



Prevention Newslink

April 2026

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Navigating Big Transitions this Spring

Spring is a season of change, and while many of these changes are exciting, they can also feel overwhelming. As students prepare for graduation, prom, and the transition into summer, it's important to recognize that big milestones often come with a mix of emotions. Excitement, uncertainty, stress, and even sadness can all show up at the same time, and that's completely normal.

Transitions can disrupt routines and challenge our sense of stability. For students, the end of the school year may mean leaving behind familiar environments, friendships, and support systems. Even positive changes, like graduating or starting something new, can bring pressure to "have it all figured out." The loss of structure during summer can also impact motivation, connection, and mental well-being.

During times like these, staying connected is one of the most important protective factors. Checking in with friends, family, or trusted adults can make a meaningful difference. A simple conversation, asking how someone is doing and truly listening, can help reduce feelings of isolation and stress.

Focusing on what can be controlled can also help. Maintaining small routines, prioritizing sleep, staying active, and setting realistic expectations support mental and emotional health. Encouraging young people to take things one step at a time can ease anxiety about the future.

For those supporting youth, this is a key time to stay engaged. Open, judgment-free conversations about upcoming events and life changes help build trust and create space for honest dialogue. Listening and offering reassurance can go a long way.

Transitions are a natural part of life. By staying connected and supporting one another, we can help make this season of change a little more manageable.

Need support or want to learn more?

Call, text, or chat the [988 Lifeline](tel:988) for 24/7 support. Find additional support and resources at sdbehavioralhealth.gov.

Click [HERE](#) to determine your region's Prevention Resource Center



UPCOMING TRAININGS & EVENTS

Pain Uncovered: The Hidden Connections Shaping Relief and Dependence Part 3

May 11 | 12 PM - 1 PM (CST)

Virtual

Find more information [HERE](#)

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

April 21-22 | Sioux Falls

Find more information and register

[HERE](#)

May 27-28 | Watertown

Find more information and register

[HERE](#)

June 10-11 | Rapid City

Find more information and register

[HERE](#)

Medications for Opioid Use Disorder Training Days

May 1 | 8am-5pm MT

Monument Convention Center Rapid City

May 14 | 9am-1pm CST

USD Sanford School of Medicine

Sioux Falls

Find more information and register

[HERE](#).

Youth Mental Health First Aid

June 8 | Pierre

Find more information and register

[HERE](#)

SPF Application for Prevention Success Training (SAPST)

Register for more information with the QR code below.



May is Mental Health Awareness Month: Building More Good Days, Together

Each May, communities across the country recognize Mental Health Awareness Month. A time to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and remind us that mental health is an essential part of overall well-being. First established in 1949 by Mental Health America, this national observance encourages open conversations, connection, and action.

This year's theme, "More Good Days, Together," highlights that mental health looks different for everyone. A "good day" might mean feeling connected, having the energy to get through the day, or simply finding a moment of calm. Supporting mental health starts with meeting people where they are and recognizing that small steps can make a meaningful difference.

Mental Health Awareness Month is also a reminder that we all play a role in supporting one another. Checking in with a friend, listening without judgment, or encouraging someone to seek help can have a lasting impact. These everyday actions help reduce stigma and create communities where people feel safe asking for support.

It's equally important to take care of your own mental health. Simple habits like getting enough rest, staying active, limiting screen time, and making space for things you enjoy can support overall well-being. Even small actions, like stepping outside, practicing gratitude, or taking a break, can help create more good days over time.

This month is also a great opportunity to get involved in your community. Whether it's sharing resources, attending an event, partnering with local organizations, or starting conversations in your workplace or school, every effort helps build awareness and connection.

As we recognize Mental Health Awareness Month, let's continue to support one another, strengthen our communities, and create more good days, not just in May, but all year long.

Looking for ways to get involved?

- [Mental Health America Toolkit](#)
- [SAMHSA Mental Health Awareness Month Toolkit](#)
- [NEPRC Mental Health Month Toolkit](#)



Paint the Town Teal: SD Rape Prevention Education Program Recognizing Sexual Assault Awareness Month



April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), and communities across South Dakota are coming together to raise awareness, support survivors, and promote prevention through the Paint the Town Teal campaign.

