



*Education, resources,
and support –
it's up to all of us.*

Youth Suicide Prevention:

What We Know and What We Can Do

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Our words reflect our beliefs

*Preventing suicide starts with our comfort
in acknowledging and talking about suicide.*

Preferred

- “suicide”
- “died by/of suicide”
- “suicide attempt”

Avoid

- “committed suicide”
- “successful suicide”
- “failed attempt”

How we can all help individuals at risk for suicide

Increase protective factors and promote resiliency to help people cope

Identify individuals at risk of suicide or a mental health crisis and help to keep them safe

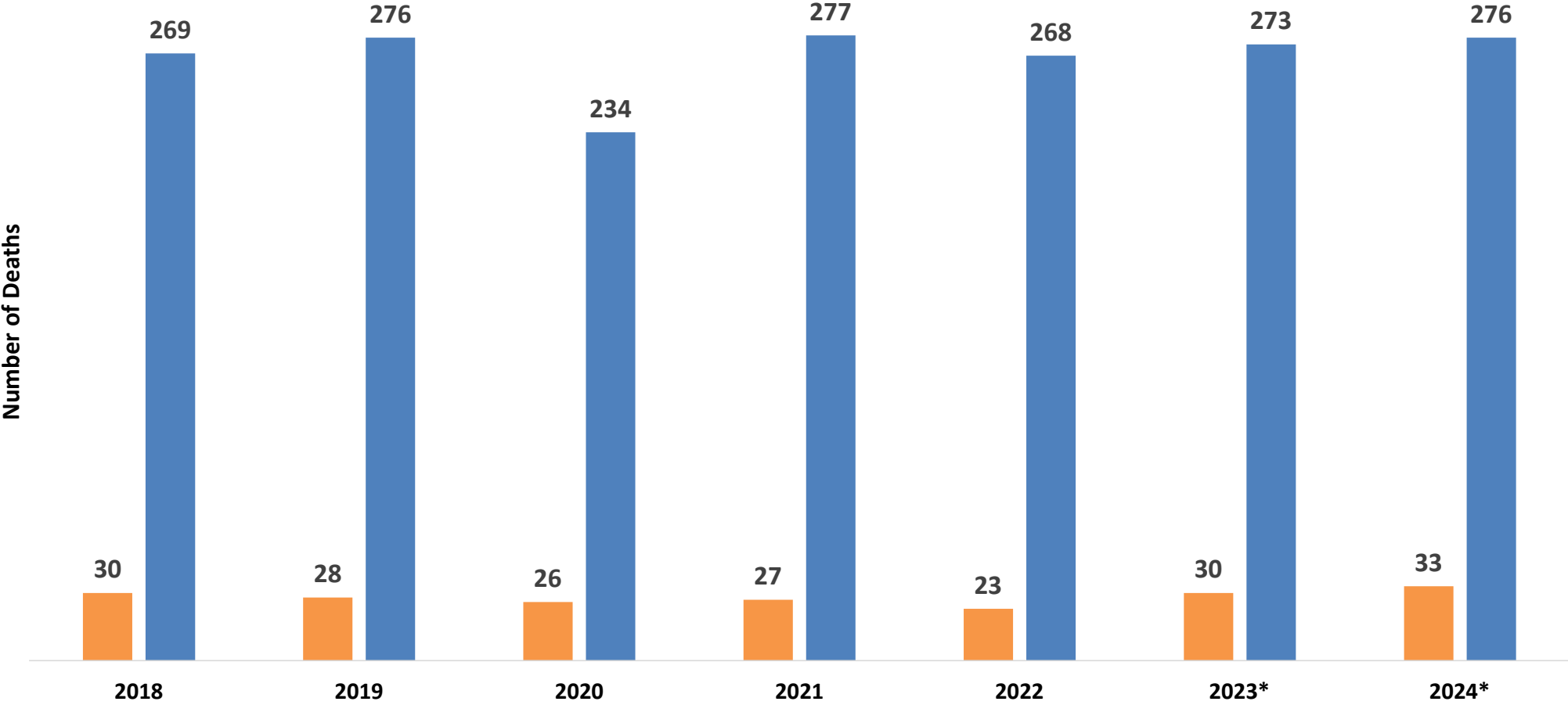
Connect people to supports and effective treatment

