Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness

What the Youth Risk Behavior Survey teaches us about health risks, and how professionals can mitigate them

[Webinar] Wednesday, Oct. 23 | 2PM ET

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SchoolHouse Connection works to overcome homelessness through education. We provide strategic advocacy and technical assistance in partnership with schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth.

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- Newsletter: [https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/sign-up/](https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/sign-up/)
- Federal and state policy advocacy
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- Webinars and implementation tools
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HAVE A QUESTION?
This webinar is for you. Enter your questions in the questions pane and click ‘Send’. We will save time at the end of the webinar to answer them.

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An archive of this webinar and all materials will be posted here.

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To get CEUs for this webinar, you must:

1. Complete a post-test upon completion of the webinar
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Our Agenda

- **Background** on student homelessness, and the YRBS
- Summary of YRBS data on **prevalence and demographics** of homelessness
- Summary of YRBS data on **health risk behaviors** of homeless high school students
- **Trauma-informed, practical strategies** to mitigate health risks, including strategies recommended by youth who have experienced homelessness
1.5 million children and youth experiencing homelessness, preK-12, identified and enrolled in school in the 2017-18 school year.

Date source: U.S. Department of Education (preliminary data)
17% of college and university students surveyed experienced homelessness in the previous year.

Date source: The Hope Center
About the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

- Developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1990 to assess health risk behaviors.

- 2017 YRBS optional question list included two questions pertaining to homelessness:
  - reveal prevalence of youth homelessness
  - exposes disproportionate health and mental health risks of youth experiencing homelessness
Housing status variable was assessed using the following survey question:

During the past 30 days, where did you usually sleep?
A. In my parent's or guardian's home
B. In the home of a friend, family member, or other person because I had to leave my home or my parent or guardian cannot afford housing
C. In a shelter or emergency housing
D. In a motel or hotel
E. In a car, park, campground, or other public place
F. I do not have a usual place to sleep
G. Somewhere else

24 states used this question in 2017.
YRBS Data Analysis: Prevalence of Homelessness

Survey results show:

4.9% OF STUDENTS EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS AT SOME POINT DURING THE 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR

For every 17.7 students, 1 student has experienced homelessness

Risk and Resilience: Differences in Risk Factors and Health Outcomes Between Homeless and Non-Homeless Students in 2017 YRBS Data
Read the full paper: http://bit.ly/SHC-YRBS2018

4.9% of students reported homelessness in the last 30 days.
RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES ARE OVER-REPRESENTED AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Data: Risk and Resilience: Differences in Risk Factors and Health Outcomes Between Homeless and Non-Homeless Students in 2017 YRBS Data

Read the full paper: http://bit.ly/SHC-YRBS2018
YRBS Data Analysis:
Race and Ethnicity

LIKELIHOOD TO EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS

Black students: 2.67 TIMES
White students

Hispanic students: 1.68 TIMES
White students

Data: Risk and Resilience: Differences in Risk Factors and Health Outcomes Between Homeless and Non-Homeless Students in 2017 YRBS Data
Read the full paper: http://bit.ly/SHC-YRBS2018
Survey results show:

29.8% OF STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IDENTIFY AS LGBQ *compared to 13.8% of all students

For every 10 students experiencing homelessness, 3 students identify as LGBQ.
YRBS Data Analysis: Sexual Orientation

Likelihood to Experience Homelessness

LGBQ students

2.94 TIMES

Heterosexual students

29.8% of homeless students are LGBQ (compared to 13.8% of all students)

Data: Risk and Resilience: Differences in Risk Factors and Health Outcomes Between Homeless and Non-Homeless Students in 2017 YRBS Data
Read the full paper: http://bit.ly/SHC-YRBS2018
YRBS Data Analysis: Mental Health

- 3.21x more likely to make a suicide plan.
- 7.19x more likely to attempt suicide.

Likelihood to Attempt Suicide

Students not experiencing homelessness

Students experiencing homelessness

36.9% of homeless students reported a suicide attempt.

