

Edmonton's suicide prevention plan providing free online suicide prevention training

September 10, 2020

EDMONTON - World Suicide Prevention Day is held annually on September 10th and with this year's theme being "*Working together to prevent suicide*" Edmonton is doing exactly that. The city has a multiyear community plan, called Living Hope, to prevent suicide.

"Last year, Edmonton recorded 143 deaths by suicide—a number that has changed little over the past decade. When we look at the numbers, the work of suicide prevention seems daunting, but there is always hope. In Alberta, the rate of suicide deaths declined year over year between 2015 and 2019 by 4 people per 100,000. We were making progress—and then COVID-19 hit, creating new stressors and mental health challenges. As we work together to protect the physical health of Edmontonians, we also need to work together to protect mental health, reaching out to our family, friends, colleagues, and neighbours, making sure they know that they are not alone," says Ione Challborn, Executive Director, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)-Edmonton.

LivingWorks Start is an online interactive suicide awareness program from the world's leading organization in that field, LivingWorks, an Alberta-based education company. "It's impossible to have healthcare professionals on every corner, but with accessible suicide awareness and prevention training, we can empower members of the community to recognize when someone is struggling and connect them to help. To effectively prevent suicide you need to engage large numbers of people," says Rick Trimp, president of LivingWorks.

The Centre for Suicide Prevention (CSP) will work with CMHA-Edmonton and partners of the Living Hope suicide prevention strategy to get 2000 licenses out into the community. "While suicide is complex, and there is never any one factor that will cause someone to take their life, we know that many of us are facing new stressors as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, stressors that can put a strain on our mental health. The good news is that suicide is preventable through education. Edmontonians who take the Start online training will be equipped to respond to people who may be thinking about suicide and connect them to help. This is effective suicide prevention," says CSP Executive Director Mara Grunau.

The purchase of these licenses comes from grant funding attached to [Roots of Hope](#). "The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) is proud to count Edmonton among the eight communities participating in Roots of Hope—a home-grown approach to suicide prevention. With the launch of today's free suicide awareness training, the city will have 2,000 more champions in the fight against suicide," said Ed Mantler, Vice-President, Programs and Priorities for the MHCC. "The strides being made here today, thanks to the tremendous partners and leaders involved, can be shared with the other participants of Roots of Hope, growing the movement and creating caring networks across the country. I can't think of a better way to mark World Suicide Prevention Day."

If you, or someone you know, are having thoughts of suicide, please check this [site](#) - help is available.

ABOUT Living Hope (CMHA-Edmonton and partners)

[Living Hope](#): A Community Plan to Prevent Suicide in Edmonton. Living Hope was developed by a committee of dedicated organizations and individuals who believe that suicide can be prevented in our city. These partners range from government to colleges and universities, to private and non-profit organizations.

[CMHA-Edmonton](#): The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), founded in 1918, is one of the oldest voluntary organizations in Canada. Each year, CMHA provides direct service to more than 100,000 Canadians through the combined efforts of more than 10,000 volunteers and staff across Canada in over 120 communities.

ABOUT the Mental Health Commission of Canada and Roots of Hope

[MHCC](#): Leads the development and dissemination of innovative programs and tools to support the mental health and wellness of Canadians. Through its unique mandate from the Government of Canada, the MHCC supports federal, provincial, and territorial governments as well as organizations in the implementation of sound public policy.

[Roots of Hope](#): A multi-site, community-led project that aims to reduce the impacts of suicide within communities across Canada. The project builds upon community expertise to implement suicide prevention interventions that are tailored to the local context. It will lead to the development of an evidence base, including best practices and suicide prevention guidelines and tools, to support the scale up and implementation of a “made-in-Canada” model across the country.

ABOUT the Centre for Suicide Prevention

[CSP](#): An education centre, a centre of excellence, based in Calgary, Alberta. We are a branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association. We are educators. For over 35 years, we’ve been equipping Canadians with the information, knowledge and skills necessary to respond to people at risk of suicide. We educate online, in print, and interactively. Our library of over 45,000 suicide-specific items, the largest English-language collection of its kind, informs the work we do.

ABOUT LivingWorks

[LivingWorks](#): The world's leading suicide intervention training company. We believe that suicide is preventable and everyone can learn to play a life-saving role. With an array of integrated training programs to meet every need, we’ve been providing communities and organizations with suicide prevention solutions for over 35 years.

RESOURCES:

- **11 of Us** - A public awareness campaign that is part of the Living Hope plan to talk about how suicide can be prevented. Get people to recognise the warning signs, learn how to have a conversation about suicide, know about community resources (including training), and learn where to find help.
- **LivingWorks Start** - In just one hour online, LivingWorks Start teaches trainees to recognize when someone is thinking about suicide and connect them to help and support. Evidence based and suitable for ages 13 and up.

MEDIA INQUIRIES:

CMHA-Edmonton
780-236-1485, AAbboud@cmha-edmonton.ab.ca

City of Edmonton
780-423-4890, francis.asuncion@edmonton.ca

Mental Health Commission of Canada
613-683-3748, media@mentalhealthcommission.ca

Centre for Suicide Prevention
403-245-3900 ext. 229, crystal@suicideinfo.ca

LivingWorks
587-482-2019, communications@livingworks.net