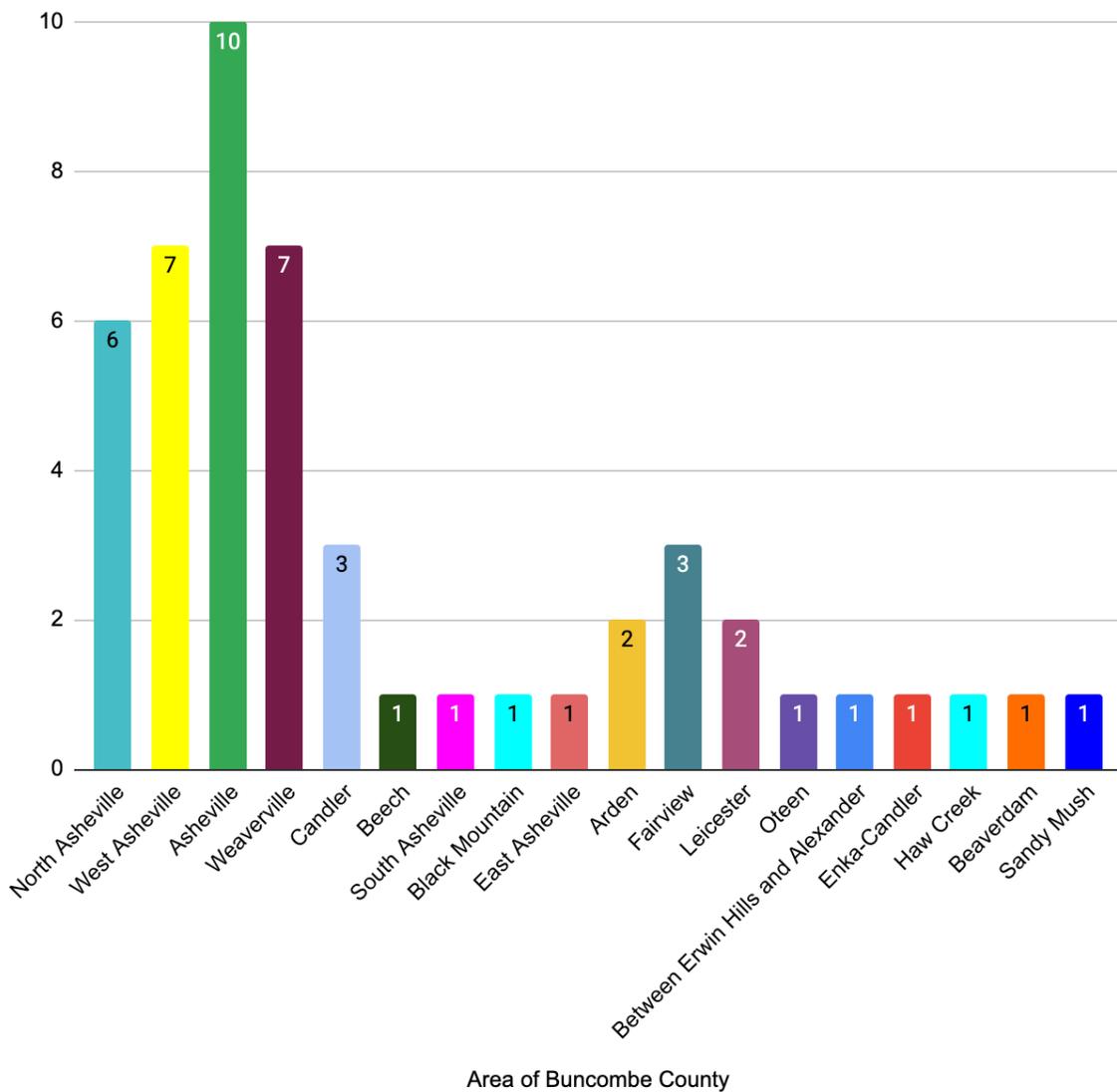


NC Preventing Underage Drinking Initiative Survey

50 residents of Buncombe County were surveyed in order to better understand community perceptions of underage drinking. Youth and adult coalition members distributed these online surveys (via email listserv, social media, and individuals asking classmates, coworkers, friends, and family). The analysis was done using inductive coding, by categorizing responses and tallying them for the short answer responses.

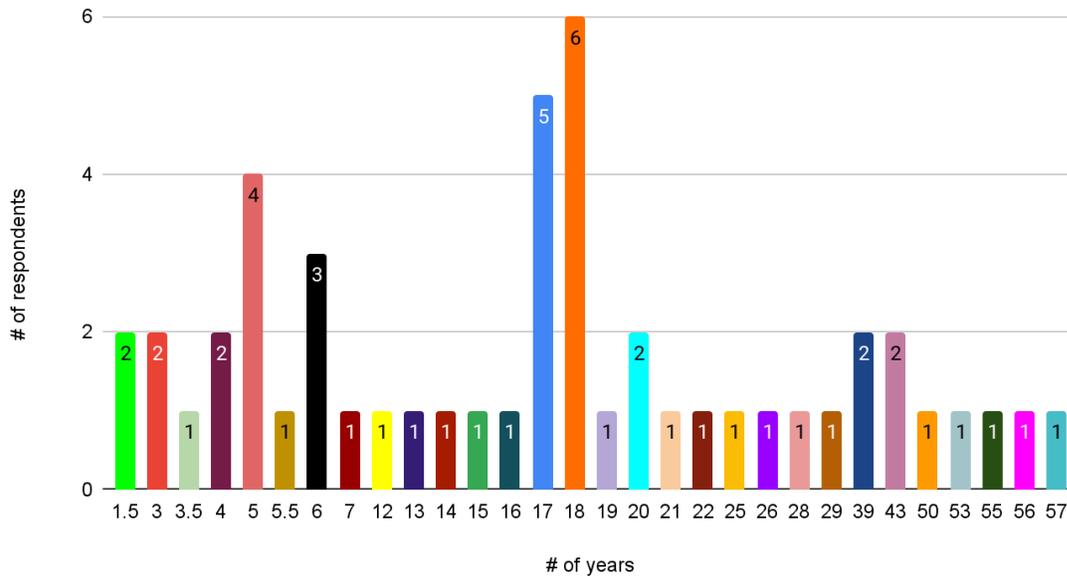
Demographics:

