

Youth Mental Health Needs & Supports: Secondary Student Perspectives



California Department of Education

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. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the crisis, with the U.S. Surgeon General issuing a General Advisory emphasizing the urgency of addressing this need [1]. This brief describes data from the California Healthy Kids Survey Core & Mental Health Supports modules on the mental health needs of secondary students during the 2022-23 school year [2].



1 out of 3 secondary students felt so sad or hopeless for 2+ weeks that they stopped doing usual activities in the past year



1 out of 7 secondary students strongly agreed that school was "really boring" and **6%** strongly agreed that it was "worthless and a waste of time," which can be an indicator of poor mental health or disengagement



1 out of 4 secondary students experienced social/emotional distress in the past month

14%

of secondary students had seriously considered suicide in the past year

60% of students reported that if someone their age felt very sad, stressed, lonely or depressed, talking to an adult could help them feel better, however...



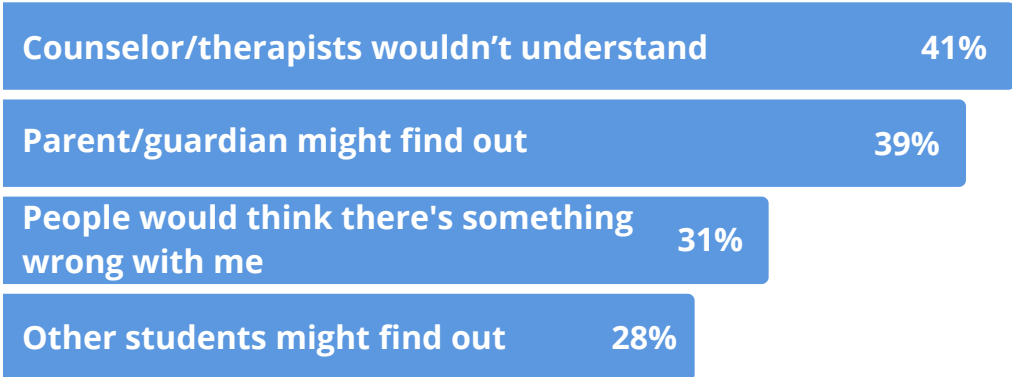
1 out of 3 students reported they did not know where to go at school for help if they felt very sad, stressed, lonely or depressed



1 out of 4 did not have an adult they could talk to about their problems

Although **1 out of 5** students wanted to talk to a counselor or therapist mental health concerns in the past year, only **half of those** who wanted help reported getting it when needed

The most commonly selected barriers to seeking mental health care if students were feeling very sad, stressed, lonely or depressed:



This brief was produced by the Project Cal-Well evaluators from the University of California, San Francisco, School Health Evaluation & Research Team (<https://schoolhealthresearch.ucsf.edu/>) for the California Department of Education (CDE) with funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) [Award #5H79SM061895]. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of SAMHSA. For more information on CDE's Project Cal-Well Initiative visit: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/mh/projectcalwell.asp>
 [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) Core (n=410,586 7th, 9th and 11th graders) and Mental Health Supports module (n=75,105 7th, 9th, and 11th graders).