

Violent Deaths among Native Americans in Oklahoma

- From 2004-2008, there were 4,560 violent deaths among Oklahoma residents; of those, 457 (10%) were Native Americans.
- Native American males were nearly 3 times more likely to be victims of violent deaths than Native American females.
- Violent death rates among Native Americans were highest among persons 25-44 years of age.
- Almost half of all violent deaths among Native Americans were suicide, 23% were homicide, and 26% were of undetermined manner.
- The rates of homicide and undetermined manner of death were higher among Native Americans compared to non-Native Americans.
- Native Americans 25-44 years of age were nearly twice as likely to be victims of homicides as non-Native Americans.
- The rate of undetermined manner of death among Native American children aged 0-4 was more than twice the rate among non-Native Americans.
- The overall suicide rate among Native Americans was slightly less than non-Native Americans; however, the suicide rate among Native Americans 10-24 years of age was 78% higher than non-Native Americans.
- Firearms were the most common weapon used to kill in both suicides and homicides for both Native Americans and non-Native Americans.

Circumstances:

- Arguments and intimate partner violence were the leading circumstances of homicide.
- Current depressed mood, intimate partner problems, and mental health problems were the leading circumstances of suicide.

Strategies to prevent self-inflicted violence:

- Learn the suicide warning signs. If you know a person at risk for suicide, refer them to help.
OK Suicide Helpline 1-800-273-TALK.
- Health care professionals should be encouraged to screen patients for mental health illnesses (including substance abuse), and provide adequate treatment for these illnesses.
- Restrict access to lethal means, such as firearms and drugs, from persons who have expressed intent to commit suicide.
- Prescription drug use by persons expressing intent to commit suicide should be closely monitored by the doctor, pharmacist, and family members.

Strategies to prevent interpersonal violence include:

- Programs that teach young people healthy relationship skills, such as Respect WORKS (a four-step approach to preventing dating violence) and Second Step (skills for social and academic success).
- Positive youth development programs, such as The Boys and Girls Club, STRYVE (Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere), and mentoring programs.
- Comprehensive school-based programs to address bullying.
- Nurse home visitation programs to educate new mothers on child safety and child development.
- Providing adequate domestic and family violence services to the community.

For more information go to:

- Safe Kids Worldwide: <http://www.safekids.org/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention>
- National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/suicideprevention/federal.asp>
- Break the Cycle: <http://www.breakthecycle.org>