What area of Buncombe County do you live in? (ex. Leicester)



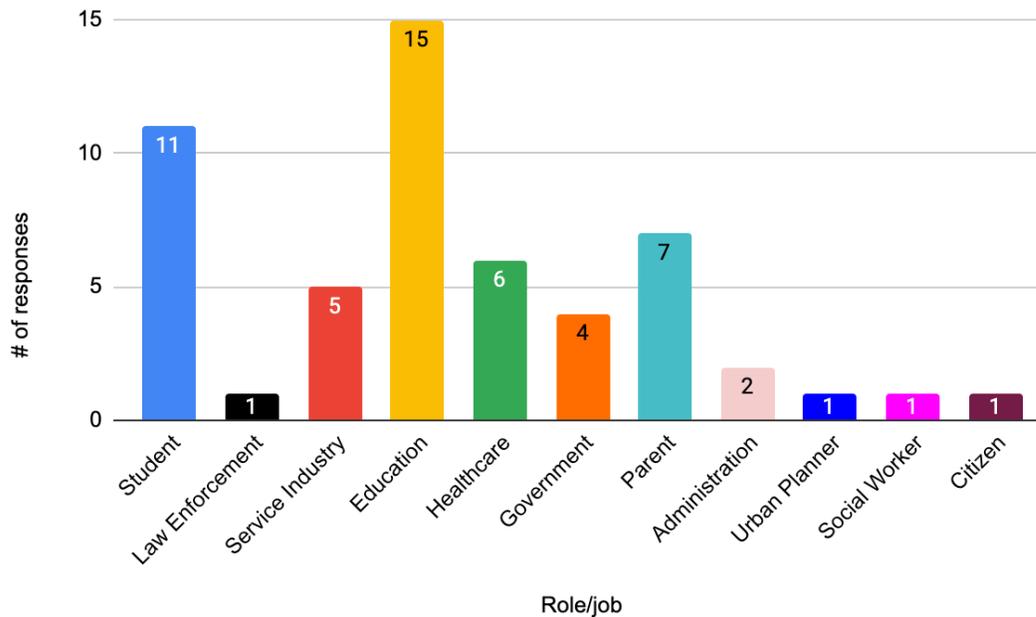
The majority of respondents live in Asheville with some representation from surrounding smaller towns.

How long have you lived in Buncombe County?



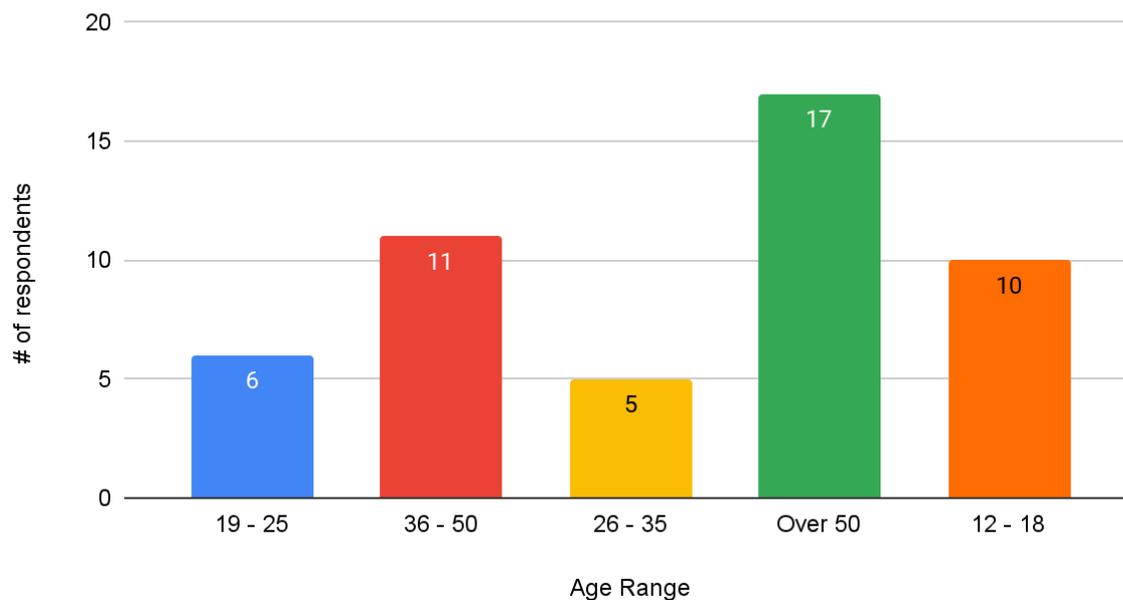
Respondents have lived in Buncombe County from a minimum of 1.5 years to a maximum of 57 years, with the most responses being at 18 years.

What is your role/job in the community? (ex: parent, student, business owner, cashier, etc.)



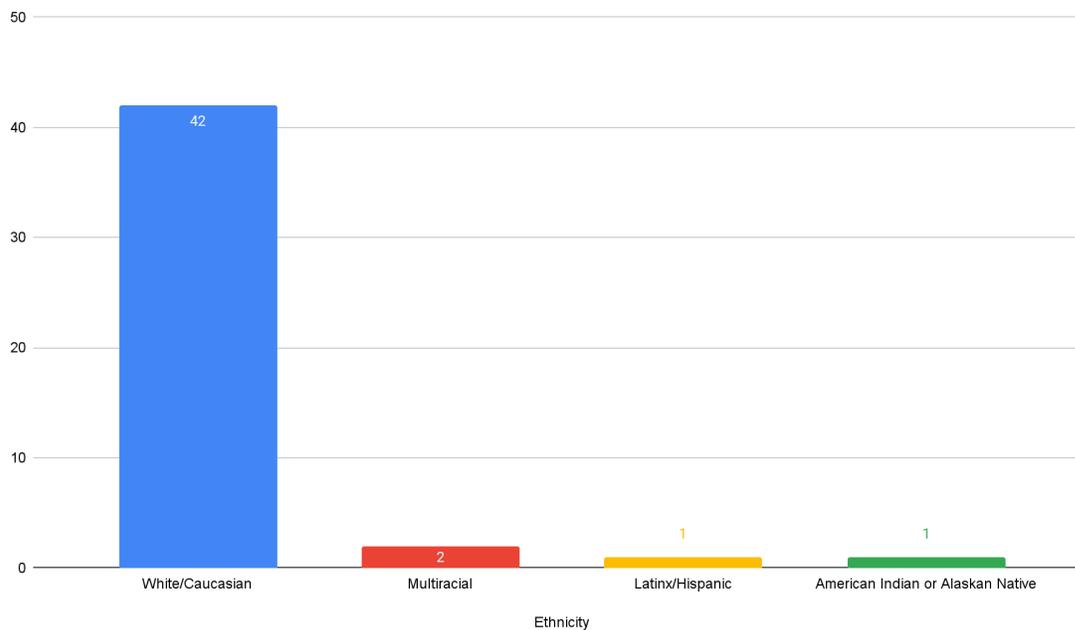
The majority of respondents work in education or are students. Other sectors have less representation. Many respondents listed multiple roles in the community (ie: housekeeper and parent). Some respondents left this section blank.

