

CAITLIN ENSLEY



**MENTAL HEALTH** Association of east tennessee

# Intersection of Mental Health and Suicide

In childhood and adolescence





# Presentation Outline

**01** What is Mental Health?

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**02** Statistics

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**03** The connection between  
mental health and suicide

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**04** Prevention & Intervention

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**WHERE TO START?**

# **Understanding mental health**

**SELF-CARE**

**COPING**

**EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION**

**MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS**



## Mental Health Definition

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"

Mental health is "a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community"

World Health Organization



**WHY IS ADOLESCENT  
MENTAL HEALTH SO  
IMPORTANT?**

**the developing  
brain  
creates  
someone's  
lifetime mental  
health  
foundation**

# How common are mental health conditions?

**50% LIFETIME**

**20% YEARLY**

**5% SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS**

**SERIOUS EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE**



# Youth Mental Health Issues

50% begin experiencing symptoms by 14  
75% begin experiencing symptoms by 24

Anxiety Disorders (32%): 6 years old  
Behavior Disorders (19%): 11 years old  
Mood Disorders (14%): 13 years old  
Substance Use Disorders (11%): 15 years old

40% have more than one diagnosis in their  
lifetime





# Recognizing Signs of Struggle

- ODD BEHAVIOR ≠ A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION
- EMOTIONAL RESPONSES ≠ A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION
- BEHAVIORS CAN BE MASKED
- SOME BEHAVIORS ARE MORE SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE



# Why is mental health important?

- MENTAL HEALTH AFFECTS OUR DAY-TO-DAY LIVES
- 90% WHO DIE BY SUICIDE HAD MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS
- ONLY 54% WERE KNOWN



# Signs of a Mental Health Condition

Changes in eating

Changes in sleep

Changes in energy levels

Vague aches and pains

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New or recurrent fears

Persistent sadness

Frequent crying

Self-harm

Talking about death or dying

New or increasing anger

Changes in grades

Loss of interest in activities

Withdrawal

Difficulty concentrating

New or increasing  
substance use

Risk-taking behaviors

Isolation

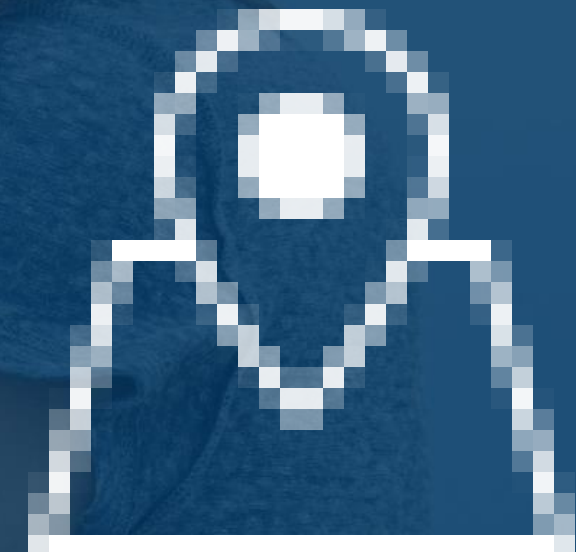
# HOW TO KNOW IF IT'S A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION



Intensity



Duration



Domains



## Rates were on the rise before the pandemic

- Rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide were all increasing pre-pandemic
- These rates can be expected to rise post-pandemic



# Youth Risk Behavior Survey

**In every  
Tennessee  
classroom there  
are...**

**10-11 STUDENTS WHO MEET THE  
CLINICAL SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION**

**5-6 WHO HAVE CONTEMPLATED  
SUICIDE**

**4-5 WHO HAVE PLANNED A SUICIDE**

**3-4 WHO HAVE ATTEMPTED SUICIDE**

**1-2 WHO HAVE MADE A SUICIDE  
ATTEMPT THAT NEEDED TREATMENT  
BY A DOCTOR OR NURSE**



# The behavioral health impact of the pandemic

## Short term:

- Instability of routine
- Loss of jobs or income
- Isolation
- Fear of illness
- Loss of life

