How are Wisconsin Kids Doing?

Data and Trends in Youth Mental Health

Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health

About These Data

Amidst growing acceptance of the importance of mental wellness, understanding that everyone has mental health, and recognition of the youth mental health crisis, The Office of Children's Mental Health (OCMH) is promoting resources and providing data for public use.

- These following data are representative of all youth and young adults, not just those with diagnosed mental health conditions.
- If you have questions about the data, please contact OCMH Senior Research Analyst Amy Marsman (amy.marsman@wisconsin.gov).
- Everyone can contribute to improving youth mental health. If you have questions on how to take action or where to find resources, please contact us (OCMH@wi.gov).

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How are Wisconsin kids doing?

Trends in key areas of youth mental health

- Anxiety ⬆
- Depression ⬆
- Self-Harm ⬆
- Suicidality ⬆

- Sufficient Sleep ⬇
- School Belonging ⬇
- Risky sexual behaviors ⬇
- Drinking, cigarette use, drug use ⬇

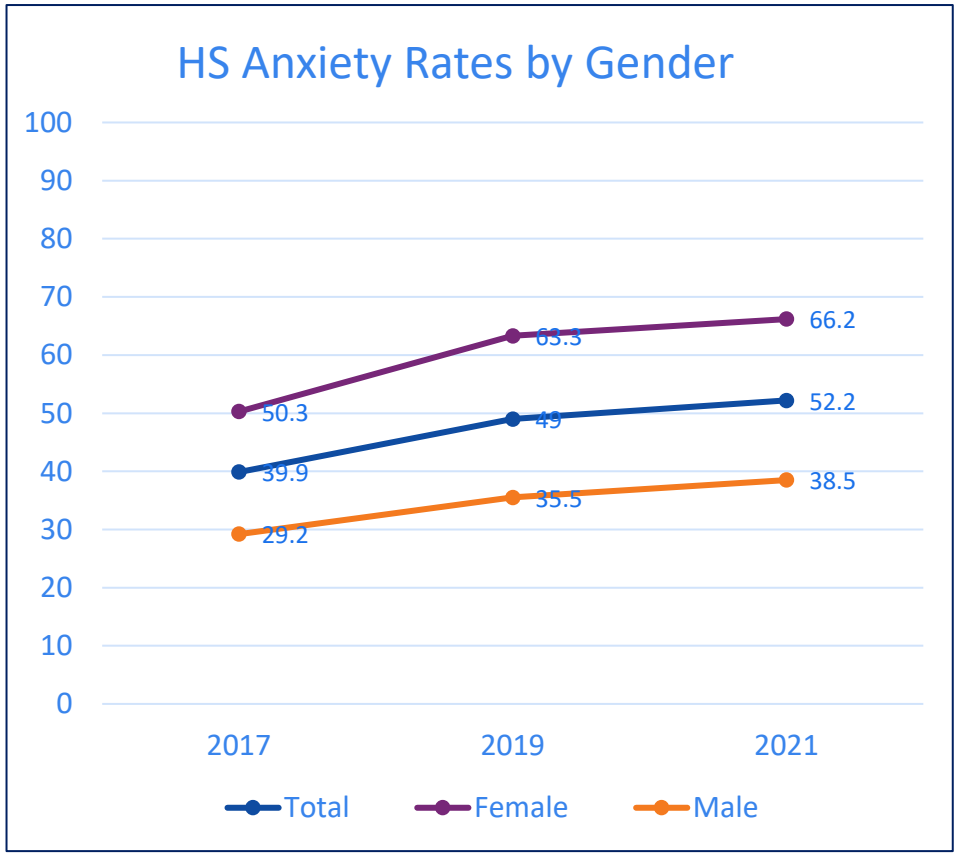
2022 Well-Being Trends Wisconsin Kids

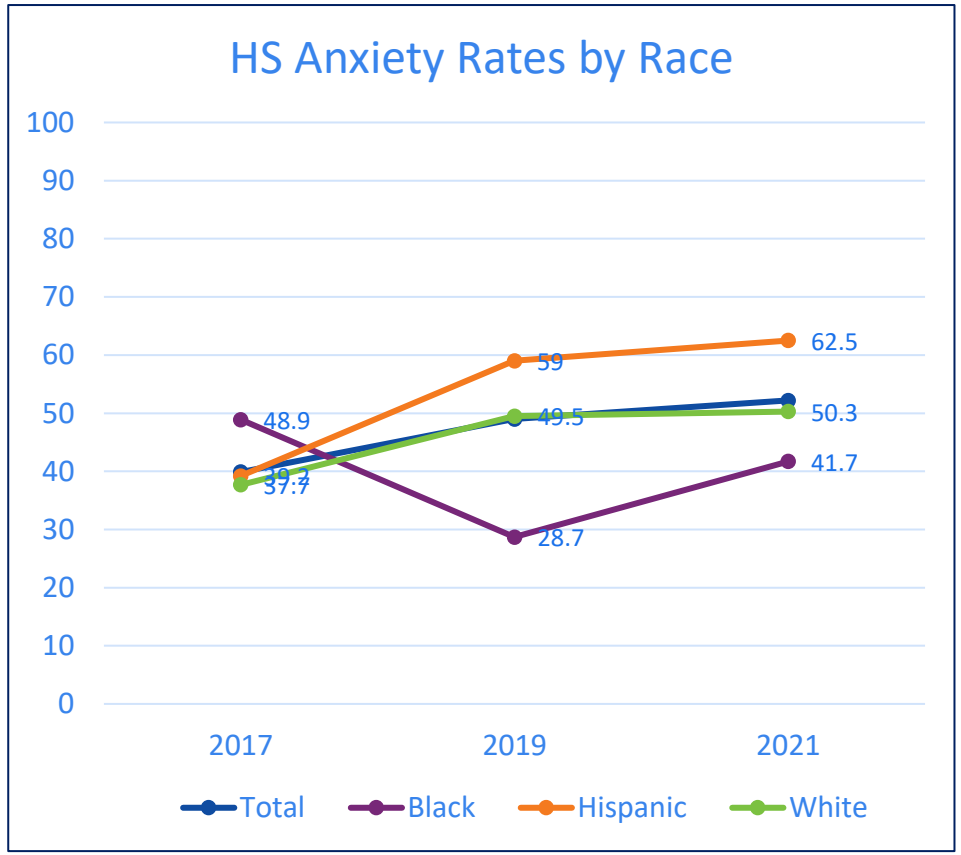
- 1 in 2 feel **anxious**
- 1 in 3 feel **sad or hopeless**
- 1 in 4 girls **seriously consider suicide**
- 1 in 5 kids **self-harm**

Source: YRBS 2021 data as reported in OCMH 2022 Annual Report
Retrieved from: Office of Children's Mental Health

Anxiety

Source: CDC 10-Year Report, Wisconsin YRBS,
Retrieved from: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction YRBS