Your age range is:



The majority of respondents were over 50, with the least respondents from the 26-35 age range.

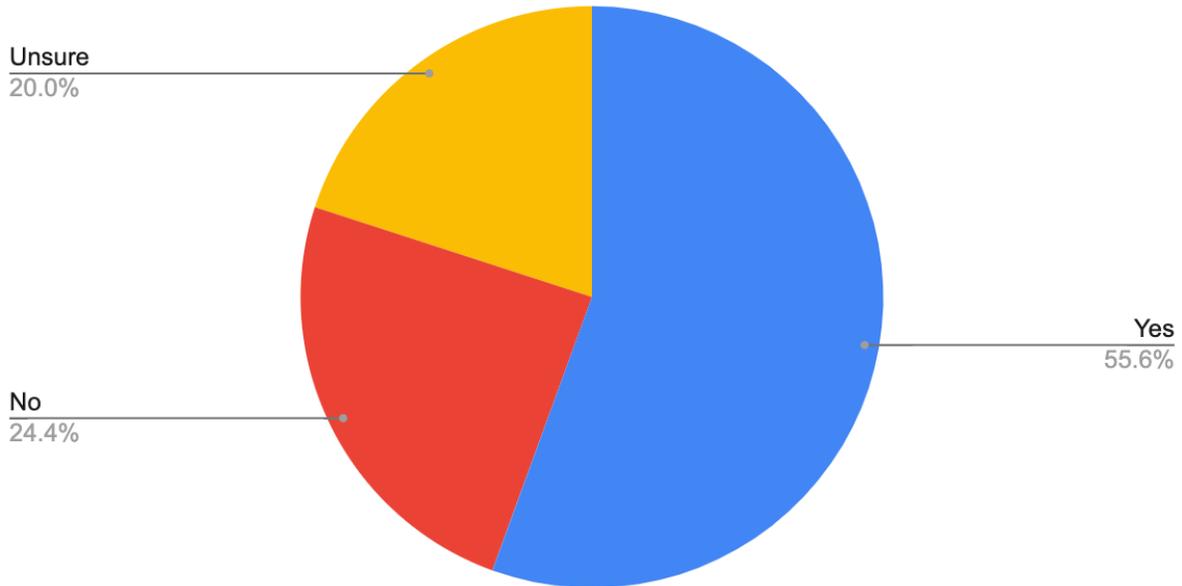
Your ethnicity is:



91.5% of respondents were White/Caucasian. The other 4 respondents self-reported as Multiracial, Latinx/Hispanic, and American Indian or Alaskan Native. Some respondents did not provide an answer.

Results:

Do you think underage drinking is a problem in Buncombe County?



Over half of respondents believe underage drinking is a problem in Buncombe county. One said, *"Yes, I personally drink and I'm underage and all of my friends drink with me as well."*

Many acknowledged that it is something that commonly happens, but didn't feel it was a problem. Many of the respondents that felt it wasn't a problem added disclaimers such as, *"as far as I know"* and *"that I'm aware of."*

Some respondents conveyed it was not a concern to them, or that there are other concerns that are more pressing.

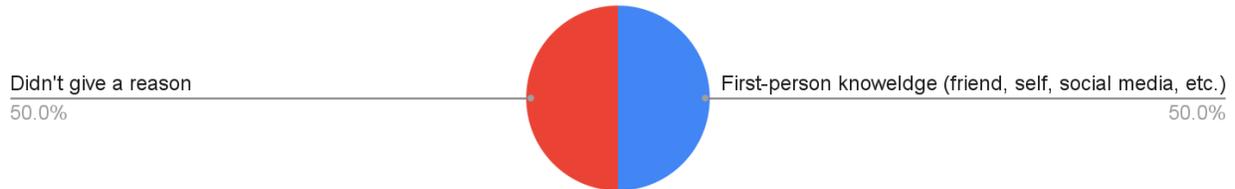
"I don't really hangout with people or care to ask if they do drink. As long as they do it responsibly and don't get behind the wheel, I don't care if they drink underage."

"It's only a problem if people make it a problem. The drinking age should be lowered to 18."

"I am more concerned with the abuse of alcohol by underage drinkers rather than whether or not they are consuming it."

