

**CHALLENGE THE SYSTEM &
BE THE VOICE FOR
CHANGE.**



From Action to Impact: How Kansas leverages partnerships to advance upstream youth & young adult suicide prevention



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Learning Objectives

Coordinated Approach

1

Kansas's coordinated approach to youth suicide prevention-- including target populations, priority communities, and alignment with the Kansas State Suicide Prevention Plan.

Leveraging Partnerships

2

Explain how Kansas GLS uses coordinated partnerships, training, awareness, and data systems to support implementation and continuous improvement.

Integrated Dashboard

3

Demonstrate how Kansas uses an integrated dashboard to assess county-level needs and support data-informed prevention planning.



Youth & Young Adult Suicide Prevention

"When we think about preventing youth suicide, what are the first things that come to mind?"

TWO APPROACHES

Traditional vs. Upstream Prevention

The distinction is primarily **when** intervention occurs and **who** it targets.

Traditional Prevention

Occurs after risk factors have already developed or when individuals/groups are at higher risk, focusing on changing knowledge, attitudes and behaviors which often include counseling, education, screenings or interventions with the goal to reduce or manage existing risk.

Upstream Prevention

Promotes well-being to entire populations, communities, and populations, communities, systems or policies **before** crisis develops, focusing on changing social, environmental, economic and policy conditions that influence well being and before significant mental health concerns emerge.

How Do We Help Someone Who May Be Suicidal Today?

Traditional prevention focuses on individuals already experiencing suicidal thoughts, behaviors, or significant mental health crises, with a goal to identify risk and intervene before an attempt occurs.

Risk Assessment

Screening and suicide risk assessments

Crisis Response

Hotlines (988), safety planning, emergency services

Treatment

Counseling, psychiatric care, post-attempt follow-up

Gatekeeper Training

CALM, QPR, ASIST, etc. — identifying people at immediate risk

TRADITIONAL PREVENTION



TRADITIONAL PREVENTION

Strengths & Limitations

Strengths

- Saves lives — essential safety net
- Evidence-based interventions
- Addresses immediate danger
- Can reduce severity & impact of the struggles
- Results can be easier to measure

Limitations

- Often reactive v. proactive
- Reaches youth after distress has escalated
- Doesn't necessarily change the conditions that contributed to the crisis

UPSTREAM PREVENTION



How Do We Reduce the Likelihood People Reach a Crisis?

Upstream Prevention prevents suicidal thoughts and behaviors **before they develop** by addressing social, environmental, and structural factors. Rather than waiting for a crisis to occur, upstream prevention promotes these protective factors across entire populations.

