HEALTH AND HEALTH-RELATED BEHAVIOURS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN YUKON

EXTENDED REPORT

Produced for Government of Yukon

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study is a cross-national research study aimed at increasing understanding of young people's health in their social and environmental contexts. The Social Program Evaluation Group (SPEG) at Queen's University, Faculty of Education has been conducting the HBSC survey through the collection of national data from students aged 11 to 15 every four years since 1990. In 2010, 2014, and 2018 the survey has included a representative sample of young people form Yukon. Findings from the HBSC survey are used to inform and influence health promotion and health education policy and programs at national and international levels, as well as to increase understanding of young people's health and well-being.

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Study in Canada

The HBSC study, originally initiated in 1982 with researchers from three countries, is a continuing cross-sectional research project developed through an inter-disciplinary, cross-national collaboration. There are now 43 HBSC participating countries and regions, in Europe, North America, and Israel. The HBSC researchers come from a variety of countries, disciplines, and theoretical perspectives. For example, the Canadian team based at Queen's University, with members at MacMaster University, McGill University, the University of Montreal, the University of British Columbia, and University of Prince Edward Island, and includes researchers from the areas of community health and epidemiology, education, kinesiology and physical education, nursing, and psychology.

HBSC is sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO) and funded nationally by the Public Health Agency of Canada. The study is conducted every four years with schools and students in Grades 6 to 10 across Canada. The Social Program Evaluation Group at Queen's University in Ontario has led the study in Canada since its inception in 1990. The first cycle of the study resulted in the publication of *The Health of Canada's Youth* (1992); the second, in the international publication *The Health of Youth: A Cross-National Survey* (1996); the third, in two publications *Trends in the Health of Canadian Youth* (1999) and *Health and Health Behaviour among Young People* (2000); the fourth, in a national report *Young People in Canada: Their*

Health and Well-being (2004); the fifth in a national report *Healthy Settings for Young People in Canada* (2008), the sixth in a national report *The Health of Canada's Young People: A Mental Health Focus* (2012), and the seventh in a national report, *The Health Behaviour Survey of School-aged Children: A Focus on Relationships*.

HBSC uses a population health framework, recognizing that the determinants of health operate at two levels: (a) the individual level and (b) the ecological level (Advisory Committee on Population Health, 1994). In accordance with the World Health Organization (WHO) perspective, health is acknowledged as a resource for everyday living and not just the absence of disease. As such, the HBSC regards young people's health in its broadest sense, encompassing physical, social, and emotional well-being. The HBSC survey adopts a three-pronged approach to conducting research with adolescents, each approach representing a dimension of students' lives. A developmental approach examines students' lives at 11, 13, and 15 years of age to investigate significant changes that occur in health behaviours and attitudes from the onset of puberty to the middle of adolescence. A socio-demographic approach explores factors such as gender, cultural diversity, and socio-economic determinants in relation to health outcomes. An ecological perspective incorporates contextual determinants – such as the home, school, peers, neighbourhoods, and geographic locations – that may shape or influence a variety of behaviours, attitudes, and outcomes for young people. A broad range of outcomes are examined in the study in relation to the above three dimensions; these include the conventional health-compromising behavioural outcomes, such as smoking, alcohol use, limited physical activity, bullying, and injuries. In addition, the HBSC measures positive adolescent developmental outcomes such as happiness, life satisfaction, emotional well-being, relationships with others, attachment and connectedness to school, and student participation in curricular and extra-curricular activities (Currie et al., 2001).

The overall purposes of the HBSC study in Canada are as follows:

- To collect data on school-aged children that allows researchers to gain insights into young people's attitudes and behaviours, and examine the relationships between contextual factors and health behaviours.

- To contribute to the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological development of research related to youth as it pertains to health in schools, a prime setting for health monitoring and interventions.
- To develop a national information system on the health and lifestyles of young people in Canada that documents trends.
- To disseminate findings to relevant audiences, including researchers, health and education policy-makers, health promotion practitioners, teachers, parents, and young people.
- To provide a knowledge base to inform policy and practice to improve the lives of young people.
- To promote and strengthen national and international expertise on health behaviour and the social and environmental contexts of health in school-aged children.

Survey Administration

The HBSC was conducted by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics (YBS), on behalf of Canadian HBSC Research Team/Queen's University, and the Yukon Government Departments of Health and Social Services and Education. The survey results are considered important by these government groups because they offer a means of providing a wealth of information that could guide health promotion programming, curriculum development and selection, and school policy. For the third time allocated funding made it possible to target a sample that included every student in Grades 6 to 10 in the territory. Through a consultative process with representatives from the Yukon, the HBSC national standard set of items was adapted to create a Yukon specific questionnaire with the goal of being more culturally relevant, respectful of the students experience and the information needs of Yukon communities.

Experienced interviewers from the Yukon Bureau of Statistics travelled to each of the participating communities to administer the surveys. School administrators were contacted prior to these visits in order to go over the logistics of carrying out the survey, to arrange a convenient time to visit the school and to find out how many students would be in each group

(Grades 6-8; Grades 9-10). At the beginning of each survey session, the interviewers introduced the survey, explained the importance of collecting the data, described how the results would be used, and answered questions that students had. Students were provided with paper questionnaires that were made up primarily of questions they were to respond to by checking off a box beside the response category that best fit them. In Grades 6 and 7, the survey was read aloud in order to be respectful of the varied comprehension levels of students. This process helped keep the class together so that students could complete the survey at the same time. The classroom teacher was invited to stay in the classroom while the survey was being administered but was asked not to walk about so that the students' answers to survey items would remain confidential. At the end of the survey session, each questionnaire was put into its own privacy envelope and sealed by the student. The data collection time for each classroom visit ranged from a low of about 45 minutes to a high of 1 hour and 15 minutes. YBS collected the questionnaires and forwarded them to Queen's University, where the surveys were processed, entered into a statistics database (SPSS) and researchers analyzed the data.

The data collection was carried out in February and March of 2018. In total, 12 schools in rural Yukon and 16 schools in Whitehorse were visited. A total of 1,450 useable questionnaires were completed and mailed to Queen's University (see Tables 1.1 and 1.2). A small number of questionnaires were determined to be unusable and are not included in the final Yukon data set. Unusable questionnaires were those that were very incomplete or identified as not having been answered honestly. Notes made by students on the questionnaires, internal inconsistencies and patterns of responses were used to inform this decision-making process. One administrator from 22 of the 28 schools completed the Administrator Questionnaire. It is noteworthy that some students enrolled in Grades 9 and 10 classes in Whitehorse are from rural communities and the responses of these students are subsumed in the Whitehorse data. Since the survey was administered in school, youth who are no longer attending are not represented in the data set. It is important to recognize this when extrapolating the results to age cohorts, and in making comparisons across gender or geography, particularly if drop-out rates are different for boys and girls, or youth living in Whitehorse versus rural communities.

For presentation purposes, Grades 6 through 8 are combined and Grades 9 and 10 are combined. Two students who self-identified as Grade 5 students are included in the Grades 6-8 group and eleven students who self-identified as Grade 11 students are in the Grades 9-10 group. Students were asked to self-identify according to the following three categories, "Male", "Female", or "Neither term describes me". Overall, 20 students checked off "neither term describes me". Due to small cell sizes this group is not identified in the tables and figures, but they are included in the numbers presented for Yukon students as a whole.

Table 1.1: Number of Completed Survey Questionnaires, by grade

Location	**Grades 6, 7 and 8**			**Grades 9 and 10**		
	Enrolment	Sample	Participation rate	Enrolment	Sample	Participation rate
Rural Yukon	229	165	72.1%	149	112	75.2%
Whitehorse	941	745	79.2%	661	427	64.6%
Total	1,170	910	77.8%	810	539	66.5%

Table 1.2: Distribution of Respondents by region, gender, and grade[1]

		Boys	**Girls**	**Total**
Grades 6-8	Rural Yukon	75	85	160
	Whitehorse	386	347	733
	Total	**461**	**432**	**893**
Grades 9-10	Rural Yukon	61	48	109
	Whitehorse	216	200	416
	Total	**277**	**248**	**525**

[1] These are numbers in the final data file. The numbers do not match what appears in Table 1 since some questionnaires were spoiled, empty, or very incomplete and are, therefore, not included as part of the final data file.

Outline of Report

This report presents key findings from the 2018 cycle of the HBSC survey in Yukon and includes chapters on the following topics:

- Home
- Friends
- School
- Community
- Health
- Healthy Behaviours
- Health Risk Behaviours
- Violence and Bullying
- Injuries

The choice of focus areas and items for presentation was made in consultation with the Departments of Health and Education in Yukon and researchers at Queen's University. Health outcomes are examined in relation to gender, grade, and urban/rural location. The decision to present findings by grade, gender, and location was also a collaborative one. Urban/rural designations were determined by school location, and do not necessarily reflect the communities in which students reside. Each chapter includes an introduction to the theme and descriptions of the measures presented. The introduction is followed by tables and figures that illustrate the analyses of the corresponding variables, with a short accompanying text providing interpretation for each figure or table. Summaries of findings are interspersed within these chapters. A concluding chapter summarizes the overall findings of the report, presenting causes for celebration and causes for concern.

2. HOME

Throughout development, the family is an important socializing force, influencing young people's actions, values, and beliefs (Parke & Buriel, 2006). As behavioural models, the family plays a key role in a variety of health-promoting behaviours. Physical activity and healthy eating in youth are associated with family functioning (Berge, Wall, Larson, Loth, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2013), responsive parenting, and parental actions that facilitate healthy living (Rew, Arheart, Thompson & Johnson, 2013). Food habits, physical activity, and educational aspirations are more influenced, particularly in early adolescence, by parents than by peers (Inchley, Todd, Bryce, & Currie, 2001; Mazur, Scheidt, Overpeck, Harel, & Molcho, 2001). Thus, parents have an important role to play in the development of healthy behaviours in youth.

As youth enter adolescence, their peers begin to have an influence on risk-taking behaviours, including smoking and substance use (Cavalca et al., 2013; Osgood et al., 2013; Simons-Morton & Chen, 2006). Despite this peer influence, the family is still a significant contributor to the development of risk-taking behaviours in adolescence. Parents who provide their children with support, who share a strong connection with their children, and who provide supervision for their children during adolescence can buffer the influence peers have on these health risk behaviours (Bremner, Burnett, Nunney, Ravat, & Mistral, 2011).

In addition to their influence on healthy and risk-taking behaviours, parents also play a significant role in supporting young people's psychological and emotional health and well-being. Youth with strong attachments and supportive relationships with their parents are more likely to have high self-esteem. These positive parental connections may also help adolescents to cope with challenges and struggles (Bulanda & Majumdar, 2009), including mental health problems (Leone, Ray, & Evans, 2013). In addition, parental support and connectedness may buffer youth from suicide attempts (Borowsky, Ireland, & Resnick, 2001).

Adolescence marks a time of great social and emotional change, where youth begin to expand their networks of social support. Despite the increase in social support from friends and partners during adolescence, parental support continues to be a key factor in healthy mental and physical development. Therefore, it is important to examine the home setting to better understand its relationship to health behaviours in school-aged children. This chapter

examines the relationships adolescents have with their parents. These relationships are assessed by asking students in Grades 6 to 10 about how supported they feel by their family; if their parents expect too much of them; if they feel understood by their parents; if they have a happy home life; if they have thoughts of leaving home; and the ease at which they communicate with their mother and father.

Table 2.1: Students living in single parent homes and students living with their mothers, by grade

	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-10
Living with both parents	66	58
Living with mother and partner	4	6
Living with father and partner	2	2
Living with mother only	19	21
Living with father only	4	7
Other	6	6

Family Support Scale

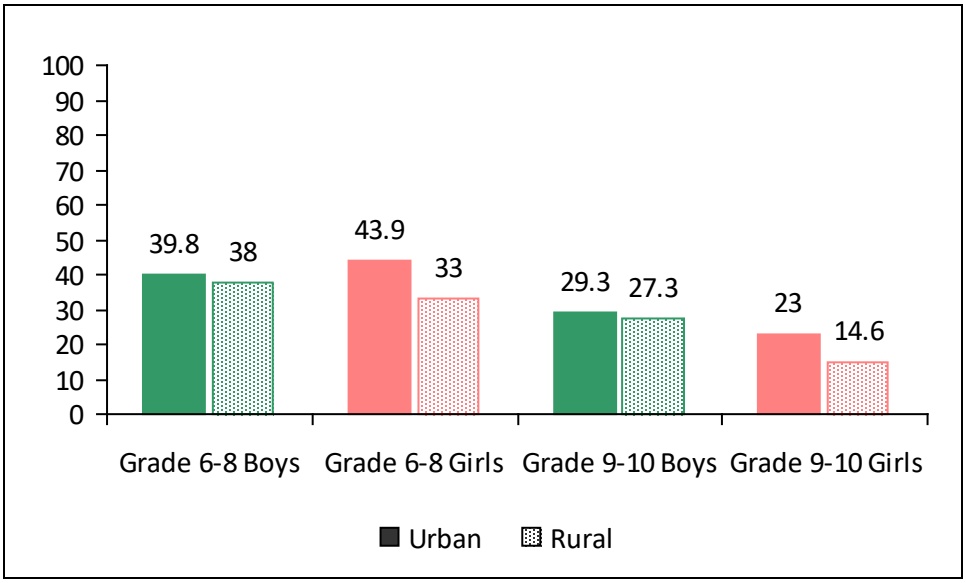
The family support scale (Table 2.2) is comprised of four items with a reliability of 0.93. The four items in the family support scale are: my family really tries to help me; I get the emotional help and support I need from my family; my family is willing to help me make decisions; and I can talk about my problems with my family. All items were reported on a seven-point scale ranging from “very strongly disagree” to “very strongly agree. Based on the level of family support the students reported, they were divided into three approximately equal groups: low family support, moderate family support, and high family support. Thirty-six and a half percent of the students were in the group with the highest family support.

Table 2.2: Family Support

My family really tries to help me.	Anchored Scale 1= Very strongly disagree, 2 . . 6 7= Very strongly agree
I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.	
My family is willing to help me make decisions.	
I can talk about my problems with my family.	

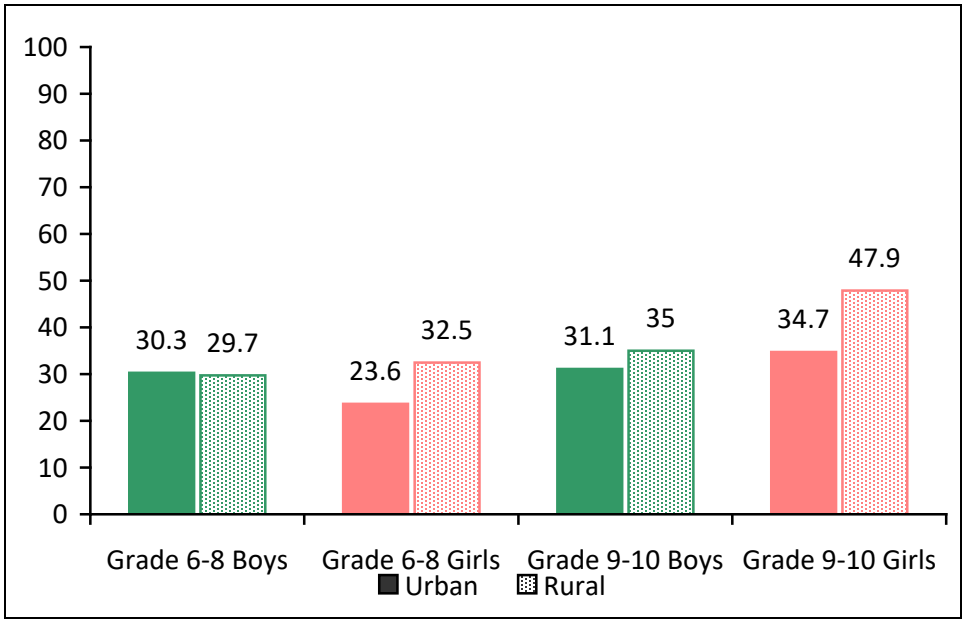
In Grades 6-8, urban girls are more likely to be in the high group on family support than girls in the rest of Yukon (Figure 2.1). Urban girls are also more likely than rural boys to be in the high group on family support. There is no difference between urban and rural for family support in boys at this grade level. In Grades 9-10, urban boys are no more likely to be in the high third of the family support scale than boys in the rest of Yukon. However, a higher proportion of urban girls are in the high family support group at this grade level than rural girls. Finally, Grade 9-10 students in all locations are less likely to have high family support than Grade 6-8 students.

Figure 2.1: Students who score in the high third (34.9%) of the family support scale, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Grade 9-10 boys in rural areas tend to see their parents as expecting more of them than do those in urban areas (Figure 2.2). The same pattern can be seen in Grades 6-8 and Grades 9-10 girls, with girls in rural areas reporting higher parental expectations than girls in urban areas. Parental expectations increase across grades, although minimally for urban boys.

Figure 2.2: Students who agree or strongly agree with the statement "My parents expect too much of me," by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)

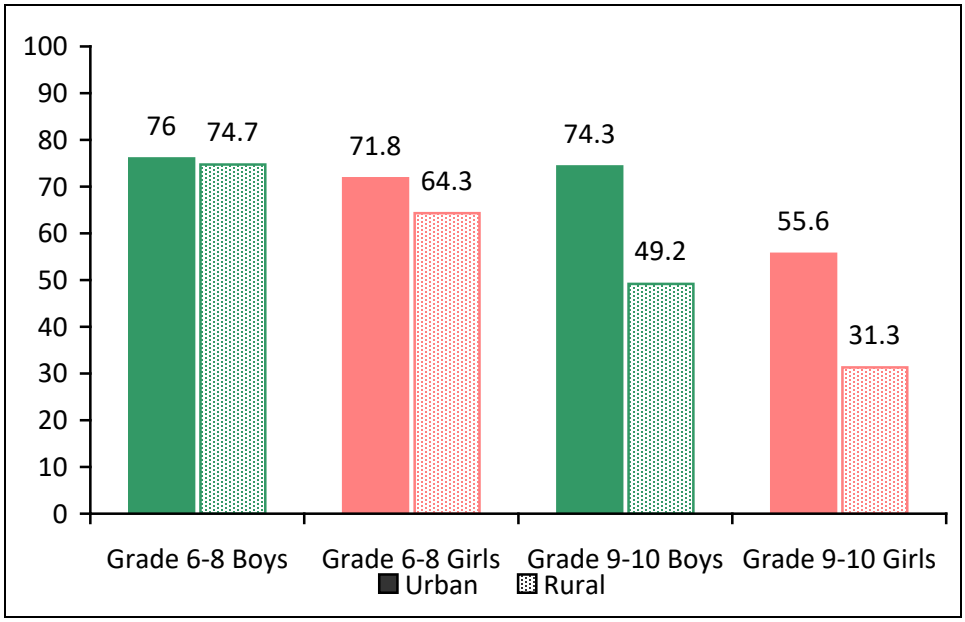


***Total = 30.5**

Younger students in Yukon view their parents as more understanding than do older students (Figure 2.3). Additionally, boys view their parents as more understanding than do girls. Location is not important for Grade 6-8 boys, while urban girls report slightly higher parental understanding than rural girls. However, in Grades 9-10, rural boys and girls report lower levels of parental understanding than urban boys and girls.

*Note the total number refers to all the average percentage across all students males, females, and gender not specified

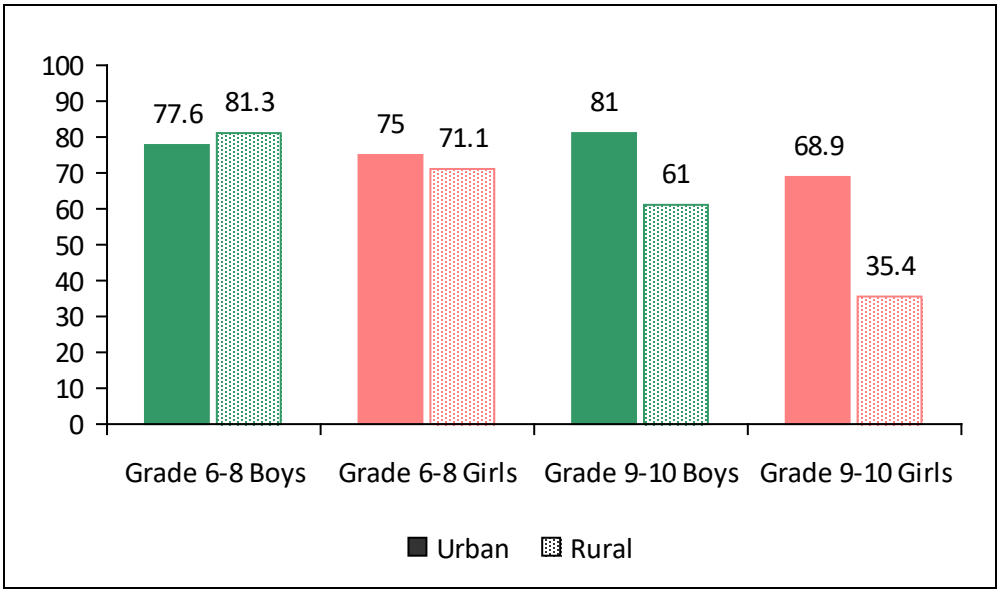
Figure 2.3: Students who agree or strongly agree with the statement "My parents understand me," by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 67.9

Younger students and male students agree or strongly agree that they have a happy home life in comparison to older students and female students (Figure 2.4). In Grades 9-10, both girls and boys in rural areas report lower endorsements of a happy home life than girls and boys in urban areas. Happiness of home life is lower for rural boys and girls in Grades 9-10 compared to Grades 6-8.

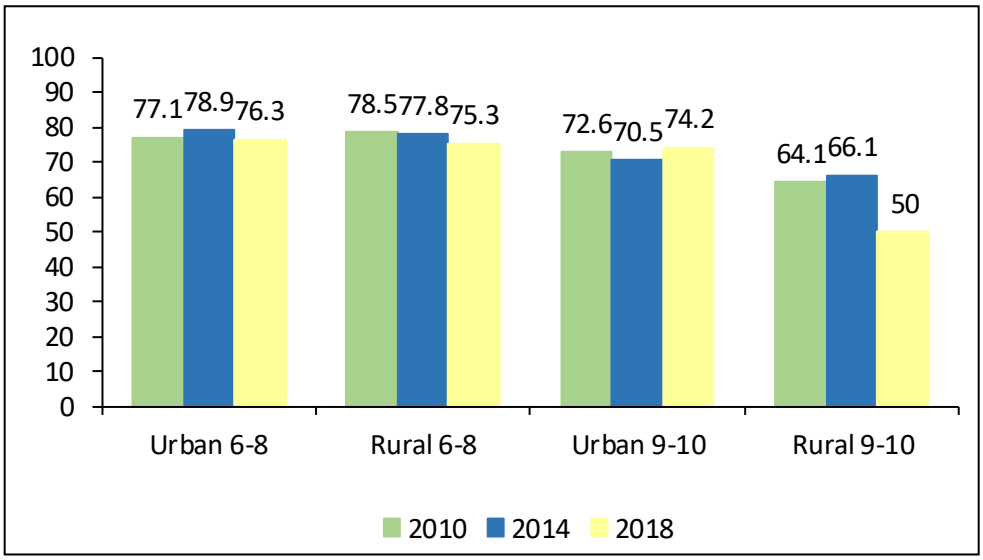
Figure 2.4: Students who agree or strongly agree with the statement "I have a happy home life," by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 73.5

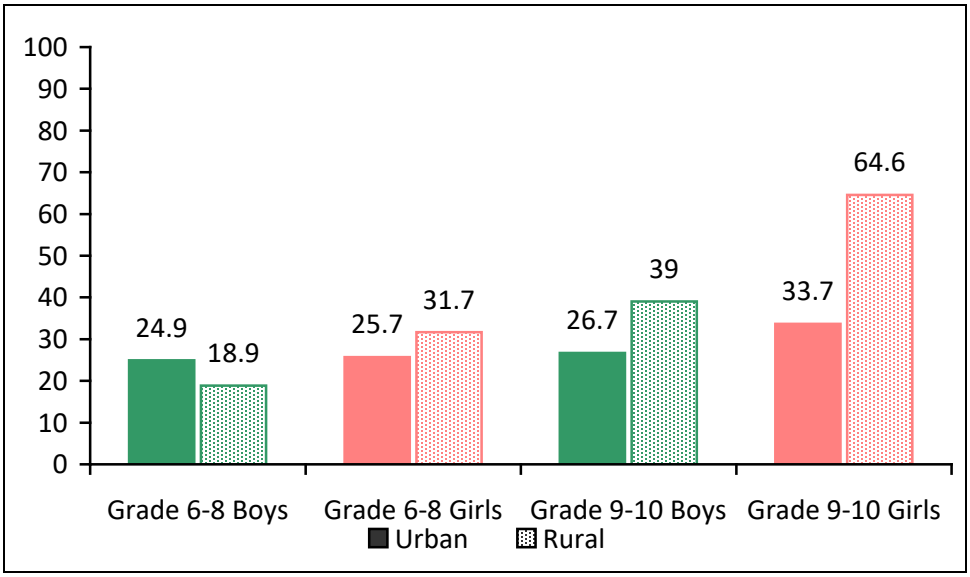
With the exception of older rural students, the proportion of students who reported having a happy home life did not change significantly from 2010 to 2018 (Figure 2.5). A smaller percentage of Grade 9-10 students in rural Yukon consistently reported having a happy home life. In 2018, this number of Grade 9-10 rural students reporting a happy home life was only 50%. In this group of students, the proportion of students decreased from 64% in 2010 to 50% in 2018.

Figure 2.5: Students who agree or strongly agree with the statement "I have a happy home life, by year of administration, and urban/rural status (%)



In the lower grades, urban boys are much more likely to report wanting to leave home compared to rural boys (24.9% versus 18.9% respectively) (Figure 2.6). The pattern is the opposite for girls in the lower grades, with 25.75 of urban girls reporting wanting to leave home versus 31.7% of rural girls. However, in Grades 9-10, rural students are much more likely than urban students to say they would like to leave home. Grade 9-10 girls in rural locations are the most likely to express a desire to leave home, followed by Grade 9-10 boys in rural locations.

Figure 2.6: Students who agree or strongly agree with the statement "There are times I would like to leave home," by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 29.0

Chapter Summary

The family continues to be an important socializing influence as young people progress through adolescence (Berge et al., 2013; Bulanda & Majumdar, 2009; Parke & Buriel, 2006). Strong parental relationships can have buffering effects on health problems, and has been linked to better physical well-being (Inchley et al., 2001; Mazur et al., 2001), decreased substance use (Bremner et al., 2011; Cavalca et al., 2013; Osgood et al., 2013), better mental health (Leone et al., 2013), and lowered likelihood of youth suicide (Borowsky et al., 2001).

The majority of Yukon youth describe positive relationships with their parents. They feel their parents understand them and describe their home life as happy. Less than half of the students feel their parents expect too much of them and (with the exception of Grade 9-10 rural girls) do not think of leaving home.

Although the majority of Yukon youth have positive familial relationships, there are still important differences based on grade level and gender. In comparison to Grade 9-10 students, Grade 6-8 students report more understanding parents, a happier home life, and less desire to leave home. For all these items, boys are more likely to be positive than girls. Younger students

and urban students are also more likely to be in the high family support group than older students and rural students. Although younger, urban girls are more likely to be in the high support group than younger boys and younger rural girls, this pattern changes for older students, with girls in both locations less likely to be in the high third of family support than boys. Parental expectations are higher for older students than for younger students and for Grade 9-10 urban girls compared to Grade 9-10 urban boys. Rural students in Grades 9-10 have higher parental expectations than urban students in Grades 9-10.

3. FRIENDS

Relationships with friends are highly influential for school-aged youth, contributing to psychological, social, and emotional development (Bukowski, Burmester, & Underwood, 2011). Friendships become especially salient during adolescence, as youth pursue greater autonomy from parents and deeper engagement with peers (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). This includes friendships with peers of the same and opposite sex (Lam, McHale, & Crouter. 2014). With this enhanced salience for peer-relationships, friends become important sources of companionship, validation, and mutual support during adolescents (Bukowski, Hoza, & Boivin, 1994; Juvonen, Espinoza, & Knifsend, 2012).

Adolescents are highly susceptible to peer-influence, which can have both adaptive and maladaptive impacts. Healthy relationships build resiliency (van Harmelen et al., 2017) and are associated with high self-esteem (Bi, Ma, Yuan, & Zhang, 2016), and academic achievement (Shin & Ryan, 2014), with friends becoming more similar to each other over time. In addition to the psycho-social and academic benefits of this closeness, research shows that teenage friends also are susceptible to adopting maladaptive behaviours, including impulsive risk taking (Romer et al., 2017) and marijuana use (Tucker et al., 2014). In contrast, increased feelings of alienation and perceived lack of social support in the absence of healthy friendships are associated with higher likelihood of avoiding school and greater risk for dropping out (Juvonen et al., 2012). Healthy friendships in youth play a large role in well-being and help to hone the social and emotional skills that shape future relationships.

This chapter examines students' friendships with their peers. These relationships are assessed by asking students how supported they feel by their friends and the ease with which they can communicate and share concerns with their friends. Peer relationships in adolescence are often formed on the basis of shared interests. This chapter also explores positive-social behaviours and the risk-taking behaviours of the adolescents' peers.

Friend Support Scale

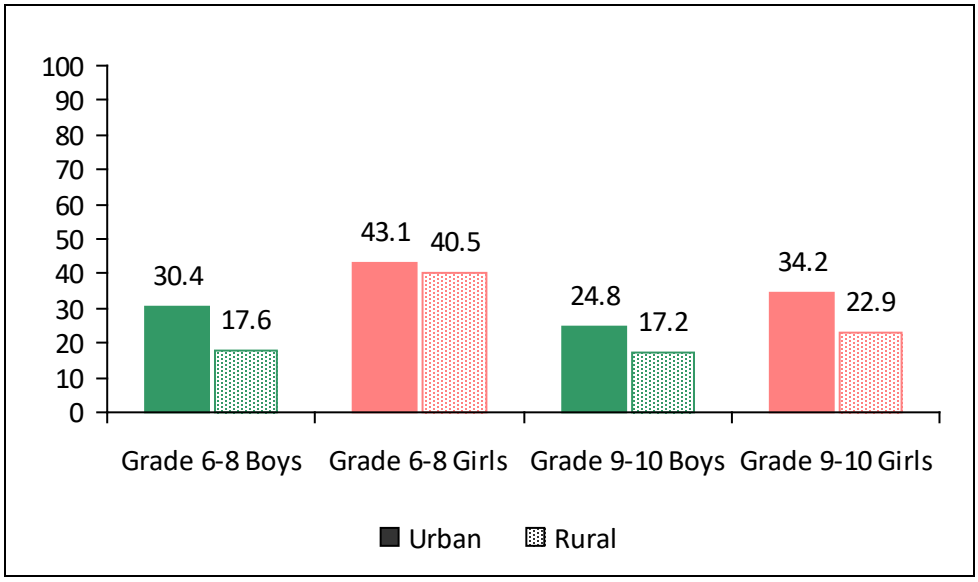
The friend support scale is comprised of four items (see Table 3.1) with a reliability of 0.93. The four items included in the friend support scale are: my friends really try to help me, I can count on my friends when things go wrong, I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows, and I can talk about my problems with my friends. All items were reported on a seven -point scale anchored by "very strongly agree" and "very strongly disagree." When students are divided into three approximately equal sized groups with respect to friend support, 32.3% of students are in the group with the highest friend support.

Table 3.1: Friend Support

My friends really try to help me.	Anchored Scale 1= Very strongly disagree, 2 . . 6 7= Very strongly agree
I can count on my friends when things go wrong.	
I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	
I can talk about my problems with my friends.	

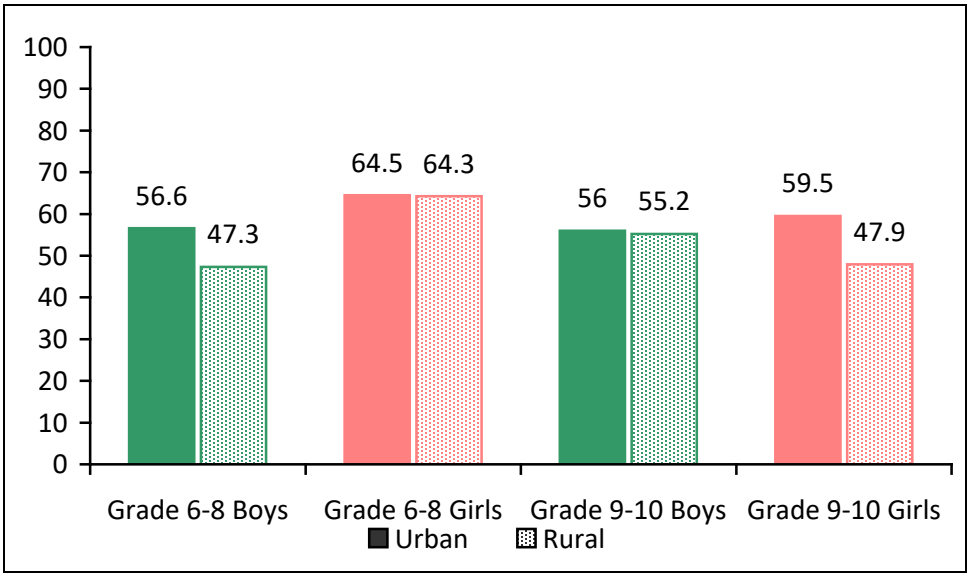
Friend support varies by gender, location, and age (Figure 3.1). The proportion of students scoring in the high third of the friend support scale ranges from 17.2% for rural boys in Grades 9-10 to 43.1% for urban girls in Grades 6-8. Girls are more likely than boys to be in the high third of the friend support scale, in either grade grouping, and for both urban and rural students. Urban students have a consistently greater probability of being in the high friend support group compared to rural students. Friend support appears to decrease for older students, as students in Grades 6-8 are more likely to be in the high third of the friend support scale than those in Grades 9-10.

Figure 3.1: Students who score in the high third (32.3%) of the friend support scale, by age, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



The majority of urban students agree with the statement "I can count on my friends when things go wrong" (56% at minimum, represented by boys in Grades 9-10) (Figure 3.2). A slightly lower proportion of rural students agree with this statement (47.3% at minimum, represented by boys in Grades 6-8). There is little difference between urban and rural students for younger girls (Grades 6-8) and older boys (Grades 9-10). This sense of friendship reliability is more prevalent in younger girls than older ones, while this sentiment appears more stable for boys in either grade level.

Figure 3.2: Students who agree with the statement "I can count on my friends when things go wrong," by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 58.8

Grade 9-10 students also reported on the perceived participation in positive social behaviours (Table 3.2) and risk behaviours (Table 3.3) of friends with whom they spend most of their leisure time. A higher proportion of urban students than rural students report high levels for all positive friend behaviours, except participation in cultural activities. Rural girls are most likely to report that their friends participate in cultural activities (31.3%). This percentage is more than 3 times the proportion of their urban counterparts (only 9.7%). Girls are more likely than boys to see their friends as doing well at school and helping others in need. In contrast, a higher proportion of boys have friends who get along with their parents. This difference is especially marked for rural students. Only 25% of female, rural students perceive this positive friend behaviour, compared to the 44.6% of rural males. The majority of students report having friends who participate in organized sports (at least 50.9%, represented by rural males), with urban boys being the most likely to perceive this positive friend behaviour (61%). Meanwhile, urban girls are most likely to have friends who care for the environment (39.5%).

Table 3.2: Positive Social Behaviours – Grade 9 and 10 students responding that most or all of the group of friends with whom they spend most of their leisure time participate in positive behaviours, by urban/rural status, and gender (%)

	Male Urban	Male Rural	Female Urban	Female Rural
Do well at school	65.7	45.6	68.4	50.0
Participate in organized sports activities with others	61.0	50.9	56.2	52.1
Participate in cultural activities other than sports	14.8	26.3	9.7	31.3
Get along well with their parents	59.4	44.6	50.3	25.0
Care for the environment	32.0	28.1	39.5	22.9
Help others in need	41.9	37.9	48.5	45.8

Patterns of friends' risk behaviours are also linked to urban/rural status, as well as gender (Table 3.3). Rural students are more likely than urban students to have friends that participate in all risk behaviours, regardless of gender. Girls are more likely than boys to report having friends who smoke cigarettes, for both urban and rural students. Rural boys are most likely to have friends that get drunk at least once a week (28.1%), as well as using drugs to get stoned (42.1%). This prevalence is especially striking in comparison to their urban counterparts. Urban, male students are least likely to have friends participating in any of the three risk behaviours (6.4-17.6%).

Table 3.3: Risk Behaviours – Grade 9 and 10 students responding that most or all of the group of friends with whom they spend most of their leisure time participate in negative behaviours, by urban/rural status, and gender (%)

	Male Urban	Male Rural	Female Urban	Female Rural
Smoke cigarettes	6.4	29.8	11.8	33.3
Get drunk at least once a week	6.9	28.1	11.3	25.0
Have used drugs to get stoned	17.6	42.1	23.8	33.3

Chapter Summary

High quality friendships in youth are important for psycho-social and emotional development (Bukowski, Burmester, & Underwood, 2011). Increased salience of peer-relationships and growing autonomy from parents serve to reinforce the influence of friendships at this age (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). These friendships can have the benefit of strengthening adaptive behaviours (van Harmelen et al. 2017; Bi, Ma, Yuan, & Zhang, 2016; Shin & Ryan, 2014) as well as the potential to cultivate maladaptive habits (Tucker et al., 2014; Juvonen et al., 2012; Lam, McHale, & Crouter, 2014). As such, adolescent friendships contribute greatly to mental health and well-being.

For Youth in the Yukon, there is a considerable range in the proportion of students who feel highly supported by friends. Girls are more likely than boys to feel highly supported by their friends, especially urban girls in Grades 6-8. For students living in urban areas, the prevalence of feeling highly supported by friends is greater than that of their rural counterparts. The proportion of students who report high friend support is least for rural boys in Grades 9-10. Similarly, the majority of urban students report believing they can count on their friends when things go wrong. The sentiment is slightly less prevalent for rural students. Younger, urban girls are again most likely to identify with this measure of positive, peer support. The gender differences here may reflect the strong role of supportiveness and emotional awareness for female friendships (Rowsell et al., 2014), compared to the heightened emphasis for companionship in male friendships (Arbeit et al., 2016). Regardless of gender, increased closeness in friendship is associated with being able to talk about one's problems (Rose, Smith, Glick, & Schwartz-Mette, 2016), emphasizing the importance of believing you can count on your friends when things for wrong. Rural boys may therefore experience less of the benefits associated with highly supportive friendships compared to other students in the Yukon.

Differences in patterns for friend behaviours (measured in only students in Grades 9-10) are related to both location and gender. Living in urban areas is associated with a higher prevalence of all positive friend behaviours, with the exception of participation in cultural activities. Among the most common of positive friend behaviours, friends' participation in

organized sports is reported by at least 50% of students in any group. Positive behaviours like doing well in school and helping others in need are more prevalent among the friends of girls, whereas boys are more likely to have friends who get along with their parents. Friends of rural girls are particularly under-represented in this positive social behaviour. Living in rural areas appears to be associated with lower prevalence of positive friend behaviours. This may, in turn, be related to lesser benefits from the adaptive behaviours of friends for older, rural students.

The high prevalence of friend risk behaviours is of particular concern for older students living in the rural areas of the Yukon. Rural students are more likely to have friends who participate in all of the measured risk behaviours. Smoking cigarettes is most prevalent for the friends of rural girls, while more than a quarter of rural boys reported having friends who got drunk within the last week. Nearly half of older rural boys have friends who use drugs to get stoned. These numbers are especially glaring in contrast to urban boys who are least likely of all groups to have friends who patriciate in any of these risk behaviours. Special focus must be paid to older rural students in the Yukon, whose friendships may be increasing their susceptibility to risky and maladaptive social behaviours.

