

Faith, Hope, & Life

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September is the month when those of us who work in suicide prevention make a special effort to reach out and remind the public of the toll that suicide takes on our families, communities, nation, and world. This year, the second weekend in September (September 8-10) has been designated a [National Day of Prayer for Faith, Hope, & Life](#) [1]. This observance is an initiative of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention [Faith Communities Task Force](#) [2]. It is part of their [Faith.Hope.Life Campaign](#) [3], which asks faith communities in the United States, regardless of creed, to focus one Sabbath each year on preventing suicide.

We hope that leaders and members of all faith communities—and other people of good will, regardless of their beliefs—can find a time to offer a prayer, meditation, or a few minutes of mindfulness or reflection to those who struggle with thoughts of suicide or have lost someone to suicide. We are encouraging leaders and members of faith communities to reach out to those who need support, connection, and faith to help them overcome suicidal thoughts and the problems that contribute to these thoughts.

Most faith communities are already helping to prevent suicide. Faith communities, like all communities, play a role in preventing suicide through the social support and connections they provide to their members. People in crisis or emotional pain often turn to their faith leaders when they are struggling with problems that they do not feel comfortable bringing to family, friends, or mental health professionals. Many faith communities work to assist people struggling with physical illness or financial stress, both of which contribute to suicide risk. Faith communities often work to help and heal victims of community violence, domestic abuse, and homelessness. And, of course, faith communities sustain the faith of their members, providing purpose and a sense of meaning, both of which can protect against suicide risk.

I would like to invite faith communities and their leaders to join us on the National Day of Prayer for Faith, Hope, & Life to acknowledge the role that they play in preventing suicide and to make a special effort to reach out to those who are struggling. The National Day of Prayer for Faith, Hope, & Life [website](#) [1] features resources, including sample prayers, [a short video](#) [4], and communication aids. Faith leaders and others can also [sign a pledge](#) [5] to



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show their commitment to the National Day of Prayer, and promote the hashtag #prayFHL on social media.

We would like all people of faith—whatever their beliefs—to take a moment during the weekend of September 8-10 to direct their prayers, intentions, mindfulness, and concern toward those struggling with suicide. We should not underestimate the importance of individual responses to people in crisis. We should not underestimate the significance of reaching out to a person in pain. We should think about how we can translate our compassion and faith into actions that can save lives. While suicide is complex, it's important for faith communities to understand that [simple actions can help someone](#) [6] feel less alone, afraid, and hopeless.

Please join us. You can make a difference. A simple gesture of love, prayer, compassion, and outreach can sometimes make a world of difference for someone who is struggling. We encourage you to be there for those who are struggling during the weekend of September 8, National Suicide Prevention Week (9/11-9/17), National Suicide Prevention Month (September), and throughout the year.

For more information, read SPRC's [The Role of Faith Community Leaders in Preventing Suicide](#) [7] to understand how faith leaders can recognize and respond to people who may be at risk of suicide.

Settings: Faith Communities

Links within this resource

[1] <http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/faithhopelife>

[2] <http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/faith-communities-task-force>

[3] http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/faithhopelife_V2

[4] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMctsuR4Qeg&feature=youtu.be>

[5] <http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/national-day-prayer-pledge>

[6] <http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/nspw>

[7] <http://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/role-faith-community-leaders-preventing-suicide-sprc-customized-information>

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