



Wake County Public Health Mental Health Issue Brief: Suicide

OVERVIEW

Suicide is death caused by injuring oneself with the intent to die. A **suicide attempt** is when someone harms themselves with any intent to end their life, but they do not die because of their actions.¹

The 2021 North Carolina Youth Risk Behavior Survey revealed an increase in mental and emotional challenges among NC high school students particularly among those who identify as female, lesbian, gay or bisexual. Suicidal thoughts

and behaviors increased slightly compared to 2019, with **22%** of high school students seriously considering suicide (up from 19%), **18%** making a suicide plan (up from 15%), and **10%** reporting attempted suicide (same as 2019). Notably, among LGBTQ+ students, **48%** seriously considered suicide, **36%** made a suicide plan, and **21%** attempted suicide, significantly higher than the rates among heterosexual respondents (15%, 12%, and 6% respectively).²

Each year in
Wake County:

An average of

100
people



lose their
lives to
suicide³

Approximately

718



suicide attempts⁴

WAKE COUNTY SUICIDE MORTALITY RATES

Figure 1: Suicide Mortality Rate per 100,000 Population, Wake County vs. North Carolina, 2017-2021

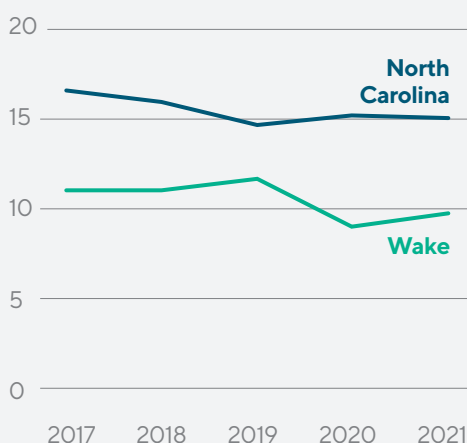


Figure 2: Suicide Mortality Rate per 100,000 Population by Age Group, Wake County 2021

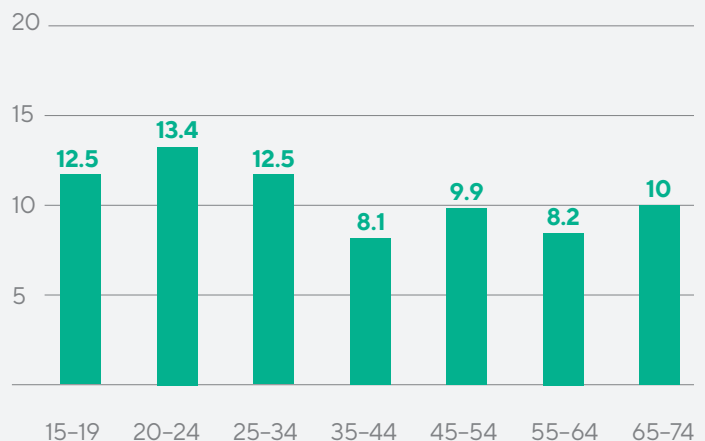
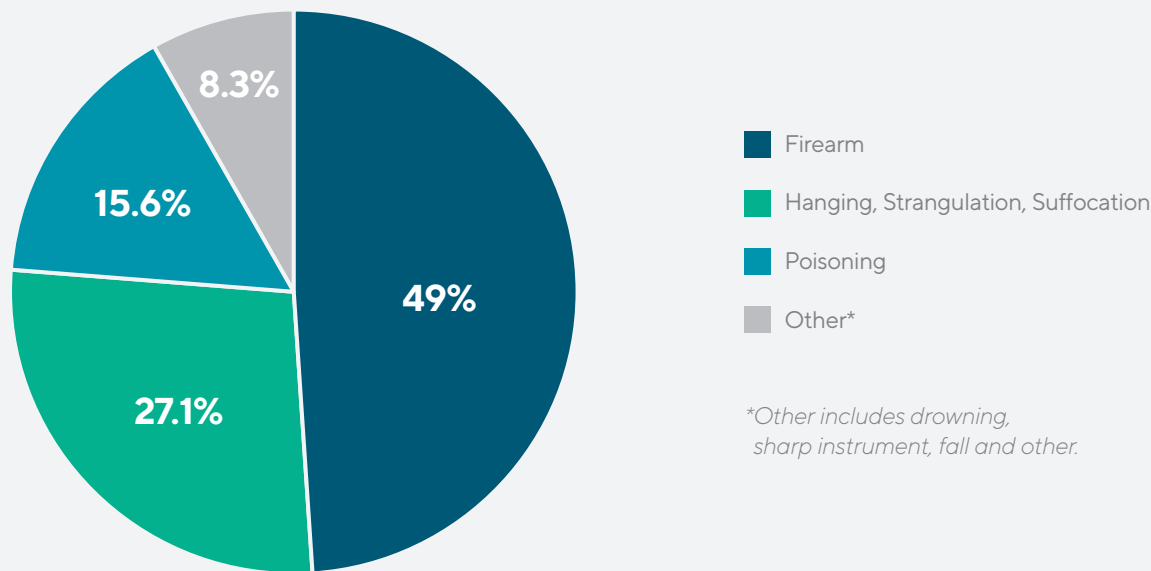


