



2023

NORTH SHORE HEALTH DEPARTMENT HEALTHY HIGHLIGHTS

Serving the communities of Bayside, Brown Deer, Fox Point, Glendale, River Hills, Shorewood and Whitefish Bay

September 6, 2023: Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Suicide is a major public health concern and a leading cause of death in the U.S.

In our 2022 North Shore Community Health Assessment (CHA) survey, **70.5%** of survey respondents selected mental health and mental conditions as a top health concern, making it the number one concern amongst respondents ([NS CHA](#)). Feedback from residents and community leaders emphasized the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health, particularly on social isolation and loneliness ([NS CHA](#)).

Many people experience fluctuations in their mental health, but starting conversations about emotional distress can be intimidating. Here are some tips to normalize talking about mental health and some ways to respond when others confide in you.

Tips for starting conversations about mental health with people you're worried about:

- 1) Learn the warning signs of mental health distress. Warning signs include mood swings, withdrawing or feeling isolated, increased substance use, sleeping too little or too much, behaving recklessly, or talking about being trapped or feeling like a burden.
- 2) Consider starting with a text. If talking about mental health face to face feels too intense, try asking to check in via text.
- 3) Be honest about how you're feeling. Say that you're worried and emphasize that you want to talk because you are about the person. It might help to start the conversation by talking about the state of your own mental health and then give the person space to talk about how they're doing.

Tips for supporting people in distress:

- 1) Listen and acknowledge their feelings. If someone discloses that they've been contemplating self-harm or suicide, try not to respond with phrases that are judgmental or that minimize their problems, like "it's not that bad" or "it'll be okay". Instead, ask open-ended questions, like "What have you been going through?" or "How can I support you?"
- 2) Express concern. Give the person permission to tell you about their problems, and take what they say seriously.
- 3) Connect them with appropriate resources. National crisis lines like the Suicide Crisis Line (988) or identity-specific lines like the LGBTQ TrevorLifeline (866-488-7386) might be helpful depending on the situation.

Everyone can learn how to save a life and prevent suicide. If you or someone you know needs mental health support, you can find resources on our website: www.nshealthdept.org/MentalHealth

Check out our [2022-2026 North Shore CHA](#) for more local mental health data.

Join the **Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force** at their meeting on Tuesday, September 12 from 3-5pm (virtual and in-person option). Speakers will address suicide prevention, recovery resources, and an update on Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Services Division. [Learn more and register](#)



Take this free, virtual **Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)** training offered by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Southeast Wisconsin. [Register here.](#)

MEDICATION DEACTIVATION AND DISPOSAL

Keep safe with medication and prescription drug deactivation and disposal items.

To keep our community safe, it's important to dispose of expired or unused medications properly. Improper disposal can harm the environment, including plants, animals, humans, and the water supply. Mixing or combining medicines can create harmful substances. These harmful substances can lead to sickness or hurt the environment. It can also get into drinking water, which into drinking water can create harmful substances when combined together, but if a treatment plant cannot remove chemicals from drinking water, bacteria can be harder to treat and cause sickness.

Ways to safely deactivate and dispose include:

- **Community Drug Take Back Days:** Bring your unused or expired medicines to these special events. Check for dates and locations near you.
- **Drop-off Locations:** Visit your local police department or other collection sites to safely drop off medications.
- **To find a disposal event or site:** Call 1-800-882-9539, visit the [DEA Diversion Control Division Registration Call Center Website](#) or search "drug disposal near me" or "medication disposal near me" on [Google Maps](#)
- **Use Safe Disposal Products:** Safe disposal products deactivate chemicals in medications and drugs, including over-the-counter ones. **Disposal products are available for FREE at both offices (Brown Deer office: 4800 W Green Brook Dr., Shorewood office: 2010 E Shorewood Blvd.).**



NORTH SHORE
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

1. Mental Health resources on our website: www.nshealthdept.org/MentalHealth
2. North Shore CHA: www.nshealthdept.org/CHA
3. Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force meeting: www.milwaukeeemhtf.org/2023/09/01/september-12-2023-milwaukee-mental-health-task-force-meeting/
4. NAMI QPR Training: namisoutheastwi.org/community-education/qpr/
5. [Deterra Drug Disposal System](#)
6. [DisposeRx, Inc. - Medication Disposal](#)
7. [Drug Take Back Locations](#)

DRUG AND MEDICATION DISPOSAL PRODUCTS

KEEP YOUR HOME SAFE WITH

DETERRA DRUG DEACTIVATION BAGS

DISPOSERX PACKETS



Unused prescription drugs pose a risk of misuse and accidental poisoning, but improper disposal can harm the environment and contaminate the water supply. Once medication is no longer needed or expired, dispose of unused pills, capsules, or liquid using the bags or packets.