Suicide Prevention or Life Promotion? Disrupting the Narrative of Youth Suicide in 2023

Jonathan B. Singer, PhD, LCSW Loyola University Chicago, School of Social Work Social Work Podcast

Why I do this



If we want a world where people feel like their lives are worth living, we can't have a society that says that some lives are worth more than others.

Definitions

Terminology	Definition
Non-suicidal self injury	Deliberate direct destruction or alteration of body tissue without a conscious suicidal intent. (e.g., "She cut herself but had no intention to end her life.")
Non-suicidal morbid ideation	Thoughts about one's death without suicidal or self-injurious content. (e.g., "He wondered if the roof would collapse on him tonight.")
Suicidal ideation	Thoughts of ending one's life
Suicide attempt	Any non-fatal potentially injurious behavior with intent to end one's life. A suicide attempt may or may not result in injury. (e.g., "She took seven ibuprofen hoping she would die.")
Aborted suicide attempt	Individual stops themselves before making an attempt
Interrupted suicide attempt	Individual is stopped by an outside force (person or circumstance)
Suicide	The act of intentionally ending one's life.

Preferred and problematic terms

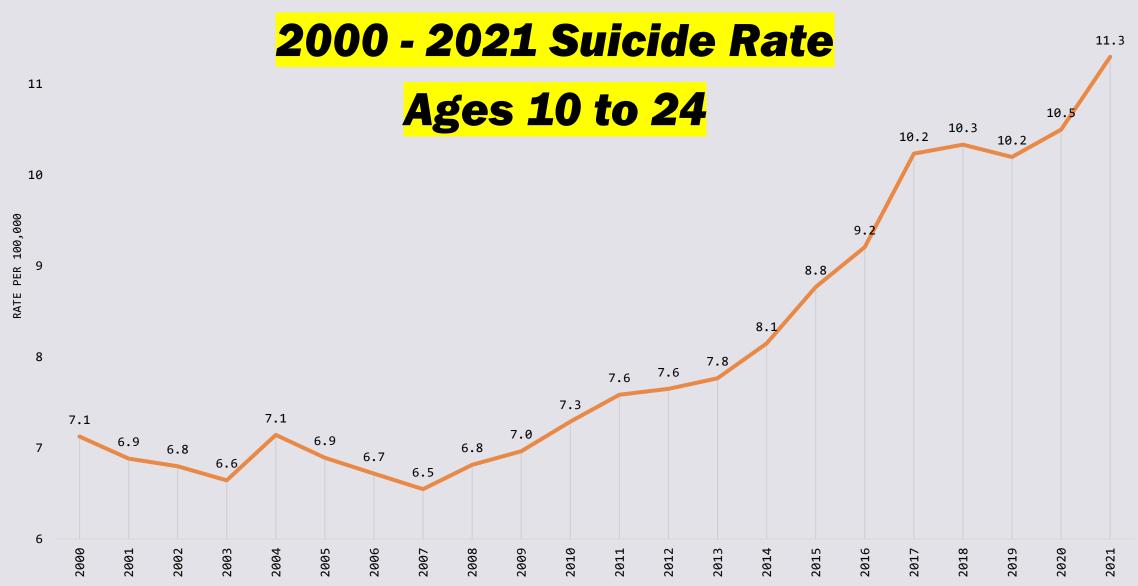
Problematic	Why?	Preferred
Failed / successful suicide	Frames living as a failure and dying as a success	Suicide attempt / suicide
Non-serious vs. serious attempt	Judging the severity diminishes the pain that the person who made the attempt is experiencing. If distinctions are necessary, describing the lethality is preferred.	Low-lethality vs. high lethality
Committed suicide	The term "committed" has negative connotations, such as committed murder or committed rape.	Died by suicide / killed themselves



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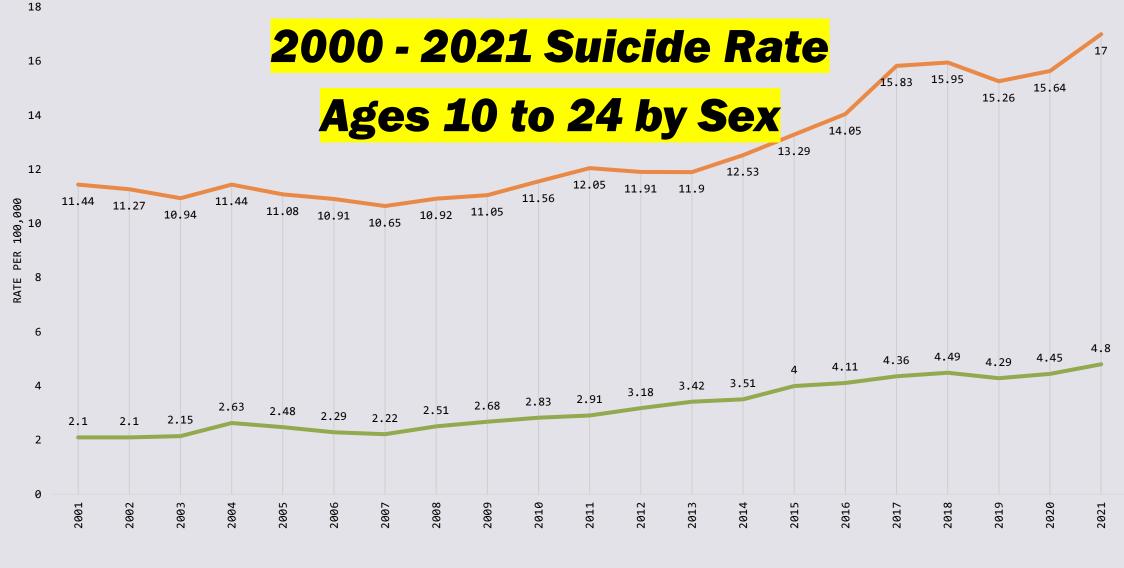
Jerry Reed

o by Anto Hamorsmit on Unshlash



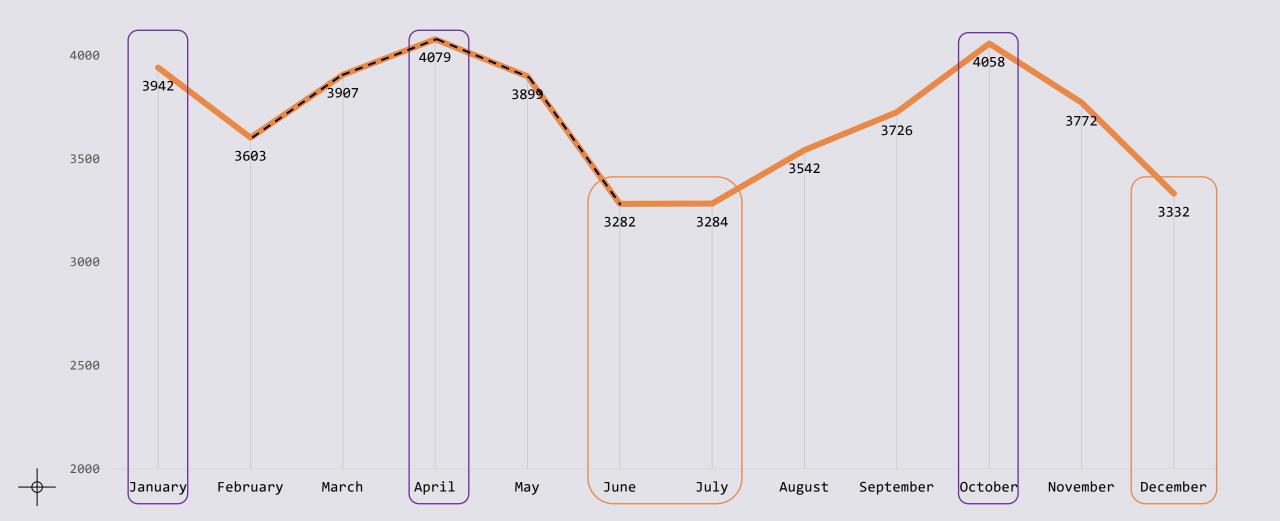
Source: Centers for Disease Control Injury Control Reports (2021) WONDER. Accessed on January 26, 2023 | ICD-10 Codes: X60-X84, Y87.0,*U03

