



THE SUPPORT NETWORK

Listener

Edmonton's Distress and Information Centre

March 2002

Feeling Better, Safer, Connected

Joan Wright, Executive Director

It is important as an organization to make sure we know why we do what we do — to ensure we are meeting a need in our community and helping to make Edmonton a better place for us all.

The Board of Directors for The Support Network has established outcomes for our programs voicing the difference our services should make. These include:

- ❖ Individuals', families', and the community's abilities to manage their distress will be improved.
- ❖ The level of risk of injury or death to self and others will be decreased, and
- ❖ Our clients knowledge of and ability to access services will be increased.

In a nutshell — our clients will **feel better, safer, and connected** as a result of our services.

In 2001, 85% of callers who received a referral from our Community Service Referral Line contacted the agency or program given. From a surveyed group of Distress Line callers, 81% had formed, with the assistance of a Distress Line Listener, a plan of action that would help them deal with their crisis situation; and, 75% of Walk-In Counselling clients reported positive outcomes after one session.

Other outcomes have been established that relate to the effective and efficient operation of the organization and the Board of Directors. Our 2001 Annual Report will be available in April and will report on these agency outcomes. If you would like a copy, call us and we will be pleased to send you one, or you can read it online at www.thesupportnetwork.com.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to invite you to our Annual General Meeting to be held April 17. Please come and hear about the successes of our past year and the new and exciting directions for the next.

One of our newest initiatives is a *Volunteer Information and Referral Service*. This service builds on the existing Community Service Referral Line (482-INFO) and The Support Network's web enhanced database. We will provide callers who have volunteer inquiries with contact information for organizations that have volunteer opportunities. Information and Referral Specialists will help callers find relevant volunteer jobs that match their needs: issues of interest, geographical area, population served. If you are interested in volunteering, call us or visit our website for information on community opportunities.

And finally, none of our work would be possible without the generosity of our many donors, volunteers, supporters and funders. We look forward to another year of growth and development in our programs.

Annual General Meeting

Join us to hear about our successes.

April 17, 2002

11:45 am - 1:15 pm

Edmonton Petroleum Club

Rainbow Room

\$15/person

RSVP to Terry 482-0198 or
admin@thesupportnetwork.com



The Support Network programs include:

HELP Lines

- Distress Line
482-HELP(4357)
- Community Service Referral Line
482-INFO(4636)

CONTACT THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS AT 482-0198:

Publications

- *Directory of Community Services*
- *Self-Help & Support Group Directory*
- *Tough Times Handbook*

Suicide Bereavement Program

Suicide Prevention Program

Volunteer Program

Walk-In Counselling

youthone.com

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Accredited by the
American Association
of Suicidology



Lifting the Silence

Suicide Awareness Week March 10-16

On March 15, The Support Network held a first annual March in March to the legislative grounds to raise suicide awareness and to decrease its associated stigma. A short ceremony included a balloon release to honor those lives lost to suicide and to symbolize lifting the silence on this issue that affects so many.

Did you know there is help for men at risk for suicide?

99 Edmontonians committed suicide in 2000. Most of these were men – our sons, fathers, husbands, brothers, nephews, cousins, friends, neighbors, co-workers and classmates. Suicide is the leading cause of death for men in Alberta aged 10 to 44.

Why do men suffer in silence?

Suicide can happen when stress and pain are greater than the ability to cope. Men often commit suicide following the loss of a significant other or loss of income. They may feel there is no way out. Men need to know that it's okay to reach out for help: there are options.

The first step to prevention is to talk about it. Talk to a crisis line, a trusted friend, a counsellor. Reach out!

For more information on the warning signs of suicide call The Support Network for a suicide information package or visit the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) on our website www.thesupportnetwork.com or check www.suicideinfo.ca/library/feature3.pdf and Suicide Information and Education Centre www.siec.ca

Test yourself on suicide myths and find suicide information in other languages at www.befrienders.org/suicide.htm

Suicide: A Daughter's Story

I am writing this because I think that our society needs a better understanding of both depression and suicide. An understanding of depression would mean we would recognize the symptoms, and that people suffering from it would be less stigmatized when getting help. An understanding would mean that families of suicide victims would not have to suffer in silence and isolation due to the stigma regarding this type of death.

