



Prevention Newslink

May 2025

SD PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTERS (SDPRC)

WPRC

Youth and Family Services
Rapid City, SD

Bill Elger
welger@youthandfamilyservices.org
(605) 342-1593

SEPRC

Volunteers of America-Dakotas
Sioux Falls, SD

Kerri Cox
k.cox@voa-dakotas.org
Audrey Simmons
a.simmons@voa-dakotas.org
(605) 444-6333

NEPRC

Human Service Agency
Watertown, SD

Dodi Haug
dodih@humanserviceagency.org
Stephanie Kinnander
stephaniek@humanserviceagency.org
(605) 884-3516

CPRC

Capital Area Counseling Service
Pierre, SD

Jana Boocock
jana.boocock@cacsnet.org
(605) 224-5811

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

GRADUATION - A TIME TO CELEBRATE

Graduation is upon us. This is a milestone most young people look forward to, a time to celebrate. Sometimes these celebrations can involve alcohol. Underage drinking can lead to negative consequences such as vandalism, arrests, sexual assault, injury, car crashes, or worse. It puts teens and their friends in real danger. Ask your graduate: Is that really how you want to celebrate?

Parents often think their opinions don't matter. A parent's influence can make a difference. It's important to set clear expectations. Tell your teen you don't want them drinking before 21. Talk with them openly and often about alcohol. Ask what they know, if their friends drink, and whether they feel pressured. Listen without judgment and stay involved.

Another great protective factor for your new graduate is for you to be a strong role model. If you drink, model moderation. Secure and monitor alcohol at home. Know your teen's friends and watch for concerning changes in behavior or mood.

And finally, supervise and support safe celebrations. Host alcohol-free parties, check in during gatherings, and work with other parents to keep teens safe. Never provide alcohol to minors—Parents Who Host Lose the Most.



A teenager's brain is still developing, and it is very sensitive to alcohol's effects on judgment and decision-making. Tragedies can—and do—happen, so underage drinking should not be a part of any end-of-year celebration. Tell your graduate to play it safe and party right—and alcohol-free—at graduation, because a well-deserved celebration shouldn't end in tragedy.



UPCOMING TRAININGS & EVENTS

School Crisis Prevention & Response Hub of South Dakota 2024-25 Virtual Speaker Series

For more information and to register, click [HERE](#). For questions, contact [Amber Kilburn](#).

Understanding ACEs

May 20 | Virtual

Sign up on the CPCM website [HERE](#)

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

May 28-29 | Watertown

For more information, contact
[Stephanie Kinnander](#)

Youth Mental Health First Aid

June 11 | Brookings

Find more information & register [HERE](#)

Yankton Area Mental Wellness Institute Conference

June 4-5 | Yankton

Find more information and register [HERE](#)

Your Journey Matters 2025 SD Behavioral Health Conference

August 4 & 5 | Sioux Falls

Find more information and register [HERE](#)

SPF Application for Prevention Success Training (SAPST)

Fall 2025

Registration can use the QR Code below



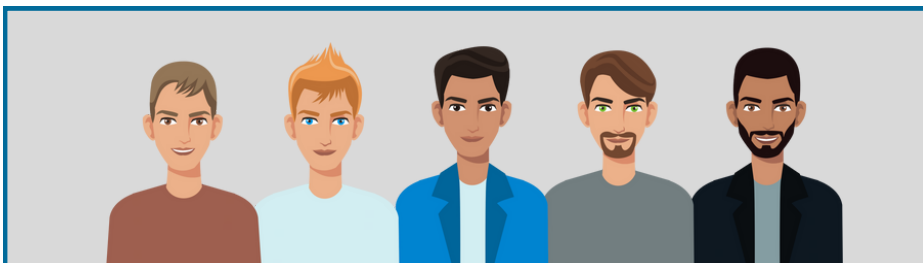
MEN'S HEALTH MONTH

June is Men's Health Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about the health challenges men face and promoting proactive health management. Men are often less likely than women to seek preventive care and screenings, leading to later diagnosis and treatment of health conditions, including mental health.

