

FIND
YOUR
PEOPLE.



Beyond silos

Social connection as an
upstream protective factor
for older adults



**Common experiences that often
come with aging** — retirement,
illness, loss of a partner or friend,
moving — **can make social isolation
and loneliness more likely.**

Social connection — the structure, function, and quality of our relationships with others — **is a critical and under-appreciated contributor to individual and population health, community safety, resilience, and prosperity.**

Source

Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community.



FIND
YOUR
PEOPLE.

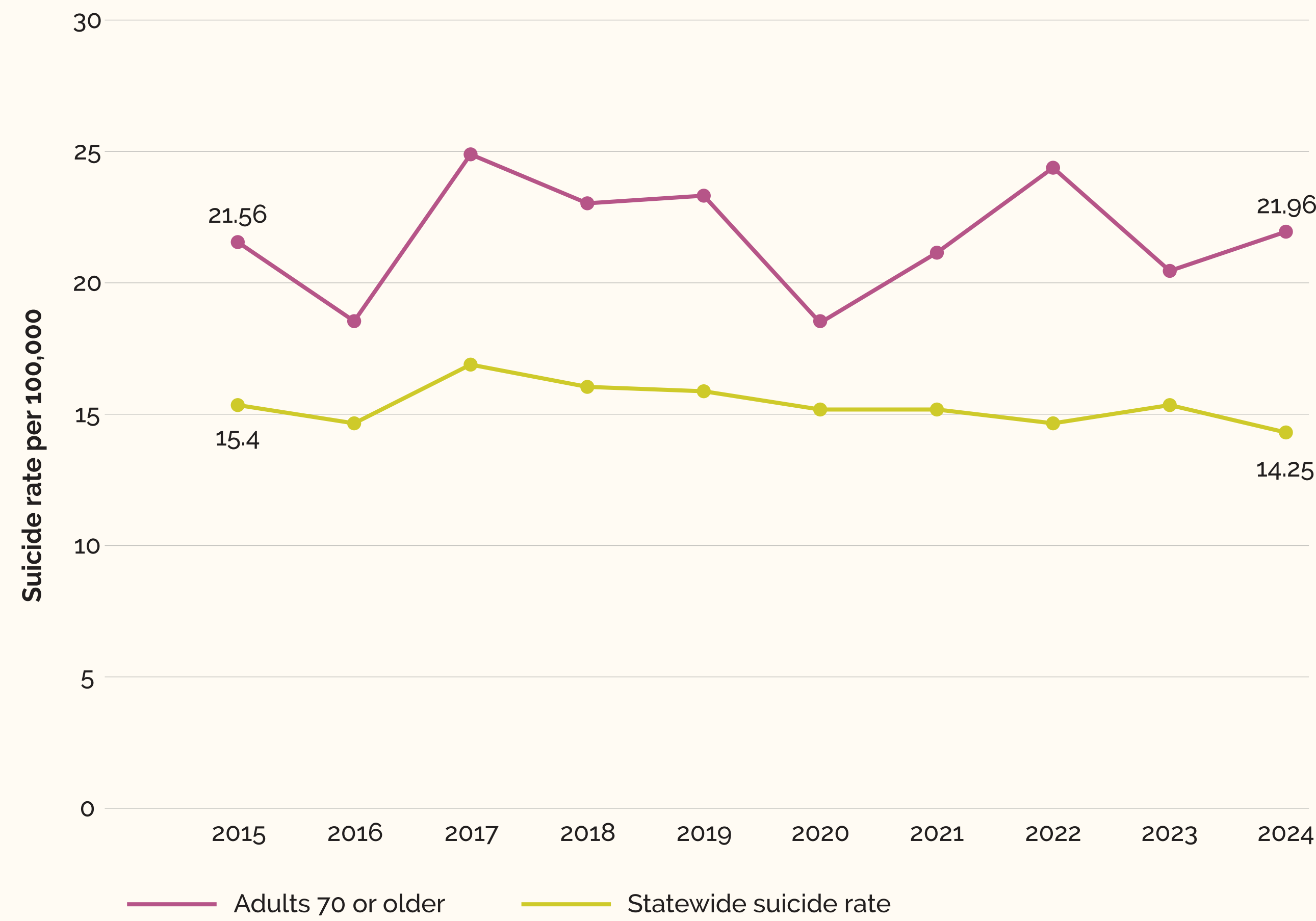
The text is written in a white, hand-drawn, sans-serif font. Two teal-colored curved arrows are positioned around the text. The first arrow starts to the left of the word 'FIND' and curves downwards and to the right, pointing towards the word 'YOUR'. The second arrow starts to the right of the word 'YOUR' and curves downwards and to the left, pointing towards the word 'PEOPLE'.



Start here.



Comparing suicide rates of older adults in Washington with the statewide average



In Washington state, the suicide rate among older adults (65 years and older) has been higher than the national rate since 2010.

Source
Washington State Department of Health (Reporting by
Taylor Blatchford, mark by Mark Nowlin / The Seattle times)



Surveys



Insight interviews



Focus groups



We heard loud and clear that a sense of personal agency – **honoring people's sense of self-reliance and individualism** – was an important motivator.







