

# Protective Factors

Certain factors help protect and strengthen youth during adolescence

## External factors

- Family cohesion, i.e., involvement through shared interests and emotional support
- Positive relationships with other youth and adults
- Academic achievement
- Opportunities to participate in social activities
- Responsibilities for other people or pets
- Adequate care for substance use, physical and mental disorders
- Lack of access to means for suicidal behaviour
- Connection to a religious community

## Internal factors

- Sense of belonging
- Sociability, i.e., ability to be a friend
- Love of learning
- Connectedness to school
- Sense of worth and self-confidence
- Self-motivation
- Service, such as community involvement or supporting a cause
- Life skills, such as good decision making, assertiveness, impulse control, coping skills, flexibility and perseverance
- Sense of humour
- Creativity, such as artistic expression
- Spirituality, i.e., faith in something greater

For crisis intervention, or further information about programs and services, please contact your nearest Mental Health Clinic.

## Mental Health Clinics:

Camrose & Tofield	780-672-1181
Killam	780-385-7161
Lamont	780-895-5817
Provost	780-753-2575
Vegreville	780-632-2714
Vermillion	780-581-8000
Wainwright	780-842-7522

## Mental Health Help Line: 1-877-303-2642 (24/7)

All services are free and confidential.

**Remember, in a medical emergency, always call 911 or visit the nearest emergency department.**



## Suicide Awareness Information for Parents and Caregivers:

Know how to respond if  
you see warning signs



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## Warning Signs in Children & Teens

### Common warning signs for suicide include:

- Making suicidal statements
- Being preoccupied with death in conversation, writing, or drawing
- Giving away belongings
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Having aggressive or hostile behaviour

It is extremely important that you **take all threats of suicide seriously** and seek immediate treatment for your child or teenager.

If you are a child or teen and have these feelings, talk with your parents, an adult friend, or your doctor right away to receive help.

### Other warning signs can include:

- Neglecting personal appearance
- Running away from home
- Risk-taking behaviour, such as reckless driving or being sexually promiscuous
- A change in personality, such as from upbeat to quiet
- Increased use of drugs or alcohol
- Problems at school, such as failing grades, disruptive behaviour, or frequent absences

(Source: myhealthalberta.ca)

### If you are concerned about someone you know...

#### Ask

- Are you thinking of suicide?
- Do you have a plan?
- Do you have a way to carry out your plan?

#### Listen

- If the answer is yes, go together to get help.
- Do not pass judgment or give advice.
- Never promise to keep it a secret.

#### Get Help

- Stay with them, and involve their family and friends.
- Suggest they speak to a mental health professional.
- If the risk of suicide is immediate, call 911, or go to the nearest emergency department.

