

Creating hope through action



Roses in the Ocean
stemming the tide of suicide

World Suicide Prevention Day

10th September 2023

Event hosting guide





**Australian Institute for Suicide
Research and Prevention**



The event hosting guide has been developed to assist organisations and individuals who are considering hosting an awareness activity as part of World Suicide Prevention Day.

The event hosting guide and accompanying resources may also be useful when organising other suicide prevention community events throughout the year.

The publication has been developed by Roses in the Ocean and endorsed by Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention. It draws on information from a number of organisations including the International Association for Suicide Prevention, Mindframe, Lifeline and the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention.

World Suicide Prevention Day

World Suicide Prevention Day is an international awareness day observed on 10th September each year to provide a focus for dedicated action to prevent suicide. The International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) collaborates with the World Health Organisation (WHO) to host World Suicide Prevention Day.

For community organisations and individuals dedicated to preventing suicide, this annual awareness day is an opportunity to share a message of hope and action in the community. Events and activities organised by volunteers occur in local communities across Australia.

It must be emphasised that World Suicide Prevention Day requires careful consideration to the wellbeing of those who participate ensuring that supportive environments are created for all who wish to be involved. The information contained in this guide will help organisations and individuals to prepare for careful discussion and provide appropriate support and information to get connected.

A list of resources and contacts for other organisations is included at the back of this guide to help you collaborate and access the information you need.



Roses in the Ocean

Roses in the Ocean is a lived experience of suicide organisation that exists to reduce emotional pain and distress and save lives.

Community has a significant role to play in suicide prevention and we believe that the local voices of people with a lived experience of suicide have the ability to raise awareness and be the catalyst for change. To help engage communities in suicide prevention, Roses in the Ocean provides training and resources for people with lived experience to inform, lead and drive the changes we need to see in suicide prevention.

With experience in hosting numerous community and corporate World Suicide Prevention Day events over many years, we hope to share our learnings and resources to assist others hosting their own community event.

For further information or to be part of a Roses in the Ocean World Suicide Prevention Day event, visit rosesintheocean.com.au or email enquiries@rosesintheocean.com.au



Suicide touches us all

An estimated 703 000 people die by suicide worldwide each year, making suicide among the most prominent international health issues.

There were 3144 deaths by suicide in Australia in 2021. Suicide is the leading cause of deaths among Australians aged between 15 and 44 years. Females make more suicide attempts than men, however more men die by suicide. Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities experience a significantly higher suicide rate. The LGBTIQ+ community have significantly higher rates of attempted suicide.

Beyond the statistics, suicide leaves profound emotional, social and economic impacts for families, friends and communities. Suicide challenges us to do as much as possible to reduce emotional pain and distress and to save lives.

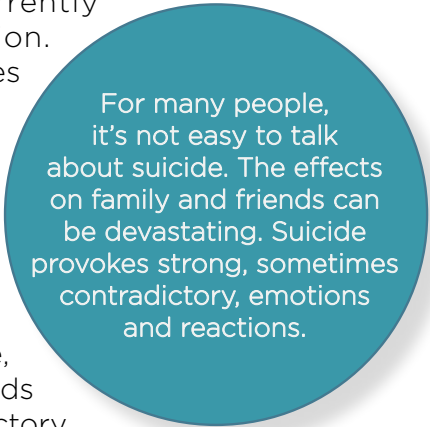
While not all suicides are preventable, increasing individual and community capacity to recognise and respond to people in distress or at risk of suicide can reduce the number of people taking their lives.

Suicide prevention

Suicide is a challenging and complex issue. There is no single solution, service or initiative that will reduce suicide and its impact. It requires all of us to play a role and share responsibility to support community members and their families.

Suicide prevention encompasses a wide range of activity including health promotion, early intervention, crisis support and ongoing support for people experiencing suicidal thoughts, aftercare support and suicide bereavement support for families, friends, kin, colleagues and communities impacted by suicide.

Over recent years, the support for whole-of-community and whole-of-government suicide prevention has increased significantly. There is currently unprecedented focus on and investment in suicide prevention. Communities and individuals play an important role in saving lives through encouraging people to talk about suicide with a focus on help-seeking and supporting people to find solutions, increase understanding about suicide prevention, invitations for help, warning signs, and how to respond when you notice someone may be struggling. We must ensure that discussions are safe and based on accurate information that leads to people feeling empowered and that the language and content of our discussions does not cause harm to those who hear them. For many people, it's not easy to talk about suicide. The effects on family and friends can be devastating. Suicide provokes strong, sometimes contradictory, emotions and reactions.



For many people, it's not easy to talk about suicide. The effects on family and friends can be devastating. Suicide provokes strong, sometimes contradictory, emotions and reactions.

