

APA Official Actions

Position Statement on Suicide Among Black Youth in the United States

Approved by the Board of Trustees, December 2025

Approved by the Assembly, November 2025

© Copyright 2025, American Psychiatric Association. All rights, including for text and data mining (TDM), Artificial Intelligence (AI) training, and similar technologies, are reserved.

“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . .” – *APA Operations Manual*

Issue:

Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among all youth aged 10-14 and the third leading cause of death in youth aged 15-19 in the United States. Though rising suicide rates across racial groups represent a major public health concern, research suggests that Black American youth in particular require urgent and immediate attention. Between 2001 and 2017, completed suicide among Black American adolescent boys and girls increased by 60% and 182% respectively. Self-reported suicide attempts and suicidal injury rates rose faster for Black adolescents as compared to adolescents of other ethnic backgrounds between 1991 and 2017. During that same study period, Black boys showed an increased rate of self-injury requiring medical attention by a doctor or nurse following a suicide attempt, when compared with boys from other racial/ethnic groups and Black girls, suggesting the use of more lethal means. In 2019, a task force led by the United States Congressional Black Caucus identified alarming gaps in identification, treatment and research of suicide in Black youth. Despite the growing rates of suicide, Black youth continue to have low rates of mental health engagement. These findings underscore the urgency of the mental health crisis in Black youth.

It is the Position of APA that:

Scientific evidence has demonstrated that racism, inequity in care, and other factors including bias, language discordance, adverse childhood experiences, and youth and caregiver mistrust of clinicians increase the risk of suicidal thoughts and prevent individuals from receiving care. Therefore, it is crucial to increase access to and research on culturally attuned best practices to address suicidal thoughts and behavior in Black youth.