We Connect Community

Connecting our Community to resources and opportunities to combat homelessness

Business Toolkit



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Connecting our Community to resources and opportunities to combat homelessness

Letter of Introduction

I am pleased to introduce the "We Connect Community" Business Toolkit to our Rapid City community, as well as to the visitors who travel to our great city. This endeavor is the first of its kind in the nation and has been the result of the hard work of many individuals and organizations that care about the community we all live in and are striving to improve. They are working hard to keep Rapid City a place we can all be proud of and together we will continue to address the difficult challenges, including homelessness and panhandling. Please join us in promoting solutions, such as the "We Connect Community" Business Toolkit, that help us advance towards the goal of creating a welcoming community for all.

Steve Allender- Mayor of Rapid City

What is a "We Connect Community"?

A "We Connect Community" shares an appreciation for both our differences and our universal humanity. In doing so, we strive to be well-connected as independent sectors to share in the responsibility of enhancing our overall well-being. We believe that when we build the individual, we build the community.

1



We Connect Community Response Guide

see page 8

2



We Connect Community Window Decal

see page 26

3



We Connect Community Resource Guide

What is the Business Toolkit?

The Business Toolkit was designed solely with the business owner in mind. It offers help in responding to situations that occur when the issue of homelessness interferes with business operations. The toolkit has 3 key components to help you and your team: The Response Guide, a window decal, and this Community Resource Guide.

For far too long our society has relied on the criminal justice system to address social issues associated with homelessness. It's become clear the criminal justice system alone is not equipped to help the most vulnerable members of our community; it is important that we as a community work together and partner to address issues affecting our City's homeless citizens. The Rapid City Police Department is committed to exploring all options to improve the quality of life for everyone in our community.

Don Hedrick- Chief of Police

What's in it for me?

These components are intended to work together to make a difference for everyone involved.

- It **connects** the individual in crisis with a list of available resources
- It **connects** the donor or volunteer with ways to give
- It **connects** the business owner to a direct line for intervention
- It **connects** the employee to practical tools for interaction
- It **connects** the community to solutions

"We Connect Community" Contributors

The Black Hills Regional Homeless Coalition recognizes that the impact of homelessness goes beyond the individual and also has an equal effect on the broader community. This is especially true for business owners and their employees who often encounter people in crisis. Those who are unhoused may display behavior that may interfere with business operations. The motivation behind the Business Toolkit is to support you and your staff in a way that offers a direct link to support for all involved. The "We Connect Community" vision has been a collaborative effort involving the following contributors.

Rapid City, SD

Serving Rapid City to create a safe, healthy, inclusive, and skilled community. Through responsive, accessible, and effective governance, we work together to improve, protect and enrich our city. We envision Rapid City to be a vibrant community where all citizens can prosper and enjoy our shared quality of life.

Helpline Center at 211

Serving thousands of people each year by connecting them to needed resources and support, providing referrals, and promoting local volunteerism. Our mission is to make lives better by giving support, offering hope, and creating connections all day, every day.

Visit Rapid City

Inspiring others to experience Big Things in Rapid City by serving as an internationally recognized destination marketing organization that promotes leisure travel, special/sporting events and group travel/tours to Rapid City and the Black Hills Area.

Rapid City Police Department

Striving for a safe and crime-free Rapid City through a mission of Community First, Service above self, and Integrity-driven services, one interaction at a time. We engage in proactive efforts such as the School Liaison Program and Youth Outreach efforts.

Journey On, Inc

Working collaboratively to provide street outreach, case management and alternative and culturally responsive therapeutic programs to support at-risk individuals and underserved populations in Rapid City. This includes individuals experiencing substance recovery, mental or behavior health crises, crime victimization, and chronic or potential homelessness.

Great Plains Tribal Leader's Health Board

Representing 18 tribal communities in a four-state region of South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska, and Iowa. Through public health practices and the formation of tribal partnerships, we work to improve the health of the American Indian peoples by providing health support and health care advocacy while embracing culturally significant values.

Rapid City Fire Department

Ensuring public safety through the provision of fire and emergency medical services with a mission to Prepare, Prevent, and Protect. The Mobil Medic program, specifically, is designed to reach the medically underserved and vulnerable populations in our community.

Main Street Square in Downtown Rapid City

Bringing life and fostering Downtown Rapid City through economic development while creating a vibrant gathering place that is rich in appeal, cultural heritage, arts, and entertainment for everyone, regardless of age, sex, race, or economic background. It is more than just a collection of buildings, but an experience that we can all share.

Volunteers of America

Creating strong families and thriving communities through progressive, holistic programs by lending a hand-up, not a hand-out. Guided by professional staff and committed volunteers, our mission is to compassionately serve and strengthen individuals by empowering them to build healthy and happy lives.

Black Hills Area Community Foundation

Achieving the goal of "connecting people who care to causes that matter" through the generosity of donors- whether individuals, families, foundations or corporations- who want to join us in taking care of our beautiful Black Hills and the people who live here.

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Active Resource Pages

A note about employees:

The business toolkit can be used to train your employees on related issues.

See page **12** for examples of what to SAY & DO in response to challenging situations.

See page **10** for ways to prevent conflict and de-escalate situations for the benefit of all involved.

See page **22** for sources of additional training available from community partners.

> It all comes down to the basics . . . courtesy and connection. The only way we can face challenging issues that affect our neighbors and our community is to ALL be rowing in the same direction.
>
> *Siaryn Duggan- Business Owner and Celtic Artisan*

To replenish your Business Toolkit materials, please contact the Black Hills Regional Homeless Coalition at bhregionalhomelesscoalition@gmail.com

Homelessness in South Dakota

According to the preliminary 2022 Annual Point-in-Time Count, South Dakota is seeing a 30% increase in homelessness. This number ONLY consists of those deemed literally homeless, defined as living on the streets, in camps or in their cars, and does NOT account for those who are doubled-up or rotating across households as a short-term solution.

The rise in the number of un-housed community members can be attributed to:

- Inflation & rising expenses
- Limited housing inventory
- Challenges to the capacity of homeless providers

SD Statistics

Per 2020 Point in Time Count

353 Total Homeless in Rapid City

353

60% of homelessness in South Dakota occurs West River

60%

At that time only 6% of the federal and state funding for homeless programs was received West River.

6%

Number of Rapid City Area School Students identified as 'homeless' in the 2021/2022 school year. This is more than **TWICE** the amount 10 years ago.

