



# Prevention Newslink

December 2025

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



## Supporting Families Through the Holidays

December brings opportunities for celebration, connection, and meaningful family time. But it can also bring stress, grief, and added pressure, especially for families juggling busy schedules or coping with loss. Simple, intentional actions can strengthen well-being and help everyone feel more grounded during the season.

The holidays are an important time to focus on protective factors such as routines, communication, and connection. These small but powerful practices help families manage stress, prevent substance misuse, and support mental wellness. They also create a buffer for youth, older adults, and anyone who may be feeling overwhelmed or isolated this time of year.

### Tips for a Supportive Holiday Season

- **Strengthen Routines:** Keep meals, sleep, and downtime as consistent as possible. Predictability helps children and adults stay regulated during busy weeks.
- **Practice Open Communication:** Talk honestly about expectations, finances, schedules, and boundaries. Clear communication prevents conflict and creates a calmer environment.
- **Reduce Substance-Related Risks:** Offer appealing non-alcoholic drinks, reinforce family rules around youth substance use, and plan safe transportation. Modeling moderation helps keep celebrations safe.
- **Reach Out to Older Adults:** Loneliness increases during the winter months. A call, visit, or invite to a holiday activity can make a meaningful difference.
- **Acknowledge Grief:** For those missing loved ones, traditions can feel heavy. Encourage people to honor memories, adjust expectations, and seek support when needed.

Small acts of care can have a big impact. Whether it's creating a simple family ritual, checking in with a neighbor, or choosing a substance-free way to unwind, these choices build connection and resilience. This December, commit to supportive practices that help all families feel seen, valued, and included.

If someone is struggling with grief, loss, or family relationships, please contact 988 via call, text, or chat for support.

## UPCOMING TRAININGS & EVENTS

### Stalking: Know It, Name It, Stop It

January 8 | 11 AM - 12:30PM (CST)

Virtual

Find more information [HERE](#).

### PREPaRE Workshop 1: Comprehensive School Safety Planning: Prevention Through Recovery

January 9 & 16 | 8:30 AM - 12 PM (CST)

Virtual

Find more information [HERE](#).

### Wyman's Teen Outreach Program (TOP) Facilitator Training

February 3-4 | 9 AM - 5 PM (CST)

Watertown

Find more information [HERE](#).

### SPF Application for Prevention Success Training (SAPST)

May 18-22

Find more information [HERE](#).



**SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION  
AND RECOVERY NIGHT**

JOIN US FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE  
PREVENTION AND RECOVERY NIGHT

JANUARY 23<sup>RD</sup> / 7:05PM



TICKETS IN SECTION S OR 16 - ALCOHOL FREE ZONES  
PHOTOS ON ICE FOLLOWING GAME

**605-716-7825**

## January is National Mentoring Month

January is National Mentoring Month, a nationwide observance celebrating the powerful impact of mentoring and the importance of connecting young people with caring, committed adults. Mentorship helps young people build confidence, develop new skills, and form strong, supportive relationships.

National data shows that youth with mentors are more likely to volunteer, take on leadership roles, feel a sense of belonging, and many say their mentors have played a key role in supporting their mental health.

This January, if you've ever thought about becoming a mentor, supporting mentoring efforts, or simply learning more, consider taking action. Just one hour a week can make a meaningful difference in a young person's life and help build stronger, healthier communities across our state.

### To find local mentoring opportunities, check out these South Dakota-based organizations:

- [South Dakota TeamMates](#)
- [Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Black Hills](#)
- [LSS Youth Mentoring Program](#)
- [Sioux 52 Mentoring Initiative](#)
- [Brookings County Youth Mentoring Program](#)
- [Connecting With Our Youth \(CWOY\)](#)

## Prevention Specialist Book Review: From Here to the Great Unknown

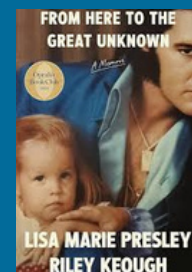
Imagine growing up as the daughter of Elvis Presley. One might assume that Lisa Marie Presley had everything she needed to live a happy and healthy life, but the reality was far more complicated.