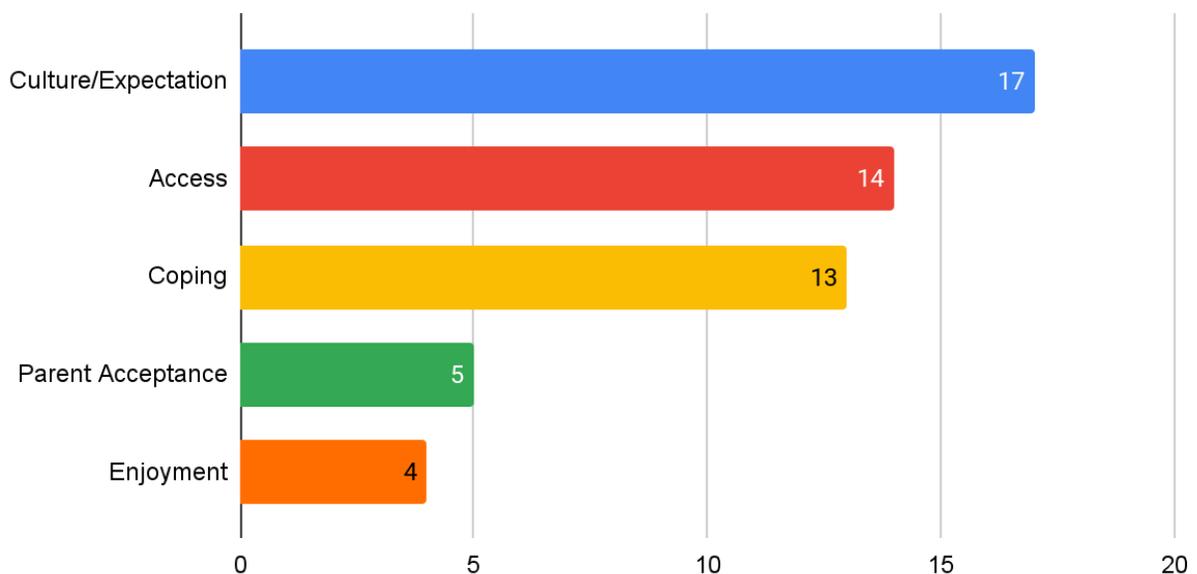
A follow-up question asked participants why or why not they believe underage drinking is a problem.

Why or why not?



50% of respondents cited first-person knowledge as to why they thought it was a problem or not. The other 50% did not give a reason for why or why not they think underage drinking is a problem.

Why do you believe underage drinking occurs in your community?



The majority of respondents gave more than one reason. The most common reason given was culture and that drinking was expected, including *“copying behaviors of adults”* and if *“they’re having a beer, why shouldn’t their kids.”* Peer pressure and *“to be cool”* were also reasons given. Access was the second most common reason, with many saying that access was being given by parents, grandparents, and friends. One person said, *“You can’t really escape it. Ask someone over or 21 to buy you alcohol and most of the time they’ll do it. I have friends who would buy it for me. My girlfriends mom offers me drinks, only because where shes from the drinking age is 18 or 16, i forget.”*

Respondents also felt that drinking was a means of coping with feelings of boredom, stress, loneliness, and to *“escape.”*

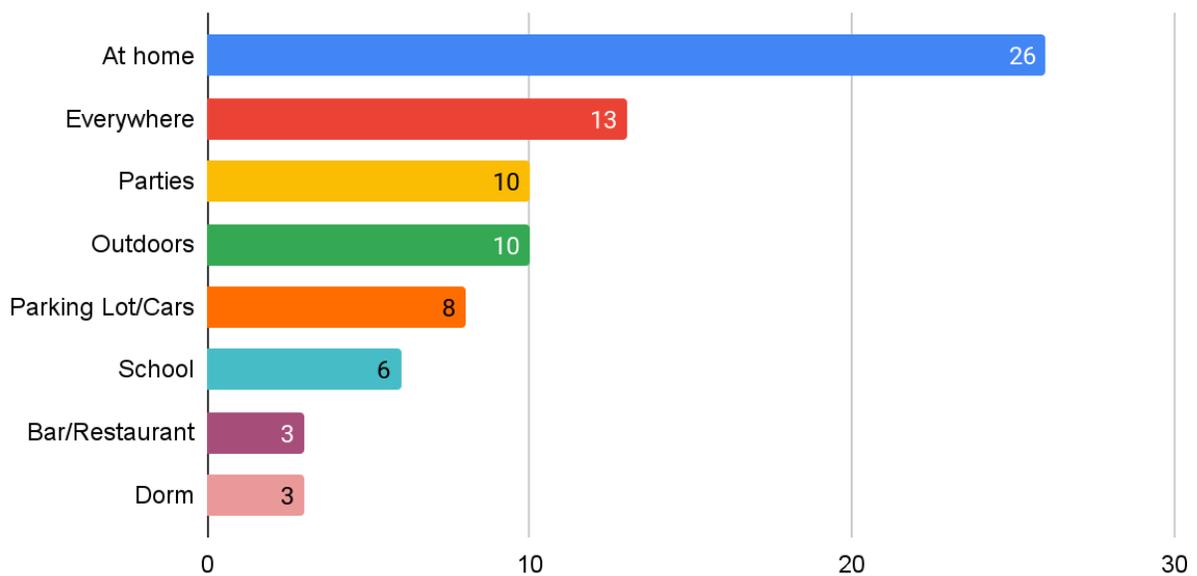
“Because it’s easy to get and the repercussions are not as bad as other drugs. And it more of thing well you’ll be able to do it later down the road so it’s not that big of deal to some people.”

“I drank when I was underage and so did the people I knew and drinking is a big part of the culture in Asheville.”

”The amazing amount of breweries around the area.”

One respondent said highschoolers drink because *“they can’t do it which, makes them want to do it”* and *“drinking is fun.”*

Where do you believe underage drinking occurs in your community?



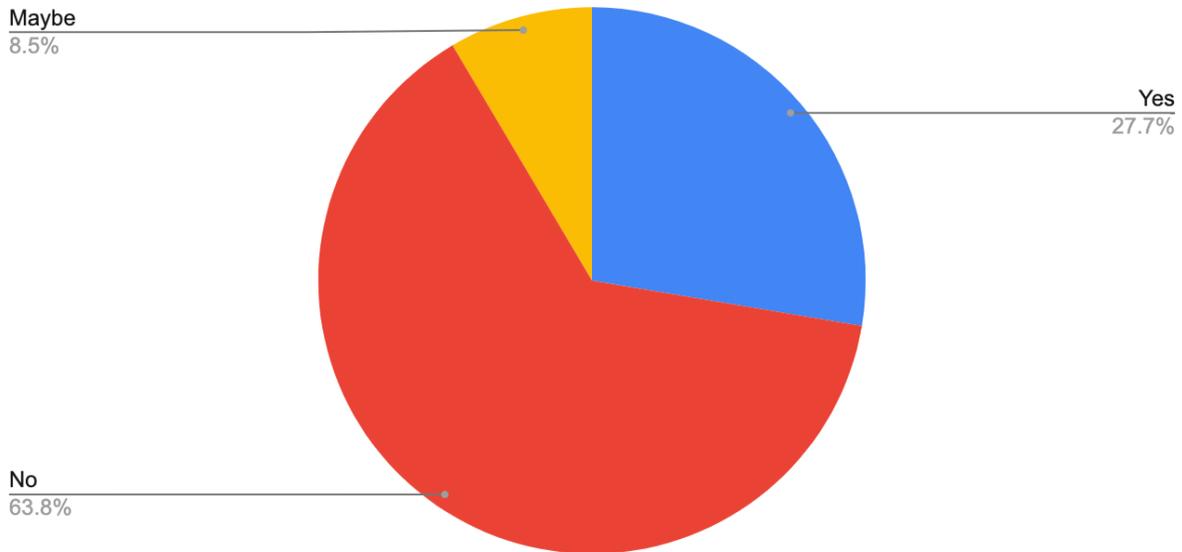
The majority of respondents said underage drinking occurs at home. *“Whether its a house party or a coping mechanism, I imagine it would happen at home.”* The second most common response was “everywhere.” Outdoors, parties, and parking lots/cars were more specific responses after “everywhere.”

