



Mindfulness Could Lower Suicide Rates in Black Young Adults

Being mindful, or “living in the present,” decreased suicide ideation and psychological distress in Black adults.

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A study led by University of Houston (UH) researchers suggest that mindfulness could help reduce the [suicide](#) rate among Black Americans, which has increased by 30% over the past decade, according to a [UH news release](#). During the same period, suicide rates decreased for white Americans.

Led by UH psychology doctoral student Jasmin Brooks and professor of psychology Rheeda Walker, PhD, the [study](#)—the first of its kind—sought to examine how mindfulness, or “living in the present,” might impact mental health as well as the association between impulsivity and suicidal risk in a group of Black adults.

Being mindful refers to paying attention to the present moment rather than focusing on past or future events, which is linked to heightened [stress](#) and [anxiety](#). The practice involves [training the brain](#) to focus on one’s senses and physical experiences as they occur without judgment. Researchers note that mindfulness can combat impulsivity—a predisposition toward fast, unplanned reactions to internal or external events without considering the potential negative consequences of those quick responses.

“Our current findings support the clinical utility of mindfulness as a potential buffer to the negative consequences of impulsivity for Black Americans,” researchers wrote in the report published in the journal [Mindfulness](#). “Suicide among Black Americans is a complex phenomenon that may be best understood via an analysis of risk factors in tandem with protective factors.”

Walker noted that the research she has conducted over the past 20 years has shown that mindfulness can help make individuals less vulnerable to certain [mental health](#) issues.

The study examined data on 332 Black young adults with an average age of 22. Participants answered an online questionnaire that measured mindfulness, impulsivity, suicide ideation and increased suicide risk.

“Mediation analyses revealed that impulsivity was directly and indirectly associated with suicide

ideation and elevated suicide risk via lower levels of mindfulness,” Brooks told UH.

Mindfulness was also associated with positive health outcomes, such as decreased suicidal ideation and depressive symptoms, lower levels of substance use and psychological distress, increased psychological well-being and better coping skills.

“Ideally, we would live in a society that doesn’t create unnecessary stress or incite mistreatment,” said Walker. “Until that is a reality, a mindful disposition is an important source of resilience.”

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