**Send Date:** September 1, 2021

**Email Subject:** Join the Suicide Prevention Week Activity Challenge

Suicide Prevention Week (September 5-11, 2021) and World Suicide Prevention Day (September 10, 2021) is a time when individuals and organizations around the country and the world join their voices to broadcast the message that everyone can play a role in suicide prevention and to remember loved ones lost to suicide. **We hope you will join us by participating in the Suicide Prevention Week Challenge beginning on Monday, September 6, 2021.**

**To get started review the attached** [**flyer**](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SPW21-Activity-Challenge-Flyer.pdf) **and download the** [**challenge card**](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SPW-21-Challenge-Card.pdf)**!**

**This is how it works!**

1. Download the [**challenge card**](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SPW-21-Challenge-Card.pdf)and or take a picture and save it to your phone.
2. Review and complete challenges. Check them off on the challenge card!

* Challenge One: Reconnect and Create a Safe Space
* Challenge Two: Find the (Cross) Words
* Challenge Three: Like & Learn about a Suicide Prevention Resource
* Challenge Four: Pause and Breathe
* Challenge Five: Get Involved in World Suicide Prevention Day

1. Post a picture to your social media accounts with the hashtags #Reconnect #SuicidePrevention Not on social media? Email the card to info@suicideispreventable.org.
2. The first 25 posts or emails received before September 30, 2021 will receive a Mental Health Thrival Kit!

The Suicide Prevention Week 2021 Activation Kit theme is: **“Supportive Transitions: Reconnect, Reenter, and Rebuild”**. Transitions can be conceptualized as an event or series of events that cause fundamental changes in the *fabric of daily life* – what people do, where they do it, and with whom. Expected or unexpected, welcomed or unwelcome – transitions can be unsettling and stressful, impacting our mental health and increasing risk factors for suicide. Feeling connected to friends, family, and our community on the other hand is a protective factor for suicide. So, as we reenter and rebuild the fabrics of our daily life that were so fundamentally disrupted, reconnecting with supportive relationships, and practicing positive coping skills is essential for our emotional well-being.

This year's suicide prevention week kit includes resources in English and Spanish, and many activities that can be done individually, as a group or within communities, as well as virtually or at home. **View the Suicide Prevention Week 2021 Activation Kit** [**here**](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/prevention-kit.php) for activities such as our brand-new Suicide Prevention Crossword Puzzle, Zoom backgrounds, a proclamation template, social media posts and more!

Connect with thousands throughout the country during Suicide Prevention Week online by using the hashtags #SuicidePrevention #SuicidePreventionWeek

**Send Date:** Monday, September 62021

**Email Subject:** Suicide Prevention Week Challenge #1: Reconnect and Create a Safe Space

Welcome to Suicide Prevention Week!

Throughout this week, individuals and organizations around the state and country join their voices to broadcast the message that *everyone can play a role* in suicide prevention. **We hope you will join us by participating in the Suicide Prevention Week Challenge beginning today - Monday, September 6, 2021.** **To get started download the challenge** [**flyer**](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SPW21-Activity-Challenge-Flyer.pdf) **and** [**challenge card**](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SPW-21-Challenge-Card.pdf)**!**

Many of us have been touched by the tragedy of suicide. We may have lost someone close to us or been moved by the loss of someone we may have never met. When a suicide happens, those left behind often experience deep shock. Even if they knew the person was struggling, they may not have expected suicide would be the result. However, many people who find themselves in a suicide crisis can and do recover. Suicide can be prevented and everyone can play a role by learning the warning signs of suicide and finding the words to reach out to someone you are concerned about.