4. SCHOOL

Schools are important social environments that influence youth development. As a result, it is important to examine students' experiences at school. While schools are important for students' academic success, they also influence adolescents' social-emotional health and well-being (Anderman, 2002; Kidger, Araya, Donovan, & Gunnell, 2012; McLaughlin, 2008; Wells, Barlow, & Stewart-Brown, 2003). Schools can promote students' health and well-being through curriculum, the physical environment, and the overall climate (Weare, 2000).

School climate encompasses the norms, practices, and qualities of interpersonal relationships that shape students' experiences at school (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). For most students, their school experiences are positive. Students are provided opportunities to form relationships with their peers and teachers, while also learning and developing life skills. Students who experience a positive school climate are less likely to engage in risk-taking behaviours that will negatively affect their health (Klein, Cornell, & Konold, 2012; Resnick et al., 1997). Safe and inclusive school communities foster students' social-emotional well-being (McLaughlin, 2008). Moreover, supportive and respectful teachers can increase students' engagement at school (Ryan & Patrick, 2001).

Unfortunately, school can be a frightening and unwelcoming place for some youth. Students who feel excluded from the school community experience more mental health problems (Shochet, Dadds, Ham, & Montague, 2006), and lower self-confidence (King, Vadourek, Davis, & McLellan, 2002). Furthermore, students who feel excluded at school are more likely to experience academic difficulties and disengage from school (Bond et al., 2007; Osterman, 2000). Disengaged youth are prone to forming relationships with like-minded peers, which may result in the development of further health-risk behaviours (Connop & King, 1999). In addition, negative school climates and lower rates of teacher support are associated with greater levels of reported student mental health problems (Wang & Degol, 2016). Receiving support from teachers (Klinger et al., 2011) and feeling connected with peers are imperative in promoting and supporting positive mental health in young people (La Greca & Harrison, 2005). Schools play an important role in further educating teachers about how to provide support for

students (Reinke, Stormont, Herman, Puri, & Goel, 2011; Whitley, Smith, & Vaillancourt, 2012) and fostering caring, respectful relationships among students (Klinger et al., 2011).

The first part of this chapter examines youths' experiences of their school climate. In addition, this chapter explores students' liking of school, their relationships with school teachers, and relationships with classmates. Specifically, students in Grades 6 to 10 are asked about their perceptions of teachers' acceptance and care. Students are also asked about the kindness and helpfulness of their classmates, and how accepting their classmates are of them.

School Climate Scale

The school climate scale is comprised of four items (see Table 4.1) and demonstrates good reliability ($\alpha = 0.82$). The first three items ("The rules in this school are fair", "our school is a nice place to be", and "I feel I belong at this school") were reported on a five-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The fourth item ("How do you feel about school at present?) was reported on a four-point scale ranging from "I don't like it at all" to "I like it a lot". When students were divided into three approximately equal sized groups according to their ratings of school climate, 30.6% of students were in the high school climate group.

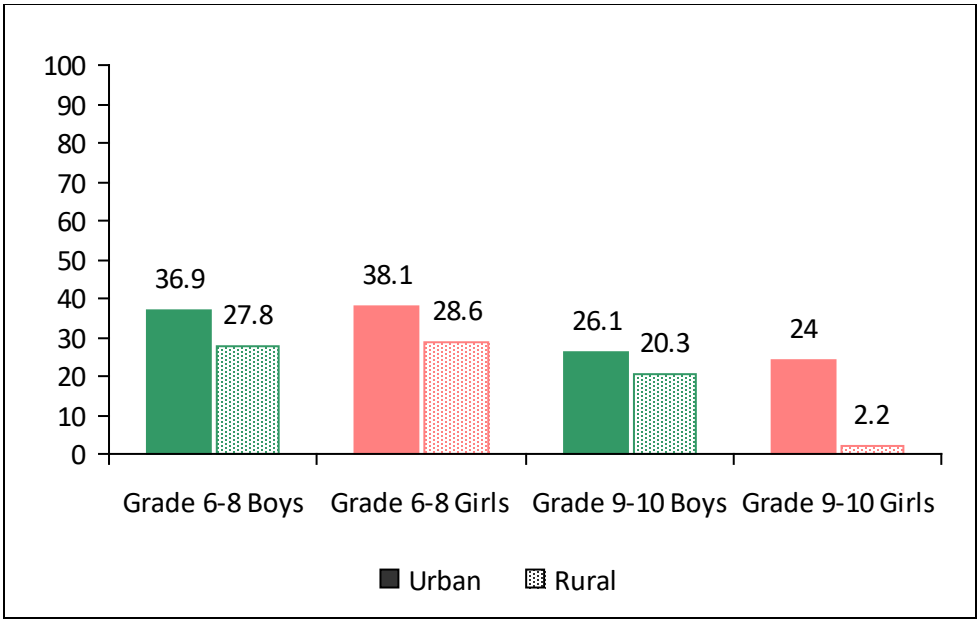
Table 4.1: School Climate

The rules in this school are fair.	1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neither agree nor disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree
Our school is a nice place to be.	
I feel I belong at this school.	
How do you feel about school at present?	1= I don't like it at all, 2= I don't like it very much, 4= I like it a bit, 5= I like it a lot

Older school students are less likely to be in the high school climate group in comparison to younger students (Figure 4.1). Urban students are more likely to be in high school climate group than rural students. Boys and girls are equally likely to be in the high school climate group across grade and urban/rural status, except for older rural students. For Grade 9-10 rural students, girls are less likely to be in the high school climate group than boys.

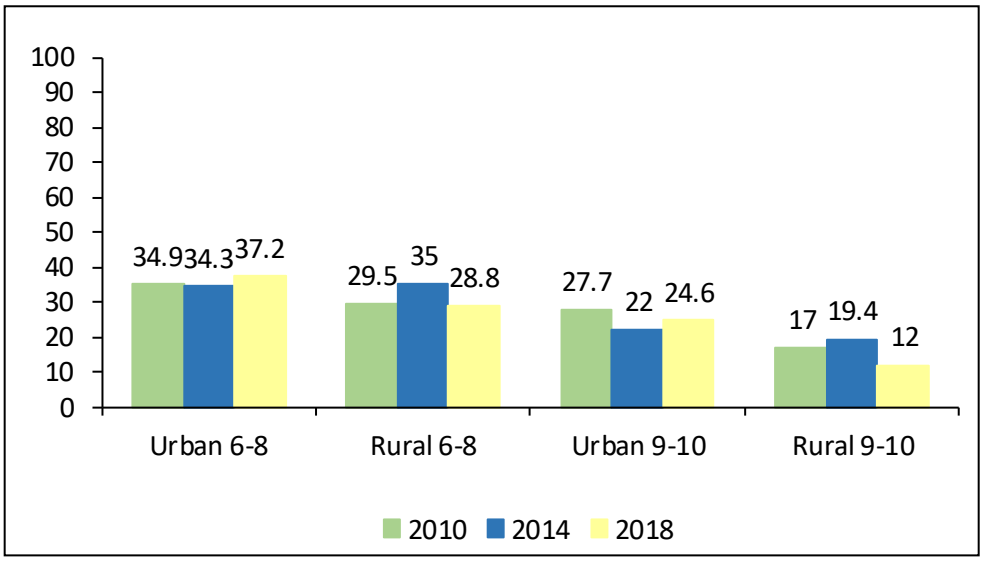
Older, rural girls are also less likely to score high on school climate in comparison to younger girls. Only 2.2% of Grade 9-10 rural girls are in the high school climate group in comparison to 28.6% of Grade 6-8 rural girls.

Figure 4.1: Students who score in the high third (30.6%) of the school climate scale, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



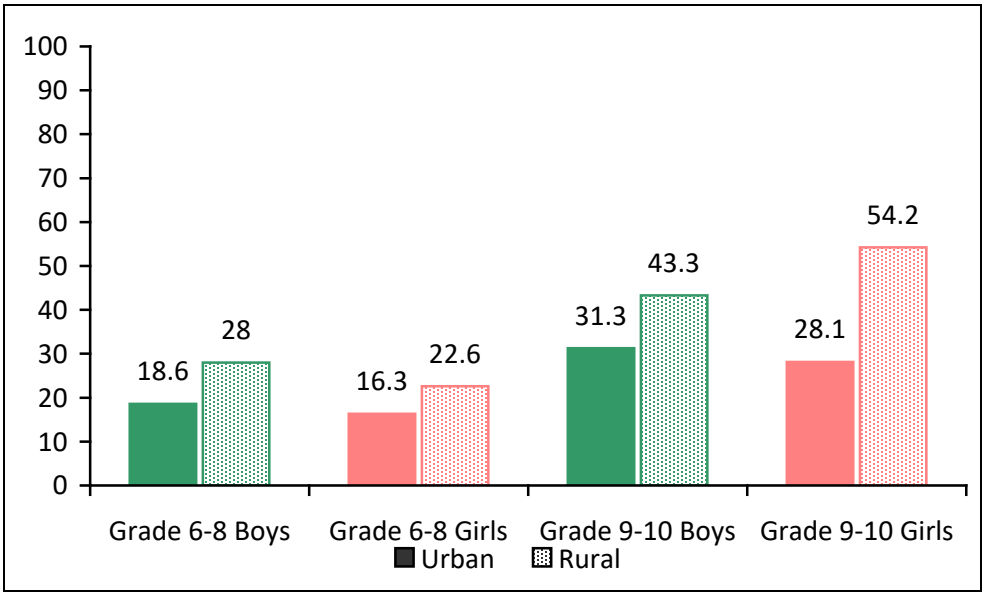
In general, the proportion of students who scored high on the school climate scale did not change significantly from 2010 to 2018 (Figure 4.2). Grade 9-10 students in rural Yukon were consistently the least likely to score high on the school climate scale over this time period. In this group of students, the proportion of students decreased from 17% in 2010 to 12% in 2018.

Figure 4.2: Students who scored high of the school climate scale, by year of administration, and urban/rural status (%)



Older students are more likely to dislike school than younger students (Figure 4.3). Rural students are more likely to dislike school in comparison to urban students across all grades. Except for Grade 9-10 rural students, boys and girls are equally likely to dislike school. Among Grade 9-10 rural students, girls are more likely to dislike school in comparison to boys. Grade 9-10 rural girls are most vulnerable to disliking school, as more than half (54.2%) the students report that they do not like school, whereas 22.6% of Grade 6-8 rural girls dislike school.

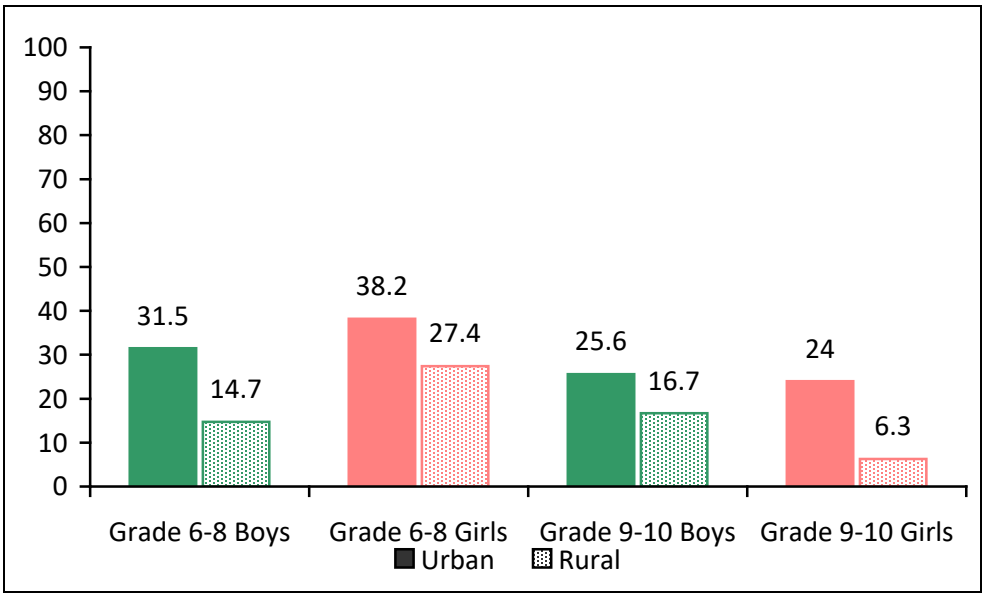
Figure 4.3: Students who do not like school at present (I don't like it very much and I don't like it at all), by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 24.6

Across all grades, urban students like school "a lot" more than rural students (Figure 4.4). The difference between urban and rural students is most pronounced among Grade 6-8 boys (31.5% urban; 14.7% rural) and Grade 9-10 girls (24% urban; 6.3% rural). Younger students generally like school "a lot" more than older students, except for rural boys. Liking school "a lot" ranges from 6.3% (Grade 9-10 rural girls) to 38.2% (Grade 6-8 urban girls).

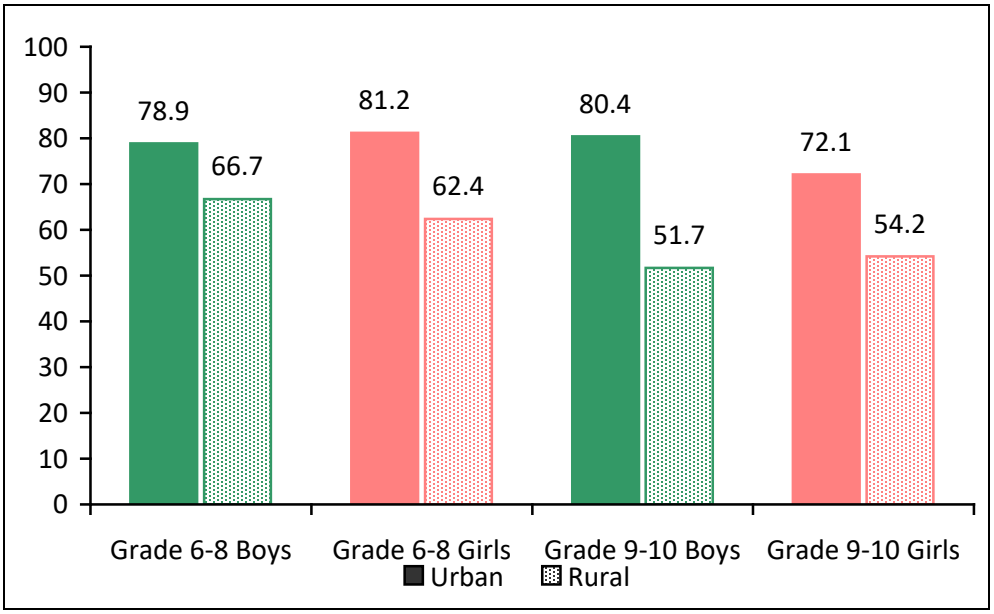
Figure 4.4: Students who like school a lot, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 28.4

Urban students are more likely to feel accepted by their teachers in comparison to their rural peers (Figure 4.5). Older students generally feel less accepted by teachers than younger students, except for Grade 9-10 urban boys. Rural older students are least likely to feel accepted by their teachers (51.7% boys; 54.2% girls). There are minimal gender differences in teacher acceptance, except for urban older students. Urban Grade 9-10 boys were more likely to feel accepted by their teachers than girls.

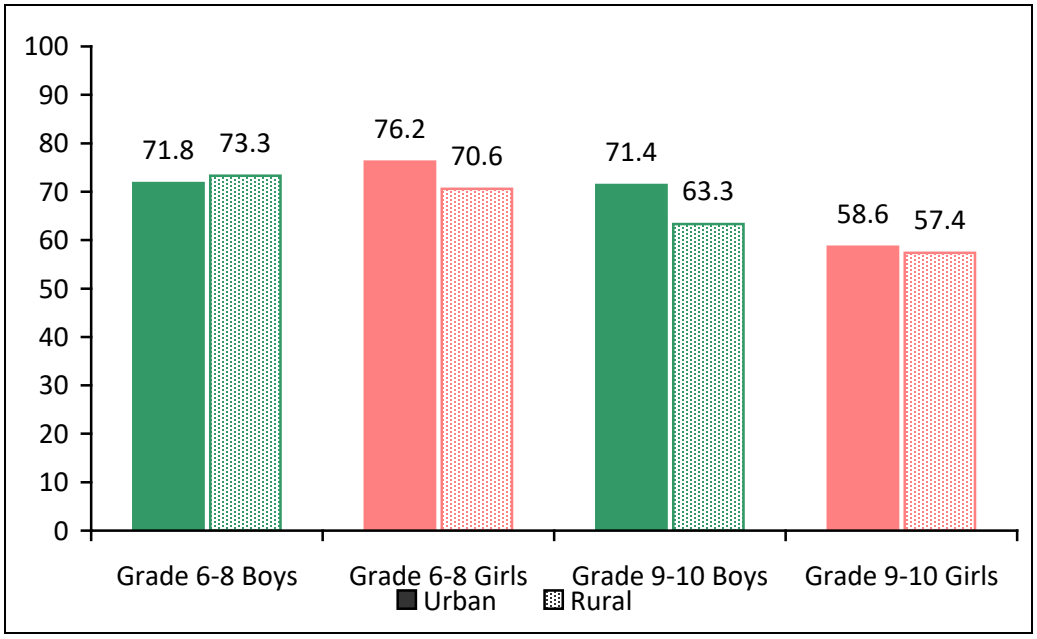
Figure 4.5: Students who agree or strongly agree that their teachers accept them as they are, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 74.4

Urban and rural students are mostly similar in how they perceive teachers to care about them (Figure 4.6). Compared to younger students, older students generally feel less cared for by their teachers, except for urban Grade 9-10 urban boys. Grade 9-10 girls are especially less likely to feel cared for by their teachers in comparison to Grade 6-8 girls.

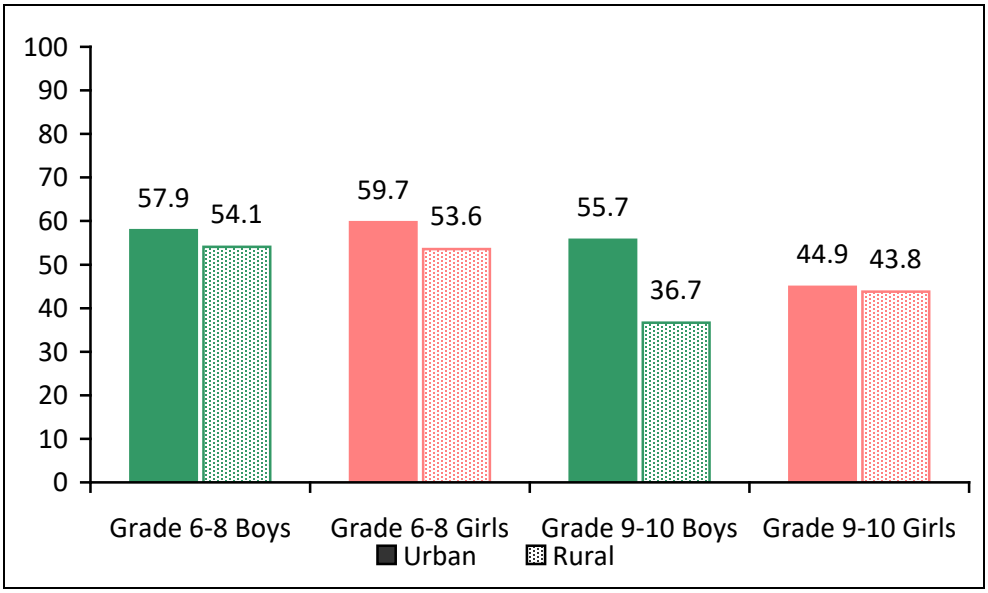
Figure 4.6: Students who agree or strongly agree that their teachers care about them as persons, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 69.9

Like teacher care, rural Grade 9-10 boys are less likely to view their classmates as kind and helpful than urban students in the same grades (Figure 4.7). Otherwise, urban and rural students are similar in how they feel their classmates are kind and helpful. Except for urban Grade 9-10 students, older students generally perceive their classmates to be less kind and helpful in comparison to younger students.

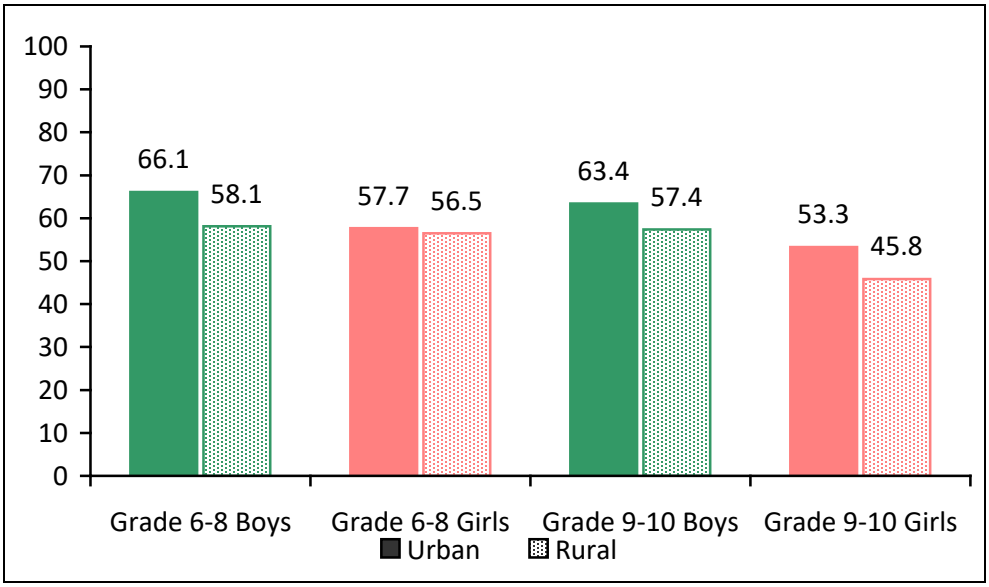
Figure 4.7: Students who agree or strongly agree with the statement "Most of the students in my class(es) are kind and helpful," by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 53.8

Except for Grade 6-8 girls, where the percentages are similar, urban students are more likely to feel accepted by their classmates than rural students (Figure 4.8). Grade differences in classmate acceptance is minimal, except for rural girls. Specifically, rural girls in Grades 9-10 are less likely to feel classmate acceptance than rural girls in Grades 6-8, with less than half (45.8%) of older rural girls agreeing or strongly agreeing that other students accept them.

Figure 4.8: Students who agree or strongly agree with the statement "Other students accept me as I am," by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 59.3

Chapter Summary

While the primary function of schools is the promotion of academic success, schools also influence on adolescent social-emotional health and well-being (Anderman, 2002; Kidger et al., 2012; McLaughlin, 2008; Wells et al., 2003). Students who have positive experiences at school are less likely to have mental health problems and engage in risk-taking behaviours than students who experience school negatively (McLaughlin, 2008). On the other hand, students who experience a negative school climate report lower self-confidence and a lower sense of self (King et al., 2002).

In Yukon, younger students generally experience school more positively than older students. Younger students tend to like school more, feel more accepted and cared for by teachers, and are more likely to perceive their classmates to be kind and helpful. Rural students in Yukon appear to have more negative experiences at school in comparison to urban students. Rural students are less likely to experience high school climate and report lower levels of liking school. Furthermore, rural students consistently feel less accepted and cared for by their teachers and classmates.

Between 2010 and 2018, the proportion of students who scored high on the school climate scale did not change significantly. Older students in rural settings were least likely to score high on the school climate scale over this time. In particular, rural girls in Grades 9-10 appear to be most vulnerable to negative experiences in their school environment. Only about 2% of rural girls in these grades report experiencing a high school climate.

Promoting a positive school climate is important for Yukon students' well-being. Especially for rural students in Yukon, cultivating schools that foster positive relationships among peers and between students and teachers is important. Schools can positively impact students' sense of self and well-being by positively shaping their experiences in the school context.

5. COMMUNITY

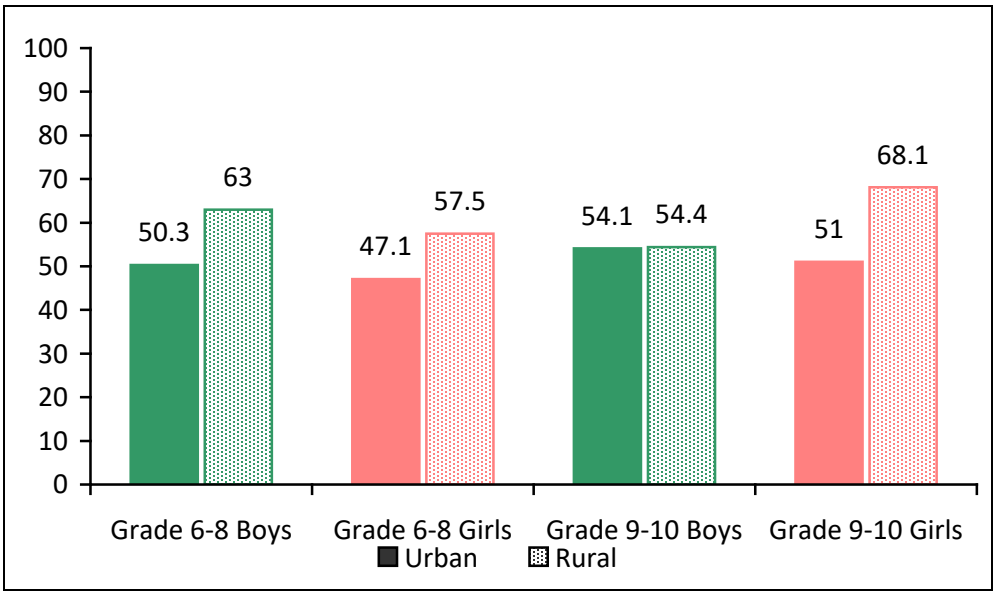
School-aged children are embedded within a variety of contexts that affect their development and well-being. The community is one such context (Antonishak, Sutfin, & Reppucci, 2005). Young people's wider community becomes increasingly important during adolescence as youth begin to establish their own identity apart from their family (Kowaleski-Jones & Dunifon, 2006). As adolescents increase their autonomy, they tend to spend increasing amounts of time outside of the home (Larson, Richards, Moneta, Holmbeck, & Duckett, 1996). As a result, adolescents have increased opportunities to interact with their communities.

Communities influence adolescents by providing them with norms and expectations for behaviour, opportunities to develop social ties with neighbours, and opportunities to participate in a variety of civic and recreation activities (Sampson, Morenoff, & Gannon-Rowley, 2002). Depending on the norms and characteristics of the community, community factors are associated with both risk-taking behaviours and healthy development among youth (Viner et al., 2012). Communities that encourage positive youth development tend to be rich in structural resources (e.g., recreational facilities). These resources benefit adolescents and the community as a whole by promoting repeated interactions with community members, fostering social ties and shared expectations (Browning & Soller, 2014). Feeling a sense of belonging and safety within the community context can play a protective role in preventing the development of risk-taking behaviours in youth (Brooks, Magnusson, Spencer, & Morgan, 2012). Youth in communities with strong social ties may have more opportunities to observe and model supportive relationships. When youth perceive a strong sense of attachment to their community, they are more likely to engage with their community and develop prosocial friendships within that community context (Lenzi et al., 2012).

This chapter examines young people's relationship with their community. Students are asked if people say 'hello' and often stop to talk to each other in the street; if people in their community can be trusted; if their neighbours are helpful; if people in their community would try to take advantage of them if they got the chance; if it is safe for young children to play outside; and if there are good places to spend free time in the community. These items are also combined into an overall index of community positivity.

Compared to urban areas, students living in rural areas are more likely to report that people stop and say hello in the street (Figure 5.1). This urban versus rural divide is especially strong for girls. Urban Grade 6-8 girls are the least likely to report that people stop to say hello (47.1%), whereas rural Grade 9-10 girls are the most likely (68.1%).

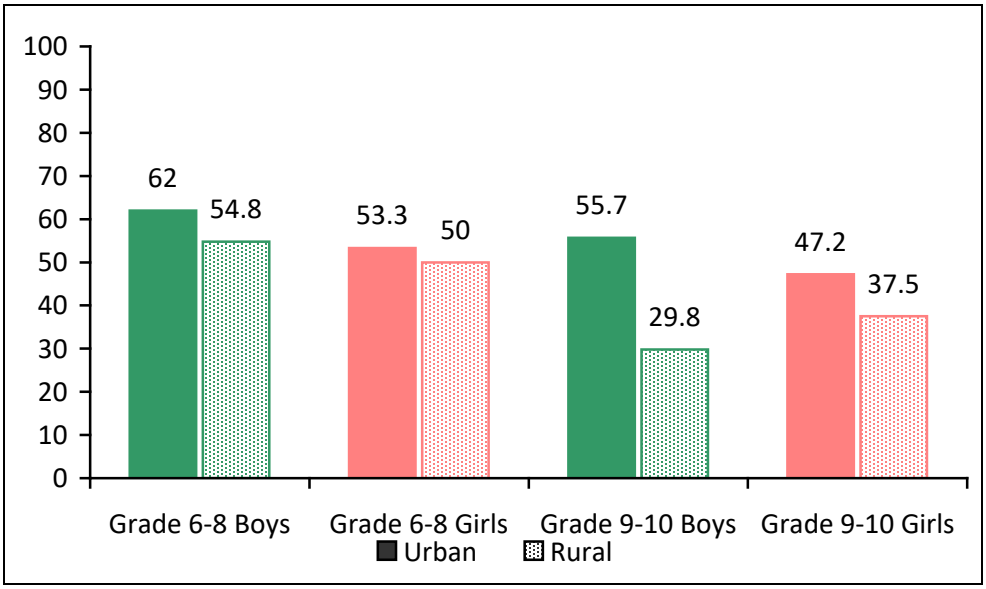
Figure 5.1: Students who agree or strongly agree that "people say 'hello' and often stop to talk to each other in the street," by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 51.7

Although rural students report that people stop and say hello more often than urban students, they see others in their community as less trusting than urban students (Figure 5.2). For rural youth in Grades 9-10, only one-third agree that they can trust people in their communities. Boys are more trusting of others than girls and younger students are more trusting of others than older students.

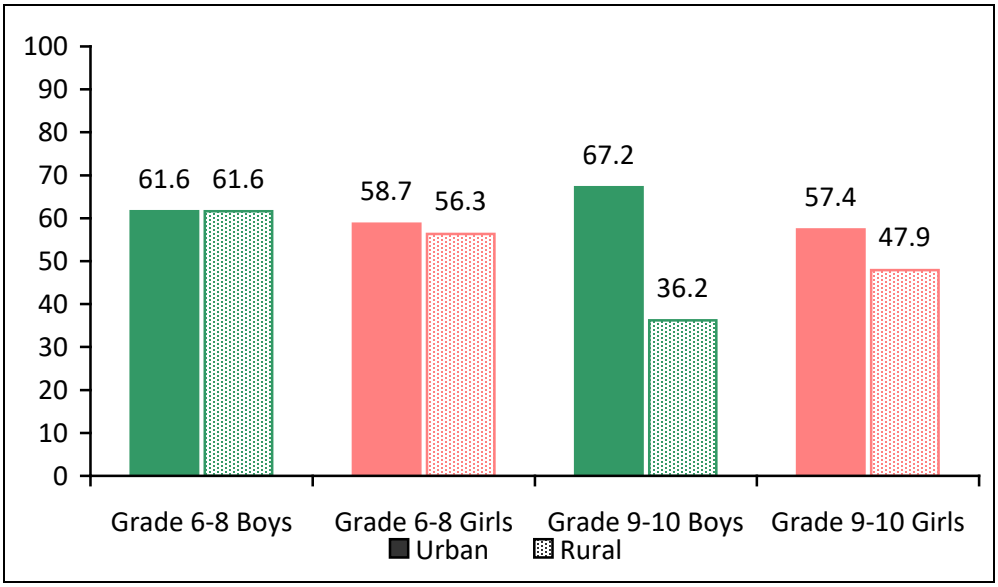
Figure 5.2: Students who agree or strongly agree that "you can trust people around here," by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 53.1

Younger students in urban and rural areas reported similar levels of helpfulness from their neighbours, with Grade 6-8 boys reporting slightly higher levels than Grade 6-8 girls (Figure 5.3). For older students, however, the difference between urban and rural areas becomes more striking. Grade 9-10 students in urban areas are much more likely to report that they could ask a neighbour for help compared to students in rural areas. This trend is especially strong for Grade 9-10 boys.

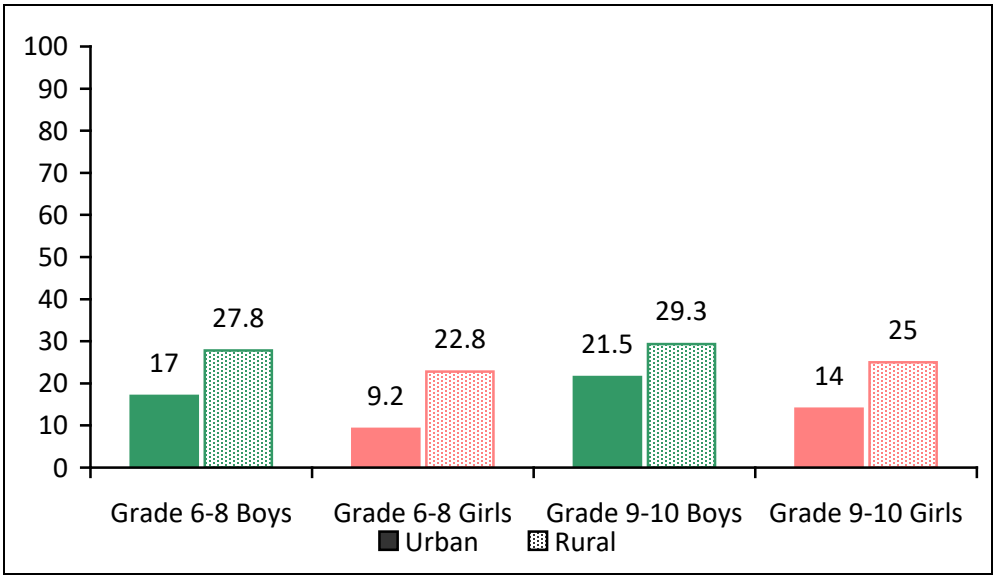
Figure 5.3: Students who agree or strongly agree that "I could ask for help or a favour from neighbours," by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 59.2

Despite interacting with their neighbours more often, rural students are more likely than urban students to perceive others in their community as likely to take advantage of them (Figure 5.4). Boys and older students are more likely to think that others would try to take advantage of them compared to girls and younger students.

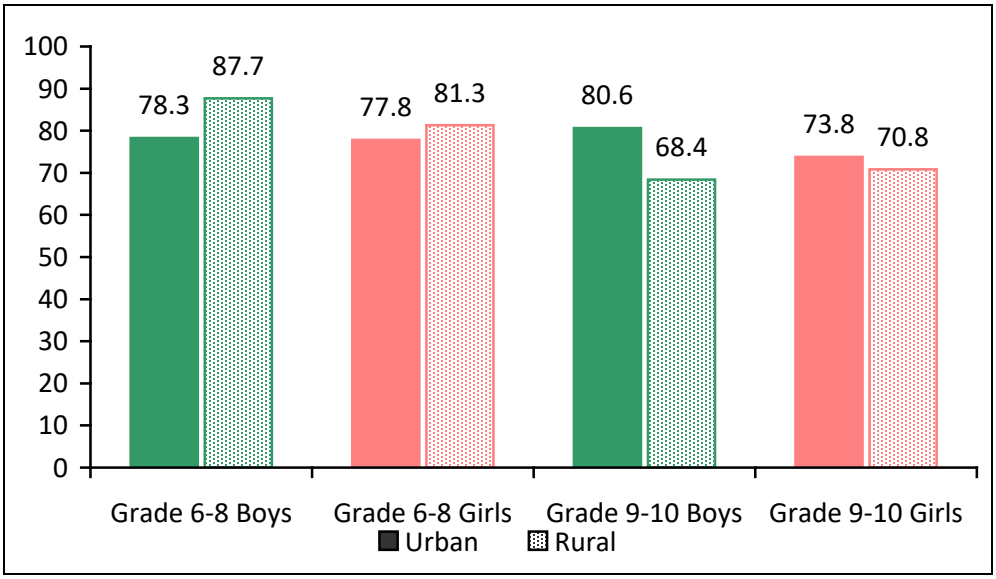
Figure 5.4: Students who agree or strongly agree that "most people around here would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance," by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 17.2

In general, the majority of adolescents in the Yukon agree that it is safe for children to play outside during the day (Figure 5.5). For those in Grades 6-8, rural students are more likely to agree that it is safe for children to play outside than are urban students. Students in Grades 9-10 report the opposite pattern, with urban students more likely to agree that it is safe for children to play than are rural students.

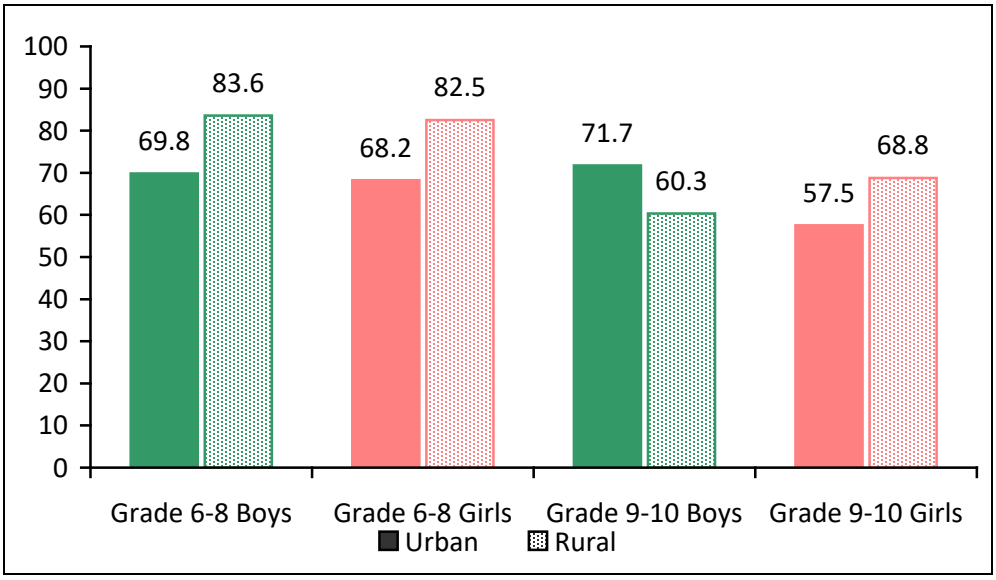
Figure 5.5: Students who agree or strongly agree that "it is safe for younger children to play outside during the day," by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 77.7

Additionally, the majority of adolescents in the Yukon agree that there are good places to spend free time in their communities (Figure 5.6). There are, however, notable differences by student location, grade, and gender. The urban versus rural difference is much more pronounced for younger students than it is for older students. For students of both genders in Grades 6-8, rural students are much more likely than urban students to agree that there are good places to spend free time in the community. This pattern changed for older students, such that urban boys and rural girls are more likely to agree that there are good places to spend free time compared to their counterparts.

