



Vancouver Island
Crisis Society

PRESS RELEASE

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Strengthening Protective Factors and Instilling Hope

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the world. Approximately one million people worldwide die by suicide each year, one death every 40 seconds. The number of lives lost each year through suicide exceeds the number of deaths due to homicide and war combined. These staggering figures do not include suicide attempts which may be up to 20 times higher, one attempt every 1.5 seconds. The psychological and social impact of suicide on the family and community is staggering. However, despite the complexity of this phenomenon, suicide can be prevented. (International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP))

Closer to home, according to the B.C. Coroner, between 1998 and 2008 on Vancouver Island a minimum of 1,109 people died by suicide. Although we do not have war here we lose more people on Vancouver Island to this devastating condition than we do to car accidents and drug related circumstances combined.

It has been said that when people don't know what to say, they will say nothing and suicide thrives in isolation. The person feeling this overwhelmed may be throwing out cues and invitations for others to pick up on but many times they go unnoticed or unaddressed. Is it because when we are not struggling ourselves we shut out the subject of suicide? Or maybe, when we do pick up on cues, are we simply too afraid to ask? What if the answer was yes, what would we do then? The fear of asking someone that question is real. It is a concern that comes up in every workshop the Vancouver Island Crisis Society presents.

Asking someone and talking about suicide can feel scary. Breaking the silence however sends a powerful message to someone that it is okay to talk about what they are feeling and thinking, that they are not alone, and that you care. When someone is feeling suicidal, it is often less about wanting to die, and more about feeling that they have run out of options and hope. The fear and shame surrounding these feeling keeps people isolated and cut off from accessing help, which allows their fear, hopelessness, and embarrassment to grow bigger and bigger. Asking about and giving people permission to talk about suicide is the first step towards hope and almost always helps reduce the risk. Asking someone about suicide doesn't put the idea in their head, it gives them the chance to let their fear out and talk about other options. Breaking the silence surrounding suicide increases realistic opportunities to save lives and to reduce suffering

No matter what issue holds people back from engaging those struggling in conversation, being educated about suicide can make all the difference. It can give people the confidence to ask the question and to get the right help in place. Suicide is said to be "transient", suggesting the thoughts can come and go. Giving someone who is thinking about suicide the option to talk to someone who is really listening, can make all the difference. In fact it does, it save lives. The crisis line workers experience it every day.

The Vancouver Island Crisis Society is honouring World Suicide Prevention Day, September 10th, this year by strengthening protective factors in the communities it serves by offering Suicide Awareness & Response workshops and a Suicide Bereavement workshop that week. We hope people will take this opportunity to come and learn how to protect those around us, our families, our acquaintances and our co-workers. We want to help our Vancouver Island community become a suicide safer community.

If you are struggling yourself or you know of anyone else who is struggling, the crisis line is here 24 hours a day. Reach out and call before things get so overwhelming that suicide becomes an option, 1-888-494-3888. The crisis line endeavors to provide emotional support during times of crisis, information about community resources, education intended to promote community wellness, and reduce the incidence of suicide. We value the principles of confidentiality, non-judgmental acceptance, respect for diversity, personal empowerment, and cooperation.

Suicide Awareness & Response Dates:

Monday, Sept 10th, 1pm-4pm, Barclay Hotel, Arrowsmith Room, 4277 Stamp Ave, Port Alberni

Tuesday, Sept 11th, 9am-12pm & 1pm-4pm, Silver Bridge Inn, Driftwood Room, 140 Trans Canada Hwy, Duncan

Wednesday, Sept 12th, 9am-12pm, St Joseph's Hospital, Edith McNish Boardroom, 2137 Comox Ave, Courtenay, Wednesday, Sept 12th, 1pm-4pm, Robron Centre, 740 Robron Road, Campbell River

Thursday, Sept 13th, 9am-12pm, Vancouver Island Crisis Society, #30 - 1708 Bowen Road, Nanaimo

Suicide Bereavement Workshop

Thursday, Sept 13th, 1pm-4pm, VI Crisis Society, #30 - 1708 Bowen Rd, Nanaimo

For further information please contact:

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