

# MindLine No 15

**ARAFMI Hobart: Autumn 2005**

Published first week of Feb, May, Aug & Nov.

97 Campbell St Hobart 7000

Ph 62 369 251 HelpLine

[www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/mhcr/](http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/mhcr/)

**A BIG Thank You to everyone for their donations of stamp booklets for MindLine!!!**

*Our thanks also to our supporters:*

Offerings for the Trade Table, Australian Ethical Investments.

## Support Meeting Venue

## Date / Topic

<p><b>All meetings start at 7.30pm</b> <b>97 Campbell St Hobart</b> Some parking at rear of bldg.</p> <p>Everyone is welcome!! Supper available – would you like to bring a plate?</p> <p><u>Trade table</u>: craft items available.</p> <p><b>MindLine copy</b>: Please deliver any items for the Editor of <i>MindLine</i> by the first day of the last week of April July &amp; Oct. Packing first week of months Feb, May, Aug, Nov.</p>	<p><b>10<sup>th</sup> February</b> Narelle Butt will answer our queries about <b>the Secure Mental Health Unit</b> and recruiting. Also: <b>Proposed changes to the law on Community Treatment Orders</b>: paper available from our office upon request.</p> <p><b>10<sup>th</sup> March</b> see detail below on <b>consultation about Dept Medicine</b> <b>14<sup>th</sup> April</b> TBA <b>12<sup>th</sup> May</b> TBA</p>
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**March 10<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm**

**Opportunity for consultation for family members about the Dept Medicine RHH.**

Shirleen Wickham, Patient Liaison Officer, and Shelley Haas, Project Support Officer, Consumer Reference Group, both of the Royal Hobart Hospital would be pleased to join you for discussion regarding the information, experiences and support received when dealing with mental health issues within DPM (**Department of Medicine RHH**) at the Royal Hobart Hospital and any other associated issues.

All material will be treated with confidence.

### **Consumer & Carer Participation Framework Process**

The Consultation of Jan 2004, *Consumer & Carer Participation Framework Process* has been compiled and edited and sent to various sections of the gov Mental Health Services Review Team and the Mental Health Council of Tas. It is too large to disseminate so if you would like to read it, please borrow from our library.

**Thank you to all those who contributed to this survey.**

### **Get your *MindLine* plus lots of other goodies via email!**

And the MindLine work-load is huge.

You can help save ARAFMI postage & handling by receiving your newsletter via email:

Visit your local library, online centre or neighbourhood house, get a free hotmail.com email address and participate in the electronic era. Please give us your email soon. Thank you

### **Thank you for returning your library loans**

**Would all borrowers please return their items now (unless borrowed this year).**

Please remember that **borrowings are for 3 weeks**, so please return your materials promptly, so that other people may benefit from them: Thank you borrowers.

Videos are now on loan for 1 week.

#### **New Library items:**

Medicines Talk all about anti-depressant medication, up to date, article also on Managing someone else's medicines.

Keys to understanding Depression      M Yapko      a self help guide-book

Wings of Madness      Buchanan      A mother's story

Shine      the DVD

Mental Health Council Aust      Annual Report

We also stock back copies of other state's ARAFMI newsletters, often with very informative articles.

### ***Certificates of Appreciation***

If you have a worker in mental health who you think deserves a certificate of appreciation, please forward their details to us so we can mail them one and list them as one of our 'workers of the quarter' in this newsletter.

**Let's support caring professionals!**

***New!!***

***Consumer Newsletter from our office: written for and by consumers.***

*Leave message for Ann Tullgren on above number if you are interested in contributing or receiving!*

## **Kidz Club**

### ***Our first club has run successfully***

These are clubs for primary school children who have a parent with emotional / mental illness.  
Contact **Anna Dimsey** Project Officer, for clubs in your area, on **1800 808 890**.

**New Norfolk** club starts 8th March, Tuesdays 3.30 til 5pm  
**Kingston** club 9<sup>th</sup> March Wednesdays 3.30 til 5pm.

Call to book a place for your child  
Kidz Clubs offer fun, essential general information about mental illness and support.