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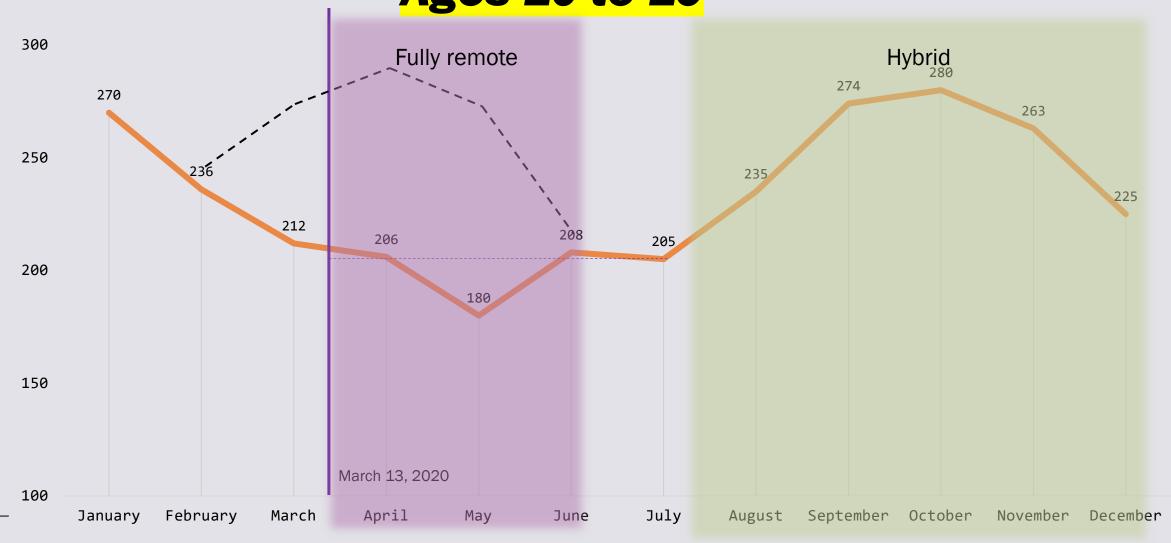


1999 - 2019 Monthly Suicide Deaths USA

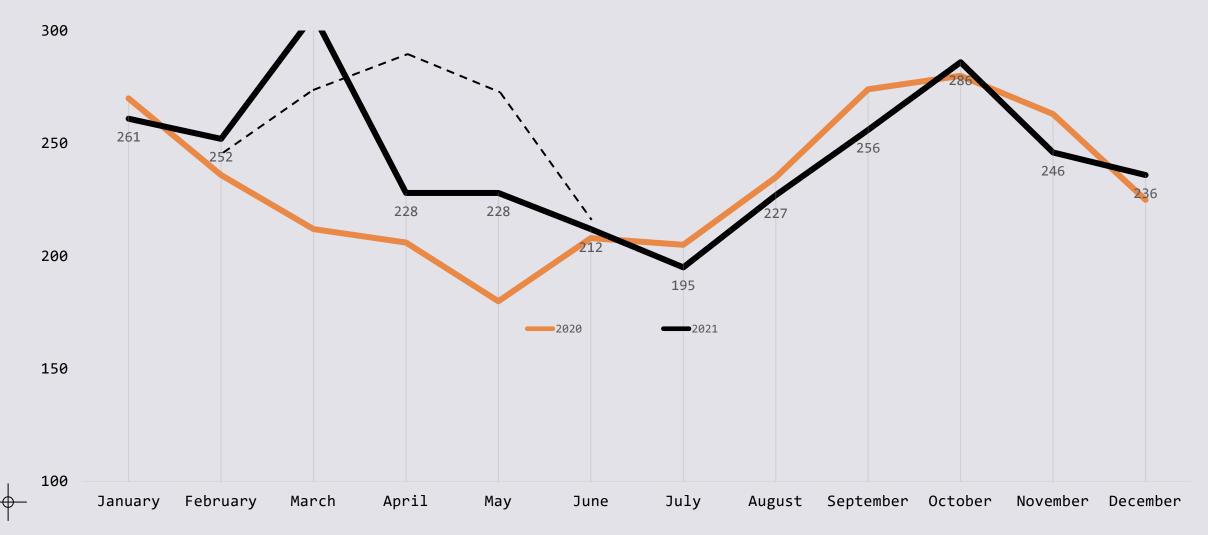
Ages 10 to 19



2020 Monthly Suicide Deaths USA Ages 10 to 19



2021 Monthly Suicide Deaths USA Ages 10 to 19 (n=2,940)

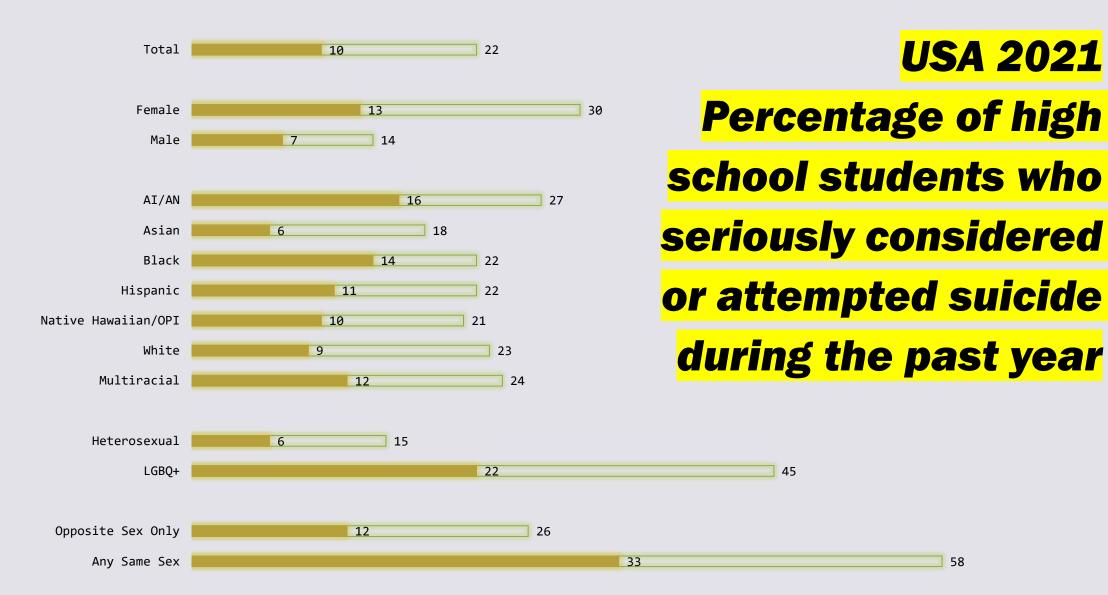


Myth: Suicide is a "White People" problem.

