

about

# TEENAGE DEPRESSION & SUICIDE IN FAIRFAX COUNTY

## What you need to know?

Depression on the Fairfax County Youth Survey is defined as feeling so sad or hopeless almost everyday for weeks or more that they stopped doing some usual activities. Overall, 31% of students responded that they felt depressed in the past year. Students were also asked if they had considered attempting suicide or actually attempted suicide in the past year.

A higher percentage of female students reported symptoms of depression, considering suicide, and actually attempting suicide than male students.

Tenth grade students had the

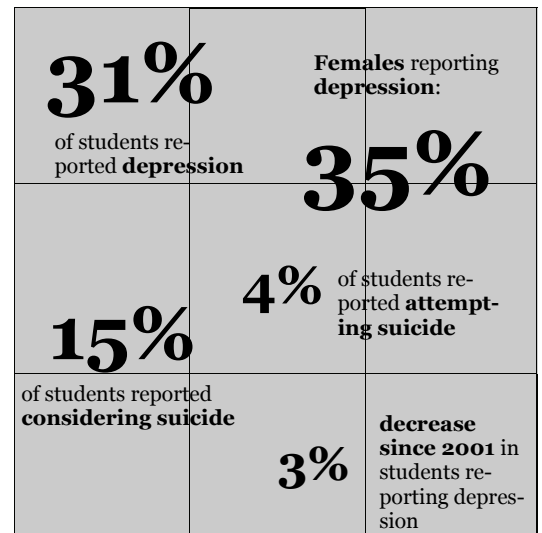
highest reported depressive symptoms as compared to 8th and 12th graders and compared to their peers nationally.

Similar to national trends, races/ethnicities other than White are more likely to report feeling depressed and considering suicide.

Reported rates of depression and considering suicide have decreased for students since 2001. Attempted suicide has decreased since 2005 when comparable data are available.



Fairfax County youth self-reported mental health behaviors



2008 Fairfax County Youth Survey Report

## what can I do?

### if your teen shows signs of ...

- Sadness or hopelessness
- Irritability, anger, or hostility
- Tearfulness or frequent crying
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Loss of interest in activities
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Restlessness and agitation
- Feelings of worthlessness and guilt
- Lack of enthusiasm and motivation
- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Thoughts of death or suicide

### consider ...

- How long have the symptoms been present?
- How severe are they?
- How different is your child behaving from normal?

Signs of teenage depression can look different from adults. Some signs that are more common for teenagers are irritability and anger rather than sadness, unexplained aches and pains, extreme sensitivity to criticism and feelings of worthlessness, and withdrawing from some, but not necessarily all, people. Teens may change "crowds" altogether.

Source: [www.helpguide.org](http://www.helpguide.org)

### if you are concerned ...

- Talk to your teen about depression
- Offer support and let them know you are there for them
- Be gentle, but persistent. Don't give up. Talking about depression is difficult
- Listen without lecturing, avoid giving unsolicited advice or ultimatums
- Validate their feelings, acknowledge their pain and sadness
- Seek professional help from your family doctor for a depression screening
- If there are no health problems, ask for a referral to a psychologist or psychiatrist
- Discuss treatment options



## who can help?



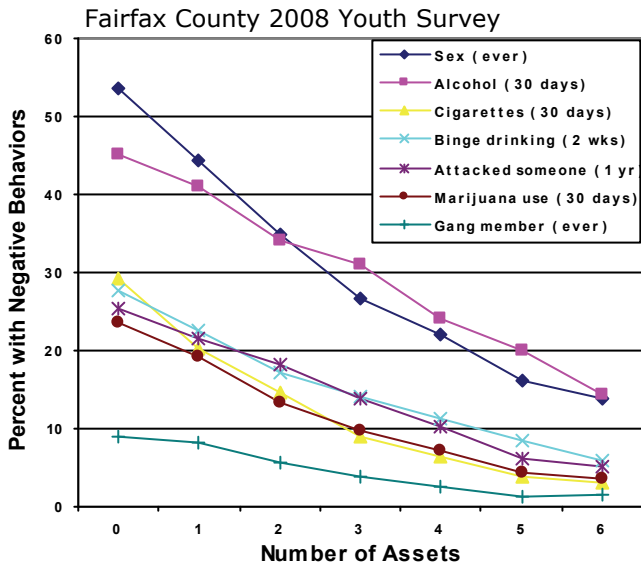
Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB)  
Mental Health Services  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/mhs](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/mhs)  
24-Hour CSB Emergency Services  
Phone: 703-573-5679 | TTY: 703-207-7737

Crisislink Suicide Prevention Hotline: (703) 527-4077

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-TALK (8255)

# THREE TO SUCCEED:

## Thriving In Fairfax



The Three to Succeed concept is based on the youth survey analysis that shows how just having 3 assets (or strengths) dramatically reduces risk behaviors and promotes thriving youth.

schools, and communities that help them thrive in health, in school and daily life, and in a safe environment.

Young people in Fairfax County report positive influences from their communities, families, schools, and friends demonstrating the benefits of everyone taking a role in ensuring that EVERYONE'S CHILDREN are thriving in Fairfax.

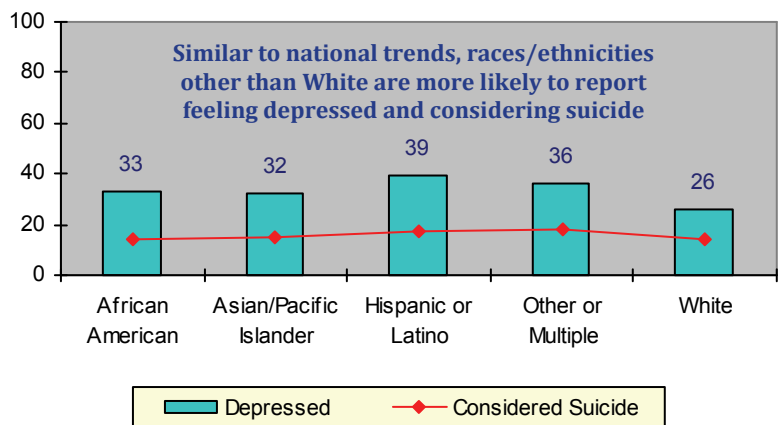
The more assets an individual has in their lives, the fewer risk behaviors. Assets are strengths in young people, their families,

Assets	
Good Grades	Parents notice when doing a good job
Involved in decision-making	Involved in extracurricular activities
Adults in my neighborhood to talk to	Involved in community service

## TEENAGE DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE

	Fairfax County 2008 Youth Survey Data						
	National YRBS	Fairfax Countywide	8th Grade	10th Grade	12th Grade	Female	Male
Depression	29%	<b>31%</b>	29%	<b>32%</b>	31%	<b>35%</b>	26%
Considered Suicide	15%	15%	14%	<b>17%</b>	12%	<b>18%</b>	11%
Attempted Suicide	<b>7%</b>	4%	3%	<b>4%</b>	3%	<b>5%</b>	2%

The Fairfax County Youth Survey was administered in the spring semester of 2008 to a randomly drawn, statistically valid sample of students. National comparisons are made to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) administered by the Center for Disease Control (CDC).



## websites

Fairfax County Youth Survey  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey)

Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Stop A Suicide Today  
<http://www.stopasuicide.org>

[www.helpguide.org](http://www.helpguide.org)

National Alliance on Mental Illness  
[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)



A Fairfax County VA Publication

### Fairfax County Youth who are depressed are :

- ◆ More likely to have used drugs or alcohol
- ◆ More likely to be sexually active
- ◆ Less likely to seek parental support for problems
- ◆ More likely to skip school