



National Alliance on Mental Illness

A photograph of two women sitting on a wooden bench outdoors. The woman on the left has long, dark, wavy hair and is wearing a yellow sweater and a brown turtleneck. The woman on the right has long, reddish-brown hair and is wearing a plaid jacket. They are both looking at each other and appear to be in conversation. The background shows trees and a building.

# NAMI Suicide Prevention Month 2024

| Toolkit

# | What's Inside This Toolkit

We at NAMI National have created this toolkit to support NAMI State Organizations and Affiliates, partners and ambassadors, and other mental health champions in an effort to raise awareness of Suicide Prevention Month. We encourage you to use these resources in your own promotion and awareness efforts.

Your support is invaluable to NAMI, and we thank you for all that you are doing to help advance our vision of a world where all people affected by mental health conditions live healthy, fulfilling lives, supported by a community that cares.

You will notice that we have included information from our wonderful colleagues at the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. And we would like to thank them for sharing with us this critically important information.

If you have any questions about the materials in this toolkit or how to use them, please reach out to the NAMI National Marketing & Communications Department at [marcom@nami.org](mailto:marcom@nami.org).

## Table of Contents

- 3** About Suicide Prevention Month
- 4** Know the Warning Signs
- 5** If Someone Tells You They're Thinking About Suicide
- 9** Additional Resources
- 10** Join the Conversation on Social Media
- 11** Sample Graphics
- 12** Fast Facts
- 13** NAMI Brand and Logo Guidelines

# About Suicide Prevention Month

**September is Suicide Prevention Month** — a time to raise awareness and discuss this urgently important crisis. In addition to shifting public perception, NAMI uses this month to spread hope and vital information to people affected by suicide and suicidal ideation. Our goal is ensuring that individuals, friends, and families have access to the resources they need to discuss suicide prevention and to seek help.

Suicidal thoughts, much like mental health conditions, can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, or background. While suicidal thoughts are common, they should not be considered normal, and they often indicate more serious issues.



## Calls to Action

- **Help NAMI spread the word** about 988 and the confidential, judgment-free support available to anyone 24/7. *Add one of these options to any messages or posts about suicide and suicide prevention:*
  - » If you or someone you know is in crisis, call, text, or chat 988, immediately (chat available at [988Lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org)).
  - » 988 offers 24/7 judgment-free support for mental health, substance use, and more. Call, text, or chat 988.
- Have questions about 988? [Visit NAMI's FAQs to learn more](#) about how 988 can offer judgment-free support for mental health, substance use, and suicide crises.
- Your advocacy matters to help people in mental health and suicidal crisis! [Visit NAMI's 988 Crisis Response State Legislation Map](#) to learn more about what's happening in your state and across the country.
- [Read and share NAMI's State Legislative Brief](#) on Trends in State Policy: 988 and Reimagining Crisis Response to learn about innovative ways states are improving suicide prevention and crisis services.
- [Explore how your community can #ReimagineCrisis](#). Find advocacy resources and information to build a better mental health and suicide crisis response system for everyone, no matter who they are or where they live.
- [Join us in recognizing #988Day on September 8](#). 988 Day is a national initiative dedicated to raising awareness about 988 and emphasizing the importance of mental health and suicide prevention.
- [Stay up to date on how you can advocate for better suicide prevention](#) and mental health crisis support by signing up for NAMI's Federal Advocacy Alerts.

# Know the Warning Signs



Distinguishing certain behaviors from possible signs of a mental illness isn't always easy. There's no simple test to label one's actions and thoughts as mental illness, typical behavior, or the result of a physical ailment.

## Common Signs of Mental Illness

Each illness has its own symptoms, but common signs of mental illness in adults and adolescents can include the following:

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Confused thinking and/or problems concentrating and learning
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable “highs” or feelings of euphoria
- Prolonged and/or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulties understanding and/or relating to other people
- Changes in sleeping habits and/or feeling tired and low energy
- Changes in eating habits such as increased, or lack of, appetite
- Difficulty perceiving reality (delusions or hallucinations, in which a person experiences and senses things that don't exist in objective reality)
- Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior, or personality (“lack of insight” or anosognosia)
- Overuse of substances like alcohol or drugs
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes (such as headaches, stomach aches, and vague and ongoing “aches and pains”)
- Thinking about suicide
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress
- An intense fear of weight gain or concern with appearance

