Adolescent Mental Health* Among Youth in the MetroWest Region
Highlights from the 2021 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey (Grades 7-12)

Depressive symptoms increased from 2018 to 2021.

- 20% -2021- vs. 14% -2018- Middle school
- 27% -2021- vs. 20% -2018- High school

More students have engaged in self-injury since 2018.

- 13% -2021- vs. 10% -2018- Middle school
- 19% -2021- vs. 13% -2018- High school

➔ 17% of middle school youth seriously considered suicide in their lifetime in 2021, compared to 14% in 2018.

➔ 5% of middle school youth attempted suicide in their lifetime in 2021, compared to 4% in 2018.

Mental health problems are reported by more females than males.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>High School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>report depressive symptoms</td>
<td>report depressive symptoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>report suicide idealization</td>
<td>report suicide idealization</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Mental health problems are higher among youth who report bullying and substance use.†

For example, among high school youth, suicidal ideation is reported by:

- 32% of school bullying victims (vs. 11% of nonvictims)
- 30% of cyberbullying victims (vs. 12% of nonvictims)
- 23% of current alcohol users (vs. 13% of nonusers)
- 29% of current marijuana users (vs. 14% of nonusers)

LGBTQ§ students report:

- 2.9x higher
- 4.3x higher
- 3.8x higher

Middle School

- Depressive symptoms
- Self-injury
- Seriously considering suicide

(-compared to heterosexual, cisgender youth)

Students with disabilities‡ report:

- 1.9x higher
- 2.1x higher

Middle School

- Depressive symptoms
- Self-injury
- Seriously considering suicide

(-compared to students without disabilities)

The MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey (MWAHS) is conducted by Education Development Center, with funding from the MetroWest Health Foundation. The MWAHS is an anonymous survey of youth in 25 communities. One of the largest student surveys in the nation, its goal is to inform local policies and programs. In 2021, 39,293 students took surveys, representing 86% of students in the region.

* Reports of depressive symptoms and self-injury are during the past 12 months. Reports of considering and attempting suicide are lifetime among middle school youth, and during the past 12 months among high school youth.
† Substance use behaviors refer to the past 30 days; bullying behaviors refer to the past 12 months; all data in this section is for high school students.
‡ Includes youth who report learning and/or physical disabilities.
§ Defined as students who identify as gay/lesbian, bisexual, transgender, gender-queer, questioning/unsure, or describe their sexual and gender identity in another way.