



Prevention Newslink

February 2026

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

March is Self-injury Awareness Month

Self-injury refers to when a person hurts their own body on purpose. A person who self-harms usually does not mean to end their life, but they are at higher risk of attempting suicide and dying by suicide if they do not get help.

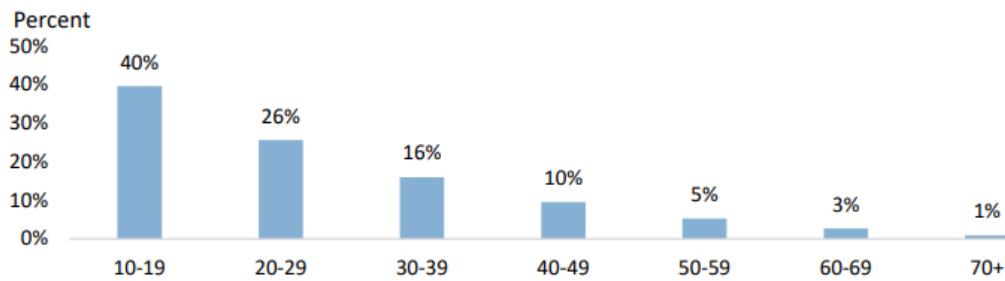
For many people, self-harm gives them a sense of relief and is used as a means to cope with a problem. Some teens say that when they hurt themselves, they are trying to stop feeling lonely, angry, or hopeless.

Examples of self-harm include:

- Cutting one's skin with a sharp object
- Piercing the skin with sharp objects
- Hitting or punching oneself or punching things (like a wall)
- Burning oneself with cigarettes, matches, or candles

If you or someone you know are struggling with self-injury, help is available. You can call, text or chat 988 for you or a loved one.

The [South Dakota Suicide Surveillance Report](#) shows the Nonfatal Self-Inflicted Injury Visits by Age Group, 2020-2024



National Eating Disorders Awareness Week February 23 to March 1

[National Eating Disorder Awareness Week](#) marks the opportunity to increase understanding, reduce stigma, and share messages of support and hope for those impacted, along with highlighting available resources for those looking for help.

UPCOMING TRAININGS & EVENTS

QPR Training

February 23 | 10 AM - 11:30 AM (CST)

Virtual

Find more information [HERE](#).

April 6 | 1 PM - 2:30 PM (CST)

Sioux Falls

Find more information [HERE](#).

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

March 9 | 12 PM - 1 PM (CST)

April 13 | 12 PM - 1 PM (CST)

May 11 | 12 PM - 1 PM (CST)

Virtual

Find more information [HERE](#).

Understanding ACEs: Building Self-Healing Communities

March 17 | 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM (CST)

Virtual

Find more information [HERE](#).

Mental Health First Aid

March 17-18 | 8 AM - 12 PM (CST)

Sioux Falls

Find more information [HERE](#).

April 6-7 | 9 AM - 1 PM (MT)

Rapid City

Find more information [HERE](#).

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

April 21-22 | Sioux Falls

Find more information and register [HERE](#).

SPF Application for Prevention Success Training (SAPST)

May 18-22

Find more information [HERE](#).



National Sleep Awareness Week

March 8-14

National Sleep Awareness Week recognizes the importance of sleep because it is how our bodies repair themselves! Sleeping can help us prevent infections, rebuild our muscles and can even help our brains work better so that we can focus, prevent mood problems and help our bodies function better.

The average teen needs 9-10 hours of sleep, some may need a little less and some may need a little bit more sleep each night.

3 tips for a good night's sleep:

1. Keep a consistent bedtime and wake up time, even on the weekends.
2. Try to get rid of electronics at least an hour before bed.
3. If you are still having trouble sleeping after having a consistent bed time, not using screens before bed, and not drinking caffeine, you may need to see a Sleep Specialist for help!

National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week

March 15-21

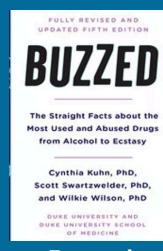
National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week highlights the importance of sharing accurate information and dispelling myths about substance use. By 12th grade, about two-thirds of U.S. students report having tried alcohol, according to the CDC.

