

Explication of the Relationship between Historical Trauma, Culture Loss, and Native American Youth Suicide: A Review of Related Literature

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Abstract : Native American youth, ages 10-24, have the highest rate of suicide in the United States. The hopelessness experienced by the native American youth is linked to psychosocial reasons more than biological or intrapsychic reasons. Two significant social determinants of health that diminish their hope include historical trauma and cultural loss. Intergenerational grief is caused by historical trauma from hundreds of years of colonization, broken treaties, and forced migration, leading to land, resources, and sovereignty loss. Forced acculturation through boarding schools that native children were required to attend led to the loss of traditions and culture. The result is hopelessness. This paper reviewed peer-reviewed research literature, government reports, non-government organizations reports, and video and written publications by Native Americans. Building hope through healing historical trauma and embracing cultural traditions may reduce suicide rates among Native American youth.

Keywords : culture loss, historical trauma, Native American, suicide, suicide rates

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