

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Among High School Students

2017 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey Data



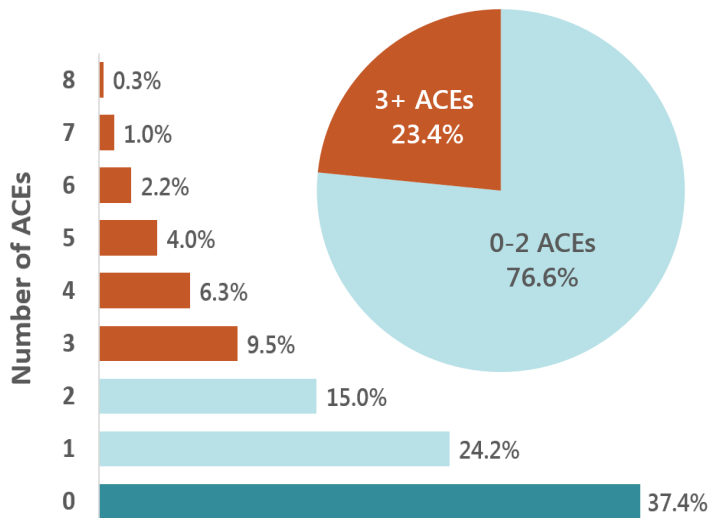
Measuring ACEs



Maine high school students were asked how many of the following happened to them. ACE scores were calculated based on how many experiences they had.

- Parents/guardians got divorced or separated
- A parent/guardian died
- A parent/guardian was in jail or prison
- Lived with an adult who had a mental illness
- Lived with a parent or other adult who often swore at/insulted, put down, or humiliated them
- Physically hurt by an adult in the home
- Ever forced (physical or otherwise) to have sexual contact
- Violence in the home, or the threat of violence, ever made them want to leave home, even just for a short while

Nearly **1 in 4** Maine high school students have experienced **3 or more ACEs**.



Risk Factors: More ACEs = Higher Risk

Students with **3+ ACEs** were more likely to experience depression and suicide compared to those with **<3 ACEs**.

Compared to students with **<3 ACEs**, those with **3+ ACEs** are more likely to report...

Depressed Past Year



3+ ACEs

1 in 2



(52%)

VS.

<3 ACEs

1 in 5



(18%)

Considered Suicide



1 in 3



(33%)

VS.

1 in 10



(9%)



Being Bullied



Over **2x** higher
(36% vs 17%)

Drinking



Nearly **2x** higher
(35% vs 19%)

