



Suicide Ideation, Drug Use

and Montana Students

What is the problem?¹

Among high school students who have attempted suicide². . .

Safety

- 17% carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club during the past 30 days on school property (9% of non-suicidal students)
- 27% did not go to school due to feelings of being unsafe at school or on their way to or from school during the past 30 days (7% of non-suicidal students)
- 21% were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property during the past 12 months (7% of non-suicidal students)
- 45% were bullied on school property during the past 12 months (22% of non-suicidal students)
- 39% were electronically bullied during the past 12 months (15% of non-suicidal students)

Alcohol and Other Drug Use

- 42% had a drink of alcohol during the past 30 days (25% of non-suicidal students)
- 31% had a binge drinking³ episode during the past 30 days (15% of non-suicidal students)
- 55% ever used marijuana in their lifetime (30% of non-suicidal students)
- 11% had used methamphetamines in their lifetime (2% of non-suicidal students)
- 14% had used ecstasy in their lifetime (3% of non-suicidal students)
- 28% ever took prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it (10% of non-suicidal students)

What are the solutions?⁴

Among middle/junior and senior high schools. . .

Policy

- 64% of schools have a School Improvement Plan that includes health-related objectives on social and emotional climate
- 96% of schools have a designated staff member to whom students can confidentially report student bullying and sexual harassment, including electronic aggression
- 94% of schools use electronic, paper, or oral communication to publicize and disseminate policies, rules, or regulations on bullying and sexual harassment, including electronic aggression

Health Education

- 71% of schools' health education staff worked with mental health staff on health education activities
- 96% of schools taught students about alcohol- or other drug-use prevention
- 96% of schools taught students about emotional and mental health topics
- 93% of schools taught students about suicide prevention
- 98% of schools' health education teacher taught about the mental and social benefits of physical activity
- 58% of schools provided parents and families with health information designed to increase knowledge for preventing student bullying and sexual harassment, including electronic aggression (i.e., cyber-bullying)

- 65% of schools' health education teacher received professional development on emotional and mental health during the past two years
- 86% of schools' health education teacher taught about the differences between proper use and abuse of over-the-counter medicines and prescription medicines
- 92% of schools' health education teacher taught about harmful short- and long-term physical, psychological, and social effects of using alcohol and other drugs
- 89% of schools' health education teacher taught interpersonal communication skills to avoid alcohol and other drug use (e.g., refusal skills, assertiveness)
- 81% of schools' health education teacher would like to receive professional development on emotional and mental health
- 65% of schools' health education teacher received professional development on suicide prevention during the past two years
- 78% of schools' health education teacher would like to receive professional development on suicide prevention
- 44% of schools' health education teacher received professional development on alcohol- or other drug-use prevention during the past two years
- 77% of schools' health education teacher would like to receive professional development on alcohol- or other drug-use prevention

¹ 2021 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey data representative of all high school students in Montana.

² Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey Suicide Report – cross-tabulation analysis of students who had attempted suicide during the past year.

³ Binge drinking is 4 or more drinks of alcohol in a row within a couple of hours (if female), 5 or more drinks (if male).

⁴ 2020 School Health Profiles data representative of middle/junior and senior high schools in Montana.