Encouragingly, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, South Dakota data show that alcohol and marijuana use among South Dakota teens has declined since 2013. Marijuana use decreased by 5.7% and alcohol use by 7.3% between 2013 and 2023.

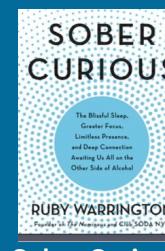
However, during the same period, teens' perception of harm from frequent alcohol and marijuana use declined. Alcohol declined by 7.1% and marijuana by 9.5%. When teenagers perceive drugs and alcohol as less risky, they are more likely to experiment.

Do you want ideas for activities and social media to promote Drug Facts Week? Access our Drug Facts Week toolkit [HERE](#).

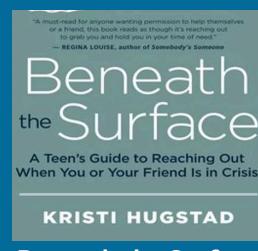
SDPRC Libby Book Recommendations:



Buzzed



Sober Curious



Beneath the Surface

Conference Registrations

WPRC – Rapid City
Thursday, March 26
Register [HERE](#)

NEPRC – Watertown
Friday, March 27
Register [HERE](#)

SEPRC – Sioux Falls
Friday, March 27
Register [HERE](#)

Featured Speaker

Brandon Saho



NEPRC Conference Watertown



SD Peer Leadership Conferences

The SD Prevention Resource Centers are hosting the annual SD Peer Leadership Conferences in Watertown, Sioux Falls, and Rapid City.

Peer leadership groups will gather for opportunities to learn more about healthy decision making, how to handle peer pressure, coping with mental health and more.

The goal of these conferences is to harness the powerful influence of YOUlt--making it a positive force that encourages their peers to live free of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs and have positive mental health.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND? Any students (grades 7-12) involved in peer leadership programs including but not limited to: SADD chapters, Natural Helpers, student councils, Key Clubs, church youth groups, FCCLA, TATU, Hope Squad, etc.

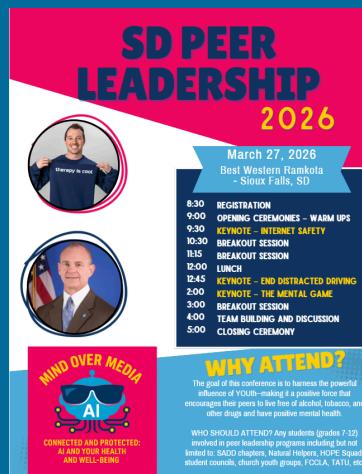
The Mental Game

Sports reporter Brandon Saho created The Mental Game after battling depression and suicidal thoughts for years. Saho's mission is to break the stigma and save lives with impactful conversations around mental health.

Brandon has spoken to over 200,000 people across 46 states. Through conversations with various professional athletes and celebrities, he has gained the trust of ESPN, the NFL and more.

Sharing his story and explaining his coping strategies and resources, Brandon demonstrates to his audience that his greatest strength is his vulnerability. Attendees are sure to be impacted by his engagement with the audience, no matter the size.

SEPRC Conference Sioux Falls



WPRC Conference Rapid City



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

Random Acts of Kindness

February 17, Random Acts of Kindness Day is a reminder that even the smallest gestures, such as holding a door, offering a compliment, or checking in on a friend, can make a meaningful difference. Beyond brightening someone's day, acts of kindness are closely linked to improved mental health for both the giver and the receiver.

Research shows that kindness can reduce stress, boost mood, and increase feelings of connection and belonging. For individuals struggling with anxiety, depression, or loneliness, a simple act of compassion can serve as a powerful reminder that they are seen, valued, and not alone. Likewise, those who practice kindness often experience increased self-esteem and a greater sense of purpose. At a time when many people are facing emotional challenges, Random Acts of Kindness Day encourages communities to slow down, notice one another, and lead with empathy. Whether it is volunteering, sending a thoughtful message, or offering support to someone who is having a hard day, kindness can be a meaningful step toward stronger mental well-being for everyone involved.

One powerful example of kindness in action is the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Calling, texting or chatting 988 connects individuals with trained counselors who listen without judgment, offer compassion, and provide emotional support during difficult moments. For many people, reaching out to 988 is an act of courage, and the kindness shown on the other end of the line can help someone feel heard, understood, and less alone.

