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A systematic review of the global incidence of suicide among Indigenous peoples by Pollock and colleagues in 2018 found ‘evidence of suicide rate parity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in some contexts, while elsewhere rates were more than 20 times higher among Indigenous peoples\(^3\)\(p21\).’

These differences were attributed to the varying impacts of colonisation in specific locations; access of Indigenous populations to mental health and health services; and the existence of community-level action. These findings led the authors to conclude that ‘suicide among Indigenous peoples is not a universal or intractable problem\(^3\)\(p22\).’

In 2008, the suicide rate was about 11 deaths per 100,000 population per annum, rising to 12.6 deaths per 100,000 population per annum in 2017 – an increase of 15% over a decade\(^3\).
However, it is also important to acknowledge that the rates vary between Indigenous populations and communities within Indigenous populations.

**Understanding the reasons for these differences may hold the keys to reducing suicide rates.**

A longitudinal study by Chandler and Lalonde (2008) among 197 First Nations’ communities in Canada found wide variations in the suicide rates between Indigenous communities. Their research identified a range of protective factors in communities experiencing little or no suicide which translate within an Australian context to include:

- Access to culturally safe services
- Creating a sense of positive individual and community continuity
- Indigenous governance where there is local control over employment, health, education, policy and child welfare and structures that are inclusive of community members
- Self-determination in communities that have self-governance
- Where community initiatives aim to strengthen cultural practices and identity
- Working towards Indigenous ownership of, and access to traditional lands

More information about suicide prevention and additional fact sheets are available on the CBPATSISP website.

**Suggested citation:** Dudgeon P, Holland C, Ring I & Walker R. (2019). Fact Sheet 1 A Global and National Overview of Suicide and Indigenous Suicide. Centre of Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention (CBPATSISP); Poche Centre for Indigenous Health, School of Indigenous Studies, University of Western Australia.

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