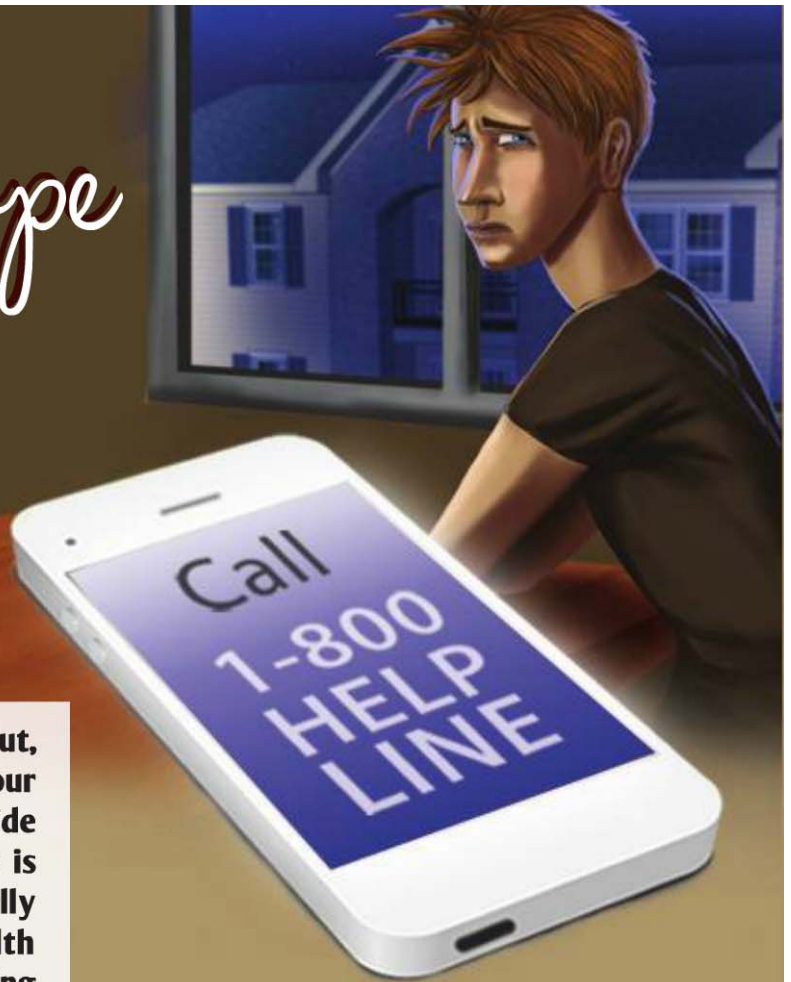


# There is Hope & THERE IS HELP



Issues of suicide are often not talked about, but the reality is that it touches all of our lives. Over 800,000 people die by suicide every year across the globe, and suicide is the second leading cause of death globally among 15-29 year olds (2014 World Health Organization 2014 report on Preventing Suicide: A Global Imperative).

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified and queer (LGBTQ) and questioning youth are at much greater risk of suicide than their straight-identified peers. 33% of LGBTQ youth have attempted suicide, in comparison to 7% of youth in general, and 47% of trans-youth have thought about suicide in the past year alone. Thoughts of suicide are even higher among teens who come from rejecting families or who have been bullied or harassed. (EGALE Report on Outcomes and Recommendations from the first national Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Two

Spirit, Queer and Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth Suicide Prevention Summit)

Although it is a difficult subject, there are many ways to help! Knowing the signs can help you identify risk factors in yourself and your loved ones. Joining a gay-straight student alliance (GSA), building strong relationships with your friends, family and peers and celebrating diversity of all kinds can help build a culture of positivity and inclusion in your school and community, reduce the stigma of

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mental health issues and let those in pain know that they are not alone and can access help, support or services when they need them.

If you are feeling suicidal, or know someone who is - you are not alone and it is not your fault. There is hope and help for you. Nothing is impossible! You are a beautiful, special person with tremendous potential for a better tomorrow.

This awful feeling is temporary. There are people who sincerely want to help you. If you are feeling alone and sad right now, here is how you can get the help you need:

- 1) Call or talk to someone you trust.
- 2) Go to a place where you feel safe. Many schools have gay-straight student alliances (GSAs) or designated safe spaces for this purpose. Community-based organizations such as Pride Centres also often offer youth-focused groups and support.
- 3) Call the 24/7 Crisis Support Centre at (780) 482-HELP (4357). The Crisis Support Centre has trained staff experienced in providing counseling to LGBTQ youth.
- 4) Visit one of these sites to access more resources for teens struggling with sexual and gender identity:

- Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services, University of Alberta: [www.ismss.ualberta.ca](http://www.ismss.ualberta.ca)

- Camp fyrefly, Canada's largest LGBTQ youth leadership retreat: [www.fyrefly.ualberta.ca](http://www.fyrefly.ualberta.ca)

- Alberta Education, resources on homophobic and transphobic bullying and guides for starting a GSA at your school: [www.education.alberta.ca](http://www.education.alberta.ca) & [www.bullyfreealberta.ca/homophobic\\_bullying.htm](http://www.bullyfreealberta.ca/homophobic_bullying.htm)

- Alberta GSA Network & Conference: [www.ismss.ualberta.ca/GSAConference](http://www.ismss.ualberta.ca/GSAConference)

- EGALE, Canadian LGBT human rights organization: [www.egale.ca](http://www.egale.ca)

This bad time will pass and you will be happy again. Connect with the people, places and services that can help you feel better. If you need help because you are feeling suicidal, please call now.

*Article provided by: The Society for Safe and Caring Schools & Communities ([www.safeandcaring.ca](http://www.safeandcaring.ca))*

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