



Highlighting National Data on Adolescent Mental Health

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CDC Strives to Help Youth Be Healthy and Successful

We envision a future where all youth in the U.S. will be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resources for a healthy adolescence and adulthood.



An Overview of the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)

● **YRBSS was established in 1990**
to monitor health behaviors and experiences among U.S. high school students

YRBSS is a system of surveys

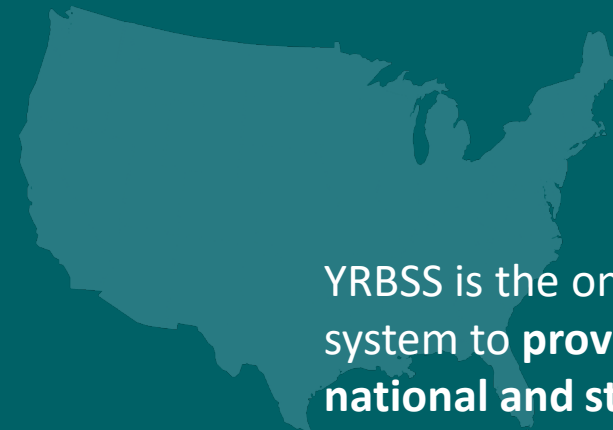


National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)
conducted by CDC

State, territorial, tribal, and local YRBS
conducted by state, territorial, local, and tribal agencies

4.9
million

high school students
across the U.S. have
participated since its
inception



YRBSS is the only federal surveillance system to **provide representative national and state data** to help guide decision making

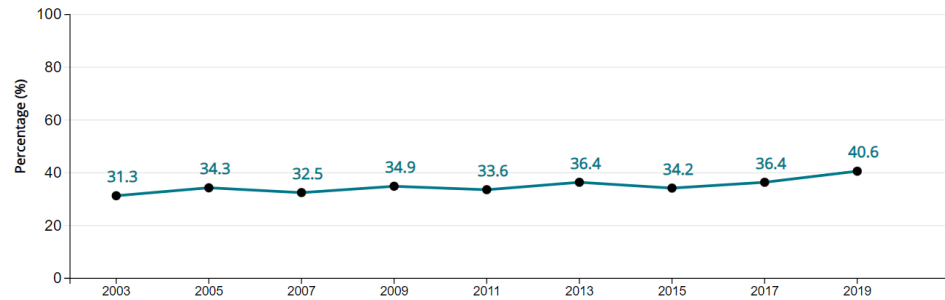
Exploring State YRBS Data

Unintentional Injuries And Violence

High School Students Who Felt Sad Or Hopeless*

Location:

[Compare to United States](#)

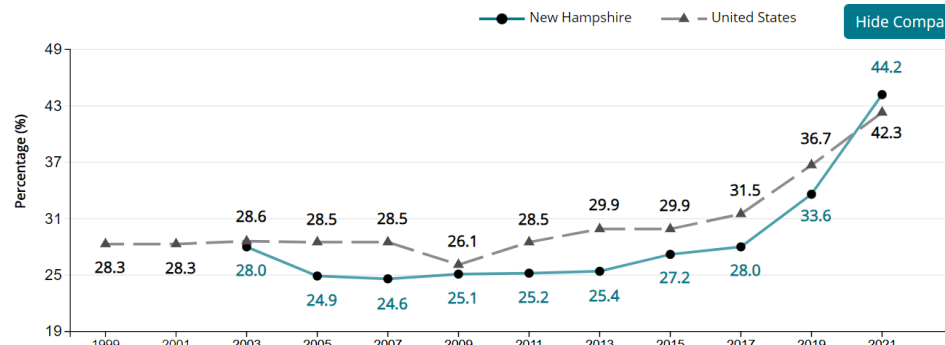


Unintentional Injuries And Violence

High School Students Who Felt Sad Or Hopeless*

Location:

[Hide Comparison](#)

