

Violence/Bullying/Suicide/Mental Health

Adolescents who experience violence are at increased risk of behavioral and mental health difficulties, including future violence perpetration and victimization, smoking, substance use, obesity, high-risk sexual behavior, depression, academic difficulties, school dropout, and suicide.⁽¹⁾ Bullying victimization is associated with depression, suicidal ideation, self-injury, suicide attempts, school absenteeism or dropping out, and psychological distress.⁽²⁾ Suicide is the second leading cause of death among people ages 10-14 and 20-34 in the United States.⁽³⁾

2023 Results

The following are findings related to various issues related to mental health, bullying, violence and suicide among NJ students for 2023:

- In the past year, 15% of NJ high school students reported they were electronically bullied on some social media platforms or through texting
- On at least one of the past 30 days, 7% of students skipped school because they felt unsafe either at school or on the way to school.
- In the past year, more than a third of NJ students (36%) felt sad or hopeless either always or most of the time for at least 2 weeks causing them to stop some or all of their usual activities.
- About one-in-seven students seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months (14%) while 11% made an actual plan for suicide and 5% reported attempting suicide in that period.
- One-in-five students (20%) did something to purposely hurt themselves (like cutting or burning) in the past 12 months without wanting to die.
- More than a quarter of students (27%) described their mental health in the past 30 days as being “not good” either always or most of the time.







Other findings in these areas include the following:

- Among students who visited a doctor, 23% reported their doctor or nurse discussed ways to deal with feelings of hopelessness or sadness.
- 23% of students gambled on a sports team, gambled when playing cards or a dice game, played one of their state's lottery games, gambled on the Internet, or bet on a game of personal skill such as pool or a video game at least once in the past 12 months.
- Among students who reported having felt sad or hopeless for 2 weeks or more at time in the past year, only 25% indicated they can get the kind of help they need most of the time or always.
- 10% of students indicated that someone forced them to do sexual things that they did not want to do in the past 12 months one or more times – 15% of females and 4% of males.
- Among the 56% of students who dated in the past 12 months, 12% indicated that someone they were dating or going out with physically hurt them on purpose one or more times. This was similar for both males and females who were dating.

Trend Summary

The general 10-year trend related to violence/bullying/suicide/mental health issues among New Jersey youth is mixed, though largely unchanged. The percentage of students who reported being electronically bullied remained consistent at 15% from 2013 to 2023 while students who skipped school because they felt unsafe moved from 6% in 2013 to 7% in 2023. There was little change in the percentage of students who considered suicide (14% in 2013 and 2023) or those who made a plan for suicide (12% vs 11% in 2013 and 2023). Students reporting having made a suicide attempt though declined from 10% to 5% in that 10-year period.

The percentage of students who reported feeling sad/hopeless increased from 29% to 36% in the 10-year period, though the 2023 percentage represented a decrease from 42% in 2021. Likewise, students who reported their mental health was “not good” fell from 33% to 27% in the past two survey years of 2021 and 2023. The percentage of students who indicated they harmed themselves increased slightly from 18% to 20% across 2013 and 2023.

Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
Felt Sad or Hopeless <i>ever felt sad/hopeless almost every day for >=2 weeks in a row so that they stopped doing some usual activities during the last 12 months</i>	29%	36%	42%	36%	Increase in a negative behavior 
Considered Suicide <i>seriously considered attempting suicide during the last 12 months</i>	14%	15%	20%	14%	No change in behavior 
Made Plan for Suicide <i>made a plan about how they would attempt suicide during the last 12 months</i>	12%	12%	13%	11%	No change in behavior 
Attempted Suicide <i>actually attempted suicide</i>	10%	6%	10%	5%	Decrease in negative behavior 
Purposely Hurt Themselves <i>did something to purposely hurt themselves without wanting to die (such as cutting or burning) one of more times in last 12 months</i>	18%	14%	22%	20%	No change in behavior 
Skipped School because they Felt Unsafe <i>did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school on at least 1 day during the last 30 days</i>	6%	8%	11%	7%	No change in behavior 

