

DOUGLAS COUNTY



NEWS RELEASE

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Douglas County Suicide Prevention Coalition hopes to raise awareness and provide support with Find Your Anchor project

(Lawrence, KS) – In conjunction with National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, the Douglas County Suicide Prevention Coalition has launched the Find Your Anchor project in the community. The premise behind Find Your Anchor, a grassroots movement created by Chicago-based designer Ali Borowsky, is that everyone needs an anchor. In this case, an anchor is a dependable, stable, secure base that you can hold on to, one that keeps you firmly planted, no matter what winds or storms may come.

Find Your Anchor sets out to create a community of these emotional supports with the help of small blue boxes. The physical form of Find Your Anchor is a small blue box packed with various materials designed to inspire, soothe and offer support. These include cards, posters, helpline resources, patches, and other items that serve as supportive reminders. The boxes are meant to be used by anyone who is struggling, especially those who have been impacted by suicide or someone who is at risk for suicide. The items in the box can also form critical elements of someone's safety plan.

The boxes are intended to be organic in the sense that each person can add to the box their own inspiration and anchors before passing it along. Ten boxes have been distributed in Douglas County. These places include: Lawrence Public Library, Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center, Headquarters Counseling Center, Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, Lawrence Memorial Hospital and Willow Domestic Violence Center.

"Find Your Anchor is such an incredible way to spread hope and kindness," said Chris Maxwell, DCSPC member and Communications Coordinator for the American Association of Suicidology. "We're extremely happy to deploy these little blue boxes of support across Douglas County and hope they find their way to folks who need them the most."

Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States. Suicide rates increased in nearly every state between 1999 and 2016, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018). In Kansas, the rates increased 58 percent during that same time period. Suicide is rarely caused by any single factor. In fact, many people who die by suicide are not known to have a

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diagnosed mental health condition at the time of death. Other problems often contribute to suicide, such as those related to relationships, substance use, physical health, and job, money, legal, or housing stress.

The warning signs that someone might be suicidal include:

- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide
- Talking about hopelessness
- Showing rage, anger or seeking revenge
- Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities such as drinking and driving
- Withdrawing from friends, family or society

If you need help for yourself or someone else, please contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 (TALK). For more information, visit suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

About the Douglas County Suicide Prevention Coalition

The Coalition was formed in 2014. Its efforts include educating the public about suicide and suicide prevention and offering resources and training to residents. The goal is to reduce the number of suicide deaths and attempts in Douglas County.

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