

The 2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) used multimode data collection, in which respondents completed the survey in person or via the web. Estimates based on multimode data collection in 2021 are not comparable with estimates from the 2020 NSDUH or prior years. Therefore, highlights are presented for the 2021 NSDUH only.

This document presents substance use and mental health estimates by race and ethnicity.¹ For information about how NSDUH collects information on race and ethnicity, please see Appendix A in the *2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH): Methodological Summary and Definitions* report.² Unless otherwise specified, the following estimates apply to NSDUH respondents aged 12 or older.

Tobacco Product Use or Nicotine Vaping

- In 2021, the prevalence of past month tobacco product use or nicotine vaping was higher among American Indian or Alaska Native people (36.1%) compared with White (24.6%), Black or African American (23.6%), Hispanic or Latino (14.9%), or Asian people (9.3%).
- Black or African American (2.2%) or Asian people (2.2%) were less likely than people in most other racial or ethnic groups to have vaped nicotine in the past month. Multiracial (8.9%) or White people (5.8%) were more likely than Hispanic people (3.1%) to have vaped nicotine in the past month.
- Among people aged 12 to 20 in 2021, White (14.5%) or Multiracial people (12.2%) were more likely to have used tobacco products or to have used an e-cigarette or other vaping device to vape nicotine in the past month compared with underage people in most other racial or ethnic groups.

Alcohol Use

- In 2021, White people were more likely than people in all other racial or ethnic groups to be past month alcohol users. More than half of White people (52.2%) were past month alcohol users. Past month alcohol use among people in other racial or ethnic groups ranged from 31.0% among Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander people to 43.2% among Multiracial people.
- An estimated 10.7% of Asian people were past month binge drinkers. This prevalence was lower than the percentages for most other racial or ethnic groups. No other significant differences were found among racial or ethnic groups. Percentages among other groups ranged from 21.2% of American Indian or Alaska Native people to 26.2% of Multiracial people.

¹ A significance level of .01 was used for identifying statistically significant differences in estimates. Statistically significant differences are described using terms such as “higher,” “lower,” “more likely,” or “less likely.”

² Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2022). *2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Methodological summary and definitions*. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2021-methodological-summary-and-definitions>

- In 2021, underage White people aged 12 to 20 were more likely to be past month alcohol users (18.1%) compared with underage Hispanic or Latino (14.5%), Multiracial (13.2%), Black or African American (9.4%), or Asian people (6.4%). Underage White people were also more likely to be past month binge drinkers (10.1%) compared with underage Hispanic or Latino (7.3%), Black or African American (5.5%), or Asian people (2.5%). Underage Asian people were less likely to be past month alcohol users and past month binge drinkers compared with underage people in most other racial or ethnic groups.

Illicit Drug Use

- In 2021, American Indian or Alaska Native (36.1%) or Multiracial people (34.6%) were more likely to have used illicit drugs in the past year compared with Black or African American (24.3%), White (22.5%), Hispanic or Latino (19.4%), or Asian people (11.1%). Asian people were less likely to have used illicit drugs in the past year compared with people in most other racial or ethnic groups.
- American Indian or Alaska Native (35.0%) or Multiracial people (30.7%) were more likely to have used marijuana in the past year compared with Black or African American (21.3%), White (19.5%), Hispanic or Latino (15.8%), or Asian people (8.6%).
- Opioid misuse (heroin use or prescription pain reliever misuse) in the past year did not differ among racial or ethnic groups. Percentages ranged from 2.3% among Asian people to 6.3% among Multiracial people.

Substance Use Disorder³

- American Indian or Alaska Native (27.6%) or Multiracial people (25.9%) were more likely to have a substance use disorder (SUD) in the past year compared with Black or African American (17.2%), White (17.0%), Hispanic or Latino (15.7%), or Asian people (8.0%). Asian people were less likely to have an SUD compared with people in all other racial or ethnic groups.

