



# Household Mental Illness: Adverse Childhood Experiences in Minnesota

Data from the Minnesota Student Survey, 2019

## Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

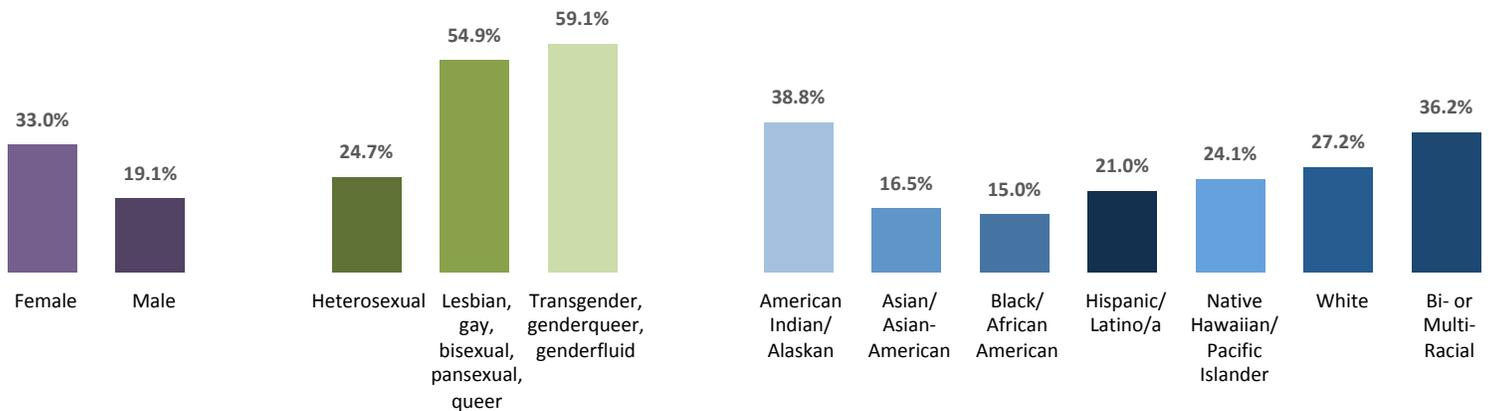
In 2019, the Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) added an 8<sup>th</sup> question to the adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) module\*:

**Do you live with anyone who is depressed or has any other mental health issues?**

In previous years, parental or caregiver incarceration had been the most prevalent ACE, but in 2019, household mental illness was the ACE reported most often, by **26.2%** of 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> graders.

## Prevalence

Rates of students reporting living with someone with depression or mental illness vary by gender, sexual orientation and gender identity<sup>^</sup>, and by race and ethnicity  
2019 MSS



## Household mental health problems are associated with many other negative effects

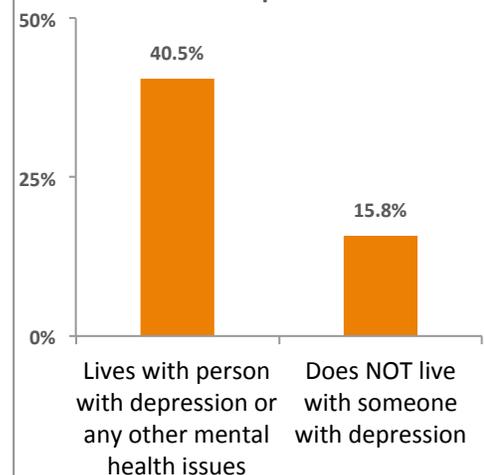
Students living with a person who is depressed or has mental illness are:

- **2.6 times** more likely themselves to report having **symptoms of depression** in the past 2 weeks (see graph),
- **2.5 times** more likely to report having **anxiety**,
- **nearly 3 times** more likely to report **having self-harmed** in the past year,
- **over 3 times** more likely to report past-year **suicidal thoughts**.

They are also:

- **nearly twice** as likely to report **long-term health problems**, and
- **3.6 times** more likely to report **missing school because of feeling sad, hopeless, anxious, stressed, or angry**.
- **20%** less likely to report feeling their **parents care** about them,
- **60%** less likely to report feeling **teachers/school staff care** about them, and
- **30%** less likely to report feeling **relatives care** about them.
- **3 times** more likely to report **household alcohol problems** and
- **nearly 6 times** more likely to report **household drug problems**.
- They are also more likely **to use substances** themselves.

