

## WHAT CAN I DO IF I EXPERIENCE THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE?

Thoughts of suicide are distressing.

It's important to talk about your experiences with your doctor, mental health care team, or any other person you trust.

### Other things that you can do include:

- Calling a crisis telephone support line or go to your local emergency room.
- Connecting with family, friends, or a support group. It can be helpful to talk with others who have experienced thoughts of suicide to learn about their coping strategies.

Some people find a safety plan useful. A safety plan is a list of personal strategies to use if you think you are at risk of hurting yourself or ending your life.

You can create a plan on your own, with a loved one, or with your mental health care team.

### Your plan may include:

- Activities that calm you or take your mind off your thoughts
- Your own reasons for living
- Key people to call if you're worried about your safety
- Phone numbers for local crisis or suicide prevention helplines
- A list of safe places to go if you don't feel safe at home

## CRISIS SERVICES

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide please call or text 9-8-8.

If, you or someone you know is not experiencing thoughts of suicide but still struggling, "warm lines" are a safe place to call and talk things through.

- Locally, you can call 2-1-1 and ask for the Men's, Women's or All Genders Helpline
- If you're a young person, try the youth peer-to-peer online community:
- <https://wellnesstogether.ca/en-CA/peer-to-peer-community/>

## DO YOU NEED MORE HELP?

Support is highly individual, but we know there are some things everyone needs to have good mental health — a purpose, safe, sustainable housing, connection and access to services.

These are some of the the building blocks of wellness.

Ensuring every Nova Scotian has access to these crucial supports is the foundation upon which our programming is built.

To learn more about our programs and training, visit [www.novascotia.cmha.ca](http://www.novascotia.cmha.ca)

Visit our CAST Hub at [www.novascotia.cmha.ca/cast\\_resource\\_hub](http://www.novascotia.cmha.ca/cast_resource_hub)



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Nova Scotia  
Mental health for all

Association canadienne  
pour la santé mentale  
Nouvelle-Écosse  
La santé mentale pour tous

# PREVENTING SUICIDE



## CMHA Nova Scotia Division

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### FOLLOW US!





## EVERYONE CAN PLAY A ROLE IN SUICIDE PREVENTION

You can help give someone hope by showing that you care.

All of us can play a role, no matter how small.

We may never know what we do that makes a difference. We all can reach in and ask somebody.

You do not need to tell them what to do or have solutions, but simply making the time and space to listen to someone about their experiences of distress or suicidal thoughts can help.

**The two most important things you can do are to listen and help them connect with mental health services.**

## WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS

Suicide affects people of all ages and backgrounds, but there are ways to help.

By taking time to understand, we can break down the stigma and support people when they need it most.

**Ideation:** thinking about suicide.

**Substance use:** problems with drugs or alcohol.

**Purposelessness:** feeling like there is no purpose in life or reason for living.

**Anxiety:** feeling intense anxiety or feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope.

**Trapped:** feeling trapped or feeling like there is no way out of a situation.

**Hopelessness or Helplessness:** feeling no hope for the future, feeling like things will never get better.

**Withdrawal:** avoiding family, friends, or activities.

**Anger:** feeling unreasonable anger.

**Recklessness:** engaging in risky or harmful activities normally avoided.

**Mood change:** a significant change in mood.

## HOW CAN I REDUCE THE RISK OF SUICIDE?

Talking about suicide can provide relief and being a listener is the best intervention anyone can give.

**Here are a few ways you can help:**

- Take all threats or attempts seriously.
- Be aware and learn warning signs of suicide.
- Be direct and ask if the person is thinking of suicide. If the answer is yes, ask if the person has a plan and what the timeline is.
- Be non-judgmental and empathetic.
- Do not minimize the feelings expressed by the person.
- Do not be sworn to secrecy. Seek out the support of appropriate professionals.
- Ask if there is anything you can do.

## TIPS FOR TALKING WITH A LOVED ONE

- Find a private place and let your loved one take as much time as they need.
- Take your loved one seriously and listen without judgement—their feelings are very real.
- Keep your word—don't make promise you can't keep or don't intend to keep.
- Tell your loved one that they are important and that you care about them.