

# The Mental Health and Well-Being of Ontario Students

# 1991–2023

Findings from the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey

SUMMARY  
REPORT



camh

OSDUHS  
Ontario Student Drug  
Use and Health Survey

# THE 2023 OSDUHS MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING REPORT SUMMARY

## This Report

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's *Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey* (OSDUHS) has been conducted every two years since 1977, making it the longest ongoing school survey of adolescents in Canada, and one of the longest in the world. This report describes mental health indicators, physical health indicators, bullying, gambling, social media use and related problems, video gaming and related problems, and other risk behaviours among Ontario students in 2023 and changes since 1991, where available. Although the OSDUHS began in 1977, most mental health and physical health measures were introduced in the survey in the early 1990s. New indicators in this report include use of mental health support services at or through school, barriers to seeking mental health support, problematic social media use, and perceived discrimination based on identity.

### The 2023 OSDUHS

A total of 10,145 students in grades 7 to 12 in 848 classes in 235 schools in 46 school boards across Ontario participated in the 2023 cycle of the OSDUHS. All data are based on self-reports derived from anonymous questionnaires. The survey was administered in classrooms between November 2022 and June 2023.

## Home and School Life

- Almost half (46%) of students report that they rarely or never talk to their parents about their problems or feelings.
- Almost one-third (30%) of students report liking school very much or quite a lot. About 41% like school to some degree, and 29% report that they do not like school.
- Most students feel close to people at their school (77%), feel like they are part of their school (76%), and feel safe at school (87%).
- The percentage of students who report that they like school very much or quite a lot, the percentage reporting feeling like a part of their school, feeling close to people at school, and feeling safe at school have significantly decreased in recent years.
- Over one-quarter (28%) of students report low subjective social status at school (i.e., feeling that other students exclude them and do not respect them).
- About one-in-eleven (9%) students report sometimes or often feeling discriminated against at school because of their race or ethnicity. About 7% report feeling discriminated against at school because of their religion or faith, and about 7% report feeling discriminated against at school because of a disability. A similar percentage of secondary school students feel discriminated against at school because of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

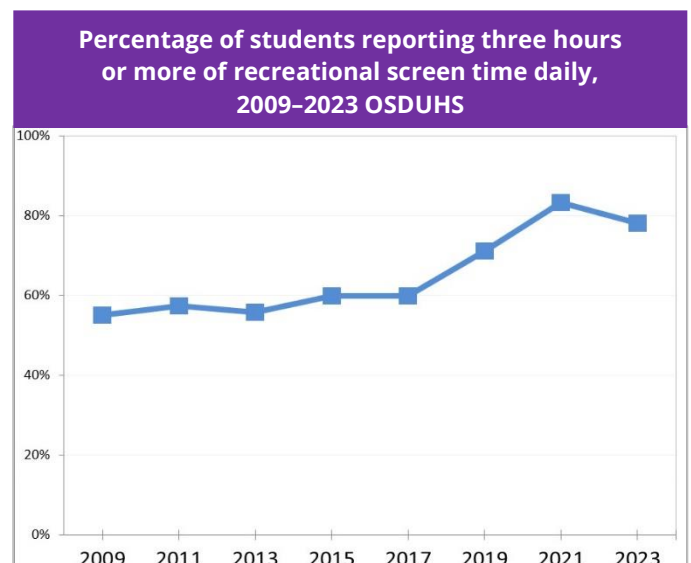
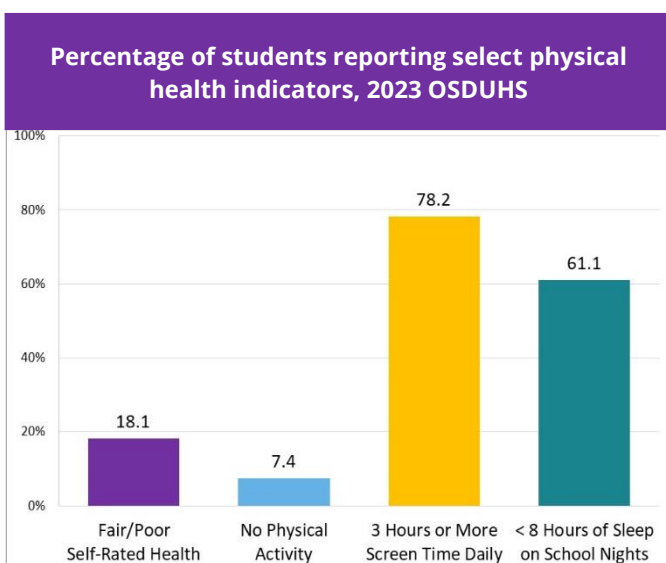
## Physical Health

### Self-Rated Physical Health and Health Conditions

- Although half (50%) of students rate their physical health as excellent or very good, about one-in-six (18%) report fair or poor physical health.
- Ratings of fair or poor physical health have significantly increased in recent years and the 2023 estimate is among the highest on record since monitoring began decades ago.
- Of the health conditions asked about in the survey, the most commonly reported are a mental health problem such as depression or anxiety (21%), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (12%), and a vision problem (9%).

### Physical Activity, Screen Time, Sleep

- One-quarter (26%) of students met the recommended daily physical activity guideline (defined as a total of at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity per day) during the past seven days. In contrast, about 7% of students were physically inactive on each of the past seven days.
- Over three-quarters (78%) of students spend three hours or more per day in front of an electronic screen in their free time (“screen time” sedentary behaviour). This amount of screen time exceeds the *Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth*.
- Although the percentage of students who report three hours or more per day of recreational screen time significantly decreased between 2021 (83%) and 2023 (78%), the current estimate remains at a level that is among the highest since monitoring began in 2009.
- Over one-third (39%) of students report that they usually get eight hours or more of sleep on an average school night. Therefore, most students (61%) get less than eight hours of sleep.

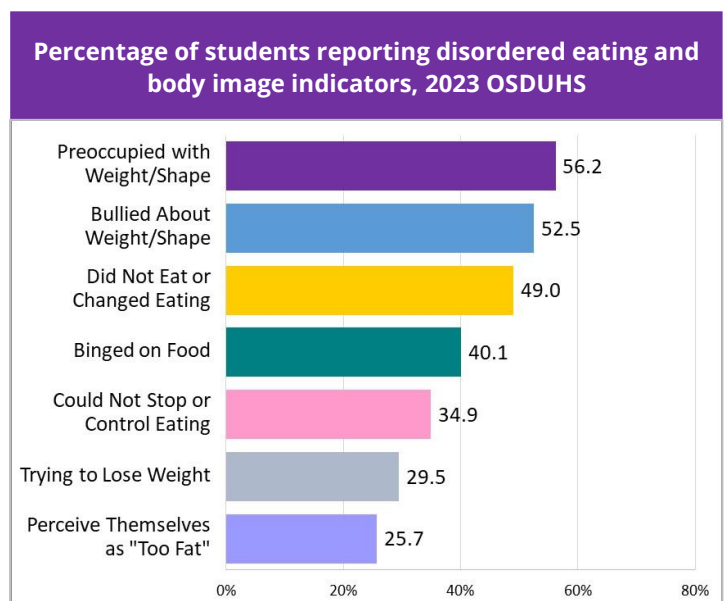


## Disordered Eating and Body Image

- Over half (56%) of students are preoccupied with their weight, as they report sometimes, often or always worrying about their weight, shape, or muscles.
- About one-third (35%) of students report they could not stop eating or control how much they ate at least once in the past month.
- About 40% of students report bingeing on food at least once in the past month.
- About half (49%) of students report not eating or eating in a way to change their weight, shape, or muscles at least once in the past month.
- Over half (58%) of students are satisfied with their weight. One-quarter (26%) believe they are overweight (“too fat”), and 17% believe they are underweight (“too thin”).
- The perception of being overweight (“too fat”) has remained stable over the past decade or so. However, there has been a significant increase since 2001, the first year of monitoring, from 19% to 26%.
- One-third (34%) of students are not trying to change their weight. About 30% are trying to lose weight, 19% want to keep from gaining weight, and 17% want to gain weight.
- Over half (53%) of students report being bullied about their weight or body shape at least once in the past year (that is, were teased or picked on about their weight or shape).
- The percentage of students who report being bullied about their weight or body shape at least once in the past year significantly increased between 2021 (the first year of monitoring) and 2023, from 40% to 53%.

## Head Injuries and Risky Driving Behaviour

- Well over one-third (40%) of students report experiencing a concussion in their lifetime. About one-in-eight (13%) report experiencing a concussion in the past year.
- The percentage of students reporting experiencing a concussion in the past year significantly increased between 2021 and 2023, from 9% to 13%, returning to a level seen when monitoring began in 2017.
- Over one-third (39%) of drivers in grades 10–12 report texting while driving at least once in the past year.
- The percentage of adolescent drivers reporting texting while driving significantly increased between 2019 and 2023, from 29% to 39%. However, the current estimate is similar to the estimates seen a decade ago, when monitoring began.



# Mental Health

## Self-Rated Mental Health

- Just over one-third (36%) of students rate their mental health as excellent or very good, while a similar percentage (38%) rate their mental health as fair or poor.
- The percentage of students who rate their mental health as fair or poor has significantly increased since 2007, the first year of monitoring, from 11% to 38%.

## Low Self-Esteem and Loneliness

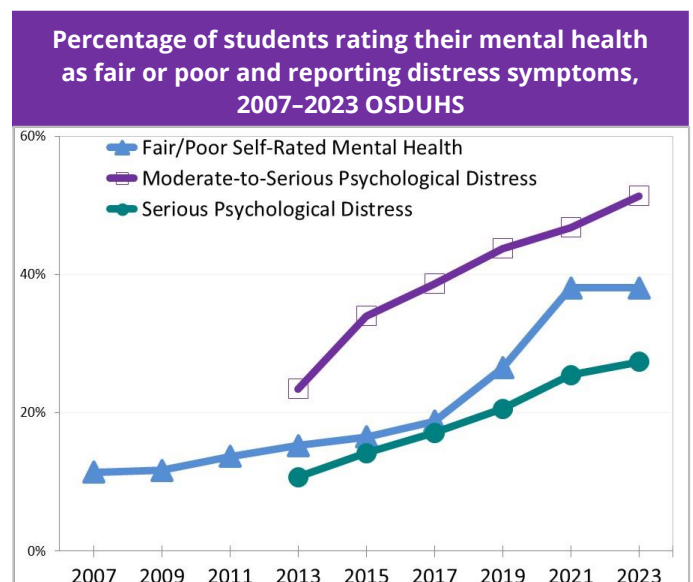
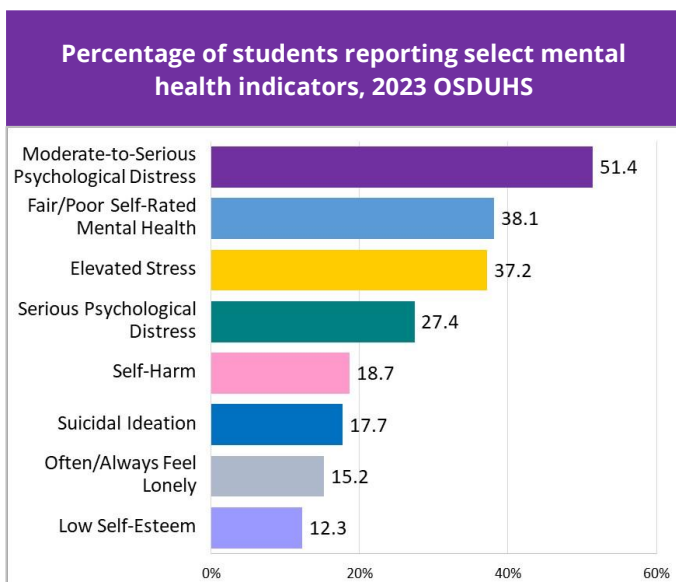
- About one-in-eight (12%) students indicate low self-esteem (feeling very unsatisfied with oneself).
- The percentage of students indicating low self-esteem has significantly increased since 2015, the first year of monitoring, from 7% to 12%.
- About one-in-seven (15%) students report often or always feeling lonely.

