

SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH



Messaging Toolkit
Winnebago County, WI
September 2023

Facts About Suicide

Suicide is a public health crisis that affects individuals, families, and communities across the state, the nation, and the world.

Suicide Statistics

In 2021, an estimated 12.3 million American adults seriously thought about suicide, 3.5 million planned a suicide attempt, and 1.7 million attempted suicide. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for people ages 10-14 and 20-34.

Suicide has economic impacts, too. In 2020, suicide and nonfatal self-harm cost the nation over \$500 billion in medical costs, work loss costs, value of statistical life, and quality of life costs. Yet, this is nothing compared to the loss of a loved one.

When people die by suicide, their surviving family and friends may experience prolonged grief, shock, anger, guilt, symptoms of depression or anxiety, and even thoughts of suicide themselves. Similarly, people who attempt suicide and survive may experience serious injuries that can have long-term effects on their health. Comprehensive, community-wide action is needed to prevent suicide and promote mental health.

48,000

**SUICIDE DEATHS IN THE
U.S.A. IN 2021**

905

**SUICIDE DEATHS IN
WISCONSIN IN 2021**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/index.html>)

Myths and Misconceptions

Myth: Suicide only affects individuals with a mental health condition.

Fact: Many individuals with mental illness are not affected by suicidal thoughts, and not all people who attempt suicide have a mental illness.

Myth: Most suicides happen suddenly without warning.

Fact: Most suicides are preceded by verbal or behavioral warning signs. Many individuals who are suicidal may only show signs to those closest to them, which is why it is important to learn and understand the warning signs associated with suicide.

Myth: Once an individual is suicidal, he or she will always remain suicidal.

Fact: Suicidal ideation is often short-term and situation-specific. An individual with suicidal thoughts or attempts can live a long, successful life.

Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness (<https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/September-2020/5-Common-Myths-About-Suicide-Debunked>)

The #BeThe1To Campaign

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline launched the #BeThe1To campaign to raise awareness of suicide prevention efforts. The campaign highlights 5 evidence-based steps to follow when communicating with someone who may be suicidal. These steps are explained in more detail below.

1

Ask

Asking the question "Are you thinking about suicide?" does not increase suicides or suicidal thoughts - rather, it communicates that you're open to speaking about suicide in a non-judgmental and supportive way.

2

Be There

Connecting with others can protect against suicide. This could mean being physically present for someone, or supporting them regularly through other channels. Consistency is key - do not commit to anything you are not able to do.

3

Keep Them Safe

Reducing a suicidal person's access to lethal means is an important part of suicide prevention. Put time and distance between the suicidal person and anything they plan to use to harm themselves. Store firearms and medications safely.

4

Help Them Connect

Connect someone with thoughts of suicide to resources such as lifelines, mental health professionals, and support groups that can help navigate a crisis. Work with them to develop a Safety Plan.

5

Follow Up

Supportive, ongoing contact may be an important part of suicide prevention. When you follow up with people experiencing thoughts of suicide, suicide deaths decrease. Check in regularly with a text, call, or visit to see if there's anything else you can do.

Messaging Guidelines

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center has put forth guidelines for safe and effective messaging. Special considerations for suicide prevention messaging are explored in more detail below.

Messaging Do's and Don'ts

Messages to promote suicide prevention efforts should:

- Emphasize help-seeking
- Provide information on finding help
- Emphasize prevention
- List the warning signs of suicide
- List risk and protective factors
- Highlight effective treatment for mental health problems



Messages to promote suicide prevention efforts should not:

- Normalize suicide
- Glamorize or sensationalize
- Present suicide as a common event
- Present suicide as inexplicable
- Present suicide as a result of stress only



6 Tips for Developing Messages that Stick

- 1. Keep it Simple** - Use analogies and metaphors that allow individuals to relate to new concepts. This will make the information easier to understand.
- 2. Unexpected** - Develop jarring, unexpected messages. These are more memorable, and will stay with individuals for time to come.
- 3. Concrete** - Use specific language and details. Be consistent.
- 4. Credentialed** - Share evidence-based facts from trusted sources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), or National Institutes of Health (NIH).
- 5. Emotional** - Tap into individuals' feelings. Creating positive or negative emotions can make a message memorable.
- 6. Stories** - Tell stories about real people. Use real examples, which are more relatable.

