

## Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Community Network Meeting

18<sup>th</sup> April 2023

10.30am-1:00pm

Paranaple Centre Devonport

### Meeting Minutes

#### 1. Welcome, present and apologies

Meeting opened at 10:30 am by Tamara Johnston

**Present:** Ben Wright(YFCC), Jonathan Cowen (YFCC), Courtney Stocks (Tas TAFE Cert 3 student), Trudi Wilson (Tas TAFE Cert 3 student & CORES volunteer facilitator), Nicole Watson (Baptcare), Rod Lambert (Men Care Too, Standby, & MHFA trainer), Owen Wild (Men Care Too), Miles Knapman (Community member), Sam Bigwood (Mental Health Council Tasmania, Our Brothers Keeper, and Man Up Tas), Aaron Meldrum (Man Up Tas, Burnie Works, & The Better Blokes project podcast), Ben Hughes (The Men's Table), Julie Patterson (Meercroft), Jodi Town (Meercroft), Annette Rockliff (Choose Life Services), Mary-Anne Burgess Faludi (Lifeline), Mel Wells (Newport and Wildman), Paula Connell (Uniting), Talitha Watson (Uniting), Garry Wakefield (Working it Out), Jodie Saville (Circular Head Council & STICH), Kate Grey (STICH), Sharon Corvinus-Jones (Kentish Regional Clinic), Natalie Baldock (Kentish Regional Clinic), Annie Anderson (Kentish Regional Clinic), Paige Freeman (Kentish Regional Clinic), Brenton Wheare (Glenmorgan suicide awareness network & Mens Shed), Mark Davis (Mental Health Peer Support worker), Jasmin Dunn (Relationships Australia Tasmania), and Tamara Johnston (Relationships Australia Tasmania).

**Apologies:** Tim McCarthy, Kelli Radford (Wellways), Deb Gyles (Uniting), Laura Grattidge

#### 2. Confirmation of minutes of meeting held 15<sup>th</sup> February 2023

Minutes of previous meeting were tabled and opened for discussion. Those present agreed that the minutes reflected the previous meeting, and no amendments were needed.

#### 3. Updates from network members

**Stronger Together in Circular Head (STICH)** – presented by Jodie & Kate

Stronger Together in Circular Head (STICH) is a volunteer run community group that aims to decrease suicide rates, reduce stigma and support those effected by mental health or suicide in the Circular Head Community.

Both Jodie and Kate shared that they have had a lived experience of and been touched by suicide. In 2019 they put the call out and the community came together and from this collective group grew STICH.

STICH undertook a Community Action Plan which supported them to build community resources and undertake training. They say the strength is in the people involved and their willingness to work together. They shared that a study recently published said that *'being lonely ages a person faster than smoking'* and so it is really important to build the community and to encourage community connection. One of the initiatives they have recently undertaken is to create a community connection guide:

[https://www.circularhead.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0023/1303781/Community-Connection-Guide-as-at-6.3.23.pdf](https://www.circularhead.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0023/1303781/Community-Connection-Guide-as-at-6.3.23.pdf)

The community connection guide is designed to assist community members to quickly locate important services and find ways to connect through local groups, clubs and organisations. They have also created, in collaboration with HALT, a pocket sized z-card with support service information and a rip off section to support getting help from a GP. Some of the other initiatives the group have undertaken are creating a flyer with caring community members who are available for a chat and cuppa, holding save your bacon and mental health bbqs and brekkies, hosting an annual out of the Shadows Walk, painting a big blue tree, school and community events with guest speakers such as Matt Caruana & Jeremy Forbes, and hosting training such as Mental Health First Aid, CORES, Accidental Counsellor, and What Do I Say, What Do I Do. They try to link what they are doing with other events in Circular Head such as hosting the opening of the Naked Farmer as part of the CHarts festival. Starting community conversations has led to people reaching out and being connected with supports.

### **Men Care Too** – presented by Rod and Owen

Men Care Too (MCT) run weekly social catch ups for men on the NW Coast to provide a place to connect, share life and support one another. They are a grassroots group initiated by Greg Smith and each of the activities are volunteer run.