Fact: Suicide kills people of all races and ethnicities.

Islander





□Considered attempting suicide Attempted suicide **USA 2021**

58

The Percentage of High School Students Who:*	2011 Total	2013 Total	2015 Total	2017 Total	2019 Total	2021 Total	Trend
Currently drank alcohol	39	35	33	30	29	23	
Currently used marijuana	23	23	22	20	22	16	
Currently used an electronic vapor product [†]	-	-	24	13	33	18	\diamond
Ever used select illicit drugs	19	16	13	13	13	13	
Ever misused prescription opioids [‡]	-	-	-	14	14	12	
Currently misused prescription opioids [§]	-	-	-	-	7	6	\diamond

*For the complete wording of YRBS questions, refer to the appendix. [†]Variable introduced in 2015.

valiable introduced in 2013

[‡]Variable introduced in 2017.

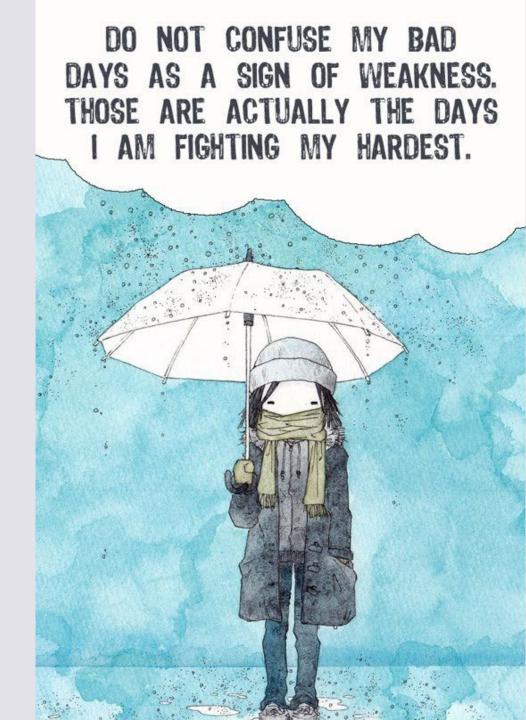
[§]Variable introduced in 2019.

In wrong direction No change

In right direction

Myth: People who are suicidal are weak.

Fact: People are suicidal
despite enormous strength
and courage.



Terri A. Erbacher, Jonathan B. Singer, and Scott Poland



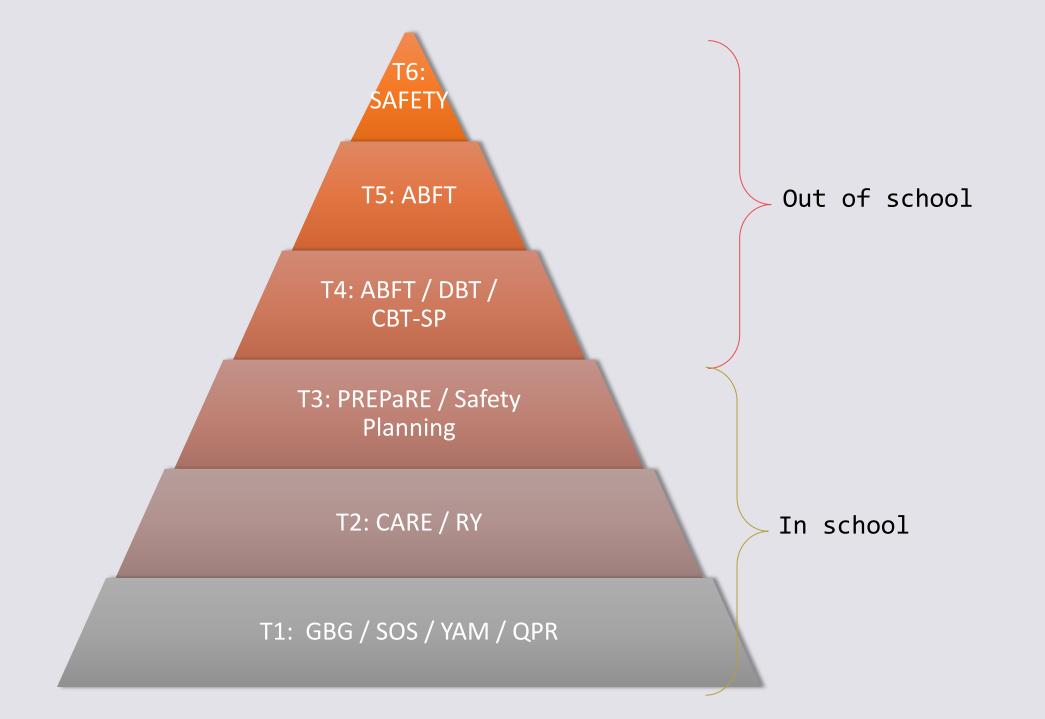
Myth: If I ask someone about suicide, I'll put the idea in their head.

Fact: Asking someone about
suicide will not make them
suicidal (Gould et al.,
2005).



SUICIDE IN SCHOOLS

A Practitioner's Guide to Multi-level Prevention, Assessment, Intervention, and Postvention



Screening

SiS: Suicide in Schools Model Youth Suicide Risk Screening Form 2.0

SiS: Suicide in Schools	Model			
Youth Suicide Risk Screening	ng Form 2.0)		
SiS: Suicide in Schools Youth Suicide Risk Screenin Student name Completed by (Name/title)	Dat	e of screer	ו	
Student name				
Reason for completing this form				
		Past 24	Past	Past
		hours	week	Month
i i successioned?	🗆 No			
 Have you ever wished you were dead? Have you ever felt that you, your friends, or your family 			_	-
 Have you even left that you, you menually eving would be better off if you were dead or gone? 	🗅 No			
 Have you ever had thoughts about killing yourself? 	🖵 No			
3. Have you even had thoughts do to a st	🗆 No			
 Have you tried to kill yourself? a. If yes, how, when, where, and why? 				
b. Did you stop yourself, or did someone else stop	you?			
c. How do you feel now that they stopped you?				
c. How do you feel now that they stopped year				
5. Do you plan to kill yourself? Do Vo Ves				
 a. If yes, how, when, and where? 				
		ant should	he comple	ted either
	de risk assessm	v. It is reco	mmended	that
If the student answers YES to any question, a comprehensive suici	ool district polic		ek Itisals	o importa
If the student answers YES to any question, a comprehensive suici by school-based mental health staff or by referral based upon sch	even if a stude	nt denies ri	SK. 1615 015	
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SiS screening



COLUMBIA-SUICIDE SEVERITY RATING SCALE Frequent Screener

Ask questions that are bold and <u>underlined</u>		Since Last Contact	
		NO	
k Question 2*			
Have you had thoughts about killing yourself?			
YES to 2, ask questions 3, 4, 5, and 6. If NO to 2, go directly to question 6			
3) Have you been thinking about how you might do this?			
 4) <u>Have you had these thoughts and had some intention of acting on them?</u> 4) E.g. "I thought about taking an overdose but I never made a specific plan as to when where or how I would actually do itand I would never go through with it." 			
 5) <u>Have you started to work out or worked out the details of how to kill yourself?</u> <u>Did you intend to carry out this plan?</u> As opposed to "I have the thoughts but I definitely will not do anything about them." 			
 (i) Have you done anything, started to do anything, or prepared to do anything to end your life? (i) Examples: Took pills, tried to shoot yourself, cut yourself, or hang yourself, took out pills but didn't swallow any, held a gun but changed your mind or it was grabbed from your hand, went to the roof but didn't jump, collected pills, obtained a gun, gave away valuables, wrote a will or suicide note, etc. 			