Female = 66.2
Male = 38.5

Hispanic = 62.5
White = 50.3
Black = 41.7

HS= High School

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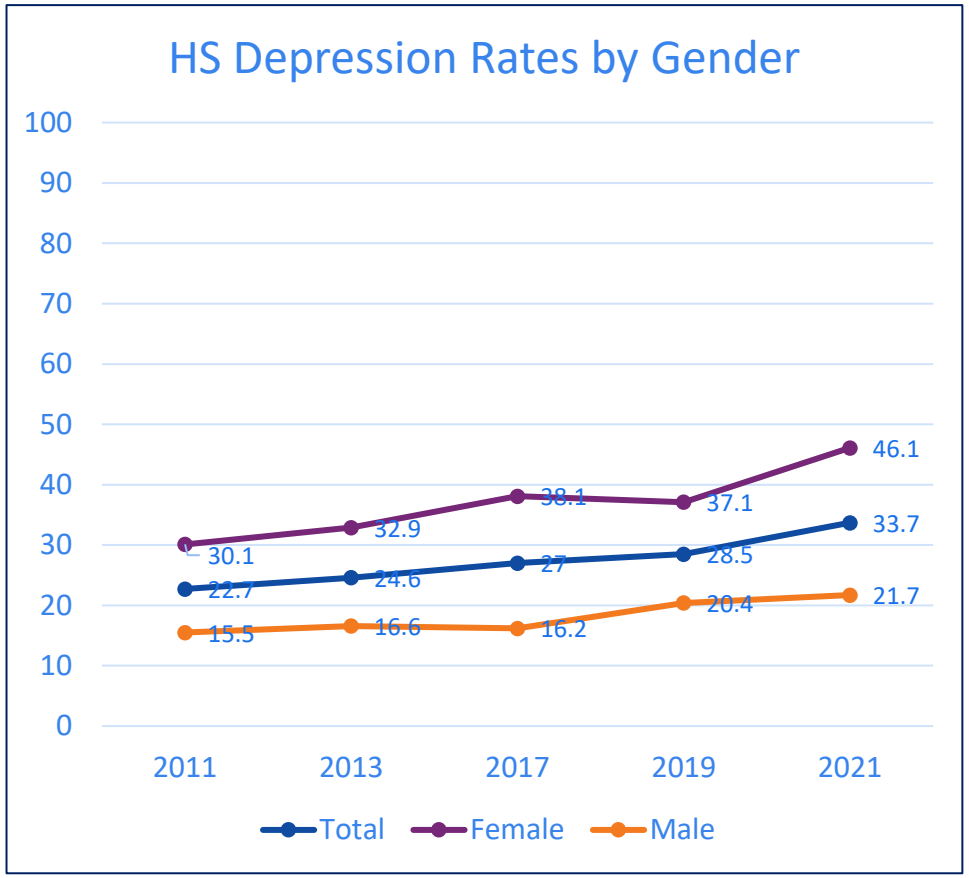
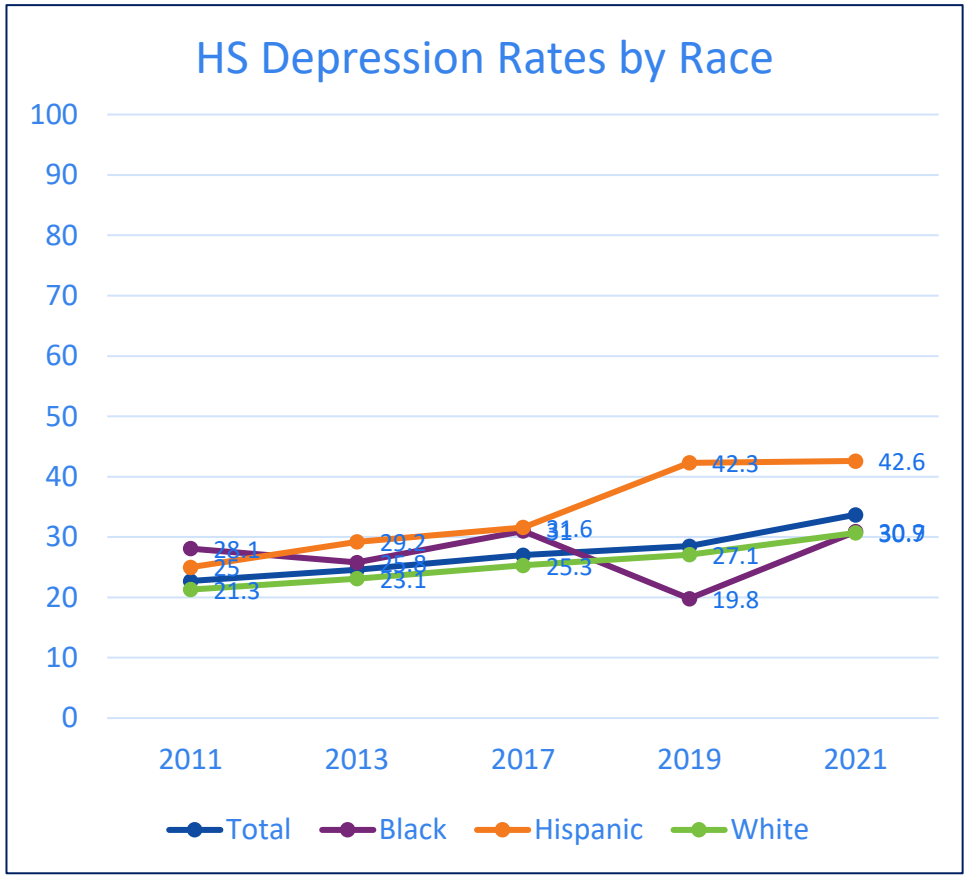
Source: CDC 10-Year Report, Wisconsin YRBS,
Retrieved from: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction YRBS