*Know the Signs:* Pain isn’t always obvious. Yet most people who are considering suicide show some warning signs or signals of their intentions. The signs or changes in behavior may appear in conversations, through their actions, or in social media posts. These are of most concern if the behavior is new, has increased or seems related to a painful event, loss, or change. **Learn more about the warning signs at www.SuicideisPreventable.org**

*Find the Words and Create a Safe Space:* Feeling connected to friends, family, and our community can be a protective factor for suicide. As we reenter and rebuild the fabrics of our daily life that were so fundamentally disrupted, reconnecting with supportive relationships, and practicing positive coping skills is essential for our emotional well-being. **Use this time to reach out to someone in your life and let them know that you are comfortable to talk about anything they need, including suicide, and should they ever come to a point where they are questioning their reasons for living, you will be there to listen and support them.** Creating this safe space at a time when there is no crisis is one way we can play a role in suicide prevention.

**Find activities and more in the Suicide Prevention Week 2020 Kit** [**here**](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/prevention-kit.php)**.**

Connect with thousands throughout the country during Suicide Prevention Week by using the hashtags #SuicidePrevention #SuicidePreventionWeek

**Send Date:** Tuesday, September 7, 2021

**Email Subject:** Suicide Prevention Week Challenge #3: Find the Words

Suicide Prevention Week (September 5-11, 2021) and World Suicide Prevention Day (September 10, 2021) is a time when individuals and organizations around the country and the world join their voices to broadcast the message that everyone can play a role in suicide prevention and to remember loved ones lost to suicide. **We hope you will join us by participating in the Suicide Prevention Week Challenge. To get started download the challenge** [**flyer**](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SPW21-Activity-Challenge-Flyer.pdf) **and** [**challenge card**](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SPW-21-Challenge-Card.pdf)**!**

Download the **“Know the Signs - Find the Words - Reach Out” Crossword Puzzle** and try to solve all the clues. Take a picture of the solved puzzle and post it to your social media with these hashtags: #SuicidePrevention #Crossword. **For more activities such as Trivia and Bingo visit:** [**www.suicideispreventable.org/prevention-kit.php**](http://www.suicideispreventable.org/prevention-kit.php)**.**

“Are you thinking about suicide?”. These words can be difficult to say, but when it comes to suicide prevention, none are more important. Asking someone directly about suicide can be difficult but being direct provides an opportunity for the person to open up and talk about their feelings. Asking directly about suicide *will not suggest the idea to them*. Listening, expressing concern, and providing reassurance will go a long way in your effort to support them.

If you think someone is thinking about suicide, listen to your instincts and take it seriously. Don’t leave them alone. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 (TALK) at any time for assistance.

Additional activity suggestions:

* When it comes to suicide prevention, the terms, phrases, and words we use can have a significant impact on the way messages are received. Messages can encourage someone to seek help and reach out, or they can push people further from the support they need. Learn about suicide prevention safe and effective messaging recommendations by joining the [Suicide Prevention Week: Messaging Matters Webinar](https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5292472147886724877) Sept. 7th 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. and reviewing the ‘[Messaging Matters’](https://emmresourcecenter.org/system/files/2018-08/MessagingRecs_2018SPWeek.pdf) tip sheet.
* To learn more about the warning signs for suicide and tips to prepare for a conversation with someone you are concerned about visit the “Find the Words” section of the website: suicideispreventable.org.
* Download and share the **Find the Words** card and social media posts.
* Watch this [60-second PSA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saUmM8_LXYY) created by a California student. This film encourages the viewer to directly ask someone who shows warning signs of suicide if they are thinking of suicide. The film, called “Unrecognizable Thoughts,” explains that asking someone if they’re thinking about suicide is important and that “you may have to break a friend’s trust to help them.”

