

# Health Behaviors among Students of Color

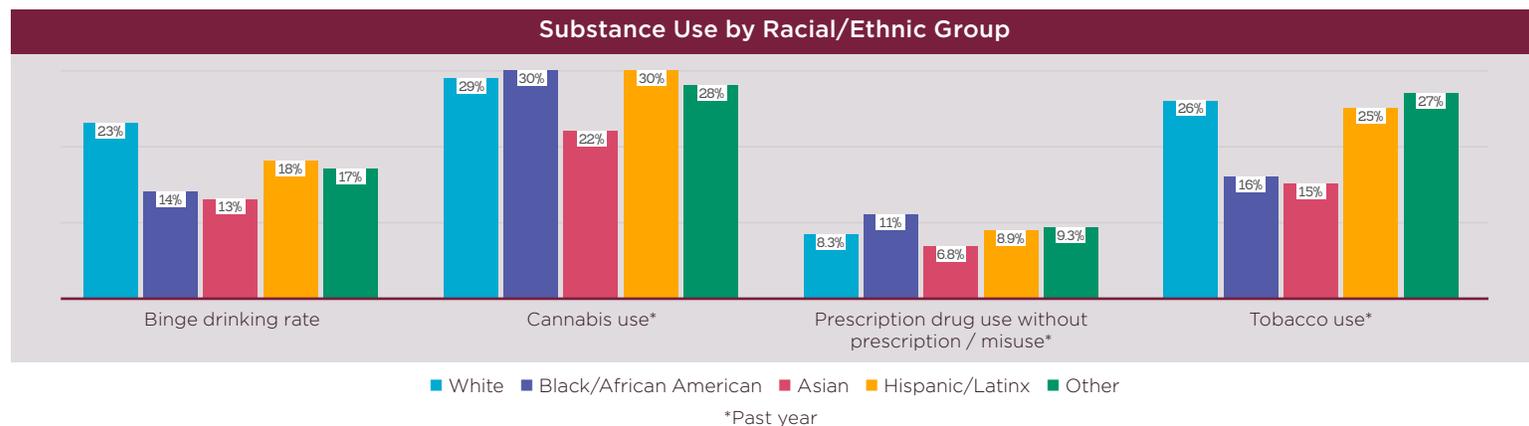
Partners in Prevention (PIP) is Missouri's higher education substance use consortium dedicated to creating healthy and safe college campuses. The coalition, comprised of 24 public and private colleges and universities in the state, works to decrease high-risk behaviors among college students by implementing strategic plans for prevention utilizing evidenced-based strategies. PIP conducts the Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors (MACHB) Survey to measure progress and obtain data. The MACHB is an annual, online survey implemented each spring to assess the impact of alcohol, drugs (illegal and prescription), tobacco, interpersonal violence, and mental health issues on student health and wellness. This report describes health and wellness experiences among students of color at Missouri colleges and universities. This brief provides updated information from the original Minority Student Health Behaviors' brief (V7.N11).

According to the MACHB 2021, students who identified their race/ethnicity as other than "white" increased from 17% in 2018 to 28%. Among students of color, 9.1% identified as Black/African American, 6.8% identified as Asian, 6.3% identified as Hispanic/Latinx, and 8.1% identified as "other". In this brief, we compare substance use behaviors, stress, and mental health concerns, as well as interpersonal violence experiences between students of color and students who identified as white.

## Substance Use

On average, 16% of students of color reported binge drinking at least once in the past two weeks. Approximately 4.3% of students of color reported frequently binge drinking in the past two weeks. Both rates are lower than those among white students (23%