690

15% were homeless for 3 years or more

15%

Per 2022 Point in Time Count

30%

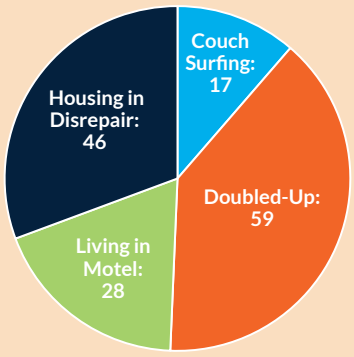
estimated increase in LITERAL homelessness in South Dakota: defined as living on the street, camps, vehicles, or places not meant for habitation.

in 2019

61% of homeless were unsheltered in **Rapid City**

vs

6% of homeless were unsheltered in **Sioux Falls**



Other Forms of Homelessness

Per a two month snapshot of other forms of homelessness in Rapid City conducted early 2022

Waiting List for SDHDA Rehousing programs

180

per Coordinated Entry assessments completed in the first quarter of 2022

State/Federal Housing Placement Programs via South Dakota Housing Development Authority

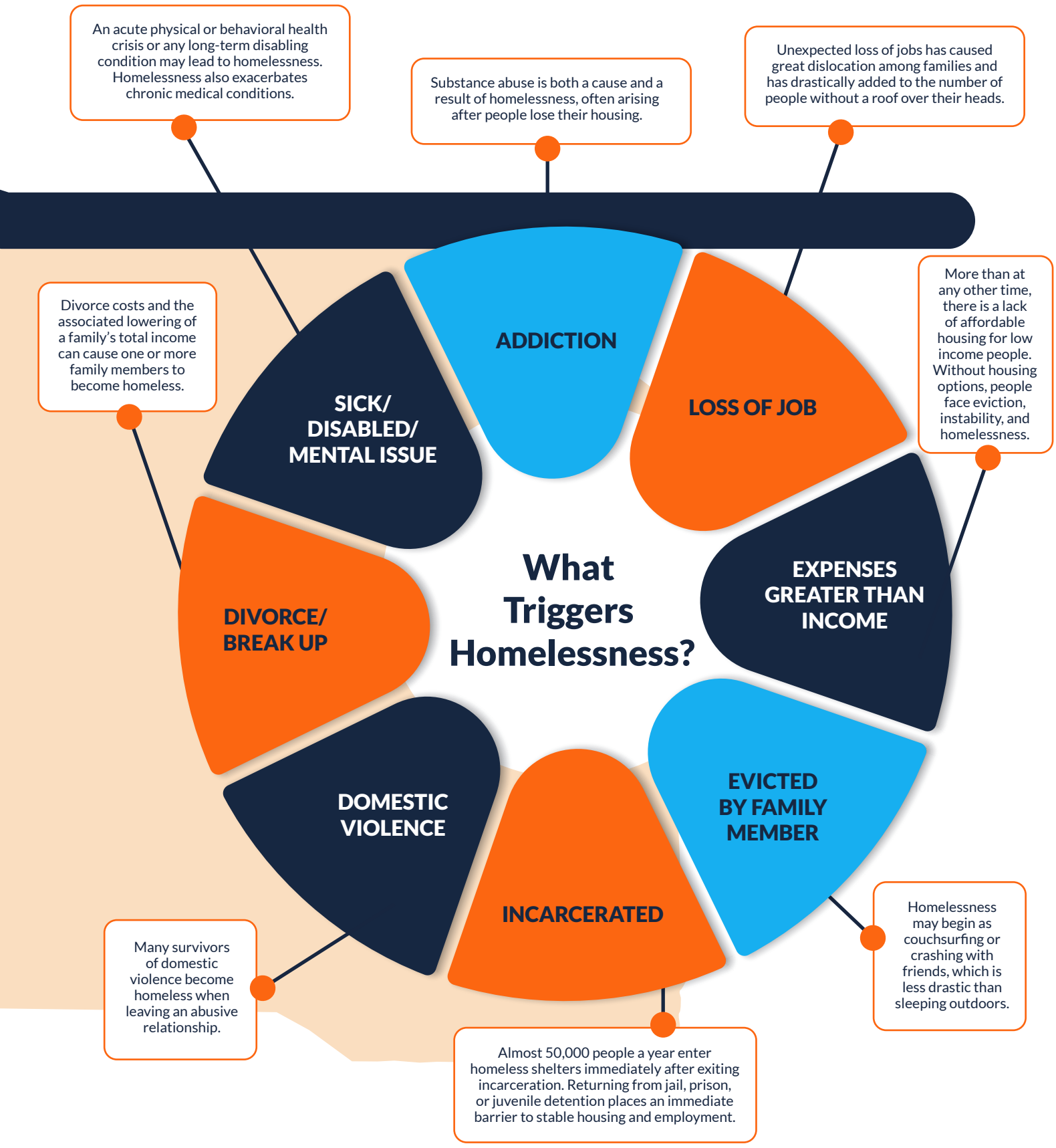
66% were female led households

65% of these reported a disability

To get on the waiting list for a state or federal housing assistance program:

Call **1-800-664-1347**
(9am-6pm CT, M-F)

South Dakota Coordinated Entry System (CES) is connecting the homeless or those at risk of becoming homeless with available resources.


An acute physical or behavioral health crisis or any long-term disabling condition may lead to homelessness. Homelessness also exacerbates chronic medical conditions.
Substance abuse is both a cause and a result of homelessness, often arising after people lose their housing.
Unexpected loss of jobs has caused great dislocation among families and has drastically added to the number of people without a roof over their heads.
Divorce costs and the associated lowering of a family's total income can cause one or more family members to become homeless.
More than at any other time, there is a lack of affordable housing for low income people. Without housing options, people face eviction, instability, and homelessness.
What Triggers Homelessness?
ADDICTION
LOSS OF JOB
SICK/ DISABLED/ MENTAL ISSUE
EXPENSES GREATER THAN INCOME
DIVORCE/ BREAK UP
EVICTED BY FAMILY MEMBER
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
INCARCERATED
Many survivors of domestic violence become homeless when leaving an abusive relationship.
Homelessness may begin as couchsurfing or crashing with friends, which is less drastic than sleeping outdoors.
Almost 50,000 people a year enter homeless shelters immediately after exiting incarceration. Returning from jail, prison, or juvenile detention places an immediate barrier to stable housing and employment.

What is a Co-Response Community?



What is the co-responder model?

First described in the United States in the early 1990s, the co-responder team model paired trained police officers with mental health professionals to respond to incidents involving individuals experiencing behavioral health crises. Since then, the use of this response model across communities and across time has resulted in substantial variation in the definition and delivery of co-responder team programs.

In many cases, this variation is a product of efforts to tailor co-response to the specific needs of communities. In Rapid City, SD, community assessment demonstrated a great need for a co-responder team that could provide **culturally relevant** and **social service-oriented support** to our houseless community.

The intent is two-fold, pressure on the criminal justice and healthcare systems are alleviated and those in crisis are connected to long-term solutions.

How a Co-responder Connects



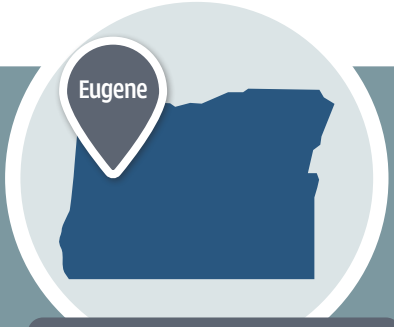
Adapted from Regis College: De-escalation Skills and Tips for Mental Health in the Community infographic

Other Co-Response Communities

Examples of Co-Response Communities

Eugene, Oregon:
Crisis Assistance Helping Out on the Streets (CAHOOTS)

Founded in 1989, CAHOOTS pairs an emergency medic and a mental health professional. Together, they respond to roughly 20% of incoming 911 calls. 60% of the calls' care recipients are homeless, and 30% have severe mental illness. These calls are often related to mental illness, counseling, anxiety, alcohol, medical or shelter issues, depression, drugs, need for food and water, or family. The program saves the city about $22 million annually on public safety and medical care.