Help communities heal after traumatic loss

What we know

Suicide Deaths in Maine

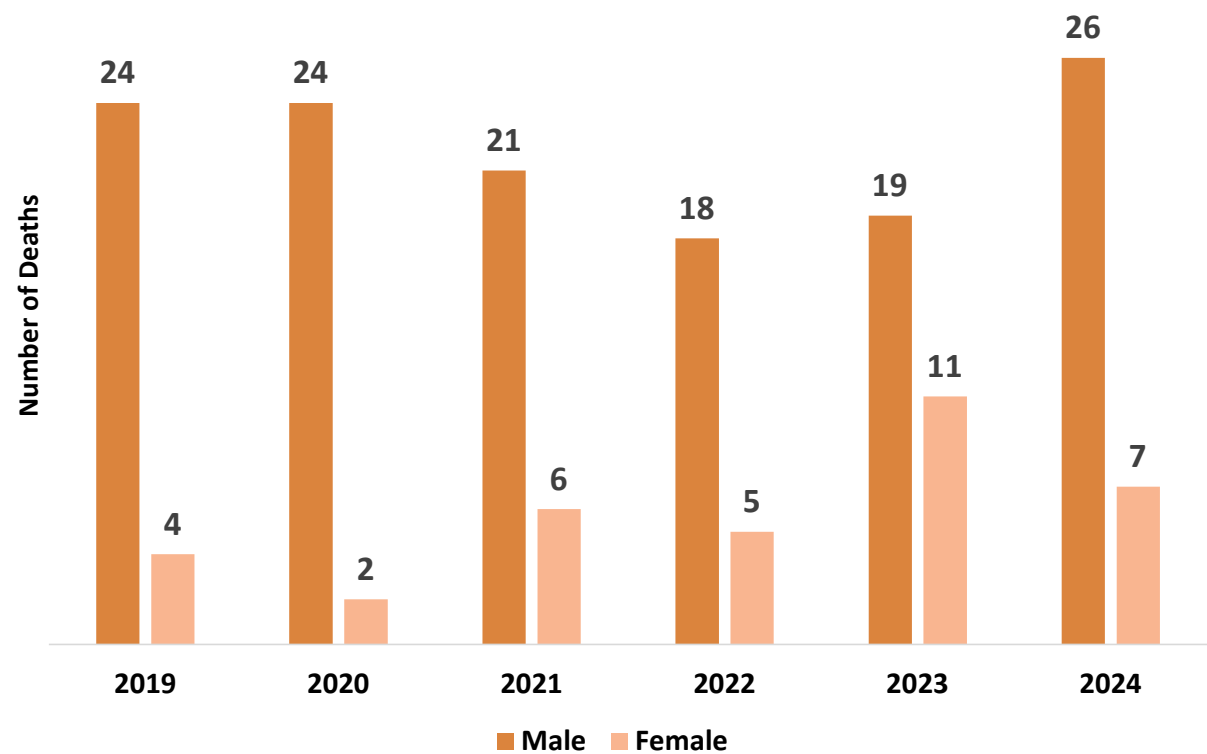
■ Youth (10-24) ■ Lifespan (10+)



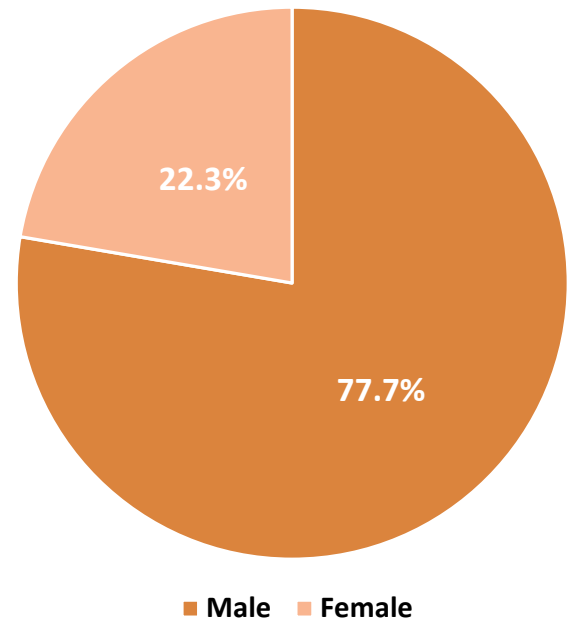
Data source: Maine Data, Research and Vital Statistics; *Provisional data

Males account for almost 80% of all youth suicide deaths.