## Common Signs of Mental Illness in Children and Young Adults

Mental health conditions can also begin to develop in young children. Because they're still learning how to identify and talk about thoughts and emotions, children's most obvious symptoms are behavioral. Symptoms in children may include the following:

- Changes in school performance
- Excessive worry or anxiety; for instance, fighting to avoid bed or school
- Hyperactive behavior
- Frequent nightmares
- Frequent disobedience or aggression
- Frequent temper tantrums

# If Someone Tells You They're Thinking About Suicide

Referenced with permission from [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Talk Away the Dark Campaign](#)

Let's say you're having an open, honest conversation with someone about mental health – you can find tips on how to do that – and they feel comfortable enough with you to reveal that they're having thoughts of suicide. You probably feel an immense amount of pressure. How should you respond? What can you do to connect them to help?

First of all, realize that someone opening up in this way is a positive thing, because it's an opportunity to help. Here are some ways you can respond.

1

## Let them know you're listening.

First of all, reassure them you hear what they're saying, and that you're taking them seriously.

- "I'm so glad you're telling me about how much has been going on, and how you're feeling. Thank you for sharing this with me."

2

## Show your support.

In your own way, make sure they know you're there with them, and that you care.

- "I'm right here with you."
- "Nothing you're going through changes how I feel about you, and how awesome I think you are."
- "I love you no matter what, and we're going to get through this together."

3

## Encourage them to keep talking – and really listen.

Let them know you want to hear more about how they're feeling, and what they're going through. Listen actively by expressing curiosity and interest in the details.

- "Wow – that situation sounds really difficult."
- "How did that make you feel when that happened?"

4

## Ask them about changes in their life and how they are coping.

Find out how long it's been that the person has been feeling this way, and any changes it's caused in their life.

- "How long have you felt this way? When did these feelings start?"
- "Have these thoughts led to any specific changes in your life, like trouble sleeping, or keeping up with work?"
- "Have you been getting out as much as before? Are you isolating yourself?"

# If Someone Tells You They're Thinking About Suicide *(continued)*

Referenced with permission from American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Talk Away the Dark Campaign

5

## Be direct if you suspect they're thinking about suicide.

If you think someone's thinking about suicide, trust your gut and ask them directly. Research shows it will not put the idea in their head, or push them into action. Often, they'll be relieved someone cares enough to hear about their experience with suicidal thoughts.

- "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"
- "Does it ever get so tough that you think about ending your life?"
- Make sure not to sound like you're passing judgment (**DON'T say:** "You're not thinking of doing something stupid, are you?") or guilt-trip them (**DON'T say:** "Think of what it would do to your parents.")
- Instead, reassure them that you understand and care.
- "I really care about you, and I want you to know you can tell me anything."

6

## What can you say if they tell you they're thinking about killing themselves?

Stay calm – just because someone is having thoughts of suicide, it doesn't mean they're in immediate danger. Take the time to calmly listen to what they have to say, and ask some follow-up questions.

- "How often are you having these thoughts?"
- "When it gets really bad, what do you do?"
- "What scares you about these thoughts?"
- "What do you need to do to feel safe?"

Reassure them that help is available, and that these feelings are a signal that it's time to talk to a mental health professional.

- "The fact that you're having these thoughts tells me something significant is going on for you right now. The good news is, help is out there. I want to help you get connected to resources that can help."

7

## Follow their lead, and know when to take a break.

This is a tough conversation to have, so make sure the other person knows they can stop if it feels like talking about it is too hard for them at the moment.

- "Are you okay with continuing to talk about this?"
- "I want to support you, and I'll be here if you want to talk more later."

# If Someone Tells You They're Thinking About Suicide *(continued)*

Referenced with permission from American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Talk Away the Dark Campaign

8

## How to suggest they could benefit from professional help.

You are being a great person in having this supportive conversation – but you're not a mental health professional. If the person you care about has told you they're thinking of suicide, it's a warning sign that they should speak with a mental health professional. Here's how you can broach the subject.

- “I hear you that you're struggling, and I think it would really be helpful for you to talk to someone who can help you get through this.”
- “You know, therapy isn't just for serious, “clinical” problems. It can help any of us process any challenges we're facing – and we all face serious stuff sometimes.”
- “I really think talking to someone can help you gain some perspective, and keep things from getting worse.”
- “You're in good company: the highest-performing executives and elite athletes lean on mental health professionals to hone their performance. Reaching out for professional guidance and therapy is a strong thing to do, and it can make all the difference.”

