

SUICIDE IN RURAL AREAS: KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT WHO'S AT RISK

Suicide is a significant public health issue that affects communities across the US, but it is particularly pronounced in rural areas. September, recognized as Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month, serves as an opportune time to shed light on the heightened risk factors and the groups most vulnerable in these regions.

The Growing Disparity

Suicide rates have been consistently higher in rural America than in urban America, according to the CDC. This disparity has grown over the years, with suicide rates increasing by 46% in rural areas compared to 27.3% in urban areas from 2000-2020. This growing divide highlights the urgent need for targeted suicide prevention efforts in rural communities.

Groups Most at Risk

- **Farmers and Agricultural Workers:** Farming is one of the most stressful occupations, with financial pressures, isolation, and physical demands contributing to high levels of stress and depression. Farmers also face unique barriers to mental health care, including stigma and a lack of accessible services.
- **Veterans:** Veterans residing in rural areas often have less access to mental health services compared to their urban counterparts. The transition to civilian life can be particularly challenging, leading to higher rates of depression, PTSD, and suicide.
- **Native Americans:** Native American communities, many of which are located in rural areas, experience some of the highest suicide rates in the country. Historical trauma, socioeconomic disparities, and limited access to mental health resources are significant contributing factors.
- **Older Adults:** Social isolation, physical health issues, and the loss of loved ones can make older adults in rural areas particularly vulnerable to depression and suicidal ideation. Limited access to healthcare services further exacerbates these risks.

By focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable groups, we can make significant strides in preventing suicide and promoting mental health in rural communities. Together, we can work towards a future where mental health support is accessible to all.

WE CAN HELP.

Our hospital-based outpatient program is designed to meet the unique needs of older adults experiencing depression and/or anxiety related to life changes that are often associated with aging or a chronic diagnosis. Anyone can make a referral to our program, including self-referrals, provider referrals, or community consultations.

Call us today at