Connectedness

Promoting belonging and social connection

Skills & Resilience

Building coping and emotional regulation

Access & Stigma

Reducing stigma, expanding behavioral health care

Systems & Policy

Addressing social determinants: housing, employment, economic stability

UPSTREAM PREVENTION

Strengths

Expansive Reach

Targets entire populations — not just individuals at high risk

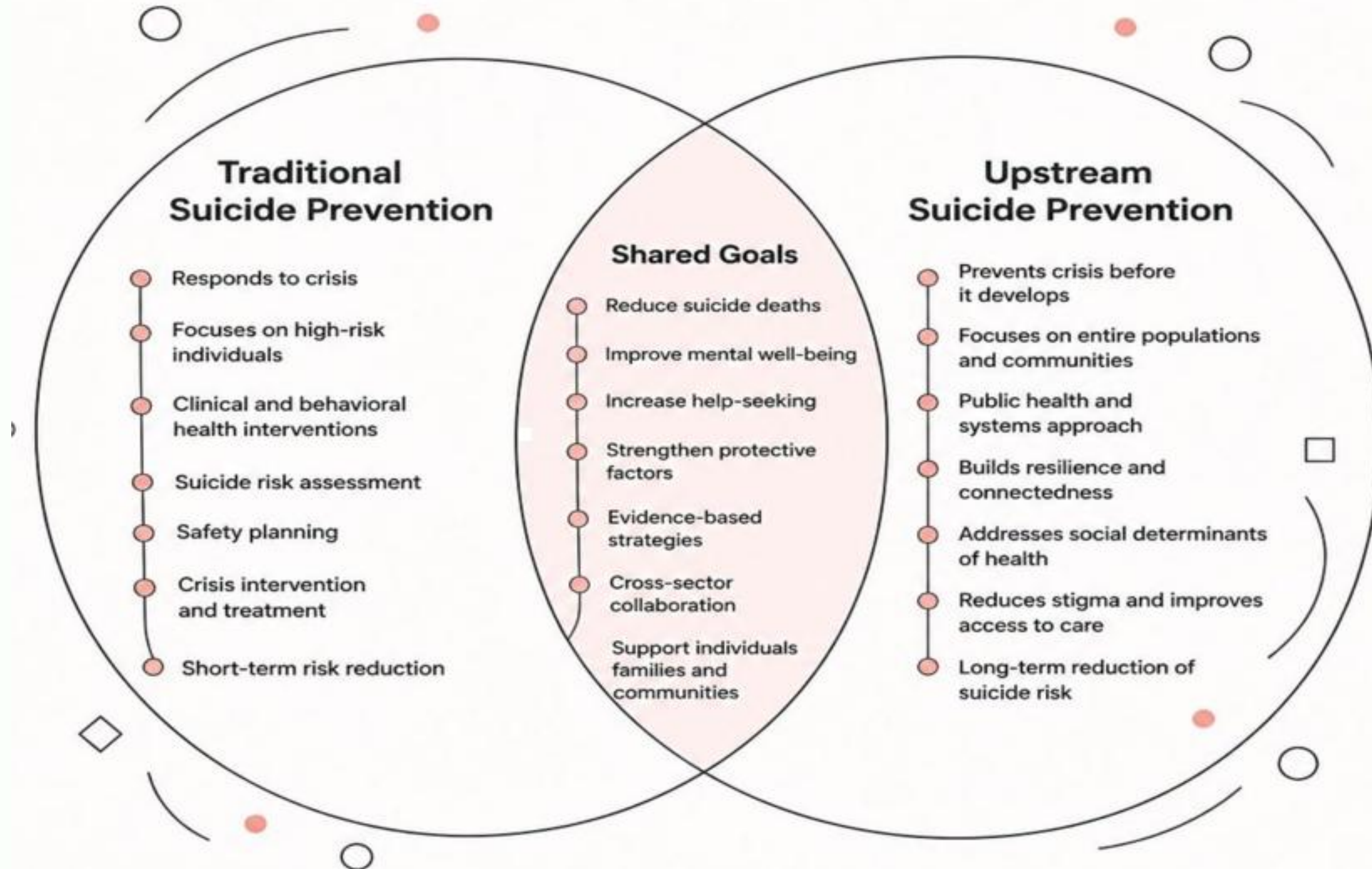
Builds Resilience

Encourages resilience and increases protective factors across communities

Broader Impact

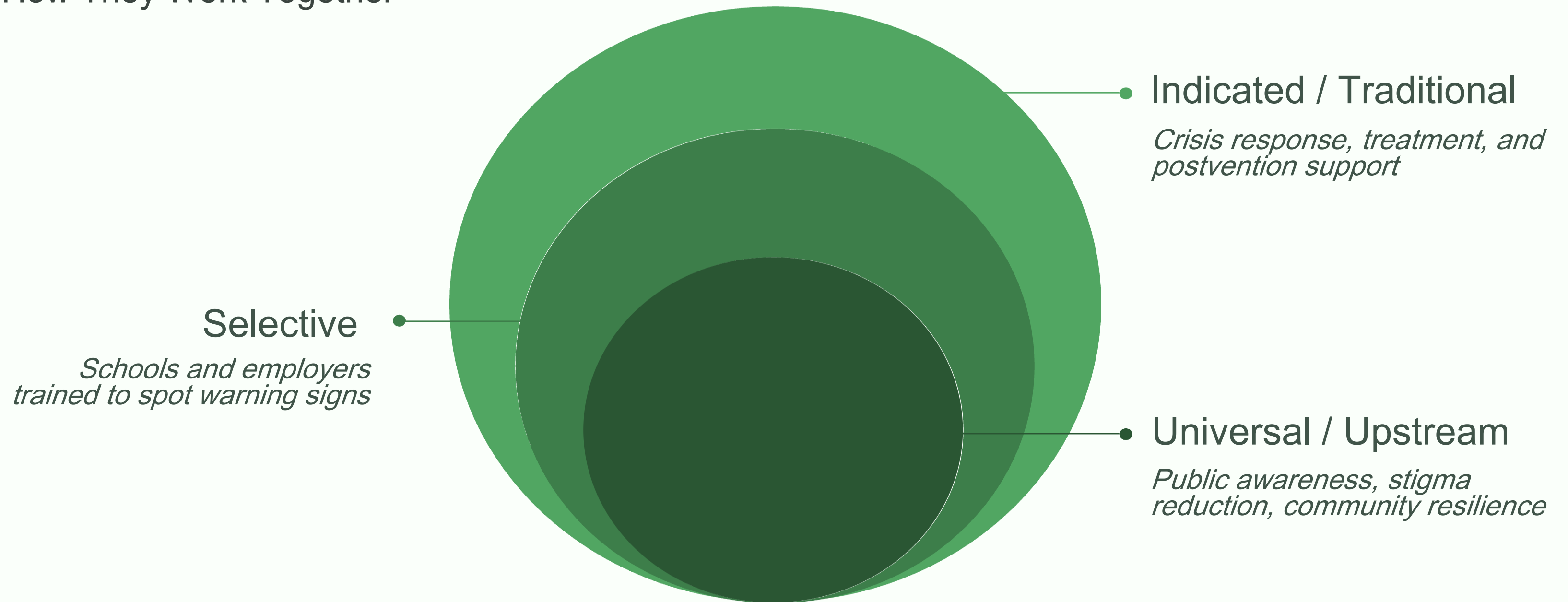
May reduce multiple negative outcomes — not just suicide

