



# Youth Suicide Prevention

## Resource Information Newsletter

Office of the Children's Advocate

Thank you to everyone who provided information on the suicide prevention programs in their areas.

We will endeavour to provide information to you twice a year - spring and fall.

Please keep us informed as to what is happening in your programs so that we can pass this information on.

Email your information to Patsy Addis Brown at: [pbrown@childrensadvocate.mb.ca](mailto:pbrown@childrensadvocate.mb.ca).



### "Empowering Our Little Sisters"

Empowering Our Little Sisters is a mentorship and empowerment program created by Aboriginal women, for Aboriginal girls.

Delivered in partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Winnipeg and other community assets, Empowering Our Little Sisters represents the coming together of Aboriginal women to reclaim and nurture our young girls - our future life givers, as they journey towards womanhood.

Through mentorship, role modeling, and hands on learning, Empowering Our Little Sisters provides a coordinated and holistic response to meeting the needs of female Aboriginal chil-

dren, youth and their families.

Empowering Our Little Sisters gives Aboriginal women a chance to share their time, wisdom and experiences with the next generation. Together, we can empower young girls - our little sisters to fulfill their inherent potential. Join the circle. Empower and inspire. Let us carry our wisdom forward together.

For further information on Empowering Our Little Sisters contract:

Jacque Lylyk  
Program Coordinator  
988-9203  
[Jacque@bigwinnipeg.com](mailto:Jacque@bigwinnipeg.com)  
[www.empoweringsisters.com](http://www.empoweringsisters.com)

Patsy Addis Brown  
Editor

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### Special points of interest:

- ☺ Empowering Our Little Sisters
- ☺ Suicide Prevention Reports and Strategies
- ☺ Words from the Elders.
- ☺ Youth Suicide Statistics and Online Questionnaire Results

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## The Manitoba Suicide Line

Suicide - we need to talk.

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide or dealing with a suicide loss - Call us now

We can help  
**1 - 877-435-7170**  
[www.suicideline.ca](http://www.suicideline.ca)

Funded by Manitoba Health and run by Klinik Community Health Centre

# Suicide Awareness: Macdonald Youth Services

Erma Chapman, Ph.D., Executive Director of Macdonald Youth Services has provided us with the following information on their training and prevention strategies on youth suicide prevention.

ASIST is obviously the standard to which everyone would like to aspire. However, given the numbers of staff members and the expense of the training, MYS has adopted a "risk management" policy approach. Anyone who is a therapist, clinician, crisis worker, intake worker, clinical case manager (generally works with foster parents), unit supervisor or program manager, or is part of an on-call roster **MUST** have completed ASIST within three months of permanent employment with the agency. Depending on the nature of the position or the clients being serviced, a manager may require additional positions in the agency to have ASIST training; this must be stated in any position posting and employment letter.

While all other employees, foster parents and volunteers are encouraged to complete training during the course of their employment, other measures, as outlined are in place to support those who are not required to have ASIST to prevent youth suicide.

The topic outline of what will be covered with new employees as well as on a yearly basis in all programs. The content covers both recognition of suicide risk and intervention protocols:

## Suicide Awareness Training Outline:

- Introduction
- Statistics
- Facts about Suicide
- Attitudes
- Identifying Suicide Ideation
- Clarifying Questions
- Suicide Risk Estimation
- Safety Contract: Developing a Safe Plan

If you would like more information on the MYS suicide awareness program please contact the following:

The senior manager who has spearheaded the development of the internal training at MYS is Cynthia Drebot -- her e-mail is

[cynthia.drebot@mys.mb.ca](mailto:cynthia.drebot@mys.mb.ca).

MYS Human Resource Officer who is responsible for the "mandatory" training, including suicide prevention and intervention, is Philipa Caplan ([philipa.caplan@mys.mb.ca](mailto:philipa.caplan@mys.mb.ca)). Either of these individuals would be able to help!

