
ACCESSING INFORMATION**ASPiRE**

The Australian Suicide Prevention Information and Resource Exchange (ASPiRE) is a strategy of the Resource and Information working group of the Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention. ASPiRE provides access to suicide prevention information, research and resources. Over 3000 items are available, online where possible, or via interlibrary loans.

Web Log

The suicide prevention web log, or "blog", is now available providing access to relevant publications and websites of note. Check it out at

<http://suicideprevention.blogspot.com/>.

Fact sheet

The fact sheet for this issue is a summary of the most recent data for suicide deaths from the Western Australian Coroners database.

RESOURCES OF NOTE**LiFE Living is for everyone: A framework for prevention of suicide and self-harm in Australia.**

The LIFE Framework aims to foster strategic partnerships and to position suicide prevention efforts across all sectors. It was developed by the National Advisory Council on Youth Suicide Prevention, guided by consultation with key groups and evidence that suicide prevention requires a multi-faceted approach involving collaboration between all levels of government and the community.

The LIFE framework takes an holistic approach, addressing risk factors and strengthening those factors known to be protective against suicide and suicidal behaviours. This framework is based on a broad collaborative approach, involving government and non-government organisations, community groups, and individuals. A key objective of the framework is to support a 'whole-of-community' approach to suicide prevention and to extend and enhance public understanding of suicide and its causes.

The LIFE Framework is described in three companion documents:

- [‘LiFE: Areas for Action’](#) outlines the framework and identifies its major goals, principles and strategic performance indicators. Six action areas are presented which are linked to strategies for promoting mental health and preventing mental illness. Performance indicators for measuring progress toward achieving outcomes for each of the action areas are also provided.
- [LiFE: ‘Learnings about Suicide’](#) sets the context for suicide prevention activity, and provides a profile of the incidence of suicide and the current

knowledge of risk and protective factors across different age, population and identified at risk groups.

- [‘LIFE: Building Partnerships’](#) describes the many programs, organisations, and governments with an interest in, or potential overlap with suicide prevention.

WHAT’S HAPPENING IN WA?

Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Steering Committee – Adele Cox

The Western Australian Government endorsed the, [Working Together to Stop Aboriginal suicide and self harm in Western Australia](#) (November 1998). The policy was developed by the MCSP in consultation with many Aboriginal organisations and individuals, as well as government agencies. The Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Steering Committee, in conjunction with the MCSP, oversaw the implementation of this policy, and the programs associated with it.

A progress report on its implementation, released in July 1999, indicated that all agencies had fully or substantially implemented strategies that fell within their mandates. The policy requires the Department of Indigenous Affairs, the MCSP, the Western Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (WAACCHO) and the States Department of Health to work together to further develop prevention strategies. This process began formally in 1999, via the mechanism of the Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Steering Committee, and continues to be supported by the MCSP. A series of Aboriginal youth forums on suicide prevention were held across the State during 1999, and the report of these consultations, published in December 1999, has also contributed to the development of State and local strategies.

A planning day is currently being organised to bring together all the key stakeholders to discuss the future direction of the Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Steering Committee. Once the outcomes of this planning day are finalised, they will be posted on the website.

For information contact Adele Cox at the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research on 9489 7765.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Education & Training Project Officer

The Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention (MCSP) in Western Australia is in the process of employing a Project Officer to implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention education and training program. The program will establish a network of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Regional Trainers to increase availability of culturally appropriate suicide prevention training for communities across the state.

The program was initiated following an extensive consultation process and is funded through the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing under the National Suicide Prevention Strategy.

We are currently recruiting for the position. To register interest contact the Executive Officer of the Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention on 9489 7717.

Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services' Council

The Help Card was a resource developed and produced in the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services' Council Inc, as a suicide prevention initiative launched by KAMSC in 2002 throughout the Kimberley region.

Through the evaluation of the Help Card it was found to have a high level of support amongst youth and service providers. In response to suggestions from young people, the Help Card will be modified to wallet size and the Kids' Help Line number will be added to the card.

For more information Kathy Hamaguchi 9193 6043.

Yorgum Aboriginal Counselling Service

Yorgum Aboriginal Family Counselling Service works with individuals, families and communities, including adults and children who suffer with any of the core issues that Aboriginal people face. This work ranges from cultural identity issues to specific traumas, the effects of the historical and current social illnesses of racism, through to family and personal relationship issues.

Yorgum also has two services that dealt specifically with child sexual abuse and family violence. This includes children who have been sexually abused, adults who are dealing with having been abused as children, as well as children who are directly or indirectly affected by adult violence.

In working across this range of issues Yorgum finds that grief and loss, self destructive actions, suicide, sexual abuse and family violence are all interrelated and most often layered in ways that are particularly destructive and disempowering to people's spirit.

Yorgum is open to referrals from any service in the metro area and runs various workshops with a community focus throughout the State. Yorgum also supports the growth of other agencies and Aboriginal community initiatives that address the need for healing for our people.

For more information contact Darrell Henry (08) 9228 0407.

Indigenous Psychological Services

IPS is a private company that was founded in late 1999, by Dr Tracy Westerman. IPS mission is to provide quality psychological services to Indigenous people that address current inequities in access to appropriate mental health services. IPS has three core business areas:

1. Clinical – IPS provides direct clinical and psychological assessment work. Referrals are taken from a number of Government and non-Government agencies.
2. Training – Training is delivered throughout Australia to audiences as diverse as remote Aboriginal communities, Government Departments and community organisations.
3. Research – IPS has a firm commitment to continuing its strong reputation as providers of culturally and scientifically sound research into the particular mental health needs of Aboriginal people.

