

2024 Public Perception Data

Communications Guidance for Promoting the New Public Perception Data

This communications guidance is intended to provide an overview of the key messages and themes that support the 2024 public perception data release, along with promotional language (e.g., social media copy, shareable graphics, customizable e-newsletter blurb, etc.) to help elevate awareness of the survey findings (via the press release [in English](#) or [in Spanish](#) and [full report](#)). The goal of this information is to encourage all partners to promote this new data using one shared voice—as well as highlighting the key points that are important for our field, the news media, and the public.

BACKGROUND:

Since 2015, the [National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention](#) (Action Alliance) at EDC, the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) (AFSP), and the [Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#) (SPRC) have commissioned The Harris Poll to conduct a bi-annual, nationally representative survey of adults in the U.S. This latest survey continues the work done since 2015, with baseline research conducted in 2018, helping to understand the public's beliefs and attitudes about mental health and suicide. The survey measures what the public knows about how to support someone who is struggling and their perceptions of barriers to helping someone at risk for suicide. The poll also helps reveal the public's awareness and usage of, expectations about, and barriers to using crisis services (including 988). New questions this year include: an employer's role in mental health, trusted people respondents would turn to, and knowledge of lethal means and suicide.

TALKING POINTS:

As you are promoting or talking about this collective project and the 2024 data, please use the suggested talking points below to ensure alignment in messaging.

- ***While progress has been made when it comes to helpful perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs around mental health and suicide prevention, more work is essential.*** Most people believe access to suicide prevention needs to be a priority, and most want to help their loved ones who are struggling but are not sure how. Greater access to care and information on resources is needed.
- ***Mental and physical health are seen as equally important, but most adults continue to feel like they are not treated equally within the healthcare system.***
 - When it comes to their own health, most adults (91%) say mental health is equally (77%) or more (14%) important than physical health (vs. 9% who say physical health is more important than mental health).
 - However, almost half of adults (49%) believe that physical health is treated as more important than mental health in the current healthcare system, with just 3 in 10 (32%) saying they believe they are treated equally and just one in 10 (11%) saying that mental health is treated as more important.
- ***Two years into 988, there is a growing familiarity with the three-digit number for calling, texting, and chatting. Most would be likely to reach out if they or someone they knew needed help, but there is a continued opportunity for continued education around 988, including reasons to call, text, or chat.***
 - Nearly two-thirds of adults (63%) have at least heard of 988, with a third (33%) saying they are familiar with 988 – both up significantly from 2022 (57% heard of, 28% familiar).
 - 41% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*, 40% of Black respondents, 38% of American Indian/Alaska Native respondents, 30% of Asian and white respondents, and 36% of Hispanic respondents were very or somewhat familiar with 988.
 - Nearly eight in 10 (78%) say they would be somewhat likely (44%) or very likely (34%) to use 988 if they or someone they knew needed help.
 - 82% of American Indian/Alaska Native respondents, 79% of Black respondents, 78% of white respondents, 77% of Hispanic respondents, and 70% of Asian and Native Hawaiian/Pacific

Islander* respondents, said they are very or somewhat likely to reach out to 988 if they or someone they knew needed help. LGBTQIA2S+ adults are more likely to say they are very/somewhat familiar with 988 vs. non-LGBTQIA2S+ adults (44% vs. 31%), but also less likely to say they would reach out to 988 if they or someone they knew needed help (72% vs. 79%).

