

Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Toolkit



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SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH



September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. A time to remember those we have lost to suicide, support those who have experienced suicidal thoughts or attempts, and recognize the individuals, families, and communities affected by suicide. It is also an opportunity to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and share messages of hope, healing, and connection.



Within the month of September, National Suicide Prevention Week is observed and World Suicide Prevention Day will take place September 10. These observances remind us that open, compassionate conversations can help create communities where people feel seen, supported, and able to ask for help.

Throughout September, and all year, we can:

- Start the conversation by asking how someone is doing, listening without judgment, and making it safe to talk about mental health and suicide.
- Share hope by highlighting stories of healing, recovery, and people finding support during difficult times.
- Strengthen connection by helping people build relationships, access resources, and know they do not have to face life's challenges alone.



Suicide prevention is not the responsibility of one person, organization, or system. It takes all of us working together to build communities where everyone feels that they belong, support is available, and every life matters.



STUDENT LED ACTIVITIES

Kindness Clips

1. Identify key partners, set a date and time for the event.
2. Set up a "Kindness Clip" art station. Allow students to come and create their own clip with a kind message on it.
3. Students will walk around school "clipping" other people, sharing a positive message that they may need.

Materials Needed: Positive message examples, wooden clothes pins, markers

Chalk the Walk

1. Identify key partners, set a date and time for the event
2. Create list of positive messages and provide chalk for classrooms to use
3. Invite classrooms to write positive messages on the sidewalk for their classmates to see.

Materials Needed: Positive message examples, chalk

Suicide Awareness Walk

1. Identify key partners, set a date and time for the event.
2. Pick a path that will allow students/staff to complete the walk during time allotted.
3. Promote the walk during morning announcements the weeks preceding the event.
4. Decorate the path with positive messages and resources - could use chalk or other signage.
5. Optional: End the walk with an assembly about suicide prevention.

Materials needed: direction signs, chalk

*This event could also be made community wide.

Post-It Wall of Support

Create a visual representation of support for suicide prevention by building a Post-It-Note display.

1. Identify key partners, set a date and time for the event.
2. Identify a suitable space.
3. Visit classrooms and provide students with a post-it. Prompt students to answer "What is the best thing someone could say to you when you need support?"
4. Display Post-It responses - don't forget to include a crisis resource such as 988!

Materials needed: post-its, space to display, tape to make sure post-its stick.

Self-Care Stations

1. Identify key partners, set a date and time for the event.
2. Plan a variety of activities for students to try to help find self-care activities that will be beneficial to them.

- Self-Care Activity Ideas

- Calm & Reset
 - Box breathing cards
 - Guided mindfulness cards
 - "Take 60 seconds to notice..." grounding activity
 - Stretching cards/Mini yoga/stretch routine
- Creative
 - Coloring sheets or Doodle prompts
 - Make a positive affirmation card
 - Friendship bracelet station
 - Origami
- Mental Wellness
 - Positive affirmation jar — pick an encouraging message
 - "What I can control / what I can't control" activity
 - Gratitude cards/Write down one thing you're proud of
 - "Things that help me feel better" brainstorming card
 - Encouraging note-to-self cards
- Hands-On/Fidget
 - Fidget toys/Stress Balls
 - Kinetic sand/Play-Doh/modeling clay
 - Pipe-cleaner creations
 - Small puzzles/Mazes
- Move Your Body
 - 1-minute movement challenge
 - Stretch-and-breathe cards
 - "Shake it out" movement break or Balance challenge
 - Quick dance/movement cards
- Sensory
 - Headphones with calming music (if appropriate for the school setting)
 - Texture/sensory items
 - "What can you see, hear, feel?" grounding activity

3. Create a "Self-Care Passport." Give each student a little card with 5–6 categories: Breathe • Move • Create • Reflect • Play • Connect. They try one activity from each category and get a stamp/sticker when they do it. This makes the station feel more like an experience than a table full of handouts.