Section 1

Campaign overview

- The Washington State Department of Health is creating a campaign to promote social connection among adults 55 and older. The state is working with a marketing agency called DH to create this campaign.
- The Find Your People campaign will feature Washington residents ages 55 and older spending time with other people in ways that are important to them.
- We are looking for candid photos, videos and stories about older adults' connections with friends, relatives, neighbors and others!
- Submit up to **five** photos and/or videos. Chosen submissions will be featured on the campaign website and in TV and digital advertisements that appear statewide.
- You could be hiking with pals, teaching or learning a skill, playing cards, making music, exercising, or just talking or laughing together. The photos can be recent, from long ago, or anywhere in between.
- **Bottom line:** The campaign is looking for photos and videos of people ages 55 and older connecting with others, no matter how.
- If you have any questions, please email MariahJ@WeAreDH.com

Section 2

About you

Information to help us track submissions and contact participants.

1. What is your name? (First and last, please.) *

Enter your answer

Section 3

Photo/video submission guidance

- Photos and videos should feature at least one older adult (55 and older).
- Photos and videos should feature more than one person, but a range of group sizes is welcome, from pairs to large gatherings.
- A range of ages is welcome, as long as at least one person in the image(s) is 55 and older.
- Different kinds of relationships are welcome (siblings, group members, parents, partners, friends, coworkers, classmates or others).
- Photos and videos should show moments of connection and interaction. Think togetherness, friendship, family, quality time.
- Photos and videos could (but don't have to) show members of different generations together, whether you're sharing knowledge and ideas with people younger or older than you or just being together.
- They can be recent or from long ago, taken with your smartphone or digital camera or scanned from print.
- Candid photos are encouraged (where the people in the photo aren't posing), but posed shots are good, too, as long as they're not overly posed, planned or edited.
- Amateur photos and videos taken with any kind of phone or camera are great. What matters to us is what's happening in the images, not how technically "good" the images are.
- We encourage images that show a range of emotional experiences and moods (happy, somber, uplifting, emotional, silly, serious and so on).

Section 4

File upload instructions

If you need assistance with submitting your photos or videos, please send an email to MariahJ@WeAreDH.com. Our team will be happy to help walk you through the process.

1. To submit your photos and videos, follow this link. **Don't forget to return to this form after submitting your files!** https://desautelhege.sharepoint.com/:f/s/FindYourPeople-DOHGSP/Eu8Wudvi0k1Mtc1sv1_1AFQ8BWjO3MmT0vTlfHC0MI6Ifg
 1. When you click on the link, a new tab or window will open.
 2. Click the button that says, "Select Files."
 3. Use the window that appears on your phone or computer to find the files you want to submit. (This step will vary depending on the device you're using. Please reach out to us if you need assistance!)
 4. Please submit no more than 5 files.
 5. Click "Submit" and wait until you see a green check mark with the words, "Finished uploading."
 6. Be sure to add your full name to your file submission, and enter it exactly as you did on this form. This will help us keep track of whose photos are whose!
1. When you finish uploading your files, **please return to this form** and tell us about the images you shared.

6. Please tell us a little about what is happening in each of your photos or videos. Which person is you? Who else is present?

Enter your answer

+ Add new question







[Home](#) [Find Your People Tool](#) [Building Connection](#) [Veterans](#) [Partner Resources](#)

A guide to help you find your people

Interested in connecting with others but not sure where to start? This tool helps you explore social and recreational activities based on your interests and life experiences.

Take a few minutes to try it out. It's low-pressure, easy to use and private. We don't collect any personal information. And you might get some good ideas!



[mwal-form-container id="v3m4jrsoa" theme="none"]

1. I am... (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Retired
- ☐ New to my area
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ A caregiver
- ☐ Living with an illness
- ☐ A veteran
- ☐ Living alone
- ☐ Living with dementia or someone who has dementia

2. I enjoy or want to try... (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Getting creative with art, music or writing
- ☐ Being active or spending time outdoors
- ☐ Reading, learning or talking about ideas
- ☐ Teaching or mentoring
- ☐ Helping others or volunteering
- ☐ Civic engagement (taking action to improve society)
- ☐ Learning about different cultures
- ☐ Playing games
- ☐ Joining clubs
- ☐ Faith-based or spiritual gatherings
- ☐ Using technology to connect with others
- ☐ Casual gatherings
- ☐ Looking at art or listening to music

3. My community is... (Select one.)

- ☒ Urban
- ☐ Suburban
- ☐ Rural

4. I live... (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ In a senior community or assisted living setting
- ☐ With my partner or spouse, other family, friends or others
- ☐ By myself

5. I live in _____ County

Adams

6. It can be hard to meet up with people because... (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ I don't drive or have access to transportation
- ☐ I have mobility issues
- ☐ I'm not comfortable using technology
- ☐ I feel nervous or anxious
- ☐ Money is tight
- ☐ There aren't nearby activities that interest me
- ☐ I don't know many people nearby

Submit



When you're all dressed up and have somewhere to go

A Halloween party — like this senior center bash — offers more than fun. Connection and even a little silliness contribute to our health and sense of well-being. In fact, the Mayo Clinic recommends making it a habit to spend time with friends who make you laugh. Laughter offers a pick-me-up and longer-term benefits, such as an improved immune system and pain relief.

