

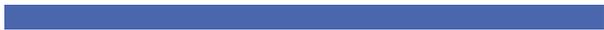


Unified Messaging

Suicide Prevention Campaign

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Unified Messaging: Suicide Prevention Campaign

Introduction:

While conducting the 2022 Community Health Assessment (CHA), suicide data was reviewed as part of the data gathering and analysis process. In response, Preventing Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders was selected as a priority from the New York State Prevention Agenda, with specific focus on reducing suicide deaths. As part of a unified messaging campaign in partnership with the Pivotal Public Health Partnership, the Livingston County Department of Health developed a series of five (5) pieces of social media with specific focus on targeting the aging population.

Process:

Community voice and public health research played integral roles in shaping the content of a regional communication campaign on suicide prevention. In October 2023, after reviewing data demonstrating a rise in suicide rates across eight counties, a survey was conducted with members of local suicide prevention coalitions to gather perspectives on high-risk populations and contributing causes. Members of county suicide prevention coalitions include community organizations, school administrators, parents, behavioral health organizations and community members impacted by or cares strongly about suicide.

Following this, in January 2024, a guest speaker from the New York Office of Mental Health (OMH) met with the Unified Messaging team, comprising Public Health Educators from each county, to outline evidence-based strategies for responsible suicide prevention messaging. The #BeThe1To campaign was identified as an evidence-based communication strategy and tailored to the region, with draft messages shared for input from the suicide prevention coalitions.

The Pivotal Unified Messaging group divided up relevant demographics for the region, including veterans, first responders, older adults, and men (see Appendix 1). The Office for the Aging Advisory Group gave the following feedback for developing suicide prevention messaging on February 20, 2024:

- Include education on the risks of being isolated and/or the benefits of socialization
- Encouraging people to not be afraid to speak up and just ask "are you thinking about suicide" as there is a stigma around asking this question. Most people think you're not allowed to ask this or that it will encourage suicide.
- Vulnerability with age - older people are easily taken advantage of / scammed which can be the "last straw" for someone who was already thinking about suicide.
- Elderly white men have the highest rates of suicide due to the 5 d's: Depression, disconnection, disease, disability, and access to deadly means. They are also not seeking help when needed.
- Encouraging older people to speak up when they are feeling off / educating on how to feel more comfortable / make it feel more normal/common to speak up

- People often won't accept help until they're ready/willing. So education on how to navigate this when you have a suspicion and the person says they're fine and you don't want to pry more.
- The importance of having someone to talk to at any age, but specifically in the older generation
- Address the stigma around support groups
- The importance of gun safety
- Wyoming County does a "table cup of Joe" - a note card placed on restaurant tables with mental health related topics/questions to encourage talking about mental health

With this guidance in mind, draft messaging was developed in line with the selected campaign messaging and reviewed via focus group with the Office for the Aging Advisory for feedback on March 19, 2024, as outlined below.

#Be The 1 To ASK

**IF YOU KNOW
SOMEONE WELL
ENOUGH TO NOTICE
THEY SEEM OFF
LATELY, YOU KNOW
THEM WELL ENOUGH
TO CHECK ON THEM.**



**IT'S OKAY TO ASK IF
SOMEONE IS
CONSIDERING SUICIDE.**

**NEED HELP FINDING
HELP? DIAL 9-8-8**



- Message is disconnected, tie in with “are you okay” or “I worry about you...”
- Wording feels aggressive or demanding – not empathetic
 - Invokes guilt
 - Maybe use “You may be the person to check on them”

- Include tips, like talking softly, consideration, make people feel comfortable
- Sick of life? Have you ever thought you don't want to be here? Feeling hopeless?
 - Counselors are there for you
 - They have seen worse than your problems
- A person you love may be feeling X -> talk to them
- Do they know you well enough?
 - Worry about crossing boundaries
 - Is it unusual for me to check on this person?
- “Stop the whispering”
- Fear of opening up due to fear of hospitalization
 - “You're going to be okay”
- Keep the use of the word “suicide”
- Do not use “attempting” or “committed”

NOT EVERYONE HAS SOMEONE.

