

Mental Health and Suicide

Key Findings

In 2005, 9% of Sandusky County adults felt so sad or helpless every day for 2 weeks or more that made them stop doing some usual activities. The health assessment results indicated that 13% of high school youth had seriously contemplated suicide in the past year and 8% admitted actually attempting suicide in the past year. 19% of middle school youth seriously thought about killing themselves and 9% tried to kill themselves.

Mental Health

- ◆ In 2005, 9% of Sandusky County adults felt so sad or helpless every day for two weeks or more that made them stop doing some usual activities, increasing to 15% of those under the age of 30 and those with incomes less than \$25,000.
- ◆ Only 2% of adults seriously considered attempting suicide, increasing to 6% of those under the age of 30.
- ◆ Of those who seriously considered attempting suicide, 16% of them made a plan about how they would attempt suicide. Only one adult reported attempting suicide in the past 12 months.

High School Suicide

- ◆ Just under one-quarter (24%) of high school youth felt so sad or helpless almost every day for two weeks or more that made them stop doing some usual activities.
- ◆ In 2005, 13% of high school youth reported seriously considering attempting suicide in the past twelve months compared to the 2003 YRBS rates of 17% for the U.S. and 18% for Ohio youth.
- ◆ The following groups of Sandusky County youth were more likely to have contemplated suicide:
 - ◆ Current smokers (52%)
 - ◆ Current drinkers (58%)
 - ◆ Those who had carried a weapon in the past 30 days (26%)
- ◆ 11% of high school youth had made a plan about how they would attempt suicide.
- ◆ In the past year, 8% of high school youth had attempted suicide and 5% had made more than one attempt. Of those who attempted suicide, 2% resulted in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse. The 2003 YRBS reported a suicide attempt prevalence rate of 8.5% for the U.S. and 12% for Ohio youth.
- ◆ The CDC has reported that firearms were used in 54% of U.S. youth suicides in 2001.
- ◆ The 2005 health assessment identified that 14% of Sandusky County youth had carried a weapon such as a gun, knife or club (with exceptions for hunting cited) in the past month.
- ◆ The health assessment also indicated that 34% of Sandusky County adults kept a firearm in or around their home. Of those who had the firearms, 5% kept it loaded and unlocked.

Middle School Suicide

- ◆ In 2005, 19% of middle school youth reported seriously thinking about killing themselves.
- ◆ One in ten (10%) of middle school youth made a plan about how they would kill themselves.
- ◆ 9% of middle school youth had tried to kill themselves.

Youth Mental Health and Suicide Facts

- ◆ Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for youths.
- ◆ In 2001, firearms were used in 54% of youth suicides.
- ◆ In 2003, just over 18% of Ohio high school youths indicated that they had seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months with more females (21%) considering suicide than males (15%).
- ◆ 12% of Ohio high school youth actually attempted suicide in the past 12 months (13% of all females and 11% of all males). 5% of Ohio high school youth indicated that their suicide attempt required medical attention by a doctor or nurse in the past 12 months.

(Sources: CDC, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Suicide, 12-22-04; CDC, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, YRBS, Unintentional Injuries and Violence, 9-14-04.)

Mental Health and Suicide

Teen Suicide Signals

The strongest risk factors for attempted suicide in teens are:

- ❖ Depression
- ❖ Alcohol abuse
- ❖ Aggressive or disruptive behaviors

In 2005, the *American Psychiatric Association* advises to consult a mental health professional, parent, or school counselor if several of the following symptoms, experiences, or behaviors are present:

- ❖ Depressed mood
- ❖ Substance abuse
- ❖ Difficulties in dealing with sexual orientation
- ❖ Family loss or instability; significant problems with parents
- ❖ Unplanned pregnancy
- ❖ Frequent episodes of running away or being incarcerated
- ❖ Withdrawal from family and friends
- ❖ Expressions of suicidal thoughts, or talk of death or the afterlife during moments of sadness or boredom
- ❖ Loss of interest in or enjoyment in activities that were once pleasurable
- ❖ Impulsive, aggressive behavior, frequent expressions of rage

Suicide Risk Factors

A risk factor is anything that increases the likelihood that persons will harm themselves including:

- ❖ Previous suicide attempt(s)
- ❖ History of mental disorders, particularly depression
- ❖ History of alcohol and substance abuse
- ❖ Family history of suicide
- ❖ Family history of child maltreatment
- ❖ Feelings of hopelessness
- ❖ Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- ❖ Physical illness
- ❖ Feeling socially isolated
- ❖ Barriers to accessing mental health treatment
- ❖ Loss (relational, social, work, or financial)
- ❖ Has easy access to lethal suicide methods (for instance, firearms)
- ❖ Unwillingness to seek help because of the stigma attached to mental health and substance abuse disorders
- ❖ Cultural and religious beliefs (i.e., the belief that suicide is not a resolution of a personal dilemma)
- ❖ Local epidemics of suicide

(Source: CDC, *National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Suicide Fact Sheet*)

Suicide Protective Factors

Protective factors defend people from the risks associated with suicide and include:

- ❖ Effective clinical care for mental, physical, and substance abuse disorders
- ❖ Easy access to a variety of clinical interventions and support for those seeking help
- ❖ Family and community support
- ❖ Support from ongoing medical and mental health care relationships
- ❖ Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, and nonviolent handling of disputes
- ❖ Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide and support self-preservation instincts

(Source: CDC, *National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Suicide Fact Sheet*)

Warning Signs of Suicide

Recognizing Warning Signs of Suicide in Others

- ❖ Feelings of despair or hopelessness
- ❖ Taking care of business-preparing for the family's welfare
- ❖ Drug or alcohol abuse
- ❖ Rehearsing suicide or seriously discussing specific suicide methods
- ❖ Shows signs of improvement, but in reality, relief comes from having made decision to commit suicide

(Source: *The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, <http://www.dbsalliance.org/index.html>*)

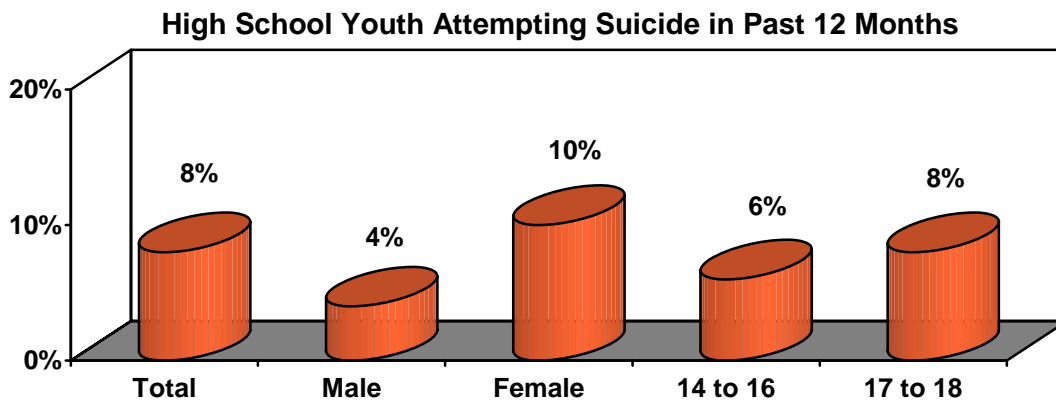
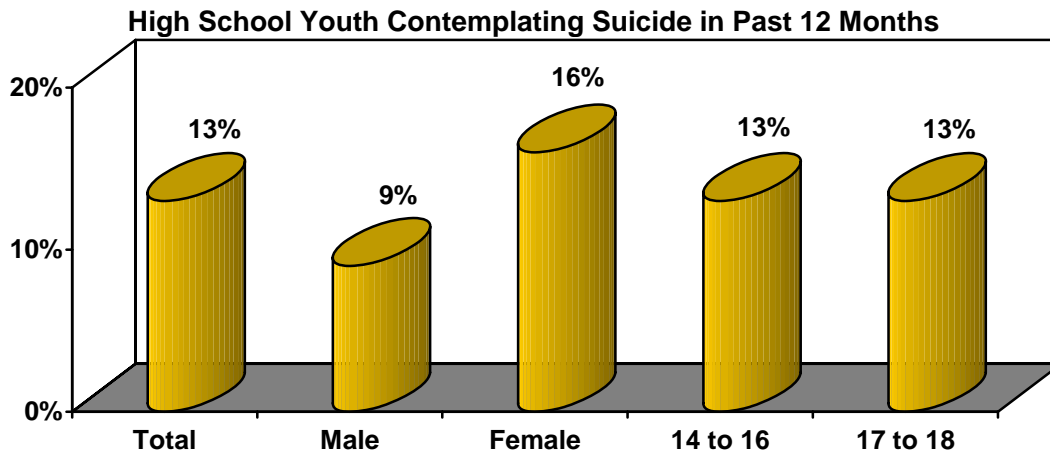
For additional resources please see:

U.S. Public Health Service, *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Suicide*. Washington, DC: 1999.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention*. Washington, DC: 2001.

