

***Building a world
worth living in:
Youth suicide
prevention in 2024***

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






Why I do this

work





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.

Mental health is not about feeling good.

It's about having the *right feelings*
at the *right time* and being able to
manage those feelings effectively.

Lisa Damour, PhD
The Emotional Lives of Teenagers

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

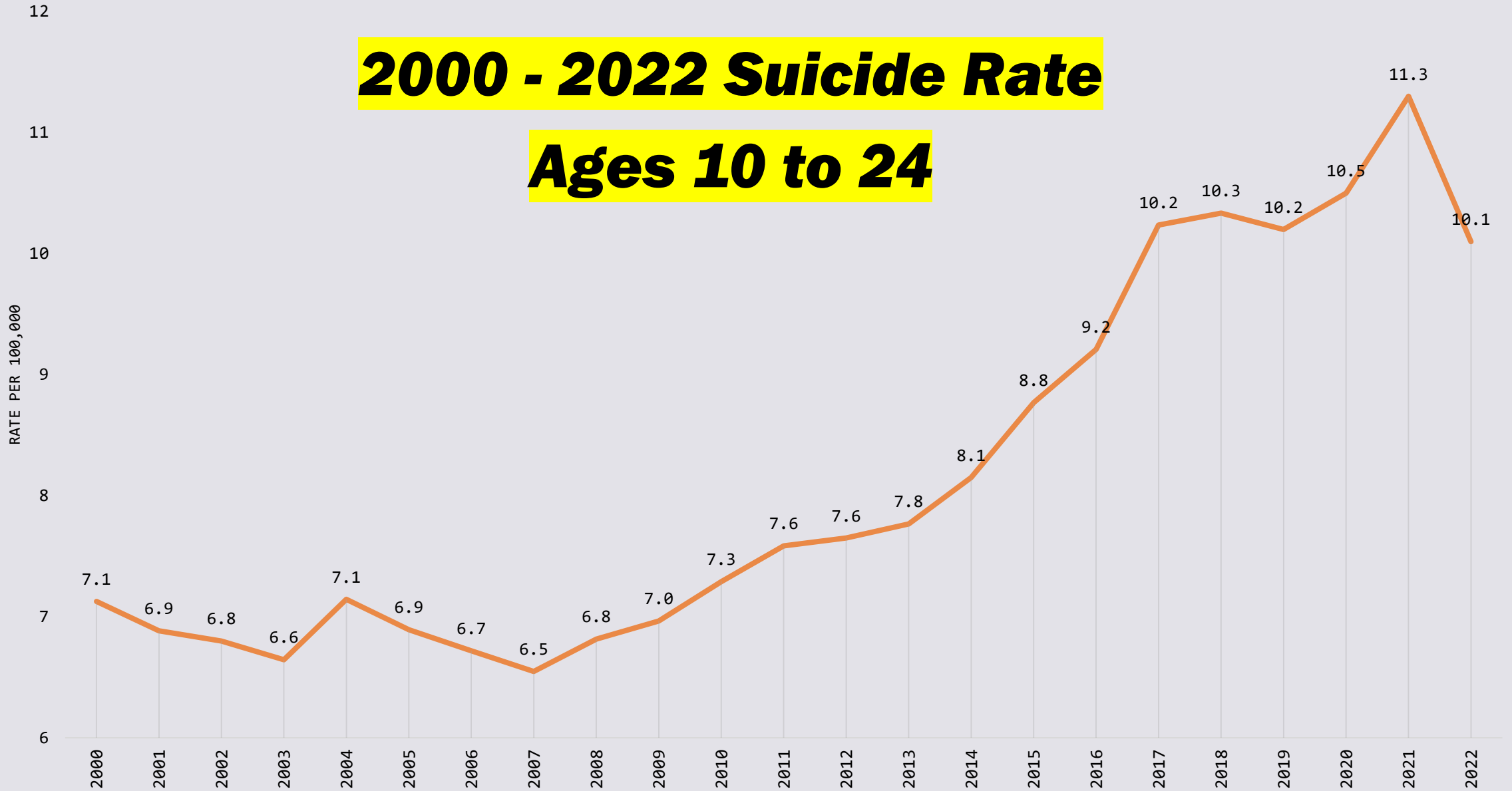
A black and white silhouette of a man and a child standing on a rocky cliff edge. The man is on the left, and the child is on his back, pointing towards the right. The background is a bright, hazy sky.

**“BEHIND EVERY
STATISTIC IS A TEAR”**

Jerry Reed

2000 - 2022 Suicide Rate

Ages 10 to 24

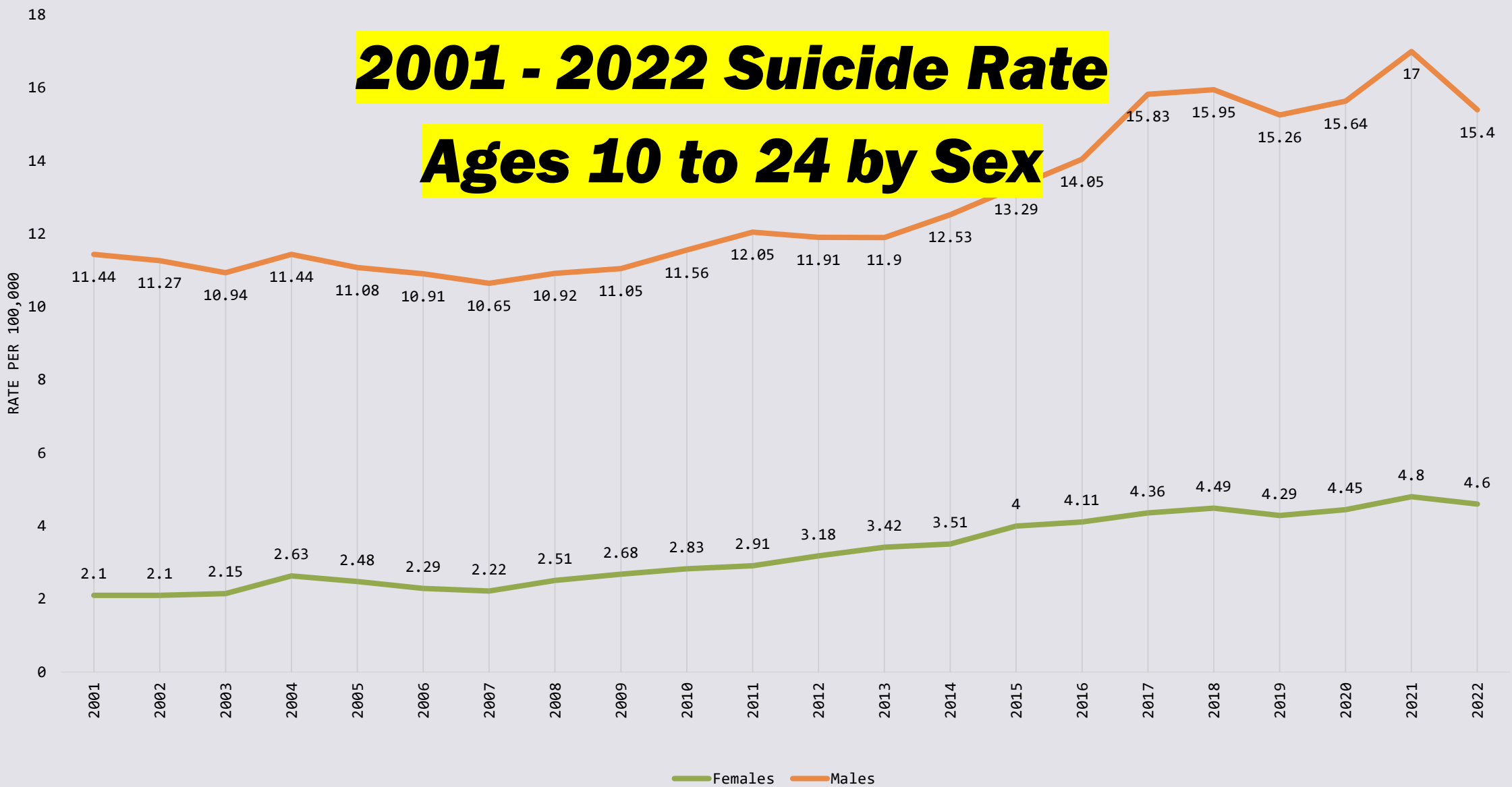


Source: Centers for Disease Control Injury Control Reports (2021) WONDER. Accessed on January 26, 2023 | ICD-10 Codes: X60-X84, Y87.0,*U03



