

NORTH EAST AND NORTH CUMBRIA

Suicide Prevention

NETWORK

North East and North Cumbria Suicide Prevention Network

Campaign toolkit

Look after yourself - Look out for others - Get help early

About the NENC Suicide Prevention Network

Guided by national policy and based on evidence of how best to prevent suicide and promote wellbeing and resilience, the aim of the North East and North Cumbria Suicide Prevention Network is to work together to take action to reduce suicide, so that fewer people die by suicide and we improve support for those affected.

Our aims:

- Promote wellbeing and resilience.
- Reduce the number of suicides, including in high-risk groups, across the North East and North Cumbria.
- Reduce the incidence of self-harm and repeated self-harm.
- Reduce the impact of self-harm and suicide.
- Reduce the stigma of self-harm and suicide.

The Network consists of professionals from the NHS, Public Health England, local authorities, police, prisons, third sector organisations, other relevant stakeholders, and individuals with lived experience of suicide. It is overseen by a regional Core Leadership Group, which reports to the **North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS)** Mental Health work stream. The leadership group works collaboratively to coordinate, support and monitor suicide prevention activity across the region, with the ambition to do everything possible to reduce suffering and prevent all suicides, and to reduce the impact where this does happen.

Key information about suicide prevention – why is this a priority?

- Over 6,000 people die by suicide in the UK each year. Approx. three-quarters of these deaths are among men.
- National suicide rates remain high, with some of the highest in the North of England.
- Suicide is the leading cause of death in males age 20-49 years. Self-harm is a known risk factor for suicide and is particularly high in younger age groups and women.
- The devastating impact of suicide to the individual, their family and friends, colleagues and wider community is immeasurable.
- The majority of people who feel suicidal do not actually want to die - they do not want to live the life they have.
- Often, feeling actively suicidal is temporary, even if someone has been feeling low, anxious or struggling to cope for a long period of time. This is why getting the right kind of support at the right time is so important.
- 1 in 5 people have thought about suicide at some time in their life. And not all people who die by suicide have mental health problems at the time they die.
- Talking to someone about suicide will not give them the idea to try it. By asking someone directly about suicide, you give them permission to tell you how they feel. Evidence shows asking someone if they're suicidal can protect them. Reaching out can save a life.
- We believe that every suicide is preventable if we work together to enable timely and evidence-based interventions.

Promoting suicide prevention responsibly

Promoting mental health, wellbeing and suicide prevention, especially online and on social media, provides an opportunity for all sectors of the community – the public, those with lived experience, charitable organisations,

researchers, clinicians, practitioners, politicians and policy makers, volunteers, other interested groups and individuals – to focus public attention on the importance of mental health, reducing stigma around the subject and encouraging open conversations about it.

Naturally, any coverage of mental health and suicide prevention this year will be in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and the additional emphasis on mental health and wellbeing which this has led to in recent months. It is a good opportunity to share some positive messages and advice for people to look after themselves and others at this difficult time, but it is equally important not to imply an increased risk of suicide as a result of the current situation.

The following guidance is offered by the Samaritans, which we advise should be adhered to when planning your coverage.

- Focus on the potential mental health risks of Covid-19, recognise the importance of supporting people's mental health and wellbeing needs at this time, and ensure people are signposted to sources of support if they are struggling.
- Use the opportunity to encourage people to connect with each other, and with activities they can enjoy safely, to help them manage their mental health and give people hope.
- Please do not directly reference suicide as an inevitable consequence of the pandemic, and avoid making any assumptions or predictions about the potential impact on suicide rates. This risks oversimplifying the issue – remember that suicide is extremely complex and seldom the result of a single factor.
- Avoid sensationalising suicide by inadvertently promoting the idea that suicidal behaviour is becoming a common response to the difficulties people are facing as a result of Covid-19.

Please be mindful of this, especially when interacting with the public on social media. There will be lots of people who are keen to engage with the topic at the moment, but won't always be aware of the risks involved if they don't have the knowledge of how to do this safely.

If you do have any contact with the media on behalf of your own organisation, remind them of the wider [Samaritans Media Guidelines](#), and encourage them to include sources of support in any coverage. Samaritans have also published [industry guidance](#) for platforms hosting user-generated content, which would include comments on websites and Facebook pages.

Suggested social media posts

We recommend posting key content on your social media channels either on a regular ongoing basis if it suits your organisation to do so, or as part of a focused day or week of activity, maybe based around national awareness events. We would encourage retweeting and sharing of posts from other Network member organisations to help amplify the key messages.

Content focuses on three key themes:

- **Look after yourself** – are you ok?
- **Look out for others** – worried about someone?
- **Get help early** – what support is available?

A suggested plan of content with template Tweets is below. You can complement these with relevant content/links from your own organisation, or share the same messages to Facebook or Instagram. The Network can be tagged on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook [@StopSuicideNENC](#) and we can share posts.

