

SOUTH DAKOTA SUICIDE PREVENTION PLAN 2020-2025

2024 PRIORITY STRATEGIES OUTCOMES REPORT

988 - Call. Text. Chat.



sdsuicideprevention.org



DATA

To measure the impact of the implementation of the 2020-2025 SD Suicide Prevention Plan, 5 performance measures were identified and are posted on the data dashboards on SDSuicidePrevention.org/data. These are monitored on an annual basis to assess progress and inform our priority strategies for the next year.

Below are the data points for the Suicide State Performance Measures:

1. By 2025, increase the average monthly number of unique users who visit the SD Suicide Prevention website from 2,324 (2020) to 4,638.
 - a. 2023 = 5,376
 - b. 2024 = 3,108
2. By 2025, increase the number of annual community helper trainings offered and individuals trained from 61 trainings, training 1,179 individuals in 2020 to 71 trainings, training 1,367 individuals.
 - a. 2023 = 229 trainings, training 5,612
 - b. 2024 = 286 trainings, training 7,035
3. By 2025, increase the number of calls from South Dakotans to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline from 3,811 (2020) to 4,661.
 - a. 2023 = 9,749
 - b. 2024 = 12,072
4. By 2025, decrease the percentage of high school students who reported they attempted suicide from 12.3% (2019) to 9%.
 - a. 2021 = 11.9%
 - b. 2023 = 8.4%
5. By 2025, decrease the number of suicide deaths from 185 (2020) to 167.
 - a. 2022 = 192
 - b. 2023 = 180



To increase awareness about suicide data and highlight available resources, the SD Suicide Prevention Workgroup developed three additional **population-specific infographics** focused on young adults, older adults, and South Dakota's workforce. These infographics, along with the previously created population infographics (American Indians, farmers and ranchers, Veterans, and youth), highlight some key data points, warning signs of suicide, ways to reduce the risk of suicide, and available resources that are specific to each population. These infographics are available on the South Dakota Suicide Prevention website.

In 2024, the **Suicide Prevention Capacity Needs Assessment for South Dakota** was developed. The purpose of this needs assessment is to explore relevant suicide and suicide risk-related data to guide in enhancing and expanding suicide prevention capacity across the State. Two key aspects of prevention capacity are the availability of resources and the readiness to apply those resources to a need. Ongoing and continuous monitoring of suicide and suicide risk factors at the individual and community level are essential for prevention efforts to adapt and respond to changes in community needs for South Dakota. This document will be used to inform program decisions and prevention efforts in the state.

An **inter-agency Data to Action workgroup** continues to meet monthly to review provisional data and identify communities at high risk for suicide. After a high-risk community is identified, workgroup members proactively reach out to

partners in healthcare, behavioral health, schools, and other local organizations to make them aware of the changes in data and provide additional support and resources. In 2024, Pennington County and the Black Hills Region were identified as additional communities experiencing a high risk.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

In 2023 South Dakota joined the **Governor's Challenge**, a partnership between the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) & U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), to enhance the work being done for Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF). The workgroup focuses its efforts on three strategies that align with the state's strategic plan - identifying those in need and reducing barriers, connecting the SMVF population to resources, and means safety. A work plan was developed in 2024 and integrated into the SD Suicide Prevention State Plan.

In partnership with the VA, gun locks started being offered through the SD Suicide Prevention website at no cost, starting in March 2024. As of December 31st, **over 6,217 gun locks have been disseminated** for personal use, to community organizations and coalitions, tribal entities, and schools. All gun locks are accompanied by educational materials highlighting the importance of means safety as it relates to suicide prevention.



The Department of Social Services held three regional convenings with local stakeholders on the expansion of the crisis response system in Watertown, Yankton, and Rapid City. Discussion at these convenings included strengths and challenges around the crisis services system with actionable steps to improve the crisis response referral system.

The Department of Social Services also continues to provide training to the Law Enforcement Training Center in Pierre and Sioux Falls on a quarterly basis to provide education to recruits on the three pillars of crisis care: someone to talk to (988), someone to respond (mobile and virtual crisis care) and a safe place to go (short-term crisis facilities).

