



## Risk Factors among Adolescents

February 10, 2017

News Type: Weekly Spark, Weekly Spark Research

An analysis of data from the 2010 Minnesota Student Survey developed risk profiles for four groups of students in the 9th and 12th grades based on their levels of suicide risk and involvement with eight behaviors: maladaptive dieting, prescription drug misuse, illegal drug use, marijuana use, problem drinking, risky sexual behavior, perpetration of interpersonal violence, and non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI). The authors suggested that these profiles can help practitioners understand which adolescents should be monitored for suicide risk. The analysis also provided evidence that family and school connections protect young people from suicide risk associated with other risk behaviors.

Six percent of the sample was classified as high risk for suicide. Among those, 12.8 percent reported a suicide attempt and 17.9 percent reported ideation within the past year. These students "reported well above average levels on all behavioral risk factors, highest across all classes, except for the maladaptive dieting and NSSI indicators." This group also fared poorly on intrapersonal factors, such as depression and anxiety; family factors, such as abuse and parent connectedness; and school factors, such as bullying and low academic achievement.

The students at second highest risk of suicide were the seven percent of the sample who reported both maladaptive dieting and NSSI. In this group, 11.4 percent had attempted suicide and 26.7 percent had experienced ideation in the past year. These young people were also found to have above average rates of violence perpetration, risky sexual behaviors, and marijuana use. This group was largely composed of 9th grade girls. The authors suggested that elevated levels of family and school connections in this group compared to the highest risk group may have protected against suicidal behavior.

A third group, termed "experimenters," reported above average risk on marijuana use, problem drinking, risky sexual behavior, and violence perpetration, but relatively low risk on all other behavioral indicators. In this group, 2.2 percent reported attempts and 10.1 percent reported ideation in the past year. Representing about a fifth of the total sample, this group consisted of mostly 12th grade students.

The lowest risk group constituted 64 percent of the sample. Among those, 1 percent had attempted suicide and 7.5 percent had experienced ideation in the past year. The students in this group reported "levels close to zero on most of the behavioral risk indicators."

Thullen, M. J., Taliaferro, L. A., & Muehlenkamp, J. J. (2015). Suicide ideation and attempts among adolescents engaged in risk behaviors: A latent class analysis. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 26(3), 587–594.

Printed on 05/26/2020 from <http://www.sprc.org/news/risk-factors-among-adolescents>



# Suicide Prevention Resource Center

---

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center at EDC is supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), under Grant No. 5U79SM062297.

The views, opinions, and content expressed in this product do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of CMHS, SAMHSA, or HHS.

Copyright © 2002-2019 by Education Development Center, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

