

Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) MONTHLY MOMENT

September 2024

Welcome back to next edition of MIYHS Monthly Moment.

The start of the school year can be a particularly challenging time of year for many students. New academic pressures, social adjustments, and changes in routines can contribute to feelings of stress, anxiety, and even depression. These factors, combined with other personal challenges can increase the risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

September is National Suicide Prevention Month. During this month, while it is a busy time for schools with administration, it is also important to promote suicide prevention awareness and access to help for those who need it.

Maine Specific Data

MIYHS asks a series of questions that ask about depression and suicide. Since the start of the MIYHS in 2009, the data has shown an increased prevalence of mental health issues among Maine middle and high school students, which is consistent with [national trends](#).

Over the past **12 months**, among Maine high school students (Figure 1)¹

- 35.0% felt sad or hopeless for 2 or more weeks
- 17.8% seriously considered suicide
- 8.1% attempted suicide at least once

Maine middle schoolers reported **over their lifetime** (Figure 2)¹

- 32.7% felt sad or hopeless for 2 or more weeks
- 21.8% seriously considered killing themselves
- 8.7% tried to kill themselves at least once

When looking at these questions further, there are some notable differences by sex and LGBTQ+ identity. Female students have significantly higher rates than males for each of the above indicators, while those who identify as LGBTQ+ are 2x more likely to have these experiences than their non-LGBTQ+ peers (Figure 3 and 4)¹.

