

Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Toolkit

SEPTEMBER 2022

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. While suicide prevention is important to address year-round, Suicide Prevention Awareness Month provides a dedicated time for people, organizations, and communities to join their voices to broadcast the message that suicide can be prevented, and healing is possible. Everyone has a role to play to save lives and create healthy and strong individuals, families, and communities. We can come together to reduce factors that increase the risk for suicidal thoughts and behavior, and increase the factors that help strengthen, support, and protect people from suicide.

Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit has been designed for, but is not limited to, people, service organizations, nonprofit organizations, businesses, local public health departments, faith-based organizations, and schools. We encourage you to edit the content to best suit your community.

How to use the Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Toolkit

This toolkit has been created to provide tools and resources to raise awareness around mental health and suicide prevention. This year's toolkit includes ideas and resources on what you can do throughout the month, information for social media posts, email, or newsletter content. You can also add images and graphics to enhance the visibility of your content. The themes for each week can be found below:

- Week 1- You Matter. Changing the Narrative on Mental Health and Suicide.
- Week 2- You Matter. Today and Every Day
- Week 3- You Matter. Supporting Others.
- Week 4- You Matter. Talk with Us.

Introduce the weekly theme in an email to staff or group members. We recommend adding images and graphics that tie into each theme.

Use these as talking points and share resources found within them. Consider using these key messages to develop an email to share with those you keep in touch with.

Share the social media posts each week. These can be shared on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, or an employee intranet site to name a few.

Plan to share as much or as little as your group needs or wants. Use the #YouMatterMN, so others can learn from what you are doing.

We want to hear from you

We will reach out in October to gather information and feedback about your outreach and impact using this toolkit. We ask you to keep track of the following: what content you used from the toolkit, where you shared the content, who you shared the content with, how you share the material and what platforms you used.

2022 SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH TOOLKIT

Your feedback will be instrumental in the development in future toolkits.

If you would like to submit immediately, please feel free to send your feedback by filling out the [Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Toolkit Survey](https://survey.vovici.com/se/56206EE33C571DE1) (<https://survey.vovici.com/se/56206EE33C571DE1>).

Ideas for Action During Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

1. Check out the Suicide Prevention Resource Center: [Suicide Prevention Month Ideas for Action](https://sprc.org/sites/default/files/SPM%20Ideas%20for%20Action%202022.pdf) (<https://sprc.org/sites/default/files/SPM%20Ideas%20for%20Action%202022.pdf>).
2. Draft a [proclamation for city and county governments to pass](https://sprc.org/sites/default/files/SPM%20Ideas%20for%20Action%202022.pdf) (<https://sprc.org/sites/default/files/SPM%20Ideas%20for%20Action%202022.pdf>).
3. Learning what to look for in individuals that have life challenges or suicidal experiences by attending a [Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/documents/suicidetrainings.pdf) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/documents/suicidetrainings.pdf>).
4. Initiate and spark conversation on your social media pages regarding suicide by accessing the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Website “social shareables”](https://afsp.org/social-shareables) (<https://afsp.org/social-shareables>) graphics and messaging.
5. Collaborate with local partners to light up bridges and/or buildings with suicide prevention month colors, teal and purple, during September.
6. Consider hosting a mental health promotion and suicide prevention awareness day for youth, adults, and the community.
7. Promote other programs within the community that encourage positive healthy activities and places for connection. A few ideas are included below:
 - a. Sharing local mental health resources through a resource fair.
 - b. Gather the community for a barbecue with family-friend's activities and resources.
 - c. Sponsor a fun run/walk.

Week 1: You Matter. Changing the Narrative on Mental Health and Suicide.

Key Message: We all have Mental Health, let's start talking about it!

Mental health is all around us, but often is misunderstood. We all have mental health, and it is important at all stages of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Our mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act every day. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

Talking about mental health and suicide can be an uncomfortable and uncertain topic that can bring up different feelings, beliefs, and attitudes for everyone. *Changing the Narrative on Mental Health and Suicide*, empowers conversations to start in the hopes to change perceptions of mental health towards hope and resilience.

