



Suicide Prevention Month Special Edition

September 2021



In recognition of National Suicide Prevention Month, the VDOE is teaming up with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists (VASP), the Virginia School Counseling Association (VSCA), the Virginia Association of School Counselors (VASC), the Virginia Association of School Social Workers (VASSW), and other community partners to promote Suicide Prevention

Month in Virginia.

Together we are calling on all school-based mental health professionals to join in activities to raise awareness and share resources around the issue of suicide prevention.

According to the 2019 Virginia Youth Survey, 16 percent of high school students indicated that they seriously considered attempting suicide (in the 12 months prior to taking the survey). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data indicates

that suicide is the second leading cause of death in children aged 10-14 and youth aged 15-24.

In September, we recognize the following observances:

- **September:** Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month
- **September 5-11:** National Suicide Prevention Week
- **September 10:** World Suicide Prevention Day

WEEKLY THEMES: "BeThe1To"

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's message for this year's Suicide Prevention Month is **#BeThe1To**.

School divisions are encouraged to take action to raise awareness and end the stigma associated with seeking mental health help.

The VDOE will launch a social media campaign in September. Join us by responding through social media your suicide prevention strategies and techniques.

The following hashtags are encouraged: #Bethe1ToVA, #AskVA, #BeThereVA, #KeepThemSafeVA, #HelpThemConnectVA, #FollowUpVA.



Each week in September has a theme to promote specific elements of Suicide Prevention. Below you will find each week's designated theme, along with hand-selected and aligned resources.

WEEKLY WEBINARS

Additionally, each week we will have a short, webinar featuring leaders in Suicide Prevention from throughout the state. You can view an introduction to this webinar series and check out the information for week one by viewing the video below.

[Week One Webinar Presentation Slides](#)

Virginia Suicide Prevention Month, 2021



Weekly Webinars for
School-Based Mental Health
Professional

If you wish to receive the webinars for weeks two-five delivered directly to your inbox please register using the button below.

[REGISTRATION FORM FOR FUTURE WEEKLY WEBINARS](#)

WEEK ONE: #AskVA

SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH
WEEK ONE

Be The 1 To Ask

Don't be afraid to ask the tough question.
When somebody you know is in emotional pain, ask
them directly:
"Are you thinking about suicide?"

Related Resources:

[Week One Webinar](#)

[Week One Presentation Slides](#)

[Partner Toolkit](#)

Seize the Awkward helps provide young people with the inspiration and resources they need to help them reach out to their friends and start conversations about mental health. This toolkit will help you share the tools that Seize the Awkward provides within your communities and networks.

[How to Ask Someone About Suicide](#)

This blog post by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is an excellent resource for gatekeepers. It includes tips on starting the conversation, asking the suicide question, and what to do after asking.

[Suicide Thoughts and Behaviors Guidelines](#)

These guidelines provide information in a digestible format that is also easy to reference. It includes information for helping people who are thinking about suicide and also cover signs a person may be suicidal, how to approach the person, how to talk with them, how to assess the urgency of the situation, how to keep them safe, what to do if a person has acted on suicidal thoughts, and how to deal with confidentiality issues.

[Mental Health Commission of Canada's HEADSTRONG School-Based Activities Toolkit](#)

This toolkit is intended to help engage schools to create and sustain school-based HEADSTRONG committees after a regional summit. The toolkit is designed for teachers, school staff, and students who will comprise the committees and to ensure that the community leader (or designate) knows how to support anti-stigma school-based activities.

VDOE Suicide Prevention Training for School Staff

To support school divisions implementing the new *Suicide Prevention Guidelines for Virginia Public Schools*, we have developed webinars to assist with staff training and training for suicide risk assessment teams/school-based mental health providers.

- [VDOE Suicide Prevention Training Video Part 1](#)
- [VDOE Suicide Prevention Training Video Part 2](#)
- Slide Deck: [PowerPoint](#), [PDF](#)

Week TWO: #BeThereVA



Related Resources:

[Talking to Someone You're Worried About](#) (Beyond Blue)

"All I actually wanted was for someone to listen." This site explores ways to listen and how to be there for someone having suicidal thoughts.

[If Someone Tells You They're Thinking About Suicide: A #RealConvo Guide from American Foundation for Suicide Prevention \(AFSP\)](#) (AFSP)

It can be overwhelming when you are having a conversation with someone and they feel comfortable enough with you to reveal that they are 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, realize that someone opening up in this way is a positive thing, because it's an opportunity to help. This resource offers specific ways you can respond.

