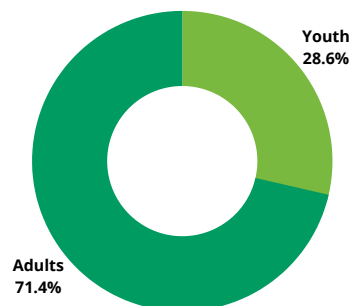
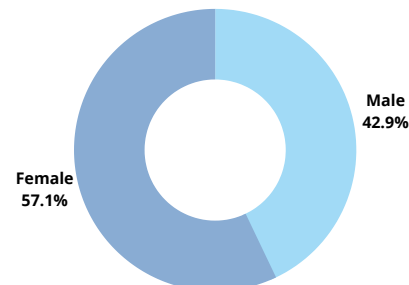
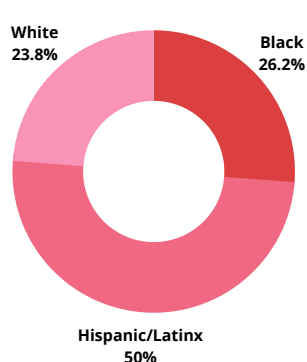


FOCUS GROUPS REPORT

OVERVIEW

Staff conducted a series of focus groups with people in recovery, Hanover Public Schools students, parents of students, and faith based partners. The purpose of these focus groups was to gather experiences, opinions, and perceptions from diverse voices in Hanover County to further target our prevention outreach. The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of participants.

There were a total of **42 participants** and they were asked questions regarding substance use in Hanover county. More specifically, participants shared about four substances: alcohol, marijuana, prescription, and over the counter drugs. Below are highlights from those conversations. **Every group shared they would like to have more open discussions, community townhalls, education and programming to continue the conversation.**



ALCOHOL

All of the participants felt that alcohol is normalized. There is a cultural norm for alcohol to be present and lots of people drink. When asked specifically about who drinks alcohol adults, teens, family members, and friends were the groups mentioned. Participants felt that both adults and youth drink for similar reasons: to cope, to ease pain, peer pressure, and because it is socially accepted.

MARIJUANA

There were mixed responses about marijuana however, most participants felt that it was present in the community. Youth shared they smell it in the schools specifically in the bathrooms. Adults shared they see it in their communities and neighborhoods. The folks who were in favor of legalization spoke to health benefits and preventing harsh sentencing.

RX AND OTC DRUGS

When asked specifically about which over the counter drugs were being abused in Hanover County, participants shared the following: Benadryl, Ibuprofen, Tylenol, Nyquil/Dayquil, Sudafed, and Robitussin. Majority of participants spoke to the easy access of these medications in the home.

"There is a culture of underage drinking because it is the right of passage and the way to be seen as cooler." (Participant)

"Corner stores, country stores, and local stores are more inclined to sell to underage customers." (Participant)