



Connect to Protect:
Support is Within Reach

2023 Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Toolkit





DEFENSE SUICIDE PREVENTION OFFICE

Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Outreach Toolkit

In recognition of September as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month (SPM) the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) created a 2023 Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Toolkit in support of the larger Department of Defense (DOD) suicide prevention campaign *Connect to Protect: Support is Within Reach*. The toolkit is a collection of campaign tools, resources, and graphics for use in all outreach efforts in September and all year. A comprehensive communication campaign is created when the same messaging and resources are used at the local and national levels.

The SPM Outreach Toolkit consists of:

Social Media Content: posts, story graphics, photo frames, banners

Sample Language Tools: public service announcement (PSA), blog, press release

Campaign Tools: pledge, poster, Connect to Protect fact sheet, campaign-style sheet, virtual background

Guides: Leaders Safe Messaging Guide, Means Safety for Military Service Members and Their Families, Your Words Matter Fact Sheet

Who may use the kit:

This toolkit is designed for organizations and communities that will be creating and promoting an SPM campaign. When the SPM campaign promoted across the Services is designed around one message, the message is more likely to resonate. The toolkit is a framework and consists of samples for communities to build on or even use as inspiration for additional creative ideas.

How to use the kit:

The toolkit provides materials to aid in planning an SPM campaign for local installations and the community. Follow the links for the items in the toolkit. Below is a table of the materials.

Promote and protect:

We encourage everyone to promote the campaign Connect to Protect: Support is Within Reach. Use the toolkit as is or use it as a jumping-off point. The goal is a cohesive campaign message to create awareness. If you're communicating on social media, use the following hashtags to join the conversation: #ConnectToProtect, #SPM23, and #BeThere. Don't forget to tag us!

Talking points and key messages: The important points below are key messages to share with the community. **#ConnectToProtect**

- [Installation, unit, etc.] is committed to preventing suicide among Service members, veterans, DoD civilians, and their families.
- Suicide prevention is a Department of Defense (DoD) priority throughout the year.



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- During September — Suicide Prevention Awareness Month (SPM) — the Department brings added attention to the complex issue of suicide and emphasizes the available resources and programs.
- We continue the DoD's SPM theme, Connect to Protect: Support is Within Reach because research continues to emphasize connections as a primary protective factor to reduce the risk of suicide.
- September is a time to refocus our energies, be inspired to continue our efforts, and reach out to the Service members, families, and coworkers on our installations. Encourage those around you to be a year-round suicide prevention advocate for their unit, peers, and family. Ideas for that encouragement can include the following tips/information:

Connect with self. It is important to focus on your health and wellness.

- Participate in spiritual or community activities and groups, or volunteer for causes or organizations that you care about.
- Spend time with friends and family members.
- Seek support from peers, family, or health professionals.
- Reach out to others. Check-in with friends and family. Let them know you care. Plan activities that you can enjoy together.

Connect with others.

- Listen when they want to talk. Accept what he, she, or they have experienced without judgment.
- Resist the temptation to problem-solve.
- Reassure them and express care and concern.
- Encourage them to get help and stay in touch with friends and family.
- Get to know your military and community resources, so that you can pass on that information if it is needed.

Learn how to help.

- **Speak Up:** If you are concerned about someone, ask if they are thinking about suicide, have a plan, and have the means, such as a firearm, medication, or other methods of self-harm.
- **Listen and Offer Support:** Be calm and express concern. Take what they say seriously and ask how you can help.
- **Act Quickly:** If you are concerned someone is at imminent risk for suicide, do not leave them alone and seek help immediately. The Veterans/Military Crisis Line is available 24/7 at 988 (press 1). You can also call 911.
- Remove any weapons, drugs, or other means of self-injury from the area if possible.
- If you are on the phone with an individual who you believe is in immediate danger, try to keep him or her on the line while you or someone else calls 911.



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- Ask if there is someone nearby who could offer support and keep talking to the individual until help arrives. Remember, there is no one “fix,” and no single person or organization can prevent suicide alone.

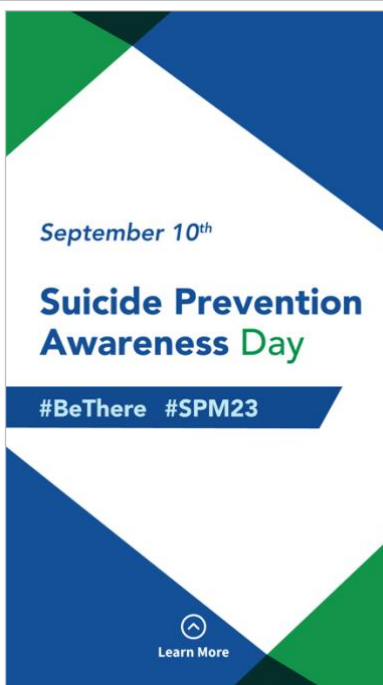
Tools:

SPM Social Media Tools

Date	Post	Graphic
	Help us spread suicide prevention awareness by using our 2023 Facebook Home. Use Facebook to upload your photo and update your Facebook profile photo with the image. https://www.facebook.com/defense.suicideprevention	
	Want to help us get the word out about suicide prevention this month? Use our Suicide Prevention Awareness Month toolkit and share vital resources to help those in your community. https://www.defense.suicideprevention #SPM23 #ConnectToProtect	
	Suicide Prevention is everyone's job! Thanks to 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline getting help has gotten so much easier. Service members and veterans can access the Military and Veterans Crisis line by dialing 988 and pressing 2. It's that easy.	