## Elevated Stress

- Over one-third (37%) of students report experiencing an elevated level of stress or pressure in their lives.
- The percentage of students reporting elevated stress has significantly increased since 2015, the first year of monitoring, from 29% to 37%.

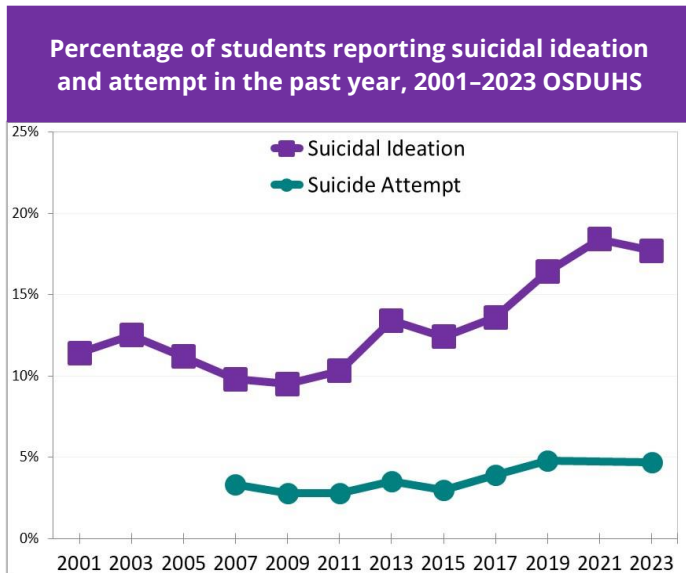
## Psychological Distress

- Half (51%) of students indicate a moderate-to-serious level of psychological distress (symptoms of anxiety and depression).
- Over one-quarter (27%) of students indicate a serious level of psychological distress.
- Both indicators of psychological distress remained stable between 2021 and 2023, but both have significantly increased since monitoring began a decade ago. Moderate distress increased from 24% in 2013 to 51% in 2023, and serious distress increased from 11% in 2013 to 27% in 2023.



## Self-Harm and Suicide

- Almost one-in-five (19%) students report harming themselves on purpose in the past year.
- The percentage of students reporting self-harm in the past year significantly increased between 2019, the first year of monitoring, and 2023, from 15% to 19%.
- One-in-six (18%) students had serious thoughts about suicide in the past year (suicidal ideation), and 5% report a suicide attempt in the past year.
- The percentage of students reporting suicidal ideation in the past year has significantly increased since 2001, the first year of monitoring, from 11% to 18%.
- The percentage of students reporting a suicide attempt in the past year has remained relatively stable since 2007 (the first year of monitoring), fluctuating between 3% and 5%.

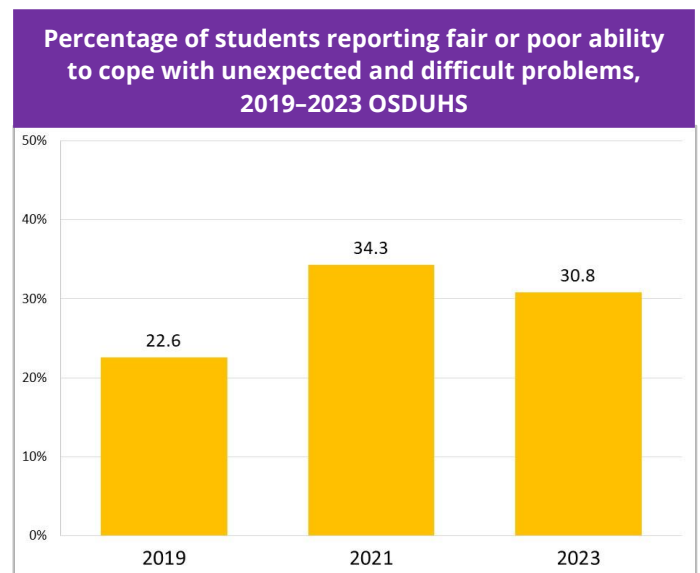


## Anxiety About Climate Change

- About one-in-six (18%) students are very or extremely worried about climate change.
- Just under half (45%) of students report feeling depressed about the future because of climate change.

## Ability to Cope

- Over one-third (35%) of students rate their ability to cope with unexpected and difficult problems as excellent or very good. A similar percentage (31%) rate their ability to cope as fair or poor.
- The percentage of students reporting an inability to cope with unexpected and difficult problems has significantly increased between 2019, the first year of monitoring, and 2023, from 23% to 31%.