Upcoming Events

Surviving After Suicide Monthly Support Groups

In-person Support Groups:

Third Thursday of each month from 6:30p.m. – 8:00p.m. 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 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. 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

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

March 17 & 18 | 8am-12pm
Helpline Center | 3817 S Elmwood Ave | Sioux Falls, SD 57105
Registrants must attend both days.

Question, Persuade, Refer: [Register HERE](#)

April 6 | 1pm – 2:30pm
Helpline Center | 3817 S Elmwood Ave | Sioux Falls, SD 57105

SOUTH DAKOTA TOBACCO CONTROL PROGRAM

Hilary Larsen

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Quittobaccosd.com

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

Youth Dual Tobacco Product Usage

[Truth Initiative](#) highlighted a recent study showing that tobacco and nicotine use among young people ages 15–25 in the United States is increasingly involving more than one product at a time. Between 2021 and 2024, the use of e-cigarettes alongside oral nicotine pouches rose sharply, and the use of multiple products—including e-cigarettes, cigarettes, and nicotine pouches—also increased. While cigarette smoking continues to decline overall, many young people are now combining products instead of switching away from them. The growing availability of discreet, flavored nicotine products has made it easier to use nicotine in more places, which can increase addiction and make quitting harder. These trends highlight the need for continued prevention efforts and support to help young people avoid or quit using multiple nicotine products.

Study Truth Initiative referencing can be found [here](#).

Take Down Tobacco – April 1, 2026

Mark your calendars for [Take Down Tobacco](#) (TDT) National Day of Action on April 1, 2026! This national day empowers youth and communities to stand up against the tobacco industry's harmful influence. Organized by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, TDT mobilizes youth, advocates, and organizations across the country to educate the public, promote tobacco-related policies, and support individuals who want to quit. No action is too small to make an impact.

Looking for activity ideas?

- Visit [SDQuit's Tobacco Prevention Activities](#) for a TDT-related resource guide.
- Explore the [Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids' Take Down Tobacco](#) page for:
 - Activity ideas, including pledge card templates
 - Sample social media posts for the day
 - Cessation materials
 - Fact sheets
 - And much more!





LOST & FOUND®

TURNING DATA INTO ACTION FOR INCLUSIVE HEALTHCARE

Lost&Found is proud to collaborate with the Transformation Project on the Inclusive Care Collaborative, a joint effort designed to strengthen access to LGBTQ2S+ affirming care across South Dakota. Together, we've taken a data-driven approach to understanding where gaps in care exist.

As part of this initiative, we collected survey data from 475 LGBTQ2S+ adults, 78 mental health clinicians, and 23 medical clinicians, supplemented by key informant interviews with providers across the region. This comprehensive dataset helped illuminate the real experiences, barriers, and needs within LGBTQ2S+ communities.

These findings directly informed a series of CEU-accredited trainings, community education efforts, and the creation of a pocket guide on LGBTQ2S+-affirming care for medical clinicians. Each resource was designed to translate data into practical tools that providers can use to offer more inclusive, supportive, and effective care.

Through this partnership, Lost&Found and the Transformation Project are helping ensure that LGBTQ2S+ individuals receive the affirming, informed, and compassionate care they deserve. By equipping providers with knowledge and tools, we're building a stronger, more inclusive network of support—one that reflects the needs and dignity of every person in our community.

**REQUEST A LOST&FOUND
TRAINING OR PRESENTATION**

The Transformation Project is now expanding this work through a structured training series for mental health clinicians, including:

Providing Gender-Affirming Care 101

- Defines essential terminology used by LGBTQ+ clients
- Explores types of transitions and what affirming care truly means
- Addresses WPATH standards and common myths about gender-nonconforming people

Barriers to Care: Gender-Affirming Care 201

- Examines health disparities affecting LGBTQ+ populations
- Highlights real-world examples of discrimination and microaggressions experienced by LGBTQ+ South Dakotans
- Address how to alleviate some of the discrepancies

Letter writing: Gender-Affirming Care 301

- Teaches clinicians how to write letters supporting clients through transition
- Provides templates and practical guidance
- Explains the importance of letters and outlines criteria for gender dysphoria

To learn more about these trainings, email info@transformationprojects.org.

