

DEFINING UNIVERSAL AFTERCARE IN TASMANIA

FACT SHEET

Under the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement, the Australian and state and territory governments have committed to achieving universal aftercare.

WHAT DOES THIS PROJECT INVOLVE?

This project has been commissioned by Primary Health Tasmania and is being undertaken by Jane Austin Consulting with the support of Everymind. It involves examining recent literature and consulting with various providers, key informants, and community members to comprehensively understand the most practical and beneficial approach to universal aftercare in Tasmania.

Consultations are being conducted across four key phases:

- Online survey with service providers and community members
- One-on-one interviews with key informants
- Online/in-person consultations with service providers who work with specific groups of interest
- In-person roundtables with additional service providers representing key groups of interest.

WHAT IS AFTERCARE?

Aftercare services are services provided to individuals following a suicide attempt. This may include the involvement of families, friends, carers and support people.

The aim of aftercare is to enable access to and engagement with care and support to ensure that all people who have experienced a suicide attempt or suicidal crisis have access to and are supported towards compassionate, effective and appropriate support services.

Aftercare services are often engaged once somebody has been to the hospital following a suicide attempt.

The concept of universal aftercare expands the pathways to aftercare support beyond hospital settings. It involves connecting people with aftercare services across various settings where people may present with suicidal distress.

WHY ARE AFTERCARE SERVICES IMPORTANT?

In Australia, approximately 65,000 people make a suicide attempt each year. A prior suicide attempt is a significant risk factor for future suicide attempts and suicide deaths. Evidence shows that the relative risk for suicide after an attempted suicide is between 20 to 40 times higher than in the general population, with the risk being greatest in the days and weeks following hospital discharge.

The period following a suicide attempt is a critical time for proactive support for the person who attempted suicide and for their families, friends, carers and support people. However, less than half of individuals admitted to hospital after a suicide attempt connect with services or supports following discharge. Additionally, the current aftercare system does not generally capture people outside of hospital settings, meaning more needs to be done to increase referral pathways and access to aftercare services.

AFTERCARE IN TASMANIA

The Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy (2023-2027) prioritises delivering compassionate and connected services that meet people's needs (Priority 2), with aftercare explicitly mentioned as part of the service system in Tasmania. The Strategy highlights the need to increase the availability, accessibility and quality of aftercare services in Tasmania for individuals following a suicide attempt or experiencing a suicidal crisis.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES OF THIS PROJECT?

A report will be prepared for Primary Health Tasmania on what defines best-practice universal aftercare for Tasmania. The report will provide an evidence-based pathway to design and achieve universal aftercare in Tasmania to ensure that:

- All people who have experienced a suicide attempt or suicidal crisis have access to and are supported towards compassionate, effective and appropriate aftercare services.
- There is increased access to and engagement with care to prevent future suicidal behaviour during the critical period immediately following a suicide attempt.

WHERE CAN I GET SUPPORT?

We can all be impacted by discussing these topics in different ways. Please connect with your supports if needed. If you, or anyone else is in immediate danger, call 000.

Lifeline Australia: 13 11 14

13YARN: 13 92 76

MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467

SANE Australia Helpline: 1800 18 SANE (7263)

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service: 1800 011 046

QLife: 1800 184 527 (3pm - 12am)

A Tasmanian Lifeline: 1800 98 44 34 (8am-8pm)