



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada



Life Promotion Toolkit for Youth and People who Support Youth:

When and where to seek help if you are thinking about suicide
in Saskatchewan

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We want to acknowledge that in Saskatchewan, we are on treaty land. These treaties serve to govern our relationships with Indigenous people. Saskatchewan spans Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10, which is the traditional territory of the Nēhiyaw/Cree, Saulteaux, Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, Dene, and formerly Blackfoot. We also acknowledge the traditional homeland of the Métis and honour their contributions.

We would also like to show gratitude to the Saskatchewan high schools that participated in focus groups, the people at the Embracing Life Initiative who shared their research and knowledge from Northern Saskatchewan, and all the individual participants who contributed to the discussion, even though suicide can be a difficult topic.

This toolkit was created in partnership between the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) and the Canadian Mental Health Association, Saskatchewan Division (CMHA-SK), with the support of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health. This toolkit was adapted from a toolkit developed by the MHCC entitled “[Toolkit for people who have been impacted by a suicide attempt](#),” in an effort to reach youth and people who support youth in Saskatchewan.

This toolkit was made in collaboration with youth.

We spent time with focus groups at high schools, surveyed youth across Saskatchewan through CMHA-SK’s online services, and collected previous data from youth in Saskatchewan, school counsellors, and youth workers. We received ethical clearance from the University of Regina Research Ethics Board to ensure we were collecting this information in a way that did not hurt our participants, and we offered support through peer support and counselling. Once we received all the input on how to tailor the original MHCC toolkit for Saskatchewan, we put these ideas into tangible form in a Saskatchewan-specific toolkit. When it was completed, it was reviewed by the MHCC, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health, and most importantly by a panel of people with lived and living experience and family members to ensure that this topic was being treated in a sensitive and real way. Essentially, this resource has been designed by youth, for youth, with oversight to ensure that the toolkit incorporates best practices and evidence-based concepts.



Rebecca Rackow, BA(Hons), BSW, RSW

Assistant Executive Director

Canadian Mental Health Association, Saskatchewan Division

Safety plan

If you have a need to support someone with a safety plan immediately, we have placed this up front for your use.

A safety plan is created by a person with thoughts of suicide who is looking for help to stay safe. Making a safety plan with someone they trust can help make staying safe for now possible. It can also help the person with thoughts of suicide to realize how many people in their life care about their safety and well-being. It is very important that the person with thoughts of suicide takes the lead in answering the questions in the safety plan because they are the ones who will have to use it when thoughts of suicide are overwhelming.

For more information on how to use the safety plan (in Section 2), [click here](#).

Step 1: What signs (like thoughts, feelings, or behaviours) will tell you to use this plan?

Step 2: What can you do on your own to help you not act on thoughts or urges of suicide?

Think of things that are calming, things that are distracting, or things that make you feel better.

Step 3: Who are the people or pets that you are important to? What would you miss out on?

If you can't think of anything, what are some things a friend or family member might say to you?

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Section 1 – I'm struggling with thoughts of suicide



I'm struggling with thoughts of suicide

— Reaching out —

Congratulations! You have taken the first step to getting help!

It is often difficult to ask for help with thoughts of suicide because

- you feel guilty or worry about making others feel bad
- you don't know what the other person's reaction will be
- you are afraid of what people might think of you if they know you have thoughts of suicide
- you are worried about being a bother or in the way when people have things to do

- you are afraid of what kinds of changes you and others will have to make because of your thoughts
- you feel like others shouldn't have to change their lives because of the things you are thinking.

It is even harder to deal with these thoughts alone because it may be hard for you to believe that you matter, even though you do matter. It might be hard for you to believe that you can change your thinking.

There are people who are comfortable talking to you about what you're experiencing, and who really do want to help you through this. Some family and friends might already be guessing that you are having these thoughts, and they may have had thoughts of suicide themselves that they have lived through.

It is normal for asking for help to feel hard, because it is!



— Who can help me? —

Here are some professionals who may be able to help you. If you're unsure where to go, contact [9-8-8](tel:9-8-8) for advice.

Counselling services

- Counselling can be received from trained professionals, like clinical psychologists, social workers, and psychotherapists, who have tools and exercises that can help you better understand your thoughts of suicide and how to cope with them.
- Counsellors work in public health services ([Saskatchewan Health Authority Mental Health and Addiction Services](#)), in the school system (including post-secondary institutions), for community-based organizations (such as [Family Service Saskatchewan](#)), and in private practice where fees are charged for their services.
- Counsellors can help you understand what is behind the thoughts of suicide. They can work with you to help explore your thoughts and provide a safe space to talk about them.
- Counsellors use cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT), narrative therapy, motivational interviewing, and other techniques. Your counsellor will be able to choose the right technique(s) for your needs. You can learn about different types of therapy techniques [here](#).

Peer support and group support

- A peer support worker is someone who has experienced some of the things that you might be going through now and is trained to use this experience to help people.
- Peer support can be done one on one with a peer support worker or in groups facilitated by a peer support worker.
- Peer support and group support can help you learn tools and strategies from people who have personally found them helpful.
- Peer support and group support are generally delivered through community-based organizations outside of the formal health system.



Doctors and nurse practitioners

- Doctors can help if you have been thinking of suicide but are not about to act on those thoughts, yet the thoughts are disruptive enough that you worry they will become a danger or disrupt your daily life.
- Doctors can do tests to make sure that there is not something physical behind the thoughts of suicide (e.g., infections, medication side effects, etc.)
- Doctors and nurse practitioners can prescribe medications that may help reduce thoughts of suicide. A small number of medications can increase suicidal thoughts. It is important to speak with your doctor and pharmacist about potential side effects of medication. If you are experiencing adverse side effects from medication, you should speak to a doctor immediately.
- It is ideal if you have a family doctor who knows your history, but any doctor at a walk-in clinic can help.
- Doctors can refer you to Mental Health and Addiction Services or Child and Youth Services for help, although a referral is not necessary to receive community mental health services.
- Specialized doctors who are experts in treating mental health and addictions conditions are known as psychiatrists. Specialized doctors who are experts in treating children and youth are known as pediatricians. To see a psychiatrist or a pediatrician, you need a referral from a family doctor.
- Doctors can be especially helpful if you live in a rural area with fewer services.



All of these helpers (counsellors, peer support workers, doctors and nurse practitioners) will keep health concerns confidential, but if a person is imminently going to harm themselves or someone else, they are required to share with other helpers so that the person can receive the best/most help possible.



