

January 9, 2026

**Child and Youth Mental Health Resources for Families in Peace River North and South**

Dear parents and caregivers,

As you may be aware, our communities have been impacted and are grieving the loss of two young members of the community. There has been a collaborative community response from Northern Health Authority (NHA), school districts 59 and 60, Safer Schools Together, the ministries of Health, Education and Child Care, and Children and Family Development, and police to ensure that children, youth, and families are well-supported. You may have already received information from NHA or schools with resources to support your children and youth.

**We are reaching out to share additional resources, guidance and free upcoming training sessions to support families. Please see below for details.**

**Upcoming Training Sessions for Families**

Families are encouraged to attend a complimentary 1-hour online training session next week to support social media and digital safety discussions with children and youth. Youth can present worrisome online behaviours, and parents/caregivers have an important role to play in providing support and guidance. These sessions are led by school safety experts Safer Schools Together, a key partner of the Ministry of Education and Child Care in supporting school safety in B.C.

Please click on the specific date you would like to register for.

[Tuesday, January 13 – 7-8pm MST](#)

[Wednesday, January 14 – 7-8pm MST](#)

Additional information to keep your children and youth safe online can be found in the [Raising Digitally Responsible Youth](#) guide, the [erase website](#), and through the [Canadian Centre for Child Protection](#).

Connection, predictability, and supportive relationships with trusted adults are among the greatest protective factors we can offer our children and youth. Most often, children and youth are able to navigate challenging information with the support of caring adults, and open communication plays an important role in helping them feel safe.

You can support your children and youth in a number of ways:

**1. Prepare yourself emotionally and mentally**

- a. Reflect on your own feelings before approaching your child. Children often pick up on adult emotions even when unspoken.

**2. Talk with honesty and compassion**

- a. Use age-appropriate and honest language. Children do better when given clear information from a trusted adult with simple words.
- b. Listen actively, validate emotions, and reassure them that it's okay to feel sad, confused or even angry.

**3. Encourage ongoing conversation**

- a. Don't limit it to one conversation. Provide multiple opportunities to revisit their feelings and questions.
- b. Offer reassurance and follow up that you are here anytime they want to talk or need support.

**4. Watch for risks and protect your child, including online**

- a. Ongoing open conversations about online activity and using social media in a healthy way are particularly important during times of increased uncertainty.
- b. Online activity can influence how children and youth understand themselves and the world around them. Social comparison, exposure to distressing or misleading content, and participation in online communities without appropriate context may affect emotional regulation and feelings of safety.

**5. Stay connected and curious**

- a. Stay connected and curious about changes in behaviour, mood, engagement, and social connection over time and reach out for support early if concerns arise.
- b. Normalize grief and emphasize that feeling sad or confused is normal.
- c. Encourage connecting with family, friends, school counsellors and spiritual leaders.

Resources are available to support you and your family. If you are especially worried about your child and need support over the weekend, connect with crisis supports, available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, or call 9-1-1. Please see resources below.

**Resources and Supports for Children, Youth and Families****Where to Find Immediate Help (24/7) – Parents/Caregivers**

- Emergency help – call **9-1-1** or go to your local emergency medical centre
- [Suicide Crisis Line](#) – call or text **9-8-8** or call **1-800-784-2433** - support for anyone experiencing thoughts of suicide or self harm
- BC Mental Health Support Line – call 310-6789 (no area code required) – for immediate mental health support or referral
- Northern BC Crisis Line – 1-888-562-1214 or text 250-563-1214

**Where to Find Immediate Help (24/7) – Children and Youth**

- [Suicide Crisis Line](#) - call or text **9-8-8** or call **1-800-784-2433** - support for anyone experiencing thoughts of suicide or self harm
- BC Mental Health Support Line - call 310-6789 (no area code required) – for immediate mental health support or referral
- Kids Help Phone – call 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868
- KUU-US Indigenous Youth Crisis Line – call 250-723-2040 (or call 1-800-588-8717 for general line)

### Where to Find Help (restricted hours) – Children and Youth

- [Foundry Virtual BC | Access Free & Confidential Support](#) – call **1-833-308-6379** or email [online@foundry.ca](mailto:online@foundry.ca) and say from Fort St. John (Mon-Fri 10am-9pm, Sat-Sun; 10am-6pm)
- KUU-US Indigenous Youth Text/Chat - text 778-601-8009 for non-judgmental listening and problem-solving (6pm-7am daily).
- [Erase Report It Tool](#) – available for students throughout B.C. to report concerns anonymously directly to their school safety team for follow up.

### Local Services

- MCFD Child & Youth Mental Health Support (9 am – 4 pm)  
Chetwynd: 250-784-2342                      Fort St. John: 250-263-0121  
Dawson Creek: 250-784-2342              Fort Nelson: 250-774-5585
- [Saplings Mental Health Services](#) – Intake and general inquiries 250-262-8842
- [NH Virtual Clinic | Northern Health](#) – 1-844-645-7811

### Information about Mental Health

- [Depression in Children and Teens](#) – HealthLinkBC information and crisis supports
- [HelpStartsHere.gov.bc.ca](#) – mental health resources and supports
- [FamilySmart](#) – supports for parents and caregivers of children with mental health or substance use challenges
- [First Nations Health Authority Mental Health and Wellness Supports](#)
- [Teens: Helping a Friend Who's Talking About Suicide | HealthLink BC](#)
- [Mental Health and Substance Use](#) – information for students, adults and school staff through the Expect Respect and a Safe Education (erase) strategy
- [Mental Health – Kids' Health](#) – a video series for families about how to talk to your child about suicide, recognizing self-harm, and supporting your child through grief and loss
- [NH Child and Youth Mental Health and Substance Use Resource Guide for Families](#)
- [Self-Harm | Kelty Mental Health](#)
- [Suicide prevention and self harm video series and resources](#) – a video series for families with tips and information if a youth is experiencing suicidal and self-harm behaviours
- [Suicide and Suicidal Thoughts | Kelty Mental Health](#)
- [Supporting your Child after the death of a family member or friend](#) – a guide for families supporting a child after the death of a family or friend
- [Talking to Children About a Suicide: A guide for parents and caregivers](#) – a guide to support families' conversations with children under 12
- [Talking to Youth about Mental Health](#) – information from Kelty Mental Health
- [Warning Signs of Suicide in Children and Teens](#) - HealthLinkBC