

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

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Proposed publication date: Sept. 04, 2023
Content provided by: Alberta Health Services

World Suicide Prevention Day

September 10 is World Suicide Prevention Day, a day about increasing awareness, building knowledge and sparking conversations about suicide.

Suicide affects people from all ages, genders, socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic groups, and it has emotional, financial and psychological impacts on individuals, families, and communities.

You can help prevent suicide.

One of the major ways to help is to reduce the stigma around suicide. Stigma contributes to feelings of fear, shame and guilt. We can help decrease stigma by talking about suicide with understanding and compassion.

When talking about suicide, use people-first language (someone with suicidal thoughts instead of a suicidal person). Phrases such as death by suicide, died by suicide, or suicide describe what really happened and respect family and friends left behind.

It is hard to know if someone is thinking about suicide, but if you are or know someone who is, help is available. Recognizing the risk factors and warning signs is important in preventing suicide.

Risk factors may include:

- Barriers to accessing social and health services.
- Mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder.
- Traumatic life events such as the death of a partner or friend, divorce or financial issues.

- Family violence, including physical or sexual abuse.
- Diagnosis of a serious physical illness.

Warning signs may include:

- Planning or saying they want to hurt or kill themselves or someone else.
- Talking, writing, reading, or drawing about death, including writing suicide notes and talking about items that can cause physical harm, such as pills, guns or knives.
- Saying they have no hope, they feel trapped, or there is no point in "going on."

Take any mention of suicide seriously, and get help right away if someone you know is in immediate risk of suicide:

- Call 911, a suicide hotline (see telephone numbers below) or the police.
- Stay with the person or ask someone you trust to stay with the person until the crisis has passed.
- Encourage the person to seek professional help.
- Don't argue with the person ("It's not as bad as you think") or challenge the person ("You're not the type to attempt suicide").
- Tell the person that you are there to support them. Talk about the situation as openly as possible.

When thinking about how to help someone, use the [REACH Pathway](#) (Recognize, Engage, Ask, Connect and Heal) to help remember what you can do: recognize when someone is struggling, engage in conversation and listen, ask about suicidal thoughts and feelings, connect to support and resources and take care of your own mental health. To learn more, visit [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](#)

Here are more resources to help:

- Health Link, 811
- Kids Help Phone
 - Visit: kidshelpphone.ca
 - Call: 1-800-668-6868
- AHS Mental Health Line
 - Call: 1-877-303-2642
- Hope for Wellness: First Nations & Inuit Populations
 - Call: 1-855-242-3310
 - Online chat: hopeforwellness.ca
- Canada Suicide Prevention Service
 - Call: 1-833-456-4566
 - Online chat: crisisservicescanada.ca
 - Text: 45645
- National Trans Lifeline



- Visit: [translifeline.org](https://www.translifeline.org)
- Call: 1-877-330-6366
- Learn more at [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](https://www.MyHealth.Alberta.ca)