Find your people

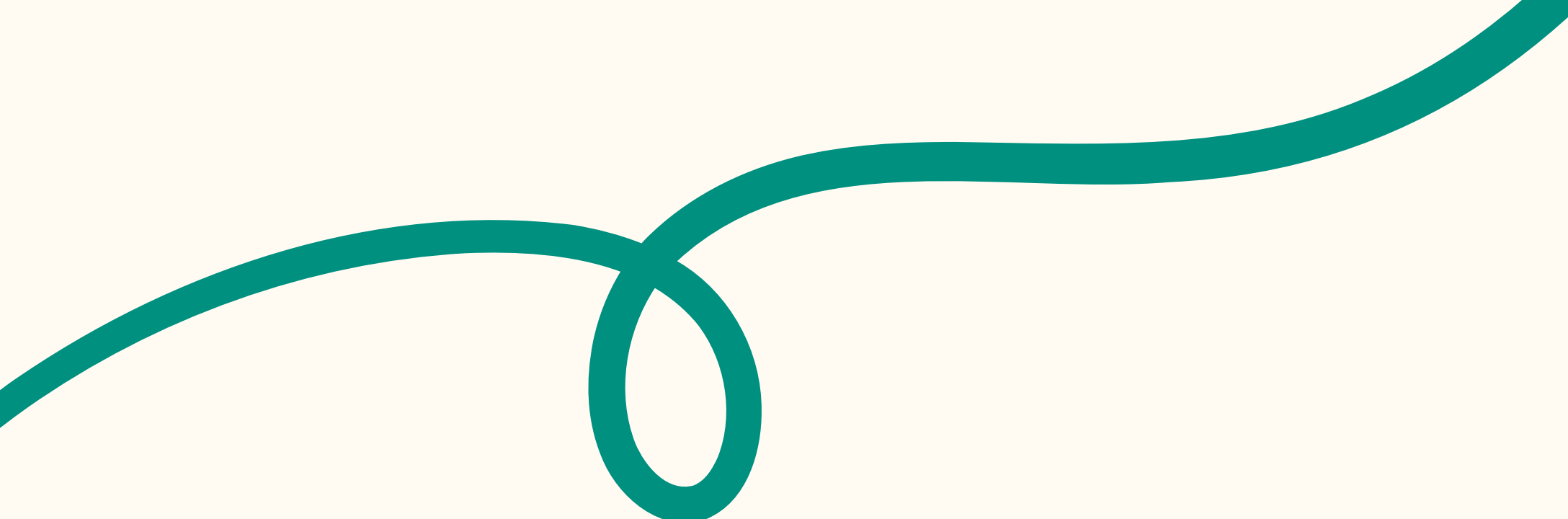


[Home](#) [Find Your People Tool](#) [Building Connection](#) [Veterans](#) [Partner Resources](#)

FindYourPeopleWA.org is committed to respecting your privacy. We don't collect personal data, and we don't use cookies to collect personally identifiable information about you.



↑
Back
to Top



1,000+
web tool unique users

2.1 million+
video views





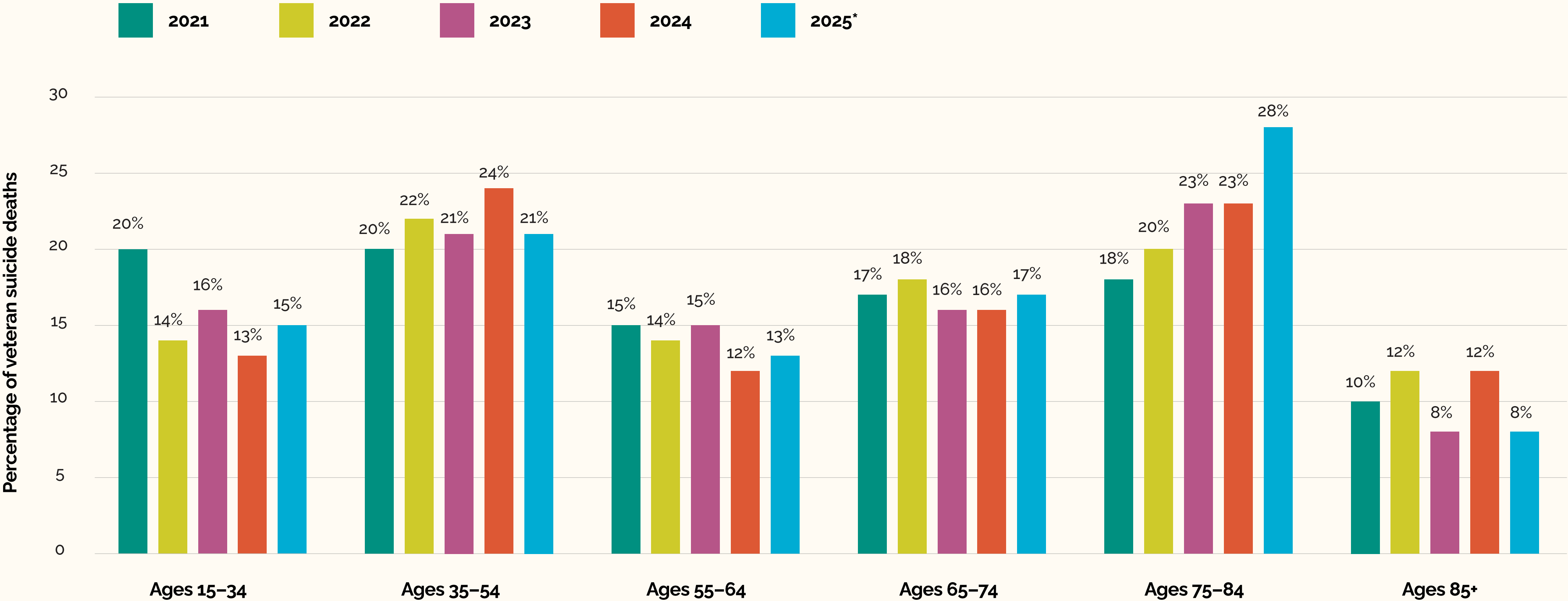
Reaching veterans.



