

Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Toolkit

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month dedicated to honoring those who have died by suicide and their loved ones, whilst also building awareness around suicide prevention. At Students Demand Action, we want to honor this month with action, especially promoting awareness about youth firearm suicide and proven preventative measures—like secure firearm storage.

Introduction

Over the last two decades, youth suicide has increased by over 50 percent and over 3,300 young people ages 10-24 die every year by firearm suicide. In fact, having access to a firearm triples the risk of death by suicide—90 percent of suicide attempts with a firearm will result in death, and suicide accounts for more than half of all gun deaths in the U.S.. Research shows that the vast majority of people who survive a suicide attempt will not go on to die by suicide, meaning that it is of the utmost importance to make sure those most at risk of harming themselves do not have access to a firearm.

Secure gun storage is particularly important for preventing suicides and unintentional gun deaths among children and teens. Eighty percent of youth firearm suicides occur with the firearm of a family member and most also occur at home. Households with securely stored firearms enable a 78% lower risk of youth self-inflicted firearm injuries.

This toolkit was created to help you take action in your community to prevent youth suicide and honor September as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. You can read more facts about youth suicide prevention and secure storage at this [fact sheet](#).

What is Secure Storage?

Secure storage means that firearms are stored unloaded, locked, and separate from ammunition. There are many [different products](#) for firearm storage that provide owners with quick access to their gun if needed, but still prevents access to people at increased risk of harming themselves.

Taking Action: High School Students

[Educate your peers and honor Suicide Prevention Awareness Month in your School](#)

There are a ton of ways you can go about building out an education campaign, here are some examples:

- Passing out teal & purple ribbons (general suicide awareness) or yellow ribbons (youth & teen suicide awareness) with informational handouts to bring home about [secure storage practices](#), [youth firearm suicide](#), and a [guide to secure storage devices](#).
- Give your peers a [presentation](#) about firearm suicide prevention and/or holding a presentation for all students on what's available to students who are struggling. This [presentation](#) is specifically regarding the resources available through 988. You can do this by teaming up with a mental health club, creating a plan with counselors or teachers at your school, or simply presenting to your Students Demand Action club.
- Talk with your advisor about making an announcement to your school to honor World Suicide Prevention Day on September 9th.
- Organize a walk to build suicide prevention awareness for your peers or members of your community.
- Posting flyers with hotlines and/or QR codes that guide to websites where students can find help they need in a crisis or help for others. You can toggle to the end of this toolkit for some examples.

Pro-Tip: Make sure you [register each event with Students Demand Action](#) and [utilize your budget](#) to purchase supplies you may need!

[Pass A Secure Storage Resolution through your School Board/Board of Education](#)

School boards have the power to pass resolutions, disseminate information, and spark change and students are a key stakeholder in this work. Building out a campaign to advocate for your Board to pass a secure storage resolution and disseminate letters home to parents about secure storage can make a monumental difference in keeping your community free from gun violence.

[Pass a Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Proclamation through your School Board/Board of Education](#)

Another great way to utilize your school board or board of education is to advocate for the passage of a proclamation honoring National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. This can help bring more awareness to the risk factors of youth suicide and start a conversation in your community.

Taking Action: College Students

[Educate your peers and honor Suicide Prevention Awareness Month on Your Campus](#)

There are a ton of ways you can go about building out an education campaign, here are some examples:

- Passing out teal & purple ribbons (general suicide awareness) or yellow ribbons (youth & teen suicide awareness) with informational handouts to bring home about [secure storage practices](#), [youth firearm suicide](#), and a [guide to secure storage devices](#).
- Give your peers a [presentation](#) about firearm suicide prevention and/or holding a presentation for all students on what's available to students who are struggling. This [presentation](#) is specifically regarding the resources available through 988. You can do this by teaming up with a mental health club, presenting to your student government, teaming up with fraternities/sororities (especially ones who focus on mental health), and presenting at your club meeting.
- Build out a social media campaign honoring Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and educating about the role of secure firearm storage in youth suicide prevention.
- Team up with other clubs to organize an awareness walk on campus.
- Posting flyers with hotlines and/or QR codes that guide to websites where students can find help they need in a crisis or help for others. You can toggle to the end of this toolkit for some examples.
- Sending a mass email to students with resources.