Figure 5.6: Students who agree or strongly agree that "there are good places to spend your free time," by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 68.9

Community Climate Scale

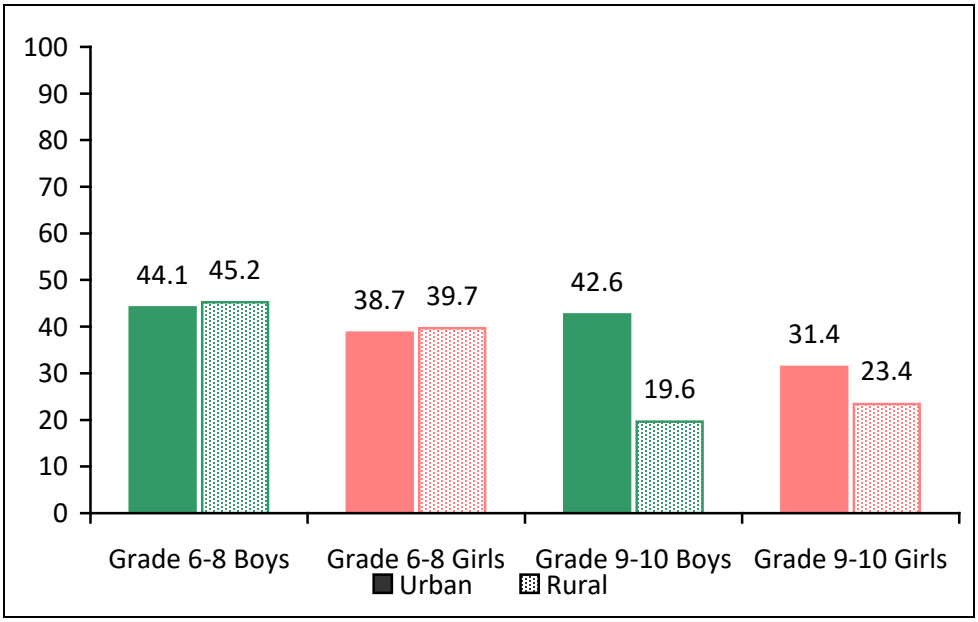
The community climate scale (Table 5.1) is comprised of five items with a reliability of 0.79. The five items in the community climate scale are: people say 'hello' and often stop to talk to each other in the street; you can trust people around here; I could ask for help or a favour from neighbours; it is safe for younger children to play outside during the day; and there are good places to spend your free time. All items were reported on a five-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree. Students' scores on this index were divided into thirds to create low, medium, and high levels of community climate. Overall, 38.7% of students fell within the "high" community climate group.

Table 5.1: Community Climate

People say 'hello' and often stop to talk to each other in the street.	1= Strongly agree,
You can trust people around here.	2= Agree,
I could ask for help or a favour from neighbours.	3= Neither agree nor disagree,
It is safe for younger children to play outside during the day.	4= Disagree,
There are good places to spend your free time.	5= Strongly disagree

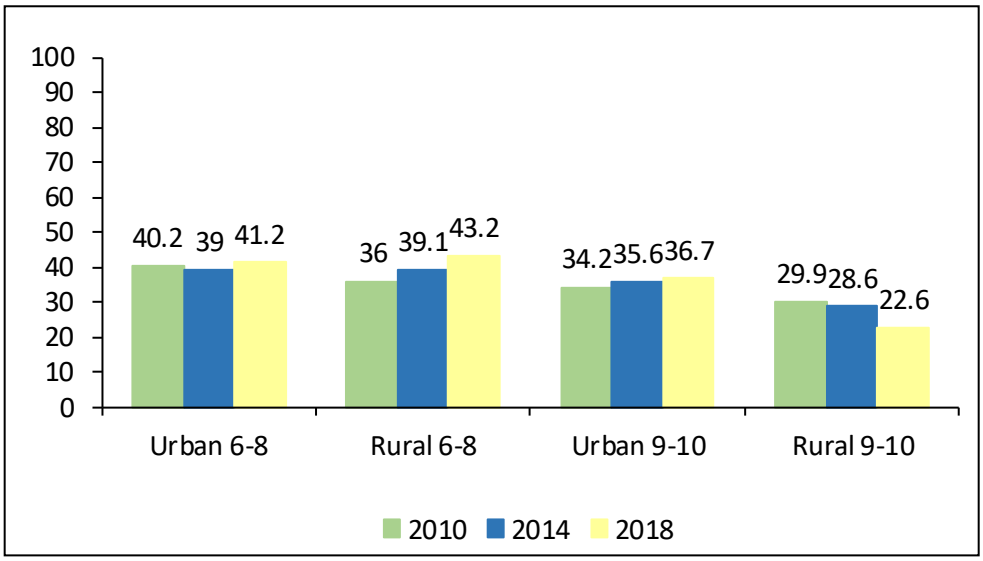
In general, boys and younger students are more likely to be in the high third of the community climate scale (Figure 5.7). The one exception being urban Grade 9-10 boys, who are much more likely than rural Grade 9-10 boys and Grade 9-10 girls to be in the high group. Among older students only, urban students are more likely to report high levels of community positivity than rural students.

Figure 5.7: Students who score in the high third (38.7%) of the community scale, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Trends in community climate were examined using data from 2010, 2014, and 2018 (Figure 5.8). In general, a similar proportion of students fell within the high community climate group over the past 8 years. For rural students, there is a slight increase (7.2%) for students in Grades 6-8 reporting high community climate. In contrast, there is a slight decrease (7.3%) for rural students in Grades 9-10 reporting high community climate.

Figure 5.8: Students who scored high of the community climate scale, by year of administration, and urban/rural status (%)



Chapter Summary

Community is an important context that promotes youth thriving (Antonishak et al., 2005; Benson et al., 2012; Brooks et al., 2012; Kowaleski-Jones & Dunifon, 2006). In the Yukon, rural students are more likely than urban students to report contact with people in their community. Rural youth, however, are also the most prone to seeing these people as taking advantage of them and the least likely to see their neighbours as trustworthy and helpful. Older youth, particularly those in rural areas, are the least likely to report high levels of community positivity. Taken together, this suggests that rural youth in the Yukon may need more supports to foster healthy relationships with their communities than youth in urban areas.

6. HEALTH: SELF-RATED HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, and SPIRITUAL HEALTH

Mental and spiritual health are equally important as physical health to the overall well-being of youth. Physically, mentally, and spiritually healthy youth are able to effectively manage challenges and stressors in life. Mental health is important to an individual's personal well-being and affects one's ability to function (World Health Organization, 2004). Canadian youth who experience mental health problems often have difficulties adjusting at home (Buote, 2009), struggle academically, and experience social difficulties at school (Mychailyszyn, Mendez, & Kendall, 2010). Students struggling with their mental health are less engaged in the classroom, have lower levels of academic performance and achievement (Mychailyszyn et al., 2010; Owens, Stevenson, & Hadwin, 2012), and are more likely to drop out of school (Meldrum, Venn & Kutcher, 2009). Mental health problems that emerge during school-age years can persist and lead to adverse outcomes throughout one's lifespan (Waddell, Shepherd, Chen, & Boyle, 2013).

Spirituality is also an important aspect of adolescent development and well-being. Spirituality – a feeling of connection or sense of closeness to the sacred (Worthington, Hook, Davis, & McDaniel, 2011) – is related to higher levels of self-reported wellness among youth (Spurr, Bally, Ogenchuk, & Walker, 2012). Research suggests that many Canadian youths feel that their spirituality is an important resource throughout adolescence and that spirituality is positively related to their sense of well-being (Spurr et al., 2012). In fact, spirituality is associated with various indicators of adolescent health and well-being, including lower levels of substance use, violence, and mental health problems (Scales, Syvertsen, Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Sesma, 2014).

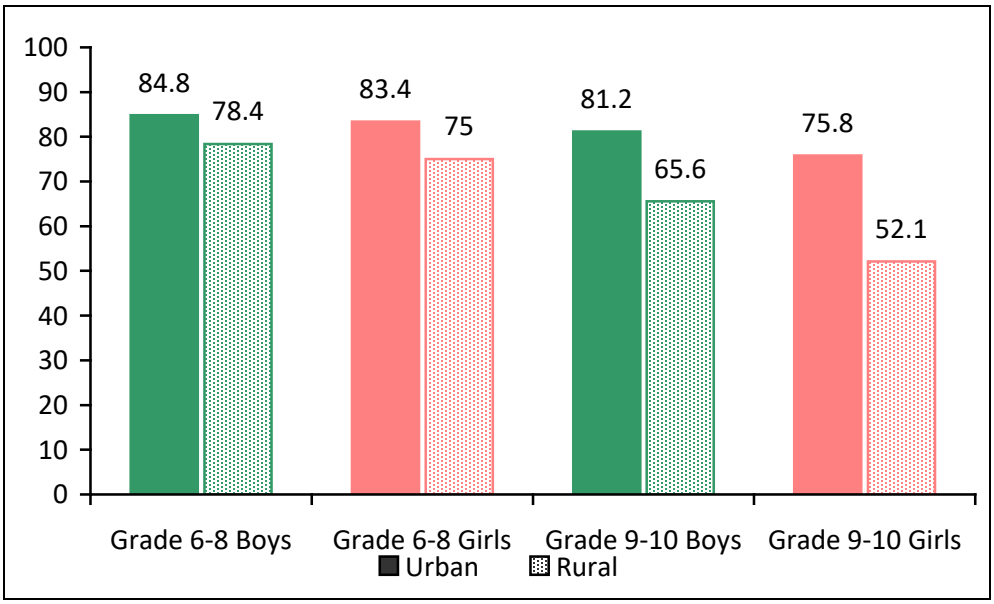
This chapter examines students' self-rated health, mental health, spirituality, and life satisfaction. Students were asked how often they feel depressed or low; how often they feel bad tempered or irritable; if they feel they have self-confidence in themselves; if they often wish to be someone else, if they feel helpless; and if they feel sad and hopeless. Students were also asked about their spiritual health. For example, students were asked to provide information on how much they value feeling connected to a higher spiritual power and to

nature. Furthermore, this chapter explores how students feel connected to their culture/family traditions, and how important it is for them to feel a sense of meaning and purpose.

Self-Rated Health, Mental Health, and Spiritual Health among Yukon Youth

Rural students are less likely than urban students to report their health as excellent or good (Figure 6.1). Urban/rural differences in self-rated health are larger among older students. Rural students in Grades 9-10 are especially less likely to report good health in comparison to their peers in urban Yukon. In addition, younger students consistently rate their health higher than older students. Most notably, only 52.1% of older, rural girls rate their health as excellent or good in comparison to 75% of younger, rural girls.

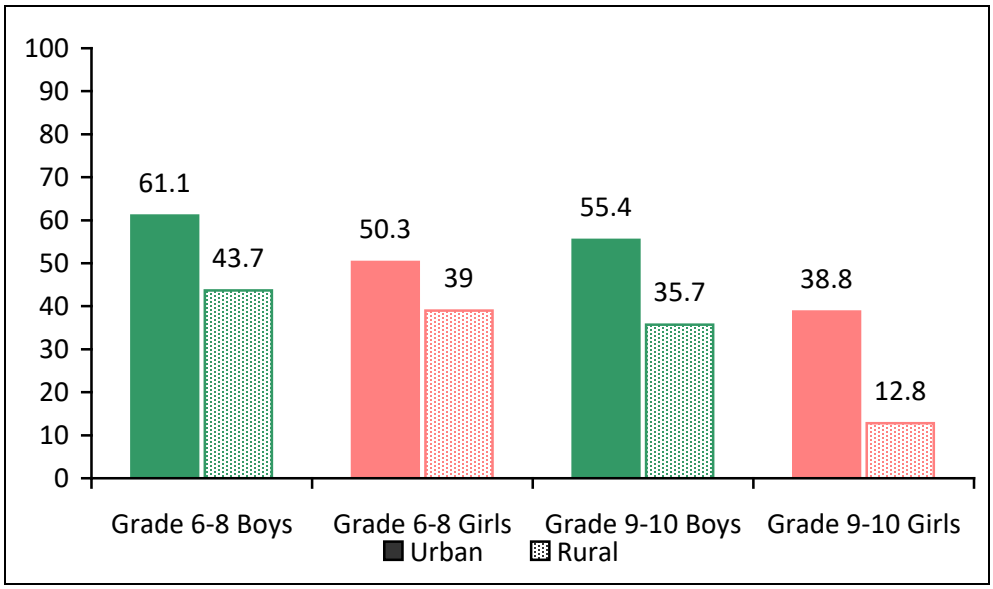
Figure 6.1: Students who rate their health as excellent or good, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 79.3

Urban students are more likely than rural students to report high life satisfaction (8 or greater on a 0-10 scale; Figure 6.2). Across all grades, less than half of rural students report high levels of life satisfaction. Younger students and boys report higher life satisfaction more so than older students and girls. Older girls in rural Yukon are most vulnerable to experiencing low life satisfaction. Only about 13% of Grade 9-10 rural girls report high levels of life satisfaction.

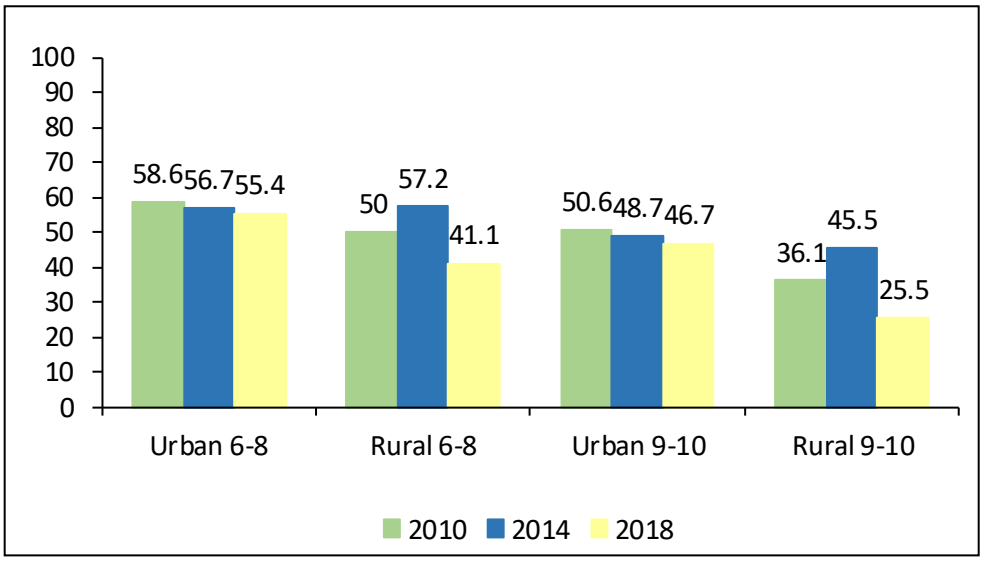
Figure 6.2: Students indicating life satisfaction levels from 8 through 10 on a 0 to 10 scale, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 49.0

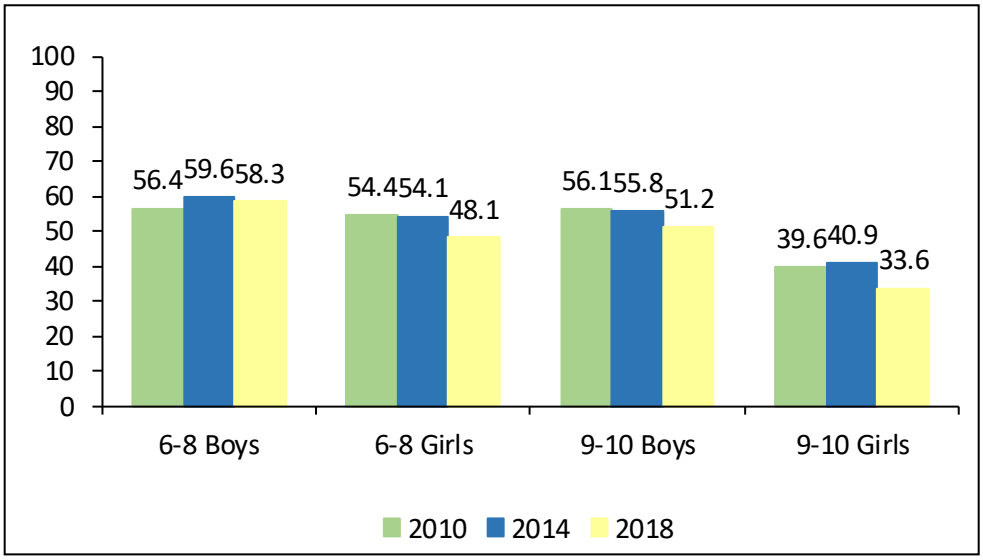
The percentage of Yukon students reporting high life satisfaction decreased between 2010 and 2018 (Figure 6.3). While the change in life satisfaction among urban students were minimal, changes among rural students were larger. While life satisfaction among rural youth appeared to increase between 2010 and 2014, the percentage of rural students who reported high life satisfaction decreased significantly between 2014 and 2018. The percentage of rural students who reported high life satisfaction in 2018 was lower than the percentage in 2010. Among Grade 6-8 rural students, the percentage of youth reporting high life satisfaction decreased by 16% over this period. Among Grade 9-10 rural students, the decrease was 20%.

Figure 6.3: Students indicating high life satisfaction (8 through 10 on a 0 to 10 scale), by year of administration, and urban/rural status (%)



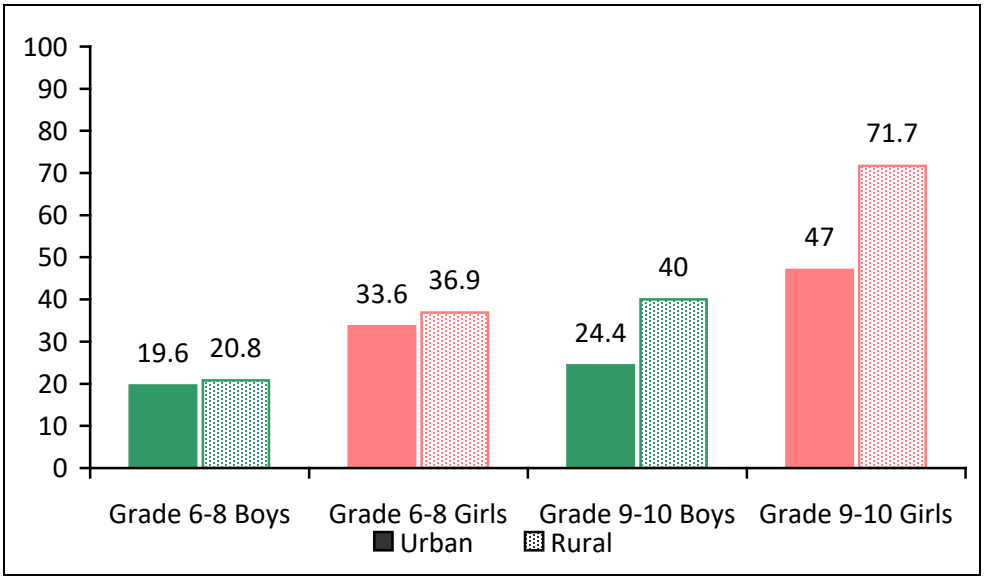
While the percentage of boys who report high life satisfaction has remained steady between 2010 and 2018, the percentage of girls reporting high life satisfaction has decreased (Figure 6.4). The percentage of Grade 6-8 girls and Grade 9-10 girls indicating high life satisfaction both decreased by about 6% since 2010.

Figure 6.4: Students indicating high life satisfaction (8 through 10 on a 0 to 10 scale), by year of administration, and gender (%)



Girls and rural students are more likely to report feeling depressed or low at least once a week than boys and urban students (Figure 6.5). Older students report higher levels of depression than younger students. Feelings of depression is highest among older girls; 47% of urban Grade 9-10 girls and 72% of rural Grade 9-10 girls reported feeling depressed or low at least once a week.

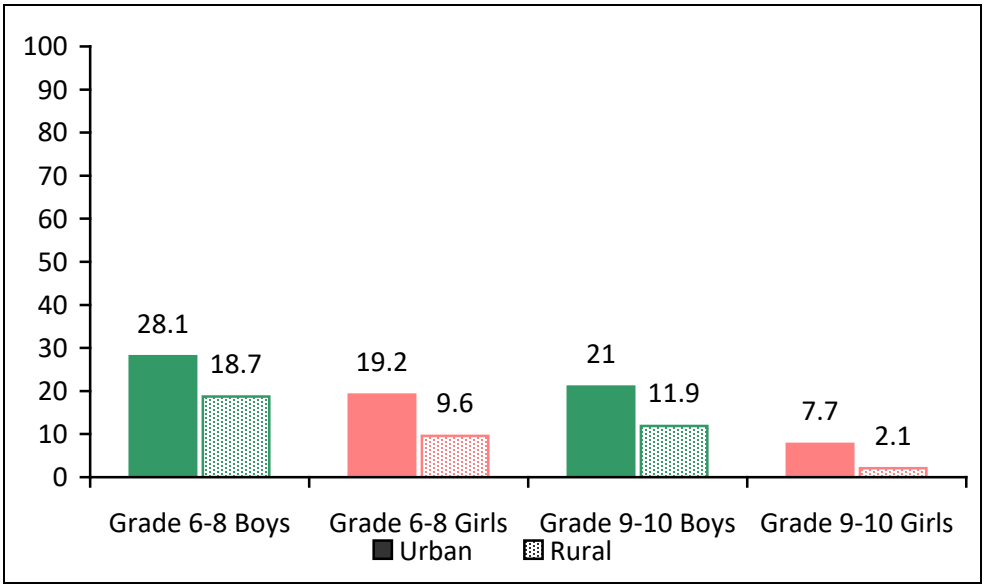
Figure 6.5: Students feeling depressed or low at least once a week, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 31.6

Rural students and girls are less likely to report strong self-confidence than urban students and boys (Figure 6.6). In addition, older students express lower self-confidence than younger students. Self-confidence is lowest among older girls, especially girls in rural Yukon. Only 8% of Grade 9-10 urban girls and 2% of Grade 9-10 rural girls agree that they have confidence in themselves.

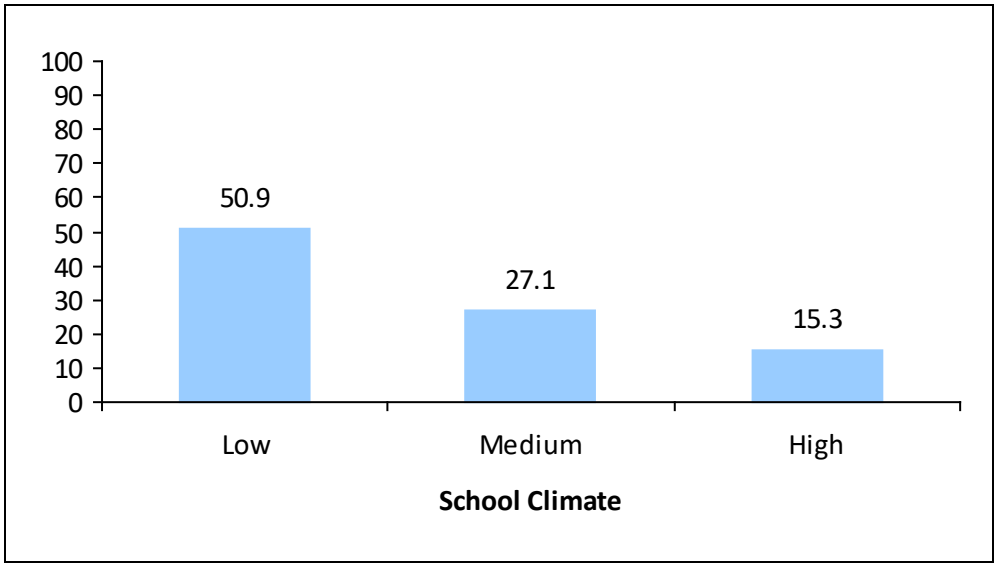
Figure 6.6: Students who strongly agree they have confidence in themselves, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 18.8

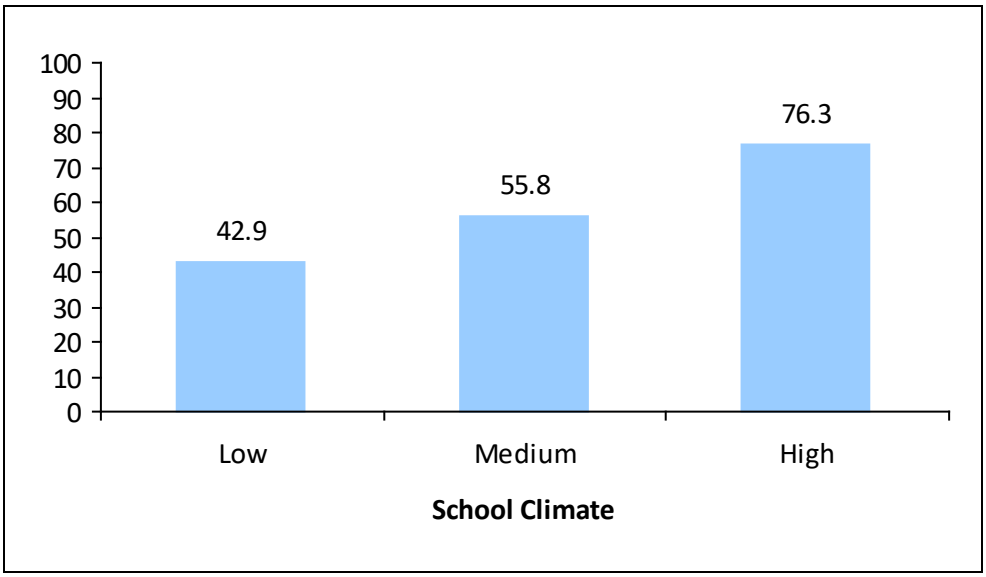
Students in the high school climate group are less likely to feel low or depressed than students in the medium and low school climate group (Figure 6.7). Students in the low school climate group are most likely to report feeling low or depressed. About half of the students who are in the low school climate group report feeling low or depressed at least once a week.

Figure 6.7: Students who feel low or depressed at least once a week (%), by school climate



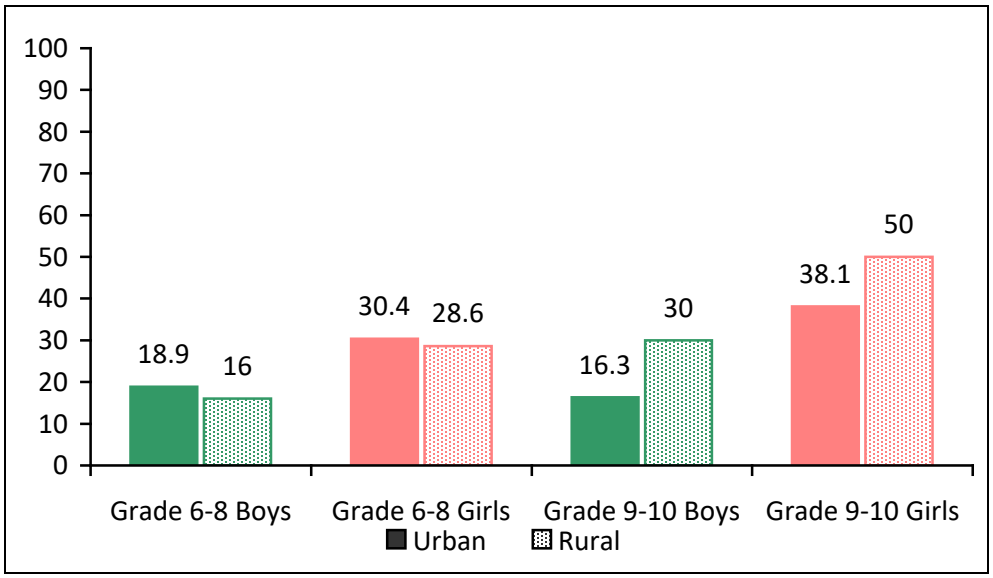
Students in the high school climate group are much more likely to feel self-confident than students who are in the medium and low school climate group (Figure 6.8). Students in the low school climate group are most vulnerable to low self-confidence, as only about 43% of students in this group report having confidence in themselves.

Figure 6.8: Students who agree or strongly agree they have confidence in themselves (%), by school climate



More girls wish that they were someone else in comparison to boys (Figure 6.9). Except for urban boys, older students are more likely to wish that they were someone else. While there are minimal urban/rural differences among younger youth, there are large urban/rural differences among older youth. Among Grade 9-10 youth, rural students are more likely to wish they were someone else. Rural girls (50%) are most likely to wish they were someone else.

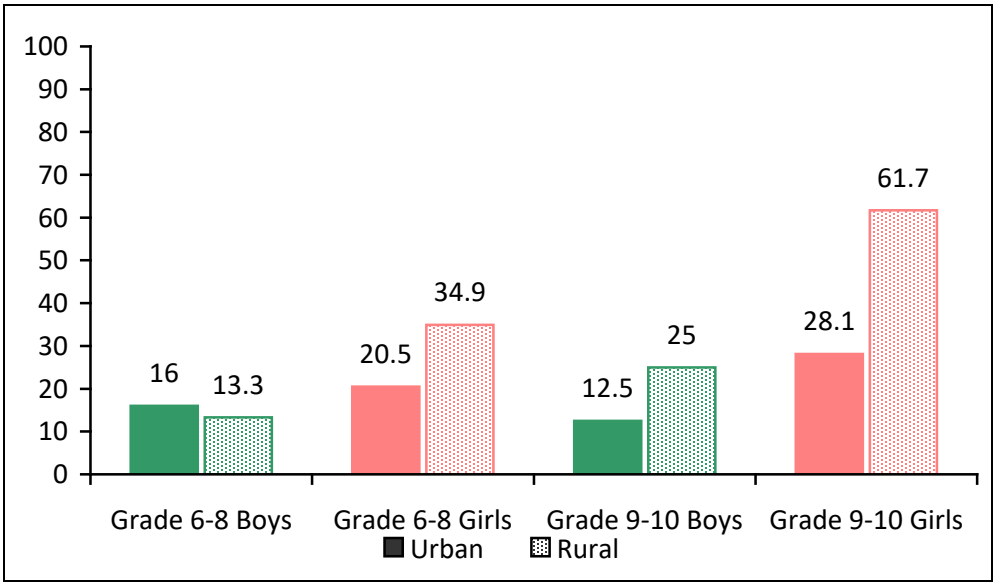
Figure 6.9: Students who agree or strongly agree they often wish they were someone else, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 26.3

Girls are more likely than boys to feel helpless. In particular, girls in rural Yukon are most vulnerable to feeling helpless. Older youth are generally more likely to feel helpless than younger youth, except for urban boys (Figure 6.10). This finding is especially true for older girls. Among Grade 9-10 students, 28% of urban girls and 62% of rural girls report feeling helpless, in comparison to 12.5% of urban boys and 25% of rural boys.

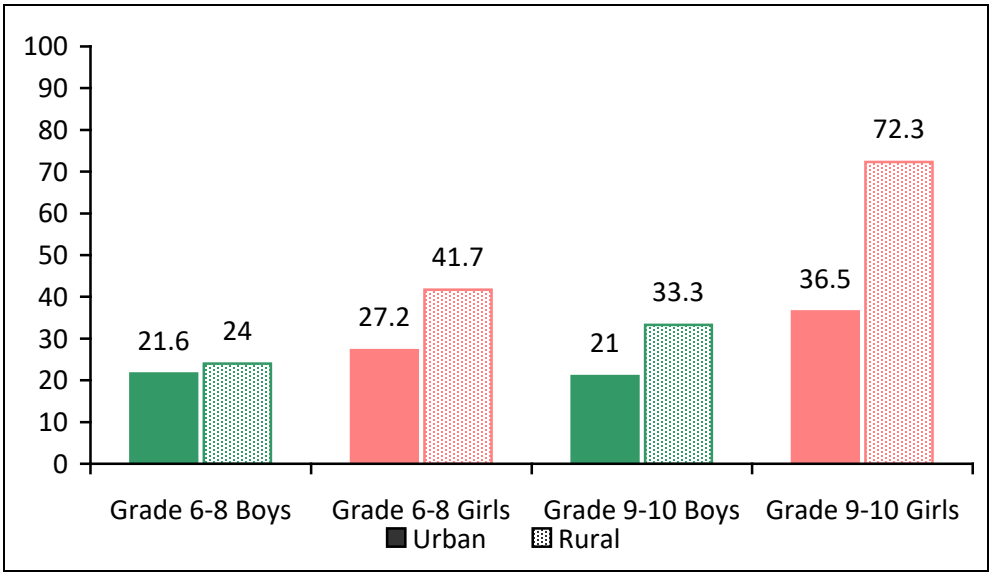
Figure 6.10: Students who agree or strongly agree they often feel helpless, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 21.6

Girls and rural students are more likely to feel lonely than boys and urban students (Figure 6.11). Older students are more likely to express feeling lonely than younger students, except for urban boys. Rural girls are most likely to feel lonely, as 41.7% of Grade 6-8 girls and 72.3% of Grade 9-10 girls report feeling lonely often.

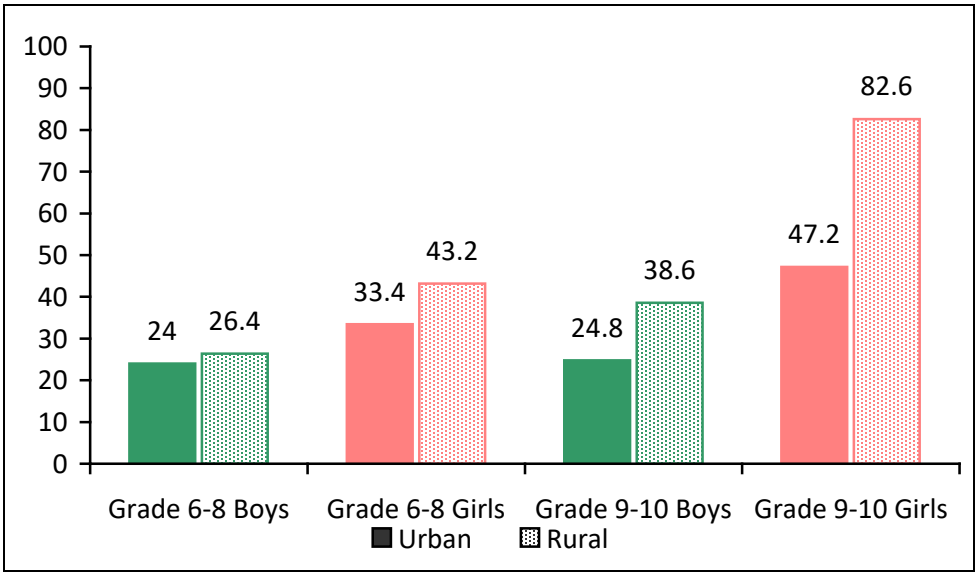
Figure 6.11: Students who agree or strongly agree they often feel lonely, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 28.8

In addition to feeling lonely, girls and rural students are more likely to feel sad and hopeless than boys and urban students (Figure 6.12). More Grade 9-10 students indicate that they are sad and hopeless than Grade 6-8 students. Similar to helplessness and loneliness, Grade 9-10 rural girls are most vulnerable to feeling sad or helpless. A significant proportion of rural girls in Grades 9-10 (83%) express that they have previously stopped engaging in usual activities due to feeling sad or hopeless.

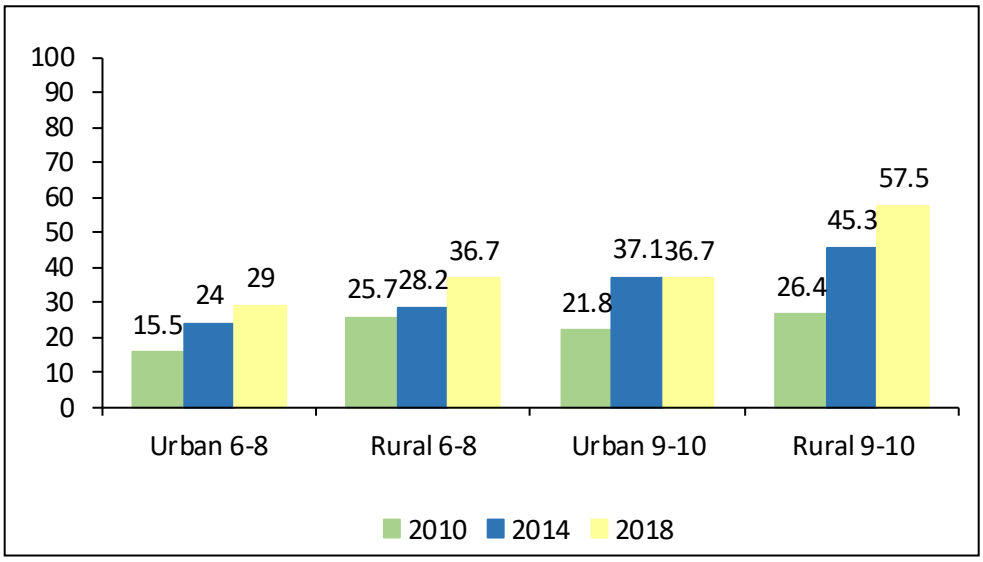
Figure 6.12: Students who felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row, that they stopped doing some usual activities, during the past 12 months, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 34.4

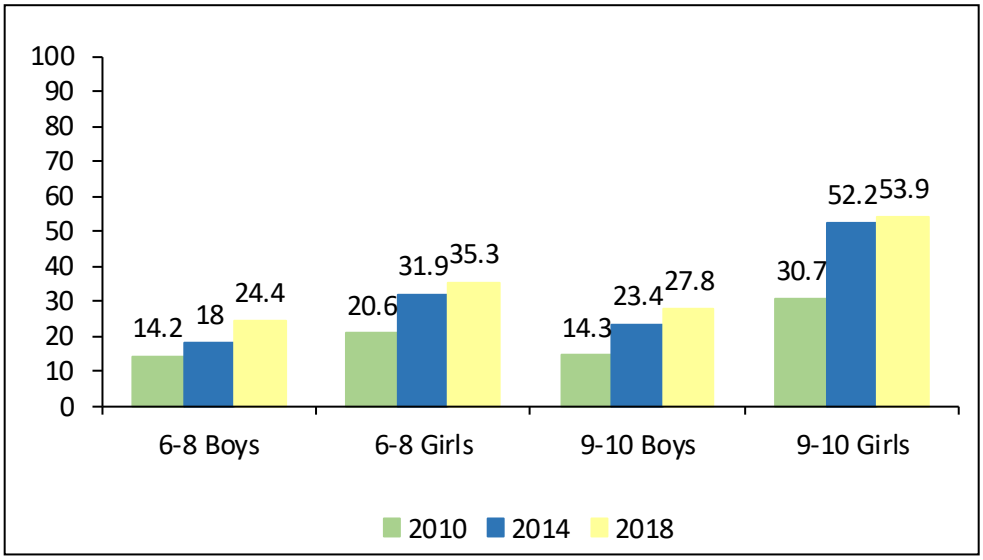
Across urban/rural status, the percentage of students who feel sad or hopeless has significantly increased between 2010 to 2018 (Figure 6.13). While 16% to 26% of Yukon students reported feeling sad or helpless in 2010, between 29% to 58% of youth reported feeling sad or helpless in 2018. The increase is most noticeable among rural students in Grades 9-10. In this group, the percentage of students who report feeling sad or hopeless more than doubled from 2010 (26%) to 2018 (58%).