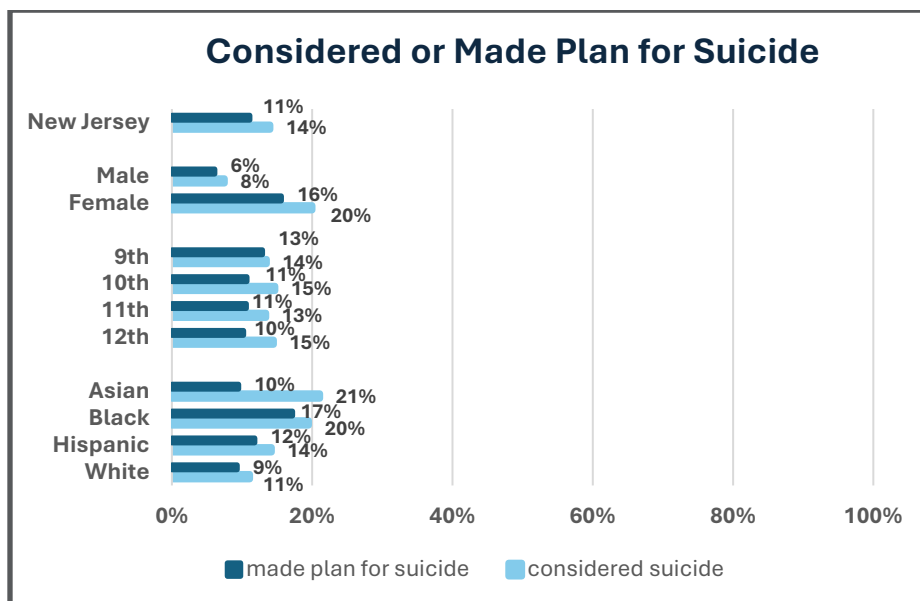
Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
Electronically Bullied <i>ever bullied through texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media during the last 12 months</i>	15%	14%	15%	15%	No change in behavior ●
Mental Health Not Good <i>reported mental health was not good most of the time or always (including stress, anxiety, and depression) during the past 30 days</i>			33%	27%	Trend not reported by CDC —

Note: Trend analysis was performed by the CDC on data from 2013 to 2023 to determine which differences across years were statistically significant. For questions not asked in all survey years, the trend analysis was performed from 2021 back to the last consecutive year in which the question was asked.

Demographic Breakdown

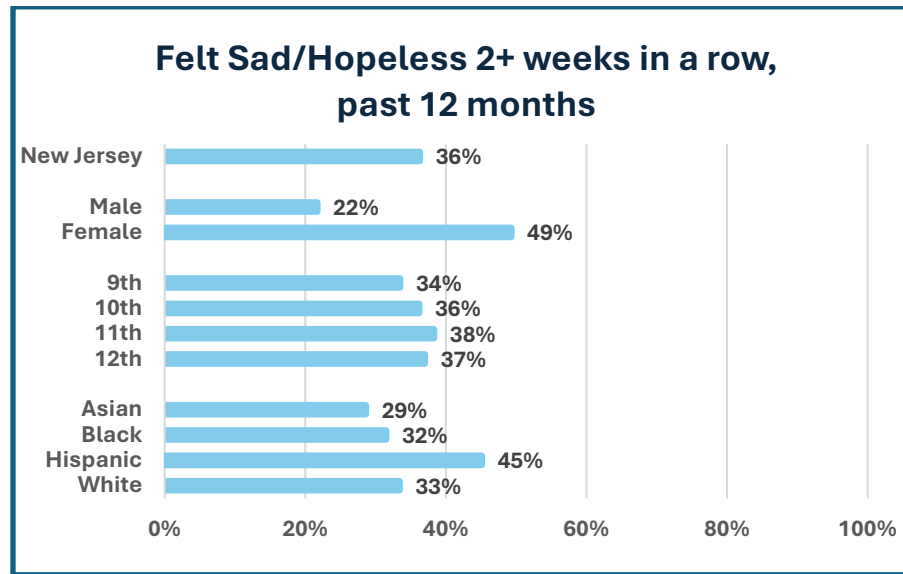
More than one-in-ten NJ high school students indicated they had either considered suicide (14%) or made a suicide plan (11%) in the past 12 months.

- **Gender** – Females were more than twice as likely as males to have either considered suicide (20% vs 8%) or to have made a suicide plan (16% vs 6%).
- **Grade** – There were very slight grade differences with regard to suicide consideration or planning.
- **Race/Ethnicity** –Asian (21%) and Black (20%) students were most likely to have considered suicide while Black students (17%) were most likely to have made a suicide plan.



More than one third of NJ high school students indicated they had felt sad or hopeless for two weeks in a row or more in the past 12 months.

- **Gender** – Females were more than twice as likely as males to have reported feeling sad/hopeless (49% vs 22%).
- **Grade** – There were very slight grade differences regarding feeling sad/hopeless with those in 11th grade (38%) having the highest rate and those in 9th grade (34%) with the lowest.
- **Race/Ethnicity** –Hispanic students (45%) were most likely to have felt sad/hopeless for two or more weeks in a row compared to much lower rates for Asian (29%), Blacks (32%) or Whites (33%).



Resources

- Suicide Prevention Hotline: Call or Text 988
- NJ Hopeline: Call or Text 855-654-6735, <https://njhopeline.com>
- Prevent Suicide New Jersey: <https://preventsuicidenj.org/>
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP): <https://afsp.org>
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC): <https://www.sprc.org/states/new-jersey>
- Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide (SPTS): <https://sptsusa.org>