Depression



Female = 46.1
Male = 21.7



Hispanic = 42.6
White = 30.9
Black = 30.9

HS= High School

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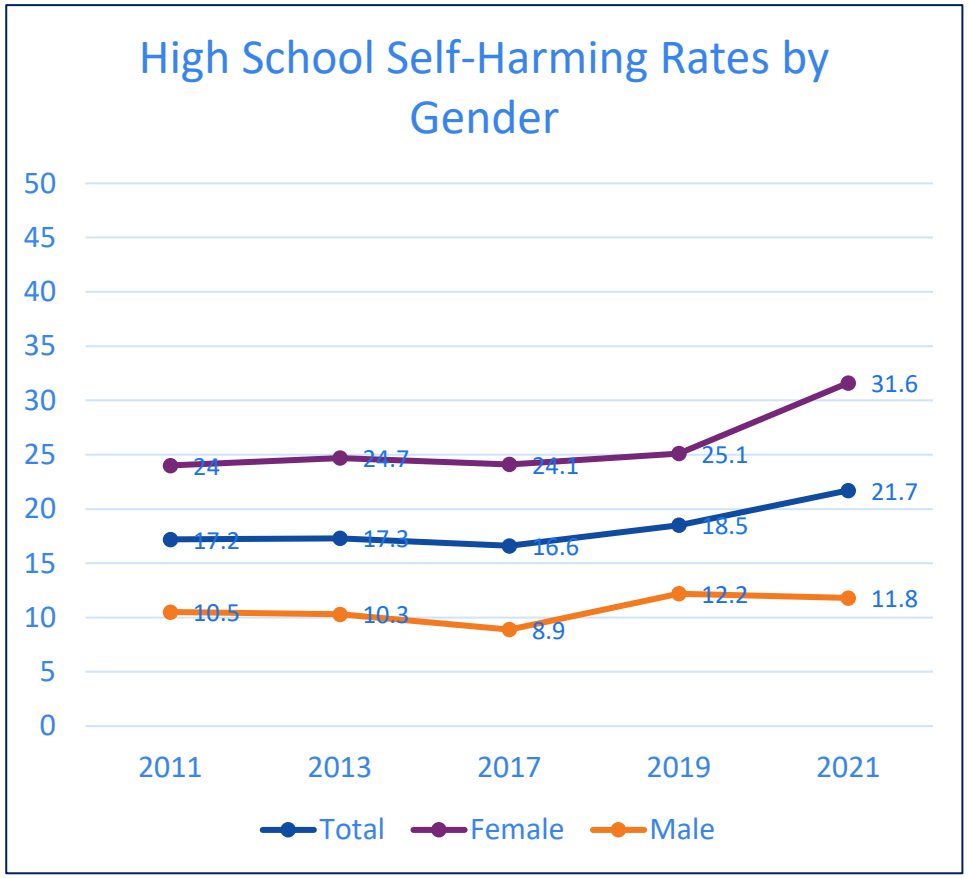
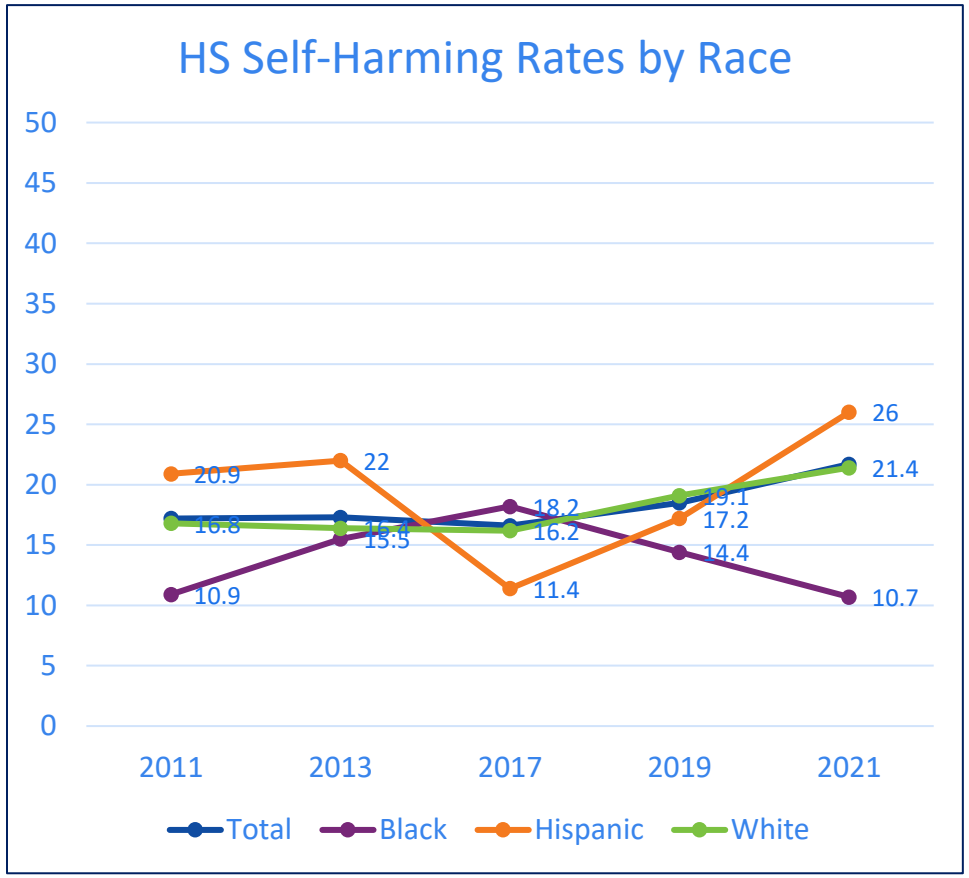
Source: CDC 10-Year Report, Wisconsin YRBS,
Retrieved from: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction YRBS