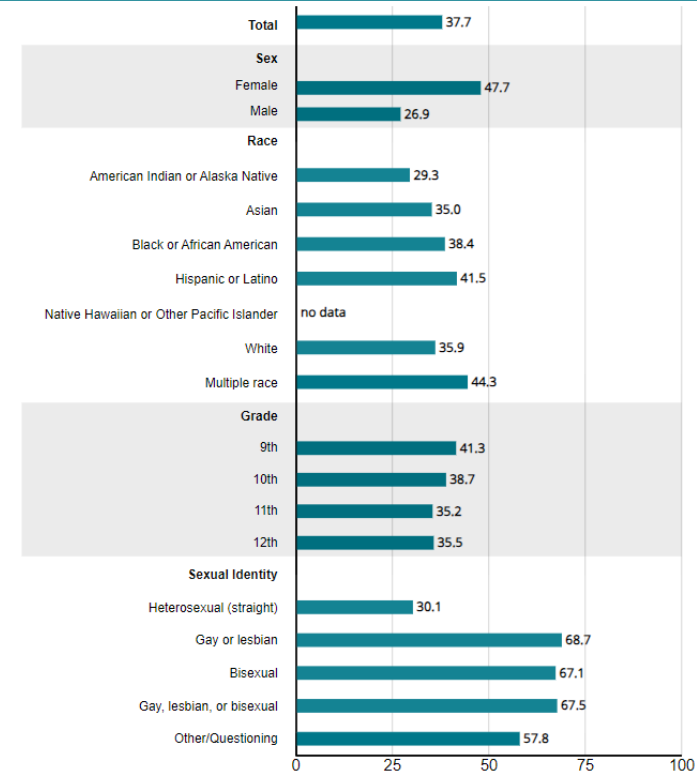


Unintentional Injuries And Violence

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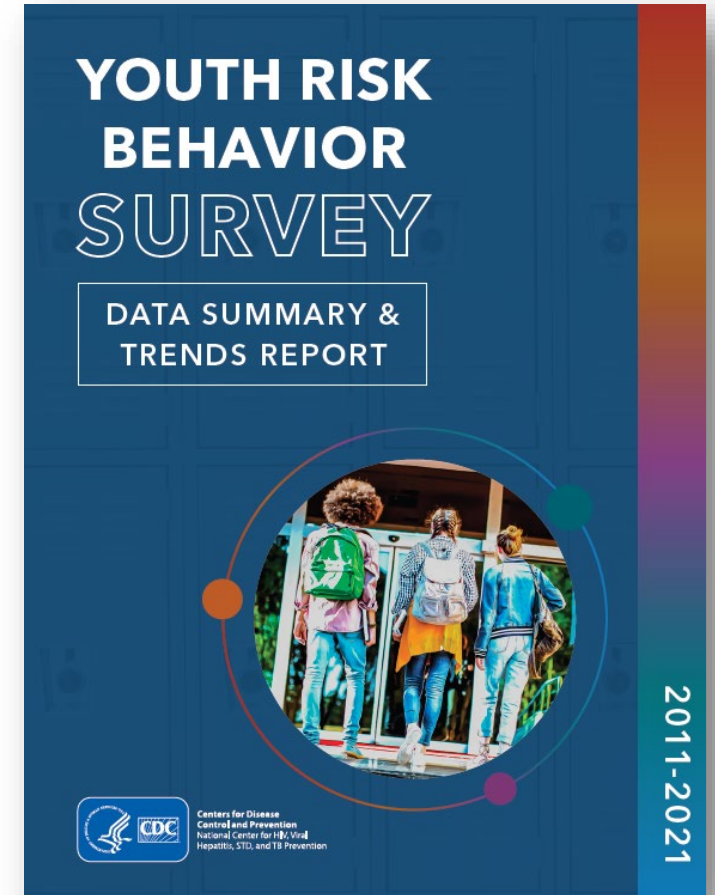
Details From a Specific Year:









Explore state data at:
<https://yrbs-explorer.services.cdc.gov/#/>

CDC Data Highlight Disparities in Adolescent Health and Well-being




- Data describe behaviors and experiences among students in key areas:
 - **Sexual behavior**
 - **Substance use**
 - **Experiences of violence**
 - **Mental health and suicidality**
 - **Protective factors and social determinants of health**
- Female and LGBTQ+ students are experiencing significant disparities



Experiences of Violence

The Percentage of High School Students Who:*	2011 Total	2013 Total	2015 Total	2017 Total	2019 Total	2021 Total	Trend
Were threatened or injured with a weapon at school	7	7	6	6	7	7	
Did not go to school because of safety concerns	6	7	6	7	9	9	
Were electronically bullied	16	15	16	15	16	16	
Were bullied at school	20	20	20	19	20	15	
Were ever forced to have sex	8	7	7	7	7	8	
Experienced sexual violence by anyone	–	–	–	10	11	11	

