

Teen Suicidal Behavior

A Survey of Oregon High School Students, 1997

Published September 1998 / ISSN 1520-5681

Prepared by: David Hopkins

Desktop Publishing by: Melissa Grace Franklin

Acknowledgments: Many people reviewed and otherwise contributed to this report, including Tammis Alexander, Linda Duke, David Fleming, M.D., Joyce Grant-Worley, Elinor Hall, Grant Higginson, M.D., Tina Kent, David Lane, Phyllis Mason, Andy Osborn, Cathy Riddell, Ken Rosenberg, M.D., and Jill Skrezyna.

Tables

TABLE 1. Oregon and U.S. Students Reporting Suicidal Ideation and Behavior, 1995 and 1997

TABLE 2. Percentage of Students Considering Suicide, Attempting Suicide, or Being Treated for a Suicide Attempt During the Previous Year, Oregon Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 1997 (Part 1)

TABLE 3. Suicide Ideation and Behavior Among Students Both Physically and Sexually Abused, Compared to Unabused Students

TABLE 4. Percentage of Students Reporting Harassment During the Previous 30 Days and the Percentage that Attempted Suicide During the Previous 12 Months

TABLE 5. Percentage of Students Considering Suicide, Attempting Suicide, or Being Treated for a Suicide Attempt During the Previous Year, Oregon Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 1997 (Part 2)

TABLE 6. Percentage of Students Engaging in Suicidal and Sexual Behavior, by Substance Use, Oregon Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 1997

TABLE 7. Percentage of Students Considering Suicide, Attempting Suicide, or Being Treated for a Suicide Attempt During the Previous Year, Oregon Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 1997 (Part 3)

TABLE 8. Deaths Due to Suicide by County of Residence, Oregon 10- to 19-year-olds, 1986-1996

TABLE C-1. Frequency of Risky Behaviors by Type of Environment, Oregon Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 1997

TABLE D-1. Fatal and Non-fatal Attempts by Method of Attempt, Oregonians Aged 17 or Less, 1994-1996

TABLE D-2. Time of Day of Fatal Attempts, Oregonians Aged 17 or Less, 1994-1996

TABLE D-3. Reasons Given for Suicide Attempts, by Age and Sex, Oregonians Less Than 18 Years Old, 1996

Table 1. Oregon and U.S. Students Reporting Suicidal Ideation and Behavior, 1995 and 1997

Within Last 12 Months	Oregon		U.S.
	1997	1995	1995
Considered suicide	22%	24%	24%
Attempted suicide	9%	9%	9%
Treated for attempt	2%	2%	3%

TABLE 2. Percentage of Students Considering Suicide, Attempting Suicide, or Being Treated for a Suicide Attempt During the Previous Year, Oregon Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 1997 (Part 1)¹

Characteristic	% with Characteristic	Considered Suicide			Attempted Suicide			Treated for Attempt	
		Both	M	F	Both	M	F	Both	Attempters ²
TOTAL	100%	22	17	28	9	5	12	2	24
GRADE									
9	30	24	17	30	11	7	15	3	23
10	28	23	16	30	9	5	13	2	31
11	23	22	17	27	8	5	10	2	31
12	19	19	16	21	5	4	6	1	26
RACE									
White	84	22	16	27	8	5	11	2	25
African American	2	21	18	25	10	5	15	4	43
Hispanic	5	22	15	29	12	7	16	4	31
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	20	16	25	9	6	13	3	29
American Indian	2	28	23	34	16	12	19	6	38
Other	4	31	23	38	13	8	18	5	38
SCHOOL SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS									
1 (Lowest)	12	22	16	28	11	7	14	3	30
2	24	23	18	28	10	6	13	3	27
3	28	23	18	30	9	6	13	2	26
4 (Highest)	36	20	15	26	7	4	9	2	27
ENROLLMENT LEVEL									
< 100	2	25	19	32	12	8	16	4	31
100-399	13	23	18	27	10	6	13	2	24
400-799	15	23	17	29	9	6	12	3	29
800-1199	18	21	15	26	9	5	12	2	27
1200+	53	22	16	28	8	5	11	2	27
NUMBER OF CARING ADULTS									
None	16	35	27	44	16	10	22	5	32
1	19	27	19	33	10	6	14	3	25
2-3	36	19	13	24	6	3	9	1	22
4+	30	18	13	19	5	4	7	1	27
EVER PHYSICALLY ABUSED									
No	73	15	11	19	4	2	6	1	22
Yes	27	38	29	46	19	13	25	6	30
EVER SEXUALLY ABUSED									
No	85	18	15	22	6	5	8	1	23
Yes	15	41	35	42	22	20	23	7	33
EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS									
No	94	20	15	25	7	5	10	2	25
Yes	6	57	54	57	30	25	31	11	36
HOUSEHOLD ENVIRONMENTAL TOBACCO SMOKE									
No smokers	63	19	15	24	6	4	9	2	27
Yes, but not inside	18	26	19	33	11	7	16	3	25
Yes, inside	19	27	20	35	13	8	18	4	29
HARASSED AT SCHOOL³									
No	69	16	12	20	5	3	7	1	27
Yes	31	34	25	42	15	10	20	4	27
CARRIED A WEAPON TO SCHOOL⁴									
No	88	20	14	26	7	4	10	2	23
Yes	12	35	29	54	19	13	35	7	34
NUMBER OF TIMES THREATENED OR INJURED AT SCHOOL⁵									
None	93	20	15	26	7	4	11	2	24
1-5	6	42	34	54	22	16	32	8	35
6+	1	60	53	79	41	38	50	24	60

¹ Based on 32,378 weighted cases from 102 schools.

² Based on the 2,611 students reporting one or more attempts during the previous year.

³ With a weapon on school property during the previous year.

⁴ During the previous 30 days.

HOW TO USE THIS TABLE: The values shown in this table, except "% with Characteristic", indicate the percentage of individuals who considered suicide, or attempted suicide, or who were treated for an attempt. For example, the "17" under the male column of "Considered Suicide" in the ninth grade row indicates that 17% of ninth grade males considered suicide.

Table 3. Suicide Ideation and Behavior Among Students Both Physically and Sexually Abused, Compared to Non-abused Students

Within the Last 12 Months	Not Abused (%)	Abused (%)
Considered suicide	13	52
Attempted suicide	3	31
Treated for attempt	1	11

Table 4. Harassment and Suicide Attempts, by Reason*

Reason	% Harassed for Reason	% Who Attempted Suicide
Not Harassed	69	5
Race/National Origin	2	12
Unwanted Sexual Attention	8	21
Perceived Sexual Orientation	2	21
Physical Disability	1	14
Other	13	13
Don't Know	7	12

* Percentage of students reporting harassment during the previous 30 days and the percentage that attempted suicide during the previous 12 months.

TABLE 5. Percentage of Students Considering Suicide, Attempting Suicide or Being Treated for a Suicide Attempt During the Previous Year, Oregon Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 1997 (Part 2)¹

Characteristic	% with Characteristic	Considered Suicide			Attempted Suicide			Treated for Attempt	
		Both	M	F	Both	M	F	Both	Attempters ²
WEIGHT									
Very underweight	2	29	28	32	13	11	17	4	30
A little under- to a little overweight	94	21	16	26	8	5	11	2	26
Very overweight	3	41	30	46	18	9	22	5	27
VOMITED OR USED LAXATIVES FOR WEIGHT CONTROL*									
No	95	20	16	25	7	5	10	2	25
Yes	5	49	27	55	30	17	33	10	34
NUMBER OF CIGARETTES SMOKED DAILY ON DAYS SMOKED*									
None	77	17	13	21	5	3	7	1	22
< 1-5	16	33	23	40	15	8	20	4	25
6-20	6	38	27	49	21	15	27	8	38
21+	1	60	59	63	45	41	55	23	52
AGE FIRST SMOKED									
< 11	9	34	27	45	19	14	27	7	35
11-12	11	31	21	40	15	8	21	4	27
13-14	17	26	18	33	11	6	15	3	23
15+	10	24	18	29	8	4	11	2	25
Never	53	15	11	18	4	2	5	1	21
THINK SMOKING IS COOL									
No	93	21	15	27	8	5	11	2	25
Yes	7	34	27	46	15	12	21	6	39
NUMBER OF DAYS DRANK ALCOHOL*									
None	54	16	12	20	4	3	6	1	21
1-5	32	27	19	33	11	6	15	3	24
6-19	13	34	25	44	17	11	24	6	35
20+	2	45	35	66	29	21	45	14	49
NUMBER OF DAYS BINGED ON ALCOHOL*									
0	68	18	13	23	6	3	8	1	22
1-5	24	30	22	37	14	9	19	4	29
6-19	6	35	26	48	17	10	26	6	37
20+	2	44	41	62	38	34	61	19	51
AGE FIRST DRANK ALCOHOL									
< 11	17	33	25	45	17	11	25	5	33
11-12	12	27	18	37	12	7	17	3	28
13-14	25	25	17	31	9	5	13	2	23
15+	17	19	15	22	6	3	8	2	28
Never	29	13	10	16	3	2	4	< 1	14
NUMBER OF TIMES DRINKING & DRIVING*									
None	89	21	15	26	8	4	11	2	25
1-3	9	31	25	39	14	10	19	4	32
4+	2	37	33	52	20	17	27	10	53
SEATBELT USE									
Always	53	18	14	22	6	4	8	1	23
Most of the time	31	24	17	31	10	5	14	2	25
Sometimes	9	31	22	42	15	8	23	4	28
Rarely	5	33	24	49	16	10	26	6	39
Never	2	33	30	44	20	18	27	10	50

