YSRC

FOURTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE

FRIDAY, JUNE 9, 2023 - 11 AM ET

BROADCAST VIRTUALLY

YOUTH SUICIDE RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

INTERSECTIONALITY IN YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION: IMPROVING RESEARCH WITH LGBTQ+ YOUTH OF COLOR

MISSION STATEMENT

We are an interdisciplinary network of researchers dedicated to the study of youth suicidal behavior among diverse populations (i.e., diversity based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, and ability), with an emphasis on understanding and decreasing disparities.

Recognizing that contemporary models of suicide tend to rely on research with adult populations – despite a higher onset and growing prevalence of suicidal behavior in adolescence and emerging adulthood – our first goal is to leverage our collective expertise to **improve research on youth suicidal behavior, suicide prevention, and treatment**. Furthermore, the increasing diversity of the US population, particularly among youth (link), suggests a pressing need for theories and research that address issues of diversity. Thus, our second goal is to **increase research on suicide among underrepresented populations of youth** by fostering multilevel and cross-disciplinary conceptualizations of youth suicide and self-harm in the United States and other parts of the world. Additionally, we want to **disseminate what we know** among families, teachers, clinicians, youth, policy makers, media, and other consumers who are not researchers or academics but for whom suicidal behaviors are of concern. Lastly, we seek to **empower researchers from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines** to advance in their careers by mentoring aspiring and junior researchers interested in the study of youth suicidal behavior.

We will accomplish these goals by:
1. Helping to increase the diversity of researchers conducting studies of youth suicide
2. Developing multi-site collaborations among researchers with diverse areas of expertise
3. Providing professional development opportunities to researchers to increase the impact of their work
4. Connecting with community-based providers who serve diverse youth at risk for suicidal behavior

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

11:00a   Welcome Remarks by Alex Bettis

11:05a-12:20p   Intersectionality in mental health research with LGBTQ+ youth of color: Implications for suicide prevention

Speakers: Marla Eisenberg, Omar Martinez, Myeshia Price, Nic Rider
Moderator: Lindsay Taliaferro

12:30p-1:50p   Concurrent Sessions

2:00p-3:15p   Measurement of intersectional factors and intersectional quantitative analysis: Applications to suicide research

Speakers: Annabelle Atkin, Monica Ghabrial, Tiffany Eden, Devin English
Moderator: Kerri-Anne Bell, Raksha Kandlur

3:30p-4:45p   Applying an intersectional lens to interventions research with LGBTQ+ youth of color at risk for suicide

Speakers: Colleen Katz, Kiara Moore, Nestor Noyola, Lucas Zullo
Moderator: Linda Oshin

4:45p-5:00p   Closing Remarks

Intersectionality in mental health research with LGBTQ+ youth of color: Implications for suicide prevention

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Moderated by: Lindsay Taliaferro

Innovative Strategies for Predicting Behavior and Enhancing Intervention

CANDICE BIERNESSER

University of Pittsburgh
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EMMA WIN

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TITLE Centering Lived Experiences and Intersectional Identities in the Codesign of Flourish, a Suicide Prevention Intervention for LGBTQ+ Youth

AUTHORS Candice Biernesser, University of Pittsburgh Department of Psychiatry; Emma Win, University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work and University of Pittsburgh Medical Center; César G Escobar-Viera, University of Pittsburgh Department of Psychiatry; Tina Goldstein, University of Pittsburgh Departments of Psychiatry and Psychology

