



In this issue:

Our winter edition newsletter draws attention to the release of 2012 census figures on suicide across the nation. In spite of the impressive efforts of many providers within the mental health sector and communities at large, there are some disturbing trends and we clearly have a lot of work in front of us. Through collaboration across the sector and innovative approaches, The Salvation Army, through Federal Government funding, is exploring new initiatives to build communities where conversations about suicide prevention and support of the bereaved become an entrenched part of the social fabric.

Current initiatives include an ongoing commitment to the community of Auburn, a suburb of western Sydney, where over 70% of the population come from Non English speaking backgrounds. We will explore this issue in some detail within this publication.

We will look at the Mental Health Commission's review of the sector and its terms of reference

This issue also puts light on the importance of postvention as a key suicide prevention strategy, and looks at recent and upcoming events.

2012 Census – Trends and challenges

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics preliminary findings, 2535 deaths in Australia were caused by intentional self-harm (suicide in 2012). This equates to a mortality rate of 11.0 per 100,000 population over the year, and an overall ranking as the 14th leading cause of death in the nation. The bureau accurately notes that care needs to be exercised in interpreting figures (which appear to have risen from 2011) , as there have been significant changes to administrative systems, particularly in New South Wales, where there has been “improved quality of preliminary coding in relation to suicide deaths”.

What is clear however is that rates remain unacceptably high in percentage terms, but particularly as a cause of death amongst men (75 % of total suicide deaths) and for younger age groups. I.e. For young women aged between 15 - 19 years suicide accounts for 32.6% of all deaths and 25.2% for 20-24 year olds. The telling figure in the data is that suicide (as a percentage of all deaths within an age range) is uncomfortably high for younger people, and that education amongst peers parents, educators and the broader community is of critical importance.

For a detailed analysis refer to the link below, which provides current data and a full more comprehensive perspective on suicide across the nation.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abnsfs@./Lookup/by%20Subject/3303.0~2012~Main%20Features~Suicides~10004>

Hope Saves Lives
...You can make a difference



Auburn Community Engagement Project: Since the Commonwealth released the findings of its Senate Review “Suicide-The Hidden Toll” in 2010, momentum has been built across the sector to target communities that have high rates and population sub groups that have complex social adjustment issues. In our last newsletter we mapped our geographical coverage in terms of training delivery. We are also targeting specific regions and locations that have unique challenges, specifically to provide resources and facilitate broader community engagement around the issue of suicide prevention and community resilience.

Auburn is a multicultural community where over 70% of residents come from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Located approximately 15 kilometres from Sydney on the main western railway line, the community has a rich tapestry of languages, faiths and cultures. It is a community that is closely situated to Villawood detention centre and houses a vast array of settlement, welfare and support services. It is a logical first point of contact for many new residents and new arrivals generally, as it provides people with tailored services and supports.



A particular challenge for mental health, welfare workers and community leaders is not only building a cohesive community, which embraces cultural difference and transcends barriers, but ensuring that the marginalised do not fall into despair and hopelessness. Complicating our task of suicide prevention and bereavement support is the reality that many individuals, including humanitarian refugees, temporary visa holders and new arrivals, may feel that they do not have a voice, or feel helpless and isolated. They are further marginalised through language and cultural barriers, which may render phone crisis services ineffective in some contexts. Re-engagement of such individuals warrants an approach that requires direct and respectful engagement, and gives local people a real stake in owning solutions. This is the very type of challenge that we talk about as part of the Salvation Army Mission: I.e. “Corps and centres working to transform communities”.

From a very modest start, Hope for Life has moved forward to embrace the community of Auburn and involve local stakeholders in formulating actions to serve the community and lower suicide attempts and completions.

From little things.....big things grow.

Local Salvation Army Captain Nesan Kisten and local State MP Barbara Perry recognised towards the end of 2013 that suicide is an issue that continues to trouble the local community and is often met with silence. At the request of Captain Kisten , Hope for Life invited about a number of people who worked in key community roles, to attend a day long suicide prevention workshop, facilitated by our Salvo’s care line Manager Karen Lattouf, and our Senior consultant and PHD candidate Ms Wilma Gallet. At the point of evaluation it became apparent that a number of participants, including a local police educator, CALD and mental health workers, were keen to drive a more substantial response. This is critical in community development, as ownership is a key factor in the success of any local initiatives.



Community engagement: After our training workshop key participants planned a community forum to be held at Auburn Public school in the evening on May 20th. Our goal was to litmus test whether the community saw suicide prevention and bereavement support as worthy of attention, personal commitment and a more serious action plan.

The forum: The response by the community was truly overwhelming with over 70 attendees participating. Community elders, leaders, sporting and social club, welfare and support service representatives provided a wealth of knowledge and lived experience (many having lost loved ones and community members to suicide) to the forum. It was also a privilege to have the NSW Mental Health Commissioner John Feneley joining us, sharing his knowledge and contributing to a “Q and A” style panel. We encouraged community members, educators and professionals to participate freely, ask questions from the floor and identify priorities such as issues that the community felt were valid and relevant. The evening concluded with a commitment to establish a steering process and drive a community centred strategy that will encompass awareness raising, education and partnership. Our first steering committee meeting is scheduled for Monday June 16. We will keep our readers informed of developments.

