

FACTS ABOUT SUICIDE

People who talk about suicide do it. Four out of five people who kill themselves have given out definite signals or talked to someone about it.

People who are suicidal don't want to die. Most suicidal people don't really want to die, they just want to stop the pain.

Talking about suicide will not encourage someone to try it. It is more likely that giving people the opportunity to talk openly about their feelings will in itself reduce the risk of suicide.

Anyone is the "type". People of all kinds, cultures, ages and incomes commit suicide. Don't ever dismiss your concerns about someone because they're "not the type".

The reasons for suicide are deep and may have been going on for a long time. For example, it may look like a guy attempted suicide because his girlfriend broke up with him. But the low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness that made the break-up so devastating for him would have started in him a long, long time before.



Photo by Joe Beaverho



Lac la Martre, 1984
T. Macintosh/NWT Archive

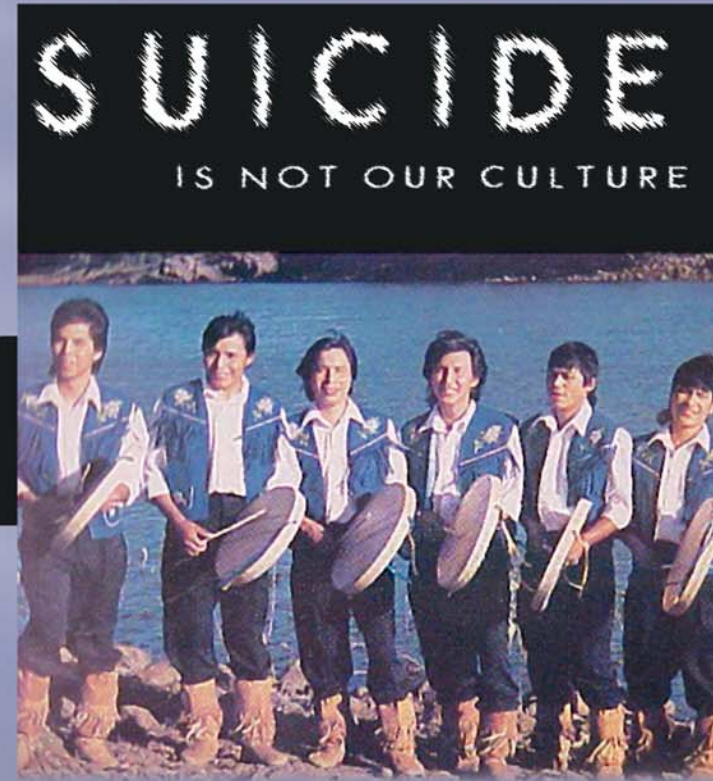


Photo by Joe Beaverho

The brochure has been adapted with permission from the B.C. Council for Families (Suicide is not a Joke). Produced and adapted by the Tli Cho Suicide Prevention Team, with support from the Northwest Territories Suicide Prevention Steering Committee, the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.



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Inuvik Drummers & Dancers in Sunset, 1991
T. Macintosh/NWT Archive

SUICIDE IS NOT ABOUT DEATH

Sometimes, people are so depressed by their problems they don't think they can take it anymore. All they can think about is ending the pain. They don't believe they have any choices, except to end their pain by killing themselves. They don't really want to die, they just want to end the pain.

If someone you know is talking about suicide, it's no joke. They really need you to take them seriously.

WARNING SIGNS

There is no single thing that makes someone suicidal, but the following signs are clues to whether or not someone is thinking about it:

- has tried to commit suicide before
- talks or jokes about it, like:
"Nothing matters anymore" or "I can't take it anymore" or "Everyone would be better off if I weren't here."
- takes stupid risks and acts like they don't care about themselves
- shows a strong interest in death, like:
makes a will, gives away favourite things, says goodbye or writes poems or makes drawings about people killing themselves
- has started (or increased) how much they drink or do drugs
- shows major changes in the way they act, like:
 - *someone who's a major party animal suddenly dumps all his friends and quits doing things he really liked before.*
 - *a girl who's a really good student suddenly quits doing her homework and is skipping classes.*
 - *your friend who always looked so cool suddenly quits washing her hair and doesn't care what she wears, acts depressed, hopeless or overwhelmed.*

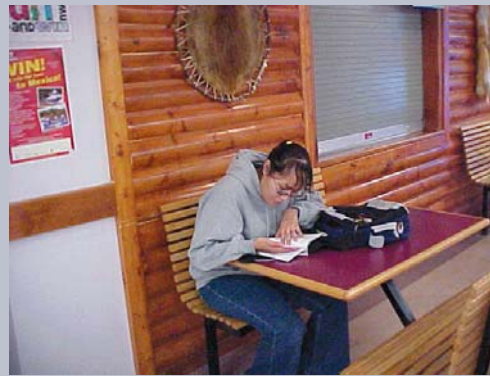


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Fortunately, there's a lot you can do to help your friend.

LISTEN

Listen for the thoughts and feelings behind your friend's words.

KEEP TRYING

Ask *"What's wrong?"*

Don't give up.

People who are suicidal feel very, very alone. You'll have to keep trying until you convince them that you care.

ASK QUESTIONS

The best way to find out for sure is to ask your friend:

"Are things so bad that you're thinking of killing yourself?"

If the answer is yes, ask....

"How are you going to do it?"

"When are you going to do it?"

"Do you have what you need to do it (guns, pills, knife etc.)"

The more dangerous the method and the more definite their plan, the greater the risk that they'll attempt suicide.

GET HELP

Don't ever agree to keep someone's suicide intentions a secret. A mad friend is better than a dead friend. Try to get your friend to agree on who to tell, but do not wait to tell someone who can help. If you think this person will try to kill themselves soon, do not leave him or her alone until help arrives.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

Are you feeling hopeless?

Do you believe that you have no choices?

Have you been thinking of killing yourself?

You aren't alone.

Other people have felt like committing suicide at some time too. Most of them are now happy that they didn't.

Life will not always be like this.

The helplessness and desperation you are now feeling can go away.

Give yourself a future - ask for help now.

Reach out to a friend or an adult you trust.

WHO CAN HELP?

- parents, relatives, neighbours, friends
- a school counsellor, teacher, caregiver
- emergency wards of hospitals
- a mental health worker, health centre, RCMP
- suicide prevention team
- Kids Helpline
1-800-668-6868 (24 hour)
- Western Arctic Helpline
1-800-661-0844 (7-11pm)
- Natsee J'e K'e 24 Hour Crisis Line
1-800-661-0846 (24 hour)
- Inuvik Suicide Line
777-1234 (24 hour)



Photo by Joe Beaverho