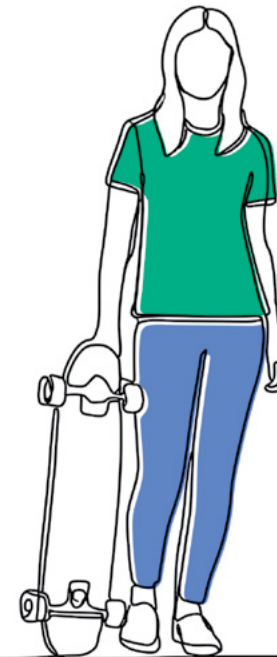
Urgent care centres (in Regina and Saskatoon), mental health centres, and hospital emergency departments

- Hospital emergency departments can help you if you have acted on suicidal thoughts and need medical attention right away.
- Urgent care centres and hospital emergency departments can help if you are having frequent, intrusive thoughts telling you to attempt suicide and you don't have another plan to keep you safe for now.
- Urgent care centres and hospital emergency departments can help if you need support from a doctor but don't have access to a family doctor or a doctor at a walk-in clinic.
- In some instances, individuals may need to be admitted into a dedicated mental health centre to receive treatment for suicidal risk. Mental health centres are located in Swift Current, Moose Jaw, Regina (adult and adolescent), Weyburn, Yorkton, Saskatoon (adult and adolescent), North Battleford, and Prince Albert (adult and adolescent). To access a mental health centre in Saskatchewan you must first go through the associated hospital's emergency department for assessment.

Who else can help me?

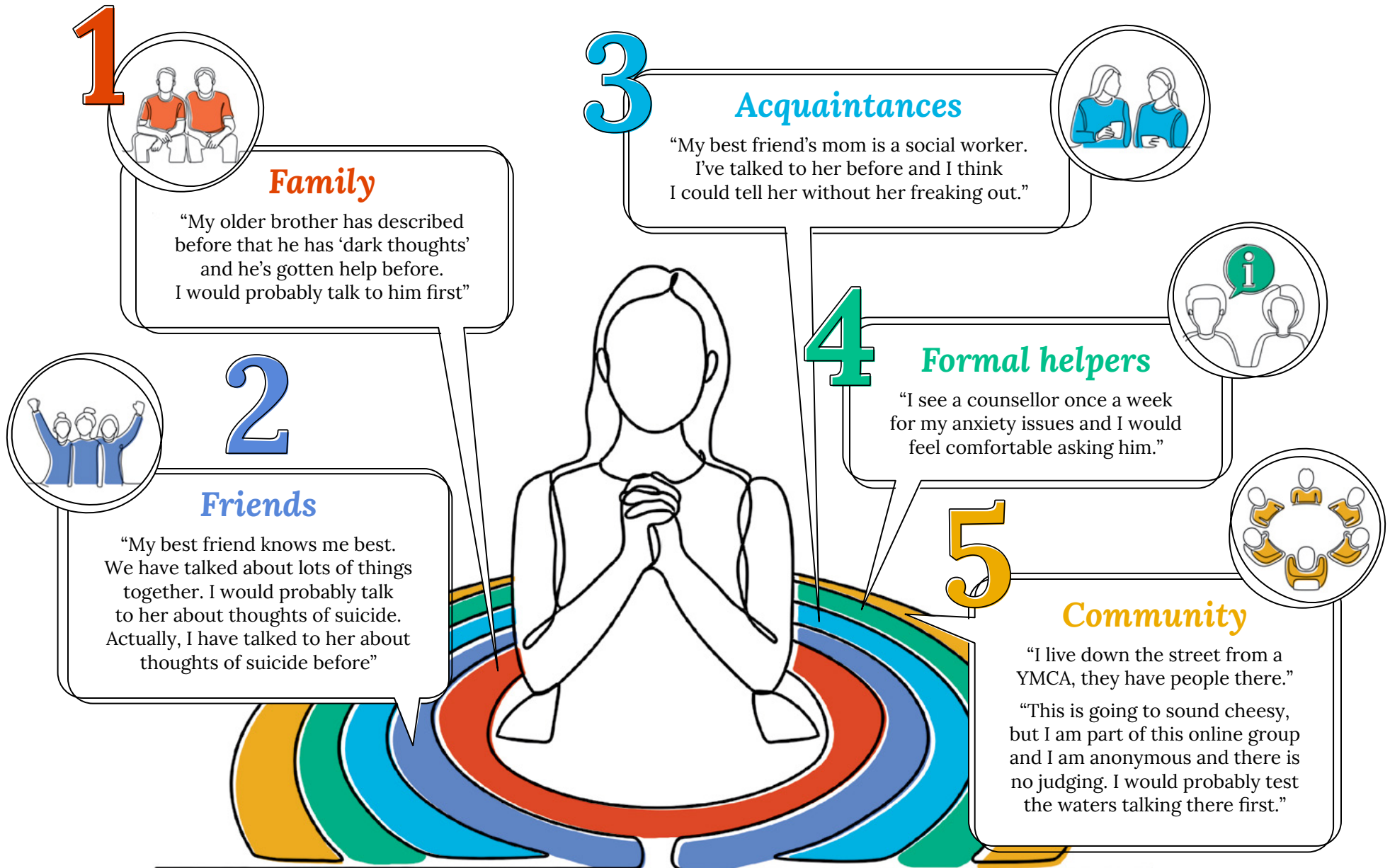
There are people who can listen and help you reach out to formal supports, and they can go with you, if you choose, to help you find the words and feel safe with these services. These people can include:

- friends
- family members
- teachers
- coaches
- members of your faith community
- spiritual leaders
- neighbours
- community organizations
- club members
- co-workers
- community leaders



Someone you trust

Who our youth participants said were in their **Circle of Trust**:



– National and provincial crisis lines

If you have already taken
steps toward suicide,
call **9-1-1**

If you are
currently in crisis,
call or text **9-8-8**

24/7 crisis resources

Suicide Crisis Helpline

📍 Canada

☎ 9-8-8 💬 9-8-8 🌐 <https://988.ca/>

i Provides a safe space that will listen to your concerns about suicide for yourself or someone you care about.

Emergency Services

📍 Canada

☎ 9-1-1 💬 Phone services only 🌐 <https://www.saskpublicsafety.ca/at-home/sask911-at-home>

i Provides emergency support when you or someone else has already taken steps toward suicide.

