

# The Suicide Crisis in Indian Country

## A Healing & Solutions Based Conversation



*Because there is strength in Unity*

## Moderator



**Onawa M. Miller, CHES, CTCR, CHC**

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National Trainer for Mental Health First Aid  
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Certified Behavior Change Specialist

## Tribal Leader Panelists



**Vice Chairperson Nita Battise**  
Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas



**Chief Clarissa Sabattis**  
Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians



**Chief Beverly Cook**  
Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe



**President Rickey Armstrong, Sr.**  
Seneca Nation of Indians



**Chief Keith Anderson**  
Nansemond Indian Nation



Art by Eloy Bida

“Grandma, I’m tired. So tired of this life...”

“Take your tiredness, my child, and wrap it around yourself. Like a blanket in the cold winter months. Tiredness comes to make you a nest, to bring you to wear comfortable clothes, to make you sink into its warm embrace. I invite you to stay within yourself. Without strength, without thoughts, without actions. Like the snow that covers everything to soften the world, to make it muffled, to protect it from noise. Accept the flakes of your tiredness and let yourself be completely covered by them.”

“I could die buried under there...”

“You will be reborn instead. Like the seed in the ground. Do not resist your weariness, do not reject it with a thousand actions, a thousand intentions, a thousand feelings of guilt. It just wants to take you by the hand and lead you to sink into the void. Right there, where the source of every inner strength lies. They taught us to be strong by resisting. But it is in surrendering that the true heroes emerge.”

“I’m afraid, grandmother. What if fatigue will annihilate me?”

“My child, you are not afraid of tiredness but of losing control of yourself. The time has come for you to give yourself to life. And to generate together with it the most wonderful children: the fruits of your soul!”

~Elena Bernabè



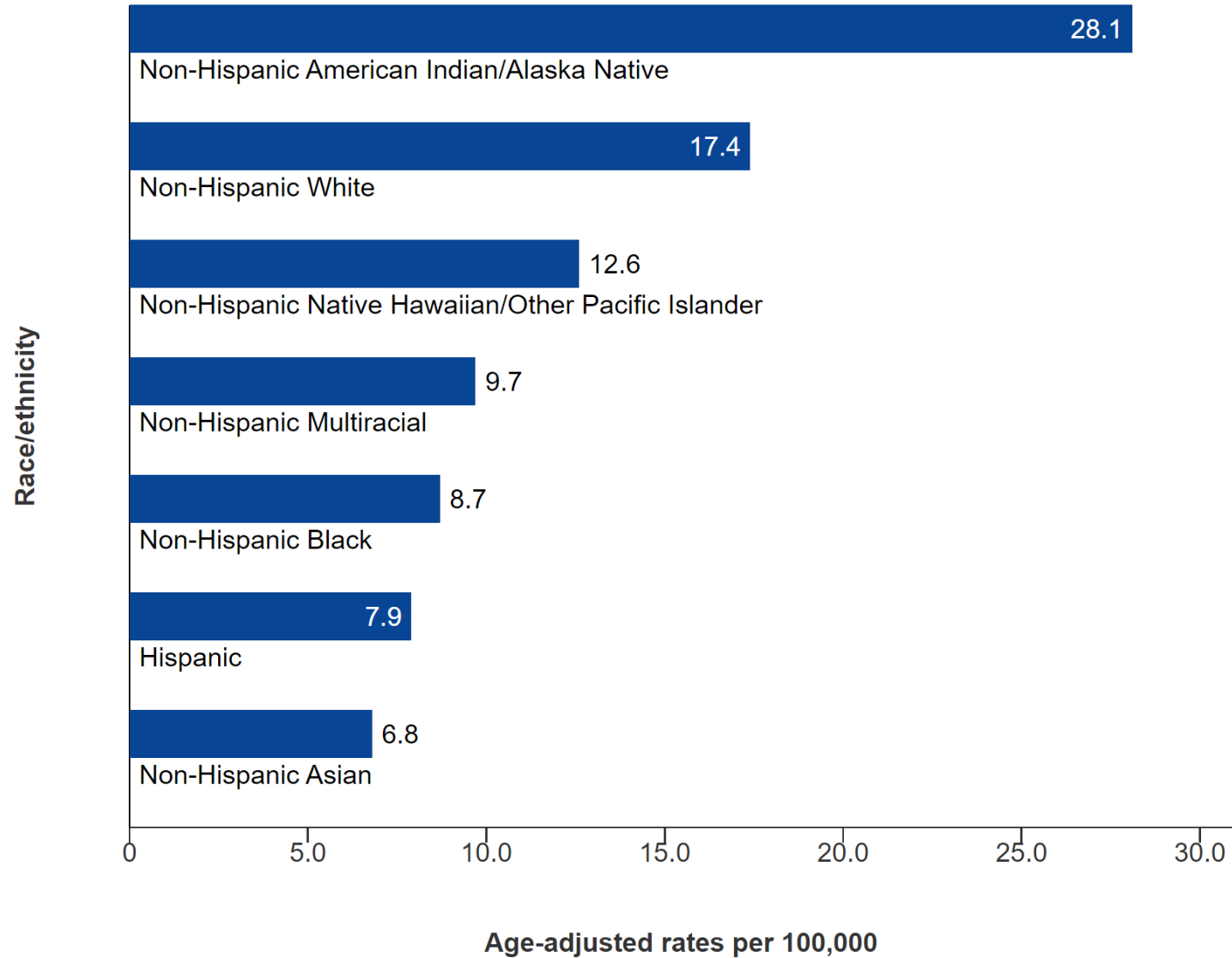
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- In 2021, non-Hispanic AI/AN people had a suicide rate 99% greater than the general population (Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.)
- 2021-2022 data indicated a 6% decrease in reported AI/AN suicides.
- **Prevention Examples: Building Capacity for Tribal Suicide Prevention Through Program Implementation and Evaluation** is a cooperative agreement funded by CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC). Through this cooperative agreement, the [Southern Plains Tribal Health Board](#) and [Wabanaki Health and Wellness](#) tribal organizations are working to increase capacity to adapt, implement, and evaluate suicide prevention programs to reduce suicide-related morbidity and mortality.



