LITTLE SHELL VOICES

Official Little Shell Tribal Newsletter - November2026

A Season of Service and Gratitude

Boozhoo, Little Shell Family,

As November begins, I want to take a moment to recognize the people who make our Little Shell community strong. This month gives us several opportunities to reflect on the importance of service, family, and gratitude, especially as we observe Veterans Day, celebrate Native American Heritage Month, and gather with loved ones for Thanksgiving.

First, I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to all our Little Shell veterans and their families. Our people have a proud tradition of military service, and many of our citizens have answered the call to serve our country, even during the generations when our Tribe was fighting to have its own federal recognition restored. Their willingness to serve and sacrifice deserves our respect and gratitude.

November is also Native American Heritage Month, a time to celebrate the history, cultures, and contributions of Native people. For Little Shell, it is an opportunity to remember that our strength as a Tribe has always come from our people. Long before federal recognition was restored, our families and Elders worked to preserve our identity, traditions, and connections to one another. Their determination ensured that future generations would continue to know who we are.

As Chairman, I am reminded every day that service takes many forms. It is found in the veteran who served our country, the Elder who shares our history, the parent raising the next generation, the employee working to improve services for our citizens, and the neighbor who helps someone in need. Each of these contributions makes Little Shell stronger.

As we approach Thanksgiving, I hope we can all find time to appreciate the people who have made a difference in our lives. I also encourage our citizens to look for opportunities to give back, whether that means checking on an Elder, helping a neighbor, or simply spending time with family.

We have much to be thankful for as a Tribe. Our government and programs continue to grow, and we are creating opportunities that previous generations worked so hard to make possible. But our greatest strength has never been the buildings we occupy or the programs we administer. It has always been our people and the way we care for one another.

This November, I want to thank each of you for the role you play in keeping our community strong. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as your Chairman, and I wish all our Little Shell families a safe, peaceful, and happy Thanksgiving.

Miigwech,
Gerald Gray
Chairman, Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana

INSIDE

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NOVEMBER EVENTS

NOVEMBER EVENTS

LITTLE SHELL CULTURE CLASS



Connect, Learn, Belong

The Little Shell Culture Club invites youth, families, and community members of all ages to gather, learn, and reconnect with the traditions that shape who we are. Each session offers opportunities to explore traditional dance, drumming, songs, language, and other teachings that reflect the heart of Little Shell identity.

Culture Club is a welcoming space where knowledge is shared across generations and our stories continue to grow. Whether you are beginning your cultural journey or deepening what you already know, you will find encouragement, friendship, and a sense of belonging.

Everyone is welcome. Come take part in the movement, the music, and the moments that keep our culture strong.

For updates on dates, times, and locations, please contact the Little Shell Culture Department or follow the Tribe's Facebook page.

BINGO



November 4th and 19th
6pm to 8pm

Come enjoy Community Bingo Nights, an uplifting way to spend time with friends, family, and fellow community members. These evenings offer more than a chance to play bingo as they create space for laughter, conversation, and meaningful connection that strengthens our Little Shell community.

People of all ages are invited to join in, enjoy light refreshments, and take part in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Prizes and plenty of good energy are always part of the experience.

Community Bingo Nights highlight the importance of gathering together and supporting one another. We hope to see you there for a night of fun and community spirit.

TOBACCO AND CULTURE CLUB



Tobacco and Culture Club at East Middle School offers students a meaningful space to learn, grow, and connect with cultural teachings. Through this program, students explore the difference between commercial tobacco and traditional tobacco, gaining a deeper understanding of health, respect, and the role traditional tobacco holds within our culture.

Along with learning about tobacco harm and prevention, students receive cultural teachings that enrich their education and support a stronger sense of identity and belonging. The club is designed to be engaging, supportive, and empowering for youth as they navigate their cultural and personal development.