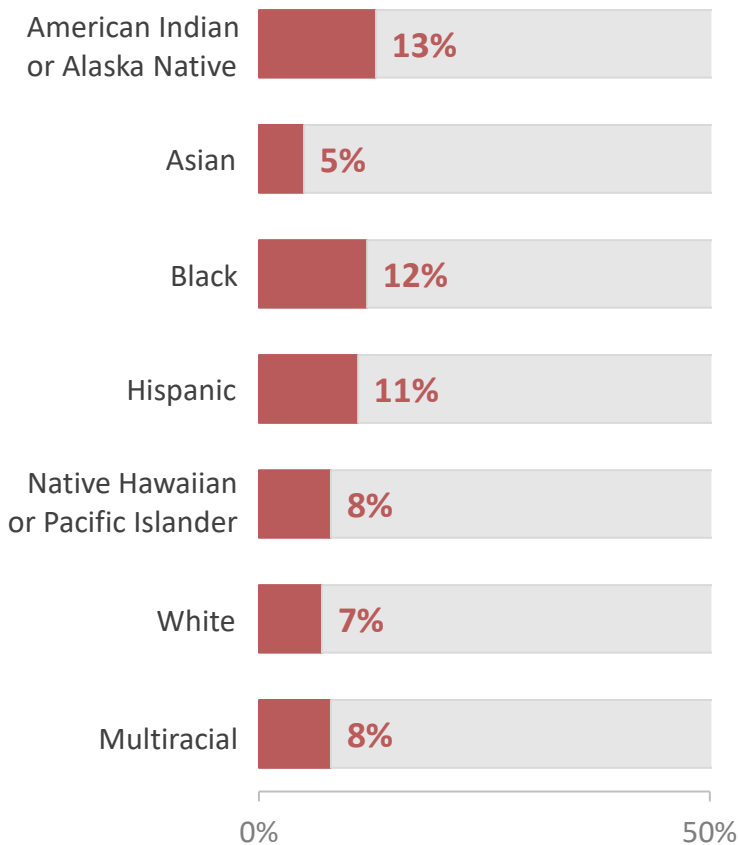
LEGEND

	In wrong direction
	No change
	In right direction

Source: National Youth Risk Behavior Surveys, 2011-2021

Experiences of Violence – Data Snapshot

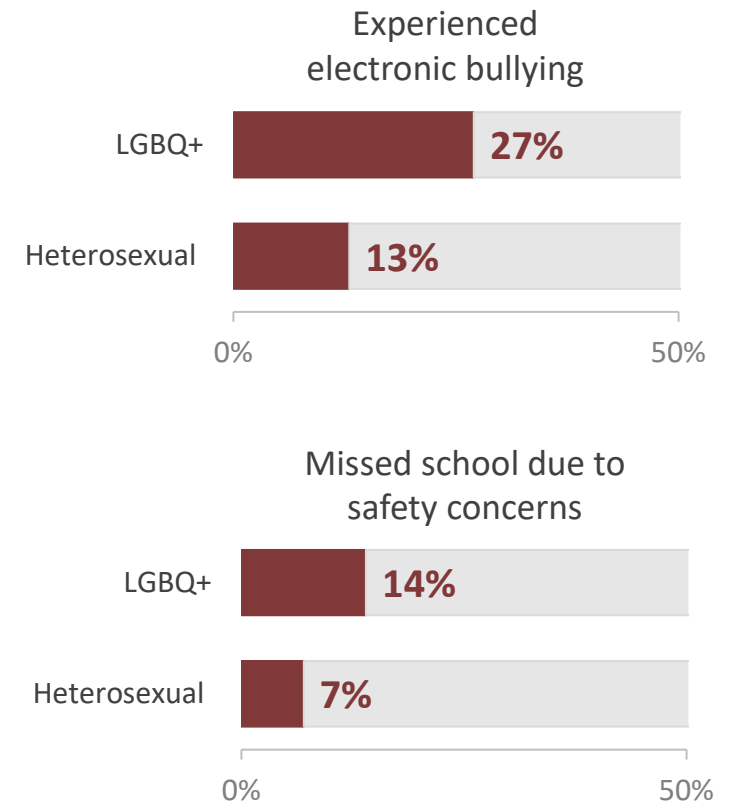
Black and Hispanic students were significantly more likely to miss school due to safety concerns