- MCT Mates Coffee Club is 10am every Monday at McCarthy's Bread Lounge in Ulverstone
- The Man Walk is held every Saturday morning leaving from McCarthy's Bread Lounge in Ulverstone at 9am.
- Mr Perfect BBQs are held weekly at 11am in different locations around the NW Coast. Currently they alternate between Burnie, Ulverstone and Devonport. They did have a BBQ at Railton but this has now ceased. Owen is looking to start a BBQ in Port Sorell to fill the gap.

Both Owen and Rod shared their personal stories of how through engaging with MCT they have found authentic connection, support and shared life experience. Rod initially thought he would be supporting others but found out it is a two-way street when diagnosed with cancer and finding support from other guys who had been through similar journeys through attending the walk and cuppa club. Owen, an experience chef, moved to Tasmania to care for his Mum and quickly found himself isolated. Through attending the BBQs he found support and connection with the other guys that was better than any clinical support.

Each of the events have a mental health focus and are more than just a BBQ, walk or cuppa. Rod says that from his work he has found the biggest protective factor in suicide prevention is connection. Approx 20-30 guys get along to the BBQs each week and they believe in the 3 years approx. 300-400 people have been connected. The groups run with little funding and have picked up grants when they can.

They say that the groups work because they are genuine; there are no forms, no formality and you can be who you are and do what you feel.

Rod also works with Standby and shared that there is free training available called 'What Do I Do What Do I Say'.

For more information on Men Care Too: <https://www.mencaretoo.org/>

### **Community Response to Eliminating Suicide (CORES) – presented by Sharon**

Sharon says *'it all comes back to community and connection. It takes a community to raise a child and a community to support an adult. We all need inclusion and diversity.'*

CORES is a community-based program which educates members of a local community on how to intervene when they encounter a person, they believe may be suicidal. CORES has 20 years' experience in supporting community in suicide prevention and will celebrate the milestone on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023. All are invited to attend with both daytime & evening events on offer for the community. Community service organisations are invited to host a stall.

CORES was developed after there were 10 suicides in the Kentish region in a 3-year period. They initially started running the ASIST training, however found the 2 days training was too long for most community members to get along to and so developed the CORES training to provide another option.

CORES now have community networks across Tas, Qld, NSW, and SA. They used to get funding from Primary Health Tasmania and now are supported through the trial sites in Tasmania. Funding in Tasmania is still a concern with most of the work run off the sides of desks. The corporate training, they run currently supports them to provide free community training which assists in reducing the barrier to attending. They are currently waiting for funding promised by Brian Mitchell to support more community training.

Sharon wants to see coordinators in each State and Territory in Australia. She finds face-to-face training the best, however there are areas they can't get too and so in partnership with Wellways they have developed an online training for organisations. Their self-care and wellbeing training is also being trialled online.

CORES completed an external evaluation as part of Tasmanian trial sites. This evaluation was undertaken by the Centre for Rural Health at UTAS. What stood out was that 3 of 6 volunteers surveyed said they wouldn't be here today without the training. Given that only 6 people were asked this was a high figure and it showed the importance of continuing to show up for the community. Sharon shared that she herself started as a volunteer facilitator and did this for approx. 15 years before becoming CEO. She sees the training as so important that she often delivers workshops in a volunteer capacity on her days off.

At a recent training she received feedback from a mother that had attended with her daughter. She said that the CORES training had helped her daughter recognise that her suicidality is not a sign of weakness.

**Man Up Tasmania** – presented by Aaron

Man Up Tas is a grassroots men's mental health organisation based on the NW Coast. Aaron shared that their logo is now changing after 2 years of operating with previous logo he had created. Man Up Tas have formed a partnership with Moon Cheese Studio, who are working with them for free, to create the new logo. The new logo features a picture of Tasmania with speech bubbles depicted as the two islands to promote talking and includes the semi-colon in the image.

They have recently celebrated training the 160<sup>th</sup> person in Mental Health First Aid for free. This has been made possible by funding support received. The local community are often not able to attend training due to affordability. Man Up Tas want to make sure there is no barrier to entry for information.

