

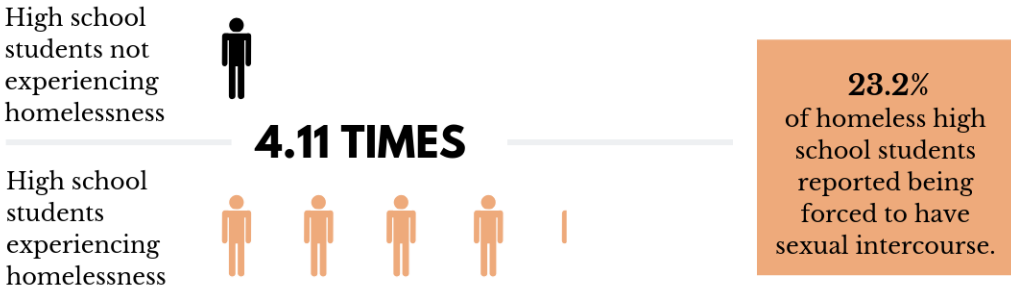


The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) was first developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1990 to assess the health risk behaviors of youth and adults in the United States. For the first time since the survey has been widely administered, the 2017 YRBS optional question list included two questions pertaining to homelessness. SchoolHouse Connection analyzed demographic and risk factor data from the YRBS in 17 states¹, comparing high school students experiencing homelessness and those not experiencing homelessness. This series shares the striking and heartbreaking results of that analysis, with tangible action steps schools can take to promote safety and health for students experiencing homelessness.

The very nature of not having a safe place to sleep places youth experiencing homelessness at serious risk of sexual assault. Shelters don't exist in many communities, or are full, or don't accept minors; many youth also are afraid of adult shelters. As a result, most high school students experiencing homelessness are staying temporarily in the homes of other people. All too often, youth are victims of sexual assault and rape at the hands of their "hosts." In fact, high school students staying in all homeless situations -- including motels, shelters, with other people, and in unsheltered locations -- are disproportionately likely to be raped and sexually assaulted.

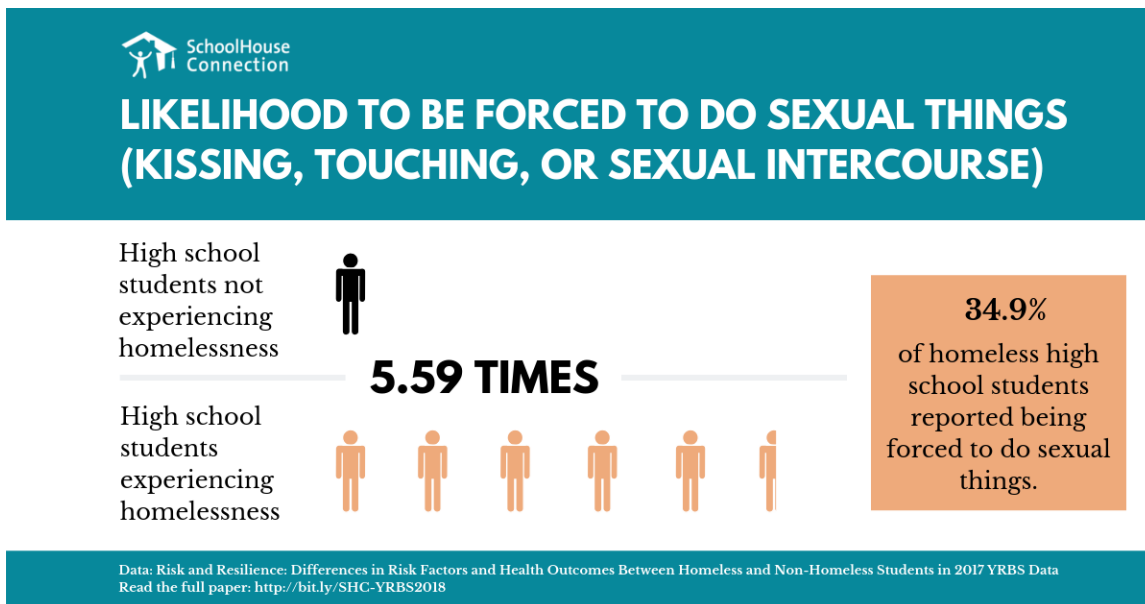
High school students experiencing homelessness were 4.11 times more likely to be raped compared to their stably housed peers. **Nearly one in four high school students experiencing homelessness reported being forced to have sexual intercourse.**

LIKELIHOOD TO BE FORCED TO HAVE SEXUAL INTERCOURSE



Data: Risk and Resilience: Differences in Risk Factors and Health Outcomes Between Homeless and Non-Homeless Students in 2017 YRBS Data
Read the full paper: <http://bit.ly/SHC-YRBS2018>

Similarly, **high school students experiencing homelessness were 5.59 times more likely to be forced to do sexual things (defined as kissing, touching, or sexual intercourse) compared to stably housed youth.** Over a twelve month period, one in three high school students experiencing homelessness reported being forced to do sexual things.



Schools can help prevent rape and sexual assault of students, as well as supporting survivors.

Action Steps for Schools

1. Create a school- and district-wide culture of respect of physical and sexual boundaries and limits. Infuse classes and extra-curricular activities with messaging about the need for affirmative consent before proceeding with sexual activity.
2. Incorporate education about sexual violence and safety into existing health classes. Be sure the curriculum is supportive of survivors and includes information about who at school is trained to talk to students who have been raped or sexually assaulted.
3. Offer school phones in private locations for students to call rape or sexual assault hotlines whenever needed. Youth experiencing homelessness often struggle to maintain functioning cell phones and cell phone plans.
4. Collaborate with community providers to ensure access to services for survivors of rape and sexual assault, as well as information about sexual health and safety. Consider likely barriers to services for students experiencing homelessness, such as lack of transportation and money for co-pays or sliding scale services.
5. Revise mandatory child protective services reporting requirements to allow youth to request and receive services without involving the child welfare system. One of SchoolHouse Connection's Young Leaders articulated a common concern: "I would emphasize confidential, non-reporting counseling options. Having experienced this kind of violence, I never sought the therapy that could have helped me cope or provided me with strategies to better my situation for fear of legal reporting requirements."

Resources

Editorial Projects in Education, "[A Practical Framework for Teaching Consent.](#)"

EducationPost, "[5 Ways We Teach Rape Culture in Schools](#)"

Healthguide, "[The Complete Guide to Teaching Kids Consent at Every Age.](#)"

Joyful Heart Foundation, "[Sexual Assault and Rape Resources](#)"

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, "[Sexual Harassment-Prevention in Schools.](#)"

Planned Parenthood, "[Getting Help for Someone Who Has Been Sexually Assaulted](#)"

Rape Crisis Help, [How We Can Help](#)

Rape Crisis England & Wales, "[Not Sure Where to Start?](#)"

Teaching Tolerance, "[Disrupting Rape Culture through Education.](#)"

Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, "[Rape Culture Pyramid Discussion Guide.](#)"

¹ AK, AR, CA, CO, DE, HI, ID, IL, KS, KY, ME, MT, NH, NC, PA, VA, WI.