

# 2023 Suicide Prevention Month toolkit



**Creating hope through  
action**

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# 2023 suicide prevention month toolkit

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## Guidelines of this toolkit

- Any Washington State agency, partner organization, school, provider, family, or community member can use some or all elements of this plan to promote suicide prevention month.
- Messaging should promote a positive narrative and avoid negative or unsafe language/imagery.
- Messaging should point to [state and national resources](#).
- Messaging should leverage the work of the existing campaign #Bethe1to.

## Goals of this toolkit


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

## Key messages

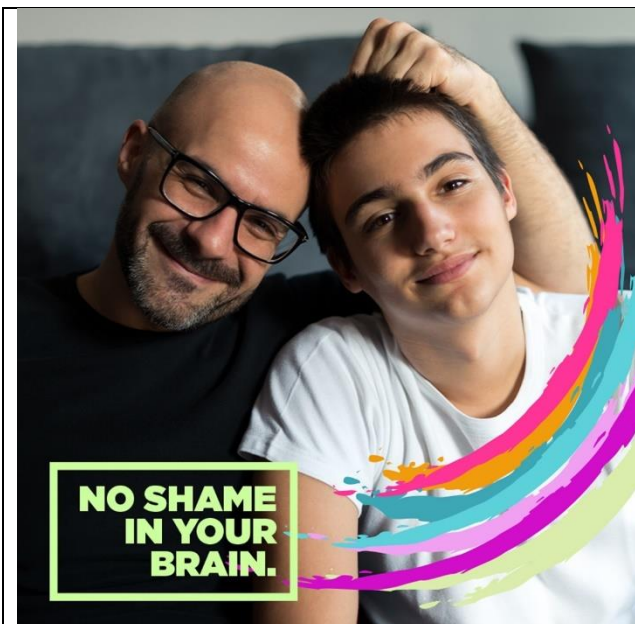
- Suicide can touch anyone, anywhere, and at any time. But it is not inevitable. There is hope.
- Anyone can call or text 988 if they are experiencing a mental health crisis.
- Everyone deals with stress at times, but if a problem lasts too long, is too intense or feels like more than you can handle, reach out for help. Call or text 988.
- It's important to learn [the warning signs of suicide, self-harm, and substance use and misuse](#).
- It's OK to ask for help – it doesn't mean that you're weak or just want attention. Everyone needs help from time to time, and if you or a loved one is experiencing distress, you should reach out to talk to someone right away.
- Trust your gut – if you're worried about yourself or a loved one, don't hesitate to act and get help. You don't have to know what is wrong, just that you need help dealing with a crisis or other distress.
- Look for big changes in behavior and personality or a dramatic 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.
- Be direct with your loved ones – 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's 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

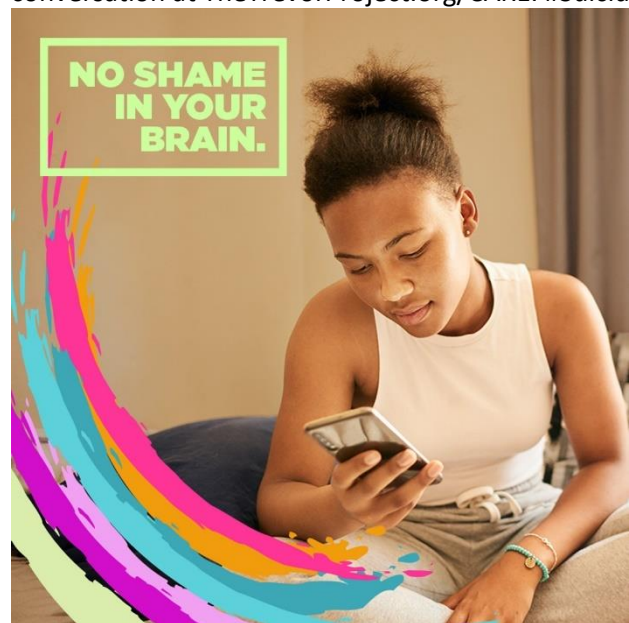
Images to pair with posts can be found at the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline [website](#). In most cases the image will pull directly from the website in the link preview.

