

The National Institute of Mental Health: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide.shtml>

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Suicide

If you are in crisis, call the toll-free National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service is available to anyone. All calls are confidential.
<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Definitions

Suicide is a major public health concern. Suicide is among the leading causes of death in the United States. Based on recent nationwide surveys, suicide in some populations is on the rise.

- Suicide** is defined as death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with intent to die as a result of the behavior.
- A **suicide attempt** is a non-fatal, self-directed, potentially injurious behavior with intent to die as a result of the behavior. A suicide attempt might not result in injury.
- Suicidal ideation** refers to thinking about, considering, or planning suicide.

Additional information about suicide can be found on the [NIMH health topics page on Suicide Prevention](#).

Suicide is a Leading Cause of Death in the United States

- According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) WISQARS Leading Causes of Death Reports](#), in 2016:
- Suicide was the tenth leading cause of death overall in the United States, claiming the lives of nearly 45,000 people.
 - Suicide was the second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10 and 34, and the fourth leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 35 and 54.
 - There were more than twice as many suicides (44,965) in the United States as there were homicides (19,362).

Table 1 shows the ten leading causes of death in the United States, and the number of deaths attributed to each cause. Data are shown for all ages and select age groups where suicide was one of the leading ten causes of death in 2016. The data are based on death certificate information compiled by the CDC.

Table 1

| Leading Cause of Death in the United States (2016) Data Courtesy of CDC | | | | | | | | Download PNG image | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|--|
| | Select Age Groups | | | | | | | | |
| Rank | 10-14 | 15-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | All Ages | | |
| 1 | Unintentional Injury | Unintentional Injury | Unintentional Injury | Unintentional Injury | Malignant Neoplasms | Malignant Neoplasms | Heart Disease | | |

| Rank | Select Age Groups | | | | | | |
|------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | 10-14 | 15-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | All Ages |
| 2 | Suicide 436 | Suicide 5,723 | Suicide 7,366 | Malignant Neoplasms 10,903 | Heart Disease 34,027 | Heart Disease 78,610 | Malignant Neoplasms 598,038 |
| 3 | Malignant Neoplasms 431 | Homicide 5,172 | Homicide 5,376 | Heart Disease 10,477 | Unintentional Injury 23,377 | Unintentional Injury 21,860 | Unintentional Injury 161,374 |
| 4 | Homicide 147 | Malignant Neoplasms 1,431 | Malignant Neoplasms 3,791 | Suicide 7,030 | Suicide 8,437 | CLRD 17,810 | CLRD 154,596 |
| 5 | Congenital Abnormalities 146 | Heart Disease 949 | Heart Disease 3,445 | Homicide 3,369 | Liver Disease 8,364 | Diabetes Mellitus 14,251 | Cerebro- vascular 142,142 |
| 6 | Heart Disease 111 | Congenital Anomalies 388 | Liver Disease 925 | Liver Disease 2,851 | Diabetes Mellitus 6,267 | Liver Disease 13,448 | Alzheimer's Disease 116,103 |
| 7 | CLRD 75 | Diabetes Mellitus 211 | Diabetes Mellitus 792 | Diabetes Mellitus 2,049 | Cerebro- vascular 5,353 | Cerebro- vascular 12,310 | Diabetes Mellitus 80,058 |
| 8 | Cerebro- vascular 50 | CLRD 206 | Cerebro- vascular 575 | Cerebro- vascular 1,851 | CLRD 4,307 | Suicide 7,759 | Influenza & Pneumonia 51,537 |
| 9 | Influenza & Pneumonia 39 | Influenza & Pneumonia 189 | HIV 546 | HIV 971 | Septicemia 2,472 | Septicemia 5,941 | Nephritis 50,046 |
| 10 | Septicemia 31 | Complicated Pregnancy 184 | Complicated Pregnancy 472 | Septicemia 897 | Homicide 2,152 | Nephritis 5,650 | Suicide 44,965 |

CLRD: Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease



Suicide Rates

Data in Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3 are courtesy of the [CDC Fatal Injury Data Visualization](#).

