

A circular arrangement of eight diverse teenagers, including boys and girls of various ethnicities, looking towards the center. The teenagers are positioned around the central text, with some appearing upside down relative to others.

Teens Talk

A Report on Youth Issues

Teens talked. We listened.

There is a tendency in both popular media and society as a whole to view teenagers as a homogenous group that shares common values, characteristics, aspirations and fears. But in fact, teens experience life very differently.

At Kids Help Phone, we listen to thousands of young people every week who trust us to help them navigate their most challenging and uncertain moments as they grow into adults.

Twenty-five years of developing skills and building confidence in young people has provided us with significant insight into teenagers. But not every teen reaches out to Kids Help Phone.

That's why we undertook a national survey. We wanted to hear about the hopes and fears of teens in Canada – not just teens who contact Kids Help Phone, but also those who don't.

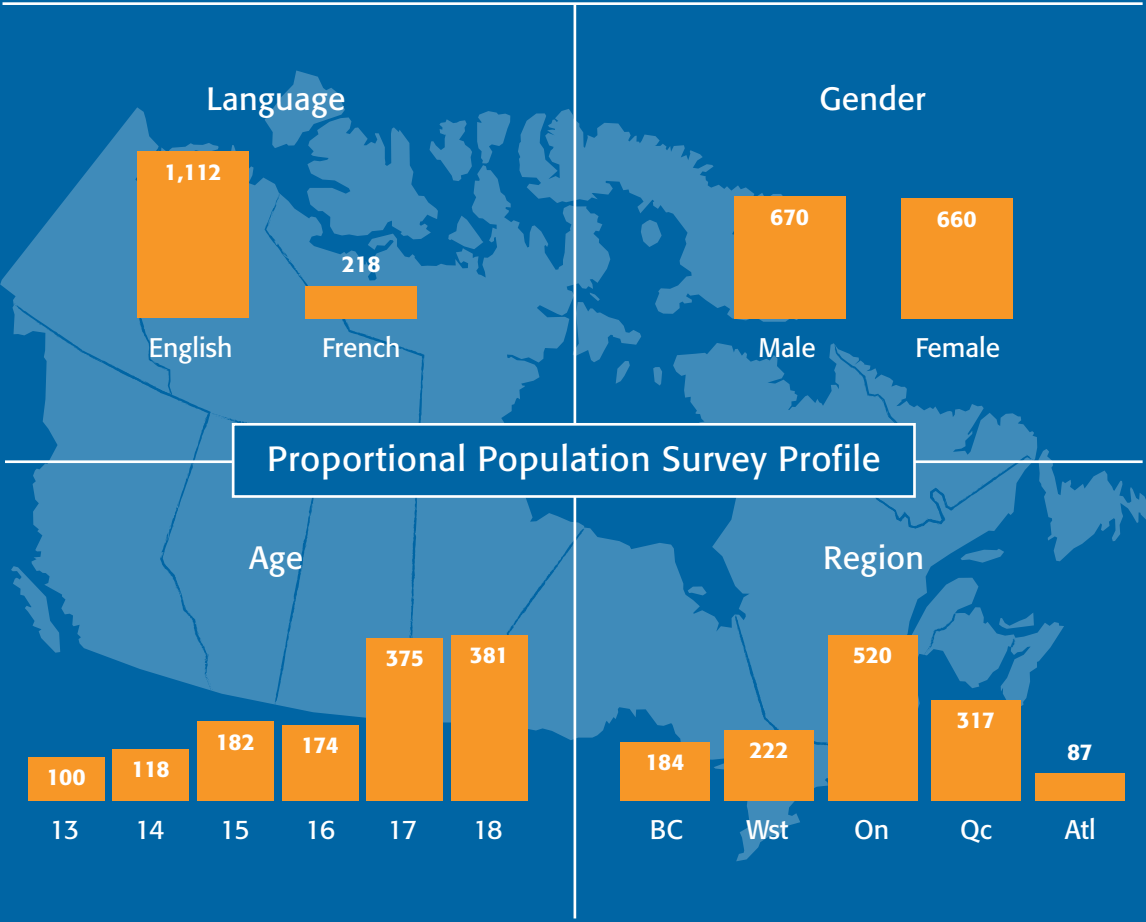
The result? *Teens Talk: A Report on Youth Issues.*

The report reveals important nuances and insights into what teens experience, including what issues they are most concerned about, where they seek support and how they prefer to talk about their problems. Most importantly, it reveals that their issues, challenges, outlooks and supports vary across age, gender and location.

Find more information at kidshelpphone.ca/teenstalk.



