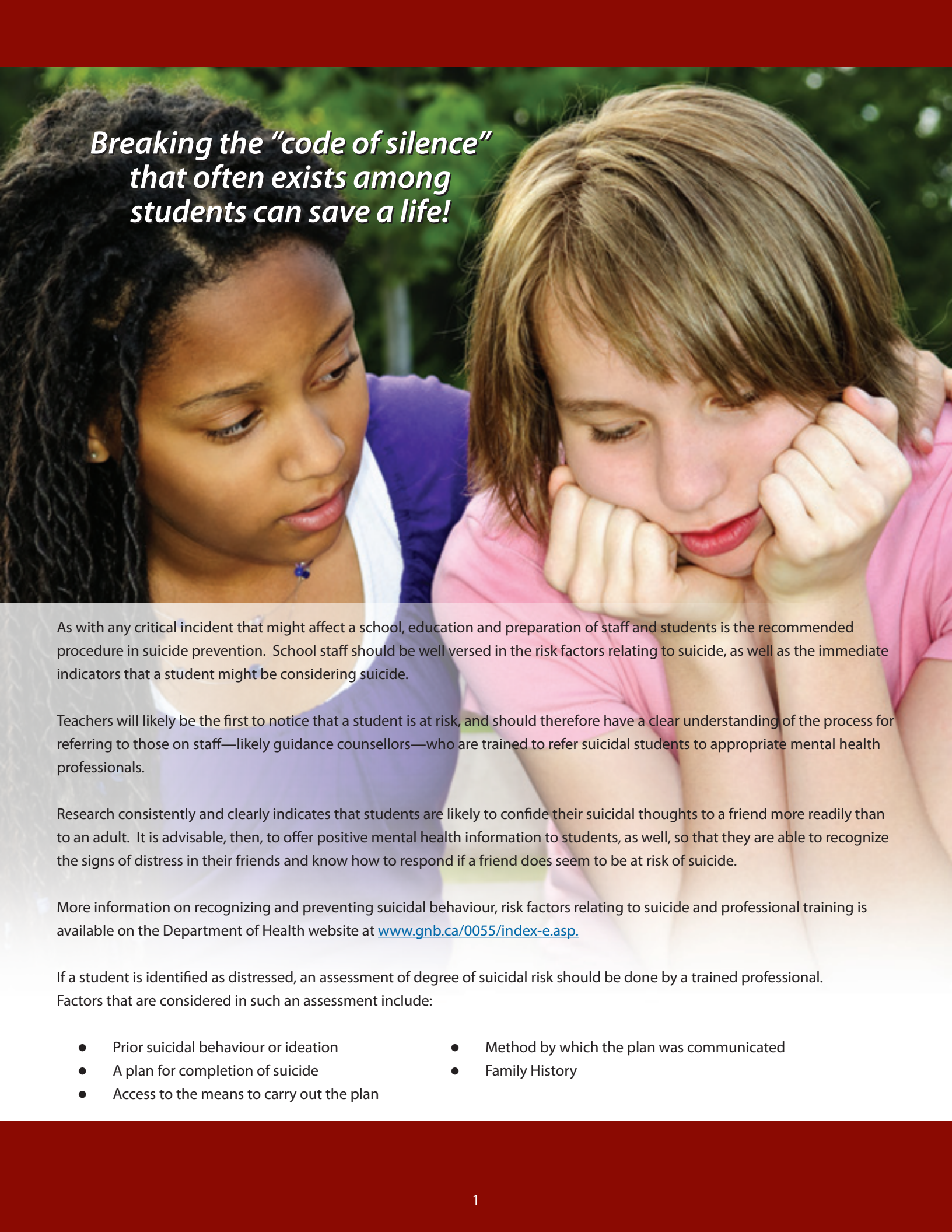




THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSE TO A THREAT OF SUICIDE

Be Informed!



*Breaking the “code of silence”
that often exists among
students can save a life!*

As with any critical incident that might affect a school, education and preparation of staff and students is the recommended procedure in suicide prevention. School staff should be well versed in the risk factors relating to suicide, as well as the immediate indicators that a student might be considering suicide.

Teachers will likely be the first to notice that a student is at risk, and should therefore have a clear understanding of the process for referring to those staff—likely guidance counsellors—who are trained to refer suicidal students to appropriate mental health professionals.

Research consistently and clearly indicates that students are likely to confide their suicidal thoughts to a friend more readily than to an adult. It is advisable, then, to offer positive mental health information to students, as well, so that they are able to recognize the signs of distress in their friends and know how to respond if a friend does seem to be at risk of suicide.

More information on recognizing and preventing suicidal behaviour, risk factors relating to suicide and professional training is available on the Department of Health website at www.gnb.ca/0055/index-e.asp.

If a student is identified as distressed, an assessment of degree of suicidal risk should be done by a trained professional. Factors that are considered in such an assessment include:

- Prior suicidal behaviour or ideation
- A plan for completion of suicide
- Access to the means to carry out the plan
- Method by which the plan was communicated
- Family History

If a student is assessed to be suicidal, the following steps should be taken:

- Do not leave the student alone. Remain with the student in a safe and visible place until help can be obtained. Remove any weapons, pills, etc.
- Explain that you will get help for the student.
- Develop a protection plan with the student that he or she will not hurt himself or herself.
- Contact parents or guardians.
- Contact local Mental Health, Social Development, police or hospital immediately.
- If parents or guardians are unavailable to drive the student to a place of help, either have persons from the school designated to do so, or request assistance from police.
- Maintain contact with the student and family during the crisis.
- Follow up with the student's class to ensure that they are able to reconnect with the student when he or she returns to school.

If a student has displayed or verbalized suicidal ideations, the following steps are recommended:

- Inform parents or guardians of the concern.
- Assist parents in arranging for intervention for the student, including medical assistance and counselling.
- Maintain contact with the student to monitor progress.

Suicide is not about wanting to die so much as it is about running out of solutions to problems that seem overwhelming. Teens are one of the highest risk groups for suicidal behaviour. Ongoing education about suicidal behaviour, risk factors and understanding the grief process associated with suicide move us ever closer to the common goal of improving and saving lives.



For further inquiries about *The Schools Response to a Threat of Suicide* contact your local school district or the Department of Education.

District 2	506-856-3222	District 15	506-684-7555
District 6	506-847-6262	District 16	506-778-6075
District 8	506-658-5300	District 17	506-357-4010
District 10	506-466-7300	District 18	506-453-5454
District 14	506-325-4432	Dept of Ed	506-453-3678

To access direct mental health services related to suicidal ideation contact any of the following New Brunswick community mental health centres:

Bathurst	506-547-2038	Miramichi	506-778-6111
Campbellton	506-789-2440	Moncton	506-856-2444
Caraquet	506-726-2030	Richibucto	506-523-7620
Edmundston	506-735-2070	St. Stephen	506-466-7380
Fredericton	506-453-2132	Saint John	506-658-3737
Grand Falls	506-475-2440	Sussex	506-432-2090
Kedgwick	506-284-3431	Woodstock	506-325-4419

- CHIMO www.chimohelpline.ca 1-800-667-5005
- Canadian Mental Health Association, New Brunswick Suicide Prevention Resource Centre
www.suicideinformation.cmha.ca/bins/site.asp?cid=284-1561&lang=1 (506) 455-5231
- Kids Helpline www.kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/Home.aspx 1-800-668-6868