Minnesota Department of Health

# Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Email Toolkit

September 2021

## Email/Newsletter Content

*Emails and newsletter content can be shared throughout an organization to provide information on suicide awareness prevention month.*

*We encourage you to edit the content to best suite your community. You can also add images and graphics to enhance the visibility of your content.*

Week 1 – September 6 – 10: Share crisis resources

**Subject: Mental Health Crisis services are available in Minnesota**

Mental health crisis services are available 24/7 for all adults and children across Minnesota. If you’re in crisis, help is available and there are options to help you cope. Support is available if someone you know is thinking of suicide.

**Crisis Resources:**

If you, or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 911.

1. [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK(8255) (https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/)](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/) – The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.
2. [State Mobile Crisis Services (https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/people-with-disabilities/health-care/childrens-mental-health/resources/crisis-contacts.jsp)](https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/people-with-disabilities/health-care/childrens-mental-health/resources/crisis-contacts.jsp) – Every county in Minnesota provides Mobile Crisis Services for both children and adults that may be experiencing suicidal feelings or mental health crisis. Crisis services are available within each county 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. County crisis teams are available for phone support as well as in-person crisis help.
3. [Crisis Text Line (https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/adult-mental-health/crisis-text-line/)](https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/adult-mental-health/crisis-text-line/) - Text MN to 741741. The Crisis Text Line provides free crisis support 24/7 for any crisis.

September 10: World Suicide Prevention Awareness Day

**Subject: Remember those lost to suicide**

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 towards helping someone realize suicide is not the answer. Encourage understanding, changing the way we talk about suicide by promoting hope can create a more compassionate society where those in need feel more comfortable with seeking help.

Sharing personal experiences, insights, and stories of people with lived experience of suicide can be extremely powerful in helping others understand suicide better and encourage people to reach into support someone, 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.

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK(8255)](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/)

[Crisis Text Line](https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/adult-mental-health/crisis-text-line/) - Text MN to 741741.

### Week 2 – September 13 – 17: Education and awareness

**Subject: Educate yourself to prevent suicide**

Suicide is complex and there is no single cause. Understanding the issue of suicide, how to talk about it and what the warning signs are can help us prevent suicide in Minnesota.

**Learn about safe messaging**

The way we talk about mental health, mental illness, and suicide shapes the way we feel about the issue. Use safe messaging to talk about suicide and mental health to support well-being and prevents suicide.

Talking about suicide carelessly can increase the risk of a person already at risk of suicide. But talking about it safely can help save a life.

Check out [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) for information on safe messaging.

**Know the warning signs and take action**

Conditions such as mental illness, substance use, painful losses, exposure to violence, and social isolation can all be contributing factors.

**You can help prevent suicide by knowing the warning signs.**

* Talking about wanting to die
* Looking for a way to kill oneself
* Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose
* Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
* Talking about being a burden to others
* Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
* Acting anxious, agitated or recklessly
* Sleeping too little or too much
* Withdrawing or feeling isolated
* Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
* Displaying extreme mood swings

**If you are concerned someone is at risk for suicide:**

* Ask them if they are thinking about killing themselves. Research shows that asking directly does not put the idea in their head or make it more likely that they will attempt suicide.
* Stay with the person; do not leave them alone.
* Remove any firearms, alcohol, drugs, or sharp objects that could be used in a suicide attempt.
* Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for support and local resources.
* Take the person to an emergency room or seek help from a medical or mental health professional.

See more at [Everyone Plays a Role in Preventing Suicide (https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/basics/index.html)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/basics/index.html).

Week 3 – September 20 – 24: Know the impact

Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death in Minnesota and tenth nationally. Based on preliminary data, 723 Minnesota residents died by suicide in 2020, which is lower than the 830 suicide deaths recorded in 2019.

Sharing how much suicide impacts Minnesota communities can help us prevent it. Together, we can continue to decrease suicides in Minnesota.

