

# VIOLENCE & DEPRESSION AMONG VIRGINIA MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

## RESULTS FROM THE VIRGINIA YOUTH SURVEY – 2015

### INTRODUCTION

Suicide is the third leading cause of death for youth between the ages of 10 and 24.<sup>1</sup> Complex peer, family, and romantic relationships, mental health concerns, and school stressors all impact suicide-related behaviors.<sup>2</sup> Suicidal youth are often overwhelmed with feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, both of which can be brought on by bullying.<sup>2</sup> Being bullied increases the chances youth will engage in suicide-related behaviors.<sup>2</sup> Bullying can also result in physical injuries, social and emotional difficulties, and academic problems.<sup>4</sup>

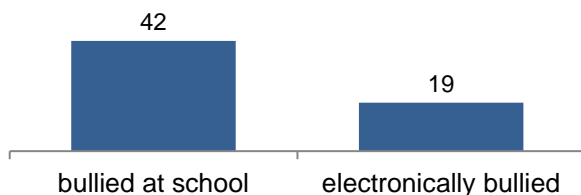
### RESPONDENTS

A total of 2246 Virginia middle school students took the survey, most of whom (90%) were between the ages of 11 and 13 years old. Males (51%) and females (49%), as well as student grade levels were evenly distributed.

### SUMMARY

#### Bullying

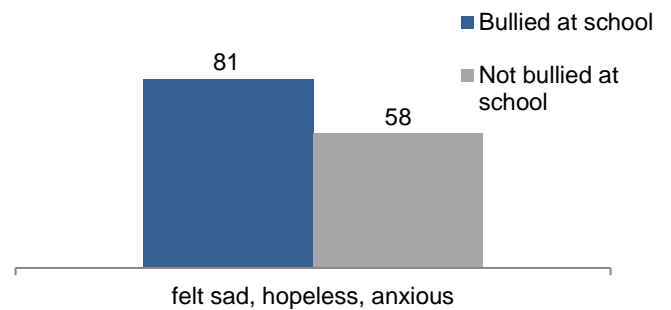
- Females were more likely than males to be bullied at school (1.6 times as likely) and electronically bullied (1.8 times as likely).
- Forty-two percent of students were bullied at school. Nineteen percent of students were electronically bullied (fig. 1).



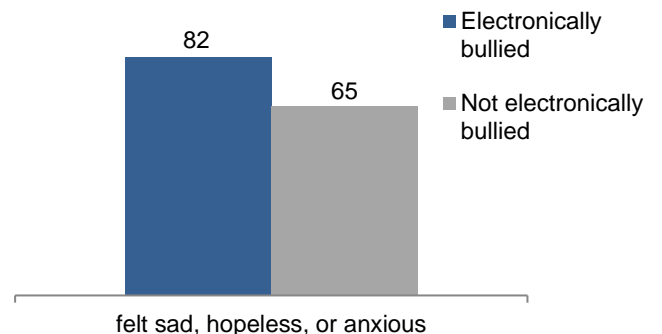
**Figure 1:** Percentage of students who were bullied at school or electronically.

#### Sadness, Hopelessness, and Anxiety

- Sixty-eight percent of students had ever felt sad, hopeless, or anxious.
- Students were less likely to have ever felt sad, hopeless, or anxious if they participated on a sports team (0.7 times as likely) or felt safe and secure in school (0.6 times as likely).
- Students were more likely to have ever felt sad, hopeless, or anxious if they were bullied at school (3 times as likely; fig. 2) or were electronically bullied (2.5 times as likely; fig. 3).



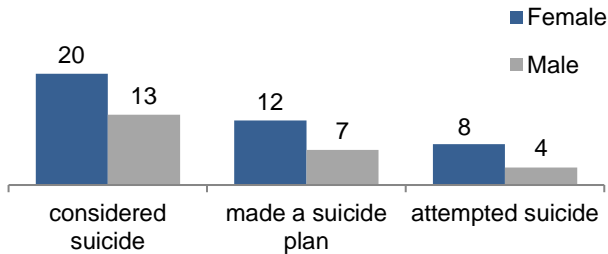
**Figure 2:** Percentage of students who ever felt sad, hopeless, or anxious by whether they were bullied at school.