Self Harm





Female = 31.6
Male = 11.8

Hispanic = 26.0
White = 21.4
Black = 10.7

HS= High School

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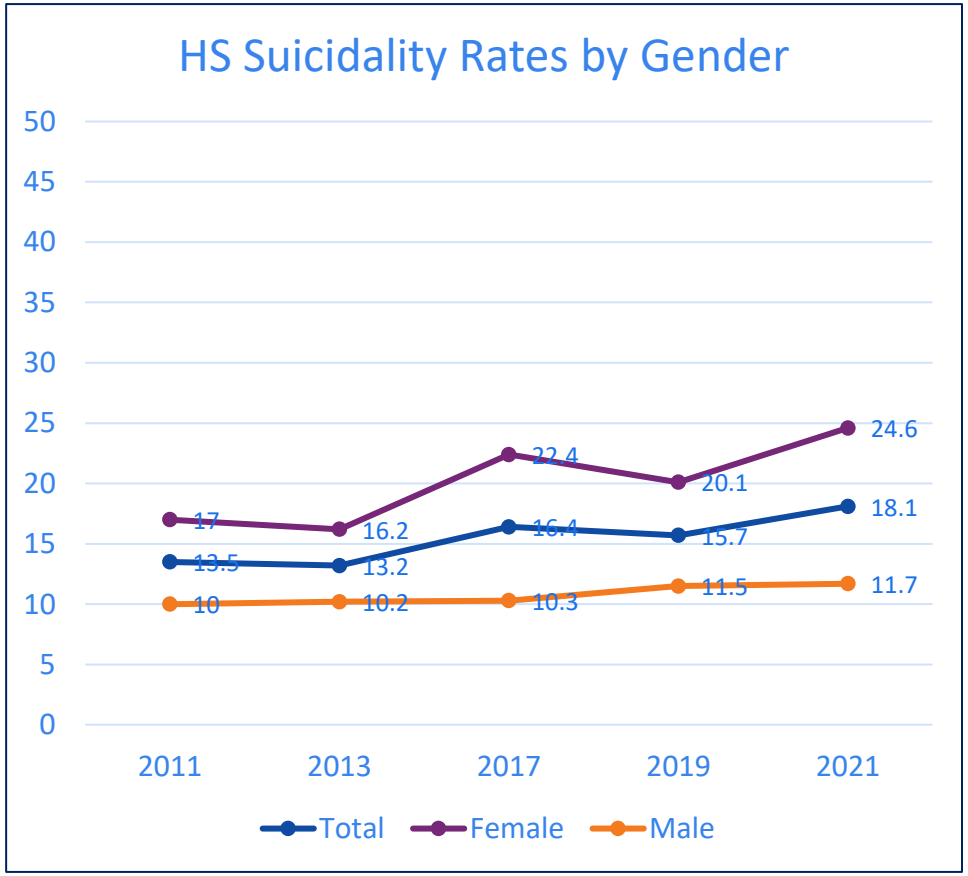
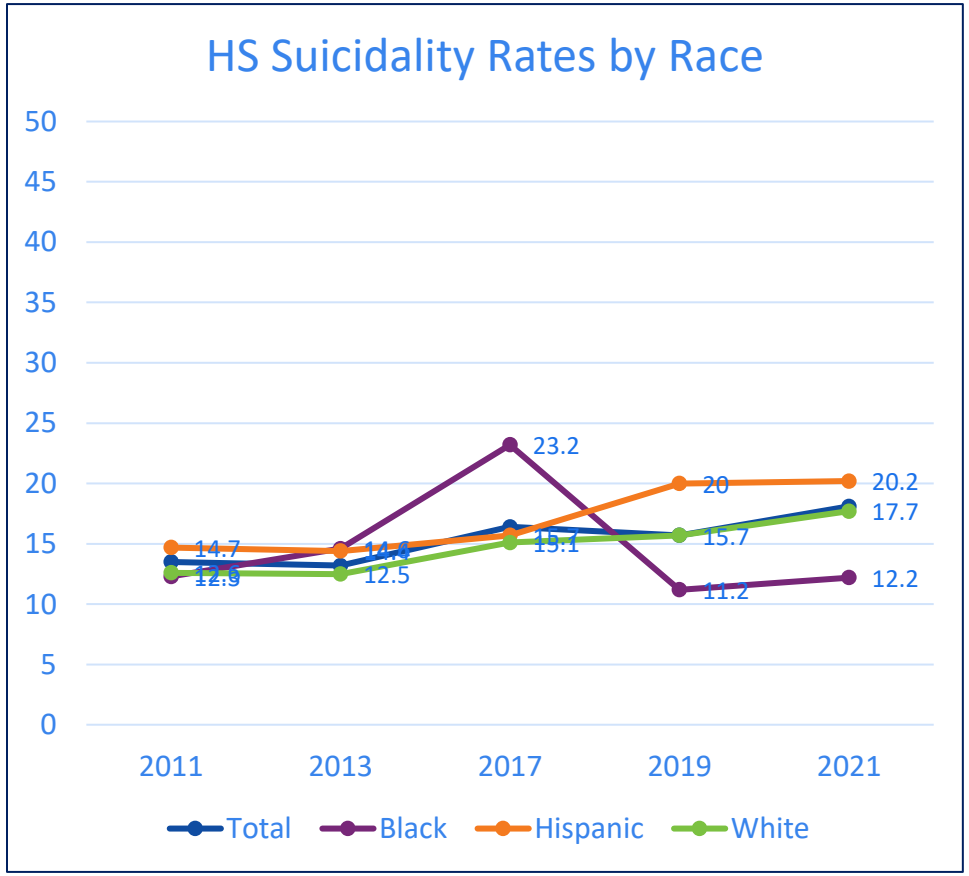
Source: CDC 10-Year Report, Wisconsin YRBS,
Retrieved from: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction YRBS