Age Groups Among Deaths by Suicide for Veterans (2021–2025)

Source
Washington State Department of Health
Center for Health Statistics, Death Certificate Data

*2025 data are still preliminary and subject to change





Surveys



**Insight
interviews**



Home Find Your People Tool Building Connection Veterans Partner Resources

Veterans, connection supports health and happiness

Everyone has their own story. As veterans, we also share unique interests, needs, and challenges when it comes to connecting with others. No matter what, connection brings real benefits. Together with our friends and families, we can support one another in finding the connection we all need.

- Benefits to connection for veterans
- Ways veterans can find connection
- How others can help by reaching out
- Supporting veterans' mental health



Connection carries benefits for veterans

Through connection, you can support your own mental health, renew a sense of purpose, and expand your relationships and experiences.



Connection helps mental health. Many older adults (and people of all ages) experience isolation and loneliness. Spending time with friends and family is one way to support your own well-being and mental health.



Connection provides direction. For some older adults, serving in the military provided a sense of purpose – a sense of direction and meaning from working with other people on something bigger.

You can renew that sense of purpose through connecting with other people, whether you pursue a new hobby, volunteer to help others, or join a club.



Connection makes life richer. Being intentional about spending time with others can help you find like-minded people and gain new experiences. It can help you visit new places and learn new skills and points of view.

Close

Veterans can connect on their own terms

Here are some ideas for connecting at your own pace in spaces that feel comfortable.



Be a small, go slow. Some veterans might prefer to connect in calm, small and predictable settings. If this is you, try activities that make it easier to connect at your own pace.



Meeting up with other veterans. Many veterans like to talk or just spend time with others who can relate to military experiences. Veterans organizations work for some people, like the:

Veterans can connect on their own terms

Here are some ideas for connecting at your own pace in spaces that feel comfortable.



Be a small, go slow. Some veterans might prefer to connect in calm, small and predictable settings. If this is you, try activities that make it easier to connect at your own pace.

- One-on-one meetups for coffee
- Walks with a friend or neighbor
- Fishing, gardening or working together on a project
- Fixing things for people or teaching a skill to someone

Here are some tips for **cautious, step-by-step** connections with people who are already around you.



Meeting up with other veterans. Many veterans like to talk or just spend time with others who can relate to military experiences. Veterans organizations work for some people, like the:

- American Legion
- Women Veterans Alliance
- VFW
- Outdoors for our Veterans

You can look online for virtual veterans groups, such as:

- The women's network [3000](#)
- [Veterans on Reddit](#)

Some people prefer groups that are open to anyone but happen to attract veterans. Use the [Find Your People tool](#) to find options in your area, like groups or events related to:

- Bowling
- Archery
- Camping
- Gardening or homesteading
- Motorcycles or cars

Close

Friends and family can make connection easier

Anyone can help an older veteran feel welcomed and supported. No matter your age or whether you're a veteran, here are some suggestions:



Check in regularly. Even older veterans who stay in touch with friends and family often want more connection. And while many enjoy time with other veterans, most also want to connect with non-veterans.

Consistency can make a big difference. Schedule daily or weekly phone or video calls, visits or meetups.



Ask them what works for them. Some older veterans avoid crowds and loud noises. They might also want to stay away from unfamiliar environments, bright lights or strong smells. They might want to avoid spaces that lack wheelchair ramps or other accessibility features.

If you don't know a veteran's needs and preferences, it's OK to just ask, "Where do you feel comfortable?" What do you like to do?"



Consider low-key activities. Some people prefer one-on-one time or small groups outside or at home. Keep plans flexible, predictable and low-pressure. For example:

- Invite them to go for a walk or get coffee
- Go fishing or work in the garden together

Veterans, connection matters. Then. Now. Always.

We can spend time with others on our own terms. For our health and well-being, it's worth the effort.



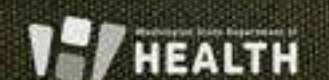
A friendship that makes life better. Peggy's 23 years of service in the U.S. Marines, including time overseas, made it harder sometimes to stay connected with lifelong friend Bonnie (in the driver's seat). But over the years, both women kept reaching out. "We've each been through each other's ups and downs," Peggy says.

Peggy with her platoon in 1973.