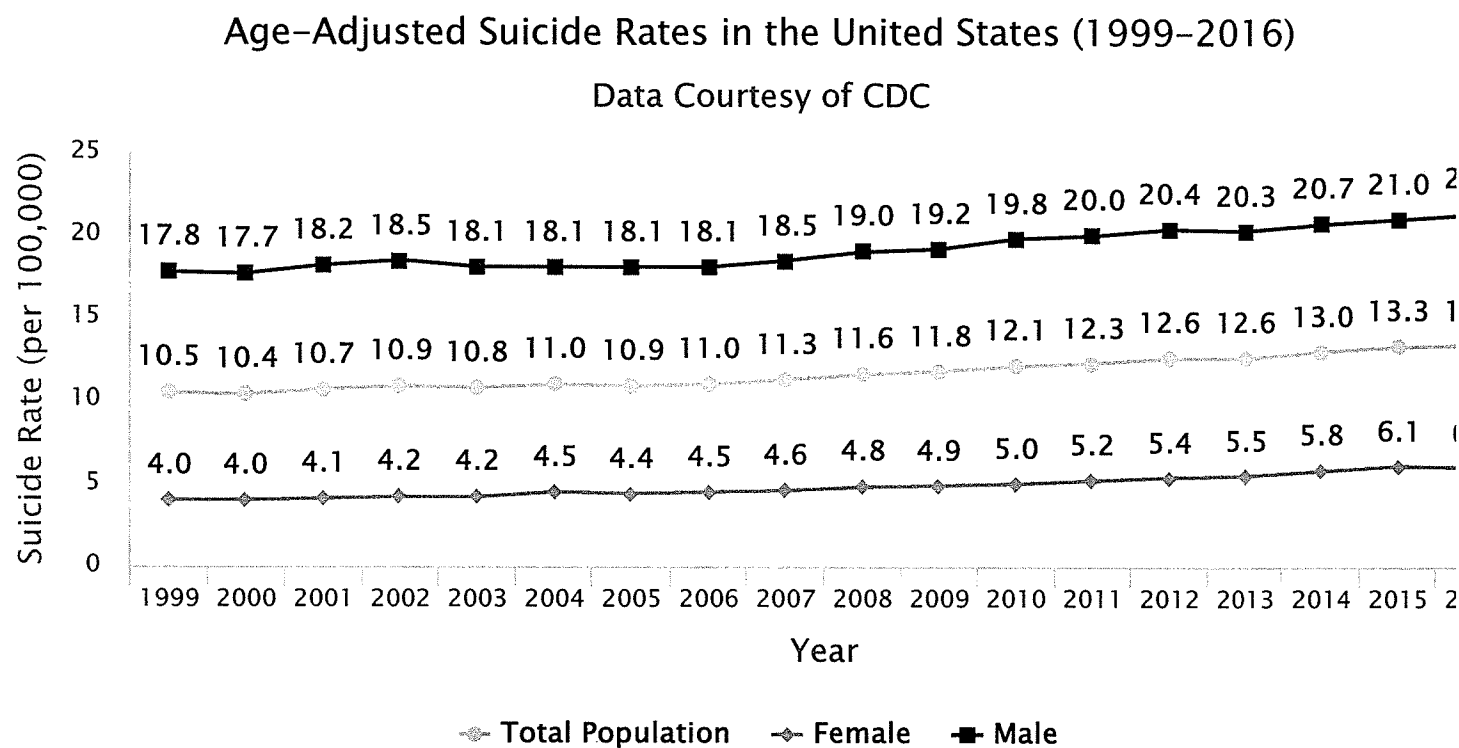
Trends over Time

Suicide rate is based on the number of people who have died by suicide per 100,000 population. Because changes in population size are taken into account, rates allow for comparisons from one year to the next. Figure 1 shows the age-adjusted suicide rates in the United States for each year from 1999 through 2016 for the total population, and for males and females presented separately.

During that 17-year period, the total suicide rate increased 28% from 10.5 to 13.4 per 100,000.

The suicide rate among males remained nearly four times higher (21.3 per 100,000 in 2016) than among females (6.0 per 100,000 in 2016).

Figure 1



Demographics

Because suicide rates take population size into account, they can be a useful tool for understanding the relative proportion of people affected within different demographic groups.

Figure 2 shows the rates of suicide within sex and age categories in 2016.

Among females, the suicide rate was highest for those aged 45-54 (10.3 per 100,000).

Among males, the suicide rate was highest for those aged 65 and older (32.3 per 100,000).

