

TITLE: Pulling Back the Layers: How Racism and Discrimination impacts Suicide Prevention

Data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has shown that African American children, ages 5-12, have seen a significant increase in suicide rates over the last few years. This rate has been increasing over the last 15 years, despite the suicide rate decreasing for white children of the same age range. The suicide rate of American Indian/Alaska Native youth under 18 are continuing to see increases as well. Latinx, African-American, and AI/AN people have disproportionately been seeing challenges from COVID-19. Brandon J. Johnson will discuss how specific population-centered issues such as systemic racism, historical trauma, and discrimination frame our work and impact communities of color. Strategies for addressing these barriers to care head-on will be discussed.

OBJECTIVES:

- #1. Attendees will be able to describe the most recent data trends on increases in suicide deaths and attempts among various populations.

- #2. Attendees will be able to explain implementation strategies for various systems to address the mental health and suicide prevention needs of youth and adults of various ages and backgrounds.

- #3. Attendees will be able to recognize the various social determinates of health that uniquely impact the mental health of people of color.

SPEAKER BIO

Brandon J. Johnson, M.H.S. is a tireless advocate for positive mental health and suicide prevention services for youth and adults across the country. Brandon earned a Bachelor of Science Degree from Morgan State University in 2008 and a Master of Health Science Degree from Johns Hopkins University in 2012. Currently, he serves as a Public Health Advisor at the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in the Suicide Prevention Branch at the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS). In this role, Brandon serves as a Government Project Officer (GPO) for various suicide prevention grant programs that respectively target youth, adults, and health care systems. Brandon is also the GPO for the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) which provides suicide-specific materials, webinars, and training to organizations and communities all over the country working to prevent suicides. Another highlight of Brandon's career is his current role as the Co-Lead of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention's Faith Communities Task Force. The group works with faith communities all over the nation to equip them with tools and resources to combat the often stigmatized issue of suicide. Brandon has lead numerous projects to develop resources and materials to specifically prevent suicide among African-American youth. Previously, Brandon served as the Director of Suicide and Violence Prevention for the State of Maryland where he worked in communities throughout the state to help develop strategies to end violence in various forms, such as community violence and human trafficking. In this role, Brandon also worked on the MD Governor's Commission on Suicide Prevention as well as organized the annual Suicide Prevention Conference.