2001 - 2022 Suicide Rate

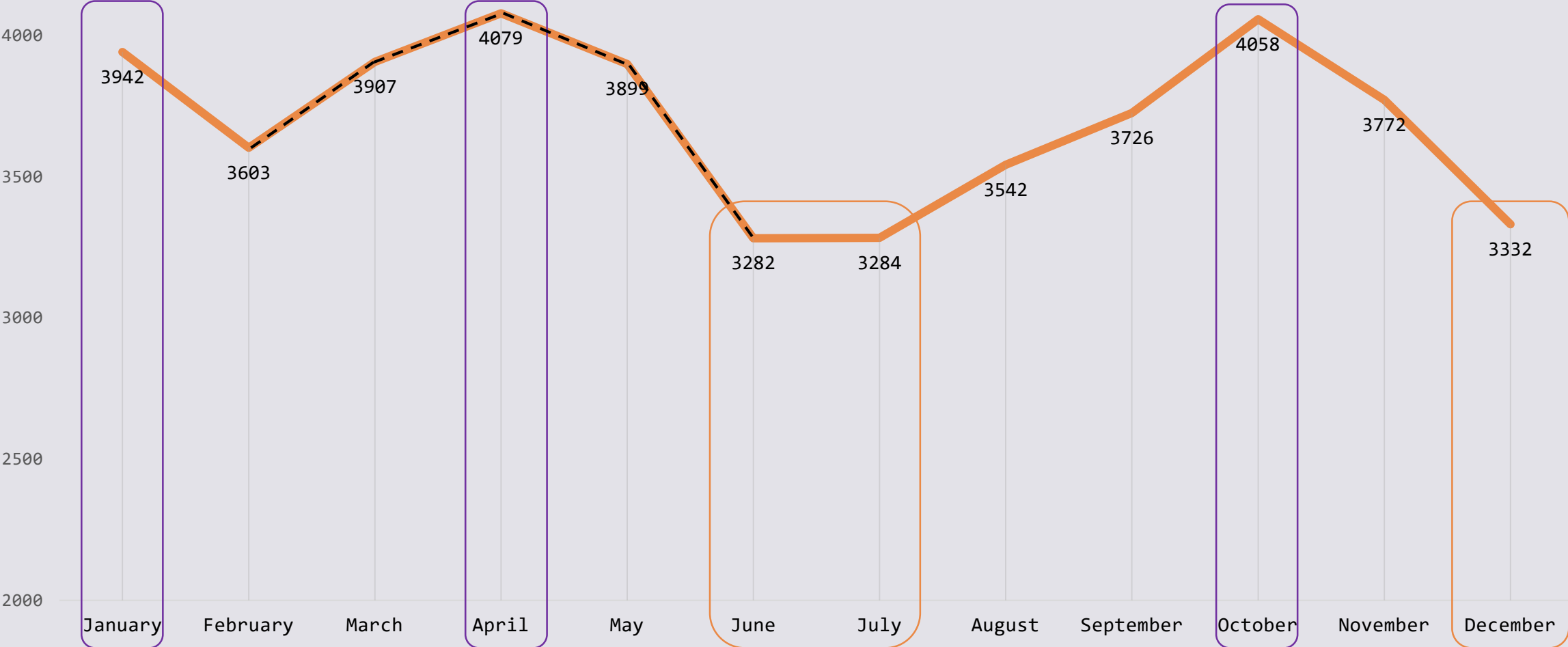
Ages 10 to 24 by Sex



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

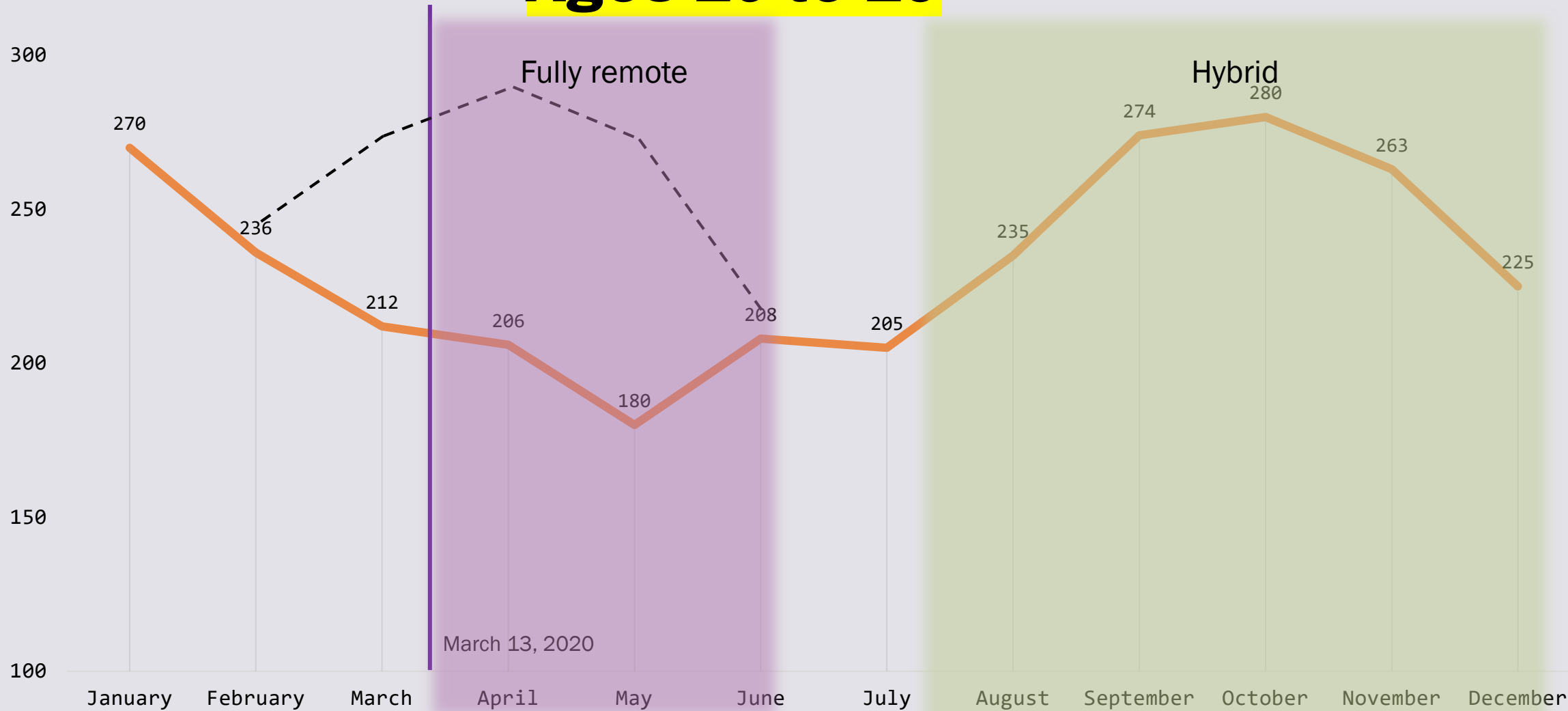
1999 - 2019 Monthly Suicide Deaths USA

Ages 10 to 19



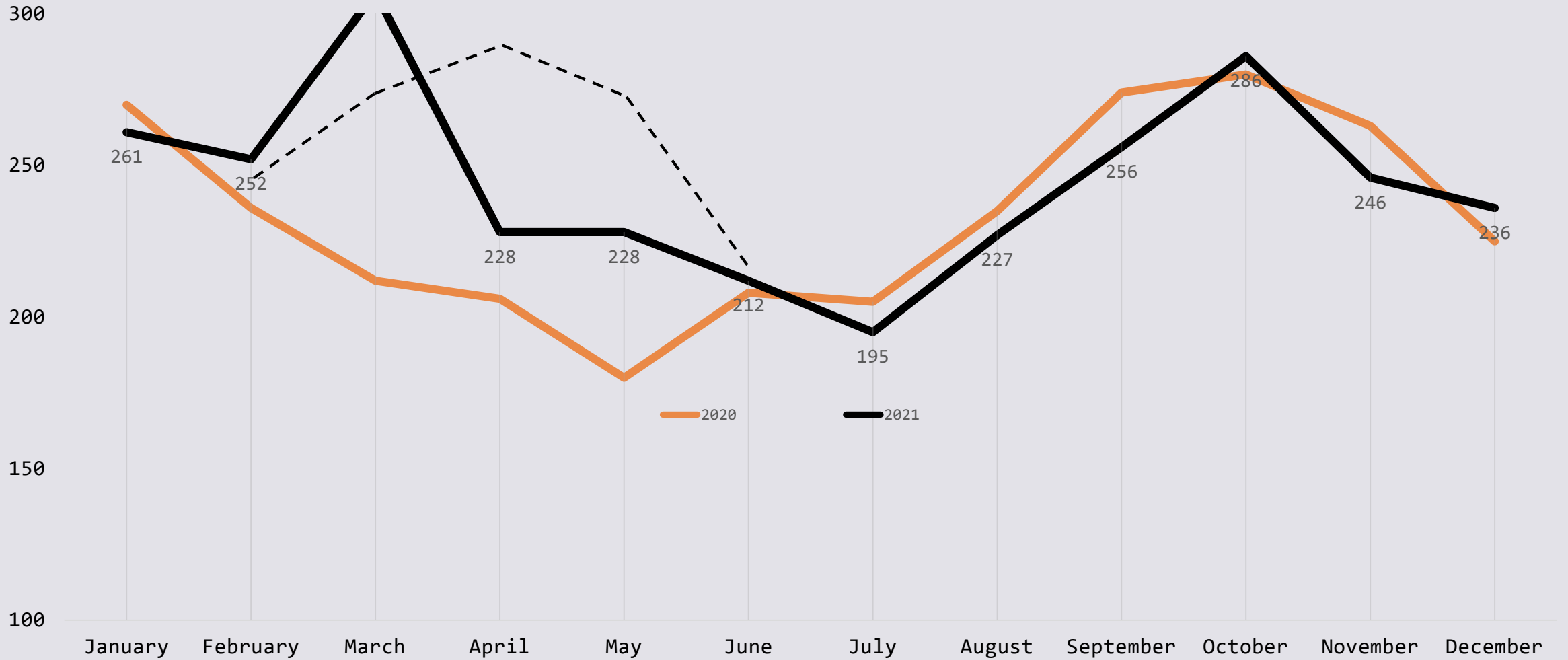
2020 Monthly Suicide Deaths USA

Ages 10 to 19



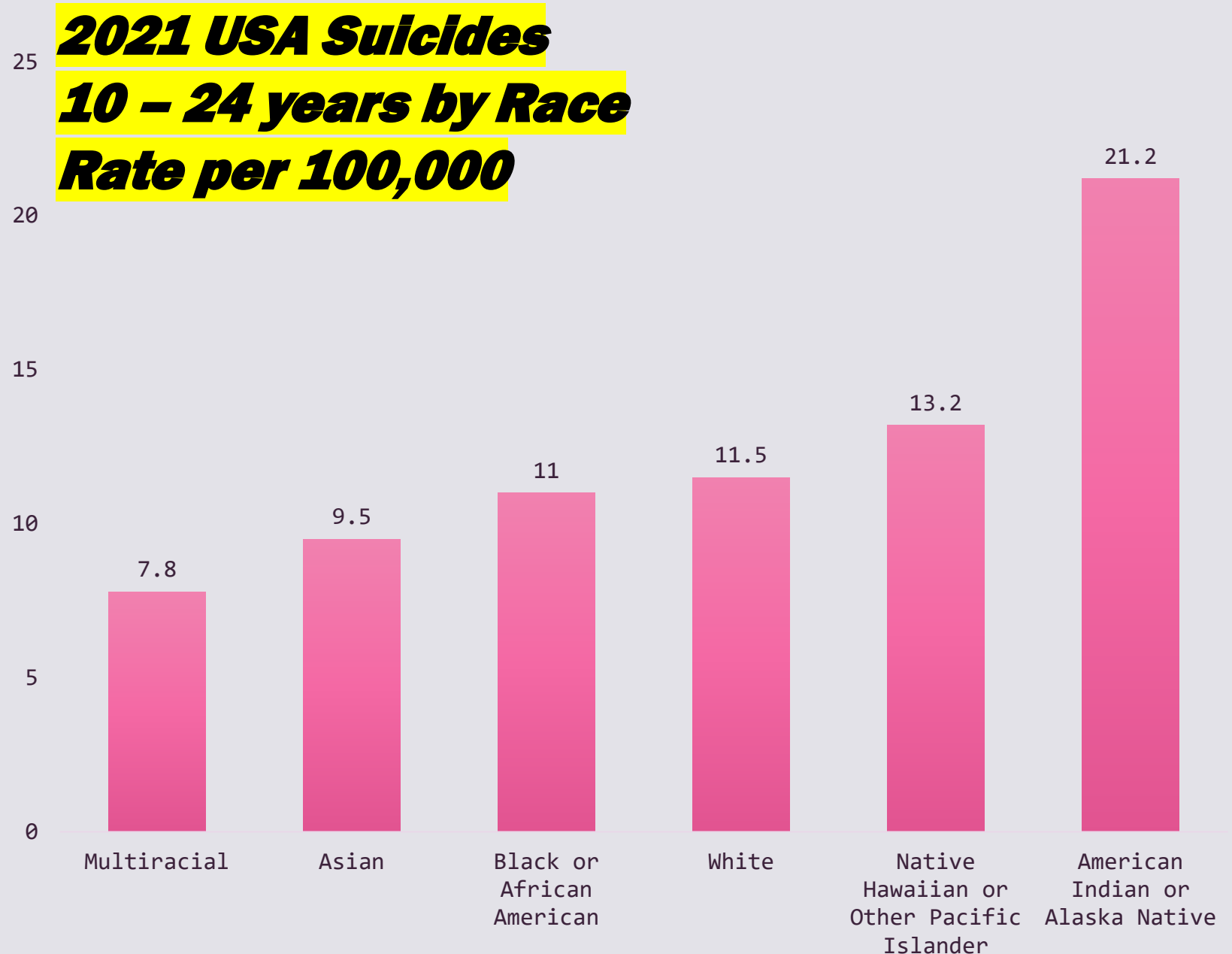
2021 Monthly Suicide Deaths USA

Ages 10 to 19 (n=2,940)



Myth: Suicide is a “White People” problem.

Fact: Suicide kills people of all races and ethnicities.

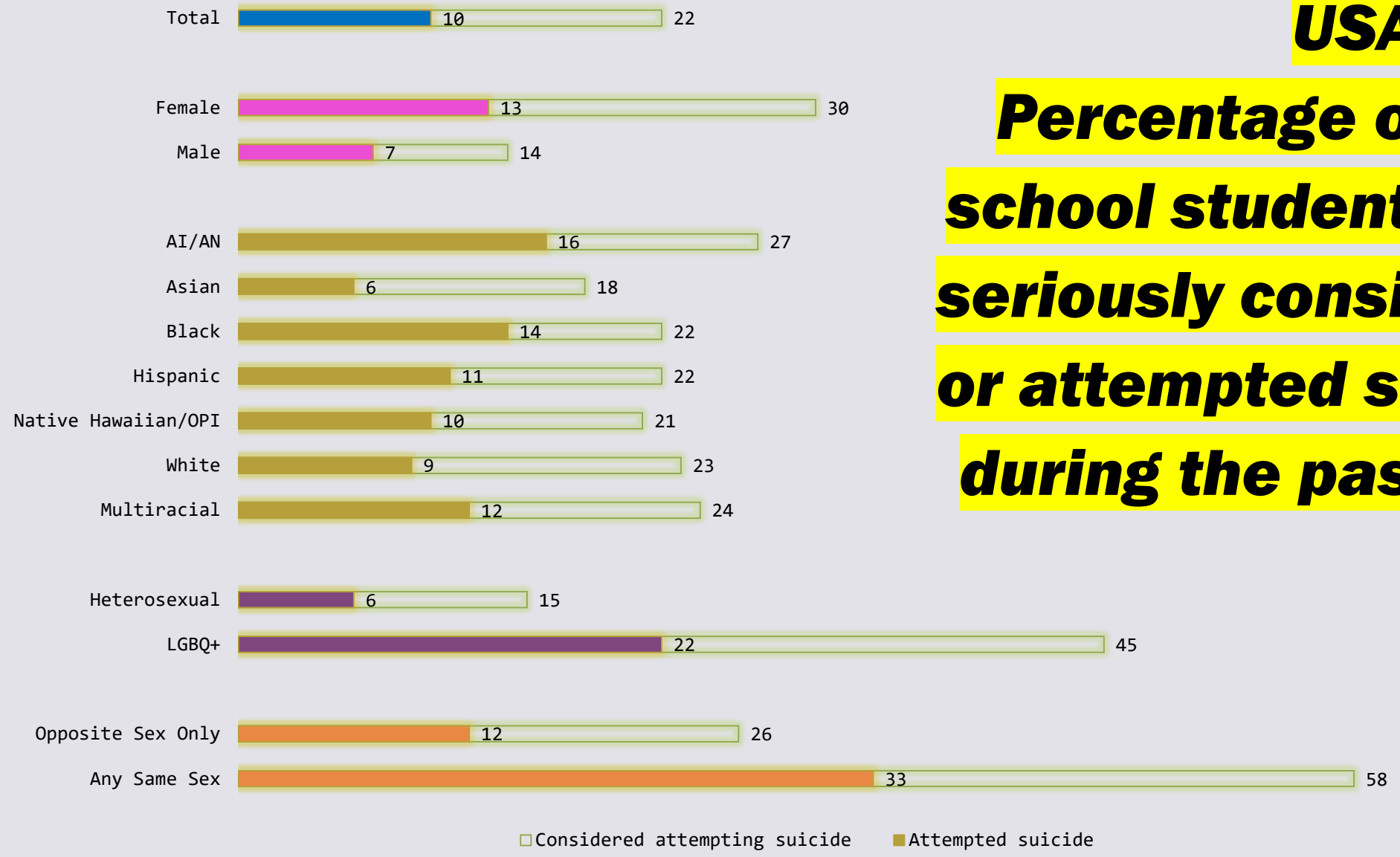




USA 2021