$22 Million

saved on public safety and medical care



2,294 calls for service

that would have otherwise been dispatched to police

Denver, Colorado:
Support Team Assisted Response (STAR)

Founded in 2020 after a four-year trial, STAR teams up an emergency medic and a mental health professional, who are dispatched via the city's 911 call center. STAR responds to situations such as drug overdoses, mental health calls, people experiencing homelessness, or people at risk for suicide.

Houston, Texas:
Crisis Intervention Response Team (CIRT)

Founded in 2008, CIRT features 12 teams of social workers and specially trained police officers dispatched via the city's 911 call center. In 2019, CIRT took 5,519 calls. Some services provided include information on mental health and treatment abuse resources, family mental health education and outreach, and support for SWAT teams as a mental health resource.



12 full-time units

the largest co-responder program with the officer and clinician riding together as partners



48.3% of dispatch calls

Journey On is able to respond to, freeing up valuable police resources

Impact in Rapid City

Journey On began responding to calls for service through 9-1-1 dispatch in early December of 2021. Since then, Journey On has been responding to nearly 48.3% of all low-level calls involving the houseless community.

Journey On not only provides response through dispatch, they provide proactive support in areas where the houseless community is known to congregate, averaging around nearly 700 proactive interactions with our houseless community per month.

Every call responded to by Journey On preventing the use of an ambulance saves the City of Rapid City $900.

Business Response Guide

We Connect Community

Response Guide

Level 1 Basic Needs

helpline center

Examples:
- Requests for food
- Resource questions
- Requests for money

Action
- Recommend individuals call 211 for available resources
- Refer to QR code on window decal for Helpline Center
- Provide Emergency Resource Guide from Helpline Center
- Provide Journey On business card

(605) 519-1066

Level 2 Support Connections

Journey On

Examples:
- Physical relocation
- Resistance to guidance
- Verbal escalations
- Refusal to leave
- Minor medical needs

Action
- Call Journey On Street Outreach **(605) 519-1066**
- If no response, call Non-Emergency Dispatch: **(605) 394-4131**

Level 3 Emergency Response

Examples:
- Medical emergency
- Treatment needs
- Safety concerns
- Threats of aggression
- Presence of a weapon

Action:
- CALL **911**

helpline center

Get connected. Get Help.

Every day people turn to 211 for information and support. The call is free and confidential OR you can easily search the resource listing yourself.

- Food/Hygiene
- Housing/Shelter
- Healthcare
- Mental Health
- Substance Recovery
- Transportation
- Financial Assistance
- Employment

DIAL 2-1-1 helplinecenter.org helpline center

Suicide Prevention and Crisis Support hotline:
Call **1-800-273-8255** or **988** *(effective July 2022)*

Journey On

We deliver responses to unsheltered community members through Pennington County Dispatch, Journey On Phone Line, and Proactive Outreach.

Our Dispatch and Phone Line responses are focused on assisting the unsheltered in critical incidents that have risen to the level where they need an immediate response.

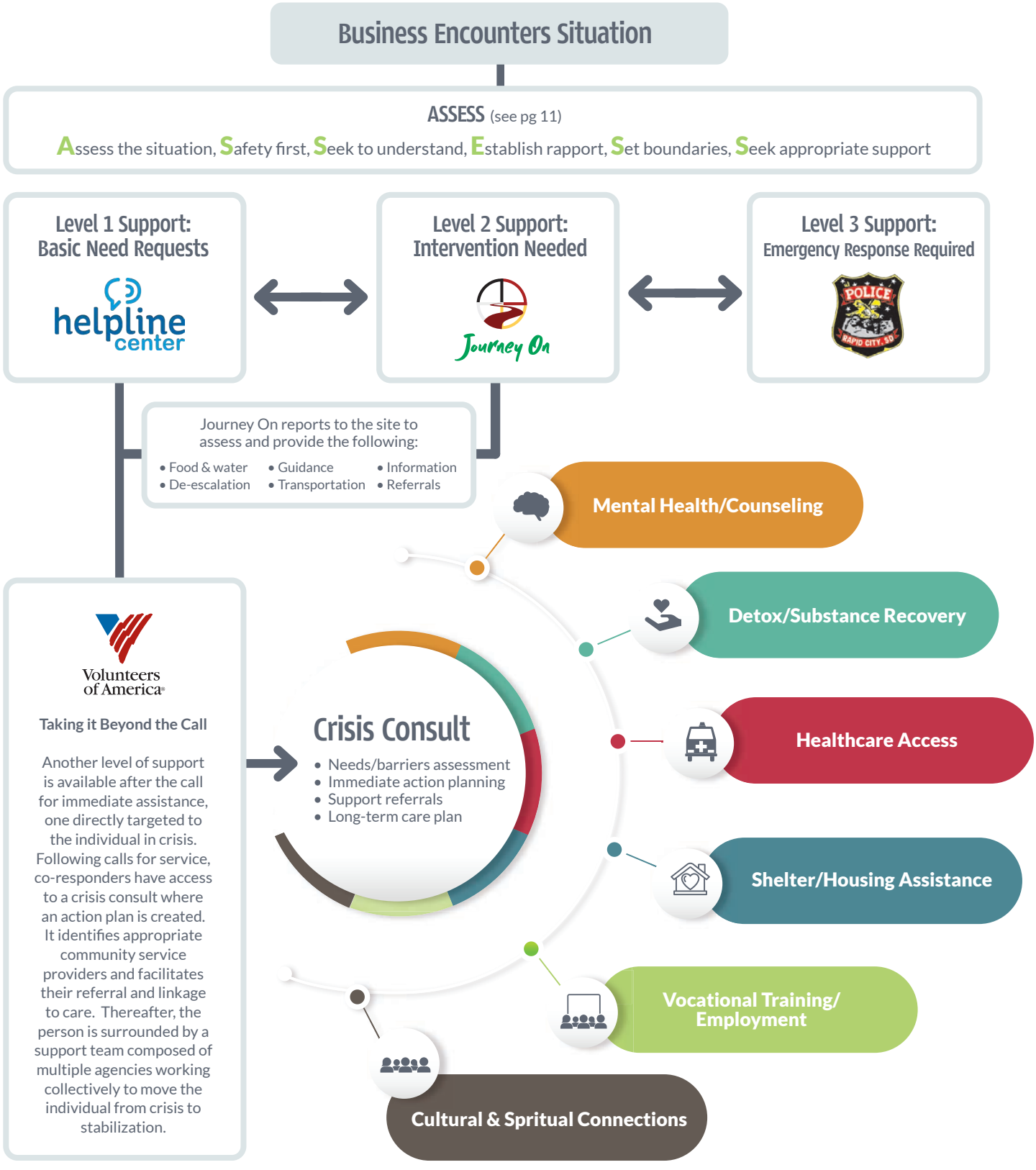
Our Proactive Outreach includes completing needs assessments and facilitating access to basic quality-of-life necessities (e.g., shelter, food and water, clothing, blankets, hygiene products, crisis intervention, service referrals and related transportation support).

(605) 519-1066

> When I see the green, I know they will help me. They always do.
>
> *- Bill*

How it Works

The response guide was intended to help businesses and community members decide **WHICH** response for support is needed **WHEN**. Some situations can change quickly and may require a combination of the above. **Just remember you are NOT alone.**



How Conflict Happens

5 Things That Make Conflict Worse

A minor miscommunication can easily escalate with any of the following common mis-steps. Avoiding them begins with awareness of how it impacts others.