For more information visit the IPS website at www.indigenouspsychservices.com.au or call on (08) 9362 2036.

NEW RESEARCH PROJECTS

Aboriginal Child Health Survey – Telethon Institute for Child Health Research

The WAACHS has been the largest and most comprehensive study of Aboriginal child health and development in Australia. The Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, with the support of the WA Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organizations, the ATSIC WA State Council, and the WA Council of Aboriginal Elders, has now completed a major statewide survey of Aboriginal children and families to improve our understanding of what children and young people need to develop in healthy ways. Data has been collected through a multisectoral household, individual youth and school-based survey. The main survey data file contains information on over 11000 family members, with just fewer than 5300 children in the scope of the survey. Excluding linked data sets, there are some 1200 variables on each of these children.

The WAACHS Team have proposed the release and publication of five volumes of findings from the survey, with the first volume being launched in May 2004. The volumes include:

- Volume One - The health of Aboriginal children and young people
- Volume Two - Social and emotional well being (title still being confirmed)
- Volume Three - Family and Community (title still being confirmed)
- Volume Four - Education and health (title still being confirmed)
- Volume Five - Health and justice (title still being confirmed)

For further information contact:

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Consumer consultation and participation – Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention

Funding by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing's National Suicide Prevention Strategy has enabled a process of consumer consultation and participation to commence, focussing on community and professional services for males aged 17 to 35 years in the Perth metropolitan and outer metropolitan areas. The study considered men's knowledge, attitudes and experience relating to suicide and services. It was specifically designed to explore men's own perspectives and experiences and was informed by consultation with men aged 17-35 years, carers or community members who have supported men during episodes of suicidal behaviour in this age group and service providers. The research will be completed by June 2004.

For more information contact the project coordinator Marg Sayers on 9489 7723.

NEW RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

1. Firearm related deaths in Australia 1991-2001

A new publication from the Australian Institute of Criminology:

An examination of firearm related deaths in Australia between 1991 and 2001 found a 47 per cent decrease in numbers, with a fall in the number of suicides accounting for the largest part of that decrease. Nine out of 10 firearm related deaths involved males.

Compared to firearm related suicides and accidents where less than 10 per cent involved the death of a female, a higher proportion of homicides involved a female victim (33%). Persons under the age of 15 years were least likely to die as a result of a firearm related injury. Males and females who suffered a fatal firearms injury tended to follow a similar age distribution, with persons aged between 24 and 34 years accounting for the largest number of firearm related deaths. There appears to be a shift in age related risk between 1991 and 2001. In 1991, males aged between 15 and 24 years had the highest risk of firearm related fatal injury (rate of 9.5%), whereas in 2001 males aged 65 years and older had the highest risk (rate of 4.9%). The majority of firearm related deaths were committed with a hunting rifle, although there has been an increase in the use of handguns.

2. Risk of suicide and related adverse outcomes after exposure to a suicide prevention programme in the US Air Force: cohort study

This new article in the British Journal of Medicine (v 327, 7428, pp 1376) looks at the efficacy of a suicide prevention program in the US Airforce, and makes observations about how their results can be extrapolated to the wider community.

3. Worried tired and alone, Carers WA

This report of research into the needs of carers of people with mental illness and the issues impacting their lives, was recently launched by Hon Sue Ellery, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health. The research was commissioned by Carers WA and the Mental Health Carers Issues Network and conducted by an independent consultant. The report is a collection and synthesis of the views and thoughts of 144 carers who participated in the research through completion of a written survey, telephone interview or as a member of a focus group.

Click onto the Web Log to access new research

<http://suicideprevention.blogspot.com/>.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NATIONALLY?

Conferences

For a list of forthcoming Australian and international conferences and events visit the Ausinet website at www.auseinet.com

National Suicide Prevention Strategy

NSPS project details are now online on the CommunityLIFE website at

<http://www.community-life.org.au/govtfundproj.php>

Auseinetter Issue 19, November 2003 is available at

http://www.auseinet.com/resources/auseinet/netter19/auseinetter_19.pdf

The Australian e-journal of mental health is available at

<http://auseinet.flinders.edu.au/journal/vol2iss3/index.php>

Mindframe National Media Strategy

The Mindframe National Media Strategy seeks to influence the media industry to report mental illness and suicide issues responsibly. It has been developed in collaboration with key stakeholders including the media industry, mental health promotion and suicide prevention experts and consumer and carer groups. Initiatives include: media monitoring research, resources for media professionals, media awards,

resources for community action against stigma, and curriculum resources for journalism and media studies students and educators.

This strategy resulted in the development of “*Reporting suicide and mental illness: A resource for media professionals*”. The resource provides suggestions about issues to consider when reporting suicide and mental illness, research sources, facts and statistics and current contacts. The resource is available online at www.mindframe-media.info

CONTACT US

If you have project material that you would like to have listed in the next newsletter, please email project information to katem@ichr.uwa.edu.au. Articles or project information will only be published by MCSP if they comply with National Guidelines. MCSP will reserve the right to alter submissions where necessary to ensure they comply with these guidelines. Programs mentioned in this newsletter are not endorsed by MCSP.

Please provide feedback as to what you would like to see in the newsletter email katem@ichr.uwa.edu.au.

MAILING LIST: If you are not already on the MCSP mailing list and would like to join click on the following link www.mcsp.org.au. Details provided for the mailing list will be treated in line with the Guidelines on Privacy in the Private Health Sector 2001.