








## I'm worried my friend is thinking about suicide. What should I do?




Continued from reverse

-  **LISTEN without Judgment** and then listen some more. Reflect back what they shared with you so they hear it out loud. Ask them how you can help.
-  **KEEP them Safe** by connecting them with a trusted adult. If a friend tells you they have thoughts of suicide or are self-harming, encourage them to connect with a trusted adult immediately. Suicide should never be kept a secret. Sometimes youth threaten to kill themselves if their friend breaks their trust. It is very important to know that most youth who share thoughts of suicide need, want and deserve support from a trusted adult.
  - Could sound like:
    - “Let’s get help from \_\_\_\_\_”
    - “This is serious. How can we keep you safe? Who can we ask for help?”
-  **SHARE the Information** from the “Give your mind a break” section and “Self-Care Ideas” sections of this booklet.
-  **TELL them about Local Resources and Online Resources** listed in this booklet.
-  **ENCOURAGE them to Ask for Help.** Offer to go with them to get additional help from a trusted adult.
-  **Take CARE of Yourself** and take breaks. It is okay if it is too much for you.
-  **Find support for yourself.** Consider using crisis chat to debrief/online emotional support

## Give your mind a break—ways you can care for yourself.

Sometimes when we feel overwhelmed or hopeless, suicide may seem like the only option. There are things you can do to help yourself feel better.

### First things first!

-  **Eat Well.** The more vegetables, fruits, and water you consume, the healthier your body will be and the better you will feel. If you don't have enough food at home, talk to a trusted adult. There are other options to help make sure you're getting the nutrition you need.
-  **Sleep Well.** Getting enough sleep is important for mental health. It's also important to unplug from this busy world so you can recharge. Establish a bedtime routine. Consider powering technology down two hours before you go to bed. If you are a fan of technology and still want a good night's rest, create a personal sleep schedule with Recharge Sleep (a free app by ReachOut Australia).
-  **Keep Safe.** If your housing or living situation feels unsafe, talk to a caring adult such as your school mental health counsellor. If there is violence in your home, you can call the 24-hour Kids' Help Line—Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) at 310-1234 (no area code is required) or ask someone you trust to make the call with you.

## Self-Care Ideas

Express yourself • Take care of yourself • Ask for help (They all take practice)

### Slow down and breathe

At any moment in time you can notice your breath. There is no right or wrong way to breathe. Picture your chest expanding as it fills with air. Notice your breath and visualize your breath for a few breath cycles can help you to feel more grounded.

- Try saying “in” as you breathe in and “out” as you breathe out.
- Wear a bracelet or necklace to touch to remind yourself to slow down and breathe.
- Carry a stone or shell in your pocket; something to hold and connect to.

### Be creative and make something

Escaping the busy endless loops of the mind is helpful for everyone. One way to do this is by using art.

- Try collaging, painting, even doodling. Allow your inner critic (the voice that might pop up and judge your artistic abilities) to take a seat back and express yourself through lines, brush strokes, colors, or a collage.
- Mold clay.
- Break out the Lego.
- Make music, do some woodworking, knit something, plant something. Draw, make art, make jewelry, make origami.
- Cook food, write poetry, tell a story. Engaging different parts of your mind can distract yourself from the feelings you can get stuck in.

### Connect with nature

Spend time in nature—at the beach, in forests and mountains. It can help you to feel connected and calm.

### Get back to the animal kingdom

Don't have a pet? Ask to borrow someone else's or offer to volunteer with the SPCA or animal rescue [spca.bc.ca/branches/call](http://spca.bc.ca/branches/call) 250-388-7722).

### My self-care ideas here

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Use technology as a support: websites, apps, and other resources

[anxietybc.com](http://anxietybc.com)

Anxiety is a common mental health concern. There are some great strategies for changing the way we think and react in various situations and this website has some tools to guide you through some of these techniques.

[kellymentalhealth.ca](http://kellymentalhealth.ca)

Connect with another youth with lived experience with mental health challenges. Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. by phone: 1-800-665-1822 or email: [kellycentre@cw.bc.ca](mailto:kellycentre@cw.bc.ca)

[youthspace.ca](http://youthspace.ca)

Text and chat support for youth under 30 from 6 pm to midnight PST. This national service includes a moderated forum, resources and a link to ongoing email counselling at Pacific Centre Family Services Association.

[youthinbc.com](http://youthinbc.com)

Resources on specific topics including depression, anxiety, suicide, self-injury, etc. Also has free mindfulness meditations and body scans.

[foundrybc.ca](http://foundrybc.ca)

Online platform which links the growing network of Foundry centres throughout BC and integrates content from the youth mental health website, [mindcheck.ca](http://mindcheck.ca). This site provides information, resources and screening tools for mental health and substance use.

[heretohelp.bc.ca](http://heretohelp.bc.ca)

Information, support an youth-accessible screening tools for mental health, substance use, etc.

