

2022 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 2022 public perception data release, along with complementary promotional language (e.g., social media posts, shareable graphics, customizable e-newsletter blurb, etc.) to help elevate awareness of the survey findings (via the [press release](#) 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), 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. to understand the public's beliefs and attitudes about mental health and suicide. Building off of past surveys in [2015](#), [2018](#), and [2020](#), the Action Alliance, AFSP, and SPRC once again conducted a poll in 2022. While many of the same questions from past years were asked in the [2022 survey](#) for trending purposes, additional questions were added related to the COVID-19 pandemic and 988—the new three-digit suicide and mental health-related crisis line. Overall, the data indicates that progress has been made, but there is more to do.

TALKING POINTS:

As you are promoting or talking about this collective project and the 2022 data, please use the suggested talking points below to ensure alignment in messaging.

- ***Research ensures our suicide prevention and mental health efforts are well-informed, especially our messaging efforts.***
 - Since research matters, the Action Alliance, AFSP, and SPRC have invested in regular polling to better understand attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions about mental health and suicide prevention.
 - To ensure research-informed messaging, the Action Alliance, AFSP, and SPRC have collaborated with The Harris Poll to conduct ongoing public perception polling in 2015, 2018, 2020, and most recently in 2022.
 - This collective project aims to use both the 2022 and past data (from 2015, 2018, and 2020) to inform and transform the nation's narrative about these pressing and growing public health issues —as well as strengthen our systems of care and support.
- ***While progress has been made when it comes to helpful perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs around these issues, more work is needed.***
 - The 2022 data show that the public increasingly find suicide is not inevitable. In fact, three-quarters of U.S. adults (75%, higher than what has been reported in previous years) say that most people who die by suicide usually show some signs beforehand.
 - While public opinion shows more engagement in and awareness of these issues over time, there is much work ahead—including eliminating barriers that keep people from accessing care. Other key findings include:
 - Nearly half of respondents (46%) believe lack of affordable treatment keeps people who are thinking about suicide from seeking help,
 - 44% of respondents believe lack of access to treatment is what keeps people who are thinking about suicide from seeking help.
 - To help reduce the number of people who die by suicide, most U.S. adults surveyed point to the need for more training and education of professionals (78%); greater access to care (77%); and educating the public about suicide prevention (60%).

- ***The public is increasingly seeing mental health as on par with physical health.***
 - Based on public perception polling of attitudes about mental health and suicide, the majority of adults in the U.S. value mental health as much as or more than they value physical health, but most adults (51%) feel physical health is treated as more important than mental health by the health care system. Other key data findings include:
 - 76% of adults surveyed say mental health is equally important as physical health.
 - Only 30% of adults surveyed believe these issues are treated equally in our current health system.

- ***There is a strong belief that everyone plays a role in suicide prevention and mental health and can act now.***
 - The findings also show a strong desire for U.S. adults to help themselves or others who are struggling. Key data findings include:
 - 94% of U.S. adults surveyed see suicide as a preventable public health issue.
 - Nearly all of U.S. adults (93%) surveyed feel actions can be taken to help reduce the number of deaths by suicide and would take action to help.
 - While a majority of people surveyed want to play a role, they are also aware of many barriers to getting help. When asked about the reasons that would prevent a person from seeking help, key data findings include:
 - 66% of U.S. adults report having feelings of hopelessness or lack hope that anything will help
 - 59% of U.S. adults report having feelings of embarrassment
 - 56% of U.S. adults report not knowing how to get help
 - 46% of U.S. adults report lack of affordable treatment and
 - 44% of U.S. adults report lack of access to treatment
 - Data also show some reservations when it comes to talking about suicide – such as being unsure of the right words to say (29% surveyed) and lack of knowledge about suicide (27% surveyed).
 - It's important that we reinforce throughout our messaging that *everyone* can take steps now to play a role, such as having caring conversations and sharing tips and resources that empower all communities to take action to support themselves and others.

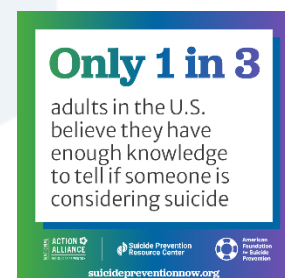
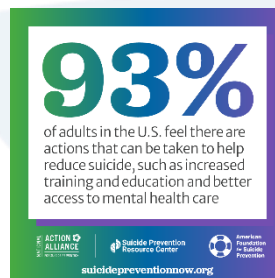
- ***The pandemic continues to raise public interest in mental health and suicide prevention, and we have an opportunity to engage in further dialogue on these issues.***
 - Due to the COVID-19 pandemic (among other issues), people are increasingly seeing mental health and suicide prevention as more important than ever before.
 - More than 8 in 10 adults surveyed (84%, up from 81% in 2020) say that as a result of the pandemic, it's more important than ever to make suicide prevention a national priority.
 - More than 2 in 3 adults surveyed say COVID-19 has made them more empathetic and 6 in 10 are said they are more open to discussing mental health as a result of the pandemic.

- ***Education is seen as key for everyone to make a difference for mental health and suicide.***
 - Mental health and suicide prevention are complex public health issues requiring efforts from many sectors of society to help with solutions. Data reinforce the role clinician and non-clinical sectors play when it comes to addressing these issues. For example, respondents reported educating the news and entertainment media (37%), educating community leaders such as teacher and faith leaders (53%), and educating first responders (55%) as being key actions that would help reduce the number of people who die by suicide.
 - That is why the Action Alliance, AFSP, and SPRC are working with diverse sector partners at the community and national levels to develop comprehensive approaches to prevent suicide and strengthen mental health.

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS:

- Today, the @Action_Alliance, @AFSPNational + @SPRCtweets, released new data that reinforce the urgent need to make #SuicidePrevention a national priority. Learn more via: SuicidePreventionNow.org
- Research impacts public health messages. That's why @Action_Alliance, @AFSPNational + @SPRCtweets partnered to release its bi-annual polling data about the public's perceptions on #MentalHealth and #SuicidePrevention. SuicidePreventionNow.org
- NEW @HarrisPoll data released today show while gains have been made, more work is needed to strengthen suicide prevention and mental health services, supports, and education. Learn more: SuicidePreventionNow.org
- More U.S. adults feel #SuicidePrevention should be a national priority, and more are open to talking about #MentalHealth in the wake of the pandemic. Learn more via: SuicidePreventionNow.org @Action_Alliance @AFSPNational @SPRCtweets
- JUST RELEASED: According to a new national survey, 84% of people in the U.S. say that as a result of #COVID19, it's more important than ever to make #SuicidePrevention a national priority. Learn more and take action: SuicidePreventionNow.org @Action_Alliance @AFSPNational @EDCtweets @SPRCtweets
- Most people in the U.S. believe there are warning signs for those at risk for suicide, but don't know how to identify them to help according to our @HarrisPoll survey on #MentalHealth and #SuicidePrevention. Public education is more important than ever. Learn more SuicidePreventionNow.org.
- Collaboration around complex public health issues like mental health and suicide prevention has never been more important. That's why the @Action_Alliance, @AFSPNational + @SPRCtweets came together to release new public perception data that builds upon past polling since 2015. More: SuicidePreventionNow.org
- 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 @Action_Alliance @AFSPNational @SPRCtweets
- According to newly released data, 94% of people in the U.S. surveyed believe suicide is preventable AND would do something if someone close to them was thinking about suicide. Learn more via SuicidePreventionNow.org @Action_Alliance @AFSPNational @SPRCtweets
- Most U.S. adults believe mental health is as important, if not more important than physical health but not treated equally in our current health system. Learn more via SuicidePreventionNow.org @Action_Alliance @AFSPNational @SPRCtweets
- In a new survey, most U.S. adults report barriers, like access and affordability, when it comes to seeking mental health care. Learn more via SuicidePreventionNow.org @Action_Alliance @AFSPNational @SPRCtweets
- According to a new survey, a majority of U.S. adults (61%) believe we need to provide better access to mental health care and other mental health options like talk therapy, couples counseling, family therapy, and tele-therapy. Learn more: SuicidePreventionNow.org
- With the recent transition to @988Lifeline, strengthening our nation's suicide and mental health-related crisis services is key! New data reveals barriers U.S. adults perceive to reaching out to such services. More: SuicidePreventionNow.org




Shareable social media images: Click [here](#) to access social shareable assets.



CUSTOMIZABLE E-NEWSLETTER BLURB:

JUST RELEASED: NEW DATA

Results from a national public perception survey on
mental health and suicide prevention

A [new 2022 public perception national survey](#) of over 2,000 U.S. adults released today helps our nation better understand the public's beliefs and attitudes about mental health and suicide. The survey finds that while a majority of those surveyed (96%) would take action to help prevent suicide if someone close to them was thinking about suicide, nearly 2 out of 3 believe they don't have enough knowledge about suicide to talk about it with someone who may be struggling, which speaks to the importance of equipping the public with resources and tools to have these conversations and to take action. The survey also provides timely findings related to the public's usage of, expectations about, and barriers to using crisis services, such as the new 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

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

The newest 2022 data also show that while gains have been made in our perceptions about mental health and suicide prevention, much work is ahead. Data show a strong desire for Americans to help but also strong uncertainty about the best ways to do so as well as that access to care is seen as the leading barrier to getting help. Key findings include:

- 94% of U.S. adults see suicide as a preventable public health issues.
- 92% of U.S. adults perceive mental health as equal to, or more important than, physical health; however, 51% feel physical health is treated as more important than mental health
- 53% of U.S. adults feel that seeing a mental health professional is a sign of strength; however, around one-quarter to one-third continue to think it's something most people cannot afford (32%), don't know where to find (32%), or is inaccessible to most people (24%).
- More than half of respondents (57%) had heard of 988 and 81% report being likely to reach out to 988 if they or someone they know needed help.

Learn more about the 2022 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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