9

## Help them connect.

Sometimes making that first moment of contact to professional help can be the hardest. Offer to help them connect in whatever way you're comfortable with.

- “I could call your insurance with you, or go online to find a mental health professional or substance use program. Or I could sit with you while you do it. We can figure it out together.”
- “I could drive or walk you to your appointment. Then we could have coffee afterwards.”

10

## If they're concerned about privacy.

If the person is worried about others finding out that they're getting treatment, let them know their worries are mostly unfounded.

- “Most people realize that mental health is an extremely important, valid part of health in general – and we all have various kinds of health issues. People who get support for their mental health are seen as strong, smart and proactive.”

If they ask you not to tell anyone, tell them you want to help them get the support they need – and that may involve enlisting the help of others. Encourage them to be part of the conversation that happens in reaching out for help, and reassure them you'll be as discreet as possible in your effort to keep them safe.

# If Someone Tells You They're Thinking About Suicide *(continued)*

Referenced with permission from American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Talk Away the Dark Campaign

11

## What if they refuse?

Not everyone is ready right away. If someone you know is struggling refuses your suggestion of professional help (and if they aren't in immediate danger, i.e. that they are not presently self-harming or about to), be patient and don't push too hard.

- "It's okay that you aren't ready to talk to someone yet. Just let me know if you change your mind, and I can help you connect with someone."
- "I know you're going through a lot, and I really believe it can make a big difference for your life, and your health. Just consider it for later, and know I'm here to help."
- "If you're not ready to go in and meet with someone in person, you could call, text, or chat online with the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. They can tell you more about what it might be like to work with a doctor, counselor or therapist."

You can also offer to speak with their primary care provider as a gentle next step – family and friends can provide information to health care providers (HCPs) without expecting a call back or for the HCP to provide any confidential health information back.

12

## When the convo's winding down...

End the conversation by reiterating that you are so glad for the chance to connect on this deeper level about such meaningful things in life. Remind them that we all have challenges at times, and that you'll continue to be there for them.

If they're in immediate danger,

- Stay with them
- Help them remove lethal means
- Call, text, or chat 988 to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
- Encourage them to seek help or to contact their doctor or therapist





# Additional Resources

## Read the NAMI Blog and Share

The NAMI Blog features content related to our awareness events. Be sure to visit the NAMI Blog at [nami.org/Blog](https://www.nami.org/Blog) and look for posts on our social media channels featuring quotes from our authors.

## Relevant Blogs About Suicide Prevention

### [How to Talk to Your Teen About Suicide](#)

Filmmaker and Youth Mental Health Advocate Jason Reid shares what he's learned about suicide prevention and teens' mental well-being after losing his son, Ryan, to suicide.

### [How to Ask Someone About Suicide](#)

After losing her brother to suicide, Sally made a commitment to learn more about suicide — especially how to talk openly about it. Here, she shares her best practices for having difficult conversations.

### [Reclaiming the Memories of My Sister](#)

Psychology professor Eleni Pinnow opens up about losing her sister to suicide and the complex journey to find comfort in the happy memories of her sister.

### [How to Help Yourself and Others with Suicidal Ideation](#)

Ginger Robertson talks about what suicidal ideation feels like and what you can do to help yourself or others going through it.

### [How to Talk \(and Listen\) to Someone Experiencing Suicidal Thoughts](#)

Vice President of the Hecht Trauma Institute Kevin Connors provides a blueprint for starting the conversation about suicide with loved ones at risk.

### [How Mindfulness Helped Me Cope with My Husband's Suicide](#)

Lenore Matthew shares how an unexpected technique became a coping mechanism as she grieved the loss of her husband.

## Get Inspired by NAMI.org Personal Stories

We will also feature personal stories of lived experience on our website at [www.nami.org](https://www.nami.org) and on our social media channels.

Personal stories are brief, informal pieces submitted to NAMI.

By sharing these stories, we aim to highlight the importance of mental health in all communities and to make people feel less alone in their mental health journeys.

## Videos

NAMI's website features videos from people sharing their stories of lived experience, such as [NAMI Support Groups: A Safe Space](#), a video about the powerful and positive impact that NAMI support groups have on their lives and [Surviving Loss: A Father's Journey](#) about NAMI Michigan's executive director, Kevin Fischer, and his journey of finding NAMI and his purpose — to take on stigma and address men's mental health. Look for additional content to be uploaded to our YouTube channel throughout the month.



