



**TOWN OF MINTO**

**DATE:** June 5, 2018

**REPORT TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Callise Loos, Assistant Chief of Administration,  
Communications & Records Management

**SUBJECT:** Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

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**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Protect the health and safety of the community and citizens, business and the environment, by supporting a quality Volunteer Fire Department, emergency preparedness, and access to health care, prevention and wellness opportunities

**BACKGROUND:**

Mental Health and Suicide prevention are increasingly important in today's society. Minto has experienced loss in the past year from suicide impacting both youth and adults. Members of the community have started to reach out to one and other to find programs and work toward prevention of these tragedies.

The Norwell High School community hosted a preliminary brainstorming meeting in May where community partners such as Canadian Mental Health Association, Homewood Health, Minto Fire, Community Resiliency Workers, Concerned Parents, Minto Youth Action Council and many others discussed the impact of these losses and what can be done to fight back. Cecilia-Marie Flynn, a youth suicide prevention consultant, from the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario led the meeting with knowledge and experiences from other communities.

Many partners at the May meeting are at arm's length to the issue within the Town of Minto as they are a county or provincial organization. At the meeting it was determined the most probable way for any initiative to be successful is if it is led by a grassroots community organization. Minto Fire was identified as potentially a good driving organization as it is close to the community and the incidents. Minto Fire provides many other services to the community and all firefighters who respond to these tragedies live here as well.

The Minto Youth Action Council was identified as a valuable partner as it has the "pulse" of the youth in the community. MYAC has identified mental health as one of their priorities in their action plan. While relevant to all ages, prevention in youth is particularly vital to help young people learn to deal with mental health issues early and lead long and healthy lives.

The initiative is in very preliminary stages. According to the consultant, the first step is to start with an information gathering meeting to understand the needs and wants of the community. A consultation meeting is planned for June 14, 2018 at Norwell District

Secondary School. The meeting will involve community members coming together to answer discussion questions about suicide and mental health from their perspective.

**COMMENTS:**

Suicide Prevention is a complex issue that very much affects everyone within a community. As a response agency, Minto Fire is in a position to contribute to a grassroots response to this problem.

At the introductory meeting, the suicide prevention consultant explained that a community suicide prevention program was composed of four pieces:

- Mental health & life promotion
- A community risk assessment
- Risk management & intervention
- Postvention

These four pieces mirror the current Critical Incident Stress Management program that Minto is currently implementing for first responders. It appears that potentially combining the programs could allow for efficiencies and sharing of resources for both programs. (ie: hosting combined trainings allows for increased purchasing power).

One of the focus areas of the suicide prevention program involves youth where the Minto Youth Action Council can be considered a key partner. Minto Youth Action Council identified intentional self-harm as one of their key priorities so this initiative fits well within their scope.

Staff is confident Minto Fire and Minto Youth Action Council can work well together to help get this community initiative off the ground along with other community partners.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

None as of this report, but sharing of resources between the First Responder & Community CISM programming could lead to efficiencies.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the Council accept the report on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention as information and supports the initiative outlined in the report.

Callise Loos, Assistant Chief of Administration,  
Communications & Records Management