

Key results

What is the prevalence of child and adolescent victimization in Poland?

- The majority of children and adolescents (79%) have experienced abuse or neglect at least once in their lives.
- In the year preceding the study, this was reported by 52% of the respondents.

What types of violence do children and adolescents experience?

The most commonly reported forms of violence were:

- peer and sibling victimization (66%)
- abuse by close adults (32%)
- noncontact sexual victimization (26%)

Furthermore, 23% of children and adolescents experienced emotional neglect, 20% experienced parentification, and 14% witnessed violence at home. 8% experienced contact sexual victimization, and the same percentage experienced physical neglect.

Who experiences violence most frequently?

Girls more often than boys reported experiencing:

- abuse by close adults (36% vs 29%),
- witnessing domestic violence (18% vs 11%),
- experiencing physical neglect (9% vs 7%),
- and sexual victimization both without physical contact (34% vs 17%) and with physical contact (13% vs 3%).

Urban residents more often than rural residents reported experiencing peer and sibling victimization (70% vs 63%) and noncontact sexual victimization (29% vs 23%).

Who are the most common perpetrators of violence against children and adolescents?

- Parents, specifically fathers (39%) and mothers (43%), are the most common perpetrators of psychological (35% and 31%, respectively) and physical (39% and 43%, respectively) abuse by close adults.
- Peers outside the family are the most common perpetrators of psychological peer violence (87%), bullying (76%), and physical peer violence (54%).
- The most frequent perpetrators of sexual victimization are males.

What is the scale of self-harming behaviors among children and adolescents?

One in five adolescents engages in self-harming behaviors (22%), and one in eleven (9%) attempts suicide. Girls more often than boys reported both self-harm (29% vs 14%) and suicide attempts (14% vs 5%).

What are the most significant risk factors for violence?

Among the assessed risk factors for violence, the most significant are alcohol abuse by a household member, mental illness of a household member, and drug use by a household member.

Do those experiencing violence engage in self-harming behaviors?

Research results indicate an association between experiencing violence and engaging in self-harming behaviors. Peer and sibling violence was shown to be the strongest studied risk factor for self-harming behaviors, while experiencing contact sexual victimization was the strongest risk factor for suicide attempts.

Who do children and adolescents turn to in difficult situations?

Children and adolescents can rely on support of:

- mothers (65%),
- peers outside the family (64%),
- fathers (45%),
- siblings or other children within the family (38%),
- other adults within the family (26%),
- psychologists or counselors (13%),
- and teachers (11%).

However, 8% of children and teenagers admit to not having anyone to turn to in difficult situations.

What are the most significant changes in the prevalence of victimization in children and adolescents in recent years?

The percentage of individuals who have experienced physical peer and sibling victimization increased (from 41% in 2013 to 48% in 2023), as did the percentage experiencing psychological peer and sibling victimization (from 28% in 2013 to 43% in 2023). Conversely, the percentage of individuals experiencing physical abuse by close adults decreased (from 33% in 2018 to 24% in 2023).