



centre for
suicide prevention

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Mr. Ian Scott Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)
1 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau Quebec J8X4B1

27 April 2021

Dear Mr. Scott:

Centre for Suicide Prevention commends the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) for including the investigation for a 3-digit crisis number in its Departmental Plan, 2021-2022, as per the following clause, page 9:

Initiate a proceeding on the potential use of an abbreviated dialing three-digit number for Canadians to call when seeking assistance for mental distress or suicide prevention. This number would provide Canadians with a more efficient method to connect to existing mental distress or suicide prevention hotline services (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, 2021, p. 9).

Further, we commend the federal government for specifically itemizing the CRTC's proceedings in the federal budget, 2021-22, ensuring funds are available for both the process and the creation of the line (Department of Finance Canada, 2021, p. 71).

According to the World Health Organization, open and easy access to mental health care is a best practice in suicide prevention (World Health Organization, 2014, p. 39). Suicide crisis lines are an easy entry point to this care.

While a 3-digit number to crisis support is always needed, COVID-19 has further heightened its importance as Canadians are self-reporting unprecedented levels of suicide ideation. (Canadian Mental Health Association, University of British Columbia and Mental Health Foundation, 2020). Research suggests this will continue to increase in the aftermath of the pandemic (McIntyre and Lee,

2020; Shuja, et al., 2020). Suicide is preventable; shoring up resources and building capacity now is key to supporting Canadians in the years ahead.

We commend the CRTC for moving forward with the regulatory proceedings for 3-digit dialing for suicide prevention. Centre for Suicide Prevention is available to support this work and welcome the opportunity to be involved in the hearings.

Sincerely,



Mara Grunau

Executive Director

cc **The Honourable Patty Hajdu, MP**

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, MP

Canada Suicide Prevention Service (Canadian Mental Health Association – National, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Crisis Services Canada)