Number of Youth (10-24) Suicide Deaths by Sex

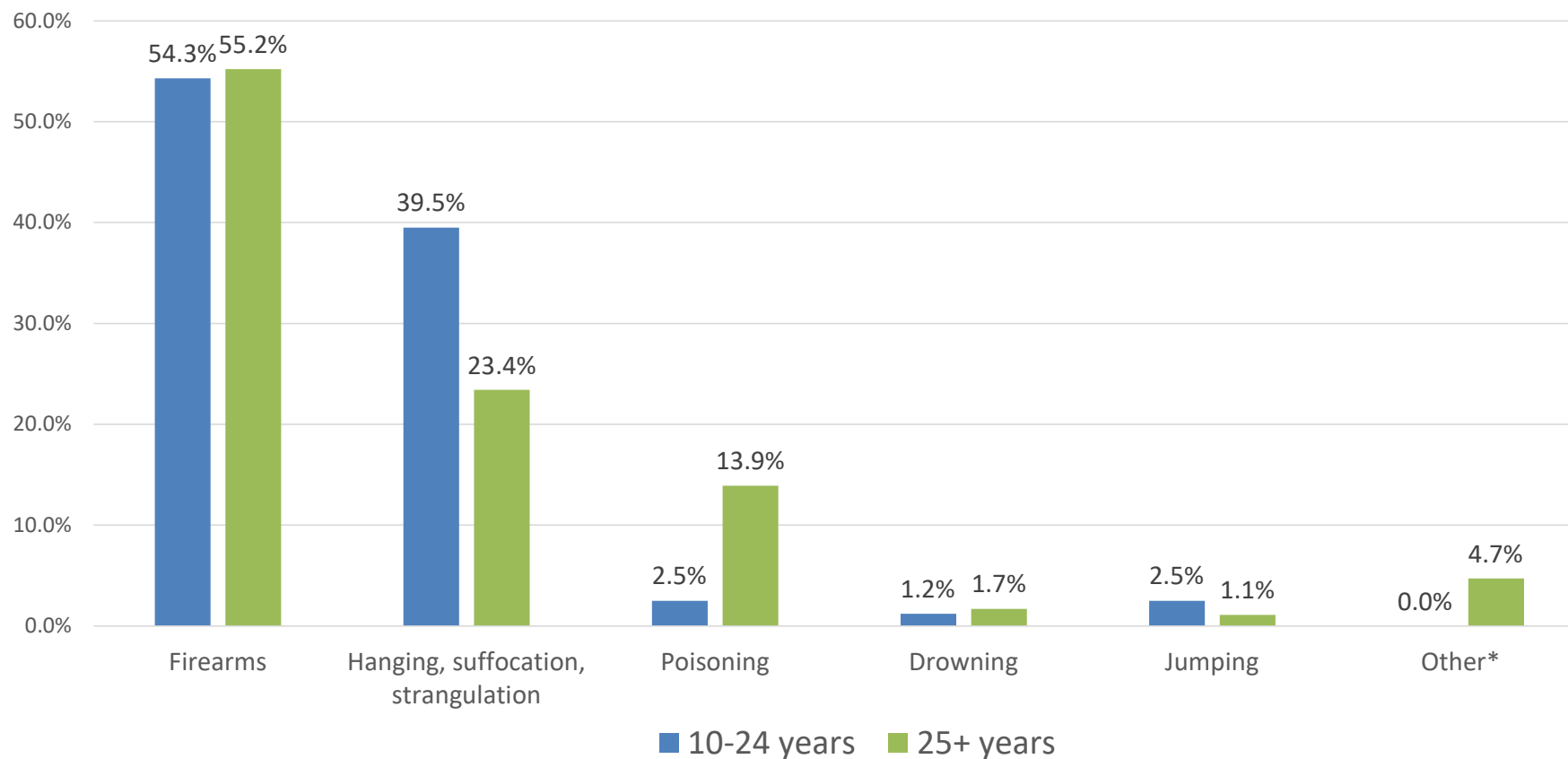


Percentage of Youth (10-24) Suicide Deaths by Sex, 2020-2024



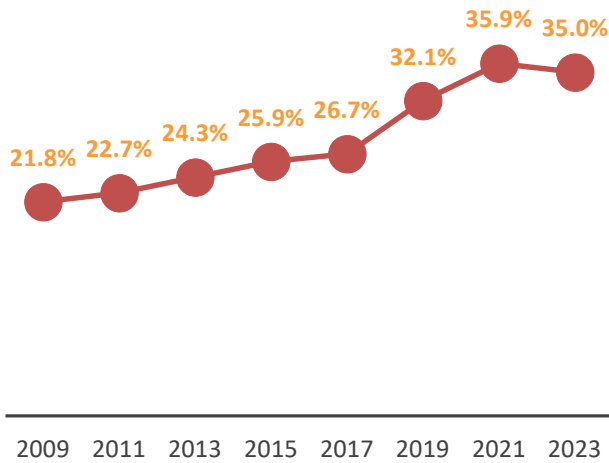
Data source = Maine Data, Research and Vital Statistics.
2023 & 2024 data are provisional.

Proportion of Suicide Deaths by Age and Method, Maine, 2019-2021

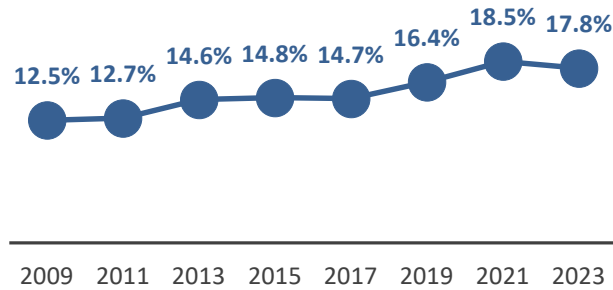


*Other includes suicide deaths caused by explosive material; smoke, fire and flames; steam, hot vapors and hot objects; sharp object; blunt object; lying before moving object; crashing of motor vehicle and intentional self-harm by other specified/unspecified means.

