

Suicide Prevention Month Communication Toolkit

September is Suicide Prevention Month. This document outlines the key themes, takeaways, and messages that any Washington State agency or partner organization can use to raise awareness of resources and help available to those who are struggling.

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Principles of this toolkit

- Any Washington State agency or partner organization is free to use some or all elements of this plan to promote suicide prevention month.
- Messaging should promote a positive narrative, avoid negative or unsafe language/imagery
- Messaging should point to state and national resources
- Messaging should leverage the work of the existing campaign Together for Mental Health. Use the hashtags #Suicide Prevention or #Together4MH.

Goals of this toolkit

- Ensure coordinated messaging for Suicide Prevention Month
- Promote help-seeking
- People understand and recognize warning signs
- Provide resources to build coping skills and resiliency
- Be inclusive

Key messages

- Most people who experience suicide ideation get help and move back into a place of wellness.
- If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, call or text 988 or go directly to your nearest emergency department.
- If you are immediately concerned about yourself or a friend, call or text 988. These services are free, confidential, and available in the USA 24/7.
- Everyone struggles at times, but if a problem is lasting too long, is too intense or feels like more than you can handle, reach out for help. Death may seem as if it is the only way out, but remember that the vast majority of people return to a place of wellness.
- It's important to learn the warning signs of suicide, self-harm and substance misuse.
- It's ok to ask for help –. Everyone needs help from time to time, and if you or a friend is struggling, you should reach out to talk to someone right away.
- Trust your gut – if you're worried about yourself or a friend, take action and get help. You don't have to know what is wrong-just that they're in trouble or struggling.
- Look for meaningful changes in behavior and personality, or a shift in emotional expression (very teary, laughing even when things aren't funny, etc.) The changes may be positive or negative. Any unexpected change or shift can be a signal.
- If you have a mental health provider, reach out.
- Be direct with your friends – tell them you're worried and why, ask them how they're feeling and offer to reach out to a professional and/or family member with them or for them.
- It is ok to ask someone directly if they've been feeling like they want to hurt themselves or thinking about suicide.

Social media: messages and themes

Images to pair with posts can be found at the Suicide Prevention Lifeline [website](#), or in most cases the image will pull directly from the website in the link preview.

September 10: World Suicide Prevention Day
Today is World Suicide Prevention Day. It's a time to remember those affected by suicide, to raise awareness, and to focus efforts on directing treatment to those who need it most. #WorldSuicidePreventionDay #SuicidePreventionMonth
 A banner for World Suicide Prevention Day. On the left is a yellow and orange ribbon icon. The text reads "World Suicide Prevention Day" in white, "Creating Hope Through Action" in yellow, and "September 10" in white on an orange background.
Theme: 988 suicide and crisis lifeline
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 is confidential, free, and available 24/7/365.
988 is available to everyone. No matter where you live in the United States, you can reach a trained crisis counselor who can help.
Access to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is available through every land line, cell phone, and voice-over internet devices in the United States.
988 services are available in Spanish, along with interpretation services in over 250 languages.
The 988 dialing code is available for call, text, and chat as of July 16, 2022. The ten-digit NSPL number, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), is still active along with 988.
In the coming weeks, Washington will launch the Native and Strong Lifeline, dedicated to serving American Indian and Alaska Native individuals who call 988. The Native and Strong Lifeline will work in partnership with the Washington Indian Behavioral Health Hub to identify resources and follow-up for those contacting 988. For additional resources, please see NativeAndStrong.org and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline .
Learn about what happens when you call 988.
Theme: Know the Signs
Everyone can learn what to do to save a life from suicide. Know the signs, find the words, and reach out. https://bit.ly/3yXgbTZ
Pain isn't always obvious. That's why we need to know the warnings signs for suicide. Encourage your friends and family to get educated about suicide prevention. https://bit.ly/3yXgbTZ
Sometimes anger and anxiety can be a sign of stress or mental illness. Know the signs. https://bit.ly/3yXgbTZ

