



Adverse Childhood Experiences In Minnesota: 2022 Minnesota Student Survey – Risk & Protective Factors Data

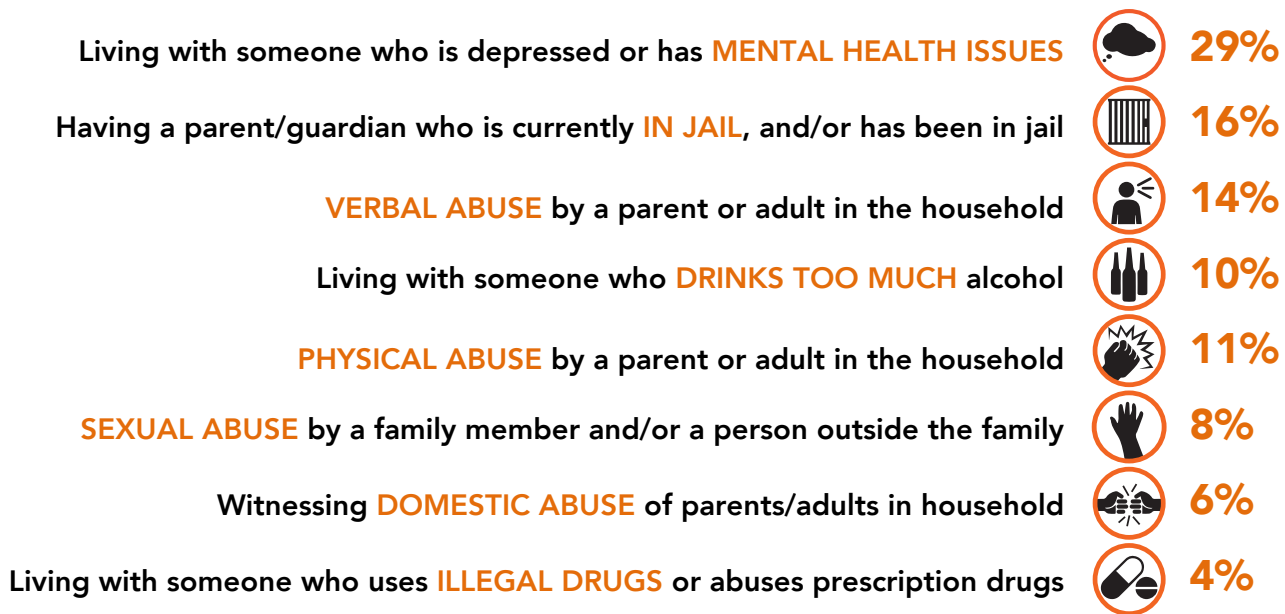
Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic experiences that a young person may face before the age of 18. ACEs include multiple forms of abuse, neglect, and a range of household adversities experienced by others in the youth’s home that the youth witnesses, such as mental health issues, substance misuse, or domestic violence. ACEs are common, and by the age of 18, most people will experience at least one ACE. In addition, ACEs tend to be interrelated and occur in clusters. The more ACEs an individual experiences, the higher the likelihood that person will develop health problems, like substance misuse, type 2 diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular problems, and depression. The health effects can arise in childhood, or well into adulthood.

However, ACEs are not destiny, and certain protective factors can have a positive buffering effect on adverse outcomes. Similar to ACEs, they are also powerful and cumulative: **more protective factors can better protect against the effects of ACEs.**

ACEs in Minnesota

ACEs data included in this fact sheet are from the 2022 Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) of 8th, 9th, and 11th graders. Other ACEs studies may use different factors or conditions, or may calculate scores differently. MSS ACE scores are calculated by adding the number of adverse experiences reported by each student from the list below.



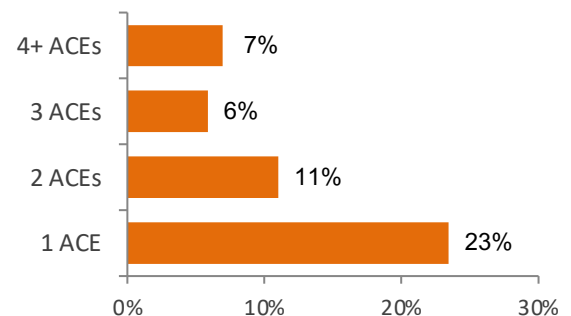
Prevalence + Frequency

Minnesota, 2022 MSS

- Of over 82,000 students in 8th, 9th, and 11th grades, **47%** reported experiencing **at least one ACE**. (ACEs are common.)
- About half of adolescents experiencing any ACEs report more than one. (ACEs tend to cluster.)
- Between 2019 and 2022, students reported increases in living with someone with mental health issues, and sexual abuse. Prevalence of other ACEs declined slightly.

