

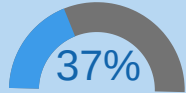


Supporting Youth Mental Health

Climate Connection is a monthly publication of the NYS Center for School Safety.

Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey (ABES)

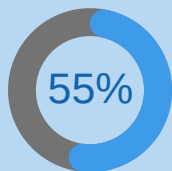
Early in 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted an online survey of a nationally representative sample of students grades 9-12 to better understand experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic, including economic challenges, risky behaviors, access to care, exposure to violence, mental health concerns and suicide.



Reported that their mental health (stress, anxiety, and depression) was not good during the pandemic most or all of the time.

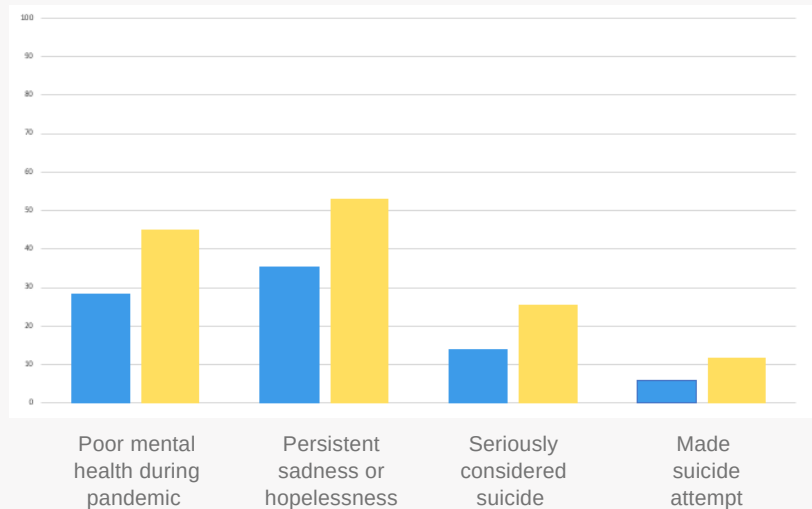


Seriously considered suicide in the 12 months prior to the survey.



Reported that a parent or other adult in their home swore at them, insulted them, or put them down during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Youth mental health is a major public health concern that was exacerbated by experiences of the pandemic including social isolation, remote learning, and reduced access to extracurriculars and social opportunities. At the time of the ABES, a little less than half of the students surveyed "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that they felt close to someone at school. The graph below shows comparative data indicating a significant difference for several mental health measurements among students who expressed not feeling close to someone at school (yellow bar) versus those who indicated they did (blue bar). For more information, visit cdc.gov/healthyouth.



Strategies to Support Connectedness

The above data suggests that social connections are an important protective factor for supporting mental health. Universal prevention strategies to support relationships include peer mentoring programs that connect older and younger students, morning meetings that serve as check-ins, the use of extended homerooms or advisory periods, restorative practices, small group work, project-based and service learning opportunities, social-emotional learning and mental health awareness lessons.

Not sure which strategy would work best for your school or district...consider asking your students. Engaging youth voice to find a solution might be the best strategy of all!