



ILLINOIS HIGHER
EDUCATION
C E N T E R
for alcohol, other drug
& violence prevention

INSIDE

Suicidal thoughts (p.2)

Review of data regarding suicidal thoughts of college students (lifetime and past 12 months).

Suicidal actions (p.3)

Review of data regarding the suicide attempts of college students.

Assistance in dealing with suicidal thoughts and actions (p.3-5)

Review of data regarding where students are seeking assistance, what is keeping them from seeking assistance, and how effective the assistance was.

Concern for friends and willingness to attend prevention education training (p.6)

Review of data regarding students' level of concern for their friends' suicidal thoughts and actions and their willingness to participate in suicide prevention education.

Bystander intervention and risk assessment (p.7)

Review of data regarding students' willingness to help others who are at risk and allowance to be helped.

Suicide risk referral to treatment and support, summary, and resources (p.8)

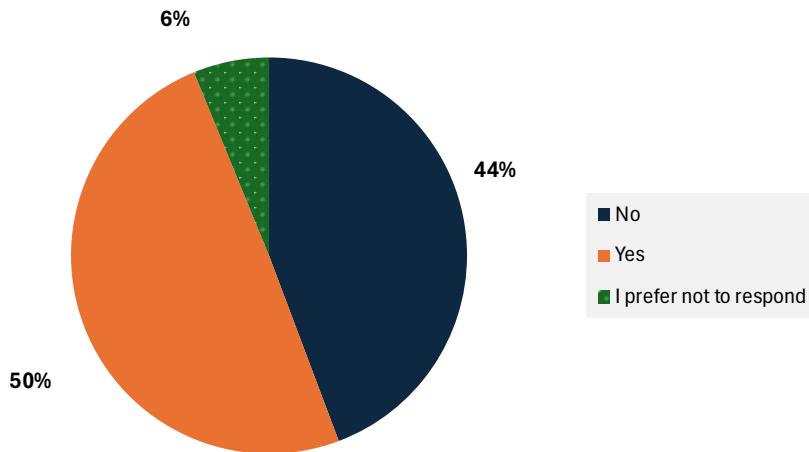
2024 IACSUB Survey Findings on Mental Health – Suicide

The Illinois Assessment of College Substance Use Behaviors (IACSUB) survey drew information from 705 participants spanning six colleges and universities across the State of Illinois. The purpose of the survey was to identify substance use behaviors among college students, such as frequency, location, and reasons for use. In this way stakeholders will be more able to identify substance use challenges in higher education and their related communities. Students were asked questions pertaining to alcohol, cannabis, and tobacco, as well as other drugs.

This brief will address what the IACSUB survey found relating to suicidal thoughts and behaviors. First this brief covers the frequency of thoughts and attempts at suicide in Illinois student populations. Then it will explore the survey's findings pertaining to assistance and treatment students received as well as how involved they would be in assisting others at risk. Finally, this brief will touch on what barriers exist that stand in the way of students seeking help for themselves or others.

Figure 6.10

Have you ever (in your lifetime) had suicidal thoughts?



Presence of suicidal thoughts (lifetime)

Out of the 646 total respondents to this question, 50% ($n=320$) students indicated they have had suicidal thoughts, and 44% ($n=286$) students reported that they have never had suicidal thoughts.

Presence of suicidal thoughts (past 12 months)

A total of 320 students gave a response to whether they experienced suicidal thoughts during the last year. Of these students, 53% ($n=170$) indicated that they had not and 46% ($n=146$) indicated that they had.

In the past 12 months, have you had suicidal thoughts?

