

Boone County Suicide Response Team

Kentucky Legislature

Health Services Interim Joint Committees Meeting

June 18, 2025

Covington, Kentucky

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Boone County Suicide Response Team

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The Team

- Established February 2025
- Internal meeting of school personnel and police social worker early Feb
- First formal partner meeting (in Feb) organized by:
 - Boone County School District
 - Kentucky Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities, Suicide Prevention Branch
 - Boone County Coroner



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BOONE COUNTY
KENTUCKY

**Steering
Committee**

In Partnership with:

TEAM
KENTUCKY

CABINET FOR HEALTH
AND FAMILY SERVICES

NorthKey
COMMUNITY CARE



NKYHEALTH
NORTHERN KENTUCKY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



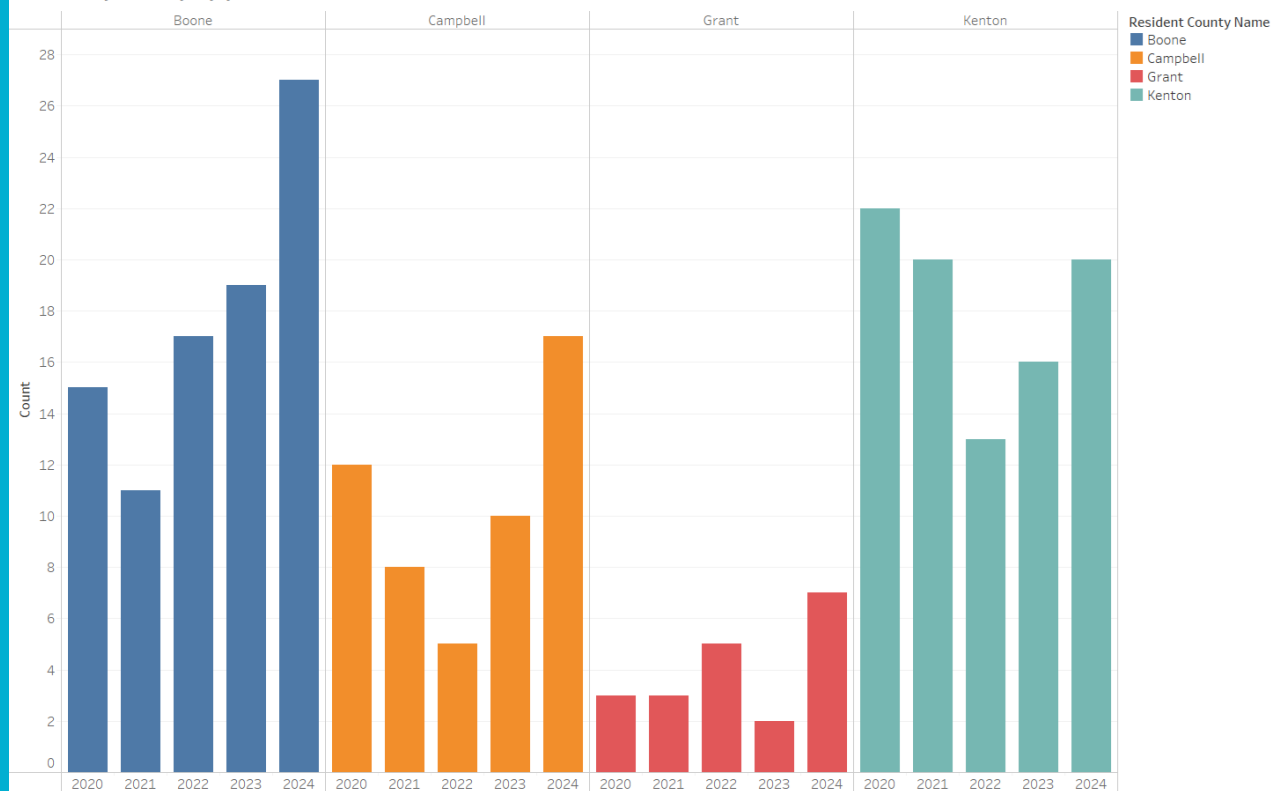
Broader Response Team: Boone County Judge/Executive's Office • Boone County Sheriff's Office • City of Florence • Florence Police Department • Boone County Fire Chiefs Association • Boone County Coroner • Northern Kentucky Health Department • NorthKey • Faith-based communities • Team Kentucky • Boone County School District • Walton-Verona Schools • Parents • St. Elizabeth HealthCare • SUN Behavioral Health • Department for Community Based Services • 1in5 • Boone County Alliance • Ethan's Purpose • Activating Hope • Survivors of suicide loss ##