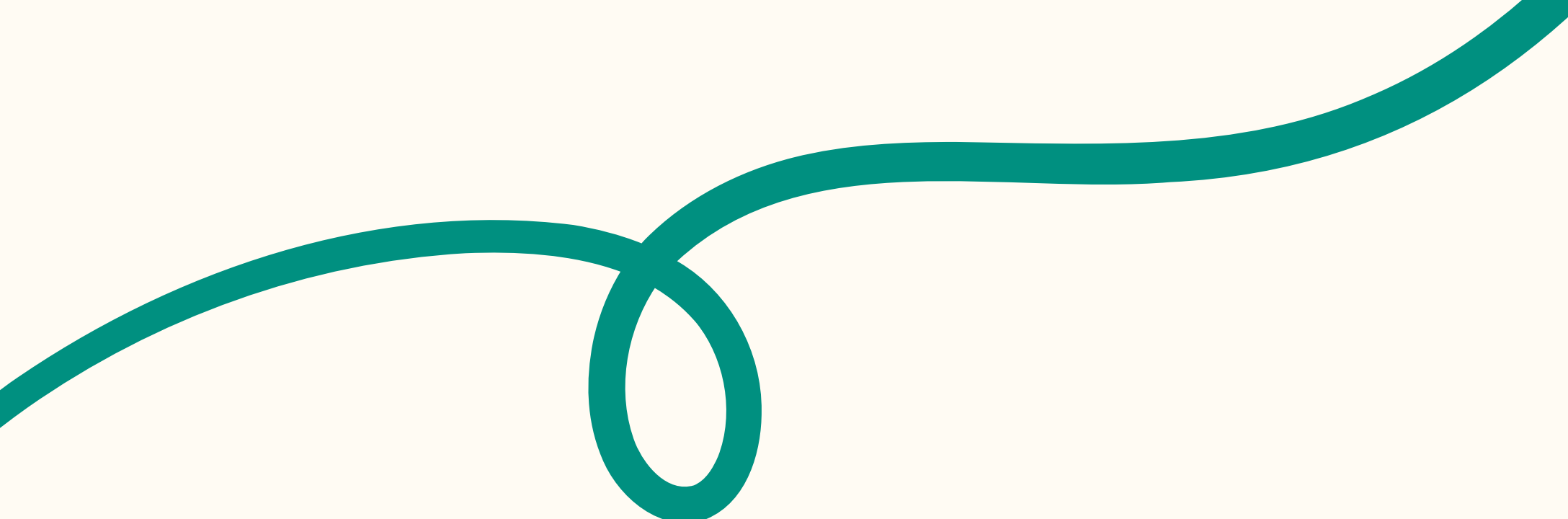


Learn how you or a veteran in your life can get more connected.
FindYourPeopleWA.org/veterans

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-625-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing residents, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email dohinformation@doh.wa.gov.







78,129
veteran reach

1.5 million+
impressions

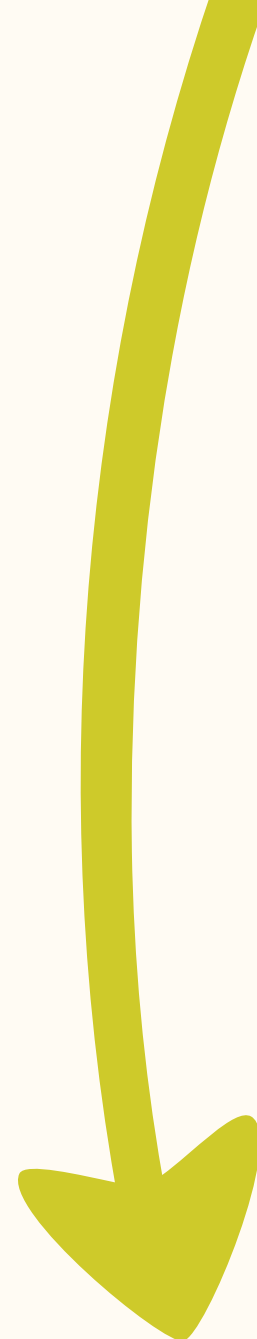
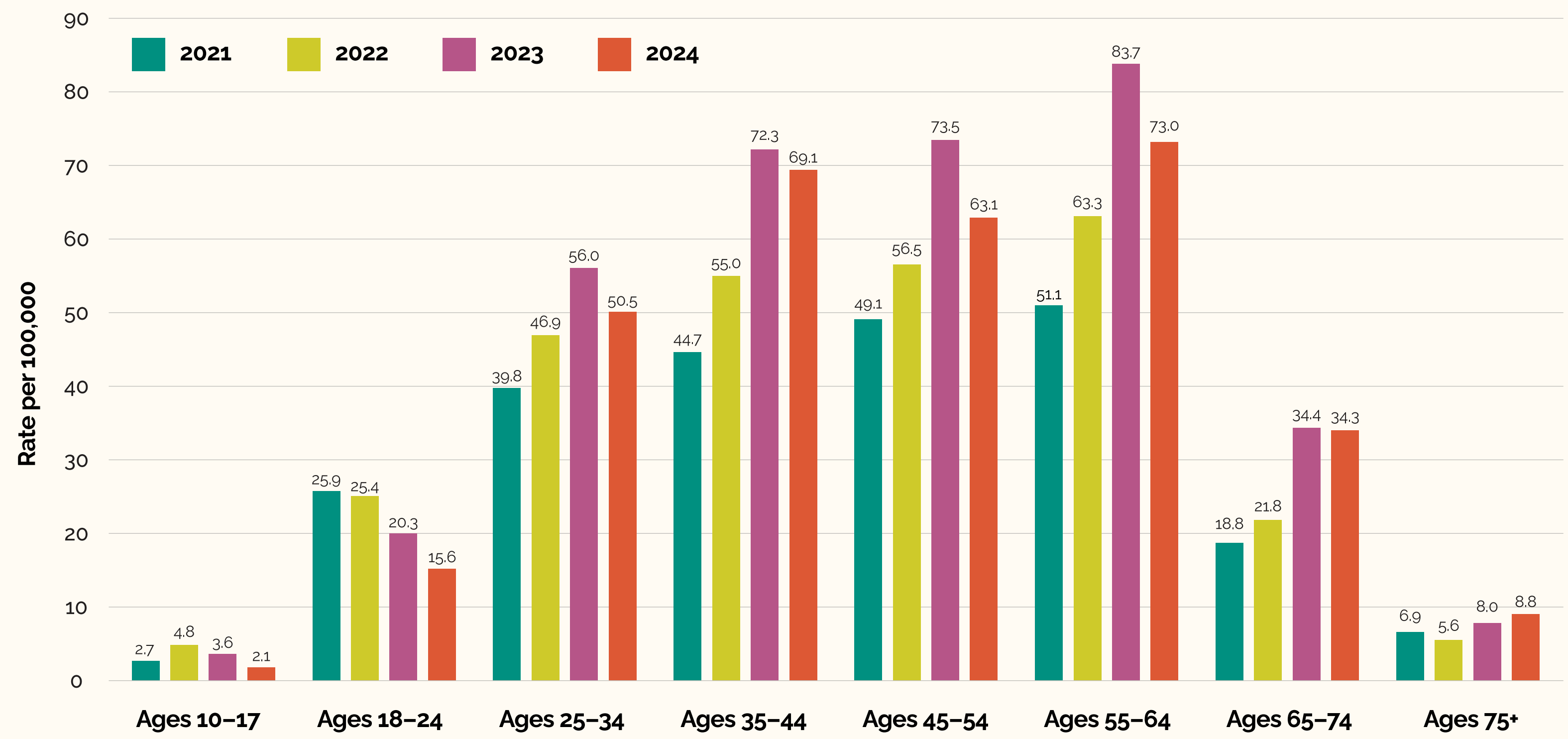




