

**WISCONSIN  
2021 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY (YRBS)  
GUIDE TO OPTIONAL MODULES AND PILOT  
QUESTIONS**

Version 1

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## OPTIONAL MODULE INSTRUCTIONS

All Wisconsin schools taking the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) utilize a standard survey. Upon registration for the YRBS, there is also the ability to customize a survey by adding one or two optional modules. Use this guide as a reference to understand and decide upon optional module(s). Then use the online registration form to make your selection.

### Why optional modules?

All of the topic areas in these optional modules are included in the standard surveys. However, the optional modules provide more depth in a specific area. Before deciding to add an optional module, please review the standard survey; it may already contain the questions you need. Some schools may select an optional module because it includes questions that are needed to fulfill a grant requirement. The Drug Free Communities module is specifically written to fulfill the data requirements of that federal grant, although other schools may also use that module.

### Deciding on an optional module or modules:

- It is highly recommended that schools collaborate with their local health department, CESA, or other local YRBS stakeholders to ensure that schools' use of optional modules within an area meets local data needs.
- Best practice is to keep the survey as short as possible. If you do not need to include an optional module for school or local grant requirements or other initiatives, it is best not to add it.
- If an optional module is added, it is advised to only add one.
- Schools are allowed to add up to two of the four optional modules. That accommodation was made in 2021 for places that have multiple grants and therefore need questions that appear in two different modules. Note that adding two modules may mean that more students need extra time to complete the survey.
- In addition to the two optional modules, middle schools are allowed to use the "mini module" which includes four (4) demographic or subgroup questions that already appear on the high school survey and which are helpful for breaking down the results.

## OPTIONAL MODULE 1: DRUG FREE COMMUNITIES

### What to know before registering for this module:

- Best practice is to use the shortest survey that meets your school and community's needs.
- Even without this module, the standard high school and middle school surveys will include questions related to use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products.
- This module contains questions that fulfill the core measures of the federal Drug Free Communities (DFC) grant, and which are not already included on the standard high school and middle school YRBS surveys.
- For this example document, questions are numbered 1-13. On the actual survey, optional modules are added to the end of the standard high school or middle school version.

### QUESTIONS

[Q1] *During the past 30 days, on how many days did you: take a prescription drug without a doctor's prescription? (Count OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin, codeine, Adderall, Ritalin, or Xanax.)*

- 0 days
- 1 or 2 days
- 3 to 5 days
- 6 to 9 days
- 10 to 19 days
- 20 to 29 days
- All 30 days

**The next 4 questions ask about how much YOU THINK people risk harming themselves if they do certain things.**

[Q2] *How much do you think people risk harming themselves physically or in other ways if they: have **five or more drinks** of an alcoholic beverage once or twice a week?*

- No risk
- Slight risk
- Moderate risk
- Great risk

[Q3] *How much do you think people risk harming themselves physically or in other ways if they: smoke one or more packs of cigarettes per day?*

- No risk
- Slight risk
- Moderate risk
- Great risk

[Q4] *How much do you think people risk harming themselves physically or in other ways if they: smoke marijuana once or twice a week?*

- No risk
- Slight risk
- Moderate risk
- Great risk

[Q5] *How much do you think people risk harming themselves physically or in other ways if they: use prescription drugs not prescribed to them?*

- No risk
- Slight risk
- Moderate risk
- Great risk

**The next 4 questions ask about how YOUR PARENTS would feel about you doing certain things. Make your best guess about how you think your parents would feel.**

[Q6] *How wrong do your parents feel it would be for you to:* drink one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day? (Count beer, wine or hard liquor including vodka, whiskey, or gin.)

- Very wrong
- Wrong
- A little bit wrong
- Not at all wrong

[Q7] *How wrong do your parents feel it would be for you to:* smoke tobacco?

- Very wrong
- Wrong
- A little bit wrong
- Not at all wrong

[Q8] *How wrong do your parents feel it would be for you to:* smoke marijuana?

