



Response to the Federal Government Announcement of New Funds to Complement 9-8-8

Addressing equity, diversity, and inclusion gaps in suicide prevention funding is crucial to ensure that every individual, regardless of their background or experience, receives accessible and equitable support when facing mental health crisis or when having thoughts of suicide.

The BC Crisis Line Network supports the Government of Canada's recent announcement to invest \$8 million in federal funding to address these gaps within Canada's distress and suicide prevention phone line sector. This initiative comes just ahead of World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10th, and it demonstrates a dedicated effort to provide comprehensive mental health and crisis intervention support for all Canadians.

The Honourable Ya'ara Saks, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, emphasized the need to ensure that distress lines and suicide prevention call centres are equipped to respond effectively to the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences of those seeking help in her announcement.

“While 1800SUICIDE, 310-6789 Mental Health in BC, and 9-8-8 nationally have access to 24/7 interpretation support to help us communicate with folks in languages other than English or French, we know crisis support is better done in the language the caller is most comfortable in,” says Stacy Ashton, Chair of the BC Crisis Line Network. “Cultural differences can be subtle. We hope this funding can make 2SLGBTQIA+, culture-specific, and language-specific crisis support readily available no matter what number someone in crisis calls.”

As crisis centres across Canada prepare to launch 9-8-8 on November 30, 2023, this initiative underscores the nation's commitment to strengthening mental health and crisis intervention resources.

The BC Crisis Line Network answers the 1800SUICIDE and 310-6789 Mental Health lines and will be 9-8-8 partners for the November 30th launch. The Kuu-Uu Crisis Line offers support for indigenous people in BC at 1-800-588-8717, S.U.C.C.E.S.S helplines at 1-888-721-0596 offer crisis support in Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Farsi-Dari, and Ukrainian.

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