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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Communication is Key to Coping with Suicide Clusters**

PIERRE, SD - When someone dies by suicide, it leaves a ripple of grief and confusion. When multiple suicides occur, as with a suicide cluster, that impact is amplified and becomes cause for public concern.

A suicide cluster is defined as a group of suicides and/or suicide attempts that occur closer together in time and space than would normally be expected. With a recent suicide cluster in our community, communication is key to preventing further loss and coping with grief or trauma.

(INCLUDE DETAILS SPECIFIC TO THE SITUATION IN THE COMMUNITY)

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), suicide is the second-leading cause of death for young people age 10-14 and 25-34. But suicide is preventable. And contrary to popular belief, talking about suicide doesn’t make it worse. Instead, talking can help diminish feelings of fear and encourage someone who may be contemplating suicide to get help.

During this difficult time, it’s important to educate yourself on the warning signs of suicide:

* Feelings of hopelessness or feeling trapped
* Dramatic mood changes
* Engaging in risky activities
* Giving possessions away
* Talking, writing or drawing about death

Check in with yourself and those around you.

* If you’re having suicidal thoughts or feelings of hopelessness or depression, know that you’re not alone. Your life has value. Call, text or chat the 988 Lifeline for free, confidential help from a local professional.
* If you’re concerned about someone in your life, you can also call 988 for resources and guidance. In a safe space, it’s okay to ask someone if they’re thinking of suicide. Then stay with them and keep them safe until you can contact help together.

Third, connect with grief counselors and support groups to help you process trauma. Visit SDSuicidePrevention.org/Survivors/Survivor-Support-Groups-In-South-Dakota/ for local support groups. (CAN ALSO LIST COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC RESOURCES HERE).

It’s okay to talk about suicide. For more information about suicide prevention, treatment options, warning signs and suicide clusters, visit SDSuicidePrevention.org.

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