

The Suicide Prevention Playbook

Educator Discussion Guide

Live
On.





Table of contents

Preface	04
Lesson 1	12
Lesson 2	16
Lesson 3	20
Lesson 4	24
Lesson 5	28
Lesson 6	32
Lesson 7	36
Lesson 8	40
Lesson 9	44
Lesson 10	48

Welcome!

The goal of this guide is to save lives. To help parents, youth, and educators feel prepared to deal with suicidal ideation in a healthy way.

This guide will give you the tools and talking points to educate youth about preventing suicide. The guide should be used with the Live On Suicide Prevention Playbook.





Building suicide prevention skills at a young age is vital.

This guide can help you do so in an age-appropriate way, so that youth feel supported and safe to share their thoughts and feelings.



The Suicide Prevention Playbook is a free training developed by mental health experts in Utah.

It's made up of 10 lessons that take 5–7 minutes each. So, anyone can become a Live On ambassador and have the skills to make their community safer in less than an hour.



Each lesson in this guide is paired with a lesson in the Playbook.

It provides additional context, suggested responses, and more resources, including a list of discussion questions and writing prompts.



Find the training on Instagram @ LiveOnUtah or online at LiveOnUtah.org.

The Live On Playbook and this discussion guide are useful in meeting the Health Standards HI.MEH.1, HI.MEH.3, HII.MEH.3, HII.MEH.4, HII.MEH.5, and HII.MEH.6.

Let's get started

The one-page assignment in this guide is intended to be used in conjunction with group discussions.

These discussions provide opportunities for you to share available resources and insight about the importance of mental health and suicide prevention efforts.



If you collect responses, make sure you review them immediately.

Some students may display warning signs of suicide or use these assignments to express the need for help.



Take all warning signs seriously.

If you notice any warning signs, talk to the school's mental health professional as soon as possible or escort the student to their office. They will notify the parents of the situation.



Let parents and students know that participation in the playbook and discussion guide is optional—especially if it brings up painful emotions.

Consider preparing an alternate assignment for those who opt out.

Educators should give parents a copy of this discussion guide so that they can go through and discuss the content together with their kids.

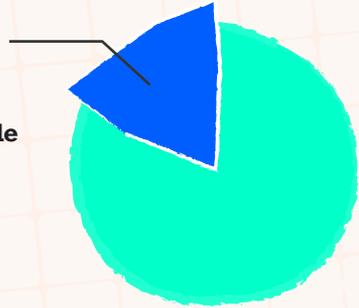
Remind parents and students of all available resources, including: SafeUT App, parents, school counselors.

Youth & mental health

Mental health and how teens deal with it is a growing concern in Utah.

17.6%

of students in 6th through 12th grade seriously considered attempting suicide in the last year. (SHARP survey, 2021).



Youth are resilient and can overcome mental health struggles with the right support, treatment, and resources. Most never act on their thoughts. They go on to live healthy, meaningful lives.



Signs of Suicide or Typical Adolescence?

It's common for teens to have mood swings, worry about what their peers think, and experience changes in sleeping and eating habits. All of which can be warning signs of suicide OR typical adolescent behavior. So, how can someone tell the difference?

Watch how potential warning signs impact their ability to function:



**In social
interaction**



At school



**Doing their favorite
activities**

Notice how long the signs last—and how much distress they seem to be in.

Keep an open dialogue with teens, so they feel supported and comfortable talking to you about tough or awkward conversations.

Course learning objectives

- 1** To empower Utah teens with the skills and confidence to help anyone having thoughts of suicide.
- 2** To normalize talking about mental health with friends and family.
- 3** To understand that suicide is preventable.



Understanding suicide

Notes for educators:

We've included a few talking points and suggestions to help guide the discussion. Give students a few minutes to respond to the following questions.

Talking points

You can try to help someone who is thinking about suicide, and still know you have no control of the outcome.

Suicide is complex, and no single event or person is responsible for a suicide.

