



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

World Suicide Prevention Day 2024: #StartTheConversation

Nanaimo, BC, August 26, 2024— The Vancouver Island Crisis Society will host **World Suicide Prevention Day** on **Sunday, September 8th, 2024**, starting at **1:00 PM** at the **Conference Room at the Best Western Dorchester Hotel, 70 Church Street, Nanaimo, BC**. This event will bring the community together to raise awareness about suicide prevention, provide valuable resources, and encourage open conversations about mental health.

Suicide is a major public health crisis with profound social, emotional, and economic consequences. Globally, over 700,000 people die by suicide each year, affecting countless others. Suicide remains a critical global issue, affecting individuals and communities worldwide. **Changing the Narrative: #StartTheConversation** is an initiative from the **International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP)** aimed at inspiring open, honest discussions about suicide and suicidal behavior. These essential conversations break down barriers, raise awareness, and foster understanding and support.

Event Highlights:

- **Date/Time:** Sunday, September 8th, 2024, starting at 1:00 PM
- **Location:** Conference Room, Best Western Dorchester Hotel, 70 Church Street, Nanaimo, BC
- **Key Activities:**
 - **Film Screening:** *Through The Shadowlands* – Initially focused on **Equine Facilitated Wellness**, the documentary took a new direction after filmmaker **Anastasia Hirst** lost her father to suicide during its production. It explores the emotional, social, and psychological impacts of mental health struggles and suicide, along with the therapeutic benefits of **Equine Therapy** for emotional regulation and healing. The screening will be followed by a **Q&A session** with **Anastasia Hirst** and **John Fulton**, providing attendees with a unique opportunity to engage with the film's themes and share thoughts. More information about the documentary and extra photos can be found on its Facebook page: [Equus Documentary](#).
 - **Community Walk** through **Maffeo Sutton Park** to raise awareness about suicide prevention, offering a chance to connect with others and remind participants that they are not alone.
 - **Bubble Release Activity**, symbolizing hope and remembrance, creating a collective moment of healing and solidarity.

This year's theme, "**Changing the Narrative: #StartTheConversation**", calls for action to break the silence surrounding suicide and mental health. The event is designed to foster understanding, reduce stigma, and create a safe space for individuals to share their stories and seek support.

Serving the Island Community

The **Vancouver Island Crisis Society** invites everyone to join this global movement and help make a difference.

For those who have lost someone to suicide, the **Vancouver Island Crisis Society** offers a **Suicide Bereavement Peer Support Group** and **1:1 Lay Counselling**, free of charge, providing a compassionate space for healing and connection. To learn more, email **info@vicrisis.ca**.

If you or someone you know is struggling with thoughts of suicide, help is available. **Call 9-8-8 or 1-888-494-3888** to speak with someone 24/7. For those who prefer texting, **text 9-8-8** anytime, day or night.

About Vancouver Island Crisis Society:

The **Vancouver Island Crisis Society** has been a vital resource for the community, providing crisis support, education, and suicide prevention advocacy. Through its 24/7 crisis helpline and the new **National 9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline**, which offers **24/7 texting support**, the organization delivers immediate assistance to those in need, whether it be by calling or texting.

For more information, please visit <https://www.vicrisis.ca/wspd-2024/> or contact:

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