



For Immediate Release

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1 IN 10 AMERICAN YOUTH REPORT CARRYING A WEAPON FOR PROTECTION

Among youth carrying a weapon – 49% report struggling with anger management or feelings of depression and 25% have been bullied in the previous 30 days

Mar 22, 2018, Dexter, Mich., - Possibilities for Change, a leading provider of solutions designed to identify and reduce youth risk behaviors, today released initial findings of the 2017 data from the RAAPS risk assessment. In 2017, over 35,000 American youth, in medical practices, school-based health centers and in other agencies across the country, were screened and counseled for risk behaviors using RAAPS. The findings reveal mental health issues rank higher than drugs, alcohol, and tobacco – risks that are often more commonly associated with teens. Risk factors such as suicide and carrying a weapon for protection now rank equally high as substance use.

- 1 in 4 youth (25%) aged 13-18 reported struggling with depression
- 25% reported problems with anger management
- Approximately 1 in 10 reported anxiety (12%); being bullied (12%); or having suicidal thoughts or thoughts of self-harm (9%)

In a steadily growing trend, 12% of youth aged 13-18 reported carrying a weapon for protection. Almost half (49%) of these youth reported struggling with anger management or feelings of depression. In addition, 1 in 4 (25%) of these youth reported being bullied in the last month.

“We are seeing mental health risks among youth starting earlier, with higher percentages of youth affected, and the numbers stay steady over time,” explained Dr. Jennifer Salerno, founder of Possibilities for Change. “This is an opportunity where early risk identification and intervention from professionals working with youth can quite literally save lives.”

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recently updated their [guidelines](#) to recommend depression screening for all youth age 12 and up. *“This is an incredibly important recommendation from the AAP,” said Dr. Salerno. “Youth with mental health concerns often have multiple, inter-related risks. The RAAPS data we’re seeing reinforces the need for comprehensive risk screening to ensure professionals are identifying and counseling on all of the risks a youth is struggling with.”*

The Rapid Assessment for Adolescent Preventive Services® (RAAPS) is a standardized risk assessment & counseling system designed especially for professionals working with 9-24 year olds. The assessment is validated to identify the risks contributing most to illness and death among youth – including mental health related issues.

[Click here](#) for a detailed guide for organizations considering implementing adolescent risk assessment.

About Possibilities for Change, LLC

Possibilities for Change (P4C) was founded with the mission of improving adolescent health and saving lives through the early identification and reduction of risks and risky behaviors. P4C delivers practical, evidence-based technology solutions and training workshops to help providers, professionals and parents identify and reduce risks among youth and young adults. For more information, visit PossibilitiesforChange.com

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