

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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# **CMHA BC AND CRISIS CENTRES URGE BRITISH COLUMBIANS TO LEARN SUICIDE PREVENTION SKILLS**

## ***Non-profits join forces on World Suicide Prevention Day to call for a suicide-safer BC***

**Vancouver, B.C.** – Approximately 4,000 Canadians die by suicide every year. For every one of those deaths it is estimated that there are as many as 20 attempts. Chances are, someone in your life may be thinking about suicide right now...perhaps a colleague, a friend or a family member. If you could learn how to help them keep safe, would you?

If the answer is “yes” then the good news is that you can do just that by taking one of the suicide prevention training programs currently being offered throughout British Columbia.

According to an editorial published this week in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, suicide is the second leading cause of death among Canadians aged 15 to 34, after motor vehicle accidents. Suicide is killing youth, middle-age men and seniors at an alarming rate and Canada is one of the few developed nations without a national suicide prevention strategy with concerted funds, goals and commitment to reducing the rates of suicide.

“In addition to creating a national suicide prevention strategy, we need to have a national conversation that encourages all Canadians to come forward and take action to help people who are in extreme emotional pain,” says Bev Gutray, Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division. “Our Community Gatekeeper training, which includes safeTALK and ASIST training, follows curriculum shown to be effective at increasing knowledge, skill and willingness to intervene, as well as helping reduce the risk of suicide.

“We would like to encourage people throughout BC, particularly those in trusted positions within their communities such as first responders, HR professionals, community service providers, Elders and spiritual leaders, coaches, teachers and others to sign up for suicide prevention training that will save lives.”

In recognition of **World Suicide Prevention Day** on **Saturday, Sept. 10, 2016**, the Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division and Crisis Centres across the province are calling on British Columbians to sign up for a suicide prevention workshop.

These organizations offer interactive, practical training workshops created by [LivingWorks](#), the world leader in suicide prevention training, including:

### **SafeTALK**

- A half-day alertness training workshop that teaches participants how to identify people who may have thoughts of suicide, how to approach them directly about the possibility of suicide and connect them to live-saving community supports and resources.

### **ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)**

- This two-day interactive session teaches participants effective intervention skills while helping to build suicide prevention networks in the community.

For dates and times of upcoming safeTALK and ASIST suicide prevention training taking place across BC click [here](#).

For more information on training near you contact:

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*The Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division (CMHA BC) and the Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC along with Need2 in Victoria, The Vancouver Island Crisis Society in Nanaimo and the Crisis Prevention, Intervention and Information Centre for Northern BC in Prince George are working together to build a suicide-safer province for all British Columbians by providing them with the tools to help people in their communities, workplaces, social circles and families who are at risk of suicide.*

**About the Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division (CMHA BC)**

CMHA BC is a part of Canada's most established mental health charity and the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health. CMHA helps people access the resources they need to maintain and improve mental health, build resilience, and support recovery from mental illness. Each year in BC alone, CMHA serves more than 100,000 people all across the province. For mental health and addiction information and resources visit [www.cmha.bc.ca](http://www.cmha.bc.ca).

**About The Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC (Crisis Centre)**

The Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC is a non-profit, volunteer organization committed to helping people help themselves and others deal with crisis. Since 1969, the Crisis Centre has been providing free, confidential, non-judgmental emotional support to youth, adults and seniors in distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Crisis Centre works at a community level to enhance resiliency and build capacity to respond to crisis and suicide. The Crisis Centre is operated by 450+ frontline volunteers who are supported by a team of professional staff.

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