**Find even more activities in the Suicide Prevention Week 2020 Kit** [**here**](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/prevention-kit.php)**.**

Connect with thousands throughout the country during Suicide Prevention Week by using the hashtags #SuicidePrevention #SuicidePreventionWeek #WorldSuicidePreventionDay

**Send Date:** Wednesday, September 8, 2021

**Email Subject:** Suicide Prevention Week Challenge #3: Like & Learn about a Suicide Prevention Resource

It’s not too late to join the Suicide Prevention Week challenge. **To get started download the challenge** [**flyer**](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SPW21-Activity-Challenge-Flyer.pdf) **and** [**challenge card**](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SPW-21-Challenge-Card.pdf)**!** For today’s challenge we ask that you familiarize yourself with a suicide prevention resource. Visit their website or social media page and like, share or comment to show your support for the work they do. Find a list of resources [here](http://www.suicideispreventable.org/).

* Visit the website or social media page of your local county behavioral health agency. Many list local crisis resources, training opportunities, and suicide prevention events!
* Visit [www.SuicideIsPreventable.org](http://www.SuicideIsPreventable.org) and explore the ‘Reach Out’ section which provides a variety of different resources at the county, state, and national level.
* Download and share the **Reach Out** card and social media posts.
* Watch this [60-second PSA](https://vimeo.com/517004655) created by a California high school student. In “True Colors,” a friend brings color back into someone’s life by getting them the help that they need and staying by their side.
* Encourage youth ages 12-25 to use art, song, narrative, or film to creatively promote a crisis resource as part of the Hope and Justice contest. Youth can win cash prizes! Entries are due September 31, 2021. For more information visit: DirectingChangeCA.org

If you or someone you know needs help, please know that **you are not alone**. Crisis lines, counselors, intervention programs, and more are available to you, whether you are in crisis yourself or concerned about someone else. For this challenge spend some time learning about one or more of these resources:

* [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/): 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
* [Crisis Text Line](https://www.crisistextline.org/): Text HOME to 741-741
* [The Trevor Project](https://www.thetrevorproject.org/) (for LGBTQ Young People): 1-866-488-7386
* [Friendship Line](https://www.ioaging.org/friendship-line-california" \l ":~:text=Friendship%20Line%20California%20is%20a,It's%20Free.) (for Older Adults): 1-888-971-0016
* [Trans Lifeline](https://translifeline.org/): 1-877-565-8860
* [Teen Line](https://teenlineonline.org/): Call 1-800-852-8336 (from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. PST)

Connect with thousands throughout the country during Suicide Prevention Week by using the hashtags #SuicidePrevention #SuicidePreventionWeek #WorldSuicidePreventionDay

**Send Date:** Thursday, September 9, 2021

**Email Subject:** Suicide Prevention Week Challenge #4: Pause and Take A Breath

It’s not too late to join the Suicide Prevention Week challenge. **To get started download the challenge** [**flyer**](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SPW21-Activity-Challenge-Flyer.pdf) **and** [**challenge card**](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SPW-21-Challenge-Card.pdf)**!** Today’s challenge is focused on a simple, but profound coping skill: **Breathing**. Schedule a 10-minute ‘Breathe Break’ into your calendar and use this time to remove distractions and partake in a breathing exercise of your choice. This can be done individually, during a zoom meeting, or even as a family.

Most of us experience any number of emotions from day to day. Experiencing negative emotions, especially when under stress, *is part of the human experience;* however, if left unprocessed or unacknowledged, they can cause harm physically and emotionally. Prolonged crises, such as the ones we have experienced due to COVID, and any form of significant life transition can lead to long-term and toxic stress. This type of stress can be especially amplified among people who were already experiencing significant life challenges, chronic health or mental health conditions, and disabilities.

Research has found that breathing practices are effective at reducing stress, balancing our energy and emotions, and helping us process some of the more challenging feelings that can arise. But incorporating self-care, such as breathing, into our busy lives is easier said than done and may also be particularly challenging for people who have experienced trauma.

Being gentle with ourselves by setting boundaries and limits that support our mental health may be the most important self-care act of all. As author Brianna Wiest says: “Self-care should not be something we resort to because we are so absolutely exhausted that we need some reprieve from our own relentless internal pressure. True self-care is not salt baths and chocolate cake, it is making the choice to build a life you don’t need to regularly escape from.”

