

9-8-8

**Suicide Crisis
Helpline**

9-8-8: Canada's New Three-Digit Suicide Crisis Helpline

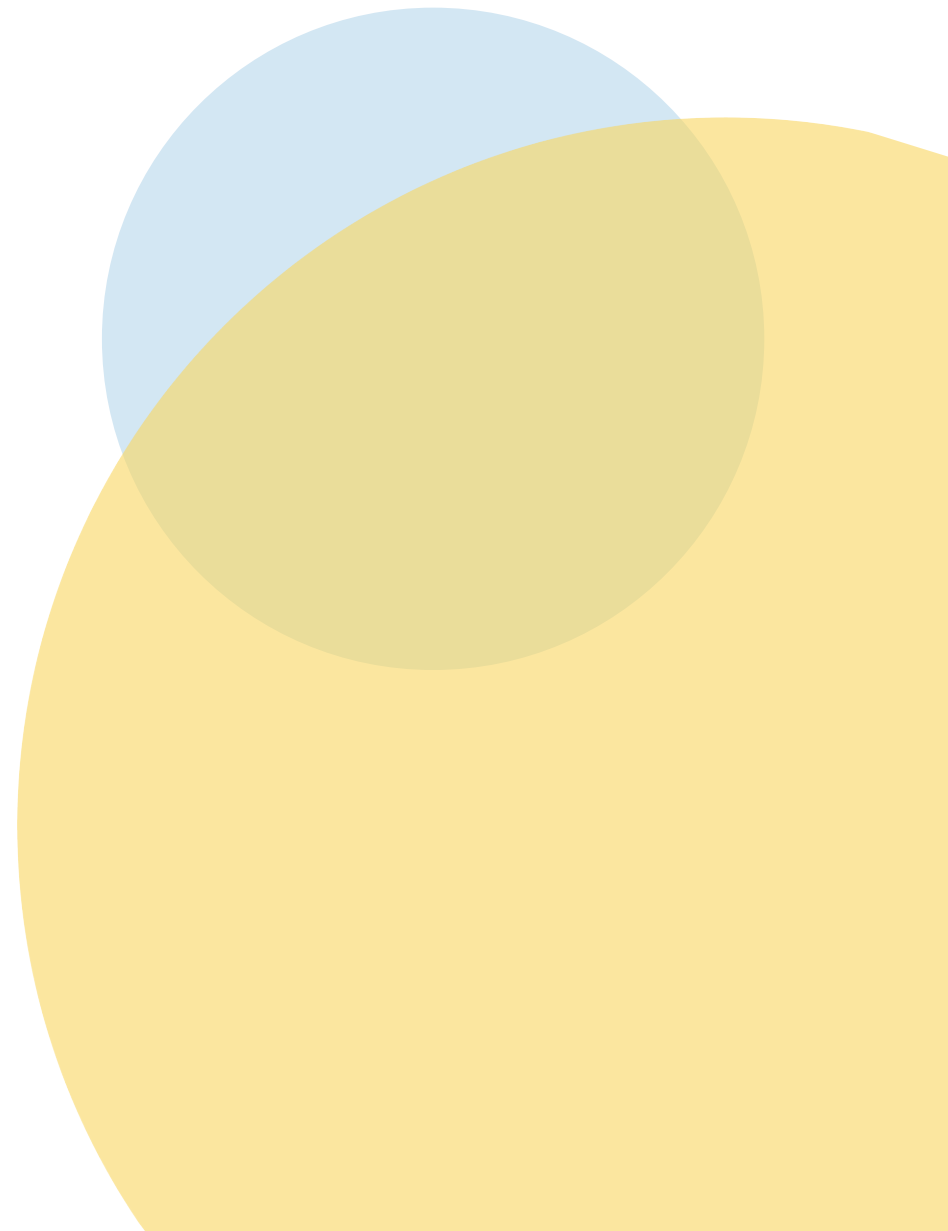
IRMHP Webinar

Tuesday, March 5, 2024, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. ET

Agenda

- 01 Introduction to 9-8-8
- 02 How 9-8-8 works
- 03 Myths and facts about suicide and helpful resources

01 Introduction to 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline



Background

- Suicide affects people of **all ages and backgrounds**.
- Every day, **approximately 12 people die by suicide** in Canada – 4,500 per year.
- For every person who dies by suicide, **as many as 135 people** can be impacted by the loss.
- Research shows that the simple **power of connection** can create newfound hope and start a path to recovery.

