

# DIAL NORTH

Volume 1 Issue 2 - September 2021

Monthly newsletter for the Crisis  
Centre for Northern B.C.  
**We're here for you 24/7.**

## WHAT'S INSIDE:

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- "Missing You" by Linda Parker
- The Importance of Suicide Postvention
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*In August of 2021, our centre answered over 1,400 calls. Approximately 700 of those calls were answered on the Canada Suicide Prevention line. Our primary goal is ensuring that individuals at risk of suicide have immediate access to support and a plan to keep safe from harm can be established.*

## SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Source: (Preventing suicide: a global imperative, 2014, WHO)

September is acknowledged as Suicide Prevention Month. Increasing awareness around suicide and the complex interplay of factors that impact suicidality is an ongoing effort. These risk factors are present in our health systems, community, relationally, and individually. Barriers to accessing health care, stigma associated with help-seeking behaviour, trauma, loss of relationships, and access to means for suicide are some of the key risk factors.

On an individual level, these risk factors can include: a history with suicide attempts, mental health challenges, substance use, financial stress, relationship stress, and feelings of hopelessness. While there are many risks for suicide, it is true that suicide is preventable.

Interventions on systemic, community, interpersonal, and individual levels tend to be focused on reducing risk factors and prevalence of suicide. Addressing *protective* factors available to those who may be vulnerable to suicide can increase resilience and feelings of connectedness. These protective factors include: the presence of strong personal relationships, a connection to one's spirituality, and being equipped with positive coping strategies to enhance subjective well-being.

After all, our humanity is characterized by the quality of our relationships with others, feeling a sense of connection and mutual interdependence, experiencing positive emotions, and working through our pain in both individual and collective ways.

# MISSING YOU

BY LINDA PARKER

On April 9, 2015 you chose to end your life and end your silent suffering and on April 9, 2015 our suffering began. You would have no idea the impact your death would have on your father and me, and your sister who found your lifeless body. How can we carry on knowing our only son chose death over life and death over love?

Our friends, your friends, some of whom you had lost touch with for years, your teachers, and co-workers were all deeply affected by your death. Some still stay in touch and others have moved on, forever changed by your choice that day.

It has been six and a half years and although the tears are less frequent the grief is relentless, like cold ocean waves.

This has become our journey. We often see you in other youth, walking along the street and wish we could have another chance to talk, to hug, to listen. It's difficult to hear others talk about their sons knowing we will never again hear your voice, see you, meet your girlfriend, see you graduate from college or university, see you get married. All those precious life moments are lost forever.

We know it was not your intent to hurt us but rather you wanted the pain to end. If only we would have listened more intently, if only you would have talked more openly, if only you would have been honest, if only you could have held on, we were always there but you were blinded by your agony.

We fear one day we won't remember what your voice sounded like, your laugh, the particular colour of your eyes.

Did we really have a son or was it all an elaborate dream? Will we wake up tomorrow and find you gaming in your room? Where have you gone and what could we have done differently? Will you walk around the next corner?

We understand now the best way to honour your life is to carry on with ours. Not without challenges but to embrace our remaining years holding memories close and our love for you closer. The many unanswered questions will remain so and we find the strength within to live our lives moving forward, with glances behind from time to time.

Losing a loved one to suicide opens a door for others to share their story and over the years many have shared their stories of loss with us. We cannot let our son's death and the death of so many others in our community, province and country be in vain. The conversations must continue and a movement towards more education on mental health for children starting in elementary school, continuing with teens in high school, youth and adults in college and university, and with medical practitioners, the movement must continue. Reducing stigma, breaking down barriers, creating better accessibility to support programs and services in our community must continue. Steps have been made but the movement must be a continuous effort to make a real difference in order to prevent further needless loss of precious lives.

*"You left behind our broken hearts and happy memories too, but we never wanted memories we only wanted you." - Author unknown*





# THE IMPORTANCE OF SUICIDE POSTVENTION

BY NEELAM PAHAL

The impacts of a suicide can be incredibly far-reaching, often touching the hearts of people who may not have even known the person who died. For those that did know them, people bereaved by suicide, the process of grief and loss can be intensely overwhelming. Furthermore, people bereaved by suicide may be at greater risk of experiencing challenges with their own well-being.

There is growing research that indicates people who are grieving from suicide loss may have an increased risk of suicide, mental health disorders, and complicated grief. The loss may have the person bereaved by suicide experiencing profound feelings of sadness, guilt, isolation, responsibility, shame, and trauma. Their entire view of the world, of life, their relationships with themselves and with others, and their wellbeing can completely change. This process can leave people feeling vulnerable and at greater risk of suicide, hence the emergence of postvention. Suicide postvention is the implementation of support and guidance to those impacted by a suicide death, who may be at a greater risk for suicide themselves. At its core, suicide postvention is an important proponent of suicide prevention.

When implementing postvention strategies, utilizing person-centered, culturally-sensitive, and trauma-informed practices is key. Being mindful of the individual in need, empowering them, and walking through this process together can allow for them to choose the support they think is best and mitigate a decline in their health.