- Very wrong
- Wrong
- A little bit wrong
- Not at all wrong

[Q9] *How wrong do your parents feel it would be for you to:* use prescription drugs not prescribed to you?

- Very wrong
- Wrong
- A little bit wrong
- Not at all wrong

**The next 4 questions ask about how YOUR FRIENDS would feel about you doing certain things. Make your best guess about how you think your friends would feel.**

[Q10] *How wrong do your friends feel it would be for you to:* drink one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day? (Count beer, wine or hard liquor including vodka, whiskey, or gin.)

- Very wrong
- Wrong
- A little bit wrong
- Not at all wrong

[Q11] *How wrong do your friends feel it would be for you to:* smoke tobacco?

- Very wrong
- Wrong
- A little bit wrong
- Not at all wrong

[Q12] *How wrong do your friends feel it would be for you to:* smoke marijuana?

- Very wrong
- Wrong
- A little bit wrong
- Not at all wrong

[Q13] *How wrong do your friends feel it would be for you to:* use prescription drugs not prescribed to you?

- Very wrong
- Wrong
- A little bit wrong
- Not at all wrong

**END OF THE DRUG FREE COMMUNITIES OPTIONAL MODULE**



## OPTIONAL MODULE 2: YOUTH TOBACCO

### What to know before registering for this module:

- Best practice is to use the shortest survey that meets your school and community's needs.
- Even without adding this module, the standard high school and middle school surveys include questions on use of tobacco products, including vaping.
- This module expands on the number of tobacco-related questions. Questions in this module were supplied by Wisconsin's Department of Health Services Youth Tobacco Prevention program and are used on the Youth Tobacco Survey. This module also adds a question to the middle school survey that otherwise only appears in the high school YRBS.
- For this example document, questions are numbered 1-10 for high schools, and 1-11 for middle schools. On the actual survey, optional modules are added to the end of the standard high school or middle school version.

### QUESTIONS

[Q1] Have you **ever tried** smoking cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars, even one or two puffs?

Yes

No

[Q2] Have you **ever used** chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip, such as Redman, Levi Garrett, Beechnut, Skoal, Skoal Bandits, or Copenhagen, even just a small amount?

Yes

No

[Q3] Which of the following tobacco products did you **try first**? Choose **ONLY ONE** answer.

I have never tried any tobacco products

Regular cigarettes (the kind that are lit and burned)

Electronic cigarettes, e-cigarettes, JUUL, or any other kind of electronic vaping device

Cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars

Chewing tobacco, snuff, snus, or dip

Tobacco or shisha in a hookah or waterpipe

Smoking tobacco in a regular pipe

Some other tobacco product not listed here

[Q4] In the **past 30 days**, how did you usually get your own tobacco products? Choose **ONLY ONE** answer.

- I have never used any tobacco products
- I bought them myself
- I had someone else buy them for me
- I borrow or bummed them
- Someone gave them to me without my asking
- I took them from a store or person
- I got them some other way

[Q5] Electronic cigarettes or e-cigarettes come in lots of flavors such as mint, candy, fruit, and chocolate. Do you think that you would try an electronic cigarette if it **did not have any flavor**?

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Probably not
- Definitely not

[Q6] During the **past 12 months**, how many times have you stopped smoking for **one day or longer** because you were trying to quit smoking cigarettes for good?

- I did not smoke during the past 12 months
- I did not try to quit during the past 12 months
- 1 time
- 2 times
- 3 to 5 times
- 6 to 9 times
- 10 or more times

[Q7] During the **past 7 days**, on how many days did someone smoke tobacco products in your home while you were there?

- 0 days
- 1 day
- 2 days
- 3 days
- 4 days
- 5 days
- 6 days
- 7 days

[Q8] During the **past 7 days**, on how many days did you ride in a vehicle where someone was smoking a tobacco product?

