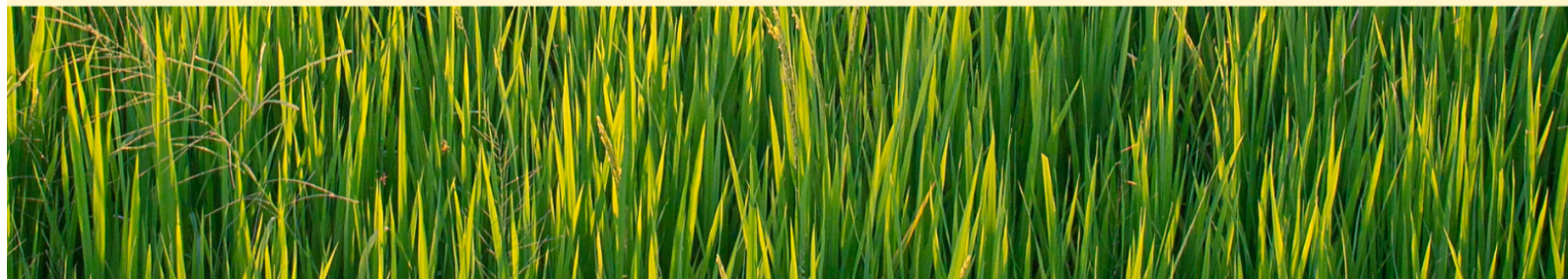




# **Davis County Suicide Postvention Plan**

**2024**





## Partners and Agencies

Davis County Community Suicide Postvention Plan was developed by workgroup members from the following organizations:



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**  
Veterans Health Administration  
VA Salt Lake City Health Care System



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# Davis County Suicide Postvention Plan

2024

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# Davis County Suicide Postvention Plan

2024

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## What Is Postvention?

Postvention aims to support individuals and communities affected by loss, and to prevent and alleviate additional negative outcomes. Postvention includes psychological first aid, crisis intervention, safe and planned engagement with media partners, and other support offered as an organized response after a suicide death. This planned response also helps survivors find appropriate crisis and bereavement support. Postvention efforts are proactive and may help prevent additional suicides ([Andriessen & Krynska, 2012](#)).

## Purpose

The purpose of the Davis County Suicide Postvention Plan is to promote healing in the community and reduce the risk of further suicide attempts and death. The plan is important because it guides the coordination of response efforts, communication, and resources after a death by suicide. This plan is a working document and does not outline activities, policies, or protocols of individual agencies. It does outline general roles and responsibilities for an overall coordinated county-wide effort. In the event of a suicide death, an individual organization's plan will supersede and this plan will support as applicable. Plan updates will be implemented as necessary, and a review will be completed annually.

## Goals

The goals of the Davis County Postvention Plan are to:

- Have a prepared, organized response that can be quickly activated when a suicide death has occurred.
- Prevent further suicide deaths and reduce the likelihood of suicide contagion.

## Definitions

*Definitions adapted from [Suicide Prevention Resource Center \(SPRC\)](#)*

**Contagion:** Suicide risk associated with the knowledge of another person's suicidal behavior, either firsthand or through the media. Suicides that may be at least partially caused by contagion are sometimes called "copycat suicides."

**Postvention:** An organized response following a suicide to help alleviate the suffering and emotional distress of the survivors, and prevent additional trauma and contagion.

**Suicide:** A death resulting from an action taken by a person with the intent or reasonable expectation that the action will result in their death.

**Suicide attempt:** When someone harms themselves with an intent to end their life, but they do not die as a result of their actions.



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**Suicidal behavior:** Suicide, suicide attempts, suicidal ideation, and planning/preparation done with the intent of attempting or dying by suicide.

**Suicide ideation:** A broad term used to describe a range of contemplations, wishes, and preoccupations with death and suicide.

**Safe messaging:** Media or personal communications about suicide or related issues that do not increase the risk of suicidal behavior in vulnerable people, and that may increase help-seeking behavior, promote healing, and support suicide prevention efforts.

## Intended Audience

This plan was written to guide organizations and leaders that have expertise in responding to emergencies; providing mental health services, including suicide prevention; and are best positioned in the community to coordinate a comprehensive response. Community suicide postvention is a coordinated effort that no one agency can do alone. Partners may include: local health departments (LHDs), local mental health authorities (LMHAs), local substance abuse authorities (LSAAs), law enforcement, schools, local governments, worksites, faith and community leaders, as well as individuals in the community. Collectively, these partners will implement this plan.

