

Risk Behaviors and Protective Factors Experienced by High School Students Who Made a Suicide Plan During the Past Year

Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2017

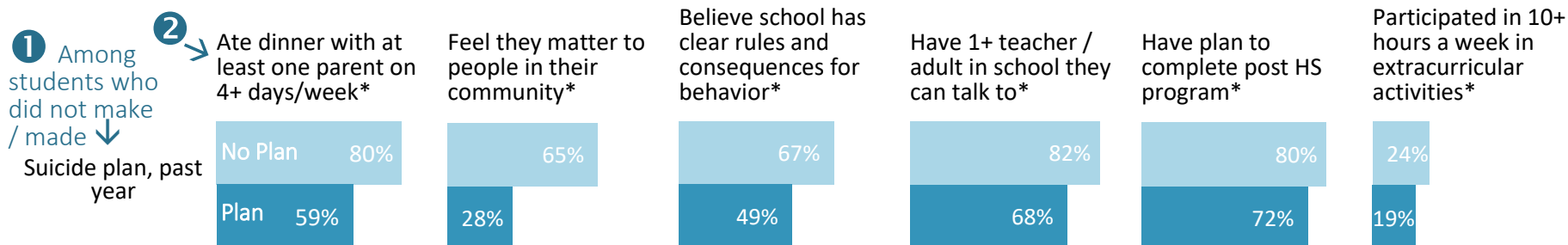
Suicide is a leading cause of death for people of all ages, both nationally and in Vermont.^{1,2} Many more people think about or attempt suicide and survive. Most youth thinking about suicide want others to be aware of their emotional pain and keep them from dying.³ While its causes vary and are complex, suicide is preventable. Suicide prevention strategies share two goals: to reduce factors that increase risk and to increase factors that promote resilience or coping.

A combination of individual, relationship, community, and societal factors or stressors can contribute to a youth's anxiety and unhappiness, increasing the possibility of a suicide attempt.^{2,3} Worrisome signs of distress and severe psychological pain include:

- Hopelessness
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Impulsiveness / unnecessary risk-taking
- Rage, anger, seeking revenge
- Local epidemics of suicide
- Family history of suicide, abuse, or mental disorders
- Abandonment of activities once considered enjoyable
- Dramatic mood swings
- Persistent feelings of failure
- Persistent physical complaints
- Giving away prized possessions
- Threatening suicide or expressing a strong wish to die
- Unrelenting low mood
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- No sense of purpose in life
- Feelings of being trapped, like there is no way out
- Seeking access to lethal means- guns, medications, poisons

Increasing protective factors and coping skills can help build resilience and improve well-being and reduce risk factors,³ Data below shows how the presence of protective factors correlates with fewer students making a plan to kill themselves compared to those who made a suicide plan in the past year. The following should be read: Among students who made / did not make a suicide plan, x% reported (protective factor). For example: Among high school students who made a suicide plan in the past year, 59% ate dinner with at least one parent on four or more days/week, statistically less than the 80% of students who did not make a suicide plan.

Experiences of students who **made** or **did not make** a plan to kill themselves during the past year.



*Students who have made a suicide plan during the past year were significantly less likely to report protective factors compared to those who did not make a suicide plan.

¹ Vermont Department of Health. Prevent Teen Suicide. Retrieved from <http://www.healthvermont.gov/children-youth-families/adolescent-health/prevent-teen-suicide> on December 20, 2018

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Suicide Prevention*. Updated August 27, 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/>

³ U Matter. *Worried about someone?* Retrieved from <https://www.umatterucangethelp.com/index.php/worried-about-someone>

