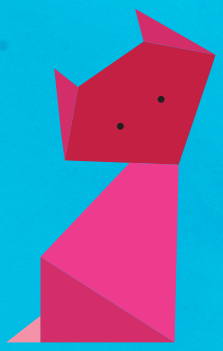
DELTA YOUTH SUICIDE INTERVENTION TOOLKIT

REACH OUT



The Child and Youth Mental Health & Substance Use (CYMHSU) Collaborative is funded by the Shared Care Committee in partnership with the General Practice Services and Specialist Services Committees of Doctors of BC and the BC Government. The goal of the collaborative is to increase timely access to integrated services and supports for children, youth and families struggling with mental health and substance use issues.

Delta Division of Family Practice
A GPSC initiative

British Columbia

doctors of bc

Where do I get help / Who can I call for help?

If you have already made a suicide attempt (overdosed) or seriously self-injured, CALL 911.

If you are seriously at risk of attempting suicide,
GO TO SURREY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL OR BC CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL FOR HELP.

If you don't have anyone to give you a ride, call 911 and an ambulance will pick you up.

At both hospitals, a doctor and mental health nurse are always on-call. They can see you and help you keep safe, everyday, 24 hours a day

Surrey Memorial Hospital
9634 King George Blvd.
Surrey, BC

BC Children's Hospital
4480 Oak St. Entrance 11
Vancouver, BC

- START Team (Short Term, Assessment, Response, Treatment)
  Phone: 1-844-START11 (1-844-782-7811)

- Child & Youth Mental Health Walk-in Clinic
  Thursday mornings: 9 am - 11:30 am in Ladner
  Phone: 604-940-7900 / 220–5000 Bridge St.

Other Resources Available or Emotional & Crisis Support Resources for Children & Youth (Phone / Chat & Text)

- Fraser Health Crisis Line, crisis support
  Phone: 604-951-8855 | 24/7

- youthspace.ca, national online emotional and crisis chat and text for youth under 30
  Chat: youthspace.ca | 6 pm – midnight
  Text: 778-783-0177 | 6 pm – midnight

- YouthinBC, crisis service
  Phone: 604-872-3311 | 24/7
  Chat: youthinBC.com | Noon – 1 am

- 1-800-SUICIDE
  BC wide phone support line
  Phone: 1-800-784-2433 | 24/7

- MCFD Child Protection
  Phone: 1-800-663-9122 | 24/7

- Kid's Help Phone, Canada wide service
  Phone: 1-800-668-6868 | 24/7
  Chat: kidshelpphone.ca
  Wednesday – Sunday, 3 – 11 pm

- BC 310 Mental Health Support Line
  Phone: 310-6789

- Alcohol and Drug Referral Service
  Phone: 604-660-9382

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

- Early Psychosis Intervention
  Phone: 604-538-4278

- BC Nurse Line
  Phone: 811

Am I 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-injuring or engaging in reckless 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?

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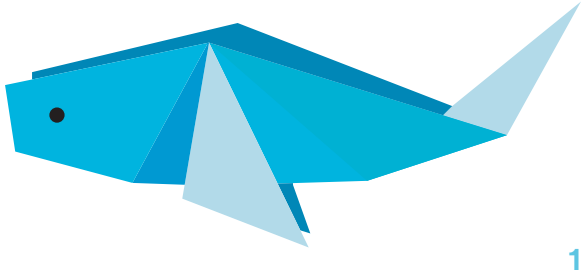


