

Suicide Prevention: 2024 Progress Report



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Canada

**TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT THE HEALTH OF
CANADIANS THROUGH LEADERSHIP, PARTNERSHIP,
INNOVATION AND ACTION IN PUBLIC HEALTH.**

—Public Health Agency of Canada

Également disponible en français sous le titre :
Rapport d'étape 2024 sur la prévention du suicide

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Publication date: December 2024

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Cat.: HP32-11E-PDF
ISSN: 2818-9361
Pub.: 240698

Note to readers

The Government of Canada recognizes that the topic of suicide may be sensitive for people.

The following resources are available for help and support. If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, please **call 9-1-1**.

9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline¹

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, call or text 9-8-8. Support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 9-8-8 offers support that is bilingual, trauma-informed, culturally appropriate, and available to anyone in Canada.

Kids Help Phone

Youth can access **Kids Help Phone** by calling **1-800-668-6868** (toll-free) or **text CONNECT to 686868**. Available 24 hours, 7 days a week to youth in Canada, aged 5 to 29, who want confidential and anonymous care from professional counsellors.

Hope for Wellness Helpline

First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Peoples can call **Hope for Wellness at 1-855-242-3310 (toll-free)** or connect via **chat at: <https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/>**. Experienced and culturally competent counsellors are available 24/7 to provide immediate emotional support, crisis intervention or referrals to community-based services. Services are available to all Indigenous people in Canada in English and French and, upon request, in Cree, Ojibway and Inuktitut.

¹ In Quebec, calls and text messages are redirected to existing services, namely the Quebec Suicide Prevention Hotline 1,866 APPELLE and the Service numérique québécois en prévention du suicide (Suicide.ca). Both services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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Minister's Message

Suicide is a serious and devastating public health issue that affects people of all ages and backgrounds. The ripple effects that losing someone to suicide has on families, friends and communities can be long-lasting. Our government is making sure that everyone in Canada has access to suicide prevention resources and supports—whenever and wherever they need them.

I am pleased to share the 2024 Progress Report on Suicide Prevention. Since the last Progress Report in 2022, we have made great strides and have been working collaboratively with partners and stakeholders on key initiatives to provide suicide prevention resources to people in Canada when they need it the most. I have been meeting with and listening to people across the country to learn about the challenges individuals and communities are facing and how we can improve our mental health care system and collective well-being. Suicide prevention is a top priority for us. One year ago, we launched the 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline and in May 2024, Canada's first National Suicide Prevention Action Plan. These national initiatives have brought together partners to strengthen our collective response to suicide. Our collective goal remains that fewer lives are lost to suicide and that people in Canada are supported in their mental health and wellbeing.

Previous progress reports focussed on activities supporting the advancement of the Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention. The Federal Framework was launched in 2016 and served as a foundation to guide federal suicide prevention efforts. Increased calls for more concrete and



measurable actions led to the development of the National Suicide Prevention Action Plan. As such, this year's Progress Report highlights achievements since the release of the National Suicide Prevention Action Plan. We will keep building on learnings, evidence, data, and lived experiences as we work to improve the mental health and wellbeing of people across Canada and take action to help prevent suicide. I look forward to ongoing collaboration with our partners and to continue reporting on suicide prevention progress to Canadians. By working together, we can improve suicide prevention and life promotion for all and provide hope when it is needed most.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ya'ara Saks'.

The Honourable Ya'ara Saks
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and
Associate Minister of Health

Background

In 2012, the Government of Canada made reporting every two years to Canadians on suicide prevention a legislative requirement as part of the [*Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention Act*](#) (the *Act*). Also pursuant to the *Act*, the [*Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention*](#) (the Framework) was finalized and released in 2016. This is the fifth Progress Report since the release of the Framework.

Building on the Framework, current evidence, and the significant collaboration that resulted in the launch of the [*9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline*](#), the Government of Canada released its first [*National Suicide Prevention Action Plan*](#) (the “Action Plan”) on May 31st, 2024 to strengthen Canada’s collective response to suicide and its prevention. The new Action Plan aligns with the elements outlined in the *Act* and replaces the Framework as Canada’s guiding framework on suicide prevention and life promotion.

