

# the george

GEORGE HULL CENTRE FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Just because you can't see it,



doesn't mean it isn't there

## World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD): Changing the Narrative on Suicide

**September 10** marks World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD), a global initiative established in 2003 by the International Association for Suicide Prevention with the support of the World Health Organization. This day is dedicated to raising awareness about the critical issue of suicide and promoting preventive measures. The theme for this year, "Changing the Narrative on Suicide," encourages us to shift from a culture of silence and stigma to one of openness and support.



# Not Shying Away from Suicide Prevention

## The George Hull Centre's Commitment to Transforming Mental Health

At the George Hull Centre, we are deeply committed to shining the spotlight on suicide and playing a role in the aforementioned cultural shift. Our goal is to transform children's mental health through exceptional care, pioneering research, and a supportive community. This focus aligns with the WSPD's call to action, underscoring the urgency of addressing mental health challenges and the importance of open dialogue.

## A Critical Challenge: The Rising Teen Suicide Rate in Canada

In recent years, the mental health crisis among Canadian youth has escalated to alarming levels. Statistics reveal that one in five (19%) students have intentionally harmed themselves, and one in six (18%) have seriously considered suicide within the past year. These numbers highlight the critical need to address youth mental health and provide timely interventions.

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**1/5 [Canadian] students have intentionally harmed themselves, and 1/6 have seriously considered suicide within the past year.**  
”

## Dispelling Myths Around Teen Suicide

One of the most significant barriers to effective suicide prevention is the prevalence of myths and misconceptions. It's essential to understand that:

### MYTH 1

**Talking about suicide will plant the idea in a teenager's mind.**

**Fact:** Open conversations about mental health and suicide can reduce the risk. When teens feel heard and understood, they are more likely to seek help and share their struggles.

### MYTH 3

**Teens who talk about suicide are just seeking attention.**

**Fact:** Any mention of suicide should be taken seriously. It is often a cry for help, and dismissing it could lead to tragic consequences.

### MYTH 2

**Only teens with diagnosed mental health disorders are at risk of suicide.**

**Fact:** While mental health disorders are a significant risk factor, teens without any diagnosed conditions can also be at risk. Stress, trauma, and sudden life changes can contribute to suicidal thoughts.

**Understanding these myths is the first step toward creating a supportive environment where teens feel safe discussing their feelings and seeking help.**

# RECOGNIZING THE WARNING



Parents, educators, and community members must be aware of the warning signs of suicide. While these signs can vary, some common indicators include:

Increased isolation and avoidance of social interactions

Changes in sleep patterns, whether difficulty sleeping or excessive sleeping

Loss of interest in hobbies and previously enjoyed activities

Significant changes in appetite

Self-harm behaviors such as cutting or burning

Preoccupation with death or suicide

Giving away prized possessions

If you notice any of these signs in a teenager, act promptly. Open the lines of communication and seek professional help when necessary. Early intervention can make a life-saving difference.

## Our Programs

### Teen Talk: Making a Difference

At the George Hull Centre, we are dedicated to altering this trajectory through targeted programs and initiatives. One such program is **Teen Talk**, a group-based program rooted in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). Teen Talk runs for 12 weeks, combining group sessions with one-on-one clinician engagement. The program equips teens with essential skills to cope with distress, manage their emotions and behaviours more effectively, build more effective connections, and learn skills that help them to feel more confident and capable.

By focusing on both individual and family support, we ensure that teens and their families are equipped to tackle mental health challenges together. Programs like Teen Talk, along with our strong collaboration with organizations like Sashbear Foundation, play a crucial role in this effort. **Sashbear's Family Connections™** program offers education, skills, and support to those in relationships with someone struggling with emotion dysregulation or related problems.

“*Teen Talk provides teens with a toolkit of coping strategies that include everything from distress tolerance to harm reduction techniques. It's about helping them find themselves and see their potential in a new light.*”

Angie Portner,  
Manager of the Community Clinic  
at George Hull Centre

## Proactive Steps to Support Teen Mental Health

Beyond recognizing the warning signs, there are proactive steps you can take to support the teenagers in your life:

Create a Safe Space for Conversations

Encourage open dialogue about mental health. Let your teen know it's okay to talk about their feelings without fear of judgment.

Educate Yourself

Learn about the challenges teens face today, including the impact of social media, academic pressures, and bullying.

Encourage Healthy Coping Mechanisms

Promote activities that reduce stress and enhance well-being, such as physical exercise, creative pursuits, and spending time in nature.

Be Present and Attentive

Sometimes, the most significant support you can offer is simply being there. Make time to connect with your teen regularly, and be an active listener.

Know When to Seek Professional Help

If your teen is showing signs of distress, don't hesitate to reach out to a mental health professional. Early intervention is key to preventing a crisis.





“  
It got me to  
be more open  
to the ones  
I love and got me  
into a better  
place both  
mentally and  
physically.  
”

Persons shown in photographs on this webpage are  
photography models (Models) and are not actual clients  
of, nor are they affiliated with, the George Hull Centre.

## Inspiring Stories of Change

The impact of your support is evident in the transformative experiences of the teens who participate in the George Hull Centre's programs. Teens, through the Teen Talk program, discovered healthier ways to manage their emotions and build stronger relationships. The group setting provided a safe space where they felt understood, supported, and seen—something that had been missing from their lives.

## Your Support Is Making A Difference

The George Hull Centre has become a beacon of hope for those struggling with mental health challenges. Here's how your contributions have made a tangible impact:



**Expand our  
Team and  
Reach**

Your donations have enabled us to hire additional clinicians, increasing our capacity to serve more children and youth.



**Advance  
Research and  
Innovation**

Contributions have driven groundbreaking research initiatives that inform and improve our approaches to children's mental health care.



**Enhance  
Professional  
Training**

We've launched new training modules to prepare the next generation of mental health professionals.

## JOIN in our Mission

As we continue our work to combat the teen suicide crisis, we invite you to join us in making a difference. Whether through a donation, spreading awareness, or simply having a conversation about mental health, your involvement is vital. The need is great, but together, we can change the course of children's mental health in Canada.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to creating a brighter future for our children.



**CLICK TO DONATE**



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FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

**Changing the  
trajectory of children's  
mental health.**

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