



Hawai'i Youth Suicide Stats: Why here, why now?

According to the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey a national survey of youth in high school, (<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>) Hawai'i has the **highest rate of attempted suicides in the country**. Here are the stats:

Suicide Attempts:

More than 1 out of 8 students in Hawai'i attempt suicide one or more times.

12.8% total youth (13.9% female; 11.5% male)—which is more than twice the national rate of 6.3%. This is the highest rate in the country, followed by Arkansas, Louisiana, and South Carolina.

Planning:

More than one sixth of all students in Hawai'i make a plan about how they will attempt suicide. 16.0% total youth (19.9% female; 12.4% male). This is the highest rate in the country, followed by Wyoming, Alabama, and Michigan.

Suicidal Ideation:

1 out of 4 girls in Hawai'i and more than 1 out of 8 boys seriously consider attempting suicide. 18.9% total youth (25.2% female; 12.9% male). This is the highest rate in the country, followed by Arkansas, Nevada, and West Virginia.

Depression:

Nearly 1 out of 3 students in Hawai'i feel so sad or hopeless almost everyday for 2 or more weeks in a row that they stop doing some usual activities. 30.6% total youth (39.0% female; 22.9% male). *This number is statistically significant in comparison to the US rates.

Youth Suicide Risks in Hawai'i:

- Girls are at higher risk of attempting suicide than boys (13.9% compared to 11.5%), but boys are at far higher risk of completing suicide;
- 9th graders, Native Hawaiians, and youth from Neighbor Islands are at highest risk;
- Girls involved in the juvenile justice system are at high risk of serious suicide attempts;
- Youth who are lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender can be considered at high risk for suicidal ideation.
- Many other factors contribute to youth suicide and depression including: teen pregnancy, bullying, family violence, trauma, substance abuse, mental health problems, and moving frequently.

RESOURCES:

ACCESS Line—24/7 Crisis Line in Hawai'i #832-3100, (800) 753-6879

BULLYING:

According to the 2009 Hawai'i Youth Risk Behavior Survey:

- **1 in 3 youth** report having been hurt by having mean things said to them on the internet or email in the last year (an increase from 2007 to 32% in 2009);
- **1 in 7 youth** have been harassed because someone thought they were gay, lesbian, or bisexual in the last year;
- **1 out of 14 (7.9%)** of Hawai'i's youth did not go to school on at least one day during the past month because they felt unsafe at or on their way to school. For girls, Hawai'i had the highest percentage in the country-- 9.1% compared to the national average 5.3%;
- And, **more than 50% of youth agree that harassment and bullying is a problem in their school.**

What is bullying?

Bullying is hurting someone on purpose. It can be physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, or cyber.

Bully's use an imbalance of power and often rely on bystanders (people who are watching or witnessing the bullying) to make it worse.

We all play roles in bullying—bystanders have the power to change the situation.

What can you do?

- Speak up about bullying, harassment, and violence;
- Look for signs of depression, isolation, low self-esteem, and fear;
- Take an active role in your own community and even in your house—do not tolerate bullying among your family members;
- Get training, find resources, and ask for help when you need it!!!

Some great resources:

The Parent Line: Oahu: 526-1222, Neighbor Island: (800) 816-1222, www.theparentline.org

E Ola Pono Campaign: www.growingponoschools.com

Stop Bullying Now: www.stopbullyingnow.gov

The Trevor Project: www.thetrevorproject.org, #(866) 4 U TREVOR or #(866)-488-7386

Teaching Tolerance: www.tolerance.org