

Freshers 2024 Survey: Summary report

857 entries (8 duplicates removed) **N=849**

Students from Bridgwater & Taunton college, Richard Huish, Strode College and Yeovil College responded.

Do you feel you have the information you need to make decisions about alcohol and drugs?

	No.	%
Yes	811	95.52
No	38	4.48

How important is knowing the facts about alcohol and drugs to you?

(1 being least important and 5 being most important)

	No.	%
1 (Least important)	35	4.12
2	44	5.18
3	188	22.14
4	255	30.04
5 (Most important)	327	38.52
Total	849	

Where would you find information about alcohol and drugs?

(Click on all that apply)

	No.	%
Friends & Family	525	61.84
Place of education	550	64.78
TikTok/Social Media	317	37.34
Internet	550	64.78
Somerset Drug & Alcohol Service (SDAS)	448	52.77
Other	34	4

Other = NHS Website, GP / Trained Hospital Staff, Everywhere, I work in a pub, On the bottle (alcohol specific, but units and daily limits), Just common sense, The drug dealer in my ends, College curriculum, Medical professionals, Other drug and alcohol services. Talk to frank, Government Guidance, Everywhere

If you wanted to talk to someone about alcohol and drugs, where would you go first?

	No.	%
Friends & Family	555	65.37
Place of education	52	6.12
TikTok/Social Media	23	2.71
Internet	88	10.37
Somerset Drug & Alcohol Service (SDAS)	117	13.78
Other	14	1.65
Total	849	

Other:

Mother (A SDAS worker), GP, *The other guy in my head*, *The wise old frog in the misty marsh sat upon a big mushroom*, Police, School mental health people, I wouldn't.

How confident would you feel approaching an alcohol and drug service?

(1 being least confident and 5 being most confident)

	No.	%
1	92	10.84
2	124	14.61
3	213	25.09
4	101	11.9
5	114	13.43
Don't know	205	24.15
Total	849	

At school, do you feel you got the right information at the right time about alcohol and drugs?

	Alcohol		Drugs	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	594	69.96	621	73.14
No	116	13.66	104	12.25
Can't remember	138	16.25	118	13.9
Blank	1	0.12	6	0.71
Total	849		849	

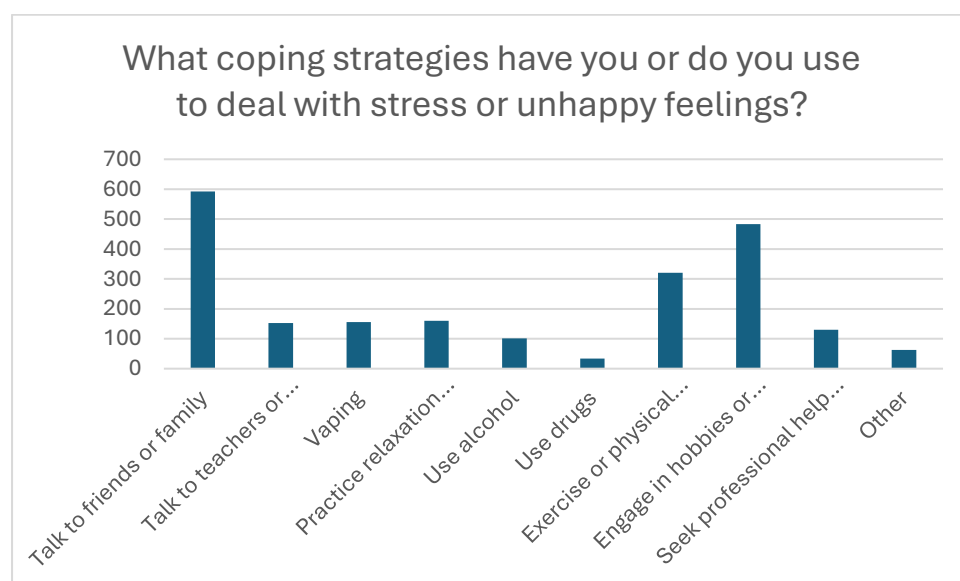
Do you feel you were able to talk freely about alcohol and drugs with your teachers or other school staff?