Upcoming Dates TBD

OTHER EVENTS

November 5th and 6th
9am to 3pm

Elders Rummage Sale being held at the LST Event Center 1529 Stuckey Road

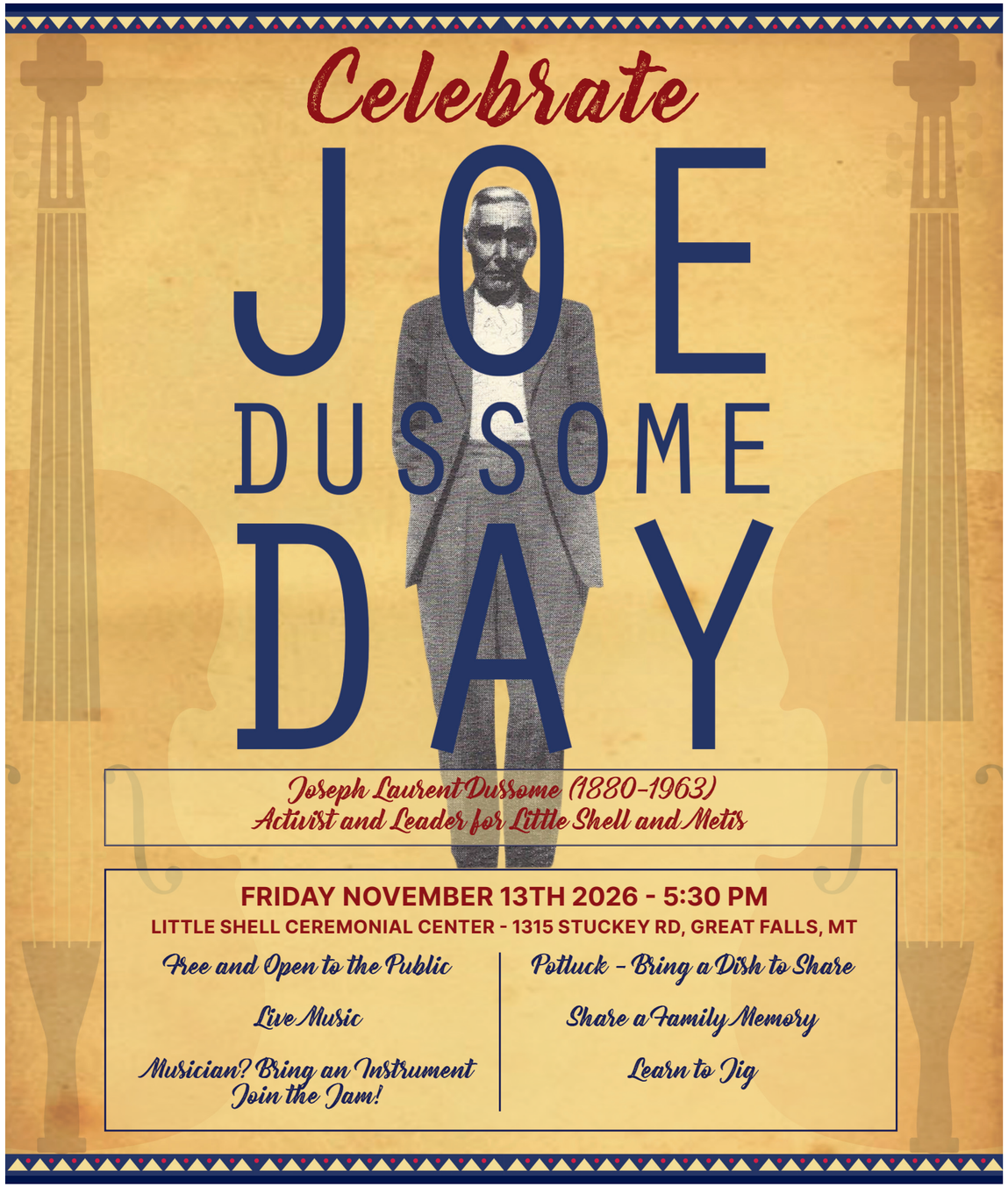
November 12th

Culture Night Contact Tobacco Prevention & Community Engagement Department for location and time.

