

Suicide as a Threat

LPP
Workshop
Nov'07

SUICIDE THREATS as a form of abuse are not addressed in any currently available training (eg. ASIST) and there are no opportunities to spend time formally recognising expressions of suicidal intent as a form of abuse, blackmail and manipulation. The Life Promotion Program wanted to acknowledge this dilemma and to bring people together to discuss ways of responding that will be most likely to ensure the safety of both parties.

So we organised a workshop and a big mob of people showed up on a Friday early in November out at Campfire in the Heart. It had been raining, so we sat indoors and outdoors. There was a good mix of remote indigenous mob, remote workers, clinical mental health workers, youth workers, family violence workers, drug and alcohol workers, telephone counselors and ASIST trainers. The group engaged in the topic and welcomed the opportunity to talk together and feel less alone with this confusing issue. Ideas were shared, sad stories told, and we all talked about the things we worry for in these situations.



Kristy, Life Promotion Officer, scribing at the workshop



Rob Loane and Yuendumu mob sharing ideas of how to help those who are threatening suicide



'Threatening suicide' is an inappropriate method of wielding power and control over another person, and we worry for both parties. Is this behavior learned from other family members? How has it become so common, familiar and acceptable to use suicide as a threat? We worry that the person might follow through and get badly injured or die. We worry that this behavior might be an indicator of deep grief, stress or hopelessness and a lack of coping and help-seeking options. Also, we are worried for the person being threatened and the stress, powerlessness and sorrow that they face as a result. We worry that the consequences of death can result in payback for this person and so we have concerns for their physical safety and their emotional wellbeing.

We hope to bring the people involved in our workshop back together to develop ways of working with families around this problem and talk about strategies for support for both parties caught up in this behavior.

We want to thank all those who contributed to the day. ✖



Workers from a range of organisations & communities - including Congress, Waltja, Women's Shelter, Tangentyere Council, Remote Mental Health, Lifeline, Yuendumu and Hidden Valley - came together to share ideas, stories and possible solutions

