Delaware 11th Graders Reporting Exposure to Verbal Domestic Violence and Current Marijuana Use

Research over the past three decades reveals children are not silent witnesses to domestic violence (DV) but the youngest victims. Youth exposed to DV are at higher risk of engaging in a wide array of delinquent behaviors including substance use. With a focus on National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, this DDATAGram highlights Delaware 11th graders’ exposure to DV and marijuana use. The 2017 Delaware School Survey (DSS) asked students to report how often they heard name-calling, threats, or yelling between adults in their home that made them feel bad. As the chart illustrates, students exposed more frequently to this type of abuse were more likely to report heavier marijuana use. For example, 16% of students who witnessed at least one instance of verbal DV monthly reported using marijuana six or more times in the past 30 days, but the percentage of heavier marijuana users drops to 9% among those who were never exposed to verbal DV, or not exposed to verbal DV in the previous year.

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