



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Champlain East
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
Champlain Est
La santé mentale pour tous

329 rue Pitt Street
Cornwall, ON K6J 3R1
Tel 613-933-5845
1-800-493-8271
Fax 613-936-2323
cmha-east.on.ca
acsm-est.on.ca

Submitted by: Canadian Mental Health Association Champlain East

Preventing Suicide

Suicide is a troubling topic that most of us would rather not deal with, but suicide is a reality, and it is more common than we would like to think. For over 20 years, World Suicide Prevention Day has been celebrated on September 10th to raise awareness of the issue, reduce stigma and encourage action to prevent suicide and suicidal behavior.

Who is affected by suicide?

The World Health Organization estimates that more than [700,000 people take their own lives](#) every year and many more attempt to do so. In Canada, an average of [12 people die by suicide every day](#), bringing the annual total to about 4,500. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among Canadians between the ages of 15 and 34 (the first cause is accidents and preventable injuries).

Why do people take their own life?

People who die by suicide or attempt suicide do not necessarily want to die. However, they think that suicide is the only solution to deal with difficult feelings or situations that are unbearable. They feel extremely hopeless, helpless and depressed. Here are some factors that may lead a person to attempt suicide: feelings of isolation, experiencing a major loss, abuse of drugs or alcohol, having a serious physical illness, prolonged depression with alterations in thinking patterns, living in a violent relationship.

What are the danger signs?

Many people who think about suicide offer warning signs and communicate their plan to others. When someone express suicidal intentions, it should always be taken seriously. Here are some of the signs to look out for: direct suicide threats such as "I want to die," or indirect threats such as "You would be better off without me", personality changes or withdrawn behaviour, giving away prized possessions, isolation from friends and colleagues, lack of interest in future plans, depression

What can you do to help prevent a suicide?

Once you have identified a person in distress, you can take steps to prevent suicide. To begin with, you should ask the person directly if they are thinking about suicide. Talking about suicide will not make them think about taking their life. But if they are seriously thinking about it, they may be relieved to talk to you about it. Find out if they have a plan in place, and then listen to them in an empathetic and non-judgmental way. Don't minimize their feelings and don't be sworn to secrecy. In fact, you should get support from family and friends and seek professional help, such as a family physician and a mental health professional. If they have a plan and are thinking of carrying it out soon, it is important to contact crisis intervention or support services. There is a **suicide crisis helpline you can call or text at 9-8-8**. This service is for people feeling like they



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have lost hope and are struggling to cope, who are dealing with thoughts of suicide, or worried about someone else. Stay with this person while you call and do not leave until the crisis line staff tells you that you can. A visit to a hospital emergency room can also be a life-saving intervention. Listening and helping this person connect with mental health services are the two most important things you can do to help.

If you have identified a person at risk of suicide and need guidance on how to help them, you can sign up for a training program offered by [LivingWorks](#). You can also check out our website www.cmha-east.on.ca (section events) for available trainings (safeTALK and ASIST). The resources offered by the [Suicide Prevention Coalition of Champlain East](#) are also worth a look.

Resources:

<http://www.reachoutnow.ca/>

DO YOU NEED HELP?

Dial or text 2-1-1 for free and confidential service that easily connects people to the critical social and community supports they need.

If you are thinking of suicide, please call 9-8-8 which is a mental health crisis and suicide prevention line.

The information provided is not a substitute for professional advice. If you need advice, please consult a qualified health care professional. For further information or if you want to access our services at CMHA, please call 1-800-493-8271 or visit our web site at www.cmha-east.on.ca