



MEDIA ADVISORY

World Suicide Prevention Day

September 10, 2021

Almost half of all people who rated their mental health as poor would be unwilling to call 911 during a mental health crisis.

Who do British Columbians trust when they need crisis mental health support? We engaged InsightsWest to conduct an omnibus survey of British Columbians on the theme of trust as it relates to mental health crisis support.

Overall, British Columbians rated their local crisis line, the Provincial 1-800-SUICIDE line, the 310-6789 Mental Health line, and the 811 Nurse's line as their most trusted resources in a mental health crisis, with each of these lines receiving the trust of over 80% of survey respondents. Trust in 911 and the Emergency Room was not far behind, with 75% of British Columbians trusting these resources in a mental health crisis.

The story changes when we take people's ratings of their own current mental health into account. Almost half (44%) of all people who rated their mental health as poor would be unwilling to call 911 during a mental health crisis.

In contrast, 72% of people who rated their mental health as good or excellent would trust their local crisis line. Further breakdowns of trust in resources amongst those with poor mental health include:

- 310-6789 Mental Health Support Line (68% trust)
- 811 – Nurses Line (67% trust)
- Emergency Room/Urgent Care or 1-800-SUICIDE Line (tied at 63% trust)
- 211 – Information & Referral Line (49% trust)

Supporting those who need our help the most means offering services that people trust even when they're feeling at their worst. A key fear for people who are in mental health crises is being taken to hospital against their will.

Both the local crisis line responders and the 1-800-SUICIDE and 310-6789 Mental Health Support Line responders work with callers to build safety plans that do not require police response or hospitalization. A full 98% of calls are resolved on the phone. Of the 2% that do require an intervention, half of those are with the full consent and cooperation of the caller. These calls take time, patience, and specialized crisis support skills.

Crisis centres across BC are vital to mental health crisis support. We are able to take the time that 911 cannot. Demand for our services remains high as the impact of COVID-19 on our mental health continues. While our current survey showed the overall mental health of British Columbians is better than last summer, we are still well below pre-COVID wellbeing numbers: 74% of those surveyed indicated good or excellent mental health compared to 61% last August and 85% pre-pandemic.

Incoming call volume to the Crisis Centre of BC hasn't declined; in fact, over the past few months we have had some of the highest incoming call numbers since the pandemic began.

On September 10, 2021, World Suicide Prevention Day provides a unique opportunity to engage in a conversation about mental health crisis support in BC. There were 609 deaths by suicide in BC last year (down from 652 in 2019 - BC Coroners Service Suicide Data). Ensuring trust in the services provided is key to suicide prevention and ensuring mental health crisis support.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, please call:

- Vancouver Coastal Regional Distress Line: 604-872-3311
- Anywhere in BC 1-800-SUICIDE: 1-800-784-2433
- Mental Health Support Line: 310-6789
- Online Chat Service for Youth: www.YouthInBC.com (Noon to 1am)
- Online Chat Service for Adults: www.CrisisCentreChat.ca (Noon to 1am)

MEDIA CONTACT

Stacy Ashton
Executive Director
sashton@crisiscentre.bc.ca

Jeffrey Preiss
Director, Development and Communications
jpreiss@crisiscentre.bc.ca

BACKGROUND

The Crisis Centre of BC is dedicated to providing help and hope to individuals, organizations, and communities. We offer:

- Immediate access to barrier-free, non-judgemental, and confidential support as well as follow-up through our 24/7 phone lines and online services.
- Education and training programs that promote mental wellness and equip schools, organizations, and communities to assist people at risk of suicide.

Additional Data Insights

When it comes to trust, the age of the caller matters. Only 61% of those aged 18-34 trust 911 services, while older British Columbians have a higher level of trust. Consistently, trust in suicide prevention and mental health crisis lines in BC averages 84% to 86%.

Data collected on Insight West's BC Omnibus:

Results based on an online study conducted from August 18-20, 2021 among a representative sample of 830 adults in British Columbia. The margin of error for this data—which measures sample variability—is +/- 3.4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies between totals are due to rounding.