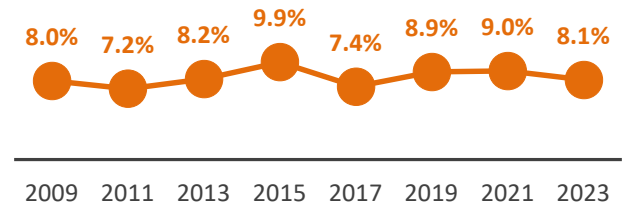
MIYHS HS 2023: Mental Health



35.0% felt sad or hopeless for 2 or more weeks (past 12 months)

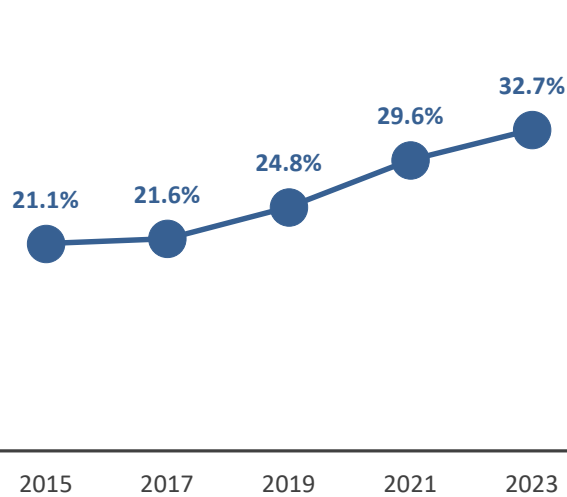


17.8% seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months

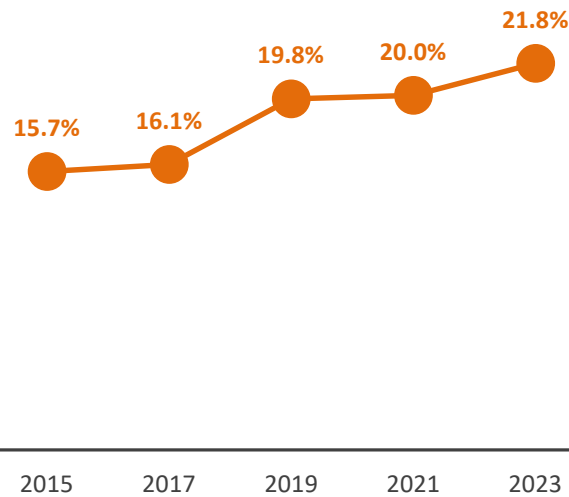


8.1% attempted suicide at least once in the past 12 months

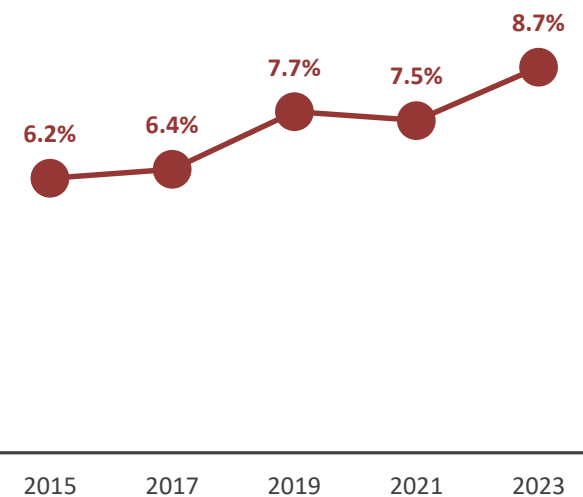
Mental Health MS MIYHS 2023



32.7% felt sad or
hopeless for 2 or more
weeks (ever)

