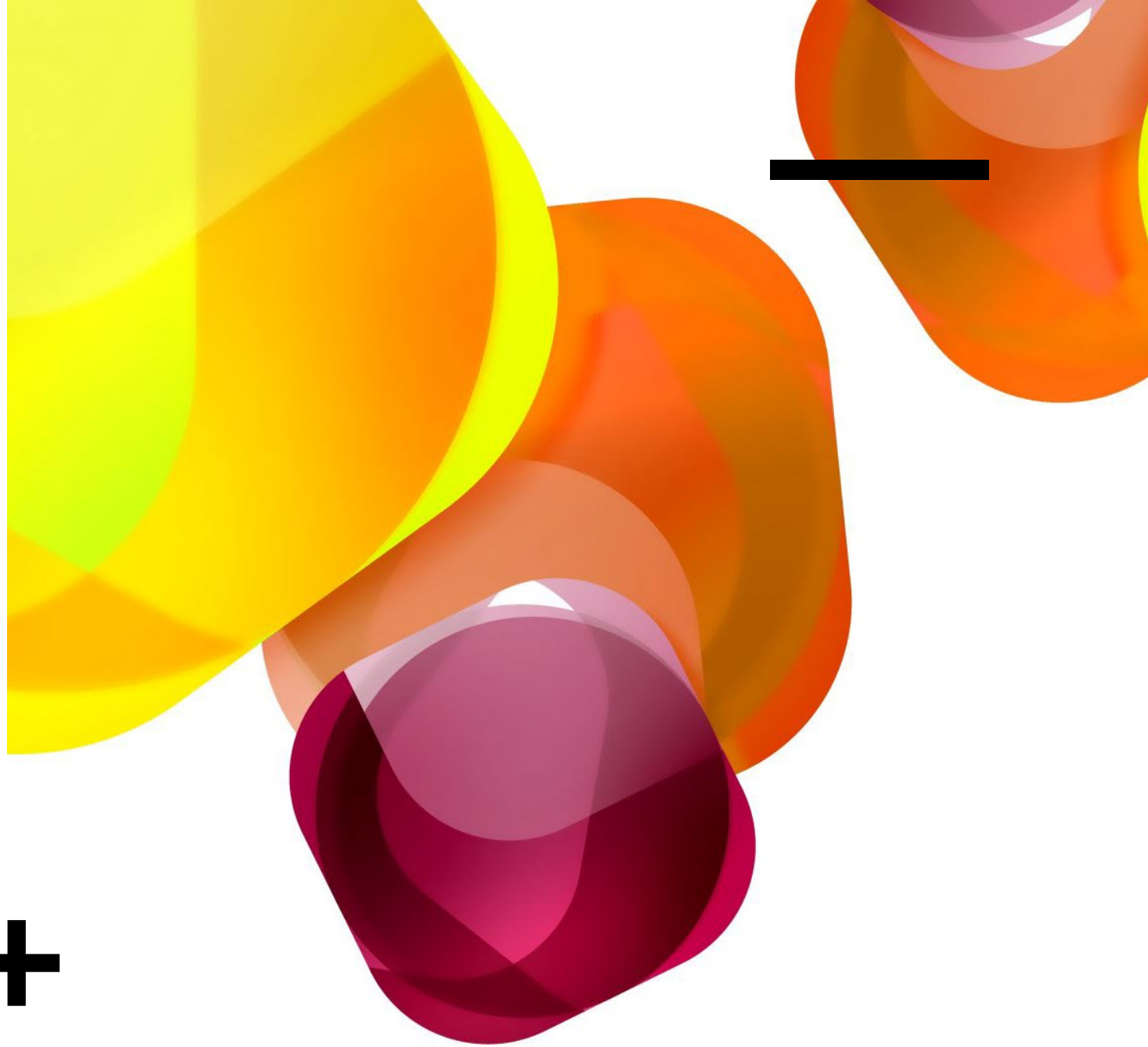
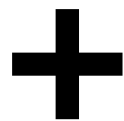


Promoting Life, Coping with Death

Jonathan B. Singer, Ph.D., LCSW

Loyola University Chicago

Social Work Podcast

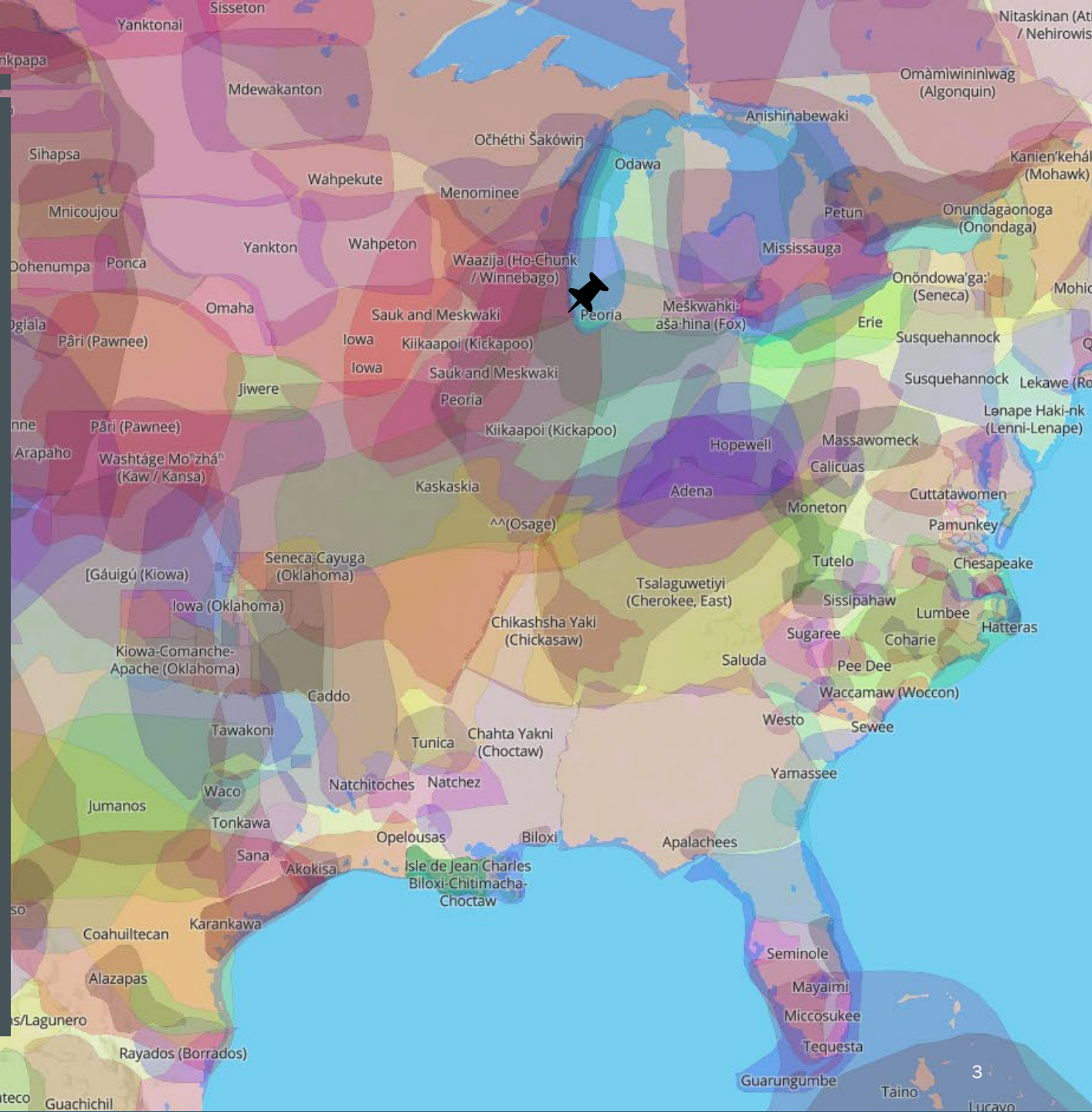



ABOUT THIS SLIDE DECK

- These slides were developed and presented by Jonathan B. Singer, Ph.D., LCSW on March 1, 2022 at the #TxSP22 symposium.
- **Description:** When we were kids, nobody talked about suicide. Today, it seems like everyone is talking about it and most kids know someone who has either been suicidal or died by suicide. School staff have a unique role in identifying and responding to youth suicide risk. This includes understanding the role of technology, including social media, in youth suicide prevention. When the unthinkable happens, school staff need to understand not only short-term crisis work, but also the components of long-term school-based postvention.
- **Objectives:** By the end of the presentation attendees will be able to 1) identify the components of long-term school-based postvention; 2) list three approaches for understanding the role of technology, including social media, in youth suicide prevention; 3) describe the distinct roles of school staff and community providers in an effective suicide prevention strategy.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I'm talking to you today from the traditional unceded homelands of the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi Nations. Many other tribes such as the Miami, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac, and Fox also called this area home. The region has long been a center for Indigenous people to gather, trade, and maintain kinship ties. Today, one of the largest urban American Indian communities in the United States resides in Chicago.





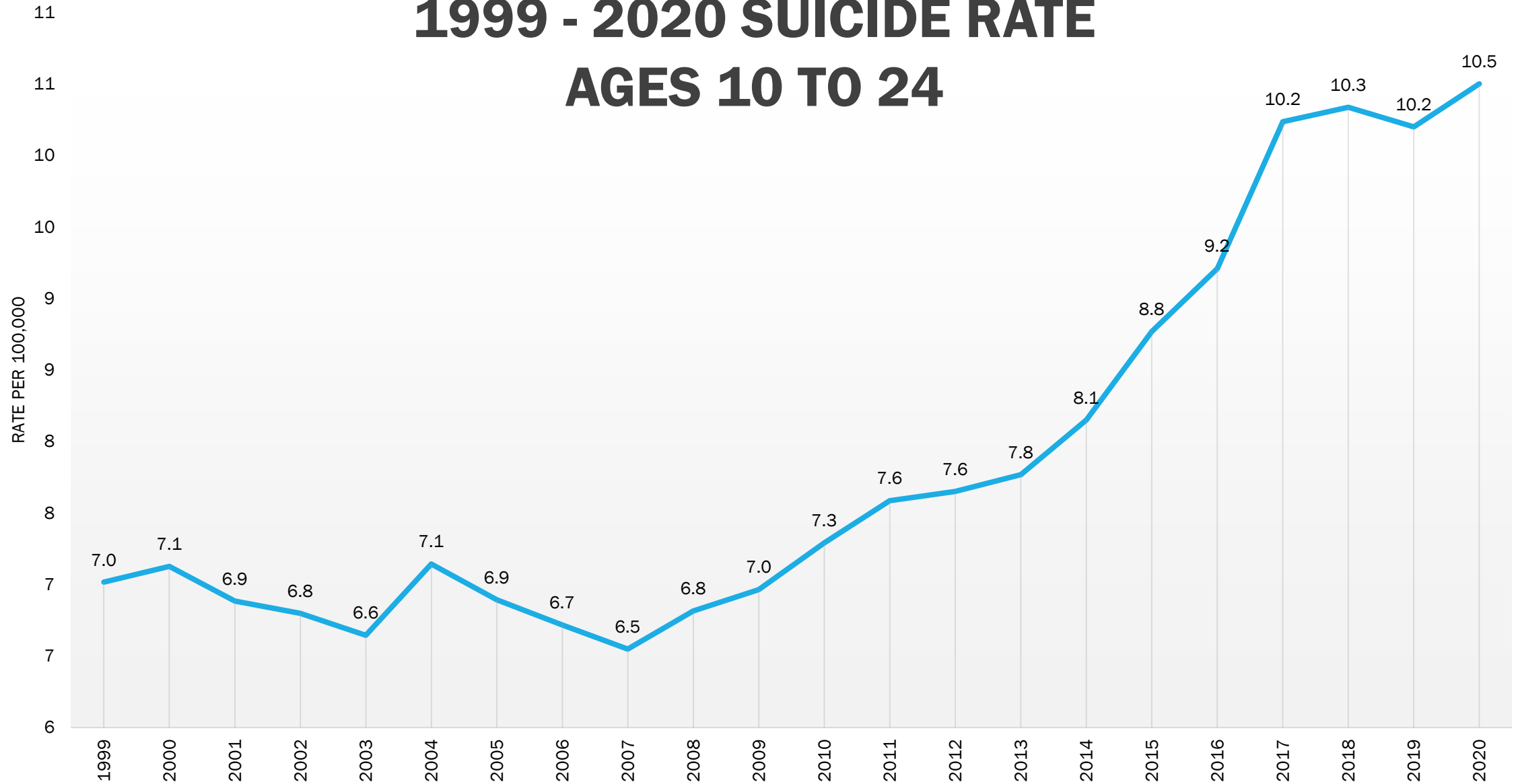
If we want a world
where people feel
like their **lives are
worth living**, we
can't have a
society that says
that some lives are
worth more than
others.

