Acknowledgements
This report was prepared by Clark County Public Health’s Health Assessment and Evaluation team.
For more information, please email cntyhealthhae@clark.wa.gov or call 360.397.8000.

Data Sources and Technical Notes

Additional Information
   WA State Healthy Youth Survey
   National Institute of Mental Health
   Anxiety and Depression Association of America
   Mayo Clinic
   U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services
   Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
   National Alliance on Mental Illness
   American Psychiatric Association

For Other Formats
Contact the Clark County ADA Office
   Voice: 360.397.2322
   Relay: 711 or 800.833.6388
   Fax: 360.397.6165
   Email: ada@clark.wa.gov
Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

There are many different types of anxiety. Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is characterized by persistent and excessive worry or feeling nervous or anxious on more days than not. Although occasional anxiety is a normal part of life, children and teens with GAD often worry excessively about their performance in school or sports, natural disasters, or other catastrophes. Among adolescents aged 13-18 in the United States, it is estimated that 32% have some type of anxiety disorder.

In Clark County, about 30% of 10th graders could be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder, based on their answers to the questions below (see Table 1).

What We Can Do

If you suspect your child has an anxiety disorder, talk with their health care provider. GAD is treatable with therapy or medication, however it is estimated that about 80% of youth in the United States with a diagnosable anxiety disorder are not getting treatment.

Table 1. Generalized Anxiety Disorder Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Several days</th>
<th>More than half the days</th>
<th>Nearly every day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not being able to stop or control worrying?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These questions were asked on the 2014 and 2016 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey. Source: Generalized Anxiety Disorder Screener

1 National Institute of Mental Health
2 National Institute of Mental Health
3 Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Youth Mental Health
Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) - Disparities

Status:

- Anxiety disorders are more common in gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth.
- Among Clark County 10th graders, multi-racial students have the highest prevalence of anxiety.
- Girls are more likely to have an anxiety disorder than boys at every grade level.
Youth Mental Health
Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) - Bullying and Abuse

**Status:**

- The more frequently youth experience bullying, the more likely they are to suffer from an anxiety disorder.
- Youth who have experienced violence or abuse are more likely to suffer from an anxiety disorder than youth who have not experienced violence or abuse.
Teen Depression

Everyone feels sad once in a while, but depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness or hopelessness and loss of interest in usual activities.\(^1\) Nationally, around 30% of high school students report feeling persistent sadness.\(^2\) Risk factors for depression include, a family history of depression, major life changes, trauma or stress, or certain physical illnesses and medications.\(^3\)

In Clark County, depression has been increasing in older teens. In 2016, about 35% of 10th graders and 37% of 12th graders reported feeling so sad or hopeless for two weeks or more that they stopped doing some of their usual activities.

Often depression and anxiety disorders can occur together. In Clark County, around 20% of teens experience symptoms of both depression and anxiety.

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1. Mayo Clinic
2. U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services
3. National Institute of Mental Health
What We Can Do

It is important for adults to know the signs of depression in adolescents. In addition to persistent sadness, other signs of depression in teens include easily feeling angry or frustrated (even at minor things), trouble concentrating, fatigue, restlessness, appetite or sleeping changes, feelings or worthlessness, or having thoughts of suicide. ¹

In Clark County, 14% of 10th and 12th graders reported that they do not feel they have adults they can turn to for help if they feel sad. Additionally, 11-13% of Clark County youth are not sure if they have adults they could turn to for help.

Treatment

Depression is usually treated with medications, therapy or a combination of the two. Exercise, spending quality time with others, eating a healthy diet, spending time outside in nature, and meditation may also help reduce symptoms of depression.¹

If untreated, depression can have devastating outcomes on adolescents, including problems at school, at home and with friends, increased risk for substance use, involvement with the juvenile justice system and suicide.²

¹National Institute of Mental Health
²National Alliance on Mental Illness, Family Guide on Adolescent Depression
Youth Mental Health
Depression—Disparities

Status:

- Depression is significantly more common in gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth.
- Among Clark County 10th graders, multi-racial students and students of other races have the highest prevalence of depression.
- Girls are more likely to have depression than boys at every grade level. However, the prevalence of depression in boys increases with age.
Youth Mental Health
Depression—Bullying and Abuse

Status:

- The more frequently youth experience bullying, the more likely they are to suffer from depression.
- Youth who have experienced violence or abuse are more likely to suffer from depression than youth who have not experienced violence or abuse.
Suicidal Ideation

Thoughts of suicide can range in severity from a vague wish to be dead to a specific plan to end one’s life. Nationwide, 17.7% of high school students reported seriously considering attempting suicide in 2015. It is important to remember that suicide is never the result of one cause, rather a combination of risk factors coming together often in the context of stress and with access to lethal means. There are many factors that can increase a teen’s risk for suicide, including:

- Mental illness (especially mood disorders, like depression)
- History of physical or sexual abuse
- Witnessing family violence
- Recent or serious loss (e.g. death, divorce)
- Substance use
- Lack of social support
- Stigma associated with asking for help
- Bullying
- Sexual orientation confusion
- Access to lethal means (e.g. firearms, pills)
- Family history of suicide.

In Clark County, 15% of 8th graders and 20% of 10th and 12th graders reported seriously considering attempting suicide in 2016. Suicidal ideation has increased among adolescent in the last decade, especially among older high school students.

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
2 National Alliance on Mental Illness
3 American Psychiatric Association
Youth Mental Health

Suicidal Ideation - Disparities

Status:

- Gay, lesbian and bisexual students are significantly more likely to think about attempting suicide.
- Multi-racial and American Indian/Alaska Native 10th graders experience the highest rates of suicidal ideation.
- Girls are more likely to think about attempting suicide, although suicidal ideation among boys increases with age.

Note: Blank cells represent data that has been suppressed because of a small sample size. NH = Non-Hispanic
Status:

- In Clark County, 7% of 8th graders, 9% of 10th graders, and 8% of 12th graders reported attempting suicide at least once in the past year in 2016.
- Girls are more likely to attempt suicide than boys, however, boys are more likely to complete a suicide attempt than girls.
Youth Mental Health
Suicide Ideation and Attempt—Bullying and Abuse

Status:
- Clark County youth who experience abuse or violence, are bullied, or feel they lack adult support are more likely to seriously consider suicide or to attempt suicide.