

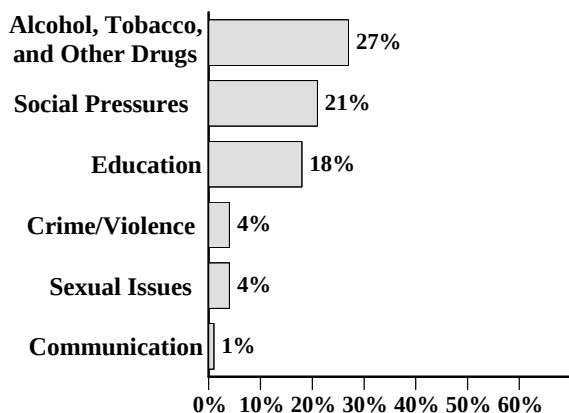
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

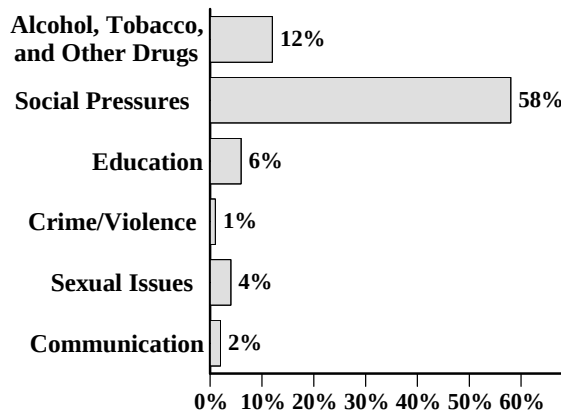
Parents Underestimate Teens' Concerns About Drugs

While drugs are the number one concern for teenagers, parents underestimate how important this issue is to teens, according to data from a national telephone survey conducted earlier this year.* More than one-fourth of youths ages 12 to 17 reported that alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs were the most important problem facing people their age. Yet only 12% of parents of teenagers reported that drugs were the most important problem facing teenagers. In contrast, parents overestimated teens' concerns with social pressures—58% of parents said that social pressures were the number one concern of teens, compared to only 21% of teenagers. Previous research has found that parents also underestimate the level of alcohol and illicit drug use by youth (see *CESAR FAX*, Volume 15, Issue 31).

While More than One-Fourth of Teens Say Drugs Are Their Number One Concern . . .



Only 12% of Parents Perceive Drugs to Be the Number One Concern of Teens



*Teens were asked "What is the most important problem facing people your age—that is, the thing which concerns you the most?" Parents were asked "And from the point of view of teenagers like your own, what do you think is the most important problem someone their age faces?" Both questions were open-ended. Additional responses not included in the above figures include mental wellbeing, moral values, and economics (for teenagers) and gaining independence, acceptance of self, and making good decisions (for parents).

NOTES: Nationally representative, random household surveys were conducted by telephone with 1,297 teenagers (ages 12 to 17) and 562 parents of teenagers between March 9 and April 30, 2006. All of the parents interviewed reside in households in which a parent gave consent for their teen to be interviewed (even though the teen interview may not have been completed).

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA), *National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse XI: Teens and Parents*, August 2006. Available online at <http://www.casacolumbia.org/supportcasa/item.asp?CID=12&PID=148>.

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