

## Suicide Awareness Council urges locals to talk during crisis

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Reaching out to family, friends, and neighbours during difficult times can help those who are feeling particularly isolated and vulnerable during our current situation.

The Suicide Awareness Council of Wellington-Dufferin stresses that anxiety, depression, and other mental health and life challenges can be can be hard to manage for some people during the current COVID-19 crisis.

Creating opportunities for open and non-judgemental dialogue about feelings of suicide is one of the most important ways to prevent suicide before it happens.

Supporting people to let them know that they are not alone and there are many people who care and will help is crucial during difficult times.

It is helpful to be able to recognize potential signs of suicide risk, said Suicide Awareness Council Coordinator, Heather Glenister. A few of these include suicidal threats, talking or joking about suicide, expressions of hopelessness, helplessness, and desperation and changes in personality or mood. By being alert to changes in behaviours, people can help someone sooner and reduce the risk.

Dialogue and reaching out to at-risk people is an important step.

For many reasons, people are often reluctant to intervene when they suspect someone might be considering suicide. That includes a fear of not knowing what to say.

It is important to remember that there is no specific formula. Empathy, compassion, genuine concern, knowledge of resources and a desire to help are key to preventing a suicide.

There are many ways to foster good mental health and well-being during difficult times. This can include getting enough sleep, leaning on social networks, playing with a pet, volunteering and learning a new skill.

Coping with stress in a positive way can help to reduce feelings of isolation, anxiety, fear, and thoughts of suicide.