In May 2015, Kids Help Phone surveyed 1,330 teens from across the country between the ages of 13 to 18. We recruited them from online panels and posed questions to assess the issues teens face, the stresses they are under and the help they seek. We wanted to know more about their state of mind and emotional health. The following breakdowns of participants reflect the country's actual population ratios.



Making the grade

57% vs. 39%

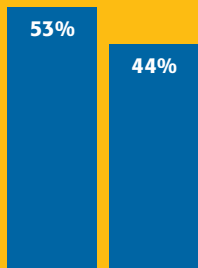
13-year-olds who have problems with grades and homework vs. 18-year-olds

Overall teens in Canada are quite worried about school – grades and homework. In fact for half (49%), it's their biggest and most frequent area of concern.

But the levels of stress vary across demographics. Boys are more stressed about school than girls (53% vs. 44%). 52% of English-speaking teens worry about grades and homework, compared to 31% of French-speaking teens.

As teens mature, they appear to become more confident in, or accepting of, their academic performance. Teens aged 13 are the most worried about grades and homework, but by age 18 their school-related concerns subside markedly.

School stress



Boys

Girls



Bullies are bullied

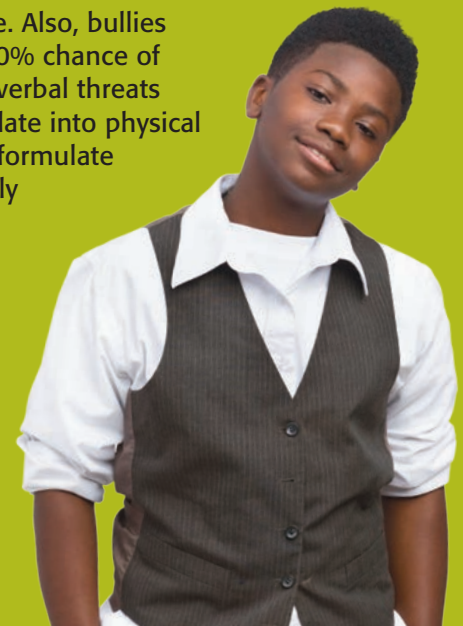
50%

Teens who bully will be bullied themselves

There are many types of bullying: physical, emotional, social, discriminatory and cyber-bullying. For our survey, Kids Help Phone asked teens questions related to physical (hitting, shoving, pushing, tripping and other kinds of force) and emotional (hurtful comments, name-calling, teasing) bullying.

Bullying is a large concern for teens in Canada (29%), but the level of concern varies on how you slice the demographic. Bullying is a greater concern for French-speaking teens (primarily located in Quebec) compared to their English counterparts (47% vs. 25%), and among younger teens (13-14 years) as compared to older teens (16-18).

Another interesting survey finding is if a teen is bullied at school, that person has a 50% chance of being bullied somewhere else – at home, for example. Also, bullies themselves have a 50% chance of being bullied. While verbal threats are not likely to escalate into physical violence, teens who formulate threats are more likely (45%) to resort to physical assaults.



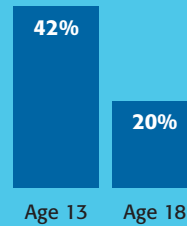
Relationship woes

42% vs. 20%

Friend relationship problems of 13-year-olds vs. 18-year-olds

A significant number of teens have relationship concerns with family (25%) and friends (27%). However younger teens report more problems with friends than family but as they age the situation reverses. It's during this time that older teens start coping with more difficult issues, including rising stress levels, emotional difficulties, gender and identity issues, and suicidal thoughts.

Friend relationship problems



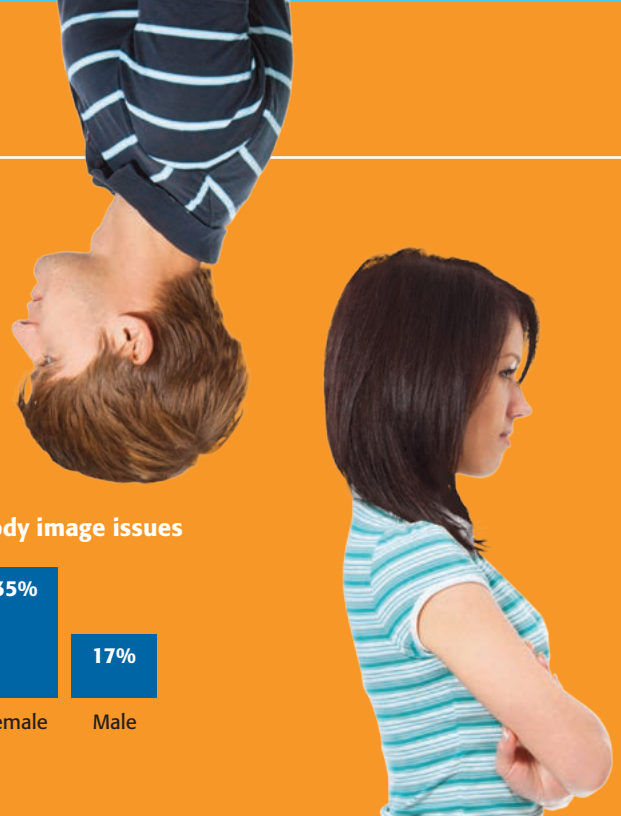
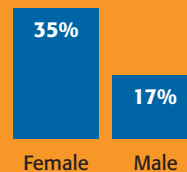
The great gender divide