Figure 2

Suicide Rates for Males and Females by Age in the United States (2016)

Data Courtesy of CDC

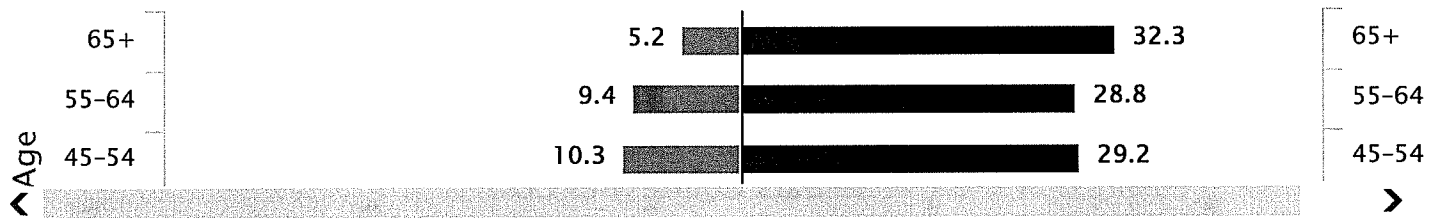
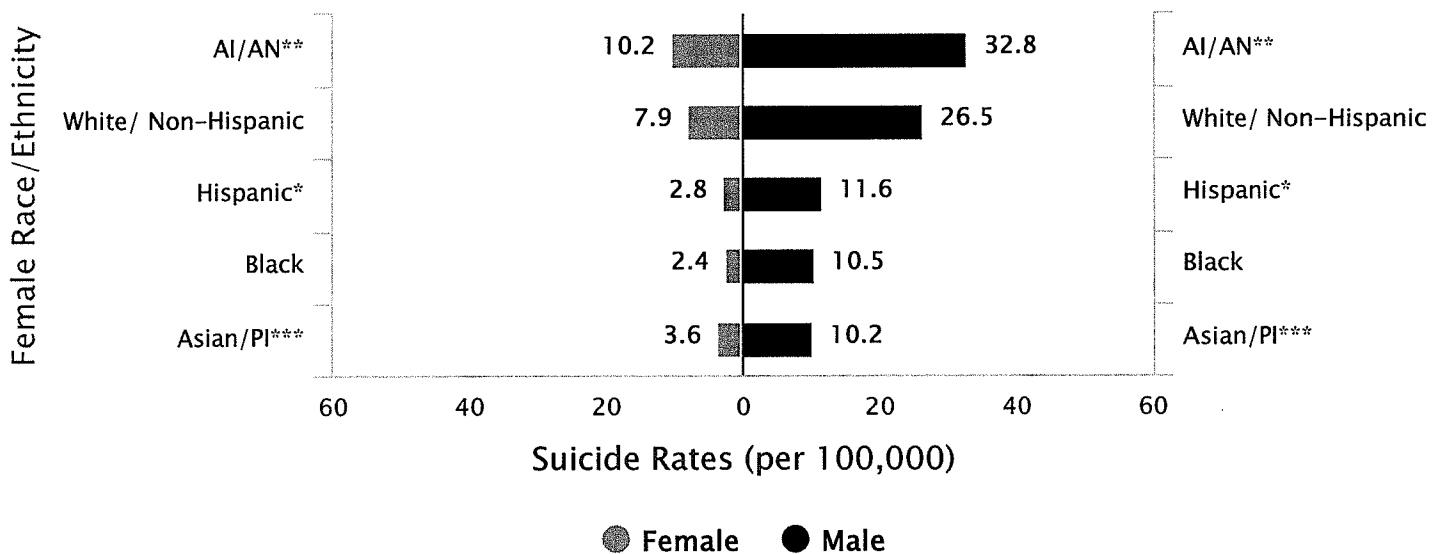


Figure 3 shows the rates of suicide for race/ethnicity groups in 2016. The rates of suicide were highest for males (32.8 per 100,000) and females (10.2 per 100,000) in the American Indian/Alaska Native group, followed by males (26.5 per 100,000) and females (7.9 per 100,000) in the White/non-Hispanic group.

