

## WHAT'S INSIDE:

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***People who feel lonely often are ashamed to admit it. They think it's equivalent to admitting that they are not likeable or that they're socially insufficient in some way. (Suttie, 2020)***

## STIGMA OF LONELINESS

Loneliness is a feeling that many of us have experienced at some point in our lives. During the pandemic, we were not able to spend time with our loved ones and this had devastating effects on our social connections. However, expressing feelings of loneliness with others can be uncomfortable as sometimes society does not welcome conversations around loneliness.

There are many definitions of loneliness, however, most research agrees that loneliness is driven from our need for human connection. While solitude, a temporary lack of contact with people, can be enjoyable and used for relaxation and personal growth, loneliness occurs when we desire connections but are unable to find them. When this happens, we may begin to experience negative, uncomfortable emotions. Loneliness is a subjective experience and can look different for everyone. It is not necessarily *being* alone it is about *feeling* alone. Some feel alone in a room full of people, whereas others can feel alone in the world, or even in a relationship with a loved one.

A study known as "The Loneliness Experiment" created a questionnaire that avoided the words "lonely" or "loneliness." Interestingly, 30% of people who said they were "never lonely" changed their answer when questions were framed in a different way, such as whether they would like some company. This demonstrates that there is stigma associated with loneliness and people can be ashamed to admit they are lonely. If someone feels lonely, it can seem as though they are admitting there is something socially wrong or unlikeable about themselves.

Loneliness is a natural human experience when someone's need for human connection is not being met. To combat loneliness, we first need to be aware of the stigma and shame around this emotion as it can prevent people from reaching out for support. As loneliness is a subjective experience, it can be hard to know who feels lonely. It is important to check in on each other and let people know it is okay to feel how they feel. Everyone's version of lonely is valid and deserves to be listened to.

Source: The Stigma and Shame of Loneliness by Well Excel (see original article for full list of references)



# CHECKING IN ON LOVED ONES

We are often told it is important to check in on loved ones, but what does that look like? Here some ways to check in and spend time with each other.

Remember that checking in is an ongoing process.

- Calling or texting someone and starting a conversation
- Telling someone how you care about them
- "I've been thinking about you lately. How have you been doing?"
- Take someone out for coffee
- Offer to babysit for parents to have a night out
- Invite someone over for supper
- Have a games night (board games, card games, video games, etc.)
- Go for a walk together
- "Is there anything I can do to help support you right now?"
- "This made me think of you."
- Relieve pressure of someone having to respond: "No need to reply, take your time."
- Ask if they want comfort or solutions
- Mail a card telling someone you appreciate them
- "I'm here if you ever need someone to talk to."
- Spend time doing something they love
- Bring someone a home cooked meal or fresh baking
- Take someone on a drive and get out of town for a bit
- Sit in silence beside someone
- "What has been going on in your life lately?"
- Play sports together
- "I wanted to follow up and ask how you were doing after our last conversation?"
- Buy someone flowers
- "It's okay to feel however you are feeling."
- Have an arts and crafts night (ex. Paint Along with Bob Ross)



# WORKSHOPS

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

## 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.

## Lifelines

- Lifelines is an evidence-based program for grades 5,6, & 7 designed to integrate youth suicide prevention into both the culture and mission of the school, which is to provide a safe learning environment for its students. Classes emphasize help-seeking behaviours and are aimed at students who encounter peers who may be thinking of 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.

## ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)

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

## 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.

## 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.

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:

### Volunteer Training

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.

Please contact Liam Moberg at [program.coordinator@crisis-centre.ca](mailto:program.coordinator@crisis-centre.ca) to apply or for more information.

### ASIST Workshop

(Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)

**Date: March 20 & 21**

**Location: UNBC**

Please contact Jody Stronstad at [community.education@crisis-centre.ca](mailto:community.education@crisis-centre.ca) to register.

## Connect with us online!



@crisiscentrenbc *contact us at information@crisiscentre.ca and let*



@crisiscentrenbc *us know your thoughts on this newsletter!*



Crisis Prevention, Intervention, and Information Centre for Northern BC

## PETS AS COMPANIONS

There are numerous benefits to having a pet as a companion. Whether it is a dog, cat, horse, lizard, bird, goat, or some other animal, having a pet who is excited to see you and greet you when you go home can be life changing. Pets can provide joy, laughter, cuddles, unconditional love, and comfort.

Spending time with a pet can decrease stress, anxiety, and symptoms of depression. By providing companionship, pets can also reduce feelings of social isolation and loneliness. Touch is a basic human need which can be fulfilled by spending time with animals. Simply patting a pet can help lower heart pressure.

Additionally, pets can help people keep a routine and encourage exercise and playfulness.

Pets are a big commitment, and may not be for everyone. If you enjoy spending time with animals but are unable to adopt a pet of your own, some other options may be to foster an animal, walk a neighbour's dog or volunteer at an animal shelter!

## 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
- Talk Suicide: **1-833-456-4566**, National, 24/7



Crisis Prevention,  
Intervention & Information Centre  
FOR NORTHERN BC  
*We are here for you 24-7*

## OUR FIVE PILLARS

The Crisis Centre for Northern B.C. has Five Pillars that are the foundation of our work. Follow Dial North over the next few editions to read about each one:

1. HUMILITY
2. INTEGRITY
3. ACCOUNTABILITY
4. COLLABORATION
5. SERVICE

**"We are committed to the unconditional support of the communities we serve."**

The Crisis Centre has been serving the north since 1970. We are by the north, for the north. We operate with transparency and believe it is important to provide appropriate expectations on what we can do and ensure we are meeting these expectations. We promote that we are available 24-hours a day, 365 days a year. We recognize our responsibility of being reachable 24/7 to the residents of Northern BC.

We strive to make our services not only accessible, but adaptable to the people we serve. Our centre is an individual, person-centred service. Every person and every journey is different. We aim to meet the people we serve where they are at in that moment and support them in a way that makes sense for them.

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

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