Seriously Considered Suicide





Female = 24.6
Male = 11.7

Hispanic = 20.2
White = 17.7
Black = 12.2

HS= High School

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Belonging

- School connectedness has **substantial protective impact during adolescence and extends into adulthood**. Research found school connectedness in adolescence reduced a number of mental health issues and risky behaviors, well into adulthood.

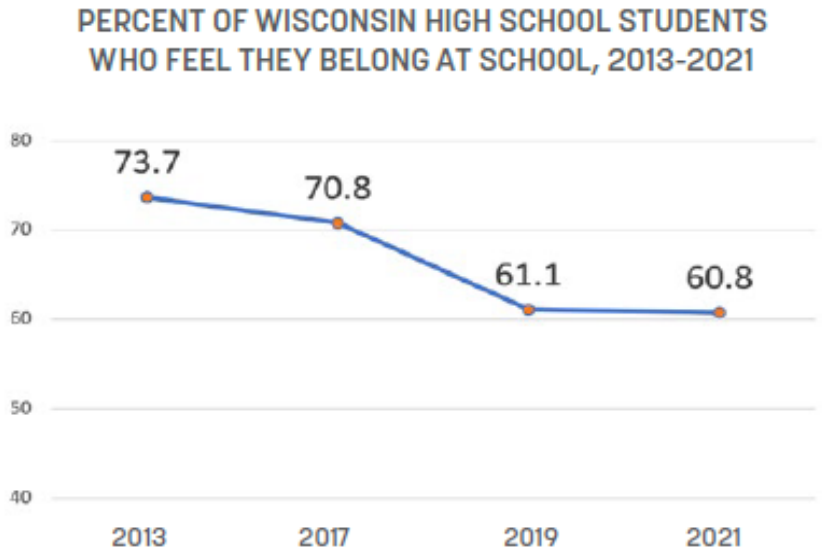
Source: Adolescent Connectedness and Adult Health Outcomes. *Pediatrics* (2019) Vol 144, Issue 1
Retrieved from: https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-3766

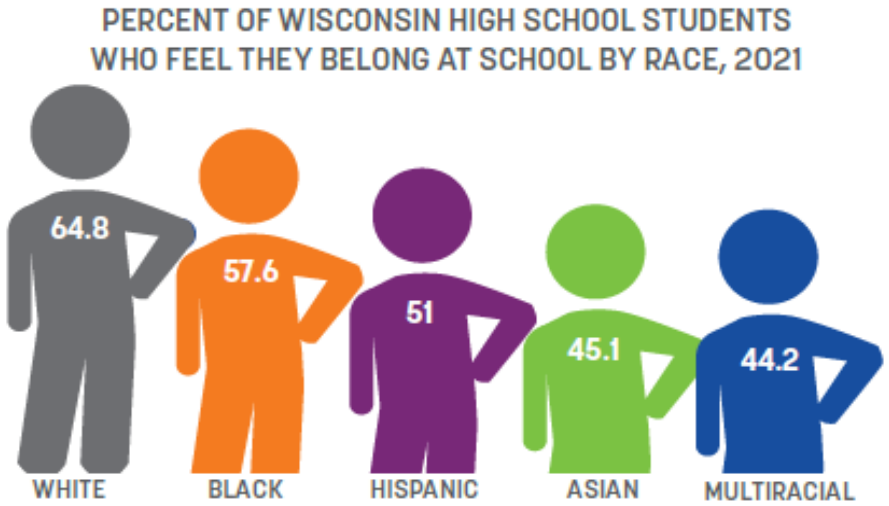
Belonging

Kids who feel they belong at school have better mental health.

- 60% of high school students feel they belong at school. This has declined over the last five years from 70%.
- Noticeable disparities by race: Half of Hispanic students do not feel they belong at their school. More than half of Asian and multiracial kids say they feel they do not belong.