Although we have the power to help, it doesn't mean we are responsible for losing someone to suicide—in the same way that losing someone to a heart attack or cancer isn't your fault.

Let's discuss

- How does it make you feel that you can help prevent suicide?
- Now that you know anyone can experience thoughts of suicide, what are your thoughts?
- Before you saw this lesson, did you have any preconceived notions about people who experience thoughts of suicide? What were they?
- How might you recognize warning signs in people close to you?
- How does it make you feel knowing that most people who have thoughts of suicide go on to lead healthy, fulfilling lives?



Space for notes here:





Reaching out

Notes for educators:

We've included a few talking points and suggestions to help guide the discussion. Give students a few minutes to respond to the following questions.

Talking points

A friend, who is considering suicide, might not know how or when to open up. They might be embarrassed or worried about bringing others down. They may feel like nobody can help, or be concerned about how you might react.

You can help a friend confide in you by reaching out privately, asking questions, and following up later.

Try sharing feelings you had during a difficult time. Let them know that having a hard time is understandable. Remind them that they're not alone.

Try to get a feel for how intense their feelings are, how long the feelings last, and how it impacts their ability to do schoolwork or participate in things they usually enjoy.

Thoughts about self-harm are a sign to seek professional help.

You, friends, and family may not have the experience or skills needed to help someone heal from thoughts of suicide. In fact, if you are worried about someone it might be a good idea for both you and them to seek professional support.



Let's discuss



- What should you do if a friend makes a joke about killing themselves or wanting to die?
- If someone is thinking about suicide, what are things they might say?
- If someone is thinking about suicide, what are some things they might do?
- What mood changes might you notice in someone who is thinking about suicide?
- What are some life changes that might trigger thoughts of suicide?

Space for notes here:





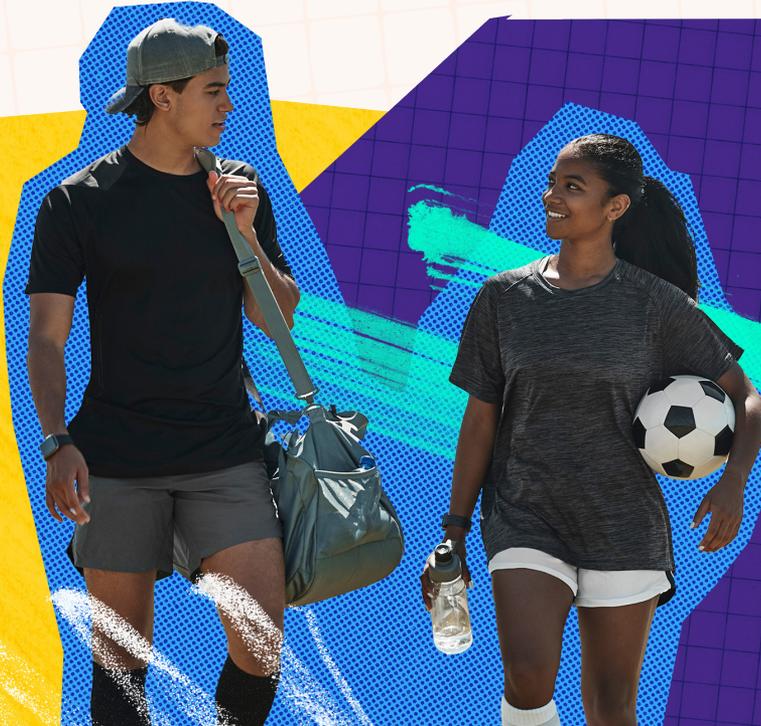
Safe messaging

Notes for educators:

We've included a few talking points and suggestions to help guide the discussion. Give students a few minutes to respond to the following questions.

Talking points

Knowing the best ways to talk about suicide and mental health can help our community prevent suicide.



