

about

# TEENAGE DEPRESSION & SUICIDE IN FAIRFAX COUNTY

what you need to know ...

Fairfax County Youth Survey defines depression as feeling so sad or hopeless almost everyday for weeks or more that the student stopped doing some usual activities. Overall, 31% of students responded that they felt depressed in the past year.

Students were also asked if they had considered attempting suicide or actually attempted suicide in the past year.

A higher percentage of female students reported symptoms of depression, considering suicide, and actually attempting suicide than male students.

Tenth-grade students had the highest reported depressive symptoms as compared to eighth and twelfth graders and compared to their peers nationally.

Similar to national trends, races/ethnicities other than white are more likely to report feeling depressed and considering suicide.

Reported rates of depression and considering suicide have decreased for students since 2001.

Attempted suicide has decreased since 2005 when comparable data are available.



Fairfax County youth self-reported mental health behaviors

<b>31%</b> of students reported depression	<b>Females reporting depression: 35%</b>
<b>15%</b> of students reported considering suicide	<b>4%</b> of students reported attempting suicide
	<b>3%</b> decrease since 2001 in students reporting depression

2008 Fairfax County Youth Survey Report

## what can you do?

### if your teen shows signs of ...

- Sadness or hopelessness.
- \* **Irritability, anger, or hostility.**
- Tearfulness or frequent crying.
- \* **Withdrawal from friends and family or changing "crowds" altogether.**
- Loss of interest in activities; Difficulty concentrating.
- \* **Unexplained aches and pains.**
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits.
- Restlessness and agitation.
- \* **Extreme sensitivity to criticism and feelings of worthlessness and guilt.**
- Lack of enthusiasm and motivation.
- Fatigue or lack of energy.
- Thoughts of death or suicide.

**\* These signs of depression are even more common in teenagers than in their adult counterparts.**

Source: [www.helpguide.org](http://www.helpguide.org)

### if you are concerned ...

- Talk to your teen about depression and what you've been observing.
- Offer support and let them know you are there for them.
- Be gentle, but persistent. Don't give up.
- Listen without lecturing, avoid giving unsolicited advice or ultimatums.
- Validate their feelings, acknowledge their pain and sadness.
- Talk to a school psychologist, counselor or social worker to discuss the signs.
- Seek professional help from your family doctor for a depression screening.
- If there are no health problems, ask your doctor for a referral to a psychologist or psychiatrist.
- Discuss treatment options.



## who can help?

Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB)  
24-Hour CSB Emergency Services  
Phone: 703-573-5679 | TTY: 703-207-7737

Fairfax County Public Schools Department of Intervention and Prevention  
(703) 423-4020

Crisislink Suicide Prevention Hotline: (703) 527-4077

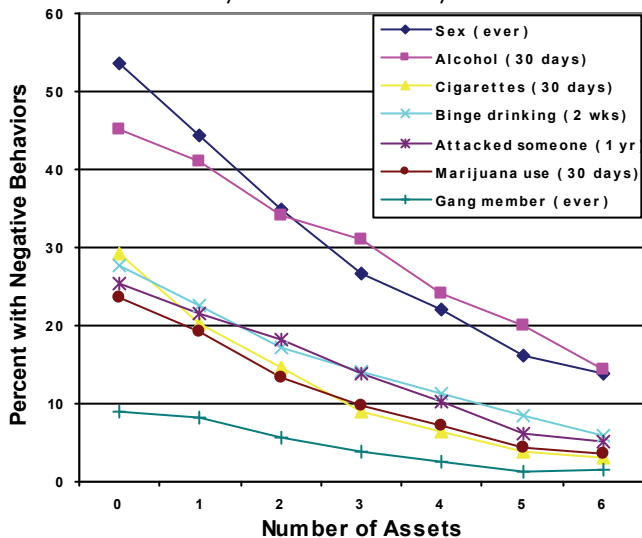
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-TALK (8255)



# THREE TO SUCCEED

## Thriving in Fairfax

Fairfax County 2008 Youth Survey



The Three to Succeed concept is based on the youth survey analysis that shows how just having three assets (or strengths) dramatically reduces risk behaviors and promotes thriving youth.

Assets are strengths in young people, their families, schools and communities that help them thrive in health, in school

- Assets**
- Good grades
  - Involved in decision-making
  - Adults in my neighborhood to talk to
  - Parents notice when doing a good job
  - Involved in extracurricular activities
  - Involved in community service

and daily life, and in a safe environment. The more assets an individual has in their lives, the fewer risk behaviors are reported.

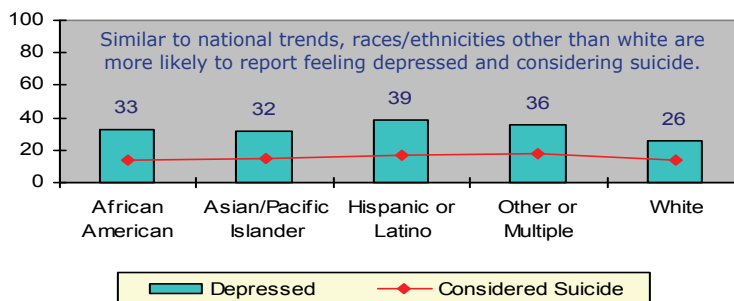
Young people in Fairfax County report positive influences from their communities, families, schools, and friends demonstrating the benefits of everyone taking a role in ensuring that EVERYONE'S CHILDREN are thriving in Fairfax.

## TEENAGE DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE

Fairfax County 2008 Youth Survey Data

	National YRBS*	Fairfax Countywide	8th Grade	10th Grade	12th Grade	Female	Male
Depression	29%	<b>31%</b>	29%	<b>32%</b>	31%	<b>35%</b>	26%
Considered Suicide	15%	15%	14%	<b>17%</b>	12%	<b>18%</b>	11%
Attempted Suicide	<b>7%</b>	4%	3%	<b>4%</b>	3%	<b>5%</b>	2%

The Fairfax County Youth Survey was administered in the spring semester of 2008 to a randomly drawn, statistically valid sample of students. National comparisons are made to the \*Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) administered by the Center for Disease Control (CDC).



### web sites for more information

Fairfax County's Prevention System (*links to Youth Survey*)  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dsm/prevention](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dsm/prevention)

Unified Prevention Coalition of Fairfax County Public Schools  
[www.unifiedpreventioncoalition.org](http://www.unifiedpreventioncoalition.org)

Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Stop A Suicide Today  
<http://www.stopasuicide.org>

[www.helpguide.org](http://www.helpguide.org)

National Alliance on Mental Illness  
[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)



A publication of Fairfax County, Va., and Fairfax County Public Schools

### related factors

#### Fairfax County Youth who are depressed are ...

- More likely to have used drugs or alcohol.
- More likely to be sexually active.
- More likely to skip school.
- Less likely to seek parental support for problems.