IF SOMEONE REACHES OUT:

- 1. SUPPORT THEM**
- 2. FOLLOW UP**



**NEED HELP
FINDING
HELP? DIAL
9-8-8**

**#BeThe1To
Follow Up**



Public Health
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- This is easier, softer
- Needs a better image
- Add more information about supporting and follow up
- “If you need help starting the conversation”
- Alzheimer’s considerations

FRIENDS SHARE THINGS SHARE WHEN YOU'RE FEELING DOWN.

- ASK
 - LISTEN
 - FOLLOW UP
- #Be The 1
To Be
There**



**NEED HELP
FINDING HELP?
DIAL 9-8-8**



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- Use more diverse images
 - Include wheelchairs
- Use photos of real people instead of graphics

IT'S NOT JUST \$\$\$\$

GETTING SCAMMED CAN MAKE YOU FEEL:

- VULNERABLE
- NAÏVE
- ASHAMED
- ISOLATED
- TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF



YOU AREN'T ALONE!

SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCES CAN PROTECT OTHERS. BE THE ONE TO TALK ABOUT IT.

NEED HELP
FINDING HELP?
DIAL 9-8-8

**#BeThe1To
Keep
Them Safe**



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

- Use a better photo, maybe a sad or stressed person
- #Be the 1 To – underline, make larger
 - Spell out “1”
- More color
- “It’s not just money” add a white border
- Not all caps
 - Bullets
 - Need help finding help – lower case
 - Dial 988 – upper case?

YOUR COMFORT MATTERS

OPEN WINDOW GIVING YOU A CHILL?



ASK SOMEONE TO CLOSE IT.

NEED TO TAKE A BREAK?



ASK FOR A SEAT.



NEED HELP RUNNING ERRANDS?

ASK FOR A RIDE.

YOUR NEEDS ARE IMPORTANT.
ASK FOR WHAT YOU NEED.

CHECK ON OTHERS.

#BeThe1To Help Them Connect

**NEED HELP FINDING
HELP? DIAL 9-8-8**



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- Underline Be The One To
- Message is disjointed – connect or make two pieces
- “Empower others to advocate for themselves”
- “Advocacy saves lives”
 - Synonyms for advocacy?

To lend additional consideration to the unique needs of this group, the Advisory Group was also asked how and where this material could best be delivered to the larger population. Their responses are included below:

- Churches – not a lot of youth
- Libraries

- Nutrition sites
- Nursing homes/assisted living facilities
- Doctor's offices, hospitals
- Radio
- Community bulletin boards (Tops, Wegmans, post offices, etc.)
- Genesee Country Museum
- Banks/financial institutions
- Buses – monthly flyer – Karen Gayton
- Local bars, casinos
- Restaurants – tables and bathroom doors
 - McDonald's
- Fire Halls, American Legions, VFWs
- Laundromats
- Senior housing
- Sportsman's clubs
- Town Fathers groups

As a result of the provided feedback, the media was adjusted to the following:

Be The One To ASK

Is there someone
in your life you
worry about?

You may be the
best person to ask
if they're okay.



It's okay to ask if someone
is considering suicide.

Need help
finding help?
Dial 9-8-8



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NOT EVERYONE HAS SOMEONE.

IF SOMEONE REACHES OUT:

1. SUPPORT THEM
2. FOLLOW UP

#Be The One To Follow Up

NEED HELP FINDING HELP? DIAL 9-8-8



Don't know where to start?
Scan here!



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FRIENDS SHARE THINGS SHARE WHEN YOU'RE FEELING DOWN.



Don't know
where to
start the
conversation?
Scan here!

- ASK
- LISTEN
- FOLLOW UP

#Be The
One To Be
There



**NEED HELP
FINDING HELP?
DIAL 9-8-8**



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



IT'S NOT JUST \$\$\$

Getting **scammed** can make you feel:

- Vulnerable
- Naïve
- Ashamed
- Isolated
- Taken advantage of



YOU AREN'T ALONE!

Sharing your experiences can protect others. Be the one to talk about it.

