



centre for
suicide prevention

Together

2021 - 2022
ANNUAL REPORT



A message from
the executive director
and board president

Together

Looking back over the last two-and-a-half years, it's hard to believe what we've lived through and how we've coped. As we've tried to make sense of our pandemic experiences, many expressions emerged, including, 'we're all in this together', which quickly gave way to, 'we're in the same storm, but not the same boat'. These expressions spoke to the importance of social connectedness, of the coming-together effect.

Studies abound evidencing the protectiveness a sense of belonging brings. Some of the research has been conducted following natural disasters - researchers enter a community when people's lives have been ravaged (think flood, fire, hurricane) and yet instead of seeing an uptick in suicide, they see people reaching out to each other to help, support and build connection. The increased social cohesion leads to reduced suicide behaviours not just in the moment but for years to come. Why? Hope, belonging, meaning and purpose are the fundamental basis of protective factors - universal among humans - and the core of the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework. Building personal resilience often involves strengthening

these elements in our lives. Research suggests that when a community is hit hard by some external force, the opportunity to build community resiliency presents itself in tangible ways ... sandbagging, evacuating, delivering supplies - coming together.

Many of us can attest to this coming-together effect in our own pandemic experience. While living with restrictions, we found creative ways to check in on our family and friends through Zoom calls, curbside drop-offs, and socially distanced dog-walks. We clanged pots at 7 pm every night to thank our health care workers; we recognized essential workers of other industries who had previously seemed invisible, we were kinder and extended care to others more than before. We increased our social capital, social cohesion, our sense of belonging.

How can we keep this going and extend the coming-together effect? At Centre for Suicide Prevention, we are repeatedly asked if suicide has increased because of the pandemic restrictions. In Canada, we have not seen an increase at this time. However, Canadians are self-reporting greater

levels of mental unwellness than ever before. This will not necessarily translate to increased suicides post-pandemic - as long as we invest in each other. Mental health care needs to be available to people in the right place at the right time. Social supports for vulnerable people need to be present. And we need to renew our value for social cohesion. During the pandemic, questions like, 'How are you really doing?' became common, and people more easily discussed mental health. Many of us developed habits of checking in regularly on loved ones. Let's continue these conversations and these check-ins. We may be in different boats but we're in the same sea. We need to stick together. This is suicide prevention.



Mara Grunau
Executive Director



Carmelle Hunka
President,
Board of Directors

who we are



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+
162 Trainers

we educate for life

For over 40 years, we've been equipping people with the knowledge, information, and skills to respond to someone thinking about suicide.



62,938
learning hours

445
workshops

182
reference queries

8
new resource publications

390
in-person workshops

55
virtual workshops

55
presentations

3,879
mailing list subscribers

44 news stories

6,163
participants

534,608 website visitors

38,109
social media followers

workshops

After attending an *Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)* workshop, participants feel more ready, willing, and able to help someone considering suicide.

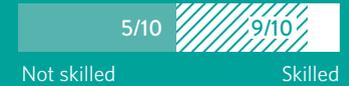
91% of participants feel **more prepared** to help



88% of participants feel **more confident** to help



90% of participants feel **more skilled** to help



■ Before ■ After



After attending other CSP workshops participants feel more confident to identify and willing to help someone considering suicide. This includes our preventing suicide in children and youth workshops *Small Talk* and *Looking Forward*, our workshops about promoting life in Indigenous children and youth, *Little Cub* and *River of Life, Walk With Me: Indigenous Suicide Bereavement*, and *safeTALK: suicide alertness for everyone* (LivingWorks Education Inc.).



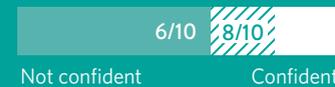
This workshop gave me the tools to develop a good relationship so the person I was helping felt safe and heard."

— ASIST TuneUp Participant

52% of participants feel **more willing** to help



77% of participants feel **more confident** to identify



■ Before ■ After



our projects

This year we've seen more openness towards suicide prevention – evidenced by greater involvement from government, foundations and the public. Read on to see the what this looks like in our community.



