

Fear and Violence among Clinton and Warren County Youth

2010

During the 2008-2009 school year, 18 public junior and senior high schools in Clinton and Warren Counties administered the Ohio Youth Survey to 6th-12th graders. This survey included questions on attitudes, activities, assets, and risk-taking. A total of 7,969 students responded. Of these, 3,345 were Clinton County students and 4,624 were Warren County students. Unless otherwise noted, there were no statistically significant differences between the two counties in terms of student responses.

For more information about the survey, visit www.mhrsonline.org/ohioyouthsurvey.

The Clinton County Family and Children First Council, the Warren County Family and Children First Council, and Mental Health Recovery Services of Warren and Clinton Counties would like to thank the administrators, teachers, school staff, and students of the Clinton and Warren Schools who participated.

We would also like to thank Minuteman Press of Lebanon and The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati for partnering with us to create these summaries.



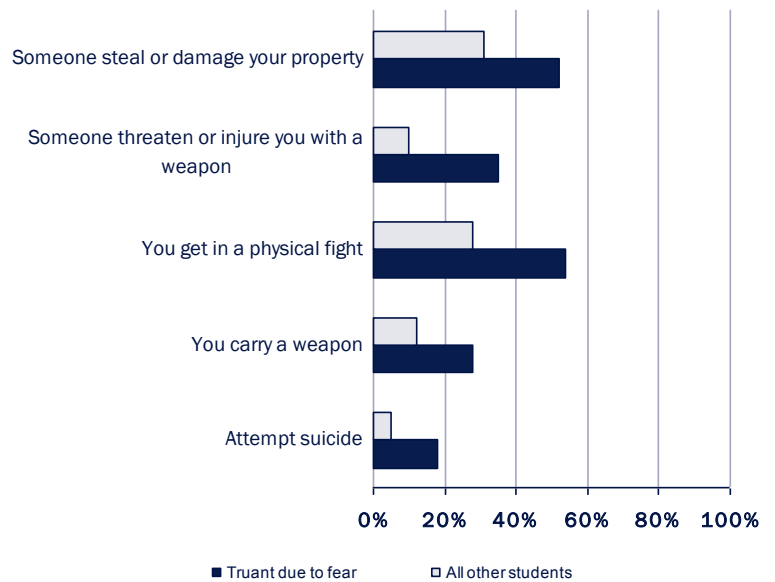
One in fourteen 6th-12th graders in Clinton and Warren Counties (7%) reported not going to school one or more days in the prior 30 days because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to school, according to a survey conducted by the Warren and Clinton County Families and Children First Councils and Mental Health and Recovery Services of Warren and Clinton Counties. Alarming, this surpasses the most recent national report of 5% (Center for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Report, 2009).

No differences were found between gender, race or family composition. The incidence, while not statistically significant, was highest in the 6th grade and then gradually decreased as the children matured.

Fear of Violence is Real

Of the individuals who have been truant due to fear, a considerable number report being threatened or injured with a weapon. In fact, they were over 3 times more likely

In the past 12 months, did ...



to have been a victim of threats or physical injury than all other students. In fact, 54% of these truant students reported being in a physical fight one or more times in the prior 12 months. Likewise, 52% have been victimized through property theft or deliberate property damage.

Weapons and Suicide

While not statistically significant, a larger percentage of these truant students reported carrying a weapon, such as a gun, knife, or club, than those who

attend school regularly (28% vs. 12%). Likewise, these truant students were more likely to report suicide attempts within the past 12 months (18% vs. 5%). The combination of weapons and suicidal behavior is of particular concern given the more lethal means used, the greater likelihood a suicide attempt will be successful. Likewise, retaliatory behavior using weapons has been observed in past incidences of school violence.

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Violence in Dating Relationships

Similarly, 1 in 14 6th-12th graders in Clinton and Warren Counties (7%) reported that their boyfriend or girlfriend hit, slapped or physically hurt them on purpose in the prior 12 months. This is slightly under the national average of 10%, yet remains a concern given nearly 550 Clinton and Warren County youth report being in an abusive dating relationship. This represents males and females across all surveyed grade levels.