Community is the Key



The Auburn Community Engagement Project is demonstrating that people within local communities are concerned about the issue of suicide prevention. People care about their neighbours, colleagues and fellow citizens and want to create a community that enables everyone to prosper and grow. This includes being there for each other during times of crisis or stress. The approach we have taken in Auburn, is very respectful of the services that are currently working hard to support those in need within this community, our role is to be a facilitator and resource that will enable these communities to develop the knowledge and skills to support those at risk of suicide and those who have been bereaved by suicide.

IF YOUR COMMUNITY IS INTERESTED IN BEING INVOLVED IN THIS TYPE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLEASE CONTACT HOPE FOR LIFE.

We are keen to work alongside local community leaders and services to assist you to develop an informed community whose members are able to develop good understanding of suicide prevention and have the skills and confidence to intervene effectively. Being there to provide a listening ear, practical support and most importantly **hope**.



**The
National
Mental
Health
Commission**

The National Mental Health Commission is conducting a broad review of mental health services, inclusive of suicide prevention and support services. The review will consider:

- The efficacy and cost-effectiveness of programmes, services and treatments;
- Duplication in current services and programmes;
- The role of factors relevant to the experience of a contributing life such as employment, accommodation and social connectedness (without evaluating programs except where they have mental health as their principal focus);
- The appropriateness, effectiveness & efficiency of existing reporting requirements & regulation of programmes & services;
- Funding priorities in mental health and gaps in services and programmes, in the context of the current fiscal circumstances facing governments;
- Existing and alternative approaches to supporting and funding mental health care;
- Mental health research, workforce development and training
- Specific challenges for regional, rural and remote Australia;
- Specific challenges for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and
- Transparency and accountability for outcomes of investment.

The final report will be provided to the Government by 30 November 2014. This report will help inform future strategies and policy decisions beyond the financial year 2014/15. The Salvation Army are deeply committed to providing effective services to see a reduction in the devastating toll of suicide in the community and feel privileged to continue the provision of services across the nation. We acknowledge the support of the Department of Health and the Federal Government in keeping this important issue on the national agenda.

Postvention Events- Support to the bereaved

Postvention is a critical foundation for suicide prevention around the nation. Whilst suicide remains a very complex issue there is a compelling case for services to connect and work with those bereaved by suicide, and learn from the lived experience and stories they bring to our midst. Critically, those immediately impacted by the loss of a loved one through suicide have a nine times greater risk of suicide than the average individual, who has not been touched by such experiences. Our commitment is to bring greater awareness, improved resources, comfort and connection to those who have experienced such painful loss. Postvention is about valuing every human life, and keeping the bereaved safe.

The Hope for Life team has been particularly busy over the past three months. We facilitated a Healing and Remembrance Service in Sydney, and directly engaged with or contributed directly to half a dozen events, including service promotion at the Australian National Grief and Bereavement Conference in Melbourne, facilitation of a Healing and Remembrance Service at Carindale in Brisbane, support of a Lake Macquarie (Wesley Life force funded) support group walk and fundraiser, contribution to a Postvention workshop at Wesley NSW headquarters and abstract presentation and promotion of services at the Postvention Australia 4th National Conference at UNSW. Many of these events promote partnership with the bereaved and sector partners. Over the past 3 months we have also had the privilege of hosting guest



academics such as Dr Diana Sands and Dr Noritta Morseu Diop, to share their wisdom and knowledge with sector workers and the bereaved communities we seek to support, and benefiting from the work of Salvation Army Envoy Alan Staines, who remains a driving force in this area of public health.

Hope for Life resources, including the Lifekeeper Memory Quilt, aid community development and promote local awareness. Our Auburn strategy is a fine example of this. At the present time we are looking to promote a new National Quilt to cover the ACT, Tasmania and Western Australia. If you are interested, or have friends bereaved by suicide who would like more information please direct them to the following link.

<http://suicideprevention.salvos.org.au/lifekeeper-quilt>



The Salvation Army – Eastern Territorial Commander James Condon speaking at the Sydney Healing and Remembrance Service March 21, 2014



Hope for Life and sector initiatives - What is in the pipeline?

Our friends at Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA) are facilitating a symposium focussing on the bereaved and “lived experiences” on the 23rd and 24th of June in Sydney. The objective of this workshop is to:

- Draft a national statement on the inclusion of those with lived experience in suicide prevention policy, research and service provision
- Map out how the network will be structured including the roles and representation required in the Lived Experience Network leadership group
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The Salvation Army have nominated a representative to contribute to this and Hope for Life will report on recommendations and outcomes in our Spring Newsletter.

Suicide Prevention Australia Conference: Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA) is the acknowledged peak body for the suicide prevention sector. The National Suicide Prevention Australia Conference is to be held in Perth from 23 to 25 July. A lived experience day is also planned for July the 26th. Details are available via the link below & registrations are still open.

<http://suicidepreventionaust.org/conferences/pages/info.html>

A short directory of web and crisis services:

The Hope for Life team is committed to keeping you and your loved ones safe. Please be aware of the following 24/7 services (crisis) and websites (information) if you or a friend (or even a stranger) needs help and you need to talk.

CRISIS

Salvo's Care Line (National) 1300 363 622

Suicide Call Back Service (National) 1300 659 467

Lifeline (National) 13 11 14

Kids helpline (National) 1800 55 1800

Mens Line Australia (National) 1300 78 99 78

INFORMATION/APPS

www.sane.org

www.beyondblue.org.au

www.reachout.com

www.headspace.org.au

Next edition: Exciting developments – Youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander connections.

Our Website is: <http://suicideprevention.salvos.org.au/>

Hope for Life gratefully acknowledges the support of the Department of Health through the National Suicide Prevention Program.