Substance misuse is a sign someone may be experiencing mental illness or thoughts of suicide. Know the signs. https://bit.ly/3yXgbTZ
Do you know the warning signs for suicide? Learn what to look for and how to help: https://bit.ly/3yXgbTZ
Theme: Find the words / Be the one to...
Learn to ask the question “Are you thinking about suicide?” and other steps to saving a life: https://www.suicideispreventable.org
If someone tells you that they are thinking about suicide, act immediately and don’t leave them by themselves. Call 911 or 988 in the event of an emergency. Even if it’s not an emergency, get them help right away. The suicide and crisis lifeline network is available 24/7: https://bit.ly/3sotf2l
Trust your instincts – if you are concerned about someone, don’t hesitate to speak up, or ask them directly about it. https://www.suicideispreventable.org/
Sometimes we know people need help, but don’t know how to start the conversation. Find the words at www.suicideispreventable.org
If you’re worried that someone in your life may be suicidal, you can use the Suicide Prevention Lifeline 5 steps to help someone that may be in crisis: www.bethe1to.com
Theme: Reach out
Did you know crisis lines are there for helpers too? If you are concerned about a loved one and don’t know what to do, they can help. Call or text the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988 or chat online: https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org
If you’ve lost someone to suicide, you are not alone. Find a survivors’ group in your area: https://www.suicideispreventable.org
Together we have the power to make a difference. The power to save a life. https://www.suicideispreventable.org
Concerned about someone? Visit www.suicideispreventable.org for resources in your county.
You don’t have to be in crisis to call a hotline. Sometimes you just need to talk. If you need help call or text the Lifeline at 988 or chat online: https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org
Theme: Connect
Make your voice count. Engage in dialog about suicide prevention at www.yourvoicecounts.org
If you are worried about someone on social media, you can contact safety teams, who will reach out to connect the user with the help they need. https://bit.ly/3CU4ksg
Be an ally to people with mental health conditions. Get tested for stigma at https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Pledge-to-Be-StigmaFree
Mental illness affects millions of Americans. You are not alone. Sharing your story can help others. Learn more: https://www.nami.org/Personal-Stories/You-Are-Not-Along
LGBTQ+
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.
The Trevor Support Center is a place where LGBTQ+ youth and their allies can find answers and explore resources on topics like coming out, healthy relationships, homelessness and mental health. https://www.thetrevorproject.org
The LGBTQ+ community is diverse and strong but may be disproportionately at-risk for suicidal feelings. Check out stories of hope and recovery to learn how LGBTQ+ people have coped during hard times. https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/lgbtq/

Be an active part of your LGBTQ+ loved ones' support systems. If they show any warning signs for suicide, be direct. Tell them it's OK to talk and practice active listening techniques.

<https://bit.ly/37NSZvw>

Strong family bonds, safe schools and support from caring adults can all protect LGBTQ youth from depression and suicide. Learn more about how you can provide support: <https://bit.ly/3sqrlsr>

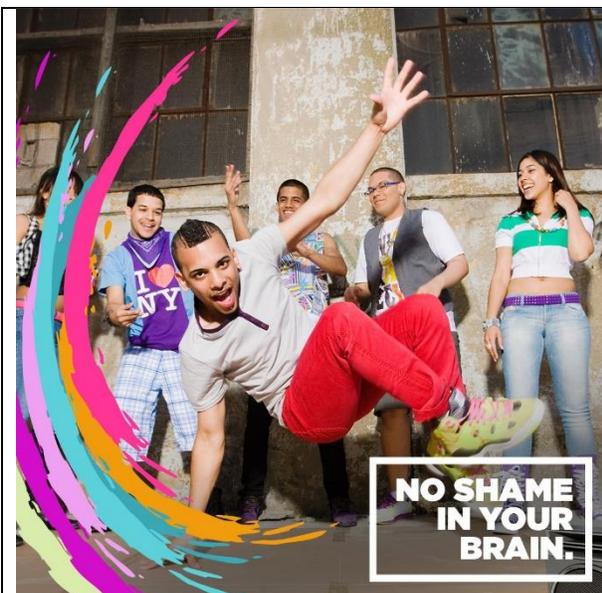
Have a step-by-step plan ready for if or when you feel depressed, suicidal, or in crisis, so you can start at step one and continue through the steps until you feel safe. Learn more ways you can help yourself:

<https://bit.ly/3iQvb0g>

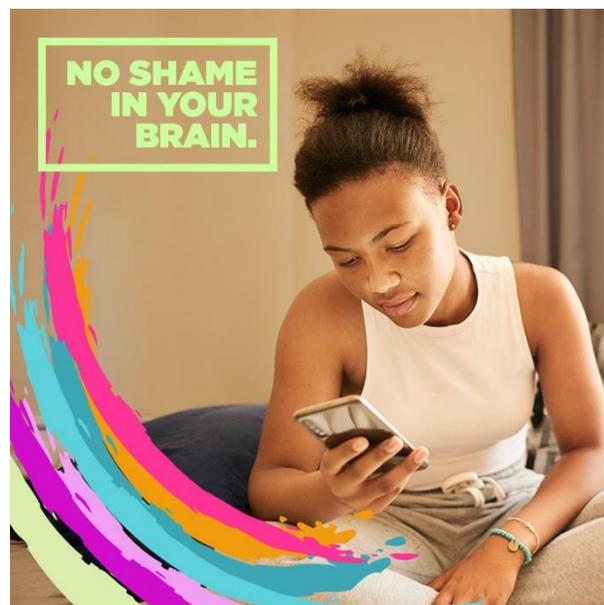
If you have an LGBTQ+ friend or family member who may be thinking about suicide, it's SO important that they know you're there for them. Get tips on what to look for and free resources to guide the conversation at [TheTrevorProject.org/CARE](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/CARE). #NoShameinYourBrain



You love who you love and what you love, and you want to share it with the world. Love yourself just as much. If you feel anxious, depressed, or just not okay, reach out. For free, confidential support from a trained teen, call or text (866) 833-6546 or visit [TeenLink.org](https://www.teenlink.org). #NoShameinYourBrain



If you identify as LGBTQ+ and are struggling with your mental health, help is available! Reach out to @trevorproject. #NoShameinYourBrain #SuicidePreventionMonth



Veterans

People can call or text [988](tel:988) or chat 988lifeline.org for themselves or if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.

Check out the Department of Veterans Affairs [Suicide prevention toolkit](#).

Talk to other veterans who have gone through the same kind of trauma that you have.

<https://bit.ly/3ma8Blr>

Is there a veteran or service member in your life? Check in with them. If they show any warning signs for suicide, be direct. Tell them they can talk to you. Practice active listening techniques and let them talk without judgment. <https://bit.ly/37NSZvw>

Not all wounds from war can be seen. Make connections with stories from veterans.

<http://bit.ly/12H3TwM>.

Don't be afraid to let your friends know what you need; they want to help. You can also reach out to confidential 24/7 services like the Veterans Crisis Line: <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>

Veterans have been trained to carry heavy stuff, but you don't need to go through it alone.

<https://www.va.gov/reach/lethal-means/>

American Indian / Alaska Native

People can call or text [988](https://www.988lifeline.org) or chat [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org) for themselves or if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.

Join We R Native in supporting #SuicidePreventionMonth. Spread the word that suicide CAN BE PREVENTED. To get help or give help, call or text 988.

Depression and suicide affect people of all ages and populations, but Native American and Alaskan Native populations can be at a higher risk. If you're struggling, the Lifeline is available to help, 24/7.

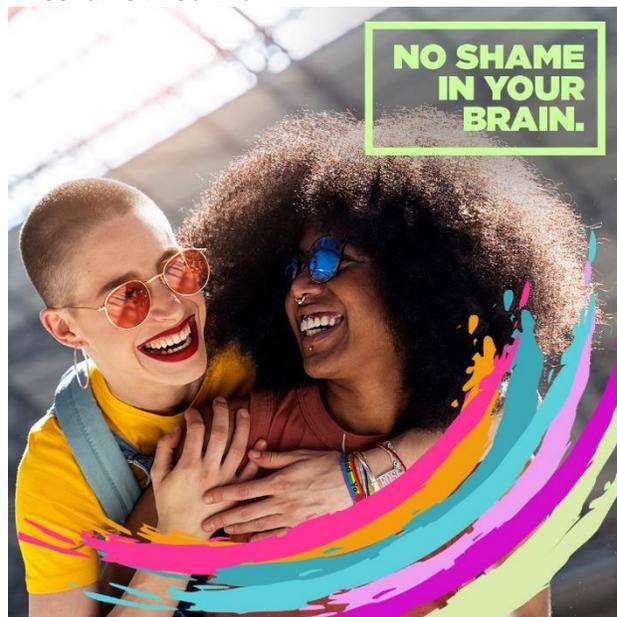
<https://bit.ly/3sqxp9N>

By paying attention to warning signs and connecting with family, friends and our culture, we may be able to prevent a death. <https://bit.ly/3xXWHxj>