A black and white silhouette of a man and a child standing on a rocky cliff. The man is on the left, and the child is on his back, pointing towards the right. The background is a bright, hazy sky.

“BEHIND EVERY
STATISTIC IS A TEAR”

Jerry Reed

1999 - 2020 SUICIDE RATE AGES 10 TO 24



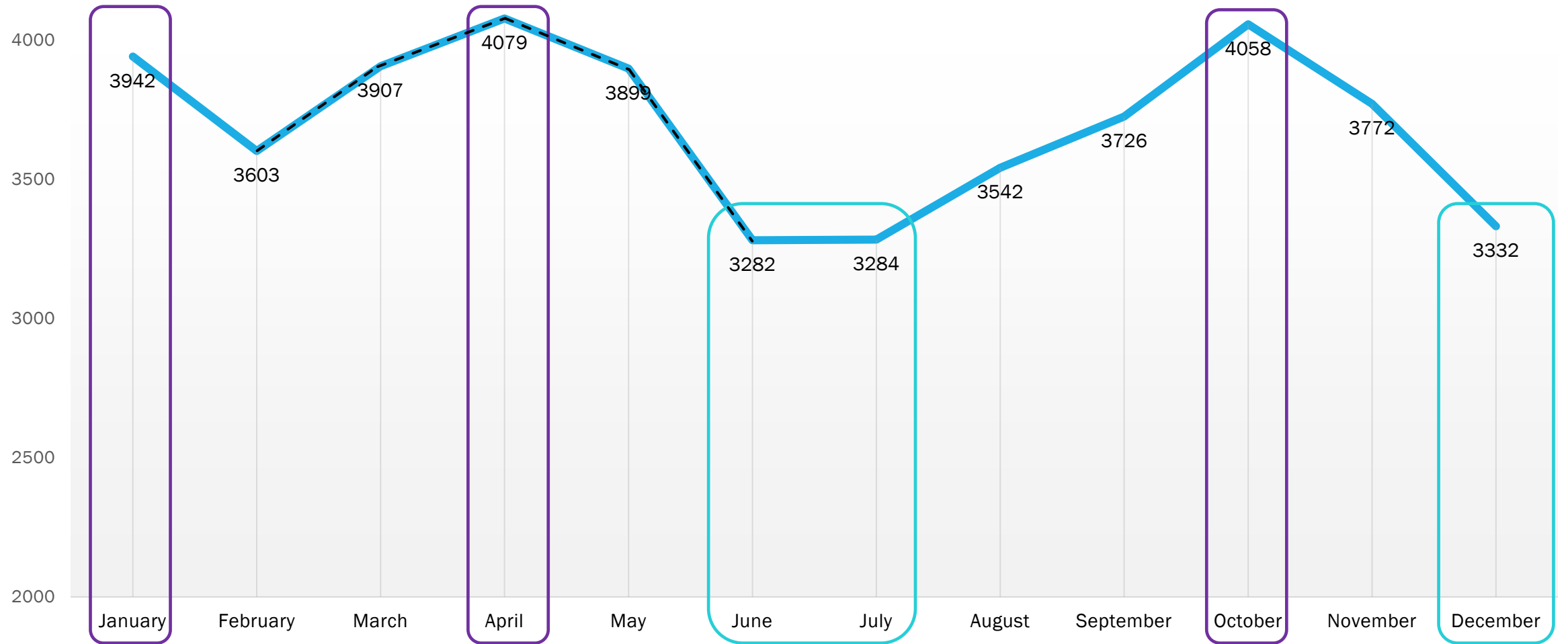
MYTH: Suicide is a “white people” problem.

FACT: Suicide kills people of all races and ethnicities.

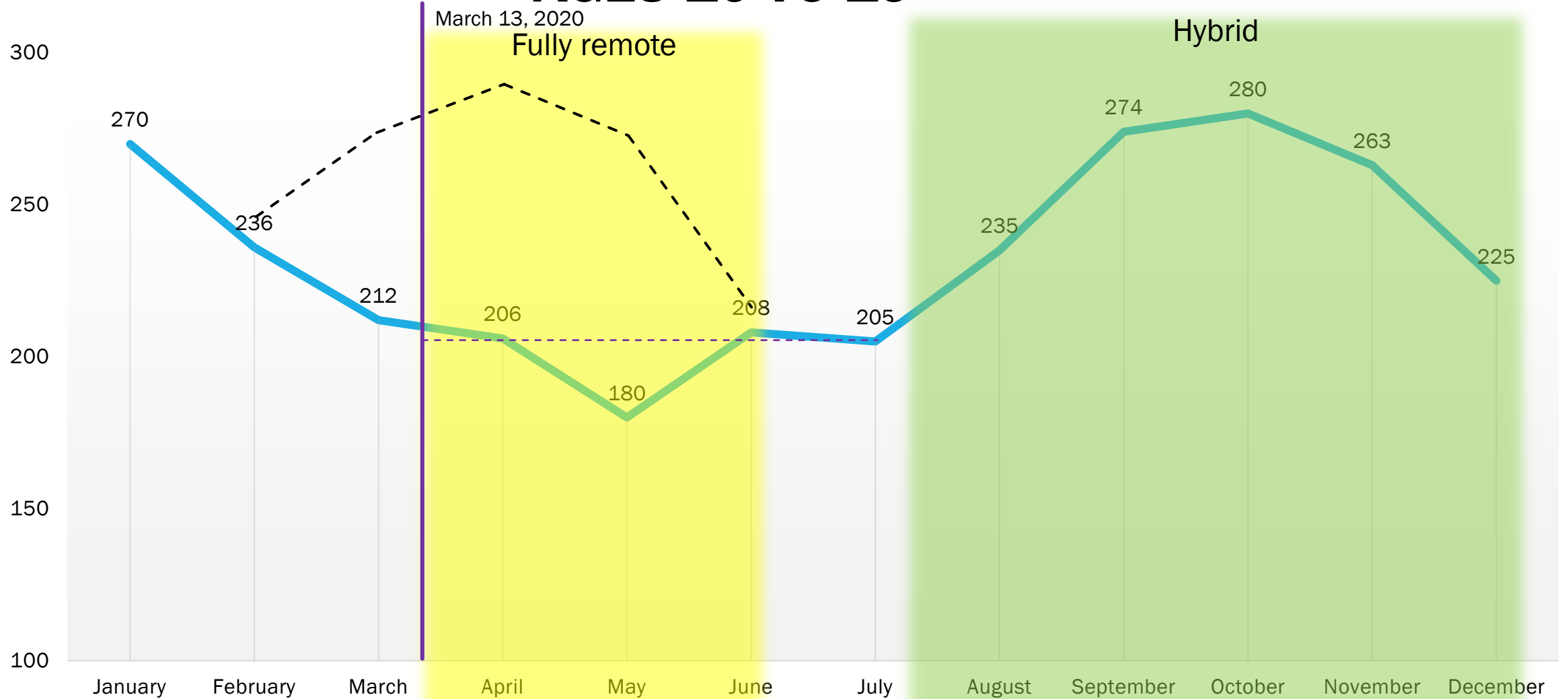
**2020 USA Suicides
10 – 24 years by Race
Rate per 100,000**



1999 - 2019 MONTHLY SUICIDE DEATHS USA AGES 10 TO 19



2020 MONTHLY SUICIDE DEATHS USA AGES 10 TO 19



TECHNOLOGY

SOCIAL MEDIA, CYBERBULLYING, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY





Most teenagers aren't addicted to technology;
If anything, they're addicted to each other.