Female students experienced substantial sexual violence






LGBQ+ students experienced more violence than their heterosexual peers



Mental Health and Suicidality

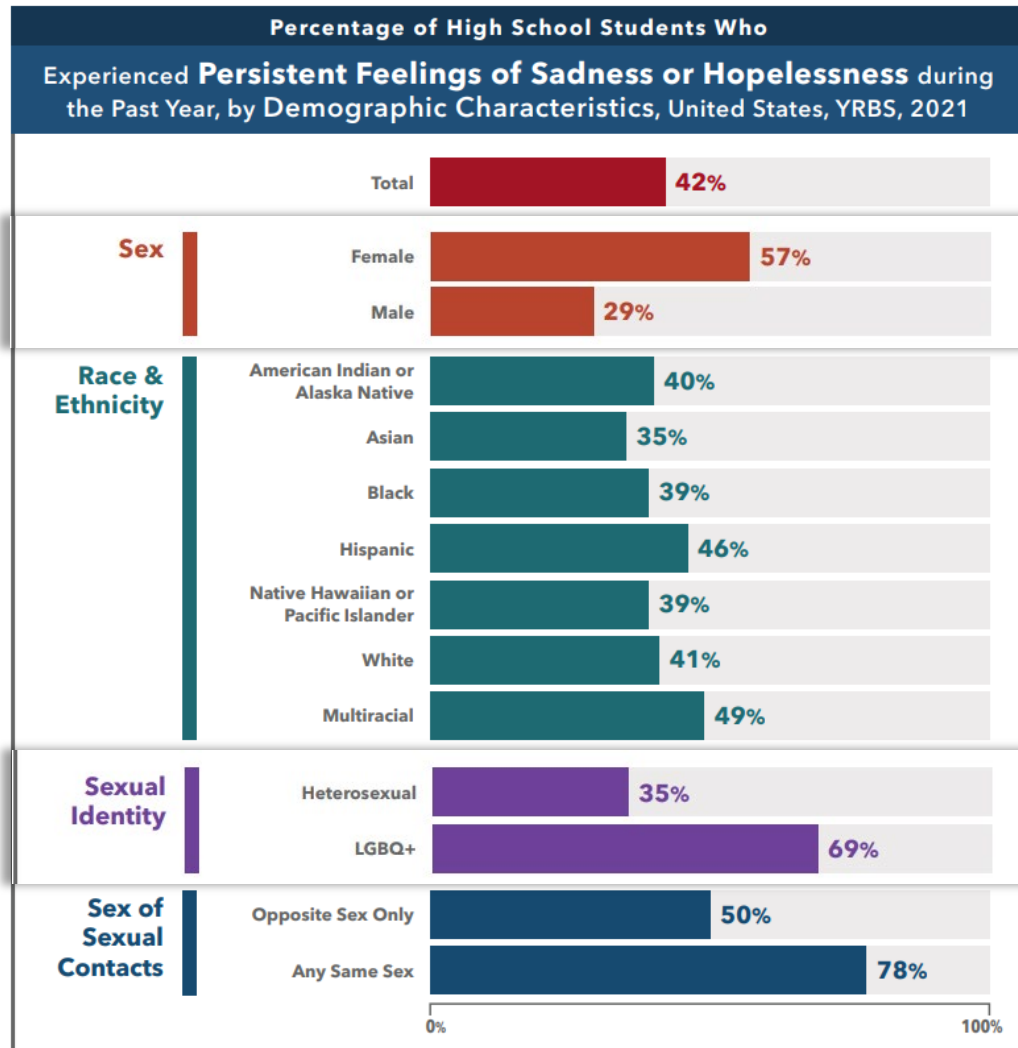
The Percentage of High School Students Who:*	2011 Total	2013 Total	2015 Total	2017 Total	2019 Total	2021 Total	Trend
Experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness	28	30	30	31	37	42	
Experienced poor mental health	–	–	–	–	–	29	–
Seriously considered attempting suicide	16	17	18	17	19	22	
Made a suicide plan	13	14	15	14	16	18	
Attempted suicide	8	8	9	7	9	10	
Were injured in a suicide attempt that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse	2	3	3	2	3	3	

LEGEND

	In wrong direction
	No change
	In right direction

Source: National Youth Risk Behavior Surveys, 2011-2021

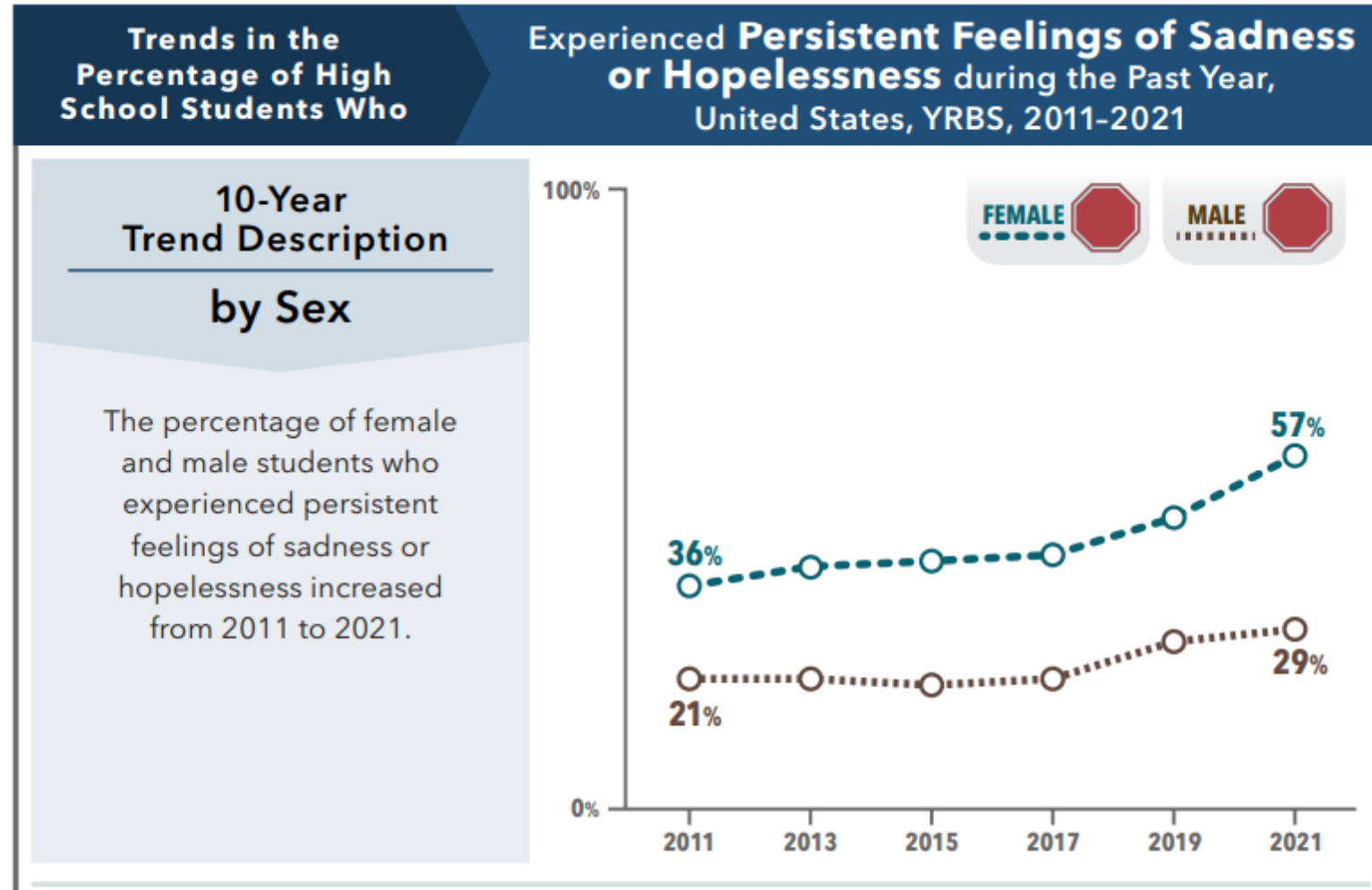
Female and LGBTQ+ students experienced higher levels of depressive symptoms



