

VIOLENCE & DEPRESSION AMONG VIRGINIA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

RESULTS FROM THE VIRGINIA YOUTH SURVEY – 2015

INTRODUCTION

Suicide is the third leading cause of death for youth between the ages of 10 and 24.¹ Complex peer, family, and romantic relationships, mental health concerns, and school stressors all impact suicide-related behaviors.² Suicidal youth are often overwhelmed with feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, both of which can be brought on by bullying.² Being bullied increases the chances youth will engage in suicide-related behaviors.² Bullying can also result in physical injuries, social and emotional difficulties, and academic problems.⁴

RESPONDENTS

A total of 5195 Virginia high school students took the survey, most of whom (74%) were between the ages of 15 and 17 years old. Males (52%) and females (48%), as well as student grade levels, were evenly distributed.

SUMMARY

Bullying

- Females were more likely than males to be bullied at school (1.6 times as likely) and electronically bullied (2.3 times as likely).
- Twenty percent of students both in Virginia and nationally were bullied at school (fig. 1).
- Fourteen percent of students were electronically bullied, compared to 16% nationally (fig. 1).

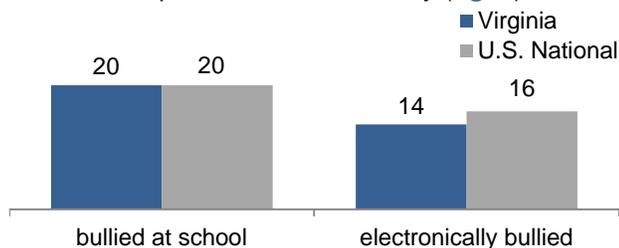


Figure 1: Percentage of students bullied at school or electronically.

Sadness or Hopelessness

- Twenty-seven percent of students felt sad or hopeless almost everyday for 2 or more weeks in a row so that they stopped doing some usual activities during the 12 months before the survey.
- Students were less likely to feel sad or hopeless if they volunteered in the community (0.9 times as likely), participated on a sports team (0.5 times as likely), or felt safe and secure at school (0.4 times as likely).
- Students were more likely to feel sad or hopeless if they had safety concerns at school (4.4 times as likely) or were threatened at school (3 times as likely).
- Students were more likely to feel sad or hopeless if they were bullied at school (3.5 times as likely; fig. 2) or were electronically bullied (5.1 times as likely; fig. 3).

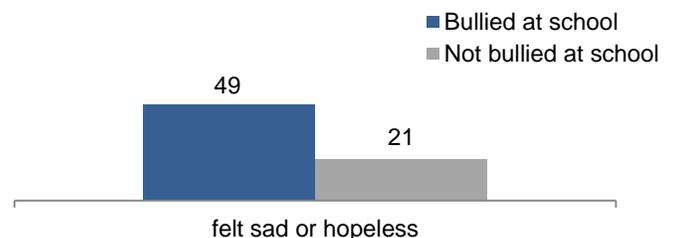
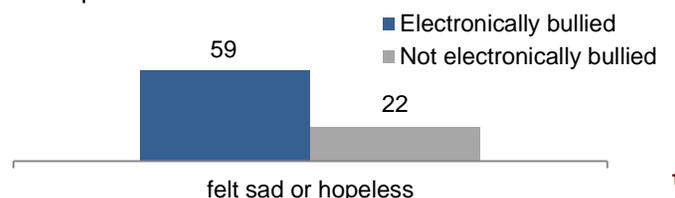


Figure 2: Percentage of students who felt sad or hopeless by whether they were bullied at school.

Figure 3: Percentage of students who felt sad or hopeless by whether they were electronically bullied.

Suicide and Self-Harm

- Nine percent of students were choked or choked



themselves on purpose.

