



Wesley Mental Health

Wesley LifeForce Suicide Prevention Training

Workshops and seminars



Wesley LifeForce Suicide Prevention Training Programs

Wesley Mission has been a leader in the field of suicide prevention for many years, having founded the Lifeline movement in 1963. Wesley LifeForce was established in 1995 by Reverend Bob Dunlop, a former Minister of Wesley Mission, in response to the growing number of youth suicides in Australia.

Since 1995 more than 40,000 people throughout Australia have participated in Wesley LifeForce suicide prevention workshops. Workshop participants come from all walks of life:

- teachers
- clergy
- community service providers
- sporting club members
- police officers
- emergency workers
- community members

Workshops are also facilitated with frontline healthcare workers:

- general practitioners and practice nurses
- GP practice managers and practice staff
- relationship counsellors
- aged care nurses
- aged care workers

The general practitioner workshops are co-facilitated by a general practitioner with a special interest in mental health or by a psychiatrist or psychologist.

The GP practice manager and practice staff program teaches to recognise the signs that a patient presenting to the practice may be at risk of suicide and to notify the GP or practice nurse of their concern. They are not taught to undertake an intervention.

In a similar way, the aged care worker program helps participants to be aware of the negative feelings aged care facility residents may experience, and to be alert to the subsequent behavior they may exhibit. They are asked to notify a senior staff member if they are concerned about a resident.

All workshop participants have a common purpose of wanting to reduce the rate of suicide. They are the 'gatekeepers' in their communities as defined by Turley and Tanney.

'A gatekeeper can be any person in a position of trust whose potential contact with a person at risk may be informal (friend, family member, sports coach) or more closely associated with a professional helping role. Gatekeepers who are competent in suicide first aid and comfortable being a first responder with a person at risk play a vital role in the primary care network of a community.' (Turley and Tanney, 1998)

The Wesley LifeForce gatekeeper training programs are designed to equip participants with the skills, knowledge and confidence to perform a successful suicide intervention and to be familiar with national, state and local referral services that may provide assistance and support to the person at risk.

Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention

The Wesley LifeForce suicide prevention training has been evaluated by the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention (AISRAP) at Griffith University in Queensland, a designated World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Centre of Research and Training in Suicide Prevention. In 2018, AISRAP completed the study examining and evaluating the suite of Wesley LifeForce Suicide Prevention Trainings.

The AISRAP study demonstrated strong evidence for Wesley LifeForce Training as a robust and effective gatekeeper training package.

Key conclusions:

- Wesley Lifeforce Training sets and meets international best practice standards for suicide prevention gatekeeper training.
- Both community and specialised gatekeepers experienced benefits from the workshops
- Safety planning capabilities and the ability to intervene were the areas where participants showed the biggest improvements in perceived capability.
- Knowledge retention was significantly higher for those without prior training.
- The SALT strategy (See, Ask, Listen and Take) was easily understood by participants in the Training.
- Those who delivered the Training did so with a high level of fidelity to workshop structure and delivery standards.

Target audience

The target audience for these programs is community gatekeepers. While some participants may be healthcare providers, the programs do not focus on training participants to be clinicians, nor do they focus on mental illness, but rather on training people to be a suicide prevention resource within their communities.

Program content

The Wesley LifeForce suicide prevention training programs begin with an overview of statistics on suicide in Australia, outline the circumstances which can lead to the development of thoughts of suicide and explore risk and protective factors and warning signs. Personal issues which may impede the gatekeeper's ability or willingness to perform a suicide intervention are also discussed and processed.

Participants are then taken through SALT, an effective way to remember the suicide intervention strategy:

- **S**ee the warning signs
- **A**sk about suicide intent
- **L**isten to the person
- **T**ake the person to appropriate help

The ability to use this strategy effectively is enhanced through the use of role plays, where participants take the roles of help-seeker and/or help-giver.

When training is being delivered for an employer organisation, role plays can be developed which depict real life workplace scenarios.

