



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2024.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Chesterfield County
Program Title: Mental Health Is Ageless
Program Category: Health & Human Services

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Melissa K. Ackley, LCSW
Title: Prevention Services Manager
Department: Chesterfield Mental Health Support Services
Telephone: 804-706-2010 Website: chesterfield.gov/preventsuicide
Email: ackleym@chesterfield.gov

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: James D. Worsley
Title: Deputy County Administrator, Human Services
Signature:

2024 VACo Achievement Award Entry:

Mental Health is Ageless- Chesterfield County

Executive Summary:

Chesterfield County Government, in partnership with the Chesterfield Suicide Awareness and Prevention Coalition, developed a multifaceted *Mental Health is Ageless* campaign designed to increase awareness of how to recognize and respond to signs that an older adult may be having thoughts of suicide and to promote positive mental health in older adults through connection to others, meaningful activities, and resources. The creation of this older adult focused suicide prevention campaign filled a gap in suicide prevention campaign messaging focused on older adults, their family members, and their health care providers.

Highlights of the reach of our campaign include:

- *Mental Health is Ageless* social media posts resulted in 13,442 impressions, a reach of 10,547 and 543 engagements.
- 178 [Webpage](#) pageviews
- Local radio ad reach of 126,400, with a frequency of 3.8, resulting in 482,400 gross impressions.
- Chesterfield Unplugged Podcast generated 200 views/listens
- 48 resource packets mailed to primary care providers.
- 4 presentations to professional groups that serve older adults
- 3 presentations to older adults
- 1000 American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Senior and Suicide Brochures disseminated through partner organizations and at community events

The Challenge:

September is recognized internationally as Suicide Prevention month. According to the Center For Disease Control people ages 85 and older had the highest rates of suicide in 2022 followed by people ages 75-84. In Virginia in 2021, people ages 75-84 had the highest rates of suicide (21.6 per 100,000), exceeding the national average (18.4 per 100,000). Based on this data, our planning group decided to focus on suicide in older adults for our September 2023 Suicide Prevention campaign. Results of focus groups conducted early in our planning process indicated that many older adults and those that care about or for them consider depression to be a standard and expectable part of aging. Additionally, older adult focus group participants indicated that they were not very comfortable talking about mental health. They stated that if they did so they would talk to their adult child or their primary care provider. Our campaign planning group was not able to identify a comprehensive suicide prevention campaign focused on older adults, their family members, and their health care providers.

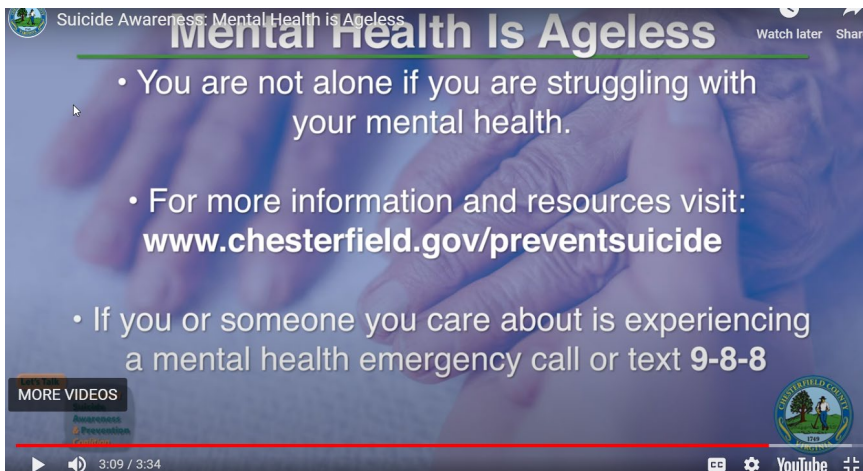
Description of the Program

Chesterfield County Government and the Chesterfield Suicide Awareness and Prevention developed and implemented a multi-faceted *Mental Health is Ageless* campaign focused on three primary messages. These messages are:

- Depression and suicide are not a standard part of aging. It is important to be aware of signs of mental health concerns and connect to help if needed.
- Being involved in meaningful recreational, creative, and social activities contributes to positive mental health.
- You are not alone if you are struggling with your mental health. Reach out for help. Resources are available.

Campaign strategies included:

- Three *Mental Health is Ageless* videos, featuring older adults who live in Chesterfield telling the stories of what helps them maintain positive mental health and professionals in Chesterfield talking about strategies and resources. While the focus of our campaign was on positive mental health and encouraging help seeking behavior, we also felt it was important to provide information about mental health resources and other resources for older adults in our community. Therefore, each video ended with the following image.



