

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Two Years Into COVID

Presented by: Rosie McMahan, AmeriCorps Program Manager

100 years ago

Life expectancy was shorter,

Kids were dropping out of school to work (no labor laws),

The world was recovering from a pandemic,

The automobile industry was born,

Alcohol was prohibited,

(White) women finally got the right to vote,

Radios were the main source of entertainment,

Jazz and dance clubs were all the rage,

&



Today



Success varies for young people in the workforce despite education

Young people are trading marriage and kids for cohabitation - with family of origin or roommates

The dollar buys a lot less/downwardly mobile

Gender role benders

Most liberal & yet most cynical generation since WWII

And

WHO I AM

Rosie McMahan





WHAT I HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH~

Review pre COVID vs post COVID mental health concerns

General & specific things we can do about it

Looking at culture and the influence it has on our understanding of how best to respond

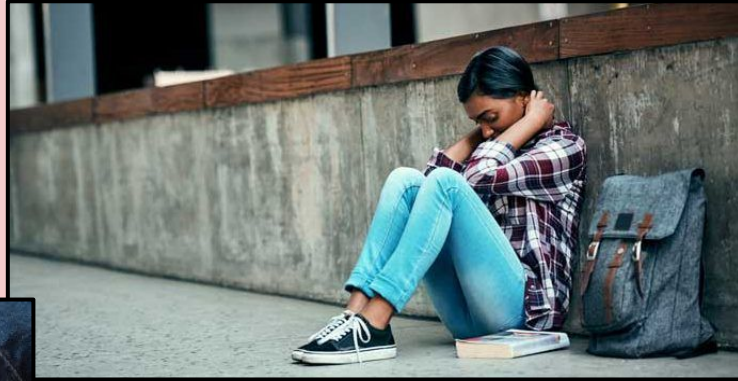
Ask the question, "How well is my organization doing?"