Figure 3

Suicide Rates for Males and Females by Race/Ethnicity in the United States (2016)

Data Courtesy of CDC



*All other groups are non-Hispanic or Latino / **AI/AN = American Indian / Alaskan Native /
 ***PI = Pacific Islander

Suicide Rates by State

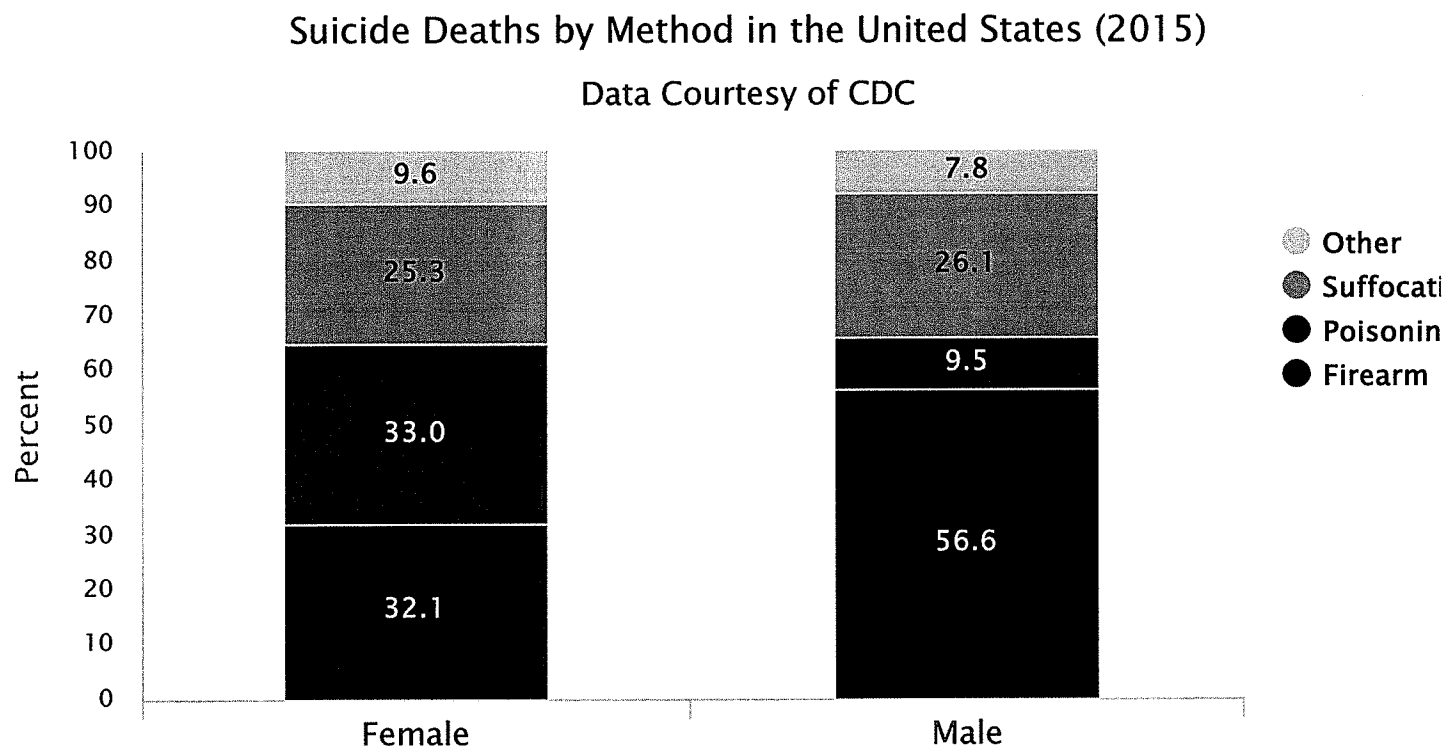
Suicide rates are not the same from state to state. Based on data from the [CDC WISQARS Fatal Injury Mapping tool](#), Figure 4 shows a map of the United States with each state's age-adjusted average suicide rate from 2008 to 2014 indicated by color.

Figure 4

Percent of Suicide Deaths by Method

Figure 5 shows the percentages of suicide deaths by method among males and females in 2016. Among males, the most common method of suicide was firearm (56.6%). Among females, the most common methods of suicide were poisoning (33.0%) and firearm (32.1%).

Figure 5



Cost of Suicide Deaths

In addition to the emotional loss associated with suicide, there is also an economic loss as the burden of suicide falls most heavily on adults of working age.

