Suicide Rates on the Rise Among Young Black Children

September 22, 2016

Take some time to talk to your kids about emotions, depression and suicide this week, no matter how young they are. This was the suggestion made recently by mental health researchers who have noticed a recent increase in suicide-related deaths among elementary-school-age black children in the United States, according to findings from a new paper published in the journal Pediatrics, CNN.com reports.

Although suicide is extremely rare in American children, recent research shows that up to 40 percent of young adults in the United States with a history of suicide attempts made their first attempt before entering high school. In addition, findings show that suicides involving younger children are far more likely to be among African-American boys—who die by hanging or suffocation—than among kids of other races.

Researchers uncovered this disturbing trend after scanning data collected by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Violent Death Reporting System. For this report, mental health experts reviewed 693 youth suicide cases involving kids ages 5 to 14 that occurred between 2003 and 2012.

The findings showed that among children in the 5-to-11 age group, 36.8 percent of suicide deaths involved a black child. The paper also noted several other reports that revealed the suicide rates among African-American boys ages 5 to 11 have doubled in the past few decades. (In contrast, suicide rates among white boys that age have been declining.)

Researchers don't know the reason for the uptick in suicide among younger kids. But some noted that several issues affecting the African-American community in particular might trigger suicidal behavior in its young people. "Black youth may experience disproportionate exposure to violence or traumatic stressors, both of which have been associated with suicidal behavior," wrote study authors in the report. "Also, research has shown that black youth are less likely to receive services for depression, suicidal ideation, and other mental health problems compared with non-black youth."

The paper also revealed that, in general, young children who took their own lives, were more likely to have problems with family or friends, had higher rates of ADD/ADHD and were less likely to appear depressed than early adolescents. Researchers also found that almost 30 percent of

children who died by suicide disclosed their intent to another person prior to their death.

Click here to learn more about how to recognize the warning signs of suicide, and what steps to take if a loved one discloses suicidal feelings or intent.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.sanemag.com/article/suicide-rates-rise-among-young-black-children