

School Bullying and Cyberbullying in the MetroWest Region (Grades 7-12)

2010 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

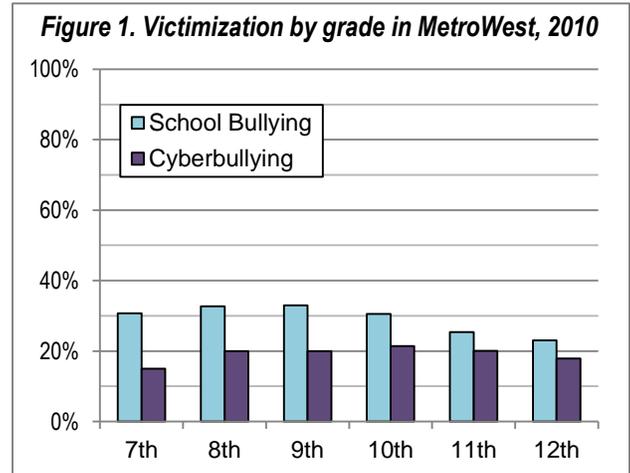
The emergence of cyberbullying and the potential negative consequences of bullying on teen mental health have received much attention in recent years. Since 2006, the *MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey* has collected information on bullying and cyberbullying in the MetroWest region of Boston. The most recent survey, administered in 2010, was completed by 14,714 middle school students in grades 6-8, and 23,187 high school students in grades 9-12, representing 90% of youth. This fact sheet summarizes data for grades 7-12.

How many teens are involved with school bullying and cyberbullying?

- **32% of middle school youth and 28% of high school youth report being bullied on school property in the past year.***
- **17% of middle school youth and 20% of high school youth report being cyberbullied in the past year. †**
- **Many students are bullied both at school and online.** For example, in middle school, 34% of youth who were bullied at school also report being bullied online. Conversely, 63% of cyberbullying victims also report school bullying.
- **Bullying perpetration is also common:** 24% of middle school youth and 28% of high school youth report that they have bullied and/or cyberbullied someone else in the past year.

Which youth are more likely to be victimized?

- **School bullying victimization decreases from middle to high school.** Reports of school bullying decrease from 31% in 7th grade to 23% in 12th grade. [Figure 1]
- **In contrast, cyberbullying reports are similar throughout the middle and high school years.** [Figure 1]
- **School bullying victimization is similar among females and males in middle school (33% vs. 30%) and slightly lower among females in high school (31% vs. 25%).**
- **More females are victims of cyberbullying than males.** Reports of cyberbullying are more common among females than males in middle school (22% vs. 12%) and high school (26% vs. 14%).



How has bullying and cyberbullying victimization changed over time?

- **From 2006 to 2010, reports of school bullying victimization increased slightly among high school students (from 26% to 28%), but decreased among middle school students (from 39% to 32%).**
- **Cyberbullying victimization is on the rise among high school students.** In 2010, 20% of high school students reported being cyberbullied, compared with 15% in 2006. For middle school students these numbers remained similar at 16-17%.

What other risks are linked to bullying and cyberbullying victimization?

- **Bullying victims are more likely to report mental health problems than youth who aren't bullied.** For example, in high school, school bullying victims are more likely than non-victims to report depressive symptoms (31% vs. 14%), seriously considering suicide (21% vs. 8%), and attempting suicide (8% vs. 2%).
- **Cyberbullying victims are even more likely than non-victims to report mental health problems,** including depressive symptoms (39% vs. 14%), seriously considering suicide (26% vs. 8%), and attempting suicide (11% vs. 2%) in high school. Similar patterns exist among middle school students. *It is important to note that we cannot determine a causal association from this data, meaning that we can't conclude that the mental health problems were caused by bullying or whether youth who have mental health problems are more likely to also experience bullying.*
- **Many students do not talk with adults about being victimized, especially if they are victims of cyberbullying.** For example, among middle school students, 53% of school bullying victims and 31% of cyberbullying victims talked with an adult about being victimized in the past 12 months.

* Bullying is defined as when 1 or more students tease, threaten, spread rumors about, hit, shove, or hurt another student over and over again.

† Cyberbullying is defined as using the Internet, cell phones, or other electronic devices to bully, tease, threaten, or spread rumors about someone.