

Vancouver Island Crisis Society

IN CONNECTION



Box 1118, Nanaimo, BC V9R 6E7 Toll Free 1-877-753-2495 T (250) 753-2495 F (250) 753-2475 E info@vicrisis.ca W www.vicrisis.ca

Fall 2012

*Helping People
Find Their Way*

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Contacts

Vancouver Island Crisis Society
 P.O. Box 1118
 Nanaimo, BC V9R 6E7

Toll Free: 1-877-753-2495
 Phone: (250) 753-2495
 Fax: (250) 753-2475
 Email: info@vicrisis.ca
 Website: www.vicrisis.ca

The Vancouver Island Crisis Line
 is also the public access to Mental
 Health Crisis Response Services
 1-888-494-3888

Suicide Bereavement Support Group:
 Support for surviving the loss of a
 loved one to suicide. For information
 call 250-753-2495 or 1-877-753-2495.

Volunteer Training on the Crisis Line
 in Nanaimo, Suicide Prevention &
 Intervention Training and other
 customized workshops for your
 business or group Island wide call
 (250) 753-2495 or 1-877-753-2495.



Cowichan
 Central and
 Northern Vancouver Island



Vancouver Island Crisis Line Statistics

6 Months Only From April 1, 2012 to September 30, 2012

Total Calls	13,642	%
Victoria & area	4,955	36.8
Nanaimo/Ladysmith	3,001	22.0
BC Off Island	1,781	13.1
Unknown	1,495	11.0
Campbell River & area	418	3.1
Cowichan Valley & area	853	6.3
Comox Valley & area	629	4.6
Parksville/Qualicum	261	1.9
Pt Alberni/West Coast	166	1.2
Rest of Canada/USA	45	0.3
Mt. Waddington & area	38	0.2

Calls by Incoming Line

1-800-SUICIDE

(provincial line)
 258 calls
 2%

310-6789

Mental Health Support
 (provincial line)
 981 calls
 7%

1-888-494-3888

VI Crisis Line
 12,403 calls
 91%

Reasons Why People Call the Crisis Line

Mental Health Issues	46%
Information & Resources	13%
Individual/Family Life	11%
Suicide	8%
Addiction	4%
Physical Health Issues	4%
Financial & Homelessness	3%
Abuse & Family Violence	2%
Other	9%

Note: 1390 suicide risk reviews were completed

Crisis Call Interventions

911	74
Police non-emergency	23
MCFD	23
Hospital	0
Poison Control	3
Other	7
MH Crisis Response	999
Total	1,129

Mental Health & Addictions Crisis Response

Interventions - by team

	# of Calls
Campbell River Crisis Nurse	2
Courtenay Crisis Intervention Nurse	70
Duncan Crisis Response Team	90
Nanaimo Crisis Response Team	420
Parksville Mental Health	4
Port Alberni Community Response Team	15
Mt. Waddington Mental Health & other	1
Victoria Integrated Mobile Crisis Response Team	397

Mental Health & Addictions Crisis Response Breakdown

by Type of Intervention

	# of Calls
Crisis Response Teams	748
Consult Only	53
Message Relay	190
Conference call:	8
Caller & Crisis Team	

worries

life is just too stressful

I've been
hurt one too
many times

where do I go for help

grief

nothing
will ever
change

layoffs

bullied

no point

I can't
go on

My pet
is gone

illness

I can't
kick
these
drugs

job

Why take
it out on
me

my kids
drive me
crazy

breakups

bills

my drinking
is out of
control

anxiety

I can't
cope

depression



*Helping People
Find Their Way*

VANCOUVER ISLAND CRISIS LINE
1-888-494-3888

Suicide Prevention Programs for Schools

It's about living your life...

In 2011 Vancouver Island Crisis Society presented our suicide prevention programs for schools at the National Conference for Suicide Prevention sponsored by the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP) and we were overwhelmed by the excitement and response our programs have generated – now seeing them presented not only in island school districts, but on the mainland.

Out of that experience, our program development staff became interested in the reasons why our programs for youth – specifically our 12 hour **GRASP program (Growth, Resilience, Acknowledgement, Suicide Awareness, Preparation, and Personal safe planning)** – were having such positive and far reaching effect on youth and concluded that the relational engagement occurring in GRASP had a lot to do with the success of the program.

Based on that, we went back to the drawing board with our 80 minute presentation for grades 8,9, and 10 - Speak Out, Reach Out, Help Out - and added elements that we hoped would engage students in a short term presentation that would help them retain the very important concepts being covered.

We added current media, and changed our messaging to focus on life and living and finding the tools to cope when life becomes difficult or overwhelming. The facilitators are trained to be transparent in their approach and in an exercise called “The Weight of My Worries – Unpacking My Bags” demonstrate the importance of finding safe spaces and people to talk with. During this exercise we also create bridging between the school counselling staff and the students as well as play a demonstration crisis line call between a youth and a crisis line worker.

The second message in the presentation is that “It isn't easy being green” – and using media from the “It Gets Better” campaign in the US, we show a video featuring Kermit the Frog as he talks about how it feels to be different. The facilitators then talk about how they feel “green” in their own lives – that we all feel that way at one time or another – and encourage students to find somebody safe to talk to if feeling green has them feeling lost or overwhelmed.

The presentation also includes information on “Red Flags” – things that may indicate it's time for us or someone we know to unpack our bags - creating safe plans, what to do if we are alerted about a red flag via

social media, and what we can do to “Help Out” and make a difference. This last section is done by having students create “Feel Better” cards for people who might be struggling and it's been positive to see the heart-felt messages youth are sharing when given this opportunity.

Another positive has been reported by the counselling departments. They are seeing an increase in students, and at times students they would not have expected, utilizing their help for more than just career planning. As well, the term “unpacking” is being used by students as a way of explaining why they've come to counselling.