[Social Media Post Calendar:](#)

A calendar of suggested campaign posts for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram



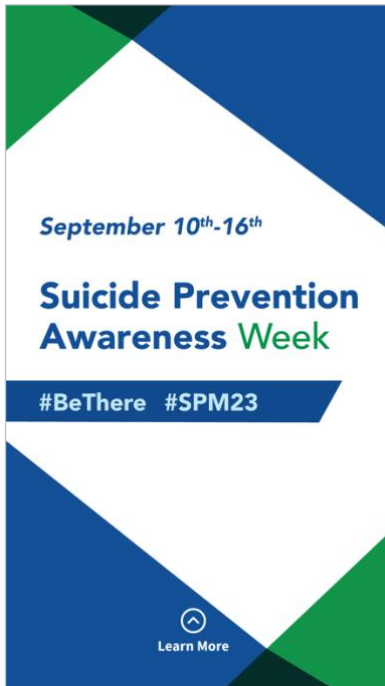
Social Media Story Graphics:

[Suicide Prevention Awareness Day Story](#)

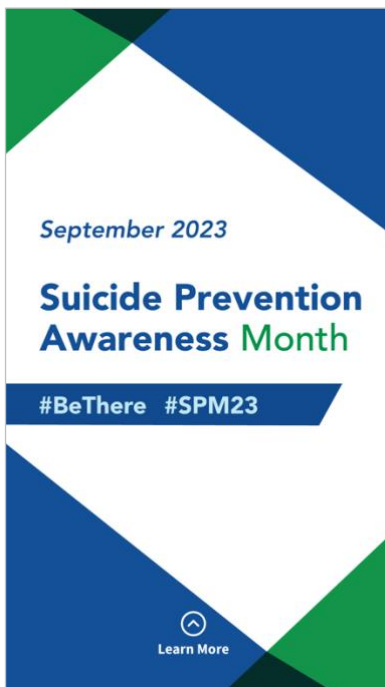


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[Suicide Prevention Awareness Week Story](#)



[Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Story](#)



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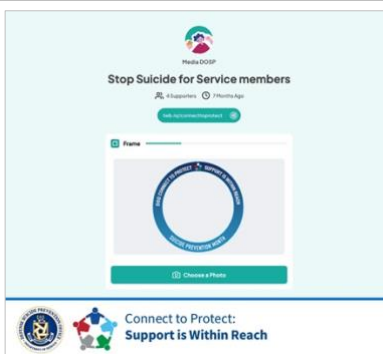
Facebook Post Graphic for Day: Include this graphic with your social media posts for Suicide Prevention Awareness Day for 10 September.



Facebook Post Graphic for Week: Include this graphic with any post throughout the week of September 10-16.



Facebook Post Graphic for Month: Include this graphic with any post throughout the month of September.



Facebook Photo Frame: Use the frame on Facebook and insert your own photo.



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Facebook Banner: Promote Suicide Prevention Awareness Month with a visual of the Connect to Protect message. Insert your own message above the banner.

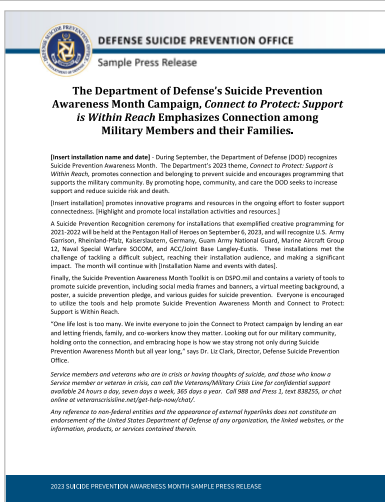


Twitter Banner: The banner is available using Twitter graphic requirements.

SPM Sample Language Documents



Sample PSA: Announcement with language that highlights the purpose of Connect to Protect: Support is Within Reach. Use the language in whole or in part for installation spokespeople. For release to local media.

