

Did You Know?

Global Facts

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.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is the number one cause of suicide in first responders³.



Suicide in Canada

First responders experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Critical Incident Stress at 2 times the rate versus the general population. It is estimated that over 70,000 Canadian first responders have experienced PTSD in their lifetimes³.

PTSD and CIS cause increased work absences, burnout, illness, and high turnover rates. This results in first responders have a higher productivity loss (5.9% versus 3.4%)⁴.

11 percent of first responders have reported suicidal thoughts as a result of the job⁵.

As of August 2016, 37 first responders have died by suicide in Canada⁶.

Warning signs include: exposure to incidents, witnessing an incident, social isolation, reluctance to seek help, anger, lack of empathy, substance abuse, numbed emotions, suicidal behaviours⁷.

Did You Know?

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.

There are many resources for first responders who are struggling with their mental health across Canada. Contact your local CMHA to find out about local resources or visit the Tema Center Memorial Trust for even more resources.

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. Wilson, Stuart, Harminder Gulliani, and Georgi Boichev. 2016. "On The Economics Of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Among First Responders In Canada". *Journal Of Community Safety And Well-Being* 1 (2): 26-31. <https://www.journalcswb.ca/index.php/cswb/article/view/6>.
4. Cernak, Ibolja. 2016. "Review Of Mental Health In First Responders And Military Person". *Http://Pacexpo.Ca/*. http://pacexpo.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Presentation-CERNAK_PARAMEDICS_Mental_Health_compr.pdf.
5. "Canadian First Responder Suicides Stress Vital Need For Support". 2016. *Disaster-Resource.Com*. http://www.disaster-resource.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2404.
6. "In The News". 2016. *Www.Tema.Ca*. <http://www.tema.ca/#linthenews/cro3>.
7. "First Responders Trauma Intervention & Suicide Prevention". 2016. *Suicideinfo.Ca*. <https://suicideinfo.ca/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=GOVCrKR11fQ%3D&tabid=516>.