

Crisis Services Canada - Canada Suicide Prevention Service

Crisis Services Canada (CSC):

CSC is a collaboration of non-profit distress and crisis service centres from across Canada whose members have been working together since 2002 to reduce the impact of suicide. In 2017, the organization incorporated under the name Crisis Services Canada. In recent years, the network has formalized its organizational structure with a focus on strengthening regional service delivery to address nation-wide gaps in service.

Canada Suicide Prevention Service (CSPS):

CSC launched the new Canada Suicide Prevention Service (CSPS) on November 28, 2017.

This service enables callers to access suicide prevention and support using the technology of their choice (phone, text or chat), in French or English.

- For telephone support, call toll free 1-833-456-4566 (24/7)
- For chat support, www.crisisservicescanada.ca (coming soon)
- For SMS support, text 45645 or 1-833-456-4566 - after October 24th, 2018

Local Crisis/Distress Lines:

CSPS will not replace existing local distress and crisis line services or phone numbers. CSPS uses a new multi-media contact centre platform to link to existing local/regional service providers who deliver crisis support. A person in crisis contacting CSPS will be routed to the closest available responder, who will provide crisis support and resources unique to the caller's community and needs. CSPS will complement local services to ensure that all people in Canada have immediate and equitable access to free and confidential support.

Nationally Available, Regionally Delivered:

As a nationally available, regionally delivered service, CSPS provides anyone in Canada thinking of, or affected by suicide with 24/7 support. We use our collective strengths, local knowledge, resources, and technology to support the needs of all people in Canada. Our highly trained, and supervised call responders leverage our unique Canadian culture, attitudes and values, providing a network of support from coast to coast to coast.

Why this National Service?

There are so many reasons!

- One Toll free number for the whole of Canada. The goal is to save lives not time, hence conversations are consistently longer than other contact centres (i.e. average of 20 min. for voice, 60 min. for text/chat)
- Providing coverage to areas previously without support
- Increasing access, not just to phone, but chat and text support
- Routing technology that gets people in need to support as quick as possible and quick access to 911 intervention nationwide

- This puts crisis centres with one voice at the national table with government, ministries, and other national services that are increasingly moving into the crisis/ distress support field.
- Shared best practices, resources, expertise and experience in the field of suicide prevention, intervention and postvention.
- Leverages shared best practices in assessing the risk of suicide, providing support, offering resources and most importantly developing a safety plan and dispatching emergency intervention if necessary.
- Avert unnecessary expensive EMS visits using the least intrusive intervention possible.
- Offering follow-up calls to people experiencing thoughts of suicide and third party outreach calls to those impacted by another's suicide ideation.
- May 2012 – Mental Health Strategy for Canada - goal was to improve the mental health wellbeing for all with 26 priorities and “prevent suicide wherever possible” is specifically mentioned.

Statistical data since launch of CSPS:

- Since November 28, 2017 to September 6, 2018, CSPS received 17,878 contacts for support from people in need across Canada (50% voice, 24% chat and 26% via text).
- 3965 service users confirmed thoughts of suicide at time of contact, 47 suicide in progress and 192 active rescues completed, 110 follow up calls arranged.
- Each death by suicide affects over 115 people over their lifetime; which means that over 22,080 people have been positively impacted by CSPS results since launch.
- Age breakdown: 2% from 0-12 years, 26% from 13-18 years, 20% from 19-14 years, 29% from 25-44 years, 6 % from 45-64 years, 1% from 65+ years, 17% unknown.
- Gender breakdown – 66% of service users identify as female, 26% identify as male, 2% identify as transgender, 2% other and 4% unknown.
- Youth statistics – 86% of service users under 19 years of age choose chat/text over voice as a means to reach help.

What if the interaction isn't about suicide?

While CSPS is a suicide specific service, we would not want to turn people away too quickly. We want to build rapport and create a connection with all calls. We would offer support and then, after ensuring safety and all is ok, let them know there are local crisis lines they can reach out to for additional crisis/distress support. There is a list of all crisis lines across Canada available to CSPS call responders.

Collaboration with stakeholders:

CSPS supports the “no wrong door” approach to access support. CSPS is committed to working with Kids Help Phone and the First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line to advance research, knowledge sharing and advocacy so that every person in Canada can access the suicide prevention supports they need, when they need it, and how they need it. We continue to work collaboratively with provincial and regional organizations.

Current funding support:

- The Public Health Agency of Canada invested \$3 million to support the development of the CSPS by CSC as part of the Government of Canada's commitment to improve the overall mental health of Canadians through collaborative initiatives with public, private, not-for-profit stakeholders and Indigenous partners.
- Mental Health Commission of Canada
- Public and private initiatives underway

For Further Information

In English

Ms. Stephanie MacKendrick CEO of Crisis Services Canada. She can be reached at Stephanie.mackendrick@crisisservicescanada.ca

Ms. Alison Caird is President of Crisis Services Canada and Executive Director of the Toronto Distress Centre. She can be reached at 416-598-0168 or Alison@torontodistresscentre.com

Ms. Elizabeth Newcombe is a Board Member of Crisis Services Canada and Executive Director of the Vancouver Island Crisis Society. She can be reached at 250-753-2495 ext. 114 or elizabeth@vicrisis.ca

In French

Charles Laframboise is the Executive Director of the Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region. He can be reached at 613.238.1089 or CLaframboise@dcottawa.on.ca