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## **Evalumetrics Youth Survey (EYS)**

The Evalumetrics Youth Survey is a valuable tool for strategic planning, research, and evaluation of prevention, intervention, and youth development programs. The Evalumetrics Youth Survey (EYS) has been conducted in schools throughout the Finger Lakes and Southern Tier of New York since 1999. The survey is based on the Risk and Protective Factor Model and asks students about several critical health risk behaviors such as substance use, violence, depression, and suicide ideation. EYS supports trauma-informed program planning by measuring adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and social-emotional distress. The survey also includes questions about students' attitudes toward and connection to school, family, and community. EYS collects data for measuring SAMHSA core measures and is approved for use with Drug Free Community and other SAMHSA funded projects.

The EYS is conducted online on a web-based platform that is accessed by students clicking on a URL address provided by the school. QR codes can also be used to direct students to the survey. Basic demographic information is collected including grade, age, gender, and race. No identifying information is collected. Parents are notified of the surveys prior to implementation and are instructed on how to “opt out” if, for any reason, they preferred not to have their child participate. Unless parents opt out, students are asked to complete the survey (i.e., passive consent). At the start of the survey, students are instructed that participation is voluntary and they can elect not to take the survey or to skip any questions that they do not want to answer. Surveys that are incomplete or meet other criteria, (e.g., same answer to all questions, suspect answer patterns) are culled from the final database. Average survey completion time is 29 minutes.

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## **Risk and Protective Factors**

The Risk and Protective Factor Model was developed at the University of Washington by J. David Hawkins, Richard Catalano, and Janet Miller. The model was developed by reviewing two decades of research that identified a link between certain risk factors and several problem behaviors and between protective factors and avoidance of problem behaviors. A major strength of this model is that by implementing strategies to reduce factors that predict one problem, (e.g., alcohol and other drug abuse), communities will reduce other negative behaviors, such as violence, delinquency, teen-pregnancy, gambling, and dropping out of school that share similar root causes. Similarly, increasing protective factors will reduce problem behavior and mitigate the negative impact of environmental variables such as childhood trauma or other social emotional stress.

On the EYS, factors are represented by 32 scales consisting of multiple items. Factor raw scores are converted to statistical standard scores (z scores) using statistical parameters, i.e., population means and standard deviations, from a benchmark sample of 25,000 students from 29 schools in the Finger Lakes region in 2000. For purposes of needs assessment and planning, risk factors standard scores above 1.0 are used to define risk. Protective factor scores below -1.0 represent risk from lack of protection.

## **Other Areas**

The EYS is more comprehensive than other surveys in that it measures both problem behaviors and underlying factors. EYS includes items that assess all elements of the ARCH model, that is, Attachment (to school, family, and community), self-Regulation, Competency, and Health. The ARCH model is used for prevention planning by Finger Lakes Community Schools, Wayne Partnership for strengthening Families, and other coalitions.

***The EYS measures both problem behaviors and underlying factors.***

## **EYS-4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

In the spring of 2019, a sample of 4th grade students participated in a pilot study to test a version of the EYS that would be age- appropriate and suitable in content and comprehension levels of younger students. In 2021, the new survey, the EYS-4<sup>th</sup> Grade, was implemented in 15 schools in the Finger Lakes Region. Using the Finger Lakes EYS-4<sup>th</sup> Grade sample, statistical parameters for 15 risk and protective factors were developed and risk scores were calculated.

***The EYS-4<sup>th</sup> is age- appropriate and suitable in content and comprehension levels of younger students.***

***For information on EYS products contact Rob Lillis at [rlillis@rochester.rr.com](mailto:rlillis@rochester.rr.com).***