

Culturally Attuned, Community-Centered Approaches: Understanding Suicidality among Latine Communities



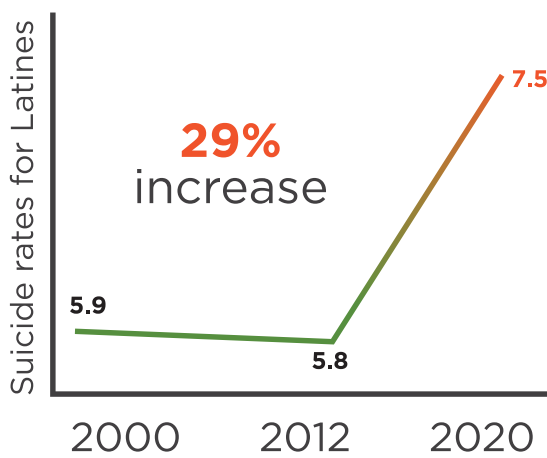
**HISPANIC/LATINO
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
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Overview

Suicide is defined as a death that results from an action taken by a person with the intent to die (CDC, 2022).¹ Suicide is a public health issue that affects many communities including Latine communities. Culturally attuned and community-centered prevention, intervention and postvention approaches are more effective and in alignment with the Latine experience.

Recent data indicates that:

- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander adults were at the highest risk of past-year suicide attempts, followed by Latine and White adults respectively.¹
- Suicide rates for Latines were stable from 2000 (5.9) to 2012 (5.8) and then increased 29% through 2020 (7.5).²
- Between 2011 and 2020, **the suicide death rate among Latine males was more than 4x the rate among Latinas**. Death by suicide rates among the overall U.S. population was more than double the rate among Latine populations in both males and females.³
- In 2021, higher percentages of Latine high school youth reported they felt sad or hopeless, made a suicide plan, attempted suicide, and made a suicide attempt requiring treatment in the past year compared to youth in the overall U.S. population. The percentage of Latine high school youth who reported they seriously considered suicide was equal to the percentage among youth in the overall U.S. population.⁴



– Suicide rates among Latine populations increased from 5.7 per 100,000 in 2011 to 7.5 per 100,000 in 2020. Among the overall U.S. population, the increase was from 12.3 per 100,000 in 2011 to 13.5 per 100,000 in 2020.³

– **Latine LGBTQ+ youth** have **22% higher risk of suicide attempts** in the past year compared to **non-Latine LGBTQ+ youth**.⁵

Social Determinants of Health to Consider in Prevention Efforts with Latine Communities:

- Limited literacy on mental health issues
- Acculturative stress
- Lack of access to care
- Poverty
- Racism and discrimination
- Housing insecurity
- Alienation
- Fatalism

The excess burden these living conditions create may increase risk of suicidal behaviors among Latine populations.

Cultural Variables that may Serve as Protective Factors for Suicide Risk:

- *Familismo*
- Ethnic identity/affiliation
- Spirituality and moral objections to suicide
- Feelings of connectedness
- Among students: feeling cared by teachers⁶

These variables reflect the value of collectivism common in Latine communities. Collectivism consists of four components: the superiority of group goals, interest in membership in the group, having common features with the group, and common concerns. Collectivism provides a sense of belonging among Latine individuals, where mutual reciprocity is highly valued and practiced among members.⁷

Studies have found a relationship between sense of belonging, connectedness, community integration, engagement, well-being, and decreased suicide risk. With such evidence, it is key that suicide prevention, intervention and postvention efforts consider cultural values, particularly those that reflect collectivism. Collectivism implies that the well being of one is the well being of all, and that a sense of community is key in preventing as well as healing from a death by suicide.⁸

Community Approaches

- Provide a space for community members to share their feelings and coping strategies.
- Respect traditional practices that provide meaning to suicide-related experiences.
- Promote the integration of community members to increase the sense of belonging.
- Understand the importance of cultural values and how they may intersect with the way Latines understand and experience mental health.



The Hispanic/Latino Behavioral Health Center of Excellence recognizes the complexities associated with gender and ethnic identification, as well as the right of all individuals to self-identify. HLBH CoE uses the term Latine with the intention of both facilitating fluent reading and pronunciation and supporting an inclusive and respectful language. Latine is a gender-neutral form of the word Latino that uses the letter e at the end, an idea native to the Spanish language.

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