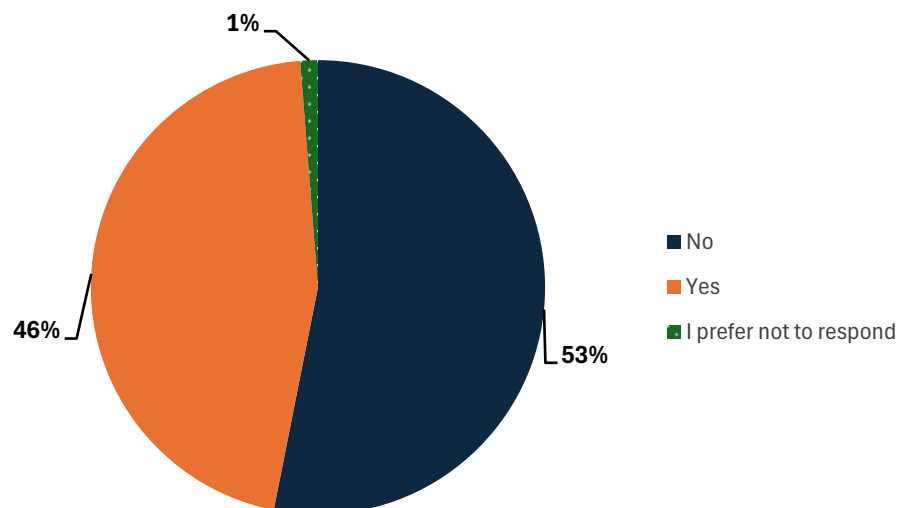
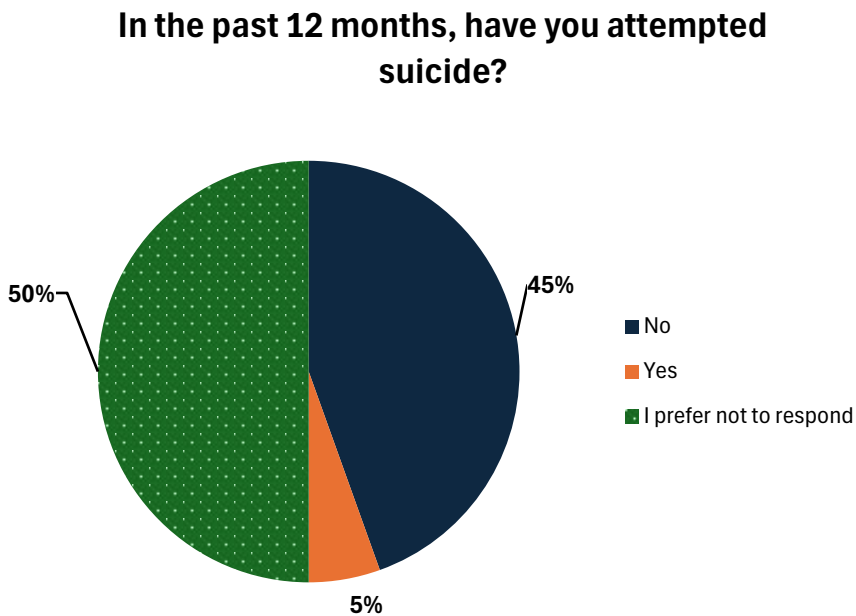


Figure 6.11

Figure 6.12



Attempted suicide (past 12 months)

When asked whether they had attempted suicide in the last year, 50% of students ($n=146$) preferred not to respond and 45% of students ($n=130$) indicated that they had not. There were 292 students who participated in this question.

Assistance for thoughts/attempts of suicide (past 12 months)

When asked whether they had sought assistance for their suicidal attempts or thoughts, 51% of students ($n=74$) stated that they had and 46% of students ($n=68$) stated that they had not. There were 146 students who participated in this question.