Percentage of high school students who seriously considered or attempted suicide during the past year

Sex
Race & Ethnicity
Sexual Identity
Sex of Sexual Contact



Myth: People who are suicidal are weak.

Fact: People are suicidal despite enormous strength and courage.

DO NOT CONFUSE MY BAD DAYS AS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS. THOSE ARE ACTUALLY THE DAYS I AM FIGHTING MY HARDEST.



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

SECOND EDITION 2024

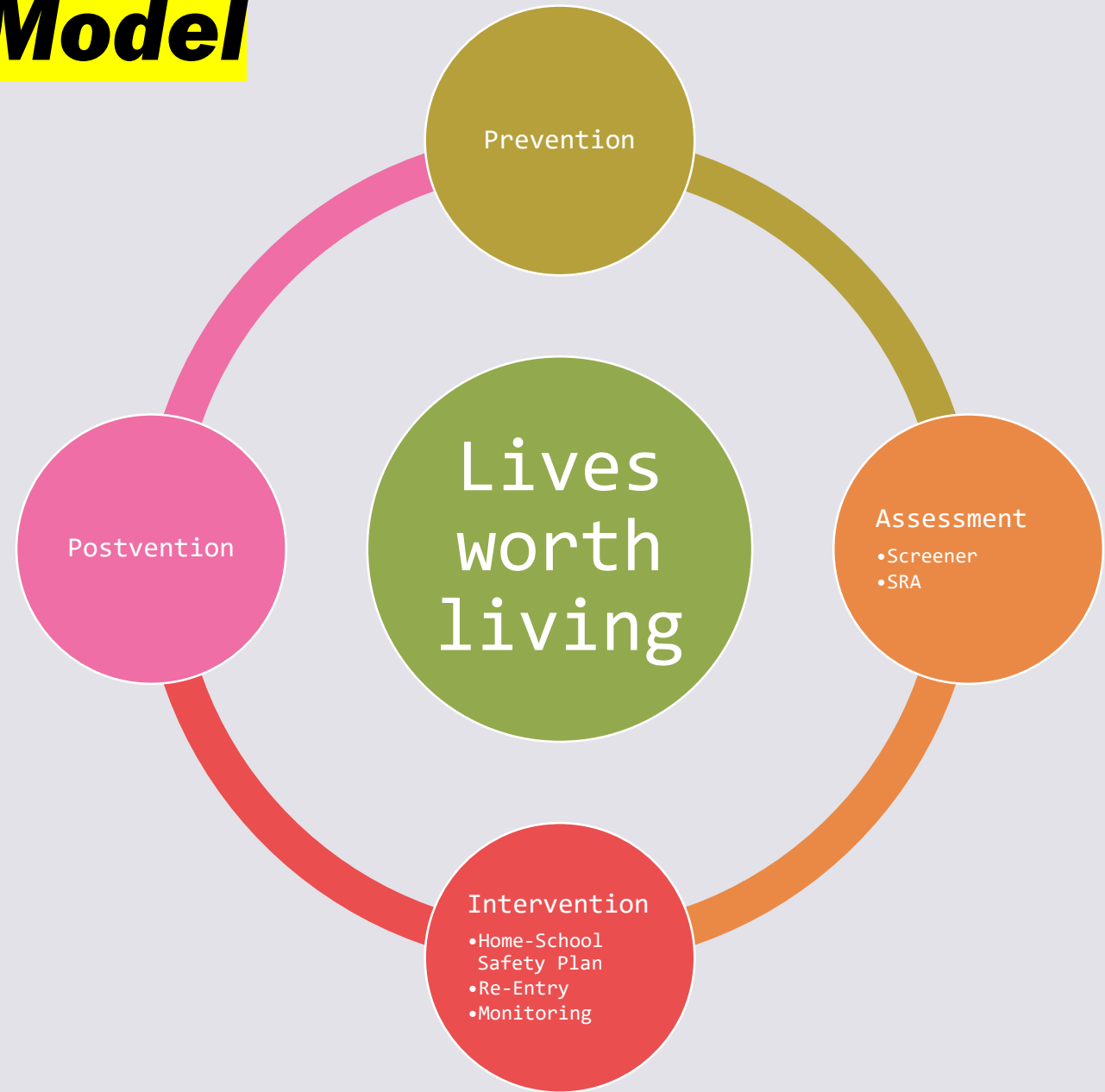
TERRI A. ERBACHER,
JONATHAN B. SINGER,
and SCOTT POLAND