## **Mental Health Council of Tasmania needs an alternate delegate.**

### **Expressions of Interest are invited from a family person for the alternate delegate position.**

Anne Bevan has been the delegate for some time. The Council Meetings are held approx every 6 weeks. The Council aims to be the state peak body for non-government mental health organisations and aims to present the various constituency's perspectives to state and national government.

What an opportunity to meet and network with people from the whole state!

Transport and lunches are provided.

**If you are interested please ring Anne for an Expression of Interest form.**

### **Disclaimer:**

Every effort is made to provide up to date and accurate information and is offered in good faith. No responsibility can be taken by ARAFMI Hobart. If you have some information of interest to readers of this booklet, please contact us.

## **Research Round Up**

**Elderly people with depression.** For self help with depression, using strength / resistance training exercise please see:

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/8.30/helthrpt/stories/s1261215.htm>

After 3 weeks, 70% of high level trainers had no diagnosis any more of depression. Please consult your doctor if you want to take part in this anti-depressant activity which is suitable for those persons who are not able for other health reasons to do aerobic activity.

New telephone **Hopeline** for patients, families and carers in a situation of a **life-threatening illness**:  
1300 364 673.

ABC Radio National Health Report 31 Jan had some very exciting research on **treating schizophrenia**. As the web site is not updated at time of MindLine dissemination, please point your browser to their web site.

### **Research Participants wanted please: To help Centrelink improves its services!**

If you are the parent of a young person who:

1. Receives youth allowance, and
2. incurred a Centrelink breach or debt during the period from 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2003 – 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2004, and
3. who experienced mental illness,

then Ann Tullgren, Centrelink Social Worker would love to hear from you on **6222 2890W**. All conversations will be treated with the strictest of confidence.

## TASMANIANS AND SUICIDE by Ann Tullgren

### Introductory Comments about suicide in Australia

Suicide continues to be a major public health issue. In Australia in 2002 1.7% of all deaths registered were attributable to suicide (= 2320 suicides).

To be classified as a suicide a death must be recognised as due to other than natural causes and also be established by Coronial enquiry that the death resulted from a deliberate act of the deceased with the intention of ending his/her own life. Accordingly, the suicide rate is under-reported, as suicides may be hidden among other death categories, for example, car accidents.

The relationship between mental illness and suicide is a complex one, with many researchers concluding that there are multiple causes of suicide with no single explanation pre-eminent. Social, relational and economic factors also may impact on the suicide rate.

Throughout 2002 in Australia the male suicide rate was higher than the female rate by a ratio of approximately 4:1. For males, age-specific suicide death rates fluctuate from year to year. In 2002 the highest suicide rate occurred in the 25-29 years age group. There was a decline in the suicide death rate among 15-19 year olds from 18.4 per 100,000 in 1992 to 13.9 per 100,000 in 2002.

Figures comparing the suicide rate in Tasmania with other States, particularly across particular age groups are not readily available and are viewed as being problematic due to statistical difficulties comparing such small figures, which may vary from year to year.

*(Sources for above: ABS 3309.0.55.001 Suicides: Recent Trends, Australia. Released 2/11/2003).*

### A General Overview of Suicide in Tasmania

Suicide is a rare event thankfully, and interpreting trends from such low levels of incidence as occur in Tasmania is difficult and great caution should be exercised in coming to conclusions about significant trends. The most recent *Annual Report of the Suicide Prevention Steering Committee of DHHS* covers 2000-2001, with the 2001-2002 Report not due out until May 2005. This delay reflects the time taken for the Coroner's Court to reach a verdict on the cause of death, a process that may take considerable time as evidence has to be collected and a verdict reached.