Traditional vs. Upstream: Shared Goals



COMPLEMENTARY APPROACHES

How They Work Together



"How do we save this life?" and "How do we help more youth thrive?" — both questions matter.



THE RIVER METAPHOR

Walking Upstream

Traditional Prevention

"Who's drowning, and how do we save them?"

Upstream Prevention

"Why are so many young people falling in?"

Both are necessary. Traditional prevention focuses on the immediate need; while upstream prevention asks how we prevent the crisis from developing in the first place.

Where does your organization currently invest most suicide-prevention efforts: crisis response, early identification, or upstream prevention?

MOVING FORWARD

A Coordinated Approach

Effective youth suicide prevention requires collaboration across sectors — schools, employers, healthcare, community organizations, and policymakers working together on both upstream and traditional strategies.

01

Reflect

What examples do you implement that are upstream vs. traditional?

03

Act

Invest in upstream strategies while maintaining essential crisis services

02

Connect

Build cross-sector partnerships to strengthen both approaches



Upstream Suicide Prevention

Shifting from crisis response to community connection — If traditional suicide prevention helps young people survive, upstream prevention helps more young people never reach that point.





Traditional vs. Upstream Prevention Outcomes

Traditional Outcomes

- Decrease suicide deaths
- Decrease suicide attempts
- Decreased Crisis calls & need for intervention

Upstream Outcomes

- Increased help-seeking
- Greater awareness of resources
- Improved school connectedness
- Stronger sense of belonging
- Reduced stigma
- Increased community engagement

**What is the biggest gap between awareness
and a young person receiving help in your
community?**

ROUNDTABLE SYNTHESIS

Four connected themes describe what families and communities need most in Southeast Kansas.

3 ROUNDTABLES

A consistent message emerged:

Needs are interconnected. Gaps in access, support, belonging, and coordination can compound risk.

Provider shortages • stigma • transportation • fragmented services

MH

Mental Health & Safety

Provider shortages and stigma make it more difficult to seek help early and consistently.

FS

Family Support

Caregivers need clearer navigation, practical guidance, and reliable follow-up assistance.

YE

Youth Engagement

Communities want more safe activities that foster connection, leadership, and belonging for youth.

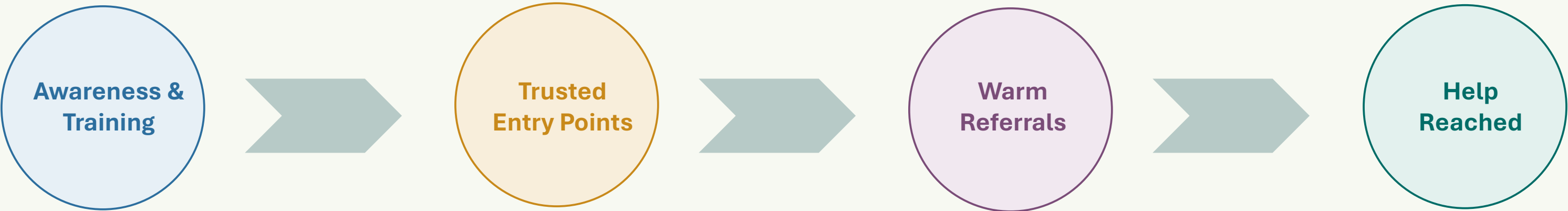
AB

Access Barriers

Transportation gaps and fragmented services prevent families from reaching accessible and necessary care.

IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Training fosters awareness, but lasting prevention depends on equipping people to translate awareness into timely, effective support.



Strengthening the entire pathway—not just the first step.

1

Referral Pathways
Clarify where people go next and support warm handoffs between organizations.

2

School-Based Access
Use schools as visible, trusted entry points for youth and families.

3

Trusted Outreach
Bring culturally responsive information through familiar community messengers.

4

Caregiver Support
Equip families to recognize concerns, navigate services, and stay engaged.

Design principle: Every training or awareness touchpoint should connect to a clear, locally accessible next step.