The Action Plan also includes a comprehensive list of recent and ongoing suicide prevention and life promotion activities across the federal government. It also provides contextual information, such as statistics and information on population groups with higher risk of suicide or related behaviours in the Canadian context. As such, this fifth Progress Report complements the Action Plan and captures progress achieved since its release while fulfilling the legislative requirement outlined in the *Act*.

Finally, the Action Plan recognizes the importance of existing work across various areas and how these broader initiatives complement collective suicide prevention efforts. The Public Health Agency of Canada will build on the ongoing collaboration and engagement with partners including, federal government departments, provinces and territories and Indigenous partners, to continue advancing suicide prevention and life promotion.

The National Suicide Prevention Action Plan—At a Glance

The Action Plan is a three-year (2024–2027), evergreen plan with the aim of increasing collaboration with partners, including federal government departments, provinces and territories, Indigenous partners, and suicide prevention stakeholders to advance shared suicide prevention/life promotion priorities. The Action Plan does not replace existing initiatives and strategies, such as provincial, territorial and Indigenous-led strategies. It is intended to complement these efforts and the work underway with the goal of increased collaboration and a greater collective impact. **(Figure 1).**

Figure 1. An overview of the Canada's National Suicide Prevention Action Plan.



Report on Progress

This report highlights progress since the release of the Action Plan on May 31, 2024. It includes updates on new activities outlined in the Plan, as well as other relevant updates under the Pillars of Action.



Pillar One: Data and monitoring

Outcome: Canada has a robust monitoring infrastructure with more complete and timely national data on suicide and related behaviours to support understanding and inform effective interventions for suicide prevention.

Update on Action Plan New Activities

Activity 1.1: 9-8-8 Data Strategy

Lead: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)

- In June 2024, an internal 9-8-8 data infrastructure for data collected from calls and texts was established to enhance reporting, analytics and insights for the improvement of the 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline (e.g., wait times).
- In November 2024, a 9-8-8 Data Governance Committee was established to inform a data governance framework to promote ongoing improvement and enhancement of data quality and use for the 9-8-8 service.

Activity 1.2: Common Data Elements for Suicide Death Investigations

Lead: PHAC in collaboration with Statistics Canada and provincial/territorial partners (PTs)

- In October 2024, data collection and validation of most up-to-date PT suicide mortality data including suspected suicide deaths was completed, with the release of data expected to follow in Winter 2025.
- In September 2024, a first set of common data elements was agreed upon with PT Chief Coroners/Chief Medical Examiners (CC/CME). Beginning in Spring 2025, interested PTs will begin piloting the common data elements which include risk factors for suicide such as suicide ideation, self-harm, and mental illness to gain greater understanding of deaths by suicide. Statistics Canada will work with PTs to implement these data elements into the Canadian Coroner and Medical Examiner Database (CCMED) in Fall 2025.

Other Relevant updates

Development of Performance Indicators

Lead: PHAC, other government departments (OGDs), PTs and other partners

- In November 2024, a Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Task Group was established to advance Data and monitoring and, Research and evaluation pillars, including collaboration on the development of performance indicators.



Pillar Two: Research and evaluation

Outcome: Suicide and its prevention are well-understood, and suicide prevention interventions are informed by the best available evidence.

Update on Action Plan New Activities

Activity 2.1: 9-8-8 Evaluation

Lead: PHAC

- PHAC is working with a third party on the evaluation of the first year of 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline to inform continued improvements of the service.

Activity 2.2: Integrated Youth Services Network of Networks (IYS-Net) - Indigenous Network

Lead: Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

- A funding opportunity for the IYS-Net Indigenous Network was launched in November 2024. The goal is to expand the IYS-Net Indigenous Network into a pan-Canadian network that will support Indigenous youth mental wellness initiatives through a distinctions-based approach. Funding recipients are expected to be announced in Summer 2025.
- CIHR is also continuing to advance the broader IYS-Net initiative, to support continued research, data collection and knowledge mobilization to help strengthen and expand integrated youth services in communities across Canada. In September 2024, a Provincial/Territorial Network Grant funding opportunity was launched to build and strengthen research and knowledge mobilization capacity within and across IYS Networks. Funding recipients are expected to be announced in June 2025.