Pro-Tip: Make sure you [register each event with Students Demand Action](#) and [utilize your budget](#) to purchase supplies you may need!

Advocate for Secure Storage Education to be Visible on Campus

This is especially pertinent if you live in a state where guns are allowed on campus by state mandate, [you can check that here](#). Education is key to making sure that guns stay out of the wrong hands. Here are a few examples on how you can advocate for this:

- [Pass a student government resolution](#) honoring Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and advocating for secure storage education to be visible on school websites, on campus, and in other places that make sense for your student body.
- Talk to your professors about including secure storage recommendations in their course syllabi or on their course resources.

Further Resources

Links to More Learning:

- [Be SMART Website](#), Everytown for Gun Safety's secure storage campaign website encourages parents and guardians to Be SMART and secure firearms in their home.
- [EveryStat](#), a website where you can find the statistics about firearm suicide in each state in the country.
- [Fact Sheet on Firearm Suicide in the United States](#)
- [The Rise of Firearm Suicide Among Young Americans](#)
- [The Danger of Guns on Campus](#)
- [Keep Guns Off Campus](#)

- [Gun Suicide in Cities](#) has a tool to analyze how prevalent firearm suicide is in your city.
- [The Relationship Between Firearms, Mass Shootings and Suicide Risk among LGBTQ+ Young People](#), a recent report published in collaboration with The Trevor Project.

Free & Confidential Crisis Lines:

- [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#), previously known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, provides free and confidential support for people in distress or suicidal crisis. [Call](#) or text 988 to talk with a counselor or visit 988lifeline.org/chat/ to chat online with one. Call, text, and chat lines are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- [Crisis Text Line](#) provides free live texting with a trained crisis counselor. Text HOME to 741741 from anywhere in the US 24/7.
- [Teen Line](#) connects teens who need someone to talk to with other trained teens who can listen and present available options. Call 1-800-852-8336 or text TEEN to 839863 from 6 to 9 pm, Pacific Time.
- [The Trevor Project](#) provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ+ people under age 25. Call 1-866-488-7386, text START to 678-678, or [chat](#) online with a counselor 24/7.
- [Trans Lifeline Hotline](#) provides support services by trans people, for trans and questioning callers in crisis 24/7. Call 1-877-565-8860.
- [Veterans Crisis Line](#) provides confidential support to anyone, regardless of Veterans Affairs status. Call 988 and press 1, text 838255, or [chat](#) online 24/7.
- [Your Life Your Voice](#) connects teens in need of help with crisis counselors 24/7. Call 1-800-448-3000 or text VOICE to 20121.

Suicide Prevention & Mental Health Organizations:

- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) is a voluntary health organization that gives those affected by suicide a nationwide community empowered by research, education and advocacy to take action against this leading cause of death.
- [Active Minds](#) has chapters on more than 800 college campuses that work to empower students to talk openly about their mental health so that no one struggles alone.
- [Asian Mental Health Collective](#) provides a list of culturally competent therapists for the Asian and Pacific Islander community and works to raise awareness about the importance of mental health care and challenging the stigma surrounding it.
- [Black Mental Health Alliance](#) aims to develop and promote culturally relevant trainings and services to support the health of Black people and other communities in the US.
- [Center for Native American Youth of the Aspen Institute](#) works to improve the health and safety of Native American youth through research, advocacy, and policy change.

- [Loveland Foundation](#) provides financial assistance to Black women and girls nationwide seeking therapy, with the goal of prioritizing opportunity, access, validation, and healing.
- [National Alliance for Hispanic Health](#) is a science-based and community-driven organization that focuses on improving the health and well-being of Hispanic people and providing quality care to all.
- American Association of Suicidology's [National Center for the Prevention of Youth Suicide](#) works to identify youth at risk, develop strategies to move prevention upstream, and engage and empower youth to be partners in their suicide prevention efforts.
- [Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide](#), founded by two dads who lost teenage children to suicide, encourages public awareness of teen suicide through the development and promotion of educational training programs.
- [You Matter](#), administered by the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, creates a safe space for youth to share their stories about mental health.