



Prevention Newslink

September 2025

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

A CALL TO ACTION THIS BACK TO SCHOOL SEASON

As students across the nation head back to school, we are reminded that learning can only flourish in environments where children feel safe, supported, and secure. The start of a new academic year is more than just a return to classrooms, it's an opportunity for communities, educators and parents to come together to reinforce our shared responsibility to protect our youth.

This year, the back-to-school season coincides with several important national observances that shine a spotlight on the safety and well-being of young people:

- October is National Crime Prevention Month, encouraging communities to take proactive steps to prevent violence and build safer neighborhoods.
- The National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence calls on all of us to address the growing crisis of youth gun violence through education, advocacy, and action.
- America's Safe Schools Week (October 19–25, 2025) reminds us that school safety is not a luxury; it is a fundamental right.



Together, these observances underscore the urgent need to prioritize the safety of children, not only within the walls of their schools, but in their communities, homes, and online spaces.



Creating safe schools means more than installing security systems. It involves fostering a culture of respect, promoting mental health awareness, addressing bullying and online threats, and ensuring that every student has access to trusted adults and supportive resources.

It also means engaging young people as part of the solution, empowering them to speak up, lead with compassion, and help shape the kind of schools they deserve.

As we observe these national initiatives, let us recommit ourselves to creating environments where children are free to learn without fear. A safe school is a strong school, and a strong school builds a stronger future for us all.

UPCOMING TRAININGS & EVENTS

Social Media and Youth Mental Health WEBINAR

September 30 | 12 p.m. CT
Click [HERE](#) for more information

SD Peer Leadership Training

October 1 | 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. CT
Codington Co Extension Building, Watertown
or
October 15 | 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. CT
Aberdeen Recreation & Cultural Center
Aberdeen
Click [HERE](#) for more information

NAMI South Dakota 2025 Conference

October 16-17 | 1 pm CT
Huron Event Center, Huron
Click [HERE](#) for more information

National Drug Take Back Day

October 26 | Statewide
The list of disposal sites located in South Dakota
can be found [HERE](#)

Cliff Effect Escape Room

Sept 24 or Nov 19 | 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. MT
Journey Museum & Learning Center, Rapid City
Click [HERE](#) for more information

Enough Abuse: Strategies for Your Family and Community WEBINAR

October 21 | 5:30 p.m. MT
Click [HERE](#) for more information

State Tribal Opioid and Methamphetamine Prevention Summit (STOMP)

November 6-7 | Pierre
Click [HERE](#) for more information

SPF Application for Prevention Success Training (SAPST)

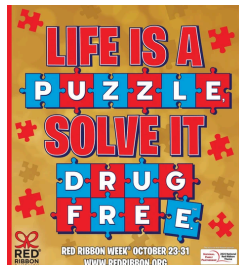
October 6-9 | Pierre
For registration use the QR Code below



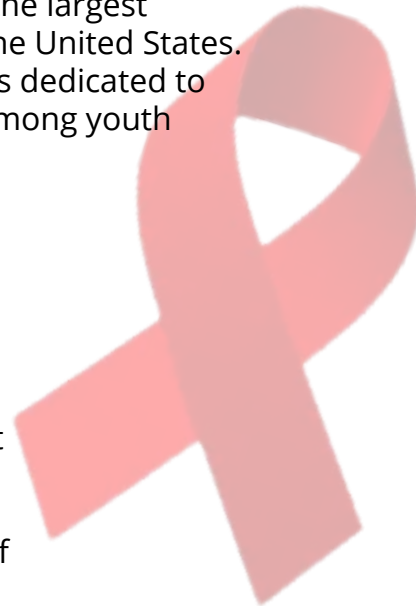
NATIONAL RED RIBBON WEEK

Each year, South Dakota joins communities across the nation in celebrating Red Ribbon Week, the largest substance use prevention campaign in the United States. Held annually in late October, the week is dedicated to promoting healthy, drug-free lifestyles among youth and families.