Overall training goals

The Wesley LifeForce Suicide Prevention Training Program is designed to equip community gatekeepers with the skills and knowledge to recognise that someone may be at risk of suicide and to undertake a suicide intervention in a supportive and constructive manner. By completion of the program, the goals of the workshop are that participants will have increased confidence in their ability to:

- Identify people who may be at risk of suicide
- Communicate appropriately with a suicidal person
- Ask a person if they are considering suicide
- Conduct a suicide intervention

Training duration

The community training is delivered as half day (4 hour) or full day (6 hour) workshops. Frontline healthcare worker workshops vary in duration:

- General practitioners and practice nurses 6 hours
- Aged care nurses and relationship counsellors 4 hours
- GP practice managers and practice staff 2 hours
- Aged care workers 1 hour
- Online delivery is also available for our community training

Trainer qualifications

Trainers accredited to deliver the Wesley LifeForce suicide prevention programs are required to have a high level of experience in mental healthcare provision or counselling with appropriate qualifications and a high standard of facilitation skills.

Workshop delivery

Wesley LifeForce delivers suicide prevention training workshops throughout metropolitan, regional, rural and remote Australia. Funding is provided by the Commonwealth Department of Health.

Participant care and safety

Participants register online to attend the workshops using the Eventbrite meetings management system. At registration they are asked they require special assistance in order to fully participate in the workshop.

Workshop participants may have been previously impacted by suicide and may become distressed during discussions. At the beginning of each workshop trainers provide the phone number of a Wesley Mission Lifeline Supervisor who participants can call on the day of the workshop.

Facilitators also monitor participants throughout the workshop. Participants are asked to give a 'thumbs up' if they leave the room during the workshop to indicate that they are not leaving because they have become distressed.

Participants can download the Wesley Service Finder, a responsive website that can be linked to a computer, tablet or smartphone. It provides access to national emergency and hotline numbers and state and local mental health support services. Local services are automatically listed when the device identifies the location of the user. Download the application here - www.wesleymission.org.au/wesleylifeforceservicefinder.

Evaluation

Before attending the workshop, participants complete a survey relating to their declarative knowledge of their awareness of the incidence of suicide in Australia and factors contributing to suicide, as well as their perceived confidence in undertaking a number of steps in the suicide intervention process. The same questions are asked in the post-evaluation survey.

Analysis of these before and after responses indicates the extent of improvement of perceived and declarative knowledge, behaviour, attitude and skills as a result of participating in the workshop.

Participants are also asked in the post-workshop survey to comment on their satisfaction with aspects of the workshop delivery.

Program content review

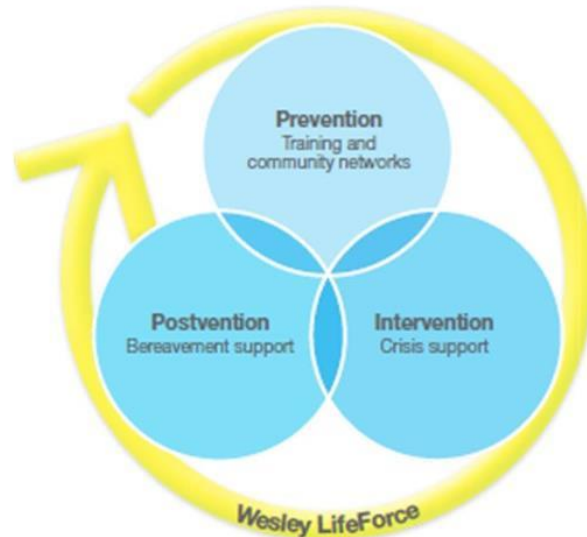
The Wesley LifeForce Advisory Committee meets quarterly via teleconference or in person. Committee members are leading clinicians, academics and practitioners in suicide prevention in Australia.

