

Alberta Health Services Community Helpers Program (CHP) is a peer helping program offered to youth and young adults ages 12 to 30 and adults who support youth. Coordinated by Provincial Injury Prevention, a part of AHS's Provincial Population and Public Health portfolio, CHP operates in community-based settings across Alberta. Currently, 30 partner service organizations deliver CHP in schools, post-secondary institutions, community organizations and workplaces that employ youth and young adults.

CHP's objectives include:

- enhance mental health and well-being among Alberta's youth and young adults
- improve access to intervention and treatment for those at risk of suicide in Alberta
- strengthen community capacity to develop and implement evidence-based interventions and programs that reduce the risk of suicide
- increase help-seeking behaviour in youth and young adults across Alberta
- reduce the stigma attached to mental health issues and help-seeking behaviour.

Through CHP, participants (known as helpers) learn and develop skills to connect and strengthen communities. Topics include effective communication, self-care, coping with stress, knowing when to refer people to professional services, handling crises, and suicide awareness. The program also connects helpers to community and professional support services, which bridges the community's connection between informal and formal supports.

What is needed to make the Community Helpers program work?

- A community agency, group or school that can host the program and access the target population (youth and young adults, in either post-secondary or working professions).
- Support from other community organizations to participate in training and support an increase in referrals to their services.
- A community that is ready to support program implementation.

If you would like more information about the Community Helpers Program, please contact:

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