

Handout 3, Youth Suicide

- Suicide (i.e., taking one's own life) is a serious public health problem that affects even young people. For youth between the ages of 10 and 24, suicide is the third leading cause of death.
- Deaths from youth suicide are only part of the problem. More young people survive suicide attempts than actually die. A nationwide survey of youth in grades 9-12 in public and private schools in the United States (U.S.) found that 15% of students reported seriously considering suicide, 11% reported creating a plan, and 7% reporting trying to take their own life in the 12 months preceding the survey.
- Suicide affects all youth, but some groups are at higher risk than others. Boys are more likely than girls to die from suicide. Of the reported suicides in the 10 to 24 age group, 84% of the deaths were males and 16% were females.
- Cultural variations in suicide rates also exist, with Native American/Alaskan Native and Hispanic youth having the highest rates of suicide-related fatalities.
- The Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey reported that lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) high school students in Massachusetts were more than four times as likely as the state's non-LGB students to have attempted suicide in the last year (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2006).ⁱ
- Eisenberg and Resnick (2006) found that LGB students in grades 9 and 12 were significantly more likely to have attempted suicide than their heterosexual peers. 52.4 percent of LB females and 29.0 percent of GB males had attempted suicide. The percentages of non-GLB females and males who had attempted suicide were 24.8 and 12.6 percent respectively.
- While little research exists on transgender people and suicidal behavior, it is reasonable to hypothesize that transgender youth—in common with LGB youth—have elevated risk and lower protective factors for suicidal behavior.ⁱⁱ

Resources

The Trevor Project: 24/7 suicide and crisis prevention helpline for LGBT and questioning youth. **1-866-4-U-TREVOR (1-866-488-7386)**

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Free, 24-hour hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

^{i, ii} Suicide Prevention Resource Center