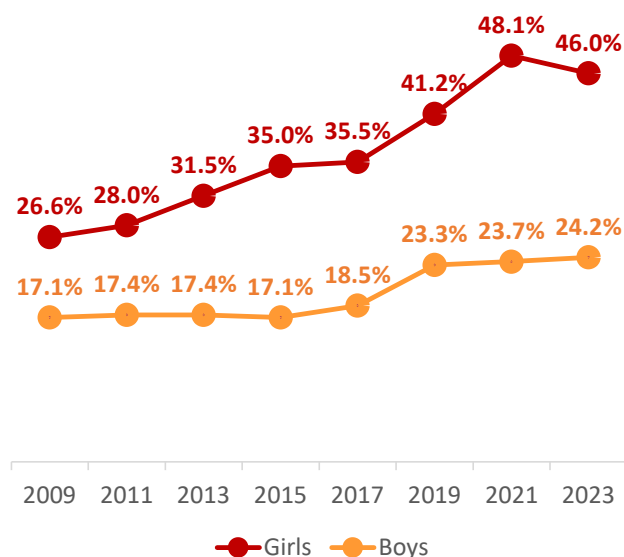


21.8% reported ever
seriously considering
killing themselves

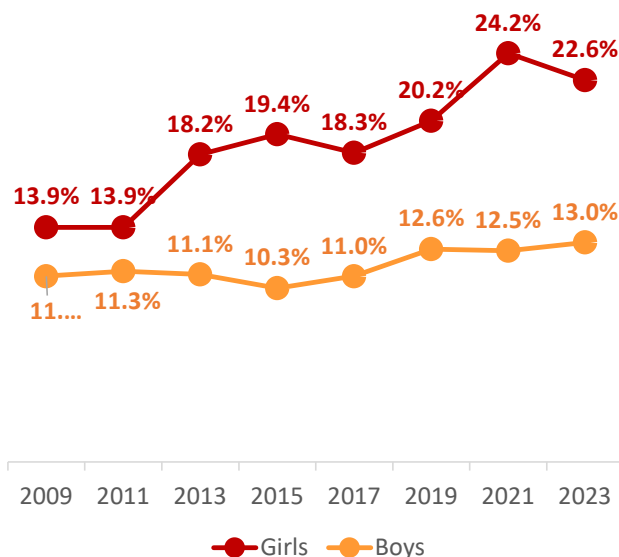


8.7% report ever
trying to kill
themselves

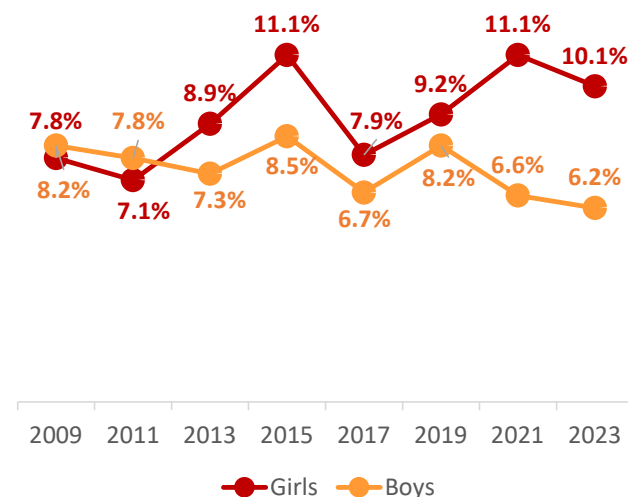
MIYHS HS 2023: Mental Health by Gender



46.0% of girls felt sad or hopeless for 2 or more weeks (past 12 months), as compared to **24.2%** of boys

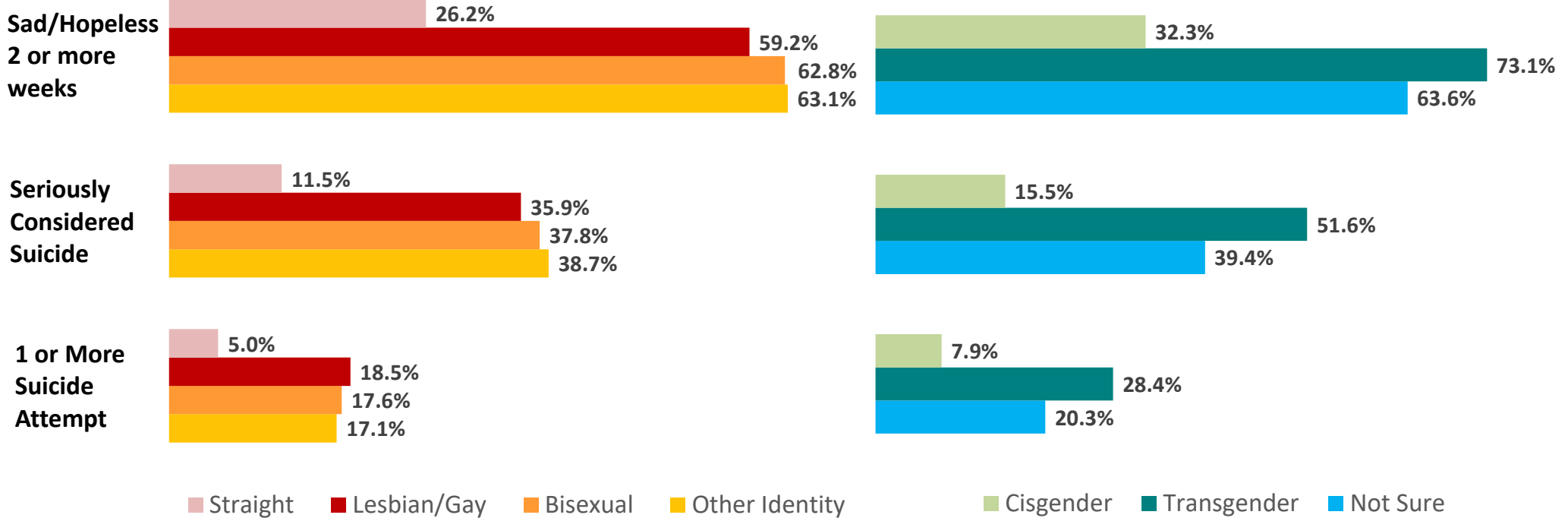


22.6% of girls seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months, as compared to **13.0%** of boys



