



Emotional Well-Being and Suicide Risk

Among American Indian and Alaska Native High School Students

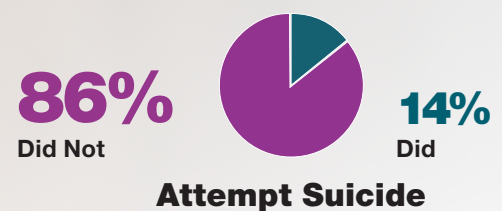
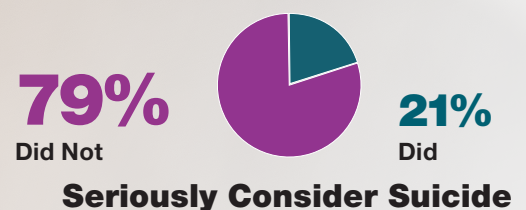
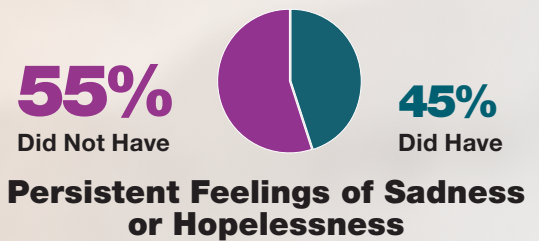
The strength of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities comes from generations of Indigenous traditions, language, culture, and knowledge. For many AI/AN people, these strengths are challenged by factors such as historical and ongoing trauma, poverty, and racism, which may lead to poor emotional well-being and suicide among some AI/AN teens.

Though most AI/AN students indicated positive emotional well-being and low risk for suicide, many struggle and could benefit from school and community mental health programs. Studies show that the emotional well-being of students is better and the risk of suicide is lower when they are connected to the people at their school. That means they feel adults and peers at their school care about them. Nationwide, 52% of AI/AN high school students report high connectedness to their school.

AI/AN Student Well-Being and Suicide Risk

The 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) collected data about different measures of emotional well-being and suicide risk among a nationally representative sample of high school students, including AI/AN students. These data describe AI/AN high school students, including those identifying as Hispanic/Latino or Multiracial.

National rates among high school students overall: 40% had persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, 29% had poor mental health, 20% seriously considered attempting suicide, and 10% attempted suicide.



¹ Such as stress, anxiety, or depression



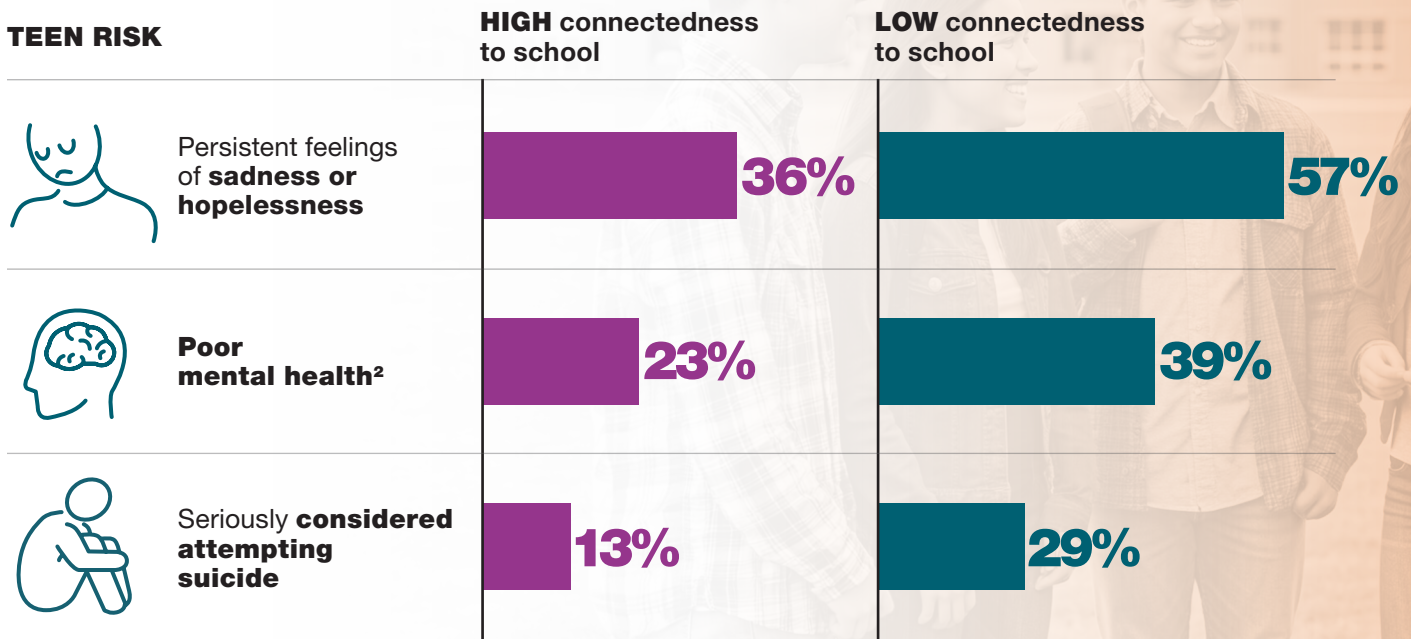
For more information about promoting emotional well-being among high school students, visit www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/mental-health-action-guide/index.html.



Importance of School Connectedness

School Connectedness—students feel that adults and students at school care about them.

AI/AN students with high connectedness to school are less likely to report struggles with emotional well-being and less likely to seriously consider suicide



² Such as stress, anxiety, or depression.

Schools Play a Critical Role

Schools promote students' health and development by creating environments where all students feel like they belong, are cared for, and are supported.

Students are less likely to engage in health risk behaviors when schools put strategies in place that create safe and supportive environments, including strategies focused on building school connectedness.

Source: Everett Jones S, Satter DE, Reece J, et al. Adult Caretaker Engagement and School Connectedness and Association with Substance Use, Indicators of Emotional Well-Being and Suicide Risk, and Experiences with Violence Among American Indian or Alaska Native High School Students—Youth Risk Behavior Survey, United States, 2023. MMWR Suppl 2024;73(Suppl-4):13–22. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.su7304a2>.



For more information about promoting school connectedness among high school students, visit www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/school_connectedness.htm.