KINDNESS BOOKMARKS TOOLKIT

Join the RAKtivist community in spreading kindness by creating personalized kindness bookmarks and hiding them in public libraries and school libraries for random visitors to discover. **Let's share the joy of random acts of kindness with our community!**

1. Gather Supplies

Collect colorful paper or card stock, markers, pens, stickers, and any other decorative items you'd like to use.

*Make sure to use flat materials & avoid gems, beads, etc.

2. Design and Decorate

Get creative with designing your bookmarks! Write kindness messages or quotes, add colorful decorations, and make each bookmark unique and special.

*Find inspiration with [daily dose of kindness](#) and [kindness quotes](#).

3. Hide Your Bookmarks

Take your finished bookmarks to a school library, local libraries or bookstores. Hide them between the pages of books, on shelves, or in other unexpected places where visitors are likely to find them.

*Remember to ask permission before hiding.

4. Spread the Word

Share your kindness activity on social media or within your community to encourage others to participate. Invite friends, family, or classmates to join in creating and hiding bookmarks.

*Include #RAKtivist when sharing.

5. Spread Kindness

As people discover your hidden bookmarks, they'll be greeted with messages of kindness and encouragement, spreading positivity throughout the community.

6. Reflect and Share

Take a moment to reflect on the impact of your kindness activity. Share your experience with others and inspire them to continue spreading kindness by becoming part of the RAKtivist community.

7. Repeat

Consider making this activity a regular occurrence or participating in other acts of kindness throughout the year. Every small act of kindness makes a difference in the world.

**make
kindness
the norm.**
randomactsofkindness.org

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS FOUNDATION*

In a world where you can be anything, be kind!

—Clare Pooley

Share the joy with others and inspire them to spread kindness in their own way. Together, we can make kindness the norm in our communities by hiding kind notes for strangers to find and encouraging them to do the same. Note: please ask permission before placing kindness bookmarks in libraries.





TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Question, Persuade, Refer

Learn how to recognize warning signs, start a caring conversation, and connect someone who may be struggling with appropriate help and support. QPR provides simple, practical skills that can help someone take action.

Youth Mental Health First Aid

YMHA teaches adults how to recognize and respond to signs of mental health challenges in adolescents. Participants learn how to provide initial support and connect them with appropriate professional help.

Mental Health First Aid

MHFA teaches participants how to recognize signs and symptoms of mental health challenges, respond appropriately, and connect individuals with appropriate support and resources. Participants learn practical skills to provide initial help and support until professional assistance or additional resources can be accessed.

Natural Helpers of South Dakota

A peer-helping program that equips youth with the skills to recognize when a friend may be struggling and provide appropriate support. Participants learn effective listening, communication, problem-solving, and help-seeking skills while identifying trusted adults and resources they can turn to when a situation is beyond what they can handle alone.

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

ASIST is an interactive suicide intervention training that helps participants recognize when someone may be at risk for suicide and develop the skills to respond safely and effectively. Participants learn how to have a direct, caring conversation, provide immediate support, and develop a plan to help connect the person with appropriate resources and ongoing support.

Navigating Your Mental Wellness

A 1-hour presentation discussing the importance of self-care, how to know when you are running on empty, resources available, and how to safeguard your home.

To request the trainings above at no cost to your organization, email neprc@humanserviceagency.org.

Promotional Materials

Helpline Center Promotional Material

Help spread the word about the Helpline Center across South Dakota! Whether it's displaying wallet cards at your front desk, hanging posters in the breakroom or other areas, or any creative ways you come up with, Helpline will supply the materials. If you'd like to discuss additional promotion ideas or request larger quantities, please email marketing@helplinecenter.org.

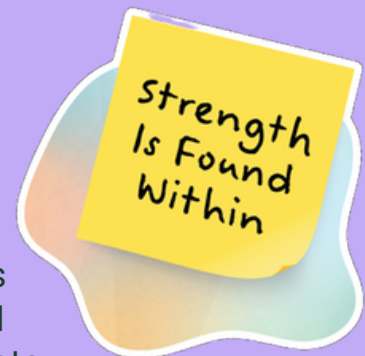


SD DOE Mental Health Poster Campaign

The South Dakota Department of Education is providing posters with helpful mental health information and resources for students, adults, and educators. Schools may print posters or digitally display them where the intended audiences may see them and utilize the information and resources. Posters are categorized by intended audience. However, posters may be utilized with younger and older grades, as well as with adults.

