



Creating
suicide safer
communities

ANXIETY RECOVERY CENTRE VICTORIA

Overview

- We will be talking about suicide
- What does a suicide safer community look like
- Australian Statistics
- Who is most at risk?
- What can we do to help?
- Where can we go to get support?
- Self care

What does a suicide safer community look like?

Where do we start?

- What role does your school play?
- What role do you play?
- Who needs to be on board?
- What resources are needed?

True or false?

- If I ask someone about suicide and they're not thinking about it, will I put the idea in their head?



NATIONAL stats

64 people per week,

8 people per day

210 attempts a day

75% male

25% female

2866

Suicide in Children

- The overall suicide rate in 2016 was 11.8 per 100,000 in Australia.
- **The most recent Australian data (ABS, Causes of Death, 2016) reports deaths due to suicide in 2016 at 2,866**
- **In 2016 suicide was the leading cause of death of children between 5 and 17 years of age**
- **Suicides for children under 14 ... rare but this is changing**
- 2012-2016 Data available from Kids Helpline (contacts from children)
- 59,053 counselling contacts related to suicide from 12,493 chn
- 12.4% concern for another person
- 82.9% reported suicidal thoughts and fears
- 3.2% expressed immediate intent
- 85% of these contacts were females

Lets out start to talk suicide

The word has so much POWER

- Dispel the myths around suicide
- All feelings are ok even negative ones
- Normalise ... sometimes when people experience ...
- The need to acknowledge we may need to be the one to ask
- It can be difficult for the person to talk about / name it

Understand

Developing and creating opportunities for awareness and questions is the beginning to be better informed.

- Anyone can be at risk of suicide...
- Suicide by children is likely to be underestimated... social stigma, shame and accept that they have the cognitive maturity to understand the consequences of their actionswritings as early as 1904
- Most people want help
- We all can make a difference
- We need to act now... take any talk seriously
- The stigma and taboo can get in the way of asking /telling someone about their thoughts of suicide
- Media... mixed messages



“But why?”

They didn't
say anything.”

“I didn't' think
they were the
sort of person
who would
take their own
life.”

True or false?

90% of people who
suicide have a mental
illness

Prepare

- Ourselves, our children to acknowledge thoughts and feelings and be prepared to have difficult conversations?
- Be prepared to ask about suicide?
- It can be uncomfortable to feel someone is in a bad place but not sure what to do or how to respond to that kind of talk
- Inform ourselves of keep safe connections... what suicide resources are available.
- It's ok to talk about how we think and feel... we want to encourage open and direct talk

True or false?

- People who always talk about feeling suicidal won't actually do it

Respond

- Need to respond now... need to connect them to someone who can do an intervention
- What does an appropriate response look like?
- Mindful of our language... “silly” “stupid”
- Acknowledgement, empathy is needed and wanted.
- No response can be dismissive.. Feels like we don't care, or acknowledge how serious this might be..
- Understand that our health and mental health system can also respond poorly... just because they are a mental health professional doesn't mean they can have these conversations or that the person has shared they thoughts of suicide with them.
- We do not need to be experts or have the answers



Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem

True or false?

Most people who think about suicide are uncertain about dying

UNHELPFUL

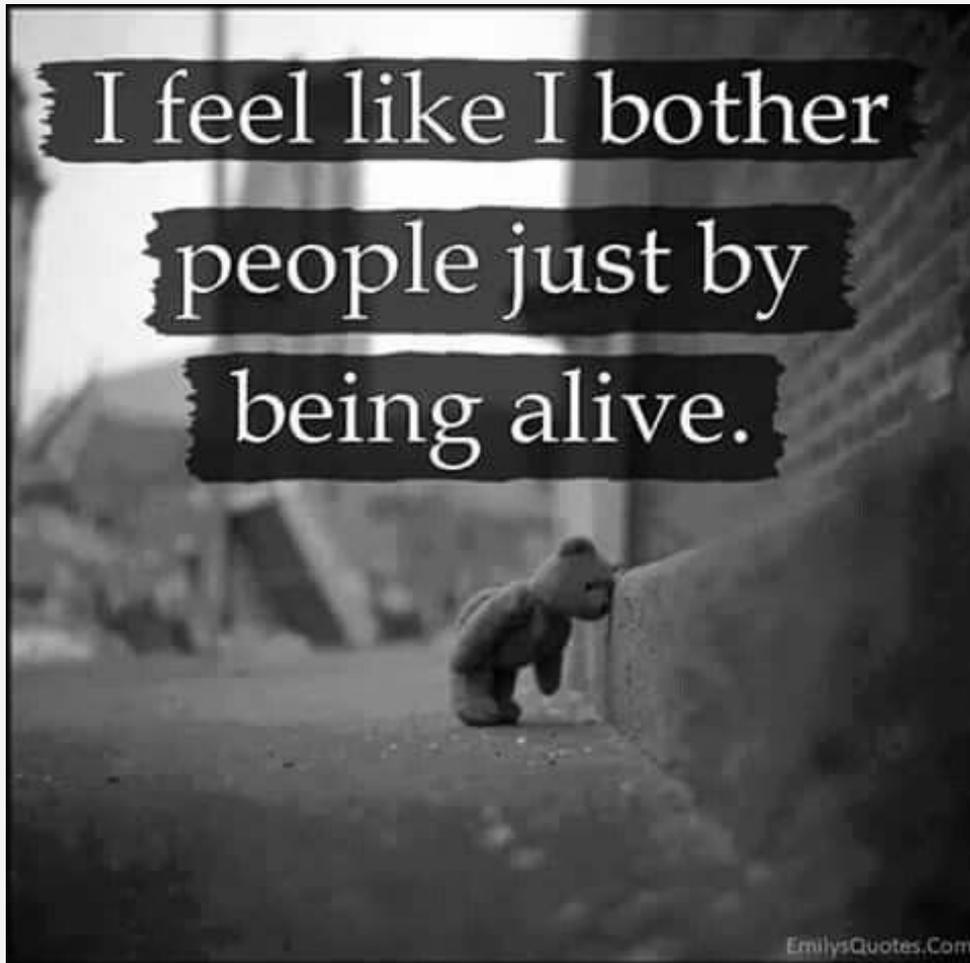
- Being dismissive/not taking it seriously
- Trying to talk them out of it
- Telling them they have lots of things to live for
- Guilt tripping – *How would your family feel?*
- Trying to fix all the problems that have got them thinking about suicide
- Change the topic
- Telling them they will have a better day tomorrow
- Doing nothing / avoidance
- Think it will go away