10.1% of girls attempted suicide at least once in the past 12 months, as compared to **6.2%** of boys

MIYHS HS 2023: Mental Health by Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity



How we can help

Adolescent Warning Signs for Suicide

- Talking about or making plans for suicide
- Expressing hopelessness about the future
- Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress
- Showing worrisome behavior or changes particularly in the presence of the above warning signs, including:
 - Withdrawal from or changes in social connections
 - Recent increased agitation or irritability
 - Anger or hostility that seems out of character or context
 - Changes in sleep (increased or decreased)
 - Changes in hygiene

Intervention

- **It starts with a connection.**
- **Actively listen.** It's not about being perfect.
- **Be direct:** ask the question.
 - *Are you having thoughts of suicide?*
 - *How often do you consider ending your life?*
- **Focus** on the person in front of you
- **Pause and empathize** before moving into next steps
- **Connect them with help.** Offer as much voice and choice as possible!

What IS Helpful

Show You Care

- 1. Listen carefully** – Be genuine
- 2. Ask the question** – Be direct, caring and non-confrontational
- 3. Get help** – Do not leave them alone

*“I’m concerned
about you...about
how you feel.”*

*“You’re not alone.
Let me help you.”*

*“Are you thinking
about suicide?”*

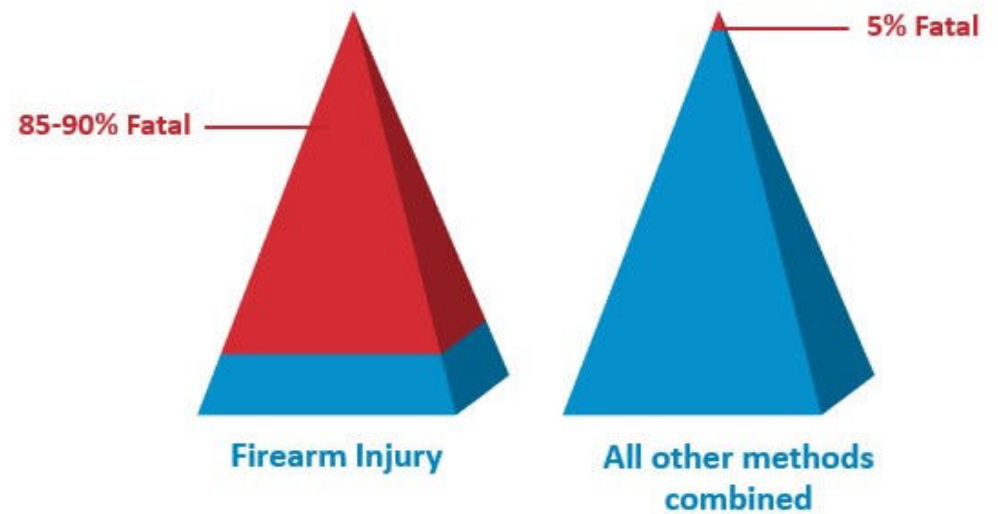
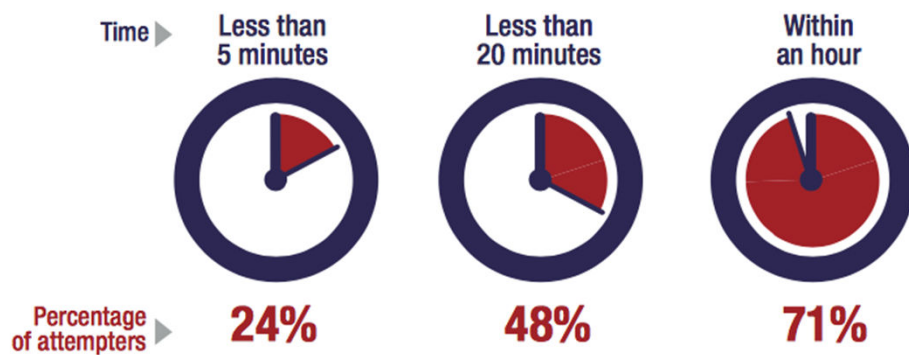
Supporting safety



We often ask why, but HOW a person attempts suicide plays a crucial role in whether they live or die.