Figure 6.13

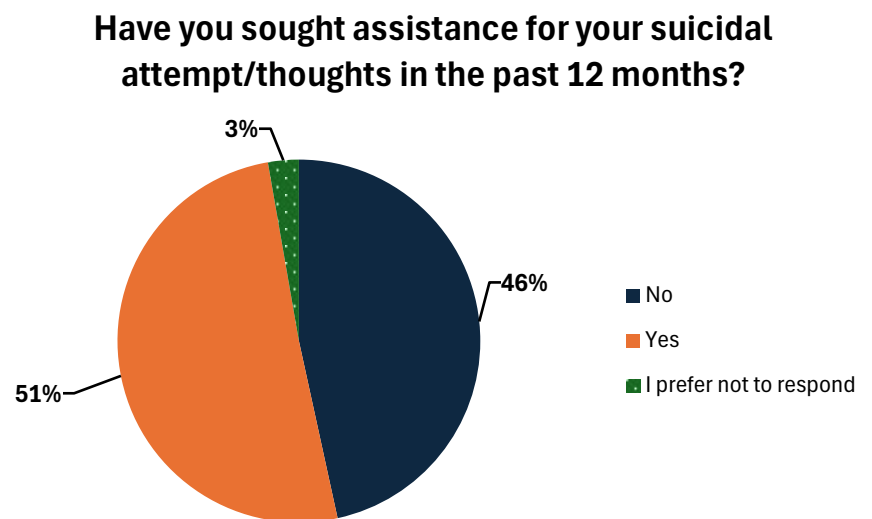
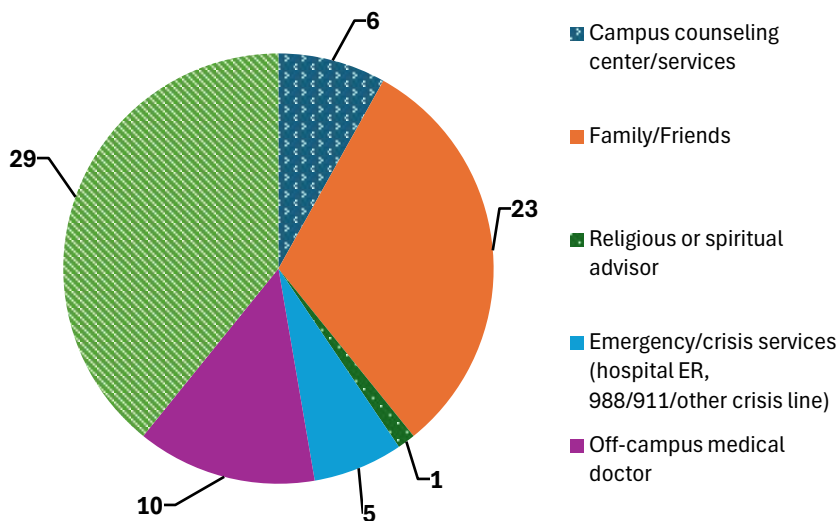


Figure 6.14

Where did you primarily seek assistance for your suicidal attempt/thoughts?



Where did students seek assistance?

When asked from where students primarily sought assistance for their suicidal attempts or thoughts, 39.2% of students ($n=29$) stated that they sought it from an off-campus mental health center. Another 31.1% ($n=23$) of students primarily sought assistance from family or friends. There were 74 students who participated in this question.

Figure 6.15

What other services did students utilize?

The 105 total responses to this question consisted primarily of: 35.2% ($n=37$ responses) was family/friends, 17.1% ($n=18$) was off-campus mental health center, and 15.2% ($n=16$) was off-campus medical doctor.

What other services did you utilize? (Check up to two)

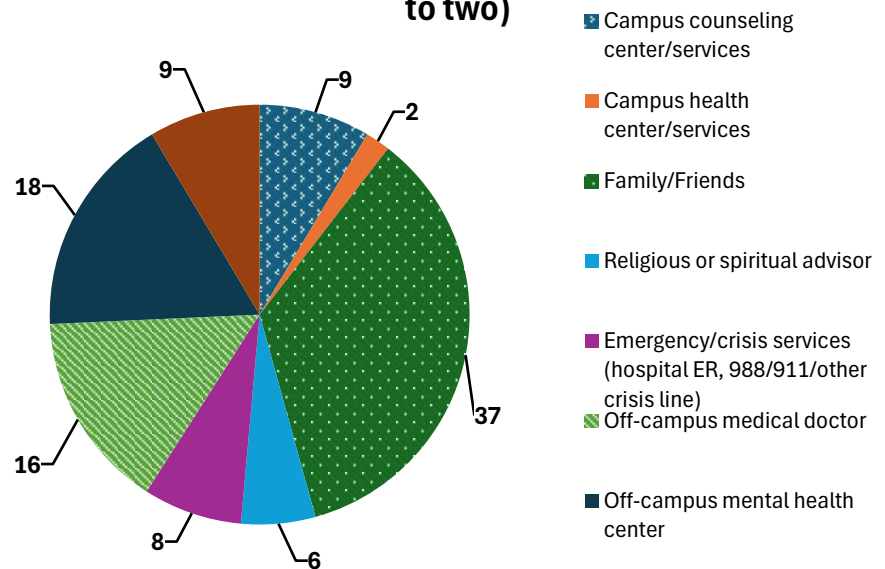
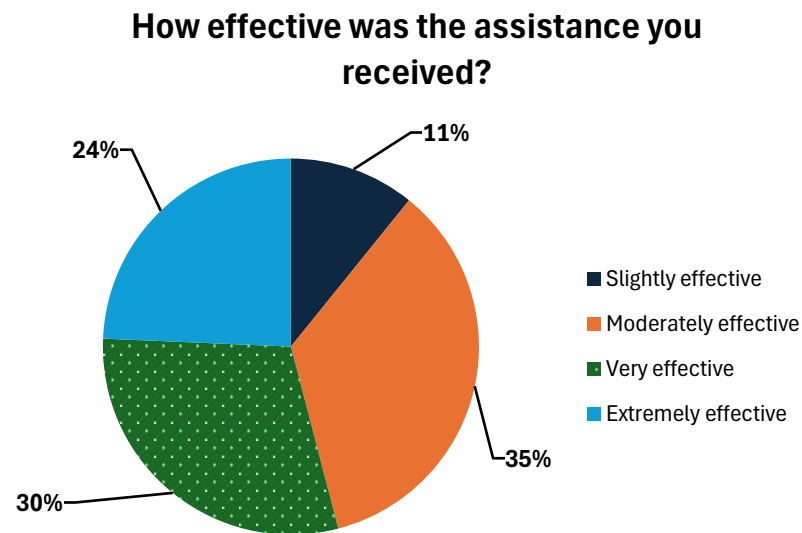