ABSTRACT Background: Online victimization (OV; disparaging remarks, images, or behaviors through digital devices) has been linked with suicidal risk among youth, and LGBTQ+ youth, who have three times the rate of OV as non-LGBTQ+ youth, are especially at risk. This study aimed to develop Flourish, a digital suicide prevention intervention for LGBTQ+ youth who have experienced OV. Methods: Flourish was developed through qualitative interviews with 20 LGBTQ+ youth, ages 13-18, with recent OV experiences and history of suicidal thoughts and/or behaviors, 10 parents, and 10 LGBTQ+-serving professionals. Interviews informed co-design of Flourish with 18 LGBTQ+ youth using participatory human centered design methodologies. Prototypes of Flourish were evaluated through usability testing with 10 additional youth. Results: Interviews generated themes for Flourish's key priorities, which included need for psychoeducation, distress tolerance skills, and help-seeking following OV, and these priorities informed the co-design process. Interviews suggested need to recognize intersectional identities in two ways. 1) Nearly half (44%) of youth met criteria for communication deficits and noted need for support in interpreting OV experiences. 2) Youth recognized the need to represent and affirm LGBTQ+ youth of color. Flourish was developed with educational content to aid interpretation of OV and fictional stories written based on youth's OV experiences that affirmed intersectional identities and modeled help-seeking. Usability testing interviews reflected satisfaction and average scores on the System Usability Scale were 91, suggesting excellent perceived usability. Conclusions: Flourish shows promise for suicide prevention among LGBTQ+ youth. Future research will involve testing the feasibility and efficacy of Flourish.

EMILY JUDD

Montclair State University
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TITLE The relationship between perceived emotional support online, social comparisons online, and mental health symptoms among sexually minoritized college students

AUTHORS Emily Judd, Montclair State University; Jazmin Reyes-Portillo, Montclair State University; Danielle Rette, Montclair State University; Daisha Mathews

ABSTRACT While social media use (SMU) has been linked to both positive and negative changes in college students' mental health, these contributions may vary for minoritized students. For instance, among sexually minoritized students SMU could provide a means for increased social support. However, SMU may also lead sexually minoritized students to make greater social comparisons to others, which has been linked to increased depression and suicidal ideation (SI). The current study sought to examine whether the relationship between perceived emotional support online (PESO), social comparisons online (SCO), anxiety, depression, and SI varies by sexual orientation. We surveyed 92 racially, ethnically, and sexually diverse college students regarding their SMU and mental health symptoms. Students self-identified as 55.4% non-White, 38% non-heterosexual, and 22.8% current suicide ideators or past attempters. Correlations revealed that greater PESO was associated with being non-heterosexual and greater anxiety, and greater SCO was associated with increased anxiety, depression, and SI. Linear regressions were conducted to examine the association between PESO, SCO, and mental health symptoms, while exploring the moderating role of sexual orientation. The PESO models were statistically insignificant, indicating that while there may be differences in PESO among sexual and non-sexual minoritized students, this perception may not impact depression, anxiety, or SI. Furthermore, although SCO was positively associated with anxiety ($R2 = .40$, $p < .001$) and depression ($R2 = .19$, $p < .001$), sexual minority status did not moderate this relationship. It is possible that sexual minority status does not significantly influence the relationship between SMU and mental health concerns.

Innovative Strategies for Predicting Behavior and Enhancing Intervention

JAZMIN REYES-PORTILLO

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TITLE Increasing engagement with online self-help interventions among college students at-risk for suicide

AUTHORS Jazmin Reyes-Portillo, Montclair State University; Emily Judd, Montclair State University; Danielle Rette, Montclair State University; Grace Martin, Montclair State University; Lizbeth Taveras, Montclair State University; Emily Kalver, Montclair State University; Helen-Maria Lekas, Nathan Kline Institute; Carrie Masia Warner, Montclair State University and Nathan Kline Institute

ABSTRACT Most college students with elevated suicide risk do not receive mental health treatment. College resources are being outpaced by the increasing demand for services, and students are reluctant to seek in-person treatment. Online interventions have significant promise for increasing treatment availability in a format that addresses barriers and preferences specific to this population. However, previous research has been limited by low adherence and high attrition. We aimed to address these significant gaps by assessing barriers to using online intervention and developing engagement strategies to increase enrollment and retention in online intervention. We conducted 4 focus groups with 24 students who self-identified as struggling with depression, anxiety, or suicidality. Of these, 75% were female (mean age = 20.17) and 46% self-identified as White, 21% as Black, 13% as Latinx, 13% as Asian, 4% as Multiracial, and 4% as Middle Eastern/North African. We used thematic analysis to code the data. Barriers included not knowing whether an online program will help, lack of human connection, and lack of self-discipline. Additionally, students felt that the ability to connect with a therapist, convenience, daily reminders, and program incentives/rewards were factors that would increase students' motivation to use online intervention. We developed engagement strategies based on the focus group results, including personalized feedback, an online intervention plan, human coaching and follow up text messages. Findings have the potential to serve as a model to increase treatment engagement among at-risk students who would otherwise not seek help and expand existing mental health services on college campuses.

