

CDC Vitalsigns™

Violence Impacts Teens' Lives

Prevent violence. Improve lifelong health.



Want to learn more?

www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention

44%

About half
(44%) of teens
experienced at
least one type of
violence.*

1 in 7

1 in 7 experienced
two or more types of
violence.*

16

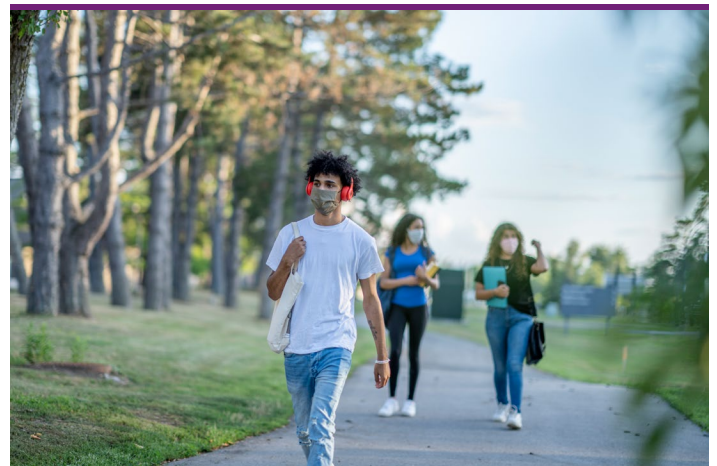
At least 16 health conditions and risky behaviors are related to experiencing violence.

* During 12 months before the survey

Overview

Violence is preventable. We can all help young people grow up violence-free. Violence can limit life opportunities, lead to emotional and physical health problems, and shorten lives. Far too commonly, teens 14 to 18 years old experience violence, often more than one type such as physical fighting, sexual violence, dating violence, and bullying.

- Every day about 360 teens are treated in emergency departments for assault injuries.
- Homicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among teens.
- Female teens are more likely than males to experience three or more types of violence, as are sexual minority teens compared to their heterosexual peers.
- Some teens may have a higher risk of online bullying and threats during COVID-19.
- Violence can impact school attendance and access to community support services.



Problem

Violence can disrupt teens' development and harm their current and future health.

Preventing violence is key to promoting teen and adult health.

A teen's brain is still growing. Experiencing violence during this time of life can harm development and contribute to:

- Impaired decision-making.
- Learning challenges.
- Decreased connections to peers and adults.
- Trouble coping with stress.

Violence can also affect teens' physical health and increase the chance of developing cancer, heart disease, or other health problems in adulthood.

We can protect teens now and support their growth into healthy adults by preventing violence.

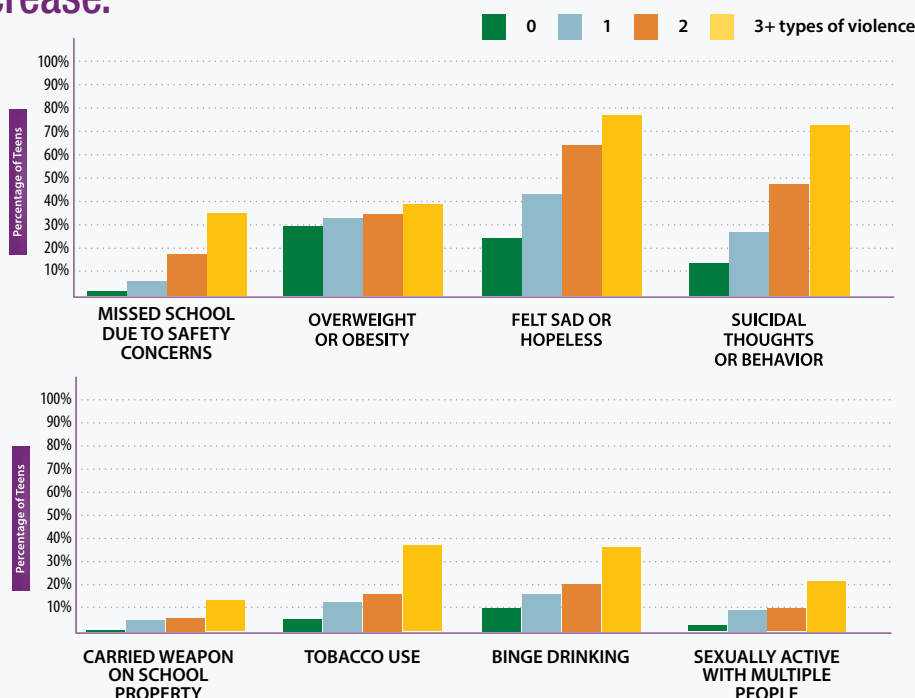


**Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention**
National Center for Injury
Prevention and Control

Teens who experience violence have several health conditions and risk behaviors, including:

- Missed school due to safety concerns
- Low academic grades
- Carried a weapon
- Suicidal thoughts or behavior
- Risky sexual behavior
- Overweight or obesity
- Felt sad or hopeless
- Substance use

As teens experience more violence, their health risks increase.



SOURCE: Youth Risk Behavior Survey, United States, 2019; CDC Vital Signs, MMWR, February 2021.

Empower teens to be part of the solution



Directly engaging teens in preventing violence helps them:

- Make healthy choices.
- Be a leader and voice for change for healthier communities and schools.
- Advise community and school decision-makers.
- Promote respect and empathy with family, friends, and peers.

THE WAY FORWARD >>>

PARENTS AND FAMILIES CAN:

- Learn about links between teens' experiences with violence and their health.
- Talk with teens about violence and ask how you can support them.
- Reach out to local programs to learn effective parenting practices.

COMMUNITIES CAN:

- Make teen mentoring, apprenticeship, and leadership programs more available.
- Collaborate with health departments and other partners to promote healthy and safe neighborhoods.
- Make use of effective social and economic policies that reduce violence.

Visit: [CDC Technical Packages](#)

SCHOOLS CAN:

- Adopt policies and practices that create safe and supportive environments.
- Teach teens skills to navigate social and emotional challenges.
- Connect students to health and mental health services.
- Build strong bonds between staff and students to improve connectedness to school.

Visit: [CDC What Works: Schools](#)

CDC is taking steps to [prevent violence](#) before it starts. Join us!

For more information
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) TTY:
1-888-232-6348 | Web: www.cdc.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30333
Publication date: February 5, 2021
Visit: <https://go.usa.gov/xAMYj>