



## **Media Release**

### **Response to Transforming Policing and Community Safety in British Columbia**

April 28, 2022

Vancouver, BC - Today's release of Transforming Policing and Community Safety in British Columbia by the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act is another step in our shared responsibility to respond to and support individuals in crises and suffering from mental health.

We are particularly pleased to see, as a recommendation, the need to create and appropriately fund a Crisis Care Continuum: community-based resources that provide non-coercive options for people in any kind of crisis, including crisis lines, mobile crisis response teams, and crisis care facilities separate from police cars and emergency rooms. A Crisis Care Continuum allows for least restrictive and culturally appropriate services to wrap around British Columbians in crisis situations, including those related to mental health, addictions and other complex issues.

A crisis care continuum, starting with the 24/7 capacity of BC's Crisis Line Network to handle mental health calls referred from 911, allows 911 and BC Ambulance to focus on dispatching services where they are needed, while crisis lines do what we do best: safely de-escalate 98% of crisis calls through compassionate listening, safety plans, and follow-up calls.

Crisis lines are the key in BC to achieving the vision set out in the Police Act Reform Committee's recommendations.

"Our experience handling calls from people in crisis shows that individuals experiencing mental health crisis can be de-escalated safely in community," states Stacy Ashton, executive director at the Crisis Centre of BC. "When we help people in crisis regain control of their lives, we avoid the 'revolving door' of sending folks who do not require hospitalization to the Emergency Room, accompanied by police. The COVID pandemic has shown us how important it is to conserve emergency resources. Why wouldn't we offer evidence-based, non-coercive, and effective alternatives to people in crisis?"

The Crisis Centre of BC successfully de-escalates 98% of calls it receives by providing emotional support and safety planning involving the caller's natural and community supports. The remaining 2% of calls require in-person intervention. Currently, the only option for in-person intervention is to call 911.

## **MEDIA CONTACT**

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## **BACKGROUND**

The Crisis Centre of BC is dedicated to providing help and hope to individuals, organizations, and communities.

Spanning the spectrum of crisis support, suicide prevention, and postvention, we engage staff and volunteers in a variety of services and programs that educate, train, and support the strength and capacity of individuals and communities.

We offer:

- Immediate access to barrier-free, non-judgemental, confidential support and follow-up through 24/7 phone lines and online services.
- Education and training programs that promote mental wellness and equip schools, organizations and communities to assist people at risk of suicide.