**Communications Guidebook**

Thank you for downloading Glacial Lakes SAFE’s Communication Guidebook! Whether you’re a partner, business, non-profit or passionate individual – we’re glad you’re here.

The Guidebook is divided into four sections with listed resources and drafted messages for our primary audiences:

* [Students](#_bookmark0)
* [Men and Young Adults](#_bookmark1)
* [Parents](#_bookmark2)

The fourth section is specifically for [local employers](#_bookmark3) and includes resources available through Glacial Lakes SAFE, ideas to try, and examples of best practices.

# Research:

In May 2022 an online survey was conducted by Glacial Lakes SAFE and its partners. The primary objectives of the survey were to:

* Gauge awareness of the Glacial Lakes SAFE Coalition.
* Establish benchmarks to measure the effectiveness of future efforts
* Determine the most effective messages for increasing awareness of mental health issues
* Identify the best methods of communicating their message and providing information

The results of the survey are reflected in this communication guide; therefore, it is not recommended to revise the primary message, brand, or scheme in each material provided or linked to in this guide unless there is explicit approval from Kelli Rumpza at the Human Service Agency, moderator of the coalition.

# Overall, survey respondents will trust and ask their friends and family the most for “Information Sources for Help/Support Dealing With Mental Health Issue”

Spread the Word! Let’s inform and educate our friends, family members, clients, and colleagues in our community so we can all help address mental health stigma and support each other in our wellness journeys.

# Students:

## From the research:

* Students are more comfortable than other groups with talking about mental health, however there is room for improvement, they ranked their comfort a 2.56 on a 5-point scale.
* Students find accessing information on services easier than other groups, however the average rank was a 3.11 on a 5-point scale.
* Students use “newer” social media sources, however 74.36% indicated regular Facebook use. SnapChat (78.85%) and TikTok (66.03%) were also popular.

## Resources available:

* Flyers
	+ Call to action to address feeling and burn-out. “Feel like you’re running on empty?”
	+ Addresses stigma and has a call to action to support others. “Talking can be awkward.”
* Printed rack-card
	+ Key messages: addresses stress, mental health stigma, 988, and wellness tips.
	+ Contact Kelli Rumpza for free copies of this rack card.
* Business card
	+ Key messages: Glacial Lakes SAFE resource and wellness tip.
	+ Contact Kelli Rumpza for free copies.

## Social media posts:

* Facebook
	+ Visit [Glacial Lakes SAFE on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/GlacialLakesSAFE) to share branded posts.
* Custom posts – Facebook, SnapChat, TikTok, and Instagram
	+ The best use of these platforms is posting a series of video clips or photos of yourself or your business doing something that supports the key messages.
	+ You are welcome to download and share the images and videos [from this page](https://www.humanserviceagency.org/glsaferesources.html) along with any of the following messages that correlate to it.
		- For example, if you talk about “recharging” in your post, please use the battery graphic or video.
	+ Messages you can use in your video or as post copy:
		- Talking can be awkward. Listening shows you have their back. Most of the time people just need to get something off of their chest to feel better, but if they are talking about suicide, know you can confidentially call or text 988.
		- Feel like you’re running on empty? 1 - Remember to take time to recharge – it may only take a few minutes to do something that makes you feel better. 2 - If you’ve been feeling empty for a while – it’s ok to ask for help. Visit humanserviceagency.org/glsafe for a list of Watertown area providers. 3- Know thoughts about suicide can begin small like “I wish I wasn’t here” But over time they can become more detailed and dangerous. If you need help now - call or text 988.
* Taking time to recharge can be as simple as: 30 seconds to breathe deeply, 1 minute to say a prayer, 3 minutes to stretch, 5 minutes to play a song you like, 10 minutes to walk around the block.
	+ Pro Tip – you can adjust this message to talking about what you do, or what the students in your life do, to recharge your batteries.
* When you're stressed out, your body may try to tell you in a variety of ways. You may be shaky, tense or irritable. You may experience tremors, clenched jaw or lack of focus. You may be sleepless or oversleeping. If these responses are starting to take over your life, it's time to talk it out.
	+ Pro Tip – you can adjust this message to talking about symptoms you’ve commonly experienced and make this post a testimonial.
* Pro-tips
	+ Direct friends or followers to a website such as humanserviceagency.org/glsafe for more information or education on a subject.
	+ Related to your friends or followers by adding something personal. It can be simple, like “I know I feel better after a walk…” to a more in- depth story.
	+ When referring to suicide and suicide attempts avoid using terms such as “committing suicide,” “successful suicide,” or “failed suicide” as these terms carry negative meanings. Instead, you can talk about it like any death. They died from suicide, which is like we would say if someone died from heart disease.

# Men and Young Adults:

## From the research:

* Men and those under 25 considered mental health issues to be less of a problem than did women and older respondents.
	+ However, these groups (men and young adults) are locally more at-risk to suicidal ideation. This stresses the importance to relate to these two groups and encourage healthy habits. It could be assumed that both groups are not recognizing symptoms before they experience a mental health crisis.
* The social media messages in this section were ranked highest by these two groups.
* Specifically for this group, we recommend sharing a video of yourself or business.
	+ SnapChat (83.71%), Instagram (74.80%), TikTok (73.17%), and Facebook (70.73%) are regularly used by survey respondents younger than 25. With young adults – social media is key.
	+ Men overall listen to broadcast radio (61.32%), streaming apps (68.29%) and YouTube (58.84%). Suggesting that men overall may rather listen and watch their news and information.

