

YOUTH SURVEY

FAIRFAX COUNTY

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE in Fairfax County

Self-reported by 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students on the Fairfax County Youth Survey

5%

Percentage point decrease since 2001 in students reporting depressive symptoms



15%

of students reported considering suicide



35%

of females reported depressive symptoms



27%

of students reported depressive symptoms



6%

of students reported attempting suicide



36%

of students reported high levels of stress



What You Need to Know

The Fairfax County Youth Survey defines depressive symptoms as feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more that the student stopped doing some usual activities. Overall, 27% of students report that they experienced depressive symptoms in the past year.

Rates of depressive symptoms increased with grade level. Sixth-graders report

depressive symptoms at 22%, compared to 31% of 12th graders.

Students also report a lot of stress in their lives; 36% reported a high level of stress on a daily basis.

Rates of depressive symptoms and high stress are significantly higher for students who report past 30-day substance use than

for those who have not used drugs or alcohol in the past month.

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, high stress, considering suicide, and actually attempting suicide than male students.

What Can You Do?

KNOW THE SIGNS OF DEPRESSION AND SUICIDAL THOUGHT

- ▶ Talking about wanting to die, be dead, or about suicide, or are they cutting or burning themselves?
- ▶ Feeling like things may never get better, seeming like they are in terrible emotional pain (like something is wrong deep inside but they can't make it go away), or they are struggling to deal with a big loss in their life?
- ▶ Or is your gut telling you to be worried because they have withdrawn from everyone and everything, have become more anxious or on edge, seem unusually angry, or just don't seem normal to you?

IF YOU ARE CONCERNED, SEEK HELP FOR YOUR CHILD

- ▶ Ask if they are ok or if they are having thoughts of suicide.
- ▶ Express your concern about what you are observing in their behavior.
- ▶ Listen attentively and non-judgmentally.
- ▶ Reflect on what they share and let them know they have been heard.
- ▶ Tell them they are not alone.
- ▶ Let them know there are treatments available that can help.
- ▶ Guide them to professional help.

From www.youthsuicidewarningsigns.org

WHO CAN HELP?

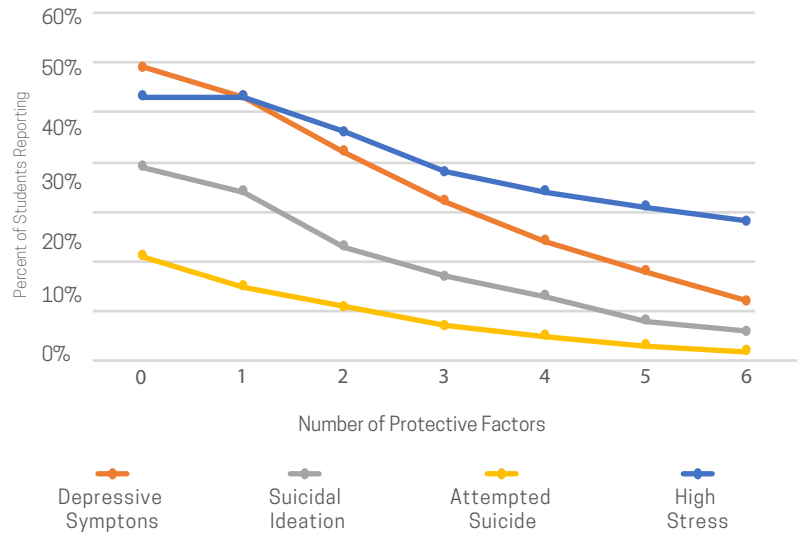
- ▶ **FAIRFAX-FALLS CHURCH COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD (CSB)**
<http://bit.ly/FairfaxCSB>
Entry & Referral 703-383-8500, TTY 711
24-Hour Emergency Services 703-573-5679, TTY 711
- ▶ Your child's school social worker, psychologist, or counselor
- ▶ **PRS CRISISLINK 24-HOUR HOTLINE**
Call 703-527-4077 or text CONNECT to 855-11
- ▶ **NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE**
800-273-TALK (8255)

3 THREE to SUCCEED

The Factors That Matter

Data from the Youth Survey reinforces decades of research that shows that when youth have protective factors (also known as assets) in their lives, they do better in lots of different areas. **Having just three protective factors dramatically reduces the likelihood that youth will engage in risky behaviors.** The Youth Survey shows that every protective factor makes a difference.

Young people in Fairfax County report positive influences from the people and opportunities in their lives. Take action to be an asset in a young person's life and help to build a stronger, more positive community that benefits ALL children and youth.



Protective Factors

Having high personal integrity
Having community adults to talk to
Performing community service

Participating in extracurricular activities
Having teachers recognize good work
Having parents available for help

Teenage Mental Health

	NATIONAL COMPARISON*		FAIRFAX COUNTY YOUTH SURVEY					
	10 TH GRADE	12 TH GRADE	COUNTY WIDE	8 TH GRADE	10 TH GRADE	12 TH GRADE	MALE	FEMALE
DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS	33%	31%	27%	23%	28%	31%	20%	35%
HIGH STRESS	N/A	N/A	36%	25%	38%	46%	27%	46%
CONSIDERED SUICIDE	17%	17%	15%	13%	15%	16%	10%	18%
ATTEMPTED SUICIDE	8.6%	5.8%	5.9%	6.1%	5.6%	5.9%	4.0%	7.6%

*National comparisons are from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to 9th-12th grade students in 2017. Data listed for YRBS are for comparable grades 10 and 12.

WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fairfax County Youth Survey
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey

Fairfax County Prevention System
<http://bit.ly/FairfaxPrevention>

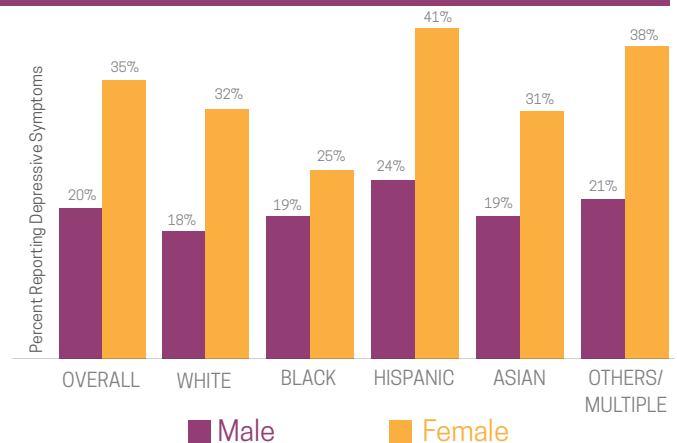
Suicide Prevention Coalition of Northern Virginia
www.suicidepreventionva.org

Suicide Prevention Lifeline
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
www.afsp.org

Josh Anderson Foundation
www.joshandersonfoundation.org

A Closer Look at Depression



Related Factors

Fairfax County Youth who experienced depressive symptoms are:

- More likely to consider and attempt suicide.
- More likely to have used drugs or alcohol.
- More likely to be sexually active.
- More likely to skip school.
- Less likely to agree they could ask their parents for support with their problems

The Fairfax County Youth Survey was administered in the fall 2017.



Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. For information, call 703-324-4600, TTY 711.



A Fairfax County, Va., publication
September 2018