We're also seeing other pieces of the program resonating long after we've been at a school. The following was written by a student who elected to take GRASP after he had seen the presentation Speak Out, Reach Out, Help Out last year:

"I've always had issues accepting myself. I've felt 'green' like I don't fit in with the rest of society. Last year what pushed me over the edge is when I lost a childhood friend of mine to 'bullying' I didn't know anything about it only that I'll never see her again. It really hurts when you lose someone you cared about, and taking GRASP is my way of trying to be a 'hero' or a nice guy who makes someone smile. I am here and I am going to make a difference."

During the **2011/12** school year the Crisis Society trained:

150 School Personnel in “Suicide Protocols Training,” **24** counsellors in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), approximately **125** RCMP and other youth workers in an island wide youth forum, **220** students in GRASP, and **1296** in Speak Out, Reach Out, Help Out.

Speak Out, Reach Out, Help Out was also presented last year at the Aboriginal Youth Conference “Gathering our Voices” to 72 aboriginal youth from across Canada.

Thanks to the generosity of The United Way, private and public donations, the Vancouver Island Crisis Society now has the funding to support ongoing suicide prevention programs in other island school

by Lyndsay Wells, Public Education Program Coordinator



***Grasp; G R A S P.
It's suicide prevention, you see
Teaching me the importance of the simple things
And that everybody dangles their life by a string***

***Learning brilliance and resilience,
How to listen and accept
Defining a crisis,
And finding the next step***

***The moment came for me walking a bridge
All I wanted was to hurl myself off of it's ridge
That was the first day,
That is not today***

***Four weeks later I walked away with knowledge
And walked and talked myself off the bridge
Knowing I had made it far
Without another frightful scar.***

***The crisis line is always there
When your heart is feeling bare
When you feel strained beyond compare
We will be there***

***For many years I could have used the training
No time remaining
When going downhill
Trying to stay unnoticed and still***

***I couldn't keep up my facade any longer
And because of GRASP I can say that I'm stronger
I'm sure many others can also say the same;
We've all won the game***

***We've learned to listen and protect
And to give ample respect
To show people they are perfect
We've been taught how to connect***

***So thank-you lovely ladies for teaching me all I know
When needed I pray my knowledge will show
Real life to begin soon
Until then I'll whistle an intriguing tune.***

***Learning brilliance and resilience,
How to listen and accept
Defining a crisis,
And finding the next step.***

***by Megan
(a grade 12 student)***

Vancouver Island Community Resource Update



Note: For any further information on a specific program listed please contact the resource directly and if you are needing other resource information please refer to our online resource database at <http://www.vicrisis.ca/community-resource-database/>

This month highlighting “Cold Weather Shelters”

Victoria:

Addictions, Rehabilitation Centre, & Hostel - (Salvation Army Addictions & Rehab Centre)

The Victoria Addictions and Rehabilitations Centre (ARC) is a modern 149-bed facility that is situated in downtown Victoria. This multipurpose facility makes every effort to give its residents the opportunity to live in a safe drug and alcohol free environment. There are 53 rooms available for rent to men on a nightly or 30-day basis. There are also 56 emergency shelter beds for men in need, 21 of which are funded by BC Housing. 24 hour reception desk service. To access the emergency shelter, people must be there at 6:00am to get their names on the bed list. Beds are assigned at 9:00am. Prerequisites: Must be male over 19 years old, not under the influence of alcohol/drugs, and able to walk up and down stairs. 525 Johnson Street Business Line **250-384-3396**

Our Place Society -

Downtown drop-in centre that offers a safe place for people in need to relax and have a snack. Meal Program - offers tasty and nutritious meals and snacks throughout the day. Drop-In Centre - serves as a living room in the downtown core. It's a place of welcome and shelter, has an outdoor courtyard, a computer lab, and a hygiene area where individuals can take a hot shower and find new clothing. Open Monday - Friday 7:00am - 5:00pm. Visitors can drop in and access the following services (adults 19 and over only): library and basic computer education; computers for job searches and resume preparation; message centre (mailing address, phone and fax); bus tickets and postage stamps (when available); physical and mental health services and counselling; advocacy and housing location assistance; referrals to detoxification programs and visits in hospital and prison; choir and art programs; recreation (pool table, summer baseball games and birthday parties); memorial services (often one or more a week); interdenominational faith room; street outreach. Hygiene area hours: 9:00am - 3:00pm (showers, washrooms, clothing); Meal hours: Breakfast 7:00am - 8:00am; Nutrition Bar 8:00am - 11:30am and 12:30pm - 3:30pm; Lunch 11:30am - 12:30pm; Dinner 4:00pm - 5:00pm. 919 Pandora Ave, **250-388-7112**

Out of the Rain Youth Shelter -

Out of the Rain works to reduce the risks faced by homeless youth by supplying a warm, safe and dry environment for youth aged 15 to 25. Morning and evening meals are provided for up to 30 youth each night. Trained staff supervise the shelter each night. In addition to tending to the immediate needs of the youth and lending a friendly ear, these youth workers also aim to empower youth by providing support and referrals to community based programs. The shelter operates 7 days a week, from October to April, rotating among hosts sites in the community in an effort to maximize community resources.

SHELTER SCHEDULE: Monday: 10:00 pm to 8:00 am - St. John's Church, 1611 Quadra (entrance off Mason Street, down the stairs) Tuesday: 10:00 pm to 8:00 am - 932 Balmoral Street (First Metropolitan United Church) - Entrance is the double doors close to the road. Sign says "Out of the Rain." Wednesday: 10:00 pm to 8:00 am - 680 Courtney Street (St. Andrew's Presbyterian) - Entrance off of Courtney St. Thursday: - 10:00 pm to 8:00 am - Beacon Community Services CAP Building, 1450 Elford Street Friday: 10:00 pm to 8:00 am - 1240 Yates Street (Boys' and Girls' Club) - Entrance is the double gym doors down the driveway, to the right of the main entrance. Saturday: 10:00 pm to 8:00 am - Congregation Emanuel, 1461 Blanshard Street - No pets. Sunday: 10:00 pm to 7:00 am - Downtown Community Activity Centre, 755 Pandora Street (no pets) **250-415-3856**

Victoria Cool Aid Society -

Extreme weather shelters:

When extreme weather conditions are predicted, additional shelters are opened up and existing shelters expand into overflow mats. Shelter capacity expands by 115 emergency mats. Contact Victoria Cool Aid Society for specific information on locations. **250-383-1977**

Transition Shelters (Rock Bay Landing; Next Steps)

Rock Bay Landing - provides 84 permanent shelter beds, 23 units for transitional housing, and 2 units for family shelter. Includes expanded space for 40 shelter mats during extreme weather conditions. Located at 535 Ellice Street **250-383-1951**:

Next Steps Transitional Shelter - provides an opportunity for 15 emergency shelter clients to get their lives back on track by offering access to resources and services such as housing, employment, financial, life skills, mentorship, and physical and mental health services. Located at 2317 Dowler Place in North Park **250-480-1408**

Sandy Merriman House (for women) Has 25 beds and also offers daytime drop-in programs offering hot meals, unlimited coffee/tea and juice, laundry and shower facilities, hygiene supplies, clothing, and support. The length of stay is traditionally 30 days however the length can be extended. All services are free. 809 Burdett Ave **250-480-1408**

Victoria Human Exchange Society -

A grass roots group providing support and advocacy to people working hard to solve their own problems. Promotes shelters and family type housing for low-income, marginalized, homeless persons; Provides liaison to community agencies that offer therapy, counselling, and community addiction recovery; Shared accommodation initiatives with members of the community provide houses for low income persons committed to being clean and sober. Houses currently available include: **Grandma's House and Bittancourt Manor** on Salt Spring Island; **Charlie Pyott House, Edith Gulland House, McGivney House**, in Victoria; and **Frances Thibeau House and Judy Thomas House** in Sidney, and **Ester's House** in Nanaimo. A branch on Mayne Island provides food, goods, and furniture to the working poor and homeless on Mayne. **250-539-5310**

Victoria Houses call Linda; **250-658-0170** or cell **250-857-3905**; Toll free **1-800-691-9366**; Business Line **250-361-2762** (pager)

Victoria Youth Empowerment Society (Kiwaniis Emergency Youth Shelter)

The Victoria Youth Empowerment Society (YES) offers services for youth and their family/caregivers throughout the Capital Region. Alliance Club - an evening drop-in center for youth 13 to 19 years to provide a safe, healthy alternative to being on the streets. The Club offers a meal each night at 5:00pm and an evening snack at 8:00pm. Provides shower and laundry facilities and recreation options (board games, arts and crafts, books, television, movie nights, pool, and ping pong). Open Mon - Thur from 3:00pm - 9:30pm. Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter - a 10-bed facility for youth 13 to 18 years who have no safe place to stay. There is a Youth and Family Support Worker on site at 2117 Vancouver Street. Daytime Youth drop-In: the YES Office also acts as a daytime drop-in centre that connects youth to healthier opportunities by providing support and referrals. Youth receive assistance in obtaining housing, education, medical, and employment information, as well as snacks and clothing. The YES Office offers youth a phone and message system as well as internet access. **250-386-8282**



Connecting Resources Island Wide

Cowichan Valley:

Warmland House -

Community Housing resource center houses a resource room, 30 emergency shelter beds and 24 transitional apartments. its purpose is to provide housing for those folks who have difficulty finding stable housing and to provide emergency shelter for those who are without shelter. As well as the **Living Room Program** - a daytime drop-in program that provides a safe, home-like environment aiming to connect adults and youth with mental health issues and those at risk of homelessness with support and access to community agencies. Extreme Weather Shelter is open now throughout winter months dependant on weather changes. Sign in is 5:00 pm, arrive early to ensure a spot. 2579 Lewis Street, Duncan **250-715-1132**

Nanaimo:

Friendship LeLum - Aboriginal Youth Safe House -

Friendship Lelum provides short-term shelter for youth who are experiencing stressful experiences and have been identified as "at-risk". Our staff works to promote a safe, secure, stable and nurturing environment for the youth who stay with us. We provide counselling, advocacy, referrals and support. 477 - 10th Street **250-753-8266**

Salvation Army: The New Hope Centre

The New Hope Centre offers 23 EMERGENCY SHELTER beds for adults males who are homeless. The shelter accommodations are in dorm style settings where the residents assist in keeping their dorm clean and making their beds. The residents have access to 3 meals a day, a central washroom, shower and laundry facilities. Men who are homeless can self-refer into the shelter for up to 10 days. During these 10 days, the resident is connected to a caseworker who assists them in developing a Personal Development Plan to address factors that have made the individual homeless. The Caseworker will also assist them in finding permanent housing, other community resources and treatment, extensions are available for clients who wish to work on their goals. 19 Nicol St **250-714-1142**

Samaritan House -

Samaritan House Emergency Shelter operated by Island Crisis care Society. The facility provides both emergency and transitional housing to adult homeless women and women with children. There are 20 emergency beds and 4 transitional suites. Meals, showers & laundry facilities are provided. Emergency Shelter residents registered at the facility may stay for up to an initial 30 days after which they must request an extension. Emotional support, advocacy, life skills, programming, and referral to other agencies are some of the many services Support Workers offer to residents. Shower and laundry facilities are available for residents only. The transitional suites are arranged on an individual basis for approximately a 3 month period. Intake Hours: 24 hours Meal Hours: Breakfast 8:30 to 9:30 am: Lunch 12:00 to 12:30 pm: Dinner 5:30 to 6:00 pm: Snacks 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm Snack served nightly. New emergency clients arriving after dinner will be provided a meal upon request. Referrals to Samaritan House come from community agencies or self. 355 Nicol Street **250-753-1474**

Unitarian Fellowship -

Extreme Weather Shelter for males and females. This is a low-barrier shelter so they accept people who are intoxicated or under the influence as long as they are no danger to themselves or others and they do not 'use' on their premises. Light hot dinner served between 7 and 9 pm, hot breakfast served in the morning. Open between 7 pm and 7 am, in the old Elk Lodge building at the corner of Townsite Road and Millstone Avenue, the door is at the back of the building. There is an outside storage locker and the guest can have their possessions stored overnight, including shopping carts. They also have a couple of dog crates in case someone arrives with an animal. People usually arrive on their own, but sometimes the police offer a ride, if the person is incapacitated. They have budgeted for two taxi fares each night. They have 24 very comfortable cots, but would not turn anyone away, even if filled to capacity. **THIS SHELTER IS ONLY OPEN DURING EXTREMELY COLD WEATHER. 250-754-3720**