Other Relevant updates

National Summit on Indigenous Mental Wellness

Lead: ISC, Indigenous partners

- The 2024 National Summit on Indigenous Mental Wellness took place in October 2024. The Summit was an opportunity for sharing what is working to improve mental wellness for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. The overarching theme for this year's Summit was "Moving Research to Action: Honouring our Ways". Discussions centered on Indigenous-led knowledge, research, data and story-telling as well as the importance of culture and community in Indigenous knowledge translation and exchange.

CIHR-funded Research

Lead: CIHR

- CIHR is continuing to support research on suicide prevention and interventions through investigator-initiated research programs. Examples of research projects funded since May 2024 include:
 - \$1.2 million over 4 years to investigate the efficacy of a novel psychotherapy intervention "[Brief Skills for Safer Living](#)" for suicide risk in adults.
 - \$1.3 million over 4 years for an initiative, that combines [ketamine and dialectical behavioural therapy](#) for suicidality in individuals with treatment resistant depression and borderline personality disorder.
 - \$267,751 over 2 years for a qualitative study that focuses on the [experience of public safety personnel \(PSP\)](#) families after a suicide and PSP organizations' response to a suicide.



Pillar Three: Supports and services

Outcome: Individuals, communities, and practitioners are aware of, have access to, and know when and how to use evidence-informed resources to prevent and respond to suicide and related behaviours and reduce stigma related to suicide.

Update on Action Plan New Activities

Activity 3.1: Indigenous Network for 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline

Lead: PHAC in collaboration with CAMH, National Indigenous Organizations (NIOs), and Indigenous distress lines

- Since May 2024, CAMH has been regularly engaging with Indigenous leadership to better understand the landscape of Indigenous crisis lines across Canada and to inform how the service evolves including ensuring culturally-affirming services across the 9-8-8 network.

Activity 3.2: Dissemination of resources and tools

Lead: PHAC, CAMH, PTs, other suicide prevention partners

- CAMH continues to share resources and tools (e.g., training material, reference sheets, competency webinars) with the 9-8-8 partner network to better support responders.
- In September 2024, CAMH established a new Equity Community of Practice for the 9-8-8 service. The community of practice includes 9-8-8 network partners, as well as other organizations. It allows for dialogue and exchange on best practices, with the aim of improving service delivery for equity-seeking populations across distress line services.

Activity 3.3: Suicide Prevention Training for Veteran Frontline Staff

Lead: Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC)

- Since the beginning of 2024–25, VAC has delivered 8 trainings sessions on *Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)*, with several more sessions in the planning phase.
- In June 2024, the Suicide Awareness and Intervention Protocol Training was updated to reflect current statistics and now includes postvention, caring contacts and lethal means safety. Since the update, training is planned for Veteran Service Agents, as well as Peer Support Coordinators for the Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS) program.

Other Relevant updates

9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline

Lead: PHAC, CAMH

- Since its launch, 9-8-8 has received an average of 750 phone calls and 435 texts per day. Monthly service data is also published on the 988.ca website.

Distress Line Equity Fund (DLEF)

Lead: PHAC

- 45 projects have received funding through the DLEF to address gaps in equity, diversity, and inclusion in the distress line sector and ensure the sector is responsive to the needs and experiences of those who call.



Pillar Four: Governance

Outcome: Canada's suicide prevention efforts are collaborative, respect jurisdictional roles and responsibilities, and recognize the need for culturally-informed and tailored approaches for populations at higher risk of suicide.

Update on Action Plan New Activities

Activity 4.1: Governance Review

Lead: PHAC, ISC, PTs, and NIOs

- The Federal Provincial Territorial (FPT) Suicide Prevention Committee on 9-8-8 implementation has been expanded to include collaboration on broader suicide prevention priorities. In October 2024, the Committee identified data and monitoring and knowledge exchange for collaborative action.
- Engagement with Indigenous partners continues to collaborate and support suicide prevention and life promotion efforts.

Activity 4.2 Suicide Prevention Science Advisory Table

Lead: PHAC

- PHAC is exploring opportunities to better engage suicide prevention experts. Drawing from this expertise, a Science Advisory Table will be established to provide science advice for decision making, priority setting and the integration of science into suicide prevention and life promotion activities.

Going Forward

The Government of Canada will continue collaborating with partners including federal government departments, provinces and territories, Indigenous partners and suicide prevention stakeholders to advance the implementation of the Action Plan. The Government of Canada will also continue to report on progress under the Action Plan, every two years, fulfilling the legislative requirement under the *Act*.