

Supporting Suicide Prevention Efforts at the University of Utah

A Toolkit to Take Action

The Center for Campus Wellness thanks **you** for supporting our efforts to create hope and prevent suicide at the University of Utah.

This toolkit is designed for students, faculty, and staff to **take action** and raise awareness with a curated collection of evergreen materials (resources that remain relevant and shareable over time) that support our shared mission of preventing suicide on campus.

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Quick Facts



Each year, **1 out of 10** college students report experiencing serious thoughts about suicide [[JED](#)]



Over **25% of students at the U** show signs of being at risk of suicide [[NCHA](#)]



Only **1 in 3** students experiencing mental health challenges connect with campus support [[JED](#)]

Suicide Prevention Toolkit

Why This Toolkit Matters



According to national data, **suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death** among people 15-24 years old.

Suicidal thoughts signal deep emotional pain or an underlying mental health concern that **deserves understanding, care, and professional support**. With one conversation, asking someone how they're doing - and being ready to truly listen, we can save lives.

A public awareness campaign can help ensure no one has to face this alone. Suicide prevention starts long before a crisis. Open conversations, shared resources, and visible awareness make a real difference. Strong connections are what people turn to in crisis.

We Remember - Honoring Our Community

We remember and honor members of our community who have died by suicide, recognizing that suicidal thoughts can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, or background.

Recent data from the **2025 National College Health Assessment (NCHA)** and the **Healthy Minds Study** depict how our students experience suicidal thoughts and behaviors:

- More than **25% of University of Utah students** show signs of being at risk of suicide
- Over **1 out of 10** students **report seriously considering suicide** or practicing intentional self-injury
- In the last year, **7% of students created a suicide plan** and **1 out of 100 students** attempted suicide.

Suicide Prevention Toolkit

How Do I Use this Toolkit?



This toolkit includes all the materials and best-practice tips for hosting your very own awareness campaign!

Use these materials to help college students and our campus community learn how to identify stalking and where to find support resources.

- Print-ready materials
- Sample social media messages and graphics
- Best practices & tips for conducting an awareness campaign
- Glossary of terminology

What Do I Need to Host an Awareness Campaign?



KNOWLEDGE

While you do not need to be an expert on suicide to plan a campaign, we encourage you to **build a basic understanding** of its definition, dynamics, and prevalence before you plan your campaign.



EVALUATION

Consider how you will **measure the campaign's success** before you begin planning. Concrete actions like event attendance or social media engagement can assess campaign distribution.

While social norms are harder to measure and change, **please share the results with us** (wellness@sa.utah.edu), and we can determine how many people were influenced to access support services through your campaign.

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Best Practices & Tips



1. Strategic Placement of Print Materials

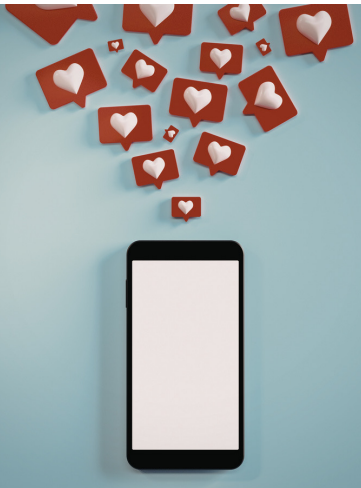
Know your community's traffic patterns and gathering places to maximize visibility of Suicide Prevention materials.

- Ask permission before placing materials in businesses or organizations
- Choose eye-level locations where people naturally pause or wait

2. Effective Social Media Resharing

When resharing Suicide Prevention posts, add a caption with local context and personal touches to increase engagement.

- Include local data relevant to the message
- Mention specific services you provide or relevant events related to the post (ex: career coaching, peer mentoring, social clubs and opportunities)
- Use local hashtags alongside [#SuicidePrevention](#)



3. Tracking and Measuring Your Impact

Monitor how your local amplification efforts are performing to optimize your approach.

