General Housekeeping

- Webinar will last 1 hour
- Audio is muted - please ask questions through Q&A
- Session is being recorded
- Follow-up email after the session will include the recording, powerpoint, and resources
About SchoolHouse Connection

SchoolHouse Connection works to overcome homelessness through education.

We provide strategic advocacy and practical assistance in partnership with schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth.

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Commissioned Corps
Centers for Disease Control
Exploring the Health Behaviors of High School Students Experiencing Homelessness – Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2021

Jennifer Smith-Grant, *Epidemiologist*
DASH, School-Based Surveillance Branch
June 21, 2023
Disclaimer

This following content was prepared by Jennifer Smith-Grant in her personal capacity. The opinions expressed in this article are the presenter’s own and do not reflect the view of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Health and Human Services, or the United States government.
Today’s Agenda

• YRBSS Overview
• History of Homelessness Questions in YRBSS
• Homelessness & 2021 YRBS
• Questions & Answers
YRBSS Overview
Purposes of the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)

• Focus the nation on behaviors among youth causing the most important health problems
• Assess how risk behaviors change over time
• Provide comparable data to better understand disparities
Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)

- Monitors health-related behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth and adults
  - National **Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)** conducted by CDC
  - State, territorial, local, and tribal surveys conducted by state, territorial, and local education and health agencies and tribal governments
Behaviors Contributing to the Leading Causes of Morbidity and Mortality

- Sexual behaviors
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence
- Tobacco use
- Unhealthy dietary behaviors
- Inadequate physical activity

*Plus:* obesity
School-based YRBS Characteristics

• 9th – 12th grade students
• Probability samples of schools and students
• Anonymous
• Self-administered questionnaire
• Computer-scannable answer sheet
• Completed in one class period (45 minutes)
• Conducted biennially usually during the spring
2021 YRBS Questionnaire Modification

- Standard high school questionnaire
  - 87 questions
  - Starting point for all state and local questionnaires as well as national questionnaire

- Sites can delete, change, and add questions
  - Must use two thirds of standard questions without changes (58 q)
  - Cannot exceed 99 questions total
Adding YRBS Questions

• Optional Question List
  • 225+ questions
  • Organized by topic
  • Consistent with standard question wording and format

• Site-developed questions
History of Homelessness

Questions in YRBSS
Development of the YRBSS Homelessness Questions

• Began in early 2000’s
• Developed based on input from national organizations that focus on youth and homelessness
  • SchoolHouse Connection
  • National Consortium on Homelessness and the YRBS
  • Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness
• Resulted in two consistent YRBSS questions about homelessness
YRBSS Optional Question #1

During the past 30 days, where did you usually sleep?

A. In my parent's or guardian's home
B. In the home of a friend, family member, or other person because I had to leave my home or my parent or guardian cannot afford housing
C. In a shelter or emergency housing
D. In a motel or hotel
E. In a car, park, campground, or other public place
F. I do not have a usual place to sleep
G. Somewhere else
YRBSS Optional Question #2

During the past 30 days, did you ever sleep away from your parents or guardians because you were kicked out, ran away, or were abandoned?

A. Yes

B. No
Boston and Massachusetts were the only two sites to include a housing instability question on their 2005 YRBS surveys.
In 2007, Boston and Massachusetts were the only two sites to include a housing question on their YRBS surveys.
Connecticut, Massachusetts, Philadelphia, and San Francisco, included housing questions on their 2009 YRBS surveys.
Delaware added a housing stability question to its YRBS survey in the following cycle, increasing the number of sites asking about housing in 2011 to five.
This number decreased to 4 in 2013 when Wisconsin added a housing question, but Connecticut and San Francisco removed theirs.
In 2015, the number of sites including housing questions on their surveys jumped to twelve* – 9 states and 3 districts.

* Two other states and 1 additional district asked the housing question but did not achieve representative data.
CDC included the two housing questions on the 2017 YRBS Optional Question List.

