



BC Crisis Line Network Responds to the Government of Canada's Announcement of an \$177 Million Investment to Implement the National 9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline

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Vancouver, BC - The BC Crisis Line Network took part in this morning's announcement by the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, regarding the [Federal Government's investment to launch the national 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline](#), a national three-digit number for suicide prevention and emotional distress. The Network's members are galvanized by the government's commitment to improving the care services available to Canadians in crisis and the inclusion of local crisis centres into the 9-8-8 network.

Minister Bennett announced that the Federal Government is committing to an investment of \$156 million over three years for the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) to implement and operate the new helpline. As part of this work, CAMH will be onboarding over 40 organizations across Canada to the 9-8-8 network. The 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline will be available to all Canadians as of November 30, 2023, making it easier to access support when it's needed the most.

"We are very excited to be part of the 9-8-8 partnership. The ten crisis centres that make up the BC Crisis Line Network have been working towards an easy-to-remember, single-line solution to crisis response for over a decade," says BC Crisis Line Network chair Stacy Ashton. "The 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline is the culmination of years of work, and we are glad to be answering these calls alongside hundreds of networked crisis centres across Canada."

"Many rural or remote communities rely on the existing network of crisis lines to have accessible mental health support or resources," says Crisis Centre for Northern BC executive director, Riley Skinner. "Looking forward to 9-8-8, we are excited by the opportunity to continue working in collaboration with the other centres across the nation to ensure help seekers connect with a helper when they need it."

The BC Crisis Line Network answers 1800SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433) and 310Mental Health Support (310-6789), with three of our centres - Interior Crisis Line Network, Crisis Centre for Northern BC, and Vancouver Island Crisis Society - already answering calls from the current national suicide prevention line, Talk Suicide Canada 1-833-456-4566.

The overall investment includes an additional \$21.4 million, which is earmarked to go towards building the capacity of distress centres that are already part of the existing Talk Suicide Canada

network, so they will be better able to meet the increase in demand that will come with the launch of 9-8-8.

"We thank the Federal Government for recognizing the importance of investing in mental health crisis lines. 9-8-8 is a necessary first step in building a crisis care continuum that meets people where they are and responds with care and support until the crisis is resolved," says BC Crisis Line Network chair, Stacy Ashton.

"Our current practice of using police and psychiatric services to react to the mental health strain following the Covid pandemic is costly and restrictive. We can ensure people receive appropriate and effective help through thoughtful investment in community-based mental health care, of which crisis lines are an integral component."

The Network is committed to supporting people who need help during times of crisis. If you or someone you know is in crisis or considering suicide in British Columbia, please reach out:

Anywhere in BC 1800SUICIDE: 1-800-784-2433
Mental Health Support Line: 310-6789 (no area code required)

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