danah boyd

TIPS FOR PARENTS

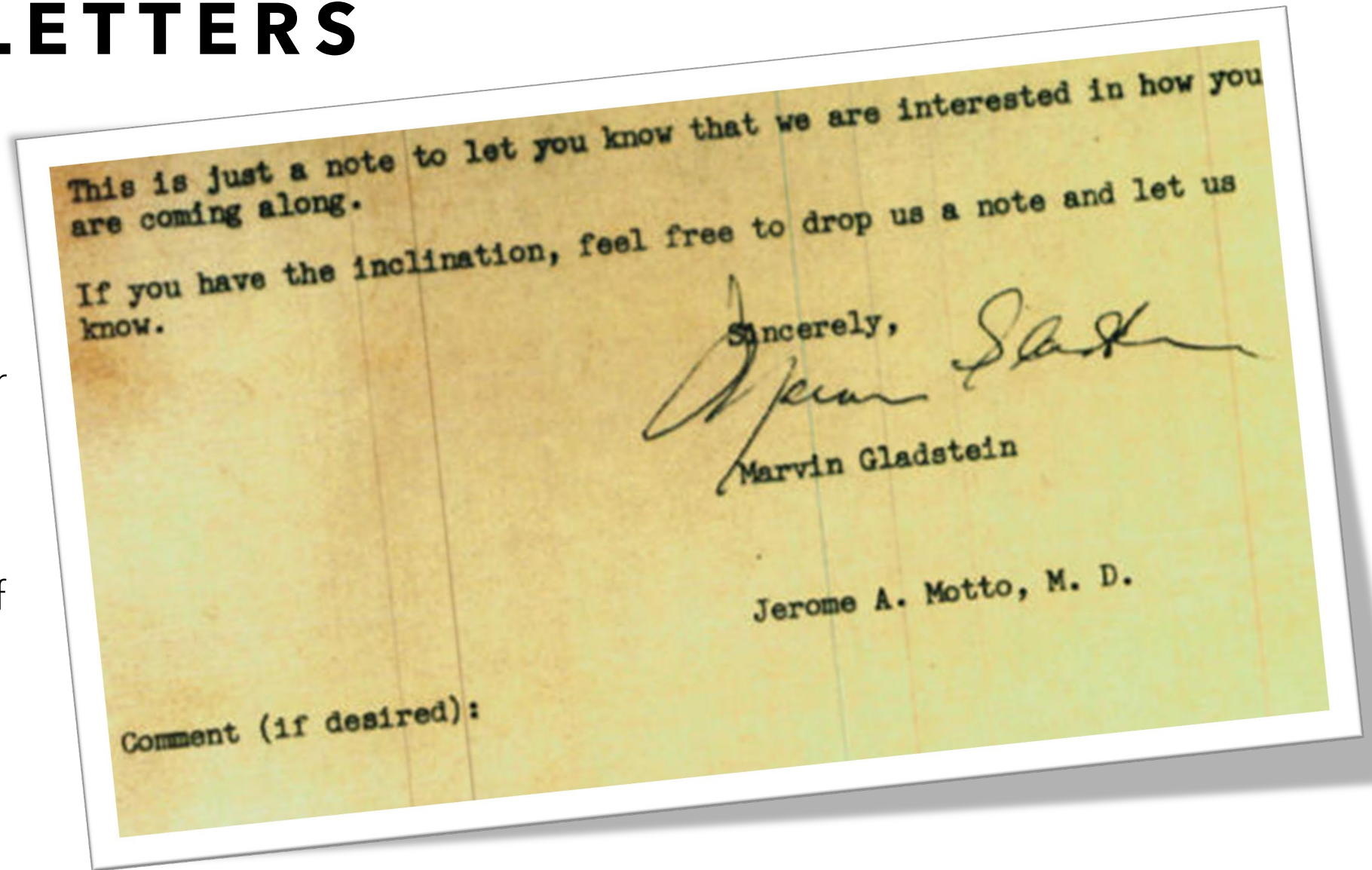
- **Talk with your parent friends about suicide.** A community problem needs a community solution. Useful when removing lethal means.
- **Ask open-ended questions.** Let your child steer the conversation to what they want to talk about.
- **Don't rush to solve their problems.** Instead, ask "what do you think would help?"
- **Validate your child's experiences.** Validation is not the same as agreement.
- **Be available and make sure your child knows it.** "I'm around if you want to talk later"
- **Talking while walking.** The relaxed atmosphere makes it easier for some kids to talk.
- **Communicate on their terms.** Text much?

CARING LETTERS

1969 - 1974

Jerome Motto sent "Caring letters" to people discharged after a suicide attempt.

2 years later, those who received them were half as likely to die by suicide.



CARING TEXTS

Text check-ins provide connection and resources for the clients and reassurance for the therapist.

This is an example of a simple "caring text." No deep clinical work, just genuine connection. I could be silly because I knew the client and was pretty sure it would extend the good mood. I anchored her "win" with an earworm.

Thinking of you today

Hey! Thanks for checking in. I'm doing much better today, which is surprising because the rain usually bums me out.

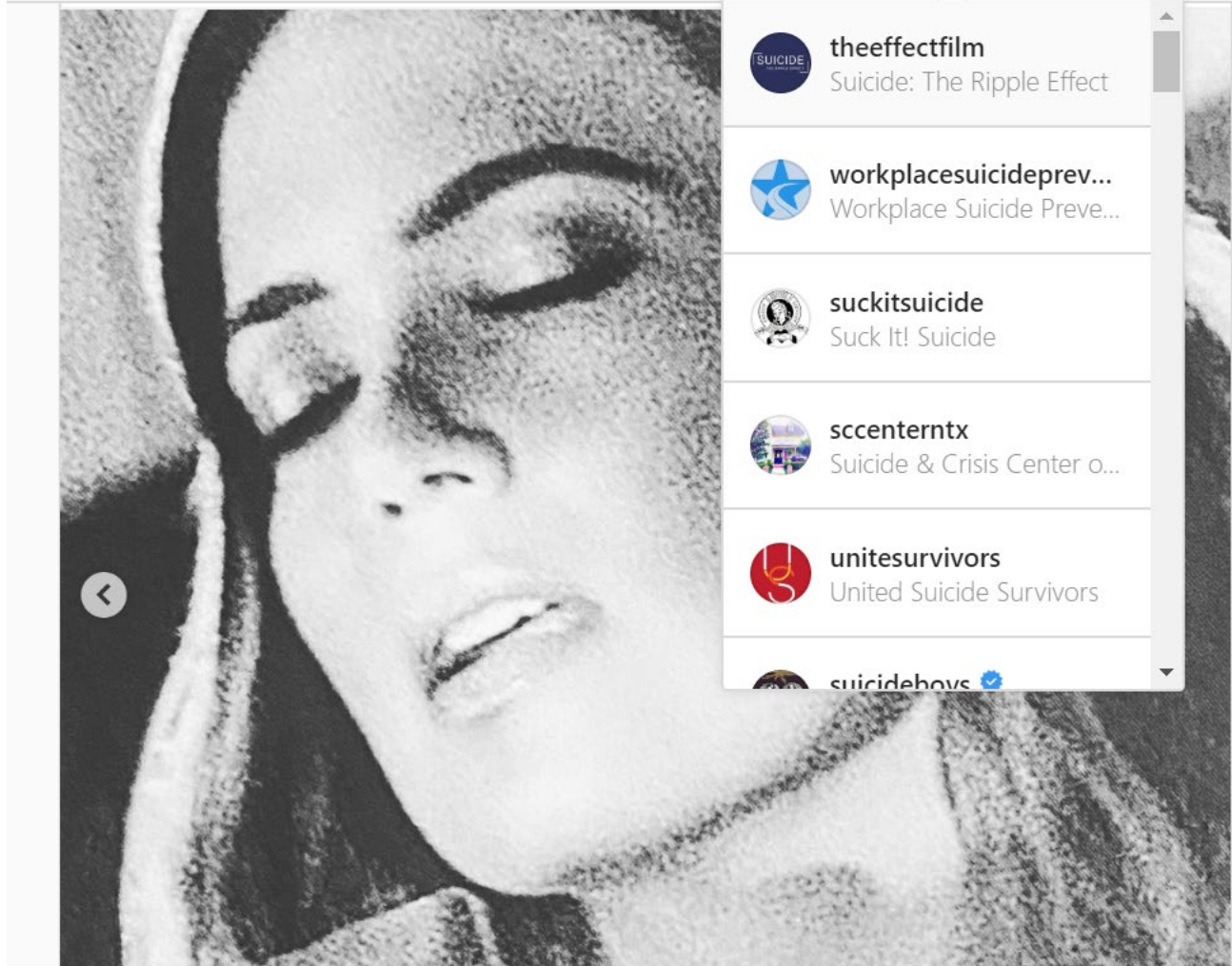
10:25 AM

Win! I guess no Milli Vanilli in your apartment today...

You didn't! Now that song will be stuck in my head. What kind of therapist are you???

Instagram

suicide



theeffectfilm
Suicide: The Ripple Effect

workplacesuicideprev...
Workplace Suicide Preve...

suckitsuicide
Suck It! Suicide

scenterntx
Suicide & Crisis Center o...

unitesurvivors
United Suicide Survivors

suicideboys

**On social media
interactions are often
public by default,
private through effort.**

danah boyd

i want to





#s3lfh4rm

Can we help?

Posts with words you're searching for often encourage behavior that can cause harm and even lead to death. If you're going through something difficult, we'd like to help.

[Get Support](#)

Show Posts

Cancel



!tw!

Sl3lf h4rm

Stress

started st@rv!ng
myself

Fake friends

Loosing my
Bestfriend of 9 years

Comparing myself to
others

@lifegavemedepression · 2021-10-05

#lifegavemedepression
#HAIRFOODHYPE ...

See more

🎵 1 sound - theneedleto



1100



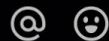
7



8



Add comment...



when I was 12

I didn't felt anything

so I started s3lf
h@rming.

now I can't stop.



256



23



2



@_s0me1_ · 2021-10-05

Tw./ #tw #littlelad #lmanburg #dsmp
#german #sh #school #idk #fy


See translation

🎵 jone.. - ??SP EDITOR!!


Add comment...






 enbywitchpal asked
Can you show ways to easily hide sh in school??

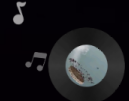


 Green Screen

@_v3nt__b00k · 2021-08-16

Answer to @enbywitchpal but it's always better to try and stop doing it </ 3 #SH #sh #selfharm #s3lfh #s3lfh4rm #school #sch00l #fypシ #foryoupage
Hide

 ondermusic (Contains

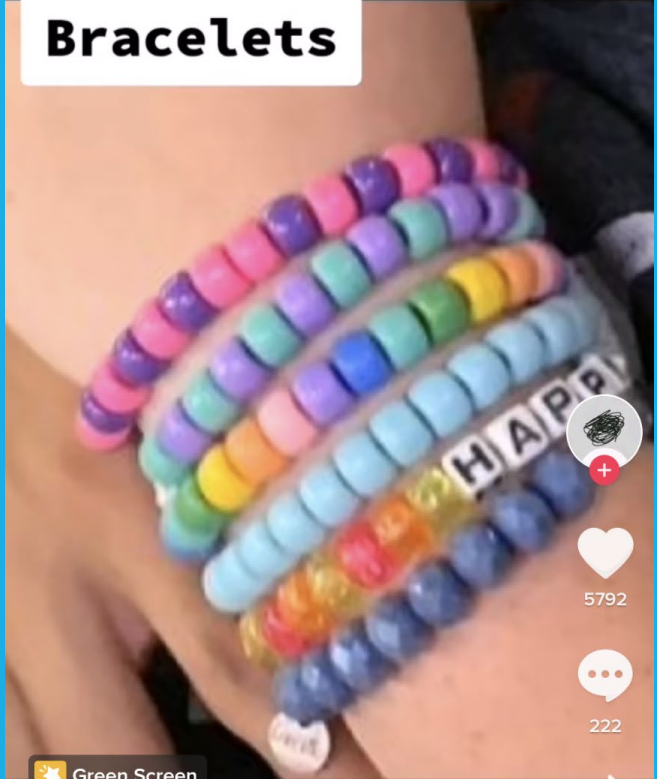


Add comment...



←
Arms

Bracelets



5792

222

Green Screen

@_v3nt__b00k · 2021-08-16

Answer to @enbywitchpal but it's always better to try and sto... See more

🎵 (Contains music from:

Add comment...

