

# Suicide Trends in U.S. Subgroups: Service Use

Crystal L. Barksdale, PhD, MPH

Office for Disparities Research & Workforce Diversity

National Institute of Mental Health

## Strategies and Interventions to Reduce Suicide: A Workshop

June 22, 2021



National Institute  
of Mental Health

# Agenda

---

- About the NIMH
- Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Services
- Mental Health Service Use Among Subpopulations
- Opportunities and Next Steps

# Agenda

---

- About the NIMH
- Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Services
- Mental Health Service Use Among Subpopulations
- Opportunities and Next Steps

# NIMH Vision and Mission

---

## VISION



NIMH envisions a world in which mental illnesses are prevented and cured.

## MISSION



To transform the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses through basic and clinical research, paving the way for prevention, recovery, and cure.

# Agenda

---

- About the NIMH
- Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Services
- Mental Health Service Use Among Subpopulations
- Opportunities and Next Steps

# Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Services

- Mental health care services are a critical component of suicide prevention efforts
- However, individuals at risk for suicide often don't seek mental health services, particularly youth and historically minoritized populations
  - This impacts suicide prevention outcomes
  - This exacerbates disparities in suicide and suicide prevention

## SPECIAL ISSUE

Suicide and  
Life-Threatening  
BEHAVIOR

### **Considerations in the assessment of help-seeking and mental health service use in suicide prevention research**

Melanie A. Hom PhD<sup>1</sup> | Ian H. Stanley PhD<sup>2,3</sup>

Has the person considered MH care? Why or why not?

Has the person sought advice from family, friends  
about getting care?

What has their experience been with care received?

If they received care, did they get better?

# Agenda

---

- About the NIMH
- Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Services
- **Mental Health Service Use Among Subpopulations**
- Opportunities and Next Steps

# Mental Health Service Use Across Racially and Ethnically Diverse Groups

---

- Among youth, research suggests:
  - Across racial and ethnic groups, service use among youth at elevated risk for suicide is consistently found to be below 50%
  - Non-Hispanic Black and other racially and ethnically diverse youth are less likely than non-Hispanic White youth to receive follow up care from mental health care after psychiatric hospitalization
- Among adults, research suggests:
  - Less than 50% of adults who have seriously considered suicide have had contact with a mental health provider
  - Racially and ethnically diverse adults are less likely than White adults to receive specialty mental health care in the same year as their suicide attempt



# Mental Health Service Use Across Racially and Ethnically Diverse Groups

---

- Why are mental health services underutilized among racially and ethnically diverse groups?

