



FACT SHEET

StandBy Response Service

Improving our capacity to respond to and support people bereaved by suicide

THE EFFECTS OF SUICIDE BEREAVEMENT

- Communities in Australia are often unprepared to support people affected by the suicide of a family member, friend or colleague.
- Suicide has a significant and dramatic affect on immediate family and friends, the community and the workplace.

SOME FACTS ABOUT SUICIDE

- Suicide is the 10th most common cause of death in Australia. In terms of the absolute number of deaths by suicide the current annual loss of life is around 2,100 (in 2004 it was 2,098, in 2003 it was 2,213).
- Deaths by suicide continues to exceed the loss of life through road fatalities in Australia (road fatalities in 2004 were 1,596 and in 2005 were 1,635).
- Suicide deaths are also higher (as a percentage of all leading causes of death in Australia) than deaths attributable to pneumonia, dementia, pancreatic cancer, liver disease or kidney failure, leukemia, melanoma or lymphoma or premature death of infants (e.g. SIDS, still births). However, high as the personal, social and economic costs of these terrible diseases are, they often attract significantly more public and political attention than does death by suicide.
- Like road fatalities, the impact of suicide is magnified by feelings of unnecessary or avoidable loss of life. In terms of years of life lost unnecessarily in Australia, suicide is second only to heart disease.
- On average in Australia there are around 20 suicides per 100,000 males and 6 per 100,000 females per annum. This figure escalates to over 40 per 100,000 males in parts of regional Australia and up to as high as 80 per 100,000 young males in some remote and rural locations.
- The 2098 deaths by suicide registered in 2004 (ABS 2006) translates to approx 21,000 people bereaved and directly impacted by suicide in that year.

THE NEED FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- People who are bereaved by suicide require assistance and support in dealing with their unique and tragic loss.
- For people who are bereaved by suicide, gaining access to the right type of support at the right time, can mean the difference between learning to live with their loss or suffering compounded and long term complications which impact on their ability to live productive and healthy lives.
- The capacity to support people bereaved by suicide is most effective when it is available within the immediate community.
- Local community support assists bereaved people not feel alone or neglected.

CANBERRA STANDBY RESPONSE SERVICE

- One of the most successful ready-response services in Australia for people bereaved by suicide is the StandBy Response Service.
- SupportLink Australia is the auspice agency for the Canberra StandBy Response Service.
- The StandBy Response Service works by harnessing the cooperation of local services and support groups to respond to people bereaved by suicide.

STANDBY RESPONSE SERVICE

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