There are many myths and stereotypes about the *type* of people who suffer from depression and end their lives as a result of it. I think many of us want to believe that something like this can only happen to certain people; people who have problems, are unhappy, weak, not successful, or missing something in their life.

My dad was well loved by his family, friends, and dog Ziggy. He ended his life on June 15, 2001. He spent most of his life struggling with depression, but he does not fit the 'typical' stereotype. He was 53, happily married for 28 years, had positive and loving relationships with three grown daughters, a successful business, was artistically talented, an integral part of a tight-knit community, had no financial debts, and owned 25 acres with a house, garden, and hand-built pond. He basically had a life that most of us would consider ideal and successful.

Depression can affect anyone regardless of race, sex, age, problems being faced, financial situation, etc. For the majority of his life, my father suffered from a depression that was caused by a chemical

imbalance. He had tried professional assistance and at the time had restarted taking medication. But symptoms of depression are not always what you would expect. He was able to function in his everyday routines, unlike the stereotype many may have of someone who will not get out of bed or stays locked in a room. People who suffer from depression or commit suicide do not fit a particular image.

People who commit suicide are not necessarily weak or taking the easy way out. They are usually experiencing a lot of emotional pain and do not know any other way to stop it. They may have lost hope and feel they have no other choice.

Families left behind by a suicide face not only the loss but the stigma of it, the guilt, and the blame. Could we have done more or could we have stopped them somehow? Having people look at you and treat you differently after you tell them the death was a suicide does not help. I do not look at my father any less for the way that he ended his life. I do miss him and wish that I could have done more to help him. I will always love and remember him for the person that he was, a sensitive and loving husband, father, and friend.

If you or someone you know are suffering from depression or feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, reach out to somebody. There are many organizations, therapists, support groups or individuals who may have felt the same way, who know how to help you ... or who can just listen.

T.S.



If you, your family or friends have experienced a loss to suicide, we at The Support Network invite you to talk about your loss with us. We may be able to help you come to terms with your feelings, either through supportive conversations, participation in our Bereavement Group or through referrals to other helping agencies in the community.

Please call 482-0198.

Workshops in the Works

Introduction to Suicide Prevention

*a one-day introductory seminar for anyone
working in the helping professions*

The aim is to increase the understanding and knowledge of suicide for those in a helping relationship with people who might be at risk for suicide. Some factors that put people at risk include:

- experiencing significant losses · facing multiple stressors
- isolation · having few resources

Content addresses attitudes, warning signs, risk assessment, intervention techniques, and resources.

Choose from these dates

Wednesday, April 17, 2002 - FULL
Thursday, May 16, 2002
Thursday, June 27, 2002

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
#301 - 11456 Jasper Avenue
Cost: \$20 per person

NEW!

Suicide Intervention Refresher Training

One day seminars for those who already have a certificate for Suicide Intervention Training of 8 hours duration or longer.

Registrants must bring in or fax us a copy of their certificate before the training date. If unable to provide a certificate, please register in one of our regular 8-hour intervention workshops.

Date: Thursday April 25, 2002
Time: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
Place: The Support Network
#301, 11456 Jasper Avenue
Cost: \$20.00 per person

Call 482-0198 for further information or to register with Visa or MasterCard or register online at www.thesupportnetwork.com

Upcoming Events

Distress Line Volunteer Training

Edmonton's only 24 Hour Distress Line answers over 2,000 calls each month from people in need. We need your help to ensure those calls are answered.

We offer volunteers:

- ❖ excellent training in communication skills
- ❖ crisis and suicide intervention training
- ❖ an opportunity for a rewarding and satisfying experience.

**Next training starts
Monday, May 27, 2002**

Call Colette at 482-0198 or visit us online at www.thesupportnetwork.com under Volunteer Program for more information and/or a volunteer application.

Information and Referral Network Meetings

Information forums are held the third Wednesday of the month, from 9:00-11:00 am, at The Support Network.

Each month, three agencies present information on their programs and services on a selected topic. Here is an opportunity to learn about other organizations, network with peers, and gain more information for your clients. Share your service brochures and promotional materials with others at a resource table.

March 20: Adult Emergency Services
April 17: Legal Services
May 15: Addictions Services

Check out our website or call our office to find out about the next meeting.

*Join us at the
Tenth Annual*

Theresea Comrie Champagne Luncheon



Great food! Great prizes! Great friends!

