

Mental Health

Risk Factors

Key Highlights

- ▶ The percentage of students who experienced feeling sad for 2 weeks or more increased significantly from 2011 (25.5%) through 2019 (32.4%).
- ▶ Hispanic students (39.5%) were more likely than NH Black (37.8%), NH White (33.4%) and NH Other (26.7%) students to experience feeling sad for 2 weeks or more and to report current illicit drug use.
- ▶ LGBT students were more likely than heterosexual students to report feeling sad for 2 weeks or more and experience sexual violence (27.6% vs 14.8%) and physical dating violence (18.1% vs 11.0%).
- ▶ Female students who reported feeling sad for 2 weeks or more had 4.4 times the odds of having their first cigarette before the age of 13 compared to males who reported those same feelings.
- ▶ Compared to LGBT students, heterosexual students who experience feeling sad for 2 weeks or more had a higher likelihood of having their first drink of alcohol before age 13 (75.5% vs 66.2%).
- ▶ Among those who reported feeling sad for 2 weeks or more, 39.1% reported that they considered attempting suicide, 29.5% made a suicide plan, 18.0% attempted suicide and 4.9% made an injurious suicide attempt.
- ▶ Compared to male students, female students were significantly more likely to experience feeling sad for 2 weeks or more and to report purposely hurting themselves without wanting to die (38.6% vs 32.1%).
- ▶ Nearly 3 in 10 (29.2%) students who rarely or never got the kind of help they needed when they were in emotional distress, had at least one drink of alcohol, on at least 1 day during the 30 days before the survey.

Introduction

Adolescent mental disorders have become a public health concern due to their prevalence and impact on children, families and communities.¹ According to the CDC, mental health disorders among adolescents are described as a severe alteration in the child’s ability to achieve social, emotional, cognitive, and academic milestones and to function in daily settings.² Despite the evidence of increasing expenditure on care for overall child health, mental health treatment utilization among children is relatively low.^{1, 2} Untreated adolescents are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors, illicit substance use, and other delinquent behaviors. For example, nearly 4 in 10 (38.1%) Virginia students who never or rarely got the kind of help they needed when they were in emotional distress, purposely hurt themselves without wanting to die.

Figure 1: Percentage of Students who felt sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 weeks or more, VYS, 2011-2019

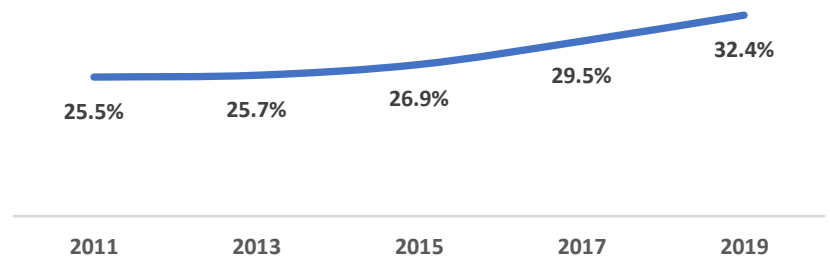
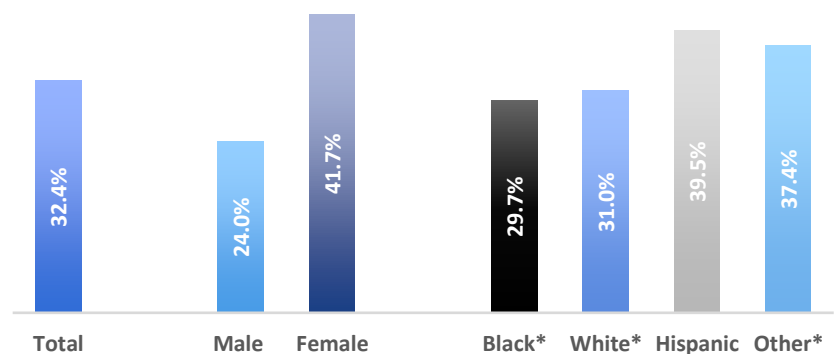


Figure 2: Percentage of Students who felt sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 weeks or more by sex and race/ethnicity, VYS, 2019



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

Figure 3: Percentage of Students who felt sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 weeks or more and reported current illicit drug use, VYS, 2019

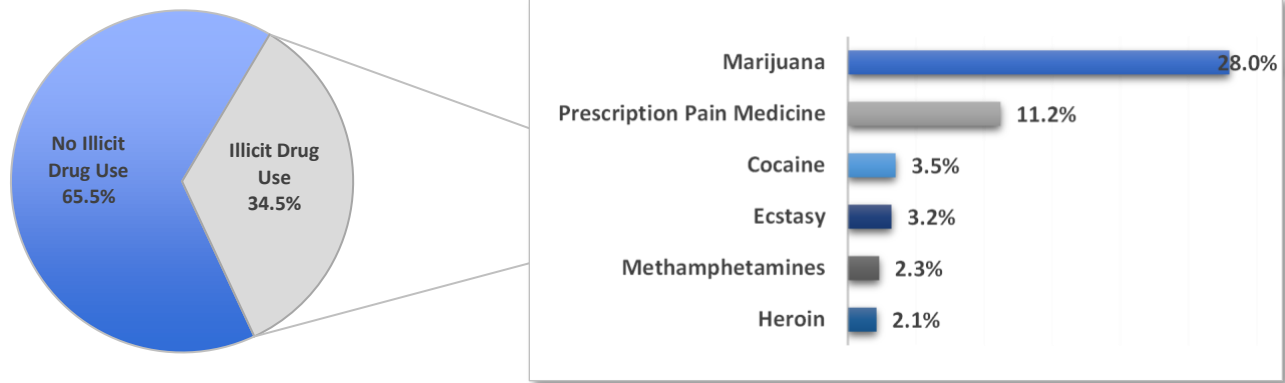


Figure 4: Percentage of Students who felt sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 weeks or more by Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity, VYS, 2019