[mindyourmind.ca](http://mindyourmind.ca)

Mental health information, support and resources for youth.

[calm.com](http://calm.com)

Free and easy online relaxation moments.

[doyogawithme.com](http://doyogawithme.com)

Free online yoga and meditations for all ages.

### There's an App for that!

**My3 – Support Network**

This is an app created to help you stay safe when you are having thoughts of suicide. It lets you program in your contacts for 3 people in your Circle of Care, as well as access 911 easily. It also helps you create and pull up your customized safety plan in times of need. You can find more information about it at [my3app.org](http://my3app.org)

**Mind Shift**

Anxiety BC has an app called “Mind Shift” and it is designed to “help you learn how to relax, develop more helpful ways of thinking, and identify active steps that will help you take charge of your anxiety.” You can find more information about it at [my3app.org](http://my3app.org) or [anxietybc.com/resources/mindshift-app](http://anxietybc.com/resources/mindshift-app)

**ReachOut**

Links to lots of cool apps, as well as a tool called “Take the Quiz” that helps you sort through some of the apps out there to find ones that might be right for you and your goals. Click on “The Toolbox” tab at the top of the page to look at the apps they recommend. [au.reachout.com](http://au.reachout.com)

**Booster Buddy**

A free app for teens and young adults to improve their mental health. A sidekick guides you through daily guests to establish and sustain good habits.

[viha.ca/cyf\\_mental\\_health/boosterbuddy](http://viha.ca/cyf_mental_health/boosterbuddy)

*This toolkit was completed with great care in January 2018.*

# REACH OUT

This Suicide Intervention Toolkit is for youth ages 12–24 years throughout Southern Vancouver Island.

This toolkit was youth informed.



doctors  
of bc

SharedCare  
Partners for Patients

Victoria  
Division of Family Practice  
A GPSC initiative

NEED2  
breaking silence • ending stigma

**Where do I get help?/Where do I get help for a friend?/Who can I call or text for help?** You deserve support. This service is here for you.

If you have already made a suicide attempt or seriously self-injured, **call 911** or go to your nearest hospital.

### Emergency Room Departments

**If you are 17 or older**, go to **Royal Jubilee Hospital** | 1295 Bay Street  
In PES (Psychiatric Emergency Services) a psychiatric nurse or an adult psychiatrist will be there to help you.

**If you are under 17**, go to the **Victoria General Hospital** | 1 Hospital Way  
A mental health crisis nurse will be available 8:30 am–10:30 pm, 7 days a week. After 10 pm, an Emergency Room doctor is there to help. An on-call psychiatrist is also available.

**If you are under 25 and live on the Saanich Peninsula**, go to **Saanich Peninsula Hospital** | 2166 Mt. Newton X Road

#### Victoria Youth Clinic

818 Douglas Street, 3rd floor  
Victoria, BC (above Noodle Box)

☎ 250-383-3552

youth@victoriayouthclinic.ca

Youth Outreach ☎ 250-818-0897

outreach@victoriayouthclinic.ca

#### Child and Youth Mental Health (MCFD)

CYMH Victoria ☎ 250-356-1123

CYMH Saanich ☎ 250-952-5073

West Shore ☎ 250-391-2223

CYMH South Island Aboriginal Team

☎ 250-952-4073

### Emotional & Crisis Support Resources for Children & Youth

youthspace.ca, national online emotional and crisis chat and text for youth under 30

☎ Chat: [youthspace.ca](https://youthspace.ca)

6 pm–midnight

☎ Text: 778-783-0177 | 6 pm–midnight

Kuu-us Crisis Line Society (For Indigenous youth) ☎ 1-800-588-8717

Vancouver Island Crisis Line, crisis support ☎ 1-888-494-3888 | 24/7

☎ Chat: [vicrisis.ca](https://vicrisis.ca) | 6 – 10 pm

☎ Text: 250-800-3806 | 6 – 10 pm

BC 310 Mental Health Support Line ☎ 310-6789

Eating Disorder Program (MCFD) ☎ 250) 387-0000

BC Alcohol and Drug Referral Service ☎ 1-800-663-1441

BC Mental Health and Addiction Info Line ☎ 1-800-661-2121

YouthinBC, crisis service

☎ 604-872-3311 | 24/7

☎ Chat: [youthinBC.com](https://youthinBC.com) | Noon – 1 am

1-800-SUICIDE,

BC wide phone support line

☎ 1-800-784-2433 | 24/7

Kid's Help Phone, Canada wide service

☎ 1-800-668-6868 | 24/7

☎ Chat: [kidshelpphone.ca](https://kidshelpphone.ca)

Wednesday – Sunday, 3 – 11 pm

#### MCFD Child Protection Hotline

for family safety and child abuse

☎ 1-800-663-9122 | 24/7

#### Gender Diverse & Transgender support

☎ 250-475-7624

gendercreativetransvictoria@gmail.com

**Discovery Youth & Family Substance Use Services** ☎ 250-519-5313

### Am I at risk?/How do I know if someone else is at risk?

Learning to recognize the signs and symptoms of suicidal thinking can help you know when to reach out for support. If you are experiencing any of the below, now would be a good time to talk to someone. Tell a teacher, school counsellor, parent, doctor, professional mental health counsellor, coach... any adult you can trust. Let them know that you need support.