Friday, May 3, 2002, 11:45 a.m.
The Fairmont Hotel Macdonald
❖ Empire Ballroom ❖

Tickets: \$85.00
Early Bird Draws: Thursday, May 2, 2002

Committee Volunteers

Lisa Sadd, Chair ❖ Trudy Cormier ❖ Janette Dodds ❖ Pat Fenrich ❖ Louise Forest ❖ Wilda Hay ❖ Anne Lalonde ❖ Jeanne Lundeen ❖ Rose Naqvi-Parasynchuk ❖ Tina Naqvi-Rota ❖ Brea Nickerson ❖ Deborah Ruste ❖ Susan Schwann ❖ Vivien Wulff



To reserve a ticket or a table of 10, call Laurie at 482-0198

Youthone: not just another project

by Kristen McGregor, a youthone volunteer
reprinted from University of Alberta Express News

Welcome to a typical day of a youthone.com promotion girl, canvassing the downtown festivals armed with youthone.com stickers, tattoos and volunteer information cards. People will ask what the point of the site is — and who funds it.

Youthone is a site of free expression for Edmonton youth, by Edmonton youth. After all, who knows the youth component of the community better?

After I explain this and that it is funded by The Support Network of Edmonton — "the first call for help" for people in need — most people then want to know how a funky e-zine can possibly help the community.

The answer is simple: prevention and outreach. The idea is to strengthen and build a youth community so that young people can pursue their dreams and ambitions without being restricted by social barriers. One of the most helpful parts of the site is the crisis chat and the crisis forums, where teens can go to chat about their problems or see how others have dealt with their own. It's free and can be used anonymously.

But youthone is more than this. It's fun, too. It offers loads of original content, including articles about current events written by young people and updates of all the cool things happening around town for the young crowd.

What makes youthone.com really amazing, and one of the main reasons I campaign for the site? It's the constant flow of content, which is provided primarily by volunteers. The volunteer base combined with the assistance of the staff makes youthone great, and keeps it real. Shelina, a promotions volunteer for

youthone.com, puts it nicely: "We're moving just as fast as technology does."

And for a site launched just last March, I hope it keeps on moving.

Check it out for yourself and feel free to get involved.



Youth Volunteer Web-A-Thon: Make a Pledge!

Youth One is asking the youth of Edmonton to volunteer! Join others from around the globe in volunteerism and show the world the impact we can make.

We are hosting a Volunteer Web-A-Thon during Global Youth Service Day (April 26th – 28th) where we will showcase various ways in which youth (aged up to 30) are involved in their communities. From *now* until midnight April 28th, you can go to www.youthone.com and make a pledge of volunteer hours to be fulfilled over the next 12 months.

All we need is your name, age, amount of hours you would like to pledge, e-mail, and the various areas of volunteerism you would be interested in. We will then offer you ideas and opportunities during the year on how to 'spend' your volunteer hours.

So, spread the word, make a pledge and join the global movement of youth volunteers!

Vitalize 2002: Our Future is Now

Provincial Volunteer Conference

The Wild Rose Foundation is pleased to announce that the Vitalize Provincial Volunteer Conference will be held in Calgary on June 13-15, 2002, at the TELUS Convention Centre.

Join 1400 delegates representing 1000 community organizations at one of Alberta's biggest voluntary sector events of the year. For more information, call Tim O'Donnell or Wendy Willows at (780)422-9305.

Volunteer Information and Referral Service

Looking for volunteer work is very much like looking for a paying job — only better! Expect volunteering to be a meaningful, fun way to spend your valuable time, with the added benefit of helping others. There are many ways to identify organizations looking for volunteers.

The Support Network is offering a Volunteer Information and Referral Service at 482-INFO. We will connect you with information about organizations that match the cause or issue that matters to you, the kind of people you want to serve or your geographical area. On our website, we host a list of agencies that provide community services. Many of them have volunteer programs.

Not sure what you want?

Check our website's *Hot Topics* for the "Looking to Volunteer?" page. It will lead you through a series of questions that help you narrow down your search. The more you know about what you want to do, the easier it will be to find the role you're looking for, and the more valuable you will be to the organization you join as a volunteer.

Volunteer! Enjoy the added value to your life!



The Support Network is proud to be a member of the Alliance of Information & Referral Systems, Inc.



The Support Network Listener
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Member of the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention

The Support Network is a member of



United Way
Alberta Capital Region