Need help
finding help?
Dial 9-8-8

#Be The One
To Keep
Them Safe



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DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK

**Your needs
are
important.**

**Many people
struggle to
ask for help.**

**Ask
for
what
you
need!**



**If you
can,
check
on
others!**

#Be The One To Help Them Connect

**NEED HELP FINDING
HELP? DIAL 9-8-8**



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



As a final review, the updated media was also sent to each participating county's corresponding suicide prevention groups from 4/17-4/22/2024, including the Livingston County Suicide Prevention Task Force. Feedback from these groups is listed below (this section includes feedback for other parts of the media campaign, notes applicable to the Livingston County media are designated with an *):

- I don't like the words of killing yourself and like the word suicide better. I think that one is too direct, but maybe that is what is needed, but like the word suicide better.*
- The rack card is good
- The LED sign is good
- I like the men's line of multiple cards each following the steps.
- I like the elderly line as it focuses more on other needs and less on the suicide line.*
- The first responder rack card needs a title to quickly tell someone what the rack card is for.
- I really like the one for men although could they also have one for women?

- I also like the veteran one although I would perhaps see if they could incorporate a picture of a disabled veteran as I feel that subset population of veteran are at a higher risk of suicide.
- The information on all of them though is great and could be applied to pretty much any occupation or population.*
- I really like the campaign. My one critique is that the messaging on the first responder and men links is confusing/not clear for me. The use of the word someone is too vague I think. You need to target your audience with clarity, "Do you know a first responder in crisis?" Especially the very first tag line. I am not quite sure how to address the one for men. Maybe, "Do you know men can struggle asking for help when facing a crisis?"
- I think all of them have good messaging but I am concerned about how they depict the elderly. If we consider the elderly at 65, which I am, I don't see myself in those pictures, especially the black and white ones. More up to day pictures for the elderly would be helpful especially when you are talking about people helping other people of their age, or at least that is part of the message I got.*
- These all look great!! My hope is one these are finalized that you would be able to have some made up and we could display/have in our offices for awareness, fliers/posters, and rack cards. I believe that the ones specific to men and first responders would be very well received in our areas (although all are needed). I can think of specific examples where these would have been helpful to have.

Collected feedback was then presented to the regional unified messaging committee. Revisions, made in May 2024, ensured messaging was sensitive, inclusive, and effectively targeted key audiences, including men, first responders, veterans, and older adults. Final versions are included below:

#BeThe1To Ask

Is there someone in your life you worry about?

You may be the best person to ask if they're okay.



It's okay to ask if someone is considering suicide.

Need help finding help? Dial 9-8-8



Don't know where to start? Scan here!



NOT EVERYONE HAS SOMEONE.

**IF SOMEONE
REACHES OUT:**

- 1. SUPPORT THEM**
- 2. FOLLOW UP**

**Making contact
after a crisis
can make a
difference.**

**#BeThe1To
Follow Up**

NEED HELP FINDING HELP? DIAL 9-8-8



**Don't know where
to start?
Scan here!**



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FRIENDS SHARE THINGS SHARE WHEN YOU'RE FEELING DOWN.



Don't know
where to
start the
conversation?
Scan here!

- ASK
- LISTEN
- FOLLOW UP

#BeThe1To
Be There



**NEED HELP
FINDING HELP?
DIAL 9-8-8**



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- Vulnerable
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- Ashamed
- Isolated
- Taken advantage of



YOU AREN'T ALONE!

Sharing your experiences can protect others. Be the one to talk about it.

Need help
finding help?
Dial 9-8-8

#BeThe1To
Keep Them
Safe



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EVERYONE NEEDS SUPPORT

Your needs are important.

Many people struggle to ask for help.

Ask for what you need!



If you can, check on others!

#BeThe1To Help Them Connect

**NEED HELP
FINDING HELP?
DIAL 9-8-8**



Other Notes:

The final content of the suicide prevention communication campaign emphasizes actionable steps for members of the public to take when communicating with someone who may be suicidal. Rooted in evidence-based strategies, the messaging highlights the importance of taking proactive steps to intervene and support individuals in crisis. Specifically, the campaign outlines five action steps: Ask, Be There, Keep Them Safe, Help Them Connect, and Follow Up. Each step is accompanied by explanations of both how and why, providing clear guidance on how to approach conversations about suicide and why these actions are critical in saving lives. In addition to the five steps, 9-8-8 is included on each image to raise awareness of that accessible resource. The campaign also invited community members to get involved by participating in local suicide prevention coalitions and engaging in open conversations about mental health. By

empowering the public with practical tools and knowledge, the campaign aims to foster a community where individuals feel empowered to support one another during times of vulnerability.

