



SUICIDALITY ON CAMPUS: A NEW STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS



Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college-aged adults (18-24) around the world, research from the WHO shows.

23%

of all post-secondary students are estimated to be affected by suicidal ideation, plans, or attempts, studies indicate, as:



Stress



Coursework



Pressure to succeed



Loneliness



Leaving home

are all shown to increase students' susceptibility to depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and low self-efficacy, while:

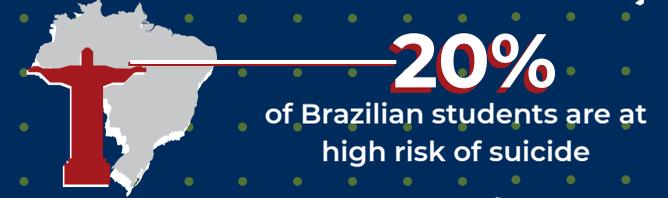
Discrimination

Victimization

Assault

are shown to place marginalized students (i.e., BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, international, and first-gen) at further risk of suicidality.

Global snapshot:



75%
of mental
health issues

are thought to **"noticeably appear"** by the age of 24—partially explaining why a majority of students report changes to their mental health during this time.

Even so, research points to several **protective factors** that can reduce students' risk of suicide, like:



Sense of belonging and connection with peers



An open and explicit conversation about mental health on campus



Access to affirming and culturally competent care

#1 Peer-to-Peer Support

Research suggests that students are heavily influenced by their peers—for better or worse.

#2 Awareness Campaigns

Students who perceive higher levels of **mental health stigma** report higher rates of suicidality and a greater reluctance to seek help.

#3 Professional Services

While a **record-breaking 37 percent** of students have accessed professional services in the past year, shortcomings, like a **lack of diversity** and **cultural competency** persist.

Prevention Strategies:

To leverage this influence in a positive way, studies prove that:

- Peer mentorships
- Student wellbeing ambassadors
- Extracurricular activities focused on wellness and community engagement

can alleviate ill-health and promote psychosocial wellbeing.

Conversely, experts contend that training or events centered around:

- Stigma reduction and unconscious bias
- Signs and symptoms of ill-health/suicidality
- How to support those who are struggling
- How to effectively cope and protect one's own mental health

can help to cultivate a positive and **psychologically-safe** campus climate.

By investing in **culturally-responsive** and **affirming** professionals, campus leaders can help to make sure that students receive the right care they need in a timely manner. Furthermore, making sure that all health screenings, questionnaires, or appointments include **explicit questions about suicide** has been associated with a:

- 7x greater likelihood of identifying at-risk students
- 4x greater likelihood that students will initiate treatment
- 8x greater likelihood that treatment will be successful

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