Introduction

Bullying is a damaging behavior that impacts 1 in 5 adolescents in the U.S. The effects of bullying, in all forms, have severe immediate and long-term consequences.\(^1\) According to the CDC, one in five U.S. high school students reported being bullied in 2018 with 15% of high schools reporting frequent bullying.\(^2\) In 2019, 22.6% of Virginia high school students were victims of any form of bullying. Research has also showed that adolescents who bully others were just as likely to suffer from serious and long-lasting negative effects.\(^3\) For example, Virginia high school students who electronically bullied someone were significantly more likely to experience any form of bullying themselves.

Figure 1: Percentage of Students who were victims of bullying on school property, electronically bullied and bullied someone by Race and Ethnicity, VYS, 2019

Key Highlights

**Bullied**

- In 2019, high school students who experienced cyberbullying, were more likely to report feeling sad for 2 weeks or more (59.6%), current alcohol use (42.5%), suicidality (41.0%), purposely hurting themselves without wanting to die (36.4%), electronic vapor products use (35.5%) and current marijuana use (29.0%).
- LGBT students were significantly more likely than heterosexual students to experience any form of bullying and reported feeling sad for 2 weeks or more (71.3% vs 50.3%).
- Among those who reported being bullied, 31.3% reported that they considered attempting suicide, 24.5% made a suicide plan, 16.8% attempted suicide and 5.0% made an injurious suicide attempt.
- Compared to heterosexual students, LGBT students were significantly more likely to be bullied and to report current electronic vapor product use (32.4 vs 29.7%).

**Teased**

- Hispanic students (61.5%) were significantly more likely than NH Other (54.8%), NH White (50.8%), and NH Black students (42.9%) to experience any form of teasing and report feeling sad for 2 weeks or more.
- LGBT students were significantly more likely than heterosexual students to experience any form of teasing and to report purposely hurting themselves without wanting to die (53.2% vs 22.9%).
- NH White students (40.1%) were significantly more likely than Hispanic (36.4%), NH Other (31.1%), and NH Black students (19.7%) to experience any form of teasing and to report current alcohol use.

---

*Non-Hispanic (NH)
Other = Asian*, Multiple Races*, All other Races*

Figure 2: Percentage of Students who were victims of bullying on school property, electronically bullied and bullied someone by Sex, VYS, 2019
Figure 3: Percentage of Students who were victims of bullying on school property, electronically bullied and bullied someone by Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity, VYS, 2019

- Heterosexual:
  - Bullied at School: 29.3%
  - Electronically Bullied: 24.4%
  - Electronically Bullied Someone: 9.0%
- LGBT:
  - Bullied at School: 15.3%
  - Electronically Bullied: 12.3%
  - Electronically Bullied Someone: 6.6%

Figure 4: Percentage of Students who were victims of teasing because of their race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and received unwelcomed sexual comments by Race and Ethnicity, VYS, 2019

- Black*:
  - Race/Ethnicity Teased: 19.0%
  - Sexual Orientation Teased: 10.5%
  - Unwelcome Sexual Comments: 5.4%
- White*:
  - Race/Ethnicity Teased: 10.5%
  - Sexual Orientation Teased: 9.4%
  - Unwelcome Sexual Comments: 5.1%
- Hispanic:
  - Race/Ethnicity Teased: 11.5%
  - Sexual Orientation Teased: 12.2%
  - Unwelcome Sexual Comments: 7.7%
- Other*:
  - Race/Ethnicity Teased: 14.5%
  - Sexual Orientation Teased: 29.2%
  - Unwelcome Sexual Comments: 14.5%

*Non-Hispanic (NH)
Other = Asian*, Multiple Races*, All other Races*

Figure 5: Percentage of Students who were victims of teasing because of their race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and received unwelcomed sexual comments by Sex, VYS, 2019

- Male:
  - Sexual Orientation Teased: 17.7%
  - Race/Ethnicity Teased: 10.9%
  - Unwelcome Sexual Comments: 4.5%
- Female:
  - Sexual Orientation Teased: 16.0%
  - Race/Ethnicity Teased: 12.7%
  - Unwelcome Sexual Comments: 6.9%

Figure 6: Percentage of Students who were victims of teasing because of their race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and received unwelcomed sexual comments by Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity, VYS, 2019