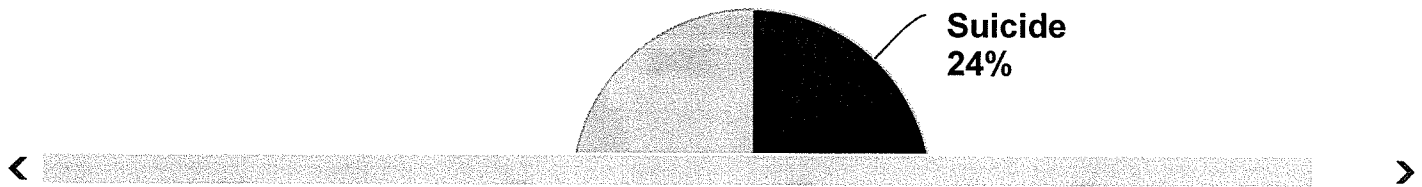
Figure 6 shows data from a 2013 CDC report on the medical and work-loss costs of fatal injury by intent in the United States.

Suicide accounted for \$50.8 billion (24%) of the fatal injury cost.

Figure 6

Medical and Work Lost Costs of Injury by Intent in the United States (2013)

Data Courtesy of CDC



Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors Among U.S. Adults

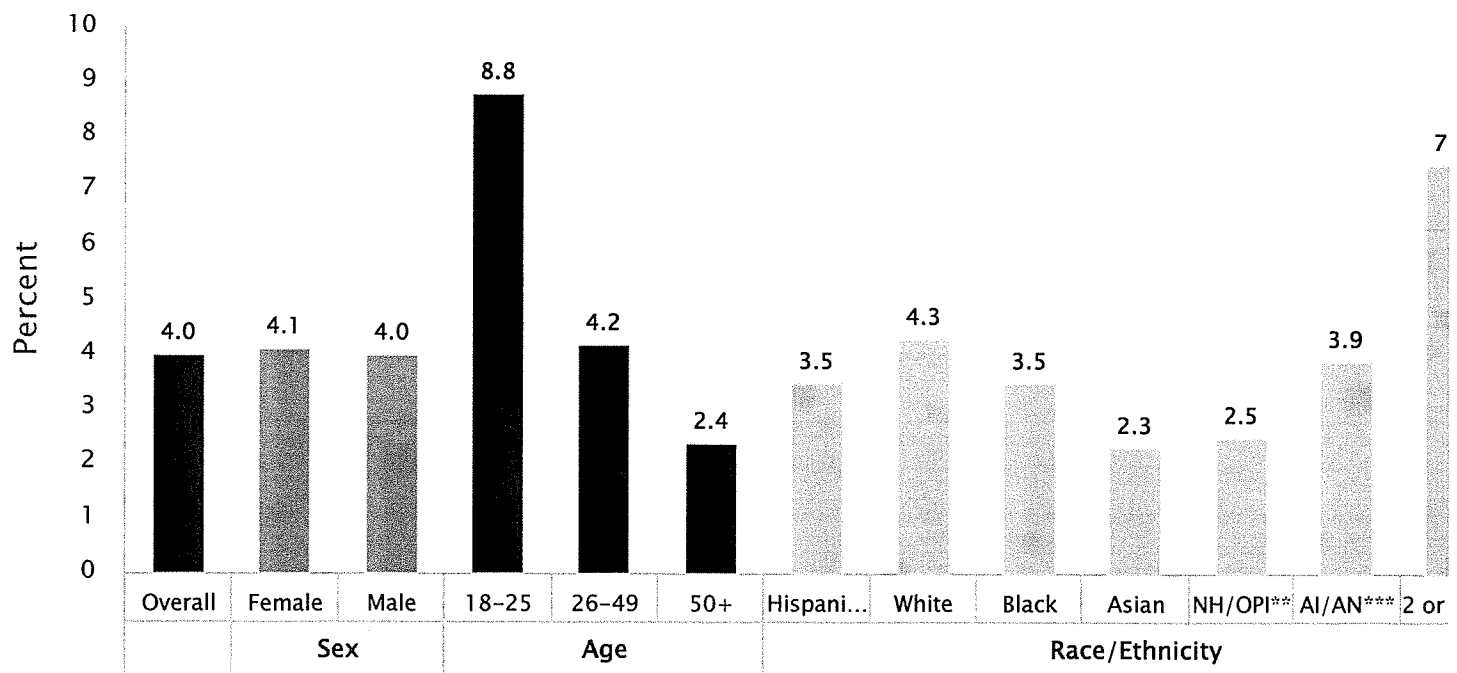
Data in Figure 7, Figure 8, and Figure 9 are based on data from the 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)¹ by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Figure 7 shows that 4.0% of adults age 18 and older in the United States had thoughts about suicide in 2016. The percentage of adults having serious thoughts of suicide was highest among adults aged 18-25 (8.8%). The prevalence of suicidal thoughts was highest among adults reporting two or more races (7.5%).