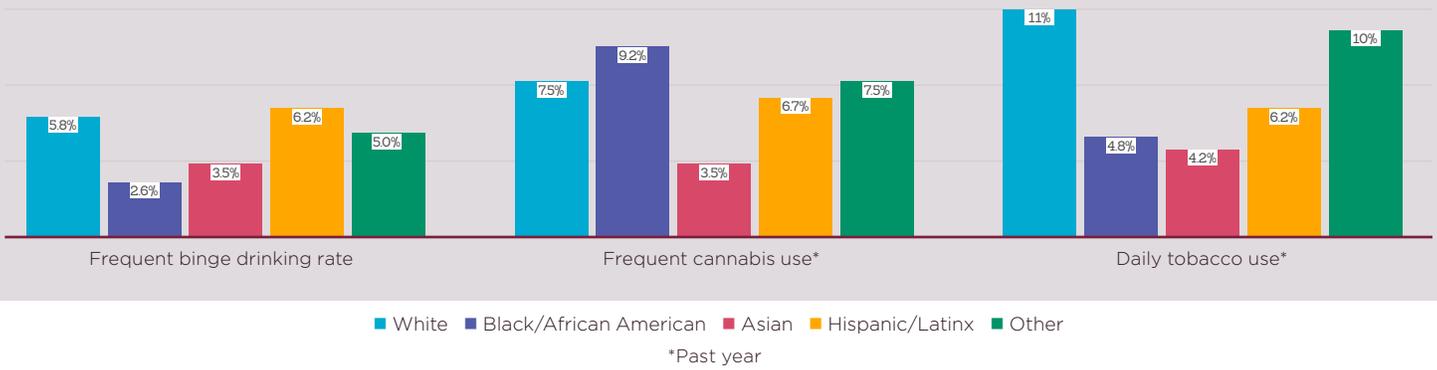
and 5.8%, respectively). However, Hispanic/Latinx students have a 6.2% frequent binge drinking rate, which is the highest among all groups. More than 1/4 (26%) of students of color used cannabis and 6.6% of them used it frequently in the past year. The average rates of cannabis use among students of color are lower than white students. It is still of note though, that 9.2% of Black/African American students reported a significantly higher frequent cannabis use rate (9.2%) than all the other racial/ethnic groups. In the past year, the rate of prescription drug use without a doctor's prescription, or using a valid prescription in a manner other than prescribed among students of color is higher than white students (9.2% vs. 8.3%). One-fifth (20%) of students of color used tobacco/nicotine products in the past year, and 6.1% used them daily. The use rates of various substances among each racial/ethnic group can be found in charts 1 and 2.



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## Frequent Substance Use by Racial/Ethnic Group

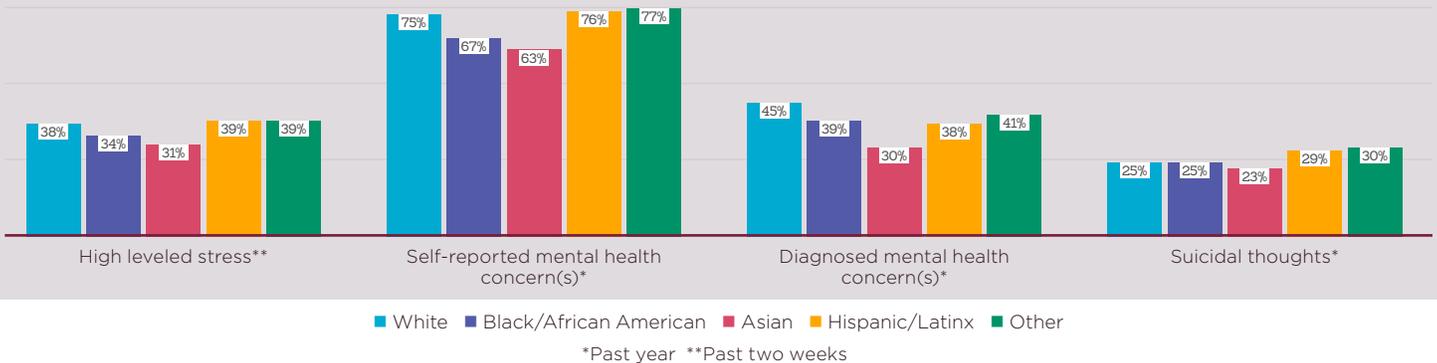


## Stress and Mental Health

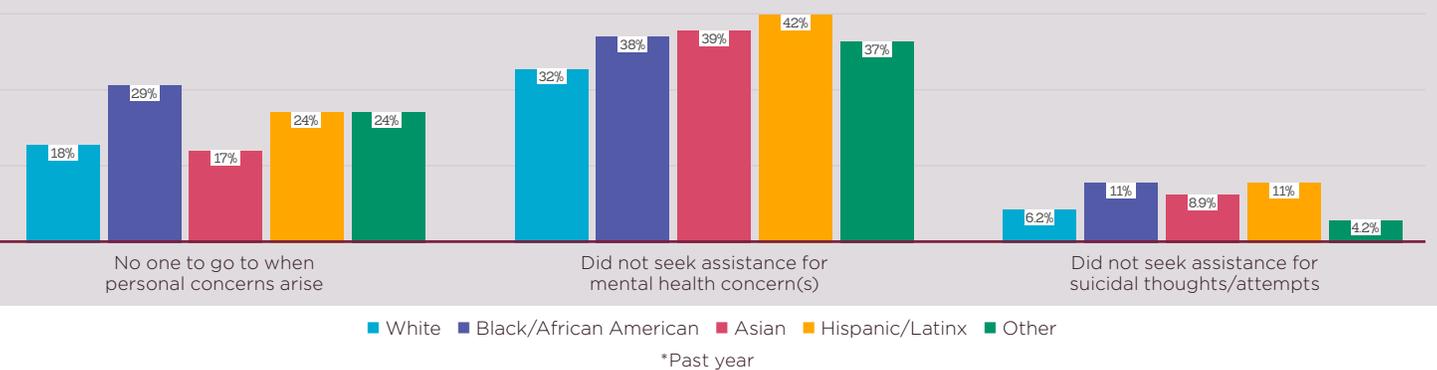
Overall, students of color reported lower rates of high level stress and any mental health concerns in the past year (both self-reported and diagnosed) than their white peers (34% vs. 38%, 70% vs. 75%, and 37% vs. 45%, respectively). Twenty-seven percent (27%) of students of color thought of suicide in the past year, which is higher than the rate among white students (25%).