This guide is a resource for individuals and organisations interested in engaging with their community on the issue of suicide, to help reduce stigma, and to encourage help-seeking behaviour.

Raising awareness of suicide and suicide prevention can



**World Suicide
Prevention Day**
#WSPD

To find out more about World Suicide Prevention Day activities around the world, go to the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) web page.

Planning and preparation

Before deciding to host or be involved in a World Suicide Prevention Day event or activity, it's important to give proper consideration to these matters.



Think about your personal readiness. Talking about suicide, sharing insights, learning about research, policy and programs can be an incredibly rewarding, healing and hopeful experience. It can also be emotionally and mentally draining and may impact on your own physical and emotional wellbeing. The way this affects you may also change over time and depends on other influences – the ups and downs occurring in your life. Hosting a World Suicide Prevention Day activity requires energy, enthusiasm and hard work. Caring for yourself and others in your group is essential to prevent stress and burnout.



If you plan to host a community event or activity, it is essential to create a safe, supportive environment. Creation of a safe environment means being sensitive to any potential risks associated with public events that involve discussion of suicide (e.g. people discussing method of suicide) and responding in ways that provide access to readily available and user-friendly help and support services.



Having qualified support (Counsellors or Suicide Prevention Peer Workers) and referral information on-hand is vital. Organisation of the event must involve identification of local and other help and support services, which can be promoted to the community throughout the event where appropriate. It is a good idea to seek involvement from health professionals in your area too.



While there is a general need to raise awareness of suicide prevention and to engage people in discussions, it is good to have an identified purpose for your event or activity and an understanding of the target audience. For example, is the purpose to raise awareness about risk factors, to tell people how to get involved in suicide prevention, or to promote services and initiatives? Be clear about what you are seeking to communicate.



The way suicide is talked about is important. While conversations can inform and educate, they can also isolate some individuals. Some people may feel distressed and need immediate support. You must be attentive and vigilant towards people engaging with you and have a qualified support at your event. While safe and appropriate conversations about suicide are an important way to connect with, inform and educate people, they can also cause strong emotions to surface. You must be attentive when engaging with community members at your event and ensure there is support available to spend time with them at the event if needed.

Talking about suicide

It is important to speak safely about suicide to increase awareness and understanding in our communities, to encourage people to seek help, and to tap into the valuable insight and wisdom that comes from engaging with people with lived experience of suicide.

You do not have to be a professional counsellor to talk about suicide. All you need is to deeply listen with an open heart and an open mind.

When talking about suicide, you must know where and how to connect people with additional support.

Finding the right words

People who experience suicidal thoughts, provide support for someone who does, or are bereaved by suicide can be particularly impacted by language.

When talking about suicide, do not discuss the details of methods or locations of suicide. Follow cultural protocols such as not naming an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person who has died without the permission of their family.

To promote a positive shift in the terminology used to discuss suicide we recommend the following guidelines:

Don't say...	Do say...	Why?
'committed' or 'commit suicide'	'died by suicide' or 'ended his/her/their own life'	To avoid association between suicide and 'crime' or 'sin' that may alienate some people.
'unsuccessful suicide'	'non-fatal' or 'made an attempt on his/her/their life'	To avoid presenting suicide as a desired outcome or glamourising a suicide attempt.
'successful suicide'	'took their own life', 'died by suicide' or 'ended their own life'	To avoid presenting suicide as a desired outcome.
'suicide epidemic'	'concerning rates of suicide'	To avoid sensationalism and inaccuracy.
'mental patient', 'nutter', 'lunatic', 'psycho', 'schizo', 'deranged', 'mad'	A person is 'living with' or 'has a diagnosis of' mental illness.	Certain language sensationalises mental illness and reinforces stigma.
'victim', 'suffering from' or 'affected with' a mental illness	A person is 'being treated for', or 'someone with a mental illness'.	Terminology that suggests a lack of quality of life for people with mental illness.
A person is 'a schizophrenic', 'an anorexic'	A person 'has a diagnosis of' or 'is being treated for...'	Labelling a person by their mental illness.
'crazed', 'deranged', 'mad', 'psychotic'	The person's behaviour was unusual or erratic.	Descriptions of behaviour that imply existence of mental illness or are inaccurate.
'happy pills', 'shrinks', 'mental institution'	Antidepressants, psychiatrists or psychologists, mental health hospital.	Colloquialisms about treatment can undermine people's willingness to seek help.
'psychotic dog', using 'schizophrenic' to denote duality such as 'schizophrenic economy'.	Reword any sentence that uses psychiatric or media terminology incorrectly or out of context.	Terminology used out of context adds to misunderstanding and trivialises mental illness.