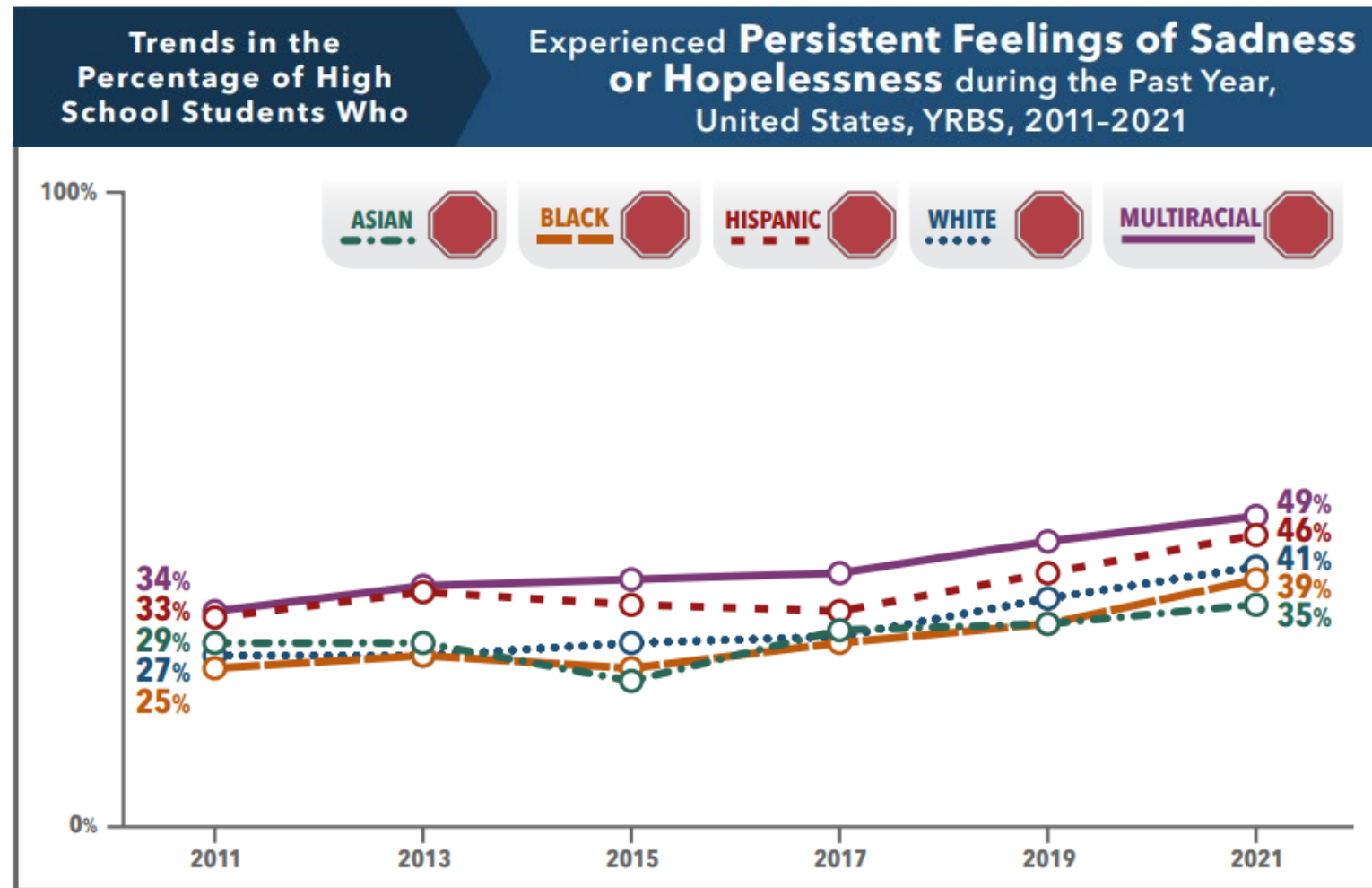
57% of female students felt persistently sad or hopeless compared to 29% of male students.

