**Alcohol**

***Home Access***

* 68% of parents report actively monitoring alcohol in the home; Only 14% of parents report monitoring their alcohol by locking it up (Dedham Parent Survey 2019)
* 16% of current drinkers got their alcohol from home with a parent/guardian’s knowledge (MWAHS 2018)
* 28% of current HS drinkers (and 34% of current HS binge drinkers) obtained their alcohol from home without parent/guardian knowledge (MWAHS 2018)

***Lack of Prosocial Involvement***

* Roughly one-third of high school students report not feeling they are part of a group of friends, not having a friend they can talk to about a personal problem and not having participated in volunteer or community service activities on 3 or more days in the past 12 months (MWAHS 2018)
* 52% of HS students report spending 3+ hours on "screen time" that is not for school/ homework on the average school day (MWAHS 2018)
* [Kids use alcohol out of] “Boredom – children aren’t encouraged to be involved in social clubs, community activities” (Parent focus group participant)

***Youth Attitudes Favorable Toward Use***

* Among youth who use alcohol and were enrolled in the AlcoholEDU course, 32% said that “to celebrate” was an important or very important reason to drink, and 47% said that “to have a good time with your friends” is an important or very important reason to drink. (AlcoholEDU evaluation survey)
* 24% of Dedham High School youth (that responded to this optional question) thought that binge drinking once or twice a week posed no or only slight health risks. (MWAHS 2018)
* [Youth use alcohol] “…To be cool. They think they are cool when they tell their stories about drinking, or vaping, just like when we were kids – it was the cool thing to do.” (Parent Focus group participants)

***Mental Health/Trauma***

* 45% of students who report using alcohol in the past 30 days report their life as “very stressful, compared to 29% of youth who report not using alcohol in the past 30 days. (MWAHS 2018)
* 32% of students who report using alcohol in the past 30 days report experiencing depressive symptoms in the past two weeks compared to 18% of students who report not using alcohol in the past 30 days (MWAHS 2018)
* 21% of students who report using alcohol in the past 30 days report considering suicide in the past 12 months compared to 10% of students who did not report using alcohol in the past 30 days (MWAHS 2018)

***Community Norms Favorable Toward Use***

* “If you go to any sporting event, there are parents pulling in with coolers…there is not an event in this town that doesn’t involve alcohol” (Parent focus group participants)
* “[Youth] are going to get it anyway, right? They already have the vape, the pot, the alcohol, so if there is an adult that says, “All right, guys, everyone here is staying here tonight because I know you are drinking because I bought the keg. Why is that different from them sneaking around? You could even be drinking and having a conversation about drinking with them.” (Parent focus group participants)
* 48% of 12th grade parents have knowingly allowed their child to attend parties where alcohol use occurs (Dedham Parent Survey)
* Police key informant interview: almost all major public events in Dedham feature widespread alcohol use (e.g. Flag Day Parade, Dedham Day)

***Commercial Availability of Alcohol***

* There are currently 54 alcohol license holders in Dedham, which is high as compared to surrounding town (Town of Dedham data)
* In 2019, there were 12 alcohol retailers that failed compliance checks (in which supervised underage youth try to purchase alcohol) out of the 47 that were visited (Compliance check data).
* Alcohol outlets such as liquor stores also tend to be disproportionately located in lower-income neighborhoods, leading to increased access to substances (Research-based risk factor)
* Among current HS drinkers (MWAHS 2018)…
  + 6% of current HS drinkers report buying their alcohol with a fake ID
  + 5% of current HS drinkers report buying it without a fake ID
  + 9% current HS drinkers asked a stranger to buy the alcohol for them
  + 4% report buying it from a delivery services
  + 3% report buying it online from another type of website

**Marijuana**

***Low Risk Perception***

45% of high school students felt that using marijuana posed a “moderate of great risk”

Nearly 10% of high school students report riding in a car driven by a high school student who had been using marijuana in the past 30 days; Just under 4% report driving a car after using marijuana in the past 30 days

Almost 53% of high school students think riding in a car driven by a high school student who had been using marijuana is "very dangerous"

“Don’t hear that “marijuana is a gateway drug” as much as we hear that about alcohol…marijuana at least has some medical uses and benefits.” (Parent focus group participants)

***Low Parental Monitoring***

* “I’d say more kids are trying it and experimenting with it. If a kid can go grab 2-3 [marijuana] gummies out of the bag that mom/dad/sister/grandma brought home, who’s going to notice 2-3 missing from a 5 pound bag?” (Parent focus group participant)
* 45% of parents reported actively monitoring marijuana in their home (of those that reported having marijuana in the home) and 30% reported locking up marijuana in the home (MWAHS 2018)
* Nearly 20% of high school parents have knowingly allowed their child to attend parties where marijuana use occurs (MWAHS 2018)