If your friend has mentioned suicide, tell someone who can help. Learn what to do when your friend is talking about suicide: <https://bit.ly/3j0Dh6V>

Silence isn't strength. Don't keep suicidal feelings to yourself. Lean on your support network, find a therapist or a support group, or get in touch with the Lifeline: <https://bit.ly/3sotf2l>

You talk to your friends about E-V-E-R-Y-T-H-I-N-G. They know the REAL you. Except maybe when you're down. You keep a lot of those feelings to yourself. Be the REAL REAL you with your friends. They care, they're listening, and they probably feel the same sometimes. And if you need help, get free, confidential support from a trained teen by calling or texting (866)833-6546 or visiting [TeenLink.org](https://www.teenlink.org). #NoShameinYourBrain



You text. Constantly. To everyone – your friends, your family, even the pizza delivery person. Well, we have one more # for you to text. If you are dealing with difficult feelings like depression or anxiety, there's free, confidential resources to help. OVER TEXT. So, if you're

down, feeling stressed, or just not okay, call or text(866)833-6546 or visitTeenLink.org.
#NoShameinYourBrain



En Español

La depresión y pensamientos suicidas pueden afectar a cualquier persona, sin importar su edad. A través de una conversación honesta y brindando apoyo a los jóvenes que lo necesitan, podemos prevenir los suicidios y salvar vidas. Reconozca las señales, escuche, dialogue y busque ayuda.
<https://www.elsuicidioesprevenible.org/>

Si usted está preocupado por un amigo o familiar que está pasando por una crisis o que está mostrando las señales de advertencia sobre el suicidio, busque ayuda lo más pronto posible. Servicios gratuitos y confidenciales disponibles a <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/en-espanol/>

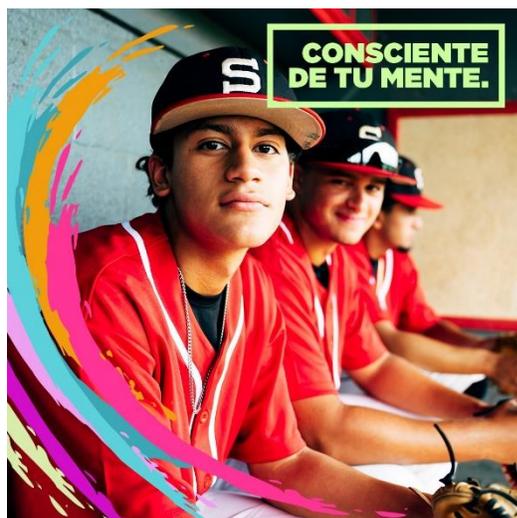
La pandemia nos ha afectado profundamente y en muchos aspectos de la vida. Si estás luchando con tu salud mental o estás contemplando el suicidio, pide ayuda. <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/en-espanol/>

Tú hablas con tus amigas de T-O-D-O. Ellas te conocen DE VERDAD. Menos cuando estás desanimada. Muchos de esos sentimientos no se los cuentas a nadie. Sé AUTÉNTICA con tus amigas. A ellas les importas, ellas te escuchan y seguro que a veces se sienten igual que tú. Y si necesitas ayuda, puedes recibir apoyo confidencial y gratuito. Simplemente llama o textea al (866)833-6546 o visita TeenLink.org.
#ConscienteDeTuMente



Tú texteas. A todas horas. A todo el mundo: a tus amigos, a tu familia, hasta al repartidor de pizza. Aquí tienes otro # más adonde textear. Si estás lidiando con sentimientos complejos, como depresión o ansiedad, hay recursos gratuitos y confidenciales que te ayudarán. POR TEXTO. Si estás desanimado, estresado o si no te sientes bien, llama o textea al (866)833-6546 o visita [TeenLink.org](https://www.teenlink.org).

