



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAMIMH Calls for Canadians to Contribute to a Responsible Discussion on Suicide

(Ottawa) December 6, 2013 - As members of Canada's mental health community, the Canadian Alliance for Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) are deeply saddened by losses of life by suicide.

Any suicide is devastating for families and friends. While many people, organizations and governments are doing their part to help loved ones, friends, employees, and colleagues prevent suicide and/or deal with the heartbreaking loss of a loved one, more can be done for all Canadians.

In recent days and weeks, there have been a number of widely reported cases of suicide and attempted suicide, including in the Canadian military, seniors apartment building and in a university setting. Each loss of life to suicide is a personal and societal tragedy that should cause deep reflection on how best we can move forward with prevention. Nationally, there are approximately 4000 suicides per year.

Beyond recognizing the tragedy of suicide, CAMIMH reminds all Canadians that it is incumbent on all of us to be vigilant in how we approach and speak about suicide as more than half of people with mental health problems unfortunately feel too ashamed to seek treatment. As individuals it is important that we contribute to a societal climate that encourages those who need help to seek it. We encourage all Canadians to know the [warning signs of suicide](#) and [how to ask about suicide](#).

CAMIMH also encourages the media, who play an important role in reporting the tragedy of suicides, to consider carefully how they report on suicides. The quality of reporting over the last two weeks has been inconsistent.

CAMIMH encourages the media, when reporting on suicide, to let people know where they can get help when in crisis, talk about the warning signs and what to do if someone close to you is in distress. It is important that suicides and attempted suicides not be reported on in a sensationalized way. News stories should avoid reporting specific details of the method.

Suicide is a tragedy, not something that should be presented for entertainment value or glorified. Reporters are encouraged to consult the [Media Guidelines from the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention](#).

Suicide is complex and CAMIMH members invite the public and organizations to contact us or consult the following resources related to suicide prevention in Canada:

- [Understanding Risk Factors & Warning Signs](#)
- [Know When to Ask About Suicide](#)
- [Hope and Resiliency at Home](#)
- [Hope and Resiliency at Work](#)
- [Suicide Prevention Toolkit](#)
- [What to do if you are in Crisis Now](#)
- [Media and Public Presentation Guidelines](#)
- [Suicide prevention for older adults: a guide for family members](#)

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Established in 1998, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) is an alliance of mental health organizations comprised of health care providers and organizations representing persons with mental illness and their families and caregivers. CAMIMH's mandate is to ensure that mental health is placed on the national agenda so that persons with a lived experience of mental illness and their families receive appropriate access to care and support.

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