Figure 6.13: Students who felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row, that they stopped doing some usual activities, during the past 12 months, by year of administration, grade, and urban/rural status (%)



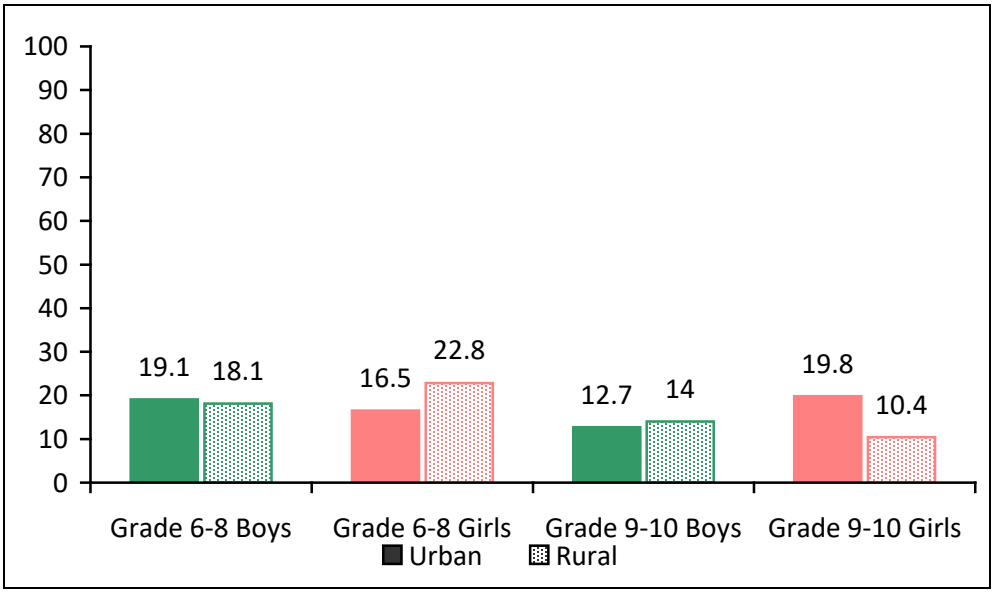
The percentage of boys and girls who feel sad or hopeless has increased steadily between 2010 and 2018 (Figure 6.14). The increase over this time period is more substantial for girls. In 2010, approximately 21% of Grade 6-8 girls and 31% of Grade 9-10 girls felt sad or hopeless. Over 8 years, there was an increase of about 14% in younger girls and 23% in older girls who felt sad or hopeless almost every day.

Figure 6.14: Students who felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row, that they stopped doing some usual activities, during the past 12 months, by year of administration, grade, and gender (%)



Except for urban girls, younger students are more likely to consider it very important to feel a connection to a higher spiritual power than older students (Figure 6.15). Age-related changes for spiritual connection are complex for girls. For urban girls, the importance of spiritual connection increases with age. In contrast, spiritual connection decreases with age for rural girls. There are no urban/rural differences in spiritual connection among boys.

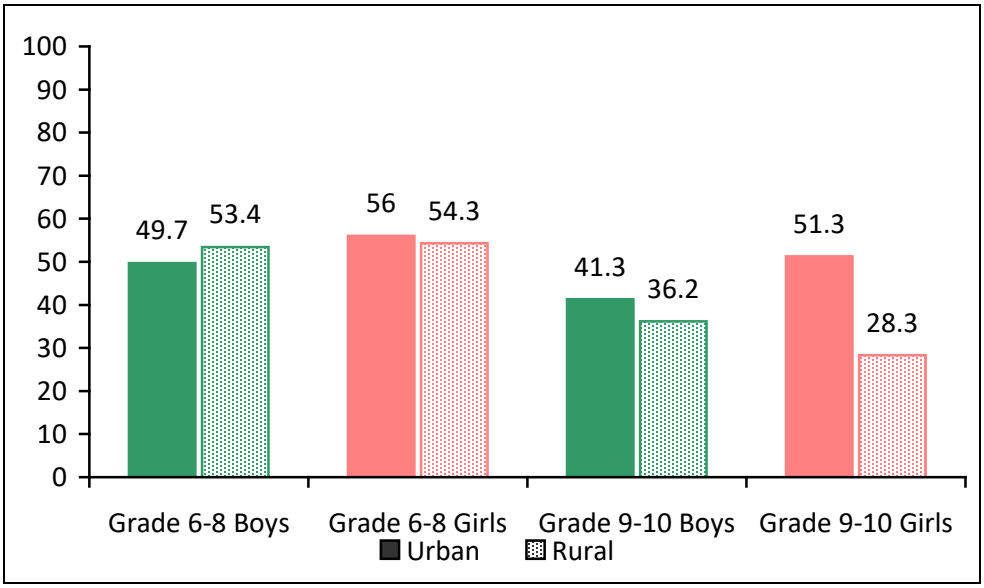
Figure 6.15: Students who think it is very important to feel a connection to a higher spiritual power, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 17.4

Younger students want to feel that their life has meaning or purpose more so than older students (Figure 6.16). This is especially true among rural students. While urban/rural differences are minimal among younger students, there are larger differences among older students. This is especially true for older girls, as 51% of urban Grade 9-10 girls express the importance of meaning and purpose in life, in comparison to only 28% of rural Grade 9-10 girls.

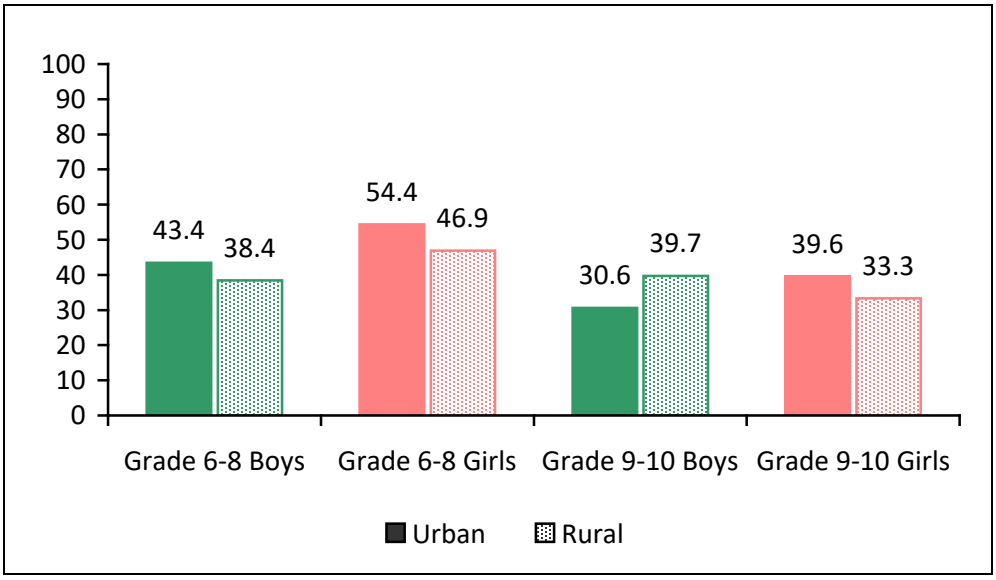
Figure 6.16: Students who think it is very important to feel that your life has meaning or purpose, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 49.2

Younger students place importance in feeling connected to nature more so than older students (Figure 6.17). Urban youth are generally more likely to think it is important to feel connected to nature than their rural peers, except for Grade 9-10 boys. Urban Grade 9-10 boys are least likely to emphasize connection with nature. Girls emphasize feeling connected to nature more than boys, except for older girls in rural Yukon.

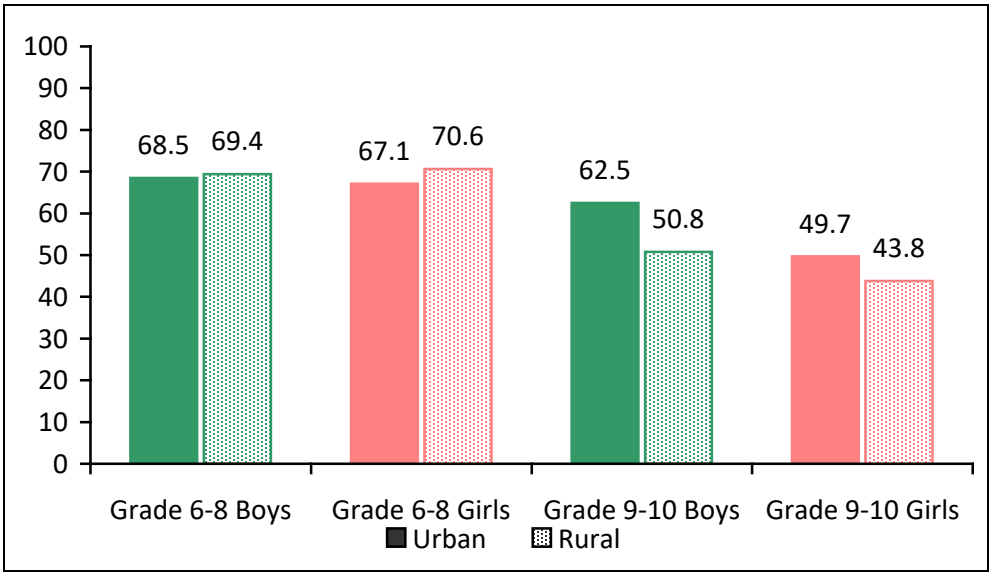
Figure 6.17: Students who think it is very important to feel connected to nature or wilderness, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 42.8

Younger students are more likely to feel connected to their culture/family traditions than older students (Figure 6.18). There is basically no difference between urban and rural students in younger grades. Among Grade 9-10 students, rural students are less likely to feel connected to their culture/family traditions than urban students. There is also a gender difference in older grades. Grade 9-10 girls are less likely to feel connected to their culture/family traditions than Grade 9-10 boys.

Figure 6.18: Students who felt connected to their culture/family traditions more than half of the time, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 62.7

Chapter Summary

Mental health is an important aspect of well-being (World Health Organization, 2004). Canadian youth with mental health issues struggle at home (Buote, 2009), at school (Meldrum et al., 2009; Mychailyszyn et al., 2010; Owens et al., 2012), and within the community (Kutcher & McDougall, 2009). Mental health concerns that arise during adolescence can persist into adulthood (Waddell et al., 2013). Therefore, it is important to support vulnerable youth during a critical period in their lives.

Rural students experience lower health and life satisfaction in comparison to their peers in urban Yukon. Self-rated health and life satisfaction is higher among younger students than older students. Girls report lower health and life satisfaction than boys. In particular, older girls in rural Yukon are most vulnerable to poor health and low life satisfaction. In Yukon, the percentage of students who report high levels of life satisfaction has steadily decreased between 2010 and 2018. In addition, the percentage of Yukon youth who feel sad or hopeless has significantly increased between 2010 and 2018. These changes are particularly pronounced among rural students and girls.

Girls are more likely than boys to report negative mental health across all indicators (feeling depressed/low; wishing to be someone else; feeling helpless; feeling lonely; feeling sad/hopeless). Rural students are also more likely to experience negative mental health than urban students. Older students are more vulnerable to all indicators of negative mental health in comparison to younger students. Older girls, especially Grade 9-10 rural girls are the most vulnerable across indicators of negative mental health. Similar patterns emerge for self-confidence. Girls and rural students are less likely than boys and urban students to feel confident in themselves. Older girls in rural Yukon are the least likely to be self-confident.

The school environment can influence adolescents' psychological well-being (Anderman, 2002). In Yukon, school climate is related to student depression and self-confidence. Students in the high school climate group are least likely to feel low/depressed, and most likely to be self-confident. On the other hand, students in the low school climate group are most likely to feel low/depressed and report low levels of self-confidence.

In addition to mental health, spiritual health contributes to adolescents' sense of well-being (Scales et al., 2014; Spurr et al., 2012). In Yukon, younger students generally report higher levels of spiritual health than older students. Younger students give greater importance to feeling a connection to a higher spiritual power, feeling their life has meaning, feeling connected with nature, and feeling connected with their culture/family traditions. Similar to trends observed for mental health, older girls in rural Yukon appear to be most vulnerable to poor spiritual health.

Promoting physical, mental, and spiritual health among all Yukon youth is important to help school-aged children and adolescents to function at home, school, and in their communities. Older girls in rural Yukon especially require support to feel connected, engage in meaningful activities, and strengthen their sense of self. Strengthening vulnerable youths' mental and spiritual health during adolescence is important to promote resilience later on in adulthood.

7. HEALTHY BEHAVIOURS

This chapter examines various health behaviours of youth in the Yukon. Healthy habits are assessed in multiple areas including time spent participating in physical activities like sports and cultural activities, (as well as contrary sedentary behaviours, like watching TV, playing video games, and cell phone use), along with dental hygiene, and eating habits.

Physical Activity

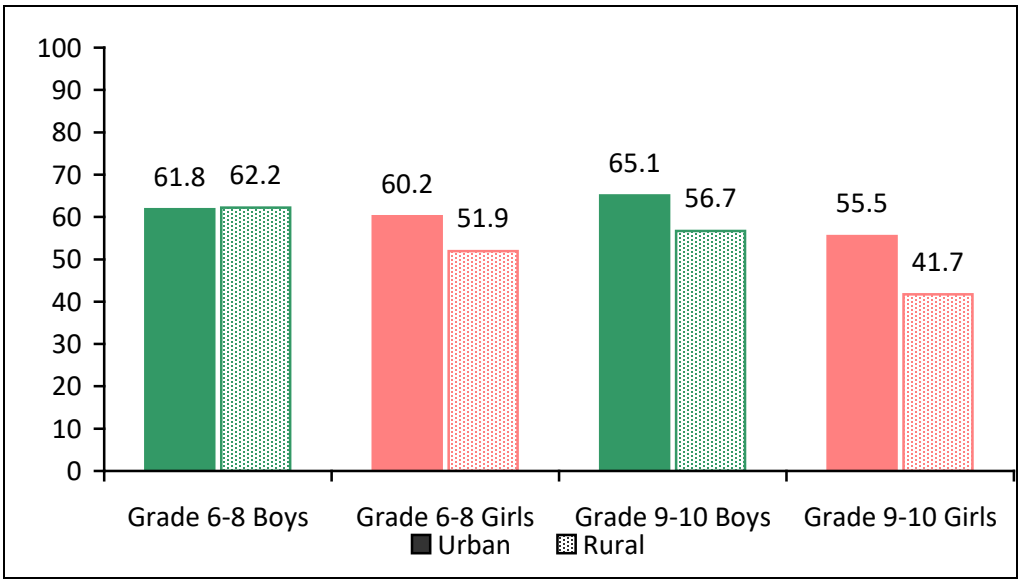
Healthy living encompasses a variety of health behaviours, including physical activity. Rather than referring to exercise alone, physical activity is broadly defined as any bodily movement, produced by skeletal muscles, that uses energy (World Health Organization, 2011). In the context of healthy behaviours, physical activity is often categorized into two levels: light-intensity physical activity (including activities such as standing, stretching, and leisurely walking) and moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (involving more strenuous aerobic and muscle strengthening activities) (Schwarzfischer et al., 2017). Health-related quality of life (spanning physical, psychological, and social health) is positively associated with higher levels of physical activity among children and adolescents (Wu et al., 2017). Health benefits of childhood physical activity include helping to regulate body weight (Janssen & Leblanc, 2010), as well as decreasing cardiovascular and metabolic risks factors such as high blood pressure (Kemper et al., 2001; Chaput et al., 2011).

In addition to improving and maintaining good physical health, physical activity has important implications for mental health in youth. Low levels of physical activity are associated with symptoms of depression and anxiety in youth (Skrove, Romundstad, & Indredavik, 2013). To promote physical activity and its positive effects, the “Canadian 24-hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth” currently recommends at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day, at least 3 days per week (Tremblay, Carson, Chaput et al., 2016).

Grade 9-10 students represent both the highest and lowest proportions of students engaging in physical activity at least five of the last seven days (for at least 60 minutes/day). Specifically, urban boys in Grades 9-10 are the most likely to report this level of physical

activity, at 65.1% (Figure 7.1) versus Grade 9-10 rural girls who are least likely, at 41.7%. With the exception of urban boys in Grades 6-8, more urban students report being physically active than rural students. For both rural and urban students, more boys report this level of physical activity than girls. Physical activity at this regularity is decreased in older students other than urban boys. Rural girls are the least likely to report this level of activity across grades.

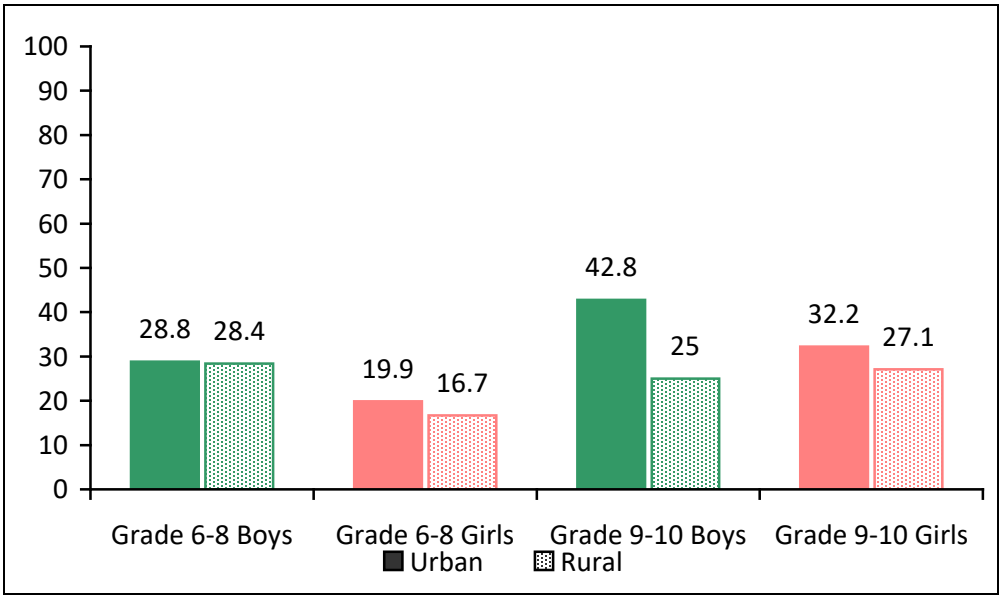
Figure 7.1: Students who were physically active five days or more over the past seven days for a total of at least 60 minutes per day, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 59.3

Compared to younger students (in Grades 6-8), older students are more likely to report spending four or more hours of class time doing physical activity (Figure 7.2). More urban students report spending class time doing physical activity than rural students, except for boys in Grades 6-8. Younger boys are equally likely to report this amount of class time physical activity, regardless of urban/rural status. Class time physical activity is generally more common for boys than girls across grades and urban/rural status. Rural students in Grades 9-10 are the only group where girls are more likely to report high class time physical activity, though only 2% more than boys.

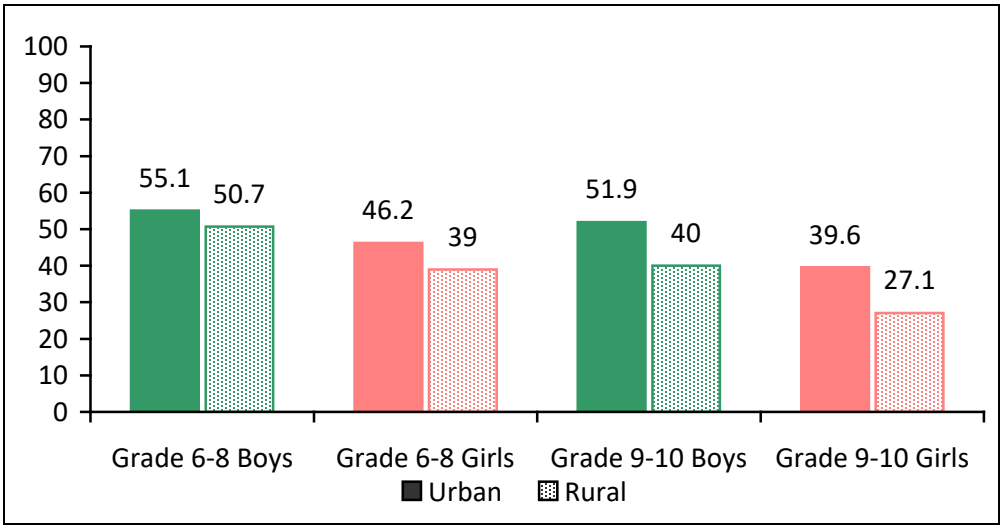
Figure 7.2: Students spending four or more hours per week doing physical activities in class time at school, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 28.1

While activity during class time seems to mostly increase for older students, the opposite seems true for physical activity *outside of school*. Fewer students reported doing physical activity outside of school four or more times per week in Grades 9-10 compared to Grades 6-8 (Figure 7.3). Similar to the above measures of physical activity, fewer girls than boys report participating in physical activity outside of school for either grade level. Once again, doing physical activity outside of school is more likely for urban students than rural students for both girls and boys, and across grades.

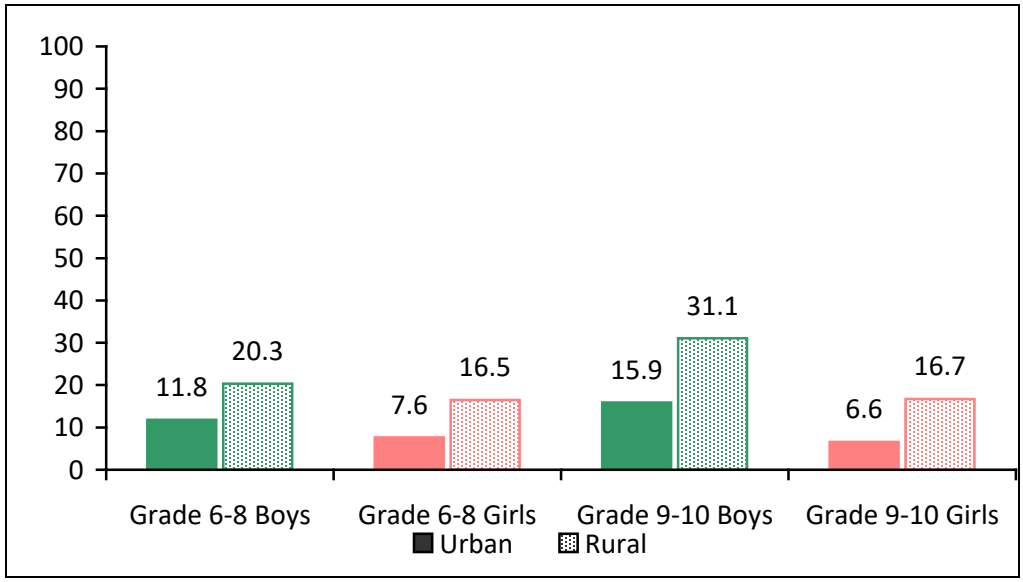
Figure 7.3: Students reporting engaging in physical activities outside of school 4 or more times per week, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 47.3

Unlike the earlier measures of physical activity, which generally showed a higher level of urban student engagement, there is a greater proportion of rural students who report participating in "on the land activities" (including camping, hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering and food preparation activities) for three or more hours per week. Boys were more likely to do so in either grade, for both urban and rural students. Overall, participation in this form of physical activity is less common than other measures. The highest proportion of students who report engaging in these kinds of activities is only 31%, represented by rural boys in Grades 9-10.

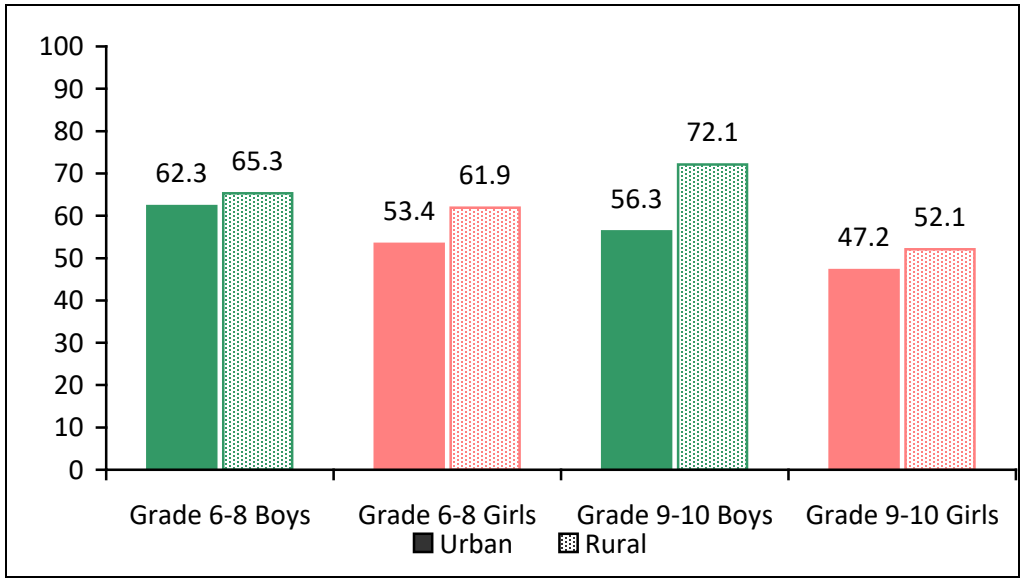
Figure 7.4: Students who are involved in on the land activities 3 hours or more per week, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 12.4

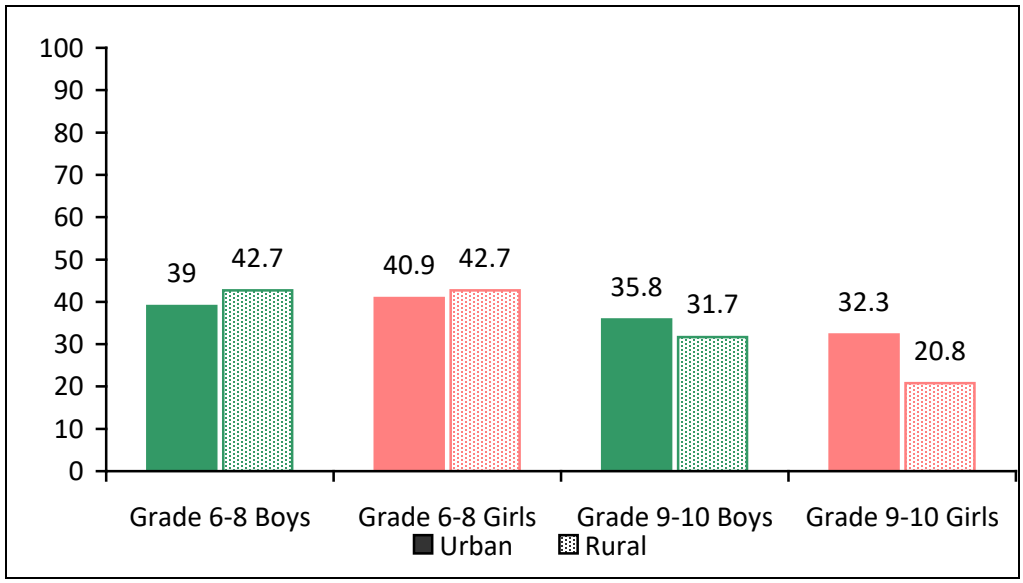
Participation in physical activity can be further considered in the context of engaging in organized sports. Students reported on their involvement with team sports (Figure 7.5) as well as individual sports (Figure 7.6). Participation in team sports captures the greatest proportion of students participating in physical activity (47.2-72.1 %). As with "on the land" activities, there is a greater proportion of rural students who report being involved in team sports compared to urban students, for both boys and girls, across grades (Figure 7.5). Within both Grades 6-8 and Grades 9-10, fewer girls than boys report participating in team sports. Older students display the highest range in team sport participation, as rural boys in Grades 9-10 represent the greatest level of engagement (~72%), while urban girls in Grades 9-10 are the least likely to report participating in team sports (~47%).

Figure 7.5: Students who are involved in team sports, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 56.9

Figure 7.6: Students who are involved in individual sports, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)

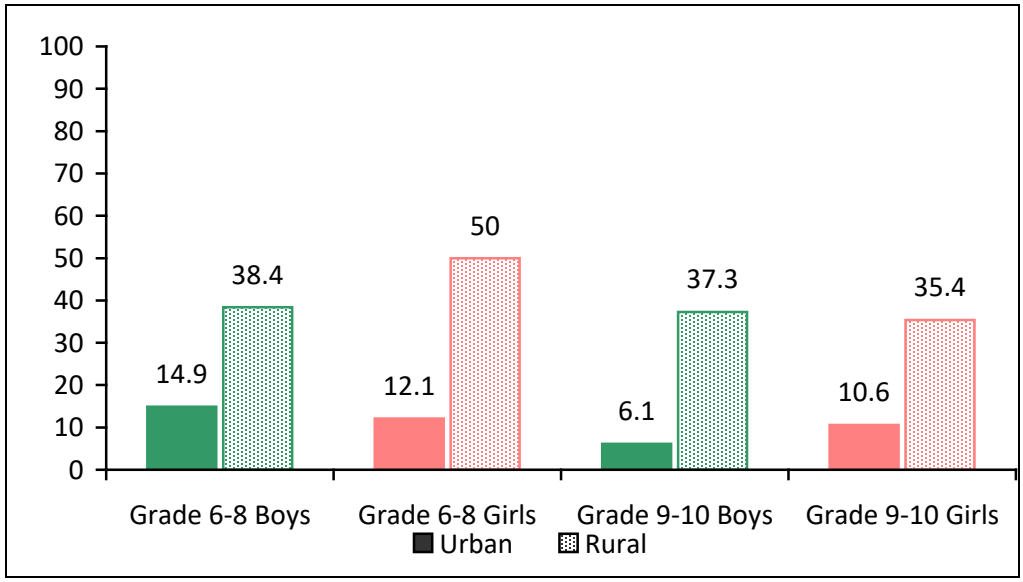


Total = 37.3

Involvement with individual sports is notably lower than that for team sports. The greatest participation was reported by rural students in Grades 6-8, at 42.7% (Figure 7.6). This is 4.5% less than the *lowest* proportion of students who report engaging in team sports (Figure 7.5). Nonetheless, involvement in individual sports is one of only two measures of physical activity to show an equal (or greater) representation of female to male students, specifically rural students in Grades 6-8. The same is true for participation in cultural activities, ceremonies or groups (Figure 7.7)

There is a distinct difference between urban and rural students for participation in cultural activities, regardless of age or gender (Figure 7.7). Rural students are much more likely to report being involved in cultural activities than urban students. Across grades and gender, at least 35% of rural students report participating in these activities. Meanwhile, the highest proportion of urban students to participate is only 14.9%. The least difference between rural and urban students' involvement in these types of activities is represented by boys in Grades 6-8 (still a difference of 23%). Participation in these types of activities appears to decrease somewhat for older students. Rural girls in Grades 6-8 are the most likely to report being involved in these activities (50%), and urban boys in Grades 9-10 are least likely (6%).

Figure 7.7: Students who are involved in cultural activities, ceremonies or groups, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 17.5

Students were also asked which activities they would like to participate in that are not currently available in their community (Table 7.1). From this open-ended question, students identified a total of 68 potential activities (along with 5 responses associated with uncertain interest, no interest in activities not already available, feeling there are not enough spaces for youth to exercise and be social, feeling too busy for additional activities, or being interested in all activities). Of the 1,418 girls and boys in Grades 6 to 10 across regions who were surveyed, some students listed more than one activity, while others chose to leave their response blank.

Certain activities appear to be of greater interest than others. There are more activities identified by boys than girls. The resounding top preference is for football, with 92 students identifying this activity as one they would like to participate in. Mostly boys identify this activity as being of interest (81/92). Other top preferences are basketball (19 students interested- all male), lacrosse (17 students interested- all male), and baseball (16 students interested- 14 male). Girls are most interested in acting, theatre, and drama (15 students- 14 female), volleyball (15 students- 12 female), gymnastics and trampoline (15 students- 11 female), art and painting (14 students- 11 female), dancing (10 students- all female), and cheerleading (10 students- all female). A small number of the higher ranking activities are of

more equal interest to boys and girls, including swimming and diving (18 students- 10 female), soccer and bubble soccer (16 students- 6 female), and choir (14 students- 9 female).

Table 7.1: Students would like to participate in organized activities that are not available in your community, by age, and gender

Activity	6-8 Boys	6-8 Girls	9-10 Boys	9-10 Girls
Acting, theatre, drama	1	9		5
Art, painting	2	9	1	2
Baseball	8	2	6	
Basketball	17		2	
Cheerleading		8		2
Choir, music, singing, rapping	3	6	2	3
Dancing		8		2
Football	48	5	33	6
Gymnastics, trampoline	4	9		2
Lacrosse	12		5	
Soccer, bubble soccer	8	3	2	3
Swimming, diving	5	5	3	5
Volleyball	2	7	1	5
None	5	8	3	1

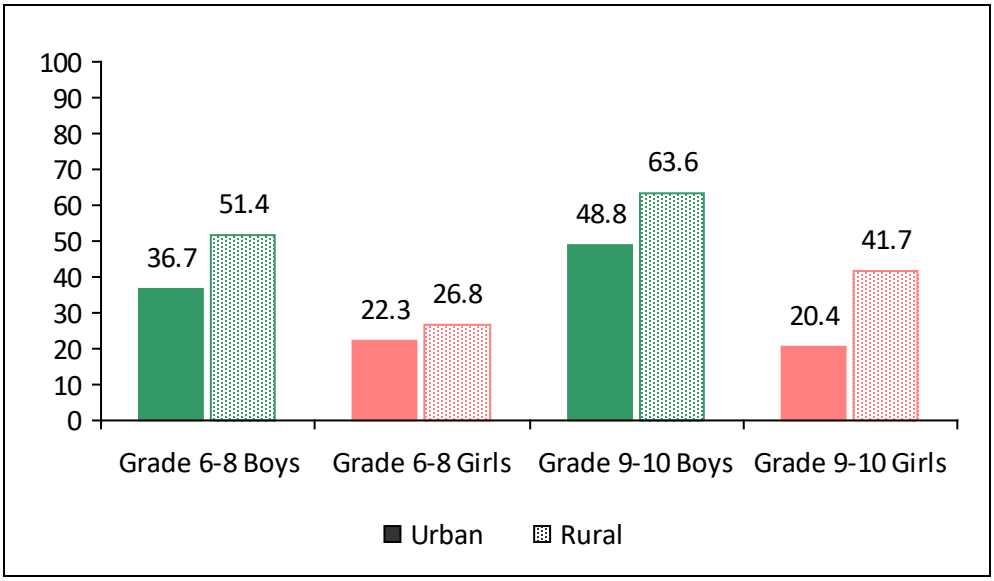
Sedentary Behaviour

While increased levels of physical activity are associated with better physical and mental health in youth (Biddle & Asare, 2011; Wu et al., 2017), sedentary behaviours are inversely related to health-related quality of life in children and adolescents (Wu et al., 2017). Sedentary behaviours are defined as any waking activity characterized by a low metabolic energy expenditure (< 1.5 metabolic equivalents), and a sitting or reclining posture (Hesketh, Lakshman, & van Sluijs, 2017). This often takes the form of “screen-based media use” (Iannotti, Kogan, Janssen, & Boyce, 2009) including watching television, using computers or smartphones, and playing video games. Sedentary behaviours are linked with poorer fitness levels (de Rezende et al., 2014), unfavourable body composition (Carson et al. 2016), obesity (Rey-Lopez, Vicente-Rodriguez, Biosca, & Moreno, 2008), and cardiovascular health issues (Gómez-Martínez et al., 2010). Current guidelines recommend limiting sedentary behaviours

like recreational screen time to no more than two hours per day (Tremblay, Carson, Chaput et al. 2016)

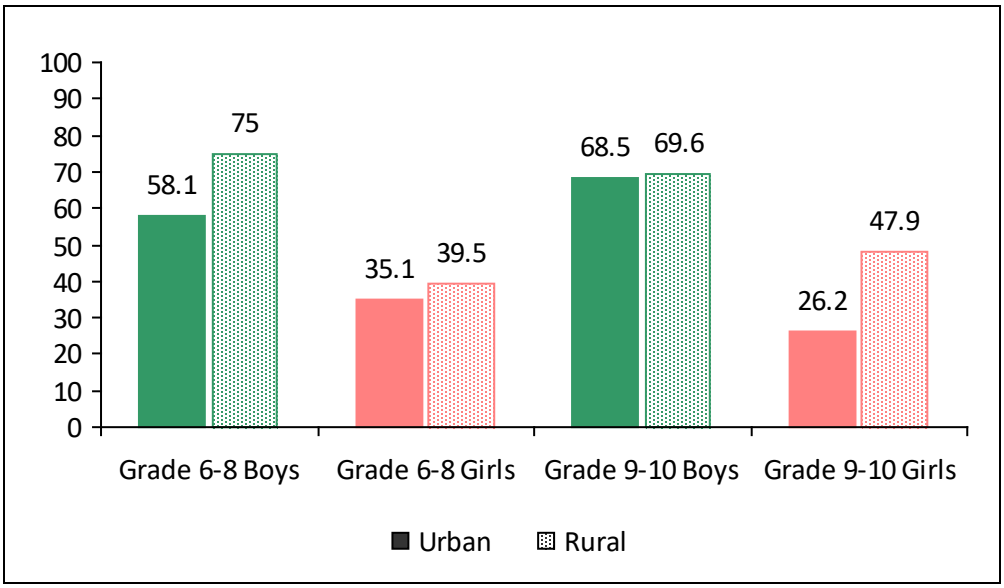
Boys are more likely to spend two or more hours playing computer games on weekdays than are girls (Figure 7.8). Older students are more likely to do so than are younger students (with the exception of urban girls) and rural students are more likely to play computer games than their urban counterparts. This is true throughout the week as well as on weekends (Figure 7.9), though location-based differences are less pronounced for boys on the weekends. There is a similar pattern for more boys than girls playing computer games over the weekend. It is not surprising that the proportion of students who report playing two or more hours of video games per day on the weekend is higher than that throughout the week for all students. Rural boys are the most likely to play at least two hours of video games during the week (51.4-63.6%) and on the weekend (69.6-75%).

Figure 7.8: Students who spend two hours or more playing games on a computer, games console, tablet (like iPad), smartphone or other electronic device (not including moving or fitness games) on a weekday, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 34.2

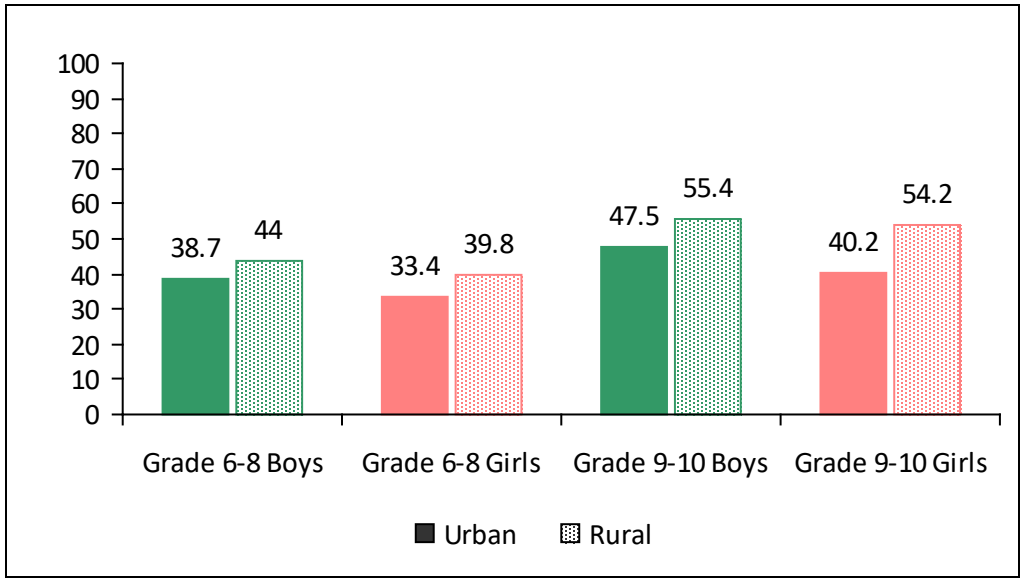
Figure 7.9: Students who spend two hours or more playing games on a computer, games console, tablet (like iPad), smartphone or other electronic device (not including moving or fitness games) per day on a weekend, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 49.3

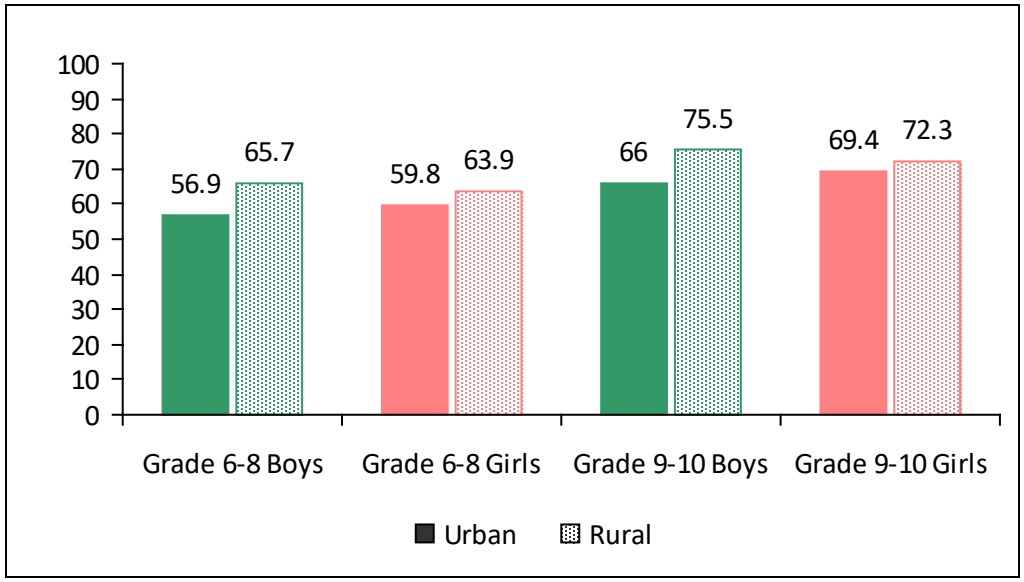
Boys are more likely to spend two or more hours watching TV or other entertainment on screen on weekdays than are girls with the exception of older rural students (Figure 7.10). Older students are more likely to do so than are younger students and rural students are more likely to watch TV or other entertainment on screen than their urban counterparts. This is true throughout the week as well as on weekends (Figure 7.11). Boys and girls are similar across the groups in the proportions who watch TV or other entertainment on screen over the weekend. Similar to gaming the proportion of students who report playing two or more hours of video games per day on the weekend is higher than that throughout the week for all students.