Prevention Messaging

The following messages may promote the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline's #BeThe1To campaign on social media. Be sure to follow the 988 Lifeline on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Social Media

We can all #BeThe1To play a role in suicide prevention. This September, join us as we recognize #SuicidePreventionMonth and share tips and tricks for suicide prevention - today, and every day. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/3q0ZyDY>

If you think someone might be considering suicide, take the first step and #BeThe1To Ask directly, "Are you thinking about suicide?" Research has shown that asking about suicide will not increase the likelihood of an attempt. Learn more at <https://www.preventsuicidewi.org> #SuicidePreventionMonth

If someone you know is thinking about suicide, take the next step and #BeThe1To Be There. Listen to their reasons for being hopeless and in pain. Listen without judgment and with compassion and empathy. You might just save a life. #SuicidePreventionMonth

If you ask someone if they are thinking about suicide and they say yes, #BeThe1To Keep Them Safe. Separate them from anything that they are thinking of using to hurt themselves. Dispose of extra medication and store firearms safely. #SuicidePreventionMonth

If someone you know is thinking about suicide, #BeThe1To Help Them Connect to resources. Help them build a support system, including the @988Lifeline, family, friends, clergy, coaches, co-workers or therapists. Trained counselors are available 24/7 to talk. #SuicidePreventionMonth

If someone you know tells you they've been thinking about suicide, don't forget to take the last step and #BeThe1To Follow Up with them. Make time to check in on a regular basis - it can make all the difference. #SuicidePreventionMonth

Do you know who to call in a crisis? The 988 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 in the United States. Save these crisis numbers in your phone, just in case - they might help save a life.

Milwaukee's Daniel Hoan Memorial Bridge is the crown over Summerfest and has become one of the city's most recognizable landmarks - but it's also a popular site for suicides. This 8-minute animated documentary explores the issues of the bridge and suicide through three intimate interviews: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrA495uA6-Y>

Email Template

Subject: Honoring Suicide Prevention Month

Dear Colleagues,

September is Suicide Prevention Month. The month brings together individuals and organizations with an interest in suicide prevention and mobilizes efforts to save lives.

Every day, approximately 132 Americans die by suicide; this is one death every 11 minutes. The suffering that leads people to take their lives is hard to imagine. Mental health challenges (especially depression and substance abuse) are a major risk factor for suicide.

Feeling connected to others is essential. We know that isolation can increase the risk of suicide and that having strong bonds can be a protective factor against suicide. Reaching out to those who have become disconnected and offering them support and friendship can be a life-saving act.

Mental health struggles or thoughts of suicide are nothing to be ashamed of. If you or a loved one are struggling, please reach out to one of the following resources:

- Winnebago County Crisis Intervention Hotline: (920) 233-7707
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988
- Text "HOPELINE" to 741741

I am proud that [Company] is making strides to emphasize the importance of comprehensive health and safety. We know fighting the stigma of mental health and suicide starts with us. We value you and your wellbeing.

Warmly,
[Signature]

Adapted from Spiess, M. (<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/honoring-world-suicide-prevention-day-your-staff-mettie-spiess-cwp-1c/>)

Email Signature

Winnebago County Crisis Intervention Hotline: (920) 233-7707

Need support? Trained mental health counselors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: (920) 233-7707

Call 988 for emergency emotional support.
Safe. Supportive. Confidential. Available 24/7.

If you or someone you know needs support now, call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org.

Source: 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (<https://www.bethe1to.com>)

Action Steps

We all have a role to play in suicide prevention. Whether we represent an organization or participate on an individual basis, all of us can #BeThe1To take action.

For Organizations

Flyers

Post a crisis line flyer in popular locations (shared fridge, break room, bulletin board, etc.).

Webpage or Portal

Update your employee website, wellness board, or HR guide to include "In crisis? Text 'HOPELINE' to 741741."

Bathrooms

Post stickers or flyers with resources in every stall.