1: Data is from 2023 MIYHS

Figure 1: Maine High School Mental Health Measures

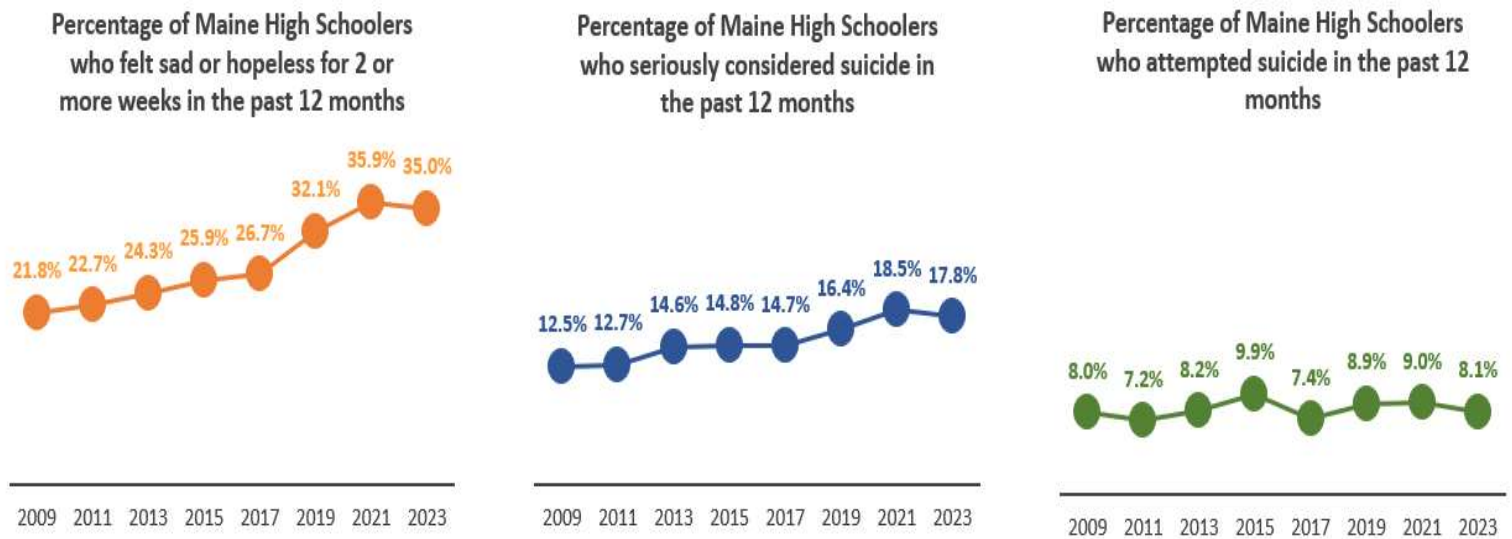


Figure 2: Maine Middle School Mental Health Measures

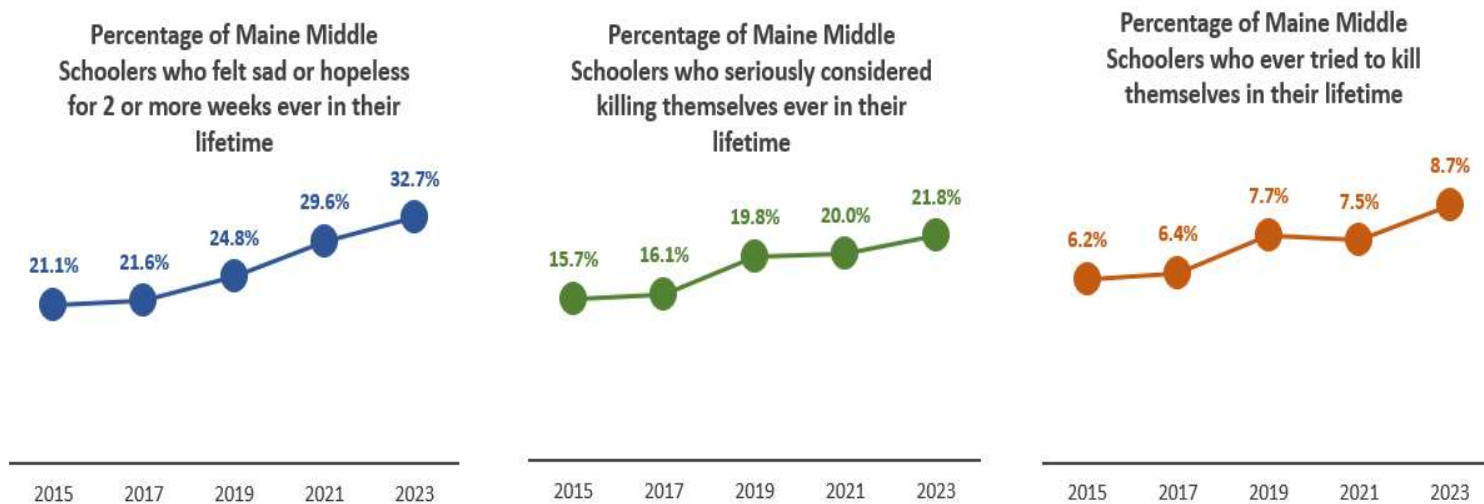


Figure 3: High school mental health questions broken down by LGBTQ+ variable from 2023 MIYHS

