



Mental health for Black, indigenous and youth of color

Mental health problems put many young people at risk for suicidal thoughts and attempts. But children and teens who are Black, indigenous or people of color (BIPOC) face even more challenges because of exposure to discrimination and potential violence. And these problems can add risk to their mental wellbeing.

Here are some important numbers to consider:

- Non-Hispanic American Indian or Alaskan native youth have the highest rate of suicide²
- Suicide rates for Black children under the age of 13 is double that of their white peers²
- Suicide death rates among Black youth are increasing faster than any other racial or ethnic group³
- Black youth are less likely than their white peers to receive care for depression. And when they do get treatment, it's often through the juvenile justice system.⁴

Discrimination and mental health

Racism, discrimination and chronic stress are all tied to poor mental health. But people may not realize that racial discrimination can be a type of chronic stress. “Experiences with racism are stressors, and are chronic, unpredictable and uncontrollable – the worst kind of stress,” says Dr. Kwate of Rutgers University.⁵

And trying to anticipate and prevent potential discrimination only adds to the stress. This might include:

- Trying to prepare for possible insults
- Paying careful attention to your speech or appearance
- Avoiding certain people, places and situations

What can you do?

Parents play a vital role in the mental health of their children. Start by helping your child develop positive views of his or her race. And try to reduce the stigma of seeking help for mental health problems.

If your child is experiencing mental distress, it's a good idea to consult a mental health professional. And here are some other resources you can explore:

- **Therapy for Black Girls**
- **Therapy for Black Men**
- **Therapy for Latinx**
- **Latinx Therapy**
- **Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum**
- **Asian American Health Initiative**
- **One Sky Center**
- **WeRNative**

Remember, you and your child aren't alone. Help is available. And you can teach your child that seeking help is a sign of strength.



²Lindsey, M. et al. [Trends of suicidal behaviors among high school students in the United States: 1991-2017](#). Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Accessed February 2021.

³[Ring the alarm: the crisis of black youth suicide in America](#). Emergency Taskforce on Black Youth Suicide and Mental Health. Accessed February 2021.

⁴Abrams, Zara. [Sounding the alarm on black youth suicide](#). American Psychological Association. Accessed February 2021.

⁵Rodriguez, Tori. [Racial discrimination linked with worse mental health](#). Psychiatry Advisor. Accessed February 2021.