JUNO PINDER

University of Denver
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TITLE Leveraging machine learning to identify unique risk factors for SITBs in LGBTQIA youth

AUTHORS Nadia Kako, University of Denver, Juno Pinder, University of Denver, John Powers, University of North Carolina, Kathryn Fox, University of Denver

ABSTRACT Background: LGBTQ+ adolescents face steeply elevated rates of self-injurious thoughts and behaviors (SITBs) relative to peers, but questions remain about the mechanisms underlying these differences. Modeling SITBs using traditional statistical models has proven challenging. Machine learning (ML) approaches may offer better performance and insights. Methods: We examined and compared the performance of multiple linear and non-linear ML models statistically predicting suicide ideation, suicide attempts, and non-suicidal self-injury—both lifetime presence and past-year frequency—among adolescents of diverse genders and sexual orientations (N = 2,452) using psychometric and demographic predictors in a cross-sectional dataset. We then selected the best-performing model family to examine and compare predictor performance between cisgender and gender minority adolescents and between heterosexual and sexual minority adolescents. We hypothesized that more complex models would yield stronger prediction, and that relative predictor importances would differ for the cisgender/heterosexual and gender/sexual minority groups. Results: More complex models generally did not outperform regression-based ML models. Predictor importances between groups were largely inconsistent across models. Depression was the most important predictor of SITBs in all models with one exception: for binary lifetime suicide attempts among gender minority adolescents, discrimination was the most important predictor. Conclusions: Relative importances of psychological and demographic variables in predicting SITBs are not consistently different between gender/sexual minority adolescents and their cisgender/heterosexual peers. Depression is generally the most important cross-sectional predictor among those tested. Future research should seek to replicate and further explore how discrimination may have an especially strong association with suicide attempts in gender minority adolescents.

Innovative Strategies for Predicting Behavior and Enhancing Intervention

TITLE Adolescent Nonparticipation in an Intensive Longitudinal Study of Suicidal Behaviors

AUTHORS Narise Ramla, Harvard University; Lia Follet, Harvard University; Darby Eck, Harvard University; Adam Bear, Harvard University; Alexander Millner, Franciscan Children's Hospital; Evan Kleiman, Rutgers University; Kelly Zuromsk, Harvard University; Kate H. Bentley, Massachusetts General Hospital; Ralph Buonopane, Franciscan Children's Hospital; Suzanne Bird, Massachusetts General Hospital; Jordan Smoller, Massachusetts General Hospital; Adam Haim, National Institute of Mental Health; Patrick Mair, Harvard University; Matthew K. Nock, Harvard University; & Rebecca Fortgang, Massachusetts General Hospital

ABSTRACT Post-psychiatric discharge presents a high-risk period for suicide. Ecological momentary assessment (EMA) can assess real-time fluctuations in risk to inform interventions. However, multiple barriers prevent participation (including smartphone access and acute symptoms) and those who ultimately enroll have reported survey fatigue and frustrations with technology, which may influence dropout. Few studies report reasons for nonparticipation. Reasons may vary according to demographic characteristics. First, we examined adolescent screening data from an EMA study of suicidal behaviors in adults and adolescents; this included 1024 adolescents presenting to an inpatient psychiatric unit. We used logistic regression to test whether demographic differences (age, gender, race) predicted enrollment versus non-enrollment. Next, we qualitatively coded responses of both adolescents (n=56) and adults (n=37) who dropped out from the same study. We used logistic regression to test whether demographic characteristics predicted study dropout versus continued participation. White patients were screened and enrolled at disproportionately higher rates than non-white patients (p=0.001), even after accounting for base population rates. We found no evidence for demographic characteristics predicting dropout after enrollment. We identified 25 reasons for dropout. The most common among adolescents were no interest (n=17), too busy (n=14), and too much involved in participating (n=19). Adults shared these top reasons (n=7; n=13; n=5). Reasons unique to adolescents included forgetting to participate (n=4), thinking the surveys were boring (n=3), and school/parent-restricted phone access (n=2). Overall, we identified several barriers to participation in EMA that provide insight on promoting participant engagement.

