



Rye Action for Children & Teens (RyeACT) is a coalition of local organizations and individuals committed to promoting long-term health and wellness by inspiring youth, parents, and community leaders to foster healthy behaviors and reduce youth substance use.



Nancy Pasquale, Coalition Coordinator, RyeACTcoalition@gmail.com. Check out the RyeACT website, www.RyeACT.com, and follow us on Facebook.



WHEN TEENS THINK THEIR PEERS DISAPPROVE OF SUBSTANCE USE, THEY ARE LESS LIKELY TO USE THEMSELVES.

RyeACT routinely collects both quantitative and qualitative data to inform our prevention work in the community, and to evaluate the impact of our prevention strategies. The PRIDE Survey instrument has been administered biennially to all students in grades 7-12 at Rye MS and Rye HS, in collaboration with our community partners at the Rye City School District, since 2014.



PERCEIVED RISK OF HARM

As the perceived risk of harm from substance use increases, rates of substance use decrease.

"Moderate to great" risk of harm to use	'16 Rye	'25 Rye	% Change
RHS 9-12 Alcohol	66.9%	80.1%	20%
RHS 9-12 Marijuana	46.3%	69.0%	49%



The increased perception of risk of harm of marijuana/THC use is notable given that it happened in the wake of legalization of marijuana/THC in NY State in 2021.

This is a testament to the power of youth-led educational initiatives, including the RHS Youth Action Team's "Legal Does Not Equal Safe for Youth" campaign.

2025 data reflect notable increases in HS students' perceptions of risk associated with both alcohol and marijuana use - both of which are at the highest reported levels since we began collecting data.

- Jeanne Matitch-Maroney, PhD, LCSW-R
Iona University, 2026 RyeACT Program Evaluation Report

RISK-TAKING AND PEER INFLUENCE

Teens are developmentally primed to take risks. Positive risk-taking like trying out for a sports team, auditioning for a school play, or even asking someone out on a date, are important learning experiences for healthy development. Teens build resilience during this time in which they are forming their identity.



Teens are significantly influenced by their peers for both healthy and unhealthy behaviors. In fact, **"the degree to which an adolescent's peers use alcohol or illicit drugs is one of the strongest, if not the single strongest, predictor of that adolescent's own substance use."** (Steinberg; Chassin, et al.)

Because what friends think matters more than ever before, when teens' perceived peer disapproval of substance use increases, rates of substance use decrease.

GOOD NEWS

2025 data reflect the highest levels of perceived friends' disapproval of both alcohol and marijuana since data collection began.

Friends would think it's "wrong" or "very wrong to use"	'16 Rye	'25 Rye	% Change
RMS 7-8 Alcohol	90.0%	91.80%	2%
RHS 9-12 Alcohol	65.0%	81.3%	25%
RMS 7-8 Marijuana	89.9%	95.9%	7%
RHS 9-12 Marijuana	49.6%	70.4%	42%

#SHOWUP4URSELF #SHOWUP4URFRIENDS

The consistently high level of perceived friends' disapproval of substance use among RMS students, and the dramatic increases among RHS students, are directly supported by the work of the RyeACT Youth Action Teams.

Both the RHS and RMS teams lead annual peer-to-peer prevention campaigns focused on the notion that **non-use is self-care** and **friends help friends stay healthy and safe**.