

SUICIDALITY

Suicidality is the likelihood of an individual completing suicide. It may be **countable**, a fatality which is an instance of suicide or **uncountable**, the tendency of a person to commit suicide. Suicidality is composed of suicidal behaviors, and suicidal ideation, thinking about or being preoccupied with thoughts of **suicide**, which is the action of killing oneself.

Statistics

- African American women are more likely than African American men to attempt suicide.
- Firearms are the predominate method of suicide, followed by suffocation.
- Suicide is the 16th leading cause of death for blacks of all ages and the 3rd leading cause of death of black males between the ages of 15 and 24.
- Blacks men and women have similar rates of suicidal behavior to whites; including serious thoughts of suicide, and making suicide plans, attempting suicide, and needing medical attention for attempted suicide.

Associated Risks

- Mental Illness
- History of depression
- Systemic Racism
- Sexism
- Sexual Abuse
- Trauma
- Incarceration
- Alcohol/Drugs
- Residential mobility
- Lack of resources
- Socio-economic factors
- Distrust/ misdiagnosis of healthcare professionals (Cultural Competence)

Steps to Preventing Suicide

- General suicide awareness education
- School and Community Programs
- Screenings
- Access to crisis centers
- Hotlines
- Peer support programs
- Counseling and clinical intervention
- Postvention (intervention with family/friends/community after a suicide takes place)
- Targeting individuals at highest risk
- Eliminate the Stigma
- Improving access to mental health services
- Reducing access to lethal means among those in suicidal crisis

Questions to ask Your Provider

- Have you treated other African Americans?
- Have you received training in cultural competence or on African American mental health?

- How do you see our cultural backgrounds influencing our communication and my treatment?
- How do you plan to integrate my beliefs and practices in my treatment?

Resources

- Findtreatment.samhsa.gov
- National Treatment Referral Helpline- 1(800)662 -4357
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline- 1(800)273-8255

While it is true Prayer changes things, seeking professional help is necessary!

“The stoicism African Americans are taught only leads to denial, isolation, and unspoken depression. Essentially, our inability to speak our pain is killing us.” –Terrie M. Williams

References

<https://www.sprc.org/news/addressing-suicide-among-black-americans>

<https://thebodyisnotanapology.com/magazine/on-wanting-to-leave-suicide-and-the-black-community>

[Williams, T.M., \(2009\). *Black Pain: It Just Looks Like We're Not Hurting*. New York, NY: Scribner](#)

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/toolstemplates/>

<https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Diverse-Communities/African-Americans>

<https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov>

<https://www.samsha.gov/>

Yolanda Scipio-Jackson BSN, RN
New Jersey Integrated BNA