

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Proposal – For Young Women

Cornerstone Youth Services Inc. was incorporated in early 2009.

A range of key community bodies are represented on the Cornerstone Board these include the University of Tasmania; General Practice North; regional health managers from alcohol & drug, mental health and primary care services; Anglicare Tasmania; ARAFMI; DHHS Children & Families & Youth Justice; and the Launceston City Council.

Cornerstone is affiliated with the Nationally funded Headspace facility in Launceston and it is through this facility that the proposed services would be delivered. Headspace employs a group of health professionals including General Practitioners, Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, Youth Health Workers and administrative support staff.

The basic objects and purposes of the Association are:

- (a) to provide accessible, integrated, quality mental health services to young people in Tasmania;
- (b) to provide accessible, integrated, quality drug and alcohol related services and advice to young people in Tasmania;
- (c) to provide a range of direct services to young people including but not limited to health, social, educational, community and vocational;
- (d) to deliver and promote community awareness relating to the health, social and economic outcomes of young people;
- (e) to enhance the health, social and economic outcomes of young people as a focus for community care, community awareness, provision of services and research;
- (f) to enable the youth sector to share responsibility for care of young people through fostering integrated service delivery within the sector;
- (g) to provide ongoing education, support and workforce development to the youth sector;
- (h) to have input into the planning of health, social and educational services for young people in terms of government policy and services;
- (i) to enable a centre for excellence relating to research across a range of health, social and community aspects that impact on wellbeing of young people; and
- (j) to administer such funds as may be provided for projects or programs in primary care, social, community, educational, vocational including research and training within the youth sector.

Cornerstone acknowledges that traditional counselling services is not an option for all young people. Our organisation is committed to ensuring we offer diversity and we actively pursue creative opportunities to engage young people to prevent and/or intervene early in the onset of mental health disorders in young people which includes suicide awareness and prevention.

Through our headspace model Cornerstone is current delivering a Mind and Body Program for young men with anger management issues. The overall objective of this program is to connect the value of physical activity with mental health and wellbeing. This program has been funded over three years and is proving to be extremely successful. Hence, we are in the process of developing a similar project for young women.

We are also seeking funds to deliver a project for young women which will focus on suicide prevention by supporting the social growth/recovery of young women in the 14 - 18 year old age group who have and/or are at risk of self harming and/or other high risk behaviours. This program is predicated upon the delivery of a series of group art therapy based sessions which would be focussed on young women living mentally healthy lives. The synergy and research evidence between art therapy and mental health and well being is well documented. There is no program of this kind in the region and it would be developed and delivered with the assistance of a local occupational therapist with extensive training, experience and qualifications in mental health and art therapy applications.

It is envisaged that the program would run over the course of twelve months, offering three separate 14 week programs over the course of a year. Referrals into the program would be via schools, headspace, child and adolescent Service and other local support agencies whom come into contact with the young women's target group.

Cornerstone acknowledges the program can offer tremendous benefits to the suicide awareness campaign. It would be Cornerstone's intention to refine and pursue ongoing recurrent funding for the program which could be offered to both young men and women in the longer term.

Our intention would be to refine a program based on feedback and participation from young people themselves.

Cornerstone estimates it would need assistance of approximately \$25,000 to deliver the program. The funds would be used to purchase art equipment and supplies for each of the group sessions. The funds would also make a contribution to the evaluation of the program and additional wages to deliver the program. All other associated costs could be borne by Cornerstone.

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