¹ Based on 32,378 weighted cases from 102 schools.

² Based on the 2,611 students reporting one or more attempts during the previous year.

* During the previous 30 days.

Table 6. Percentage of Students Engaging in Suicidal and Sexual Behavior, by Substance Use, Oregon Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 1997

Behavior	No Tobacco, Alcohol, or other Drugs	Tobacco & Alcohol ¹	2+ Illicit Substances
Suicidal Behavior			
Considered Suicide	13.5	27.3	39.7
Attempted Suicide	3.1	11.2	21.6
Treated for Attempt	0.5	2.7	7.5
Sexual Behavior²			
Never had Sex	85.2	50.3	28.7
Not Within Last 3 months	5.8	14.4	21.0
1 Partner	8.1	30.1	34.5
2 Partners	0.4	3.7	8.5
3+ Partners	0.3	1.4	6.9
1. Excluding illicit substances.			
2. Within last three months			

TABLE 7. Percentage of students considering suicide, attempting suicide, or being treated for a suicide attempt during the previous year, Oregon Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 1997 (Part 3)¹

Characteristic	% with Characteristic	Considered Suicide			Attempted Suicide			Treated for Attempt	
		Both	M	F	Both	M	F	Both	Attempter ²
NUMBER OF TIMES SNIFFED INHALANTS*									
None	95	21	15	26	8	5	10	2	26
1-9	4	49	37	58	28	18	37	8	29
10+	1	63	54	76	46	37	60	19	40
NUMBER OF TIMES USED MARIJUANA*									
None	76	19	14	24	6	3	9	1	22
1-9	14	32	23	41	15	9	21	4	27
10+	9	35	28	47	19	14	27	8	42
NUMBER OF TIMES USED COCAINE*									
None	98	20	15	26	7	4	10	2	23
1-9	2	50	42	57	33	27	38	14	44
10+	<1	51	49	56	41	43	38	25	61
EVER INJECTED DRUGS									
No	99	21	15	26	8	4	11	2	24
Yes	1	69	67	72	56	57	56	33	60
NUMBER OF TIMES EVER USED OTHER DRUGS									
None	85	19	13	23	6	4	9	1	22
1-9	11	34	24	42	15	9	21	4	28
10+	4	42	36	51	25	20	33	11	44
AGE AT FIRST SEXUAL INTERCOURSE									
< 13	5	37	31	48	22	17	31	9	41
13-14	12	33	26	40	17	12	22	6	33
15-16	15	27	21	32	12	7	15	3	30
17+	3	20	14	26	6	5	7	1	24
Never	65	18	12	23	5	3	8	1	18
TOTAL NUMBER OF SEXUAL PARTNERS									
None	65	18	12	23	5	3	8	1	18
1-2	22	28	21	33	12	8	17	3	27
3-5	9	32	25	39	15	10	20	5	36
6+	5	38	35	42	22	21	24	9	43
NUMBER OF SEXUAL PARTNERS (LAST 3 MONTHS)									
Never had sex	65	18	12	23	5	3	8	1	18
Yes, but over 3 mos. ago	12	27	22	34	13	8	18	4	28
1	19	29	22	34	13	9	16	4	32
2	3	40	32	47	22	14	30	7	35
3+	2	40	34	51	26	23	32	13	51
CAUSED PREGNANCY OR BEEN PREGNANT									
Never sexually active	65	18	12	23	5	3	8	1	18
Sexually active, never pregnant	31	28	22	34	13	9	17	4	30
Once	3	41	37	44	22	19	24	10	47
Two or more times	1	51	43	56	41	36	45	14	35
NUMBER OF RISK FACTORS**									
None	18	7	6	8	1	1	1	< 1	6
1	17	12	9	15	2	1	3	< 1	19
2	14	18	12	23	5	3	6	1	13
3	11	22	16	28	6	4	9	1	17
4-6	23	29	19	38	11	5	18	2	22
7-9	12	39	30	48	19	12	25	5	30
10-13	5	49	37	62	30	22	40	12	39
14+	1	71	67	77	59	53	66	31	52

¹ Based on 32,376 weighted cases from 102 schools.