Besides assessing students' stress and mental health experiences, learning if students would seek assistance when the issues arise is also an important piece in the prevention work. Compared to white students, students of color are less likely to seek assistance when concerns arise. Chart 4 shows the non-help-seeking rates of each group. Most barriers for not seeking assistance regarding mental health concerns among students of color are higher than for white students: "high cost"

## Stress and Mental Health Concerns by Racial/Ethnic Group



## Assistance Seeking by Racial/Ethnic Group



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(28% vs. 26%), “no insurance/insurance does not cover” (11% vs. 7%), “do not know any resources” (14% vs. 12%), and “it’s not helpful” (17% vs. 14%).

## Interpersonal Violence and Safety

Students of color experienced a lower occurrence of abusive relationships in their lifetime (34% vs. 38%), but a slightly higher occurrence of abusive relationships in the past year (17% vs. 15%) than their white peers. The rates of non-consensual sexual contact experience among students of color and white students are similar. However, the “other” group has the highest rates in all questions, which should draw one’s attention. By breaking down the data into specific groups, we found that American Indian/Alaskan Native students reported the highest occurrence of abusive relationships in their lifetime (52%) and in the past year (24%), as well as

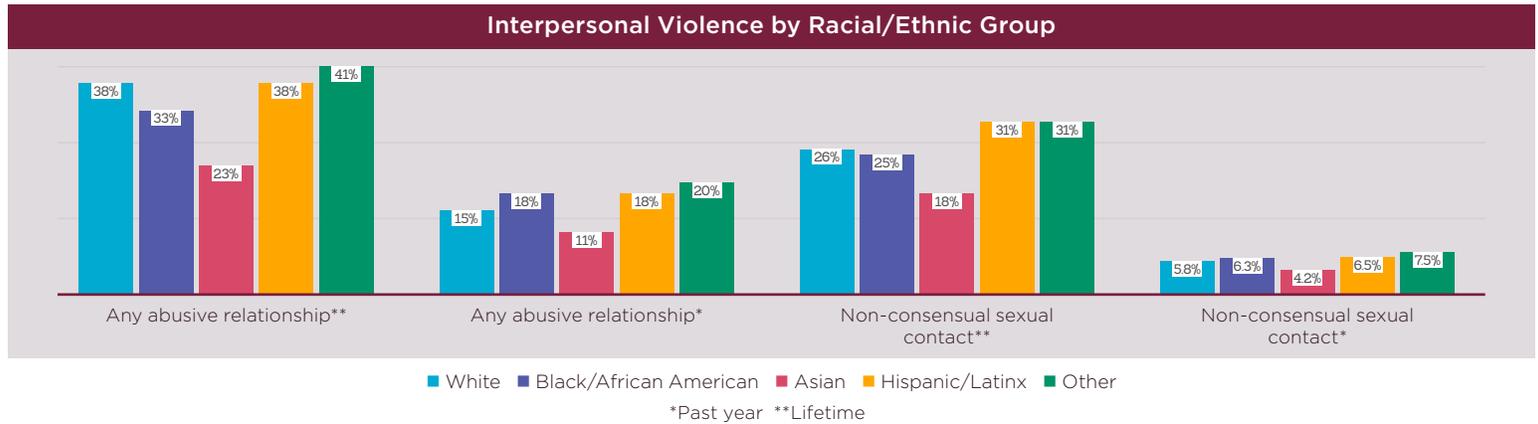
non-consensual sexual contact in their lifetime (36%) and in the past year (13%).

## Summary

Students of color are important to consider as they represent a large population of the Missouri college student body and a large population on their respective campuses. It is important to recognize the health behaviors of students of color as college and university campuses strive to create safe, positive environments for all students across the state. For more information about Partners in Prevention and to explore our research, visit [mopip.org](http://mopip.org).

Contact Partners in Prevention at (573) 884-7551.

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