



# Youth Violence in Massachusetts 2009-2017

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# Youth Violence is ...

... an Adverse Childhood Experience and is related to other forms of violence including child abuse and neglect, teen dating violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence and suicide.\*

# Youth Violence ...

**... is common.** Nationwide, 19% of students reported being bullied on school property, 7% reported skipping school because of safety concerns, and 10% reported experiencing sexual violence.\*

**... results in death and injury.** Each day, 14 young people ages 10-24 are victims of homicide and about 1,300 are treated in EDs for non-fatal assault-related injuries.†

**... is costly.** Each year, youth homicides and non-fatal assault-related injuries account for more the \$21 billion in combined medical and lost productivity costs. †

\* Kann L et al. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2017. MMWR, 2018;67(8).

† Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Preventing Youth Violence.

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/fastfact.html>

# There is Evidence that ...

- Youth Violence is related to depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems among youth.\*
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), like Youth Violence, have a strong and graded relationship with variety of adult health outcomes including: depression, suicide, unintended pregnancy, fetal death, STIs, cancer, smoking, alcohol and drug addiction, risky sexual behaviors, and impaired work performance. †

\* Fowler PJ, Tompsett CJ, Braciszewski JM, Jacques-Tiura Aj, Baltés BB. Community violence: A meta-analysis of the effect of exposure and mental health outcomes of children and adolescents. *Dev Psychopathol.* 2009;21(1):227-59.

† [https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/journal.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fviolenceprevention%2Facestudy%2Fjournal.html](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/journal.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fviolenceprevention%2Facestudy%2Fjournal.html)

# Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)

- Monitors health risk behaviors among youth grades 9-12
- Funded by CDC – 46 states, 21 LEAs, 3 US Territories & 3 Tribal Nations participating (2017).
- Survey methodology is consistent between states and set by CDC.
- Implemented by DESE
- Has been on-going for 26 years in MA

# Youth Health Survey (YHS)

- Funded and implemented by DPH
- Uses same CDC-set survey methodology as YRBS
- YHS sample includes middle schools and additional classrooms in YRBS-sampled high schools
- DPH determines questions on YHS questionnaire
- Has been jointly administered with YRBS since 2007

# Measures of Youth Violence on YRBS/YHS

- Violence – Related Behaviors and Experiences
- Violence – Related Behaviors and Experiences at School
- Dating and Sexual Violence
- Bullying
- Family Violence

# Violence Related Behaviors and Experiences in Massachusetts 2017

## Survey Highlights:

- **Youth Violence has either declined or held constant** in Massachusetts since 2009. MA rates remain lower than nationwide measures.
- **Fewer students are bringing weapons to school:** 11% of students reported carrying a weapon in the past 30 days, but only 2.7% carried a weapon to school in the same time period.
- **Fighting has decreased:** The percent of high school students who were in a physical fight has decreased by 11.4% since 2009, from 29.2 to 17.8%.
- **Fewer middle school students are witnessing violence in their family:** 11.1% in 2009 to 8.2% in 2017.



# Dating and Sexual Violence in Massachusetts 2017 Survey Highlights:

- 20.5% of high school students and 11% of middle school students reported **having their activity monitored** (e.g., monitoring cell phone use or repeated texts) by someone they were dating.
- 9.3% of female and 2.3% of male high school students reported **sexual dating violence**.
- 5.6% of high school students experienced **physical dating violence** in the 12 months before the survey. The rate was the same for male and female high school students.

# Bullying in Massachusetts 2017 Survey

## Highlights

- **Less bullying in MA high schools:** Fewer high school students are being bullied at school since 2009. The rate has dropped from 19.4% in 2009 to 14.6% in 2017. This is lower than national rates.
- **Middle school bullying continues:** Middle school bullying rates have not changed, nor has the incidence of cyberbullying in either high school or middle school.
- **Student perceptions of bullying frequency:** conversely, according to student reports, from 2009 to 2017 the prevalence of bullying has decreased in both high school and middle school.

# Summary

- Violence related behaviors and experiences have decreased in Massachusetts
- Bullying has decreased from 2009 to 2017
- Dating and sexual violence rates remain steady, though it has not been measured as reliably since 2009

# Next Steps

- Data collection for the 2019 survey has just been completed
- We typically expect the report to be ready by end of 2019
- For the 2021 survey, we will focus on maintaining our response rate and ensuring continued representation at-risk groups