🔁
29

🎵

👤

@

😊



Stomach Foundation |



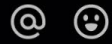
Green Screen

@_v3nit__b00k · 2021-08-16

Answer to @enbywitchpal but it's always better to try and sto... See more

🎵 I - pondermusic (Conte

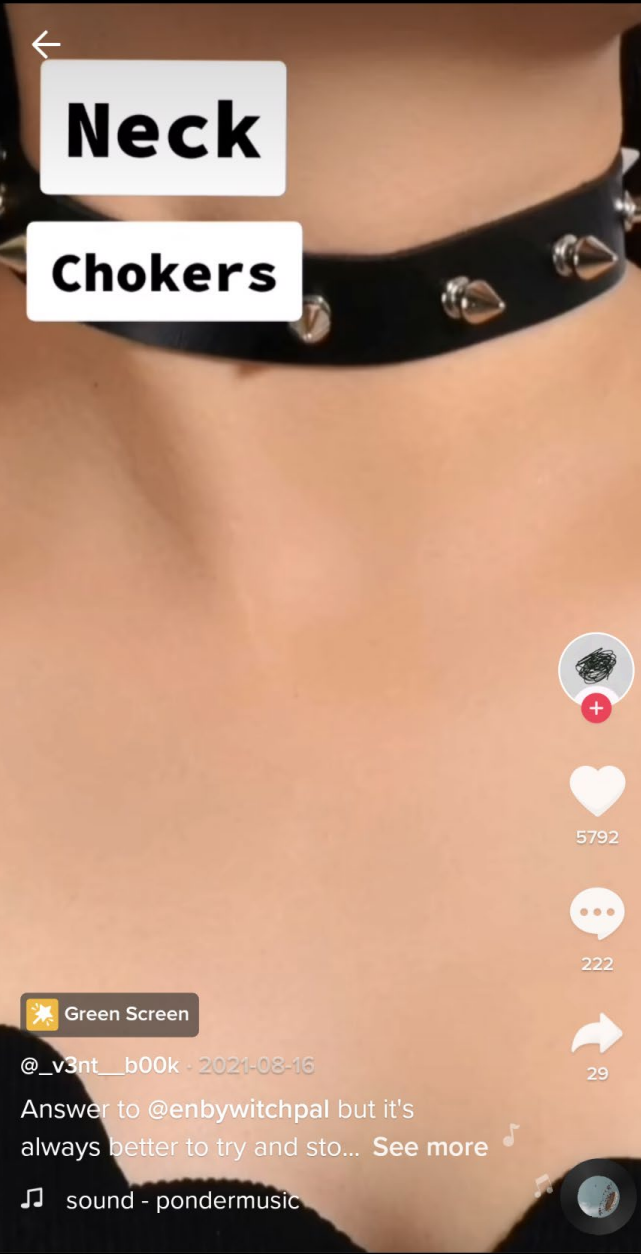
Add comment...





Neck

Chokers



5792



222

Green Screen

@_v3nt__b00k · 2021-08-16

Answer to @enbywitchpal but it's always better to try and sto... [See more](#)

sound - pondermusic



29

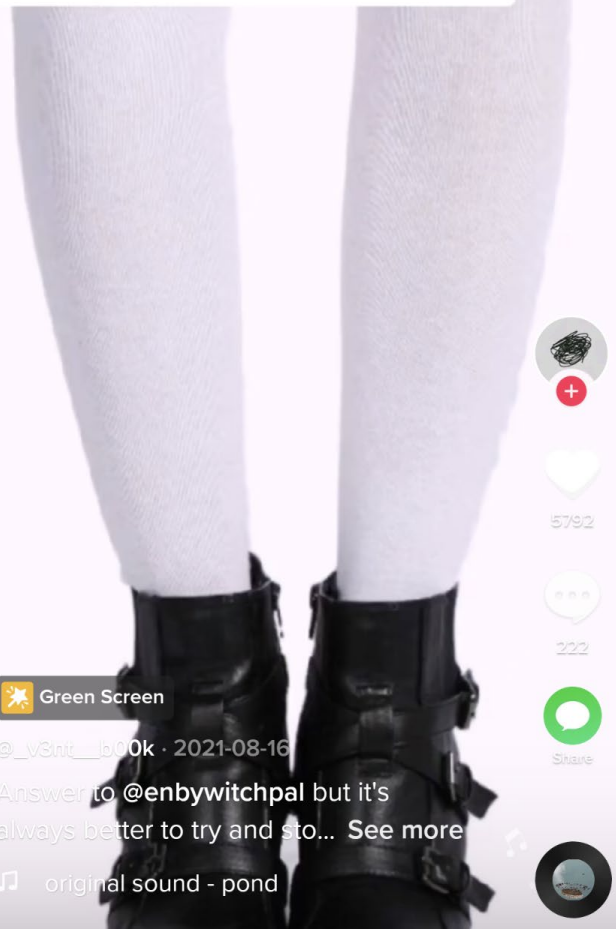
Add comment...





Legs

Knee high socks



-
-
-
- 5792
-
- 222
-
- Share
-

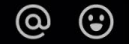
Green Screen

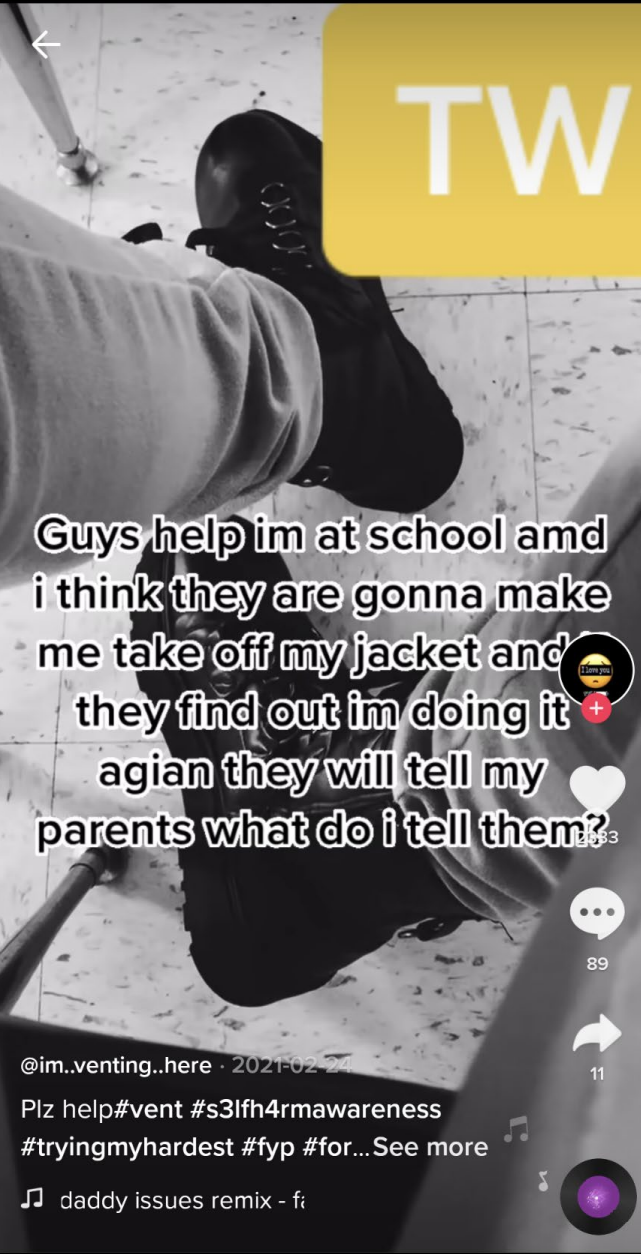
@_v3nit_b00k · 2021-08-16

Answer to @enbywitchpal but it's always better to try and sto... See more

original sound - pond

Add comment...





TW

Guys help im at school amd
i think they are gonna make
me take off my jacket and
they find out im doing it
agian they will tell my
parents what do i tell them?



2653



89



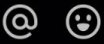
11

@im..venting..here · 2021-02-24

Plz help#vent #s3lfh4rmawareness
#tryingmyhardest #fyp #for... See more

daddy issues remix - fi

Add comment...





Guys help im at school amd

89 comments



0.who_cares.0



tell them you dont have a shirt under

1

2021-02-25 Reply

Liked by creator



ur._local._weirdo



Say you don't have anything on under it

1

2021-02-25 Reply

Liked by creator



caspertheghostsbabydaddy



say you don't have a shirt on under it

1

2021-02-25 Reply

Liked by creator



hello10001101



And I cut too..

1

2021-02-27 Reply



Add comment...





Guys help im at school amd

89 comments



rustytoeslol



1

I'm young but I'm really tempted but I also don't want to at the same time-

2021-02-24 Reply

Liked by creator



arlene_dc



1

Socials

2021-02-25 Reply

Liked by creator



arlene_dc



1

I mean I started at nine and it was a huge mistake, it's been 3 years and I haven't been clean, please don't if you want to talk I can give you my

2021-02-25 Reply

Liked by creator

Hide ^



Add comment...





Guys help im at school amd

89 comments



sour_candyyyy



I'm really tempted.

84

2021-02-24 Reply

Liked by creator



im..venting..here · Creator



No don't I don't want you to be like me plz dont 🙄🙄

68

2021-02-24 Reply



itsaddy.lmao



Same but pls pls don't

3

2021-02-24 Reply

Liked by creator



Add comment...





89 comments



itsaddy.lmao

Same but pls pls don't

2021-02-24 Reply

Liked by creator



jazmine_lancaster00

I write on my arm and it helps a lot the only thing is my parants yell at me for it but it's MUCH better then that and it's washes off to

2021-02-24 Reply

Liked by creator



frogz_lolz

i normally just use red marker on where u would normally do it and it calms me down a lot :)

2021-02-25 Reply

Liked by creator



Add comment...



TAKE HOME POINTS

Kids self harm at school

Kids use social media to reach out when they are distressed

Kids are afraid of the consequences of adult intervention more than the benefits of talking with adults

Kids support each other

Kids distract each other

Kids encourage each other NOT to hurt themselves

Schools should address [#selfharm](#) proactively

MOBILE APPS



Teens say social media helps strengthen friendships, provide emotional support, but can also lead to drama, feeling pressure to post certain types of content

% of U.S. teens who say the following about social media



81% Feel more connected to their friends

69% Think it helps teens interact with a more diverse group of people

68% Feel as if they have people who will support them through tough times



45% Feel overwhelmed by all of the drama there

43% Feel pressure to only post content that makes them look good to others

37% Feel pressure to post content that will get a lot of likes and comments

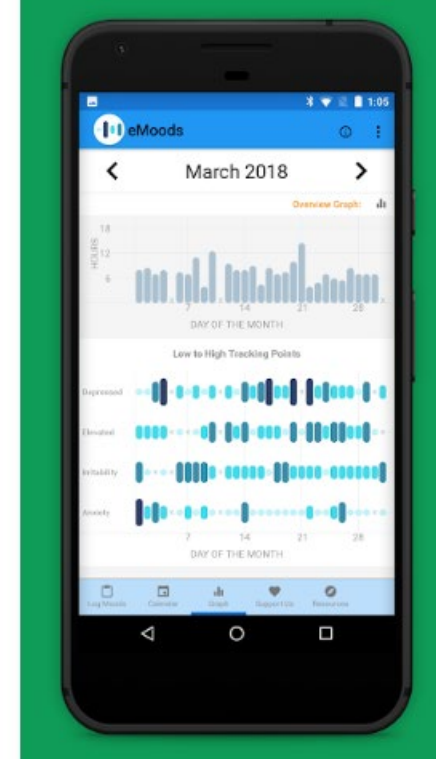
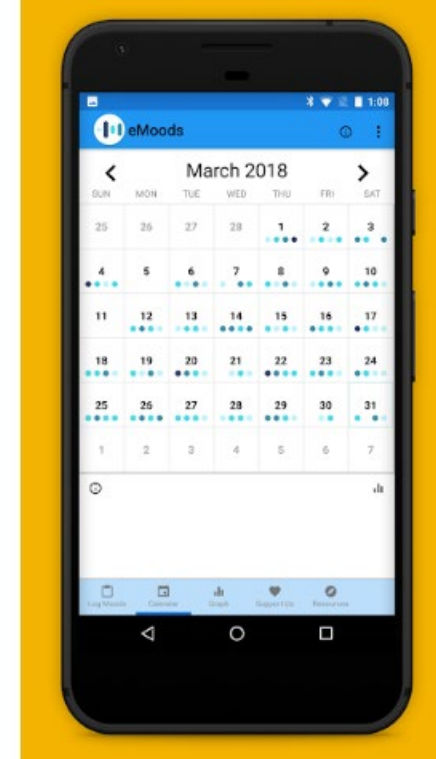
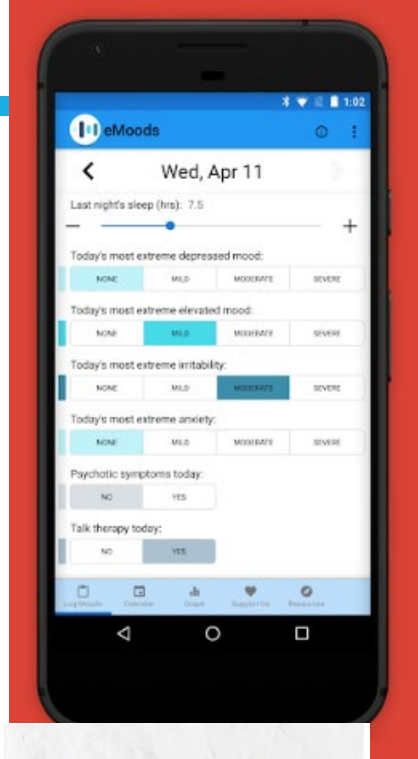
Note: Respondents who did not give an answer or gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted March 7–April 10, 2018.