Let's discuss



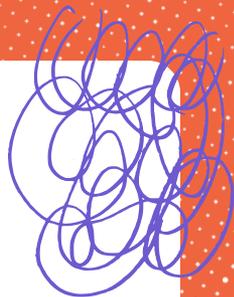
- What have you heard others say about mental health struggles, mental health treatment, or suicide?
- How might those ideas help or hurt people who are thinking of suicide?
- What could you say to encourage someone to seek help?

Activity



Try having each class member write examples of ways to encourage someone to talk about their feelings or seek help. Discuss what the class wrote.

Space for notes here:





Warning signs

Notes for educators:

We've included a few talking points and suggestions to help guide the discussion. Give students a few minutes to respond to the following questions.

Talking points

Take jokes about suicide seriously. The person sharing the joke might be struggling with thoughts of suicide. Ask them privately what they meant or if they are really thinking about suicide.

Talk to your parents or a trusted adult right away if a classmate talks about harming themselves. They can follow up and make sure your classmate is okay.

Seeing warning signs in someone might be like putting a puzzle together. One warning sign may not present a clear picture that they're at risk of suicide, but piecing together multiple warning signs can help you see that they need help.



Let's discuss



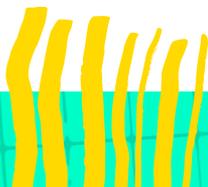
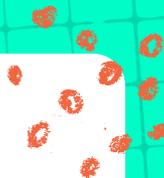
- What should you do if a friend makes a joke about killing themselves or wanting to die?
- What are some things a person might say if they're thinking about suicide?
- What are some things a person might do if they're thinking about suicide?
- What mood changes might you notice in someone who is thinking about suicide?
- What are some life changes that might trigger thoughts of suicide?

Side note



Be as specific as possible. For example: How would a teen say they feel like a burden to others? How might it sound if a teenager reached out to say goodbye?

Space for notes here:





Lesson 5

Create a safety plan

Notes for educators:

We've included a few talking points and suggestions to help guide the discussion. Give students a few minutes to respond to the following questions.

Talking points

Remember, you can chat with a licensed counselor anytime using the SafeUT app or by texting 988. Put these in your phone now so you're ready in case you ever need them.

If you're worried about a friend or struggling with your own mental health, you can go to the main office and ask to speak to the school counselor.



Let's discuss



- What makes you happy or makes your life worth living?
- Who do you feel connected to in your life? It can even be a pet!
- Do you have a goal or an activity that gives you a sense of purpose? What is it?
- What activities help you feel better when you're feeling down?
- What adults and/or professionals can you talk to when you are struggling?

Activity



Ask each student to create their own safety plan on a notecard or their cell phone. Have them list:

- Situations where they might feel overwhelmed or upset,
- Coping strategies they can do on their own.
- Friends or social settings that can be a positive distraction
- Adults and resources they can turn to for help.
- A description of what make them happy or gives them purpose.

Space for notes here:





Ask about suicide



Notes for educators:

We've included a few talking points and suggestions to help guide the discussion. Give students a few minutes to respond to the following questions.

Talking points

Any information that a friend shares about self-harm is too important and too dangerous to be kept a secret. **Connect them to a trusted adult right away.**

If a friend tells you to keep it a secret, you might say something like, "I care about you too much to keep this a secret. We need to tell an adult." or "I don't want you to get hurt. Let's tell someone together. Would you rather we tell your parents or the school counselor?"



Let's discuss



- What would you do if a friend told you they were thinking about suicide and told you not to tell anyone?
- How comfortable would you feel asking someone directly if they were having thoughts of suicide? Would you prefer to tell an adult what you've noticed and have them take the lead?
- Why might it be helpful to keep trusted adults in mind? Why is it important to share anything you hear about thoughts of suicide with them?
- Which adults would you trust with this? Parents, school counselors, coaches, religious leaders?

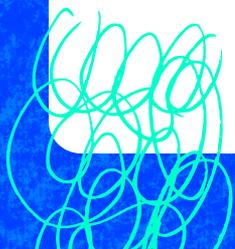
Activity



Help your students make a list of adults they trust and who they feel comfortable talking to.