Company IDs

Advertise mental health resources on the back of company IDs.

All Staff Meetings

At an upcoming all staff meeting, suggest that people enter the local crisis line into their contacts.

Signature

Include "In crisis? Text 'HOPELINE' to 741741" in the HR department signature.

Wellness Policy

Adopt an organization-wide wellness policy that requires training on mental health.

Social Media

Post on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and other platforms so your users and staff know where to turn in crisis.

Professional Development

Require a Mental Health First Aid training as part of your HR orientation process.

For Individuals

Educate

Participate in support groups, presentations, trainings, and webinars about mental health.

Volunteer

Volunteer at a local mental health agency, such as NAMI.

Take Care of You

Prioritize your own mental health by participating in regular self care.

Save

Save local crisis line phone numbers in your phone, just in case.

Share

Spread the word on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Shapchat, and TikTok.

Communicate

Share mental health resources with children, partners, and friends. Be an active listener. Encourage honest communication.

Advocate

Be an advocate in your community. Share mental health resources with school leaders, city government, and local organizations. Table at farmers' markets and community events. Bring flyers to local churches and recreation centers. Share at PTA meetings.

Donate

Donate to organizations that support mental health and respond when there is a mental health crisis.

Action Steps for Schools

Schools are an important target for suicide prevention efforts. Whether you are a school administrator, teacher, parent, or student, you can #BeThe1To take action.

For Administrators

Flyers

In the school counselor / principal / nurse and coaches' offices. Posted in every classroom.

Webpage

Update your school's counseling or student wellness webpage to include local crisis resources.

Social Media

Share resources regularly across all school social media.

Assemblies

At an upcoming student assembly or PTSA night, suggest that people add (920) 233-7707 to their contacts.

Share

Spread the word by sharing this toolkit with the PTA at your school so they can push out the 988 Lifeline as a resource, too.

Bathrooms

Post stickers or flyers with resources in every bathroom stall.

Online Portals

Include the resource in all remote learning resources and online student portals (Google Classroom, Canvas, Zoom, Schoology, etc.).

Student IDs

Advertise mental health resources on the back of student IDs.

Email Signatures

Include the Winnebago County Crisis Intervention phone number in all staff email signatures.

For Teachers

Syllabi & Agreements

Include the resource in all syllabi and assignments.

Email Signature

Include the resource in your email signature.

Online Learning

Add a reminder of the resource to all online learning sessions.

Communications

Add the resource to all class-wide communications.

Phones

Encourage students to save (920) 233-7707 in their phones if they ever need it.

Parents

Send flyers, stickers, or magnets home with students to give to their parents. Discuss resources at parent-teacher conferences.

Share

Spread the word by sharing this toolkit in social media groups and professional circles for teachers.

Professional Development

Participate in trainings, webinars, and presentations to identify signs of a mental health crisis.

For Parents

Your Community

Be an advocate at your child's school. Share flyers with school leaders. Table at farmers' markets and community events.

Your Children

Talk with your child about mental health. Keep resources in an easy-to-see location, like on the fridge.

Listen

Practice good communication and active listening in your home.

Other Parents

Email friends. Post on Facebook or Instagram. Spread the word to other parents. Discuss resources at PTO meetings.

Volunteer

Volunteer as a Mentor or Crisis Counselor.

Learning

Participate in trainings, webinars, and support groups to learn how to identify signs of a mental health crisis.

Medications

Properly dispose of unwanted medications. Safely store other medications in a locked, out-of-reach place.

Firearms

Store firearms unloaded, in a locked storage container such as a lock box or safe. Store ammunition separately from firearms.

Social Media

Participate in social media campaigns. Post resources for mental health.

For Students

Accountability

Hold parents, teachers, and school officials accountable.

Social Media

Share mental health resources on Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok.

School Clubs

Start (or join) a club that promotes mental health and stands against bullying.

Publications

Write an article, story, or poem about mental health and share it in the school newspaper or yearbook.

Art

Create posters and flyers to promote mental health resources. Hang them in the hallways at school.

Peer Mentors

Become a peer mentor to a younger student.

