

31 July 2020

Wide Bay community trains to prevent suicide

An inspiring number of residents in Wide Bay are learning how to help prevent suicide in their community, by enrolling in a nationally recognised one-hour online training program.

According to the most recent report, more than 80 people in the Bundaberg, North Burnett and Discovery Coast region have already completed the Question. Persuade. Refer. (QPR) 'gatekeeper' training, which teaches participants to recognise and respond to signs of suicidality.

Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN's Senior Manager for Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs, Michelle McAllister, said the number of people signing up to the course is very encouraging for the Wide Bay.

"It's such a credit to the community that people are taking the time to find out not only what suicidality looks and sounds like, but importantly, are learning what to do next," Ms McAllister said.

"Suicide is an issue that affects entire communities, and it takes a community to make a difference.

"This training helps create a community safety net, and the more people who complete the course, the stronger that safety net will be."

Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN recently funded 1,000 licences for the QPR training, which is recognised by the Black Dog Institute as the leading evidence-based program for building skills to help someone with a suicidal crisis.

By learning how to 'question', you can gain the knowledge and skills to identify the warning signs that someone may be suicidal, while the 'persuade' portion of the training gives empowers you to engage in meaningful conversation with those who may be having suicidal thoughts.

The third and final step in the training has been designed with the general public in mind, so we can all become comfortable building the bridge between 'questioning' and 'persuading' to suggesting professional care, which may include the general practice setting as a first port of call.

Data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in September 2019 revealed there were 3,046 deaths by suicide in 2018, or an average of 8.3 each day, with the proportion of total deaths attributed to suicide almost three times higher in males than females.

Queensland had the second highest number of suicide deaths (786) across the country last year, with the rate the highest in NSW (899).

"These statistics show us an issue but they don't show the individuals and stories behind those numbers," Ms McAllister said.

"For every suicide there is a community, a network of family, friends and work colleagues who are affected."

"Circumstances have changed for many people since the start of the year, creating a very uncertain and lonely time for many people, and a tense time for others.

"This training is a very practical way to help – by learning to recognise and support those who are, or might be, at risk of suicide."

Become part of the community safety net in less than 60 minutes.

Access the QPR training by visiting ourphn.org.au/preventsuicide and following the prompts through to 'get started'. The organisation code is SCPHN.

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MEDIA RELEASE

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