Extracts taken from: [Everymind https://everymind.org.au/suicide-prevention/understanding-suicide/role-of-language-and-stigma](https://everymind.org.au/suicide-prevention/understanding-suicide/role-of-language-and-stigma)

Hosting World Suicide Prevention Day events in the community

Have a clear purpose

It is very important that every event has a clear message and purpose.

- Raise awareness of and provide information about suicide prevention
- Connect people to crisis and support services
- Give people confidence to talk about suicide.

Steps to follow

- Form a small group to help organise the event
- Choose a venue where people will feel comfortable and safe and ensure you have permission from the venue owner or appropriate authority
- Determine if you require public liability insurance for the event
- Invite other local service providers to take part (such as those in the social or community services sectors, mental health, and organisations that support people through some of the underlying factors of suicide like relationship breakdown, financial distress). Perhaps set up an information stall, organise an activity or provide informative resources
- Ensure you have enough volunteers and support staff on hand at the event
- Counsellors or other qualified support people like Suicide Prevention Peer Support Workers must be present
- [Ensure speakers and content are appropriate and be prepared to manage challenging comments or emotional responses](#). Ask to review any speeches or slide presentations to ensure correct use of language and imagery
- Ensure that information provided is culturally appropriate and inclusive by considering the language used, the way the issue is discussed, and whether community leaders are present
- Determine whether local media will be invited and plan messages
- Promote your event using flyers, posters, local radio and newspapers, and social media

#WSPD

@RosesInTheOcean

#suicideprevention

@SuicidePrevAU

#livedexperience

#IASP

Refer to the Resources page of this guide for links to templates and additional checklists



Hosting World Suicide Prevention Day events in the workplace

Providing information at workplaces is an important part of creating a whole-of-community approach to suicide prevention. Most deaths by suicide are among people of working age. Suicide is the leading cause of death for men aged 25 to 44 years and women aged 25 to 34 years.

You can raise awareness of suicide prevention at your workplace by hosting a World Suicide Prevention Day event, such as a morning or afternoon tea with your colleagues.

Define the purpose of the event and follow the steps for hosting a community event. Ensure that support service information is available for those who may want to reach out for help. This could include employee assistance program information, or information about telephone and online counselling and support services. Remember that employees may not feel comfortable reaching out for support internally for fear of career implications, so be sure to leave external support brochures and numbers in communal areas like the kitchen area, printing room and even bathrooms. To find out more go to rosesintheocean.com.au/sector-priorities-collaborations/peer-care-companion-in-community.

Engaging workplaces in World Suicide Prevention Day

There are many creative ways for employers and workplaces to participate in World Suicide Prevention Day and support the wellbeing of employees.

Beyond Blue provides individuals and businesses free tools and resources to help create mentally healthy workplaces that support wellbeing. To find out more go to beyondblue.org.au.

Some of the workplaces that have participated in World Suicide Prevention Day in previous years include Roses in the Ocean, the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention (AISRAP), Lifeline, MATES in Construction, TIACS, Trademutt, StandBy Support After Suicide, Headspace, Eating Disorders Qld, White Bear Foundation, Gay and Lesbian Welfare Association, Suicide Prevention Pathways, Brisbane North PHN, Queensland AIDS Council, Bahloo Womens Youth Centre, Gallang Place and Talk Suicide.

Role of the media

Your local media are an excellent channel to let people know about suicide prevention activities and positive mental wellbeing messages as part of World Suicide Prevention Day.

Working with media also presents an opportunity to help educate journalists on the appropriate reporting of suicide. [Guidelines developed by Mindframe](#) encourage responsible and helpful communication and media reporting on suicide and prevention activities.

Special considerations

There are a number of special considerations that may influence your approach to planning a World Suicide Prevention Day awareness event or activity,

Do no harm

It is important to think about your audience and how information might be interpreted. Even something as straightforward as statistics can be interpreted differently. For some, hearing about the number of people who attempt or die by suicide will encourage them to learn more and get involved. While for others, associating a number to a loved one may be interpreted as minimalistic and de-humanising. Information must always be presented compassionately, acknowledging the personal pain that sits behind it.

Remember to choose your words carefully when talking about suicide. Avoid judgemental or sensationalist language and ensure that the critical importance of saving a life or remembering a life lost is central to your efforts, and the efforts of the community.

Readiness and capacity

Suicide is complex and there can be as many different experiences, perceptions and views as there are people in your community. It may take time for a community to feel ready to join the effort to build a suicide-aware and responsive community.

Feeling ready and capable involves having knowledge and awareness of evidence-based strategies and responses, as well as connections to those who can provide advice and support around the suicide prevention ideas suggested by your community. Your Primary Health Network is a good place to start to understand what suicide prevention plan is in place for your community and how you and others can support it and get involved.