In that cycle, 23 states and 10 school districts included at least one of the housing questions in their 2017 YRBS.
CDC included the two housing questions again on the 2019 YRBS Optional Question List.

In that cycle, 29 states and 9 school districts included at least one of the housing questions in their 2019 YRBS.
“Where did you sleep?” added to the standard questionnaire
   • 40 states
   • 26 districts

Sixty-six separate estimates for youth experiencing homelessness

“Where did you sleep?” added to the national questionnaire

1st NATIONAL estimate for youth experiencing homelessness
Homelessness & 2021 YRBS

Homelessness & 2021 YRBS: Overview

- Measuring Homelessness with YRBS
- Methods & Analyses
- Results
- Summary
During the past 30 days, where did you usually sleep?

A. In my parent's or guardian's home
B. In the home of a friend, family member, or other person because I had to leave my home or my parent or guardian cannot afford housing
C. In a shelter or emergency housing
D. In a motel or hotel
E. In a car, park, campground, or other public place
F. I do not have a usual place to sleep
G. Somewhere else
Methods & Analyses

• Dichotomized variable of interest – experiencing homelessness versus being stably housed
  • Stratified by sex, grade, race and ethnicity, and sexual identity
• Logistic regression models used to provide unadjusted and adjusted prevalence ratios
• Prevalence estimates of each risk behavior were stratified by housing status
• Statistical significance determined by 95% confidence intervals
• Analyses conducted using SUDAAN 11.0.3
Methods & Analyses: National

- Prevalence estimates
- Adjusted prevalence ratios (aPRs)
  - PR for sex adjusted for grade, race/ethnicity, and sexual identity
  - PR for grade adjusted for sex, race and ethnicity, and sexual identity
  - PR for race/ethnicity adjusted for sex, grade, and sexual identity
  - PR for sexual identity adjusted for sex, grade, and race and ethnicity
  - PR for health risk behavior/experience adjusted for sex, grade, race and ethnicity, and sexual identity
- Numbers and percentages for youth experiencing homelessness will be in purple.
- Stably housed youth data will be in orange.
- Statistically significant differences shown in bold font
In the U.S. in 2021...

17,232 youth surveyed by the YRBS (Youth Risk Behavior Survey) indicated that 2.7% experienced homelessness, while 97.3% were stably housed.
Prevalence of homelessness among youth in the U.S. in 2021 – Sex at Birth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>% (95% CI)</th>
<th>aPR (95% CI)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2.4 (1.9-3.2)</td>
<td>Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2.7 (2.2-3.4)</td>
<td>1.2 (0.8-1.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PR for sex adjusted for grade, race/ethnicity, and sexual identity.**
Prevalence of homelessness among youth in the U.S. in 2021 – Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>% (95% CI)</th>
<th>aPR (95% CI)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>2.0 (1.4–2.9)</td>
<td>Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>2.1 (1.5–2.8)</td>
<td>0.9 (0.6–1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>2.8 (2.0–4.0)</td>
<td>1.4 (0.9–2.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>3.4 (2.7–4.3)</td>
<td>1.7 (1.1–2.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*PR for grade adjusted for race/ethnicity, sex, and sexual identity.
Prevalence of homelessness among youth in the U.S. in 2021 – Race/ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/ethnicity</th>
<th>% (95% CI)</th>
<th>aPR (95% CI)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>2.0 (1.4–2.9)</td>
<td>Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>5.1 (3.8-6.8)</td>
<td>2.6 (1.9-3.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic †</td>
<td>2.5 (1.6-3.9)</td>
<td>1.1 (0.7-1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>7.9 (4.1-14.4)</td>
<td>4.7 (2.3-9.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>10.0 (4.3-21.7)</td>
<td>5.9 (2.6-13.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0.8 (0.4-1.5)</td>
<td>0.3 (0.1-0.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>3.1 (2.0-5.0)</td>
<td>1.5 (0.9-2.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*PR for race/ethnicity adjusted for sex, grade, and sexual identity.
† Persons of Hispanic or Latino (Hispanic) origin might be of any race but are categorized as Hispanic; all racial groups are non-Hispanic.
Prevalence of homelessness among youth in the U.S. in 2021 – Sexual identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual identity</th>
<th>PR (95% CI)</th>
<th>aPR (95% CI)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>2.0 (1.6–2.5)</td>
<td>Ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay or lesbian</td>
<td>4.7 (2.9–7.3)</td>
<td>1.9 (1.0–3.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>4.2 (2.6–6.6)</td>
<td>2.3 (1.4–3.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>4.0 (2.2–7.1)</td>
<td>1.8 (1.1–3.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sexual identity</td>
<td>2.6 (1.6–4.2)</td>
<td>1.5 (0.9–2.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*PR for sexual identity adjusted for race/ethnicity, sex, and grade.
Among Youth in the U.S. in 2021: Substance Use

