



# Suicide Awareness Resources

Covid-19 continues to take a toll on the mental health of Canadians. Tragically, this has meant that Canadians have also become more likely to take their own lives. Both suicide and suicidal thoughts are on the rise.<sup>1</sup>

A survey by the Canadian Mental Health Association, in partnership with UBC researchers in May of 2020, found that 1 in 20 Canadians (5%) had experienced thoughts or feelings of suicide as a result of the pandemic.<sup>2</sup> That was up from 2.5% who reported suicidal thoughts in the previous year.<sup>3</sup>

By learning more, we can start to address the stigma and barriers that prevent people from getting help. Especially at a time when they need it most.

## **IMPORTANT:**

Call 911 if you are concerned that someone is at risk of harming themselves or others. Imminent risk of suicide is an emergency. If you're unsure, get help. It's better to be safe.

## **Supporting employees in the workplace**

The workplace can play a key role in supporting employees at risk of suicide and encouraging them to access mental health resources.

So while talking about suicide can be intimidating, having these conversations is important.

As a people leader, you may be the first person to notice signs that an employee may be struggling.

## **What are warning signs that someone may be at risk?**

The employee may:

- show a sudden change in mood or behaviour
- show signs of increased substance use. Signs may include erratic behaviour, dilated pupils.
- show a sense of hopelessness and helplessness
- express that they wish to die or end their life<sup>4</sup>

It's important to keep in mind that each person is different. Mental states can 'show up' in different ways, or not at all. For more tips, watch our video [Identifying and supporting employees at risk for mental health issues](#).

For more information on how to help someone who is at risk for suicide, refer to CAMH's [suicide resource page](#).

**What resources are available?** Talking about mental health and the resources available should be ongoing. Promote resources every opportunity you can.

- **National resources**

- [Crisis services Canada – Suicide prevention and support](#) – **1-833-456-4566** connect with responders over the phone.
- [Wellness together Canada](#) – free mental health & substance use support, resources and counseling with a mental health professional. **Immediate crisis support: Text Wellness to 741741**
- [Buddy-up champion](#) (Centre for suicide prevention)

- **Employee and family assistance program**

If your organization offers its employees an EFAP

- Encourage them to call it when they are in crisis.
- Make EFAP information available somewhere they can access it with out asking. For example, put up posters in the staff room/washrooms. Give everyone a wallet card/fridge magnet. Email the information to your team or post it on your intranet.
- Let them know the different ways they can access help – by phone, email, live chat.
- Affirm and let them know that all access is strictly confidential. The EFAP provider doesn't share any of their information with the employer.
- Talk about what they can expect when they call EAP.

**Additional information:**

- Mental Health Commission of Canada – [Suicide Prevention Toolkits](#). They've tailored one toolkit for [people who have attempted suicide](#). They've focused the other on on resources for [people who have lost someone to suicide](#).
- CAMH – [Suicide prevention tools and resources](#)
- World Health Organization – [Virtual course – Engaging communities in suicide prevention](#)

Sources:

1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7236718/pdf/main.pdf>
2. Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) (2020). [COVID-19 Survey report](#)
3. Ibid
4. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). [Suicide](#).

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