“Teens’ Social Media Habits and Experiences”

APPS

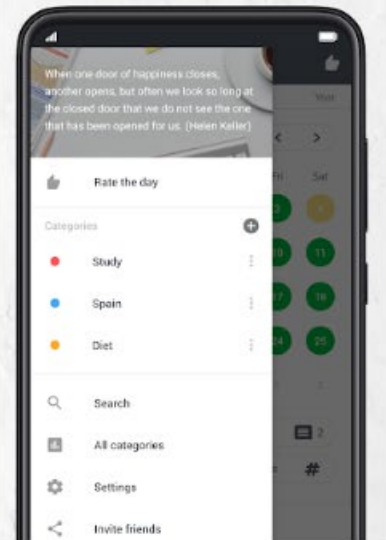
eMoods – Bipolar



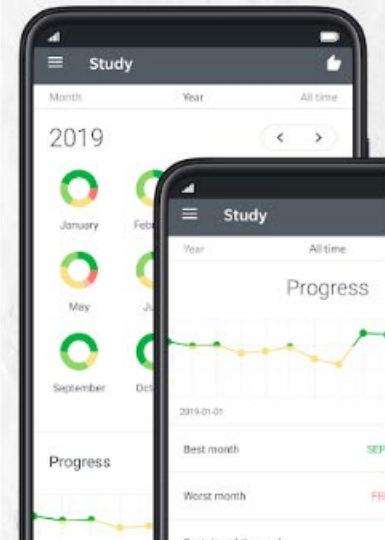
CALENDAR



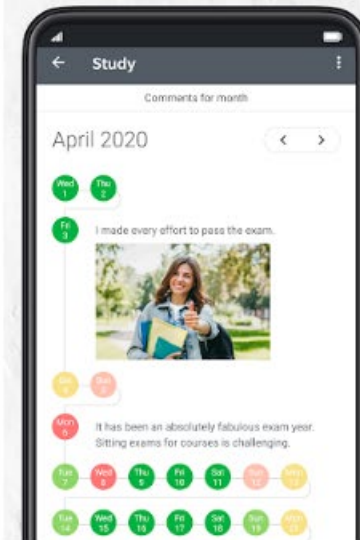
CATEGORIES



STATISTICS



CHRONOLOGY



Mood Tracker, Diary, Journal: Puncher



-
- **Myth:** People who are suicidal are weak.
 - **Fact:** People are suicidal despite enormous strength and courage.

DO NOT CONFUSE MY BAD
DAYS AS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS.
THOSE ARE ACTUALLY THE DAYS
I AM FIGHTING MY HARDEST.



- **Myth:** If I ask someone about suicide, I'll put the idea in their head.
- **Fact:** Asking someone about suicide will not make them suicidal (Gould et al., 2005).



SUICIDE IN SCHOOLS

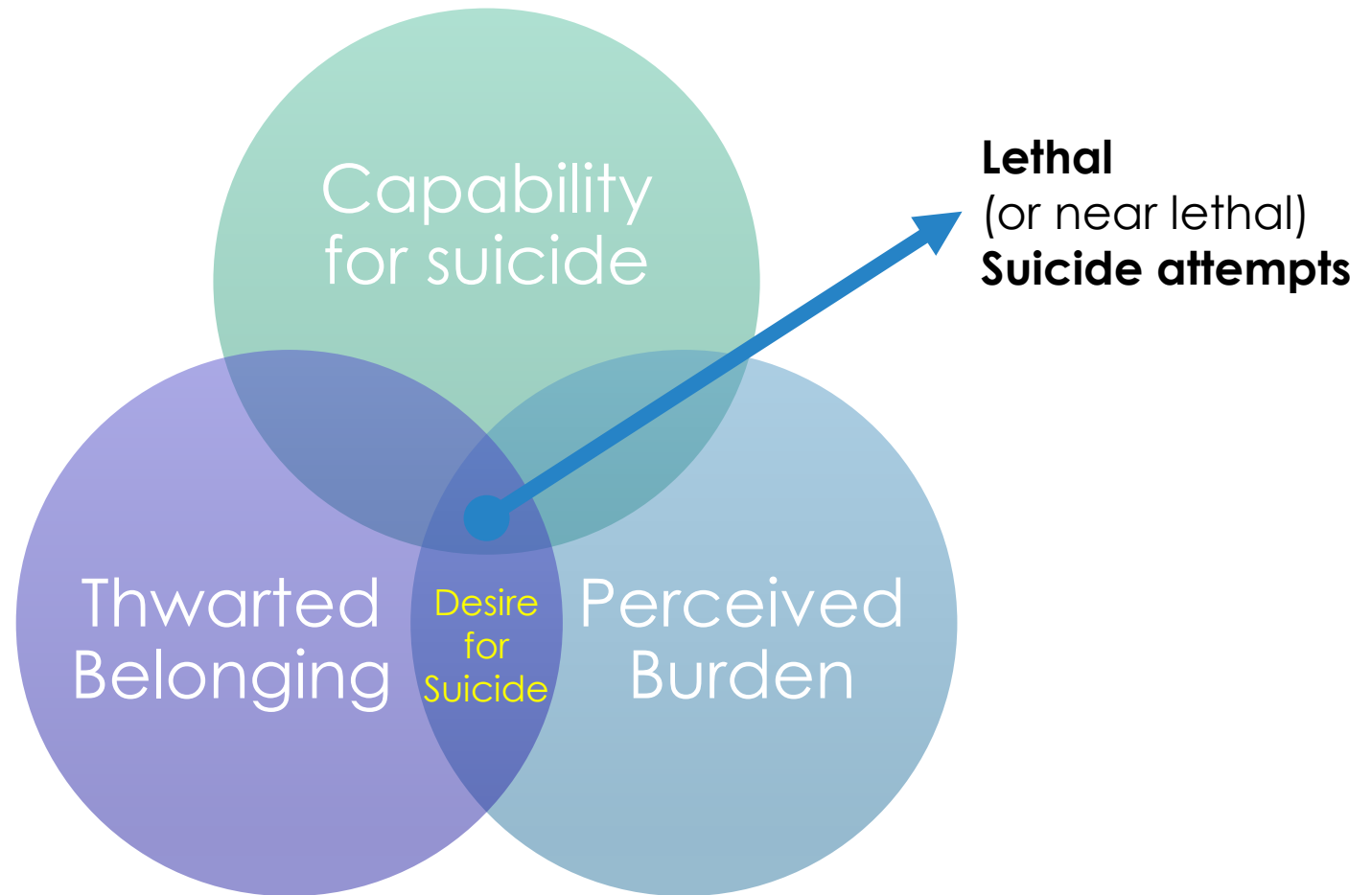
A Practitioner's Guide to Multi-level Prevention,
Assessment, Intervention, and Postvention

SCHOOL-BASED PRACTICE IN ACTION SERIES

WHY DO PEOPLE DIE BY SUICIDE?

- Sociologist Emil Durkheim was the first person to conduct an empirical study of suicide (Durkheim, 1897). His study suggested that people killed themselves because they felt that they did not belong (**egoistic**), they were unimportant in society (**altruistic**), they were morally adrift because of societal upheaval or lack of structure (**anomic**), or they were overburdened by societal restrictions (**fatalistic**). Although Durkheim's theory was proposed in 1897, many of his ideas inform current thinking about suicide (for an update of Durkheim's theory, see Mueller & Abrutyn, 2016).
- **Ideation-to-Action Frameworks.** Since 2005, four theories, collectively known as ideation-to-action frameworks, have emerged that try to explain how people move from having thoughts of suicide to non-fatal or fatal suicide attempts (Klonksky et al., 2018). Integrated motivational-volitional model, Three-step theory, Fluid vulnerability theory, and the Interpersonal Theory. Although space limitations prevent a thorough review of each theory, a brief review of the most well-researched framework, the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide (IPT; Van Orden et al., 2010), is instructive.

