


PROTECTING OUR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION
 DURING COVID-19:
 LESSONS LEARNED AND WAYS FORWARD


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 KEYNOTE--SPCLI



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Agenda

Overview

- What we know about suicide
- COVID-19: What did we learn about prevention
- Where do we go from here?
- Resources




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CULTURE TRENDS

Language Matters

Avoid	Say
• Commit suicide	• Died by suicide
• Successful/failed attempt	• Attempted suicide



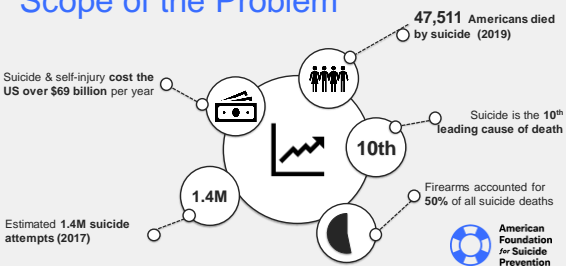
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ABOUT SUICIDE




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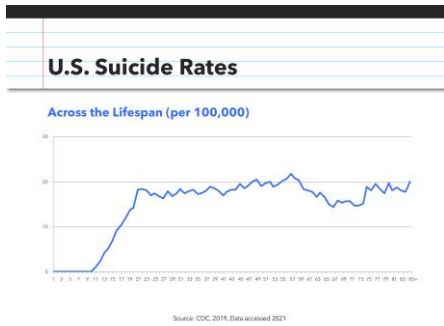
Scope of the Problem



- Suicide & self-injury cost the US over \$69 billion per year
- Estimated 1.4M suicide attempts (2017)
- 47,511 Americans died by suicide (2019)
- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death
- Firearms accounted for 50% of all suicide deaths




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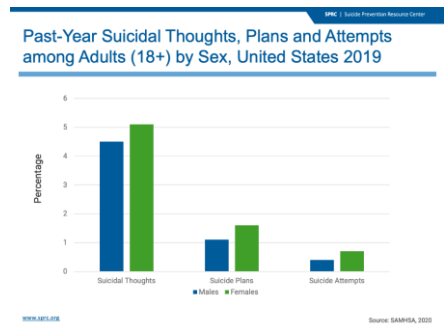
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Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2019)

- 8.9% of youth grades 9-12 reported that they had made at least one suicide attempt in the past 12 months.
- Female students attempted almost twice as often as male students (11% vs. 6.6%).
- Approximately 2.5% of all students reported making a suicide attempt that required treatment by a doctor or nurse. For those requiring treatment, rates were highest for multiple race students (4.1%).



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COVID-19




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- Closing of schools
- Changes to work, home
- "Social distancing"
- "Essential workers"
- Mask wearing
- Uncertainty
- Illness/"Long COVID"
- Death and Loss



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What would happen to suicide rates? Mental health? Prevention efforts? Clinical support?

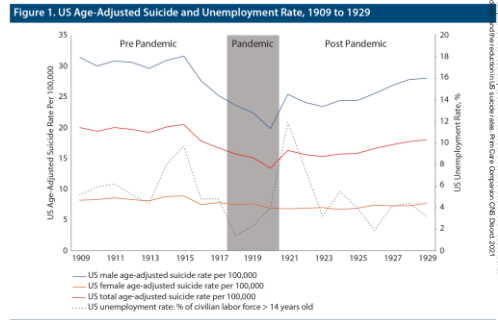


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Are there past events we can look to so we can understand potential impact?




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Today's pandemic...

- Telehealth, including for mental health, became more widely available.
- Use of technology increased overall
- NSPL and other help lines were widely promoted; new resources developed



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So what has happened to the suicide rate? (at least so far...)



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Suicide and COVID-19

CDC data is pointing to overall suicide mortality rate going down in 2020* (based on currently available data).

This follows an overall downward trend seen in 2019 data.

Early data for 2020 shows as much as a 5.6% decrease from 2019.


More analysis is needed.



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But...

- This doesn't appear true for all groups, especially Black and Latinx persons.
- Some data suggests that ER visits for suicide attempts in teens increased during 2020.
- Calls to crisis lines increased during pandemic (with reports of depression and anxiety).
- Pandemic disruption/impact is not over or yet fully understood.



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But I heard suicide rates were going up during the pandemic?




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Suicide in 2020

Provisional 2020 suicide death data from the CDC show that deaths by suicide in the U.S. declined from 47,511 to 44,834 (5.6%) between 2019 and 2020.

Suicide reportedly moved from the tenth to the eleventh leading cause of death as COVID-19 became the third leading cause of death in 2020.




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Suicide in 2020

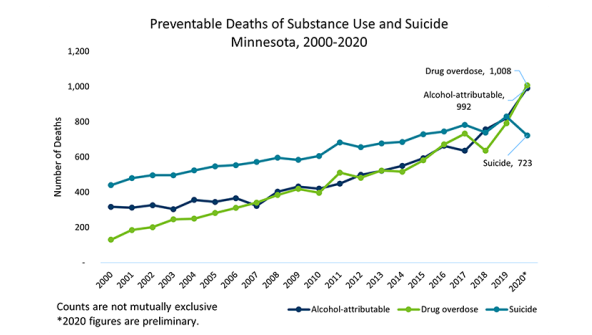
Early data from all reporting states show that overall suicide rates declined or saw no change in 2020 compared with the previous year.

There are concerning signals of increasing suicide rates in some non-White populations during the pandemic.

- Research shows there can be a time lag in the manifestation of distress even months after the acuity of a traumatic or stressful period.




