Youth Risk Behavior Surveys

SUICIDAL TENDENCIES

LOUISIANA 2008 & 2009

Louisiana Public Health Institute

Louisiana Department of Education
Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among adolescents aged 10-24 years in the United States. Close to 90% of U.S. schools have action plans for students who are at risk for suicide, which generally involve informing the student’s family, referring the student to a mental health provider, and requiring documentation of mental health provider visit prior to the student’s return to school.
LOUISIANA STATISTICS

In 2009, 31.2% of Louisiana students felt sad or hopeless, compared to 26.1% nationwide. There has been little change since 2008 in Louisiana, but a slight decrease nationally from 28.5% to 26.1% (Figure 1).

» In 2009, female students (35.5%) were more likely to feel sad or hopeless than male students (26.1%) (Figure 1). The gap between the genders has lessened, with females decreasing and males increasing from 2008 to 2009.

» In 2009, black students reported slightly fewer suicidal tendencies than white students, but the opposite was true in 2008. The difference between the races is only a few percentage points.

» Suicidal tendencies decreased with age in 2009 for 9th through 11th grade, with a slight increase from 11th to 12th grade. 9th graders showed the highest percent feeling sad/hopeless (Figure 1).

*Percentage of students that felt sad or hopeless every day for 2 or more weeks in a row so that they stopped doing some usual activities during the 12 months before the survey.
SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING ATTEMPTING SUICIDE

In 2009, 14.4% of Louisiana students and 13.8% of students nationwide seriously considered attempting suicide, and this has stayed relatively the same in the year between surveys (Figure 2).

» More female students (15.5%) seriously considered suicide than male students (13.1%) (Figure 2), but the gap has lessened since 2008.

» There is relatively no difference between black and white students with about 14% seriously considered attempting suicide in both 2008 and 2009 (Figure 2).

» Fewer 12th grade students seriously considered attempting suicide than students in any other grade level (Figure 2) in both surveys.

*Percentage of students who seriously considered attempting suicide during the 12 months before the survey.

FIGURE 2
MADE A SUICIDE PLAN

In 2009, 11.6% of Louisiana students made a suicide plan during the past twelve months (Figure 3), similar to the result for 2008 (11.9%). National estimates of students who made a suicide plan are only slightly lower than in Louisiana, and did not change much from 2008 to 2009.

» More female students made a suicide plan than male students (Figure 3).

» Fewer 12th graders made a suicide plan than other grades in 2008 and 2009 (Figure 3).

*Percentage of students who made a plan about how they would attempt suicide during the 12 months before the survey.

**FIGURE 3**
ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

In 2009, 10.9% of Louisiana students attempted suicide one or more times during the past twelve months, a much higher rate than nationally at 6.3% (Figure 4). Additionally, in Louisiana this is an increase from the previous year; whereas national rates have remained fairly constant.

» Both males and females have shown an increase in attempting suicide in one year, and percents are similar (9-11%) (Figure 4).

» Fewer black students (9.8%) attempted suicide than white students (11.8%) in 2009, but the trend was opposite in 2008 where more black students attempted suicide compared to white students (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4
**Attempted Suicide with Injury**

In 2009, 4.9% of Louisiana students’ suicide attempts resulted in an injury, a higher rate than nationally at only 1.9%, and a 2 percentage point increase from 2008 (Figure 5). The national rate remained low from 2008 to 2009 at about 2%.

- Male and female students who made suicide attempts had almost identical rates in 2009 (about 5%), and both have increased from 2008 (Figure 5).
- More black students attempted suicide with injury than white students in both surveys (Figure 5).
- Agreeing with other trends in suicide estimates, 12th graders had the lowest percents compared to other grades (Figure 5) for 2009.

For more information on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, go to [http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm).

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*Percentage of students whose suicide attempt resulted in injury, poisoning, or an overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse during the 12 months before the survey.*
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