[School Connectedness](#) (Military Child Initiative)

For military children, who may move as many as 15 times before they graduate from high school, a school environment where they feel secure and ready to learn is critical. This resource discusses the importance of school connectedness and offers strategies and resources to enhance connectedness.

[School Connectedness](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

School Connectedness is the belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals. This resource offers six evidence-based strategies that could be implemented to increase students' sense of connectedness to school, along with specific actions that can be taken to implement each of the strategies.

[How to Better Support Your Marginalized Students](#) Article by Nick Gehl on how to support marginalized students.

[Every Student Matters: Cultivating Belonging in the Classroom](#) (Edutopia)

This article explores five specific strategies that classroom teachers can use to ensure that students feel they belong in your classroom.

[Preventing Youth Suicide: Tips for Parents and Educators](#) (National Association of School Psychologists)

Youth who are contemplating suicide frequently give warning signs of their distress. Parents, teachers, and friends are in a key position to pick up on these signs and get help. This site offers resources to help the school community better understand suicide. Included in the resources are handouts that can be shared with teens, staff administrators and crisis teams, and Spanish-speaking families, youth, and teachers.

WEEK THREE: #KeepThemSafeVA



If someone is thinking about suicide asking about it won't increase their likelihood of harm.
Find out if they have a plan and take action to keep them safe.

Related Resources:

[Lock and Talk](#)

Lock and Talk is a statewide suicide prevention program that helps to spread the two key program messages:

1. Secure or remove lethal means to suicide, and
2. Open conversations about mental health concerns and foster a compassionate approach to discussing suicide.

Visit their webpage for free templates of posters to display, resources to connect students and families to mental health resources, education, and to receive free safety devices like gun locks or locking boxes for medications for your school.

[Heard Alliance Intervention Resources](#)

Intervention protocols to assist students in a crisis involving suicidal thoughts or behaviors are a critical component of both district and school responses. These protocols aid school personnel in intervening effectively with suicidal students. Intervention protocols vary based on the determined degree of suicide risk.

[Suicide Assessment Five-Step Evaluation and Triage \(SAFE-T\) \(Pocket Card\)](#)

This helpful pocket card was developed as a collaboration between Screening for Mental Health, Inc., the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

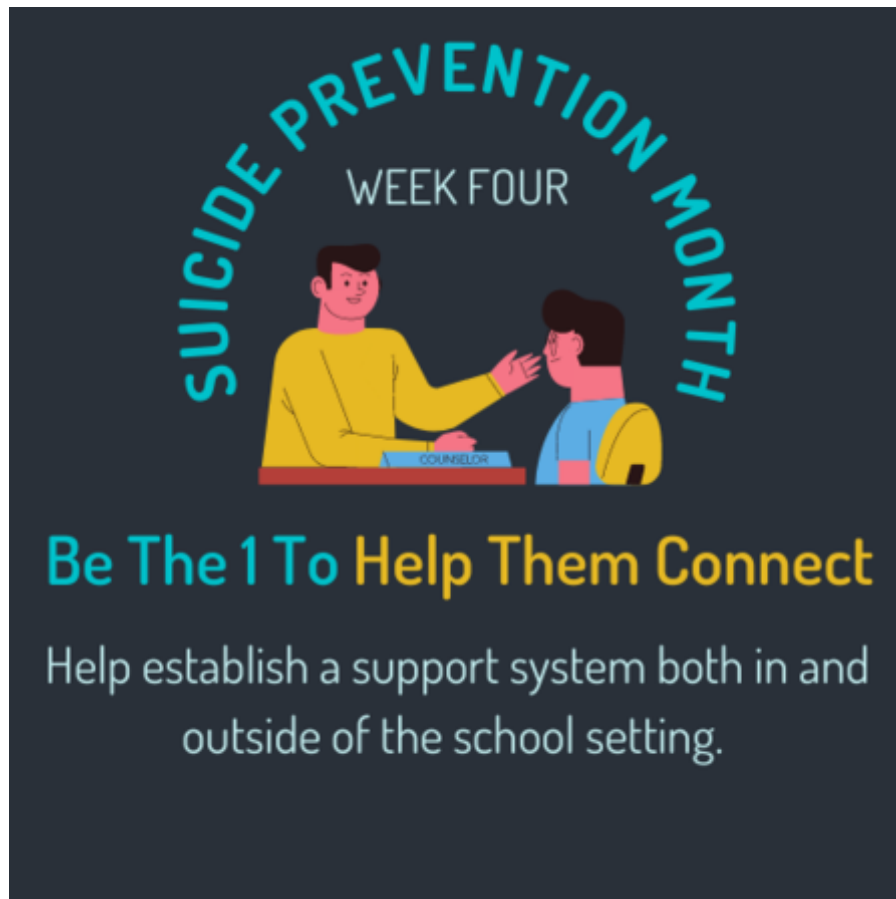
[Take 5 to Save Lives](#)

Learn how to help someone who may be struggling with suicidal thoughts. The most important thing you can do is to ASK the person directly if they are thinking about suicide. This five-step outline provides helpful tips and conversation starters to guide you along the way.

