

# REDUCING THE RISK

## Managing suicidality at home

It can be a stressful situation but there are ways to make your home safer. The steps you take will depend on the level of risk. Your healthcare provider can help you create a plan.

### What is the level of risk? Think of the following:

- **Communication:** How open is the communication between you and the child or youth?
- **Frequency of Suicidal Thoughts:** How often is the child or youth having suicidal thoughts?
- **Intent to Act:** Is your child or youth planning to act on these suicidal thoughts?
- **Access to Means:** Do they have the ability to follow through on their plan?
- **Understanding & Agreement:** Does the child or youth understand and agree to the safety plan?



## Physical Environment

Make a plan together to keep everyone safe. Change the environment by removing or securing anything that could be a danger. This might include locking up items, putting them in cabinets or cars, or removing them from the home.

Items to secure include:

- Sharp objects (knives, razor blades, box cutters, sharpeners), over-the counter (i.e Tylenol, Advil, cold medicine etc.) and prescription medication, substances, vitamins, guns or items that could be used as a weapon.
- Other items to watch out for are belts, ropes, power tools, gardening tools and access to high windows or rooftops.

It's also important to monitor online activities for anything that suggests suicidal thoughts or plans.

Exceptions: If they are trying to reduce substance use, removing items like vapes or substances could be harmful. Check with your provider for advice on harm reduction. Watch for signs of withdrawal, such as irritability, nausea, trouble sleeping, headaches, or restless.

# Monitoring & Observation

The level of risk may require different ways of monitoring. Here are some strategies:

- Keep your child's bedroom door open or sleep in the same room as them to provide comfort and safety.
- Never leave your child alone for long periods, including the bathroom. Check on them often, especially when they're bathing or using the bathroom.
- If you can't be home, make sure your child is with a trusted adult.
- If they are able to go to school safely, inform the school about the safety concerns and what to watch for. It's also helpful to arrange transportation and identify a trusted person or safe place at school.

# Crisis Response

Watch for any unusual behaviour or changes, as they could indicate immediate safety concerns. These changes may include

- Lack of emotional expression (like a monotone voice, little eye contact, or few facial expressions)
- Rage, anger, or revenge-seeking behaviour
- Reckless or risky actions.
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from family or friends.
- Big mood swings.
- Saying they have no reason to live or feel no purpose.

**\*If you can't keep them safe, take them to the nearest emergency department\***



If you can't transport them, call 911 for help. Let them know you're a caregiver and your child or youth is expressing suicidal thoughts.

# PROVINCIAL CRISIS LINES

**If your child is in crisis and wants help, someone is available 24/7:**

## **Suicide Crisis Helpline: 988**

**Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-784-2433**

**Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868**

## Indigenous Crisis & Support Line (KUU-US): 1-800-588-8717

## BC Mental Health Crisis Support: 310-6789

# LOCAL CRISIS TEAMS