NARISE RAMLAL

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The Utility of Large Survey Data Sets to Identify Suicide Risk among Youth who are Multiply Minoritzed

EDEN WALL

Hunter College, CUNY
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TITLE Characteristics of Transition-Age Youth Engaging in Suicidal Behavior

AUTHORS Colleen Katz, Hunter College; Nathanael Okpych, University of Connecticut; Eden Wall, Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center; Jama Shelton, Hunter College

ABSTRACT Background: Suicide rates are markedly high among adolescents and youth adults with foster care involvement ("transition age youth", or TAY), with TAY attempting suicide at more than three times the rate of their peers in the general population. Methods: Analyzing data from the CalYOUTH Study (n=727), this paper explores suicidal behavior among TAY with the goal of better identifying, understanding, and supporting those at risk. We report rates of suicidal ideation and suicide attempt at each of the four interview waves (age 17, 19, 21, and 23) and examine differences in rates by three sets of youth characteristics: sociodemographic characteristics, past maltreatment, and behavioral health disorders. Results: At age 17, 42% of participants had ever thought of killing themselves and 24% had attempted suicide. There were clear and consistent differences in suicidal behavior by gender and by sexual orientation, with females and sexual minority youth having significantly higher rates than their male and heterosexual peers, respectively. We also found that youth with: (1) maltreatment experiences (especially sexual abuse); (2) major depressive disorder, anxiety disorder, or PTSD; or (3) alcohol/substance abuse disorders were significantly more likely than their peers to engage in suicidal behavior. Conclusions: Youth in foster care need to be screened for suicidal behavior routinely. Those at at heightened risk may require more consistent mental health care and may be the focus of targeted mental health interventions. Future research should shed light on mechanisms linking certain sociodemographic, experiential, and behavioral characteristics with suicidal behavior in TAY.

COLLEEN KATZ

Hunter College, CUNY
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TITLE Correlates of Suicide Among Middle and High School Students in Ghana

AUTHORS Enoch Azasu, Washington University in St. Louis; Sean Joe, Washington University in St. Louis

ABSTRACT Purpose: We know little about the epidemiology of suicide among middle school students in Ghana including the years preceding high school. This study explores the onset, characteristics, and recent patterns of suicide among Ghanaian middle and high school students. Methods: This study used the World Health Organization Global school-based student health survey (GSHS, 2012) which has self-reported measures on suicide ideation, plan and attempt of middle and high school students in Ghana. Correlation and logistic regression analyses were performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 25). Results: The study found prevalence of suicidal behaviors among the population as follows: ideation (19%), plan (22%) and attempt (25%). Suicide ideation significantly increased the risk for suicide plan [OR=9.14; CI=7.57-11.02] and attempt [OR=11.89; CI=9.82-14.38], while suicide plan significantly increased the odds of suicide attempt [OR=12.64; CI=10.50-15.19]. There was a higher prevalence of suicide ideation, plan and attempts among middle school students than high school students though only suicide attempt differences were significant (28.4%>22.3%; X2=17.1, p<0.001). There were increasing patterns in suicide behaviors associated with age increases among the sample showing suicide to be pervasive in the population. Conclusions: The onset of suicide is earlier than previously thought and there were increasing trend in suicide behaviors as age increases. This finding highlights a potential suicide crisis among preteens which warrants attention. Additional studies are needed to observe these increasing trends, identify risk, protective and precipitating factors to help prevent suicide among these children.

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The Utility of Large Survey Data Sets to Identify Suicide Risk among Youth who are Multiply Minoritzed

TITLE Suicidality Among Transgender High School Students of Color in 15 States of the U.S.

