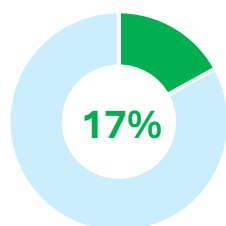


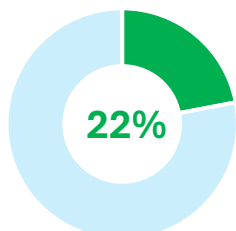
Adolescent Mental Health in the MetroWest Region

Highlights from the 2023 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey (Grades 7-12)

Depressive symptoms* are reported by:

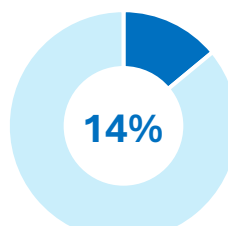


17% of middle school youth
(in the past 12 months)

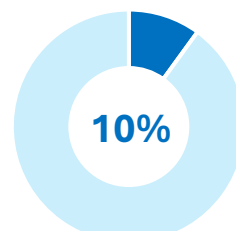


22% of high school youth
(in the past 12 months)

Serious suicidal thoughts† are reported by:



14% of middle school youth
(in their lifetime)



10% of high school youth
(in the past 12 months)



Teen mental health is showing some signs of improvement since 2021.

- **Depressive symptoms** in the past 12 months decreased in middle school (from 20% in 2021 to 17% in 2023) and high school (from 27% to 22%).
- **Serious suicidal thoughts** decreased in middle school (from 17% in 2021 to 14% in 2023; in their lifetime) and high school (from 16% to 10%; in the past 12 months).

Some youth are at higher risk of mental health problems. For example:

Middle School Girls (vs. boys) are:

- **2.0x** more likely to have depressive symptoms
- **1.8x** more likely to consider suicide

High School LGBTQ+ youth (vs. non-LGBTQ+ youth) are:

- **2.4x** more likely to have depressive symptoms
- **3.4x** more likely to consider suicide

Note: Patterns are similar in middle and high school.

Poor mental health is linked with higher substance use.‡

Among high school youth:

With depressive symptoms:

Without depressive symptoms



Vaped nicotine

18%

7%



Drank alcohol

30%

18%



Used marijuana

18%

8%

Note: Patterns are similar in middle and high school.

Some youth are getting help, but others may be in need of support.

Among youth with depressive symptoms:



39% of MS youth and
39% of HS youth talked with
a counselor at school**



32% of MS youth and
43% of HS youth talked with
a counselor outside of school**

For questions or support about mental health or other health concerns, reach out to your school's counseling department or nurse's office, your pediatrician, or a mental health specialist in your community.

For immediate help, call, text, or chat the national 988 Helpline: [Get Help - 988 Lifeline](#)



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The MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey (MWAHS) has been conducted by Education Development Center (EDC) since 2006, with funding from the MetroWest Health Foundation. The MWAHS is a voluntary and anonymous survey of youth in 25 communities that provides data to inform local adolescent health priorities and programs. In 2023, 38,074 students in grades 6-12 participated, representing 89% of middle school youth and 79% of high school youth in the region.

*Depressive symptoms are defined as feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities (in the past 12 months)

† Seriously considered attempting suicide; timeframe is "lifetime" for middle school youth and "past 12 months" for high school youth

‡ Used substance one or more times in the past 30 days

**Talked with a counselor or mental health professional about emotional challenges or problems in the past 12 months; this includes things that make you feel sad, angry, stressed, or anxious, or that may make you have thoughts of hurting yourself.