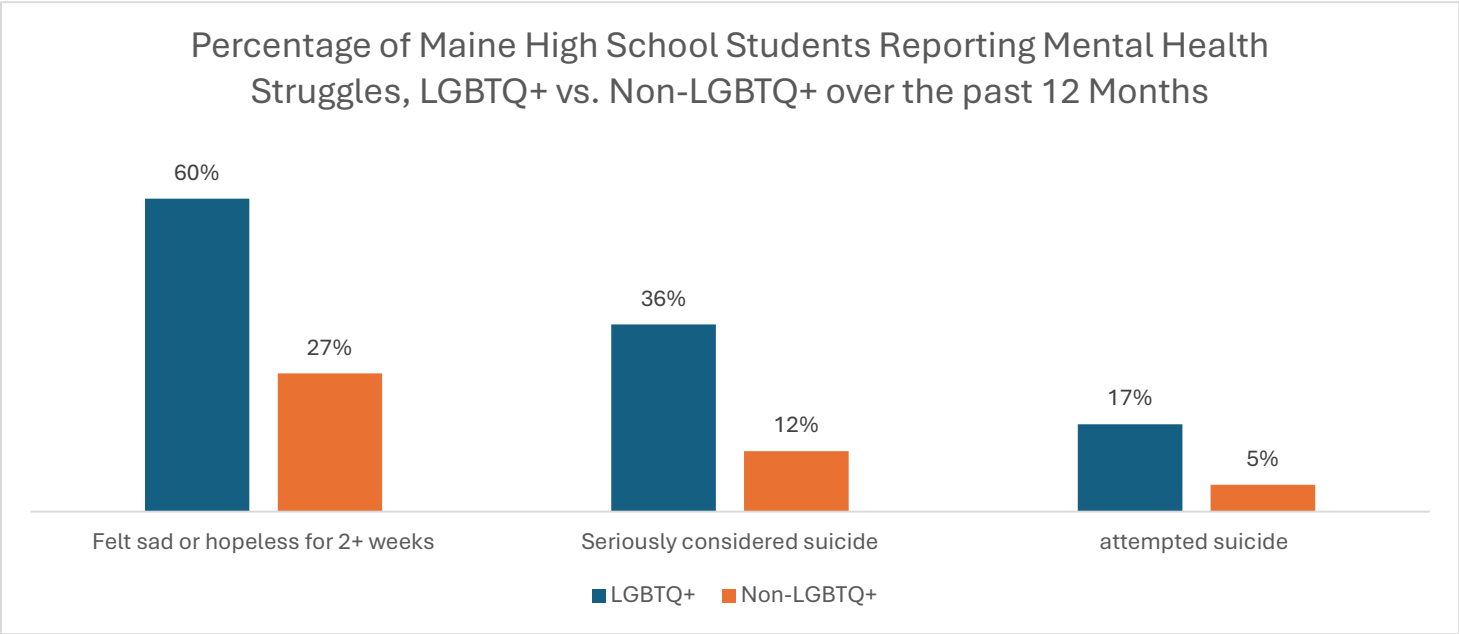
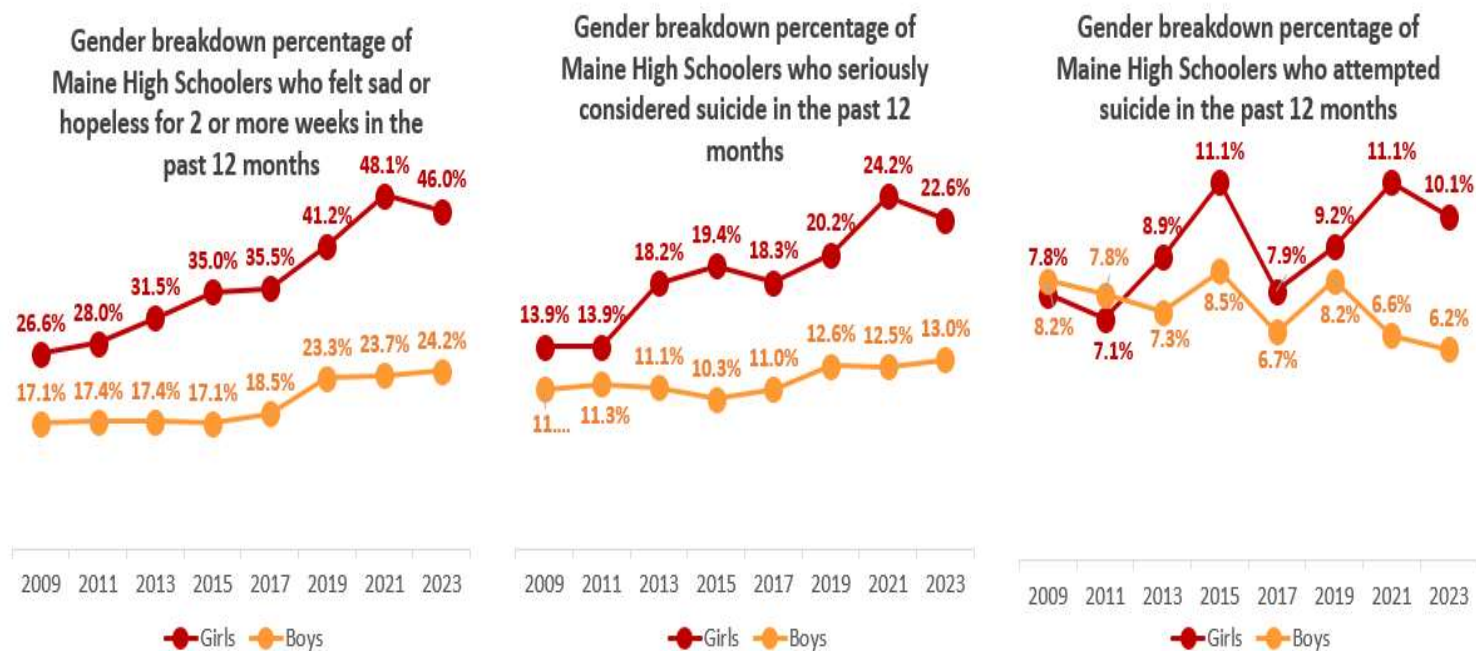