## Resources available:

* Flyers
	+ Call to action to address feeling and burn-out. “Feel like you’re running on empty?”
	+ Addresses stigma and has a call to action to support others. “Talking can be awkward.”

## Social media posts:

* Facebook
	+ Visit [Glacial Lakes SAFE on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/GlacialLakesSAFE) to share branded posts.
* Custom posts – Facebook, SnapChat, TikTok, and Instagram
	+ The best use of these platforms is posting a series of video clips or photos of yourself or your business doing something that supports the key messages.
	+ You are welcome to download and share the images [from this page](https://www.humanserviceagency.org/glsaferesources.html) along with any of the following messages that correlate to it.
		- For example, if you talk about “recharging” in your post, please use the battery graphic or video.
	+ Messages you can use in your video or as post copy:
		- Feel like you’re running on empty? 1 - Remember to take time to recharge – it may only take a few minutes to do something that makes you feel better. 2 - If you’ve been feeling empty for a while – it’s ok to ask for help. Visit humanserviceagency.org/glsafe for a list of Watertown area providers. 3- Know thoughts about suicide can begin small like “I wish I wasn’t here” But over time they can become more detailed and dangerous. If you need help now - call or text 988.
		- It’s okay for guys to talk about what’s on their mind. And it’s okay to listen. If a friend or family member wants to talk about life or their health, the best thing to do is listen and support them. All they may need to know is you always have their back. If they are talking about suicide, know you can confidentially call or text 988.
* Taking time to recharge can be as quick as microwaving a bag of popcorn. Take a few minutes and do something to help you feel and be better. Make a list of the things you like to do and pick at least one each day as part of a healthy life.
	+ Pro Tip – you can adjust this message to talk about what you do to recharge your batteries.
* Everyone has bad days. When bad days outnumber the good ones, it’s time to talk it out.  Talking with a family member or friend is healthy and helpful. At the same time, if you are wondering if you should speak with a counselor, it’s ok to reach out. Visit humanserviceagency.org/glsafe for a list of Watertown area providers.
* Pro-tips
	+ Direct friends or followers to a website such as humanserviceagency.org/glsafe for more information or education on a subject.
	+ The following numbers are specific for certain populations. You can add these numbers according to the group you’re addressing
		- Local number: Human Service Agency Crisis Line 24/7: 605-886- 0123
		- Farm and Rural Stress Hotline: 1-800-691-4336
		- Veteran Crisis Line: Call 988 then press 1 to talk to connect with a VA responder.
	+ Relate to your friends or followers by adding something personal. It can be simple, like “I know I feel better after a walk…” to a more in-depth story.
	+ When referring to suicide and suicide attempts avoid using terms such as “committing suicide,” “successful suicide,” or “failed suicide” as these terms carry negative meanings. Instead, you can talk about it like any death. They died from suicide, which is like we would say if someone died from heart disease.

# Parents:

Parents often don’t want to talk about themselves – they focus their energy on their kids.

## Research:

* Adults with a child in the household ranked “How much of a problem are mental health issues in your area a 4.04 on a 5-point scale with 5 being “very much a problem”.

o Ages 25 – 34 year old, often an age of young parents, ranked it a 4.12 and ages 35 – 44 ranked it a 4.05.

* This group wants more details regarding local access, for example providers available, how to schedule an appointment, etc.
* Parents overall use Facebook (85.63%) the most out of all available information sources. They also listen to broadcast radio (58.05%) and streaming apps (59.77%).

## Resources available:

Please see the Students section above for printed materials. Many times, parents learn from their child’s handouts from school, church and other groups; therefore, dispersing the resources from the Students section to parents is a great opportunity for both groups to learn and normalize mental health together.

