



# ARC Mental Health Information Series

*This document is intended to be information only and does not replace the opinion of a health provider.*

## Suicide

Every year approximately 4,500 people in Canada die by suicide. Almost 3/4 of those who die by suicide are men. For every death by suicide, at least 7 to 10 survivors are significantly affected by the loss. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth and young adults ages 15-34 years old. Every day, more than 200 people in Canada attempt suicide.



People who die by suicide don't necessarily want to end their lives. They often want to stop significant or unbearable mental, emotional or physical pain. They want to end their suffering or put an end to a situation that seems overwhelming to them.

The terms "attempt" and "died by suicide" are used instead of "committed suicide" because suicide is not a crime and negative terms contribute to the stigma around suicide and mental illness.

### Warning signs

- Losing interest in a previously enjoyed hobby or activity
- Disconnecting from friends or family (not calling as much, not going out)
- Increased alcohol and/or drug use
- Higher levels of irritability or anger
- More risk taking with ambivalence about the consequences
- Giving away their possessions
- Denying or not experiencing feelings and emotions
- Making off-hand or uncharacteristic comments of hopelessness or expressing feelings of being a burden to others
- Talking about wanting to die or taking their own life
- Looking for a way to take their own life or already having a plan



## Risk factors

- Experiencing traumatic events such as engaging in combat or being the victim of an assault.
- Experiencing employment issues such as working in poor conditions or having a high workload can increase the risk of mental health issues. Unemployment and retirement also increase the risk.
- Experiencing a marital breakdown - depression is more common and more severe among men who are divorced. Being single is also a significant suicide trigger among men.
- Having legal or financial worries
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Having a family history of suicide
- Having a history of previous suicide attempts
- Having a serious physical illness
- Having access to weapons, medications or other lethal means of suicide
- A personal history or a family history of mental health problems.
- Conflict with family or friends
- The illness or death of a family member

## Protective factors

Protective factors may help a person avoid considering suicide in the face of stressors:

- Positive social supports
- A sense of responsibility for others, such as having children in the home (except when the person has postpartum depression or psychosis) or having pets
- Positive coping skills
- A positive relationship with a medical or mental health provider
- A religious belief that suicide is wrong

## Resources available

- Access Crisis Centre – (450) 679-8689
- Suicide Action Montreal – 1 (866) 277-3553
- 811
- Centre de crise Haut-Richelieu – (450) 348-6300
- Kids Help Phone – 1(800) 668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868

Psychosocial support available at your local CLSC and through your primary care physician.

CLSC St-Hubert (450) 443-7400

CLSC Brossard (450) 445-4452

CLSC St-Jean-sur-Richelieu (450) 358-2572

CLSC Richelieu (450) 658-7561

811 Info-Sante, press 9 for English



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