With regard to equity, the Unified Messaging team made deliberate efforts to prioritize cultural humility and linguistic appropriateness in the suicide prevention communication campaign. Recognizing the diverse needs of our community, we utilized plain language from the #BeThe1To tested campaign, provided messaging in both English and Spanish to reach bilingual individuals, and created culturally relevant images to accompany our messaging.

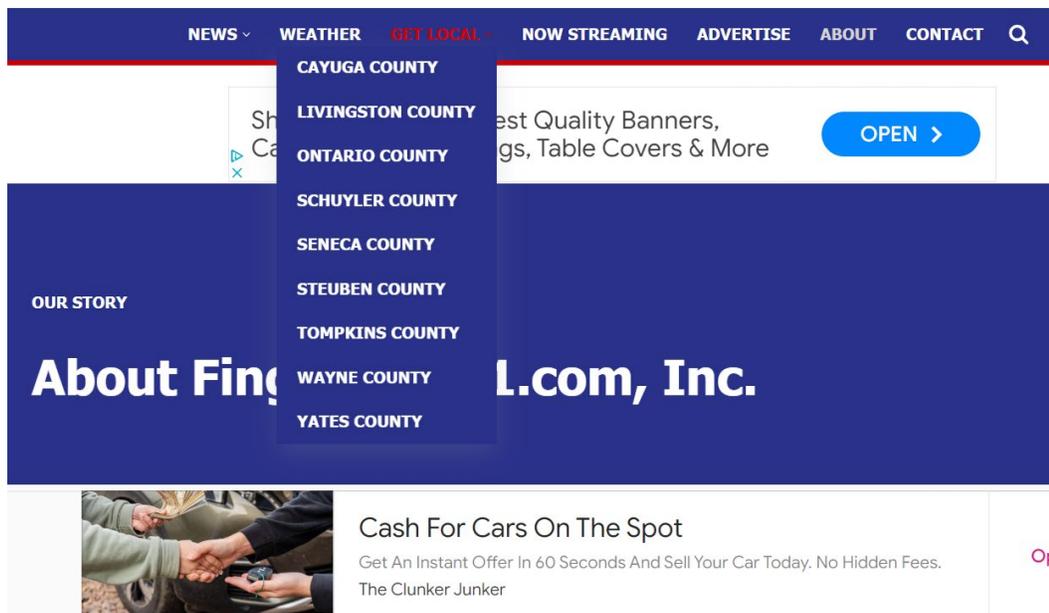
Dissemination:

A Press Release launched the campaign. An excerpt from the press release:

Local Health Departments Collaborate through the Pivotal Public Health Partnership to Launch a Multi-County Suicide Prevention Campaign.

May 22, 2024 – In response to alarming trends indicating a rise in suicides across the region, the local Public Health Departments of the Pivotal Public Health Partnership (Chemung, Livingston, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, and Yates counties) partnered to launch a suicide prevention campaign. This initiative, modeled after the successful #BeThe1To campaign, targets at-risk populations in our region including first responders, older adults, men, and veterans.

The press release was picked up by Finger Lakes 1 which serves all 6 MJD counties as seen below:



[\(https://www.fingerlakes1.com/2024/05/23/finger-lakes-region-launches-multi-county-suicide-prevention-campaign/\)](https://www.fingerlakes1.com/2024/05/23/finger-lakes-region-launches-multi-county-suicide-prevention-campaign/)

In addition, multiple modes of communication were used in several counties. This includes social media posting in Livingston, Schuyler, and Steuben counties and sharing with community partners in Livingston and Steuben counties. Schuyler, Steuben shared the press release with local outlets and local committees. Other methods included posting flyers at providers offices, post offices, and other community locations, sharing at outreach events, the Schuyler County LED sign, print ads, local TV promotion (Steuben County, WETM, WENY), and local radio.

Appendix 1

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE  **#BeThe1To**

Ask

Ask the tough question.