FROM FEEDBACK TO ACTION

Program Impact & Next Steps

The findings validate Kansas GLS priorities while pointing to practical ways to deepen regional impact.

Roundtable feedback reinforces four KS GLS priorities

**Data-driven planning**

**Regional coordination**

**Rural access solutions**

**Community-centered prevention**

Desired impact

Fewer gaps between concern, connection, and care.

Priority next steps

- 1

Strengthen cross-agency communication
Create clearer roles, handoffs, and feedback loops across schools, providers, and community partners.
- 2

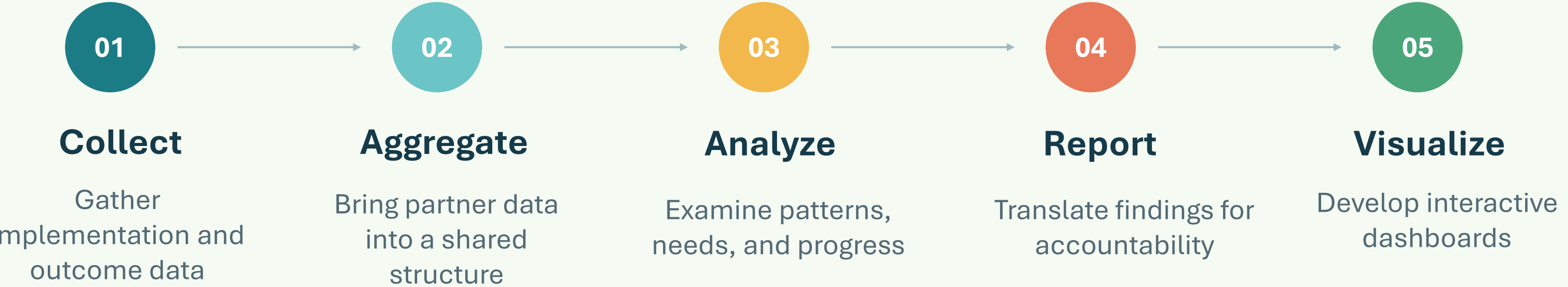
Keep local resources current
Maintain an accessible regional resource map that reflects real availability and eligibility.
- 3

Build youth belonging
Expand safe activities, peer connection, and youth voice in prevention planning.
- 4

Measure what happens after training
Track referrals, follow-through, access, and other outcomes—not participation alone.

DATA INFRASTRUCTURE

A connected data workflow supports reporting, dashboards, and decision-making.



DATA BACKBONE Supports data-informed planning, implementation monitoring, and continuous quality improvement

DATA COLLECTION

ANALYSIS

REPORTING

DASHBOARDS

Data-Informed Planning

County-level data collection, aggregation, analysis, reporting, and dashboard development.

