

POLICY CENTER
FOR Maternal Mental Health

The Latest in Maternal Suicide Trends

Fireside Chat

September 22, 2023

Maternal Mortality Rates

This March the CDC reported:

The U.S. maternal mortality rate is more than 10x the rate of other developed nations.

Our maternal mortality rate has continued to rise.

32.9 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2021, compared with a rate of 23.8 in 2020 and 20.1 in 2019.



When Do These Deaths Occur:

Among pregnancy-related deaths with information on timing,
53% occurred 7 days to 1 year after the end of pregnancy

84%

(or 4 in 5)

were determined to be **preventable**



Definitions: Maternal Mortality

Understanding Maternal Mortality Definitions

Pregnancy-Associated Death

The death of a woman while pregnant or within one year of the end of pregnancy, regardless of the cause.

Pregnancy-RELATED Death

A death during pregnancy or within one year of pregnancy from a pregnancy complication, a chain of events initiated by pregnancy, or the aggravation of an unrelated condition by the physiologic effects of pregnancy.¹⁰

OR

Unable to Determine

Pregnancy-Associated but NOT-RELATED Death

A death during pregnancy or within one year of the end of pregnancy from a cause that is not related to pregnancy.

“Pregnancy-Associated” Death: According to the CDC, death during or within one year of pregnancy, regardless of the cause. These deaths make up the universe of maternal mortality; within that universe are (1) pregnancy-related deaths and (2) pregnancy-associated, but not related deaths.⁹

One way to differentiate between **Pregnancy-RELATED** and **Pregnancy Associated, but NOT RELATED** death is to ask the question:

“Would the woman have died if she wasn’t pregnant?”

- If the answer is **no**, then it is a **pregnancy-related death**.
- If the answer is **yes**, then it is a **pregnancy-associated, but not related, death**.¹¹


What are MMRCs?



Findings

MATERNAL SUICIDE IS A LEADING CAUSE OF MATERNAL MORTALITY IN THE U.S.


The 2022 CDC report on pregnancy-related maternal mortality revealed mental health conditions* as the **leading underlying cause of pregnancy-related deaths**




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MATERNAL SUICIDE IS A LEADING CAUSE OF MATERNAL MORTALITY IN THE U.S.

While maternal suicides can happen during pregnancy, **most maternal suicides occur in the postpartum period** and not just in the immediate postpartum period.



Time Period	Percentage
between 43-365 days postpartum	62%
during pregnancy	24%
within 42 days postpartum	14%



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Suicidal Ideation & Race

MATERNAL SUICIDE IS A LEADING CAUSE OF MATERNAL MORTALITY IN THE U.S.

Hispanic and Black women are more likely to report suicidal ideation than White women.

2x



The infographic features a dark blue background with a yellow top section. A large red circle containing the text '2x' is positioned on the left. To its right, the text states that Hispanic and Black women are more likely to report suicidal ideation than White women. The bottom of the graphic is white with a rainbow arc at the very bottom.

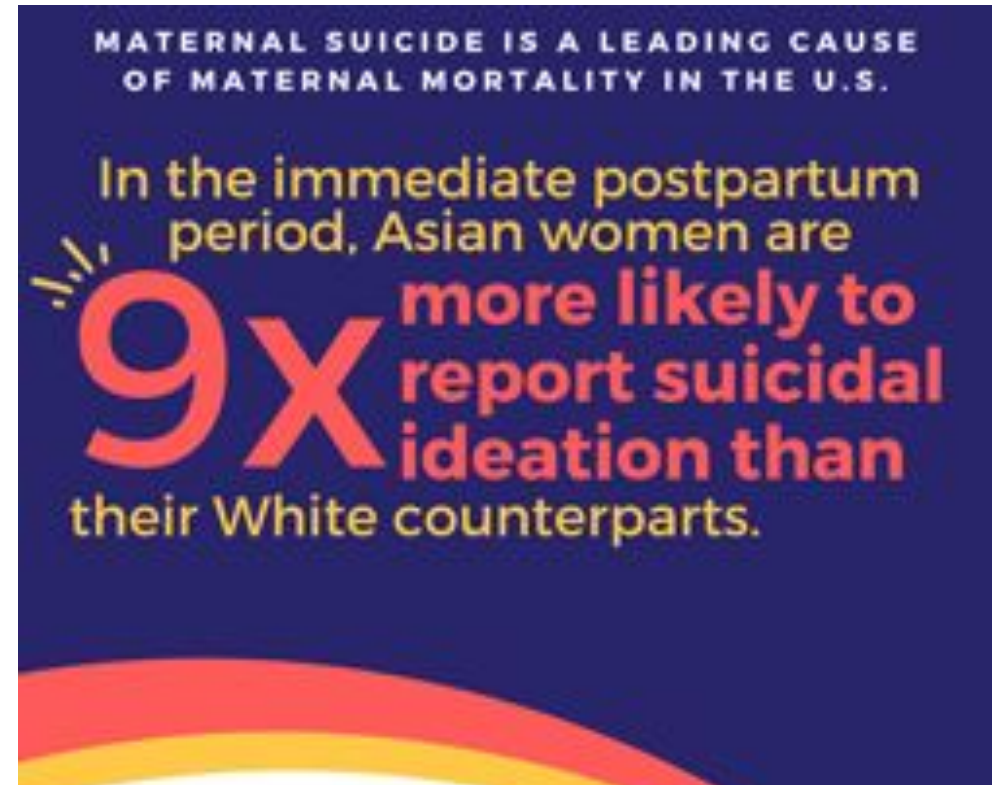
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MATERNAL SUICIDE IS A LEADING CAUSE OF MATERNAL MORTALITY IN THE U.S.

