

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 existing campaigns ([#BeThe1To](#), [#BeThere](#), and [Take 5 to Save Lives](#)) that focus on the importance of being there for others.

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

- If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, call 911 or go directly to your nearest emergency department.
- If you are immediately concerned about yourself or a friend, text Crisis Text Line at 741741 or call the Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). 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 it isn't.
- It's important to learn the warning signs of suicide, self-harm and substance 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 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, don't hesitate to take action and get help. You don't have to know what is wrong-just that they're in trouble or struggling.
- 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.
- 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.
- If you have a mental health provider, don't hesitate to reach out.
- You don't have to be a professional to help. Learn how by watching the ["Saves Lives Suicide Prevention Training for Parents/Caregivers" training](#).
- 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](#)



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> #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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> #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

Sometimes anger and anxiety can be a sign of stress or mental illness. Know the signs.

- #BeThere <https://bit.ly/3yXgbTZ>

Substance misuse is a sign someone may be experiencing mental illness or thoughts of suicide. Know the signs.

- #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#) <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> #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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> [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

If someone tells you that they are thinking about suicide, act immediately and don't leave them by themselves. Call 911 in the event of an emergency. Even if it's not an emergency, get them to help right away. The Lifeline network is available 24/7.

- <https://bit.ly/3sotf2l> #BeThere #BeThe1To #SuicidePreventionMonth

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> #SuicidePreventionMonth

Make a call today to someone you are concerned about. If you need help finding the words, visit:

- <https://www.suicideispreventable.org> #SuicidePreventionMonth

Sometimes we know people need help, but don't know how to start the conversation. Find the words at:

- www.suicideispreventable.org #SuicidePreventionMonth

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 #BeThere #BeThe1To #SuicidePreventionMonth

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 the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255 or chat online: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org> In the event of an emergency, call 911.

- #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](https://www.suicideispreventable.org)

If you've lost someone to suicide, you are not alone. Find a survivors' group in your area:

- <https://www.suicideispreventable.org> #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](https://www.suicideispreventable.org)

Together we have the power to make a difference. The power to save a life.

- <https://www.suicideispreventable.org> #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](https://www.suicideispreventable.org)

Concerned about someone? Visit www.suicideispreventable.org for resources in your county.

- #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](https://www.suicideispreventable.org)

You don't have to be in crisis to call a hotline. Sometimes you just need to talk. If you need help call the Lifeline at (800) 273-8255 or chat online:

- <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org> #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Are you going through tough times? Trained and experienced counselors are available 24/7 to help you. Make the FREE call to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-8255.

- [#SuicidePreventionMonth](https://www.suicideispreventable.org) #BeThere

Theme: Connect

Make your voice count. Engage in dialog about suicide prevention at www.yourvoicecounts.org.

- #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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> #BeThere #SuicidePreventionMonth

Be an ally to people with mental health conditions. Get tested for stigma at CureStigma.org

- #CureStigma [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

Mental illness affects millions of Americans. You are not alone. Sharing your story can help others. Learn more:

- <https://notalone.nami.org> #CureStigma [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

LGBTQ+

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> [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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/> #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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. Practice active listening techniques and let them talk without judgment.

- <https://bit.ly/37NSZvw> #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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:

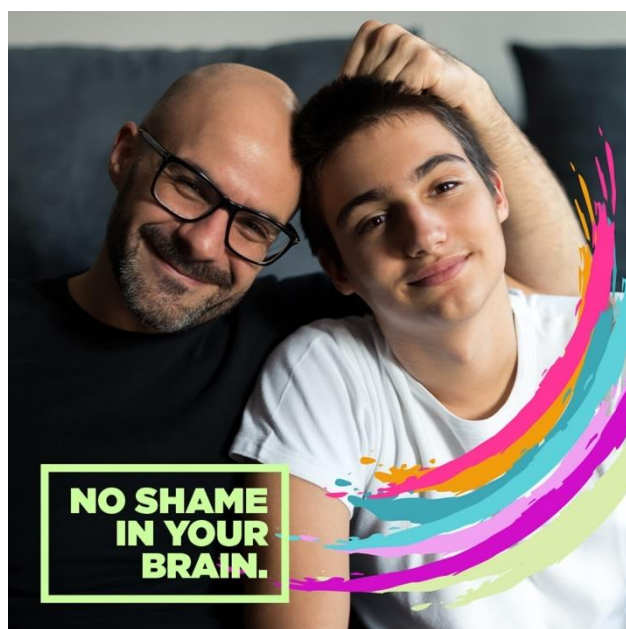
- <https://bit.ly/3sqrlsr> #BeThere [#BeThe1To](#) [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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/3iQvb0q> #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