What the Team is Responding To:

- Responding to:
 - Review of provisional data and information
 - 5 youth deaths since November 2024
 - 4 suicide deaths and 1 cause undetermined
 - Community concern

Data

Counts by county by year



Intentional Injury
Deaths, 2020-2025

Source: KY Vital
Statistics

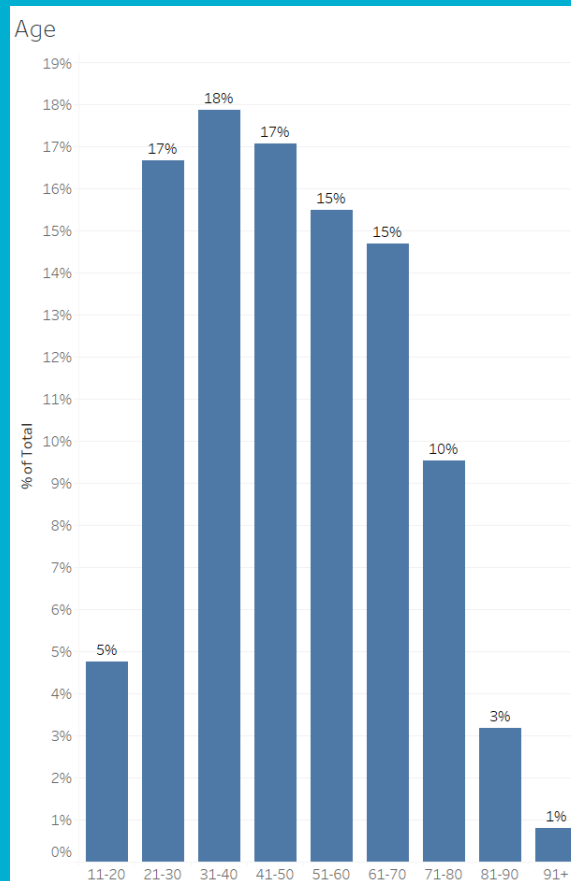
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Data

Intentional Injury Deaths, 2020-2025

Source: KY Vital Statistics



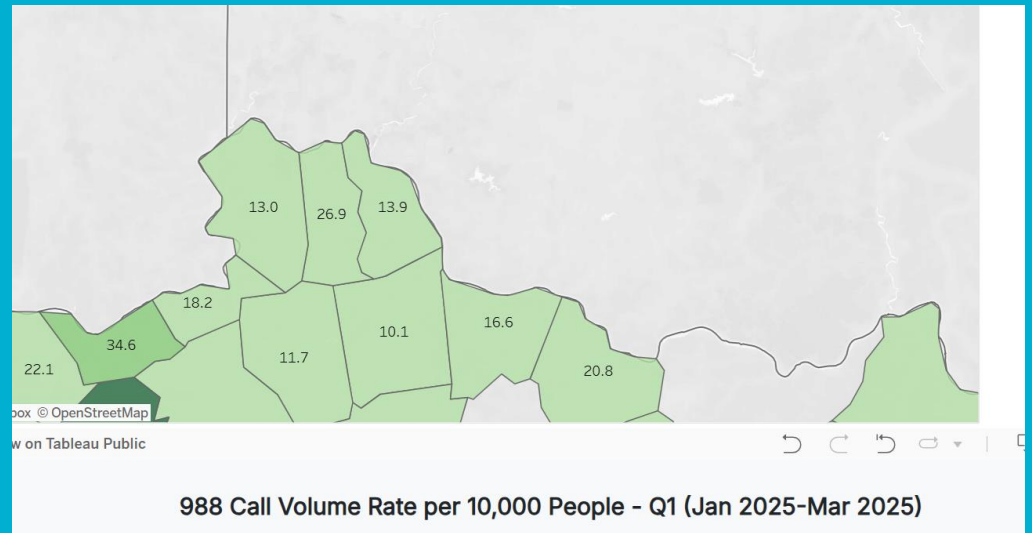
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Data - 988 Calls

988 Call Volume by County - Q1 (January - March 2025)

460	Kenton	NorthKey
183	Boone	NorthKey
130	Campbell	NorthKey
38	Carroll	NorthKey
30	Grant	NorthKey
16	Gallatin	NorthKey
15	Pendleton	NorthKey
11	Owen	NorthKey



Nov. 24- April 25 Top Reasons Caller Reached out to 988 (NorthKey only)

- Requesting Information
- Loneliness
- Friend and/or family issue
- Suicidality
- Mood Issues

