

'Living Hope'

Suicide Bereavement Support Training Program

Leonore Hanssens

Mental Health Project Officer

Top End Mental Health Services (TEMHS), DHCS

The Salvation Army Bereavement Support Services recently hosted the pilot of the 'Living Hope' Suicide Bereavement Support Training conducted by Leonore Hanssens TEMHS DHCS. This training is the realisation of a vision to develop a practical training course by Salvation Army Envoy Alan Staines OAM who was a recipient of the Order of the Founder Salvation Army in 2007. The roll out of the 'Living Hope' training throughout Australia is part of the Salvation Army's "Hope For Life" national program based in Sydney NSW and funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health & Aging and the National Suicide Prevention Strategy community grants funding 2006 - 2009. Major John Friend, Salvation Army Darwin, was instrumental in drawing together the highly qualified and experienced Salvation Army personnel to receive the training and participate in the pilot training program. It was a highly successful workshop with eight participants who are now forming a Northern Territory wide bereavement support network and service. They are also involved in the further development of the training program by participating in the evaluation of the pilot conducted by Edith Cowan University, Western Australia.

Participants provided a variety of services and support including: a women's shelter in Darwin; a community outreach in Katherine; an alcohol rehabilitation in Alice Springs; prison ministry services in Darwin; a Flying Padre who covers the whole of the Northern Territory and Ministers of Religion.

The training will equip the Salvation Army Officers with the skills to provide help and care to those people and families who have lost loved ones to suicide. It will provide a referral pathway to support

networks, support groups and agencies. The "Living Hope" training program will also support Indigenous communities with the Indigenous Postvention Response and Suicide Safe Community model completing the comprehensive model of bereavement support in these communities.

The young man from the Tiwi Islands featured in the article told his story to video journalist Angela Bates SBS Living Black about the loss of his brother to suicide and the acute grief he felt after this tragic event. He also spoke about his own personal suicide risk of imitation and familial contagion his grief provoked in him. He also says how his love for his family protected him through the bereavement stage. He was then able, with the help of his family and community, to overcome his own suicidal feelings. He

now promotes life and supports others in his community.

At the same training the "Information and Support Pack for those bereaved by suicide and other sudden death" 2007 was launched by Leonore Hanssens and distributed to participants of the training. The "Info Pack" is now available for distribution by the Mental Health Directorate, Suicide Prevention Coordinator. This pack gives essential information on the coronial process and referral to agencies and support groups in the Northern Territory. It also provides culturally sensitive information for Indigenous people through "Grieving Aboriginal Way" a.

My thanks to the Salvation Army Alan Staines, John Friend, Peter Wood, the "Living Hope" national trainers and the Edith Cowan University.

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Left to right back row: Janet Seden; Gary Taylor; Shirley Baker; David Buckle; and Peter Wood.

Left to right front row: Jennie Shrimpton; Sue Benedetti; Joan Buckle and Leonore Hanssens ('Living Hope' Train the Trainer)

The Chronicle



A young Indigenous man from the Tiwi Islands tells his story to SBS Angela Bates:

"I had ... my own brother... he passed away a couple of years ago. He committed suicide. And that's when I saw Mum, how she reacted when my little brother passed away; he's the youngest of our family. So I sort of reflect back to those days when I lost my brother and it makes me think a lot, you know, if I do take my life away, you know, my mum will have no kids left".

The Crisis Intervention Committee coordinates the prevention, intervention and postvention activities at a local community level and incorporates primary, secondary and tertiary interventions, support and referral pathways. Concerned Indigenous people and volunteers, who are willing to support others and undertake training, generate the response.

INDIGENOUS POSTVENTION RESPONSE AND SUICIDE SAFE COMMUNITY

CRISIS INTERVENTION COMMITTEE – COORDINATES

PRIMARY (WHOLE OF COMMUNITY)

SECONDARY (MONITOR AT RISK GROUPS)

TERTIARY (HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS IDENTIFIED)

PREVENTION

(POPULATION APPROACH: BROAD COMMUNITY EDUCATION, PROMOTE HELP SEEKING)

BROAD EDUCATION FOR COMMUNITY:
NIGHT PATROL, YOUTH GROUPS, SCHOOLS, CLINICS, PRISONS, PROBATION & PAROLE, COMMUNITY GROUPS & CHURCH GROUPS.

IDENTIFY GROUPS AT RISK & WORKERS REMAIN ON SUICIDE RISK ALERT:
ABORIGINAL (MENTAL) HEALTH WORKERS, ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICERS, YOUTH WORKERS, TEACHERS, NURSES, and DOCTORS.

CLEAR PROTOCOLS FOR RISK ASSESSMENT & ADMISSION:
FOREMERGENCY DEPARTMENT STAFF, AMBULANCE OFFICERS, POLICE OFFICERS, CLINICAL PSYCHIATRIC NURSES, DOCTORS & ALLIED HEALTH STAFF.

INTERVENTION

(SKILLS TRAINING UNDERTAKEN FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND PROFESSIONAL GATEKEEPERS)

SUICIDE AWARE TRAINED:
COMMUNITY MEMBERS, GROUPS, AGENCIES, ORGANISATIONS, VOLUNTARY GROUPS AND CHURCH GROUPS.

APPLIED SUICIDE INTERVENTIONS SKILLS TRAINING
(ASIST) ABORIGINAL (MENTAL) HEALTH WORKERS, ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICERS, YOUTH WORKERS, TEACHERS ETC

CLINICAL SUICIDE RISK ASSESSMENT SKILLS:
EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT STAFF, CLINICAL PSYCHIATRIC NURSES, AMBULANCE, POLICE, PSYCHIATRIST, PSYCHOLOGIST.

POSTVENTION

(SUPPORT FOR BEREAVED WITH SORRY CAMPS, HEALING CIRCLES, SUPPORT GROUPS OR OTHER BEREAVEMENT SERVICES – SALVATION ARMY BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

GENERAL BEREAVEMENT
INFORMATION, SUPPORT, TRAINING IN LISTENING SKILLS FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS AND CRISIS INTERVENTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ACTIVE SUPPORT
FOR THE BEREAVED FROM ABORIGINAL MENTAL HEALTH WORKERS AND ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICERS - GIVE ASSISTANCE AND REFERRAL IF NECESSARY

REFERRAL PATHWAY
TO AGENCIES FOR BEREAVED FAMILIES WITH COMPLICATED GRIEF; SUICIDE WATCH AND RISK ASSESSMENT IF NECESSARY FOR THOSE 'AT RISK' OF SELF-HARM.

(Adapted from the Top End Life Promotion Program TEMHS DHCS 1999 – 2006 Northern Territory) (Hanssens 2007)

For further information on the:

Hope for Life website: www.suicideprevention.salvos.org.au

Information & Support Pack for Bereaved www.mcsp.org.au/bereavement

Hanssens L. (2008) Clusters of Suicide: The need for a comprehensive postvention response in Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory. Aboriginal & Islander Health Worker Journal. Vol. 32. Issue 2. March / April.

<http://search.informit.com.au.ezpdhcs.nt.gov.au/browseJournalTitle;res=APAF;issn=1037-3403;username=nthcs;password=431924>