Figure 4: High School mental health questions broken down by gender



1: Data is from 2023 MIYHS

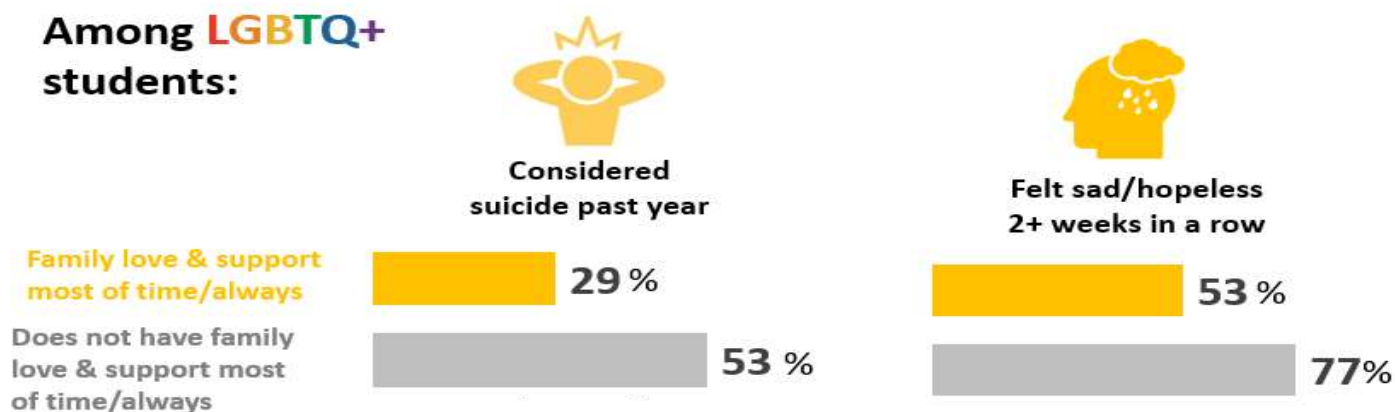
Maine Specific Data on Protective Factors

Maine students as well as students all over the country are experiencing mental health challenges ([YRBS Data Summary & Trends Report | Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System \(YRBSS\) | CDC](#)). Knowing what can help aid these students, what resources are available to them, and warning signs to watch out for is key.

Protective factors are positive things in someone's life that reduce the potential of suicide and other high-risk behaviors; some also call these assets. In Maine, we collect data on assets such as students' feeling like they are supported (by parents, teachers, and adults other than their parents), and that they matter to their community. These assets have been found to help both students going through mental health challenges and those who are not.

