FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

National Studies Data on Suicides in Correctional Settings – What We Can Learn from this Data

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This presentation will focus on two important studies on suicide in correctional settings released by Lindsay M. Hayes of the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives

And also look at suicide data in the California, Texas and Florida Juvenile Justice Systems
“National Study of Jail Suicide 20 Years Later”

Lindsay M. Hayes, Project Director
National Center on Institutions and Alternatives
April 2010

Published by U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Corrections

- Presents comprehensive updated information on the extent and distribution of inmate suicides throughout the country
“Juvenile Suicide in Confinement: A National Survey”

Lindsay M. Hayes, Project Director
National Center on Institutions and Alternatives
February 2004

- The first comprehensive effort to determine the scope and distribution of suicides by youth confined in juvenile justice facilities throughout the country
National Study of Jail Suicide 20 Years Later”

Jail Suicide Data for 1985-86 and 2005-06 Indicates…

- **A dramatic decrease in jail suicide**
  - In 2006, suicide rate was 36 deaths per 100,000 inmates
  - In 1985, the suicide rate was 107 deaths per 100,000 inmates

- **Jail Suicide no longer centralized to the first 24 hours of confinement.**
  - In 2006, 24% of suicides occurred within the first 24 hours of confinement.
  - In 1985, 51% of suicides occurred within the first 24 hours.

- **Intoxication is no longer a leading precursor to jail suicide.**
  - In 2006, 20% of victims were intoxicated at the time of death.
  - In 1985, 60% of victims were intoxicated at the time of death.
National Study of Jail Suicide 20 Years Later and National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement

Comparison of Findings of Jail Suicide 2005-06 Data and Juvenile Suicide in Confinement Survey Data
Findings of the National Study of Jail Suicide and the National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement

- “National Study of Jail Suicide: 20 Years Later”
  Lindsay M. Hayes, Project Director
  National Center on Institutions and Alternatives, April 2010

- The study identified 696 jail suicides in 2005 and 2006 combined. Data was analyzed for 464 cases

- “National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement”
  Lindsay M. Hayes, Project Director
  National Center on Institutions and Alternatives, February 2004

- The study identified 110 juvenile suicides occurring between 1995 and 1999. Data was analyzed on 79 cases
Findings of the National Study of Jail Suicide and the National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement

- National Study of Jail Suicide: 20 Years Later
  - Findings - Suicide Victims
    - 67% white
    - 93% male
    - 47% history of substance abuse
    - 38% had a history of mental illness
    - 20% had a history of psychotropic medication
    - 34% had a history of suicidal behavior

- National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement
  - Findings - Suicide Victims
    - 68% white
    - 80% male
    - 88% history of substance abuse
    - 74% history of mental illness
    - 54% taking psychotropic medication
    - 71% history of suicidal behavior
Findings of the National Study of Jail Suicide and the National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement

- National Study of Jail Suicide: 20 Years Later
  - Findings - Suicide Victims
    - 67% White
    - 15.1% African American
    - 12.7% Hispanic
    - 2.8% American Indian
    - 2.2% Other

- National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement
  - Findings - Suicide Victims
    - 68.4% White
    - 11.4% African American
    - 11.4% American Indian
    - 6.3% Hispanic
    - 2.5% Other
Findings of the National Study of Jail Suicide and the National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement

- **National Study of Jail Suicide: 20 Years Later**
  
  - **Findings - Suicide Victims**
    
    93.1% Male  
    6.9% Female  
    
    - Appears to correlate with the percentage of male and female jail inmates in 2005/2006 (approximately 87% male and 13% female*)
    
    *US Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States 2011*

- **National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement**
  
  - **Findings - Suicide Victims**
    
    80% Males  
    20% Females  
    
    - Appears to correlate with the percentage of males and females in juvenile justice placements (nationally, approximately 85% male and 15% females in residential placement in 2006*)
    
    * OJJDP data
Findings of the National Study of Jail Suicide and the National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement

- National Study of Jail Suicide: 20 Years Later
  - Findings - Suicide Victims
    - 34% had a history of suicidal behavior

- National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement
  - Findings - Suicide Victims
    - 71% history of suicidal behavior
    - 46% suicide attempt(s)
    - 31% Suicidal ideation
    - 24% suicide gesture and/or self-mutilation
Findings of the National Study of Jail Suicide and the National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement

- **National Study of Jail Suicide: 20 Years Later**
  - **Findings - Suicide Victims**
    - Deaths were evenly distributed throughout the year; certain seasons and/or holidays did not account for more suicide
    - 24% occurred within first 24 hours, 27% between 2 and 14 days, and 20% between 1 and 4 months

- **National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement**
  - **Findings - Suicide Victims**
    - Deaths were evenly distributed during a more than 12-month period
    - 4% occurred within the first 24 hours
Findings of the National Study of Jail Suicide and the National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement

National Study of Jail Suicide: 20 Years Later

Precipitating Events

- 35% of deaths occurred close to the date of a court hearing, with 69% occurring in less than 2 days
- 22% of suicides occurred close to the date of a telephone call or visit with 67% occurring in less than 1 day of precipitating event.