Name suicide as a concern

Mentoring, and the role it might play in well being

Evaluation of our time together

What the data told us before COVID



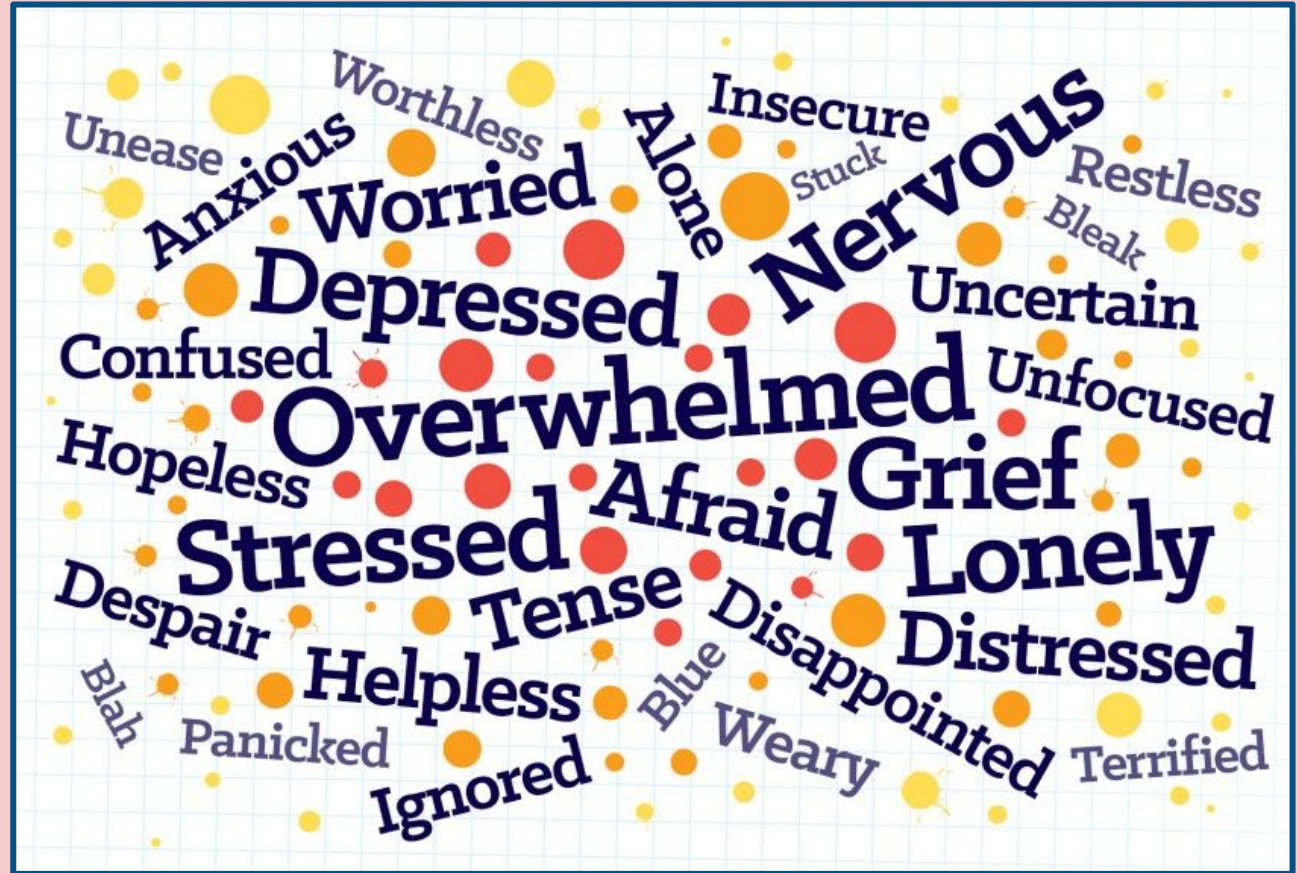




Adults are no doubt experiencing our own challenges right now.



What the data tells us post COVID?



FINDINGS

I Miss the Sound of Our Bells offers seven key findings about high school students' lived experiences during the pandemic. In summary, we found that:



1. Remote learning presented specific struggles for nearly every student we interviewed. Young people described a loss of connection.
2. Some students took on additional responsibilities for paid work or caregiving, As a result, their school attendance and engagement suffered.
3. Young people became acutely aware of illness and death.
4. Heightened attention to race-based violence and calls for racial justice, led to widespread mental health issues.
5. Students' networks of support among both peers and adults shifted. Some friendships deepened, and most students had at least one adult they could turn to for help. However, few young people reported organized support systems or programs that could connect them with needed resources.
6. Young people met pandemic-related challenges with resilience, increased self-awareness, and a new appreciation for what "normal" life looked like.
7. Though students craved the connection of going back to school in person, they also worried about whether returning to the classroom would be safe.

“With increasing stress comes increasing risk for mental health symptoms, or reoccurrence of symptoms, at a time when there are fewer options for getting simple supports that can help lower stress levels.

When our homes have increased stress, the chances of depression or substance use rise, as does the possibility of abuse or violence at home.

These are all factors identified as potential **Adverse Childhood Experiences** (ACEs), and we know from many studies of ACEs that when young people have these early experiences, they face increased risk of lifelong morbidity or mortality.

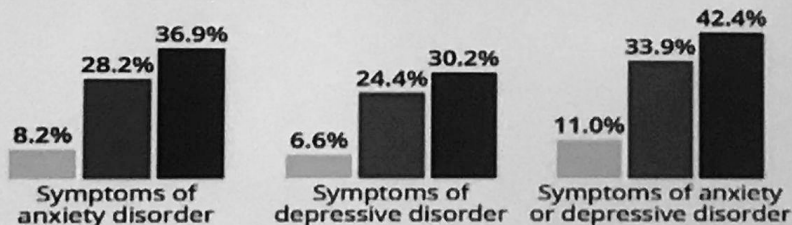


Impact of isolation

Pandemic Causes Spike in Anxiety & Depression

% of U.S. adults showing symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder*

■ January-June 2019 ■ May 14-19, 2020 ■ December 9-21, 2020



* Based on self-reported frequency of anxiety and depression symptoms. They are derived from responses to the first two questions of the eight-item Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-2) and the seven-item Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-2) scale.