A selection of graphics and other digital assets to support these messages is available to download from our website www.stopsuicidenenc.org

Key message: Look after yourself

- It's important to take care of your mind as well as your body. Download the @StopSuicideNENC wellbeing booklet for self-help advice and sources of support:
<http://www.stopsuicidenenc.org/resources/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>
- During difficult times we may need to be more creative and thoughtful about how we look after ourselves. Get some ideas and advice in the @StopSuicideNENC digital booklet:
<http://www.stopsuicidenenc.org/resources/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>
- It is important you stay aware of your own mental health and notice the signs of when you may need help. Taking notice of how you're feeling through self-care can allow you to connect with yourself and increase confidence and self-esteem. @StopSuicideNENC
- It's important to have open discussions about mental health while we're dealing with difficult circumstances. Find out how to make your own safety plan and encourage others to do the same:
www.stayingsafe.net/ @StopSuicideNENC
- You might be feeling down, worried or anxious right now, and that's ok. Be kind to yourself and ask for help: www.stopsuicidenenc.org @StopSuicideNENC

Key message: Look out for others

- Are you worried about someone? It can be difficult and upsetting if you care about someone who is struggling with their mental health. Search for sources of support and advice:
<http://www.stopsuicidenenc.org/visitor/concerned/> @StopSuicideNENC
- You don't need to be an expert to support someone who may be struggling. @ZeroSuicide offers 3 levels of free online training, boosting your confidence and giving you the skills to help someone in need: <https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training> @StopSuicideNENC
- We can all play a role in helping people whose mental health and wellbeing is at risk. Showing you care, offering support and a listening ear can all go a long way:
<http://www.stopsuicidenenc.org/resources/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/> @StopSuicideNENC
- The smallest displays of kindness, like picking up the phone to check-in on someone, could make all the difference: <http://www.stopsuicidenenc.org/resources/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/> @StopSuicideNENC
- One of the most important things you have to offer right now is your time. Make contact with others, reach out, check-in and show you care: <http://www.stopsuicidenenc.org/resources/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/> @StopSuicideNENC
- Connecting with People emotional resilience and wellbeing training is being offered by @StopSuicideNENC free of charge. Find out more: <https://www.stopsuicidenenc.org/training/>

Key message: Get help early

- Whether you are struggling to cope with difficult emotions, or are having thoughts of suicide, there is hope and you are not alone: www.stopsuicidenenc.org @StopSuicideNENC
- Social distancing is about physical distance not emotional distance. If you are feeling isolated there is always someone to talk to: <http://www.stopsuicidenenc.org/resources/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/> @StopSuicideNENC
- If you feel overwhelmed by difficult feelings, then reach out for professional help. It's OK to ask for more support to see you through: www.stopsuicidenenc.org/ @StopSuicideNENC
- Trust your gut instincts. If you are at all concerned that someone is having thoughts of suicide: ASK them directly - LISTEN compassionately - GET HELP early: www.stopsuicidenenc.org/ @StopSuicideNENC
- It's a common myth that talking to someone about suicide will 'put the idea in their head'. In fact, having an open conversation can be a vital first step to getting help. Learn more with @ZeroSuicide training: <https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training> @StopSuicideNENC
- There may be times when we need some extra support to get through. It's ok to ask for help, and there's lots of support out there. Find out more: www.stopsuicidenenc.org @StopSuicideNENC

Awareness Days and ongoing activity

It is a good idea to stress to your audience that taking action around mental health isn't just about World Mental Health Day or World Suicide Prevention Day, when there will be an increased focus on these issues, and that there are things we can do all year round to help raise awareness, reduce stigma, and support those in need.

Sharing our key messages about mental wellbeing and suicide prevention – look after yourself, look out for others, get help early – is a really useful way to raise awareness about the topic even when there isn't a high-profile event to draw attention to it.

Resources for social media and other content will be available on the Suicide Prevention Network website www.stopsuicidenenc.org for use at any time, and we would encourage scheduling posts to highlight the key messages on a regular basis, alongside your own organisation's content.

For information tough, some key dates for your diary when you may like to schedule an additional push on content, or for a more tailored audience, are listed below.

Key dates for your diary 2021

This is a selection of key awareness events which you may like to schedule relevant content for. In addition, each month the Suicide Prevention Network will have a focused day of social media action, when we will encourage an extra push of our key messages from our member organisations.

Stress Awareness Month April 2021

Maternal Mental Health Week 4-9 May 2021

World Maternal Mental Health Day 6 May 2021

Mental Health Awareness Week 10-16 May 2021

International Father's Mental Health Day 21 June 2021

Youth Mental Health Awareness Day 7 September 2021

World Suicide Prevention Day 10 September 2021

World Mental Health Day 10 October 2021

National Stress Awareness Day 3 November 2021

Alcohol Awareness Week 11-16 November 2021

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day 20 November 2021

Focused days of Suicide Prevention Network social media action:

Monday 26 April 2021

Friday 14 May 2021

Monday 21 June 2021

Thursday 15 July 2021

Tuesday 24 August 2021

Friday 10 September 2021

Monday 11 October 2021

Wednesday 3 November 2021

Monday 13 December 2021

Contact

For any queries we can be reached by email england.everylifematters@nhs.net.

Twitter/Facebook/Instagram @StopSuicideNENC

www.stopsuicidenenc.org