Low Risk
 Moderate Risk

High Risk

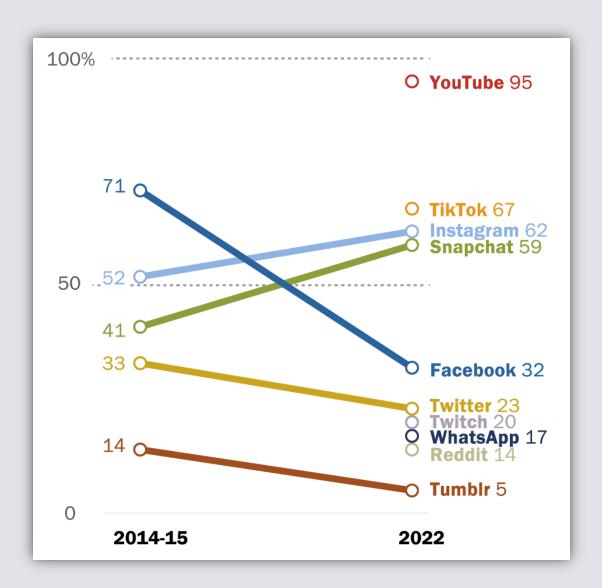




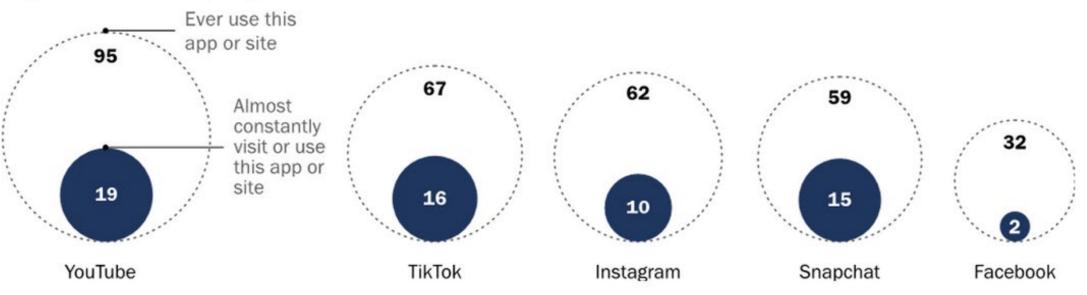
Teens and

<mark>social media use</mark>

- 46% almost constantly online
- 35% almost constantly on social media
- 41% of girls and 31% of boys say they spend too much time on social media
- 54% say it would be hard to give up social media







Note: Teens refer to those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer or gave other responses are not shown. Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Ever vs. constant social media use

Most teenagers aren't addicted to technology; If anything, they're addicted to each other.

danah boyd

SOCIAL SURVEILLANCE

STUDENTS USING DIGITAL

TECHNOLOGY TO MONITOR EACH OTHER

Photo by Shawn Fields on Unsplash

On social media

interactions are often

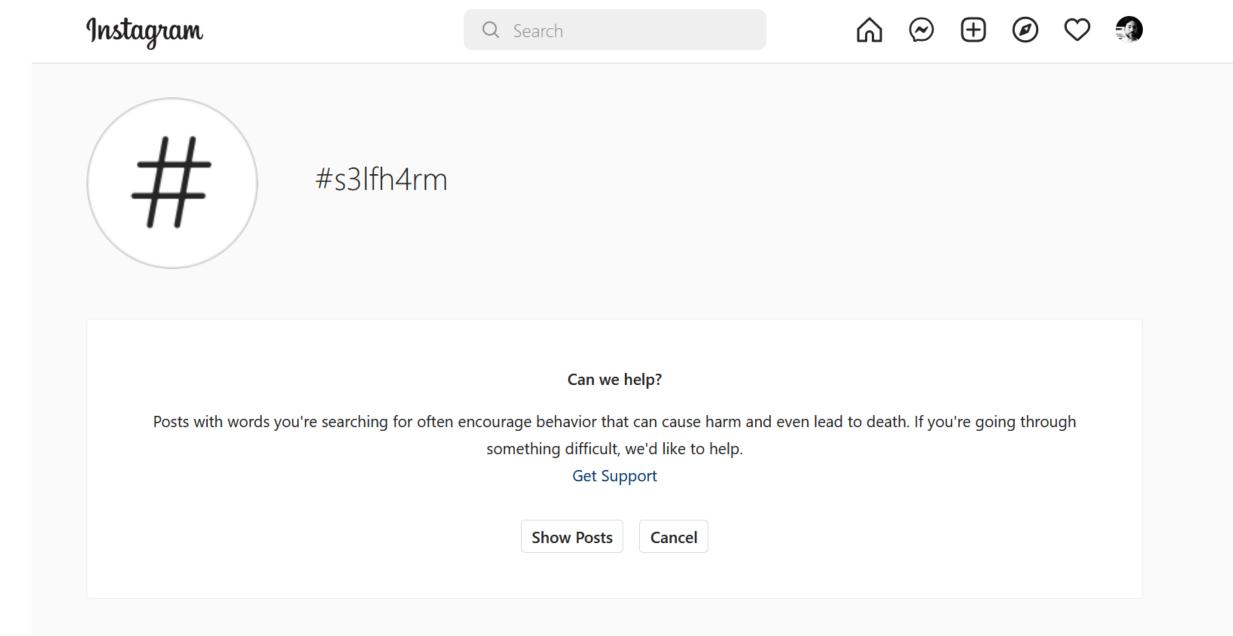
public by default,

private through effort.

