



Central East (HHS Region 3)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Growing Crisis:

Suicide Death Rate, Attempts and Injuries among Black Youth

"Data show that it is a myth that Black youth do not die by suicide"

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Recent Findings ► Black Youth

Lethal means
when attempting suicide
has **INCREASED** with
Black Male Youth



Suicide Attempts
went up

73%

1991 - 2017



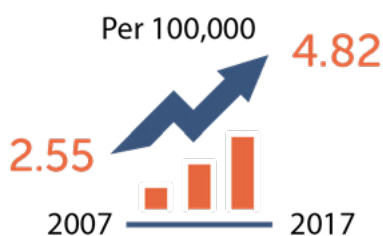
Injuries from Attempts
went up

122%

1991 - 2017



Suicide death rate among Black youth is increasing faster than any other racial/ethnic group:



Black Males ages 5-11
are **more likely** to die by
suicide compared to their
White peers





The Challenge

Limited research on:

- Reason(s) for rise in suicide deaths, attempts and injuries among Black youth
- Effective suicide prevention strategies for Black youth



What do we know?

Key risk factors for suicidal thoughts and behaviors for youth in general include:

- The presence of a psychiatric disorder (e.g., depression, anxiety)
- Sex (with females being more likely to attempt suicide and males being more likely to die from suicide), LGBTQ+/ SGL identity
- Prior suicide attempts
- Being a victim of bullying and bullying others
- Socioeconomic factors
- Impaired family functioning
- Exposure to suicide (including a family member or celebrity)
- Access to lethal means

In addition to the above risks, other possible contributing factors may include but are not necessarily limited to:

- Chronic stress/trauma associated with:
 - Poverty
 - Community violence
 - Racial discrimination
- Media and technology
- Lack of access to behavioral and physical health care
- Lack of evidence-based culturally-grounded suicide prevention programs and strategies
- Access to means to die by suicide

What can we do?

- Screen for depression in primary care settings
- Psychosocial interventions shown to be effective or probably effective in the treatment of Black youth:
 - Multi-systemic therapy (MST)
 - Peer resilient treatment for traumatic stress
 - Cognitive behavioral treatment (CBT)
- Improve the mental health service utilization among Black youth
- Design, implement, treat and evaluate existing and new suicide interventions targeting specific risk factors among Black youth
- Encourage families and loved ones to check in with their children
- Encourage more research on why the rate of suicide deaths, attempts and injuries are rising in Black youth

Source:

Lindsey MA, Sheftall AH, Xiao Y, Joe S. Trends of Suicidal Behaviors Among High School Students in the United States: 1991–2017. *Pediatrics*. 2019; 144(5):e20191187

Resources:

Suicide Prevention Resource Center
<https://www.sprc.org/populations/blacks-african-americans>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800 273-8255)
<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Division of Violence Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/suicideTechnicalPackage.pdf>
2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Results https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/dear_colleague/2018/dcl-061418-YRBS.html