November 12th

Crafting Event Contact Tobacco Prevention & Community Engagement Department for location and time

NOVEMBER EVENTS



COMMUNITY CORNER

Native American Heritage Month

Native American Heritage Month was first federally recognized in 1990 by President George H. W. Bush, however this was not the first time the United States took steps to recognize those Indigenous to Turtle Island.

Back in the early part of the 1900's several states adopted "American Indian Day", During the 1970's and 1980's "American Indian Week" became federally recognized.

It wasn't until 2019 that we, the Little Shell, received our federal recognition. The month of November, in honor of the Native American Heritage Month, is a perfect time to share our beautiful story and culture.



The Legend of the Dream Catcher:

A very long time ago there lived a tribal Elder named Asibikaashi, she was known to the Anishinaabe as the Spider Woman.

One day, Asibikaashi noticed a Spider spinning its web in the branches of an old cedar tree, noting the beauty in its creation – clearly a gift from Kitchi Manitou (the Great Spirit). She asked Spider to share the wisdom behind the web so she could create something herself that would protect her people from bad dreams.

Sensing the purity in Asibikaashi's intentions, Spider agreed to teach the Elder how to weave a web. They worked together through the night, first creating a hoop from the slender branch of a willow tree. With threads, Asibikaashi created an intricate pattern inside that hoop, starting with eight points in honor of her Spider teacher. She prayed for protection and good dreams the entire time she worked. Eventually, the Anishinaabe people spread too far and wide for Asibikaashi to create Dream Catchers for everyone. She passed her knowledge to the mothers and grandmothers of the tribe so they could continue making Dream Catchers for everyone.



Why the Fiddle:

The fiddle was first introduced to our Ancestors by the Hudson's Bay Company. The York boats were very large oar-powered vessels. In order to keep the voyagers rowing in time (and to stop the vessel from capsizing) a man with a fiddle was placed on board. The men would row in time to the music. Like many of the traditions, we took a little from our European influence (French and Scottish) and added a whole lot of pizzaz from our Indigenous families.



Traditional Ojibwe Patterns and Designs- Our Visual Language:

These patterns and designs are more than just simple decoration they represent our spirituality and identity as a people. These designs often depict our deep connection to our environment "Mother Earth". These designs were a way for our ancestors to tell their stories with beautiful floral motifs symbolizing interconnectedness and cycles of life while the animal figures such as bears symbolize spiritual guidance, power, and protection. Ojibwe art is often guided by the "Seven Grandfather Teachings" and their understanding of the importance of balance

HOUSING

PLEASE WELCOME LST HOUSING DEPARTMENT'S NEWEST TEAM MEMBER



George Cozino

My name is George Cozino I am the new Elder Housing Program Coordinator. I have been in different aspects of housing for 20 years including Maintenance and as a Property Manager. I am looking forward to working for Little Shell and helping where I am needed. If I'm not on my Harley enjoying scenic Montana, I am playing golf.

PROGRAMS HELPING OUR COMMUNITY





TOBACCO & CULTURE

PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEW TOBACCO PREVENTION SPECIALIST



Agnes Falmand-BlackWeasel

Agnes M. Flamand-BlackWeasel " Aoh-Ts-Sko-Yah-Akii (Blue Shawl Woman)", is an experienced administrator with a comprehensive background in policy interpretation, development, and implementation at Tribal, State, and Federal levels.

With extensive experience in managing complex programs and projects, she has a proven track record of successfully overseeing large-scale operations, such as the Child Support Enforcement Program, and the One Stop Workforce Center, and Tribal Law Enforcement in years past. Her expertise spans grant management, community organization, case management, and budget management, employment services, partnership development, Training Provider, and many other areas.

Throughout her career, Agnes has demonstrated an exceptional ability to manage diverse teams and build effective partnerships across various government agencies and community organizations. Her role as the Director/ Administrator at the Blackfeet Child Support Enforcement Program involved managing a substantial caseload and supervising a significant number of staff members. Agnes is skilled in policy advocacy and has successfully driven legislative changes to enhance community services.

Her knowledge of human resources and program management, combined with her dedication to improving services for her community, makes her an invaluable asset to any organization.