Most Suicidal Crises are Brief

Time from Decision to Action < 1 hour



CDC WISQARS: Deaths from death certificate data; nonfatal incidents estimated from national sample of hospital emergency departments

Source: Simon, T.R., Swann, A.C., Powell, K.E., Potter, L.B., Kresnow, M., and O'Carroll, P.W. Characteristics of Impulsive Suicide Attempts and Attempters. SLTB. 2001; 32(supp):49-59.

Source: CDC WISQARS and US Dept. of Veterans Affairs
<https://www.mirecc.va.gov/lethalmeanssafety/facts/>



Lethal Means Safety Strategies

Remove

- *Remove* firearms and excess medications from the home, or store safely offsite

Restrict

- *Restrict* access to firearms and medications using gun safes, trigger locks, or lock boxes

Reduce

- *Reduce* risk of harm by keeping firearms unloaded, storing ammunition separately, always having “eyes on” a suicidal person during acute crisis



Start the Conversation

I know that you are really worried about your child, but I also hear that guns are important to you. Can you think of someone who would be able to hold on to your firearms until they're feeling better?

Sometimes when parents have a child who is struggling with their mental health, they will lock their guns/ammunition at home and ask someone they trust to hold onto the keys. Is that a strategy you'd consider?



Medication Safety

I know that you have medications that are important for your health. Let's work on a plan that will keep your child safe and work well for you.

Sometimes when youth are struggling with their mental health, caregivers will lock their medicines in a cabinet at home or remove any non-necessary medications. Is that a strategy you'd consider?

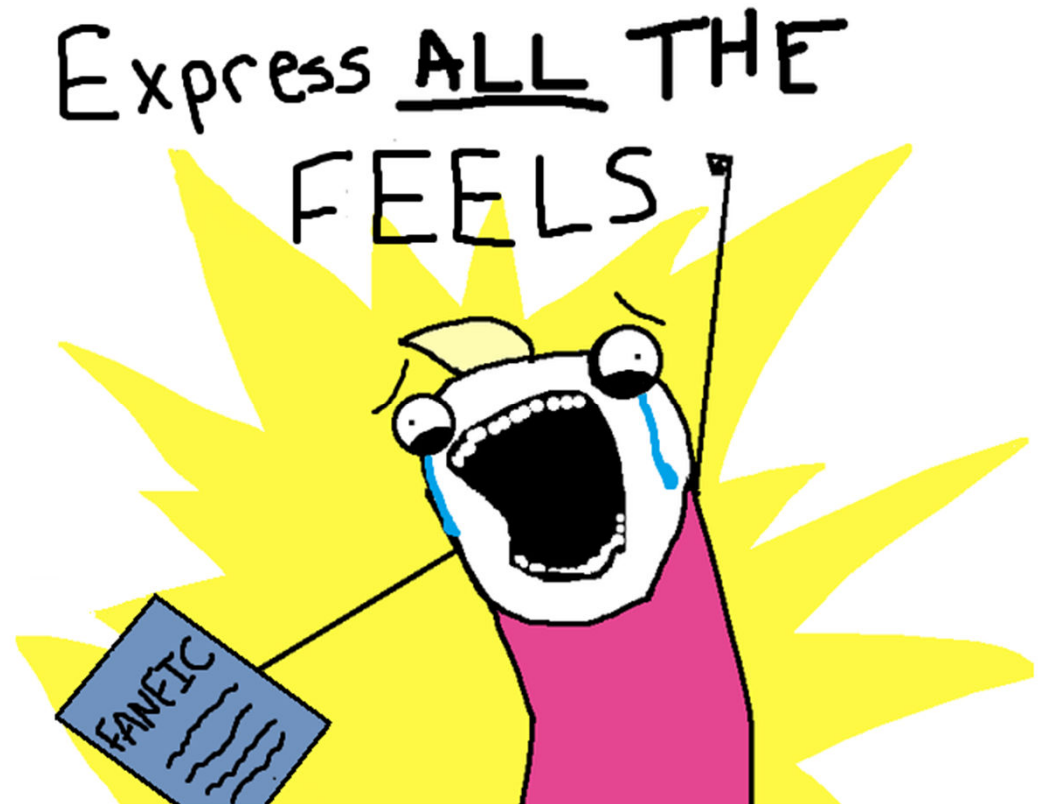


Supervision

- Strongly consider having someone with “eyes on” a young person when they are a very high-risk period
- Reminding caregivers that actions taken to end life can happen in a matter of minutes
- Acknowledge that lack of privacy is developmentally inconsistent with the needs/wants of youth
- Critical to include youth in the plan, and strategize expected conflict

Developmentally Appropriate Conversations

- Adolescents are rapidly maturing in the “feeling” sections of the brain
- Have less “wiring” connecting the feeling brain with the planning/inhibitory brain
- May make it especially likely for youth to take actions based on heightened emotional states
- Provide context without minimizing or dismissing the lived experience of youth





Supervision

Sometimes when youth are struggling in the ways you've described, caregivers will make sure that someone is always with their child. Is that a strategy you'd consider?