# ASIST - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

ASIST was developed by Living Works Education and is the most widely used suicide intervention workshop in the world. Just as "CPR" skills make physical first aid possible, training in suicide intervention develops the skills used in suicide first aid. ASIST is a two day interactive course that meets professional training requirements by helping participants recognize risk and learn how to intervene to prevent the immediate risk of suicide.

ASIST has five learning sections:

1. **Preparing** - sets the tone, norms, and expectations of the learning experience.
2. **Connecting** - sensitizes participants to their own attitudes towards suicide. Creates an understanding of the impact which attitudes have on the intervention process.
3. **Understanding** - identifies the intervention needs of person at risk. It focuses on providing participants with the knowledge and skills to recognize risk and develop safe plans to reduce the risk of suicide.
4. **Assisting** - presents a model for effective suicide intervention. Participants develop their skills through observation and supervised simulation experiences in large and small groups.
5. **Networking** - generates information about resources in the local community. Promotes a commitment by participants to transform local resources into helping networks.

Further information on ASIST can be found at the Centre for Suicide Prevention: [www.suicideinfo.ca](http://www.suicideinfo.ca).

## 24-Hour Crisis Lines

Service	Phone
Klinik Crisis Line (Provincial Line)	(204) 786-8686 1-888-322-3019
Klinik Suicide Prevention Line (Provincial Line)	1-877-435-7170 (1-877-help170)
Teen Touch Crisis Line (Provincial Line)	(204) 783-1116 1-800-563-8336
Kids Help Phone (National Line available to Manitoba Youth)	1-800-668-6868

## Youth Emergency Crisis Stabilization System (YECSS)

### Target Group:

- Children or youth at risk for suicide
- Children who put their lives at risk
- Children who are an obvious life threat to self and others
- Chronic substance abuse combined with chronic running posing a health threat
- Children at risk for involuntary displacement from home
- Children experiencing mental health or psychosocial stressors.

### Objectives:

- To support children in crisis at home
- To limit institutionalization
- To offer a range of quick, accessible services to children and families in crisis
- To promote systems cooperation and resource planning
- To support the preservation of healthy families and communities
- Early identification of mental health concerns.

YECSS is an intersectoral, inter-agency service sponsored by MB Family Services, MB Health and MB Education & Training.

**To access YECSS for services, please call (204) 949-4777 or toll free at: 1-888-383-2776.**

## Additional Suicide Prevention Resources

### SPEAK

Suicide Prevention Education Awareness Knowledge (SPEAK) is a non-profit organization. Their vision is to see a healthy community in which all people, and youth in particular, have the support and information they need to detect and obtain treatment for depression, where survivors of suicide have ready access to the supports they require and where the stigma associated with mental illness and suicide is eliminated.

For more information on SPEAK visit their website at [www.speak-out.ca](http://www.speak-out.ca)



### Centre for Suicide Prevention

The Centre for Suicide Prevention is a non-profit organization serving thousands of people across Canada and around the world. For further information contact:

Centre for Suicide Prevention  
Suite 320, 1202 Centre Street S.E.  
Calgary, AB T2G 5A5  
403-245-3900  
[www.suicideinfo.ca](http://www.suicideinfo.ca)

# Suicide Prevention Reports and Strategies

## Senate Committee on Human Rights

The Final Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights called "**Children: The Silenced Citizens**" was released in April 2007 by the Honourable Raynell Andreychuk, Chair and The Honourable Joan Fraser, Deputy Chair.

This report and the Committee's proceedings are available online at:

[www.senate-senat.ca/rights-droits.asp](http://www.senate-senat.ca/rights-droits.asp)

## First Nations & Inuit Health

The following suicide prevention information was taken from the Health Canada website.

Health Canada is committed to improving the health status of First Nations people and Inuit. One of its priorities is the development and implementation of a National Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Strategy that aims to increase resiliency and protective factors, and reduce risk factors associated with Aboriginal youth suicide.