Suicide in Schools Model

Erbacher et al., 2024



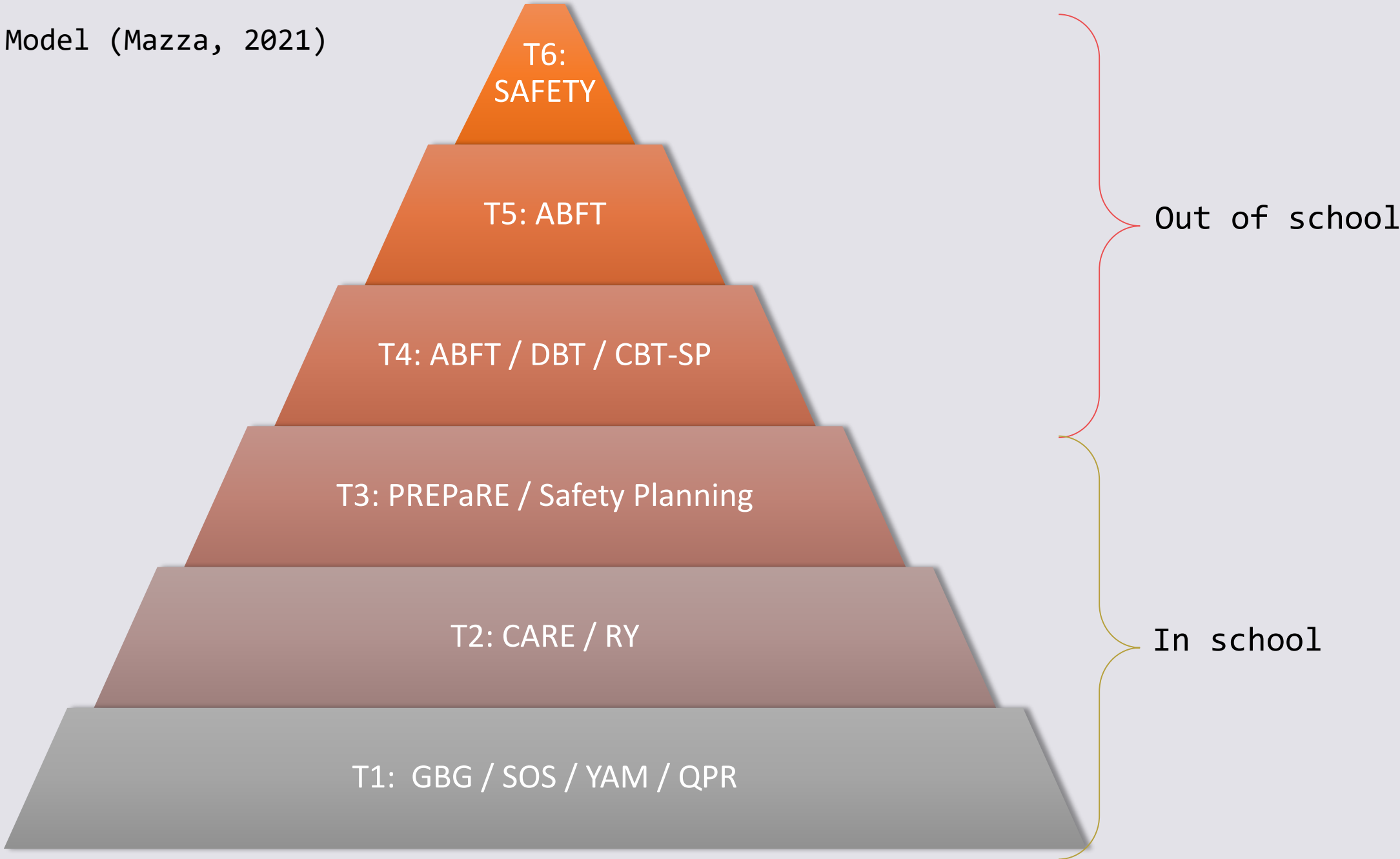
Prevention

- District-wide and building specific suicide prevention policies and protocols
 - + Suicide Prevention Coordinator
 - + Crisis teams include suicidal crises in scenario planning
 - + Establish relationships between care systems
 - + Culturally relevant trainings about death and bereavement
- Screening and monitoring youth (don't forget social media)
- Training on Safety Planning and coordination
- School re-entry (on-ground and digital) post-hospital discharge





6 Tier Model (Mazza, 2021)





Screening



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

Student name _____ Date of screen _____
Completed by (Name/title) _____
Reason for completing this form _____

	Past 24 hours	Past week	Past Month+
1. Have you ever wished you were dead?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have you ever felt that you, your friends, or your family would be better off if you were dead or gone?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Have you ever had thoughts about killing yourself?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. 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?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do you plan to kill yourself? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes a. If yes, how, when, and where?			

If the student answers YES to any question, a comprehensive suicide risk assessment should be completed either by school-based mental health staff or by referral based upon school district policy. It is recommended that parents are contacted in all cases where a screening is conducted, even if a student denies risk. It is also important to consult with other school staff on suicide risk cases, such as other school-based mental health professionals (SMHP), a Suicide Prevention Coordinator (SPC), crisis team members, and/or administrators.

Name of parent contacted _____ Date _____ Time _____
If Parent unreachable, list person/agency contacted _____
If yes to any question, referred to school staff for Suicide Risk Assessment? Yes No
Outside referral for assessment made? Yes No
Consulted with other SMHP, SPC, crisis team member or administrator? Yes No

Referred to: _____ Phone: _____
Email: _____

Date _____

Date _____

Adapted from the Ask Suicide-Screening Questions form (ASQ; Horowitz, 2012), the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS; Posner, 2009) and the Suicide Ideation Questionnaire-JR (SIQ-JR; Reynolds, 1997).