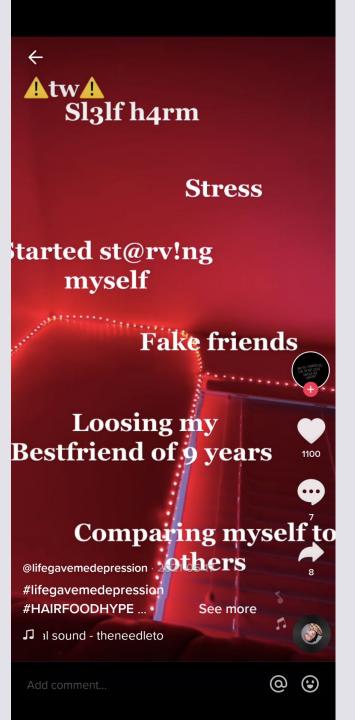
danah boyd

i want to

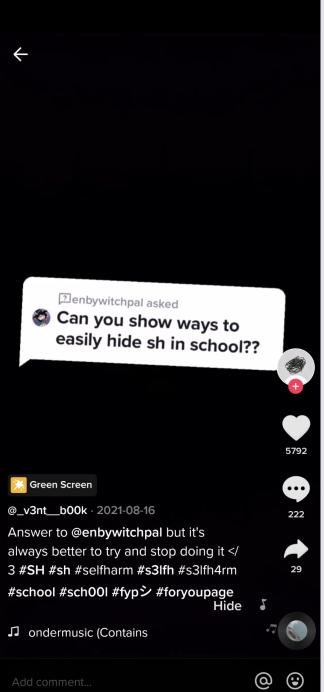


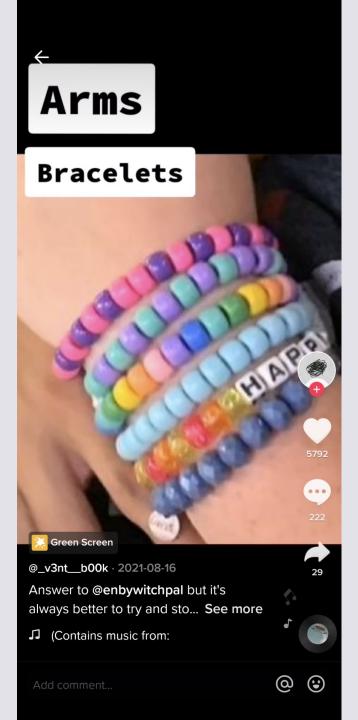


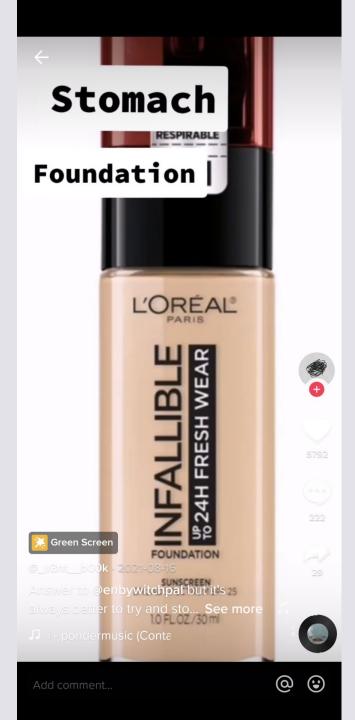
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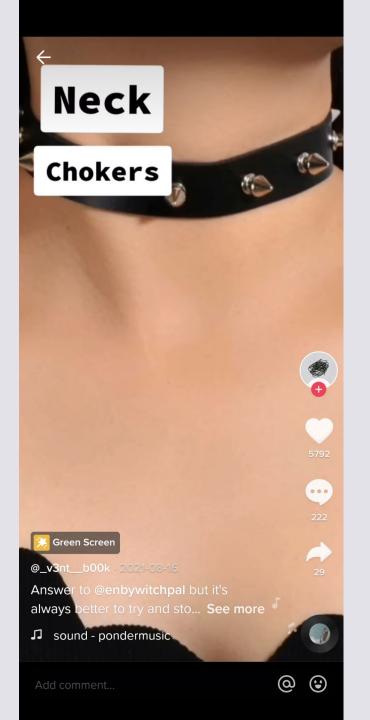


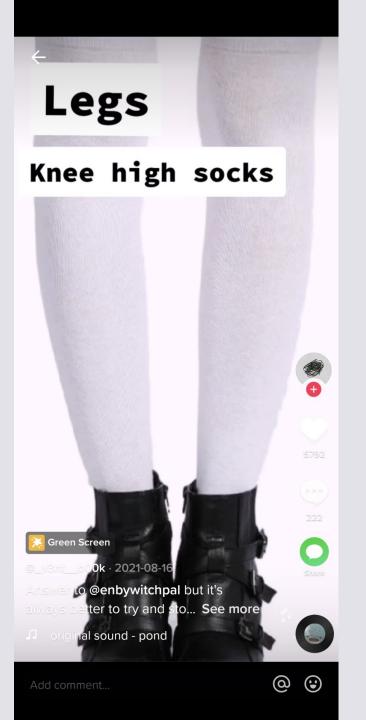








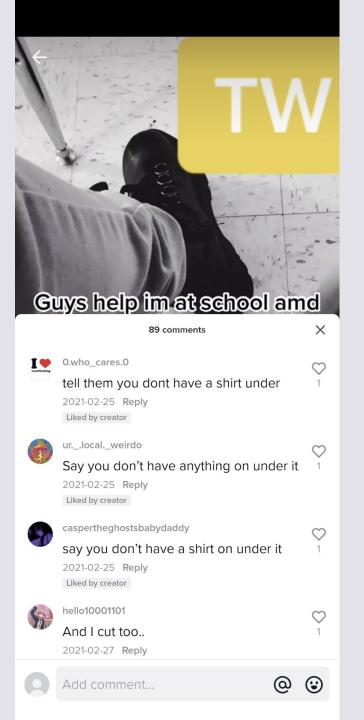




Guys help im at school amd i think they are gonna make me take off my jacket and they find out im doing it agian they will tell my parents what do i tell them?

@im.venting..here · 2021-02-24
Plz help#vent #s3lfh4rmawareness
#tryingmyhardest #fyp #for...See more
J daddy issues remix - fi

Add comment.







Guys help im at school amd

	89 comments	\times
3	itsaddy.lmao	\heartsuit
	Same but pls pls don't 2021-02-24 Reply Liked by creator	3
٩	jazmine_lancaster00	\heartsuit
	I write on my arm and it helps a lot the only thing is my parants yell at me for it but it's MUCH better then that and it's washes off to	10
	2021-02-24 Reply Liked by creator	
	frogz_lolz	\heartsuit
	i normally just use red marker on where u would normally do it and it calms me down a lot :) 2021-02-25 Reply Liked by creator	8

W

Take home points

- Kids self harm at school
- Kids use social media to reach out when they are distressed
- Kids are afraid of the consequences of adult intervention more than the benefits of talking with adults
- Kids support each other
- Kids distract each other
- Kids encourage each other NOT to hurt themselves

We should be talking with kids about their social media use

SELF-SURVEILLANCE

USING DIGITAL DATA TO MONITOR OUR OWN ACTIVITIES

SiS: Suicide in Schools Model Suicide Risk Monitoring Tool (SMT 2.0)