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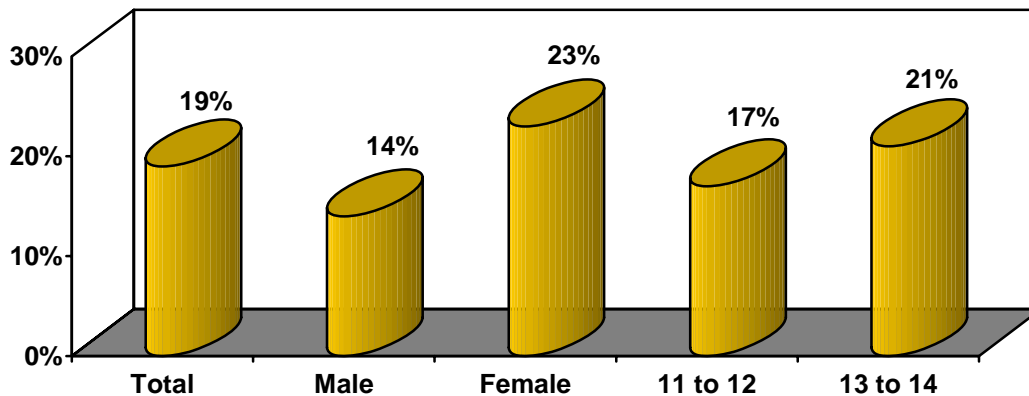
The following graphs show the percentage of Sandusky County youth who contemplated and/or attempted suicide in the past 12 months (i.e., the first graph shows that 13% of all youth contemplated suicide, 9% of males, and 16% females contemplated suicide).



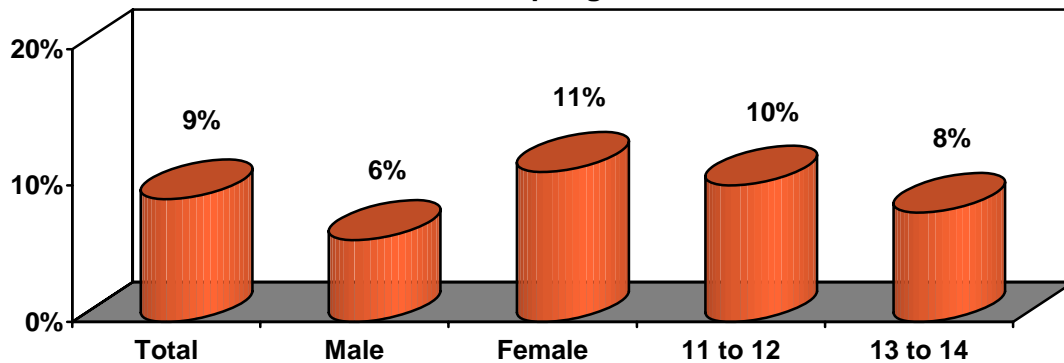
Mental Health and Suicide

The following graphs show the percentage of Sandusky County middle school youth who contemplated and/or attempted suicide in the past 12 months (i.e., the first graph shows that 19% of all youth contemplated suicide, 14% of males, and 23% females contemplated suicide).

Middle School Youth Contemplating Suicide in Past 12 Months



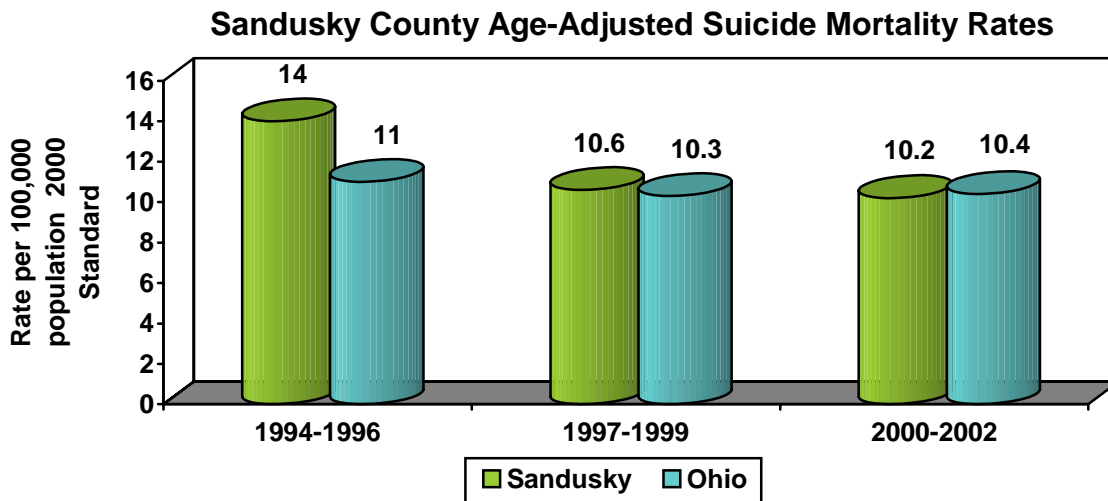
Middle School Youth Attempting Suicide in Past 12 Months