Integrated Platform

Combines multiple state and local data sources in one place

Clearer Picture

Provides a clearer picture of youth and young-adult suicide-prevention needs

Evidence-Based

Helps partners use evidence to guide planning and implementation

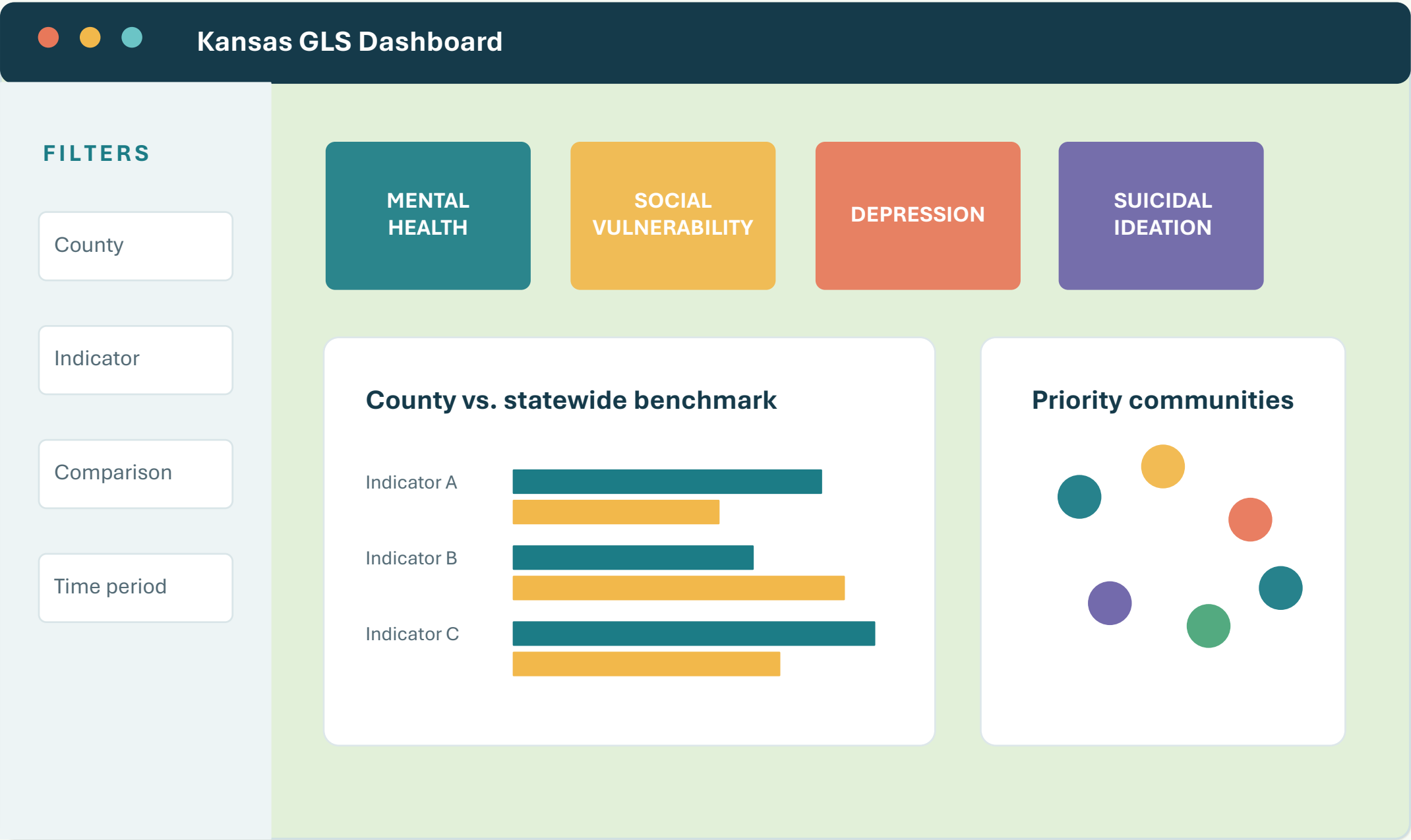


Using Data to Influence Initiatives

**What data would help your community to
decide where prevention action is needed the
most?**

DASHBOARD DEMONSTRATION

Indicators and benchmarks help partners identify where prevention is needed most and county level needs more visible.

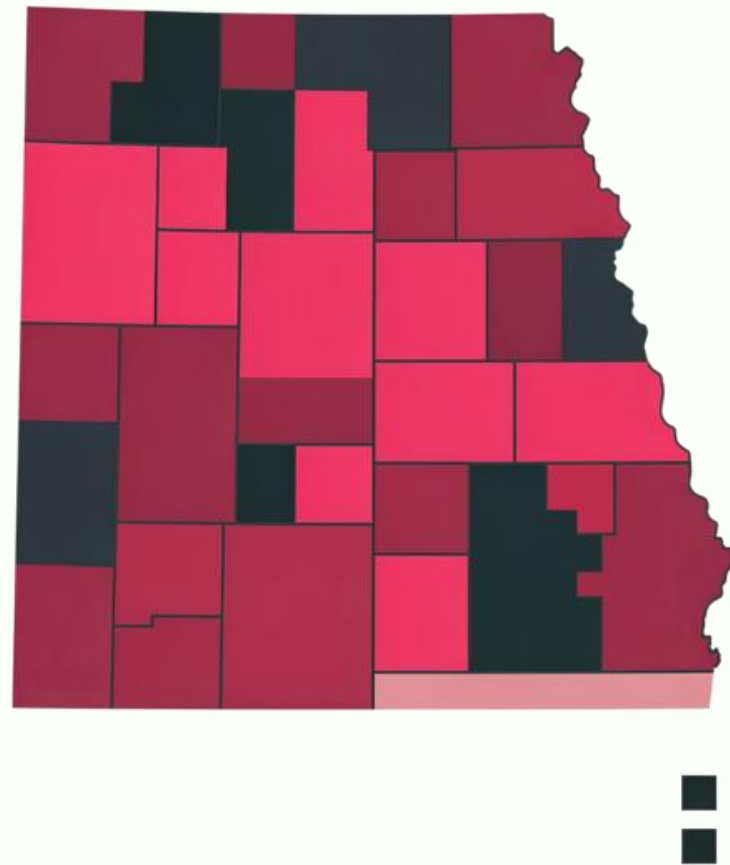


What the data supports

- 01** Assess county-level needs
- 02** Compare GLS counties with statewide benchmarks
- 03** Analyze mental health and social vulnerability indicators
- 04** Guide prevention planning and action

