

SUICIDAL THOUGHTS OR ATTEMPTS and YOUTH RISK and PROTECTIVE FACTORS
 2007 Minnesota Student Survey Statewide Data
 9th Grade Students

What is the purpose of these tables and graphs?

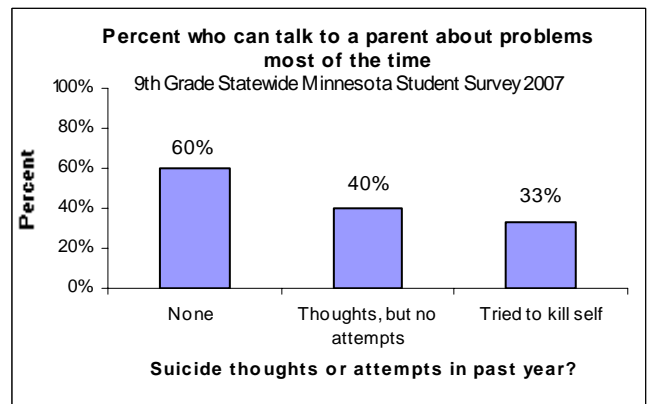
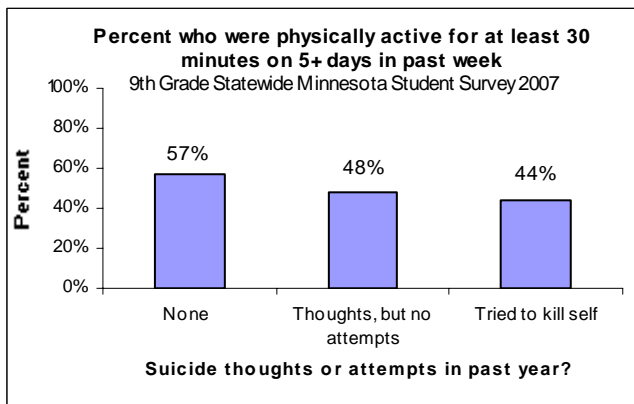
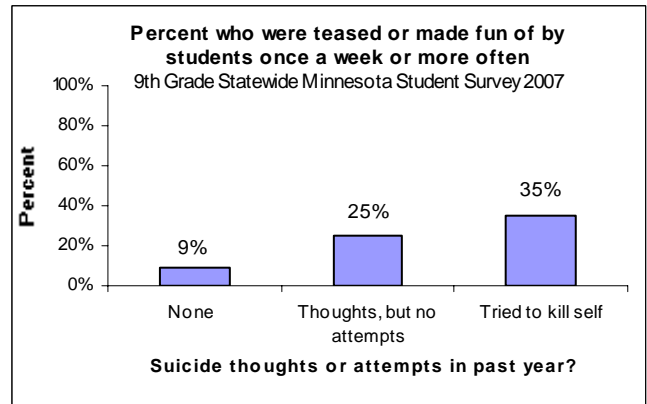
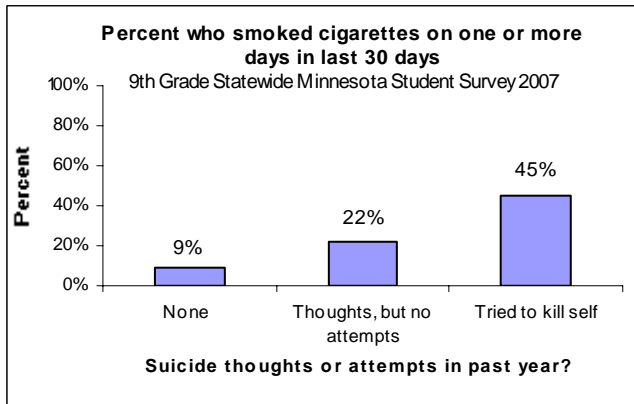
This issue brief provides data showing the extent to which selected risk and protective factors are associated with suicidal thoughts and attempts. The risk and protective factors selected for this brief are of interest to many who work with teens, but represent just a sample of all the survey questions that could be investigated. Each brief in this series uses the same set of risk and protective factors. An association only means that two factors often occur together. It is important to remember that the survey results alone cannot tell us if one factor “causes” or “predicts” the other. Just because two factors are associated with each other does not mean they are causally related.

How should I read these tables and graphs?

In this brief, 9th grade students are divided into three groups. The table on the reverse side compares these three groups on various risk and protective factors. For example, 39,653 students said they did not have suicidal thoughts or attempts in the past year; of these students, 9 percent reported smoking cigarettes in the last 30 days. In addition, 6,566 students said they had thoughts of killing themselves but made no attempts; of these students, 22 percent reported smoking. Finally, 1,820 students said they had tried to kill themselves in the past year, and 45 percent of these students reported smoking.

What do these tables and graphs say about suicidal thoughts and attempts and other risk and protective factors?

In general, 9th grade students who reported either suicidal thoughts or attempts are much more likely to engage in or be exposed to each of the *risk factors* examined in the table than are students who reported no thoughts or attempts. In addition, students who had no thoughts or attempts are more likely to engage in or be exposed to the *protective factors* examined in the table. Exceptions to this general pattern include watching TV, DVDs and videos, and eating fruits and vegetables.



This brief is based on responses by students in regular public schools to questions on the 2007 Minnesota Student Survey. Over 90 percent of the regular public school districts in the state participated in the 2007 survey. The participation rate for all 9th grade students was 76 percent. Statewide and county results can be found on the web at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/mss>.

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(continued from reverse side)

Risk Factors	Suicidal thoughts or attempts in the past year*		
	None	Suicide thoughts only	Tried to kill self
Number of Students (N)	39,653	6,566	1,820
Smoked cigarettes on one or more days in last 30 days	9%	22%	45%
Drank alcoholic beverages on one or more days in last 30 days	20%	37%	58%
Used marijuana on one or more days in last 30 days	7%	16%	35%
Have ever had sexual intercourse	15%	29%	54%
Felt sad all or most of the time in last 30 days	7%	38%	61%
Hit or beat up another person one or more times in last 12 months	23%	36%	50%
Skipped or cut one or more days of school in last 30 days	18%	29%	46%
Have been kicked, bitten or hit at least once on school property in last 12 months	22%	36%	48%
Have been teased, made fun of or excluded by other students once a week or more often	9%	25%	35%
Alcohol or drug use by family member has repeatedly caused problems	16%	32%	48%
Have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse by someone in their family	8%	27%	49%
Spend 11 or more hours per week watching TV, DVDs or videos	22%	26%	26%

Protective Factors	Suicidal thoughts or attempts in the past year*		
	None	Suicide thoughts only	Tried to kill self
Number of Students (N)	39,653	6,566	1,820
Had 5 or more servings of fruits & vegetables yesterday	18%	17%	19%
Were physically active for at least 30 minutes on 5 or more days in past week	57%	48%	44%
Always wear a seat belt when they ride in a car	60%	50%	42%
Like going to school "very much" or "quite a bit"	49%	37%	28%
Say that "all" or "most" of their teachers show respect for students	76%	65%	52%
Live with two parents	72%	65%	53%
Can talk to at least one parent "most of the time"	60%	40%	33%
Feel their friends care about them "very much" or "quite a bit"	78%	63%	53%
Spend 6 or more hours per week doing homework	30%	27%	20%
Participate on school sports teams 1 or 2 times per week or more often	51%	38%	28%
Participate in religious activities (including youth group, programs, etc) 1 or 2 times per week or more often	44%	39%	30%

*This is a composite variable that focuses on the past year and is created from two questions: (1) "Have you ever thought about killing yourself?" and (2) "Have you ever tried to kill yourself?" The possible responses for each question are: "No"; "Yes, during the last year"; and "Yes, more than a year ago".

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