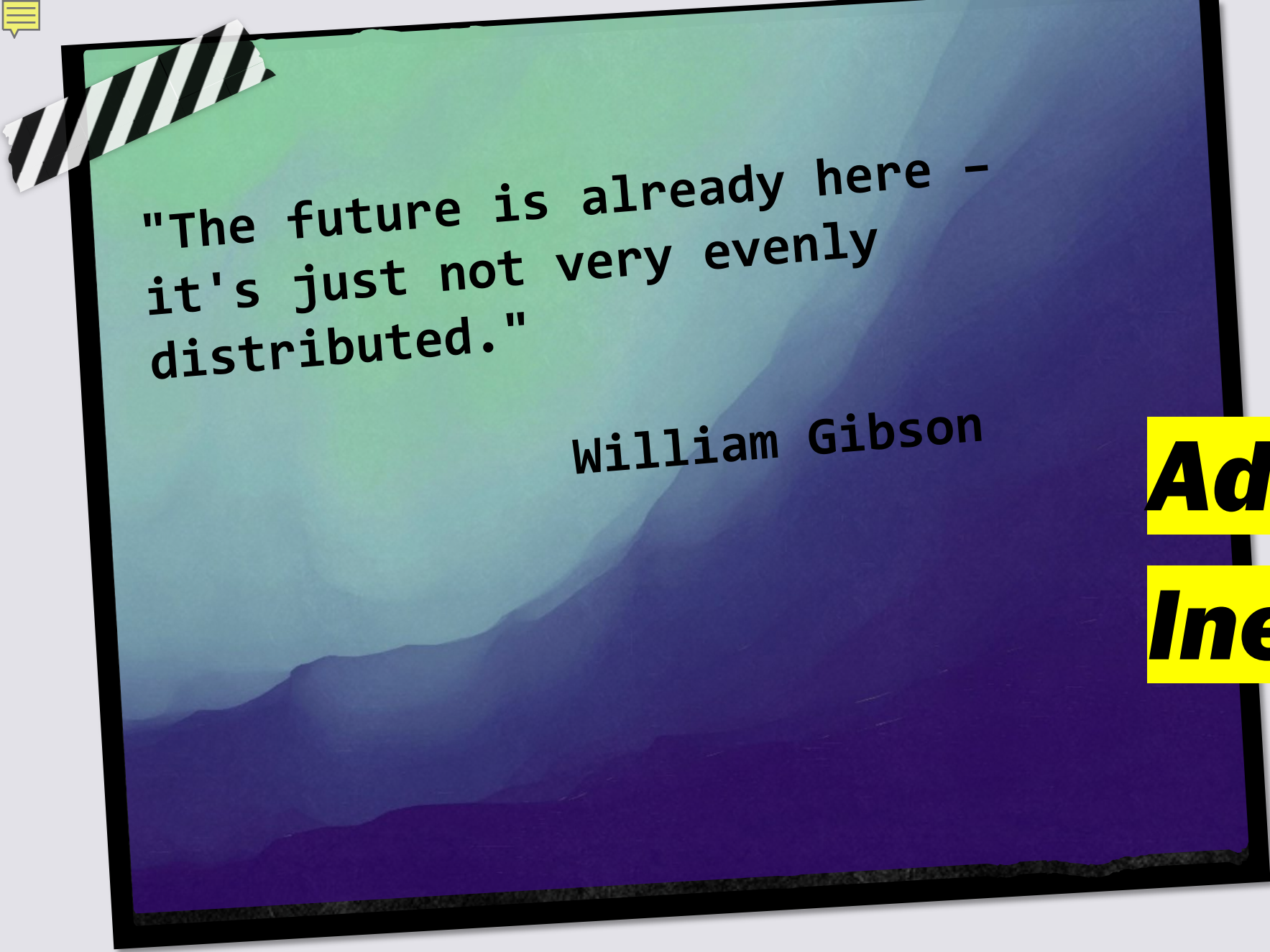
SiS Screening

Form 2.0

The image features a complex network diagram overlaid on a faint, stylized globe. The network consists of numerous nodes, represented by small circles in various colors including green, orange, purple, red, yellow, and grey. These nodes are interconnected by a dense web of thin, dark grey lines. The globe in the background is composed of several curved lines that suggest its spherical shape. The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

Social media





"The future is already here -
it's just not very evenly
distributed."

William Gibson

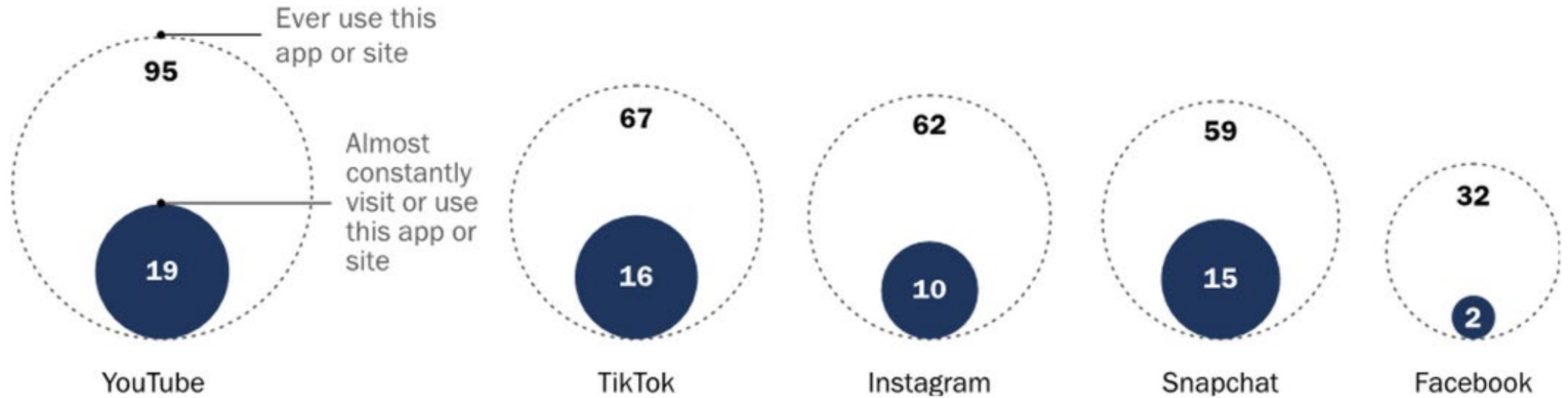
Addressing

Inequity





% of U.S. teens who say they ...



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

A young man and woman are standing outdoors, looking at their smartphones. The man is on the left, wearing a black t-shirt and a brown backpack, holding a red smartphone. The woman is on the right, wearing a black hoodie, holding a white smartphone. They are both looking down at their phones. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a building.

SOCIAL SURVEILLANCE

**STUDENTS USING DIGITAL
TECHNOLOGY TO MONITOR EACH OTHER**

On social media

interactions are often

public by default,

private through effort.

dannah boyd



i want to





#s3lfh4rm

Can we help?

Posts with words you're searching for often encourage behavior that can cause harm and even lead to death. If you're going through something difficult, we'd like to help.

[Get Support](#)

Show Posts

Cancel



!tw!

Sl3lf h4rm

Stress

Started st@rv!ng
myself

Fake friends

Loosing my
Bestfriend of 9 years

Comparing myself to
others

@lifegavemedepression · 2021/05/14

#lifegavemedepression

#HAIRFOODHYPE ...

See more

🎵 1 sound - theneedleto



Add comment...





when I was 12

I didn't felt anything

so I started s3lf
h@rming.

now I can't stop.



256



23



2

@_s0me1_ · 2021-10-05

Tw./ #tw #littlelad #lmanburg #dsmp
#german #sh #school #idk #fy

See translation

♪ jone.. - ??SP EDITOR!!



Add comment...





enbywitchpal asked
Can you show ways to easily hide sh in school??



Green Screen



@_v3nt__b00k · 2021-08-16

Answer to @enbywitchpal but it's always better to try and stop doing it </ 3 #SH #sh #selfharm #s3lfh #s3lfh4rm #school #sch00l #fypシ #foryoupage

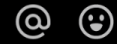


🎵 **undermusic** (Contains

Hide

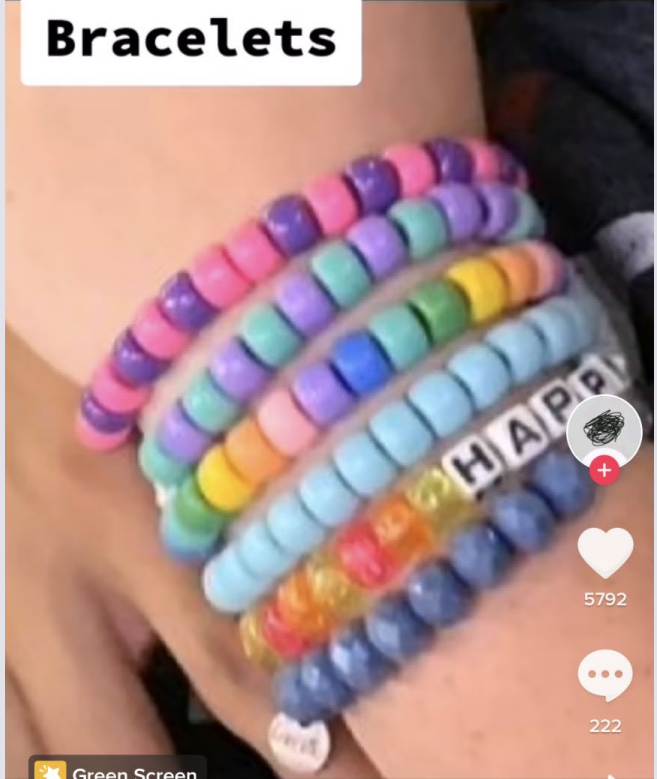


Add comment...



←
Arms

Bracelets



5792

222

Green Screen

@_v3nt__b00k · 2021-08-16

Answer to @enbywitchpal but it's always better to try and sto... See more

🎵 (Contains music from:

Add comment...

🔄
29
🎵
👤
@
😊



Stomach

RESPIRABLE

Foundation |



Green Screen

@_v3nit__b00k · 2021-08-16

Answer to @enbywitchpal but it's always better to try and sto... See more

🎵 1 - pondermusic (Conta

Add comment...





Neck

Chokers



5792



222

Green Screen

@_v3nt__b00k · 2021-08-16

Answer to @enbywitchpal but it's always better to try and sto... [See more](#)

sound - pondermusic



29

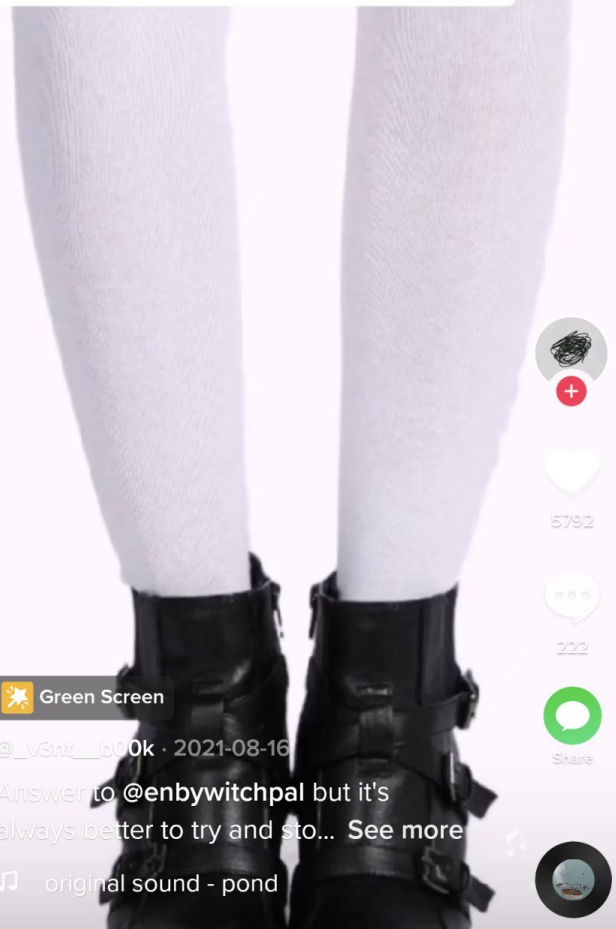
Add comment...





