



Prevention Newslink

August 2026

WPRC

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

Natural Helpers of South Dakota Listed on SPRC Best Practices Registry

Natural Helpers of South Dakota is now listed on the Suicide Prevention Resource Centers (SPRC) Best Practices Registry (BPR). Every program or intervention listed on the BPR has been reviewed by experts to ensure it aligns with the most current guidance on preventing suicide. Each listed program or intervention has demonstrated effectiveness in preventing suicide or directly addressing factors that impact suicide prevention.



Natural Helpers of South Dakota was founded with the knowledge that within every school, an informal "helping network" already exists. Students experiencing problems naturally seek out other students – and also adults – whom they trust. Natural Helpers uses this helping network to disseminate as much accurate information as possible to all students. It provides training to students and adults who are already serving as helpers, giving them skills to help others more effectively.

Goals of the Natural Helpers of South Dakota program are:

- Strengthen natural support networks
- Equip participants with helping skills
- Promote a safe and supportive school climate
- Increase early identification of concerns
- Encourage positive leadership
- Strengthen adult-student connections
- Build understanding of self-care

The program uses an anonymous school-wide survey to identify a cross-section of students and school adults. These students and staff will learn skills to become a better Natural Helper.

Find Natural Helpers of South Dakota on the BPR [HERE](#). To learn more about this program, contact your local Prevention Resource Center or visit www.sdsuicideprevention.org/natural-helpers.

NATURAL HELPERS
of South Dakota

UPCOMING TRAININGS & EVENTS

Emily's Hope: International Overdose Awareness Day Candlelight Vigil

August 31 | 8pm CT
Greenway Amphitheater, Sioux Falls
Click [HERE](#) for more information

988
DAY

988 Day

September 8
Learn more [HERE](#)

Great Plains Tribal Health 988 Day Event

September 8 | 4:00 p.m.
Main Street Square, Rapid City
For more information contact
[Sara Webster](#)

Glacial Lakes SAFE Suicide Awareness Walk & Remembrance Ceremony

September 9 | 5:30 p.m.
SD Army National Guard, Watertown
Learn more and register [HERE](#)

Walk of Hope

September 12 | 8:30 a.m.
Hyde Stadium, Pierre
Learn more [HERE](#)

New Leaf New Life Walk

September 13 | 1:00 p.m.
Cherry Rock Park, Sioux Falls
Learn more and register [HERE](#)

NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

September is National Recovery Month. A time to celebrate the strength and progress of people in recovery, recognize the families and communities that support them, and honor the professionals and peer supporters who make recovery possible. It is also an opportunity to increase understanding of mental health and substance use conditions, reduce stigma, and remind people that treatment works and recovery is possible.

SAMHSA's 2026 message emphasizes that Recovery is **REAL**: Restoring Every Aspect of Life, for everyone. With access to effective treatment, recovery support, and community resources, people can improve their health and wellness and build meaningful, self-directed lives. Recovery is personal, and there is no single path that works for everyone.

Throughout September, and all year, we can:

- **Celebrate recovery** by recognizing progress, honoring the many pathways to recovery, and sharing stories that inspire hope.
- **Support the journey** by listening without judgment, using respectful language, and helping people connect with treatment, peer support, and other resources.
- **Strengthen communities** by expanding access to services, supporting recovery-friendly workplaces and organizations, and creating environments where people feel welcomed and valued.

Recovery Month reminds us that people are not defined by the challenges they have experienced. Everyone deserves the opportunity, resources, and support needed to pursue recovery and build a healthy, fulfilling life.

Get Involved: Resources for Action

- [SAMHSA National Recovery Month Toolkit](#) – Messages, graphics, outreach materials, and resources for celebrating Recovery Month.
- [South Dakota Behavioral Health](#) – Information about prevention, treatment, crisis care, and recovery support available across South Dakota.
- [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) – Call or text 988 or chat online for support with mental health or substance use concerns, 24/7.

RECOVER
TOGETHER

UPCOMING TRAININGS & EVENTS CONTINUED

Out of the Darkness Community Walk

September 12 | 9:00 a.m.
Odde Ice Center, Aberdeen
Learn more and register [HERE](#)

September 19 | 11:30 a.m.
Levitt Band Shell, Sioux Falls
Learn more and register [HERE](#)

September 19 | 8:00 a.m.
Herrmann Park, Belle Fourche
Learn more and register [HERE](#)

SPF Application for Prevention Success Training (SAPST)

October 19-22

Capital Area Counseling Service, Pierre
Register [HERE](#).

SDPRC Book Recommendation

Each PRC has a physical library and also maintains an online digital library through the Libby app with audiobooks & ebooks relating to mental health, addiction, and other prevention topics. Use the QR code below to get signed up today!



For Suicide Prevention Awareness month, we'd recommend listening to "[The Art of Being Broken](#)" by Kevin Hines.

For National Recovery Month, we'd recommend "[We are the Luckiest](#)" by Laura McKowen.



September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. A time to remember those we have lost to suicide, support those who have experienced suicidal thoughts or attempts, and recognize the individuals, families, and communities affected by suicide. It is also an opportunity to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and share messages of hope, healing, and connection.

