Youth Suicide in Illinois

98 Illinois youth ages 10-19 died by suicide in 2020

That’s more than 1 every 4 days,
Or 5 full school classrooms

3rd leading cause of death among youth ages 10-19.

Suicide death rates are highest among youth who are White, male, or live in rural counties.

Deaths from suicide are rising among females, Black, and Latino youth, and youth living in urban and suburban communities.

45,000 Illinois high school students attempted suicide in 2019

That’s one every 12 minutes.
Or 625 full school buses.

Suicide attempts have remained steady since 2009.

Out of every 12 Illinois high school students...

1 attempted suicide and
2 others seriously considered or made plans to attempt suicide.

Male and female students were equally likely to attempt suicide.

Lesbian, gay, or bisexual students were 4 times as likely to attempt suicide as heterosexual students.

Black and Latino students were 1.5 times as likely to attempt suicide as White students.

Questions?
Contact the Illinois Department of Public Health
Office of Women’s Health and Family Services
Division of Maternal, Child, and Family Health Services
DPH.MCH@illinois.gov
Risk Factors for Suicidal Behavior Among Illinois Youth

Experiencing the following types of violence increases risk of suicidal behaviors:
- Being bullied
- Feeling unsafe at school
- Sexual abuse
- Physical dating violence
- Sexual dating violence
- In a physical fight with someone
- Carrying a weapon

Youth who experienced three or more types of violence are five times as likely to have suicidal behaviors as youth who do not experience any violence.

1 in 10 students experienced three or more types of violence.

Using any of the following substances increases risk of suicidal behaviors:
- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Marijuana
- Prescription pain medication misuse
- Other substances, such as cocaine, heroin, or methamphetamines

Youth who use three or more substances are three times as likely to have suicidal behaviors as youth who do not use any substances.

1 in 10 Students used three or more substances.

Resources

Know the Warning Signs for Suicide
- Threatening to, or talking about wanting to, hurt or kill oneself.
- Looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means.
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide when these actions are out of the ordinary.
- Feeling hopeless.
- Feeling rage or uncontrolled anger or seeking revenge.
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities.
- Feeling trapped - like there's no way out.
- Increasing alcohol or drug use.
- Withdrawing from friends, family, and society.
- Feeling anxious, agitated, or unable to sleep or sleeping all the time.
- Experiencing dramatic mood changes.
- Seeing no reason for living or having no sense of purpose in life.

Seek Help
If you or someone you know shows warning signs for suicide, or wants to discuss mental health concerns, contact:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
800-273-TALK

National Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741-741

Safe2Help Illinois
844-4-SAFE-IL
Text SAFE2 (72332)

Illinois CARES
800-345-9049

Trans Lifeline:
877-565-8860

The Trevor Project
866-488-7386

For More Information, please visit:
- IDPH Website
- Safe2Help Illinois
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Data Sources and Methodology
1) Illinois Death Certificates for Illinois residents, 2010-2020
2) Illinois Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 2009-2019*

*YRBS is representative of Illinois public high school students. Suicidal behaviors are self-reported by students. YRBS is conducted in odd years only; 2019 is the latest year available.