- 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline, Canada's **new three-digit suicide prevention helpline**, launched November 30th, 2023.
- The **Centre for Addiction and Mental Health** in Toronto, Ontario is leading and coordinating the delivery of 9-8-8 nationwide.
- Funded by the Government of Canada, through the **Public Health Agency of Canada** (\$158.4 million).

9-8-8 makes it as simple as possible to get help, when it's needed most.

- ✓ Easy to remember number.
- ✓ English and French.
- ✓ 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- ✓ Available across Canada.
- ✓ Live support by phone and text.
- ✓ Toll-free.



Who Should Call or Text 9-8-8?

- 9-8-8 is here for anyone who is **thinking about suicide**, or who is **worried about someone they know**.
- Everyone who reaches out to 9-8-8 will be assessed for suicide risk.
- The goal is to prevent suicide by making it as simple as possible for people to get the help they need **in the moments they need it most**.

No one who reaches out to 9-8-8 will be turned away.



Children and Young People

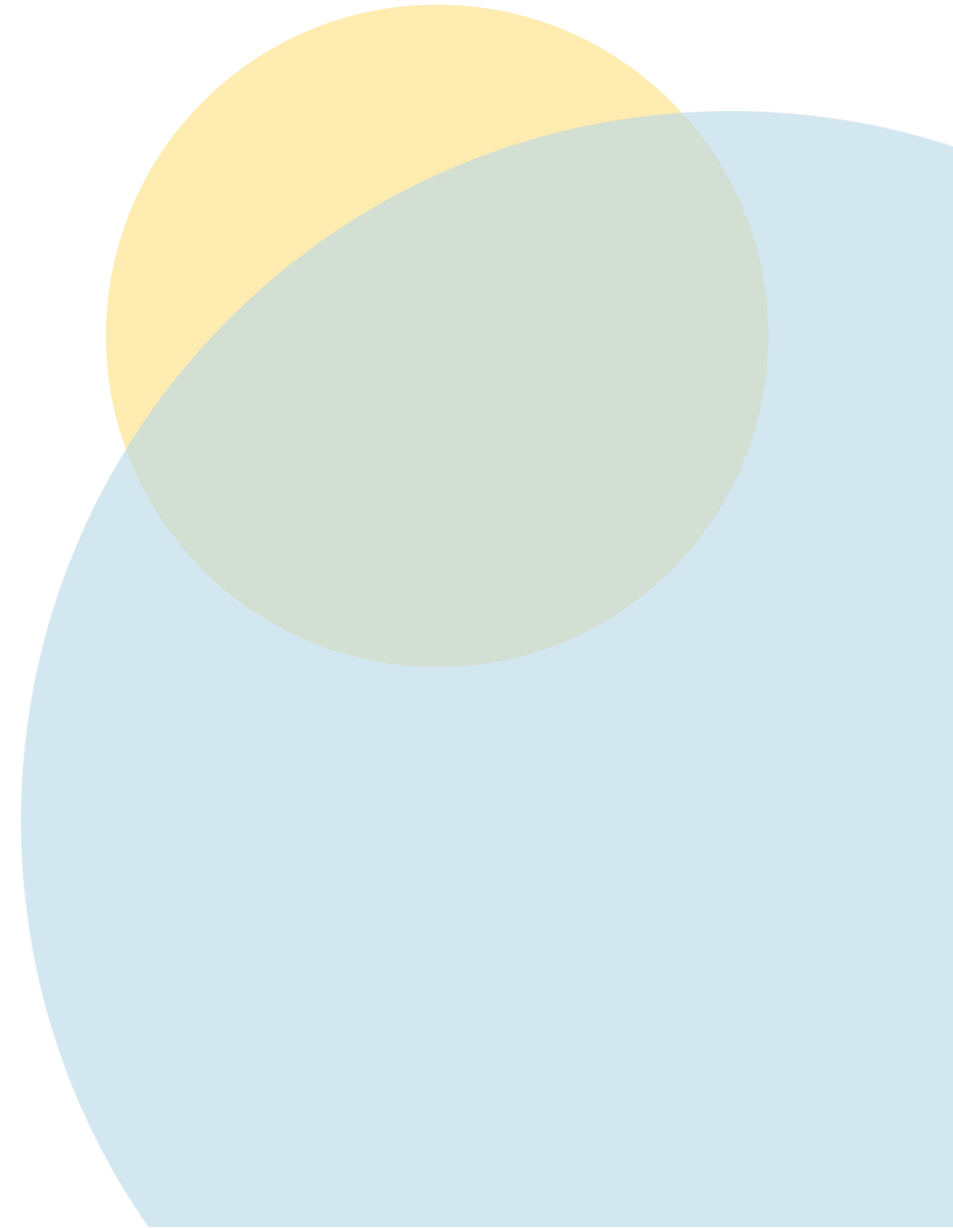
- Children and young adults can access specialized support.
- Kids Help Phone is one of several partners providing support to children and young people.
- Everyone who calls or texts 9-8-8 will have a suicide risk assessment- while it is recommended for children and youth to engage a responsible adult in safety planning, we know this is not always possible.
- If the young person does not feel comfortable speaking with a parent or guardian, the 9-8-8 responder will help them think through who else in their life they might feel safe confiding in.



