

SUICIDE ISSUES

among American Indian Youth in NEW MEXICO 2011



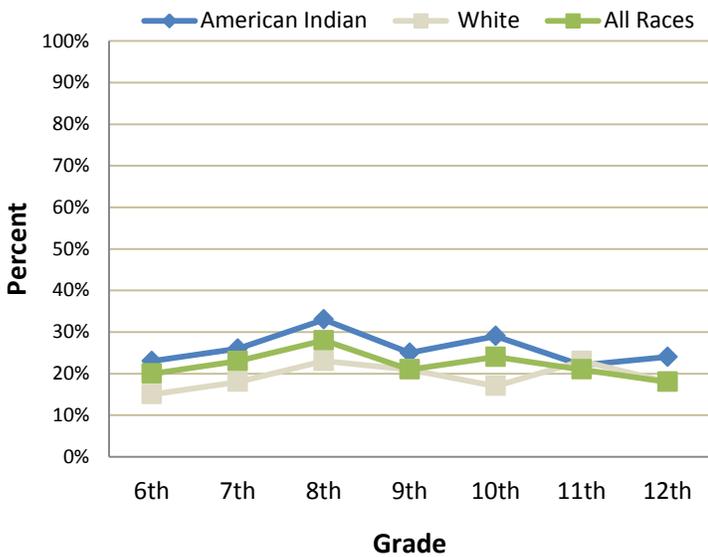
2011 Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey



This fact sheet presents data from the 2011 New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (YRRS) on suicide-related warning and protective factors among American Indian (AI) students in grades 6-12. Comparisons are also made between New Mexico AI students, non-Hispanic Whites and the all-race student population in New Mexico. The overarching aim of the NM YRRS is to better characterize risk behaviors and resiliency/protective factors among youth in New Mexico. In 2011, 10,777 Native American students in grades 6th through 12th answered the questions about suicide.

Percentage of NM AI Students in 2011 Who Had Suicide Issues by Grade 6-12

Students with “suicide issues” are those who seriously considered suicide, created a suicide plan and/or attempted suicide. Grades 9 -12 were asked about thinking, planning or attempting suicide in the *past year* and grades 6-8 were asked about *ever* thinking, planning or attempting suicide. In 2011, **AI students had more suicide issues than other groups** in all grades with the exception of 11th grade.



RECOMMENDATIONS and RESOURCES*

- Be aware that American Indian youth are at increased risk for suicide.
- Contact your tribal behavioral health program for more information and support.
- Get involved in your community suicide awareness events.
- Make treatment a team-approach including elders, family members, spiritual leaders, community members, behavioral health providers, caregivers, school personnel, friends, babysitters, neighbors and other significant people in the person’s life.
- Call the National Native American Youth Crisis Hotline 1-877-209-1266 or the National Suicide Hotline 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for more assistance.

*Source: *Suicide Awareness Voices for Education (SAVE) www.save.org*

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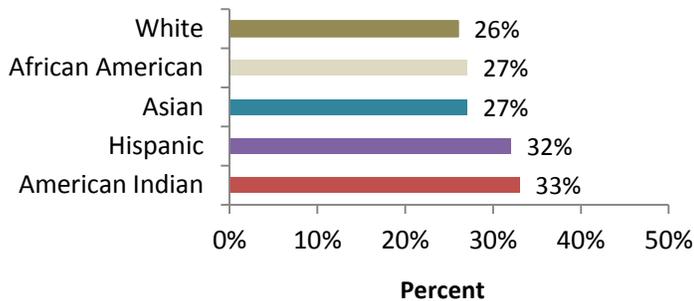


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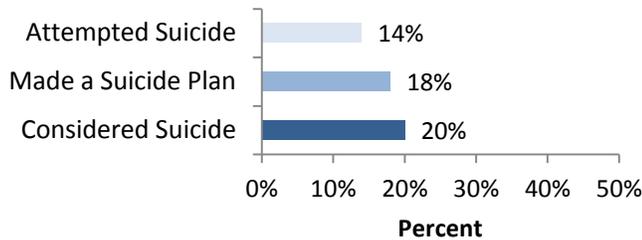
HIGH SCHOOL – GRADES 9-12

The NM YRRS asked five questions to high school students (grade 9-12) about sad feelings and suicide within the past 12 months. In 2011, 6,153 AI high school students answered the suicide questions on the HS YRRS survey.



Percentage of High School Youth Who Felt Persistent Sadness or Hopeless in the past 12 months

More AI high school students (33%) reported feelings of persistent sadness or hopelessness almost every day for two or more weeks or more in a row than other groups. The NM statewide average was 30%.



Percentage of AI High School Students with Suicide Ideation/Actions in the past 12 months

One in five (20%) AI high school students considered suicide in the past 12 months. Eighteen percent made a suicide plan and fourteen percent attempted suicide.

Protective Factors of Suicide Issues*

- ❖ Parents believe their student will be a success
- ❖ Parents listen to their student

Warning Factors of Suicide Issues*

- Sad for two or more weeks in a row
- Uses laxatives or vomits to lose weight
- Currently uses heroin
- Electronically bullied in the past year
- Bullied at school in the past year
- Forced to have sex
- Tried alcohol before age 13
- Often not enough food for student's family

*All warning and protective factors were statistically significant and are listed in order from strongest to weakest influence for suicide issues.

