



# Better Health 4 Dorset

## Community Action Plan

### 2025-2026



*Relationships Australia*  
TASMANIA

SUPPORTED BY  
  
Tasmanian  
Government


## Where can I get support?

Talking and reading about mental health and suicide can be distressing and may bring up strong feelings or personal experiences for some people. If you're worried about how you're feeling and need help, please use the below services to access support.

# Need Support?

# We are here for you...



 **Is this an emergency?**

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger - CALL triple zero (000)

### Lifeline

*Anyone having a personal crisis*

 13 11 14

 [lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au)

### Suicide Call Back Service

*Anyone thinking about suicide*

 1300 659 467

 [suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://suicidecallbackservice.org.au)

### A Tasmanian Lifeline

*Tasmanians supporting Tasmanians*

 1800 984 434

 [atasmanianlifeline.com.au](http://atasmanianlifeline.com.au)

### Beyond Blue

*Support around depression and anxiety*

 1300 224 636

 [beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au)

### Find Help Tas

*Directory of Tasmanian supports*

 [findhelptas.org.au](http://findhelptas.org.au)

### SANE

*Support around complex mental health*

 1800 187 263

 [sane.org.au](http://sane.org.au)

## Bereavement Support

### StandBy Support After Suicide

 1300 727 247

 [standbysupport.com.au](http://standbysupport.com.au)

## Alcohol & Drug Support

### Holyoake (Hobart)

 03 6224 1777

 [holyoake.com.au](http://holyoake.com.au)

## First Nations Support


### 13YARN

 13 92 76

 [13yarn.org.au](http://13yarn.org.au)

## LGBTQIA+ Support

### Qlife

 1800 184 527

 [qlife.org.au](http://qlife.org.au)

## Youth Support

### Kids Helpline

 1800 551 800

 [kidshelpline.com.au](http://kidshelpline.com.au)

## Men's Support

### Mensline

 1300 78 99 78

 [mensline.org.au](http://mensline.org.au)

## Financial Advice

### National Debt Helpline

 1800 007 007

 [ndh.org.au](http://ndh.org.au)

## Veterans Support

### Open Arms

 1800 011 046

 [openarms.gov.au](http://openarms.gov.au)

## Gambling Support

### Gambling Help Online

 1800 858 858

 [gamblinghelponline.org.au](http://gamblinghelponline.org.au)



## What is a CAP?

A Community Action Plan (CAP) is a community owned and led plan that focusses on promoting wellbeing, mental health, and suicide prevention. CAPs are developed in collaboration with the community to ensure that actions are as practical and sustainable as possible, focusing on the specific needs of each target group. CAP actions typically support one or more of the following domains:

- Stigma reduction,
- Connection to community,
- Awareness of supports available,
- Suicide prevention preparedness, and
- Suicide prevention prioritisation.

The Tasmanian Government has funded Relationships Australia Tasmania to provide support for communities to develop initiatives which align with the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy (2023-2027). This initiative provides communities with a small grant to support the role out of the action/s.



## Background Information

Better Health 4 Dorset (BH4D) is a group made up of dedicated members of the Dorset community.

The group work together to support the Dorset community by truly listening to local needs. Their goal is to make access to health and wellbeing services support easier for all community members—removing barriers like cost, long wait times, travel, or the need for referrals. They also advocate for services to deliver support within the Dorset region and provide a welcoming space at the Hub for services and community members accessing them. and wellbeing options, the kettle is always on!

Services available at the BH4D Hub include:

- Royal Flying Doctors Service – Adolescent, Adult Counselling,
- Relationships Australia – General Counselling
- Salvation Army – Doorways Program, Emergency Relief
- Yemaya – Domestic and Family Violence Counselling
- Laurel House – Sexual Assault Support Service
- Wellways – Discovery Program
- Mayshaw – Health and Aged Care for Living
- Cancer Council – Information and referral, individual support, oncology masseuse
- Cancer Peer Support Group – Anyone impacted by cancer, monthly
- Dorset Connector – Transport available Tue, Wed, Thurs, for Dorset residents (18+)
- Dorset Community Garden – For all Dorset residents 7 days per week
- Information and Referral – Support for individuals to access services needed
- Aged Care support – Support to navigate the aged care system.
- Dorset Suicide Prevention Network Meetings – Monthly
- Expo's and Events – Bringing information to the community

# Community Consultation Method and Results

## Community Survey Summary

### Respondent Overview

Total Respondents: 7

Roles Represented:

- Service Providers (Outreach and Local) – 5
- Community Members / Volunteers – 2
- Engagement Duration:
- Majority engaged for 1–2 years
- Three have been involved for less than 1 year



### Socialising and Connection Needs

Common Suggestions:

- Morning/afternoon teas
- Talking groups
- Team building activities
- Lunch or dinner offsite
- One suggestion to revive a “New Residents Welcome Event”

Key Insight: There's a strong appetite for both informal and structured social connection opportunities that can strengthen relationships across service providers and the broader community.