Legs

Knee high socks



5792

222

Green Screen

@_v3nit__b00k · 2021-08-16

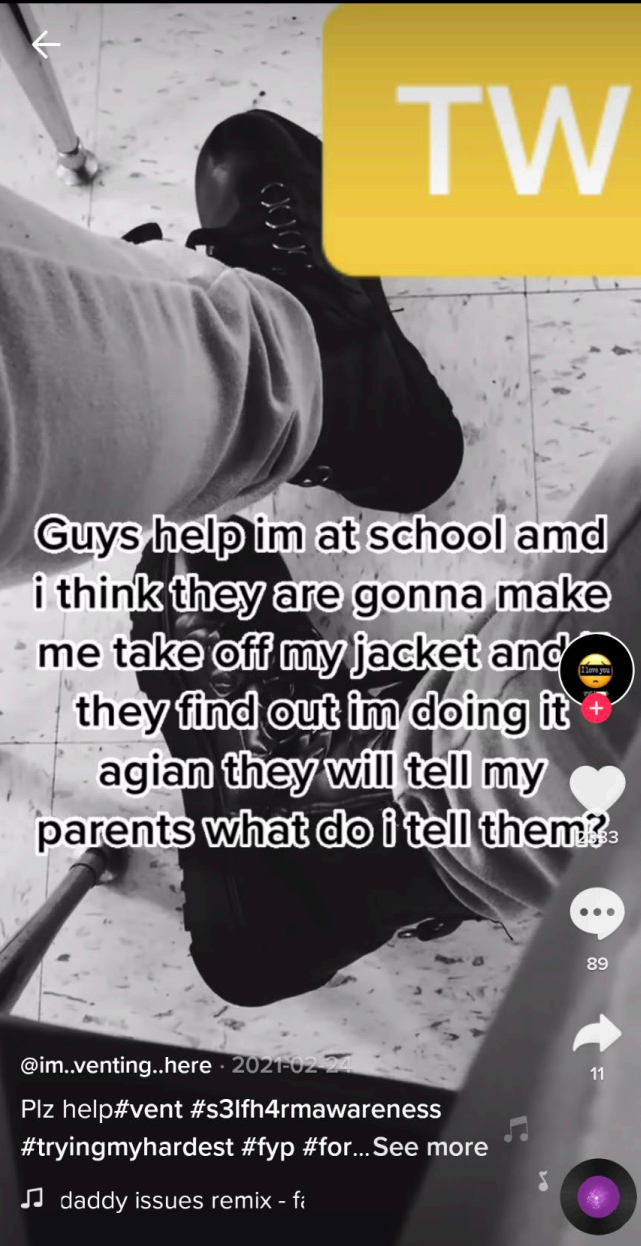
Answer to @enbywitchpal but it's always better to try and sto... See more

original sound - pond



Add comment...





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?

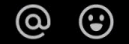


@im..venting..here · 2021-02-24

Plz help#vent #s3lfh4rmawareness
#tryingmyhardest #fyp #for... See more

♪ daddy issues remix - f:

Add comment...





Guys help im at school amd

89 comments



0.who_cares.0



tell them you dont have a shirt under

1

2021-02-25 Reply

Liked by creator



ur._local._weirdo



Say you don't have anything on under it

1

2021-02-25 Reply

Liked by creator



caspertheghostsbabydaddy



say you don't have a shirt on under it

1

2021-02-25 Reply

Liked by creator



hello10001101



And I cut too..

1

2021-02-27 Reply



Add comment...





Guys help im at school amd

89 comments



rustytoeslol



1

I'm young but I'm really tempted but I also don't want to at the same time-

2021-02-24 Reply

Liked by creator



arlene_dc



1

Socials

2021-02-25 Reply

Liked by creator



arlene_dc



1

I mean I started at nine and it was a huge mistake, it's been 3 years and I haven't been clean, please don't if you want to talk I can give you my

2021-02-25 Reply

Liked by creator

Hide ^



Add comment...





Guys help im at school amd

89 comments



sour_candyyyy



I'm really tempted.

84

2021-02-24 Reply

Liked by creator



im..venting..here · Creator



No don't I don't want you to be like me plz dont 🙄🙄

68

2021-02-24 Reply



Add comment...





Guys help im at school amd

89 comments



itsaddy.lmao



3

Same but pls pls don't

2021-02-24 Reply

Liked by creator



jazmine_lancaster00



10

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

2021-02-24 Reply

Liked by creator



frogz_lolz



8

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



Add comment...





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



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 / 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?

Assessment



Assessing for risk

- Understand the story of how and why someone became suicidal (Freedenthal, 2017).
- Identify points of **prevention rather than prediction** (Pisani et al., 2016).
 - After the suicide risk assessment, the social worker, client and family or friends should know what stressors or conditions might exacerbate the current suicide risk and have a plan to prevent those from happening. This contrasts with the traditional view of the suicide risk assessment as a tool for predicting the near future.
- “How confident are you that you will be able to keep yourself from attempting suicide?” (Czyk, 2018)



Suicide Risk

Assessment

1. Ideation
2. Intent
3. Plan
4. Strengths/Resources
5. Risk factors
6. Interpersonal distress
7. School/Work environment
8. Family environment
9. Presentation at time of assessment

X. RISK ASSESSMENT

1. **Low risk:** None or passing ideation that does not interfere with activities of daily living; reports no desire to die (i.e., intent), has no specific plan, exhibits few risk factors, and has identifiable protective factors.
2. **Moderate risk:** Reports frequent suicidal ideation with limited intensity and duration; has some specific plans to die by suicide but no reported intent. Demonstrates some risk factors but is able to identify reasons for living and other protective factors.
3. **High risk:** Reports frequent, intense, and enduring suicidal ideation. Reports specific plans, including choice of lethal methods and availability / accessibility of the method. Student presents with multiple risk factors and identifies few if any protective factors. If the student has written a suicide note, the student is immediately considered at high risk.

XI. OVERALL RISK LEVEL SUMMARY

Student meets criteria for **low / moderate / high** suicide risk based on the following information (If a student falls between levels, err on the side of caution and assume higher risk category):

- Current risk state (compared to prior or baseline, if known):

- Available resources at school, home, and in the community:

- Foreseeable changes that might increase or decrease risk:

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Warning signs

1. Talking about or making plans for suicide.
2. Expressing hopelessness about the future.
3. Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress.

Showing worrisome behavioral cues or marked changes in behavior, particularly in the presence of the warning signs above.

Specifically, this includes significant

- Withdrawal from or change in social connections/situations.
- Recent increased agitation or irritability.
- Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context.
- Changes in sleep (increased or decreased).



FAMILY BEHAVIOR THAT INCREASES HEALTH RISKS:

Don't Let Your Child Participate In LGBTQ Support Groups



www.lgbtqfamilyacceptance.org | FAMILY ACCEPTANCE PROJECT®

LGBTQIA+

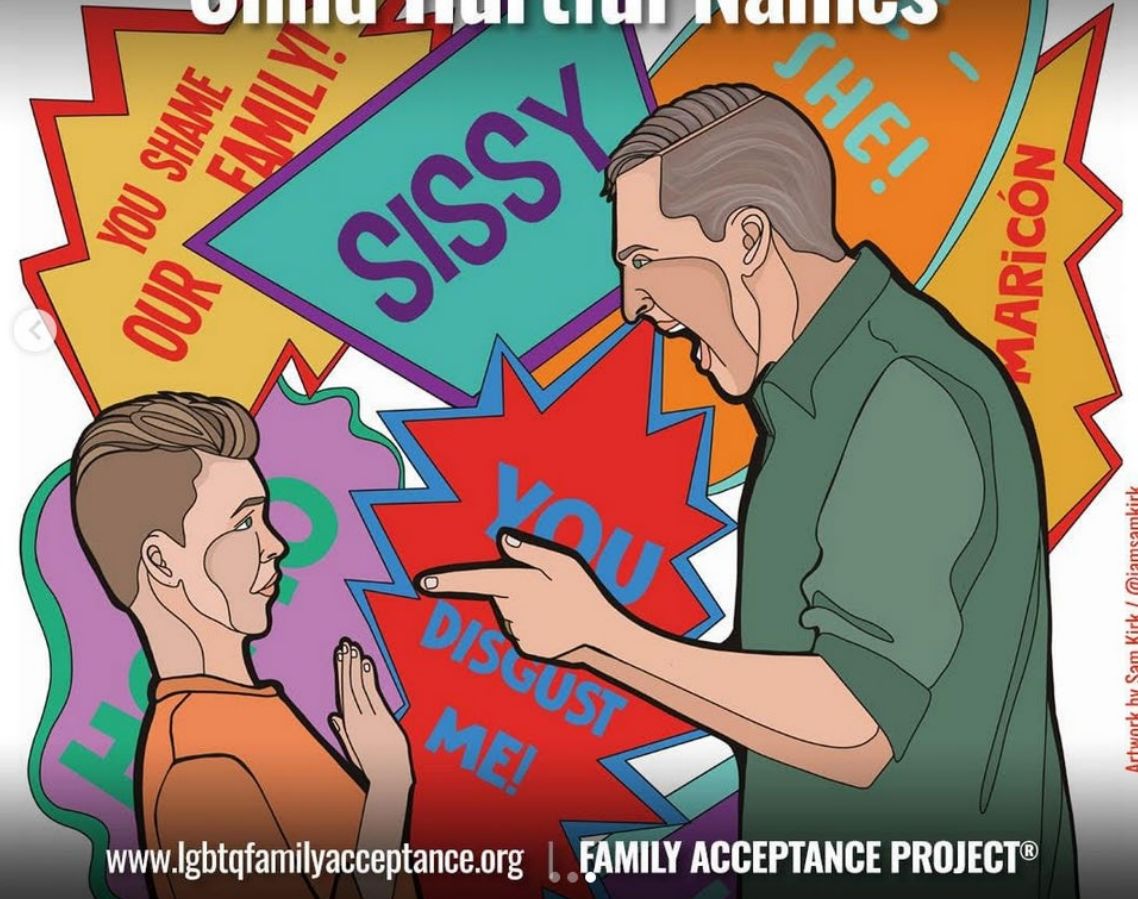
- Are there times when your parents say or do things that suggest they reject you because you are [sexual orientation and/or gender identity], such as telling you
 - + to “tone down” how you look or behave;
 - + that you’re just going through a phase;
 - + refusing to call you by your name or use your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