First Meeting – Feb 20, 2025

- Introductions
- Parent advocates
- Introduction to Postvention
- Media contacts identified and next steps agreed upon
 - Boone County Fiscal Court
 - Boone County Schools
 - Northern Kentucky Health Department
- Parent liaison identified
- Activities currently planned by groups and organizations
- Child Fatality Review Committee overview
- Discussion
 - Data
 - Committee next steps - Media, postvention training, strategic planning, smaller group meeting
 - State support available



NEWS RELEASE

Contact:
Elaine Zeinner, Communications Sr. Manager
Boone County Fiscal Court
859-609-2588 (ext)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 24, 2025

Content Warning – This article discusses suicides. If you or a loved one are having thoughts of suicide, please call or text 988.

'You Are Not Alone:' Community Comes Together to Support Youth Mental Well-Being

Community agencies across Boone County are rallying together to help youth and teens experiencing mental health challenges. Guided by a research-backed approach, leaders from several organizations have formed the Boone County Suicide Response Team. Work is currently underway to develop a plan focused on suicide postvention, engagement and support.

The team was formed in response to the recent cluster of youth suicides in the county. There have been five juvenile deaths in Boone County since November 2024. Four of those were deaths by suicide; one cause of death was undetermined.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines a suicide cluster as "a group of suicides or suicide attempts that occur closer together in time, space, or both than would normally be observed for a community."

"Even one death is too many, and the death of five young people in our community is a call to action," says Gary W. Moore, Boone County Judge/Executive. "We must come together to support our youth, their families and others across our area. This response team is just a first step in ensuring our community has the support and resources it needs."

"Suicide is complex and conversation about it can be hard, but it is time we have those tough talks with our children, friends, family members and neighbors," Jennifer Mooney, PhD, MS, District Director of Health at the Northern Kentucky Health Department.

"We know that prevention is possible, and that by digging in, developing, implementing and sharing effective programs and resources, hope, resilience and recovery are possible," Dr. Mooney finishes.

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Postvention Actions – Training and Organizing

- Partner list created - 67 individuals
- Postvention Training - March 18, 2025
 - Open to all interested partners
 - Media needed to commit to entire training and strategic planning
 - Trainers/facilitators Kentucky Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities, Suicide Prevention Unit and National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), New Hampshire
 - Evidence Based practices in response
 - Loss Survivors - family presentation



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Postvention Actions – Training

- Strategic Planning - March 19-20, 2025
 - 15 areas for postvention
 - Discussion of current actions
 - Identification of areas needing focus
 - Planning for future actions - strategic plan generation
 - Determined group structure to drive work



- Events - over 20 in the community, organized by various sectors and organizations
 - Hope, education, support, resources, prayer and healing

Postvention Activities, Training and Messaging

Training

- Faith Based Organizations - March 17, 2025
 - 100 individuals invited, 20 attended
- Media - March 5, 2025
 - 68 (news managers, desk editors and reporters) invited, 30 attended
 - Participants shared their appreciation for the training
 - Feb - May - 67 stories reached 4.3 million people
 - Designated 1 person as the spokesperson
 - Consistency
 - Accuracy
 - Built on existing relationships - trust

Messaging Matters - Do no harm

- Concerned about:
 - suicide contagion
 - need for support and resources
- Safe messaging tools
 - One-on-one conversations with reports and video crew before, during and after interviews
 - Resources in press release, emails, conversations - consistently reiterated
- Media were receptive and responsive
 - Lack of awareness
 - Example from Channel 5

Framework for Successful Messaging
(National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention)

Ethical Reporting Guidelines for Media
(American Foundation for Suicide Prevention)

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Postvention Activities, Schools

- Crisis Response Team at District level organized and activated
 - Responding for recent loss
 - Counseling onsite
 - Communication - consistent, timely
 - Support, resources and referrals
- Review of current procedures and forms at district level and school level
 - Consulting with other schools - forms and procedures
 - Example - referrals for mental health assessments, reentry forms from inpatient, memorial guidelines, communication methods,
- Reviewing data
- Continue school based mental health services provided through NorthKey

Postvention Activities, Data

Understanding data requirements - some information required by law, but not to local public health.