35% vs. 17%

Girls with body issues vs. boys

Across the country, males and females are closely matched on most issues. However, the one significant difference is body image (a concern among 26% of teens overall). Girls are twice as likely as boys to have body image issues. As girls age, their issues about body image increase, from 28% at age 13 to 33% at age 18. But even among males, there is a marked jump in body image issues between ages 13 and 18.

Body image issues



Under pressure

23%

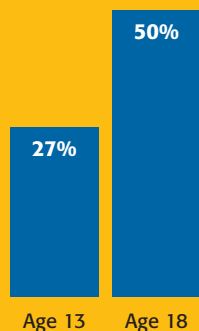
How much stress and anxiety levels increase between the ages of 13 to 18

Teens in Canada are stressed out! At 42%, stress is the biggest area of concern after grades and homework (49%) for the general teen population. As they age, their stresses continue to mount. At age 13, 27% reported concerns about stress but by age 18, this number had risen to 50%.

Females tend to feel stress and anxiety slightly more than males (45% vs. 39%), and English-speaking teens more than French (43% vs. 37%).

Perhaps because of the stress they feel, teens are not overwhelmingly happy or optimistic about the future. Rating their levels of happiness and optimism about the future on a scale from one to seven, their mean responses fell below five.

In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed?



Drugs and addictions

26% vs. 8%

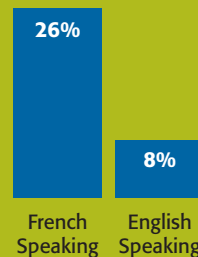
French-speaking teens with drug/addiction issues vs. English-speaking

Only 11% of teens reported issues with drugs and addictions. But the numbers become more revealing when you slice the statistics different ways.

For example, there is a big language divide. The study shows that 26% of French-speaking teens have concerns about drug and addiction issues compared to Anglophones at 8%. This language divide also reflects a regional one, where, for example, 9% of teens in British Columbia have concerns vs. 19% in Quebec.

The division between males and females (12% vs. 10%) is not significant but the drug and addiction concerns worsen slightly with age: 8% of 13-year-olds have issues vs. 13% of 18-year-olds.

Teens with drug/
addiction issues



It's good to talk

Our survey results show that 63% of teens confide in their mother, while 35% turn to dad and 55% share with their best friends. Other family members, teachers, online social networks and counselling services are further down the list.

But the statistics shift across life stages. Older teens (60%) are less likely to talk to mom than the younger ones (83%), but more likely to entrust their boyfriend or girlfriend (25%) than 13-year-olds (3%).

Our survey also shows that teens who indicated they did not have anyone to confide in were 200% more likely to experience issues related to violence at home, gender identity, suicidal thoughts and/or experience emotional difficulties that could lead to more serious emotional and mental health problems.

200%

How much more likely teens are to experience emotional difficulties if they do not have anyone to talk to



Technically speaking

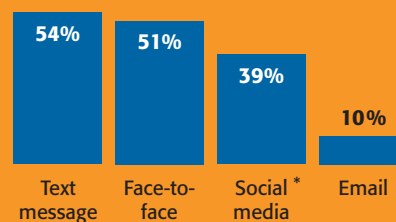
When communicating to friends about issues, teens prefer texting (54%), followed by face-to-face encounters (51%). The influence of social media is strong, with teens communicating concerns via private messages on Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter and other channels (39%).

When teens talk to professionals (teachers, school counsellors, coaches, religious leaders) about personal problems, they prefer to do so in person or via text. But when it comes to anonymous counselling services, new channels of connecting, such as web chat and other means of digital communication have a rising importance.

54%

Teens who text about their problems with friends

Sharing information with friends





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