Am I at risk? Continued

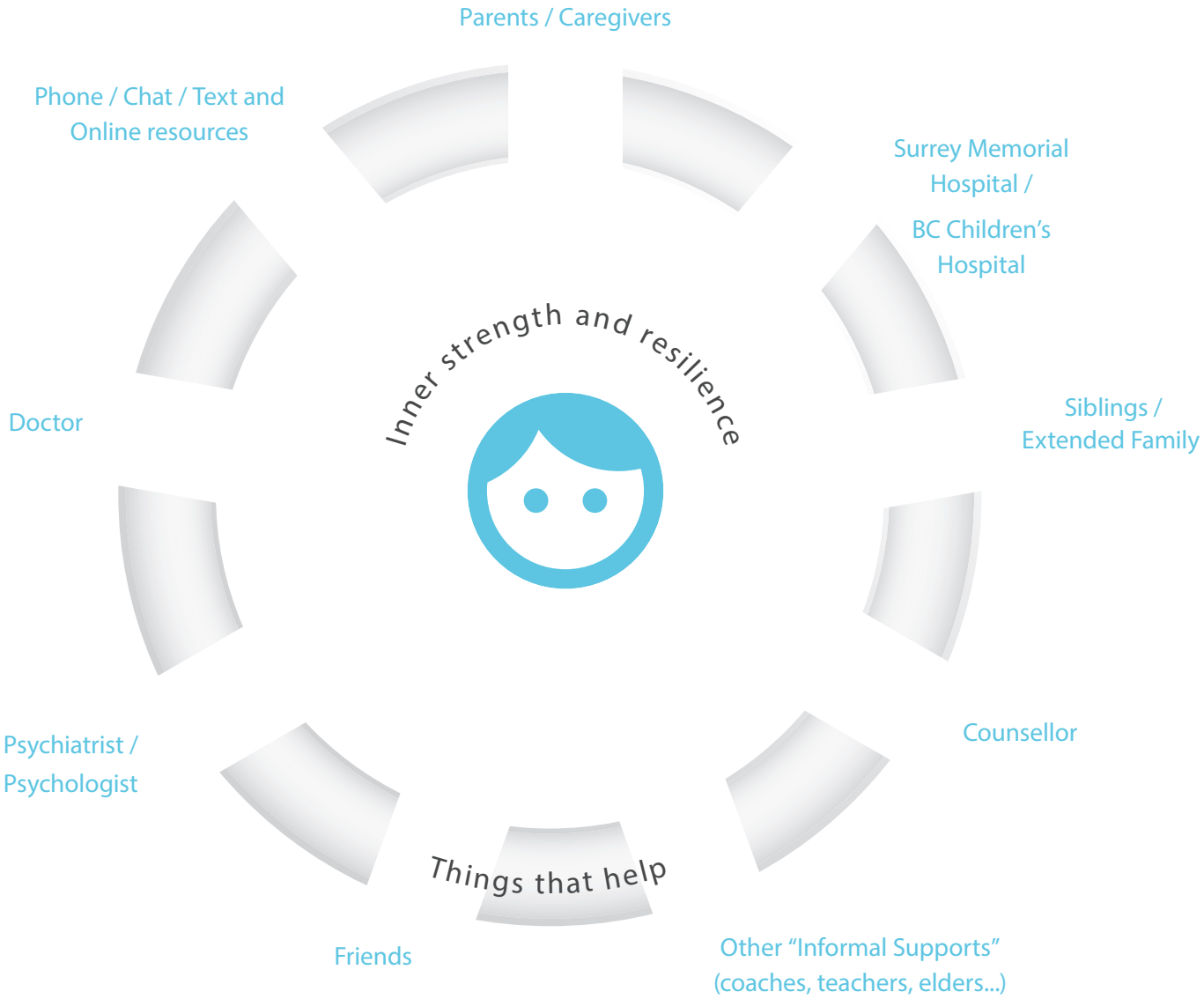
Have you experienced:

- Recent loss or a series of small losses?
- A recent suicide in the community / family?
- Loss of a close friendship / romantic relationship?
- Your parents often being mad at you / blaming you for stuff?
- Confusion about gender identity and / or sexual orientation?
- Previous suicide attempts?
- Acting without thinking it through first?
- Family history of suicide or suicidal behavior?
- Mental illness?

Circle of care

You might be feeling anxious, lonely, and isolated. It may help to focus on things, people or experiences that make you feel good; maybe it's music, nature, or a pet.

- Write down people's names and their contact information so you have these supports in place.
- Sit down with someone you know and trust if you have trouble coming up with ideas on your own.
- Think about who you could reach out to if you are struggling and need support. Who in your Circle of Care will answer your text at 2 am and listen to what you're going through?



Reach out

Asking for Help is a Sign of Strength. You Deserve Support.

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.

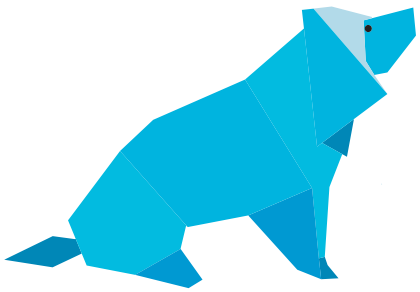
Don't underestimate your stress. If it is bothering you, you deserve support. Experiencing stress is "normal". Feeling like it's taking you down or that you have to escape it is reason to reach out for help. No matter how "big" or "small," all stress deserves care. You deserve to have someone help you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

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?" (inside front cover page), and people you have included in your Circle of Care (page 3) 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.