Man Up Tas have also been working closely with businesses and organisations to understand their mental health practices. One of the businesses they have been working with is Simplot. Simplot in Ulverstone have been proactive in supporting their staff's mental health for many years however felt like they were not moving in a fast enough and forward direction. Simplot had mental health BBQs, posters displayed, and mental health first aiders as part of their current practice. They had the tools but not a strategy of how to back up what they were doing. Man Up Tas help businesses to understand their strategy and what underpins it. They assist to build the toolbox to hold all the tools. As part of their work with Simplot, Man Up Tas recently put on a panel presentation to all 400 staff at the Ulverstone site. It provided a space for people in the room to ask questions and be a part of the conversation.

Aaron says that funding is hard to get, and grants are few and far between. Man Up Tas are working with businesses to build the capital needed to continue providing free community training and support.

Man Up Tas work closely with Men's Resources Tasmania and are auspiced through them. Their work with Men's Resources Tasmania recently supported advocating to get a male focus added to the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention strategy.

**Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT)** – presented by Sam

Sam's role is funded by the government to meet people where they are. He is about finding the gaps across the state and connecting people to make the world a little smaller. They want to support people when they are good and keep them good. To give people the tools to connect. MHCT recently partnered with SAMRHI to look at a behavioural change project. They are looking at a photo aspect to this project and are looking for community partners and local leaders with roots in community, who speak the language of community, to lead and drive it. Watch this space as Sam says there will be more to share in the next 2-3 months.

#### 4. General business – Open discussion

**Tamara** – thanked the fabulous presenters. Connection was a strong theme in all of the presentations and there is space and a need for all of us in this work.

Tamara shared the QR codes that are on the back of the agenda which link to further information about the upcoming National Suicide Prevention Conference and the CORES 20 year celebration.

#### **Suicide Bereavement Group held in Ulverstone**

Albie House/Lifeline Tasmania runs a Suicide Bereavement Group, the second Tuesday evening of every month from 5.30-7.30pm at the Ulverstone Neighbourhood House. The Group is facilitated with clinical support and also by lived experience facilitators. The group has been running successfully in Hobart for several years and has recently expanded to the North West with direction to expand into Launceston mid-year. Mary-Anne can be contacted on 0477 883 985 or emailed [mary-anne.burgessfal@lifelinetasmania.org.au](mailto:mary-anne.burgessfal@lifelinetasmania.org.au). Mary-Anne is located on the North West and works every Tuesday in this space.

#### **Roses in the Ocean Peer CARE connect warmline**

A suicide prevention call-back service providing a safe place for people with a lived experience of suicide to connect with others with a similar lived experience for a chat, in a shared space of compassion, understanding and respect.

The service provides people with an opportunity to connect, be heard, and for their distress to be compassionately explored and understood by another person through the mutual understanding that comes with meaningful shared experience. This service may assist in providing relief from emotional distress, explore coping strategies, assistance navigating to find additional online resources and/or information.

Whether you have lost someone to suicide, are caring for a loved one in crisis, have survived an attempt, or have been living with your own suicidal thoughts, we will connect you with a trained and supported Peer CARE Companion who has a similar lived experience of suicide.

\*\*\*This is NOT a crisis line. If you are in crisis or someone you are with is in crisis, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14. If your life or the life of someone you are with is in danger, please call emergency services on 000.\*\*\*

Peer CARE Companions do not provide counselling or advice.



**How to call Peer CARE Companion Warmline**

- 1 Call **1800 77 PEER** (1800 77 7337)\*
- 2 Leave a message, so we can call you back.
- 3 A Peer CARE Companion will connect with you within 48 hrs.

**1800 77 PEER**  
**1800 77 7337**

\*1800 number costs may apply. Please check with your mobile provider.

**5. Next meeting** – to be held online in June with the date to be confirmed. This meeting will be state-wide and held online to allow a greater number of attendees.

**6. Meeting closed** at 12:20pm with lunch and networking following.