Culturally Affirming Support

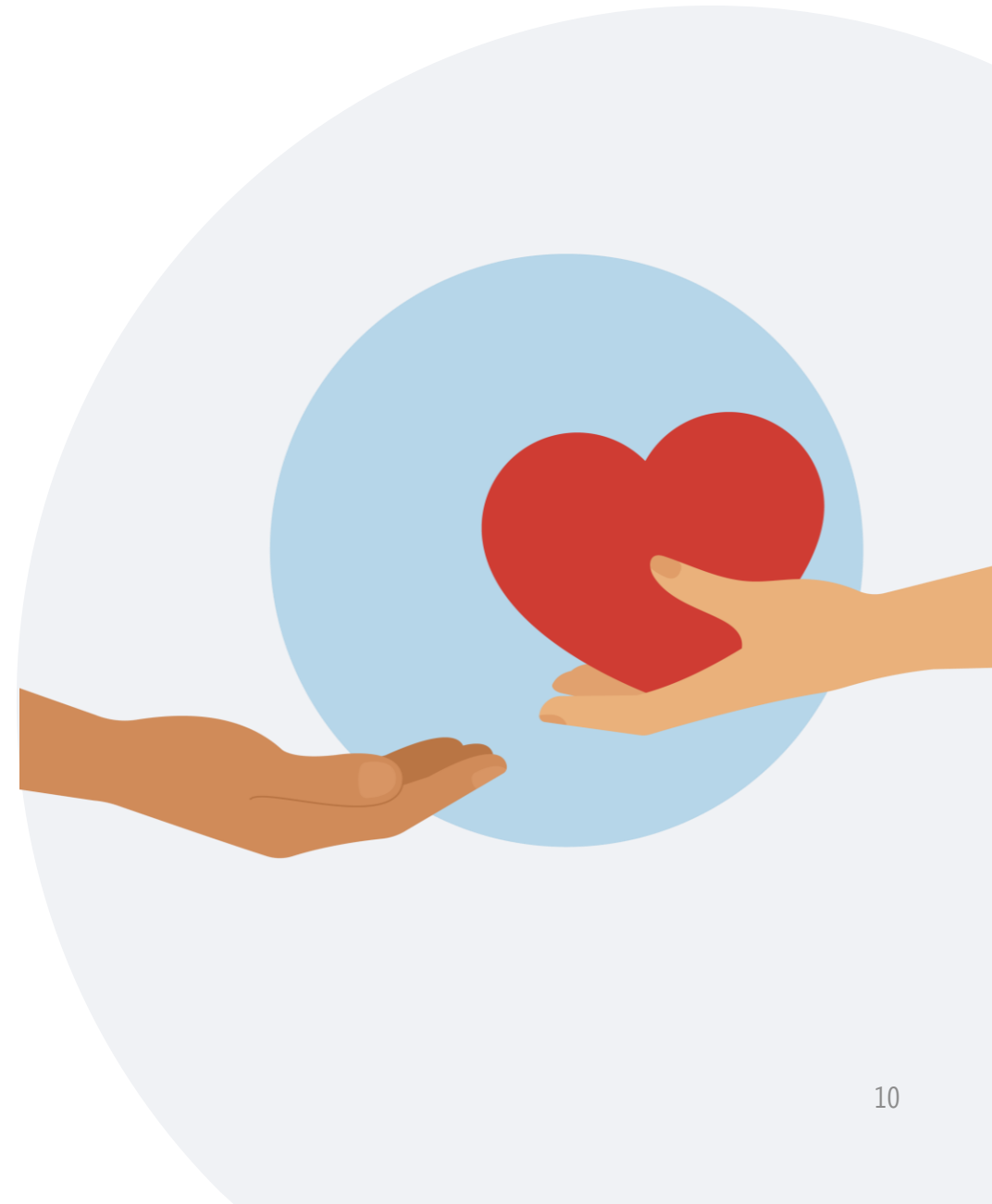
- Cultural safety is a key principle of 9-8-8.
- 9-8-8 responders are trained to understand the importance of a caller or texter's values and preferences, and embrace cultural humility.
- 9-8-8 is committed to providing culturally affirming support.
- Responder training is informed by best practices and engagement with organizations representing populations most affected by suicide.
- 9-8-8 is partnering with the Hope for Wellness Helpline, who specialize in supporting First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities.
- Hope for Wellness offers support in Cree, Ojibwe (Anishinaabemowin), and Inuktitut.
- Other 9-8-8 partners provide support in languages other than English and French, via interpreting services.
- ASL/LSQ interpretation will be provided to callers who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing via the Canada Video Relay Service.