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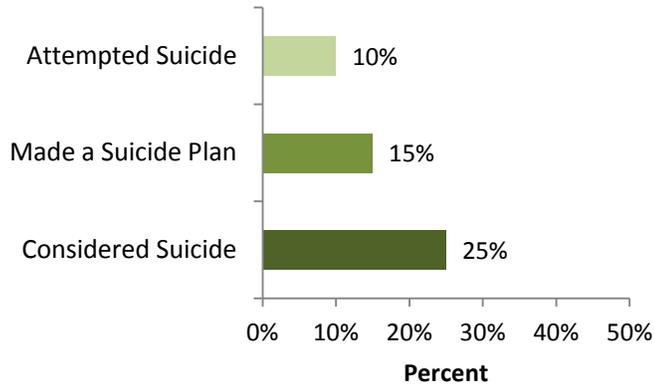


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MIDDLE SCHOOL – GRADES 6-8

The NM YRRS asked three questions about suicide for students in grades 6-8. These questions asked about attempted suicide, suicide planning, and considering suicide. Unlike the high school NM YRRS, these questions asked about “ever” having these issues related to suicide. In 2011, 4,624 AI students in grades 6-8 answered the suicide questions on the NM YRRS survey. Participating 6th grade students came from both elementary and middle schools in New Mexico



Percentage of Middle School American Indian Students Who Ever had Suicide Ideation/Actions

One in four (25%) American Indian students in grades 6-8 ever seriously thought about killing themselves. Fifteen percent made a suicide plan and one in ten (ten percent) attempted suicide.

Protective Factors of Suicide Issues*

- ❖ Parents listen to their student
- ❖ Parents know where their student is and with whom

Warning Factors of Suicide Issues*

- Bullied at school in the past year
- Often not enough food for student's family
- Uses laxatives or vomits to lose weight
- Tried marijuana before age 11
- Tried alcohol before age 11
- Electronically bullied in the past year

**All warning and protective factors were statistically significant and are listed in order from strongest to weakest influence for suicide issues.*

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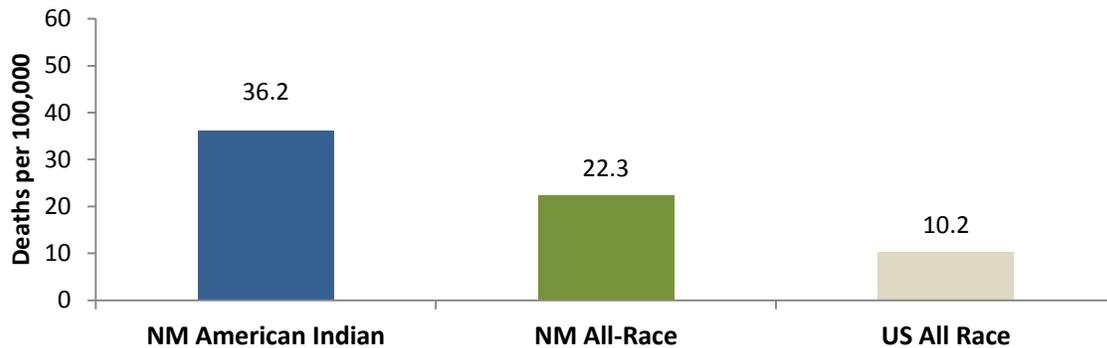


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Suicide Death Rate among Persons Age 15-24 in NM and US 2007-2010 *

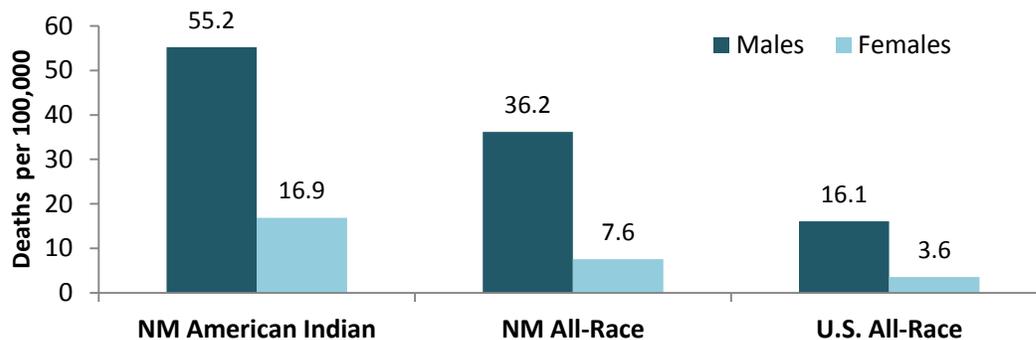
In 2010, suicide was the second leading cause of death for persons age 15-24 in New Mexico. **Suicide death rates were significantly higher for American Indians from New Mexico (36.2 per 100,000)** compared to the NM all-race rate (22.3 per 100,000) and the U.S. all-race rate (10.2 per 100,000).



* Source: New Mexico Department of Health NMIBIS and CDC WISQARS

Suicide Death Rates among Persons Age 15-24 in NM/US by Gender 2007-2010 *

Males (age 15-24) were significantly more likely to commit suicide compared to females in all three groups (NM American Indians, NM all-race, and U.S. all-race). **American Indian males in New Mexico had the highest suicide death rate (55.2 per 100,000) compared to all other groups.**



* Source: New Mexico Department of Health NMIBIS and CDC WISQARS

The NM YRRS is a joint project of the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH), the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center (UNM PRC), the Albuquerque Area Southwest Tribal Epidemiology Center (AASTEC), and the Division of Adolescent and School Health, Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC-DASH). For more information on the NM YRRS visit www.YouthRisk.org.