



Preventing Suicide Among High-Risk Groups

Suicide affects individuals across all demographics, but certain groups face disproportionately higher risks. Populations such as LGBTQ+ individuals, veterans, older men and certain racial minorities experience unique challenges that contribute to elevated rates of suicide. By understanding the specific vulnerabilities these groups face, we can better tailor prevention efforts and provide the support necessary to save lives.

Disparities in Suicide Rates

LGBTQ+ Individuals: Forty-one percent of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in 2023, and 14% had made an attempt. Among transgender and nonbinary youth, the rate of consideration ranged from 48-56%.

Veterans: In 2020, veterans accounted for 13.7% of all suicides among U.S. adults, despite comprising only 8.4% of the adult population. A study released in 2022 found that as many as 44 veterans die on average per day from suicide.

Older Men: Men aged 75 and older have the highest suicide rates among all age groups, with a rate of 40.8 per 100,000 in 2021. Factors such as social isolation, physical illness and the loss of loved ones contribute significantly to this statistic.

Minorities: In 2021, suicide rates among Black youth have been increasing faster than any other racial/ethnic group. Indigenous peoples experience a suicide rate that is 3.5 times higher than that of the general U.S. population.

Addressing the Unique Challenges

Each of these groups faces distinct challenges that heighten their risk for suicide. Addressing these issues requires a nuanced and empathetic approach.

LGBTQ+ Individuals: LGBTQ+-identifying individuals often face societal stigma, discrimination and rejection from family and peers which contribute



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to feelings of isolation and hopelessness. Providing affirming environments, promoting acceptance and offering accessible mental health resources tailored to LGBTQ+ individuals are crucial steps in reducing suicide rates within this community.

Veterans: Veterans may struggle with PTSD, depression and the transition back to civilian life. They often face barriers in accessing mental health care, compounded by the stigma associated with seeking help. To support veterans, it is essential to expand access to mental health services, offer peer support programs and promote the importance of mental wellness.

Older Men: Social isolation, physical health issues and bereavement are significant risk factors for older men. Community engagement programs that encourage social interaction, regular health check-ups and mental health screenings can help mitigate these risks. Families and caregivers should be educated to recognizing the signs of depression and suicidal ideation in older adults and be encouraged to engage in open conversations about mental health.

Minorities: Systemic racism, economic disparity and cultural stigma surrounding mental health contribute to higher suicide rates among some populations. Culturally competent care that respects and understands the unique experiences of minority individuals is vital. Increasing the availability of mental health resources in minority communities, training mental health professionals in cultural competency, and fostering community support networks can make a significant difference.

If you or a loved one is struggling with depression or suicidal thoughts, talk to someone. Here are some ways to get help:

Lean on a support system. The veteran and LGBTQ+ communities are full of individuals who have experienced similar ups and downs. Talking to someone who understands the same struggles can help you cope during difficult times and feel understood.

Make a safety plan. Keep resources and your support network close for times when you may feel depressed, suicidal or in crisis. Always call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 9-8-8 or 800-273-8255 if you or someone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts.

Talk to a mental health professional. Call the behavioral health number on the back your health insurance card, or reach out to your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to get connected with counseling and other community support resources.

#StopSuicide

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 9-8-8 or 800-273-8255.