Give your students a chance to practice how they might talk to someone they are worried about. Discuss when and where they could bring up this conversation with someone they are worried is thinking about suicide.

Space for notes here:



Where to find help

Notes for educators:

We've included a few talking points and suggestions to help guide the discussion. Give students a few minutes to respond to the following questions.

Talking points

Asking why they don't want to get help and listening to their concerns can help you find ways to assist them.

You may want to try being assertive by saying something like, "I care about you, so I want to include someone who can help us figure out what to do next."

Students can use the SafeUT app to report they are worried about someone. SafeUT is free, anonymous, and confidential. Reporting your concerns will help connect someone thinking of suicide with an adult who can help.

You may need to talk to more than one counselor. Each counselor has different life experiences, personalities, and skill sets. Keep talking and trying!

Try different coping strategies to deal the stress and challenges in your life in a healthy way. The more healthy coping strategies you try, the more likely it is that you'll start to feel better.

Let's discuss

- What would you say to a friend who told you they were thinking about suicide, but didn't want to get help?
- What if you or a friend has a bad experience reaching out for help?
- What if talking to a counselor previously didn't seem helpful or felt awkward?
- Why might it be worth trying again or looking for a different counselor?
- What are some healthy coping strategies you've heard of or tried?

Activity

Have each student download the SafeUT app and create an account. Emphasize that the resource is easily available when they need it.



Space for notes here:





Helping others heal

Notes for educators:

We've included a few talking points and suggestions to help guide the discussion. Give students a few minutes to respond to the following questions.

Talking points

If a friend is constantly texting you about their mental health, you might say something like:

- I want to be a good friend, but this is beyond my ability to help.
- I'm really worried about you. Will you please text SafeUT or 988?
- An adult might know how to help you better than I can, and I really want you to be okay. Can we talk to someone together?
- I care so much about you, but I can't keep texting you in the middle of the night. Will you text 988 instead?

When someone attempts or dies by suicide it's common to think about what we might have done differently. Here are some things you might say to someone who tried to help someone who died by suicide:

- You did the best you could—and I love you for doing what you did to help.
- You didn't know they would do this. It wasn't your fault.
- They knew you cared about them. It's normal to wonder what we could have done differently.
- I'm sorry you are feeling this pain. Have you talked to anyone else about how you feel?

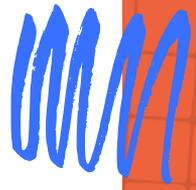


Let's discuss

- What could you say to a friend who texts you at all hours of the night about their pain and thoughts of suicide? Side note: For this example, imagine their parents already know and they have recently started therapy.
- How might you comfort a friend who lost someone to suicide even after trying help them?

Space for notes here:





Let's change the culture

Notes for educators:

We've included a few talking points and suggestions to help guide the discussion. Give students a few minutes to respond to the following questions.

Talking points

If we all try harder to help each other and talk when we're struggling:

More people might be more willing to seek and ask for help.

People experiencing mental health challenges might feel less isolated or embarrassed.

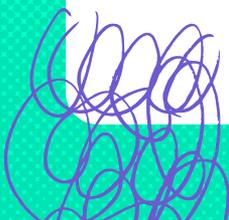
We might all feel more connected to each other and our community.

Let's discuss

- What might happen if everyone felt comfortable talking about mental health and suicide?
- How might our world be different if everyone was open about their feelings?
- How might our community change if seeking help was seen as a sign of strength?



Space for notes here:



Lesson 10

Putting it all together

Notes for educators:

We've included a few talking points and suggestions to help guide the discussion. Give students a few minutes to respond to the following questions.