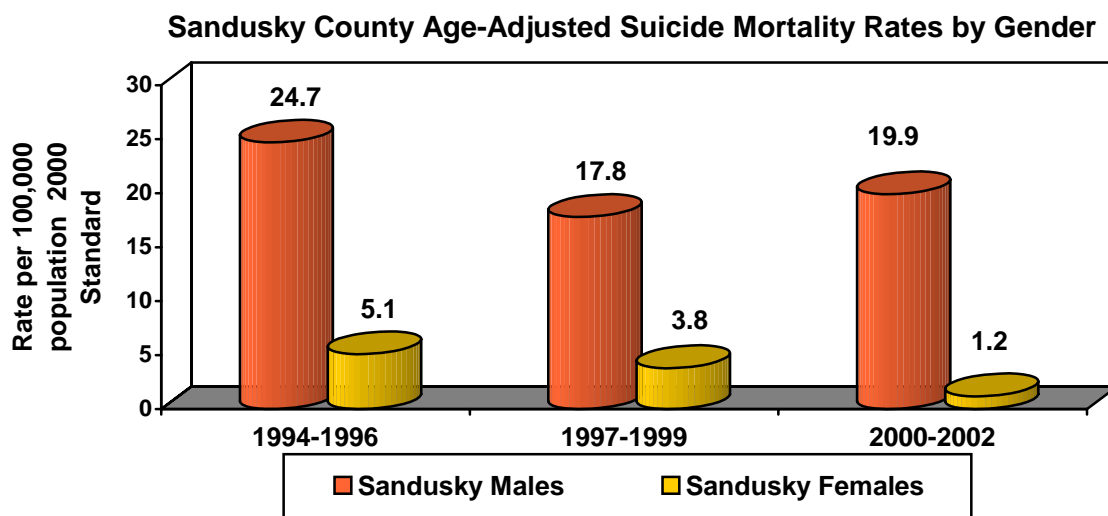
Mental Health and Suicide

The following graphs show the Ohio and Sandusky County age-adjusted suicide mortality rates per 100,000 population and the number of suicide deaths by age group for the county. The graphs show that:

- ◆ The Sandusky County age-adjusted suicide mortality rate has decreased from 1994-2002.
- ◆ Sandusky County male age-adjusted suicide rates far exceeded female rates for all reported years. The 2000-2002 Sandusky County male age-adjusted suicide mortality rate was 17 times the female rate based on a total of 19 suicide deaths where 18 were male and one was female.
- ◆ From 2000-2002, suicide deaths occurred in similar numbers across the age groups.



(Source: ODH Information Warehouse)



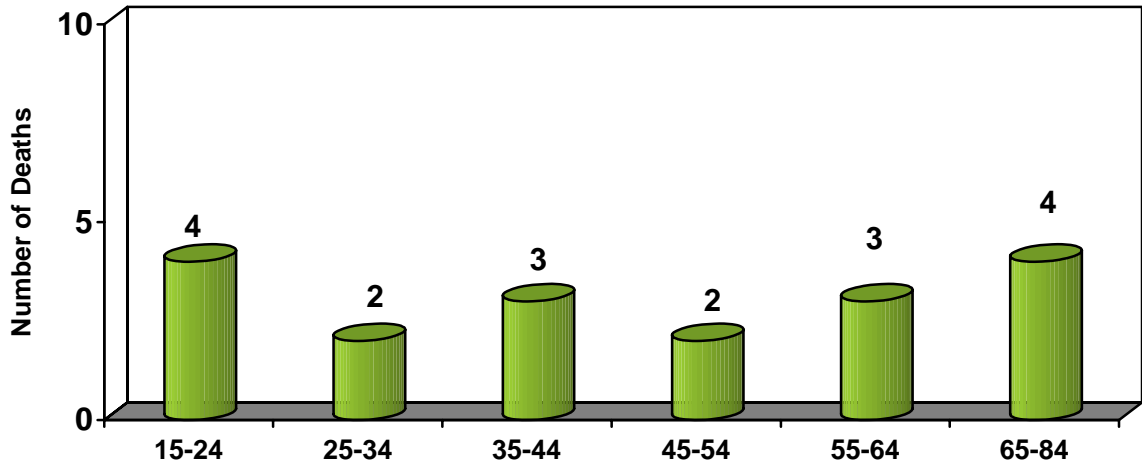
(Source: ODH Information Warehouse)

The female rates were calculated with 5 or less deaths and should be used with caution.

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Sandusky County Number of Suicide Deaths By Age Group 2000-2002

Total Deaths = 19



*(Source: ODH Information Warehouse, updated 9-29-04)
One death occurred in an age group without details available.*