Sources: CDC, NCHS, U.S. Census Bureau

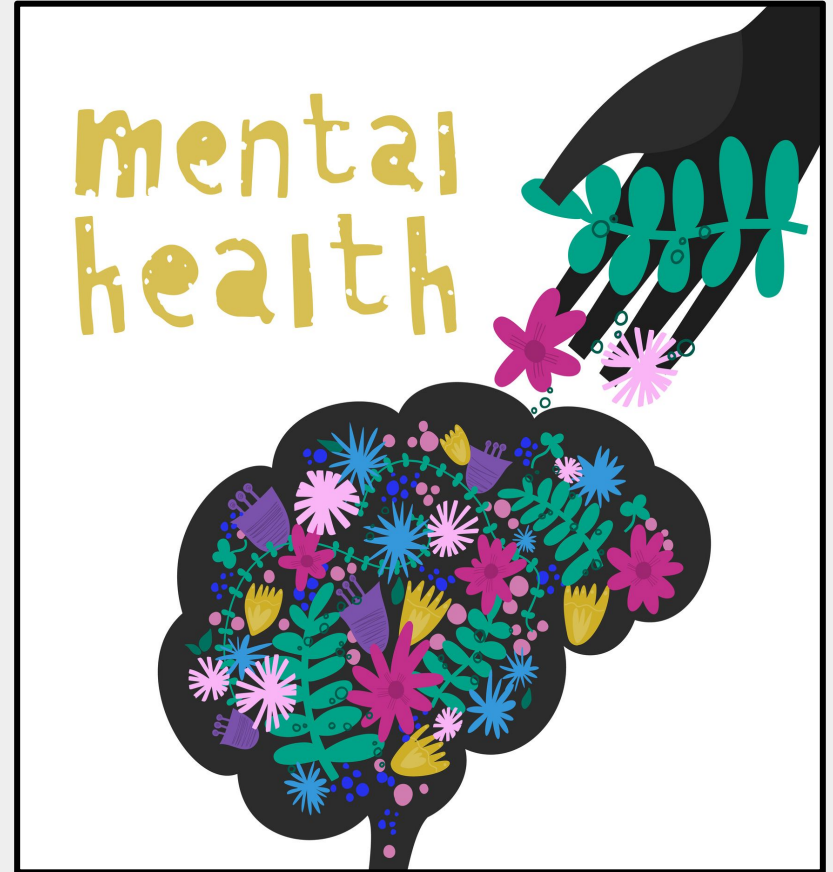


statista



Mental Health is a state of well-being in which an individual:

- Realizes their own capabilities
- Can cope with the normal stresses of life
- Can work or go to school productively
- Can contribute to their community in meaningful ways

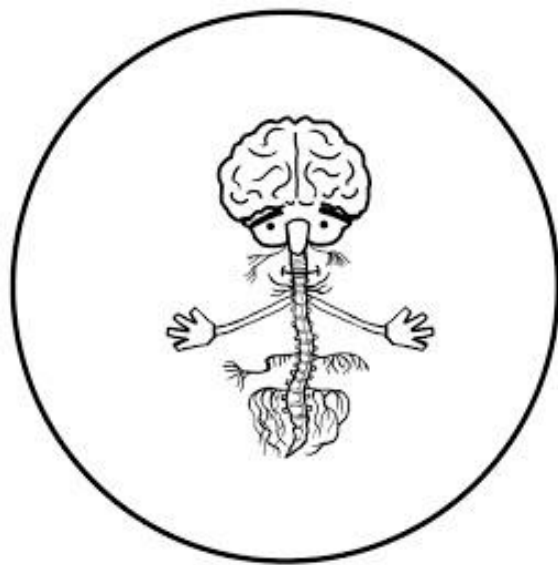


Another way to look at mental health...