# Join the Conversation on Social Media



## #SuicidePreventionMonth

Throughout September, we invite you to share our messages below or your own messages about Suicide Prevention Month through the power of courageous community conversations. Help us amplify the message that there is strength in vulnerability.

Don't forget to tag us at @NAMICommunicate on Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) and @NAMI on TikTok, LinkedIn, and Facebook. And be sure to use the hashtag #SuicidePreventionMonth in your posts.

In every post, please add language or a reply comment providing information to 988. This can include but is not limited to:

- Call, text, or chat 988 to speak to a trained crisis counselor offering support 24/7/365.

### Platforms

Weekly/daily activations will be taking place on NAMI's social media channels. Follow NAMI to tune in, repost, retweet, and share:

- [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Threads](#), [TikTok](#), [X](#), [YouTube](#).

### Hashtag

#SuicidePreventionMonth

URL: [nami.org/suicidepreventionmonth](https://nami.org/suicidepreventionmonth)

## Sample Captions

If you or someone you know has thoughts of suicide, immediate help is available. Call, text, or chat 988 to speak to a trained crisis counselor offering support 24/7/365. #SuicidePreventionMonth

It's #SuicidePreventionMonth – if you are struggling, there are options available to help. Call or text #988, or chat at 988lifeline.org, to speak to someone and get immediate support.

As we share our mental health journeys – the good, the bad, and the ugly – we begin to let down our walls and create safe spaces. Join me in fostering open conversations. #SuicidePreventionMonth

#SuicidePreventionMonth provides a dedicated time to come together with passion and strength to address this difficult topic. We can all benefit from honest conversations about mental health and suicide, because just one conversation can change a life.

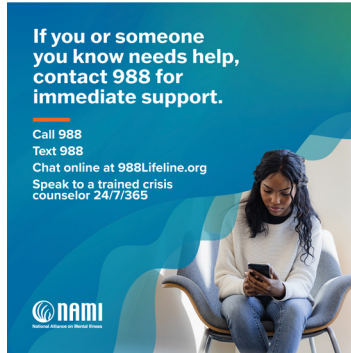
Let's create spaces where people can prioritize their mental health, where their voices are heard, where support thrives and flows freely, and where healing can take root. #SuicidePreventionMonth

Starting a conversation can help save a life. Studies show people who are having thoughts of suicide feel relief when someone asks about them in a caring way. Learn more about how to help support someone you care about through a crisis at [nami.org/suicidepreventionmonth](https://nami.org/suicidepreventionmonth).

# Sample Graphics


We encourage you to incorporate these graphics in your social media posts, cover images, website hero images, or existing messaging to help spread awareness during September. High-quality files can be downloaded from [nami.org/suicidepreventionmonth](https://nami.org/suicidepreventionmonth).

## Stand-Alone Posts



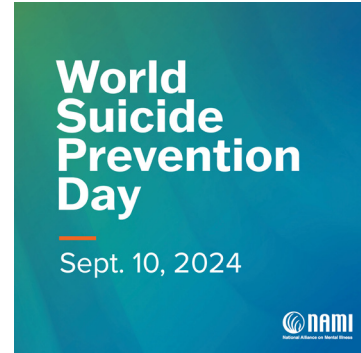
**If you or someone you know needs help, contact 988 for immediate support.**

Call 988  
Text 988  
Chat online at [988Lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org)  
Speak to a trained crisis counselor 24/7/365



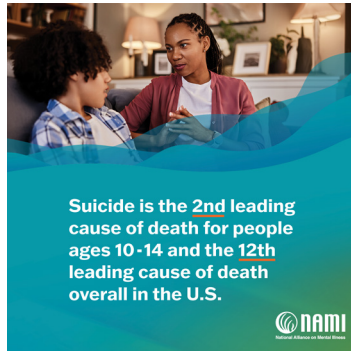

**Know the warning signs of suicide.**

Learn more at [nami.org/suicideprevention](https://nami.org/suicideprevention)




**World Suicide Prevention Day**

Sept. 10, 2024



**Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for people ages 10-14 and the 12th leading cause of death overall in the U.S.**



**If you're in crisis, call or text 988 or chat online at [988Lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org).**