National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement

- 38% Had Precipitating Event:
  - Fear of waiver to adult system or transfer to more secure facility
  - Recent death of family member
  - Failure in program
  - Contagion from another recent suicide in facility
  - Parent threat of/or failure to visit
  - Other- ridicule of peers, loss of relationship
Findings of the National Study of Jail Suicide and the National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement

**National Study of Jail Suicide: 20 Years Later**
- Findings - Suicide Victims
  - 93% used hanging as the method
  - 66% used bedding as the instrument
  - 30% used a bed or bunk as the anchoring device
- 38% were in isolation
- 8% were on suicide watch at the time of death

**National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement**
- Findings - Suicide Victims
  - 98% were by hanging
  - 72% used bedding as the instrument
- Variety of Anchoring Devices
  - 21% door hinge/knob
  - 20% air vent
  - 15% window frame
- 50% were on room confinement status at the time of death
- 17% were on suicide watch at the time of death
Findings of the National Study of Jail Suicide and the National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement

- National Study of Jail Suicide: 20 Years Later
- Findings – Suicide Victims
  - 8% were on suicide watch at the time of death. (most at 15 minute intervals)
  - 29.5% had previously been placed on suicide precautions during their current or previous confinement

- National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement
- Findings – Suicide Victims
  - 17% of victims were on suicide precautions at the time of their deaths (most at 15-minute intervals)
Findings of the National Study of Jail Suicide and the National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement

- National Study of Jail Suicide: 20 Years Later
  - Findings - Facilities
    - 77% provided intake screening, but only 27% verified the victim’s suicide risk during previous confinement

- National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement
  - Findings – Facilities
    - 71% of suicides took place in a facility that provided intake screening to identify suicide risk
Findings of the National Study of Jail Suicide and the National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement

**National Study of Jail Suicide: 20 Years Later**
- Findings - Facilities
  - 93% provided a protocol for suicide watch, but less than 2% provided an option for constant supervision
  - 8% were on suicide watch at the time of death. (most at 15 minute intervals)

**National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement**
- Findings – Facilities
  - 90% of facilities had a suicide prevention protocol
  - 17% of victims were on suicide precautions at the time of their deaths (most at 15-minute intervals)
Findings of the National Study of Jail Suicide and the National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement

- National Study of Jail Suicide: 20 Years Later
  - Findings - Facilities
    - 32% between 3:01pm and 9:00pm
    - (Fairly evenly distributed throughout the day)

- National Survey on Juvenile Suicide in Confinement
  - Findings – Facilities
    - 50% occurred between 6:01pm and midnight. 29% occurred between 6:01pm and 9:00pm
    - 71% of suicides in detention centers occurred during traditional waking hours (7:01 am to 9:00 pm)
What We Can Learn From the National Study of Jail Suicide and National Survey of Juvenile Suicide in Confinement Data ...

- Data shows that suicides can occur at any time during the year
- Hanging is by far the leading method
- Majority of victims are white males
- Room confinement or isolation was in effect for 50% of juvenile victims and 1/3 of jail victims
- Prior suicidal behavior strongly related to future risk of suicide (71% of juvenile suicide victims and over 1/3 of jail suicide victims)
- Prior substance abuse (88% juvenile victims, 47% jail victims) mental illness (74% juvenile victims, 38% jail victims), psychotropic medications (54% juvenile victims, 20% jail victims) related to future risk of suicide
- Vast majority of facilities had intake screening which included suicide screening, but did not include information regarding inmates suicide risk during previous confinement.
- Vast majority of facilities had a suicide watch protocol, but few provided for constant supervision.
Suicide Among the Nation’s Youth

Before we look at California, Texas and Florida JJ Data. Let’s look at national data regarding suicide and suicide behavior among youth in the U.S. ...
Adolescent Suicide – National Data*

- Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 10 to 24 year-olds

- **Suicide results in approximately 4400 lives lost each year.** The top three methods used in suicides of young people include firearm (46%), suffocation (37%), and poisoning (8%).

- 84% of suicide victims were males and 16% were females

- Nationwide Survey of Youth in Grades 9-12 found that within the 12-months preceding the survey:
  - 15% seriously considered suicide
  - 11% made a plan for suicide
  - 7% had attempted suicide in the last 12 months

- Each year, approximately 149,000 youths receive medical care for self-inflicted injuries in emergency departments across the U.S.

(* CDC, Youth Suicide)
3 States Data on Suicide in Juvenile Justice Facilities

Now let’s look at California JJ Data, Texas JJ Data and Florida DJJ Data on suicide ...
Data for Comparable States - California

- California Division of Juvenile Justice
  (Formerly California Youth Authority)

  - Since 1996, 16 youths committed suicide

  - Six suicides occurred between 2000 and 2005

  - 2004 – Double suicide occurred. A 17 year old male and 18 year old male found hanged together in their cell by their bed sheets. Youths were in special management unit on lockdown status at the time.
Texas Youth Commission

Five TYC youth suicides since 2002

- 2002  (2) included a suicide in county detention center and in adult jail after TYC youth was transferred there
- 2004
- 2006
- 2009
Florida DJJ Data

Data for 1994 - May 2011

➢ 3 Suicide Victims (1998, 2000, 2001)

1 in Residential Commitment Program (Boot Camp) in 1998
1 in CINS/FINS Shelter in 2000 and
1 in Detention Center in 2001
There has not been a suicide in a DJJ CINS/FINS Shelter, Detention Center, or Residential Commitment Program for almost ten years!
What We Can Learn From The 3 States Data

- Florida DJJ suicide data compares very favorably to other large states (California and Texas)
- Reported suicides correlate closely to National Study Data
- Suicide threats were present in most instances
- Precipitating events present and often included concern for personal safety and/or distress related to confinement status
- Room confinement or isolation was a factor in most instances
- Suicide was by hanging in most instances
- Suicide watch had been discontinued or downgraded in several instances
What We Can Learn From The Studies and State Data

- Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Policy is essential.
- Constant Supervision of suicidal youth is essential until the youth is removed from suicide precautions. (Reported suicides occurred when youth were on close supervision)
- Assessment of Suicide Risk is the cornerstone of suicide prevention and needs to be an in-depth analysis of the youth’s suicide potential and needs
- High Intensity mental health treatment of suicidal youths can effectively prevent suicide
- Suicides generally occur during confinement rather than while participating in program activities.
QUESTIONS
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The End

Thank You