Talking points

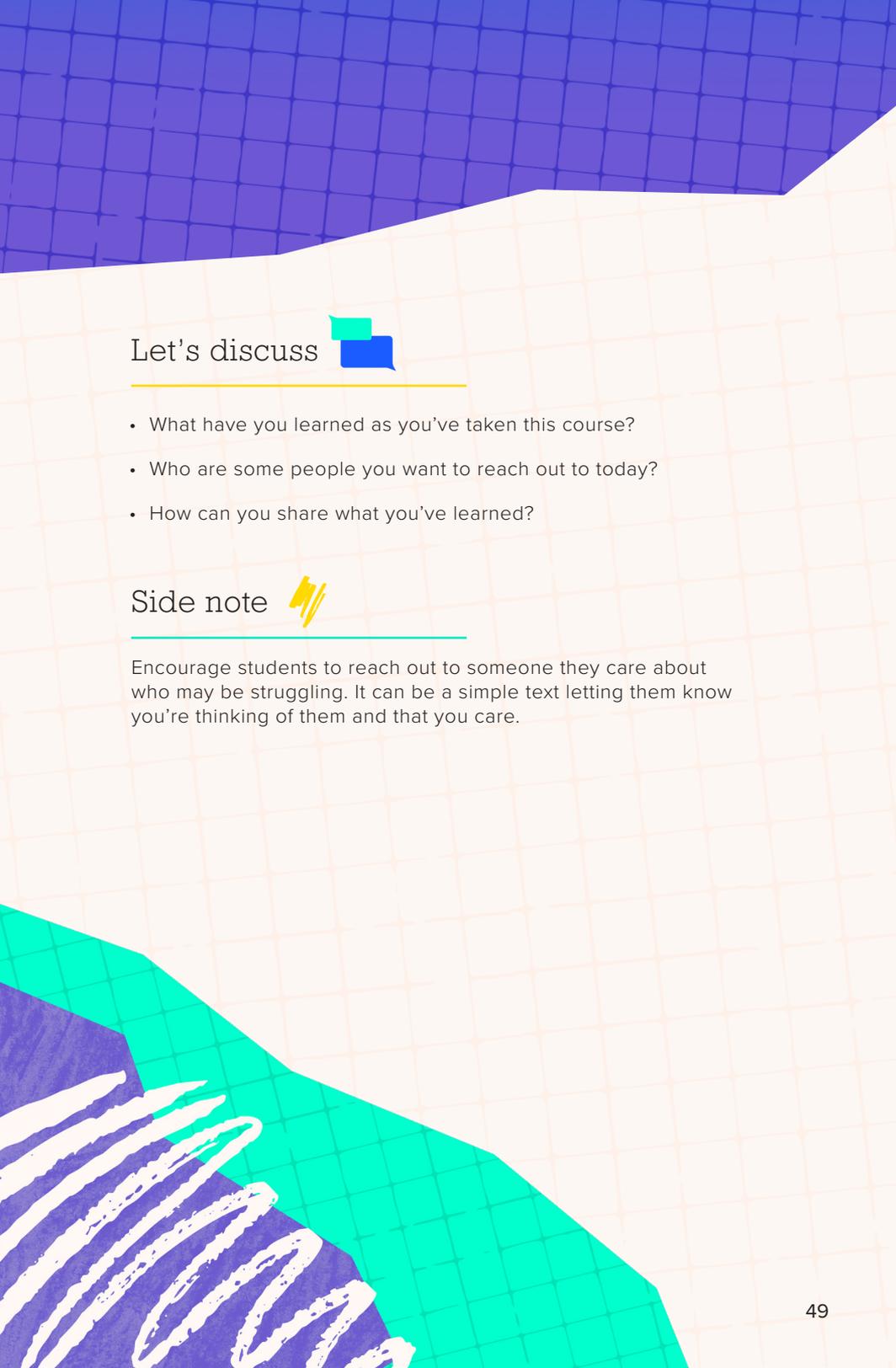
Post about your experience on social media.

Tell your family and friends about the Suicide Prevention Playbook.

If you don't have access to social media, send a message to a friend and tell them about what you've learned taking this course.