Overcoming stigma

There is often a harmful stigma associated with suicide that may impact on people with lived experience of suicide by damaging social relationships and creating barriers to help-seeking behaviours. This stigma must be challenged and reduced in a safe and compassionate way. When we truly unpack stigma, we are really talking about discrimination, prejudice and fear.

Knowledge derived through listening to people with a lived experience of suicide goes a long way to breaking down these barriers.

Careful planning and appropriate information and resources are pre-requisites to addressing the stigma that may be associated with suicide.

Special considerations

Underlying factors of suicide

Many people assume that suicide is always linked to mental illness. However, many people who experience mental illness do not display suicidal thoughts or behaviour. Indeed almost 50% of suicides are not linked to a diagnosable mental illness.

There are many underlying factors that can lead a person to a place where they consider suicide as an option, and sometimes as their only option. Situational factors include relationship breakdown, financial distress, redundancy, chronic pain and others.

Involving organisations that provide support across a diversity of issues – as well as local mental health professionals, counsellors and community health staff – in World Suicide Prevention Day activities can provide a pathway to broader health and wellbeing discussions for people in your community.

Understanding suicide in culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Culture shapes people's views of suicide; different cultures understand suicide and suicidal thinking in different way, influenced by the laws of their country and religious beliefs.

The most respectful way of engaging with people from different cultures is to invest in building connections with the community and faith leaders of individual cultural groups in your community and invite them to participate in planning and attending the event. You may also like to consider inviting translators to the event.

Impacts of suicide

The profound effects of suicide are often likened to a stone thrown into a lake that results in ripples that radiate and have a multiplier effect, impacting the lives of any number of individuals—from family to friends, colleagues, clinicians, coronial staff, volunteers of bereavement support services and other associates—who can feel intense and conflicted emotional distress in response to a death by suicide. Many people refer to this effect as a tsunami as opposed to a ripple.

Such impacts may lead to other health concerns and people bereaved by suicide may also experience a heightened risk of suicidal thoughts, behaviours and attempts, particularly if appropriate avenues of support are either limited or lacking, and/or individuals experience other compounding adverse life events.

Special consideration and support for people bereaved by suicide is an essential part of World Suicide Prevention Day.

Resources

WSPD event hosting resources

We have created a range of simple to use resources to assist you to host a World Suicide Prevention Day event in your workplace or community, including event planners, check lists, letters to local MPs and businesses requesting support, promotional poster templates and much more. These resources are available at rosesintheocean.com.au/communities-events/world-suicide-prevention-day/

Roses in the Ocean Lived Experience resources

Visit rosesintheocean.com.au for information on safe language, self-care and a selection of resources, stories, videos and podcasts from the perspectives of lived experience.

External resources

Visit these sites for information on World Suicide Prevention internationally and in Australia:

[International Association for Suicide Prevention \(IASP\)](https://www.iasp.info/)

[Suicide Prevention Australia \(SPA\)](https://www.suicidepreventionaustralia.org.au/)

Crisis support services

Roses in the Ocean does not provide crises intervention or counselling services.

If you are looking for support for yourself urgently, or are worried that someone's life is in danger, call 000 for emergency help or head to the nearest hospital.

For further information or support, contact one of the following national 24/7 Crisis Support Services

- Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467 | suidecallbackservice.org.au
- Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800 | kidshelpline.com.au
- Lifeline: 13 11 14 | lifeline.org.au
- 13YARN: 13 92 76 | 13yarn.org.au
- SP Peer CARE Companion Warmline: 1800 777 337
- Beyond Blue: 1300 24 636 | beyondblue.org.au
- QLife: 1800 184 527 | qlife.org.au
- Open Arms: 1800 011 046 | openarms.gov.au
- Headspace: 1800 650 890 | headspace.org.au
- ReachOut | au.reachout.com
- Everymind | everymind.org.au/need-help
- Men's Helpline: 1300 789 978 | mensline.org.au

Further information on external suicide prevention organisations can also be found at: rosesintheocean.com.au/i-need-help-now/



Peer CARE Companion Warmline | 1800 77 7337

Roses in the Ocean's suicide prevention call-back service provides 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.

Roses in the Ocean Speakers Hub

Our trained and supported lived experience speakers share stories that are powerful, impactful and a catalyst for change.

Our Speakers have been trained to share their personal experience of suicide in the context of raising awareness, educating, providing insights into early warning signs, invitations for help, how to have difficult conversations, where to source help and what helped them through their own experience.

Organisations, clubs, workplaces, schools, community groups... we have speakers from all walks of life, with a wide range of experiences that can be matched to your specific needs. Whether you are looking to raise awareness or are responding to a recent suicide loss, our speakers can bring insights, comfort and hope to your audience.



To find out more or to request a speaker, submit a request via [Roses in the Ocean's Lived Experience Speakers Hub Request Form](#).

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