How can you help a friend?

Listen without judgment. Support a friend by listening to understand and telling them what you are hearing.

That means saying things like:
- "It sounds like you are in a lot of pain"
- "You sound hopeless and overwhelmed"
- "It sounds like everything is falling apart right now"

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"

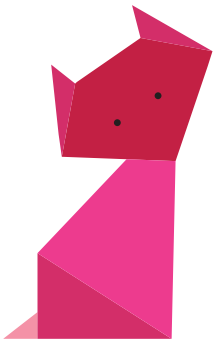
Encourage them to ask for help. Offer to go with them to get additional help. It's very important that you talk to a caring and trusted adult: a counsellor, parent, teacher, or doctor. If a friend tells you they have had thoughts of suicide, plan to die by suicide or are self-injuring, connect them with a caring and trusted adult immediately.

Suicide should not be kept a secret. It is too big and sometimes the best way to help a friend is to make sure they get the help they need.

Share the information from the "Give your mind a break" (page 6) and "Try these things" (pages 7–8) pages to support the friend in taking care of themselves.

Talk to them about connecting to local and online resources.
- Counselling
- Phone and text supports from the "Who can I call for help?" (inside front cover page)

Take care of yourself. Supporting a friend who is struggling can be challenging; make time to be kind to yourself and recharge.



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. Take time to prepare and eat healthy foods. Overall, 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 or you need some help, talk to a trusted adult. There are other options to help make sure you're getting the nutrition you need.

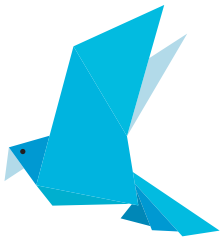
Sleep Well. It's important to unplug from this busy world and it's very important to have down time. Experiment shutting down your devices by 9 pm and turning on after you've eaten breakfast. Set a sleep schedule and stick to it. Try the free apps—"Recharge Sleep" app by ReachOut Australia.

Keep Safe. If your housing or living situation feels unsafe, talk to a caring adult such as your school mental health counsellor. If home is an unsafe place for you and / or if there is violence in your home, you can call the 24-hour Helpline for Children—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.

Key point

Self-care is important. So is reaching out and getting immediate help if things are getting bad and you think you might hurt yourself.

Try These Things



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 breathing; visualizing it for a few 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 backseat and express yourself through lines, brush strokes, colors, or a collage. Don't know where to start? (Try this experiment: paint, draw, write, or collage an image of "who I am." Include all the different parts of yourself that you know and have known over the years. You might include parts of yourself that are playful, loving, stressed out, upset; animals or people you admire / love, things you enjoy or have enjoyed such as music, sports, dance, etc. Put it all down; there is no right or wrong. There is no one to judge this self-expression.)
- 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 helps us to feel connected and calm. We learn a lot from being in nature. Nature is alive and thrives, responds to change and survives. A 100 year old tree builds a solid foundation, draws nutrients from the environment and can bend in a strong wind—it has survived many storms.

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Try These Things Continued

Get back to the animal kingdom

Snuggling with a dog, cat, horse… really does help. Research tells us the brain responds positively to connecting to animals.

If you don't have a pet, you can ask to volunteer with the Delta Community Animal Shelter (DCAS) Email: dcas@delta.ca or call 604-940-7111 or borrow someone else's.

A counsellor can work with you on lots of ideas like these. The more practice you have and the more tools you have, the less likely you will think of suicide as your only option. There are lots of options. Expressing yourself, taking care of yourself, and asking for help take practice.

The best way to prevent mental health challenges from getting worse is to recognize symptoms early and get professional help. Many mental health challenges and disorders can be treated successfully. When the signs are recognized early, that person can get started on the path to a full recovery. Talk to your family doctor or visit:

Child & Youth Mental Health Walk-in Clinic:
Every Thursday morning from 9 am – 11:30 am
New clients only.
220 – 5000 Bridge St., Ladner / 604-940-7900
Youth over 12 can attend without parents / caregivers.

They may refer you to free counselling programs at Deltassist and Boys & Girls Club.