Source: YRBS 2021 data as reported in OCMH 2022 Annual Report
Retrieved from: Office of Children's Mental Health





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Belonging

- Students who participate in **extracurriculars**, who feel connected to their school, are less likely to report depression.
  Source: 2019 Wisconsin YRBS Summary Report

- School connectedness acts as a **protective factor**. This was true before and during the pandemic.
  Source: Using Intersectionality and School Connectedness to Understand Health Disparities During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Adolescent Health* (2022). Vol 70 (5). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2022.02.001

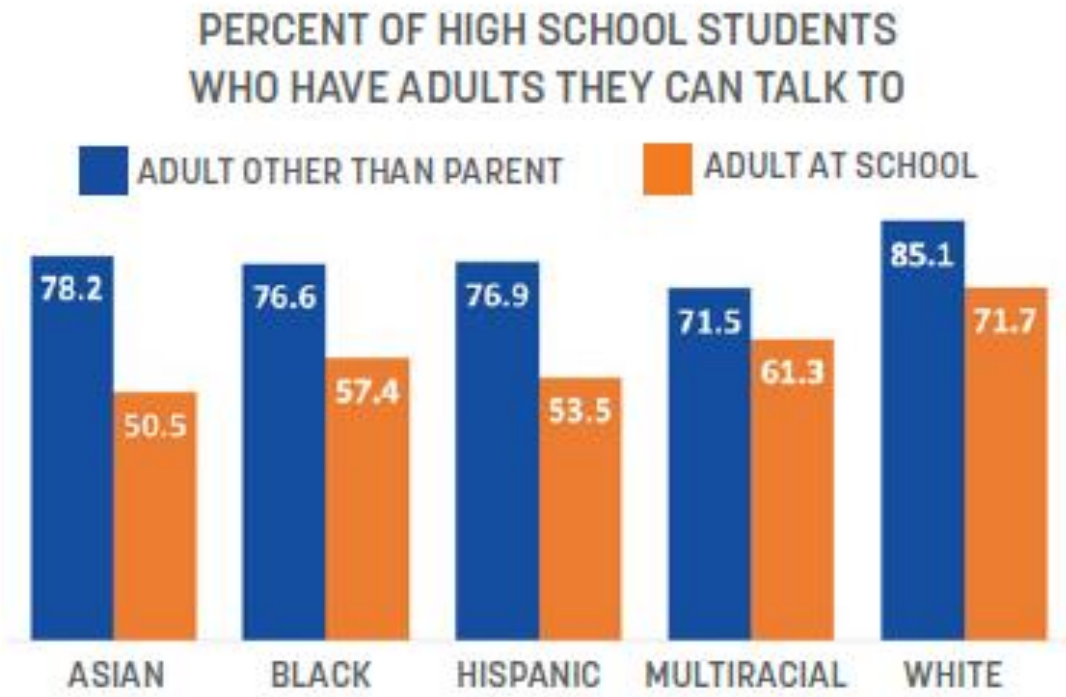
Friends and Peers

- The **quality of teen friendships** can predict physical and mental health in adulthood.
  Source: Running with the Pack: Teen Peer-Relationship Qualities as Predictors of Adult Physical Health. *Association of Psychological Science* (2015). Vol 26 (10). https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797615594118
- Quality relationships among teens is a far better predictor of **long-term outcomes** than the quality of teens' relationships with their parents.
  Source: Adolescent Relationship Qualities and Adult Psychosocial Functioning. *Child Development.* (2021). Vol 93 (3). https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13713

Adults at School

- **67% of kids have an adult at school that they can talk to if they have a problem** about their feelings. This has declined over the last ten years from 73%.

- **Asian and Hispanic students are less likely** to have an adult at school to turn to, with nearly half reporting they have no teacher or adult at school they can talk to about a problem.



Source: YRBS 2021 data as reported in OCMH 2022 Annual Report
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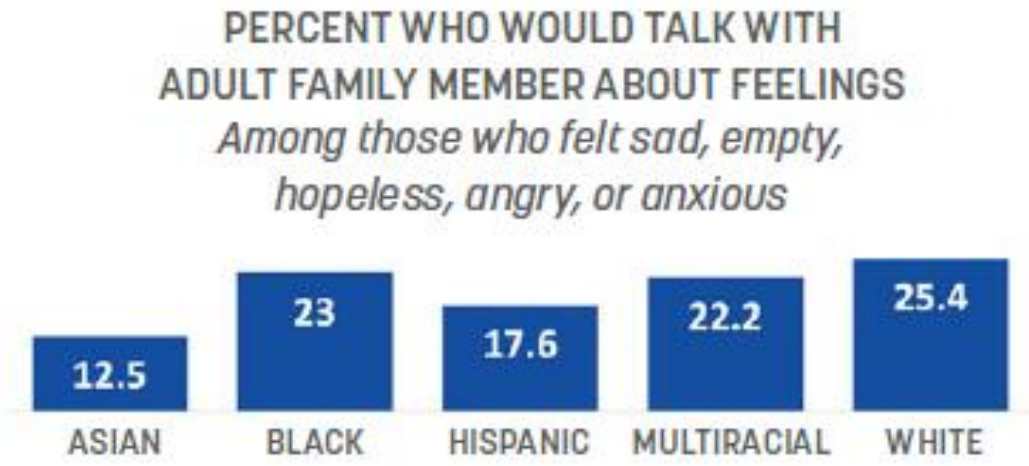
Kids Help Seeking

