

## 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 16<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death for blacks of all ages and the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://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

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

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

<https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov>

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