

As Temperatures Rise, So Does Suicide Risk: ANK Behavioral Health Highlights Growing Body of Research Mental Health

New Jersey psychiatric practice points to a growing body of peer-reviewed studies linking rising temperatures to higher suicide risk

MOUNT LAUREL, NJ, UNITED STATES, July 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As much of the country experiences another summer of record-breaking heat, ANK Behavioral Health is drawing attention to a growing body of peer-reviewed research showing that rising temperatures are associated with increased suicide risk, a connection the practice says deserves more public awareness heading into the hottest months of the year.



Hot weather can affect more than your physical health. Take a moment to check in with yourself and those you care about.

A 2018 study published in *Nature Climate Change* by researchers at Stanford, UC Berkeley, and other institutions analyzed decades of mortality data across the United States and Mexico and found that suicide rates rose by roughly 0.7 percent in U.S. counties and 2.1 percent in Mexican municipalities for every 1°C increase in monthly average temperature. The same research group found comparable patterns of declining well-being in an analysis of hundreds of millions of social media posts during warmer periods.

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*Alyssa Killion, MSN, APN,
PMHNP-BC*

Subsequent research has reinforced the pattern across different populations and methods. A 2026 study in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* found that the link between summer heat and suicide is especially pronounced in young people, particularly those ages 15 to 24. A separate

2026 analysis of crisis hotline records found that suicide-related help-seeking rose sharply on unusually warm nights, with sleep disruption, social isolation, and reduced access to basic resources identified as likely contributing pathways. Regional studies, including one examining suicide rates across California's largest counties over a 20-year period, have found similar effects.

Researchers point to several compounding factors behind the pattern, including heat's disruption of sleep, its effects on mood-regulating brain chemistry, increased irritability and impulsivity in extreme heat, and the added strain that heat places on people already facing housing instability, limited access to air conditioning, or social isolation.

"This isn't about one hot day causing a crisis. It's a pattern that shows up again and again, across countries, across decades, and across totally different ways of measuring it," said Alyssa Killion, MSN, APN, PMHNP-BC, founder of ANK Behavioral Health. "Heat affects sleep, it affects brain chemistry, it affects impulse control. So when the temperature climbs, we should be paying just as much attention to mental health as we do to heat stroke."

"The takeaway for New Jersey families is simple: during a heat wave, check in on people the way you would during any other emergency," Killion said. "That goes for teenagers, older adults, anyone already struggling, and anyone without reliable access to air conditioning. A phone call or a text can make a real difference."

ANK Behavioral Health emphasizes that this research describes a population-level trend, not a prediction about any individual, and that most people experience uncomfortably hot weather without any effect on their mental health. The practice encourages anyone who notices a change



A simple call or text can make a difference. During periods of extreme heat, staying connected helps support mental well-being.



Rest, hydration, and meaningful connection are important ways to care for your mental health during the hottest days of the year.

in their mood, sleep, or ability to cope during periods of extreme heat to reach out for support, and encourages friends and family members to check in on those who may be more vulnerable, including older adults, people with existing mental health conditions, and those without reliable access to cooling.

ANK Behavioral Health offers comprehensive psychiatric evaluation and ongoing care by telehealth across New Jersey, with first appointments running 60 to 90 minutes to allow time for a full conversation about what a patient is experiencing. More information is available at ankbh.com.

If you or someone you know is struggling, help is available. Call or text 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, any time, day or night.

About ANK Behavioral Health

ANK Behavioral Health is a psychiatric care practice based in Mount Laurel, New Jersey, offering comprehensive psychiatric evaluation, medication management, and integrated psychotherapy through telehealth. Founded by Alyssa Killion, MSN, APN, PMHNP-BC, the practice has served New Jersey patients since 2012 with a focus on thorough evaluation, clear communication, and individualized care. ANK Behavioral Health accepts major insurance plans and offers telepsychiatry services statewide. More information is available at ankbh.com.

Media Contact

ANK Behavioral Health 1200 South Church St. Suite 14, Mount Laurel, NJ 08054 Phone: 856-372-1819 Email: [\[info@ankbh.com\]](mailto:info@ankbh.com) Website: ankbh.com

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"When temperatures increase, mental health risks can too." NPR, July 2, 2026.

Alyssa Killion, MSN, APN, PMHNP-BC

ANK Behavioral Health

+1 856-372-1819

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