



**September 22, 2022**

## **Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and Mental Health Equity**

Happy Thursday, everyone—

September marks Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, and this week we want to take some time to discuss mental health equity and how we can better care for communities of color. Just like with physical health, people of color and members of other marginalized communities face worse mental health outcomes [due to a myriad of factors](#), from lack of access to high-quality or culturally-competent care, to cultural stigma around mental health care, to racism and discrimination.

The data are startling.

[According to the CDC](#), Native Americans suffer from the highest rate of suicide—35.8 suicides per 100,000 people in this group in 2020.

And for young people of color, suicide rates [jumped startlingly](#) from 2019 to 2020. Rates for Black Americans aged 10 to 24 years old increased by more than 30 percent for boys and young men and 23 percent for girls and young women. In that same age group, rates increased by 20 percent for Latino boys and young men and 40 percent for Latina girls and young women. Lastly, suicide rates among Asian young women aged 15-24 increased by 20 percent, though, suicide rates among Asian men the same age held steady.

These numbers paint a tragic picture, making it clear that more needs to be done to address mental health and well-being in communities of color.



To learn more about Mount Sinai's efforts to address these mental health care disparities, we caught up with **Sidney Hankerson**, MD, MBA, Vice Chair for Community Engagement for the Department of Psychiatry, and Director of Mental Health Equity Research for the Institute for Health Equity Research (IHER).

[Sidney's work](#) centers on partnering with community organizations and other stakeholders to create, implement, and evaluate culturally-competent and relevant mental health interventions, with a specific focus on depression. Additionally, Sidney is a co-project leader of the [Triumph study](#), a Harlem-based initiative that equips community health workers with the skills and knowledge required to screen for depression and provide research-backed counseling to their community members.

"Oftentimes, mental health education and care isn't always framed in a way that's culturally accessible to communities of color," said Sidney. "People might be able to find comfort during times of depression in their communities, but they're not always able to open up to a trained mental health professional. That's why it's crucial to engage the community in this work, and to understand how we can best offer a helping hand."

One way Sidney has accomplished this is through his work with the [HOPE \(Healing On Purpose and Evolving\) Center Harlem](#), which works to minimize the stigma of seeking mental health services in communities of color. We encourage everyone to [learn more](#) about the Center and their [Sneaker Ball 2022](#)—co-sponsored by Mount Sinai—which will raise awareness around youth mental health services and programming.

Lastly, we'd like to encourage you all to take good care of yourselves and your mental health. The Center for Stress, Resilience, and Personal Growth at Mount Sinai offers numerous services for employees, [learn more here](#). You can also find a list of comprehensive mental health resources at Mount Sinai [here](#). If you or a loved one is experiencing suicidal thoughts, you can reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline 24 hours a day, seven days a week by dialing **9-8-8** on any phone.

We invite you to join us at an event listed below.

All the best,  
Angela and Shawn

## Join Us for an Upcoming Event

### **Chats for Change Deeper Dive Series | White Supremacy Culture**

**Characteristics: Individualism** Chats for Change is a production of the Icahn School of Medicine's Racism and Bias Initiative. Individualism has served as a cornerstone value of American society, encouraging us to depend on single charismatic leaders, work in isolation, and avoid community-development. Join us **Tuesday, September 27, at noon** as we explore what we miss when we rely on our individualism and that of others. Register on [Zoom](#).

**Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month:** Join us for **Virtual Bi-Lingual Tai Chi with Sifu Lafi** Wednesday, October 5, 5 – 6 pm by clicking [here](#) and see more events listed in [Mount Sinai Daily](#).

[Road Map for Action](#)

[Past Bulletins](#)

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