Deltassist: (0-19)
202 – 5000 Bridge St., Ladner 604-946-9526
Monday to Friday: 9 am – 4:30 pm

Boys & Girls Club: (13-19)
205 – 5000 Bridge St., Ladner 604-591-9262
Monday to Friday: 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

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

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

keltymentalhealth.ca
The Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre has some "Youth in Residence" who are youth "who have experience with mental health challenges, and provide support, navigation, and resources to other youth from across B.C." Access them for peer support:
Monday – Friday from 10 am – 5 pm by phone 1-800-665-1822 or email keltycentre@cw.bc.ca

ReachOut.com (Australia)
An online resource dedicated to teaching how to get support when we need it. There is great information on this site about all sorts of things that might be affecting you, and they have a couple of great apps.

mindcheck.ca
Information, resources and accessible screening tools related to mental health and substance use for youth and young adults.

heretohelp.bc.ca
Information, support, and youth-accessible screening tools for mental health, substance use, etc.

mindyourmind.ca
Mental health information, support and resources for youth.

familysmart.ca
Support for families to work with professionals and systems to understand and meet the mental health needs of families, children and youth.

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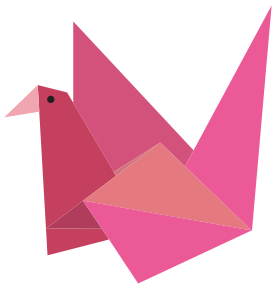


Use technology as a support: websites, apps, and other resources Continued

youthspace.ca
Support and information for youth under 30. Online chat and text support, moderated forum, resources and link to ongoing email counselling at Pacific Centre Family Services.

youthinbc.com
Resources on specific topics including depression, anxiety, suicide, self-injury, etc. Also has free mindfulness meditation and access to online help.

calm.com
Free and easy guided relaxation.

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. It also helps you create and pull up your customized safety plan in times of need. It is free of charge through Apple App Store or Google Play. You can find more information about it at my3app.org

Mind Shift
Anxiety BC has a free 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 or 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 resources 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

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.

Stop, Breathe, Think
This free app inspires people of all ages to develop kindness and compassion in everyday life.

LifeLine: National free Suicide Prevention and Awareness App

You're not alone

Some stories from others who have suffered…and reached out…and felt better

Freedom

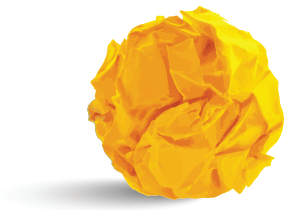
At only 19, I have been through a lot in my life and have dealt with so many issues. Even though I'm not perfect now, I have found ways to help me deal and have overcome everything that I have been through. When I was younger, I was never really accepted by anyone, school, family, anything. I just have always felt as though I didn't belong.

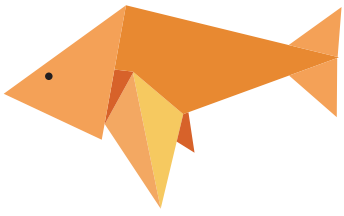
To add to the sense of not belonging, my parents split up. For about a year after that, my cousin was sexually abusing/raping me. I never felt connected enough to my parents or family to tell anyone, fearing that they wouldn't believe me. Therefore, I kept all of this pain inside making me feel as though I was messed up, dealing with depression, anger, bitterness and hurt. I was always looking for happiness and a way out of the dark hole I was in. I started hurting myself because I just felt a sadness that would never go away. I was never liked by anyone, so I tried changing my physical appearance, by becoming prettier and "acceptable."

So, I started to become anorexic and bulimic. When those things didn't work, even though I was still practicing them, I started getting in with the wrong crowd, abusing drugs and alcohol. I was completely messed up, to the point where all of these things almost took my life. And, even though things have gotten better, I still mess up from time to time.

I finally have control over my life. I have found God, which helps tremendously. But for those of you who aren't religious, I have found music, and art, and friends who just help me get me through my day. I realized that all of those things that I was looking in for happiness only made things worse. Even though I got a temporary high/happiness from them, they only dug me deeper into my darkness and made my life worse. I don't need those things. What I need in my life is happiness and peace, and the way to do that is to not let those things control my life and my overall being. There are many ways, such as music, art, and friendship, that have helped me overcome everything I was bound by. There are ways out, and things get better.

umatterucangethelp.com/index.php/your-stories/item/177-one-person-can-help





From survivor 911

Hindsight is a mean creature. Imagine the lives that could be saved, if we knew today what we will find out tomorrow. Suicide stole a friend of mine. As cliché as it sounds...suicide really did steal a piece of everyone who knew him that day.