Rates of past two-week depressive symptoms are 2.6 times higher for students who live in a household with mental health problems



\*For more information on the MSS, ACEs, or definitions used in this fact sheet, please visit [www.sumn.org](http://www.sumn.org)

<sup>^</sup>Data for sexual orientation and gender identity include only 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders

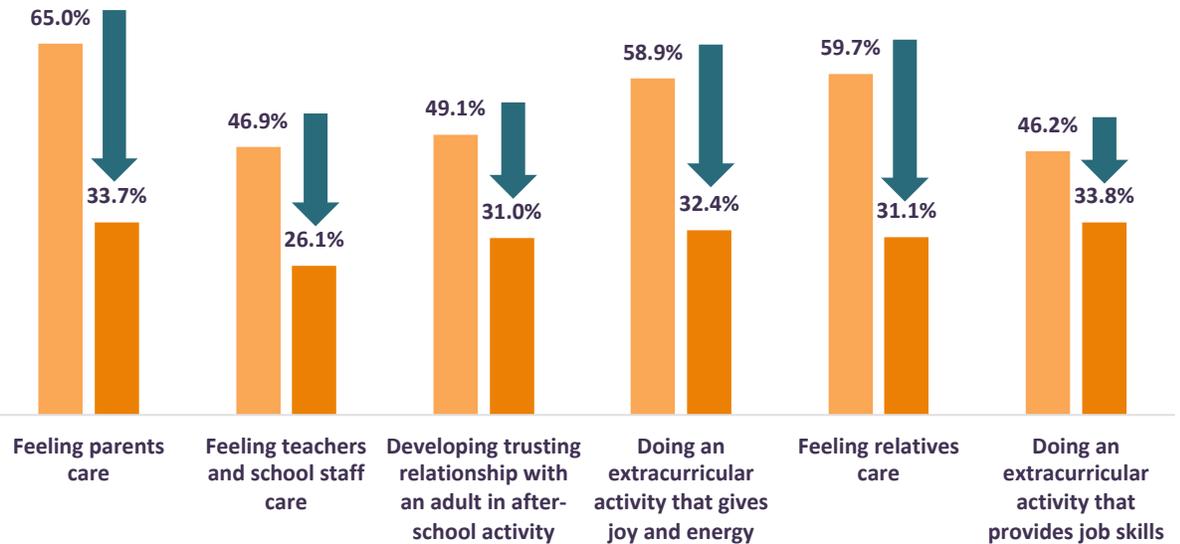
## Protective Factors

While family mental illness can be a difficult issue, there are protective factors that can mitigate the negative effects of this pervasive ACE. Providing **trusting relationships with adults and activities that bolster a student's skills and joy** greatly reduce the likelihood that a student living in a household with mental illness will report symptoms of depression themselves. While the graph below shows the relationships of these protective factors with depression, similar effects are seen for rates of anxiety and other mental health issues, for substance use, and for other health problems.

**Rates of depressive symptoms are much lower when students have protective factors in their lives that build relationships, joy, and life skills**  
2019 MSS

### HOW TO READ THIS GRAPH:

Of students who live in a household with mental illness, 65.0% who feel their parents DON'T care about them report having depressive symptoms. However, when students who feel their parents DO care about them, this drops to 33.7%



## Resources

Communities that recognize that mental health problems are not confined to an individual are more likely to succeed in creating resources that address family needs in a comprehensive way. Find out more about Minnesota's System of Care approach to children and youth mental health: <https://mn.gov/dhs/mnsoc/>

Developing an effective plan to address ACEs by using your community's MSS data. Find your data through [www.sumn.org](http://www.sumn.org)

Use a database of evidence-based programs to address your community's needs: <https://www.blueprintsprograms.org>

Find out more about mental health resources at the National Alliance on Mental Illness in Minnesota: <https://namimn.org/>

Participate in and benefit from University research through the Resilient Communities Project, which partners local government agencies and University of Minnesota faculty and students: <https://rcp.umn.edu/>

Learn more about the University of Minnesota's research and outreach addressing youth at the Institute of Child Development: <https://icd.umn.edu/>

Help families thrive through the use of social and emotional learning with CASEL, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, at <https://casel.org/>

Attend conferences and trainings on children's mental health from Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health. Find out about events, programs and resources at <https://macmh.org/>