



24 Hour Distress Line
604-872-3311
Toll Free: 1-866-661-3311

Web-Based Hotline for Youth
www.youthinbc.com

Community Education
604-872-1811

For Immediate Release
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News Release

Local crisis centre celebrates 40 years of suicide prevention World Suicide Prevention Day, September 10, 2009

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Canada – The Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC (Crisis Centre) is celebrating 40 years of community service, in conjunction with World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10, 2009.

“We know that suicide is preventable, and yet 500 people die by suicide every year in BC,” said Ian Ross, Executive Director, Crisis Centre. “This day is about celebrating the successes of the suicide prevention services and programs in our community, but also about examining where there are gaps and how we can do better.”

One of the keys to suicide prevention, said Ross, is to educate the public in recognizing warning signs of suicide so they can get help for people who exhibit them. About 80 % of people who attempt or complete suicide present warning signs to those around them. These warning signs may not include a direct plea for help.

Warning signs associated with suicidal ideation include:

- Talking or joking about suicide or dying;
- Making preparations for death (giving away significant possessions, making a will, etc.);
- A previous suicide attempt;
- Being persistently depressed or down for more than a couple of weeks;
- Protracted anxiety or agitation; extreme mood swings/bipolarity; outbursts of rage, grief, violence;
- Isolation, withdrawal from previously enjoyed relationships and activities;
- Lethargy, lack of interest, low energy, insomnia or over-sleeping;
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs;
- Uncharacteristic high risk activity, impulsive behaviours;
- Expressions of hopelessness, helplessness, purposelessness;
- Low self-esteem, low self-worth, self-contempt, anger toward self;
- Significant loss(es), such as an important relationship, health, identity, economic security, freedom.

“It is important to show a potentially suicidal person that we care and that we are concerned for their safety,” noted Ross. “It is also important to directly ask the person if they are considering suicide. This shows that you are taking their feelings seriously, and helps to establish if the risk for suicide is real. If you feel uncomfortable asking, it is important that you get someone else to ask. We need to listen to the person – without judgment and by showing empathy.”



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If someone is indicating that they are suicidal, help is available.

“You need to get help for that person by enlisting professionals, such as a family doctor, a mental health professional, a 24-hour crisis line, or even a hospital emergency room if the person is imminently at risk,” urged Ross.

One source of help is the Crisis Centre’s distress services. In the centre’s 40 year history, over 6,000 dedicated volunteers have provided support, intervention, and prevention services in the community.

As a safe place to turn to when there seems to be no hope, the Crisis Centre is operated by 290+ front line volunteers and a small team of professional staff who support and empower troubled individuals to see their own strengths and options, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Last year, the Crisis Centre helped over 50,000 people through its three core programs: the 24/7 distress phone services, www.YouthInBC.com (an internet support service for youth), and suicide prevention and stress management workshops delivered in high schools across the Lower Mainland and Sea-to-Sky Corridor.

Crisis Centre Services

24/7 Distress Line: 604-872-3311 or 1-866-661-3311 (toll free)

Internet-based support service for youth: www.YouthInBC.com

Donations can be made to the Crisis Centre online at www.crisiscentre.bc.ca or by phone at 604-872-1811.

-30-

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