<b>September 10: World Suicide Prevention Day</b>
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 seek support.

<b>Theme: Know the Signs</b>
Everyone can learn what to do to save a life from suicide. Know the signs, find the words, and reach out. <a href="https://988lifeline.org/help-someone-else/">https://988lifeline.org/help-someone-else/</a>
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. <a href="#">Help Someone Else : Lifeline (988lifeline.org)</a>
Sometimes anger and anxiety can be a sign of stress or mental illness. Know the signs. <a href="#">Help Someone Else : Lifeline (988lifeline.org)</a>
In some cases, substance misuse can be a sign of emotional distress. Know the signs and how to support. <a href="#">Help Someone Else : Lifeline (988lifeline.org)</a>
<b>Theme: Find the words / Be the one to...</b>
Learn to ask the question "Are you thinking about suicide?" and other steps to saving a life: <a href="https://www.suicideispreventable.org">https://www.suicideispreventable.org</a>
If someone tells you that they are thinking about suicide, act immediately and don't leave them by themselves. Call or text 988. Even if it's not an emergency, get them to help right away. <a href="#">Talk To Someone Now : Lifeline (988lifeline.org)</a>
Trust your instincts – if you are concerned about someone, don't hesitate to speak up, or ask them directly about it. <a href="#">Suicide Prevention Awareness   Know the Warning Signs of Suicidal Behavior (suicideispreventable.org)</a>
Make a call today to someone you are concerned about. If you need help finding the words, visit <a href="#">Suicide Prevention Awareness   Know the Warning Signs of Suicidal Behavior (suicideispreventable.org)</a>
Sometimes we know people need help, but don't know how to start the conversation. Find the words at <a href="http://www.suicideispreventable.org">www.suicideispreventable.org</a>
If you're worried that someone in your life may be having thoughts of suicide, you can use the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline 5 steps to help someone that may be in crisis: <a href="http://www.bethe1to.com">www.bethe1to.com</a>
<b>Theme: Reach out</b>
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 988 or chat online: <a href="https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org">https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org</a> .

If you've lost someone to suicide, you are not alone. Find a survivors' group in your area: <a href="https://www.suicideispreventable.org">https://www.suicideispreventable.org</a>
Together we have the power to make a difference. The power to save a life. <a href="https://www.suicideispreventable.org">https://www.suicideispreventable.org</a>
Concerned about someone? Visit <a href="http://www.suicideispreventable.org">www.suicideispreventable.org</a> 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 988 or chat online: <a href="https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org">https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org</a>
Are you going through tough times? Trained and experienced counselors are available 24/7 to help you. Make the FREE call to 988
<b>Theme: Connect</b>
Make your voice count. Engage in dialog about suicide prevention at <a href="http://www.yourvoicecounts.org">www.yourvoicecounts.org</a>
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. <a href="http://SupportonSocialMedia:Lifeline(988lifeline.org)">Support on Social Media : Lifeline (988lifeline.org)</a>
Be an ally to people with mental health conditions. Test for stigma at <a href="http://CureStigma.org">CureStigma.org</a>
Mental health conditions affect millions of Americans. You are not alone. Sharing your story can help others. Learn more: <a href="http://YouAreNotAlone NAMI:NationalAllianceonMentalIllness">You Are Not Alone   NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness</a> #CureStigma
<b>LGBTQIA2S+</b>
The Trevor Project is a place where LGBTQIA2S+ youth and their allies can find answers and explore resources on topics like coming out, healthy relationships, homelessness, and mental health. <a href="https://www.thetrevorproject.org">https://www.thetrevorproject.org</a>
The LGBTQIA2S+ community is diverse and strong. You're not alone, and help is available 24/7/365 via 988. Check out stories of hope and recovery to learn how LGBTQIA2S+ people have coped during hard times. <a href="https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/lgbtq/">https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/lgbtq/</a>
Be an active part of your LGBTQIA2S+ loved ones' support systems. If you notice any signs they're having thoughts of suicide, be direct. Tell them it's OK to talk. Practice active listening techniques and let them share without judgment. <a href="https://bit.ly/37NSZvw">https://bit.ly/37NSZvw</a>
Strong family bonds, safe schools, and support from caring adults can all help reduce depression, thoughts of suicide, and other emotional distress for LGBTQIA2S+ youth. Learn more about how you can provide support: <a href="https://bit.ly/3sqrlsr">https://bit.ly/3sqrlsr</a>
Have a step-by-step plan ready for if or when you experience depression, thoughts of suicide, or another mental health crisis. If you're in distress, you can start at step one and continue through the steps until you feel safe. Learn more ways you can help yourself: <a href="https://bit.ly/3iQvb0q">https://bit.ly/3iQvb0q</a>
If you have an LGBTQ+ friend or family member who may be thinking about suicide, it's important that they know you're there for them. Get tips on what to look for and free resources to guide the conversation at <a href="http://TheTrevorProject.org/CARE">TheTrevorProject.org/CARE</a> . #SuicidePreventionMonth #NoShameinYourBrain



