

Data Insights:

School-Related Conversations Across The Trevor Project's Crisis Services

August 2021

What we're exploring

As a new school year begins, The Trevor Project is reflecting on the LGBTQ youth who reached out to talk about the 2020-21 academic year. To better understand the challenges they faced this past year and to improve our services, we analyzed our data from the 2020-21 school year alongside our data from the 2019-2020 school year.¹ Our insights include important findings about academic performance and mental health, which have implications for The Trevor Project as well as for other organizations that are focused on youth wellbeing.

What we've discovered

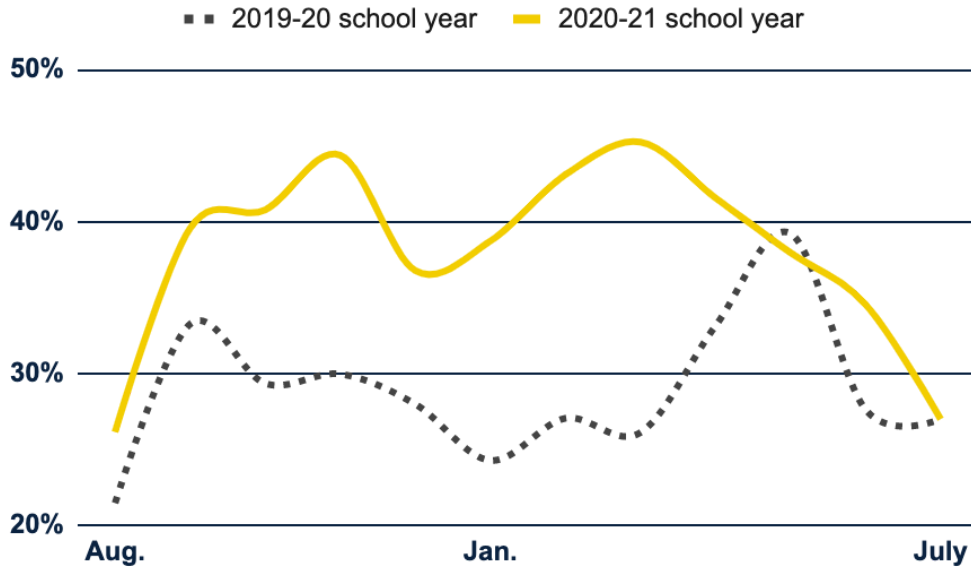
When talking about school this year, youth shared academic performance concerns at rates significantly higher than in the previous year.² One set of concerns was about keeping pace with the material, which grew 1.8X and included key words such as *catching* or *keeping up*.³ A second set of concerns were about grades, which grew 1.4X and included words like *fail*, *pass*, and *graduation*.⁴ A third concern area was homework, which grew 1.4X as well. This included conversations about assignments and studying.⁵ March 2021, a year into the pandemic, was a peak point for all these concerns. In that month, terms related to keeping or catching up were over 3X higher and terms related to homework and grades were both 1.7X higher than the same month a year before.

2020-21 academic performance compared to 2019-20



Academic performance concerns were consistently higher in the 2020-21 school year compared with 2019-20. When looked at collectively, key words and phrases related to academic performance quickly exceeded the rates of the prior academic year. By October 2021, the rate was 10 percentage points higher than the same period the prior year. Seven months into the 2020-21 school year saw rates more than 1.5X the prior year’s rate in the same month before declining as the academic year ended.

Academic performance key words



Nearly half of school-related conversations now include mental health topics. Mental health keywords included *depression, anxiety, fear, worry, loneliness, stress, upset, and isolation*. From November 2020-April 2021, these terms came up in school-related conversations over 1.25X as frequently as the same months the prior school year.

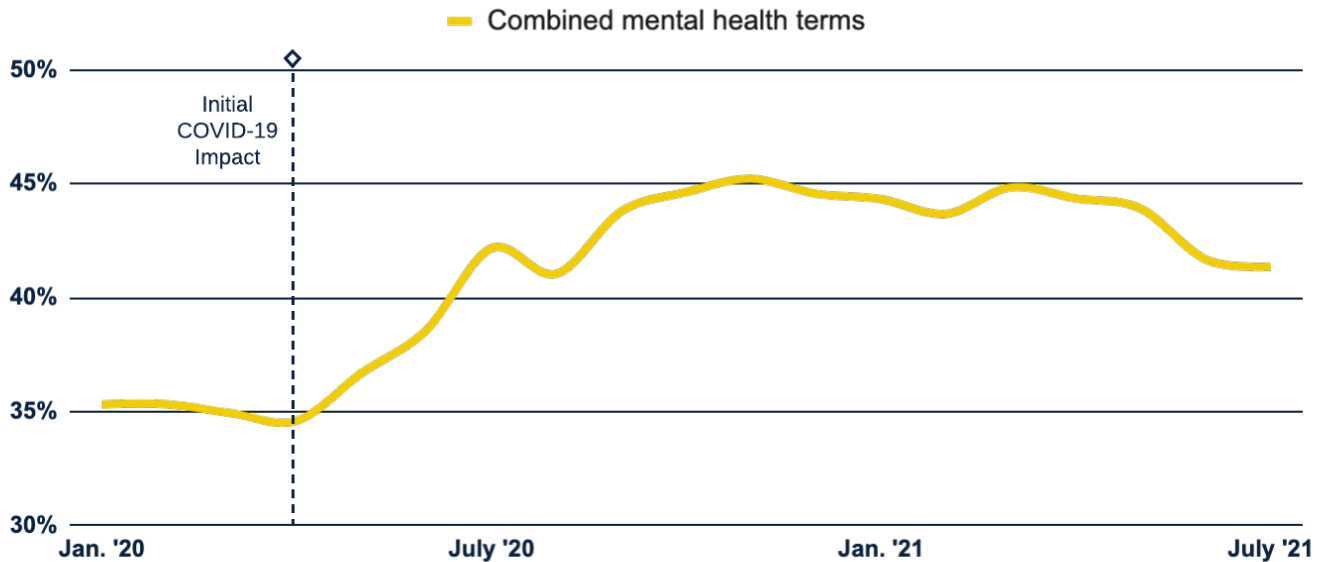
More than 4 out of every 9



school conversations included mental health terms

Since the pandemic started, mental health topics are more frequent. While youth have regularly discussed mental health in school-related conversations with Trevor counselors, these concerns grew and sustained a consistently higher rate throughout the 2020-21 school year. Between April and May 2020, this rate grew 1.5X.

Mental health terms in school conversations



What's next

The Trevor Project continues to expand and improve our crisis services by understanding the issues that LGBTQ youth reach out to discuss. These insights enable us to further equip our counselors to support youth as they navigate a new school year with ongoing pandemic ramifications. Trevor will continue to analyze trends around school conversations to meet youth where they are no matter how the academic year evolves.

1. Youth statements from Trevor's Digital conversations and Trevor Lifeline counselor summaries were examined to find conversations that included school topics. Key words and phrases from these school-related conversations were then compared to the prior academic year to see what had changed.
2. Academic performance was defined by the use of one or more keywords or phrases related to school work and outcomes. This list included items like the following as well as common permutations of them: keep up, catch up, behind, grades, GPA, failing, graduate, pass, homework, assignment, finals, test, and exam.
3. Key words and phrases included the following: catch up, keep up, catching up, keeping up, and behind.
4. Key words and phrases included the following: grade, grades, GPA, failed, failing, failure, graduate, graduation, and pass.
5. Key words and phrases included the following: homework, assignments, school work, paper due, test, quiz, and study.