



## Letter to the editor

Re: "Cancer, heart disease leading killers", Dec 1

Every Canadian should be very concerned about Statistics Canada's report this week that suicide is the second leading cause of death for young adults in this country and one of the top 10 leading causes of death overall.

What your news story did not mention is that behind these two important statistics, there were people suffering from forms of mental illness that led them to suicide. They are people like 18-year-old Jack Windeler, a first-year student at Queen's University whose suicide last March has sparked a national campaign – The Jack Project ([www.thejackproject.org](http://www.thejackproject.org)) – to focus attention on youth mental health.

This year alone, more than seven million Canadians will experience a mental illness. They could be your son or daughter, brother or sister, father or mother, friend or colleague.

Stigma and discrimination are still major barriers preventing people living with a mental illness from talking about it and receiving treatment. The Mental Health Commission of Canada's anti-stigma initiative, *Opening Minds*, is seeking out the most effective ways to change negative attitudes and behaviours toward people experiencing mental illness. A part of this work is to find the best strategies to sensitize children and youth about mental illness, the importance of talking about it and seeking early treatment.

Every Canadian can make a significant difference by taking action to eliminate stigma and discrimination and talking openly about mental health issues with their colleagues, family and friends. By doing so, they will be helping to give all Canadians living with mental illness real hope for treatment and recovery.

Louise Bradley  
President & CEO  
Mental Health Commission of Canada

-30-

## Contact

Karleena Suppiah, Mental Health Commission of Canada  
Tel: 403 385-4050  
[ksuppiah@mentalhealthcommission.ca](mailto:ksuppiah@mentalhealthcommission.ca)

10301 Southport Lane SW, Suite 800  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2W 1S7  
[www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca)

10301 Southport Lane sud-ouest, Suite 800  
Calgary (Alberta), Canada T2W 1S7  
[www.commissionsantementale.ca](http://www.commissionsantementale.ca)