



Media Advisory - World Suicide Prevention day

Need to Talk? You're Not Alone

Who do you talk to when you need to get outside your bubble? As we continue to take care of each other from a distance, mental health surveys tell us that loneliness is having an impact on our mental health, and loneliness can be a factor in suicidal thoughts and feelings.

With World Suicide Prevention Day coming up on September 10th, the Crisis Centre of BC wants everyone to know that we are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

As part of efforts to make sure people can reach out when and how they want to, the Crisis Centre commissioned two surveys from Insights West, just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and again in August.

Our surveys confirmed that British Columbians are experiencing mental health concerns, with Metro Vancouver showing the biggest drop in mental health: 28% more Vancouverites respondents marked their mental health as fair to poor now, compared to before the pandemic.

We found old-fashioned phone calls matter to individuals and communities when reaching out to a crisis centre. 65% of people reported they would call when they needed to connect, and 72% would use the phone to find out how to help someone they were worried about.

In an era where texting is everywhere, we wanted to know why people in distress preferred phones. Reasons to call included: talking is quicker and easier than texting, you're more likely to get an immediate response, you know you are talking to a real person, and you are confident you have the person's full attention.

"Our voice communicates 80% of what we are trying to say, so hearing and being heard makes the sense of being connected to another person more real. I'm not surprised our phone service is the preferred option", says Stacy Ashton, Executive Director of the Crisis Centre of BC.

"We also recognize that getting through a crisis is not a one size fits all type of solution, so we want to make sure we are there for you when and however you need us", she remarked when asked about alternatives for connecting with a crisis centre.

Crisis Centre of BC staff and volunteers are trained to connect with people over the phone and through Province-wide chat services that extend to the Yukon. With phone services being a

preferred option, chat services are available if that's your comfort zone. According to the survey, some reasons people choose text/online chat services are because it feels less intimidating, and protects you from being overheard.

If you or someone you know is struggling, especially with thoughts of suicide, we are here for you. Reach us at:

- Vancouver Coastal Regional Distress Line: 604-872-3311
- Anywhere in BC 1-800-SUICIDE: 1-800-784-2433
- Mental Health Support Line: 310-6789
- Online Chat Service for Youth: www.YouthInBC.com (Noon to 1am)
- Online Chat Service for Adults: www.CrisisCentreChat.ca (Noon to 1am)

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Crisis Centre of BC

The Crisis Centre of BC provides help and hope to individuals, organizations, and communities. Spanning the spectrum of crisis support, suicide prevention, and postvention, we engage staff and volunteers in a variety of services and programs that educate, train, and support the strength and capacity of individuals and communities.

We offer:

- Immediate access to barrier-free, non-judgemental, confidential support and follow-up to youth, adults, and seniors throughout 24/7 phone lines and online services.
- Education and training programs that promote mental wellness and equip schools, organizations and communities to assist people at risk of suicide.

Our programs work to ensure timely access to support, destigmatize suicide and mental health concerns, and increase awareness and skills for mental health. We engage a community of passionate volunteers. We foster and create compassionate, connected, suicide-safer communities.

Additional Resources

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health:

<https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-health-and-covid-19/covid-19-national-survey>

The Conference Board of Canada:

[https://www.conferenceboard.ca/\(X\(1\)S\(nqgymikzbijscpls00qhlthk\)\)/focus-areas/health/how-has-covid-19-impacted-canadians-mental-health?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1](https://www.conferenceboard.ca/(X(1)S(nqgymikzbijscpls00qhlthk))/focus-areas/health/how-has-covid-19-impacted-canadians-mental-health?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1)

Canadian Mental Health Association:

<https://cmha.ca/news/warning-signs-more-canadians-thinking-about-suicide-during-pandemic>

A study completed by the Canadian Mental Health Association shows that 6% of Canadians have had suicidal thoughts during the pandemic. This breaks down to 1 in 20 Canadians.

Additional Findings from Insights West

In ages ranging from 18 to 55+, there was between a 16-18% increase in individuals saying their mental health was “Fair/Poor”. The most affected are those between 18-34 saying their mental health was “poor”, a 10% increase to pre-COVID-19. For women, there was a 31% increase in responses saying their mental health has decreased during COVID-19.