One said, *“Pretty much everywhere, but especially in student dorms and apartments, or at the houses of adults who don’t mind allowing minors to drink. For individuals who are especially brave and don’t mind spending the money, fake IDs are very easy to come by and will allow minors to drink in bars and clubs.”*

6 respondents said it occurs at school, “highschools and colleges.” One person said it occurs, *“Literally everywhere. I was drunk during class once.”*

Respondents thought drinking occurred less frequently at bars/restaurants and dorms. *“For individuals who are especially brave and don’t mind spending the money, fake IDs are very easy to come by and will allow minors to drink in bars and clubs.”*

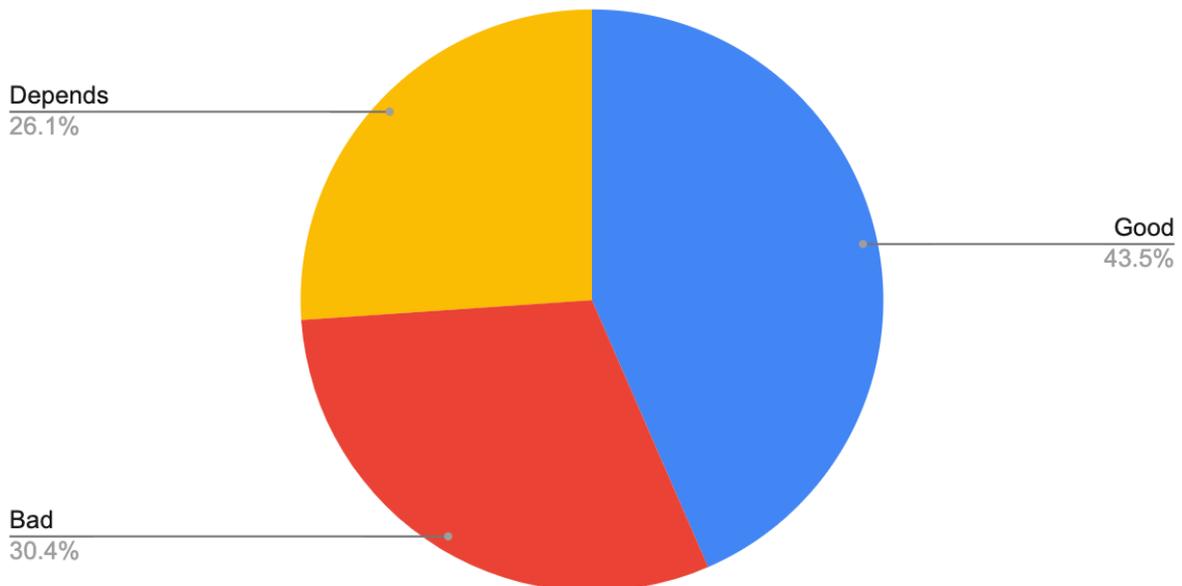
Do you believe advertising and marketing (ex. billboards, street signs, posters/ads in stores) of alcoholic beverages contributes to underage drinking in Buncombe County?



The majority of respondents believe that advertising of alcohol does not contribute to underage drinking in Buncombe County. This is over twice as many as those that believe advertising does contribute to underage drinking. Many of these respondents shared the sentiment that, *“people will want to drink no matter what ad you throw in their face”* or are not *“influenced by any of these ads”* and that *“there isn’t really a whole lot to prevent or provoke it.”* One said, *“students are mostly immune to physical ads.”* One felt that it could influence choice of beverage, but would not influence the choice to drink. Many of these respondents felt that there were other factors that were more influential than advertising, such as culture, access, peer attitudes,

Those that said yes *“ads make it look like fun, attractive people like to drink”* and makes drinking seem *“cool”* and *“normal.”*

Do you believe promoting bars, breweries, or distilleries as "family friendly" is a good or bad idea?

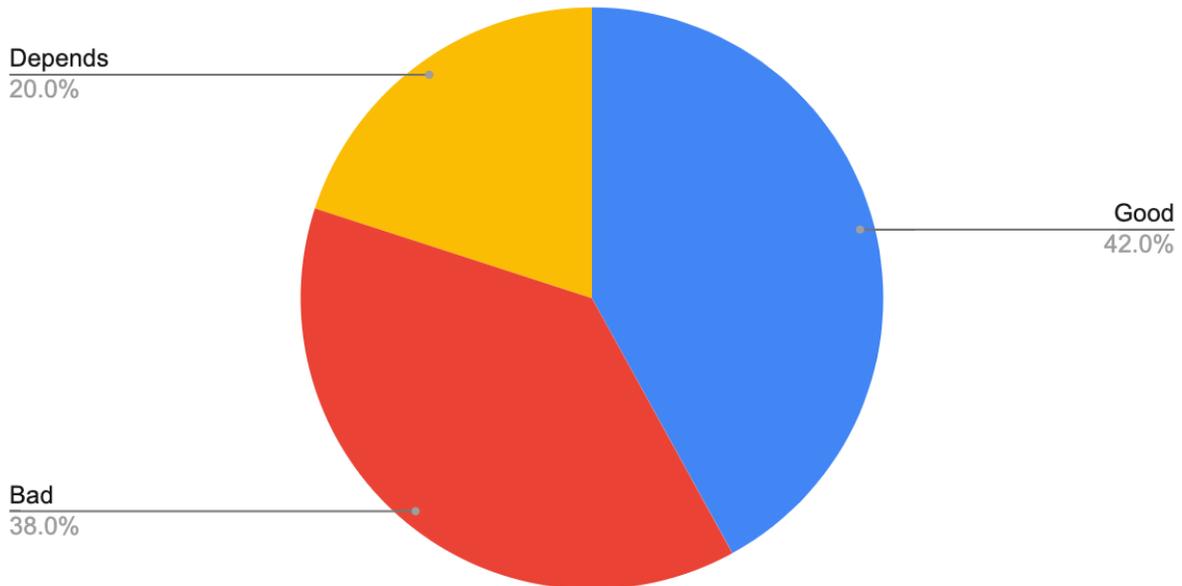


The majority of respondents believe that promoting bars, breweries, or distilleries as “family friendly” is a good idea. These respondents felt it could be a “*good way to model healthy drinking habits,*” and “*safe drinking.*”

About a third of respondents believe it is a bad idea, due to potential dangers (such as drinking and driving), that it normalizes alcohol “*in a bad way,*” and relies on parents to be responsible.

About a quarter of respondents believe it depends on how it is done. For example, it is ok if food and alternative beverages are served and if there are outdoor activities and games for kids and as long as the bar isn't letting minors in without their parents. One respondent felt that it was appropriate for minors to be at breweries, but not at bars.

Do you believe promoting alcoholic beverages at health related events is a good or bad idea?

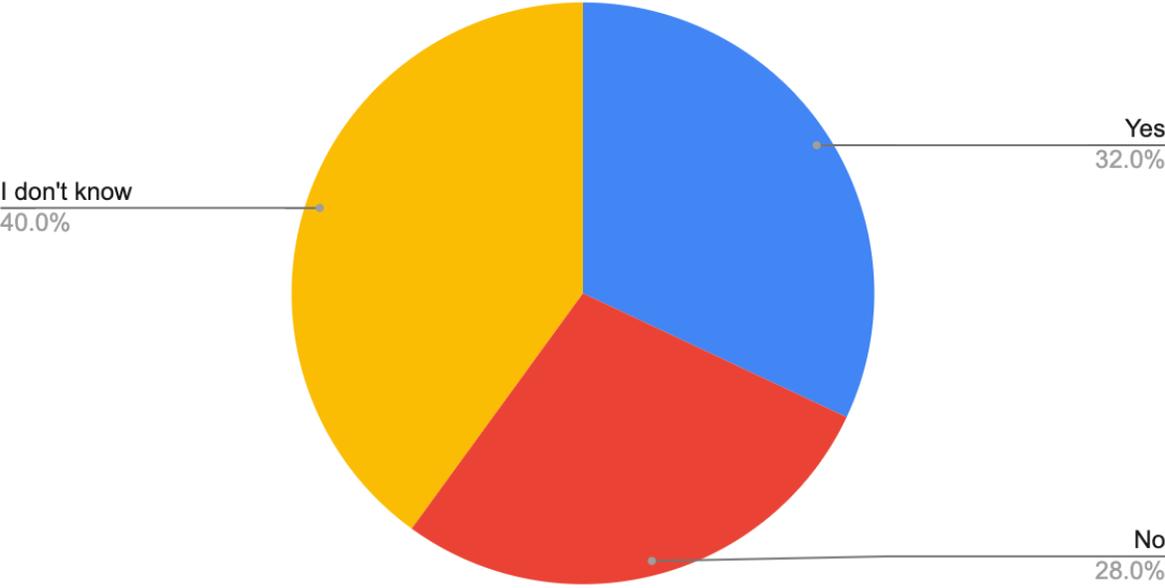


The majority of respondents felt that promoting alcohol at health related events is a good idea, with just 2 respondents less thinking it was a bad idea. One said, *“Yes, why should it matter? Beer and wine sales make up a huge amount of the economy, so to have a fundraiser using those items would make a lot of money. You see it with colleges that sell alcohol at sporting events. A third if not more come from beer and wine, way more than just ticket sales ever could make.”* The reasons people felt it is a good idea were that it is an *“effective way to raise money”* and that people can learn moderation and responsible drinking. One person said *“I don’t have a problem with minors drinking as long as they can do it maturely.”*

The reasons people felt it was a bad idea were that alcohol isn’t healthy and detracts from the purpose of the event.

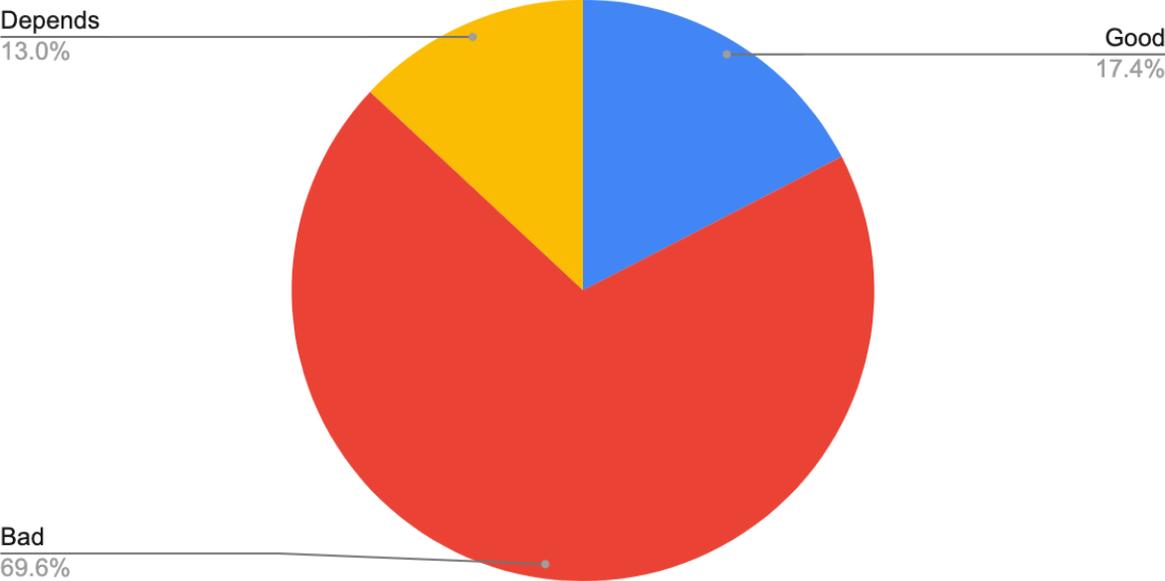
10 respondents said it depends on how much alcohol is being served, if the law is being followed, and if alternatives are provided.