02 How 9-8-8 Works

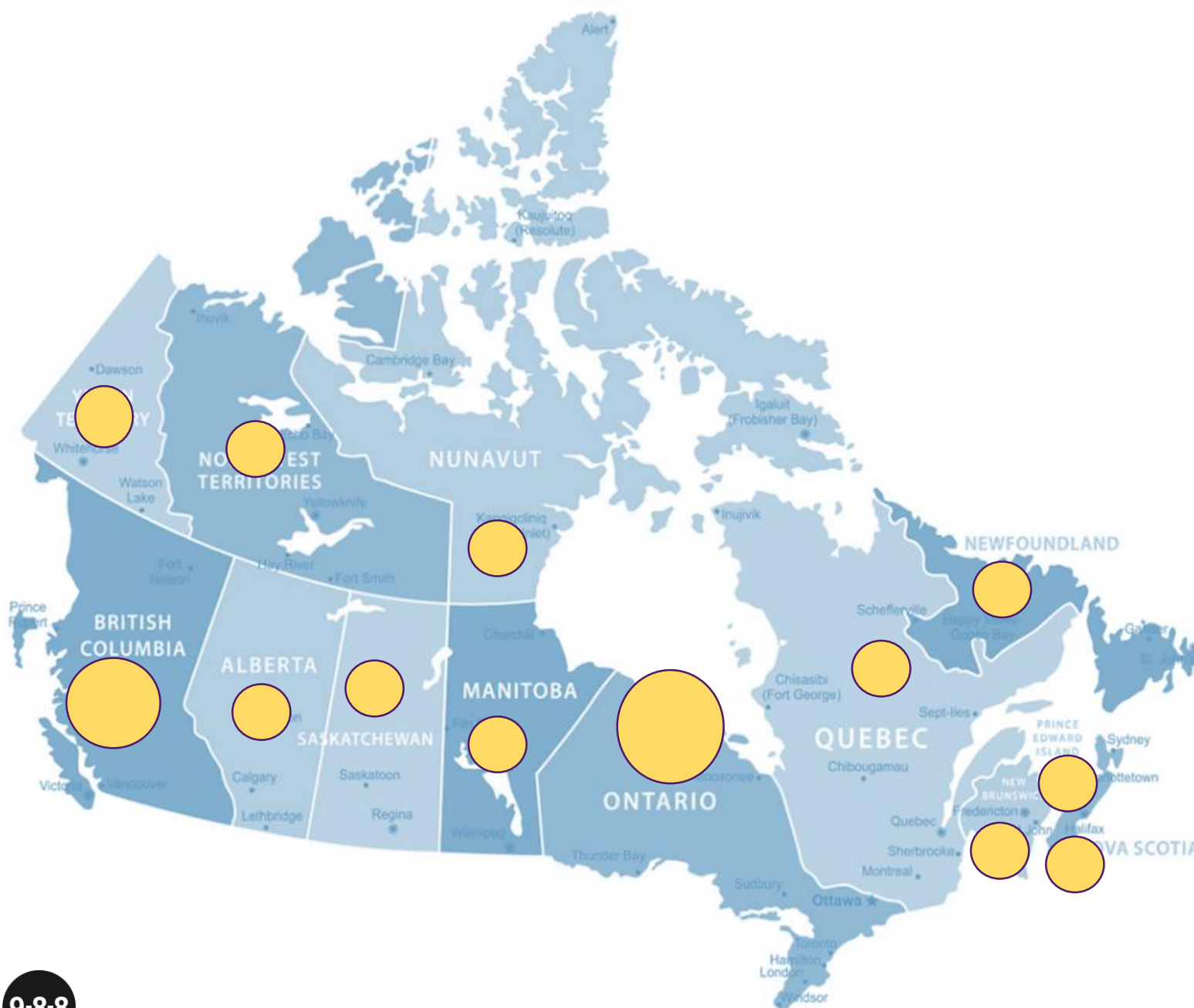


A Network Model

- 9-8-8 Partners are the backbone of the service.
- Calls and texts to 9-8-8 are answered by **trained responders** at one of over 40 local, provincial and territorial, and national crisis lines, who **co-deliver** the service.
- All partners provide **existing crisis services** within their communities, and also take 9-8-8 calls and texts.
- Some partners provide national services for **specific populations and communities**:
 - First Nations, Inuit, and Métis can connect to **Hope for Wellness** through 9-8-8.
 - **Kids Help Phone**, along with other partners, supports callers under 18.
- GTA-based partners include **Distress Centres of Greater Toronto, Gerstein Centre, and South Asian Canadians Health and Social Services.**



Support Close to Home



- A growing network of experienced local, provincial and territorial, and national helplines.
- Where possible, callers and texters will be routed to the nearest available responder.
- A “hub” of trained responders, based across the country, provide crucial additional capacity when a local responder is not available.
- In some parts of Canada, calls and texts will be routed directly to a provincially-led crisis service.

What happens when you call or text?

1

You will hear or see a brief recorded message to let you know you are in the right place.

2

You will be able to choose options to make sure you get the support that works best for you., including whether you'd like to connect in English or French.

3

You will hear or see an important message about privacy, and a link to where you can find out more.

4

You will reach a responder, who will:

- Listen and give you space to talk.
- Offer empathy and compassion.
- Help you find ways to create safety when things feel overwhelming.



9-8-8 Responders

- All 9-8-8 responders are trained in suicide prevention using **best practices, procedures and protocols** in crisis/distress interactions.
- Training covers topics such as:
 - How to assess suicide risk
 - How to practice active listening
 - Working with the individual on coping techniques
 - Collaboratively creating a safety plan.

03 Resources



Myths and facts about suicide

Myth: Suicide is caused by mental illness

Fact: There is no single cause of suicide.

