

## Blueprint for Youth Suicide Prevention: Letters to the Editor

### How to Send a Letter to an Editor

- Published letters are usually 150 - 250 words
- Call your local newspaper or look on their website for length limit and submission information; there often is a special email address specifically for submissions (eg, letters@newspaper.com)
- The draft below is about 150 words. You can make it your own by filling in personal information about why you are advocating for suicide prevention; be sure to stay within the length limit
- Be selective. Because letters are so short, choose 1 or 2 key messages. Including a data point can strengthen your position.
- Put the letter in the text of the email; do not send it as an attachment, or it will not be accepted
- Include your name, city or town, and daytime phone number (preferably cell phone) so a paper can verify information
- A newspaper may propose edits or cuts to shorten it; that is ok, as long as the message meaning is not altered

### Letter to the Editor Template

Dear Editor,

#### «Customize your opener to reflect the priorities of your community»

[Open by explaining why the issue is important, eg; “After years of living with the COVID-19 pandemic, young people in our community are struggling with their mental health,” or “The current generation of youth in Smith County are facing unprecedented stressors impacting their day to day lives”]. Research shows that building resiliency and life skills, promoting connectedness, and encouraging help-seeking behaviors in adolescents and young adults supports overall well-being, helps them thrive, and protects their mental health.

Each of us can help support our young people by reaching out to those around us and checking in, asking “how are you, really?” and being available for a conversation by listening and showing support.

#### «Personalize your message with your story and action»

One action I’m taking this month is to [provide an example action here, eg: “speak to my local school board about steps they can take in preventing suicide,” or “implement a new training program at my clinical practice to ensure all staff know how to ask the right questions about suicide risk,”] in partnership with my local [doctor’s office, school or community or faith center].

#### «Close with a strong call to action for people in your community»

Together, we can help protect our children and ensure we are all doing our part to prioritize and practice good mental health just as we approach our physical health.

Sincerely,

[NAME]