

Suicide in Alabama

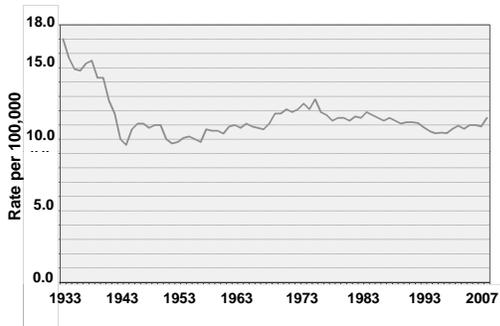
Satellite Conference and Live Webcast
 Thursday, September 2, 2010
 10:00 – 11:30 am Central Time

Produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health
 Video Communications and Distance Learning Division

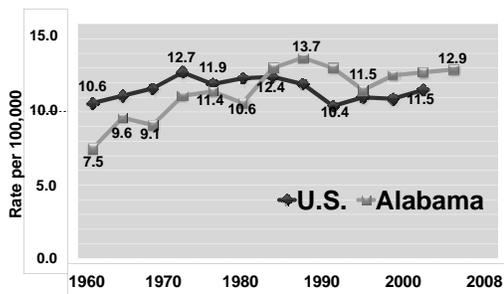
Faculty

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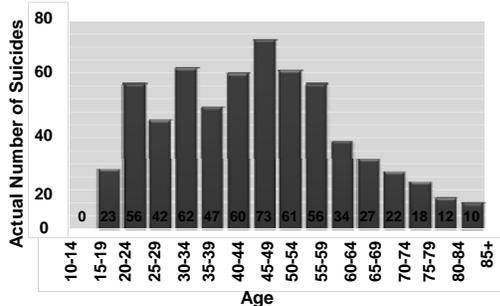
U.S. Suicide Rates: 1933-2007



U.S. and Alabama Suicide Rates: 1960-2008

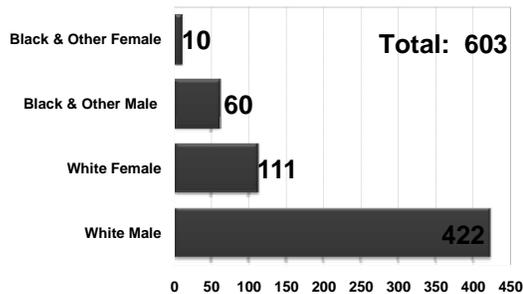


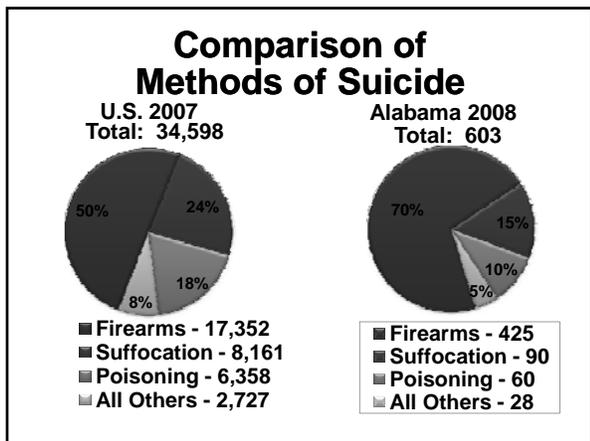
Alabama Suicide by Age 2008



Homicides: 450 Total: 603

Alabama Suicides by Race and Gender 2008





- ### Risk Factors for Suicide
- Age
 - Immaturity
 - Lack of impulse control
 - Elderly, isolated
 - Chronically ill

- ### Risk Factors for Suicide
- Sex
 - Males
 - Risk-taking behaviors
 - Career obsessions
 - Less help-seeking behaviors
 - Females
 - Rumination
 - Dramatic behavior

- ### Risk Factors for Suicide
- Mental illness
 - Including depression
 - Substance abuse
 - Access to lethal means
 - Firearms
 - Medications
 - Vehicles

- ### Risk Factors for Suicide
- Family history
 - Interpersonal violence
 - High, chronic interpersonal conflict
 - Suicide by a family member or close friend
 - Marital status
 - Divorced or recently widowed

- ### Risk Factors for Suicide
- Joblessness
 - Geography
 - Social isolation
 - Situational factors
 - Hopelessness
 - Helplessness

Protective Factors

- **Spirituality**
- **Strong social support**
- **Good family relationship and friendships**
- **Having others depend on you**
 - **Children, pets**

Protective Factors

- **Availability of healthcare**
- **Availability of mental healthcare**
- **Talking about suicidal thoughts or feelings is the most important protective factor against an actual suicidal gesture or attempt**

