



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
British Columbia  
Mental health for all

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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

**Vancouver, B.C.** – Monday September 10 is World Suicide Prevention Day. This is the one day a year focused solely on awareness of suicide and its prevention. This year CMHA BC would like to take this opportunity to spread the message that suicide can affect *anyone* and *anyone* can help prevent suicide. This year's theme, as determined by the International Association for Suicide Prevention, is "*Working together to prevent suicide.*" Suicide prevention is everybody's business. CMHA maintains an online resource for the public at [AskAboutSuicide.ca](http://AskAboutSuicide.ca), created with generous support from London Drugs.

While depression, anxiety and other mental health concerns may contribute to suicide risk anyone struggling with life's challenges and difficulties might have thoughts of suicide and anyone has the capacity to help someone at risk of suicide. People who think about and attempt suicide don't want to die: they want a way out of their deep, psychological pain and may see other possibilities. A caring intervention can demonstrate to the person at risk that they are not alone and people do care if they live or die. This can provide a lasting anchor for the person at risk in future.

Studies have found that 90% of people who were in the process of acting on their plan to die by suicide but were stopped before attempting – either by a passerby, security staff, or police – did not go on to attempt suicide again.

"We need to have a national conversation that encourages all Canadians to come forward and take action to help those who are in extreme emotional pain," says Sarah Hamid-Balma, Director of Mental Health Promotion, Canadian Mental Health Association. "Our suicide alertness and prevention 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, bar staff and others to sign up for suicide prevention training that will help save lives."

In recognition of **World Suicide Prevention Day**, 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](http://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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