



Suicide is Not a ‘White Thing’

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According to the CDC, for children ages 10-18, the second leading cause of death is suicide. Although the suicide rate for Black people remains low, it is increasing in Black youth. The study “Black Youth Suicide: Investigation of Current Trends and Precipitating Circumstances” found that the suicide rate for Black teens, 15-17, increased 4.9% and increased by 6.6% for Black girls.

Not only is mental health a stigma in the Black community, death by suicide is also. Despite Black people dying by suicide each year, some members of the Black community consider it a “white thing.” If mental health continues to be ignored or parents who are raising Black

children only believe this will only happen to white children, the Black youth suicide rate will continue to increase.

Dr. Arielle H. Sheftall, a lead researcher for the study that was released this month told TIME earlier this year, “Black youths are two times more likely to die by suicide compared to their white counterparts ... We want to intervene, but we don’t know what the best intervention is yet.” The first step is informing people of the problem. Research studies such as the one Sheftall helped conduct provides the data to let the Black community know this is not a white thing.

Another study, from 2020, found evidence that racism is impacting Black youth and causing short term depressive behavior. Depression is one of the many causes for death by suicide. No two suicides are alike. A myriad of factors can combine and lead up to youth losing hope and believing suicide is the only option.

It will also be important to continue to follow the data and evaluate the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of Black youth and having suicide ideation. Parents should not ignore changes in their children’s behavior and believe they can shake them off. As youth are developing, they are still learning how to manage their emotions and support from mental health specialists might be necessary.

Dr. Sheftall has noted that the best interventions are still being identified, and it is important that we all stay vigilant to ensure this happens.

Click [here](#) to access suicide prevention resources.