- *Mental Health is Ageless* social media posts that were shared on both County Government's and Chesterfield Suicide Awareness and Prevention Coalition member organizations' social media

- Resource packets mailed to local primary care providers that serve older adults, including a “Dear Colleague” letter from the Director of our Health District and the Director of our Community Service Board, a directory of local resources for older adults, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention’s brochure related to Seniors and Suicide, and the University of Washington AIMS Center’s guidelines for developing protocols for suicide prevention in primary care.
- 4 presentations to professional groups that serve older adults
- 3 presentations to older adults
- [Webpage](#) containing campaign materials
- [Podcast](#)
- Print material distribution
- Radio ads
- Distribution of American Foundation for Suicide Prevention’s Senior and Suicide Brochure through partner organizations and at community events

Financing:

Staff Time	Staff time from all agencies was provided a no charge to this coordinated project
Paid Radio	\$3,000
Print Products	Primarily provide in kind. Approximately \$250 in print shop expenses.
Postage	\$33.00
Total	\$3,033.00

Staffing:

Chesterfield County and Chesterfield Suicide Awareness and Prevention Coalition's *Mental Health Is Ageless* campaign is an outstanding example of an initiative that promotes intergovernmental and cross-sector cooperation and coordination to meet a gap in available resources. The Chesterfield Suicide Awareness and Prevention Coalition is led by a Chesterfield County Mental Health Support Services Program manager and includes representatives from Chesterfield-Colonial Heights Social Services, Chesterfield County Public Schools, eight non-profit organizations, two faith-based organizations and two concerned citizens. Chesterfield County Constituent and Media Services, Chesterfield Community Engagement and Resources, Chesterfield County Public Library and Chesterfield County Information Systems Technology all contributed to development and/or implementation of the *Resilient Chesterfield* campaign. The Capital Area Agency on Aging was an essential part of campaign development and dissemination.

The Results of the Program:

Chesterfield County and the Chesterfield Suicide Awareness and Prevention Coalition achieved our goal of developing and implementing a comprehensive suicide prevention campaign focused on older adults, their family members, and their health care providers.

Highlights of the reach of our campaign include:

- *Mental Health is Ageless* social media posts resulted in 13,442 impressions, a reach of 10,547 and 543 engagements.
- 178 [Webpage](#) pageviews
- Local radio ad reach of 126,400, with a frequency of 3.8, resulting in 482,400 gross impressions.
- Chesterfield Unplugged Podcast generated 200 views/listens
- 48 resource packets mailed to primary care providers
- 4 presentations to professional groups that serve older adults
- 3 presentations to older adults
- 1000 American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Senior and Suicide Brochures disseminated through partner organizations and at community events

Worthiness of Award:

The *Mental Health Is Ageless* campaign reached over 136,000 people with a comprehensive suicide prevention campaign focused on older adults, their family members, and their health care providers. The creation of this resilience focused suicide prevention campaign filled a gap in suicide prevention campaign efforts focused on decreasing suicide in older adults, the age group with highest rates of suicide in both the United States and Virginia. *Mental Health Is Ageless* Campaign materials have been used in a variety of settings since Suicide Prevention Month in September 2023 and will be used in future campaigns, including Mental Health Month in May 2022.

Supplemental Materials:

- Mental Health is Ageless Videos
<https://youtu.be/ETb0GL2pFQs>
<https://youtu.be/Z7AS2Fn5BXY>
<https://youtu.be/IMXvMmnt6v0>
- [Chesterfield Council on Aging Resource Directory For Older Adults](#)
- [American Foundation For Suicide Prevention's Seniors and Suicide Brochure](#)
- Dear Colleague Letter (attached)



Chesterfield County, Virginia
Department of Mental Health Support Services

6801 Lucy Corr Blvd – P.O. Box 92– Chesterfield, VA 23832
Phone: (804) 748-1227 – Fax: (804) 768-9205 – TDD: (804) 768-7200

Kelly Fried
Executive Director

Dear Colleague:

September is Suicide Awareness Month. As you know, suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the United States. The 2022 suicide data released by the CDC in August 2023 indicated that people ages 85 and older had the highest rates of suicide (22.4 per 100,000) followed by people ages 75-84 (19.6 per 100,000). In Virginia in 2021, people ages 75-84 had the highest rates of suicide (21.6 per 100,000), exceeding the national average (18.4 per 100,000). We are writing to ask for your participation in the Chesterfield Suicide Awareness and Prevention's 2023 suicide prevention month campaign focused on increasing awareness about how to recognize and respond to signs of suicide in older adults.

Enclosed with this letter are:

- Fliers for upcoming Talk Saves Lives Seniors workshop
- Seniors and Suicide Brochures
- Senior Resource Guides
- A guide to developing protocols for Suicide Prevention in Primary Care.

We would appreciate your engagement by sharing these resources with your patients and staff. If you have any questions or would like additional materials, please reach out to Melissa Ackley, Chesterfield Mental Health Support Services Prevention Services Manager and Co-Chair of the Chesterfield Suicide Awareness and Prevention Coalition at ackleym@chesterfield.gov or 804-706-2010.

Sincerely,

Alexander P Samuel MD MPH
Director
Chesterfield Health District

Kelly A. Fried
Executive Director
Chesterfield Community Services Board
Chesterfield Department of Mental Health Support Services