## Long term:

- Increases in cost of living
- Decreases in income
- Health outcomes
  - Long-haul Covid-19
  - Behavioral health impacts of Covid-19
- Difficulty accessing mental health care



# Suicidality and the Pandemic

June 24-30, 2020 (released August 14, 2020)

- 11% reported suicidal ideation
  - 25.5% of people ages 18-24
- Higher reported rates of ideation for:
  - Hispanic & Black respondents
  - Employed persons
  - Essential workers
  - Unpaid caregivers

March-April, 2021 (released July 2, 2021)

- 8.4% reported suicidal ideation
- Higher reported rates of ideation for
  - Persons under 30
  - Transgender or nonbinary persons
  - Multiracial persons

# Mental Health Screenings

- 20% INCREASE FROM 2019
- 2.6 MILLION SCREENINGS IN 2020

REACTION SURVEY

Good Average Poor

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4) Did you rec

5) How do we compare ab

6) Would you use our service again?

is it that you would refer a friend to us?

Contact information here.



# ESSENCE ALERTS

HIGHER THAN AVERAGE VISITS TO ER



Suicide Attempts



Intentional Self-Harm



Suicidal thoughts and feelings

2020

**78/95 COUNTIES RECEIVED AN ESSENCE ALERT**

**219 ALERTS STATEWIDE**

**HIGHEST METRO REGION: DAVIDSON COUNTY**

**HIGHEST NON-METRO REGION: SOUTHEAST TN**

# Mobile Crisis

In 2020, there was a decrease statewide for face-to-face assessments and crisis calls:

- -8,351 face-to-face assessments
  - 2019 79,360
  - 2020 71,009
- -3,168 crisis calls
  - 2019 125,695
  - 2020 122,527



# Service utilization during the pandemic

- NORMALIZATION OF MENTAL HEALTH
- DIFFICULTY ACCESSING SERVICES
- ADDITIONAL SAFETY PROTOCOLS
- FEAR OF COVID



# Suicide Statistics: National Data

The group with the highest suicide rate is middle-aged men

48,000 people died by suicide in 2019 (13.93/100,000) / (13.95 for ages 15-24)

6,488 people ages 10-24

- Ages 4-9 (12 deaths, 13th leading cause of death for age group)
  - Ages 10-14 (534 deaths, 2nd leading cause of death for age group)
  - Ages 15-24 (5,954 deaths, 2nd leading cause of death for age group)
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# Suicide Statistics: Tennessee Data

1,161 people in 2018 (16.60/100,000)

1,220 people in 2019 (20.3/100,000)

1 person every 8 hours

National Ranking: 22nd

3rd leading cause of death ages 10-24:

- Ages 10-17 (39 deaths, 5.7/100,000)
- Ages 10-19 (61 deaths, 7.13/100,000)
  - 2019 Deaths ages 10-19 (55 deaths, 6.4/100,000)
- Ages 10-24 (139 deaths, 10.68/100,000)

**What is suicide?**



## Suicide is...

Death caused by injuring oneself with the intent to die.



# Understanding Intent

Self-harm and drug use



# The crisis of suicide

30% of suicidal crises last under an hour  
For 24-74% of attempters, the time between deciding on  
suicide and attempting was 10 minutes or less

90% of people who die by suicide had a mental health  
condition at the time of their death.  
These disordered thoughts, emotions, and behaviors  
contribute to suicide risk.