Preventing overdose.

Drug overdose death rates in Washington by age

Comparing 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023



Older adults have experienced some of the sharpest relative increases in overdose mortality in recent years.

Source
Washington State Department of Health death certificates



Literature &
landscape review



Insight interviews

 Washington State Department of Health
Sponsored · 

...

As we age, sharing what we've learned about grief can help prevent overdose. Connection helps people cope without drugs or alcohol.



FINDYOURPEOPLEWA.ORG/BUILDING-CONNECTI...

Find Your People
Share your strength

Learn more

 Like

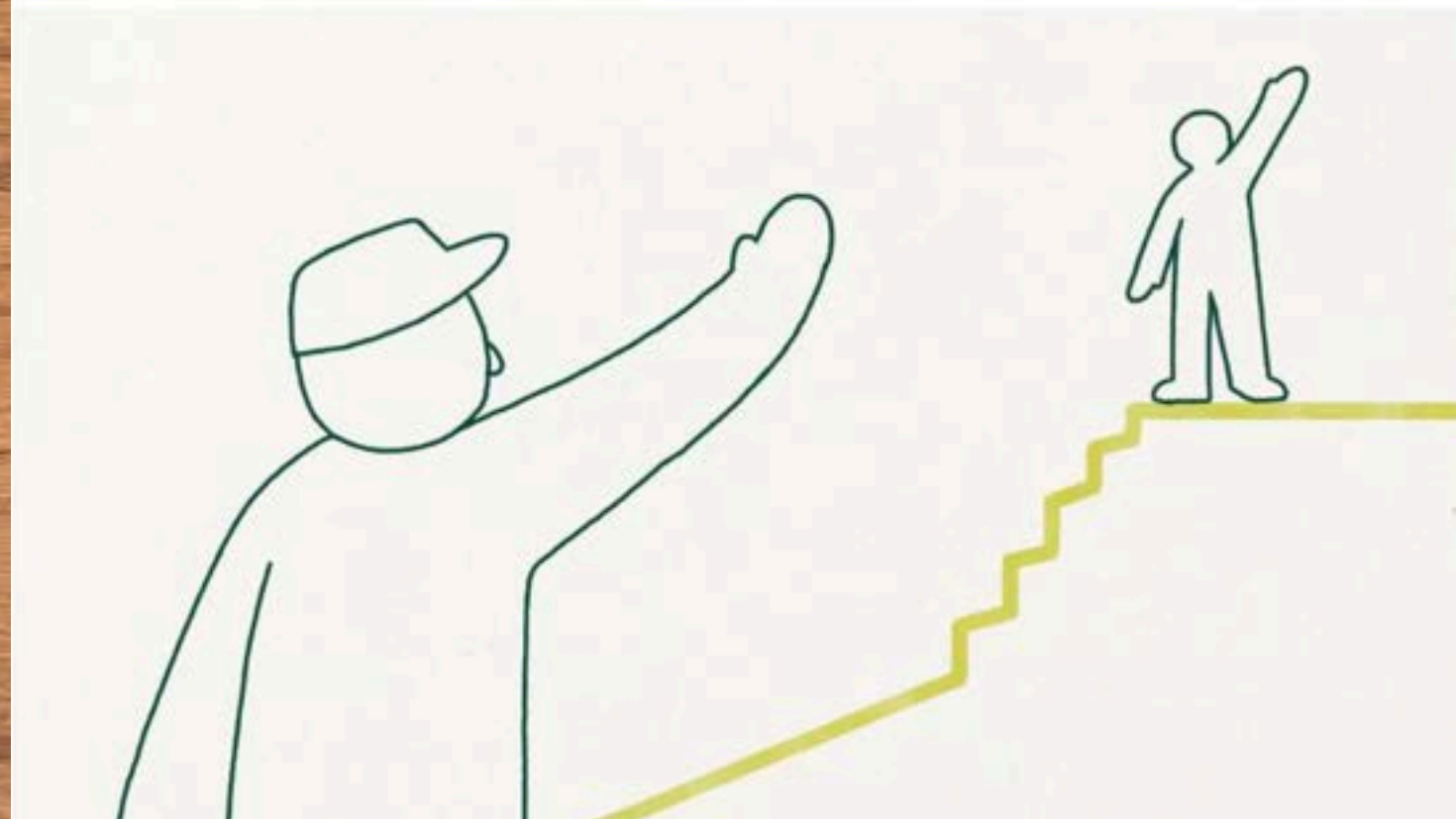
 Comment

 Share

 Washington State Department of Health
Sponsored · 

...

As we age, sharing what we've learned about getting care we need can help prevent overdose. Connection helps people cope without drugs or alcohol.



