

# TAKE ACTION

to prevent suicide



## We need to talk!

Most people don't want to talk about suicide. Some people think that talking about suicide will make the person do it. That is not true.

To prevent suicide, we need to talk about it. We need to really listen to why someone wants to die.

We need to learn more about how we can help someone choose life. Learn more about what we need to do by reading below.

## Quick Facts

- Every day in Alberta, at least one person dies by suicide. Many more attempt suicide, but live.
- People who die by suicide are all ages and from all backgrounds.
- You can help prevent suicide!

## Look for signs

Many people who are thinking about suicide are afraid to tell others directly. But, you can look for invitations from them . . . for signs they want to talk.

Here are a few signs that someone might want you to help them talk about suicide:

- They talk about wanting to die.
- They lose interest in doing things they used to enjoy.
- They avoid being with people they used to like.
- They have more trouble at home, work, or school than usual.
- They are misusing or abusing drugs or alcohol.

Do you get invitations like these? Do you think that someone might be trying to tell you that they want to talk about their reasons for suicide? Then try the reaching out.

## Use a direct question.

Reaching out and talking about suicide could save someone's life. Asking someone if they are thinking of suicide can be hard to do.

You could try something like:

- "You seem really sad lately. I'm concerned. Have you been thinking about death . . . suicide?"
- "You said that nobody cares if you live or die. Does that mean that you are thinking about suicide?"
- "You've been drinking a lot since your friend died. Sometimes people who do that are thinking about suicide. Are you thinking about ending your life?"

If they say "no", but you're not sure if you should believe them, respect their answer. Let them know that they can tell you if they are thinking about suicide. It is okay to ask them again . . . even right away.

Get advice from another helper about what to do if you think that they are still thinking of suicide.

*turn over...*

## Listen.

It can be hard to listen to someone talking about wanting to die. Do your best because it is important. Be patient and show respect. Listening to reasons for dying can be helpful to find reasons for living. Don't promise to keep secrets about suicide. Tell them that you will get help if their life is in danger.

Try to ask questions like:

- What are you thinking of doing to take your life?
- How have you planned to do it?
- When are you planning to do it?

## Get them connected to help.

If their answers tell you they have prepared a plan and that they could die by suicide very soon, you need to get help right away. Call 9-1-1.

Even if they don't have an immediate plan, getting help is still very important. Work with them to plan a way to keep safe:

- Make a list people they can agree to talk to.
- List things they can do that take them away from their thoughts of suicide.
- Find something special they can do for themselves.

Try to make an agreement with them to:

- Call a crisis line if their thoughts start to turn into actions.
- Stop or take less alcohol and drugs.

If you agree to find information, you can:

- Call a local crisis line or counseling centre. There are crisis lines in many Alberta communities. Look in the front of your telephone book under "Emergency Numbers". Call 211 in Edmonton and Calgary.
- Check the internet. Go to [www.suicideinfo.ca](http://www.suicideinfo.ca) and click on "Are you in crisis?" That will get you a list of links to on-line programs and crisis lines phone numbers.
- Find someone who will care - a psychologist, doctor, addictions counselor, employee assistance program, pastor, spiritual leader, elder, social worker, or someone at a local mental health agency. Ask if they have had suicide intervention training.

**Caring about someone who is thinking of suicide can be very stressful. Ask for caregiver support at the same places listed above.**

## It is important to learn more about preventing suicide.

Suicide affects us all. Here are some ideas to help you prevent suicide in your family and community:

- Get suicide intervention training to learn how to Take Action.
- Get your workplace or community to do a presentation on the taboo and stigma of suicide.
- Learn what you and your family can do to protect against the risk of suicide.

### You can learn more about preventing suicide at:

- The Centre for Suicide Prevention: 403-245-3900 [www.suicideinfo.ca](http://www.suicideinfo.ca)
- The Canadian Mental Health Association - Alberta Division: 780-482-6348 [www.cmha.ab.ca/](http://www.cmha.ab.ca/)

\*These are not crisis lines\*

**Learn more about injury prevention.** Learn how to prevent injuries from affecting you and your family. Call us at the *Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research*, at 780-492-6019. You can also send us an e-mail at [acicr@ualberta.ca](mailto:acicr@ualberta.ca) or visit our website at [www.acicr.ualberta.ca](http://www.acicr.ualberta.ca).