## Prescription Medication for Mental Health

- About 5% of students used prescribed drugs for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (such as Adderall, Ritalin, Concerta) in the past year.
- The percentage who report medical use of ADHD drugs in the past year has remained stable during the past few years, but has significantly increased since monitoring began in 2007 (from 2% to 5%).
- About one-in-ten (10%) secondary school students report they were prescribed medication for anxiety, depression, or both conditions in the past year.
- The percentage of secondary school students who report being prescribed medication to treat anxiety, depression, or both has significantly increased since 2001, the first year of monitoring, from 3% to 10%.

## Mental Health Support

- Over half (57%) of students report that they know how to access school-based mental health support services. About one-in-five (22%) report not knowing how to access school-based mental health support services, and a similar percentage (21%) are “not sure.”
- About one-in-seven (14%) students report using school-based mental health support services during the school year.
- Over one-third (36%) of students report talking to a mental health professional (including any school professional) at least once in the past year.

- About 6% of students report seeking counselling by either calling a telephone helpline or over the Internet (or both) at least once in the past year.
- The percentage of students who report seeking counselling through a helpline or over the Internet has significantly increased since 2011, the first year of monitoring, from 2% to 6%.

## Barriers to Seeking Mental Health Support

- One-third (33%) of students report that they felt they needed mental health support from a professional during the past year, but did not seek it.
- Among those who report that they needed mental health support from a professional, but did not seek it, the most common reasons for not seeking support are thinking they could manage it themselves, being afraid of what others would think about them, and being “too busy.”

Percentage reporting reasons for not seeking mental health support among students who report needing help, 2023 OSDUHS





# Bullying

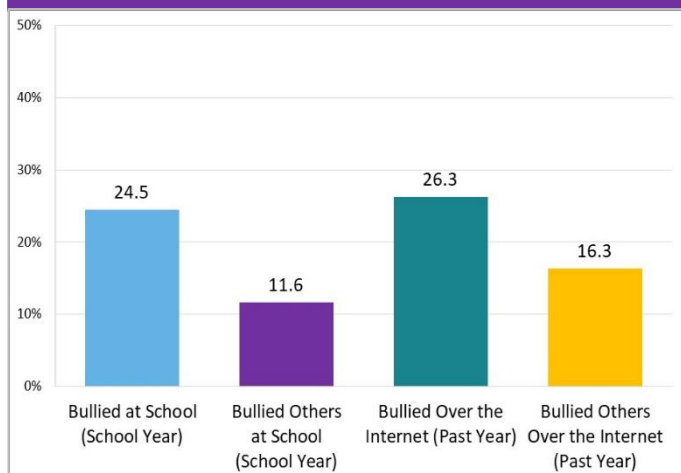
## Bullying at School

- One-quarter (25%) of students report being bullied at school since the beginning of the school year. The most prevalent form of bullying victimization at school is verbal (20%), while 3% report that they are primarily bullied physically, and 2% of students are victims of theft/vandalism.
- One-in-eight (12%) students report bullying others at school since September. The most prevalent form of bullying others at school is through verbal attacks (9%), followed by physical attacks (2%), and theft/vandalism (less than 1%).
- The percentage of students reporting being bullied at school has remained stable during the past few years (since 2013), but has significantly decreased since 2003, the first year of monitoring, from 33% to 25%.
- The percentage reporting bullying others has also decreased since 2003, from 30% to 12%.

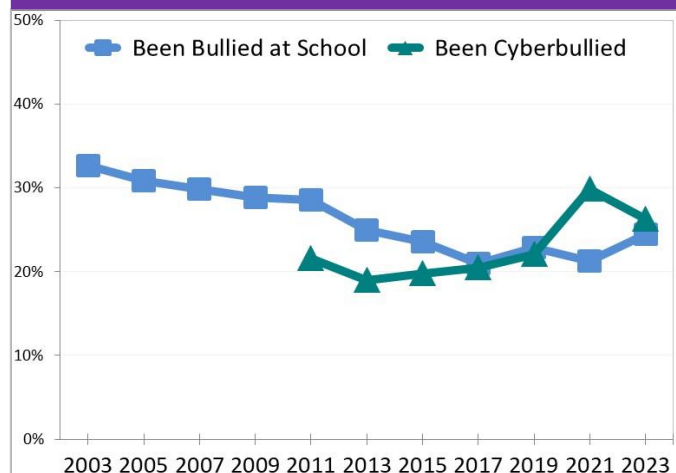
## Cyberbullying

- One-quarter (26%) of students report being bullied over the Internet in the past year.
- One-in-six (16%) students report bullying others over the Internet in the past year.
- The percentage who report being bullied over the Internet in the past year has significantly increased since 2011, the first year of monitoring, from 22% to 26%.
- The percentage who report bullying others over the Internet has significantly increased since 2017, the first year of monitoring, from 10% to 16%.