Simple tracking methods:

- Material distribution logs: Track locations and quantity of materials distributed
- Social media engagement: Note which of your reshared posts get the most local engagement (likes, shares, comments)
- Community response: Document any increase in people accessing your services or anecdotal feedback after campaign sharing



4. Maintaining Brand Integrity

When sharing materials, please don't alter the core messages or design.

Suicide Prevention Toolkit

Print-Ready Materials

Click on the blue links on the following pages to download materials that can be printed and strategically displayed in public spaces, clinics, community hubs, or distributed directly to your audience. We encourage wide distribution within your available budget and capacity.

2.5" x 7.5" Bookmark [\[Suicide Specific\]](#)

SEPTEMBER

Suicide Prevention

AWARENESS MONTH

Create hope in your family and community by educating yourself about suicide prevention

JUST ASK, YOU CAN SAVE A LIFE

Talking about

- plans for suicide
- being a burden to others
- feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- feeling hopeless or having no reason to live

Behavior changes

- Extreme mood swings
- High anxiety or paranoia
- Reckless actions and choices
- Agitation, rage, and seeking revenge
- Constantly sleeping or unable to sleep
- Withdrawing from classes, clubs, group chats
- Increasing use frequency and use of substances inc. alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, etc.

"I noticed you mentioned feeling overwhelmed, are you thinking about ending your life?"

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

QUALITY HEALTHCARE	SAFE ENVIRONMENTS
with reduced access to lethal means (i.e. guns, medications...)	
EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT	SOCIAL BELONGING
SENSE OF LIFE PURPOSE	
EMOTIONAL SKILLSET	
• Problem-solving strategies	
• Emotional regulation practices and tools	

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RESOURCE

988

SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

The 988 Crisis Line offers 24/7 access to trained professionals who can support people experiencing crises like, suicidal thoughts, substance use, and emotional distress and more.

Accessible

No payment or insurance is needed to receive support from the 988 Lifeline. Text and chat lines are available in both English and Spanish languages.

Highly Effective

Nearly 96% of people report feeling less depressed, overwhelmed, and suicidal after connecting with The 988 Lifeline

Person-Centered

Most contacts with the lifeline are resolved by the lifeline itself, and do not involve hospitalization.

Less than 2% of lifeline contacts required immediate intervention inc. emergency dispatch or hospitalization

WELLNESS.UTAH.EDU

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wellness.utah.edu

2.5" x 7.5" Bookmark [\[Mental Health Awareness\]](#)

MAY

Mental Health AWARENESS MONTH

Build your self-care toolkit and practice checking in with your emotional wellbeing using the **Continuum of Mental Health**

EXCELLING

Peak function and performing at fullest potential
Cheerful, flow, high performance, energetic, and joyful

THRIVING

A healthy baseline with normal functions & behaviors
Positive, calm, sleeping well, routine eating, consistent work and social patterns

SURVIVING

An unsettled mind that may feel on edge or restless
Worried, nervous, irritable, sad, trouble sleeping, distracted, withdrawn

STRUGGLING

A troubled state where it is important to seek support
Numb, empty, distracted, tired, negative self-talk, difficulty with basic habits like sleep and nutrition

IN CRISIS

A state of unbearable suffering that needs immediate help
Exhaustion, isolation, shame, absent, incoherent, negative self-image and difficulty with basic hygiene

EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

is the ability to identify and manage emotions, adapt to change, and respond to stressful situations and looks like...

Asking for help	Mindfulness	Setting boundaries
Being able to relax	Positive self-talk	Supportive relationships

RECOVERY IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE

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RESOURCE

Be Prepared for Mental Health Moments

The Center for Campus Wellness hosts evidence-based trainings to teach you how to recognize and support individuals facing mental health challenges.

Similar to CPR, these programs build life-saving skills to confidently support others in critical moments.

Mental Health First Aid

Become a certified Mental Health First-Aider and gain the skills to assess risk, respond confidently, and connect individuals to appropriate care in mental health and substance use situations.

Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)

Become a QPR-trained Gatekeeper and learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis, and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help.

MH1

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST RESPONDERS

The **Mental Health First Responders** provide free, mobile, after hours professional crisis support for University of Utah students

Learn more at mhtl.utah.edu

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Stickers



["Asking for Help Shows Strength"](#)



["Talk to Yourself with Love"](#)

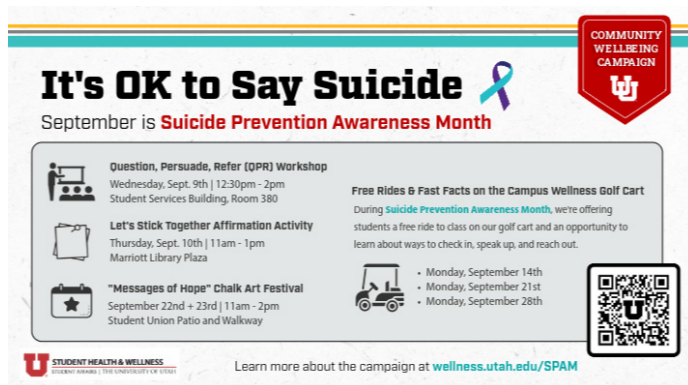
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Sample Messages & Graphics

Caption Ideas

1. Join us and take action to help prevent suicide. Every conversation, every connection can make a difference. Follow along with the campaign for resources and ways to connect, support, and prevent:
wellness.utah.edu/events/suicide-prevention-awareness.php #StrongerTogether #SuicidePrevention
2. You may not always know what someone is experiencing. A check-in, a listening ear, a number shared at the right moment, can make a real difference.
#SuicidePrevention starts with connection.
3. Learn the warning signs of suicide for the people in your life, and for yourself. Changes in mood, sleep, or behavior; withdrawing from others; talking about having no reason to live: wellnesshub.utah.edu/student-mental-health-resources

TV Display Screen of Campaign Events



16 x 9" TV Display
"It's Okay to Say Suicide"

Suicide Prevention Toolkit

Sample Messages & Graphics

Instagram Graphics



"It's Never Wrong to Ask How Someone is Doing"



"Open Your Eyes to the Warning Signs"



"Your story isn't over yet"

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Resources & Referral Tips

Find student mental health options that fit your needs at [The Wellness Hub](#).

Connect with professional on-campus, off-campus, and virtual support filtered to fit how you're feeling.



In Crisis - A state of unbearable suffering that needs immediate help



Struggling - A troubled state where it is important to seek support



Surviving - An unsettled mind that may feel on edge or restless



Thriving - A healthy baseline with normal functions & behaviors



Excelling - Peak function and performing at fullest potential

How to learn more about Suicide Prevention



**Mental Health
First Aid**
Certification



**Question, Persuade,
Refer (QPR)**
Workshop



**You Can Make
a Difference**
Workshop

Suicide Prevention Toolkit

Glossary of Terminology

Learn **key messages** and **terms** and used frequently in suicide prevention efforts. This glossary includes local and general terminology that will be helpful as you start the conversation with your peers, students, staff, and loved ones during the campaign!

1. It's OK to Say Suicide

- **What is it? Suicide** occurs when people harm themselves intending to end their life, resulting in death. A suicide attempt is when individuals harm themselves with the same intent but survive. It is important to avoid terms like "committing suicide," "successful suicide," or "failed suicide," as these phrases tend to carry negative connotations. Alternatively, saying someone "died by suicide" can honor the person's experience with dignity and respect.
- **Are suicidal thoughts permanent?** No, feeling hopeless or having **thoughts of suicide** can happen when we experience a lot of pain or numbness, but those feelings are temporary and can get better with the right support.
 - Hopelessness can show up as thinking things will never improve, focusing only on the negative, or pulling away from people and activities you used to enjoy.
 - Telling someone how you're feeling is a brave first step toward getting help. You don't have to struggle alone, and reaching out can bring relief and hope.
- **Asking saves lives:** Asking someone directly if they're **thinking about suicide** does not put the idea in their head. Research shows that it can actually bring them relief because someone has finally acknowledged how bad they're feeling. [Learn more about ways to ask.](#)