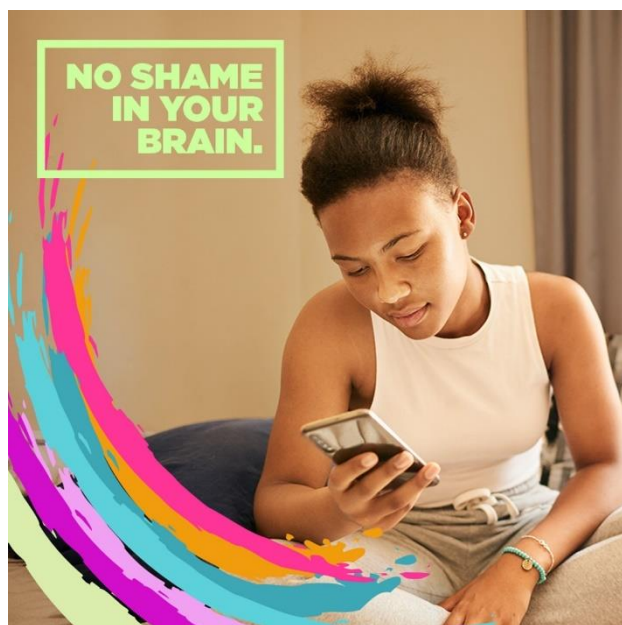
If you have an LGBTQ+ friend or family member who may be thinking about suicide, it's SO important that they know you're there for them. Get tips on what to look for and free resources to guide the conversation at:

- TheTrevorProject.org/CARE [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#) [#NoShameinYourBrain](#)



COVID-19 has been especially tough on LGBTQ+ teens, many of whom are stuck at home with non-supportive family members. If you identify as LGBTQ+ and are struggling with your mental health, help is available! Reach out to:

- @trevorproject [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#) #NoShameinYourBrain



Veterans

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

- <https://bit.ly/3ma8Blr> #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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> #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

A simple act of kindness to the veteran in your life can help them feel less alone. If they show any warning signs for suicide, be direct. Let them know you're there for them.

- <https://bit.ly/37NSZvw> #BeThere [#BeThe1To](#) [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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

- <http://bit.ly/12H3TwM> [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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> [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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

Join We R Native in supporting [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#). Spread the word that suicide CAN BE PREVENTED. To get help or give help, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or text START to 741741 to chat via text. #BeThere

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> #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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> [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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> [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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> #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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.elsuicidioesp prevenible.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/>

Youth and parents

Sometimes your struggle can be underestimated because of your age. But we hear you, and help is available.

- <https://bit.ly/2W4aPYI> #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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> #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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/> #BeThere [#BeThe1To](#) [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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> [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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:

- <https://youtu.be/FQ8Sgl8O6xQ> [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

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> #BeThere [#SuicidePreventionMonth](#)

Mental and emotional well-being, COVID-19 pandemic

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>

Staying home does not have to mean being lonely. 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>

If you are experiencing excess stress due to COVID-19, call Washington Listens at 833-681-0211 for support and resources.

If you're experiencing stress from COVID-19, call us today.

WAListens.org

1-833-681-0211

Mon - Fri 9 to 9, Weekends 9 to 6

Language access services are available and TTY can be accessed by dialing 7-1-1 or preferred method.

WA Listens
Stay connected

Washington Listens supplements but doesn't replace existing community programs. The phone line is staffed by support specialists located around the state who understand how COVID-19 is affecting your community.

Washington Listens is available to anyone experiencing emotional distress related to COVID-19. Call 833-681-0211 to talk with someone.

Feeling anxious, overwhelmed or powerless is common during an infectious disease outbreak like COVID-19. It's more important than ever to know the warning signs for suicide:

- <https://bit.ly/3yXgbTZ> #SuicidePreventionMonth

There are healthy ways to manage stress during COVID-19. 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> #SuicidePreventionMonth

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. Get more coping tips for emotional wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- <https://bit.ly/3xZG9ot> #SuicidePreventionMonth

Don't forget. You matter. It's okay to not be okay. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected us all. Find mental health resources for young adults, parents, and remote workers:

- <https://bit.ly/37OwDKm> #SuicidePreventionMonth

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> #BeThere #SuicidePreventionMonth

Assets and resources

- [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)
 - [NAMI Images and graphics](#)
- [Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)
- [Coronavirus.wa.gov Mental & Emotional Wellness page](#)
- Department of Health Suicide Prevention page
- [Coronavirus.wa.gov infographics](#) (includes mental health messages)
 - [Spanish](#)
 - [Russian](#)
 - [Simplified Chinese](#)
 - [Vietnamese](#)
- [Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#)
- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)
- [Washington Listens](#)
- [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 #BeThere — to help prevent suicide. Being there 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.
- Watch the ["Saves Lives Suicide Prevention Training for Parents/Caregivers" training](#).

Look for the hashtags #BeThere and #SPM20 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 the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255 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].