### Suicide Statistics in Tasmania Between 1978-2001

- There were 1,620 cases in total, with 78 cases unconfirmed.
- Males represented 80% of all cases.
- The average annual rate was 24.02 per 100,000 males, compared to 5.94 per 100,000 females giving an *average total suicide rate* of 14.81 per 100,000 head of population. In 2001 the rate had increased to 16.08 per 100,000 (data from the coroner's Office, including unconfirmed cases).
- **In relation to males:** 16% of all cases of suicides involved **young men between 15 and 24** years. During this period the suicide rate tended to increase from 1978, reach a peak in the late 1980s and early 1990's and decline subsequently. These patterns are generally reflected in the national statistics, and may reflect young people being the target of suicide prevention and intervention programmes since the mid 1990's. Some authors suspect that youth depression is better recognised and treated now.
- However, a worrying overall trend has been the steady and substantial increase in annual suicide rates from 1978. **Men aged between 25 and 39 years** accounted for 27% of all suicides in this period. These figures may suggest a need for a focus on awareness prevention and intervention campaigns in middle aged males; the increasing rate may reflect social and economic hardship and undiagnosed depression and other medical conditions for which assistance has not been sought.
- A further 25% of all suicides were **men aged between 40 and 64 years**. For them the rate has been relatively stable, with a slight decline in the middle period. In both 2000 and 2001 males aged between 25 and 39 years were the largest group defined by age and sex, with males aged between 40 and 64 the next largest group.
- 12% of male deaths from suicide involved **men over 65 years of age**. Following increases in the rates during the middle of the period, the rate has since declined. This may reflect a recent focus on healthy ageing as a protective factor.

- **Regional distribution Tas:** 50% cases occurred in the Southern Region; 29% were in the Northern Region and 21% were in the North Western Region. From year to year these figures may vary. The highest annual average suicide rate in Tasmania is in the Southern Region. The total suicide rate in the North Western region has come closer to that of the South. Between 1995 and 2001 both the South and North West have annual suicide rates of just under 16 per 100,000, with the North having a lower rate of 13.69 per 100,000.
- **Means of Suicide:** The use of gun shot has declined (from 44% of deaths between 1978 to 1994 to 19% of deaths between 1995-2001) probably due to firearm legislation. However the use of carbon monoxide has increased from 16% (78-2001) to 32% (2001) (Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services. Mental Health Services. *Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Steering Committee Annual Report 2001-2002*, by Justinian C Habner and G Vaughan, Hobart 2002).
- Between 1997-2002 among the 15-24 age group Tasmanian suicides were the lowest in Australia by State/Territory (rates: Tasmania 12.1%; Australia 14.7%), despite the peak years of 1999 and 2000. Source (C Fraser and D Fraser, *Young People in Tasmania: A Statistical and Demographic Profile of Issues and Service Provision for Young People*, 2nd Edition, March 2003, Office of Youth Affairs, Tasmania).

### TASMANIA: SELF INFLICTED DEATHS, BY AGE, 1995-2002

(Source: Coroner's Office, Magistrates Court of Tasmania, Coronial Division In Fraser 2003 *Young People in Tasmania*).

YEAR	15-19yrs	20-24	T15-24	ALL PERSONS	%15-19	%20-24	%15-24
1995	0	8	8	65		12.3	12.3
1996	3	5	8	67	4.5	7.5	11.9
1997	0	7	7	61		11.5	11.5
1998	3	3	6	74	4.1	4.1	8.1
1999	6	7	13	88	6.8	8	14.8
2000	5	8	13	66	7.6	12.1	19.7
2001	3	5	8	79	3.8	6.3	10.1
2002	3	6	9	55	5.5	10.9	16.4

Variations in statistics from various sources are noted. Variations may be explained by delays in finalising cases in the coroner's court, and idiosyncracies in recording small figures.

#### REFERENCES

ABS 3309.0.55.001 *Suicides: Recent Trends*, Australia. Released 2/12/2003

C Fraser and D Fraser, *Young People in Tasmania: A Statistical and Demographic Profile of Issues and Service Provision for Young People*, 2nd Edition, March 2003, Office of Youth Affairs, Tasmania

Coroner's Office, Magistrates Court of Tasmania, Coronial Division in C Fraser and D Fraser, *Young People in Tasmania: A Statistical and Demographic Profile of Issues and Service Provision for Young People*, 2nd Edition, March 2003, Office of Youth Affairs, Tasmania

Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services. Mental Health Services. *Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Steering Committee Annual Report 2001-2002*, by Justinian C Habner and G Vaughan, Hobart 2002

**If you would like a free copy of the Tasmanian Community Bereavement Support Kit, which you may find helpful if you have lost a significant other to suicide or sudden death, please phone 1800 808 890.**

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