What we know as "mental health" is a **product** of social, cultural, historical, and political **systems**. These systems favor certain groups over others.

Image created by Alyse Ruriani (www.alyseruriani.com & [instagram.com/alyseruriani](https://www.instagram.com/alyseruriani))



Wellness Workbook

Opening Circle: **What does wellness look like for you?**

Clover Model of Development

- Voice
- Choice
- Autonomy

Assertiveness

Active
Engagement

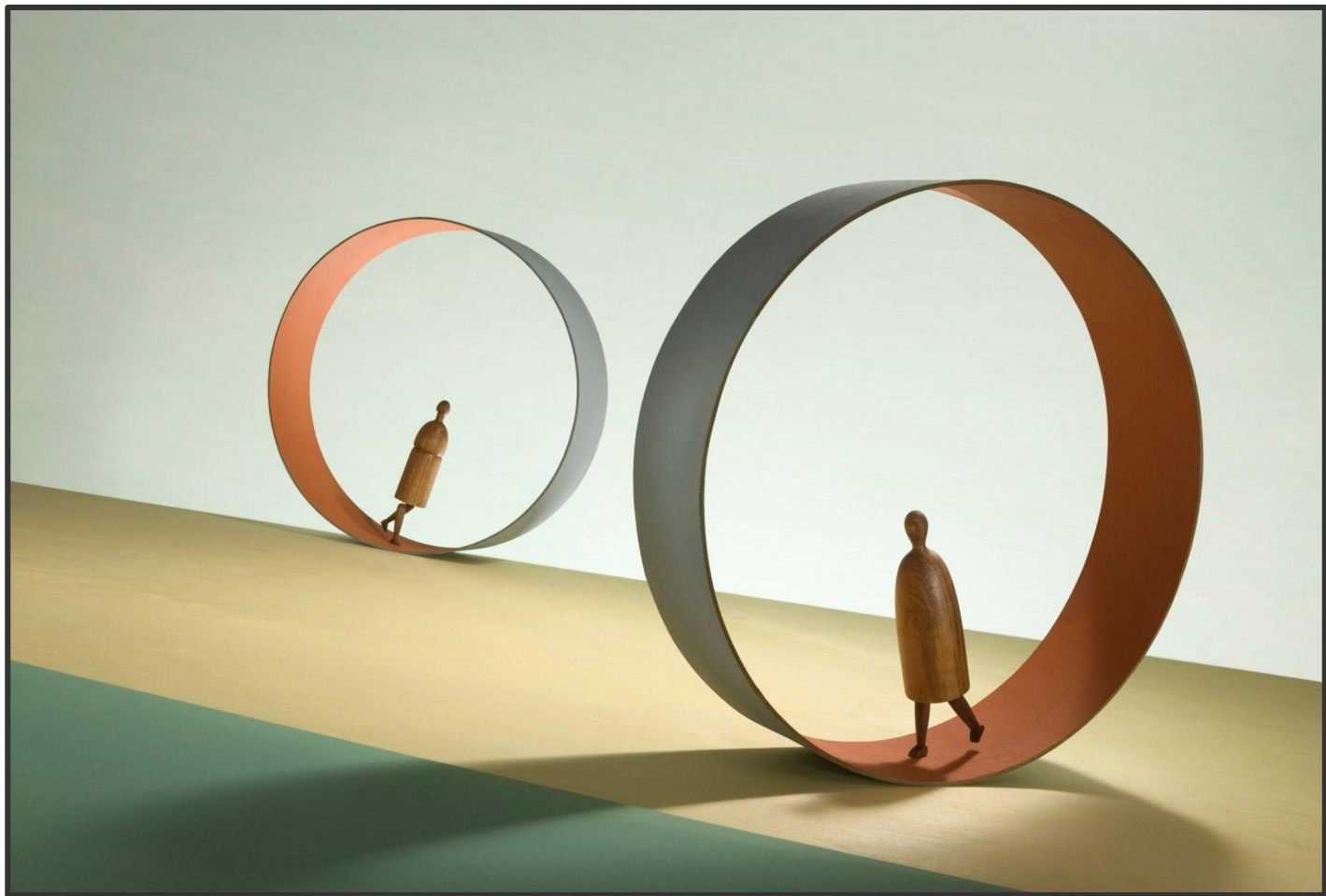
- Body
- Movement
- Hands-on learning

Belonging

Reflection

- Relationships
- Community
- Acceptance

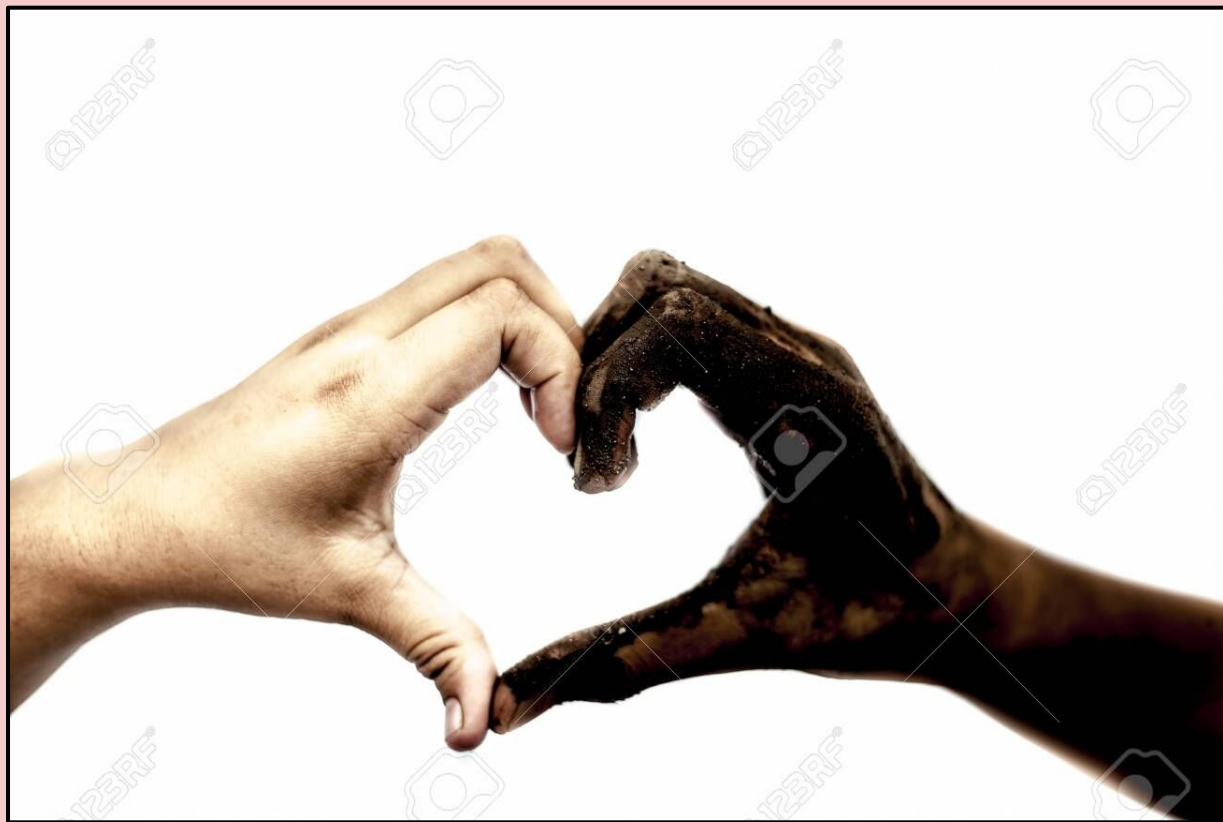
- Meaning-making
- Observation
- Insight
- Self-awareness



GENERAL THINGS YOU CAN DO







Feelings and Emotions

Match the faces with the emotions.

