‘Living Hope’

Suicide Bereavement Support Training Program

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The Salvation Army Bereavement Support Services recently hosted the pilot of the ‘Living Hope’ Suicide Bereavement Support Training conducted by Leonore Hansens 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 Hansens 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”.

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

Left to right back row: Janet Sedore, Gary Taylor, Shirley Baker, David Buxton and Peter Wood.
Left to right front row: Jenny Sherington, Sue Benedetti, Joan Buxton and Leonore Hansens
(Living Hope Train the Trainer)
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

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<tr>
<th>CRISIS INTERVENTION COMMITTEE – COORDINATES</th>
<th>PRIMARY (WHOLE OF COMMUNITY)</th>
<th>SECONDARY (MONITOR AT RISK GROUPS)</th>
<th>TERTIARY (HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS IDENTIFIED)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREVENTION (POPULATION APPROACH: BROAD COMMUNITY EDUCATION, PROMOTE HELP SEEKING)</td>
<td>BROAD EDUCATION FOR COMMUNITY: NIGHT PATROL, YOUTH GROUPS, SCHOOLS, CLINICS, PRISONS, PROBATION &amp; PAROLE, COMMUNITY GROUPS &amp; CHURCH GROUPS.</td>
<td>IDENTIFY GROUPS AT RISK &amp; WORKERS REMAIN ON SUICIDE RISK ALERT: ABORIGINAL MENTAL HEALTH WORKERS, ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICERS, YOUTH WORKERS, TEACHERS, NURSES, AND DOCTORS.</td>
<td>CLEAR PROTOCOLS FOR RISK ASSESSMENT &amp; ADMISSION: FOREMERGENCY DEPARTMENT STAFF, AMBULANCE OFFICERS, POLICE OFFICERS, CLINICAL PSYCHIATRIC NURSES, DOCTORS &amp; ALLIED HEALTH STAFF.</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTERVENTION (SKILLS TRAINING UNDERWAY FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND PROFESSIONAL GATEKEEPERS)</td>
<td>SUICIDE AWARE TRAINED: COMMUNITY MEMBERS, GROUPS, AGENCIES, ORGANISATIONS, VOLUNTARY GROUPS AND CHURCH GROUPS.</td>
<td>APPLIED SUICIDE INTERVENTIONS SKILLS TRAINING: ASSIST ABORIGINAL MENTAL HEALTH WORKERS, ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICERS, YOUTH WORKERS, TEACHERS ETC.</td>
<td>CLINICAL SUICIDE RISK ASSESSMENT SKILLS: EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT STAFF, CLINICAL PSYCHIATRIC NURSES, AMBULANCE, POLICE, PSYCHIATRIST, PSYCHOLOGIST.</td>
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<tr>
<td>POSTVENTION (SUPPORT FOR BEWARED WITH SORRY CAMPS, HEALING CIRCLES, SUPPORT GROUPS OR OTHER BEREAVEMENT SERVICES – SALVATION ARMY BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT)</td>
<td>GENERAL BEREAVEMENT INFORMATION SUPPORT, TRAINING IN LISTENING SKILLS FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS AND CRISIS INTERVENTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS</td>
<td>ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR THE BEWARED FROM ABORIGINAL MENTAL HEALTH WORKERS AND ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICERS - GIVE ASSISTANCE AND REFERRAL IF NECESSARY</td>
<td>REFERRAL PATHWAY TO AGENCIES FOR BEWARED FAMILIES WITH COMPLICATED GRIEF: SUICIDE WATCH AND RISK ASSESSMENT NECESSARY FOR THOSE AT RISK OF SELF-HARM.</td>
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(Adapted from the Top End Life Promotion Program TEMHS DHCS 1999 – 2000 Northern Territory) (Hannsens 2007)

For further information on the:

- Hope for Life website: www.suicideprevention.salvoes.org.au

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