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#ZeroReasonsWhy Campaign embraced by Wichita-area schools

COMCARE of Sedgwick County – the area’s Community Mental Health Center – is administering the teen suicide prevention campaign across 8 school districts in the region

WICHITA, Kan. (October 28, 2021) – The **#ZeroReasonsWhy** campaign to prevent teen suicide has expanded to include Sedgwick County and surrounding region, launched this year because of the efforts of [COMCARE](#) of Sedgwick County, the region’s Community Mental Health Center. COMCARE is administering the campaign in partnership with [Overflow](#) and in collaborative partnership with eight school districts in and around Sedgwick County, thanks to the leadership of the school district superintendents.

“It is an honor for the Wichita Public Schools to be part of the coalition supporting #ZeroReasonsWhy coming to our community,” said Wichita Public Schools (USD 259) Superintendent Dr. Alicia Thompson. “Our district has been a strong proponent of programs that support student social-emotional well-being and suicide prevention. This is an important investment Sedgwick County is making to continue enhancing mental health services for our young people, and I hope county-wide participation will remove the stigma and build even greater community support for these lifesaving services.”

Emerging research suggests that the global prevalence of child and adolescent mental illness has increased considerably during COVID-19, including increased rates of clinically elevated anxiety and depression symptoms. Nationwide, suicide is the second leading cause of death among people between the ages of 10 and 34, and for every one suicide, there are an estimated 25 attempts.

The teen-led [storytelling and community mobilization campaign](#) is focused on teen suicide prevention and mental health. It seeks to engage peer-to-peer conversations among key audiences of teens, parents, educators, and health professionals to reduce the stigma of mental health, build community support, and commit to education. The #ZeroReasonsWhy campaign originated in 2018 by the six school district superintendents in Johnson County, Kansas, which engaged Overflow to help concept and run the campaign. Campaign activities include teen-led initiatives, rallies, and meet-ups; cross-district programs; social media efforts; response teams; parent-to-parent support; mental health expert collaboration; as well as posters, banners, yard-signs, and more. When COMCARE’s Executive Director Joan Tammany first learned about the campaign, she and her team reached out to stakeholders in Sedgwick County and beyond to seek mutual interest and support from community stakeholders to bring it to the Wichita area.

“When we heard about the #ZeroReasonsWhy campaign, we realized it would serve COMCARE’s mission to provide a safety net for individuals in need of mental health services,” Tammany said. “We are working together to create a community continuum of care and prevention, as well as encourage and increase help-seeking behaviors. We need to make sure all our youth can reach their potential.”

Tammany said she and her staff appreciate how the campaign empowers and encourages people to take action toward change and advocate for teen mental wellness. COMCARE and Overflow will facilitate monthly meetings of a Teen Council, quarterly community mental health convenings, as well as manage [social media channels](#) and create story-focused multimedia content. Teens and adults in the region who wish to engage in the #ZeroReasonsWhy campaign can [sign up here](#).

(more)

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“There is so much to be gained when our region’s schools work side-by-side with our community mental health center,” said Maize Superintendent (USD 266) Dr. Chad Higgins. “From increasing awareness of and access to community resources, to sharing information and generating support, to maximizing cooperation in every corner of our community, we are expanding the conversation to normalize mental health for everyone, as well as putting our teens at the forefront of these efforts. This local campaign will engage the community in new ways, helping to de-stigmatize the issue and support area youth. There are zero reasons why we can’t do more to make sure our teens have the future we all want for them.”

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