Number of ACEs Reported

Minnesota, 2022 MSS



ACEs Can Increase Risk for Behavioral Health Problems

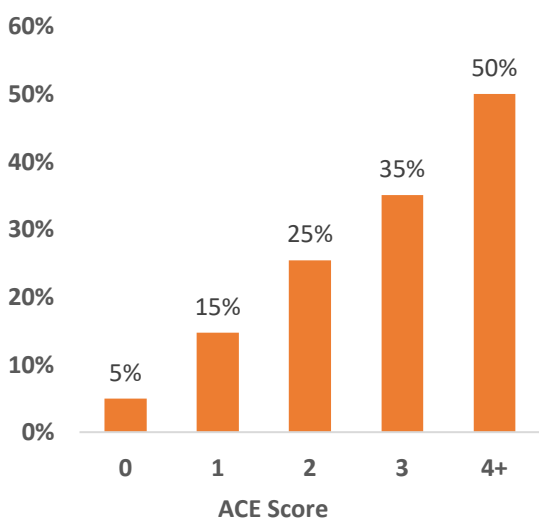
Minnesota, 2022 MSS

Mental Health

Students with 4+ ACEs are **4.6 times** more likely to report feeling down, depressed, or hopeless in the past 2 weeks (**67%** of those with 4+ ACEs vs. **15%** of those with 0 ACEs). Rates of other mental health issues also increase by ACE score:

Past 2-week anxiety:
70% (4+ ACEs) vs. **18%** (0 ACEs).
 Past-year suicidal ideation:
50% (4+ ACEs) vs. **5%** (0 ACEs).
 Past-year suicide attempts:
21% (4+ ACEs) vs. **1%** (0 ACEs).

Of students with 0 ACEs, **5%** reported having thoughts of suicide in the past year, compared to **50%** of students with 4+ ACEs; students with 4+ ACEs are **10 times** more likely to report **suicidal thoughts**.



Substance Use

Compared to youth who are not exposed to ACEs, those reporting an ACE score of 4+ are...

13.8 times more likely to report e-cigarette use
15.6 times more likely to report marijuana use
16.2 times more likely to report prescription drug misuse
 ...in the past month.

Additional Childhood Traumas Also Play a Role

Minnesota, 2022 MSS

While the MSS asks about 8 specific experiences to calculate an ACE score, there are other negative experiences that can contribute to dysfunction and health risks. Chronic stress can result from adversity both in children’s communities, as well as in their families. According to the MSS, children in Minnesota also face these adversities:

50% of students have been bullied in the past month:
 Students reported being bullied most for their physical appearance (**29%**), their weight (**25%**), their gender expression* (**21%**), and their race, ethnicity, or national origin (**15%**)
4% don’t feel safe in their neighborhoods
14% don’t feel safe at their schools
18% have experienced dating violence (including being verbally or physically abused, or being pressured into sex by a girlfriend or boyfriend).*
1% have been in foster care in the past year; **2%** were in foster care more than a year ago.

According to the US Census, the poverty rate in Minnesota was **9.3%** in 2021. Poverty and its attendant issues (such as hunger and homelessness) also have lasting effects.

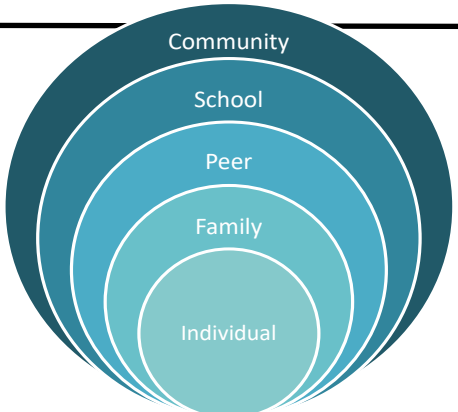
3% of students had to skip meals because their family didn’t have enough money; and
4% experienced homelessness in the past year.*

*These questions are only answered by 9th and 11th graders.