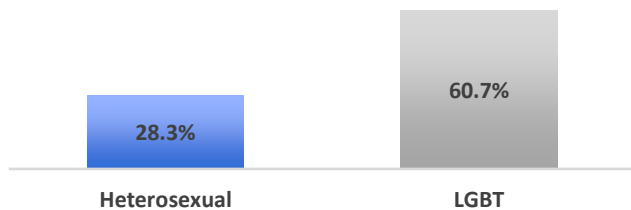


Figure 5: Percentage of Students who felt sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 weeks or more by experienced sexual victimizations, VYS, 2019

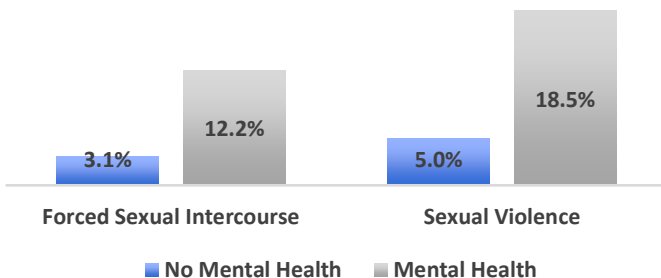


Figure 6: Percentage of Students who never or rarely got the kind of help they need when they were in emotional distress, VYS, 2019

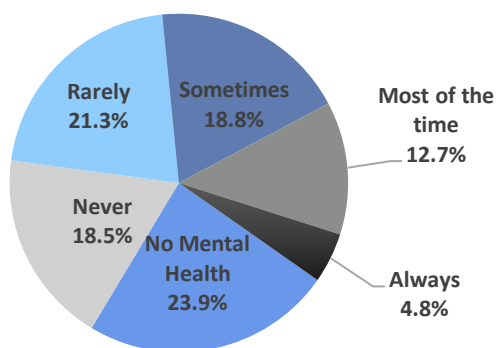


Table 1 : Prevalence and Adjusted Odds Ratio (95% Confidence Interval) of students who felt sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 weeks or more by selected risk indicators, VYS, 2019

Risk Indicator	Percentage (%) [*]	Adjusted OR ^a (95% CIs) ^b
Mental Health**		
First tried cigarette smoking before age 13 ^c	12.4%*	3.2 (2.5 – 4.3)
First drink of alcohol before age 13 years ^d	25.8%*	3.3 (2.7 – 4.0)
Drank alcohol or used drugs before sex ^e	22.3%*	1.8 (1.1 – 2.9)
Binge Drinking ^f	18.7%*	2.1 (1.6 – 2.7)
Suicidality ^g	44.2%*	10.7 (8.8 – 13.1)
Purposely hurt themselves without wanting to die ^h	36.2%*	9.0 (6.8 – 11.8)
Teacher/Adult to Talk To ⁱ	42.2%*	2.2 (2.0 – 2.7)

*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 have their first cigarette smoking before age 13

^d = significantly different (p<0.05) than students who did not have their first drink of alcohol before age 13

^e = significantly different (p<0.05) than students who did not drink alcohol or used drugs before sexual intercourse

^f = significantly different (p<0.05) than students who did not binge drink alcohol

^g = significantly different (p<0.05) than students who did not experience any form of suicidality

^h = significantly different (p<0.05) than students who did not purposely hurt themselves without wanting to die

ⁱ = significantly different (p<0.05) than students who reported at least one teacher or other adult that they can talk to if they have a problem

**Example interpretation of Table 1: Forty-four percent of high school students who reported mental health issues, experienced any form of suicidality.

DEFINITIONS

- **Current Illicit Drug Use:** high school student who currently used marijuana, took prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription, differently than how a doctor told them to use it, used any form of cocaine or heroin, methamphetamines or ecstasy.
- **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.
- **Sexual Victimization:** high school students who were ever physically forced to have sexual intercourse and experienced sexual violence (being forced by anyone to do sexual things [counting such things as kissing, touching, or being physically forced to have sexual intercourse] that they did not want to).
- **Suicidality:** high school students who reported considering suicide or made a suicide plans or attempting suicide, or an injurious suicide attempt.

REFERENCES

1. Ghandour, R. M., Sherman, L. J., Vladutiu, C. J., Ali, M. M., Lynch, S. E., Bitsko, R. H., & Blumberg, S. J. (2019). Prevalence and Treatment of Depression, Anxiety, and Conduct Problems in US Children. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, 206, 256-267.e3. Accessed July 20, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2018.09.021>
2. Children's Mental Disorders | CDC. (2019, September 5). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Accessed July 20, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/symptoms.html>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please visit <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/virginia-youth-survey/> or contact VYSrequest@vdh.virginia.gov