- 0 days
- 1 day
- 2 days
- 3 days
- 4 days
- 5 days
- 6 days
- 7 days

[Q9] During the **past 12 months**, have your parents or guardians talked with you, even once, about not using any kind of tobacco product?

- Yes
- No

[Q10] Do you agree or disagree that: All tobacco products are dangerous.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**[Q11 BELOW ONLY APPEARS ON MIDDLE SCHOOL VERSION OF THIS MODULE]**

[Q11] Have you **ever used** an electronic vapor product? (Count electronic cigarettes, e-cigarettes, JUUL, or any other kind of electronic vaping device.)

Yes

No

**END OF THE YOUTH TOBACCO OPTIONAL MODULE**

## OPTIONAL MODULE 3: ADVERSITY AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

### What to know before registering for this module:

- Best practice is to use the shortest survey that meets your school and community's needs.
- Even without adding this module, the standard high school and middle school surveys include questions on adverse events, stressors and protective factors.
- This module expands on the general area of adversity, stress, and protective factors. Note that there are more questions in this module at the middle school level (n=12) than the high school level (n=10), because this module adds two questions for middle school respondents that are already present on the standard WI high school survey.
- For this example document, questions are numbered 1-10 for high schools and 1-12 for middle schools. On the actual survey, optional modules are added to the end of the standard high school or middle school version.

### QUESTIONS INCLUDED AT HIGH SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVELS

[Q1] *During the past 7 days, on how many days did you: **do something that you felt really good at?** (Count schoolwork, sports, hobbies, work, volunteering, chores, helping people in your life, or anything else that you feel really good at.)*

- 0 days
- 1 day
- 2 days
- 3 days
- 4 days
- 5 days
- 6 days
- 7 days

**The next two questions ask you to think back over things you may have experienced since this time last year, or over the past 12 months.**

[Q2] During the past 12 months, has anyone close to you planned, attempted, or died by suicide?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

[Q3] During the past 12 months, did you ever: sleep away from your parents or guardians because you were kicked out, ran away, or were abandoned? [HS version]

[MS version: "...kicked out, ran away, or left behind?"]

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

**The next three questions ask how often you feel "very stressed" about different parts of your life.**

[Q4] How often do you feel very stressed about school or schoolwork?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- Always

[Q5] How often do you feel very stressed about friends or classmates?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- Always



[Q6] How often do you feel very stressed about your family or life at home?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- Always

**The next questions ask whether you agree or disagree with the statement.**

[Q7] I can work through my problems.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

[Q8] I feel alone in my life.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

[Q9] In my home, there is a parent or other adult who listens to me when I have something to say.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

[Q10] I plan to go to college or some other school after high school. (Count a 4-year college, community college, or vocational training.)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**MIDDLE SCHOOL ONLY QUESTIONS: The following questions are ONLY included on the middle school version of this optional module, because they are already part of the standard WI high school survey in 2021.**

[MS 11] Have you ever lived with someone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal?

- Yes, I do now
- Yes, but not anymore
- No

[MS 12] During your life, how often has there been **an adult in your household who tried hard to make sure your basic needs were met**, such as looking after your safety and making sure you had clean clothes and enough to eat?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- Always

**END OF THE ADVERSITY AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS OPTIONAL MODULE**

## OPTIONAL MODULE 4: SCHOOL CLIMATE

### What to know before registering for this module:

- Best practice is to use the shortest survey that meets your school and community's needs.
- Even without adding this module, the standard high school and middle school surveys include questions on school climate.
- This module expands on the area of school climate. The module draws from questions on the Department of Education School Climate Survey and the Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) cluster of Wisconsin's previous OnlineYRBS system. The Safe and Supportive Schools cluster was used extensively in the previous Online YRBS system. Some of the questions have been modified slightly for clarity.
- For this example document, questions are numbered 1-10. On the actual survey, optional modules are added to the end of the standard high school or middle school version.