View MDH’s latest data report:[**Minnesota Suicide Mortality, Preliminary 2020 Report** (https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/documents/2020prelimsuicidedata.pdf)](file:///C:\Users\anders2\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Word\Minnesota%20Suicide%20Mortality,%20Preliminary%202020%20Report%20(https:\www.health.state.mn.us\communities\suicide\documents\2020prelimsuicidedata.pdf))

The [**Youth Suicide and Mental Health Dashboard** (https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/data/youth/index.html)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/data/youth/index.html) provides an overview of the data available for suicide and mental health. Youth is defined as ages 13-19, or data from the Minnesota Student Survey.

Find more suicide data for Minnesota at [MDH Suicide Prevention Data and Reports (https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/data/suicidedata.html)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/data/suicidedata.html).

**How to talk about suicide**

The way we talk about suicide can impact the way we think and feel about the issue. If you are worried that someone might be having thoughts of suicide, ask them openly and directly “are you having thoughts of suicide?" Asking someone openly and directly, if they are having thoughts of suicide, this let’s them know you care and does not put the idea of suicide in their head.

Tips on starting the conversation, asking the questions and how to respond.

* If you observe signs or behaviors that worry you, prepare yourself to ask the question. Become familiar with the support resources and crisis lines in your community.
* Take a deep breath, acknowledge your own feelings and center yourself to have the conversation.
* Create a safe place that provides comfort and safety away from distractions.
* Thank them for sitting down with you and share your observation that are causing you concern. Start with, “I’ve noticed …"
* Ask open-ended questions “I’d like to understand more about what you’re going through. Can you tell me more?” Practice active listening. Avoid advice-giving and problem-solving.
* When asking the person if they are thinking about suicide, be direct but ask the question with empathy and compassion. “Sometimes when emotional pain is so intense, people think about suicide. Are you thinking about suicide?”
* Observe nonverbal cues, such as body language. If the person says “no” when asked if they are thinking about suicide but seem defensive or avoid eye contact, or their response is not clear, ask follow-up questions.
* If they answer yes, thank them for telling you and help connect them with crisis services in your area.
* Follow up. Regardless of how the conversation ended, reconnecting with that person can provide continued support. For more information on how to talk to someone about suicide visit: [How to Ask Someone About Suicide | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness (https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/September-2019/How-to-Ask-Someone-About-Suicide](https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/September-2019/How-to-Ask-Someone-About-Suicide))

**Safety planning**

A safety plan is a written list of coping strategies and resources to support someone who might need extra mental health support, or might be at high risk of suicide. Having a safety plan can provide life-saving guidance in a crisis. To get started making your own plan, check out this [Patient Safety Plan Template (https://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/resource-program/Brown\_StanleySafetyPlanTemplate.pdf)](https://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/resource-program/Brown_StanleySafetyPlanTemplate.pdf)

### Week 4 – September 27 – October 1: Take care of your mental health

Everyone has mental health and well-being, whether or not we are aware of it. Taking care of your mental health and well-being can improve or maintain your quality of life. Maintaining mental wellness helps us reach our maximum abilities, cope with day-to-day stress, create meaningful relationships, and contribute to our family and community. Small steps towards mental wellness can help improve how we feel and function.

**Everyday tools and tips**

Taking care of your mental well-being can be as simple as calling a friend, practicing yoga, or walking in nature. These [mental well-being everyday tips (https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/communities/mentalhealth/quickcardmwb.pdf)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/communities/mentalhealth/quickcardmwb.pdf) can help spark ideas of ways you can maintain your mental health.

**Wellness Plans**

A personalized wellness Plan serves as a guide to reach your mental health and wellness goals. This plan can include mental and physical health, but also spiritual, financial, social, emotional and occupational elements. A holistic approach to wellness can create a path that is right for you, while building resiliency and empowerment. Here are some examples to help get started.

* [My Wellness Plan (https://www.mcohio.org/departments/human\_resources/mcbenefits/docs/Optum\_Wellness\_Wheel\_Activity\_Goals.pdf)](https://www.mcohio.org/departments/human_resources/mcbenefits/docs/Optum_Wellness_Wheel_Activity_Goals.pdf)
* [Creating a Healthier Life (https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma16-4958.pdf)](https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma16-4958.pdf)

**Supporting Mental Health During COVID-19**

Many people experienced increased stress and anxiety throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to be gentle with yourself and others, and to take steps to support both your own and your family's mental well-being in times of heightened stress. Consider these tips for [supporting your mental well-being during the COVID-19 (https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/support.html)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/support.html).