Figure 7.10: Students who spend two hours or more watching TV (including YouTube and similar services), DVDs and other entertainment on a screen on a weekday, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 40.4

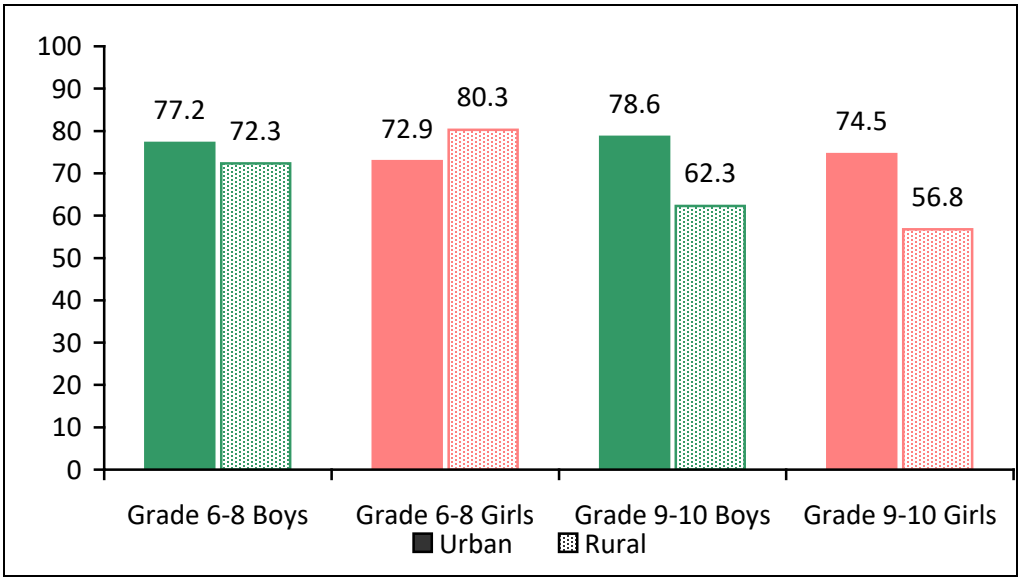
Figure 7.11: Students who spend two hours or more watching TV (including YouTube and similar services), DVDs and other entertainment on a screen on a weekend, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 62.9

The current guidelines for sleep time recommend 9 to 11 hours of sleep for children aged 5 - 13, and 8 to 10 hours of sleep for youths aged 14 - 17 (Tremblay, Carson, Chaput et al. 2016). Overall, most students meet these sleep time guidelines (74.3%), with the lowest proportion of students being rural girls in Grades 9-10 (56.8%). While sleep appears to be relatively stable across time for urban students, the proportion of rural students who report meeting these guidelines decreases for older students. This finding is particularly profound for rural girls, who transition from being the most likely to meet sleep guidelines in Grades 6-8, to the least likely in Grades 9-10.

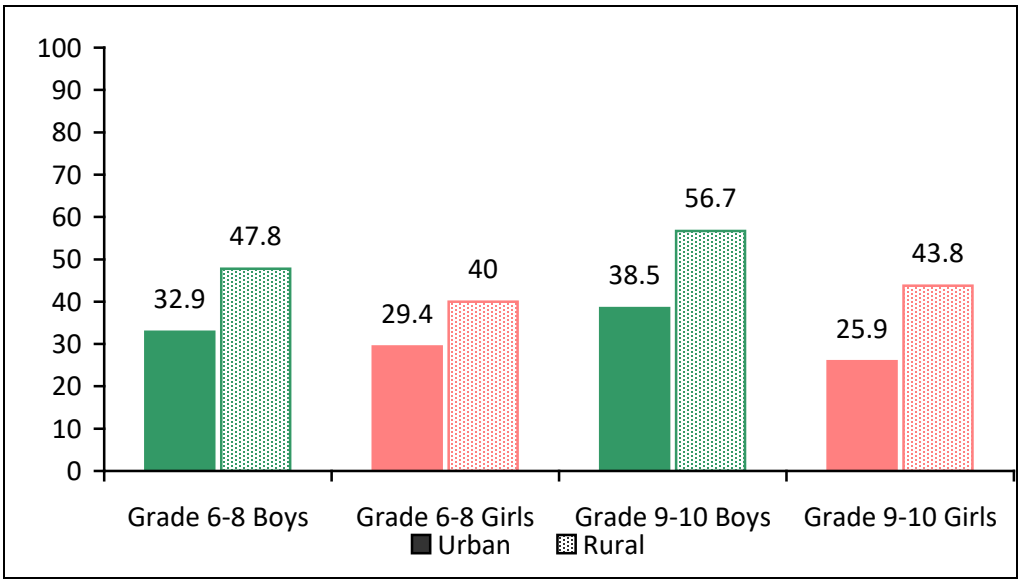
Figure 7.12: Students who meet sleep time guidelines, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 74.3

Exploring which behaviours are most common in the last hour before sleep, watching TV in the bedroom is a relatively common behaviour, particularly for rural boys (47.8-56.7%) (Figure 7.13). Rural students are more likely than urban students to report watching TV in the last hour before sleep in general. This behaviour is also more prevalent for boys than girls, for both younger and older students.

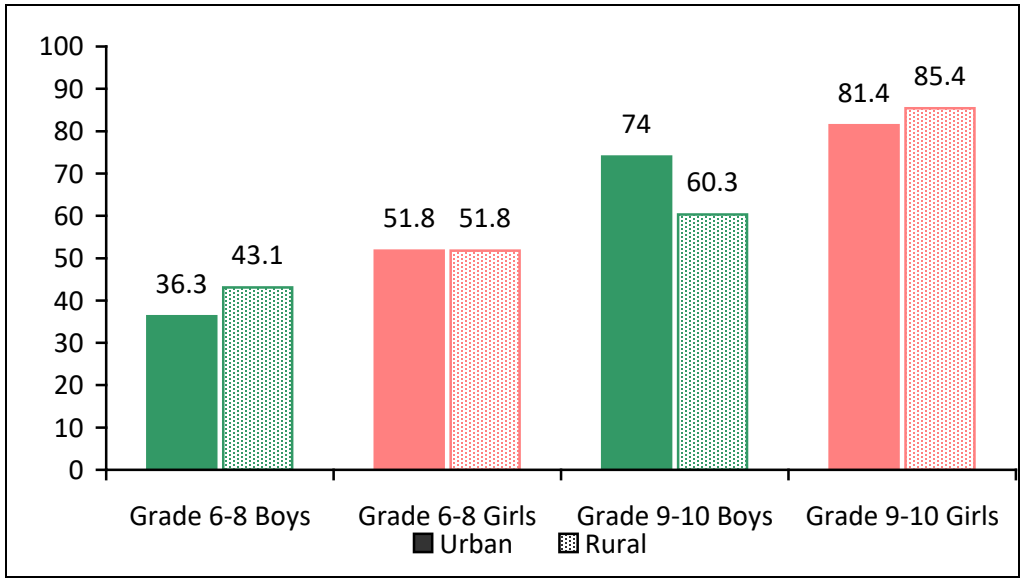
Figure 7.13: Students who report watching television in their bedroom in the last hour before going to sleep three or more days a week, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 34.4

The proportion of boys and girls who report using their cell phone in their bedroom in the last hour before sleep is high (approximately 60.5% on average), and substantially increases over grade levels (Figure 7.14). The highest proportion of younger students who report using a cell phone in their bedroom in the final hour before sleep is 51.8% (for both rural and urban girls in Grades 6-8). This number increases to between 81.4-85.4% for girls in Grades 9-10. At either age and for either location, girls are more likely than boys to report this behaviour.

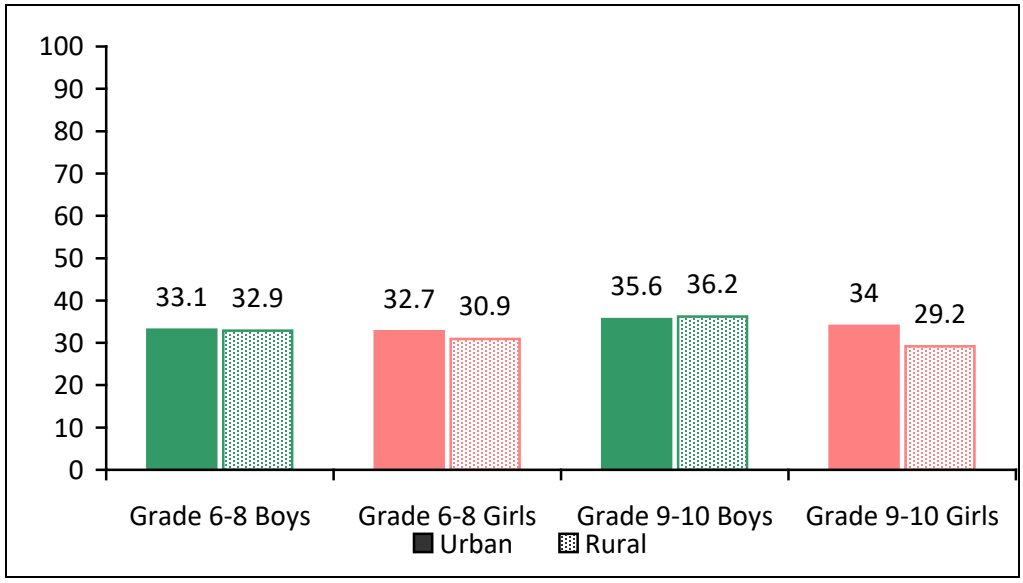
Figure 7.14: Students who report using their cell phone in their bedroom in the last hour before going to sleep three or more days a week, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 56.2

Using a computer or tablet in their room in the final hour before sleep is less common than cell phone use. At its' highest prevalence, 36.2% of rural boys in Grades 9-10 report using a computer or tablet in their room in the last hour before sleep (three or more days per week) (Figure 7.15). There is little difference in this kind of computer use between students, regardless of age, gender, or location (ranging from 29.2-36.2%).

Figure 7.15: Students who report using a computer or tablet in their bedroom in the last hour before going to sleep three or more days a week, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



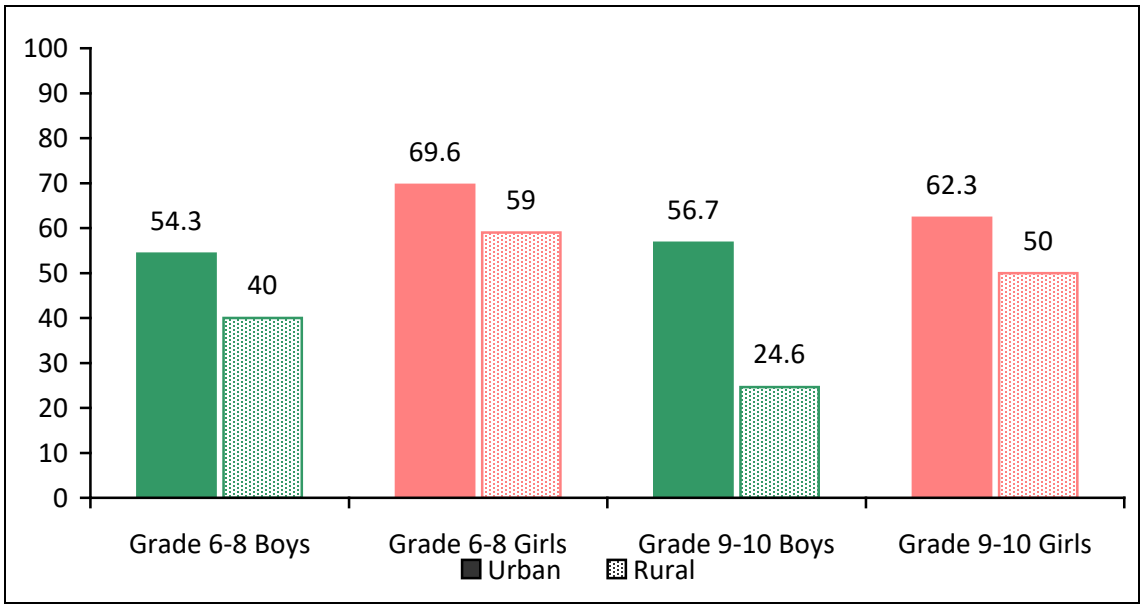
Total = 33.6

Dental Hygiene

Dental hygiene is the care and maintenance of healthy teeth and gums. Dental hygiene is a core contributor to overall oral health, which the World Health Organization defines as a state of being free from mouth and facial pain, oral and throat cancer, oral infection and sores, periodontal (gum) disease, tooth decay, tooth loss, and other diseases and disorders. Regularly brushing one's teeth (at least once per day, especially before bed) is recommended to prevent the development and progression of oral health problems like gum disease and tooth decay (Canadian Dental Association, 2019). According to a 2017 report on the State of Oral Health in Canada, (released by the Canadian Dental Association) there is considerable disparity in the state of oral health of Canadians from different socioeconomic backgrounds and geographical locations. Critically, rural and remote access areas across Canada, including the Yukon, have proportionally fewer dentists than urban areas, resulting in more challenging access to oral health care (Canadian Institute for Health Information, Distribution and Internal Migration of Canada's Dentist Workforce, 2007). With lesser access to oral health professionals, maintaining good dental hygiene to prevent dental disease may be especially important for youth in the Yukon.

Urban students, especially girls in Grades 6-8 (69.6%), are more likely than rural students to report brushing their teeth more than once a day (Figure 7.16). More girls than boys report this habit in either location. There appears to be a slight decline in positive dental hygiene for older students, as fewer students in Grades 9-10 report brushing their teeth at least twice per day (with the exception of urban boys). Rural boys in Grades 9-10 are the least likely to report this habit (24.6%).

Figure 7.16: Students who brush their teeth more than once a day, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 57.4

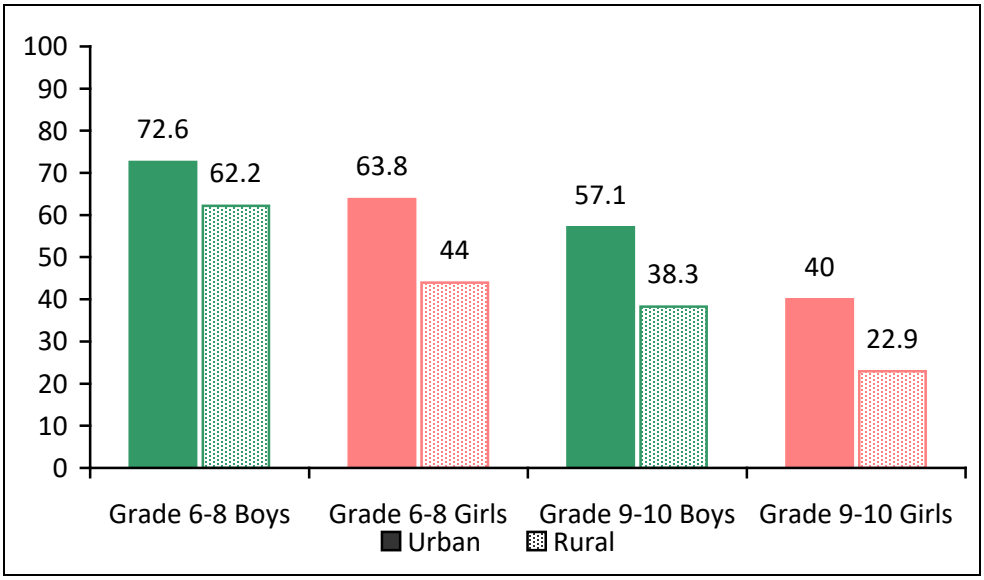
Eating and Diet

Like other health behaviours, eating and nutritional behaviours that are formed during adolescence often continue into adulthood (Vereecken, 2005). Eating behaviours in youth are influenced by a variety of environmental and psychosocial factors. Media messages, peer pressure, teasing, food availability, body dissatisfaction, parent's nutritional knowledge and encouragement, biological factors, and food preferences are all associated with the eating patterns and food choices of youth (Neumark-Sztainer, Wall, Story, & Perry, 2003; Raine, 2005; Taylor, Evers, & McKenna, 2005). Often times, these factors place young people at risk for health problems that may continue into adulthood (Neumark-Sztainer et al., 2003). For people living in Northern communities, eating traditional foods (i.e.., locally sourced foods such as animals, fish, and plants) is associated with improved diet quality, as well as with improved well-being through connections with culture and identity (Canada Food Guide, 2019). The shift away from eating traditional foods to eating more high-sugar and high-fat market foods has contributed to an increase in health problems for people in Northern communities (Kuhnlein, Receveur, Soueida, & Egeland, 2018). Moreover, young people tend to consume fewer traditional foods than adults (Willows, 2005), placing them particularly at-risk for poor nutritional health.

This section explores young people's eating and diet patterns. Students are asked how often they eat breakfast on weekdays, weekends, and at school. Students are also asked how often they eat certain foods: fruit; vegetables; soft drinks with sugar; and traditional foods from hunting, fishing, and berry picking. Questions also elicit how often they go to school or bed hungry because there is not enough food at home.

At either age, eating breakfast throughout the school week is more common for urban students than rural (Figure 7.17). Younger boys and younger urban girls are most likely to eat breakfast every day during the school week (62.2-72.6%). Unfortunately, this healthy eating habit becomes less prevalent in older students, with only 22.9% of rural girls reporting eating breakfast every school day.

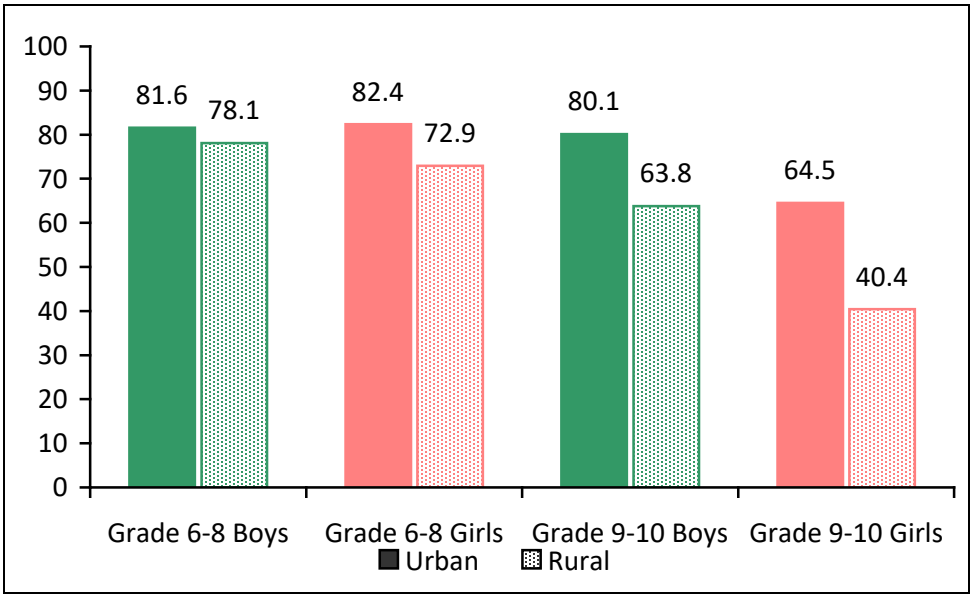
Figure 7.17: Students that eat breakfast all five days of the school week, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 57.7

Eating breakfast is much more common over the weekend than throughout the school week. Nearly double the number of rural girls in Grades 9-10 eat breakfast on the weekend (40.4%) (Figure 7.18). Despite the increased number for all students eating breakfast over the weekend relative to the school week, similar patterns emerge for differences based on age, gender, and location. Students are more likely to eat breakfast on weekends if they are younger and live in urban areas. While relatively even numbers of younger boys and girls report eating breakfast on the weekend, girls in Grades 9-10 (especially those in rural areas) are among the least likely to do so.

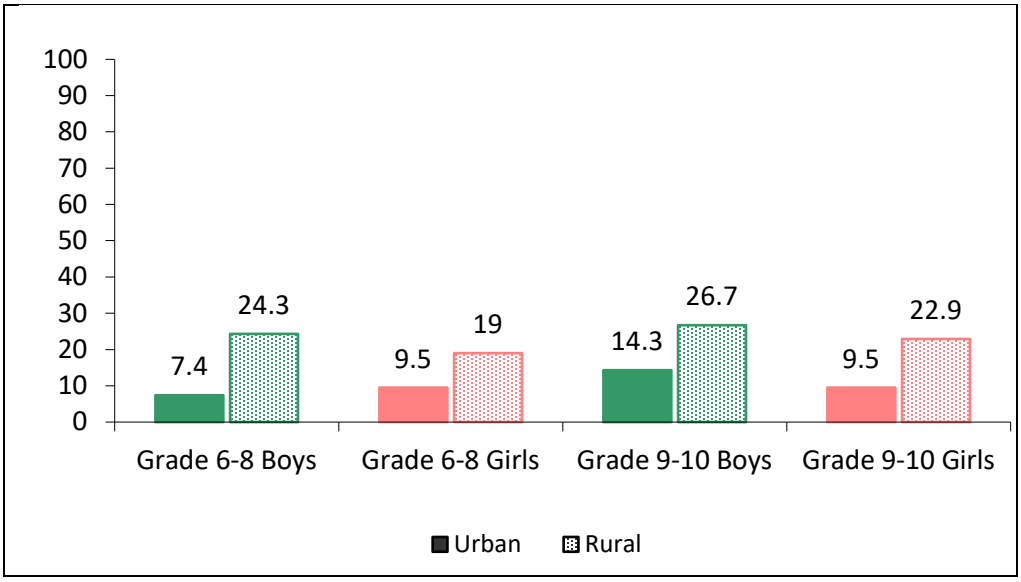
Figure 7.18: Students that eat breakfast both days of the weekend, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 76.1

The proportion of students having breakfast at school (rather than eating at home or not having breakfast at all) at least 3 days a week was relatively low, with the most students represented by rural boys in Grades 9-10 (26.7%) (Figure 7.19). Rural students were more likely to report this breakfast habit than urban students, regardless of age or gender. There was little difference between boys and girls at either grade level.

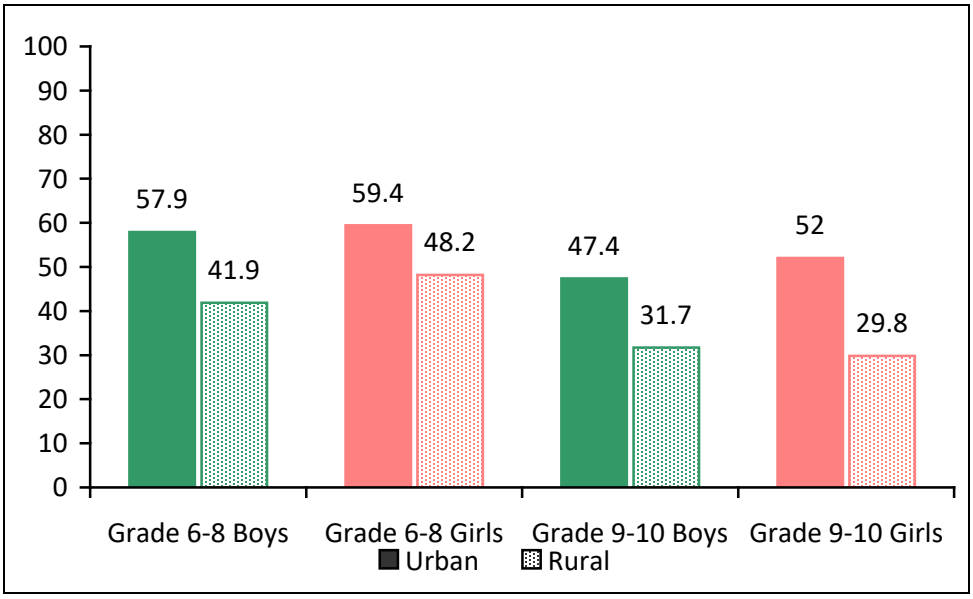
Figure 7.19: Students that usually have breakfast at school three days a week or more often, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 12.5

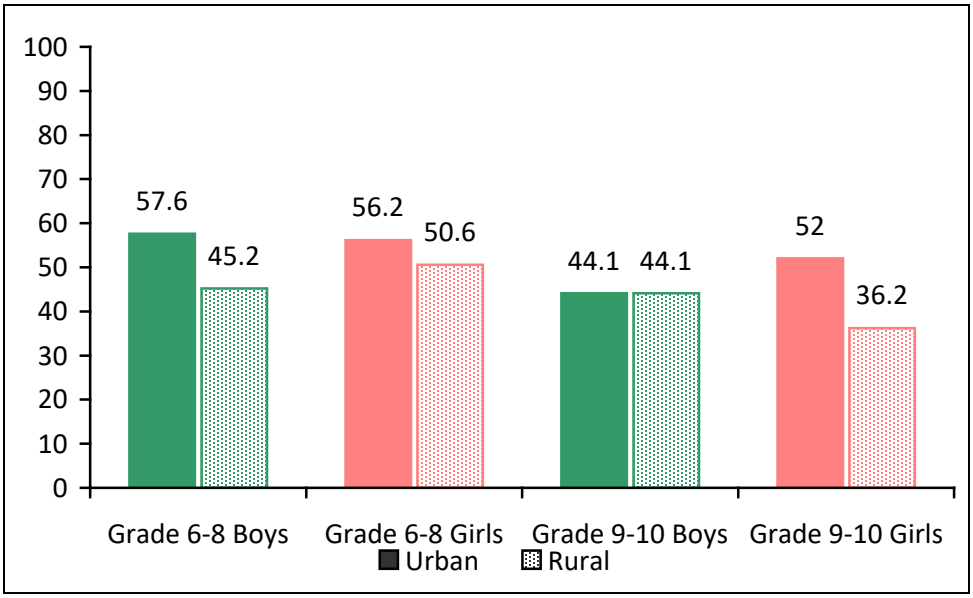
Fruits and vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet (Canada's Dietary Guidelines, 2019). Students were asked if they ate fruits (not including juice) at least once per day (Figure 7.20), as well as whether they ate vegetables at least once per day (Figure 7.21). The proportion of students eating fruits and vegetables is relatively comparable, ranging from 29.8-59.4% for fruits and 36.2-57.6% for vegetables. Similar patterns emerge for the students who eat fruits and vegetables with this regularity. Specifically, urban students are more likely to report eating fruits, as well as vegetables, compared to their rural counterparts, with the exception of Grade 9-10 boys. These older boys were equally likely to eat vegetables every day, regardless of location (44.1%). The proportion of students eating fruits and vegetables with this regularity declines from Grades 6-8 to Grades 9-10.

Figure 7.20: Students eating fruits (not including juice) once per day or more often, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 52.4

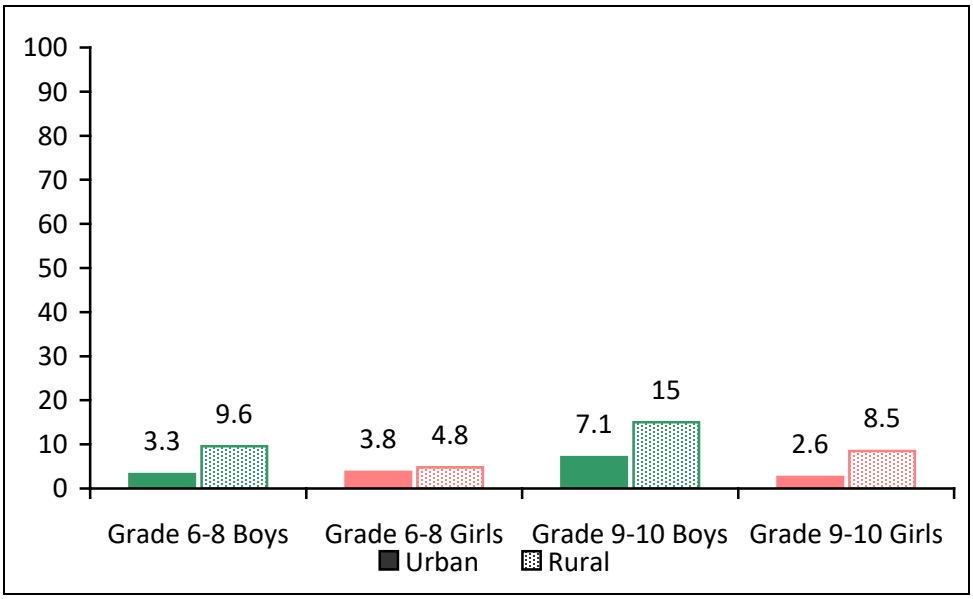
Figure 7.21: Students eating vegetables once per day or more often, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 51.8

Rates of drinking soft drinks once per day or more often are generally low for students in the Yukon (Figure 7.22). Rural students, particularly boys, are more likely to drink soft drinks at least once per day than are urban students.

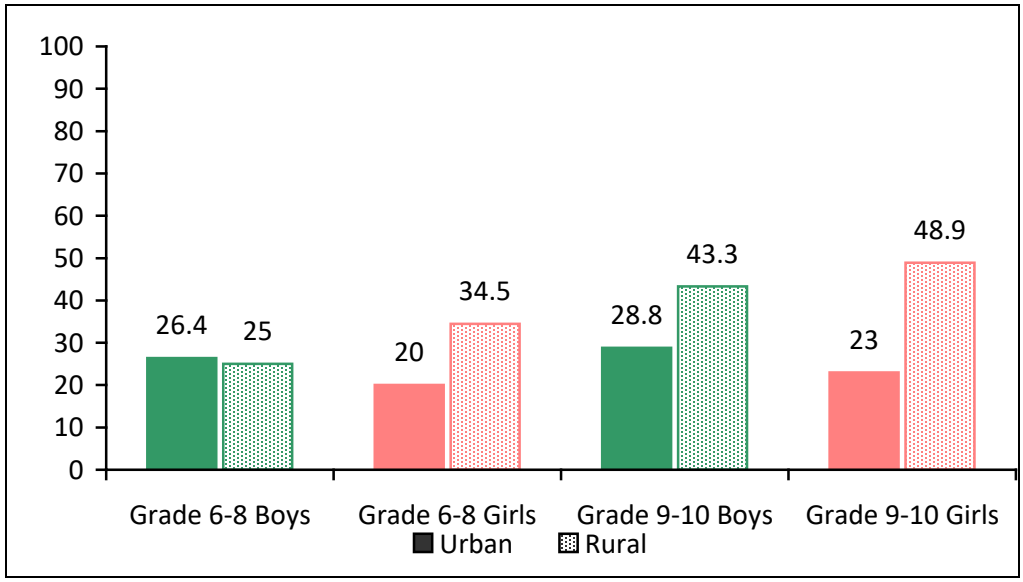
Figure 7.22: Students drinking soft drinks (with sugar) once per day or more often, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 5.2

Hunting, fishing, and berry picking are examined as traditional foods for students in the Yukon. In general, students in rural areas and those in Grades 9-10 are more likely to eat traditional food from hunting often than are students in urban areas, and those in Grades 6-8 (Figure 7.23). There is a small gender difference – in rural locations, girls are more likely to eat traditional food from hunting than are boys, with the opposite gender pattern in urban locations.

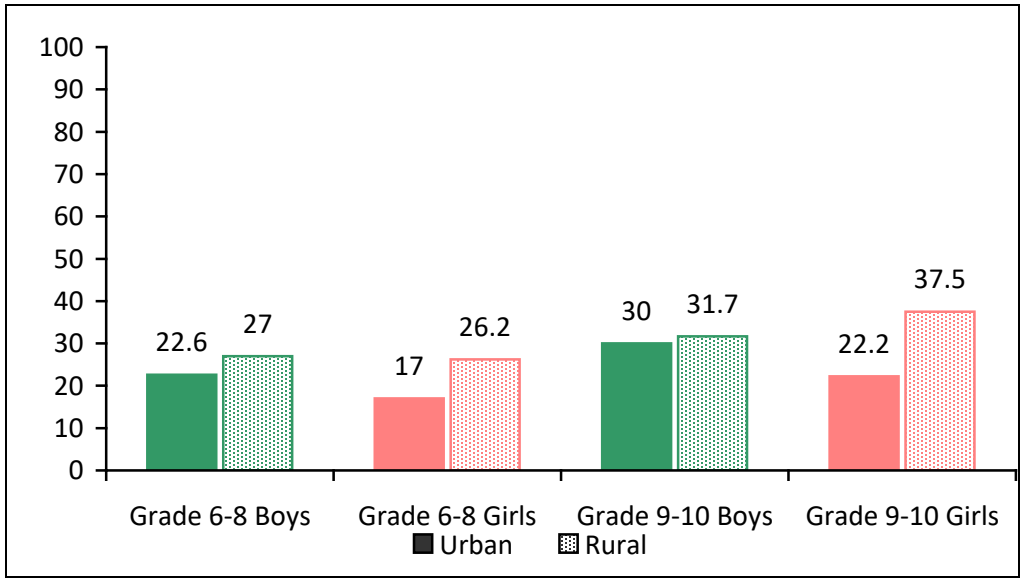
Figure 7.23: Students who eat traditional food from hunting often when it is available, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 26.7

Approximately one-quarter of students in the Yukon eat traditional food from fishing often (Figure 7.24). Rural students are more likely to report eating traditional food from fishing than urban students, with this location difference particularly strong for girls.

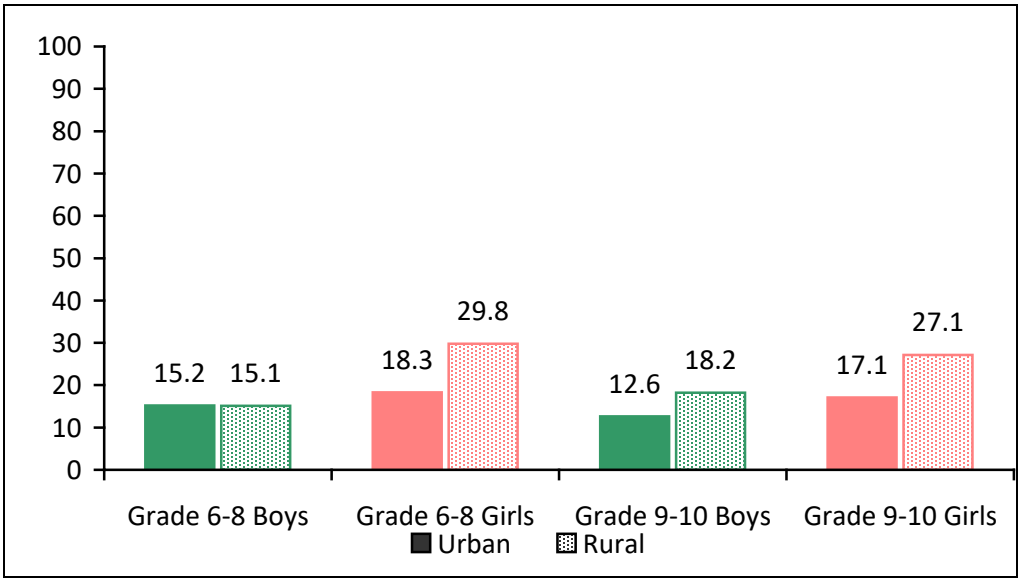
Figure 7.24: Students who eat traditional food from fishing often when it is available, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 23.5

In contrast to hunting and fishing, eating traditional food from berry picking is least common among students in the Yukon (Figure 7.25). Girls in rural locations are the most likely to eat traditional foods from berry picking relative to other students.

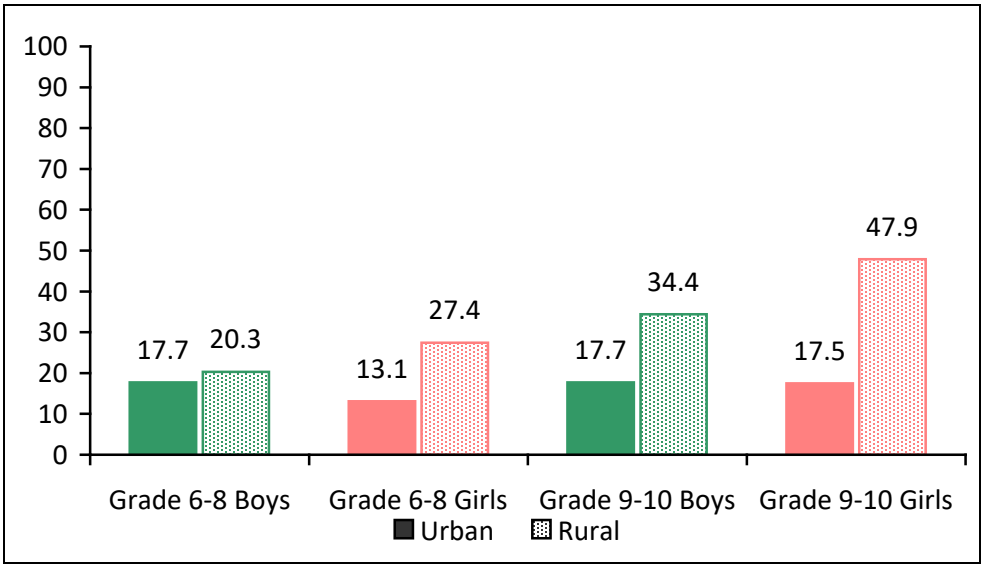
Figure 7.25: Students who eat traditional food from berry picking often when it is available, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 17.4

Students in urban locations are less likely to report that they go to bed hungry sometimes than students in rural areas (Figure 7.26). For urban students, there are few differences across age and gender. In contrast, there are both age and gender differences for rural students. Rural girls and Grade 9-10 students are more likely to go to bed hungry than boys and Grade 6-8 students. This results in large differences between rural girls in Grades 9-10 (48%) and urban boys in Grades 6-8 (18%).

