



CMHA welcomes the creation of 9-8-8, the three-digit suicide prevention line

Ten CMHAs join network of service providers for the national crisis line

Toronto, ON (November 30, 2023) – Beginning today, people anywhere in Canada can call and text 9-8-8 if they are thinking about suicide or are worried about someone who is.

The three-digit suicide prevention helpline will be answered by responders who are as close to home as possible. Ten CMHAs will be part of a network of roughly 40 partners answering the national crisis line. These local CMHAs have expertise in providing community-based crisis response, including crisis lines, mobile crisis response and other related mental health services.

“The CMHA partners are pleased to be a local voice on the other end of the phone at 9-8-8” says Margaret Eaton, CMHA National CEO. “The Canadian Mental Health Association is the most established community-based mental health federation in Canada, and CMHAs have long been leading crisis response in their local communities and will continue to provide lifesaving, mental health support.” states Eaton.

Every day in Canada, an average of 12 people die by suicide.¹ Suicide is the second leading cause of death for people ages 15-34.² Research shows that suicides are preventable, and that telephone crisis services, and online counselling can help save lives.³

“We see people in our communities struggling every day,” says Eaton. “The 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline is an important step towards addressing Canada’s mental health crisis and creating a country where mental health is a universal human right.”

9-8-8 provides:

- A number that is easy-to-remember in a crisis.
- Bilingual support, available 24/7/365 by phone and text.
- Quick access to support from trained responders.
- High quality, evidence-based, equitable suicide prevention and crisis support for everyone in Canada.

“The Canadian Mental Health Association applauds and thanks the Government of Canada for investing in 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline and has been pleased to participate in an advisory and consultative capacity throughout the development of the initiative,” Eaton adds. “CMHA will continue to play a leading role in delivering services across the crisis continuum – from crisis prevention to in-person community-based crisis response services– and will continue to advocate for more investment for mental health.”

To learn more about 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline, visit 988.ca/about.

¹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/suicide-prevention/suicide-canada.html>

² Opioid- and Stimulant-related Harms — Canada.ca

³ Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2018). Research on suicide and its prevention: What the current evidence reveals and topics for future research. Ottawa, ON.

About the Canadian Mental Health Association

Founded in 1918, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is the most established, most extensive community mental health federation in Canada. Through a presence in more than 330 communities across every province and the Yukon. CMHA provides advocacy, programs and resources that help to prevent mental health problems and illnesses, support recovery and resilience, and enable all Canadians to flourish and thrive. For more information, please visit www.cmha.ca.