Mental Health among Youth

- Among adolescents aged 12 to 17 in 2021, 13.8% of Asian adolescents and 14.0% of Black or African American adolescents had a past year major depressive episode (MDE). These percentages were lower than the corresponding percentages of Multiracial (27.2%), Hispanic or Latino (22.2%), or White adolescents (20.7%). A similar pattern of differences among racial or ethnic groups was observed for past year MDE with severe impairment among adolescents.

³ In the 2021 NSDUH, the presence of a substance use disorder (SUD) in the past year was assessed based on criteria specified in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th edition. For more information, please see Section 3.4.3 and the substance-specific SUD definitions in Appendix A of the following reference: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2022). *2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Methodological summary and definitions*. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2021-methodological-summary-and-definitions>

Mental Health among Adults

- Among adults aged 18 or older in 2021, Multiracial adults (34.9%) were more likely to have had any mental illness (AMI) in the past year compared with White (23.9%), Black or African American (21.4%), Hispanic or Latino (20.7%), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (18.1%), or Asian adults (16.4%). The percentage of adults with AMI in the past year was lower among Hispanic or Latino adults than among White adults. The percentage was also lower among Asian adults than among White, Black or African American, or Hispanic or Latino adults.
- Among adults aged 18 or older in 2021, Multiracial adults (8.2%) were more likely to have had serious mental illness (SMI) in the past year compared with Hispanic or Latino (5.1%), Black or African American (4.3%), or Asian adults (2.8%). The percentage of adults with SMI in the past year was lower among Black or African American adults than among White adults (6.1%). The percentage was also lower among Asian adults than among White or Hispanic or Latino adults.

Suicidal Thoughts and Behavior

- In 2021, there were no racial or ethnic differences in serious thoughts of suicide, suicide plans, and suicide attempts among adolescents aged 12 to 17.
- Asian adults aged 18 or older in 2021 were less likely to have had serious thoughts of suicide in the past year compared with adults in most other racial or ethnic groups.
- In 2021, percentages of adults aged 18 or older in different racial or ethnic groups who made a suicide plan in the past year ranged from 0.5% among Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander adults to 2.4% among Multiracial adults. No racial or ethnic differences were found.
- The percentage of adults aged 18 or older in 2021 who attempted suicide in the past year was higher among Hispanic or Latino adults (1.1%) than among White (0.5%) or Asian adults (0.3%). Black or African American adults (0.9%) also were more likely to have attempted suicide in the past year compared with Asian adults.

Substance Use Treatment⁴

- In 2021, the percentage of people who needed substance use treatment in the past year was higher among American Indian or Alaska Native (28.7%) or Multiracial people (25.5%) compared with Black or African American (16.4%), White (15.9%), Hispanic or Latino (15.0%), or Asian people (7.7%). The percentage of people who needed substance use treatment in the past year among Asian people was lower than the percentage among people in all other racial or ethnic groups.

Mental Health Service Use

- In 2021, the percentage of adults aged 18 or older with a past year MDE who received treatment for depression in the past year was lower among Black or African American adults (51.0%) than among White adults (64.0%).

⁴ People were classified as needing substance use treatment if they had an *illicit* drug or alcohol use disorder in the past year or if they received substance use treatment at a specialty facility in the past year.

- In 2021, the percentage of adults with AMI in the past year who received mental health services⁵ was lower among Asian (25.4%), Hispanic or Latino (36.1%), or Black or African American adults (39.4%) than among White (52.4%) or Multiracial adults (52.2%). Asian adults with AMI were less likely to have received mental health services compared with adults in most other racial or ethnic groups.
- The percentage of adults aged 18 or older with SMI in the past year who received mental health services⁵ in the past year did not differ by racial or ethnic group.

⁵ People were asked whether they received any of the following mental health services in the past year: inpatient or outpatient mental health services, prescription medication for a mental health issue, or virtual (i.e., telehealth) services.