
Suicidality in adolescents

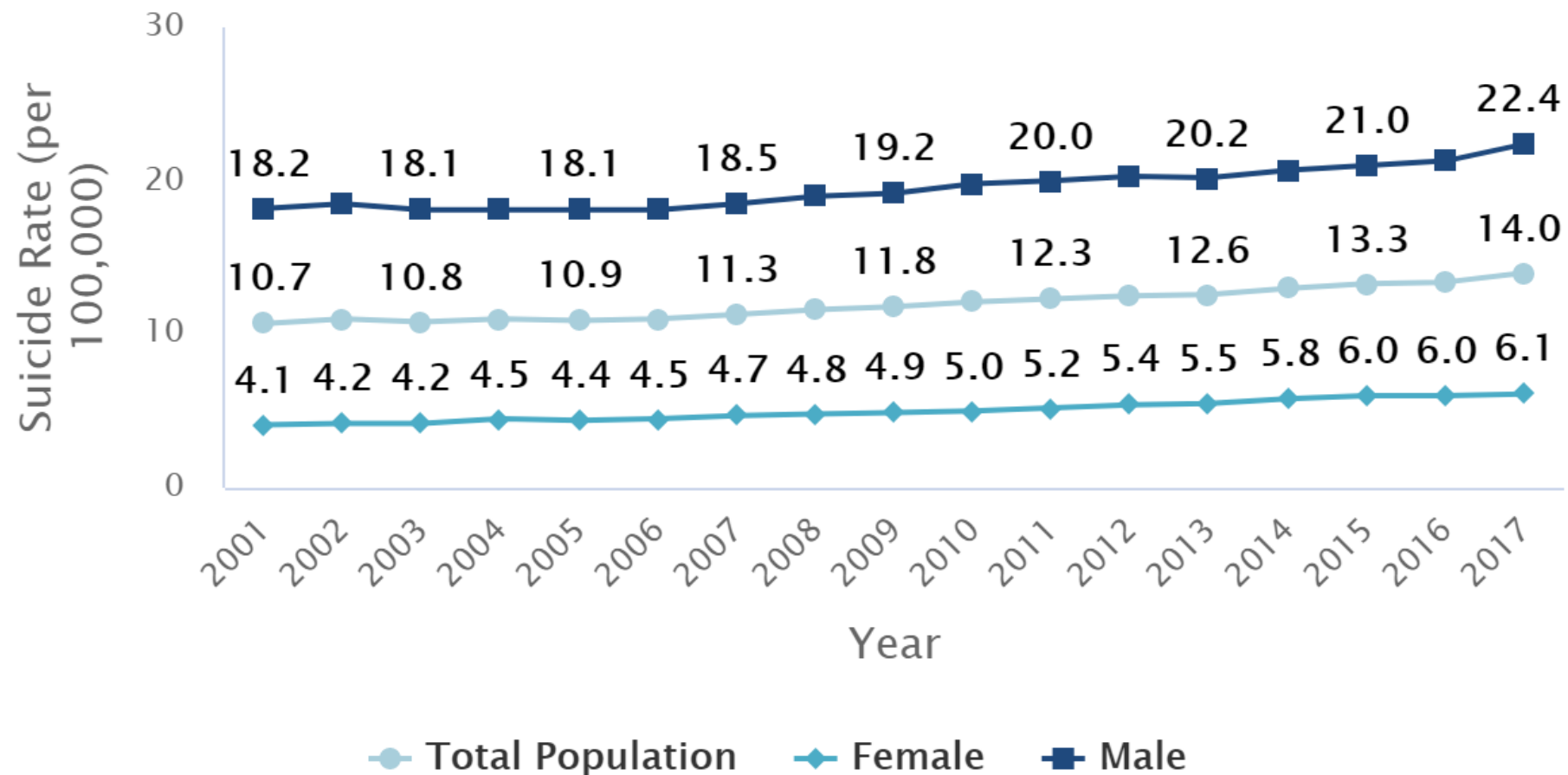
ADOLESCENT SUBSTANCE USE ECHO

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Age-Adjusted Suicide Rates in the United States (2001 – 2017)

Data Courtesy of CDC



Substance use!



Recent discharge from hospital

Warning signs of suicide

- Obsession with death or frequent conversations about death
- Direct or indirect threats of suicide
- Hints about life not worth living – “hopeless”, “helpless”, “I shouldn’t be here”, “it’d be better off if I wasn’t around”
- Intense and overwhelming guilt, shame, rejection
- Sudden mood improvement after period of depression that is out of the ordinary for individual
- Increased irritability
- Changes in eating or sleeping
- Changes in personality or demeanor
- Changes in school performance or involvement in other extracurricular activities
- Putting affairs in order (getting rid of important possessions)

When should I screen for suicide risk?

- Myth: asking about suicide gives an individual thoughts / ideas
- Suicide screening should be routine!
 - Preventative
 - Models to parents about discussing with youth
 - Demonstrates to youth that it's OK to talk about it



Initial suicide risk screen

If NO to all items

End screen & provide
resources & education

If YES to any items

Additional risk assessment

Safety Plan

Determine Disposition

Necessary referrals / action

Documentation & follow-up

Initial suicide risk screen



Ask **Suicide-Screening** Questions

Ask the patient:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. In the past few weeks, have you wished you were dead? | Yes | No |
| 2. In the past few weeks, have you felt that you or your family would be better off if you were dead? | Yes | No |
| 3. In the past week, have you been having thoughts about killing yourself? | Yes | No |
| 4. Have you ever tried to kill yourself? | Yes | No |

If yes, how? _____ When? _____

If the patient answers yes to any of the above, ask the following question:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 5. Are you having thoughts of killing yourself right now? | Yes | No |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|

If yes, please describe: _____



Additional suicide risk assessment

1. Praise Patient

- Validate them for sharing

2. Assess with patient alone

- Ideation: frequency, intensity, duration, note if current ideation (i.e., within past 48 hours)
- Suicide plan, intent, previous behaviors/attempts
- Warning signs: changes in sleep/appetite, mood, isolation, etc.
- Risk factors: recent break-up or loss, family conflict, significant life change, family history, recent hospital discharge

3. Assess with parent & patient

- Share with parent
- Re-assess warning signs, risk factors with parent report

4. Safety Plan (NOT safety contract)

- Identify people they will tell if having thoughts
- Identify coping strategies
- Determine means restriction (removal of firearms access, medications, other lethal items)
- Ask patient: Do you think you need help to keep yourself safe?

Intervention	Risk & Protective Factors	Suicidality
ED referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acute psychiatric symptoms, acute precipitating event • NO current mental health provider • Patient/parent doesn't feel they can stay safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current and/or intense ideation with plan and intent • Past suicide behavior or attempt
Immediate mental health referral or connection to provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-acute psychiatric symptoms • Safety plan with coping strategies & contacts identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicidal ideation with plan but no intent or behavior
Non-urgent mental health referral / follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety plan in place • Risk factors modifiable • Few warning signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughts of death, no plan, intent, or behavior

Provider Resources

- NIMH asQ Suicide toolkit
 - <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/research/research-conducted-at-nimh/asq-toolkit-materials/index.shtml>
- Suicide Resource Prevention Center
 - <https://www.sprc.org/>
- SAMHSA suicide resources
 - <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/suicide-prevention>

Patient / Parent Resources

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
 - 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- 24/7 Crisis Text Line
 - Text “HOME” to 741-741
- Covenant House Nine Line
 - 1-800-999-9999