OUTREACH STRATEGY

Identifying Gaps & Priorities

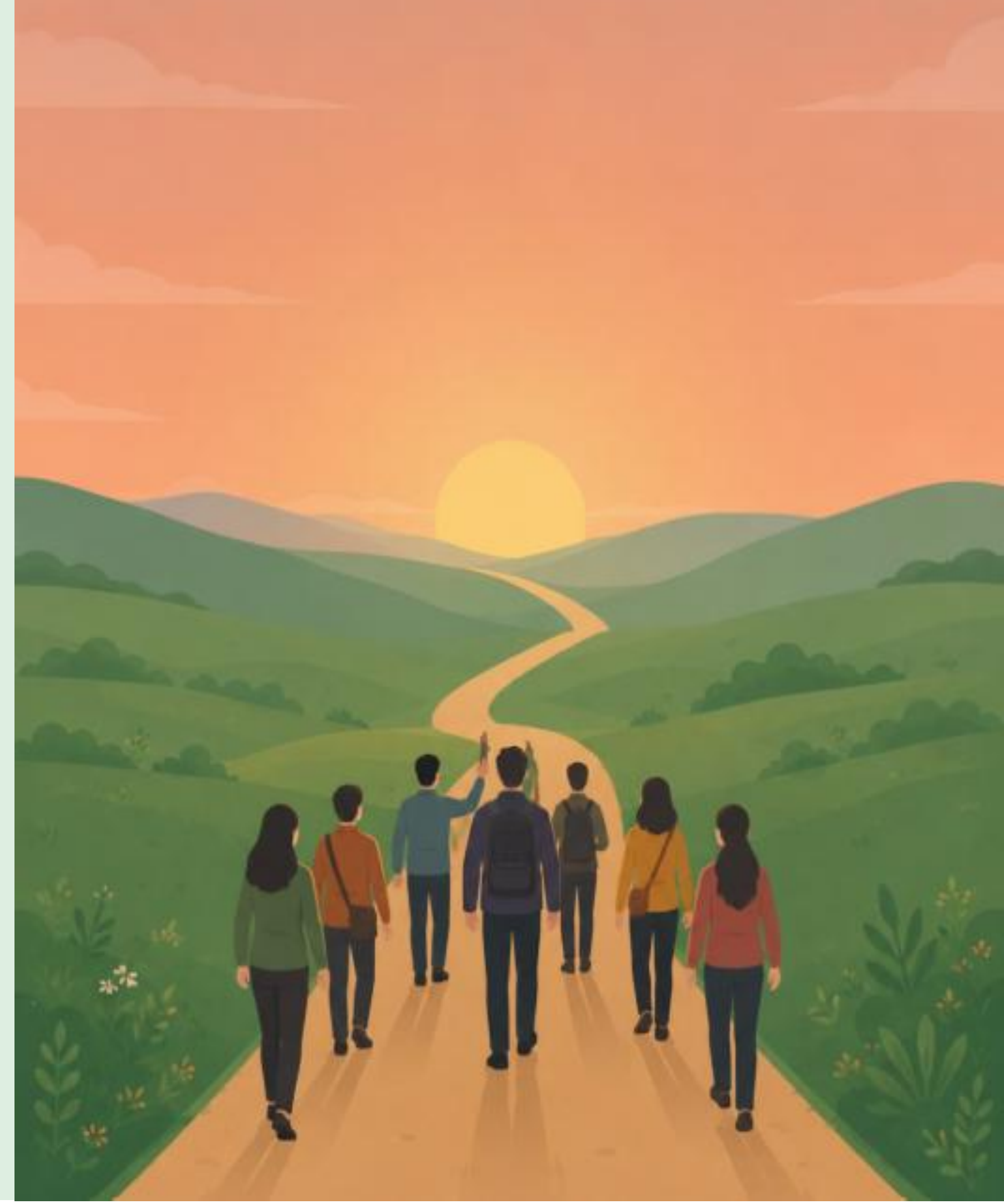


Data is used to:

- Identify geographic gaps and emerging trends
- Determine outreach priorities in GLS catchment counties
- Monitor changing trends over time
- Guide implementation decisions

Partners use this evidence to guide planning and adjust outreach strategies as county-level needs evolve.

Collective Efforts



DCCCA Gatekeeper Trainings

Adapting training modalities to better serve our communities — with expansion from Year 1 through Year 3.

Adaptive Modalities

Pivoting to delivery formats that meet communities where they are — in-person, virtual, and hybrid.

Community-Centered Design

Training content shaped by the needs, cultures, and languages of the communities we serve.

Year 1–3 Expansion

Growing reach and impact across Kansas through sustained, scalable gatekeeper training programs.



Leading with innovation: Reflex AI Partnership

Embracing innovation to expand access to evolving needs.



Reflex AI Services

AI-powered support tools to innovatively train crisis response professionals to more effectively provide 24/7 accessible care for those in need.