#### Are you:

- Isolating yourself?
- Thinking about or hinting to others about suicide — for example, making statements such as “I’m going to kill myself,” or “I’d be better off dead”, or “I wish I were dead”?
- Having regular thoughts about violence or death?
- Using drugs or drinking more than usual?
- Thinking “I can’t take this anymore” or wondering “What’s the point?”
- Losing interest in hanging out with friends/doing anything after school?
- Feeling moody: happy one minute, sad or irritable the next?
- Eating/sleeping more or less than usual, even on the weekends?
- Being told by your friends/family that you’re being mean or irresponsible?
- Giving away things you love or saying good-bye because you know you won’t be around much longer?
- Feeling severely anxious, sad, hopeless, angry or restless most of the time?
- Self-harming or engaging in risky behaviour?
- Not caring about your grades at school, or not wanting to attend school?
- Having trouble concentrating, forgetting, or experiencing a lack of energy or enthusiasm?
- No longer caring whether you’ve had a shower or whether your clothes are clean?
- Feeling “worthless” or feeling guilty/ashamed?
- Making plans to die by suicide?
- Joking about suicide?
- Being Bullied?
- Excessive or numbing out with technology and social media.

#### Have you:

- Recent loss or series of small losses?
- A recent suicide in the community/family?
- Loss of a close friendship/romantic relationship?
- Feeling ashamed or blamed?
- Confusion about gender identity and/or sexual orientation?
- Previous suicide attempts?
- Acting without thinking it through first?
- Mental illness?
- Overwhelming stress?
- A history of mental illness?

### Circle of care

People feel good when they can help others. It’s okay to ask for help. Throughout Southern Vancouver Island there are many community-building groups and teen drop-in centres which are youth-friendly, inclusive and safe.

- Fill out your circle of care so you have supports in place.
- Or fill this out with someone you trust.
- Who in our circle has supported you in the past or would be willing to help you in the future?



### Reach out

**?** You are not alone; everyone asks for help at some time or another. People feel good and grow when they can help others; you are not creating a problem for anyone when you ask for help. It’s okay to ask for help.

**👤** Don’t underestimate your stress. If it is bothering you, you deserve support. Experiencing stress is “normal”. Feeling like it’s taking you down or that you have to escape it is reason to reach out for help. No matter how “big” or “small,” all stress deserves care. You deserve to have someone help you take care.

### Reach out Continued

**🗨️** It’s okay to talk about what you’re feeling and experiencing. How you feel is important to the people around you. They want to know how you feel.

**📞** Sources of help and support are available and accessible. Reach out to resources from the list titled “Where do I get help?”, and people you have included in your Circle of Care in this toolkit.

**🗨️** It’s okay to talk about your inner feelings to people who can help you. You can trust that you will get the help you need. People who you confide in may also need to reach out to others to get help for you. They may need to share information from your conversation, to help you keep safe. Your Circle of Care will expand with other caring people to help support you in the ways that you need and deserve.

**👩🏻‍🎓** Professionals such as counsellors, doctors and teachers are trained to support you. They have received ongoing education, experience, and have their own professional networks of support. Even though you might feel hopeless, trust in the process. People can help you.

### I’m worried my friend is thinking about suicide. What should I do?

**👩🏻‍🎓** ASK them how they are doing. Support a friend by listening to understand.

Ask them:

- “What’s going on for you?”
- “How have things been for you lately?”
- “I’m concerned about you, I’ve noticed that you haven’t been going out as much as usual. Do you want to talk?”

**👤** TELL them what you have noticed without judgement. It’s very important that you talk to a caring and trusted adult, like a counsellor, parent, teacher or doctor. If a friend tells you they have had thoughts of suicide, plan to die by suicide or are self-injuring, connect them with a caring and trusted adult immediately.

**❤️** ACKNOWLEDGE what they are feeling and ASK them about their thoughts of suicide. They say: “My life sucks right now.” “I hate my life.” “I wish I were dead.”

Your response could sound like:

- “It sounds like you are struggling right now.”
- “You sound overwhelmed.”
- “Sometimes when people are feeling this overwhelmed, they think about suicide.”

Instead of:

- “You shouldn’t say that/feel that way.”
- “You’re so lucky/popular.”
- “Don’t be silly—you have so much going for you.”

What else could be helpful to hear from a friend when you are struggling?

What isn’t helpful?