Kids Help Phone

📍 Canada

☎ 1-800-668-6868 💬 686868 🌐 <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>

i Provides multilingual e-mental health support to all kids, teens, and young adults (up to age 30) around Canada.
There is an **online chat option** available through the website.

Hope for Wellness Helpline for Indigenous People

📍 Canada

📞 1-855-242-3310

💬 Phone services or online chat only

🌐 <https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/>

i Supports all Indigenous people across Canada, connecting them with experienced and culturally competent counsellors. Phone and chat support is offered in English and French, with phone support also offered in Cree, Ojibway (Anishinaabemowin), and Inuktitut during certain timeslots. There is an **online chat option** available through the website.

National Overdose Response Service

📍 Canada

📞 1-888-688-6677

💬 1-888-688-6677

🌐 <https://www.nors.ca/>

i An anonymous and non-judgmental service that connects people who are using or about to use drugs with peer volunteers to provide support and prevent overdoses. Those concerned about a loved one may also use this support.

Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) Crisis Line

📍 Saskatchewan

📞 1-877-767-7572

💬 Phone services only

🌐 <https://metisnation.sk.com/2023/08/08/mental-health-and-addictions-program/>

i Métis culturally specific mental health and addictions crisis line for all Métis adults, youth, and families.

Farm Stress Line

📍 Saskatchewan

📞 1-800-667-4442

💬 Phone services only

🌐 <https://farmstressline.ca/>

i Provides support for farmers, ranchers, and their families but is available for anyone in crisis, regardless of age, gender, or background.

TEO Tel-Aide Francophone Helpline

📍 Saskatchewan

📞 1-800-567-9699

💬 Phone services only

🌐 <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/bonjour/health-and-healthy-living/francophone-helpline-in-saskatchewan>

i A French-only helpline for anyone experiencing psychological distress or in need of emotional support.

Poison Information Centre

📍 Saskatchewan

☎ 1-866-454-1212 💬 Phone services only

🌐 <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/emergency-medical-services/poison-control-center>

📄 *Emergency treatment advice for people exposed to all kinds of poisons, including drugs, plants, mushrooms, pesticides, snake and spider bites, and household cleaners and chemicals.*

Prince Albert Mobile Crisis Unit

📍 Prince Albert

☎ For support, Monday-Friday 4 p.m. to 8:30 a.m., and anytime on weekends or holidays, please call: **306-764-1011**.

For support, Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., please call the Mental Health Centre: **306-765-6055**.

💬 Phone services only 🌐 <https://www.pacrisis.ca/services-3>

📄 *Provides crisis support to all individuals.*

Regina Mobile Crisis Helpline

📍 Regina

☎ 306-757-0127 💬 Phone services only 🌐 <https://mobilecrisis.ca/>

📄 *Provides crisis and suicide prevention support to people of all ages.*

Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service

📍 Saskatoon

☎ 306-933-6200 💬 Phone services only 🌐 <https://www.saskatooncrisis.ca/>

📄 *Provides support to anyone in distress, including all ages. It is 2SLGBTQ+ friendly and non-denominational.*

— How to ask for help

When you are ready to ask for help, it might be difficult because

- it is hard to say “suicide” or “kill myself” out loud
- it can be hard to trust someone with your private thoughts
- you are worried about being labelled and judged on these thoughts
- you are afraid of what changes you and others might have to make to keep you safe
- you feel that others shouldn't have to change their lives because of the things you are thinking.

If you are calling a crisis line, seeking help from a professional, or contacting a community group, it may be helpful to practise a script of things you need to say to get help, or know what helpers might ask ahead of time.

Here are some ways to start this conversation that can work and that our youth participants liked:

- “I've been having thoughts about suicide and am looking for help.”
- “I am worried about my safety because I sometimes have urges to kill myself.”
- “Hi. I am calling because I need some help. I'm going through some things that are tough and it sometimes feels like I can't take it anymore. It's so bad there are times I think about suicide.”
- “I need help. My life is bad right now and I'm thinking about suicide.”
- “I've been thinking about killing myself. Can you help me?”

Sample scripts by the Centre for Suicide Prevention (2016).

Often, crisis workers have been trained to ask specific questions to learn as much as they can about your situation as quickly as possible. These questions may feel uncomfortable, but if you know that they are coming, it may not feel as difficult in the moment.

A crisis worker or mental health worker might ask:

- “Have you already done something to harm or kill yourself?”
- “Do you have a plan?”
- “Are you on any medications?”
- “Are you under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or narcotics?”
- “Can you tell me more about your situation?”

— Coping strategies

Sometimes, it is difficult to get help right away or to be calm enough to call someone.

Sometimes, the services are busy, or you have already talked to someone at a crisis line and have to wait for help to arrive.

Sometimes, you may have gaps between counselling sessions or doctors' appointments, but the thoughts of suicide continue.

When you are having thoughts of suicide, it can be helpful to do an exercise that gives your brain a break from these thoughts. Here are some exercises that some youth and youth peer supporters say work for them. They might work for you too.

5-4-3-2-1 grounding exercise

This is a method to take control of the moment. People who have used this say that it helps to make things calm, to stop too many thoughts from buzzing around inside, and to regulate emotions that you might be feeling.

There are five steps to this method, and it works best if there is a helper to remind you of the steps.

The process is as follows:

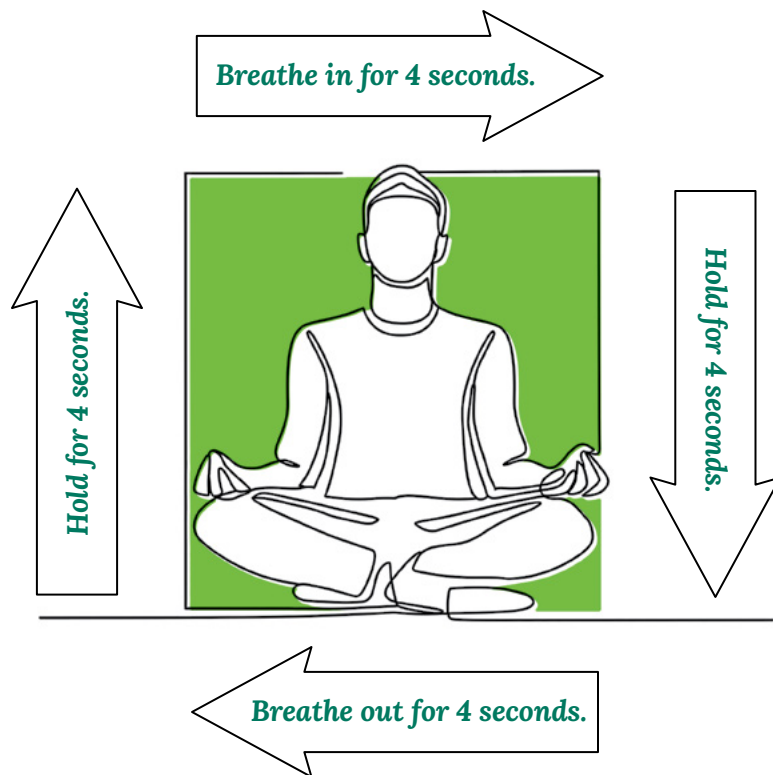
1. *What are five things you can see?*
2. *What are four things you can feel?*
3. *What are three things you can hear?*
4. *What are two things you can smell?*
5. *What is one emotion you can feel?*

