



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Suicide Prevention and Self-Care

Tammy Weppelman, M.S., LPC-S
Office of Mental Health Coordination
Texas Health and Human Services Commission

Trauma-Informed Disclosure



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

We will discuss the topic of suicide prevention.

You are invited to take breaks as needed during the presentation. Additionally, call or text the **Suicide and Crisis Line at 9-8-8** or text the Crisis Text Line by texting "**TX**" to **741741** in the event you become distressed and need support.

Learning Objectives



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

- Identify at least one warning sign and one risk factor of suicide risk.
- Identify at least one protective factor from suicide risk.
- Identify at least one self-care strategy to engage in going forward.

What is Suicide Care?

- Systems approach to comprehensive suicide prevention that includes:
 - ▶ Prevention;
 - ▶ Intervention;
 - ▶ Treatment; and
 - ▶ Postvention.
- A continuous and trauma-sensitive approach to care.



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Language Matters - Death



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Unsafe:

- Completed suicide
- Successful suicide
- Committed suicide

Safe:

- Died by suicide
- Death by suicide
- Survivors of suicide loss
- People bereaved by suicide

Language Matters - Attempt



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Unsafe:

- Failed attempt
- Parasuicide
- Serious attempt
- Suicide gesture
- Manipulative act
- Nonfatal suicide
- Suicide threat

Safe:

- Attempted suicide
- Low or high lethality attempt
- Survivors of suicide attempt
- People with lived experience
- Aborted or interrupted attempt
- Thoughts of suicide

Language Matters - Lethal Means



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Unsafe:

Means restriction

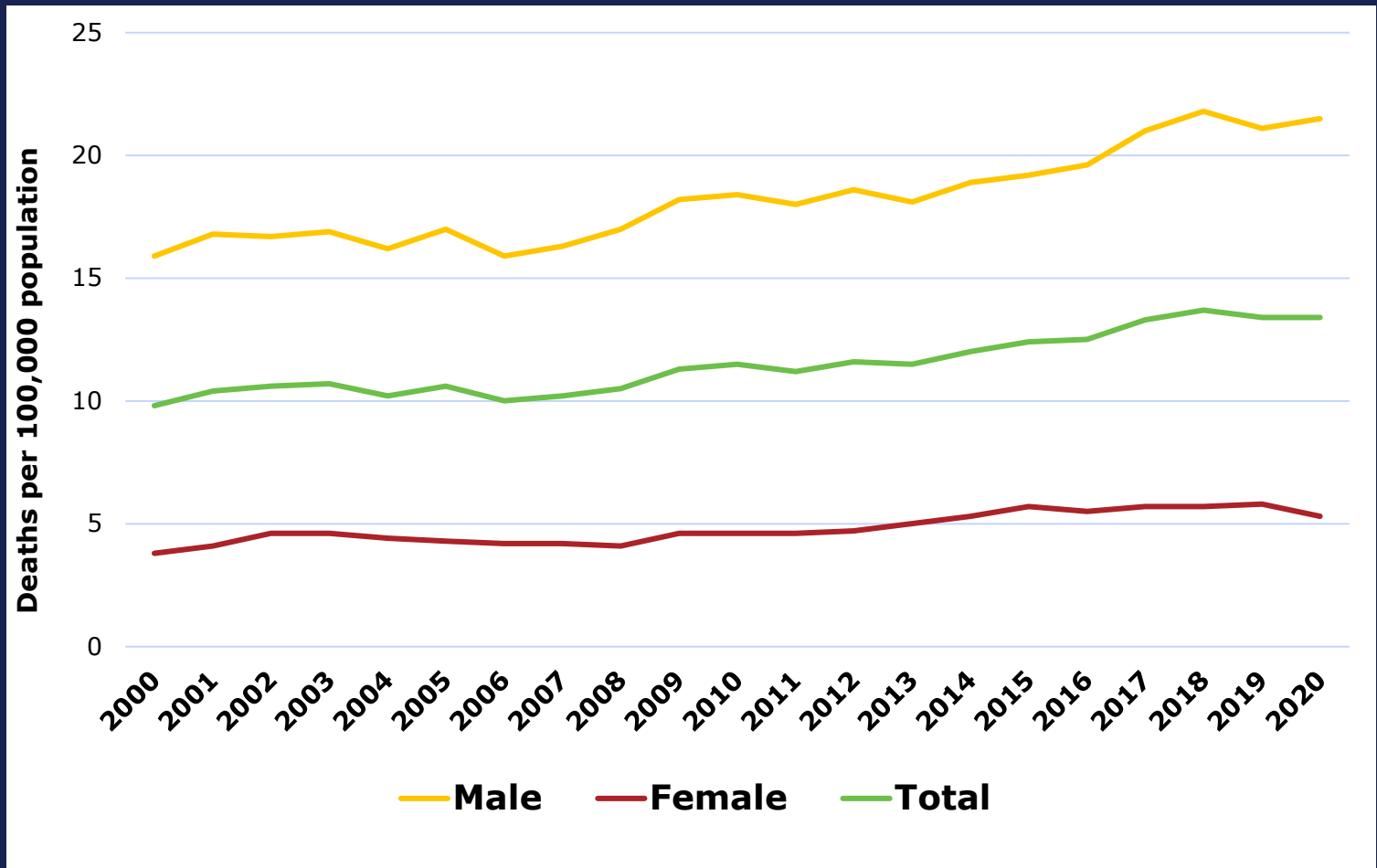
Safe:

Means safety

Texas Suicide Mortality by Sex*



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

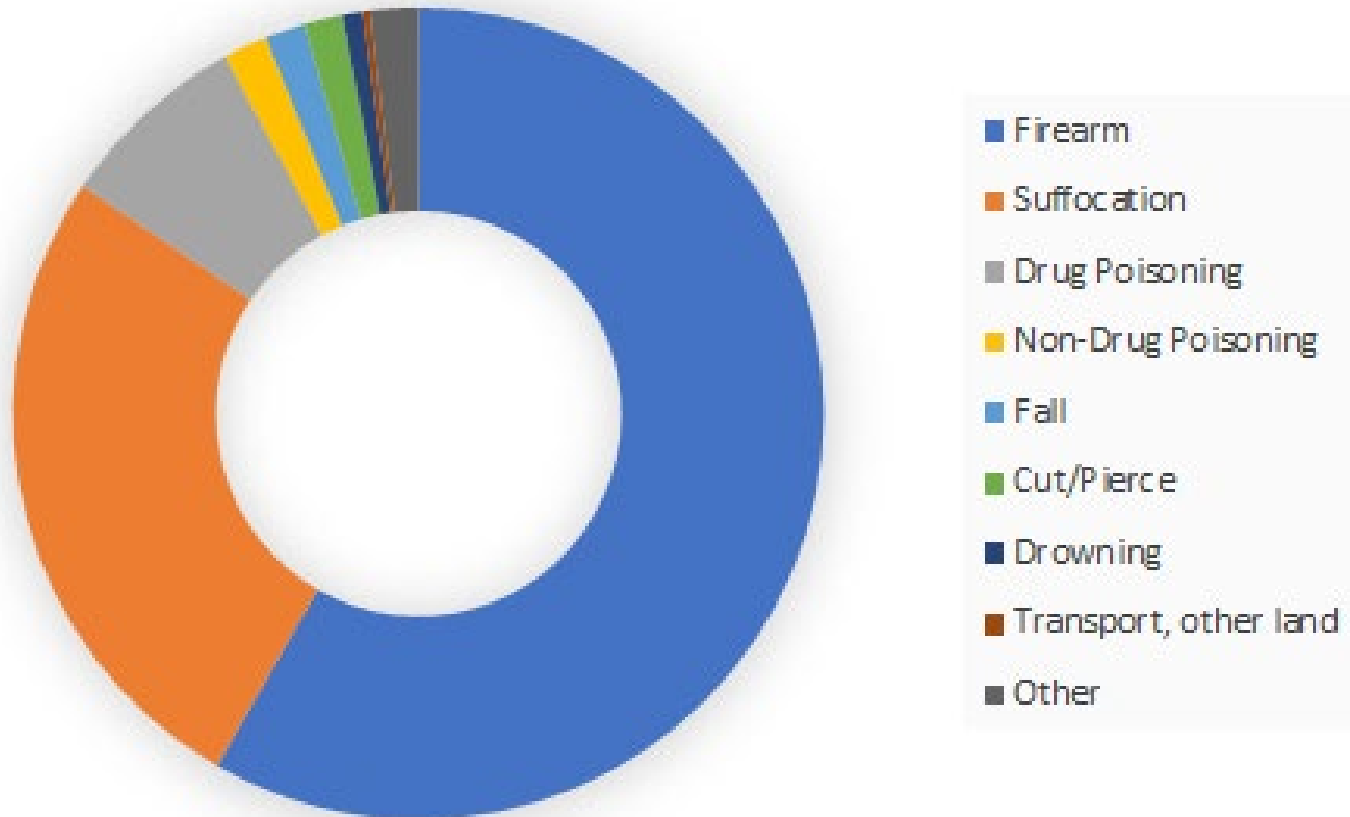


*Source: CDC WONDER

Texas Suicide Mortality by Method (2020)*



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

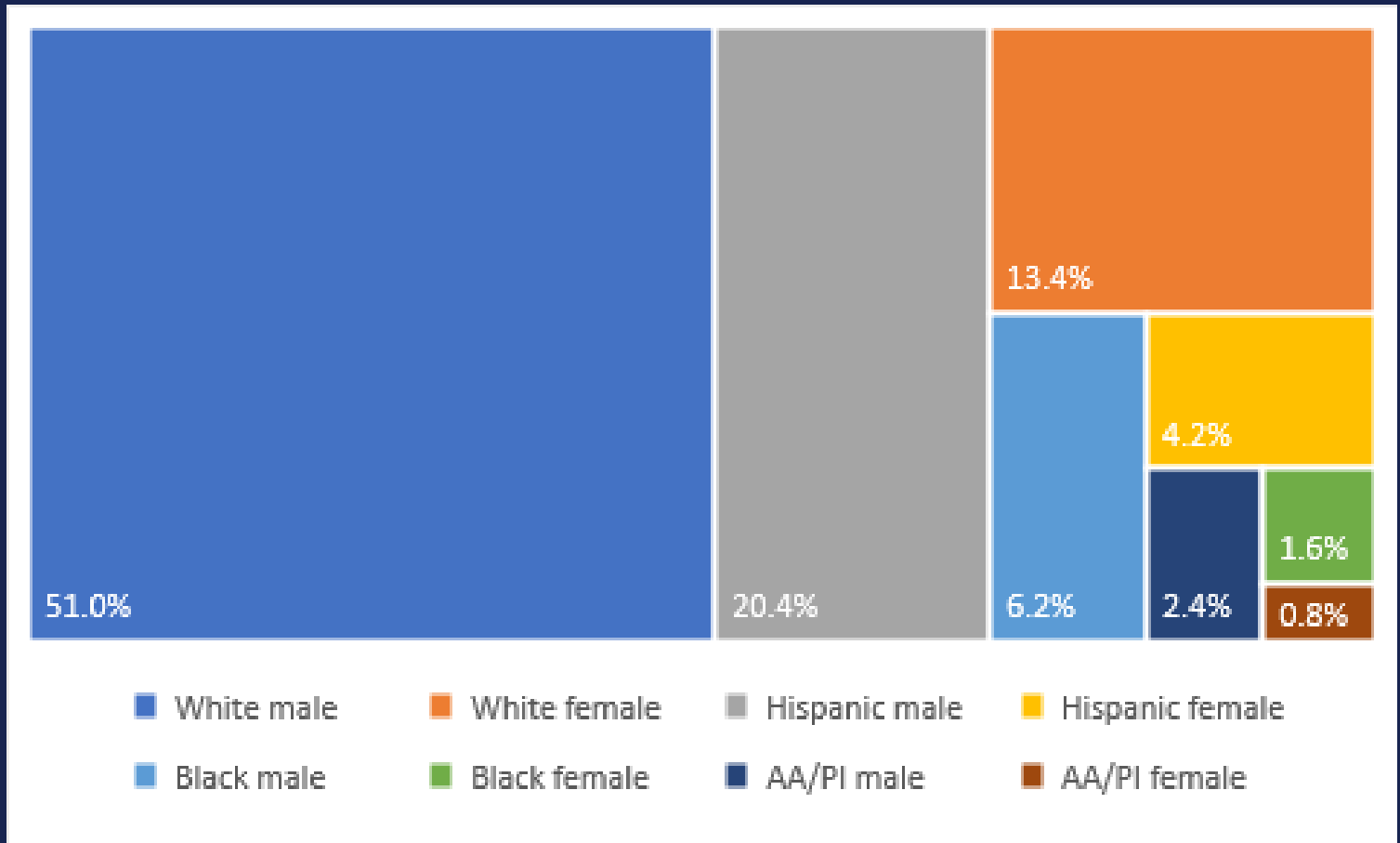


*Source: CDC WISQARS



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Suicide Mortality Data by Sex, Race and Ethnicity (2020)*

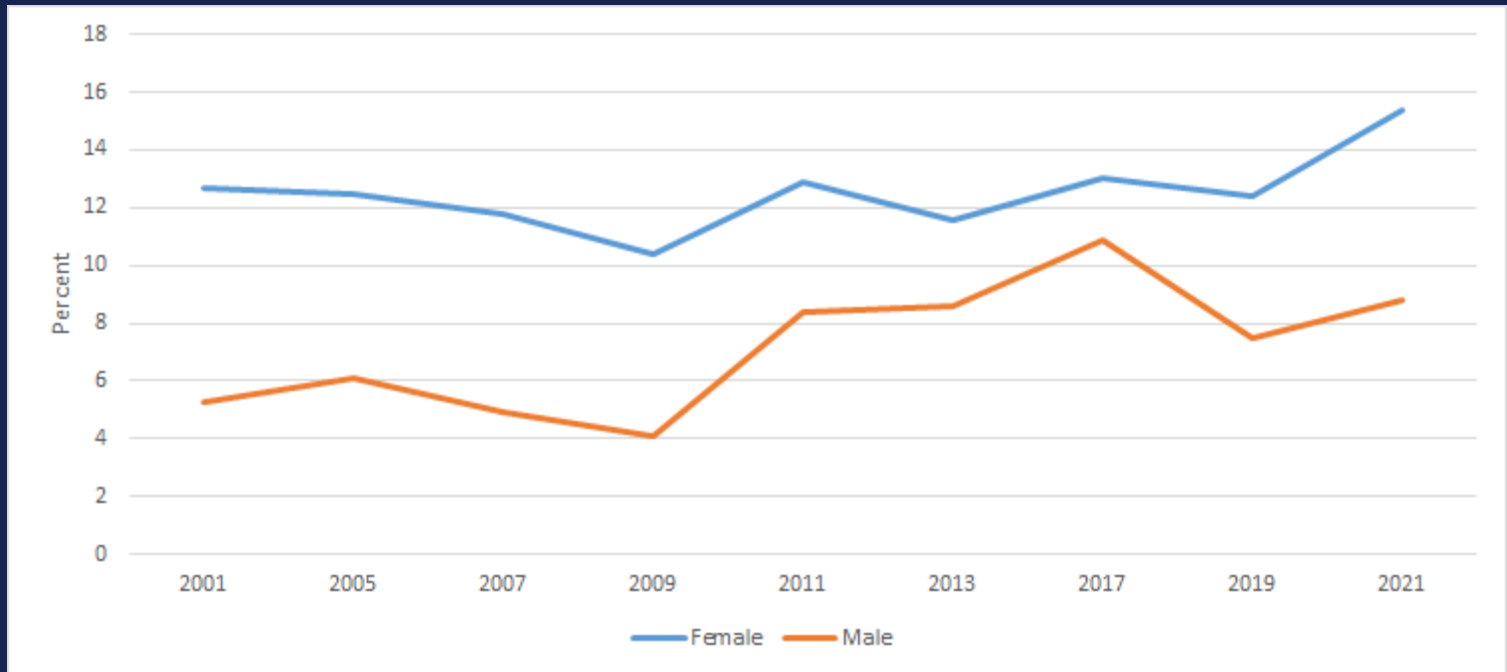


*Source: CDC WISQARS

Texas High School Students Who Attempted Suicide in the Past 12 Months by Sex*



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services



*Source: Texas Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) 2001-2021

Suicide Prevention

A collection of efforts to reduce the risk of suicide. These efforts can be at the:

- person,
- relationship,
- community, or
- society level.



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Suicide Prevention

What can you do to help?

- Know the warning signs that someone may be thinking of suicide.
- Know the risk factors that make someone at higher risk of suicide.
- Know the protective factors that make it less likely someone will make a suicide attempt.
- Be willing to ask clearly and directly if someone is having thoughts of suicide.



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Risk Factors (1 of 3)

What is a risk factor?

- Risk factors are characteristics or conditions that increase the chance someone may attempt suicide.
- One way to better understand suicide prevention is to understand risk factors, warning signs, and protective factors.



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Risk Factors (2 of 3)

- Suicide of loved one
- Chronic physical illness or pain
- Divorce or separation
- Loss of employment or financial problems
- Legal problems or arrest
- Victim of crime or abuse
- Witness to violence



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Risk Factors (3 of 3)

- Lack of social support
- Use of alcohol or other substances
- History of or current mental illness (not always diagnosed)
- Feelings of being a burden
- Previous attempt(s)
- History of trauma



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Warning Signs (1 of 3)

Difference Between a Risk Factor and a Warning Sign?

Warning signs are indicators that a person may be in acute danger and needs help urgently.



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Warning Signs (2 of 3)

- Loss of interest in activities usually found enjoyable;
- Verbally talking or writing about suicide;
- Decreased social interaction, self-care, and grooming;
- Feeling hopeless or worthless; or
- Putting affairs in order, giving things away, making changes in will.



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Warning Signs (3 of 3)

- Stock-piling medication or obtaining other lethal means;
- Increased use of alcohol or other substances; or
- Dramatic change in mood – **most significant indicator.**



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Protective Factors (1 of 3)

What is a protective factor?

Protective factors are characteristics, traits, or supports that make a person less likely to attempt suicide.



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Protective Factors (2 of 3)

- Access to effective mental health treatment;
- Family and community support;
- Healthy coping strategies;
- Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide;



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Protective Factors (3 of 3)

- Protection from lethal means;
- Having a sense of purpose or meaning in life;
- Hope for the future; or
- Having a sense of responsibility for others (kids, spouse, pets, etc.).



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Things to Consider (1 of 2)

- Warning signs, risk factors, and protective factors are not cumulative. That is, people may have many protective factors and only one warning sign and still be at high risk.
- There are minimal differences between children, adolescents, and adults regarding warning signs, risk factors, and protective factors.



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Things to Consider (2 of 2)

- Most people thinking of suicide do not want to die; rather, they are experiencing unbearable pain and are unable to see other options available to stop the pain.
- People experiencing thoughts of suicide often do not have access to positive coping mechanisms.
- Encouraging and helping the person to think of reasons to live and reasons for hope can be very helpful.



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

What Can You Do?

(1 of 3)

If someone you know is exhibiting warning signs, you should:

- Ask clearly and directly about suicide.

Examples of clear and direct questions include: "Are you thinking about suicide?" or "Have you been thinking about killing yourself?"

- It is important to avoid the use of the term "harm yourself."



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

What Can You Do?

(2 of 3)

If the person is having thoughts of suicide:

- Listen and be non-judgmental – let them know you care.
- Believe what they say – take words and actions seriously.
- Offer hope – help them think of reasons to live or ways to keep safe.
- Get help – stay with them until help is available.



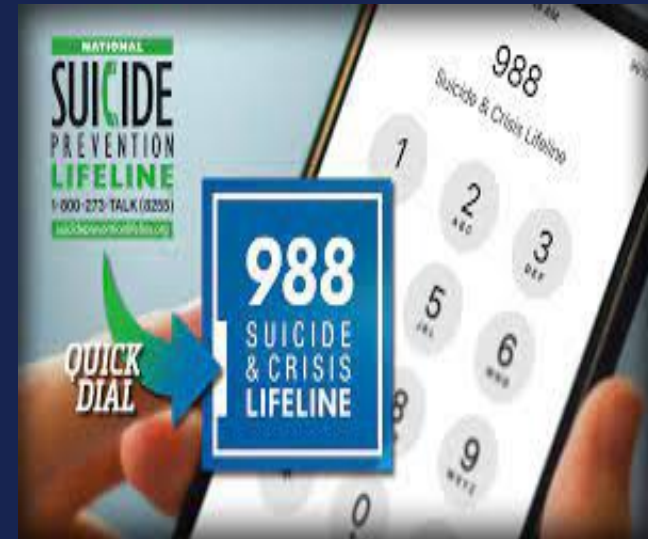
TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

What Can You Do? (3 of 3)



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

- Be willing to assist the person to reach out for help.
- The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline provides 24/7, free, and confidential support for people in distress.
- The Lifeline also provides free crisis and suicide prevention resources for people, loved ones, or professionals working with people who may experience thoughts of suicide.



What is 988?

- The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline offers 24/7 call, text, and chat access to trained crisis workers who can help people experiencing suicidal, substance use, mental health crises, or any other kind of emotional distress.
- People can also contact 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

How Does 988 Work?

- Made up of over 200 local and state funded crisis centers across the United States.
- Calls and texts are routed to the center closest to the caller by area code of the caller's phone number.
 - ▶ Press "1" for Veterans
 - ▶ Press "2" for the Spanish sub-network
- If the closest center is unable to answer, call is routed to the national back-up network to be answered.



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Self-Care Strategies



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Small, daily
acts

Larger, more
elaborate
acts

Event-based
self-care

Crisis self-
care

Daily Coping and Self-Care



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Enjoyable

Competent
and
effective

Mindfulness

Gratitude

Self-Care Assessment



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

The following slides are from a self-care assessment. Rate how often and how well you are taking care of yourself.

Look for patterns in your responses.
Is there anything you would like to do more?

Physical Self-Care



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

- Eat regularly
- Exercise
- Preventative medical appointments
- Massages
- Dance
- Swim
- Wear clothes you like
- Take vacations

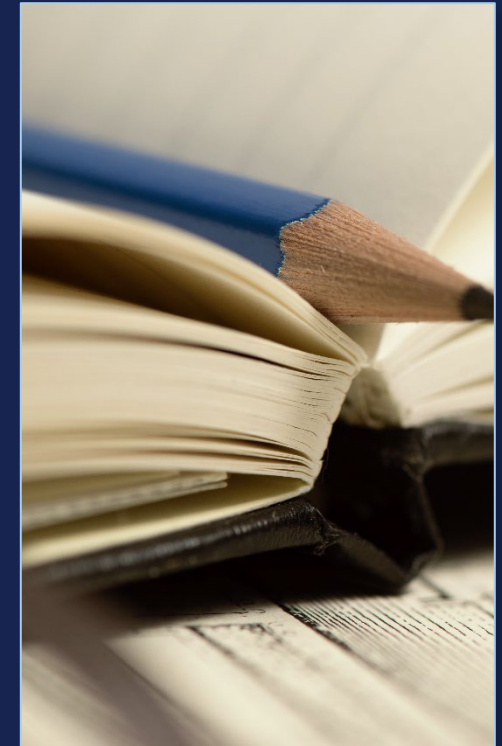


Psychological Self-Care



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

- Make time away from phones and the internet
- Make time for self-reflection
- Write in a journal
- Read literature unrelated to work
- Do something at which you are not an expert
- Engage your intelligence in a new area such as art, sports, or theatre
- Be curious





TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Emotional Self- Care

- Spend time with others whose company you enjoy
- Stay in contact with important people
- Give yourself positive affirmations
- Re-read a favorite book
- Identify activities that comfort you and seek them out
- Find things that make you laugh

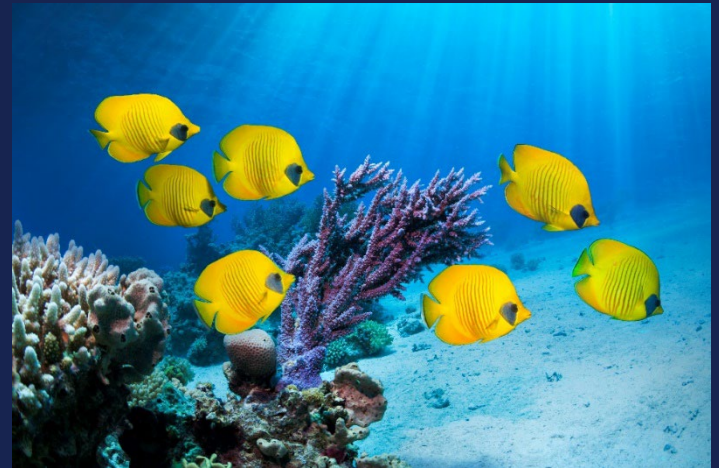




TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Spiritual Self-Care

- Spend time in nature
- Be open to inspiration
- Cherish optimism and hope
- Meditate
- Pray
- Sing
- Have experiences of awe
- Read inspirational literature





TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Workplace Self-Care

- Take a break during the workday
- Take time to chat with a coworker
- Make quiet time to complete tasks
- Identify projects or tasks that are exciting or rewarding
- Get regular supervision or consultation
- Have a peer support group
- Strive for work-life and workday balance



Self-Care Activity



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services



What is one self-care strategy you can use today?



What is one self-care strategy you can use in the next week?



What is one self-care strategy you can use in the next month?



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

QUESTIONS?



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Thank You

Tammy Weppelman, M.S., LPC-S
State Suicide Prevention Coordinator
Tammy.Weppelman@hhs.texas.gov
(512) 944-8569