

There are a few different mental health support lines in BC. This document is about what it's like to call the BC Suicide Hotline.

Background information about the BC Suicide Hotline:

- It can be contacted by dialing **988** or by dialing **1-800-784-2433 (1-800-SUICIDE)**.
- It's free to call.
- It's anonymous.
- It's always open: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week even on holidays. **It's never closed.**
- All hotline responders are trained. **They won't judge you.** They will show you kindness for whatever you're going through.

What to Expect When you Call:

- At the beginning of the call, they will ask if there's a name you'd like them to use for you. You can give your real name, or a fake name, or no name at all. It's your choice.
- They will then ask: *"Are you having thoughts of suicide?"*
- If you say yes, they will ask *"Have you taken any action to harm yourself today?"*
- If you say yes, they will ask *"Do you have a plan, and are you able to act on that plan?"*
- If you say yes, they will contact emergency services.

If you answer "no" to the above questions, they will take you at your word and assume you are not currently at risk of harming yourself - so they **do not** contact emergency services. Many people call the BC Suicide hotline just to talk about their suicidal thoughts, but they are not planning to act on those thoughts right now. When that happens, it's a **Support Call**. Here's what happens on a Support Call:

- Once you tell them that you are not currently at risk or in crisis, they will just listen.
- They will ask questions because they want to remain curious and they don't want to make assumptions. They might ask things like:
 - *What is it that's causing you to feel this way today?*
 - *How are you feeling today compared to when your suicidal thoughts were affecting you?*

After they ask their questions, they will offer to help you make a **safety plan** for yourself. Sometimes people get through suicidal thoughts by just taking it one step at a time. Sometimes people prefer to distract themselves from these thoughts. To help you make a safety plan, they may ask you:

- *Do you like going for walks?*
- *How can you take your mind off things?*
- *Do you like what you're studying in school right now? Can you put your focus on school for a while?*
- *Do you play sports?*
- *Do you have people you can reach out to? Friends? Partners? Family? Neighbours?*
- *Do you have professionals you can reach out to? Counsellors? Teacher? Doctor?*
- *Do you have any internal coping strategies?*

The responders aren't counselors, and they can't choose a counselor for you. They may ask if you already have a counselor or mental health professional you could reach out to.

The call usually ends when:

- They know that you are not in immediate crisis
- They know you do not have a plan to harm yourself
- They know you aren't in danger of harming yourself
- You and the counselor have built a safety plan together that works for you.

There is no 'average' or 'normal' amount of time to talk to someone on the hotline. However long you need is however long you need. Lots of different kinds of folks reach out to the hotline - including people with **intellectual or developmental disabilities**.

No matter who is calling, the responder will always be inclusive, compassionate, and non-judgemental. They will respect your privacy, and **they won't pressure you to give them any information you don't want to**.

You can also call this hotline:

- If you want to know how to support someone who has suicidal thoughts
- If you have a question about mental health resources for suicide.