

Youth Mental Health

The World Health Organization defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”.¹ The onset of clinical depression often occurs during adolescence, affecting more females than males.² Suicide is also a concern in adolescence as it is the second leading cause of death in Canadians aged 15-24.³

Data on students who are at risk of depression and students who have had serious thoughts of suicide are presented in this report. It also includes information on students who scored high in 3 mental health Developmental Assets[®]: Personal Power, Self-Esteem and Positive View of Future.

Purpose of Health Indicator Report: To provide information on the mental health of grade 7 and 10 students in Halton Region

Data Source: Halton Youth Survey

Data Collection Period: 2012

For more information on statistical significance, data interpretation and limitations in this report, see the [data notes](#) section on the last page.

At Risk for Depression

Grade and Sex:

- In 2012, Halton grade 10 students [9%(±1)] were more likely than grade 7 students [4%(±1)] to be at risk for depression. This difference was statistically significant (see **Figure 1**).
- In 2012, Halton females in both grade 7 and grade 10 were more likely to be at risk for depression than males. Differences were statistically significant when comparing grade 7 females [6%(±1)] to grade 7 males [3%(±1)] as well as when comparing grade 10 females [15%(±1)] to grade 10 males [5%(±1)] (see **Figure 1**).

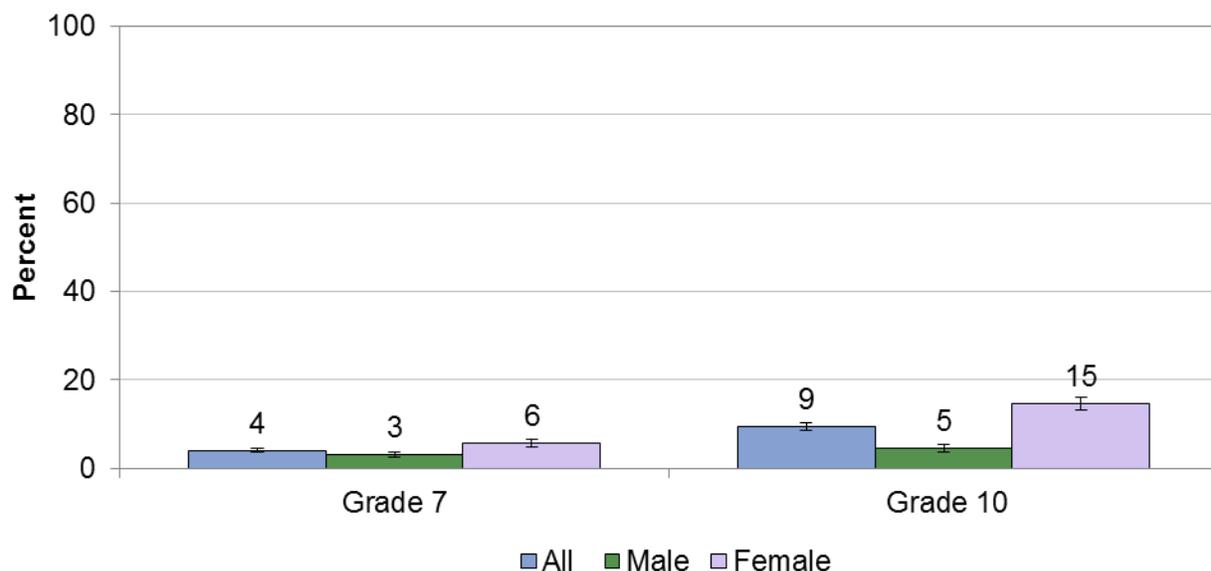
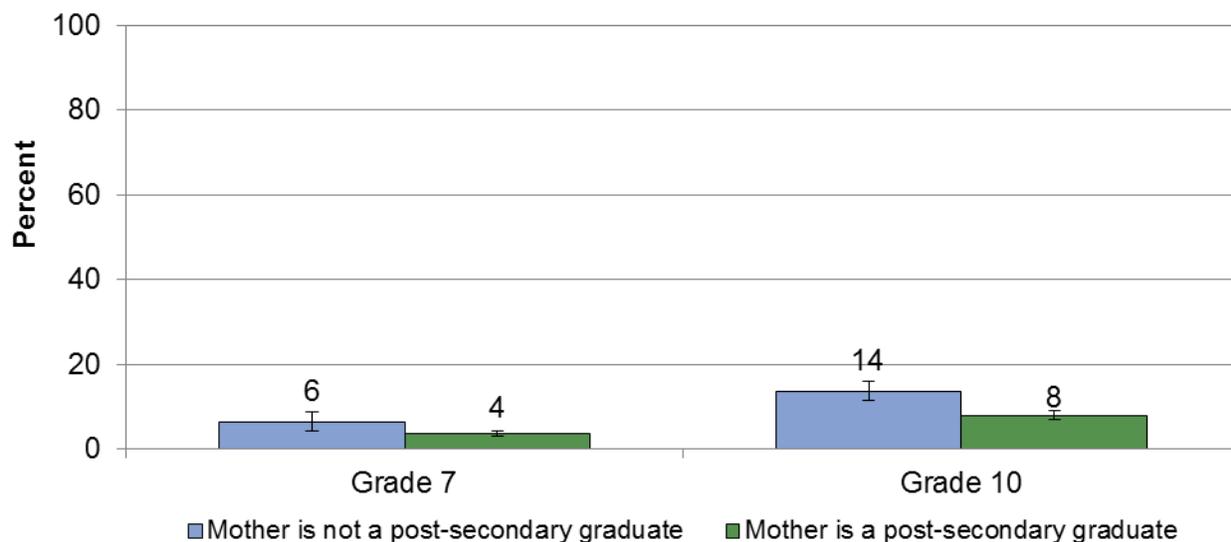


