

or daughter's disclosure can be referred to a local chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals (www.pflag.org). Adolescents who acknowledge same-gender attractions or relationships are also at risk for violence and harassment from schoolmates, neighbors, and even strangers. Sexual minority adolescents may fear similar uncaring attitudes among health care providers and might avoid disclosing their orientation during health assessments. To provide sensitive, professional care for gay, lesbian, and bisexual adolescents, nurses should be sensitive in their choice of language and be nonjudgmental and caring in their communication.

Use of Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Substances

Experimentation with substances is common among adolescents in the United States. Among 12th graders, 70% used alcohol, 40% smoked cigarettes, and 46% used cannabis in the past month ([Goncy and Mrug, 2013](#)). Many adolescents use these substances because they provide an opportunity to challenge authority, demonstrate autonomy, gain entry into a peer group, or simply to relieve stress. There are many documented consequences of early experimentation with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, such as becoming heavier smokers, lower academic achievement, dropping out of school, and early sexual behavior.

Depression and Suicide

A national survey of 9th- through 12th-grade students found that 34% of boys and 22% of girls reported feeling sad or hopeless ([Eaton, Kann, Kinchen, et al, 2012](#)) due to real or perceived stress ([Fig. 15-9](#) and [Box 15-4](#)). Nearly 16% of high school students reported seriously considering suicide during the past year, with female students being more likely than male students to consider a suicide attempt ([Eaton, Kann, Kinchen, et al, 2012](#)).