### What the Hub Is Doing Well

Themes include:

- Providing a confidential, inclusive and welcoming space
- Hosting multiple service providers and mental health support
- Supporting trauma-informed practice
- Playing a first-point-of-contact role for the community
- Supporting navigation of services for complex needs

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Improve visibility and advertising of the Hub's work
- Expand the physical space
- Promote more inter-provider connection and social cohesion
- Increase community outreach efforts

## **Suicide Prevention Capacity**

Most referenced:

- Suicide prevention training and workshops
- Connections to services like DSPN, RA, Standby, Lifeline
- Supportive leadership and access to workers who know the local context

Where more is needed:

- Stigma reduction and cultural change, especially among men and older generations
- Consistent staffing to build trust and avoid disruption
- Youth-focused strategies
- Outreach to isolated residents who may not attend the hub
- Follow-up after referral or discharge

## **Identified Risk Factors for Suicide in the Region**

Highly recurring themes:

- Isolation and remoteness
- Financial strain and economic instability
- Access to firearms in rural areas
- Family violence and trauma
- Drug and alcohol use
- Lack of local mental health services or long wait times
- Poor access to GPs and psychologists
- Housing and transport challenges
- Stigma, especially in small communities

## **Barriers to Help-Seeking**

- Community stigma and gossip
- Concerns about privacy in small towns
- Fear of judgment or job impact
- Distrust or fear of service inconsistency
- Perception that mental health = weakness, especially among men

## **Barriers to Mental Health Conversations**

- Fear of not knowing what to say
- Cultural attitudes: "she'll be right"
- Personal grief avoidance
- Perceived career risk
- Stigma and internalised shame

## “Magic Wand” Ideas from Respondents

If they had unlimited resources, participants would like to see:

- A larger physical hub with dedicated mental health spaces (counselling, drop-in)
- Free psychologists and clinical services locally available
- Outreach programs to small and remote communities
- A flagship mental health awareness event (like AgFest or Show Day)
- Trusted local champions sharing lived experience stories
- Primary prevention and community-wide education (especially on CSA and FV)
- Collaboration with sporting clubs, schools, churches, etc.
- Mental health response embedded in local, not distant, governance



# HUB STRENGTHS & IMPROVEMENTS

## WHAT THE HUB IS DOING WELL



### Welcoming & Safe Environment

Providing a confidential, inclusive, and non-judgmental space for clients and community members.



### Community Connection & Navigation

Serving as a first point of contact, guiding people to the right support and referrals.



### Access to Mental Health & Wellbeing

Offering affordable "soft health" services like counselling and therapy close to home.



### Supportive & Trauma-Informed Approach

Staff are described as compassionate, trauma-informed, and supportive of both clients and service providers.



### Strong Local Engagement

Actively involved in community events, schools, and local programs like Dorset Connector.



### Collaboration with Services

Partnering with external service providers to bring more mental health support into the region.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT



### More Visibility & Promotion

Improve advertising to raise awareness of the Hub and its services in the community.



### Extend Operating Hours

More availability to meet growing demand.



### Bigger or Expanded Space

More room to accommodate services and provide a better working environment.



### Stronger Provider Cohesion

Foster connection between service providers (e.g. shared lunches or team events) to build community among staff.

## What is in place that helps you identify and support a colleague at risk of suicide? Where could we do more?

The training that has been supplied to the community has brought awareness and have given the ability to ask the question. Keep providing the opportunity for members to participate in the workshops

Access to Raw with the worker regularly visiting the hub and meeting visiting services. Taking the time to meet with and speak to workers in the field.

We have access to many resources and service providers from RA, DSPN, Standby, Lifeline and our own EAP. Training in Mental and Youth Mental Health. To do more is to break down stigma and have more conversations with youth and all community members.

**Mental health First Aide Training and Networking with other services at the Health Hub.**

One would hope the DSPN offering resources and training to community looking for support is making a difference, and the close connection between the hub and the DSPN will only improve the ability to deliver a range of opportunities for people to connect in the suicide prevention space.

There is more opportunity to do "outreach" I think for those who struggle to get into the hub if we can work alongside other organisations with the same integrity.

# Key Themes Contributing to Suicide Risk in the Dorset Region

## Social Isolation & Exclusion

- Lack of connection or sense of belonging
- Physical and emotional isolation in rural settings
- Living away from family and support networks

## Limited Access to Services

- Long wait times for GPs, psychologists, social workers, and ambulances
- High cost and distance to access mental health services
- Under-resourced emergency services

## Rural & Farming-Related Stressors

- Farming pressures and unstable markets (beef/sheep)
- Access to firearms
- Remoteness and difficulty reaching services

## Socioeconomic Pressures

- Unemployment and underemployment
- Financial stress and instability (especially in farming)
- Low income among single-parent households
- Limited affordable housing

## Trauma & Family Conflict

- Experiences of family violence and abuse
- Relationship breakdowns
- Conflict in family law matters

## Substance Use & Sexual Violence

- Endemic drug use in some parts of the community
- High (anecdotally reported) rates of sexual assault

## Health Determinants & Education

- Poor health literacy and limited education opportunities
- General barriers to accessing timely and appropriate care

## Mental Health & Stigma

- High rates of mental health issues with limited support
- Stigma around seeking help
- Emotional regulation challenges

# Mental Health Risk Factors

"Isolation. Transport. Community Connection is low as there is not much happening in the remote communities for people, especially youth."