Figure 1: Percent of youth at risk for depression, by grade and sex, Halton Region, 2012

Mothers Education[‡]:

- In 2012, Halton grade 7 and grade 10 students whose mothers were not post-secondary graduates were more likely than students whose mothers were post-secondary graduates to be a risk for depression (see **Figure 2**). This difference was statistically significant when comparing grade 10 students only.



[‡]If a student indicated they did not have a Mother, their Fathers education was used instead, when available.

Figure 2: Percent of youth at risk for depression, by mothers education[‡], Halton Region, 2012

Serious Thoughts of Suicide

Grade and Sex:

- In 2012, Halton grade 10 students [11%(±1)] were more likely than grade 7 students [5%(±1)] to have had serious thoughts of suicide. This difference was statistically significant (see **Figure 3**).
- In 2012, Halton grade 10 females [14%(±1)] were more likely than grade 10 males [8%(±1)] to have had serious thoughts of suicide (see **Figure 3**). This difference was statistically significant.
- In 2012, there were no statistically significant differences by sex, in the percent of grade 7 students who have had serious thoughts of suicide.

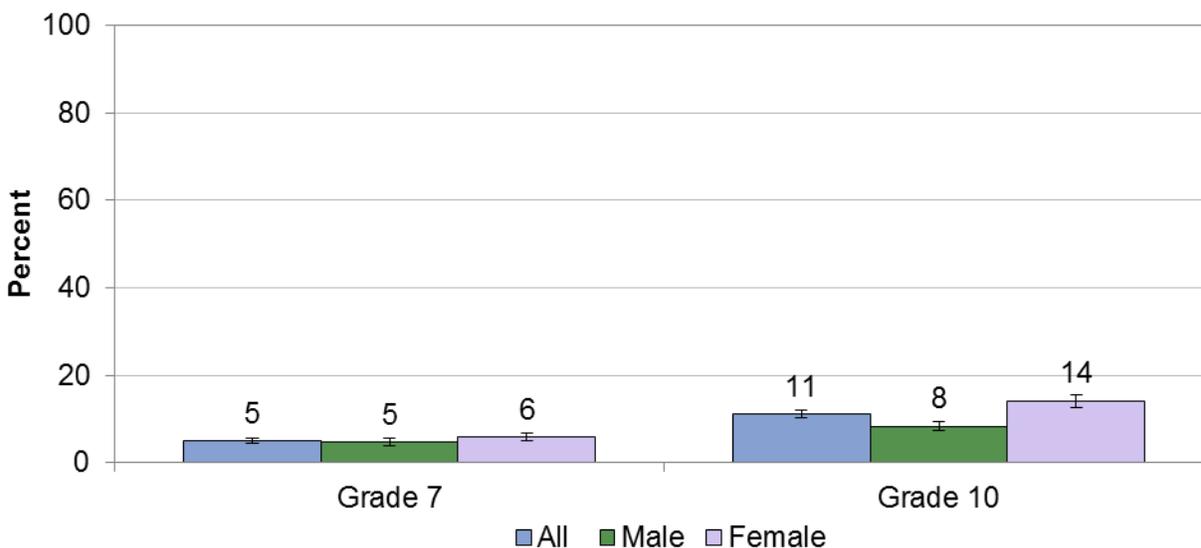
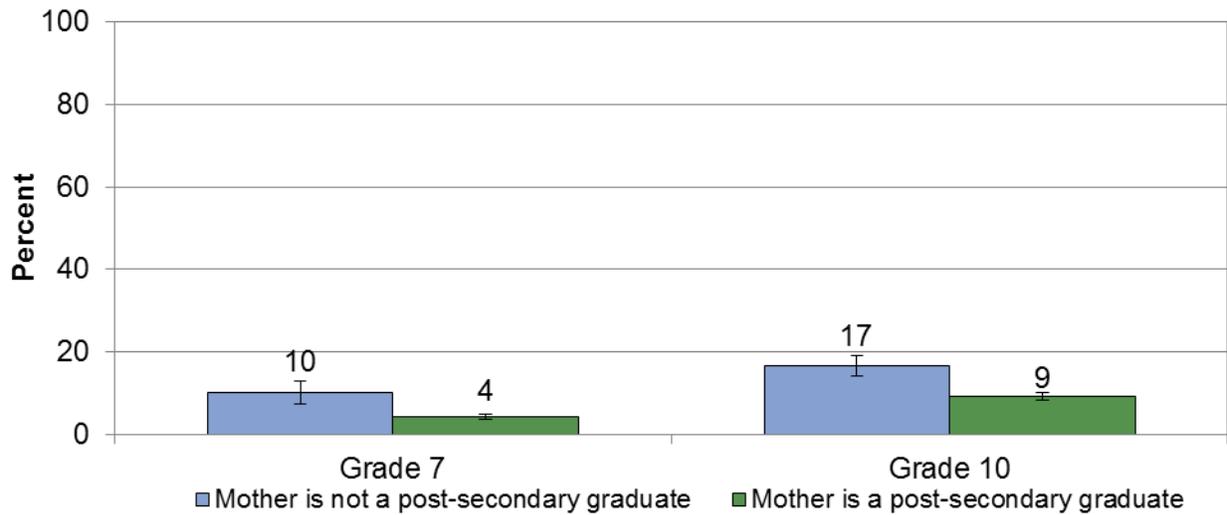


Figure 3: Percent of youth who have had serious thoughts of suicide, by grade and sex, Halton Region, 2012

Mothers Education[†]:

- In 2012, Halton grade 7 and grade 10 students whose mothers were not post-secondary graduates were more likely than students whose mothers were post-secondary graduates to have had serious thoughts of suicide (see **Figure 4**). This difference was statistically significant for both grades.



[†]If a student indicated they did not have a Mother, their Fathers education was used instead, when available.

Figure 4: Percent of youth who have had serious thoughts of suicide, by mothers education[†], Halton Region, 2012

Mental Health Developmental Assets

Grade and Sex:

- In 2012, Halton grade 7 students were more likely than grade 10 students to score high in all 3 mental health assets (personal power, self esteem and positive future) (see **Figure 5**). Differences were statistically significant for all assets when comparing grade 7 to grade 10 students.
- In 2012 there were no statistically significant differences by sex in the percent of grade 7 students scoring high in personal power (see **Figure 5**).
- In 2012 Halton grade 10 females [55%(±2)] were more likely than grade 10 males [47%(±2)] to score high in personal power (see **Figure 5**). This difference was statistically significant.
- In 2012 Halton males in both grade 7 and grade 10 were more likely than females in grade 7 and grade 10 to score high in self esteem (see **Figure 5**). Differences were statistically significant when comparing grade 7 males to grade 7 females as well as when comparing grade 10 males to grade 10 females.
- In 2012 there were no statistically significant differences by sex in the percent of grade 7 or grade 10 students scoring high in positive view of future (see **Figure 5**).