- Females were more likely than males to consider suicide (2.2 times as likely) and attempt suicide (2 times as likely).
- Students who were bullied at school were more likely to consider suicide (4 times as likely).
- Students who were electronically bullied were more likely to consider suicide (5.5 times as likely).
- All Virginia student suicide-related behaviors were lower than the national average (fig. 4)

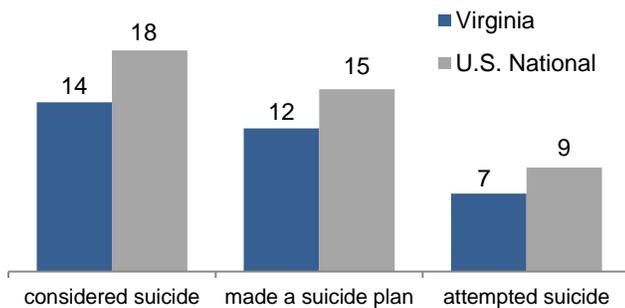


Figure 4: Percentage of students engaging in suicide-related behaviors.

Suicide-Related Behaviors 2011-2015 Trends

All suicide-related behaviors in 2015 were lower than in 2013 and 2011. The percentage of students who considered suicide and attempted suicide steadily decreased between 2011 and 2015 (fig. 5).

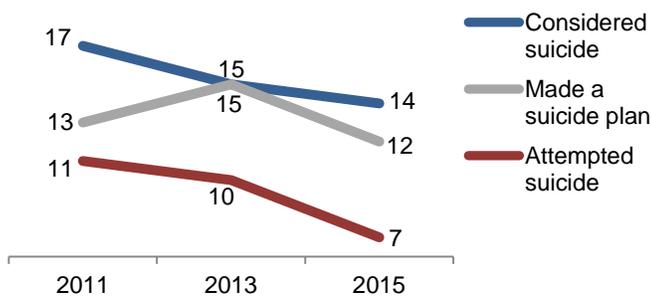


Figure 5: Percentage of students engaging in suicide-related behaviors, trending from 2011-2015.

Self-Esteem

- Seventy percent of students strongly agreed or agreed that they felt good about themselves.
- Students were less likely to strongly agree or agree that they felt good about themselves if they were bullied at school (0.4 times as likely; fig. 6) or were electronically bullied (0.3 times as likely; fig. 7).

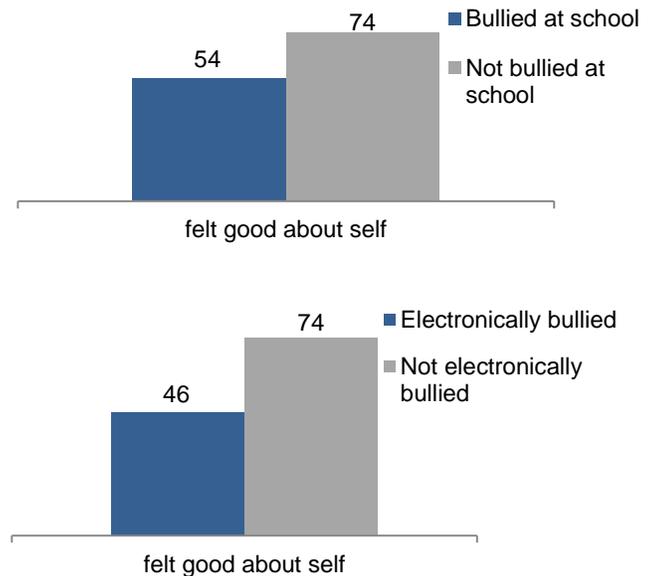


Figure 6: Percentage of students who felt good about themselves by whether they were bullied at school.

Figure 7: Percentage of students who felt good about themselves by whether they were electronically bullied.

Resources

- Twenty-five percent of students did not have a teacher or adult at school with whom they could talk.

MORE INFORMATION

1. https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/youth_suicide.html
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying-suicide-translation-final-a.pdf>
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/bullyingresearch/>

For more information, please visit <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/virginia-youth-survey/> or contact VYSrequest@vdh.virginia.gov