Parksville/Qualicum

Salvation Army -

EXTREME WEATHER SHELTER - located at the church 187 Alberni Highway, open from 6:00 pm to 8:00 am. This shelter is only open during subzero temperature. There will be a big sign at the church to let people know when it is open. **250-248-8793 or 250-248-8794** Soup Kitchen: 187 Alberni Highway. Nutritious meals served Monday - Wednesday and Friday from 11 am to 1:15 pm, bread available on those days at 11:00 am at the same location **250-954-0707**

Port Alberni:

The Port Alberni Shelter Society -

Our Emergency Shelter Program is a 24-hour, year-round shelter for men and women ages 19 and older. This program offers 12 emergency shelter beds for temporary accommodation, meals, shower, and laundry facilities. This program is designed to assist our clients to access the resources that can help them end their homelessness such as health services, housing supports, income assistance, and employment programs. **EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE PROGRAM:** Our Extreme Weather Response Program provides extra emergency shelter beds during the winter months. Extreme weather beds are temporary spaces made available to homeless people during situations where sleeping outside might threaten their health and safety. The Extreme Weather Response Program is activated by the shelter in response to the weather being experienced in our community. This program usually runs from the end of October to the end of March. 3978 8th Ave. **250-723-6511**

Comox Valley:

Salvation Army Community & Family Services -

Emergency Assistance: Food, shelter, clothing, essential furniture or other goods for people who have unexpected expenses. (No money available) An appointment is required ID and proof of residence is required Emergency Shelter (referral is required): A shelter for men and women (19 + years) who need a bed for up to 3 nights due to unforeseen emergencies. Ministry of Housing and Social Development (welfare) referral: 1-866-866-0800 Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm: located at 730 Grant Street in Courtenay. Salvation Army referral: 250-338-5133 Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm After Hours: for food, shelter or income assistance call 1-866-660-3194, 7 days a week 4:30 pm to 12:30 am Tuesday Lunch Program: Free lunch provided from 11:30 to 1:00 provided by the Salvation Army at St. George's United Church 10 - 2966 Kilpatrick Ave **250-338-5133**

Campbell River:

Salvation Army Evergreen House -

Emergency Shelter: Food, clothing, and safety for a maximum of 30 days Long term housing: Furnished one bedroom apartments for individuals who are alcohol and drug free, and are on assistance with a goal to learning self support. 690 Evergreen Road **250-287-3791**

North Island:

North Island Crisis and Counselling Centre Society -

Temporary shelter, food and other necessities, support in getting financial, medical or legal help, parenting support, information on community and provincial resources, emotional help and counselling, transportation. **250-949-8333**

Salvation Army - Mt Waddington Lighthouse Resource Centre -

Out of the Cold Emergency Shelter, 7:00 pm to 8:00 am, location: 8635 Granville Street, Port Hardy, serving the Mt Waddington region. Entrance is at the rear door. Transportation outside the Port Hardy area is available up to :7:00 pm for clients who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Open nightly Nov 1 to March 31st. **250-949-8125 Ext 225**

ARE YOU USING PROTECTION?

Canadian Association of Suicide Prevention conference October 2012

In two of the workshops that Vancouver Island Crisis Society staff attended the focus and topic was on “how to protect oneself from stress”, “what we can do as organizations to support employee mental wellness” and the overall impact doing nothing has on our workforce. This is a subject near and dear to the Vancouver Island Crisis Society's team as we would assume it also is important for many of our partner agencies who are the front lines in supporting clients with mental health problems and suicide ideation. It can be difficult to support others if we are not maintaining a healthy balance with our own mental health. This year's staff retreat for the Vancouver Island Crisis Society's team will focus on “compassion fatigue” and implementation of a new tool to support our employees who in turn support our callers. More information about this new tool will be forthcoming in the next e-newsletter issue.

Let's start off with a few definitions that may be helpful.

Compassion Fatigue – Is an accumulation where a worker loses their empathy. They have no more capacity to give especially when people start getting negative. A worker may begin to say things out of character or making judgment statements about others.

Burnout - This can be an accumulation over time. This is a result of a clash in values between the organization and the worker. You can train skills but if the employee's core values do not match with the agencies there can be an impact on health.

Vicarious Trauma – This is when a particular story or event from a client or caller you have connection with affects you.

Helping Yourself

No one else is going to do this for you! Help yourself to some self-care! We need to be role models for our staff.

- ⇒ You need to maintain your own well-being – setting limits and boundaries for a better work/life balance, relaxing the need for excellence or perfection at work, adopting new working styles, being more realistic about deadlines are just a few.
- ⇒ Help your workplace become healthier by ensuring health and wellness programs exist for employees.
- ⇒ Support staff especially those you supervise. Empower and promote resiliency in others and in your own life.
- ⇒ Use the same positive strengths based approach and hope building in your life – be aware of your own risk and protective factors – focus on the positives and protective factors, not on the negative ones.
- ⇒ Taking care of yourself – eat, sleep, exercise, do things you enjoy, there are enough hours in the day to do these things! Making them a priority!

How active is your organization in promoting suicide prevention and good mental health?

