



# SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH

BY TMI STAFF

## *Alarming (But Not Surprising) Connections Revealed in New National Survey*

The latest findings from the [2024 National Survey on Drug Use and Health \(NSDUH\)](#) reveal a troubling but important truth: substance use and mental health challenges often go hand-in-hand, especially among youth and young adults.

IN 2024, MORE  
THAN HALF

**58.3%**

*of Americans aged 12 and older reported using tobacco, alcohol, or illicit drugs in the past month.*

Marijuana remained the most commonly used illicit substance, with 22.3% reporting past-year use, rising to 35% among young adults aged 18 to 25. Opioid misuse affected 7.8 million people, most of whom misused prescription pain relievers. Alarmingly, 48.4 million people aged 12 or older (nearly one in six) had a substance use disorder (SUD) in the past year.

*But the most urgent finding is the powerful link between mental health and substance use.*



*Among adolescents aged 12 to 17 with a major depressive episode (MDE), substance use was dramatically higher than their peers without depression:*

**32.6%**

*used illicit drugs  
(vs. 11.8%)*

**25%**

*used marijuana  
(vs. 7.8%)*

**16.9%**

*vaped or used  
tobacco (vs. 4.7%)*

**6.2%**

*engaged in binge  
drinking (vs. 3.0%)*



*Teens with moderate or severe anxiety  
showed similar trends:*

**25.6%**

*used illicit drugs  
(vs. 10.1%)*

**17.5%**

*used marijuana  
(vs. 6.7%)*

**12.8%**

*vaped or used  
tobacco (vs. 4.3%)*



*The pattern continues into adulthood.*

*Adults aged 18 or older with serious mental illness were significantly more likely to:*

A dark blue circular graphic containing the white text "57.4%".

*Use illicit drugs, compared to those without mental illness (21.2%).*

A green circular graphic containing the white text "9.5%".

*Misuse opioids (compared to 2%)*

A green circular graphic containing the white text "41.4%".

*vape or use tobacco (compared to 20.5%)*

***These findings underscore a reality that The Martinsburg Initiative sees every day: addressing mental health is essential to preventing substance use.***

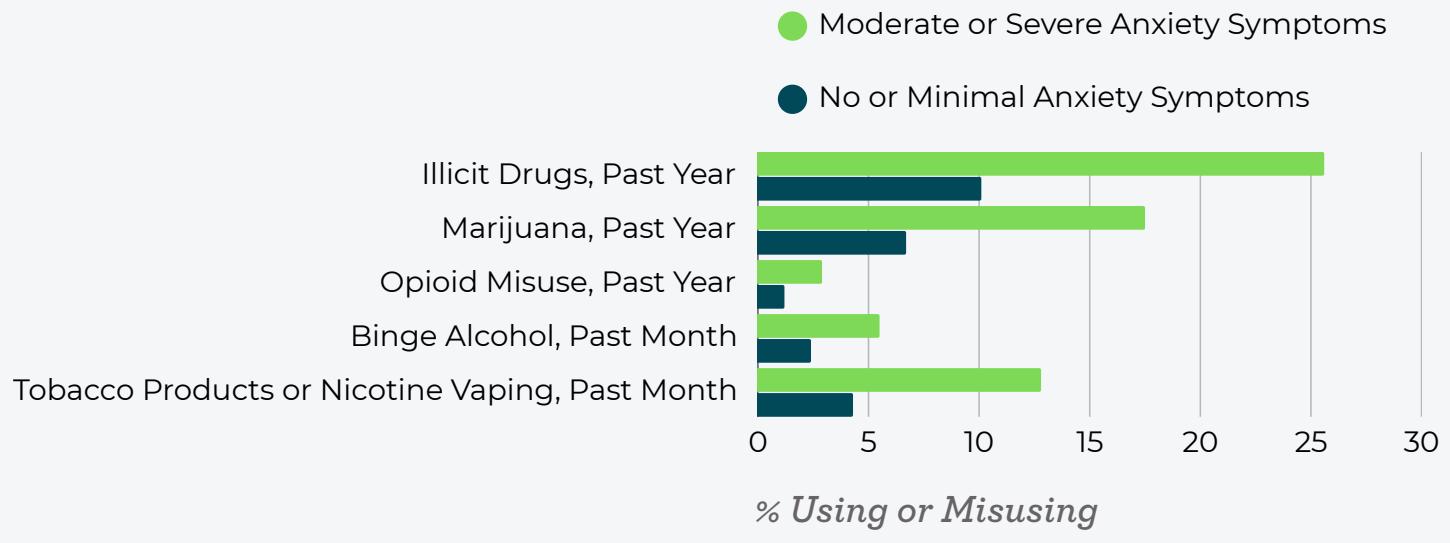
TMI's school- and community-based programs prioritize early intervention, trauma-informed support, and mental wellness. Through mentoring, education, and partnerships with mental health professionals, we're building resilience in youth before substance use begins.



