

In this issue:

This issue of the Hope for Life newsletter features a summary of the latest release of the ABS suicide data, the data released in March each year, provides information on the registered suicide deaths that occurred two years ago, for example the data released in 2013, relates to the deaths registered in 2011.

In the discussion of postvention responses, we are particularly focussing on dealing with suicide in the workplace; Hope for Life is contacted from time to time by business owners or managers seeking advice and support following the suicide death of a colleague. Whilst we are able to provide assistance and guidance to these companies, it is clear that many business organisations are often at a loss of what to do and where to turn to, when confronted with the suicide death of one of their staff members.

Latest suicide data

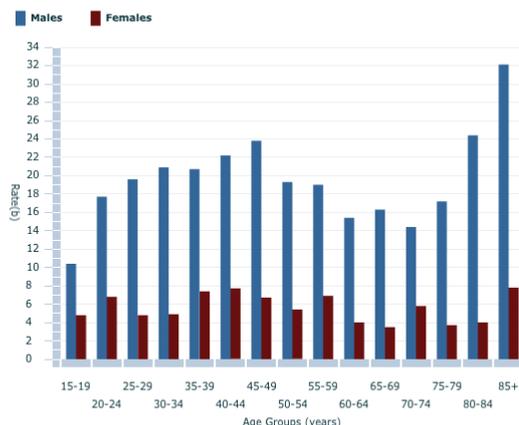
The ABS has released the 2011 preliminary suicide data and this reveals that there were 2,273 deaths by suicide in 2011, this is slightly lower than the number of deaths from suicide registered in 2012, which was 2,361.

Males accounted for 76% of all suicide deaths in 2011. While suicide accounts for a relatively small proportion (1.5%) of all deaths in Australia, it accounts for a greater proportion of deaths from all causes within specific age groups. For example, in 2011, over one-quarter (27.8%) of all male deaths aged 15-24 years were due to suicide.

Similarly for females, suicide deaths comprise a higher proportion of total deaths in younger age groups compared with older age groups.¹

¹ <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/3303.0Chapter22011>

AGE-SPECIFIC SUICIDE(a) RATES(b) 2011(c)



Save Chart Image

Suicide Postvention

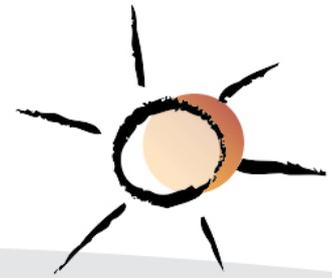
Suicide postvention refers to a range of activities and initiatives that have been developed for and sometimes by people who have been bereaved by suicide. These initiatives are designed to support people who have been bereaved as they deal with the myriad of emotions that come with a suicide death and also to ensure that they are protected from adverse outcomes. Hope for Life has developed a range of postvention initiatives and in this process is continually learning from the bereaved and developing expertise in the type of responses that they find helpful.

People who have been bereaved by suicide should not only be regarded as recipients of specific supports, they have information, wisdom and lived experience that should be tapped into to help shape these postvention initiatives. In this process, we have found that bereaved people are able to not only gain hope for their own journey they provide hope to others by telling their stories and raising awareness about the issues. The Hope for Life Bereaved Families DVD is one such initiative. This resource features the stories of four families who speak candidly about their experience following the death of their loved one and share their feelings and what they found helpful. This resource is available to organisations involved in providing postvention support to bereaved people. If you want to know more or to access this please contact the Hope for Life National Program Manager.

The Impact of Suicide on Work Colleagues

We were recently contacted by a major company who were mourning the loss of an esteemed colleague who had died by suicide, everyone in the workplace was shocked and saddened that their friend and colleague had died and the manager wanted to know how he could support his team through this totally unexpected and tragic situation.

It is an absolute tragedy when someone close to us dies and we inevitably experience grief and a sense of loss. Suicide grief however is different, it is often accompanied by a range of emotions not always associated with grief these many include, anger, guilt, confusion, disbelief, shock, denial, fear, depression etc. as well as a deep sense of sadness. It is important to understand that these emotions can be present and are a normal human response to the suicide death of a friend, family member or colleague. Understanding that suicide grief is different is the first step in working through the issues.



Postvention in the workplace

Suicide deaths are a relatively rare occurrence and it's because of this that most people never think of the impact of suicide and don't ever consider what they might do when confronted with the death of someone they know by suicide. Suicide has no barriers, it can happen in any community, any age group, it crosses all socio economic boundaries and whilst we might believe that suicide will never touch us directly, we know that over 2000 people die each year by suicide in Australia, and each suicide death has the propensity to impact between 10-100 people who knew the person who died. Therefore up to 100,000 people each year in Australia, will be affected in some way by the death of someone they know by suicide. Knowing these statistics, suggests that we need to do everything we can to give people the knowledge and capacity to be able to support people who are bereaved by suicide. This might include work colleagues, school friends, and peers from sporting clubs, church members, neighbours and others in the local community who may have known the person who died.

The Living Hope Bereavement Support Training Program can provide people with the skills and knowledge that will equip them to assist others who have been bereaved by suicide. This course can be delivered free of charge in any workplace or anyone can access an online version of this training through the Hope for Life web site.

In addition, organisations should become aware of the resources available throughout the community to provide support following a suicide death.