## Social media posts:

* Facebook
	+ Visit [Glacial Lakes SAFE on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/GlacialLakesSAFE) to share branded posts.
		- [Encouraging Wellness in Watertown](https://www.facebook.com/groups/WellnessWatertown/) is a great Facebook group where community members like parents to share tips.
* Custom posts – Facebook, SnapChat, TikTok, and Instagram
	+ The best use of these platforms is posting a series of video clips or photos of yourself or your business doing something that supports the key messages.
	+ You are welcome to download and share the images and videos [from this page](https://www.humanserviceagency.org/glsaferesources.html) along with any of the following messages that correlate to it.
		- For example, if you talk about “recharging” in your post, please use the battery graphic or video.
	+ Messages you can use in your video or as post copy:
		- Talking to your teen about their mental health can feel awkward at first. You can start by asking them about a behavior you’ve noticed. Make sure you ask when your conversation can remain confidential, including from their siblings. All they may need is for you to actively listen. If they say they need help, ask if they’ve thought about what they might need to feel better. If they haven’t, offer support and talk it out with them. If they have, support them in following through with their needs. Local providers and school counselors are available to help you and your teen. Visit humanserviceagency.org/glsafe for a list of Watertown area providers.
* Parenting is a 24/7 job. Take time to recharge – it may only take a few minutes to do something that makes you feel better and be more present for your family. 2 - If you’ve been feeling empty for a while – it’s ok to ask for help. Visit humanserviceagency.org/glsafe for a list of Watertown area providers. 3- Know thoughts about suicide can begin small like “My family doesn’t need me.” But over time they can become more detailed and dangerous. If you need help now - call or text 988.
* You may notice your child or teen is shaky, tense or irritable. They may be sleepless or oversleeping. If these responses are starting to take over their life, it's time to talk it out. Make time to talk them alone about your observations and give them time they need to talk about it. . If they say they need help, ask if they’ve thought about what they might need to feel better. Visit humanserviceagency.org/glsafe for a list of Watertown area providers.
* Pro-tips
	+ Direct friends or followers to a website such as humanserviceagency.org/glsafe for more information or education on a subject.
	+ Related to your friends or followers by adding something personal. It can be simple, like “I know I feel better after a walk…” to a more in- depth story.
	+ When referring to suicide and suicide attempts avoid using terms such as “committing suicide,” “successful suicide,” or “failed suicide” as these terms carry negative meanings. Instead, you can talk about it like any death. They died from suicide, which is like we would say if someone died from heart disease.

# Local Employers:

Local employers can show their support and help their staff in a variety of ways. This special section includes resources available through Glacial Lakes SAFE, ideas to try, examples of best practices, and links to other resources available online.

Looking for more? Kelli Rumpza is happy to talk about your needs and contribute ideas.

## For Your Customers and the Public:

* Visit [Glacial Lakes SAFE on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/GlacialLakesSAFE) to share branded posts.
* Have resources available for customers if needed. Rack cards and business cards are available through Kelli Rumpza.
* Train staff in Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) - three steps anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide. This training is available through the NE Prevention Resource Center – [click here.](https://www.humanserviceagency.org/NEPrevention/neprctrainings)

## For Your Employees and Internal Communication:

* Flyers available
	+ Call to action to address feeling burn-out. “Feel like you’re running on empty?”
	+ Addresses stigma and has a call to action to support others. “Talking can be awkward.”
* Ideas to try
	+ Hold events and plan additional communication during Suicide Awareness Month in September and Mental Health Awareness Month in May
	+ Digital message board
		- Feel like you’re running on empty? Remember to take 5 minutes to recharge.
	+ Distribute customized healthy habit ideas, for example
		- A walking path near the office that typically takes 10 minutes to complete.
	+ Offer perks related to health such as a respite room
* Training and Lunch & Learns
	+ [Trainings from the NE Prevention Resource Center](https://www.humanserviceagency.org/NEPrevention/neprctrainings)
	+ [NAMI's stigma free workplace](https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Pledge-to-Be-StigmaFree/StigmaFree-Company)
	+ [NAMI presentations](https://namisouthdakota.org/support-and-education/presentations/mental-health-in-the-workplace/)
* Best practices
	+ Double check your health plan offered to employees. Are mental health and substance abuse covered?
	+ Remind your staff frequently of their EAP program: how it works, that it's confidential, free to them and available to their family members as well. Often people will not use this resource/benefit because they do not fully understand it is completely confidential and their employer will not know they sought services.
		- Many EAP programs will also offer lunch and learns or brief presentations on mental health or substance abuse topics at which time they might offer confidential screenings and information on their EAP program for those staff who feel they would like to seek more individual services.
* Business leaders should be checking in regularly with their HR representative to make sure policies and procedures reflect how to use FMLA or mental health related absences.
* It can be difficult to navigate employees’ time off due to mental health issues or illness. It is an employer's right to ask for a counselor note or doctor note if they are gone more than a specific number of days. This can align with your sick day policy.

# Summary:

Start here:

If you want to start with one thing – share Glacial Lakes SAFE’s Facebook posts. It is the most used information source across all ages.

Printed resources in the library or digital assets to add to your employee site or website: Contact Kelli Rumpza at kellir@humanserviceagency.org or (605) 884-3518.

Make it personal or custom on social media:

As we shared, our community trusts their friends and family for information on mental health. Follow the messages under each audience and make it personal.

Always include a call-to-action so your friends or followers have something to act on. It can be as simple as, “be kind”, text or chat 988 if you need help now, or Visit humanserviceagency.org/glsafe for a list of Watertown area providers.

If you want to bounce your ideas off a member of our coalition, please feel comfortable reaching out via Kelli - kellir@humanserviceagency.org – or message us on Facebook.

Become a coalition partner:

Glacial Lakes SAFE is dedicated to empower the Glacial Lakes community to prioritize mental health and de-stigmatize suicide, crisis, and mental health conditions. We meet every month to discuss our projects and plan the Annual Suicide Awareness Walk and Remembrance Ceremony, which is held the first Wednesday in September. Contact Kelli Rumpza at kellir@humanserviceagency.org or (605) 884-3518 for more details.