

MEDIA RELEASE



Thursday, 1 September 2016

CRMMH addresses rural suicide prevention on World Suicide Prevention Day

To mark World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD) on Sunday, September 10, the University of Newcastle's Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health (CRRMH) are delivering a number of initiatives aimed at understanding and responding to rural suicide.

Our Farm-Link program, funded by the Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network will be holding a 2-day workshop in Inverell from 15-16 September as part of a worldwide suicide intervention program, ASIST.

ASIST is a 2-day workshop that teaches participants very specific skills around holding an intervention with a person who is having thoughts of suicide. ASIST is suitable for any person who is 16 years or older, whether you're part of the health profession, or you just want to learn these life -saving skills in your personal life.

Farm-Links Senior Project Officer Fiona Livingstone says it's important not to underestimate just how far a smile or a kind word can go when someone is in a dark place

"Although many people find it difficult to connect with someone who is struggling, remember that by truly caring and being genuine in your approach, that person will feel more able to open up and talk about what is happening for them, which may provide you an opportunity to encourage help-seeking.

"Farm-Link encourages everyone to embrace this year's WSPD theme – connecting and communicating with a person at risk shows that you care", said Ms Livingstone.

In addition to the workshop, the Centre is also is also facilitating a free public online forum on Suicide and Mental Health at 12 noon on Friday the 2nd of September.

Director of CRRMH Professor David Perkins says there is ongoing concern about mental health and suicide in rural and remote NSW.

"The Centre is interested in trying to understand why suicide happens in rural areas and programs such as Farm-Link and the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program help to address it.

"The online forums are also a great opportunity for people to chat anonymously online and get support from a panel of experts," said Professor Perkins.

For details on how you can participate, please see below.



If you would like to know more about Farm-Link or the ASIST workshop, please contact farmlink@newcastle.edu.au or phone 0427 072 105.

If you would like to speak to Professor David Perkins about the Centre's key strategic direction in suicide prevention, please call Jocie Johnston on 0410549325.

If you are concerned about yours or another's mental wellbeing, call Lifeline on 131114.

ONLINE FORUM DETAILS

When: Friday 2nd of September at 12 noon

Where: Go to www.theland.com.au on the day and follow the links.

An expert panel will answer questions about a number of important issues, including:

- Preventing suicide and providing support in tough times.
- How to tell if someone is thinking about suicide and what to do about it.
- How to have a difficult conversation.
- How to reduce stigma associated with mental illness, and
- Understanding what it is like to be bereaved by suicide.

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