Data: Risk and Resilience: Differences in Risk Factors and Health Outcomes Between Homeless and Non-Homeless Students in 2017 YRBS Data
Read the full paper: http://bit.ly/SHC-YRBS2018
YRBS Data Analysis: Substance Abuse

LIKELIHOOD TO MISUSE PRESCRIPTION PAIN MEDICINE

Students not experiencing homelessness

4.63 TIMES

Students experiencing homelessness

40.6% of homeless students misused prescription pain medicine.

Data: Risk and Resilience: Differences in Risk Factors and Health Outcomes Between Homeless and Non-Homeless Students in 2017 YRBS Data
Read the full paper: http://bit.ly/SN-SCYRBS2018
YRBS Data Analysis: Substance Abuse

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LIKELIHOOD TO ENGAGE IN BINGE DRINKING AT LEAST ONE DAY PER MONTH

Students not experiencing homelessness

2.41 TIMES

Students experiencing homelessness

24.7% of homeless students engaged in binge drinking at least one day per month.

Data: Risk and Resilience: Differences in Risk Factors and Health Outcomes Between Homeless and Non-Homeless Students in 2017 YRBS Data
Read the full paper: http://bit.ly/SHC-YRBS2018
YRBS Data Analysis: Violence and Absenteeism

**Likelihood to Miss School Due to Safety Concerns**

Students not experiencing homelessness

Students experiencing homelessness

4.63 TIMES

28.2% of homeless students missed school due to safety concerns.

Data: Risk and Resilience: Differences in Risk Factors and Health Outcomes Between Homeless and Non-Homeless Students in 2017 YRBS Data
Read the full paper: http://bit.ly/SHC-YRBS2018
YRBS Data Analysis: Physical Dating Violence

LIKELIHOOD TO BE VICTIMS OF PHYSICAL DATING VIOLENCE

Students not experiencing homelessness

Students experiencing homelessness

5.88 TIMES

24.8% of homeless students reported being victims of physical dating violence.

Data: Risk and Resilience: Differences in Risk Factors and Health Outcomes Between Homeless and Non-Homeless Students in 2017 YRBS Data
Read the full paper: http://bit.ly/SHC-YRBS2018
YRBS Data Analysis: Sexual Violence

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LIKELIHOOD TO BE FORCED TO DO SEXUAL THINGS (KISSING, TOUCHING, OR SEXUAL INTERCOURSE)

Students not experiencing homelessness

5.59 TIMES

Students experiencing homelessness

34.9% of homeless students reported being forced to do sexual things.

Data: Risk and Resilience: Differences in Risk Factors and Health Outcomes Between Homeless and Non-Homeless Students in 2017 YRBS Data
Read the full paper: http://bit.ly/SHC-YRBS2018
YRBS Data Analysis: Sexual Violence

**Likelihood to be Victims of Sexual Dating Violence**

Students not experiencing homelessness  

5.03 TIMES

Students experiencing homelessness

17.2% of homeless students reported being victims of sexual dating violence.

Data: Risk and Resilience: Differences in Risk Factors and Health Outcomes Between Homeless and Non-Homeless Students in 2017 YRBS Data  
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**LIKELIHOOD TO GET 6 OR FEWER HOURS OF SLEEP**

Students not experiencing homelessness

3.32 TIMES

Students experiencing homelessness

71.7% of homeless students typically got 6 or fewer hours of sleep.

Data: Risk and Resilience: Differences in Risk Factors and Health Outcomes Between Homeless and Non-Homeless Students in 2017 YRBS Data
How Can We Help Prevent and Mitigate These Risks?
Identification

How can schools effectively identify McKinney-Vento students?

67% of students say they were uncomfortable telling people at school about their homelessness and asking for help.
Identification

1. Don’t say "homeless".
   Use descriptive language; ask questions with discretion:
   - Where would you go if you couldn’t stay here?
   - What led you to move in to this situation?