Buddy Up

The Buddy Up communications campaign raised awareness of men's suicide prevention: promoting authentic conversation among men and their buddies. Thanks to Viewpoint Foundation, Sun Life, the Johnny Z Healthy Minds Fund at South Saskatchewan Community Foundation and others for their contributions to this project.



The large majority of our workforce is male and... in the construction industry and society men aren't always willing to talk about their feelings ... so it's important that we (let our employees know) that it's okay not to be okay."

— Mike Principalli
Volker Stevin Contracting and
Buddy Up Champion



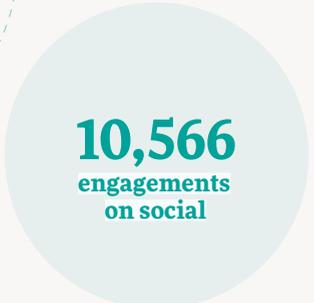
Two new Buddy Up personas were developed with input from community stakeholders: Luis, a post-secondary student and athlete and Clay, an agriculture producer.



+300% from 2020 with ~100 Champions



3× more than in 2020



The Buddy Up research committee was re-established, grounding the campaign in suicide prevention and messaging research.



Respite House

Centre for Suicide Prevention initiated a respite care pilot project that will reach its completion in 2022.

This community-based, crisis stabilization model was built by a province-wide advisory group; the pilot is operated by the Canadian Mental Health Association – Wood Buffalo Region in Fort McMurray, Alberta. It is a crisis stabilization care facility for individuals experiencing a deterioration in their mental wellness or thoughts of suicide. Centre for Suicide Prevention hopes to bring Respite Houses to other communities in Alberta.



By supporting individuals through their crisis and normalizing their experience, while also connecting them with vital supports and programs both internal and external to CMHA, we hope to reduce the impacts of a mental health crisis and associated societal impacts on individuals, families, and community members."

— Amanda Holloway
CMHA Wood Buffalo Executive Director

Workshops

RIVER OF LIFE

River of Life: Promoting life in Indigenous young people workshop was updated, thanks to support from the Government of Alberta.

Offered in-person and online, participants will learn about the role of community and culture in life promotion, recognizing warning signs in young people, competently responding to a young person in crisis and safety planning.

River of Life, along with our other child and youth workshops, was provided to student teachers thanks to the support of the Max Bell Foundation.

TEAM UP

As part of the Canadian Mental Health Association – Ontario's Talk Today program, Centre for Suicide Prevention has developed a knowledge-based workshop for high-performance athletes and their teams.

The *Team Up* workshop teaches athletes awareness of suicide, how to identify a teammate who may be thinking about suicide, and how to connect them to a trusted adult for support.



Together to Live

Check out togethertolive.ca to learn about, develop, implement and evaluate a community suicide prevention plan. We refreshed this guide, divested to us by the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health, thanks to generous support from the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

City of Calgary Crisis Response Project

Together with PolicyWise for Children & Families, we studied Calgary's current crisis response system and put forth recommendations for system transformation.

Run for Life

The 4th annual Run for Life was a virtual event that took place September 19 to 26, 2021 to remember those lost to suicide and raise awareness for suicide prevention.

Thank you to all our Run for Life sponsors and to our Diamond Sponsor, Prairie Sky Royalty.

Trainer Hubs

We're driving connection inside and out! Trainer Hubs convene our Trainer and Mentor network quarterly for knowledge exchange and learning.



425
participants

47
teams

\$75,000
raised



partners and donors

PARTNERS

We are grateful for the support of our partners, who have shown ongoing commitment to suicide prevention. Their support has allowed us to continue operating and even expanding our services throughout the pandemic.

DONORS

Thank you to all our donors who have continued to make suicide prevention a priority during this difficult time; we appreciate your support.



City of Calgary, CSIF /// Viewpoint Foundation /// Sun Life /// Johnny Z Healthy Minds Fund at the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation

We are the Centre for Suicide Prevention. For over 40 years we've been equipping Canadians with knowledge and skills to respond to people thinking about suicide. We can equip you too. We educate for life. If you are in crisis, call Talk Suicide at 1-833-456-4566.

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Buddy up illustrations: **Kyle Metcalf**

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Canadian Mental
Health Association
Mental health for all



centre for
suicide prevention