² Based on the 2,611 students reporting one or more attempts during the previous year.

* During the previous 30 days.

**A count of the number of risk factors for each student. The following factors were included; very under- or over-weight; physically abused; sexually abused; threatened or injured at school; carried a weapon at school; used tobacco; began smoking before age 11; drank; drank and drove; binged on alcohol; never, rarely or sometimes used a seatbelt; abused inhalants; used marijuana, cocaine or other drugs; had sexual intercourse; had 6+ sexual partners; had sex before age 15.

Table 8. Deaths Due to Suicide, by County of Residence, Oregon 10- to

17-year-olds, 1986-1996

COUNTY	NUMBER	RATE
TOTAL	400	9.0
BAKER	5	20.0
BENTON	6	5.4
CLACKAMAS	38	7.9
CLATSOP	8	15.1
COLUMBIA	4	5.8
COOS	10	10.6
CROOK	3	12.3
CURRY	2	8.0
DESCHUTES	16	13.2
DOUGLAS	20	12.4
GILLIAM	0	0.0
GRANT	1	7.2
HARNEY	4	31.9
HOOD RIVER	3	10.9
JACKSON	14	6.1
JEFFERSON	6	26.1
JOSEPHINE	5	5.2
KLAMATH	7	7.3
LAKE	4	32.0
LANE	33	7.5
LINCOLN	7	12.9
LINN	15	10.0
MALHEUR	2	4.0
MARION	32	8.7
MORROW	0	0.0
MULTNOMAH	81	10.5
POLK	7	8.3
SHERMAN	1	31.8
TILLAMOOK	1	3.2
UMATILLA	9	8.9
UNION	4	9.5
WALLOWA	3	26.3
WASCO	2	5.4
WASHINGTON	37	7.5

WHEELER	1	49.1
YAMHILL	9	7.8
EAST OF CASCADES	71	11.5
COAST	28	10.8
OTHER	301	8.4

NOTE: Many of the rates are based on a small number of events and should be used with caution. Rates are per 100,000 population.

TABLE C-1.
Frequency of Risky Behaviors by Type of Environment, Oregon Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 1997¹

Sample and Estimated Number of Students	A ²	Inter-mediate	Ω ³	
Number in sample	7,790	24,435	153	
Percent of sample	24.1	75.5	0.5	
Estimated # of Oregon students	34,233	107,380	672	
Characteristics	Percentage Engaging in Behavior			Odds Ratio (Ω/Δ)
Considered suicide	9.4	25.9	72.8	7.7
Attempted suicide	2.0	10.4	48.8	24.4
Treated for attempt	0.4	2.8	19.1	47.8
Very underweight	1.1	2.6	9.7	8.8
Very overweight	2.1	3.8	5.8	2.8
Vomited or used laxatives ^{4,5}	2.3	6.2	20.6	9.0
Threatened or injured 6+ times ⁶	0.2	6.7	8.5	42.5
Carried a weapon to school ⁴	10.2	19.6	32.0	3.1
Carried a gun to school ⁴	2.9	6.4	18.1	6.2
Think smoking is cool	4.2	7.8	19.5	4.6
Smoke more than 20 cigarettes/day ⁴	0.1	0.7	10.6	100.6
Smoked before age 11	3.6	11.1	32.4	9.0
Drank alcohol 20+ of days ⁴	0.4	1.8	10.2	25.5
Binge drank on 20+ days ⁴	0.1	0.6	6.2	62.0
Drank alcohol before age 11	8.3	19.4	43.8	5.3
Smoked marijuana 10+ times ⁴	2.6	10.4	25.4	9.8
Used cocaine 10+ times ⁴	0.1	0.5	4.9	49.0
Sniffed inhalants 10+ times ⁴	0.2	0.6	3.4	17.0
Ever injected drugs	0.4	0.7	10.0	25.0
Emotional problems	3.3	6.6	16.0	4.8
Had intercourse before age 13	1.6	5.8	21.4	13.4
6+ sex partners	1.5	6.0	28.1	18.7
Pregnant (or caused pregnancy) 2+ times	0.1	0.9	11.0	110.0

1. Based on 32,378 surveys from 102 high schools.

2. The student had at least two adults he or she could go to for support, had not been physically or sexually abused, and no one smoked inside the home.