1 Telling others HOW they feel

Statements like these are based in assumptions and take away a persons self-expression.

"Don't get angry with me!"
"Why are you so defensive?"
"Aren't you embarrassed?"

2 Telling others WHY they do what they do

Statements like these presume the motivations of others without making the effort to listen.

"You said that because you're jealous."
"You did that because you want to get even."
"You must have no self-esteem."

3 Using Labels and Stereotypes

When you label a person and associate them with a stereotype, you take away their identity and individualism. This can be dehumanizing and cause defensiveness.

"You are just like the rest of them."
"You guys always need something."
"Why are your people so sensitive?"

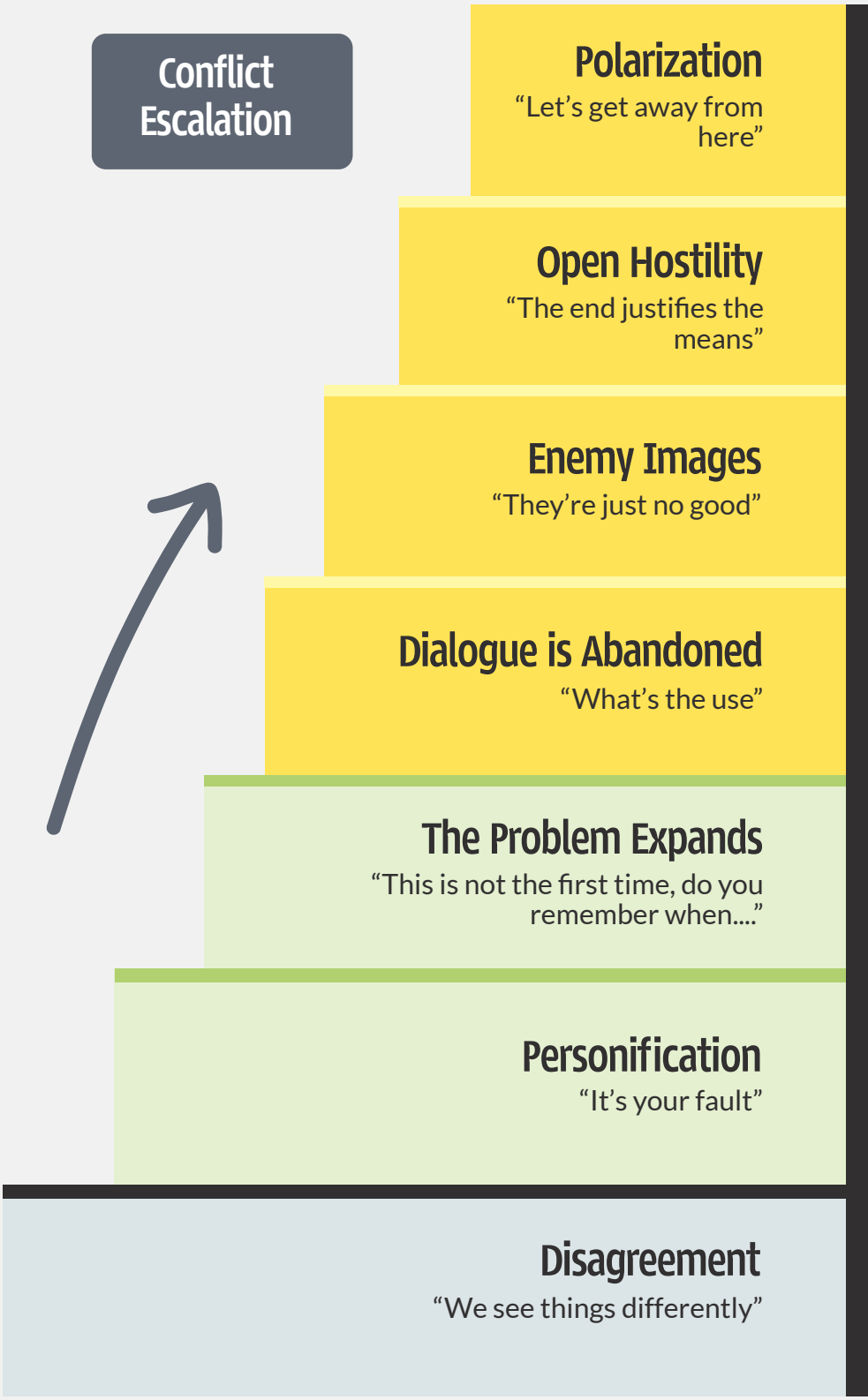
4 Raising your voice

Whether at the start or during a conversation, raising your voice will trigger the fight or flight response in anyone. It is human nature to the respond defensively. In doing so, the message of what is being said gets lost.

5 Focusing on the past

Not all situations and not all people are the same. We are tempted to judge the present by the past. When we do, we make assumptions that affect our ability to see a different response or result. This can create a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Whether in the streets with a stranger or at home with a family member, ask yourself, **"Do any of these behaviors ever show up in your conflict communication style?"**



Source: DBSA - Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance. This information is based on consensus guidelines from Project BETA established by the American Association for Emergency Psychiatry.

How to Respond to Conflict

Verbal De-escalation

Remain Calm
Avoid the power struggle. Remain calm and in control of your own emotions

Courteous Approach
Use universal courtesy and speak using simple vocabulary and short sentences

Listen & Relate
Listen to identify the person's needs and find ways to agree on the simple things

Establish Boundaries
Clearly set limits and boundaries in a matter of fact manner without negativity.

Outline Options
Outline options available and concisely state the outcomes of each. Repeat as needed

Allow Time & Choice
Give the person time to think and make their own choice before reacting. Set time limit if necessary

Act on Choice
Act on the choice made as previously outlined, referring to the Business Response Guide as needed

De-escalation Acronym

A — **Assess the situation**
Observe the setting, people, and problem in a way that informs your approach.

S — **Safety first**
Identify, avoid or clear potential threats to the safety of self and others.

S — **Seek to Understand**
Use simple questions and language to identify the root cause, problem or need.

E — **Establish Rapport**
Use courtesy and common greetings to build rapport with the person in need.

S — **Set Boundaries**
Outline options without emotion and allow the person time to make a choice.

S — **Seek Appropriate Support**
Once a choice is made, implement the subsequent action or support per resources available.

> Journey On was so helpful during an interaction with the houseless community. I feel more confident with what to do and how to handle situations more effectively.
>
> *- Stacie Granum, Visit Rapid City*

What to Do

Beware of Stereotypes

Stereotypes, by name, group people in a way that is easy to reference. Yet, individual situations, challenges, and solutions are far from universal.

To be effective, we need to see the individual behind the label. This starts with avoiding the assumptions that stereotypes create, and viewing people (and their experiences) as multidimensional.

Modified from Source: Covering Poverty; What to Avoid and How to get it Right

Ensuring YOUR Safety

- Tell someone where you are going and what you are doing
- Have a phone with you at all times to seek support as needed
- Stay in the observation zone (2 arms length distance)
- Identify potential environmental hazards before approaching
- Always approach from an angle where you have an exit in case of escalation
- Do not approach if hazards, weapons, or unpredictable behavior are observed
- Subtly redirect person away from crowds while awaiting intervention

Remember you are not alone

- If there is a potential risk to safety, call Journey On
- If there is an immediate risk to safety, call 911

Universal Courtesy

- **Make eye contact**
- **Avoid assumptions**
- **Offer a greeting**
- **Use open body language**
  - Arms uncrossed
  - Knees bent
  - Eyebrows raised
  - Relaxed facial expressions
- **Speak respectfully**
  - Don't use labels
  - Talk to me, not about me
  - Speak softly
  - Use simple vocabulary

> Everyone smiles in the same language.
>
> *- George Carlin*

The Power of Acknowledgement

One of the best things you can do is share a simple smile, or a 'Good morning'. Look them in the eye. Give them a nod. Give them a friendly smile. Wish them a good day. Do whatever you can to acknowledge your fellow human beings. It can make a world of difference in making everyone feel valued in the community.