Social Media Posts

- Having everyday conversations about our mental health allows people to know that they are not alone, and that help is available. However, talking about mental health can sometimes be uncomfortable. The [Roadmap to Mental Health](https://www.thementalhealthcoalition.org/mhcs-roadmap-to-mental-health/) (<https://www.thementalhealthcoalition.org/mhcs-roadmap-to-mental-health/>), developed by the Mental Health Coalition is a resource to help explain and provide language on what we mean when we say “mental health.” #YouMatterMN
- Changing the narrative of how we talk about mental health and suicide can decrease the risk of people experiencing struggles and increase the likelihood that they will seek help! This resource on [Safe Messaging Around Suicide](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/documents/suicidemessaging.pdf) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/documents/suicidemessaging.pdf>) will provide guidance on how to safely talk about mental health and suicide. #YouMatterMN
- Having conversations around mental health can sometimes be uncomfortable, but it can also make a big difference. Not sure where to start? Check out these tips and tools from [Seize the Awkward](https://seizetheawkward.org/conversation/start-the-conversation) (<https://seizetheawkward.org/conversation/start-the-conversation>) to help you start the conversation and what to do during and after the conversation. #YouMatterMN

Week 2: You Matter. Today and Every Day.

Key Message: There are things that we can do to support our own mental health.

We all experience tough days or even weeks due to physical, emotional, financial, or social problems. This means that sometimes we experience mental health struggles. When we experience struggle, it is important to learn how to listen to ourselves, body, feelings, and thoughts. Understanding how we are affected by life's stressors and struggles, will help us to identify when and how to reach out for help.

Social Media Posts

- Support your health by building your own resource toolkit. The [JED Foundation](https://jedfoundation.org/i-want-to-take-care-of-my-mental-health/) (<https://jedfoundation.org/i-want-to-take-care-of-my-mental-health/>) has resources related to specific feelings and experiences people struggle with. Check it out and fill up your resource toolkit with new knowledge and coping strategies. #YouMatterMN
- Taking a [mental health screening](https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/) (<https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/>) is one of the quickest and easiest ways to determine whether you are experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition. Mental health conditions are treatable, and healing is possible. #YouMatterMN
- You don't have to go through struggles on your own. The 988 [Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](https://988lifeline.org/help-yourself/) (<https://988lifeline.org/help-yourself/>) has resources available to help yourself find hope, help and healing no matter your level of need. #YouMatterMN.

September 10: World Suicide Prevention Awareness Day

Key Message: Creating hope through action.

Today is World Suicide Prevention Day, an awareness day observed on the 10th of September every year.

Take a moment to connect and reach out to someone who may need help. A simple phone call, message, or hug can go a long way. Encourage understanding, changing the way we talk about suicide by promoting hope can create compassion for those in need to feel more comfortable asking for help.

Sharing personal experiences, insights, and stories can be extremely powerful in helping others understand suicide better, and for individuals to reach out themselves. If you or someone you know are having thoughts of suicide, know there is hope and help is available.

By countering myths and fear with information and action, we are changing the conversation about suicide. We all have a role to play in suicide prevention, not only during the month of September but all year long. #YouMatterMN

Social Media Posts

- The International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) together with the National Council for Suicide Prevention (NSCP) has launched the [Take 5 to Save Lives Campaign](https://www.take5tosavelives.org/) (<https://www.take5tosavelives.org/>). The campaign encourages everyone to complete action steps in five themes: Learn, Know, Do, Talk, and Share. Create hope through action and use the Take 5 to Save Lives toolkit to acknowledge World Suicide Prevention Day 2022. #YouMatterMN
- Together, we are changing the conversation about suicide by countering myths and fear with information and action steps everyone can take. We all have a role to play in suicide prevention, not only during the World Suicide Prevention Day but all year long. To learn more, visit the National Action Alliance's [#BeThere page](https://theactionalliance.org/bethere) (<https://theactionalliance.org/bethere>). #YouMatterMN

Week 3: You Matter. Support Others.

Key Message: Supporting others that may need help.

We are all in a unique position to notice when our friends, family, and colleagues are having a hard time. If you are concerned about someone in your life, learn more about the ways you can get help and discover tools you can use today to have a conversation about mental health and suicide.

Social Media Posts.

