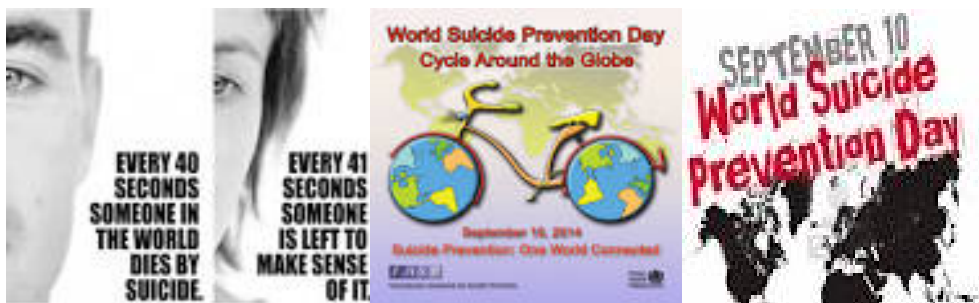


Hope Saves Lives

...You can make a difference



In this issue:



Spring is finally here after a wet and windy August around much of the country. This issue will review our work from the past 3 months, outline upcoming events, and provide an update on the work Hope for Life are currently undertaking around the nation.

World Suicide Prevention Week events feature heavily in our events calendar. In a number of cases, these events are actually being used to launch a broader set of tailored initiatives that will drive education and resourcing throughout the local community.

The challenge in the mental health and suicide prevention sectors is to some degree to see the forest for the trees. The complexity of effectively lowering suicide attempts and rates is evidenced through the diversity of providers and awareness campaigns that run throughout the year: e.g. RUOK day, Mental Health Awareness Week, International Suicide Prevention Day and a plethora of local and provider based initiatives. . The challenge with any campaign however is to not only reach the target audience with a message, but to drive sustainable behavioural change that will see a lowering of suicide rates, and make the conversation around suicide more accessible and less confronting for the general community. It is with this in mind that we reflect on the past three months and our current activities.

What have we been doing?

The Hope for Life team adapts courses and content to meet the needs of different communities around Australia, and many of our deliveries are based on solid “word of mouth” recommendations from people who have attended previously. In the past 3 months our team has delivered 13 training events with a number utilising local Salvation Army Corps as a suitable training venue. This allows regional residents in particular, to participate in a high quality event, in a comfortable and inclusive learning environment.

We have had the privilege of delivering “Living Hope” to students of local TAFE’s in Bega in NSW and Frankston in Victoria, Adelaide, Perth, Lifeline on the Gold Coast, the community of Slacks Creek in Logan Queensland, as well as the communities of Karratha in the Pilbara and the Riverina community of Swan Hill/Kerang, to name but a few. These events are always extremely well patronised by local people, who invariably bring a rich range of life experiences to our midst. Nearly all courses have attendees who have direct “lived experience” and the motivations for attending vary greatly, from those who seek comfort, support and more understanding of suicide, to health workers, welfare workers, chaplains, educators, community leaders and people who just want to learn more so that they can make a difference in the local



community in which they live. We have developed some special partnerships with organisations that provide advocacy and support services to individuals living with complex mental health needs, as well as specialist employment services, drug and alcohol intervention services and providers of community welfare services.

Regional and rural Australia remain an important focus for Living Hope, and our commitment to communities that have significant suicide rates, lack service infrastructure and have special needs, is central to our strategic planning and delivery.



Aerial view of Karratha



Swan Hill – on the mighty Murray



Logan and surrounds

What is Living Hope?

Living Hope is a two day Postvention course delivered by skilled professional trainers. It builds on the premise that Postvention is an effective prevention strategy. It also builds on the notion resilience is built through community connection with “at risk” individuals.

The Hope for Life team is happy to discuss the prospect of delivery to any community that can provide the basic training facilities and hospitality to run an event. Living Hope can also be an effective launching pad for communities looking to develop a more comprehensive strategy. Using 6 key principles, our trainers will walk participants through a model of intervention based on the following assumptions: I.e. When working with those bereaved by suicide we need to....



- Secure the relationship**
- Provide immediate support**
- Interpret the grieving process**
- Rally support**
- Inform & connect**
- Track progress & follow up**

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What do participants take away from Living Hope?

The overarching program objectives of Living Hope are to

- explore values and ideas about suicide and their relationship to agency and community services
- train you in the six step Postvention First Aid process (SPIRIT)
- improve your skills and confidence so that you can approach suicide events with greater confidence in your own abilities
- promote current research knowledge and best practice about bereavement
- promote understanding of the issues of the bereaved (both children and adults and diverse groups) and to encourage helpful actions in their best interests
- promote understanding of the issues of caregivers so that they don't burnout and know how to access help for the people they support
- promote understanding of community public health issues around suicide and to encourage postvention strategies and community support in schools and the wider community and to develop strategies that serve the bereaved, caregivers and their agencies.

Interested? Drop us an email at admin.hopeforlife@aue.salvationarmy.org



In a recent survey of Living Hope participants 95% of respondents believed that Living Hope training increased their knowledge and skills in the areas of suicide prevention and postvention.

