

## [Envision Comments on Saskatchewan's Lowest Suicide Rate in 8 Years](#)

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Juli Dzuba of Envision Counselling. (File photo.)

According to the initial report from the Saskatchewan Coroner's Service, 2020 saw 134 suicides across the province, which is still 134 too many, but that's still a drop of 72 compared to the year before. The Coroner's Service is still investigating the cause of some deaths in 2020 so those numbers are not final, but after suicide rates were expected to jump during the pandemic and lockdowns, this comes as a surprise to many.

Juli Dzuba is the community outreach coordinator with Envision Counselling, and she believes that there are a number of factors that could have had an effect on this, but a big one is that we have seemed more focused on mental health in general during this last year. More people than ever have made an effort to reach out to their friends and family just for the sake of checking in.

"More people are reaching out and seeing what they can do for other people, talking about their feelings and their impacts on their mental health a little bit more, and also reaching out for those outside supports whether there are natural supports or friends and family, or are other supports that are more formal like our helplines, our counselling services, those types of things. I think it's getting a little bit easier to kind of reach out for supports in

that fashion and I also think another support that is impacting the rates is outside supports like our government supports or community services."

While suicide rates have gone down, the number of people calling mental health services has increased substantially. Envision Counselling themselves had to add over the phone services to their programming which nearly doubled how many people they were able to speak with at times, and while that may sound like a negative thing, Dzuba says that it can also mean that more people are comfortable reaching out.

"When we're talking about seeing that lower suicide rate, I think that it could definitely be that people are reaching out more. We are seeing that the numbers rose on things like support line services that are dealing with mental health and things like that, the numbers they go up. So it does indicate that that could be an impact as to why some of the suicide rates were down."

Sometimes scrolling through social media, there can be a bit of a doom and gloom feel seeing the latest reports of pandemic news, or even seeing people with opposing views arguing with one another, but there is a flip side to that coin. According to Dzuba, common struggles between people tend to also bring out the more compassionate side of people as well.

"When we're talking about a pandemic, or just like any natural disaster or things like that, our focus generally isn't on ourselves, and we kind of start focusing on what's better for the general public or the general well being of our group. I think that also might have to do with, or are definitely impacting, the suicide rates for our province."

Dzuba does credit some of the government supports that have come down to help out with mental health services. February 2 was made 211

Day, which has been set up as a confidential mental health service across Saskatchewan that can be accessed through phone, text, or web chat, and it's services like that and other government supports that have made a major impact.

"Being able to expand services, I know for Envision, we were able to expand some of our programmings to include those virtual and telephone supports which were really important and impactful during this time. Also, just creating that awareness, so supports like 211 that are online, just being get that awareness out there a little bit more and knowing that there are places that you can turn to to get awareness or education or knowledge about what is actually available in your community has been huge."

If you or anyone you know is struggling with mental health, there are a number of avenues you can look into for support. You can get in contact with [Envision Counselling by clicking here](#) or calling (306) 637-4004, or another option is calling or texting 211, or [clicking this link](#) to get in touch with someone from Saskatchewan's 211 centre online.



Saskatchewan Coroners Service

**Suicides by Year, Sex and Race, Saskatchewan, 2005 to 2020**

Sex	Race	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016(**)	2017(**)	2018(**)	2019*	2020*
Female	Caucasian	12	12	18	23	19	17	15	12	20	14	17	22	20	37	13	12
	First Nations (includes status & non-status)	14	12	15	17	13	14	15	15	13	18	12	31	19	21	26	17
	Asian	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
	Black/African American					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Metis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	1	1	0
	Other Specified Race	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Unknown	5	0	3	4	3	3	2	3	8	8	3	0	2	3	4	2
	Subtotal	32	24	36	44	35	34	32	30	42	40	34	55	46	62	44	32
Male	Caucasian	54	55	66	53	85	70	73	59	56	58	96	87	94	124	102	59
	First Nations (includes status & non-status)	24	22	29	27	28	30	22	28	13	23	32	33	33	35	41	34
	Asian	3	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	2	2	1	2	3	2
	Black/African American	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	1	0	0
	Metis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	3	5	2	2
	Other Specified Race	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	3	0
	Unknown	11	12	8	8	14	8	11	10	30	20	10	7	6	10	11	5
	Subtotal	92	91	103	88	128	109	106	98	99	102	146	132	141	179	162	102
<b>TOTAL</b>		124	115	139	132	163	143	138	128	141	142	180	187	187	241	206	134

Source: Saskatchewan Coroners Service, January 6, 2021

\*Preliminary data, not all death investigations have been concluded.

(\*\*) These statistics do NOT include deaths associated with Medical Assistance in Dying which were initially being investigated by the Saskatchewan Coroners Service and reported as Suicides. The Saskatchewan Coroners Service stopped investigating these deaths in September 2018 when regulatory amendments were made to *The Coroners Regulations, 2000*.

*The most up to date stats provided by the Saskatchewan Coroner's Service classified by race.*