

Teen Suicide

Definition

Teen Suicide Rate

The Teen Suicide Rate is the number of deaths from suicide, per 100,000 teens, ages 15-19. The data are reported by county of residence, rather than by where the death occurred.

Significance

The teenage years are often a period of turmoil. Teens are learning new social roles, developing new relationships, experiencing changes in their bodies and making decisions about the future. Too often, the stress of these challenges is complicated by outside forces, such as drug or alcohol abuse, family breakup, domestic violence or sexual abuse.¹ When a young person reaches the breaking point, he or she may decide that committing suicide is the only way out.

Risk Factors

One of the most dangerous times in a teen's life is when he or she has suffered a loss or a humiliation of some kind: doing poorly on an exam, breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend or experiencing the trauma of parents' divorce. A family history of suicide is also a significant risk factor for a young person.²

Impact

- ◆ Suicide, like homicide, has come to play a proportionately larger role in teen deaths over the past several decades. Since 1950, the suicide rate for persons aged 15-24 has tripled.³
- ◆ Suicide is the third-leading cause of death among people aged 15-24. Some experts estimate that each year nearly 5,000 teenagers commit suicide.⁴
- ◆ Although females 15-19 are more likely than males to attempt suicide, males are four to six times more likely to actually kill themselves.⁵
- ◆ Firearms are the most frequently used weapon in suicides.⁶
- ◆ From 1981 to 1991, Nevada's Teen Suicide Rate was between 1.5 and 2.4 times the national rate, leading to a consistent annual ranking among the top-ten states with the highest rates of teen suicide.⁷ Likewise, the rate of attempted suicide by Nevada teens is twice the national average.⁸
- ◆ According to The *Nevada Youth Risk Behavior Survey Report 1997*, 22 percent of Nevada high school students seriously considered attempting suicide during the year prior to the survey, 15 percent made a plan to kill themselves and 8 percent actually attempted suicide one or more times.⁹

Nevada

The Teen Suicide Rate in Nevada from 1996 to 1998 was **14** deaths per 100,000 teens, ages 15-19. During this period, a total of 46 teens between the ages of 15 and 19 took their own lives. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the national teen suicide rate in 1995 was 10.¹⁰

Counties

Among the 13 counties for which statistically reliable rates could be calculated, the Teen Suicide Death Rate ranged from a low of 0 in several counties to a high of 20 in Washoe County, followed by 19 in Churchill County.

Nevada 1999 National Rank on Deaths by Suicide in 1995: 49¹¹

According to the American Psychiatric Association: "Young people who have attempted suicide in the past or who talk about suicide are at greater risk of future attempts. Listen for hints like 'I'd be better off dead' or 'I won't be a problem to you much longer!'"¹²

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Teen Suicide Death Rate, 1996 - 1998

(Deaths per 100,000 teens, ages 15-19)

	1996 Teen Suicide Deaths	1996 Population Ages 15-19	1997 Teen Suicide Deaths	1997 Population Ages 15-19	1998 Teen Suicide Deaths	1998 Population Ages 15-19	Teen Suicide Death Rates 1996-1998
Carson City	0	2,827	0	2,935	0	3,116	0
Churchill County	0	1,707	1	1,750	0	1,792	19
Clark County	9	67,873	8	72,897	9	78,832	12
Douglas County	0	2,720	1	2,947	0	3,162	11
Elko County	0	3,745	0	3,963	1	4,155	8
Esmeralda County	0	104	0	107	0	100	0
Eureka County	0	129	0	117	0	126	0
Humboldt County	0	1,315	0	1,412	0	1,455	0
Lander County	0	611	0	627	2	597	N.M. **
Lincoln County	0	384	0	393	0	393	0
Lyon County	0	2,126	1	2,261	2	2,443	N.M. **
Mineral County	0	525	0	553	0	513	0
Nye County	0	1,769	0	1,982	1	2,158	17
Pershing County	0	488	0	514	0	617	0
Storey County	0	233	0	246	0	253	N.M. **
Washoe County	4	17,478	1	17,861	6	18,551	20
White Pine County	0	809	0	823	0	854	N.M. **
Nevada *	13	104,843	12	111,388	21	119,117	14

* The sum of the counties may not equal the state total due to missing or incomplete county reference data

** N.M. = not meaningful. Calculated rates based on very small numbers are not statistically reliable

Source: State of Nevada Department of Human Resources, Health Division, Office of Vital Records and Statistics, 1996, 1997, 1998