Figure 7

Past Year Prevalence of Suicidal Thoughts Among U.S. Adults (2016)

Data Courtesy of SAMHSA



*All other groups are non-Hispanic or Latino / **NH/OPI = Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander /

***AI/AN = American Indian / Alaskan Native

Figure 8 shows that 0.5% of adults age 18 and older in the United States attempted suicide in 2016.

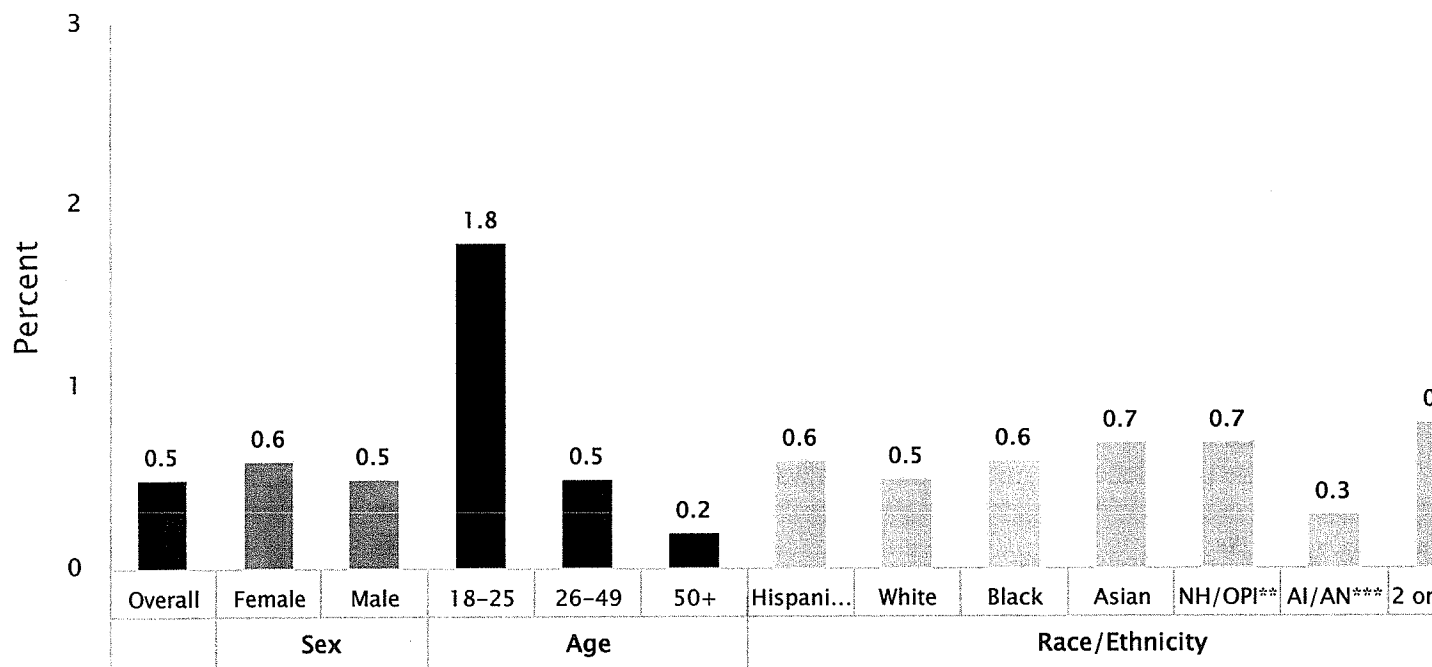
The percentage of adults that attempted suicide was highest among adults aged 18-25 (1.8%).