"Regional country community member including farmers . Youth and males. Social isolation due to cost of travel. Unsure how to seek support or what services are available locally. "

"Getting support outside of work hours is tough and when they travel to get help in Launceston it often isn't timely or if sent home there is inadequate follow up. I am concerned about younger men in this regard, and the difficulty getting services to travel to them because of isolation, access to transport and safe spaces"

"Homelessness, isolation, family violence, financial struggles, abuse and trauma"  
"High rate of problem drinking, substance abuse, smoking and poor diet resulting in obesity "

## Mental Health in Dorset

Psychological Distress: Residents of Dorset experience higher levels of psychological distress compared to the Tasmanian average.

Self-Rated Health: Only 36% of Dorset residents rated their health as "excellent" or "very good," which is below the state average.

Mental Health Conditions: According to the 2021 Census, 11.5% of Tasmanians reported living with a long-term mental health condition, higher than the national average of 8.8%.

*primaryhealthtas.com.au*



# BIG IDEAS

Scheduled outreach to our smaller communities and presence at community events would close that sense of isolation - what do we need - resources, community lead buy in and support from local and state government that has primary health care managed locally at its core

"Larger building to accommodate more services for outreach. More events to promote what services are available to support mental health concerns. Free Psychologists available in the area. "

"Ongoing state and federal government support and funding Facilitating increased networking between and training for various groups in the community who can directly or indirectly influence mental health - service clubs, churches, sporting teams and clubs, police, hotels, hospital and aged care home, etc."

"Increased support and community awareness/primary prevention strategies that address CSA and family violence. Better and safer access to Government Systems that respond to these issues. "

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A day where mental health is unpacked and there are things that showcase good mental health practices. Someone that the community respects to talk about their personal journey so as to break stereotypes and show people that mental health issues affect us all. 'It takes a village mentality' to make people realise we are all in this together and should be watching our friends, family and others' backs.

# Community Action Plan

## Action 1: Increase confidence of community members to identify and support people considering suicide.

<p><b>What will this action look like? (Activities)</b></p>	<p>HBH4D will host a “Just a Farmer” movie evening to raise funds for the DSPN to provide Mental Health First Aid and Youth Mental Health First Aid training</p>
<p><b>How will this action make a difference? (Outcomes)</b></p>	<p>Hosting a “Just a Farmer” movie evening will bring community members together in a social setting, and the content of the film will likely encourage conversations among community members about mental health, suicide and the common challenges they face.</p> <p>Facilitating this event as a fundraiser to support the DSPN to fund training for community members will ensure there is place based support available in the community for those experiencing mental health challenges.</p>
<p><b>How will you know if the CAP has made a difference (Outcome Measures)</b></p>	<p>The community will know if this action has made a difference by monitoring the increase in trained MHFA and YMHFA community members, and engaging with these community members to hear their stories of impact and their experiences in using their learned skills.</p>

# Community Action Plan

## Action 2: Increase awareness around suicide prevention and invite community members to become engaged

<p><b>What will this action look like? (Activities)</b></p>	<p>BH4D will host and support a diverse range of events that will bring the Dorset community together. Including a fire circle with Jason Smith, a Traditional Fire Practitioner, soup and chat days each week at the Hub and a Multicultural afternoon at Red Dirt Café, providing an opportunity for CALD community members to gather and bring a plate of their traditional foods</p>
<p><b>How will this action make a difference? (Outcomes)</b></p>	<p>Hosting community events will bring the community together, fostering connection and conversation in safe and welcoming environments. These events will also allow an opportunity for community members to become more familiar with local services, and could lead to community members proactively organising additional events/opportunities for gathering and connecting.</p>
<p><b>How will you know if the CAP has made a difference (Outcome Measures)</b></p>	<p>Track attendance and participation at the events to measure how many people are engaging Collect post-event surveys and feedback from attendees</p>

# Community Action Plan

## Action 3: Increase awareness and understanding of suicide and suicide prevention.

<p><b>What will this action look like? (Activities)</b></p>	<p>Develop a lived experience story-based resource to foster hope, reduce stigma and improve access to help</p>
<p><b>How will this action make a difference? (Outcomes)</b></p>	<p>Inviting community members to share their stories and unique insights will allow others to grow their understanding of the contributing factors and causes of suicidality in the community, the importance of accessing help and support, and foster a sense of hope. Having a tangible resource available to community members will provide them with agency and control around how they access that information.</p> <p>Publishing the book will also provide BH4D the opportunity to include the details of support services, leading to accessibility of key resources.</p>
<p><b>How will you know if the CAP has made a difference (Outcome Measures)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BH4D will be able to monitor how many copies of the book have been distributed in the community.</li> <li>• BH4D will be able to collate anecdotal information stemming from conversations with both contributors and consumers of the book.</li> </ul>

