

MYTHS & FACTS

Myth: Suicidal people just want to die.

Fact: Most of the time, suicidal people experience an internal “tug-of-war” between wanting to die and wanting to live. Ultimately, it is about wanting to end the pain rather than wanting to end one’s life.

Myth: People who die by suicide do it, instead of talk about it.

Fact: The majority of people who kill themselves give clues about their suicidal thoughts. These may be things that are said, or done. All clues need to be taken seriously.

Myth: It is not a good idea to talk about suicide with people at risk; you may give them the idea.

Fact: Research shows that a direct question “Are you thinking of killing yourself?” will often allow a person at risk to share unpleasant feelings and intentions to harm themselves. Asking this question does not plant the idea, but expresses that you care and would like to help.

Myth: Only depressed people kill themselves.

Fact: People of all races, cultures, ages and incomes die by suicide. Don’t ever dismiss your concerns about someone because they are “not the type”.

PARTNERS

Lift The Silence, Suicide Awareness Week is made possible by:



Suicide Prevention Pocket Guide

September 2014



KNOW THE SIGNS

How people at risk of suicide may behave:

- make final arrangements, make a will, give away possessions, say good-bye as if they won't be seen again
- appear depressed, withdrawn, and/or have low energy
- lose interest in activities or hobbies
- increase use of alcohol or drugs
- take unnecessary risks
- have attempted suicide in the past
- show a sudden change in behaviour, attitude or appearance

What people at risk of suicide may say:

- make threats, talk of, or joke about dying
- express feelings of hopelessness and helplessness
- express feelings of worthlessness, guilt, shame, and self-hatred

They may say:

- *"I can't do anything right"*
- *"I won't be needing these things anymore"*
- *"I can't take it anymore"*
- *"I wish I was dead"*
- *"Everyone will be better off without me"*

Sometimes people at risk for suicide suddenly appear happy, as if relieved.

This does not mean that the risk of suicide is gone.

Talking about suicide will NOT make someone suicidal.
Talking about suicide may save a life.

START THE CONVERSATION

Ways to start a conversation about suicide:

- Talk about what you see them doing, or hear them saying.
"I have been feeling concerned about you lately, because..."
- 1** • Ask directly.
"Are you thinking about suicide?" or *"Are you thinking about ending your life?"*
- 2** • Listen without judgement or offering advice.
"When did you start feeling like this?", *"What causes your pain?"*, *"Can you tell me more about it?"*
 - Believe what the person says, take all threats seriously.
- 3** • Encourage them to seek support, call a 24 hour crisis line, offer to go with them to walk-in counselling, or the closest hospital emergency department.
 - Tell them you care about them.
"You are not alone in this. I'm here for you.", *"I may not be able to understand exactly how you feel, but I care about you and want to help."*
- 4** • Follow up to see how things went, get them to promise to reach out before acting on thoughts of suicide.

Caregivers:

- Don't keep someone's thoughts of suicide a secret, get others involved.

It takes a group of caring people, including professionals, to help a person at risk of suicide stay safe.

If you feel like someone is at immediate risk, involve others.
If necessary, contact emergency services for help.

REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT

- You are not alone. There is help.
- If one tool or answer doesn't work, keep trying and keep reaching out until something does.

24 HOUR CRISIS LINES

Crisis Support Centre Distress Line	780-482-HELP (4357)
Health Link Alberta	1-866-408-LINK (5465)
Kids Help Phone	1-800-668-6868
Alberta Health Services Community Urgent Services & Stabilization Team Adult Services	780-342-7777
Mental Health Help Line	1-877-303-2642

INFORMATION & SUPPORT

Canadian Mental Health Association Edmonton Region	780-414-6300
Centre for Suicide Prevention	403-245-3900
The Support Network - Crisis Support Centre Suicide Bereavement Support Services Suicide Caregiver Support Services	780-482-0198
Walk-in Counselling Society of Edmonton (sliding scale) Suite 200, 9562 82 Avenue	780-757-0900

For additional resources on suicide prevention,
mental health or other supportive community services
dial 2-1-1 or 780-482-INFO (4636).
211 is free, confidential and available 24 hours a day.

Inclusion of any agency on this list
does not constitute endorsement.