Schools, organizations, and community groups across South Dakota host activities such as themed dress-up days, classroom lessons, and community events to spark conversations about making positive choices. The red ribbon itself is worn as a symbol of commitment to living drug-free and honoring the legacy of those who have worked to protect communities from the dangers of substance misuse.



In South Dakota, Red Ribbon Week encourages students to remember “Life is a Puzzle, solve it.” It also reminds everyone of the importance of prevention, education, and strong community support. By coming together, South Dakotans help create a brighter, healthier future for the next generation.



NATIONAL BULLYING PREVENTION MONTH & UNITY DAY

October is National Bullying Prevention Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about the impact of bullying and promoting kindness, inclusion, and respect. Across South Dakota, schools, organizations, and communities are coming together to spread the message that every child deserves to feel safe and supported. One key highlight of the month is Unity Day, celebrated this year on October 22. On this day, South Dakotans are encouraged to wear orange to show solidarity against bullying and to stand for kindness, acceptance, and inclusion. Whether it's in classrooms, workplaces, or neighborhoods, Unity Day reminds us that together, we can create safe and welcoming environments for all.

By joining in these efforts, South Dakota continues to take a strong stand in building communities where every student feels seen, valued, and respected.

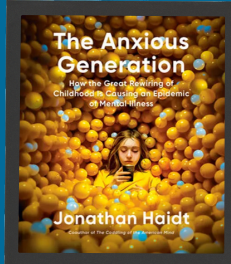


SD PRC E-LIBRARY SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

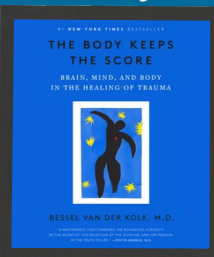
The SD PRCs maintain an e-library on the Libby App. They recently added 37 new titles highlighting suicide awareness. Check out a few below:

The Anxious Generation

Social psychologist Jonathan Haidt lays out the facts about the epidemic of teen mental illness that hit many countries at the same time.



The Body Keeps Score

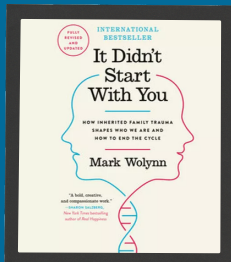


"Essential reading for anyone interested in understanding and treating traumatic stress and the scope of it's impact on society." - Alexander

McFarlane, Director of the Centre for Traumatic Stress Studies.

It Didn't Start With You

A groundbreaking approach to transforming traumatic legacies passed down in families over generations, by an acclaimed expert in the field.



Download the free Libby app on any device or visit libbyapp.com/library/sdprevention



NATIONAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE BACK DAY OCTOBER 25, 2025

Prescription medications can be helpful when used correctly, but when they're no longer needed, keeping them around puts your family at risk. Unused or expired medications are a leading source of accidental poisonings and misuse, especially among teens and young children.

As a parent or caregiver, you have the power to prevent tragedy with one simple step: safe disposal. The Drug Enforcement Administration's Prescription Drug Take Back Initiative offers nearly 17,000 secure drop-off locations in pharmacies, hospitals, and police departments nationwide.

Click [HERE](#) to find a drop off locations near you!

OTHER OPTIONS TO DISPOSE OF MEDICATION SAFELY

Let's Be Clear: Medication safety is key to a healthier, safer home. Order a **free lock box** to safely store medications or request **free DisposeRx** packets to dispose of medications at home. It's a small act that can make a big difference in preventing substance misuse or accidental poisoning.



CLICK [HERE](#) TO
ORDER!



1. Add warm water to the medicine bottle with the pills until 2/3 full.
2. Empty DisposeRx packet into the bottle.
3. Close bottle and shake for 30 seconds.
4. Throw bottle away

A 4-digit, 10,000 combination locking medicine box that allows storage of all prescription & over-the-counter medications in one secure place.