- ⇒ Do you offer a confidential employee assistance program?
- ⇒ Is the employee assistance program promoted and accessible?
- ⇒ Are cards and posters for local helpline and crisis services available to staff and clients? Are they prominently displayed in public areas? **Vancouver Island Crisis Line 1-888-494-3888**
- ⇒ Do your organizational policies reflect suicide safety? Do these policies encourage help seeking behaviors, and clearly communicate that talking helps? Is there a suicide prevention protocol in place?
- ⇒ Does your webpage have a link to the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention, www.suicideprevention.ca or the Crisis Line Association of BC www.crisislines.bc.ca or your local Vancouver Island Crisis Society www.vicrisis.ca for suicide prevention services?
- ⇒ Do you include or consider the needs of survivors bereaved by suicide, caregivers of people struggling with suicidal thoughts and behaviors and those with lived experience in your program planning?
- ⇒ Do you have information readily available on suicide bereavement and local suicide bereavement support groups?
- ⇒ Do your workplace values reflect a genuine concern for the wellness of employees, promoting physical, mental and spiritual health?
- ⇒ Do you have a workplace mental health program or strategy?
- ⇒ Does your workplace offer mental health related benefits? Are they covered at the same rate as physical health benefits?
- ⇒ Do staff members know when to ask about suicide?
- ⇒ Do staff know how to ask about suicide?
- ⇒ Is each client/patient assessed for suicide risk at regular intervals or when there is a change in their situation? Does this include assessing their protective and risk factors?
- ⇒ Do staff receive training in suicide intervention, prevention and postvention?
- ⇒ Does your organization have mechanisms and supports in place that address immediate safety needs?



ARE YOU USING PROTECTION?

Continued from page 8

- ⇒ Do you identify treatment and monitoring strategies to ensure client/patient safety?
- ⇒ Do you follow up within 24 hours of discharge or the transition of care of people deemed to be at risk for suicide?
- ⇒ Do you develop and document individual care plans for people deemed to be at risk for suicide?
- ⇒ Does your organization educate staff and clients about mental illness?
- ⇒ Does your organization routinely assess mental health issues?
- ⇒ Does your staff have access to ongoing educational opportunities related to mental health and wellness?
- ⇒ Does your organization promote work-life balance to increase mental and emotional resiliency?
- ⇒ Do staff know where to get more information regarding suicide prevention, intervention and postvention?

Sourced from the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention www.suicideprevention.ca

Why is protecting yourself and protecting your

employees from stress important? The annual cost in Canada of work time lost to stress is calculated at over 50 billion in absenteeism, reduced productivity, workers' compensation benefits, depression, and sick days.

- ⇒ 82% of workers report that they are at least a little stressed on the job
- ⇒ 40% of job turnover is due to stress
- ⇒ 40% of workers reported their job was very or extremely stressful
- ⇒ 35% say their job is negatively affecting their physical or emotional well-being
- ⇒ 34% reported difficulty in sleeping because they were too stressed-out due to their job
- ⇒ 25% view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives
- ⇒ 26% of workers said they were "often or very often burned out or stressed by their work"
- ⇒ 25% of respondents had been driven to tears because of workplace stress
- ⇒ 19% or almost one in five respondents had quit a previous position because of job stress

(Statistics Canada, Health Canada, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Institute for Work & Health)

Distress/Crisis Centres in Canada – Survey results

The Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention in October 2012 conducted a survey for distress/crisis centres in Canada to get a snapshot nationally. How does the Vancouver Island Crisis Line compare to its national counter parts?

Vancouver Island Crisis Line

20 employees

31-50 volunteers

Annual # of calls – 30,000

Do you provide on line chat? Not currently
Ready to provide with funding support.

Funding sources – VIHA, United Way and
Gaming Combined make up 95%

Length of crisis line training – 70-80 hours

Do you provide follow up calls to high risk callers?
Yes - 234 follow calls completed last year

Are you accredited? Yes with the
American Association of Suicidology (AAS)

National results

15 employees was the average with 43% of the
centres having less than 5 employees

average # was 52 volunteers

68% receive less than 10,000 calls/yr
12% of centre had call volume of 30,000 range

17% of centre provide on line chat

Government/Health Authorities 64%, UW 54%

50% of centre's required less than 39 hours

70% of centre's offer follow up calls.

15% accredited with AAS
58% accredited with other organizations

Coast Capital Donates \$10,000 to Support Youth Suicide Prevention

Coast Capital Savings has donated \$10,000 to the Vancouver Island Crisis Society's youth suicide prevention programs being presented to high schools students. There are two programs that the money will be earmarked for, a twelve-hour peer-to-peer support program called GRASP and an eighty-minute classroom presentation targeted to grade 8 and 9's.

GRASP stands for growth, resiliency, acknowledgement, suicide awareness and planning for safety. Students learn concepts such as healthy communication, coping, how to recognize warning signs in themselves and others, community resource information and, how to reach out for help to resources like the crisis line. The students receive a course completion certificate that they can attach to their resume.

The classroom presentations bring awareness to students around what happens when life becomes too stressful and how to reach out for support when they are alerted to warning signs in themselves or others. Whether they see the signs during school hours or on social media, they are encouraged to have that conversation person to person. A school counselor sits in on every presentation and encourages the students to come and see them whenever they need to talk during school hours or if they are worried about a friend.

"With budget constraints and cut backs from some of the program funders, we were unsure as to how many presentations we could facilitate in the upcoming school year," said Elizabeth Newcombe, executive director, Vancouver Island Crisis Society. "This donation from Coast Capital will ensure these programs are able to reach all high schools in School Districts Nos. 68 and 79. We know these programs save lives and are grateful that we are able to continue to offer them."

Last year 80 students completed the GRASP training and over 1000 students received the eighty minute classroom presentation Speak Out, Reach Out, Help Out. As a direct result of these presentations, there was an increase in the number of students calling the crisis line and utilizing the school counselors to

access help for themselves and their peers.

Wendy Lachance, director of community leadership for Coast Capital Savings, said the credit union chose to support the Vancouver Island Crisis Society's youth suicide prevention programs because it's making a difference in the lives of youth.

"Coast Capital Savings is committed to helping build a richer future for youth in our communities," said Lachance. "Suicide is the

second highest cause of death for youth between the ages of 10-24. By supporting the Vancouver Island Crisis Society's youth suicide prevention programs, we can help give youth access to support programs and change their lives for the better."