**Stigma**

**Structural inequalities and structural racism**

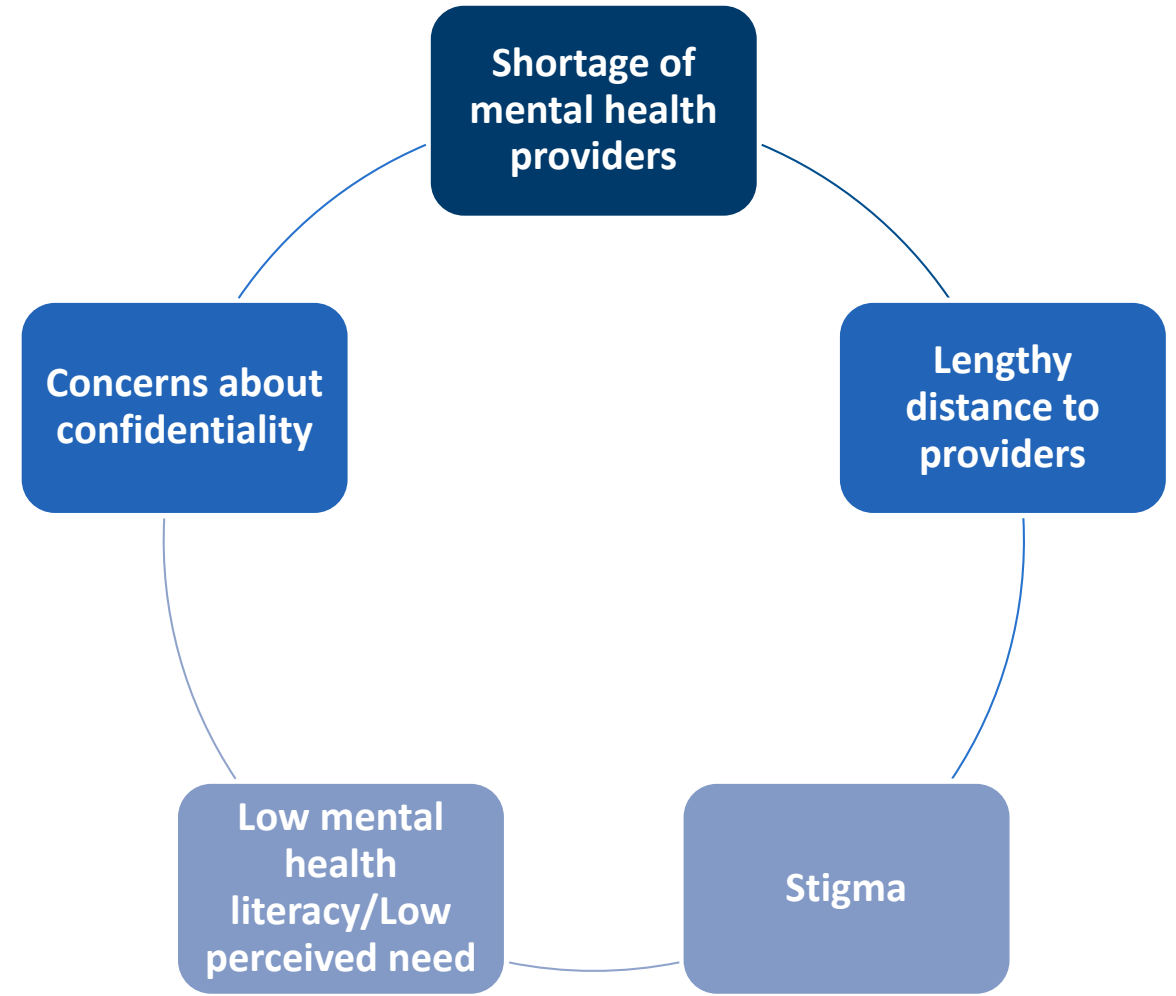
**Low mental health literacy**

**Limited availability of culturally competent services**

**Limited knowledge of and access to resources**

# Mental Health Service Use Among Individuals Living in Rural Areas

- Research suggests that individuals who are at elevated risk of suicide and who are living in rural communities are less likely than those living in urban communities to have received mental health treatment
- There are multiple factors that contribute to mental health underutilization among rural populations:



# Mental Health Service Use Among Sexual and Gender Minorities

---

- Though there are subgroup variations, research suggests that LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly TGD (transgender and gender diverse) adults and youth, are less likely to seek general community mental health services than non-LGBTQIA+ individuals, and when they do, they often report a high level of dissatisfaction with services
- Reasons for underutilization often include:
  - Lack of family support and support to seek services
  - Concerns about privacy and disclosure
  - Stigma
  - Lack of the availability of LGBTQIA+ affirming services

