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Suicide Awareness Council launching ?Paws-a-thon?

The Suicide Awareness Council of Wellington-Dufferin is going to the dogs, cats, hooved, feathery and finned during Mental Health Week (May 3rd-9th).

COVID-19 has significantly heightened feelings of fear, distress, anxiety and depression. When we add social isolation, economic uncertainty and other life challenges it can negatively impact our mental wellness. This can lead to thoughts of suicide and suicide.

We don't need science to tell us that pets can foster mental well-being. They offer unconditional love, don't judge, are accepting and they can be entertaining. Council Coordinator, Heather Glenister calls it ?the ?pet-effect.? They can help us de-stress, create routines, help us to live in the moment and provide companionship. These are protective factors that reduce suicide.?

Pets can be a good starting point to talk about suicide. They are often a bridge to connecting with others which is crucial to getting help.

The Council is hosting a ?Paws-a-thon' ? 1,000 Paws for Suicide Prevention. www.paws4suicideprevention.com It's easy to get involved. Share a photo. Tag it. #pawsathon2021 #1000paws #sacwd #sacwdsuicideprevention. Post it to social media. Alternatively, people can send their photo to suicidecouncilwd@cmhaww.ca. The Council wants to build suicide awareness one paw at a time. Check back to the website to see how many paws have taken up the challenge.

?We know that not everyone has a pet,? says Glenister. ?There are lots of other things people can do to support mental well-being. Hobbies, exercise and staying connected with family and friends are great examples.?

Follow the Council on Twitter: https://twitter.com/SACWDCouncil and Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/suicideawarenesscouncilwellingtondufferin