

The Facts: Did You Know?

Global Facts

The World Health Organization estimates that over 800,000 people die by suicide each year — that's one person every 40 seconds¹.

Suicide accounted for 1.4% of all deaths worldwide, making it the 15th leading cause of death in 2012. Effective and evidence-based interventions can be implemented at population, sub-population and individual levels to prevent suicide and suicide attempts.

No single determinant, including mental illness, is enough on its own to cause a suicide. Rather, suicide typically results from the interaction of many factors, for example: mental illness, marital breakdown, financial hardship, deteriorating physical health, a major loss, or a lack of social support².



Suicide in Canada

Suicide is a leading cause of death for people in Canada aged 15-24, preceded only by accidents (unintentional injuries)³.

There are approximately 4000 deaths by suicide in Canada each year⁴ at a considerable cost to government. In 2010, it is estimated that there were 105 deaths (11.1/100,000) due to suicide/self-harm in Nova Scotia at a cost of approximately \$74 million dollars⁵. It is noteworthy that these are estimates of deaths by suicide and that the actual number is likely higher due to reporting issues.

Men in their 40s and 50s have the highest rate of suicide⁶.

Women are three to four times more likely to attempt suicide than men, but men are three times more likely to die by suicide than women⁷.

Known risk factors for suicide include: previous suicide attempt, family history of suicidal behaviour, a serious physical or mental illness (such as operational stress injuries).

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What You Can Do

Don't assume that people who think about or talk about suicide are not serious, are being dramatic, or that their suicidal thoughts will simply go away on their own - they often don't.

Keep in mind that helping loved ones doesn't mean you can or should solve their problems, treat their illness or take away their pain. Helping doesn't mean that you should assume personal responsibility for someone else's safety or for stopping their suicidal thoughts or actions. It means listening, caring, supporting, and helping the person get the professional mental health help they need, when and where they need it.

If the situation isn't urgent but you or the person you are concerned about is distressed, help is available. Helping to make calls and appointments can be very important to getting someone help in a timely manner.

Times of Crisis

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, cannot make the thoughts go away, feel like acting on the thoughts, have a plan for how to die by suicide, or have access to the means with which to end life, you need to get help immediately! Call 911, go to the nearest hospital emergency room or urgent care clinic, or call a crisis line or distress centre.



What You Can Do for You!

Think about your emotional well-being. Assess your emotional health regularly. Consider the particular demands or stresses you are facing and how they are affecting you. Give yourself permission to take a break from your worries and concerns. Recognize that dedicating even a short time every day to your mental fitness will reap significant benefits in terms of feeling rejuvenated and more confident⁸.

1. "Suicide Data". 2016. World Health Organization. http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/en/.
2. Suicide In Canada. 1994. [Ottawa]: Health Canada.
3. "Fact Sheet - Help To Prevent Suicide". 2013. Mental Health Commission Of Canada. http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/MHCC_Suicide_Prevention_Facts_FINAL_Bilingual_1.pdf.
4. "Fact Sheet - Help To Prevent Suicide". 2013. Mental Health Commission Of Canada. http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/MHCC_Suicide_Prevention_Facts_FINAL_Bilingual_1.pdf.
5. "The Cost Of Injury In Canada". 2015. http://www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/research/Cost_of_Injury-2015.pdf.
6. "Suicide Rates: An Overview". 2015. Statcan.Gc.Ca. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-624-x/2012001/article/11696-eng.htm>.
7. "Psychology Works Fact Sheet: Suicide". 2016. Accessed July 20. http://www.cpa.ca/docs/File/Publications/FactSheets/PsychologyWorksFactSheet_Suicide.pdf.
8. "Mental Fitness Tips - Canadian Mental Health Association". 2016. *Canadian Mental Health Association*. http://www.cmha.ca/mental_health/mental-fitness-tips/#.V6TJX9ArK14.

