

BROWARD BRIEFINGS

SUBSTANCE ABUSE INFORMATION FOR ACTION



October 2020

Mental Distress and Suicide among Broward County High School Students

Newly released data from the CDC's biennial Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System survey provide a detailed look at mental distress and suicide attempts among high school students in the county. In 2019, nearly 37% of school students surveyed felt sad or hopeless during the past year – an increase of 6.8% since 2017. As shown in Table 1, rates are similar among Black, Hispanic, and white students, but compared to males, significantly more females reported feeling sad or hopeless. In addition, self-identifying gay, lesbian, and bisexual students were significantly more likely to report feeling sad or hopeless than their heterosexual peers.

Data related to attempted suicide followed a similar pattern; 10.9% of students reported a suicide attempt within the year – a decrease from 11.1% in 2017.

Although not statistically significant, Black and Hispanic students reported higher frequencies of suicide attempts than their white peers. However, females, compared to males, were significantly more likely to have attempted suicide in the past year; this trend was the same when comparing sexual minorities to heterosexual students. These data indicate that females as well as gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth may be in need of greater prevention and intervention efforts.

Table 1: Felt sad or hopeless (past year)

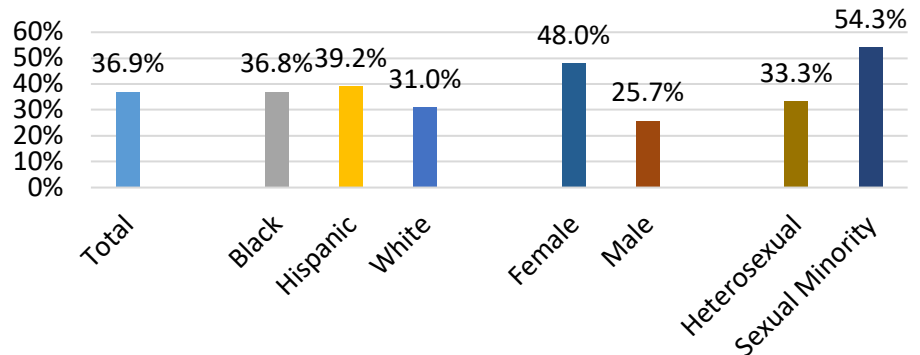
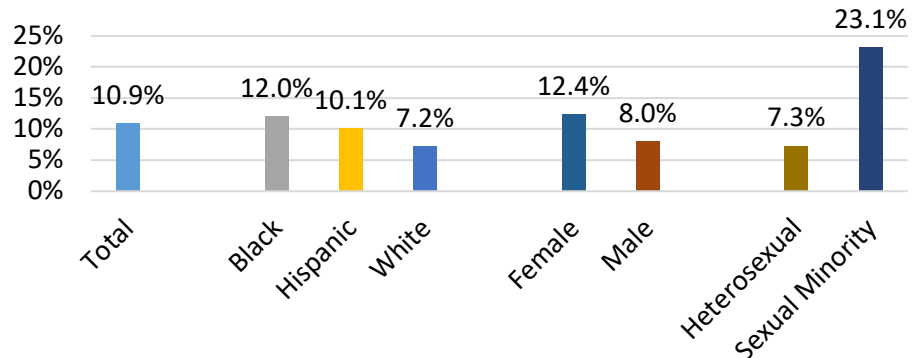


Table 2: Attempted suicide (past year)



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 1991-2019 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data. Available at <http://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/>. Accessed August 26, 2020; <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/features/teen-substance-use.html>.

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