Things that make me
happy...

I get excited when...

I was surprised when...



angry
embarrassed

surprised

happy

worried

scared

sad

excited



Things that make me
sad...

I get angry when...

I was worried when...







SPECIFIC THINGS YOU CAN DO

Talk privately about your concerns at a mutually convenient time in a place free of distractions.

Be aware that a person may not open up to you until they are sure that you care.

A young person may downplay what they are going through to avoid upsetting you.

Let the young person know you are ready when they are — do not put pressure on them to talk right away.

BREATHING EXERCISE



HOW DOES (MY) CULTURE
INTERSECT WITH HOW I
COMMUNICATE AND LISTEN?

Share in Breakout Rooms





~ Remember ~



RESPECT!

Because Youth Truth Matters

R

REAL EMPOWERMENT

Youth voice and actions make a positive difference in the school and the community.

E

ENVIRONMENT IS YOUTH FRIENDLY

The school feels safe, fair and inclusive.

S

SUPPORT & GUIDANCE FROM ADULTS

Adults believe in the youth and help them learn and grow.

P

PARTICIPATION IS MEANINGFUL

Youth can get involved in different ways that are important to them.

E

ESTABLISH GOALS

Youth set goals for themselves, the school and the community.

C

COMMUNITY MATTERS

Youth focus on making a difference in the lives of other youth, the community, and the natural environment.

T

TOGETHER WE LEARN


Youth and adults learn from each other and build new skills.



The image features two black silhouettes of hands against a solid orange background. The hand on the left is positioned higher and further to the left, with fingers slightly spread. The hand on the right is lower and further to the right, also with fingers spread. Both hands are oriented towards the center of the frame, creating a sense of reaching or interaction. Two semi-transparent orange rectangular boxes with dark red text are overlaid on the image. One box is located in the upper right quadrant, and the other is in the lower left quadrant.

Why Is Asking For

Help So Hard?



we're only ever limited to our
own beliefs

Jennifer Pierre

 QuotesLyfe





Emotional Safety. It's important to minimize surprises and to help staff understand that the organization is looking out for their wellbeing.



Physical Safety. A safe environment decreases the stress response and ensures that rational thinking, judgment, and attentional control can occur. It's important to address the safety concerns related to the physical space and the people using and providing services. During a health-related crisis, physical safety will be a priority.



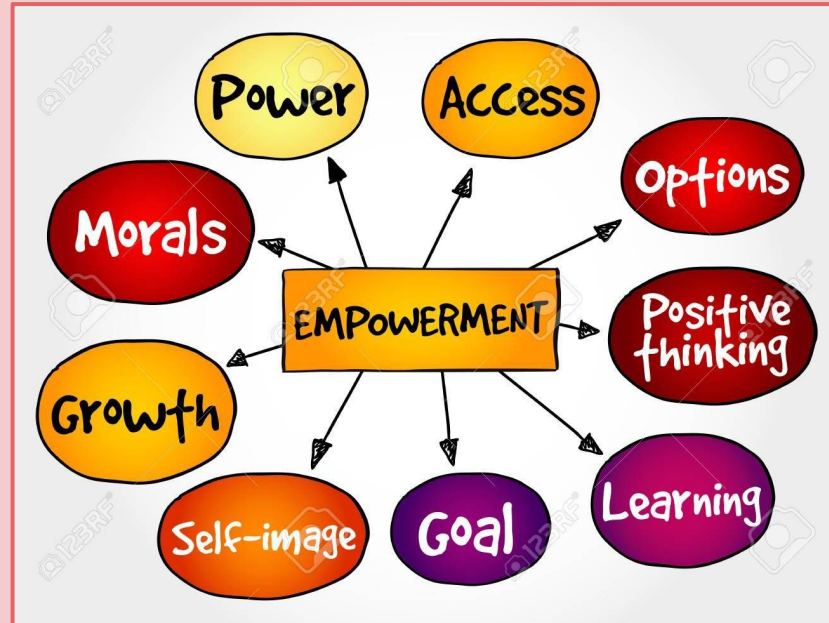
Peer Support and Relationship. Positive attachment and bonding can suppress a stress response. Social support is key to an individual's ability to be resilient in the face of trauma and toxic stress. Build on existing ways to connect or create new ones. If staff is working remotely, this will be especially important.