Who can I turn to?

- For many people with thoughts of suicide, it can be difficult to know who they can tell that will take them seriously
- There is much taboo and stigma in our society about suicide, which can often lead people to be very careful about who they tell and how they tell
- Often try to tell in ambiguous ways

What do I need to look for?

- What are some signs that could be indicators of thoughts of suicide?



People at risk of taking their own life often feel very isolated and alone.

Burden

Shame

Guilt

Hopeless

Worthless

And much more

Checklist of concerns

- Things we see that are of concern, their **actions**, behaviours, physical appearance, giving things away, risky in their behaviors etc
- The **talk** words they use – there's no point, no-one cares
- **Sensing feelings**- desperate, helpless
- **Behaviour**- risky, anger, frustration
- Life challenges and how they are coping with them.. bullying, relationship issues

Listen to our gut instinct

R U OK?

All it takes is
A beautiful fake smile to hide
an injured soul and they will
never notice how broken
you really are!

-Robin Williams

Feelings in
disguise

Desperate

Lonely

Sad

Hopelessness

Overwhelmed

How do I know if they are serious?

- It is important to take EVERYONE who talks about suicide, directly or indirectly, seriously
- Often, we as the helper need to take the lead to ask a clear and direct question about suicide
- Acknowledge the seriousness of the situation and determine with the person who they can reach out to for further help
- The best way to know is to ask them directly.
- Use clear language

Examples

- **Are you thinking about suicide?**
- **Are you thinking about ending your life?**
- **Are you thinking about killing yourself?**

Need to act now

- Take warning signs seriously
- Reaching out could save a life.
- Seek urgent help if it is needed by calling 000
- Time is now
- Mindful of surroundings

Listen and be present

- **Slow down and take the time to just listen and be there.**
- Right now you do not need to be a counselor or a therapist they need someone to share this with.
- We don't need to be the expert.
- We don't need to have the answers to their problems.
- The best gift you can give to someone is to listen
- The power of story telling ... the circuit breaker between the thinking to the feeling

Examples Don Richie

"I just needed someone to listen"

How do we show someone that we are listening

Reassure

- Thank you for sharing this with me... that took a lot of courage to do this.

Acknowledgement

- It sounds like you are going through a really tough time.
- It sounds like things have been really difficult for you I'm glad you reached out to me.
- I get the sense that you're really overwhelmed right now and feel really lonely disconnected. Can't imagine how difficult this has been for you.

Support

- Give hope
- I don't know what the answer is but I want to help you would you be willing to work with me to get some extra help now... who would you be comfortable in talking to.

Need to connect to further help

- **Identify who they can call on for support** and encourage the person to agree to get further support.
- **Check their safety.** If you are really worried, don't leave the person alone.
- **Agree on the next step..** Further help is needed
- Teleconference call to someone who can do a suicide intervention.
- Take them to Emergency –
- If we don't have co-operation ring 000

Interested in further training

- **Identify a person with thoughts of suicide** and ask the person about suicide and the listen
- **How to create safety around their thoughts of suicide.** Learn how to do a suicide intervention
- **Connect people to** ..further help

- safeTALK -3 hour training
- ASIST- 2 days
- ARCVic www.arcvic.org.au

What does a suicide safer community look like?.....clearer

Where do we start?

- What role does your school play?
- What role do you play?
- Who needs to be on board?
- What resources are needed?

HELP

- H- Helplines-** Suicide Line / Suicide Call back service / Lifeline can do suicide interventions
- E-Emergency** If you have no co-operation or out of your depth ring 000
- L-Lifeline** Don't under estimate what talking can do
- Plan safety** Person with thoughts of suicide needs to be connected to safety now
Personal self care- (de-brief / seek support if needed)

RESOURCES

- Suicide line 1300 651 251
- Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467
- Lifeline 13 11 14

Other Resources

- LIFE is for Everyone Facts Sheets
- Suicide Line have Fact Sheets
- Headspace –School support