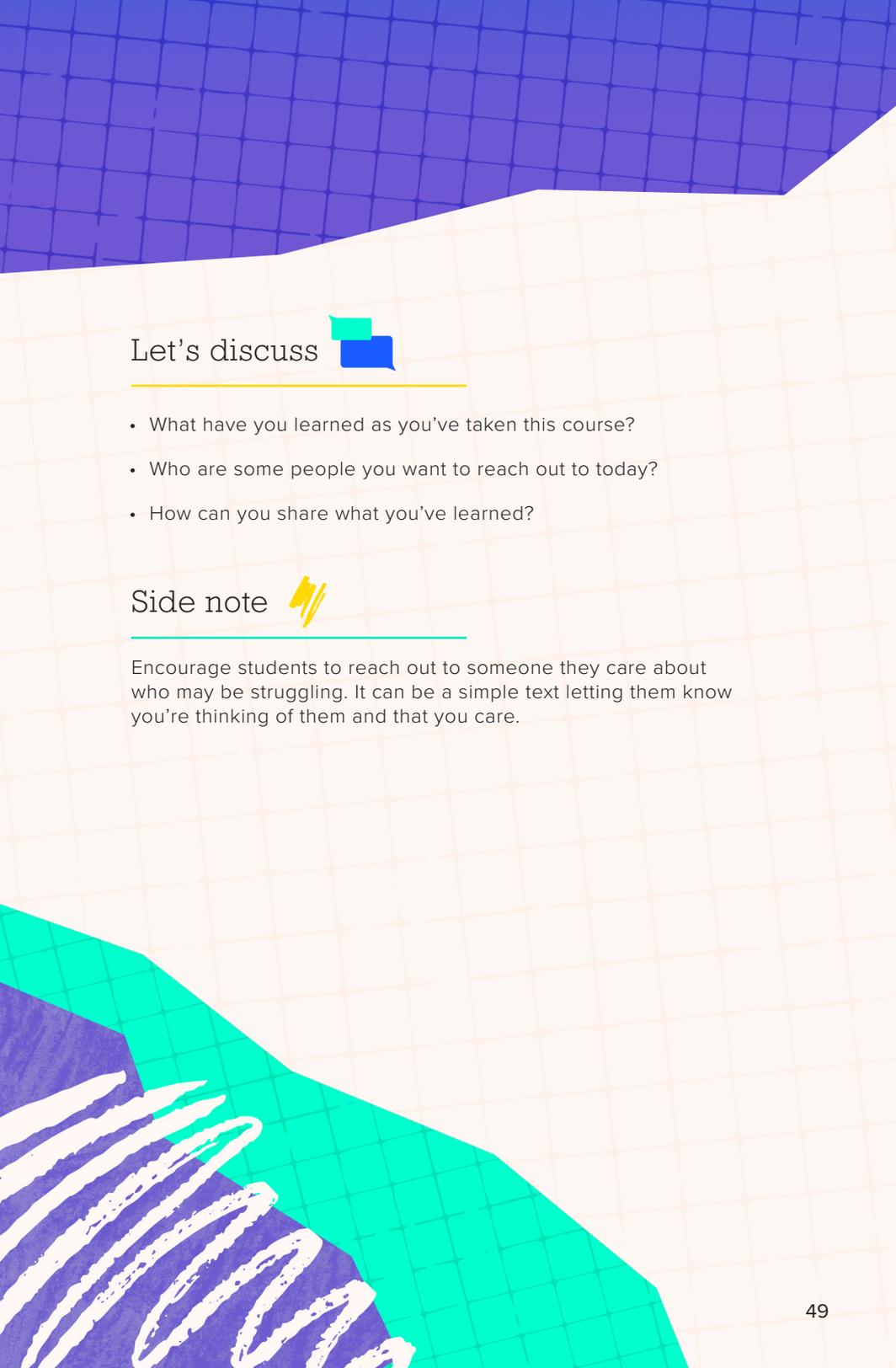


Let's discuss



- What have you learned as you've taken this course?
- Who are some people you want to reach out to today?
- How can you share what you've learned?

Side note



Encourage students to reach out to someone they care about who may be struggling. It can be a simple text letting them know you're thinking of them and that you care.

