

What makes life worth living?

When asked the question, what makes life worth living; some of the answers you might hear are loving and supportive relationships, meaningful work and involvement in hobbies, opportunities for fun and play, and the ability to pursue your dreams.

However, there are circumstances that may prevent people from having these opportunities and gaining the belonging, acceptance and recognition we all need. These circumstances may include poverty, unemployment, discrimination and limited services available when they need help.

Many of these challenges create stressful conditions and over time, they also create poor mental health. Perhaps most troubling is the fact that suicide claims the lives of more than 3500 people in Canada a year and approximately 500 of those deaths are young people between the ages of 15 and 24.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among our young people in Canada and this fact leads me to ask what can we do to support all youth in building lives worth living? This is true prevention but there is no one easy answer. We can begin by understanding those things that make our youth feel connected and accepted.

Communities can play an important role in suicide prevention. Communities that provide youth with opportunities to build coping and problem-solving skills, dependable adults and role models, access and transportation to a variety of recreational activities, strong family support and involvement, community and cultural ties, positive and safe school environments and opportunities to be involved in decisions that effect them have happier, healthier and safer youth.

And remember, help is available. If you or someone you care about is currently in crisis, call 1-888-353-2273 (1-888-353-CARE) or visit the following websites for information: <http://www.crisiscentre.bc.ca> and <http://youthinbc.com/>

September 10th is World Suicide Prevention Day and events are taking place across Canada and around the world to promote suicide awareness and prevention. Be on the lookout for World Suicide Prevention Day events happening in your community.

To learn more about suicide and the important role you and your community can play in saving lives visit <http://www.suicideprevention.ca>.

Author: Jenny Turco is a Community Health Facilitator with Interior Health.

Date: September 3rd, 2013

