

09/12/2022

Mental Health Council of Tasmania Media Release

Strategy outlines a collaborative approach to suicide prevention in Tasmania

The Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) has welcomed the release of the State Government's Suicide Prevention Strategy 2023-2027.

This third Suicide Prevention strategy builds upon the previous strategies, and was developed following consultation with a range of stakeholders, including people with lived experience of suicide, people from the community, mental health and suicide prevention sectors, communities, as well as representatives from a range of priority population groups.

One of the critical things that the Strategy recognises is that suicidal distress isn't linked solely to mental ill-health and mental illness.

MHCT CEO, Connie Digolis, said, "Suicidal distress can be influenced by a range of life stressors, including social, personal, and financial factors. It's good to see that instead of addressing suicide as a mental health issue only, this Strategy outlines a whole of population wellbeing approach, that aims to tackle the gamut of social and economic factors to help foster social connection and build hope."

An important goal outlined in the strategy is to remove the stigma that is still associated with suicide in Tasmania. With the pandemic leading to increasing discussions about mental health and suicide across our community, more Tasmanians are opening up and having honest and meaningful conversations about their mental health. Ms Digolis said that it's just as important that the conversations don't inadvertently cause harm and increase stigma.

"We know that stigma around suicide continues to be a significant barrier to people accessing the support they need if they are experiencing thoughts of suicide. If we start to break down the fear the people have around talking about suicide, then it becomes easier and less daunting for someone to speak up and reach out for help and support when they need it."

While this Strategy has been developed by the State Government, Ms Digolis said that suicide prevention is a responsibility we all share.

"From the State and Federal Governments, to the various supports, services and community organisations that help people through many of life's challenges, to our communities, our colleagues, and our families and friends. We all play a part. And by taking a collaborative approach, guided by the actions outlined in the Strategy, we can help to keep those around us safe and supported, and help prevent suicide in Tasmania."

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Please include the following crisis support services for any story regarding mental health or suicide:

A Tasmania Lifeline: 1800 984 434 atasmanianlifeline.com.au/

Lifeline: 13 11 14 www.lifeline.org.au

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467 www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 kidshelpline.com.au/

More information on safely reporting on mental illness or suicide can be found at:

<https://mindframe.org.au/> and <https://www.tascharter.org/>