Told through Lisa Marie's own recordings, with her daughter Riley Keough filling in the gaps, this book reveals a heartbreaking story. At just nine years old, Lisa Marie lost her father, whom she adored. Her mother, Priscilla, did not fully recognize the depth of this loss or the lasting impact it had on Lisa Marie's emotional well-being. Throughout her youth, Lisa Marie moved between several schools and struggled with substance use as a teenager and into adulthood. Although she attended treatment programs, she often returned to substances to fill the persistent void she felt.

Lisa Marie also sought love and stability through several marriages, none of which endured. She pursued a music career, but the one role she believed she truly excelled in was being a mother. Riley describes her childhood as adventurous and unstructured, shaped by her mother's deep love. Yet even that love could not shield Lisa Marie from the pain she carried. The death of her son Ben by suicide devastated her, and she never fully recovered. She lived with profound grief for the rest of her life.

Lisa Marie Presley died at 53 from gastrointestinal complications, and I believe, a broken heart.

Sign up for our Libby account today to listen or read for yourself. Content Warning: This book contains strong language.



# **SOUTH DAKOTA SUICIDE PREVENTION**



## **RESOURCES**

**STATEWIDE WEBSITE**  
[SDSUICIDEPREVENTION.ORG](https://SDSUICIDEPREVENTION.ORG)

**THE HELPLINE CENTER**  
[HELPLINECENTER.ORG](https://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**

## **Impaired Driving Awareness**

December is National Impaired Driving Prevention Month. The goal is to promote safety, wellness, and hope to all communities. This is a time to raise awareness about the dangers of impaired driving and to encourage safe, responsible choices as holiday celebrations and winter travel increase. While impaired driving is often discussed in the context of road safety, it is also closely connected to broader issues of mental health, substance use, and suicide prevention.

Alcohol and drug misuse can increase feelings of hopelessness, risk-taking behaviors, and emotional distress. In some cases, impaired driving incidents may be linked to underlying struggles that have gone unaddressed. By promoting prevention, support, and early intervention, we can help protect lives on the road and support individuals who may be experiencing mental health or substance use challenges. This month, we encourage communities to promote safe and sober driving during holiday gatherings, check in with your friends, family, and coworkers who may be struggling, offer support and reduce stigma around seeking mental health or substance use help, and share the resources available.

Call, text, or chat 988 for 24/7 emotional support. Whether you're experiencing a mental health crisis, substance-related distress, or simply need someone to talk to, trained counselors are ready to help. The Helpline Center offers compassionate Substance Use Care Coordination to help individuals and families navigate treatment options, recovery support, and community resources. This service provides guidance, follow-up, and encouragement throughout the journey toward wellness. For more information, call 988 and ask for substance use care coordination.

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Surviving After Suicide Class**

10 week class to begin January 13, 2026 from 6:00p.m. – 8:30p.m. CST  
3817 S Elmwood Ave | Sioux Falls, SD 57105

This 10 week class helps people who lost loved one's to suicide understand the traumatic loss and grief journey they have entered. They will connect with other survivors to find the support and hope. There is no cost to attend but registration is necessary. Please register [here](#).

### **Helpline Center Featured Mental Health Training**

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) is for anyone—regardless of prior experience—who wants to be able to provide intervention support for people experiencing a suicidal crisis.

Shown by major studies to significantly reduce suicidality, the ASIST model teaches effective communication skills to help keep people "safe for now." ASIST is a 2-day training. This is a great training for professional helpers or leadership teams. Please reach out to our team for more information [here](#).

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

See what is available [HERE](#).





# LOST & FOUND®

## FINDING YOUR VERSION OF JOY: NAVIGATING HOLIDAY STRESS AT WORK AND AT HOME

By: Lana Loken, Senior Education & Policy Specialist

'Tis the season to be jolly—or so the music in every store reminds us. The holidays are often portrayed as joyful and bright, but for many people, the season brings more stress than cheer. A 2023 American Psychological Association study found that 89% of adults feel stressed during the holidays, and 41% report higher-than-usual stress levels. Add workplace pressures to an already demanding time of year, and it's no wonder so many people feel overwhelmed.