SOUTH DAKOTA,

Let's Be
Clear



PREVENTION. TREATMENT. RECOVERY.

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

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

While mental health and suicide prevention are critical public health issues that deserve attention year-round, September offers a focused opportunity for individuals, organizations, and communities to come together, raise their voices, and emphasize that hope and healing are possible.

Suicide prevention month is rooted in the idea of creating hope through meaningful action. This means increasing awareness of how proactive steps—whether big or small—can help prevent suicide and ultimately save lives. Research shows that communities actively working to reduce stigma and barriers to mental health services experience fewer deaths by suicide. One important step is to encourage open and honest conversations about suicide, mental health, and the challenges that can lead to suicidal thoughts. Sharing personal stories and struggles can help others feel less alone and more understood. Additionally, promoting positive and supportive messages about mental health throughout the community can help reduce stigma and create a more compassionate environment. In addition, mental health trainings can benefit communities by increasing awareness, reducing stigma, and equipping individuals with the tools to recognize and respond to mental health challenges early. These lead to safer, more compassionate environments where people feel supported, connected, and empowered to seek help or assist others in need.

The Helpline Center is offering free 988 yard signs for shipment or pick up at our office in Sioux Falls! Signs available during office hours at 3817 S. Elmwood Ave. Sioux Falls, SD 57105 and can be ordered through our website [here – 988 SIGNS](#).

On Thursday, September 18th, join agencies across South Dakota in the “Chalk the Walk” initiative and help spread hope and awareness by covering sidewalks with positive, uplifting messages about mental health and suicide prevention. Don’t forget to share your chalk art on social media using the hashtag #ChalktheWalk2025—posts will be featured on the Helpline Center’s social media pages.

Together, we can remind others that hope is real and help is always available. If you or someone you know is struggling, call or text 988—the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline—for free, confidential support, 24/7.

Upcoming Events

Surviving After Suicide Support Groups

Third Thursday of each month from 7:00p.m. – 8:30p.m. CST

3817 S Elmwood Ave | Sioux Falls, SD

There is no fee or registration required. Must be 18 years old to attend.

Virtual

Second Wednesday of each month from 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. CST

A virtual link will be sent to you after you register [HERE](#).

Request Helpline Center 988 or 211 marketing materials at NO COST!

See what is available [HERE](#).

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.

Breathe Easy Cross Country Meet in Milbank

The Milbank Tobacco Coalition was excited to once again host the Breathe Easy Meet this year. With beautiful weather and strong turnout, students connected with athletes and spectators to share facts about the harms of tobacco and vaping.

This year's event featured a new sponsor who purchased shirts, which were awarded to the top 10 runners in each race. The shirts also displayed the QuitLine, helping extend the message beyond race day. Educational resources were available along the course and in the clubhouse, sparking conversations among participants, especially youth, who showed great interest in learning and talking about tobacco prevention.

One runner even joked the event should be renamed the "Breathe Hard" meet after finishing the race, a lighthearted reminder of the day's purpose. Overall, it was a successful event that spread prevention resources and encouraged tobacco-free conversations across the community.



Red Ribbon Week is Coming!

October 23 – 31, 2025!

Join the nation's largest and longest-running substance-use prevention campaign! Red Ribbon Week® empowers youth and communities to take a stand, learn about prevention, and access helpful resources.

This year's theme is:

❧ "Life is a Puzzle, Solve it Drug Free." ❧

Mark your calendars, spread the word, and get youth involved in this powerful week of awareness and action.

✓ Free guides, flyers, and activity resources available at:
🔗 redribbon.org | redribbon.org/downloads

UPCOMING EVENTS AND TRAININGS

- **October 6, 2025 3:00pm- 5:00pm CT - CATCH My Breath (Virtual)** –
Email Hilary Larsen to register

If interested in requesting a training, contact
DOHTobaccoControl@state.sd.us.