The prevalence of suicide attempts was highest among adults reporting two or more races (0.8%).

Figure 8

Past Year Prevalence of Suicide Attempts Among U.S. Adults (2016)

Data Courtesy of SAMHSA



*All other groups are non-Hispanic or Latino. / **NH/OPI = Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander /

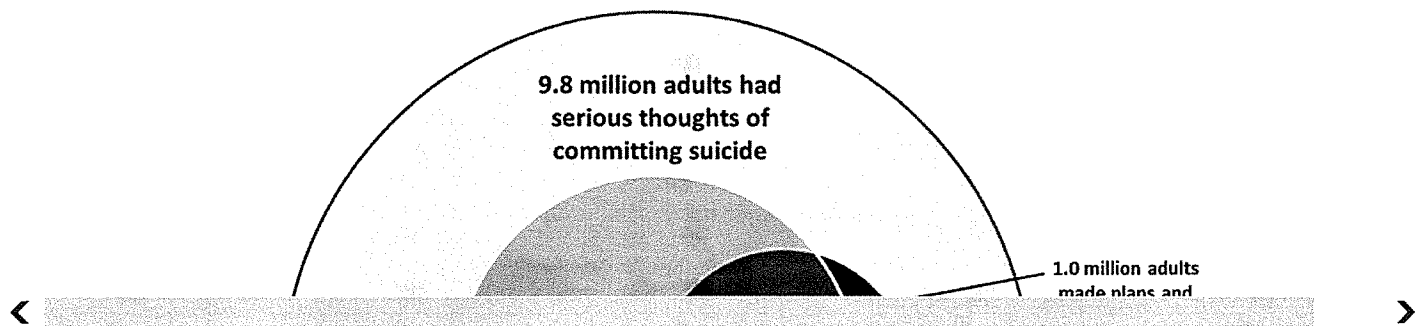
***AI/AN = American Indian / Alaskan Native

Figure 9 shows that in 2016, 9.8 million adults aged 18 or older reported having serious thoughts about trying to kill themselves, and 1.3 million adults attempted suicide during the past year. Among those adults who attempted suicide, 1.0 million also reported making suicide plans.

Figure 9

Past Year Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors Among U.S. Adults (2016)

Data Courtesy of SAMHSA



Data Sources

Statistical Methods and Measurement Caveats

National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

Population:

The survey participants are from a civilian, non-institutionalized population aged 18 years old or older residing within the United States. NSDUH does not ask adolescents aged 12 to 17 about suicidal thoughts and behavior.

The survey covers residents of households (persons living in houses/townhouses, apartments, condominiums; civilians living in housing on military bases, etc.) and persons in non-institutional group quarters (e.g., shelters, rooming/boarding houses, college dormitories, migratory workers' camps, and halfway houses).

The survey does not cover persons who, for the entire year, had no fixed address (e.g., homeless and/or transient persons not in shelters); were on active military duty; or who resided in institutional group quarters (e.g., correctional facilities, nursing homes, mental institutions, long-term hospitals).

Survey Non-response:

In 2016, 31.6% of the NSDUH adult sample did not complete the interview.

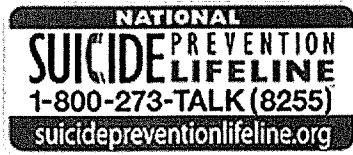
Reasons for non-response to interviewing include: refusal to participate (22.2%); respondent unavailable or never at home (4.5%); and various other reasons, such as physical/mental incompetence or language barriers (4.6%).

People with suicidal behavior may disproportionately fall into these non-response categories. While NSDUH weighting includes non-response adjustments to reduce bias, these adjustments may not fully account for differential non-response by suicide behavior status.

Please see the [2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health Methodological Summary and Definitions report](#) for further information on how these data were collected and calculated.

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Additional Resources

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)

[Veterans Crisis Line](#)

[National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention](#)

[National Library of Medicine - Suicide](#)

[National Strategy for Suicide Prevention](#)

[NIMH Multimedia on Suicide Prevention](#)

[NIMH Suicide Prevention](#)

[Take 5 To Save Lives](#)

[StopBullying.gov](#)

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[STATISTICS HOME](#)