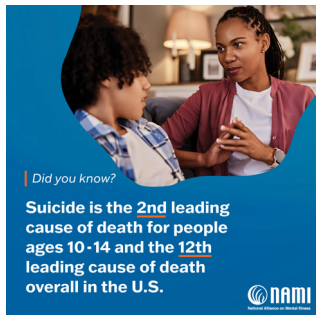


**Raise awareness for suicide prevention and treatment, know the risks and warning signs for suicide and what to do in a crisis.**

[nami.org/suicideprevention](https://nami.org/suicideprevention)




## Suicide Prevention Carousel



**Did you know?**

**Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for people ages 10-14 and the 12th leading cause of death overall in the U.S.**



**Tell me more**

**Although more women than men attempt suicide, men are 4x more likely to die by suicide.**



**Tell me more**

**Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are 4x more likely to attempt suicide than straight youth.**



**Tell me more**

**Transgender adults are 9x more likely to attempt suicide at some point in their life compared to their peers.**



**Tell me more**

**The highest rates of suicide in the U.S. are among American Indian/Alaskan Natives, followed by non-Hispanic white people.**



**To help raise awareness and break down stigma, you can share resources, stories, and support.**



# Fast Facts



## Individual Impact

**79%** of all people who die by suicide **are male**.

Although more women than men attempt suicide, **men are 4x more likely to die by suicide**.

In the U.S., suicide is the **second leading cause of death among people aged 10-14**, the 3rd leading cause of death among those aged 15-24, and the 12th leading cause of death overall.

**46% of people who die by suicide had a diagnosed mental health condition** — but research suggests that 90% may have experienced symptoms of a mental health condition.

## Community Impact

- Annual prevalence of serious thoughts of suicide, by U.S. demographic group:
  - » 4.8% of all adults
  - » 7.4% Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander
  - » 8.2% Mixed/Multiracial
  - » 8.5% American Indian/Alaska Native
  - » 13% of young adults aged 18-25
  - » 22% of high school students
  - » 41% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth
- The highest rates of suicide in the U.S. are among American Indian/Alaskan Natives, followed by non-Hispanic white people.
- Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are 4x more likely to attempt suicide than straight youth.
- Transgender adults are nearly 9x more likely to attempt suicide at some point in their life compared to their peers.
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for people held in local jails.

*Data from CDC, NIMH and other select sources.*

## Other Resources Around Suicide Prevention

To address the mental health crisis in the Black/African Ancestry community, NAMI's Community Health Equity Alliance (CHEA) created the [Crisis Can't Wait Campaign](#): a campaign designed to help reduce mental health crises in Black/African Ancestry communities around the country. Join us in sharing resources with changemakers in your community who are ready to make a difference. Together, we can stop these crises and connect people with the care and support they need, because Crisis Can't Wait.

- [Navigating a Mental Health Crisis: A NAMI Resource Guide for Those Experiencing a Mental Health Emergency](#)
- [What You Need to Know About Youth Suicide](#)
- [Safe Storytelling Guidelines](#)
- [988 FAQs available at nami.org/988](#)

# NAMI Brand and Logo Guidelines

Following our identity guidelines ensures that all NAMI publications and content maintain a professional and high-quality standard. Please use the guidelines listed below to help create materials that reflect the NAMI look and feel.

The approved NAMI Identity Guide and NAMI logos can be found at [nami.org/identity](https://nami.org/identity). We encourage you to use and share these in your campaigns.

## Logo



Primarily, the logo is shown in NAMI Blue.



The logo should be white over dark backgrounds.



The NAMI logo can also be used in black.

## Fonts

### Franklin Gothic

Sans serif font for headlines and attention-grabbing information.

### Museo Sans

Sans serif font for sub-headlines and secondary information.

### Proxima Nova

Sans serif font for body copy and tertiary information.

## Colors



NAMI Blue  
PMS Reflex Blue  
CMYK: 100/82/0/2  
RGB: 0/83/159



NAMI Teal  
PMS 321  
Purple  
CMYK: 80/21/32/1  
RGB: 0/153/168



NAMI Pear Green  
PMS 377  
CMYK: 58/23/100/4  
RGB: 121/153/0



Orange  
PMS Warm Red  
CMYK: 0/74/98/0  
RGB: 255/102/27

## Questions?

If you have any questions about the materials in this guide or how to use them, please reach out to the NAMI National Marketing & Communications Department at [marcom@nami.org](mailto:marcom@nami.org).