When a Veteran you know is in emotional pain, ask them directly:

"Are you thinking about killing yourself?"

Bethe1To.com



#BeThe1To **988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE** 

Be There

If a Veteran is thinking about suicide, LISTEN to their reasons for feeling hopeless and in pain.

Listen with compassion and empathy and without dismissing or judging

Bethe1To.com



#BeThe1To **988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE** 

Help Them Connect

Help Veterans in crisis connect to a support system

Connect them to 988 Lifeline, family, friends, clergy, coaches, co-workers or therapists for assistance.

Bethe1To.com



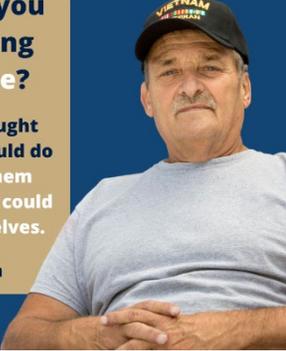
#BeThe1To **988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE** 

Keep Them Safe

Is a Veteran you know thinking about suicide?

Ask if they've thought about how they would do it and separate them from anything they could use to hurt themselves.

Bethe1To.com



#BeThe1To **988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE** 

Follow Up

Check in with Veterans you care about on a regular basis.

Making contact with a friend in the days and weeks after a crisis can make a difference in keeping them alive.

Bethe1To.com



#BeThe1To **988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE** 

Help Them Connect

Help Veterans in crisis connect to a support system

Connect them to 988 Lifeline, family, friends, clergy, coaches, co-workers or therapists for assistance.

Bethe1To.com



#BeThe1To **988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE** 

If you think a Veteran might be considering suicide, be the one to help them by taking these 5 steps:

Bethe1To.com

**ASK.
KEEP THEM SAFE.
BE THERE.
HELP THEM CONNECT.
FOLLOW UP.**



#BETHE1TO HELP THEM CONNECT



HELP THEM CONNECT

If a first responder you know is struggling, help them connect to a support system, whether it's the 988 Lifeline, family, friends, clergy, coaches, co-workers or therapists, so they have a network to reach out to for help.

Find out why this can save a life at [BeThe1To.com](https://www.bethe1to.com).
If you're struggling, call or text the Lifeline at 988.



#BETHE1TO FOLLOW UP



FOLLOW UP

Check in with the person you care about on a regular basis. Making contact with a friend in the days and weeks after a crisis can make a difference in keeping them alive.

Find out why this can save a life at [BeThe1To.com](https://www.bethe1to.com).
If you're struggling, call or text the Lifeline at 988.



#BETHE1TO ASK



ASK

When a first responder you know is in emotional pain, ask them directly: "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"

Find out why this can save a life at [BeThe1To.com](https://www.bethe1to.com).
If you're struggling, call or text the Lifeline at 988.



#BETHE1TO BE THERE



BE THERE

If a first responder you know is thinking about suicide, listen to their reasons for feeling hopeless and in pain. Listen with compassion and empathy and without dismissing or judging.

Find out why this can save a life at [BeThe1To.com](https://www.bethe1to.com).
If you're struggling, call or text the Lifeline at 988.



#BeThe1To Help Them Connect

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE



Public Health
Present. Promise. Protect.



For more information visit www.bethelto.com



Help your friend connect to a support system, whether it's the 988 Lifeline, family, friends, clergy, coaches, co-workers or therapists, so they have a network to reach out to for help.



988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE



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#BeThe1To Keep Them Safe

Is your friend thinking about suicide? Ask if they've thought about how they would do it and separate them from anything they could use to hurt themselves.

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988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

#BeThe1To Ask

Ask the tough question.

When somebody you know is in emotional pain, ask them directly

"Are you thinking about killing yourself?"

For more information visit www.bethelto.com



#BeThe1To Keep Them Safe

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

#BeThe1To



Public Health
Present. Promise. Protect.



For more information visit www.bethelto.com

Is your friend thinking about suicide? Ask if they've thought about how they would do it and separate them from anything they could use to hurt themselves.

#BeThe1To Follow Up

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE



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When somebody you know is in emotional pain, ask them directly
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