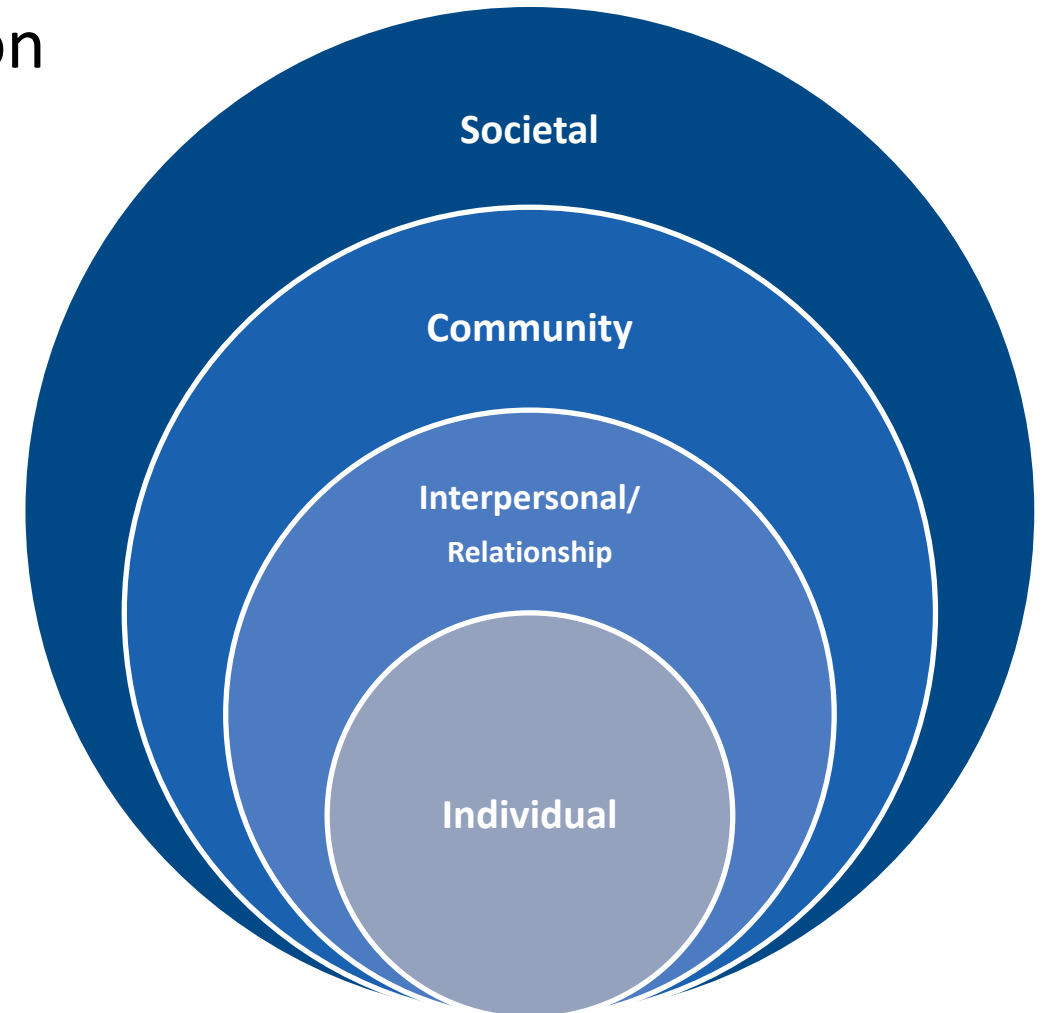
# Agenda

---

- About the NIMH
- Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Services
- Mental Health Service Use Among Subpopulations
- Opportunities and Next Steps

# Opportunities and Next Steps

- Social-Ecological Model of Suicide Prevention
  - Provides comprehensive framework to organize risk and protective factors
  - Grounding for multilevel intervention and prevention Programs
  - Enables nuanced view of relationship between multi-level factors



# Opportunities and Next Steps

---

- Consider ways to improve data collection – there are several gaps in epidemiological data on minoritized youth and intersectional populations
- Improve ability to identify individuals, especially minoritized youth, who are at risk for completing suicide
- More information and research on the best approaches to prevent suicide, especially among minoritized youth - need to ensure that approaches are developmentally and culturally relevant

# Resources

---

- Research Opportunities
  - **Notice of Special Interest (NOSI) in Research on Risk and Prevention of Black Youth Suicide** - <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-MH-20-055>
  - **Systems-Level Risk Detection and Interventions to Reduce Suicide, Ideation, and Behaviors in Black Children and Adolescents (R01 Clinical Trial Optional)** - <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-MH-21-185.html>
  - **Systems-Level Risk Detection and Interventions to Reduce Suicide, Ideation, and Behaviors in Black Children and Adolescents (R34 Clinical Trial Optional)** - <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-MH-21-186.html>
  - **Systems-Level Risk Detection and Interventions to Reduce Suicide, Ideation, and Behaviors in Youth from Underserved Populations (R01 Clinical Trial Optional)** - <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-MH-21-187.html>
  - **Systems-Level Risk Detection and Interventions to Reduce Suicide, Ideation, and Behaviors in Youth from Underserved Populations (R34 Clinical Trial Optional)** - <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-MH-21-188.html>
- Sign up for NIH Guide Notices - <https://grants.nih.gov/funding/searchguide/index.html#/>



# Thank You!

Crystal L. Barksdale, PhD, MPH

[crystal.barkdsale@nih.gov](mailto:crystal.barkdsale@nih.gov)