In the community where you live, do parents, caregivers or other adults provide alcoholic beverages to youth?



The majority chose the “*I don't know*” answer. Of the respondents that said they knew, 16 respondents said “yes” and 14 said “no.”

Do you believe adults hosting parties where alcoholic beverages are available to youth is a good or bad idea?

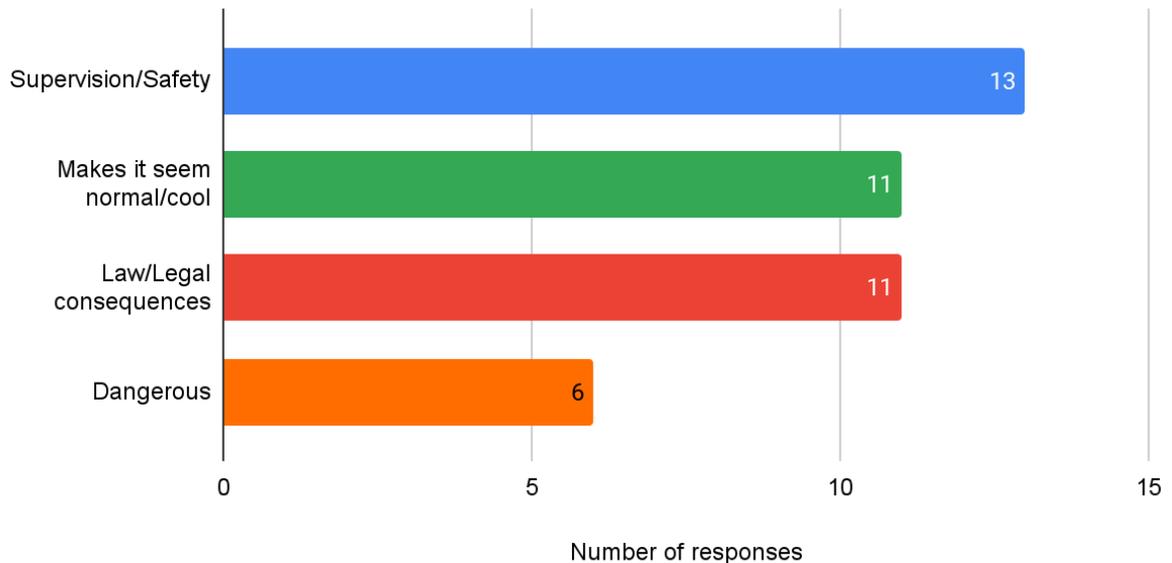


The majority (36 respondents) believe it is a bad idea. 8 respondents think it is a good idea and 6 think it depends. Those 6 thought it depends on the beverage and/or the age of the youth.

“Obviously if the children are like 15 or younger than no its not a good idea. But like 16 or older then yes. They are in the comfort of family and friends that can watch them to ensure that they do not drink too much and can protect them from going too far.”

Follow up question to adults hosting parties with alcoholic beverages present.

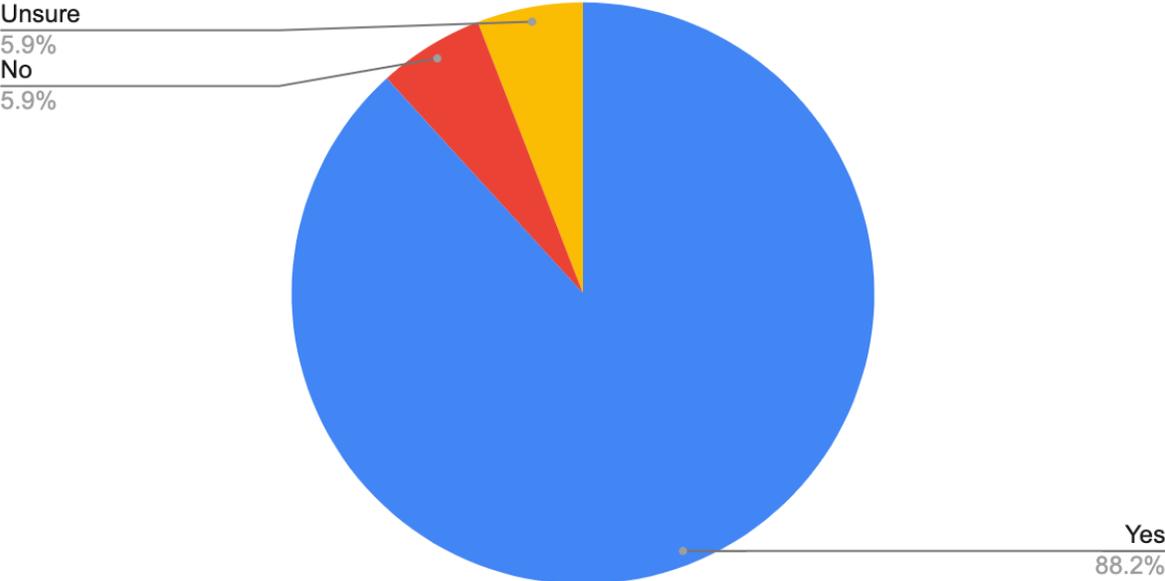
Why or Why not?



