

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](http://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](mailto:csp@suicideinfo.ca)

© Centre for Suicide Prevention

[WWW.SUICIDEINFO.CA](http://WWW.SUICIDEINFO.CA)

# SUICIDE

# AWA R E N E S S



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