Percentage of students reporting being bullied at school and being cyberbullied in the past year, 2023 OSDUHS



Percentage of students reporting being bullied at school and being cyberbullied in the past year, 2003–2023 OSDUHS





# Gambling, Video Gaming, and Social Media Use

## Gambling Activities

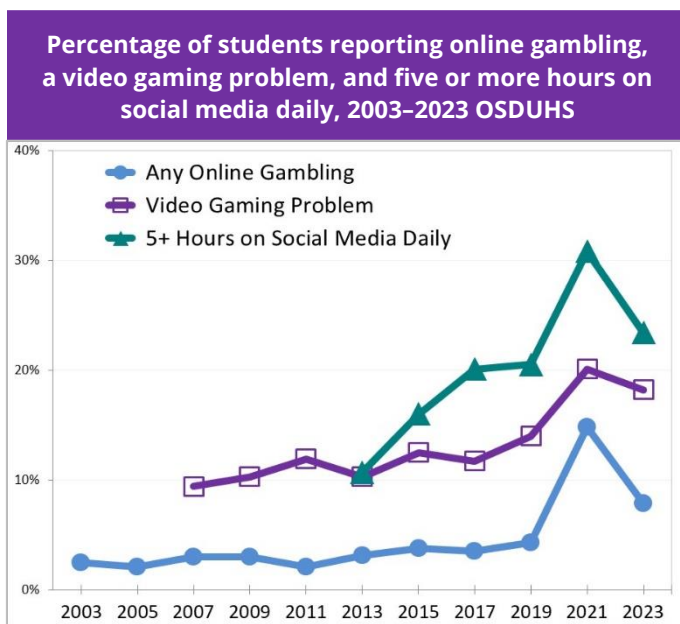
- About 8% of students report betting money on any online game (such as online casino games, online sports betting) at least once in the past year.
- About one-quarter (24%) of students report gambling while playing a video game in the past year (that is, spent real money to buy loot boxes, keys or in-game currency, or engaged in skins betting).
- About 16% of students report gambling in another activity, such as card games, dice, lotteries, scratch cards, in the past year.
- The percentage of students reporting any online gambling in the past year significantly decreased between 2021 and 2023, from 15% to 8%. However, despite this recent decrease, the current estimate remains higher than 2003 (2%), when monitoring began.

## Video Gaming

- Over one-quarter (28%) of students play video games daily or almost daily. About one-in-eight (12%) students play video games for five hours or more per day.
- One-in-six (18%) students report symptoms of a video gaming problem (such as preoccupation, tolerance, loss of control, withdrawal, escape, disregard for consequences, disruption to family or school).
- The percentage of students reporting symptoms of a video gaming problem has significantly increased since 2007, the first year of monitoring, from 9% to 18%.

## Social Media Use

- The vast majority (94%) of students use social media daily. About one-quarter (23%) of students spend five hours or more on social media daily.
- The percentage of students who report spending five hours or more on social media daily significantly decreased between 2021 (31%) and 2023 (23%). However, despite this recent decrease, the current estimate remains higher than 2013 (11%), when monitoring began.
- About one-in-eleven (9%) students report symptoms of problematic social media use (such as preoccupation, tolerance, loss of control, withdrawal, escape, conflict with family).



## Sex\* Differences

↑ Males are more likely to:	↑ Females are more likely to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ rarely or never talk to their parent(s) about problems</li> <li>▪ like school and report a positive school climate</li> <li>▪ be physically active daily</li> <li>▪ perceive themselves as “too thin”</li> <li>▪ get at least eight hours of sleep on school nights</li> <li>▪ bully others at school</li> <li>▪ cyberbully others</li> <li>▪ gamble online and in other ways</li> <li>▪ spend 5 hours or more video gaming daily</li> <li>▪ indicate a video gaming problem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ rate their physical health as fair or poor</li> <li>▪ report three hours or more of screen time daily</li> <li>▪ report disordered eating symptoms</li> <li>▪ perceive themselves as “too fat”</li> <li>▪ be bullied about their weight or body shape</li> <li>▪ rate their mental health as fair or poor</li> <li>▪ report low self-esteem</li> <li>▪ report elevated stress</li> <li>▪ report often or always feeling lonely</li> <li>▪ indicate moderate and serious psychological distress</li> <li>▪ report self-harm</li> <li>▪ report suicidal ideation and attempt</li> <li>▪ be worried about climate change</li> <li>▪ be depressed about the future because of climate change</li> <li>▪ rate their ability to cope with problems as fair or poor</li> <li>▪ be prescribed medication for anxiety/depression</li> <li>▪ use school-based mental health care services</li> <li>▪ visit any mental health care professional</li> <li>▪ seek counselling over the phone or Internet</li> <li>▪ report needing mental health support, but not seeking it</li> <li>▪ be cyberbullied</li> <li>▪ spend five hours or more on social media daily</li> <li>▪ indicate problematic social media use</li> </ul>


## Grade Differences


↑ Increases with grade	↓ Decreases with grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ rarely/never talk to parent(s) about problems</li> <li>▪ three hours or more of recreational screen time daily</li> <li>▪ texting while driving</li> <li>▪ fair or poor self-rated mental health</li> <li>▪ low self-esteem</li> <li>▪ elevated stress</li> <li>▪ often or always feeling lonely</li> <li>▪ moderate and serious psychological distress</li> <li>▪ suicidal ideation</li> <li>▪ needing mental health support, but not seeking it</li> <li>▪ worry about climate change</li> <li>▪ use of school-based mental health services</li> <li>▪ online gambling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ liking school and reporting positive school climate</li> <li>▪ daily physical activity</li> <li>▪ getting eight hours or more of sleep on school nights</li> <li>▪ experiencing a concussion</li> <li>▪ being bullied at school</li> <li>▪ being cyberbullied</li> <li>▪ problematic social media use</li> </ul>

\* refers to sex at birth

## Regional Differences









The survey design divided the province into four regions: Greater Toronto Area (Toronto, Durham Region, York Region, Peel Region, and Halton Region); Northern Ontario (Parry Sound District, Nipissing District and farther north); Western Ontario (Dufferin County and farther west); and Eastern Ontario (Simcoe County and farther east). The following tables show significant regional differences.