You can find an example of this on YouTube: [The 5-4-3-2-1 Method](#)



Square breathing

One thing our bodies do during situations of crisis or high stress is prepare to fight. We can tell because our hearts start beating faster, we start breathing more quickly, and it is harder to focus. This can also happen when we are nervous about an unknown event, like what will happen when help arrives. Sometimes, the best way to focus thoughts is to regulate what our bodies are doing.



- 1. Begin by slowly exhaling all your air out.*
- 2. Then, gently inhale through your nose to a slow count of four.*
- 3. Hold at the top of the breath for a count of four.*
- 4. Then, gently exhale through your mouth for a count of four.*
- 5. At the bottom of the breath, pause and hold for a count of four.*

You can find an example of this here:
[Four Square Breathing Technique](#)



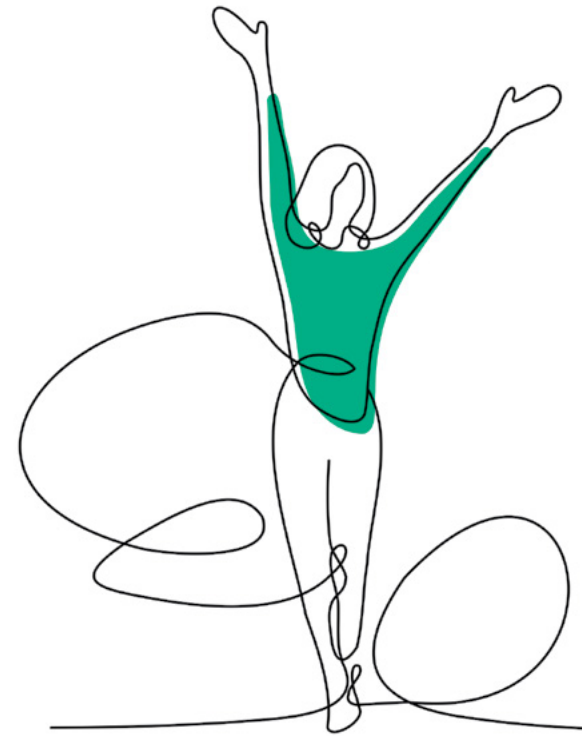
Body stretches: tension and release

This exercise puts your focus on your body and what it is doing and takes your mind off of your thoughts. It helps keep you in the present.

Go through your body muscles, inhaling as you tense up a specific muscle, holding it for four to 10 seconds, and then exhaling as you release each muscle. Between exercises, give yourself 10-20 seconds to relax.

Some examples of tensing muscles:

- **Forehead** - Wrinkle it into a deep frown... Release.
- **Eyes and nose** - Close your eyes as tightly as possible... Release.
- **Cheeks and jaw** - Smile as widely as you can... Release.
- **Mouth** - Open your mouth as big as you can... Release.
- **Hands** - Clench your fists... Release.
- **Wrists** - Extend your fingers and bend your hands back at the wrists until you feel a pull... Release.
- **Arms** - Clench your fists and bend your arms at the elbows... Release. Flex your biceps... Release.
- **Shoulders** - Shrug your shoulders up to your ears... Release. Hug yourself... Release.
- **Chest** - Take a deep breath, hold it, then exhale... Release.
- **Back** - Arch your back backward... Release. Curl your back forward toward your chest... Release.
- **Stomach** - Pull your stomach in toward your backbone... Release.
- **Hips and buttocks** - Squeeze your buttocks together tightly... Release.
- **Thighs** - Clench the large muscles in your legs one at a time... Release.
- **Ankles** - Pull your foot up at the ankle... Release.
- **Feet** - Curl your toes but point your feet downward... Release.



Happy-making activities

Think about what you like to do, or things that make you happy. Doing them can act as a positive coping tool. Some of the things that youth in Saskatchewan told us make them happy during difficult times are

- **listening to music**
- **taking a walk**
- **cuddling a pet**
- **taking a shower**
- **voice chatting with friends**
- **playing a video game**
- **playing an instrument**
- **reading**
- **watching a movie**
- **exercising**
- **making a small snack.**

Anything that helps take your mind off things and changes your focus.



*It is important to note here that some people use drugs and alcohol to make them happy. This can lead to substance use problems that are difficult to overcome, especially if you have thoughts of suicide often. Some things, like alcohol, actually increase depressive feelings. Also, if you are waiting for help, it will be harder for people to help you if you are under the influence of substances. The happy-making activity that you choose will work best if it is healthy and reminds you of the things you like about life.

Hopeful messages for people who have thoughts of suicide

Here are some messages of hope shared by people who have been affected by suicide:

“It will get better! One step at a time, one minute at a time - you got this.”

*“Honestly, it won’t always feel this bad and it WILL get better.
You are worth it, please keep going.”*

“If you are looking for a sign not to kill yourself, THIS IS IT.”

*“It is temporary. Do what you need to do to cope and get through this.
Sleep if you must, cry if you must, just hold on for another day, hour, or minute.”*

“Please reach out for help, you are not alone and YOU MATTER.”

“Your illness does not define you.”

“Breathe.”

“Don’t ever lose hope! Recovery is possible!”

“Find one thing to wake up for every day whether it’s a pet, a child, spouse, parent, etc.”

“Find someone you trust who is supportive and reliable and put them on speed dial!”

“HOPE (Hold On, Pain Ends).”

— Language matters

Historically, language used around suicide usually has a negative connotation, which leads to continuing stigma:

- committed suicide (suggests criminality)
- successful or completed suicide (suggests being unsuccessful or incomplete before)
- failed suicide attempt (suggests living means failure)



Safe and compassionate words should be used when talking about suicide. Here are some recommendations:

- Use “suicide” as a verb/action word (e.g., “he suicided” or “they tried to suicide”).
- Consider “survivor” rather than “victim.”
- For more suggestions, see [Language Matters: Safe Communication for Suicide Prevention](#) available from the Government of Canada.