# Risk Factors

Untreated or poorly treated mental illness

Alcohol or other substance use disorders

Family discord

Family history of suicide

Previous suicide attempts

Member of a high risk population

Isolation or lack of social support

Physical illness

Sudden loss

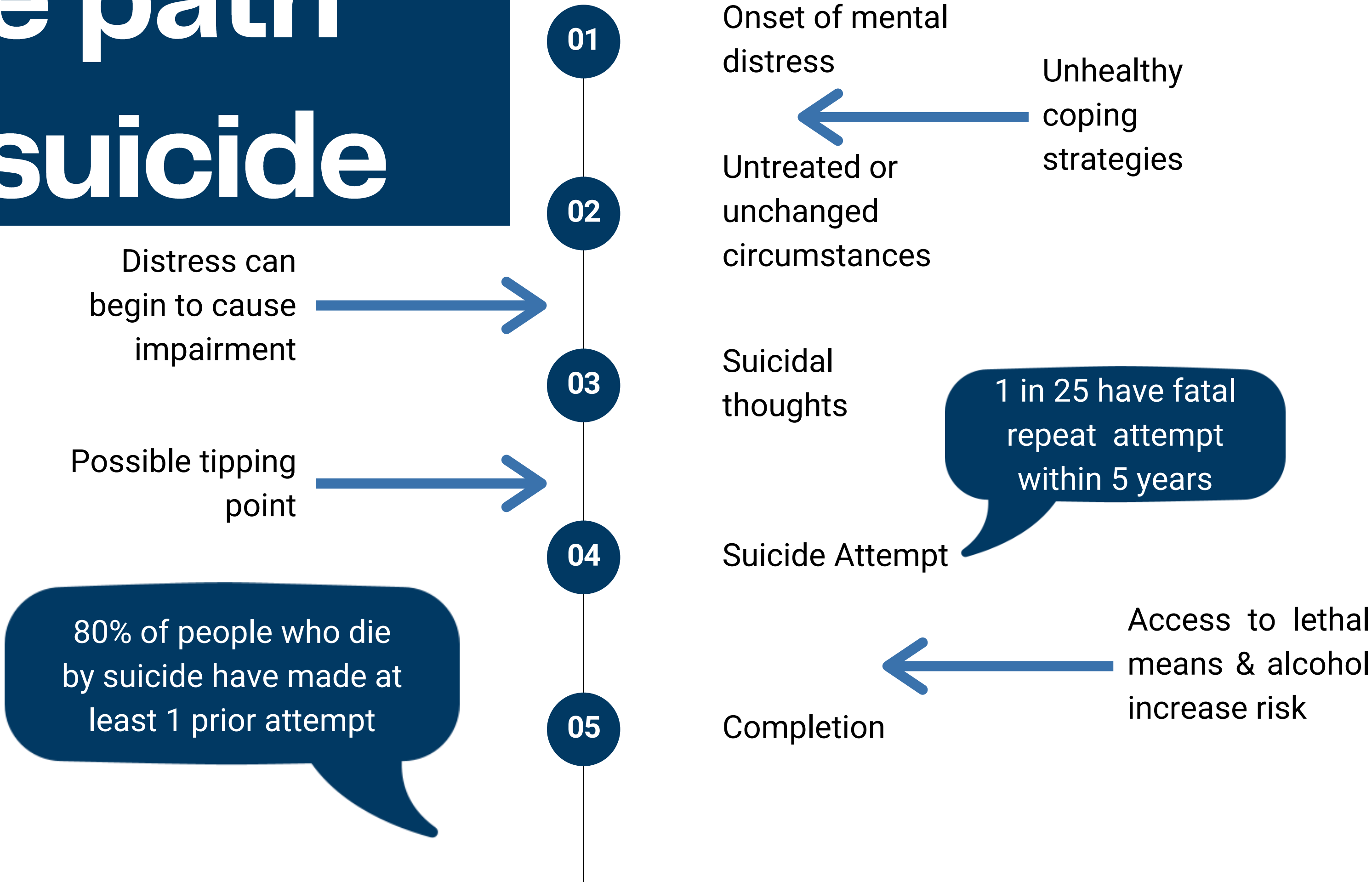
Ease of access to methods



# Tipping Points

- Relationship breakdown
- Interpersonal problems
- Death or suicide of a loved one
- Legal problems
- Financial problems

# The path to suicide



80% of people who die by suicide have made at least 1 prior attempt

1 in 25 have fatal repeat attempt within 5 years

## Visits to ED increase during the school year

A 2015 study comparing week-by-week, found a 118% increase in visits to a children's psychiatric ED during weeks when school was in session

Another study found the rate of hospitalization for school-aged children for suicidal ideation and attempts increased 300% in school months

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## Suicide rates also increase

Large decrease in youth suicide over the summer  
95% increase for boys in the school year; 33% increase for girls

# Steps for Intervention

- **CREATE A MENTAL-HEALTH-SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT**
- **ENCOURAGE SELF-CARE AND HEALTHY COPING**
- **EDUCATE YOURSELF**
- **INTERVENE AS APPROPRIATE**

# Prevention

Model positive sharing of emotions and the challenges in your own life.