<https://lgbtqfamilyacceptance.org/>

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

FAMILY BEHAVIOR THAT INCREASES HEALTH RISKS:

Ridicule/Call Your LGBTQ Child Hurtful Names



www.lgbtqfamilyacceptance.org | FAMILY ACCEPTANCE PROJECT®

LGBTQIA+

- 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/>



**STEPS FOR HELPING
SOMEONE WITH
THOUGHTS
OF SUICIDE:**

1. DON'T BE A DICK

2. LISTEN

3. THERE ARE NO STEPS

@chrismvett



988

SUICIDE
& CRISIS
LIFELINE

TRANS
LIFELINE
(877) 565-8860

GET HELP 24/7:

 TrevorText Text START to 678678	 TrevorChat TrevorChat.org	 TrevorLifeline 866.488.7386
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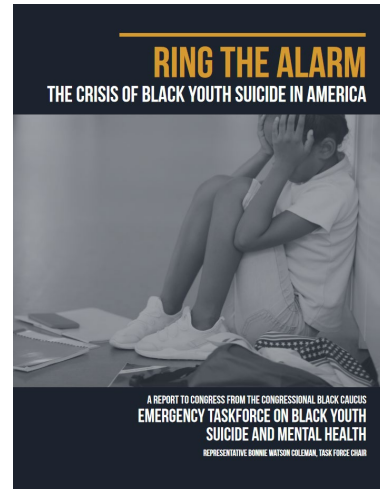
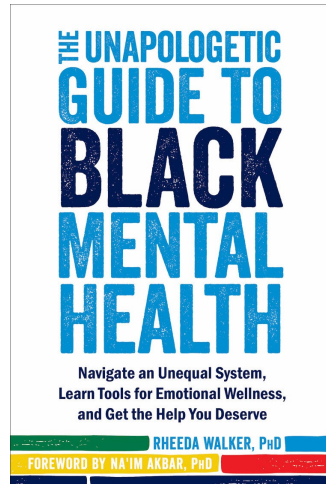
THE TREVOR PROJECT
Saving Young LGBTQ Lives

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



Dr. Sherry Molock

<https://psychology.columbian.gwu.edu/s-herry-molock>

Dr. Arielle Sheftall

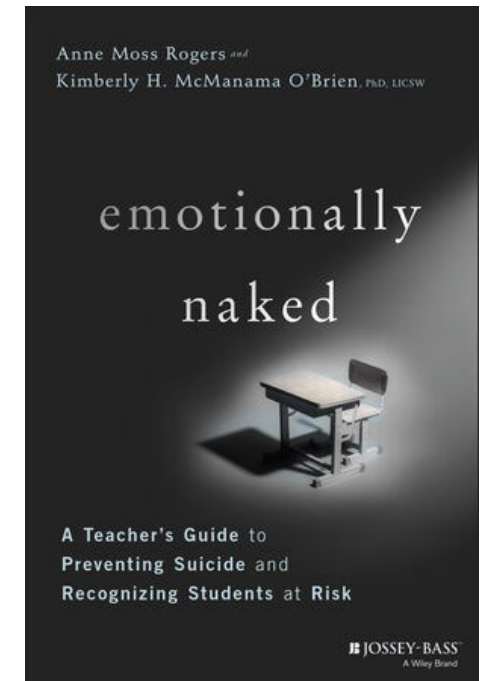
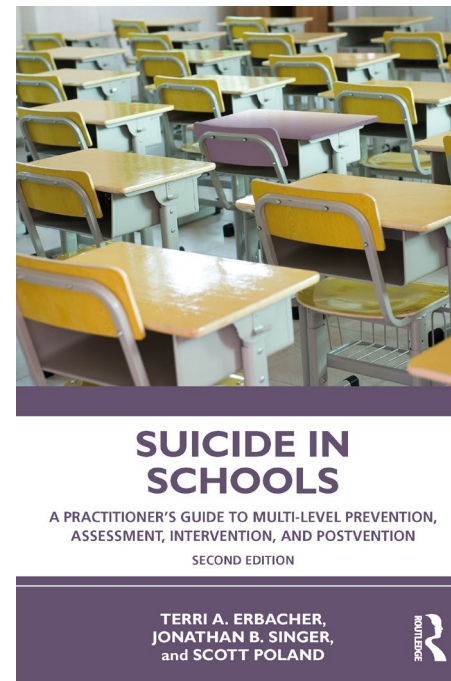
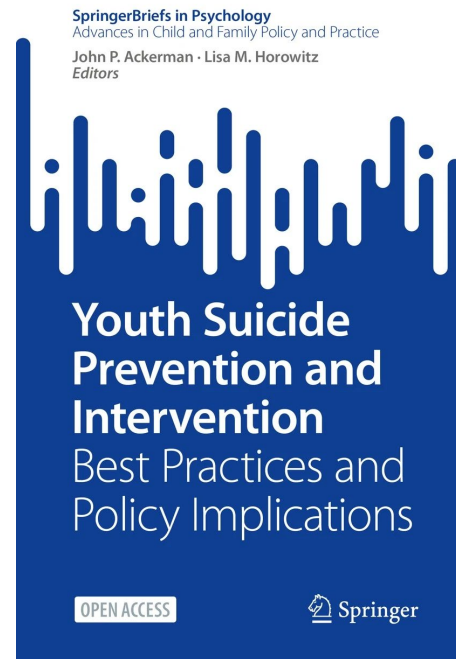
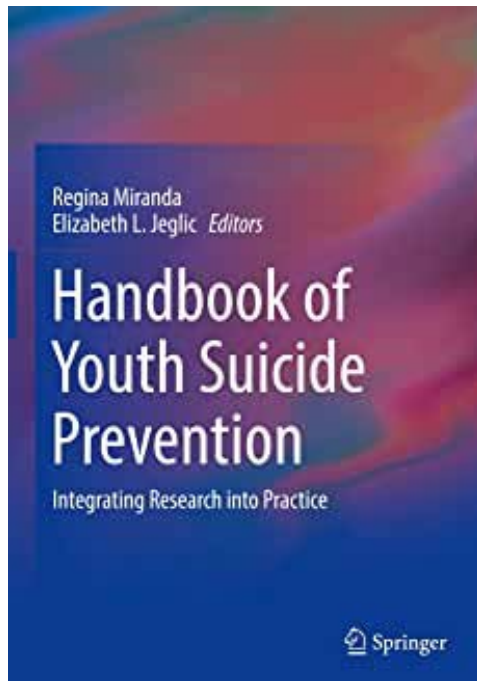
<https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/find-a-doctor/profiles/arielle-h-sheftall>

Dr. Sean Joe

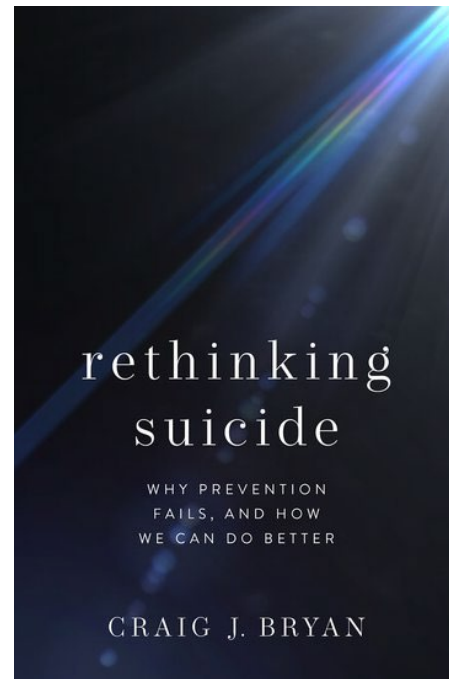
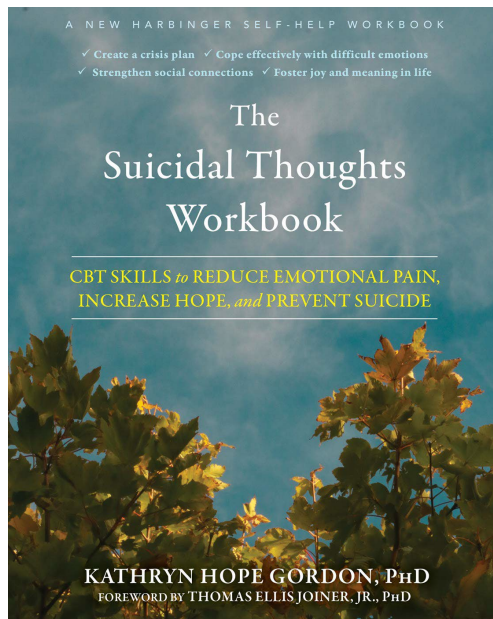
<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/Faculty-and-Research/Pages/Sean-Joe.aspx>

