Prevention Newslink

November 2026

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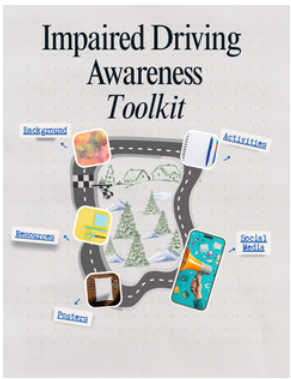
*Click **HERE** to determine your region's Prevention Resource Center*

Impaired Driving Awareness

December is recognized as Impaired Driving Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness about the dangers of drunk, drugged, and distracted driving. With the holiday season bringing increased travel as families and friends gather to celebrate across South Dakota, it's an important reminder that making safe choices behind the wheel can save lives.

Impaired driving isn't limited to alcohol. Marijuana, prescription medications, and other substances can affect judgment, coordination, and reaction time. Distracted driving is equally dangerous, whether it's looking at your phone, adjusting the radio, or taking your attention off the road.

The good news? Impaired driving is preventable! Before heading to a holiday gathering, make a plan for a safe ride. Designate a sober driver, arrange transportation, or plan to stay overnight if needed. Put your phone away, avoid distractions, and make sure everyone is buckled up. Look out for one another, too. If someone isn't safe to drive, help them find another way home.



This holiday season, let's make getting to our destinations safely just as important as the celebrations waiting for us. No gathering or destination is worth risking a life.

The NEPRC has developed an Impaired Driving Awareness Toolkit to help organizations, schools, and community partners promote awareness and encourage safer driving decisions. Additional educational materials, campaign ideas, and prevention resources are available through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.



This December (and always) drive sober, drive focused, and drive safe. Because the best holiday memories are made when everyone makes it home.

UPCOMING TRAININGS & EVENTS

ASIST
December 2-3
Human Service Agency | Watertown
Learn More & Register HERE.

Conducting Small Groups
January 19 | 9:00 - 3:30 (MT)
Western Dakota Tech, Rapid City
Learn more and register HERE

PREPaRE Training
Mental Health Crisis Interventions: Responding to an Acute Traumatic Stressor in Schools
February 11 & 12 | 8:30 - 3:30 (CST)
Virtual
Learn more and register HERE

SPF Application for Prevention Success Training (SAPST)
Learn more and register HERE

South Dakota Peer Leadership Conference
March 31 | Watertown
Email Stephanie Kinnander to learn more
April 1 | Rapid City
Email Abbey Kochman to learn more

Let's Be Clear has updated resources that can help South Dakota residents find naloxone, including:

- A request form for South Dakotans to request free naloxone be shipped to them.
- A location dashboard for public naloxone distribution boxes.

Naloxone, also known by the brand name Narcan, is a life-saving medication that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. It works by blocking the effects of the drug and restoring normal breathing until medical attention is provided.

Expand Your Knowledge with the SDPRC E-Library

Looking for a good book on substance use, addiction, mental health, or suicide prevention? The South Dakota Prevention Resource Centers (SDPRC) have you covered! In 2022, the SDPRCs created an online library through the Libby App, expanding the reach of their existing library resources and making educational materials more accessible to individuals across South Dakota. Whether you're a prevention professional, educator, parent, student, or simply someone interested in learning more, the e-library offers a convenient way to explore topics that impact individuals, families, schools, and communities.

With approximately 150 titles available, there is something for a variety of interests and learning needs. Topics range from understanding addiction and substance use to navigating trauma, strengthening emotional wellness, managing stress, and exploring the many factors that influence mental health.

A few titles currently available include:

- The Craving Mind: From cigarettes to smartphones to love - why we get hooked and how we can break bad habits.
- The Trauma and Attachment Aware Classroom: A practical guide to supporting children who have encountered trauma and adverse childhood experiences.
- The Alcohol Experiment: A 30-day alcohol free challenge to interrupt your habits and help you take control.
- Fentanyl Inc.: A deeply human story investigating the hazardous and illicit industry that has created a worldwide epidemic.
- The Devil's Playbook: Big tobacco, Juul, and the addiction of a new generation.
- Tell Your Children: The truth about marijuana, mental illness, and violence.
- The Art of Taking It Easy: How to cope with bears, traffic, and the rest of life's stressors.
- The Emotionally Exhausted Woman: When you're feeling depleted and how to get what you need.
- The Art of Being Broken: How storytelling saves lives.