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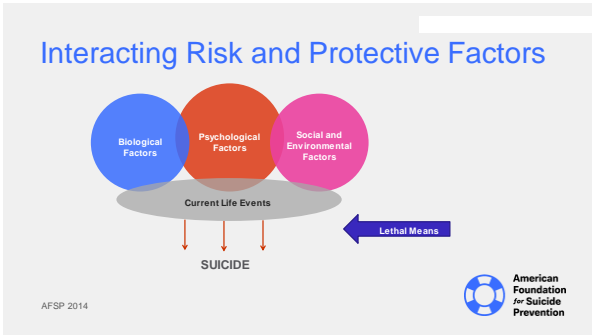


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Suicide is complex.
It is related to, and distinct from mental health.



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Risk Factors for Suicide

WHY DOES SUICIDE OCCUR


- Mental health conditions
- Childhood trauma/ACEs
- Genes- stress/mood
- Previous SA
- Fam Hx suicide
- Parent SA/MHC/Addiction
- Shame/despair
- Access to lethal means
- Suicide exposure
- Inflexible thinking, perfectionism
- Precipitating event (disrupted relationship, bullying)
- LGBTQ rejection
- Relationship discord



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Suicide ideation is different from suicide attempts, suicide mortality.

At a population level, mental health conditions do not tell us enough about suicide rates.




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Mental Health and Suicide Risk

80-90% of those who died by suicide experienced a mental health condition (though may not have been diagnosed) before their death.

Many people struggle with their mental health and will not ever attempt suicide, or die by suicide.

Of those who have survived a suicide attempt suicide, 90% do not go on to die by suicide.



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Mental Health Conditions in America

- 1 in 4 Americans have a MHC (lifetime)
- 50% MHC onset by age 14; 75% by age 24
- <50% receive treatment

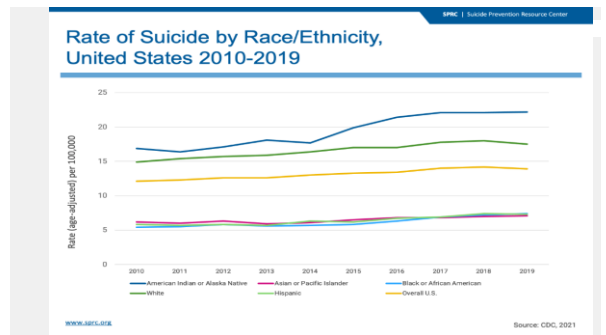


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We didn't all have the same experience during the pandemic.



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Staying connected, messages about mental health, and promoting tx and help lines likely made a difference for many.




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Mental Health Matters.
Means Matter.
Access to Tx Matters.
Safe Messaging Matters.
Connections Matter.




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Where do we go from here?



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Suicide prevention efforts cannot slow down.



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Where should we focus our attention?

- Proactive mental health/sp messaging during/beyond pandemic
- Invest in crisis support and promote help-lines
- Improving early identification, treatment availability, telehealth
- Attention to at-risk groups, groups where rate is increasing.
- Train others on suicide prevention
- Supporting public health policy
- Staying the course...providing hope



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At risk groups disproportionately impacted COVID-19

- Black, Latinx, American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and other BIPOC communities
- Older adults
- Frontline workers, including healthcare professionals and other essential workers
- LGBTQ individuals
- Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families
- Individuals who lack basic needs such as food, housing, and financial security



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Impact on Helpers

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What allows you to stay hopeful?

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COMPASSION FATIGUE

"The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet."

— Dr. Naomi Rachel Remen

• EMPOWERSOCIALWORKER •

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TEND TO YOUR MENTAL HEALTH GARDEN



#mentalhealth #afspforall

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Taking care of your mental health

- Staying connected
- Getting help and support
- Tending to the health basics
- Staying focused on what you can control
- Staying attuned to your own mental health needs
- Taking things as they come, while steadying for the longer term.

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What we can do for our kids

- Take care of your own mental health
- Have honest, candid, supportive conversations with your children
- Stick to routines as much as possible
- Help them stay connected
- Ensure your children get physical exercise and spend time outdoors
- Enlist the help of a mental health professional when needed
- Take their needs seriously

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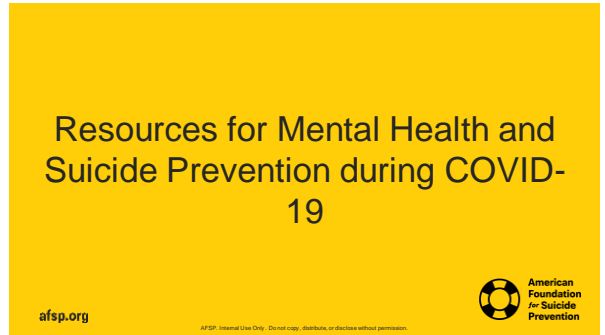
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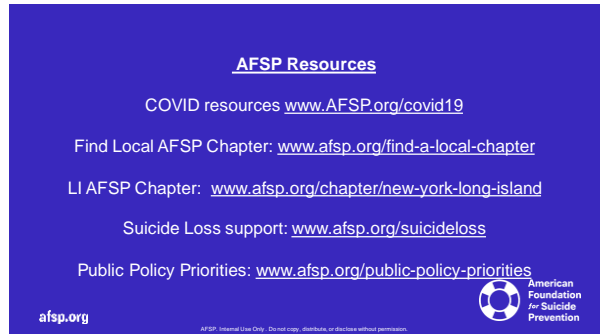
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SUPPORT



**Suicide Prevention
 Lifeline:
 Call 1-800-273-TALK
 Crisis Text Line:
 Text TALK to 741741**

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SAVE THE DATE


WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY FACEBOOK LIVE

Join us for an all-day virtual event featuring a #RealConvo Concert, Ask Dr. Jill, and panel conversations on mental health and suicide prevention.

12 - 8PM ET • SEPTEMBER 10





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