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Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2011



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A total of 3,492 Hamilton County high school students from 19 public and six private schools completed the survey between October 2010 and January 2011.

Classroom teachers administered surveys using a protocol to enhance the confidentiality of student responses. Participation was voluntary, and either parents or students could choose not to participate. Overall student response rate was 69.6%, with non-response based on student absenteeism and student or parent refusal.

Previous YRBS studies were conducted in 1998 (2,990 surveys completed) and 2002 (2,752 surveys completed).

2011 YRBS funding was provided by:
Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga
Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department
First Things First
Medical Foundation of Chattanooga
On Point
Public Education Foundation
Bea Lurie (Girls Inc. of Chattanooga)
and in partnership with:
Medical Foundation of Chattanooga

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Bullying and Violent Behaviors of Hamilton County Youth

Youth violence takes many forms, including physical fights, bullying, dating violence and carrying weapons. Within the past year, 32% of Hamilton County high school students were in a physical fight and 18% were bullied at school. Eleven percent of students reported being hit or slapped on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend within the past year; 8% reported they had been forced to have sexual intercourse. Twenty-two percent of all students had carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club within the past month. Eight percent of students had carried a gun.

The survey also addressed violent behaviors occurring on school property. Within the past year, 18% of students were bullied at school, 12% were in a physical fight at school, and 7% had been threatened or injured with a weapon at school. Within the previous month, 6% of students reported they had carried a weapon to school and 5% had missed one or more days of school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school.

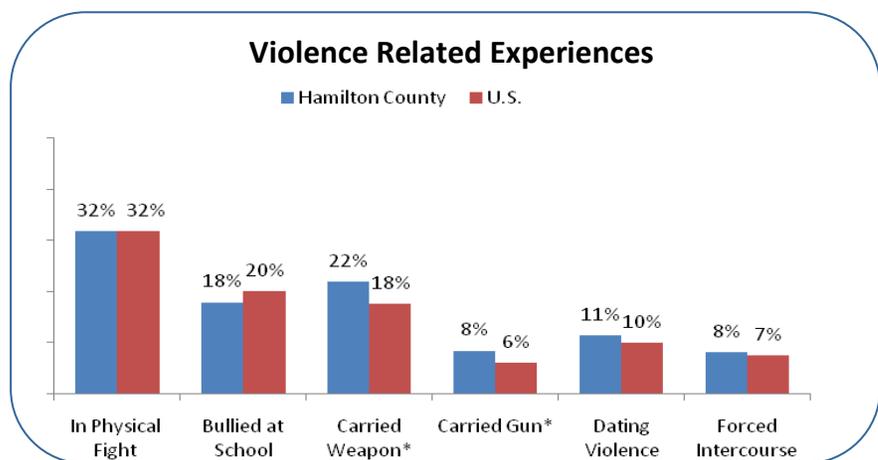
Students who were victims of one form of violence were more likely to be victims or participants in other forms of violence. For example, students who had been threatened with a weapon at school at school were more likely than non-threatened students to have also been bullied at school (40% vs. 16%), been in a fight at school (39% vs. 9%), brought a weapon to school (24% vs. 4%), and to have skipped school for safety reasons (27% vs. 3%).

Within the past year, one in four students were victims of bullying, either at school (18%) or online (15%), while 8% experienced both types of bullying. Females were more likely than males to be victims of school bullying (20% vs. 15%) and online bullying (21% vs. 10%) and were more than twice as likely to experience both forms of bullying (11% vs. 5%).

Students who were bullied were at increased risk for other types of violent behaviors, either as a victim or as a participant. This association was strongest among students who had experienced both types of bullying. About one in four victims of both types of bullying skipped one or more days of school (24%) or were threatened at school (21%), while about half had bullied others (50%) or been in a fight (47%).

Bullying victimization was also associated with increased risk for psychological distress, including symptoms of depression and suicidal thoughts and attempts. This association was strongest among students who had experienced bullying both at school and online. Over half of victims of both types of bullying reported symptoms of depression, while 31% had seriously considered suicide and 21% had attempted suicide.

HAMILTON COUNTY AND U.S. COMPARISONS

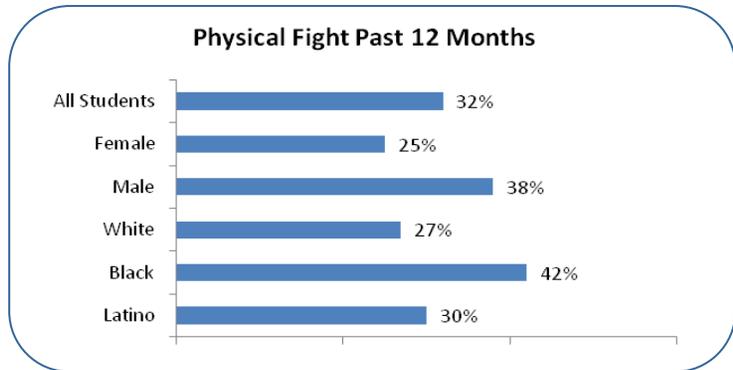


* Represents statistically significant differences between local and national data.

PHYSICAL FIGHT

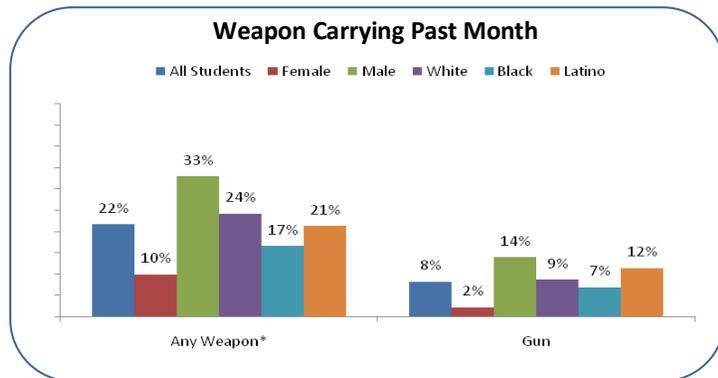
Almost one in three (32%) students reported having been in a fight over the past 12 months.

- Four percent of students had sustained injuries in a fight that were treated by a medical professional.
- At least 1 in 4 students in each sex, grade, and race/ethnicity category reported fighting.
- 38% of male students and 25% of female students had been in a fight. The prevalence of fighting was higher among black students (42%) than Latino (30%) or white (27%) students. The prevalence of fighting by grade level ranged from 29% and 34%.



22% of students had carried a weapon in the past month; 8% had carried a gun.

- 22% of students reported carrying a gun, knife, or club within the past 30 days. 24% of white, 17% of black and 21% of Latinos reported carrying those weapons.
- 8% of students reported carrying a gun.
- Male students were more than three times as likely as female students to report having carried a weapon (33% vs. 10%) and seven times more likely to report having carried a gun (14% vs. 2%).

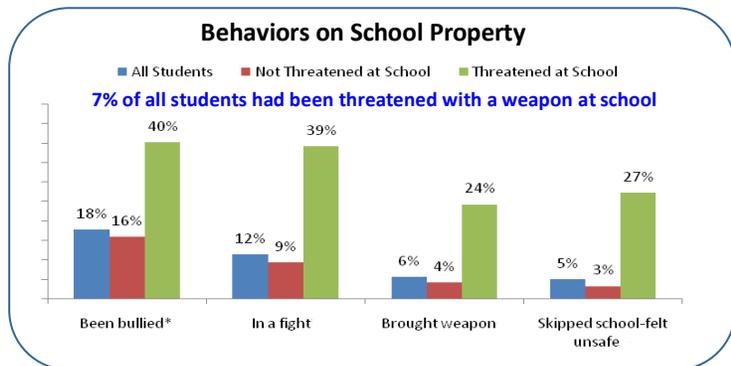


* Such as a gun knife or club

VIOLENCE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students threatened at school were more likely to be victims or participants in other school violence.

- Among all students, 7% were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property within the past year.
- Among students threatened at school, 40% were also bullied at school and 39% were in a fight at school, versus 16% and 9% of non-threatened students, respectively.
- Threatened students were 9 times more likely to report skipping school in the last month because of safety concerns (27% vs. 3%) and 6 times more likely to report carrying a weapon to school (24% vs. 4%).