There are many organisations that can provide direct counselling and assistance; [here is a full list of these organisations](#)

Managers need to know that there is help available; however it is also useful to develop organisational policies that focus on postvention in the workplace, alongside all of the other Human Resource Policies. The policy should include details of:

1. How the organisation will convey the notice of a suicide death of a staff member to other work colleagues
2. What sort of debriefing will be provided to staff
3. Details of any special leave arrangements that will be permitted
4. Access to workplace counselling where required
5. How the organisation will relate to or involve the family of the person who died
6. Will the organisation arrange a special ceremony or ritual to remember their work colleague?
7. Is it considered appropriate to develop an initiative that will become an ongoing memorial for this person as sometimes happens when a long-term employee dies, (this of course should involve the family and be discussed at a later stage).

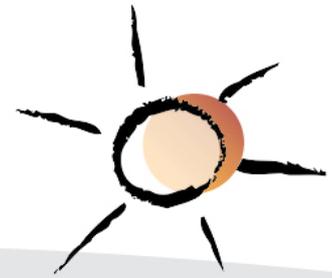
You don't need to know everything.
There are people who can help.

There may be other issues that are appropriate for your particular workplace. The key thing to note is that suicide postvention or bereavement support is like 'psychological' first aid and should be considered in the same way that other Occupational Health and Safety initiatives are. Responding appropriately following the suicide death of a work colleague is very important to maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.

The most important thing that we can do to support people who are grieving is to provide a listening ear and give them space and time, to talk, debrief or just be silent.

The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us, not healing, not curing..... that is a friend who cares.

(Henri Nouwen).



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Some Do's and Don'ts when supporting someone who is grieving:

Do	Don't
Give the person your full attention	Avoid talking about the person who died
Show interest	Make value judgments
Be warm and supportive	Assume you know how the person is feeling
Pay attention	Try to give answers or find the solution
Ask for clarification	Interrupt
Be silent	Give out platitudes
Allow time	
Be yourself and communicate naturally	

Hope for Life Tailored Workshops

Hope for Life wants to raise awareness about the impact of suicide in our community and in particular to train potential care givers and ordinary citizens on how to be a support for people who have been bereaved.

Hope for Life training courses are offered free and can be accessed via our web site <http://suicideprevention.salvos.org.au/>

We can also deliver face-to-face training in your workplace, school or community.

By being informed you may help to save a life.

For more information please contact

Hope for Life Program Manager: Stephanie Wilks

Phone 02 9356 2120

Mobile 0435 967 265

Email Stephanie.wilks@ae.salvationarmy.org

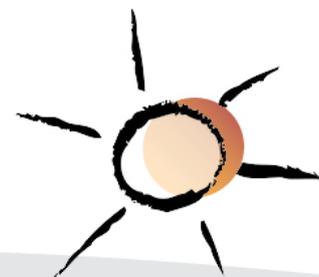
Or - to do the Living Hope course on line, visit the Hope for Life web sites

www.suicideprevention.salvos.org.au

When you complete this training you will feel better equipped to

- Know what to do.
- Know what to say.
- Know where to go for help

The Salvation Army Hope For Life Program gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing through the National Suicide Prevention Strategy



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Organisations in Australia that can provide postvention support following a suicide death:

- Hope for Life - <http://suicideprevention.salvos.org.au/>
- United Synergies Standby Services - <http://www.unitedsynergies.com.au>
- The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement - <http://www.grief.org.au>
- Grieflink - <http://grieflink.org.au>
- Support after suicide - <http://www.supportaftersuicide.org.au/>
- Wesley Mission LifeForce - <http://www.wesleymission.org.au/centres/lifeforce/>
- The Compassionate Friends Victoria - <http://www.compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au>
- The Compassionate Friends NSW - <http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org.au>
- The Compassionate Friends QLD - <http://www.compassionatefriendsqld.org.au>
- The Compassionate Friends WA - <http://www.compassionatefriendswa.org.au>
- The Compassionate Friends SA - <http://www.compassionatefriendssa.org.au>

List of Standby Services

Area	Organisation	Mobile	Email	Location
National	United Synergies	0458406640	standbynational@unitedsynergies.com.au	National
Canberra	SupportLink Australia	0423063839	standby@supportlink.com.au	ACT
Brisbane	Lifeline Community Care	0438150180	dev.kaphle@uccommunity.org.au	Brisbane, QLD
Far North Queensland	Lifeline Community Care	0459299147	susan.vaughan@uccommunity.org.au	Cairns, QLD
Sunshine & Cooloola Coasts	United Synergies	0407766961	standbyscc@unitedsynergies.com.au	Maroochydore, QLD
Wide Bay Burnett	United Synergies	0427748729	standbywbb@unitedsynergies.com.au	Maryborough, QLD
N/NW. Tasmania	CLS Inc	0439556660	standby@parakaleo.org.au	Devonport, TAS
Southern Tasmania	Lifeline Tasmania	0400183490	standby.south@lifelinetasmania.org.au	Hobart, TAS
Pilbara	Pilbara Health Network	0438611999	standby@phn.org.au	Karratha, WA
East Kimberley	Anglicare WA	0488910012	alisa.ranson@anglicarewa.org.au	Kununurra, WA
West Kimberley	Anglicare WA	0458889937	zoe.evans@anglicarewa.org.au	Broome, WA