Safe language means creating a safe space and trust for the person who is having thoughts about suicide.



Section 2 – When someone you care about is having thoughts of suicide



When someone you care about is having thoughts of suicide

In Northern Saskatchewan, young people have said that they can see the warning signs of someone who is thinking about suicide, but they don't ask about it because they don't know what to do if the person says "YES."



— What is suicide? —

Suicide is defined as the act or instance of taking one's own life voluntarily and intentionally.

Why do people have thoughts of suicide?

Generally, we have a survival instinct in our brains that keeps us from having thoughts of suicide. This instinct can be affected by trauma, substance use, onset of a mental illness, or a prolonged feeling of helplessness, high stress, grief, or loss. **This can happen to anyone**, so it is important not to blame the person you care about for their thoughts of suicide.





According to Mikkonen and Raphael in their influential publication [Social determinants of health: The Canadian facts \(2010\)](#), there are 14 determinants that have a greater bearing on an individual's health than all other factors:

- Indigenous status
- Disability
- Early life
- Education
- Employment and working conditions
- Food insecurity
- Health services
- Gender identity and sexual orientation
- Housing
- Income and income distributions
- Race
- Social exclusion
- Social safety net
- Unemployment and job security

If any of these determinants are being experienced in a negative way by the person with thoughts of suicide or their families, it may contribute to those thoughts of suicide.

According to the [Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth](#), other contributing factors specific to youth can be

- bullying
- cyber-bullying
- a feeling of not being safe with people who are supposed to keep you safe.

Online communities and social media can sometimes contribute to thoughts of suicide. Some guidelines to staying safe online and feeling safe online can be found at [#ChatSafe](#).

— Warning signs and what to do

Warning signs that someone might be thinking about suicide include

- spending more time alone when they usually spend time with others
- sometimes talking about death and when they die
- participating in riskier behaviors
- giving stuff away
- looking relieved when they usually look stressed
- saying that things don't really matter or won't matter soon
- showing a lack of interest in things they normally find interesting
- saying things like they don't really matter, engaging in self-blame
- having recently experienced a significant loss or change
- becoming more (or less) religious
- **telling you they have been thinking about suicide**
- **showing any significant change in behaviour.**

A warning sign is like an invitation for someone to help

When you see a warning sign, it is important to:

1. Ask the person if they are thinking about suicide
2. Listen to them explain what is making them think about suicide, without judgment
3. Offer to help them get support

Sample script of how to talk to a friend who may be having thoughts of suicide:

- “I’m sorry to hear you’re going through such a rough time, and I’m here for you. But we need to tell someone else how you’re feeling. I can come with you to see the school counsellor if you want.”

Sample script on how to text a friend who may be having thoughts of suicide:

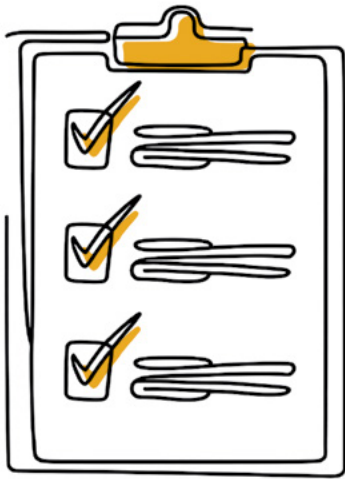
- “It sounds like things are really hard for you right now. I can’t imagine what you’re going through, but I am here to help! Let’s text the distress centre to see what resources they might have that could help.”
- “I’m so glad you told me how you’re feeling; I’ve been really worried about you! I feel like it’s a good idea to talk to your parents, too. Want me to come with you?”

Sample scripts adapted from the Centre for Suicide Prevention (2016)

4. If they do not have access to other support right now, help them to work on a safety plan to stay safe until other support can be found.

— Safety planning

A safety plan is created by a person with thoughts of suicide who is looking for help to stay safe. Making a safety plan with someone they trust can help make staying safe for now possible. It can also help the person with thoughts of suicide to realize how many people in their life care about their safety and well-being. It is very important that the person with thoughts of suicide takes the lead in answering the questions in the safety plan because they are the one who will have to use it when thoughts of suicide are overwhelming.



Things to remember when helping someone make a safety plan:

- Make sure you are in a private place where the person you are supporting feels safe.
- This will only work if the person with thoughts of suicide is directing the choices.
- While you can make suggestions of things that they may not have thought about, the choices of who to trust are up to the person with thoughts of suicide.
- Make sure you keep the information on the safety plan confidential from people who don't need to know.
- Do not feel offended if you are not on their list of contacts; the help you are providing now is very important also.
- Make sure you are being a safe person.
 - Don't gossip about the person having thoughts of suicide or the fact that you're helping them to make a safety plan.
 - Don't make the person that you are supporting feel guilty for their choices.
 - Do not act like you know all the answers or like the other person is childlike, "less than," or "broken." Sometimes even not intentionally, people trying to help can come off this way and the person with thoughts of suicide, who may already feeling vulnerable or unconfident, may already be feeling worse.

— Safety plan —

If you have already taken
steps toward suicide,
call **9-1-1**

If you are
currently in crisis,
call or text **9-8-8**

Step 1: What signs (like thoughts, feelings, or behaviours) will tell you to use this plan?

Step 2: What can you do on your own to help you not act on thoughts or urges of suicide?

Think of things that are calming, things that are distracting, or things that make you feel better.

Step 3: Who are the people or pets that you are important to? What would you miss out on?

If you can't think of anything, what are some things a friend or family member might say to you?

What if they can't/won't safety plan with you?

There are many reasons why someone might not want or be able to safety plan with you:

- They had come to terms with suicide and now they have to consider living again with realities that may have been difficult for them for a long time. This shift might look scary to them.
- They are using a substance and cannot focus.
- They don't feel completely safe with you.
- They don't want you to be responsible for them.
- There is a communication gap, and the safety plan is hard to understand.
- They feel that this gives someone else control and they have experienced trauma.
- They are embarrassed.
- They're having sporadic, intrusive thoughts about suicide without a plan.
- It is difficult to remove their planned means of suicide.
- They cannot sit still or focus for whatever reason.
- They have a mental illness and are in psychosis/ experiencing hallucinations.
- **They have already started their method of suicide. Call 9-1-1 immediately.**



If they won't safety plan with you, other ways to help keep them safe include:

- going with them to a trusted adult, like a teacher or a counsellor, for help
- calling 9-8-8
- calling 9-1-1 or take them to the hospital's emergency department
- accompany them to a walk-in clinic to be assessed by a doctor
- accompany them to an urgent care centre if there is one in your community
- calling Mobile Crisis
- calling the Saskatchewan Health Authority's Mental Health and Addiction Services.

