



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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### **STUDY: ONE IN TEN JUVENILE DETAINEES THOUGHT OF SUICIDE**

WASHINGTON – Approximately one in ten juvenile detainees contemplated suicide within the six months prior to entering detention, according to a new bulletin from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Significantly more females than males had thought about suicide.

In *Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors Among Detained Youth*, researchers present data from a long-term study of the thoughts, behaviors and psychiatric disorders of 1,829 juvenile detainees in Cook County, Ill. The authors found that 11 percent had previously attempted suicide, and more than one-third thought a lot about death or dying in the six months prior to entering detention. Fewer than half of detainees with recent thoughts of suicide had told anyone about their suicidal thoughts.

Previous research has shown that past suicide attempts are a powerful predictor of future attempts and detained youth are at greater risk for suicide than youth in the general population. In this bulletin, the authors conclude that juvenile detention facilities should screen for suicide risk and increase psychiatric services.

This bulletin is the fourth in a series on the findings of the Northwestern Juvenile Project, a longitudinal study of the mental health needs and outcomes of juvenile detainees.

**TITLE:** *Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors Among Detained Youth*

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