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Prevention



## Seize the Awkward Student Videos Creative Brief

### Overview

Launched in 2018 in partnership with the Ad Council, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and The Jed Foundation (JED), the [Seize the Awkward](#) campaign equips young people everywhere with the inspiration, tools and language to reach out to a friend and check in on their mental health. The latest iteration of the campaign, an original music video [“Whatever Gets You Talking”](#) and a suite of digital, social, radio and broadcast creative assets shows the many ways young people can check in with their friends and start and sustain mental health conversations. We give young people the information and resources to get over a potentially awkward hump and onto the conversation that matters.

We hope that with your help in sharing this important message, we’ll encourage those between the ages of 16-24-years-old to check in with their friends. To spread the word about the campaign on social media, we’ve provided several ideas you can execute across your social platforms. Please use the campaign hashtag, **#SeizeTheAwkward**, URL, [seizetheawkward.org](http://seizetheawkward.org), or the Instagram handle, [@SeizeTheAwkward](https://www.instagram.com/SeizeTheAwkward), whenever possible.

### Issue Background

**Suicide is the second leading cause of death amongst young adults.** Young adulthood is a critical time in a person’s life when they may experience great stress from multiple life changes like leaving high school, moving from home and beginning college. It’s also a time when mental health issues frequently emerge and despite effective treatment options, there are often long delays between the first appearance of symptoms and when people go to receive counseling or treatment.

The friends of those struggling with mental health issues can be incredibly influential in helping them get the help that they need when they need it. **76% of young adults will turn to a peer in a time of crisis for support.** This generation is ready to crack open the cultural conversation about mental health, but they’re missing the language to do it.

### PROPOSED CREATIVE IDEAS

The following ideas are proposed for you to activate *Seize the Awkward* across your owned social media platforms including Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

#### Idea 1: Share our GIPHY stickers

At the heart of our campaign is a speech bubble symbol that we use to represent talking about mental health. This symbol is the main icon featured in all the new creative.

We’d love for you to show your support by inserting one of our GIPHY stickers above you like a speech bubble in a selfie or video and discuss the importance of reaching out to a friend about their mental health. You can find the stickers by searching “Seize the Awkward” in Instagram Stories, Snap or TikTok. Choose whichever sticker you like best! Below are a few social copy options/talking points you can use to share. Please use **#SeizeTheAwkward** and tag [@SeizeTheAwkward](https://www.instagram.com/SeizeTheAwkward).



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### Social copy/talking points

- We don't need to be there, to be there for our friends.
- I'm excited to support *Seize the Awkward*, a campaign showcasing the many ways you can check in with a friend around their mental health.
- There are so many ways to start the conversation.
- Whether you reach out while playing video games, over a virtual dinner, or via a call, text, emoji or GIF.
- Search "Seize the Awkward" to use a GIF like this to reach out to a friend.
- [seizetheawkward.org](http://seizetheawkward.org) also has more tools to help you take care of yourself and your friends.

### Idea 2: Personal story video

Create a video where you share a story around the importance of talking to your friends about important issues, including mental health. You could also describe your own experiences with mental health issues. Please emphasize the value of checking in with friends. Guiding questions that can be answered, as well as talking points, are included below.

### Guiding questions and talking points

- Why is it important to you to be able to talk to your friends about important issues including mental health?
- Why does it help to have a friend who you're able to talk to about how you're feeling?
- How did you reach out to a friend who was struggling? Or how did a friend reach out to you?
- Do you have a personal experience with mental illness/mental health struggles?
  - If you struggled personally:
    - What was your experience?
    - Did a friend help you in any way? What did they do that made a difference? Why did it help?
    - What is one piece of advice you would give to someone who is supporting a friend struggling?
    - How do you support or care for your mental health today?

### Idea 3: Q&A video

Create a Q&A style video with one of your closest friends and take turns asking each other questions, providing an opportunity to talk about mental health.