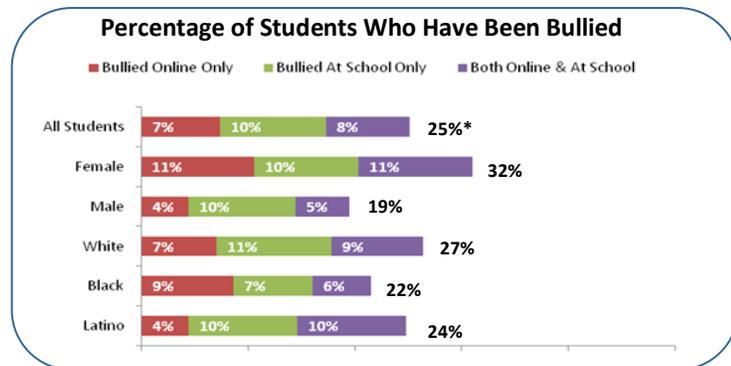


*Bullying defined as "when 1 or more students tease, threaten, spread rumors about, hit, shove, or hurt another student over and over again. It is not bullying when 2 students of about the same strength or power argue or fight or tease each other in a friendly way."

BULLYING

25% of students were bullied online or at school in the past year; 8% had been bullied in both places.

- Within the past year, 18% of all students had been bullied at school and 15% had been bullied online. 8% of students said they had experienced bullying in both venues.
- Females were much more likely to experience bullying: almost one-third of females had been bullied online or at school in the past year, and 11% had been bullied in both venues.
- Within the past year, 27% of white, 22% of black, and 24% of Latino students were bullied online or in school.

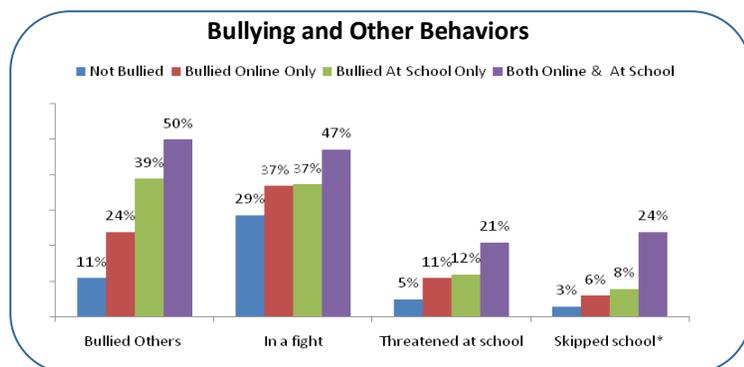


*Bolted numbers in black represent the total percentage who had been bullied in either venue.

BULLYING AND OTHER RISK BEHAVIORS

Bully victims were at higher risk for other violent behaviors, particularly if bullied both online and at school.

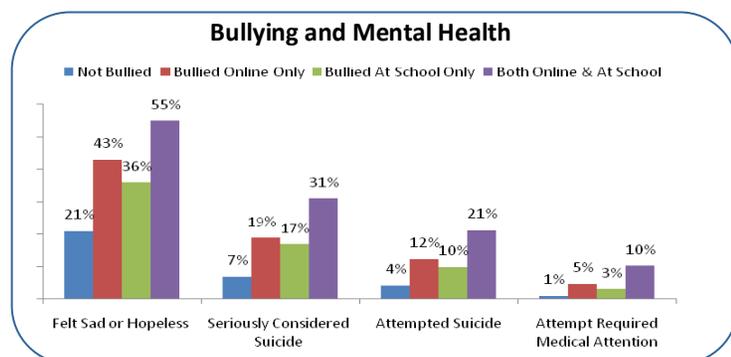
- Students who had been bullied were at greater risk for other violent behaviors, including bullying others. Bullying victims were also more likely than non-victims to have been in a fight, been threatened with a weapon at school, and to have skipped school because of safety concerns.
- Victims of both types of bullying were much more likely to engage in these other violence related behaviors than victims of only one type of bullying.



BULLYING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Bully victims report higher levels of mental distress, particularly if bullied online and at school.