Year 2–3 Onboarding

Successfully onboarded call centers 1 through 4 in Kansas, building a statewide network of support.



Trusting the Process

Commitment to innovation required trust — and the results show the value of that investment.

Statewide Awareness Campaigns

Types of Initiatives

Coordinated campaigns across Kansas designed to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and connect young people to resources.

Safe Messaging Guidelines

All campaign materials follow evidence-based safe messaging standards to ensure ethical communication that aligns with harm reduction and best practices. A reference table created by the grant is available for distribution.



"You Matter More Than You Know" Campaign

Every activity connects back to a protective factor — building communities that *demonstrate* young people matter.

Campaign Activity

Murals

Public Art

Storytelling

Media Campaign

Community Events

Youth Engagement

Belonging

Community Pride

Hope

Awareness

Social Connection

Voice & Agency



"Our goal isn't simply to tell young people they matter. It's to create communities that consistently demonstrate they matter."

Protective Factors in Action

Belonging

Youth feel rooted in their communities through art, events, and shared identity.

Voice & Agency

Young people lead storytelling, design murals, and shape the message.

Reduced Stigma

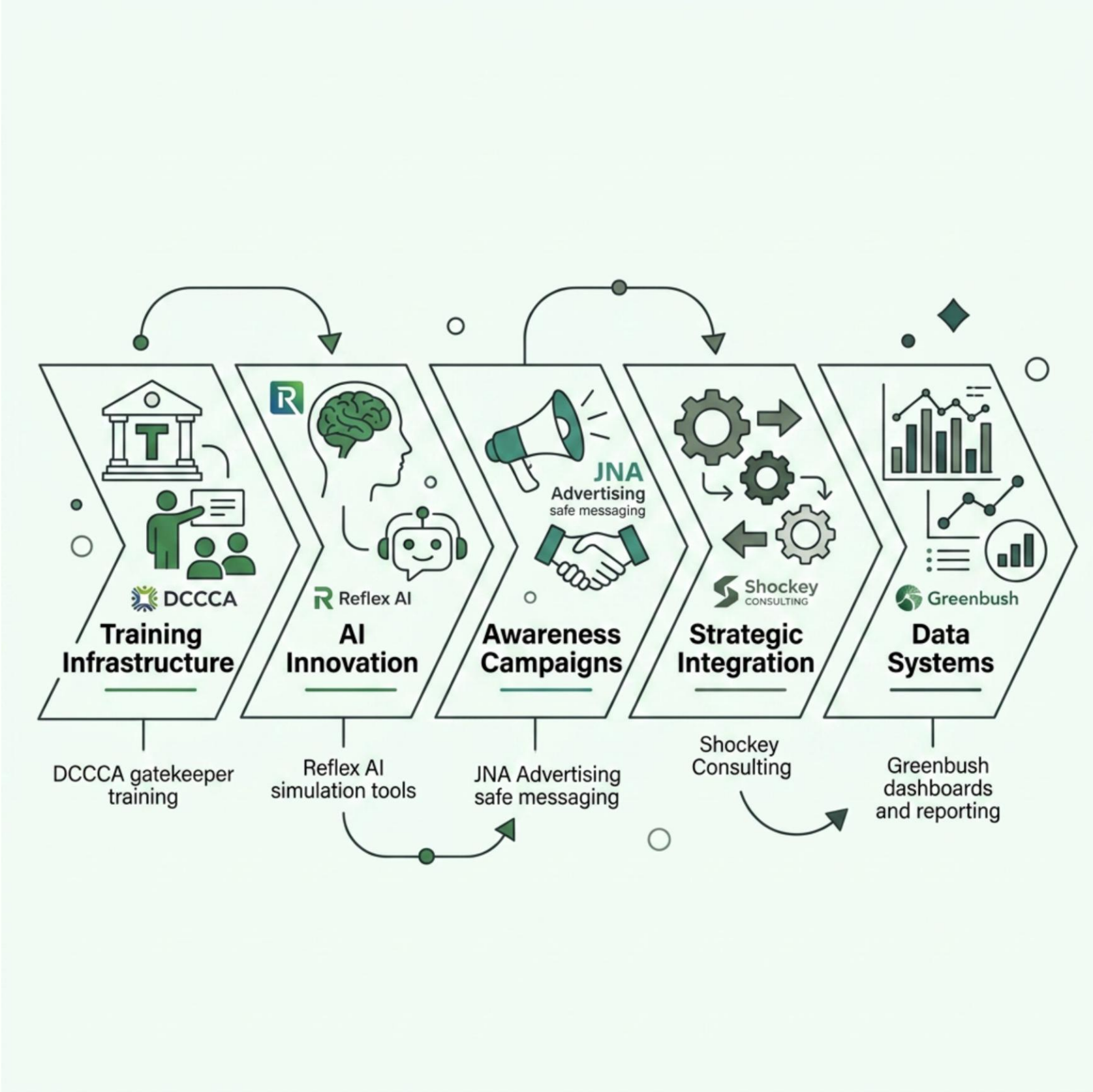
Safe messaging and media campaigns normalize help-seeking behavior.