- Data related to suicide is collected through Kentucky Violent Death Suicide Reporting system (KYVDRS) - de-identified info
 - Death certificate
 - Coroner/Medical Examiner reports
 - Police reports
 - Crime and toxicology reports
 - Child Fatality Reports

- Child Fatality Review Committee meeting dedicated to recent youth suicide deaths in Boone County- February 27, 2025
 - Systematic review of deaths
- Drafted data sharing agreements between NKY Health and Coroner- under review
 - Weekly reports of de-identified suspected suicide deaths
 - Coroner completing Suicide Assessment Form being
 - completed on suicide deaths
- Exploring data sharing from KDPH to NKY Health
- Monitoring syndromic surveillance

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Postvention Activities, Coordination and Communication of Services

- Creation of a handout to provide families at the scene of death
- Flow of information to Police Social Workers - first point of contact for families
 - Support and resources
 - Seamless communication - all organizations prepared
 - Example - recent adult death
- Boone County Alliance - coordinated distribution of 10,000 door hangers to households
- Question. Persuade. Respond Training for community and worksites

- Boone County Sheriff's offices - On-line and Internet Safety training
- LINK (local news outlet) - forum on mental health and youth



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Framework





Source: Suicide Prevention Resource Center [Site](#)

Framework

Source: CDC [Site](#)

STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES to achieve and sustain substantial reductions in suicide

STRATEGY	APPROACH
 1 Strengthen Economic Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve household financial security• Stabilize housing
 2 Create Protective Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce access to lethal means among persons at risk of suicide• Create healthy organizational policies and culture• Reduce substance use through community-based policies and practices
 3 Improve Access and Delivery of Suicide Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cover mental health conditions in health insurance policies• Increase provider availability in underserved areas• Provide rapid and remote access to help• Create safer suicide care through systems change
 4 Promote Healthy Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote healthy peer norms• Engage community members in shared activities
 5 Teach Coping and Problem-Solving Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support social-emotional learning programs• Teach parenting skills to improve family relationships• Support resilience through education programs
 6 Identify and Support People at Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Train gatekeepers• Respond to crises• Plan for safety and follow-up after an attempt• Provide therapeutic approaches
 7 Lessen Harms and Prevent Future Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intervene after a suicide (postvention)• Report and message about suicide safely

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Future Actions

- Assessment of resources to shape resource guides - survey
- Landscape analysis of data
- Liaison with families
- 988 marketing
- Coordinate mental health services
- Suicide Death dashboard
- Training - for many sectors
- Develop communication guidelines
- Media toolkit
- Policy templates for worksites, etc.
- Share work with other counties and KY
- Transition to prevention

SUICIDE POSTVENTION PROTOCOL RESPONSE PLAN COMPONENTS

	SUICIDE POSTVENTION PROTOCOL RESPONSE PLAN	SOCIAL SERVICES/MILITARY/FAITH BASED	FIRST RESPONDERS/LAW ENFORCEMENT	SCHOOLS/CAMPUSES	PHYSICAL HEALTH / MENTAL HEALTH	CIVIC/Health Dept
1	<i>Promotion and use of Media Recommendations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share safe messaging/media toolkits with coalition partners and local schools. Audit all BCA posts for alignment with safe reporting guidelines before sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak with family about drafting safe messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide media guidelines to all school communication personnel and yearbook sponsors. Ensure all external communications (press, website, social media) adhere to safe reporting practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designate a media lead responsible for coordinating messaging with partners and media contacts. Develop a media plan with sample stories, tone guidelines, and preferred language to support safe and uplifting narratives. Work with local press and organizations to shift media language to focus on hope, help, and recovery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a core media response team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Content calendar Anniversary Promotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated responses Regionwide training and awareness
2	<i>All communication guided by Safe Messaging</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus social media on messages of hope, healing, and connection. Offer templated posts for partners to share, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train staff (those involved with first 4 hours) in safe messaging Add emotional containment to large meeting planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a communication plan with Safe Messaging principles embedded in all scripts. Train spokespersons and building leaders on safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop universal talking points and guidelines that all partners and community agencies can use during and after a suicide event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide safe messaging to media Follow up with recommendations

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Future Actions

- Educate the community and stakeholder about safe messaging, resources, and best practices
- Educate local and state leaders about suicide prevention and effective policy
 - Importance of a State Coordinating Board
 - Oversight of existing legislation
 - Mental health education for school personnel and students
 - Required training for healthcare and service organizations
 - Policies to improve the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of suicide-related data

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What can I do right now?

Be attentive to your own language in personal conversations and professional

QPR Training:

<https://qprinstitute.com>

/

Review:

Suicide Prevention

Resource Center [Site](#) &

CDC [Site](#)



[Ethical Reporting
Guidelines for Media](#)
(American Foundation
for Suicide Prevention)



[Framework for Successful Messaging](#)
(National Action Alliance for Suicide
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Questions?

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