 Above provincial average
<b>Greater Toronto Area (GTA)</b>
▪ liking school
▪ three hours or more of screen time daily
<b>North Region</b>
▪ daily physical activity

 Below provincial average
<b>Greater Toronto Area (GTA)</b>
▪ daily physical activity
▪ experiencing a concussion
<b>North Region</b>
▪ three hours or more of screen time daily
<b>East Region</b>
▪ fair or poor self-rated health
▪ five hours or more on social media daily

## Recent Trends

The following table summarizes the significant changes between the 2021 and 2023 cycles among the total sample of students.

	2019	2021		2023
Like school “very much” or “quite a lot”	36%	42%		30%
Three hours or more of recreational screen time daily	71%	83%		78%
Been bullied about weight or body shape (past year)	n/a	40%		53%
Eight hours or more of sleep on school nights	37%	49%		39%
Concussion (past year)	15%	9%		13%
Medical use of prescription opioids (past year)	20%	15%		25%
Online gambling (past year)	4%	15%		8%
Five or more hours on social media daily	21%	31%		23%

Note: the 2019 estimates are provided for context

## Overview of Trends

### Trends for Select Indicators of Mental Health and Well-Being (Total Sample)

Indicator	Among Grades	Period		Change
Fair or poor self-rated physical health	7, 9, 11	1991–2023	↑	Increased from 6% to 18%
Daily physical activity (60 minutes daily)	7–12	2009–2023	↑	Increased from 21% to 26%
Three hours or more of recreational screen time daily	7–12	2009–2023	↑	Increased from 55% to 78%
Perceive themselves as overweight (“too fat”)	7–12	2001–2023	↑	Increased from 19% to 26%
Medical use of prescription opioids (past year)	7–12	2007–2023	↓	Decreased from 41% to 25%
Fair or poor self-rated mental health	7–12	2007–2023	↑	Increased from 11% to 38%
Low self-esteem	7–12	2015–2023	↑	Increased from 7% to 12%
Elevated level of stress (past month)	7–12	2015–2023	↑	Increased from 29% to 37%
Moderate-to-serious psychological distress (past month)	7–12	2013–2023	↑	Increased from 24% to 51%
Serious psychological distress (past month)	7–12	2013–2023	↑	Increased from 11% to 27%
Self-harm (past year)	7–12	2019–2023	↑	Increased from 15% to 19%
Suicidal ideation (past year)	7–12	2001–2023	↑	Increased from 11% to 18%
Suicide attempt (past year)	7–12	2007–2023	■	Stable
Fair or poor ability to cope with unexpected problems	7–12	2019–2023	↑	Increased from 23% to 31%
Medical use of ADHD prescription drugs (past year)	7–12	2007–2023	↑	Increased from 2% to 5%
Prescription for anxiety, depression, or both (past year)	9–12	2001–2023	↑	Increased from 3% to 10%
Sought counselling over the phone or Internet	7–12	2011–2023	↑	Increased from 2% to 6%
Bullied at school (this school year)	7–12	2003–2023	↓	Decreased from 33% to 25%
Cyberbullied (past year)	7–12	2011–2023	↑	Increased from 22% to 26%
Online gambling (past year)	7–12	2003–2023	↑	Increased from 3% to 8%
Video gaming problem (past year)	7–12	2007–2023	↑	Increased from 9% to 18%
Five hours or more on social media daily	7–12	2013–2023	↑	Increased from 11% to 23%

## Percentage Reporting Select Indicators of Mental Health and Well-Being by Sex, 2023 OSDUHS (Grades 7–12)

	Total %	Males	Females	
<b>School Climate</b>				
like school very much or quite a lot	30.4	32.6	28.1	*
feel close to people at school	77.4	82.1	72.4	*
feel like part of school	76.0	78.4	73.5	*
feel safe at school	87.0	89.2	84.6	*
<b>Physical Health</b>				
fair/poor self-rated physical health	18.1	13.8	22.6	*
daily physical activity (60 minutes of activity daily in the past week)	25.5	32.6	18.1	*
three or more hours of recreational screen time daily	78.2	75.2	81.3	*
worried about/preoccupation with weight, body shape, muscles	56.2	42.9	70.1	*
perceive themselves as overweight (“too fat”)	25.7	18.9	33.1	*
bullied about weight or body shape (past year)	52.5	49.5	55.7	*
eight or more hours of sleep on an average school night	38.9	44.4	33.1	*
concussion (past year)	13.3	13.8	12.8	
texting while driving (G10-12 with licence, past year)	38.7	41.1	35.7	
<b>Mental Health</b>				
fair/poor self-rated mental health	38.1	22.4	53.9	*
low self-esteem	12.3	9.1	15.4	*
elevated stress	37.2	23.0	51.5	*
often/always feel lonely	15.2	10.1	20.2	*
moderate-to-serious psychological distress (past month)	51.4	35.7	67.8	*
serious psychological distress (past month)	27.4	14.8	40.5	*
self-harm (past year)	18.7	10.0	27.6	*
suicidal ideation (past year)	17.7	10.7	24.6	*
suicide attempt (past year)	4.7	2.9	6.5	*
very/extremely worried about climate change	17.5	13.2	21.7	*
depressed about the future because of climate change	44.5	38.4	50.5	*
fair/poor ability to cope with unexpected and difficult problems	30.8	22.1	39.4	*
medical use of ADHD drugs (past year)	5.4	5.9	4.9	
prescribed medication for depression/anxiety/both <sup>††</sup>	9.7	5.3	14.0	*
know how to access school-based mental health support	56.8	56.1	57.5	
used school-based mental health support services this school year	14.3	10.0	18.6	*
any mental health care visit, including school-based (past year)	35.6	28.5	42.6	*
sought counselling over the phone and/or Internet (past year)	5.5	3.1	8.0	*
needed mental health support, but did not seek it (past year)	33.0	18.3	47.8	*
<b>Bullying</b>				
been bullied at school this school year	24.5	23.5	25.4	
bullied others at school this school year	11.6	13.2	9.9	*
been cyberbullied (past year)	26.3	22.8	29.9	*
cyberbullied others (past year)	16.3	19.3	13.2	*
<b>Gambling, Video Gaming, Social Media Use</b>				
online gambling (past year)	7.9	12.4	3.0	*
gambling while playing a video game (past year)	23.6	34.5	11.8	*
gambling in other ways (past year)	15.5	19.0	11.6	*
video gaming problem (past year)	18.2	24.5	11.5	*
five or more hours on social media daily	23.4	15.9	31.2	*
problematic social media use (past year)	8.8	5.5	12.1	*

