Preventing suicide by reaching out

Overall, an estimated 3,900 Canadians and 800,000 people worldwide die by suicide each year, yet it remains a taboo subject that is often not openly discussed.

Here in B.C. we lose an average of 500 people a year to suicide. The effects can be devastating to our families and our communities. Suicide prevention is a shared responsibility - we all have the potential to make a difference and save a life.

September 10 is World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD), a day for communities to show support for suicide prevention, to remember and celebrate the lives of those who have died, to comfort those who grieve and to send a message that there is help, hope and people who care.

“Suicide can shatter the lives of the family and friends left behind and can affect anyone of any age, gender and culture,” said Health Minister Terry Lake. “There is help available day or night and I encourage all British Columbians to be aware of the many resources available.”

We can all play a role in preventing suicide. Here are some ways you can show your support:

- Let your friends, family and colleagues know how you plan to reach out by sharing on social media and tagging your post with #WSPD2015.
- Follow #WSPD2015 for updates on Twitter.
- Attend a World Suicide Prevention Day event in your community.
- Light a candle in your window on September 10 at 8 p.m. to show support.

“Everyone can benefit from the help and support of family, friends, and community during difficult times,” said Jenny Green, Community Health Facilitator with Interior Health. “Many suicides are preventable. Suicide prevention begins with our willingness to recognize the signs of suicide and talk openly about it. Sometimes just a few genuine words of concern and active listening can create an open discussion about suicide and encourage an at-risk person to seek help. You can make a big difference.”

If someone you know is feeling suicidal, help is available. The Interior Crisis Line Network provides Interior Health residents with around-the-clock access to telephone support. The toll-free number is 1-888-353-CARE (2273). A province-wide network of crisis lines is accessible by calling 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433). Assistance is also available through local mental health and substance use services, family physicians, emergency services and through web-based supports such as Crisis Centre (http://www.crisiscentre.bc.ca) and HeretoHelp (http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca).

For more information on World Suicide Prevention Day:
Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention: www.suicideprevention.ca

Event information: A list of events is included in the attached Backgrounder. For information about a specific event in your community, please contact the individual(s) listed as event contacts.
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World Suicide Prevention Day events in our region

Cranbrook - World Suicide Awareness Day Event: Live music, food vendors, guest speakers, information booths, activities to honour loved ones and an art display.
  When: September 10, 3 p.m. - 7 p.m.
  Where: Rotary Park
  For more information contact: Patricia Whalen at 250-919-5769 or Elaina Englesby at 250-426-5222

Kamloops - 3rd Annual Bringing Suicide Out of the Shadows: Evening session with guest speakers, kite memorial, and refreshments.
  When: September 10, 6:30p.m. - 8:30 p.m. (Media welcome until 7:30 p.m.)
  Where: Kamloops Yacht Club
  For more information contact: Christa Haywood-Farmer at 250-374-0440 or Jolene Lindsey at 250-377-6500 ext. 4043

Kelowna - Benefit for Life Fundraiser: Special guests, memorable performances, live music, award winning Okanagan wine, and desserts.
  When: September 9, 7 p.m. -10:30 p.m.
  Where: Manteo Resort, Waterfront Ballroom
  For more information contact: Liane Weber at 250-899-4942
  Tickets available for purchase at http://www.thelifelinecanada.ca/event-information/

  When: September 10, noon - 1p.m.
  Where: Nelson Lakeside Park
  For more information contact: Karen Miller at 250-364-0274

Vernon - Walk of Remembrance
  When: September 10, 6 p.m.
  Where: Starts at the Centennial Garden, Polson Park
  For more information contact: Sharon Durant at 250-542-3114 or Dianne Hustler at 250-260-3233

Williams Lake - World Suicide Prevention Day Gathering: Drumming, music, encouragement, remembrance and information.
  When: September 10, noon – 1 p.m.
  Where: Boitanio Park
  For more information contact: Janice Breck 250-398-8220 ext. 2040

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