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## Mayday! Mayday! Mayday! Black Children are Killing Themselves: An Examination of Risk Factors, Protective Factors, and Best Practices for addressing Suicidality among African-American Youth

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**S**uicide incidences among African American children and adolescents have increased at alarming rates during the last two decades. While research has also indicated a rising rate in suicidality among other minority ethnic groups, the increasing rates among African American youth have historically trended at lower rates. Despite, rising trends there remain significant gaps in the literature related to suicidality among youth in general, and more specifically among ethnic minority youth. Method: A comprehensive literature search of several databases (PUBMED; PsychInfo; CINAHL) was conducted between January 2020 and January 2021 and identified 28 included studies. The articles included were published between 2015 and 2020. One article was published in 2006, which explored historical context. Results: Key risk and protective factors specific to African American youth identified. The historical contexts that create mental health treatment engagement barriers explored; best treatment practices are determined. Conclusions: This is a call to action. Suicide among African American youth is a significant public health crisis that can become the number one killer of African American/ or Black youth if continually left unattended. The gaps in knowledge identified could guide future research.

### Biography

Tyesha Hardwick, RN, LMHC, is a 2021 doctorate candidate who is currently pursuing a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree with a specialty in psychiatric mental health. Ms. Hardwick began her pursuit of a second career in the field of nursing in 2018 after working for 16 years in the field of behavioral health. Ms. Hardwick holds a Master of Science degree in Nursing from Columbia University, a Master of Science degree in Mental Health Counseling from Manhattan College, and Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Hunter College. She is currently a member of the National Black Nurses Association.

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