SD Behavioral Health

It's our mission to make conversations about mental health a little easier. Using free resources from SD Behavioral Health, you can encourage empathy and start the conversation around mental health in your organization, school or workplace. These materials are provided by the South Dakota Department of Social Services and are only available to South Dakota residents. Please allow up to 2 weeks processing time.



SD Suicide Prevention

The South Dakota Suicide Prevention (SDSP) website serves as a resource hub for those seeking help, resources, data and free suicide prevention training and materials. Please complete the following form to request campaign and other materials.



Resources

SD Behavioral Health

South Dakota Behavioral Health is dedicated to strengthening and supporting the behavioral health needs of children and adults through prevention, treatment, crisis care and recovery support services.



SD Suicide Prevention

A resource hub for those seeking help, resources, data and free suicide prevention training and materials

National Institute of Mental Health

Brochures and information sheets on topics such as anxiety, stress, depression, etc.

988

Call for support for Emotional Distress, Suicidal Thoughts, and Substance Use

211

Call for Information and Community Resources

911

Call for emergencies needing Medical, Fire, or Police

SD Statewide Family Engagement Center

The South Dakota Statewide Family Engagement Center (SFEC) unites students, families, schools, and communities together by focusing on learner needs. Helping Resources can be found on protective factors, warning signs, and talking with children about their mental health.

Community Mental Health Centers

Listing of SD Community Mental Health Centers. These centers are funded through the state of SD. Individuals who are concerned about the financial aspect of seeking help can potentially receive some financial assistance for getting help due to the sliding fee scale.

After a Suicide Tool Kit

This toolkit is designed to help schools respond immediately in the minutes, hours, and days after a suicide, as well as in the weeks and months it takes the school community to heal and move forward. Since significant numbers of high school-aged youth die by suicide across the United States every year, every school needs to be prepared to respond to such an event.



Classroom Empathy

Toolkits for elementary schools, middle schools and high schools that can be incorporated into lessons.

Mental Health Video Series Toolkits

Healthy Minds, Thriving Kids video series for elementary, middle and high schools from PBS Learning Media

NIMH Resources for Students and Educators

Provides learning resources for students and teachers about mental health and the brain. Includes videos, coloring books, hands-on quizzes and activities to help understand mental health challenges, promote emotional well-being and how to care for your own mental health.

Farm and Rural Stress Hotline:

1-800-691-4336

LGBTQ Support 24/7:

Call 1.866.488.7386 or text 678-678

K-12 Suicide Intervention Guide: Identifying Students at Risk and Responding to Crisis

This guide is designed to support schools in identifying and responding to students who are at risk for suicide or experiencing suicidal behaviors. Grounded in SPRC's Comprehensive Approach to Suicide Prevention, this actionable guide is intended to be completed by a multidisciplinary team, which may include school health and wellness staff, administrators, educators, and safety teams.

Northeast Prevention Resource Center

The NEPRC assists students, parents, educators, community coalitions and agencies with development and implementation of prevention programs surrounding the issues of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, mental health and suicide prevention. The NEPRC is one of four prevention resources centers in South Dakota. The NEPRC works to provide prevention resources, training and technical assistance through:

- Program development for schools and communities surrounding behavioral health issues
 - Training coordination, development, and promotion
 - Awareness campaigns and health promotion
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Glacial Lakes SAFE (suicide awareness for everyone)

Glacial Lakes SAFE is a collaborative coalition of mental health professionals, community members, and supportive local businesses dedicated to promoting mental wellness in the Glacial Lakes region surrounding Watertown, South Dakota. We offer free resources, educational materials, presentations, and trainings to support suicide prevention and mental health awareness in our communities. For more resources and information [click here](#)
