

Youth Suicide

“In the most recent survey of adolescent behaviors conducted by Washington’s Department of Health, one-fifth of Washington’s students in grades 9 through 12 reported that they had seriously considered suicide.”

The number of suicides by youth in Washington varies significantly from year to year. In 2008, there were 20 suicides by youth. During the five years 2004-2008 the number of Washington youth committing suicide has ranged from a high of 22 in 2004 to a low of 14 in 2007. The average number of youth deaths due to suicide for the five-year period is 19.

While the number of males who commit suicide is generally higher than the number of females, it is noteworthy that 13 of the 20 youth suicides in 2008 were males. In recent years, the ratio of males to females has been approximately 4 to 1 however in 2008 the ration of males to females was nearly 3 to 1.

According to Washington’s Department of Health, suicide is the second leading cause of death among our state’s young people 15-19 years old. In the most recent survey of adolescent behaviors conducted by Washington’s Department of Health, one-fifth of Washington’s students in grades 9 through 12 reported that they had seriously considered suicide. Of these, 80 percent had made a suicide plan, 40 percent had made a suicide attempt, and 20 percent had made an attempt that required medical attention.

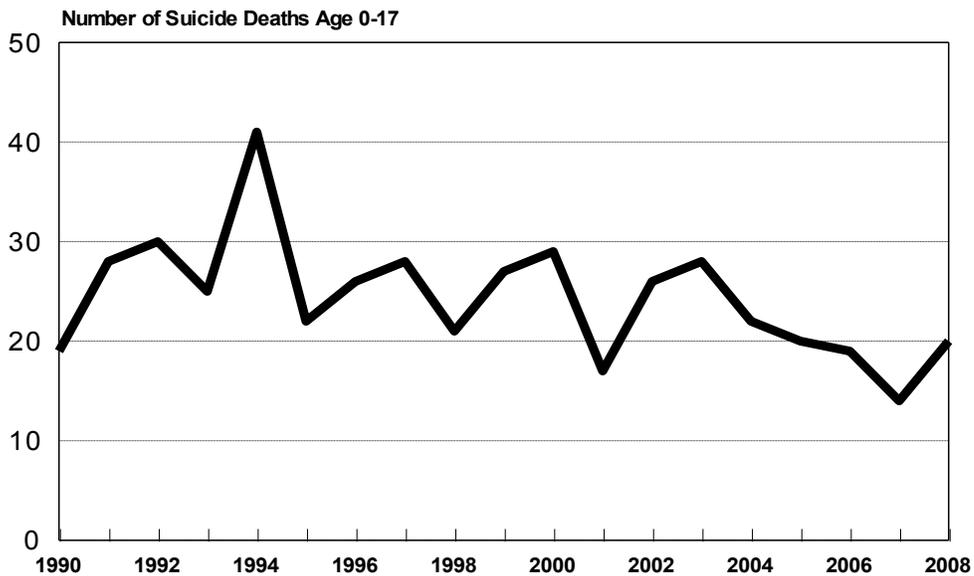
The American Association of SUICIDOLOGY indicates that suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people (ages 15-19 and 15-24; only accidents and homicides occur more frequently. According to the Centers for Disease Control, in 2002, 1,327 youth between the ages of 10 and 18 committed suicide. Most of these youth, nearly 81 percent, were males (1070).

The National Center for Policy Analysis, 2001, reports that, “Young white males are more likely to kill themselves than blacks—though the rate for black males has risen sharply since 1980. The highest rate of all is among young Native American males.” Equivalent data regarding ethnicity is not collected in Washington.

In 1994, the Washington State Legislature directed the Department of Health to develop a youth suicide prevention plan. The Department has developed a three-tiered prevention approach: a public education program, “Gatekeeper” training (provides training to adult front-line caregivers to recognize risk factors, screen youth, communicate and make referrals) and crisis service enhancements. Washington’s Suicide Prevention Plan is considered a national model of state sponsored suicide prevention programs.

Attempted suicide is a risk factor for future completed suicide, and a potential indicator of other health problems. Many adolescents who have committed suicide or attempted suicide have been in contact with the juvenile justice system (or law enforcement). Incarcerated youth are at an extreme risk for suicide (OJJDP, “Conditions of Confinement” report).

Graph 14
Juvenile Suicide Deaths in Washington State
1990 - 2008



Source: Data provided by the Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, "Residence Suicide Deaths by Gender in Washington, Age 0-17," updated December 2009.

TABLE 30

**Juvenile Suicide Deaths in Washington State
by County of Residence, Age 0-17 Years from 1998-2008**

County	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Adams											
Asotin											1
Benton	1	1	2	1		2			1		1
Chelan											1
Clallam			1		1		1	1			
Clark	1	1	4	2	1	1	2		1	2	1
Columbia							1				
Cowlitz	1	2	3					1			
Douglas									1		
Ferry											
Franklin	1										
Garfield											
Grant		1						1			
Grays Harbor	1	1									
Island	1	1			1	1		1	1	1	
Jefferson											
King	1	5	5	3	6	6	2	3	2	2	4
Kitsap	1	1		1	1	2	1	1	4	2	
Kititas	1						1				
Klickitat							1				
Lewis	2					2	1				1
Lincoln							1				
Mason											
Okanogan				2	1						
Pacific	1	1			1						
Pend Orielle											
Pierce	3	6	3	3	4	8	4	3	2		7
San Juan											
Skagit			2		1					1	
Skamania					2				1		
Snohomish		2	2	3	1	4	1	1	2	1	3
Spokane	1	2	3		2	2	4	3	1		
Stevens			1		2			1		1	
Thurston	3		1	1	1			1	2	2	1
Wahkiakum								1			
Walla Walla		2									
Whatcom			1						1	1	
Whitman											
Yakima	2	1	1	1	1		2	2		1	
TOTAL	21	27	29	17	26	28	22	20	19	14	20

Source: Data provided by the Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics; updated December 2009, "Residence Suicide Deaths by Gender in Washington: 2008, Age 0-17."

TABLE 31

**Juvenile Suicide Deaths in Washington State by Gender
Age 0-17 Years, from 2004 - 2008**

County	2008			2007			2006			2005			2004			Total 2004-2008
	F	M	Total													
Asotin	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Benton	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Chelan	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Clallam	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	2
Clark	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	6
Columbia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Cowlitz	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Douglas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Island	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	3
King	0	4	4	1	1	2	1	1	2	0	3	3	1	1	2	13
Kitsap	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	4	0	1	1	1	0	1	8
Kittitas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Klickitat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Lewis	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Lincoln	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Pierce	1	6	7	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	3	3	1	3	4	16
Skagit	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Skamania	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Snohomish	3	0	3	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	8
Spokane	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	3	1	3	4	8
Stevens	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Thurston	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	6
Wahkiakum	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Whatcom	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Yakima	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	2	5
TOTAL	7	13	20	2	12	14	5	14	19	1	19	20	8	14	22	95

Source: Data provided by the Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics; updated December 2009, "Residence Suicide Deaths by Gender in Washington: 2008, Age 0-17."