If someone refuses help, but they remain a serious threat to themselves on a persistent or ongoing basis, you can lay information according to the Mental Health Services Act, which if successful, will require them to access help.



Steps to laying information

1. Call and go to your closest provincial courthouse. A list of provincial courthouses can be found [here](#).
2. Tell the judge or justice of the peace that you need to lay information. You will need the date and time of instances of harmful behaviour to self or others and threats that have been made. Be as detailed as possible.
3. The judge or justice of the peace will decide if a court order will be issued to take the person in for an assessment.
4. If the judge or justice of the peace has decided to issue a court order, then police officers or a police and crisis team (PACT) will be sent to bring them to the emergency department for assessment.

— Courses for helpers

There are courses you can take to feel better prepared to support youth and others experiencing suicidal thoughts.

LivingWorks

START

- A 90-minute online course
- Appropriate and safe for anyone aged 15 years and older, or 13+ with parent/carer supervision
- Learn how to recognize when someone may be thinking about suicide and how to connect them to help and support
- Available in English, French, and Spanish

Learn more here:

<https://livingworks.net/training/livingworks-start/>

SafeTALK

- A four-hour training
- Safe for anyone aged 15 years and older
- Learn how to be a connector by reaching out to someone thinking about suicide and helping them keep safe by promptly connecting them to further support

Learn more here:

<https://livingworks.net/training/livingworks-safetalk/>

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

- A two-day in-person workshop
- For anyone aged 16 years and older
- Learn how to recognize when someone may be thinking about suicide and how to provide a skilled intervention and develop a safety plan with the person to connect them to further support

Learn more here:

<https://livingworks.net/training/livingworks-asist/>



Opening Minds – Mental Health Commission of Canada

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) – Standard

- A nine-hour course, available both virtually and in-person
- For anyone aged 18 years and older
- Learn how to support individuals navigating mental health crises or challenges by identifying common signs of distress and delivering immediate aid until professional assistance is accessible
- There are also MHFA adaptations specifically for
 - people supporting youth
 - First Nations
 - Inuit
 - Northern Peoples
 - older adults
 - police
 - veterans.

Learn more here:

<https://openingminds.org/training/mhfa/>

Opening Minds also provides workplace mental health training through [The Working Mind](#) and mental health and stigma reduction training for educational and student settings through [The Inquiring Mind](#).

Youth Substance Addiction Committee (YSAC)

Life Is Sacred Life Promotion

- Developed in Saskatchewan
- A 1.5-day First Nations and Inuit youth suicide prevention and life promotion learning module
- For First Nation and Inuit communities, including schools and their community-based service providers
- Has been recognized Canada-wide for providing training in a culturally sensitive way

Learn more here:

<https://lifeissacred.ca/>



— How can helpers take care of themselves? —

It is important for you to take care of yourself when you are helping someone through a difficult situation.

Here are some things you can do:

- Establish boundaries so that you can have time to take care of yourself.
 - Clearly outline what you can do for the person you are helping and the times when you are available and unavailable. Be sure that the person has alternate contacts and crisis supports available to them.
 - If you are providing ongoing support, it will be important to have other supports so that you can take breaks and take care of yourself.
 - Taking care of yourself allows you to be present when helping others.
- Don't make promises you can't keep.
 - Making promises that you can't keep could impact the trust of the person you are trying to help, and it could also add feelings of guilt and stress on yourself. There is no shame in saying, "I can help you with this part of your safety plan, but we are going to have to figure out who else can help you with that part."
 - Taking on more than you can handle will mean that some things won't be done well and may lead to self-blame.
 - Follow through on anything you do promise to the person you are trying to help.
- Talk to someone you trust when you are helping in a difficult situation.
 - Remember that this is not gossip, so the person you trust should keep this confidential. If possible, this should be someone who doesn't know the person you are helping.
 - This person should be able to empathize with the difficulty you are having.
 - Debriefing in this way can reduce negative effects of trauma on your ability to help.
 - Remember, counselling resources are available to you too! There is no shame in reaching out to a professional for help.
- Remember, if you do everything that you can and the person you are helping still tries to suicide, it is not your fault, and you are not to blame.
 - Family Service Saskatchewan offers free rapid-access counselling across Saskatchewan for those impacted by suicide loss (and suicide attempts) – you can book a session here:
<https://www.counsellingconnectsask.ca>

Hopeful messages for people who are supporting someone with thoughts of suicide

A few messages of hope shared by people who have been affected by suicide:

“Be patient. Be hopeful. Be there.”

“Always take the person seriously, listen, and ask them what they need to be safe.”

“Appreciate that it is not an attention-seeking act. Their pain is real - do not minimize their thoughts.”

“Ask them, ‘What is the most helpful thing I can do for you?’”

“Be non-judgemental. Be supportive. Be kind.”

“Be strong. Look after yourself and never give up fighting for your loved ones.”

“Do not blame yourself for not seeing the signs.”

“Get support and talk about it. Supporters need help too and the love and comfort of knowing they are not living this alone.”

“Don’t forget to take care of yourself too.”

People who are supporting someone with thoughts of suicide
can contact **9-8-8** for support



Section 3 – When you have been affected by suicide: advocacy and sharing your story



When you have been affected by suicide: advocacy and sharing your story

Supporting those who have experienced suicide stretches beyond receiving or providing immediate support. As someone with lived experience of suicide, you can help others who will experience the same thing.

— Telling your story

You might be asked to share your story of lived experience of suicide at some point, maybe during peer support or at a mental health event. Deciding to tell your suicide-related story is a personal decision. If you choose to share, it is

important to do so in a way that is safe for you and for those learning from you. Telling your story in a safe way includes sharing messages of hope that you have learned through your experience.