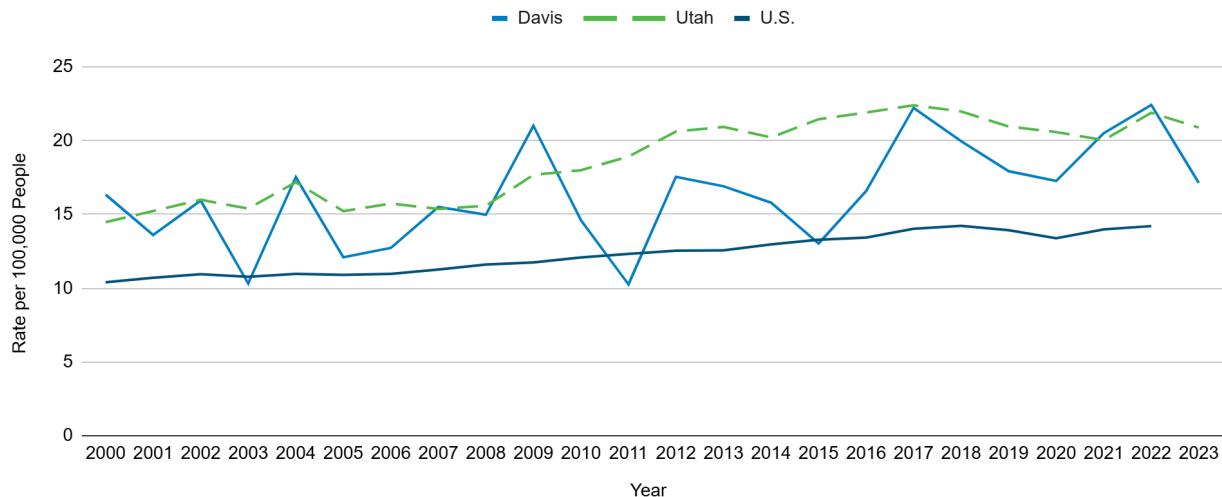
## Background

When someone dies by suicide, the ripple effect on their family, loved ones, and community can be far-reaching. We often assume suicide affects only those closest to the person who died, like family members, so we focus our sympathies and condolences there. People who fall outside the close circle can be overlooked even though they may also be impacted. Broader connections due to advances in social media and communications can expand the impacts beyond those with close proximity or personal relationships to the deceased. A death by suicide can increase the risk of suicidal thoughts and actions among those close to, or even aware of, the person who died. Best practices for how to respond to a suicide may help to reduce that risk. These practices are collectively termed “postvention.” It is important to recognize varying levels of grief and work to promote long-term healing in the community ([Utah Suicide Prevention Coalition Postvention, 2022](#); [Fairfax County, 2020](#)).

This postvention plan was created by the Davis County Suicide Prevention Workgroup. Community partners met quarterly September 2023 to November 2024 to provide input and direction for a coordinated response after a suicide death. Consultations were conducted with additional partners including: first responders, crisis response team members, local death investigators, and the Utah Office of the Medical Examiner. This plan provides guidance and tools for a coordinated Davis County response after a suicide death and can be used for any unexpected death response.

# Statistics

Figure 1: Rate of Suicide Deaths, 2000-2023

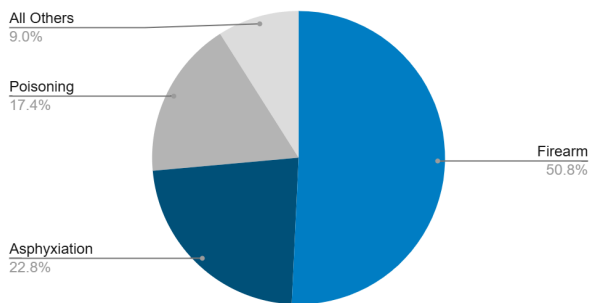


Data: IBIS, 2000-2023 (age-adjusted); WISQARS, 2000-2022 (age-adjusted)

In Utah, 696 people died by suicide in 2023; 62 deaths (9%) occurred in Davis County ([IBIS](#), 2023). Suicide is the 9th leading cause of death in Davis County, the State of Utah, and the U.S. ([CDC WONDER](#), 2020). Utah also had the 9th highest suicide rate among all 50 states. Utah traditionally has higher rates than most other states, but similar rates to neighboring Rocky Mountain states ([AHR](#), 2022).

