

# MEDIA RELEASE



Centre for  
Rural & Remote  
Mental Health

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## SCARF training gets rural communities talking

The Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health's Farm-Link presentation on suicide prevention has received positive feedback from rural communities, addressing the need for a better understanding of mental health and suicide issues.

The Farm-Link program incorporates a suicide prevention education training package for communities called SCARF which stands for Suspect, Connect, Ask, Refer and Follow-Up.

Senior Project Officer of Farm-Link, Fiona Livingstone says there is ongoing concern about mental health and suicide in rural and remote NSW and the SCARF training addresses that need.

"Every suicide is a disaster for a family and community. The SCARF training helps people identify when someone may not be travelling too well, how to connect with that person, and where to refer them to appropriate help.

"Participants feel more confident to be able to ask questions such as: 'You said you haven't been sleeping well lately, and I notice you haven't been coming out to our regular get togethers, I'm worried about you. What's going on? Are you OK?'" Ms Livingstone said

The SCARF presentation has been well received with over 40 people attending a recent presentation in Tenterfield. Performer and mental health advocate Morgan Crae, (Little Phoenix) said the presentation provided concise, practical and accessible information both for health professionals and the general community.

"It was amazing to hear how much more confident and empowered people felt about discussing suicide and mental health issues towards the end of the training.

"If we can all increase our confidence in reaching out to someone, we can save lives." Ms Crae said.

The Farm-Link Program is a rural initiative of the University of Newcastle's CRRMH, and is funded under the Department of Health's National Suicide Prevention Program

If you would like to know more about Farm-Link or the SCARF program, please contact [farmlink@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:farmlink@newcastle.edu.au), phone 0427 072 105 or find Farm-Link on Facebook

If you are concerned about your own or someone's mental wellbeing, call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or the mental health line on 1800 011 511.

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