- Ever misused prescription opioids: 0.117 vs. 0.364
  - Experiencing Homelessness: 2.9x
  - Stably Housed

- Ever used illicit drugs: 0.127 vs. 0.417
  - Experiencing Homelessness: 3.0x
  - Stably Housed

- Ever injected any illegal drug: 0.009 vs. 0.225
  - Experiencing Homelessness: 19.0x
  - Stably Housed
Among Youth in the U.S. in 2021: Sexual Health

- Currently sexually active: 2.0x
- Used alcohol or drugs at last sexual intercourse: 2.1x
- Did not use a condom during last sexual intercourse: 1.2x
- Not tested for any STD (other than HIV) in the past 12 months: 0.9x
- Not ever tested for HIV: 0.9x
Among Youth in the U.S. in 2021:
Violence Victimization

- Experienced sexual dating violence in the past 12 months: 3.0x
- Experienced physical dating violence in the past 12 months: 3.7x
- Experienced sexual violence by anyone in the past 12 months: 2.6x
Among Youth in the U.S. in 2021: Mental Health & Suicide

- Poor mental health in the past 30 days: 1.1x
- Experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in the past 12 months: 1.3x
- Seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months: 1.9x
- Made a suicide plan in the past 12 months: 2.0x
- Attempted suicide in the past 12 months: 3.3x
Limitations for YRBSS

• Data apply only to students in grades 9–12 who attend public and private schools U.S.
• The extent of underreporting or overreporting of health-related behaviors cannot be determined
• Data from certain questions are not available from all sites
• YRBS data analyses can only indicate association between variables, not causality
• In 2021, YRBSS was administered during the fall semester
• COVID-19 precautions might have reduced school and student participation
Limitations for study of youth experiencing homelessness

- Causality cannot be inferred between housing instability and health risk behaviors
- All variables did not share a common time reference point
  - Exposure to homelessness was measured during the past 30 days
  - Risk behaviors measures included “ever engaged,” “past 12 months,” and “at time of last sexual intercourse”
- Analysis is limited to students who attend school and were present on the day(s) of data collection
- Students who slept “somewhere else” in the past 30 days were categorized as being stably housed
Implications for youth experiencing homelessness

• YRBS data highlight disparities in health risk behaviors and adverse experiences
• YRBS data on youth homelessness raise attention to public health challenges
• Schools, national organizations and agencies can use data to steer resources and interventions to youth experiencing homelessness
• CDC can revise/add YRBS questions to meet the needs of those who use the data
  • Submit requests for changes or additions via email
  • “New” housing question ☐ not being able to compare results from original housing question
Acknowledgements

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- Nancy Brener, PhD
Questions?
Additional Resources

- New CDC Data Show Higher Health Risks for Students Experiencing Homelessness
- Why we use the Phrase “Students Experiencing Homelessness”
- Student Homelessness: Lessons from the (2019) Youth Risk Behavior Survey
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