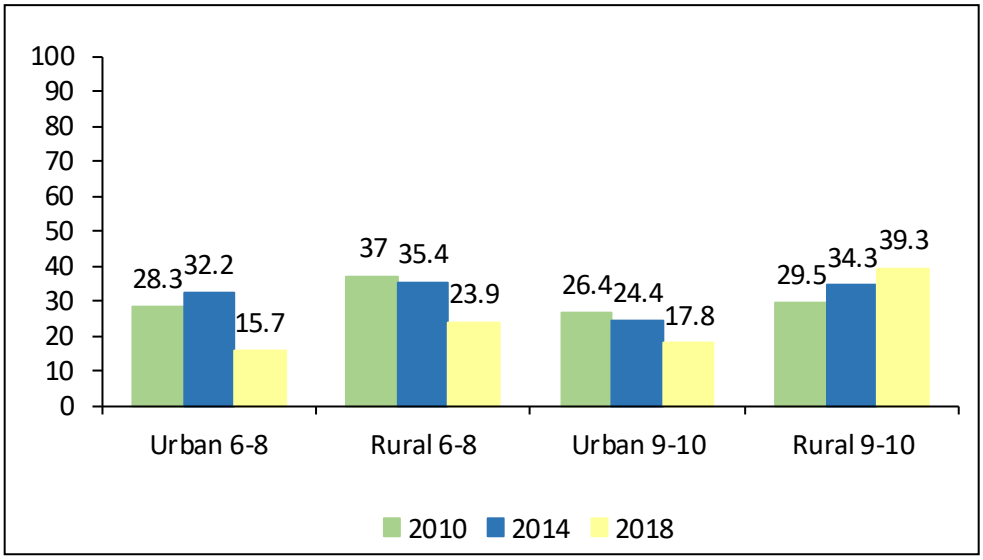
Figure 7.26: Students who go to school or bed hungry at least sometimes because there is not enough food at home, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 19.1

For most students in the Yukon, the percentage who report that they went to school or to bed hungry has decreased steadily over the past 8 years (Figure 7.27). The one exception to this trend is among rural students in Grades 9-10, in which there is an increasing trend.

Figure 7.27: Students who said they went to school or bed hungry at least sometimes because there is not enough food at home, by year of administration, and urban/rural status (%)



Chapter Summary

Living a healthy life-style encompasses getting enough physical activity, reducing sedentary behaviours, maintaining good dental hygiene, and eating a well-balanced diet. The benefits of physical activity for youth include regulation of healthy body weight (Janssen & LeBlanc, 2010) and improved cardiovascular health (Kemper et al., 2001), along with improvements in cognitive function (Donnelly et al. 2016) and helping to alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression (Annesi 2005; Biddle & Asare 2011). In contrast, sedentary behaviours can be associated with unfavourable body composition (Carson et al. 2016), poorer fitness levels (de Rezende et al., 2014), and more mental health issues (Hoare et al., 2016).

Students in the Yukon are variably engaged in different forms of physical activity. While urban students are more likely to report frequent activity in class, outside of class and across the week, rural students are more likely to report engaging in specific activities, including team sports, "on the land" activities and cultural activities. The highest proportion of students report being involved in team sports (> 50% for all groups except Grade 9-10 girls, at 47.2%). Encouraging participation in team sports may be a potential avenue for increasing and maintaining engagement in physical activity for students in the Yukon. In addition, promoting participation in individual sports and cultural activities could be particularly beneficial for female students, as these are the only measurements of physical activity that show an equal or slightly higher proportion of female to male student engagement, specifically in Grades 6-8.

Sedentary behaviours are quite common. Video game playing (not including fitness/movement based games) during the school week and over the weekend is most common for rural boys at either grade level. Roughly half of younger rural boys report playing at least 2 hours of video games per week day, and as much as 75% of younger rural boys play this much every day of the weekend. For girls, the most striking finding revolves around cell phone use in the final hour before sleep (rates risings from roughly 52% in Grades 6-8 up to 85.4% in Grades 9-10 for rural girls).

Good dental hygiene involves regular brushing and flossing. Brushing at least once daily helps to prevent the development of oral health problems like dental decay (Canadian Dental Association, 2019). Maintaining good dental hygiene practices may be especially important for

youth in the Yukon, where access to oral health care is more challenging compared to other regions of Canada. The dental hygiene of rural boys in the Yukon is a concern, as only 40% of rural boys in Grades 6-8 report brushing their teeth more than once a day. This habit worsens for older rural boys, dropping to roughly 25%. This decline in dental hygiene from younger to older students is common across students (with the exception of urban boys, who show a 2% improvement).

Fruits and vegetables are an essential element of a well-balanced diet (Canada Food Guidelines, 2019). At best, little over half of students in the Yukon are eating fruits every day, and slightly less report eating vegetables every day. Rural students fair worse than their urban counterparts for this habit. Eating habits are particularly concerning for rural girls in Grades 9-10. These students are least likely to eat breakfast every day of the school week, as well as on the weekend, and least likely to eat fruits and vegetables every day. Nearly half of rural girls in Grades 9-10 go to bed or school hungry because there simply is not enough to eat at home sometimes. No child or youth should go to bed or school hungry, but this is the reality for at least 15% of students in the Yukon. We do see an encouraging shift, with the percentage of students who report going to bed or school hungry decreasing from 2010-2018 for most students (highest rates dropping from 37.2-23.5%). In harsh contrast, the percentage of rural students in Grades 9-10 going hungry has climbed roughly 10% over the last 8 years (rising from 29.5-39.3%). This is an alarming finding, and reinforces the call to action. We must work to ensure that all students are getting enough food to eat, with special attention to rural Grade 9-10 students.

8. HEALTH RISK BEHAVIOUR

Adolescence is a critical developmental period in which many health-related behaviours are adopted. These behaviours are often carried forward and contribute to health trajectories into adulthood (Sawyer et al., 2012). Adolescence is also characterized by a peak in risk-taking behaviours (Steinberg, 2008), such that many young people will experiment with smoking, alcohol, and drugs. By Grade 12, 50% of Canadian youth have tried alcohol and 30-47% of Canadian youth have tried cannabis (Leatherdale & Burkhalter, 2012; Tu, Ratner, & Johnson, 2008). However, early age of onset of initial substance use is a risk factor associated with an increased likelihood of engaging in future risk behaviours (DuRant, Smith, Kreiter, & Krowchuk, 1999). Indeed, some youth who begin experimenting with these risk-taking behaviours become further involved in activities that can adversely affect their health and well-being (Pickett, Boyce, Garner, & King, 2002). There are many risk and protective factors that influence adolescent substance use (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992). Some of these factors include social norms, the availability of alcohol and drugs, problems at school, and engaging in relationships with peers who similarly engage in risky behaviours (Hawkins, Catalano & Miller, 1992; Kobus, 2003; Simons-Morton & Chen, 2006). Substance use is also associated with mental health problems. It is estimated that 60% of youth with a substance use disorder also have a comorbid mental health problem, such as depression (Armstrong & Costello, 2002).

This chapter examines health risk behaviour among young people in Grades 6 to 10. There are four broad categories of risk behaviour explored: smoking, alcohol, drugs, and sexual behaviour. Students' smoking behaviours are assessed in respect to having smoked tobacco and having used e-cigarettes in the last 30 days. Students' alcohol-use behaviours are assessed in respect to binge drinking more than once/month, alcohol consumption in the last 30 days, and been drunk in the last 30 days. Students' cannabis-use behaviours are assessed in terms of having used any in the last 30 days and heavy use in the last 30 days. Grade 9-10 students were also asked how easy it is for them to obtain cannabis, and whether they first began using alcohol and drugs at age 13 or younger. The relationship between substance use (cigarettes, alcohol, and cannabis) and school climate, peer support, and family support is also investigated.

Questions about other drug use and sexual behaviours are only asked of Grade 9-10 students. They are surveyed about whether they used LSD/other hallucinogens and pain reliever medication to get high in the last 12 months. Finally, Grade 9-10 students are asked about their sexual behaviours, including whether or not they had had sexual intercourse, if they first had sexual intercourse at age 13 or younger, and whether or not they used a condom/birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse. Grade 9-10 students were also asked whether or not they experienced physical, psychological, and online violence from a dating partner in the last year.

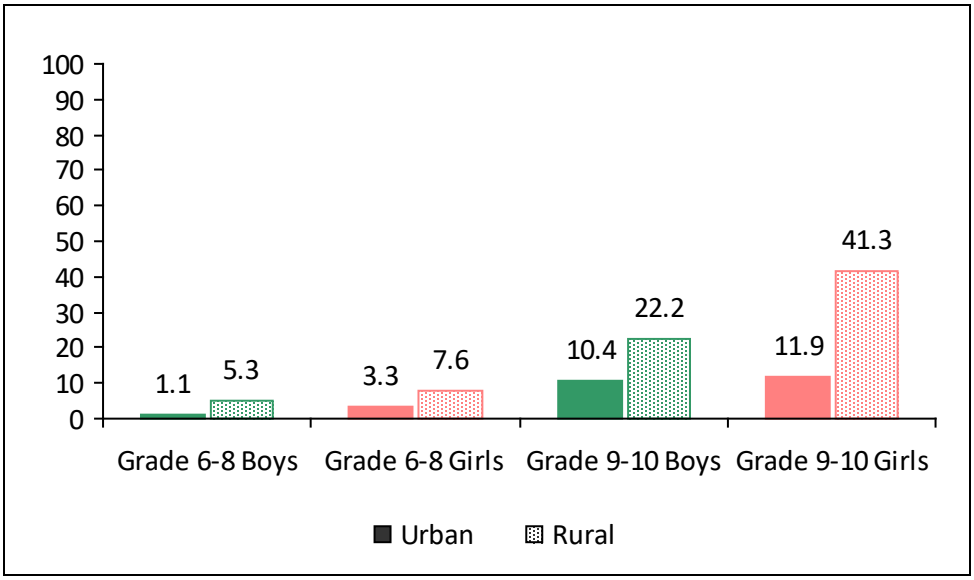
Smoking

According to the Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey [CTUMS] (2012), smoking among youth is at its lowest recorded rate since Health Canada first began reporting smoking prevalence. The most recent Youth Smoking Survey indicates that, for students in Grades 6 to 12 who smoke, 13.6 is the average age at which youth smoked for the first time (Health Canada, 2014). Young people, however, are the most likely to use electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes). Recent Canadian research indicates that among youth aged 15-19, 19.8% of youth had ever used an e-cigarette (Reid, Rynard, Czoli, & Hammond, 2015). While many people use e-cigarettes as a smoking cessation technique, the opposite pattern may be true for youth. Longitudinal research on Canadian youth in Grades 9 to 12 indicates that past 30-day e-cigarette use predicts an increased likelihood of initiating tobacco smoking, as well as daily smoking (Hammond, Reid, Cole, & Leatherdale, 2017). There are many negative effects of prolonged cigarette smoking, including heart problems, respiratory problems, and cancer (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2004). Schools and school environments have a particularly important role to play in reducing smoking in Canadian adolescents (Cole, Leatherdale, & Burkhalter, 2013).

There are age, gender, and location differences in recent tobacco use in the Yukon (Figure 8.1). Older students are more likely to have smoked tobacco in the past 30 days. Girls are more likely than boys to report recent tobacco use, with this gender difference being more notable among rural students than urban students. Lastly, rural students are much more likely

than urban students to have smoked tobacco in the past 30 days. These factors are associated with large differences between the groups – Grade 9-10 rural girls are the most likely to report recent tobacco use (41.3%), and Grade 6-8 urban boys are the least likely to report recent tobacco use (1.1%).

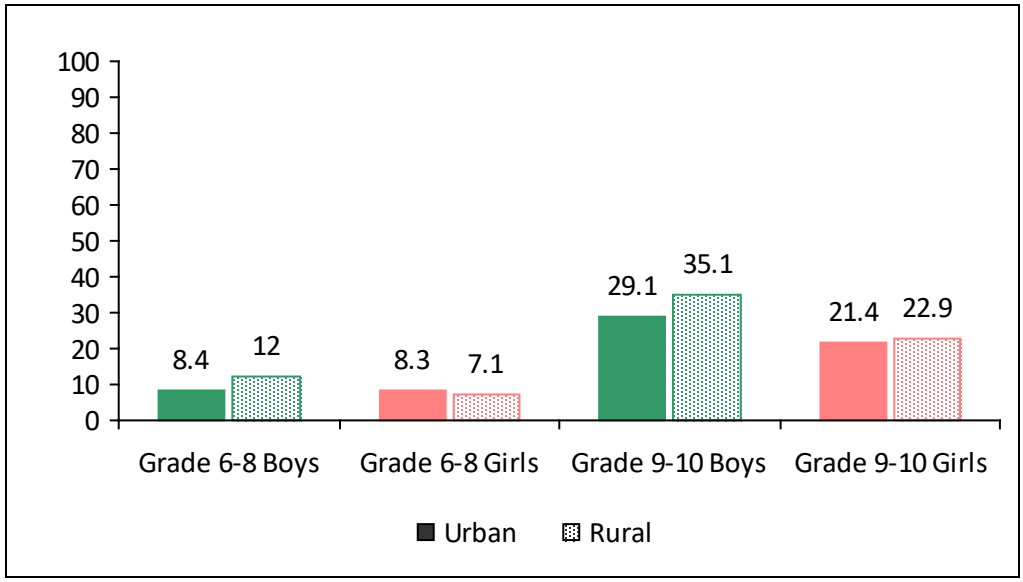
Figure 8.1: Students reporting having smoked tobacco in the last 30 days, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 7.7

When looking at e-cigarettes, however, these trends differ (Figure 8.2). As expected, the likelihood of e-cigarette use increases with age. bINGE

Figure 8.2: Students reporting having used e-cigarettes in the last 30 days, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



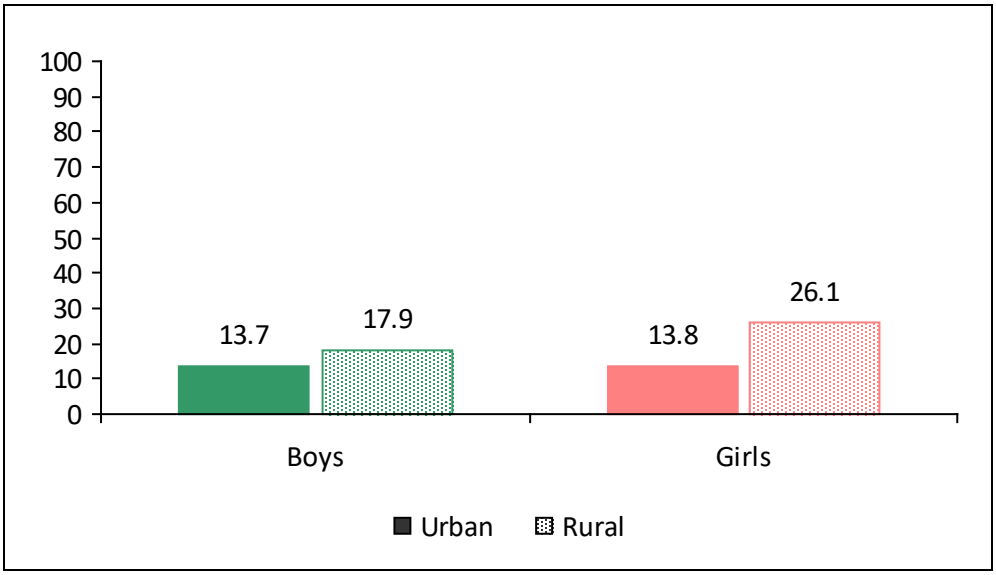
Total = 15.3

Alcohol Use

Alcohol is one of the most commonly used substances among youth (Elgar & Pickett, 2011; Leatherdale, Hammond, & Ahmed, 2008). The risks associated with adolescent alcohol use increase in a dose-response relationship - those who use alcohol more frequently and in heavier quantities have the highest likelihood of negative outcomes (Taylor, Rehm, Room, Patra, & Bondy, 2008). For example, drunkenness (drinking) is a stronger predictor of negative outcomes for youth, such as injuries, violence, and low academic performance (Kuntsche et al., 2013). Alcohol is a primary factor in a variety of risk taking behaviours such as illegal drug use (Johnston, O' Malley & Bachman, 2002) and risky sexual behaviour (Cooper, 2002; Johnston et al., 2002). Alcohol-related accidents are a leading cause of death among youth (Solomon, 2012).

Rates of monthly binge-drinking (4+ drinks for females, 5+ drinks for males) are much higher among rural students than urban students (Figure 8.3). While there is no gender difference for binge-drinking among urban students, rural girls (26%) are much more likely to report binge-drinking than are rural boys (18%).

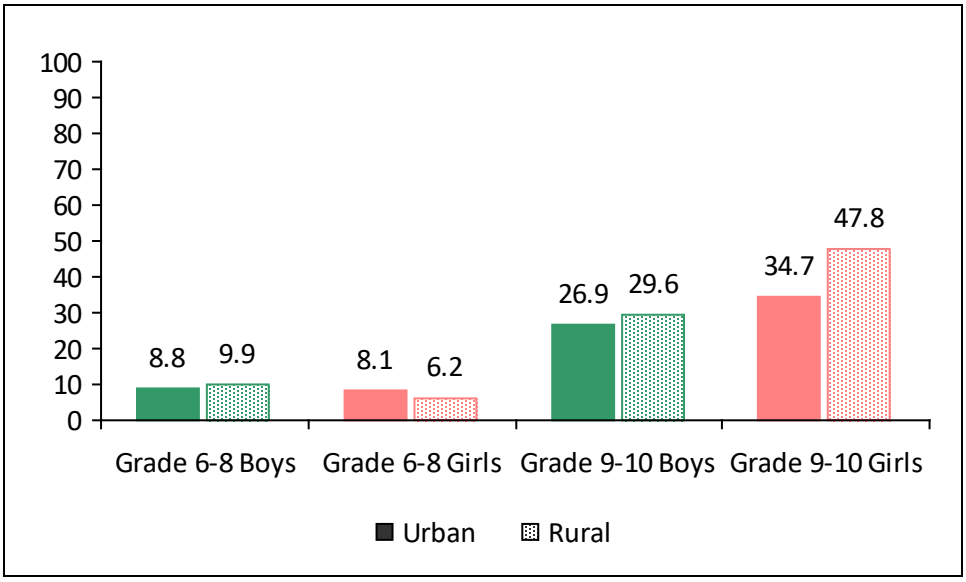
Figure 8.3: Grade 9 and 10 students having five or more drinks (or four or more for females) more than once a month, by urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 15.0

Students in Grades 9-10 are more likely to have consumed alcohol in the past 30 days than are students in Grades 6-8 (Figure 8.4). Urban and rural students report a similar prevalence of alcohol consumption, with the exception of Grade 9-10 girls. Rural Grade 9-10 girls (48%) are more likely to have consumed alcohol in the past 30 days than their urban counterparts (35%).

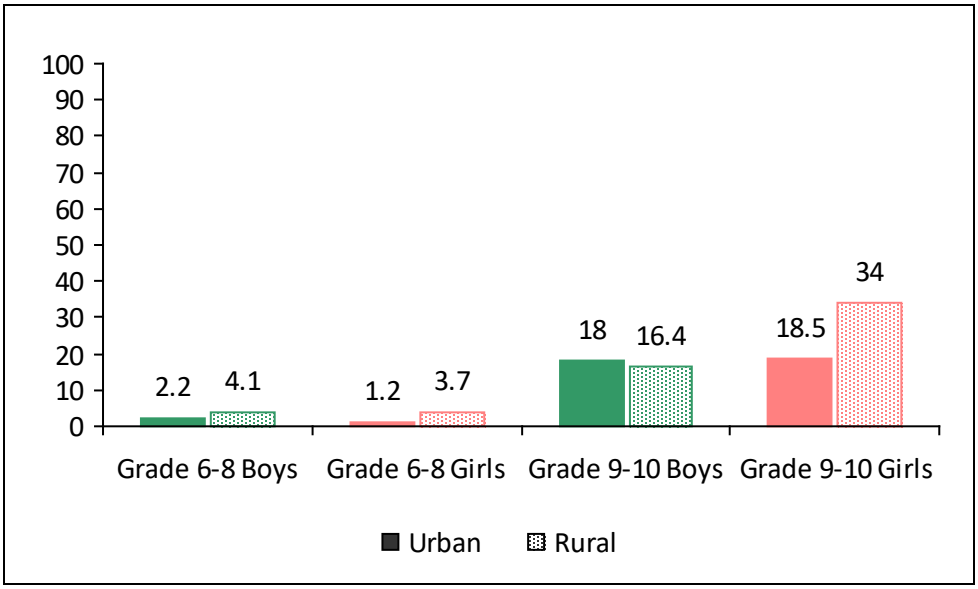
Figure 8.4: Students reporting alcohol consumption in the last 30 days, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 17.2

Although having been drunk in the past 30 days is less common than any alcohol consumption, it follows a similar pattern (Figure 8.5). Older students are more likely to have been drunk in the past 30 days than are younger students. There are few gender or location differences with the exception of rural Grade 9-10 girls (34%), who are the most likely to have been drunk in the past 30 days.

Figure 8.5: Students reporting having been drunk in the last 30 days, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 8.5

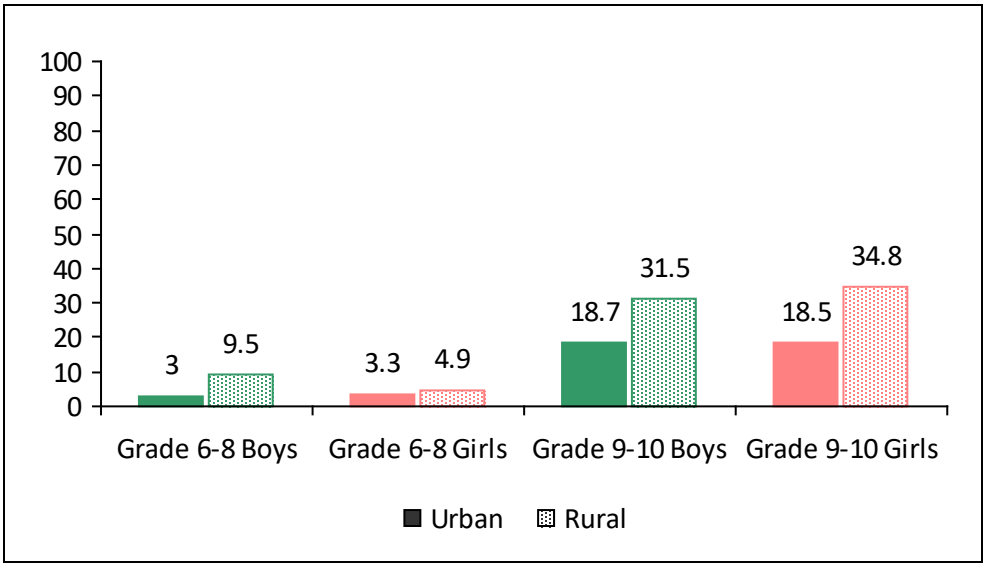
Drugs

Cannabis is one of the most commonly used drugs in the world. In 2010, Canadian youth ranked first for cannabis use among 43 countries, with one-third of youth having tried cannabis by age 15 (Inchley et al., 2016). Compared to adulthood, adolescent cannabis use is particularly problematic because adolescence is a period of rapid brain development. Indeed, cannabis use is associated with structural and functional changes to the brain (Grant & Belanger, 2017). Adolescent cannabis use is strongly associated with other health-risk behaviours and difficulties, including tobacco smoking, depression, anxiety, psychosis, and poor academic performance (Grant & Belanger, 2017). There are a variety of factors that influence young people's decision to use and/or not use cannabis. Some of these factors include family relationships and influence, perceived health risks of cannabis, and the impact cannabis has on academic performance (Porath-Waller, Brown, Frigon, & Clarke, 2013). Other illicit drugs used by Canadian youth include ecstasy, LSD and other hallucinogens, and pain relievers (Health Canada, 2014). Comorbid use of cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs is common among youth (Leatherdale & Burkhalter, 2012). Healthy relationships with peers, parents, and

the school community represent important protective factors for reducing adolescent health-risk behaviours (Jessor, Van Den Bos, Vanderryn, Costa, & Turbin, 1995).

Like alcohol, rates of recent cannabis use increase drastically among older youth (Figure 8.6). Boys and girls engage in cannabis use at relatively similar rates. In general, rural students are much more likely than urban students to have used cannabis in the past 30 days.

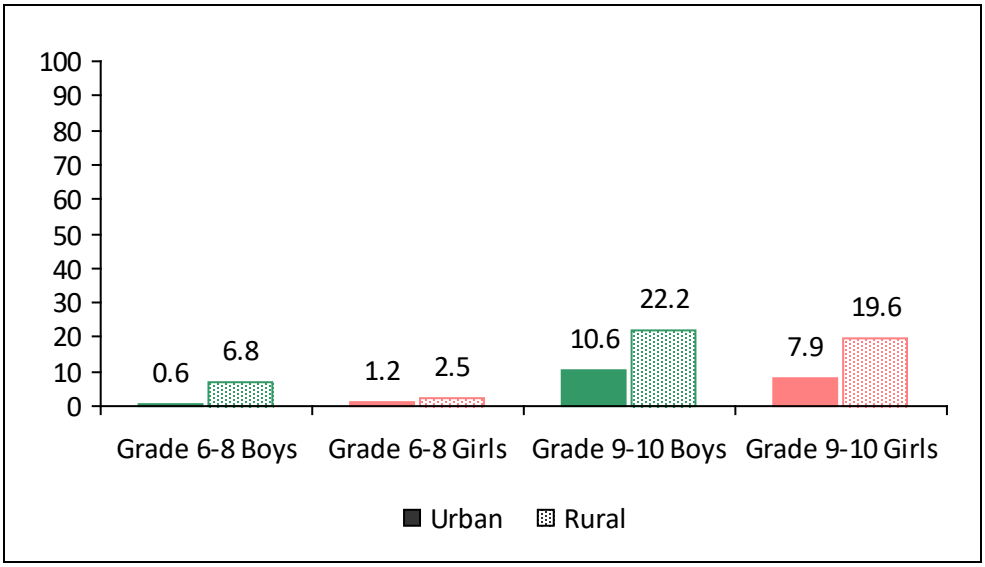
Figure 8.6: Students reporting cannabis use in the last 30 days, by urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 10.6

Similar trends are observed for frequent cannabis use (Figure 8.7), such that rates increase with age and rural students are much more likely to engage in frequent cannabis use than are urban students.

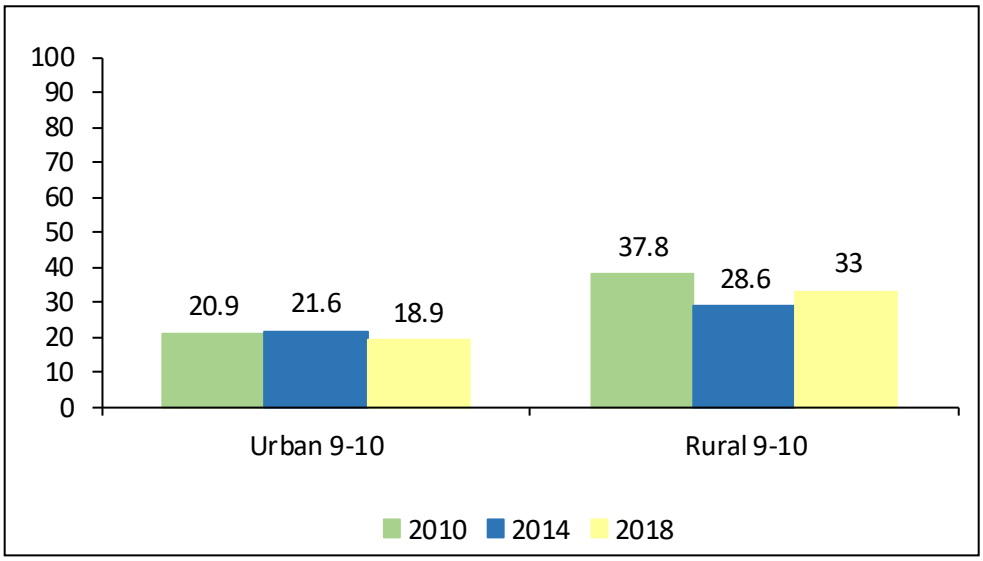
Figure 8.7: Students reporting cannabis use 6 or more days in the last 30 days, by urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 5.5

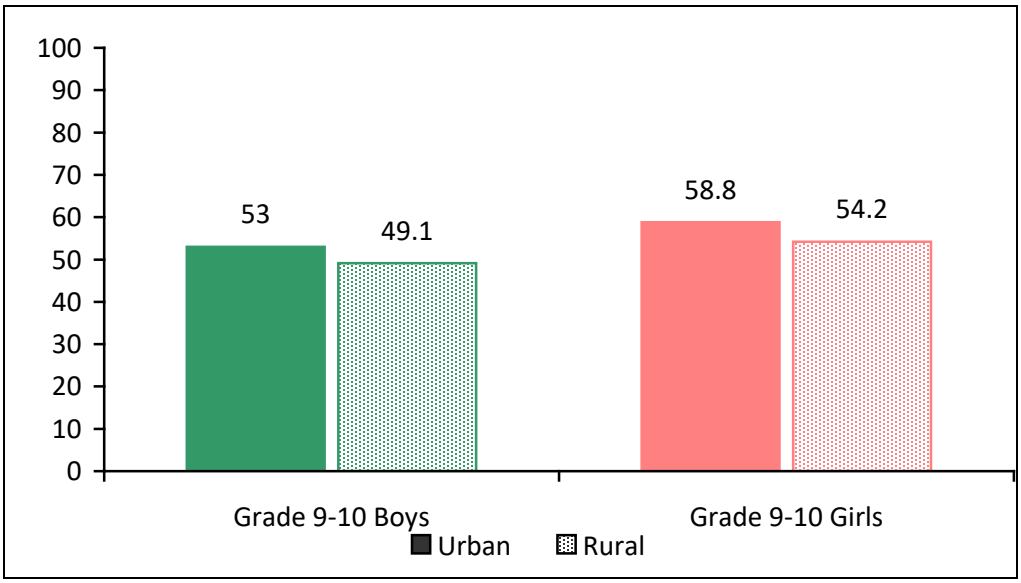
Longitudinal trends in cannabis use from 2010, 2014, and 2018 are different for students in urban and rural locations (Figure 8.8). For urban students, rates of cannabis use are relatively stable over the past 8 years, with a slight decrease (2.7%) from 2014 to 2018. For rural students, rates of cannabis use are much lower since a peak 2010; however, there is a slight increase (4.4%) from 2014 to 2018.

Figure 8.8: Grade 9 and 10 students who used cannabis in the last 30 days, by year of administration, and urban/rural status (%)



About half of students in Grades 9-10 report that it would be fairly easy or very easy for them to get cannabis (Figure 8.9). Rates are similar across gender, with urban students being slightly more likely to agree that cannabis is easy for them to obtain than rural students.

Figure 8.9: Grade 9 and 10 students reporting it would be fairly easy or very easy to get cannabis, by urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 55.0

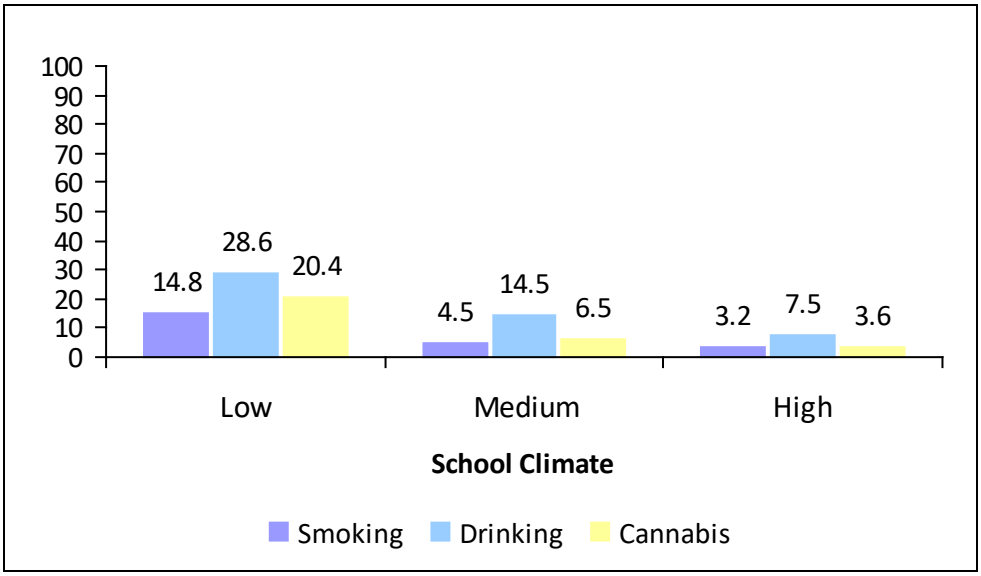
Across the 4 risk behaviours examined, rural students are much more likely than urban students to report that they first initiated these behaviours at 13 years old or younger (Table 8.1). Girls living in rural areas engage in the highest rates of early risk behaviours.

Table 8.1: Grade 9 and 10 students risk behaviour early age of initiation – 13 years old or younger, by urban/rural status, and gender (%)

	Male Urban	Male Rural	Female Urban	Female Rural
Drink alcohol (more than a small amount)	22.5	33.3	22.4	50.0
Get drunk	6.0	17.5	11.2	27.1
Smoke a cigarette (more than a puff)	8.5	28.6	9.1	37.5
Use cannabis	10.0	31.6	12.7	37.5

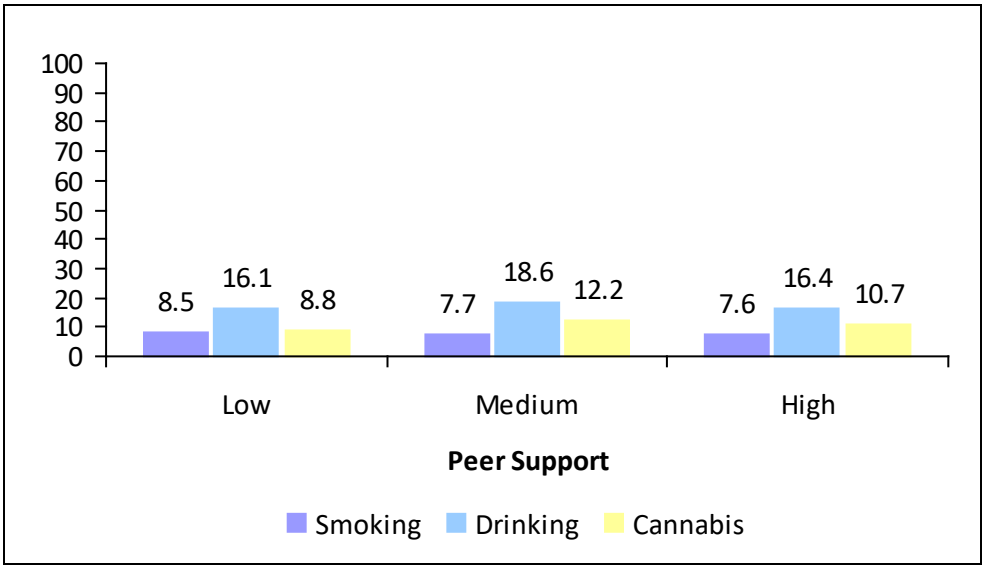
Rates of youth substance use is related to school climate (Figure 8.10). Regardless of the substance, students in the high school climate group are the least likely to report substance use, while students in the low school climate group are the most likely.

Figure 8.10: Students smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, and using cannabis in the last 30 days (%), by school climate



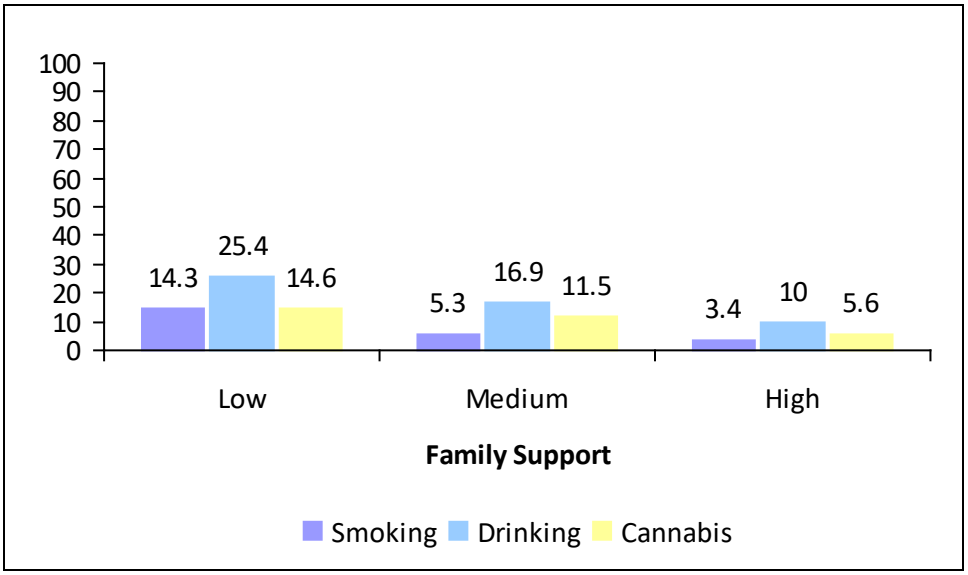
In contrast, rates of substance use did not vary across levels of peer support (Figure 8.11). Students reported similar levels of substance use across low, medium, and high levels of peer support.

Figure 8.11: Students smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, and using cannabis in the last 30 days (%), by peer support



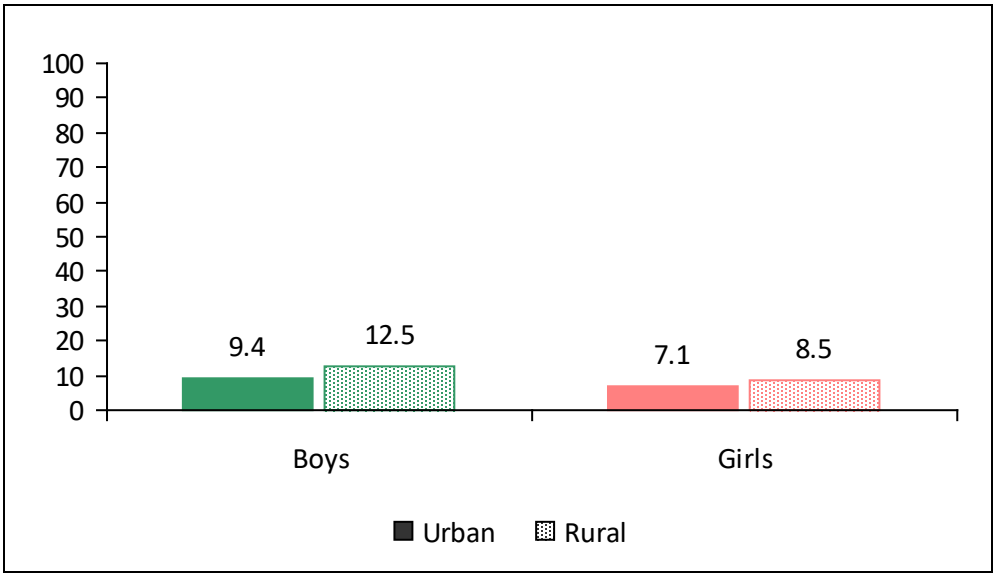
Family support, however, is more strongly associated with substance use rates (Figure 8.12). Like school climate, students in the high family support group are the least likely to report current substance use, while students in the low family support group are the most likely to report current substance use. This trend is observed across all substances.

Figure 8.12: Students smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, and using cannabis in the last 30 days (%), by family support



Use of LSD and other hallucinogens is relatively uncommon in the Yukon – less than 9% of students reported use in the last 12 months (Figure 8.13). The prevalence of use is similar across groups, with boys reporting slightly higher rates than girls, and urban students reporting slightly higher rates than rural students.