Space for notes here:

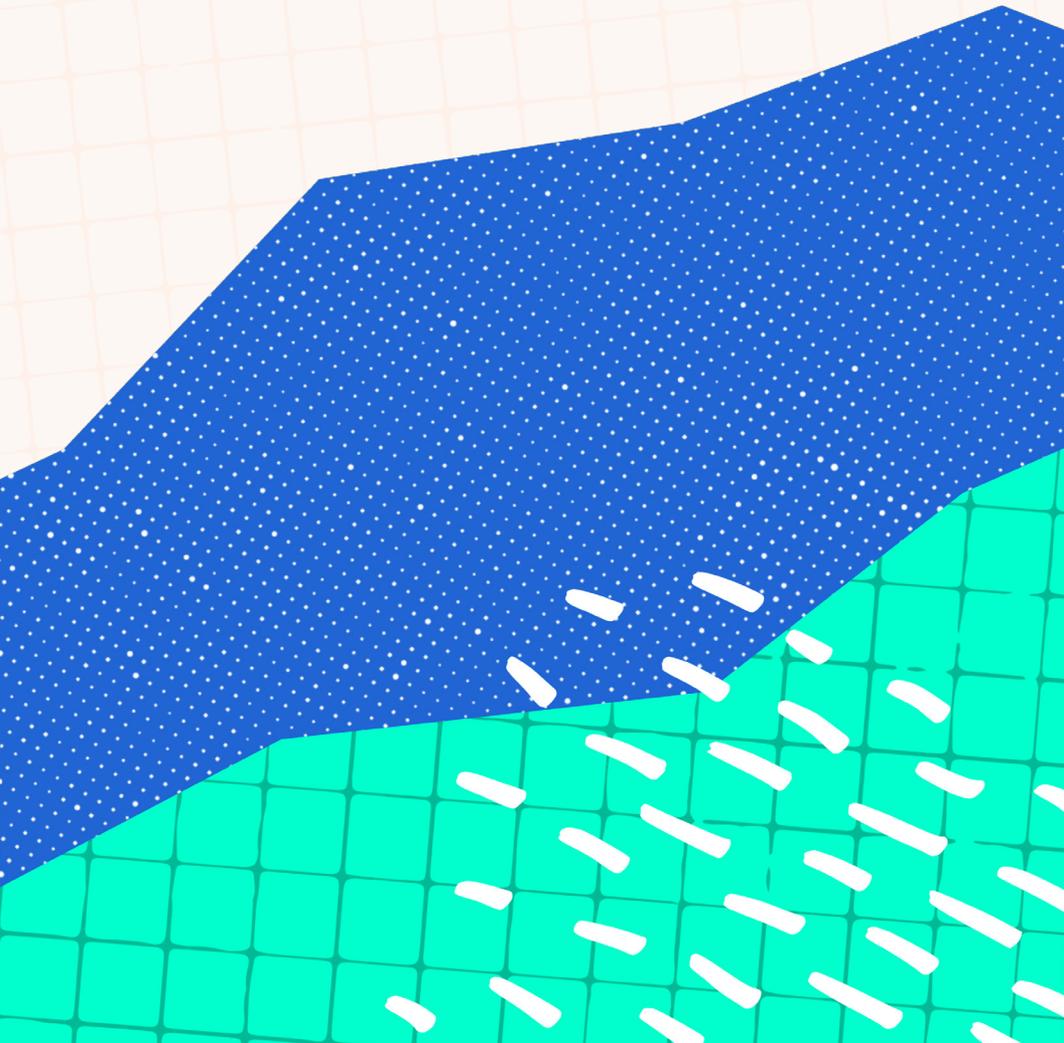




After completing the Suicide Prevention Playbook, each class member becomes a Suicide Prevention Ambassador.

Please message @LiveOnUtah on Instagram, or email hello@liveonutah.org to claim your class certificates.

Thank you for helping prevent suicide in Utah.





GO
WE
MUST



Follow @LiveOnUtah 