

Big rise in US teen girls reporting violence, sadness. Far more than boys

February 13 2023, by Cara Murez



An alarming new survey shows that American teen girls are experiencing

record high levels of violence, sadness and suicide risk.

Schools may be the answer to improving what's happening for [young people](#), according to the report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

About 3 in 5 girls—57%—said they felt persistently sad or hopeless in 2021. That's up 60%, the CDC reported, and those numbers are double the number of [teen](#) boys experiencing sadness or hopelessness.

Girls fared worse than boys across nearly all measures, though all teens reported increasing mental health challenges, experiences of violence and suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

LGBTQ teens also continued to experience extremely high levels of [violence](#) and mental health concerns.

"High school should be a time for trailblazing, not trauma. These data show our kids need far more support to cope, hope, and thrive," said Dr. Debra Houry, the CDC's Chief Medical Officer and Deputy Director for Program and Science.

"Proven school prevention programs can offer teens a vital lifeline in these growing waves of trauma," she said in an agency news release.

According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 30% of teen girls seriously considered attempting suicide. About 18% experienced [sexual violence](#) in the past year, up 20% from 2017, when the CDC started monitoring this measure.

About 14% had ever been forced to have sex, up 27% since 2019.

Meanwhile, about 52% of LGBTQ students had recently experienced

poor mental health and 22% had attempted suicide in the past year.

But in schools, safe and trusted adults, including mentors, trained teachers and staff, could help foster connectedness for teens.

Schools can also equip teens with skills that include understanding and ensuring true sexual consent, managing emotions and asking for what they need. School-based clubs and [community outreach](#) could connect teens with their classmates and communities, the CDC added.

"Young people are experiencing a level of distress that calls on us to act with urgency and compassion," CDC Division of Adolescent and School Health Director Kathleen Ethier said in the release. "With the right programs and services in place, schools have the unique ability to help our youth flourish."

More information: The American Academy of Pediatrics has more on [teen mental health](#).

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