WHY WE CHOSE THIS TOPIC
The rate of adolescents who are dying by suicide has risen in the last few years across the nation as well as in Wisconsin, especially among vulnerable populations. The challenges faced by today’s youth are unique to their age, race and gender identity and require early intervention. Unfortunately, in 2019 most Wisconsin high school students who are considering suicide are not receiving the help they need.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS
There are often many layers to the reasons why an adolescent may be struggling. Some may include:
- Issues in school such as failing grades, bullying, rejection.
- Prejudice or discrimination based on race and/or gender identity.
- Stress resulting from major life transitions and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE’s) such as divorce and economic hardship.
- Having a friend or family member die by suicide.
- Having a firearm in their place of residence.

WHAT’S HAPPENING IN WISCONSIN?

45% of adolescents in Wisconsin who died by suicide between 2016 and 2018 died by firearm with the vast majority accessing a gun belonging to a parent. Despite prevention measures such as talking about gun safety with a child, parents are often over-confident that their child would not know how to access or touch a firearm.

Prevent Suicide Wisconsin, a public-private partnership with the Department of Health Services, takes the lead in suicide prevention activities. This partnership involves state agencies, local coalition leaders, people with lived experience of suicide, and local health departments who work together to develop state-wide strategies to reduce the number of suicide attempts and deaths that take place in the state each year.

Some of these strategies include:
- Promote protective factors such as social-emotional development.
- Support innovative ways to expand access to mental health treatment such as using smartphone apps for mental health support and organizing peer-led groups.
- Implement tools for screening and risk assessment in health care organizations.

About 1 in 13 high school students attempt suicide one or more times.
Differences in how adolescents experience suicidal thoughts and behaviors and the treatment they receive varies depending on their race, gender identity and also among cisgender adolescents.

**FOCUSING ON**

**Differences in how adolescents experience suicidal thoughts and behaviors and the treatment they receive varies depending on their race, gender identity and also among cisgender adolescents.**

**REFERENCES:**

1, 9 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2018 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2020. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 1999-2018, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html on Aug 24, 2020 4:19:00 PM


