



Children's Mental Health Ontario Santé mentale pour enfants Ontario

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Canada ranks an astonishing fourth highest in the world in suicide rates of Canadian teenagers, 15-19 years in age, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development's (OECD) first report on the well-being of children, *Doing Better for Children*.

The report, released last week on September 1st, compares data for about 30 OECD countries and couldn't be timelier.

Thursday, September 10th is *World Suicide Prevention Day*, and the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention is encouraging communities across Canada to get involved in this important day by showing their support for people affected by suicide-related deaths.

Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO), an accrediting body representing more than 86 child and youth mental health treatment centres in Ontario, champions the right of every child and youth in Ontario to mental health and well-being. Not surprisingly, it was disappointed – and disheartened – to learn of Canada's poor ranking of suicide rates among teenagers.

CMHO works to raise public awareness of children's mental health issues, including suicide, to generate discussion about this issue.

Given that in Canada there are 14.7 suicides per 100,000 boys and 5.1 suicides for every 100,000 girls, the importance of early intervention is critical so that young persons have the best possible chance at succeeding in all aspects of their life.

Doing Better for Children recommends that "in terms of overall spending...all member countries should spend more for better starts in life for younger, disadvantaged children." Funding for children's mental health in Ontario has only increased by 8 per cent since 1990.

As *World Suicide Prevention Day* fast approaches, bare in mind that 1 in 5 children and youth has a mental health issue; suicide is the second leading cause of non-accidental death among 10-19 year olds in Canada. Even more alarming is the suicide rate for aboriginal young people, which is six times higher than non-aboriginals. But help is available. And treatment works.

To view *Doing Better for Children*, visit www.oecd.org/els/social/childwellbeing. For more information on suicide prevention, visit www.casp-acps.ca. Information on kids mental health can be found at www.kidsmentalhealth.ca

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