***Economic Disadvantage***

* 39% of HS students that are eligible for free or reduced price lunch in the past 30 days report using marijuana in their lifetimes as compared to 30% of students that report not using marijuana in the past 30 days, which is a statistically significant difference (MWAHS 2018)
* Socioeconomic status determines access to many resources, including adequate health care and higher education opportunities. Chronic feelings of shame, stress, and frustration at lack of economic opportunity can lead to the use of alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs to cope. (Research-based risk factor)
* Homelessness is a key risk factor for substance use among youth. Homeless and unstably housed youth are more likely to be exposed to substances and witness adult use. Drug and alcohol use can also be a coping mechanism for the daily stressors (noise, sleeping outside, verbal harassment, etc.) associated with living on the streets. (Research-based risk factor)

***Trauma and Mental Health***

* Substance use can be a way of coping with past trauma or untreated mental illness. (Research-based risk factor)
* 52% of students who report using marijuana in the past 30 days report their life as “very stressful, compared to 30% of youth who report not using marijuana in the past 30 days. (MWAHS 2018)
* 39% of students who report using marijuana in the past 30 days report experiencing depressive symptoms in the past two weeks compared to 18% of students who report not using marijuana in the past 30 days (MWAHS 2018)
* 27% of students who report using marijuana in the past 30 days report considering suicide in the past 12 months compared to 10% of students who did not report using marijuana in the past 30 days (MWAHS 2018)
* [Kids use marijuana due to] “peer pressure, pressures in life from parents and school…social media is a huge reason. So much crap on social media that makes kids feel worse.” (Parent focus group participants)

***Discrimination***

* 27% of LGBTQ HS students report using marijuana in the past 30 days as compared to 17% of their heterosexual, cisgender peers. (MWAHS 2018)
* Experiencing discrimination due to race, sexual orientation, country of origin, disability status, or other social factors can create chronic stress that increases one’s risk of substance misuse. (Research-based risk factor)

**Nicotine**

***Youth Attitudes Favorable Toward Use***

* “Adults are vaping in public and it’s legal, so young people don’t perceive it as dangerous” (Parent focus group participant)
* 57% of high school students surveyed reported that the risk of harm from using EVPs was moderate or great (MWAHS 2018)
* 45% of high school students surveyed reported having used EVPs in their lifetimes, and 30% report using EVPs in the past 30 days (MWAHS 2018)

***Trauma/Mental Health***

* Substance use can be a way of coping with past trauma or untreated mental illness. (Research-based risk factor)
* 43% of students who report using EVPs in the past 30 days report their life as “very stressful, compared to 29% of youth who report not using EVPs in the past 30 days. (MWAHS 2018)
* 34% of students who report using EVPs in the past 30 days report experiencing depressive symptoms in the past two weeks compared to 17% of students who report not using EVPs in the past 30 days (MWAHS 2018)
* 22% of students who report using EVPs in the past 30 days report considering suicide in the past 12 months compared to 10% of students who did not report using EVPs in the past 30 days (MWAHS 2018)
* Recent research shows that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as abuse, violence, witnessing substance misuse in the home, sudden death of a loved one, or neglect can create change an adolescent’s brain in ways that predispose them to substance misuse and can drastically increase the likelihood that a child will misuse substances.

***Price and Promotion (e.g. marketing of flavors toward youth)***

* [Kids vape because of] “marketing”… [It is] “scary that it is marketed to kids with flavored nicotine” (Parent focus group participants)
* Youth may be exposed to pro-tobacco content and advertising on social media through various sources, including commercial brands as well as their own peers or influential accounts they follow. Young people were most likely to see ads at retail stores (68%), followed by the internet (41%), television (38%) and newspapers and magazines (24%). Between 2014 and 2016, exposure to retail e-cigarette advertising among young people jumped nearly 20%. JUUL has also targeted children as young as third grade by funding summer camps, visiting schools and paying community and church groups to distribute their materials, according to recent congressional testimony. (Research-based risk factor)

***Policy Environment***

* Policy has a widespread impact on both youth and adult substance use. For example, when substances are widely available for purchase, or there are no restrictions on advertising, hours of sale, or types of products that may be sold, it can have negative effects on substance use rates. Similarly, when the larger policy environment does not support fair employment, access to health care, and social services, we see the consequences of substance misuse disproportionately impact certain groups, like those with lower socio-economic status, communities of color that many have experienced systematic discrimination, etc. (Research-based risk factor)