


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. Data from the Sixth Grade Youth Survey is reported separately and not included in totals.

 **4** Percentage point increase since 2015 in students reporting depressive symptoms

14% of students reported considering suicide



38% of females reported depressive symptoms



6% of students reported attempting suicide



36% of students reported high levels of stress



30% of students reported depressive symptoms



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, 30% 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 25%, compared to 34% of 12th graders.

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

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 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- ▶ Or is your gut telling you to be worried because they have withdrawn from everyone and everything, have become more anxious or on edge, seem unusually angry, or just don't seem normal to you?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.

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)

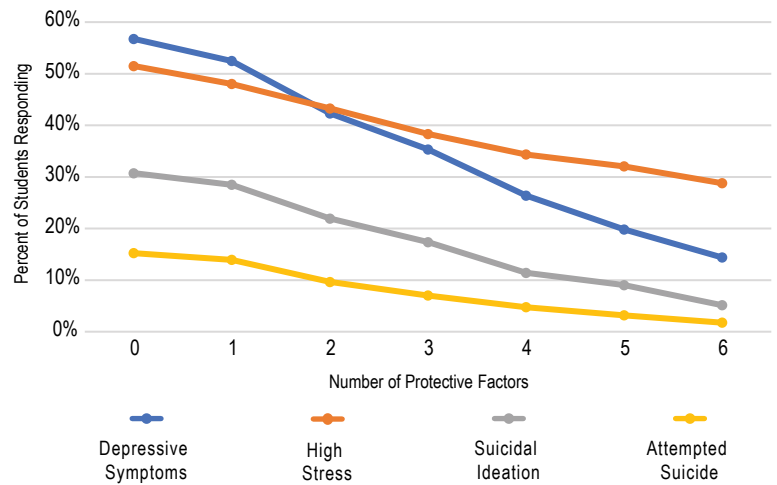
From www.youthsuicidewarningsigns.org

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

- Accepting responsibility for one's actions
- 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					
	10TH GRADE	12TH GRADE	COUNTY WIDE	8TH GRADE	10TH GRADE	12TH GRADE	MALE	FEMALE
DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS	37%	39%	30%	26%	30%	34%	21%	38%
HIGH STRESS	N/A	N/A	36%	25%	39%	46%	27%	45%
CONSIDERED SUICIDE	19%	20%	14%	14%	15%	15%	10%	18%
ATTEMPTED SUICIDE	8.8%	8.5%	6.0%	6.6%	6.1%	5.2%	4.1%	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 2019. 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>

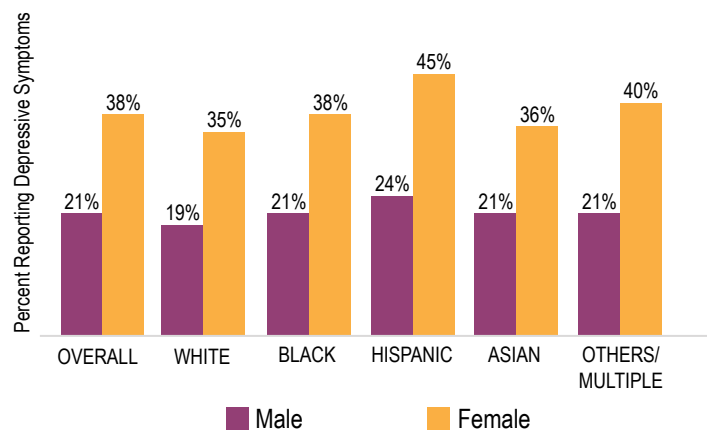
Suicide Prevention Coalition of Northern Virginia
www.suicidepreventionnva.org

Suicide Prevention Lifeline
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
www.afsp.org

Our Minds Matter
ourmindsmatter.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 of 2019.



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.



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