3. The student had no adults he or she could go to for support, had been both physically and sexually abused, and was exposed to environmental tobacco smoke in the home.

4. During the prior 30 days.

5. To control weight.

6. During the prior year.

TABLE D-1. Fatal and Non-fatal Attempts by Method of Attempt, Oregonians Aged 17 or Less, 1994-1996

Method	Number of All Attempts	% of Non-fatal Attempts	% That Were Fatal	% of Fatal Attempts
Poisoning ¹	1,838	79.7	0.1	1.4
Carbon Monoxide	5	0.2	0.0	0.0
Hanging	113	4.2	15.0	23.9
Drowning	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Firearms	57	0.4	84.2	67.6
Cutting	193	8.3	1.0	2.8
Jumping ²	8	0.3	12.5	1.4
Other & N.S.	161	6.9	1.2	2.8
Total	2,375	100.0	3.0	100.0

1. Includes medications, solids, and liquids.

2. From a high place.

TABLE D-2. Time of Day of Fatal Attempts, Oregonians Aged 17 or Less, 1994-1996

Time	% of Attempts
3:00 AM - 6:00 AM	10
7:00 AM - 10:00 AM	6
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM	13
3:00 PM - 6:00 PM	32
7:00 PM - 10:00 PM	24
11:00 PM - 2:00 AM	15

TABLE D-3. REASONS GIVEN FOR SUICIDE ATTEMPTS, BY AGE AND SEX, OREGONIANS LESS THAN 18 YEARS OLD, 1996

REASONS	TOTAL	SEX		AGE		
		MALE	FEMALE	< = 12	13-14	15-17
TOTAL						
NUMBER	681	133	548	45	180	456
PERCENT	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
FAMILY DISCORD						
NUMBER	360	63	297	32	101	227
PERCENT	52.9	47.4	54.2	71.1	56.1	49.8
ARGUMENT WITH BOY/GIRLFRIEND						
NUMBER	185	32	153	4	40	141
PERCENT	27.2	24.1	27.9	8.9	22.2	30.9
SCHOOL-RELATED PROBLEMS						
NUMBER	130	29	101	13	32	85
PERCENT	19.1	21.8	18.4	28.9	17.8	18.6
RAPE OR SEXUAL ABUSE						
NUMBER	61	7	54	6	17	38
PERCENT	9.0	5.3	9.9	13.3	9.4	8.3

SUBSTANCE ABUSE						
NUMBER	52	19	33	2	15	35
PERCENT	7.6	14.3	6.0	4.4	8.3	7.7
PROBLEMS WITH THE LAW						
NUMBER	52	17	35	3	7	42
PERCENT	7.6	12.8	6.4	6.7	3.9	9.2
DEATH OF FAMILY MEMBER/FRIEND						
NUMBER	37	5	32	1	16	20
PERCENT	5.4	3.8	5.8	2.2	8.9	4.4
MOVE OR NEW SCHOOL						
NUMBER	34	9	25	4	14	16
PERCENT	5	6.8	4.6	8.9	7.8	3.5
PEER PRESSURE/CONFLICT						
NUMBER	29	9	20	3	7	19
PERCENT	4.3	6.8	3.6	6.7	3.9	4.2
PHYSICAL ABUSE						
NUMBER	20	7	13	5	4	11
PERCENT	2.9	5.3	2.4	11.1	2.2	2.4
SUICIDE BY FRIEND/RELATIVE						
NUMBER	14	2	12	1	5	8
PERCENT	2.1	1.5	2.2	2.2	2.8	1.8
PREGNANCY						
NUMBER	8	1	7	-	1	7
PERCENT	1.2	0.8	1.3	-	0.6	1.5
OTHER REASONS						
NUMBER	149	30	119	12	46	91
PERCENT	21.9	22.6	21.7	26.7	25.6	20.0

NOTE: Reports with unknown reasons for suicide attempts are not included in this table.
Percentages do not total 100 because more than one reason may have been given.
The category "suicide by friend/relative" includes suicide attempts.