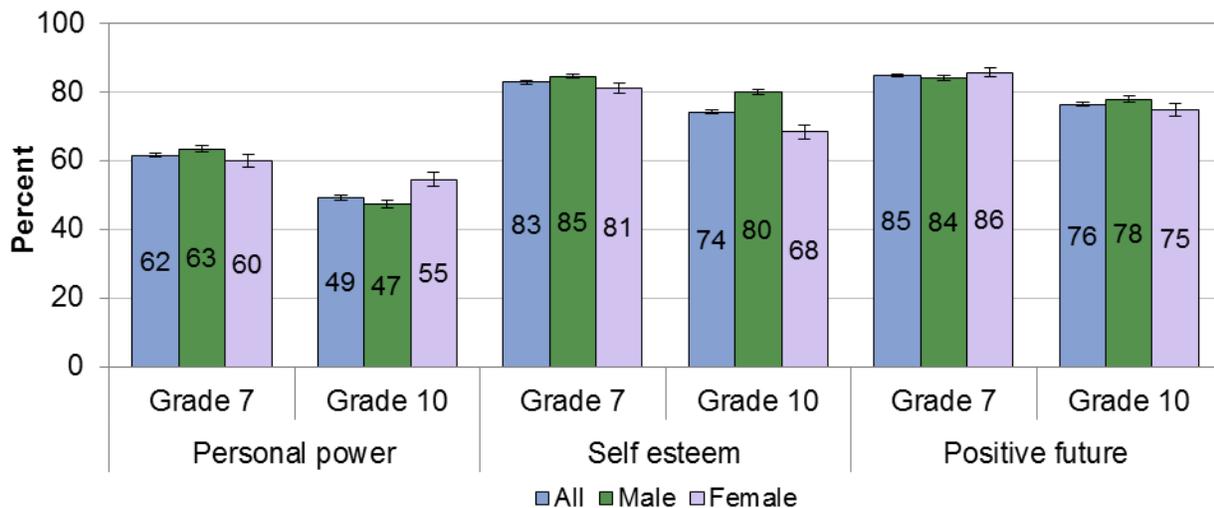
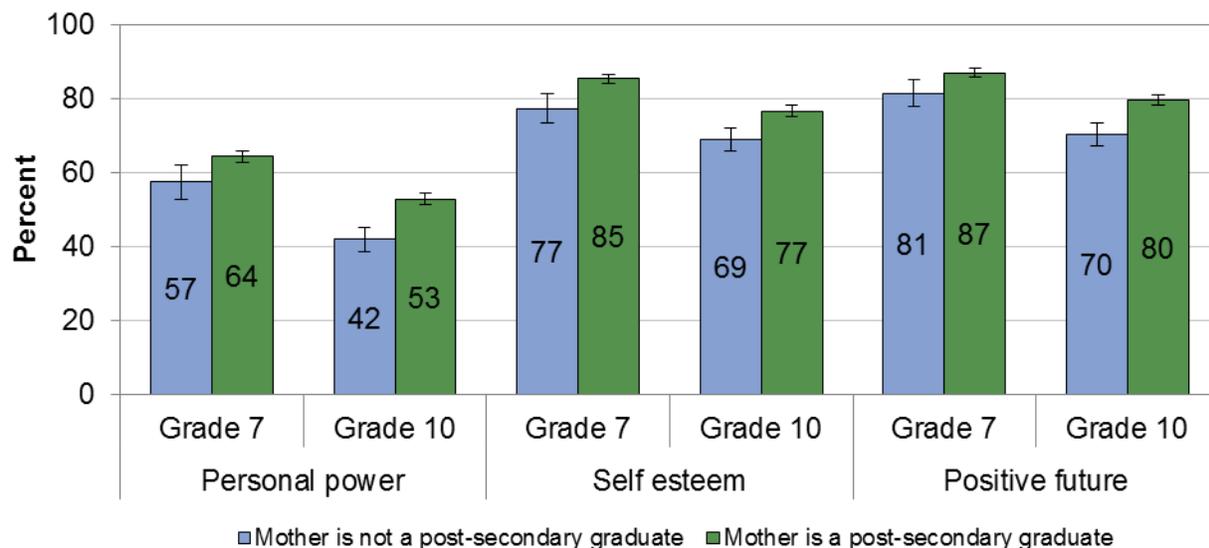