If you're able to keep "eyes-on" your child during this crisis, it's likely there will be moments that are challenging for you or your child. What strategies could we brainstorm to help manage conflict?

Resources

Maine Prevention Store

<https://www.maine preventionstore.com/>

- Order materials to be delivered
- Digital downloads
- If you'd like to order more than the max number allowed, please reach out with the mailing address, # of items
- Gun locks now available!



Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Suicide Prevention Safety Card

IF YOU LOVE THEM, KEEP THEM SAFE

If someone you love is struggling with thoughts of suicide, there are some important steps you can take to keep them safe until they're feeling better. Make a plan based on the options below:



Temporarily remove firearms from your home to keep your loved ones safe until they are feeling better.

SAFEST CHOICE



Store all firearms in a locked safe, or use trigger locks. Remove access to combinations or keys.



Make sure all firearms are unloaded. Store ammunition safely in another location.



Remove any medications from your home to keep your loved ones safe until they are feeling better.

SAFEST CHOICE



Store any medications in a locked box or cabinet. Be sure keys and combinations are in a secure location.



Keep only small amounts of medications in your home. Talk to a pharmacist about what quantities of medication would be safest.



Until your loved one is feeling better, do not leave them alone. Make sure someone has "eyes on" them to ensure they are safe.

SAFEST CHOICE



Create a "safety plan" so your loved one knows how to get help at any time. Identify activities that help them feel better, and people they can reach out to for support.



Make sure your loved one knows how to access the 24-hour Maine Crisis Line at 1-888-568-1112.

STEPS I CAN TAKE

TO PROTECT A LOVED ONE WHO IS AT RISK FOR SUICIDE

It can feel overwhelming when someone you care about is struggling with their mental health. You can help by creating a plan to keep your loved one safe while they get the support they need. If possible, focus on the safest options – but it's most important that you take some kind of action to protect your loved one until they're feeling better.



☐ Remove or store firearms safely.

My Plan: _____



☐ Remove or store medication safely.

My Plan: _____



☐ Stay connected and supervise.

My Plan: _____



1-888-568-1112
MAINE CRISIS LINE
CALL. TEXT. CHAT.



Safety Plan Templates

(order through [SAMHSA 988 Store](#) or Maine Prevention Store)

SAFETY PLANS WORK

There is Hope.



- 1 Write 3 warning signs that a crisis may be developing.

- 2 Write 3 internal coping strategies that can take your mind off your problems.

- 3 Who/What are 3 people or places that provide distraction?
(Write name/place and phone numbers)

_____	Phone _____
_____	Phone _____
_____	Phone _____

- 4 Who can you ask for help? (Write name/place and phone numbers)

_____	Phone _____
_____	Phone _____
_____	Phone _____

- 5 Professionals or agencies you can contact during a crisis:

Clinician _____ Phone _____

Local Urgent Care or Emergency Department:

Address _____ Phone _____

Text or call 988 or chat [988lifeline.org](#)

- 6 Write out a plan to make your environment safer.
(Write 2 things)



988
SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

Modified from Stanley & Brown (2021)

PEP24-08-03-007

Maine Crisis Line & 988

No Judgment. Just Help.



CALL.



TEXT.



CHAT.

988 | SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

988 | SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE



988 offers 24/7 judgment-free support for mental health, substance use, and more. **Text, call, or chat 988.**

PEP24-988-010



Mental Health Support Materials

I AM STRONGER THAN I
GIVE MYSELF CREDIT FOR.

I matter.

IT'S OKAY
TO NOT
FEEL OKAY.

TALK IT
OUT WITH
SOMEONE
YOU TRUST.



MAINE CRISIS LINE
TEXT OR CALL 988

LGBTQI+ SUPPORT
TEXT Q TO 988 OR
CALL 988 AND PRESS 3

MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE
CONTROL & PREVENTION

5 TIPS TO REFOCUS ANXIOUS FEELINGS

Hold a piece of ice



Move your body



Put your hands in cold water



Touch and feel an item near you



Slowly inhale, then exhale



MAINE CRISIS LINE
TEXT OR CALL 988

LGBTQI+ SUPPORT
TEXT Q TO 988 OR
CALL 988 AND PRESS 3

MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION

RESET IN



BREATHING EXERCISE



BREATHE IN FOR
FOUR SECONDS



HOLD FOR FOUR
SECONDS



BREATHE OUT FOR
FOUR SECONDS



HOLD FOR FOUR
SECONDS

AND START AGAIN!

#BeThe1To

If you think someone might be considering suicide,
be the one to help them by taking these 5 steps:

**ASK. KEEP THEM
SAFE. BE THERE.
HELP THEM CONNECT.
FOLLOW UP.**



Find out why this can save a life at
www.BeThe1To.com
If you're struggling, call the Lifeline at
988