Between year-end reports, inventory, fundraising deadlines, and personal commitments like family gatherings, school concerts, and holiday parties, the season can leave even the most prepared person feeling stretched thin. Common stressors include juggling personal and professional demands, loneliness, grief, financial pressure, and worsening symptoms of existing mental health conditions. The good news: with awareness and intentional support—both in the workplace and in our own routines—we can make this season more manageable.

### How Workplaces Can Support Employees During the Holiday Season

- Check in with each other - year-end busyness can make us rush from task to task without noticing how others are doing. A simple check-in with coworkers or supervisees can prevent burnout from building quietly under the surface.
- Recognize that the season isn't joyful for everyone - people may be struggling with loss, financial strain, distance from loved ones, or simply not celebrating the holiday. Acknowledging different experiences helps create a more inclusive, compassionate work environment.
- Offer financial planning resources - holiday spending often increases financial anxiety. If your organization provides financial wellness tools or workshops, highlight them now. Even basic budgeting guidance can offer reassurance.
- Limit "required" holiday events - encourage the use of PTO - many employees avoid taking time off due to workload or guilt. Yet stepping away helps prevent burnout and increases productivity. Support your staff in using their PTO, especially during a season full of personal obligations.
- Remind employees of mental health benefits - for some, holiday stress requires professional support.

A reminder about available mental health resources—such as EAP services or therapy coverage—can help employees access the care they need.

- Celebrate your employees - recognition doesn't have to come from large events. A thoughtful acknowledgment during a meeting or a simple thank-you note can significantly boost morale and remind people that their efforts are valued.

### What You Can Do Personally to Reduce Holiday Stress

- Set boundaries - holiday obligations can pile up quickly. It's okay to say no. Prioritize the gatherings and commitments that truly matter to you and allow yourself the space to rest.
- Maintain healthy habits - holiday schedules often disrupt routines. While some flexibility is natural, maintaining core habits—regular sleep, movement, and balanced eating—helps stabilize stress and energy levels.
- Acknowledge your emotions - your feelings during the holidays may not match the enthusiasm around you. Whether you're grieving, exhausted, or simply not in the holiday spirit, your emotions are valid. Recognizing them is essential to understanding your limits and knowing when to seek support.
- Plan for peace - if your calendar looks overwhelming, intentionally block out downtime. Even brief moments of calm—a walk, quiet reading time, or a break from social demands—can replenish your emotional energy.
- Stay connected - even in busy gatherings, it's possible to feel isolated. If you're overwhelmed or grieving, connection with someone you trust can help. Reach out by phone or video if you can't be with loved ones; if you are with family, carve out a few moments of meaningful conversation.

### Embracing Your Own Version of Joy

The holiday season brings a mix of joy, excitement, grief, loneliness, and everything in between. Whatever you're feeling, your emotions are real and valid. By supporting one another at work and caring for ourselves at home, we can move through the season with more balance, compassion, and authenticity. This year, give yourself permission to seek—and define—your own version of joy.

## SOUTH DAKOTA TOBACCO CONTROL PROGRAM

**Hilary Larsen**

Tobacco Program  
Coordinator

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**DOH Team:**

[DOHTobaccoControl@state.  
sd.su](mailto:DOHTobaccoControl@state.sd.su)



**Quittobaccosd.com**

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

### New Year, New Habits: A Fresh Start Toward a Healthier You

As we welcome a new year, there's no better time to reset, refocus, and build habits that support long-term wellness. Our *New Year, New Habits* resource is designed to help individuals take small, meaningful steps toward a tobacco-free lifestyle—whether they're just starting their journey or renewing their commitment.

This tool encourages users to choose a quit date, set attainable goals, and track their progress as they move toward a healthier routine. It highlights the power of understanding triggers, celebrating smoke-free milestones, and recognizing the financial benefits of quitting—turning saved dollars into rewards that uplift and motivate.

