

# Youth Mental Health Needs & Supports: Elementary 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. 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 2022-23 school year [2].

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



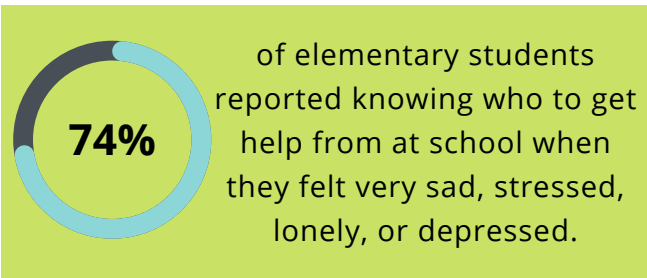
**1 out of 5 felt very lonely**



**1 out of 3 felt very stressed**



**1 out of 5 felt sad**



**52%** 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

**1 out of 4** 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 67%**

**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=18,202 5th graders).