Our societal norms and male stereotypes often discourage men from seeking help, leading to serious mental health concerns. According to the [World Health Organization](#), suicide rates are significantly higher among men worldwide. In many countries, men are three to four times more likely to die by suicide than women. This trend highlights a critical question: are men suppressing their emotional struggles until they become crises?

Men's mental health affects more than just the individual, it influences families, communities, and workplaces. When men are mentally well, they are better partners, fathers, friends, and colleagues. Addressing men's mental health promotes healthier relationships, reduces violence and addiction, and enhances productivity.

Use this month to help break the stigma and bring awareness to men's mental health. Encourage open dialogue about stress and emotions, normalize therapy, and promote male role models who speak candidly about their mental health.



ENHANCING PREVENTION

In April, the South Dakota Department of Social Services, Division of Behavioral Health held their Prevention Network meeting in Pierre. Twenty-eight prevention providers and state staff from 17 organizations had the opportunity to learn about Enhancing Environmental Prevention Efforts in South Dakota from Dr. Rodney Wambeam from the Mountain Plains Prevention Technology Transfer Center. They also had the opportunity to hear from local providers, including Kelli Rumpza of Watertown Healthy Youth, Kara Gravemen of Action for the Betterment of Our Community, and Joyce Glynn of Michael Glynn Memorial Coalition, on Environmental Approaches that they have utilized.

The Prevention Resource Centers hosted cross-regional discussions about prevention efforts across South Dakota that added to the rejuvenation of local programming.



EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO PROMOTE SAFETY



Creating a safer school environment takes a collective effort—one that engages educators, parents, law enforcement, and most importantly, students. In South Dakota, the [Safe2Say SD](#) initiative places students at the forefront, empowering them to promote a culture of safety, well-being, and proactive intervention in their schools.

What is Safe2Say SD?

Safe2Say SD is an anonymous reporting system designed to help students, educators, and community members report concerning behaviors, threats, bullying, or other safety concerns. It offers a safe, confidential platform to ensure school leaders and authorities can intervene early and effectively—before situations escalate.

To help schools prioritize the need for safe and supporting learning environments, critical to students' well-being, the South Dakota School Safety Center employs a School Safety Specialist who provides programming and resources geared specifically for youth mental and behavioral health, including:

- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)
- Handle with Care (HWC)
- Suicide Prevention
- Bullying
- Internet Safety

For more information, visit the [SAFE2SaySD website](#).

NATURAL HELPERS *of South Dakota*

[Natural Helpers of South Dakota](#) is a youth-based program designed to equip formal and informal youth leaders with the skills and confidence to support peers, family, and other community members facing mental and emotional challenges. Lower Brule is among the South Dakota communities whose investment in their youth has paid significant dividends and has likely saved lives.

The youth in [Lower Brule](#) trained in Natural Helpers of South Dakota are serving as peer connectors, organizing events for open dialogue, hosting talking circles, and sharing traditional wellness practices with their peers. According to the 2020 census data, there are 169 youth between the ages of 10-19 in Lower Brule. Over the 5 year period of implementing Natural Helpers, peers submitted a total of 455 referrals for at risk youth. The Natural Helpers team has been connecting their peers to support at an average rate of 14 times per month.

These student leaders are recognizing and supporting their peers with interpersonal issues, such as conflict with family or friends. They are sharing resources such as the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, local tribal behavioral health services, school-based support programs, and traditional healing and elder wisdom.

Since January 2023, the SD PRC's have trained over 240 youth from 9 South Dakota communities. When reviewing post-training data, it shows a statistically significant increase in participant's knowledge and ability to help others with mental health challenges, suicidal thoughts, or substance use.

At the end of Natural Helpers, all respondents "Strongly Agree" to work cooperatively, know the warning signs, know how to help, and know community resources for anyone struggling with mental health, suicide or substance use. Participants also felt more empowered to reach out to resources when a problem was more than they could handle.