It is important to note the Davis County suicide rate in Figure 1 appears to be much more inconsistent than the Utah and U.S. rates. This is common for data at the local level due to small counts. County suicide rates are typically reported as an average over several years as a reliable way to observe and report trends. From 2021-2023, the average rate of death by suicide per 100,000 people was 19.98 in Davis County and 20.93 in Utah ([IBIS](#), 2023).

Figure 2: Suicide Deaths by Method, Davis County, 2019-2023



Data: IBIS, 2019-2023

Firearms are the most common method of suicide deaths for all age groups. In recent years, the use of a firearms were involved in 51% of suicide deaths followed by asphyxiation (23%) and poisoning (17%) in Davis County as shown in Figure 2 ([IBIS](#), 2019-2023). In Utah, 84% of all firearm deaths are suicides ([DHHS](#), 2020).

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## Postvention Plan Workgroup and Member Roster

The workgroup is responsible for: writing the plan, keeping it current, training new members, and promoting postvention planning within their own business, agency, or organization. Some members of the postvention workgroup have responsibilities on the Core Response Team, while others may not.

The Postvention workgroup was formed in September 2023 to assess community postvention efforts, identify gaps, and align efforts in a coordinated community suicide postvention plan. The Davis County Health Department (DCHD) serves as the workgroup lead. Refer to the [Workgroup Roster](#) for the 2024 list of workgroup members and contact information.

## Postvention Plan for Supporting Individuals and the Community After a Suicide

Following are steps to a plan that is initiated by notification from the Office of the Medical Examiner (OME) of a suicide or suspected suicide death. Although, portions of this response plan can be activated by a single partner agency or by multiple partner agencies working together to support someone who has lost a loved one unexpectedly.

The OME and DCHD Data Service Agreement is being processed as of January 2025 and will be added as an appendix upon completion.

1. When possible, investigators from the OME attend the scene of death and complete the investigation form. If applicable, the checkbox of suicide or suspected suicide is marked. Survivors are given a postvention connection card.
2. Investigation forms are uploaded. OME is notified of the death.
3. OME sends a secure email to the Davis County Health Department's (DCHD) Administrative Epidemiologist within 24 hours of the death notification (refer to Appendix A).
4. The DCHD Epidemiologist enters the death data into a secure spreadsheet titled "Davis County (DC) Postvention Response Tracking Sheet" and notifies the Core Response Team that information has been updated. Data will be stored on the spreadsheet for one year and will then be deleted.
5. The Core Response Team, workgroup members, first responders, and community members can implement postvention response actions as appropriate for each situation. Some identified responsibilities are as follows:
  - a. All are encouraged to share the following resources during any step of this plan or through other interactions with someone who has lost a loved one unexpectedly.
    - i. The Survivor Connection Card lists a contact number to call for support and connection to resources. It also includes a QR code and link to a webpage of various resources. It can be shared with survivors and those affected by the suicide. It can be distributed through multiple avenues such as on scene by investigators or first responders, through funeral home staff, hospital staff,



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school staff, faith leaders, workgroup members, neighbors, etc. (refer to Appendix B).

- ii. The Davis County Grief and Loss Resources Webpage includes a variety of local services and resources for survivors. It can be given in person or sent in an email to anyone affected by the suicide death. The link is also listed on the Survivor Connection Card. The webpage is found at this link:  
[daviscountyutah.gov/health/grief-and-loss](https://daviscountyutah.gov/health/grief-and-loss) (refer to Appendix B).
  - b. Davis Behavioral Health (DBH) responds to calls initiated from the Survivor Connection Card. If at any point the family of the deceased is open to receiving support and would like to be contacted, their contact information will be shared with DBH who will reach out via phone, email, or text to offer support and connection to needed services.
  - c. Davis School District (DSD) responds to all student deaths per the district's crisis response plan. If the deceased is not a student, DSD will search their data system of guardians, household members, and/or past students to determine a connection to a DSD school and notify the appropriate staff. The district will activate their protocol to support and/or reach out to offer applicable services. Messages of hope, healing, and resources will be shared with affected communities. If youth survivors are not affiliated with DSD, the response coordinators will be notified to look for affiliation to charter or online schools.
  - d. The Core Response Team Public Information Officer (PIO) monitors, communicates, and responds to local media. Messages of hope, healing, and resources can be shared through public communication channels.
  - e. The DCHD Response Coordinators collaborate with the response team, workgroup members, and service providers to connect to appropriate resources and support.
  - f. Workgroup members and other interested partners will share messages of hope, healing, and resources referenced in the Community Messaging Toolkit (Appendix D) with identified areas or groups affected by the death.
  - g. The Suicide Postvention Workgroup members are notified with generic information as applicable. Workgroup members offer resources and support as needed.
6. Core Response Team members coordinate with DCHD Response Coordinators as needed and report response actions on the DC Postvention Response Tracking Sheet.
  7. DCHD Response Coordinators monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan annually and throughout each response.
  8. The Core Response Team participates in a semi-annual self-care check-in to assess members well-being. The structure for this meeting is outlined later in this plan.