But changing the expectations of ourselves and others takes time and practice. Starting with small actions can be a good way to begin. For example, try out one of the breathing exercises below or [mindful breathing](https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/mindful_breathing), which has been known to reduce feelings of stress and anxiety.

**Belly Breathing:**

It may sound strange, but many people forget how to breathe properly, using their chest and shoulders to breathe, resulting in short and shallow breaths which can increase stress and anxiety! When you breathe, your belly should expand, involving your diaphragm, a large muscle in your abdomen. This type of breathing is known as diaphragmatic, or belly breathing and can lower stress levels, reduce blood pressure, lower our heart rate, and help us relax. Belly Breathing is at the center of the practice of meditation which is known to help manage symptoms of depression, anxiety, and sleeplessness.

Download, share and watch the 30-second Belly Breathing Animation, which can be found here: <https://www.suicideispreventable.org/social-media.php>

**Color Breathing**

Visualize a color that represents how you want to feel, imagine inhaling that color in. Visualize a color that represents what you want to let go of, imagine exhaling that color out.

**4-7-8 Breathing Technique**

Otherwise known as “relaxing breath”, 4-7-8 breathing, is a simple breathing exercise that can be done anywhere, anytime to aid in stress reduction, grounding, and even sleep. Inhale for a count of 7, hold for a county of 4, and then exhale for a county of 8! Download and share the 4-7-8 Breathing Card and Social Media post.

**Square Breathing**

One of the most common breathing exercises is referred to as square breathing which is the act of breathing in the form of a square! Inhale 2…3…4… hold 2…3…4! Download and share the Square Breathing Card and Social Media post.

**Find even more activities in the Suicide Prevention Week 2020 Kit here.**

Connect with thousands throughout the country during Suicide Prevention Week by using the hashtags #SuicidePrevention #SuicidePreventionWeek #WorldSuicidePreventionDay

**Send Date:** Friday, September 10th, 2021

**Email Subject:** Suicide Prevention Week Challenge #5: Light a Candle for World Suicide Prevention Day

**It is World Suicide Prevention Day!** Each year on September 10th, World Suicide Prevention Day encourages **worldwide** commitment and action to prevent suicide and to support those who have been impacted by suicide. On this special day, you can join thousands of others in showing your support for suicide prevention and remembering loved ones lost to suicide by lighting a candle near a window or on social media at 8 p.m.

Additional Resources:

* The brochure “Help and Support After Suicide: Information and Resources to Promote Healing” explains complicated grief and offers resources for individuals who have lost a loved one to suicide. The brochure and a California Survivor of Suicide Loss Program Directory can be found on the “Reach Out” page of this website: [www.SuicideisPreventable.org](http://www.SuicideisPreventable.org)
* [Friends for Survival](http://www.friendsforsurvival.org) has offered support for those bereaved by a suicide death for over 30 years. Call their help line, sign up to receive their newsletter, and visit their web site for links to resources and reading material. Toll Free Suicide Loss Helpline: 1-800-646-7322.
* The [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](https://afsp.org/ive-lost-someone) is a national organization with chapters in all 50 states that is dedicated to saving lives and bringing hope to those affected by suicide. Their web site includes a wide range of resources and educational materials for survivors of suicide loss.
* To learn more about World Suicide Prevention Day, visit <https://www.iasp.info/wspd2021/>**.**

**Find even more activities in the Suicide Prevention Week 2020 Kit here**.  It’s not too late to join the Suicide Prevention Week challenge. **To get started download the challenge** [**flyer**](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SPW21-Activity-Challenge-Flyer.pdf) **and** [**challenge card**](https://www.suicideispreventable.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SPW-21-Challenge-Card.pdf)**!**

Connect with thousands throughout the country during Suicide Prevention Week by using the hashtags #SuicidePrevention #SuicidePreventionWeek #WorldSuicidePreventionDay