Figure 5: Percent of youth who scored high in personal power, self-esteem and positive view of future, by grade and sex, Halton Region, 2012

Mothers Education[‡]:

- In 2012, Halton students whose mothers were post-secondary graduates were more likely than students whose mother's were not post-secondary graduates to score high in all 3 mental health assets: personal power, self esteem and positive future (see **Figure 6**). Differences were statistically significant in grade 7 and grade 10 for all assets.



[‡]If a student indicated they did not have a Mother, their Fathers education was used instead, when available.

Figure 6: Percent of youth who scored high in personal power, self-esteem and positive view of future, by mothers education[‡], Halton Region, 2012

Data notes on next page...

Data Notes:

Definitions:

At Risk for Depression is based on a shortened version of the Centre for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) that is derived from four questions, based on the last 7 days: How often have you felt sad, lonely, depressed, like crying? The student had to answer "often" or "always" to all four questions are considered *at risk for depression*.

Serious thoughts of Suicide includes youth who answered that in the last 12 months that they sometimes, often or always had seriously thought of suicide.

Developmental Assets are the positive experiences and personal qualities that youth need to grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

Personal power is a developmental asset that refers to youth feeling in control of their life and being able to cope/deal with challenges effectively.

Self-Esteem assess whether the young person reports having a high self-esteem. This developmental asset is based on five questions.

Positive View of Future assesses whether the young person is optimistic about her or his personal future. This developmental asset is based on two questions.

Statistical Significance:

A **95% confidence interval (CI)** refers to the range of values that has a 95% chance of including the true estimate. 95% CI's are reported in brackets or presented as "I" shaped bars in the graphs. A large CI means that there was a large amount of variability in responses or the sample size for the category was small. When CIs do not overlap between 2 or more groups (e.g., when comparing males and females) it means that the differences between the groups are **statistically significant** and unlikely to be due to chance alone. Since overlapping confidence intervals are used to determine statistical significance, p-values are not calculated. This is a conservative approach ($\alpha < 0.01$) which is more appropriate when multiple comparisons are being made, such as in this report.

Data Interpretation:

Coefficient of variation (CV) refers to the precision of the estimate. When the CV is between 16.6 and 33.3, the estimate should be interpreted with caution because of high variability and has been marked with an asterisk (*). Estimates with a CV of 33.3 or greater are not reportable and have been marked with double asterisks (**) in the graphs and tables.

Mothers education was analyzed as a proxy for household socioeconomic status as studies have shown that mothers with higher education have healthier children.⁵ If a student indicated they did not have a Mother, their Fathers education was used, when available.

Limitations:

The Halton Youth Survey results are self-reported and may not necessarily be recalled accurately. In general, individuals with mental health issues are more difficult to reach in surveys. As a result, the percentages may be under-estimated. Also, the perception of social approval/disapproval by respondents may affect their responses to questions.

Rounded estimates were used for the presentation of data, thus estimates may not total 100 percent. Rounded CI's were used for the presentation of data; however, non-rounded CI's were used to determine statistically significant differences.

Students who answered don't know or refused were excluded from the analysis.

References:

1. World Health Organization. Mental health: strengthening mental health promotion (Fact Sheet No. 220). Geneva: WHO, 2007.
2. Adlaf EM, Paglia-Boak A, Beitchman JH, Wolfe D. 2007. The mental health and well-being of Ontario students: 1991-2007: OSDUHS highlights. Toronto, ON: Centre for Addiction & Mental Health.
3. Canadian Mental Health Association (CAMH). Mental Health Statistics. Accessed April 2014 from <http://www.cmha.ca/media/fast-facts-about-mental-illness/>
4. Scales & Leffert. Developmental Assets: A Synthesis of the Scientific Research on Adolescent Development. Minnesota: Search Institute, 2004.
5. Chevalier, A. 2004. Parental Education and Child's Education: A Natural Experiment. Accessed April 2014 from <http://ftp.iza.org/dp1153.pdf>

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