Protective Factors Buffer Negative Outcomes

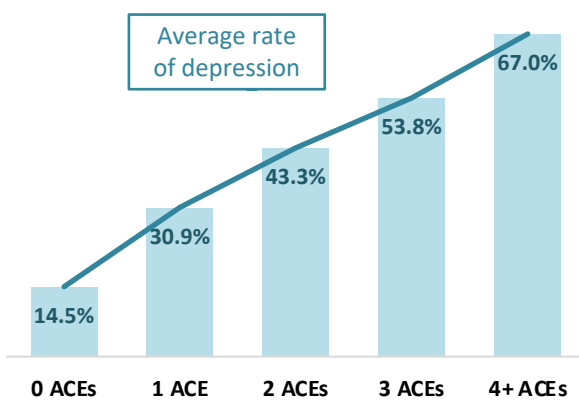
Minnesota, 2022 MSS

Protective factors are characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community or cultural levels (shown here in an illustration of the social-ecological model) that precede and are associated with a lower likelihood of negative outcomes such as substance use and mental health issues.

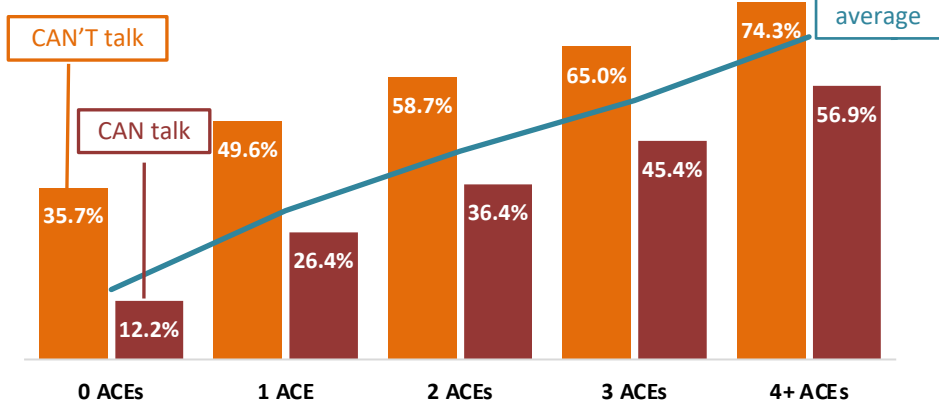


ACEs are correlated with negative outcomes; however, those who have experienced ACEs, and who also have protective factors, are buffered from some negative effects of ACEs. Protective factors work like adverse experiences, but in reverse; they work to reduce negative behaviors and lessen the effects of ACEs.

Students with 4 or more ACEs are more likely to report depression than students with 0 ACEs. **Rates of depression increase in a stepwise manner as the number of ACEs increase.**



However, even if a student reports a higher ACE score, **the rates of depression are lower** when students feel they can talk about their problems with a parent. This graph compares the rate of depression for students **who feel they CAN talk to their parents** about problems with **those who CAN'T**; it shows that **being able to talk to a parent has a protective effect against depression.**



Protective Factors Can Build Resiliency Through the Whole Community

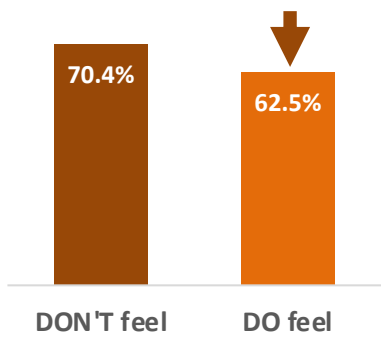
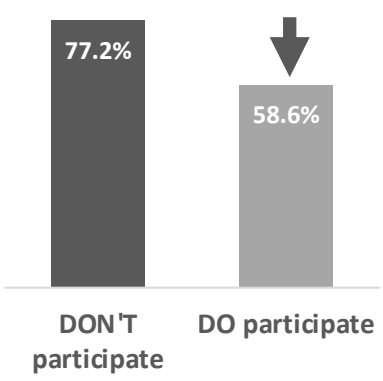
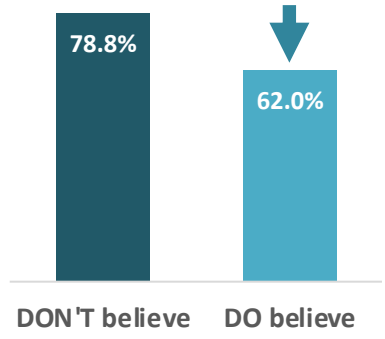
Minnesota, 2022 MSS

No matter how many ACEs students experience, they still benefit from protective factors; for example, students are less likely to engage in substance use or experience depression when they believe school and community adults care about them, whether they've experienced 4+ ACEs, or none. But the effect is especially large when it comes to students who have experienced multiple ACEs.