In everything Agnes does, she does with compassion and empathy and in addition to her role at child support, she is a dedicated and loving mom and grandma and currently takes care of five grandchildren. Her and her husband Earl run a working cattle ranch on the Blackfeet Reservation, and currently reside in Great Falls Mt.

ENROLLMENT

UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION - IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR TRIBAL MEMBERS

It is time for tribal citizens to update their information with the Tribe. Keeping your records current helps ensure you receive important notices and services without delay. Please take a few moments to review your details and make any needed updates.

Why This Matters

- **Accurate records** — helps the tribe maintain up-to-date Citizen information.
  Important communications — ensures you receive notices, announcements, and deadlines on time.
- **Eligibility** — supports continued access to services, programs, and benefits.
- **Family updates** — keeps household and dependent information aligned with current needs.

What Information to Update

- **Contact information** — phone number and email address
- **Mailing address** — including any recent moves or seasonal changes
- **Family changes** — marriage, divorce, births, deaths, or guardianship updates

How to Submit Your Updates

1. **Complete** the Tribe's change of information form or contact the enrollment office for assistance. The "Change of Address" form can be found on Montanalittleshelltribe.org under Tribal Resources.

2. **Submit** your updates as soon as possible so your record stays current. Submit completed forms by email: Enrollment@lstribe.org.
   Or by mail: 511 Central Avenue West, Great Falls,MT 59404

Thank you for taking the time to keep your records accurate and up to date. If you have questions or need help, please contact the Enrollment Office for assistance.

ENROLLMENT QUESTIONS?
CALL 406.315.2400 OR
EMAIL ENROLLMENT@LSTRIBE.ORG

ICWA



BECOME A FOSTER PARENT

The ICWA Department is looking to assist Little Shell Citizens in becoming licensed foster parents so our children can stay within their culture. There is such a need to keep our children in our culture.

Native American children make up one third of the children in foster care in Montana even though they are only 10 percent of the population of Montana. The Little Shell ICWA Department is dedicated to decreasing this over representation.

If anyone would like more information on ICWA please feel free to call me! 406-315-2400 ext. 120
Sincerely, Edith Colman
406-315-2400, ext. 120.
ICWA Caseworker
Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana

HEALTH

IT'S FLU SEASON!!!

As both a public health nurse and a nurse practitioner, I have seen how much prevention matters in keeping our families and communities healthy.

Flu season is upon us!

This is your yearly reminder that something as simple as getting a flu shot can make a meaningful difference, especially in Native communities.

Native American members can face a greater risk of severe complications from influenza. Protecting ourselves through vaccination is not just about our own health; it is also about protecting our elders, our children, our relatives with chronic health conditions, and those who may be more vulnerable to serious illness.

I understand that everyone has their own experiences and feelings about vaccines, and I believe in approaching these conversations with respect, compassion, and understanding. My goal is to share information, answer questions, and help families make the best decisions about their health.

Getting your flu shot is a simple step that can help reduce your risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and complications from influenza. When we take care of ourselves, we help protect the people around us, too. Our elders carry stories and traditions, our children represent the future, and every member of our community matters.

As we head into flu season, I encourage you to talk with your healthcare provider about getting vaccinated.

Members are welcome to stop by our clinic at your convenience to receive a flu shot—in the afternoons, no appointment necessary.

Let's continue to care for one another, protect our families, and strengthen the health of our communities.

Prevention is an act of caring for ourselves and our families.

Thanks,

Blair Tomsheck FNP-C
Little Shell Health Clinic



THE LITTLE SHELL HEALTH TEAM WOULD LIKE TO GIVE A BIG SHOUT OUT TO OUR NEWEST HIRE. WELCOME TO THE TEAM!!



Brandy Riley

I am the new Service and Access Specialist for Behavior Health with more than 25 years of experience in the medical field, spanning roles from billing to management. Over the course of my career, I have developed extensive knowledge and expertise, and I take great pride in the work I have done and my dedication, and commitment to helping others. Outside of work, family is my greatest joy. I love spending time with my family and being a proud grandma to one granddaughter, with another grandbaby on the way!

