

Hidden Lessons from Black Suicide Science



Rheeda Walker, Ph.D.

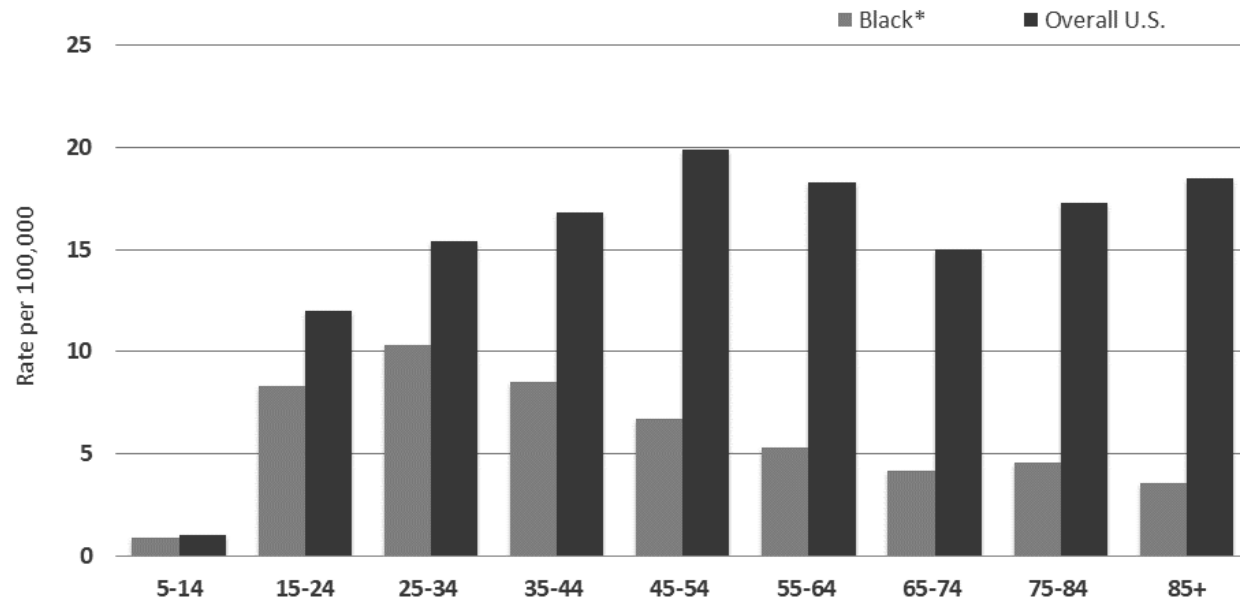
CAMS-care Webinar Series

May 19, 2021

Objectives

- 1) Increase insight to important patterns in Black suicide
- 2) Inspire an expanded and more inclusive approach to suicide science
- 3) Expand suicide prevention *upstream*

Suicide Rates for Black Populations by Age, United States 2009-2018



www.sprc.org

*Non-Hispanic
Source: CDC, 2020

African-American Youth suicide

HEALTH

Rise in Suicide by Black Children Surprises

By SABRINA TAVERNISE MAY 18, 2015



Between 1993 and 2012, the suicide rate doubled for African American children while the rate for similar age European American children decreased (Bridge et al., 2015; 2018)

Black Suicide Amidst COVID-19

Covid-19 Story Tip: Racial Divide: Maryland Suicides During the Pandemic Halved in Whites, Doubled in Blacks

12/29/2020



Johns Hopkins Medicine researchers have found that suicide deaths increased dramatically among Black Marylanders during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Credit: Getty Images

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Intelligencer

THE UNFORGETTABLE YEAR | MAR. 25, 2021

Deaths of Despair Have Surged Among People of Color: New data shows another disaster unfolding alongside the pandemic.

By Rob Arthur

Their stories deserve to be heard



Widely Cited Risk factors (CDC.gov, AFSP.org)

Recent life stressor
Depression, Anxiety
Other psychiatric disturbance (e.g., psychosis)
Childhood Maltreatment
Social isolation
Health-related concerns
Sleep disturbance
Barriers to healthcare

History of Suicide attempt
Family History of Suicide attempt

Psychosocial and Cultural Model of Suicide Vulnerability and Resilience

Walker, 2007; Walker, Townley, & Asiamah, 2008; Walker, Salami, Carter, & Flowers, 2014)



Ethnic Group Differences in Reasons for Living and the Moderating Role of Cultural Worldview

Rheeda L. Walker, David Alabi, Jessica Roberts, and Ezemenari M. Obasi
Southern Illinois University

Patterns of suicide resilience vary considerably across ethnic groups and are an understudied dimension of suicide science. The purpose of the current study was to examine the relationship between cultural worldview and “reasons for living,” an alternative index for suicide risk in a cross-cultural sample. The Reasons for Living Inventory and Worldview Analysis Scale were administered together with measures of hopelessness and depressive symptoms to 139 African American and 161 European American participants. Cultural worldview functioned as a moderator for African American but not European American participants in predicting reasons for living scores. African Americans who reported a less African-centered worldview also reported fewer reasons for living as hopelessness increased. However, African Americans who reported a more African-centered worldview reported less justification to live as depressive symptoms increased. These findings provide insight to suicide resilience profiles across and within ethnic groups and suggest that assessments of reasons for living and cultural correlates might have important implications for future research and clinical practice.