69% of LGBTQ+ students felt persistently sad or hopeless compared to 35% of heterosexual students.

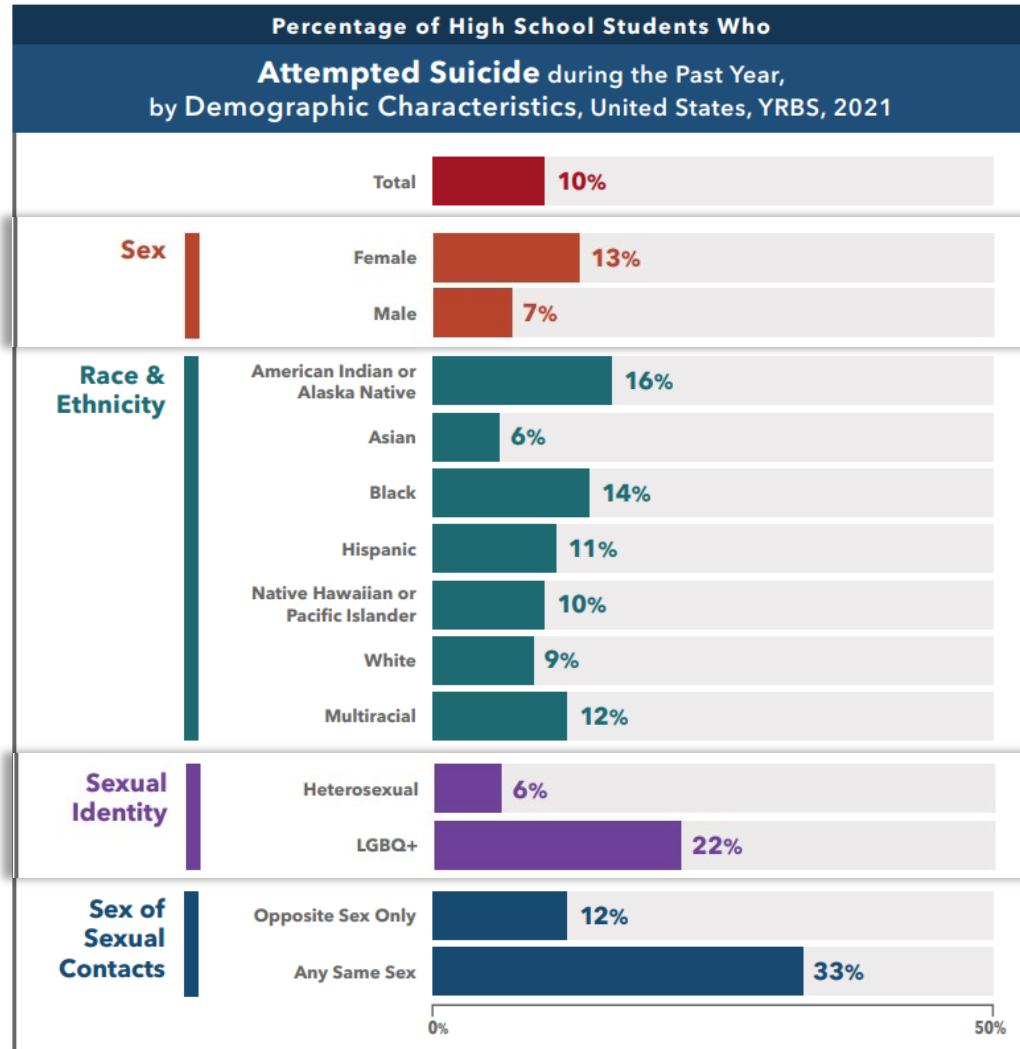
The disparity in depressive symptoms between male and female students is significant