9. Workgroup members work to keep resources up-to-date, educate and train partners and the community, create ready media responses, and identify postvention support for specific populations.

This plan is written to support other organization and agency postvention or crisis response plans. In the event of a suicide death, an individual organization's plan supersedes this plan. Support and connection to resources will be provided as agreed upon by the organization.

## Postvention Core Response Team, Contact Information, and Responsibilities

The Core Response Team is responsible for implementing essential actions in the event of a suicide or suspected suicide death in Davis County.

Suicide Death Informant	Michael Staley, Office of the Medical Examiner (OME) <a href="mailto:mstaley@utah.gov">mstaley@utah.gov</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sends secure email notification of a suicide or suspected suicide death in Davis County within 24 hours</li> </ul>	
DCHD Data Receiver	Cody Mayer, Epidemiologist Davis County Health Department <a href="mailto:comayer@co.davis.ut.us">comayer@co.davis.ut.us</a> 801-525-5013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receives secure email from OME with information of a suicide/suspected suicide in Davis County</li> <li>Enters data into a secure spreadsheet titled Davis County (DC) Postvention Response Tracking Sheet</li> <li>Notifies the Core Response Team</li> <li>Deletes spreadsheet data one year after the event</li> </ul>	
Postvention Response Coordinator	Teresa Smith, Suicide Prevention Co-Coordinator Davis County Health Department <a href="mailto:teresaj@co.davis.ut.us">teresaj@co.davis.ut.us</a> 801-525-5149 or Jessica Gehring, Suicide Prevention Co-Coordinator Davis County Health Department <a href="mailto:jgehring@co.davis.ut.us">jgehring@co.davis.ut.us</a> 801-525-1577
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborates response with needed partners</li> <li>Provides resources and support</li> <li>Initiates appropriate community response connections to resources</li> <li>Evaluates plan effectiveness</li> <li>Monitors the DC Postvention Response Tracking Sheet to bridge gaps as applicable</li> <li>Documents actions in the DC Postvention Response Tracking Sheet</li> </ul>	

