Culturally Responsive Assessment of Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors in Youth of Color

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The significance of youth suicide as a public health concern is underscored by the fact that it is the second-leading cause of death for youth globally. While suicide rates for White groups have declined, there has been a precipitous rise in suicide deaths and suicide-related phenomena in Black youth; rates remain high among Native American/Indigenous youth. Despite these alarming trends, there are very few culturally tailored suicide risk assessment measures or procedures for youth from communities of color. This article attempts to address this gap in the literature by examining the cultural relevancy of currently widely used suicide risk assessment instruments, research on suicide risk factors, and approaches to risk assessment for youth from communities of color. It also notes that researchers and clinicians should consider other, nontraditional but important factors in suicide risk assessment, including stigma, acculturation, and racial socialization, as well as environmental factors like health care infrastructure and exposure to racism and community violence. The article concludes with recommendations for factors that should be considered in suicide risk assessment for youth from communities of color.

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