

# Youth Suicide This Is Our Challenge

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# Suicide in Australia

- 2015:
  - 3,027 people died from intentional self harm (suicide)
  - Equates to 12.6 deaths per 100,000 people.
  - Increase from 10.2 deaths per 100,000 people in 2006
  - 13<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in Aus. (from 14<sup>th</sup> in 2006)
  - Rates for males substantially higher than females
  - Males: 19.3 in 100,000
  - Females: 6.1 in 100,000

# Suicide in Australia

- 2015:
  - Leading cause of death in all people 15-44 years old
  - Second leading cause in all people 45-54 years old
  - Highest percentage of suicide deaths males 40-44 years old
  - Rates of Indigenous suicide twice as high as non Indigenous people

# Suicide in Australia

- 2015:
  - Leading cause of death for 5-17 years old
  - Highest rates in Northern Territory (13.6 in 100,000)
  - All other states/territories between 1.6 - 3.1 in 100,000
  - All states/territories (excluding SA) showed increases
  - Overall highest rates in 10 years

*Who Are We Working With...?*



66% arrested in last 12 months

63% have been incarcerated in our life



41% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander



40% lived in 3 or more places in 6 months

85% suspended or expelled from school





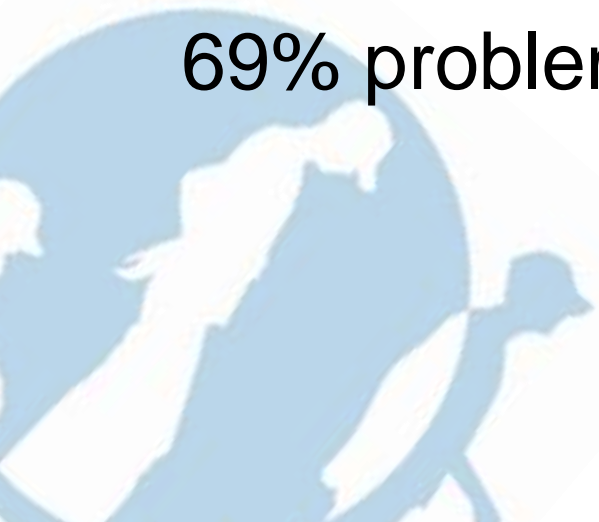
68% report work/school problems

75% do not have Year 10

5% only primary school

75% problems relating to people

69% problems with violence and/or aggression



43% experienced ongoing verbal/emotional abuse

79% have serious mental health concerns or diagnosis

60% suffered physical abuse from known person (DV)

37% suffered physical abuse from a stranger

23% sexual abuse from a known person

12% sexual abuse from a stranger



42% have tried to take their own lives



*This is our Challenge...*



# *Our Response...*



# *Trauma*



# Trauma

- Increased capacity to train all staff in latest trauma research and best practice.
- Relevant in the current climate given the amount of sustained and recent trauma our clients have suffered (violence, homelessness, selling self to dealers etc.)
- All staff trained in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) to work with unpredictable and challenging behaviors in a supportive and holistic way.

# *Noticed the Imbalance*





“The Street University provides a safe haven for young people to be who they are and simultaneously link in with a multitude of support services.”

*Liverpool City Council*

“At the moment I feel like I am living life to its fullest. I am finally doing something I enjoy.”

*Female young person*

# Street University

- The Street Universities aim to engage young people in meaningful ways
- They provide workshops and activities that incorporate creative use of art, music, dance, theatre, multi-media, writing, life skills development and technology and design in a highly visible, youth-friendly venue.
- They also deliver vocational and educational workshops and bridging programs to further education.

# *Positive Action*



# Positive Action

- Incorporating positive movement and creativity (dance, art, song) into traditional therapy
- Allows young people to create and grow in a safe space with adequate resources invested – our young people deserve the best... not the cheapest!
- Creating more holistic and robust treatment interventions, particularly for traumatized young people.

# *Skilled Connection*



# Skilled Connection

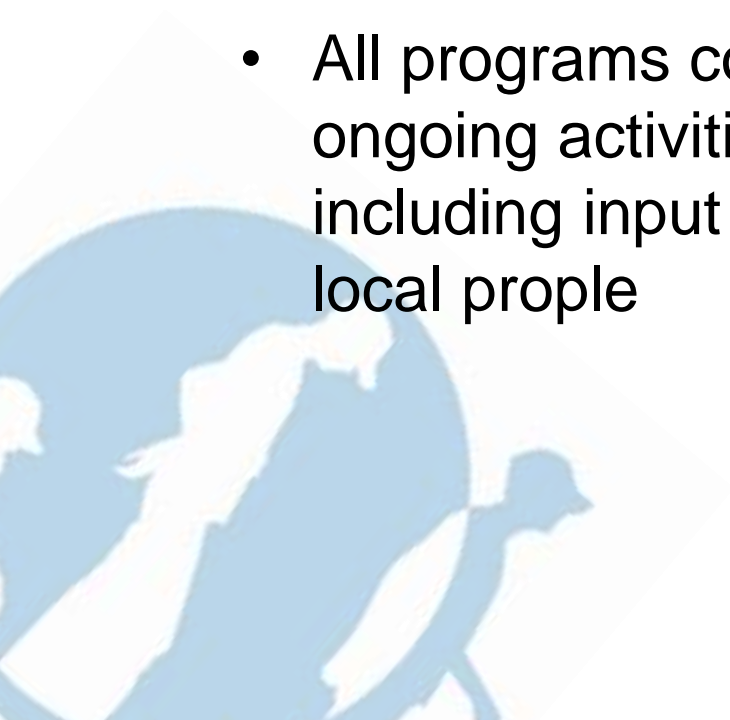
- Huge investment in training and staff development
- All staff trained in AOD, basic MH and Motivational Interviewing
- Vitally important given client population and increase in methamphetamine (issues with motivation and reward pathways)
- All clinical staff flown to Sydney 4x year for clinical training and conference.

# *Family and Culture*



# Family and Culture

- All staff trained in brief family intervention
- Families encouraged to be an active part of YP's treatment
- All programs contain cultural elements and ongoing activities within local communities including input from young people, elders and local people





# *Continuing Care*



# Continuing Care

- Emphasis on meaningful continuing care
- Dedicated aftercare programs for residential units supporting YP up to 5 years (and in some cases beyond)
- Pioneering use of social media in actively following up clients.



# *Methamphetamine*



# Methamphetamine

- Our stats show the female methamphetamine users are more likely to self harm, have attempted suicide, and have experiences interpersonal trauma
- All staff trained in current best practice in working with young people using methamphetamine.
- Including Motivational Interviewing to effectively work with people with lower reward and motivation functioning

# *Outcomes*



## Cannabis use reduced by over half

21 days per month to 11 days per month

18 cones per day to 7 cones per day

## Methamphetamine use reduced significantly

6.6 days per month to 1.9 days per month

3.4 pipes per day to 1.7 pipes per day

Statistically significant decreases across all items in Severity of Dependence Scale (SDS)

Number of arrests decreased by 66%

Statistically significant increases in family  
communication and trust (Family Assessment Device –  
General Functioning Scale)



Suicidal thoughts reduced from 44% to 16%





“It’s not difficult. It’s actually quite simple. We just want someone who cares, someone who trusts and respects us.... now stop asking me all these questions!”

*Female, 17 years*



# This Is Our Challenge...



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