As we continue our work, these national trends confirm what we know locally: to prevent substance use, we must also treat the pain that drives it. Together, let's continue investing in programs that make our community members feel safe, supported, and seen.

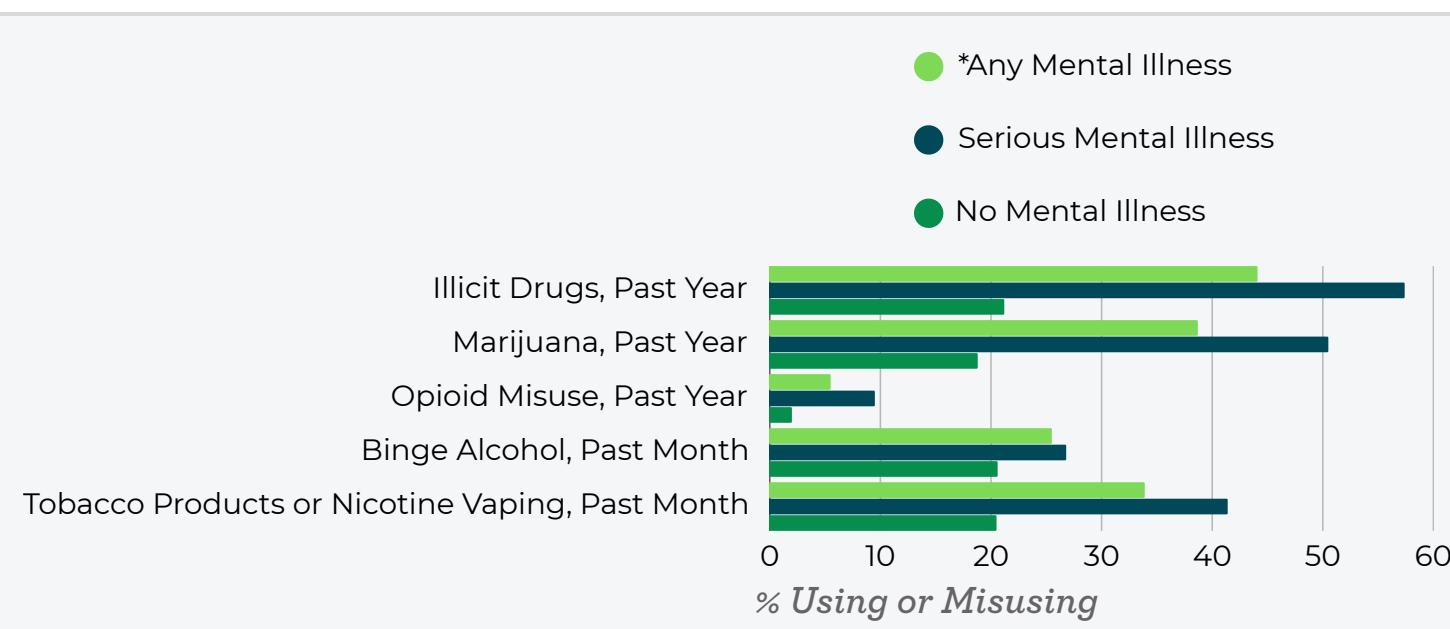
# PAST YEAR OR MONTH SUBSTANCE USE

*Among adolescents aged 12-17, by the severity of anxiety symptoms in the past 2 weeks, 2024*



# PAST YEAR OR MONTH SUBSTANCE USE

*Among adults aged 18+, by level of mental illness, 2024*



*\*with or without serious mental illness*

# PAST YEAR OR MONTH SUBSTANCE USE

*Among adolescents aged 12-17, by past year major depressive episode (MDE) status, 2024*

