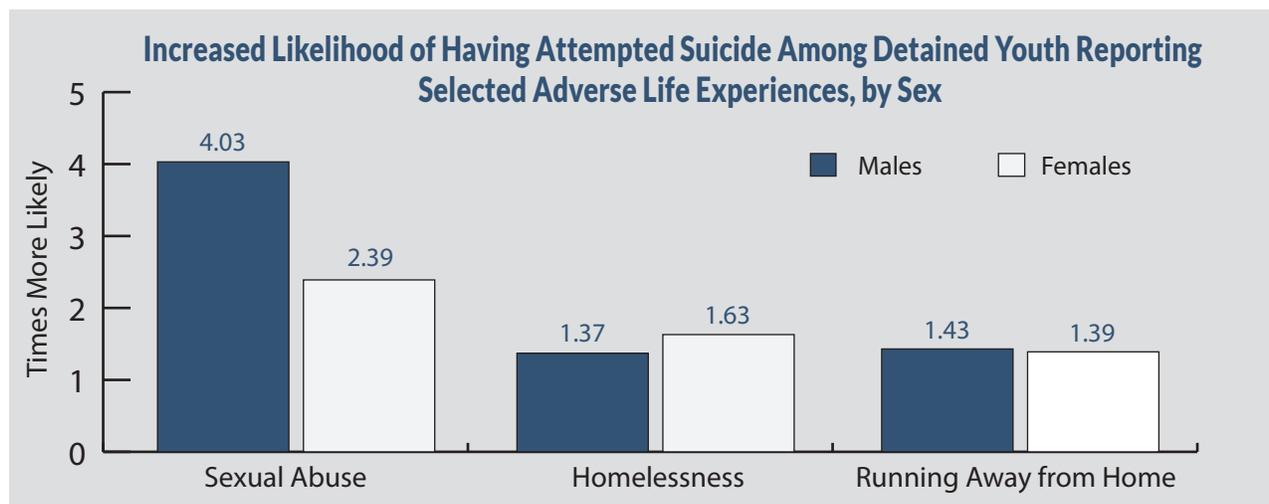




Adverse Life Experiences Among Detained Youth Linked to Greater Likelihood of Suicide Thoughts and Attempts

Adverse life experiences were associated with an increased likelihood of suicide thoughts and attempts among adolescents in a juvenile detention center, according to study results recently published in *PLOS ONE*. Researchers assessed 3,156 male and female adolescents¹ entering an Ohio juvenile detention center between 2003 and 2007² for selected adverse life experiences: sexual abuse, homelessness, running away from home, and problem household substance use. Four in 10 participants reported at least one (42.7%); 24.5% reported one, 12.7% reported two, and 5.5% reported three or four. Adolescents who reported sexual abuse and homelessness were more likely to have had suicide thoughts than those who did not report these experiences. Also, those reporting sexual abuse, homelessness, and running away from home were more likely to have attempted suicide. Males experiencing sexual abuse, homelessness, and running away from home were 4.03, 1.37, and 1.43 times more likely to have attempted suicide, and females were 2.39, 1.63, and 1.39 times more likely, respectively. Individuals who reported all four experiences were 7.8 times more likely to have attempted suicide than those experiencing none. Among all participants, 19.0% reported having thoughts of suicide and 11.9% having attempted suicide. Authors note that an understanding of risk factors and the impact of adverse life experiences on suicide behaviors is critical to implementing effective intervention programs and therapies for adolescents in correctional settings.



Source:

Bhatta, M. P., Jefferis, E., Kavadas, A., Alemagno, S. A, and Shaffer-King, P. (2014). Suicidal behaviors among adolescents in juvenile detention: Role of adverse life experiences. *PLOS ONE*, 9(2), 1-7. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0089408

Notes:

¹ Among the 3,156 adolescent participants, 22% (694) were females and 78% (2,462) were males.

² Adolescents were asked to participate in a voluntary, anonymous survey during the facility intake process. Those who agreed and completed all key questions were included in the study sample (N=3,156), which was comprised of 80% of all intakes during the study period.

Prepared by the Center for Health and Justice (CHJ) at TASC. CHJ works to build, enhance, and sustain strong and vibrant communities by promoting policies and practices that stop the cycle of drugs and crime. We conduct research and evaluations, and offer policy analysis, trainings, and technical assistance in the fields of health and justice. For more information, visit us online at www.centerforhealthandjustice.org.

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