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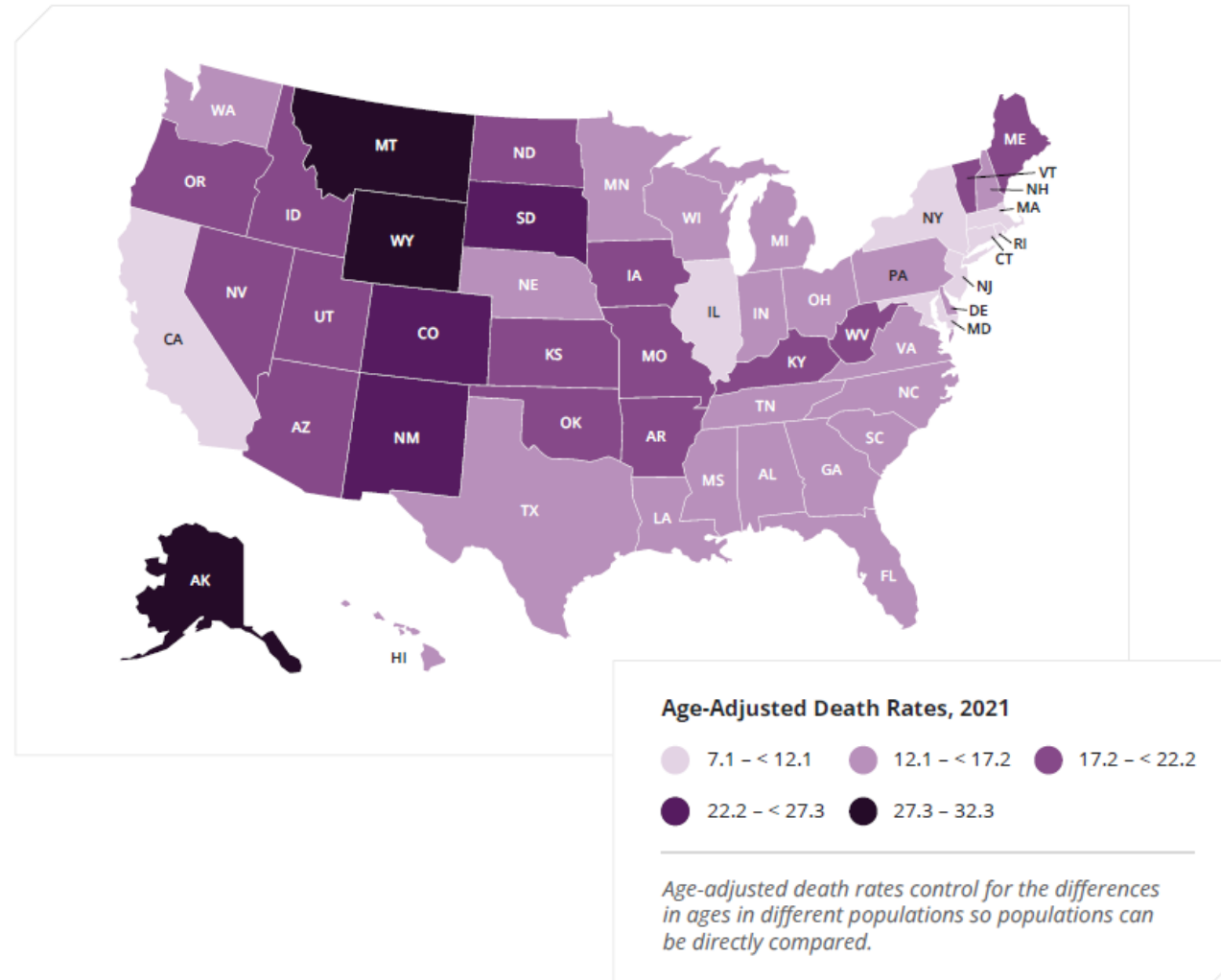
The racial/ethnic groups with the highest rates in 2021 were non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native people and non-Hispanic White people.



# Suicide Rates Across the United States

Suicide rates can vary substantially across **geographic regions**.

People living in **rural areas** have **much higher rates of suicide** than people living in urban areas. Suicide rates increase as population density decrease and areas become more rural.



## Suicide rates are higher among certain racial and ethnic groups.

### Male Suicide Rates, by Race and Ethnicity, 2021

Age-adjusted rates per 100,000 population



### Female Suicide Rates, by Race and Ethnicity, 2021

Age-adjusted rates per 100,000 population



*\*Other racial and ethnic groups have unstable rates and are therefore not included.*





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