



SUICIDE AWARENESS

Participant Workbook



OBJECTIVES

A GUIDE TO SAFETY, SUPPORT, AND STRENGTH

Being a first responder comes with intense stress, trauma, and pressure. While you're trained to protect others, it's just as important to care for your own mental health and support your team.

This booklet offers practical tools and guidance for anyone affected by suicidal thoughts—whether it's you or a fellow firefighter. You're not alone, and help is always within reach.

Risk and Protective Factors

- An overview of what increases or reduces the likelihood of suicidal thoughts or behaviors.

Invitations (Warning Signs)

- Subtle and overt ways people may show they're in distress, and how to recognize and respond to these invitations for help.

Supporting Others

- Guidance on how to recognize when someone may be struggling and how to respond with care, confidence, and respect.

Safety Planning

- A step-by-step approach to help manage suicidal thoughts and create a personalized plan for staying safe during crisis moments.

Resources

- A list of trusted local and national supports, including crisis lines, peer support programs, and mental health professionals.

RISK FACTORS

It's important to understand the risk factors to suicide for early identification, prevention, and timely intervention - for yourself or others.

- **Prior suicide attempt:**
 - Risk of suicidal behaviour or a repeat attempt is highest in the weeks and months following a discharge from an ER or inpatient care
- **Losing a family member or loved one to suicide:**
 - Suicide risk increased by 2.58 times in families with a history of completed suicide
- **Major life changes or stressors:**
 - Unemployment, homelessness, poor physical health or illness, death of a loved one, harassment, discrimination
- **Mental health challenges:**
 - Suicide tends to be more common among people with one or more mental disorders, primarily mood disorders (like major depressive disorder or bipolar), psychotic disorders (schizophrenia), substance use disorders and personality disorders.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Protective factors are characteristics or attributes that reduce the likelihood of attempting or completing suicide. Protective factors are skills, strengths or resources that help people deal more effectively with stressful events. They enhance resilience and help to counterbalance risk factors. Protective factors can be personal and/or environmental.

Strengthening these factors should be an ongoing process to increase resiliency during the presence of increased risk factors or other stressful situations.

Protective Factors:

- Social support
- A sense of belonging and connectedness with family, friends, culture and community
- Supportive environments where you are accepted and valued (work, school, community)
- Access to appropriate mental health services and support
- Strong sense of self-worth/self-esteem
- Good coping and problem-solving skills



INVITATIONS

Invitations are signs of distress that invite help (actions, words, feelings, physical appearance)

ACTIONS

Giving away possessions
Withdrawal
Misuse of alcohol/drugs
Self-harm
Impulsive/reckless behaviors

FEELINGS

Desperate
Angry
Guilty
Lonely
Hopeless
Sad

WORDS

"I just can't take it anymore"
"I'm a burden to everyone"
"All my problems will end soon"

PHYSICAL

Lack of interest in appearance
Disturbed sleep
Change/loss of appetite/weight

Accept invitations - explore the meaning of the things you see and hear. Say that you've noticed some changes or signs that they may be hurting, that you are worried or concerned and want to help.

PHONE, CHAT AND CRISIS LINE SERVICES (24/7)

Suicide Crisis Helpline

If you feel like you have lost hope, are struggling to cope, dealing with thoughts of suicide or if you are worried about someone else, reach out to 9-8-8. Trained responders will listen without judgement, provide support and understanding, and offer resources.

Phone or Text: 9-8-8

Website: <https://988.ca>

Interior Crisis Line Network

The Interior Crisis Line Network is your community safety net of C.A.R.E., providing confidential, accessible, research-based, empowering support for people in the Interior Region of BC by phone or chat.

Phone: 1-888-353-2273

Website: <http://www.interiorcrisisline.com>

BC Suicide Prevention and Intervention Line

Provides a confidential, 24-hour toll-free crisis line for people who are feeling suicidal, are concerned for someone who might be suicidal, or for emotional support.

Phone: 1-800-784-2433

BC Mental Health and Crisis Response

Provides a toll-free number connecting callers to a BC crisis line. Offers emotional support, information on appropriate referral options, and a wide range of support relating to mental health concerns.

Phone: 310-6789 (no area code needed)

SUICIDE INTERVENTION TRAINING

LivingWorks safeTALK

LivingWorks safeTALK is a four-hour, in-person training that helps people recognize when someone may be thinking of suicide and connect them to further support. Through presentations, discussions, and hands-on practice, participants build confidence to reach out, ask directly about suicide, and link individuals to intervention providers.

LivingWorks ASIST

LivingWorks ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) is a two-day, evidence-based workshop that teaches participants how to provide skilled suicide interventions. Guided by two trainers in a safe learning environment, participants learn to recognize risk, explore safety needs, and develop a safety plan with someone at risk—making ASIST the global gold standard for suicide intervention skills training.