- **76% of kids would NOT talk with their family** about their feelings, among those who felt sad, empty, hopeless, angry, or anxious.
- **Asian and Hispanic students are the least likely to talk** with adult family members.



Source: YRBS 2021 data as reported in OCMH 2022 Annual Report
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Accepting Adults Save Lives

- LGBTQ youth who felt high social support from their family attempted suicide at **less than half the rate** of those who felt low or moderate support.

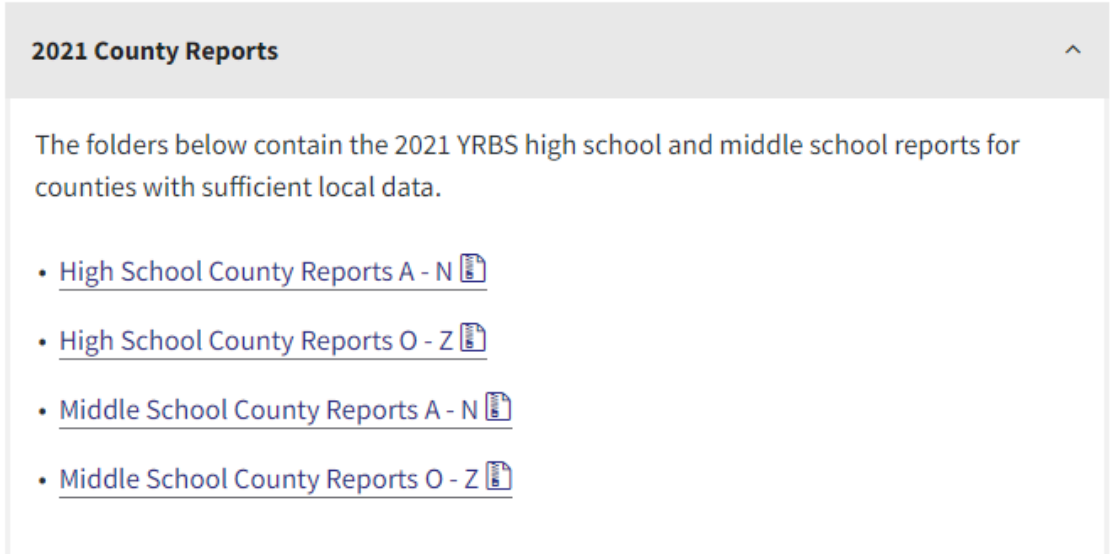
  Source: The Trevor Project. 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health. https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/

- LGBTQ youth who have at least one accepting adult were **40% less likely** to attempt suicide.

  Source: The Trevor Project. Accepting Adults Reduce Suicide Attempts Among LGBTQ Youth. June 2019 Research Brief. https://www.thetrevorproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Trevor-Project-Accepting-Adult-Research-Brief_June-2019.pdf

Find Your Local YRBS Data

2021 Results by County



- YRBS county-level reports are produced for those with sufficient data to support public reporting.
  - 53 counties have high school reports
  - 47 counties have middle school reports
- Access it on this webpage under the 2021 County Reports section: https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/yrbs/online

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Importance of Youth Risk Behavior Survey

2023 YRBS

The data collected in the YRBS are **foundational to our understanding of youth mental health in Wisconsin**. Without it, we would not have valid and reliable state, regional, or county level data on children's wellness.

Schools with students in any grades between 6-12 are **strongly encouraged to participate in the YRBS** so that we can monitor how kids are faring since the youth mental health crisis was declared.

Want to see whether a school has **already registered for the 2023 YRBS**? Use this YRBS Registered Schools Lookup. For questions, contact denise.kohout@dpi.wi.gov.

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Data Next Steps

Review data on youth mental health in your community to help understand the scope of the problem.

→ For example, you could compare local data to the child well-being dashboard in the OCMH 2022 Annual Report.

Advocate for sustainable children's mental health funding in the Wisconsin state budget.

→ For example, you could write your legislator requesting comprehensive school mental health funding.

Act on a concerning data point.

→ For example, you could connect with a young person. Be their trusted adult.

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