



Project Information

Taking The First Step: Young Men's Health & Wellbeing (18-25 years)

24 April, 2022



GREAT SOUTH COAST
Suicide Prevention
Place Based Trial



phn
WESTERN VICTORIA
An Australian Government Initiative



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TAKING THE FIRST STEP

PROJECT SUMMARY

The **Men's 18-25 years Suicide Prevention Research Project "Taking the First Step"** sought to better **understand the attitudes and help-seeking behaviours that contribute to Men's mental health, well-being and service access** in the Great South Coast (GSC) region.

The work completed in this project included delivering community consultations and awareness raising sessions to help:

1. Gain a better understanding of the target group, specifically the risks and vulnerabilities that exist in this community relating to young men's risk of suicide
2. Support and engage the community to better recognise and respond to young men aged 18-25 who are at risk of suicide

81 young males engaged in suicide prevention research - 66 took part in an online survey and 15 participated in focus groups.

An **online survey** was conducted to assess the key objectives, including attitudes and understanding in respect of mental health literacy, knowledge of support services available, barriers to help seeking and perception of the risks associated with help-seeking. This survey was live from December 2020 to May 2021.

A series of **focus groups** conducted with young males in the community to extract more in-depth and enriching information from the target cohort on mental health literacy, attitudes to help-seeking, help-seeking behaviours and protective factors and ideas or recommendations for future mental health initiatives directed at the target cohort. These focus groups were conducted in May 2021.

The focus groups involved consultations over Zoom with Year 12 students from Portland's Bayview College; Year 12 students from Terang's Mercy College; and a series of one-on-one interviews with young males across the GSC.

This project was completed in July 2021 and was run by Headspace.

KEY RESEARCH OUTCOMES

- Masculine norms are an issue that impacts young men help-seeking.
- The main support pathway for young males in the region is talking to their partner.
- The barriers to accessing support are internal barriers - not wanting to burden others.
- Young males in GSC communities were easily able to identify a wide range of supports, indicating a good awareness of local support.
- The project provided valuable insights for future local campaigns and initiatives around protective factors.
- There were high levels of mental health literacy in the participant sample. Young males in the region can demonstrate high levels of compassion and empathy towards other young males experiencing mental health problems, with most asserting they would be willing to support other males to access mental health support.
- Community awareness needs to target pathways.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PROGRAM

- Campaigns to reach the partners of the target audience, who are the current prominent support pathway;
- Utilise social media to promote future young men's health and wellbeing initiatives;
- Utilise incentives for participation.





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BACKGROUND

- On average, one in eight men will experience depression and one in five men will experience anxiety at some stage of their lives.
- Men make up an average 7 out of every 9 suicides every single day in Australia. The number of men who die by suicide in Australia every year is nearly double the national road toll.
- Stigma regarding mental health appears to be a significant risk factor for suicide. Young men appear to be disproportionately deterred from help-seeking by stigma.
- Mental health literacy (the ability to recognise signs and symptoms of mental health) is correlated with a reduction in stigma and increase in help-seeking behaviour.
- Fear in relation to protection of confidentiality is particularly pronounced for those living in smaller, rural communities.
- Conformity to traditional masculine attitudes and norms is associated with high levels of stigma and is also a risk factor for suicide.
- Systematic reviews indicate that young people typically seek help from their social networks, most notably their peers. Young men are less likely than young females to seek support regarding their mental health.

Background research:

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect/men>

Kennedy et al., 2018; Clement et al., 2015; Struszczyk et al. 2019; Michelmores and Hindley, 2012

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Additional mental health resources/support for the needs of young men in this target group:

- To book an appointment with **Headspace Warrnambool**, call 1300 276 749 or visit <https://headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/warrnambool/>.
- Learn the signs, find the words, connect to care. Participate in free* suicide prevention training - **LivingWorks START** - here: <https://form.jotform.com/220807792455058>

*free for communities in GSC only.

MORE INFORMATION ON THE GSCSPPBT TRIAL

Visit bit.ly/GSCSPPBTbackgrounders