139 African American
161 European American

Hopelessness → Reasons for living*

*Unless African American and reporting African-centered worldview (community, spirituality)

3474
Views | CrossRef citations to date | Altmetric


Original Articles

Religious Coping Style and Cultural Worldview are Associated with Suicide Ideation Among African American Adults

Rheeda L. Walker , Temilola Salami, Sierra Carter & Kelci C. Flowers

Pages 106-117 | Accepted author version posted online: 03 Feb 2017, Published online: 01 Mar 2017

 Download citation

 <https://doi.org/10.1080/13811118.2017.1289871>



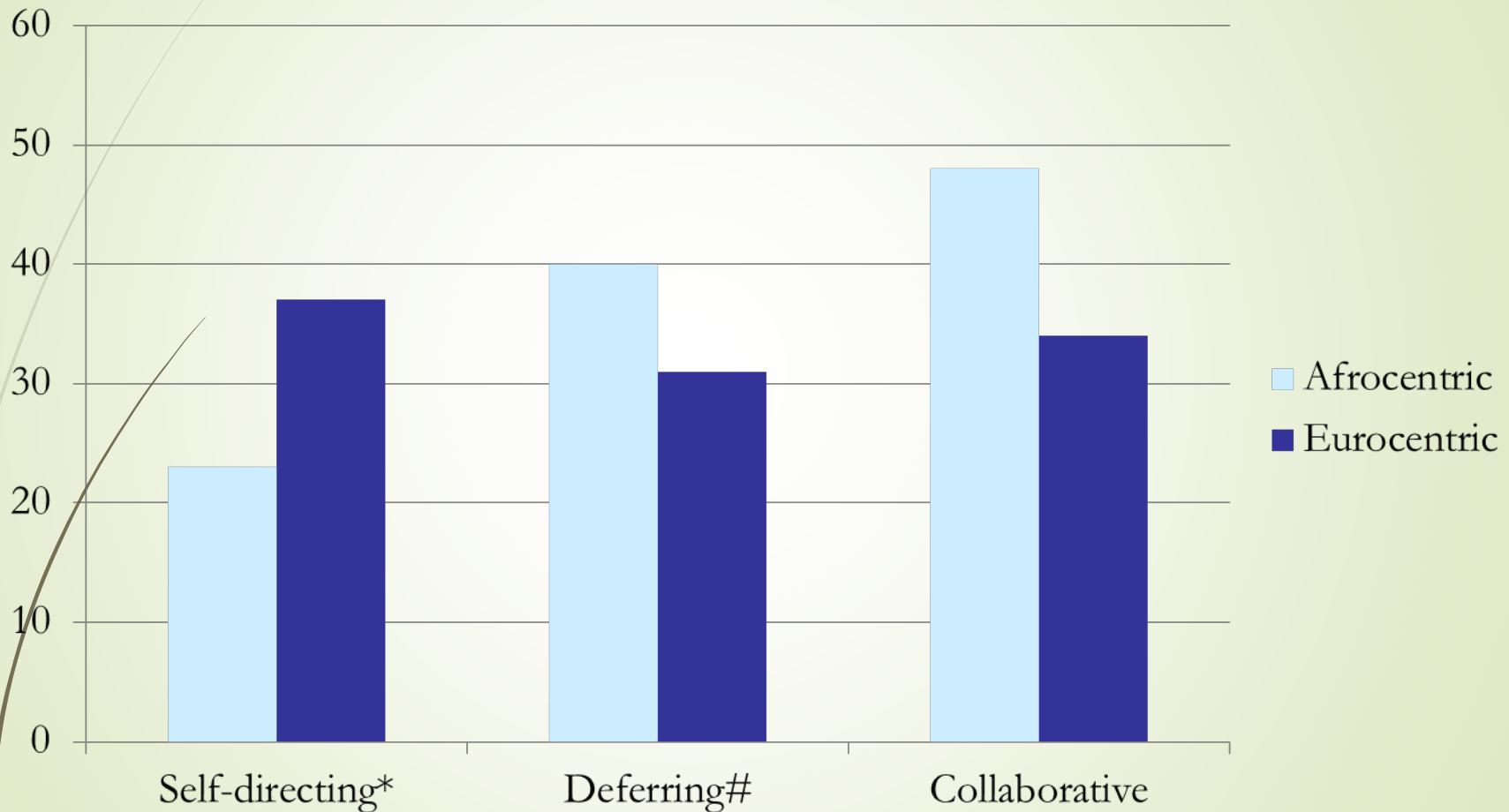
n= 134 African American adults

Stressful life events → Suicide ideation*

*Self-directed coping

* More likely to endorse Eurocentric worldview than African-centered worldview

Religious Coping, Cultural Worldview, and Suicide Ideation in Black adults



Walker, R.L., Salami, T., Carter, S.E., & Flowers, K.C. (2018)

