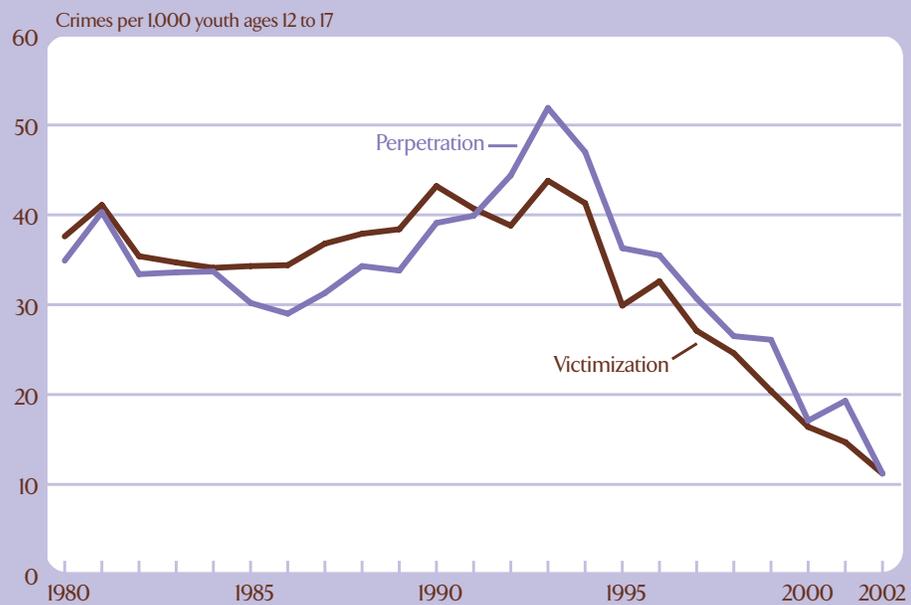


Behavioral and social environment indicators

Young people's participation in illegal or high-risk behaviors, such as smoking, drinking alcohol, using illicit drugs, and engaging in violent crimes, has severe long-term consequences for our Nation's youth.

A striking decline in the level of violence affecting young people is one of the most favorable trends in recent years. Dramatic declines have been observed in both serious violent crime victimization of youth and offending (perpetration) by youth. After peaking in 1993, serious violent crime victimization rates dropped 74 percent: from 44 crimes per 1,000 youth ages 12 to 17 in 1993 to 11 crimes in 2002 (Figure 7). Likewise, since 1993, serious violent crime offending rates dropped 78 percent: from 52 crimes per 1,000 youth in 1993 to 11 crimes in 2002.

FIGURE 7 Serious violent crime victimization and perpetration rates for youth ages 12 to 17, 1980-2002



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. National Crime Victimization Survey. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reporting Program, Supplementary Homicide Reports.

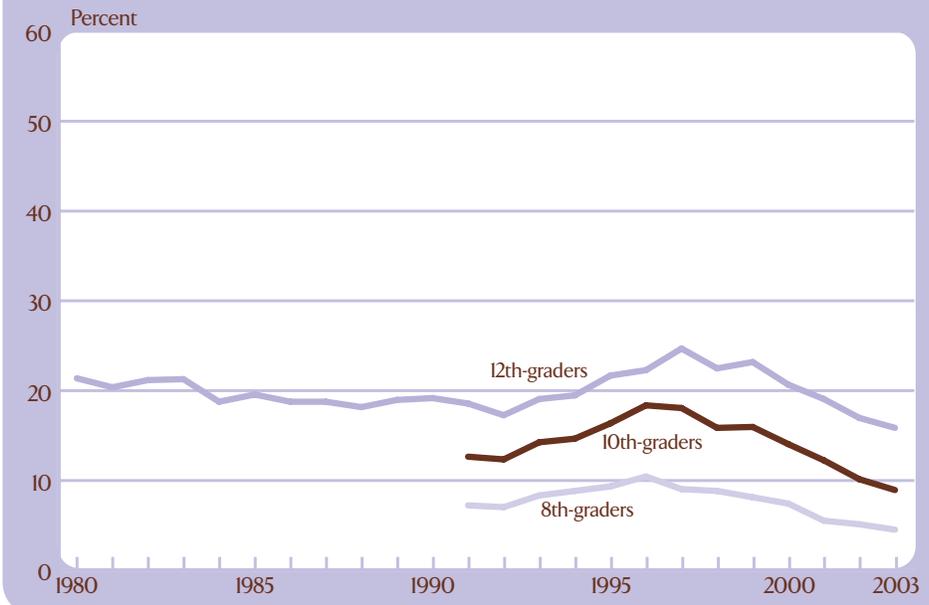
In 2002, the race of youth did not affect their likelihood of being victimized. This represents a change in victimization patterns since 1993, when Black youth were more likely to be the victims of serious violent crimes than were White youth. In 1993, the serious crime victimization rate for Black youth was 72 crimes per 1,000 compared to 40 crimes per 1,000 White youth. By 2002, Black youth were as likely to be the victims of serious violent crime as were White youth. The 2002 serious crime victimization rate for Black youth was 17 crimes per 1,000 versus 10 crimes per 1,000 White youth.

According to 2002 victims' reports, 17 percent of all serious violent crimes involved a juvenile offender. Victims' reports from 2002 also indicate that more than one offender was involved in 57 percent of all the serious violent crimes involving youth offenders.

Prevention of cigarette smoking among adolescents is a national public health priority. In 2003, 5 percent of 8th-graders, 9 percent of 10th-graders, and 16 percent of 12th-graders reported that they smoked cigarettes daily in the past 30 days (Figure 8). These are the lowest rates since the survey began (1975 for 12th-graders and 1991 for 8th- and 10th-graders). However, from 2002 to 2003, daily use of cigarettes did not decline significantly for students in any grade. As in the past, male and female students continue to have similar rates of daily smoking, and White students continue to smoke at a higher rate than either Black or Hispanic students.

FIGURE 8

Percentage of students who reported smoking cigarettes daily in the previous 30 days by school grade, 1980-2003



SOURCE: National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Drug Abuse. Monitoring the Future Survey.

Illicit drug use over the past 30 days did not decrease significantly from 2002 to 2003 for students in any grade. Nonetheless, in 2003, illicit drug use was at its lowest point since 1993 among 8th-graders (10 percent), since 1994 among 10th-graders (20 percent), and since 1995 among 12th-graders (24 percent).

From 2002 to 2003, heavy drinking remained steady across all age groups: 12 percent of 8th-graders, 22 percent of 10th-graders, and 28 percent of 12th-graders consumed 5 or more drinks in a row at least once in the past two weeks in 2003. The pattern of illicit drug use and heavy drinking by race and ethnicity is similar: both are much more prevalent among White and Hispanic secondary school students than among their Black counterparts.