**Figure 3:** Percentage of students who ever felt sad, hopeless, or anxious by whether they were electronically bullied.

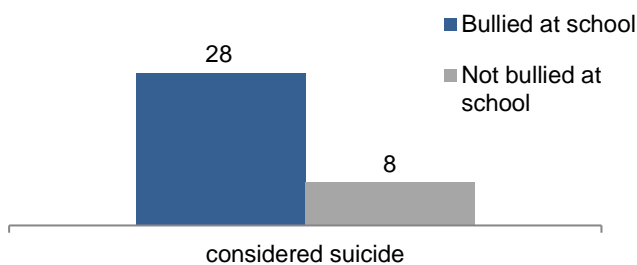
**Suicide and Self-Harm**

- Females were more likely than males to consider suicide (1.7 times as likely), make a suicide plan (1.9 times as likely), and attempt suicide (2.2 times as likely) (fig. 4).

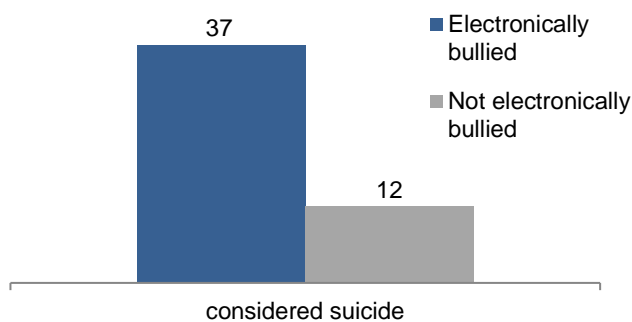


**Figure 4:** Percentage of students engaging in suicide-related behaviors by sex.

- Students were more likely to consider suicide if they were bullied at school (4.2 times as likely; fig. 5) or were electronically bullied (4.3 times as likely; fig. 6)



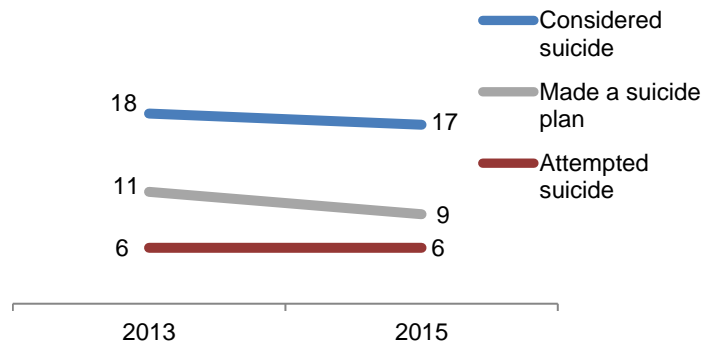
**Figure 5:** Percentage of students who considered suicide by whether they were bullied at school.



**Figure 6:** Percentage of students who considered suicide by whether they were electronically bullied.

**Suicide-Related Behaviors, 2013 and 2015**

Between 2013 and 2015, the percentage of students who considered suicide and made a suicide plan slightly decreased while the percentage of students that attempted suicide remained the same (fig. 5).



**Figure 7:** Percentage of students engaging in suicide-related behaviors, 2013 and 2015.

**Resources**

- Sixteen percent of students did not have an adult or teacher at school with whom they could talk.
- Students were more likely to get the kind of help they needed if they had a teacher or other adult at school (2.3 times as likely), felt safe and secure at school (2.1 times as likely), participated on a sports team (1.8 times as likely), or volunteered in the community (1.4 times as likely).

**MORE INFORMATION**

- [https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/youth\\_suicide.html](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/youth_suicide.html)
- <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying-suicide-translation-final-a.pdf>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/bullyinresearch/>

For more information, please visit <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/virginia-youth-survey/> or contact [VYSrequest@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:VYSrequest@vdh.virginia.gov)