> Never judge someone by the way he looks or a book by the way its covered; for inside those tattered pages, there's a lot to be discovered.
>
> *– Stephen Cosgrove*

What to Say

1. What do I say/do when someone whom is intoxicated or under the influence enters my business?

"Good _____. Is everything OK? It appears that you might be in need of assistance. Allow me to call Journey On to come over and help you. Let's find a place to sit outside while we wait for them."

2. What do I say/do when someone is making a biased or derogatory comment?

"I heard you voicing your opinion about a member of our community. In Rapid City, we appreciate both our differences and our shared humanity. We hope you will do the same."

3. What do I say/do when someone complains that we are enabling people in crisis?

"Keep in mind that we are all one job loss, accident, illness, or death away from being in the same position as someone we may encounter on the street. As a We Connect Community, we try to offer a hand up and not just a handout."

Frequently asked questions from those without housing:

Can I use your bathroom?

"Our bathrooms are not open to the public, but you can find one at the community shelter or in one of our community parks."

Can I use your phone?

"If you are needing help, I am happy to call Journey On for you. Otherwise, the shelters have a phone available for general use."

Can I get a bottle of water or food?

"For health reasons, we are unable to provide these items. However, you can find a list of the community meals available every day of the week through the 211 Helpline Center."

Can I sit inside to warm up or cool down?

"I understand how uncomfortable extreme weather can be. The area shelters have supplies available and Journey On is available to provide transportation if needed."

Language matters

It has the power . . .

- To include or exclude
- To connect or separate
- To offend or empower

Words can do more harm than good. Demeaning language can unintentionally undermine our goal of helping others. Too often, the following words are used to reference people in poverty:

- ✗ *Beggary*
- ✗ *Destitution*
- ✗ *Indigent*
- ✗ *Insufficient*
- ✗ *Needy*
- ✗ *Inadequate*

These words describe states of matter and **NOT** the state one's humanity. In contrast, when using person-first language, you emphasize the value of their humanity above their situation. Consider using the following instead:

- ✓ *People experiencing poverty*
- ✓ *People without housing*
- ✓ *People with limited resources*

> Language that conveys dignity and empowerment in culturally relevant ways, diminishes shame, increases confidence, and motivates. Words suggesting neediness have the opposite effect.
>
> *- Catherine Thomas, Proceeding of the National Academy of Sciences*

Understanding the Homeless Mindset

1 Homeless individuals want to look dangerous



It is really dangerous to be homeless. Homeless individuals get robbed, attacked, and raped much more frequently than housed individuals. Consequently, homeless individuals want to look a little dangerous so that bad people won't want to attack them. Unfortunately, there is no way to look dangerous to potential robbers without looking dangerous to everyone else.

2 The best thing you can do to help is just be nice

Homeless individuals are treated very poorly by most people. They are constantly subjected to harassment and disrespect. Most homeless people are craving to be treated with respect. Believe it or not, the most important thing you can do for homeless patrons is not to help them get a job to get sober. The most important thing you can do is to treat them with hospitality and respect.

3 Homeless individuals don't think of themselves as "homeless"



Do you define yourself by your housing? At a party do you introduce yourself by saying "I live in a 2-bedroom apartment?" Probably not! Individuals experiencing homelessness don't define themselves by their housing status either. If someone thinks of himself as an "out of work mechanic with two children and passion for old Ford Mustangs" and all you see is "homeless guy" it is going to be hard to have genuine communication.

4 You only see 10% of homeless people

Only about 10% of homeless individuals are homeless for a year or longer, termed "chronically homeless." This 10% is what you think of when you hear "homeless." The other 90% do not "look" homeless at all. In fact, you have probably served a lot of homeless people without realizing it.

5 Homeless people just want to be treated the same



Most homeless individuals are not looking for special treatment. They just want to be treated the same as non-homeless patrons. They especially don't want to be discriminated against because of the actions of a few troublemakers.

7 Space is different

When you are homeless, there is not a single place in all of the world where you can go that is truly yours. There is nowhere you can go to be alone that other people can't be intruded upon you. Please remember this when you see someone "monopolizing" space at the library, bus stop or sidewalk.

8 Time is different



When you have to worry about where you will sleep tonight and where you will get your next meal, you don't worry about anything that happens more than 24 hours from now. The long term becomes irrelevant in the face of surviving today. For instance, you might periodically think about retirement. A homeless person rarely thinks beyond tomorrow.

9 Possessions are different

When you only own a few things, those few items become very important to you. You don't want to let them out of your sight for fear that they will be stolen from you, or you will lose them. Imagine if everything you owned in the world fit in one bag. Would you ever let that bag out of your sight?

10 Homelessness is exhausting



Imagine sleeping outside or in a room with 100 other people (with 30 people snoring simultaneously). Imagine skipping meals periodically. Imagine walking everywhere you go. Imagine being worried 24 hours a day about where you will eat and sleep. You would be absolutely exhausted. So are homeless people.

The homeless information network is really efficient and effective

Homeless individuals talk to each other a lot. It is necessary for survival. Word about anything and everything spreads very fast and relatively accurately amongst homeless individuals. I guarantee they talk about which staff members are helpful and which security guards don't enforce rules. They also share which programs are the most beneficial. You can use this to your advantage. Share key messages with a few homeless individuals and it will spread on its own without you telling everyone.

Source: The Employee's Guide to Homelessness by Ryan J. Dowd | Homeless Training Institute

Healing from Historical Trauma

We are all members of one community and building bridges of compassion and understanding will benefit us all.

Historical Trauma

This is the accumulative emotional and psychological pain experienced over an individual's lifetime and across generations as a result of massive group trauma. Historic trauma has long-lasting effects on in the physical and mental health of the individual, family and community. It creates grief, depression, and identify issues in the individual and contributes to increased substance use, child abuse, suicide and domestic violence in the community. Even the family unit is impacted as traditional family structure, roles, and child rearing practices are altered.

Medicine Wheel

The Medicine Wheel is a sacred symbol used by the indigenous Plains tribes to represent all knowledge of the universe. The Medicine Wheel is a symbol of hope — a movement toward healing for those who seek it.

Renewal of Hope

A Wounded Community

When the whole community is wounded, it can't function in the ways it was intended.

