

A Cry for Help from Black/African American Youth

Hi Jennifer,

I am writing to Ebony Media in hopes of shedding light on a little-known crisis that is occurring in the Black/African American community. The perception of suicide has been portrayed as a “white phenomenon”; however, statistics say otherwise. From 1991-2019, there has been an 80% increase in suicide rates of black youth. Suicide rates among African American males between ages 15 to 24 years old increased by 47% from 2013-2019. Rates among African American females in the same age group also increased by 59%.

African American youth are more likely to grow up disproportionately affected compared to white youth due to systematic racism, historical trauma, and racial discrimination. These circumstances can cause risk factors for suicide that are unique to black youth, in addition to, cause misdiagnoses and failure of treatment of mental illnesses that can lead to suicide.

Risk factors such as neighborhood violence, socioeconomic issues, and interpersonal conflicts with family result in higher rates of suicide among African American youth than white counterparts. Negative attitudes toward seeking help, feelings of embarrassment, and lack of trust in the healthcare system are rooted in stigma surrounding mental health in the black community.

To combat this rising issue, we need to raise awareness within the community, more so to parents and guardians of black youth, of the warning signs of suicide and depression and work to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health. Furthermore, involvement and collaboration

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from educators, the healthcare industry, child services, juvenile justice systems, psychiatrists, and psychologists is essential to change the narrative of mental health in the Black/African American community. Additional funding and advocacy are also necessary to develop culturally tailored and inclusive programs, approaches, and training to reach black youth in need of help.

As a leading voice in the Black/African American community, Ebony Media is the ideal platform to speak on this despair that is plaguing the black youth. Please let me know if you are interested in discussing this further. Thank you for your time and attention.

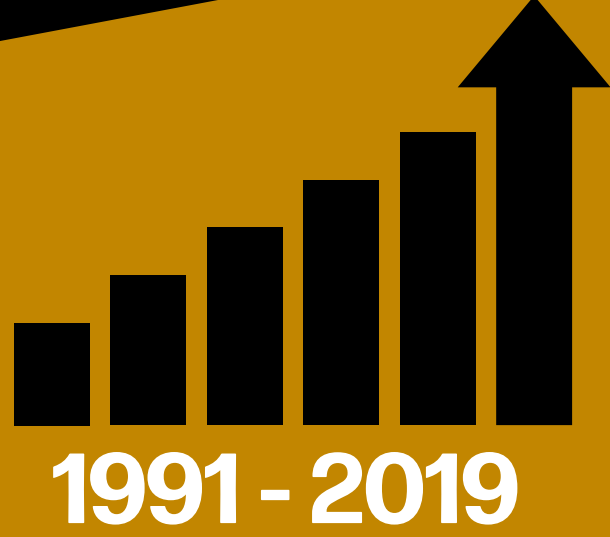
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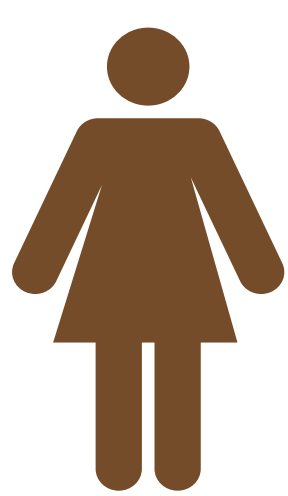
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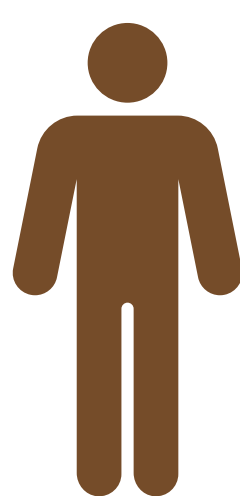
80%

increase in suicide rates among black youth.



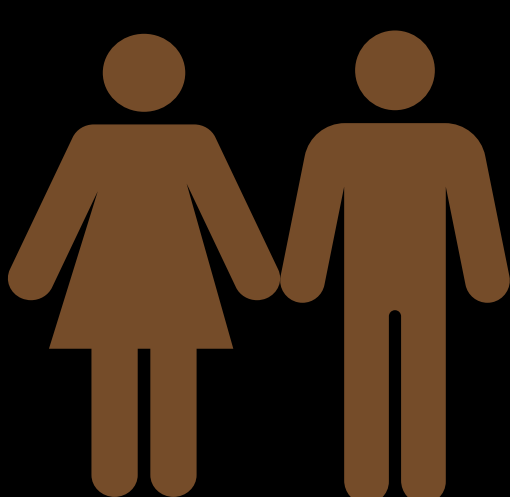
59%

increase in suicides of black females ages 15-24 years old from 2013-2019.



47%

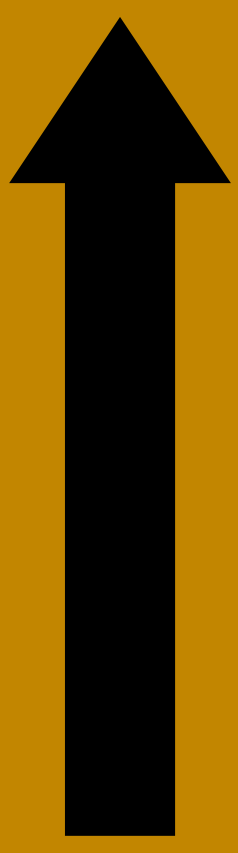
increase in suicides of black males ages 15-24 years old from 2013-2019.



African American youth more likely to grow up disproportionately affected compared to white youth due to:

- Systematic racism
- Historical trauma
- Racial discrimination

Negative attitudes toward seeking help, feelings of embarrassment, and lack of trust in the healthcare system are rooted in stigma surrounding mental health in the black community.



Higher rates of suicide among young African Americans than white counterparts due to risk factors:

- Neighborhood violence
- Socioeconomic issues
- Racial discrimination
- Interpersonal conflicts with family

To combat this rising crisis, we need to:

1

Raise awareness within the black community, addressing parents and guardians specifically on:

- Warning signs of suicide & depression
- Reducing the stigma surrounding mental health

2

Generate involvement and collaboration to change the narrative of mental health in the black community from:

- Educators
- Healthcare industry
- Child services
- Juvenile justice systems
- Psychiatrists
- Psychologists

3

Provide funding and advocate to develop culturally tailored programs and training to reach black youth.

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