



Canada's 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline marks one year of support

Nanaimo, November 22, 2024 – **Canada's 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline** is marking one year of providing people across the country access to life-saving support through three easy-to-remember numbers. Since its launch on November 30, 2023, trained 9-8-8 responders have been supporting people across Canada who are thinking about suicide or worried about someone they know.

Over the past year, 9-8-8 responders have answered more than 300,000 calls and texts to the national helpline – that's an average of around 1,000 per day. In British Columbia, 9-8-8 responders have answered an average of around 3,500 calls and texts per month since the service launched.

9-8-8 provides urgent, live support by phone and text in English and French, 24/7/365.

Vancouver Island Crisis Society is one of nearly 40 local, provincial and national helplines across the country whose responders answer 9-8-8 calls and texts. These responders are trained in suicide prevention and to listen with compassion and empathy. They give those who reach out space to share what they're going through without being judged, offering culturally appropriate, lifesaving supports to people in their most challenging moments.

"We feel privileged to be there to listen on the other end of the phone, helping people get the support they need," said Elizabeth Newcombe, Executive Director of Vancouver Island Crisis Society.

"Talking about suicide can be hard – but with three simple digits, 9-8-8 is making it easier to reach out for support," said Dr. Allison Crawford, Chief Medical Officer of 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline. "We're asking everyone to play a part, by sharing those three simple numbers – 9-8-8 – wherever and with whoever they can."

9-8-8 is led and coordinated by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and funded by the Government of Canada.

Suicide affects people of all ages and backgrounds. An average of 4,500 people across Canada die by suicide each year – approximately 12 people per day.

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Serving the Island Community