Trust/Transparency. Being transparent fosters trust and creates a sense of value and belonging for staff.



Voice, Choice, and Empowerment. This crisis will result in a loss of control and power for people. Providing information to and soliciting input from staff is empowering.



Cultural Responsivity. This crisis will affect groups of individuals differently based on multiple factors, e.g., history, access to services, racism, and systemic oppression. It's important to think about the communities who will be affected by policy and practice decisions.



Collaboration. This crisis is requiring organizations to think differently about how they conduct their work and provide services. Given the tremendous needs and the huge numbers of people affected, it will be necessary to merge, expand, or collaborate across organizations. We can't do this in isolation.



Portland State University
COVID & TRAUMA

Break Out Rooms



SUICIDE AS A CONCERN

(NIMH)

In 2018, there were 48,344 recorded **suicides**, up from 42,773 in 2014, according to the CDC's National Center for Health **Statistics** (NCHS). On average, adjusted for age, the annual **U.S. suicide** rate increased 24% between 1999 and 2014, from 10.5 to 13.0 **suicides** per 100,000 people, the highest rate recorded in 28 years.

This past year, it remains the second leading cause of death among 15 to 24 year olds after accidents.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) WISQARS Leading Causes of Death Reports, in 2018:



<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/25/opinion/suicide-prevention.html>

“Just as safer highways and car models make seatbelts more effective, asking about and responding to suicidal thinking is only one part of a solution that also includes attention to societal injustices.”

European Research On~

The importance of being present:

*Reflections on the importance of relationships in
youth mentoring*

Dr Bernadine Brady and Prof Pat Dolan
Dec 8th 2020

A Presence Mentor!

- *‘There for Mentee’ – Has value in itself*
- **‘Takes time’ – Listening or ‘the two ears one mouth rule’!**
- **‘Affirms’ - acts as dignity insurance**
- **‘Not problem-fixated’ - might lead to problem solving**

(Adapted from Baart 2002)

Dolan and Brady 2012; Brady Dolan and McGregor 2020



Mentoring helped in these ways:

- Providing a supportive adult presence
- Building social and community networks
- Repairing disconnections/promoting connections with school & education
- Relaxation & leisure
- Strategies to manage emotions/relieve stress
- Supporting a positive sense of agency

RESOURCES

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255) [24/7 Hotline] 1-888-628-9454 (Spanish) 1-800-799-4889 (TTY) This hotline is available 24 hours a day.

<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2020/04/cover-kids-screens>

<https://www.stanfordchildrens.org/en/service/child-adolescent-psychiatry/supporting-mental-health-covid-19>

https://www.aecf.org/blog/creating-a-sense-of-belonging?utm_source=linkedin&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=blog&utm_term=casey-linkedin

<https://iei.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/GenZConsumers.pdf> (escapism)

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/02/01/metro/surge-depression-during-pandemic-among-children-color-between-5-11-year-old-boston-medical-center-researchers-say/>

<https://ginwright.medium.com/the-future-of-healing-shifting-from-trauma-informed-care-to-healing-centered-engagement-634f557ce69c>

<https://ceresinstitute.org/i-miss-the-sound-of-our-bells/>