If you have an LGBTQIA2S+ friend or family member who may be thinking about suicide, it's 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). #SuicidePreventionMonth #NoShameinYourBrain



If you identify as LGBTQIA2S+ and are experiencing mental health concerns or other emotional distress, help is available! Reach out to [@trevorproject](https://www.trevorproject.org). #SuicidePreventionMonth #NoShameinYourBrain

## Veterans

Talk to other veterans who understand what you are experiencing. [Veterans : Lifeline \(988lifeline.org\)](https://www.988lifeline.org)

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

A simple act of kindness to the veteran in your life can help them feel less alone. If you notice any signs of suicide, be direct. Let them know you're there for them. <https://bit.ly/37NSZvw>

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Not all wounds from war can be seen. Make connections with stories from veterans. <a href="#">Make the Connection   Videos &amp; Info for Military Veterans</a>
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: <a href="https://www.veteranscrisisline.net">https://www.veteranscrisisline.net</a>
Veterans have been trained to carry heavy stuff, but you don't need to go through it alone. <a href="https://www.va.gov/reach/lethal-means/">https://www.va.gov/reach/lethal-means/</a>
<b>American Indian / Alaska Native</b>
Join <a href="#">We R Native</a> in supporting #SuicidePreventionMonth. Spread the word that suicide CAN BE PREVENTED. To get help or give help, call 988 or text START to 741741 to chat via text.
The Native and Strong Lifeline is integrated into the <a href="#">988 Suicide &amp; Crisis Lifeline system</a> in Washington state. When someone calls 988 Lifeline from a Washington state area code, they will hear an automated greeting that features different options, such as the Veterans Crisis Line and the Spanish Language Line. <b>Callers can now choose option 4</b> to reach the Native and Strong Lifeline.
By paying attention to warning signs of suicide and connecting with family, friends, and our culture, we may be able to prevent a death. <a href="#">Suicide - We R Native</a>
If your friend has mentioned suicide, tell someone who can help. Learn what to do when your friend is talking about suicide: <a href="#">When Your Friend Is Talking About Suicide - We R Native</a>
Silence isn't strength. Don't keep thoughts of suicide to yourself. Lean on your support network, find a therapist or a support group, or get in touch with the Lifeline: <a href="#">Talk To Someone Now : Lifeline (988lifeline.org)</a> #Bethe1to
<b>En Español</b>
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. <a href="https://www.elsuicidiosprevenible.org/">https://www.elsuicidiosprevenible.org/</a>
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 <a href="https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/en-espanol/">https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/en-espanol/</a>
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. <a href="#">Lifeline (988lifeline.org)</a>
<b>Youth and parents</b>
When you are young, adults may brush off your distress or say, "it's no big deal." But we hear you, and we know that your pain is real. Get help now by calling, texting, or chatting with 988. <a href="#">Youth : Lifeline (988lifeline.org)</a>
Talking with young people about suicide won't put the idea in their heads. If you see warning signs, be caring and seek help. <a href="#">Help Someone Else : Lifeline (988lifeline.org)</a> #BeThere
Is your gut telling you to worry when your child has withdrawn from you or their friends, become more anxious, or on edge? Seek help now. <a href="https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/#BeThe1To">https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/#BeThe1To</a>
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; <a href="#">StopBullying.gov</a>
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 online: <a href="#">LEARN® Saves Lives Suicide Prevention Training for Parents/Caregivers - YouTube</a>

