

# VIOLENCE / BULLYING / SUICIDE

Physical fighting is a marker for other problem behaviors<sup>(1)</sup> and is associated with serious injury-related health outcomes.<sup>(2,3)</sup> Bullying victimization is associated with depression,<sup>(4,5)</sup> suicidal ideation,<sup>(4,5)</sup> self-injury,<sup>(5)</sup> suicide attempts,<sup>(5)</sup> increased odds of repeated common health problems,<sup>(6)</sup> school absenteeism,<sup>(7)</sup> psychological distress,<sup>(6)</sup> and feeling unsafe at school.<sup>(7)</sup> Suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth aged 15-19 years in the United States.<sup>(8)</sup>

## 2013 New Jersey Student Health Survey (NJSHS) Highlights

- *Violence in the Past Year:* 22% had been in a physical fight and 6% were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property during the past 12 months.
- *Violence in the Past 30 Days:* 10% carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club, 6% did not go to school because they felt they would be unsafe, 3% carried a weapon at school, and 3% carried a gun during the past 30 days.
- *Bullying:* During the past year, 21% had been bullied at school and 15% had been electronically bullied. In the same time frame, 15% had bullied someone else at school and 10% had bullied someone else electronically.
- *Suicide:* During the past year, 29% felt sad or hopeless for two weeks straight, 18% hurt themselves on purpose by cutting or burning without wanting to die, 14% considered suicide, 12% made a suicide plan, and 10% attempted suicide at least one time.

## Violence, Bullying and Suicide by Demographic Subgroup

Minimal differences existed within grade and racial/ethnic categories with regard to violence, bullying and suicide. The only item of note is that Blacks (30%) and Hispanics (26%) were more likely than Whites (20%) and Asians (13%) to engage in physical fights. Otherwise, most grade and racial/ethnic groups had similar prevalence rates on all other violence, bullying and suicide items. However, male students were generally more likely to report violence, whereas female students were more likely to report being bullied and experiencing suicidal ideation. Examples include the following:

- During the past 12 months, male students were more likely to have been in a physical fight (28% vs. 15%) or to have been threatened or injured with a weapon at school (8% vs. 4%).
- During the past 30 days, males were much more likely than females to carry a weapon (17% vs. 4%) but only slightly more likely to carry a weapon while at school (4% vs. 2%), miss school for safety concerns (7% vs. 4%) or to carry a gun (5% vs. 1%).
- During the past 12 months, female students were somewhat more likely to have been bullied at school (24% vs. 19%) and much more likely to have experienced electronic bullying (20% vs. 10%).
- During the past 12 months, female students were much more likely than male students to have felt sad or hopeless for two weeks straight (37% vs. 21%), to have hurt themselves on purpose without wanting to die (25% vs. 12%), to have considered suicide (18% vs. 10%) or made a suicide plan (15% vs. 8%), but they were only slightly more likely to have actually attempted suicide (11% vs. 9%).

## NJSHS Trend Analysis: 2001-2013 Violence, Bullying and Suicide

Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who:	2001	2005	2009	2011	2013	Trend Analysis
<b>Bullied on School Property</b> <i>were bullied on school property 1+ times (past 12 months)</i>	--	--	21%	20%	<b>21%</b>	●
<b>Electronically Bullied</b> <i>were electronically bullied 1+ times (past 12 months)</i>	--	--	17%	16%	<b>15%</b>	●
<b>Involved in a Physical Fight</b> <i>were involved in 1+ fight (past 12 months)</i>	35%	31%	28%	24%	<b>22%</b>	↘
<b>Threatened or Injured on School Property</b> <i>were threatened or injured 1+ times (past 12 months)</i>	11%	8%	7%	6%	<b>6%</b>	↘
<b>Carried a Weapon</b> <i>carried a gun, knife or club 1+ times (past 30 days)</i>	13%	11%	10%	10%	<b>10%</b>	↘
<b>Carried a Weapon at School</b> <i>carried a weapon 1+ times at school (past 30 days)</i>	7%	3%	3%	--	<b>3%</b>	--
<b>Missed School Day Because Felt Unsafe</b> <i>missed school day for safety fears 1+ times (past 30 days)</i>	9%	4%	5%	4%	<b>6%</b>	↘
<b>Carried a Gun</b> <i>carried a gun 1+ times (past 30 days)</i>	5%	2%	2%	--	<b>3%</b>	--
<b>Felt Sad or Hopeless for Two Weeks</b> <i>felt sad or hopeless for 2 weeks straight (past 12 months)</i>	31%	--	--	26%	<b>29%</b>	●
<b>Considered Suicide</b> <i>considered suicide 1+ times (past 12 months)</i>	17%	--	--	13%	<b>14%</b>	●
<b>Made a Plan for Suicide</b> <i>planned for suicide 1+ times (past 12 months)</i>	13%	--	--	11%	<b>12%</b>	●
<b>Attempted Suicide</b> <i>attempted suicide 1+ times (past 12 months)</i>	8%	--	--	6%	<b>10%</b>	●
Increase in a negative behavior	Decrease in a negative behavior	Increase in a positive behavior	Decrease in a positive behavior	No change in behavior	Trend not reported by CDC	
↗	↘	↗	↘	●	--	
Trend analysis was performed by the CDC on data from 2001 to 2013 to determine which differences across years were statistically significant. For questions not asked in all survey years, the trend analysis was performed from 2013 back to the last consecutive year in which the question was asked.						

**Summary of Trend:** Rates of bullying have changed very little since 2009; however, there have been notable declines in other indicators related to violence and suicide. In terms of past year indicators of violence, the percentage of students who were in a physical fight declined from 2001 to 2013 (35% to 22%) and the percentage of students threatened or injured at school also dropped, from 11% in 2001 to 6% in 2013. Past 30 day indicators of violence fell between 2001 and 2013 as well, with rates of carrying a weapon dropping from 13% to 10%, carrying a weapon at school decreasing from 7% to 3% and missing school due to safety concerns falling from 9% in 2001 to 6% in 2013. The percentage of students carrying guns has changed little between 2001 and 2013. Between 2001 and 2013, the number of students considering suicide declined from 17% to 14% while the rate of students attempting suicide increased from 8% to 10%. (Indicators related to suicide were not asked in either 2005 or 2009.)

For a complete set of fact sheets on all 2013 NJSHS topics and [citations](http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/yrbs/index.html/), visit: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/yrbs/index.html/>.