

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please consider including my letter in the regular council agenda. The topic of suicide is one that for many families is difficult to openly discuss and touches families in all municipalities, including Whistler. It is a topic though we must discuss in order to make improvements and positive change.

Felicity loved her visits to Whistler, which included trips to zipline and snowboard. She enjoyed spending time in the Village exploring the shops and stores and meeting new people from all over the world..

Thank you,

Laura Donovan

Greetings,

My name is Laura Donovan, a member of the Odanak First Nation, living on the territories of the Coast Salish peoples. I want to thank you for your willingness to read this letter, as it may be triggering and difficult to read. I am fully aware of the significant impact suicide has had on every one of our communities.

I have been a Tattooer for 15 years, starting in Selkirk, Manitoba, and now in Surrey, BC. I have tattooed countless memorials for fellow Indigenous community members, using my craft to heal and provide good medicine. I never expected that I would end up tattooing memorials to honor my daughter.

I would like to share information about my 16-year-old daughter Felicity, an Indigenous student and a proud Abenaki member of the Odanak First Nation. Felicity died by suicide in December 2023.

In October 2023, she reached out for suicide prevention support at school, and a call was made to an external agency for help. I did not learn about the details of this call or the support the school had committed to provide until January 2024. At that time, I discovered that the school principal had contacted a different external support agency, informing them that Felicity had not presented as at risk and was not on their radar.

Additionally, I learned that the Surrey School District had a suicide prevention protocol that was not followed and did not have a suicide prevention program or plan to address students presenting with thoughts of suicide, nor support for staff providing this support to students.

On July 22nd, I met with the BC Minister of Education to share Felicity's experience and the experiences of many Indigenous families who have shared their stories with me over the years. In the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation, to honor the lives of all Indigenous children lost to suicide and to ensure Every Child Matters, I have requested the following from the Minister:

1. The Ministry of Education ensures all schools in British Columbia are funded and equipped to provide suicide prevention support and training to staff and students based on current evidence-based practices. I request this with the understanding that all children and staff will benefit from this honor.
2. The Ministry of Education performs an audit of the suicide prevention support provided to Felicity and our family.

I am reaching out to ask if your municipal leadership will add your voice to my call to provide improved suicide prevention support for children in your municipality. Please consider providing me with a letter addressed to the British Columbia Minister of Education, the Honourable Rachna Singh, in support of my request, with a CC to my email at donovanfamily@gmail.com. The Minister's email is ECC.Minister@gov.bc.ca.

If you have any questions or would like more information that will enable you to provide a letter of

support, please reach out to me, and I will respond promptly.

I have attached supporting information for your reference:

1. A picture of Felicity.
2. A record of the call the School Counsellor made to a suicide prevention program where Felicity asked for support.
3. A record of the call the Principal made to another suicide prevention program, informing them Felicity was not presenting as at risk or on their radar.
4. A letter of support from the Chief and Council of Odanak First Nation.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Laura Donovan (Felicity's Mom)

Hi everyone,

I had a call this evening from Principal Kavita Sharma from Elgin Park Elementary School regarding deceased youth F.D. PID #1819082
The phone number for the principal is [REDACTED]

The principal was requesting information regarding START protocol. Specifically, for when START communicates/ collects collateral with the school and the ROI process. I explained to the principal that the ROI is part of confidentiality and the youth because they were 16 years of age at the time would have signed ROI during the assessment (first meeting with clinician). The principle asked when START would get in touch with the school and I let her know that the supervisor would have to contact her to disclose more information. She went on to reiterate that youth's dad earlier today spoke with a clinician and he had sent the principal an email regarding the gaps in care between school and START.

Principal said the school counsellor found out youth was seeing START clinician once family had mentioned it to them (Krista - School Counsellor). Writer requested if at that time school counsellor had called START to collect collateral. She went on to say that youth at school was not presenting as being at risk or on their radar. Therefore, this was not done. I reiterated to the principal a couple times that the supervisor will have to contact them as I do not have all the information and we would need permission from the family to release any information regarding youth. The principal expressed that a meeting may be needed to discuss how we all can do better in the future.

I was under the impression that B would be follow up, however, I spoke with B and they informed me that it would be Aldo.

Also, in regards to reporting, because there is no longer an open Paris file, we have not been documenting the conversations.

