

BUDDY UP CAMPAIGN

BUILD UP FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

Some of our most authentic conversations and deepest connections happen while we're working shoulder-to-shoulder with others. This Buddy Up mini-campaign is about working on a project with a buddy. A buddy could be anyone you're close with – a friend, family member, teammate, colleague, etc.



HOW TO PARTICIPATE

1 Ask a Buddy to work on a project with you. Here are some ideas:

- Build a gingerbread house
- Take a pottery class
- Work on a home improvement project

2 While you're working, ask how they're really doing:

- Check out this conversation guide (bit.ly/3AeX8Yd) if you're worried about a buddy
- Even without a deep conversation, just spending time together can make your friendship stronger and let your buddy know you're there for them if they need support

FRIENDSHIPS ARE LIFE-SAVING

Connection and belonging are important for our mental health. Men have said that close, trusting friendships are important to them, and working on a project with a buddy is a great excuse to hang out. For many men, focusing on an activity, rather than talking, is the better way to engage with other men (McKenzie et al., 2018; Robertson et al., 2016).

Relationships can be life-saving – they provide a safety net when men are thinking about suicide, because those people are there to offer help and to be asked for help (McKenzie et al., 2018; Wilson & Cordier, 2012).

SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER

It's easier to open up when we're relaxed. While working on a project, there's no pressure to talk, so guys are more likely to open up, especially when they're shoulder-to-shoulder with a buddy, instead of face-to-face.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONVERSATION

Men have often been brought up to not talk about their emotions, and guys who were raised with the idea that showing any sign of emotion is a "weakness" are more likely to hide their emotions, which can become overwhelming and may lead them to a point of crisis (Houle, Mishara & Chagnon, 2008; Ogrodniczuk & Olliffe, 2011). That's why conversations can be life-saving – they give men an opportunity to vent about their stress with others who can relate, offer help, or simply listen.

FIND A PROJECT

If you'd like to find a project to work on with other guys in your area, check out these resources:

- Men's Sheds: menssheds.ca
- Mankind project (paid membership): canada.mkp.org
- DUDES club (for Indigenous men): dudesclub.ca

References: bit.ly/3ANfRKt