FOOD DISTRIBUTION



"GRATITUDE GROWS HERE." NOVEMBER IS FOR GIVING & GATHERING

October As we enter this season of gratitude, family, and tradition, the Little Shell Food Distribution Program gives thanks to you — our tribal citizens and community. We're honored to support your households with quality food each month and especially during the holidays.

This Thanksgiving, remember that FDPIR foods can help bring your holiday table to life.
From hearty soups to comforting sides and sweet treats — we've got the essentials to help you create a meaningful meal.

WELLNESS CORNER

FOOD DISTRIBUTION

NEED FOOD ASSISTANCE? APPLY ONLINE ANYTIME

Our FDPIR program provides monthly food packages to eligible tribal members — nutritious and shelf-stable foods for your household.

Apply online — quick & easy
Visit us at: 1301 Stuckey Rd, Great Falls, MT
Call us: 406-315-2400 ext. 130

NOVEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Thanksgiving Favorites:
This month's featured items include:
Canned Pumpkin & Cranberry Sauce – Great for side dishes, sauces, and pies!

Meal Planning Help:
Stop by to talk recipes or tips for building your Thanksgiving meal from FDPIR foods.

Holiday Closure Notice:
We will be closed from November 26th through November 30th. Please plan your food pick-up accordingly.

Hams are here to distribute:
Our 5 lbs. hams for the FDPIR Program are here to be distributed.

RECIPE IDEA: PUMPKIN CRANBERRY MUFFINS

Combine canned pumpkin, dried cranberries, and a bit of cinnamon for a festive fall muffin.
Delicious for breakfast or a snack — ask us for the recipe when you come in!

FROM OUR TABLE TO YOURS

Wishing you a safe, warm, and joyful Thanksgiving.
Thank you for allowing us to serve you and your families.
– Your Little Shell FDPIR Team

MENTAL HEALTH

HOW AND WHY THE 5 STEPS CAN HELP
HOW THE 5 STEPS CAN HELP SOMEONE WHO IS SUICIDAL

The five action steps for communicating with someone who may be suicidal are supported by evidence in the field of suicide prevention.



ASK

How – Asking the question "Are you thinking about suicide?" communicates that you're open to speaking about suicide in a non-judgmental and supportive way. Asking in this direct, unbiased manner, can open the door for effective dialogue about their emotional pain and can allow everyone involved to see what next steps need to be taken. Other questions you can ask include, "How do you hurt?" and "How can I help?" Do not ever promise to keep their thoughts of suicide a secret.

The flip side of the "Ask" step is to "Listen." Make sure you take their answers seriously and not to ignore them, especially if they indicate they are experiencing thoughts of suicide. Listening to their reasons for being in such emotional pain, as well as listening for any potential reasons they want to continue to stay alive, are both incredibly important when they are telling you what's going on. Help them focus on their reasons for living and avoid trying to impose your reasons for them to stay alive.

Why – Studies show that asking at-risk individuals if they are suicidal does not increase suicides or suicidal thoughts. In fact, studies suggest the opposite: findings suggest acknowledging and talking about suicide may in fact reduce rather than increase suicidal ideation.



BE THERE

How – This could mean being physically present for someone, speaking with them on the phone when you can, or any other way that shows support for the person at risk. An important aspect of this step is to make sure you follow through with the ways in which you say you'll be able to support the person – do not commit to anything you are not willing or able to accomplish. If you are unable to be physically present with someone with thoughts of suicide, talk with them to develop some ideas for others who might be able to help as well (again, only others who are willing, able, and appropriate to be there). Listening is again very important during this step – find out what and who they believe will be the most effective sources of help.

Why – Being there for someone with thoughts of suicide is life-saving. Increasing someone's connectedness to others and limiting their isolation (both in the short and long-term) has shown to be a protective factor against suicide. Thomas Joiner's Interpersonal-Psychological Theory of Suicide highlights connectedness as one of its main components – specifically, a low sense of belonging. When someone experiences this state, paired with perceived burdonsomeness (arguably tied to "connectedness" through isolating behaviors and lack of a sense of purpose) and acquired capability (a lowered fear of death and habituated experiences of violence), their risk can become severely elevated.