Figure 3: Suicide Mortality by Method, Wake County, 2021



WAKE COUNTY SUICIDE ATTEMPT RATES

Figure 4: Proportion of Emergency Department Visits for Suicide Attempt by Age Group, Wake County, 2022

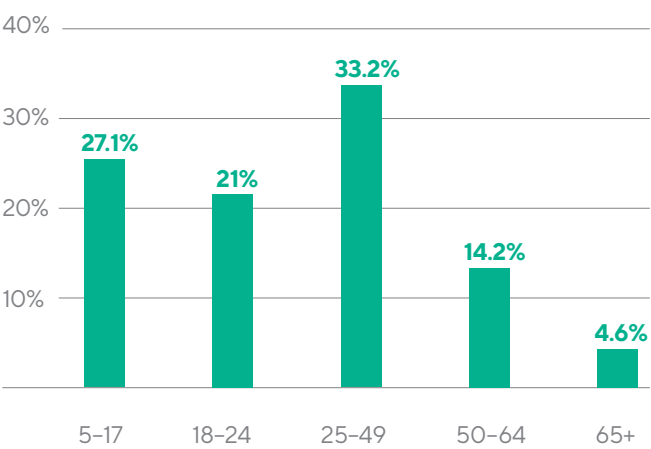
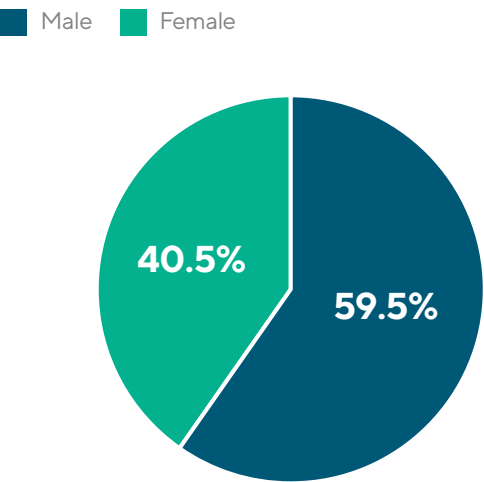


Figure 5: Proportion of Emergency Department Visits for Suicide Attempt by Sex, Wake County, 2022



25 to 49-year-olds had the highest proportion of emergency room visits for suicide attempt. Males accounted for 59.5% of these attempts.

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE:	 Extreme mood swings	 Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain, or being a burden to others	 Increasing use of alcohol or drugs
	 Acting anxious or agitated, behaving recklessly	 Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge	 Talking about wanting to die, kill oneself or feeling hopeless or having no reason to live

SUICIDE RISK FACTORS⁵

- History of depression and other mental illnesses
- Prior suicide attempt
- Current or prior history of adverse childhood experiences
- Substance use
- Feelings of hopelessness, impulsiveness, or aggressiveness
- Social isolation
- Barriers to mental health care or reluctance to seek help
- Loss of significant relationships, employment, or financial support
- Access to lethal means
- Physical illness and chronic pain

PROTECTIVE FACTORS⁵

Protective factors are conditions or attributes in an individual, family, or community that increase the health and well-being of children and families. Protective factors can reduce the risk for suicide by helping people cope with negative life events, even when those events continue over a period of time.

Relationship protective factors:

- Support from partners, friends and family.
- Strong family, peer, and community bonds that enhance resilience.
- Feeling connected to others.



Community protective factors:

- Access to effective mental health and substance abuse treatment.
- Support from healthcare providers.
- Feeling connected to school, community, and other social institutions.
- Availability of consistent and high quality physical and behavioral healthcare.



RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

- 📞 Call or text 988 (24/7)
 - 👉 988lifeline.org
-

The Trevor Project

- 📞 24/7 support
 - 👉 thetrevorproject.org
-

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

- 📞 Helpline 800-451-9682; Text 919-999-6527
 - ✉ Email helpline@naminc.org
 - 🕒 (Mon. – Fri., 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.)
 - 👉 naminc.org
-

Alliance Health Behavioral Health Crisis Line

- 📞 877-223-4617 (24/7)
-

Mobile Crisis Management (MCM) by Therapeutic Alternatives

- 📞 877-626-1772
 - 👉 mytahome.com/mobile-crisis
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Find a mental health provider at:

- 👉 findtreatment.samhsa.gov

REFERENCES

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Facts about Suicide (<https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/index.html>)

² North Carolina Youth Risk and Behavior Survey, 2019-2021

³ North Carolina Violent Death Reporting System, 2017-2021

⁴ North Carolina Disease Event Tracking and Epidemiologic Collection Tool (NCDETECT), Suicide Attempt v2, 2018-2022

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Suicide Prevention, Risk and Protective Factors (<https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/factors/index.html>)