

# RESEARCH CONNECTION

## Suicidality in rural and remote communities: Stakeholder conversations

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### Why this research is important

The suicide rate is higher in rural communities when compared to urban communities ([Hirsch, 2006](#); [Hirsch & Cukorwicz, 2014](#); [Singh et al., 2013](#)). A previous scoping review of the literature indicated a paucity of research related to rural suicidality in Canada and, of the 39 articles included, few were qualitative (8/39).

### How the research was conducted

A third-party liaison organization connected the researchers to potential participants as approved through the Brandon University ethics committee. Participant discussion took place in ZOOM breakout rooms after the group listened to a presentation on the scoping review findings. A round table discussion following the breakout rooms provided the opportunity for participants to share

### What you need to know

Stakeholder Conversations (virtual focus groups) were held in six rural communities across Canada (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Newfoundland). The intent was to develop recommendations for future research and knowledge translation related to suicidality in rural Canada. Stakeholders included community members, community leaders, and those in the health care sector, education, research, or other related occupations.

the most significant thing heard or discussed during the consultation, as well as any final comments.

### What the researchers found

Stakeholders identified barriers to seeking help as rural culture, masculine norms, and stigma. Rural culture tends to be close-knit, which is in many ways a positive. The flip side of closeness is it affects anonymity or confidentiality when seeking help. As well, limited published research explores the lived experience of suicidality in rural communities. The stakeholders felt this was a missing piece to the research. Many of the stakeholders (72%) had personal experiences with suicide, having lost family, friends, community members, or clients to suicide and/or having battled with suicide ideation or attempts themselves. Stakeholders indicated that those with lived experience have valuable information for developing

programs for prevention, intervention, and postvention related to rural suicide.

*Firstly, the most voiceless people are the people that are dead, they can't speak to us, ... so sadly we're the closest to a voice that these people are having, and I don't know what the answer is. I mean, I guess that the best thing, like I said, is try to find someone that's been there, that's somehow crawled out of it, and maybe they can offer some solutions.* (Roy, Manitoba)

### How this research can be used

Qualitative research into suicidality in Canadian rural communities is missing. Stakeholders have indicated that those with lived experience of suicidality are an important piece of the solution and are ready to start the conversation to ultimately reduce the incidence of suicide in rural communities.

### About the researchers

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### Publications based on this research

Epp, D., Hunter Rauch, K., Windsor, J., Dauphinais, J., Herron, R., Mullins, S., Lee, S., Ramsey, D., Ryan, K., Thomson, A., & Waddell- Henowitch, C. (2020). *Suicidality in rural and/or remote communities: A scoping literature review* [Report]. Brandon, Manitoba, Canada: Centre for Critical Studies of Rural Mental Health, Brandon University.

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rural, suicide, remote, Canada

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