



2016 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey

Data Brief: Mental Health

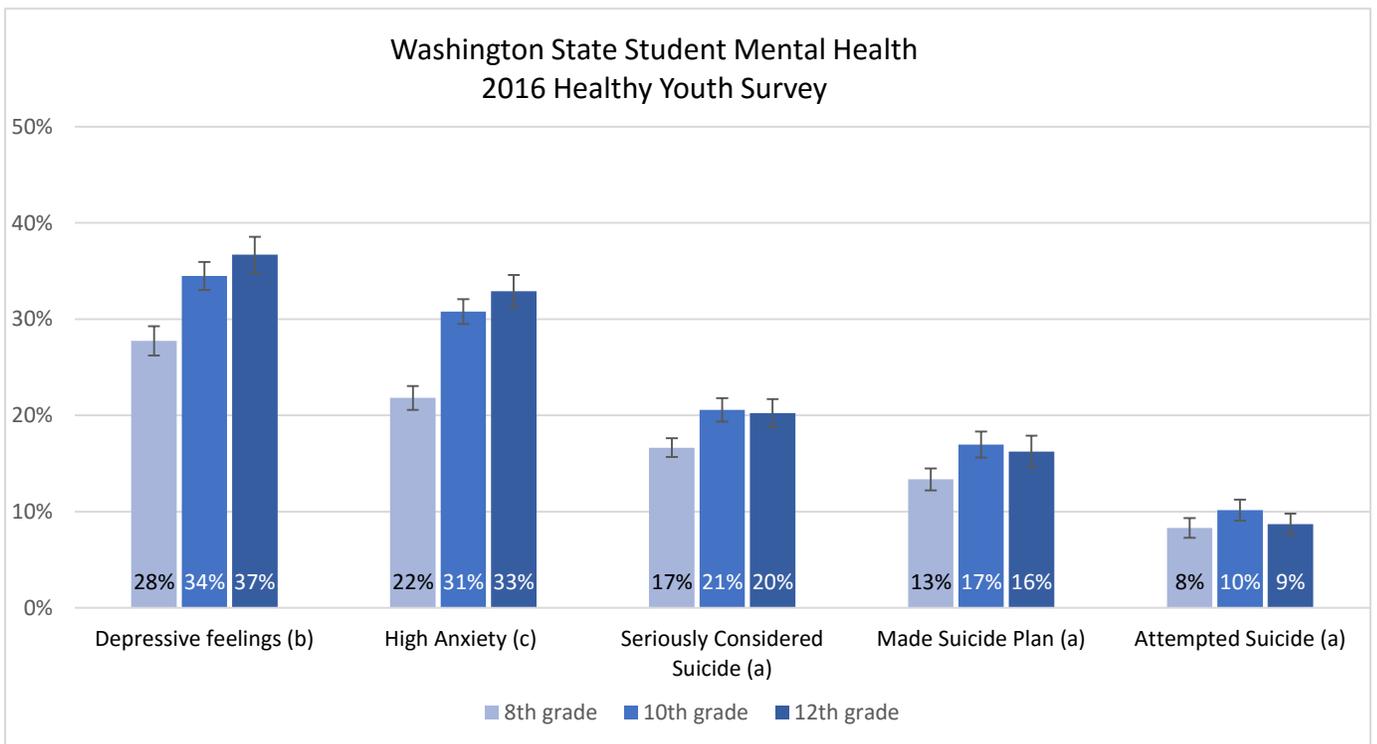
The Washington State Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) is a crucial source of information on adolescent health, behaviors, and perceptions. In fall 2016, over 230,000 students participated in this biennial statewide school-based survey. Over 1,000 schools administered the survey, representing all 39 Washington counties and 236 school districts. To explore Healthy Youth Survey results or learn more about the survey, visit www.askHYS.net.

About one in 10 Washington high school students report having attempted suicide in the past year.

- Rates of reported suicide attempts were steady between 2014 and 2016. In 2016:
 - 8 percent of 8th graders (about 6,490 students)
 - 10 percent of 10th graders (about 8,370 students)
 - 9 percent of 12th graders (about 8,150 students)
- This means that in a typical-sized high school classroom (about 29 students), chances are two or three students have attempted suicide in the past year.

About one in five high school students seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months.

- The percentage considering suicide rose substantially over the past decade, changing from 11 to 17 percent of 8th graders, 15 to 21 percent of 10th graders, and 12 to 20 percent of 12th graders between 2006 and 2016.



Technical Note: (a) - during the past 12 months, (b) - for at least two weeks in a row during the past 12 months, (c) - over the last two weeks (GAD-2 scale).

Teen anxiety is on the rise and about one in three 12th graders are experiencing high levels of anxiety.

- From 2014 to 2016, the percentage experiencing a high level of anxiety increased among 8th (19 to 22) and 12th graders (27 to 33), while 10th graders held steady (31% in 2016).
- HYS began tracking anxiety in 2014 with a scale that has been shown to be a good indicator of experiencing high levels of anxiety (GAD-2). It includes questions about feeling anxious, nervous, or over the edge, and not being able to stop or control worrying.

Most high schoolers report having support with and education about mental health and suicide, but some teens do not believe they have any support when experiencing challenges.

- Among 10th graders who ever feel sad or hopeless, 63 percent say there are adults to whom they can turn.
- Friends/peers, parents/guardians, and siblings/cousins are the most common people 10th graders say they turn to when depressed. However, about 11 percent of those who have felt sad or hopeless for at least two weeks in a row say they don't have anyone they would talk to.
- Over half of 10th (54%) and 12th graders (51%) and somewhat fewer 8th graders (38%) say they saw or heard info at school about suicide warning signs and how to get help for themselves or a friend.

Some groups of students have higher rates of considering and attempting suicide. Among 10th graders in 2016:

- Almost double the percentage of girls thought about (26%) and attempted (13%) suicide in the past year than boys (14% and 7%, respectively). However, Washington State vital statistics data shows more teenage boys die from suicide than girls.
- High rates of suicidal thoughts and attempts are also found among American Indian or Alaskan Native students (29% considering and 16% attempting) and multiracial students (30% and 16%, respectively).
- Among the 77 percent of state-sample schools administering the optional survey questions, GLBQ students had substantially higher rates than those who identified as straight/heterosexual:
 - Gay/Lesbian: 38 percent considering and 25 percent attempting
 - Bisexual: 51 percent considering and 25 percent attempting
 - Unsure: 31 percent considering and 15 percent attempting
 - Straight/Heterosexual: 16 percent considering and 8 percent attempting
 - Note that because not all schools administered this question, these results may not be representative of students across Washington State.

Efforts to address bullying may be starting to pay off, but too many students are still being bullied.

- From 2014 to 2016, the percentage of 10th graders saying they had ever been bullied decreased slightly, from 23 to 21 percent.
- However, about one in 20 students say they are being bullied at least once a week, so in an average classroom, chances are at least one student is dealing with regular bullying.

State, local, and community efforts are crucial for supporting youth mental health.

- See the Mental Health Resource Guide at <http://www.askhys.net/Home/Press>.