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2. Strong & safe relationships are a form of suicide prevention

- **Not a month or a moment, but a shared responsibility:** Suicide prevention is not one moment or one person's job. It lives in the relationships we build, the support we offer, and the communities we create together.
- **Suicide prevention touches every part of life** – from families and schools to workplaces, faith communities, and health care systems. When people feel connected, valued, and supported, they are more likely to seek help. And when communities come together around a shared commitment to prevention, lives are saved
- **Suicide prevention starts long before a crisis.** Open conversations, shared resources, and visible awareness make a real difference.
 - Knowing the warning signs of suicide, in adults and in children and teens, means being able to recognize when someone needs support and connect them to help sooner.
 - Small acts of connection, such as a check-in, a shared resource, a moment of genuine attention, are how communities take care of each other.
- **Dignity starts with being heard.** When people feel respected and valued, they are more likely to seek help and stay connected to care.

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3. Recovery is possible and shared resources save lives

- **Reaching out early**, to a trusted person, a provider, or 988, before things reach a breaking point leads to better outcomes and more paths forward.
 - 988 is there for anyone who is struggling, not only for people in a full crisis. Feeling overwhelmed or in emotional pain is reason enough to reach out.
 - A real person answers every call, text, and chat to 988. The support is free, confidential, and available any time of day or night.
 - 988 is available in Spanish, for Veterans, for deaf and hard of hearing callers via ASL Videophone and chat, and in more than 150 languages. Help is there for everyone.
- **Treatment works.** People who receive timely, compassionate care for suicidal thoughts or behaviors can and do heal.
- A **safety plan** gives people something to hold onto in their hardest moments: warning signs to watch for, coping strategies, people to call, and 988
- **The days after someone leaves a hospital or emergency room are among the most difficult.** Follow-up care and a call within 72 hours can change everything. Suicide prevention is possible.

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Resource Terms

- **UCC** = The University Counseling Center
 - **What is it?** The **UCC** supports student health and wellness by offering preventive and therapeutic services (individually or in a group) that enhance students' mental and emotional well-being. **UCC** is staffed by over 40 licensed mental health professionals, clinicians, social workers, and PhD student-staff, and two dogs!
- **MH1** = Mental Health First Responders
 - **MH1** provides licensed mental health crisis workers who offer mobile, after-hours crisis support services. **MH1** licensed mental health crisis responders differ from UCC in that they specialize in crisis care and are the ones to be contacted (385-321-5356) in the case of an emergency or mental health crisis.
- **988** = The national three-digit suicide hotline
 - **988** is a 24/7 national lifeline anyone can call, text, or chat at any time to speak with a crisis counselor if they are facing suicidal ideation or need connection to divert from suicidal behaviors or thoughts.
- **SafeUT** = A Utah-specific app for suicide prevention
 - Like 988, this is an online chat application based in Utah that provides instant access to a trained crisis counselor. **SafeUT** counselors are licensed with master's degrees in mental health and are employed by the Huntsman Mental Health Institute at the University of Utah Health. They're trained in supportive listening, problem-solving, crisis intervention, and suicide and school safety prevention. **SafeUT** counselors are ready to help 24/7, 365 days a year, for free.

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- **QPR** = An acronym for a form of suicide prevention - "Question, Persuade, Refer"
 - **What is it?** **QPR** is a skill-based workshop where participants will learn how to recognize when someone close to them needs help, how to talk about it, and how to guide that person to professional help. A session will be held in the Student Services Building (RM. 380) on September 9th.
- **Safe Messaging:** Talking differently about suicide and mental health can reduce negative stigma surrounding it. Words can carry meaning and provide support. We choose words that don't minimize someone or their experience.