One young man took the opportunity to thank the facilitators that returned to his school and said, "It saved my life. I didn't really want to die, I just didn't know where or how to reach out." Although he still has dark thoughts sometimes, he now knows how to access support and



Pictured from left to right: Heather Owen, Promotions & Community Relations Coordinator, Vancouver Island Crisis Society; Lisa De Leeuw, Branch Manager Coast Capital Savings; Elizabeth Newcombe, Executive Director, Vancouver Island Crisis Society; and Trish Wolfe, Manager, General Insurance, Coast Capital Savings.

has learned the skills to get through it.

The Vancouver Island Crisis Society has been providing 24 hour telephone crisis and suicide prevention, intervention service, including postvention programs for 42 years in the community and have been extended island wide for the past 2 years. Our youth suicide prevention programs in the schools have just seen their 10th anniversary.

Coast Capital Savings Credit Union is Canada's second largest credit union with total assets under administration of \$13.5 billion, 475,000 members and 50 branches in the Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley, and Vancouver Island regions of British Columbia. Product innovations include Canada's first free chequing account from a full-service financial institution and the country's most flexible mortgage product, the You're the Boss™ Mortgage, which was named 2010 Mortgage of the Year by canadianmortgagetrends.com. Coast Capital offers one of Canada's 10 Most Admired Corporate Cultures™. It is a member of Canada's Best Managed Companies Platinum Club and an Imagine Canada Caring Company. To learn more, visit www.coastcapitalsavings.com.



Resource Highlight

Need healthcare
but can't afford
to fly there?



Getting Canadians to getting better



www.hopeair.org



Unique Hope Air is Canada's only national charity providing free air transportation to medical appointments for people in financial need. Since 1986, we have arranged flights throughout the country without regard to location, age or illness.

Free If you need to travel to a medical appointment, Hope Air may be able to arrange a free flight for you. If your doctor confirms you are unable to fly alone for medical reasons, your escort may be eligible as well.

Eligibility We arrange donated flights on Canada's national and regional airlines and on private planes. We may be able to help you if...

- you are flying for a confirmed, approved medical appointment (e.g. treatment is being covered by your provincial health plan)
- you are unable to afford the airline ticket
- your doctor confirms you are medically fit to fly: we do not offer an air ambulance service

Accessible If you wish to request a flight, or if you wish to refer someone for a flight, call 1-877-346-HOPE (4673) or complete a Flight Request Form at www.hopeair.org.

Profile of Hope

For 7-year-old Makenzie, travelling long distances for eye cancer treatments is both stressful and beyond her family's budget.



"Being a single parent and living in a small remote community, I really appreciate the help we've received from Hope Air. It makes a big difference."

— Makenzie's Mom



Thank you to all our Donors

This list represents all those who supported the Crisis Society financially or with in-kind donations since our last newsletter was published in April 2011. The donations listed are from March 15, 2012 to November 30, 2012. We would especially like to thank those organizations that contributed to keep our Youth Suicide Prevention Programs in our schools. We successfully raised the \$25,000 that was our shortfall in funding this year. We appreciate your generosity.

Anchors (under \$499)

Coastal Community Credit Union
 Fairwinds Community & Resort
 Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie 2101
 Genesis Rehabilitation Ltd.
 Herold Engineering
 Kinsman Club of Lake Cowichan
 Ladysmith Lions Club
 Nanaimo Daily News
 Nanaimo Harbor Lites Lioness Club
 Nanoose Bay Lions Club
 Rotary Club of Ladysmith
 Royal Canadian Legion Branch #10
 Royal Canadian Legion Malahat Branch #134

Life Preservers (\$500-\$999)

Island Timberlands
 Malahat Lions Club
 Rotary Club of Parksville A.M.
 Royal Canadian Legion Branch #256

Town of Ladysmith
 Maximum Yield Publications Inc.

Lighthouse Keepers (\$1000 - \$2499)

Great Canadian Casino, Nanaimo
 Rotary Club of Lantzville
 Women of the Moose

Northstars (\$2500 - \$4999)

Big Cheese Charity Classic 2012

Visionaries (\$5000 +)

Coast Capital Savings
 Cowichan United Way
 Intraworks I.T. Management – Phil Stiller
 Island Radio – Jim Patterson Group
 Loyal Protestant Association
 Province of BC – Gaming
 United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island
 Vancouver Island Health Authority



The Vancouver Island Crisis Society was pleased to accept a \$1,000.00 donations from the Great Canadian Casino in Nanaimo and was the recipient of the funds raised in the Big Cheese Charity Classic. Business men from the Central Island area came together to share in an enjoyable day competing against each other in a hockey game followed by a wonderful meal with steaks provided by M & M Meats. In

the end the Crisis Society was presented with a cheque for \$3500.00. All in all it was great fun, great food and great day for networking. Many thanks to all the businesses that participated including Roger Beck of Coldwell Banker Van Isl Realty, Mike Johnston of Johnston, Johnston & Associates Ltd., Dave Dugan of Central Island Distributors, Rob Fuller of McKinnon & Associates, Mike Klassen of The Whole Show Restorations, Grant McDonald of Church Pickard, James McIntyre of Studio Kitchen & Designs, Barney sharp of Monk Office, Jason Davies of Davies Electric, Colin Jones and Stephan Montpetit of Nicol Street Pawnbrokers, Sean Krause of Reaction Source for Sports, Greg Kahan of Edward Jones, Derrick Turnbull of Ward Electric, Mark MacDonald of Business Vancouver Island, Lance Sullivan of Concept Photography, Chris Turnbull of DenMar Electric, Mike Jones of Ken Jones Painting, Dave Kirk of Cunningham Rivard Appraisals Ltd, Bob James of Island Office Equipment, Mike Stone of Top Drawer Graphics, Lee Grover of Grover Communications, Darren Hauca of The Communication Connection Inc, Geoff Bajkov of Bajkov of the Sea, Don Moores of Maximum Yield, Tim Paugh of Paw Bobcat and the referee's Jim Kipp and Kevin Brydges. Also a big thank you to additional organizers Ron Berry, Teresa Hauca.



CONCEPT
PHOTOGRAPHY

2012



Elizabeth Newcombe, Vancouver Island Crisis Society Executive Director, Bob Rae Liberal Leader, Debbi Mahaffy, Vancouver Island Crisis Society Crisis Line Service Manager at the 2012 Canadian Association of Suicide Prevention Conference.

