



GREAT SOUTH COAST  
**Suicide Prevention  
Place Based Trial**

# **Youth Health & Wellbeing Live4Life**

## **Profile Spotlights**



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WESTERN VICTORIA  
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# MEET LAUREN WESTHORPE, YOUTH INSTRUCTOR



**Lauren is a Career Practitioner for the South West Skills and Jobs Centre and became a Live4Life Youth Mental Health First Aid Instructor in August 2021. Lauren has delivered three courses to the Great South Coast community, training over 20 community members (over 18) to become Youth Mental Health First Aiders - the latest being a course organised specifically to target young people aged 18-25 from the Warrnambool community.**

## **How did you get involved with Live4Life? How did you become a Live4Life Youth Instructor?**

When I talk about my career, I've experienced more than 20+ Jobs across 10+ industries, have lived in four states of Australia and spent two years abroad. I hold three VET Qualifications and a Graduate Certificate from RMIT. I am proud of my journey to get to where I am today and can often relate to the clients I work with.

My journey with Live4Life began through a work colleague, introducing me to Live4Life and their opportunities that were available to become an instructor. I often work with youth, parents and their children, teachers and their students, and students in adult education environments who are training towards careers working with youth. There is a real need for an understanding of the mental health problems that face our youth today - these young adults are our future and I felt I could support by being able to deliver this course with Live4Life.

Just like any other job application and when you're passionate about the role, you put in the time to work through the application process. The application was about my strengths, skills, knowledge and awareness in our region and what it would mean to become an instructor. I also needed to be endorsed by my manager at the Skills and Jobs Centre to support my application. Once successful, I then attended a 5 day training course where we were taken through the delivery of the Youth Mental Health First Aid and then assessed on our own delivery to our group.

## **What have been some key highlights (what you've most enjoyed) as a Youth Instructor?**

The participants are the number one highlight. I have now trained over 20 community members and each participant brings something of themselves to the course - it might be a lived experience, it might be a participant's knowledge and skills from their line of work, or just something they value and then share for the group. The reward of seeing the participants walk away with learning something new is also a highlight - the confidence and satisfaction that they are ready to support our youth and have the tools to understand their mental health.

## **How has becoming a Youth Instructor supported your career development?**

I have more confidence and understanding of working with youth who may be living with mental health challenges. I have learnt how to adapt to my audience and be guided by the group. Through each course I am gathering feedback so that I am working towards delivering the best training that I can. This opportunity has opened other doors for my career and given me connections that allow my work to grow.

## **How can others get involved with Live4Life - either to do the mental health first aid course or become an Instructor?**

Live4Life are working across many rural and regional communities and can be contacted via [www.live4life.org.au](http://www.live4life.org.au). Live4Life will often advertise their Youth Mental Health First Aid courses and also their instructor training opportunities through their [website](http://www.live4life.org.au). If you know your local region, you can also contact the [Community Engagement Coordinator](http://www.live4life.org.au) that works in your area.





## MEET CASS PRIG, LIVE4LIFE COURSE PARTICIPANT

**Cassandra is a Student Leader at Deakin University and was one of the participants in the most recent Life4Life session, run by Youth Instructor, Lauren Westhorpe. Cass loves working with young people to help unlock their passions. After graduating high school at 16, Cass spent 10 months living at a host family in rural France before returning to Australia and studying a Bachelor of Arts degree. Now at 27, Cass is studying Marine Biology at Deakin University while working and volunteering in a range of community advocacy roles. Cass is wanting to advocate for the student association at Deakin to offer the Youth Live4Life Training on campus.**

### How did you first get involved with Life4Life and the training session?

I am a member of the Headspace Warrnambool Youth Reference Group (YRG). The Manager of this group was able to arrange for some of the YRG Members to do the training for free. I had wanted to do Mental Health First Aid for a long time but cost had been a barrier, so I jumped at the opportunity.

**Describe your experience as a course participant. What did you enjoy about the training?**

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Meeting a couple of other young women who are passionate about mental health and our local communities was definitely a highlight. We worked closely together over the two days doing role plays and brainstorming ways of being a good support to young people in crisis. Being able to bring some of my personal experiences, positive and negative, with mental health into that space was really empowering. As a person with lived experience of psychological distress, some of what we discussed really hit close to home. Our Instructor, Lauren, was fantastic and made sure we always discussed these sensitive topics in a safe way.

**How has this training equipped you to be able to aid in supporting someone experiencing mental health challenges or at risk of suicide?**

We practiced the steps for approaching anyone in crisis many times in many different scenarios, so I now feel comfortable being able to assess and assist with these kinds of challenges as well as being able to listen, give support and refer on to professional support as necessary.

**What are your plans for advocating for Deakin Uni Student Association to offer the Live4Life mental health first aid training on campus?**

I need to talk to the Students Council about this idea and how we can offer this training in a way that is financially accessible to our students. I think cost is a big barrier to doing the training for many young people, so if we can remove or at least minimise that obstacle, we will be well on our way to having a strong and well resourced community of student leaders at our local campus who can support each other and their peers through a lot of challenges.