#ConscienteDeTuMente



Amas a quien amas y lo que amas, y quieres compartirlo con el mundo entero.

El amor propio también importa. Si sientes ansiedad, depresión, o no te sientes bien, pide ayuda. Para recibir apoyo confidencial y gratuito, llama o textea al (866) 833-6546 o visita [TeenLink.org](https://www.teenlink.org).

#ConscienteDeTuMente



Youth and parents

The [You Can campaign](#) supports and affirms how young people are feeling, encourages healthy ways to cope, and provides resources for those who need more help. Visit [You Can's toolkit](#) (PW: Prevention and Education) for organic social media content related to suicide prevention month.

Sometimes your struggle can be underestimated because of your age. But we hear you, and help is available. <https://bit.ly/2W4aPYI>

Talking with young people about suicide won't put the idea in their heads. If you see warning signs, be caring and seek help. <https://bit.ly/3yXgbTZ>

Is your gut telling you to be worried because your child has withdrawn from you or their friends, become more anxious, or on edge? Seek help now. <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

Love and friendship are all about respect. Toxic or unhealthy relationships can negatively affect you. Whether you're dating or building new friendships, remember your rights. If you're being bullied, help is available: <https://www.stopbullying.gov>

Suicide is preventable, and you don't have to be a professional to help. Learn how by watching the "Saves Lives Suicide Prevention Training for Parents/Caregivers" training: <https://youtu.be/FQ8Sgl8O6xQ>

A fight or breakup for a young person can feel immense. Sympathize and listen. Minimizing what your child or friend is going through can increase their sense of hopelessness. <https://bit.ly/2W4aPYI>

Mental & emotional well-being

One of the best things you can do to support kids and teens is to be available on their timeframe. Be a good listener and give them extra time to process their feelings. <https://bit.ly/3iUT3zT>

Stay connected, keep in touch with friends and family, and be kind to yourself. <https://bit.ly/3CO7Lka>

It's normal that you or your loved ones might feel anxious, sad, scared or angry. You are not alone. It's okay to seek out and ask for help. These resources are a good place to start: <https://bit.ly/3xZG9ot>

There are healthy ways to manage stress. Be sure to stay active, get enough sleep and rest, and stay hydrated. Avoid excessive amounts of caffeine, alcohol, and marijuana. Eat healthy foods whenever possible. Get more coping tips for emotional wellbeing. <https://bit.ly/3xZG9ot>

If you find the daily news to be heightening your anxiety or stress, set a limit on media consumption, including social media, local and national news. <https://bit.ly/3xZG9ot>

Don't forget. You matter. It's okay to not be okay. Find mental health resources for young adults, parents, and remote workers: <https://bit.ly/37OwDKm>

Deaf and hard of hearing

If you are hard of hearing, you can chat with a Suicide Prevention Lifeline counselor online or for TTY, dial 800-799-4889. <https://bit.ly/37T6REI>

Assets & resources

- [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)
 - Images and graphics: <https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Awareness-Resources>
- [Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)
- [Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#)
- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)
- [Indian Health Service Suicide Prevention](#)

Sample Press Release

[Organization] recognizes September as Suicide Prevention Month

In observance of Suicide Prevention Month, **[Organization]** encourages Washingtonians to help prevent suicide. Everyone can help prevent suicide by being present, supportive and strong for those who may be going through a difficult time.

“Suicide is preventable, and you don’t need special training to prevent it.” said **[Organization Representative]**. “Everyone can play a role by learning to recognize the warning signs, showing compassion, and offering support.”

Listed are actions anyone can take to be there:

- Reach out to loved ones to show them you care. Check in through a text and simply ask, “How are you?”
- Learn the warning signs of suicide at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-someone-else/>.
- It is ok to ask someone directly if they’ve been feeling like they want to hurt themselves or thinking about suicide.

Look for the hashtags #Suicide Prevention or #Together4MH this month on **[Organization]’s** social media pages.

People in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know someone in crisis, should call or text 988 or chat online at suicidepreventionlifeline.org. Confidential support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Learn more about **[Organization]’s** suicide prevention efforts at **[website]**.