Figure 6.16



How effective was the assistance that students received?

When asked about the effectiveness of the assistance they received, 35% of students ($n=26$) stated it was moderately effective, 30% of students ($n=22$) stated it was very effective, and 24% of students ($n=18$) stated it was extremely effective. There were 74 students who participated in this question.

What prevented students from getting help?

A total of 155 responses were received in response to this question. The most frequently reported barriers to seeking assistance were: "I feel shame", "I have a fear of hospitalization", and "I am afraid people will judge me". These answers received 20% ($n=31$), 18% ($n=28$), and 14% ($n=22$) of the total respectively. Another 16% ($n=25$) indicated "I do not think I need any assistance".

Figure 6.17

What are the barriers that stop you from seeking assistance? (Check all that apply)

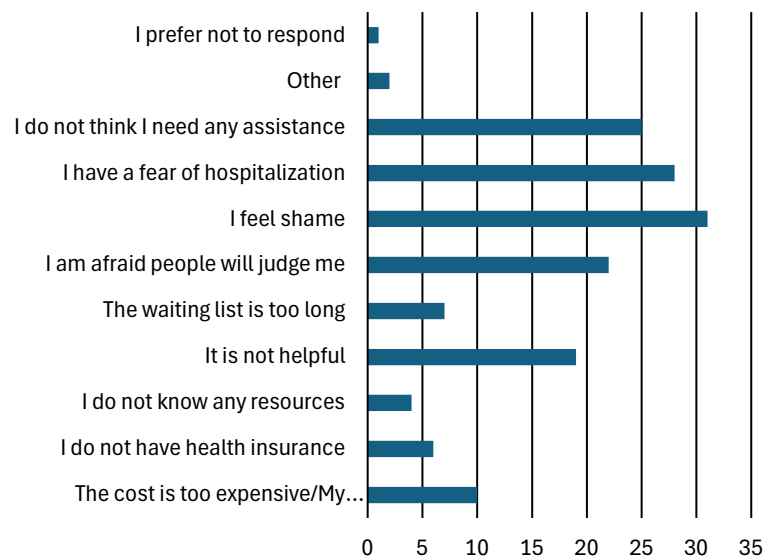
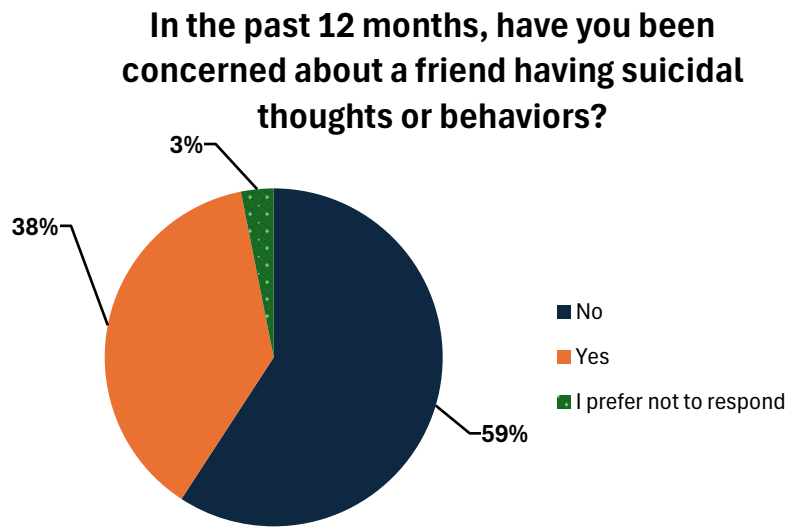