Depressive symptoms increased among all racial and ethnic groups of students



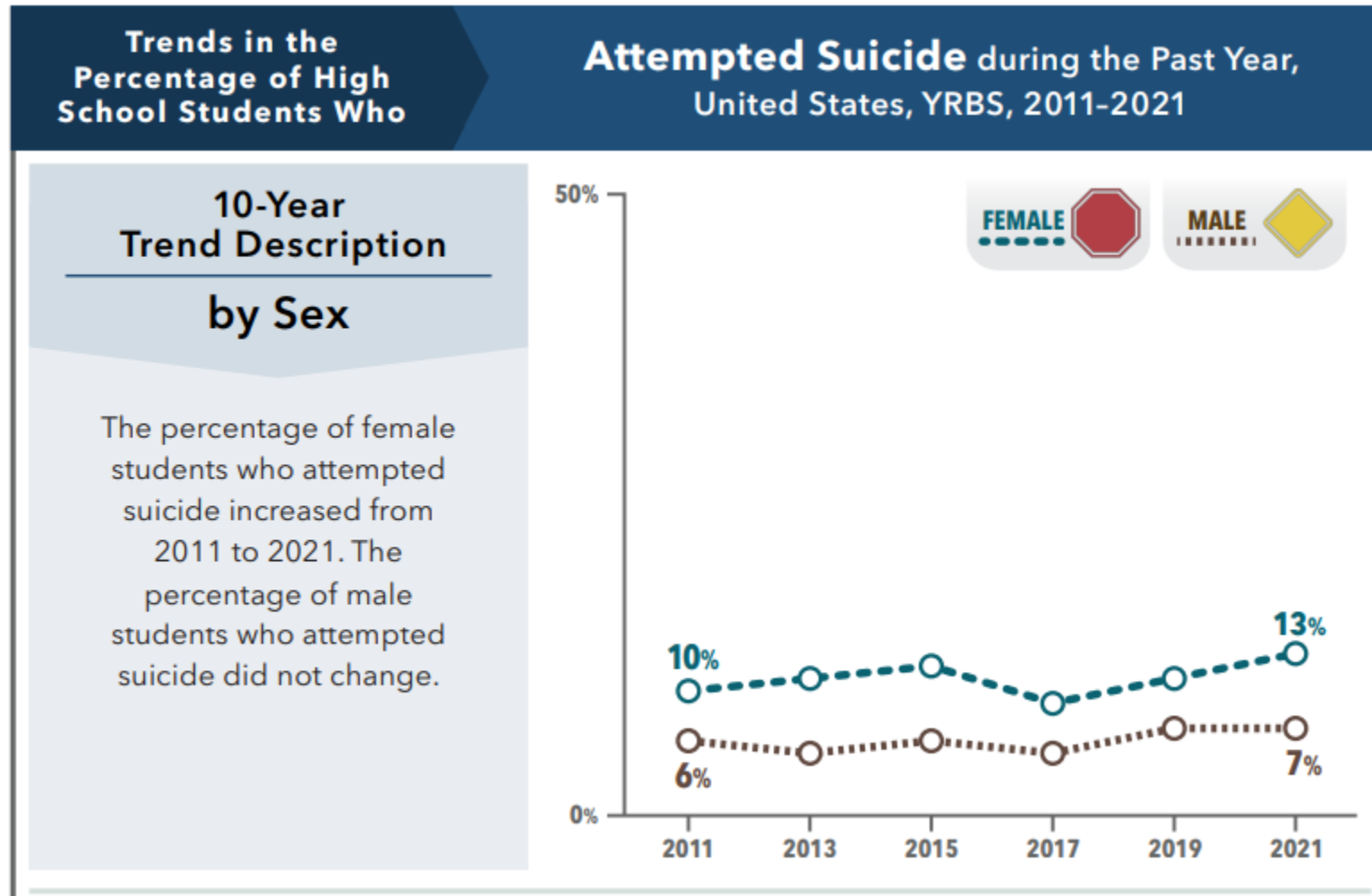
Female and LGBTQ+ students were more likely to attempt suicide



