

YOUTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

HEALTHY YOUTH SURVEY

Washington State Healthy Youth Survey Facts

- More than 35,000 students participate across the state, representing all 39 counties
- Questions ask about risk for injury, health outcomes, alcohol, and drug use.
- Results are used by communities to support youth and reduce risks.

More info available at: www.askhys.net

Island County Facts

Represented School Districts *

Oak Harbor
Coupeville
South Whidbey

Survey Response Rates

6th Grade: 86%
8th Grade: 83%
10th Grade: 81%
12th Grade: 60%

*Camano Island youth are reported as part of the Stanwood School District in Snohomish County

BULLYING	6th Graders	8th Graders	10th Graders	12th Graders
Bullied in the past 30 days	35.5%	33.2%	27.9%	17.5%
Bullied or harassed by someone through computer or cell phone	~	18.5%	13.5%	12.9%
ABUSE	6th Graders	8th Graders	10th Graders	12th Graders
Threatened or had activities limited by a boy/girlfriend	~	2.8%	8.0%	9.9%
Physically hurt by a boy/girlfriend	~	2.8%	3.9%	6.8%
Physically abused by an adult	~	24.7%	31.9%	21.5%
QUALITY OF LIFE	6th Graders	8th Graders	10th Graders	12th Graders
Feeling sad or hopeless¹	~	28.9%	34.8%	38.3%
Feel alone in life²	~	15.1%	11.1%	14.0%
Look forward to the future²	84.5%	68.0%	65.1%	73.7%
* Within the past year; 1. Defined from self-report of being so sad or hopeless they stopped doing usual activities for two or more weeks in a row; 2. Rate 8-10 on scale when 10="Completely true"				
SUICIDE*	6th Graders	8th Graders	10th Graders	12th Graders
Seriously considered attempting suicide	18.5%	17.0%	22.8%	23.0%
Planned how to attempt suicide	~	12.7%	19.7%	17.4%
Attempted suicide	5.9%	9.1%	11.9%	7.2%
Very or somewhat unlikely to seek help if feeling depressed or suicidal	~	18.1%	26.7%	26.5%
Very or somewhat unlikely to seek help for a friend who is depressed or suicidal	~	16.9%	11%	9.4%
* Within the past year				
SOCIAL SUPPORT	6th Graders	8th Graders	10th Graders	12th Graders
Feel unable to ask a parent for help with a personal problem	11.5%	12.1%	17.7%	20.3%
Do not have (or are not sure you have) an adult to turn to when feeling sad or hopeless	18.1%	28.3%	29.1%	27.3%

~ = Question was not asked to these students

We are extremely appreciative for the participation of all our Island County School Districts in the Healthy Youth Survey. Their participation allows us to report on the current health status of our youth and track trends over time.

YOUTH, BULLYING AND ABUSE

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WHAT WE CAN DO

PARENTS

If you suspect a child is being bullied or if you witness a child being bullied:

- Don't ignore it, intervene immediately.
- Display respectful behaviors when you intervene.
- Make sure that everyone is safe.
- Don't talk to the kids involved together; speak to them separately.
- Don't make the kids involved apologize on the spot.
- Assure the child being bullied that it is not their fault.
- Make sure that children know that the bullying behavior is not acceptable.¹

18.5% of Island County 8th graders have been bullied or harassed through a computer or cell phone.

6.8% of Island County 12th graders report being physically abused by a boyfriend or girlfriend.

Know the signs that a person may be abused by their boyfriend/girlfriend:

- Appears afraid or anxious to please that person.
- Goes along with everything that person says and does.
- Talks about their partner's temper, jealousy, and being possessive.
- Checks in frequently with their partner, always telling them where they are and what they are doing.
- Has a lower self-esteem when they used to be very confident.
- Shows major personality changes.²

How to help someone who you suspect or know is being abused:

- Don't ignore it and remain calm; listen to what the person has to say without judgment.
- Reassure the person that they did nothing wrong and it is not their fault they are being abused.
- If you feel your safety or the safety of others is in danger if you intervene, seek professional help immediately.
- Child abuse should be reported to proper authorities immediately; reporting is anonymous.
- If a youth notifies you that they are in an abusive relationship, first make sure they are not in immediate danger. Contact your school-based mental health counselor, guidance counselor or mental health professional or call the National Dating Abuse Helpline 1-866-331-9474.³

SCHOOLS

SCHOOLS CAN have a bullying prevention policy in place and enforce it.