Notes: the total sample size is 10,145 students; some estimates based on a random half sample; ‘s’ indicates estimate suppressed due to unreliability; \* indicates a significant sex difference ( $p < .05$ ) *not* controlling for other factors; <sup>††</sup> among grades 9–12 only; medical drug use is defined as use with a prescription.

# Percentage Reporting Select Indicators of Mental Health and Well-Being by Grade, 2023 OSDUHS (Grades 7–12)

	G7	G8	G9	G10	G11	G12	
<b>School Climate</b>							
like school very much or quite a lot	35.4	32.8	28.9	25.2	31.1	30.7	*
feel close to people at school	84.2	81.7	77.4	77.9	74.1	72.4	*
feel like part of school	80.5	81.6	74.2	75.7	72.4	74.1	*
feel safe at school	87.9	88.0	86.1	85.2	86.8	88.0	
<b>Physical Health</b>							
fair/poor self-rated physical health	15.4	17.9	19.0	18.1	19.7	17.8	
daily physical activity (60 minutes of activity daily in the past week)	36.7	33.9	24.9	23.8	20.0	18.9	*
three or more hours of recreational screen time daily	66.3	73.9	83.8	80.7	78.1	82.2	*
worried about/preoccupation with weight, body shape, muscles	56.4	55.2	54.5	56.8	57.4	56.7	
perceive themselves as overweight (“too fat”)	20.2	27.4	23.5	29.1	28.7	24.3	
bullied about weight or body shape (past year)	54.7	53.5	51.0	52.1	55.9	49.2	
eight or more hours of sleep on an average school night	67.5	56.5	40.8	32.4	26.1	22.3	*
concussion (past year)	17.0	16.2	12.4	13.4	11.3	11.1	*
texting while driving (G10-12 with licence, past year)	--	--	--	14.7	28.1	51.0	*
<b>Mental Health</b>							
fair/poor self-rated mental health	29.5	32.7	33.1	40.2	44.2	45.1	*
low self-esteem	9.5	10.0	9.2	13.6	16.4	13.9	*
elevated stress	20.6	29.0	32.4	39.9	44.9	49.7	*
often/always feel lonely	10.4	10.3	14.2	15.9	19.9	18.3	*
moderate-to-serious psychological distress (past month)	40.9	41.5	50.0	52.8	58.7	59.0	*
serious psychological distress (past month)	21.3	21.9	25.6	30.3	31.8	30.5	*
self-harm (past year)	16.5	19.3	19.1	19.3	19.2	18.6	
suicidal ideation (past year)	13.9	11.5	17.1	17.7	21.9	21.6	*
suicide attempt (past year)	s	4.5	5.1	4.9	5.7	3.7	
very/extremely worried about climate change	14.1	12.6	16.6	20.6	20.2	19.3	*
depressed about the future because of climate change	48.8	41.8	43.4	43.6	43.0	46.4	
fair/poor ability to cope with unexpected and difficult problems	31.4	28.3	30.5	27.0	36.2	31.1	
medical use of ADHD drugs (past year)	5.6	5.5	7.0	6.2	4.7	4.0	
prescribed medication for depression/anxiety/both <sup>††</sup>	--	--	7.7	9.2	11.1	10.6	
know how to access school-based mental health support	46.1	50.4	60.3	59.1	62.1	59.1	*
used school-based mental health support services this school year	10.7	12.4	10.2	15.9	18.2	17.1	*
any mental health care visit, including school-based (past year)	31.2	33.4	32.2	38.9	40.5	36.4	
sought counselling over the phone and/or Internet (past year)	s	5.3	5.0	6.8	7.2	5.5	
needed mental health support, but did not seek it (past year)	21.4	27.6	27.2	35.4	39.5	42.1	*
<b>Bullying</b>							
been bullied at school this school year	37.3	30.7	21.7	23.8	21.9	16.7	*
bullied others at school this school year	12.3	14.4	8.7	14.6	10.9	9.5	
been cyberbullied (past year)	32.0	30.9	25.0	29.1	24.8	19.3	*
cyberbullied others (past year)	18.5	20.6	15.9	18.4	15.9	10.6	*
<b>Gambling, Video Gaming, Social Media Use</b>							
online gambling (past year)	5.0	4.6	7.6	7.8	8.2	12.0	*
gambling while playing a video game (past year)	24.1	29.8	23.0	22.4	21.5	22.8	
gambling in other ways (past year)	12.8	13.2	14.4	15.8	15.2	19.7	
video gaming problem (past year)	17.4	14.6	16.9	19.1	20.0	19.9	
five or more hours on social media daily	22.5	23.0	28.1	22.8	23.1	21.0	*
problematic social media use (past year)	9.8	12.2	10.2	8.4	8.4	5.5	*

Notes: \* indicates a significant grade difference ( $p < .05$ ) *not* controlling for other factors; ‘s’ indicates estimate suppressed due to unreliability; †† among grades 9–12 only; medical drug use is defined as use with a prescription.

