

Fact vs Fiction

- Motor-vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death in young people. **False**
- Suicide rates are higher in males than in females. **True**
- All people who self harm are considering suicide. **False**
- Asking someone if they are thinking of suicide increases their risk. **False**
- The majority of adolescents who suicide have a mental illness. **True**

Why suicide?

- Distress
- Mental health problems
- Reduced cognitive ability
- Beliefs about being a burden to others
- A last resort strategy to 'stop the pain'
- Impulsivity



Postvention

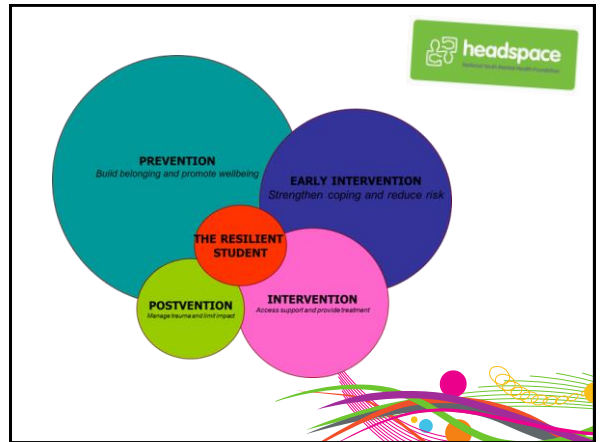
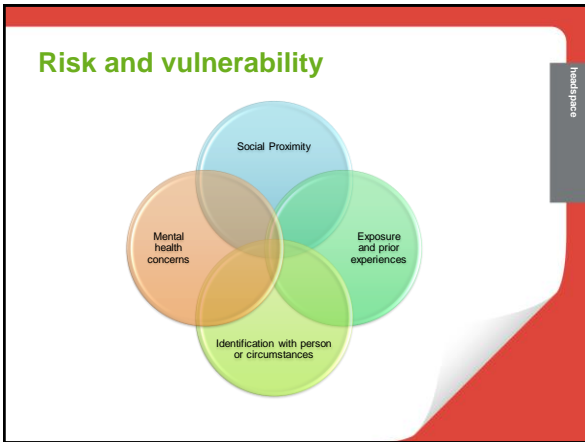
Experiencing the death of someone to suicide can have a devastating effect on individuals and communities.

An appropriate and timely response to suicide can reduce the impact on those affected and aid in the recovery of the school community.

Evidence based postvention responses aim to:

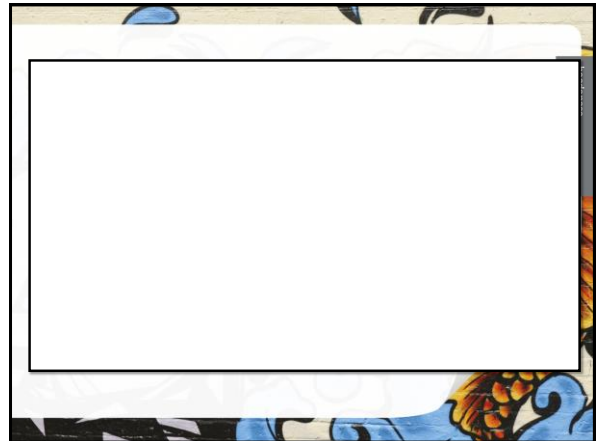
- provide bereavement support and advocacy for those affected by the suicide
- prevent further suicide events including contagion suicides and suicide clusters (Queensland Government, Department of Communities, 2008).

Postvention is the prevention of further suicides



Why headspace School Support?

A Principal's perspective



Service components

Preparing	Responding	Capacity	Resourcing	Evaluating
Customised response plans for individual schools and engagement of Education Departments and authorities in the program	Support, coordinate and deliver immediate short and long term support to schools following a suicide	Build capacity, skills and knowledge in teachers, welfare staff and school leadership teams	Providing resources and supports to those well placed to respond to young people	Ensuring delivery from and contributing to an evidence base for postvention support

Critical Incident

Why have policy and procedures in case of a suicide?

- A critical incident is any event or series of events that are sudden, overwhelming, threatening or protracted
- Measures to ensure that, should an emergency or critical incident occur, resources and services are capable of coping with the effects.
- Measures can include planning, preparation of processes which could include staff training and development, and links with relevant agencies and personnel.