	No.	%
Yes	494	58.19
No	197	23.2
N/a	158	18.61

What coping strategies have you or do you use to deal with stress or unhappy feelings? (Click on all that apply)

	No.	%
Talk to friends or family	592	69.73
Talk to teachers or school staff	153	18.02
Vaping	156	18.37
Practice relaxation techniques (e.g. meditation, deep breathing)	160	18.85
Use alcohol	101	11.9
Use drugs	34	4
Exercise or physical activity	321	37.81
Engage in hobbies or interests	483	56.89
Seek professional help (e.g., GP, counsellor, therapist)	130	15.31
Other	63	7.42

Other: Complain, Walking, Fix whatever is making me unhappy, Games, Try to make ppl snitch on themselves, I don't feel comfortable disclosing this, Disconnect from reality by playing games, Gaming with friends/partner, Fortnite, Listen to music, Crying and rotting in bed, Listen to music, Sleep, I try to avoid them or just deal with them, Comedy, The wise old frog in the misty marsh, sat upon a big mushroom, Gambling, I don't, I let it happen till its over, Don't feel stressed or unhappy, Yogurt (probiotics), Journaling / Writing about feelings, Play with my Guinea pigs. I refuse to go anywhere near alcohol and drugs, Mentally keep myself happy by means of positivity, Playing Games, Watching YouTube Videos, Fishing, Ignoring them, Read fiction and ignore the situation, Crying lol, Ignore it, Social Media, Gym, Self harm, I honestly think the relaxation stuff isn't going well I might switch to vapes idk, Hobbies, Stay quiet:)



What do you think was missing from your lessons about alcohol and drugs?

This is a free text box, all responses were reviewed and categorised. Categories were then reviewed and those with <5 responses were combined with similar categories to streamline the data.

	No.	%
Blank/No entry	360	42.4
Joke answer	16	1.88
Can't remember/Don't Know	55	6.48
Stated they didn't attend lessons	7	7.82
Criticised lessons	23	2.71
Nothing missing	174	20.49
Peer pressure	5	0.59
The law	8	0.94
Harm reduction strategies	12	1.41
Signposting to help/services	12	1.41
Addiction	18	2.12
Real life stories/Statistics	24	2.83
Long term harm/Impact on others	25	2.94
Physical effect of drugs/alcohol	40	4.71
Broader understanding of the issues and impact/More information	53	6.24
Other	17	2

Real life stories/Statistics

Under this category, participants expressed an interest in finding out more about drugs and alcohol from those with lived experience and Somerset statistics.

"Testimonies from people who have actually struggled with addiction. I felt like most of what was said was from an outside perspective, which was helpful but didn't really help me grasp how serious addiction actually was. It wasn't until I saw how it affected people I knew that I started thinking of addiction as a serious mental illness."

Long term harm/Impact on others

Comments were about the long time effects both physically and mentally and life impacting health conditions. As well of the broader impact on those around them.

"I think we should be shown the real true dangers of what can happen after taking drugs or drinking alcohol. I also do not think schools talk about the effects it has when a child takes these such things as the brain is still developing. so I think it would be helpful if schools spoke about the subject more to help students understand the real dangers of what it can do to you in the long term."

Physical effect of drugs/alcohol

Participants expressed an interest in finding out about the effects of various drugs and alcohol.

Broader understanding of the issues and impact/More information

Comments under this category expressed a need for more information on either drugs or alcohol.

"I think that lessons focus too much on the negatives and don't prepare you for what to do if you get carried away or pressured into using alcohol or drugs. Teachers know that students are using alcohol and possibly drugs but avoid the subject because it is taboo."

Other

This category includes comments about vaping/smoking, why people use alcohol and drugs and coping strategies.

The End