Chalk Campaign

Write the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline number on sidewalks, in the parking lot, and on whiteboards in classrooms... every week.

Announcements

Include mental health resources on the morning video announcements.

Bullying

Stand up against bullies. Be a friend to other students who may be victims of bullying.

Winnebago County Mental Health Resources*

Crisis Lines

National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: 988

Free | Confidential | 24/7 | English and Spanish

Winnebago County Crisis Intervention Hotline: (920) 233-7707

Free | Confidential | 24/7

Crisis Text Line: Text "HOPELINE" to 741741

Free | Confidential | 24/7

The Trevor Project: 1-866-488-7386 or Text "START" to 678678

Free | Confidential | 24/7 | LGBTQ+

211 Wisconsin: 211 or Text Your ZIP Code to 898211

Free | Confidential | Resource and Referral Line

Respite

Iris Place

920-815-3217

1213 Matthias St, Appleton

Friendship Place, Inc.

920-729-9975

220 N Commercial St, Neenah

State Street Center

920-232-3320

206 State St, Oshkosh

Support & Info

NAMI Fox Valley

920-954-1550

211 E Franklin St, Appleton

211 Wisconsin

Call 2-1-1 for free assistance and mental health resources.

NAMI Oshkosh

920-651-1148

525 N Main St, Oshkosh

Prevent Suicide Fox Cities

920-996-0563

211 E Franklin St, Appleton

Department of Human Services

Oshkosh: 920-236-4700

Neenah: 920-727-2882

UW-Extension

920-232-1970

625 E County Rd Y, Oshkosh

Treatment Services

Apricity - Casa Clare
920-731-3981
201 S Glenridge St, Appleton

Apricity - Mooring House
920-739-3235
607 W Seventh St, Appleton

Ascension Mercy Hospital
920-233-8570

Aurora Behavioral Health
920-456-2030

Partnership Clinic
920-731-7445
2310 Westowne Ave, Oshkosh

ThedaCare Behavioral Health
920-720-2300

Rogers Behavioral Health
920-843-5660

Samaritan Counseling Center of the Fox Valley, Inc.
920-235-1678
10 Church Ave, Oshkosh

Oshkosh Counseling Center, Inc.
920-231-2858
501 Merritt Ave, Oshkosh

Options Treatment Programs, Inc.
920-651-1844
502 E New York Ave, Oshkosh

Ascension St. Elizabeth Hospital
920-730-4411

Esprit Counseling & Consulting
920-486-5079
40 Jewelers Park Dr, Neenah

Nova Counseling Services, Inc.
920-231-0143
3240 Jackson St, Oshkosh

Further Reading



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Facts About Suicide
Suicide statistics, data, and prevention programs.



National Alliance on Mental Illness
Suicide Prevention Month
Evidence-based awareness resources.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Suicide Prevention Reports and Publications
National strategies for suicide prevention.



The **We Heart You App** includes resources for individuals struggling, family members or friends who want to connect their loved ones to help, or professionals that want to share the app. Learn more or download the app at weheartyou.org/app

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requirements.

Como empleador que brinda igualdad de oportunidades en el empleo y acción afirmativa (EEO/AA, por sus siglas en inglés), la University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension, proporciona igualdad de oportunidades en el empleo y en sus programas, incluyendo los requisitos del Título VI, Título IX, la ley federal para personas con discapacidades en los Estados Unidos (ADA, por sus siglas en inglés) y los requisitos de la Section 504 del Rehabilitation Act.

Tus Tswv Hauj Lwm Ntawm (EEO/AA), ntawm lub Tsev Kawm Ntawv Qib Siab (University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension) pab rau kev ncaj ncees txog kev hauj lwm thiab kev pab cuam, xws li nyob rau hauv Title VI, Title IX, thiab ntawm tsab cai Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) yuav tsum kom muaj thiab Feem 504 ntawm the Txoj Cai Kev Pab Rov Tsim Kho Uas Tau Teev Tseg.

Katie Jaegly
UW-Extension Winnebago County
Health & Well-Being Educator
jaegly@wisc.edu
920-232-1979



24/7 CALL, TEXT, CHAT



Extension



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