

MEDIA RELEASE

Helping prevent suicide in Benalla

11 December 2018



An Australian Government Initiative

A group of Benalla residents say they are now confident to carry out suicide intervention in the community after attending Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).

The participants who completed the two-day training included a teacher, police officer, social worker, community members and health service professionals.

The training helps equip individuals to become more willing, ready, and able to intervene with someone at risk of suicide. Intervention also involves working with the person at risk to create a plan that will support their immediate safety and link them with appropriate services and supports.

Albury Wodonga Health and Murray PHN helped fund the training as part of the Victorian Government's place-based suicide prevention trial in Benalla. The trial forms part of the Victorian suicide prevention framework 2016-2025, which is aimed at halving the state's suicide rate by 2025.

Renee Murtagh, Mental Health Nurse Consultant at Albury Wodonga Health and ASIST Trainer, has been delivering mental health and other suicide prevention courses to local communities for 10 years.

"It was a great privilege to work with a group of key community members and workplace leaders to help them better understand the needs of a person who is at risk of suicide," she said.

"I hope to continue to support the Benalla community to grow their mental health and suicide intervention literacy."

Matt Jones, Murray PHN CEO, said that there are many important components of an overall suicide prevention strategy, including prevention, intervention and "postvention".

"It's important that we support the community to support themselves both now and into the future," he said.

"Delivering intervention training to people from varied walks of life, as we have done in Benalla, helps extend the reach of people who are able to recognise the warning signs and provide suicide first aid when it's needed."

If you are in an emergency or at immediate risk of harm to yourself or others, please contact emergency services on 000. Other services include: Lifeline – 13 13 14 or www.lifeline.org.au
Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467 or www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Contact details

For more details, Amity Bradford, Communications Specialist, e: abradford@murrayphn.org.au t: 0412 060 308.

A note on reporting suicide:

There is extensive literature linking media reporting of suicide with increased suicide rates. Suicidal behaviour can be 'learned' from the media when reports are sensationalised, focus on celebrities, are repeated, and explicitly describe location and method details. Evidence suggests that responsible reporting of suicide by the media can reduce suicide rates.

Mindframe Australia Media Guidelines support the media to report suicide accurately, responsibly, and ethically. A summary version of these guidelines accompanies this Murray PHN media release. This information is also available from www.mindframe-media.info or on the Mindframe App.