Smoking



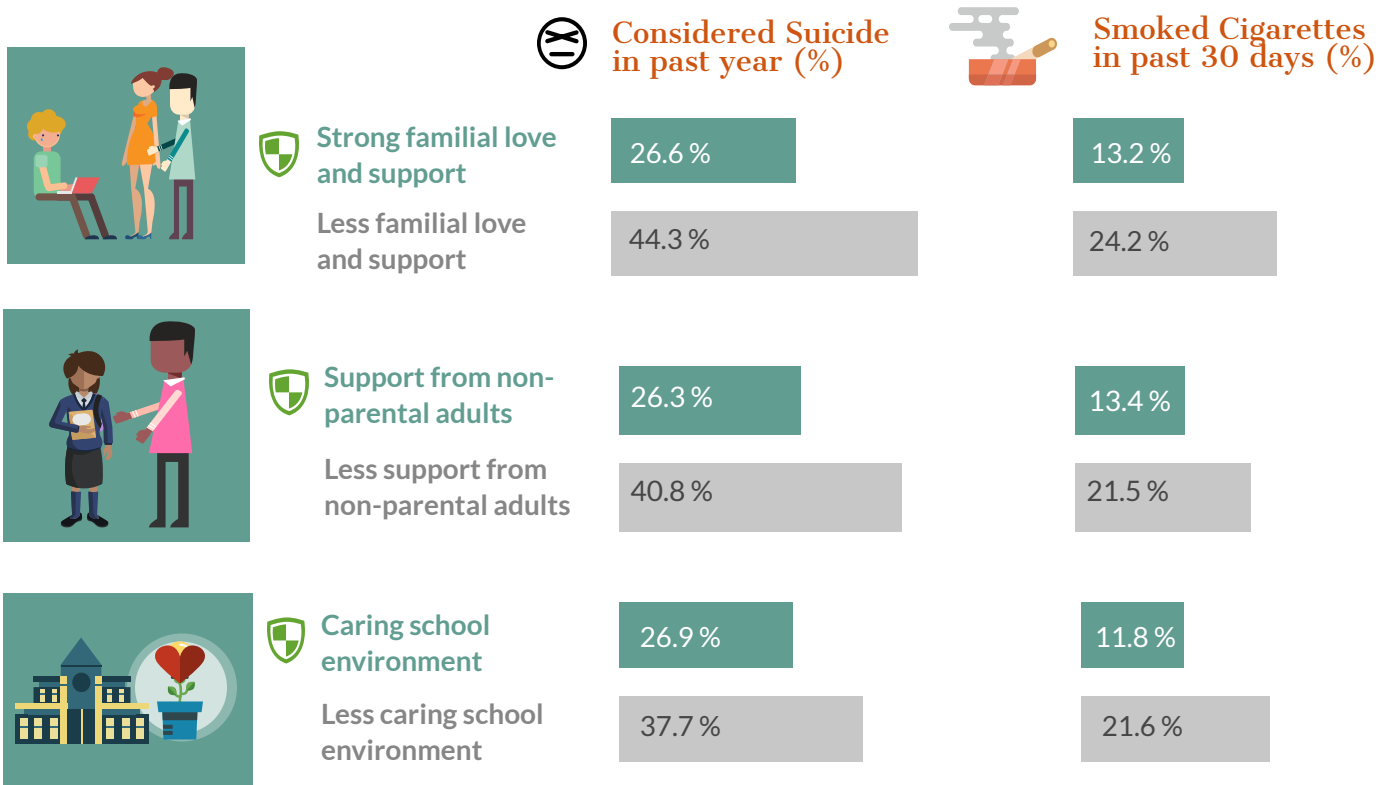
3x higher
(18% vs 6%)



Protections: More Support = Lower Risk

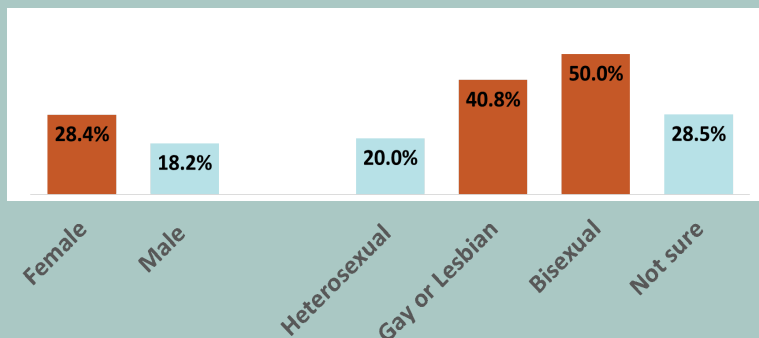
Among students with **3+ ACEs**, those who said they had **strong support from families and school** reported less suicide ideation and cigarette smoking, compared to those with less support.

Among those with 3+ ACEs



Some students need more support.

Girls and LGB students are more likely to experience **3+ ACEs** compared to boys and heterosexual students.



What Adults Can Do



- It's easier than you think! Protective factors such as love, supportive relationships and positive norms can help a child feel safe, and enhance resiliency.
- Ensure youth have a physically and psychologically safe community in which to learn, grow and play.
- Provide opportunities for youth to develop interests and engage with their community.
- Talk with youth each day to build connections, trust and their sense of self-worth.

Web Resources:

- www.BeMyHeroToday.com
- <https://preventionforme.org/parent/>
- www.myan.org/awareness-building/