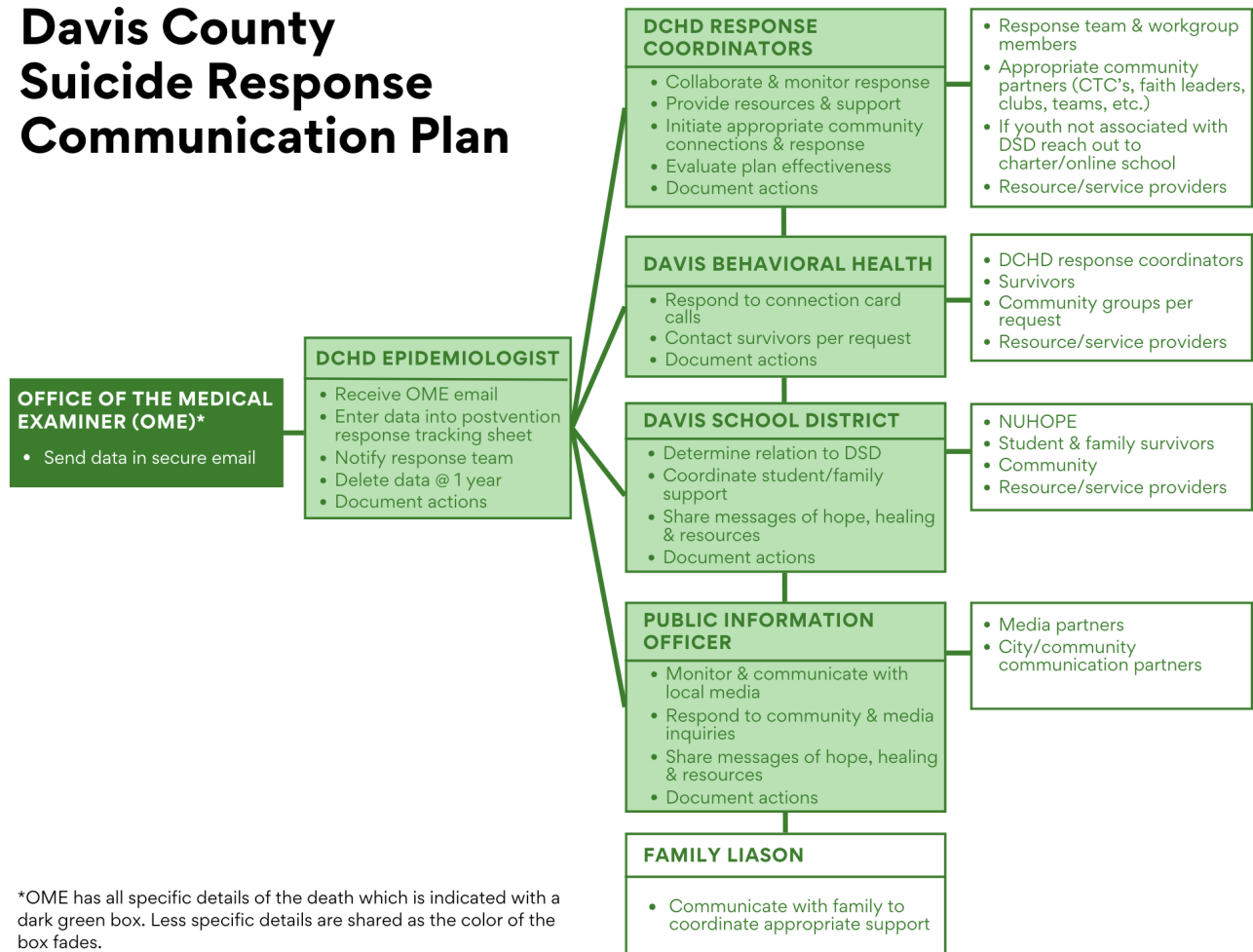
Davis Behavioral Health (DBH)	David McKay, Director of Adult Services <a href="mailto:davidm@dbhutah.org">davidm@dbhutah.org</a> 801-336-1749 Kim McComas, Clinical Director <a href="mailto:kimm@dbhutah.org">kimm@dbhutah.org</a> Todd Soutor, Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (MCOT) Coordinator <a href="mailto:todds@dbhutah.org">todds@dbhutah.org</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaches out to offer support and resources per survivors' request</li> <li>• Responds to calls initiated by the connection card</li> <li>• Documents actions in the DC Postvention Response Tracking Sheet</li> </ul>	
Davis School District (DSD) Crisis Response Team	Casey Layton, Director of Responsive Services <a href="mailto:clayton@dsdmail.net">clayton@dsdmail.net</a> Christi Blankman, Prevention Coordinator <a href="mailto:cblankman@dsdmail.net">cblankman@dsdmail.net</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checks guardian accounts to determine relation to a DSD school</li> <li>• Coordinates student/family support</li> <li>• Shares messages of hope, healing, and resources to affected communities related to schools</li> <li>• Contacts NUHOPE (Becky Austad-Layne or Lindsay Pulver) to adjust presentations in affected schools</li> <li>• Documents actions in the DC Postvention Response Tracking Sheet</li> </ul>	
Public Information Officer (PIO)	Stephanie Dinsmore, PIO Davis County Sheriff's Office <a href="mailto:sdinsmore@co.davis.ut.us">sdinsmore@co.davis.ut.us</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitors and communicates with local media</li> <li>• Responds to community and media inquiries</li> <li>• Shares generic messages of hope, healing, and resources to local media</li> <li>• Documents actions in the DC Postvention Response Tracking Sheet</li> </ul>	
Family Liaison	Designated by the Postvention Response Coordinator when applicable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates with the family to gather information and offer support</li> <li>• Coordinates with Core Response Team as applicable</li> </ul>	



## Postvention Response Communication Plan

The Postvention Response Communication Plan is outlined below. The OME has full details of the death indicated by the dark green box. Partners who will receive data specified in the Data Service Agreement are listed in the lighter green boxes with their roles and responsibilities outlined. Additional partners who may receive undetailed or general information as applicable are listed in the white boxes (refer to Appendix C).

