

United for Life

Addressing Rural Suicide Prevention

Presented by:

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Handout 1: Learning Objectives & Key Themes

United for Life: Addressing Rural Suicide Prevention

Learning Objectives:

- 1. Describe rural-specific suicide risk factors.
- 2. Interpret suicide-related data for Texas and the ACCESS region.
- 3. Identify effective community prevention strategies.
- 4. Explain the SPARK model and its sub-initiatives.
- 5. Recognize the role of faith groups, schools, and law enforcement.
- 6. Apply trainings like AS+K, CALM, and CSSR-S.
- 7. Embrace community empowerment and collaboration as core solutions.

Core Presentation Themes:

- - Suicide is preventable.
- - Hopelessness + Helplessness (H+H) are risk triggers.
- - Data guides prevention—but stories build empathy.
- - Rural solutions must be community-driven.
- - Empowerment, connection, and education are key.

Handout 2: The SPARK Model Overview

The SPARK Model: Building Rural Resilience

Sub-Initiative	Focus	Key Strategies
CARE Community Awareness & Resilience Education	Awareness, education, and stigma reduction	School and community workshops, story-based engagement
SHIELD Mental Health Protection	First responder & high-risk population support	Peer support, crisis readiness, and law enforcement training
IGNITE Empowerment & Activation	Mobilizing communities for prevention	Coalitions, advocacy, recovery allies, and events
RESUS Restorative Emotional Support for Urgent Settings	Postvention & crisis aftermath response	ER/facility staff training, grief support, coordination

Handout 3: Rural Suicide Prevention – Barriers & Solutions

Common Barriers in Rural Areas:

- - Transportation and geographic isolation
- - Shortage of mental health providers
- - Distrust in health systems
- - Stigma in tight-knit communities
- - Substance use and incarceration overlap

Community-Based Solutions:

- - Normalize help-seeking: Storytelling, testimonials, peer-led conversations
- - Bring training to the community: AS+K, CALM, CSSR-S
- - Empower faith and school leaders to act as connectors
- - Partner with law enforcement for co-response and post-crisis follow-up
- - Use local coalitions to sustain momentum and fill service gaps

Handout 4: Crisis Response Tools Quick Guide


Community First Aid Tools for Mental Health

Tool/Training	Purpose	Who Should Use It
AS+K (Ask, Save, Know)	Identify and intervene in a suicide crisis	Community leaders, faith groups, school staff
CALM (Counseling on Access to Lethal Means)	Reduce access to lethal methods	Providers, peer specialists, law enforcement
CSSR-S (Collaborative Safety & Suicide Risk Reduction)	Structured suicide risk planning	Clinicians, crisis responders, coordinators
Safety Planning	Step-by-step guide for managing suicidal thoughts	Anyone working with at-risk individuals

Handout 5: 'Where Do You See Hope Building?'

 Reflection & Discussion Questions:

1. 1. Who in your community is already doing good work in mental health or suicide prevention?
2. 2. What barriers keep people from talking about suicide where you live?
3. 3. What local action can you take to reduce stigma or support someone at risk?
4. 4. How could your school, church, or agency get involved with SPARK?
5. 5. What story of resilience do you carry that others may need to hear?

 Use the space below to jot down your thoughts, ideas, or action steps: