

# DARE TO TALK

## about suicide with youth

### For professionals who work with youth ages 12 to 17.

Suicide Prevention Week is the perfect opportunity to take concrete action to prevent suicide in your community! Here are some guidelines to help you learn how to talk to youth about this topic and organize your awareness-raising actions.



#### THE IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTION

To prevent suicide among young people in the short, medium and long term, prioritize actions that allow you to intervene **before difficulties occur**. This approach promotes the development of healthy personal and social skills and it prevents psychological distress or suicidal thoughts from taking root.

Here are some examples of topics you could discuss:

- Problem solving
- Managing emotions
- Stress management
- Conflict management
- Importance of asking for help

To raise awareness in your community, you can also put mental health and suicide prevention posters up and distribute materials promoting support resources.

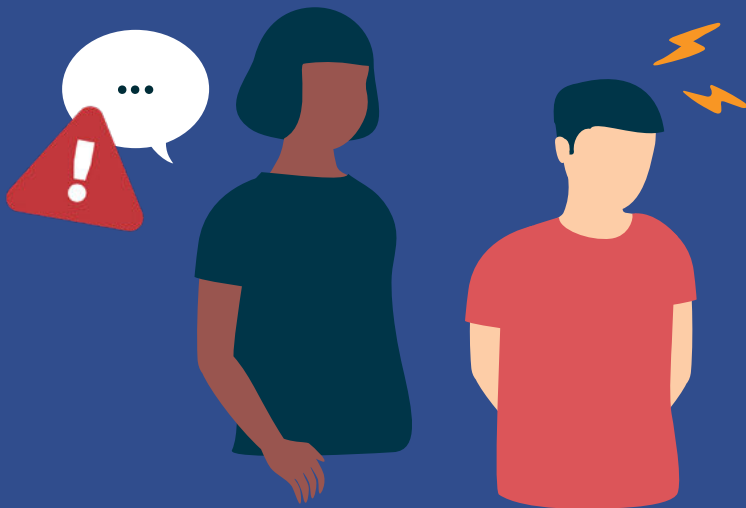
#### THE TOPIC OF SUICIDE

With youth, it's recommended that you **avoid suggesting** group discussions, school assignments or activities on the topic of suicide<sup>1</sup>. Addressing this issue directly may have more negative than preventive effects.

##### Why?

- Group discussions do not always enable you to identify young people who are experiencing difficult emotions on the topic of suicide.
- Educational activities completed at home do not ensure that the topic is being dealt with from a preventive standpoint, such as avoiding the glorification of suicide, debunking certain erroneous beliefs about suicide, etc.

<sup>1</sup>As recommended by Institut national de santé publique du Québec and Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux.



## UNDERSTAND WHAT'S BEHIND THEIR CURIOSITY

If young people in your community show interest in talking about suicide, **try to understand the motivations** behind their interest.

Here are some possible reasons:

- They need help.
- They're interested in a work that touches on the topic of suicide (e.g., film, series, book, etc.).

You should avoid promoting or distributing works that deal with suicide. Instead, target works that promote positive mental health.

If the youth you work with really want to have a discussion about suicide, contact your **local suicide prevention centre** so that you can get support from a suicide prevention professional as you organize your workshop.

## IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT A YOUNG PERSON

- Schedule a **one-on-one meeting** in a setting that encourages them to open up and confide in you
- Identify your concerns:  
"I've noticed that..."                      "I'm concerned about your situation..."
- Ask the person directly whether they are having suicidal thoughts, and avoid ambiguity:  
"Is what you're going through causing you to think about suicide?"                      "With everything that's going on right now, does that lead you to have suicidal thoughts?"
- If the young person is thinking about suicide, **quickly** refer them to a suicide prevention resource.  
"I know about some resources that could help you with what you're going through. They could help shorten the length of time your difficulties last and reduce your level of distress. Do you prefer using chat, text or phone call? Do you want me to talk to them first, or would you rather contact them yourself?"

**Choose one of these resources available 24/7:**

Phone: **1-866-277-3553**

SMS: **535353**

Chat: **suicide.ca**

- If the young person refuses to contact a support resource, or if you simply want help with the situation, contact the resources yourself.