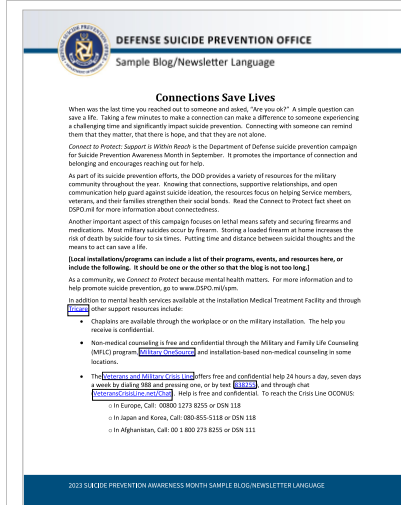


Sample Press Release: A press release with recommended campaign language. Use in whole or in part. It has space for a localized message. For release to local media.



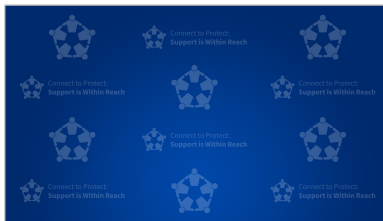
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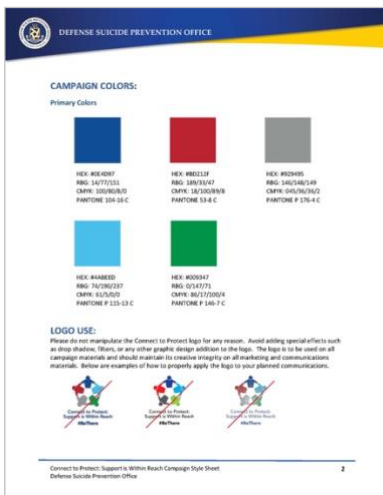


Sample Blog: Use recommended campaign language and add individual content. Use on a local website and written in a conversational style.

SPM Campaign Tools



Virtual Background: Use SPM background during virtual meetings. Directions on how to use the background: [Zoom](#) and [Teams](#).



Campaign Style Sheet: A sheet with the font and color palette for the Connect to Protect campaign. Includes logos in various forms and color scales.

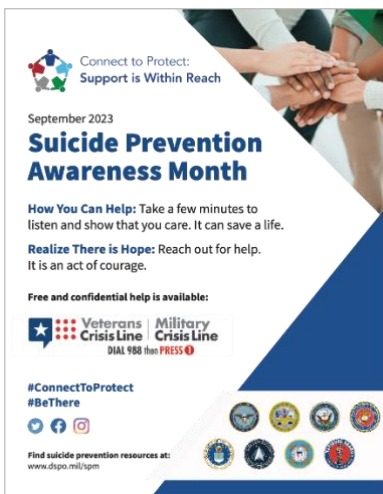


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Connect to Protect Fact Sheet: Explains what connectedness means and the purpose of the campaign. Great reference tool to get a feeling about messaging



SPM Posters (2 sizes): Motivational message of campaign theme with resources listed. Print out to hang in communal areas and offices.

SPM Poster (8.5 x 11)

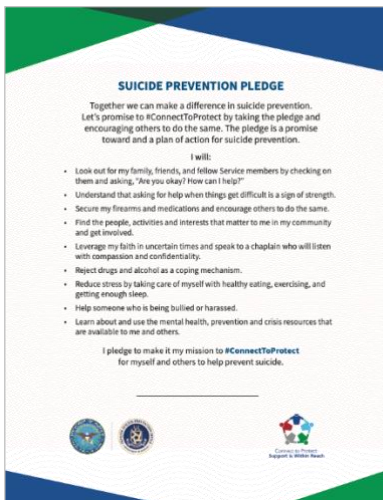


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SPM Poster (8.5 x 14)



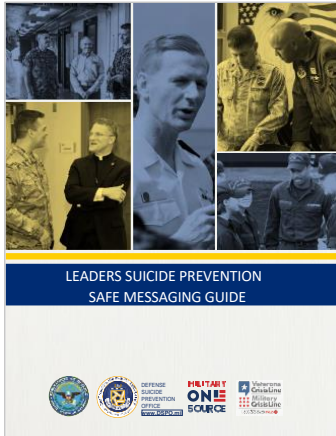
SPM Pledge: Asks people to think about and dedicate themselves to suicide prevention behaviors and look out for their community.



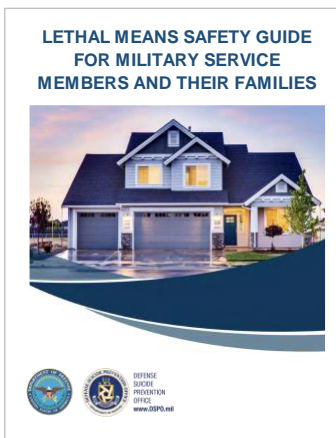
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SPM Guides



Leaders Safe Messaging Guide: A guide for military and community leaders to help reduce suicide risk, including how to use inclusive language that encourages help-seeking behavior.



Lethal Means Safety Guide for Military Service Members and Their Families: The guide provides the military community with ways to control and secure lethal means safety and explains its importance.



Your Words Matter Fact Sheet: The importance of using inclusive language is one of the important components of suicide prevention. This sheet explains to people how and why using the correct words is important. It also includes examples.