How to find hopeful messages for others

- Telling your story is a big decision. Healing yourself and helping others are different but are both important. Consider talking about the idea with a mentor or friend before deciding to share.
- [Four keys to sharing suicide survival stories safely](#) (infographic by the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention)
- [Guidelines for sharing experiences with suicide](#) (Centre for Suicide Prevention)
- [Storytelling for Suicide Prevention Checklist](#) (988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, United States)



— Advocacy for survivors —

For people who have lived experience with suicide, it is important that they have

- the ability to live stigma-free
- have their voices included in understandings of and in interventions for survivors
- knowledge of prevention strategies that address people who do not seek help
- the inclusion of families and friends in the treatment program, if the survivor consents to their involvement.



In [“The Way Forward: Pathways to hope, recovery, and wellness with insights from lived experience”](#) by the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, attempt survivors are urged to get involved in suicide prevention initiatives and advocacy. Some of the ways this can be accomplished are

- “to join crisis centers as members of boards of directors, leaders and staff/volunteers
- to participate in oversight or advising behavioral health systems change
- to review communications campaigns or social marketing endeavors aimed at consumer/individuals who are suicidal
- to act as spokespersons, advocates, or resources for legislative hearings/testimony
- to be partners in the development of research/evaluation for suicide prevention initiatives.”

(National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, 2014, p. 30).



Section 4 – Additional resources



Additional resources

If you have already taken
steps toward suicide,
call **9-1-1**

If you are
currently in crisis,
call or text **9-8-8**

24/7 crisis resources

Suicide Crisis Helpline

📍 Canada

☎ 9-8-8 💬 9-8-8 🌐 <https://988.ca/>

i Provides a safe space that will listen to your concerns about suicide for yourself or someone you care about.

Emergency Services

📍 Canada

☎ 9-1-1 💬 Phone services only 🌐 <https://www.saskpublicsafety.ca/at-home/sask911-at-home>

i Provides emergency support when you or someone else has already taken steps toward suicide.

Kids Help Phone

📍 Canada

☎ 1-800-668-6868 💬 686868 🌐 <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>

i Provides multilingual e-mental health support to all kids, teens, and young adults (up to age 30) around Canada.
There is an **online chat option** available through the website.

Hope for Wellness Helpline for Indigenous People

📍 Canada

☎ 1-855-242-3310 💬 Phone services or online chat only 🌐 <https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/>

i Supports all Indigenous people across Canada, connecting them with experienced and culturally competent counsellors. Phone and chat support is offered in English and French, with phone support also offered in Cree, Ojibway (Anishinaabemowin), and Inuktitut during certain timeslots. There is an **online chat option** available through the website.

National Overdose Response Service

📍 Canada

☎ 1-888-688-6677 💬 1-888-688-6677 🌐 <https://www.nors.ca/>

i An anonymous and non-judgmental service that connects people who are using or about to use drugs with peer volunteers to provide support and prevent overdoses. Those concerned about a loved one may also use this support.

Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) Crisis Line

📍 Saskatchewan

☎ 1-877-767-7572 💬 Phone services only
🌐 <https://metisnation.sk.com/2023/08/08/mental-health-and-addictions-program/>

i Métis culturally specific mental health and addictions crisis line for all Métis adults, youth, and families.

Farm Stress Line

📍 Saskatchewan

☎ 1-800-667-4442 💬 Phone services only 🌐 <https://farmstressline.ca/>

i Provides support for farmers, ranchers, and their families but is available for anyone in crisis, regardless of age, gender, or background.

TEO Tel-Aide Francophone Helpline

📍 Saskatchewan

☎ 1-800-567-9699 💬 Phone services only
🌐 <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/bonjour/health-and-healthy-living/francophone-helpline-in-saskatchewan>

i A French-only helpline for anyone experiencing psychological distress or in need of emotional support.

Poison Information Centre

📍 Saskatchewan

☎ 1-866-454-1212 💬 Phone services only

🌐 <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/emergency-medical-services/poison-control-center>

i Emergency treatment advice for people exposed to all kinds of poisons, including drugs, plants, mushrooms, pesticides, snake and spider bites, and household cleaners and chemicals.

Prince Albert Mobile Crisis Unit

📍 Prince Albert

☎ For support, Monday-Friday 4 p.m. to 8:30 a.m., and anytime on weekends or holidays, please call: **306-764-1011**.

For support, Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., please call the Mental Health Centre: **306-765-6055**.

💬 Phone services only 🌐 <https://www.pacrisis.ca/services-3>

i Provides crisis support to all individuals.

Regina Mobile Crisis Helpline

📍 Regina

☎ 306-757-0127 💬 Phone services only 🌐 <https://mobilecrisis.ca/>

i Provides crisis and suicide prevention support to people of all ages.

Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service

📍 Saskatoon

☎ 306-933-6200 💬 Phone services only 🌐 <https://www.saskatooncrisis.ca/>

i Provides support to anyone in distress, including all ages. It is 2SLGBTQ+ friendly and non-denominational.

Non-crisis helplines and mental health services

For non-crisis support, please call or visit the websites below to learn more about each service available. Each service is free and accessible.

*Note that this list does not include all mental health services across Saskatchewan.

Your school, workplace, parent's workplace, or doctor's office may also have access to mental health services for you.

You can also call or text 2-1-1 Saskatchewan (or visit <https://sk.211.ca>), which has a database of social, non-clinical health, and government services for over 6,000 communities across the province.

Trans Lifeline

📍 Canada

📞 1-877-330-6366 🗨️ Phone services only 🌐 <https://translifeline.org/>

i Peer support phone service run by trans people for trans and questioning peers. Call if you need someone trans to talk to, even if you're not in a crisis or if you're not sure you're transgender.

Provincial HealthLine

📍 Saskatchewan

📞 8-1-1 / Deaf and hard of hearing: 1-800-855-0511 🗨️ Phone services only
🌐 <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/accessing-health-care-services/healthline>

i 24/7 information line, **not** a crisis line. A licensed health-care professional will provide professional health or mental health and addictions advice, education, and support. **Services are offered in English, with translation options available.**

Counselling Connect Saskatchewan

📍 Saskatchewan

☑️ Appointments can be booked through their online portal 🌐 <https://www.counsellingconnectsask.ca/>

i Family Service Saskatchewan provides rapid access to free phone or in-person counselling sessions to children, youth, adults, and families. Agencies providing this service are located in Swift Current, Regina, Prince Albert, The Battlefords, Saskatoon, Estevan, Humboldt, Moose Jaw, Kindersley, and Yorkton.

HOMEBASE

📍 Saskatchewan

📞 Humboldt Youth Hub: 306-682-4135. Moose Jaw Youth Hub: 306-694-5554. Regina Youth Hub: 306-525-2141 ext. 308. Sturgeon Lake First Nation Youth Hub – coming soon! Contact the Health Centre in the meantime: 306-764-9352.