FINDYOURPEOPLEWA.ORG/BUILDING-CONNECTI...

Find Your People
Share your strength

Learn more

 Like

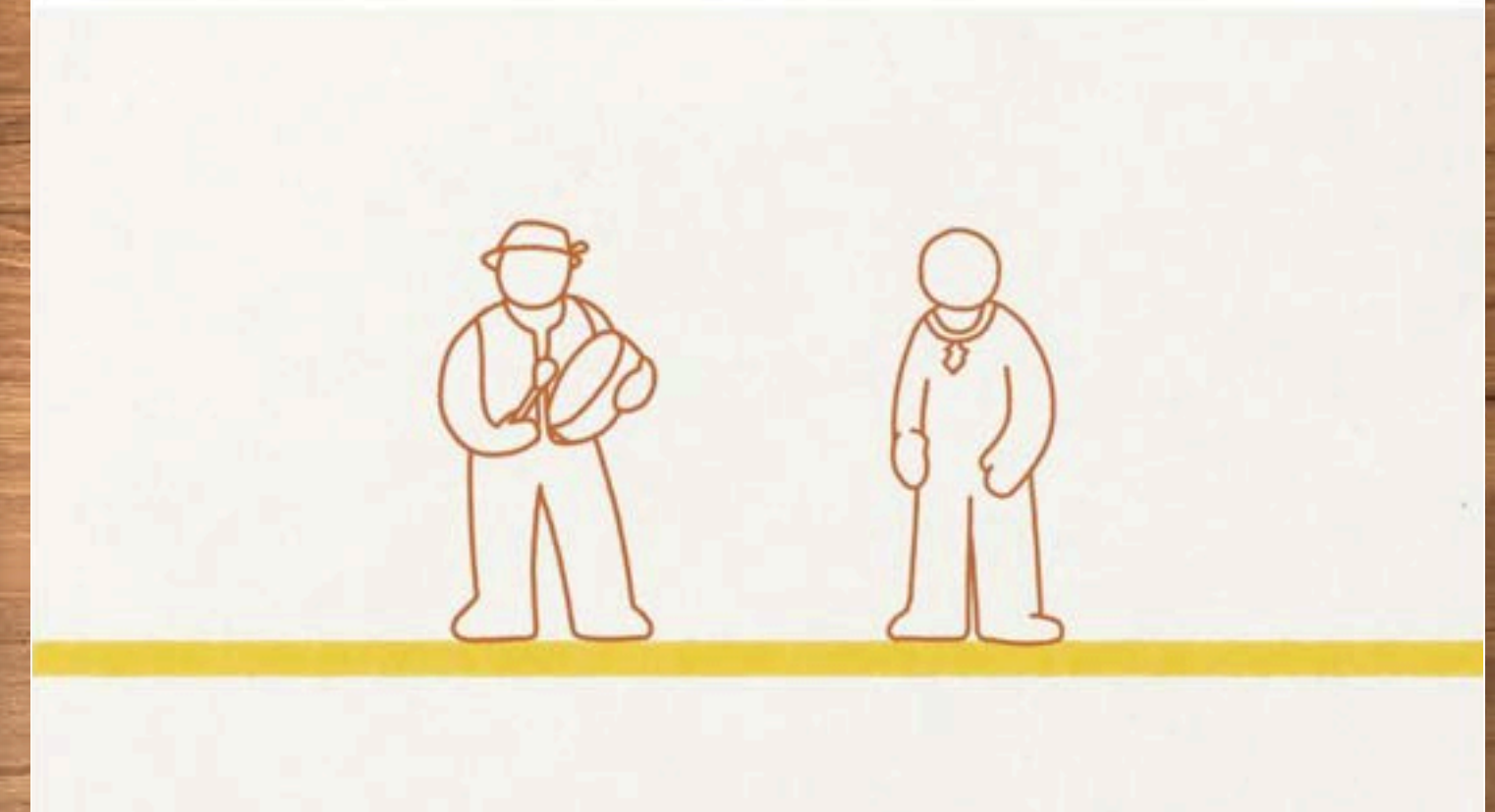
 Comment

 Share

 Washington State Department of Health
Sponsored · 

...

As we age, sharing what we've learned about our cultures can help prevent overdose. Connection helps people cope without drugs or alcohol.



FINDYOURPEOPLEWA.ORG/BUILDING-CONNECTI...

