

INJURY AND VIOLENCE AMONG VIRGINIA MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

RESULTS FROM THE VIRGINIA YOUTH SURVEY – 2015

INTRODUCTION

During adolescence, youth begin to spend more time without adult supervision, gain more independence, and are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors making them particularly vulnerable to injury and violence.¹ Adolescents and young adults maintain the highest rates of fatal motor vehicle crash involvement.¹ Youth violence is the third leading cause of death for people between the ages of 15 and 24.² Adolescents can be victims, offenders, and/or witnesses to violence, which impacts their own physical, emotional, and mental health as well as that of their communities.²

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

Vehicle Safety

- Sixty-nine percent of students reported always wearing a seatbelt.
- Fourteen percent of students rode with a driver who had been drinking.

School & Neighborhood Safety

- Twelve percent of students never or rarely felt safe at school. Eight percent of students never or rarely felt safe in their neighborhood.
- Forty-two percent of students had been bullied at school. Nineteen percent of students had been electronically bullied.
- Students who had at least one teacher or other adult at school to talk to if they had a problem were more likely to feel safe and secure at school (2.6 times as likely) (fig. 1).

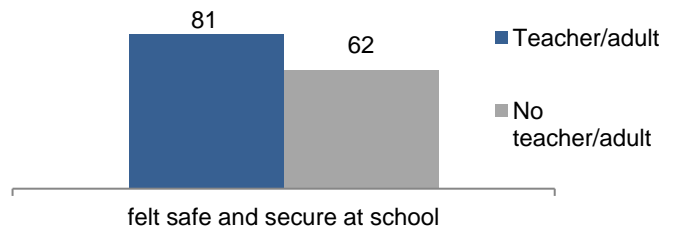


Figure 1: Percentage of students who felt safe and secure at school by whether they had a teacher or other adult at school to talk to if they had a problem.

- Students who felt safe and secure at school were less likely to have skipped school at least once during the previous 12 months (0.5 times as likely) (fig. 2).

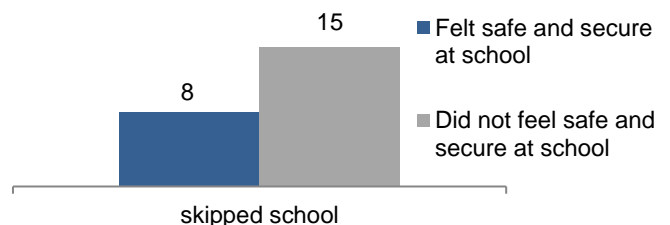


Figure 2: Percentage of students who skipped school by whether they felt safe and secure at school

Weapon Carrying

- Twenty-seven percent of students had carried a weapon.
- Students were more likely to carry a weapon if they were bullied at school (1.1 times as likely).
- Students were more likely to carry a weapon if they were electronically bullied (1.2 times as likely) (fig. 3).

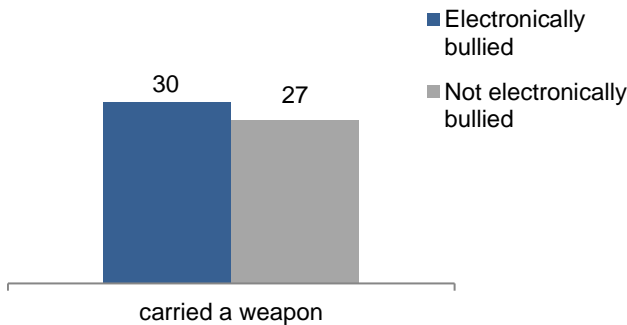


Figure 3: Percentage of students who carried a weapon, by whether they were electronically bullied.

- Students were less likely to carry a weapon if they felt safe and secure at school (0.6 times as likely) (fig. 4).

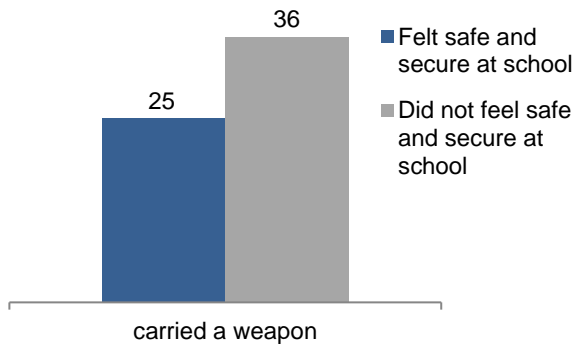


Figure 4: Percentage of students who carried a weapon, by whether they felt safe and secure at school.

Physical Fighting

- Forty-three percent of students were in a physical fight.
- Five percent of students were in a physical fight that left them with injuries that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse.
- Females were less likely than males to have been in a physical fight (0.3 times as likely).
- Students who volunteered in the community were less likely to have been in a physical fight (0.9 times as likely) (fig. 5).

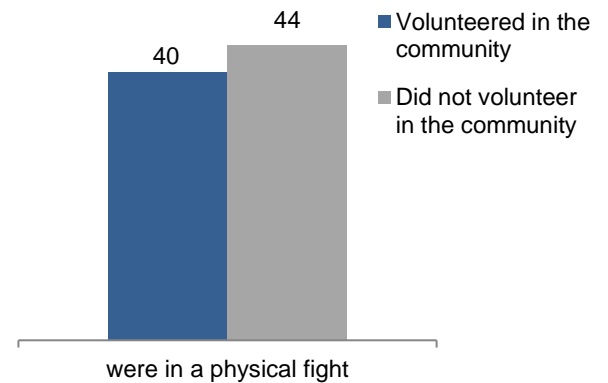


Figure 5: Percentage of students who were in a physical fight by whether they volunteered in the community.

Resources

- Sixteen percent of students did not have an adult or teacher at school with whom they could talk.

MORE INFORMATION

1. Schwarz, S. (2009, October). Adolescent Violence and Unintentional Injury in the United States. Retrieved from http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_890.html
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2015). Understanding Youth Violence. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/YV-FactSheet-a.pdf>

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