The South Dakota Department of Health, Rape Prevention Education (SD DOH RPE) program and the South Dakota Coalition Ending Domestic and Sexual Violence have partnered to develop a statewide Paint the Town Teal campaign that includes an easy-to-use toolkit. This resource provides practical guidance for

organizations, public entities, schools, healthcare providers, businesses, and communities to participate in SAAM in meaningful and visible ways. The toolkit can be accessed on the [SD DOH RPE website](#).

During SAAM, the color teal represents support for survivors, strength and resilience, hope and healing, and a shared commitment to prevention. Communities can participate by decorating spaces with teal, displaying ribbons and lights, sharing messages, and hosting awareness activities which sends a powerful message of unity and support.

One of the easiest ways to participate is by wearing teal. Hosting a Wear Teal Day at your organization is a great way to show collective support. Sharing photos on social media helps expand awareness across the state. Most importantly, wearing teal shows survivors they are not alone. Organizations and community members can also help spread awareness by ordering FREE teal awareness bracelets to share. Bracelets can be ordered online [HERE](#) under the Injury Prevention tab. These small items can make a big impact by starting conversations and increasing visibility in communities, departments, and organizations.

As part of this year's campaign, community members are invited to visit the Arc of Dreams in Sioux Falls on the evening of April 21, 2026. The Arc will be lit teal in recognition of SAAM, symbolizing hope, healing, and a shared commitment to prevention.

The Paint the Town Teal toolkit, teal bracelet initiative, and Arc lighting event are all made possible through collaboration between the South Dakota Department of Health RPE program and the South Dakota Coalition Ending Domestic and Sexual Violence. Small actions create big impact—one conversation, one event, one community at a time. Join us this April and help Paint the Town Teal.

NATIONAL PREVENTION *we* **EK**
A CELEBRATION OF POSSIBILITY

MAY 10-16
2026

[National Prevention Week](#) (May 10-16, 2026) is a public education platform showcasing the work of communities and organizations across the country that are preventing substance use and misuse — and promoting positive mental health.

Here in South Dakota, we have a widespread prevention network. You can learn more about the great work our providers are doing [HERE](#). Reach out to your local Prevention Resource Center to learn more about how you can provide impactful prevention in your community.

SOUTH DAKOTA SUICIDE PREVENTION



RESOURCES

STATEWIDE WEBSITE
SDSUICIDEPREVENTION.ORG

THE HELPLINE CENTER
HELPLINECENTER.ORG

If you or someone you know needs help with:

- Depression
- Grief
- Relationship Conflicts
- Drugs
- Alcohol
- Suicidal Thoughts

Call/text 988 or [chat online](#)



988

SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

Stress Awareness Month

April marks Stress Awareness Month, a time dedicated to recognizing the impact of stress on daily life and encouraging healthy ways to cope. Health professionals say stress, while a normal part of life, can take a serious toll when it becomes chronic or overwhelming. It is linked to issues such as anxiety, depression, heart disease, and weakened immune function.

Experts emphasize that managing stress is not one-size-fits-all. Simple strategies like regular exercise, maintaining a consistent sleep schedule, staying connected with others, and practicing mindfulness can make a meaningful difference. Taking breaks from news and social media, setting realistic goals, and seeking professional support when needed are also key steps in maintaining mental well-being. Organizations across the country use April to promote awareness and provide resources that help individuals better understand their stress triggers and build resilience. The goal is not to eliminate stress entirely, but to develop healthier responses to it.

For those in need of immediate support, help is available. 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides free, confidential support 24 hours a day by call, text, or chat. The Helpline Center offers local assistance, resources, and guidance for individuals facing stress, mental health challenges, or crisis situations.

Upcoming Events

Surviving After Suicide Monthly Support Groups

In-person Support Groups:

Third Thursday of each month from 6:30pm – 8:00pm CST
Helpline Center | 3817 S Elmwood Ave | Sioux Falls, SD 57105
There is no fee or registration required. Must be 18 years old to attend.

Virtual Support Groups:

Second Wednesday of each month from 1:00pm-2:30pm or 6:30pm – 8:00pm CST
There is no fee but registration is required. Must be 18 years old to attend.
To receive a Zoom link, register [HERE](#) or contact griefsupport@helplinecenter.org.