- Heterosexual:
  - Race/Ethnicity Teased: 15.4%
  - Sexual Orientation Teased: 6.6%
  - Unwelcome Sexual Comments: 4.1%
- LGBT:
  - Race/Ethnicity Teased: 23.3%
  - Sexual Orientation Teased: 2.3%
  - Unwelcome Sexual Comments: 2.2%

Table 1: Prevalence and Adjusted Odds Ratio (95% Confidence Interval) of bullying and teasing victimization by selected risk indicators, VYS, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Indicator</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Adjusted OR a (95% CI) b</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bullied</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>54.9%*</td>
<td>3.3 (2.9 – 3.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposely hurt themselves without wanting to die</td>
<td>33.2%*</td>
<td>4.0 (3.2 – 4.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicidality</td>
<td>37.2%*</td>
<td>3.6 (3.0 – 4.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Alcohol Use</td>
<td>36.1%*</td>
<td>2.0 (1.7 – 2.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Marijuana Use</td>
<td>23.9%*</td>
<td>2.0 (1.6 – 2.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Electronic Vapor Use</td>
<td>29.8%*</td>
<td>2.2 (1.8 – 2.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teased</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>52.2%*</td>
<td>3.2 (2.6 – 3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposely hurt themselves without wanting to die</td>
<td>32.2%*</td>
<td>4.2 (3.3 – 5.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicidality</td>
<td>36.5%*</td>
<td>3.6 (2.9 – 4.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Alcohol Use</td>
<td>33.2%*</td>
<td>1.9 (1.4 – 2.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Marijuana Use</td>
<td>76.3%*</td>
<td>1.8 (1.5 – 2.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Electronic Vapor Use</td>
<td>27.5%*</td>
<td>1.9 (1.6 – 2.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically significant
a = adjusted for race/ethnicity, sex and grade
b = Please interpret confidence interval with caution: estimates that have a 95% confidence interval width exceeding 2 points or 1.2 times, indicate that this estimate has low precision
c = significantly different (p<0.05) than students who did not feel sad or hopeless almost every day for >= 2 weeks in a row.
d = significantly different (p<0.05) than students who reported not purposely hurt themselves without wanting to die
e = significantly different (p<0.05) than students who reported not experiencing any form of suicidality
f = significantly different (p<0.05) than students who reported no current alcohol use
g = significantly different (p<0.05) than students who reported no current marijuana use
h = significantly different (p<0.05) than students who reported no current electronic vapor product use.

**Example interpretation of Table 1: Nearly fifty-five percent of those who have been a victim of any form of bullying, reported feeling sad for 2 weeks or more.
DEFINITIONS

- **Bullied**: high school students who reported any form of bullying such as bullied on school property or electronically (cyber) bullied (counting being bullied through texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media)
- **Gender Identity**: A sense of oneself as trans, genderqueer, woman, man, or some other identity, which may or may not correspond with the sex and gender one is assigned at birth.
- **Heterosexual**: A sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of a gender other than their own.
- **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT)**:
  - **Lesbian**: Usually, a woman whose primary sexual and affectional orientation is toward people of the same gender.
  - **Gay**: A sexual and affectional orientation toward people of the same gender.
  - **Bisexual**: A person whose primary sexual and affectional orientation is toward people of the same and other genders, or towards people regardless of their gender.
  - **Transgender**: Identifying as transgender, or trans, means that one’s internal knowledge of gender is different from conventional or cultural expectations based on the sex that person was assigned at birth.
- **Mental Health**: high school student who reported ever feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities.
- **Odds Ratio (OR)**: represents the odds that an outcome will occur given a particular exposure, compared to the odds of the outcome occurring in the absence of that exposure.
  - Example: Students who experienced any form of teasing were 4.1 times as likely to report purposely hurting themselves without wanting to die.
- **Sexual Orientation**: an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual or affectional attraction or non-attraction to other people.
- **Suicidality**: high school students who reported any form of suicide ideation and behavior such as considered suicide, made a suicide plan, attempted suicide, and injurious suicide attempt.
- **Teased**: high school students who reported being teased because someone thought they were gay, lesbian, or bisexual, or because of their race or ethnic background.
- **Unwelcomed Sexual Comments**: high school students who reported another student most of the time or always made unwelcome sexual comments, jokes or gestures that made them feel uncomfortable on school property.

REFERENCES


FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please visit [https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/virginia-youth-survey/](https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/virginia-youth-survey/) or contact [VYSrequest@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:VYSrequest@vdh.virginia.gov)