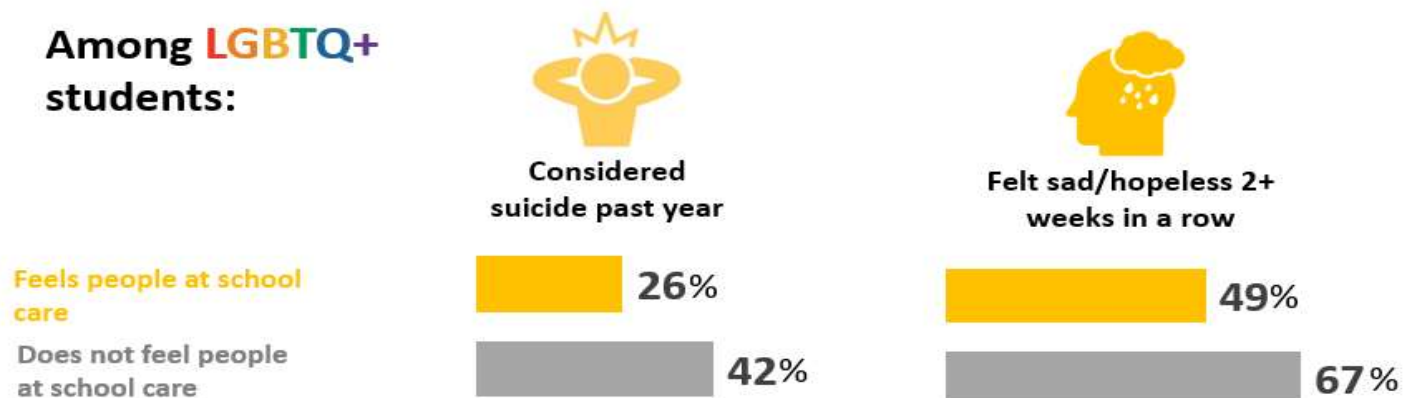
An analysis of MIYHS supported the idea that these supportive connections greatly help students. It demonstrates that LGBTQ+ students who felt they had greater support were less likely to report mental health challenges (Figures 5 and 6)¹.

Figure 5: LGBTQ+ students who indicated having support from family were less likely to report mental health challenges



1: Data is from 2023 MIYHS

Figure 6: LGBTQ+ students who indicated they felt people at their school cared about them and encouraged them were less likely to report mental health challenge



Resources for Youth Suicide Prevention

Mental health challenges look and feel different to everyone. Becoming aware of [warning signs](#) to watch out for can greatly help your students.

SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS FOR YOUTH

It's time to take action if you notice these signs in family or friends:

- Talking about or making plans for suicide.
- Expressing hopelessness about the future.
- Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress.
- Showing worrisome changes in behavior, particularly in combination with the warning signs above, including significant:
 - Withdrawal from or changing social connections/situations.
 - Changes in sleep (increased or decreased).
 - Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context.
 - Recent increased agitation or irritability.

#SUICIDEPREVENTIONMONTH | #SPM24

SAMHSA

1: Data is from 2023 MIYHS

If you think someone might be considering suicide, be the one to help them by taking these [5 steps](#):

5 Action Steps to Help Someone Having Thoughts of Suicide

ASK	BE THERE	HELP KEEP THEM SAFE	HELP THEM CONNECT	FOLLOW UP
"Are you thinking about killing yourself?"	Listen without judgment and acknowledge their feelings.	Reduce their access to lethal items or places.	Call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988).	Stay in touch to see how they're doing.

National Institute of Mental Health nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention

Maine Specific Resources

There are also resources available for students, staff, or anyone who needs it.

- In a mental health crisis, call or text the Maine Crisis line at 988 or 1-888-568-1112
 - Support in Spanish: call 988 and press 2
 - LGBTQI+ Support: Text Q to 988 or call 988 and press 3
- [Maine CDC Suicide Prevention Program](#)
- [NAMI Maine delivers trainings and technical assistance](#) as part of the Maine Suicide Prevention Program
- Maine's youth-focused suicide prevention campaign: [Filter Out the Noise](#)

[Find free suicide prevention print materials and digital downloads like the ones below at the Maine Prevention Store.](#)

To find more information about the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, visit: [Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey](#)

The Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) is a biennial survey of Maine students in grades 5-12 that monitors health behaviors and attitudes regarding physical activity, nutrition, mental health, tobacco, alcohol, substance use, and protective factors and has been administered to Maine students since 2009. For any questions regarding MIYHS please email: MIYHS.DHHS@maine.gov

BREATHING EXERCISE



BREATHE IN FOR
FOUR SECONDS



HOLD FOR FOUR
SECONDS



BREATHE OUT FOR
FOUR SECONDS



HOLD FOR FOUR
SECONDS

AND START AGAIN!

IT'S OKAY
TO NOT
FEEL OKAY.

TALK IT
OUT WITH
SOMEONE
YOU TRUST.