## Percentage Reporting Select Indicators of Mental Health and Well-Being by Region, 2023 OSDUHS (Grades 7–12)

	GTA	North	West	East	
<b>School Climate</b>					
like school very much or quite a lot	33.5	26.0	28.8	26.5	*
feel close to people at school	78.6	78.8	75.4	76.9	
feel like part of school	76.5	75.4	74.3	77.3	
feel safe at school	86.4	87.4	86.4	89.0	
<b>Physical Health</b>					
fair/poor self-rated physical health	18.4	20.6	20.1	13.9	*
daily physical activity (60 minutes of activity daily in the past week)	23.5	31.7	27.5	26.2	*
three or more hours of recreational screen time daily	80.3	72.5	74.9	78.8	*
worried about/preoccupation with weight, body shape, muscles	55.8	53.5	59.5	53.3	
perceive themselves as overweight (“too fat”)	23.6	28.9	31.6	21.9	
bullied about weight or body shape (past year)	52.6	54.9	55.9	47.3	*
eight or more hours of sleep on an average school night	37.5	41.5	37.1	44.1	
concussion (past year)	11.7	14.0	14.2	15.6	*
texting while driving (G10-12 with licence, past year)	32.2	48.8	44.4	41.7	
<b>Mental Health</b>					
fair/poor self-rated mental health	37.4	39.3	40.6	36.1	
low self-esteem	11.4	17.1	13.4	11.6	
elevated stress	37.8	38.4	38.0	34.6	
often/always feel lonely	14.9	18.8	16.8	12.9	
moderate-to-serious psychological distress (past month)	52.4	47.5	52.6	48.4	
serious psychological distress (past month)	26.9	29.3	30.3	24.2	
self-harm (past year)	18.9	17.5	20.1	16.7	
suicidal ideation (past year)	18.0	23.8	17.2	16.1	
suicide attempt (past year)	4.2	s	5.2	4.6	
very/extremely worried about climate change	18.1	12.8	16.8	18.2	
depressed about the future because of climate change	44.2	42.2	41.5	49.3	
fair/poor ability to cope with unexpected and difficult problems	32.5	31.5	29.2	28.5	
medical use of ADHD drugs (past year)	4.8	s	6.4	5.8	
prescribed medication for depression/anxiety/both <sup>††</sup>	7.8	12.9	11.0	11.9	
know how to access school-based mental health support	57.1	59.8	60.0	51.0	
used school-based mental health support services this school year	13.8	18.0	13.9	15.2	
any mental health care visit, including school-based (past year)	34.7	42.5	36.0	35.7	
sought counselling over the phone and/or Internet (past year)	5.9	s	6.8	3.4	
needed mental health support, but did not seek it (past year)	33.0	34.4	33.8	31.7	
<b>Bullying</b>					
been bullied at school this school year	22.9	26.8	27.0	24.1	
bullied others at school this school year	10.3	9.9	14.4	11.2	
been cyberbullied (past year)	24.1	30.4	30.3	25.1	
cyberbullied others (past year)	15.7	14.7	19.2	14.0	
<b>Gambling, Video Gaming, Social Media Use</b>					
online gambling (past year)	8.9	11.2	6.6	6.6	
gambling while playing a video game (past year)	22.6	23.8	27.6	20.8	
gambling in other ways (past year)	14.1	14.8	18.8	14.4	
video gaming problem (past year)	18.9	14.5	21.1	13.8	
five or more hours on social media daily	24.4	23.2	25.1	18.6	*
problematic social media use (past year)	10.0	8.5	7.8	7.7	

Notes: GTA is the Greater Toronto Area; \* indicates a significant regional difference ( $p < .05$ ) *not* controlling for other factors; ‘s’ indicates estimate suppressed due to unreliability; <sup>††</sup> among grades 9–12 only; medical drug use is defined as use with a prescription.



## Methodology

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's *Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey* (OSDUHS) is an Ontario-wide health survey of elementary/middle school students in grades 7 and 8 and secondary school students in grades 9 through 12. This cross-sectional survey has been conducted every two years since 1977.

The 2023 survey cycle, which used a stratified (region by school level) two-stage (school, class) cluster design, was based on 10,145 students in grades 7 to 12 in 848 classes in 235 schools in 46 English and French public and Catholic school boards. Excluded from selection were schools in First Nation communities, on military bases, in hospitals and other institutions, and private schools. Special Education stand-alone classes and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes were excluded from selection.

Active parental consent procedures were used. Anonymous electronic or paper-and-pencil questionnaires were group administered in classrooms during regular school hours by staff from the Institute for Social Research, York University between November 2022 and June 2023. Data from the sample of 10,145 students were weighted to represent just under one million students in grades 7 to 12 enrolled in Ontario's publicly funded schools.

### A note about the 2021 OSDUHS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ontario schools were closed to in-person learning during the 2020-2021 school year. Therefore, the 2021 OSDUHS pivoted to online data collection. Students could complete the questionnaire outside of school hours rather than the typical method of completions in classrooms during school hours. This change in mode and setting led to a dramatically decreased student response rate for that cycle. Although the survey weights were adjusted to minimize any potential bias from non-response, the high level of non-response in the 2021 cycle likely had an impact on estimates. Readers should be cautious in interpreting the 2021 estimates as provincially representative.

Please visit the OSDUHS webpage for reports and FAQs:

[www.camh.ca/osduhs](http://www.camh.ca/osduhs)