

Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM)

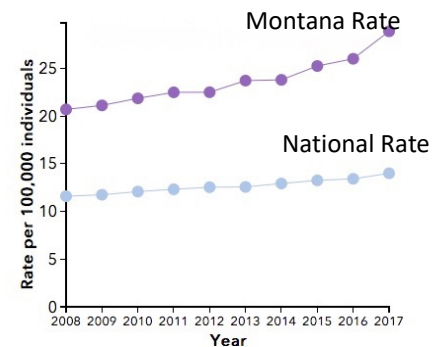
Montana State University

A School-Based Program to Support Student Well-Being & Mental Health

For Montana's youth, suicide is the leading cause of death for youth ages 15-24. The 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted by the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) found that during the 12 months before the survey:

- 9.5% of grades 9-12 students made a suicide attempt.
- 14.8% of grades 7 & 8 students made a suicide attempt.
- 18.3% American Indian students attempted suicide one or more times.

To address critical Montana youth mental health challenges, Montana State University brought the Youth Aware of Mental Health program to Montana schools.



Death by Suicide in Montana and the Nation (from <https://afsp.org/about-suicide/suicide-statistics/>)

YAM Program Goals

- Breaking down the stigma -- awareness and information about mental health
- Establishing self-help and coping strategies
- Recognizing stress and crisis
- Understanding depression and suicidal thoughts
- Helping a troubled friend
- Seeking help -- who to contact and resources available

Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM) is a classroom mental health promotion program that aims to raise mental health awareness about risk and protective factors associated with suicide, including knowledge about depression and anxiety, and enhance the skills and emotional resiliency needed to deal with stress and crisis. The adolescents learn from both a professional and from each other through a mix of cognitive, emotional, and experiential learning.

The program is taught by a YAM certified instructor and assistant in five one-hour highly interactive sessions to middle school and high school students. YAM provides an opportunity for students to delve into relative topics through active discussion and role-play. These activities allow students to find solutions to difficult situations and common stressors in a fun and nonthreatening environment.

YAM in Montana & Idaho

9,270 students participated

44 certified YAM Facilitators trained

34 participating schools

4 certified YAM Trainers

88% of youth surveyed said their schools should teach mental health