2. Training, training, training.
   - School counselors,
   - Registrars
   - Teachers
   - Bus drivers
   - Resource officers
   - Nurses
   - Dropout prevention specialists
   - Attendance officers
   - Principals
   - Food service staff

3. Work with your liaison.
4. Educate students, parents and community partners.
   - Put information on the school and district websites.
   - Posters in school buildings, libraries, motels, campgrounds, service providers.
   - Meet with teen parent programs, LGBTQ youth organizations, youth organizations, homeless service providers, health, housing and social service agencies.

5. Ask about preschool-aged siblings.

6. Coordinate across federal and state programs.
Mental Health and Substance Abuse
Strategies from Young People

“I would emphasize confidential, non-reporting counseling options...I never sought the therapy that could have helped me cope or provided me with strategies to better my situation for fear of legal reporting requirements.”

“Destigmatizing depression, anxiety, and mental illness, in general, would be a big step in the right direction. Nurses and counselors could visit classrooms and discuss the commonality of things like this.”
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<th>Strategies</th>
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<td><strong>01</strong></td>
<td>Provide school-based mental health care providers (psychologists, counselors, social workers) with training on student homelessness.</td>
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<td><strong>02</strong></td>
<td>Open the school to community-based providers, to address the transportation barrier.</td>
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<td><strong>03</strong></td>
<td>Ensure all school personnel are trained in evidence-based suicide prevention strategies and information about where to refer students for immediate support.</td>
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<td><strong>04</strong></td>
<td>Ensure discretion and privacy.</td>
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<td><strong>05</strong></td>
<td>Destigmatize treatment through peer-based mentorship and other measures.</td>
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Physical Health
“Educate [students about] what physical and sexual dating violence looks like so they can identify whether they are in a violent relationship. Explain prevention methods, how to de-escalate a physically and sexually violent person, [and] how to leave such a relationship without promoting any more violence. When I was experiencing sexual violence in a relationship, I did not realize right away that it was abuse even though I knew I was being coerced.”
Making Connections
“Let students know what resources are available to them. Be clear about the procedure followed when students disclose [feelings of suicidality] so they can make an informed choice about disclosure—don’t force interventions that students don’t want, [and] let them know what they need to do to avoid them.”

“Students experiencing homelessness are more likely to seek and ask for help from those they trust.”
Strategies

1. Establish a culture of care
   - Talk openly and often
   - Open door policy
   - Clear cultural norms
   - Immediate response
   - Trauma-informed practices that specifically include students experiencing homelessness

2. Empower self-advocacy
   - Equip students with language
   - Respect youth autonomy
   - Create targeted resources
   - Make resources and reporting mechanisms easily available

3. Create physical safe spaces
   - Before- and after-school use of classrooms
   - Affirming messages and resources
   - Clear anti-bullying and anti-violence policies
Q&A
Resources

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http://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/

Short briefs on specific YRBS data elements

Full paper on YRBS analysis

Centers for Disease Control YRBS information
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm

For help getting homelessness questions on your state’s YRBS, contact Patricia Julianelle, patricia@schoolhouseconnection.org
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Link to post-test: https://forms.gle/9PG92XUQ65Ye2j2P6
THANK YOU!

Patricia Julianelle
Director of Program Advancement and Legal Affairs
patricia@schoolhouseconnection.org

Supported by:
Youth Leadership and Scholarship - Application Open

Scholarship open to applicants:
- Born on or after November 11, 1999
- Entering college for the first time in the 2020-21 school year
- Who have experienced homelessness within the last 6 years

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https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/youth-leadership/scholarship-program/
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5 Sessions:
- What’s Hot on the Hill(s): Federal and State Policy Advocacy
- Education Leads Home: A National Campaign on Student Homelessness
- Lessons of College Liaisons: Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness
- NC's Focus on Access to Quality Child Care for Children Experiencing Homelessness
- Early Childhood Homelessness State Profiles