These trends show the powerful role of peer-to-peer support and where more help is needed. If you are interested in bringing a Natural Helpers training to your school, organization, or community, please get in touch with your local [SD PRC](#).



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

May is Mental Health Month

May is Mental Health Awareness month. This was established in 1949 to increase awareness of the importance of mental health and wellness in everyone's lives and to celebrate hope, healing, and recovery. Mental health plays a huge role in our overall health and well-being. Across the country, people unite to raise awareness, spark conversation, and advocate for resources.

Mental health refers to a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Mental health can affect how we live, work, and play. It is more than the absence of mental disorders; it exists on a complex continuum.

- **Excelling:** This is the high level of mental well-being. Given a positive mind-set and the right conditions, this is us functioning at our peak level of excellence. This can be a time for feeling a sense of great joy or fulfillment. Excelling usually occurs after the birth of a child, receiving a promotion at work, or achieving a new skill. Excelling can also be when they are performing at their highest potential.
- **Thriving:** A normal, healthy state of mental health. In this zone, they feel fine yet not completely free from troubles. Worries and annoyances are coped with well; they don't make them feel unsettled for the long term. Normal, basic behaviors like sleeping and eating are functioning well.
- **Surviving:** In this zone, there is an unsettled state of mind. A person can slip into surviving fairly easy and it is important to look out for symptoms in this phase. There is no severe state of distress, but this can indicate the problems can get worse. Thoughts may be more negative than usual, sleep may be affected, and it may be harder to focus on tasks that were once easy.
- **Struggling:** This person may seem significantly troubled. They may feel so much anxiety that life feels a misery. They may find it hard to do anything like get out of bed in the morning. Concentration is low, energy is poor, and we may feel numb or empty. Thoughts will be negative like a feeling of worthlessness or becoming a burden.
- **In Crisis:** This person is in a state of great suffering and needs immediate help. This emotional pain may be so unbearable that they may feel they want to take their own life. Signs would look like severe anxiety and/or depression. If this person does show these signs, it is best to approach them in a private setting and ask about suicide. Refer them to resources such as the 988 lifeline or local resources you know this person uses.

We tend to fall into one zone most of the time, but they can fluctuate up or down. It is extremely important to understand how variable someone's emotional state is. We all have days when we feel better than others. And just like our physical health, we can do things that make us mentally healthier like practicing self-care. Mental health and physical health go hand and hand and play a huge role in our overall health and well-being. Our goal this month is to raise awareness of the importance of mental health.

<https://www.samhsa.gov/about/digital-toolkits/mental-health-awareness-month/toolkit>
<https://delphis.org.uk/mental-health/continuum-mental-health/>

Mental Health First Aid

June 3-4 | Rapid City

July 10 | Sioux Falls

Question, Persuade, Refer

May 30 | Rapid City

June 16 | Sioux Falls

SOUTH DAKOTA TOBACCO CONTROL PROGRAM

Southeast Tobacco Prevention Coordinator

Carter Linke

605-770-6994

clinke@bhssc.org

Northeast Tobacco Prevention Coordinator

Ashley Heyne

605-221-8783

ahayne@bhssc.org

Western Tobacco Prevention Coordinator

Kayla Bolstad

605-721-4584

kbolstad@bhssc.org



Quittobaccosd.com

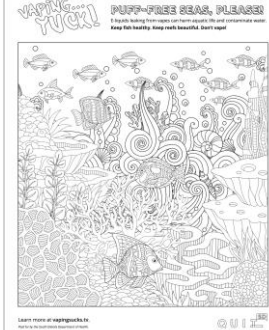
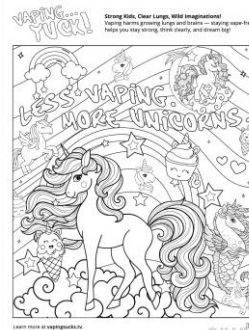
Click [here](#) to determine your region's Tobacco Prevention Coordinator

