

Suicide Prevention Grants Program - Evaluation

The Suicide Prevention Grants Program provides funding through 12-month Grant Agreements with local governments and non-for-profit community service organisations to implement projects that support suicide prevention activities. These activities should contribute to the following outcomes for participants, and subsequently the wider community:

1. Improved health literacy surrounding mental health and wellbeing and suicide;
2. Reduced social stigma associated with poor mental health and wellbeing and suicide; and
3. Increased ability to seek help for oneself or for someone else.

This Suicide Prevention Grants Program round is specifically aimed at achieving these outcomes through suicide prevention training activities.

Applications will close at 5:00pm on Friday, 29 September 2017.

It is important that a project can clearly demonstrate it achieved what it set out to achieve. In order to do this, the project must be evaluated.

The Mental Health Commission (MHC) must receive information on what the project has done with the grant funding (activity reporting), and what the project has achieved with the grant funding (outcome reporting). These, along with financial reporting, will form the basis for the acquittal report you are required to submit at the end of your project should you be successful in receiving a grant.

How do we evaluate activities?

The project activities are the **things you do** with the funding you receive through the grant. You will have to report back to the MHC on these activities so it's important that you collect the relevant information over the course of your project.

For suicide prevention training projects, activity reporting should include:

- The type of training (and other activities) undertaken;
- The number of people who participated in each activity;
- Some general characteristics of the people who participated in the activities (e.g. males and females; age groups; ethnicity etc.);
- Where the activities took place;
- Who was involved in the activities, especially if there has been collaboration with other organisations; and
- Any other information you feel is needed to help illustrate what you've done.

Keep in mind that when reporting on the participants of your activities you should only report

de-identified group information (e.g. percentage of males, proportion aged 18-25 etc.) as this is less likely to identify individual participants.

How do we evaluate outcomes?

The project outcomes are the **things you achieve** with the funding you receive through the grant. In this case, three important outcomes have already been determined for you, but there may be others that you would like to achieve as well.

Many existing suicide prevention training programs have participant feedback forms which gather information on how useful completing the training has been for participants. These may compare responses before the training to responses after the training, or they may ask questions only once the training is over. Some of the questions asked in these surveys might help to demonstrate achievement of the three outcomes above so it's a good idea to investigate if the training you would like to offer has an established survey and what types of questions it asks.

Alternatively, you will need to gather the information yourself. You need to consider the types of questions that will help to demonstrate that you have achieved what you needed to achieve, and how you will go about asking them, before you submit your application for funding. **Addressing and measuring these three outcomes will be one of the criteria against which your application will be assessed.**

Outcome 1: Improved health literacy surrounding mental health and wellbeing and suicide

This covers knowledge, understanding and awareness of important factual information about mental health and wellbeing and suicide. These could include risk factors for suicidal behaviour; symptoms of common mental health conditions; factors that have been shown to support mental health and wellbeing; or people and places that are available to help. We want people to become more knowledgeable about the reality of mental health and wellbeing, mental illness, and suicide so that they can make informed decisions for themselves and those around them.

For example, you could ask:

- Rate your knowledge of ... ?
- How confident are you that you would know where to ... ?
- Please indicate how much you agree with the following statement, "I am aware of..."

Outcome 2: Reduced social stigma associated with poor mental health and wellbeing and suicide

This refers to the negative feelings and behaviours we have towards people who are experiencing poor mental health and/or suicidal behaviour or who have experienced these in the past. Stigma can play a significant role in whether or not people are honest about their mental health and wellbeing and if they seek help when they need it. We want people to realise that mental health issues are a normal part of life and even severe mental health conditions are manageable with suitable support. It's important that we can feel comfortable discussing our mental health challenges and asking for help when we need it.

For example, you could ask:

- If you found out someone ... would you think less of them?
- How likely would you be to avoid someone who ... ?
- Please indicate how much you agree with the following statement, "I think that..."

Outcome 3: Increased ability to seek help for oneself or for someone else

Being able to get help for yourself or for someone else when help is needed is crucial to managing the mental health challenges we all face as a normal part of life. Knowing what to do, where to go and who to ask is important. We want people who have undergone suicide prevention training to feel increased confidence that they have the skills to recognise when someone might need help, when someone is in crisis, and how best to support them in getting help. It is also important that we are able to get the help we need for ourselves when we aren't travelling well.

For example, you could ask:

- How likely are you to ... ?
- How confident are you that you could ... ?
- Please indicate how much you agree with the following statement, "I feel able to..."

There are also several established questionnaires created by mental health researchers that might be useful to you. Some examples can be found here:

<http://cmhr.anu.edu.au/mental-health-measures>

You will be able to find more through some basic online research.

Things to consider

- The examples given above are just that, examples, and are in no way exhaustive. They have been included only to illustrate the types of information you can gather to demonstrate achievement of outcomes. If you would prefer to ask other questions then you may do so. There may also be other questions not related to the outcomes from the state-wide suicide prevention strategy Suicide Prevention 2020: together we can save lives that you want to ask, and you should consider including these too.
- You are under no obligation to include an established questionnaire. Questionnaires can sometimes be very helpful, but may not be suitable under certain circumstances. You need to decide if using one is appropriate for your project and your participants.
- Some questions are better asked as a yes/no or true/false, some are better asked as a rating on a scale, while some are better asked open-ended with room for the participant to reply. It is perfectly acceptable to ask a mix of question types to demonstrate outcome achievement.
- Timing of information collection is important. Consider whether you will gather this information from your participants both before AND after an activity, or only after. Also consider how long after you will ask, straight away or after several weeks or months of follow-up?
- The method of information collection is also important. Consider whether you will use a pencil and paper questionnaire, an online survey, or perhaps a short interview. Decide which is the easiest and most appropriate method for your project and participants, keeping in mind that you want as many people as possible to provide you with useful information.
- Consider what you will do with the information you collect from your participants. How will it be reported to the MHC? Will it be best to report numbers, percentages, proportions or a mix? Will you use tables, graphs or diagrams? If a change has occurred over time how will you report this change? Thinking about this now will help you to collect the right information throughout your project.
- It's also a good idea to get some feedback on the project itself. What did your participants like? What could be done differently? Evaluating your project is a great opportunity for some self-reflection and genuine feedback from your participants. Consider including a question or two that could help you to improve in the future. The information you collect should be as useful to you as it is to the MHC.