

TAKE ACTION

to prevent suicide



We need to talk!

Most people don't want to talk about suicide. They might fear that talking about it could cause it to happen. But hundreds of people die of suicide in Alberta every year anyway.

To prevent suicide, we need to talk about it. We need to listen to people to find out if they are at risk. We should talk to someone if we are thinking about suicide.

We need to learn more about how to prevent suicide from happening. Here's what you need to know to get started.



Quick Facts

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

Suicide doesn't usually happen without warning.

People who are thinking about suicide won't often tell others. However, you can look for certain signs.

These signs show that people might be thinking about suicide:

- They avoid being around other people.
- They lose interest in doing things they used to enjoy.
- They often lose their temper or get into fights.
- They abuse drugs or alcohol.
- They have a lot of trouble at work or at home.

Do you see these signs? They should make you wonder if someone is thinking of suicide.

The best question is a direct question.

Asking is the best way to find out if someone is thinking about suicide. This can be hard to do. Don't feel embarrassed or afraid. Remember – you could save someone's life.

Here are examples of words you can use:

- "You seem really down lately. I'm concerned. Have you been thinking about death or 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?"

Any answer but "NO" could mean that they are thinking about suicide. If they say "No," make sure you believe them.

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It's important to listen.

You might be frightened to hear someone talk about suicide. Stay calm. Listen to everything they have to say. Don't tell them they are wrong to feel the way they do. Find out if they have a suicide plan. Ask:

- How do you plan to do it?
- Do you have everything you need to do it?
- Do you know when you are going to do it?

If they could commit suicide right now, you need to get help right away. Take action. Call 9-1-1.

People who don't have a plan, but are thinking about suicide, also need help. Ask them to make a promise to themselves and you. They must promise to stay safe until they can get help. They should avoid drugs or alcohol. They should also have someone they can call in an emergency. Never promise them that you will keep their plans a secret.

Here are some places where they can go for help. Most of them are free.

- The Mental Health Help Line: 1-877-303-2642 (24 hours a day, anywhere in the province)
- A local crisis line. There are crisis lines in many Alberta communities. Ask the 4-1-1 directory assistance operator for a local crisis line. Or, check the front of your phone book under "Emergency Numbers."
- The internet. Go to www.suicideinfo.ca and click on "Are you in crisis?" That will get you a list of all crisis centres in Alberta and their telephone numbers.
- A psychologist, doctor, addictions counselor, pastor, spiritual leader, elder, social worker, or someone at a local mental health agency.

Learn more about preventing suicide.

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

- Attend a workshop on suicide prevention
- Organize an awareness session in your workplace or community
- Look for information on the internet or at your local library.

For more information on suicide and suicide prevention training, contact:

These are not crisis lines

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

In your community contact:



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 or visit our website at www.acicr.ualberta.ca.