Structural racism and health inequities in the USA: evidence and interventions

America: Equity and Equality in Health 3

Zinzi D Bailey, Nancy Krieger, Madina Agénor, Jasmine Graves, Natalia Linos, Mary T Bassett

CrossMark

racism is Literally Bad For Your Health

3444290/racism-is-literally-bad-for-your-health

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SPECIAL SERIES
You, Me And Them: Experiencing Discrimination In America

Racism Is Literally Bad For Your Health

October 28, 2017 - 6:06 PM ET
Heard on All Things Considered

MICHEL MARTIN

5-Minute Listen

Understanding how social factors drive poor health outcomes, many academics, policy makers, journalists, and others responsible for defining and responding to the public health crisis of racial health inequities. In this conceptual report, the authors argue that structural racism is a root cause of racial health inequities. In this conceptual report, the authors argue that structural racism is a root cause of racial health inequities. In this conceptual report, the authors argue that structural racism is a root cause of racial health inequities. In this conceptual report, the authors argue that structural racism is a root cause of racial health inequities.

Lancet 2017; 389: 1453-63
See Editorial page 1369
See Comment pages 1376 and 1378
This is the third in a Series of five papers about equity and

Understanding how social factors drive poor health outcomes, many academics, policy makers, journalists, and others responsible for defining and responding to the public health crisis of racial health inequities. In this conceptual report, the authors argue that structural racism is a root cause of racial health inequities. In this conceptual report, the authors argue that structural racism is a root cause of racial health inequities. In this conceptual report, the authors argue that structural racism is a root cause of racial health inequities. In this conceptual report, the authors argue that structural racism is a root cause of racial health inequities.

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Racial/ethnic discrimination and well-being during adolescence:
A meta-analytic review

Aprile D. Benner^a, Yijie Wang^b, Yishan Shen^c, Alaina E. Boyle^a, Richelle Polk^a, and Yen-Pi Cheng^a


^aUniversity of Texas at Austin
^bMichigan State University
^cTexas State University

Abstract



Original Article |  Full Access

Perceived Racism and Suicide Ideation: Mediating Role of Depression but Moderating Role of Religiosity among African American Adults

Rheeda L. Walker PhD , Temilola K. Salami MS, Sierra E. Carter MS, Kelci Flowers MS

First published: 01 April 2014 | <https://doi.org/10.1111/sltb.12089> | Citations: 39



Implications for Risk Assessment in an Ethnically diverse sample


- ✓ Nature of current suicide symptoms
 - ✓ History of past attempts
 - ✓ Resolved Plans
 - ✓ Recent life stressors
 - ✓ Dual Diagnosis
-
- ✓ Race-related and Acculturative Stress
 - ✓ Buffering factors (e.g. culture, religiosity, ethnic identity)

Adapted from Joiner, Jr., T.E., Walker, R.L., et al. (1999).

Objectives achieved?

(also known as Conclusions)

- 1) Increase insight to important patterns in Black suicide, including vulnerability in early 20's-30's
- 2) Inspire an expanded and more inclusive approach to suicide science, attending to unique buffers rather than co-varying race
- 3) Expand suicide prevention upstream with attention to emotion regulation and social justice



Gratitude for my graduate student advisees (present and past)

- Jasmin Brooks, M.A.
- Sierra Carter, Ph.D.
- Judy Hong, Ph.D.
- Rebecca Jewell, M.A.
- Jake Leavitt, M.A.
- Ijeoma Madubata, M.A.
- Mary Odafe, Ph.D.
- Temilola Salami, Ph.D.
- David Talavera, Ph.D.



Gratitude for
Thomas E. Joiner, Jr.

Thank you for
your
attention!

dr rheedawalker.com
IG: dr.rheedawalker
youtube/dr rheedawalker

**THE UNAPOLOGETIC
GUIDE TO
BLACK
MENTAL
HEALTH**

**Navigate an Unequal System,
Learn Tools for Emotional Wellness,
and Get the Help You Deserve**

RHEEDA WALKER, PhD

FOREWORD BY NA'IM AKBAR, PhD