

Understanding Your PAYS Data

The PAYS data report provides a **wealth** of data pieces that can be used separately or together. Often, you will want to condense or summarize your data into manageable information that can be easily shared. The keys are to share the *most* important pieces of information in a way that is *easy* to understand. This will get your conversation started. Remember, you can always refer to your full report if you need more detail later.

Remember that no change isn't necessarily bad, it can represent stability. And stability can be worth talking about too!

Consider Your Audience (and choose your data accordingly)!

- **Is your audience interested in:**
 - **Very specific pieces of information**
 - **Example:** Mothers Against Drunk Driving would likely be *most* interested in items on alcohol use, and driving after substance use across all ages.
 - **Overall themes and patterns of behavior**
 - **Example:** School Board would likely be interested in school risk and protective factors, and school climate data across youth in all grades.
 - **A certain age group**
 - **Example:** Parents with youth graduating from 5th grade into middle school may be especially interested in the issues of 6th graders in the area.

Your PAYS data can be represented in many ways. In most cases, you will probably need to do some summarizing before you share it. This will help them focus on your main point, instead of winding up lost in details

The Highs and Lows of Data

- When reviewing your data, look first at the highs and lows for the year. It is sometimes helpful to look at the three highest and three lowest scores. This may help you identify certain patterns...
 - **Are the highs/lows in the same area?**

For example, are your high scoring risk factors and low scoring protective factors all in the same domain, like family?

 - If so, this may suggest focusing efforts on that one domain.
 - **Are they across multiple areas?**
 - If so, are they in complementary domains like community and school? Or, family and peers?

Looking at the 3 highs and lows is not a hard and fast number. It's a place to get started. You may find that it leads you in a certain direction (e.g., 4 of 6 highest risk factors are in the community domain).

- Are they factors that might relate to each other—like community disorganization and family conflict?
- The goal here is to get an overall sense of the data—can anything be grouped together, or be considered similar?

Ch-ch-changes?

- If you have historical PAYS data, take a look at how your highest and lowest risk and protective factors fare this year compared to previous years.
 - Have there been:
 - Increases;
 - Decreases; or
 - No changes?
 - If yes, to any of the above, what does this mean? Is this a good thing or not such a good thing?

Grouping Information...

- There are a lot of data in the PAYS report. In many cases, your audience will be interested in an overall theme or trend. Don't be scared to consolidate your PAYS data into groups **that make sense**.
 - **Risk & Protective Factors**
 - These may group according to domain, or
 - They may group according to factor, like:
 - Prosocial opportunities – in family, school, community
 - Antisocial behavior – in peers and parents
 - **Bullying**
 - PAYS questions on bullying can be put into three categories. These categories are based on **what avenue is used** for the bullying behavior:
 - Physical—this type of bullying is generally direct (e.g., been hit, damaging property, threats), and is often more common among males
 - Relational—this type of bullying is generally indirect (e.g., spreading rumors, telling lies, being left out)
 - Technology—this type of bullying happens through technology (e.g., the internet, Facebook, cell phones)
 - **ATOD Use**
 - Alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana are often have the highest prevalence of use and can be considered “gateway” drugs. It may be useful to highlight them separately, while combining all other types of illicit drugs.
 - Decide if you are interested in current usage (i.e., past 30-days), or markers of experimentation and overall exposure (i.e., ever used).

Comparisons

- Your PAYS report includes averages for Pennsylvania on each item.
- Also, the risk and protective factors can be compared to the “norm” provided either by the national Monitoring the Future study or by Bach Harrison (average of all data they have collected).

Examples of how to use your PAYS data...

This table illustrates the various audiences and ways to share your PAYS data.

Audience	Data	Method
Parents, Community	30-day ATOD use	By grade, gateway drugs vs. other
PTAs	Prosocial opportunities	By grade, change over time
Policymakers/ Funders	Risk & protective factors	Comparisons to state, national norms
Prevention Boards	Addressable risk & protective factors	Highs & lows, change over time
School Administrators	School climate & safety	Comparisons to state, change over time
Youth	Prosocial opportunities, Bullying	By grade, by bullying type
County Officials	Risk & protective factors, Gambling, DUI, other illicit drugs	Youth overall, change over time
Media	ATOD prevalence, lifetime use	Comparisons to state, national norms