### Davis County Suicide Response Communication Plan



#### Additional notes:

- OME shares details within 24 hours of the death in a secure email with the identified DCHD Epidemiologist per Data Service Agreement protocols.
- DCHD Epidemiologist notifies the Core Postvention Response Team members through email that data has been added to the spreadsheet.
- A family liaison may or may not be identified in all situations and will be involved in connecting survivors to resources as applicable.
- The white boxes on the right show who the agency communicates and/or coordinates with as appropriate for each situation.

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## Core Response Team and Workgroup Communication and Self-Care Guidelines

The Davis County Suicide Postvention Workgroup and Core Response Team will adhere to the following guidelines:

### Core Response Team

- Death details will only be shared with this team
- Regular well-being check ups
- Anyone can remove themselves from the Core Response Team as needed

### Postvention Workgroup

- Suicide death information shared with the workgroup as needed
- Public messaging follows guidelines outlined in the Safe Messaging Guide linked in Appendix D
- All members review the brief [Safe Messaging Video](#)
- Anyone can remove themselves from the workgroup as needed

## Semi-annual Self-Care Check-in Meeting

The intent of this meeting is for responders to self-assess their well-being by:

- **Discussing response efforts:** What worked? What did not work? What changes are needed in future postvention response efforts?
- **Evaluating personal impact:** This is a forum for postvention response team members to voice how the response and involvement in this work has impacted them.
- **Referring for follow-up:** Mental health resources for crisis workers will be shared as a reminder of self-care for postvention response team members.

## Plan Reviews and Updates

This plan will be reviewed and/or updated annually. Refer to the record of revisions below.

### Record of Revisions

Date	Description of Update	Updated By
3/2023	Initial outline organized	DCHD (Teresa Smith, Jessica Gehring, Isa Perry, Ivy Melton-Sales)
2024	Portions of the plan were created and reviewed through workgroup and partner meetings throughout 2024	Workgroup and community partners
	Completed plan review	Workgroup partners
	Reviewed/Updated (Annually)	

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## **Appendix A: Data Service Agreement**

The Data Service Agreement is in process and will be added as soon as it is completed.



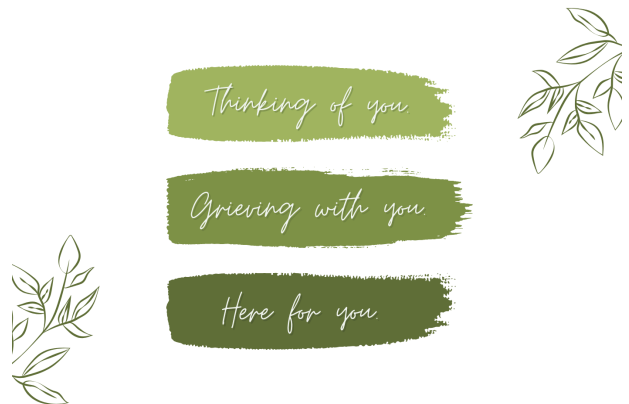
## Appendix B: Survivor Connection Card & Davis County Grief and Loss Resources Webpage

### Survivor Connection Card:

A survivor connection card is one point of contact with survivors and those affected by the suicide. It is distributed through multiple avenues such as on-scene by investigators, through funeral homes, hospitals, schools, faith leaders, workgroup members, etc. The card lists a contact number to call for support and connection to resources. It also includes a QR code and link to a webpage of various resources. The card will be available to share in print as well as a [PDF version](#).

Front/back of card:

Inside Card:



Dear Neighbor,

We are deeply sorry for your loss. May you find moments of strength, peace, and comfort in the coming days. Your community grieves with you.

As help and healing are core values in our community, we want you to know that a variety of grief support and other resources are available for you and your loved ones. If you would like help accessing these resources, you are welcome to call 801-336-1749 to talk to a member of our loss survivor support team. There is also a QR code on the back of this card that links you to a webpage with information on services and supports.

We acknowledge that grieving and healing happen in their own time. Feel free to reach out when or if you would like support.