Within the month of September, National Suicide Prevention Week will be observed September 6–12, 2026, and World Suicide Prevention Day will take place September 10, 2026. These observances remind us that open, compassionate conversations can help create communities where people feel seen, supported, and able to ask for help.

Throughout September, and all year, we can:

- **Start the conversation** by asking how someone is doing, listening without judgment, and making it safe to talk about mental health and suicide.
- **Share hope** by highlighting stories of healing, recovery, and people finding support during difficult times.
- **Strengthen connection** by helping people build relationships, access resources, and know they do not have to face life's challenges alone.

Suicide prevention is not the responsibility of one person, organization, or system. It takes all of us working together to build communities where everyone feels that they belong, support is available, and every life matters.

Get Involved: Resources for Action

- [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) – Call or text 988 or chat online for free, confidential support 24/7.
- [SAMHSA Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Toolkit](#) – Messages, graphics, promotional materials, and other resources.
- [Suicide Prevention Resource Center: Ideas for Action](#) – Practical ways to support Suicide Prevention Month in 2026.
- [World Suicide Prevention Day Resources](#) – Materials supporting the theme "Changing the Narrative Suicide."
- [South Dakota Suicide Prevention](#) – Statewide resources, training opportunities, events, and outreach materials.



It's okay to
ask for help

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

National Grief Awareness Day

On August 30, 2026, communities across the nation will observe National Grief Awareness Day, a day dedicated to increasing understanding of grief, reducing stigma around loss, and encouraging compassionate support for those who are grieving. National Grief Awareness Day was established to promote open conversations about bereavement and to remind individuals that grief is a unique journey with no timeline or "right" way to heal.

Grief can result from many types of loss, including the death of a loved one, the end of a relationship, serious illness, job loss, or other significant life changes. While grief is a normal human response, it can affect emotional, physical, and mental well-being in different ways for each person. National Grief Awareness Day encourages us to recognize these experiences, offer support without judgment, and create spaces where people feel comfortable sharing their stories.

One of the most meaningful ways to observe this day is by reaching out to someone who may be grieving. A simple phone call, message, or invitation to talk can help remind a person that they are not alone. The day also serves as a reminder to practice self-care, seek support when needed, and extend patience and understanding to ourselves and others during times of loss.

Suicide Grief Support Services at the Helpline Center

The Helpline Center understands that grief can be overwhelming, and that support can make a significant difference in the healing process. Through its grief support services, individuals and families can access resources, information, referrals, and compassionate assistance tailored to their needs. Whether someone is coping with a recent loss or navigating grief that has persisted over time, support is available. For more information about grief support, reach out to 988 for more information or for a listening ear by a trained counselor available 24/7.

Upcoming Suicide Grief Support groups

In-Person: Meets the third Thursday of every month at the Helpline Center in Sioux Falls from 6:30pm - 8:00pm (CST). Email griefsupport@helplinecenter.org to register.

Virtual: Meets the second Wednesday of every month virtually from 6:30pm - 8:00pm (CST). Email griefsupport@helplinecenter.org to register.

SOUTH DAKOTA TOBACCO CONTROL PROGRAM

Hilary Larsen

Tobacco Program Coordinator

Hilary.Larsen@state.sd.us

DOH Team:

DOHTobaccoControl@state.sd.us



Quittobaccosd.com

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

Back to School: Supporting Healthy, Tobacco-Free Students

As we welcome everyone back for a new school year, it's a perfect time to refocus on the habits that help students thrive. Tobacco and nicotine use, including vaping, continues to be a challenge for youth nationwide, and staying informed is one of the best ways we can support student health and academic success.

What to know this year:

- Tobacco and vape products can affect attention, memory, mood, and overall well-being, making it harder for students to do their best.
- Prevention works best when students hear clear, consistent messages at home, in school, and throughout the community.
- If a student is struggling with tobacco use, reaching out for help is a positive and courageous step. Schools and community partners are committed to providing nonjudgmental support.
- Conversations matter. Ask questions, listen, and keep communication open. A single supportive discussion can make a big difference.
- Local and state resources are available to help youth and families access guidance, education, and cessation support.

The South Dakota Tobacco Control Program offers a variety of resources and materials to help support you. Visit <https://quittobaccosd.com/> to learn more about our downloadable activity pages, free print materials available for order, curriculums and trainings, or about the SD QuitLine. You can also email our team at DOHTobaccoControl@state.sd.us to learn more about our efforts and what we have to offer.

Together, we can make this school year one filled with connection, confidence, and healthy choices. Thank you for your ongoing support in helping our students stay tobacco-free and ready to learn.

Truth Initiative's Outsmart Nicotine Campaign

[Truth Initiative](#) has launched a new national [Outsmart Nicotine](#) campaign through its EX Program to address the rising trend of Gen Z using multiple nicotine products—including, for the first time, oral nicotine pouches like Zyn alongside e-cigarettes- and cigarettes. The campaign highlights how stress, cravings, and high nicotine products fuel addiction and directs young people to free, -evidence-based- quitting support. Recent data show that more than 45% of youth and nearly 53% of young adults who used e-cigarettes in the past month also used at least one additional tobacco product, underscoring the urgency of intervention. The campaign also draws attention to the fact that most -e-cigarette- and pouch products on the market lack FDA authorization.