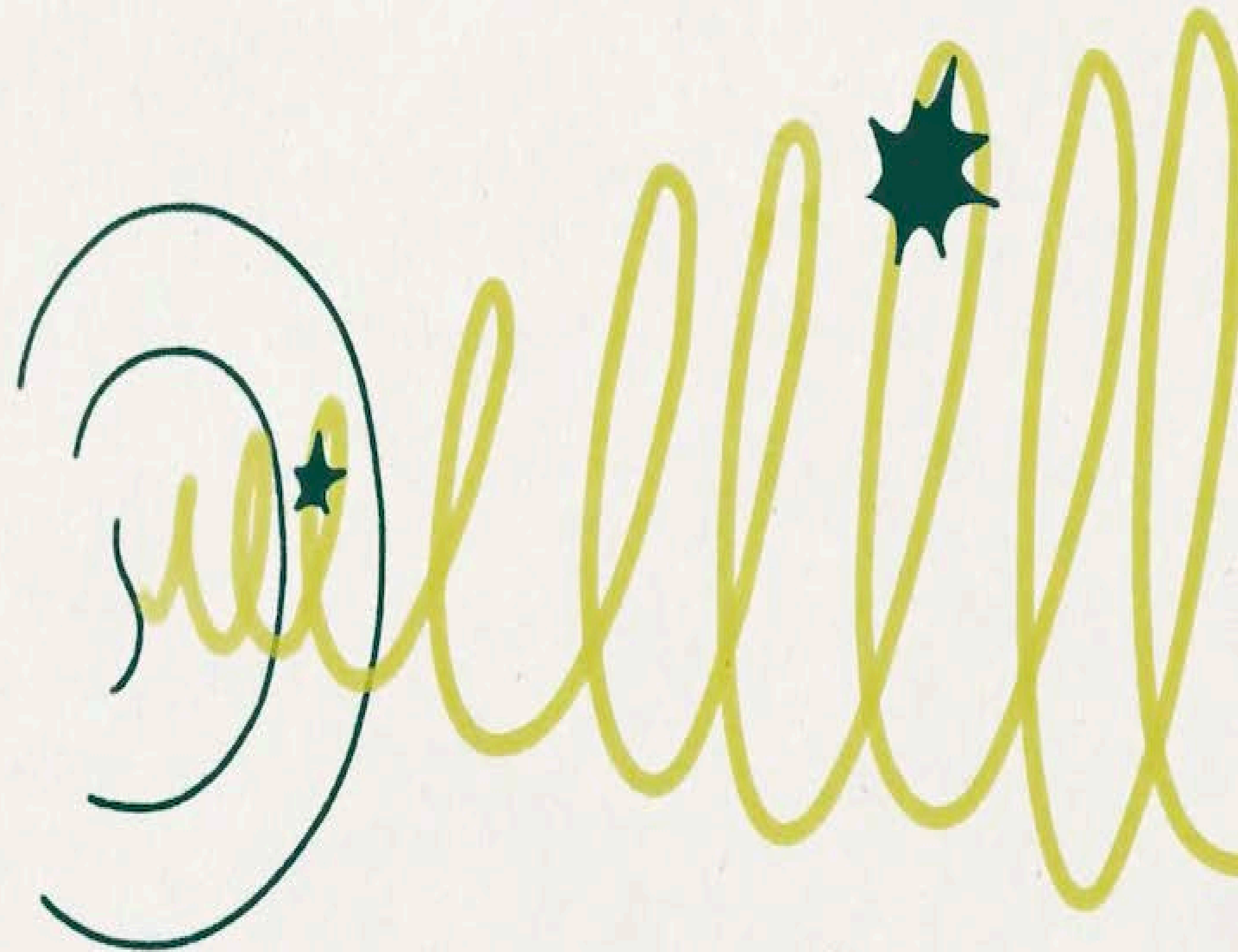
Find Your People
Share your strength

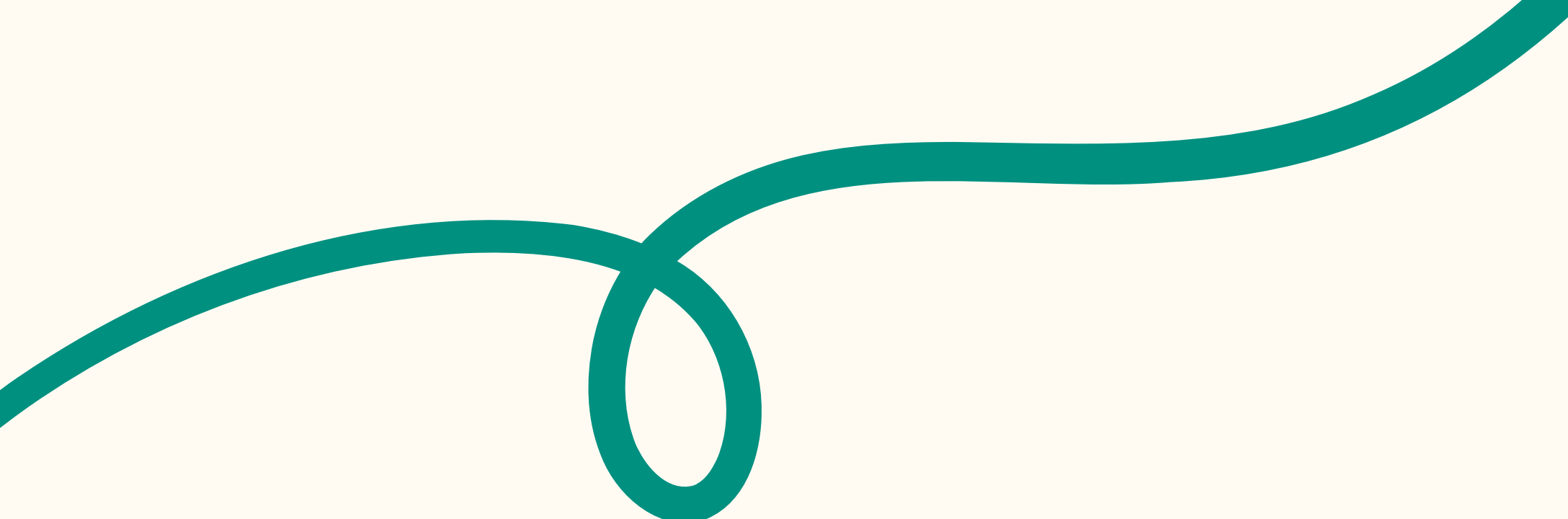
Learn more

 Like

 Comment

 Share





262,911
reach

2 million+
impressions



FIND
YOUR
PEOPLE.



Thank you!

Megan Mills, DH

Jennifer Almgren, DOH

Kirstin McFarland, DOH