High Risk Groups

- **Males**
 - **7th leading cause of death**
 - **4 times more likely to die**
- **Youth**
 - **3rd leading cause of death**
- **Elderly**

High Risk Groups

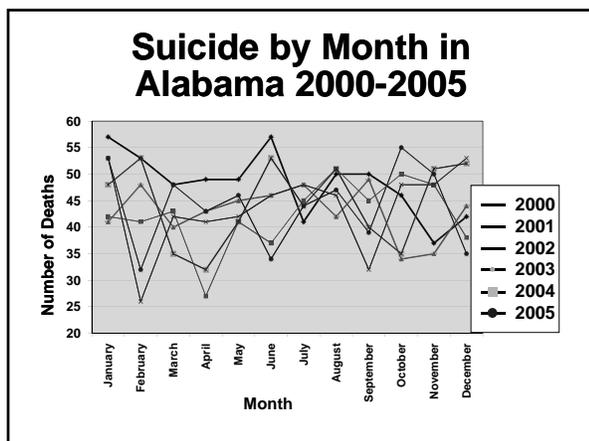
- **Racial Rates**
 - **#1 White males**
 - **#2 American Indian/Native Alaskan**

Myths About Suicide

- **People who talk about suicide won't really try to kill themselves**
- **If someone is determined to kill him/herself, there is nothing you can do to stop them**
- **People who attempt suicide are just looking for attention**

Myths About Suicide

- **Talking about suicide to someone who is depressed may cause them to kill him/herself**
- **Most suicides happen during the holidays**



Signs to Look For

- Depression
- Social isolation
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Giving away prized possessions
- Skipping classes or events
- Sleeping too much or too little

Signs to Look For

- Expressions like, "I'd be better off dead."
- Feeling hopeless, helpless, or worthless
- Talk about feeling worthless
 - Vicious self-accusations

Signs to Look For

- Absence of futuristic talk
 - Talk of settling affairs
 - Talk of a long trip
- Changes in eating behaviors

Signs to Look For

- Drastic changes in behavior
 - Impulsive and aggressive behavior with frequent expressions of rage
- Withdraws from friends and/or social activities
- Has attempted suicide before or has had a family member or close friend commit suicide

Signs to Look For

- Loses interest in their personal appearance
- Has had recent life changes
 - Divorce of parents
 - Death of friend or family member
 - Relationship loss

Signs to Look For

- Indifference to effects of one's death on others
- Sudden burst of energy after being very depressed

How Do You Help Someone

- ASK the question, "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"
- Do not tell them everything is going to be okay
- Really listen to their problems
- Suggest alternative ways to deal with their problems

How Do You Help Someone

- Stay with them until they are in a safe place
- Get their agreement to talk with someone who can get professional help for them

How Do You Help Someone

- Take away any lethal means
 - Drugs
 - Alcohol
 - Car keys
 - Guns

The Choking Game

What is the choking game?

- Players cut off the flow of blood to the brain in exchange for a few seconds of feeling lightheaded
- Some strangle themselves with a belt, a rope, or their bare hands
 - Others push on their chest or hyperventilate

The Choking Game

- When they release the pressure, blood that was blocked up floods the brain all at once
- This sets off a warm and fuzzy feeling, which is just the brain dying, thousands of cells at a time

Signs of the Choking Game

- Marks on the neck or wearing turtlenecks or scarves constantly
- Changes in personality
 - Aggression or agitation
- Rope or belt tied to doorknob or bedroom furniture

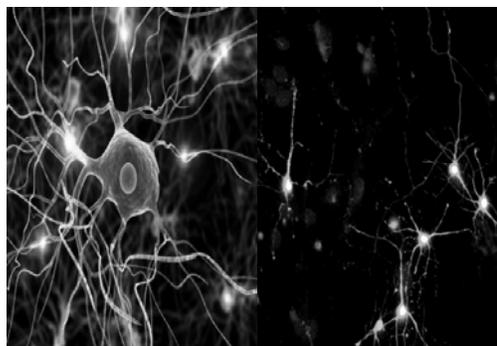
Signs of the Choking Game

- Severe headaches
- Bloodshot eyes
- Thud sounding from the bedroom, indicating a fall

What Can I Do

- Ask if the person is playing the choking game and explain the danger
- Find out if others are playing the game
- Notify a trusted authority
 - Teacher, coach, pastor

Brain Cells



Alabama Suicide Prevention Resources

- ASPARC: Alabama Suicide Prevention and Resource Coalition
- www.adph.org/suicideprevention
 - Source for state suicide rates and resources

Alabama Suicide Prevention Resources

- Toll Free Hotline Numbers
 - 1- 800-SUICIDE
 - 1- 800-273-TALK
- www.gaspinfo.com