- Bully victims were more likely to report symptoms of depression than non-victims.¹ Among students bullied both at school and online, over half (55%) experienced these symptoms, compared to 21% of non-victims and approximately 40% of students bullied in only one venue.
- There were similar differences for reported suicidal behaviors. Among students bullied both online and at school, 31% seriously considered suicide, 21% attempted suicide, and 10% had a suicide attempt requiring medical treatment.



*Within the past year

¹ Defined as "feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities."

IMPACTS OF YOUTH VIOLENCE AND BULLYING

The cost of youth violence in the United States, including direct and indirect costs, is estimated at \$158 billion per year, including \$7.9 billion attributed to school violence. Further, the study estimates that school violence and bullying contributes between 1 and 5 percent of “early secondary school leaving,” with an associated economic impact ranging from \$6.5 to \$32.4 billion. The two estimates of the costs of school violence suggest that school violence may cost the United States between \$14.4 and \$40.3 billion dollars annually. (The Economic Impact of School Violence: A Report for Plan International, Overseas Development Institute, 2010)

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) reports that during the 2007-2008 school year, 85 percent of public schools reported at least one violent crime, theft, or other crime in their school. (Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2009, BJS)

In a survey of American middle and high school students, 66 percent of bullying victims believed that school professionals responded poorly to bullying problems. (OJJDP, 2011)

A 2003 national study by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) examined the associations between bullying and other types of aggressive behavior. The study found that both children who bullied others and children who had been bullied were more likely than children who had never been bullied to engage in other violent behaviors. The study’s authors concluded that “Findings from this study suggested that programs designed to reduce violent behaviors should address less severe forms of aggressive behavior, particularly bullying. Bullying, as a behavior that is inflicted with the desire to harm another, seems to be an important marker for violence-related behaviors.” (NICHD)

A recent study of high school students in Boston found that victims of online and school bullying were more likely than non-victims to report depressive symptoms and suicide ideation/attempts. In addition, victimization was associated with lower school performance and lower school attachment. These associations were strongest among students who had experienced both types of bullying. (American Journal of Public Health)

VIOLENCE RELATED BEHAVIORS BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	All Students	Female	Male	White	Black	Latino	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade
Violence										
Carried weapon in past month	22%	10%	33%	24%	17%	21%	21%	23%	22%	21%
Carried gun in past month	8%	2%	14%	9%	7%	12%	6%	8%	8%	11%
Physical fight past year	32%	25%	38%	27%	42%	30%	33%	34%	30%	29%
Fight required medical attention past year	4%	3%	5%	3%	6%	6%	5%	4%	4%	4%
Dating violence past year	11%	11%	11%	10%	14%	12%	9%	11%	12%	13%
Forced intercourse ever	8%	11%	5%	7%	10%	7%	7%	8%	9%	9%
School Violence										
Physical fight on school property past year	12%	9%	14%	9%	16%	12%	15%	12%	9%	10%
Threatened w/weapon on school property past year	7%	6%	9%	5%	11%	10%	7%	6%	8%	8%
Carried weapon on school property in past mo	6%	3%	8%	6%	4%	8%	5%	6%	5%	7%
Missed school because felt unsafe past 30 days	5%	5%	5%	4%	6%	10%	6%	5%	4%	5%
Bullied on school property past year	18%	20%	15%	19%	13%	20%	22%	18%	16%	15%
Bullying										
Bullied someone else	18%	16%	19%	17%	17%	21%	21%	18%	17%	14%
Bullied on school property past year	18%	20%	15%	19%	13%	20%	22%	18%	16%	15%
Bullied online past year	15%	21%	10%	16%	15%	15%	16%	14%	14%	16%
EITHER at school or online	25%	31%	20%	26%	22%	25%	26%	22%	25%	29%
BOTH at school and online	8%	11%	5%	9%	6%	10%	7%	7%	7%	7%
Mental Health - Past Year										
Sad/hopeless 2 or more weeks	27%	33%	20%	26%	27%	30%	25%	25%	28%	28%
Seriously considered suicide	10%	13%	8%	10%	10%	11%	9%	9%	13%	10%
Planned suicide	10%	12%	8%	10%	10%	11%	9%	9%	13%	10%
Attempted suicide	7%	8%	6%	6%	8%	8%	6%	6%	9%	6%
Suicide attempt required medical treatment	2%	3%	2%	2%	3%	4%	2%	2%	3%	2%