



School-Based Mental Health Services and Suicide Risk

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Recent findings from Oregon suggest that increasing the availability of mental health services in school-based health centers (SBHCs) may decrease suicide risk and substance use among at-risk adolescents. These results suggest that SBHCs may be a critical partner in youth-based suicide and substance use prevention.

Researchers used data from 168 public schools that participated in the Oregon Healthy Teens Survey in 2013 and 2015. They compared student outcomes in schools that increased their mental health services within that time period to those that did not, and to those without SBHCs. Students with a past-year depressive disorder who attended a school with increased mental health services were less likely to report past-year suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and cigarette smoking than students in the comparison schools. Lower frequencies of marijuana and unauthorized prescription drug use were also found in schools that increased their mental health services, compared to other schools.

SBHC mental health services may be protective for at-risk adolescents. However, more research is needed to better understand the types of services and the level of service use needed in order to produce the most benefit.

Paschall, M. J., & Bersamin, M. (2017). School-based mental health services, suicide risk, and substance use among at-risk adolescents in Oregon. *Preventive Medicine*, 106, 209–215.

Populations: Youth

Settings: Schools, Middle School, High School

About Suicide: Behavioral Health Disorders, Depression/Bipolar, Substance Abuse, Suicidal Thoughts and Behavior, Ideation, Attempts

Strategies: Effective Care/Treatment, Treatment

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