SIS: Suicide in Schools Model Suicide Risk Monitoring Tool (SMT 2.0) Student name Completed by (name / title):
Suicide Risk Monitoring Tool (SMT 2.0)
Student name Today's date
Completed by (name / title): Prior monitoring date
I. IDEATION
Have you had thoughts of suicide since the last time a school staff member met with you?
Please circle / check the most accurate response: How often do you have these thoughts? (Frequency): hourly / daily / weekly / other How long do these thoughts last? (Duration): a few seconds / minutes / hours / days / a week o How disruptive are these thoughts to your life (Intensity): not at all= 10 20 30 40 50 = a grea
II. INTENT
How much do you want to live? not at all= 1 2 3 4 5 = a great deal
How much do you want to die? not at all= 1 2 3 4 5 = a great deal
III. PLAN
Do you have a plan? Yes No (if no, jump to section
Have you written a suicide note? Yes No Have you identified a method? Yes No
Do you have access to the method? Yes No N/A
Have you identified when & where you'd carry out this plan? Yes No N/A
Have you made a recent attempt? 🔲 Yes 🔲 No
If so, when / how / where?
How confident are you that you will: be able to keep yourself from attempting suicide? not at all= 1 2 3 4 4 5 = a great c
tell someone about your suicidal thoughts? not at all= 1 2 3 3 4 5 5 = a great d
IV. INTERPERSONAL DISTRESS
How hopeless do you feel? not at all= 1 2 3 4 5 = a great of
How much of a burden on others do you feel? not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = a great of
How depressed, sad or down do you feel? not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 5 = a great d
How disconnected do you feel from others? not at all= 1 2 3 4 5 = a great of
Write down your biggest trigger/stressor

How much of a trigger/stressor is it right now? not at all= 1 2 3 4 5 = a great deal

V. PROTECTIVE FACTORS

REASONS FOR LIVING	SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE
(things I'm good at / like to do / enjoy / other)	(family / adults / friends / peers)

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What could change about your life that would make you no longer want to die?

Summary: Please compare this to the baseline on the SRA or prior SMT and note how the current risk state compared to prior or baseline/most recent SMT. You want to be able to answer the question: "does risk appear increased or decreased and why?"

VII. ACTIONS TAKEN / RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendations for further treatment and management of suicide risk should be based on their baseline SMT and the current SMT in collaboration with your school district procedure.

Consultation with other School Mental Health Provider / Suicide Prevention Coordinator / admin received?	Yes	No
Parent/guardian contacted?	Yes	No
Release of Information signed?	Yes	No
Released to parent/guardian?	Yes	No
Copy of the SRA provided to referral?	Yes	No
Safety plan developed/reviewed/updated?	Yes	No
Recommending removal of method/means?	Yes	No
Copies of Safety Plan provided to parent/guardian?	Yes	No
If currently in treatment, contact made with therapist/psychiatrist?	Yes	No
If not in treatment, referrals provided to parent?	Yes	No
Outpatient therapy Crisis center / hospitalization		
□Local crisis line □988 / text "home" to 741-741		
Other? Please describe:		

FOR THE CLINICIAN – SUMMARY PAGE

Purpose: This tool is not a comprehensive suicide risk assessment measure. At times, we must monitor ongoing suicidality of students who have already been assessed by you, an outside mental health professional, or in a hospital setting. Clinicians working with suicidal students often report being unsure when a student may need re-hospitalization or further intervention and when levels of suicidality are remaining relatively stable for that individual student. As you know your student best, this form is a place to document the student's particular triggers or stressors. This will allow you to monitor and track their fluctuating suicide risk over time

With older middle school and high school students, complete this form with them the first time, explaining each area and ensuring they understand how to complete it. During subsequent sessions, they can complete the form independently, followed by a collaborative discussion of risk and treatment planning.

With elementary and early middle school students, the clinician should complete this form through collaborative discussion with the child during each session or meeting. Alter the wording as needed to make it developmentally appropriate to ensure the child understands what you are asking.

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Suicide Risk Monitoring tool 2.0





Sleep Hygiene

and technology

- Help youth and their parents codevelop and "acceptable use" policy for technology, including digital curfews (Homayoun, 2017; Vernon et al., 2018);
- 2. Encourage parents to establish a monitored bedtime routine that ritualizes disconnecting from the phone, such as charging the phone in the kitchen or giving the mobile device to a parent;
- 3. Talk with youth about setting peergroup expectations that mobile communication will pause during sleep hours; if your closest friends are not on their phones, then you won't experience a fear of missing out (FOMO) by not being on the phone.

Talking with youth about social media use

- How does social media usually fit into your life?
- Which apps/social media sites do you typically use?
- Can you tell me about how you use each site?
- What are some of the best parts of having social media?
- What are some of the most challenging or difficult parts of having social media?
- Were there times that social media/cell phone were helpful related specifically to your mental health?
- Were there times that social media/cell phone made your mental health worse or made you feel worse?

Social media and digital re-entry from hospitalization

- Hospitals restrict access to mobile devices and social media
- Youth report appreciating the forced break from routine use
- Post-hospitalization is a time of increased suicide risk
- Considerations for "digital re-entry"
 - + What awaits them?
 - + How will it affect their recovery?
 - + How will they explain their absence?

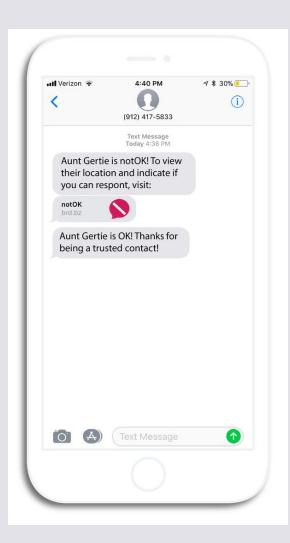
<mark>notOK App™</mark>

- What if there was a button you could press and someone would immediately know you were not okay?
- <u>https://www.notokapp.com/trusted-</u> <u>contacts</u>



<mark>notOK App™</mark>

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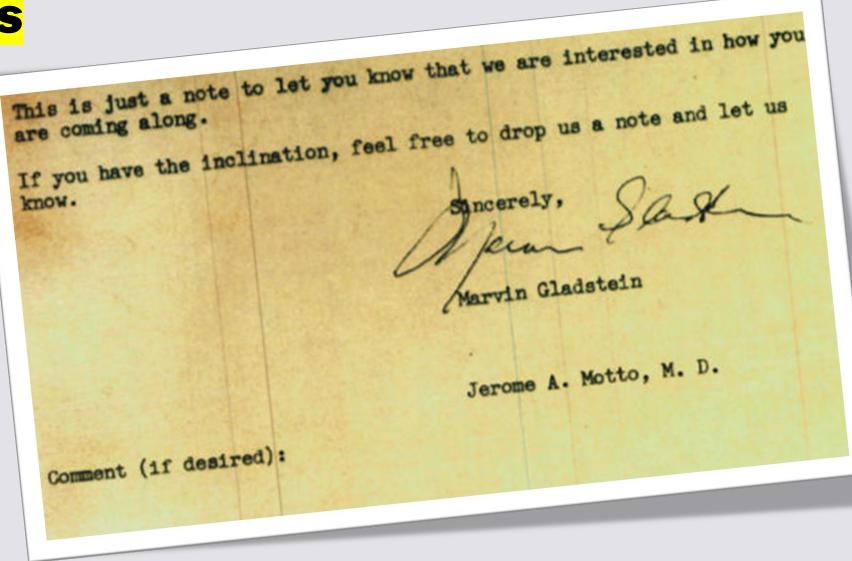


Caring letters

1969 - 1974

Jerome Motto sent "Caring letters" to people discharged after a suicide attempt.

2 years later, those who received them were half as likely to die by suicide.



Thinking of you today

Caring texts

Text check-ins provide connection and resources for the clients and reassurance for the therapist.