**Connection**

Strong social connections can help protect us, and others, from stress. Check in with people and let them know you are thinking about them. Caring Contacts are a simple but effective tool in preventing suicide. Caring contacts are messages of support to show someone that you care about their well-being. Letting a person know: "I hope you’re OK and I’m here. I’m thinking about you” can help people stay connected.

Visit Caring Contacts (https://zerosuicide.edc.org/sites/default/files/nowmmattersnow.pdf) for more ideas on sharing support: [NowMattersNow Caring Contacts (https://zerosuicide.edc.org/resources/resource-database/nowmattersnow-caring-contacts)](file:///C:\Users\anders2\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Word\NowMattersNow%20Caring%20Contacts%20(https:\zerosuicide.edc.org\resources\resource-database\nowmattersnow-caring-contacts))

## Specialty resources for communities at risk

Not all communities are equally affected by suicide, and several resources are here to support communities at increased risk. Please feel free to add these resources, and others, to your messages if they will help the community you serve.

### American Indians

* [Suicide Prevention – Indian Health Service (https://www.ihs.gov/suicideprevention/)](https://www.ihs.gov/suicideprevention/)
* [Preventing Suicide by American Indians (https://store.samhsa.gov/product/To-Live-To-See-the-Great-Day-That-Dawns-Preventing-Suicide-by-American-Indian-and-Alaska-Native-Youth-and-Young-Adults/SMA10-4480)](https://store.samhsa.gov/product/To-Live-To-See-the-Great-Day-That-Dawns-Preventing-Suicide-by-American-Indian-and-Alaska-Native-Youth-and-Young-Adults/SMA10-4480)

### LGBTQ+ Community

* [The Trevor Project — Saving Young LGBTQ Lives (https://www.thetrevorproject.org/)](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/)
* [Trans Lifeline – for the trans community, by the trans community (https://translifeline.org/)](https://translifeline.org/)
* [Mental Health and the LGBTQ Community Stats (https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/LGBTQ\_MentalHealth\_OnePager.pdf)](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/LGBTQ_MentalHealth_OnePager.pdf)
* [It Gets Better Project – uplift, empower, and connect LGBTQ+ youth around the globe (https://itgetsbetter.org/)](https://itgetsbetter.org/)

### Veterans

* [Suicide Prevention - Mental Health (https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\_prevention/)](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/)
* [Suicide Prevention – Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (https://mn.gov/mdva/resources/veteransuicideprevention/)](https://mn.gov/mdva/resources/veteransuicideprevention/)

### Agriculture Workers/Farmers/Ranchers

Minnesota Farm & Rural Helpline: 1-833-600-2670

The Farm & Rural Helpline provides free and confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This call center is located in Minnesota. Calls are answered by trained staff and volunteers. If you or someone you know is struggling with stress, anxiety, depression, or suicidal thoughts – call.

For more information: [Coping with Farm and Rural Stress (https://www.mda.state.mn.us/about/mnfarmerstress)](https://www.mda.state.mn.us/about/mnfarmerstress)

## Thank you!

Thank you for participating in Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and sharing and promoting messages around suicide prevention. For more ideas on key messages, posts, and more, visit [Suicide Prevention - Minnesota Department of Health (https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/index.html)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/index.html)

## Additional Resources

* [Minnesota Department of Health Suicide Prevention Unit (https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/index.html)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/index.html)
* [Minnesota Department of Health Mental Health Promotion (https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/index.html)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/index.html)
* [National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) (https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Suicide-Prevention-Awareness-Month)](https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Suicide-Prevention-Awareness-Month)
* [NAMI It’s Okay to Talk About Suicide (https://nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/Infographics/NAMI\_Suicide\_2020\_FINAL.pdf)](https://nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/Infographics/NAMI_Suicide_2020_FINAL.pdf)
* [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (https://www.samhsa.gov/suicide)](https://www.samhsa.gov/suicide)
* [Suicide Prevention Resource Center (https://www.sprc.org/)](https://www.sprc.org/)

Minnesota Department of Health

Suicide Prevention Unit

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