

HALF OF KIDS FEEL STRESSED OUT

Columbia University researchers say that nearly half of all American teenagers report experiencing high stress in their lives—the “usual suspects” include academic pressures (56 percent), family problems (13 percent), drama with friends (4 percent), bullying (2 percent), and popularity concerns (2 percent).

It's easy to miss or disregard the everyday pressures kids face—few adults have any significant “taste” of their battlefield. So here's a little sampler:

- Almost a third of teenagers (29 percent) have been left home alone overnight without adult supervision. A similar number (26 percent) are left home alone in the evening for a few hours more than once a week without adult supervision. These kids are more likely to use marijuana than those who aren't left home alone (23 percent vs. 11 percent), drink alcohol (41 percent vs. 21 percent), and smoke cigarettes (20 percent vs. 7 percent).
- Nearly a quarter of all teenagers (22 percent) says at least half of their classmates drink alcohol, and one in five (18 percent) guess that more than half of them use drugs. Almost all high school students (91 percent) know someone at their school who sells marijuana, and a quarter (24 percent) know someone who's illegally selling prescription drugs.
- More than half of all teenagers (57 percent) say their school has security guards or police officers assigned to patrol the hallways full-time—a large number of them (69 percent) believe this “hardball” strategy helps prevent teenage drug-dealers from selling.