

BEYOND SEPTEMBER GUIDE

How to Get Involved in Your Community

Connection is protection. Getting involved gives pain somewhere useful to go — and communities genuinely need people who understand this from the inside. Here's how to find your place, at whatever pace is right.

Why involvement helps the helper

Purpose, routine, and belonging are three of the strongest protective factors against suicide. Volunteering and advocacy deliver all three at once. Many of the strongest voices in suicide prevention — including the founder of Beyond September — started as people who lost someone or survived, and decided to show up.

Ways in, from smallest to biggest

- **Show up once.** Attend a community walk, a town awareness event, or a support group meeting. No commitment, just presence.
- **Volunteer locally.** Mental-health nonprofits, crisis lines, community centers, and hospitals all need reliable people. NAMI affiliates and AFSP chapters run on volunteers.
- **Share the message.** Post resources, wear the message, bring the conversation into your workplace, school, or faith community. Small and steady beats big and rare.
- **Get trained.** QPR and Mental Health First Aid are widely offered, low-cost trainings that teach anyone how to recognize and respond to someone in crisis.
- **Advocate.** Local task forces, school boards, and state legislation all move when ordinary people testify. Your experience is expertise.
- **Lead something.** A walk team, a workplace lunch-and-learn, a monthly meetup. Movements are built by people who simply started.

Pace yourself

- Choose roles that fill you up, not roles that keep you raw. It's fine to help behind the scenes.
- Take breaks without guilt. September is heavy for many of us — which is exactly why this work needs to happen all year.
- Your recovery comes first. A sustainable volunteer helps for years; a burned-out one helps for a month.

Ready to bring Beyond September into your school, workplace, or community? Visit beyondseptember.org/organizations — and see current campaigns at beyondseptember.org/campaigns.

Sources & further reading

- NAMI — Get involved: nami.org • AFSP — Chapters & walks: afsp.org
- QPR Institute: qprinstitute.com • Mental Health First Aid: mentalhealthfirstaid.org

Beyond September is an awareness and education initiative. This guide is general education — it is not medical, mental-health, or crisis care, and it is not a substitute for advice from a qualified professional. If you are struggling right now, call or text **988** or chat at 988lifeline.org. If you are in immediate danger, call **911**.