Disclose when appropriate your own mental health condition.

Ask questions even when nothing is wrong. Use open-ended and specific questions.

Help them set boundaries that support and prioritize mental health.

# Self Care & Coping

## **Make sleep a priority**

And don't underestimate the importance of a healthy diet and exercise

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## **Consistency in routine**

Find habits and events that you and your family can do consistently and at similar times in the day

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## **Create rules**

Make sure everyone follows them

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## **Foster a sense of belonging**

Social connection protects from the effects of distressing life events

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## **Plan intentional time together**

This builds trust and gives you the opportunity to notice if a child is struggling

# Build resilience

Healthy social relationships

Positive view of self

The ability to manage strong feelings and impulses

Problem-solving skills

Feeling in control

The ability to find positive meaning in life despite traumatic events





# Educate Yourself

Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself  
Making suicide threats  
Hopelessness  
Increasing use of alcohol or drugs  
Changes in sleep  
Social isolation  
Increased anger  
Acting agitated or reckless  
Displaying mood swings  
Suicide plan and access to means



# Utilize your resources

Conversations

Change routines and home life when possible

Crisis Intervention when needed

Medical care

Mental health services

Medication

# Barriers to treatment

- WILLINGNESS TO ENTER TREATMENT
- ACCESS TO RESOURCES
- BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE SHORTAGE
- HEALTHCARE PARITY

# Moving Forward

A silhouette of a person running on a path that leads to a view of the ocean. The scene is set against a teal-colored sky and water, with trees visible on either side of the path. The overall mood is one of forward motion and hope.

Encourage hope for yourself and others  
Advocate for necessary services  
Advocate for system change

# Resources

- Suicide and Youth: Risk Factors <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6218408/>
- Suicide by Age <https://sprc.org/scope/age>
- Pew Research Center “Most U.S. Teens See Anxiety and Depression as a Major Problem Among Their Peers” <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/02/20/most-u-s-teens-see-anxiety-and-depression-as-a-major-problem-among-their-peers/>
- Status of Suicide, Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network: <https://tnsuicidepreventionnetwork.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/2021%2F05%2FTSPN-SOS-2020.pdf>
- TN Suicide Death Statistics <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/statistics/health-data/death-statistics.html>
- Suicide Risk and Mental Disorders <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6165520/>
- Barber, C. W., & Miller, M. J. (2014). Reducing a suicidal person’s access to lethal means of suicide: A research agenda. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 47(3S2), S264-S272.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2014.05.028>
- CDC Suicide Rising Across the U.S. <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/suicide/index.html>
- <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/what-causes-depression>
- <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14992027.2021.1896793>

# Resources

- <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2020.592878/full>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6580142/>
- <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamaotolaryngology/fullarticle/2732497>
- [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(21\)00084-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(21)00084-5/fulltext)
- <https://mhanational.org/mental-health-and-covid-19-what-mha-screening-data-tells-us-about-impact-pandemic>
- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9394939/>
- <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/substance-use-and-mental-health/>
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/freedom-learn/201805/children-s-teens-suicides-related-the-school-calendar>
- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272775711000677>
- <https://health.ucdavis.edu/what-you-can-do/facts.html>
- [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm?utm\\_campaign=2021\\_july&emci=b0f77fa0-eceb-eb11-a7ad-501ac57b8fa7&emdi=995c40a8-9bf0-eb11-b563-501ac57b8fa7&ceid=7755146](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm?utm_campaign=2021_july&emci=b0f77fa0-eceb-eb11-a7ad-501ac57b8fa7&emdi=995c40a8-9bf0-eb11-b563-501ac57b8fa7&ceid=7755146)
- <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7026e1.htm>

**Thank you!**