



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Prince Edward Island
Mental health for all

***“Take a minute, Change a life” Theme for World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10th
CMHA/PEI announces new “Life After Suicide Loss” program offered this fall***

September 6, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Charlottetown---- “Take a minute, Change a life” is the theme for World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD) on September 10th, as chosen by the International Association for Suicide Prevention, adopted by the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP) and promoted locally by the PEI Division of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) and its partners.

These organizations invite individuals and communities to find a way of connecting with this year’s WSPD theme by wearing a suicide prevention ribbon, lighting a candle or tealight at 8 pm, participating in a WSPD event, or reaching out to a survivor of suicide loss. Collectively, these efforts shine a light on this important issue, sending a message to those who are despairing, those who are grieving, and those who are supporting someone who is struggling - that help, hope, and healing are possible.

CMHA/PEI is marking the fifteenth anniversary of WSPD by announcing the launch of a new program entitled, “Life After Suicide Loss” (LASL). LASL is a 9-week, suicide bereavement program for adults who have lost a loved one to suicide. Through a partnership with Health PEI, CMHA has been working with several local clinicians and our veteran suicide loss survivors, over the past several months to prepare for this new programming.

Until recently, CMHA utilized a self-help model of peer support as one of several support options available to those impacted by suicide loss on PEI. “The organization supported the establishment of these groups in several Island communities over the past 15 years. More recently these groups have not been meeting regularly.” says CMHA’s suicide prevention coordinator, Pat Doyle.

As a member of CMHA’s provincial suicide prevention committee and a former co-facilitator of the Prince County Survivors of Suicide Self-Help group, Lela MacDonald is excited to see the new program being offered. MacDonald explains. “ The new LASL group’s structured approach will provide those grieving the loss of a loved one with some foundational knowledge and strategies for managing life after suicide loss.”

This initiative will also see the establishment of a peer-led, monthly follow-up group for former LASL participants. The self-help group will offer past participants an opportunity to reconnect, share and to problem solve with their peers as they continue through their grief journey, better equipped with the knowledge, coping strategies and peer support of the LASL group.

The start date of the first 9-week closed group program is Thursday, October 5th and space is limited. The partners have been reaching out to families impacted by suicide loss to explore their readiness and interest to participate. Those interested may call McGill Centre at 902-368-4911, to inquire.

World Suicide Prevention Day can also mark the renewal of our commitment to other suicide prevention efforts, by bringing communities together. There will be a community WSPD event held again this year on September 10th from 5:30 to 6:30 pm at the Queen Elizabeth Park (bottom of Belvedere Avenue in Charlottetown).

This will be a safe, welcoming community gathering for all who have been touched by the loss of someone to suicide or are supporting someone who is struggling with life. There will be comforting music, messages of hope, and the 2017 WSPD banner will be available to sign in honor of loved ones or as a show of support. WSPD ribbons, tea lights and PEI tree samplings will also be offered to those in attendance and all are welcome. Visit the event's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/events/122522761655083 for more details.

To learn more about this and other CMHA/PEI programs and initiatives, visit their website at www.cmha.ca or call 902-628-1648 (toll free 1-800-682-1648).

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Lori Morris, CMHA's Communications Officer (902-628-3650)
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Possible Sidebars:

If you or someone you care about needs help, please call The Island Helpline at 1-800-218-2885 toll free, 24/7. If you are experiencing an emergency, please go to your local emergency department or call 911 for assistance.

Take a minute, change a life...

Take a minute to make a difference. Small acts can truly be life changing.

Take a minute put on a suicide awareness ribbon to show your support. The beautiful orange and yellow ribbon represents a flame - a light in the darkness. It is a symbol of hope and possibility. Ribbons and WSPD postcards will be available at all CMHA/PEI offices.

Take a minute to spread the message of WSPD through social media. Like and share local WSPD events on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Even better...join the conversation.

Take a minute to light a candle or tea light and place it near a window at 8:00 p.m. on September 10th, as a beacon of light and to recognize those who have been impacted by suicide and suicide loss.

Take a minute to talk to someone who may be struggling. If you are concerned about someone, reach out and ask them if they want to talk. Listen supportively and compassionately to what they have to say. You don't have to have all of the answers, but be prepared to help them find and connect to local resources if they need additional support.