- ***There are still barriers to reaching out to crisis services, such as 988, including financial concerns, which can be addressed with further education, and negative attitudes (stigma) from culture surrounding mental health and suicide.***
 - About one in three (32%) said there would not be any barriers to prevent them from reaching out to crisis services if they were struggling with thoughts of suicide or experiencing mental health distress.
 - The top barriers to reaching out include fear of out-of-pocket costs (25%), lack of confidence in the services in their area (23%), and lack of insurance to cover costs (22%).
 - Fear of what family, friends, or others would think: Top barrier for Hispanic (39%), American Indian/Alaska Native (38%), Black (33%), and white (30%) respondents.
- ***A majority of adults have personal experience with suicide.***
 - Three in five adults (61%) say they know someone who has thought about, attempted, or died by suicide, or have worried that someone might be thinking about suicide.
- ***There is an increase in adults who would reach out to someone if they were having thoughts of suicide.***
 - Most adults (82%) would tell someone if they were having thoughts of suicide, which is significantly higher than in 2018 and 2020 (both at 73%), and 2022 (80%).
 - One in three (34%) would turn to their spouse or significant other if they were having these thoughts, with similar numbers saying they'd reach out to a mental health provider (33%), other family member (33%), or a friend (30%).
- ***Suicide can be prevented and there are actions that can be taken to reduce the number of those who die by suicide.*** Suicide is not seen as an inevitable fate, as a vast majority believe there are warning signs, and that action can be taken to try to help.
 - Nine in 10 adults (91%) believe that suicide can be prevented at least sometimes, with nearly half (47%) believing it can be prevented all of the time or often.
 - Seven in 10 adults agree that most people who attempt suicide or die by suicide show signs beforehand (72%, 70% respectively), and only a quarter (25%) believe that if someone wants to die by suicide, there is nothing anyone can do to help them.
- ***Action can be taken to help reduce the number of people who die by suicide.***
 - Over nine in 10 adults (93%) believe there is something that can be done to help reduce the number of people who die by suicide.
 - Most respondents point to greater access to care (77%); more training and education for professionals (72%); and educating the public about suicide prevention (55%).
- ***There is a strong desire to help those struggling with thoughts of suicide, and individuals want to learn more on how to help or overcome barriers to offering that help. Trusted people can play an important role in suicide prevention.***

- More than nine in 10 adults would do something if they were worried about someone's mental health (93%) or if someone they knew was thinking about suicide (95%).
 - Less than three in 10 (28%) say nothing would stop them from trying to help someone who was having thoughts of suicide. Among the nearly seven in 10 (72%) who cited barriers, 28% say it's because the person might not accept help, or 24% would be afraid to make the person feel worse.
 - Nearly nine in 10 adults (89%) believe that a trusted person can play a role in suicide prevention, reflected in the finding that just 4 in 10 adults (40%) agree that only a clinical professional can help someone who is thinking of suicide.
 - Three in four adults (77%) agree they would be interested in learning how they might be able to play a role in helping someone who may be experiencing thoughts of suicide, and they report that they would turn to various resources for tips about coping with thoughts of suicide or helping a loved one.
- **Most are unaware about the relationship between lethal means (any object or instrument used to carry out a self-destructive act, including items in an individuals' private environment or in public spaces) and suicide, and more education is needed here.**
 - Only 49% of adults know that limiting access to lethal means can prevent suicide.
 - **Employers and the media and entertainment industry should have a role in mental health and suicide prevention.**
 - About nine in 10 believe there is a role for the media and entertainment industry and for employers in supporting mental health and suicide prevention (90% media and entertainment, 92% employers).

Visit suicidepreventionnow.org/take-action for the 2024 Executive Summary and information on what you can do to help prevent suicide.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a suicide or mental health-related crisis, please call or text 988 or chat [988Lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org).

**small base of respondents (n<100)*

SOCIAL MEDIA COPY:

The below graphics can be downloaded here to use with the suggested social media content. The data will launch on Wednesday, October 9, 2024.

