

About the Data – Adolescent Mental Health

Indicator Description

The adolescent mental health indicators are estimates of the percentages of public-school students in grades 7, 9, and 11 and in non-traditional programs (community day schools or continuation education) who, in the past year, felt sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more (depression-related feelings) and/or who seriously considered attempting suicide (suicidal ideation).

Data Sources

The original data source, [California \(CA\) Healthy Kids Survey \(CHKS\)](#), is based on a representative sample of secondary students and is sponsored by the California Department of Education. Additional summarized data are from these sources: (1) [WestEd, CA School Climate, Health, and Learning Surveys](#) and (2) [KidsData.org](#).

Data Analysis

The percentages of public-school students who experienced depression-related feelings and/or suicidal ideation are derived from the statewide biennial and local CHKS as presented in the KidsData website and WestEd public data dashboard and county reports. The survey question for depression-related feelings is this: “During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more that you stopped doing some usual activities?”. The survey question for suicidal ideation is this: “During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously consider attempting suicide?”. The suicidal ideation question was not asked of 7th graders. Data collected between 2011 and 2019 are made available in two school-year increments. For example, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school terms are combined as 2011-2013. Data for depression-related feelings and suicidal ideation are stratified by grade level, race/ethnicity, school connectedness, sexual orientation, and parent education level(s). See Category and Subcategory Definitions below for additional inclusion/exclusion criteria.

Data Annotation and Suppression

The rate is not shown when the numerator is less than 10.

Category and Subcategory Definitions

Grade level: Student's grade level at time of survey. Grade levels included were 7th, 9th, 11th, and non-traditional. Non-traditional students were attendees of continuation schools or community day schools.

Race/ethnicity: Student's self-reported racial/ethnic group as: American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN), Asian, African American/Black (Black), Hispanic/Latino (Hispanic), Multiracial (Multi-Race), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NH/PI), White, or something else (Other).

School connectedness: Based on a scale created from responses to five questions about the student feeling happy, safe, close to people, and a part of school, and about teachers treating the student fairly. Additional information about calculations are available from [WestEd](#).

Parent education level: Highest level of education completed by a parent or guardian of the student. Data for parent education level was not collected for 2011-2013.

Sexual orientation: Student's self-reported sexual orientation. "Not sure" includes something else, other, or decline to respond. Data for sexual orientation was not collected for 2011-2013.

Suggested Citation

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