



April 19, 2022

Our schools and communities have weathered difficult times in adapting to the evolving and complex changes created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the evolving national landscape. As we continue to grapple with the difficulties of the pandemic, our school and college campuses are facing new challenges surrounding the mental health of our students. There have been many reports that our youth are experiencing increased stress, disruptive changes in schedules, and a constant stream of bad news on both the national and world stage.

While the overall suicide rate declined in 2020, it rose slightly in those under 24 and preliminary data suggests that the suicide rate increased in Missouri during 2021. Although it is too soon for formal reports on 2022 suicides, the Missouri Suicide Prevention Network has been made aware of a significant number of recent suicides among our youth and young adults. Based on these trends, Missouri Suicide Prevention Network's members decided as a community to be proactive and communicate resources for our partners in primary, secondary, and higher education. As we head into late April and early May, these resources become even more vital as Missouri typically experiences a peak in suicide behavior and deaths during these times as well as similar seasonal patterns in September. Although there are many reasons for these observed seasonal trends, we are certain that end of semester stress and re-entering school stress play a role in the May and September peaks. Given the recent reported rise in suicides and the pending seasonal peaks, we wanted to reach out to our educational partners in support of suicide prevention efforts and make known the resources and assistance available to all communities.

Primary and secondary education resources:

- [Ask Listen Refer Program – All other audiences](#)
- [Suicide in Schools: A Practitioner's Guide to Multi-level Prevention, Assessment, Intervention, and Postvention \(School-Based Practice in Action\)](#)
- [After a Suicide Toolkit for Schools](#)
- [Recommendations for School Based Suicide Screening](#)

Partners of MSPN: Missouri Department of Mental Health, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Missouri Department of Social Services, Missouri Behavioral Health Council, Missouri Primary Care Association, Missouri School-Based Health Alliance, Missouri Department of Agriculture, Missouri Institute of Mental Health, Missouri Hospital Association, Missouri CIT Council, Missouri Foundation for Health, University of Missouri St. Louis, BJC Behavioral Health, Community Partnership of the Ozarks, Provident Behavioral Health, Compass Health Network, Community Counseling Center, CommCARE, Behavioral Health Response, Brown School at Washington University St. Louis, Ozark Center, Burrell Behavioral Health, Kids Under Twenty-One (KUTO), Partners in Prevention (PIP), CHADS.

- [Ask Suicide-Screening Questions \(ASQ\) Toolkit](#)

Higher education resources–

- [Partners in Prevention Suicide Prevention Toolkit](#)
- [Ask Listen Refer Program – Higher Education](#)
- [JED/HEMHA Postvention Guide](#)
- [JED Comprehensive Approach to Promoting Mental Health and Preventing Suicide](#)

If you are currently assisting a suicidal youth, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK**. All calls to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline from Missouri are routed to the call center that covers your school or campus's area. There are also local crisis services offered through Missouri's Access Crisis Intervention providers. This information can be found at: <https://dmh.mo.gov/media/pdf/aci-hotline-numbers>.

The Crisis Text Line can be reached by **texting "MOSAFE" to 741741**. If you think a youth is at immediate risk of suicide, call 911 immediately for help. Please help ensure the entire school community is aware of these suicide prevention resources. ***Attached are printable posters to display prominently in your schools. Feel free to use and distribute as needed.***

For additional information about suicide prevention or non-urgent needs visit www.mospn.org or contact admin@mospn.org.

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