Most importantly, it reminds everyone that they don't have to take this journey alone. The SD QuitLine offers free support, including coaching, texting services, and Nicotine Replacement Therapy. With the right tools and encouragement, this can truly be the year to quit for good.

Help your community kick off the year with confidence, clarity, and support—because small habits today can create big health changes tomorrow.

New Year, New Habits worksheet can be found on the following page.

### Prepping Extra Support for Staying Tobacco-Free Through the Holidays

Whether you are quitting yourself or wanting to support a loved one, consider creating a quit kit as a meaningful but subtle way to show your support. A tobacco quit kit is a small collection of tools and resources designed to help someone stop using tobacco or nicotine by managing cravings, reducing withdrawal, and breaking daily habits tied to smoking or vaping—especially helpful during high-stress times like the holidays. These kits often include nicotine replacement therapy (such as patches, gum, or lozenges), informational materials, tracking sheets to identify triggers, and simple craving-busters like mints, lollipops, or fidget items. They also provide access to support resources like quitlines, text programs, apps, and local counseling, along with optional quit-plan tools to help set goals and stay motivated. During the holiday season, when stress and routines shift, quit kits can be a practical, ready-to-use tool to help individuals stay on track.

### UPCOMING EVENTS AND TRAININGS

February 3-4, 2026: **Teen Outreach Program** training in Watertown

Further details can be found on the flyer following the New Year, New Habit worksheet.

# New Year, New Habits

SOUTH DAKOTA  
**QUIT**  
LINE

Kick off the New Year with a fresh start and a healthier you! Quitting smoking is one of the best resolutions you can make for your health. Set clear goals, track your progress, and stay motivated as you build new habits. From identifying your triggers to celebrating smoke-free milestones, this planner is designed to help you succeed. Let's make this the year you quit for good!



## CHOOSE YOUR QUIT DATE

I pledge to be tobacco-free by:

## BUDGET RIGHT!

Use the extra dollars you save each month towards something special for you or a loved one! Reflect on the cost of tobacco use in your life, and plan how much you'll save each month from cutting the habit!



## SCAN HERE:

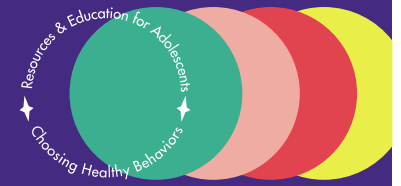


## SEEK SUPPORT

You don't have to do it alone! The SD QuitLine provides free cessation resources, such as Nicotine Replacement Therapy, phone coaching, and texting support. Find what works for you and stick to your plan to quit this New Year.



# REACH



## TEEN OUTREACH PROGRAM

**RESOURCES FOR YOUTH** 12-19 years old, middle school and high school

### KEY FEATURES

Wyman's evidence-based Teen Outreach Program® (TOP®) is a positive youth development program designed to build teens' educational success, life and leadership skills, and healthy behaviors and relationships. As a result, teens are better able to navigate challenges during their teenage years- a time when decisions matter.

### WHAT TO EXPECT

Caring, responsive, and knowledgeable TOP facilitators will build strong, supportive relationships with teens and create engaging and empowering classroom experiences, providing at least 12 lessons from the TOP curriculum with content tailored to teens' needs and interests, taught in 45-minute modules. TOP teens complete at least 10 hours of meaningful community service learning, which includes planning, action, and reflection.

### IMPACT

- Teens build and hone social and emotional skills, like managing emotions, problem-solving, decision-making, and empathy that are proven to help them be successful during the teenage years, and also later in life.
- Teens improve academic performance, and lower risky behaviors like truancy and suspension that leads to dropout.

### TRAINING DETAILS

Tuesday February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9am-5pm CST  
Wednesday February 4<sup>th</sup>, 9am-5pm CST  
Location: The Watertown Event Center  
1901 9th Ave SW, Watertown.

**Registration link:** <https://forms.gle/tE3nZyvVKaBSa5Ru6>

### TRAINERS