Majority of Dating Violence Victims been in Physical Fights and Threatened with Weapons

While 57% of dating violence victims reported being in a physical fight one or more times in the prior 12 months, an astounding 39% reported being threatened or injured with a weapon. Additionally, 54% have been victimized through property theft or deliberate property damage.

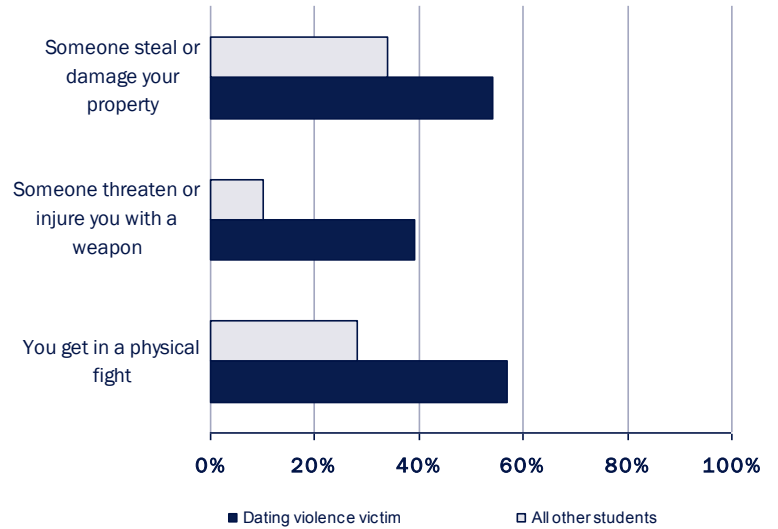
The Impact on Mental Health

The impact of being a victim of dating violence goes much further than the risk of physical injury. These experiences can produce significant psychological, social and behavioral consequences. Namely, victims of dating violence reported a considerably greater likelihood of depressive symptoms, considering suicide, and actually attempting suicide.

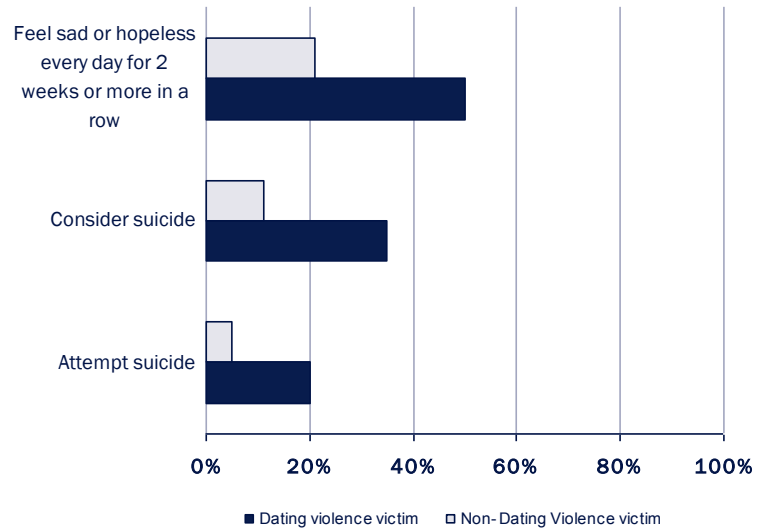
What this Means for Parents and Adults

- The community should create a culture where violence is not acceptable in any form. Educate yourself about bullying and dating violence.
- Provide support and understanding. Listen actively and without judgment.

In the past 12 months, did ...



In the past 12 months, did you ...



- Be encouraged that the youth is confiding in you. Give the youth permission to express a full range of feelings.
- Assist the youth in accessing professional help and/or exploring options through the legal system or school officials. Engage the youth in creating a plan to stay safe.
- Know the Warning Signs of depression and suicide. Reduce the risk of retaliation and/or suicide by controlling the potential means, such as locking up firearms, medications, and alcohol.