**JOINER'S
INTERPERSONAL
THEORY OF SUICIDE
(2005/2010)**

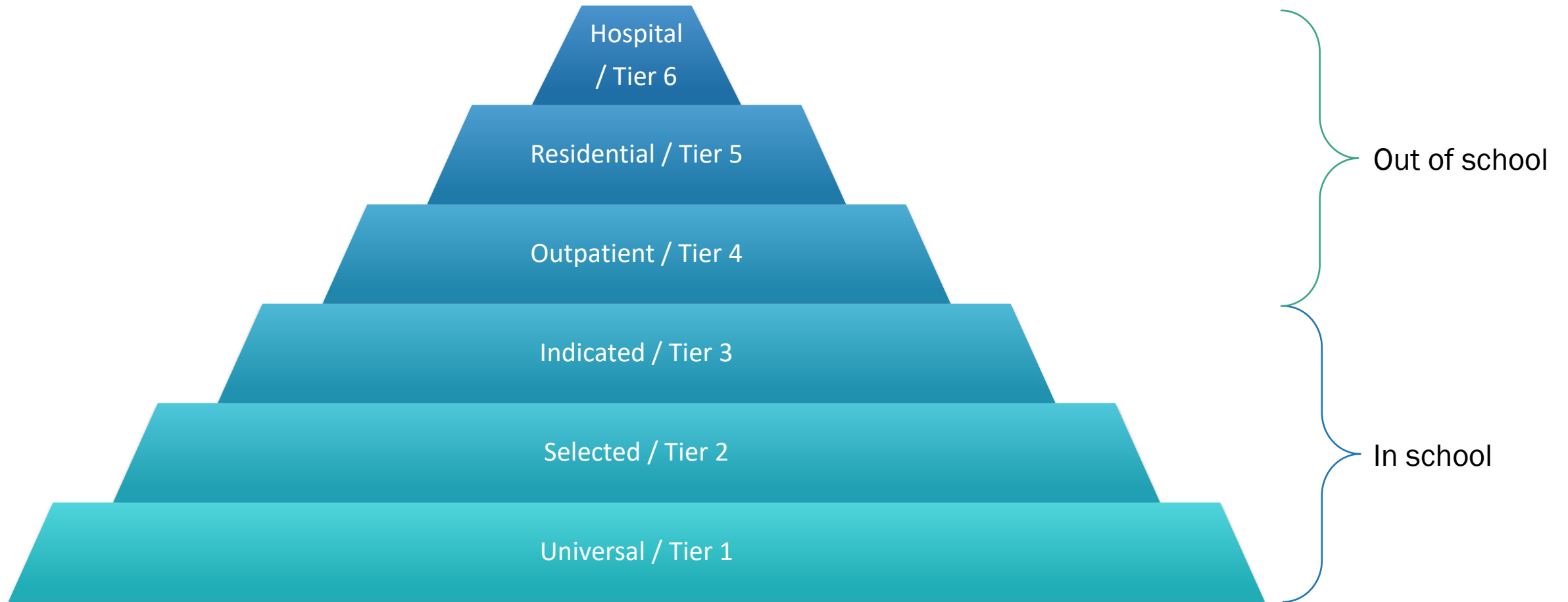




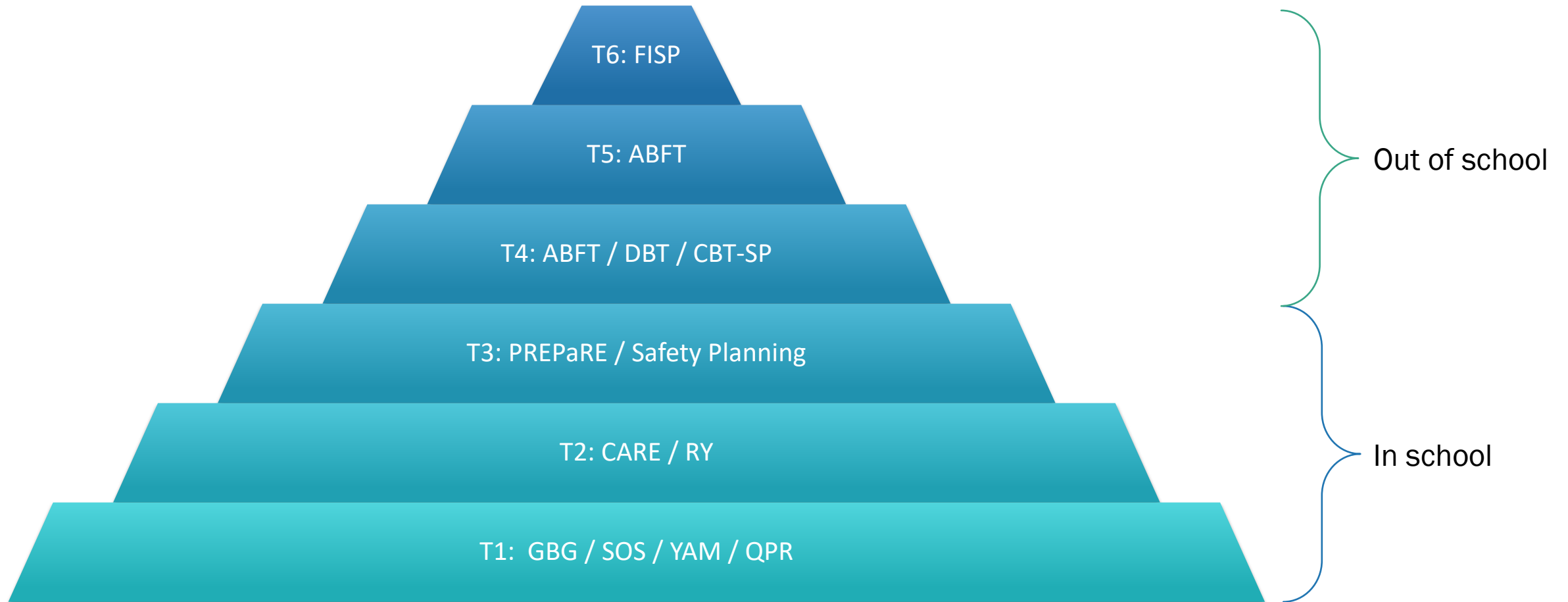
Prevention

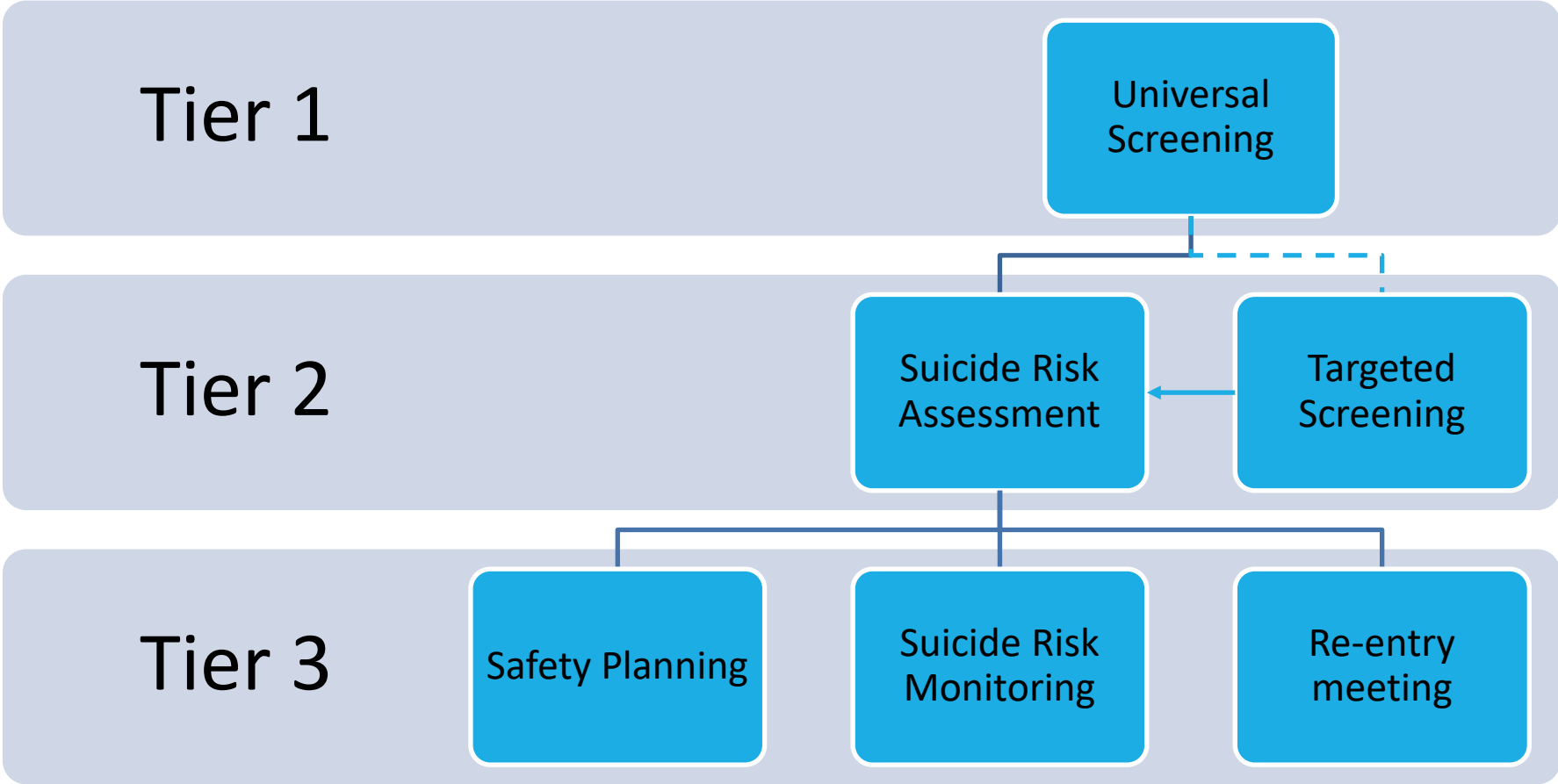
Risk factors and warning signs, multi-tier response, challenges

MULTI-TIERED APPROACH (JIM MAZZA)



MULTI-TIERED APPROACH (JIM MAZZA)







CHALLENGES DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE SCHOOL-BASED SUICIDE PREVENTION

- Suicide risk is not evenly spread out across all schools within a district
- Suicide risk is not evenly spread out across all students within a school
- Providing culturally relevant services for Black, Indigenous, Latine, Asian American and Pacific Islander students is essential
- School staff are trained primarily in addressing student behaviors
- Parents, like school staff, have a variety of opinions about the role of schools in suicide prevention and intervention
- Legal precedent for suicide and schools is limited and at times contradictory

POSTVENTION

Intervention after a suicide death to address grief and loss and prevent future suicide deaths

You want to step into a cultural bubble
without breaking it.

Sade Heart of the Hawk Ali

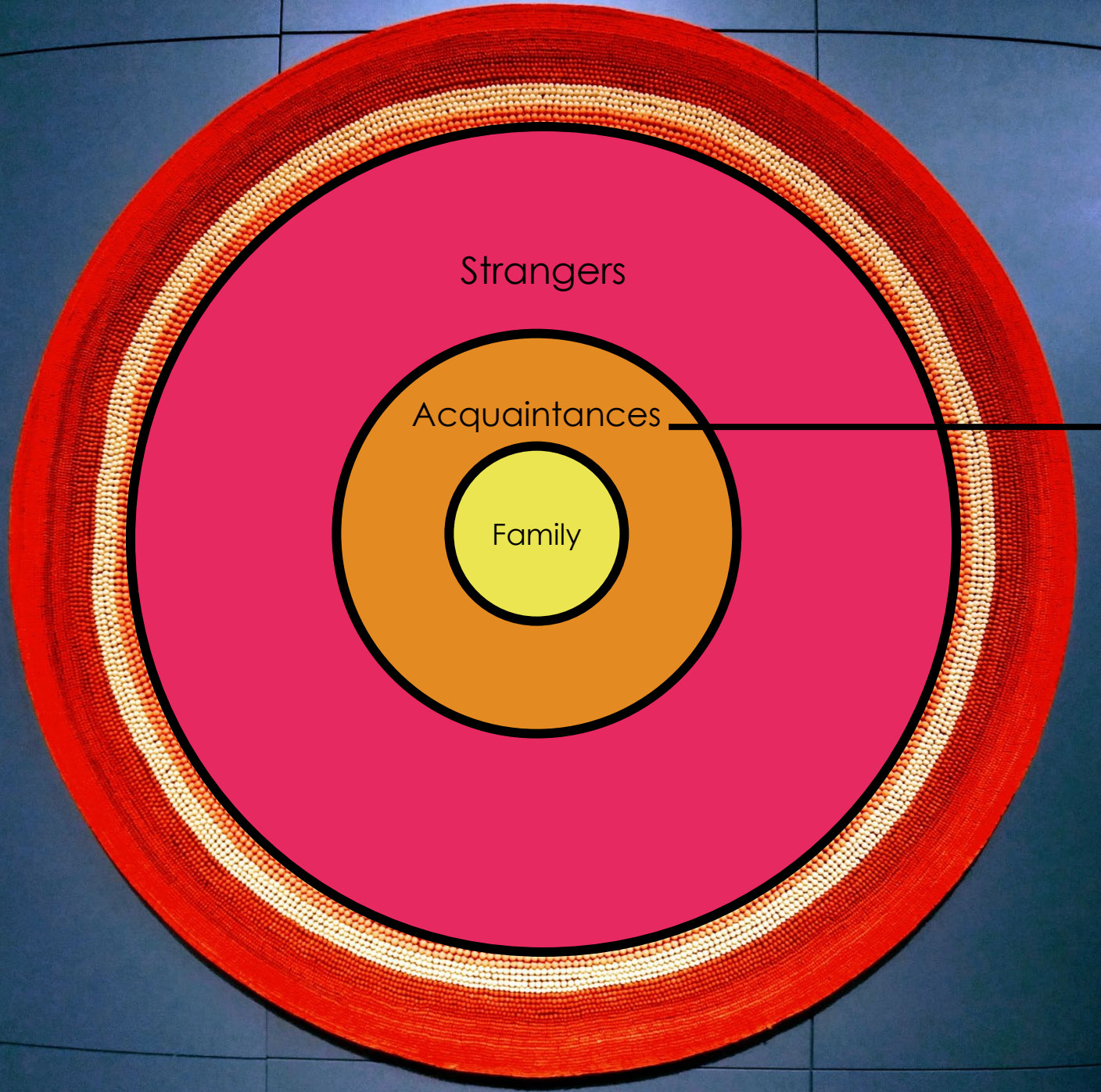


POSTVENTION

Following a suicide death, postvention refers to interventions that address grief and loss and reduce risk for subsequent grief-related suicide.