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. [Youth : Lifeline \(988lifeline.org\)](https://www.988lifeline.org/youth)

### **Deaf and hard of hearing**

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you can chat with a 988 Lifeline counselor online or for TTY, dial 800-799-4889. [Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Hearing Loss : Lifeline \(988lifeline.org\)](https://www.988lifeline.org/deaf-hard-of-hearing-hearing-loss) #BeThere



# Hashtags

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## #BeThe1To

#BeThe1To is the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline’s message for National Suicide Prevention Month and beyond. We can all take action to prevent suicide. The 988 Lifeline network and its partners are working to change the conversation from suicide-to-suicide prevention by focusing on actions that can promote healing, help and give hope.

### Ask

- Research shows people who are having thoughts of suicide feel relief when someone asks after them in a caring way. Findings suggest acknowledging and talking about suicide may reduce not increase thoughts of suicide.
  - #BeThe1ToAsk

### Be there

- People in crisis are more likely to have fewer thoughts of suicide and feel less depressed, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful after speaking to someone who listens without judgment.
  - #BeThe1ToBeThere

### Keep them safe

- If someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, get their consent to remove lethal means, like weapons or medication. Evidence shows that when lethal means aren't available or are less deadly, suicide rates by that method decline. Often, overall suicide rates also decline.
  - #BeThe1ToKeepThemSafe

### Help them stay connected

- When people in crisis have a network of resources and people who can help them feel safe and supported, they may feel less hopeless and find it easier to take positive action.
  - #BeThe1ToHelpThemStayConnected

### Follow up

- Evidence suggests that brief, low-cost interventions, and supportive, ongoing contact may be an important part of suicide prevention. Ongoing support is especially important for people who have just been discharged from hospitals or care services.
  - #BeThe1ToFollowUp

### Learn more

- Get message kits, resources, events and more at the official website.
  - [#BeThe1To.com](https://www.988lifeline.org)

## Sample press release

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### **[Organization] recognizes September as Suicide Prevention Month**

In observance of Suicide Prevention Month, [Organization] encourages Washingtonians to #BeThe1To help prevent suicide. Be there by asking, keeping them safe, helping them connect, and following up with 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, show compassion, and offer support.”

Here are actions anyone can take to be there:

- Ask about them in a caring way. #BeThe1ToAsk
- Be there and listen without judgement. #BeThe1ToBeThere
- Keep them safe. Make lethal means less available. #BeThe1ToKeepThemSafe
- Help them stay connected by creating a network of resources for support and safety. #BeThe1ToHelpThemStayConnected
- Follow up by reaching out after they have been discharged from hospitals or care services. #BeThe1ToFollowUp
- Learn more. Get message kits, resources, events and more at the official website. [#BeThe1To.com](#)

Look for the hashtags #BeThe1To this month on [Organization]’s social media pages.

Individuals in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know someone in crisis, should call or text 988. 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].