

***“Finding Hope on the Horizon”***  
Suicide Intervention Training:  
A Brief Overview

**Suicide is less about death and more about wanting the pain to end, spirit sickness, a coping strategy & communication.**

**BC’s First Nations youth....**

- 50+% communities have not experienced a youth suicide in 15 yrs.
- 90% youth suicides - 10% communities
- Cultural Continuity: Land claims, self-government, education, police, fire, health services, cultural facilities  
(\*Chandler & Lalonde, 2004)

**Warning Signs** are the things you see, or hear, that cause you to wonder if the person is considering suicide.

*General Warning Signs*

- Changes in concentration, energy, eating or sleeping
- Less talking, laughing, joking
- Withdrawing, isolating
- Dropping out of activities
- Decreased pleasure
- Mood swings, crying

*Specific Warning Signs*

- Statements similar to:
  - “Nobody would miss me if I was gone.”
  - “I’m going to kill myself!”
  - “I wish I was dead.”
  - “It doesn’t matter anymore.”
  - “I just wish I wasn’t here.”
  - “There’s no reason to be alive.”
- Talking or joking about suicide
- Saying goodbye; writing a will
- Drawing or reading about death, dying, & suicide
- Singing or listening to songs about death & suicide
- Giving things away
- Practicing ways to suicide

**Triggers** are stressful events that occur, or that a person fears will occur; that result in thoughts of suicide. These stressful events *increase* feelings of loss, aloneness, helplessness, & hopelessness.

## **Asking about Suicide**

### *Recommended Script*

"I have noticed (warning signs) and I know (trigger). Sometimes when people (brief repeat of warning signs) and they have (brief repeat of trigger) they think about suicide. I am wondering if you are thinking about killing yourself?"

## **The Importance of Listening**

Talking makes the pain smaller! The person needs someone trustworthy who will listen!

### *Listening*

Increases hope!

Listen to Risk Factors: the reasons the person wants to die

Listen for Protection Factors: those things that keep the person alive

Ambivalence: wanting to die and wanting to live!

### *Risk Factors (examples)*

- Prior suicidal behavior
- Suicide of close family member/friend
- Personal/family history of substance abuse or mental health concerns
- Depression; anxiety; PTSD; insomnia
- Severe interpersonal conflict

### *Protective Factors (examples)*

- Family and/or community connection
- Cultural & spiritual awareness/connection
- Success
- Positive belief about self
- Skills & Talents
- Opportunities - home, school & community

## **Risk Assessment**

- Thoughts only?
- A plan OR date?
- A plan AND date?
- An immediate plan AND date?
- Prior attempts

## Estimating Risk

- Low Risk: Thoughts only?
- Moderate Risk: A plan OR date OR prior attempts?
- High Risk: A plan AND date?
- Imminent Risk: An immediate plan AND date?

## Safety Planning

### *Safe Plan – Written*

1. Distraction techniques
2. Friends/supportive adults
3. A safe place to go
4. Community Resource/Professionals
5. Emergency Services

### *24 Hour Information*

Suicide Hotline (24 hrs) 1-800-784-2433

Native Youth Crisis Hotline 1-877-209-1266

Kids Help Phone (24 hrs) 1-800-668-6868

Websites for Youth:

- [www.youthinbc.ca](http://www.youthinbc.ca)
- [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)

Websites for Caregivers:

- [www3.suicideinfo.ca/youthatrisk/](http://www3.suicideinfo.ca/youthatrisk/)
- [www.teenmentalhealth.org](http://www.teenmentalhealth.org)

## Program Expectations

### Self Care

#### *Create your own Safety Plan*

1. Distraction techniques
2. Friends/supportive adults
3. A safe place to go
4. Community Resource/Professionals
5. Emergency Services

## References & Reading

### *References & Helpful Information*

“Cultural Continuity as a Hedge Against Suicide in Canada’s First Nations” (Chandler & Lalonde) [web.unvic.ca](http://web.unvic.ca)

“Darkness Calls” Healthy Aboriginal Network.

[www.ccamhr.ca/resources/Darkness\\_Calls.pdf](http://www.ccamhr.ca/resources/Darkness_Calls.pdf)

Improving the mental health of youth by the effective translation & transfer of scientific knowledge [www.teenmentalhealth.org](http://www.teenmentalhealth.org)

References & Helpful Information Cont’d

“Looking for Something to Look Forward to.” BC Coroners Service. Child Death Review.  
[www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca)

“Standards for the Assessment of Suicide” –National Suicide Prevention Lifeline’s  
Certification and Training Subcommittee (Some terms accredited to Rudd & Joiner)

\*Added by presenter to model.

### *Recommended Reading*

Blauner, Susan Rose. How I Stayed Alive when My Brain was Trying to Kill Me: One Person’s Guide to Suicide Prevention. Harper Collins Publishers, 2002.

Lukas, Christopher & Henry Seiden. Silent Grief: Living in the Wake of Suicide. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Rev. Ed. 2007

Tattered Teddies: An Interactive Handbook about the Awareness and Prevention of Suicide in Children. Centre for Suicide Prevention, 2008.

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***“Finding Hope in Times of Crisis”***

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