In May 2024, the Department of Education provided **Youth Suicide: Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention in Schools**, a virtual workshop geared for school and district administrators, school psychologists, school counselors, and school social workers.

In 2024, The Helpline Center coordinated with eleven K-12 schools in South Dakota to implement **Hope Squad**, an evidence-based peer-to-peer support program. A Hope Squad is a group nominated by their peers that meets regularly with trained advisors to talk and learn about mental health. Squad members are trained to watch for at-risk students, provide friendship, identify suicide warning signs, and seek help from adults. The program aims to reduce the risk of youth suicide through education, training, and peer intervention. In 2025, there are plans to expand Hope Squad to fourteen more schools in South Dakota.

In 2024, Lost & Found implemented the **Peer2Peer mentoring program** in ten South Dakota post-secondary institutions. The Peer2Peer mentoring program brings together student mentors, who have guided practice helping others, with mentees, who are students that need support navigating college life. The program helps both mentors and mentees become familiar with mental health and other resources

“I loved connecting with my mentees and being able to support someone through similar college experiences. It makes the stuff I went through have purpose if it helps someone else!”

-Peer2Peer Mentor

available on campuses and in the community. Mentors are trained to facilitate meetings, listen, and respond to mentee concerns, and refer to outside professionals when appropriate. Mentees gain skills in goal setting and have an accountability partner for those goals.

The **Campus Resilience Index (CRI)** is a partnership-driven tool created by Lost&Found that assesses the suicide prevention capacity of college and technical school campuses and their communities, identifies areas of strength in prevention, and recommends programs, policies, or resources that can reduce suicide risk. In 2024, five South Dakota post-secondary institutions completed the Campus Resilience Index and received an action plan for future improvements.

COMMUNICATIONS

State agencies continue to partner to cross-promote suicide prevention messaging across all populations of focus. New posters for the youth, SMVF, and LGBTQ+ communities were created to promote the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Reach for Life campaign materials continue to be available to promote the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline amongst the Native American community.

In March, a messaging **toolkit on suicide prevention** was created, consisting of example posts and responses for social media to ensure appropriate and inclusive language is being used across prevention providers in South Dakota. In addition, the following toolkits were also developed, including social media posts, cover photos, example press releases, and printable signs: Suicide Prevention Month Toolkit, Higher Education Suicide Prevention Toolkit, Suicide Cluster Toolkit, and Survivors of Suicide Loss Day Toolkit.



In response to provisional data analyzed by the **Data to Action workgroup**, additional media efforts were targeted toward Hughes, Lincoln, Fall River, Tripp, Lawrence, Meade, and Pennington counties. Digital and print media were used to tailor messaging towards identified populations of risk, including farmers, veterans, and the middle-aged working class. The social media campaign achieved a reach of 834,000, with 2.65 million impressions on Facebook and Instagram alone. A complimentary campaign with a focus on the 988 helpline was run during Suicide Prevention Month.

WE NEED TO TALK

2024 Suicide Prevention Conference



During the **Third Annual Suicide Prevention Conference**, attendees were able to record videos sharing why suicide prevention matters to them. These videos were posted on SD Behavioral Health's [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#) accounts and are also available on SD Behavioral Health's [YouTube](#) channel.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Efforts to **support suicide loss survivors** have included in-person and virtual support groups, facilitator training, and resource dissemination to families who have experienced suicide loss. The Helpline Center has been providing ongoing support to launch and strengthen support groups in Chamberlain, Watertown, and Yankton. Lost&Found's Survivors Joining for Hope (SJ4H) program has also been providing personalized one-on-one support for survivors while continuing outreach and education for communities at conferences.

A **K-12 Suicide Postvention Toolkit** was developed, providing guidance and tools for schools to implement best practices for response to suicide loss. Five K-12 schools are anticipated to have the toolkit implemented in 2025. Lost&Found continues to work with post-secondary campuses on best practices for suicide postvention using their postvention policy guide that was created in 2023. Additionally, a West River Postvention Coalition was formed with partners in Western South Dakota to ensure suicide postvention providers are collaborating and coordinating with one another.