Having a mental health problem can increase your risk of suicide, but many factors and circumstances can contribute to someone's thoughts of ending their life. Things like loss, addictions, trauma, depression, serious physical illness, and major life changes can make some people feel overwhelmed and unable to cope. It isn't necessarily the nature of the loss or stress that makes someone want to end their life — it's the feeling that these things are unbearable. Talking to someone about what you are going through can help ease that pain.

Myth: It's dangerous to ask someone if they are considering suicide

Fact: Talking safely about suicide does not increase suicidal thoughts.

Asking someone if they have been thinking about suicide can open up the conversation and help them share their feelings. They may well be glad that you asked.

Myth: Suicide is a sign of weakness

Fact: Suicide is not a moral weakness or a character flaw.

It is not selfish or a cry for attention. These ideas are all part of the stigma that surrounds suicide. Stigma can cause someone who is thinking about suicide to believe that their feelings are something to be ashamed of. It is dangerous and can stop people from seeking help. That is why it's so important to talk about suicide, so we can break down the shame and stigma that surrounds it.

Myth: Suicide can be predicted

Fact: Even trained professionals cannot always predict who will end their life.

It is never anyone's fault for "missing" the flags, or not being able to predict and prevent suicide. However, there are signs that someone may be thinking about suicide, and we can always open a conversation.

Myth: Someone considering suicide only wants to end their life

Fact: Most people who attempt suicide don't necessarily want to die, but they do want to end their emotional pain.

They may be overcome with hopelessness and unable to see another way out of their situation. They may have lost their sense of connection to the people around them. But thoughts of suicide can pass, and people who have thought about or attempted suicide in the past can go on to live full and rich lives when they receive the support they need.

Promoting 9-8-8 in your community

- Resources to help spread the word are available for download including:
 - Posters
 - Wallet cards
 - Social media posts.
- Order form for printed resources coming soon.



<https://988.ca/get-involved>

More resources

- Local, regional, national and community-based crisis line services: <https://988.ca/community-resources>.
- Links to find out more about how suicide impacts different populations: <https://988.ca/understanding-suicide/facts-about-suicide>

Presenter contact information

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