The same survey showed that 59% of participants had supported someone bereaved by suicide after the training and that 92% of participants believed that this workshop was an important preventative strategy in their local community.



World Suicide Prevention Day

World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10 sees the Salvation Army Hope for Life team actively engaged and delivering services in a variety of locations, to hundreds of participants. Community engagement and a strong awareness drive over the coming week sets the platform for us to build stronger, more connected and more resilient communities. Our events are highlighted in the summary below:



EVENTS CALENDAR

Monday September 8 – The Hope for Life Life keeper memory quilt will be on display at Monro Park Cronulla, as we partner with Lifeline and community partners for the “Sutherland Shire Community Awareness Walk”. We will be promoting our champions program at this event.

Monday and Tuesday September 8 and 9 – Living Hope will be conducted in the Riverina @ Corowa NSW

Wednesday September 10 – The Hope for Life Life keeper Memory Quilt will be on loan to Lifeline in Newcastle, for their Suicide Prevention walk.

Wednesday September 10- Hope for Life will be co- facilitating a workshop titled “Keep our Kids and Community Safe” in partnership with Alison Law, from the NSW Attorney General’s Department (Aboriginal Service Client Specialist) and her colleagues. We are hoping to draw up to 100 local Aboriginal people to this event in Dharruk (Mt Druitt). This event will be the launching pad for a local strategy which may also involve our colleagues at Wesley Life force.

Wednesday September 10- Envoy Alan Staines will attend an AISRAP community forum in Brisbane as an ambassador to promote Hope for Life services, along with partner organisations including Wesley Life force. The forum will be led by luminaries from Griffith University and the sector, including Professor Diego De Leo.



Thursday September 11-

Hope for Life are proudly co-sponsoring the “Together for Hope” community walk to raise suicide awareness in Auburn. This project involves a plethora of community leaders, partners in mental health, local schools, Universities, welfare providers and is also generously supported by Dooley’s Catholic Club. We are hopeful that this event (which is the culmination of many months work) may become an annual commitment but more importantly, an effective launching pad to bring the community together around this issue. Hope for Life have committed to partnering with Auburn to improve knowledge, skills and capability. The local Salvation Army Corps has been the hub for the project, which has also had support from local MP’s, the NSW Mental Health Commissioner John Feneley and the NRL. Salvo’s Care Line and Auburn Community Health will have counselling support available on the night.

Friday September 12- The Queensland Hope for Life Lifekeeper Memory Quilt will be on loan to Lifeline on the Gold Coast.

Saturday September 20- Hope for Life will be partnering with STARTTS (Service for the Rehabilitation of Trauma and Torture Survivors), Partners in Recovery, Auburn community Mental Health and Headspace under a Bedouin style tent to engage with people attending the Auburn Festival, a community event that draws upward of 20,000 visitors per annum.

Building capacity and saving lives:

Suicide Prevention is truly everybody’s business, from corporate HR departments, to remote mining communities, to small rural townships and sprawling multicultural urban centres. It is an issue that affects the wealthy and the dispossessed, the old and the young, new and our first Australians. The recent Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA) conference in Perth launched the “Communities Matter” resource, with the NSW Mental Health Commission. This document focuses on community development as an essential plank in lowering rates within small regional towns and communities. More information is available on the SPA website:

<http://suicidepreventionaust.org/project/communities-matter-toolkit>



The Salvation Army experience affirms the principle that local action plans deliver better outcomes, particularly where individuals bring “lived experience” and knowledge to the table. This is relevant in suburban areas as well as regional Australia. Collaboration can be achieved through informal or formal mechanisms, such as support groups, memorial quilt events, training, public forums, local steering committee or a combination of each. Hope for Life is currently working with a number of targeted communities who either reject available services or have found them inaccessible. The reasons for this are often complex but can relate to issues such as guilt, stigma, language, belief systems, generational loss and trauma or a combination thereof. In these cases, grass roots plans that include all key stakeholders become a necessity. Furthermore, community champions are often critical to move the strategy forward in a meaningful way.

In our next edition we will report on our collaborations in Western Sydney, in particular the culturally diverse community of Auburn, as well as the great work being done by Indigenous court workers in Mt Druitt, targeting young people who are facing criminal justice issues and social dislocation. We are also doing some exciting work developing technologies that will allow young people to provide direct support to each other, in the language and setting that they find most accessible. We hope to bring you some great stories, photos and examples of how these communities are tackling the issue of suicide in a positive and socially inclusive way, and how Hope for Life and The Salvation Army is providing an effective backbone at a grass roots level .

Services for those in crisis: Available 24/7.

If you or a friend needs to talk to someone urgently please note the following numbers:

- Salvo Care Line 1300 363 622
- Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467
- Lifeline 13 11 14
- Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800
- MensLine Australia 1300 78 99 78

A final Word: Spring is the season of hope and renewal. I would like to leave you with these words of Minister Norman Vincent Peale to comfort and inspire optimism as we seek to join together, and keep our communities safe by reducing the impact of suicide harm.

Throw back the shoulders, let the heart sing, let the eyes flash, let the mind be lifted up, look upward and say to yourself ... nothing is impossible!