Lastly, which details does the team need to know in order for the information to be relayed safely and delicately, when we receive calls similar to today's.
Thus far, Gen and Katie have spoken to dad and I spoke with the school principal.

Regards,

Taj Sahota (She/Her)

Crisis Clinician

The START Team- Supporting Children and Youth through Mental Health Crisis

Shirley Dean Pavilion

9634 King George Boulevard

Surrey, BC V3T 0G7

Phone: 604.585.5561 Fax: 604.585.5560

Brief Service Stats Report

Brief Service Stat Report Generation

Entered By: Olivia Roxburgh
Created Date: 20-Oct-2023
Effective Start Date: 20-Oct-2023 [set] [F]

Worker: Olivia Roxburgh [F]
Program: Suicide Prevention, Education [F]

Contact Type: Phone [F]
Contact: CHRISTA FINDLAY [F]

Organization: ELGIN PARK SECONDARY

Program Details:
Referring Professional:
First name: Christa
Last name: Findlay
Community agency or institution: Surrey School District
Phone number: [REDACTED]
Preferred time to call during the school day:
Email address: [REDACTED]

Service Requested: Name of youth being referred: Felicity Donovan
Date of Birth: Mon, 02/26/2007 - 00:00
School: Elgin Park Secondary
Community of residence: White Rock
Does the young person have a safety plan in place? Yes
Please describe the safety plan: Student is creating a safety plan and sharing it with her parents today.
C-0000 Suicidal Ideation Severity: Have you wished you were dead or wished you could go to sleep and not wake up? Yes
Please describe: Student attempted suicide about a month ago.
Have you actually had any thoughts of killing yourself? Yes
Please describe: Last time I had these thoughts was last weekend when I was really stressed out about school and life.
Have you been thinking about how you might kill yourself? Yes
Please describe: I have tried to hang myself with my belt. I am unsure if I am safe currently or if I am a danger to myself but I'm still really down.
Have you had these thoughts and had some intention of acting on them? Yes
Please describe: I tried to hang myself but was found by my sister and was very thankful that she found me. I was praying to god that someone would find me in time because I wanted to be saved.
Have you started to work out or worked out the details of how to kill yourself? Yes
Did you intend to carry out this plan? Yes
Please describe: I tried but I was found.
Have you ever done anything, started to do anything, or prepared to do anything to end your life? Yes
Please describe: I tried to hang myself. I told my parents about what I did and they have taken me to the hospital, gotten me a counselor and I have an appointment with a psychiatrist on November 11th.

Service Provided

Writer called back Christa to gather more information. Christa shared that she is unsure who youth's outside counsellor is, but that she is going to email parents and find out. Youth sees this outside counsellor on a regular basis and this counsellor is not new to youth. Christa is also going to ask for youth's consent to speak to youth's outside counsellor so that counsellor can support youth with suicidality. Christa is connecting youth to ASW and substance use liaison at school as youth is in a place where she would like to get support for substance use (vaping, drinking). Youth has Indigenous cultural background and is connected to Indigenous cultural programs (Christa was not sure the names of these programs). Writer let Christa know that she can reach out at any time if she has more questions or if youth's counsellor is no longer working with youth. Christa will give youth's parents SPEAC's contact info in case parents or youth feel they need extra support.

Outstanding Needs

Christa is going to connect with youth's parents and find out who youth's counsellor is (whether this counsellor is with START or not). Christa will connect with us again if she has any questions or if youth is in need of more support.

Minutes Spent

20

[Cancel](#) [Save Brief Service Attendance](#)



July 25th, 2024

Honourable Rachna Singh
British Columbia Minister of Education
ECC.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Object: letter of support for the Donovan family

Kwá,

On December 21, 2023, the Abenaki of Odanak lost a member, Miss Felicity Donovan. She was only 16 years old. Her family has been waiting for answers on the support provided to their daughter to prevent her suicide. No parent should be in their position.

On behalf of the Abenaki Council of Odanak, we would like to support the Donovan family in their requests:

1. The Ministry of Education ensures all schools in British Columbia are funded and equipped to provide suicide prevention support and training to staff and students based on current evidence-based practices. I request this with the understanding that all children and staff will benefit from this honor;
2. The Ministry of Education performs an audit of the suicide prevention support provided to Felicity and our family.

Wíwni,


Chief Rick O'Bomsawin
Abenaki Council of Odanak
reception@caodanak.com
1-450-568-2810

cc: donovanfamily@gmail.com