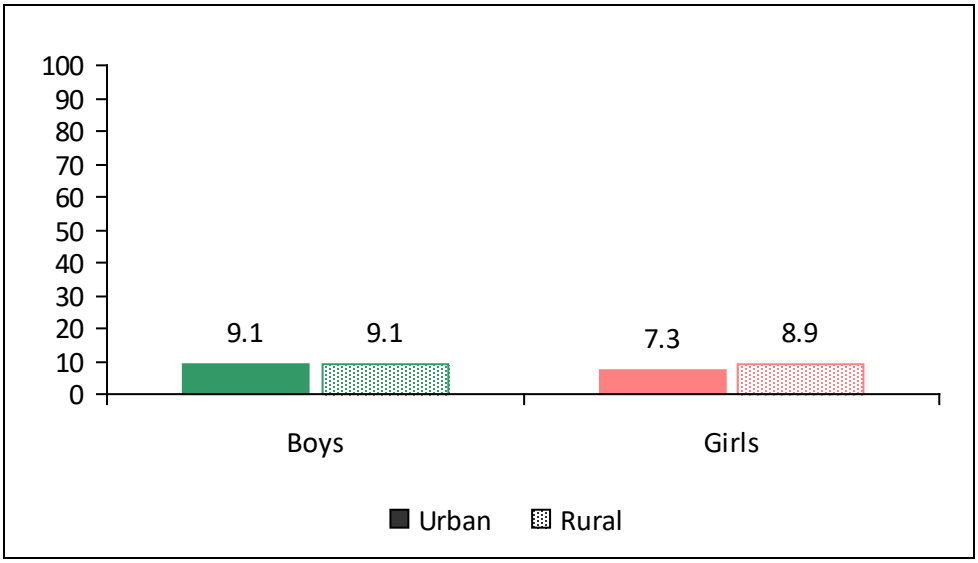
Figure 8.13: Grade 9 and 10 students reporting LSD and other hallucinogens (PCP, magic mushrooms, mescaline, peyote) use in the last 12 months, by urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 8.9

Similarly, less than 9% of students in the Yukon report using pain reliever medication to get high in the last 12 months (Figure 8.14). Boys in urban and rural locations reported the same prevalence (9%), with rural girls (9%) reporting slightly higher rates than urban girls (7%).

Figure 8.14: Grade 9 and 10 students reporting pain reliever (Percodan, Demerol, Oxycontin, Codeine) use in the last 12 months to get high, by urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 8.5

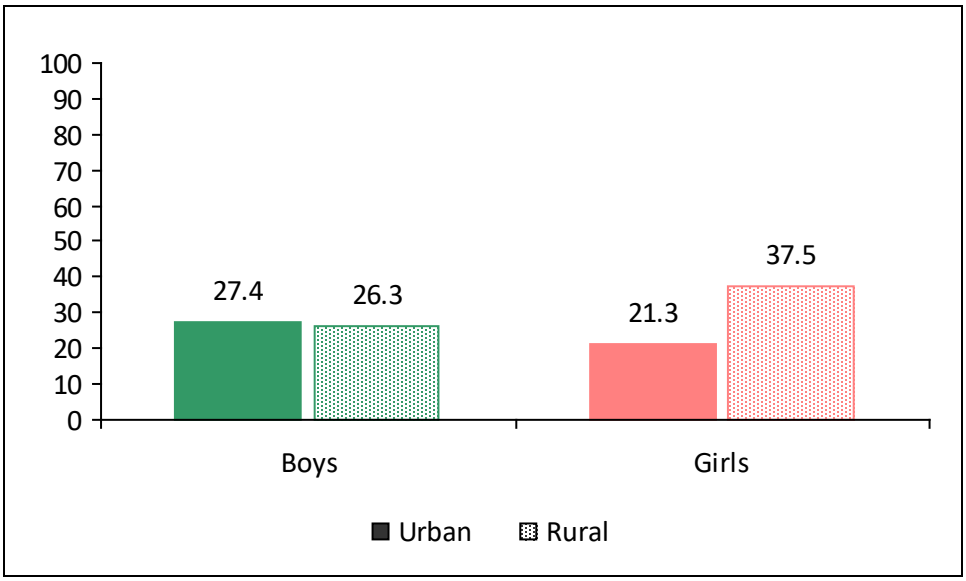
Sexual Behaviours

Adolescence is characterized by the emergence of romantic relationships. These relationships enable youth to learn intimacy skills and develop healthy relationships. Indeed, sexual health is important to adolescents' overall health and well-being (Slater & Robinson, 2014). Romantic relationships, however, can also involve risky behaviours. Young people who engage in sexual intercourse earlier are at greater risk for engaging in unprotected sex, having an unplanned pregnancy, and contracting sexually transmitted infections. Moreover, it is linked to other risk taking behaviours such as drug and alcohol use (Godeau, Nic Gabhainn, & Ross, 2005). These effects are largely preventable if schools, families, and health care professionals coordinate their efforts to help educate and support youth (Slater & Robinson, 2014). Dating relationships can also be sources of conflict, including dating violence. Teen dating violence includes many types of behaviours, including physical violence, psychological violence, and online violence. Research estimates that approximately 12% of youth experience physical dating violence, whereas 20% experience psychological dating violence (Exner-Cortens, Eckenrode, & Rothman, 2013). Adolescents who experience dating violence are more likely to engage in risky behaviours (e.g., binge drinking) and are more likely to experience mental

health problems than their peers in non-violent dating relationships (Exner-Cortens et al., 2013).

Across locations, approximately one-quarter of Grade 9-10 boys report having had sexual intercourse (Figure 8.15). In contrast, there is a large difference in reported rates of sexual intercourse by location for girls. Rural girls (37.5%) are much more likely than urban girls (21.3%) to report having had sexual intercourse in Grades 9-10.

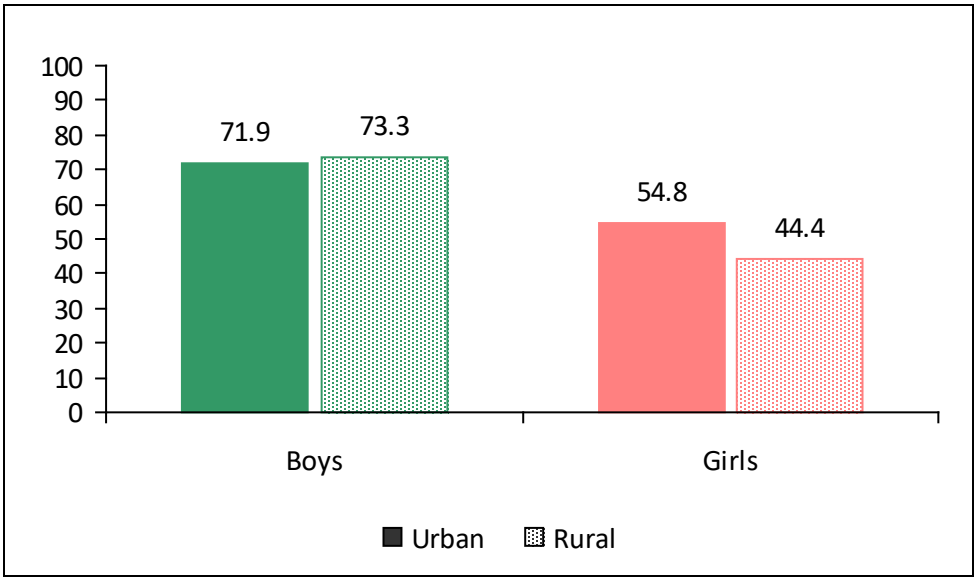
Figure 8.15: Grade 9 and 10 students who report having had sexual intercourse, by gender, and urban/rural status (%)



Total = 25.5

Boys are much more likely than girls to report that they used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse (Figure 8.16). While there were no location differences for boys, urban girls (55%) were more likely than rural girls (44%) to report that they used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse.

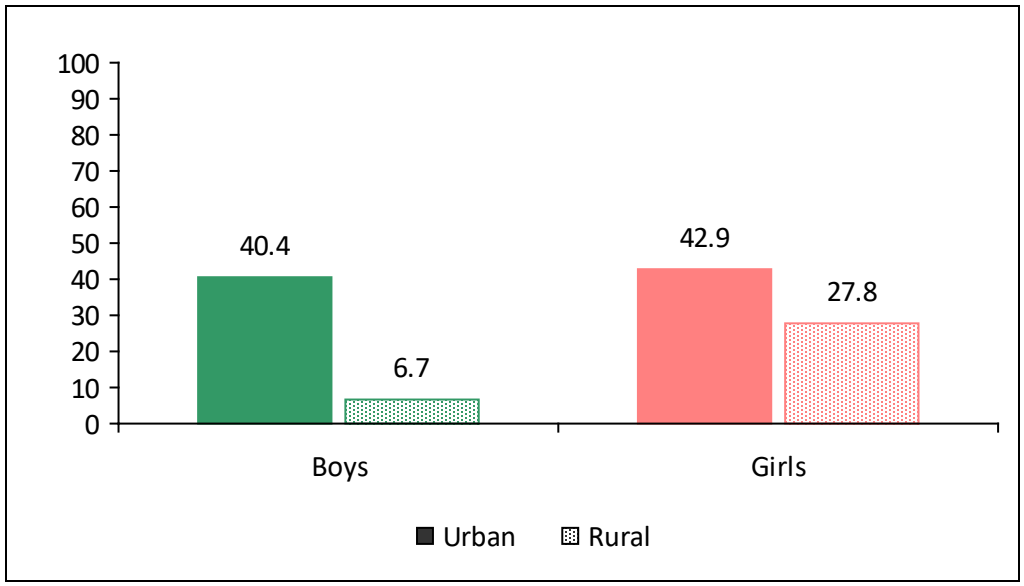
Figure 8.16: Grade 9 and 10 students who report having used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse, by gender, and urban/rural status (%)



Total = 62.7

Birth control pills are used less frequently than condoms (Figure 8.17). In urban locations, boys and girls report using birth control pills at similar rates. Both boys and girls in rural locations are less likely to use birth control pills than those in urban locations, with the lowest rates reported by rural boys (7%).

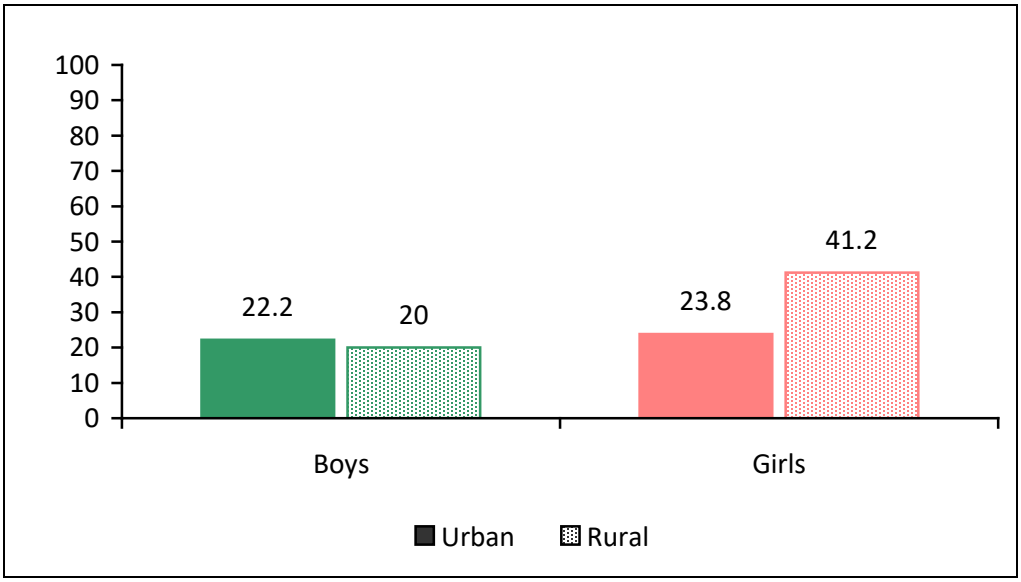
Figure 8.17: Grade 9 and 10 students who report having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse, by gender, and urban/rural status (%)



Total = 35.1

Approximately 1 in 5 boys reported that they first had sexual intercourse at age 13 or younger (Figure 8.18). Urban girls report similar rates of early sexual intercourse as boys. Rural girls, however, are twice as likely to report that they first had sexual intercourse by age 13 (41%).

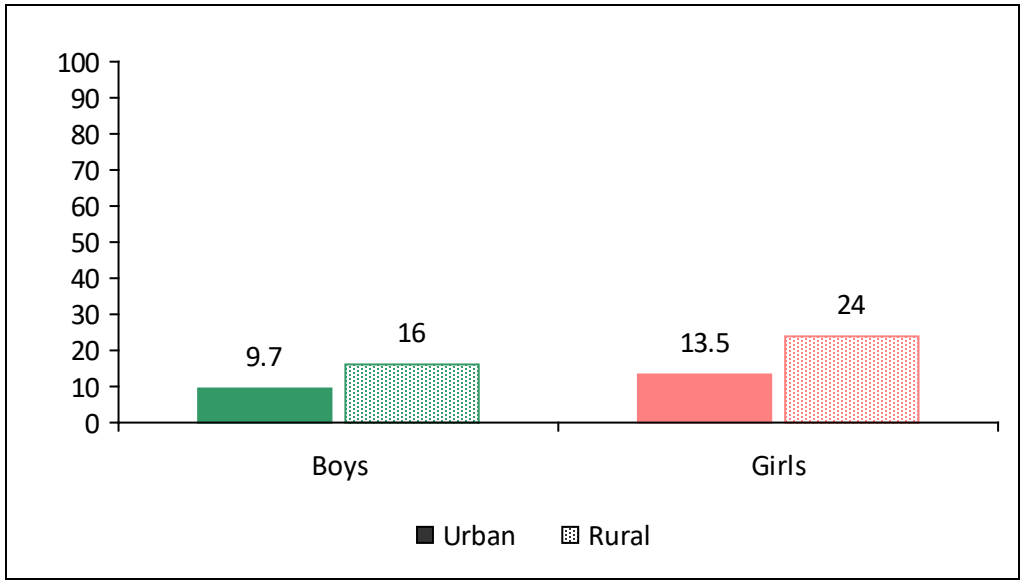
Figure 8.18: Sexually active Grade 9 and 10 students who report first having sex at age 13 or earlier, by gender, and urban/rural status (%)



Total=24.6

Overall, 13% of students in the Yukon experienced physical dating violence in the last 12 months (Figure 8.19). Girls and students living in rural locations are more likely to be physically victimized by a dating partner than are boys and students living in urban locations.

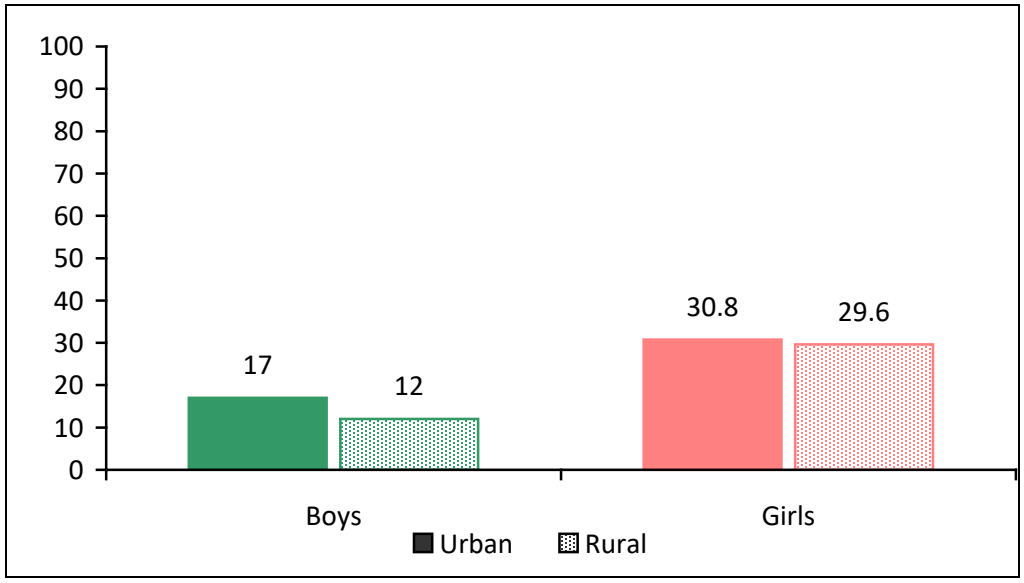
Figure 8.19: Grade 9 and 10 students who reported that someone they were dating or going out physically hurt them on purpose during the past 12 months, by urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 13.1

Psychological dating violence (Figure 8.20) was much more commonly experienced by students in the Yukon than physical dating violence. Girls in particular are much more likely than boys to be psychologically victimized by a dating partner. Rates differed little by location.

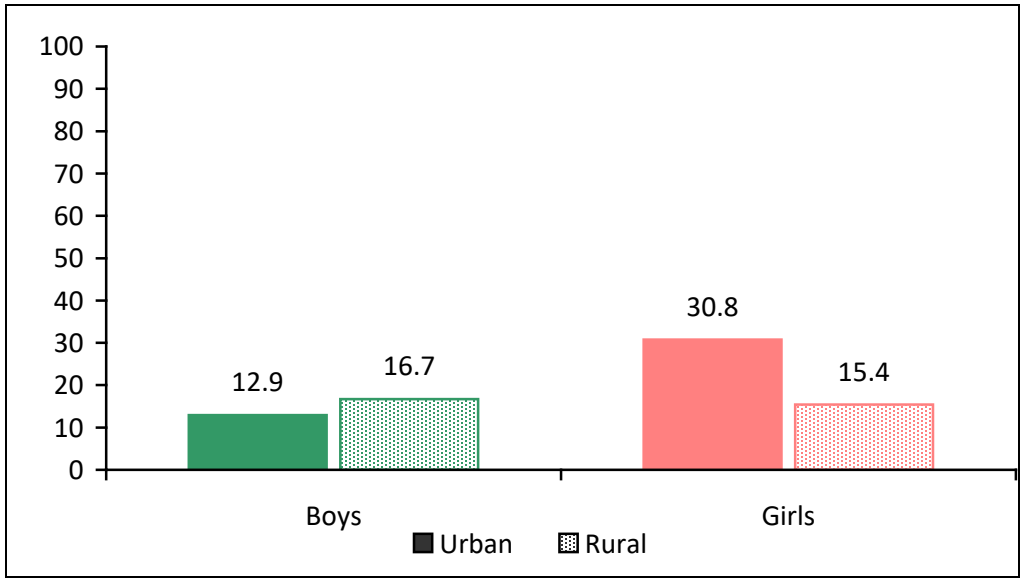
Figure 8.20: Grade 9 and 10 students who reported someone they were dating or going out purposely tried to control or emotionally hurt them during the past 12 months, by urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 23.5

Online dating violence was experienced at similar rates by boys and rural girls in the Yukon (Figure 8.21). Urban girls, however, were approximately twice as likely to experience online dating violence compared to other students.

Figure 8.21: Grade 9 and 10 students who reported someone they were dating or going out with used social media to hurt, embarrass or monitor them during the past 12 months, by urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 20.6

Chapter Summary

Lifelong health habits are formed during adolescence (Sawyer et al., 2012). This includes health-risk behaviours, such as substance use and risky sexual behaviours. Most of the health-risk behaviours that were examined in this chapter varied by location, grade, and gender. In general, rural girls in Grades 9-10 engage in the highest rates of health-risk behaviours in the Yukon and engage in these health-risk behaviours at an earlier age than their peers. Thus, prevention and intervention efforts should be specifically targeted towards rural girls in Grades 9-10.

As expected, rates of smoking, alcohol, and cannabis use increased with age. Rates of e-cigarette use were higher than traditional tobacco smoking for all students in the Yukon with the exception of rural Grade 9-10 girls. This difference could reflect a harm reduction strategy, however, e-cigarette use is a predictor of future tobacco initiation among youth (Hammond et al., 2017). Rural girls in Grades 9-10 engage in the highest rates of past 30 day tobacco use (41%). In addition, rural girls in Grades 9-10 engaged in the highest rates of binge-drinking (26%), alcohol consumption (48%), and getting drunk (34%). With this exception, there were

few location differences in alcohol use among students in the Yukon. In contrast, students living in rural areas were more likely to report past 30 day cannabis use, as well as frequent cannabis use (6+ days in last 30 days), than their urban peers. Students in rural areas are twice as likely as their urban peers to report frequent cannabis use. Rates of other drug use were similar across locations and gender. Taken together, rural students (particularly older girls) in the Yukon engage in the highest rates of substance use and will benefit from increased prevention and intervention efforts.

Substance use rates varied according to levels of school climate and perceived family support, such that students in the high support group reported the lowest levels of substance use. This suggests that building healthy relationships within the school community and at home may be one way to reduce levels of adolescent substance use. In contrast, rates of substance use did not vary by levels of peer support. Rather than peer support, it may be more important to consider the behaviour of youths' peer groups as a protective factor. For example, youth may benefit from friendships with prosocial peers (e.g., friends who help others in need, participate in sports or school clubs) because youth are motivated to conform to the prosocial norms of their peer group (Barry & Wentzel, 2006). Promoting healthy relationships and prosocial peer relationships may be one way to help reduce health risk behaviours among students in the Yukon.

In terms of dating relationships, rural girls in Grades 9-10 are once again the most likely to have had sexual intercourse (38%) and they are almost twice as likely to have had sexual intercourse by age 13 than girls in urban locations. Boys are more likely than girls to report condom use, whereas girls are more likely to report using the birth control pill. In general, girls are more likely than boys to report that they experienced violence from a dating partner in the last year. Taken together, girls (particularly those in rural locations) will benefit the most from interventions designed to help teens develop healthy romantic relationships. By delivering such interventions during adolescence, youth may carry healthy dating relationship skills into their adult relationships.

9. VIOLENCE AND BULLYING

Bullying is a relationship problem that stems from an imbalance of power, and involves the intentional and repetitive harming of another person's feelings, self-esteem, or body. Bullying can be physical, social, verbal, or indirect, and can also occur electronically. Victimized youth may be targeted because of their perceived race, sexual identity, religion, physical appearance, and/or abilities. Being victimized by bullying in adolescence is predictive of recurrent victimization over the lifespan, and is related to an increased risk for a plethora of maladaptive behaviours that serve to reinforce the cycle of victimization (Feiring & Furman, 2000). In addition, the power differential characteristic of bullying may persist throughout the lifespan, such that individuals who experience bullying in childhood and adolescence are more likely to experience other forms of victimization, including workplace harassment, sexual aggression, and dating violence, later in life (Wolke & Lereya, 2015).

Young people who are bullied are at risk of developing a range of physical, socio-emotional, and psychological problems, both in adolescence and through to adulthood. Victimized youth exhibit a variety of physical health symptoms, including stomachaches, headaches, backaches, and dizziness (Due et al., 2005). In addition, young people who are bullied are more likely to have negative views of themselves, to have lower self-esteem and lower levels of self-worth (Grills & Ollendick, 2002; Hawker & Boulton, 2000), and to find it difficult to make friends (Alikasifoglu, Erginoz, Ercan, Uysal, & Albayrak-Kaymak, 2007) than non-victimized youth.

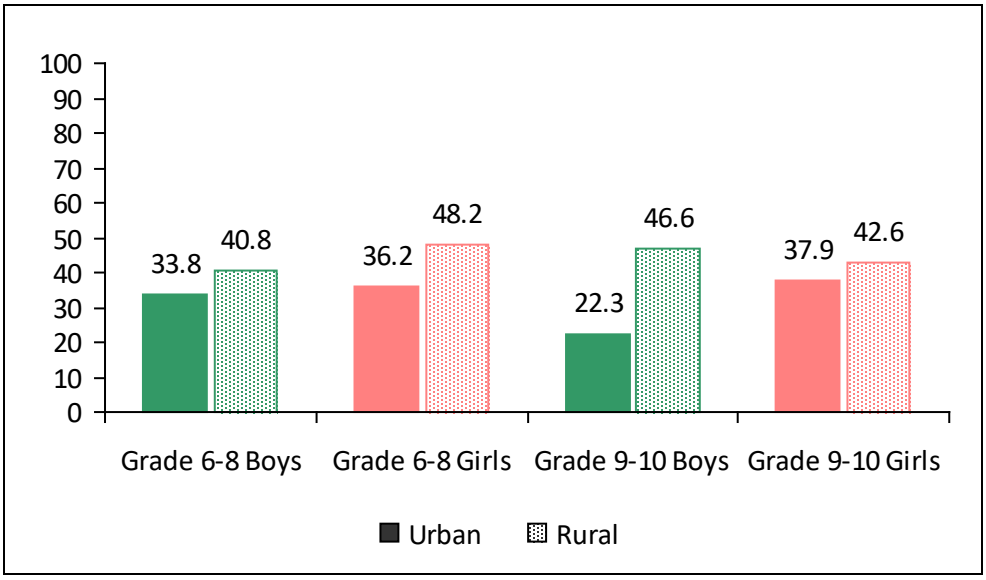
Adolescents who are bullied are also at an increased risk of developing anxiety and depression (Bond et al., 2001; Craig, 1998; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpelä, Rantanen, & Rimpelä, 2000; Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, & Gould, 2007; Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve, & Coulter, 2012). Compared to non-victimized teens, they also are more likely to exhibit serious suicidal ideation and suicide attempts (Klomek et al., 2007; Rigby & Slee, 1999; Schneider et al., 2012; Van der Wal, De Wit, & Hirasing, 2003). Victimized youth may start to bully others as a result of their own anger and frustration (Goldbaum, Craig, Pepler, & Connolly, 2007).

Youth who are victimized are not the only ones at risk of negative developmental outcomes. Being a bully is associated with a variety of risk taking behaviours such as alcohol consumption (Alikasifoglu et al., 2007; Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000), smoking cigarettes (Vieno, Gini & Santinello, 2011), illegal substance use (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000), excessive use of medicine (Due, Hansen, Merlo, Anderson, & Holstein, 2007), and weapon carrying (Dukes, Stein, & Zane, 2010). With the continued reinforcement of aggression and power through bullying at school, bullying can lead to future acts of sexual harassment (McMaster, Connolly, Pepler, & Craig, 2002), dating aggression, child abuse, elder abuse, and workplace harassment (Pepler, Jiang, Craig, & Connolly, 2008).

This chapter assesses bullying and victimization among school-aged youth. Students are asked to report how often they have been bullied and how often they bully others at school. Students are also asked about the different ways in which they have been bullied or bully others: (a) verbal (e.g., called mean names, made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way); (b) indirect (e.g., left out of things on purpose, excluded from a group of friends, or completely ignored); (c) physical (e.g., hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around or locked indoors); (d) malicious gossip (e.g., lies or false rumours, tried to make others dislike me); (e) sexual harassment (e.g., sexual jokes, comments, or gestures); and (f) weight (e.g., made fun of because of weight). Given the important role electronic communication plays in the lives of today's youth (Mishna, Cook, Gadalla, Daciuk, & Solomon, 2010), students were also asked about how often they have been cyberbullied and how often they cyberbully others. Students also report how often they partake in physical fighting. Finally, the association between bullying and school climate, peer support, and family support are studied.

For all grades and all genders, rural students report being bullied more often than do urban students. Except for Grade 6-8 rural students, girls more often indicate being bullied than do boys (Figure 9.1). For Grade 6-8, girls report slightly more bullying than do boys. However, in Grades 9-10, a higher proportion of rural boys report bullying than any other group. The proportion of students who experience bullying decreases for rural girls and urban boys from Grades 6-8 to Grades 9-10 but increases for urban girls and rural boys.

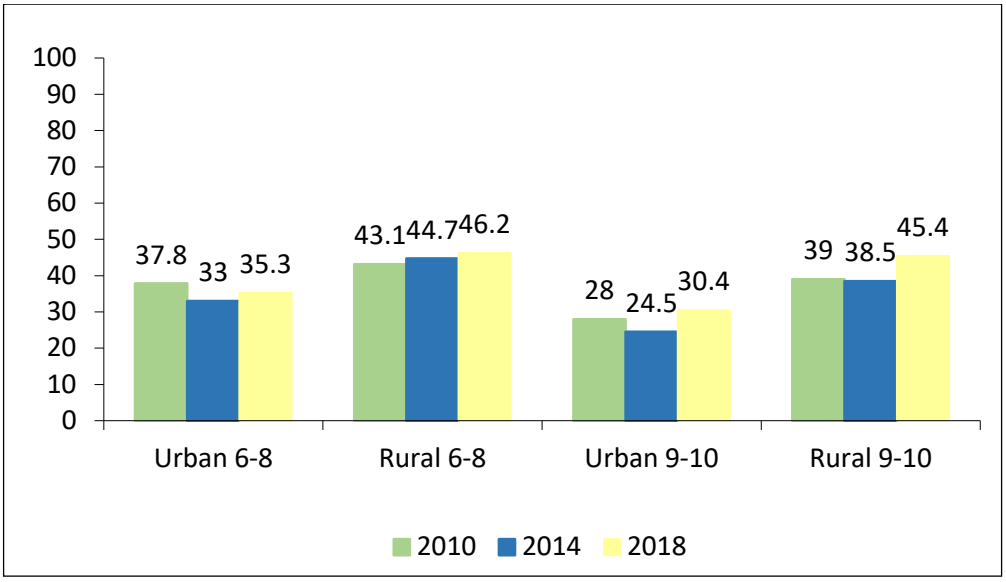
Figure 9.1: Students who report being bullied at school more than once or twice in the past couple of months, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 35.8

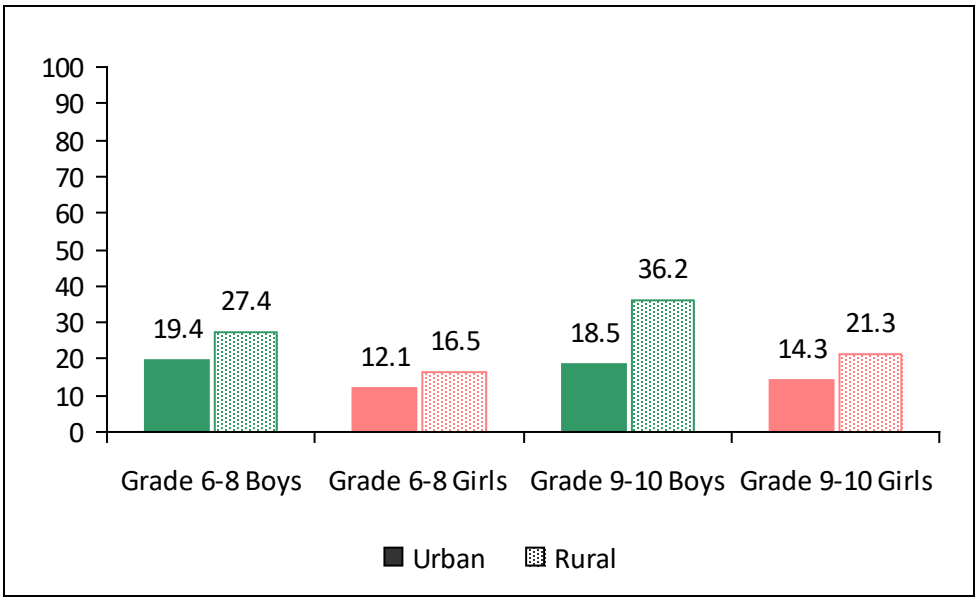
For urban youth in grades 6-8, there has been a slight decrease in the prevalence of being bullied in the past couple of months from 2010, but an increase since 2014 (Figure 9.2). Being bullied has increased from 2010 to 2018 for rural students in grades 6-8 and for all youth in grades 9-10. The highest increase in being bullied in the past couple of months is for rural youth in grades 9-10 from 39% in 2010 to 45.4% in 2018.

Figure 9.2: Students who report being bullied at school more than once or twice in the past couple of months, by year of administration, and urban/rural status (%)



Boys indicate bullying others more often than do girls, particularly among the older rural students (Figure 9.3). Across all grades, a higher proportion of rural boys and girls report bullying others compared to urban students.

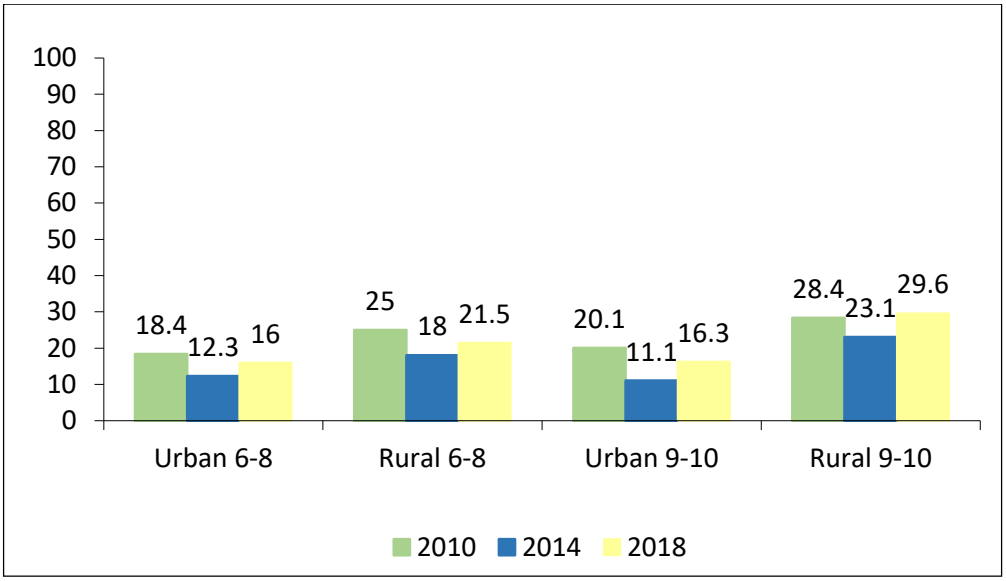
Figure 9.3: Students who report bullying others at school more than once or twice in the past couple of months, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 17.7

There has been a decrease in bullying others for students in grades 6-8 from 2010 to 2018 (Figure 9.4). However, the percentage of students reporting bullying others in the past couple of months has increased for students in all grades from 2014 to 2018. Only for rural students in grades 9-10 in 2018, has there been an increase in bullying in the past couples of months that was higher than in 2010.

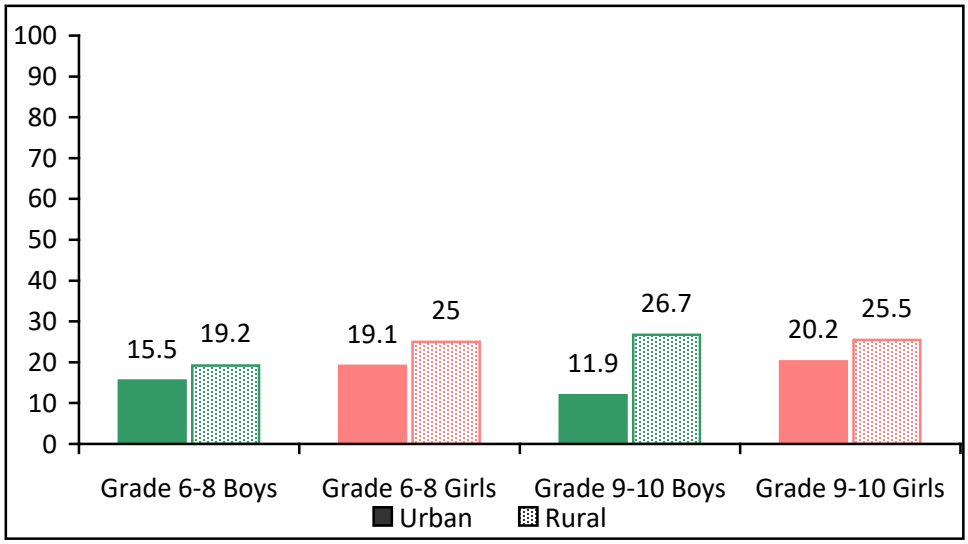
Figure 9.4: Students who report bullying others at school more than once or twice in the past couple of months, by year of administration, and urban/rural status (%)



Being called mean names is the second most common form of being bullied for Grade 6-8 students (Figure 9.5), after being bullied indirectly (Figure 9.7). Boys are more often physically bullied than are girls (Figure 9.6). A higher proportion of rural boys and girls report being bullied for all types of bullying compared to urban boys and girls.

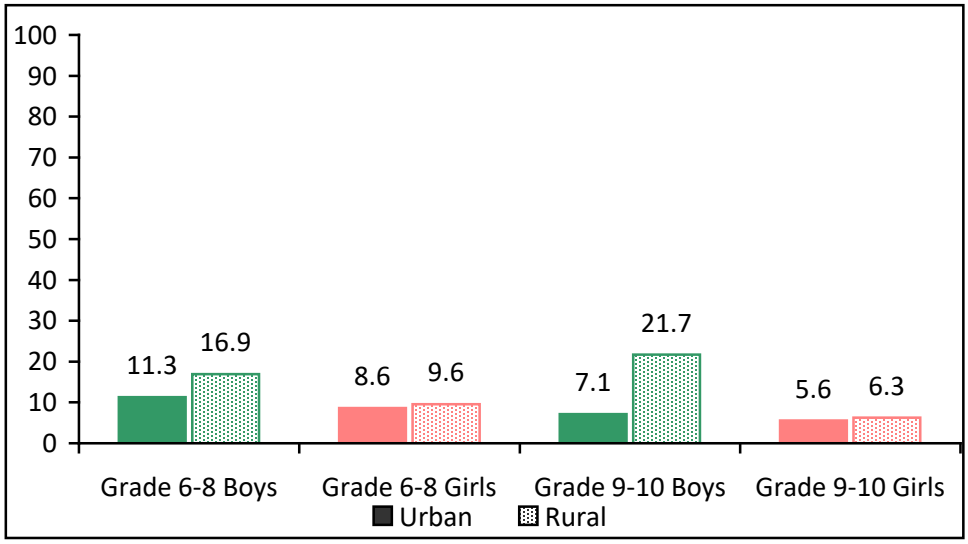
Most forms of being bullied decrease with age, although teasing stays fairly consistent across age groups. Gender differences in types of being bullied remain relatively constant across grades.