Social Connection

Community events and engagement build networks of support.



Kansas GLS: Aligned with the State Plan



Coordinated & Accountable

Each partner contributes a distinct, complementary role. Together, they advance awareness to action and strengthen the impact of upstream suicide prevention across Kansas.

- Target populations reached
- Priority communities served
- Outcomes aligned with the Kansas State Suicide Prevention Plan

Where Prevention Begins

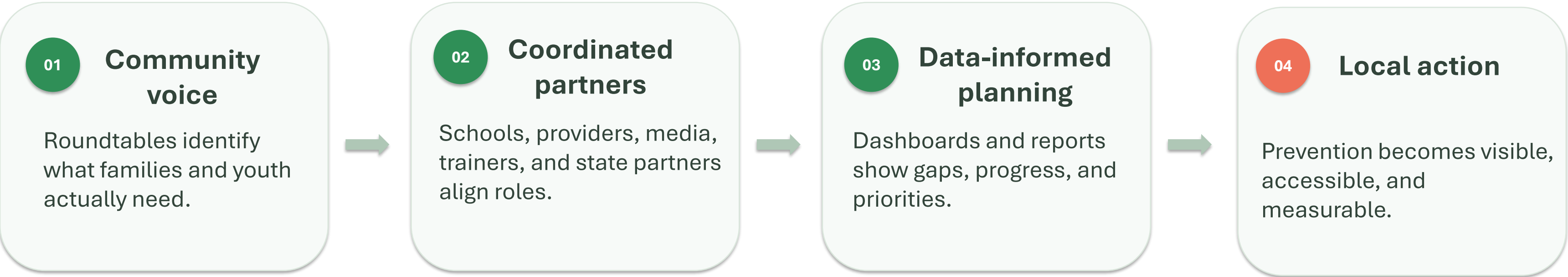
"Every suicide prevented matters. Every crisis interrupted matters. But imagine the impact if fewer young people ever reached that point — because they grew up surrounded by connection, hope, belonging, and people who reminded them every day that they mattered."

Suicide prevention doesn't begin in the emergency room. It begins in our **homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, and communities** — every place where we have the opportunity to help someone believe that they truly do matter more than they know.



CONCLUSION

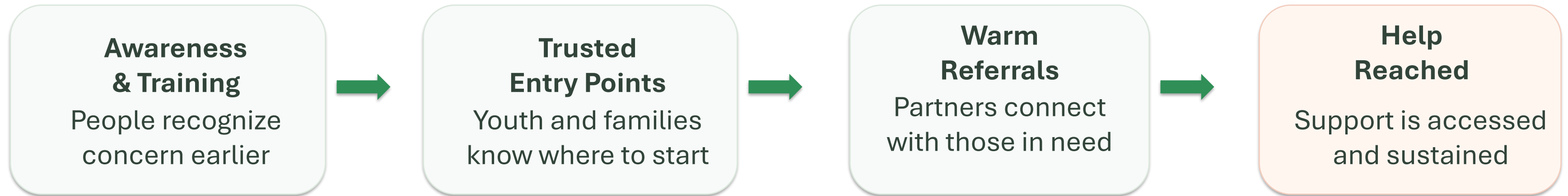
Kansas GLS moves from action to impact when community voices, partnerships, and data work together.



Main takeaway Upstream prevention is not one program or one message. It is a coordinated system that helps youth feel connected before crisis begins.

CONCLUSION

Training opens the door. Impact depends on what happens next.



Implementation focus

Every awareness touchpoint should connect to a clear, locally accessible, next step.

Measure beyond reach

Participation tells us who was present. Follow-through tells us whether prevention became accessible and helpful.

CLOSING COMMITMENT

The shared goal is not only to respond faster when youth are in crisis, but to build communities where fewer young people reach that point.

1

Keep pathways clear

Make the next step visible for youth, families, and partners.

2

Build belonging

Create places and messages that show young people that they matter.

3

Use data to improve

Let community feedback and outcomes guide the next decision.

Closing reflection: What is one action you can take to make prevention more connected, visible, and usable in your community?

Reflection: Where Does Your Organization Stand?

Where does your organization currently invest most of its suicide-prevention efforts and what may be missing?

What is the biggest gap between awareness and a young person receiving help in your community?

What data would help your community decide where prevention action is needed the most?



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