

September 4, 2019

Press Release – For Immediate Distribution

September 10, 2019 is World Suicide Prevention Day (isap.com). The Association of Psychology Newfoundland and Labrador (APNL) wishes to provide the public with some facts regarding suicide, dispel some myths, identify potential warning signs, and provide local sources of assistance.

For additional information please refer to the CPA Fact Sheet on Suicide

https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Publications/FactSheets/PsychologyWorksFactSheet_Suicide.pdf

Also please note Media Guidelines For Reporting on Suicide from the Canadian Psychiatric Association

<https://www.cpa-apc.org/wp-content/uploads/Media-Guidelines-Suicide-Reporting-EN-2018.pdf>

Statistics (Statistics Canada):

- National Average 11.5/100,000, NL data from 2009 shows 9.7/100,000 in this province
- Approx. 55-60 deaths by suicide/year in NL
- 20-25 attempts for every completed suicide – approx. 1200-1500 attempts/year in NL
- Males 4x higher than females – in NL 15.9/100,000 vs 3.7/100,000
- Suicide rates are highest in middle aged white men
- First Nations individuals twice the national average, Inuit 6-11x higher
- Second leading cause of death in youth 15-24
- LGTBQ youth – 4-7x higher than peers

Risk Factors (cpa.ca):

- Greatest predictor is a previous attempt
- Member of a vulnerable groups, LGTBQ, First Nations
- Individuals experiencing bereavement, loss, isolation
- Mood Disorder (e.g. Major Depressive Disorder or Bipolar Disorder), psychotic disorders, personality disorders
- Alcohol use or other substance use
- Untreated depression is the number 1 cause, however important to note that not everyone who is depressed experiences suicidal thoughts.

Suicide Warning Signs (source suicide.org, cpa.ca)

- Appearing depressed or sad most of the time (untreated depression is the number one cause of suicide)
- Talking or writing about death or suicide
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Feeling strong anger or rage
- Feeling hopeless or trapped – like there is no way out of situation
- Experiencing dramatic mood changes
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Exhibiting a change in personality, sometime acting recklessly or impulsively
- Losing interest in most activities
- Experiencing a change in sleeping and/or eating habits
- Performing poorly at work or in school
- Giving away prized possessions
- Writing a will
- Feeling excessive guilt or shame

How to Talk About Suicide:

- Common myth that talking about suicide will make them suicidal
- Talking about it can open up discussion
- Use World Suicide Prevention Day information as a way to start the discussion
- Don't overreact or underreact
- Listen, don't judge, don't try to solve their problems, accept they are in pain and need help
- Don't try to convince them their thoughts are bad or wrong
- Assist in connecting them with sources of help, be their advocate if needed



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Where/How to Get Help?

- Immediate assistance is available through the Mental Health Crisis Line (709) 737-4668/1-888-737-4668 or through your local Emergency Department. Survivors of Suicide 726-4223,
- Psychologists can assist with Depression and Suicidal thoughts. Psychologists can be accessed through your local health care centre, via workplace Employee Assistance programs, and privately (see www.apnl.ca – click on Find a Psychologist for more details.).

Media interviews with a Psychologist on this (or other topics), can be arranged by contacting Dr. Janine Hubbard at 682-0235 or janine@janinehubbard.com