Partner Tags: *Please tag all partners when promoting the Harris Poll.*

- **Facebook:** /ActionAlliance; /AFSPNational; /SuicidePreventionResourceCenter
- **LinkedIn:** National-Action-Alliance-for-Suicide-Prevention; AFSPNational; Suicide-Prevention-Resource-Center
- **X:** @Action_Alliance; @AFSPNational; @SPRCtweets
- **Instagram:** @AFSPNational; #ActionAlliance; #SuicidePreventionResourceCenter

Shareable social media images: [click here to access sharable assets.](#)

General

- Today, the @Action_Alliance, @AFSPNational + @SPRCtweets, released new data that reinforces the urgent need to make #SuicidePrevention a national priority. Learn more: SuicidePreventionNow.org

- Collaboration on complex public health matters like #MentalHealth and #SuicidePrevention have never been more important. @Action_Alliance, @AFSPNational + @SPRCtweets came together to release new public perception data building on data since 2015. More: SuicidePreventionNow.org
- New @HarrisPoll data on suicide prevention doubled sample size in 2024 to be more representative and inclusive of the diversity of the United States. For insight on population-specific data, visit: SuicidePreventionNow.org [Tag Partners]
- Data from @HarrisPoll shows ongoing progress in perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs surrounding #MentalHealth and #SuicidePrevention. However, there is still significant work to be done. Learn more: SuicidePreventionNow.org [Tag Partners]

988

- A new survey shows that nearly two-thirds of adults have heard of @988Lifeline, with one-third reporting familiarity, significantly up from 2022. This shows growing awareness around #mentalhealth resources. Learn more: SuicidePreventionNow.org [Tag Partners]
- New data shows that U.S. adults feel comfortable contacting a mental health hotline, yet few have. By raising awareness about @988lifeline, we can encourage more people to seek the support they need. Learn more: SuicidePreventionNow.org [Tag Partners]
- More people are open to contacting @988Lifeline, but barriers still exist. Financial concerns and cultural bias around mental health can hold people back. Prioritizing education can help remove barriers. More: SuicidePreventionNow.org [Tag Partners]
- Nearly 8 in 10 adults say they would reach out to @988Lifeline if they or someone they knew needed help. Remember, support is just a call, text or chat away at 988 or 988lifeline.org, available 24/7/365. Want to know more about these insights? Visit SuicidePreventionNow.org. [Tag Partners]
- Did you know that 7 in 10 adults would feel comfortable reaching out to a mental health hotline, but over 80% have never used one? Your mental health matters. Reach out to a hotline like 988 for support today. Learn more at SuicidePreventionNow.org. [Tag Partners]

Lethal Means (including Firearms)

- Many adults are unaware about the link between lethal means and suicide. Only 49% know that limiting access to lethal means can prevent suicide, but increased education can help in suicide prevention efforts. Learn more: SuicidePreventionNow.org [Tag Partners]
- Nearly half of U.S. adults recognize that limiting access to lethal means can prevent suicide. Research shows that by understanding and taking simple steps, like securely storing medication and firearms, you can directly protect those at risk. Learn more: suicidepreventionnow.org [Tag Partners]
- Nearly half of U.S. adults know that firearms are used in more than half of suicides. Securely storing firearms is one way to protect those you care about. Learn more: suicidepreventionnow.org [Tag Partners]

Mental and Physical Health

- Most U.S. adults see mental and physical health as equally important, but many feel they are not treated equally in the health care system. Learn more: SuicidePreventionNow.org [Tag Partners]

- 9 in 10 adults believe that both employers and the media and entertainment industries should play a role in #MentalHealth and #SuicidePrevention. Learn more: suicidepreventionnow.org [Tag Partners]
- 91% of adults believe mental health is just as important or more important than physical health. Your mind deserves the same care as your body. What can you do to improve your mental health today? Learn more: suicidepreventionnow.org [Tag Partners]
- While 91% of adults believe mental health is as important or more important than physical health, 49% feel that physical health is treated as more important in the current health care system. Research shows that health care systems can effectively play a role in saving lives. Learn more: suicidepreventionnow.org [Tag Partners]

Suicide Prevention

- According to new @HarrisPoll data, most U.S. adults have personal experience with suicide. Click to learn more: SuicidePreventionNow.org [Tag Partners]
- JUST RELEASED: A new national survey suggests that there is an increase in adults who would reach out to someone if they were having thoughts of suicide. Want to learn more? Check out SuicidePreventionNow.org [Tag Partners]
- Data from @HarrisPoll reinforces suicide can be prevented. A vast majority of U.S. adults believe there are warning signs and actions that can be taken to reduce the number of those who die by suicide. More: SuicidePreventionNow.org [Tag Partners]
- A new national survey reveals a strong desire among U.S. adults to support those struggling with thoughts of suicide. Many want to learn how to help and overcome barriers for #SuicidePrevention. Learn more: SuicidePreventionNow.org [Tag Partners]
- A majority of people in the U.S. see suicide as a preventable public health issue and want to learn more about how to help: SuicidePreventionNow.org [Tag Partners]
- According to newly released data, 93% of people in the U.S. believe there is something that can be done to help reduce the number of people who die by suicide AND 95% would do something if someone close to them was thinking about suicide. Learn more: SuicidePreventionNow.org [Tag Partners]
- Most people in the U.S. believe #suicideprevention needs to be a priority according to a new national survey. Greater access to care is more important now than ever. Learn more: SuicidePreventionNow.org. [Tag Partners]
- 9 in 10 adults believe that suicide can be prevented at least some of the time. By recognizing the warning signs and being there for someone in crisis, you could help save a life. Learn more: suicidepreventionnow.org [Tag Partners]

CUSTOMIZABLE E-NEWSLETTER BLURB:

[A 2024 national public perception poll on mental health and suicide prevention](#) builds on research from previous years, and helps our nation better understand the public's beliefs and attitudes about mental health and suicide. This year's survey, which doubled in size to over 4,000 U.S. adults, emphasizes awareness of crisis services like 988, revealing significant growth in familiarity – 63% have heard of 988, up from 57% in 2022.

Key findings show that while most adults recognize that suicide can be prevented and believe they can play a role in suicide prevention, there are still barriers to reaching out to crisis services, such as financial concerns and negative attitudes from culture surrounding mental health and suicide that hinder action and can be addressed with further education. The poll also highlights the importance of trusted individuals in suicide prevention, with 89% of respondents believing they can make a difference.

The survey, conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of the [National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention \(Action Alliance\)](#) at EDC, [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention \(AFSP\)](#), and the [Suicide Prevention Resource Center \(SPRC\)](#), builds upon past surveys in [2015](#), [2018](#), [2020](#), and [2022](#).

The newest 2024 data also show that while gains have been made in perceptions, attitudes and beliefs about mental health and suicide prevention, continued efforts are essential to enhance awareness, understanding, and access to mental health and suicide prevention resources. Additional insights include the necessity for more education on lethal means safety, and the role of employers and the media and entertainment industries in supporting mental health.

Additional key findings include:

- 91% of U.S. adults see suicide as preventable, at least some of the time.
- 93% of adults in the U.S. believe there is something that can be done to help reduce the number of people who die by suicide.
- 77% of adults in the U.S. would be interested in learning how to play a role in helping someone who may be experiencing thoughts of suicide.
- 91% of adults in the U.S. perceive mental health as equal to or more important than physical health.
- 49% of adults in the U.S. feel physical health is treated as more important than mental health.
- 78% of adults in the U.S. say they would be somewhat or very likely to use 988 if they or someone they knew needed help.
- 61% of adults in the U.S. say they know someone who has thought about, attempted, or died by suicide, or have worried that someone might be thinking about suicide.
- 49% of adults in the U.S. know that limiting access to lethal means can prevent suicide.
- 47% of adults in the U.S. know that firearms are used in more than half of the cases of suicide in the U.S.
- 92% of adults in the U.S. believe there is a role for employers in supporting mental health and suicide prevention.

Learn more about the 2024 data—along with related data from previous years—and learn how you can take action to strengthen mental health and suicide prevention. Go to: SuicidePreventionNow.org.

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