Eighth graders’ perceived risk of using inhalants, LSD, or ecstasy continues to decline, according to data from the 2009 Monitoring the Future survey. The percentage of 8th graders perceiving a great risk from using ecstasy once or twice decreased from 43% in 2004 to 26% in 2009. The perception of harm from inhalant use began to decline in this population in 2001 (from 46% to 34% in 2008 and 2009). The most substantial decline, however, has occurred in the perceived risk of LSD use. In 1993, 42% of 8th grade students in the U.S. perceived a great risk in using LSD once or twice. In 2009, half as many students (21%) reported that using LSD once or twice posed a great risk.

According to lead MTF researcher Lloyd Johnston, this decline removes “a major obstacle to experimentation. We have seen LSD make a comeback before, clearly it could happen again” (p. 2).

NOTE: Data on the perceived risk of LSD use began being collected in 1993; ecstasy in 2001.