Sincerely,

The Davis County Loss Survivor Support Team

### Davis County Grief and Loss Resources Webpage:

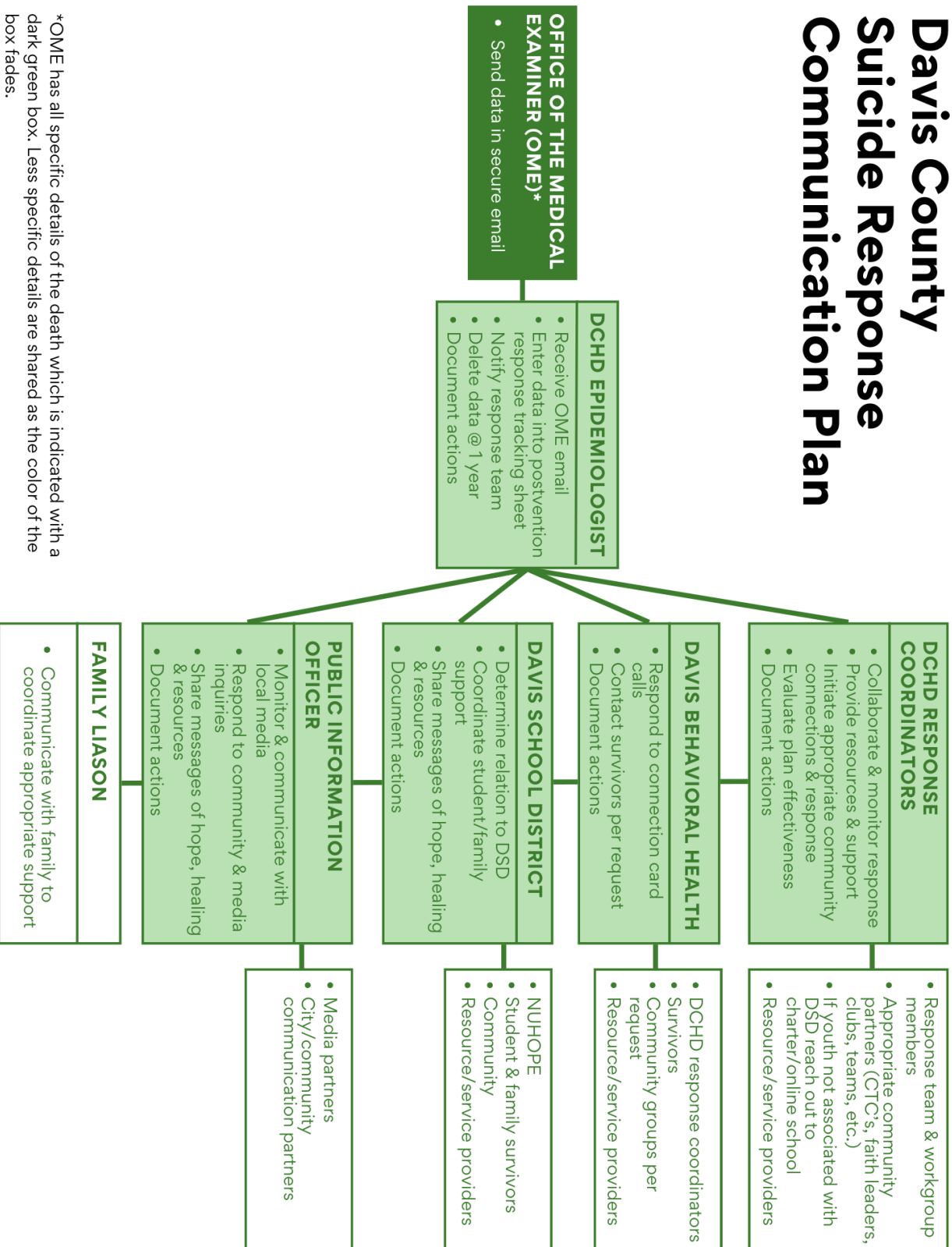
This webpage can be used for all unexpected deaths. The page includes general grief information and resources as well as information specific to suicide loss.

[daviscountyutah.gov/health/grief-and-loss](https://daviscountyutah.gov/health/grief-and-loss)



## Appendix C: Postvention Response Communication Flow Chart

# Davis County Suicide Response Communication Plan



\*OME has all specific details of the death which is indicated with a dark green box. Less specific details are shared as the color of the box fades.

## Appendix D: Community Messaging Toolkit

The links below can be used to guide safe and timely messaging in response to a suicide death in the community.



