

OHIO SUICIDE PREVENTION FOUNDATION

How to Approach Increasing Youth Suicide Rates in Ohio

More and more young people are struggling with suicidal thoughts and don't want – or know how – to ask for help. Stigma and barriers to accessing mental health services keep youth from the care they most desperately need. It is critical that we empower them to ask for help and provide parents and teachers with the support and resources they need to address when a young person is in crisis.

By the Numbers

Suicide rates in young people ages 10-24 have increased both in Ohio and across the country. Recent data has shown that while there was a dip in suicide rates in 2020, the pandemic had a major impact on young people's well-being. Current trends show:

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people, accounting for more than 7,000 deaths in the US in 2021. Additionally, suicide rates for this age group increased 52.2% between 2000-2021 in the US.¹
- From 2020 to 2021, the rate of youth suicide in Ohio increased 5% with 260 total deaths.²
- Nearly 20% of high school students report serious thoughts of suicide and 9% have made an attempt to take their lives.³
- 45% of LGBTQ+ youth seriously considered suicide in the past year, and 14% of LGBTQ+ youth attempted suicide in the past year.⁴
- From 2000 to 2020, Black youth ages 10-19 experienced the largest increase in suicide rates, a shocking 78%. And in a research study among the youngest children (ages 5-12), Black youth were approximately two times more likely to die by suicide than their white counterparts.⁵

Young people have a unique set of challenges that many adults do not when it comes to seeking support for mental health concerns or suicidal thoughts. Because youth need a parent or guardian's permission to access mental health services, unsupportive adults can seriously inhibit their ability to seek treatment. Accepting and affirming a young person's experiences and getting them immediate support is the most important first step toward addressing and reducing suicidal thoughts and actions.

Youth Suicide Risk Factors

- Existing mental health or substance use disorder
- Impulsive behaviors and tendencies
- Changes in family (divorce, parent loss, etc.)
- Changes in friendships or romantic relationships
- Peer or social conflict
- Problems in school
- Environmental factors (e.g. access to lethal means)
- Family history of suicide
- Exposure to suicidal behaviors of others
- Prior suicide attempt(s)

Resources

- National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: Call or Text 988
- Youth Crisis Hotline: Call 1-800-448-4663
- Parent Hotline: Call 1-800-840-6537
- STEVE Fund for young people of color: Text STEVE to 741-741
- The Trevor Project for LGBTQ+ youth: 1-866-488-7386

OSPF's Work

Now more than ever, it's imperative that suicide prevention programs are implemented in schools and communities across Ohio. From legislative requirements to post-pandemic mental health concerns, the Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation is focusing on three core programmatic efforts for youth: Sources of Strength; Be Present Ohio; and Kognito.

Sources of Strength

Sources of Strength (Sources) is a wellness program for kindergarten through 12th grade that focuses on suicide prevention but impacts other issues such as substance use, bullying, and violence. Sources uses a combination of evidence-informed curricula and evidence-based youth-led programming to build protective factors and resiliency in school and community settings. Sources of Strength is available at no cost for Ohio schools through funding from the Ohio Departments of Education and Mental Health and Addiction Services. [Click here to learn more.](#)



Be Present Ohio

Be Present Ohio (BPO) connects teens and young adults to help and hope through mental health resources, information, and peer-to-peer support. In 2023, BPO is launching "Be Present Ohio: The Online Experience" (BPO:XP), a multimedia mental health and suicide prevention education and awareness program created by OSPF, Nationwide Children's Hospital, and BMC Media. BPO:XP engages teens through a gamified experience, teaching them about warning signs of suicide, ways to access help for themselves and others, and how to communicate with peers and family about mental health concerns or thoughts of suicide. BPO is funded by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. [Click here to learn more.](#)



Kognito

Kognito is an interactive learning software. The company has 20+ years of experience offering mental health and suicide prevention training. A portion of Kognito trainings are made accessible to educators and school faculty at no cost by the Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) Garrett Lee Smith (GLS) Youth Suicide Prevention Grant. This training initiative aligns with the Suicide Prevention Plan for Ohio and is a comprehensive school suicide prevention and mental health component. [Click here to learn more.](#)



References

- 1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About Multiple Cause of Death, 2018-2021, Single Race. wonder.cdc.gov/mcd-icd10-expanded.html. Accessed May 17, 2023.
- 2 Ohio Department of Health. Suicide Demographics and Trends, Ohio, 2021. [2021+Suicide+Fact+Sheet_Final.pdf](https://www.ohio.gov/files/assets/odh/2021+Suicide+Fact+Sheet_Final.pdf). Accessed May 17, 2023.
- 3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Mental Health, Suicidality, and Connectedness Among High School Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic — Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey, United States, January–June 2021. [cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/su/su7103a3.htm?cid=su7103a3_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/su/su7103a3.htm?cid=su7103a3_w). Accessed May 17, 2023.
- 4 The Trevor Project. 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health. [thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/). Accessed May 17, 2023.
- 5 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About Underlying Cause of Death, 1999-2020. wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html. Accessed May 17, 2023.

ABOUT OHIO SUICIDE PREVENTION FOUNDATION

OSPF gives hope to those in crisis, strength to those in the struggle, and comfort to those in grief. OSPF is a non-profit organization that works tirelessly to help all of Ohio's communities reduce the risk of suicide. Our work includes supporting those impacted by suicide, raising awareness of mental health issues, and coordinating community resources and evidence-based prevention strategies across the state.



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