- All that is felt is the loss
- People try to fill that loss with other things
- Traditions are not available to help keep relationships healthy
- Trauma continues to roll forward like a wave over generations

Adapted from Historical Trauma: Definition, Impact and Hope for Healing by Beth Boyd (May 2020)

To stop this forward momentum . . . Social healing is needed where:

- Losses are mourned
- New and healthy coping mechanisms are created
- Resilience is celebrated

> "Healing is a communal process of rediscovering balance within self and the harmony between self, Creator, and the natural world.
>
> - *Beth Boyd*

Lakota

Indian Removal Act: Initiated government policy for removal of Native tribes

1830

1868

Fort Laramie Treaty: Resulted in loss of tribal land and Treaty Status

Boarding Schools Initiated: Education aimed at 'civilizing' Native American children

1869

1876

Battle of the Little BigHorn

Wounded Knee Massacre: Occurred on Lakota Pine Ridge Reservation

1890

Representation

- The circle of the Medicine Wheel represents the sacred outer boundary of the Earth
- The lines represent the crossing of the sun and man's sacred path.
- The colors represent each of the Four Directions (west, north, east, south)
- The eagle feather is a sign of Wakȟáŋ Tȟáŋka, the Great Spirit's, power over all

Lakota Values

Fundamental beliefs that guide or motivate our attitudes and actions. Four of the prominent Lakota values are listed below

Wacantognaka = Generosity

Contributing to the well-being of one's people and all life by sharing and giving freely of possessions, emotions, and time without expecting anything in return.

Wotitakuye = Kinship

Family relationships are sacred and a measure of wealth when characterized by trust, harmony, and unconditional support.

Wacintaka = Fortitude

Believing in yourself and facing challenges with strength, confidence, and courage. This requires patience, perseverance and a strong mind.

Woksape = Wisdom

The wisdom inherent in our elders comes from understanding the design and purpose of life and nature. It includes both knowing and living the spiritual values and beliefs.

Lakota Language

Here are some recommended Lakota words to learn and use:

Hehanni waste (heh-hawni wash-teh)! = Good morning!

Toksa ake (dok-shaw ah-keh) = I'll see you later (again)

Anpetu waste (ahm-peh-doo wash-teh)! = Have a good day!

Wopila tanka (woh-pee-la tong-kah) = A big thank you

> "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, it goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart."
>
> *-Nelson Mandela*

History

1934
Indian Reorganization Act: Legislation to retain historic Native American culture and initiate establishment of tribal government

1956
Indian Relocation Act: US Law encouraging Native Americans to leave reservations and tribal ties to relocate to urban areas

1960
Boarding Schools Ended: Ending operations of 367 total boarding schools across 29 states

1978
American Indian Religious Freedom Act: Returned civil liberty of Native American religion and ceremonies where many aspects were prohibited previously

2016
Renaming of Harney Peak to Black Elk Peak

The Impact of Mental Health

Mental illness can be situational or chronic and are diagnosable conditions that affect an individual's emotional, psychological, behavioral and social well-being.



1 IN 5 PEOPLE

EXPERIENCE A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION



only

16.8%

of the need for psychiatric care can be met with the current number of licensed psychiatrists

While those experiencing mental health issues is on the rise, the number of mental healthcare professionals is decreasing.

Unmet need refers to a person having a perceived or recommended need for mental health treatment or counseling but not receiving care. Many groups face additional barriers to accessing care such as distance, lack of insurance or minorities.

Adults with mental illness in SD who are NOT receiving mental health treatment:

71.5% mild mental illness

53.2% moderate mental illness

23.9% serious mental illness

7% higher

suicide rates than the national average (2019)

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the US. SD suicide rates have remained higher than the national average since 2009.

24.7%

of adults reported symptoms of Anxiety or Depressive Disorder

From September 29- October 11, 2021

Mental Health in the United States

Mental health problems are difficult enough to deal with on their own, but those issues often cascade into other problems, including homelessness, incarceration, and encounters with law enforcement.

10x **10x more likely** to be incarcerated than in a treatment facility

4x **4x more likely** to be jailed for low-level offenses than offenders without mental illness

Mental health is the only health-related issue for which the police are usually first responders.

30% of those with mental illness first receive treatment through an interaction with law enforcement.

25% of all fatal police shootings involve someone with an untreated mental illness.

People with mental health issues are more likely to encounter law enforcement

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation https://www.kff.org/statedata/mental-health-and-substance-use-state-fact-sheets/south-dakota/

Those with severe mental illness are:



How social workers provide assistance



Some municipalities are trying different methods to better serve mentally ill community members and free up law enforcement resources. To support these efforts, social workers focus on treating people with dignity and respect and determining the root causes of issues at hand.

Dealing with underlying causes helps people access appropriate treatment and assistance rather than become incarcerated.

Black Hills Regional Homeless Coalition

The Black Hills Regional Homeless Coalition works to address involuntary homelessness by ensuring that adequate services are available and accessible, empowering homeless individuals to utilize services and achieve self-sufficiency, increasing the community's awareness of and responsiveness to homelessness, and seeking long-term societal change.

The coalition is a collective collaboration of 40+ organizations that come together to advance best practices in homeless services, engage in joint problem-solving, and collaborate to create shared solutions to both individual and community issues affecting those experiencing homelessness.

Roles of the Homeless Coalition

Coordinated Entry

The statewide Coordinated Entry System is a process in which persons experiencing homelessness are assessed, prioritized, and referred to the most appropriate housing program.

Point In Time (PIT) Count

The PIT Count is a federal-mandated practice intended to identify the number of people per state experiencing homelessness, which in turn drives federal funding allocations.

Community Connect Events

These events are held to distribute emergency resources and inform those in poverty of the life-changing community services available to them.

Community Outreach

Initiatives aimed at creating community awareness and collaboration around solutions for both individual and community issues resulting from homelessness.

Youth Advisory Board

A youth-driven entity that creates community awareness around youth homelessness and informs the development of public solutions utilizing the Youth Homeless Demonstration Grant.

Black Hills Regional Homeless Coalition

Supported by Volunteers of America

Black Hills Regional Homeless Coalition

Members

- Artemis House
- Behavior Management Services
- Black Hills Area Community Foundation
- Black Hills Special Services Cooperative
- Black Hills Works
- Call to Freedom
- Catholic Social Services
- City of Rapid City
- Community Health Center of Black Hills
- Cornerstone Rescue Mission
- Feeding South Dakota
- Goodwill of the Great Plains
- Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board
- Helpline Center
- Jesus' Hands
- John T. Vucurevich Foundation
- Journey On
- LGBTQ+ Family Connection Center
- Love Inc.
- Lutheran Social Services
- Maggie's House
- Meals on Wheels
- Monument Health
- Northern Hills Sources of Support
- Oglala Lakota Housing Authority
- One Heart
- Pennington Co. Health & Human Services
- Pennington County Housing
- Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center
- Rapid City Fire Dept Mobil Medic
- Rapid City Police Department
- Rapid City Area Schools
- RCAS McKinney Vento
- RCAS Teen Up
- Salvation Army
- St. Vincent DePaul
- The Hope Center
- The RV Ministry
- United Way of Black Hills
- Veterans Administration
- Volunteers of America
- Western SD Community Action
- Wild Horse Butte Community Development Corp
- Working Against Violence, Inc.
- Youth & Family Services
- YFS-Counseling Center
- YFS-Stronger Families Program

More Tools and Training

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

is a multi-disciplinary approach to crime prevention that uses urban and architectural design and the management of built and natural environments. CPTED strategies aim to reduce victimization, deter offender decisions that precede criminal acts, and build a sense of community among inhabitants so they can gain territorial control of areas, reduce crime, and minimize fear of crime.

5 Basic CPTED Principles



1 Natural Access Control

Natural access control guides how people enter and leave a space through the placement of entrances, exits, fences, landscaping and lighting. It can decrease opportunities for criminal activity by denying criminals access to potential targets and creating a perception of risk for would-be offenders.

