

CHANGE PATHWAYS IN INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS YOUTH SUICIDE

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Introduction

- Suicide is a serious, preventable public health problem that can have lasting harmful effects on individuals, families, and communities.
- Hopelessness is rising among youth.
- However, perception and realization of hope is an important protective factor in emotional well-being among youth.

Objectives

- Suicide prevention efforts seek to reduce risk for suicidality and increase factors that help strengthen, support, and protect individuals from suicide.
- The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship among suicide attempts, anxiety symptoms, depressive symptoms, hope and help-seeking across time in Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian adolescents.

Methods

Participants were adolescents from the National Center on Indigenous Hawaiian Behavioral Health's high school health survey who were part of a five-year longitudinal cohort study ($N = 7,317$). Contemporary longitudinal dynamic structural equation models were used to analyze the multiple dynamical relationships among anxiety symptoms, depressive symptoms, help seeking, hope, and suicide attempts for non-Hawaiian and Native Hawaiian groups.

Results

Descriptive statistics at Time 1 for the total sample ($N = 7,206$), non-Hawaiian youth ($N = 2,377$) and Native Hawaiian youth ($N = 4,829$)

Variable At Time 1	Total Sample		Non-Hawaiian Youth		Native Hawaiian Youth		Mean Difference
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Age	15.48	1.25	15.54	1.24	15.45	1.251	.08**
Anxiety	19.55	10.31	18.93	10.01	19.81	10.46	-.88**
Depression	0.67	0.59	0.64	0.59	0.69	0.59	-.06**
Help 1 family or friends	2.77	2.09	2.87	2.14	2.69	2.04	.18**
Help 2 Needed counseling during past 6 months	3.22	0.88	3.28	0.84	3.19	0.90	.09**
Hope 1 hopeful about future	1.28	1.07	1.27	1.07	1.28	1.06	-.02
Hope 2 ...feel about life now?	2.44	0.87	2.43	0.85	2.45	0.87	-.01
Hope 3 ... feel about life ten years from now?	1.86	0.72	1.87	0.71	1.86	0.73	.003
Suicide Attempt***	0.04	0.20	0.04	0.19	0.05	0.21	-.01*

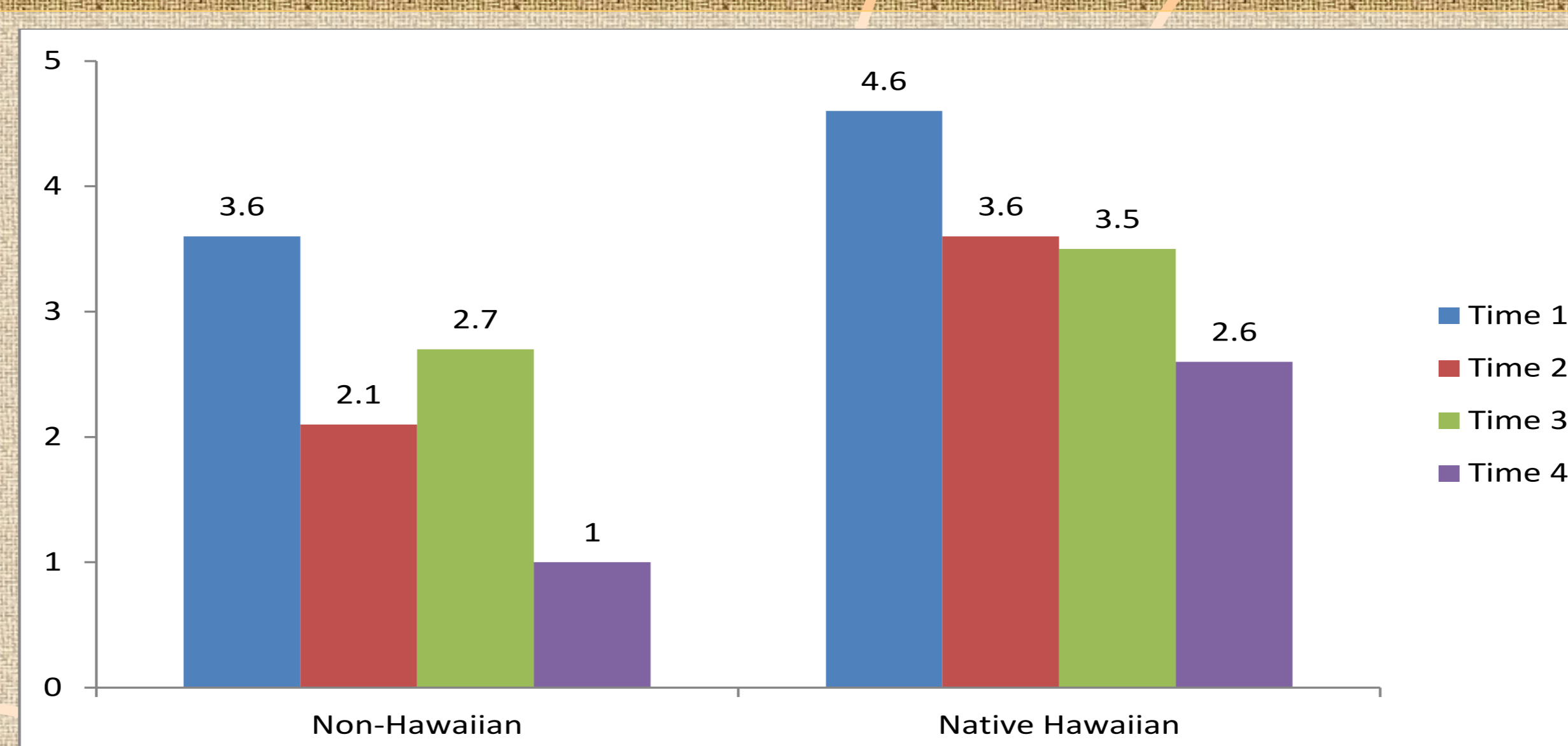


Figure 1. Repeated measures of suicide attempts by ethnicity

We found mainly similarities in dynamical systems between Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian youth regarding how change scores were influenced by the past behavioral patterns for the four domains. The greatest differences were in help, followed by suicide, and hope.

Change in Suicide	Non-Hawaiian	Native Hawaiian	Difference in coefficient	Z
Suicide \rightarrow $D_{suicide}$	-1.008	-1.040	0.0320	0.9995
$F_{Hope} \rightarrow$ $D_{suicide}$	-0.726	-0.690	-0.0360	-0.4455
$F_{help} \rightarrow$ $D_{suicide}$	-0.192	-0.115	-0.0770	-1.5986
$F_{symptom} \rightarrow$ $D_{suicide}$	1.028	1.058	-0.0300	-0.2164

Conclusions

- The vast majority of youth in our study not report suicidality, even when they experienced symptoms of anxiety and/or depression. Yet Native Hawaiian youth remain at higher risk. They seek help and restore hope less often.
- There has been a strong calling for more culturally relevant tools and trainings related to youth suicide prevention.
 - Culture frames what *all* people bring to the setting including: help-seeking patterns, coping styles, support systems, role of stigma, and engagement in prevention.
 - By building cultural strengths, such as kinship ties, community assets, spirituality, and creating positive meaning, we can prevent suicide among our youth.
- We need more thoughtful and purposive inclusion of mental health infrastructure in suicide prevention and intervention strategies to decrease disparities. More collaborative and youth-centered approaches to suicide prevention in the cultural context of the community are essential in enhancing well-being in indigenous communities.

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