### Sample questions

- How have you been lately?
  - This would be an opportunity to talk about your mental health if either of you would like to share you've been struggling lately or if you've improved
  - It would be an optimal way of showing that starting a conversation about mental health doesn't have to be difficult
- What are the ways you show your friends that you care about them?
  - This could be an opportunity to talk about how you check in on the mental health of your friends and how you start that conversation.
- Who are people who have gotten you through a difficult time?
  - An opportunity to talk about the ways in which friends have started the conversation with you



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- How did this person make a difference?
- Why did it help?

#### **Idea 4: Share our existing social media content**

If you're unable to create unique content but still want to support the campaign, one way to do so is to by sharing existing campaign content on your own social channels. The following are some suggested social copy that you can use for reference. Please use the campaign hashtag, **#SeizeTheAwkward**, URL, [seizetheawkward.org](https://seizetheawkward.org), or the Instagram handle, [@SeizeTheAwkward](https://www.instagram.com/SeizeTheAwkward), whenever possible.

#### **Social copy**

- Reaching out to a friend about their mental health can make a big difference. Whether that's through a call, text, GIF or emoji. Check out [seizetheawkward.org](https://seizetheawkward.org) for tips to start the conversation. #seizetheawkward
- There are so many ways to start the conversation about mental health with a friend! Reaching out can make a big difference. For more tools to start talking, head to [seizetheawkward.org](https://seizetheawkward.org). #seizetheawkward

**The following are links to the campaign videos to include in your posts, for easy reference:**

- PSA – “Whatever Gets You Talking” (longform): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJDNCpFlje8&t=20s>
- PSA – “Whatever Gets You Talking” (:60): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGOaN0jLFXA>
- PSA – “Whatever Gets You Talking” (:30): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01RK2pfXAxU>

**The following are sponsor handles that you might want to include or tag in your posts:**

- JED: @jedfoundation
- AFSP: @afspnational

#### **GENERAL TALKING POINTS**

Below are general campaign talking points you should feel free to include in any social content you're sharing.

- There are so many ways to start the conversation about mental health with a friend! Reaching out can make a big difference.
- Visit [SeizeTheAwkward.org](https://SeizeTheAwkward.org) to find helpful tips and resources on how you can help a friend who may be struggling with their mental health. If you need additional support, you or your friend, can always text “SEIZE” to 741741 or call 800-272-TALK (8225). It's free. They won't judge, anything you tell them is confidential unless it's essential to contact emergency services to keep you or your friend safe.
- Seize the Awkward is a campaign to help empower young adults to reach out to a friend who may be struggling with their mental health.

#### **LANGUAGE GUIDELINES**

**Do:**



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SEIZE THE AWKWARD

- Be thoughtful about how you use the word “awkward.” Starting a conversation about mental health or mental health issues may be awkward for some people. But we don’t want to over imply that talking about mental health with a friend is awkward for everyone or should be. It might be in some cases but not necessarily in all cases.
- Avoid phrases like “it doesn’t matter what you” because it could to some extent.
  - The emphasis should be on the fact that you know your friend best, so trust your instincts/guts. It’s better to bring it up than to say or do nothing at all. What’s important is that you take action to help your friend.
- We want to emphasize encouraging people to dive in and ask the question or start the conversation about what can be a difficult or delicate subject.
- Keep language straightforward and conversational. Avoid overly formal or technical language.
- Employ a light tone but (but don’t belittle or joke about the people who have mental health issues, and don’t joke about the act of reaching out and seizing the awkward).
- Use the phrase “mental health” when necessary. Part of the goal of this campaign is to destigmatize conversations around mental health (and the phrase “mental health” in particular).
- Refer to friends as “they” (rather than “he/she”) to avoid issues of gender and keep language informal and colloquial.
- Be honest about the dangers of neglecting mental health problems.

**Don’t:**

- Put up barriers that young people could use to avoid talking to their friends.
- Talking about suicide directly. The campaign is focused on mental health and tackles these issues farther upstream.