And the collection isn't limited to what's already on the shelves! The SDPRCs welcomes book recommendations. Looking for a little group learning? The e-library can also accommodate book clubs and book studies, making it a great resource for teams, organizations, coalitions, and other groups interested in exploring a topic together.

Whether you're looking for professional development, information to share with others, or simply your next great read, take a few minutes to explore what the SDPRC E-Library has to offer! For more information, book recommendations, or assistance accessing the e-library, email stephaniek@humanserviceagency.org.

SOUTH DAKOTA PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTERS

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

National Gratitude Month

The month of November holds the title of National Gratitude Month. Gratitude is the state of feeling or being thankful and appreciative towards the meaningful aspects of life. According to the CDC, daily gratitude practices can reduce stress, lower anxiety, and even improve sleep. The expression of gratitude releases dopamine and serotonin, which enhances mood and satisfaction. Consistent practice of gratitude leads to an increased experience of positive emotions. It can change how we perceive situations, encouraging us to appreciate what we already have.

There are multiple ways to practice gratitude to improve your mental health. You can start by listing two to three specific things that you appreciate every day! Try keeping track of them in a journal or calendar.

Directly express gratitude by sending thank-you notes or speaking directly with someone who has had a positive impact on your life. Take a moment to send a text to someone you're glad is in your life and include an explanation of why they're important to you. Engage in gratitude meditation. Visualize the things in your life that you are grateful for. Take this meditation on a walk and observe the world around you. Take a moment to mentally note the things that have beauty and positive qualities.

Try this! Finish these gratitude statements:

- I am grateful for...
- I am thankful for...
- I appreciate...

Upcoming Events:

Mental Health First Aid Training: Register here
Monday, November 16, 2026 from 8am-5pm (CT)
Helpline Center (3817 S Elmwood Ave. Sioux Falls, SD 57105)

Survivor of Suicide Loss Day: Register Here
Saturday, November 21, 2026 at 1:00pm (CT)
Butterfly House and Aquarium, Sioux Falls, SD

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training: Register here
January 21-22, 2027 - 8:30am-4:30pm (MT)
Youth and Family Services (202 E Adams St. Rapid City, SD 57701)

SOUTH DAKOTA TOBACCO CONTROL PROGRAM

Hilary Larsen

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Great American SmokeOut – Celebrating 50 Years!

The South Dakota Tobacco Control Program is excited to invite you and your school to join us in celebrating this year's **Great American Smokeout on November 19, 2026**. This nationwide event marks 50 years of empowering individuals who smoke to take an important step toward a healthier, smoke-free life. It's a meaningful opportunity to encourage students and community members to make positive choices and to raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco use.

We've created a resource guide just for schools, filled with engaging activities, educational materials, and ideas for observing the day with your students. These resources are designed to seamlessly support classroom curriculum or school-wide events. You'll also find links to the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout tools and materials.

If you're looking to expand your activities or would like additional support, we're here to help with a variety of free resources and materials.

We'd also love to hear from you! Share your stories and photos with us at DOHTobaccoControl@state.sd.us, or tag #SDQuits on social media.



QUIT SD

Quittobaccosd.com

Click here to order our FREE materials and resources.

Tobacco & Alzheimer's Prevention

Tobacco use isn't just harmful to the lungs, it also takes a serious toll on brain health and may increase the risk of Alzheimer's disease. According to the Alzheimer's Association, exposure to cigarette smoke at any stage of life raises the risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Heavy smoking during middle age may elevate Alzheimer's risk by as much as 50%, and even exposure to secondhand smoke can impair cognitive function. Nicotine, present in all tobacco products, including smokeless forms and vape devices, also contributes to accelerated brain tissue loss and diminished blood flow, which leads to reduced gray and white matter volume and worsened memory and attention.

Henry Ford Health specialists add that smoking's impact on blood vessels further increases risk: buildup of arterial plaque makes vessels less flexible, limiting oxygen-rich blood flow to the brain and raising stroke risk, a known contributor to dementia. Smokers face a roughly 30% higher risk of dementia compared to non-smokers, and the more one smokes, the greater the danger. The good news? Quitting helps! Not only do blood pressure and circulation begin to improve within weeks, but after nine years smoke-free, former smokers' dementia risk can drop to that of lifelong non-smokers. During Alzheimer's Month, highlighting tobacco cessation as a modifiable risk factor offers a powerful message: when it comes to protecting brain health, quitting smoking truly matters.