- Train teachers and staff to create a positive, respectful, tolerant and accepting environment.
- Train teachers and staff how to appropriately intervene when a child is being bullied.
- Implement a bullying prevention curriculum.
- Refer students who are bullying, being bullied, or showing signs of depression or suicide to their school-based mental health counselor.⁴

COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT

COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND LOCAL OFFICIALS CAN

- Advocate for bullying prevention policies in the schools.
- Work with local media outlets such as radio stations, newspapers, and websites to run anti-bullying ads and provide information how to prevent and deal with current bullying issues.
- Reach out directly to groups who work with children to advocate for anti-bullying policies and education.⁵



YOUTH, DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE

HEALTHY
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WHAT WE CAN DO

NEED HELP?

Crisis Line:

800-584-3578 or 2-1-1

Suicide Prevention:

9-1-1 or 800-273-8255

The Trevor Project :

Resources for Gay/
Lesbian/Bisexual/
Transgender Youth:

866-488-7386

Island County Human Services

(Mental Health
Counseling and
School-Based Mental
Health Program)
360-969-5867

Citizens Against Domestic Violence and Abuse (CADA)

800-215-5669

PARENTS

PARENTS CAN know signs of depression:

- Changes in eating and sleeping habits.
- Consistent feelings of sadness and anxiety.
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities.
- Irritability.
- Overeating or a loss of appetite.
- Thoughts of suicide or attempt at suicide.⁶

PARENTS CAN know signs of suicide:

- Changes in eating.
- Frequent complaints about physical ailments such as stomachache, headache, or fatigue.
- Unusual neglect of personal appearance.
- Substance abuse, mental health issues, and physical and sexual abuse are often factors that contribute to suicide attempts.⁷

If you suspect your child is struggling with depression or suicidal thoughts:

- Connect them to a mental health professional through your school, physician, or other community resource.
- Talk to them, and listen carefully.
- Help them find and build relationships with an adult they can go to with problems. Understand this may not be a parent, but find someone both of you can trust.

SCHOOLS AND YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

If you suspect a student is struggling with depression or suicidal thoughts, STAFF AND TEACHERS CAN:

- Take your suspicions seriously.
- Contact your Island County school-based mental health counselor or an Island County Mental Health Counselor.
- Advocate for additional school-based mental health counselors to help meet the needs of our students at each school.

SCHOOL AND ORGANIZATION ADMINISTRATION CAN offer suicide-prevention trainings to all staff.

GOVERNMENT

Government officials CAN

- Create and support commissions dedicated to youth, such as the Oak Harbor Youth Coalition.
- Improve access to mental health services for youth through dedicated funding for school-based mental health counselors.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.). *Why Prevention Must Be a Priority*. Retrieved from STRYVE; Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere: http://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/stryve/prevention_priority.html.

2. HelpGuide.org. (2013, July). *Domestic Violence and Abuse*. Retrieved from Helpguide.org: http://www.helpguide.org/mental/domestic_violence_abuse_types_signs_causes_effects.htm.

3. Health and Human Services (2013, September 25). *Teen Dating Violence-- Awareness and Prevention*. Retrieved from Office of Adolescent Health: <http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/news/e-updates/eupdate-11.html>

4. Health and Human Services (n.d.). *Prevention at School*. Retrieved from stopbullying.gov: <http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/at-school/index.html>

5. Health and Human Services (n.d.). *Working in the Community*. Retrieved from stopbullying.gov: <http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/in-the-community/index.html#CommunityStrategies>

6. National Institutes of Health (n.d.). *Depression*. Retrieved from National Institute of Mental Health: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>

7. National Institutes of Health (n.d.). *Suicide in the U.S.: Statistics and Prevention*. Retrieved from National Institute of Mental Health: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/suicidein-in-the-us-statistics-and-prevention/index.shtml#intro>