Interpersonal strengths, like self-efficacy and spiritual well-being, have a protective influence on suicide-related outcomes for African American women exposed to childhood abuse.

Suicide resilience is a set of factors that protect an individual from engaging in suicide-related behaviors. In the current study, researchers explored the relationship between suicide resilience, childhood abuse, and interpersonal strength in 121 African American women who reported a suicide attempt and exposure to intimate partner violence in the past year.

Childhood abuse was negatively associated with interpersonal strength and suicide resilience. Interpersonal strengths, like self-efficacy and spiritual well-being, were positively associated with suicide resilience. Interpersonal strengths were a better positive predictor of suicide resilience than childhood abuse was a negative predictor of suicide resilience. When interpersonal strengths were accounted for, the relationship between suicide resilience and childhood abuse was no longer significant.

With a strengths-based approach to understanding suicide, this study suggests culturally informed, positive psychology interventions are likely to foster enhanced suicide resilience among African American women at risk for suicide.