Figure 6.18



Concerns for friends who have suicidal thoughts or behaviors

When asked whether they have had concerns for a friend having suicidal thoughts or behaviors in the last year, 59% of students ($n=380$) stated that they had not and 38% of students ($n=242$) stated that they had. There were 642 students who participated in this question.

Willingness to complete an online suicide prevention training program

Of the 642 total participants who responded to this question, 50% ($n=324$) stated that they would be willing to participate in a training program like the one described; while 36% of participants ($n=228$) indicated that they were not willing to attend such training.

Figure 6.19

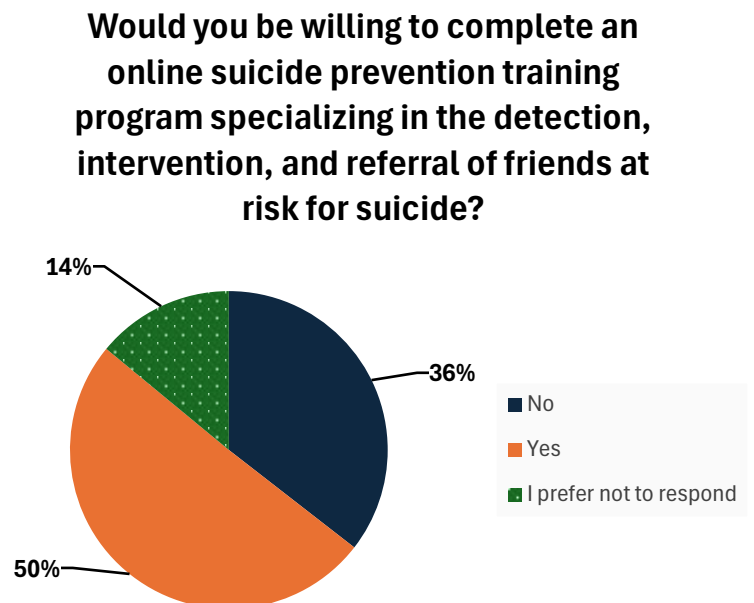
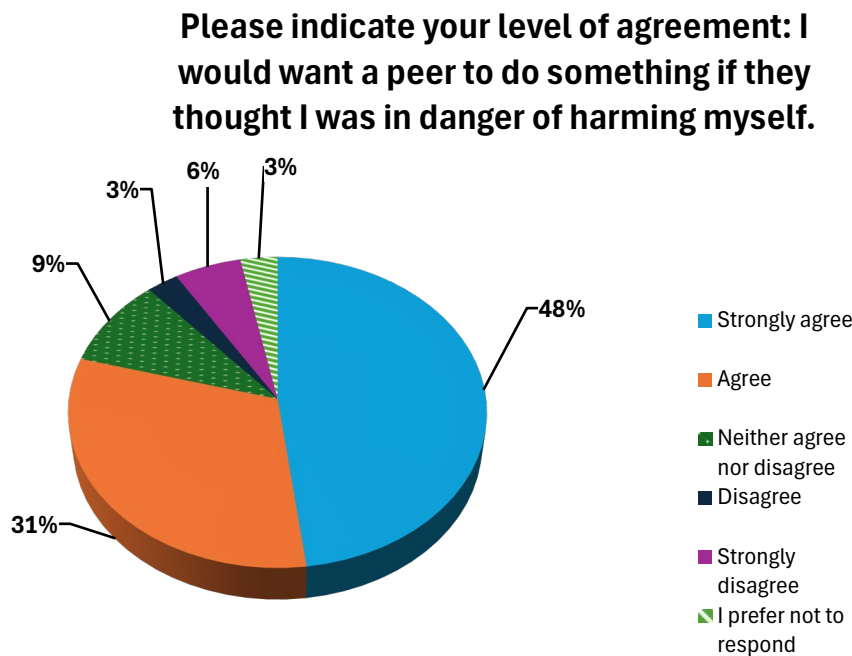


Figure 6.20



Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement:

I would want a peer to do something if they thought I was in danger of harming myself.