2 Natural Surveillance

Natural surveillance guides the placement of physical features such as windows, lighting and landscaping. These features affect how much can be seen by occupants and passersby. Potential criminals are unlikely to attempt a crime if they are at risk of being observed. Similarly, we are likely to feel safer when we can see and be seen.

3 Territorial Reinforcement

Physical design can create an area of territorial influence that can be perceived by and may deter potential offenders. Examples include defined property lines and clear distinctions between private and public spaces. Territorial reinforcement can be created using landscaping, pavement designs, gateway treatments, signs and fences.

4 Maintenance

A well maintained home, building, or community park creates a sense of guardianship and helps deter criminals.

5 Activity Support

Criminal acts can be discouraged in public spaces when we encourage activities in those spaces by residents, visitors, and other legitimate users.

Schedule an assessment

email **tyler.read@rcgov.org**

More Tools and Training



Reporting Crime:

For those who wish to report crime information anonymously, you can do so in one of two ways:

1) To report an **ACTIVE** crime, call **605-394-4131** to get an immediate response from RCPD through dispatch.

2) To anonymously report information about a prior or potential incident, text **'RCPD'** and your information to: **847411 (TIP411)**.

This text goes through a third party service to remove identification information and forwards to the RCPD for consideration in investigations.

The Circles of Care program

This program was developed to help identify gaps, stigmas, barriers and biases in community organizations and service providers in the behavioral health, substance abuse prevention and treatment field.

It's focus is to improve mental health, substance abuse prevention and wellness services and support for children, youth and families in the He Sapa area while using culturally relevant approaches.

GPTLHB website: *https://gptchb.org*

palecek
Therapy & Consulting

Poverty 101

Join us as we delve into the dynamics of poverty in our communities. We will look at the definitions of poverty, the stereotypes, and the most common barriers that people face. We will discuss how brain science and crisis living impact individuals and families and make it difficult to navigate middle class systems. Finally, we will look at research-based methods for helping those struggling in the crisis of poverty including social bridging and intense mentoring practices.

www.PalecekTherapy.com

HUNDREDS of ways to VOLUNTEER

Connecting Volunteers. Supporting Nonprofits.

Helpline Center's Volunteer Connections program is the critical link between caring community volunteers and the nonprofit agencies that need them.

In addition to providing and maintaining a database list of hundreds of volunteer opportunities, Volunteer Connections also provides resources and information to non-profit organizations and businesses.

www.helplinecenter.org/volunteer-connections

An Alternative to Panhandling

Panhandling can threaten the vitality of a business district. Panhandlers strategically position themselves in areas where soliciting yields high returns, such as areas of high pedestrian or vehicle traffic. Other environments that attract panhandlers include areas that provide seating, easy access to restrooms or water, and unsecured trash bins. All of these apply to downtown Rapid City.



Although often associated with homeless populations, panhandlers may not be homeless. Likewise, panhandlers are not necessarily mentally ill. While many panhandlers have criminal records, they are also likely to have been victimized themselves.

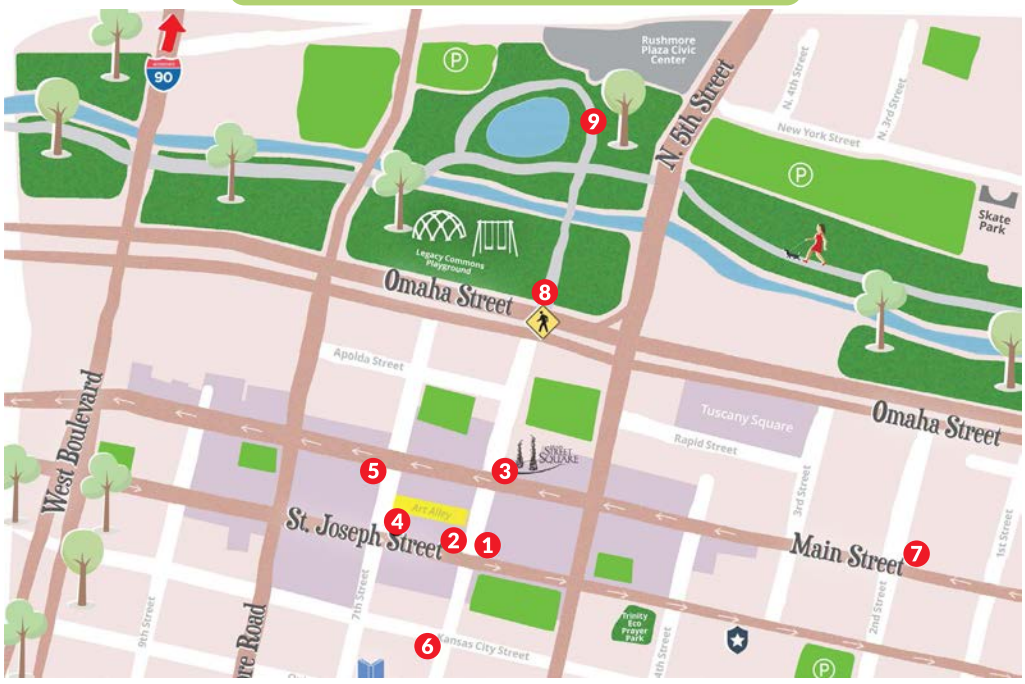
Panhandling is legal in many jurisdictions. Enforcing laws against panhandling plays a relatively small role in controlling the problem. Public education to discourage donations, and providing adequate access and availability of social services are more effective tactics in a comprehensive community response to panhandling.

Illinois found when they implemented a public education campaign educate givers to offer social service referrals instead of money and redirect donations to systems of care, they experienced a 64% decrease in solicitations and a 75% satisfaction rate amongst business respondents.

Source: www.MySafeCIty

Change Giver Behavior + Reduce the Reward + Redirect to Community Services

"We Connect" Giving Meter Locations



1. Tally's
2. Alex Johnson
3. Medicine Wheel (MSS)
4. 7th & St. Joseph (Summer Nights)
5. 7th & Main (by bench & stoop)
6. Hay Camp & Hope Center area or Church across the street
7. Armadillos/Mission area
8. Promenade/Legacy Commons area
9. Band Shell Area

Preparing Our Visitors

As a "We Connect Community," we understand the value that our visitors and guests bring to our businesses and economy. Visit Rapid City is working to incorporate messaging that can be shared with guests in advance to or during their visit to promote alignment with our community approach to homelessness. Below is a sample of what we are sharing.

In the Toolkit, you will also find business cards that can be used to give to guests and visitors to encourage them to support a more sustainable solution through their financial contributions.

To Our Visitors & Guests:

As a guest in our community, there are many sites to explore. Along the way, you will experience the lifestyle of those who call Rapid City home. In some cases, you will encounter people who are currently without housing. We want to offer you with insight on our "We Connect Community" mindset and how you can best respond to related contact.

Our community has adopted a "We Connect" approach to the issue of homelessness, making an effort to connect those in need with the right resources at the right time to move themselves forward. To accomplish this, we use a co-response model in our emergency response system, which incorporates social service professionals in the process for linkage to care rather than redirection only or correctional response, neither of which produce long-term change. In this manner, we can de-criminalize homelessness.



How do we change giver behavior?