## Facts on Suicide Rates

Youth suicide is an urgent issue for First Nations and Inuit youth in Canada. While there is much variation among communities, overall rates are high.

- Suicide rates are five to seven times higher for First Nations youth than for non-Aboriginal youth.
- Suicide rates among Inuit youth are among the highest in the world, at 11 times the national average.

## Addressing Youth Suicide Prevention

In July 2001 a Suicide Prevention Advisory Group was jointly appointed by National Chief Matthew Coon Come of the Assembly of First Nations and former Minister of Health Allan Rock. The purpose of this Advisory Group was to review the existing research and formulate a series of practical, doable recommendations to help stem the tide of youth suicides occurring in First Nations communities across Canada. The Advisory Group met between July 2001 and June 2002 to collaborate on this task. Through discussion, literature review and preparation of background papers, key issues were identified and recommendations generated.

The report of the Advisory Group on Suicide Prevention is called, "**Acting on What We Know: Preventing Youth Suicide in First Nations**". This report sheds light on some of the root causes of suicide and presents recommendations to reverse the alarming trend among First Nations youth in Canada.

A copy of the report can be downloaded from the Health Canada/First Nations & Inuit Health/Report and Publications website at:

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca>



## Words from the Elders

In September 2006 a report was published by the Ajunnginiq Centre, National Aboriginal Health Organization called: "**Suicide Prevention: Inuit Traditional Practices that Encouraged Resilience and Coping**".

The following excerpt is taken from the Executive Summary of this report - these words of wisdom are from the Elders from the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunavut, Nunavik and Nunatsiavut: "Inuit suicide rates, especially for young men, are many times higher than the rates for any other Canadians.

The Ajunnginiq Centre for the National Aboriginal Health Organization believes it is important to incorporate the knowledge of Inuit Elders in all attempts to change this sad pattern. Suicide was not common among Inuit in the past, and in fact was very rare among young people. Focus groups with Elders were therefore held in each Inuit region, to gather information about the values and methods that helped Inuit overcome problems and survive even when life was very difficult.

To survive, Elders said, people must have hope and belief that things will get better. They must feel they are loved and cared about. They must have safe opportunities to talk about problems and emotions so that bad feelings do not grow too overwhelming. They must have skills to solve conflicts and arguments. They must be willing to face difficulties and take responsibility for making things better. They must have pride and belief in themselves.

## Words from the Elders

They spoke of several important traditional values that were the foundation for a sense of connection, caring, respect, and hope, and which must be passed on to today's youth:

- **Patience:** tomorrow is another day, problems can be solved, life will get better;
- **Perseverance:** never give up, keep trying, difficulties can be overcome;
- **Love and caring** among family members and community members: listen to each other, help each other, understand each other, teach each other, show love and caring;
- **Communication:** talk out problems, solve conflicts and return to harmony;
- **Awareness of self and others:** think of how your own behaviour affects others, pay attention to others so you will recognize if they need help;
- **Confidentiality and respect for others:** do not gossip, do not lie, do not tell other people what you know about someone's feelings or problems; and,
- **Personal responsibility:** take responsibility for your own behaviour and try to solve your own problems, apologize if you do something wrong, and also take responsibility for being helpful to others.

Specific helping and coping behaviours grew out of these values. The Elders discussed things that people can do when they feel overwhelmed, sad, or have a problem that seems to have no solution:

- **Talk to someone you trust about problems:** keeping problems inside will just make them seem worse;
  - **Change your thoughts:** remind yourself that although life is sometimes difficult, things will change, days are never the same; tell yourself that you can make changes; tell yourself that you can feel better;
  - **Get outside into nature, be active:** this will help take your mind off problems and make you feel better;
  - **Focus on helping others:** you will feel good about yourself and take your mind off your problems;
  - **Don't isolate yourself:** go out, be with others, be active;
  - **Pray:** you can always talk to God;
  - **Stay busy:** learn new things, do things;
  - **Learn how to handle arguments and problems with other people:**
  - **Believe in yourself:** don't put yourself down, learn ways to develop strength and competence;
  - **Remember that you are not alone:** others care about you; others have had similar problems and made it though; and,
  - **Learn traditional skills:** you will feel proud to be an Inuk.
- Parents must teach children from an early age that life will always have some problems, but that situations change: children's young minds can't think ahead, and they must be taught to think and understand about changes and the future;
  - Be tolerant of others: try to understand them;
  - Approach those who seem worried or sad, offer to listen;
  - Always keep information confidential: if you are trying to help someone, let them know you will not talk about what they tell you;
  - Share your own experiences of difficulties, so people will know they are not alone and that problems can be overcome;
  - Help the person develop a more positive way of thinking; and,
  - Talk calmly, respectfully and kindly.

Elders also provided guidelines for helping prevent loss of hope and belief, and for helping those who are feeling distressed:

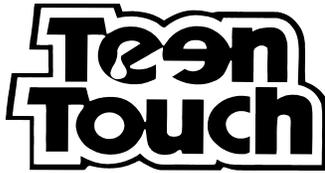
- Parents must listen to and pay loving attention to children, showing they are cared for; Elders and other community members must also show caring to children and youth;

Elders felt very strongly that these traditional values and coping skills are as necessary today as they were in the past. They are the attitudes and behaviours that can help prevent suicide. They understand that suicide probably cannot be avoided completely, and that there will always be a few who make that choice. And they say, that we must talk openly about suicide - but that the discussion must be built on the traditions that develop inner strength and belief in the future."

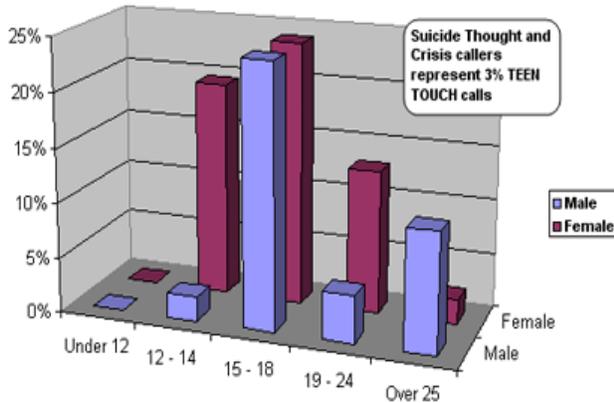
A copy of this report can be found at the Ajunnginiq Centre website at:

[www.naho.ca/inuit](http://www.naho.ca/inuit)

## Online Survey



Suicide Thought and Crisis Calls by Age and Gender



	Under 12	12 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 24	Over 25
Male	0%	2%	24%	4%	11%
Female	0%	20%	24%	13%	2%

## Honouring Her Spirit

### Tracia Owen

We honour the spirit of Tracia Owen, a 14 year old youth who took her own life in August 2005. Tracia was a child in care for much of her life and an inquest into the care she received as a Ward of a CFS agency is currently being held.

## Thank you!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Brett Summers, WPS for his commitment toward the children and youth of this province. Brett has recently been transferred to a different police division and is unable to continue to participate in the Youth Suicide Prevention Committee.

We would also like to thank Gordon Alvare for his hard work and dedication to the children and youth of this province during his tenure as Executive Director of Teen Touch.

### Youth Suicide Statistics by Age and Gender For Year 2006

Age Group	Sex		Totals
	Male	Female	
8-11	0	0	0
12-14	1	7	8
15-17	4	2	6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>

Compiled by Office of the Chief Medical Examiner:  
May 2007

### Youth Suicide Statistics by Age and Gender 1999 - 2006

Age Group	Sex		Totals
	Male	Female	
8-11	4	3	7
12-14	17	22	39
15-17	52	31	83
<b>Totals</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>129</b>

Compiled by Office of the Chief Medical Examiner  
February 2006

### Office of the Children's Advocate

102 - 500 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3X1  
Telephone: (204) 945-1364 Fax: (204) 948-2278