Upcoming Community Mental Health Trainings

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training: Register [HERE](#)

June 10 & 11 | 8:30am-4:30pm (CST)

Youth and Family Services | 202 E Adams St | Rapid City, SD 57701

Registrants must attend both days.

Mental Health First Aid: Register [HERE](#)

May 22 | 8am – 5pm

Helpline Center | 3817 S Elmwood Ave | Sioux Falls, SD 57105

SOUTH DAKOTA TOBACCO CONTROL PROGRAM

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Quittobaccosd.com

Click [here](#) to order our FREE materials and resources.

Earth Day & Tobacco Product Clean-up!

Earth Day is April 22, 2026! This day services as a reminder we share responsibility to protect the planet. It is also a great time to highlight how tobacco prevention supports environmental health. Cigarette butts are the most littered item in the world, while vape waste poses new challenges with plastic pollution and battery disposal. This Earth Day, let's work together to raise awareness and inspire actions that support a cleaner, healthier future for all. Start planning your Earth Day activities by checking out our [Youth Tobacco Prevention Toolkit's Module 3](#) for activities focused on environmental impact!



Peer Leadership & Tobacco Media Advertising Education

On March 27, youth attended the SD Peer Leadership Conference in Sioux Falls to learn about mental well-being, living a substance-free life, and digital safety. Members of the planning committee expressed a strong interest in ensuring that all sessions incorporated a perspective on how social media and AI influence these topics. In response, the Tobacco Control Program (TCP) tailored its session to focus on how “Big Tobacco” is reviving its traditional marketing strategies to target youth, while also adopting new approaches tied to emerging products and evolving regulations.

The presentation also highlighted how TCP works to counter these tactics by providing accurate, evidence-based information to youth and the broader community. Participants shared feedback on what they have observed online and engaged in further discussions within their school groups, alongside their advisors, about ways they can educate their peers more effectively.

TOP Facilitator Training in Rapid City

A Wyman’s evidence-based Teen Outreach Program (TOP) facilitator training is being held in Rapid City April 28-30, 2026! If interested in attending, contact Seth Voorhees at Seth.Voorhees@LssSD.org.

LOST & FOUND[®]

PEER2PEER MENTORING LAUNCHES ACROSS GREEK LIFE



This spring, Lost&Found has expanded its Peer2Peer mentoring program through new partnerships with Greek Life chapters across South Dakota.

At South Dakota Mines four fraternities, engaging 128 students, have already received training. Discussions are also underway to expand the program campus-wide through the Greek Advisory Board.

Students are quickly seeing the impact of this work within their own chapters. One participant shared, **"I love how Lost&Found provides structure to the mental wellness of our house. It forces these impactful conversations and brings us closer together in brotherhood."**

At the University of South Dakota, three sororities and one fraternity have committed to participating, with training scheduled for the end of this semester and early fall. This expansion is expected to engage approximately 300 students, with additional chapters continuing to express interest.

As chapters begin meeting one-on-one, students are highlighting the value of guided conversations. One student shared, **"It's been a very lively and much different experience than most conversations held within the house. These topics help guide the conversation in a positive way and create a safe environment for both the mentee and the mentor. I'm excited to see how this pilot program can affect those within our community. Further campus collaborations, improved brotherhood morale, and stronger personal bonds are all great representations of how our organization can benefit from Lost&Found."**

This pilot expands Peer2Peer mentoring to include intentional, resilience-focused skill building within the Greek community. Weekly topics are tailored to address both mental wellness and culture-specific challenges, including hazing, substance misuse, and sexual harassment, while also building skills in boundaries, identity, stress management, and conflict resolution.

As this work continues to grow, Lost&Found is deepening its impact by embedding Peer2Peer mentorship into campus communities and strengthening student-led support systems.

UPCOMING TRAININGS

Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)
Virtual Training - May 12, 2026
6:30pm CT
[Registration Link](#)

[Request a Training or Presentation](#)

**WANT TO LEARN MORE OR
SIGN UP FOR P2P? SCAN
THE CODE TO VISIT OUR
CAMPUS HUB!**

