

The recent sudden decline in female adolescent mental health

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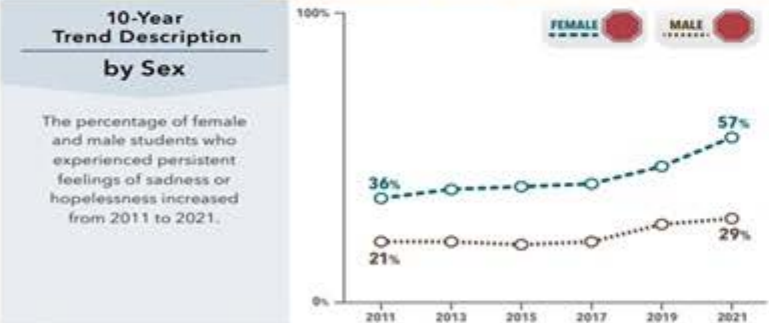
INTRODUCTION

There has been a 21% increase in persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness during the past year among female adolescents compared to an 8% increase among their male peers. Though the 21% increase in feelings analogous to depression occurred between 2011 and 2021, much of this trend is represented by a sharp increase post-2017.

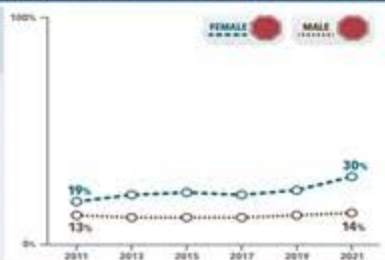
In regards to mental health, the report also highlighted a similar disparity in sexes concerning mental health during the past 30 days as well as a significant rise in female adolescent suicidality during the past decade.

Also notable from the report is dominant female substance use, experiences of violence, and lack of school connectedness—all of which are major risk factors for overall poor mental health.

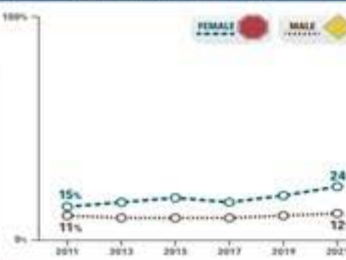
Trends in the Percentage of High School Students Who Experienced Persistent Feelings of Sadness or Hopelessness during the Past Year, United States, YRBS, 2011-2021



Seriously Considered Attempting Suicide during the Past Year, United States, YRBS, 2011-2021



Made a Suicide Plan during the Past Year, United States, YRBS, 2011-2021



Substance Use

2021	Current Alcohol Use	Current Marijuana Use	Current Electronic Vapor Product Use	Ever Used Select Herb Drugs	Ever Misused Prescription Opioids	Current Prescription Opioid Misuse
See: Female (F), Male (M)						
Female Comparison	F=M	F=M	F=M	F=M	F=M	F=M

Experiencing Violence

2021	Threatened or Injured with a Weapon at School	Did Not Go to School Because of Safety Concerns	Electronically Bullied	Bullied at School	Ever Forced to Have Sex	Sexual Violence by Anyone
See: Female (F), Male (M)						
Female Comparison	No significant difference	F=M	F=M	F=M	F=M	F=M

Mental Health and Suicidality

2021	Persistent Feelings of Sadness or Hopelessness	Poor Mental Health	Seriously Considered Attempting Suicide	Made a Suicide Plan	Attempted Suicide	Injured in a Suicide Attempt
See: Female (F), Male (M)						
Female Comparison	F=M	F=M	F=M	F=M	F=M	F=M

New and Emerging National Data

2021	School Connectedness	Parental Monitoring	Verbal Abuse
See: Female (F), Male (M)			
Female Comparison	F=M	F=M	No significant difference

PURPOSE

This project aims to investigate both the long term decline and the recent sudden decline in female adolescent mental health.

METHODS

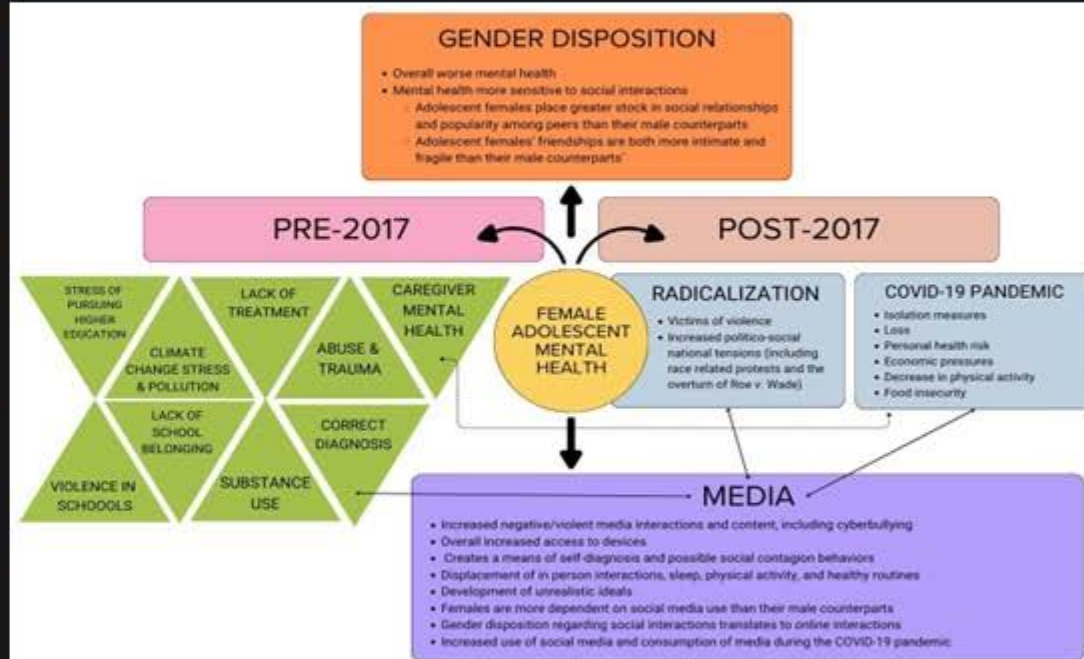
A scoping review of over 50 published articles was performed. Articles were selected based on their relevance to the American female adolescent population with a majority of articles selected from *Pediatrics*, *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, and the *Pew Research Center*. Other sources were compiled through targeted searches utilizing PubMed and ClinicalKey.

REFERENCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY DATA SUMMARY & TRENDS REPORT: 2011-2021
Additional references available upon request.

RESULTS

The decline in female adolescent mental health is multifactorial with numerous causes attributable to the long-term decline seen pre-2017 and the sudden decline post-2017. The decline is likely heavily intersectional, and there are significant relationships between risk factors that can augment their impacts. Further investigation is needed to quantify severity of risk factors and determine courses of action for addressing them.



CONCLUSION

The CDC updated and rebranded their adolescent health initiatives in 2020 as the "What Works Well in Schools Program" with the following goals:

- "Increase school connectedness across all grades and for all youth."
- "Increase access to needed services by improving school-based services and connecting youth and families to community-based sources of care."
- "Implement quality health education for all grades."

Though the CDC's goals do address some of the risk factors influencing female adolescent mental health, they do not address them all, lack specificity, and do not consider data collected since the initiative began. Next steps for this project include investigating concrete solutions to address this mental health crisis, primarily from a health care provider perspective.