

National News: Canadians Rally in Support of Suicide Prevention

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OTTAWA, Sept. 8, 2012 /CNW/ - September 10th is World Suicide Prevention Day. Suicide is the leading cause of injury related fatality in Canada. In 2009 alone, there were about 100,000 years of potential life lost to Canadians under the age of 75 as a result of suicides, and it is estimated that well over 3,000,000 Canadians have been touched by suicide in some way. Among those aged 15 to 34, suicide was the second leading cause of death.

This year, communities across Canada will be gathering to remember family and friends who died when despair overcame hope, and to support those who grieve, help those who struggle with living and renew a commitment to building a compassionate and caring society. Scheduled events across the country include memorial walks and runs, remembrance gatherings, candle light vigils, and informational workshops.

In keeping with the theme for this year's World Suicide Prevention Day in Canada, "All Together - Promoting Hope and Resiliency," the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP), the Mental Health Commission of Canada, the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Canadian Psychiatric Association, the Canadian Psychological Association and the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) stress the importance of bringing people and groups together to promote a collaborative approach to suicide prevention.

The organizations note that there has been a very positive and significant shift in national attention devoted to this important public health issue. In addition to a growing number of courageous testimonials on the effect of suicide on people, families and communities, this past year saw Parliament for the first time become actively engaged in a serious discussion of suicide prevention. A private member's bill to establish a national framework on suicide prevention was introduced by the Hon. Harold Albrecht (Bill C300) and received overwhelming bi-partisan support. It is expected to be passed in the upcoming session of Parliament.

At the same time, organizations and individuals are increasingly recognizing the importance of addressing the issue of suicide across systems, across disciplines and across jurisdictions. Last May, people from across the country met in Ottawa to discuss the creation of a National Collaborative for Suicide Prevention, and there are renewed efforts underway to develop a Canadian Distress Line Network. It is estimated that 90% of people who die by suicide were experiencing a mental health problem or illness, and the release of Canada's first-ever mental health strategy in May provides an opportunity for improving the ability of the mental health system to help to prevent suicide.

Resources that contribute to suicide prevention by helping people believe in the possibility of building a life of dignity, purpose, and hope are increasingly being made available. These include a series of new resources produced by CASP in partnership with Klinik Community Centre in Winnipeg ("Hope and Healing at Work" and "Hope and Healing at Home") which will be launched on September 10th. These and other resources are available on CASP's website www.suicideprevention.ca [1].

The views represented herein solely represent the views of the Mental Health Commission of Canada.
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Footnote: **Written by: Mental Health Commission of Canada** [2]

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1. <http://www.suicideprevention.ca/>