



# No life should be lost before it's lived.

## One high school class.



**The equivalent of a high school class dies by suicide in Canada every single month.** All that potential, lost forever.

It is widely recognized that children and youth are in a mental health crisis across Canada. Since 2019, two-thirds of youth reported a decline in their mental health. Mental illness is the leading cause of disability in youth, with 75% of adults living with mental illness reporting their problems began in childhood or adolescence. Suicide is the second leading cause of death. This paints a bleak picture. But you can offer hope to Canadian youth.

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

### Peerpower

Research shows youth listen to their peers before they reach out to an adult. We can leverage that connection by equipping youth with the knowledge they need to become champions for mental health in their community.

### Empower

HEADSTRONG is a proven, established, fully evaluated youth mental health program from the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC). HEADSTRONG has served Canadian youth aged 12-19 since 2014, inspiring young leaders to champion mental health awareness and stigma reduction, right where they live.



**HEADSTRONG is unable to fulfill all the annual requests we have for the program.** What does that mean? It means that right now, a 14-year-old two blocks from you is too ashamed to ask for help. It means that a 12-year-old who did ask for help was told 'Life just gets worse from here.'

For more details, contact [headstrong@openingminds.org](mailto:headstrong@openingminds.org) – we can't wait to hear from you!

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## THE HEADSTRONG DIFFERENCE

HEADSTRONG informs and empowers youth. They use their insight and creativity through year-round positive social action for mental wellness. Youth build resilience, kindness and hope in their own environment, engaging and educating peers, teachers and families, and encouraging the timely and appropriate help-seeking that can prevent crisis.

HEADSTRONG is a two-part program for lasting change, available in two accessible formats and in French and English. Part one, the HEADSTRONG summit, is thoughtfully designed to inform, engage and motivate youth through activities, discussions, carefully prepared lived-experience stories, and proactive action planning. For part two, youth take their action plans back and design and deliver inventive awareness-raising and stigma-reducing activities customized to their schools, year-round.

HEADSTRONG provides measurable and consequential change for youth with this proven and fully evaluated program with you as a valued partner.

## WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING ABOUT HEADSTRONG?

### Educators

Educators report that HEADSTRONG helps them feel better informed about mental health and highlights available resources. Following the summit, their students see them as allies in mental health and safe people to reach out to, to ask questions and find support.

**"The most exceptional program I've seen by far!" Education leader ON**

### Youth

**"I got more knowledge, understanding and hope."**

**Grade 8 student**

**"I will educate my community about stigma and mental health."**

**Grade 8 student**

**"At this summit I learned how much stigma can impact people and what steps we can take to prevent it."**

**Grade 7 student**

**"I was able to learn a lot more to help the people I love."**

**Grade 9 student**

HEADSTRONG **needs your support** to reach more Canadian youth in diverse and underserved communities. Your support makes a genuine and meaningful difference. Together, we can inspire more youth to be brave, reach out and speak up for their own and other's mental health through positive action. **Together, we can change and even save lives.**

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