



A suicide awareness and response workshop for youth

The *ACTT for Life (ACTT) Workshop* is a suicide awareness and response workshop, designed to empower youth with knowledge, skills and tools about mental health and suicide. The aim is to have youth better equipped to manage their own mental health and be effective helpers to friends who may be experiencing mental health struggles or thoughts of suicide.

Why ACTT for Life?

Studies suggest that when teens have a problem, the majority of them reach out to a close friend first, and to an adult second, if at all. While a friend or peer may be able to relate, they may not have the knowledge, skills and resources to help a friend to stay safe from suicide.

Research indicates that mental health literacy and suicide awareness and response programming, offered within familiar and supportive community-based settings, have the potential to reduce stigma and promote help-seeking, while improving mental health outcomes among youth.

ACTT for Life Workshop Mission and Learning Goals

The mission of the *ACTT for Life* workshop is to facilitate safe, hopeful conversations about mental health and suicide with youth.

The *ACTT* workshop helps youth to understand and learn the following:

- that we all have mental health, just like we have physical health
- that mental health and coping skills are related
- that mental health struggles and suicide are issues that we can do something about
- that we can talk about mental health and thoughts of suicide in sensitive and helpful ways
- that worrisome changes and warning signs may indicate struggles or thoughts of suicide
- that the *ACTT for Life Steps to Helping* tool can guide us in reaching out in hopeful, helpful ways
- that there are people and resources in our communities who can help us move beyond mental health struggles and thoughts of suicide
- that there are limits to our responsibility of being a good friend
- that we, as helpers, can *ACTT* for ourselves

ACTT for Life Workshop Process

The *ACTT* workshop is presented by a trained *ACTT for Life* facilitator, in youth friendly settings such as schools, youth groups and service clubs.

Combining interactive learning techniques with several short videos, the 80-minute *ACTT* workshop safely explores mental health and suicide with youth aged 13-19 years.

ACTT facilitators work closely with host counselors to ensure that the workshop is planned with safety in mind. They do this by:

- using the *ACTT for Life Checklist* to coordinate plans and safety prior to the workshop dates
- ensuring the host support counselor and designate have suicide intervention skills training, like ASIST
- ensuring the information and resources shared are evidence-based and responsive to youth and community needs
- providing *ACTT for Life Helpcards* to participating youth, that offer information and life promoting resources as a take-away for the future
- offering a leave-behind *ACTT for Life* poster to help reinforce key messages and resources
- offering supplementary resources for parents, caregivers and support staff

ACTT Steps to Helping

- ① **Ask.**
- ② **Care.**
- ③ **Talk.**
- ④ **Tell.**



ACTT for Life Messages

We all have mental health

- Mental health struggles and distress are a normal part of life
- Good coping strategies can help us to maintain balance in times of mental health distress
- Change, loss and pain are also part of life and can challenge our mental health and coping in real ways

Suicide is preventable – Life promotion is possible

- Suicide is not about death - it is about stopping emotional pain
- Most people with thoughts of suicide want to live and find another way to cope with the situation
- People with thoughts of suicide will invite help in many different ways

We can all learn to use the ACTT for Life Steps to Helping

- When a friend has changed in ways that suggest they may be struggling with thoughts of suicide, it's ok to **Ask** directly about thoughts of suicide
- We can show **Care** and listen with empathy about problems, feelings, mental health struggles and about suicide
- We can encourage our friends to **Talk** to a trusted adult who can help our friends to stay safe
- Sometimes we need to **Tell** a trusted adult about a friend's thoughts of suicide to keep them safe

Helping can be hard – we can get help, too!

Who We Are?

The Canadian Mental Health Association/PEI Division (CMHA/PEI), is a non-profit mental health agency that works to promote good mental health for all.

For more than two decades, we have been engaged in community-based suicide prevention, intervention and postvention (aftercare) strategies aimed at preventing suicide and lessening the impacts of suicide behaviors throughout our province.

We also work to strengthen community supports and enhance resiliency, while contributing to suicide-safer communities.

For more information about the *ACTT for Life* workshop or other CMHA programs and supports, contact us at:

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