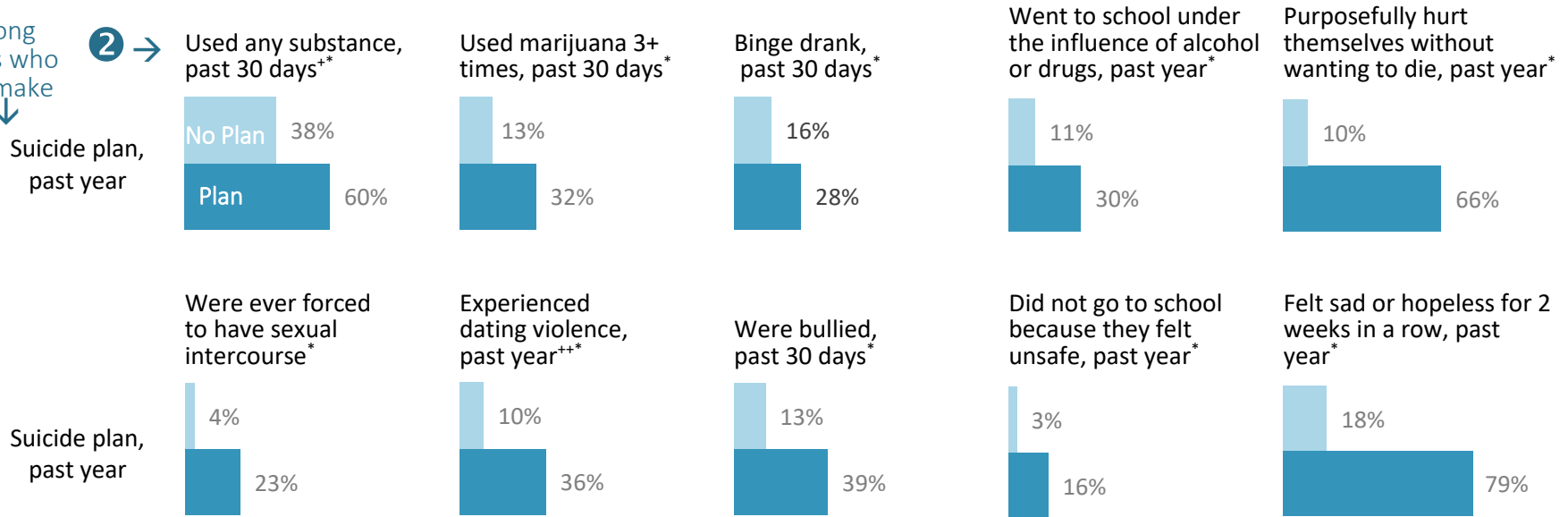
The **presence of warning signs and other risk factors such as bullying** correlates with more students making a plan to kill themselves. Many of these observations are not sure signs that someone is suicidal but could mean that they are struggling with issues in their lives and could use help. If these issues are not addressed or treated, they can result in suicidal thoughts or attempts.⁴

The following should be read: Among students who made / did not make a suicide plan during the past year, x% reported (risk factor). For example: Among high school students who made a plan to kill themselves, 32% used marijuana three or more times during the past month, statistically more than the 13% who did not make a suicide plan.

Risk behaviors and negative experiences of students who made or did not make a plan to kill themselves during the past year.

1 Among students who did not make / made

2 →



*Students who made a suicide plan were significantly more likely to report risk factors / behaviors compared to those who did not make a suicide plan.

*Any substance includes: alcohol use, marijuana use, any tobacco use, or prescription drug misuse.

** Experienced dating violence include: experienced physical or sexual violence by someone they were dating or going out with, among those who dated.

More information on youth suicide prevention including information about risk factors and warning signs for suicide and how to access Vermont resources visit the [Vermont Suicide Prevention Center](#) or [UMatter](#), for additional teen friendly resources, videos, and support.

For more information about the YRBS contact Kristen Murray Kristen.murray@vermont.gov

GET HELP NOW

If you or someone you know may be considering suicide, text VT to 741741 for the Vermont Crisis Text Line service, or call the 24-hour National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or visit www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org to text/chat anonymously with a compassionate and trained counselor.

⁴ The Jason Foundation. *Youth Suicide*. Retrieved from <http://jasonfoundation.com/youth-suicide/facts-stats/>
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