In the immediate postpartum period, Asian women are

9x more likely to report suicidal ideation than their White counterparts.



The infographic has a dark blue background with a yellow top section. A large red '9x' is the central focus, with the text explaining that Asian women are 9 times more likely to report suicidal ideation than White counterparts during the immediate postpartum period. A rainbow arc is at the bottom.

Intervention

Perinatal
Quality
Collaboratives

Screening

Treatment

MATERNAL SUICIDE IS A LEADING CAUSE OF MATERNAL MORTALITY IN THE U.S.

ZERO SUICIDE is the **gold standard** for suicide care in the U.S. healthcare system.

The Zero Suicide Toolkit consist of seven elements:

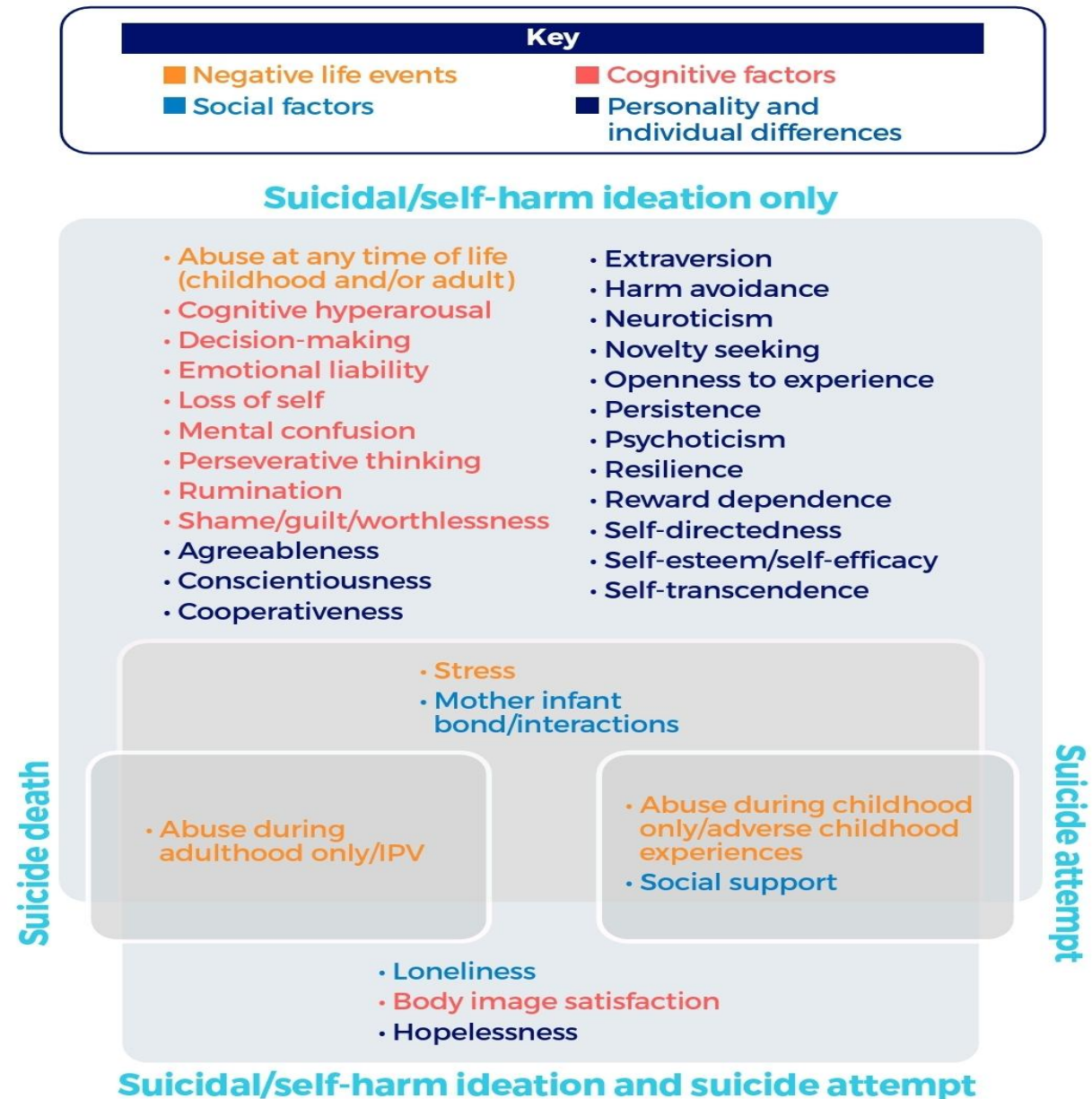
- Lead
- Train
- Identify
- Engage
- Treat
- Transition
- Improve

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Research: Risk Factors

For Ideation
For Suicide Attempts/Deaths



Q&A

Learn more

www.PolicyCenterMMH.org

Maternal Suicide Resources:

<https://www.2020mom.org/maternal-suicide>