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# Let's Talk About Suicide: Raising Awareness and Supporting Students

Information Session

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# Territorial Acknowledgement



# Trigger Warning

- We are covering complex material about suicide.
- Please feel free to turn off your mic and video.
- Take a break.
- This session will be moderated, please use the comments.
- Opportunity to debrief after the session.

# What suicide awareness or prevention training do you already do on your campus?

- QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer)
- ASIST
- SafeTalk
- LivingWorks Start
- Sessions we have created
- Local crisis line training
- None currently

# Session Overview

LET'S TALK ABOUT SUICIDE:

Raising Awareness and  
Supporting Students



Photo by Ashwin Photo from Pexels

Facilitator's Guide for Use with Faculty and Staff



Ministry of  
Advanced Education  
and Skills Training



- Purpose and background
- Design and use
- Practical preparation
- Emotional, mental and intellectual preparation



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# The Purpose

To reduce the stigma around suicide and to help faculty and staff acquire the skills and confidence to ask if student is considering suicide, listen to that student in a non-judgemental way, and refer the student to appropriate resources.

# Facilitator's Guide Location

BCcampus open textbook repository:  
<https://opentextbc.ca/suicideawareness/>

BCcampus Mental Health and Wellness Resources  
<https://bccampus.ca/projects/wellness/mental-health-and-wellness/>

# Background

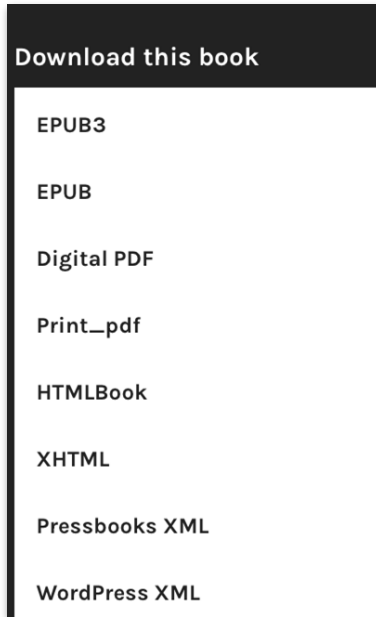
- Collaborative Project - Advisory Group with faculty, staff and students
- Funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training
- Adapted from a training written by Dawn Schell
- Authors: Dawn Schell, Jewell Gillies, Barbara Johnston, Liz Warwick



# Design

- For facilitators to offer to faculty and staff
- 2 hour session in person or online: with sample agenda, PPT presentation, group and reflection activities, practice scenarios
- Followed a framework: Accessible, Adaptable, Culturally-located, Evidence Informed, Inclusive, Trauma-Informed.
- Decolonized perspective: this can be adapted to reflect the traditional territory and Indigenous teachings where your institution is located

# Open and Adaptable



- Download in variety of formats
- Open Education Resource (OER) with a CC BY 4.0 International license: Retain, reuse, remix, redistribute without permission. Attribute source, copyright holders and authors on revisions and remixes.



# Accessibility

- All content can be navigated using a keyboard
- Links, headings, tables are formatted to work with screen readers
- Images have alt tags
- Information is not conveyed by colour alone
- There is an option to increase font size
- Download in variety of formats

# Practical Preparation

1. Download and read facilitator's guide, presentation slides & handouts
2. Review sample agenda (Getting Ready Section)
3. Familiarize yourself with campus resources, procedures and policies (Handout 1: customize this)
4. Prepare a territorial acknowledgement
5. Talk to Elders and other Indigenous wellness staff about teachings to share during this session

# Practical Preparation Cont.

6. Consider co-facilitation
7. Group guidelines ahead of time
8. Share video *Live Through This* website:  
<https://livethroughthis.org/about/>
9. Practical considerations for facilitating online or in-person



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Conversations about suicide are never comfortable, but  
it is possible to develop skills and increase confidence

# Key Learning Points

- We can all play a role
- By knowing the signs and needs, we can support students
- There are practical steps for starting a conversation
- Recognize, empathy and refer
- Listening without judgment
- Staff and faculty are not expected to act as a counsellor and should not attempt to diagnose
- Staff and faculty boundaries and self-care



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# Preparing Ourselves

Emotionally, Mentally, Intellectually



# Questions and Worries

Imagine you are about to ask someone if they are considering suicide....  
questions, thoughts,  
worries, fears, that come up?

- Might give them the idea
- Might make them worse
- Don't know what to do
- Don't know where to refer
- Don't know how to respond
- Don't have time to help
- Aware I want to rush to "fix"
- Don't know what might help
- Might upset them because they aren't thinking that

# Preparing

- Assess our own readiness to do this work
- Assess our own feelings & attitudes
  - Naming our fears and discomfort is crucial
- Assess our broader community feelings & attitudes
  - Where might be 'hot button' issues?
  - How might I respond?

# Practice Scenarios

Think fire drill

- Practicing before we find ourselves having to do it “in real life”
  - Boosts confidence
  - Reduces awkwardness
  - Allows us to identify our own feelings/attitudes, etc.
- We feel more prepared knowing what might come our way in a tough conversation
- Tailoring scenarios

# Boundaries and Care

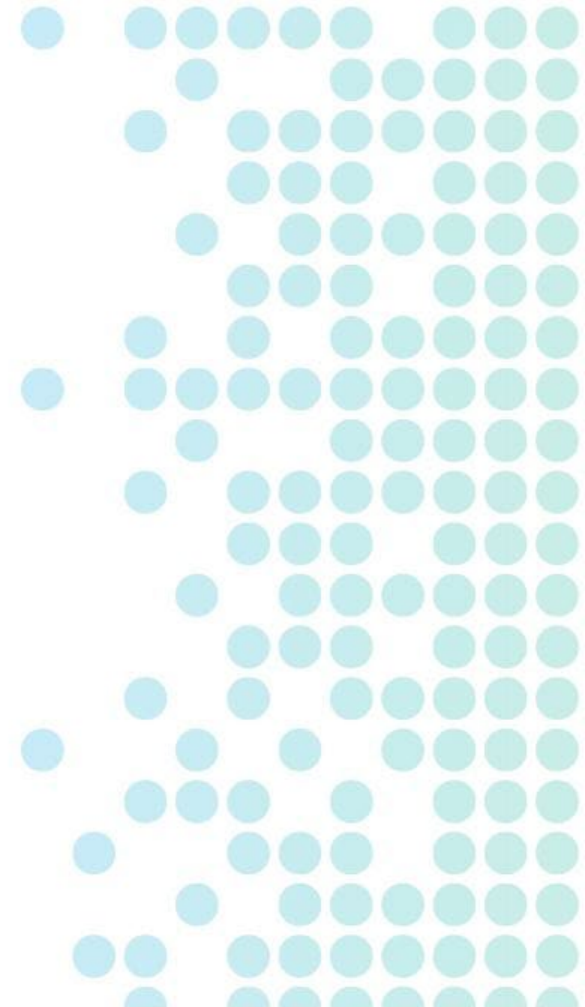
- Know your role
- Presenting on this topic can be exhausting
  - Planning ahead helps!
- Feeling as if something is still ‘sticky’?



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# Questions?



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