- [Safe Messaging Guide](#)
- [Tips to Share Your Story Safely](#)
- Templates for communicating with families, impacted individuals and groups, and the media during the response
  - [Sample email/letter templates](#)
  - [Social media guidelines](#)
  - [Sample press release](#)
- [Community Healing Handout](#) that can be printed or shared electronically as appropriate.
- University of Utah's Caring Connections developed [grief literacy videos and a webpage](#) on how to respond to persons experiencing grief and loss in ways that bring comfort and do not bring harm.
- **Live On** is a statewide effort to prevent suicide by promoting education, providing resources, and changing our culture around suicide and mental health. Together we can get through, reach out, lift up, look ahead, and Live On.
  - The [Live On Campaign Toolkit](#) includes messaging for campaigns, such as ads and images.
  - Suicide affects us all. When you know how to help someone struggling with thoughts of suicide, you can save a life. The Suicide Prevention Playbook is a fast-paced, interactive course with simple tips on how to help. **Visit [LiveOnUtah.org](https://LiveOnUtah.org) to get started!**



THIS IS SUICIDE  
PREVENTION.



Learn to connect at [LiveOnUtah.org](https://LiveOnUtah.org)



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## Appendix E: Next Steps

Awareness of this plan is essential to implement a coordinated postvention effort. The Davis County Suicide Postvention workgroup will continue to meet quarterly throughout 2025 to gain added suicide prevention education; to educate the general public; and to train additional community response organizations.

- **Increase awareness among the general public of available support for those who have lost a loved one to suicide throughout 2025.**
  - Social media posts
  - Include Davis County Suicide Postvention Plan on partner webpages
- **Increase Davis County Suicide Postvention plan awareness among community response organizations throughout 2025.**
  - Presentations to organizations such as:
    - first responders
    - funeral homes
    - city leaders
- **Increase the knowledge of the postvention plan workgroup members about suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention skills as well as available resources.**
  - Suggested suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention education trainings
    - [15 Minute Safe Messaging video](#)
    - Safe & Effective Messaging Train the Trainer provided by the Utah Suicide Prevention Coalition
    - Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)
    - Mental Health First Aid
- **Increase the number of partner organizations creating or updating their agency postvention plan.**

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## Appendix F: Suicide Postvention Resources by Group or Sector

This appendix includes resources specific to various groups within the community.



### Children:

- [A Center for Grieving Children](#)
- [National Alliance for Children's Grief](#)
- [The Sharing Place](#)
- [Bradley Center](#)

### Faith Leaders:

- National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention: [Supporting Life Before, During and After a Suicidal Crisis](#)
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center: [After a Suicide Recommendations for Religious Services & Other Public Memorial Observances](#)
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: [Life Help](#) includes resources for death, grief, hope, mental health, suicide, etc.

### First Responders:

- [First Responders First](#)

### General

- Veteran Affairs: [Uniting for Suicide Postvention](#)
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center: [Suicide Postvention as Suicide Prevention](#)
- University of Utah: [Grief Literacy: Compassionate Communities](#)
- [Davis County Grief and Loss Resources](#)
- Davis Links Resource Directory

### LGBTQIA+:

- [LGBTQ+ Davis County Resource Directory 2023](#)
- [The Trevor Project](#)

### Media Guidelines:

- [Best Practices for Reporting on a Suicide](#)

### Military:

- Department of Defense: [Postvention Toolkit for a Military Suicide Loss](#)
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: [Postvention - Mental Health Care Following a Death by Suicide](#)
- Defense Suicide Prevention Office: [Postvention Guide](#)
- Department of the Air Force: [Guidance on Memorials for Suicide Deaths](#)

### Schools:

- [After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools](#)
- Higher Education Mental Health Alliance: [Postvention: A Guide for Response to Suicide on College Campuses](#)
- USBE: [Healing Our Schools After a Loss](#)

### Workplace:

- [A Manager's Guide To Suicide Postvention in the Workplace](#)

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## Appendix G: Postvention Printables

Following are resources that can be easily printed or shared electronically as appropriate.

- [Checklist following an unexpected death](#)
- [Community Healing Handout](#)
- [Tips to share your story safely](#)
- [Safe Messaging Guide](#)
- [Safe Storage Handout](#)
- [Survivor Connection Card email format \(PDF\)](#)
- [Survivor Connection Card printable format \(front/back of card\)](#)
- [Survivor Connection Card printable format \(inside of card\)](#)