- Discourage patrons from giving to panhandlers by educating and informing in advance about the alternative options for giving. *(See below)*
- Interrupt patrons considering or having already given to panhandlers by sharing the "Giving in a We Connect Community" business card.

We Connect Community

We are grateful for your generous heart!

Our community hosts many exceptional service providers who support people in crisis. We encourage you to refer individuals to the 211 Helpline Center if they ask for direct assistance.

1) Text to donate:
RCGIVES to **605.550.8193**

2) "We Connect" Giving Meters

Recommendations for our Visitors:

Acknowledge the person

One of the best things you can do is share a simple smile, or a 'Good morning'. Look them in the eye. Give them a nod. Give them a friendly smile. Wish them a good day. Do whatever you can to acknowledge your fellow human beings. It can make a world of difference in making them feel valued in the community.

Provide Options for Services

After acknowledging someone asking for help, offer them information on community services that might be able to help them. We don't expect you to know and navigate our community service network. All you need to do is remind them that the Helpline Center at 211 can be accessed for guidance on any resource needs.

Support local service providers and churches

Rather than giving directly to a person in crisis, support a local nonprofit that offers services to them. By supporting these organizations, you are not only supporting a person in need, but are now supporting them with more sustainable solutions.

A Tool for Anyone Looking to Connect

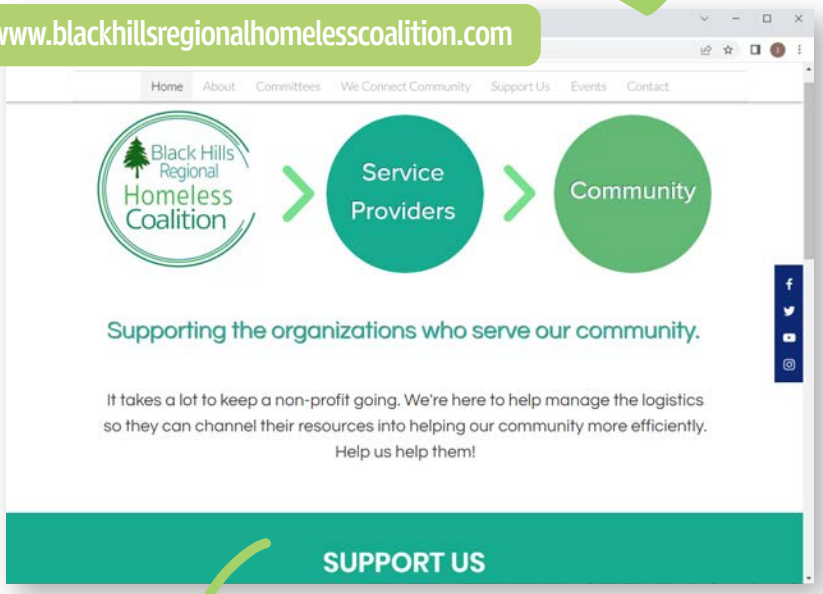


Community Window Decals

This window decal affiliates your business with the "We Connect Community" **AND** provides a tool for **ANY** guest to use, connecting them in a way that is meaningful to their situation.

Scan the QR code to access all other community connections through the Homeless Coalition Website.

www.blackhillsregionalhomelesscoalition.com



> This is a wonderful community-based initiative that will be another tool in our city to handle the situation our community faces regarding our houseless population.
>
> *- Lance Lehmann, City Council President*

> Journey On and resources such as the toolkit will help bridge the gap of our houseless relatives and the downtown business community. Initiatives like these show the power of cooperation and it is great to see everyone come together and come up with positive solutions.
>
> *- Domico Rodriguez, President & CEO of Main Street Square*

Use the direct links to the following:

Find Help

Options for the Person in crisis to access emergency resources and community services.

Donate Now

Options for the Person who wants to donate directly to the organizations helping those experiencing homelessness.

Volunteer

Options for the Person who wants to give of their time to help organizations supporting those in crisis.

Learn More

For the Person who wants to learn more about the issue and the community collaboration working to address homelessness.

Local Stories of Hope



Meet Dena

Since the age of 3, Dena has been in and out of foster care, in group homes, and oftentimes homeless sleeping on the floor of friends' and relatives' homes. "I do really feel like a burden when I am couch surfing…but it is either that or staying up all night walking around the city."

Now, at 19 years old and a single mother of a 5-month-old son, she has an apartment of her own, is a few classes away from getting her GED, and is part of a movement to bring awareness to the problem of youth homelessness.

> *I lost my keys to life, my parents. That is really your key to life. I just want to give my son a better life. It feels really good to go home and have a safe place to sleep. I am grateful for it. I really am."*
>
> *Everybody has a different story. Regardless of what I went through there is someone out there that has had it 10 times harder than I had it. I just have to be grateful.*



Meet Joe

Mike is an avid reader and aspired to be a history teacher following his military service. He moved to South Dakota with his significant other after being raised in the South, but when the relationship failed, he found himself lost and without direction.

For affordability, he moved into a storage unit where he continued to live for 6 years until discovered and evicted. Hopeless and full of anxiety, he began his journey of all-season camping outdoors, where threats and exploitation while homeless only further impacted his mental health.

Although a Veteran, he fell through the cracks of most programs until eligibility conditions expanded during the pandemic. With persistent affirmation and offers of support through the Veteran Outreach Center, he started to see a different future for himself. In less than 6 weeks, Mike relocated to Wyoming, enrolled in employment services and found permanent housing; signing a lease agreement for the first time in over 9 years.

> *After being homeless for 9 years, I am doing wonderful.*



Meet the Garcia Family

Living together as an extended family was the only way to make ends meet. They shared everything from the family's one vehicle and the limited number of bedrooms. They were lucky enough to have found a job that came with an apartment at reduced cost. However, the pandemic changed everything. Their landlord and primary employer could no longer afford to pay them. In this single act, they lost both their home and their income.

Unable to prepare, they resorted to living in their vehicle. As a household of seven, this was an impossible situation. Even with the prospect of a job, the first paycheck would not be received for over a month. After reaching out to the Helpline Center, they were able to find food and hotel assistance. Through diligent work and the support of a case manager over the coming months, they were able to secure work and a new lease with the assistance of federal housing programs designed to assist those in crisis.

> *Journey On makes me feel better about life. Street life isn't easy. Sometimes I want to give up. Thank you for helping to keep me going.*
>
> *- Unhoused citizen of Rapid City*

What Can I Do About Homelessness?

After reviewing this toolkit, you may feel that the issue of homelessness is so complex that you don't know what to do next. It all begins with the **POWER OF ONE** . . . one person, one choice, one action.

Based on what you have learned today, use the following tool to fill in the signs with ideas of what YOU can do tomorrow to make a difference.



We Connect Community

Connecting our Community to resources and opportunities to combat homelessness

We Connect Community

Connecting our Community to resources and opportunities to combat homelessness

Find Help

Call Helpline Center at #211
or
Call Journey On at 605.519.1066

Access emergency resources when in crisis.

scan for info

Donate Now

Text RCGIVES to 605.550.8193
or
Use a giving meter near you

Donate directly to organizations helping the homeless.

Volunteer

See Helpline Center Volunteer Opportunities

Give of your time to help organizations supporting those in crisis.

Learn More

Black Hills Regional Homeless Coalition

Learn about the community collaboration working to address homelessness.