AUTHORS Alison P. Kwok, Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health; Holly C. Wilcox, Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health

ABSTRACT Background: Transgender high school students were found to have higher risk of past year suicidal ideation and attempt, violent victimization, substance use, and sexual behavior in comparison to cisgender peers in the CDC's 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). Methods: This analysis focuses on the 2019 YRBS survey of high schoolers. Overall, 1,530,390 students were surveyed nation-wide, and 803,771 (52.5%) were from fifteen states that opted to administer the transgender identity module. Results: Trans students made up 2.1% (n=4,092/193,488). Over half of trans students identified as not non-Hispanic White (55.3%, n=2,088/3,774). Trans students endorsed a higher burden of past year suicidal thoughts and behaviors as compared to cis students. They were 4.6 times more likely to seriously consider attempting suicide in the past year (p<0.001, 95% CI [4.3,4.9]) and were 6.6 times more likely to attempt suicide (p<0.001, 95% CI [5.9,7.3]). Among transgender students, students of color were 2.3 times more likely to make a suicide attempt in the past year (p<0.001, 95% CI [1.8,2.8]) compared to White trans students. Conclusions: Transgender youth face unique challenges with minoritized gender identity, and transgender youth of color face further exacerbated health risks from multiple marginalization. Trans students endorsed more suicidal ideation and behavior. Trans students of color were more likely to make a suicide attempt but did not differ from White trans students on other suicide measures. This implies complex intersections of racial/ethnic and gender identity and a call to action for future suicide prevention efforts for trans students of color.

ALISON P KWOK

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TITLE Suicidal Behaviors among Sexual Minority Populations: Intersections with Race/Ethnicity and Sex, and its Potential Mechanisms

AUTHORS Mingsheng Li, Teachers College, Columbia University; Shuquan Chen, Teachers College, Columbia University

ABSTRACT Background: In accordance with intersectionality theory, the heightened stress and discrimination that racial/ethnic and sexual minority youths experience may increase their vulnerability to suicide. Despite this, there have been limited investigations into the intersectionality hypothesis regarding suicide risk among sexual minority youth, especially those who identify as bisexual. Methods: We analyzed data from 235 young cohort participants (M=21.46, SD=1.84) of the Generations Study Wave Ⅰ-Ⅱ. Logistic regression models were utilized to examine the intersection of racial/ethnic, bisexual identity, and sex in suicidal behaviors comparing bisexual and other sexual minorities in an LGBTQA+ sample. Results: A total of 53.62% of respondents reported suicidal ideation (SI) in the past year (65.87% of females, 34.92% of Black and Latinx, and 43.65% of bisexuals). For the SI model, respondents who reported SI having a significant association with bisexual identity [OR = 1.38, 95% confidence interval (CI) 1.00-1.90, p < .05], and discrimination levels (OR = 1.14, 95% CI 1.04-1.25, p < .01). One two-way interaction (race X sex) was identified (OR = 1.71, 95% CI 1.18-2.48, p < .01). No other statistically significant interactions were identified for the models. Conclusion: Overall, our findings suggest that sex, bisexual identity, and race/ethnicity can all elevate the risk of suicidal ideation in individuals. Additionally, sex combined with race/ethnicity had an amplified effect on SI, further supporting the intersectionality theory.

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Measurement of intersectional factors and intersectional quantitative analysis: Applications to suicide research
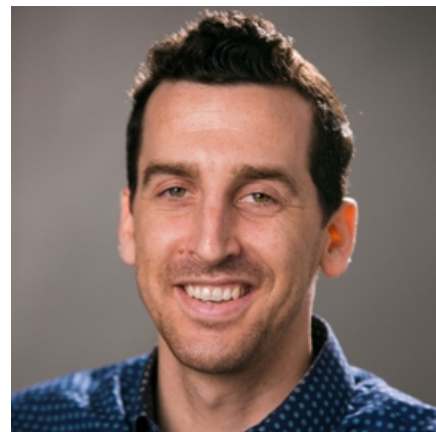
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Applying an intersectional lens to interventions research with LGBTQ+ youth of color at risk for suicide

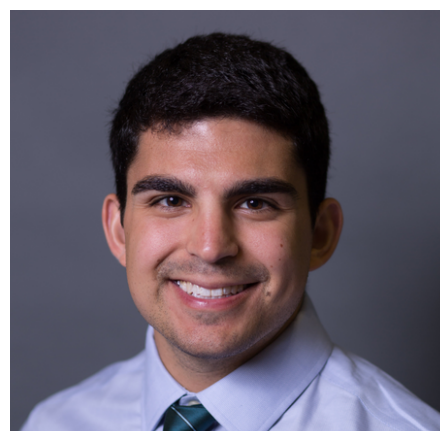**COLLEEN KATZ**

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THANK YOU

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**Funded by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention