

RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE DEATHS BY SUICIDE

BASED ON A COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT DISTRIBUTED IN NORTHWEST MICHIGAN

The Suicide Prevention Action Team developed the following recommendations based on the results of the Mental Health Awareness & Suicide Prevention Community Assessment distributed in Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford counties in 2023-2024. While all counties could use additional supports, the recommendations below highlight populations with particular intervention needs.

PRIORITIZE EXPANDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

All counties in Northwest Michigan need easier access to mental health supports: **no more than 1/3 of respondents in any county reported ease in accessing mental support services.** Strategies for enhancing access should particularly concentrate on the four counties with the highest reported access challenges:

- 78% of residents in Missaukee county, 68% of residents in Kalkaska county, 61% of residents in Emmet county, and 60% of residents in Manistee county reported that it was difficult to access mental health and wellbeing supports in their region.

EDUCATE RESIDENTS ABOUT AVAILABLE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

Residents across all counties in Northwest Michigan need to know where to reach out for help in case of a crisis: **only 72% of residents across the region report they know where to reach out for help** if they or someone they know are experiencing a mental health or suicide-related crisis. Strategies for increasing awareness should particularly target the two counties reporting the lowest reported awareness:

- Only 57% of residents in Missaukee county and 61% of residents in Benzie county reported they know where to go to reach out for help if they or someone they know are experiencing a mental health or suicide-related crisis.

EDUCATE YOUNG ADULTS ABOUT HOW TO ACCESS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF A CRISIS

Across all age groups, residents need easier access to mental health supports: **no more than 34% of respondents of any age group reported ease in accessing support services.** However, strategies for enhancing access should particularly target youth, as ease in accessing services increased with age:

- For example, 71% of respondents age 18-24 reported it was difficult to access mental health services. Meanwhile, only 45% of respondents age 55-64 reported difficulty.

Younger respondents were also more likely to report they did not know where to reach out for help if they or someone they know are experiencing a mental health or suicide-related crisis.

- 29% of respondents age 18-24, as compared to 15% of respondents age 55-64, reported they do not know where to reach out for help in case of a crisis.



NORTHWEST MICHIGAN
**Behavioral
Health
Initiative**



This is the work of the **Suicide Prevention Action Team**, one of the 13 Northwest CHIR's Behavioral Health Initiative Action Teams. Action Teams consist of cross sector partners willing and able to take action collectively and supported by the CHIR BBO staff. Learn more about the [CHIR](#) and the [Behavioral Health Initiative](#), and email the team if you want more information about this project at behavioralhealth@northwesternmichiganchir.org.