



Youth Suicide Prevention

Resource Information Newsletter

Office of the Children's Advocate

Thank you for keeping us up to date on what is happening in your programs regarding youth suicide prevention.

The Office of the Children's Advocate made a commitment in February 2006 to be the central gathering point where community service providers could forward their program information and we continue that commitment today.

We look forward to hearing from you in the future.

Email your program information to Tanis Yaseniuk at:

tyaseniuk@childrensadvocate.mb.ca



Reclaiming Hope

Manitoba's Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy

In December 2008, Manitoba Health and Healthy Living led the development of Reclaiming Hope: Manitoba's Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy in collaboration with several key partners. The goal of the strategy is to prevent the tragedy of youth suicide and suicide-related thoughts and behaviours. Activities were identified for the strategy that both enhance protective factors and reduce risk factors known to contribute to suicidal thinking and behaviour. The strategy will help youth develop healthy individual coping strategies encouraging them to embrace and succeed in life; will enhance family, social and community supports; and will improve access to mental health treatment.

The main components and basic structure of the strategy were influenced by the Canadian Association of Suicide Prevention Blueprint and the Framework for Suicide Prevention in Manitoba, and are consistent with the federal government's National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy.

The recommendations of the external reviews of child welfare were also considered in the development of this strategy, recognizing that many children involved with Child and Family Services are at significant vulnerability for suicide and suicide-related thoughts and behaviours.

The Changes for Children Initiative was designed to address the recommendations of the external reviews, and this strategy will address recommendations related to suicide prevention.

For further information go to: www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/mh/hope.html or call Manitoba Healthy Living (204) 786-7101.

Tanis Yaseniuk
Editor

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Special Points of Interest:

- ☺ Youth Suicide Statistics
- ☺ Honouring Their Spirits
- ☺ River of Life

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The Manitoba Suicide Line

1 - 877-435-7170 (1-877-help170)

www.suicideline.ca

Youth and Suicide

The following is taken from the Canadian Mental Health Association website at www.cmha.ca.

Adolescence is a time of dramatic change. The journey from child to adult can be complex and challenging. Young people often feel tremendous pressure to succeed at school, at home and in social groups. At the same time, they may lack the life experience that lets them know that difficult situations will not last forever. Mental health problems commonly associated with adults, such as depression, also affect young people. Any one of these factors, or a combination, may become such a source of pain that they seek relief in suicide. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people after motor vehicle accidents. Yet people are often reluctant to discuss it. This is partly due to the stigma, guilt or shame that surrounds suicide. People are often uncomfortable discussing it. Unfortunately, this tradition of silence perpetuates harmful myths and attitudes. It can also prevent people from talking openly about the pain they feel or the help they need.

Suicide can appear to be an impulsive act. But it's a complicated process, and a person may think about it for some time before taking action. It's estimated that 8 out of 10 people who attempt suicide or die by suicide hinted about or made some mention of their plans. Often, those warning signs are directed at a friend.

Recognizing the warning signs is one thing; knowing what to do with that information is another. Suicide was a taboo subject for a very long time. Even talking about it is still difficult for most people. But being able to talk about suicide can help save a life. Learning about suicide is the first step in the communication process. Suicide is about escape. Someone who thinks seriously about suicide is experiencing pain that is crushing, they feel that only death will stop it.

Some Myths About Suicide

Myth: Young people rarely think about suicide.

Reality: Teens and suicide are more closely linked than adults expect. In a survey of 15,000 grade 7 to 12 students in British Columbia, 34% knew of someone who had attempted or died by suicide; 16% had seriously considered suicide; 14% had made a suicide plan; 7% had made an attempt and 2% had required medical attention due to an attempt.

Myth: Talking about suicide will give a young person the idea, or permission, to consider suicide as a solution to their problems.

Reality: Talking calmly about suicide, without showing fear or making judgments, can bring relief to someone who is feeling terribly isolated. A willingness to listen shows sincere concern; encouraging someone to speak about their suicidal feelings can reduce the risk of an attempt.

Myth: Suicide is sudden and unpredictable.

Reality: Suicide is most often a process, not an event. Eight out of ten people who die by suicide gave some, or even many, indications of their intentions.

Myth: Suicidal people are determined to die.

Reality: Suicidal youth are in pain. They don't necessarily want to die; they want their pain to end. If their ability to cope is stretched to the limit, or if problems occur together with a mental illness, it can seem that death is the only way to make the pain stop.

