

During adolescence there is an increased risk for suicidal thoughts and behaviors. The causes of suicide are varied and complex and there are both community and person-level prevention strategies, one of which is reducing substance use through community-based policies and practices.¹ Cannabis use during adolescence is associated with adverse health outcomes related to brain development, neurocognitive functioning, and mental health issues, including suicide.² The data in this brief are from the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), which provides point in time estimates on suicide plans and attempts, and cannabis use. The YRBS data cannot be used to infer causation – i.e. cannabis use led to planning/attempting suicide or vice versa. Schools and prevention programs can use this data to help identify at risk youth and promote prevention activities that incorporate both mental health and substance misuse.

Suicide Plan or Attempt and Current Cannabis Use

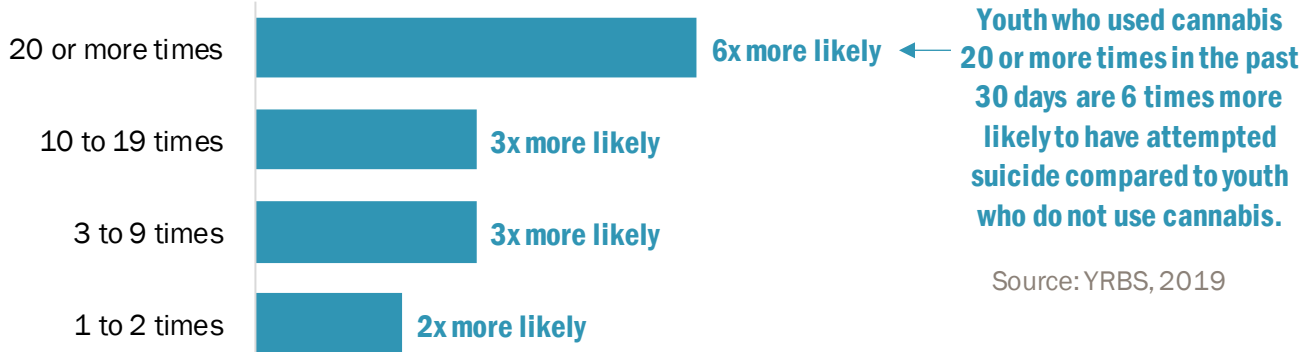
Students who have made a suicide plan or attempted suicide in the past year are two times more likely to currently use cannabis compared to the general population (planned 45%, attempt 54%, 27% all youth).³ This suggests **cannabis use is a risk factor in students with suicide risk behaviors. A majority of students who attempted suicide in the past year currently use cannabis.**

Frequency of Cannabis Use and Suicide Risk

Students who have used cannabis 1 or 2 times in the past 30 days are 2 times more likely to have attempted suicide compared to students who do not use cannabis. Students who have used cannabis 20 or more times in the past 30 days are 6 times more likely to have attempted suicide compared to students who do not use cannabis. These findings are similar in youth who have made a suicide plan. For more data, see [here](#).

Vermont students who used cannabis in the past 30 days were more likely to attempt suicide.

Frequency of Cannabis Use
in the last 30 days...



Source: YRBS, 2019

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/prevention/index.html>

² [Literature review update to the HIA: Cannabis Regulation in Vermont, 2020; https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35792818/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35792818/)

³ Current use refers to cannabis use in the past 30 days.