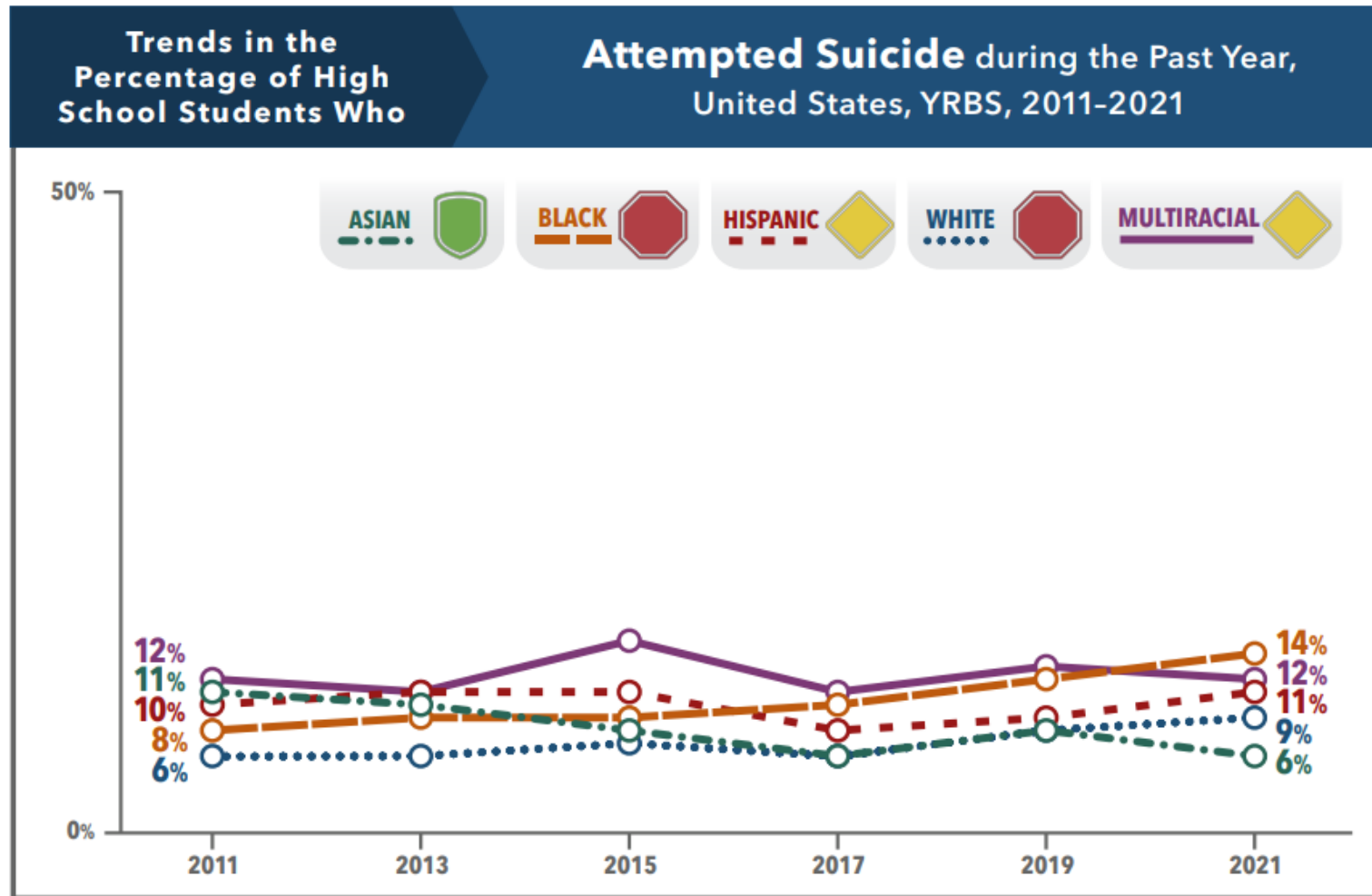
13% of female students attempted suicide compared to 7% of male students.

22% of LGBTQ+ students attempted suicide compared to 6% of heterosexual students.

Suicide attempts among female students continue to increase



Black and White students experienced increases in suicide attempts



Summary

- Adolescent mental health continues to worsen.
- Female students are experiencing substantially more violence, poor mental health, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors than their male peers.
- Disparities between LGBTQ+ students and their heterosexual peers remain significant and concerning.
- Patterns of disparities are less consistent for race and ethnicity, but equally important to understand.

Adolescents are experiencing a level of distress that calls on us to act.

School-based prevention strategies are effective



Activities to increase school connectedness

Classroom Management	Service-Learning Programs	Mentoring Programs	LGBTQ Supportive Policies and Practices
<p>Providing professional development on classroom management techniques, and policies and practices that support youth</p>	<p>Implementing school-based service-learning programs</p>	<p>Implementing school-based mentoring programs</p>	<p>Implementing policies and practices that support LGBTQ youth</p>

CDC's *What Works in Schools* program improves adolescent health and well-being

In schools implementing this approach within CDC-funded districts, students were **less likely** to:



HAVE EVER
HAD SEX



HAVE 4+
SEXUAL
PARTNERS



BE CURRENTLY
SEXUALLY
ACTIVE



MISS SCHOOL
BECAUSE
OF SAFETY
CONCERNS



BE FORCED TO
HAVE SEX



USE
MARIJUANA

How states can support adolescent mental health

- Leverage Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) funding
- Enhance capacity to support the mental health of students and staff
- Develop, implement, and enforce robust, state-wide school enumerated:
 - Anti-bullying policies
 - Non-discrimination policies for students and staff
- Strengthen state education agency-based efforts to foster inclusion
- Support youth health data collection (Youth Risk Behavior Survey & School Health Profiles)