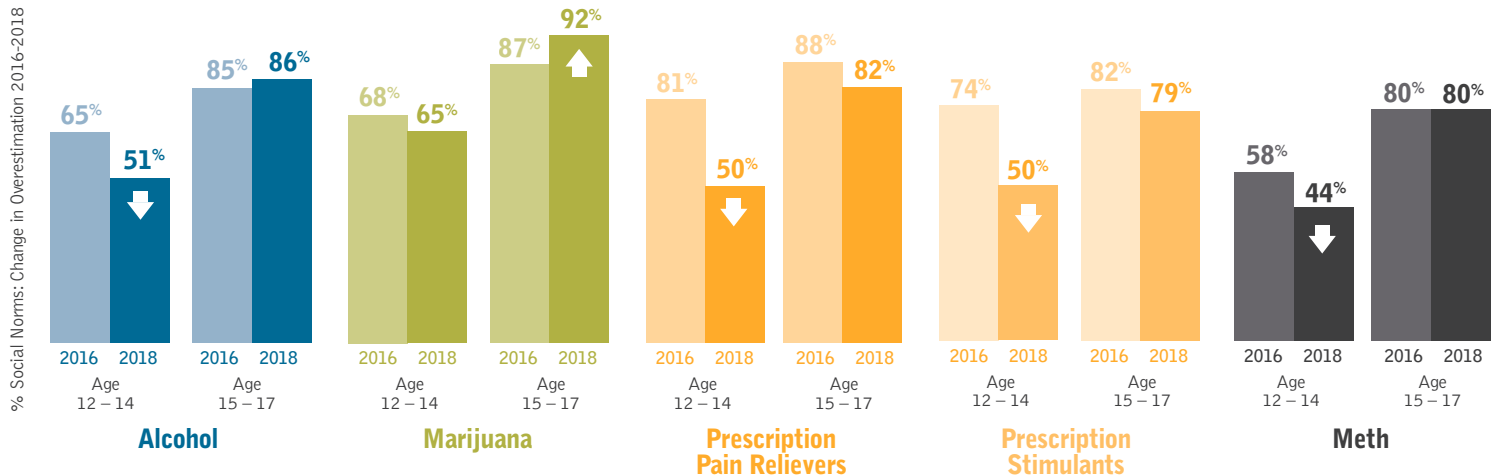
While inaccurate perceptions of marijuana use remains prevalent among high school aged youth, **overestimation of schoolmates' use of alcohol, prescription drugs and meth decreased significantly** since 2016 among middle school aged youth (12 to 14):



9 in 10

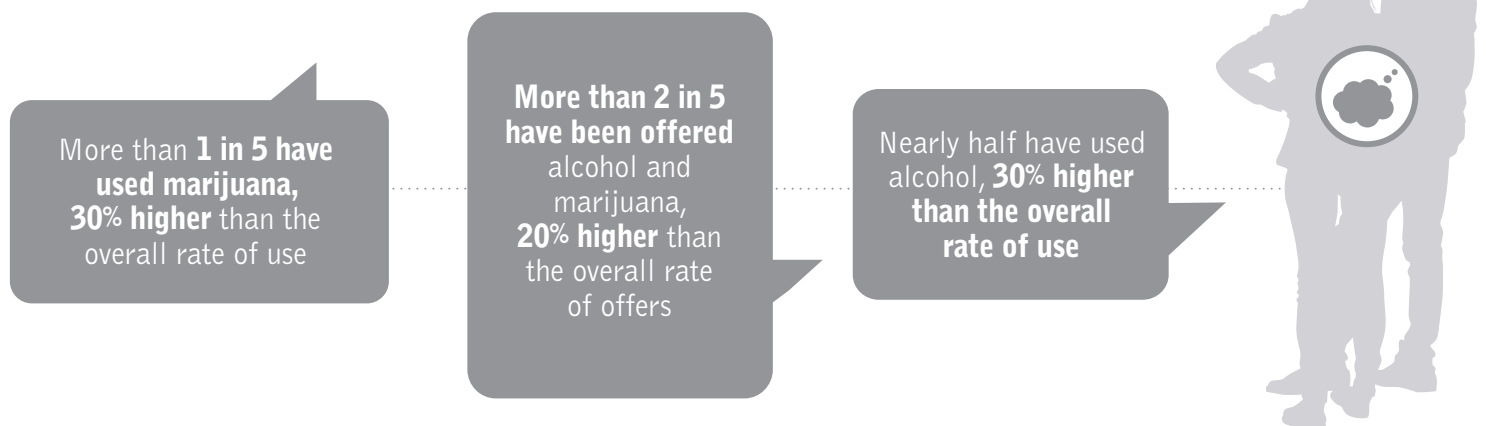
high school aged youth (15–17)

OVERESTIMATED
SCHOOLMATES' MARIJUANA USE



CONCERN: THE CONSEQUENCES OF MISPERCEPTIONS

Of those who overestimated their peers' substance use:



HOPE: HOW ARE COLORADO YOUTH RISING ABOVE?

Most Colorado youth are **making healthy choices every day** and there are many **opportunities to enhance our support of their growth and development**. The behaviors below are known protective factors and by increasing their prevalence we can help reduce youth substance use.

65% Report they are capable of standing up for their beliefs.



62% Report knowing an adult they can talk to.



85% Participate in at least one extracurricular activity.



66% Have goals they have set for themselves.



COLORADO
Office of Behavioral Health
Department of Human Services