According to the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention, there are four themes that should be considered when engaging in suicide postvention:

- Through the dynamic stages of bereavement, there should be diverse services when supporting the individual that address the practical and emotional aspects of grief and loss.
- Addressing challenges associated with the identification and matching people bereaved by suicide with relevant support services.
- Acknowledging stigma, insensitive attitudes, and social isolation in personal and public domains.
- Connecting with people who may have similar experiences through support groups for people bereaved by suicide.

Often, people may not have resources that walk them through this grief process. This can have people bereaved by suicide feeling lost, uninformed, and experience decline in their mental health. Providing information, supportive services, and connecting them with counselling and therapeutic resources is crucial to opening door for them and giving them space to work through their experience. It is true that people grieving from suicide can be the driving force for communities to come together.

*Source: Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention & Postvention Australia (2017) Postvention Australia Guidelines: A resource for organisations and individuals providing services to people bereaved by suicide. Brisbane: Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention.*

# WORKSHOPS

Our training includes skills training, healthy coping, communication, peer support, and education to prevent and respond to crisis and suicide.

## Reaching Out

- This workshop introduces the topic of suicide to youth and teaches about warning signs, that it's okay to talk about suicide, how participants can respond to suicide, and advises participants it is okay to ask for help and to connect with a safe adult.

## Self-Care 101

- A central goal of this workshop is to invite youth to see that each of us has mental health and, similar to caring for our physical health, we can learn to nurture and improve our mental health through our actions, experiences, and lifestyle choices.

## GRASP

- This 12-hour skill building program provides youth from Grades 9-12 with self-awareness, communication, and coping skills that will aid them in their personal growth as well as contribute to an overall plan for ongoing youth suicide prevention programs within schools and communities.

## COPE

- This workshop uses the principals of mindfulness to help students in grades 5,6,7 achieve better mental wellness and cope with issues like anxiety, overthinking, stress, self-harm, sleep loss, and social media use.

## ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)

- Living Works' two day, interactive workshop that prepares caregivers to provide suicide life-assisting first-aid intervention.

## suicideTALK

- Ranging from 90 minutes to a half a day, Living Works' suicideTALK invites all participants to become more aware of suicide prevention opportunities in their community.

## Safe (Suicide Awareness For Everyone) TALK

- Living Works' three-hour workshop which prepares helpers to identify persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to suicide first-aid resources.

Contact our **Community Education Coordinator** at  
[community.education@crisis-centre.ca](mailto:community.education@crisis-centre.ca) or 778.693.2765 for more information!

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ **UPCOMING TRAINING:** ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

## Being a Volunteer Changes Your Life!

It gives you a new perspective and a new way of looking at your own problems when you have a chance to understand others. The training is invaluable for your own communication skills and relationships.

The Crisis Prevention, Intervention, and Information Centre for Northern B.C. offers training ~3 times per year based on demand.

**Visit:** <https://crisis-centre.ca/volunteer-upcoming-training/>

## Connect with us online!



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contact us at  
information@crisis  
centre.ca and let  
us know your  
thoughts on this  
newsletter!



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Centre for Northern BC

## UPCOMING EVENT: Soles Remembering Souls

Our centre has put this event together as a way to remember those lost to suicide and to bring the community together. The evening begins with opening remarks, light refreshments, and a discussion about how to get involved in creating suicide-safer communities.

At Soles Remembering Souls, we will gather in honour of those lost to suicide, and support survivors of suicide loss. Taking a walk in the garden, attendees will find placards with pictures of people who have died by suicide that include 5 things their loved ones would like them to be remembered by.

The event will take place from 6pm - 8pm on Wednesday, September 29th at the Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park Bandshell.

If you would like your loved one to be memorialized at the event, please register online at <https://crisis-centre.ca/events>.



## KEY RESOURCE: Heartbeat Support Group

CMHA Prince George offers a support group for individuals who have lost a loved one to suicide. Participants come together to share experiences, ways to cope, or just gather strength and comfort from being together with others who understand.

**Location** - 1148 7th Ave, Prince George

**Time** - Group meets 3rd Mon of each month 17:15 - 18:30 for youth aged 12 - 24, and 18:45 - 20:00 for all others.

## Crisis Centre for Northern B.C.: Resources

- Northern B.C. Crisis Line: **250-563-1214, 1-888-562-1214**, 24/7
- Northern B.C. Youth Line: **250-564-8336**, 24/7
- BC Suicide Line: **1-800-784-2433**, BC-wide, 24/7
- 310-MENTALHEALTH: **310-6789**, BC-wide, 24/7
- Canada Suicide Prevention Service: **1-833-456-4566**, National, 24/7



**Crisis Prevention,  
Intervention & Information Centre  
FOR NORTHERN BC**

*We are here for you 24-7*

**Crisis Prevention, Intervention, & Information Centre for Northern B.C.**

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