A circular diagram with four segments: 'Prevention' (top), 'Preparedness' (right), 'Response' (bottom), and 'Recovery' (left). Arrows indicate a clockwise cycle between these stages.

Adapted from Emergency Disaster Planning for Principals, Commonwealth of Australia 1992.

Postvention Toolkit

The postvention toolkit is a comprehensive guide to effectively responding to the needs of the school community impacted by suicide. The toolkit is 40 pages long and details tasks and actions to be taken:

- 8 ● Section A - Immediate Response
- 10 ● Section B - The first 24 hours
- 16 ● Section C - The first week
- 22 ● Section D - The first month
- 24 ● Section E - Longer term

Immediate Suicide Response

Principal's checklist

Understand
immediate risk management and duty of care to all

Follow emergency management protocols and contact your department/authority
Contact
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School Support
1800 688 248

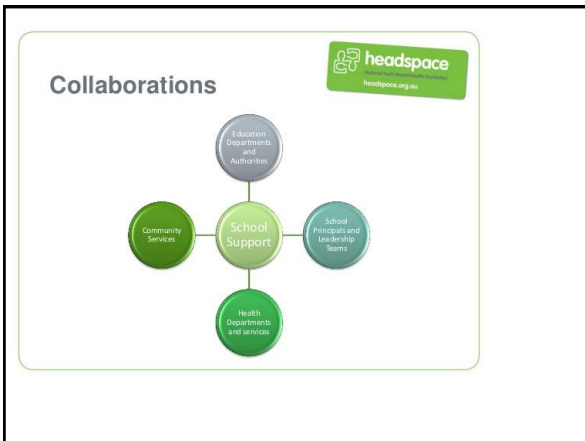
Find out the facts. Confirm the suicide with the family and seek permission to refer to the death as a suicide

Access your school's Suicide Postvention Response Plan and suicide toolkit/guidelines
Convene an internal Emergency Response Team meeting

Event the first 24 hours of your school's Suicide Postvention Response Plan
Inform
Support
Manage

Members of Emergency Response Team

Additional notes

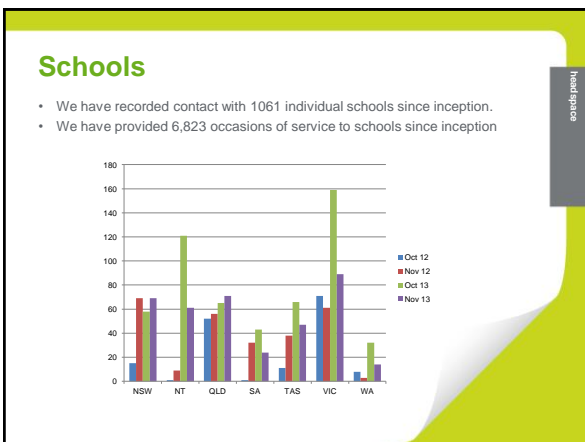


Support

Initial

- Provision of advice, support and assistance to the school leadership team to apply an evidence lead response in the school which includes:
 - Informing teachers, staff, parents, students and key adults who interact with affected students (bus driver, sporting coach etc)
 - Supporting staff with their own grief and response
 - Supporting staff to provide support to young people including the identification and support of young people who may be vulnerable to contagion
 - Managing media, social media and the narrative (stories) that arise

Ongoing support and collaboration



Online Postvention

Any online/social media activity that arises as a result of a suicide

The speed and exchange of information can often add to the risk of contagion

Social media and online activity can also be a protective factor

In grief, sadness, and shock...young people want to connect!!

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The challenge of information exchange in a suicide

- Glamourising suicide can increase the risk of suicide
- Stopping memorials or information exchange is not the way to avoid glamorising
- If people are talking about the suicide, schools and parents need to acknowledge the suicide and be open to discussing it (within boundaries and safe guidelines)
- Safe and monitored spaces for young people should, and can, be established.....inclusive of online spaces. This is where young people can discuss grief reactions and sadness, as well as learn ways to look out for friends

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Scenario

In March 2013, a year nine girl died by suicide in a metropolitan area. She had written a comment on facebook saying she was going to end her life.

Within 2 hours of her death this message had been "liked" by 300 young people. Within 4 hours of her death her social group had confirmed her suicide and agreed to meet at the train line.

Monday afternoon at 4pm approximately a hundred young people from over 6 schools gathered at the train line.

The news of her death included accurate and rumoured information

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Future



Thank You!