I'm 20, and I'm sitting at a friend's funeral. I didn't think this was coming for another 50 years. Ten days earlier, we'd been chatting away, making plans to catch up. The next day, he took his life. He didn't seem himself the weekend before he did it. I knew he wasn't happy and we were worried. I asked him if he was going to "do something silly" but he said he "was fine," so I assumed he was. I spoke to him the next day and he said he was great, and we organized to go to a football game the next week.

The following day, driving to work, I heard there was an "accident" nearby and someone had died, a suspected suicide. Something told me it was Dan, but common sense took over. Friends of mine don't die, and they sure as hell don't commit suicide. I sent him text messages from work, no reply. I figured he was just busy. No reason to freak out. I finished work, walked outside, and my mom was there. Odd. She'd been phoned, and had come to tell me and drive me home. "It was DAN." Everything hit me. Anger, frustration, guilt and shock.

I didn't know what was going on. I had to give a statement to the police, something that scared me. I thought people would think I was a terrible friend for not speaking out when I suspected he might do something like he did. I was mad at Dan for putting me in this situation. Why didn't he speak out? I'd never faced anything like this, and for once, I didn't know if I could handle things on my own. I had a million things going on in my head and I really needed to get it out. My parents didn't know what to do as it was, and my friends were struggling as much as I was. I should point out that I'm not a big fan of deep and meaningful conversations (ie. I run as far away as possible as fast as I can at the sound of "we need to talk...") but I knew I had to talk to someone. I started to talk to a friend. It was awkward talking about stuff I'd spent 20 years avoiding. I stuttered my way through the story and "how I was feeling" but it was such a relief to get it all out of my head. I told everyone else that things were fine, and hid my feelings behind laughter and a bubbly, "no worries" exterior. I was still struggling but things seemed so much easier with someone behind me who knew the story.

As with life, things changed, and I found myself falling back into old habits. I stopped talking about things. Things were piling up on me big time. It felt like a brick wall had fallen from the sky, blocking my way and I'd been given a toothpick to bury my way through. I'd never felt so overwhelmed. One day when things all seemed too much, I took a packet of prescription painkillers. Death scared me, but I'd had enough of the crap going on in my head. Death wouldn't keep me up at night. It couldn't get worse every day. I just didn't care what happened. It was up to the drugs now. I wasn't crazy, I was just really sad.

Jump forward a couple of days. I'm sitting in a shrink's office. My worst nightmare sitting in front of me asking me "how I was feeling." The consultation seemed to drag on and on. He was my dad's age, and talked to me like I was ten. Needless to say, I wasn't keen to head back to his nicely decorated office. Strongly encouraged by my GP and a few awesome friends, I went and saw another psych. He was young, relaxed and seemed pretty cool compared to the last guy. I walked out of the first consultation three months ago feeling positive, and have been going back since. Some days are still tough, but they're not nearly as overwhelming. It was a tough lesson to learn, and in circumstances, I don't wish on anyone, but I've learned that "reaching out" really is one of the most important lessons anyone can learn. If only Dan had learned the lesson.

umatterucangethelp.com/index.php/your-stories/item/177-one-person-can-help

If you are struggling with substance use issues, you can call:

- Pacific Community Resource Society (Free counselling through the Astra program)
  Phone: 604-836-6273
- Deltassist: 604-946-9526
- Little House Society (Offers 10-12 free counselling sessions)
  5061 12th Avenue, Tsawwassen 778-434-3119
- Alcohol and Drug Information and Referral Line: 604-660-9382
- Narcotics Anonymous: 604-873-1018
- Alcoholics Anonymous: 604-434-3933
- Look on delta.fetchbc.ca for other resources

One person can help

While walking down the halls of school to my classes, I would constantly hear people saying rude things about me, like I was a 'cutter' or that I dressed weird.

For years and years, this beat down on my self-confidence. Even when I was with a group of friends, I felt horrible. I spent a lot of classes crying silently or running out of the room. I felt best when I was at my house, without all the drama. Then, one day I had to stay home from school I felt so happy that day. I didn't have anyone or anything to deal with. I wanted everyday to be like this, but I couldn't think of a way to stop going to school, except for killing myself, so I overdosed on drugs.

But then I remembered something. I had one person who really cared about me. So I called her just to tell her I loved her. But the moment I heard her voice, I realized I couldn't leave; she needed me. I told her what I had done, but I was about to pass out and later woke up in the hospital. The next few days I felt sick and sad. Should I have gone through with it? Soon after that incident, I changed schools. After awhile, I felt more confident about myself, and I started making more friends. I then realized that because I wanted my life to be better, it was getting better. Just when I thought that everything was worthless, one day, one person changed everything.

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