Update Your School's Smokefree Policy This Summer

With summer break approaching, now is a great time for school leaders to review and update their K-12 tobacco-free policies. Doing so helps ensure that when students, staff, and visitors return in the fall, they are welcomed into a healthier, safer school environment—free from tobacco, nicotine, and secondhand exposure. Strong policies that include emerging products like e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches reinforce the message that tobacco use has no place in educational settings. Schools can access resources and guidance to strengthen their policies by visiting [Quit Tobacco SD's K-12 Policy Support Materials](#). For more support, please contact Carter Linke (CLinke@BHSSC.org).

NEW: Vaping Yuck Coloring Pages

South Dakota Tobacco Control is excited to announce NEW coloring pages just before summer break for your younger students. To place an order, please visit [here](#) or print your own online [here](#).



World No Tobacco Day: May 31st, 2025

As summer break begins, it's the perfect time for youth to focus on building healthy habits and staying tobacco-free. World No Tobacco Day is a global movement to stand up against the harms of tobacco and nicotine—and youth have the power to lead the way. To support your journey, check out our **World No Tobacco Day Community Resource Guide**. It's filled with tips, tools, and activities to help you stay tobacco-free and learn more about quitting and healthy living. Whether you're planning a summer event or just looking for ways to take action on your own, this guide has what you need. [Find the Resource Guide here.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS AND TRAININGS

- Join us on May 19 for When Clouds Collide: Vaping and the Teen Mental Health Crisis with Dr. Sarper Taskiran, Child Mind Institute
 - Register [here](#).
- Teen Outreach Program (TOP) Training Opportunities
 - [Rapid City on May 28-29, 2025](#)
 - Contact Ashley Heyne (AHayne@BHSSC.org) to register.
- May 29th, 2025 9:00-11:00 AM CT / 8:00-10:00 AM MT: CATCH My Breath (Virtual) [Register Here](#)



Mental Health FIRST AID

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
MENTAL WELLBEING

June 5, 2025 VIRTUAL TRAINING

*2 hours of pre-course work
and 6 hours of online live training*

WHY MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among adults.

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

- Employers.
- Police officers.
- Hospital staff.
- First responders.
- Caring individuals.

WHAT IT COVERS

- Common signs and symptoms of mental health challenges.
- Common signs and symptoms of substance use challenges.
- How to interact with a person in crisis.
- How to connect a person with help.
- Expanded content on trauma, substance use and self-care.

Register for this
valuable **FREE**
course **here:**



LOST & FOUND[®]

We do more to eliminate suicide among young adults
through training, data, programs, and policy.

OUR MISSION

Lost&Found, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, delivers comprehensive, data-driven, and resilience-focused suicide prevention and postvention programs and services for youth and young adults and their support networks.

OUR HISTORY

In 2009, two 16-year-olds debated on Facebook whether writing the word "love" on their arms would be enough to help their friends struggling with mental health and suicide ideation. Fifteen years later, their spirit and idea — to "do more" to prevent suicide — has guided Lost&Found to apply proactive measures to serve young adults in South Dakota and the surrounding region.

OUR WORK

Lost&Found does work in four main areas:

Education & Policy

- Providing education, training, policy guidelines, and tools to campuses and community organizations that help prevent suicide, build skills, and raise awareness of mental health needs

Research & Evaluation

- Offering the Resilience Index, a tool that assesses suicide prevention capacity and recommends actions to reduce suicide risk, to campuses and workplaces

Student Programs

- **Peer2Peer Mentorship:** Students helping students build resilience
- **Campus Chapters:** Students building resilience through community

Survivors Joining for Hope

- Supporting suicide loss survivors with financial help and connections to resources



Our work is about more than just saving lives. We focus on what it means to live life well: with resilience and hope.

We welcome the opportunity to work with suicide prevention partners. Get in touch to learn more about Lost&Found's work: resilienttoday.org/contact