This is an example of a simple "caring text." No deep clinical work, just genuine connection. I could be silly because I knew the client and was pretty sure it would extend the good mood. I anchored her "win" with an earworm. Hey! Thanks for checking in. I'm doing much better today, which is surprising because the rain usually bums me out.

10:25 AM

Win! I guess no Milli Vanilli in your apartment today...

You didn't! Now that song will be stuck in my head. What kind of therapist are you???



<mark>LGBTQIA</mark>+

- Are there times when your parents say or do things that suggest they reject you because you are [sexual orientation and/or gender identity], such as telling you
 - + to "tone down" how you look or behave;
 - + that you're just going through a phase;
 - + refusing to call you by your name or use
 your pronouns;
 - + or preventing you from seeing your LGBTQ
 friends?

https://lgbtqfamilyacceptance.org/

https://www.instagram.com/famacceptproj/



<mark>LGBTQIA+</mark>

- Are there times when your parents say or do things that suggest they reject you because you are [sexual orientation and/or gender identity], such as telling you
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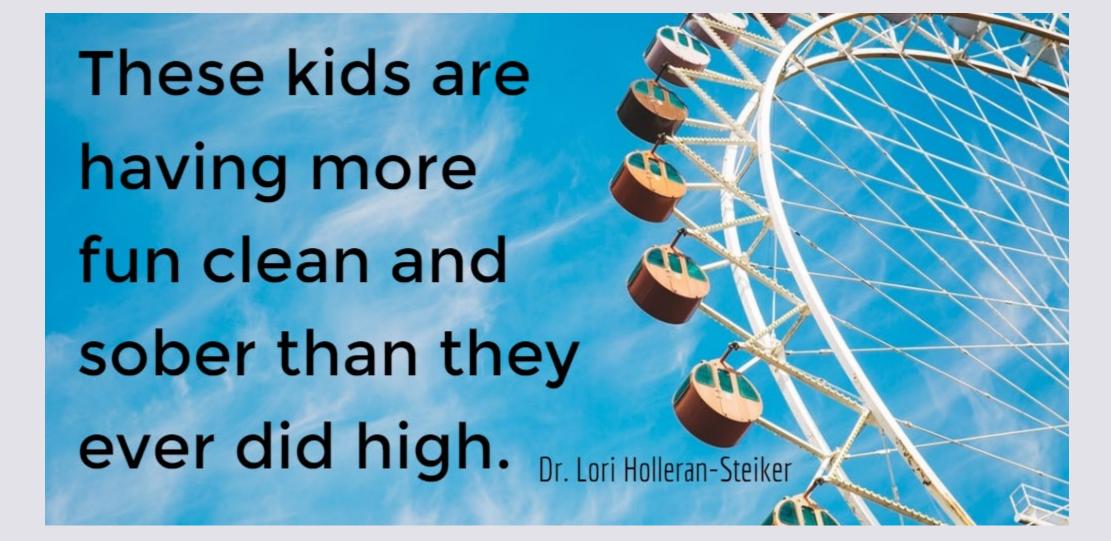


Latinx Mental

Health

- 21% meet criteria for at least one mental illness
- Of those, only 10% accessed mental health services
- 80% of Latinx individuals have access to the internet via a mobile device
- Language can be a barrier.
- Spanish-language mental health apps are a solution
- Only 14.5% of apps are offered in Spanish

Source: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fdgth.2021.615366/full



Source: Singer, J. B. (Host/Producer). (2016, August 23). #105 - Recovery High Schools: Interview with Lori Holleran Steiker, Ph.D. [Audio Podcast]. *Social Work Podcast*. Retrieved from http://www.socialworkpodcast.com/2016/08/RecoveryHS.html

POSTVENTION

Intervention after a suicide death to address grief and loss and prevent future suicide deaths

You want to step into a cultural bubble without breaking it.

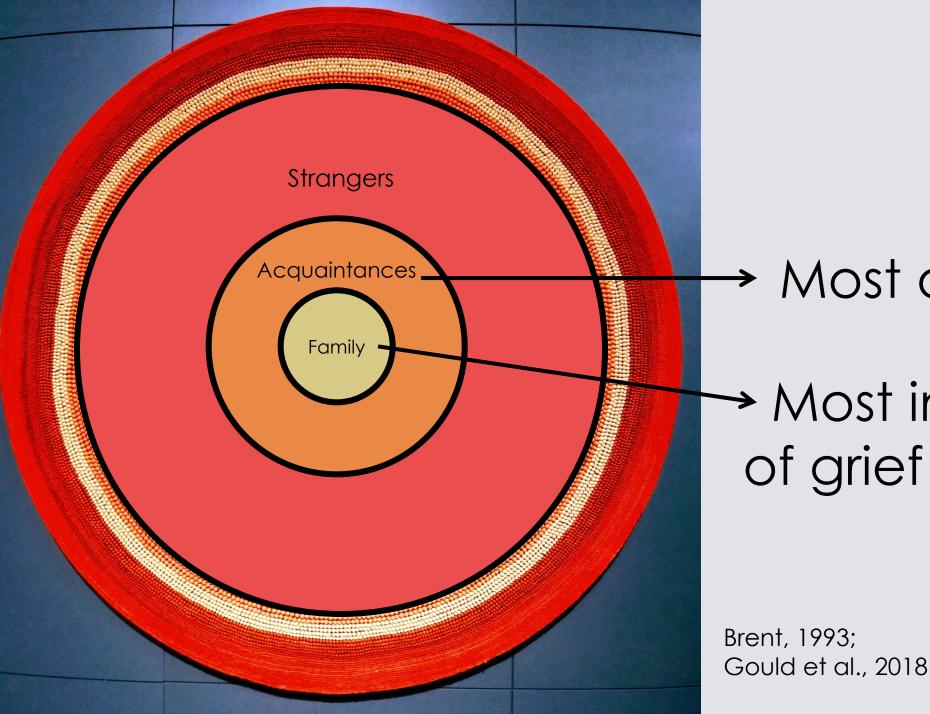
Sade Heart of the Hawk Ali



POSTVENTION

Research shows that postvention is effective in addressing grief and loss, including traumatic loss, but there is no evidence that postvention is effective in preventing suicide deaths (Sokol, 2021).

Postvention is most effective when it is planned for and is respectful of the cultural variations associated with grief and loss.



→ Most at risk

→ Most in need of grief support

Círculo naranja

 Dominga Gutiérrez Hilario Rogelio Rojas Islas Xawery Wolski

Terracota

Digital grief and loss

- Don't dismiss the positive use of social media. Digital users, particularly teens, turn to social media for immediate emotional support from their online communities. By connecting with others, they feel less isolated. Try to be understanding if someone's style of grieving is more public than yours. Family members should not discourage loved ones from reaching out to their peer groups online.
- Find out what the family's wishes are before posting anything. Not everyone wants their lives or their emotions to be shared online. It's important to know what the family wants to share and what they would prefer to keep out of the public eye.
- Be thoughtful when sharing your message of grief and support. The phrase "thoughts and prayers" has been repeated so many times that it's lost meaning. Be authentic and sincere. Share a memory. What was special about them? How did you meet, and what did you enjoy together? A short message that will remind others of what the person meant to you will be appreciated.