Most respondent's reason for thinking this would be a good idea was for supervision and safety. One said, *“I would rather have the kids at a home monitored by adults and not driving.”*

Respondents thought it wasn't a good idea because it is against the law and could result in legal consequences for the adults allowing it. Respondents also thought it makes underage drinking seem normal and cool and sets a bad example. A less common reason respondents thought it was a bad idea was because it is dangerous (drunk driving, sexual assault, binge drinking). One said, *“youth under 25 are not capable of making good decisions yet regarding alcohol use.”*

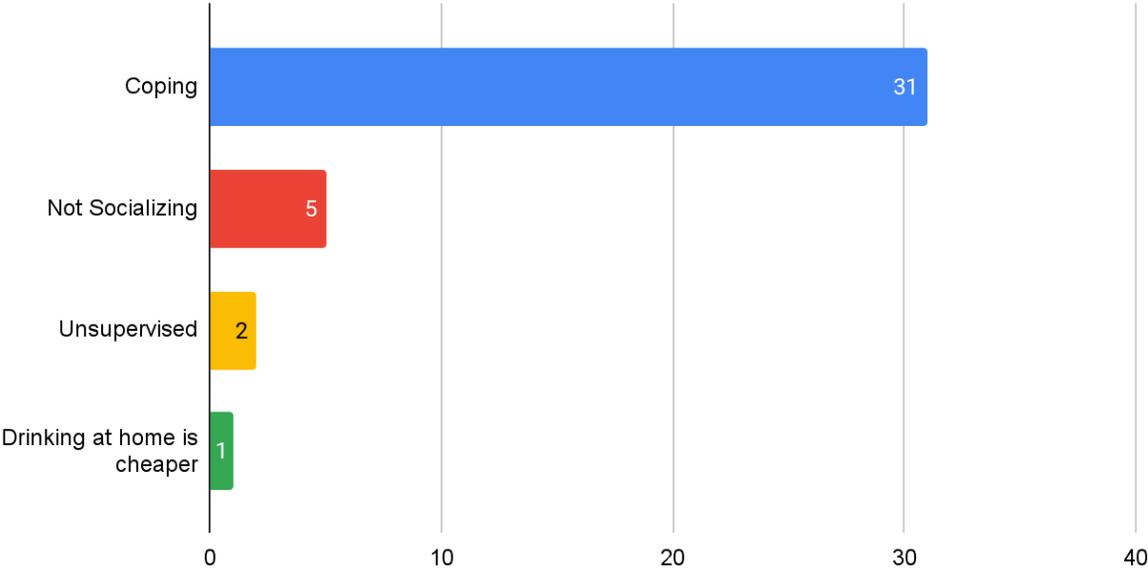
Do you believe there has been an increase in alcohol consumption as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?



45 respondents said they believe there has been an increase in alcohol consumption due to COVID-19. 3 respondents were unsure. 3 respondents said there hasn't been an increase.

Follow up question to why or why not COVID-19 has impacted alcohol consumption.

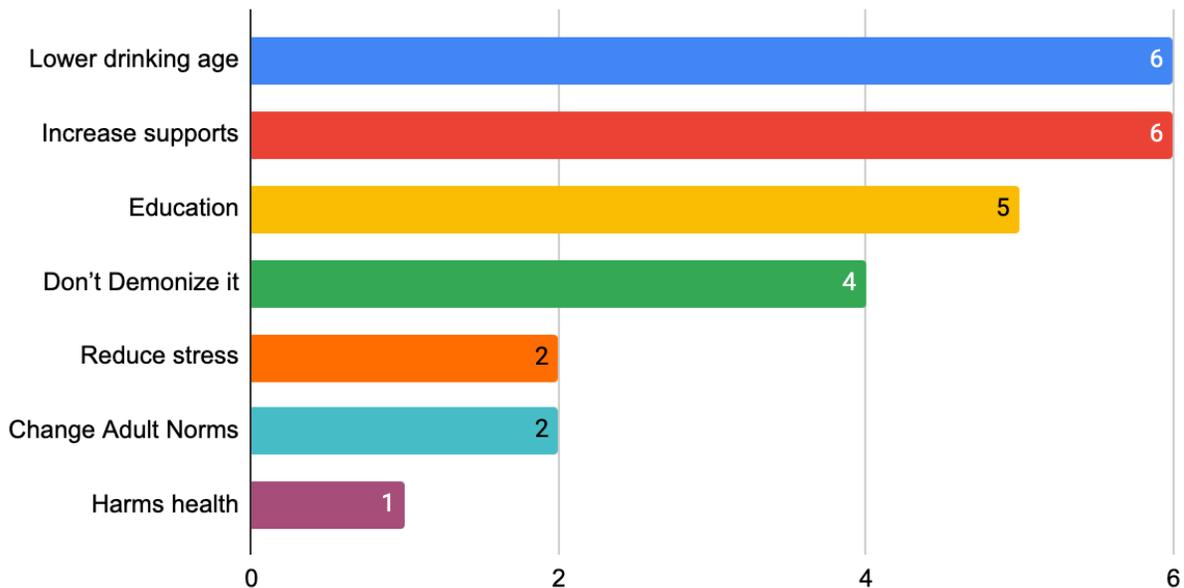
Why or Why not?



31 respondents gave coping with boredom, stress, depression, and trauma from the pandemic as the reason why there has been an increase in drinking. 2 said the increase was partially because youth have been home unsupervised. 1 said they were drinking more at home, because it is cheaper than buying beer when going to breweries pre-pandemic.

Not socializing was given both as a reason people were drinking less and drinking more.

If you have any concerns, ideas, or solutions related to underage drinking, please share



6 respondents supported lowering the drinking age to 18 years old. One respondent suggested, *“Lower the drinking age in a manner similar to current driver’s license tiers - allow beer and wine consumption at 16, with a graduated tier of liquor at 18.”*

6 respondents recommended increasing support, such as providing a system of stamping hands at bars to prevent underage drinking and to *“provide a safe outlet for kids to get a ride and not get in trouble if they’ve been drinking.”*

5 respondents suggested people need more education about alcohol, *“I think parents need to be forthright with their kids to let them know the facts about use, abuse and addiction. Also parents should be informed about the physical and psychological effects of alcohol on young brains and bodies. Having an open dialogue with your kids is important and needs to be sustained each week, month, year until the adolescent is of legal age...and even then keep the dialogue going.”*

4 respondents said not to demonize alcohol. One suggested *“avoid making drinking a forbidden fruit.”* Another said, *“be honest with kids about alcohol and you take away the taboos.”* One

suggested that demonizing it is part of what leads to binge drinking, because kids feel rebellious.

2 said to reduce community stress, including *“promoting better self care and stress relief methods.”*

2 said to change adult norms. *“Young people think alcohol is cool, because that's how adults act. Kids think it makes them more grown if they drink or that its a way to cope with problems, because thats how adults use it. I think kids do what they see adults do.”*

1 said their greatest concern is how alcohol harms the neurodevelopment of youth.