Intervention Resources Developed to Compliment the VDOE Suicide Prevention Guidelines:

- [Suicide Risk Assessment: Parent Notification Form](#) (Word)
 - [Suicide Risk: Tips for Making Parent/Guardian Contact](#) (Word)
 - [Suicide Risk Assessment: Planning Guide and Checklist](#) (Word)
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WEEK FOUR: #HelpThemConnectVA



Related Resources:

[How Can You Help](#)

Find A Therapist or Support Group: Speaking to someone, whether by going to a therapist or by attending a support group, can help you feel better and improve your mental health. These resources can help you find a psychologist, psychiatrist, or support group near you.

- [Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator](#)
- [Find a Therapist](#)
- [Find a Support Group](#)

Build and Use a Support Network: Those you choose to confide in can provide encouragement and help you through a crisis. Leaning on your support network can help you cope during difficult moments and is an important step in getting help and moving forward.

- [With Help Comes Hope](#): support for persons living with suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts
- [You Matter](#): You Matter is a safe space for youth to discuss and share stories about mental health and wellness, created and administered by the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. You Matter blog posts are written by a rotating Blogger Council of individuals between the ages of 13-24 that are passionate about suicide prevention and mental health.

Safety Planning: A safety plan is designed to guide you through a crisis. As you continue through the steps, you can get help and feel safer. Keep your plan easily accessible in case you have thoughts of hurting yourself.

- [Safety Plan Template](#)
 - [Safety Planning Around Suicidal Ideation](#)
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WEEK FIVE: #FollowUpVA



needed.

Related Resources:

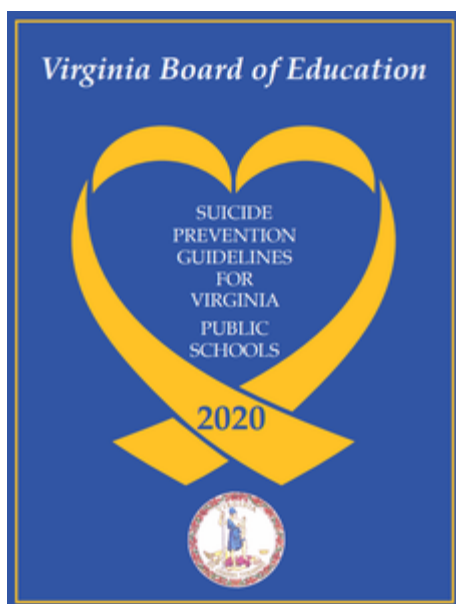
[Follow-Up Matters](#): This website discusses the challenges of post-discharge, partnering with crisis hotlines, and the processes and types of follow-up that support the transition of individuals as they continue their journey toward recovery.

[The Way Forward](#): This report provides pathways to hope, recovery, and wellness and focuses on approaches and practices to support the person experiencing suicidal thoughts and feelings.

[Best Practices in Care Transitions](#): This focuses on the transition from inpatient care to outpatient care. It can provide useful strategies for supporting the person after connecting them to mental health services.

A few more things before you go...

The VDOE also pulled together a list of resources to aid in your suicide prevention efforts. This one-stop-shop of resources is organized into five categories: Guidelines and Models, Prevention and Awareness, Resources for Students, Resources for Caregivers and Staff, and Helpful Infographics and Social Shareables. Find these resources at our [Suicide Prevention Resource Library](#).



Schools are key settings for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. Most children and youth spend most of their day in school where caring and trained adults are available to help them. Teachers, mental health providers, and all other school personnel who interact with students can play an important role in keeping them safe (VDH, 2019). The recently released [Suicide Prevention Guidelines for Virginia Public Schools 2020](#) discuss suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention in the school setting.

**Don't forget to register for our future
Suicide Prevention weekly webinars!**

Calendar | Revolution Weekly Webinar

[Weekly Webinar Registration Form](#) [Registration Form](#)

Let's Stay in Touch!

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