Bob Rae was the key note speaker at the Crisis/Distress Line Conference held in Niagara Falls, Ontario in October 2012. This conference was followed by the Canadian Association of Suicide Prevention conference attended by researchers, clinicians, crisis centre professionals, survivors, educators, mental health professionals and others with an interest in suicide prevention across Canada.

Bob Rae shared the importance of continuing to talk about mental health issues to combat the stigma in our communities. It is about the work we do in our local communities that gives hope to others. We all have personal stories that humble us and he praised the work of crisis/distress lines across Canada for the significant difference we make in the lives of others.

The Vancouver Island Crisis Society staff attend the Canadian Association of Suicide Prevention and the American Association of Suicidology conferences annually. These are important opportunities to stay current with the latest research and education on the subject of suicide prevention, intervention and postvention.

CRISIS LINE VOLUNTEERING

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*Helping People
Find Their Way*



Vancouver Island
Crisis Society

www.vicrisis.ca
or call

250-753-2495



Self-Injury Among Teens

Excerpts from a Master's paper written by Youth Pastor, Ryan Morgan

Cutting, burning, bruising and even bone-breaking are all part of the cruel prison that make up the broad category of Self-Injury (SI), an increasingly prevalent and highly addictive form self-medicating behaviour. Yet the issue has been largely ignored either because of ignorance or because self-injurious behaviour (SIB) is often feared and misunderstood.

Self-Injury can be defined as the behaviour in which people intentionally hurt themselves with sharp blades, broken glass, burning cigarettes, blunt objects, nails, needles, hairbrushes, acid, boiling water, or even their own fists as a way of expressing or managing intense emotions that chaotically swirl around inside them. More extreme forms of SI such as amputation and eye-gouging are rare and usually limited to those suffering with psychotic conditions, and will not be considered here. Rather, the scope here will be limited to common forms of SI among self-injuring adolescents: cutting (72%), burning (35%) and self-hitting (30%), and hair-pulling (10%). One of the most common misconceptions about those who self-injure is that they are suicidal; SI is not about ending life, but is more about regulating emotions, survival, and coping with stress.

Yet it's important to realize that the underlying issues behind SIB may eventually push a person to thoughts of suicide, so in all cases, SIB must be taken quite seriously as a symbol of deep internal conflict and pain. With this in mind, it's important that those seeking to help or understand someone struggling with SIB understand that the issue at hand will never be the self-injury itself (which is a symptom, not a cause), but rather the underlying issue. In regards to the behaviour itself, SI is highly addictive. Those who engage in SIB most often find themselves preoccupied with their mode of self-injury and stuck in a compulsive cycle, unprepared for, how hard it is to quit, how strong the urges are, and how they can even have uncomfortable physical feelings like agitation and bodily aches when they've gone a long time without harming themselves. Compounded by the law of diminishing returns, SI quickly gets out of hand as a person builds up a tolerance to their injuries; as SI progresses it often requires greater and greater degrees of bodily harm to satisfy the addiction. Additionally, the SI may be inflicted on different parts of the bodies. While initial and less severe SI may focus on superficial cuts or burns to the forearms or wrists, its common to see the injuries migrate to other parts of the body which are far easier to hide: cuts, bruises and burns to the upper thighs, abdomen and breasts are very common. For those whose SIB is connected to a sense of personal deficiency from sexual abuse, the SI may especially be focused on either the breasts or the genitals.

**1 in 5 young women
1 in 7 young men
will self-injure at some point in their lives**

The Journal of Abnormal Psychology reported in 2005 that anywhere between 14% and 39% of adolescents are currently engaged in self-injurious behaviour. This is supported further research by both Princeton University and Cornell University which suggests that approximately 1 in 5 young women and 1 in 7 young men will self-injure at some point in their lives. The epidemic nature of this issue is seen in the dramatic change in statistics from earlier studies. Only as recently as 1998 Steven Levenkron estimated that self-injury affected 1 in every 250 teenage girls, and was almost unheard of among teenage boys. The escalating number of occurrences of self-injury was reported in a 2003 survey of counselors, 70% of whom reported an alarming increase in the number of self-injury cases that were being referred to them.

As Chap Clark notes in his book *Hurt: Inside the World of Today's Teens*, most teenagers crave a relationship with a caring, non-judgmental adult, yet the majority of their experiences leave them wanting; as a society, our systematic abandonment of teenagers only increases the risk of SI, while all the time pushing the issue deeper underground into the safety of secrecy, outside the reach of the adult world.

Since SI is merely a coping behaviour for a much deeper issue, it's critical that interventions seek to identify and address the core issues instead of merely managing the SIB. To play a significant role in the lives of adolescents who struggle with SI, they must build relationships marked by permanence, gentleness, authenticity and acceptance. For most adolescents struggling with SI the intense shame that they feel makes disclosure very difficult. If trust is eroded, it will be even more difficult for the adolescent to seek help a second time, therefore an adult playing a role in the lives of adolescents who self-injure must be committed to the adolescent (the person), not the treatment of the issue. This personal commitment will also allow them to refer the student to another professional without creating a dynamic of abandonment or neglect. Referral is highly likely as the scope of issues that can be at the root of self-injury include issues that will no-doubt require long-term counseling or treatment. Childhood sexual abuse, general depression and anxiety disorders, personality disorders and traumatic loss are just some of the root issues that can manifest in SIB. Cognitive and behavioural interventions can be very helpful in dealing with these root causes, and subsequently the SIB itself.

In the short-term, it's critical that a person does not over or under-react to the disclosure. There is usually no reason or need to force an adolescent to show their injuries (and as these injuries may be on the upper-thighs or breasts, to do so may be entirely inappropriate), but there is a need to help the adolescent find proper medical care for their wounds, be that a well-stocked first-aid kit or a non-judgmental trip to the local Emergency-Room. All of this is a practical illustration of the much greater truth: a declaration of who these adolescents are as highly valuable and worth helping.