Source: https://www.directivecommunications.com/netiquette-experts-agree-guidelines-are-needed-on-death-in-a-digital-world/

7 TIPS FOR PARENTS

What can we do right now to decrease the risk of suicide in our children? (Strassberg, 2015)

- 1. Make your teen sleep
- 2. Talk with your teen
- 3. Model mental health treatment
- 4. Want the best for your child, not for your child to be the best
- 5. It's you and the teachers *for* your teen, not you and your teen *against* the teachers
- 6. Get a pet
- 7. Keep Calm



6 TIPS FOR SCHOOLS

- 1. Conduct universal screening
- 2. Collaborate with parents and communities
- 3. Aspire to zero suicides
- 4. Train staff to recognize and respond to suicide risk
- 5. Recognize mistakes as learning opportunities
- 6. Care for staff



<mark>5 TIPS FOR YOUTH</mark>

- 1. Don't worry about upsetting adults
- 2. Your reasons for living might not be in your life yet.
 #LiveYourBestLife
- 3. Don't confuse being sad, angry, scared or lonely with wanting to die.
- Don't discount your experiences: some are windows, and some are mirrors
- 5. It isn't about you / It is all about you



l'm a social worker. I talk and listen all day.

At the end of the day, I don't want to talk OR listen. Makes my self-care hard, especially for those Hove.

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

CRISIS TEXT LINE

Text HELLO to 741741 Free, 24/7, Confidential

teen line

Call 800-852-8336 from 6pm to 10pm PST or text "TEEN " to 839863 from 6pm to 9pm PST

TRANS
 LIFELINE
 (877) 565-8860

GET HELP 24/7:

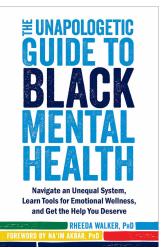


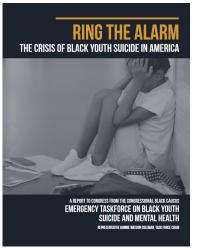
TrevorText

Text START to 678678

TrevorChat TrevorChat.org TrevorLifeline 866.488.7386







Dr. Sherry Molock https://psychology.columbian.gwu.edu/s herry-molock Dr. Arielle Sheftall https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/fi nd-a-doctor/profiles/arielle-h-sheftall Dr. Sean Joe

https://brownschool.wustl.edu/Facultyand-Research/Pages/Sean-Joe.aspx

TEXTS ABOUT SUICIDE AND BLACK AMERICANS

PRACTICAL TEXTS ON YOUTH SUICIDE

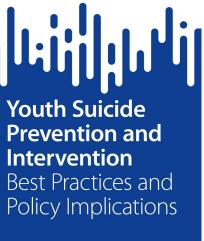
Regina Miranda Elizabeth L. Jeglic *Editors*

Handbook of Youth Suicide Prevention

Integrating Research into Practice

Springer

SpringerBriefs in Psychology Advances in Child and Family Policy and Practice John P. Ackerman - Lisa M. Horowitz *Faltars*



OPEN ACCESS

🖄 Springer



Terri A. Erbacher, Jonard B. B. Stiffer,

SUICIDE IN SCHOOLS

A Practitioner's Guide to Multi-level Prevention, Assessment, Intervention, and Postvention

HOOL-BASED PRACTICE IN ACTION SERIES

Anne Moss Rogers and Kimberly H. McManama O'Brien, MD. LICSW

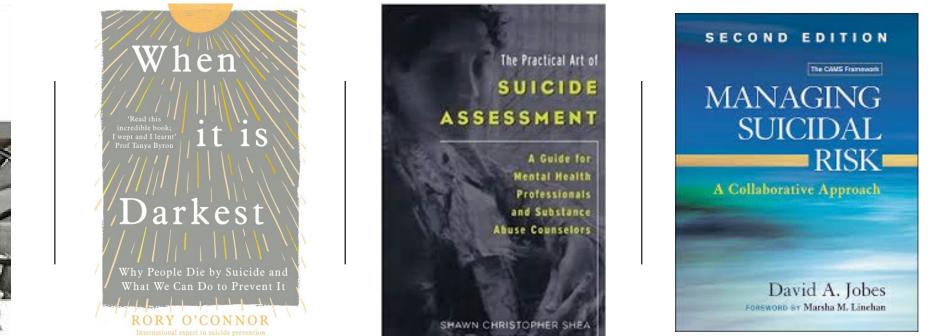
> emotionally naked

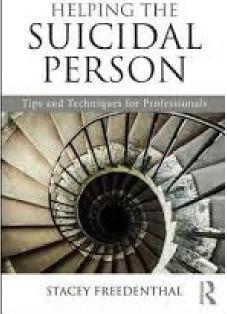


A Teacher's Guide to Preventing Suicide and Recognizing Students at Risk

> JE JOSSEY-BASS A Wiley Brand

PRACTICAL TEXTS ON SUICIDE & ASSESSMENT





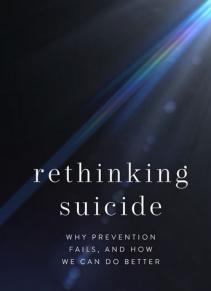
PRACTICAL TEXTS ON SUICIDE & ASSESSMENT



^{The} Suicidal Thoughts Workbook

CBT SKILLS to REDUCE EMOTIONAL PAIN INCREASE HOPE, and PREVENT SUICIDE



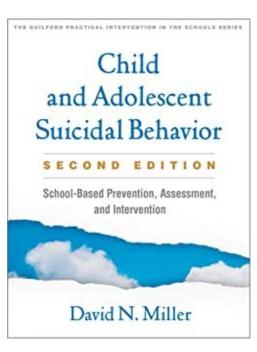


CRAIG J. BRYAN

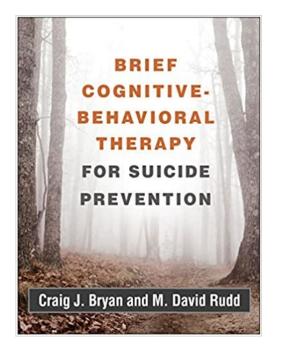


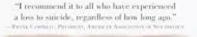


Suicide and suicidal behavior among youth and young adults is a major public health crisis. Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among young people 10-24 years of age in the United States (US), and rates have been

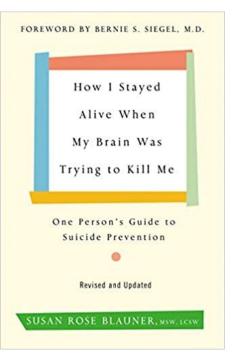


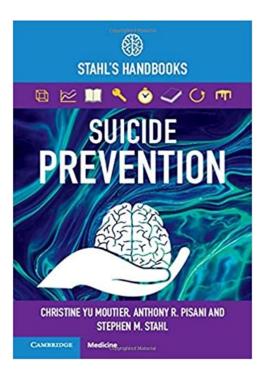
PRACTICAL TEXTS ON SUICIDE & BEREAVEMENT





No Time to Say Goodbye Surviving the Suicide of a Loved One Carla Fine





Thank you!

Jonathan B. Singer, PhD, LCSW Loyola University Chicago, School of Social Work Social Work Podcast