Figure 9.5: Students who report having been bullied at school more than once or twice in the past couple of months by being called mean names, being made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



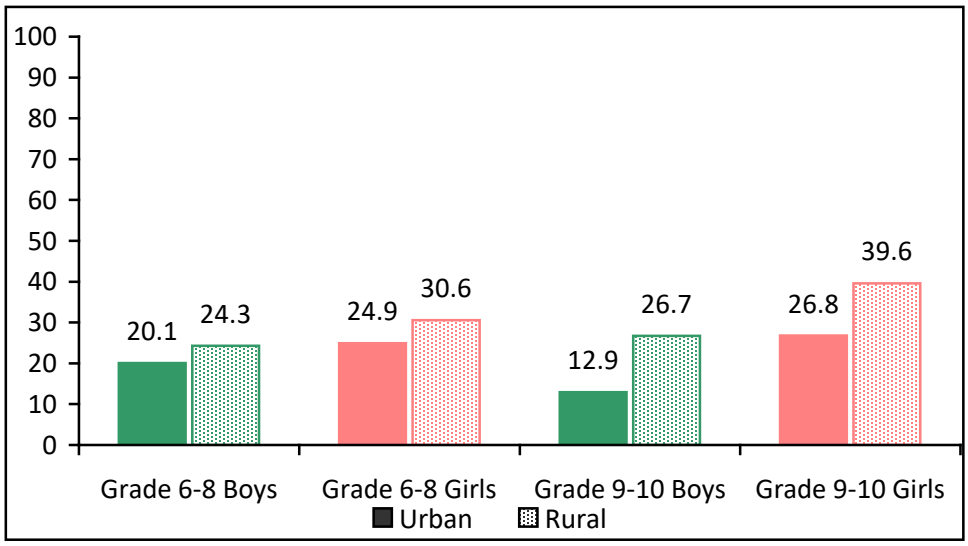
Total = 18.6

Figure 9.6: Students who report having been bullied at school more than once or twice in the past couple of months by being hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked indoors, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 9.8

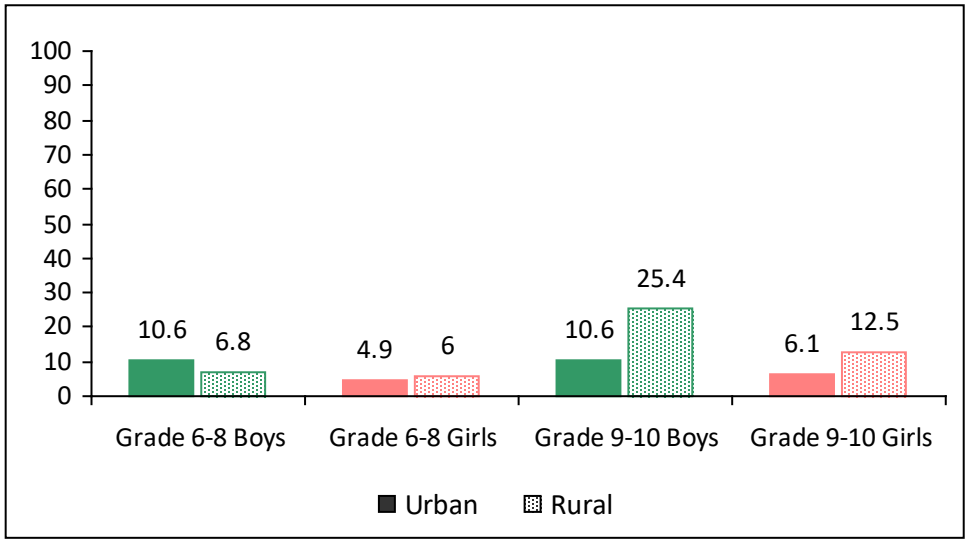
Figure 9.7: Students who report having been bullied at school more than once or twice in the past couple of months through indirect bullying (other student(s) told lies or spread false rumours about me and tried to make others dislike me), by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 23.4

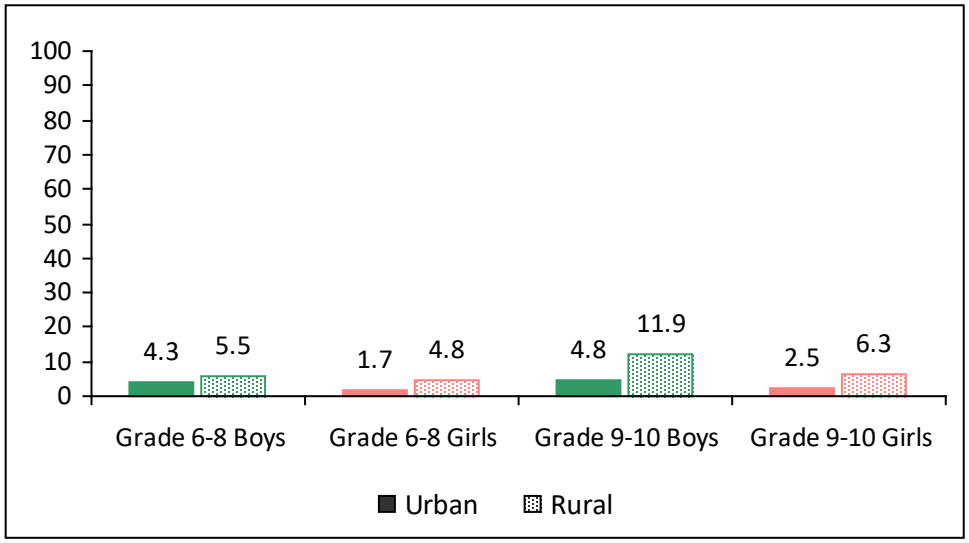
Reports of bullying others are considerably lower than they are for being bullied (Figure 9.8). Grade 9-10 rural boys were the most likely to bully others by teasing. Additionally, a higher proportion of boys and girls bullied others by teasing in Grades 9-10 compared to Grades 6-8. However, there was no consistent pattern for location or gender. Grade 9-10 rural boys were also the most likely to report physical bullying (Figure 9.9). On average, a higher proportion of rural students reported physical bullying than urban students. Differences in reported indirect bullying were minimal (Figure 9.10).

Figure 9.8: Students who report having bullied another student(s) at school more than once or twice in the past couple of months by calling them mean names, and making fun of, or teasing him or her in a hurtful way, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



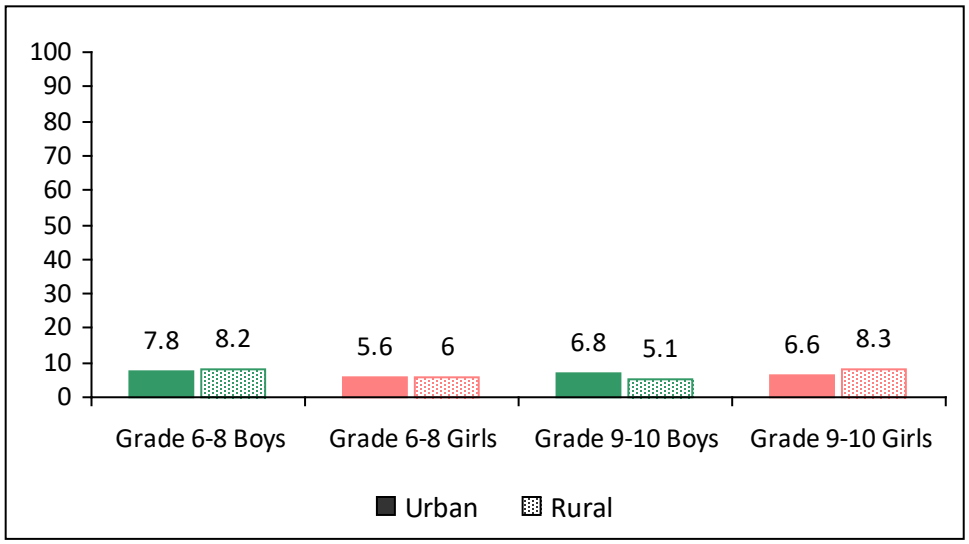
Total = 8.8

Figure 9.9: Students who report having bullied another student(s) at school more than once or twice in the past couple of months in the following ways: I hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked another student(s) indoors, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 3.9

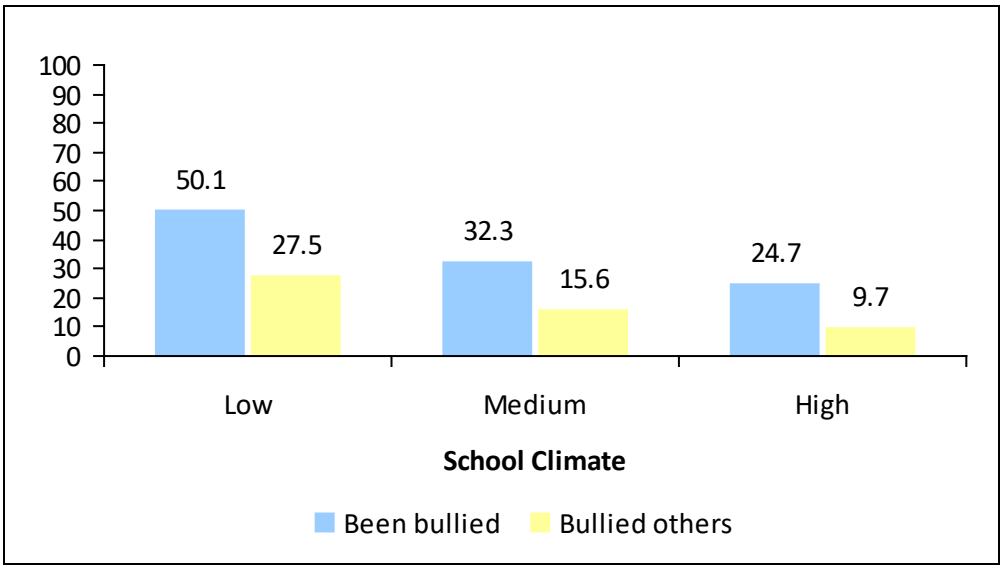
Figure 9.10: Students who report having bullied another student(s) at school more than once or twice in the past couple of months through indirect bullying (kept out, excluded or ignored, or I spread false rumours about another student(s) and tried to make others dislike him or her), by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 6.6

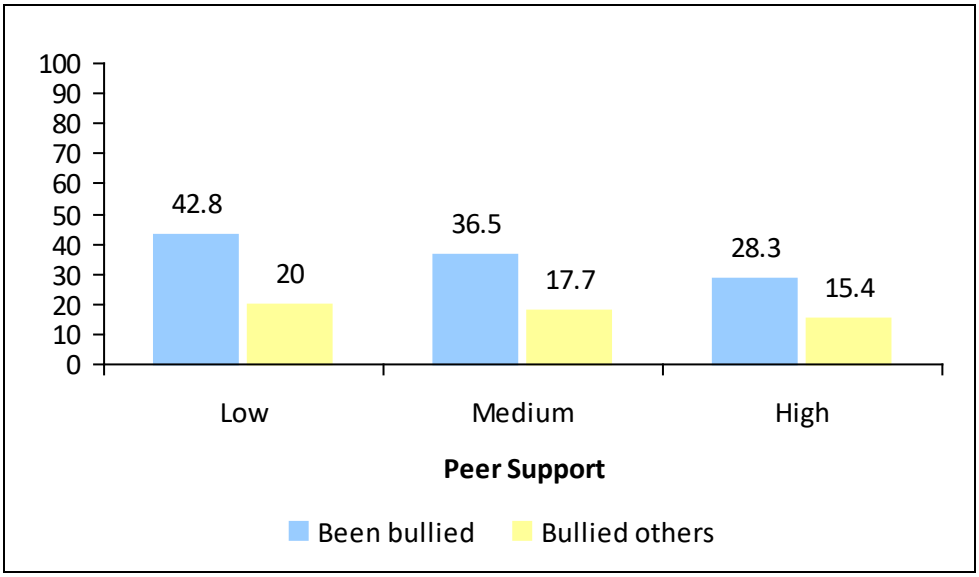
Students who are in the high positive school climate group are the least likely to have been bullied or to have bullied others (Figure 9.11). Students in the low school climate group are the most likely to have done both.

Figure 9.11: Students who report being bullied and bullying others more than once or twice in the past couple of months (%), by school climate



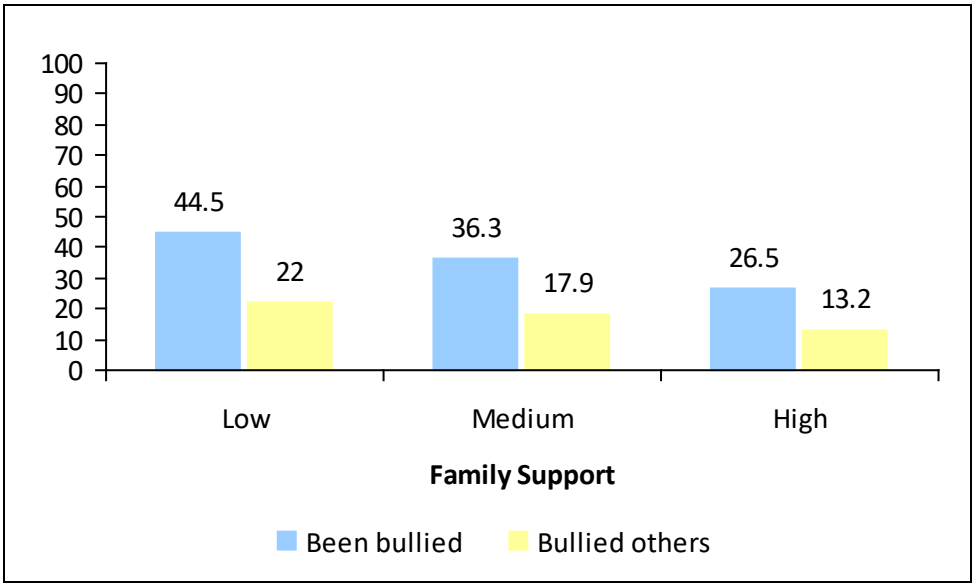
Peer support is related to being bullied, with the low peer support group the most likely to report being bullied and the high peer support the least likely to report being bullied (Figure 9.12). There is a similar trend with reports of bullying perpetration, where students in the low peer support group are the most likely to report bullying others. while those in the high peer support group are the least likely to report bullying others.

Figure 9.12: Students who report being bullied and bullying others more than once or twice in the past couple of months (%), by peer support



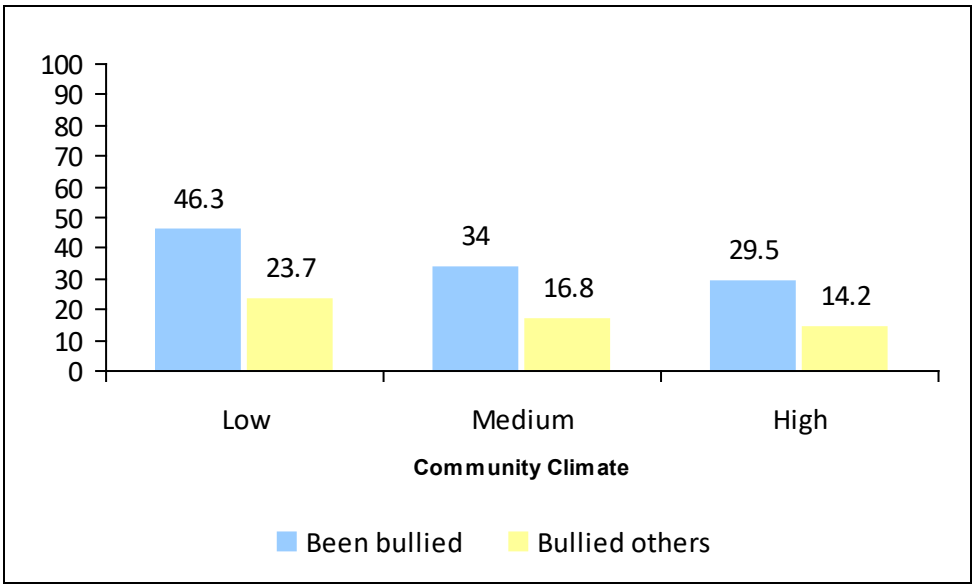
A similar trend to the peer support results emerged in the family support groups (Figure 9.13). Students in the low family support group are the most likely to report both being bullied and bullying others, while students in the high family support group are the least likely to report being bullied and bullying others.

Figure 9.13: Students who report being bullied and bullying others more than once or twice in the past couple of months (%), by family support



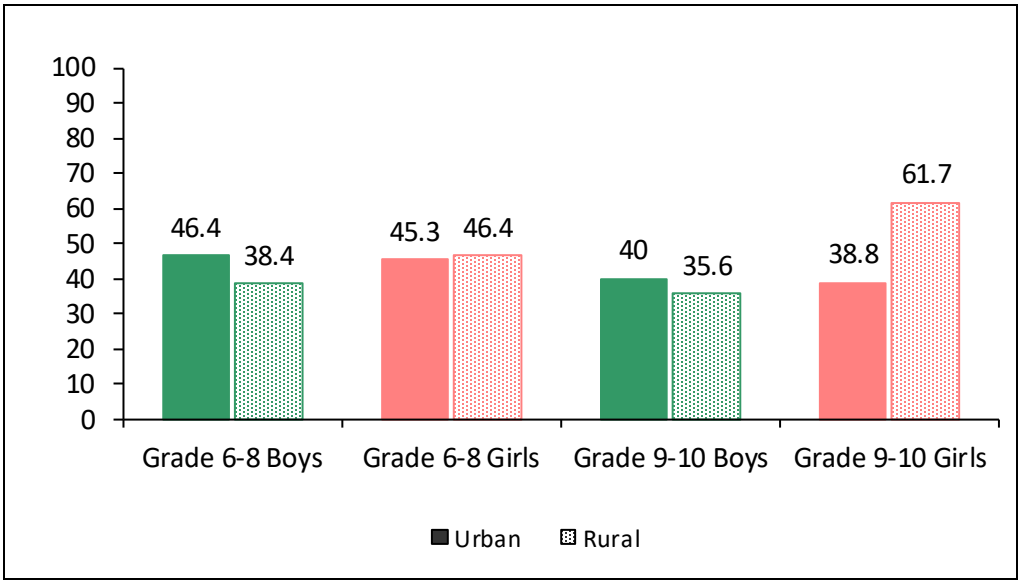
The same pattern as peer and family support can be seen in the community climate groups, with students in the low community climate group reporting the highest rates of bullying victimization and perpetration, and students in the high community climate group reporting the lowest rates of victimization and perpetration (Figure 9.14).

Figure 9.14: Students who report being bullied and bullying others more than once or twice in the past couple of months (%), by community climate



When it comes to defending behaviours, Grade 9-10 rural girls are the most likely to report having taken part in defending another student from bullying. Other group differences are minimal.

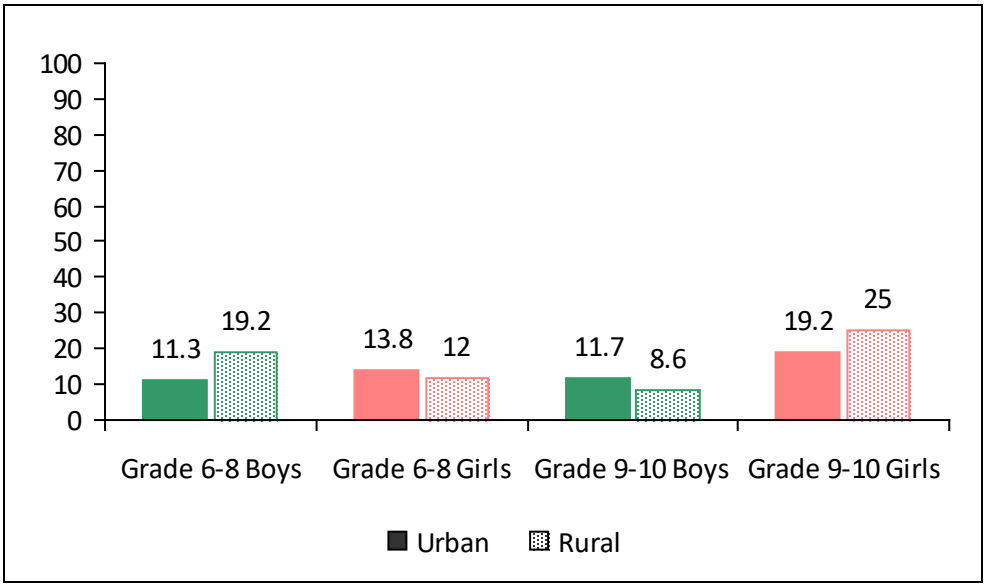
Figure 9.15: Students reporting they have taken part in defending another student from bullying, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total=43.8

Grade 9-10 rural girls are the most likely to report having been cyberbullied in the past two months (Figure 9.16). The proportion of students who are victimized by cyberbullying increases from Grades 6-8 to Grade 9-10 for both urban and rural girls. For boys, there is no such pattern: rates increase minimally for urban boys and decrease for rural boys.

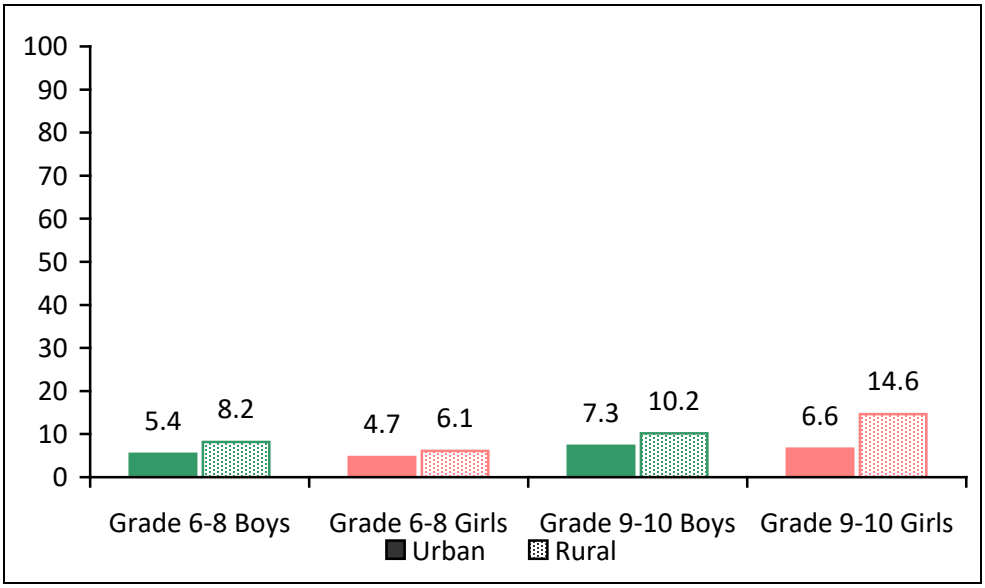
Figure 9.16: Students who report having been cyberbullied in the past two months, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 14.4

Bullying others electronically is rarely reported by Grade 6-8 students (Figure 9.17). The rates of reported cyberbullying perpetration increase from Grade 6-8 to Grades 9-10 for both boys and girls in both rural and urban locations. In addition, rural students are more likely than urban students to report cyberbullying others.

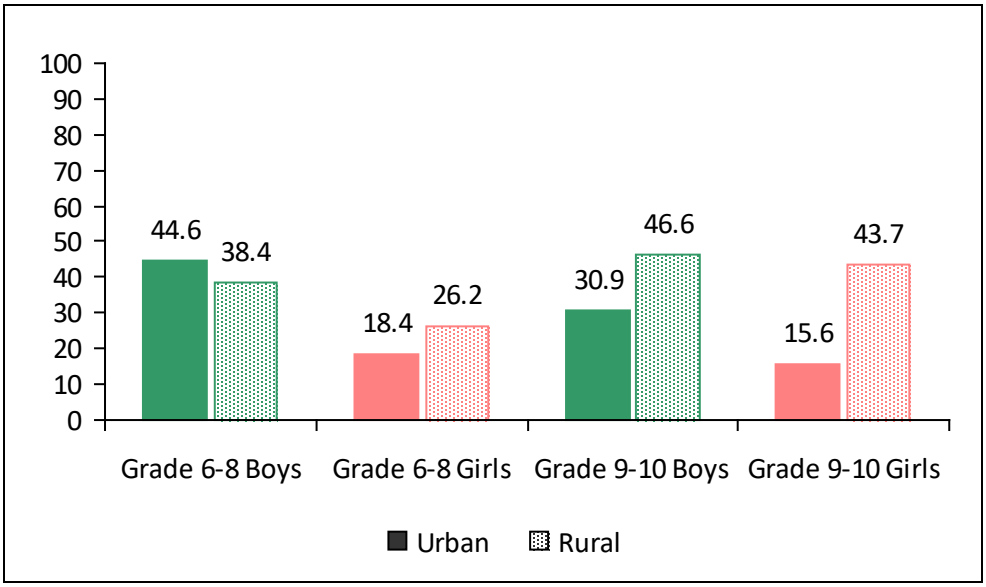
Figure 9.17: Students who report having cyberbullied others in the past two months, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 6.6

Boys and rural students are more likely to have been in a physical fight in the past 12 months than are girls and urban students, except for urban boys, who are the most likely to have been in a physical fight (Figure 9.18). For rural students, reports of being in a physical fight increased from Grades 6-8 to Grades 9-10. Older urban girls are the least likely to have been in a recent physical fight.

Figure 9.18: Students who report having been in a physical fight in the past 12 months, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 31.0

Chapter Summary

Bullying entails intentional and repetitive harming of another person's feelings, self-esteem, or body. Bullying can be seen in many forms: physical, social, verbal, or indirect, and can also occur electronically. Adolescents who are bullied may suffer physically (Due et al., 2005), socially (Alikasifoglu et al., 2007), emotionally (Bond et al., 2001; Craig, 1998; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000; Klomek et al., 2007; Schneider et al., 2012), and psychologically (Grills & Ollendick, 2002; Hawker & Boulton, 2000). Being bullied also increases the likelihood of serious suicidal ideation and suicide attempts (Klomek et al., 2007; Rigby & Slee, 1999; Schneider et al., 2012; van Der Wal et al., 2003).

On the other side of the power relationship, bullying others is associated with a range of risk behaviours, such as substance abuse, cigarette smoking, and underage drinking (Alikasifoglu et al., 2007; Due et al., 2007; Dukes et al., 2010; Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000; Vieno et al., 2011). Adolescents who bully others are more likely than their peers to exhibit these behaviours in adulthood (McMaster et al., 2002; Pepler et al., 2008).

In general, a higher proportion of rural students report being bullied compared to urban students. Except for Grade 6-8 rural students, a higher proportion of girls report being bullied compared to boys. However, for bullying perpetration, boys report bullying others more than do girls. Across all grades, rural students report more bullying perpetration than urban students.

For specific examples of bullying behaviour, being bullied generally decreases across grade level. Name-calling and indirect bullying are the most common forms of bullying behaviour. Grade 9-10 rural girls are the most likely to report having been cyberbullied, and being victimized by cyberbullying increases from Grades 6-8 to Grades 9-10 for both urban and rural girls. Being bullied is far more often reported than bullying others, no matter the type of question. In addition, across types of bullying, a higher proportion of rural students report being bullied compared to urban students.

Physical fights are related to gender and location. Boys and rural students are more likely to have been in a physical fight in the past 12 months than are girls and urban students.

Bullying and being bullied are related to school climate, peer support, and family support. Students who are in the high school climate group are the least likely to have been bullied or to have bullied others. Students in the low school climate group are the most likely to have experienced both. There is a similar trend for peer support and family support, where students in the low family support and peer support groups are the most likely to report being bullied and bullying others, and the students in the high family support and peer support groups are the least likely to report being bullied and bullying others.

Bulllying perpetration and victimization are both related to a variety of negative developmental outcomes. These data suggest that support at home, at school, and by peers may be associated with a decreased likelihood of experiencing bullying, and may mitigate students from the long-term psychological, social, physical, and emotional effects of victimization. However, because of the prevalence of bullying victimization and perpetration among rural students, policymakers should focus on this at-risk group when planning interventions.

10. INJURIES

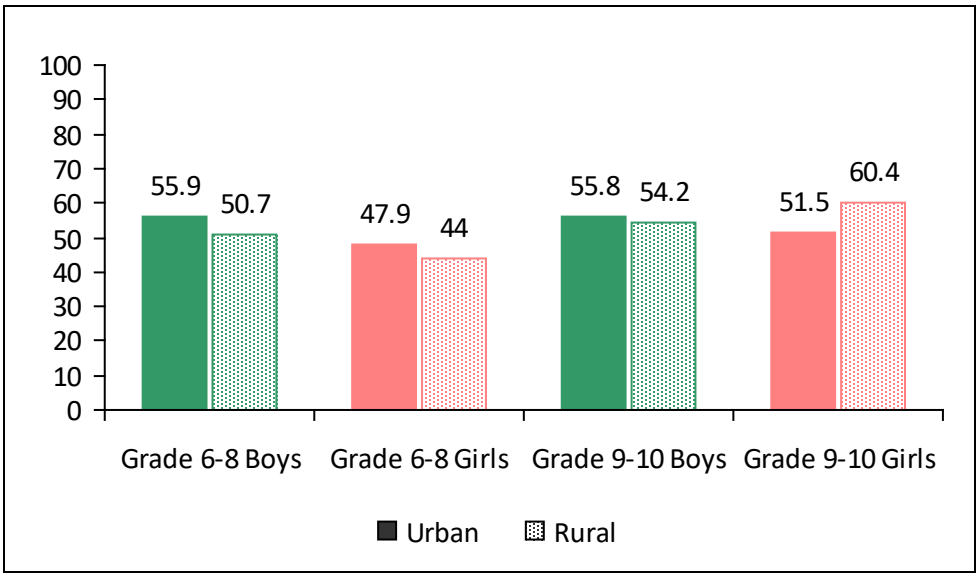
Injuries encompass minor or severe harm done to the body, typically by an external force. In the most severe cases, injuries can result in death. In Canada, injuries are the main cause of death among youth (Leitch, 2007; Pickett, 2011). Therefore, injury prevention is important to promote healthy youth development (Billette & Janz, 2011; Leitch, 2007; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2009). This is especially true during adolescence, when the risk of injury is considerably high.

School-aged youth are at a higher risk to sustain an injury than any other age group (Billette & Janz, 2011). Youth may sustain injuries through various reasons. Youth can acquire injuries while training or participating in sports (Fridman, Fraser-Thomas, McFaull, & Macpherson, 2013), engaging in other recreational activities, or fighting (Molcho et al., 2006; Pickett et al., 2005; Pickett, 2011). Youth are more likely to acquire an injury due to fighting or violence if they are experiencing emotional problems (Pickett, 2011) and elevated depressive symptoms (Asbridge, Azagba, Langille, & Rasic, 2014). In addition, some youth engage in risk-taking behaviours during adolescence (e.g., using alcohol and drugs) which may place them at a greater risk for injury (Pickett et al., 2005; Pickett et al., 2012). Most injuries are both predictable and preventable, and therefore should not be viewed as accidents (Pickett, 2004). Ultimately, social contexts such as school, home, and the peer group can both protect young people from injury and place them at greater risk (Pickett et al., 2005). This chapter examines youths' experiences of physical injury over the last 12 months. In addition, this chapter explores various locations where youth are likely to sustain injuries.

Injuries among School-Aged Youth in Yukon

Older students generally report more medically treated injuries in the past 12 months in comparison to younger students, especially for girls (Figure 10.1). Boys are more likely than girls to sustain an injury, except among Grade 9-10 students in rural Yukon, where the opposite is true. There are virtually no urban/rural differences in injuries, except for Grade 9-10 girls. Among older girls, rural youth are more likely to have had an injury than urban youth.

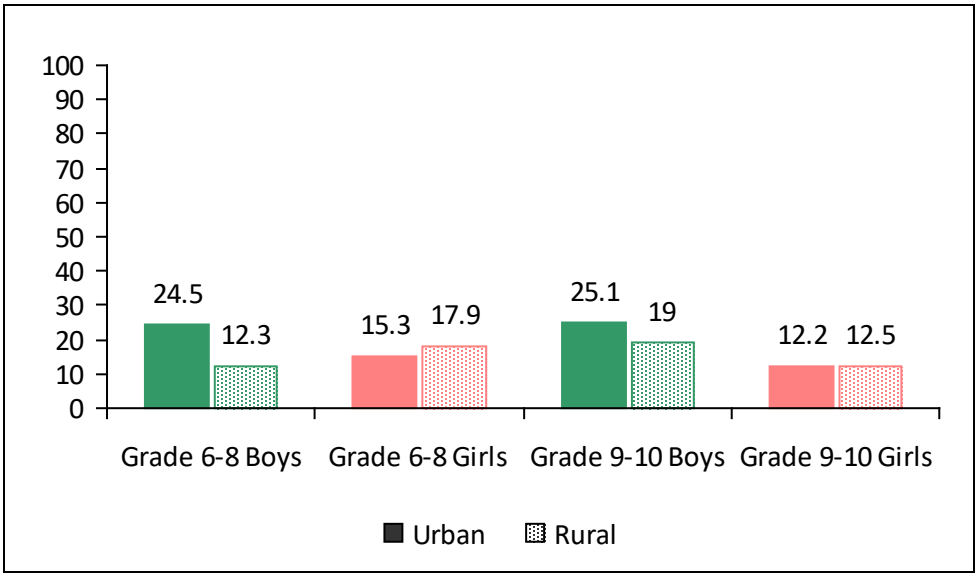
Figure 10.1: Students reporting an injury during the past 12 months requiring treatment by a doctor or nurse, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 52.6

Serious injuries requiring significant medical treatment is more common among boys than girls (Figure 10.2). Urban boys are more likely to have a serious injury than rural boys. In contrast, there are no noticeable urban/rural differences among girls. There are also no age differences in serious injuries.

Figure 10.2: Students reporting one or more serious injuries during the past 12 months requiring significant medical treatment, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)



Total = 18.8

Most injuries for urban students occur at a sports facility or field, or at home or in the yard. (Table 10.1). For rural students, injuries mostly occur at home or in the yard, at school during school hours, or other outdoor areas. Injuries for rural students in Grades 6-8 often occur at school during school hours. For younger students, injuries often occur in “other outdoor areas”. Older students in Grades 9-10 report similar locations of injuries as younger students, with more older students report sustaining an injury at sports facilities or fields.

Table 10.1: Locations of the most serious injury in the past 12 months, by grade, urban/rural status, and gender (%)

Grades	Male		Female	
6 to 8	**Urban**	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Rural**
At home or in the yard	21.9	20.7	26.1	21.4
At school during school hours	14.2	27.6	20.9	17.9
At school outside of school hours	2.4	0.0	2.2	10.7
At a sports facility or field	29.0	13.8	23.1	14.3
In the street or parking lot	6.5	3.4	3.0	7.1
Other outdoor area	16.0	20.7	14.9	17.9
Other location	10.1	13.8	9.7	10.7
9 and 10				
At home or in the yard	12.4	12.5	16.0	35.0
At school during school hours	14.4	20.8	11.7	15.0
At school outside of school hours	7.2	8.3	7.4	10.0
At a sports facility or field	36.1	8.3	42.6	10.0
In the street or parking lot	7.2	12.5	3.2	10.0
Other outdoor area	13.4	20.8	5.3	10.0
Other location	9.3	16.7	13.8	10.0

Chapter Summary

Injuries are significant causes of death among Canadian youth. Thus, injury prevention efforts are needed to ensure the safety of Canadian youth. Injuries vary in severity and can be sustained in various settings. This chapter examined the prevalence of injuries among school-aged youth in Yukon across various social settings. In Yukon, older students in Grades 9-10 are more likely than younger students in Grades 6-8 to experience an injury that requires treatment. Boys are more likely to sustain a serious injury that require medical treatment than girls. In particular, urban boys report higher levels of serious injury than boys in rural Yukon. There are no notable age differences in serious injuries. Urban students often sustain injuries at sports facilities or fields, in contrast to rural students who report that their injuries mostly occur at home or in the yard, at school during school hours, and at “other outdoor areas”. Preventing injuries is important to promote safety and well-being among Yukon youth.

10. CONCLUSION

In this section we highlight the most important findings. This includes findings that are causes for celebration and findings that represent cause for concern. The main messages from this report are:

1. *Rural students are systematically reporting more health concerns than urban students in the Yukon.* Rural students reported more physical and mental health problems, more risky behaviours and bullying and victimization involvement, and poorer eating behaviours than urban students. In addition, rural students were more likely to report having friends who also engaged in risky behaviours, likely reinforcing their own behaviours. School was also a place that rural students reported as being more negative in comparison to the urban students. Rural students consistently reported feeling less accepted and cared for by their teachers and classmates. Not surprising, rural students were also less likely to experience positive school climate and report lower levels of liking school than urban students. Finally, rural students are less likely to report higher quality relationships with family, at school, and in the community than urban students. The concern for rural students is that they appear less likely to have high quality relationships at home, with peers, at school, or in the community. Consequently, they are less likely to experience the potential benefits and protective effects of healthy relationships for these negative mental and physical health outcomes. It is critical moving forward to engage these youth in supportive and healthy relationships, and support adults in forming these relationships with youth.
2. *Rural girls in Grade 9-10 are consistently reporting the most negative health experiences and in particular problems with respect to their relationships.* They have the highest likelihood of reporting that their parents expect too much of them; they are most likely to report they are not happy in their home life and they want to leave home. With the exception of participation in cultural activities, rural girls are more likely to state that their friends participate in risk behaviours and less likely to state that their friends take part in positive social behaviours than urban girls. They are most likely to report that they dislike school and most likely to be in the group with the low school climate. Not

surprisingly, they report the poorest health and life satisfaction. With respect to mental health, rural Grade 9-10 girls report the lowest levels of confidence, and highest levels of depression, feeling helpless, lonely, sad, hopeless, and wish they were someone else. With respect to physical health, they are the least active and they represent the highest percentage reporting not meeting the sleep guidelines. Grade 9-10 girls have especially high smoking rates; they are more likely to report drinking, getting drunk, using cannabis and using hallucinogens. Lastly, they are most likely to engage in sexual behaviour at an earlier age and without protection. Although there is concern for youth living in rural areas in general, rural girls are at the most risk for lacking the healthy relationships and having the worst physical and mental health. Target interventions for these girls is required.

3. *Younger students are doing better than older students.* Although there are some exceptions, in general, younger Yukon youth are doing better with respect to physical and mental health, engagement in risky behaviours, and lower rates of bullying and victimization, injuries, and sedentary behaviours than the older youth. Although some of these patterns can be explained by development, such as increased engagement in risky behaviours, the result highlights the need to engage in more prevention work at the younger ages and invest in more intervention services at the older ages.
4. *More youth are reporting mental health problems over time.* For example, the percentage of students who report high levels of life satisfaction has steadily decreased between 2010 and 2018. In addition, the percentage of Yukon youth who feel sad or hopeless has significantly increased between 2010 and 2018. These changes are particularly pronounced among rural students and girls. This trend is disturbing and suggests that more mental and physical health resources need to be directed to youth in the Yukon.

5. *Relationships matter to the health of Yukon young people.* Having high quality relationships at home, at school, and in the community decreased the likelihood that Yukon youth would experience physical and mental health problems, substance use, engage in risk behaviour, and being victimized or bullying others. Engaging in relationships based solutions may be critical for this population. Adults need to have the relationship skills and competencies to effectively support youth and youth need support in developing healthy relationship skills to engage in relationships.

Causes for Celebration

1. *Family Relationships*

   Overall, the majority of Yukon youth reported positive relationships with their parents. These quality family relationships matter. More positive family relationships were associated with decreased smoking, cannabis use, drinking, and bullying. Thus, a target for intervention is supporting parents in developing healthy relationships with their youth. Investment in parenting programs for rural youth in particular may be effective in reducing health problems.

2. *Friendships*

   Living in urban areas is associated with a higher prevalence of all positive friend behaviours, with the exception of participation in cultural activities. Having high quality friendships is positively associated with lower rates of being bullied. Schools are an ideal environment to address peer relationships and the associated skills required for healthy relationships. Engaging in evidence-based school wide programs that are adapted to the community needs may enable more youth to benefit from the positive influence of high quality friendships.

3. *School Climate*

   Although there are grade and urban/rural differences, in general, students in the Yukon tend to feel accepted and cared for by their teachers. Younger students generally experience school more positively than older students and are more likely to perceive their classmates to be kind and helpful. A positive school climate was associated with

lower rates of feeling low, having low self-confidence, smoking, cannabis use, drinking, and bullying. Promoting positive school climates has the potential to protect youth from negative health behaviours.

4. *Electronic Bullying*

   There are low rates of cyberbullying in the Yukon. This finding may reflect access to the internet. With improved access and the internet proposed in the future, this is an area also to be attuned to. From a prevention perspective, it may be important to provide youth with the digital literacy and relationships skills to have positive internet experiences and interactions.

Concluding Thoughts

Notably, many of the report findings represent issues that were identified in the last report. The health and well-being for rural Grade 9-10 girls who have the poorest outcomes across a range of mental health and substance use issues is concerning. However, there are clues in this report about how to address and support youth in the Yukon. Having healthy positive family relationships and safe and accepting school environments with caring and respectful teachers was associated with reduced risk of negative mental and physical health problems. Thus, targeting the promotion of healthy relationships would be an effective health promotion effort. Furthermore, targeting youth who are disadvantaged by their relationship contexts may also be important. By supplementing and/or buffering these children's negative relationship experiences, we can promote healthy development during childhood and adolescence and healthy adaptation through the lifespan.

The healthy development of children and youth is dependent on many relationship influences. Parent, peer, teacher, school, and community relationships all contribute to healthy development. Positive relationships in one or many contexts can have a significant influence on the health of children and youth. Providing children and youth with healthy relationships wherever they live, learn, play, and work will support their healthy development.

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