While media-saturation and a lack of information may tempt us to dismiss SI as a fad, strange attention-seeking or an attempt to manipulate, it is critical that we take a comprehensive look at this critical issue.





Training Opportunities



Next workshop will be held on January 25th & 26th at #30, 1708 Bowen Road, Nanaimo.

For more information and registration forms please visit our website at : www.vicrisis.ca



CIST is a communication workshop that will give caregivers the tools needed for assessing and deescalating crisis. Responding to and diffusing crisis situations, including suicide, is a vital skill for anyone embarking on a career in human services.

The CIST workshop will give concrete skills to help caregivers feel more comfortable. Topics covered include: Non-violent communication; Active listening; Working with our fears and biases; Definition of Crisis; Crisis Intervention Model; Boundary setting; Statistics; Warning signs for suicide; How to respond to a suicidal person; Intervention skills using an intervention model; Networking and resources.

The next workshop is January 10th & 11th, 2013. For information or registration see our website @ www.vicrisis.ca

The Parent/Caregiver Workshops are part of the second phase of the Autism Outreach Program and will focus on rural and remote communities across the province.

The goal of the workshops is to improve access for families to research-based information and resources on autism and treatments for children and youth with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

MCFD is not charging for the workshop but eligible participants **must register** to attend. These workshops are open to parents and caregivers only, however, families may invite a member of their child's intervention team to join them.

Each workshop will be conducted by a professional in the area of autism and will be held over two full days during school hours. For more detailed information, please visit <http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/index.htm> and look to the right hand side of the page.

The following is a list of locations and dates:

(Note: some dates and locations have yet to be confirmed all dates and locations should be confirmed on <http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/index.htm> by August 2012)

Vancouver Island Dates and Locations:

December 13-14, 2012: **Campbell River, BC:** Royal Canadian Legion

January 10-11, 2013: **Duncan, BC:** Island Saving Centre

February 7-8, 2013: **Comox, BC:** Comox Community Centre

February 18-19, 2013: **Salt Spring Island, BC:** The Hart Bradley (Lions) Hall

On January 1, 2004, the new privacy legislation came into effect. It is designed to protect individuals' personal information from being misused. As you know, we love to stay in touch, keeping you posted on what's happening in our Island Community. We now require your consent to do so. We also want to respect your privacy. So if you no longer wish to receive our newsletter please email us at info@vicrisis.ca....please let us know and we will delete your name from our database. If we don't hear from you, we shall assume we have your consent to stay in touch. Enjoy reading this issue of "In Connection," the Vancouver Island Crisis Society's newsletter.



United Way

World Suicide Prevention Day

Since Vancouver Island Crisis Line has made the transition to providing island wide service, our Community Education Department has been gradually shifting its mandate to move in the same

direction. Where once our programs were situated in the Central Island, we are expanding our vision to an island wide approach and this year's planned events for World Suicide Prevention Day began in part to reflect that.

The theme for World Suicide Prevention day 2012 - as designated by the World Health Organization - was "Strengthening Protective Factors in Community" and we decided the best way to support this initiative would be to provide workshops by a donation of \$25.00 in five island communities: The Cowichan Valley, Nanaimo, Courtenay, Campbell River, and Port Alberni. Being a community partner of the United Way, all donations raised were given to the local United Way division in that community. In all \$2,275.00 were donated to this year's campaign.

Feedback from participants in these workshops was overwhelmingly positive and we plan to build on this experience to provide more island wide training opportunities in the future.



**Support the good work of non-profit
agencies in your area
and give generously
to your local United Way Campaign**



Since being appointed Minister responsible for the Ministry of Social Development, I have been pleased to receive letters, emails and comments regarding how income assistance is provided in our province. I am writing to you today to introduce changes to many income assistance policies that may affect you. Unless otherwise stated these changes take effect October 1, 2012.

Families with Children

- Increasing the annual school start up supplement to \$100 for every child aged 5-11 and \$175 for every child 12 and over (effective July 1, 2012).
- Increasing the family bonus top-up rate to match the federal amount (\$181.41 for first child, \$160.50 for second child, and \$152.67 for each additional child).
- Exempting lump sum family bonus payments less family bonus top up amounts provided to the family.
- Expanding eligibility to provide assistance to parents without status who are fleeing abuse and cannot leave the country with their children.

Expected to Work Clients:

- Exempting income tax refunds for families on income assistance.
- Introducing a \$200 per month earnings exemption for all expected-to work clients.
- Reducing the wait period for earnings exemptions from three months to one month.
- Increasing asset limits to \$2,000 for individuals and \$4,000 for couples and families.
- Increasing the vehicle exemption amount to \$10,000.
- Removing time limits (previously 24 months in a five-year period).

Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Clients:

- Exempting income tax refunds for families on disability assistance.
- Increasing asset limits to \$5,000 for individuals and \$10,000 for couples and families.
- Increases to the non-discretionary trust exemption limit to \$200,000.
- Increasing the trust disbursement exemption to \$8,000 for promoting independence.
- Increasing earning exemptions to \$800 for individuals receiving disability assistance and \$1,600 for couples who are both designated as a Person With Disabilities.
- Reducing the wait period for earnings exemptions from three months to one month, and eliminating the wait period for PWDs returning to assistance.

Hardship Assistance Clients

- Providing dental benefits for children of families on hardship assistance.
- Exempting child benefits for families on hardship assistance.
- Extending school start-up to families on hardship assistance (effective July 1, 2012).

In 2013, mandatory income tax filing will be required and exemptions will be in place for those who are at risk, such as fleeing an abusive partner. There will also be more flexibility for clients designated as Persons With Disabilities (PWD) to calculate earnings on an annual basis.

For further information on these changes, please visit the Ministry's website, <http://www.gov.bc.ca/hsd/>

Sincerely,
Stephanie Cadieux
Minister of Social Development

Happy Holidays

The Vancouver Island Crisis Society

would like to wish everyone
a season full of love, laughter
and connection with all those people in
your life you care about.

Take time to show someone you care.

Give thanks for all our many blessings.

Remember those less fortunate.



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to all Vancouver Island Communities.
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