

Youth Mental Health Needs & Supports: Elementary Student Perspectives



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Youth's mental health can directly affect their ability to learn and succeed in school and beyond, yet most with mental health concerns do not receive necessary care. COVID-19 exacerbated the crisis, prompting the U.S. Surgeon General to issue an Advisory Report emphasizing the need to address youth mental health concerns[1]. This brief describes data from the California Healthy Kids Survey Core & Mental Health Supports modules on the mental health needs of fifth grade students during the 2021-22 school year [2].

In the past month, elementary students felt the following "most" or "all of the time"...



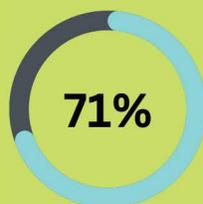
1 out of 5 felt very lonely



1 out of 3 felt very stressed



1 out of 5 felt sad



71% of elementary students reported knowing who to get help from at school when they felt very sad, stressed, lonely, or depressed.

Nearly **75%** of students reported that if they felt very sad, stressed, lonely or depressed, talking to an adult could help them feel better, however...



1 out of 4 students reported they would not know what to do if they felt very sad, stressed, lonely, or depressed



1 out of 4 students reported they would be afraid to get help if they felt very sad, stressed, lonely, or depressed

2 out of 5 of elementary students wanted to talk to a counselor or therapist about mental health concerns in the past year, yet only **60%** who wanted help reported getting it when needed

Elementary students reported that, if they were feeling very sad, stressed, lonely or depressed, they would talk to...

Their friends 65%

Their parents or someone else in their family 64%

A teacher or another adult from their school 40%

A counselor or therapist 29%



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[1] Protecting Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory: Accessed on October 31, 2022, from: <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2021/12/07/us-surgeon-general-issues-advisory-on-youth-mental-health-crisis-further-exposed-by-covid-19-pandemic.html>

[2] California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) Mental Health Supports module (n=13,949 5th graders).