Some Common Warning Signs

-  Sudden change in behaviour (for better or worse)
-  Withdrawal from friends and activities
-  Lack of interest
-  Increased use of alcohol and other drugs
-  Recent loss of a friend, family member or parent, especially if they died of suicide
-  Conflicting feelings or a sense of shame about being gay or straight
-  Mood swings, emotional outbursts, high level of irritability or aggression
-  Feelings of hopelessness
-  Preoccupation with death, giving away valuable possessions
-  Talk of suicide: e.g. "no one cares if I live or die"
-  "Hero worship" of people who have died by suicide.

Youth Suicide Prevention—Crisis Lines

Service	Phone
Klinic Crisis Line	(204) 786-8686 or 1-888-322-3019
Manitoba Suicide Line	1-877-435-7170
Klinic Sexual Assault Crisis Line	(204) 786-8631 or 1-888-292-7565
Seneca Help Line (Winnipeg)	(204) 942-9276
Kids Help Phone (National Line available to Manitoba Youth)	1-800-668-6868
MacDonald Youth Services Mobile Crisis Services	(204) 949-4777 or 1-888-383-2776
Mobile Crisis Service (Winnipeg)	(204) 940-1781
Youth Mobile Crisis Team (Winnipeg)	(204) 949-4777 or 1-888-383-2779
24 Hr. Crisis Line and Mobile Crisis Unit (Brandon, MB)	(204) 725-4411 or 1-888-379-7699
Mobile Crisis Unit (Selkirk, MB)	(204) 482-5376 or 1-866-427-8628
Crisis Stabilization Unit (Selkirk, MB)	(204) 482-5361 or 1-866-427-8628
24 Hr. Crisis Line (Thompson, MB.)	(204) 778-7273
24 Hr. Cross Lake Crisis Line	(204) 676-3687
Churchill Health Centre—Crisis on Call	(204) 675-8300
On Call Crisis (Flin Flon, MB)	Daytime: (204) 687-1340 After Hours: (204) 687-7591
On Call Crisis (The Pas, MB.)	Daytime: (204) 623-9560 After Hours: (204) 623-6431

Community Suicide Prevention Resources

Bullying Help Line	1-888-456-2323
The Mood Disorders Association of Manitoba Ltd.	1-800-263-1460 or (204) 786-0987
Youth Resource Centre	(204) 253-7475
Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre: Winnipeg	1-800-962-6294 or (204) 925-0300
Black Youth Help Line	(204) 253-7475
RAY—Resource Assistance to Youth	(204) 783-5617 or info@rayinc.ca
Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre	(204) 477-6391
Addictions Foundation of Manitoba	(204) 944-6367
New Directions for Children, Youth, Adults and Families	(204) 786-7051

*The Office of the Children's Advocate tries to ensure that contact numbers are accurate at time of publishing; should you find a discrepancy, please notify us so that the correction can be made to our online edition. Thank you.

Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Program

River of Life

Excerpt take from an article in *SAY Magazine*, Winter 2010.

The Centre for Suicide Prevention in partnership with Millbrook Technologies, the Canadian Mental Health Association and Aboriginal leadership across the country are presenting the first ever national culturally-based suicide prevention online training program.

The program called River of Life is designed to enhance the capacity of First Nations to implement suicide intervention, prevention and postvention approaches. The online training program was developed

"By delivering the training online we can ensure that it is available to the majority of First Nations rural communities," explains Diane Yackel, Executive Director of the Centre for Suicide Prevention. "We feel that some immediate benefits this course will bring to the First Nations communities are trained graduates who can increase the communities' capacity to prevent suicide, provide access to research and Elders' experience in an unique approach to youth suicide prevention, and strengthen the communities infrastructure that will support life choices for youth at risk of suicide."

For more information, contact:

Centre for Suicide Prevention

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Honouring Their Spirits

We would like to take this moment to thank and honour the **Teen Touch** organization; its dedicated staff, volunteers and Board members, who have, for the past 26 years honoured the voice and spirit of youth through their various outreach and helpline services. The organization closed it's doors on October 31, 2009.



Youth Suicide Statistics

by Age and Gender

September 15, 2008 to March 31, 2009

Age Group	Sex		Totals
	Male	Female	
6-10	1	0	1
11-12	0	1	1
13-15	1	5	6
16-18	1	3	4
Over 18	0	1	1
Totals	3	10	13

Compiled by the Office of the Children's Advocate

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