In the Three-Step Theory (or more commonly known as the Ideation-to-Action Framework), David Klonsky and Alexis May also theorize that "connectedness" is a key protective factor, not only against suicide as a whole, but in terms of the escalation of thoughts of suicide to action. Their research has also shown connectedness acts as a buffer against hopelessness and psychological pain.
By "being there," we have a chance to alleviate or eliminate some of these significant factors.



HELP KEEP THEM SAFE

How – First of all, it's good for everyone to be on the same page. After the "Ask" step, and you've determined suicide is indeed being talked about, it's important to find out a few things to establish immediate safety. Have they already done anything to try to kill themselves before talking with you? Does the person experiencing thoughts of suicide know how they would kill themselves? Do they have a specific, detailed plan? What's the timing for their plan? What sort of access do they have to their planned method?
Why – Knowing the answers to each of these questions can tell us a lot about the imminence and severity of danger the person is in. For instance, the more steps and pieces of a plan that are in place, the higher their severity of risk and their capability to enact their plan might be. Or if they have immediate access to a firearm and are very serious about attempting suicide, then extra steps (like calling for emergency help or driving them to an emergency department) might be necessary. The Lifeline can always act as a resource during these moments as well if you aren't entirely sure what to do next.

The Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health notes that reducing a suicidal person's access to highly lethal means (or chosen method for a suicide attempt) is an important part of suicide prevention. A number of studies have indicated that when lethal means are made less available or less deadly, suicide rates by that method decline, and frequently suicide rates overall decline. Research also shows that "method substitution" or choosing an alternate method when the original method is restricted, frequently does not happen. The myth "If someone really wants to kill themselves, they'll find a way to do it" often does not hold true if appropriate safety measures are put into place. The Help Keep Them Safe step is really about showing support for someone during the times when they have thoughts of suicide by putting time and distance between the person and their chosen method, especially methods that have shown higher lethality (like firearms and medications).

WELLNESS CORNER



HELP THEM CONNECT

How – Helping someone with thoughts of suicide connect with ongoing supports (like the 988 Lifeline) can help them establish a safety net for those moments they find themselves in a crisis. Additional components of a safety net might be connecting them with supports and resources in their communities. Explore some of these possible supports with them – are they currently seeing a mental health professional? Have they in the past? Is this an option for them currently? Are there other mental health resources in the community that can effectively help?
One way to start helping them find ways to connect is to work with them to develop a safety plan. This can include ways for them identify if they start to experience significant, severe thoughts of suicide along with what to do in those crisis moments. A safety plan can also include a list of individuals to contact when a crisis occurs.
Why – Impact of Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training on the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline found that individuals that called the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline were significantly more likely to feel less depressed, less suicidal, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful by the end of calls handled by Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training-trained counselors. These improvements were linked to ASIST-related counselor interventions, including listening without judgment, exploring reasons for living and creating a network of support.



FOLLOW UP

How – After your initial contact with a person experiencing thoughts of suicide, and after you've connected them with the immediate support systems they need, make sure to follow-up with them to see how they're doing. Leave a message, send a text, or give them a call. The follow-up step is a great time to check in with them to see if there is more you are capable of helping with or if there are things you've said you would do and haven't yet had the chance to get done for the person.

Why – This type of contact can continue to increase their feelings of connectedness and share your ongoing support. There is evidence that even a simple form of reaching out, like sending a caring postcard, can potentially reduce their risk for suicide.

Studies have shown a reduction in the number of deaths by suicide when following up was involved with high risk populations after they were discharge from acute care services. Studies have also shown that brief, low cost intervention and supportive, ongoing contact may be an important part of suicide prevention. Please visit our Follow-Up Matters page for more.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU LOVE IS EXPERIENCING A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS, REMEMBER YOU ARE NOT ALONE. CALL OR TEXT 988-THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE TO LISTEN.
988lifeline.org