💬 No texting number available 🌐 <https://homebasesask.ca/>

📌 HOMEBASE locations offer rapid access to evidence-based, integrated, culturally safe, and youth-targeted services and supports, with a focus on prevention and early intervention, for youth aged 12 to 25.

Métis Nation Saskatchewan Mental Health and Addictions Program

📍 Saskatchewan

📞 1-855-671-5638 💬 Phone services only

🌐 <https://metisnationsk.com/2023/08/08/mental-health-and-addictions-program/>

📌 Métis culturally specific mental health and addiction supports for adults, youth, and families in Saskatchewan. Services are offered in English and French and will be provided in person where available. Video conferencing and phone support are also available.

West Central Crisis & Family Support Centre Inc.

📍 Saskatchewan

📞 306-463-6655 💬 Phone services only 🌐 <https://westcentralcrisis.ca/>

📌 Provides support to individuals, families, and communities in west central Saskatchewan and the greater Saskatchewan area, offering counselling and resources in person, virtually, or by phone.

Canadian Mental Health Association – Saskatchewan Division

📍 Saskatchewan (various locations)

🌐 Find a CMHA branch in your area here: <https://cmha.ca/find-help/find-cmha-in-your-area/>

📌 Programming focused on education, advocacy, and peer support.

Saskatchewan Health Authority Child and Youth Mental Health Services

📍 Saskatchewan (various locations)

📞 St. Joseph's Hospital - Estevan: 800-216-7689.
Kikinahk Friendship Centre – La Ronge: 306-425-8572.
Lloydminster Community Health Centre: 306-820-6250.
Meadow Lake Hospital: 306-236-1500.
Moose Jaw Family Wellness Centre: 306-691-2340.
Don Ross Centre – North Battleford: 306-446-6555.
Prince Albert Regional Health Centre: 306-765-6053.
Regina Child and Youth Services: 306-766-6700.
Youth Resource Centre – Saskatoon: 306-655-4900.
Community Health Services – Swift Current: 306-778-5280.
Community Health Services Building – Weyburn: 800-216-7689.

🌐 <https://www.saskhealthauthority.ca/your-health/conditions-diseases-services/mental-health-and-addictions>

📄 *Outpatient assessment and treatment, psychiatric services, counselling.*

Rainbow Youth Centre

📍 Regina

📞 306-757-9743 🗨️ Phone services only 🌐 <https://rainbowyouth.com/>

📄 *Young people between 11 to 25 years of age can participate in a variety of individual and group counselling, skill development, educational, recreational, and direct service programs.*

Street Culture

📍 Regina

📞 306-565-6206 🗨️ Phone services only 🌐 <https://streetcultureproject.ca/>

📄 *Provides services along the continuum of homeless youth in crisis to youth living independently, empowering youth through mentorship, daily structure, and access to personal growth and development opportunities.*

EGADZ

📍 Saskatoon

☎ 306-931-6644 💬 Phone services only 🌐 <https://www.egadz.ca/>

i Provides youth-directed programs and services to children and their families, including a drop-in centre, day and school support, and residential and outreach services.

Out Saskatoon 2SLGBTQ+ Centre

📍 Saskatoon

☎ 306-665-1224 💬 Phone services only 🌐 <https://www.outsaskatoon.ca/>

i Provides support, youth housing, groups, education and research services.
Short-term counselling and peer support groups are available for 2SLGBTQ+ community members and their loved ones.

Teens Talk XYE

📍 Saskatoon

☎ No phone number listed 💬 No texting number available 🌐 <https://ttyxe.ca/>

i Provides monthly sharing circles for youth ages 12-20 to connect with peers with mental illness, youth mental health wellness retreats, and peer support circles for parents and caregivers.

— How to find resources in your community

Follow your interests and share your skills! You are a citizen who can participate, even when you are struggling.

Explore what is available in your neighbourhood. Here are some ideas:

- **Libraries** – they have books, programs, groups, activities, and often links to community services. Friendly librarians like to answer questions.
- **Faith communities** – they may have youth and interest groups, as well as worship, projects to support the community, and people who care.
- **Sports and recreation** – there are individual activities like swimming and skating, or group activities like tennis and pickleball. Follow a current interest or learn a new skill.
- **Service groups and organizations (e.g., Legion, Lions, Kinsmen, CMHA, arts associations)** – meet new people! Groups are often looking for members and volunteers for activities.
- **Volunteer opportunities (e.g., food bank, community gardens, Meals on Wheels, events, and festivals)** – check with your city, town, or band office for opportunities. Meet new people, gain skills and confidence, and feel good about contributing in the community.
- **Music** – participate in bands, choirs, or other musical events.



— Helpful websites and online supports

- [9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline](#)
Information provided includes resources on understanding suicide, suicide-safe language, and media guidelines.
- [Government of Saskatchewan – Youth Suicide Prevention](#)
Information on resources available to young people experiencing suicidal thoughts, and their parents and caregivers.
- [Canadian Mental Health Association](#)
Information provided includes mental health resources, mental health checks, and tips on how to find support.
- [Canadian Mental Health Association, Saskatchewan Division \(CMHA-SK\)](#)
Information provided includes help resources, information about mental health events across the province, information about CMHA programs and services, and more.
- [Mental Health Commission of Canada \(MHCC\)](#)
Information provided includes resources on suicide prevention, anti-stigma, and mental health training programs.
- [Government of Saskatchewan – Ministry of Health](#)
Information provided includes Saskatchewan's suicide prevention plan, where youth and helpers can access help.
- [Saskatchewan's Children and Youth Strategy](#)
Index of all children and youth services within each of the following categories: growing knowledge and abilities; supporting healthy children, youth and families; a strong start for children; fostering inclusivity and respect; and building safer communities.
- [We Matter](#)
A place to help Indigenous youth get through hard times. Information provided includes videos from peers with lived experience, toolkits, and resources.
- [CAMH: The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health](#)
Information provided includes mental health tutorials, overview of suicide, and crisis resources.
- [Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention](#)
Information provided includes a resource centre specific to suicide support, support services directory, and information about life promotion.
- App: [Embracing Life](#). A free download. Resources for your own well-being and to help someone else. Designed by youth in Saskatchewan.
- Discord: [MS2 Mentally Safe Minecraft Server \(CMHA SK\)](#). Uses Discord and Minecraft. Peer support in a virtual group setting, including helplines and group mental health coaching.



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