Of the total 642 students who responded to this question, 48% ($n=308$) stated that they strongly agree and another 31% ($n=201$) of respondents selected that they agree.

How likely are you to bring up the topic of suicide with someone you think is at risk?

Of the 642 student participants who responded to this question, 41% ($n=266$) said that they are likely to bring up the topic of suicide with someone who they think is at risk. An additional 24% ($n=152$) of participants indicated that they were very likely to bring up the topic of suicide with someone they think is at risk.

Figure 6.21

How likely are you to bring up the topic of suicide with someone you think is at risk?

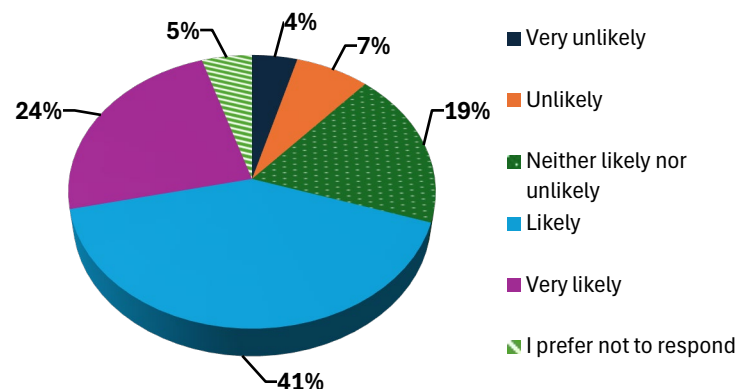
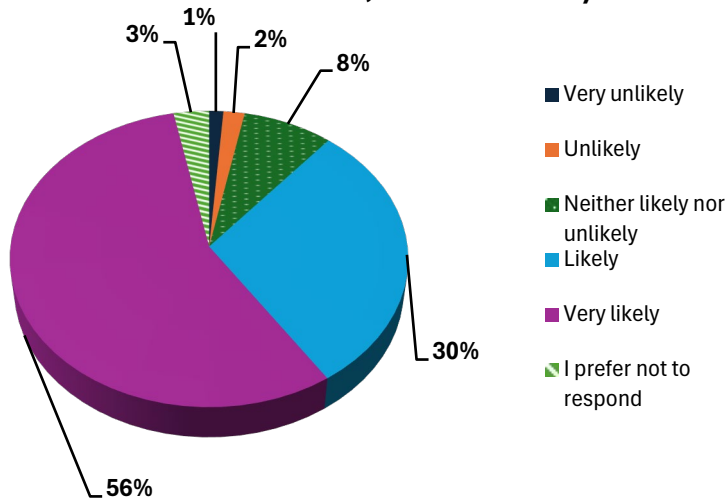


Figure 6.22

How likely are you to refer someone who tells you they are thinking of suicide to a resource? (e.g. counseling services, local crisis center, crisis hotline)



How likely are you to refer someone who tells you they are thinking of suicide to a resource? (e.g. counseling services, local crisis center, crisis hotline)

Of the 642 participants in this question, 56% ($n=361$) stated that they are very likely to refer someone who tells them they are thinking of suicide to a resource. Another 30% ($n=190$) of students who responded to this question said that they are likely to make this referral.

Summary

Roughly half of the students in the IACSUB survey expressed suicidal thoughts and about a quarter of them have had these thoughts during the last year. A small percentage of students attempted suicide in the past 12 months. Over half of those who have had thoughts or actions of suicide have sought help. When seeking treatment, students gravitated towards off-campus mental health centers and talking to their friends and family. When they sought treatment, students believed that it was effective. Most respondents in the IACSUB survey indicated they would be proactive in helping others that are experiencing suicidal thoughts or behaviors.

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Resources

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