TEXTS ABOUT SUICIDE AND BLACK AMERICANS

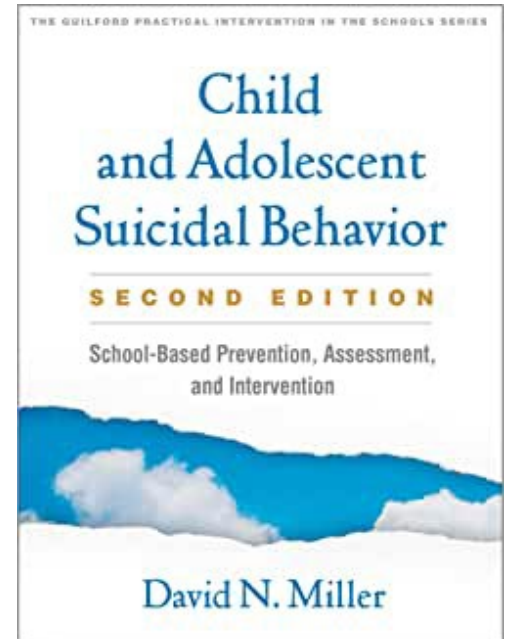
PRACTICAL TEXTS ON YOUTH SUICIDE



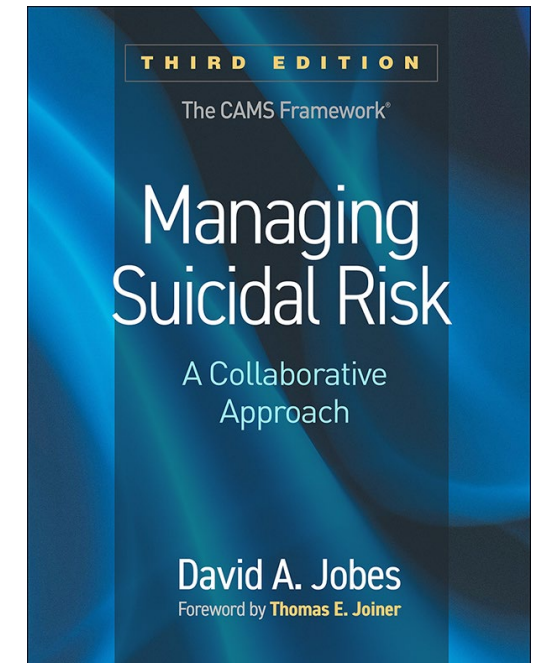
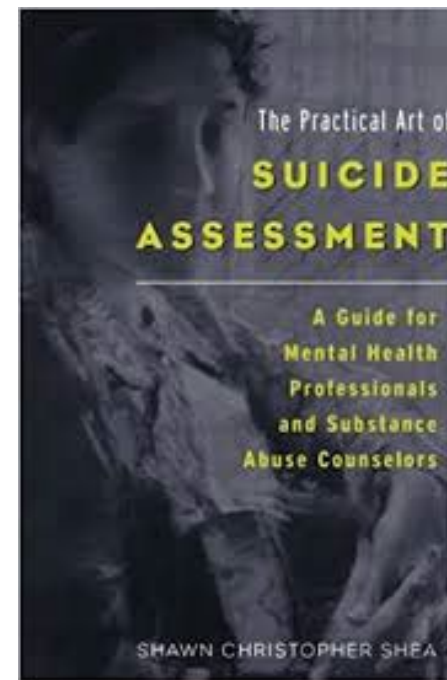
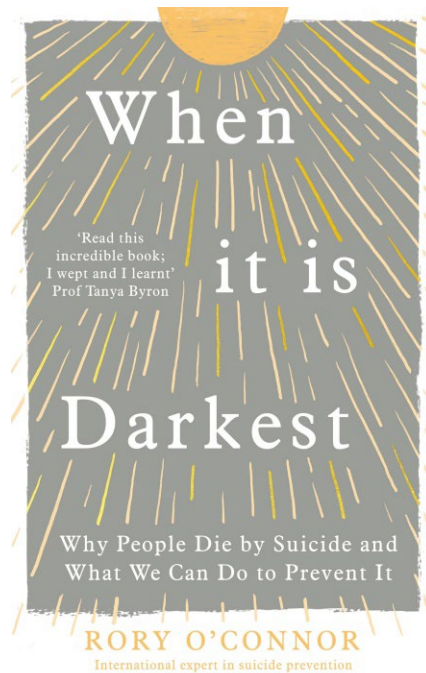
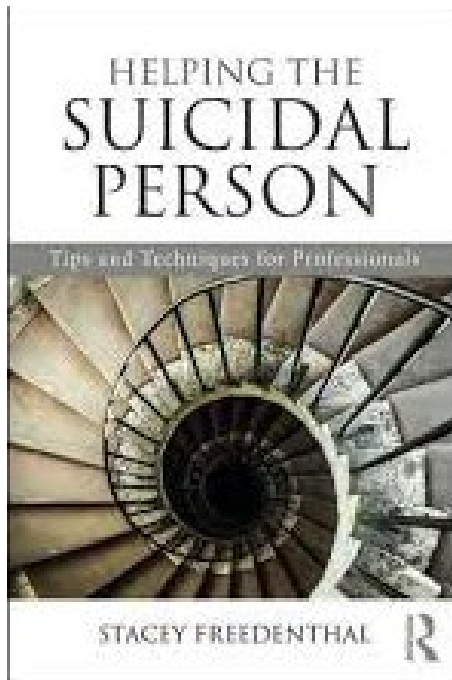
PRACTICAL TEXTS ON SUICIDE & ASSESSMENT



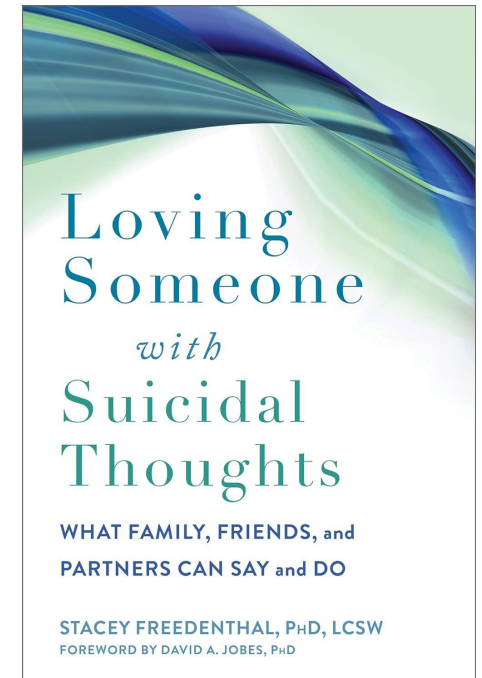
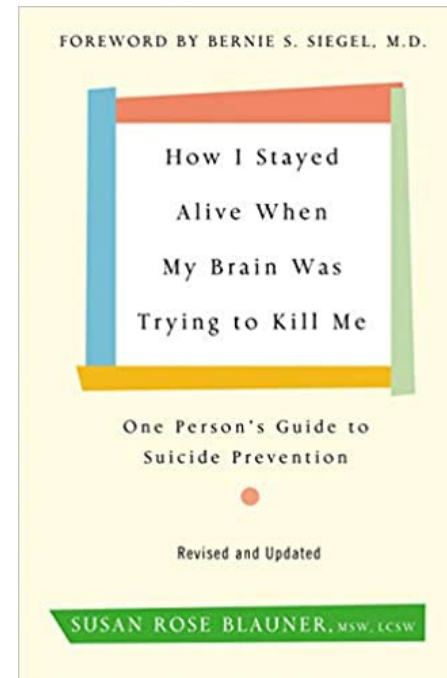
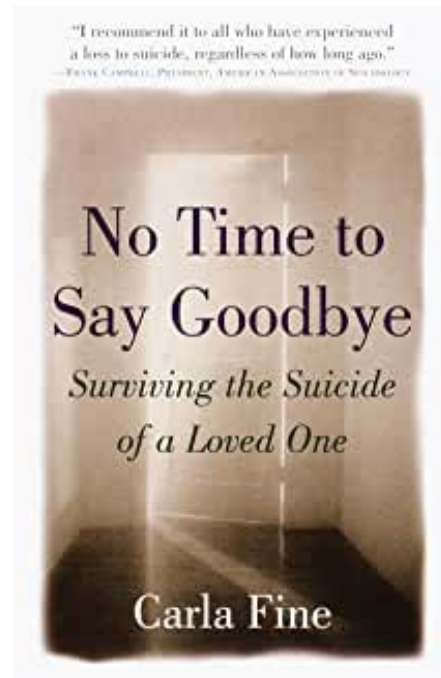
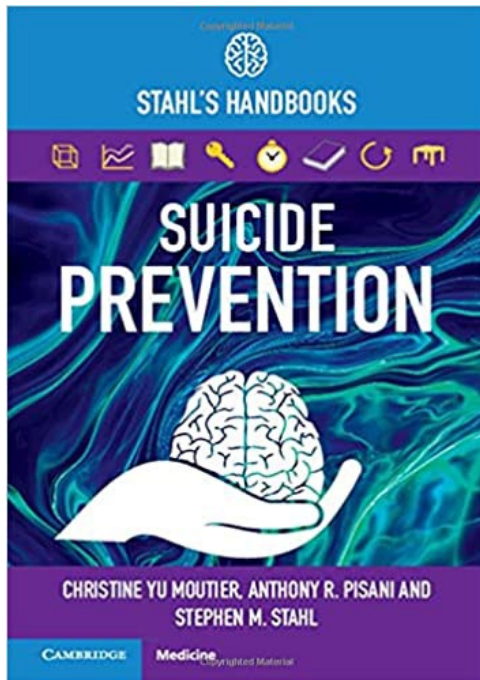
Suicide and suicidal behavior among youth and young adults is a major public health crisis. Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among young people 10-24 years of age in the United States (US), and rates have been



PRACTICAL TEXTS ON SUICIDE & ASSESSMENT



PRACTICAL TEXTS ON FOR FAMILIES & LOVED ONES





Thank you!

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