- If someone you know is struggling emotionally or having a hard time, you can be the difference in getting them the help that they need. The 988 [Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](https://988lifeline.org/help-someone-else/) (<https://988lifeline.org/help-someone-else/>) has resources on some warning signs that may help you determine if they need help, and resources on how you can help them. #YouMatterMN.
- Offering support is one of the best things that we can do to help friends, family, and colleagues through difficult times. However, it can sometimes feel uncomfortable, daunting, or just plain awkward. [The Roadmap to Friends Supporting Friends](https://www.thementalhealthcoalition.org/friends-supporting-friends-visible/) (<https://www.thementalhealthcoalition.org/friends-supporting-friends-visible/>) that gives ideas on what support can look like, how to offer support, and where to begin. #YouMatterMN
- If you think someone is thinking about suicide, assume you are the only one who will reach out. The [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](https://afsp.org/when-someone-is-at-risk) (<https://afsp.org/when-someone-is-at-risk>) has resources available on what to do when someone is at risk and ideas on how to manage mental health conditions. #YouMatterMN

Week 4: You Matter. Talk with Us.

Key Messages: If you, or someone you know, is in a mental health crisis or at risk of suicide call or text 988.

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline offers 24/7 access to trained crisis counselors who can help people experiencing mental health related distress. That could be: thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotion distress.
- People can call or text [988](#) or chat [988lifeline.org](#) for themselves or if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.
- 988 serves as a universal entry point so that no matter where you live, you can reach a trained crisis counselor who can help.
- There is hope. The 988 Lifeline helps people overcome suicidal crisis or mental health related distress every day.
- Supporting mental health is a critical public health need, and one of the best ways we can do that is to make it as easy as possible for people to get the help they need when they need it.
- To reach the Veterans Crisis Line, dial 988 and press 1. Calls will route to the same trained Veterans Crisis Line responders. The Veterans Crisis Line will still be available by chat ([VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](#)) and text ([838255](#)).

Potential Handouts/Resources

- [988 Fact Sheet \(\)](#)
- [988 printable materials from SAMHSA \(\)](#) – Printable materials include wallet cards and posters, available in English and Spanish.

Social Media Quick Posts

988 social media sharables are available through the [988 SAMHSA webpage \(\)](#) for download.

- Simply calling or texting 988 or chatting 988Lifeline.org will connect you to compassionate care and support for mental health-related distress. #YouMatterMN #988Lifeline
- If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide or experiencing a mental health or substance, use crisis, 988 provides 24/7 connection to confidential support. There is Hope. Just call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org #YouMatterMN #988Lifeline
- If you or someone you know is struggling or needs support now, call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org You are not alone. #YouMatterMN #988Lifeline
- When you're struggling and in crisis and text 988, your trained counselor will listen, support, and share resources. #YouMatterMN #988Lifeline

Social Media video clips (<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988/partner-toolkit/social-media-shareables>) that can be shared. Video clips are available for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter posts. Includes video with and without audio.

- What happens when I call 988?
- What happens when I text 988?
- What happens when I chat?

Minnesota Department of Health
Suicide Prevention Unit
85 East 7th Place
PO Box 64882
Saint Paul, MN 55164-0882
651-201-5000
health.suicideprev.MDH@state.mn.us
www.health.state.mn.us

To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5400

Appendix

Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Proclamation

A Proclamation is something that municipalities can use to start the conversation about proactive suicide prevention and mental health awareness in their community. This can help raise awareness of how individuals can help support those around them and share local resources of where individuals can go for help, when life is challenging. Below is some draft language that can be shared with local cities and counties in helping develop a proclamation for their continuants.

- WHEREAS: September is known as National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month which helps promote resources and awareness around the issues of suicide prevention. It teaches how to help others and how to talk about suicide without increasing the risk of harm; and
- WHEREAS: Suicidal thoughts can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, race, orientation, income level, religion, or background; and
- WHEREAS: According to the Minnesota Department of Health more than 700 lives were lost to suicide in 2020.
- WHEREAS: Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death in Minnesota and the second leading cause of death among people from age 10 to 24 (source: Minnesota Department of Health); and
- WHEREAS: Everyone in our community can play a role in preventing suicide, we all need the occasional reminder that we are all silently fighting our own battles. A simple phone call, message, or hug can go a long way towards helping someone realize suicide is not the answer; and
- WHEREAS: Support is available during a mental health crisis through the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988 by call, text or chat; and
- WHEREAS: While there is no single cause of suicide, the Minnesota State Suicide Prevention Plan supports healthy and empowered individuals, families, and communities; coordinates effective programs; promotes suicide prevention as a core component of health care services; increases the timeliness and usefulness of data systems related to suicide; and sustains suicide prevention efforts; and
- WHEREAS: We can all help to prevent suicide; You Matter.