Levels of depression in students with 4+ ACEs **decrease** when they **believe an adult cares about them** (parent, relative, school or community adult).

Levels of depression in students with 4+ ACEs **decrease** when they **participate in activities outside of school that give them joy and energy.**

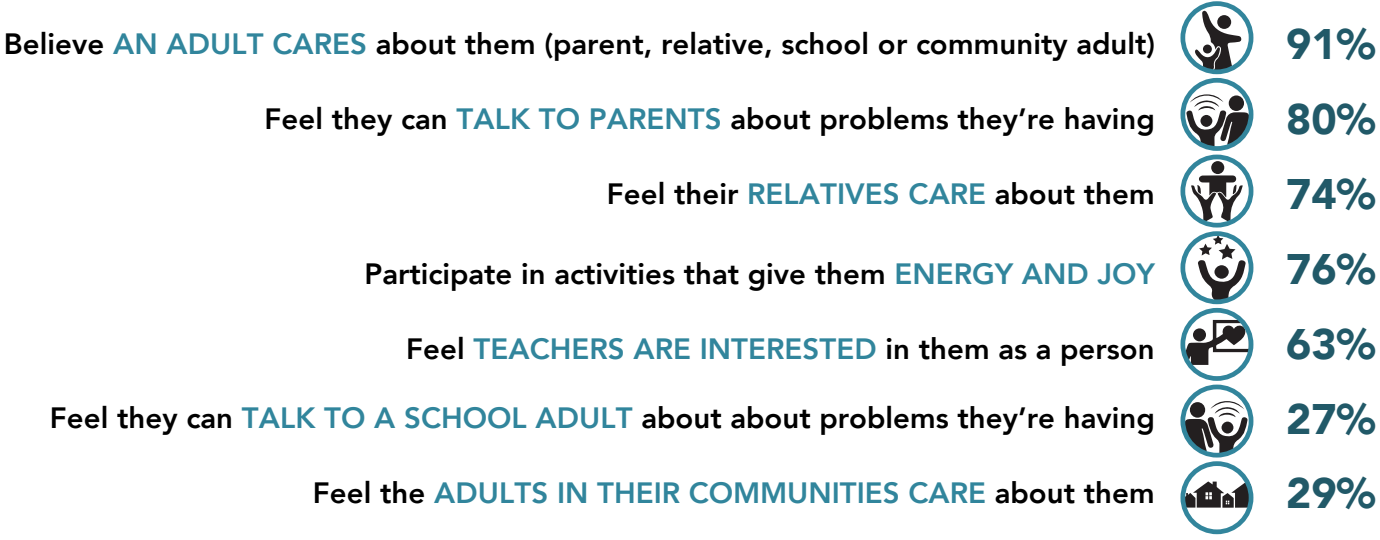
Levels of depression in students with 4+ ACEs **decrease** when they **feel that teachers are interested in them as a person.**



Examining Protective Factors in Your Community

Minnesota, 2022 MSS

Focusing on protective factors can improve resilience in your community. Below are selected indicators from the MSS highlighting positive relationships and other factors that can be harnessed or boosted to support the health and emotional wellness of young people in our communities – regardless of whether they have experienced ACEs. These include ensuring that youth:



There are many sources of data on protective factors experienced by Minnesotans. These data can highlight your community's strengths and challenges; and inform your steps to promote protective factors in your community. For help finding MSS and non-MSS data to aid in ACEs prevention planning for your community, please see the Community ACEs Planning Tool.

Resources

- FamilyWise:** <https://familywiseservices.org/>
- Substance Use in Minnesota**, reports and data, including MSS data on ACEs, mental health, and substance use, by county and demographic group: <https://www.SUMN.org>
- Minnesota Department of Human Services**, Adult ACE report: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/communities/ace/acereport.pdf>
- Minnesota Department of Education**, Minnesota Student Survey data: <https://public.education.mn.gov/MDEAnalytics/DataTopic.jsp?TOPICID=242>
- Minnesota Kids Count**, data on the wellbeing of children in Minnesota: <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#MN>
- MN Compass**, data on various Minnesota topics, such as health, housing, and equity: <https://www.mncompass.org/>
- County Health Rankings:** <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/use-data/explore-your-snapshot>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**, Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/preventingACES.pdf>

This fact sheet was developed for FamilyWise, in conjunction with Minnesota Department of Human Services, Behavioral Health Division. Data and design by EpiMachine and EpiCog. Updated February 2023.