### QUESTIONS

*The next questions ask whether you agree or disagree with the statement.*

[Q1] Violence is a problem at this school.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not Sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

[Q2] The things I'm learning in school are important to me.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not Sure
- Disagree

Strongly disagree

[Q3] There are lots of chances for students in my school to talk with a teacher one-on-one.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not Sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

[Q4] Students at this school get teased or picked on for being different.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not Sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

[Q5] There are lots of chances to be part of class discussions or activities.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not Sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

[Q6] There are lots of chances for students at this school to get involved in sports, clubs, and other activities outside of class.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not Sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

[Q7] My teacher(s) notices when I am doing a good job and lets me know about it.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not Sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

[Q8] This school feels friendly and welcoming.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not Sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

[Q9] Staff at this school enforce the rules for student behavior.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not Sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

[Q10] My teachers expect me to do my best all the time.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not Sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**END OF THE SCHOOL CLIMATE OPTIONAL MODULE**

## MIDDLE SCHOOL MINI-MODULE: HIGH RISK GROUPS

- This module contains four (4) questions related to high risk sub-populations.
- The high school survey already includes these questions.
- The middle school survey can include this module on its own or in combination with one of the four main modules described above.

[Q1] Which of the following best describes you?

- Heterosexual (straight)
- Gay or lesbian
- Bisexual
- Not sure

[Q2] Some people describe themselves as transgender when their sex at birth does not match the way they think or feel about their gender. Are you transgender?

- No, I am not transgender
- Yes, I am transgender
- I am not sure if I am transgender
- I do not know what this question is asking

[Q3] Do you receive Special Education services through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan?

- Yes, I do
- Not anymore, but I used to
- No, and I never have
- Not sure



[Q4] Do you have any physical disabilities or long-term health problems? (Long-term means 6months or more.)

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

**END OF THE HIGH RISK GROUPS MIDDLE SCHOOL MINI MODULE**

## PILOT QUESTIONS

During the registration process, schools or those registering on a school's behalf will be asked whether or not to include pilot questions. The two pilot demographic questions on race and sex are intended to allow for more selections than appear on the standard survey, while still staying as close to the standard survey as possible.

Pilot demographic questions are not available for the approximately 2,000 students sampled into the CDC/DPI State of Wisconsin sample. Schools that have sampled classrooms can administer the pilot questions to other classrooms, and DPI works with those schools to ensure that the appropriate version of the survey is routed to each classroom.

## PILOT SEX QUESTION

Here is the standard question:

2. What is your sex?

A. Female

B. Male

If a student leaves the standard sex question blank, no further prompts appear.

Here is the pilot question:

2. What is your sex? (Leave blank if neither)

A. Female

B. Male

If a student leaves the pilot question blank, then the prompt below appears:

*You did not select either male or female. How would you describe your sex? (You may leave blank if you wish.)*

Since this is a pilot question with an open-ended text option, it remains to be seen whether the responses from students who do not choose either male or female will generate usable categories of data. If the data is usable in resulting reports, categories will be subject to standard data redaction policies to protect student privacy.

## PILOT RACE QUESTION

The standard race question allows students to select more than one race. The pilot version expands on this by also including an “Other:\_\_\_\_\_” option, which allows students to enter a response into the text box.

Since this is a pilot question with an open-ended text option, it remains to be seen whether the responses from students who write in a response will generate usable categories of data. If the data is usable in resulting reports, categories will be subject to standard data redaction policies to protect student privacy.

## OPEN-ENDED QUESTION (on some surveys only)

An open-ended feedback question is asked of a small number of randomly selected students and allows students to provide comments on the survey itself or any topic area. The 2019 results to this question were helpful in understanding both the survey user experience and some of the issues facing young people. Information gathered through the 2019 open-ended question prompted changes to the 2021 survey.

By selecting “yes” to including this question, schools allow that at least one of their students, and no more than a few, may have this question included on the survey. The results are not available at the school level but do help with the continuous quality improvement of the YRBS in Wisconsin and provide insight into what is important to young people.