The Advisory Committee provides feedback and input on the program content as well as on latest research findings in suicide prevention. Program content is revised when necessary to reflect this feedback.

Australian suicide statistics are documented in the training packages and are updated annually to reflect the latest data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Wesley LifeForce

At Wesley Mission, we believe that every life matters. Through our suicide prevention programs, we aim to help those at risk of suicide find the assistance they need. We are a trusted leader in this field, having established Lifeline and suicide prevention program, Wesley LifeForce.



Prevention

Suicide Prevention Training

Our robust and evidence-based programs help educate people about suicide with the goal of challenging attitudes and teaching basic engagement and suicide intervention skills.

LifeForce Networks

Local Wesley LifeForce suicide prevention networks are one of the most effective ways of raising awareness of the issue of suicide and developing suicide prevention strategies at a grassroots level in towns and cities across Australia.

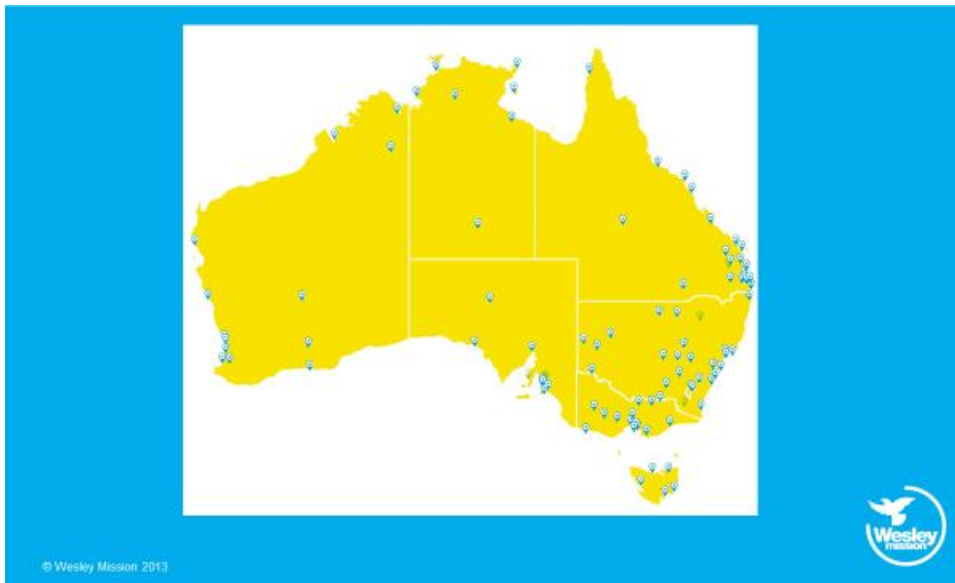
Intervention

Established by Wesley Mission in 1963, Lifeline telephone crisis support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, giving Australians at risk of suicide the support they need at their most desperate moment. Wesley Mission has original lifeline phone in our Sydney offices.

Postvention

Wesley LifeForce Memorial Services offer practical care and emotional support for people who have been bereaved by suicide, including family, friends and local communities.

Wesley LifeForce Suicide Prevention Networks



Wesley LifeForce establishes and support community groups or networks to take action to tackle suicide where there are high rates and/or volumes of suicide.

The Commonwealth Department of Health has provided funding for Wesley LifeForce to establish networks across Australia. This map shows established and planned networks.

To get involved in a Wesley LifeForce Network near you, contact liforcenetworks@wesleymission.org.au

Wesley LifeForce Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Networks



Wesley LifeForce has helped establish several Aboriginal community networks around Australia. While Wesley LifeForce provides support to the networks they are managed by members of their local communities.

Wesley LifeForce Memorial Service



Annual memorial services are held to remember those lost to suicide. One is held at the Sydney Opera House in September (to coincide with World Suicide Prevention Day). These services provide an opportunity for those bereaved by suicide to come together in a spirit of comfort and hope. We also hold memorial services in Newcastle, Brisbane and Adelaide.

References

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