Postvention is most effective when it is planned for and is respectful of the cultural variations associated with grief and loss.

Disrespecting the cultural bubble during postvention can cause significant damage.



Most at risk

Brent, 1993;
Gould et al., 2018

Círculo naranja

- Dominga Gutiérrez Hilario
- Rogelio Rojas Islas
- Xawery Wolski

Terracota

ADDRESSING DIFFUSION

“Exposure to suicide itself is not inherently risky, though it may be inherently distressing; instead, whether it results in increased vulnerability depends on the meaning an individual makes of the experience and likely the context surrounding the death.”

- *Increased vulnerability:* in those overwhelmed by grief after loss, suicide becomes a real option to resolve problems
- *Decreased vulnerability:* The consequences of suicide become real; the risk of harming others acts as a deterrent from suicide.

(Miklin et al, 2019)



CONTAGION AND YOUTH

- Suicide attempts made by friends and family do indeed trigger the development of suicidal thoughts and sometimes attempts in adolescents.
- The effects last at least a year and up to six years, and possibly longer for girls.
- When exposed to a suicide attempt, girls are more susceptible to developing both suicidal thoughts and attempting whereas boys may develop thoughts (but not attempt).
- Peers continue to have a greater influence than family for both boys and girls, though girls may also be susceptible to contagion when a family member attempts suicide, though boys are not. (Abrutyn & Mueller (2014))

DIGITAL GRIEF AND LOSS

- **Don't dismiss the positive use of social media.** Digital users, particularly teens, turn to social media for immediate emotional support from their online communities. By connecting with others, they feel less isolated. Try to be understanding if someone's style of grieving is more public than yours. Family members should not discourage loved ones from reaching out to their peer groups online.
- **Find out what the family's wishes are before posting anything.** Not everyone wants their lives or their emotions to be shared online. It's important to know what the family wants to share and what they would prefer to keep out of the public eye.
- **Be thoughtful when sharing your message of grief and support.** The phrase "thoughts and prayers" has been repeated so many times that it's lost meaning. Be authentic and sincere. Share a memory. What was special about them? How did you meet, and what did you enjoy together? A short message that will remind others of what the person meant to you will be appreciated.

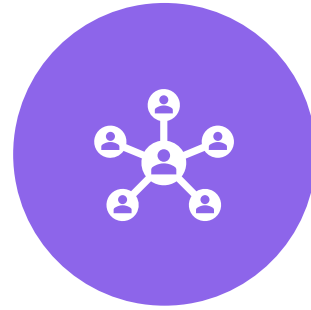
SOCIAL MEDIA AND MOURNING



TEMPORAL



SPATIAL



SOCIAL



CULTURAL

FIRST 24-HOURS

- What not to say to youth:
 - Your friend is in a better place [NO! A better place would be here with me!]
 - They are with God now (HOW do you know if I even believe in God?)
 - I understand how you feel [HOW? Did your best friend take their life at 15?]
 - Keep your chin up / stay strong [WHY? My dad died. I'm not allowed to cry? Who will be strong for me?]
 - Remember, it's God's will [THEN God is cruel and I don't want her in my life]
- Notify parents & community / coordinate meetings
 - AFSP / SPRC "After a Suicide" toolkit for sample agenda.
- Proactively use and monitor social media / work with press
- Debrief at the end of the day
- *Don't forget to care for school staff*



I'm a social worker.
I talk and listen all day.

Makes my
self-care hard,
especially
for those I love.

At the end of the day,
I don't want to talk
OR listen.

WEEKS 2 - 4

- Approach support from a culturally respectful stance
- Be intentional about attending the funeral or not
- Memorials (temporary better than permanent / be consistent across deaths)
- Address the Empty Desk
- Monitor for suicide risk
- Evaluation: There is no perfect postvention. Ask students, staff and community: *“what did we do well? What was missing? What could we do better next time? What were the holes in our plan?”*
- Circle back to prevention programming

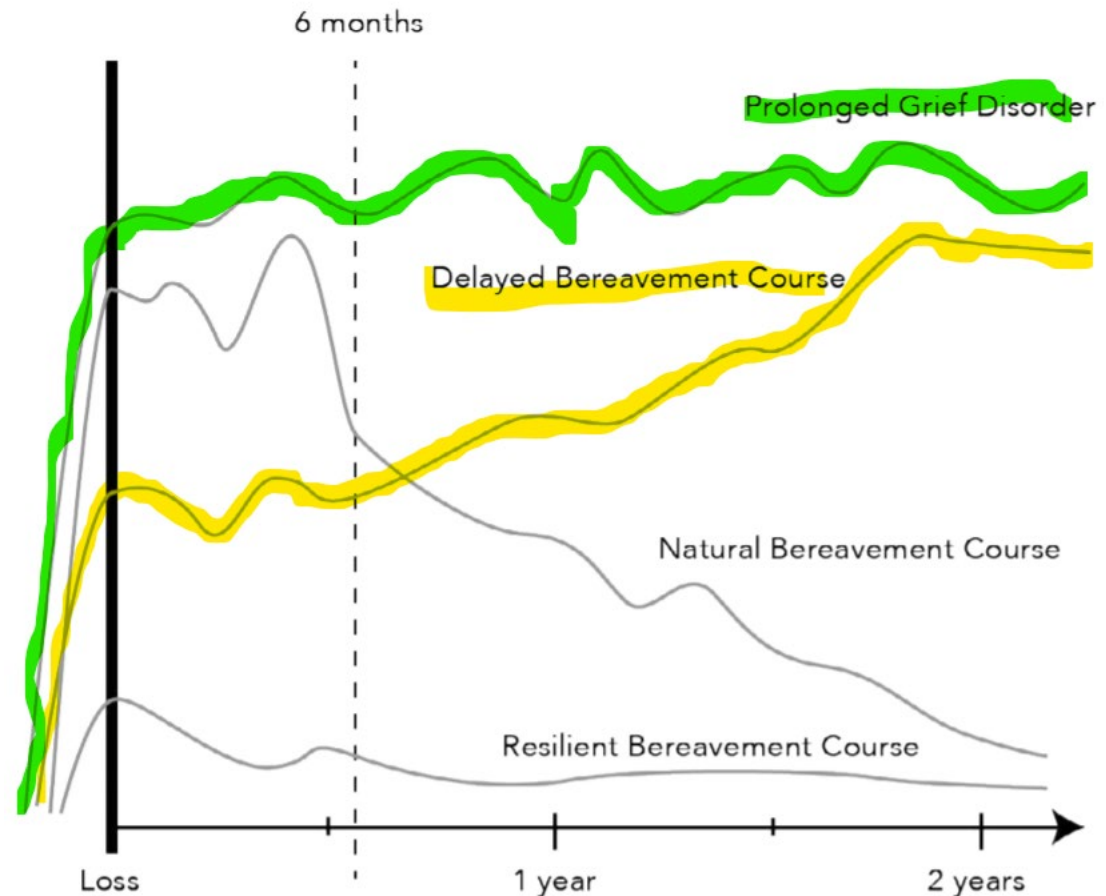
**OUR LOSSES MAY
BE SO SIMILAR
AND
EXPERIENCES
SO DIFFERENT
-AMELIA LEHTO**

MONTHS AND YEARS AFTER...

- Acknowledge the diversity of grief reactions (or lack thereof)
- Complicated grief / PTSD
 - Grief counseling groups
 - Survivors of suicide loss
- Monitor for suicide risk
- Anniversaries (death, birthday, prom, graduation, 2 years-post)
- Finding meaning in the loss

THE FOUR MOST COMMON PATTERNS OF BEREAVEMENT PROCESS

adapted from G.A. Bonanno, "Loss, Trauma, and Human Resilience: Have We Underestimated the Human Capacity to Thrive After Extremely Adverse Events?" *American Psychologist* 59:20-28




SUICIDE-SPECIFIC GRIEF COUNSELING GROUPS

- Program for Children Bereaved by Suicide (PCBS), a group therapy program for 6-12 year olds (Daigle & Labelle, 2012)
- Suicide bereavement groups (Groos & Shakepeare-Finch, 2013)
 - Beneficial in helping survivors adjust to the loss, normalize the bereavement experience
 - Sharing with others who suffered a similar loss
 - Exploring why the suicide may have occurred
 - Addressing distressing emotions of guilt, fear, blame, hurt and anger helped participants make sense of and find meaning in the loss
 - Participants developed important social relationships

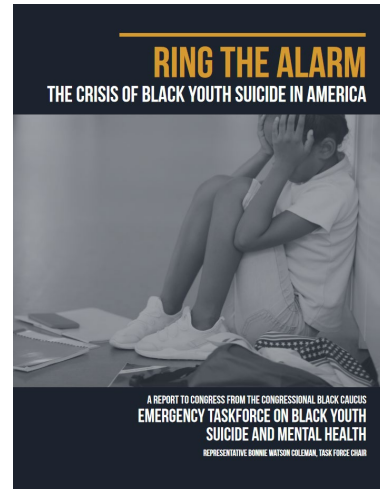
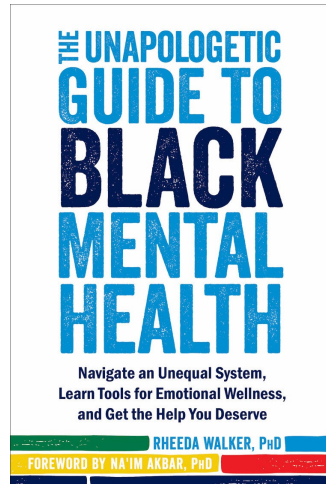
6 TIPS FOR SCHOOLS

1. Conduct universal screening
2. Collaborate with parents and communities
3. Aspire to zero suicides
4. Train staff to recognize and respond to suicide risk
5. Recognize mistakes as learning opportunities
6. Care for staff



The background is a dark blue gradient with a glowing teal particle stream that curves from the left towards the center. A white circular area on the right contains the text.

