

Certain factors and circumstances in a person's life are thought to provide some protection against suicide and suicidal behaviours.

Protective Factors

Outer factors

- Family unity
- Academic achievement
- Good relationships with other youth and adults
- Stable environment
- Social acceptance and opportunities to participate in activities
- Responsibilities for other people or pets
- Adequate care for drug and alcohol abuse, physical and mental disorders
- Lack of access to means for suicidal behaviour
- Connection to a religious community

Inner factors

- Sense of belonging
- Sociability, i.e., ability to be a friend
- Love of learning
- Connection with school environment
- Sense of worth and self-confidence
- Self-motivation
- Help-seeking and advice-seeking behaviour
- Life skills, e.g., good decision-making, assertiveness, impulse control, coping skills, flexibility and perseverance.

For more information visit
suicideinfo.ca/youthatrisk



CENTRE FOR
SUICIDE
PREVENTION

Centre for Suicide Prevention
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
Phone: (403) 245-3900
Fax: (403) 245-0299
Email: csp@suicideinfo.ca
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WWW.SUICIDEINFO.CA

SUICIDE

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stigma

warning signs

after a loss

protective factors

take care of yourself

helping yourself or others



Stigma

What is stigma?

Stigma is a negative stereotype you may hold about someone, something or even yourself. Ultimately stigma is about disrespect.

What effect does this have on the person(s) being stigmatized?

When we hold negative attitudes toward someone it frequently results in the person feeling isolated and small. Poor self esteem can follow, as well as a loss of hope and even thoughts of suicide. Because of stigma and a fear of being rejected the person may not seek help when they need it.

What can you do?

First examine your own attitude

- Ask yourself:
 - Do I stereotype people who are different?
 - Do I treat them with disrespect?

How can I change things?

- Get informed!
- Be compassionate and understanding.
- Remember normal is a state that really doesn't exist. We are all human – interesting, flawed, talented... different. The thing to remember is when different means mentally unwell, help is available. Support from family, friends, teammates, school teachers and strangers is crucial.

Do you suspect a friend, brother, maybe a sister of being at risk of suicide but you are not really sure?

Warning signs

- Talking about suicide or a plan for suicide
- Making statements about hopelessness, helplessness or worthlessness
- Complaining of being a bad person, not accepting praise or rewards
- Giving away possessions
- Preoccupied with death
- Loss of interest in things they once cared about,
- Always feeling bored
- Personality changes
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Trouble concentrating
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Showing impulsive behaviours, such as violent actions or rebellious behaviour
- Becoming suddenly cheerful after a period of depression (may mean the youth has already made the decision to escape their problems through suicide)

All suicidal thoughts or threats must be taken seriously.

Warning Signs

If you are having thoughts of killing yourself or feel that a friend is at risk of suicide, please seek help right away. Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number for assistance.

Getting help for yourself

If you feel like you have mental health issues or are feeling suicidal, please remember the following:

- Acknowledge that you have a problem that cannot be solved by you alone. You need the help and support of others.
- Do not blame yourself.
- If you don't know where to go for help, ask a trusted adult, perhaps a teacher, parent, or mental health professional to assist you.
- Do not ask your friends to keep your suicidal thoughts a secret, but ask for their help in getting further support and guidance.
- Take care of yourself!
- Believe that your life can change for the better!

Getting help for a friend

- Ask him directly if he is thinking about suicide.
- Do not promise to keep your friend's thoughts a secret. You must tell an adult so she can get the help she needs. Show your ongoing support by keeping in touch with her and expressing your belief in her recovery.

Helping yourself or a friend