

Violence and Suicide Prevention

This fact sheet summarizes findings of the 2010 School Health Profiles, a survey of middle school and high school principals and lead health teachers in over 300 schools in Washington State. The survey assesses health-related policies, procedures, instruction, and environments every two years.

To compare student perceptions or behaviors, selected data from the 2010 Healthy Youth Survey are included.

The Healthy Youth Survey measured self-reported health risk behaviors of about 34,000 students in 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades in over 200 Washington schools.

Laws and Policies

In an effort to reduce school violence, the Washington State Legislature passed laws in 2010 and 2011 to reduce school bullying.

In 2011 all schools will have adopted an anti-harassment, intimidation, and bullying policy and procedure that was developed by a state level work group.

Substitute House Bill 2801

Law prohibits harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) in our schools.

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2009-10/Pdf/Bills/House%20Passed%20Legislature/2801-S.PL.pdf>

RCW 28A.300.285

Harassment, intimidation, and bullying prevention policies and procedures

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.300.285>

Between 2005 and 2011, the state as a whole has seen a slight drop in school violence. Still, school violence impacts too many youth in Washington.

Strengthening school policies and procedures, implementing prevention programs, engaging parents and families, and enlisting community resources all play a part in reducing school violence and creating a safe school climate.

What are the Current Behaviors?

Data from the Healthy Youth Survey show:

- 85% of 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th graders reported feeling safe at school
- 30% of 6th and 8th graders, 24% of 10th graders, and 17% of 12th graders reported being bullied in school during the past month
- 15% of 8th graders, 9% of 10th graders, and 6% of 12th graders report getting into a fight at school in the past year
- 3% of 6th graders, 5% of 8th graders, and 7% of 10th and 12th graders reported carrying a weapon on school property like a gun, knife, or club in the past month

The Healthy Youth Survey asks students if they've been bullied in the last month. It also asks them if they were bullied because they are part of a particular group. This information is invaluable for schools that wish to look at issues underlying bullying, such as ethnic prejudice or homophobia. A link to complete survey data is listed on the back.

Depression and Suicide

Depression and suicide are both serious problems for teens in our state. Youth suicide is the second leading cause of death for Washington youth ages 15-19.

According to the Healthy Youth Survey:

- 25% of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders reported feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks that they stopped their usual activities

- 15% of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders reported seriously considering suicide in the past year
- 7% of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders reported actually attempting suicide in the past year

What Schools Can Do

Addressing students' emotional, social, and physical health requires personnel and coordination. Despite few resources, schools have found ways to provide and coordinate staff. Health and safety experts and school administrators recognize that promoting all facets of health is by far the most economical and effective way to ensure all students are ready to learn.

The School Health Profiles survey reported that 80% of schools have someone who oversees and coordinates school health safety programs and activities.

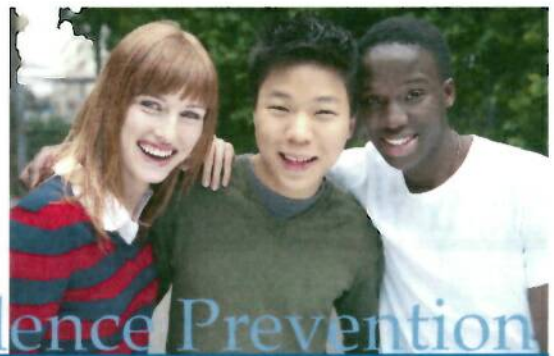
School Programs

The School Health Profiles survey reported on violence prevention programs in secondary schools:

- 73% had a bullying prevention program
- 34% had a suicide prevention program
- 24% had a program to prevent dating violence
- 16% had a safe-passage to school program

Violence and Suicide Prevention Policy Guidance

More schools are taking a comprehensive approach to addressing school violence and suicide. Research supports focusing on



Violence Prevention

Violence and Suicide Prevention

four areas of school climate in order to comprehensively address student safety:

- Physical, social, and emotional health of students
- Quality of relationships in the school—student-to-student, student-to-teacher, and teacher-to-teacher
- Students' engagement in their learning
- Health of school buildings and environments

According to the survey of principals:

- 57% of schools set a healthy and safe school environment goal, objective, or strategy as part of their School Improvement Plan
- 31% reviewed injury and violence prevention policies, activities, and programs with the School Health Index or other self-assessment tool
- 17% set a mental health and social services goal, objective, or strategy as part of their School Improvement Plan

In helping to develop or implement a suicide prevention policy or program in the past two years, principals reported:

- 17% had community member involvement
- 13% had student family involvement

Violence and Suicide Prevention Instruction

Health teachers reported trying to increase student knowledge through a required health education course:

- 89% taught violence prevention (preventing bullying, fighting, or homicide)
- 89% taught emotional and mental health
- 83% taught accident or injury prevention
- 73% taught suicide prevention

Health teachers reported using a specific suicide prevention curriculum in a required course in any grades 6 through 12:

- 16% taught HELP curriculum (*Helping Every Living Person: Depression and Suicide Prevention*)
- 13% taught another suicide prevention curriculum or materials
- 6% taught *Look, Listen, Link* curriculum

Staff Development on Violence and Suicide Prevention

Health teachers reported receiving and wanting professional development in order to provide quality instruction:

- 42% received injury prevention and safety training, and 52% wanted more
- 35% received suicide prevention training, and 67% wanted more
- 30% received emotional and mental health training, and 70% wanted more
- 20% received training in violence prevention (bullying, fighting, or homicide), and 74% wanted more

Resources

Healthy Schools, Successful Students

<http://healthyschools.ospi.k12.wa.us/waschool/>

Provides information and resources to ensure that Washington's students are healthy and ready to learn

Healthy Youth Survey www.askhys.net

Important information about adolescents in Washington

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) – School Safety Center

www.k12.wa.us/SafetyCenter/BullyingHarassment/default.aspx

2010 State Model Policy and procedure on bullying

School Health Profiles

www.k12.wa.us/CoordinatedSchoolHealth/SchlHealthProfiles.aspx

Information on the status of health and wellness-related policies, procedures, instruction, and environments

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

<http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/>

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) bullying prevention resource kit

Washington State Youth Suicide Prevention Guide

<http://theguide.fmhi.usf.edu>

Tools for assessing school suicide prevention efforts and resources

Washington State Youth Suicide Prevention Program (YSPP)

<http://yspp.org/>

Training for adults for comprehensive suicide prevention programs

Resources are provided as a public service and do not imply endorsement by the State of Washington.

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