

**2006 FLORIDA SUICIDE  
PREVENTION SYMPOSIUM**

**PRESENTS**

**A WORKSHOP ON CULTURAL  
IMPLICATIONS ON SUICIDE**

**DECEMBER 5, 2006  
10:45 A.M. – 12:15 P.M.**

**PRESENTER**

**FRED DYER, Ph.D., CADC**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Suicide carries a social and moral meaning in all societies. At both the individual and population levels, the suicide rate has long been understood to correlate with cultural, social, political, and economic forces (Giddens, 1964). Suicide is not everywhere linked with pathology but represents a culturally recognized solution to certain situations. As such, understanding suicide and attempting risk prevention requires an understanding of how suicide varies with these forces and how it relates to individual, group, and contextual experiences. Society and culture play an enormous role in dictating how people respond to and view mental health and suicide. Cultural influences the way in which we define and experience mental health and mental illness, our ability to access care and the nature of the care we seek, the quality of the interaction between provider and patient in the health care system, and our response to intervention and treatment. This has important implications for treating individuals belonging to different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups in the United States, as discussed in detail in the surgeon General's Report, *Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity* (US DHHS, 2001). Cultural variables have a far-ranging impact on suicide. They shape risk and protective factors as well as the availability and types of treatment that might intervene to lessen suicide.**

**ECOLOGICAL BASIS OF BEHAVIOR**

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**UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP OF CULTURE AND SOCIETY IN  
SUICIDE THROUGH THE EXAMINATION OF:**

- **Family and other social systems**
- **Marital status**
- **Parenthood**
- **Familial discord and connectedness**
- **Social support**

**THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION, RELIGIOSITY, AND RELIGIOUS  
AFFILIATION AS A PROTECTIVE FACTOR AGAINST SUICIDE ATTEMPTS  
AND COMPLETIONS**

- **Religion**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **Religiosity**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **Religious affiliation**

**AN EPIDEMIOLOGICAL OVERVIEW OF SUICIDE AND CULTURE**

1.

2.

3.

**ECONOMIC INFLUENCE AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS THROUGH  
ANALYZING:**

- **Occupations**
- **Unemployment**
- **Socioeconomic status**

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC  
POWER AND SUICIDE RATES**

- **Politics**
- **Social power**
- **Economic power**

**COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL VS. URBAN****Rural****vs.****Urban****4 CHALLENGES OF REDUCING SUICIDE THROUGH EXAMINATION OF  
CROSS-NATIONAL DIFFERENCES VS. REAL****1.****2.****3.****4.**

**INTEGRATING APPROACHES THROUGH INDIVIDUAL AND AGGREGATE  
STUDIES**

**INCREASING AND UTILIZING A BIO-PSYCHOSOCIAL UNDERSTANDING**