One life lost is
One too many



Dr. Sherry Molock

<https://psychology.columbian.gwu.edu/sherry-molock>

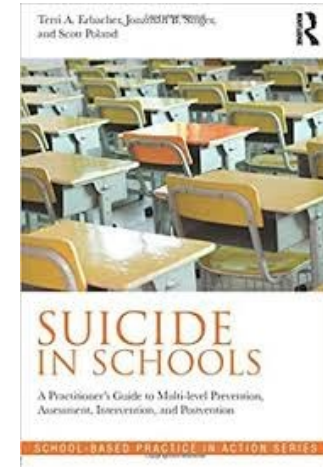
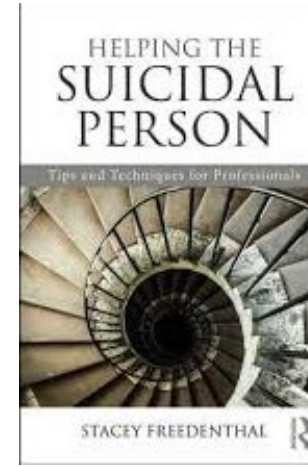
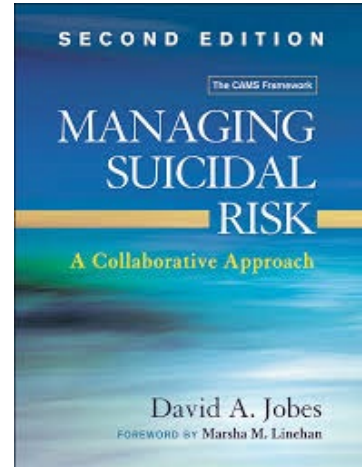
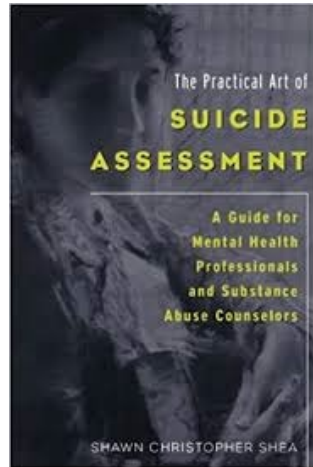
Dr. Arielle Sheftall

<https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/find-a-doctor/profiles/arielle-h-sheftall>

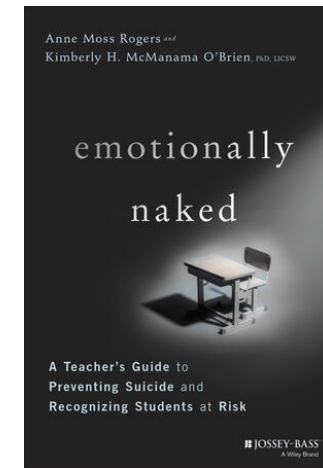
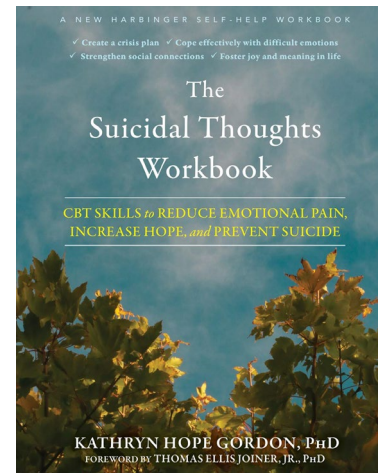
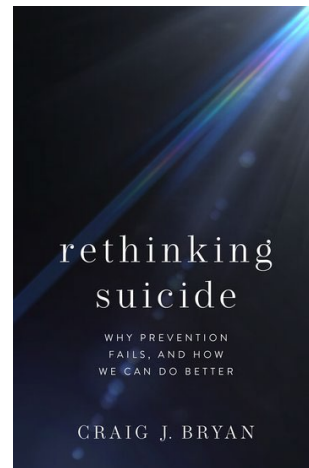
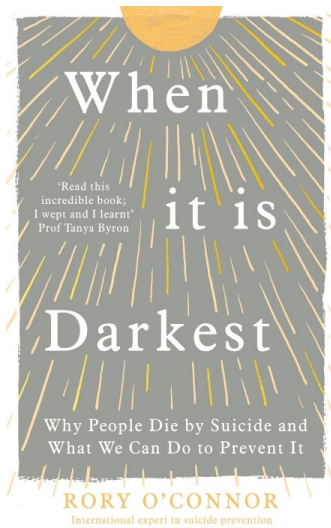
Dr. Sean Joe

<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/Faculty-and-Research/Pages/Sean-Joe.aspx>

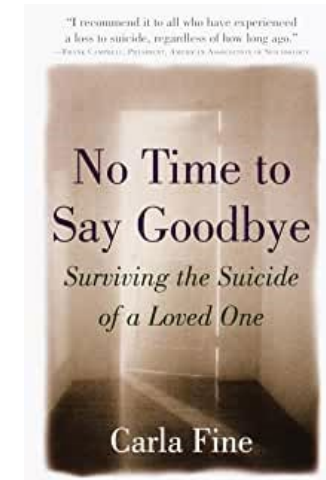
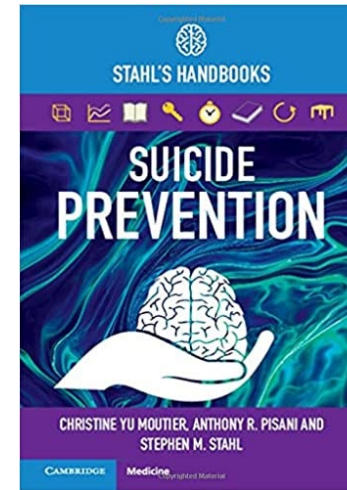
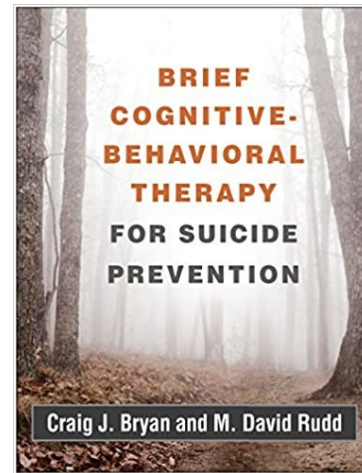
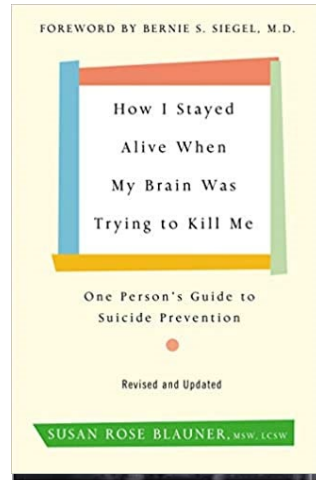
TEXTS ABOUT SUICIDE AND BLACK AMERICANS



PRACTICAL TEXTS ON SUICIDE & ASSESSMENT



PRACTICAL TEXTS ON SUICIDE & ASSESSMENT



PRACTICAL TEXTS ON SUICIDE & BEREAVEMENT

NATIONAL
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
LIFELINE
TM
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

CRISIS TEXT LINE |

Text HELLO to 741741
Free, 24/7, Confidential

GET HELP 24/7:


TrevorText
Text START to 678678

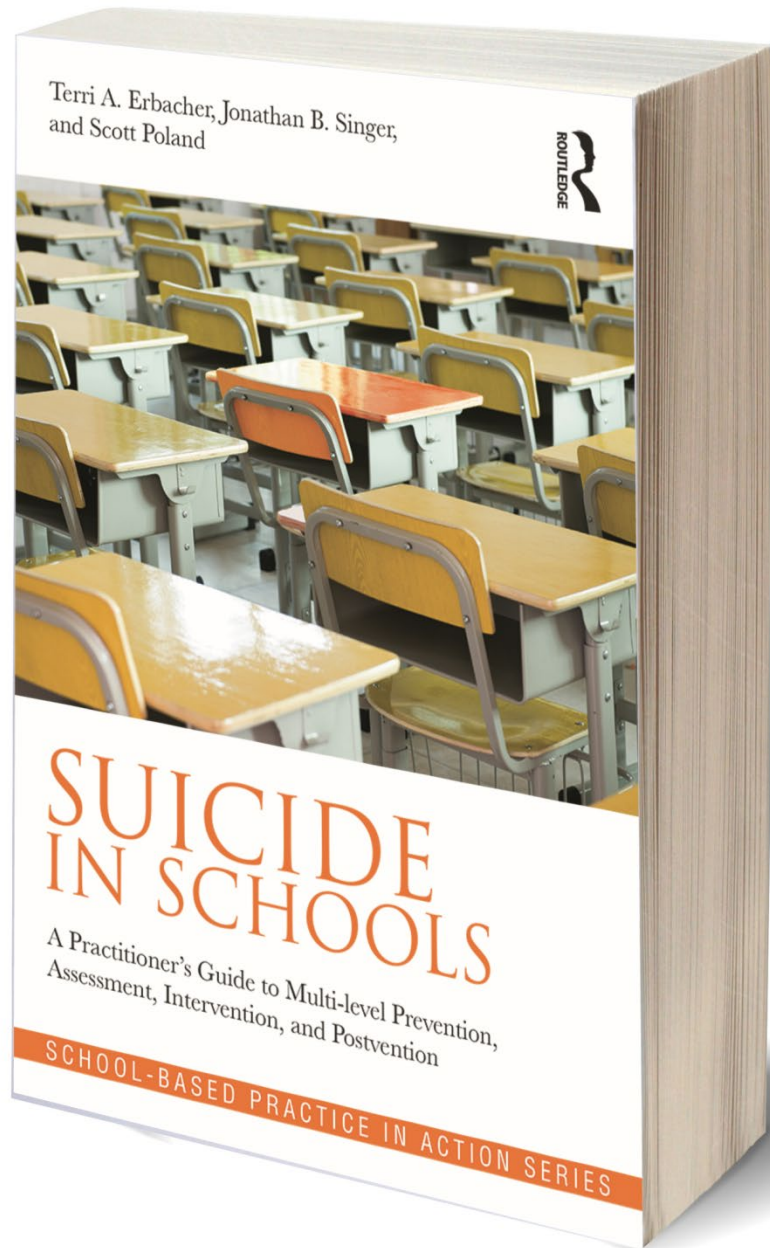

TrevorChat
TrevorChat.org


TrevorLifeline
866.488.7386

THE **TREVOR** PROJECT
Saving Young LGBTQ Lives


Veterans Crisis Line

Military Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**



To Learn More

- Erbacher, T. A., Singer, J. B., & Poland, S. (2015). *Suicide in schools: A practitioner's guide to multi-level prevention, assessment, intervention, and postvention*. New York: Routledge.
- eResources for the book can be found at the Routledge Press website: <https://www.routledge.com/Suicide-in-Schools-A-Practitioners-Guide-to-Multi-level-Prevention-Assessment/Erbacher-Singer-Poland-Mennuti-Christner/p/book/9780415857031>

Thank you!

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Founder & Host, Social Work Podcast

