

# The Military Teen Experience

## Teen Suicidality: An Urgent Crisis

Teen suicidality is a critical public health issue. Recent research indicates rising rates of suicidal thoughts and behaviors among adolescents, making it a leading cause of death for this age group.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **suicide is the second leading cause of death among individuals aged 10-24.**

In 2021, 18.8% of high school students reported seriously considering suicide, and 8.9% attempted suicide.

From 2009 to 2019, the rate of high school students considering suicide increased by 44%, while the rate of those who attempted suicide increased by 28%.

### Military teens are no exception.

In our 2023 Military Teen Experience Survey, most respondents (60%) have never made any plans to commit suicide, but more than one third (38%) of respondents reported preparing to end their life at some point across their lifetime. A small percentage (1%) made plans to commit suicide in the past three months.

For Hidden Helpers - children of a wounded, ill, or injured service member - the problem is even greater. One in four Hidden Helpers with a visibly wounded service member reported passive suicidal ideation in the past month, while 70% of respondents with a service member with an invisible wound reported preparing to end their life at some time in their lifetime.

Now in its fourth year, the Military Teen Experience Survey continues to look closely at military teen mental health and well-being. To see our latest data and learn more about teen suicidality, military teens, and how you can help, visit [www.militaryfamily.org](http://www.militaryfamily.org).

### Risk factors for teen suicide include:



#### Mental Health

**Depression and Anxiety:** Approximately 41% of adolescents diagnosed with depression and 33% with anxiety disorders report suicidal ideation.

**Substance Abuse:** Teens with substance abuse issues are significantly more likely to attempt suicide.



#### Social Factors

**Bullying:** Victims of bullying are 2 to 9 times more likely to consider suicide than non-victims.

**Isolation:** Social isolation and lack of supportive relationships contribute to higher suicide risk.



#### Environmental Factors

**Family Dynamics:** Teens from families with a history of mental health issues, domestic violence, or substance abuse are at greater risk.

**Access to Means:** Easy access to firearms and other lethal means increases the risk of suicide attempts.



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